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March 1995

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Page 8 in this issue.

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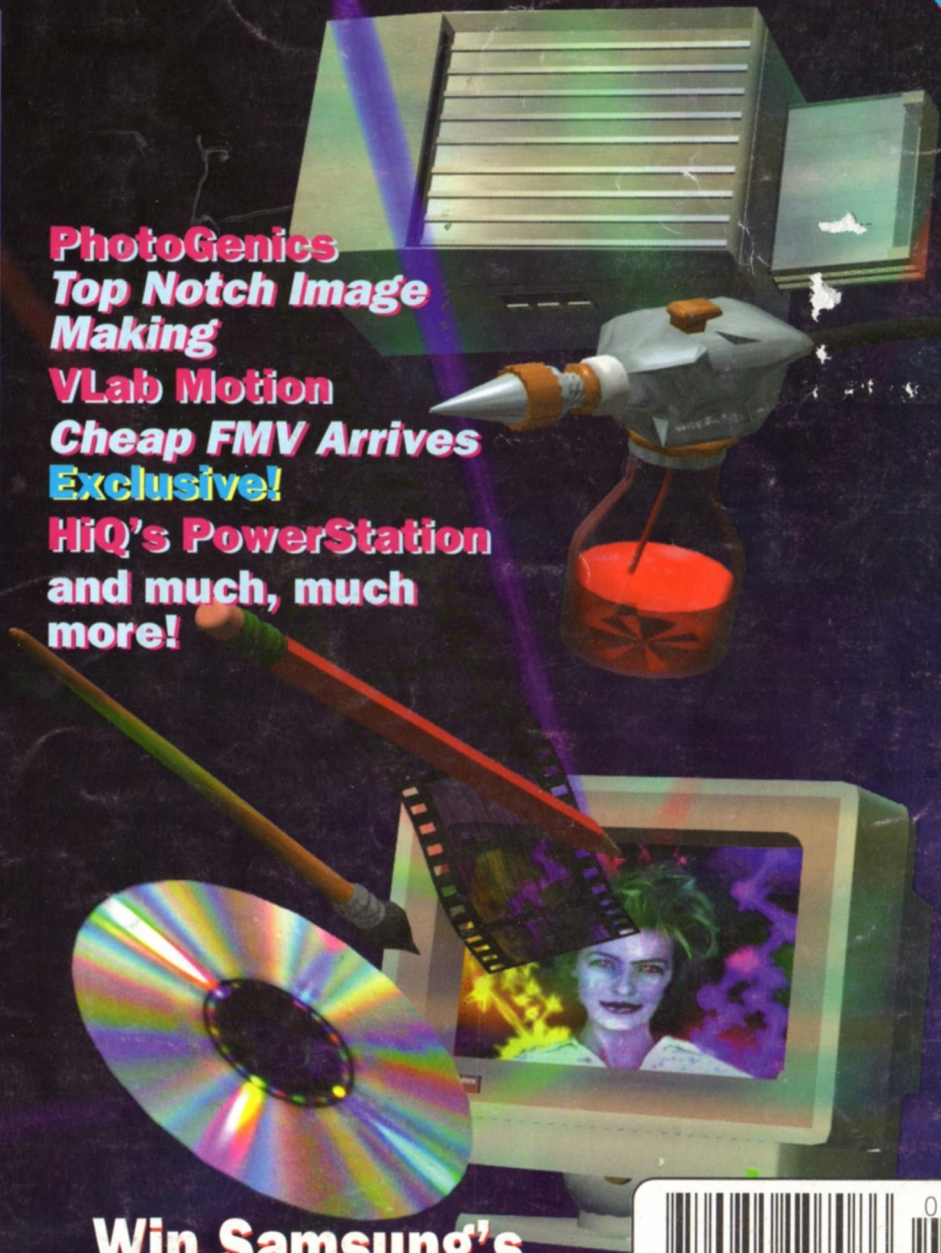
Boot SuperDisk No.53. Do not boot this SuperDisk.
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open serial ports. VT4000 users will need 2 mb chip RAM. When integrating other
video equipment, consult manufacturer's documentation.)

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CONSTANT FACTORS

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Managing Editor Antony Jacobson discusses the latest moves in the continuing battle for the control of the moribund Commodore empire.

6 SuperDisks No.53 and No.54

Wow! An incredible six and half Megabytes are packed onto this month's SuperDisks. Workbench utilities, CLI commands, Printer utilities, 3D objects, textures and games. There's enough to satiate any voracious Amiga appetite. Nice work if you can get it.. Well, you can. What's there and how to get it all, explained by David Taylor.



12 NewsFile

All the news, the views and the phews! As they break, direct from computer wires of the universe, picked up as always by the terrible identically-challenged twins, Anthony Mael and Martin Witton. Buckle up and blast off into the electric blue with the *AUI* NewsFile aces.

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Cover and Laser Force pictures by Gary Fenton

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94 Amiga Answers

Step into the surgery with Dr Andy Eskelson and get the prescription your problem needs as he cures your computer ills with the gentlest of touches.

102 The PD StakeOut

You can't get owt for nowt? Not so, as Gideon Overhead finds the juicy morsels from this month's selection of PD releases in *AUI's* renowned Public Domain roundup.



108 Write to Reply

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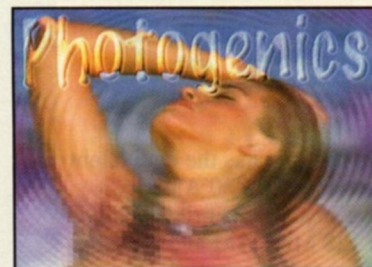
Has cheap motion video found an ally in the shape of this revolutionary board or are we in for a disappointment? Gary Fenton shouts 'action' and presses record.

26 Monument Titrer

A monumental start in the titling world? Helmut Schumacher cuts in and overtakes the competition with this new program.

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Stunned by our sneak preview two month's ago? You were not alone. Now Gary Fenton reveals the full wonders of this revolutionary program and revels in the new high power, low price package from Almathera.



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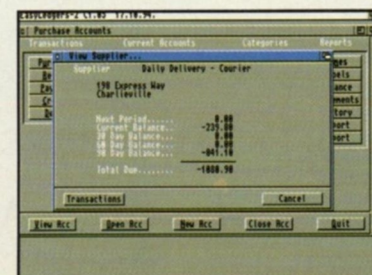
Anthony Mael takes an exclusive preview look at a stunning new workstation for the Amiga. CD and stereo capabilities together with superfast interfaces sound like just the ticket? Then hitch a ride to the PowerStation...

34 Amiga NCP

Joining up your Amiga to other machines is becoming the order of the day. Andy Eskelson finds a great way to link his Psion to his Amiga.

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Mark Blackham test drives Easy Ledgers and Home Office. Two accounts packages and finds one so good that he's setting up his own business just to use it!



40 GameSmith

Games programmers are in for another treat this month as Paul Overaa unveils HiSoft's bright new package.

44 Pixel 3D Pro 2

After a rather buggy first version and who knows how many follow ups, Pixel 3D Pro has come of age. Barry McCarthy gets ecstatic about a truly impressive upgrade.

USER PORT

46 Help Me!

ICPUG is constantly out there aiding the lost and the lonely with their problems. John Bickerstaff takes you through a story of how one hard case was made easy.

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Tell us what interests you and we'll help you get the information you need to make your buying decisions count. *AUI's* new buying power information pages.

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your PRESENTATION

By THE MD.

66 3D Tips

Barry McCarthy brings 3D closer to the masses with his hints. This month, you can even join in with the macros he discusses. They are of this month's *AUI* SuperDisks.

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How to brighten up your Intuition windows. Paul Overaa gives you the tips that make it easy.

HARD COPY

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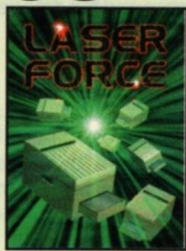
68 Win a Laser!
There are TWO great Samsung laser printers to be won in this special easy Laser Force competition. Now's the time to get Laser Force on your desktop!

86 CompuServe for Europe
CompuServe is ever popular, but not the easiest comms system to master. Could this book be the guide you need? David Taylor turns bookworm.

Entertainment Now

76 Entertainment Now!
Moving ever onwards, this month's Entertainment section starts a number of features with an in depth look at mastering the recent 'classic' SimCity 2000.
With reviews of Sensible World of Soccer, Jungle Strike, PGA European Tour, DeathMask, Shadow Fighter, Shaq Fu, Battle for the Ashes, Cannon Fodder 2 and previews of many more, keep up to date with the guide to the games from Mark Blackham, Andy Moss and David Taylor.

53 Laser Force Special Report



You may have dot matrix or even ink jet printers connected up to your Amiga but nothing compares for quality and speed to that most desired of printers, the Laser. Here the **AUI** team, led by Mark Blackham and Aitor Ibarra tell you how they work, what to look for, what you need to know to buy the right one and how to use them to their - and your - best advantage.
Laser Force - AUI's Special Report - Where You'll Feel It Most!

The Amiga Dimension

This month's Opinion Column contains not the opinion of just one person with a hobby horse to ride but those of several on a matter of importance to all Amiga users.. These opiners are key members of the Amiga community - developers, the people who make the things that make the Amiga make our lives more exciting. Their views in this **AUI** are expressed on the proposed buy out by the Commodore UK team under the name, obviously near to our heart at this magazine, of Amiga International.

It seems that the months of waiting for good news of Commodore and the Amiga's fate are coming to an end. I say "it seems" because although an announcement has appeared on CiX giving some information, as yet there is no official confirmation that the bid by Amiga International has been successful.

Although no-one can officially confirm, at the time of our going to press, that the best outcome has happened; that the Amiga will be rescued by an experienced team based in the UK but with international ambitions, we hear from an extremely reliable source that the Creditors' Committee, those to whom CBM owed millions, have agreed to accept the offer made on behalf of Amiga International. However, the person responsible for the final agreement to the offer is the Liquidator appointed by the Bahamian Court and as yet he has not given his approval. Probably he is still trying to squeeze out a slightly better deal.

One difficulty is that the components stacked in many huge crates are not easily valued and the price put on this job lot of Amiga stuff by the Liquidator may not be acceptable by Amiga International.

There are also immense complexities in things that might not seem important at first glance. Though, obviously, Amiga International will change from the Commodore style logo - The Crab, as it has sometimes been rather disrespectfully called - it would not want anyone else to get the rights to the use of it. This is true of a whole range of copyright material that belongs to CBM.

One problem is that, for an unknown reason, the copyright to The Crab and other material was held in Germany and so is the property not of the Bahamian Liquidator but of the German one. Before Amiga International's offer goes through, if they want, as they do, to arrange the copyright matters then they have to fix a deal with the German and other liquidators too. And this sort of arranging has to be carried out wherever in the world there is a Commodore company. And all of them, I believe, except that in the UK and the one in Canada have gone bust. Lots of deals to be done and lots of complications to be overcome..

My sources have told me that most of the problems have actually already been sorted out and a major obstacle, the US-based bid from CEI led by US Amiga distributor Alex Amor, is about to collapse.

There was a story that CEI had put up a "non-returnable deposit of over a million dollars" as an earnest of its seriousness and they were even supposed to have been advertising for staff to join them in anticipation of their success.

My information is that any deposit was only needed in the case of a successful bid - not before it but after it. No sensible person would have put up a million or so with no way to get it back if the bid didn't succeed. Amiga International certainly didn't.

Now it seems that the time limit CEI placed on their involvement in the take over has run out and they are acknowledging that they are on the losing side.

So is this the end of the story? No, I don't think so. If you have been involved in any deal of this kind it always seems the hardest part is winning the bid. But it isn't. The really hard part is making your plans that helped you get the deal actually work out. That's what Amiga International has yet to face. For them to make it all work, they'll need all the help they can get. From the developers, from the magazines and from Amiga users everywhere. Let's hope the deal really does go through now and they make it all happen for the Amiga. It's time we all had some good news.

Anthony Jacobson
Managing Editor and Publisher

Who Does What

Managing Editor and Publisher:
Anthony Jacobson

Editorial Co-ordinator: David Taylor
Editorial Assistants: Mark Blackham,
Gideon Overhead

Contributors: Andy Eskelson, Janet Bickerstaff, John Bickerstaff, Paul Broadbent, Gary Fenton, Aitor Ibarra, Anthony Mael, Barry McCarthy, Andy Moss, Paul Overaa, Alan Puzey, Helmut Schumacher, Bud Vennos, Martin Witton.

Design: Graham Baldock

Advertisement Executives: Charles Cutbill,
Nick Martin

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Telephone: 0171 391 8833

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Customer Interface Ltd, Bradley Pavilions,
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...And What They Used

Commodore's Amiga A3000, A2000, A500, Citizen's Swift 240C, Canon's BH-20 Bubblejet, Consultron's CrossDOS, Electronic Art's Deluxe Paint IV, Gold Disk's Professional Page, GVP's A530 Turbo, Toshiba's IDE drive, Supra's V32 Fax Modem, Datel's Action Replay MKIII, ASDG's Art Department Professional, Epson's GT-6500 and 9000 colour flatbed scanners, Readysoft's AMAX, OpalTech's Opalvision, Innova-tronic's Directory Opus, JCL's ColourPic Plus and Cabaret, John Veldhuis' VirusChecker, JVC's HR-D980 Video Recorder, Micro-System's Scribble!, Macro Systems VLAB, 32bit RAM from First Choice Computers, Discovery Software's Grabbit.

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AMIGA

User

INTERNATIONAL

This month's SuperDisks contain an incredible six Megs of data. "Something for everyone," claims David Taylor and explains why...

Instructions

It couldn't be simpler. Boot SuperDisk No.53 and wait until you're asked which disk you wish to install. Enter the letter followed by return. This will decrunch the main disks: **AUMAR95a-c,g&h**. For the textures disks, read the instructions for those disks. That's it.

It does take a little while to install these disks, but six Megs don't fit on without a great deal of effort. Your time will not be spent in vain. Sit back and read your favourite mag as your Amiga sorts out your disks.

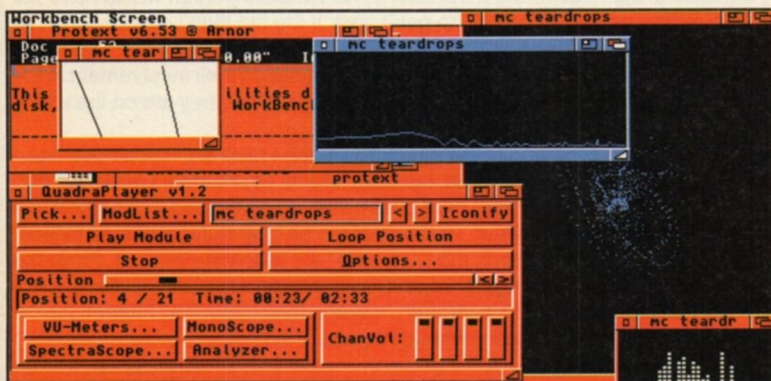
You need 1 Meg of Chip RAM and five disks to install the main disks (three more for the textures). Oh, and you need an Amiga. The SuperDisks will sense pre-formatted disks or format it for you when you insert your spare disks. The only disks you can't use (for obvious reasons) are this month's SuperDisks.

AUI MAR95a

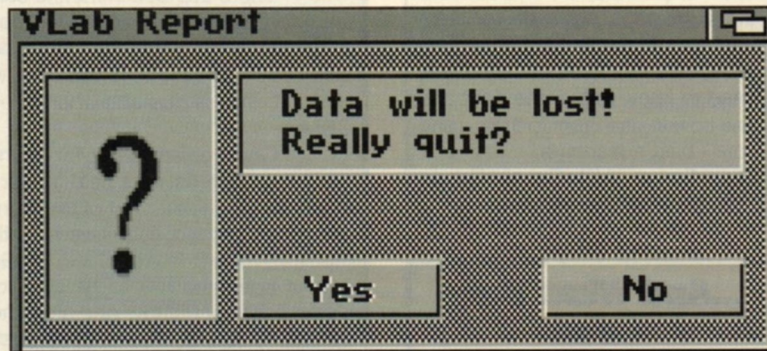
This is the general utilities disk. Once you've installed the disk, you need to boot WorkBench to use these utilities.

QuadraPlayer

It's been quite a while since we've seen a new module player that's caught our eye, but this one really "is the business" (as one member of staff observed). It's fully multitasking and will play quite a few module types. Once it's loaded you can decide which analysers you want on your screen. There are four to choose from (you can have any or all of them running at the same time). The question has to be what use are they? I'm sure some of them mean something to some people, but we just think they look good!



Groovy music tunes with the best player we've seen for ages.



Are you really sure you want to leave ARQ? After all, it's excellent.

ARQ

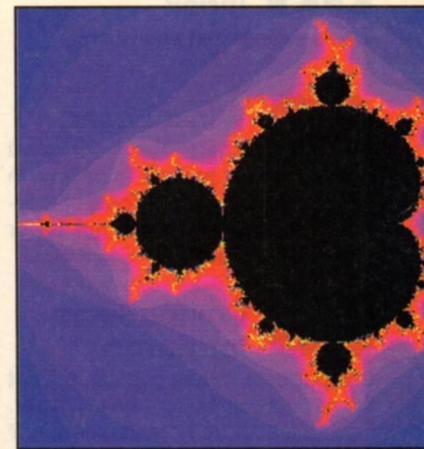
Every so often a utility comes along that really moves you, right in your Workbench startup drawer. ARQ is just such a gem. Workbench has been updated several times now, but still throws up the same boring requesters

every time it has a problem. No more! ARQ is small, but perfectly formed. Now you get animated requesters for, amongst others, volumes, printer errors, read/write errors and the dreaded software failure.

Invoicer

If you run a small business, or need to keep an official account of money owed, then it's likely you want some help from your trusty Amiga. Invoicer is a great program, complete with a friendly interface that could help you

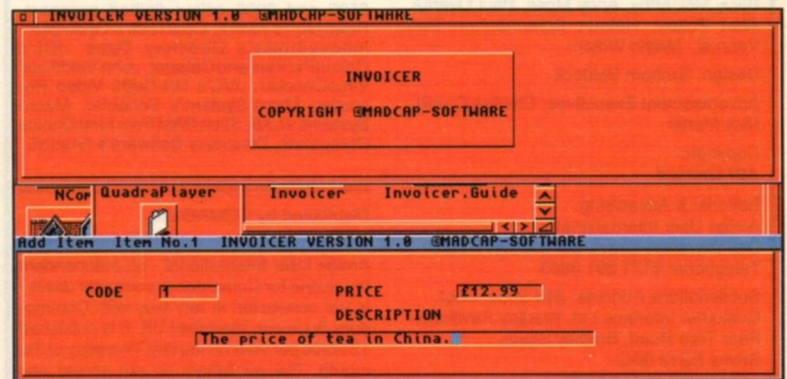
author, Peter Spinaze. Fractal World is a powerful fractal generator with many options. There is an example picture and xyz co-ordinates. Zoom and animate fractals until you're convinced you're in a pop video.



Get into the groove with Fractal World.

Bluff Titler

Here's a great program. Render and animate 3D text with this well done program. Zoom through and around. You can alter everything from text rotation and depth to the angle of your eye. This is the demo version, so if you like it, register.



Add an item to your invoice. That'll please the customer.

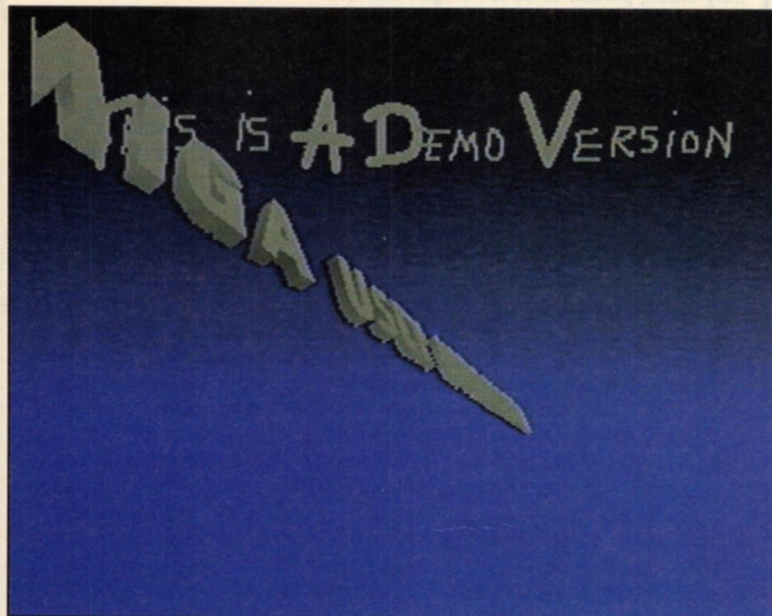
Fractal World

Exclusive to AUI, Fractal World was created specially for us for you by its

Deftool2

This is the Toolbox program explained in this month's Amiga Answers section.

SuperDisks No. 53 & No. 54



Here's a great rendering program for everyone to play around with.

It will help you sort out your program icons - see the Answers section for detailed info.

Analysis

This is a quick little program that simply runs a check on your system and gives a simple report about the state of your drives and system.

Crypt

Everyone has their secrets. This CLI program supplied to **AUI** will encode your text into such a mess that nobody could ever decode, unless of course you do it for them with the decode facility! Enter a unique password for each file and your secrets won't become as public as the Government's do.

AUI MAR95b

This disk contains the printer utilities, together with over seventy printer drivers to ensure you get the best from your printer.

Print Manager 2

It's so unfair to the PC, but every time something good appears on that platform (OK, it's quite rare!), someone

goes and creates a version for the Amiga. Take that handy little util, ScreenTab, on last month's disk for example. Well, the Amiga doesn't come with a print manager like Windows, but here's one for you anyway.

Print Manager 2 will handle all your print jobs and installs itself at the port level, so it will work with any program and not just ones written to take advantage of it. What's even better is that it only takes notice of jobs that use the "printer.device" so whether you're using a serial or parallel printer, Print Manager will not slow down any other processes going through those ports.

makes use of the "datatypes.library", so it can print out anything that Multiview can show.

PrintSel

If you're a lucky person who's got more than one printer hooked up (maybe you want to use your old one for draft and your new posh one for the actual finished item), then you know how much of a bind it is to keep changing the preferences.

PrintSel is here to make life easier. Set up the printers you want in the icon information and you can select the printer with ease. Once you've got your preferences set, the best place to pop this util is in your WBStartup drawer.

Labels

This is actually a different utility to the one we were originally going to put on. This one prints out small batches of labels to a single addressee. It's ideal for if you want to re-address post. You need to install the "req.library" that's in this directory to your "System libs:" directory. There is an icon that should do this for you.

MiserPrint

Here's a time and paper saving utility for HP Deskjet and compatible users. Taking advantage of the printer's small internal fonts, it allows you to print out up to eight pages of text on one page. If you've got a large

Fastmode

Fastmode is a simple CLI command that could double the speed of your printing. It accepts on or off arguments and will speed up your "parallel.device", as long as your printer can keep up.

Poster Print

No matter how many fonts you've got, the likelihood is that you can't print out large text with any real success. Poster Print is a program designed to let you print out banners and the like, giving you a whole new use for your printer.

TypeWriter

Why would you want to make your printer emulate a typewriter? Well, before you start thinking "Bah, how useless!" consider how many times you've had trouble printing out envelopes or forms or an non-standard printing job. Perhaps now you can see the advantages of having this little beauty.

With a typewriter meter displayed on screen, everything should become much easier.

Drivers

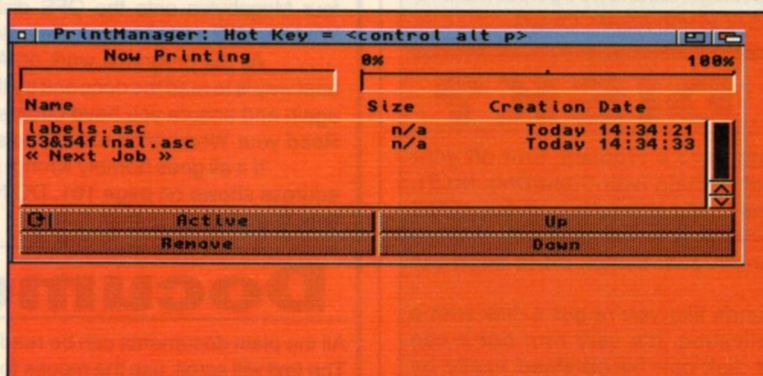
From HP laser to Nec to Oki to ... Yes, there are over seventy printer drivers here for you. So if you've got a printer that doesn't come with support on standard Workbench, then this could be your lucky day. You'll need to view all files as the drivers do not have icons.

General Utilities

Inside this directory is the animet roadmap that wouldn't fit onto **AUI** MAR95a. It compliments this month's Online column, so see that for more information.

SuperDisk scripts

How do we do it? How can six Megs be fitted onto two disks? Well, whilst you were carving your turkey, the **AUI** team was banging its head against the wall, chewing on the doors and making desperate pleas for help from Andy



Take control of your printer with this excellent utility.

Print Manager will work on any WB 2 system or above, but will only deal with text on WB 2. On WB 3, it

text to print out, such as a listing, then this program will save you time and money.

DISK INFORMATION

Expert Users

If you like an easy life, DO NOT read this! Simply install the disks the easy way.

If you want a challenge, read on...

If you are an experienced user, then you may want to install the programs yourself, instead of letting the SuperDisk do all the hard work.

Why? I spent weeks on that script. Isn't it good enough for you? No, seriously, if you want to do this manually, then it will take a bit of effort.

You will need to de-archive the commands.lha from SuperDisk No.51 C: directory. If you don't have the 'lha' command on your system, copy it across or use it directly from the SuperDisk. The command from Shell should read: "Superdisk53:c:\lha x Superdisk51:c:\commands.lha ram:".

In RAM: you'll now find a set of directories (no icons, so view all files). There is a devs drawer which contains the device, icons and mountlist necessary for the Amiga to read SuperDisk No.52 (which is a special disk formatted to 959K, thanks to the diskspare.device supplied by Klaus Deppisch). These need to be copied to your devs drawer. The mountlist needs adding to your own mountlist. DO NOT simply copy it as it would erase your own mountlist.

The Amiga will need rebooting. It can now read the disks formatted to 959K. Cool, eh?

Then simply dearchive the programs you want. Either the whole archive or individual programs. They are stored in a directory called "archives" on both SuperDisks. To see the syntax of "lha", type "lha ?" or "Superdisk51:c:\lha ?" if you are using it from the SuperDisk. Something like "lha x Superdisk53:archives/AUI MAR95b bookcorner/email025.txt ram:" would make sense though.

Because of the way the scripts work, re-using some commands, it might be an idea to de-archive that disk (AUI MAR95b) from the disks first using the normal procedure. That way you'll have more idea what's going to be needed. You could also then doctor those scripts, removing the format command, for example, should you already have blank disks ready.

The scripts did take a great deal of effort (four Megs don't fit on two disks any old how!), so I'd advise only using this method if you understand what you're doing and want to play. Make sure you know what 'Diskspare' is - ideally you'll have last month's SuperDisk with the actual program.

In short, don't come crying to us if you mess up. The installation procedure is as simple as it could be - you decided to spurn it for this (more fun?) path!!!

There you go. Good Luck!

Nobody ever said life would be easy.

Remember: always work on copies of your Workbench disks.

NO SUPERDISK?

Consult your Newsagent! Explain that you know that AUI SuperDisks are irresistible, but that you need them. Seriously though, we cannot be responsible for what happens at the end of a very long chain of different organisations, especially those outside of the country. So what we propose is simple: If you live in

the UK, consult your newsagent as usual. If you are outside the UK, then we'll try our best to help you get the advantages of the SuperDisks. If you don't receive them on the cover, then send us £1 in sterling (International Money Order, etc) to cover postage, etc and we'll get this month's disk to you ASAP. Okay?

FAULTY DISK?

In the VERY unlikely event that you do have a problem, turn off your Amiga and wait 30 seconds, then boot it again with SuperDisk No.51. Ensure that you follow the instructions to the letter. If you have only 1 Meg, then you may find a problem with memory fragmentation if you don't install the disks in numerical order. Just switch off to allow the memory to reset and then start again.

If this doesn't help, then it sounds like you're got a disk with a read/write error on it, caused in duplication. It's very rare but it can happen. Don't worry! A replacement disk can be obtained easily by sending the faulty disk to:

AUI Faulty Disks

Unit 3, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos. G08 8LD

Don't forget to include your name and full postal address in block capitals.

A PLEA

We have gone to every effort to make the SuperDisk easy to use and to ensure that all the programs work on as many systems as possible.

We regret that we cannot take any telephone calls concerning SuperDisk problems. They are just too time consuming and then we wouldn't have time to put the next SuperDisk together for you.

If you do have a problem, try the docs again and refer to your manual, should you need to move any libraries or assign any programs. If you are truly stuck, please write to Amiga Answers.

BBSs

Thanks to Simon Gardner of Burning Chrome BBS on 01428 727060. Much Gratitude to Jimbob, the supportive Sysop of the excellent Waltons' Mountain BBS, on 0181 891 5730. Faulty Towers shouldn't be omitted, available on 01235 535113. If you want to be truly international, then check out the splendid American BBS Smorgasboard, on 205 745 3989.

Readers' Contributions

AUI's SuperDisks are crammed with the cream of Amiga crop. Many of the programs are created especially for us and released into the Public Domain through us. It's you the reader that makes it possible for AUI to continue to share top quality software with tens of thousands of avid Amiga users.

If you've got a masterpiece that you think can cut it with the best, send it to: SuperDisk Contributions, Amiga User International Magazine, Fourth Floor, Building 3, 203 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BW. (NB. This is our new address. Send them here, not to the address mentioned on the SuperDisk.)

It's best for us if you don't use Powerpacker, because we use lha to archive, which is far more efficient. It will also help if you tell us which libraries or fonts your program requires, keeping them to a minimum if possible. So, if you're sending an AMOS program for example, try to avoid the need to have the AMOS library separately. These guidelines make life jolly for everyone.

Happy compiling!

Shareware

Just a brief reminder that some of the programs on our Coverdisk are Shareware. This means that you can try them out, but if you regularly use them you should send a registration fee to the author. Registration fees are between £5 and £20 and sometimes the author will send you the latest version in return. You can send an International Money Order, or preferably a cheque but many authors don't accept cheques if they are outside the UK. If you want to risk sending cash in a registered post, it's up to you. We wouldn't advise it but it's your money...

Compatibility

These SuperDisks will only work on a 2.0+ Amiga with one Meg of Chip RAM or more. If you don't have 2.0 and are still laughuishing the 1.3 or less dimension, we're sorry but the only answer is to upgrade. There's no way we could fit nearly four Megabytes onto the OFS disks and these days most programs are Workbench 2 and above anyway. So if you haven't already, upgrade.

All the programs work on A1200 and most on A500+ and up. The best way is to read the docs and try them out. If they don't work, read the docs again and ensure you have updated any libraries that the program needs. Read your Workbench manual to see how to do this.

If it all goes horribly wrong, please WRITE to Amiga Answers at the address shown on page 101. DO NOT RING; we cannot answers queries over the 'phone.

Documentation

All the plain documents can be read simply by double clicking on their icons. The text will scroll, use the mouse to control it and press Escape to quit. If the docs are in AmigaGuide format, you'll need a computer that can read AmigaGuide files in order to read them without all the nodes showing.

The docs can also be loaded into any WP that reads ASCII, which is just about all of them.

GAMESMITH

The Game Development System

Are you tired of those "BASIC" game development systems? Ready for one that you can really sink your teeth into? Fast Parallax scrolling? No problem. Dual Playfields?? A piece of cake! Multiple viewports with multiple animated objects on independent paths with multiply defined background and object collision detection???? Child's play!



Creating fast parallax scrolling landscapes is easy with the Gamesmith system

Professional game development is made easy with the new GameSmith Development System. Over 3 years in the making, GDS gives you the low level power to create the masterpiece of your dreams in a single, comprehensive, easy to use development system.

Build up your animations graphically in the interactive character animator CITAS and then output in C or Assembler source code.

- ✓ Customise all aspects of the object, including sequence, placement, speed, display method, priority, & object collision detection parameters.
- ✓ Save complex animation sequences out as a single object addressable by the system!
- ✓ Optional custom encryption to protect your work.
- ✓ Fully supports AGA chipset and mode promotion.
- ✓ Hardware level smooth scrolling on a per viewport basis. Fast Parallax scrolling! Independently scroll in dual playfield mode.
- ✓ Custom copper lists. Custom hardware sprites.
- ✓ Over 350 pages of documentation fully describing the system, utility programs, and over 130 library functions.
- ✓ Detailed manual tutorial walks you through the creation of an actual game that exercises all the major components of the system!
- ✓ Extra disks full of commented example source code.
- ✓ Complete animation system with transparent double buffering and prioritised object display.
- ✓ Define custom object-to-object and object-to-background collision detection and response.
- ✓ Automatic placement and animation of multi-sequenced animated objects with a single call.
- ✓ Chain objects. Animating one object animates them all!
- ✓ Automatic virtual space and virtual object handling.
- ✓ Dynamic animation control. Modify on the fly!
- ✓ Complete audio system to make audio playback easy! Automatic load and play of IFF samples. Interrupt driven background sound replay.
- ✓ Easy-to-use, customisable joystick polling routines.
- ✓ Very fast and efficient ILBM picture loader.

The GameSmith Development System fully supports and is compatible with all Amigas including AGA. A C Compiler or 680x0 Assembler is required. From shoot 'em ups to graphic adventures, from intergalactic conquest to strategic simulation, the GameSmith Development System is the perfect solution.

Gamesmith now comes complete with Devpac Lite and a reduced version of Dice C so you can start programming straight out of the box.

Don't let the limitations of yesterday keep you from forging the masterpiece of tomorrow!

Termite

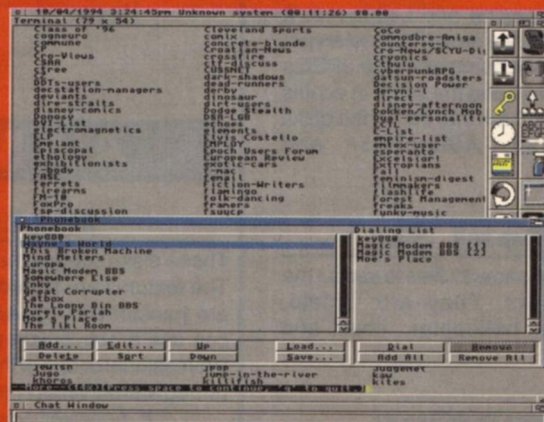
Telecommunications for your Amiga



Afraid of becoming a hedgehog on the Information Super Highway? Don't worry! Termite is so easy to use that even a first time telecommunicator will feel at home. Yet it has all of the power and flexibility to satisfy the most seasoned modem warrior!

Termite is designed to take full advantage of all of the newest features of Workbench 2™ and beyond. It is 100% Amiga Style Guide compliant and provides you with all of the modern user interface features to really enjoy playing in the highway!

- ✓ Speeds from 300 to 115,200 bps.
- ✓ Flexible phone book with unique configurations for each number.
- ✓ Supports Amiga standard XPR libraries allowing you to choose from a wide variety of transfer protocols such as Xmodem, Ymodem, Zmodem, Kermit, and more.
- ✓ Supports Amiga standard XEM external terminal emulations in addition to the built in ANSI and VT-102 terminal emulations.
- ✓ Configurable review buffer with cut and paste editing between any window.
- ✓ The unique script recording function watches your actions and writes complex scripts for you!
- ✓ Flexibility! Termite is so completely configurable that everyone can make it their own dream terminal program!
- ✓ User configurable floating Button Bar! Assign any program function, macro, or ARexx script to any button. Want your own icons? Just assign any IFF image to the button!
- ✓ Automatic call logging. Where you were, for how long, and how much you spent, all saved for you.
- ✓ Configurable text macros.
- ✓ Support for multiple line BBSs.
- ✓ Fully ARexx programmable for complete automation. Assign your scripts to the button bar or install them as a menu option.
- ✓ Multi-tasking chat window. Great for those real time conferences.
- ✓ Completely font and screen sensitive. You choose the font and screen mode and Termite automatically adjusts everything.



the Termite Button Bar

Termite comes complete with a comprehensive manual explaining the operation of every program function including a quickstart tutorial, ARexx programming examples and a telecommunications glossary. We have also set up the button bar with useful, instant access to CIX and other popular BBSs.

Termite (RRP £39.95 inc) and Gamesmith (RRP £99.95 inc) should be available now from all good Amiga stores. In case of difficulty you can order directly from HiSoft...

HiSoft
High Quality Software

The Old School, Greenfield,
Bedford MK45 5DE UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1525 718181
Fax: +44 (0) 1525 713716



AMIGA

User

INTERNATIONAL

Eskelson. The results are the stunning disks controlled by these unusual shell scripts.

As every month, the scripts are provided on this disk for expert users who need to know where some of the files are kept and where to find the libraries that are duplicated as necessary onto the appropriate disks. If you're learning the shell, then they're also a good indication of what's possible with the Amiga OS.

The conversion script that is used to convert the JPEGs from disk **AUMAR95c** to the necessary iffs is not included. You can find this script in "**AUMAR95c:conversion/**" and load it into a WP if you need to see it.

AUI MAR95c

This disk contains the 3D objects for Real 3D, Imagine and Lightwave. It also contains the new JPEG datatype, the XtolBMB2 command, the JPEGs for conversion and the script to do this and convert them into iffs on the disks **AUMAR95d**, **AUMAR95e** and **AUMAR95f**.

Real 3D

You need to show all files to see all the objects here. They are: shield, candabra, helicopter, chair and nighttable.

Imagine

The objects for Imagine (again - show all files) are as follows: swimming pool, brickwork, house, chair and tree.

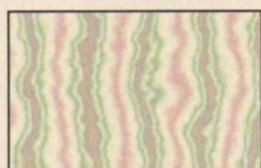
Lightwave

There are objects and scenes supplied here. Show all files, but note that when you open them in Lightwave, you will need to adjust your source path.

The objects are: chair, tree and all required for a house (walls, windows, running boards, roof ends, roof main, door, fence, chimney, attic roof and attic walls).

In addition to these, there are also the macros used in this month's 3D Tips included.

For instructions concerning the JPEG datatype, the JPEGs and



MO1



MO5



MO8



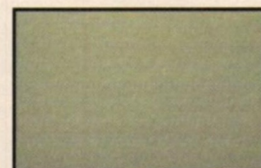
M19



O05



O08



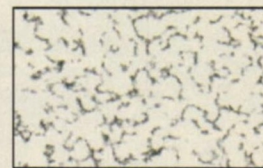
Paper



S02



S04



S18

I
N
D
E
X

Here is an index to the ten textures supplied.

AUI MAR95d-f

Instructions

These disks contain the iff textures for use as you see fit. The textures are stored as JPEGs on the SuperDisk and are transferred onto **AUMAR95c**. To convert them, you can use a conversion program such as Art Department Professional or one of the PD clones, such as ImageStudio (unregistered version on SuperDisk No. 47).

If, however, you're using Workbench 3, which is quite likely for 3D enthusiasts, then we've put the necessary script onto **AUMAR95c** in the conversion drawer. Before you start, you must install the JPEG datatype. To do this, double click on the datatype installation icon. It will use the standard Commodore installer program and install the new datatype for you.

Then, double click on the script and install the disks as it says. If you've got 2 drives, it will want **AUMAR95c**: in df1:. Ideally, you should be running a minimum of an A1200 with 2 drives and a hard drive. If you've not got this

system, then you'll be in for some disk swapping. However, if you're trying to run a 3D program from floppy, what are you doing?!?

Each of the textures will convert to 256K colour hi-res laced iff. The textures have been taken from the extensive archives supplied on Aminet. See the readme files for details.

Should you not have WB 3, and are unpacking them manually, be aware that you can only fit an average of three textures to each disk. You should load the script into a WP and see what it copies to each disk to give you the best idea of how to fit them to disks.

If you're not a 3D user, you may be interested in the textures as backdrops for use in your paint package. In this case, unpack them as suggested or simply load them in, if you're using a package that can handle JPEGs, such as Personal Paint (Supplied with **AUI** February 1993). To give you an idea of their use, you can see two of the textures used as backgrounds on this month's SuperDisks.

AUMAR95c contains the CLI command XtolBMB2, which is used in the script to convert the JPEGs. This command will convert any format that is supported by datatypes to an ILBM. See the docs for the format.

XtolBMB2, read the box for disks **AUMAR95d-f**.

AUI MAR95g

This disk contains the best Doom clone we've seen on the Amiga so far. Forget the commercial attempts, the Pub-

lic Domain is here once more to prove the quality of non-professional programmers.

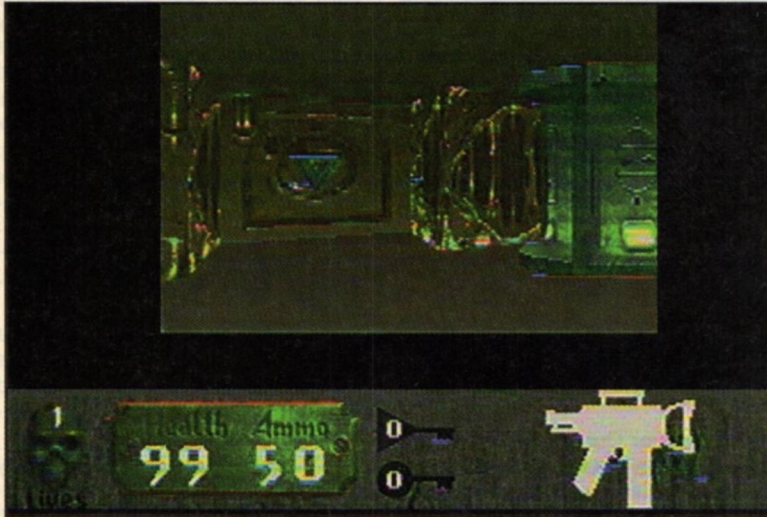
Fears

This game is AGA and therefore requires an A1200 or higher. Simply boot the disk.

Fears is easy to control. Once it's loaded, use the arrow keys to move around (you'll be amazed by the smoothness). The return key opens doors and the space bar fires (but be sparing with that ammo). The guns can be selected with the number keys.

The aim of the game is simple (as Doom is), survive. Try not to be put

SuperDisks No. 53 & No. 54



Blast away with this superb game.

off by the real time rendering going on around you, or that baddie may just finish you off.

This disk contains one huge level to explore, but we're sure you'll be desperate for more. In that case, read the docs which detail how you can get your trigger happy hands on a further ten levels of smooth and silky mayhem.

Dynamite Warriors

This game was leapt upon in the office. For one reason only. It's blinking good.

The aim of the game is to bomb your way around the screen, hopefully taking out the other players and collecting the goodies as you go. Beware



Who says "Doomed to the PC"?

AUI MAR95h

Last but by no means least, the eighth (did we really pack that many on?) disk this month contains two great games.

Simply boot the disk and select the game.

of blowing yourself up though. There are four players and you can play between one and four of them, so get your mates round for this. The computer will play the others.

NB. Graphic corruption does occur on this game on the A1200. Although it plays, it doesn't not look as

good as on the A500+ (well, we had to make up for you getting the Fears game, didn't we?)

That's it, bombs away!

Peg It!

The second exclusive for this month's SuperDisks: this fifty level game was written especially for **AUI**. Based on the simple solitaire game, this smooth number is as addictive as Lemmings.

To begin with, things are easy. You must leap your men over one another until only one is left. Each time one leaps another, the latter will

switches, teleports, one way systems, voids, trampolines and heaven knows what else awaiting you.

Level codes are supplied to make your life easier. This game is one of the best we've seen. Much gratitude to Paul Burkey for writing and supplying it to us. Should you finish these fifty levels, another one hundred and fifty can be obtained from him for a measly three pounds. See the docs for details.

This game can also be run from Workbench by double clicking on its icon. Should you wish to read the docs from Workbench, you'll need to



Jump to it men. This puzzle needs brain power.

disappear. Your mouse controls your men.

After the first levels, things start to get a mite complicated, with bombs,

change the default tool in the icon information to ":c/least" or a text viewer of your choice. (Deftool 2 can help - see AUI MAR95a). **AUI**

SuperDisk No. 50 Colonial Conquest II Save Games

A few readers have had problems saving their game on the excellent Colonial Conquest II, supplied on SuperDisk No. 50. The save facility is not disabled, as some people concluded. This is the full game. We assumed people had experience of the AMOS save requester before, but "never assume anything"!

For those left confused, here's what to do. You need a separate formatted disk. Call it "Saves" or anything that takes your fancy. When you want to save a game, go to the requester, insert your save disk and set the directory your saving to as "Saves" (or whatever you called your disk), inserting the name in the first flashing line and use "Set Dir", then insert the name of your save game in the second line and save the game.

Do the same for loading your game.

May your colonies never lack a power supply.

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Want to be a Spielberg on your Amiga?

Want to be a Spielberg on your computer?

Silica have launched the Amitek Fusion Genlock for people who are on a limited budget (isn't everyone?) but who want to experiment with desktop video without buying expensive studio equipment.

It enables the mixing of Amiga graphics, such as titles, captions and animation, with live video from VCR, LaserDisc or video camera input.

Powered through the Amiga, so an external power supply is not needed, the back of the unit gives free access to all connections for Amiga In,

RGB Monitor Out and Video In/Out. The control layout has a single vertical hardware fader and three setting controls for Picture Only, Graphics Only and Overlay. Price £99.00.

Amitek Fusion comes complete with free Scala HT-100 program disks.

**Contact: Silica Systems,
1-4 The Mews, Hatherley Rd.,
Sidcup Kent. DA14 4DX.**

Elsa on the case

ELSA's investigators have found yet another fraudster in their quest to stem "the estimated £778.5 million lost to leisure software piracy." (And just how do they get that figure, we hear you cry? Ah that's another mystery!) This time their victim was a bulletin board operator who has been fined £500 and had £3000 of equipment confiscated.

The Krypt bulletin board contained large amounts of Amiga software which users could copy over the telephone in exchange for a copy of a game of their own. The operator, Robert Butler, from Birmingham, described as 'unemployed' - well, he is now without his equipment (we hope!) - pleaded guilty to two specimen charges of distributing copyright software.

Hi-Tech's SX-1

Robert Maynard, of Paravision, a very nice and forceful guy who took over the SX-1 Amiga CD 32 add-on from MicroBotics, has tragically been taken seriously ill and given up his company and its activities. A company called Hi-Tech are announcing to everyone in Amiga-land that they are now in full-scale production of the SX-1. They have told AUI how excited they are that they have the original manufacturer of the board and box producing them. Even more exciting, to them at any rate, is the acquisition of several of the former Paravision technical and design staff members available to answer all questions. Even those relating to the SX-1 we presume!

Hi-Tech have also had time among all the excitement, to complete the development of the Puma and Panther products, previously announced by Paravision.

If you need these products they would like to hear from you as according to Hi-Tech "anticipatory orders will only bring these products to the market sooner". Customisation is also on offer as they "model their production upon your demands". Oh really?

**Contact: Steve Zapp, CEO, Hi-Tech
Component Distributors Inc.,
Tel: 805 681 9961.**

It's Funtimental

Do you remember the Shoe People? No? Well, the market is just about to be reminded of those peculiar cartoon characters with the release of the first three of nine, yes, we said nine, adventures released as video CDs. Hard on the heels (Ouch! Sorry about that!) of The Shoe People - Their First Ad-

venture, Their Second Adventure and Their Third Adventure, MPEG (The Multimedia Products (Entertainment) Group Ltd) will also be releasing the Wombles of Wimbledon Common to boot.

More old hat you may say but if it the old ones work don't fix them!. The video CDs (each priced £12.99)



Combi Centre Workstation

Premier Developments are offering the Combi-Centre at £49.99. The unit has been designed to group together the CD32, SX1 Expansion, monitor, keyboard, disk drive and other peripherals.

The sliding shelf, they told AUI, facilitates the opening of the top loading CD32 and in anticipation of the return to the market of the A1200 the Combi Centre has sufficient clear-

ance under this sliding shelf to accept the A1200's height.

It is supplied in FPSA (flat pack self assembly) and should be available "in all good computer retail outlets shortly."

If you haven't a 'good' outlet near you, contact:

Premier Direct: 4 Third Avenue, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE17 2SR. Tel: 0487 823684.

Super Triple CD Rom

Used with the Squirrel SCSI interface on the A600/A1200 the Super Triple offers CD32 compatibility so you can play the majority of CD32 games with full CD audio. This new CD ROM system from Squirrel Storage Systems is a 3.4 speed drive with 190ms access time and 3.4x, 2x and 1x rotational speed. Featuring PhotoCD (multisession) compatible with the new Kodak PhotoCD it supports CD-DA (to play audio off the CD directly through the computer).

The SuperTriple has auto-sensing power supply, SCSI in/out 50-way connectors, stereo audio out sockets, stereo audio jack at the front, SCSI ID selector and is supplied with a SCSI terminator.

Contact: HiSoft, The Old School, Greenfield, Bedford. MK45 5DE. Tel: 1525 718181.

for Children ages 3 and up, are manufactured in White Book format making them compatible with the CD32 and PC ROM, provided the hardware is fitted with the relevant video card or cartridge.

Contact: MPEG, 218 Bradley Road, Batley West Yorkshire WF17 6JF. Tel: 0924 457138.



The Shoe People - kicking off on Video CD



US Robotics - making multistandard credit card sized.

Multi Standard PCMCIA Modem

Data communications Company U.S. Robotics has brought out a new high speed addition to the range of PCMCIA credit card size modems with improved throughput and wider fax compatibility.

The WorldPort Dual Standard Cellular PCMCIA Fax provides 16,800bps data throughput on dial-up lines, using U.S. Robotics' own HST protocol, as well as V.32bis, the international standard for 14,400bps transmission. The product also offers both EIA Class 1 and Class 2.0 fax at up to

14,400bps making it compatible with a wide range of third party PC fax software packages. The new modem also offers a mobile data option for up to 12,000bps throughput over analogue cellular networks using the HST Cellular protocol.

Priced £299.00 with five year warranty and free lifetime technical support.

Contact: U.S. Robotics Ltd., 224 Berwick Avenue, Slough, Berkshire SL1 4QT. Tel: 0753 811180.

Rev up your Amiga

The new Blizzard 1230-III Turbo Accelerator Memory Board is claimed to be the highest performing 68030 accelerator for the A1200, with either a rapid 40 MHz 68EC030 CPU, or a faster still (unless you know better) 50MHz 68030 with MMU (Memory Management Unit). The 1230-III offers further expansion options with its integral Fast Expansion Bus for add-on modules such as the Blizzard 1230-III SCSI-2 Controller. With the single industry standards SIMM Socket, it can provide 32Mb of 32 bit fast ram. Whew!

Gordon Harwood are substantiating the claims through a series of tests which showed:

Standard A500-A600-A1500-

A2000 (unexpanded) 0.55 MIPS
Standard A1200 (Unexpanded) 1.33 MIPS

A1200 with Blizzard 1220/4 28MHz 68EC020 4Mb Accelerator - 5.05 MIPS.

A1200 with Blizzard 1230-III 40MHz 68EC030 Accelerator with 4Mb - 7.06 MIPS

A1200 with Blizzard 1230-III 50MHz 68030 Accelerator with 4Mb - 8.84 MIPS

Standard A4000 030 (2Mb Chip RAM & 4Mb Fast RAM) - 4.43 MIPS. (Whew again!)

Contact: Gordon Harwood Computers, New Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7BP. Tel: 1773 836781.

NewsBytes

US Gold, Microprose, Team 17, Mindscape, Krisalis and Kixx have agreed to put the Zappo logo on all their CD32 Zappo CD-ROM drive compatible software. "Amiga peripherals are selling brilliantly and the Zappo CD-ROM remains our best seller", said Don Carter, ZCL's chairman.

The bill for the \$31 million Leonardo da Vinci manuscript recently auctioned

has been picked up by Bill! (Microsoft's billionaire owner) Gates who has been revealed as the mystery buyer of the manuscript sold recently at Christie's in New York. He can afford it.

Allan Hall, reporter for the Daily Mirror is a new man! He tested out the ZyberFantasy Ride VR sex machine and claims he went in a flesh and blood boy and came out a computer age man! He said that Cybersex could be the answer to Aids, lawyers and mothers-in-law! And anybody, like a certain Vic Witton, fond of visiting that popular Chinese city, Wan-King too!

"Addams Family Values" has been released on Video CD from Philips. It was the second movie to be released on the same day as the sell-through VHS cassette version, the first was "The Firm."

Cyber Surfer is new magazine focusing on, they say, "the synergy occurring between entertainment and technology: music, sports, television, movies and pop culture." Oh really? **From Starlog Group Publishing, 475 Park Avenue South, New York NY 10016. Tel: 0101 212 689 2830.**

ICPUG Question Time

ICPUG South East Group, part of the Independent Commodore Products Users Group, is organising a Question and Answer evening at the Library, Church Road, Biggin Hill, Kent on Thursday 16th March 1995.

Members and visitors will be able to put their computing questions to a panel of experts drawn from the members themselves. As the membership of ICPUG South East includes users of the Amiga and the PC, the panel will cover both these machines.

ICPUG are planning to have the panel include professional consultants, such as Harry Broomhall and Tom Cranstoun, Jolyon Ralph from Almathera, and ICPUG's Amiga PD Librarian Alan Pfeil. The question master will be Roger Spreckley.

Visitors are welcome. The charge for non members is 50p.

Contact: The Membership Secretary, Len Beard. Tel: 0689 813616.

Ramiga Grows

The Amiga Centre of Excellence, Ramiga, are distributing an increasing number of products ranging from multimedia, audio, video graphics and animation. These include Deskstation Technology's Raptor Plus and Raptor II, DKB (Europe)'s Cobra 030 (Accelerator board for A1200) and DKB 060 Accelerator Card, Intelligent Design's Amiga Accounting System and RGB Inc's Amilink video editing system.

The products, Ramiga told AUI, are growing in popularity for corporate, educational, medical and scientific use. Once again, it shows that for serious use, the rumours of the Amiga's death are greatly exaggerated. Not so sure for games though...For details of their full list of top line Amiga products, **Contact: Ramiga International, Stablau Rin, Pentrefoelas, Clwyd LL24 4LE. Tel: 0690 770304.**

Macro's Own System

MacroSystems GmbH of Witten, Germany have announced that they are developing their own computer, the DraCO which is based on the Motorola 68060. For operating systems, the Amiga OS will be standard and UNIX and UNIX clone support is expected.

Macro decided to take matters into their own hands they told AUI, because of the lack of Amiga custom chips. Any software program that is system compatible programmed and runs on Amiga graphics boards such as the Retina and the Picasso, they say, will work in DraCO. This includes Light Wave, AdPro, Image F/X and most other professional software package. The five Zorro II slots allow the use of the Toccata, Emplant, Ethernet and most other hardware boards. However, any hardware requiring the custom chip set won't run in DraCO including 880k floppies, genlocks and the Toaster.

The first release of DraCO is intended to be a full size tower with a minimum of 4Mb expandable to 128Mb of on board 72pin SIMM Modules. It sounds wonderful and could be a very attractive piece of kit but no price yet and no delivery date either...

Contact: MacroSystem Computer Trading GmbH, Friedrich-Ebert-Str. 85, 58454 Witten, Germany. Tel: 02302 80391.



Big keys for little people.

Keys for Kids

KCS have come up with the answer, they claim, for children who have difficulty using computers because they find the QWERTY lay out too confusing. The Big-Keys alphabet keyboard has been specifically designed for very young children getting their first use of computers.

"The Big-Keys is not a toy but an important accessory for your computer which will help your children gain a head start in the world of technology in a productive and fun way", say KCS. Big-Keys has a small panel of adult control keys for system control, and

with the other characters and hieroglyphics removed there is less danger of children accidentally accessing important stored information.

Big-Keys will function as a standard keyboard and has no compatibility requirement for software with straightforward plug-and-go technology. The keyboard, priced £85.00 works with IBM compatible computers but there may be something on the horizon for the Amiga.

Contact: KCS Ltd., PO Box 700, Southampton SO17 1LQ. Tel: 01703 584314.

Ultra SCSI and More

Three major disk drive manufacturers, Hewlett-Packard, Quantum and Seagate have announced that they will actively support and promote the 40 Mbyte/second Ultra SCSI and 100 Mbyte/second Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop (FC-AL) data storage interface standards. The companies believe that if these interfaces become standards in the industry, it will bring cost and performance advantages to everyone interested in computer storage. (And aren't we all?)

The three hard disk drive companies agreed that the long term direction for SCSI will be FC-AL over other serial interfaces such as SSA. FC-AL is the subset of the Fibre Channel network systems interconnection standard adopted by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

The recommended standard is a serial data storage interface designed for high-end, high throughput applications including storage for mainframes, supercomputers, disk array subsystems and enterprise system servers. The first generation of FC-AL provides a path to much higher performance in addition to offering better flexibility and better performance than other serial storage interfaces, say HP.

Ultra SCSI will serve as an interim solution for customers who want additional performance over traditional parallel SCSI, but are not yet ready to make the switch to a new serial interface. Ultra SCSI is an extension of the parallel SCSI standard that is designed to keep up with the throughput requirements of microcomputers, workstations, network file servers and disk array subsystems. New disk drives incorporating Ultra SCSI or FC-AL interfaces should be arriving later this year.

And if Commodore - sorry Amiga International - want to be up there with the big players then they are going to have to think about incorporating standards like these in future Amigas.

"Quotes" of the month

Intel's problems with the bug in their Pentium chip are, naturally, causing comment and concern

"There are so many other things that can go wrong with computer hardware and software that, at least, we ought to be able to rely on the basic arithmetic."

Cleve Moler, chairman and chief scientist at the MathWorks to worried users considering yoking a Pentium to his company's MATLAB statistical analysis package.

Stephen Smith, Pentium-engineering manager said *"If you're one of the people designing nuclear reactors you should talk to us"*. Smith also promised that there was no risk of catastrophe if any engineers remained unaware of the problem. *"Our analysis shows that won't happen - bridges won't fall down"*, he said.

Not all users have been soothed by Intel's pronouncements however. *"I won't go near a Pentium machine until this bug is fixed and I hear it in the mass media from someone other than Intel"*, said Scott Eliason, a statistical researcher at the University of Iowa.

The problem appears to be partly in the minds of the users with estimates that the bug will only affect users once in 14 years or so. However, Intel are now, after initially trying to quieten down users' worries, offering to replace anyone's Pentium chips. And if you are building a bridge or in the nuclear business, you might do well to make sure your calculations don't get bugged up...

Printers with HDs

Hewlett Packard have introduced a new class of laser printers as a fast desktop size printer for mid volume printing environments. The 16 page per minute HP LaserJet 4V and HP LaserJet 4MV printers offer advanced networking capabilities, 600 x 600 dots per inch print resolution and accommodate printing on a wide range of paper sizes, including letter, legal and A3. They are also the first HP printers to offer the option of an internal hard disk. Is this the beginning of a trend?

Contact: Hewlett-Packard Ltd., Cain Road, Bracknell, Berks. RG12 1HN. Tel: 0344 369222.

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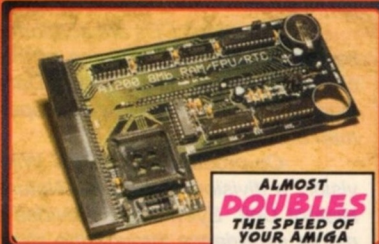
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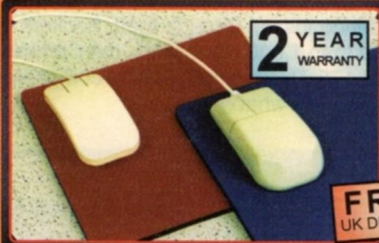
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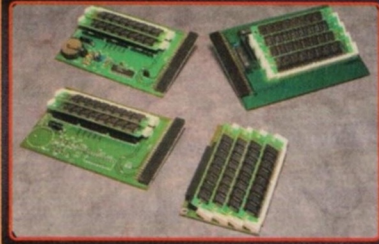
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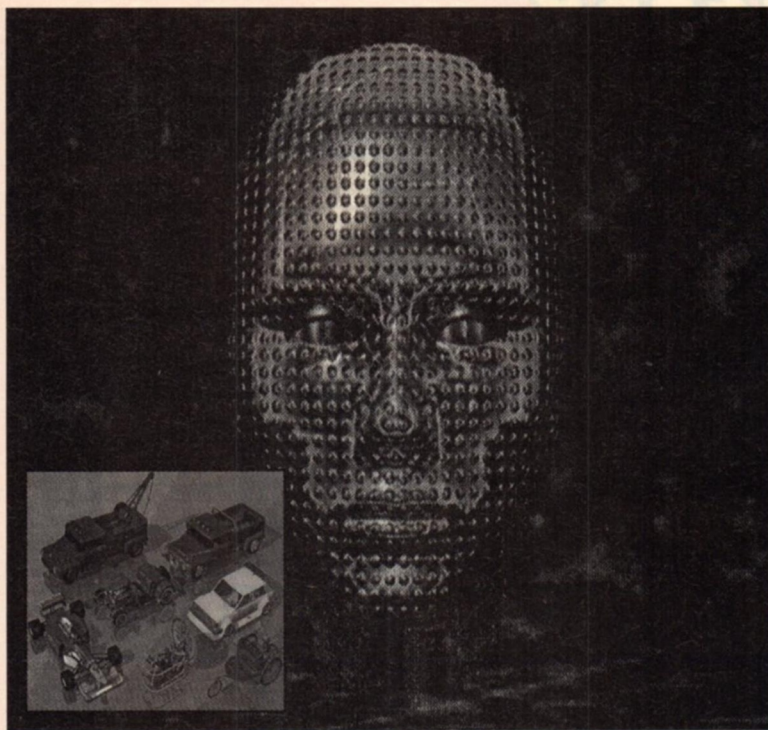
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Travel the Imagine way.

Imagine 3.0 Enhancer CD-ROM

This Enhancer CD, from Germany, is designed for use in broadcast graphics and animation to give the work the 'final touch', according to distributors Gordon Harwood Computers.

Featuring 12 high-end traffic vehicles including a jeep, motorcycle and time machine, (a standard traffic vehicle of course!) the program has been developed by Imagine artists for use in TV and publishing.

There are 25 3D-fonts including all special letters with 10 high end

backdrop images in different sizes and formats (IFF, TIFF) for DTP and video production.

Based on a gallery of the work of German artist Horst Kolodziejczyk, there are 8 different 'Reflectionmaps' for use with metallic objects without ray-tracing and one animated 'Reflectionmap' for use in animation. All this for £50.00.

Contact: Gordon Harwood Computers, New Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7BP. Tel: 01773 836781.

Another Amiga?

No, it's not from Commodore or even Amiga International, but a mysterious story has surfaced about a new Amiga - the 2200.

Ex-Commodore engineer, Dave Haynie called the official A2200 "So wrong it couldn't be forced on anyone". Yet though the new A2200 was the subject of an ad in Amiga World last December no-one seems to know anything about it. Priced at \$1199 - about £800 - for the machine without a monitor, the A2200 is supposed to have 4Mb RAM and built in CD-ROM Controller. But the catch is

it only has one expansion slot with optional expansion cards. Even more mystery, where would you put them?

One explanation seems to be that it is a CD32 motherboard transferred over to a PC case with addons, and a separate keyboard. It is a mystery but one that no doubt the new owners of the Amiga technology will probably like to solve. In the meantime if anybody has actually seen this machine or better still has acquired one we'd love them to get in touch. It sounds more like a piece of vapourware to us.!

Interactive Sharks

A UK film company is predicting that its entry into the games market will 'revolutionise' the industry. (Now where have we heard that before?) S.H.A.R.C Squad (Sea Hunt and Rescue Crew) is supposed to be the world's first ever interactive movie, say Compute a Miracle, the firm behind the project. Will it take a miracle or will the firms C A M are claiming to be talking to - including Commodore (who?) - provide the bundling deals and publishing rights they need to make it a success?

Shooting of the multi-million dollar project, under the supervising direction of Michael (Death Wish) Winner, will run over 12 weeks and will include sequences for the game as well as the movie. Both are planned to be released on CD32, CD-Rom and MPEG in July 1995.

3D Animals

Three of Dorling Kindersley's award winning Eyewitness series nature programmes - Shark, Horse and Cat - are now available from CD Vision for £9.99 each.

The Video CDs are supported by the simultaneous release of four classic cartoons - Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck & Friends, Popeye and Superman on VHS video.

Co-produced with BBC Wildvision, a division of the BBC Natural History Unit, Eyewitness provides a nature experience through the sharp pictures of the animals, each on a white background and explored from different angles in three dimensions.

The wildlife footage from all over the world is supplemented with information, anecdotes and humour.

Computer Fraud Up

The Audit Commission has reported that computer fraud is on the increase, with 36 per cent of companies suffering losses through theft, hackers or virus attacks. Through surveys with more than 1,000 companies, the Commission found that the average loss was £28,170. Despite that, 60% of companies had no security awareness training program. (A what?)



French Drop in the Ocean!

French international conglomerate Chargeurs, has bought a multi-million dollar minority slice in the UK games company, Ocean. The British company say they will use the cash injection to launch new products which will be based on CD-ROM technology and to expand their sales and marketing operations in Europe and America.

Ocean has in the past beaten US and Japanese rivals to win the computer games licences for movies

such as Top Gun and Batman and has spin off games from Jurassic Park and the Flintstones.

Chargeurs is an entertainment to textiles group, whose main media interests include film production and distribution, cinema, television and the development of interactive educational programs.

This is another step in the death of the independent games company - on both sides of the Atlantic and now

the Channel. Why does such a successful company like Ocean feel the need for big money partners?

Because, as one leading games company boss said recently, these days just to start the creation of a top game you need to put aside £500,000. And even Ocean hasn't got that sort of cash to splash around for many games. So, entrez les Francaises. (£20 million worth!)

Learning from Talking Computers

Ansyst has announced AcceleRead AccleWrite to help teach reading and writing as a comprehensive guide to the Talking Computer Project. The project, which originated in Somerset, uses accelerated learning techniques to teach reading and writing particularly for children with dyslexia or other learning difficulties.

iAnsyst, who have been specialising in training and educational software for the last 12 years, see AcceleRead, AccleWrite and the whole Talking Project as "the most exciting development in teaching reading and writing since chalk and the slate".

Using talking word processors and carefully structured phonic-based sentences for about six hours work spread over a four week period, children have achieved remarkable improvements in reading and writing skills and listening memory, according to iAnsyst.

The AcceleRead AccleWrite guide gives teachers and parents full instructions on how to run the project using off-the-shelf word processors and equipment for Amigas.

Contact: iANSYST Ltd., Omnibus Building, 41 North Road, London N7 9DP. Tel: 0171 607 5844.

Grippy



Cashing in on fetishes for a grippy bottom mouser..

Speak to me!

A CD32 which communicates with every Amiga? Eureka! We hear you cry! Yes, it is Eureka's Communicator which is claimed to allow the CD32 to be used as Intelligent 2-way CD-ROM drive.

Communicator can be used in the normal way as a CD ROM or to upload files to CD32, or you can view PhotoCD pictures on CD32 in 16.7 million colours, make your own presentations with CD audio and CD video tracks or view Amiga picture CDs. Wow!

With hardware protection against power surges and short circuit, Scala CD audio and CD video control, the Communicator has full MIDI interface included. For CD32, A4000, A3000 and A2000.

Contact: Eureka, Adsteeg 10, 6191 PX Beek(L), Netherlands. Tel: 046 370800.

bottom mat

We all like grippy bottoms don't we? The Mat makers are cashing in on our fetishes with a selection of mice mats. Well, not so much mice mats, more pig, frog or owls. (Don't owls eat mice?)

For the deeply perverted there is the chocolate dream, while sexists will opt for two's company!

With Mat-ress backs, the mats are claimed to have 'original grunge-

free, fast track surfaces', and are CFC and HFC free. Too good to use? All the mats are clear bagged on header card hangers with Euroslots and have full-length card backers for shelf and bin display, or any other use you can think of.

Contact: The Mat, The Data Business Ltd., 3 Bankside, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 1JE. Tel: 0865 842224.

WYSIWYG or Is It?

So the camera never lies? Huh! Don't bank on it as the latest generation of image editing software makes it possible to alter photographs digitally so well it is impossible to spot the change.

The technology is creating an entirely new image-editing industry but is proving a nightmare for the police when using photos as evidence. Take the recent O.J. Simpson case for instance. Was it him in the photograph or had it been digitally altered?

Time Magazine raised the question when critics said the altered picture made him look menacing. Even

if any photos presented in evidence in court have not been altered, could not the defendant say they had?

As fast as technology is developed to help bring criminals to justice - and we have all seen video pictures of thieves in action - some counter invention negates it all. Watch out then if you are intending to go to court. We have heard of a situation where the husband has been edited out and another man superimposed and used in evidence of the wife's affair! Gary Fenton does this sort of thing all the time! Play around with pictures we mean!

Amos Role Playing

Classic Amos Basic, by Dicon Peeke, may be worth taking a peek at if you want to know more about writing role playing adventures. The book gives tips, ideas and is based on the role playing game 'The Black Tarot' which comes on disk to explain programming and procedures. Also included is a copy of the New Amazing Tome Junior. This Amiga program allows games writers to generate huge maps using very little memory, according to the publishing house, Kuma.

Screens of graphics are available to cut out and use as well as tile banks, music, icons and bobs. There is a program that tells a different story each time it is run and a program that generates different characters for you to load into the game. All the programs are listed with comments.

Contact: Kuma Books Ltd., 12 Horseshoe Park, Pangbourne, Berks. Tel: 0734 844335.

Universal Device Driver

Fujitsu Europe Ltd. have announced the launch of the Universal Device Driver (UDD), a software programme which, they say, eliminates SCSI-compatibility problems for users of magneto-optical disks, according to the company.

Adam Harris, general manager at Fujitsu Europe, told **AUI** that in theory, MO disks can be read on any MO drive, regardless of the manufacturers involved. However the SCSI interface adaptors, which are needed to fit magneto-optical drives to most

computers, do not always produce data in a compatible format. "Setting compatibility standards for MO media is fine, but the industry needs to ensure that SCSI-compatibility also exists. By introducing UDD, we are giving our users a peace of mind that they will be able to read MO disks, no matter which manufacturer's hardware they use", he said.

Contact: Fujitsu Europe Ltd., 2 Longwalk Road, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex. UB11 1AB. Tel: 0181 573 4444.

Amiga CD Critical Zone

In spite of there being a dearth of buyable Amigas, Silica are offering the new Amitek Critical Zone pack, featuring the CD32 with 7 entertainment titles on CD.

Priced £249.00, the CD32 can now be upgradable to the power

and features of the A1200. The bundle includes Cannon Fodder, Project X, Liberation, Ultimate Body Blows, Microcosm, Oscar and Diggers.

Contact: Silica, 1-4 The Mews, Hatherley Road, Sidcup Kent. DA14 4DX. Tel: 0181 309 1111.

CD-ROM Revved Up

Matsushita has revealed their CD-ROM drive that reads disks at quadruple speed, and can also write, erase and rewrite up to 650 megabytes of data onto optical disks. Now isn't that what we've all been waiting for?

Matsushita has received or applied for 88 international patents on the drive's 'phase change' recording technique, which reversibly alters the structure of the disk. They say users can transfer data from CD-ROM onto disk, edit the data, and read it at almost the same speed as from the CD-ROM.

Matsushita is likely to start selling the new drive this year, probably under the Panasonic label. The new drive which uses 120mm disks, is likely to be priced at around £630.00.

Panasonic Portable CD

Panasonic have a very attractive notebook computer with internal 12cm CD-ROM drive. The CF-41 has a 10.4" TFT active matrix colour screen in a 'rugged and durable' (they claim) magnesium LCD cabinet. There are built in stereo speakers and CD viewer software is preloaded. The PCMCIA interface accepts Type II and Type III cards and the 12cm CD-ROM drive gives the package multimedia on the move!

The RRP is around £3500. We know an Editor who would like one for his birthday - and so would we!



A sexy little CD notebook from Panasonic.

MIXING IT WITH STUDIO

The MS 2000 Micro Studio has been designed to enable seamless mixing of computer graphics and video images, so its makers, CTV Multimedia told **AUI**.

Micro Studio has two video inputs, either Composite or S-VHS, to be mixed, keyed or wiped to each other or to a computer generated in real time. The output is then sent to VCR and monitor in Composite and S-VHS.

Micro Studio has eight wipe patterns, together with the ability to fade between video input and computer images. Using third party pres-

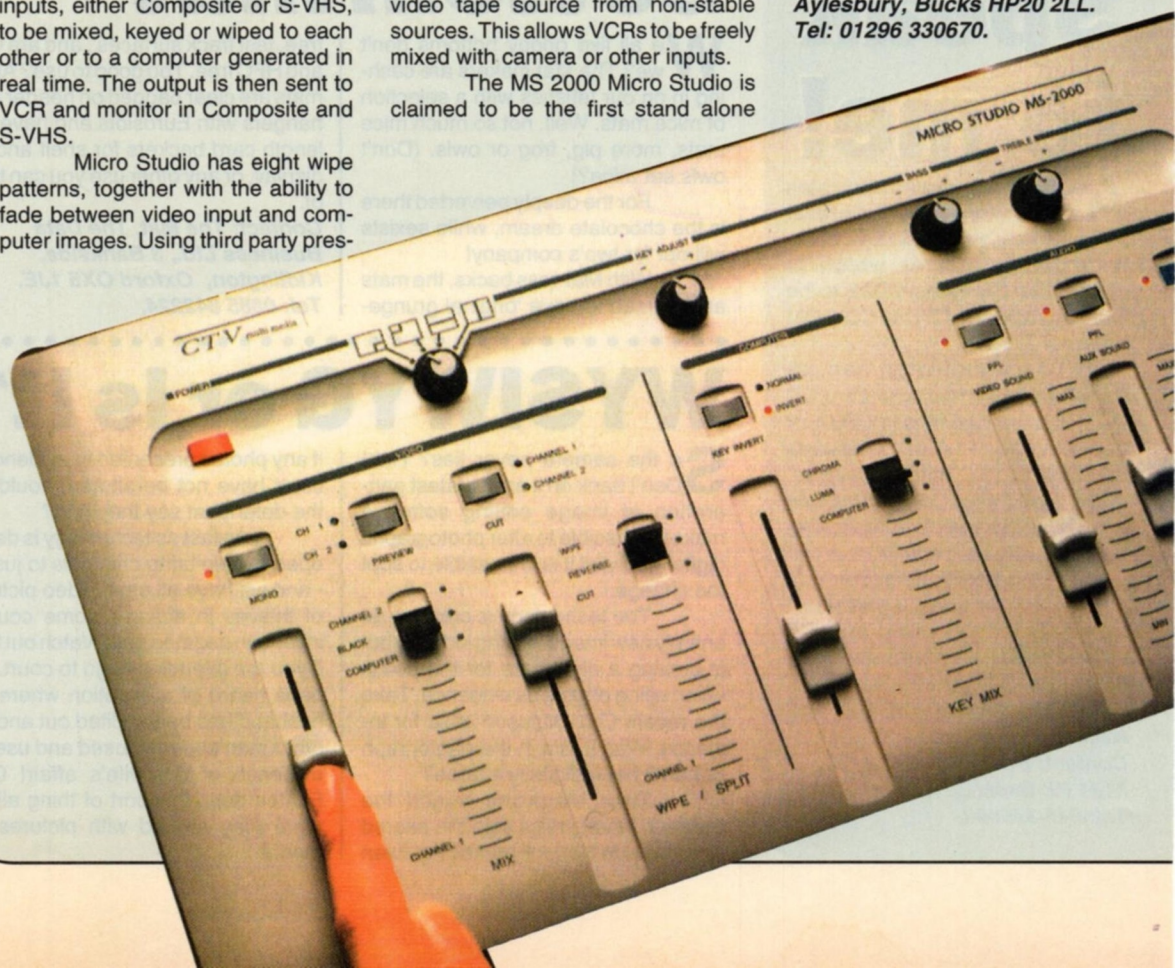
entation software enables, they say, the integration of thousands of wipes and mix effects when mixed with keying transitions.

The optional on board, Time Base Corrector (TBC) synchronises video tape source from non-stable sources. This allows VCRs to be freely mixed with camera or other inputs.

The MS 2000 Micro Studio is claimed to be the first stand alone

computer, video and audio mixer, allowing computer generated graphics to be mixed with two video inputs and stereo audio.

Contact: CTV Multi Media, Litton House, 52-56 Buckingham Street, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 2LL. Tel: 01296 330670.



PUBLIC MULTI MEDIA

Videotron has unveiled the UK's first public business multimedia service - a PC based business television and information service. It offers video, voice, text, data and graphics to customers via a single connection to a desktop computer.

In Comes IntOS

IntOS is an Intuition extension for AMOS, AMOS Profesional and AMOS/AMOS pro compiler. Featuring over 120 commands to utilise the Amiga's Intuition System, it can be used, the creators told AUI, to create gadgets, windows, screens and menus as used in Workbench. Creating professional business applications using Amos can be achieved with 3D look user interfaces. Forget 'C' and 'Blitz Basic' say OTM 2000 Publications (well, they would, wouldn't they?), "Amos is now a true application and utility development language."

IntOS needs Kickstart 2 or greater, 1MB memory, AMOS or AMOS Profesional and comes with an instruction manual and example programs. Price £29.95.

Contact: OTM Publications & Promotions Ltd., 5 Albert Road, Tamworth Staffs. B79 7JN. Tel: 0827 312302.

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07 Jul 94	INTERAC ATM WITHDR	\$101.50-	\$98.50
10 Jul 94	INTERAC ATM WITHDR	\$51.50-	\$47.00

Get straight into your account via the Amiga CD 32.

Banking on CD32

TVI Interactive Systems of Vancouver in Canada has introduced the TVI Modem/Remote external 2400 baud modem which provides the CD32 entertainment system with telecommunications capabilities. TVI is a group of programmers, artists and technologists who develop interactive multimedia based solutions for clients in banking, advanced communications and entertainment.

The TVI is a small lightweight and compact unit designed to complement the CD32 case design. The TVI Modem/Remote also allows navigation of the system using a custom infra-red remote control. TVI development tools are also used in creating Windows-based software and porting to other systems.

In conjunction with VanCity, a Canadian financial institution, TVI have been involved in a two month pilot test

of Teleview, the new home banking system which uses a standard TV, telephone line, CD ROM player and a hand held infra red remote control device. The trial took place in Vancouver and tested the statement review, bill payments and transactions.

TVI told AUI that the initial testing they have made has had a very positive result and they are going into other areas of the financial institutions activities. They and their banking-style collaborators see this as a major application for the CD 32 which they think provides an ideal low cost but very effective delivery system for this kind of application. They are hoping that once it is up and running in a full-service way in Vancouver, that other countries may be interested. We understand that the MBO team of Amiga International have already indicated that they could get involved.

PremierVision Multimedia

The multimedia authoring house, PremierVision tell us they specialise in music, graphics, broadcast animation and compositing and designing interactive CDs. (That's all, Andrew Bishop? What do you do with your other hand. No, don't tell us!) As they are distributors too, they told AUI that their own favourite viewing at the moment is the spectacular range of LightWave training videos (a set of 5) featuring NewTek's Lee Stranahan (See Wil Mobberley's A Day in the Life of Lee in the February AUI).

The Lightwave Essentials videos have five titles - Modeler Part 1, Modeler Part 2, Camera & Lighting Techniques, Displacement Mapping, Morphing & Bones and Surfaces & Textures. Even if you are considering getting LightWave, PremierVision say, these videos will give you the best idea you could get of the talents of the this

super program. PremierVision also distributes Humanoids, a collection of four detailed hierarchical human models (man, strong man, woman and child. What about a strong woman? We've got them!), with morphing features for use in LightWave, Imagine and 3D Studio.

Humanoids includes facial expression, limb movements, gesturing, grasping and digitised toes. With 50 page manual on morphing and hierarchical features.

A couple of things like this from PremierVision and you're in business as a videographer pro, and then comes your first million and an Oscar thrown in too! For the first steps on the road to fame and fortune,

Contact: Premier Multimedia Ltd, The Foundry, 156 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8EN. Tel: 0171 721 7050.

Junior Essentials

One program that has been out for a little while may not have received as much coverage as it deserves is Junior Essentials.

Yet Junior Essentials from the tried and tested 10 out of 10 company is probably one of the most comprehensive educational programs around. Covering History, Geography, Science, Arithmetic, Spelling, Grammar and French - (to name a few) - Junior Essentials encourages logical thought in a cleverly disguised way, through six games.

This one seems to have slipped in without getting noticed but for kids at that level it looks really useful. Watch out for the review in April's AUI.

Games Help Learning?

Computer and video games can have a strong and positive impact upon the development of children according to Professor Stephen Heppell, head of ULTRALAB, Anglia Polytechnic University's learning technology research centre.

But, he says, parents need to get more involved to ensure that their children obtain the most from computer and video games.

"The challenge to parents is for them to help children see that the approach they use when playing computer and video games may be used elsewhere," he said.

In addition, Professor Heppell believes that computer and video games can have an important effect on the socialisation of children, belying the image of a generation of loners playing games.

So it's death to the computer-games-playing nerd image and all the shoot 'em up addicts are going on to Oxford for a first class degree...

Oh really?

Hand and eye coordination maybe helped, but can you see Dad and Mum standing over Wayne while he bangs away or they bang away to show him how...

Sorry, perhaps we should rephrase that. While Wayne gets into Junior Essentials? Try telling that to someone who's spent £50 on Mario or Sonic the hedgehog...

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Wall to wall help from the Amiga.

ColourVision at Home

Thinking of changing the colour of your bricks, floors, roofing, or carpets? Naturally, it's that time of year when we all look at our brickwork and say - "Yep, time for a change. Let's knock the place down and start over."

Colourvision create custom graphic boards or use standard computer equipment - which means the Amiga - for tailor made solutions for customers to visualise thousands of colour schemes through words, pictures and sound.

The ability to mix multicolour coatings on screen allows the user, which is intended to be a paint or wall paper shop, to let its customers choose

the best combination from a variety of colour options. According to the company, complex pattern mapping in correct scale and perspective help customers to choose from specific manufacturers' paint systems. ColourVision say they can offer customers the opportunity to see how a particular colour will look in their home through the deck and patio programs which can lay out the designs in minutes as well as produce material lists and instant quotations. The idea is that it shouldn't cost the shop too much because ColourVision will sell ads for paint and paper which then appear in the program from which the intending redecorating customer will select the one that appeals.

There doesn't seem to be a price set yet for the system but we heard that it will be about £3000 to include an Amiga system and all the software.

**Contact: ColourVision,
55 High Street, Old Woking,
Surrey. GU22 9LW.
Tel: 0483 766965.**

Virtual Realities

Latest developments in the VR world include the 3D virtual reality room planner. If your husband (or wife), is one of those conventionalists who freak if the furniture is moved around (do such people exist?! Not the Ed. surely!)(I've told you not to call me Shirley! Ed.), the 3D planner may save your bacon allowing you to demonstrate the proposed layout. He can even 'walk through' the layout to test it first. (Great! Ed.)

For ambitious or radical changes, such as extensions, initial ideas can be plotted on a 2D floor plan before being converted into a three dimensional image. Supplied by COSMI price £14.95, PC versions only so far, but you can probably read it with an emulator.

NewsBytes Magic Media

Magic Media, the home VR manufacturer, has agreed a distribution deal with Devar for their Visor-V headset in the Middle East. The unit is expected to be on sale in the UK bundled with a Virtual Joystick and at least one title.

**Contact: Magic Media
Tel: 081 343 9933.**

You won't be happy till you've had it!

ZCL has taken on the CyberMaxx headset which AUI featured recently. According to ZCL boss, Don Carter, at least 2,000 units will be available by early Spring. "Once consumers have put the CyberMaxx headset on, plugged it in and seen what it's like they won't be happy until they have it", said Carter. Oh really? We said that months ago, Don.

Amiga Support

Despite the collapse of Commodore and the empty shelves in stores at Christmas where Amigas should have been, 82% of retailers in an Xmas poll said they would like the Amiga to return to their shops in 1995. Silica's Ken Browning was enthused by the crowds at the World of Amiga show back in December, and Ocean are planning a new wave of releases in 1995. Jungle Strike and PGA European Tour both shipped over 20,000 units in the UK. A good sign of things to come..

The end of the book?

Gary Fenton is not the only computer enthusiast who has an aversion to reading. (Not even the RTFM instructions!) According to a recent article in the Sunday Times, traditional book publishers must keep up with new technology or face extinction. The feature claims that over the next three years CD and on-line multimedia will hit about half of all categories of books published today. Reference books are apparently already suffering a significant decline in sales.

Keelhauled pirate

Anti-piracy body FAST has claimed another successful prosecution following a raid at a North London address. The pirate pleaded guilty to bootlegging copies of commercial business software. Hendon Magistrates heard how Dejan Corovic had supplied a list of software with a total street value of £50,000 including, it is believed, plenty of Amiga stuff. The obnoxious pirate was ordered to pay costs of £1,990 and carry out 180 hours of community service.

More titles on CD

More Philips Video CD, in other words Amiga CD 32 compatible, titles are now available - RainMan, In Bed with Madonna (just watch her use that bottle!), Thelma and Louise (Oh that great final scene at the Grand Canyon!) and Scrooged. All have retail prices of £17.99. Anybody got a spare video cartridge for the CD 32? Money is available!

HP has a sale!

In a move, they say, aimed at making high-performance inkjet printers more accessible to business users, Hewlett Packard has announced that it will cut the prices of the HP DeskJet 1200C and HP DeskJet 1200C/PS colour-capable office printers by up to 30 per cent. Included in this (seasonal) sale are the HP DeskJet 320 and HP DeskWriter 320, reduced by 11%.

Prices will be £870.00 - DeskJet 1200C, £1370.00 - 1200C/PS,

£229.00 DeskWriter 320 and DeskJet 320. HP have also announced enhancements to these printers including, they say, improved colour print quality with HP's ColourSmart technology, out-of-ink sensing, enhanced memory management and qualification for the US Environmental Protection Agency Energy Star certification.

**Contact: Hewlett-Packard Ltd.,
Cain Road, Bracknell Berks.
RG12 1HN.**

... and climaxing the NewsFile

The VR sex machine prototype is about to hit some New York night clubs soon. The prototype of the ZyberFantasy Ride is priced at \$100,000, but is only available for men at the moment. The US performance artist and developer, Jo Lowery, well-known in the Amiga community of the USA, is currently working on systems for women and the gay community. He is planning a home model in time for Christmas next year. Yes, dear, if that's what you want for your pressie...

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From
Almathera

*** Photogenics will work on any Amiga with a minimum of 68020 CPU, 2Mb RAM and Kickstart 3.0.**

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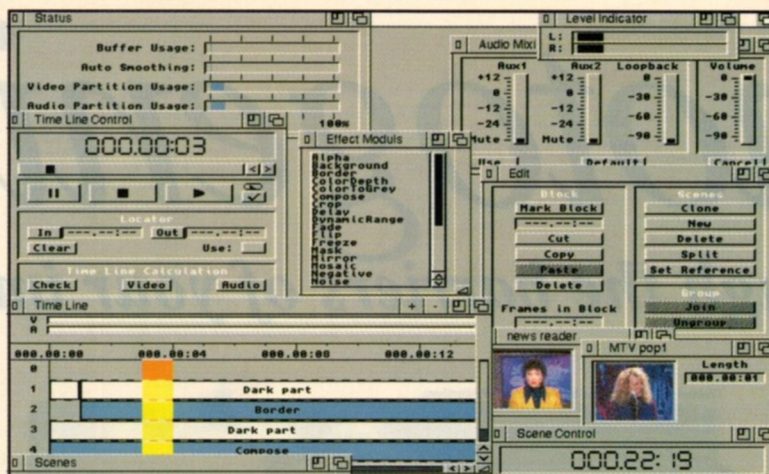
For true broadcast quality results there's the PAR and Broadcaster Elite digital video boards. But what if you don't need broadcast quality video? Vlab Motion uses hardware based JPEG technology to encode digitally and play back video in real time. The quality of SVHS can easily be achieved and at the top end it's comparable to laserdisc. The recorded video is fixed at a broadcast resolution of 768 x 592 pixels running at 50 fields per second, although you can crop the screen size if you wish.

Fancy Stuff

The hardware works with any 2Mb Amiga that can take a Zorro II board (2/3/4000) and provides a composite and YC input and one of each for the outputs. You can watch the digital video on a second monitor, or just use a genlock if you're stuck with one monitor.

The software is now in its second generation and supports full audio editing and mixing which previous versions did not. MovieShop 2.0 will record 16 bit sound along with the video providing you also have MacroSystem's Toccata sound board installed. Just as in conventional film editing, the recorded video can be cut up into scenes and assembled into a story or whatever you have in mind.

Not surprisingly it doesn't end there. The hardware provides live chroma-keying of a video source over previously recorded material. Any col-



MovieShop using a 800x600 256 colour screen. Not recommended without a Retina, so I suggest a 16 grey scale screen instead!

Vlab Motion 2.0

MacroSystem have an evolving product for the Amiga which heralds high quality full motion video without beating up your bank account, as Gary Fenton reveals.



The irrepressible Ray Cokes grabbed at 65%, live off satellite using a composite connection.

our can be picked out and made transparent to reveal video underneath. Obvious examples include keying a weatherman over a map, or at the spectacular end, Superman flying over a city using a blue screen behind the actor.

On the subject of special effects, MovieShop has plenty of tricks up its sleeve for jazzing up mundane videos. A library of nearly 30 effects allow you not only to mix from one

scene to another, but slide screens in and out, image process, shrink, rotate, distort and move several, or even a hundred, different video clips using the infinite track timeline. Of course, beginners can stick to the simple three track timeline to start with! This is very much like Premier on the Mac and PC. MovieShop makes it easy for beginners to get going before taking on the more complex timeline, which is very logical once you wrap your grey matter around it.

Video Quality

Just as with other software which saves JPEG files, MovieShop lets you de-

cide the level of quality for encoding the video. Quality is expressed as a percentage, 100% being approximately a 5:1 compression ratio. This sort of quality is impossible with Vlab Motion because the maximum data transfer rate from a Zorro II card is 2.5Mb per second and at 100% you need to have a data rate of at least 6Mb per second! The highest quality setting you are likely to get is 85% according to MacroSystem who are using it with a Warp Engine.

As a rough guide, selecting 30% quality will give a VHS comparable picture. When the settings are shifted up to 60% we're talking SVHS equivalent quality. At 75% it's extremely hard to tell the difference between the encoded video and the original source, even if it's from a laserdisc.

Bottleneck

Not everyone will be able to record massive amounts of video to their hard disk because the main limitations are disk capacity and the data transfer rate to the hard disk. You can record just under 3 minutes of video at 30% quality onto a 100Mb hard disk. For serious users I recommend having at least a 500Mb partition.

Slower hard disks and controllers will be limited by the sheer amount of data that can be recorded at any given moment. At 60% quality you'll need a hard disk to sustain a recording rate of at least 1Mb per second. SCSI 2 hard disks and controllers are strongly recommended such as the Warp Engine, Fastlane, or CyberStorm.

If you understandably can't afford both Vlab Motion and a SCSI II hard disk setup then I hope you've loads of RAM instead. MovieShop allocates a record buffer which sucks in the video as it's being recorded and passes it on to the hard disk. If your hard disk is fast enough the buffer will never fill up. Should your hard disk be too slow, the buffer will fill up and overflow and the recording stops.

This is not such a bad thing because people with slow hard disks are given the ability to record high quality video. An 8Mb buffer will hold roughly 6 seconds of 75% quality video

SETTING UP

Installing Vlab Motion is nearly a push over. You need a strong hand to slot in the Zorro card and a few spare hard disk partitions in waiting. MovieShop requires one hard disk partition to record the video and another to record sound. Make sure they're empty because MovieShop will erase the contents and format them making them inaccessible to AmigaDOS.

The software comes on one disk and you don't need to worry about configuring the hardware.

I had both Vlab Motion and Toccata up and running out of the box within ten minutes. The hardest part was deciding how to allocate my hard disk partitions! Because some of the special effects need to be processed, I recommend using a fairly fast CPU, like an 040. My 4000/040 processed about 4 frames of special effects per minute so you can imagine how long ten seconds of video effects will take to compute. (A: 1 hour!)



A sequence demonstrating some effects: (top) Trapezium, (middle) Rotate, (bottom) Scale, (background) Shift. A colour border has also been added. Only one field per frame has been printed here in order to eliminate the interlacing effect of video.

which would otherwise be impossible to achieve.

Animator's Heaven

If you're an animator and dabble with 3D graphics you'll appreciate how large animation files become once you've rendered a couple of hundred frames. Playing back high resolution animations using the Amiga's native hardware isn't exactly fast comparing it to the TV frame rate of 25 frames per second. This is where Vlab Motion comes into play.

MovieShop can import 24 bit animation frames and convert them to JPEG data which in turn can be played back at the full frame rate of 25 frames

per second, and at broadcast resolution. Obviously the quality is limited by your hard disk speed and also the YC output socket.

But for those who can record quite happily at high quality levels, MacroSystems can optionally provide a YUV/RGB output module for recording your animations to high end equipment, like Betacam VTRs with the minimal loss of quality. It certainly gives the PAR a good run for its money at half the price.

However, unlike the PAR, Vlab Motion doesn't make any of the JPEG video frames directly available to other software with-

out first having to save the frames to an AmigaDOS partition. This takes



Three composed video clips demonstrating Emboss, ColourDepth and Mask (key) effects.

time and heaps of extra disk space. PAR cunningly provides a virtual Amiga DOS device allowing other software instant access to the video frames. MacroSystems suggests a similar method is on the cards for Vlab Motion.

Conclusion

Nothing really comes close to the quality and price of this exciting product on any computer platform. It's clearly not meant for on-line broadcast editing due to the hardware limitations, but MacroSystems have planned to use an industry compatible EDL in future software updates so their product can be professionally used as an off-line editor.

The software still needs to mature just a little to make it easier and less clinical to use.

While PAR and Broadcaster Elite owners may sniff at Vlab Motion, the price alone makes it accessible to many enthusiasts, animators, and semi-professionals who are quite happy working below broadcast quality, maybe on the SVHS medium. This is a great multi-purpose product which has a very promising future as new software is constantly under development. These products highlight the Amiga's value as the best platform for desk top video. Check this out now if you can. **AUI**



A grab from laserdisc which looks as good as the original (when viewed on a PAL monitor). It has been slightly softened using a hardware filter.

RATINGS

INFO

Vlab Motion 2.0

FEATURES	92%
PERFORMANCE	90%
EASE OF USE	95%
VALUE FOR MONEY	95%
INSTALLATION	94%

Overall Rating 94%

Price: £885+VAT
Contact: Amiga Centre Scotland,
Harlequin House, Walkerburn,
Peeblesshire. EH43 6AB
Tel: 01896 870583
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Whether you're a professional videographer or an amateur budding Woody Allen, a video titler will give your opus the finishing touch. Hartmut Schumacher test drives the latest titling program to reach the Amiga.

Installation

Installing the program couldn't be simpler. Just drag the install icon into an appropriate drawer on your hard disk and then double click the icon. This non-standard installation method is very convenient for beginners. Advanced users, however, would probably rather prefer the approach of Commodore's "Installer" utility which gives the user more influence over the installation process.



The two main windows of Monument Titler.

Monument Titler

You probably know that proDAD have established a very good reputation among Amiga video enthusiasts. Their animation program "ClariSSA" and their effects software "Adorage" (see box) have earned critical acclaim as well as the respect of the users. Now the company (whose name, by the way, has nothing to do with a "professional father"; "DAD" stands for "Digital Animation Development") have released a video titler aimed at professional users and ambitious amateurs. But does the Amiga market really need another titling program? Well, yes - if it's as good as proDAD's "Monument Titler".



You can change virtually every aspect of a character's appearance.

The first impression, however, was not so positive: I loaded one of the provided example files. The program crashed. Hm. Another try, another example file - another crash. I was not pleased. And I began to have serious doubts about the usefulness and the stability of the software. But after a considerable amount of cursing and experimenting I finally discovered the gremlin that was responsible for this disaster. Monument Titler doesn't at all like to be installed on a partition that is controlled by the popular hard disk compression utility "XFH". So be warned.

Editing

The graphical user interface of the Monument Titler mainly consists of two resizable windows (see picture 1): the object window and the time line window. In the object window you create the individual pages of your title. As in a desktop publishing program

you can place texts anywhere on the page.

Fortunately, Monument Titler doesn't employ a proprietary font format as some other titlers. You can use any Compugraphic font (e.g. the ones included on your Workbench disks). This means you have an enormous

ROM". Monument Titler comes with eight public domain fonts that should be sufficient for most purposes.

As you probably know, Compugraphic fonts are vector orientated and so can be scaled to any size without a loss of quality. Bitmap fonts are not supported, which is not necessarily a bad thing, considering the poor results you get when you scale these fonts.

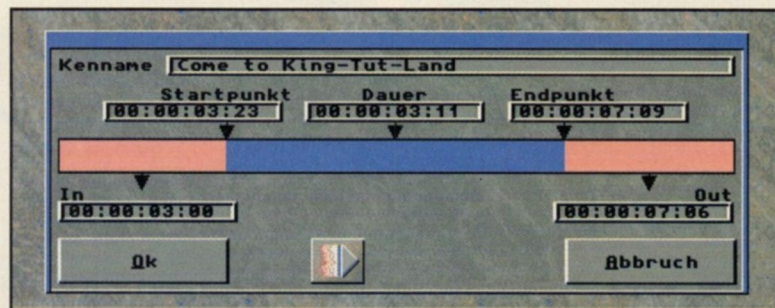
Monument Titler offers you all the text editing functions of a simple, but good text editor. You can copy, paste, cut, and move parts of the text. It is even possible to import ASCII files.

The strength of the program lies in its text format functions. You can't only choose the font, the size (in steps), and the style (normal, bold, or italics) of the text but also the justification (left, right, or centred), the kerning, the line spacing, the colour, and the texture.

Some of the available colours are transparent, allowing the video picture to be seen through the letters of your title. A texture is a little IFF



Some pre-defined textures.



The time data requester of a title object.

range of commercial and public domain fonts at your disposal such as on the CD ROMs "CDPD 4", "CD Exchange 1", and "Professional CD

picture that the program uses to fill a character. Monument Titler comes with 49 pre-defined textures but you can easily digitize or paint additional ones.

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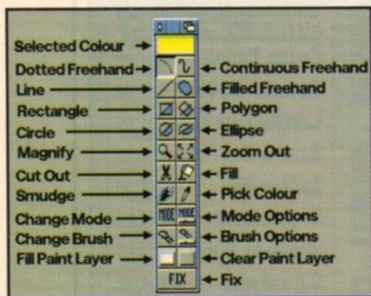
Let's not beat about the bush. What we have here is a unique graphics program for the Amiga which turns any Amiga 1200 or 4000 into a serious image processing machine for around £55. We're not just talking about making images brighter, blurred, or stretched, but true 24 bit painting in real time with an alpha channel and natural paint tools!

It's not merely the features or the expensive looking packaging which will undoubtedly impress you, but the interface and the way in which Photogenics works. Conventional paint programs limit you to working with just one picture at a time. Sure, you can jump to a second screen and edit a different image but what if you need to work on several images at the same time?

HAM8 Display

Surely not meaning to replicate the way PhotoShop works on the Mac, Photogenics loads an image into its very own window. Because of this, you can open up umpteen images onto just one screen. Even if the screen isn't big enough to hold all of the windows you can resize them making them smaller (instantly rescaling the image), or hide them completely. Alternatively you can turn the screen into a superbitmap so it becomes larger than your monitor.

Photogenics works in a special HAM8 mode producing true colour images with the added benefit of fast screen updates and real time painting.



A guide to Photogenics' toolbox.

I must point out that there are no apparent fringing side effects in Photogenics normally associated with HAM modes. If you have an AGA emulation graphics board then there's a 256 colour mode which allows you to work with graphics cards like the Picasso or Rainbow. But since graphics cards are not required, Photogenics can run on any Amiga with Workbench 3 and at least an 020 processor and 2Mb RAM (4Mb recommended).

Using the AGA chipset's HAM8 mode is fantastic for producing vivid,

colourful images. I must say that Photogenics's HAM8 mode does produce a slight blocky effect noticeable on some images. This is just a quirk with the new display method and doesn't effect the image since it's stored internally as 24 bit.

Natural Artist

If any of the great artists were still alive I'm sure they'd die if they could see Photogenics natural paint tools in action. There's a choice from 13 brushes ranging from the soft touch of an airbrush to the textured feel of chalk, and from the mellow touch of watercolours to the sharp markings of a ball pen. Any brush can be instantly changed, altering the size, pressure, and transparency. It's

even possible to create your own brush type!

The normal thing to do if you make a mistake while drawing is to select undo. This would erase the very last thing you did. But what if you want to undo one specific brush stroke without erasing anything else? Photogenics uses an imaginary layer of paper on top of your picture which you paint directly on to. So, anything you do won't permanently affect your image unless you commit yourself to it by selecting the "Fix" button from the main toolbox.

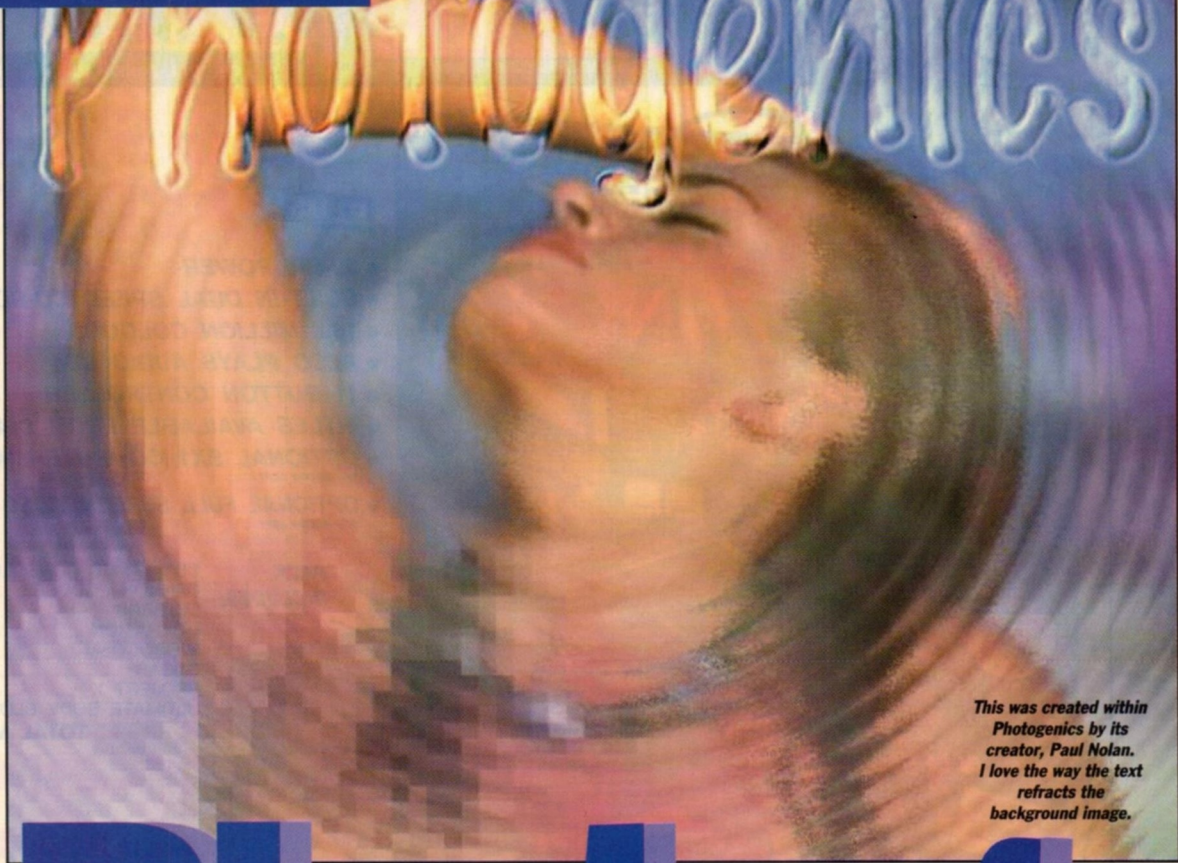
To undo something that you've drawn, go over the mistake holding down the right mouse button. This acts like an eraser, deleting anything you've drawn even if it was made 20 brush strokes ago. This feature lets you experiment and to keep trying until your picture is just right. Unfortunately not enough software lets you free your mind with the ability to experiment

endlessly and so easily. Photogenics was conceived and mostly programmed by a budding artist, Paul Nolan, so "ease of use" and "flexibility" were his main considerations.

Paint Modes

Like the loaders and brushes, the paint modes are also modular. This means that new features can be added to Photogenics just by adding a small file for each new feature. There are already new paint modes available and many more modules are in development.

The current version comes with over 50 paint modes which affect your image in different ways. For example, any paint mode can be "draw on", like the Emboss mode, turning the image to stone raising off the screen. If you want a paint mode to effect the whole screen then simply click on the "fill paint layer" button. Within seconds the image has been processed and you



This was created within Photogenics by its creator, Paul Nolan. I love the way the text refracts the background image.

Photogenics 1.1

From the same stable as the highly acclaimed Video Creator comes a brand new 24 bit paint and image processing package. It's a revolutionary product for the Amiga, so Gary Fenton discovers.



Pho-nics

can see exactly how it has been affected. If you're not happy with the results you can tinker with the settings or select a different paint mode. As soon as a new mode has been selected the image is redrawn using the

selected. It's still a lot faster than other programs such as Art Department. Speaking of which, have you ever seen the ripple effect in action? On the low quality setting, ADPro took 40 seconds to perform a ripple effect. On

A few effects: FalseColour, Emboss, GradientTint, Mix-Add, Saturation, MotionBlur, Randomise, Stellate, RubBright.

Photogenics to produce some work. There are so many features with which to play and experiment!

Alpha Channel

Alpha channels have so far been reserved for more expensive software such as ADPro or TV Paint. A few months ago we reviewed PPaint 6

alpha channel child's play. Although there are many ways to go about generating the ideal alpha channel, the fastest method is to paint over your original image masking out the areas you want to remove. Selecting "Move paint layer to alpha" from the Alpha/ Paint menu generates an alpha channel using the information you've just provided by painting out unwanted areas. Your original image is then restored (the paint is removed) and you're ready to go.

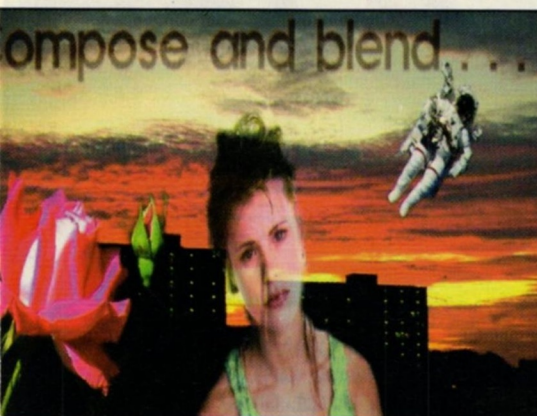
Drag And Drop

Photogenics organises its images using the drag and drop window which is normally at the bottom of the screen. New images start off as "main" images but can be used as "second" or "alpha" images simply by picking up their icons and dragging them over to the "second" or "alpha" drop site. If you've just created an alpha image and you want it to become an active alpha channel, just pick up its icon and drag it over the the alpha drop site.

A second image is required for certain paint modes like Rub Through, or DisplaceMap. Rub Through comes in 10 flavours and is particularly powerful allowing the main image to be mixed or replaced by the second image. Variations of this mode incorporate image processing features like logical operators (And, Or, Xor) and tinting. But the best way of merging two images together is by composing.

Strike A Pose

In an ordinary paint program it's easy to compose two images. Just pick up an area as a brush and slap it on top of the other image. Photogenics does



Composing images is just one of Photogenics' main features, but probably my favourite because no other program lets me do it visually using huge images!

new mode. There's no waiting around with Photogenics.

Clicking on the Fix button will make the changes permanent, unless you select the undo feature afterwards. Although processing an entire image can take anything from one second upwards (it depends on the size of the image and speed of your Amiga) it does take a bit longer for the image to be processed properly when Fix is

exactly the same image Photogenics took less than 2 seconds to draw the HAM8 preview and just 3 seconds to "Fix" it!

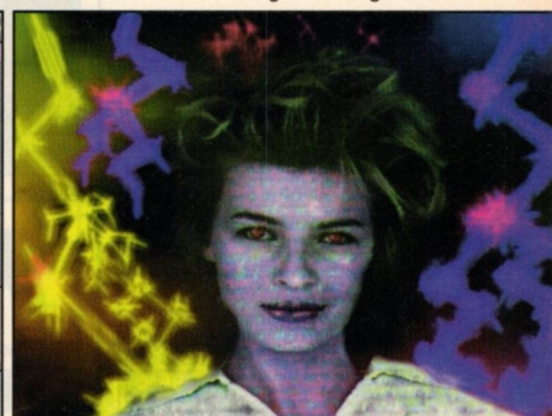
Photogenics hasn't a dedicated ripples operator like ADPro, but by combining different aspects of Photogenics together there appear to be very few limits on what you can achieve. Admittedly, it's quite easy to become distracted when using



Photogenics uses windows so you can arrange the screen any way you like.

which has an alpha channel for brushes, but Photogenics lets you generate an alpha channel for an entire image. An alpha channel is like using masking tape which prevents you from drawing over parts of a picture. But unlike masking tape, an alpha channel has 256 levels of transparency which are defined using a grey scale image.

Photogenics makes using an



The range of effects are so amazing that you'll spend ages exploring different combinations and ideas. I call this the Bimbold

things differently, trading speed for features. Selecting "Compose" from the Image menu does two things. Firstly, it superimposes the second image on the current image, and secondly, it opens up a new window called, funnily enough, the Compose window.

The second image is displayed with a box around it and a handle in each corner and the centre. The centre handle can be used to drag the

image around while the handles around the outside are used to resize the image. Resizing occurs almost instantly so you can move and scale the image around as many times as you like without wasting time.

An alpha channel can be used while composing or you can manually remove and blend in areas of the image. If you accidentally remove a bit you wish you hadn't, just go over it with the right mouse button pressed and it magically comes back! There's also an option to paste down the second image using a paint mode which can create some strange effects!

Magnify and Smudge

Clicking on the magnify icon enlarges the currently selected image. Either the scroll bars or cursor keys can be used for moving around the image while the keys ">" and "<" zoom in and out. Magnify can be used at any time, even during composing, and simultaneously on several images.

Photogenics almost didn't have a smudge mode because it seemed to be a very difficult thing to program due to the way Photogenics works. Luckily the programming team cracked it and did a bloody good job too! Unlike DPaint's and Brilliance's smear tool, Photogenics elegantly smudges the image and blends at the same time. It's perfect for extending smiles, ears and other bits!

Conclusion

Having used Photogenics in various stages for two months, I'm totally impressed with it and the novelty factor hasn't yet worn off, and I can't see that happening for a long while. This package is something of a blood transfu-

This package is something of a blood transfusion for the Amiga, a major uplift that it urgently needs.

sion for the Amiga, a major uplift that it urgently needs. But don't throw away your conven-

tional paint program because Photogenics won't replace it completely.

As I said earlier, the interface uses a fast HAM8 mode which is okay, but there's a saver which renders a

I call this one "Ice Queen" because of the frosted ice effect.



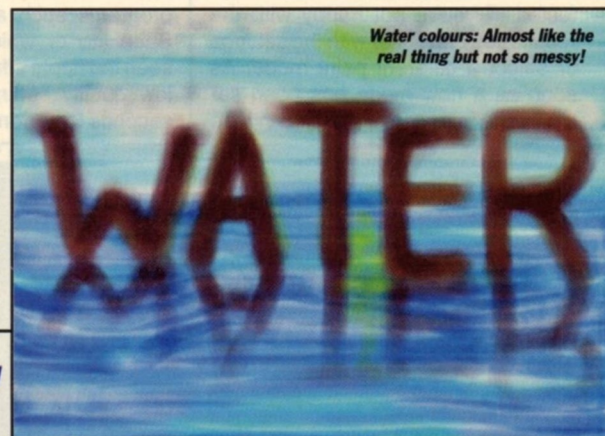
high quality HAM8 image so you can instantly view it in all its glory. There are many formats in which the image can be saved but exclude the palette mapped IFF formats (2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128 and 256 colours). I am told this will be included in future upgrades. Additionally, I'd like to see animation support but this will come later as a "professional" product. (There'll be a "pay the difference" upgrade opportunity when the time comes.)

All in all, Photogenics puts the Amiga back onto pole position as a very powerful low cost graphics platform. In these times of depres-

sion the entire Amiga community can look at Photogenics and say "Thank God I've got an Amiga!"

This package is something very special that deserves your attention, especially the artistic people. Many congratulations to Paul Nolan and Almathera for producing both an affordable and incredible graphics package. Highly recommended! **AUI**

Water colours: Almost like the real thing but not so messy!



RATINGS

Photogenics 1.1

FEATURES	96%
PERFORMANCE	97%
EASE OF USE	96%
SPEED	94%
VALUE FOR MONEY	98%

Overall Rating 97%

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FEATURE FRENZY!

Here's a quick rundown of the important modules included with Photogenics at the time of writing. More modules will become available separately as development continues.

Load/savers: ACBM, AmigaScreen, Ascii-Art, Backdrop, BMP, CDXL, ColourNoise, GIF, IFFDeep,

ILBM, Img, JPEG (fast!), OpalVision, Pattern, PBM, PhotoCD, Picasso II, Plasma, QRT, QuadAnim, Raw, RGB8, RGBN, Ripples, Sculpt, Streaks, Targa, Text, Vlab, Whitenoise.

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Anthony Mael gets a sneak preview of an add-on that brings the day of the universal CD-ROM closer to your Amiga.

One of the problems with otherwise excellent computers like the 1200 or even the 600 is that they lack power. No, this isn't a criticism of the unlamented CBM management's ideas of the memory or Motorola for the 68000 chip family. It is simply a point made by thousands or possibly millions of Amiga

involvement in creating the A1500 case and later for adding 3 1/2 inch drives to 1200s and very successfully too (ask Mark Blackham!), have told **AUI** about their latest creation for the serious Amiga user, the "PowerStation". Designed for the A1200 and A600 it is a unit based on a converted MultiMedia computer case and delivers, HiQ told **AUI**, considerable benefits.

The PowerStation is a case with stereo speakers (30 Watts PMP), 2 X 5.25", 1X3.5" front mounting drive bays, and 2 X 3.5" internal mounting drive bays. It uses the new HiSoft Squirrel high speed SCSI II interface, a dual speed SCSI CD-Rom drive unit with a tray loader not a caddy, and finally a 200 watt power supply which powers your Amiga as well as the drives inside the case. This is, say HiQ, ideal for accelerator card users with large amounts of fast RAM.

What you get, it seems, is a CD-ROM drive plus all those lovely slots, built-in stereo sound and all the



The PowerStation proves the Amiga is no toy.

times more powerful than the normal Amiga power supply this beastie is certainly a way of showing that the Amiga 1200 - or even the 600 - is no toy.

The early production model that we saw was impressive, a very solid affair made of metal not witable, or crackable plastic. And one of the neatest tricks it can perform is that as the monitor rests on it and is con-

in one of the slots a high density disk drive - one of those which increases your floppy capacity up to 1.4 megs. Nice little thing to have that.

Of course, with HiQ's acknowledged expertise in the hard drive area, if you want, they will fit as many HDs as you want to daisy chain. And we believe they will be bringing out, in the not to distant future a stand

The PowerStation

users in regard to the PSU - the notorious power supply unit. Again and again those who, in the early days of the Amiga and when **AUI** was the sole European Amiga magazine we used to call "Power Users" because they had all of a 20 meg hard drive, they have complained at the

AUI
EXCLUSIVE!



The PowerStation comes with on board stereo speakers for that multimedia look.

paucity of the often just 3 amp limit of the Amigas electronics.

These limitations are still a restriction for those who want to add extra drives or other devices and are frequently only circumvented by adding a string of devices but also sticking on, like some spaghetti junction, strings of PSUs to go with them. But rising up on the Amiga horizon, **AUI** can exclusively report, is a solution that all who use their 1200s and even 600s for anything other than games may want seriously to consider.

HiQ, known for their expertise shown in the more distant past for an

power supply you can use. Enough to drive five drives, HiQ's Steve Jones told **AUI**, without a moment's hesitation. Try that on your present PSU!

No Toy

The "PowerStation" is available in an optional version without speakers or in a Mini Tower for those users who prefer this type of casing.. With the power for five drives plus ability for connection to outside drive cases this looks like a formidable addition to the armoury of Amiga style boxes. Steve Jones pointed out that with a PSU six

nected, as is the 1200, when you switch on, through a button on the fascia of the box, then the monitor comes on too. Now that's real labour-saving...

Price is not absolutely set yet but thought to be around the £349 mark.

However, as a special advantage for **AUI** readers, if you call HiQ and mention the magazine then there is a good chance that for a limited period you can get the PowerStation for half a ton less. And that £50 off refers to the price not the weight of the PowerStation.

Though not confirmed yet, there may well be the possibility of including

alone CD-ROM drive for the Amiga too which, it would not surprise us be very similar to that inside in the PowerStation case.

Don't forget, when you contact HiQ about the PowerStation to mention **AUI** or if you are writing enclose a photocopy of this page and it could save you oodles of dough.

HiQ say the PowerStation should be available right now as you are reading this exclusive preview. **AUI**

INFO

Contact: HiQ Limited
176 Kenton Lane,
Harrow,
Middx HA3 8SU
Tel: 081 909 2092
Fax: 081 909 3885

Main Features

1. Single 200 Watt power supply complete system.
2. MultiMedia case or Mini Tower.
3. Five SCSI drive bays with cable supplied.
4. Monitor stand and cable tidy.
5. High Speed SCSI II interface
6. Dual speed, mostly CD32 compatible CD-Rom.
7. DOES NOT VOID WARRANTY! WOW!

And HiQ have told **AUI** about these hard drive options they supply:
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1060mb Quantum SCSI2 Drive £569.95

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Sunrise AD516 and Studio 16

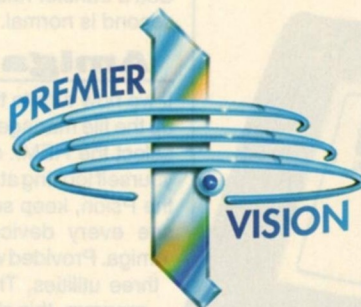
This incredible direct to disk recorder is generally regarded as the Amiga's finest hard disk sampler and can be linked to Bars & Pipes Pro to give you the ultimate recording studio.

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At last a detailed hierarchical human model with morphing features available for Lightwave 3D.



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programs on the Amiga, copy them to the Picon, transfer and run them all from the Amiga. Now this would make GPL development much easier.

Conclusion

The documentation for this program is in the form of a text file and an AmigaGuide file. When you register you get a nice printed manual as well. The document is just superb. Included in the archive is all the developer information so that you could write your own programs utilizing the AmigaNCP library.

One last thing, and one that I have not yet tried out, is that the AmigaNCP is a general purpose networking protocol. It is stated that you could connect any two devices together that were running an NCP system. I really must try connecting two Amigas together with this in the meantime! Almost too late I have a response Amiga! Great stuff! AU!

RATINGS	
FEATURES	100
PERFORMANCE	100
EASE OF USE	95
SPEED	100
VALUE FOR MONEY	100
Overall Rating 100%	
Yes, I think it is that good	
Price DM 60	(about £22)
Requires Workbench 2.04 or better	
INFO	
B&B Computersysteme	
c/o Michael Balzer	
Winchenbacher 12b	
D-42281 Wuppertal Germany	

I have mentioned a few times in the Amiga Answers that I use the PICON Bases 3x as a portable connection to the Amiga via a standard comm program, but it is slightly annoying to say the least. What is really needed is a means of making the Picon the system part of the Amiga. This type of connection has been available for the PC for quite a long time, however now it is available for the Amiga, and it is a really nice program. This is a software of its very best. I evaluated this for all of 45 seconds before doing something about registration.

In order to use this program you need the S2K as well as an S2 converter will automatically convert the Picon user MIB. (The Picon uses MIB) The Picon user and end of the line. The standard drawer (binary) transfer to type (binary) transfer use these for program. I think that you will find the impression that there is a program here, and there is. You can use a standard directory utility. SIG. Because the AmigaNCP is functional Amiga libraries, you can use the S2K as a transfer rate of less than 2K per second and is normal.

Files
The system utilizes several files. The main file is a library that does

AmigaNCP

Do you, like all of us, want a portable Amiga?
Andy Eskelson is delighted with a device
that helps create the next best thing.

I have mentioned a few times in Amiga Answers that I use the PSION Series 3a as a portable notebook. It has always been possible to connect the Psion to the Amiga via a standard comms program, but it is a slight annoyance to say the least. What is really needed is a means of making the Psion filesystem part of the Amiga.

This type of connection has been available for the PC for quite a long time, however now it is available for the Amiga, and it is a really nice program. This is shareware at its very best. I evaluated this for all of 45 seconds before doing something about registration.

In order to use this program you need the S3link as well as an S3 or S3a. Connect the S3link to the Amiga serial port, and the other end into the S3a. It is advisable to use a mains adaptor when using the S3link, as the RS232 interface does suck a fair amount of power from the batteries. Installing AmigaNCP is simply a matter of running the installer script. There is nothing to it, just tell the installer where you want to install the main files and that's all there is to it.

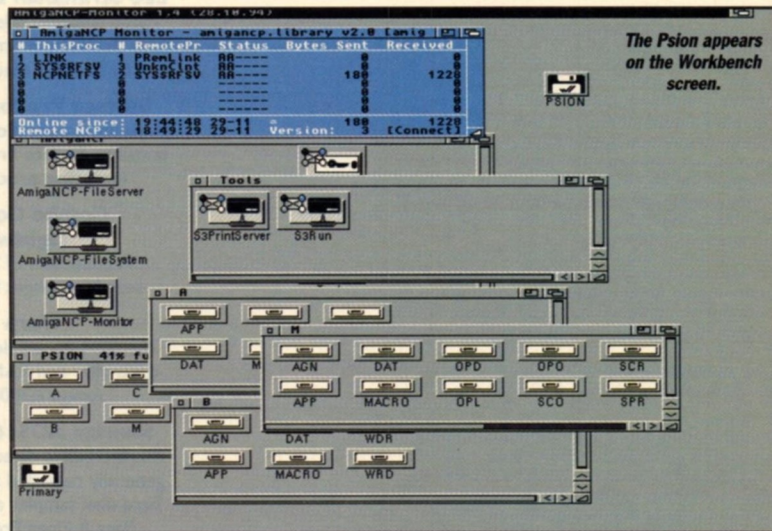
Files

The system utilises several files. The main file is a library that does

all the hard work. The other files are the all important server and filesystem programs. Click on the server, and then on the filesystem and AmigaNCP will wake up. All you have to do then is a Psion L from the Psion system screen to start the Psion Link protocol. What happens next is clever. A new disk icon appears, I have configured the program to call this icon PSION. Click on this and you find a drawer for each of the Psion drive slots.

The file system provides a second set of drawers, which are duplicates of the normal drawers except that when you move files between the Amiga and the Psion via these drawers a character format conversion will automatically happen. (The Psion uses MSDOS style filenames and end of line terminations). The standard drawers perform byte for byte (binary) transfers so you would use these for programs.

I think that you will be getting the impression that there is a lot of program here, and there's still more. You can use a standard Amiga directory utility, SID, DOPUS etc. and because the AmigaNCP is a fully functional Amiga filesystem, you can



manipulate the Psion files as if they were Amiga files. If you use the Workbench to do this, remember to switch on the show all files option. This is the only gripe I have about this whole program. I would have liked a means of setting the show all files on at startup. Also remember that the Psion link runs at 9600bps on the S3 and 19200bps on the S3a, so on the S3a a transfer rate of less than 2K per second is normal.

Amiga Drives

If we now turn to the Psion, and bring up the file manager (Psion *) and then select the REM:: device, you will find yourself looking at the Amiga drives on the Psion, keep scrolling and you will see every device attached to the Amiga. Provided with the package are three utilities. The first is a monitor program, this shows you the status of the link, a Print server, and a utility that lets you run a Psion program remotely from the Amiga. The print server allows you to use a printer attached to the Amiga as the Psions printer. The S3RUN program allows you to run programs remotely. Now this might not sound too useful at first, but you could set up a system where you write your OPL

programs on the Amiga, copy them to the Psion, translate and run them all from the Amiga. Now this would make OPL development much easier.

Conclusion

The documentation for this program is in the form of a text file and an AmigaGuide file. When you register you get a nice printed manual as well. The document is just superb. Included in the archive is all the developer information so that you could write your own programs utilising the AmigaNCP library.

One last thing, and one that I have not yet tried out, is that the AmigaNCP is a general purpose networking protocol. It is stated that you could connect any two devices together that were running an NCP system. I really must try connecting two Amigas together with this. In the meantime I almost feel like I have a portable Amiga! Great stuff! AUI



Link the Psion to the Amiga? No problem.

RATINGS

AmigaNCP

FEATURES	100%
PERFORMANCE	100%
EASE OF USE	99%
SPEED	100%
VALUE FOR MONEY	100%

Overall Rating 100%

Yes, I think it is that good

Price DM 60
(about £25)

Requires Workbench 2.04
or better

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Alt Terrain Racer	CD32 17.9										

Easy Ledgers 2

Your Amiga has a million uses - but no one has really taken it seriously as tool for managing boring, but essential, tasks like accounting. We were willing to accept that you could run your small home business from the same computer you used to play Alien Breed, but no one except shameless marketing people claimed that you would run a major company employing many staff, from your Amiga.

That perception will have to change with the arrival of Easy Ledgers 2 from the clever Aussies at GP Software. This tight, capable and extremely well prepared package contains every vital component of an accounting system for any sized business. Not only is it well equipped, but it is expertly designed to make complicated accounting procedures easy to understand. If you are self-employed and running a business from home, Easy Ledgers will move your accounts out of the shoebox and into a computerised form which will make you, your accountant, and the taxman much happier.

Easy Ledgers is powerful enough to handle your company if it employs people, is divided into multiple departments or even owns other companies. The program runs every aspect of a business - from the running of sales and purchases and specific client and supplier accounts, to the printing of invoices and even address labels. Every aspect of your stock and money inflow and outflow can be recorded, monitored and analysed. For those unfamiliar with accounting practices, there is a short tutorial chapter in the ample manual and example accounts, which cover the basics, but it is advisable to find a book on setting up and running a business. Easy Ledgers won't let you proceed unless both sides of the double-entry accounting method are equal. This could prove frustrating, especially in setting up the

Mark Blackham leaps in as a potential millionaire entrepreneur just because of a program that proves the Amiga is serious.
Will it do the same for you?



Accounting made easy peasy.

Ledger book, if you don't understand the basics of how equity and assets are treated, for example. The program comes with options for use in various countries - which you specify on installation - but these options, such as VAT management, can be altered.

Heart of System

The Ledger book is the heart of the system. The other books (where you may sell stuff or buy something) automatically post their activities to the ledger - which keeps track of how your whole business is doing. When you set up your business, you enter the foundation information in the ledger - such as capital, bank account balances, assets and liabilities. Easy Ledger already has a skeleton system in place - you just enter your specific details or adjust it to your own needs. From the ledger you can pull out for viewing or printing the current balance sheet and

profit and loss statement, account histories, transaction journals, cashbook and liquidity ratios.

Books

Your business accounts are divided into three other books besides the ledger - a Sales Book, Purchases Book and Inventory Book - and a Job Card file. To anyone vaguely familiar with basic accounting, the use of these is obvious. The Sales book can divide individual accounts (i.e. those clients who owe you money for services or products you have provided) into 32 different categories. These can vary from straight alphabetical sorting to classifications such as corporate, government institutions and schools. These later classifications may be needed if you treat some clients differently - such as with product mark-up and tax.

Easy Ledgers provides a Job Card file - the record of work completed for clients by you or up to 32 of your staff - which automatically reconciles the cost and sales details with the rest of your accounts. This is particularly useful for firms in businesses like car repairing, plumbing, or even consultancy work based on specific time charges, deadlines and such like. This

HOME OFFICE

Mark Blackham test drives a new package to organise your life that has the reassuring feel of an old friend.

In a world where people are always chasing after the new, it is nice to see Digita displaying some sense and sticking with a tried and tested old product.

Home Office is actually a compilation of four productivity programs released many years ago; Home Accounts, Mail Shot Plus, G Calc and Day by Day. So squeezed onto one disk is a program to manage your bank accounts and budget, one for compiling mail lists and labels, a basic spreadsheet and a personal diary. The saving grace for Digita is that they don't

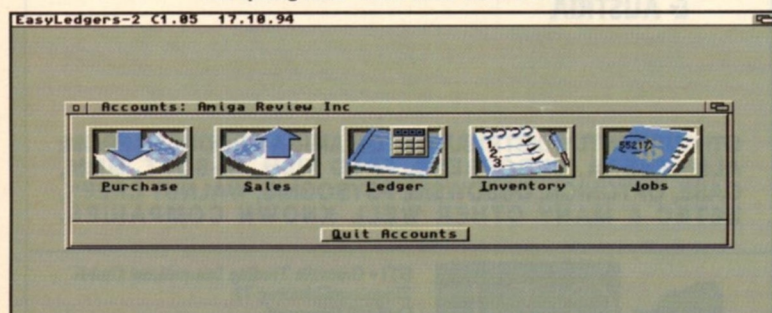
pretend these programs are anything else but basic capable tools for managing various aspects of your personal life. The reality is that this is a no-frills product - which means it looks, acts and feels old. In this respect they barely live up to their recommended retail price of almost £50.

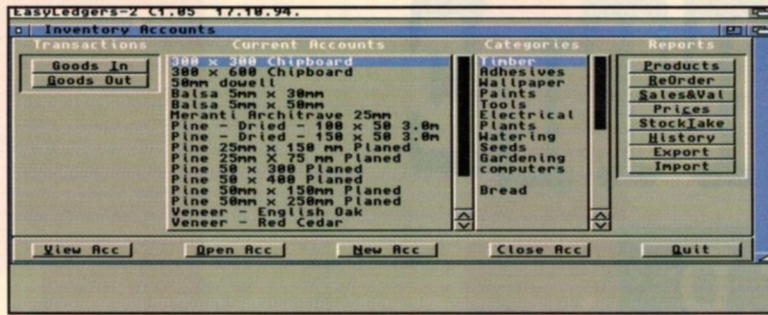
We have come to expect pointless bright lights and gimmicks in modern productivity software, so Home Accounts is refreshing in its honest, bare bones function.

Automatic

Home Accounts will let many different people or companies

Your opening books - where all the business is done.

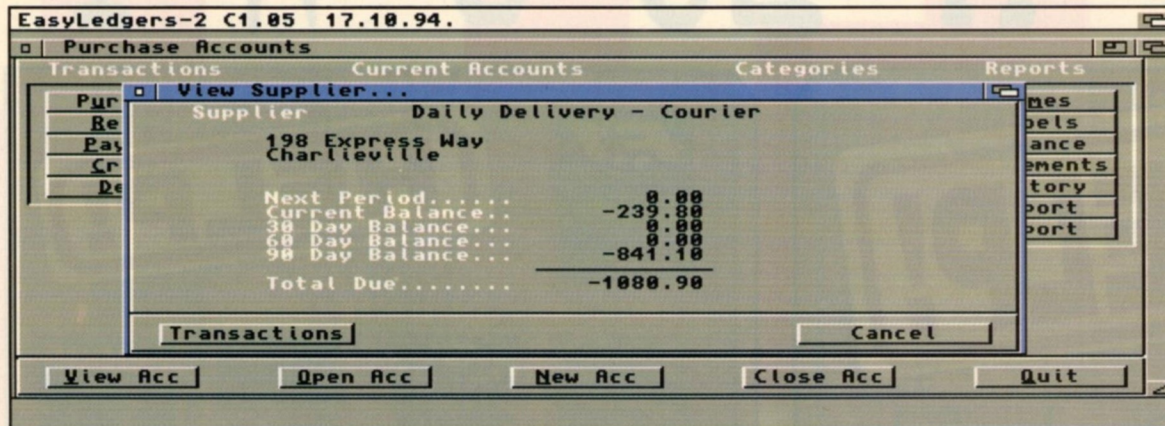




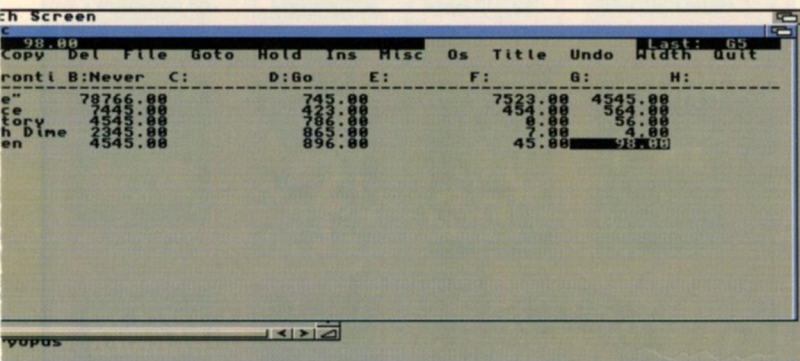
Taking a gander at my stock inventory.

way you can monitor individual jobs, call-outs or what-ever, and see the hours worked and money earned by you or your staff. The invoices are then written up and mailed out (or if manually written and handed to the client, they should be inputted immediately afterwards to the accounts). You can set up your staff details so each per-

son rates a different cost (what you pay them) and charge-out rate (what the client pays for their service). The information from the Job Card then feeds into the client account (what you are owed) and your costs (what was needed in the way of stock - purchases - and labour - your wage bill).



Checking up on the account of a supplier.



This is as good as lots of numbers gets in G Calc.

run a number of different accounts, all with regular automatic transactions and budgeting. You have to enter manual transactions like writing out a cheque or extorting money from a cash machine. You can then ask for reports on the various accounts or a comparison of your current situation with the budget.

Mail Shot Plus is a database for mailing labels - you enter in names and addresses, store them, sort them, search them and print them out onto labels. Simple. Each label has its own

memo pad - onto which you can note extra details about the person.

G Calc

G Calc is a spreadsheet, equipped with a solid range of calculation functions and some handy extras like Cell Lock and UNDO. Day By Day is a further reminder that no personal diary/time management program like "Organiser" by Lotus for the PC exists for the Amiga. I'll have to write one. Still, it will, in its own way, help you keep track of your busy life via an events

The Sales book works in a similar way, managing the flow of money from straight "over the counter" sales. You can choose to manage this through an open item or balance forward accounting method, and have the program total everything on a weekly or monthly basis.

Sales have a number of different aspects - such as the method of payment (cash, cheque, credit card, sample etc), tax, product or service code, quantity, unit price and discounts - which are all recorded, and monitored by Easy Ledger. From here you can print invoices and envelope labels and call up sales analysis such as a list of balance receivable on clients' accounts, transaction history, statements, sales tax/analysis report, credit card reports and a sales and receipts journal.

Purchase

The Purchase book mimics the Sales book in the sense of setting up accounts with your suppliers, entering and processing purchases and credits, payments and receipts, and watching your progress through reports. You can call for reports of suppliers' name and addresses, mailing labels, balance payable list, statements, transaction history, and a journal of purchases and payments.

If you already have a great wad of this information on another, now antiquated, software package, you can transfer the information across as straight ASCII files. The software comes on one disk, which must be installed to a hard drive and have two megs in which to run. In the pack is a thick and very thorough ring-bound manual. The only downside is the appearance of a dongle. This must be inserted into the joystick port to enable the program to run. GP Software probably figured most users wouldn't be big game players, so wouldn't need to swap between dongle and joystick. They may be right - but the dongle is a pain nonetheless.

Your Amiga had better be equipped with a battery-backed clock and calendar, otherwise the accounting package will be pointless. Anyone familiar with accounting methods will have no problems, but those that get stuck can call a 24 hour help line (it's a call to Australia!).

Conclusion

I have always kept down my scoring of product reviews to ensure there is room at the top for the really good stuff. Easy Ledgers is almost faultless. It is probably the top accounting software available, and proves the Amiga is a darn serious computer. Easy Ledgers is so well constructed that I started up my own business so I could use it. There is no better recommendation than that. **AUI**

RATINGS

Home Office

FEATURES	60%
PERFORMANCE	60%
EASE OF USE	55%
DOCUMENTATION	85%
VALUE FOR MONEY	55%
Overall Rating	60%

INFO

Price: £49.99
Contact: Digita International
Black Horse House
Exmouth EX8 1JL
Tel: 0395 270 273

RATINGS

Easy Ledgers 2

FEATURES	96%
PERFORMANCE	96%
EASE OF USE	92%
DOCUMENTATION	99%
VALUE FOR MONEY	93%
Overall Rating	97%

INFO

Price: £149.99
Contact: Wizard Developments
74 Gordon Rd
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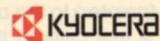
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Despite Commodore's recent problems, there's no doubt that recent months have been good for a new Amiga software releases because some great new packages have surfaced. Alma-thera's brilliant Photogenics is one example and, judging by the experiments that I've been doing over the last few weeks, Oregon Research's GameSmith looks set to become another rising star.

GameSmith is a 'development system' which provides a library of high-level routines and utilities that simplify much of the coding needed for programming Amiga games. The most important utility in the package is an animation tool which lets you build up animation sequences by importing ILBM graphics brushes. It's called CITAS and it allows you to run animation sequences while you are creating them. You can rotate, flip, copy and delete frames, set up object-to-object and object-to-background collision detection tables and do all sorts of other clever things extremely easily.

CITAS is not only good to use it is flexible too. If, for the sake of ease of placement and control, you want to create an anim object consisting of a single cell then CITAS will let you do it. On the other hand if you wish to combine a series of separate animation sequences into a single complex unit then CITAS allows you to do that as well. CITAS can produce either binary animation files which can be loaded into programs with a single line of code, or can output C or assembler source code which you then include like any other support file.

One of the more powerful features of the animation system is the transparent handling of real space within virtual space. Object co-ordinates are positive 16bit integers so virtual bitmaps up to 32K x 32K in size may be effectively created with GameSmith only ever drawing those objects as they appear in the real (displayed) part of the bitmap.

GameSmith graphics are based on the standard Commodore bitmap structure so GameSmith routines will work just as well with Intuition screens and windows as with custom displays. For more advanced coders a variety of 'safe' blitter routines are provided but normally if objects are created using CITAS then this utility generates all the appropriate control structures and all your program needs is a handle (pointer) to the object itself coupled to a few calls to the GameSmith library functions.

More advanced coders can set up their own user copper lists and generally play about with the contents of the structures that GameSmith creates to their heart's content. The manual contains a number of useful tips and tricks about such things, along with notes about AGA displays and so on.

Game Building

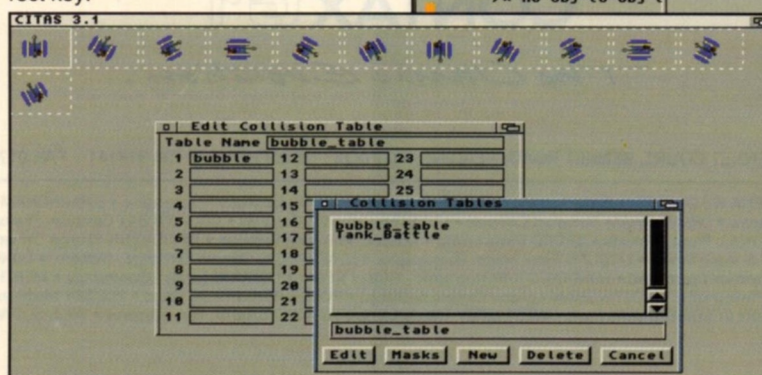
Once the appropriate CITAS units have been designed they can be used to build the final game program using high-level routines present in the GameSmith library. The library functions themselves are provided in the form of a standard library that is linked with your controlling code.

A mass of high-level animation control routines are provided, along with display routines for double buffering, background picture loading, blitter control, multiple viewports. Super-smooth scrolling, sliced parallax viewports (these allow you to scroll individual scanlines at different rates) - it's all easily done using the GameSmith library.

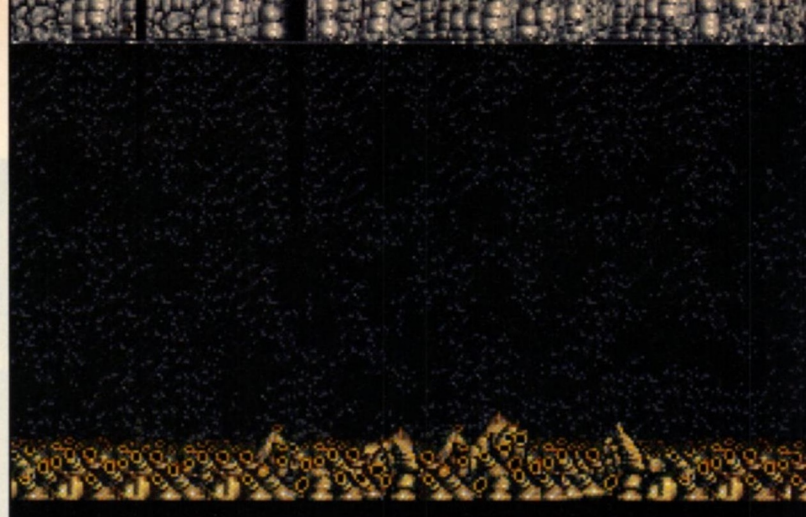
In addition there are general utility functions, joystick polling routines, path plot routines, random number generators and so on. The library documentation incidentally is exceptionally good and around one hundred and seventy pages of the manual (about half) deals with library functions and their use. The routines are described in Amiga autodoc style with a C synopsis plus register usage followed by a description of the function's purpose, required parameters, and returned values.

CITAS can create disk based animation objects and programs using the high-level GameSmith library routines to load and manipulate these objects need to know surprisingly little (often nothing) about the objects themselves. That's fine as far as giving the coder an easy life is concerned but it can be argued that while these disk-based objects are easy to use they could well be vulnerable to theft by pirates.

Since GameSmith is intended for use by professional coders this potential worry needs to be minimised and Oregon Research have gone to a lot of trouble to provide built-in 'security' options. So GameSmith allows programmers to encrypt graphics and sound files in a way which permits them still to be recognised by the GameSmith routines. CITAS also has the ability to produce serial number locked object code modules which can only be used if the calling program provides the correct key.



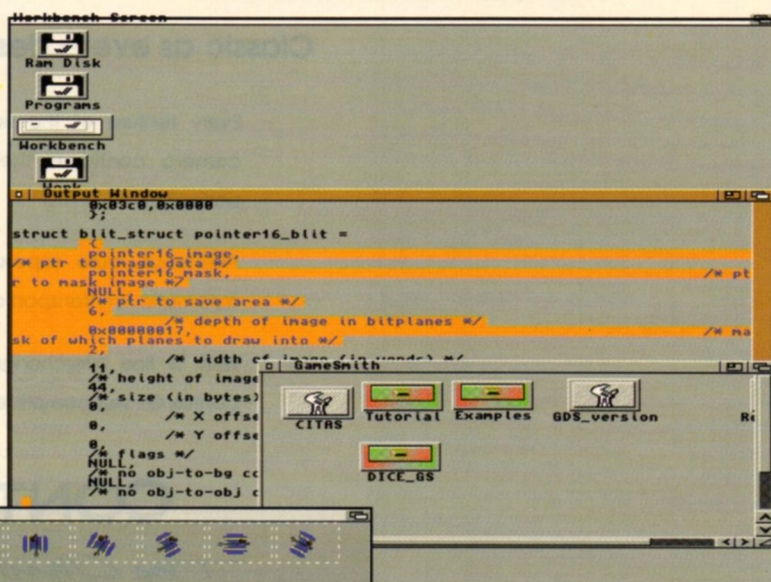
You can run CITAS animations while you are in the process of creating them!



GameSmith has some impressive smooth scrolling functions.

Game

Paul Overaa spent a good part of his Christmas slaving over a hot Amiga. Why? Just to bring you a review of a new package from Oregon Research...



Code generation the GameSmith way.

Sound

The GameSmith linker library also includes a set of sound routines that provide high-level access to an interrupt driven sound system. Functions are provided for loading/unloading IFF (8SVX) and raw sound data files, playing sounds through selected channels, and changing the volumes and periods and so on. These routines are certainly

Smith

fine for playing sound effects and so on but there are a couple of things that surprised me.

One was the absence of routines for either playing a given IFF sample as a specified musical-note (or at least calculating the period value needed for a note of a particular pitch). The other was that tracker module player routines have not been provided. As the manual points out, tracker-based routines are available from other sources but it would have been useful to have something of this nature available in the GameSmith library.

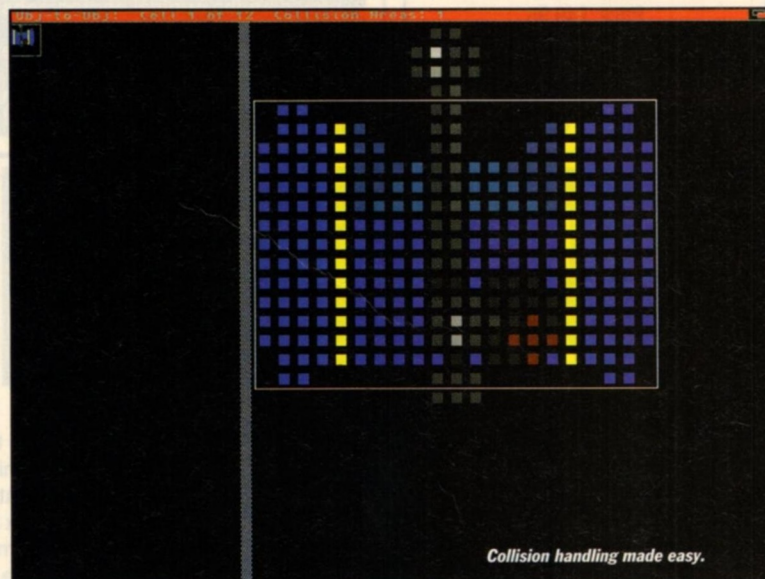
The sound chapter of the manual is quite small and you might think that after reading it that the GameSmith sound routines are really only to be used for one shot games effects. This may be their intended use but it turns out that it is possible to do quite a bit more than this.

During the time I was reviewing the package I produced a routine that is able to extract note on/off data from a Midi file and play it using the GameSmith sound playing routines as sound drivers. The idea is simple enough and just involves converting the extracted Midi note numbers to the period values required to produce the notes from the sound samples.

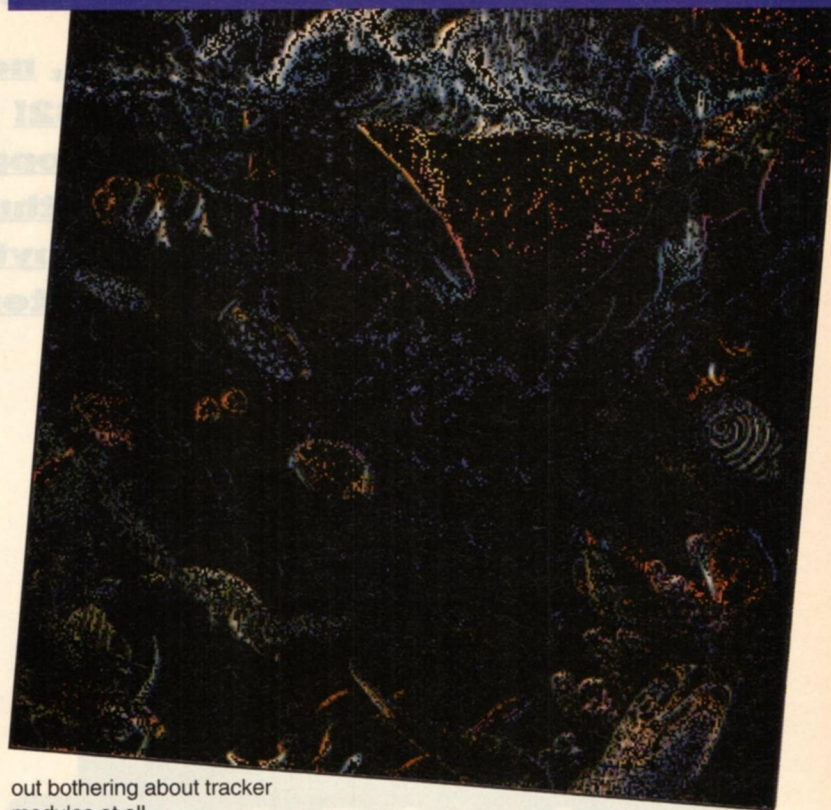
My main interest here was to see just how efficient the GameSmith sound sample buffering system was, and in particular to check that the speed was fast enough for things like song playback. Because I didn't have much time I cheated a little and used algorithmic pitch calculations, rather than adjusted frequency tables, for computing period playback values - this meant

that my routines are not 100% pitch perfect when samples are being played at rates significantly different to their original sampling rate. Nevertheless the code serves its purpose well enough and you will find a (short) demo tune on the cover disk which goes some way to showing that the underlying GameSmith functions are capable of being used to play games music tracks.

It did cross my mind that instead of games using tracker-based music modules it might be feasible to



add routines to GameSmith that used either direct or encrypted Midi or MPX1 files for producing games music. The advantage here would be that a games designer could play a tune on a synth, store it as a Midi file, and have it read straight into the game and played with-



out bothering about tracker modules at all.

Screen backgrounds are easily incorporated using the GameSmith loader routines!

Conclusion

I love it! GameSmith is a most impressive package that deserves to do very well indeed. One of the things I have particularly liked about the GameSmith library approach is that you can use as much, or as little, of the GameSmith environment as you choose (and you will find that your choices are reflected in resultant program sizes). Reusability of CITAS disk-based objects is another big plus.

and preferably some understanding of the how things like Amiga displays and graphics objects are created.

I've only had a few weeks working with GameSmith and during that time have certainly had no particular difficulties save for a few occasions where I had not read the function autodocs properly. Of course for an environment like GameSmith to be used commercially coders are going to need to know that the product is well supported. The good news here is that HiSoft are providing the European support and so, as always, you can rest assured that a decent level of technical help is likely to be available. Among the various bits and pieces provided on the GameSmith release disks you will find a version of HiSoft Devpac 3 assembler and the Dice C compiler. All you really need apart from GameSmith then - is an original idea for a game! **AUI**

RATINGS

GameSmith

FEATURES	85%
PERFORMANCE	90%
DOCUMENTATION	90%
IMPLEMENTATION	95%
VALUE FOR MONEY	90%

Overall Rating 90%

INFO

Price: £99.99
Contact: HiSoft
The Old School, Greenfield
Bedford MK45 5DE
Tel: 0525-718181

CD ROUND UP

No, not games for the CD32! Gary Fenton gets the opportunity to wade through several gigabytes of other types of entertaining software.

Imagine Enhancer: 3D objects with breathtaking detail.



Imagine 3 Enhancer

From Germany comes a CD containing some very interesting objects, fonts, attributes, and rendered pictures for users of Imagine 3. As you can see from the picture the objects are outstandingly detailed.

There are 14 objects including a racing car, an early car, a Harley, a hot rod, a jeep, an army jeep, two pickup trucks, Stingcab and Stingray cars, a stockcar racer, and Orson Well's time machine. A beautiful guitar and an elegant living room top off the collection.

For those who are stuck for 3D fonts, the disc contains 25 new fonts stored as objects. That's not all because there're 8 reflections maps, 12 sharply

scanned backdrop images, and 100 new attributes to explore! Even if you don't own Imagine 3, you could always convert the objects to LightWave or Real3D formats using an object converting program.

RATINGS

Rating 90%

INFO

Price: £49.95
Contact: Gordon Harwood Computers,
New Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire,
DE55 7BP.
Tel: 01773 836781

Amiga Desk Top Video CD

Calling all desk top video and graphics people! You'll just love this extremely affordable CD packed full with 634Mb of goodies. There's over 200 various textures in JPEG, Video Creator and 16, 64 and 256 colour IFF formats, over 200 pieces of clip art, over 200 anti-aliased fonts in sizes up to 200 points in Amiga and Postscript formats, and over 150 3D objects each in LightWave, Imagine and Sculpt formats!

It doesn't end there because around 50 utility programs have also been included covering 3D object manipulation, video databases, image generators and processing, titling and

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If you have any CDs you'd like mentioned in **AUI** then why not send them in? **AUI** is a strong believer in CD technology as the Ed will tell you.

DTV CD: The awesome Manga Girl is just one of many 3D objects and other delights.



genlock suitable utilities, and picture and animation viewers. This CD is worth every penny. Another gem from Almathera!

RATINGS

Rating 99%

INFO

Price: £14.99
Contact: Almathera, Southerton House,
Boundary Business Court, 92-94 Church
Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3TD.
Tel: 0181 687 0040

PhotoLite

At last, an easy way for CD32 owners to view PhotoCDs! Just pop this disc into the CD32 and PhotoLite will quickly load. Replace the disc with a PhotoCD and you can then view any photograph from the disc. Images are displayed in a very high resolution with a 24 bit palette and look stunning - providing the original photographs are any good!

The software is easy to use but fairly basic with no fancy features. The actual program is only 60k in size, but hey, it does the job!

Unfortunately it's an expensive disc yet essential if you want to view PhotoCDs on a CD32. If you have a keyboard and disk drive you could alternatively try a viewer from the public domain.

RATINGS

Rating 65%

INFO

Price: £19.99
Contact: Silica Tel: 0181 309 1111

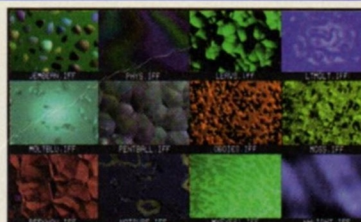


Texture Heaven: Marble, wood and abstract textures.

As animators will tell you, 24 bit textures can take up a whacking great chunk of your hard disk. That's why texture CDs are so useful. Take this one for instance; there are 245 various wood textures, 53 marble textures, 8 tiles, 59 abstract designs, 18 images of wilderness scenery, and 135 symbols. All images are in 24bit IFF and 256 colour formats.

The quality is second to none but unfortunately, being a Canadian product, the images are in the NTSC format - 768x480 pixels. If you use textures for presentation purposes (Scala, MediaPoint) then you must rescale them to PAL resolution. This won't be a problem for 3D animators since the textures will be wrapped around objects. Thumbnails on the CD help to select textures at a glance to save time loading them all up.

Texture Heaven 1



Texture Heaven 2: Some of the wierd and wonderful abstract textures.

The second disc in the Texture Heaven series contains 164 rather intriguing miscellaneous textures. They look as if they've been generated using Essence, the algorithmic textures package from Apex Software. The images are duplicated six times in BMP, Frame-store, HAM8, IFF24, JPEG, and PAL IFF24 formats. The latter is the only PAL format, all of the others are in NTSC. Again, thumbnails are provided for quick reference.

It's quite an expensive disc considering you could have created the textures yourself using Essence (if you have Essence!), but having them on CD saves you acres of precious hard disk space and endless hours of Essence rendering.

RATINGS

Texture Heaven 1 Rating 80%
Texture Heaven 2 Rating 80%

INFO

Texture Heaven 1 Price: 300 francs
Texture Heaven 1 Price: 500 francs
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Tel: 010 33 275 96000

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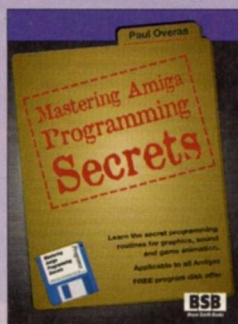
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Dyfed, S. Wales SA18 2HE

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BLOCKBUSTERS

Does anyone know the way to stop these blockbusters from BSB becoming essential reading and viewing?

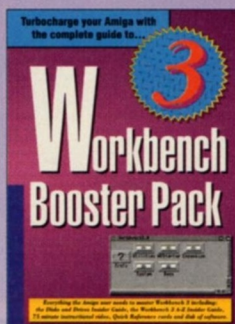


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This is now my 4th review of Pixel 3D! From version 1, then 2, then it grew into Pixel 3D PROFESSIONAL and now comes version 2 of what is generally called PixPro. So is it really worth a full review or would a simple update be enough? A full review is certainly the order of the day, because yet again, Pixel 3D has been completely re-written from, as they say, the ground up. Well, that's what Scott Thede (the programmer) told me. Let's see if he's right.

Why Re-write P3D Pro 1?

Lots of the loaders and savers didn't work properly, were too slow or had bugs. The interface, although nice in places, was too complicated and obscure for many of the functions (especially smoothing). The manual was no help. ARexx had been removed. Lastly, many of the functions were simply incredibly slow.

Specific/vital problems/omissions

1. DXF input/output seemed horribly unreliable and bugged. This was a major problem, because DXF is

ther Axiom or I have found a DXF file that won't convert.

PostScript input is there, as long as your PostScript file is a LEGAL PostScript image or font. The only problems you are likely to encounter are if your PS file is non-standard. An example would be an Adobe Illustrator file. This is not standard PS, it is Adobe Illustrator PS. Just make sure that the original file will print on a postscript printer and you should be fine.

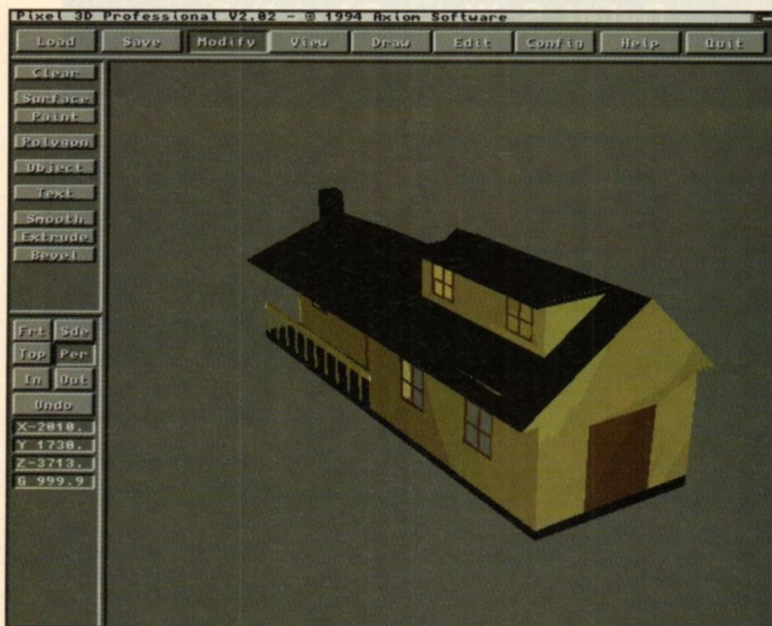
Hierarchies and surfaces are generally loaded, converted and saved without a problem and in fact control over both, goes further than just conversion...

Goodies

PixPro 2 has a whole host of new goodies, that should make your 3D life easier and quicker.

Barry McCarthy test drives for the fourth time a graphics product that just goes on getting better and better.

PIXEL 3D PROFESSIONAL 2



Here's the house, knock on the door...

the ONLY universal 3D object format that exists across all platforms.

2. PostScript input/output was missing. The other universal format, this time for images and fonts. Also, PostScript is resolution independent, so you don't get palatalisation problems at all and you don't need to process the image or font with a smoothing algorithm.

3. Object hierarchies and surface names were not transferred between formats.

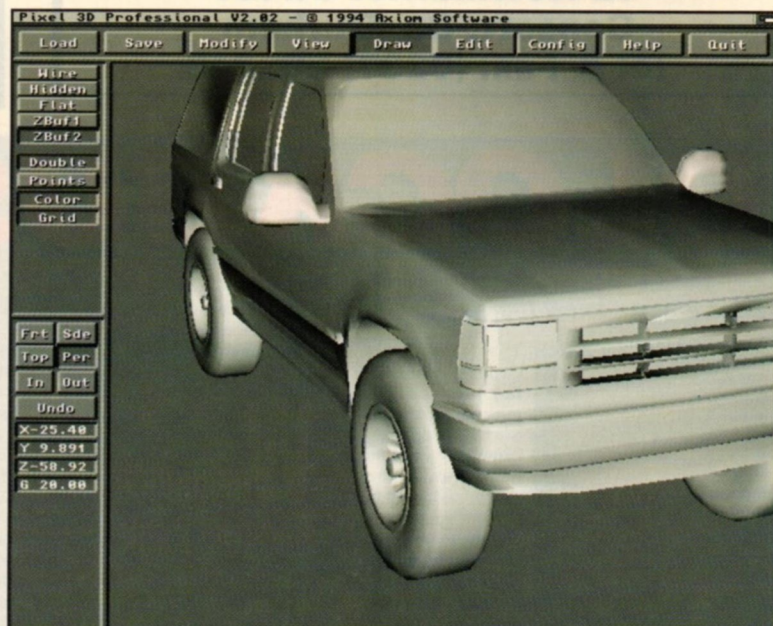
Cured or Killed?

A resounding CURED! DXF input and output appears nigh-on perfect. Nei-

As before, it automatically chooses which loader to use for any file, be it object, image or scene. Changes are that images can be automatically cut down to 2 colour images from, say, 24 bit.

Also, the smoothing requester is displayed at the end of each image conversion. You can still choose not to smooth but there isn't really any point. The smoothing requester itself, has gone through a big change (good). It is now very simple and straight forward to use and actually works very well. A major improvement this.

The extrude and bevel tools are still around and still work well. One



The new display in 256 shades of grey

recent omission seems to be the spin extrude. Maybe they thought it was already well covered in most 3D packages, which is probably true.

It's much more stable and professional, with buttons laid out in a more logical and uncluttered format.

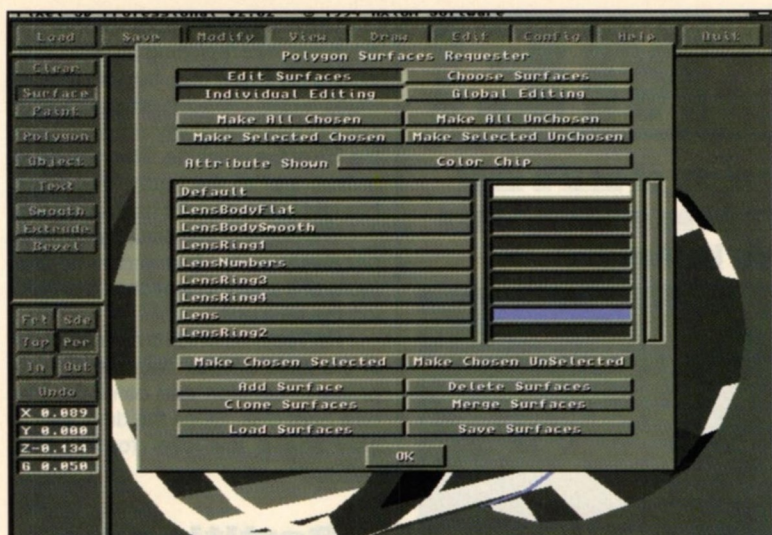
There are a few new requesters. The Surfaces requester allows you to manipulate surfaces individu-

ally or globally. You can change their colour, name and whether smoothing is on or not.

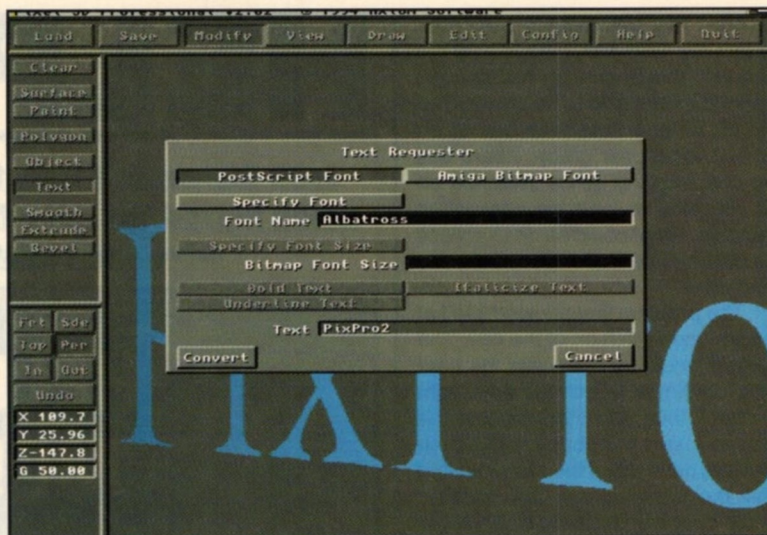
The new Object requester now shows you the hierarchical relationships of the individual objects that make up the group that you are looking at. This can then be manipulated at will. As far as I know, there isn't a piece of software that can do this so easily. Excellent.

Objects can also exist in either a background or foreground layer within PixPro. Each object or layer can then be manipulated individually.

And now we have the thing that everyone goes on and on about



The new surfaces requester



Transforming PostScript fonts

but is in fact almost completely useless. It's like graphic equalisers and nonalcoholic beer. And it is...

3D Painting. I won't dwell on this. It gives you the ability to paint directly onto the surface of your 3D display and change the colour of the polygons that you move across. If you find it useful, then well done. It's there if you need it.

Interface

Yet again, Pixel 3D gets another new interface. But this time, they've pretty much got it right.

It adjusts automatically to PAL and in fact it will automatically adjust to bigger monitors and screens as well. There is also a depth gadget in the top right.

An amazing invention, the depth gadget. Amazing too, that so many people seem to ignore it.

The feel for the interface is the best yet. It's much more stable and professional, with buttons laid out in a more logical and uncluttered format. Essentially, the main buttons across the top, when pressed, reveal their own set of buttons down the left hand side. It's an easy system to get used to and avoids sensory overload.

The interface now has ARexx back on board. Could be useful, especially for batch conversions of objects, images or fonts.

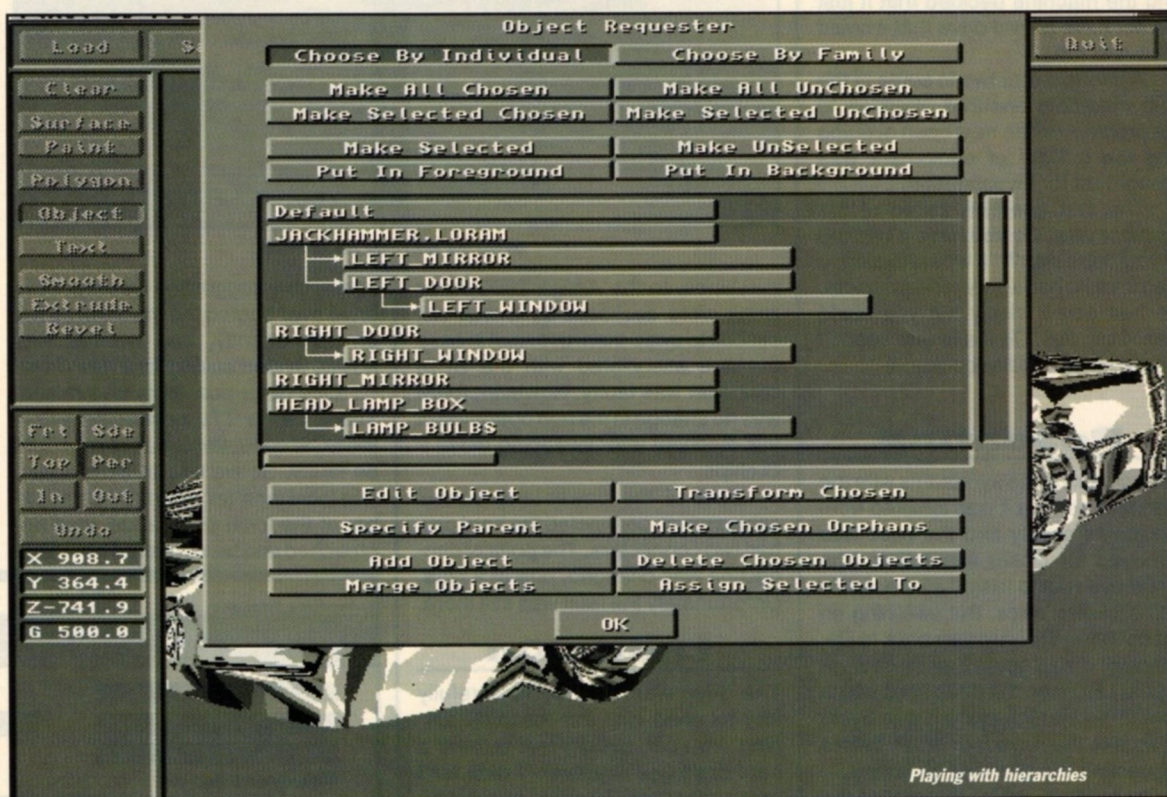
The memory handling is also much improved. Instead of simply running out of allocated memory and having to re-start the program with more RAM allocation, it will now automatically adjust RAM use as it needs it. Why can't ADPro do this?

Conclusion

If you do 3D on the Amiga, get it.

Simple as that. I just can't see how you can do without it.

Pixel 3D Professional 2 is now truly professional and Scott Thede should be proud of his programming efforts. Well done. **AUI**



Playing with hierarchies

RATINGS

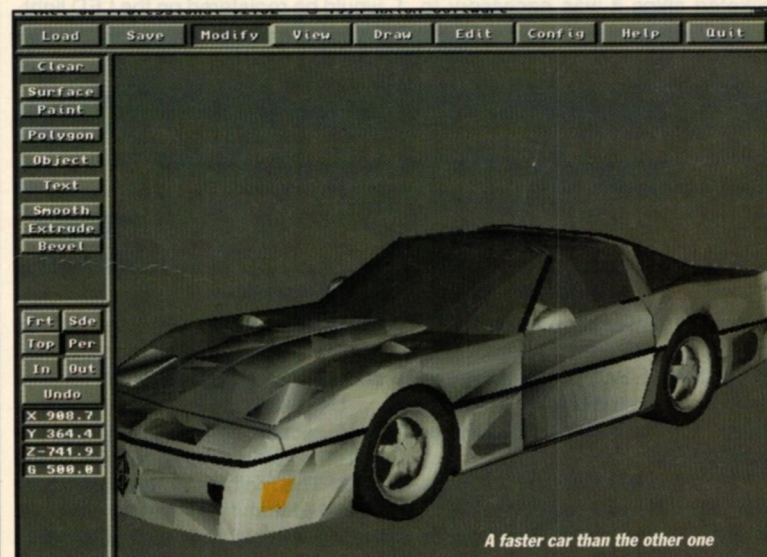
Pixel 3D Pro2

FEATURES	95%
PERFORMANCE	93%
EASE OF USE	84%
SPEED	72%
DOCUMENTATION	75%
VALUE FOR MONEY	89%

Overall Rating 93%

INFO

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A faster car than the other one

HELP ME!

John Bickerstaff tells the story of how a user group played the good fairy when a wicked hard drive went nasty on its Amiga.



Do you feel like crying out for help?

I don't feel well today, I can't contact my hard disk, please help me find it" this is what an Amiga 3000 desktop model said to its owner. The owner, a long time member of an ICPUG local user group, heard this cry one morning as he switched on his machine to load his accounting package. What could he do to access his data? What had happened to his hard drive.

The problem first showed itself at the second switch on of the day. The system would try to access the hard disk four times (watch the drive light to check this) and then request the user to insert the floppy workbench disk into drive df0. If the owner waited until the following day the machine would boot from the hard disk without a falter. However, even this ceased and the machine decided that it just did not have a hard drive that it could read and run.

A phone call or two to some of the club members ensured attention to the problem on the next open evening and the full set of equipment was brought up for investigation.

The first question asked of the member was "Do you have a backup of your hard disk?". It was pleasing to learn that he had a very recent backup. He had acted wisely but you could learn from this. Do make and keep in a safe place regular backups!

Reseating

After checking the symptoms with the machine running it was isolated from the mains supply and the case was removed for closer inspection. The first move was to reseal all the visible and socketed chips. But switching on did not bring the hard disk back to life; although it was noted that there were repeat LED's on the drive itself which confirmed that the system was trying to access the drive four times before requesting the Workbench floppy.

In order to get at the rest of the socketed chips it was necessary to

machines. In the Amiga 3000 these chips were socketed so it was not difficult to swap them over just in case the one associated with the SCSI controller was faulty. However, there was no change in the non operation of this machine after swapping these I/O chips.

Both of the power and control cables which connected the hard disk had two connectors. The point of connection was changed, one at a time. Unfortunately the fault was still there.

Lights On

The drive was listened to carefully and touched with the machine running. You can usually feel or hear a hard drive working even if data isn't being accessed. Reading and writing would be registered on the LED light,

again. One suggestion was that if the drive ever booted the machine be left on permanently, and another was advice to start saving for a new drive.

One other possibility was raised. There was a TTL connected within the SCSI controller circuit which might be faulty. So we had to think again. The local repairer, who is also a member of the local user group, was approached and he wondered if the fault

Once it had been proved that the drive required replacing an order was placed for a new one, but this time of much larger capacity, since the cost per Mb had drastically reduced over the life of the machine. The new drive arrived and all the equipment again brought to the club for its installation.

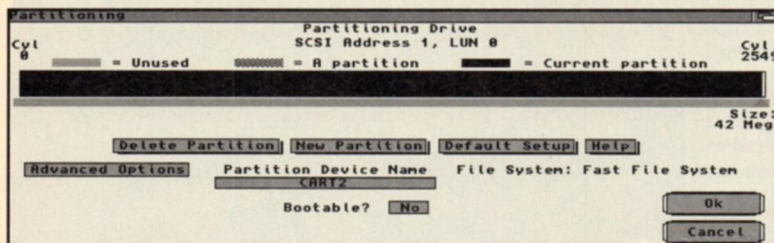
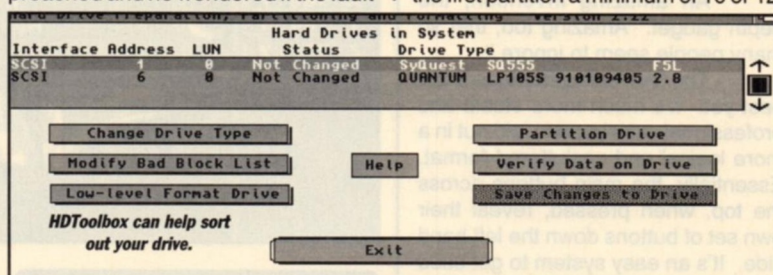
The physical installation was comparatively easy, just removing the faulty unit and re-connecting and bolting the new unit.

HDToolbox, which is naturally kept in the tools drawer, was required to prepare, partition and configure the new hard disk. Since the drive was a new one a low-level format was needed.

Partitioning

Partitioning was next. It is necessary to consider where you wish to store your programs and your data before proceeding, remembering that each time a change is made to the partition size all data will be destroyed and it will be necessary to reload all programs and to restore the data from the backup media.

In general the first partition would be set up to take the Workbench files. If you think that this is of constant size once installed you would be wrong. New programs that are installed will have an installation script, although you may not know or see what they contain. The scripts cause files to be added to the Workbench area, especially fonts to the fonts directory and some assigns within the startup sequence in the S directory. So make the first partition a minimum of 10 or 12



This is how you can sort out hard drive partitions.

remove the power supply unit (PSU) which in turn required the removal of the hard disk. Sadly, reseating the remaining socketed chips was not the answer, the hard disk resolutely refused to boot.

There are two identical I/O chips mounted on the main logic board each covering different ports. Commodore have fitted two similar chips in all their

which was not happening on this A3000 since the system could not access the hard drive.

Use was made of the Amiga/hardware section on CIX to ascertain if any other CIXen had had similar problems. The majority of the comments indicated that it was almost certainly the hard drive that had stuck and would not, and never would, rotate

was a virus. This was not considered to be the correct answer as the system booted from the floppy Workbench disk successfully, but access to the hard drive was not available, the system just could not find it.

Replacement

Eventually the repairer received a similar machine for repair, with an entirely different fault. Based on our original thoughts of substitution (which we were not able to try because similar equipment was not owned by any other club member) the suspect hard disk was tried in the other machine and still did not work. But the hard disk from the second machine worked in our member's apparently faulty Amiga 3000.

Mb and bootable. It may be acceptable to sub-divide the rest of the space into two sections, one for programs and the other for data.

Unless the new drive is exactly the same make and size as the first disk, HDTools requests entry of details of the new drive unit. Don't forget to delete details of the earlier fitted drive before asking the program to read the specifications of the new drive. This setting up shouldn't be considered a daunting process but it's often reassuring to have other knowledgeable Amiga users with you. And that's just where your local computer club comes in. If you want to contact ICPUG for information on your local user group, call John Bickerstaff on 081 651 5436. **AUI**

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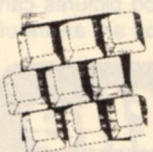
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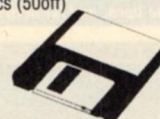
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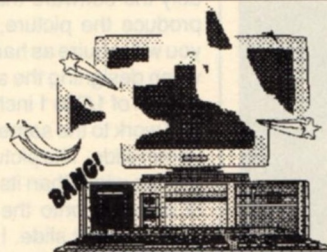
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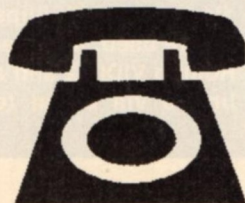
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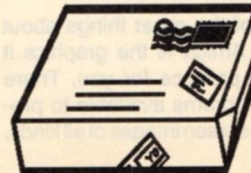


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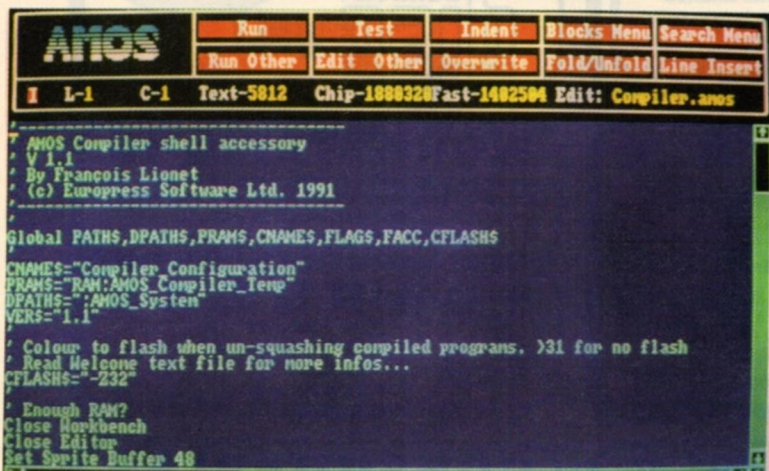
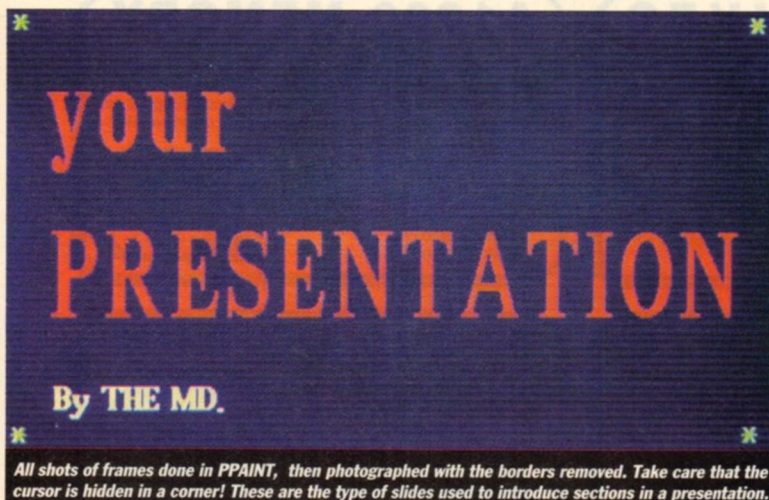
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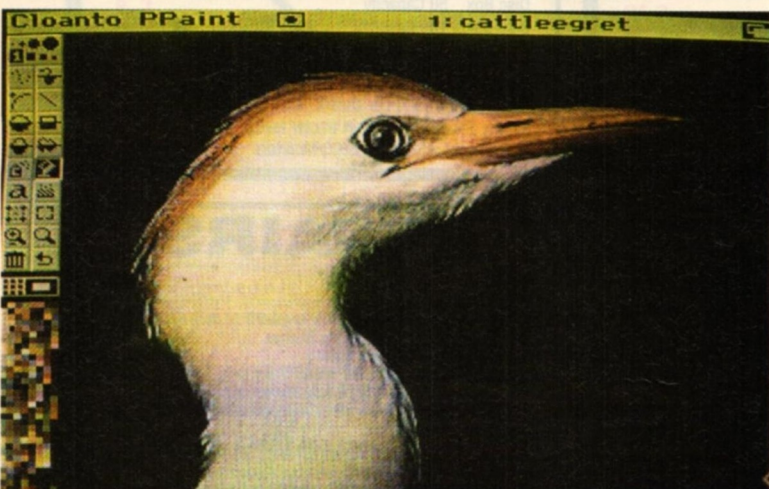


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Just Picture



Shot showing a serious Amiga screen. Pictures of this type, taken of industrial process control screens can be very useful in lectures and for training purposes. They are clear and sharp. Easily read by someone at the back, and far better at getting attention than an overhead projector.



One of my own digitised photographs loaded into a paint program. This allows some interesting work to be done on the screen - changing parts of pictures, building up montages etc. The professionals do it with very expensive gear, you can make a possible stab with your current Amiga!

One of the great things about the Amiga is the graphics it can produce for you. There are many programs available to produce superb screen images of all kinds,

and these can be transferred to video quite easily as we all know. However, unless you have a very expensive printer indeed, hard copy can be rather lacking when compared to the screen,

It!

Paul Broadbent shows you how to make your screen creations come alive outside your computer.

and the ability to produce 35mm colour slides for presentations requires sending the files away on disk to suitable printing houses to have the slides made. High quality photographic quality prints are similarly difficult to achieve ... Or are they?

As well as my interest in computers, I have a long standing involvement with photography. Over 30 years ago I was taught many aspects of photography, both camera craft and the processing side as part of my technical training. I have learned too, with a minimum of photographic equipment, you can produce excellent colour slides, or colour/black and white prints from your computer VDU or TV very cheaply indeed.

SLR

Let's look at the computer side initially. You already have the Amiga, and probably the software that you require, to produce the picture, or pictures that you will require as hard copy. It is wise, when designing the screen, to leave a margin of 1/2 to 1 inch round the edge, and work to the same dimensions as a 35mm slide. The picture should be 1 1/2 times wider than its depth in order to fit correctly onto the 1 1/2 by 1 inch 35mm colour slide. I draw a frame of this size first before producing my desired image within it.

You will, of course, get the best results from a monitor - the higher the resolution of the display, the better will be the final image - but a TV will do.

The camera you need MUST be a 35mm Single Lens Reflex - but these are now very common - fitted with a lens that will focus close enough

to fill the frame with the monitor screen. Most modern zooms will easily allow this and produce quite adequate results, although some barrel or pin-cushion distortion can result. That is straight lines near the edge of the frame tending to look a little bent! I use a macro lens, designed for such purposes, but these can be rather expensive and are really not necessary.

With the required image on the screen, adjust the monitor/TV controls to achieve a saturated image with good contrast. Note the settings used, and even mark the position of the knobs on the set with a spot of nail varnish if you really need a memory jogger!

Set up the camera loaded with the desired type of film rated at 100 or 200 ISO - that is the film speed - in front of the screen and mounted on a firm tripod. Slower films tend to produce better results than fast as they have a finer grain size. Try and get the camera back parallel to the screen as this helps to get the image sharp all over and reduces distortion. Have the desired image area filling the frame, so that the curved edges of the screen are not shown. A zoom can help here and save a lot of moving the tripod back and forth. Focus the image sharply and either fit a cable release to the camera, or use the delayed action device to achieve shake free results. Hands should NOT be touching the camera when the shutter fires.

Exposure Now, the real problem is exposure. Good pictures can only be achieved if you are aware of

For the Record

All these pictures were taken on Fujichrome 100 loaded in a Canon T90 fitted with 90mm Tamron Macro lens and the camera mounted on a strong tripod. Room curtains were closed and lights off for each shot to prevent any light falling on the screen and thus reducing contrast.

An A1200 with 4 Meg and 210 Meg Hard drive, external floppy and Phillips monitor were used, together with a Rombo VIDI 12 and a CD32 linked via serial to A1200.

how a monitor/TV produces its display. The screen scans once every 1/50th of a second, so there are two full scans in 1/25th second.

You must NOT use flash - if the camera has an automatic flash, switch it off. If you would like to try auto exposure, it is important that the shutter speed used is 1/25th second or less. Set the camera to shutter priority exposure control and check the exposure. The auto selected aperture is

Mark the position of the knobs on the set with a spot of nail varnish if you really need a memory jogger!

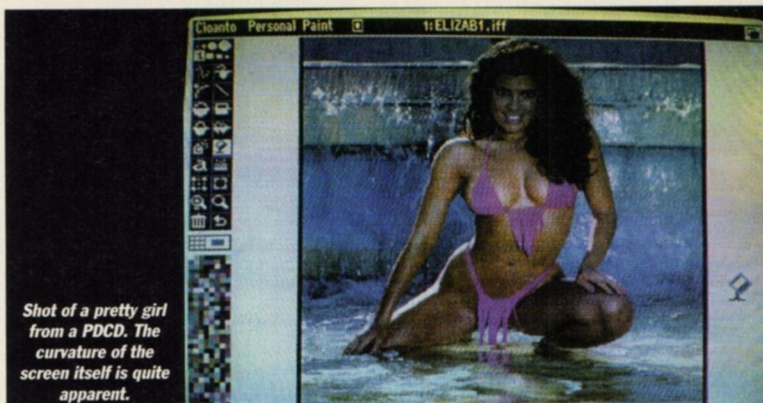
likely to be f2.8 or f4. Some zoom lenses do not have wide apertures, but as a tripod is being used, a shutter speed of about 1/10th second could be selected. The important factor is that the camera records exactly an

even number of scans, and no 'part' scans, which result in dark or light lines across the screen.

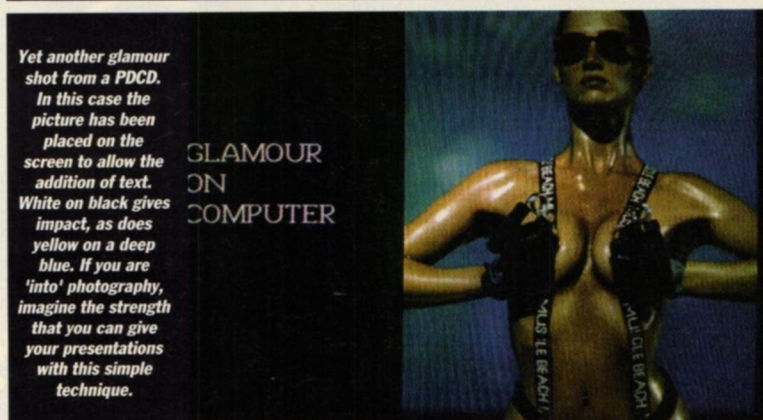
The best way is to shoot some test exposures initially. Try a series of different shutter speeds and apertures, preferably on the manual setting so that you know EXACTLY what is happening, and note what you did for each shot on a piece of paper. Make sure the image used for your tests is as average as possible - not too dark or light.

When the slides/prints come back, examine them with respect to your notes and, with luck, at least one setting should be spot on. You must, of course, use the same speed of films, but 100 ISO slide film is exactly as sensitive as 100 ISO print film, so that shouldn't be a problem.

There you have it. From then on, all you need to do is set things up in exactly the same way, and results are almost guaranteed. You can have colour slides for projection and as part of presentations, or you could use colour negative to allow the production of large prints. If you already own the equipment, or can borrow it, some excellent pictures are at your fingertips at minimum cost. **AUI**



Shot of a pretty girl from a PDGD. The curvature of the screen itself is quite apparent.



Yet another glamour shot from a PDGD. In this case the picture has been placed on the screen to allow the addition of text. White on black gives impact, as does yellow on a deep blue. If you are 'into' photography, imagine the strength that you can give your presentations with this simple technique.

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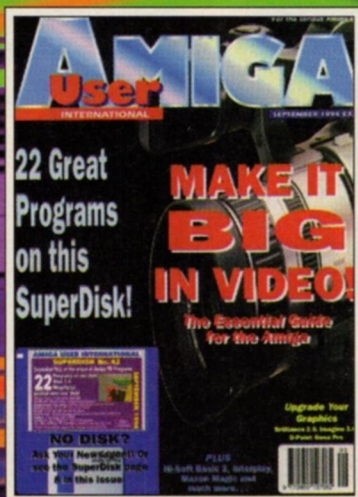
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LASER FORCE



**An *AUI* Special Guide To The
Emerging World Of Amiga
Laser Printing**

Laser

It has never been a better time or a cheaper time to have a laser printer in your home or office. Mark Blackham puts the spotlight on lasers to see how they work and why you would want to use laser force in your printing.

If you've worked in an office, chances are that you have used a laser printer. You probably already know that their performance is fast (four pages a minute at the very least), quiet, and that they produce 'perfect' quality output.

Laser printers are the standard by which all other home and office computer printers are today measured. Many manufacturers claim their dot matrix or ink jet printers produce "laser-like quality". That means the output looks pretty darn good, but it still isn't as good as a laser printer!

If you haven't seen the output of a laser printer, take a closer look at the text on this page and compare it with the output of your trusty dot matrix or ink-jet. That's the difference.

Compared to the smooth lines of laser output, dot matrix or ink jet produce jagged images. Unlike laser printers they cannot get the dots as small on the page as they are on your screen.

Business and professional level DTP, word processing and image manipulation all need high resolution output, particularly if other people are to view the work. Even if high quality output isn't essential, a laser printer will help your work look professional.

And that's worth having, isn't it?

Digital Printing

Computers form text and images by placing dots in specific patterns on the screen or printed page. Although other factors affect the quality of printed output, the higher the number of dots per square inch (dpi), the better the quality.

Dot matrix printers now average around 200 dpi. Many ink jet printers are better than 300 dpi, and laser jets start at 300 dpi.

Those specifications are merely the theoretical capability. Due to the methods of applying the ink to the page, the printers do a varying job in attaining the claimed quality of output. Laser printers generally do the best at getting an image the closest to its digital resolution, and at the fastest speed.

Alternatives

Dot matrix printers use one or two lines of long pins on a print head which



are instructed according to the computer data to fire out of the print head in a certain pattern. They strike out at the printer paper from behind the printer ribbon, leaving behind tiny dots where they connected with the paper.

Non-impact printing methods like the ink-jet are quieter - nothing strikes the paper or platen except for a soft squishy blob of ink delivered from tiny nozzles. Recent ink-jets use 48 individual nozzles to obtain a resolution of 360 dots per inch (dpi) - better than some cheaper laser printers.

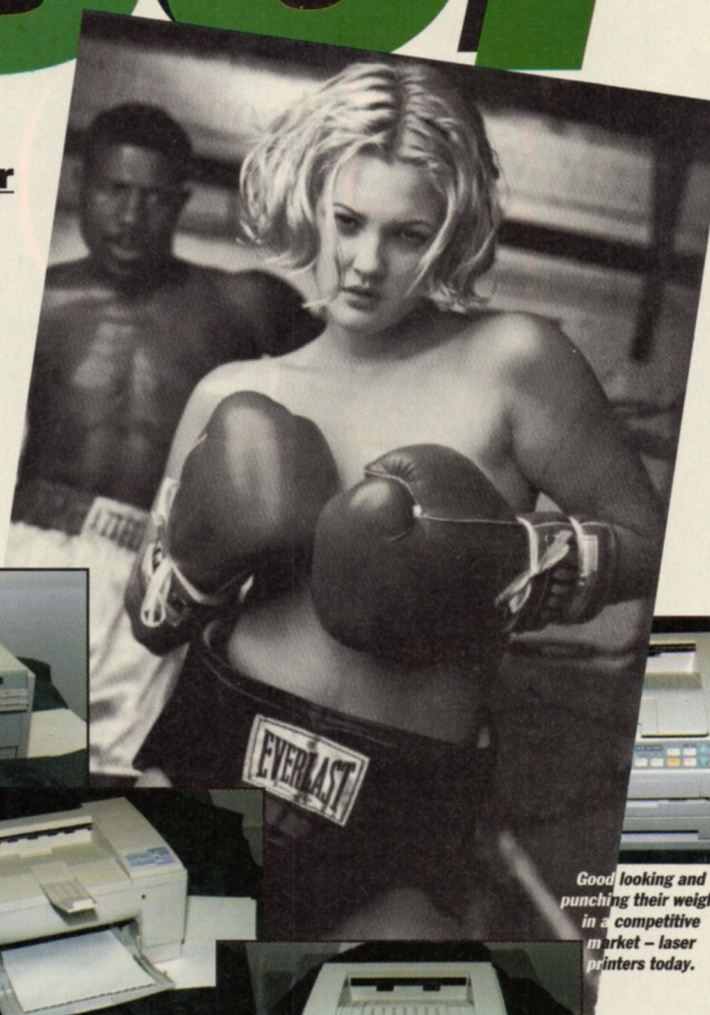
Ink-jet printing is the path to the best quality colour printing on the Amiga. Colour dot matrix printers suffer from a weakness of colour and dotty appearance. Colour laser printers are unbeatable for quality, but cost a phenomenal number of thousands of pounds.

The Laser that Isn't

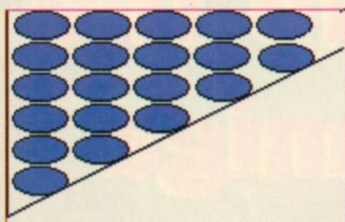
Some cheaper "laser printers" don't actually use lasers but a special LED system to create a similar-looking output. The price of laser technology has made the cost-cutting alternative increasingly unnecessary, and none of the printers reviewed here use LEDs.

Inside the Laser Printer

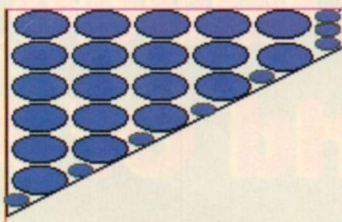
The laser printer mechanism centres on a photosensitive print drum. It rotates within the printer, attracting toner (powdered ink) and placing it on



Good looking and punching their weight in a competitive market - laser printers today.



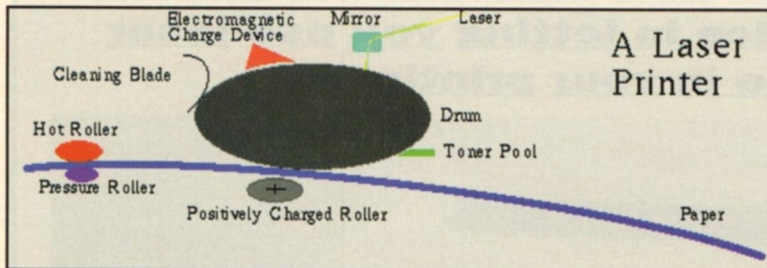
Dot Matrix



Laser Dot Matrix

A laser printer manages much better resolution than standard Amiga printers.

Force!



How it works . . .

paper that rolls around the drum. Just imagine one of those old hand-cranked printers - like my old school used twenty years ago. With the laser printer, the drum has new pages printed onto it by a laser as it turns.

The printer receives a page of data from the computer and starts up the drum.

A blade scrapes excess toner and paper dust off the drum which remain from the last printing job, and special lamps kill any rogue electrical charges.

A clean negative electrical charge is then applied to the face of the whole drum, which primes it for receiving the computer information.

At the write stage, the drum passes a laser beam scans across the drum, writing information onto the surface through a 6-sided rotating mirror. This information is essentially a dot matrix pattern - only more precise than any other printer can manage.

This is the most complex and ingenious part of the process, since the com-

puter has converted the data from your screen into bits of information for transfer to the printer which then recreates that data onto the drum. It re-draws your image or page so it wraps around the drum face.

Where the laser strikes the drum the earlier negative electrical charge is weakened, while the untouched surface remains at the higher charge.

The toner, containing iron particles, is attracted to the areas of lower negative charge.

Paper moves between the drum and positively charged roller, which attracts the toner back onto the paper.

The toner stays on the paper at this stage only because of the electromagnetic attraction. It could be wiped off easily, so must be fused onto the paper to fix it in place. It is melted through heat and pressure generated by a fusing station

consisting of a hot non-stick roller above and a soft roller that applies pressure to the paper from below.

Then the paper exits the printer and the drum continues rotating into po-

sition for the next page or job.

The large office laser printers tend to use a stand-alone drum and separate toner cartridge. The smaller and cheaper laser printers use an all-in-one replaceable drum and toner cartridge. Either way, the printing method is essentially the same.

Consumables

Consumables - what the printer uses up in the printing process - are an important consideration. If you want the output quality, then you have to accept that you will be regularly stung for pricier consumables.

Keep the cost of consumables in mind when buying a laser printer. The printer price may seem cheap, but the

running costs of consumables could cripple you financially.

Separate toner cartridges and drums cost between £30 and £100 each. The all-in-one drum / toner cartridge of smaller laser HP LaserJet 4P cost around £50 and should, on average, print at least 3000-4000 A4 pages before running out.

Driving Your Laser Printer

The vast majority of laser printers can use a standard printing language called PostScript to print their files. PS is a powerful computer-printing language used to describe how a page looks. Software like DTP programs can pre-



An all-in-one drum (the green cylinder) and toner cartridge.

pare their files in the PostScript format for transmission to printer. Having a PS compatible printer is advantageous, but not necessary. Many of the cheaper, entry level laser printers do not use PS.

Because of this special PostScript language and the different printing method, your computer needs to drive the printer in a special way. Software "Printer drivers" convert the page information flowing from the Amiga into a format your printer can understand.

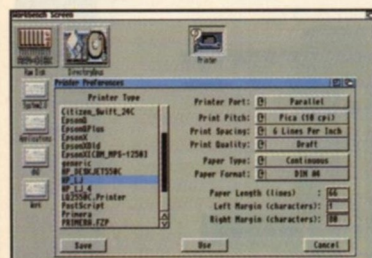
Each printer needs its own unique driver, but in practice most printers will "emulate" a few standards, like EpsonX and EpsonQ for dot matrix printers and EpsonLQ800 and HP DeskJet for ink-jet printers.

Laser printers won't understand these standards so need special Amiga-compatible drivers to push out pages.

It's possible that your software already contains the necessary drivers to run a laser printer. Check in the manual and the program's printer preferences list.

If your laser comes with an Amiga driver, you'll need to install it into your printer preferences. It's a safe bet that if you buy a laser printer which can emulate the HPLaserJet/4 standard, you can get it to run with the Amiga, since there are plenty of Amiga HPLaserJet drivers available in the Public Domain.

A more complete option is to get hold of a printing utility program like Digita Print Manager (which comes with WordWorth) or the powerful Studio II.



Choosing a laser driver from a printer preferences list.

Top Output

Although still in the top price bracket for printers, the price of lasers has fallen dramatically. Laser printers have never been more affordable. £500 will now give you access to that superb quality which was costing over £1000 not more than a year ago.

People always judge by appearance. If something looks professional, then half your battle to impress them is won.

The printed presentation is ultimately the answer to improving your DTP, word processing and image creation work. You cannot get a better print output from your desk top than a laser printer.

Test Drive

Aitor Ibarra sets up four laser printers that could satisfy the needs and the pockets of Amiga users. Test driving them gives a good view of what is now available for quality, speed and price in letting you use laser force in your printing.



Hewlett Packard LaserJet 4P

HP are one of the world's most successful printer manufacturers, although the InkJets and LaserJets represent a departure from their traditional bread and butter: mini computers and workstations. HP lasers have set a standard which others are judged by; all the printers in this test emulate HP LaserJet standards.

We are now in the fourth generation of LaserJets, and they have matured into very capable beasts. HP machines are very elegant mechanically and aesthetically, and the 4P reviewed here is no exception. The footprint is small (although not the smallest of those on test) and the printer is fairly squat. The 250 sheet paper cassette slides out from underneath the machine, and there is a neat little plastic orange tab which drops down to tell you when paper is running low.

After printing the paper emerges face down at the top of the printer, in a recess which acts as a paper tray. I find this preferable to the use of flimsy plastic support arms which other print-

ers use. If you print a lot of pages at once you know that they'll be properly supported instead of sagging and curling.

All main settings are accessed via a simple control panel with a very neat LCD alphanumeric display, which is also used to report status messages. This facility is very important for the Amiga user, as we don't have access to the special Windows software that can be used to control the printer directly from a PC.

The 4P is a 600dpi machine, making it capable of much better quality prints than the average 300dpi. This was particularly evident in the text tests. The bitmap test came out far too dark at 600 dpi, however. This was due to the dithering employed; half-tone dithering would have worked better, reducing the problem of the toner not being quite up to the resolution of the printer.

Because of the way the Amiga handles printing, most prints will either be bitmaps or simple text; the structured graphics abilities of PCL5 won't

be used. As a result the Intel 80960 32bit RISC CPU at the heart of this machine will hardly be pushed to the limit. You can upgrade the printer to PostScript Level 2 with a SIMM card, and I expect PostScript will tax the CPU more heavily. The P4 is a very fast performer, and could process the pages we used in the test much faster than the four pages per minute print engine could run them out.

Accessible

The 4P's 3 SIMM slots, which will take up to 24 MB of RAM, are easily accessible by removing a panel on the side of the machine. The average user will never need more than the basic 2MB built in to the machine; PostScript won't be comfortable unless you have at least 4MB, but anything over 8MB is probably overkill.

The toner cartridge is reached by opening a hatch on the top the machine, and easily pulled out and replaced. The cartridge is a complete imaging cartridge, contain-



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Test Drive CONTINUED

56 ing all the consumables as well as the toner. The sensitive OPC drum is protected by a sprung plastic flap, which closes when the cartridge is removed from the printer. HP earn some environmental brownie points by paying the postage for you to send them spent cartridges for recycling.

And even more praiseworthy is the fact that HP have redesigned their LaserJets so that they do not emit any ozone; this is a big plus point if you value your health.

Conclusion

The HP, while not being the the Rolls Royce of laser printers (you'd have to spend a bit more!) is a dependable, well featured workhorse, and well worth the extra money.

RATINGS

BUILD QUALITY	85%
FEATURES	85%
PRINT QUALITY	90%
VALUE FOR MONEY	75%

Overall Rating 82%

INFO

RRP: £829+VAT

Toner: £68+VAT

PostScript upgrade: £234+VAT

4MB RAM (necessary for PS):

£236+VAT



EPSON EPL 3000



Epson were the biggest name in dot matrix printers, but from my experience of this printer, they haven't translated that success into the world of laser printers. This printer screams "cheap cheap cheap" - without a particularly cheap price tag.

The printer has a very small footprint, but it cheats by having both the paper input and output trays stick out the front of the machine. I prefer having them integrated with the rest of the printer; otherwise they are likely to get knocked about.

The stupidest design "feature" of this printer is to have the parallel port actually inside the machine. To connect the cable to the printer, you have to remove a flimsy side panel. Finger access to the actual port is fiddly. Once the cable is connected, it threads through a hole at the back, which I suppose looks neater, but is very impractical if you have to disconnect the cable.

There is no LCD control panel; just a set of three status LEDs. This printer is designed primarily for the Windows market, and comes with control panel software, but we Amiga users have to do without. Generally, you probably won't need to change any of the default settings, but it would be nice to have the ability.

No Manual Feed

Unlike the other printers on test, the Epson doesn't have a manual feed so you won't be able to print on envelopes and the like. It doesn't have a sheet paper cassette, which isn't too much of a problem, but it can only take 100 sheets of paper in the input tray.

Printing speed is reasonably fast, and the engine runs at 4 pages per minute. The printer emulates HP's PCL5. The quality, however, leaves a little to be desired; text and line graphics aren't quite as smooth as the other printers on test, but the blacks are strong.

You can expand the RAM beyond the standard 1 Mb, which is enough for a whole page at 300dpi. The printer accepts standard 72 pin SIMMS, but getting at the slots is a bit of a bind. You can add a SIMM which gives you PostScript compatibility; this is "EpsonScript Level 2" which is a clone of the latest version of Adobe's PostScript. I've not seen Epson's clone, but in my experience PostScript clones are not always 100% compatible with the true Adobe language.

The imaging cartridge is reached by pressing a button which releases the top of the printer. The cartridge has nice big handle so it's easy to pull out and swap with another. Like the HP cartridge, it has a sprung flap to pro-

tect the OPC drum - always a good idea.

Conclusion

I see the Epson as one step up from a bubble/ink jet printer; and it should be priced accordingly. The print quality we achieved was not as good as the average of our lasers but still a substantial improvement over a bubblejet, and of course it prints much faster.

The build quality is disappointing; the least impressive of all machines tested and aesthetically looking as if it were designed by Amstrad. If you can find it for a realistic price, and you are not too bothered about its shortcomings, then consider it; otherwise save your pennies for something slightly more expensive but much better.

RATINGS

BUILD QUALITY	55%
FEATURES	65%
PRINT QUALITY	70%
VALUE FOR MONEY	50%

Overall Rating 55%

INFO

£689+VAT

Toner £89+VAT

CONTINUED ON 56

Test Drive

60 CONTINUED

SAMSUNG



I had to come up with different tests for this printer, so direct comparisons with the others are a little difficult. This is because the Samsung laser only emulates PCL4/LaserJet II rather than the PCL5/LaserJet III standard supported by the other printers. This is not a big problem for Amiga users - there is a Workbench printer driver that functions well. The other problem I had testing this printer is that the model reviewed only had 512K of RAM - not enough for a full page of 300dpi graphics.

The case of the printer is well built and everything is fairly hefty. It looks like it will survive a few knocks, although as it is fairly heavy I wouldn't recommend dropping it on your feet!

The paper is kept in a well-designed cassette which pulls out from the front of the printer. It can take up to 250 sheets of paper. There is also a manual feed option, and a straight-through paper path for printing on stiffer media. In normal use, printed pages emerge at the top of the printer, face down, in a recess which doesn't seem quite large enough to support A4 sheets properly; a support arm is used, although this is not nearly as flimsy or protruding as the Epson printer.

The imaging cartridge is reached

by opening the printer's spring-loaded top hatch. Samsung have designed and manufactured their own cartridge, but I was a shade concerned about the design in comparison to the other printers. I found that it spilt a little toner when the toner seal was removed, and the OPC drum was not covered by protective flap, so you have to be rather careful not to touch it. To their credit, Samsung have put a very clear warning on the cartridge, but human beings are not reknowned for heeding warnings! You can replace the toner and developer separately, which should keep running costs down.

Like the HP machine, the Samsung has an LCD based control panel. The printer settings are very easily changed through a simple but effective menu system.

The printing speed was very good considering that the printer could not take advantage of PCL5's bitmap compression. The quality of graphics was excellent too, with agreeably strong blacks and clearly defined text. Because of the lack of PCL5, the text facilities are not particularly wonderful, but then you can only make some use of these functions if you are using a word processor with custom drivers such as ProText.

Conclusion

This particular model had low memory but with 1mb of extra RAM it would be able to print entire A4 pages at 300dpi, which would make it much more useful. A 1mb upgrade costs £65 plus VAT, which may seem quite a lot, but the base machine is so competitively priced that it should be within your budget if you are in the market for a laser printer. With the extra memory, I'd say the Samsung is very well worth considering, as it is well-built, dependable, and of course, cheap. This could be the one for Amiga users everywhere.

RATINGS

BUILD QUALITY	75%
FEATURES	80%
PRINT QUALITY	75%
VALUE FOR MONEY	85%

Overall Rating 83%

INFO

RRP: £339+VAT, £65+VAT for 1Mb extra RAM

KYOCERA FS-1550

This printer is a very different design to the other printers on test. Kyocera have created their own print engine, which uses a special amorphous silicon drum which should last a lifetime, and they claim, is far more environmentally friendly than the average laser printer. They've called the whole idea "Ecosys".

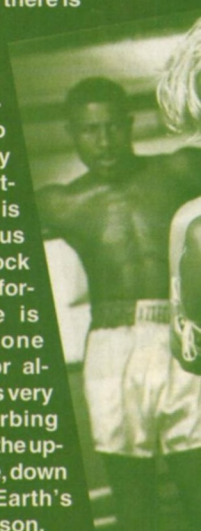
The printer departs from the current trend of self contained imaging units and sticks to the old idea of separate toner and developer units. Nothing wrong with this, so long as the results are good. I found the installation of the units a bit fiddly, but as this is normally a one-off or at least very rare procedure (Kyocera say that the only consumables are toner and paper, and the only maintenance necessary is cleaning) it didn't worry me unduly - but I have to say, that all the other printers were almost plug'n'play in comparison.

The print quality was disappointing. I used to get this quality five years ago with a laser which was crap then. The prints are poorly focussed, and there is noticeable banding in greyscale images. Worse than this, the PCL5 emulation is not 100% compatible - look at the Drew tests results to see what I mean.

Although the engine speed of this printer is very high (10 pages per

Heal

We are told that there is a gaping hole in the ozone layer, which is allowing harmful UV rays to pass too freely through our atmosphere and is giving those of us without sunblock skin cancer. Unfortunately there is plenty of ozone down here. For although ozone is very good at absorbing harmful rays in the upper atmosphere, down here on the Earth's crust it is a poison.



minute) this does not translate into particularly fast prints (look at the tests section). The parallel port seems to be very slow in comparison with the other printers.

The printer also suffered from the same problem as the Samsung - not enough installed memory to print a whole bitmap page. You can add more, but as this machine is very expensive, I don't think that it's fair that people have to cough up more just to make it useable.

These considerations, the price and in particular the quality are not compensated for by the speed. And though the "ecosys" element seems a very sensible approach to environ-

mental aspects, I don't think I can really recommend this printer to Amiga users.

RATINGS

BUILD QUALITY	85%
FEATURES	40%
PRINT QUALITY	50%
VALUE FOR MONEY	35%

Overall Rating 55%

INFO

RRP £1199.00

Toner £51.00



h Hazards

Ozone is O₃ - three atoms of oxygen grouped together. Oxygen likes to hang around in pairs, which is why ozone is so easily broken down. When you breathe ozone, your lungs can't do anything with the spare atom, and the stuff can make you feel nauseous and long term exposure can lead to health problems.

Why are we telling you this? Well, most laser printers, like other electrostatic devices such as photocopiers, pro-

duce copious amounts of ozone when printing. Modern machines produce a lot less than the older ones, but you must still make sure that the printer is well ventilated so that the ozone can escape through a window and drift up to where it is needed. None of the printers failed my rudimentary ozone sniff test, I'm glad to say, and HP's print mechanism does not produce any ozone at all.

The other potential health hazard is toner. Toner is a very fine powder, and if you spill any you should take care when clearing it up. The basic rule is: don't swallow any! Again, modern machines are lot less messy than the older ones, so don't lose any sleep over this one!

PostScript and Lasers

Adobe's PostScript page description language has become a standard for laser printers and other printing devices in the professional world. It gives word processing, DTP and structured graphic software almost total control over the appearance of the printed page, while remaining device and resolution independent. The PostScript file you use on a 300 dpi printer will work unchanged on a 600dpi machine, taking advantage of the extra resolution. Unfortunately, PostScript requires some extra hardware horsepower, so having it adds to the cost of the laser printer.

If you are using DTP software or PostScript capable graphics or word processing software on the Amiga, you'll appreciate the extra control it gives you. For advanced text and structured graphics, it relieves most of the work from the Amiga - a large solid rectangle, for instance, can be described with just four sets of co-ordinates rather than the thousands of bytes necessary for a bitmap image. This gives you faster prints, as the main bottleneck in high resolution printing is the computer rather than the printer.

Test Driving

There were two basic types of test that we used on the laser printers - quality and speed. Testing quality was fairly simple, but in testing speed we had to be careful. Because of the way the Amiga handles printing, print speed is more likely to be affected by the speed of the computer and the software it is using than by the actual printer.

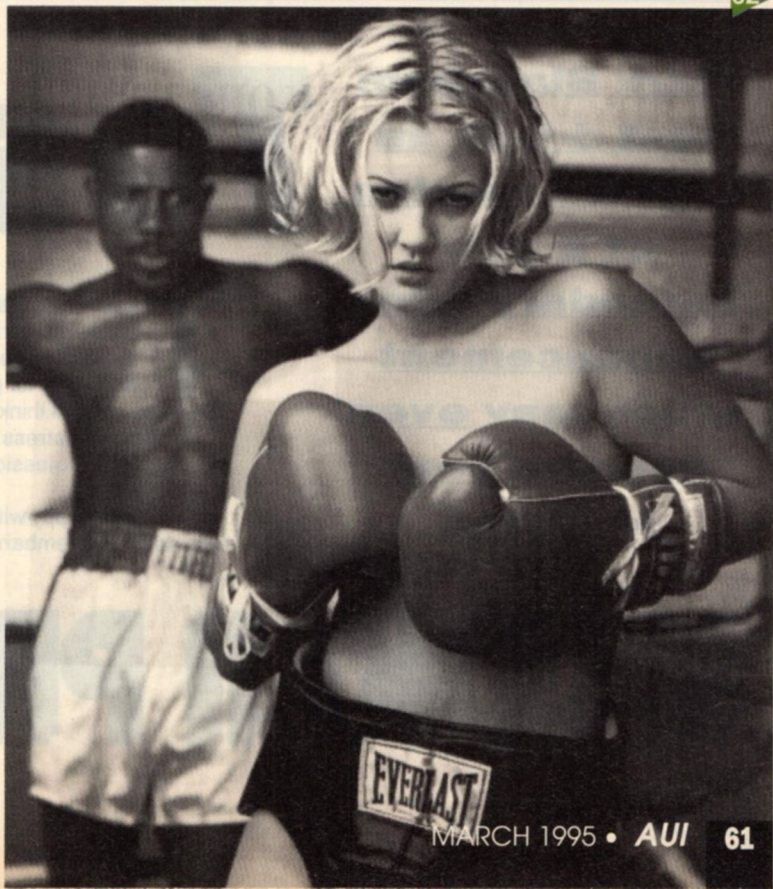
In order to isolate the printers so that we could measure their speed rather than the Amiga's, we created some standard test files that could be dumped over the parallel port - requiring minimal processing on the part of the Amiga. The results are likely to have been affected by the speed of the

Amiga's hard drive (where the test files were stored), but we consider the tests have been as accurately conducted as is useful for judgement on an Amiga..

Speed

Our basic speed test was the Drew Barrymore picture, and the printer file for this was created by printing the image at 300dpi at a size of 8.3cm x 10.7cm by using AdPro's PrefPrinter Saver. Instead of sending the result directly to the printer, the output was redirected to a disk file using CMD (supplied with Workbench).

62



Test Driving

60 CONTINUED

Here are the results:

HP 4P	0:14
Epson EPL 3000	0:32
Samsung SL1051A	0:31*
Kyocera FS-1550	1:18

*As the Samsung printer only has PCL4 rather than PCL5, the image file was larger and therefore slower to print.

These are measures of the time the printer takes to download the file; of the time it takes for the printed page to emerge. This is because several small files, each with a page to themselves, could be sent before the printer had a chance to run them off. The time for a printed page to emerge is affected by the printer engine speed, but in general this is a less important factor than the processing speed.

Quality

As well as the "Drew" test, we checked quality with some DTP prints from Pro Page and a text test from ProText. Quality is somewhat subjective, so we have included some print samples to let decide for yourself.



Kyocera FS-1550



Epson EPL 3000



Samsung SL1051A



Hewlett Packard 4P

Internal font tests:

This text has been printed using the printer's internal fonts rather than treating the whole page as a bitmap.

The Amiga printer drivers can usually only use one font, and apply only **bold**, *italic* and underline effects. To make life easier, it is best if this is a monospaced font like Courier.

Some word processors cannot print text without going via the bitmap route.

ProText, used for this test, affords more control via its custom drivers. The default set up allows access to different printer fonts, and to more effects.

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Epson EPL 3000

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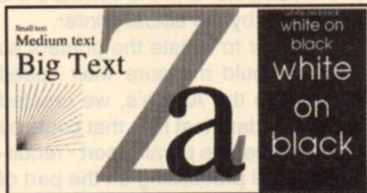
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Samsung SL1051A



Kyocera FS-1550



Epson EPL 3000



Samsung SL1051A

Hewlett Packard 4P



Hewlett Packard 4P

**Mark Blackham
test drives an
updated version
of a now
legendary print
enhancement
which may even
improve your
love life.**

Test Drive

The overuse of the term "Professional" within software titles has led to a blase attitude on behalf of us punters. We know the software isn't really for professionals - they just call it that hoping we'll think it's the business.

That is why I stress from the start of this review that Studio II Professional is REALLY for professionals.

If you are happy with your current print output, and don't feel embarrassed when you present

your printed work to boss, client, friends or lovers, then don't get this program.

If you must maximise the quality of your printed output because your job, income, reputation or love life depends on it, then Studio II is essential.

There are two elements to the software. Firstly, it contains oodles of printer drivers to select for use with your current applications. Secondly, Studio has its own program for managing printing of files outside of applications.

STUDIO II PROFESSIONAL

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62 CONTINUED

This basic structural concept is not immediately obvious from the manual nor from jumping straight into the somewhat unfriendly user-interface. The manual is clear and detailed but starts from an assumption that you are already in the masterclass of printing expertise. Given the program's high-level users, it's a fair assumption, but one that still requires some unnecessary mind-work as you try to second-guess what the programmers intended.

Installation

Studio uses the familiar Commodore WB3 Installer. Unless you have worked out how and why Studio works, the installation process could cause a bit of confusion. The Catch-22 is, you won't work the program out until you've installed it.

Before the installation process signs-off it demands that you choose Studio's suggested printer driver to place in the WorkBench printer Preferences window.

The printer drivers are probably slightly better than those you are currently using, especially in their ability to tweak elements such as colour, greyscale, dithering, density and resolution.

Many applications use the WorkBench printer Preferences program to print their output, so it's very useful to have the better drivers, especially if you are using an inkjet or laser printers.

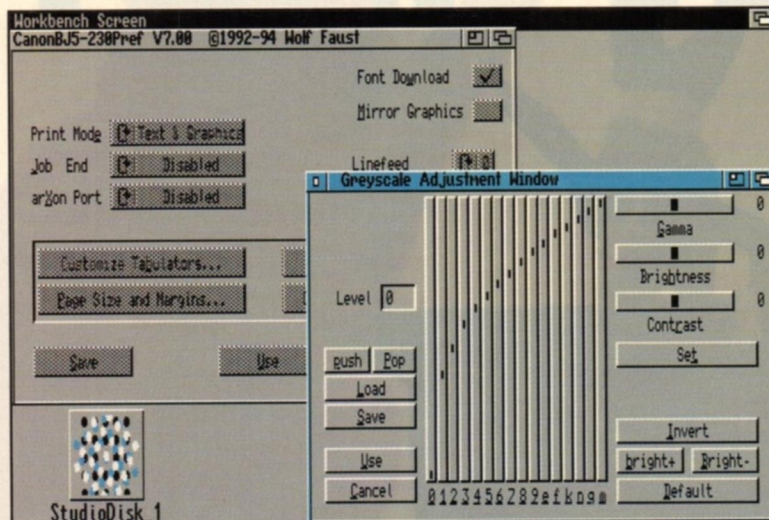
Clicking on the icons of the installed Studio printer drivers pulls up a menu from where you can fiddle and tweak with the preference details. This will enable you to maximise the printout quality of images and text which aren't printing as well as you think they could.

How you actually do this is a very complex process, often requiring much try-it-and-see-what-happens testing. The manual does a good job of helping you through the options.

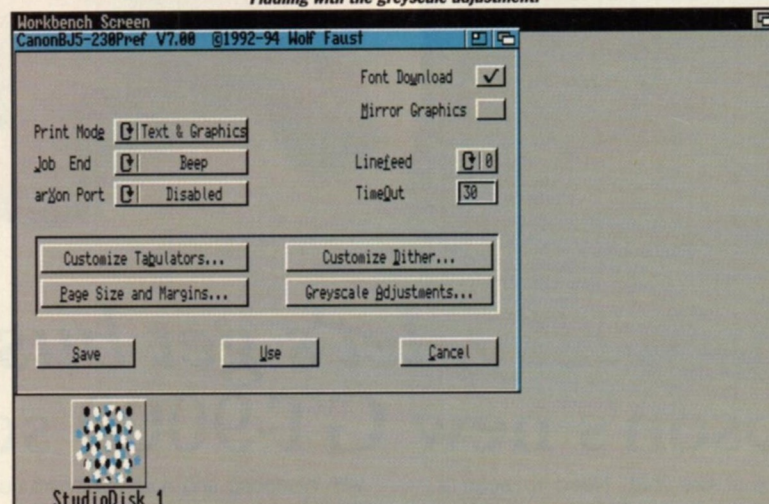
Studio's claims that its printer drivers will even improve the output of applications which use their own printing system, and not that of Workbench, such as PageStream, Wordworth and Professional Page, were accurate.

Studio is also there to replace those printing methods used by image processing applications such as ADPro, DPaint, with its own specialist and superior system.

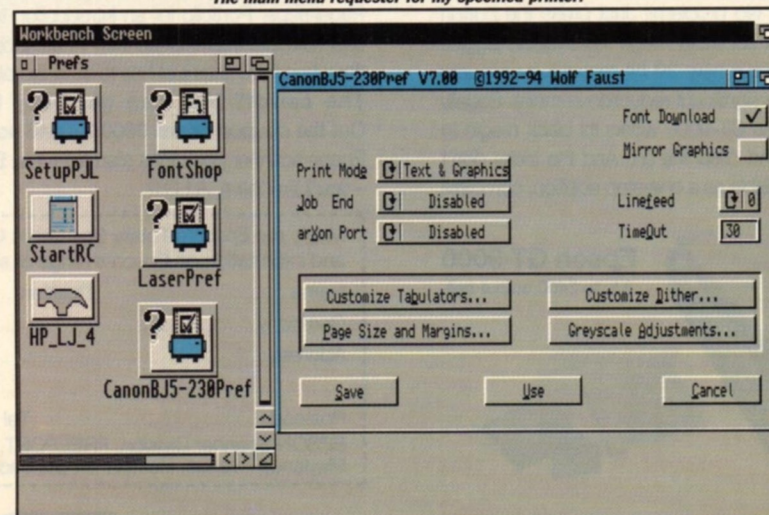
STUDIO II PROFESSIONAL



Fiddling with the greyscale adjustment.



The main menu requester for my specified printer.



Altering the details of a printer preference.

Progress Report

Click on the main Studio icon and you get a simple file requester. Select your file and Studio will go ahead and print it, using the printer driver specified by you during installation. A printing progress report panel is available, but you are free to select another file for printing or to move on to another application.

Next to the Studio icon are icons for managing Studio's extremely capable Colour Management System. This powerful package insures the colours on your screen are replicated in the printed output. To help you match these factors a little more closely, Studio also includes an impressive list of monitor drivers to ensure you are seeing the colours and definition which is really in your image.

Studio also includes a smooth print spooler, which enables multi-tasking. As the print job processes through, you can get on with other work. Very nice.

The whole idea is that if you want to print something, you get a quality, dedicated program to do it, and Studio is just that program. AUI

RATINGS

FEATURES	83%
PERFORMANCE	88%
EASE OF USE	78%
DOCUMENTATION	90%
VALUE FOR MONEY	78%

Overall Rating 86%

INFO

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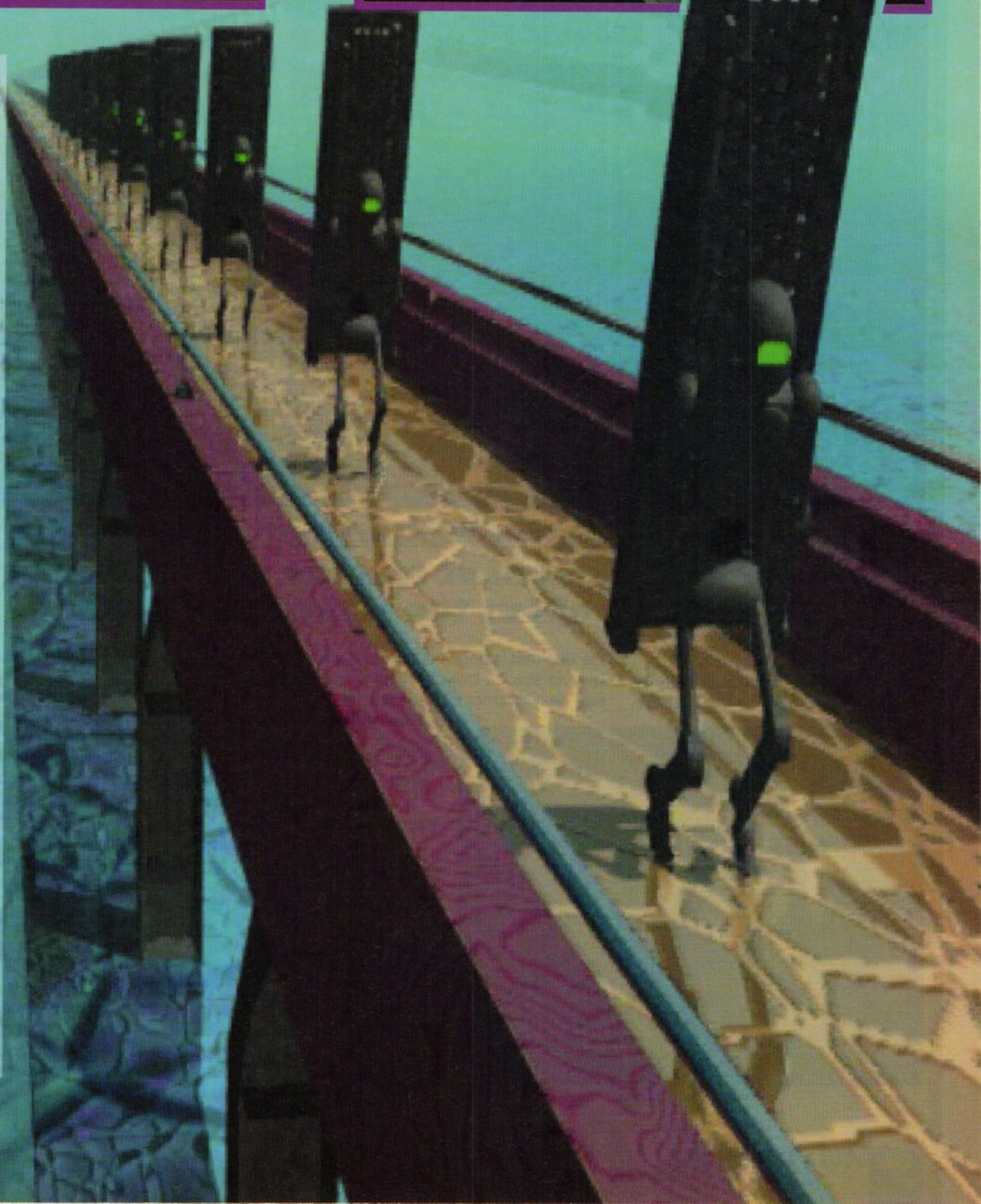
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N.Devon

EX31 2HF

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3D Tips

This planet is becoming transparent.

So what are macros then? A macro is a very small set of instructions that a program can already carry out. Is that a wow then? Well, it doesn't sound like it but wait until you try it out... Imagine you needed to create an Earth globe like the one on the BBC. That's

Barry McCarthy expounds the use of macros and tells all about the essential Pegger 2.

the one that is only the land masses, with no sea. It looks very sexy (can say "sexy" in a computer magazine?).

Unfortunately, it's a nightmare to build. Think about it. Try it out even.

It's easy enough to create a flat version of the Earth. Create. Scan or use a pre-made map of the world and convert it in Pixel 3D Professional. The only thing to be careful of, is make sure that it is only 2 colours and that the sea is colour 0. This

will now give you a nice, flat world map object.

All you have to do now is slice it up with latitude and longitude lines, so that it can be bent into a sphere. You will have to create a perfectly symmetrical grid, exactly in proportion to the object and then use this as a slicer.

Luckily, you could just run a macro, that would ask you how many slices in x, y and or z you want and then press OK.

Lastly, simply bend the sliced object into a perfect sphere, without any holes. How?

Just select the WrapToSphere LightWave macro and the job is done.

Macros not only make tiresome, repetitive tasks quicker and easier but they can produce virtually new tools for everyday use.

Here are some examples:

Fragment: randomly break up objects.

Batch Render: render lots of scenes automatically, one after the other.

Pie Chart: instant pie chart generator.

Blow Up: create explodable objects!

StandIn: automatically create very simple versions of complex objects.

Make sure all of the macros that come with LightWave are installed, so that you can use them. Spend a bit of time learning them from use and from the doc files in the macros directory. The Lightwave version 4.0 manual should have more to say on this subject. For more macros try the following:

Products: Sparks, particle animation software. PowerMacros, custom macro collection.

Comms: Try the NewTek BBS (the no.'s in the manual) or any other BBS that supports 3D on the Amiga, for readymade macros.

Pegger 2.0

For those of you out there who already use Pegger, you'll know what a fabulously useful program it can be. For



We enter the world of logos.



Ah, it makes more sense now!

those who haven't used it, here's a quick summary:

Pegger is a small program that can sit on the Workbench or its own custom screen and look at various directories. When an image is saved to one of the specified directories, it is automatically Jpeg'd at a predetermined compression ratio. This is extremely useful for those of you who do a lot of rendering or batch image processing with ADPro or ImageFX.

In order to obtain the best quality images and animations from software, you have to create 24 bit picture files at PAL resolution. These can quite happily be around 1 megabyte or more in size. So, either buy a very large hard drive (2 gigabytes would be reasonable), or compress the images using Jpeg compression.

Jpeg

Jpeg has an adjustable quality ratio. This generally goes from 1 to 100%, with 100% being the lowest compression but the highest quality. The only problem with Jpeg is that the higher

the compression, the worse the image looks. Nevertheless, even at 95 to 100% quality, there is still a great saving in space. You would be pretty hard pushed to notice any difference between pure 24 bit and 95% Jpeg.

The other excellent thing that Pegger can do, is to scan directories for DE-compression as well as compression. This means that any program can now load Jpeg. 3D programs can use Jpeg image wraps and background images. The PAR board can load Jpeg images.

So it all works fine and everyone is happy with Pegger 1. So why Pegger 2.0? What else could you add that's REALLY needed?

What about the ability to scan across a network?

How about much faster compression and decompression?

More image formats for decompression?

Well, it's all here in Pegger 2.0. It looks the same but works twice as fast. Images seem to load and save in almost the same amount of time as if

there was no jpeging going on.

Pegger 2.0 purports to work across networks such as Enlan-DFS 2.0 but on my 3 Amigas running Enlan-DFS 2.0... no such luck. I'll leave a comment on the Pegger BBS but I can't get it to work at all.

Image formats that are supported now are: IFF 24, DCTV4, DCTV4filtered, DCTV3, DCTVfiltered, FrameStore, HAM8, RGB8, IFF 8 and Targa.

Anything else? Yes, I've saved the best 'till last. Pegger now supports "Program Snooping". Select Program on the Snoop interface and click on New. You are presented with a list of all the currently running programs. Just select the program you want to add Jpeg ability to and hey presto, all programs are capable of loading and saving Jpeg, no matter where the files are going.

Is the Amiga filling a void, or falling into it?

Pegger is almost perfect, with reservations about the networking ability. If you need Jpeg compression, then you need Pegger 2.0.

News

LightWave 4.0 has now been demo'd in the UK. It is promised to come out very soon (Jan? Feb?) for Amiga, PC and SGI.

Pixel3D Pro version 2.0 should be out by the time you read this.

Next month's SuperDisk should contain, amongst other goodies for 3D users, the macros mentioned above. **AUI**



LASER FORCE



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Entries must reach AUI by April 30th 1995

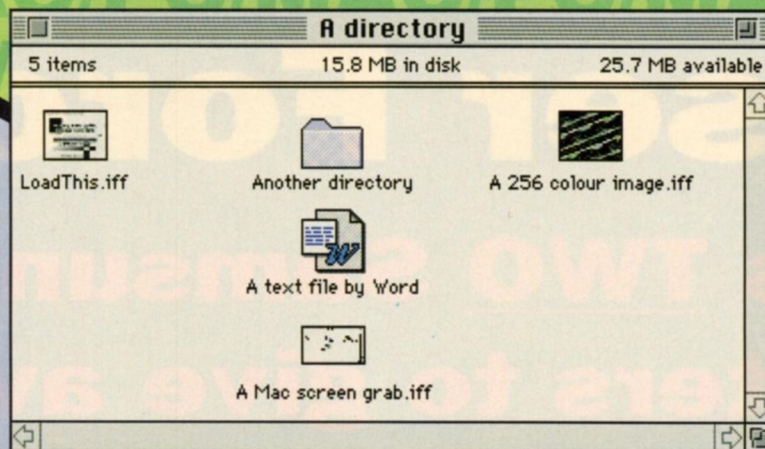
One of the nice things about the Amiga is that although it has a very intuitive (if you'll forgive the intentional and very corny pun) GUI, it also allows you to get "under the bonnet" as it were. Once there you can interact with the computer directly through AmigaDos commands. Not only that, but the command line interface (CLI) is very well integrated with the GUI, much better than, say, DOS is with Windows.

Macintosh users do not have this facility. All interaction with programs and files is done through a GUI, which is so well developed, Mac aficionados would argue, that they have no need for a CLI, and their computing lives are the better for it. Well that's arguable, but one of the things that GUI relies upon is a file system that is very... how shall I put it... "different".

This doesn't really matter to the Mac user because the GUI protects them from it, but it can make sharing files with other computers a real pig. This isn't particularly a criticism of the system; it works very well, and I think difference should be applauded if it is an improvement... the Amiga is different too, remember.

I'll explain a bit more about the file system later - I just thought it would be a good idea to prepare you. The file system isn't the only problem however. The disk formats are different too... especially low density disks. In order to outdo MSDOS, perhaps, both the Mac and Amiga can get more onto a 3.5" disk than MSDOS's 720K. The Amiga manages this without any weird hardware, but the Mac uses a technically brilliant but utterly frustrating disk drive that can change the speed at which the disk spins.

This makes it nigh on impossible to read a Mac 800K disk (yes, only 800K - Amigas manage 880K without



Here are some files on a disk on the Mac...

all this jiggery-pokery) on anything other than a Mac. Apple saw the light eventually, and when the move to high density floppies came, they went for a constant speed format - so the drives could read PC disks. This ability, coupled with a utility called Apple File Exchange, enabled Mac and PC users to exchange files in a rudimentary way, and Amiga users too, via something like CrossDos.

Complications

Of course, using an MSDOS floppy as a transitory medium brings about further complications. Macs, like Amigas, let you give files meaningful names - i.e. you're not restricted to 8 uppercase or numeric characters and one three character extension, as in MSDOS. But because you're using an MSDOS disk, these limitations apply.

The next complication that arises is the Mac's aforementioned file system. OK, I've been trying to avoid it, but now I'll have to explain. When a Mac user creates a file, they see an icon representing that file. But on the disk, two files have been created. One is referred to as the data fork and the other as the resource fork. The data fork contains, obviously data. The resource fork contains the icon.

OK, so this is very similar to the Amiga, where Workbench icons are stored with the same names as

their files but with a ".info" extension. But resource forks also contain executable code, if the file is an application, and any application specific data.

A further complication is the Mac "Finder" information, which is not in either fork, but is kept within a database which points to the file's location on the disk. The two bits of info that concern us and the Mac are what type of file the file is and which program created it.

This information is extremely important, especially the file type, and without it most Mac programs will ignore any files you try to get them to recognise. No amount of shouting ("It's



Those CrossMac utilities... the icons could've been prettier

a JPEG! IT'S A BLOODY JPEG!") will help, and Apple File Exchange won't create this information for you either.

Transfer

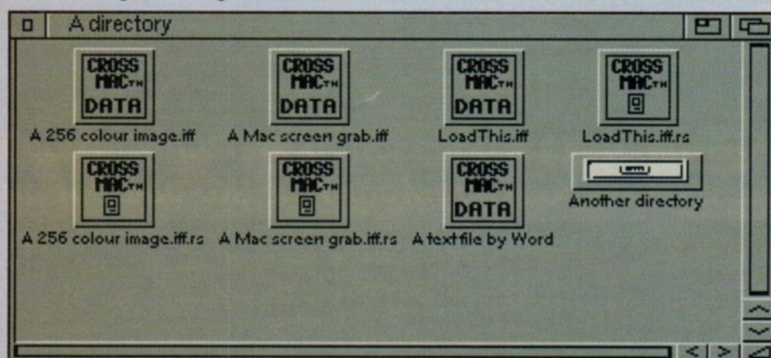
All is not lost, however. Apple File Exchange is really old hat now. It works as simple transfer utility; not seamlessly integrating into the operating system in the way that CrossDos on the Amiga does. It's a real pig, in other words, and most Mac users who regularly share files with PC's have ditched it for something more useful. Dos Mounter, Access PC, and PC Exchange (from Apple, and now part of System 7.5) all do a similar job to CrossDos, allowing Macs to read and write to PC disks as if they were normal Mac disks.

Access PC at least, the one I have most experience with, can automatically generate the "Finder" information from the MSDOS three char-

acter file extension, so long as you create an association between that file and the target application and filetype. And you can read files created on a Mac, although an understanding of the "forks" mentioned above as finding the right one (the data fork, usually) can often be a hit and miss affair.

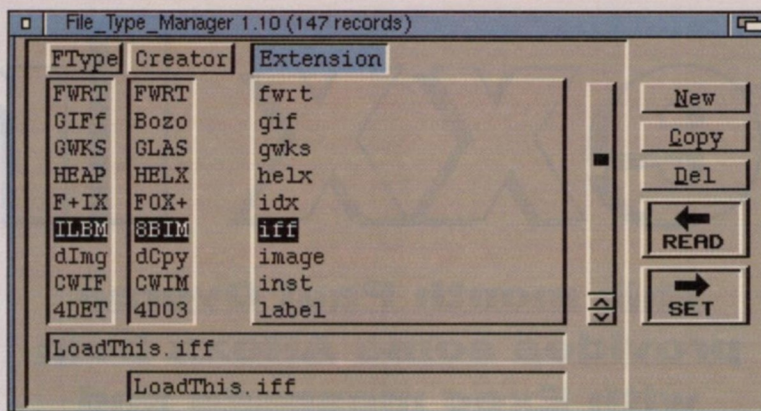
Also, each utility handles the forks slightly differently, so they are incompatible with each other to a certain extent (if you save Mac data to a PC disk with one utility and try to read it back with another).

All right, so we've gone through all the trials and tribulations, what's next? Well, what if your data won't fit on a floppy? If you're exchanging data with a Mac it's likely to be graphics, and we all know how much space they can take up! Compression can help, but the popular compression schemes on the Mac are different to those on the Amiga.



...and the same files as viewed via CrossMac on the Amiga

There is, apparently, a shareware LHA decompressor available for the Mac, but I've not seen it yet. Some Mac compression utilities support PKZIP, a PC compression format, for which there are compressors on the Amiga. If compression doesn't get the file size down enough, then an option, if you have AdPro, is to use the Splitz'n'Joinz utilities which are supplied in Amiga, Mac, Windows and DOS versions. Failing that then you're looking at a serial port transfer using comms software on both machines, or some kind of network connection. What's really needed is a way of writing to external hard drives, then you



I've just told CrossMac that files with an .iff extension are to be treated as IFF bitmap files on the Mac and that Adobe Photoshop is their creator, so if I double-click on the icon on the Mac it will run Photoshop and load the file. "8BIM" is a strange id for Photoshop, don't you think?

No Amiga is an Island Part 4

This month, Aitor Ibarra shows you how to share files across two platforms, and reviews a new package for the Amiga that will aid the process.

could transfer loads of data quickly and easily...

Arrgh! By now you're probably wishing for a CrossDos that supported Mac disks, a "CrossMac" as it were. Well, the fairy godmother (Consultron, creators of CrossDos) has been listening, and your wish has been granted! Not only that, but CrossMac also supports Mac hard drives!

CrossMac

Here's the condensed version of the review. It works and it works well! OK, there are a few drawbacks, but most of them are not Consultron's fault.

Firstly, unless you have AMax and a Mac 800K drive or AMax II plus/AMax IV (AMax is a Mac emulator, which sort of defeats the object) you will not be able to read 800K floppies. That leaves you with high density floppies, and, of course, not all Amigas

have high density drives. (Insert angry bit about Commodore not putting a high density floppy into the A1200!)

These problems obviously are no fault of CrossMac. And frankly, they don't matter very much. If your data can fit on a floppy, then you can use CrossDos. It's a little bit more hassle, but it's not the end of the world. No, where CrossMac really becomes useful is in reading Mac hard drives.

To read hard drives, you are obviously going to need a SCSI port (all Mac drives are SCSI except for a few of the newer Macs which use IDE for their internal drives) and the drive is going to have to be external or removable. (Ripping a drive out of one machine and installing it inside another just to exchange data lacks a little finesse, don't you think?) Yes, you can also read CD-ROMs. Configure CrossMac and the drive correctly (CrossMac makes this really easy) and away you go. Read,

write and format to your heart's content. Fast, too.

I can't emphasise enough how important this is. Example: you are creating an animation on the Amiga, let's say a LightWave job, with each frame being rendered at a high resolution, and you need to get this into a Mac based off-line video editing system (sadly, most of these systems, which the video industry are taking up really enthusiastically now, are PC or Mac based) like Adobe Premiere or Avid Media Composer.

Do you want to do the transfer frame by frame, one per floppy? Or by a serial link? I don't think so. Right, just hook up a big hard drive to your SCSI port, copy across the files, and you've done the job. Saving a lot of time and hassle. Even if there isn't much that much data it's still less bother than a floppy based system, especially if you are using removable media, like Syquest disks.

Simple Installation

Installation of CrossMac is simple; it's through the standard Installer. From then on the thing is as transparent as CrossDos, and you can access disks from the CLI/Shell, Workbench, file requesters and so on, as you would any other disk. Resource forks are treated as separate files, and have their own icons. It's a shame that CrossMac doesn't always display the same icons as the Mac (it only displays Mac icons for certain executable files), but this isn't too much of a problem.

To solve the problem of the necessary Mac "Finder" information, there's a little utility which will automatically create it for you, so long as you tell it which file extension to associate with which icon type. It comes with a pre-defined database that covers most file types you'll ever need (and many that you almost certainly won't).

Remember, CrossMac won't magically make your programs read data of others if they are not file com-

patible; you are not going to be able to load Microsoft Word files into Final Writer, for example.

Utilities

There are a number of utilities supplied with CrossMac, some a bit esoteric (like the resource-fork extractor), others are very useful indeed (the file salvaging utility, for instance). My main gripe, and my only serious complaint with CrossMac, is that the text-file translator (the Amiga and Mac character sets are slightly different) doesn't seem to work properly. For instance, it doesn't translate carriage returns.

All Amiga programs I've used will accept the Mac code for a return, even without using the translator, but there is no way of forcing them to write the Mac code when saving files. The consequence is that text files created on the Amiga will appear not to have any carriage returns, which are replaced with an unprintable character.

The problem can easily be fixed on the Mac using a word processor's search and replace, but this shouldn't really be necessary. It also fails with apostrophes and quote marks when importing text into the Amiga, which is really annoying. Again, a search and replace cures the problem, but there shouldn't be a problem in the first place.



- and this is what that icon looks like on the Mac

Conclusion

In conclusion, I was very impressed with CrossMac, and like CrossDos before it, I hope it gets taken up as part of the standard Amiga operating system. It would be nice if CrossDos could support PC SCSI drives! (This would be difficult; there are several incompatible "standards" for SCSI disks in PC land, I've known PCs not to read each other's Syquests, for instance). If my criticisms are addressed (the icons, and more importantly, the text problems), then CrossMac will be perfect!

AUI

RATINGS

CrossMac

FEATURES	90%
PERFORMANCE	95%
EASE OF USE	85%
DOCUMENTATION	80%
VALUE FOR MONEY	85%
Overall Rating 90%	

ARexx Info

Someone wrote to me the other day asking for some 'general details' about how ARexx allows programs to communicate with each other, and how it made sure that the right messages ended up being sent to the right programs. Since this is a topic which might be of interest to quite a few ARexx users I thought it would be useful to devote this month's article to explaining how the ARexx message system works.

The first point is that ARexx doesn't do all of the work itself - it uses communications arrangements which are part of a general Exec message passing facility and it's here that the story really starts. Exec is the Amiga's 'multi-tasking executive, the part of the Amiga's operating system which controls task swapping and a host of other operating system 'housekeeping' jobs. Part of the Exec arrangements include a general message passing mechanism based on the use of a system structure known as message port. So any program which needs to communicate with another has, as a first step, to set up one of these message ports.

To transmit a message a program will allocate a block of memory, fill it with the data which forms the message, and then send it to the message port belonging to the destination program. In fact nothing really gets 'sent', copied, or moved at all - the data that forms the message stays exactly where it is in memory. What happens is that pointers present in the block of memory representing the message are adjusted so that the message gets 'logically attached' to the appropriate destination message port list. Programs are always signalled by Exec whenever their message port's list gets altered and so, providing they are bothering to look for these signals, it's relatively easy for a program to tell when new messages arrive.

Once a message has been collected, unlinked from the receiving program's message port and used, it is 'replied' to. This is a job which involves the program which received the message linking that same message into the message port of the program that originally sent the message. The only difference on this return journey is that the message will be given a 'finished with' marker. This tells the sender that the message has been dealt with and is free for re-use or deallocation.

This month Paul Overaa provides some ARexx help with Exec message and communications arrangements.

Sending... Receiving

Now everyone talks in terms of these messages being sent and received because that, in a logical sense, is what's happening. Information is being passed from one task to another. The important point to bear in mind is that nothing is ever really being moved around. All that happens is the message pointers are changed so that the messages get effectively added, or removed, from various message lists attached to message ports.

Another important point about Exec style messages is that the Exec arrangements only specify the layout of the initial part of the message (list pointer areas and so on). Exec ignores the rest of the message contents so

programs are free to add on to the basic Exec message structure any data they want.

ARexx Connection

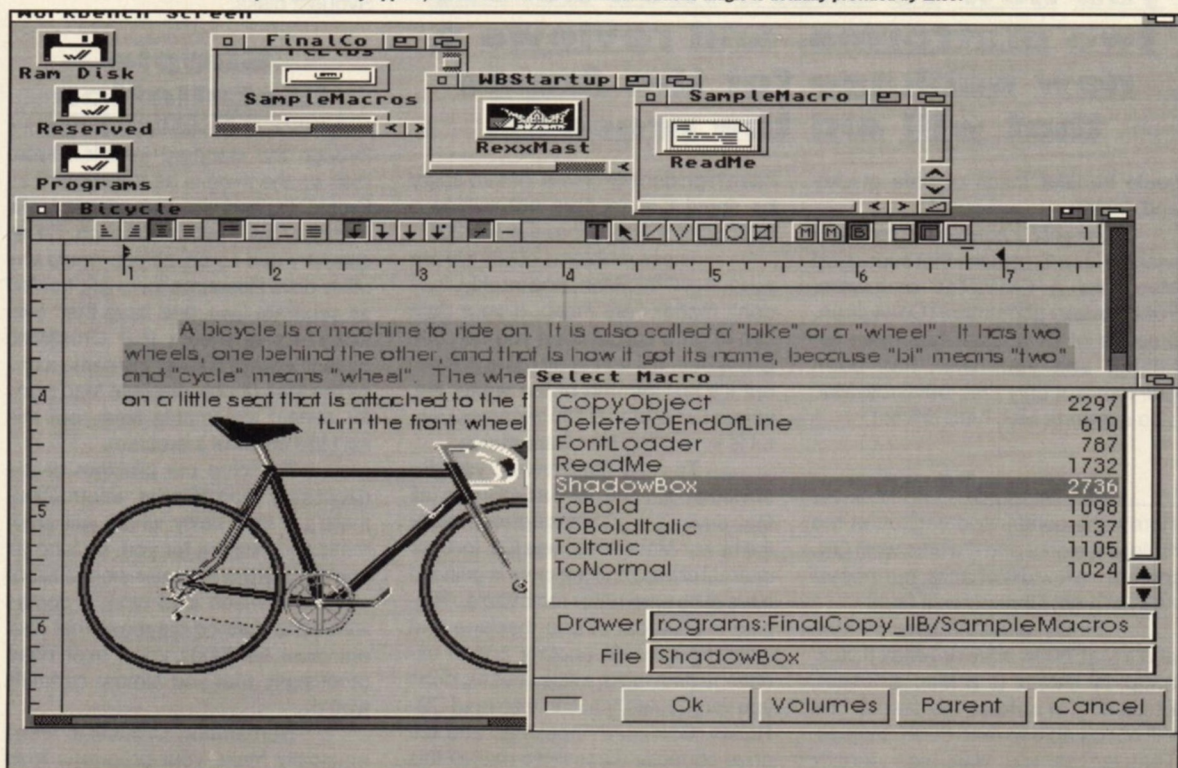
ARexx ports are just standard Exec ports. Nothing more, nothing less. They are referred to as 'ARexx ports' simply because they are used to collect ARexx-oriented messages. Similarly ARexx messages, as you might now have guessed, are just ordinary Exec style messages with the only distinctive feature being that they have ARexx-specific data items tagged onto them. ARexx's real job, through its communications facilities, is to act as a control centre. Programs send their messages to ARexx, and ARexx sends

these on to the required destination. How does ARexx know where the messages should go? Well, as far as the scripts you write are concerned - you tell it by having your script set the current host using the ADDRESS command. ARexx checks and locates such ports by looking at a 'public ports' list which Exec maintains and because of this any port that is used for ARexx communications must be made visible to the system by having its name added to this list. This is something which is taken care of automatically by any program which contains an ARexx interface. Luckily all this complexity is transparent to the ARexx user because almost all the communications magic gets handled automatically.

For ARexx ports, there are only two things end-users need to remember: firstly, ports must be recognisable to ARexx at the time you try to communicate with them, so the associated program must be up and running before you try and talk to it.

Secondly, you need to be aware that the functions used to search the Exec public ports list are case sensitive. The reason is that if you get the case of a port name wrong in an ARexx script, ARexx fails to find the port and issues an error message! **AUI**

Despite how it may appear, much of the ARexx communications magic is actually provided by Exec!



PROGRAMMING TIPS

It's technicolour time ... Paul Overaa provides some simple ways of brightening up your Intuition programs.

Over the next two issues we are going to be providing an example program that illustrates how you can brighten up your Intuition programs using copper lists. The most immediate good news, for Intuition coders is that once you have opened an Intuition screen all the complicated low-level structures and associated copper lists that describe the display have been set up by Intuition itself.

All that's needed then is a way of adding a few extra instructions to the existing display's copper lists. The trick here is to build a separate 'user list' and get the graphics system to incorporate that into the display lists it has already prepared.

So, what do you have to do to get this copper list working in your own Intuition programs? If we take the simple case of creating background shading then the first thing to do is to decide on the colours that are going to be jammed into particular colour registers and set up the appropriate copper instructions.

In the example routine that I've chosen to use these colour values are being generated algorithmically and as they are calculated the graphics library CWAIT, CMOVE and CINIT macros are used to build the required list of instructions.

This list building loop itself is pretty straightforward: First allocate some memory for the list and use the CINIT() macro to initialise it. Then use a loop involving CWAIT() and CMOVE() to set up the instructions that wait for each screen line and place the designated colour into a specified colour register.

Finally use CEND() to terminate the list. Then we use a couple of graphics library routines, MakeScreen() and RethinkDisplay(), to incorporate the user list we've created into the real hardware lists that the copper reads.

Unfortunately this month there is only space to give you the listing of the routine that I'll be using along with details of the graphics library's copper list macros. Next month however everything will be put into perspective with details of how the routine can be incorporated into your own Intuition programs. There will also be a runnable Intuition-based example for you to examine. **AUI**

```

BOOL ColourShading(UBYTE colour_number, UWORD colour_shade)
{
    BOOL error_flag=TRUE; static struct UCopList *user_copperlist_p=NULL;
    COUNT j; UBYTE brightness=0x5; /* must be between 0 and 15 */
    UBYTE cycle_max=10,intensity=0; UBYTE base_red,red,base_blue,blue,base_green,green;
    if(g_viewport_p->UCopIns==NULL)
    {
        if (user_copperlist_p=AllocMem(sizeof(struct UCopList),MEMF_PUBLICIMEMF_CLEAR))
        {
            error_flag=FALSE;
            base_red=(colour_shade&0x0F00)>>8;
            base_green=(colour_shade&0x00F0)>>4;
            base_blue=colour_shade&0x000F;
            CINIT(user_copperlist_p,WINDOW_HEIGHT*2+1);
            for (j=0;j<WINDOW_HEIGHT;j++)
            {
                (j/cycle_max) % 2 ? intensity-- : intensity++;
                red=(base_red*intensity)/cycle_max;
                if (red<brightness) red=brightness;
                green=(base_green*intensity)/cycle_max;
                if (green<brightness) green=brightness;
                blue=(base_blue*intensity)/cycle_max;
                if (blue<brightness) blue=brightness;
                CWAIT(user_copperlist_p,j,0L);
                CMOVE(user_copperlist_p,
                    custom.color[colour_number],(red<<8)|(green<<4)|blue);
            }
            CEND(user_copperlist_p);
            g_viewport_p->UCopIns=user_copperlist_p;
            MakeScreen(g_public_screen_p); RethinkDisplay();
        }
    }
    else {
        g_viewport_p->UCopIns=NULL; MakeScreen(g_public_screen_p); RethinkDisplay();
        FreeCopList(user_copperlist_p->FirstCopList);
        FreeMem(user_copperlist_p,sizeof(struct UCopList));
        user_copperlist_p=NULL;
    }
    return(error_flag);
}

```

Listing 1: A typical copper shading routine

CINIT() Initialise a user copper list

Function Prototype: struct UCopList *CINIT (struct UCopList *, UWORD);

Arguments: Pointer to a UCopList structure and count of the number of copper instructions being used

Return Value: Pointer to initialised list to store user list instructions

CWAIT() Add a wait instruction to a user copper list

Function Prototype: void CWAIT(struct UCopList *, WORD, WORD);

Arguments: Pointer to a UCopList structure, vertical beam position and horizontal beam position

CMOVE() Add a move instruction to a user copper list

Function Prototype: void CMOVE(struct UCopList *, void *, WORD);

Arguments: Pointer to a UCopList structure, target hardware register and the value to be placed in register

CEND() Terminate a copper list

Function Prototype: void CEND(struct UCopList *);

Arguments: Pointer to a UCopList structure

Next month we will finish the whole thing off.

Back to BASICS

The New Zealand company, Lascelles (who brought us Word Construction Set), is offering children this Back To Basics set covering addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The programs also include times tables, fractions and spelling, through exercises, verbal and written instructions and progress reports.

With more Local Authority schools 'opting out', the Back to Basics philosophy means children have to pass a form of entrance exam for admission to secondary schools. The old eleven plus seems to have been covertly re-introduced. Judging from the increased sales of practice papers and number of companies now entering the exam papers market, parents are turning to home tuition, or private tuition to supplement the regular school teaching. Even if local schools do not have selected entry, there are the National Curriculum tests which require children to show they can meet the standards set in key stage attainment targets. So what can be better for all children, than the opportunity to learn and practice the basic skills at their own pace through their beloved Amiga?

The Back to Basics compilation set really does allow learning to be paced, with clear instructions on how to solve the problems. Many 'shoot em up' type educational games offer a degree of practice at quickly solving problems, but this set of programs allows learning to be carried out in a structured way, with another chance each time the answer is incorrect.

You can't progress until you get it right. Watch out for silly errors though! I answered one spelling question in upper case and the voice kept saying 'wrong'. He didn't accept my arguments, but when I realised my mistake and keyed the word in lower case he still said 'wrong'. It turned out the next word to spell was 'wrong'! (Like the only word spelt 'wrong' in the dictionary!)

The voice does take some getting used to. The sound can be turned off, of course, but you are advised to use the verbal as well as the written instructions to begin with.

However, when you want to speed up you are better off without him. This is because the voice explains every step, such as in long addition where he says 'put the carry one in the tens column' etc and will not let you proceed to the next column until you have done it. It is this step-by-step teaching which makes the program stand out from the rest. Explaining for instance, precisely how to do long division, particularly

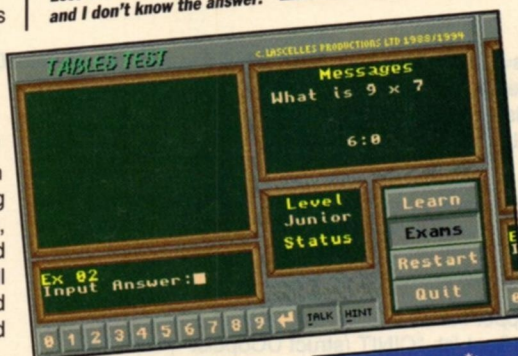
Martin Witton, ignoring the Government's disaster, gets Back to Basics with a set of programs for 10 to 14 year olds and Scrabbles around in the Snow with the younger kids.

when a nought is involved is jolly helpful and the display screens show you exactly what he is talking about. Say 'n Spell works by showing up one of 700 of the most commonly used words, taking it off the screen then when the voice says the word and you have to spell it. The words are grouped in seven levels with 10 sets of words at each level.

Progress can be recorded, saved and printed out as the players name has to be keyed in at the beginning. My son was somewhat surprised when he came into the room and the computer voice said 'Hello Nicholas'.

It was actually a coincidence as I had just keyed his name in (just in case I couldn't answer the questions!), but we

Less than two seconds to go and I don't know the answer.



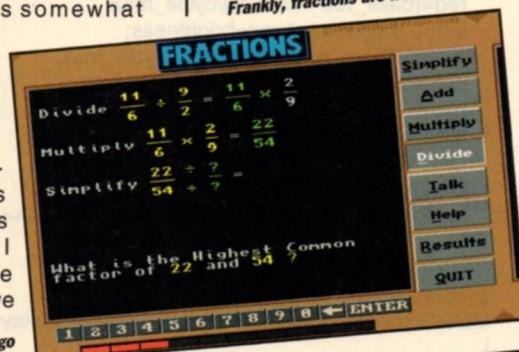
were both very impressed that the computer voice could read what I'd just written! If you are not put off by the title, this is definitely one set of excellent programs that every child aged between 10 and 14 should have access to. And for parents needing to go 'Back to Basics' to brush up on their maths and spelling in order to explain it to the children, it is thoroughly recommended too.

9/10

SNOW WORDS HOKIANGA SOFTWARE

When you have finished your homework and successfully completed some of the Back to Basics exercises, what better way to relax than to play a board game - like Scrabble for instance? Or maybe Tetris is more your idea of fun. Well Lascelles has found a way of combining these

Frankly, fractions are frustrating.



Go forth and multiply.



two popular games with Snow Words, devised by Hokianga Software. As the name suggests, snowflakes on the screen contain letters which, yes you've guessed, from which

you have to make words. But unlike Scrabble, the aim of the game is to score as many points as possible from the length of the word and value of the letters, combined with the speed at which you are playing. If you pause the game to work out words you see penalty points increasing rapidly. And unlike the board game, you haven't the time while the other player has a turn to work out your best move.

While it may be considered by some as twee, the game has some neat touches. Put the candle flame on the snowflake you have chosen and then make the flame hotter to melt it and release the letter. If you want to erase a letter you can click on the snowman. The points values vary according to the colour of the Snowflakes and Golden Snowflakes count as any letter. The robot voice takes a rest from Basics and pops up in Snow Words to speak your words for you, or if you prefer, music can accompany your game. Did I say music, well perhaps that is being a wee bit generous!

As the game progresses the snowman will gradually melt to give you an idea of how much time you have left. The game is great for exercising your mind power, being creative and there is a 'feel good' element when you work out a particularly complex word. Small children from about five years can play, or get Granny going by convincing her that there is another way to play Scrabble, even on That machine! Will it be good value for money though? That is, will you still want to play this time next

year? The answer is yes, but you'll probably not want to be reminded of snow in the summer months so it might turn out to be a seasonal game only. But then who plays board games when you could be outside?

7/10

INFO

Contact: Rasputin Software
Distributed through
Grandslam Video Ltd, 3 Rathbone Square,
28 Tanfield Rd, Croydon, Surrey
Tel: 0181 680 7044
Price: Back to Basics: £29.95
Snow Words: £19.95

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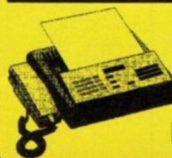
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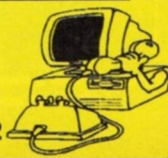
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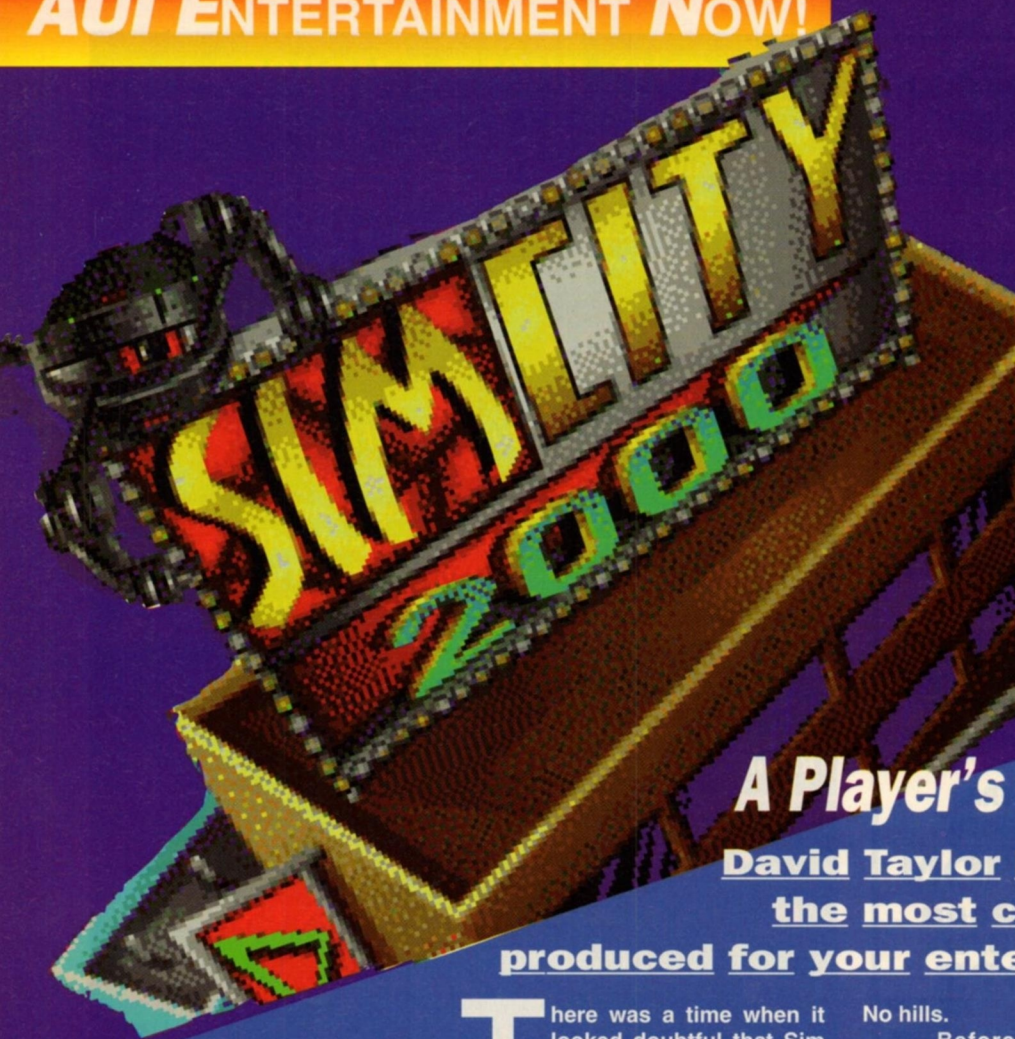
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The Romans weren't stupid

A Player's Guide to Sim City 2000

David Taylor helps you get to grips with the most complex city simulation yet produced for your entertainment and frustration.

Bug-Fix

Some users of Sim City 2000 found it crashed when used in conjunction with an accelerator board. Maxis have now solved this problem and the new shipments should be fine. If you've an earlier version (some of the copies in the shops might be old stock), then send your disks to Maxis and they'll get the new version to you.

The address is:

Maxis
18-20 St John Street
London, EC1M 4AY

There was a time when it looked doubtful that Sim City 2000 would be ported to the Amiga. Maxis must be pretty glad that they have done it, given the chart success it's enjoying.

Sim City isn't the easiest game to play though and the manual is pretty sparse as far as hints go. So, if you are stuck, here's *AUI* to help out.

These tips are going to assume you'll play the full game from 1900.

The first thing to do is make sure that you get a good site. If you have too many hills, you'll be stifled for a lot of money when you try and build. The easiest way around this is to go to the terrain editor, drag the green bar down to zero for hills and then create a landscape. Bingo!

No hills.

Before you think about laying zones, slow the time down to give you breathing space. Find a good area, preferably close to the water. Build a grid of roads, remember to keep everything small scale; there's no need for dual carriageway yet. Each rectangle should have access to a road. Sims won't use land that's too far from a road, in fact they'll like to stay within 3 squares of transport.

Then lay a rail system adjacent to the roads. Keep the system quite small as it's expensive. The trick to your roads and pipes is to build in straight lines, like the Romans; it uses less space than a diagonal.

Make a couple of rectangles into industrial zones. These are the most important zones to begin with.

Industry is the life blood of a new city. With that in mind, you could lower the taxes for industry to 5% – go to the budget screen and click on the book by the taxes, then lower them or industry only.

Make a residential zone and lastly a commercial zone. The latter can be quite small as it's not a very important part of turn of the century life.

If you were lucky enough to get a good river, you should now get a seaport up and running. These are just a different type of zone, but cost a lot of money. The advantage is that they help industry greatly.

Now you need to set up the final essentials, a power plant (with every zone split up by a road connected) and some water pumps and pipes. Lay all these out sensibly. Try to keep the pipes in squares,



Splitting your city over a river may look good, but the Sims themselves don't like to move away from the amenities.



Stadiums and other leisure services are popular.



Ports grow very quickly, but at \$150 per square, they cost you quite a lot to set up.



If you don't encourage growth with tax incentives, you'll start to get deserted buildings.

because you may want to lay subways later, and these can't cross at diagonals.

Alternatively, *AUI* has done all of this ready for you. On this month's SuperDisk you'll find some Sim City 2000 saved games, called AUITown. It is at the very start with everything laid out and the sims are starting to move in. Obviously, you need the game Sim City 2000 to use this save game!

There are two ways of approaching the game:

one – start small and build, or two – make huge industrial and residential zones. Either way will work, but the latter makes an impressive city within a few years.

Now, speed time up and wait for the sims to move in. You'll soon have to add police, a hospital and a fire station. Don't expect the sims to be understanding. They want all the services now. This means you're going to have to issue a bond to raise some cash. The trouble with this is, you will have real trouble paying it back. Get into debt at your own risk.

If after a time, your sims may start to desert you and abandoned buildings begin appearing, don't panic. Take a look at your taxes and consider lowering the industry ones. Try not to lower the residential taxes or the commercial taxes, because when you put them back up, everyone will leave! You'll be



At the turn of the century, the industrial zones will boom.

AUI ENTERTAINMENT Now!

setting up a boom/bust economy and we know how much trouble that can cause – you'll end up making a virtual Britain!

At the beginning, it's quite possible to ignore the commercial zone, as long as they're powered up and watered. If they fail to grow or come and then desert you, ignore them. Growth comes from industry and residents to start with.

As your zones fill up, build more around the outsides of your roads. Make sure it doesn't become a closed system, with buildings in the way of road expansion. Demolishing buildings gets to be a real pain.

One of the most useful buttons is the query tool. At first it may seem like a waste of time – you know what's what, but there's more to it than this. Query public buildings and you'll find out how successful they are. You can work out if you need more police or schools or entertainment, which means that you won't waste money on extra services that the sims won't use.

The trick is to get involved in everything. When the citizens are willing to give you a house, think carefully about placing it. Where you live can become a trendy neighbourhood and attract more citizens, so don't place it in any



When you pull back, you can see how small your city really is.

It's also worth connecting your town with neighbours, you'll get more trade and steal some of their citizens.

One of the major things to remember is that although Sim City 2000 is a complex game, there's hardly any button or menu that can be considered superfluous.

Keep an eye on your neighbours' town sizes to ensure that you are competing well. Consider lowering certain taxes for specific industries to encourage them, but be aware that if these industries do boom and you raise taxes to make some quick cash, your industries may just decide to go elsewhere.

already developed area. Put it in a new zone.

The last problem you've really got to face is that of bonds. You can issue them to raise cash, but you'll have trouble paying them back, because the citizens are going to want more and more services. If you can, avoid issuing any, but this means you'll have difficulty expanding your city.

These tips should get you going and help you produce a teeming city. There's much more to this game than could be covered, but you'll find that out for yourself.

Live long and prosper!

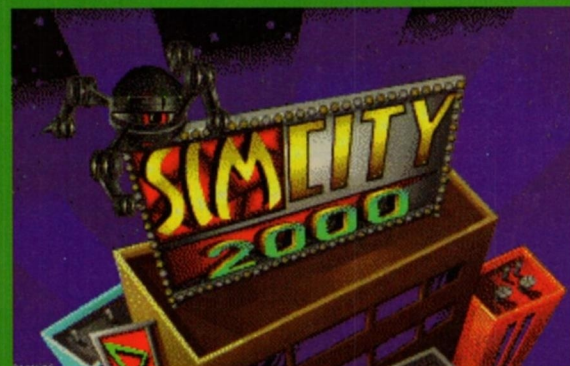
WIN! Ten copies of Sim City 2000 to be given away!

So, you've not bought Sim City 2000 yet. Well, if we haven't convinced you yet that it's well worth your cash, enter this brilliant competition and win a copy. We've teamed up with Maxis and we've got a copy for ten lucky readers. Simply answer the questions below and get your entry to us before 30th May 1995.

- 1) What would you call your simulated city?
- 2) Which game was the first in the series of "Sims"?
- 3) What is the American term for the underground or tube system for public transport?

Send your entries to:

AUI Sim City Competition, 3 Carriage Row, 203 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BW



CANNON FODDER

Virgin/Sensible
All Amigas
£34.99

2 I could begin this review with a question; what have aliens, a bunch of Chicago mobsters, medieval knights and a load of Saddam's middle eastern types



Another line of foolish wannabe heroes.

SHADOW FIGHTER

Gremlin All Amigas £27.99

Beat-em up fans will be ecstatic at the huge number of quality new releases in their favourite genre. Shadow Fighter should be top of their list for acquisition. Its large clear sprites and 17 deathly difficult fighters, each with more than 25 different moves, make it a winner.

Rise of the Robots may have the huge advertising budget and the in-game atmosphere, but Shadow Fighter has the action.

The game, which feels like a Manga movie, works on all

"A cossack kick killer twist just connected with my goolies."

Amigas and comes with a very scary poster of the Shadow Fighter himself drawn by the artist responsible for Judge Dredd.

VERDICT

Overall: 87%



got in common with an army of World War 1 British soldiers? But it would only be stating the bleeding obvious wouldn't it? What else could it be except another Cannon Fodder. But I fear that even the great Sensible Software (I am not worthy even to mention their hallowed name in jest) have succumbed to the evil temptation of greed. What else would drive a company whose product has always been nothing short of brilliant to produce a sequel to a best selling game, that apart from a tweak and a new inbetween level screen, is basically exactly the same game as before.

You're still in charge of a merry band of mouse controlled volunteers who shoot bullets, rockets and grenades into just about anything that moves in an orgy of destruction. The in-game mission music is the same, the control method's the same, and the graphics identical. The only things that have been changed are the mission maps. This of course is the game's saving grace, because lets face it, if the mission maps were the same, there'd be no point in buying the game now would there.

The pointless plot has your merry band kidnapped by the aliens and dropped back at different points in history, hence why your various foes are throwbacks to bye-gone times. (Ever seen a Knight in shining rocket launcher?)

In truth, you do feel that this is more like a data disk, although the 35 quid might just bring you back to reality. I blame those people at Sensible (There!, I said the name again, to hell with them) who have probably been so busy creating Magic Carpet or Theme Park, or Sensi Golf, that they had no time to sit down and work out some different things for CF2. Instead, we've got 70 more levels to conquer, and boy are some of them tough. So tough in fact that they are almost impossible, but I don't doubt that there are many people out there who will still manage to finish it.

DEATH MASK

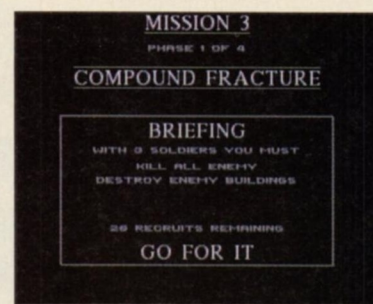
Alternative Software All Amigas £25.99 - £29.99

Doom has gone down in computing folklore. As you would expect, the hype and cult which has grown up around the game has obscured the fact that it is basically simple-minded rubbish.

Simple-minded rubbish has a habit of catching on by allowing players to inject their own imagination and enthusiasm into the game.

Clone games which attempt to cash in on the craze are often dismissed because they starkly reveal the emptiness of the original.

Death Mask brings Doom to the Amiga. If you like Doom - killing enemy in a 3D maze and collecting ammo



Seems easy enough, but guess what, it ain't!

Early on there is a mission with only enough grenades to blow up all the buildings. The problem is that the grenades are sited close to where the enemy are, and so you have to decide to either shoot everyone and risk blowing up your precious grenades, or creep around and risk getting picked off one by one?



Another victory to the good guys.

This fiendish gameplay is what made Cannon Fodder such a brilliant game the first time around. If you didn't get to buy a copy, this is a must for you. But beware those of you who have already been Foddered so to speak, as this is a mighty expensive data disk.

VERDICT

Graphics:	85%
Sound:	80%
Gameplay:	80%
Overall:	75%

crates - you will appreciate Death Mask.

DM does not operate very smoothly on the non-CD version even though the graphics resolution is poor. Compared to the PD Doom clone "FEAR", given to you free on this month's cover disks, DM comes off badly.

That's a shame, since Alternative have produced a reasonable version of Doom, and those who buy it would be happy-enough with the result.

VERDICT

Overall: 72%

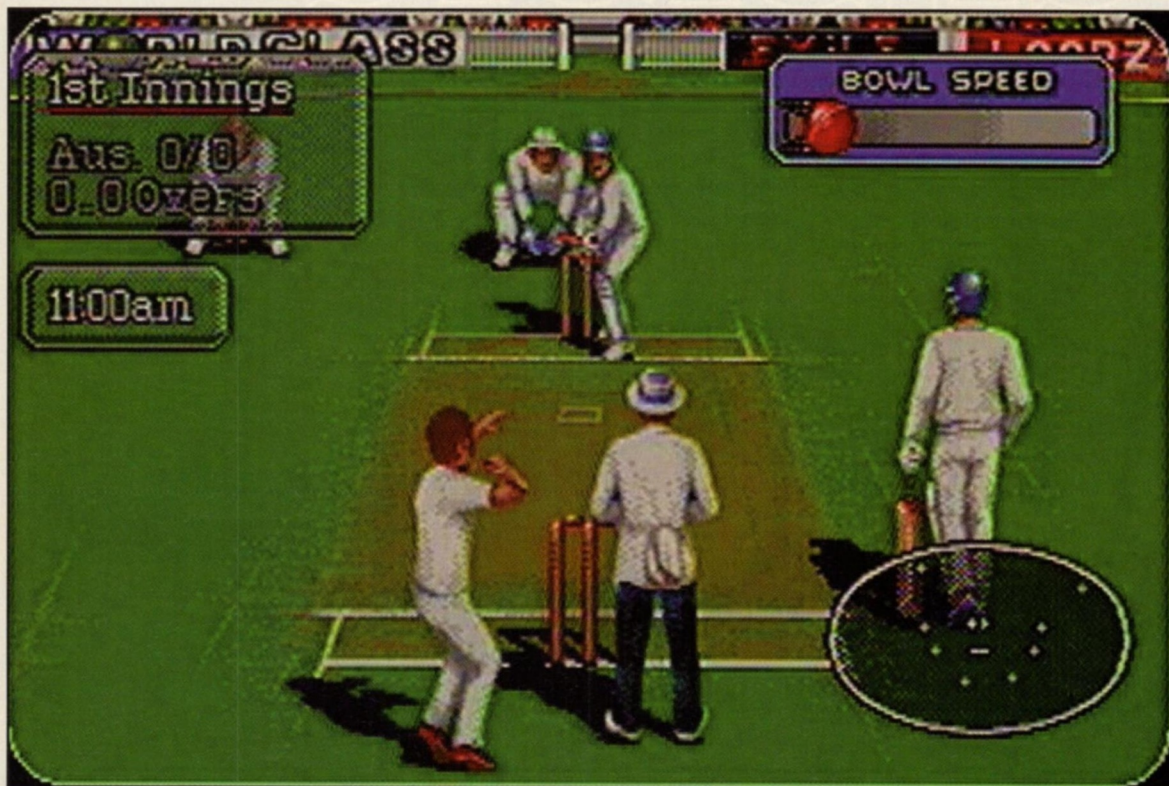
Sensible

WORLD OF SOCCER



Sensible
SOFTWARE

BATTLE FOR THE ASHES



"Gatting is batting - hide your eyes!"

Audiogenic
All Amigas £19.99

A crippled budgie with the flu could have done better than England in the Ashes series. Audiogenic have given you a chance to be that budgie with the release of Battle for the Ashes. You can improve the batting of Mike Gatting or create a storm as Shane Warne.

The game engine from World Class Cricket has been recycled to produce a budget game which pits England against Australia in a five day test match. While the bowling system works very well, with full control over spin, flight and speed, the batting continuously failed to respond to my commands.

Against the computer the game is disheartening and slow (well, it IS a test-match), but the game comes alive in two-player mode.

A lot more effort should have been put into the package. How about some commentator's calls like "He's gone!" or "That's all the way to the boundary for four!"

Those people who loathe real cricket will have their hatred confirmed by this computer simulation, but my desire to be at the crease ensured that I enjoyed it, especially in two-player mode.

VERDICT

Overall: 60%

ROCKETZ

Exclusive PD AGA Amigas £10.50

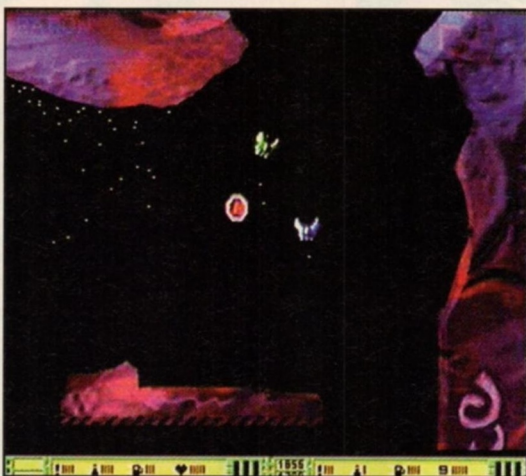
Considering the AGA and fast memory demands of this game, you might think you were onto something good.

Exclusive PD think so, since they have been at great pains to point out that ROCKETZ "is NOT Public Domain in any way, shape or form". Unfortunately, both you and Exclusive PD would be wrong.

For all the impressive graphics, super-smooth action and game atmosphere, the actual game concept itself is rather poor.

Many people would think this from the start when they strike incredible difficulty manoeuvring their craft around the lunar-lander type screen.

Once the sensitive controls are managed, the game opens up. It can be fast-paced and frustratingly addictive. It can also be mind-numbingly limited.



A barrage of lead hail rebounds around the cavern.

Take your choice, but remember, it may look like a particularly impressive PD game, but it's not PD, okay?

VERDICT

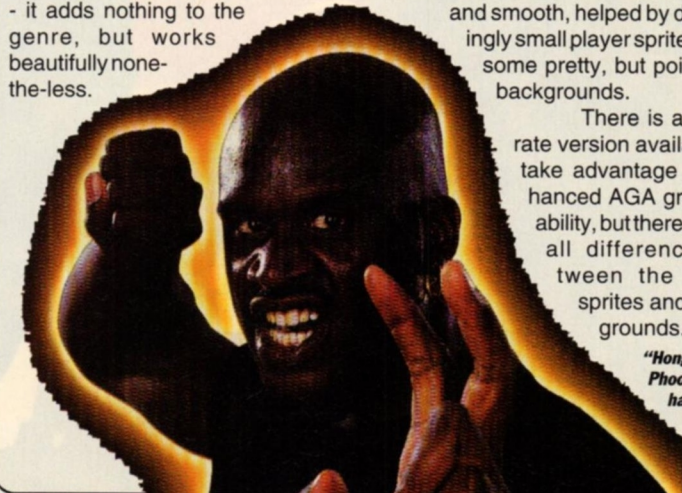
Overall: 77%

SHAQ-FU

Ocean All Amigas £25.99 - £27.99

Not a lot of media hype for this beat-'em-up game, but it does the one-on-one fight genre much better than many others.

In my mind the naff 70's "blaxploitation" image counts against the success of any marketing. So you may not hear of the game elsewhere in the media but try it out - it adds nothing to the genre, but works beautifully none-the-less.



"Hong Kong Phooey could have taken this guy on."

VERDICT

Overall: 79%

You have a wide range of players to choose from, some particularly vicious enemies, and an solid array of moves. The action is fast and smooth, helped by disturbingly small player sprites, with some pretty, but pointless, backgrounds.

There is a separate version available to take advantage of enhanced AGA graphics ability, but there is so-d-all difference between the small sprites and back-grounds.

TVPaint

TVPaint 2.0 Amiga	156,00
TVPaint 3.0 Amiga (Jan. '95)	598,00
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flight European team, and then a national side.

If the task is too intimidating for you, you can play a friendly between any team in the database, or manage a team through a specific club or national competition.

The options are seemingly infinite - and that's what makes World of Soccer so beautifully enjoyable.

Sensible claim to have included crowd chants from around the world. If that is true (it's hard to picture Sensible Software staff on junkies to foreign stadiums, standing in cheering crowds with their tape recorders) all they have succeeded in doing is proving that soccer yobs sound the same where-ever you go.

I discovered a programming error in the game about which Renegade admitted to getting a number of calls. If you try to play a match after buying one more player than allowed in your squad, or you have an injured player, you get stuck in the pre-match tactics screen with no way out except a soft-reset. It's not in the dismal manual but there is a way out of that screen.

Select the offending player by clicking his line until it turns light orange, move down to the gap below the subs bench and click again. The player will be taken out of the squad and the "OK" button will reappear to let you start the match.

Renegade got themselves in that bother not only through a lapse in the programming, but in the failure to do enough work on the manual. For such a sweet and playable game, the manual and overall packaging appears far too scamped as a piece of work.

The box image looks cheap and the author of the manual has an off-hand attitude towards the reader which may have been thought hip, but unfortunately comes across as "I don't give a damn". Consequently, the manual is badly structured, annoying and uninformative.

With those minor penalty infringements aside, World of Soccer is the business. It can be tough to start with, but perseverance and the attraction of the career possibilities make the game rewarding and fun.

We've been waiting a long time for a game like this. It's here, it's worth the cash, and you ought to get it.

VERDICT

Graphics:	84%
Sound:	88%
Gameplay:	94%
Overall:	91%

PREVIEW



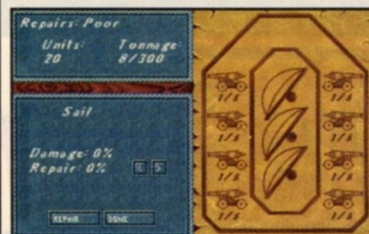
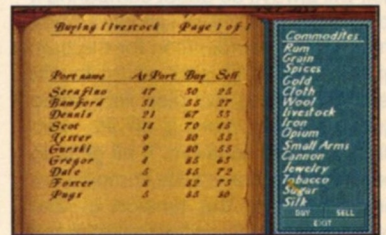
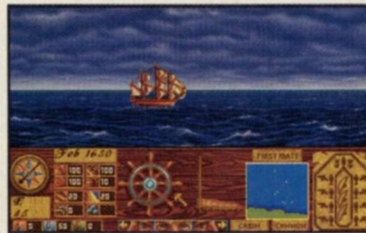
HIGH SEAS TRADER

FRONT LINES

Some exclusive pics of Impie's newie High Seas Trader, which apart from the subject matter (done to death with Pirates, The Patrician, Piracy etc) just has to better than their effort Detroit. I suppose the one good thing about this type of game is that journalists can mutter plenty of adjectival phrases like 'buckle your swash', or 'shiver your timbers' et al. So, buckle your swash for a rip roaring trip across the high seas and get to sail through 120 ports (a girl in every one?), recruit your crew, build a fleet of 16 ships, and fight off marauding pirates, whilst exploring uncharted places and amassing riches beyond your wildest dreams. And all in 256 colours!! Out next month at £24.95

Also due out next month is a game that more reflects Impressions' core roots, the tactical war game Front Lines. Set in the year 2040, on the 100th anniversary of Pearl Harbour, the world is once again at war.

You play the military commander of the combined democratic governments, who face the might of renegade armies armed by massively wealthy cartels. Tactical turn based, the game contains fully animated movement and combat, with 16 unit types from light armour to SAM's.



Jungle Strike

**Ocean All Amigas
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Funnily enough, Jungle Strike opens in Washington DC of all places which is so far from the bloomin' jungle you could send post cards.

Maybe they mean an Urban Jungle? Nah, cos the next one in the works is in fact URBAN STRIKE set in downtown Washington, therefore it makes sense to call Jungle Strike, Jungle Strike even though it's set in er Washington. Well at least the first mission is anyway, after that things get decidedly more foliage-like as you attempt to try and track down the drug lords in their own back yard.

This is the follow up the hugely successful Desert Strike, where the nasty Middle eastern dictator General Kilbaba waged war on the mighty U.S. This time around it's not the General who's the enemy - basically because you blew him away at the end of the last game - it's his son Ibn Kilbaba whose hell bent on revenge for his kind fathers death.



"Permission to crash in flames on your lawn Mr President?"

Hence the opening attack on Washington, which only goes to show that the son is just as crazy as his old man was!! This opening campaign gets you in the mood for action, and gives you a taste for what's to come. Fans of the first game will be quite at home with the controls of the chopper, because they are exactly the same, you are piloting a

Comanche helicopter armed to the teeth with chain guns, hellfire rockets and hydra missiles. Throughout your mission you'll need to replenish fuel and ammo which can be found dotted about and hidden under various

vehicles, and repair your armour by landing in one of three safe zones.

The good thing about the game is the added bits of realism that abound in each part of your mission. In the first mission, you first need to defend Washington's famous monuments from attack, this done, you then get to learn the whereabouts of the enemy HQ's and blow them to kingdom come. Having their HQ's blasted, leaves the terrorists with no course but to attack the city's embassies with car bombs, but be careful not to kill off innocent citizens driving to work!! Having thwarted the car bomb threat, you need to rescue an undercover agent who will then reveal to you that the true reason for attacking Washington was to assassinate the president in his motorcade. As if this is not enough, finally you have to capture (alive mind you) a sniper who is wreaking havoc at an important intersection. His information will give you the whereabouts of Ibn Kilbaba in South America, and it's off to the jungle you go.

So you can see that every-

thing follows a logical path, it's not just indiscriminate killing of anything that moves, a sort of intelligent man's Cannon Fodder.

The A1200 and CD32 versions come with animated intros, but the game play is not much different.

Jungle Strike comes with a very polished and informative manual, and a good guide to each campaign that gives you enough to work with, but still leaves the battle open.

The game feel is very much like Syndicate, with rather less action, and less challenging. That leaves it enjoyable, completable but not exactly endearing.

Unlike Cannon Fodder 2, this sequel really has got some new bits, and follows a more logical storyline that should please both previous Strikers, and new pilots to the hot seat.

VERDICT

Graphics:	79%
Sound:	80%
Gameplay:	88%
Overall:	82%

Last year I was bleating on about golf games just not coming up to scratch, apart that is from EA's PGA Tour, the late great Leaderboard, and Microprose Golf. I said this from the point of view of the real golfer, me being a single figure handicap golfer and all, and not from the armchair player's perspective. For me, computer golf will always be about comparing it to the real thing, and not simply a study in hand/eye coordination for the truly gifted. Good golf is all about touch, feel, and timing, coupled with some quick decision making on lie, wind direction, and contours. It all goes to pot of course in a real life competition, and recreating the tension of that competitive spirit is what makes a golf game so compelling.

The lowest point in my computer golfing life was of course Ocean's very own GOLF which got changed to Ryder Cup, a collectors item for sure, due to the truly awfulness of it. Rumour was rife at the time that some great titles were in the can - namely PGA Euro Tour and US

Gold's World Cup Golf. After Ryder Cup, I was naturally cynical about any future release, and chose instead to wallow in my misery.

However, as luck would have it, Ocean have redeemed themselves (albeit via Electronic Arts) with Euro Tour, an updated version of the classic best seller PGA Tour. This one really does cut the mustard, and not just in



"A beautifully manicured course - until I've finished with it."

PGA Euro Tour

Ocean All Amigas £25.99 - £27.99

the gameplay and graphics departments, but also in the thoughtful way it has been put together, with many new features included. It features some sub tournament games like Skins (a mini tournament where holes are won for money) Match Play (where only the holes are played for not

strokes) and a four player shoot out contest.

All of these mini competitions are played either against computer controlled pros like Seve, or Colin Montgomerie or Woosie, or up to four human players.

The actual swing mechanism

has been fine tuned to make selecting clubs and choosing direction a lot easier, and graphically it looks better than ever with some stunning rendered backdrops. Water reflects the sky, trees have realistic looking leaves, the fairways are an impossible green, and the actual greens even greener and hillier than before. You get the choice of five courses in the package, from Wentworth in England to Crans sur Siere in Switzerland, all spectacular courses in their own right, but doubly so once computer rendered. This is a true step forward for the PGA series, and EA should be applauded for insisting on maintaining quality in all their licensed products.

Coming from an arch cynic, this is probably the best golf game you'll see this year. But I haven't seen World Cup yet!!

Pick up your club, your caddy and your tarten cap, and go golfing! FORE!

VERDICT

Graphics:	84%
Sound:	76%
Gameplay:	90%
Overall:	87%

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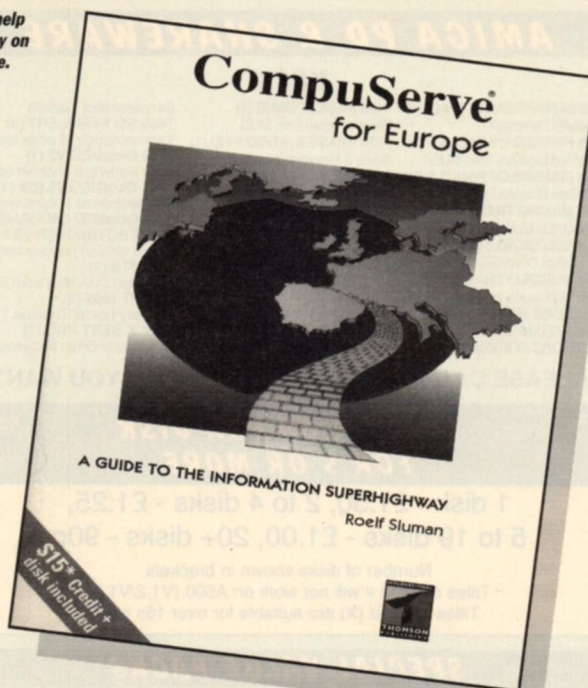
There are many ways to use your modem. Comms has lost its nerd image and got trendy, mainly due to cool terms like "information superhighway". Are you bored with hearing that banded around too? Let's face it, your first "cascade failure" sounds much better.

Aside from BBSs, which are a good source of files, there's a wealth of files and people to meet on various services and the Internet. Compuserve is one such service, and one that gives access (limited at the moment, but expanding quickly) to the Internet.

Compuserve, like many services, allows you to join your Amiga to many different systems. In addition, there are some Amiga specific areas. In return, Compuserve charges you. Quite a lot.

One of this book's aims is to show you how to get the best value for your money. In some of the many

The book to help
make your way on
Compuserve.



Compuserve for Europe

'hints and tips' parts, Roelf Sluman breaks down the way in which the charges are levied and indicates at which point it becomes much more economical to become an 'executive' member.

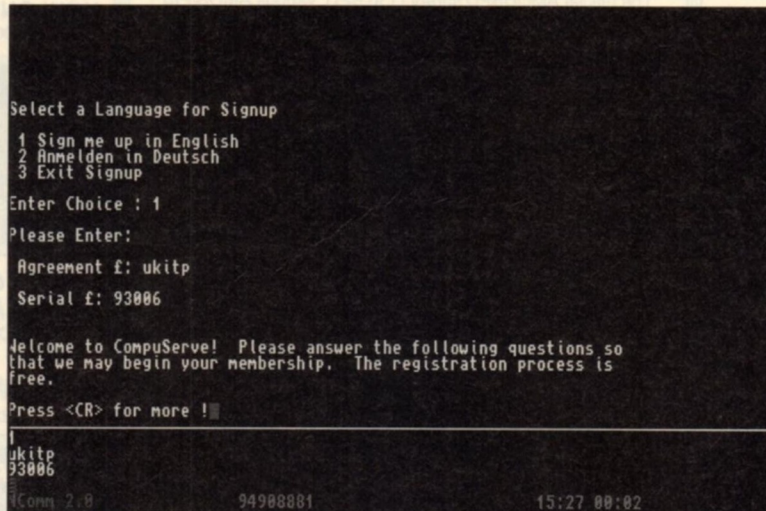
Comprehensive

The book is a very comprehensive guide to the system, aiming to cater for everyone, from those experienced with modems right through to novice users.

To this end, there's a section that considers all the types of data compression that are used to make sure you don't spend any more time (and therefore money) than necessary transferring files. All systems are covered including the Amiga, when not only lha (the type of archiver used to compress the files on the AUI SuperDisks) but also zoo and others. There's also mention of picture compression, such as Jpeg.

Rather than simply throw such terms around, there is an attempt to explain how the compression works. When you first encounter compression, it can be a little baffling. How can the minimum amount of data required by a machine be compressed. The simple answer is that the computer can't actually use the data in the compressed form and has to de-archive it in order to use it, but it does mean that transferring files when either space (such as the disk) or time (as on a modem) are at a premium can be improved. The actual details of how this is accomplished are normally left, as once described, as "black magic". The author makes a commendable start to dispelling some of the illusion

David Taylor reviews another "guide to the information superhighway."



Compuserve - famous, but is it for you?

and setting people more at their ease so that this actually works.

There is a large chunk of the book used to discuss PC programs, which will leave most Amiga users cold, but may interest those who use PCs at work and wouldn't mind a book that deals across platforms.

Unfortunately, the free disk that

comes with the book is only for PC users. Shame, but that's the way the cookie crumbles, or something.

Services

Also useful is a list of the types of services available - a discussion of the virtual shopping malls at your disposal

**Rather than simply
throw such terms
around, there
is an attempt to
explain how the
compression works.**

is most interesting. To finish off, there's an index of the forums for you to find where you'd like to meet people.

To help out the new members, there's a sizable piece on net etiquette, which is quite important to ensure you don't go blundering on upsetting people.

There's also a list of the abbreviations, such as IMHO (In my humble/honest opinion) or BTSOOM

(Beat's the shit out of me) and emoticons. Yes now you can find out what :-), :-ll or :-W really mean! :-)

If you're on Compuserve and feeling lost or wanting to join, then this book could really help out. £20 might seem like a fair amount, but it's a good investment and an excellent way to save money later, by making sure you're being as economical as possible. It will also stop you from making mistakes that will at best cause embarrassment and at worst get you flamed.

It's worth saying though that if you are considering joining the comms scene via Compuserve, you should consider whether this is the service that best suits you before you buy the book or the service. Decide if it offers you more than other services, such as CIX or Demon.

If it is Compuserve that you need, take a look at this book. **AUI**

INFORMATION

Overall Rating 80%

Price: £19.95

Compuserve for Europe

International Thomson Publishing ISBN: 1-850-32121-3

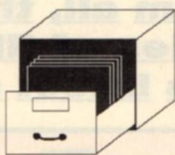
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In the last two issues of **AUI** we discussed what the Internet is and what you'll need to become part of it. We recommended subscribing to either CIX or Demon which provide you with a gateway into the awesome world of the information superhighway. (I really hate that phrase, but heck, everyone else seems to use it!)

File Shopping

Assuming you have or are getting an account with CIX or Demon and have the relevant software installed, you'll want to access FTP sites. These are file servers normally situated in a university or government building that allow people on the Internet access. Most of the FTP sites specialise in particular subjects which are relevant for their local establishment, but there are areas on many FTP sites which are specifically for the Amiga.

When you log on to an FTP site, you communicate with the host computer by typing commands, as if you're using AmigaDOS in a Shell. To get a directory listing, just type "dir" as you would to get a listing of the Amiga's directory. There are rarely any interesting files in the root directory since FTP sites have massive directory structures, you often have to go down at least two or three directories to find anything worth while. Just as in AmigaDOS, typing the "cd" command followed by a directory name will take you into that directory. "cd /" will take you back out to the root directory.

Downloading Goodies

Nearly all FTP sites are case sensitive when it comes to file and directory names. If you see a file called "ListItPro.lha" then you must type it in exactly as you see it. If you type in "listitpro.lha" then the computer will assume you're referring to another file

On-Line

This month Gary Fenton takes you fishing in the biggest pond of them all, the Internet, for access to gigantic libraries of files and some of the world's latest software.

How To FTP

CIX and Demon are similar when it comes to certain Internet services like FTP. If you're using CIX, you must log on manually and type "go internet" from the main prompt. Next type "ftp" and press return. Now, at the ftp> prompt, type "open" followed by the name of the FTP site you wish to visit. If you want to get onto an Aminet site, type "open doc.ic.ac.uk" which is the closest Aminet site for people in the UK. It really doesn't matter where the FTP is geographically placed but local sites are often faster to use.

If you're using Demon, and are connected, from a Shell type "ncftp". Don't use the FTP program because NCFTP has better features. Now you must open a link to the FTP site by typing "open doc.ic.ac.uk".

All FTP sites ask for a user name and a password. NCFTP replies automatically for you if AmiTCP has been set up correctly, but CIX users (aka CIXens) must type in both pieces of information manually. For the user name, type "ftp" and for the password type in your full e-mail address, e.g. garygfx@cix.compulink.co.uk. Demon users must check to see if a file exists called ".netrc". It should be in a directory bearing the same name as your user name, eg AmiTCP:usr/gary. The file should at least contain a line similar to this:

```
#set anon-password gary@auiimag.demon.co.uk
```

Obviously your e-mail address should be there and not mine for it to work properly!

and report an error.

To download a file use the command "get" followed by the exact file name, for example, "get ListItPro.lha". Demon users have the advantage that the file will be downloaded directly to their own Amiga whereas CIXens must wait for the file to be received by CIX before they can download it to their Amiga. Remember, CIX charges by the minute so Demon works out cheaper if you'll be doing a lot of downloading from the Internet.

Suppose there are several files you want to download with a similar

name. The command to use is MGET which will get multiple files using a wildcard. If you want the files "ListItPro.lha" and "Lister.lha" you could type "mget List*" but be warned; if there are other files called "Listings.lha" and "Listener3.zip" then these too will be downloaded. Always check first and don't be too lazy! ;-)

Aminet Rules OK

Aminet was started in 1991 and was nothing more than a directory on an FTP site containing about 50 megs of various Amiga software. Within just a

few years Aminet has grown into a network of 20 sites across the world storing over 10,000 Amiga files. It's looked after globally by 60 administrators who provide the Amiga with such a highly regarded public service. Just about every piece of software or information put into the public domain will find itself on Aminet within days.

There are over 100 directories on Aminet containing everything from the latest demos to the Fred Fish collection, from business software to games, and from programming utilities to a whole forest of music modules. Aminet is a free service enjoyed by Amiga owners all over the world who have access to the Internet. See the file AminetRoadMap.text on the coverdisk for a complete list of directories. Aminet sites on the Internet include:

```
ftp.doc.ic.ac.uk
ftp.wustl.edu
ftp.uni-paderborn.de
ftp.netnet.net
```

There are well over 600 new files every month. If there's nothing at all that interests you then you're probably a PC owner reading the wrong magazine! To log on to an Aminet site, use the FTP command followed by the name of any one of the Aminet sites. The Aminet directory is usually found by typing "cd pub/aminet" once you have successfully logged on.

To find out what the latest files

Batch FTP on CIX

Luckily CIX offers a batch file feature. This lets you tell CIX which files you want to get from the Internet so you can log off and come back later to pick them up.

From CIX's ip> prompt, use the command "batchftp" followed by the FTP site and then the path and file name.

For example, "batchftp doc.ic.ac.uk / aminet/comm/misc/PhoneBill.lha" will get the file PhoneBill.lha from the comm/misc directory on the UK Aminet site. See your CIX

manual for more details.

To see if the file has been received by CIX, list your IP directory on CIX from the ip> prompt by typing "dir" or "ls".

If it's there then things look promising. Type "send" followed by the name of the file sitting in your directory.

This will send the file from CIX straight to your Amiga. Wildcards can be used to make things easier if you like. To download all the files you asked for, type "batchftp get".

TOP TEN AMINET

- 1 jfif_dtc.lha NEW JPEG DATATYPE
- 2 PCFloppy2Amiga.lha USE PC HD DRIVES!
- 3 ArtSer36_6.lha OPTIMISED SERIAL DEVICE
- 4 FastMath405.lha NEW FAST MATHS LIBRARIES
- 5 exept49.lha EXEC SPEEDUP PATCH
- 6 ipatch33.lha INTERRUPT SPEEDUP PATCH
- 7 fears.lha WOLFENSTEIN 3D TYPE GAME
- 8 AmigaXv121.lha IMAGE PROCESSING FOR AGA
- 9 MacSND-dtc-107.lha DATATYPE: MAC SOUNDS
- 10 AIFF-dtc-110.lha DATATYPE: AIFF SOUNDS

are, get the file called "RECENT" (in upper case!) or, if you're on CIX, join the amiga/aminet conference for regular updates on Aminet uploads.

Each directory on Aminet has a text file called "INDEX" which lists a description of every file contained within that directory and the descending directories. The INDEX file in the root directory is almost 1Mb but it's worth downloading just once for reference purposes. **AUI**

CONTACTS

- Demon's joining fee is £12.50 and there's a monthly charge of £10 (plus VAT). There are no on-line fees apart from the standard BT/Mercury phone charge you'd expect to pay. Demon's voice number is 0181 371 1000 or 1234 for sales. CIX costs £25 to join and there's a minimum monthly charge of £6.25 (plus VAT). You must pay for

Straight in at number one this week is a new JPEG Datatype, while at number 7 is a fabulous 3D game. Not half! (Aminet chart 18/12/94. Image created with Photogenics and Brilliance)

each minute you're on-line to CIX which is currently 6p peak and 4p off peak, plus your usual phone bill. You can join by calling 0181 390 8446 (voice) or have your credit card ready and join while on-line on 0181 390 1255 (modem).

AUI On-Line

If you have any news, comments, letters, or technical questions, you can contact **AUI** directly using this e-mail address:

amigauser@cix.compulink.co.uk

Or you can join our amiga_user conference on CIX, or contact me personally with e-mail:

garygfx@cix.compulink.co.uk or gary@auimag.demon.co.uk

NET NEWS

NET NEWS

• The Liverpool Daily Post is the first regional newspaper to go online using the Tel-Me system. It additionally gives access to BT and Thompson phone directories.

NET NEWS

• The Rolling Stones are now reportedly on the 'net.

Whether they'd reply personally to e-mail is another story.

NET NEWS

• The UK Government's World Wide Web site is up and running. You can reach it at <http://www.open.gov.uk>.

NET NEWS

• The BBC's WWW site is at <http://www.bbcnc.org.uk>. There are various

info, e-mail addresses and details of joining their Networking Club.

NET NEWS

• Another newish WWW site belongs to The Telegraph

newspaper at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk>. Sadly Amiga users can't gain access using AMosaic software because it doesn't yet support forms which is required by some WWW sites. :-)

NET NEWS

• Still nothing to report on CompuServe. They gave us

an account but couldn't provide the required Amiga software! I haven't been able to get through to customer support for any assistance.

The most interesting video news I've seen this month is the breakthrough in multi-layered CDs. Scientists have come up with a technique for cramming twelve hours of compacted video onto one compact disc. Though CDs have seen little change in their storage capacity over recent years, this is now expected to change radically, using this new technique of writing data at different levels.

SIX MOVIES... ONE CD!

While the approach is unique, it is also quite obvious. The experimental discs are made by stacking several recording surfaces on top of one another. The layers are

THE VIDEO COLUMN

day's CD and the player for these will be backward compatible and able to play current CDs. The storage capacity is expected to be 6.5 gigabytes which is equivalent to six feature films or more than ten thousand novels.

As if this isn't enough, by the time this reaches production, new blue laser technology and improved lens - capable of focusing the laser beam into an even smaller spot, may increase this storage capacity by a factor of five!

VIDEO PRO

Starting publication early this year from America - so it should probably be in English shops soon after as you're reading this, is a new magazine aimed at video-



The actual disk in the hand.

then sandwiched together by gluing spacers to the edge of each disc, producing a tiny gap above the recording surface of each layer. Only the inside disc surfaces contain data, so a stack of six layers would yield ten recording surfaces. Data is read by moving a lens up and down to focus a laser beam onto one of the five layers.

The critical element is the new lens involved, as it has to focus the light more than 10,000 times more intently on the target layer than the adjacent layers. The developers have set a target of 100,000 times, to ensure trouble free operation. Intervening layers will then reflect so little light compared to the layer being read, that it will just form an acceptable level of background noise.

The breakthrough came when it was realized that if the aluminium coating was removed from a CD, the disc would look like a plate glass window with 95% transmission with only the reflectivity of the plastic as a limiting factor. The signal-to-noise ratio during experiments was found to be perfectly acceptable and then it was just a case of producing the right blend of light transmission against reflectivity - as there has to be enough reflectivity for the lens to focus on it.

The five layer disc is expected to be less than twice as thick as to-

Alan Puzey discovers an amazing technological development in the video CD field that may revolutionise our idea of CD storage. How would you like a CD with more than 30 gigabytes. Yes, that's not megabytes but gigabytes!

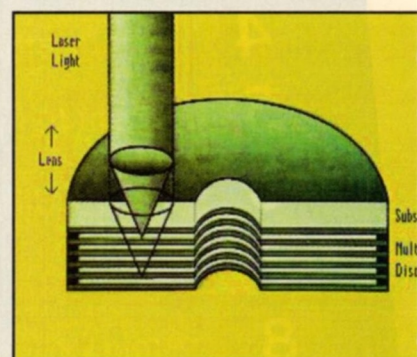
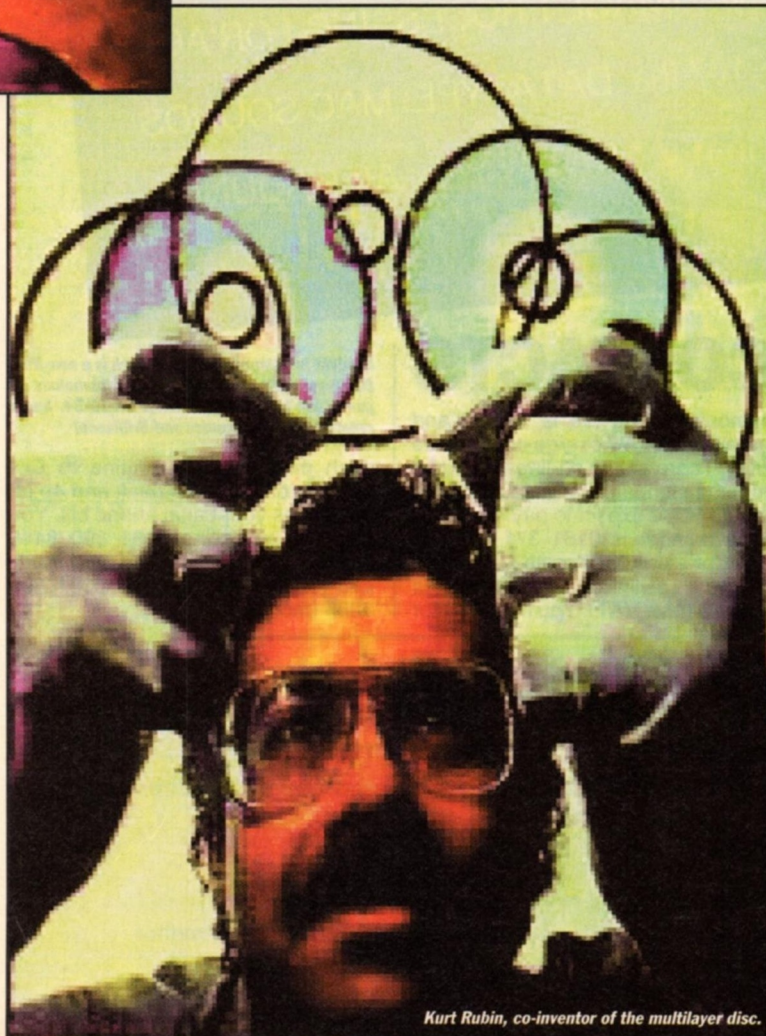


Diagram of the multilayer disc.

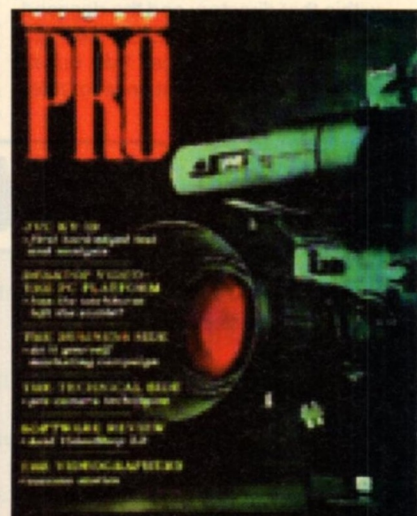
graphers, desktop video producers and small business entrepreneurs.

Video Pro aims to cover the latest in prosumer equipment from cameras to DTV software and from VTRs to computer systems and software - plus all the accessories that accompany these areas. As well as the expected hardware and software evaluations there will be "inspiring success stories" and practical business advice for those wishing to enter the desk top video business.

For further details of the magazine, including a special offer on subscriptions, contact Reese Communications Inc, 460 W 34 Street, New York, NY 10001. **AUI**



Kurt Rubin, co-inventor of the multilayer disc.



The new prosumer magazine from the USA for 1995.

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The Amiga Answer Machine...



APPS

Dear AUI,
My system consists of A1200 2MB Chip 2MB Fast, 85Meg Hard Drive, external drive, CDTV Parnetted to A1200.

When the CDTV is paretted to the A1200, I cannot obviously print due to the fact that the network is occupying the parallel port. Can I somehow dismount the parnet so that I get my parallel port back again? I.e. Kill parnet or something? I searched for a software parnet killer to no avail. At present when finished with the network I power down, switch my data switch and reboot. This is available with Multidos as to mount the drives to read PC formatted disks I type PCMountAll and to kill Multidos I type PCKILLALL. Is there anything you know of?

Could you include an advertisers index at the back of each issue to show where the advertisers adverts are that month? It would make life easy when searching for them.

Keep up the good work on the magazine and keep the excellent cover disks coming.

Mr S V Judd
London

Dear Mr Judd,
I've scanned just about every parnet file I can lay my hands on and I cannot find any reference to a Kill parnet utility at all.

You could try an ASSIGN DISMOUNT command, but that is only intended for development, and you cannot cancel it once done.

The question of the advertisers's index has been raised by several people and in response to your requests, we are re-introducing such an index.

APPS

Dear AUI,
Re- ProCalc.V2
I am finding it impossible to get two particular functions within ProCalc to function at all. They are LCELL and LRANGE.

Although I follow the instructions in the manual to the letter and ensure that all relevant files are loaded into memory all I can get are the following error messages :
LCELL :- = LCELL(Test,D4)
"Syntax : Expecting a function"
and the s in Test is highlighted.
LRANGE :- = LRANGE(Test,D4:F4)
"Syntax:Expecting a value"
and the G in LRANGE is highlighted.

My system is a 500+ 2 Meg chip RAM and a 40 Meg GVP harddrive
Is it my stupidity or is the software bugged and if so is there a solution?

My thanks in anticipation.
Brian Sharman
Leicester

Dear Brian,
It would have helped if you were able to tell me WHAT the commands were supposed to do in the first place. However, I have a good idea what is going wrong.

From what you have told me I think that you are setting up a multi spreadsheet example, and LCELL and LRANGE loads a CELL from another spreadsheet and LRANGE loads a range of cells from another spreadsheet.

Answer Types

APPS	Programs etc]
VIDEO	Video related problems
COMMS	Communications
PROG	Programming
OS	Operating System
PRINT	Printer Problems
COVERDISK	Cover Disk problems
OTHER	For Anything Else

In order to do this you must NAME the range to be loaded. If you do not do this ProCalc will try to interpret the name as a command, which it cannot do. So the simple answer is that I think you have forgotten to enter the name of the cell that you are trying to import.

Please remember that it is difficult to give answers to application- specific queries if I don't have the necessary information. In this case it would have been useful to have a photocopy of the example and what the commands were supposed to do.

APPS

Dear AUI,
Could you please help me. I am having a few teething problems with my Amiga 600 that I have recently purchased.

This computer is the first that I have owned in about 10 years (my first one was a ZX81), so I am not the most experienced computer operator, as you can imagine.

What I would like to do with the computer is to be able to create and print documents (as well as to play games).

I have read through and followed all the instructions in the "Using the Amiga Workbench" manual and I believe the program that would be best for this is the

AmigaDOS.

The place where I get stuck is on the "working with files" section. I can open the file but how can I prepare my own work in it when all I seem to have is the text prompt which I can't seem to pass.

If you could help me with this very irritating (but probably very simple problem) I would be most grateful. Also if you could advise me if I am using the right program or whether there is a more suitable one I could buy on the market.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I hope to hear from you in the very near future.

Mr A Saunders
Colchester

Dear Mr Saunders,
The problem is that you have got into the idea that AmigaDOS is an application that you can use. Well, to some extent it is, but it is more like a collection of tools that allow other programs to do their thing.

AmigaDOS is the part of the Amiga system that controls the disk drives and the filesystem. There is nothing really in AmigaDOS that allows you to directly access files in the way that you want. Before anyone starts screaming, it is possible to force AmigaDOS to create a file by typing to a file, but that's getting far too complex, and is best avoided.

There are several programs provided with the Amiga that will get you started. ED and EDIT are two, and you should also have Memacs on your disks somewhere. ED and EDIT are pure text tools and are really designed to edit script files. (Files that perform various system configurations functions) Memacs is a programmers editor. It gives a fair number of functions such as cut and paste, copy and so on.

What you really need is a Word-processor program. There are quite a few to choose from. Scribble, Wordworth, Protext, Transwrite, to name four commercial ones. There are also several public domain text utilities, such as EdWord Pro that was on SuperDisk No.49. However, you will have to be very careful if you only have the bare A600 as your storage will be very limited.

COMMS

Dear AUI,
I used my Amstrad CPC6128 for nine years and last May upgraded

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to an Amiga 1200 with Cumana external drive and Star LC20 printer. As I am now in my seventies, learning to adapt to the 1200 has been slower than would be usual, especially the difference in programming after the CPC, but I am getting the hang of it. A few hangups I have written to several other magazines about have not been answered. So as I now take your magazine regularly I hope you might help me.

Firstly, I also have an Okimate 20 printer, 9 way connector serial and an 8056 serial printer which I used on the CPC through an RS232C Amstrad serial interface with good results, I have managed after a lot of aggro to get the 8056 running on Transwrite and of course the Star LC20 runs perfectly on several of my other programs but the Okimate will not budge on any program. The baud rate for the 8056 is 1200 and the Okimate is 9600, and I thought by just changing those settings would do the trick, but no luck. I managed to get a few ASCII files transferred from 3" Amstrad disks to 3 1/2" Amiga disks by a helpful young man, but do not like to impose on his time, so do you know of a commercial firm that will do transfers, or can I use my Amstrad RS232C interface to send files from the CPC to the 1200? I still have the CPC set up.

In this month's AUI there is mention of an Amiga helpline. Can you tell me what is the number please?

Also I have bought several disks at our local computer shows and they will not run on my 1200. So, I bought Fakemem and other degraders but have not a clue as to how to use them and when I run them the machine just sits there doing nothing. I will be grateful for any crumbs of info you can provide.

A.Sheldon
Nottingham

Dear A.Sheldon,
Make a note of the switch settings inside the Okimate and put them somewhere safe, just so you can get back to the original settings.

Set the switches as follows.

SW1= 1,2 & 6 ON 3,4 & 5 OFF
SW2= 5 ON 1,2,3,4 & 6 OFF

This will set the printer for 9600bps, Xon-Xoff handshaking 8 bits no parity. So set preferences up for the same and see what happens.

On some models SW2 - 5 controls white space between lines on graphic dumps. Check your handbook on this. Once you have this working you can start trying Hardware handshaking. (A point to note. Load up Breakout Box from my

Toolbox series, and that will let you see what is going on)

You will need a cable correctly wired. Normally you will need a what is called a crossover cable, but I really need the see the interface specs for the Oki to sort that out exactly. Generally you will need a cable that connects the following signal lines together:

TXD - RXD
RXD - TXD
RTS - CTS
CTS - RTS
DSR - DTR
DTR - DSR
GRD - GRD

Amiga Oki

You may also need to do something with CD (carrier detect, but this will depend on the printer. Another thing that can cause problems is that some printers use DTR as their flow control, where the Amiga expects to see RTS-CTS, well a simple link between CTS and DSR at the Amiga end will cure that problem. This is where Breakout Box is handy to see what signals are active.

Your data transfers; well this is a very simple task, and all you will need is a comms program for the Amiga. I would suggest Ncomm as that it a nice and easy program to use.

Once you have installed it set it up as if it were the Amstrad printer. Connect the CPC and the Amiga with a crossover cable and turn on Ncomms capture option. This will log anything to a disk file. Print any of the files you want transferred on the CPC and they will be captured by Ncomm.

If you have a comms program for the CPC you can do all of this with a file transfer protocol such as Xmodem, or Zmodem.

You can also try increasing the speed of the CPC comms as well and Ncomm, this will speed the transfer up.

I'm not sure about the Amiga Helpline, from comments other readers have made, it may not be all that hot.

The number is: 081 302 8383, but reports are that it's got a long way to go. Still, worth a try maybe.

You have to read the instructions with the degraders very carefully as they all work in different ways. Some you run, then reboot the Amiga, other run and seem to do nothing. They are not all successful with every program, and many programs will not work with them at all. However, another tip that you can try, and one that does work for quite a few programs is to reboot the Amiga, Holding down BOTH mouse buttons as you do so.

This will bring up a system screen that gives you some boot options.

Select display options and then ECS, this will disable the fancy A1200 graphics chip modes and any program will see only the ECS graphics modes (as per the A500) The other thing that you can disable, and one that does cause a lot of problems is the CPU caches - turn them off and this will enable a lot of programs to work. The nice thing about this method is that it is a two stage process. You can set the graphics mode and the CPU caches and then boot a game disk or whatever, as far as the program knows it has just been put in an Amiga and booted.

VIDEO

Dear AUI,

In the November issue of AUI your reply to a letter from Mr.R.Brown was most interesting. He has basically the same problem as I. In PAL HiRes mode the picture fills the screen perfectly but there is bad flicker. I used the Commodore flicker fixer which I pinched from my previous machine (A200 HD). Again it gave perfect picture filling the screen nicely but without the full colour range, so I have been forced to use DBLPAL High Res No Flicker. This is fine but there is a large border around the screen. Is it possible the programs mentioned in your reply might solve my problem too?

I hope you can extend your offer to me too (and the few thousand others who have also as well)? If so, I enclose a disc with S.A.E. and thank you for your help.

L. Hellawell
Bradford

Dear L.Hellawell,

I've sent the disk to you and I hope that you find the programs useful. I expect that the monitor editor will do the job for you. Remember that you will have to edit each driver and screen mode that you intend to use. You may even need to re-edit the overscan prefs in the normal way.

A general note to any other interested readers.

I will send the following programs to you on receipt of a stamped self addressed envelope and disk.

README
README.info
Yass.lha
Windowdeamon.lha
Setdefmon.lha
Screenselect.lha
Screenmode.lha
Pkludge.lha
Nontsc.lha
Huntwindows.lha
Changemode.lha
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Promotor.lha
moned3.lha
1942PatchAGA.lha
1942setup.lha
blackbordr.lha
cborder.lha
promo104.lha
moned2.lha
frcomon31.lha

We aim to please!

VIDEO

Dear AUI,
Technical Query - Microvitec 1438 Multisync Monitor.

I Note with interest in the November issue problems using multisync monitors with the Amiga. My system setup is as follows:

Amiga A 1200, internal 20Mb Hard Drive, GVP 40Mhz Accelerator/ FPU Card with Additional 4Mb FAST RAM (Total 6Mb), Microvitec Autoscan 1438 multisync hi-res monitor, HP Deskjet Portable Printer.

My problem is very similar. The monitor has a vertical size adjustment but no horizontal size adjustment and as such all of my hi-res screenmodes have a 1.5" Left 'margin' and a 0.5" Right 'margin'. If I use the Monitor's horizontal Movement to centre the display I get a black area where the tube ends along the right. To hide this I use the public domain program 'BBlank' to turn the border black.

I run WorkBench and most WB programs such as Final Writer, Imagine etc. with DBLPAL screen driver and IControl Preference set to Mode Promotion ON. I tried using the Overscan preference program to stretch the sides but it adds less than .5" so I accepted standard text width of 640 pixels. The only other problem after I have centred and vertically sized the screen is that if I use a low-res screen mode (such as most games use) I have to adjust the Vertical size again or the screen is too big to fit! I can live with this if I can have a full width DBLPAL screen. I have enclosed a formatted disk and S.A.E. and would be grateful if you could forward me the programs mentioned in Robin Browne's letter of November's Amiga Answers if they might possibly be of any use. I have tried the monitor on a PC with Microsoft Windows and that displays a full screen hi-res picture right up to 1024x768 so I know the monitor is not 'defective'.

D Nesbit
Isle of Wight

Dear D Nesbit,
The disk is on its way to you. I hope

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Stunning 4 Disk AGA Demo
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- X3515 NEXUS 7**
AGA Demo By Andromeda
- X3514 (AB) MOTION OMIGIN 2**
More AGA Excellence
- X3513 (AB) PREY**
AGA Demo By The Polka Bros
- X3512 ROOTS**
AGA Demo By Sanity!
- X3511 (ABC) WHAMMER SLAMMER**
Good Multiplatform AGA Demo
- X3510 (AB) SOUL KITTEN**
Great!! By The Silents!
- X3509 APEX AGA**
More Demos For Your A1200
- X3508 (AB) OXYGENE DEMO**
You Guesse! AGA Demo!
- 3507 TURBOCAT / VIEW**
Views & Cats Disks Contents
- 3506 EFF'S INTERNET GUIDE V2.3**
Formerly The BDG To Internet
- 3505 SAT TRACK V4.2**
Satellite Tracking Program
- 3504 PGP V2.6vi**
Good CLI Knowledge Required
- 3503 CULT TV & FILM GUIDE**
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- 3502 FREEFORM 3D V1.9**
B-Spline Ed For Imagine & Real 3D
- 3501 MAINACTOR V1.55**
Animation Utility
- 3500 AMOSSIBLE**
Amos Examples For Beginners
- 3499 ICON TOOLBOX**
Lots Of Excellent Icon Util!
- 3498 NEW UTILS 3**
Includes MPEG Player
- 3497 (AB) JSB GAME**
Jet Set Willy Clone With Editor!
- X3496 (AB) SWITCH BACK**
Good AGA Demo By The Rebels
- 3495 ROBS HOT STASH #25**
Many More Super Util!
- 3494 ROBS HOT STASH #24**
More New Util!
- 3493 PAGESTREAM 3.0D PATCH**
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- 3492 IMAGESTUDIO V1.2.1**
Superb Image Processor
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All For Magic WB! Tons!
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Another Klondike Cardset
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- F1 016 ART SCHOOL
- F1 014 TOTS TIME
- F1 013 THROUGH THE RED DOOR

you find the programs useful.

I've printed your letter even though it's quite similar to other readers' problems so I can give a note about the games, and lower res. screens. Quite often what happens is that the games use a non-interlaced screen, and that effectively doubles the height of the display. I've not seen a sure fire way of solving this effect yet, but I'll keep my eyes open.

OTHER

My Amiga setup consists of . . .

- (1) Amiga 1200 (Kickstart version - 39.106, Workbench Version - 39.29 (3.0))
- (2) Chip Ram - 2 MB, Fast Ram - 2 MB
- (3) 33 Mhz FPU co-processor.
- (4) IBM 2.5" 170 MB Hard Drive fitted by myself (Didn't I have fun fitting it !!!)
- (5) Cumana 3.5" external 3.5" floppy Drive.
- (6) Star LC200 printer (9 pin dot-matrix)
- (7) Zappo A1200 CD Rom drive.
- (8) Commodore 1084S Monitor.

After reading the December issue of your magazine I noticed that Mr Mike Barrows of Devon is having problems running your No.3 CD on his Amiga setup. I had my CD Rom drive for about 2 months now (when it got first released) and this was the only CD I had to run on it. I had the game screen contents come up, then the buzzer sounded, but then a message 'System request Intuition is attempting to reset the Workbench screen. Please close all Windows except Drawers' if I didn't press a key. After some messing around trying to run the best part of the CD from Workbench or CLI, I discovered that there was a simple remedy to run it. The steps I use are as follows :

- (1) Reset system. Hold down the left mouse button and let the "CDRom Boot Requester" screen come up. Double click on CDRom Boot
- (2) Let the game screen contents show, buzzer sound and let system go to the AmigaDOS screen.
- (3) Immediately a Window (Called 'your new Window') appears in the top left hand corner of the screen. Quickly click the mouse pointer on the first screen (AmigaDOS screen) and type 'endcli' return, then quickly click the mouse pointer on the top left window ('Your new Window'), the rest of the CD should now load normally.

I hope Mr Mike Barrows (and

other users) find this tip useful as I have found this disk an excellent introduction into Multimedia. Please release some more in the near future.

Just one problem I seem to be having is that if I boot into Rekick 3.1, the system responses on the AmigaDOS screen :

c:Rekick: unknown command
c:Rekick Failed returncode 10

Then a window saying, 'System request. Intuition is attempting to reset the Workbench screen. Please close all Windows except Drawers' quickly flashes up and the Workbench loads normally. Is this a bug in the early software (Version 8.0) supplied with the ROM drive and if so how do I get an upgrade?

I would be happy with any reply regarding this problem.

Kevin Dent
Wiltshire

Dear Kevin,
Thanks for the hints on the CD, I sure that they will prove interesting. Remember that we did pop a small proglet onto a SuperDisk that sorted out the CD! 3 disk.

I can't say what is going on with your rekick - the error message says it all. The Amiga cannot find the program. Are you sure that you have Rekick in a directory with a path to it? The system in looking in the C: directory for it.

Upgrades to the driver software should be available from your dealer as and when they are available.

OTHER

Dear AUI

I have a 1.3 A500, with a half meg upgrade, recently the A500 has started to give me problems. When I first use the computer it behaves and works alright, after half an hour or so of use I start to get thin horizontal lines up and down the screen. The colour then recedes until there is nearly no picture.

When I reset my A500, instead of the usual blue colour screen, I have a light green colour screen. I can still boot the A500 but all I get is the above. Rather than send it away for repair would you able to tell me if it is one of the chips that is gone, so that I might replace it.

Is there any chance in the near future that we might see any of the following on your excellent SuperDisks: PD fonts (computographic or bitmap), clipart or Imagine objects, as I soon hope to have a brand new A1200.

I would like to thank you in advance for any help that you may

be able to give me on my A500, as even though I hope to get a A1200 I would not like to lose my trusty A500.

Billy Clydesdale
Rossshire

Dear Billy,

The main video functions are controlled by Agnus, the big square chip in the centre of the motherboard. I have known that chip to cause problems. However, I don't think that is the case here. It sounds as if your monitor is half dead! I assume that you are using a monitor?

Check by using another monitor or TV. If the fault still exists then you have an Amiga problem. If not, well you have found the problem.

If it is the Amiga it sounds more like a fault in the Video stages rather than the main custom chips. Any suggestions I could give would be of the poke and hope type, and not really worth the effort. Your fault really needs to be investigated with some test equipment and a circuit diagram.

Font, Image objects and clipart are already very well covered in the various PD libraries. It's not impossible that the odd file will appear, but Dave has enough trouble cramming the programs onto the coverdisks as it is without adding even more things. You should be happy with this month's disks which do have some things of interest to you. Unfortunately, your old A500 won't be able to decrunch the disks, so hopefully you've got your A1200 by now, or if not, some fellow Amiga friends with a more recent machine.

OTHER

Dear AUI,

Query : Upgrading.

My current Amiga set-up consists of a standard Amiga 600 with 20Mb Hard Drive and memory expanded to 2Mb. I also have a Citizen Swift 200C Printer. The software I use, besides games, consists of Kindwords 3, Personal Paint, Money Matters, and a Database Program in the main.

I am currently considering upgrading this system, and given that I want something which is faster, has more memory and can use CD-ROM I appear to have two options. I can either buy an A1200, probably with about 80Mb Hard Drive, a suitable accelerator and memory expansion (Blizzard 1220?) and the Zappo CD-ROM drive. The alternative option would appear to involve buying a CD-32 Console, the SX-1 Expansion Module, a floppy drive, a hard drive, a keyboard and some suitable extra memory.

It would appear that the relative costs of these two options would be as follows:

1)
A1200 Option A1200 with 80Mb HD £429 (Hobbyte Computing)
CD-ROM Drive £190 (Hobbyte) Blizzard 1220/4 £230 (Harwoods)
Total £849

2)
CD-32 Option
CD-32 Console £240 (Hobbyte)
SX-1, Keyboard, Floppy £255 (Indi)
Suitable HD £???
Suitable memory. £???
???

Which option would you recommend? What are the relative pros and cons of each option? Would the CD-32 Option be as fast as the A1200 option? What would the total cost of the CD-32 Option be? As you can see I'm not sure what HD or Memory expansions would be needed or how much they would cost. The CD-32 Option would also enable me to upgrade to a FMV module in the future if I wish but I'm not convinced whether or not this makes this option worthwhile. Your comments on this would be greatly appreciated.

Mr M.D. Ferbert
Somerset

Dear Mr Ferbert,

There is a fairly easy answer to this, and there is only one proviso really. If you are interested in games and Full Motion Video (if that ever takes off that is) then the CD32 is the route to take. However, this will be more expensive.

The only suggestion I will make to you regarding your A1200 choice is that your hard drive is a bit on the small side. IDE drives are getting very very cheap, consider something larger than 80 megs, 160, 240 Megs for example. 80 meg hard drives are about £160, 4 megs of RAM £140.

That would make the total CD32 system price of £795, but this is without an accelerator. However, Hobbytes, I am sorry to say apparently is no longer in business.

OTHER

Dear AUI,

I have a problem which I hope that you can help me with.

My system setup is as follows, Amiga A500 + with 1.5 MByte chip RAM OS 2.04, GVP Impact Series II A500-HD + 120MB hard disk drive with 2 MByte fast RAM, external floppy disk drive, Commodore 1084S Video Monitor and Seikosha SL-95 Colour printer.

The problem is as follows, from time to time when I use my system for extended periods the computer tells me that the hard disk has read/write errors. This is always accompanied by the fan in the hard disk slowing down and what sounds like the disk "powering up", e.g. it beeps and scans itself. The fault does not occur with any software in particular.

The read/write errors appear to be random. I have tried switching off the system for five minutes but when I reboot it still reports read/write errors with the above symptoms. If I leave it off for more than an hour everything appears to work fine and when I check the disk there are no read/write errors reported.

I suspect that the problem could be the power supply to the hard disk but before I invest in a new one I would like your opinion, as to whether this is the most likely cause.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for any help that you maybe able to give me.

Paul Alben
Milton Keynes

Dear Paul,
Well, long range fault diagnostics is always a tricky problem, my number one guess would be the PSU. Does the PSU get rather hot?

If it is not the PSU, then it is something temperature related. Make sure that no ventilation slots have been blocked.

As the hard drive has its own PSU it SHOULD be OK, but there is always the chance that it is a little temperature sensitive. Can you arrange for a fan to blow air over the hard drive case? If you can and the time taken for the fault to appear increases then you will have confirmation that you do have a temperature problem. Checking the PSU directly will require measuring the supply voltages which I don't think you will be able to do yourself.

It would appear that a trip to the repair shop is indicated.

COMMS

Dear AUI,
First the formal out of the way;

I have an A600HD (20 MB) WB 2.05, 2 MByte with clock, Power's PC880B External Drive, Telly. Also a CD32 WB3.1 (I think) (With SX-1 and Power's Dual Drive (With its own PSU so I don't have to upgrade my power pack at Christmas), A2000 Keyboard plugged in AUX port via adapter (CDDA's a great command isn't it?)

Right. First problem, I'm thinking of buying HiQ's 420MB IDE hard drive. I know the SX-1 will take 2.5

inch internal hard drives, but will a 3.5 inch internal hard drive fit? Will it go into the external IDE port? Is it safe? Will I need a more powerful power pack?

Second problem, I'm thinking of buying a modem, preferably a 9600 bps or above. I'm an Amiga veteran so use what language you want, but I've no experience with modems. Is the bps the same as the baud rate? Having a quick look through your November issue two modems take my fancy. The first is the Supra Fax Plus (£112.99) 9600 bps advertised on page 10 by First Computer Centre, and the second is the Faxlink 2400/9600 bps Fax (£79) advertised on page 57 by Amiga Supplies. Both come with communication software and have a top speed of 9600 bps, the Faxlink seems to be switchable between 2400 and 9600 bps, so it looks like it may have more compatibility with other modems. Shouldn't this make it more expensive? You always say that you pay for what you get, so is there a reason why the Supra is more expensive? Which shall I buy? Do you have a better suggestion (cheaper, more value for money etc)?

Third and final, and I'm sure there are a lot of other people who want to know this, once I have my modem, how will I go about (FidoNet is top priority) joining the Fidonet, AmigaNet, AmiNet (Are them two the same thing?) and Internet? Are some of the first lot sub-divisions of the Internet? Help, I'm confused? Oh, and by the way, how's Amiga CD Issue Four coming along (It's a bit late isn't it)?

Stuart Tomlinson
Manchester

Dear Stuart,
The short answer to your hard drive fitting question is I don't know. You will have to measure things up! Not all drives are the same size so be careful.

There is no reason why the external IDE port cannot be used, however you will need to have the IDE drive boxed up somehow, and the necessary cables. This might push the cost to about the same as a 2.5 inch unit so compare the prices carefully. If you do not have any other extras in your SX1 you should be OK for power, it's impossible to say because I cannot predict what you are going to add. It's an easy enough thing to work out. Just add up all the power requirement of your system, and then compare them with the rating of the supply.

i.e. 5V @ 245mA + 5V @ 750mA + 5V @ 350mA + 5V @ 550mA comes to 1895mA or 1.895Amps at 5V.

12V @ 100mA + 12V @ 135mA comes to 12 V @ 235mA

This would mean that your supply would need to be rated at 2A for the

5V supply and 250mA for the 12V supply. If your supply can give more than the total demand required by anything that you add it will be OK.

The modems, well, neither of the two modems that you mention are particularly fast. They will ONLY run at 2400bps in normal data modes. The higher speeds are for Fax use only. The Supra that the V42 bis error correction/compression system built in and that would explain the difference in price.

The Supra 144LC, Supra V32bis, and the USRobotics Sportster are better choices. You need to look for modems offering V32bis, AND V42.

FidoNet is an association of Bulletin Boards that exchange mail and files on a regular basis. It relies on the BBS dialling up other BBSs on a regular basis. Passing mail and files this way can take quite a time. You need to find a local Fido BBS to you and join it.

You will have to give me a few more clues about AmigaNet in what context have you come across this? At the moment I suspect that it is the same as AmiNet.

To give it its correct title the Internet: this is a world wide network of computer systems; there are many different computers linked into The Internet and this is a major growth area in communications. You access The Internet in several ways. The easiest method is to join a BBS system that offers an Internet gateway. A service such as CIX will provide this. The other method would be to set you a direct connection to the Internet, via a service provider such as Demon Internet Services.

The problem here is that you will need to run the TCP/IP suite of software on your Amiga. This is no real problem except that it is a big and complex suite of software. If you do chose to go down this route then be prepared to have a good fight with your software. You will also find that there is a lot of other software that you can set up in order to access the Usenet, which is where a lot of The Internet traffic lies. This is the various newsgroups that are set up for various interest groups such as the Amiga, photography and so on. It is VAST - join a few news groups and you can expect a few hundred Kilobytes of messages PER DAY, you have been warned!

Scattered about the Internet are various repositories for special interest. One of these is AmiNet devoted to the Amiga, it is the primary source of software and information for the Amiga. Several computer sites carry 'mirrors' of AmiNet, so even if one site is down you can normally access the required files from another site.

Try 061 For Amiga on 061-799-4922 (data) for your local Fido BBS and CIX 0181-390-8446 (voice) 0181-390-1255/1244 (data), Demon 0181-

349-0063 (voice). This is the head office of Demon, but they have what is called POPs (Points Of Presence) around the country, so you may even get a local call access to the Demon if you are near a POP.

I'm Amiga Answers, not Write to Reply or Letters to the Editor! I've said this a few times before, but I'll say it again. If you have comments or questions that are NOT Amiga Answers related, please use a separate sheet of paper for them. That way they stand a chance of being answered. I've not got a clue how the next CD is coming along?

(After the flood of people asking for another CD, AUI is looking forward to bringing out CD4, but we are waiting until the situation with Commodore and the CD32 is clearer - ED.

COVERDISK

Dear AUI
I have some queries in respect of Disk Number 42, and I would appreciate some help.

First my set up:
Amiga A500
Trapdoor expansion to 1 meg
External expansion 4 megs
Monitor CM8833
CitizenSwift 240C
2 external Cumana Floppy Drives
Workbench 1.3 and 2.04 via A ROM
Sharer
Protex Version 6

Disk 42, all the programs were successfully unarchived, and several programs worked, but the following would not load:

Epoch MasterV3.0

Upon clicking on the icon Womble Font - activity occurs then the following appears. I am about to install EPOC's Font to your Fonts:Directory[Y/N] Pressing 'Y' :c/copy: unknown command All done. you can now run Epc master V.03 Clicking on the Icon gives Epoch Master Cannot Find Womble.font - OK.

Clicking upon Epc Master V3.0 Doc Unable to open tool, C:More File Master V2

When Clicking on Icon Screen Multi-colours then following appears: Couldn't open Required Library VR World

Appears to load OK, then Gives 'Load a World' Program Failed (ERROR #80000004) Wait for Disk activity to finish Suspend/Reboot

Graham Pope
Somerset

Dear Graham,
The installation script for Epoch Master is looking for the copy command. You do not have the copy command

where the install script expects to find it. Copy the required font into your fonts: directory manually and all will be fine.

Unable to open C:More? This is exactly the same problem, you do not have the More program in the C: directory. (Nor do I for that matter!) Click once on the document icon and then select Information from the Workbench menu. Edit the default tool to point to your own preferred text viewer. Something like utilities:textviewers/More if you have a drawer called textviewers within your utilities drawer.

File Master was missing a library, you should have that by now, as well as the example files see **AUI Nov 1994**.

VR World, not surprising that this crashed, it required a 68020 processor as a minimum. This is mentioned in one of the doc files.

OTHER

Dear AUI,
Regarding PCMCIA Drive. I have A1200, 28Mhz Viper accelerator,

FPU 28Mhz 68882, 8Mb 32bit Fast RAM fitted.

Can I fit said CD drive with 8 Mb of Fast RAM. The overdrive HD is said to not work if 8 Mb fitted. That's why I went for an internal HD. You can fit a SCSI adaptor to the Viper board and then a SCSI CDROM, but which make?

I fancy the PCMCIA route but want to keep 8 Mb not drop to 4Mb of Fast RAM.

All the Amiga mags are giving it plenty of ??? about the PCMCIA CD drives, but they never mention the setup and if there is a memory clash with expansion RAM.

Mr D. Magill
Cheltenham

Dear Mr D. Magill,
As I understand things, the Zappo drive claims to correctly autoconfigure into the existing memory space. However, this will depend on the Viper doing things correctly. The problem is that there are so many different combinations of third party hardware that it will be impossible for every manufacturer to test their prod-

uct with everyone else. The same problem exists for magazines, can you imagine what the office would look like if we had a sample of every hardware product? Apart from the cost, we would be too busy playing with all the goodies and no work would get done!

In your situation I would go to a reputable dealer who will let you try the system before you buy it. Take your system to the dealer, that is the safest way to find out.

If you opt for the SCSI option, things are much easier. I have not heard of any SCSI CDROM that will not work. (SONY and NEC are often mentioned). The AmiCDROM filesystem is freely available on the internet and BBS sites and should be available from PD libraries as well.

OTHER

Dear AUI,
I'm writing to you and all the other AUI readers.

I have a Commodore monitor model 1085S a Commodore printer

model 1270 MPS and an Amiga 600 built in 1 Meg. Yes, it may seem funny, but it's true 1 megabyte. Apparently the person who had this computer before ordered it from a catalogue here in Switzerland. The computer arrived from the States.

The person didn't have a clue how to use it and sold it to a second hand shop.

I bought the lot for 870 Swiss Francs, the problem is I wanted a Megabyte card that slots in on the left hand side of the A600, but you wouldn't believe it. It just didn't fit. Because the person who had it before had the keyboard converted and it's possible that something went terribly wrong, my biggest question as there is no Commodore company in Switzerland anymore: what should I do? Otherwise, the keyboard works fine but for me this is a defect piece of hardware.

There's something else I'd like to add to this letter. The game disk No 45 with Zombies Apocalypse II gives software failure 80000020, but Pengo and Pub Darts are working well. Is it because I don't have enough memory or is it something else? Please could you help me or could some other readers help me?

Diana Katona
Switzerland

Dear Diana,
You will have to find an independent dealer somewhere local to you. Due to the current problems with Commodore, I don't think that there is any official CBM presence in Switzerland or France.

I would like to know what has been done to the keyboard? Why has it been modified and what has been done to it? The memory slots are pretty solidly constructed and it would take quite a bit of work to disable them.

Any competent electronic engineer will be able to tell you if there are any serious problems. I would suggest that you find such a person: a technical college or university technician. An Amateur Radio club would also be a good place to ask in; many Radio Amateurs are engineers.

Zombies is an AGA game only and is not compatible with the A600.

When writing to Amiga Answers include as much information as possible about your system and about which software/hardware you are running. This will help to determine what your problem might be and its solution! Send your questions to:

Amiga Answers
Amiga User International
4th Floor Building 3
Carriage Row
203 Eversholt Street
London NW1 1BW



TOOLBOX

DefTool2

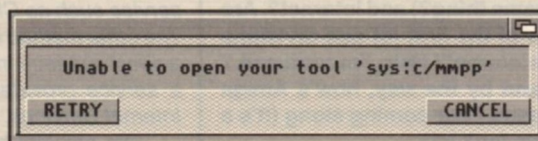
Author Robert Lang

Requires Workbench 2.0 V37 or greater

This little program complements ToolType featured in last month's Toolbox. Some icons are known as 'Project' icons. These are normally used for data files, such as generated by an editor. One of the most annoying questions I get (both to the readers and myself) goes along the lines of: 'When I click on so-and-so icon all I get is a message saying cannot find your tool :c/mmp'.

Now this is a very easy problem to cure. If you click once on such an icon and then select information from the Workbench icon menu you will see a line identified as 'default tooltype'. This is the program that is needed to be able to view/edit/make use of the file. Have a look at the information requester from the document icon for DefTool2.

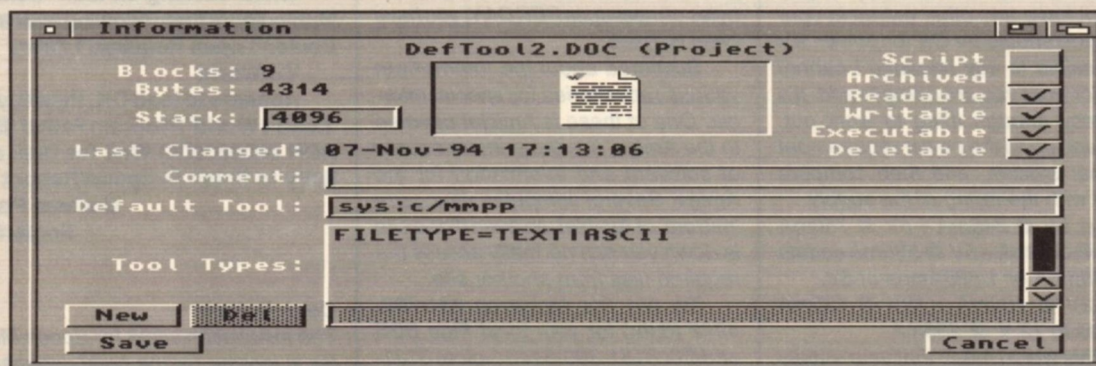
Now this is a very easy problem to cure. If you click once on such an icon which is located in the SYS: disk volume, in the C directory. Or is it? The point is that



YOU may have moved it elsewhere, or you may not have mmp at all. If you have a view program tucked away in your utilities directory called ViewIt, and your utilities drawer is on your WORK: volume, the default tooltype would need to be changed to WORK:utilities/ViewIt.

This is no problem for the odd icon, but if you have a dozen icons to change, it begins to get tedious. DefTool2 allows you to select a single or a range of icons and then change their default tool.

When run DefTool attaches to the Workbench tools menu. Just select the icons and then select DefTool. Fill in the requester and select save, all the icons will have their default tool updated.



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THE PD STAKEOUT

Scoring

The marks awarded to each PD disk are based purely upon its own merits and, of course, our personal views. Value for money and reliability are also taken into account as well as features and quality of the software.

Compatibility

The PD disks reviewed in this issue were tested on an A500 with Kickstart 1.3. Please check with your PD supplier that the disks you are ordering are compatible with your Amiga. Amiga Plus, 600, or 1200 owners should be aware that roughly half of the software in the public domain will not work with Kickstart 2 or 3. Always ask first.

PD or ShareWare?

All freely distributable software comes under the rather deceiving umbrella of "public domain". Quite a lot of this software is, in fact, shareware. Shareware means that if you like the software, or use it regularly, the author will request a reasonable donation from £5 to £20. There is usually a note on the disk informing you if the software is shareware or regular PD. Whether or not you send a donation to the author depends totally upon your level of conscience and morals. Remember, if you send a donation to the author, you may receive an updated version of the software. Even if you don't receive an update, you will have given the author the incentive to continue contributing into the public domain.

Disk OG75 Online PD

I think Deluxe Galaga has to be one of the most polished PD games currently available in the Public Domain. This professionalism is further proved by the way author continually updates his product. The previous few revisions have mainly been bug fixes. 2.4 however contains a number of new features.

These new features include the use of both the nonvolatile and lowlevel libraries. The CD32 uses both of these, and this means that the high score can be saved in its nonvolatile RAM chip, and also that all the buttons on the CD32 controller can be used with the game.



DELUXE GALAGA 2.4

Other improvements include more alien types on a single level, one extra sub game, and above everything

else, the author has made the game slightly easier. If you're a games player, this is one you won't want to miss.



Bluff Titler

Aminet

There are quite a few new PD video titling programs on the Amiga. This is one of the more interesting. Every Amiga owner has been stunned at one time or another by those flashy European demos with the smooth vector graphics. Well, I am sure many people have wanted to include those smooth graphics into their video work. Now you can with Bluff Titler.

You cannot create advanced objects as in the demos but you can

animate simple lines of text as filled 3D objects. On an AGA machine the backgrounds are wonderfully smooth.

This version has the words "This is a demo version" across the screen which makes the program unusable for actual video titling. If you like the program, which I am sure you will, registering for it will cure the problem.

90%

LSD and 17Bit Compendium Vol 1 17 Bit

This is the first in an proposed series of compendiums from the biggest PD library, 17 Bit, and LSD who are an internationally renowned Amiga group. There are about 150 LSD utilities disks here which contain a wealth of useful programs.

These programs are in DMS format which you might think would be an inconvenience as you cannot read the format to check which utils are there. It is good news then that small text files are included next to the archive which let you know their contents. There is also a complete file Index which is useful for BBS's.

I like CDs which contain a lot of SoundTracker modules and I do like this disk! It has 513 normal mods which take up 85 megs. There are also some chip modules if you are into a bit of electronic music.

At £19.99, it's not really PD or even Shareware but this is another good value, low price disk from 17 Bit.

85%

CAM

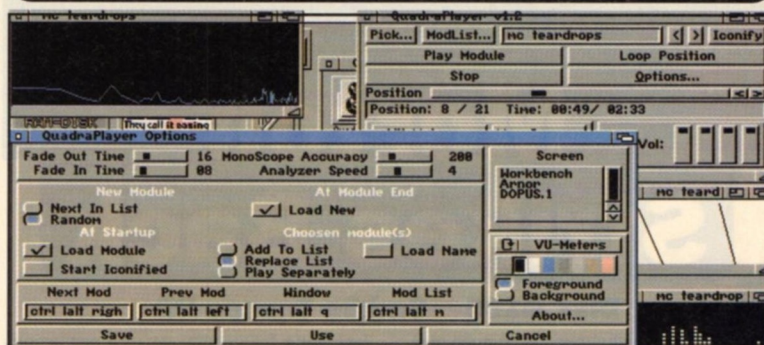
17 Bit

I personally had not heard of CAM or Club Amiga de Montreal for which it stands, but they must be quite an Amiga club as this double CD contains a lot of PD. Not as much as it could have included though as each CD carries only 408 megs instead of the maximum 650.

The disks are not split into categories as on many other PD CDs. Instead the archives, (in LHA format), all 866 of them, are in one single directory.

The extraction process is achieved by clicking on a button in an AmigaGuide document. At £24.95 for a two CD set, this is quite good value for money.

75%



QUADRA PLAYER

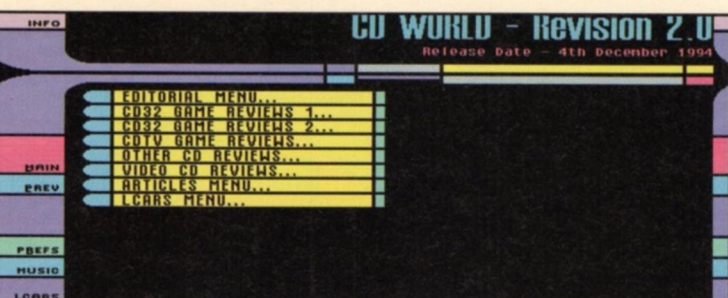
Aminet

ule play list which is a very good idea. As with many other players in the Public Domain, this also has separate Audio monitors. These are essentially pointless but great fun to watch. Like the main screen, they automatically

re-format themselves when re-sized.

The best feature of all though has to be the drag and drop facility. Just drop a module on top of the icon on the Workbench and it will start playing, cool!

90%



CD WORLD

Infinite Frontiers

CD World is a disk magazine for CDTV and CD32 users. It may seem strange to release such material on floppy disk rather than on CD but it is a fact that a considerable amount of CD32 owners also have a normal Amiga or an SX1, which means they have access to disk drives.

Many disk magazines seem to look the same nowadays so it is nice to see one which has a completely different control system. It is called LCARS and stands for Library Computer Access and Retrieval System.

This is the interface between the computer and the user and people who watch Star Trek The Next Generation will recognise it straight away. It looks and acts just like a ST-TNG computer terminal, and makes all the right noises too.

It was great fun to use, and I enjoyed playing around with the system more than actually reading the articles. There are quite a few good articles on here though including many software and hardware reviews.

80%

Yes, yes, another boring Sound Tracker module player. Why mention it? Well, it is a very good one that's why, and it's small to boot. The main executable is only 80K and contains a lot of different features.

It allows you to build up a mod-

VIPERAGA

92%

Aminet

For a long time Megaworm was the snake game we all played in the office. Its beauty was its simplicity, and therefore was great fun. Viper is also very enjoyable to play but is quite a bit more complex.

For those who don't know what a snake game is, you control a lengthening snake which you must keep mov-

ing for as long as possible and not let crash into the remains of its body.

This version is different because it allows up to six people to play simultaneously on a single screen. This is achieved by the clever use of the keyboard. Only two keys are required, left and right, so six hands can easily reach the appropriate keys. The game plays very well and is highly addictive. The only niggle is that it is just for AGA.



Blast-Em

Disk F1-058 F1 Licenceware

With Deluxe Galaga being the best Shootem'up game around, this had to be something really special for me to recommend it. Unfortunately it wasn't. Not that it was really bad, just not a patch on Galaga.

There are a few new ideas like the aliens bouncing on the ground next to you which you have to then avoid but nothing really spectacular. It is a lot faster than Galaga but not as smooth, this may be due to my machine though.



Morton Strikes Back

Disk G156 Saddle Tramps PD

I am getting really bored with cute platform games where all you do is walk along and collect bits of fruit only to progress to the next level in which you do exactly the same. Morton Strikes Back sadly is such a game.

As well as walking, you can also fly, and this bears a striking resemblance to Super Frog. This is because Morton the main character can also fly which is amusing but only slightly. Returning to the beginning levels after dying has always annoyed me, and this

happens frequently so you can imagine I was not very happy.

Morton is, however, wonderfully programmed and is quite playable but there are few new ideas and this is what was needed for it to become interesting. This version has only six levels. The full version will set you back a rather overpriced £7 for which you get eighty. Personally I think six is enough.

70%

Charr1.0

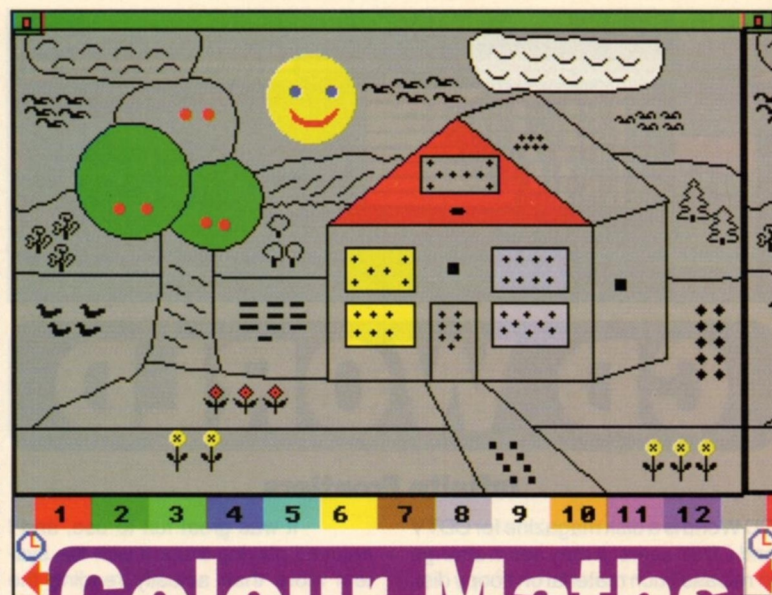
Aminet

For a long time there has been a game on the PC called Scorched Earth. This was best described as a strategy/arcade game. This means that you had to think a bit before you blew your opponent to bits. There have been several attempts at this type of game on the Amiga, not all of them have been fun to play.

The object as already established is to destroy your opponent by

using a selection of weapons available to you. You have to enter both the right trajectory and power to be successful. This version is slightly different as you can have up to eight players as opposed to the usual two. This makes the game more fun to play.

Charr contains all the usual nasty weapons that the others do, as well as a few new ones. These include a particularly unpleasant one called



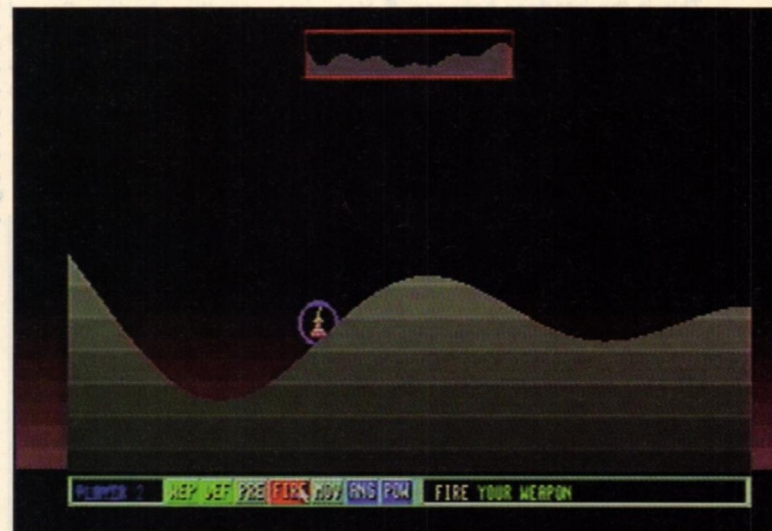
Colour Maths

F1-057 F1 Licenceware

This educational disk will be good fun for kids. They should be able both to play and learn at the same time. The game is paint the numbers and to colour a square successfully you must get a simple maths question correct.

This is, of course, pretty easy and very boring for me but for small children I am sure it will be great fun!

75%



Lava. This fires a rocket into the air and when it comes down it releases lava. This should, if fired accurately, roll towards the enemy and fry him. If you haven't eight friends to play with,

you can always play against eight computer opponents.

90%

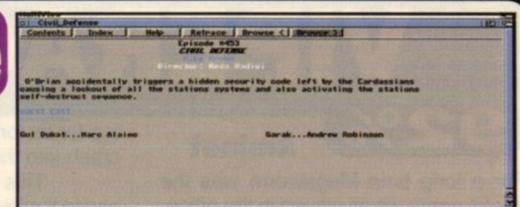


Star Trek Guide

Disk OL7A-F Online PD

This sounds a really geeky disk, and perhaps it is but it is also very well put together. The design is simple and effective. It is a huge AmigaGuide document which must have taken an eternity to write.

The guide comes on 6 disks and will take up about 4.5 megs of space on your hard drive. This, of course, will not all be text. Every episode has a brief synopsis and quite a few also have a



picture. There are a lot of pictures too, 167 files altogether.

These, however, are not very good quality but do give you an idea what the episode looks like. A lot of work has gone into these disks and for Trek fans it is an essential set of disks to own.



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Disk OL76 Online PD

Island is based on the board game Hotel. It is a two player game in which the object is to ruin the other player. You do this by buying hotels. It is essentially a very simplified version of Monopoly.

The hotels can be built up in stages, to a maximum of six. The higher the stage, the higher the fine if the other player is unfortunate enough to land on it.

Island is programmed in AMOS and looks and feels very slick but unfortunately it is too simple and it didn't excite me in any way.

65%

Contacts for PD reviewed in this issue.

Obstickle
Malcolm Lavery
20 Shakespeare Ave
Orgill, Egremont
Cumbria CA22 2HF

17 Bit Software,
2/8 Market Street
Wakefield
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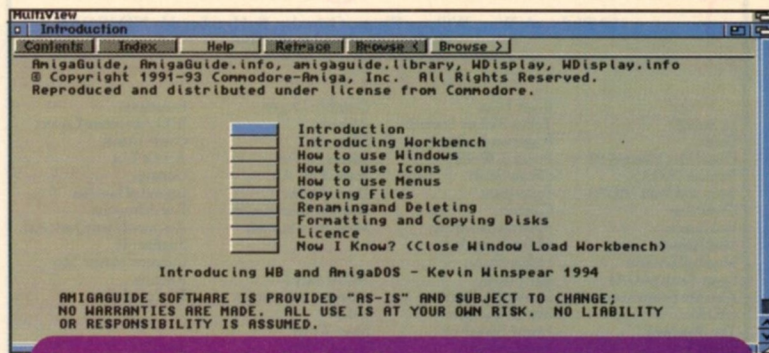
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INTRODUCING WORKBENCH

Disk F1-051 F1 Licenceware

This two disk set is both useful to newcomers to the Amiga and as a reference guide to regular users. The first part is an attractive looking AmigaGuide file which explains how to use the basic features of Workbench such as the windows, icons, etc.

When you feel you understand this, Workbench is actually loaded and as disk 1 is opened, it is laid out just like the actual Workbench disk. When you click on one of the programs, instead of it loading, a text file will appear and tell you about it.

There are also pictures included to show you it in action. If you feel some areas of the Workbench still baffle you, or you are a complete beginner, these disks are well designed and are easy to use.

90%

a Christmas theme to go into the Christmas issue they should send them in to us in September.

For Obstickle, you control a small red blob which is moved around by him bouncing. Pulling down on the joystick at the right moment will make him bounce higher, this is so objects can be collected on various platforms. The graphics are gorgeous and well

Obstickle

Malcolm Lavery

This game is definitely similar to another I have played but I cannot put my finger on exactly which one it is. Perhaps it is several games. Obstickle is a very Christmassy game and should have fitted in well with the appropriate time of year. If people want games with

animated, and it is quite fun to play.

The object is the same as most platform games, to collect the objects and make your way to the exit, but the different control method makes it a very agreeable game.

85%

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297 A pretty good multi player car racer that is actually trying to be like the excellent Skidmarks.

[Bandit Mania

913 This disk is for all you fruit machine addicts out there who check away a fortune on those machines. There are three fine ones on this superb disk.

[Doctor Strange

2012 An old platform game completely revamped for the nineties with beautiful graphics and oodles of playability.

[Extreme Violence

1321 An immensely playable and funny 2 player chase each other with big gun game. A classic!

[Firefly

2665 A cracking shoot-em-up which is pure blasting fun, and is very well produced.

[High Octane

680 This is a brilliant over head 1/2 player car racer which features missiles, mines and plenty of skulls all over the shop.

[Kung Fu Charlies

1138 This is a really cute and fun platform game with a bit of bashing and kicking. Good for kids.

[Last Refuge

1033 A new slant on the old invaders and Galaxians style which proves a tad too fast on a 1200.

[Martial Spirit

180 (For Amiga 1200 only). A pretty nifty shareware beat-em-up with

nice graphics and playability.

[Megablock 2

2744 One of the best Tetris clones around with plenty of new features including bombs!

[Mental Image 2

1834 A collection of three very good games which include a fruit machine, a platformer, and a mind bending puzzler.

[Overlander

2157 This is the nineties version of that arcade classic Moon Buggy which is still very frustrating.

[Megaball AGA

842 (Amiga 1200 only) A thoroughly excellent breakout style game with tons of levels and plenty of neat pick-ups to be had.

[Motorola Invaders 2

1551 (2 DISKS - Amiga 1200 only). This is a simple invaders game with a huge rock anthem to listen to while you play.

[Mutant Games 1

81 This compilation disk features TTN classic old games which should bring back a few memories for those over 21's.

[Nanofly

1441 Is a simple audiostrategy type game with a little fly that flies soundlessly but it's addictive.

[Olempiad

84 (2 DISKS) The Lemmings enter the Olympics in this simple but amusing little offering.

[Outpost Solo Assault

1260 (Amiga 500 & 1200). A nice effects and a relaxing tune make this demo a bit of a change from the run of the mill.

[Equipoise

366 What appears to be a normal demo is lifted by the seriously funky organ music. Yes I said organ music!! Unusual.

[Euro Euro

2740 (Not Amiga 500) The fastest, hardest, flabbiest hypersonic rave disks ever. Do not watch this if you suffer from fits!!

[Friday At Eight

2033 (Amiga 1200 only) This is a classic 1200 demo which features great music, graphics and design. A real treat to behold and hear

[Road To Hell

563 A brilliant 1/2 player over-head road racer with plenty of extra and fast action thrills & spills.

[Rocketz

1987 (Amiga 1200 only). This really is an excellent 1/2 player space combat shareware game with gorgeous graphics and sound.

[Strike-N-Spares

1055 A computerized ten pin bowling game for upto 8 players. It looks good and plays very well.

[Seven Tiles

270 A cross between football and Speedball which results in a good two player game.

[T.M.A.

698 A nutty arcade space adventure game with plenty of problems to solve and tight spaces to get through. Very nice stuff.

[War

807 An excellent 1/2 player arcade space war game with a bit of strategy and plenty of action.

[Wibble World Giddy

570 A nice cutie arcade adventure game in the same vein as the classic Dizzy games. Simple fun

[Wipeout

1923 A very swift looking Asteroids style blaster which is simple and smooth with good increasing difficulty curve.

[Full Moon

1740 (Amiga 1200 only) Fairlight music and graphic extravaganzas which feature a brilliant motion video sequence at the start.

[Love

898 (Amiga 1200 only - 2 DISKS) Lovingly demo's a few and far between, so make the most of this happy little offering while it lasts.

[Real

2379 (Amiga 1200 only) One of the best 1200s to date. It features excellent visuals, funky music and a great 3D sequence.

[Smells Like Chanel 5

68 (Amiga 1200 only) A classy 1200 demo with some smart graphics and the evocative music.

[3D Games Series

849 This great disk features three very good 3D games created with the 3D Construction Kit. Two of the games are quite decent adventures.

[Ant Wars

1985 This is Lemmings with ants, oh and a couple of vehicles, and some heavy weapons, and it's a 2 player blow each other to bits thing too! Play it now!

[Black Dawn

539 As far as RPG adventures go this is one of the greatest and most popular to ever appear, and with good reason, it's brilliant!

[Black Dawn 2

730 The shareware follow up to the original which shows more manages to smash the game even further.

[Colonial Conquest 2

1970 Probably the best strategy type game on the PC since the dawn of time.

[Knights

1098 An excellent 2 player over-head adventure game which features real time split screen action and a host of missions to complete.

[Little Wizards

729 This brain strainer sees you as the master wizard trying to get your little wizards from A to B. This involves some fast thinking and moving about to succeed.

[Sensitive

2375 An old C64 classic action puzzler is given a new lease of life, and it's still as frustrating as ever.

[Slamball

1734 A sort of football management game that's not really football, if you know what I mean. Anyway, it's good and has all the usual features you'd expect of this genre.

[Starbase 13

1213 (2 DISKS) The new classic point and click graphic adventure game which sees you trying to find out what happened to the occupants of the unlucky Starbase 13.

[Task Force

2122 Must be the best Space Crusade sort of game around. You must arm your crew with the various weapons and gadgets and then jump into one of the missions.

[Total War

1043 Should be re-named Total Addiction really. It's a computer version of the classic Risk board game, and by cracker it is good!

[Watermine 1

478 (Not Amiga 1200) As Boulderdash games go this one is pretty challenging to say the least.

SPECTRUM STUFF

[Spectrum Emulator

1448 This brilliant program actually turns your Amiga into a 48K Zx Spectrum. You can play any of the Spectrum games, load save, and you can even load tape games if you have a sampler. Be warned you need an accelerated Amiga to really appreciate it as a 1200 with fast ram or a 68030 processor. Otherwise the games will run, but very slowly, and almost un-playable really. You have been warned!

[Specy Classics 1

498 Includes "Ripcord", "Jumping Jack", "Hungry Horse", "Ground Attack", "Project Force", "Road Racers" and many more.

[Specy Classics 2

1499 Includes "Jetpac", "Planetoid", "Astro Blaster", "Jumping Jack", "Scuba Dive", "Music Minor", "Tanks" and yet more.

[Specy Classics 3

2993 Includes "Space Raiders", "Android", "Stinkers", "Chequered Flag", "Chalkie Egg" and more three over.

[Specy Classics 4

468 Includes "Death Chase", "Piman Seven", "Brace Lee", "Bagaboo", "Wizards Lair", "PSSST", "Vandalia" and even more.

[Play Spectrum

591 Includes "Batman", "Quazatron", "Brach Head", "Driller", "Pantadrome", "Dark Star" and oodles more.

[The Ultimate Games

810 This is a must for anyone who ever had a dear old floppy. You see this disk contains the entire collected works of the fondly remembered Ultimate Play The Game who were a revelation in their day.

[Techno React 2

1117 Four absolutely astounding tracks on this disk of the highest quality, though they are all Techno, but they're still damn good. Stick it in and turn it up!

[Techno Tracks 2

1664 A fantastic demo which features one of the most haunting musical scores to ever grace your humble little Amiga. Just stick it through your Hi-Fi and see!

[Techno Trance

430 (Not Amiga 1200) The sounds of Kraftwerk are heavily featured on this excellent and quite original demo.

MUSIC AND DEMO DISKS

[9 Fingers

383 (2 DISKS) Spaceballs follow up to the hugely successful "State Of The Art" which takes the whole thing even further. Get it now!

[Big Time Sensuality

2215 (Amiga 1200 only - 2 DISKS) Beautiful graphics accompanied by that classic song by Bjork really tie this demo aside.

[Divine Inspiration

1523 (Amiga 500 only) The title of this disk is well suited as it features some fantastically good original music which is quite exceptional.

[Earths Sorrows

1264 (Not Amiga 1200) Nice art-work

[Full Moon

1740 (Amiga 1200 only) Fairlight music and graphic extravaganzas which feature a brilliant motion video sequence at the start.

[Love

898 (Amiga 1200 only - 2 DISKS) Lovingly demo's a few and far between, so make the most of this happy little offering while it lasts.

[Real

2379 (Amiga 1200 only) One of the best 1200s to date. It features excellent visuals, funky music and a great 3D sequence.

[Smells Like Chanel 5

68 (Amiga 1200 only) A classy 1200 demo with some smart graphics and the evocative music.

[State Of The Art

19 One of the best demos of all time. It features stunning video style visuals which are set to a good original dance tune. If you don't have it then you're better get it.

[Technological Death

609 (Not Amiga 500) One of the fastest demos around as far as audio visuals go. It's a jam packed five minute banger.

[Techno Mania 2

347 This is an all time classic Amiga music disk which features six superb tracks of impeccable good quality.

ART AND ANIMATIONS

[3D Picture Show

1104 (Not Amiga 500) A videobank of 3D random dot stereograms for you to torment yourselves with.

[Batman Slideshow

2425 Some nice comic art here featuring the original Batman character, the sinister looking one.

[Duffy Loses His Head

1588 An amusing little animation featuring Duffy Duck who just never seems to have any luck.

[Lemming Animation

311 A cute little animation featuring everyone's favourite chaps that's a little bit sad really.

[NLP Rendershow

2953 (Amiga 1200 only - 2 DISKS) Two disks full of superb HAMs rendered pictures which are a treat to behold.

[Revelations

1146 A beautiful collection of fantasy art work that will just make you drool over your keyboard.

[Savings

112 An amusing copy of the National Savings advert which featured on the TV, with a surprise or two.

[Scan Is Lame

2654 (Amiga 1200 only - 2 DISKS) This must be one of the best collections of hand drawn AGA art work. The pictures really are fantastic to look at.

[The Magic Factory 1

719 (Amiga 1200 only) This disk contains some brilliant computer art pictures to really show off your 1200.

[The Magic Factory 2

1717 (Amiga 1200 only) More art work colour Star Trek art work for you.

[Welcome to the Machine

1064 A collection of three single screen perpetual motion animations of various contraptions. There's tons to look out for in each of them.

[Workbook 3 Screens

363 Some very high quality background pictures for all you lucky workbook 3 users. It even has a Windows style background - cheeky.

HOBBIES-N-THINGS

[Animation Studio

2406 This is an excellent animation creating program that is simple and quite educational to use, which gives a good insight into the techniques the pro's use.

[Artistix

2397 This is quite simply the best shareware kids art program you can get. It's simple to use, is absolutely feature packed with really useful features for kids to create their own masterpieces.

[Cheats !

1598 This disk contains a mega amount of cheats, passwords and solutions to hundreds of the top games around.

[Code Mungus

1456 (Not Amiga 500) Tests your knowledge of the highway code which should prove very useful if you are about to take your driving test.

[Dynamic Skies

1512 This is the Amiga premier night sky viewer which is laden with features and information which should be a boon to all astronomers.

[Forecaster

607 (Not Amiga 500) Improve your chances of winning on the horses with this well produced in depth predicting program.

[Gas Trick

1269 Ever wanted to know how much your gas bill will be before you get it? Well now you can with this little gem.

[Inscript

2693 This program provides a simple but effective means of producing video titles for any home productions you might be creating.

[Lypapunov

939 This fractal generator produces what must be some of the most beautiful pictures to date. It even comes with a slideshow of examples to demonstrate.

[Pools Tools 2

442 Give yourself the advantage when the pools, and possibly increase your chances of winning a liver.

[Stitchery

2218 If you're a bit of a cross stitcher as well as a computer user, then why not let your computer create some patterns for you from ordinary drawings of your very own.

[Tee To Green

635 Any golfing fans out there will certainly want this brilliant program which will help you to keep all sorts of golfing information easily.

[Words

1108 If you do a lot of crosswords or word puzzles then this disk may just be the thing you want. You see it will help you find any word with any amount of letters missing from it.

[X Beat Pro

415 An excellent music sequencer which is very suited to both professional and novice alike. Comes with everything you need to get started.

The Easy PD Catalogue Disk

Our catalogue disk is probably the best ever. It is a simple but quite powerful and useful database program which has been written just for us! It features information on our full range of disks, including compatibility, how much memory is needed, and even a mini review of every title. All this information can be used by the program, so you could tell it to get rid of any programs that are not compatible with your Amiga, and any that need more memory than you have. Then you can tell it to only show the kind of disks you are interested in, such as games or music. It features a unique ordering system where the program will actually order the disks you want for you. It will even add up how much you order comes to! And of course it takes into consideration the lower prices for each disk with the more you order. As well as our PD database, you will have access to some useful text files if you happen to be a new Amiga user. To top this all off, the whole thing loads in one go!! No waiting around for each new section to load up. It's all there in your computers memory, all the time, which makes it instant. But the best thing of all is that this whole thing is absolutely free with your first order!! Nice or what?

Easy PD Catalogue

CATALOGUE NUMBER 1
Disk supplied by EASY PD
PO Box 36, Frodsham,
Warrington, WA6 6DJ.
Tel 0928 732 550

SOME USEFUL INFORMATION

All the software supplied by us comes on high quality British manufactured disks. We do not and will not use cheap-nasty disks from the far east, even though they are less than half the price!! All our disks come with properly printed disk labels which clearly feature the title of the disk, the catalogue number, general loading instructions and our name and address of course. Each order is accompanied with a simple help sheet which is aimed at new Amiga users, to help you overcome any loading difficulties you may encounter. You will also receive simple operating instructions for our catalogue disk too. All orders are usually dispatched to you within 24 hours, barring any natural catastrophes of course. Telephone orders can usually be dispatched the same day if you call early enough. We check out all our disks as best we can for any un-necessary bad language, and we refuse to stock any titles of a pornographic nature, or any titles that may be harmful in any way. If you want any further information then please feel free to call us. But please remember that we do not know everything about everything, but we do try.

Easy PD Prices

We charge a set amount per disk for our service. The amount you pay per disk will depend on the size of your order. Order -
between 1-9 disks for £1.00 each
between 10-19 disks for 90p each
20 or more disks for 80p each
Then add 75p to the total amount for the postage and packing. European orders please add a further 10% to your total order to cover the extra cost.

How to order your disks

You can call our sales line and order over the phone with your credit card. Or you can tick the titles you want on this advert then rip it out and send it to us with your payment (card, cheque, postal order), or you can write the catalogue numbers of the titles you want on a piece of paper if you don't want to spoil your nice magazine. Please remember to count how many disks you only receive the amount of disks you pay for. Also could you please make sure you write your name and address CLEARLY, as any illegible writing will only delay the processing of your order. And don't forget to add the postage cost to the total order.

PLEASE ENTER ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION FOR YOUR ORDER AS CLEARLY AS POSSIBLE

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
POST CODE _____ TEL _____
No' Disks _____ AMOUNT £ _____
CARD No' _____ Exp _____

Write to Reply

Bud Vennos gets his wish - an extended postbag - more pages! But his temper still hasn't improved

Dear AUI

I suppose I could begin this letter by joining in the great Cover Disk debate, so I think I will! I hope you'll reconsider the use of diskspare .device and full disk archives. I personally don't find the few extra kilobytes of often frivolous software worth the considerably longer time required to set up the device and format and unpack whole disks at a time helpful. Most of the utilities you provide aren't going to be very useful to someone who can't already format a floppy and work his way through either GUIArc or Installer.

As an experiment, I took SuperDisks 47 and 48 - after the tedious process of unpacking them as suggested and redid them using DMS. By removing the Blizzard screen save, which looked like something from my Atari 800 days, along with the files used for your unpacking scheme, there was room on the two FFS formatted diskettes for all five DMS files, an Imploder packed copy of DMS and the necessary AmigaDos scripts (with icons) to unpack the five disks. The five DMS'd versions unpack in less than half the time that the lha files need, it doesn't require the formatted floppy and it isn't necessary to boot from these disks. Just a suggestion.

Now...

It does seem that each coverdisk you produce does have one program which is worth the cost of the magazine. Thanks ever so much for DB and especially for SnoopDOS 3.0. When it comes to present more software awards, this

little gem deserves special recognition as an example of how an Amiga program should be written. Not only does it work completely as advertised, it has the best interface I have ever seen. Talk about being user friendly.

Robert Ehrhardt
Netherlands

Dear Robert

Your letter does continue to say how you've made use of SnoopDOS, but that is exactly what it's there for, so we've omitted that.

I think it's about time we made our reasons clear concerning the disk. Contrary to what you may think, we do know about DMS and how fast it is. However, we have to consider every angle before we compile the disks. It would be great if we could assume everyone had two disk drives or more than one Meg of RAM, a hard disk, etc, but we have to assume that the disks must work on a 1 Meg Amiga 500+.

Your system of DMS sounds great, but it would require more than a Meg of RAM. We used it for a Non-DOS disk (Wibble World Giddy) on SuperDisk No.43, but couldn't use it for the other games on that disk, because it required too much RAM. Also, as you note, many libraries are re-used on several disks and to DMS them, would be to replicate data - a waste of precious space.

Your system also means that people can't just boot the disk, something you consider a plus, but what about the majority of people, who don't have a hard drive as you obviously do, and would need to boot WorkBench,

which not only takes a lot of tedious time, but also uses up too much memory to allow you to use DMS? It's a vicious circle.

As you've also noticed, the command files are lha'd too, to save as much space as possible. Setting up the disks this way saves hundreds of Ks and requires about 30 seconds to set up - surely that's not too long to wait? Admittedly, the disks are not available the instant you turn on your computer, but that's because the programs are achieved. Either we stop archiving (and get cries of despair from the majority of readers) or we accept that a little time is required on all our parts in order to give you the best we can. Take it from us, the disks do not arrive ready done - they take us a very long time indeed.

As to diskspare, it allows another 80K of crunched data, which equates to a few hundred (not just a few) extra K of programs. Frivolous? Well, what is essential? Maybe you'd consider ARQ on this month's SuperDisk frivolous. All it does is update the requesters. But if this is to be considered frivolous, why were we all so happy to see the updated face of WorkBench?

The aim of the SuperDisks is to provide something for everyone. And if you can only find one thing on each disk that's of interest, then perhaps you're a bit narrow minded. Remember that we include what we consider to be the cream of PD every month. We don't control the PD market. We have to select from what becomes available. This means one month may have a Image processor (maybe you already have one), the next a word

processor, the next a snooping utility.

The only guarantee is that each month will contain the programs that we consider to be excellent and of interest to our readers. Not every program will appeal to everyone, neither we nor you could expect that, but with now between 4 and 6 Megs on each issue, surely you can find more than one program useful!

As to Blizzard, we were inundated with requests for a safe and simple screen saver. Blizzard was 10K, which neatly filled our disks to 100% full (as every single disk has been for the past nine months). That's why it was there. We could have left 10K free, but why? It might not have been all that impressive for you, but from the reactions we received, we assure you that others were truly grateful for it.

Hang in there and you will find our disks grow on you...not like mould, we hope, but as an acquired taste for the interesting, the useful, the helpful and even the exotic - just like AUI.

Lastly, let's take this opportunity to clarify one final point about the disks. From time to time somebody discovers a program doesn't work on their system and immediately assumes that it wasn't tested. Every program is tested on every machine in the office, but there are more versions of the Amiga in this heaven and earth... With the number of releases of WorkBench and libraries and everyone naming their system disk something different, with different memory configurations, etc, etc. Yes from time to time somebody may find they can't install something properly (how can an install script know what you've called your disk?), which is why the disks now autoboot - to ensure everyone has the same disk when the disk drives stop whirring. Since we've been doing it this way, we've had nobody having problems installing or using the programs.

So a little of your time has to be sacrificed for the greater well being of other, less able, AUI readers. What can you do while you twiddle your thumbs as the disks install? Why not read AUI? You've just spent £3.75 on it. Surely you want to read it. And if you manage to read it within the half hour it takes to install the disks, you're a faster reader than I.

By the way, you'll be glad to note that this month's disks will now detect if the spare disk you insert is preformatted, so there's

not the need to wait for that now if you've got some disks ready. Happier?

Dear **AUI**

I am writing to complain, not about **AUI** but about the service, or rather lack of it, offered by the company which deals with the magazine coverdisks.

The December issue of **AUI** with SuperDisk 47 attracted my attention with SnoopDOS3 the prime interest. Unfortunately, there was a fault with the disk and as advised on page 8 of **AUI** I returned the offending article to **AUI** Faulty Disks with a covering letter. After waiting two weeks for the replacement disk to arrive I wrote to the company enquiring about the delay and asking for the disk to be sent by return. Nearly three weeks later I have had to write to them again as they have not responded to either of my letters, even if only to say that they hadn't received the disk that I had sent.

I cannot blame **AUI** for the fault nor can I blame **AUI** for the lack of service but I feel that you need to know how a company acting on your behalf is treating your readers.

I trust that you will be able to intervene on my behalf as after all the primary reason for buying **AUI** was the cover disk as I wanted SnoopDOS3.

Finally, I would like to add that I am not a regular reader of **AUI**, nor any other computer magazine for that matter, as my choice of purchase is based on the contents and/or cover disk of the Amiga magazines as they appear on the newsagent's shelves each month. I have to add that of late **AUI** has been more informative than the rest particularly the reader's letters and replies from Andy Eskelson. You can learn a lot from other people's problems.

Yours faithfully

Mr.M.I. Buckley

Dear Mr Buckley,
You are right that we can learn from other people's problems. In this case the problem is yours, but we have to help solve it and let other people know it exists so that if they have a similar problem then they can learn from yours. (I don't somehow think that the Ed is going to consider that a very elegant sentence!).

Although **AUI** obviously is concerned with all aspects of the magazine - including the disks - we don't have much to do with them once the master leaves us.

The company that is responsible for duplicating the

many thousands of disks that go on the covers of **AUI** is also responsible for replacing any that turn out to be faulty. You would be surprised how few that is. I believe that according to the 5750 standard which is the British Standard for all duplicators, a failure rate of .5 per thousand is allowable.

Well, we put out well over 100,000 disks per month and the duplicators don't get anywhere near the amount of complaints permitted by the BS 5750 standard or the ISO 9000 which is the European equivalent.

Now that doesn't help anyone who is among the unfortunate few who get that tiny number of problem disks, I know. They rightly want to have a correctly functioning disk A.S.A.P. But like all human organisations there are sometimes the human factors getting in the way of efficient reparation.

In your case the efficiency left much to be desired. However, there has recently been a change over in the arrangements for carrying out the replacement service and yours may have been one that got away, so to speak.

It is specified that 28 days should be allowed for delivery just to cover the possibility of delay but we are assured that it generally doesn't take that long. However, as you had this problem we have sent you already a replacement disk from the neverending supply that Gideon Overhead keeps for just such an eventuality. I hope you have received it. If not, please don't write to me but to Gideon and a copy to the Editor too if you like!

Dear Sir

This the first time I have taken time out to write to a computer magazine, but I feel justified in doing so this time. After reading in the "Amiga" magazines about the "World of Amiga" Show to be held at Wembley London on the 9th December 1994, I decided along with another friend of mine from Warminster to go along and enjoy a day out with other enthusiasts, and view some soft/hardware for our computers, by the way I run a 4000/30 with 8meg mem and a 240mb H/D. I use my computer for video work and was in the need for a budget digitizer. I also wanted to find out what was happening to the Amiga, and if was going to continue to be supported. What did I find at Wembley???

Not what I expected!! It only took me 10 minutes to walk around the stands, and that was

after travelling from Southampton for 1hr 30 minutes! There was a stand with a guy selling pens! What has this got to do with computers?

Another stand was showing on a 1200 how to decorate the inside of a house using your computer to map it all first, the only problem was he had no stand or table, his 1200 was on the floor along with the monitor, and if you wanted to look at what he had you were forced to get onto your knees to look at the monitor!!! White Knight Technologies were there extolling the virtues of the long awaited video module for the Opal Vision board, and they actually had a Beta version running, when will it be released I asked? Well it should be out by April 95 was the answer, Oh! Only if.

I found a stand offering a Rombo 12 AGA digitizer for £50.00, Wow I thought, and handed over my cash, I was given a bag with the digitizer in it but no receipt, so I opened the box containing the digitizer and the manual was missing! So back I went and told the chap on the stand, he looked in three more boxes and only found one manual, which he gave to me. This made me somewhat suspicious so I looked in the box again, I found the disk was made for WB 1.3 and 2.0, so I went back again and spoke to the same chap, who told me it was okay and that AGA only meant it would pick a still frame in the AGA mode!!!

Rombo who were also at the Show told me that the Digitizer was well out of date and being in a black plastic container dated it even more, no way was it AGA and he doubted it was even a colour version!!!

All in all a bloody awful day out, a complete lack of stands ended in a computer show that was only just on par to the local computer fairs we get in Southampton in our church halls. This is not a case of Sour Grapes, but a genuine observation on the "One and only World of Amiga" Disaster!!!. We arrived at 10.15am and were on our way back home by 11.10am and most of that time was spent getting my money back from the stand with the AGA digitizers!

Yours faithfully

A Jackson
Southampton

Dear A. Jackson
Wow! Some people have it all bad, don't they? You make an

interesting point about the Show. It wasn't like some of the Commodore Shows of the past, was it? But the world has moved on and in the case of Commodore not in a very agreeable direction.

First we have to look at why the Show Had To Go On - as the old showbiz saying has it. It happened largely because there was a need to keep up the morale and the spirits of those involved with the Amiga and that meant not just Amiga users but also the developers and the distributors and the retailers.

Without their continued support for the Amiga even if the buy out succeeded there might be no Amiga business left when the situation was sorted out. Now you wouldn't have wanted that to happen, would you? So Commodore - the UK team involved in the buy out, in most people's view after the event - rightly got themselves together and put on the show right here - as they used to say in the ancient black and white movies.

That comparison is not so far fetched. The "kids" in those films - generally led by Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland - were usually in some kind of trouble and they met it head on and, with typically American get up and go spirit, they battled through. I think that's what lay behind the creation of the Amiga Show at that still very uncertain point in Commodore's career.

Now maybe you don't give a damn for all that. Quite reasonably you complain that you spent your cash on train and entrance tickets and don't feel you got your money's worth. To a certain extent I agree. There were some very odd exhibitors at the Show including that one with the pens who I've seen at shows before. There was, worse still, an awful carousel. What on earth was that doing there? Is the Amiga a fairground freak? I don't think so and I'm sure you don't either.

But then I go back longer than you in my dislike of the kind of Show into which Commodore and Amiga shows have, in my opinion, deteriorated. I was lucky enough to get to some of the AmiExpos in the USA when the Amiga was in its heyday. Now they were Shows... (He says clicking his false teeth and giving his wheelchair a twirl.)

They were Shows at which you didn't go to get a market stall approach for cheap software - or in your case out of date cheap hardware! What those Shows were for was to let the Amiga users get a sight of the latest developments that they would be able, probably later from their

write to reply

c o n t i n u e d

local computer store, to buy with the appropriate support.

After seeing Shows like that, the kind of cheap and nasty market that was to be seen in those days at the Novatel in Hammersmith was a considerable come down. To be honest I used to get the same feeling that you so forcefully express in your letter. That's what happened to the Amiga in this country when it went, literally, down market.

Like a lot of people, I hope that the times they are a-changing that the new company that emerges from the ruins of CBM will take the Amiga upmarket again. And in spite of your feelings about the Show, I think that there were signs of it even among the grotteness and tat at Wembley in December. The new Amiga may well have no option because the market in which it will find itself will probably only leave it a niche for a higher spec machine for more serious and interesting purposes.

From the spec of your own Amiga that appears to be the kind of way that you see the computer. If the Wembley Show was a bit of a disaster for you, don't give up hope. As they used to sing in those old movies - bad times - sorry, good times are just around the corner and there are silver linings etc etc etc.

Perhaps we may both get our wishes for a different kind of show tomorrow...tomorrow...it's only a day away...Just waiting for us out there...all we have to do is not give up hope and...

Well, I bet you know the lines too! And better luck next time!

Dear AUI

Please could you help me on a quest I have. I phoned DATEL ELECTRONICS about a month ago asking if they were to bring out an ACTION REPLAY for the A600+A1200, all they said was "No because the demand is not there". Well, I personally think that is a load of crap, so I was wondering if you could ask your staff and readers (Be it user groups, friends Etc..) to send me their names and addresses, so that I could put a petition together. I will collect all the letters I receive and personally go to DATEL and

shove the lot under their noses.

The reason for this quest is, tried the PD version (IS IT LEGAL?) and I found it to be unreliable.

Also, I am fed up with the jibs I get from my friends who have the hardware versions.

Yours Hopefully

Antony Hinks
Flat 1A
27 Waverly Road
Southsea
Portsmouth
PO5 2PH

Dear Antony,

Now that's what I call the right spirit! If they don't give the right answer go and shove it under their noses! And quite right too! this is like the famous - or infamous - thing they say to you in shops when they haven't got the thing you want in stock. There's no demand for it.

A load of rubbish, of course, because you have just made a demand for it. Where Datel are concerned, they should be ashamed of themselves. Mike Connor, the founder of Datel, got into the Amiga market right at the beginning. Datel had really been successful in the C64 era and they carried on being so for the Amiga. they must have sold thousands and thousands of the Action replay cartridge of every version they brought out. But recently they seem to have deserted the Amiga field for the bigger fish of the PC. There may be more cash floating around in the IBM compatibles market but there is still a substantial audience for the kind of product with universal appeal that their cartridge has always been for the Amiga.

I think, like you, that they are making a mistake in not going on with developing for the Amiga and we have heard that there may be some movement from Datel in returning to creating products for our favourite machine and one that has always been so profitable. So don't give up hope and we are publishing your address so that those readers who feel the same way as you can get in to touch and help you show Datel that there is still plenty of demand from the Amiga users of the world.

Dear AUI

Recently I purchased a 3.5 inch 420 MB Conner hard drive from the Gasteiner stand at the Future Entertainment Show. I received no manual or instructions being told that the installation was obvious and very easy. I have been able to work out how the power cable fits, but the ribbon has four possible in which to be connected.

I would be very grateful if you could send me a copy of the instructions for the HiQ hard drive, which is the same model as I have, that you reviewed in the November issue. If not could you print the connections for the ribbon cable and the shielding which needs to be cut.

I thank you in advance and hope that you keep up the hard work producing a great magazine.

Yours faithfully,

Owen Rolfe-Herbert
Newhaven, E. Sussex

P.S. When will Amiga CD number 4 be published? Will it also be A570 compatible?

Dear Owen Rolfe-Herbert,

I do hope that your letter, like your name, is some kind of a joke. If it isn't, what an absolute cheek you have. Imagine, you go off and buy a cheap drive at a Show. You don't, for whatever reason, get any instructions. Then you want us to supply you with the instructions not to the drive you bought but to some other company's product.

Now, why not go into British Home Stores. Littlewoods, Dixons or Currys and buy some piece of equipment in a sale. There are plenty on now, loads of damaged stuff about too. Then because you have paid below the odds for it and don't get the box, the instructions etc go into Marks and Spencers and ask THEM for some instructions. Why not ask them for a guarantee for a year or two at the same time?

M & S are a pretty good company for that sort of thing. They take back almost anything provided you have a receipt and sometimes when you haven't but even they would think you were taking a liberty trying to get them to help you out with another company's products.

I think you have the cheek of the devil even to suggest that we should send you the instructions for HiQ's hard drive. Grow up! This is a real world where people like HiQ have to sell their products to make a living. Why should you think because you went and got something on the cheap that someone else should suffer?

Why don't you write and ask

HiQ? Probably because you know they would think you barmy and consign your letter to the bin in short order which is what it deserves.

In this life we only get what we pay for. There is a great proverb in Spain; "Take what you want and pay for it." You seem to think life is about trying to get what you haven't paid for.

We all at AUI like being complimented on the quality of the magazine but I'm not sure we need compliments from someone so lacking in common sense as you.

But for your information Amiga CD! No.4 will, we hope, be published when the CD 32 gets back into production and yes, the CD will be A570 compatible. (If you have one and have lost the instructions, why not write to Philips for help?)

Dear AUI,
Congratulations on an excellent Amiga magazine.

I have been an occasional purchaser of AUI since its inception in the late 1980's, and recently I have placed a regular order for AUI from our local newsagent.

My first regular issue was AUI, June 1994, and on reading the advertisement about the "Next Month Etc", for AUI, July 1994 - my attention was held! I was therefore looking forward to receiving the next issue with a CD! - I was a little disappointed when AUI July duly arrived and 'lo and behold, only two floppies! However, as usual they had excellent programming on board. (Never mind, eh!)

I have an A1200HD and an Amiga CD32, so I could have made good use of the CD! - then on reading the review of the Amiga CD! No. 3, in AUI July (Great Stuff!) has prompted me to put pen to paper, and enquire as how we can obtain this "Amiga CD! No. 3" and as well the earlier CD issues No's one and two? - Also are CD's going to be a regular feature of AUI? (Hope So!).

Can you please advise, are earlier issues of AUI available?

Prices etc, and can payment be made via VISA credit cards.

Thank you for an excellent well balanced magazine which is undoubtedly the best Amiga magazine on the market. Keep up the good work. - Much appreciated.

Thank you for your attention etc.

Yours Faithfully,
Trevor G Headifen
Wellington
New Zealand

Dear Trevor.

It's nice to know that even after so many years we can convince an old stager to take out a regular order for AUI. We must be still improving! Or maybe it's as the Ed. is inclined to say "Never give in and never give up!" Well, we haven't and one of the reasons we go on is because of letters like yours which give us plenty of encouragement.

As for the missing CD from the cover of the magazine, if you've followed these columns you should be now know that the reason was that we only had the CDs on the UK issues because there was no way of knowing if there were a sufficient number of CD 32 owners to make it worthwhile to send them out of this country. undoubtedly there are some, such as yourself, who would have welcomed the CD but nobody, including Commodore, could tell us the real numbers.

What we did, and I have mentioned this a number of times, was offer anyone who wanted the disc who lived overseas, for a nominal sum for postage, the CD through the post. We have now sent you one.

As to your other queries, we do supply back copies. In general they cost the cover price plus £1 for postage and, yes, we do take Visa. The best thing is to send your request to the company who handle our subscriptions. Their address is at the front of the magazine.

And by the way, if you think that AUI has got better, it could be because you get compatriot-style vibes from it these days. AUI staffer Mark Blackham comes from your very island. A long way to come to work for an AUI? You'd better ask him if he thinks it's worth it! He says next week Kiri te Kanawa is coming to serenade us here just to make him feel at home! I believe that when I hear it!

Dear AUI,

Why is it that you and all the other magazines seem to have gone overboard for LightWave? Most of us Amiga users are never going to get near this program that I thought had to be used with NewTek's Video Toaster. Why do you all go on about it?

I thought AUI was a sensible magazine, certainly the best around, so why are you following the fashion of the others who seem to have bananas for this program that so few people are likely to use?

Yours sincerely,

Robert Laurence
Enfield, Middx

Dear Robert,

I don't suppose you were making an intentional pun when you said

they we and other magazines were going "overboard" for LightWave! Perhaps you should have said surfing along it!

But I can understand your annoyance if you are constantly reading about something which appears to have little to do with the activity that you carry out on your Amiga.

But first a correction.

LightWave is NOT only usable on the Video Toaster. Originally, and for years, it was only sold WITH the Toaster. that was the only way you get it and use it. And then it was only sensible to use it if you were in the USA, because the Toaster was NTSC only not for the PAL standard we have in this country.

However, recently, NewTek have released LightWave as a stand alone package and it is usable on any Amiga powerful enough. Why should then everybody be going on about it all the time? Human nature... The people who write in the magazines, including AUI, are those who see the latest gizmos that appear on their machine. So naturally they want to write about them and share their enthusiasm for these new wonder gadgets with the readers. Sometimes, they lose their judgement as to what well appeal to readers, most of whom, as you rightly point out about yourself, will never get to use such a package. Yet there are also good reasons for articles covering such products.

Firstly, much of what is published in magazines is aspirational. That means that readers, and especially computer users, like to read about things that they may never possess. But they feel linked to the these things because their machines are, in principle, the same machines on which such products can be run.

Secondly, by informing a wider public of what is available they too can be made aware of what they can do with such products.

However, perhaps most important of all, LightWave is an outstanding product by the standards of any computer. It stands up to comparison with even the heavyweight graphics stuff like that on Silicon Graphics machines. And it's on the Amiga.

That brings not only reflected glory to our favourite machine but also genuinely helps it forward. It gives encouragement for people to use Amigas - and buy them. And it also gives the computer credibility as a serious machine that has a future. And that is important to you and others like you even if you won't be using LightWave.

You are quite right; there can be too much of a good thing in

the pages of any magazine that is intended, in general, for users who are not professionally into graphics when article after article appears about a relatively expensive and highly professional product. But when products like LightWave do appear on the Amiga they are going to help us all keep the Amiga alive.

Giddyay!

Thought you might like to know I think you're putting out one of the more informative mags available for the Amiga. In fact after buying a few different 'zines I've settled on yours.

What am I interested in?

1) Up to date, detailed, reliable info on the latest Amiga hardware and software (Particularly Music).

2) Technical articles about how all/any Amiga's work - hardware, & OS. Even explain the less common chips like Ramsey and Buster and any problems the early revisions had.

3) Nifty Cover disk/CD (buying a mag with Amiga!CD would have to be more convenient than modem calls yielding 660MB!)

4) Intelligent comment/news on computing/electronics today.

Please though, pay attention to detail - so many Amiga mags are unprofessional with poorly developed pictures, blatant spelling errors & pagesetting mistakes. I guess you know you aren't perfect either. Lucky ya'll have a sick sense of humour.

Concerning Subscriptions:

Tell me about overseas subscriptions. How much, to who, how quickly would I get them, I want the CD and the floppy disc or I'm not subscribing, how many past CD's can you send me if I send you your \$1 extra per issue because they don't keep the CD on the mag over here and how do the magazines/discs come packaged so that they survive the ordeal of postage? (Please don't say that the contents of the floppy disc are on the CD. I know, I just don't have a CD32/CD1200 yet!)

I have included below my thoughts on the state and future of Amiga technology: (Grab a cup of coffee or other addictive substance before progressing)

Nowadays no-one doubts the Amiga was way ahead of its time.

Amigas with peripherals and applications for audio,

video and graphics are used in studios around the world. Similar systems on other platforms cost at least twice as much. To achieve more than Amiga technology can give means leaving desktop computing and entering the realm of high end workstations. Such systems cost an order of magnitude more than any Amiga.

Despite such remarkable potential, the company solely responsible for the development and marketing of this technology went bankrupt. The only plausible explanation for such a result is incapable, perhaps even corrupt, management who marketed poorly and held back development. Professional users were disappointed many times with the compromising approach taken to the higher end machines.

And now, quite understandably everyone is concerned that RISC CPU's, Pentium CPU's, PCI buses with mass produced peripherals etc will erode the Amiga's position in creative applications.

But are we overreacting? Is the immediate situation that bad?

I believe short term, Amiga simply needs to:

1. Refine the AGA chipset to include Akiko as standard and integrate CD32 into all machines fast! (It's all but done already...)

2. Take a less compromising approach with flagship machines, eg SCSI etc!

By doing this a standard Amiga will have CD Rom, effectively 16 bit sound, better than Super VGA display, all running on up to an '040 CPU (or even '060 when Motorola eventually release large quantities). Put this together with the MATURE fully multitasking operating system Amiga already has and we're looking pretty good.

Want 24 bit graphics? Buy a card! Want DSP and multi channel audio better than A/V Macs? Buy a card!

It's all there. Amiga just needs to watch the price of their machines relative to "586" PC clones. You quoted Commodore's Chief of Engineering as saying "... our costs are comparable to PC clone makers" so it shouldn't be hard.

Now let's look at what everyone else will be buying in a year's time. Compare this with a Pentium or 486DX4

write to reply

c o n t i n u e d

running Windows 95 or OS2. They might have SVGA or slightly better display cards. They will probably come bundled with a double speed CD ROM + sound card. Not a bad system, but if Amiga's can be priced competitively they are still in the running. Remember, the icons in Windows/Chicago 95 still aren't connected to the files. Things like that show that Microsoft haven't been able to change all that much yet. And as for voice recognition of commands, the ones I've tried are pathetically slow and often wrong. Anyway, you can implement that as an add-on for an Amiga - check out the Fish Disks.

What about PowerPC's? They are still expensive. The cheaper PowerPC 601 chips make software emulation of Mac/IBM applications too slow, since you can't get everything in native PowerPC code yet (ever?). When the faster versions start to take off, only then will Amiga really fall behind. Furthermore, this collaboration between former competitors is not as uniform as you might have thought. The "Mac" Power PCs I've seen don't have PCI buses - try Nubus. Supposedly the reference platform changes to PCI shortly but you'll get division and bickering.

Computing riches will also be divided if rumours are true that when PC clone makers take on PowerPC, many may license the Macintosh PowerPC OS...

I think Apple has done very well to come back from the brink of extinction. In a similar way, Amiga could come back, selling mature, sophisticated but friendly computing solutions that offer complete uniformity within the Amiga world, away from the chop and change that the rest of the industry is suffering from.

Anyway, to lead in the future, Amiga need to:

1. Decide whether AAA is worth releasing (Maybe they should as it's a sure thing -

finish the OS and it's there).

2. Develop a parallel processing architecture machine and bus system capable of modular expansion to utilise multiple RISC/VLIW CPU's.

3. Develop a chipset to provide large 24 bit displays with video and audio DSP capabilities.

4. Develop software or hardware emulation similar to "Emplant" to run existing applications, and include some Zorro slots in the new machine.

Ahhhh - so easy to say... Games Developers Away from serious pursuits for a second: On the topic of games I would like to see some statistics for the number of Amiga's in the world with the following combinations:

68000, OCS68020+, ECS or better68030+, ECS or better68020+, AGA68020+, AGA + Akiko (ie CD32/SX-1)

Why? Because all games developers seem to write for 68000 CPU with OCS (Apart from CD32). They seem to think that the better machines are a tiny minority! Is that really the case?

Let me illustrate with "Hired Guns". You can run this (quite good) game on a standard OCS A500 with 1MB ram, which was released almost 10 years ago. When the PC version eventually came out, you needed a 386 with VGA etc. 386 machines have been out for about 5 years. Of course this demonstrates what we all know, that the Amiga WAS way ahead of it's time, BUT! it also shows that the game was written with a lot of constraints, and could have been HEAPS better if they even said, OK this is only going to work with 68030 and ECS (with say 2MB Chip and 1MB Fast Ram). The conversion of that to PC would probably only run on 486.

The new Amiga company will have to set the next standard for games as 020+AGA+Akiko by integrating

CD32 into all machines.

Doom is the first game I have lamented that the Amiga hasn't got. Notice though - it isn't written for out of date machines, it only runs properly on a 486. I want to know why there aren't any Wolfenstein or Doom type games for better Amigas - I realise that planar pixels make it difficult, but is it that hard? Believe me, most every Amiga owner would upgrade their CPU/Chipset/Ram if it meant they could play 3D scrolling games like Doom.

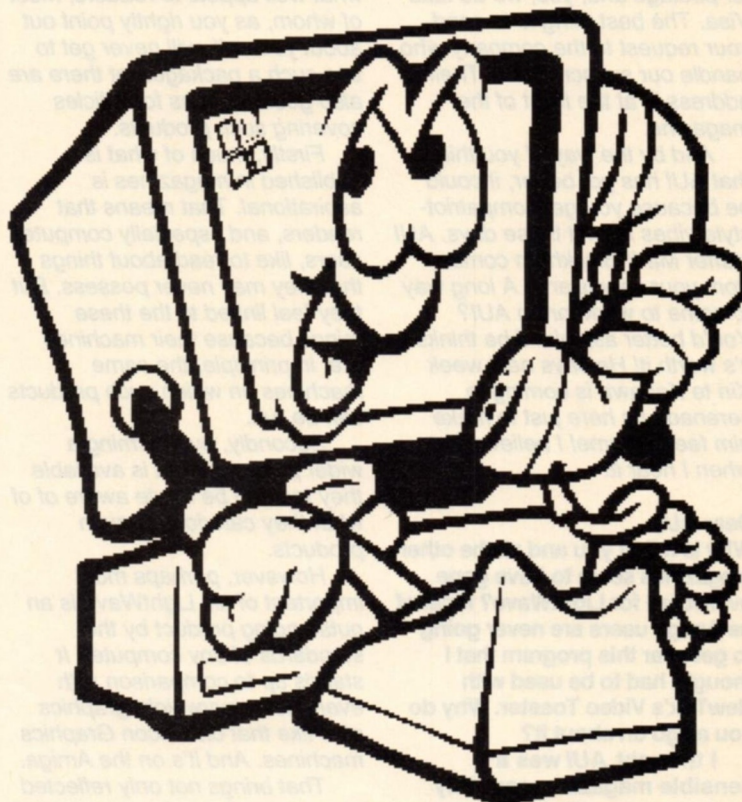
Regards,
Jim Kennedy

Dear Jim,
Well, well...that's quite a letter. And a very intelligent discussion of a whole raft of problems and ideas that I think everyone who is interested in the fate of the Amiga would do well to read. And, as you appear to have said it all, what more is there for me to say except thanks for taking the trouble for writing to us at such length so interestingly. And the I pretty well agree with every comments you have made. Giddy and right on! (And thanks for e-mailing it so promptly.)

Send your letters to:
Write to Reply

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AUI can be contacted on CIX as
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WHAT THE DEVELOPERS SAID ...

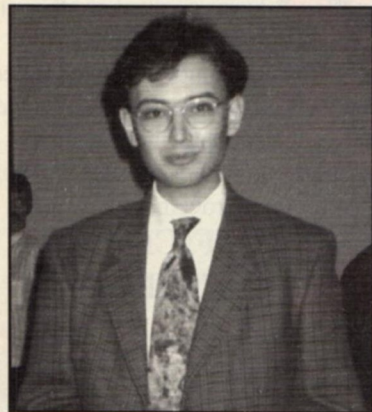
Janet Bickerstaff reports on reaction in the Amiga World to news that our favourite computer is back in action.

This is what some of the members of the Amiga Developer community had to say:

Michael Console Battilana of Cloanto - Developers of Personal Paint.

"OK, the UK bid has been 'accepted', but I believe we must wait at least until early in the new year to see a more definitive result. Other people I've spoken with are even more cautious. For us (Cloanto), this does not change things - in the past months we've kept investing in the Amiga more than ever. We were with the Amiga in the very first days, and are still there 100%.

I would hope for a more 'open' policy from the new company in directions such as licensing, standards and developers. I mean licensing Amiga technology, seriously considering next generation standards such as Taligent's CommonPoint, and giving all potential Amiga developers a free CD-ROM with all the documentation and tools needed to write Amiga software.



Michael Console Battilana from the Italian Company Cloanto - Developers of Personal Paint.

The Future? I have no crystal ball, and there are many things I don't know much about. The existing Amiga technology could probably be packaged and repackaged in different flavours for at least another year, and still remain the most usable system around. I find the Amiga on a PC board a great idea, because it would reach out to fill gaps which couldn't be accessed otherwise. CD-ROMs should certainly become more popular. Much of the strength of the Amiga lies in the fact that it is an overall good system, and doesn't just

excel in one way or another. It is great for games, for video, for multimedia, for productivity, for software development, etc. This sometimes also makes it difficult to position. As far as future generations of the Amiga are concerned, I think that it should be possible to implement emerging technologies and standards without excluding the consumer market, for example.

But let me contribute with a more original perspective from my field, which is software. My ideal Amiga operating system would be even more elegant than it is now, yet accepted by major corporations, and it should be easy to port software to and from the Amiga. It should also retain its actual responsiveness, look and feel.

If something like the Taligent Application Environment (already embraced by HP, who are working closely with the Amiga people) were integrated with the Amiga operating system and hardware, we could have all of this, and still invest in MPEG, RISC etc.

I've worked on this in the past and visited Taligent in Cupertino. From a technical point of view, the Amiga could have one of the best implementations of Taligent's CommonPoint, at least one year ahead of the Macintosh (which still lacks multitasking). Developers would prefer the Amiga to other workstations, and home users would still be able to play their games".

Jolyon Ralph of Almathera - Developers of Amiga CD-ROMs and software for the Amiga.

"Our reaction was of relief. We had expected this result for quite a while, but until it was confirmed there was always a cloud hanging over the future of the Amiga. If the new company perform as well as they have since April then I'll be happy.

The Future? I see the future in new, low-cost, high spec Amiga computers. There should be at least one new generation of 680x0-based Amigas before RISC is launched".

Jim Hawkins - always in the forefront of Amiga development.

"My reaction was pleasure and relief, mingled with extreme irritation that this solution wasn't arrived at six months ago.

I hope that Amiga International will move swiftly to re-establish confidence

and get stock back into the shops. They have a proven track record on the consumer front, but they've lost many opportunities in the multimedia field and the high end. I strongly hope that they will fund some high-end killer applications in the video and MM area to get big-box Amigas into strategic areas. I hope they won't repeat the CD mistake of total reliance on the games industry. In terms of long-term development I hope they will attempt a technological leap over the opposition, rather than trying merely to catch up.

The Future? The Amiga will remain for the foreseeable future as a home computer with good games capability. It will only transcend that with

A4000 back into production.

The Future? I hope to see a much clearer split in the machines where Amiga International manufactures basic units that can be packaged for the retail market, while still allowing companies like Index to re-package them for commercial applications. Longer term I see the Amiga having a much firmer base as a low cost commercial multimedia delivery platform.

I would like to see a much more open strategy being developed to allow us access to chips, boards and system software. I would like to see the open management style that was being developed by Lew Eggebrecht to be continued so that developers can plan

"Totally brilliant" Jim Hawkins, developer of many CD-ROM discs

"What a marvellous Christmas present." Jolyon Ralph - Almathera

"Brilliant news" John Blackburn - Multi Media Machine

"Oh Wow! The Amiga has always been our strongest line". Doug Thompson - Arnor

investment in software and hardware at least a magnitude more powerful than current Amiga offerings. I would like to see the top range Amigas offering fast Windows and DOS emulation and fast Mac emulation out of the box at competitive prices - this, together with some powerful Amiga applications, would make it a show-stopper".

Mick Tinker of Index Information - Developers of Amiga hardware and software.

"It is good news. As we are at the 'bleeding' edge of development it has two very important effects:

a) It ensures that there are machines to sell to the customer and therefore it makes more projects viable because there is a longer term return on the considerable time and money involved in development. Already I am looking at some planned projects to see if it is viable to extend their development cycle for products that will be available in 6-12 months.

b) In the medium term it is likely to have a good effect on both contract work opportunities for Amiga International and better support for developers. I do not accept that development is likely to remain in the USA longer term, but expect it to migrate over to the UK. This will not only create new jobs for UK developers, but also create a good pool of skilled developers for the future, this was always an advantage for companies like GVP and Scala US who were located close to West Chester.

I am still being cautious and, therefore, the only thing I want at the moment is to have the CD32, A1200 and

ahead and enhance the Amiga line rather than wasting resources fighting for information and help".

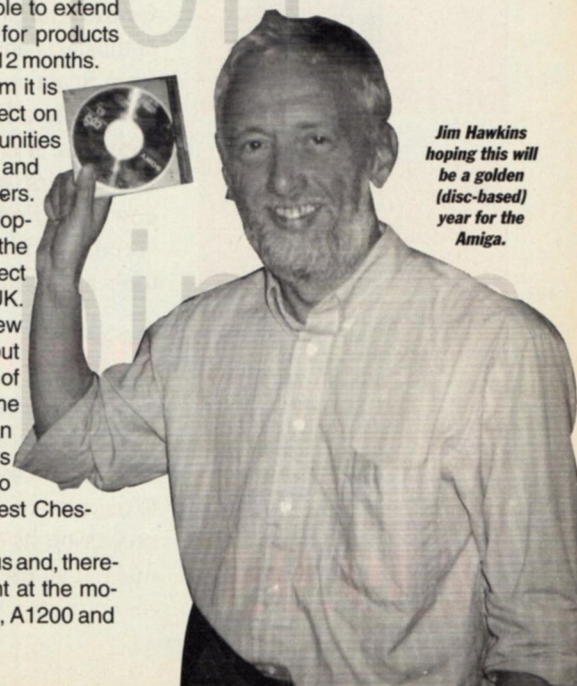
Toby Simpson of Millennium Interactive - Amiga games developers.

"My reaction is that it is potentially good news, but I can't speak for the company I work for.

The Future? I hope that Amiga International bring out quickly a new set of machines with existing technology and basic improvements which could be turned round in 6 months. I see the future lying in cheap low end home computers and games machines, and a potential multimedia information super-highway and audio/video work machine."

At the time of writing we are still waiting to hear the Fat Lady sing - it's not over yet! But watch this space.

AUI



Jim Hawkins hoping this will be a golden (disc-based) year for the Amiga.



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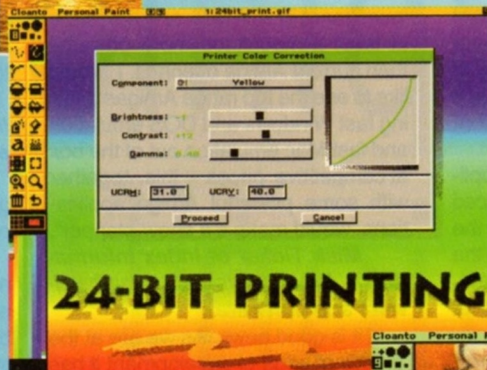
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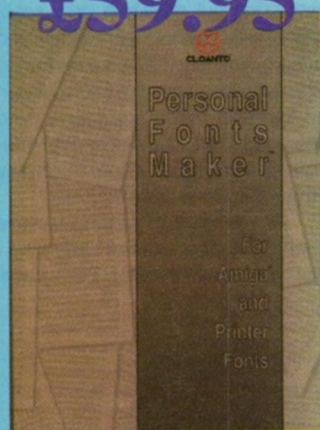
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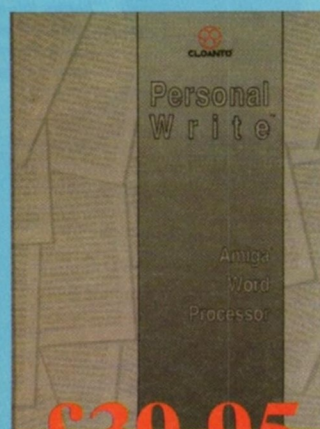
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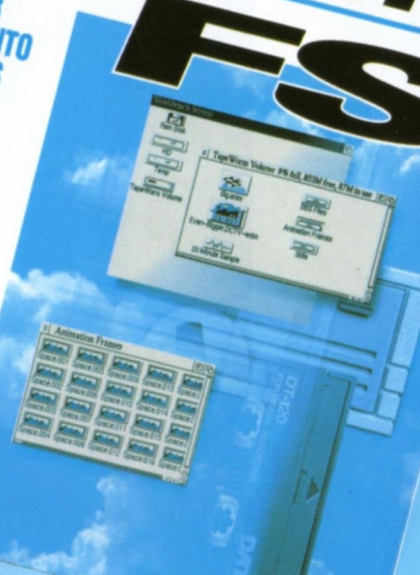
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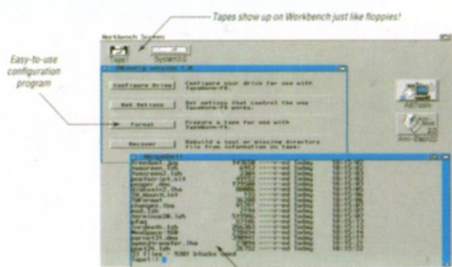
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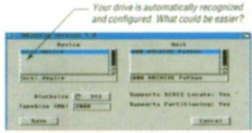
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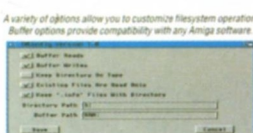
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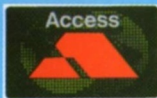
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