

AMIGA

User

INTERNATIONAL


APRIL 1995 £3.75

FIVE

**Absolutely Essential
Disks packed on Two!
More than 40 Utilities
and 4 Full Games!**

Portability!

**Computing on the
move and the Amiga
AUI Exclusive Report**



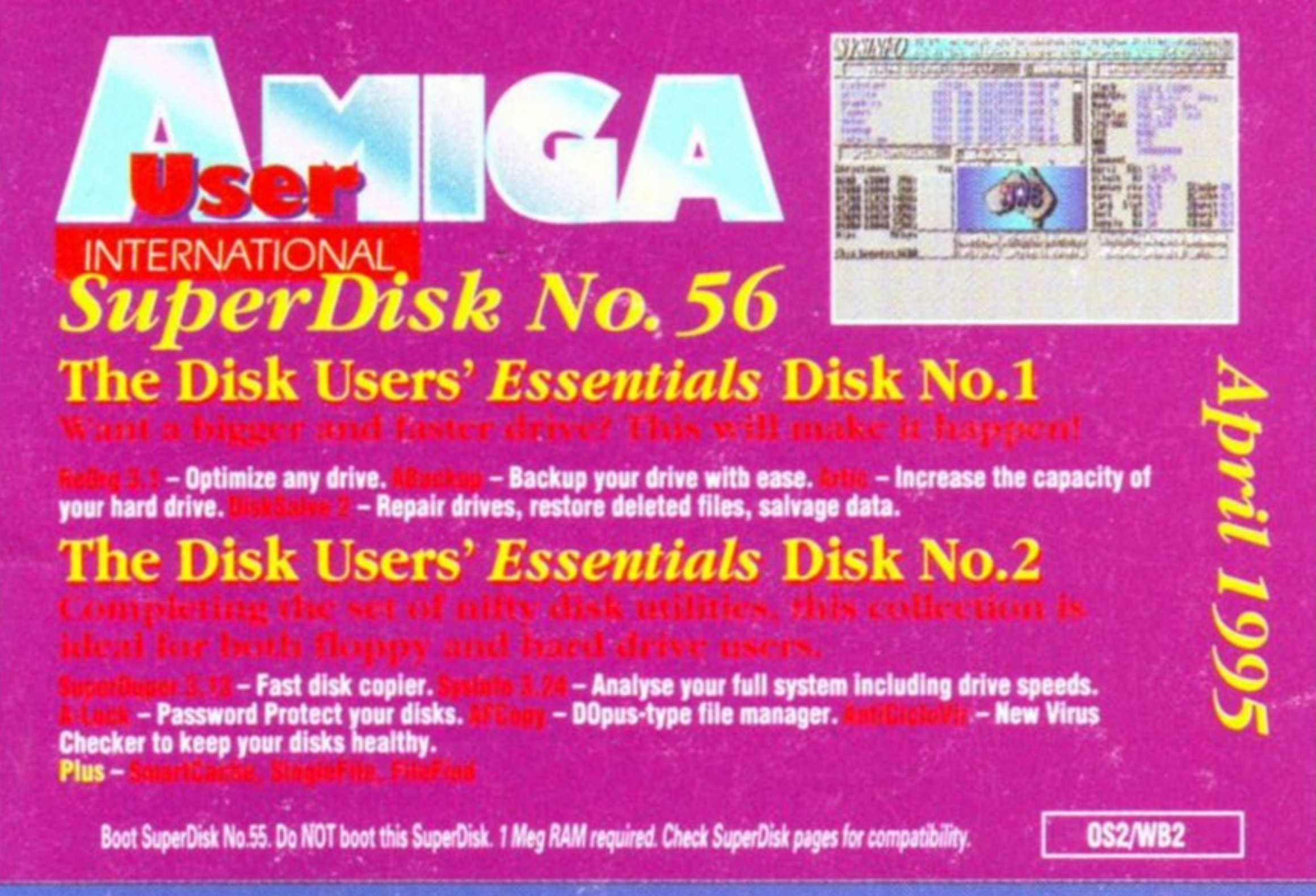
AMIGA User INTERNATIONAL SuperDisk No. 55
The Top Utilities Disk –
Over FORTY utilities selected to make your Amiga even better.
The Music Makers' Essentials Disk
Get into the groove with this disk – a must for beginners and pros. QuadraPlayer 2 – Incredible music creation program with sample editor, midi interface, spectroscopy and much more.
The Great Games Disk
Insectoids from Outer Space – Multi-faceted shoot 'em up. Poing! – Breakout clone.
Tetris – Workbench puzzle game. Pong – The original video game!
Plus – Additional sound samples to help you create a musical masterpiece.
Boot THIS SuperDisk to use both SuperDisks No. 55 and No. 56. 1 Meg RAM required. Check SuperDisk pages for compatibility.

April 1995

OS2/WB2

NO DISK

Ask Your Newsagent!
Or see the **SuperDisk**
Page 14 in this issue.



AMIGA User INTERNATIONAL SuperDisk No. 56
The Disk Users' Essentials Disk No.1
Want a bigger and faster drive? This will make it happen!
Disk 1.1 – Optimize any drive. Disk 1.2 – Backup your drive with ease. Disk 1.3 – Increase the capacity of your hard drive. Disk 1.4 – Repair drives, restore deleted files, salvage data.
The Disk Users' Essentials Disk No.2
Completing the set of nifty disk utilities, this collection is ideal for both floppy and hard drive users.
Disk 2.1 – Fast disk copier. Disk 2.2 – Analyse your full system including drive speeds.
Disk 2.3 – Password Protect your disks. Disk 2.4 – DOS-type file manager. Disk 2.5 – New Virus Checker to keep your disks healthy.
Plus – AmigaDOS, AmigaDOS, AmigaDOS
Boot SuperDisk No. 55. Do NOT boot this SuperDisk. 1 Meg RAM required. Check SuperDisk pages for compatibility.

April 1995

OS2/WB2

NO DISK

Ask Your Newsagent!
Or see the **SuperDisk**
Page 14 in this issue.

**Plus InfoNexus, X-DVE,
MultiLayer, DataStore
The Amazing Rocket in your pocket modem!**

**Music Magic
Build your own music studio!**

**FIVE Portable
Computers
To Be Won!**



Portability!

A surreal landscape with a cracked, orange ground. A path of dark, rectangular blocks leads from the foreground towards a distant, tall, cylindrical tower. Several small, dark figures with glowing green eyes are walking along the path. The sky is a deep red with a bright, glowing light source at the top.

**The *AUI* Guide to
computing on the
move and the Amiga.**

Exclusive report starts on page 57

Masters of Technology



Quality, reliability, excellent service and state of the art products. That's why Samsung invests around eight per cent of its annual revenues in research and development, to continually improve quality and performance.

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AM1

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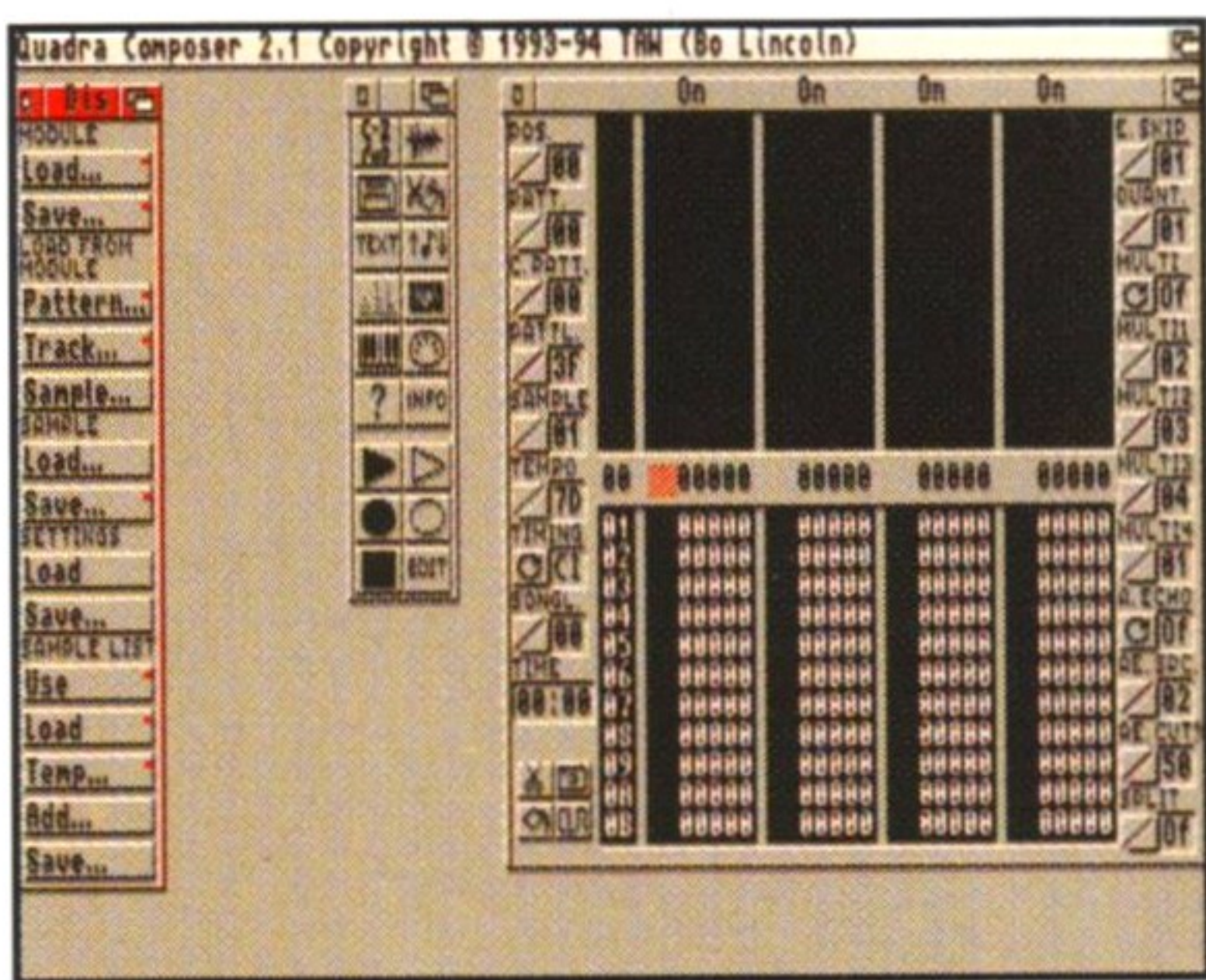
CONSTANT FACTORS

5 The Amiga Dimension

Managing Editor Antony Jacobson explains that though the Amiga is popular, sometimes it's safer to be not so fashionable with the new RAM raiders about.

8 SuperDisks No.55 and No.56

Make magic music with the incredible QuadraComposer. A full package that's packed with power and just part of the *AUI* Music Special. Plus the Disk Users' *Essentials* disks - two disks crammed with everything you need to improve your disk drives. As if that weren't enough, there are two more disks with over forty top utilities and four great games.



18 NewsFile

It's the unique NewsFile. It's the news, views, stews and blues of computerdom netted for you by the never-give-in and never-give-up newshound team of Anthony Mael and Martin Witton.

74 Online - The Internet Column

What's new, what's popular, what's Usenet? Gary Fenton dives once more into cyberspace and, almost intact, returns with the info you need to get online.

Cover and Portability! cover courtesy of A&B Photon Graphics

88 Amiga Answers

Judging by the mail bag, *AUI*'s resident Guru, not the crashing kind, of course, Andy Eskelson, is the answer to your techno prayers. All your problems solved and even an intro to the Shell.

94 The PD StakeOut

The quality of the Amiga's Public Domain support is beyond compare. Gideon (I'm in the Public Domain too!) Overhead provides another instalment of *AUI*'s popular and comprehensive round-up.



Bud Vennos or PD? Your choice!

104 Write to Reply

AUI's own Agony Uncle, Bud Vennos is unleashed again. Trying to help where he can but beware, only if you deserve it, your letters get the unique Venemous (Don't spellcheck that!) treatment.

113 Opinion

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TEST DRIVE

28 Digitally Effective

Gary Fenton test drives a video package that's short on name, low on price but high on power. X-DVE has arrived!

30 DataStore

Can Digita find a market for another database. Mark Blackham suggests they probably can with DataStore, the latest from the makers of WordWorth.

32 Info Nexus

What can this new file manager possibly offer that we haven't seen before? David Taylor test drives the first designed for network use on the Amiga.

34 MultiLayer

AdPro is one of the Amiga's staple programs, solid and loved by all. Now it can create even more with this excellent companion, as Gary Fenton explains.

36 PowerTitrer

There may be a gap in the video market, according to Gary Fenton test driving this low priced titling software which could be just the package to fill it.

38 Aura

After you try this month's music disk, you'll need more samples, but are some samplers just too expensive? Could Aura be the answer to your ears' dreams? Mark Blackham lends you his as he test drives the newest on the market.



40 VideoStage Pro

Multimedia creation strikes again! Gary Fenton test drives the latest multimedia and titling software from Oxix.

42 HyperCache 2

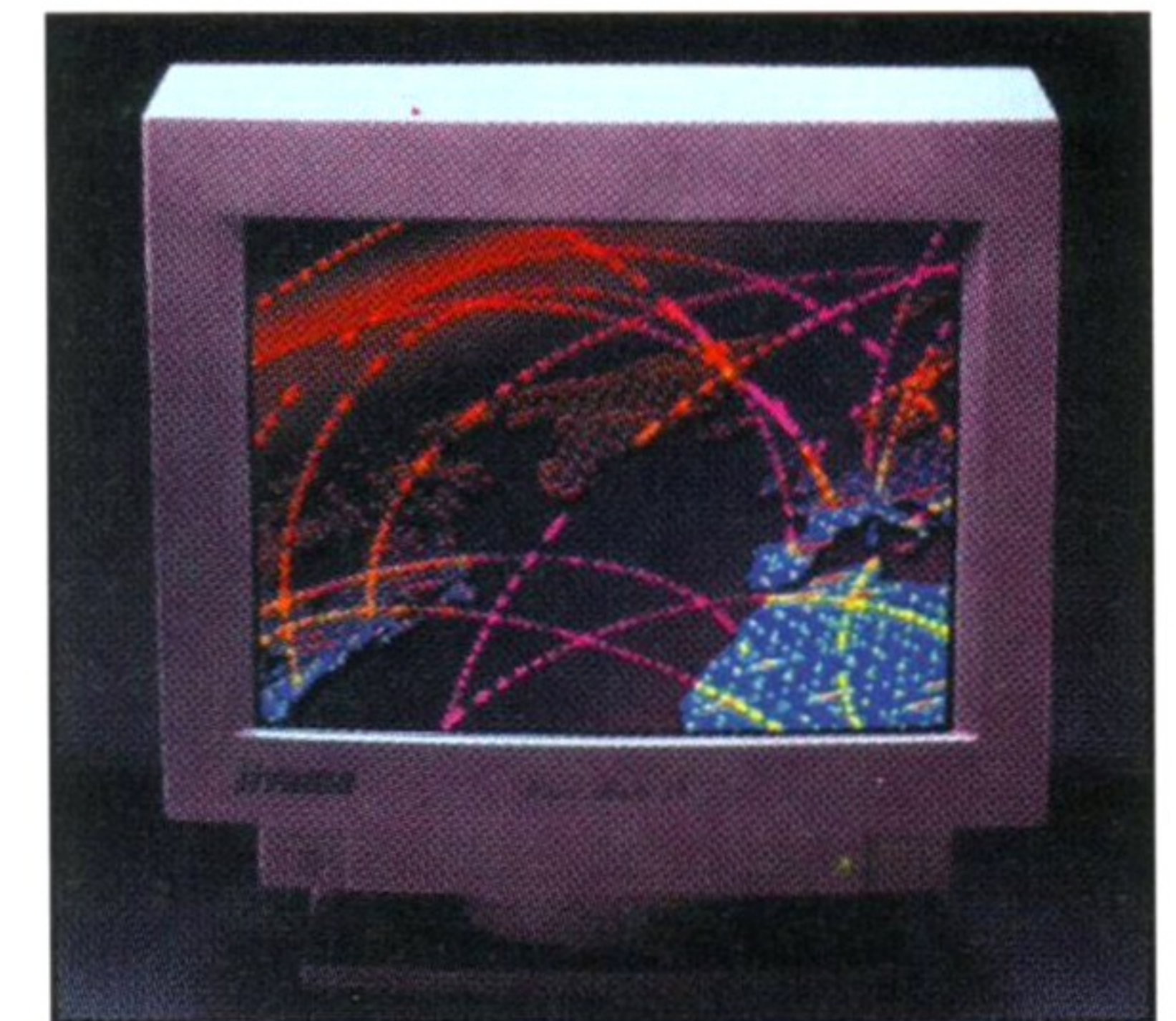
How can you make your Amiga perform better and faster without tampering with the hardware? This professional caching system could help, as Mark Blackham explains.

43 Asim CDFS

CD-ROMS are today's storage medium but software control can be a bit of a problem. Gary Fenton test drives this solution.

43 Picture Box

An artist can never have too many resources and this is one of the best CDs yet. Gary Fenton tells you how to avoid splashing out.



44 Screen Star

Gideon Overhead test drives you into the picture with this sharp new monitor from Iiyama.

46 Termite

Could NComm's days as the top Amiga comms package be numbered? Gideon Overhead test drives a new package that just may make it happen.

72 Rocket Power

Getting on the move? David Taylor and Gideon Overhead examine a modem that is a rocket in your pocket and can keep you on the move and online.



USER PORT

52 A MIDI studio to call your own

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54 Quadra Composer

This month's star program from the *Music Makers' Essentials* disk gets that special Mark (Roll Over Beethoven) Blackham treatment.

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Combining with the *AUI Music Special*, Paul Overaa explains the use of ARexx with music packages.

79 Programming Tips

Your Intuition should tell you that Paul Overaa's a shady character. These tips on programming prove it!

HARD COPY

76 Accessing the Internet

David Taylor reviews a book that tells you how to get online without the help of Gary Fenton.

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80 Could Atari provide the cool cat to help the Amiga market? A look at the the old/new kid on the block's latest plus top reviews of Pinball Illusions, The Lion King, BloodNet and info on Tracksuit Manager 2. And the chance to win some cash and go down in computer history!

AUI SERVICES

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Get your monthly dose of *AUI* direct to your home and ensure you never miss an issue. Subscribe today and save some cash too with a special offer!

100 Arena

The *AUI* classified advertising section will help you find those little and large things you're after.

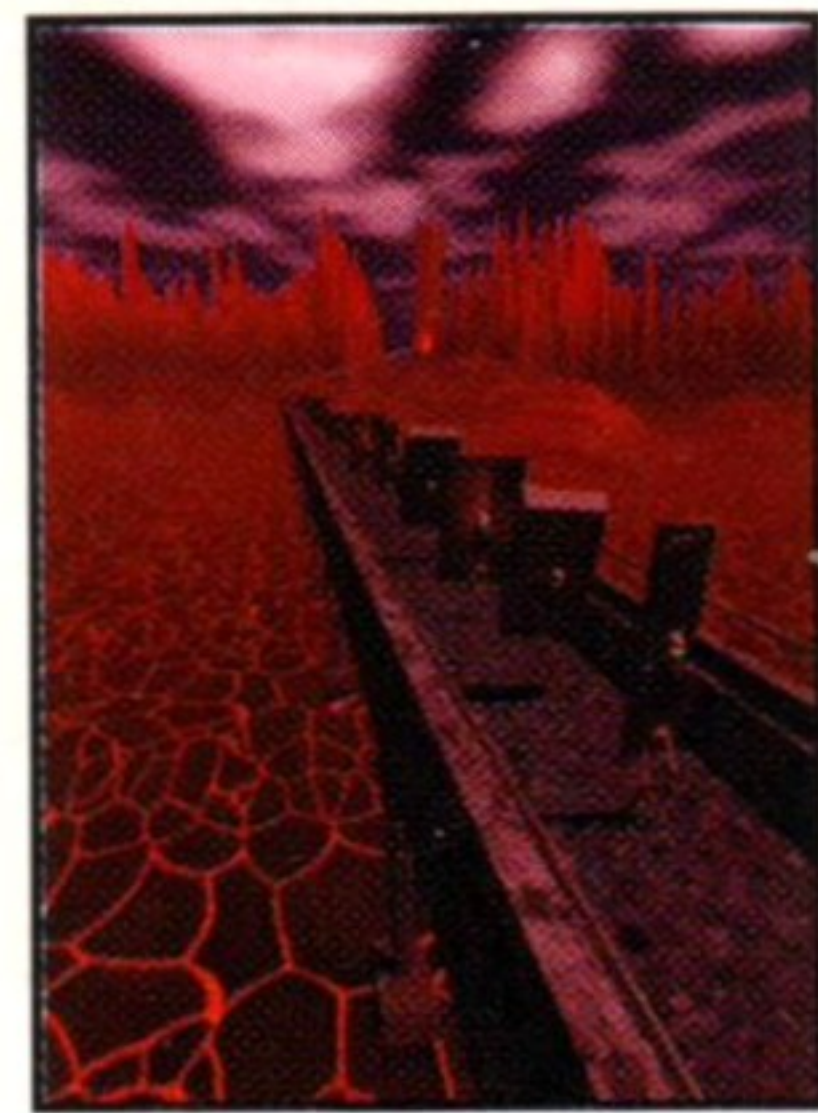
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Want some help choosing your products before making your purchases? With this *AUI* service, it couldn't be easier.

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You can take it with you! The *AUI* team, led by Simon Gardener, go walk about and investigate the options to keep you in touch while you're on the move and online.

What's happening in the literally fast moving mobile world? Portability! An *AUI* Special report that tells you everything you need to know about the mobile computing side of life, even how to get your Amiga into it.

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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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The Amiga Dimension

The Amiga is "celebrating" a year of living absently. Not a machine has been manufactured and still no final result of the protracted buy out negotiations has been achieved. A story has emerged that there was a delay because the previous Commodore directors, Irving Gould and Mehdi Ali, were objecting to the their actions in the management of Commodore being investigated for the period of twelve months before CBM went down.

This would have been true had the company gone into liquidation in the USA but by chance, of course, Commodore was registered in the Bahamas where only the last three months of directorial responsibility are examined.

The story has, I am told by very well informed sources, no basis at all. What is holding up the progress that everyone wants are complications of the kind I mentioned last month - copyright. How to settle all the ownership complexities of a company that was the proprietor of Amiga technology and other intellectual copyrights of Commodore in numerous countries around the world with as many Liquidators is no simple matter.

The management buy out team, led by David Pleasance and Colin Proudfoot, are extremely frustrated at the delays and want to get into production again of a computer that despite its year of absence is still highly popular, not only with us the users who possess Amigas but with those who want to join us.

There is a pent up demand for Amigas. They could be 1200s, 4000s or CD32s, or magic RISC computers, the stores would love to have them in because they know the buyers are out there waiting. The too long absent Amiga is acquiring a rarity value.

Fortunately, this rarity value is not yet such that the "RAM Raiders" come looking for them. The RAM Raiders are not tearaways stealing cars and smashing them in through shop windows to speed away with clutching loads of designer shell suits. These thieves are a new class who go for computers or sometimes, hence the name, just, quite literally, pocket the RAM from the computers and leave the rest.

There is now, according to the Police, a well-organised crime wave for the theft of computers. Fortunately, as I said, it's not generally Amigas. The skilled and focused thieves want high spec PCs or more commonly Apple Macs, especially the latest Apple Power PCs.

Because the Macs are expensive and largely used in professional areas such as design and publishing, there is apparently a ready market that asks no questions about where the computers come from. The Police estimate that this "second hand" market of stolen computers is worth, in the UK alone, £100,000.000 a year.

But the market isn't in the UK alone, for most of the "dirty" Macs are thought to end up abroad, particularly in the eastern European countries. During the Communist period they were not allowed by the rules of COCOM, the US-dominated technology restriction agreement, to be supplied with anything over 8 bit. However, I did hear of a couple of Amigas reaching the Kremlin long before Communism fell.

Now those technology and hard currency starved countries seem to be taking their revenge. They are suspected of being the destination for many of the computers stolen in the UK. A container load of criminally acquired computers worth over £100,000 bound for eastern Europe was recently stopped at a port.

Even putting the name of the company that owns the computer in some indelible form such as etching it on doesn't deter either thieves or buyers. Apparently in Russia, as these computers tend to be top of the range, there are, I am told perhaps jokingly, orders for "another computer of the "Property of XXXX Company" brand."

Insurance companies in the UK are now requiring Macs to be chained or fixed to the tables. Even that doesn't always work. One design company was hit eight times in eight months, But the burglars didn't always take the whole computer, sometimes just the CPU or only the RAM.

Most of this nasty business confines itself to the Mac and PC world. With raiders being more and more selective about what they take the Amiga seems up to now relatively, and agreeably, neglected. This is certainly one area of computing where it pays us not to be in the fashion. But with the growth in video studios using Amigas, LightWave and hot rendering boxes, if they don't start producing Amigas soon that rarity value may see our own computers on the wish list of the RAM Raiders. And that kind of popularity and pent up demand for the Amiga we can all do without.

Antony Jacobson
Managing Editor and Publisher

Over 50% of our business comes by word of mouth...

When we say our products are highly recommended, we
don't just mean by us - but also by you - the people using it.
You have, after all, got something to shout about.

...NewTek LightWave 3D

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Combo Collection

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SunRise AD516 Studio 16

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Pixel 3D

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Bringing you and your Amiga closer together! That's the aim of this month's SuperDisks. David Taylor introduces the Essentials disks that will have you and your computer making wonderful music together.

Instructions

The SuperDisks will install themselves to five disks. All you have to do is tell the Amiga which disk (a-e) you want. Simply boot SuperDisk No.55 in order to install any or all of the five disks. Have five spare disks ready. Each disk takes around five minutes to install (time will vary depending on the speed of your Amiga).

Note to readers with two disk drives: Each disk installs itself in two parts. In order to cut down disk swapping, place the following disk in your external drive once the disk has started to install - MAKE SURE THERE IS NO DISK ACTIVITY IN DF1: (EXTERNAL DRIVE)!:

SuperDisk No.55 in df1: for AUIAPR95a & AUIAPR95b
SuperDisk No.56 in df1: for AUIAPR95c, AUIAPR95d & AUIAPR95e.

To install some of the utilities to your hard drive requires the Commodore "installer". If you don't have this in your C: directory (or wherever your search path is), they will not work. If you don't have "installer", it can be found on older copies of AUI.

After the start last month of the AUI "Theme" disks with the Printer Utilities and 3D Graphics disk, this month sees first in a series of Essentials disks. These disks are designed to give you the utilities and programs that we judge to be ideal for each theme. The Music Disk has a brilliant composer and the Disk Users' Disks have everything you need to get the best out of your drives.

So let's take a look at the FOUR Megabytes of great programs on the disks...

AUI APR95a

The Music Makers' Essentials Disk

Last month we included a module player that we described, very technically, as "the business"! This month we're giving you that player's big brother, QuadraComposer. This is the accompanying module creator and

it has more features than a multiplex cinema.

You can load Quadra-Com-poser in a variety of ways. Either load Workbench and double click on its icon, or double click on the install icon and install it to a hard drive. The disk will also autoboot and load the program automatically which will save you memory if your using an Amiga with only one meg.

Once the program is loaded you can open a variety of screens. Select them from the main menu or from one of the menus at the top of the screen.

There's a module editor and a sample editor as well as extras such as the spectroscope and midi interface.

You can find some samples in the sample directory on this disk and there are also some additional samples in the sample directory on the games disk (AUIAPR95e). There is also an example module, Floyd, for you to listen to and play with.

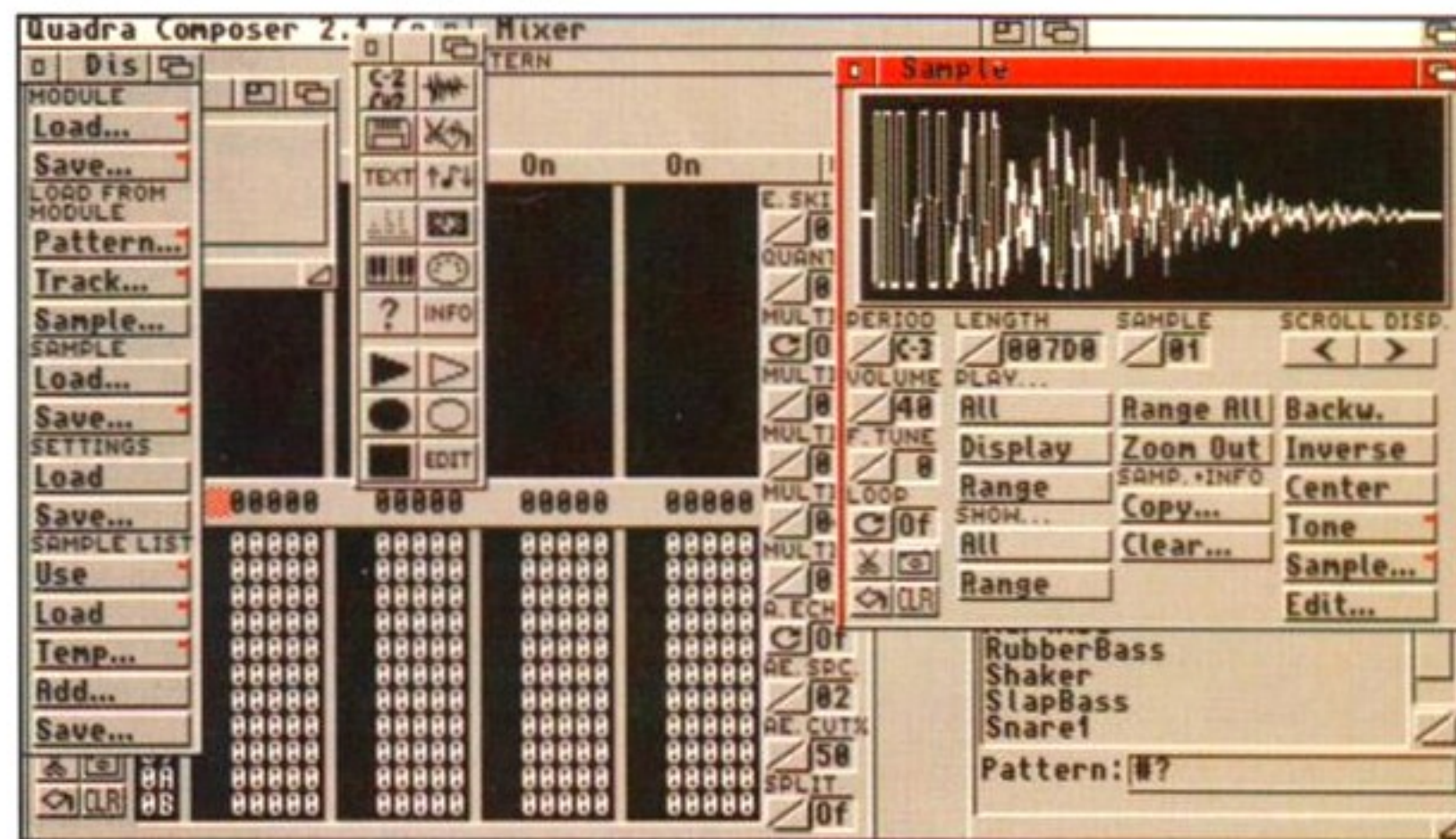
Here's a complete list of samples provided:

Alien	Analogstring
Asia	Bart
Bassdrum	BassSlap
Blast	Burns

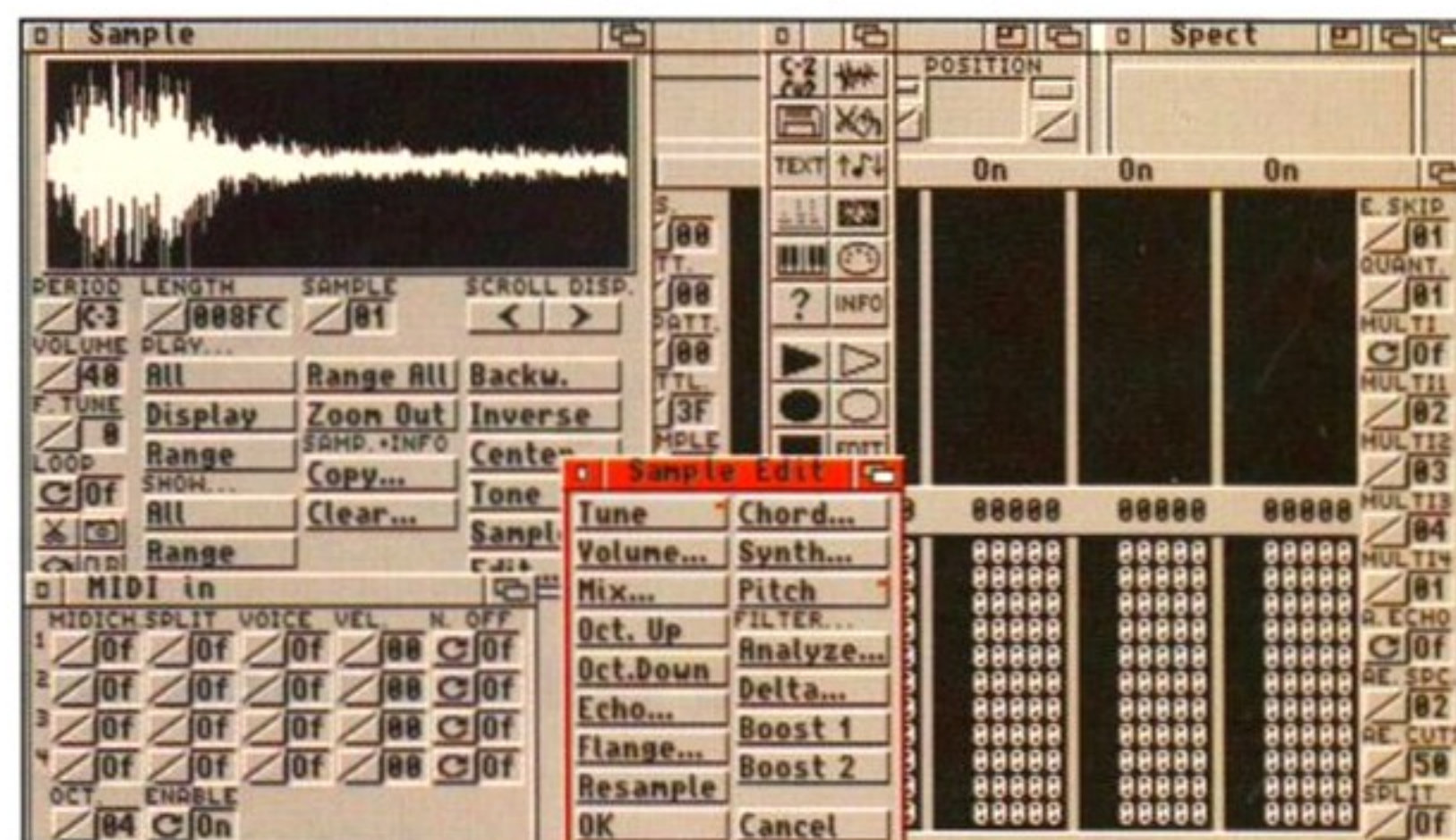
Burp	Choir	Shaker	Slapbass
Cinema	Clap	Snare	Tom
Claps1	Claves	Trav	Wowbass
Closehiat	Conga		
Corker	Dangerous		
Deepbass	Digiharp		
Doh	Elguitar		
Epiano	Explo		
Fatbrass	Funbass		
Funkbass	Harp		
Heavysynth	Honk		
Korgbass	Laserblast		
Leader	Marimba		
Organ	Ping		
Pop	Popbass		
Popsnare	Rubberbass		

These samples will get you going, but if you need more, then many companies sell sample disks. Check out the double CD "Sounds Terrific" from Weird Science (see their advertisement on p.57). Alternatively, sample your own, see the review of Aura on page 38.

See page 54 of this issue for the AUI tutorial on making music and midi and the Amiga.

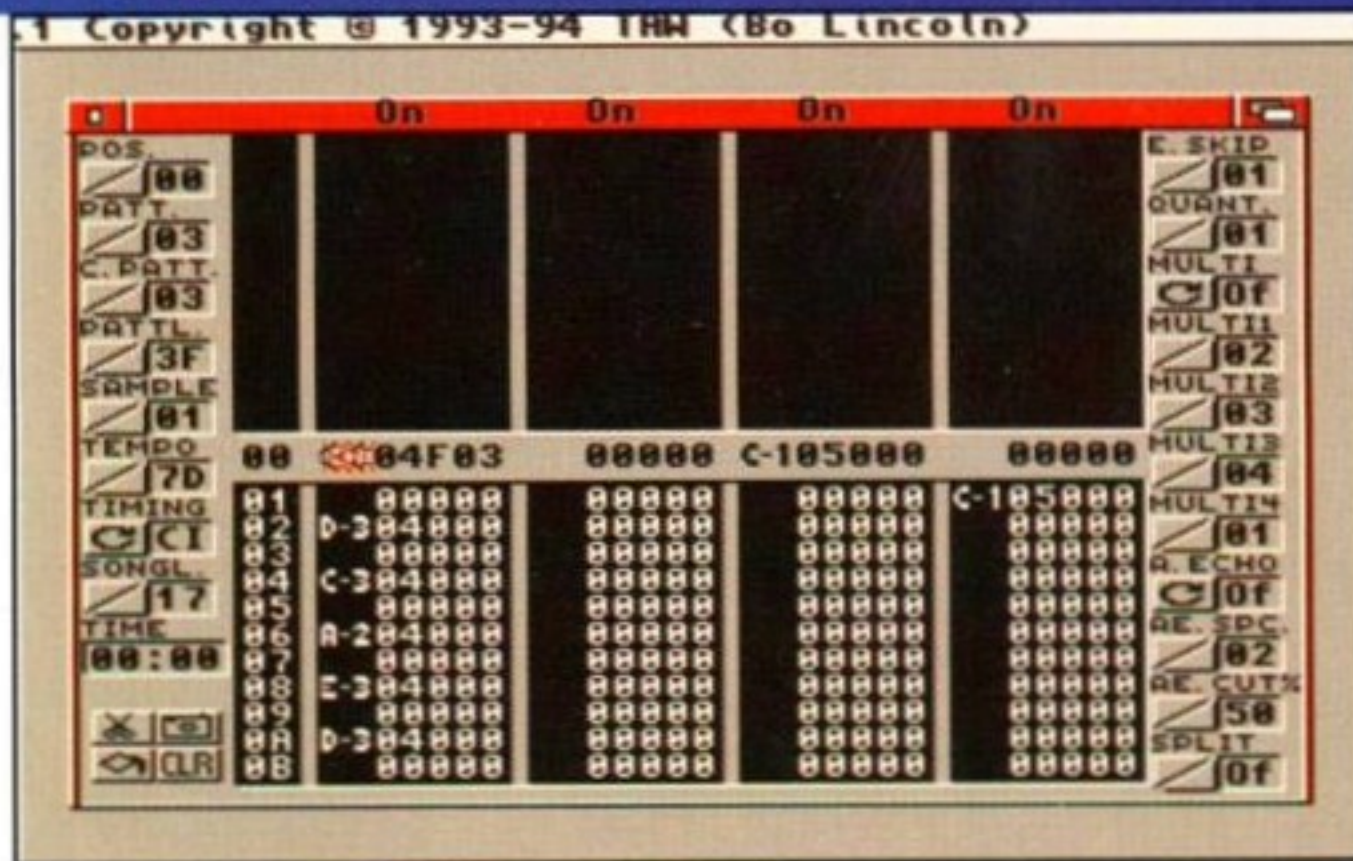


The superb QuadraComposer will have you dancing in the streets.

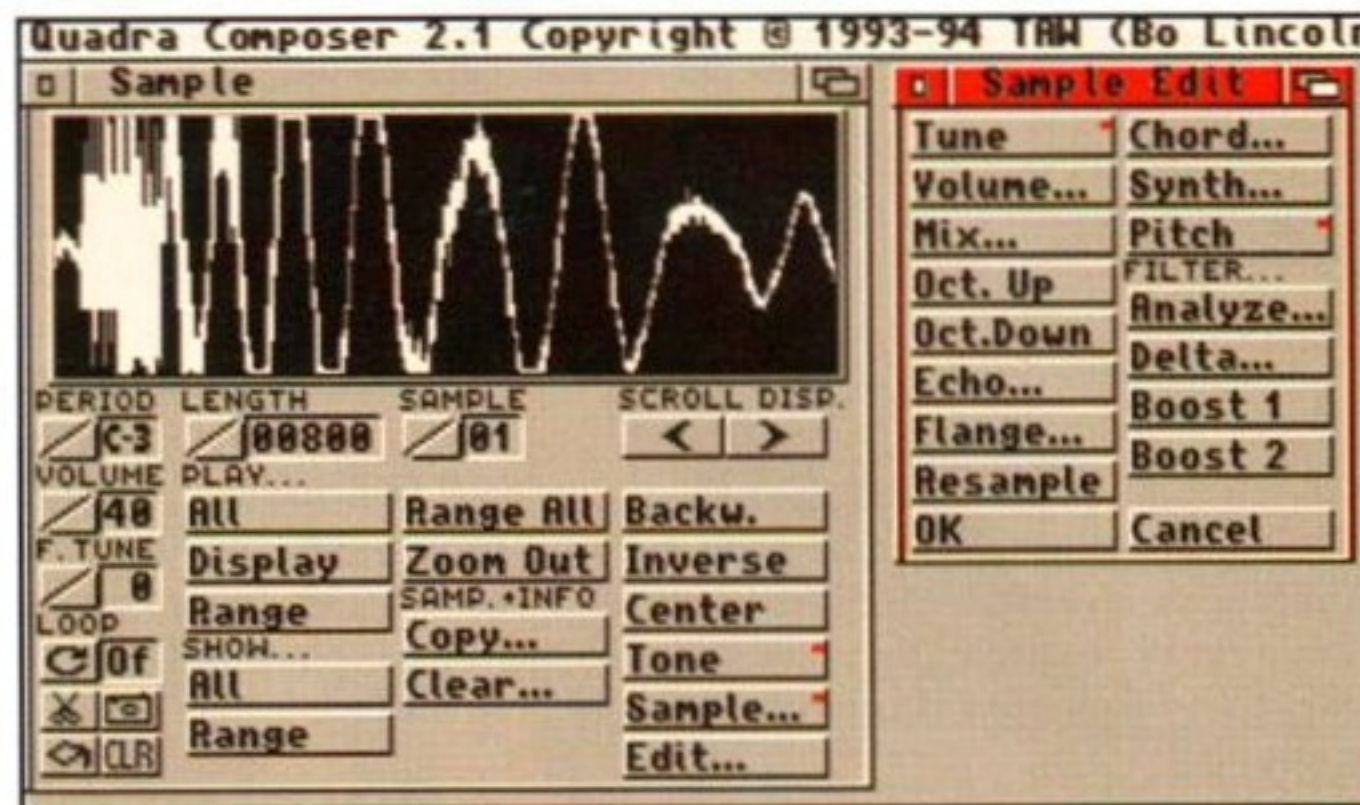


Samples can be manipulated to get a different sound.

SuperDisks No.55 & No.56



The module editor denotes all the sounds as numbers.



The sample editor displays the samples and allows you to crop it and edit it.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| DiskOut | The shortest floppy disk drive disable program ever. |
| Displcon | Display an icon from the CLI without Workbench loaded. |
| DL | Very small directory lister. Two column with size and total. |
| Dolcon | Execute a script from an icon's tootype. |
| DStrip | Strips away unreadable characters from a file leaving text. |
| Dute | Disk Utility. Edit sectors, view bitmap, etc. |
| DViewer | Picture Viewer with requester and powerpacker capability. |
| FreeMap | Remove unused keymaps from memory. |
| LangtonAnt | Chris Langton's Ant. from Scientific America. |
| LottoEval | Evaluate your favourite lotto numbers in thousands of draws. |
| Membar | Graphically Avail with fragmentation indicators. |
| MemLook | Graphically look at memory and rebuild lost pictures. |
| MenuFix4.4 | Modify command keys for menu's from a script file. |
| PPDC | Powerpacker decruncher for data files. |
| RndXOX | Random Noughts and crosses. Not as easy as you may think. |
| Shadow | CLI text hack. |
| SprClock | Clock using 4 sprites to display time and date. |
| Sprite4la | 16 colour 32 pixel wide animated sprites which gravity bounce. |
| STR2.0 | Allows viewing and modification of 70 system structures. |
| Ucop | Copper list loader which allows simple picture display. |
| UltWait | Ultimate Ask, Wait and Echo - 3 in one! |
| WBButs | 4 character wide list of gadgets for easy program starting. |
| BrbrBlack | Turns on a black border outside the front screen. |

AUI Extra Utilities

Because there was some space left on this disk, we've added some more utilities. We just can't bring ourselves to leave space!

ShowSys

Like CheckSys, but this command will report the configuration instead of checking for it.

Metric and Ascii

Metric is a command for converting between the imperial measurements we in Britain are used to with those pesky metric thingies that Napoleon foisted on us.

Ascii is a command useful for programmers, reporting the ASCII value of characters.

ShowFile

This utility will check directories and report each file and the type of file it is. Especially useful for badly described picture files (Is it a GIF? A JPEG? etc).

SuperDisk Scripts

As ever the scripts that control the SuperDisks are supplied for the expert users and nosey people who need to know where files are, what they are called and how it all works.

Note: AUIAPR95b may take longer to install than the other disks because of the time required to de-archive multiple files.

CheckSys

This CLI command will check your system configuration and report if certain parameters are met. It's very useful for scripts, should you want to load certain programs depending on the system, eg. 68000 or 68020 versions.

DirMenu

This utility will allow you to launch your favourite programs from a pop-up menu. You can configure it to launch text readers if you select a text file, or to view pictures via a viewer, etc.

Simply select the hotkey and the menu will pop up, you can work through directories and subdirectories and choose any file. You must configure this program to use your own particular utilities. It requires the whatis.library (in the directory) to be in your SYS:libs drawer. Read the guide for full information.

Dion's Disk

I've been collecting AUI for a couple of years and it has become one of the only decent publications lately. Usually I will check what has been included with a magazine before purchase. With AUI, however, no checking is needed.

Enjoying the magazine as I do, I thought it time I contributed something in an effort to maintain your superiority. On this disk (if you've not looked already) are 35 programs I have written.

All programs and files on this disk are copyright Dion Vingerhoets 94-95.

AUI APR95b

The Top Utilities Disk

AUI is always pleased to get contributions to our coverdisks and we're happy that many more people are sending their programs to us. Some make the grade, some don't. This month we were delighted to receive a disk from Dion Vingerhoets - with 35 programs on it - and the right to distribute the whole lot. Thanks, Dion. Let's hand over to him.

DIRECTORY DESCRIPTION OF FILE WITHIN

AFSLMB	Auto fire for the Left Mouse Button.
ALIEN2.5	2K! Space Invaders.
AltClose	Hack to give an alternate close gadget to Workbench windows.
AutoInsert	Auto Execute specific commands when marked disks are inserted.
BIO	Check out you BioRhythms from a graphical display.
BootClock	BootButs 9 character wide gadget list for boot disk menus.
CLIFreq	File requester for easy access to files from CLI/Shell.
CLIONLY	Title bar with message for non-Workbench programs with icons.
DAVClock	One very small titlebar clock.
DeepBench	Convert WorkBench to 512 lines non-interlaced "on the fly".
DF0Busy	Make a disk "Busy" and (temporarily)

There comes a time in everyone's life when they think "Is it big enough? Is it fast enough?" The answer, whether it's floppy or hard, is always "No". What can you do? Rip it out and get a better one? Expensive and like saying goodbye to an old friend. No the pain is too much.

Well, the answer is here! Your drives can be revitalised with the help of **AUI**. This month's second *Essentials* collection provides the best utilities for your disk drive since Noah said "It looks like rain."

AUI APR95c

The Disk Users' Essentials Disk No.1

ReOrg 3.11

If you write to your disk often, you'll end up copying over files, deleting and changing them quite a lot. This will mean that your disks, whether floppy or hard, will become very fragmented, with files spread over different sectors.

ReOrg will optimize your disks, organising them so that there is no fragmentation and thus speeding up disk accessing. This is the latest version and has some very powerful options, such as graphical display of fragmentation.

One of the most impressive features (and one that beats its commercial rivals) is the recognition of non-standard disks. ReOrg will even optimize diskspare disks (such as SuperDisk No.56).



The most impressive optimizer we've seen.

ABackup

If you've valuable data on your hard drive, you'll want to back it up. Of course, you could do this by manually copying the files onto disks, but they'd fit badly and you'd soon get sick of dragging them across on WorkBench. ABackup is a system that will transfer your data to disks in a variety of ways. You can simply transfer it or back it all up using a variety of packing methods. Either use the default or set it to use lha (if you don't have lha, you can find it in the C: directory on SuperDisk No.55) or make use of the XPK libraries if you have them.

Whatever you use, ABackup is friendly and efficient.

DiskSalv 2

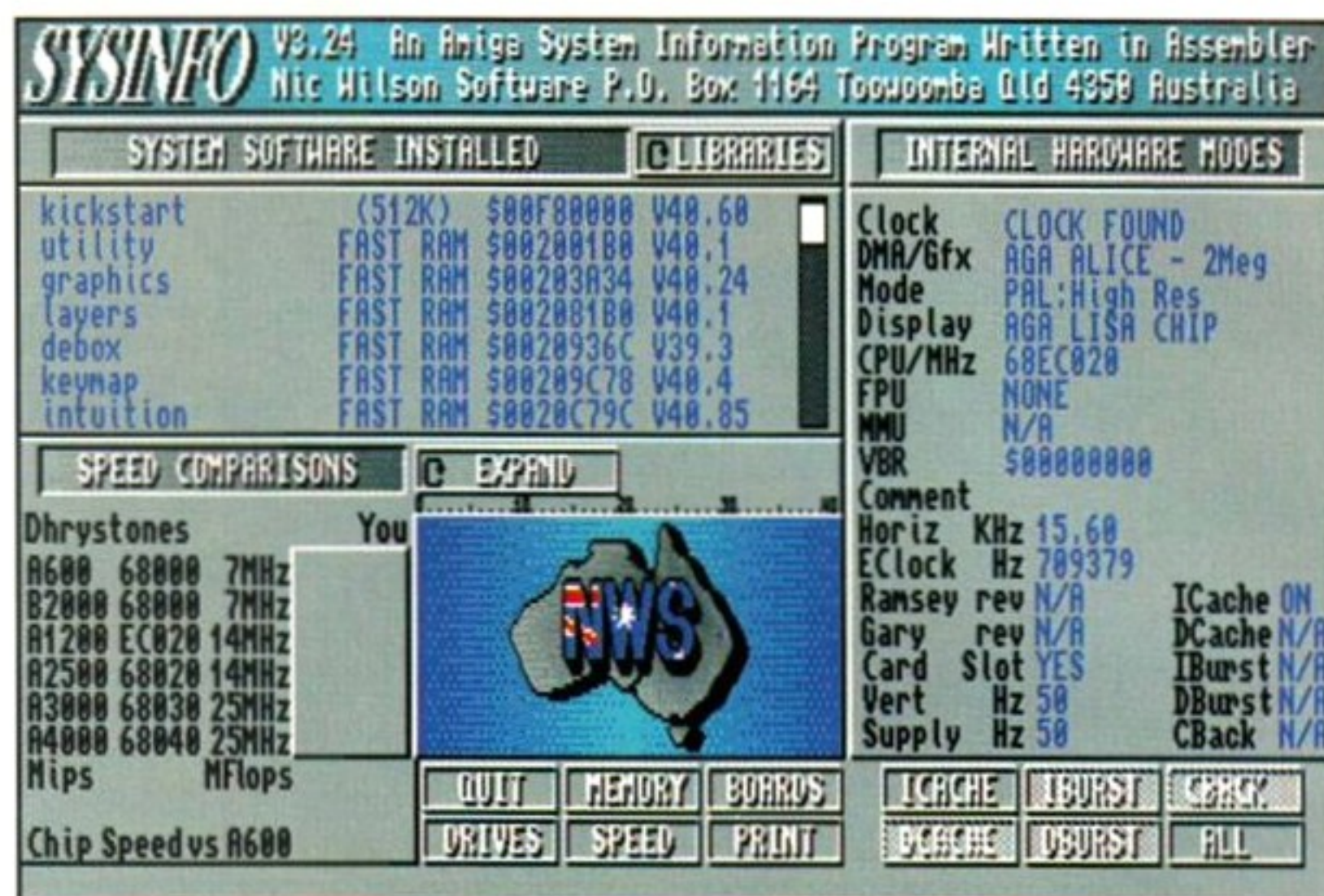
Arggh! You deleted that file by mistake. Arggh! My disk's been corrupted.

DiskSalv 2 is the solution. When a file is deleted, the data is not actually destroyed, so a good program (and DiskSalv is considered one of the best) should be able to trace it and restore it. If you've disks with bad sectors and deleted files, then DiskSalv is the answer to your prayers.



Keep your blood pressure under control, DiskSalv 2 will restore your data.

SuperDisks No.55 & No. 56



Just how fast am I? Let's find out.

This utility is essential for anyone who uses their Amiga often and who isn't perfect. (Not many of us left who are!)

Artic

There are several disk stacker type programs available for the Amiga. Most however are quite complex and require a separate partition on your hard drive.

Artic is easy to install and will mount a pseudo-disk from any directory on your hard drive.

Once it's installed, everything you save to that "drive" will be packed invisibly. Look at a text file in Protext and it states the full size. Eh? Ah, but take a look behind the scenes and you'll find that it's being fooled. The file is much smaller. This system can increase the capacity of your hard drive by up to fifty percent.

This version is optimized for 020 use and will not handle files larger than 100K. But when you've seen what it can do, you'll want to register. See the docs for details.

AUI APR95d

The Disk Users' Essentials Disk No.2

SuperDuper 3.13

Let's be honest, nobody is a great fan of DiskCopy. It functions, but it's slow,

especially for single drive owners. SuperDuper is a blindingly fast disk duplicator. It will work for people with multiple drives, but can also buffer very quickly, making disk copying on single drive systems faster too.

The meter will show you how it progresses and you can perform other disk tasks, such as formatting from this program too.

SysInfo 3.24

Whenever you read a review of a disk drive, you'll tend to see some speed figures quoted. How do we get these? Well, one of the programs people use is this one, SysInfo. Not only will it give you disk speeds as well as the drive devices (very useful), it will run a full diagnostic of your system, comparing your whole system speed with that of other models.

SysInfo is one of the most "professional" packages around.

AFCopy

Windows on the PC has a program called FileManager. It is truly awful. In comparison, the Amiga has Directory Opus and its clones, which often outstrip the original nowadays, that are awesome.

AFCopy will allow you to manage your files, view files, hear files, etc. In fact, do pretty much anything with your files.

This version is the standard one which will work on any Amiga from A1500+ up, but does require the reqtools.library. This has been included many times before, but there is not, unfortunately room to include it again. If you don't have reqtools.library in

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NAME:

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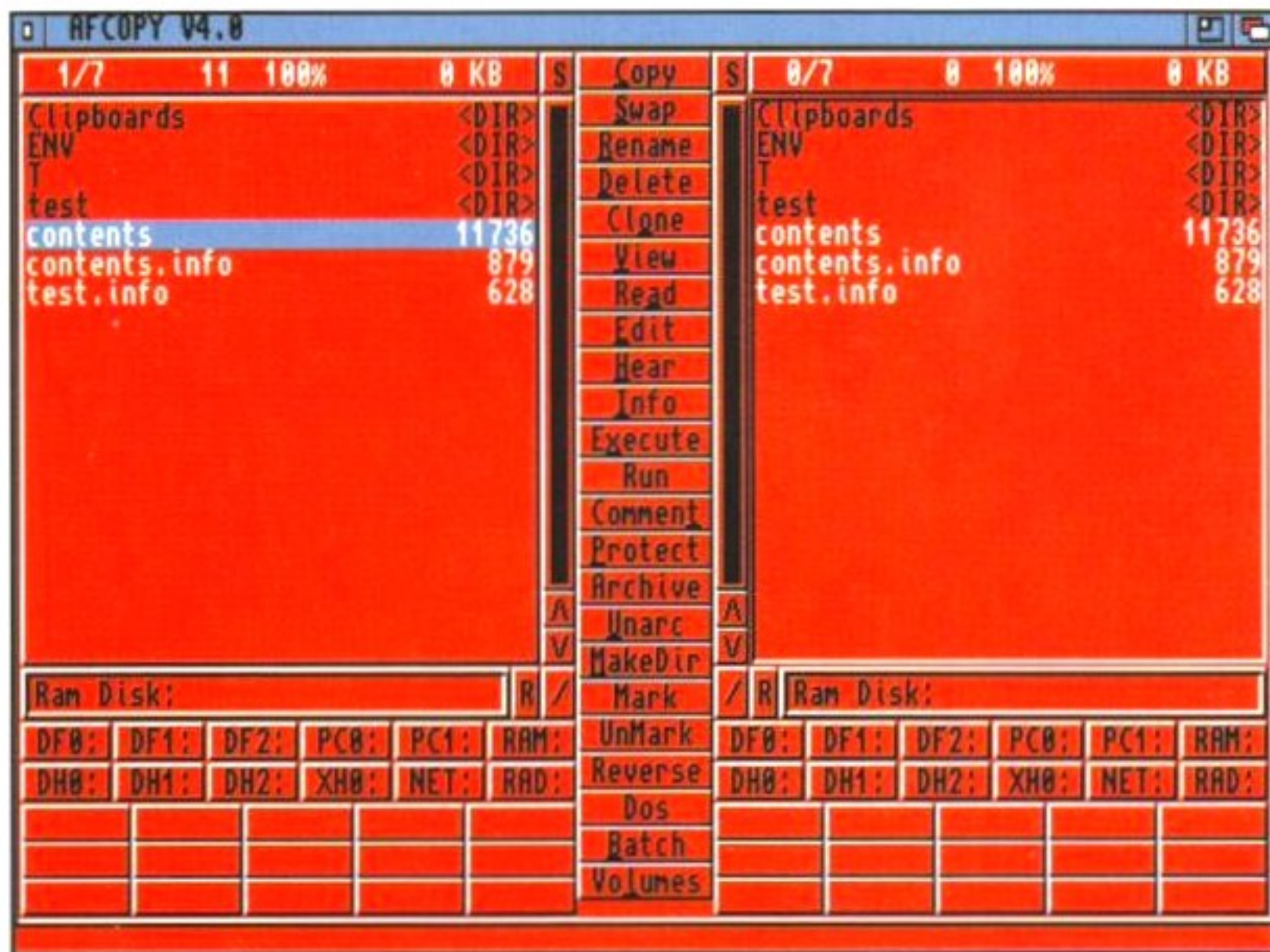
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Let's get this disk in order.

your libs: drawer, copy it off an earlier SuperDisk or contact your local PD library. They should also have versions of AFcopy that are optimized for other processor speeds, such as 020.

A-Lock

If you have disks or a hard disk and you're sick of coming back to find your siblings have wrecked them, then you'll be glad to get password protection. A-Lock is very versatile. You can put it into your WBStartup drawer, so that your system is locked when you boot, until the password is entered, or start it later, when you want to leave your computer for a while (ideal for if you want to leave it demo-ing or multitasking without been mutilated - or if you're popping for a coffee).

Once started, you need to type in your password to use the computer again. The password is chosen by you and entered into the icon information. Brilliant.

AntiCicloVir

Nobody likes getting ill and viruses on your computer are as much of a pain as they are in your body. This virus checker will scan disk and keep an eye on any that are inserted. Should it pick one up that has a problem, it will let you know. So sleep easier in your bed, keep this on your system. If only a cure for the common cold were as simple!

FF (FileFind)

If you have a hard disk, it suddenly becomes very easy to lose files. FF can find your lost files and direct you to them. What if you can't remember the proper name? Well, it will support wild

cards and find files that match your needs. It's simple to use and, well, just wonderful.

SmartCache

Have you noticed how much disk activity goes on every time you access your floppy drives? SmartCache can cut down on the number of times it accesses the drive, saving you time and wear and tear on the drive. All you sacrifice is a bit of memory. It's a godsend for floppy drive users.

Single File

Multiple libraries, multiple files, duplicate data, all of this takes up valuable space on your drives. Single File will scan the disks and find these duplicates and report them for you, giving you the full path. You can then chase these up and delete the necessary files.

AUI APR95e

The Great Games Disk

This disk contains four games and also a utility to help take care of your gaming needs, as well as some additional samples for use with QuadraComposer on AUIAPR95a.

Insectoids from Outer Space

After all that, a little light relief, methinks. Well, how about a good old fashioned blast. Insectoids is a colourful

Galaxians clone with some extra gameplay thrown in for good measure. Destroy the aliens, dodge the asteroid belts, you don't need instructions, just get blasting.

By the way, if you've installed this disk to use the samples in the samples directory on this disk, you could make use of the noises this game has. Try loading some of the samples from the data directory.

Pong

This is a recreation of the original video game, where two players play bat and ball across the screen, trying to score points. Go on, have a laugh and recall the (bad?) old times..

GameStor

Last, but by no means least is GameStor. If you play games, you'll be



Blast them away to your heart's content.

Poing!

There are quite a few BreakOut clones available. This is one of the most compact though. Control your paddle with the mouse and bounce the ball around the walls to destroy the tiles. Move through the levels and have fun. One of the most addictive games ever designed.

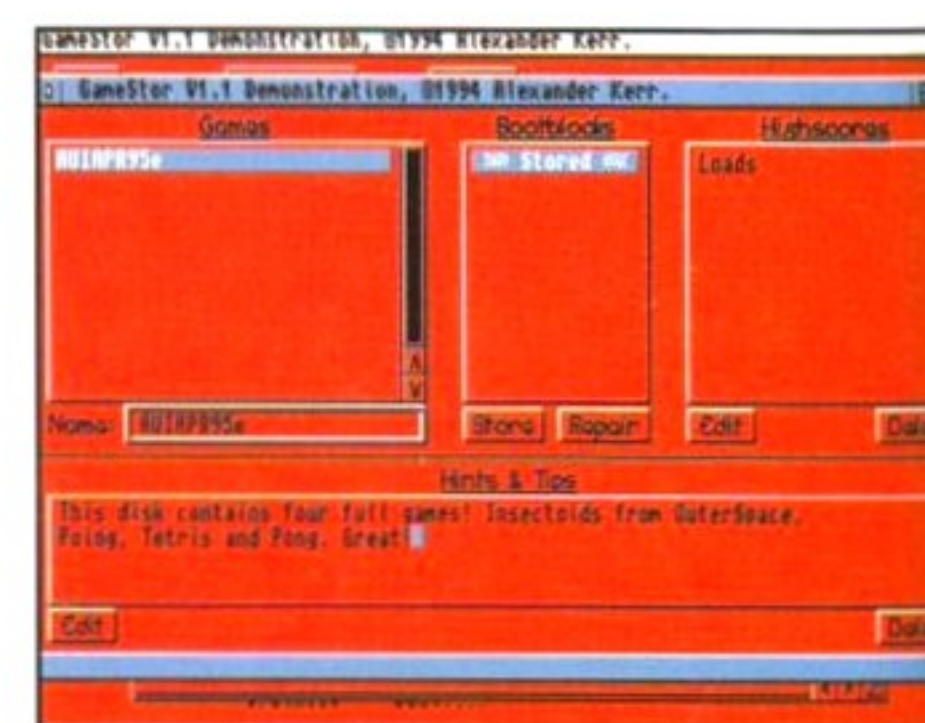
Tetris

This is a Workbench version of the classic puzzle game. Load it through WorkBench. It requires the icon.library (in directory) to be copied to the SYS:Libs drawer (on your WorkBench disk).

In case you somehow don't know the point of Tetris, different shaped blocks will fall down the screen. These blocks should be moved and fitted together to form horizontal lines. Fill the line and it will disappear. The idea is to stop the blocks piling up to the top of the screen. To help, the shape of the next block to be dropped is displayed in the bottom left of the screen.

pleased with this utility. Before you game players hiss, wait. GameStor is a database that can keep track of your highscores, tips and cheats. More importantly, it will make a backup of the bitmap of games disks.

The bitmap is the part of the disk that stores all the important data, without which the disk won't work - it's also the part that viruses attack. This is normally a risk you have to take as games are normally non-DOS disks. GameStor will solve these problems for you.



A utility for games players? Yup, GameStor is for you.



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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?

Now to de-archive the programs, you'll need to unpack the archives. Each archive, such as AUI APR95a-a.lha contains an archive, called archive.lha. You'll need to de-archive this. To see the syntax of lha, type "lha ?", with the correct path, such as Superdisk55:c/" if applicable. Doing something like, Superdisk55:archives/auipr95a-a.lha ram:" followed by "lha x ram:archive.lha df0:" 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 APR95b) 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. GO8 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...

Note that some of the authors don't want anything more than a postcard from you so they can see how far their programs have travelled. So, why not make their day. After all, they made yours.

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 laugishing 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.



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Quiet Please
National Computer Offer

Page 17

Compatibly Zappo
Sony Takes The Lead
Sony Takes Giant Capacity
Leap
Quad Speed Under £200
Spiderman In Soho!
Gremlin's Full Motion
Future

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Quotes Of The Month
Siren Upgrades
Games For All Ages
ICPUG's Free PD
Top 20 Titles
Ace Comes Clean
Cinemas On Line
No Fears

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OpalPaint In Video
HP At Fault
7 Gig CD-ROM
Getting The Hang Of New
Technology
Compaq Profits Soar

Page 22

Sony Clears The Decks
Just A Load Of Bull?
Digital Paper
Lay It On Me
Photogenics Upgrade

Page 24

One Stop Multimedia
Yorks Pops Cork!
Cashless Society?
Samsung's Plants Grow!
AMD and Intel Ceasefire
Saturnalia Plus
Technology
Knight In Opal Armour

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Lexmark Leap Into 1200dpi
Premier Vision Brings
Them In
Reward For Whistle
Blowers
Think Again
Render Bender

Page 27

In Your Face
Wavemaker
Wavelink
Spotlight 1995
Who gives an IntOS? We do!
Don't Play It Again, Uncle
Sam



Quiet Please

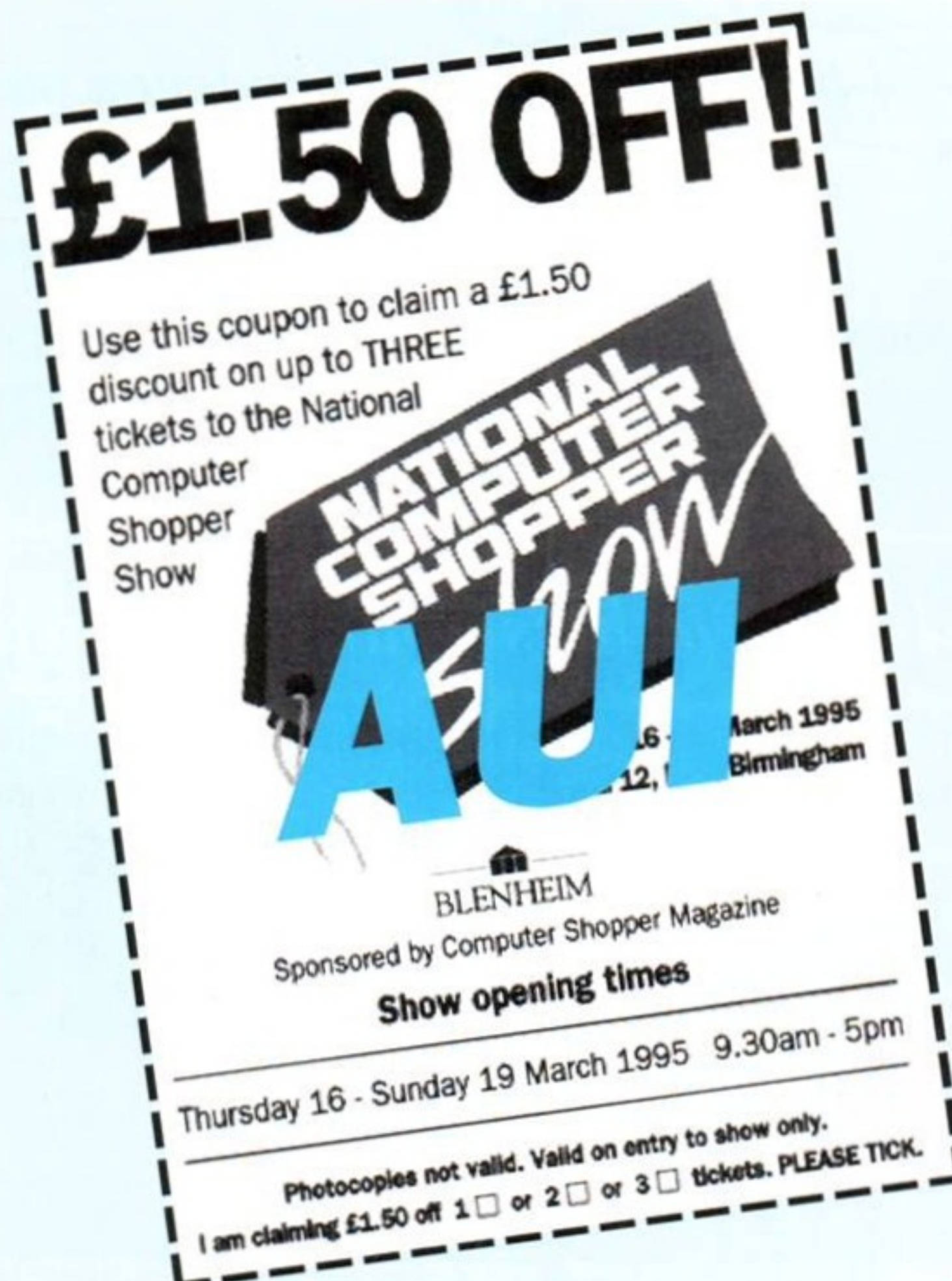
Panasonic set out to produce a low cost, robust, economic, but above all quiet printer and have come up with a 24-pin matrix model which they have named, very cleverly, the KX-P2135 QuietPrinter.

Designed, they say, for home, school or small business use, the 360 x 360 dpi QuietPrinter includes 7 colour printing,

a set-up disk and a 20 sheet cut sheet feeder. The print parameters are controlled from the front panels or the set-up disk which gives an on-screen display. The operating noise of the quietPrinter technology is claimed to be 43.5 dBA in super-quiet mode and it can operate at speeds of up to 250cps. Priced £189.00. A contribution to the reduction of noise pollution is always to be welcomed...

Contact: Panasonic Business Systems, Panasonic House, Willoughby Road, Bracknell Berks. RG12 8FP. Tel: 0500 404041.

SSShhh. Can you hear it printing?

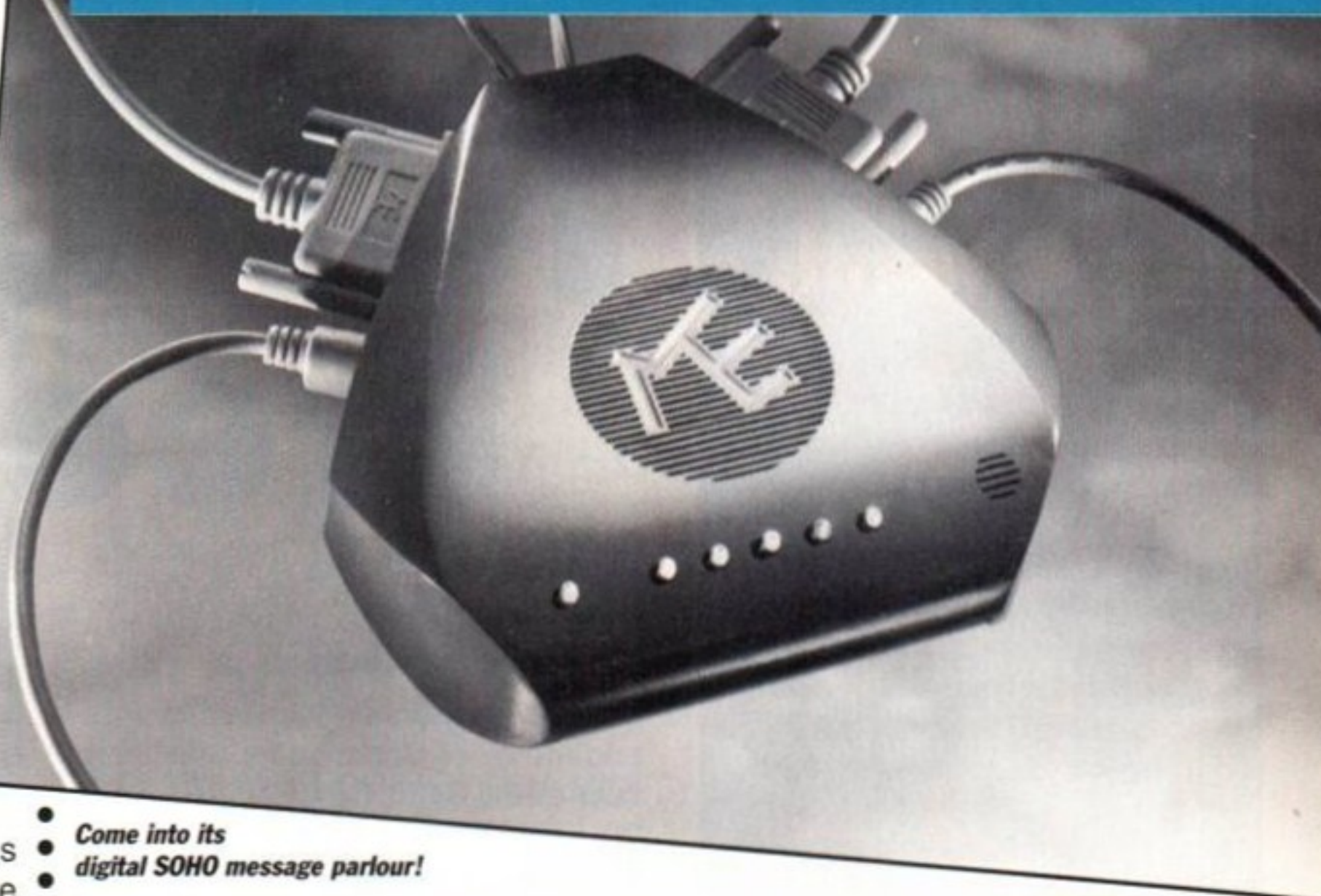


Those nice people at Blenheim Exhibitions would be delighted to see huge numbers of Amiga users at the National Computer Show at the NEC in Birmingham. So they've given us this special coupon to include in this issue of **AUI** although it's a bit late. But this **AUI** should hit the streets at the beginning of March so there's still time for you to take advantage of the reduction in the entry charge.

Compatibly Zappo

The Zappo (A1200) compatibility list of Amiga CD32/CDTV titles version 2 is available and can be ordered by phone. All titles on the list are said to be compatible with the Zappo, Overdrive and Archos branded drives. The listed titles, which include games from big names, such as Mindscape, Psygnosis and Gremlin, are, say Zappo, available and in stock. The list covers games, edutainment, arts, leisure and reference. PD titles and utilities are listed separately and accessories such as Amiga mice and Amiga joystick can also be ordered, Zappo says.

**Contact : Capri CD distribution,
Capri House, 9 Dean Street, Marlow Bucks, SL7 3AA.
Tel: 0628 891022.**



Sony Takes The Lead

According to independently researched figures published by RomTec, Sony now leads the way in the UK monitor market. Figures are researched from a panel of approximately 350 dealers who are said to be representative of the whole trade market. Recent figures in May 1994 put Sony at the top of the league with 21% share due, Sony claims to their strong position in the 17" and 20" market. The latest figures, based on trade sales in the year to September 1994, show an even more positive trend, Sony being the fastest growing vendor, with a market share for the year of 11% compared to the previous year of 6.5%. Sony could now claim to be real screen stars...

and Sony

Takes Giant Capacity Leap!

Sony are claiming another technological breakthrough with the impending release of a 3.5" format rewritable optical disc system. Each single sided disc can carry 650 Mbytes, the same capacity as current CD-ROMs. The maximum capacity presently available for MO discs is 230 MBytes, with 128 MBytes still being popular. (As we well know having just acquired a 230 MO drive only to find its compatible with nobody else in the publishing business!) However, the demand for even higher capacities is being driven by the requirement to back up even larger hard discs and the need to transfer large amounts of data in applications such as desk top pub-

lishing, graphic imaging and document storage. Multimedia applications are also a force as they become more popular and widespread in many consumer and business applications. The new drive, which meets standard specifications agreed by Sony, Hitachi and 3M, is said to incorporate a number of new technological developments. The direct overwrite capacity, specially developed for Sony MD Data, gives a real boost in performance compared with conventional MO operation, says Sony.

Quad Speed Under £200

Upgrade specialist Datrontech is now shipping NEC's new Quad-X IDE CD-ROM drive with a suggested retail price of less than £200.00. According to the Datronech, it is the fastest quad speed IDE CD-ROM drive available.

**Contact: Datrontech on
01252 313155.**

GREMLIN'S FULL MOTION FUTURE

Gremlin Interactive, Sheffield's answer to Hollywood, have told AUI that they have bought "state-of-the-art motion capture facility which will enable the company to gear up for the next generation machines." The Motion analysis system which they claim is even more advanced than that which produced the dazzling effects in the movie Jurassic Park, is said to be one of only two in the UK and will be used to provide more realistic movement in forthcoming releases, according to Gremlin.

The motion performance capture system was originally developed for

**Come into its
digital SOHO message parlour!**

Spiderman in Soho!

Personal message centre products such as SpiderMan, which combine a digital telephone answering machine, fax/data modem and fax storage and printing in one unit, will be the "catalyst for further explosive growth in the fast-moving SoHo market", according to Swiss comms specialists Martignoni Electronics. (Let's hope the explosive growth doesn't happen while you are using them!).

A recent report on the SoHo market - that is "Small Office, Home Office" not the restaurant and night in London - for desktop computing peripherals by IDC showed a 45% rise in PC sales across Europe in 1993, with a equal increase in printer sales. However, Martignoni Electronics claims that the market is still being held back by the lack of effective solutions to typical communications problems such as missed calls and faxes, which are problems supposedly solved by the new

generation of comms products such as SpiderMan.

ME's international sales manager Bart Corver told AUI that "The comms products available now are not aimed at SoHo users - they create as many problems as they solve. For example, if you want to receive faxes with a fax modem you must leave your PC switched on all the time. What we are doing with SpiderMan is making comms into a commodity like TVs or VCRs. With it people can turn their printers into fax machines and handle all their communications on one phone line without complications". Oh really!

For more info on how Spiderman can come to the rescue of your communications,

**Contact Martignoni Electronics on
041 1 273 1111 or 0625 521966**

gearing up to use the applications for Motion Analysis within video games due to be released in 1995.

Longtime games players might remember that a primitive version of the same idea was used to create a golf game by a company called Access many years ago. It made, even on the C64, a great improvement in the smoothness of the movement of the swing by having a real player videoed and the action transferred to computer graphics. The system that Gremlin have bought probably cost a damn sight more than the video camcorders used by Access though.

“Quotes of the Month”

“The Internet is far from friendly and straightforward for the inexperienced. The system is set for rapid growth and these newcomers are going to need help”. Steve Franklin, One Stop Software.

“We’ll never see the retailer replaced by on-line services. People like to shop in stores and talk face to face with people. But there are the ‘time poor and cash rich’ who don’t have time to shop. There’s lots of room for a wider diversity,” says Tessa Kerney, European Sales and Marketing Manager, Apple OnLine Services.

Steve Franklin, erstwhile MD of Commodore UK, now there’s a name from the past... But he has always been very well-regarded for his commercial acumen and he rightly sees that many will find the Internet a formidable problem for novices and not the easy way to world communication that some pundits have been predicting.

But we love the “time poor and cash rich” idea. Generally we have been just the opposite... We’ve also heard that shopping has become an end in itself for those whose weekday life is so stressed that they can’t even slow down on Sunday and need to go shopping then so they don’t fall into depression. The comparatively slow pace of the Internet won’t be much good for those strung out supermarketers, will it?

ICPUG’s Free PD

Members of ICPUG (the Independent Commodore Products Group) can have a wide choice of Public Domain programs which cover the full range of Amiga computers, PC clones and the older Commodore machines such as the C128, C64, Plus 4 and VIC 20, ICPUG’s head honcho and sometimes **AUI** writer, John Bickerstaff has revealed. This service is free of charge when members provide the floppy disk and cover the postage.

For Amiga owners there are the

Fred Fish library of 1000 disks, the Scope library of 253 disks and ICPUG’s own Amiga library of more than 270 disks containing 1250 programs. In addition, there are specialist libraries for animations, graphics demos and Amos programs. Also ICPUG distributes a regular journal to its members. There are technical helplines and discounts available too.

Contact: Alan Pfeil, Stanwell House, Botson Lane, West Kingsdown, Sevenoaks, Kent. TN15 6BN.

TOP 20 TITLES

Absent but still in the frame... Gallup’s Home computer games charts, show the Amiga still topping the board, or rather screen. The Amiga versions of Sensible World of Soccer on the Renegade label, is in first place. US Gold’s Winter Olympics for the Amiga, second, and Theme Park from Bullfrog lies third. Piracy? No Amigas in the shops? Big advertising spends from Nintendo and Sega? Forget it! The Amiga is still a presence to be reckoned with in the games market in the UK.

SIREN UPGRADES

Siren have told **AUI** that their Speedcom+BF 28800 modem has been upgraded to support V34 as well as the V. Fast protocol, but

the Speedcom+BF supports both for maximum flexibility. All their modems include “RS232 cable, UK power supply, UK telephone cable, full instructions” (That’s lucky, we do hate partial instructions!)

Also included is a “getting started guide,” as opposed to getting finished, comms software and a 12 month warranty.

With 3 models in the range, the Speedcom+B priced at £119.99 operates at speeds up to 14,400bps (V.32bis), the Speedcom+ET priced at £149.99 has a maximum speed of 19,200bps (V.32terbo) and the Speedcom+Bf priced at £199.99 has a top speed of 28,800bps.

Contact: Siren Software, 178 Bury New Road, Whitefield, Manchester M45 6QF. Tel: 0161 796 5279.



Siren’s Speedcom upgraded.

Games for All Ages

Under ELSPA’s 1994 age rating system, (that doesn’t mean that you had to be born that year!) 80% of video games have been rated as suitable for all ages by the Video

Standards Council. Only 1% were rated in the 18+ category. (And is the remaining 19% only suitable for 60 year olds and over we wonder?)

ACE Comes Clean

Hard-core porn distributor, ACE, has admitted it broke the law by selling uncertificated full motion CDs at UK trade and consumer shows last year. All CDs containing full motion video have to be certificated by the British Board of Film Classification before being allowed for sale in the UK.

ACE’s sales manager Pim van Rijn, said that the Netherlands-based company sold the goods “under the table”. (Surely it should have been under the bed where most portn is kept!) “We only manage to sell stuff at the shows”, said Van Rijn, “although we do regularly advertise in the UK for distributors, we have not signed a deal with one yet”. (Any offers? Leisuresoft would seem a perhaps inappropriate name.)

ACE has now had to tone down its trade adverts which featured pictures of topless women. (Some say they look more top heavy than top less. A matter worth closer consideration?)

Cinemas On Line

A dozen Los Angeles cinemas will soon receive their movies over phone lines as part of a pioneering technology trial that is intended to avoid the need for physical film print distribution. California’s telecommunications company Pacific Bell is teaming up with Alcatel Network systems, a Texan offshoot of Acatel Alstom, the world’s largest manufacturer of communications equipment, to test the digital transmission of high definition movies from Hollywood studios directly to the cinemas over fibre-optic lines.

Sony, which has poured millions into the development of high definition technology, is expected to participate in the pilot programme, supplying digitally-compressed movies from its Columbia and TriStar studios.

No Fears

Last month, SuperDisk No. 54 contained a demonstration of the game Fears. It was the best Doom clone we’d seen on the Amiga. There were details of a fuller version available from the authors. Although this is available, you’ll be interested to know that Fears has been so successful that it has apparently been snatched up by a games company (no name supplied, very hush hush). The full commercial Fears should be available soon and will, we understand, have full screen action and an option to link two computers head to head.

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OTHER TOP TITLES

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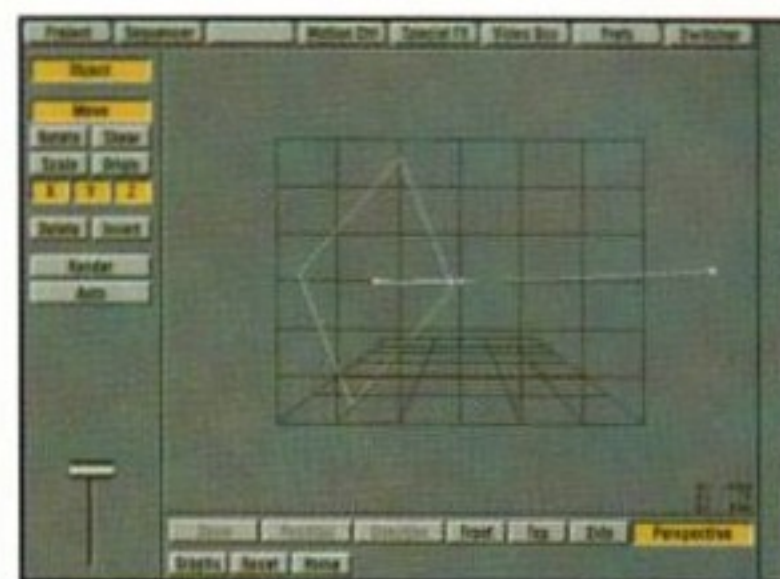
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OpalPaint in Video



Long awaited video module now arriving?

OpalPaint now has a video module that is said to offer "all the necessary tools to create video productions in an individual way," according to Opalvision. The programmable digital

video effects software includes instant previews of any effect and allows new effects types to be added later.

The new module is said to handle both true perspective and pseudo-per-

spective DVEs and has an interactive 3D interface for "move, rotate, scale and shear video or video segments. Most effects and all previews are done in real time."

OpalPaint now includes full 32-bit video painting and has a range of drawing tools and modes, texture mapping and colour and transparency gradients.

HP at Fault

Hewlett Packard admits that it has shipped around 1.5 million faulty printers worldwide, and is sending retailers a fact sheet telling them how to fix the fault.

HP says it doesn't know how many customers are affected in the UK but industry sources say that it is probably 'thousands'. The fault is with HP DeskJet and DeskWriter 510 and 520 and HP DeskJet 550C and 560C printers produced between June 1993 and March 1994. Due to a failure of HP's inkjet mechanism the printers 'do not consistently pick up paper from the tray'. HP says that systems have already been retrieved from retailers, but that there are still printers sold to customers that

GETTING THE HANG OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

A survey from Equifax Europe Marketing Services has identified that British consumers are no longer suffering from technophobia. Professionals working from home, students and housewives are using computers to keep accounts, databases and for wordprocessing.

The survey on Personal Computer Hobbyists by Equifax has identified

users in categories of 'Corporate Rising Stars, Sophisticated Successful Cosmopolitans, Young Military Families and Northern Provincial Students'. Wow! That covers most of us doesn't it! Based on that "representative sample", we now know that personal computing is a 'major past-time throughout the UK'. Oh really? We also know that consumers in Aberdeen, Inverness,

Oxford and Swindon particularly favour the world of home computing. Credit and loan facility users in Edinburgh, Cambridge, Guildford, Plymouth, Crewe, Milton Keynes, Reading and Hemel Hemsted also reflect a high proportion of consumers owning a personal computer.

This information may be thought to be useful to marketing managers but perhaps they could have told us in which of these towns these people were spending their free time playing computer games to fill their leisure hours and what's lacking in their lives? We would then remember not to move there - unless we knew how many Amigas there were.

they have not traced. HP is issuing a free Paper Feed Cleaning Kit - really just some adhesive patches! - which HP claim allows users to clean and restore their own paper feed. HP's free customer phone number is 0800 387125.

7 Gig CD-ROM!

Sony (gosh, there is a lot about them in NewsFile this month and, no, we haven't bought shares in the company - but maybe we should?) and Philips have proposed specifications for extending CD-ROM standards. The 12cm multimedia CD Plus will be available to store 3.7Gb five times that of cur-

rent CD-ROMs. This is equivalent to more than two hours of MPEG-2 video with accompanying audio and subtitles. A further project with 3M will take the disk to 7.4Gb. Seven gigs plus on one CD-ROM! It sounds like science fiction. But then so would CD-ROM multimedia a few years ago.

Compaq Profits Soar

Compaq are officially Number One in the expanding PC market.

Eckhard Pfeiffer, Compaq's boss, has been delighted to announce that the company has had "an excellent fourth quarter and outstanding year" with a reported sales increase up 51% and profits up 88%.

"Compaq's push past the \$10 billion sales mark is due to the diligent and spirited performance of Compaq employees all over the world" he said. "Our customers have responded to the challenge of leadership in customer satisfaction innovation and product quality", he enthused.

In 1994, Compaq became the largest supplier of personal computers in the world fuelled by its jump to number one in the worldwide desktop PC market. The company took the number one position with 10% market share, according to research company International Data Corporation figures. The achievement is helped by Compaq's record number of new products, the company's employees, its products and strategies, according to Pfeiffer. How refreshing for a C.E. to publicly congratulate his workforce. Let's hope they too have a share of the company's success.

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Sony Clears the Decks

Sony - whose name seems to fill our pages these days - has dumped a load of cartridges from their video games company onto the market at practically give away prices. Why, we hear you, cry? The story is that a million cartridges have been booted out to make way for their PlayStation's European launch supposedly to take place next September.

The cartridges have been offered to UK and European retailers at drastically reduced prices and even include recent releases such as Mega Turrican for the MegaDrive. Sources say that the whole range of video games did not sell well over Christmas. Others on offer are Double Dragon 5, Legend, Troy Aikman American Football and Charles Barker Shut Up (Is that some sort of conversation stopper?) and Jam Basketball are going for £8.50 - quite a reduction from the RRP of between £45 and £55.

Sony however, are saying that "the company is still fully committed to support Sega and Nintendo platforms with top level platforms! "Oh really?



The theme for Bullfrog's new game is cash.

Just a Load of Bull?

No sooner had Electronic Arts publicly stated that no discussions were taking place about a take over of the successful Bullfrog development house than it was announced that the \$400 million US games giant had agreed to buy the UK developer Bullfrog in a share swap deal. Bullfrog has designed hits such as Populous, Theme Park and Magic Carpet which sold well around the world, making them a profit of £1.7 million.

EA have apparently assured Bullfrog that it will operate as a totally autonomous unit remaining in its Guild-

ford base but will take a greater direct publishing control over its products - and the profits too no doubt!

The price for Bullfrog hasn't been announced but we don't think that Pete Molyneux and Co would have taken less than £3 or 4 million. There is big money about these days for bright and creative programmers.

DIGITAL PAPER

4 CC has been developed by Enso Group and Finnish mill, as what they claim to be, state of the art paper for state of the art colour copiers, laser printers and

Lay It On Me

Premier Vision have told AUI of the arrival of Multilayer, a composition and layering tool for video and graphics on the Amiga. Multilayer includes the layering types of zero black, image mapping, luminance keying, chroma keying, chroma-range keying and alpha keying. The resolution can be set from lo-res to full film resolution of 4000 by 4000 pixels and includes a setting for D1. Multilayer is, say Premier Vision, "an essential compositing tool for any animator working in the professional domain". Price £99.00.

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

the latest developments in digital printing machines. 4CC will be sold through Ricoh, the Japanese manufacturer of digital office equipment as their preferred brand.

4CC is an opaque wood-free paper which, say the manufacturers, provides clear images for the highest resolution with true colours. According to Enso's product manager Richard Allin-Jones, the paper is "super-calendared and dimensionally stable to prevent distortion at high temperatures."

So if you work your printer up to red-hot speed and you are feeling in dimensionally stable mood - and we hope you are! - this could be the paper for you.

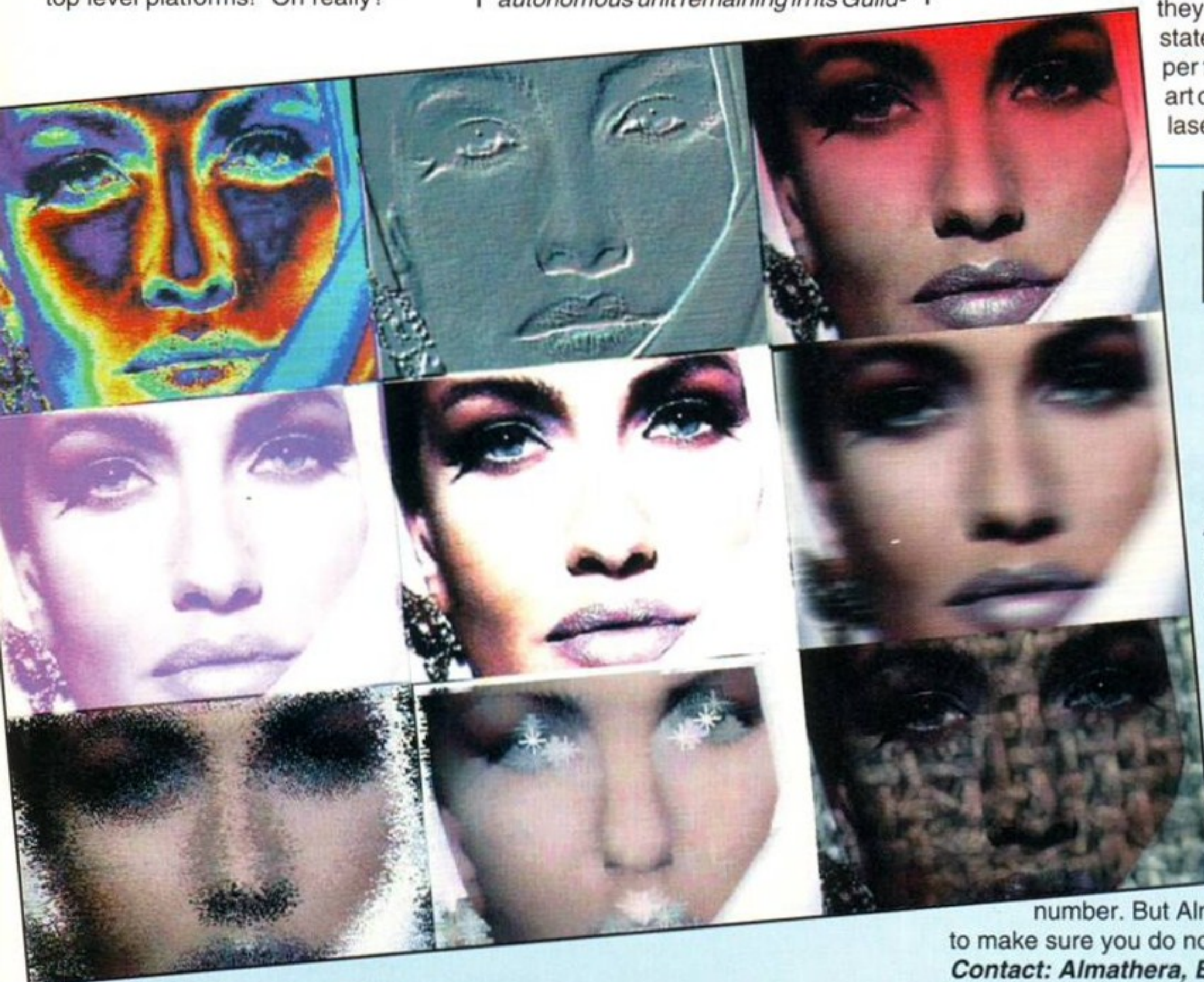
Photogenics Upgrade

Almathera has developed and released an upgrade to their hot new graphics product Photogenics. The 24-bit paint and image manipulation package now upgraded to V1.1a offers, so Almathera told AUI, such new features as any-angle rotation from 0 to 359 degrees, faster blur and new blur types, median filter, stellate paintmode, defocus filter, refract paintmode, offsets for RubThru and enhanced lineart, Emboss and ShiftRGB. Wow! Some upgrade for a product that was reviewed only last month in AUI.

The upgrade is offered free of charge to all registered Photogenics users by sending a 3.5" disk and a stamped addressed disk mailer plus registration

number. But Almathera say you should check your 'About' requester to make sure you do not have 1.1a already.

Contact: Almathera, Boundary Business Court, 92-94 Church Road, Mitcham CR4 3TD. Tel: 0181 687 0040.



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COMMUNICATIONS

23

One Stop Multimedia

Optonica are offering a Multimedia Services Bureau for creative, development and marketing organisations. The company started the bureau in January as a one stop shop for organisations to draw upon Optonica's expertise on multimedia, from a single service to a full start and finish production.

Optonica claims to lead the way in the field of interactive CD backing this claim with their successful products such as Pandora's CD, Insight: Technology and Insight: Dinosaurs. Their software development includes Interplay, the Amiga based multimedia authoring system for interactive CDs on CDTV and CD32.

The services Optonica offers include 2D Graphic Design, 3D Graphic Design, consultancy, 3D/2D digitising, CDXL and MPEG encoding, voice overs, audio sampling and project management.

Contact: Optonica Ltd,
1 The Terrace, High Street,
Lutterworth, Leicestershire
LE17 6A. Tel: 01455 558282.

AMD and Intel Ceasefire

After seven years of accusations and legal action over rights to microprocessor chip technology, Intel and Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) have reached an out of court settlement.

The fight between two of the largest US chipmakers began in 1987 when the companies accused each other of reneging on the terms of a 1982 technology partnership under which they had planned to develop jointly microprocessors and related chips. That referred to the 286,386 and 486 series that Intel has used to establish its domination in the PC chip market.

How, we hear you cry, did AMD ever get into the Intel-invented technology? (We do hear you cry that, don't we?) The interesting reason was that the computer manufacturers to whom Intel supplied the chips - IBM, who once owned a piece of Intel, among them - insisted that Intel appoint a "second manufacturer" so that

they would have security of supply if something nasty happened to Intel.

Intel didn't like it and with its power those days and would probably be able to tell them to go to hell nowadays. But then it chose AMD as an unlikely candidate to compete with them. How wrong can you be?

Neither arbitration nor legal action resolved the dispute as Intel accused AMD of copyright infringement, with AMD bringing an anti-trust case against Intel. Things got nasty when senior executives from both companies traded insults!

Now however, they've made up with Intel granting AMD a perpetual licence to the microcode (internal program instructions) for 386 and 486 microprocessors. AMD have, in return agreed that it has no right to copy other Intel microcode, including the Pentium processor, and any future Intel products. It would make a good film or TV mini series might be appropriate, don't you think?

Saturnalia Plus Technology

Fancy going to a party? There is one in France at the Parc Floral, and yes, you are invited. There will be food, drinks phones and the all important WCs and showers. Even a quiet room if you need to rest. Well, with 8000 'guests' expected you might need some peace and quiet. Besides the party, there is incidentally a computer show next door (with Amigas, C64, (Wow!) PCs, Falcon (is it a bird show?) and other technological attractions) and for 120FF (French money only but about £15 in sterling) you can go to the party and the show.

The Saturne Party II, billed as "the world's largest party" is to take place on 15, 16 and 17 April 1995, and feature giant screens, laser and light show and hi-fi equipment. The media will be there (will we?) and according to the organisers "lots of professionals will be there looking for talented men" (for what?) and to round it up, there is a competition on video tapes. If you are going to be in the mood for a fling a la français, **Contact: Saturne Party III,** 23 rue des Beaux-Regards, 77450 Esbly, France. Tel: 33 1 60019777.

YORKS POPS CORK!

Yorkshire Television and ILP have won the Education Multimedia Award for their CD ROM - World War II. This is the second year running that they have scooped the prestigious EMMA award. The EMMAs are in recognition of significant creative excellence in multimedia and categories include education, music, advertising and publishing.

World War II contains interactive videos, maps and

personal reminiscences which bring the sights, sounds and history of the war to the desktop, according to Yorkshire TV and Interactive Learning Productions. "This award marks our significant contribution and to the growth of education on CD ROM in schools and homes, and it seals our commitment to be leaders in the field of this important growth market for the next century" Fred Grainger, MD of Yorkshire International Thomson Multimedia told AUI.

Cashless Society?

In the unlikely setting of Swindon, Wilts, a large proportion of the population are currently taking part in trials where cash has been replaced by the electronic purse system Mondex. Pioneered by National Westminster Bank, the town is taking part in the experiment to test the system in which payments can be made from one card to another, and cards can be topped up, in the same way as traditional wallets are replenished with cash from machines.

All payments from a 20p bar of chocolate to seriously expensive purchases are paid through Mondex cash which can be kept in circulation indefinitely as it does not use a bank clearing system. Nat West realised that cash was becoming an expensive commodity, and a 'loss leader' but the security

risk in such very smart cards meant that the system has taken several years to develop. Now the cards have inbuilt locking devices so it is said to be safer.

Smart cards are not a new idea. More than a quarter of a century ago the concept of embedding a computer chip in a plastic bank card was patented. Now the Smart card is set to be part of our daily lives with the storage of medical records, pass through road tolls, access pay TV services, improved security in offices and computer networks and replacing loose change from phone boxes.

Some of us, for less than technological reasons, have already experienced the cashless society. Now it's Swindon's turn and no doubt smartie pants cards will it will soon be reaching the parts that other systems cannot.

Samsung's Plants Grow!

Samsung showed the fastest growth among the world's leading semiconductor manufacturers last year, with sales up 61% at \$4.9bn, - a mere matter of around £3 billion - according to a survey from US company Dataquest. This makes it the world's seventh largest producer with a market share of 4.5%.

Spurred on by this, Samsung we hear are considering establishing a semiconductor plant in the US by 1998. The plant may cost up to \$1bn - £600 million - and would produce 16 megabit and 64 megabit dynamic random access memory (D-Ram) chips to meet growing demand in the US, the company's largest export market, and elsewhere too no doubt.

Knight in Opal Armour

White Knight Technology have announced that they are distributing OpalVision products in the UK. They are expecting to add the OpalVision Video Processor module to their list of products when it starts shipping in April.

White Knight offer, what they claim to be, the only PAL standard OpalVision Video Processor set up for demo in their Hertfordshire office.

Where can you see this exciting new development. Ware? Oh don't start that joke again!

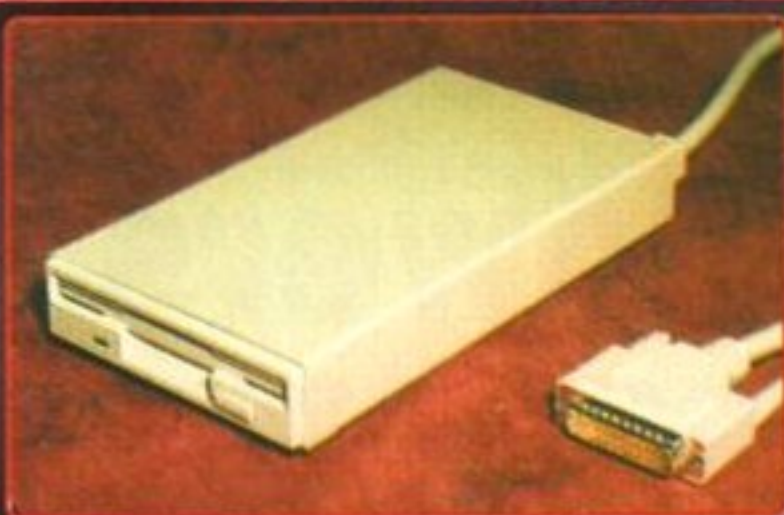
Contact: White Knight Technology, P.O.Box 38, Ware, Herts, SG11 1TX. Tel: 01920 822321.

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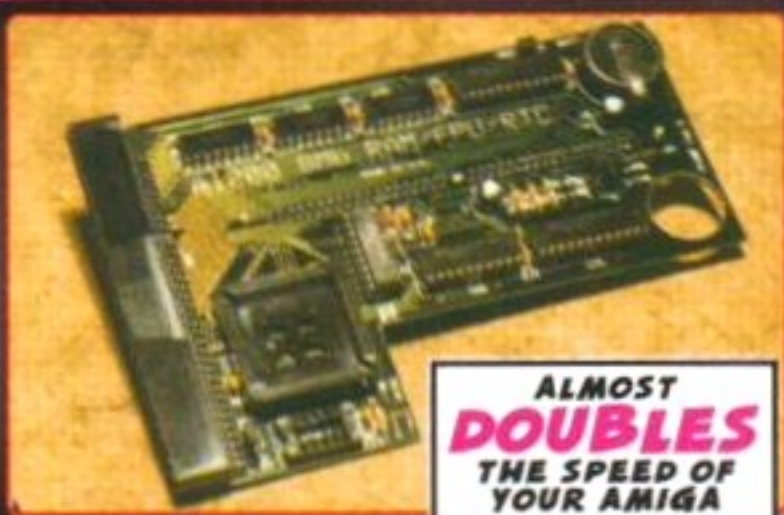
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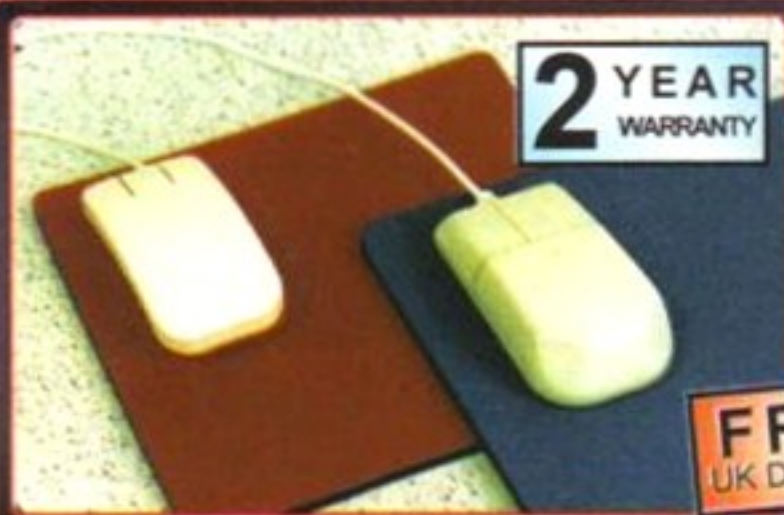
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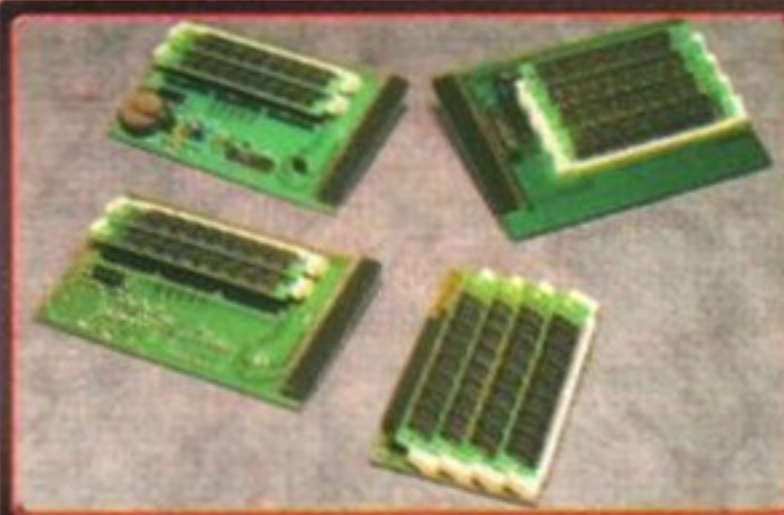
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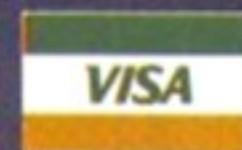
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The new Optra family of 1200 dpi printers.

LEXMARK LEAP INTO 1200dpi

T rue 1200 dpi desktop laser printing has finally arrived thanks to Lexmark, IBM's old printers division.

AUI attended a big-splash media launch at the world famous Groucho Club in London, where Lexmark announced the new "Optra" family of printers.

Lexmark admitted the promotional effort showed they were very eager to gain credit for the achievement of being the first with true 1200 dpi laser printers. They claim their past successes have been ignored.

It's safe to bet that Lexmark won't be ignored any longer. The new Optra range has very impressive output quality at exceptionally reasonable prices. Until now, 1200 dpi has only been achieved in desktop models by using software to artificially push the laser mechanisms.

The Optra printers use Lexmark's own laser engine and new "Diamond Fine" toner to print out 1200 dpi at 8 pages a minute. Their unique MarkVision network printing software utility also looks very capable.

Optional features include duplex printing, network/Ethernet compatible, flash memory, memory compression (so large jobs will still print out), hard disk drives. The new printers start at £1139 for the 4039 10 plus (600 dpi), updated with the new laser engine. The 1200 dpi family starts with the Optra R (12ppm, 2Mb RAM, 200 sheet feeder - £1299), with the high-end version being the Optra Lxi (16ppm, 8Mb RAM, 1000 sheet feeder, Ethernet ready - £3059).

Reward for Whistle Blowers

Executive Software Pirates will have to watch out as a new force has been stimulated to expose illegal practice. The Business Software Alliance is now offering cash rewards for staff willing to expose their bosses. The CrimeLine number is now up and running and anyone who rings into a special freephone number and reports the use of illegal soft-

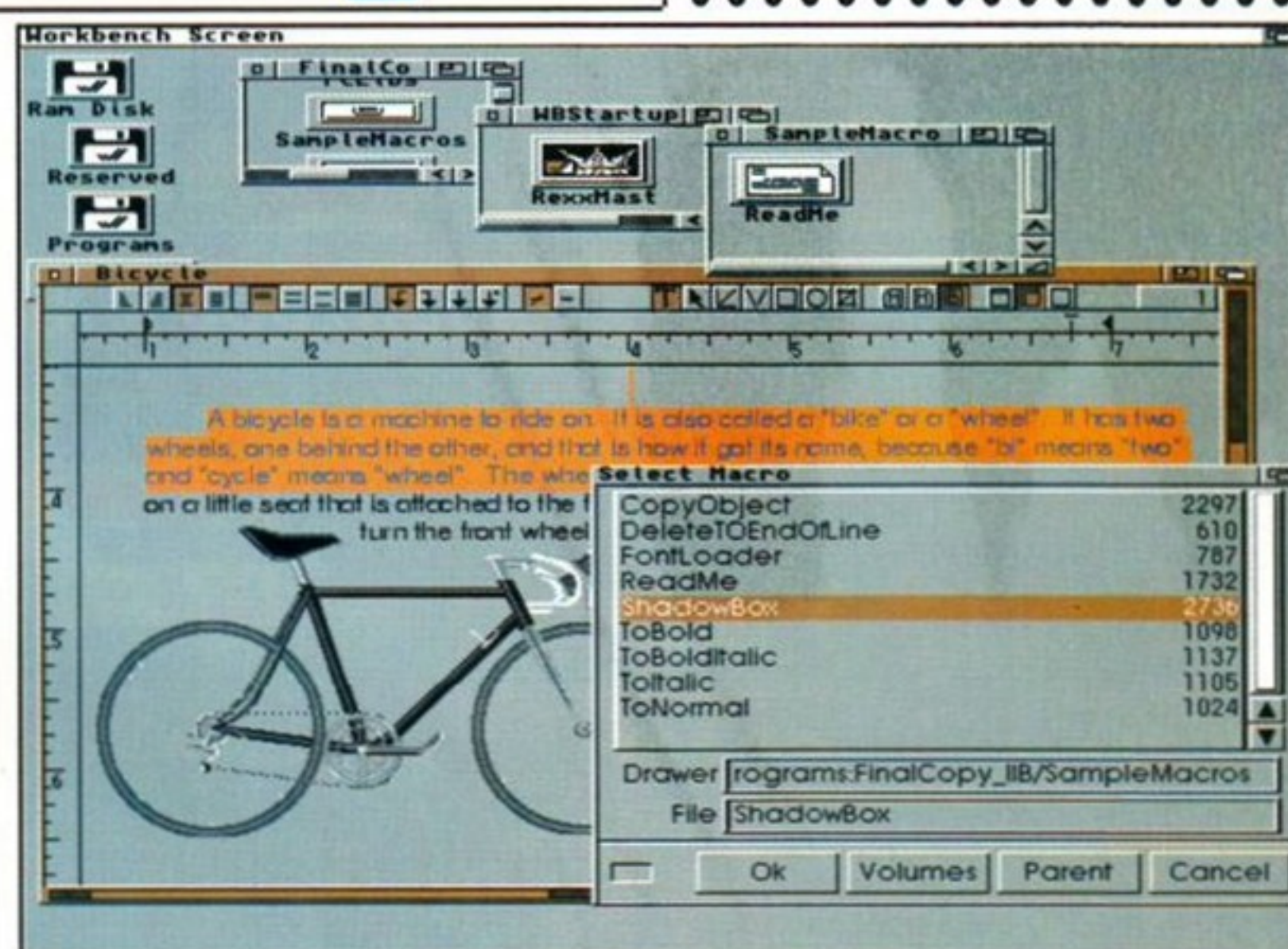
ware in a company can win a reward of up to £2,500 for the effort. The BSA set up the phoneline as the UK software industry, it says, is facing around £333 million losses a year due to pirated software and the company wants to stamp this out by encouraging morally upright employees or (disgruntled?) former employees who want to see justice done.

THINK AGAIN

You may carry it about but would you trust it? After the kerfuffle over Intel's defective Pentium chips - Pentium is the chip which is now being fitted in scads of portables - comes problems for IBM's Think Pad portables which actually use the damn things.

IBM is recalling some AC adaptors - the AA19210 which sold with their Thinkpad 3609/750/755 notebooks. the Adaptor carries the date "04".

IBM are worried because they think the adaptors might give users an electric shock. It's only a remote possibility, say IBM, and no incident has yet been reported. But obviously they want to be safe rather than sorry and are replacing the adaptors free of charge. Portables, as we show in the special report in this AUI are expanding fast. We mean in numbers not size, of course.



Anim-builds animations on your, sorry, the fly.

Premier Vision Brings Them In

Premier Vision will be pleased to help you spend your cash on a variety of products which they think will make the Amiga world a more exciting place.

Anim Workshop 2.0. This is designed, Premier Vision says, for anyone who cannot afford the editing environment of the PAR. Anim Workshop allows the user to divide up animations, insert pictures, add

sound or link with ADPRO or Image FX for batch processing or single frame editing. Anim can be used to build animations on the fly while the 3D software renders each frame. Anim Workshop also allows the user to create frame by frame palette changes to anims. Anim Workshop 2.0 supports all AGA modes including Anim 5, Anim 7, Anim 8. It also works with Anim Brushes and AREXX. Price £79.95.

Render Bender

No relation to Boy George... Premier Vision have three machines in the Render Bender range which have been designed and optimised specifically as LightWave rendering engines.

System 1 - The Warhog - now we wonder who thought that name up, someone with pretty funny personal tastes, we'd guess - priced £4500 has 1BG SCSI with 2 hard drives and a double speed CD ROM drive. It has a 1.44MB floppy, 17" IDEK monitor and has 16MB RAM.

System 2 - The Firebird, priced £6800.00, features the 233 MHz DEC Alpha chip, 2Mb secondary cache, 32MB Ram and a high speed ethernet card.

System 3 - The Warbird, priced £7499.00 features 275 MHz DEC Alpha, 2MB secondary cache, 32MB Ram and 4MB PCI video adaptor. The cost can, according to Premier Vision, be further reduced by removing or substituting components. For example, a smaller SCSI drive or a smaller video card and the Ethernet card may not be needed.

For all those juicy goodies - and we love the idea of whizzing along at 275 MHz!

Contact: Premier Multimedia Ltd, The Foundry, 156 Blackfriars Road, London SE18EN. Tel: 0171 721 7050.

IN YOUR FACE!

Visage computers have told **AUI** of the new Blizzard range, including the Blizzard 1230-III, which are now available.

They have also increased the size of their hard drives, they say, due to Western Digital ceasing production of the 730 MB drive. The new 850MB drives are on offer for £289.99 and carry a 3 year warranty. These drives can be fitted to A1200s and A4000s. Visage will supply a fitting kit for all 3.5" drives for the A1200 for £19.99 or for another £19.99 will arrange courier pickup, fitting and delivery

Alternatively there's the one gigabyte drive available for £389.99. All these drives come prepped, formatted and installed with WorkBench and come with 100 MB of free Public Domain for **AUI** readers. So, don't forget to mention our name to get your freebies when ordering! See page 39 for more details.

Contact: Visage Computers,
18 Station Road,
Ikeston,
Derbyshire, DE7 5LD.
Tel: 0115 9444501

WAVEMAKER

"Jobbing animators will be also interested to know that Wavemaker 2.0 is now available for the creation of flying logos using pre-defined motion paths and animated wipes." say Premier Vision. (Oh really?)

The finished animations can be rendered straight from the Wavemaker interface or can be edited from Lightwave and incorporated into larger anims. For people involved in creating corporate videos, Wavemaker, according to PV, will save time and money due to the speed of creating an animation. Wavemaker has links built in for PAR and is priced £129.95.

WAVELINK

And on the subject of linking or rather waving, Wavelink, priced £79.95 is, say Premier Vision, available for linking two machines for network rendering to save the aforementioned time on rendering animations.

SpotLight 1995

Gasteiner have announced details of their Spotlight Show, taking place at the Novotel Hotel in Hammersmith on 10th and 11th June 1995. The doors will open at 10:00 AM and tickets are priced at £5. The Show is aimed at the "more cerebral Amiga user", which means you! The show is not only for showcasing products, but for you to do a bit of shopping and pick up some bargains. They are predicting a fourfold increase in exhibitors this year, so for advance booking call the hotline on **Tel: 0181 345 6000.**

IntOS upgrade

OTM have finally released their update for AMOS users, allowing 3D look interfaces. IntOS uses the Amiga's Intuition system, they say, and helps users create gadgets, window screens, menus, etc as you see on WorkBench. Designed to give a "professional touch with ease", our reviewer found it a very useful addition to the AMOS armoury.

Contact:
OTM, 5 Albert Road,
Tamworth,
Staffordshire, B79 7JN.
Tel: 01827 312302

Don't Play It Again, Uncle Sam

We tried to resist say that the game was up for thousands of employees who work for the State of Virginia in the USA. (What state is Virginia in? Not the same one as she was in before last night.)

For Governor and Chief Spoil Sport George Allen has cracked down on game playing at work. On computers that is. He has ordered that all the games to be found on the computers owned by the State should be deleted.

It seems, surprise, surprise, that some of the State's employees were - shame! - playing computer games when they should have been slaving away at real work. (Some of us think computer games are real work. ED)

He just may have been reading a survey of 1000 US companies which showed that employees spend an average of 5.1 hours a week playing games on their work computers. Some bright spark, using a computer no doubt, has worked that it cost those companies a mere \$10 billion - about £6 billion - a year.

Long ago back in the distant days of the 8 bit computers we seem to remember a chess program that had a "Boss's screen". It was a screen which you flicked on when the boss came by that showed a spreadsheet and not the game you were playing.

For Virginia, whatever state she's in, it's now a real spreadsheet or nothing.

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32 bit GVP SIMMs	65	-	188	-	925	-

IDE Hard Drives (SCSI & SCSI II also available POA)

Various Quality Makes 3.5" Low Profile		Western Digital Caviar 3.5" Low Profile (V. Fast)		Various Makes 2.5" (A1200 or CD32 SX 1)	
SIZE	PRICE	SIZE	PRICE	SIZE	PRICE
170	135	341	220	80	130
210	149	425	235	130	170
250	159	540	270	250	225
320	169	730	345	340	295
420	179	1080	489	405	360
540	209	**** New Lower Prices ****		520	480
1080	475				

Note: 2.5" drives come with fitting kit for A1200 and CD32 SX-1 module
3.5" drives can be fitted into A1200. Fitting kit costs £20 when bought with drive.

Other Items

Viper 030 MkII 28mhz	140.00	Toshiba XM3401B CD Rom	275.00
Viper 030 MkII 33mhz	207.00	Media Vision SCSI Rom	150.00
Viper 030 MkII 40mhz	235.00	Zappo A1200 CD Rom	185.00
GVP A1230 40mhz 0mb	222.50	Canon BJ10 SX InkJet Printer	180.00
GVP A1230 50mhz 0mb	290.00	Epson Stylus Colour Printer	450.00
G-Force 040 40mhz for A4000	895.00	EGS Spectrum 24bit Graphics	332.50
WarpEngine 28mhz w/o CPU	590.00	Microvitec 1438 Monitor	285.50
WarpEngine 28mhz w CPU	785.00	SVGA 15" FST m/sync Monitor	310.00
WarpEngine 33mhz w CPU	980.00	CD32 SX1 Module	189.00
WarpEngine 40mhz w CPU	1175.00	Black Keyboard for SX1	38.00
20mhz FPU 68882	24.00	GVP I/O Extender 2S 1P	120.00
33mhz FPU 68882	60.00	Fax Modems - V32bis from	110.00
40mhz FPU 68882	78.50	Power SuperXL 3.5mb Floppy	95.00
50mhz FPU 68882	120.00	Video Backup V3.0	55.00

Digitally Effective

Television has become saturated with varying degrees of digital effects. From simple slide in, slide out wipes to quite literally shattering effects where the image breaks up into thousands of pieces. The Amiga has been able to do DVEs (Digital Video Effects) for a couple of years now thanks to Adorage but technology has moved on and the demands placed upon video producers have become greater.

ClassX Development have kept their products confined to Italy for a while but recently decided to let them loose for European distribution. I'm

A new product from Italy could put you one up on the competition for video presentations and productions, Gary Fenton reports.



A sequence of effects including scrolling text with a light source. These images have been shrunk so they may have lost some quality in print.

glad they have because X-DVE starts where ProDad's Adorage left off.

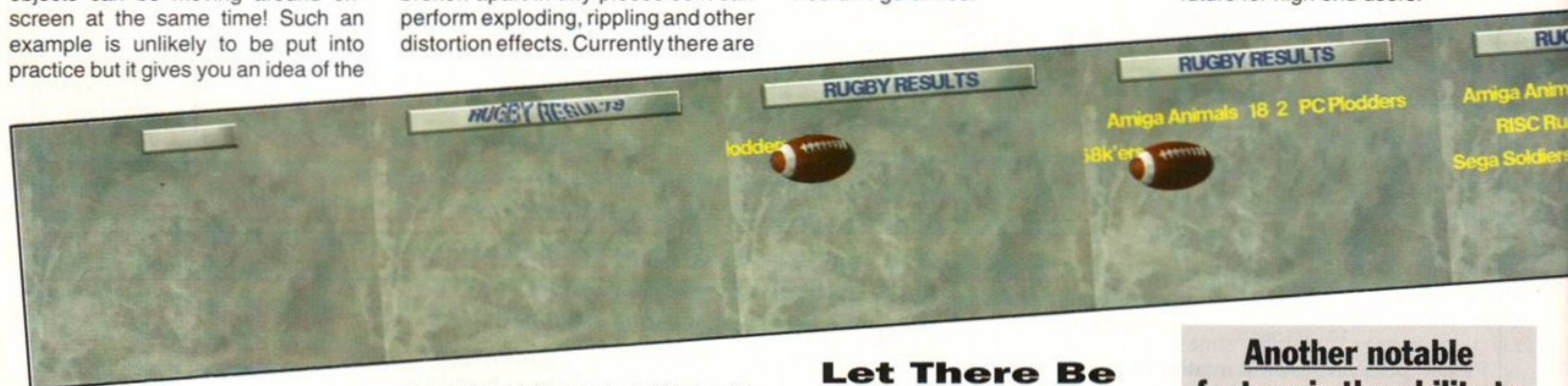
X-DVE gives you control over 100 different objects which can be a combination of images, text, and animations. Because X-DVE takes a parallel approach to this, up to 100 objects can be moving around on-screen at the same time! Such an example is unlikely to be put into practice but it gives you an idea of the

Effects Galore

X-DVE does three types of effects. 3D rotation and scaling, slides (simple wipes), and wind effects. The last effects include the really impressive ones where the image is broken apart in tiny pieces so it can perform exploding, rippling and other distortion effects. Currently there are

X-DVE also has the ability to generate text from within the program. Any Amiga font can be used to good effect, scrolling, rotating, or exploding. Maybe a future release could anti-alias text for optimum quality and an automatic shadow wouldn't go amiss.

well in most cases, the restrictions of a 256 colour palette sometimes become quite apparent as X-DVE does its best to accommodate brighter and darker shades when rendering the objects with a light source. I'd really like to see a 24 bit version of the software in the future for high end users.



power behind X-DVE.

X-DVE works on any Amiga with WB2 or above and a minimum of 2Mb RAM. Resolutions from 320x512 in 2 colours up to 1472x566 in 256 colours are supported, depending on the Amiga chip set used. The software is optimised for 020/030/040 processors any FPU which is nice to know if you have such hardware.

over 40 predefined wind effects with names like Vortex, Flag, Wave, Sphere, Barricade, and Hurricane but you can customise your own variations.

There's the added option to key images over others. When required, X-DVE will remove the background colour from images allowing the background colour to become transparent.

Let There Be Light

A novel and unexpected feature is the working light source which highlights and shades objects as they move around the screen. The light source slows down rendering time dramatically, so it's best used in moderation. Just as in a 3D package, the light can be placed anywhere in the environment. While this works very

Another notable feature is the ability to remap images automatically using a selectable palette.

Another notable feature is the ability to remap images automatically using a selectable palette. This is necessary if you use images with differ-

ent palettes and numbers of colours. I must say that the quality of remapping is very good, although it doesn't add any dithering under normal circumstances, it will dither images when a light source is used.

Scripting

The whole show is scripted in a linear fashion, a bit like Scala, with a separate window for displaying a time-line illustrating when each objects comes in and goes out. The "in" and "out" points are set by typing in the number of fields (2 fields = 1 frame) you want the effect to last for. A preview button lets you see a quick render of the effect on the current object. It would be nice if it could do a preview of the whole script as well.

Rendering

The animation can be rendered out to disk as a sequence of IFF files or rendered directly to RAM to be later



X-DVE's interface.

A 50 frame explotion effect on a 256 colour 736x566 image took 7 minutes to complete.

the resolution and number of colours you use will also affect rendering times.

If you have a basic A1200 then it's best to stick to 32 colours or less in a

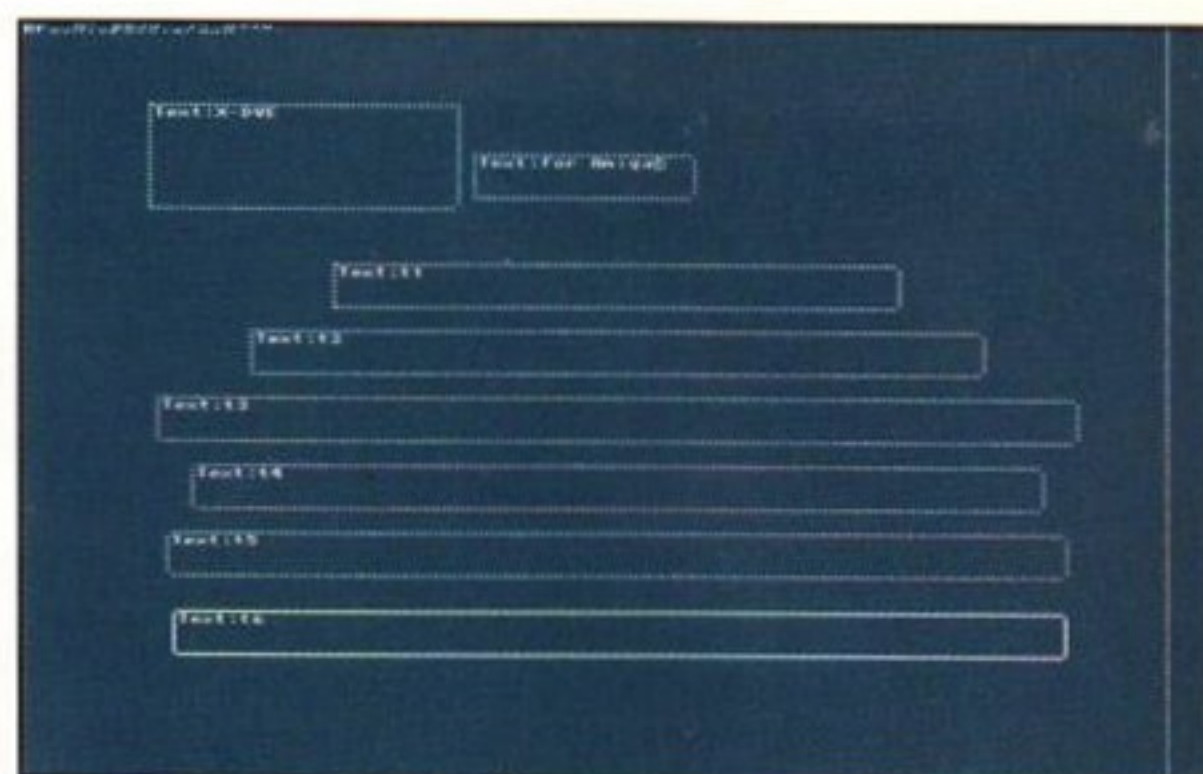
well as fast cars and fashionable suits?

The ability to create entire sequences of text and images layered on top of each other with limitless applications is very tempting to anyone involved with video. Imagine creating a top ten countdown for a music TV show where the name of the artist flies in from one side of the screen as a picture of the band implodes together and an arrow slithers upwards.

There are just four things that I've

ability to play back the animation at speed. The secret is to keep the number of colours and resolution down as far as possible and not to have too much going on at once - unless you have the PAR, Digital Broadcaster or Vlab Motion at hand!

Make sure you check out X-DVE if you're into video production. It's a unique product which not only jazzes up your graphics but also provides an alternative method for producing good



Objects are positioned by the mouse using a wire frame preview.



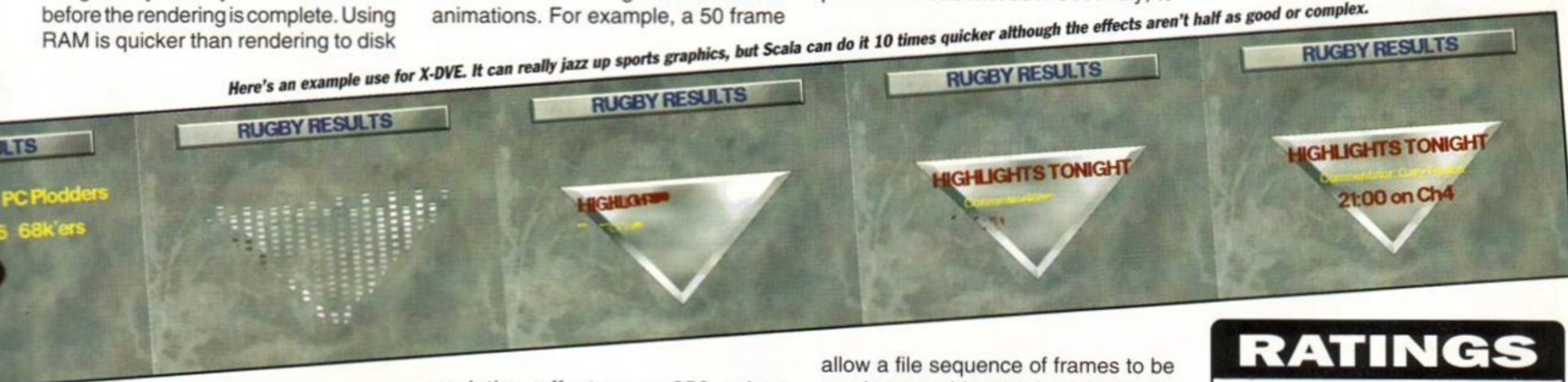
saved as a single animation file. If you render to RAM you're restricted by the amount of RAM available in your Amiga so you may run out of RAM before the rendering is complete. Using RAM is quicker than rendering to disk

low resolution, otherwise you'll be hanging around for a while waiting for it finish. Faster Amigas are recommended for rendering hires 256 colour animations. For example, a 50 frame

put on a wish-list for X-DVE. Firstly, support 24 bit rendering which would avoid palette restrictions that limits potential broadcast use. Secondly, to

looking animations. This was certainly one of Italy's best kept secrets! AUI

Here's an example use for X-DVE. It can really jazz up sports graphics, but Scala can do it 10 times quicker although the effects aren't half as good or complex.



because the computer will be able to multi-layer objects on to frames held in RAM so it doesn't have to keep loading previous frames held on disk.

X-DVE has its own optimised animation format called XFA. An separate program (which is included) plays XFA animations direct from disk or RAM and additionally converts XFA anims to IFF frames.

The time it takes to render an animation depends on the length of string you cut yourself. X-DVE has three levels of quality for wind effects which will alter rendering times, and

explotion effect on a 256 colour 736x566 image took 7 minutes to complete on an Amiga 4000/040. The same effect on a 16 colour 368x566 image took about a minute.

Conclusion

The interface looks very appealing and results in an easy to use package. We were supplied with an Italian manual but managed to figure out how to use it under half an hour. Maybe this has something to do with the Italians being typically good designers, applying their talents to software as

allow a file sequence of frames to be used as an object and not just anim files. Thirdly, full anti-aliasing especially for text. To be honest, I'm being greedy here but I can see other professional users drooling over the prospects with me. Lastly, I'd like the "stop rendering" button work better. There's nothing worse than hammering away the the stop button hoping it will eventually listen to you and stop!

So, overall am I impressed? Not half! It's like a cross between the best parts of Adorage and Multi-Layer. X-DVE has been very well thought out from a user's point of view and performance is only hampered by your Amiga's

RATINGS

X-DVE

FEATURES	88%
PERFORMANCE	85%
EASE OF USE	92%
VALUE FOR MONEY	78%
Overall Rating 85%	

INFO

Price: 300,000 Lira, about £118.
Contact: ClassX Development,
Via Francesca 463, 56030
Montecalvoli (PI), Italy.
Tel: 39 587 749206

Datastore

This is wierd. Real wierd. Digita have produced the definitive database. Easy to use, simple, powerful, image handling and user-definable.

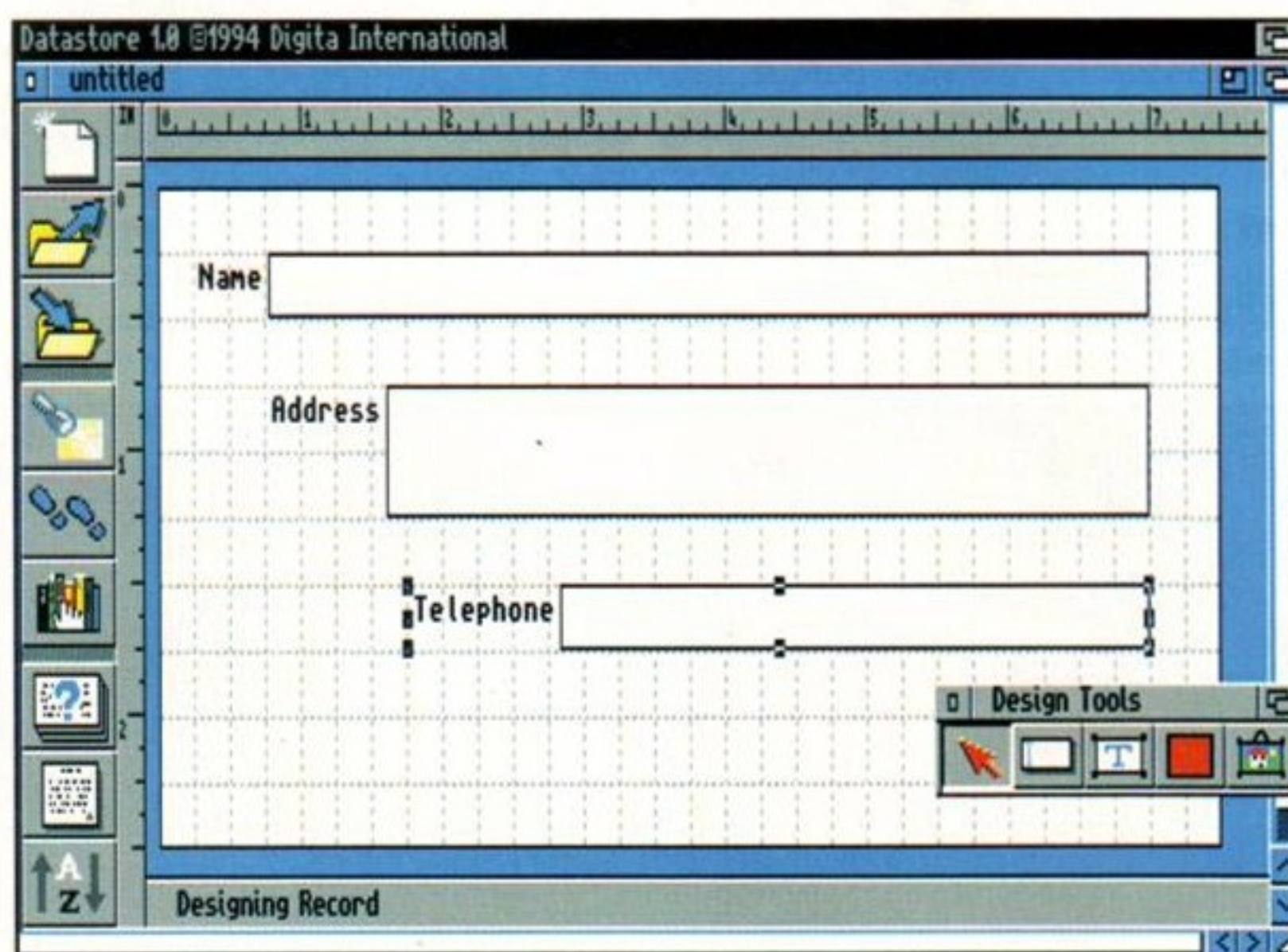
But you can't print out labels! Now, one of the primary uses of databases is to store lists of names, like your local tiddly-winks club member list or the list of all your video tapes or the 10/10 girls in your "Really Sexy" little black book. What good is it if you can't print out the information as address or video labels or their specialities?

I asked Digita what in heaven was going on. Why release a damn hot product but leave out such an essential function? The technical staff could not give me a reason.

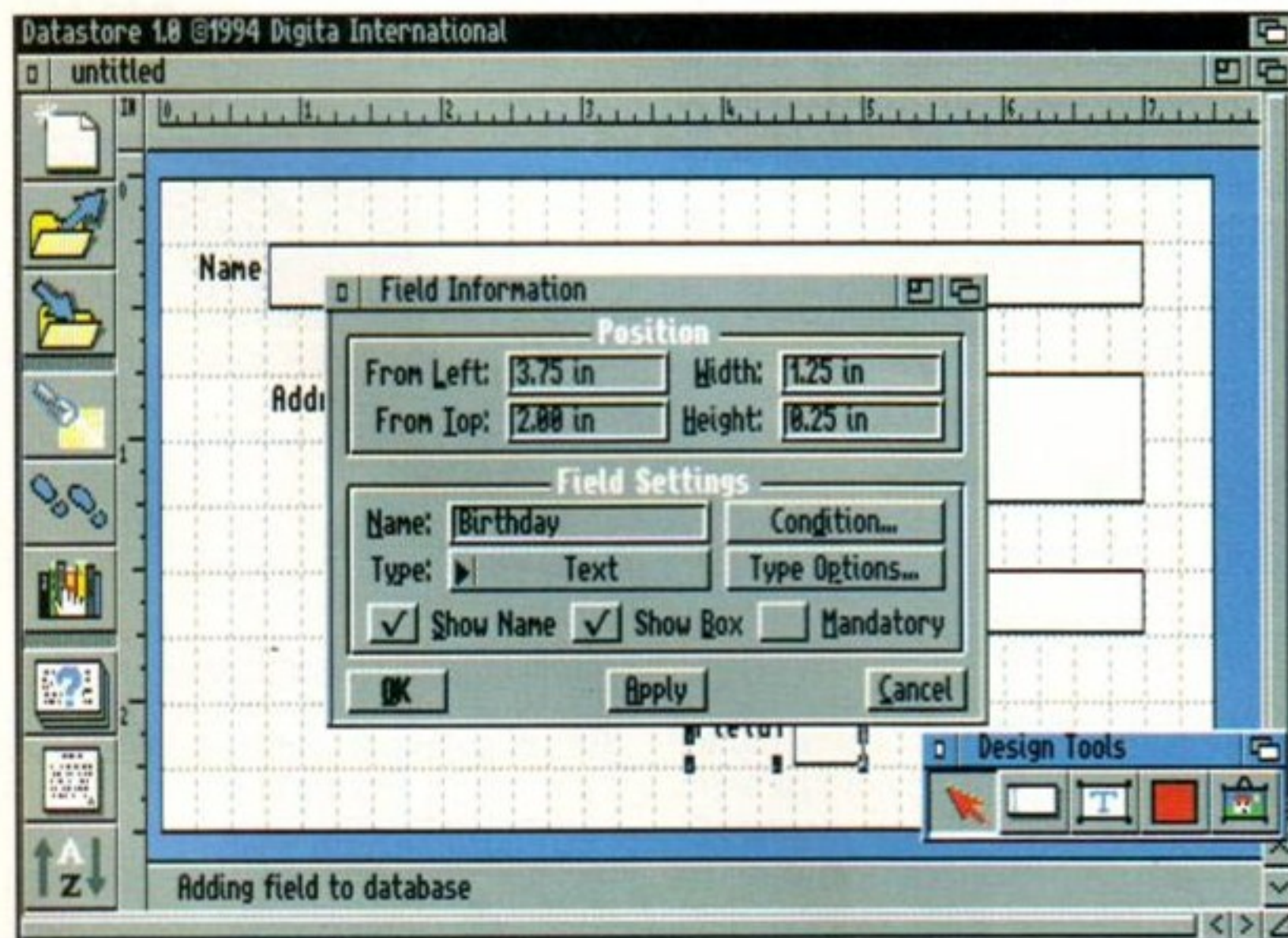
The PR people had no real answer but said it was possible that label printing would be included on future updates.

Another reason they gave for the omission was that they simply ran out of programming time as the release date approached. Hardly good enough! I was expecting some practical answer such as there was

A fantastic low-end database, according to Mark Blackham.
But is there something missing?



I've begun setting up my own black book of addresses.



An information box for the birthday field. Note the location pointers and field type options.

not enough room on one disk or that label printing was technically very awkward given the way files were structured. Nope. Digita's answer was "We just didn't do it."

They suggested people use the label printing facility in Wordworth or their ancient MailShot software. You can get the raw information into Wordworth, but you'll have to reformat

Digita are well aware of the competition but are happy to go head to head with Softwood in a showdown.

all of it. Mailshot just creaks its bones and says no.

So if you buy Datastore, which, as you will see, I absolutely insist you do, tell Digita to include label printing in the next update. I'm sure that's what they always intended to do (it makes the update worth buying).

Showdown

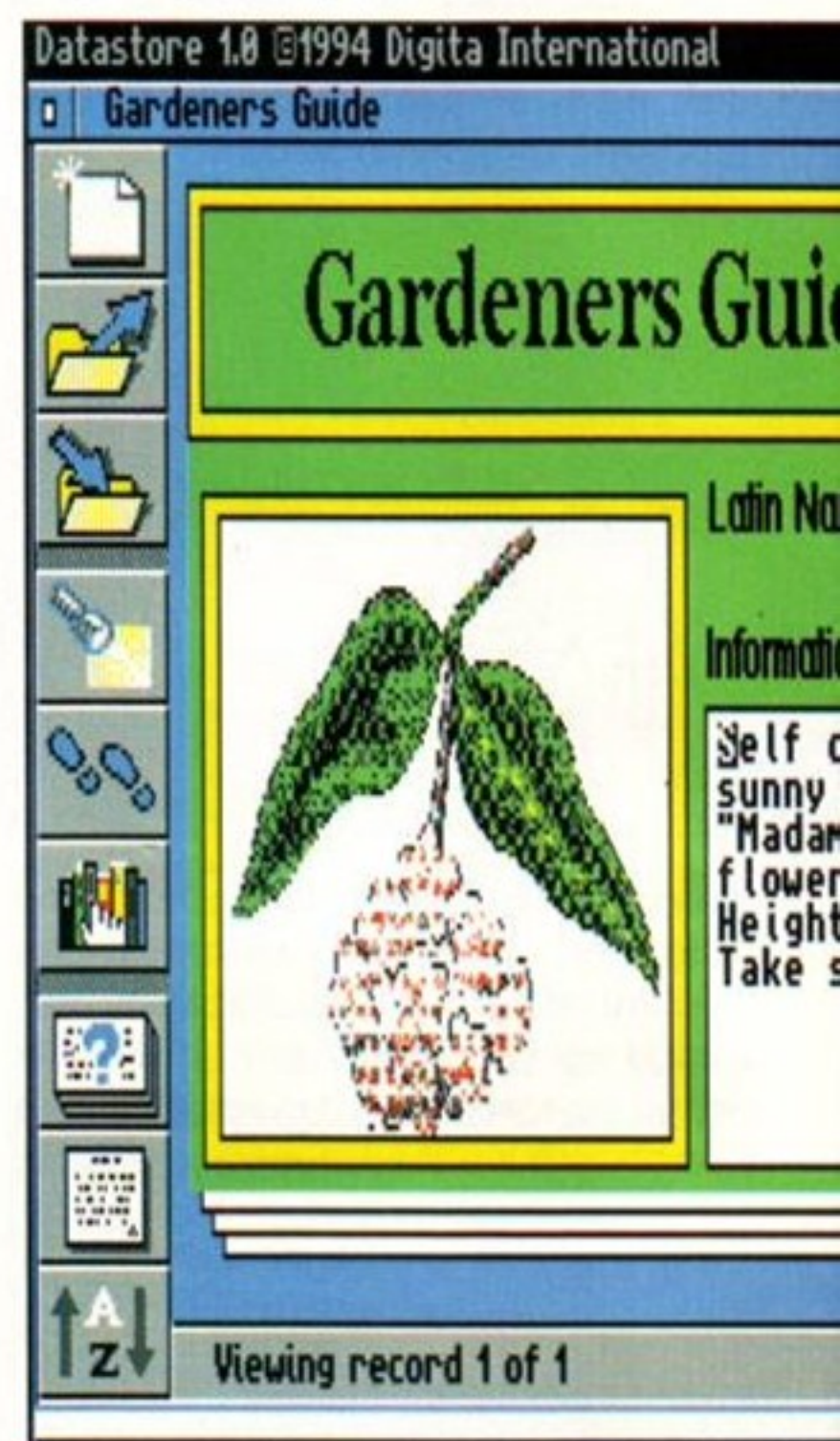
The opponent to Datastore is Softwood's Final Writer (which scored 68% in February AUI). Digita are well aware of the competition but are happy to go head to head with Softwood in a showdown. They know they have the superior fire power. For some deranged reason Digita reckon their big gun is in the Datastore user-interface.

While I'd agree that the interface (like requesters and general appearance) is nicer than Final Writer because it sticks to accepted Amiga standards, this isn't really a major issue.

Users of the new Wordworth will feel right at home with the interface because it uses the same page style and icons, which in themselves are consistent with the standard Amiga style.

Datastore beats Final Writer because of its approach to storing data. Both are flat-plan based but while Final Data looks like a basic spreadsheet, Datastore feels more like a card index. The easiest way to think of it is like one of those rolo-indexes - where the cards flick around a circular bar.

You flick through the cards using a basic tape-deck system - forward one, back one, straight to beginning, straight to end.



You can specify colourful backgrounds and text for the file cards. The tape-deck browser allows you to flick backwards or forwards card by card.

Each card in the file takes up the whole editing screen as you view or modify it.

The find facility is a quicker way through that huge file which lists all your friends or to find the full details on something you only half-remember.

The Query option enables you to pull out cards that fall within a user-defined category.

Say you want to look at all the records in your video collection file which include the name "Hanks". You simply enter the Query requester and ask Datastore to pull out any file with the word "Hanks" anywhere in it. Searches can be more specific if necessary. Although the slim but

useful manual doesn't help you much on this occasion, the options are self-explanatory.

Flexibility

The snazzy part of Datastore is in the ability to define the look of those cards in each file and the size and types of fields. The fields can be added, re-sized or deleted at any time. Field

types include text, numbers, formulas, currency, true/false, yes/no, date, time and pictures.

Moving file entry areas is simply a matter of clicking and dragging to a new position, and you re-size them by grabbing the frame hooks in the usual manner.

You can ensure precision by defining the new screen position co-ordinates in the box's information panel. Screen co-ordinates aren't easy to get the hang of, but the "Snap to Grid" facility helps tidy up your mess.

At first you can use the pre-set templates for creating your own files, but the power of Datastore is in the flexibility of its user-definable interface, so you will soon want to start setting up your own card styles.

Picture Filing

In this multi-media age it is essential that pictures can be stored as part of your list.

Datastore graciously accepts IFF files. That means photos of your friends, grabs from your favourite videos or scans of music album covers can be included in your lists. Even pictures of the sex kittens from that black book.

Multiple files can be opened at any time, and the capacity of any of them is limited only by your computer's RAM size. As you would expect, the files can be loaded into other programs and used for a mail merge in your word processor.

Extra facilities available include password entry, configurable reports, template support, a librarian (for storing sentences and words you want to use in lists repeatedly), password protection and multiple line fields.

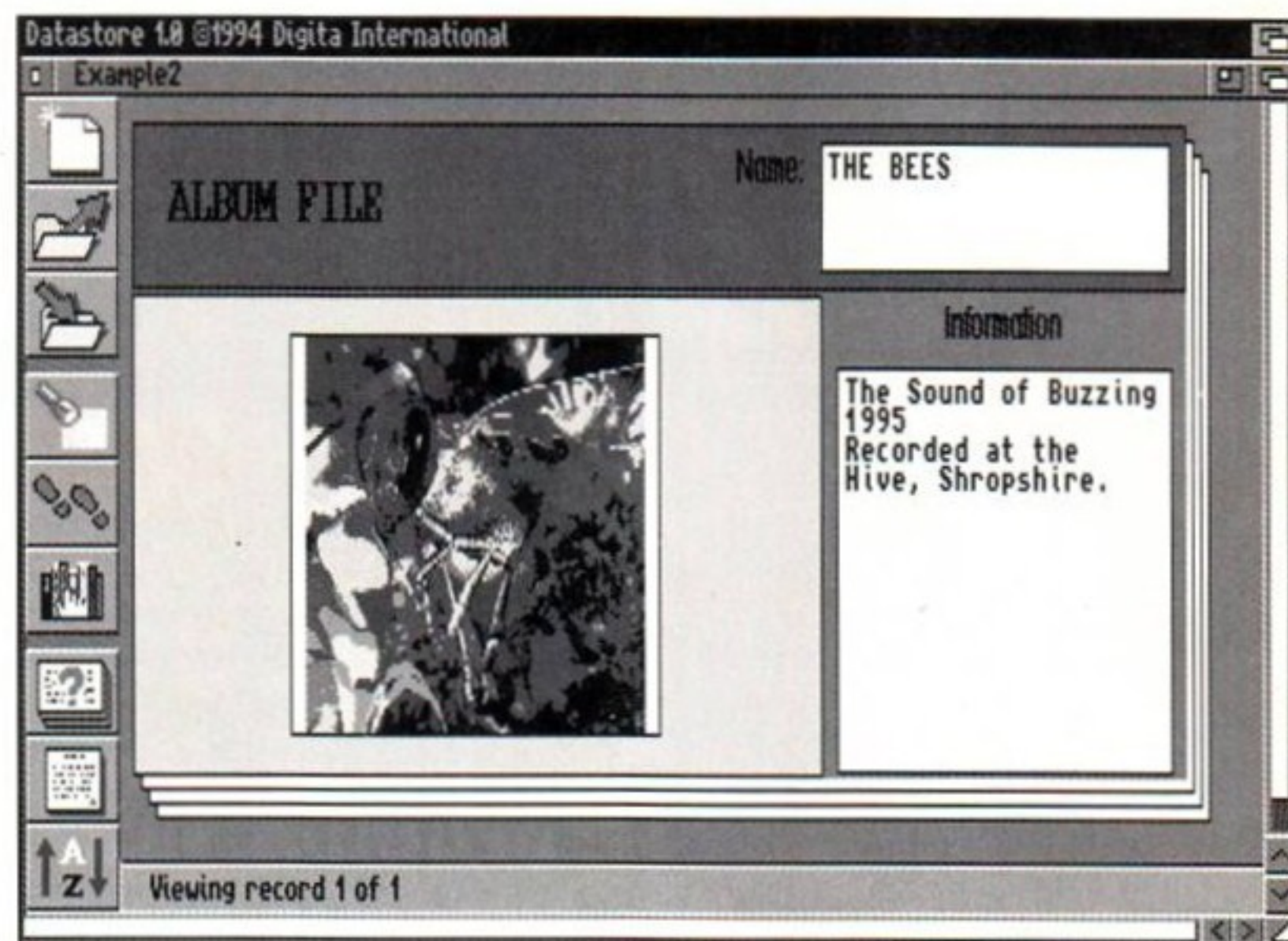
The reports are a useful way of assessing the information in your files. You can define them in any way

you like and print them out.

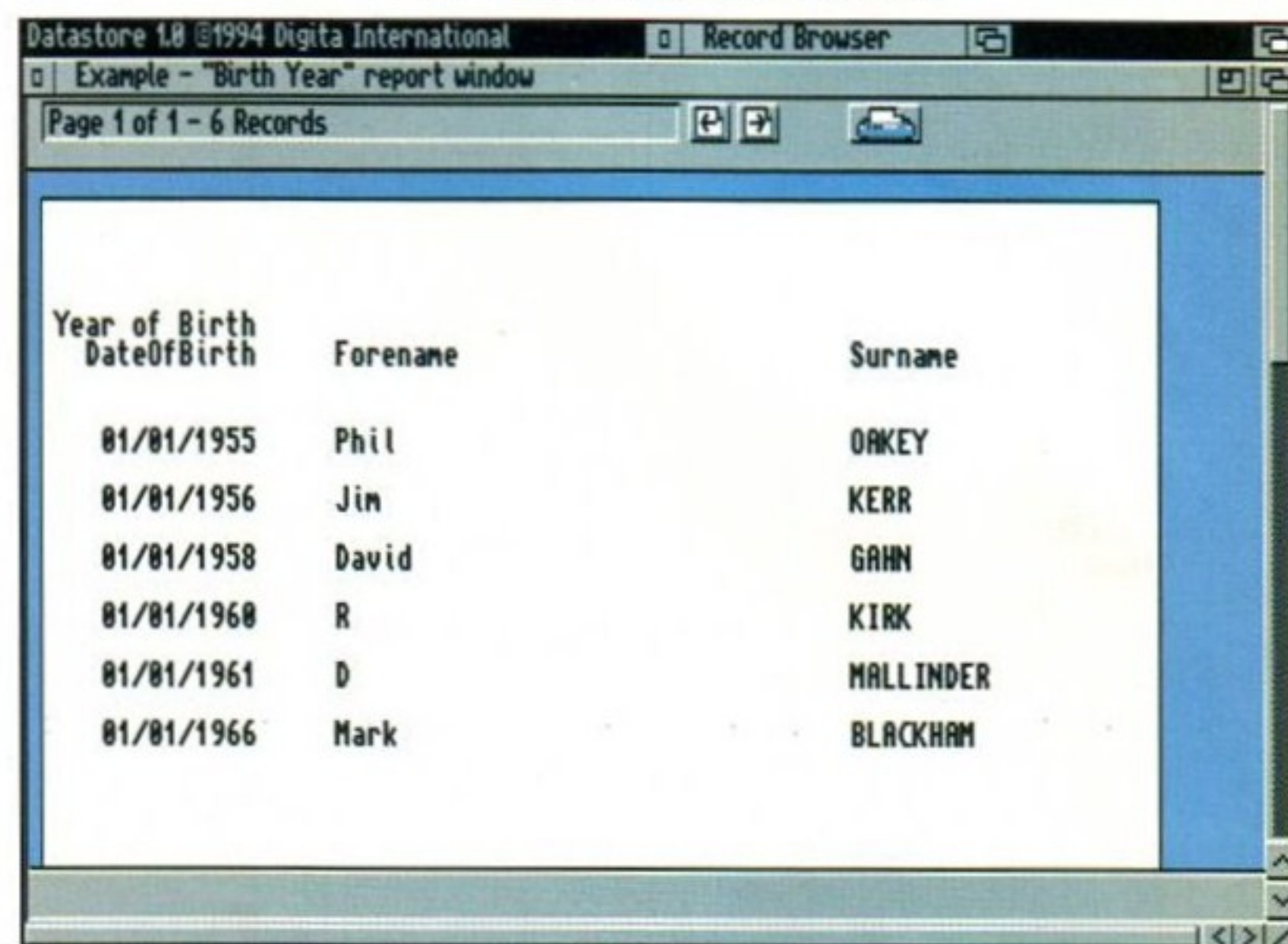
Some obvious examples of reports are a basic list of names and addresses, or all of the science fiction movies in your video collection, or all of your Bucks Fizz albums, or all those who haven't paid membership fees for your Nolan Sisters appreciation club.

facility is the route for printing out lists (pictures not included), no label printing option is a serious let down. Even if there are ways around this problem (and there really isn't) they shouldn't be necessary.

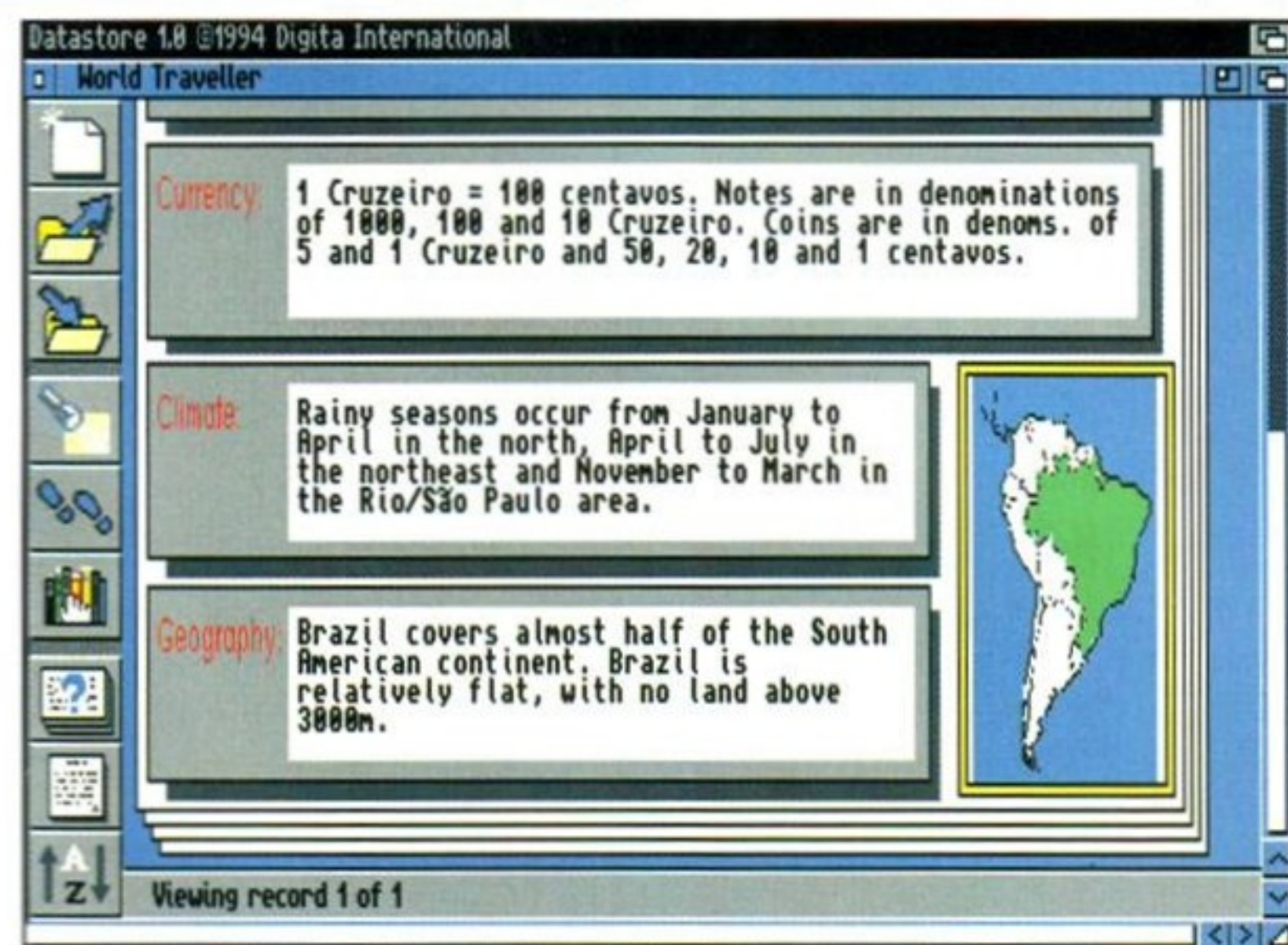
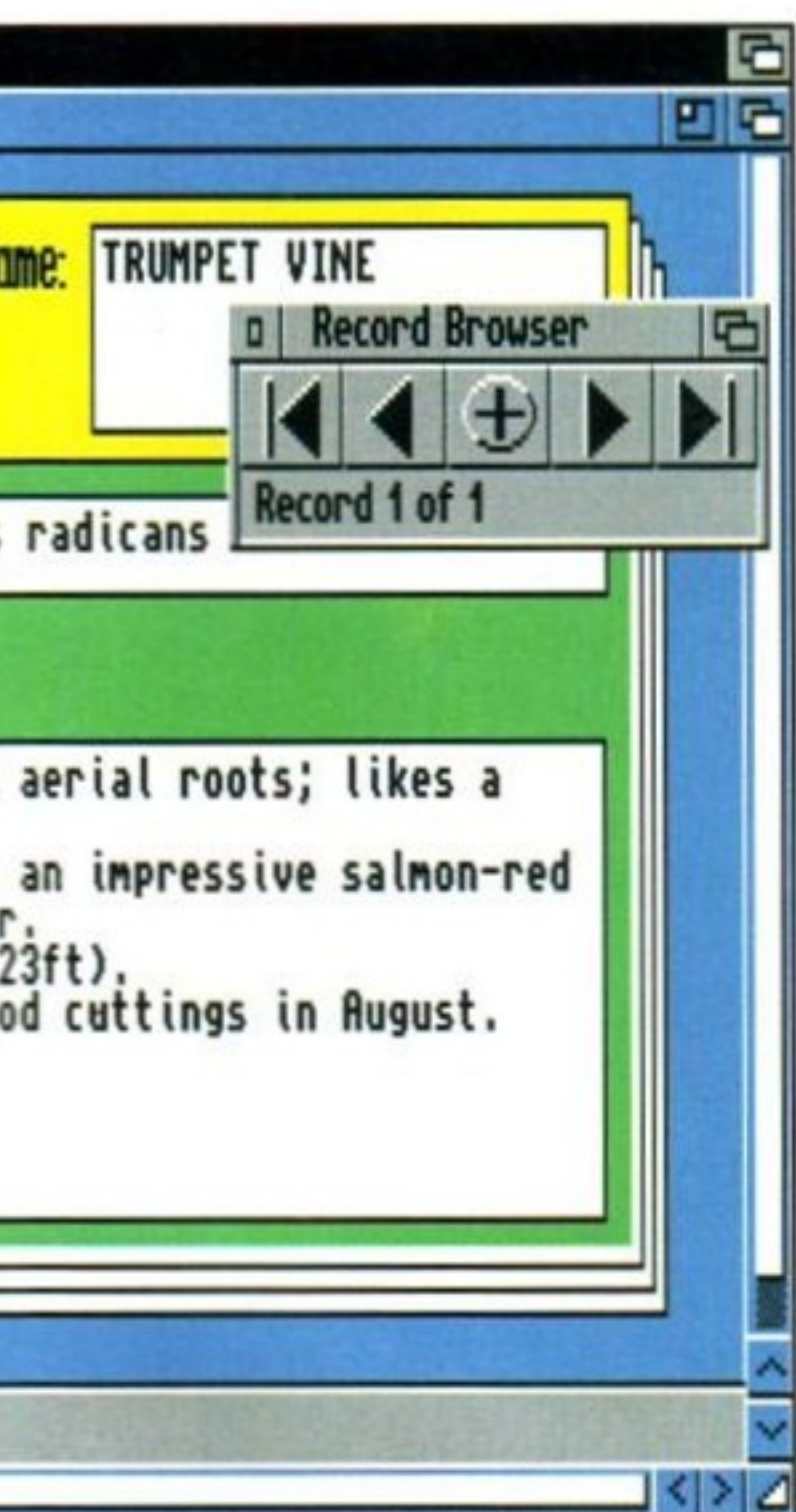
Despite that glaring omission, I'd still prefer to use Datastore over Final Data. **AUI**



Create a collection of your favourite pictures.



Call for a report on your file. This one has listed all the birthdays of those in my address book.



The bottom half of an A4 sized file card. Each card can be a maximum of 20 inches deep and 20 inches wide.

Finally, I have a bit of a gripe with the speed that Datastore loads files. It's faster than it takes to prise a pickle from a burger but there is a disturbing wait even for relatively simple files.

Databases are notorious for looking like the answer to your New Year's resolution to organise your life. They often end up unused, lists remain incomplete and the user remains in just as much a muddle as they were before.

But a database can be darn handy - not least for mail merging and as a computerised address book.

Datastore lends itself well to becoming an integral part of your computer office. Although the report

RATINGS

Digital Datastore V1.1

FEATURES	80%
DOCUMENTATION	89%
EASE OF USE	88%
VALUE FOR MONEY	70%
Overall Rating 83%	

INFO

Price: £49.99

Contact:

Digita International Ltd.

Black Horse House

Exmouth EX8 1JL, England

Tel: 0395 270 273

Info Nexus

The coin flips through the air, spinning. My hand grasps for it, misses and it falls to the floor, laying there shining. There's no doubt, it's heads.

So, we'll start with the good points first!

When Optonica released yet another file manager, we couldn't really see the point. After all, the market is flooded with them. There's DOpus for the pros and a multitude of PD clones (make no mistake, some of these are excellent) for everyone.

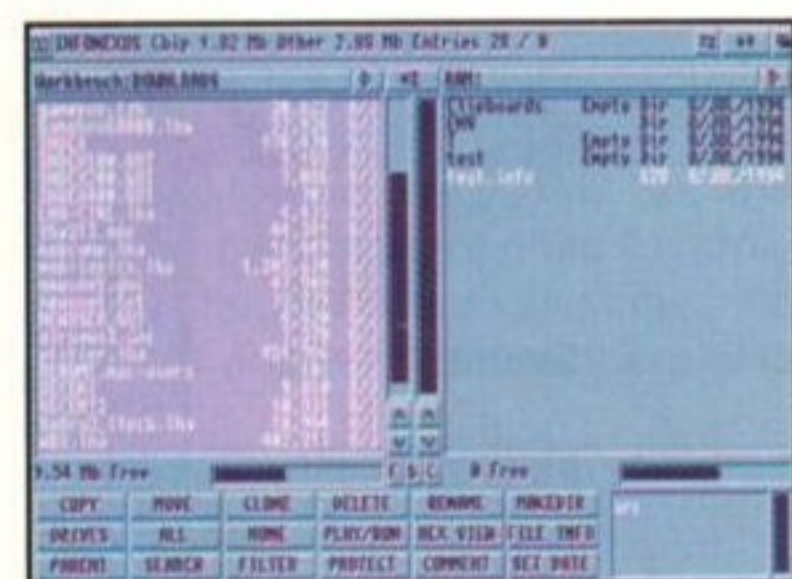
Info Nexus, however, is claimed to be the result of their programmers creating a manager that did what they needed, evolving it to suit their needs, until it reached the point where they realised they had a product that could benefit others.

The program can be run from floppy or hard disk (installation is simple). I wouldn't recommend running any file

submenus, it has a menu-cycling method. The first part is fine but I never had a problem with submenus and prefer them. I would also have liked it if they'd incorporated the PC idea (used elsewhere on the Amiga) where clicking the mouse button once brings up the menu, which stays until you select an option or cancel, instead of disappearing when you release the button.

In addition, Info Nexus has been designed for people who are involved in the new technology. Unlike DOpus, Nexus will display CDXL files. These are the files such as those incorpo-

David Taylor test drives a product that shows him that there is more to file life than Directory Opus.



The usual setup for file managers. No surprises here.

manager from floppy really, certainly not on a regular basis.

When it loads, you get the split screen that you'd expect in any file manager (except the latest DOpus - yet to be released). Click on either side and the list of devices appears. When you choose one, the list of files and directories is displayed.

You can then operate on files, performing various tasks. All the necessities are there: copy, delete, rename, protect, lha control, etc, etc. In addition are some handy operators, such as clone. When you perform a standard copy, the protection bits (for instance the parts of the file that mark it as readable/writable/executable) are not copied, so a script file would not remain executable. Clone allows you to retain the exact parameters of the file. Very useful for serious users.

Optonica have also chosen to use a custom menu system. Instead of menus only being available from the top of the screen, they will appear anywhere where you click the right mouse button, and instead of using

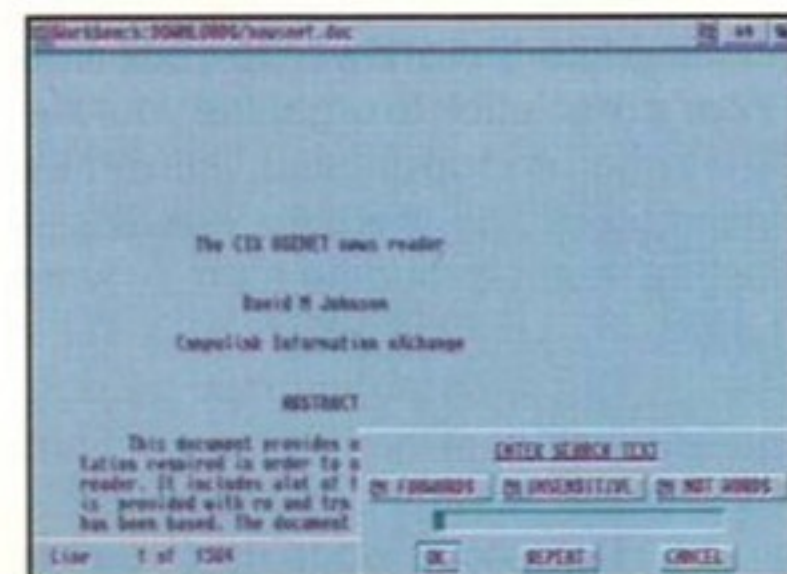
rated on the CDs from AUI. They allow quarter screen video to be played. Obviously this requires enough processor speed and memory. However, there are some well thought out options which allow you to spool any animation from disk (not just CDXL files, but IFF-anims too). The disadvantage of spooling from disk is the speed at which the anim can play. Even better, Nexus can be instructed to

calculate the best mode of play to see whether it can be loaded into RAM: and played from there.

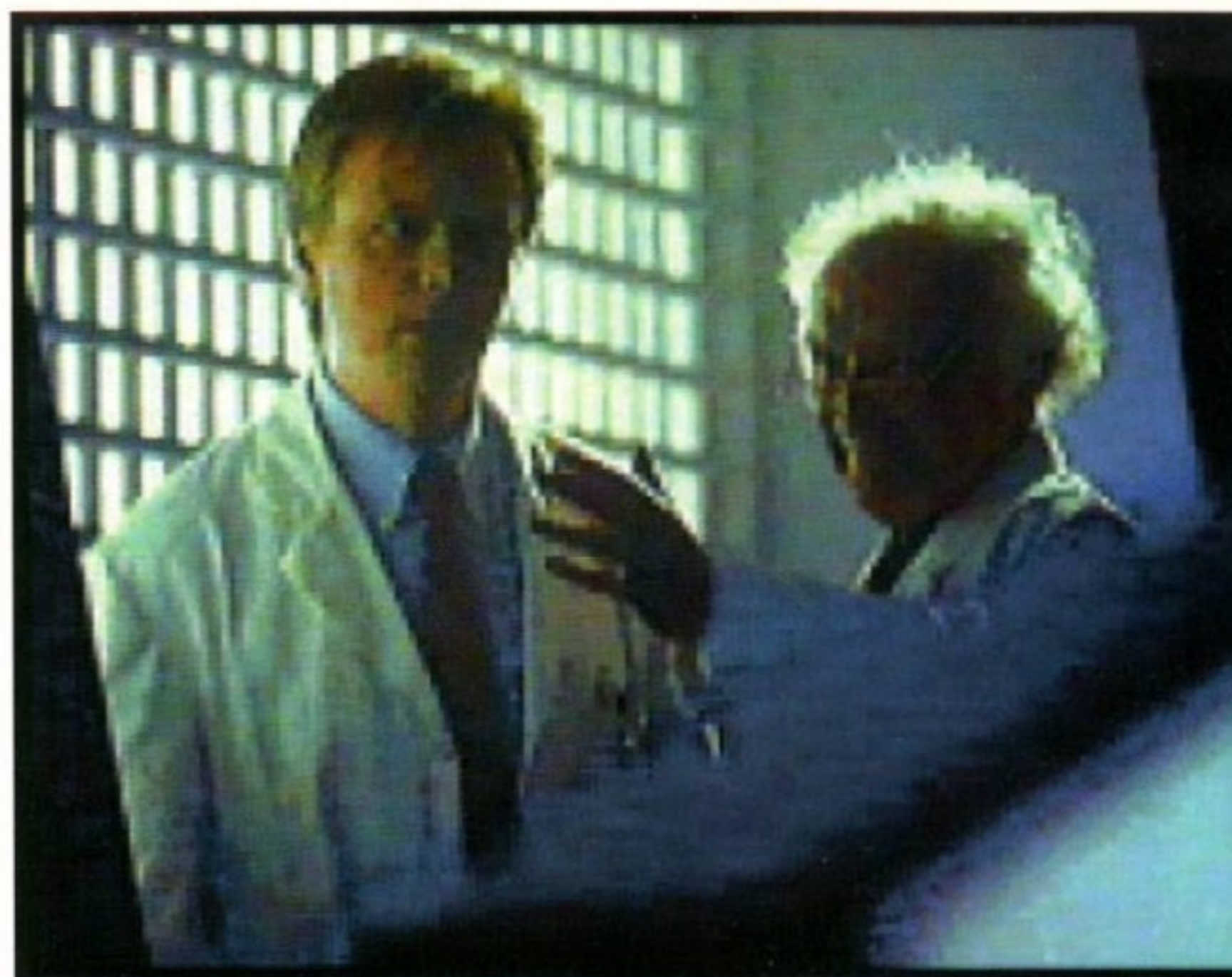
Unique

On the same "media" thread, Nexus is capable of all you'd expect in terms of playing modules, samples and showing pictures as you'd expect.

For the more abnormal, ie. non-Amiga standard, files, such as JPEG,



View and search test. Nexus will even search multiple files for words.



CDXL files can be viewed, quite a step forward.

design for implementing user commands.

Conclusion

Nexus is a good buy, especially at the price, for serious "media" users, for people who make constant or even frequent use of, for instance, CDXL files. For the less professional, less demanding and more impecunious. I would not necessarily recommend it, nor any commercial file manager. I would suggest that a Public Domain version, such as the AFCopy supplied on this month's SuperDisks, might well suffice. Nexus is not for those who simply need to copy and amend files. However, it is very well worth investigation if you want a low price, highly professional package with more power than the current DOpus. AUI

Nexus will recognise datatypes for those with WB3.

Uniquely, as things stand at the moment, Nexus will work over networks. If you have a network installed, it's possible to access other people's computers, their drives and files, and to grab their screen (if they allow you to). On top of this, you can send mail to each other and chat too.

These are the elements that set Nexus apart as the file manager for serious users, for professional users who use it in the office. It is a manager that takes the Amiga and treats it as a machine for use in company circumstances. DOpus is a fantastic product, but is not designed for this purpose. Nexus is not just a standard file manager.

Now for the tails, the downsides. Well, the major fault is speed. Even when running from hard disk, the menus take time to appear and react. Part of the problem lies in the way in which the whole program is designed. When you click on a drive, the colour changes. Not a great design point, one that shouldn't have been implemented, because it simply eats up processor time for little purpose. Nexus does not run as fast as you'd like. It's as simple as that.

Lastly, it is isn't as easy to control and to configure as I'd like. Part of this is because I'm used to a different system but some of it is down to poor

RATINGS

Info Nexus

FEATURES	85%
PERFORMANCE	80%
EASE OF USE	65%
SPEED	65%
DOCUMENTATION	73%
VALUE FOR MONEY	85%

Overall Rating 81%

INFO

Price: £29.95
Contact: Optonica
1 The Terrace
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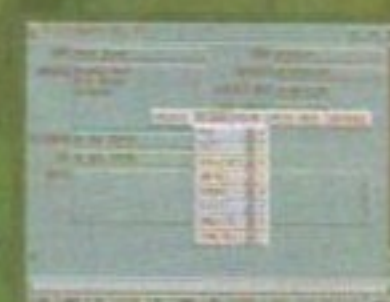
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ALL AMIGAS 1 MEG RAM MIN



ALL AMIGAS 1 MEG RAM MIN



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80% AMIGA USER INT MAGAZINE



ALL AMIGAS 4 MEG RAM + HARD DISK MIN : 8 - 16 MEG REC

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93% CDTV USER GROUP NEWS



CD32 - CDTV - A570

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87% AMIGA FORMAT

91% CU AMIGA



CD32 - CDTV - A570

92% FORMAT GOLD AWARD
91% CU AMIGA (TOP RATED)
96% CDTV USER GROUP NEWS
90% COMPUTER SHOPPER

Gary Fenton test drives a program that takes the WYSIWYG approach to building up an animation.

The name MultiLayer is correctly descriptive for a product which does just that. Up to 99 layers of imagery can be layered on top of each other with motion controls for each layer. Two versions of MultiLayer are available, one for ADPro and one for ImageFX which are used as the "engine".

foreground image. Chroma keying will extend to a range of colours so you can key using, say, a range of red to purple.

MultiLayer can only move images around on the X and Y axis using just a start and end point. You can't get layers to move with a curved path, nor can they wander along the Z axis. It's very two dimensional and linear. But layers can be "eased" in and out just



MultiLayer provides an interface to composite your images and gives a real time wireframe preview. The basic concept of operation is simple to grasp but it takes a run through the manual to understand how to set up a project and get the wheels in motion.

Timeline Control

Layers are added to the project via the timeline window which controls editing features and timings. Up to 99 layers are listed here along with the frame numbers where they appear and disappear in your animation sequence.

The info window is where you tell MultiLayer which image files to use as the current layer. Either a static image or a sequence of files (for an animation) can be selected together with an optional alpha channel (or sequence of alpha images) for each layer. Alpha channels are very powerful because they allow you to key a foreground image on top of a background image with 256 levels of transparency.

If you don't have an alpha channel then MultiLayer will alternatively luma or chroma key your foreground image based on the brightness or colour of the



like brushes can in a Deluxe Paint animation which gradually increase and decrease in speed.

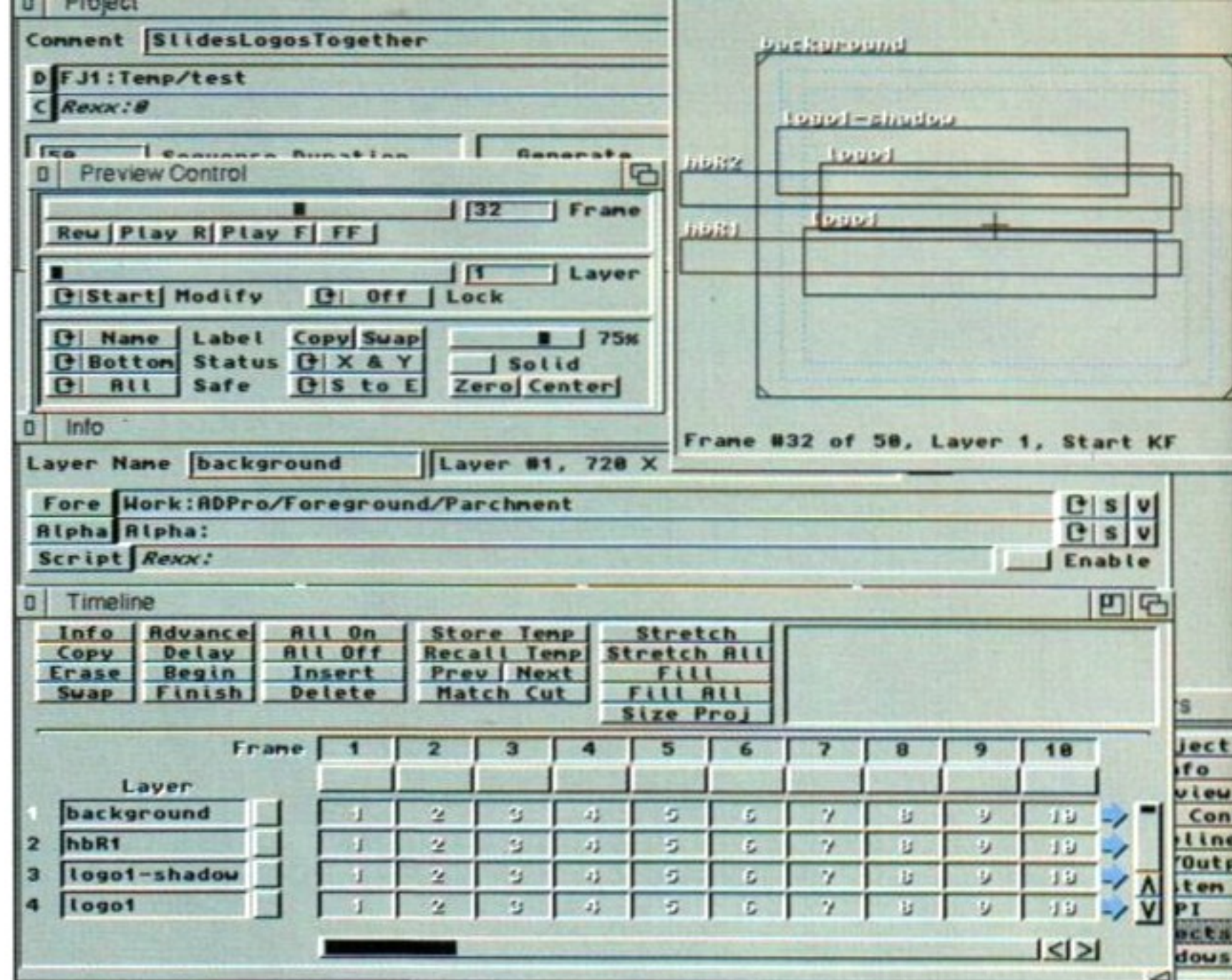
Additionally, layers can be made to fade in and out to or from a maximum or minimum level of transparency. This is ideal for creating subtle effects, or a tidy way to introduce and remove layers from an animation.

Instant Preview

The rescalable preview window gives you a quick way to position the layers' start and end points. The animation can be instantly previewed in wireframe which gives you a good idea how your sequence is progressing. At any time, a single frame or a range of frames can be rendered when you need to see the

Image Control

MultiLayer can scale and save animations in any format that your host processing package supports. This includes 24 bit frames, JPEG, and anim files. It can also display the final rendered frames during processing using the Amiga's hardware or a 3rd party graphics board supported by your processing package.



Multi layers and multi windows!

MultiLayer

final images for an accurate inspection of the compositing.

Regrettably, there is no way to perform any image processing without using an ARexx script. MultiLayer allows you to select such a script for each layer which is executed every frame. It's an opportunity to perform an oilpaint effect, blur the image,



emboss it, or whatever else you can do with ARexx, providing you know how to use it.

I would like to have seen some hard coded buttons on MultiLayer's interface to perform some standard processing effects which would please those who don't know the first thing about programming in ARexx. (As I've always said, why should artists have to learn how to program?) An automatic shadow creator would have been nice too.

Conclusion

MultiLayer takes the power of your processing package and combines it with an easy to use interface to create stunning, professional 24 bit anim-

RATINGS

MultiLayer

FEATURES	85%
PERFORMANCE	95%
DOCUMENTATION	90%
EASE OF USE	80%
VALUE FOR MONEY	84%
Overall Rating 87%	

INFO

Price: £99

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




Here's a broadcast quality title animation sequence using alpha channels and a total of 17 layers. (LightWave and Photogenics were used to create the static imagery.)

ations. This is perfect for TV title sequences or anything than can benefit from compositing and motion. It does exactly what it's meant to do with excellent results. AUI

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PowerTitler

Apart from the PD titling packages, the cheapest commercial ones are listed at around £99 which leaves quite a big gap in the market. Home videographers with their camcorders and trusty Amigas often want nothing more than an easy-to-use, basic titling system for a realistic price. I believe ClassX Development of Italy have addressed these needs very well.

System Requirements

Power Titler works on any Amiga using AmigaDOS 1.3 right up to 3.1. You'll need a minimum of 1Mb of Chip RAM and 1Mb of Fast RAM, although a stock A1200 will do just fine. A hard disk is recommended to store the fonts but I've been running it off a floppy without any problems.

Because a hardware dongle must be connected to the joystick port it appears at first impossible for G-Lock owners to use their genlocks, since it too requires exclusive use of the joystick port. The software claims to support the G-Lock but I have one and it needs the joystick port to work! Will someone please explain?



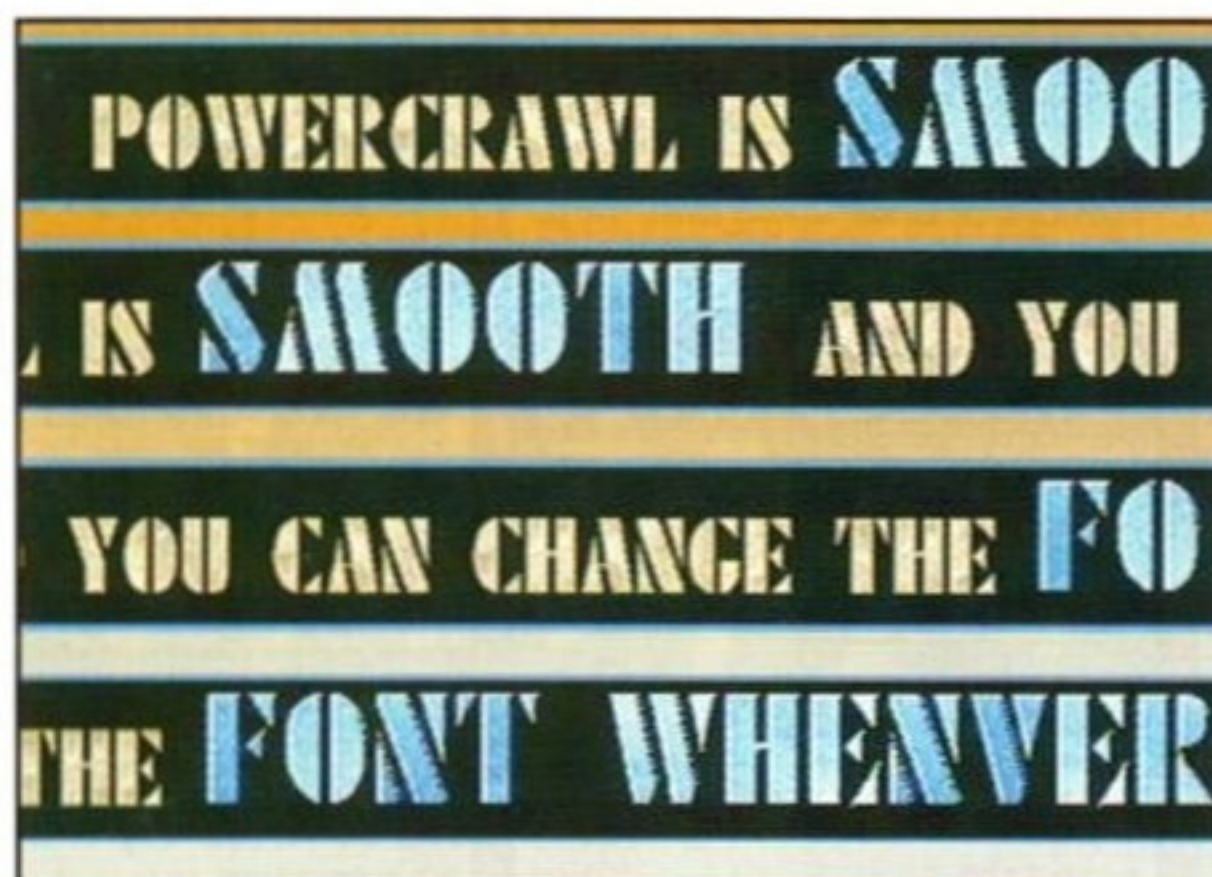
PowerCrawl

PowerTitler comes on two disks containing three programs and 13 variations of fonts and sizes. The first program, PowerCrawl, scrolls text horizontally with the ability to include a brush, such as a logo, for example.

The interface is neatly laid out with buttons to load text files, position the brush image, change scroll speed, alter the pause time, change the font, and edit the palette. The text can be positioned to scroll anywhere on the screen in lowres or highres with interlace or without.

Up to two different fonts can be

Test driving a new titler from Italy, Gary Fenton finds it is a package that he believes fills a long felt gap in the Amiga armoury.



PowerCrawl scrolls a single line of text across the screen. This is a sequence of video grabs and doesn't do justice to the actual quality.

PowerPage: The menu automatically jumps to the top of the screen when you're editing text at the bottom.

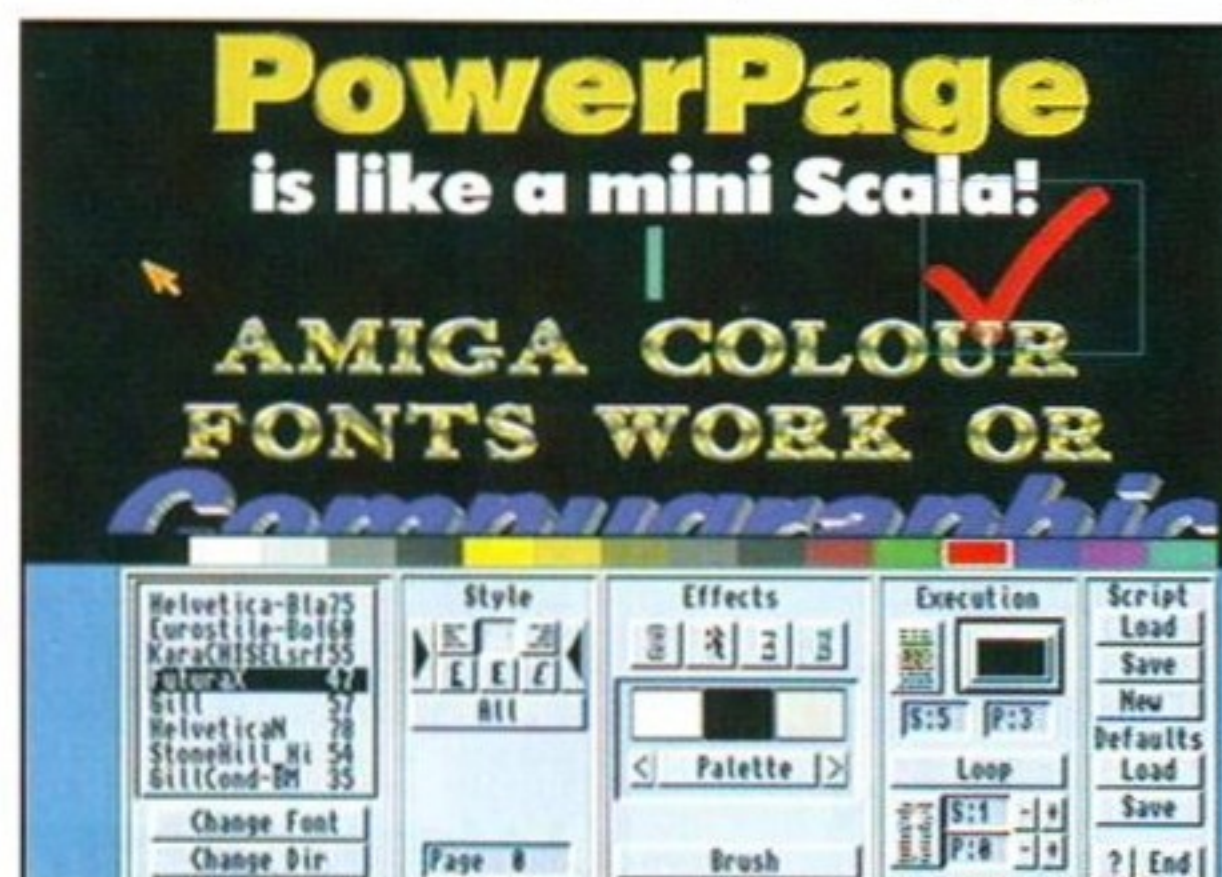


PowerFont can create some great fonts using brush maps.

PowerPage

This program is designed to scroll text vertically or wipe between pages using any of the 42 effects. Each line of text can have its own font type and size, colour, alignment, and style. Styles include bold, italic, underline, outline, 3D, shadow, and emboss.

PowerFonts loads in any type of Amiga font and can perform various effects on the font before saving them as Cfonts. Such effects include outline, bevel, brush mapping, and anti-aliasing. It's a shame that PowerPage can't use Cfonts because you can create some nice Cfonts using the PowerFonts part of the package.



PowerPage in action. These screen shots are video grabs, so the quality of the shots is jaded.

Conclusion

If the Italian price is anything to go by then the price of the whole package is very good considering competitive products. The only negative points are that none of the programs multitasks, probably because they were programmed in AMOS (but don't let that put you off), and the stupid dongle. Does a £40 program really need hardware protection?

To conclude, I recommend PowerTitler to all those people who can't afford the luxury of Scala or MediaPoint for video titling. Well done to ClassX for coming up with such an affordable and usable product that gets the job done. **AUI**

Brushes can be included with each page that are optionally remapped to the current palette if required. PowerTitler only supports up to 16 colours so you can't be too extravagant with your choice of brushes. The text sits on top of the brushes, so with a little imagination you can create some very fetching credits or captions. The page effects are very good and include wipes, bouncing pages, wallpaper peels, and other clever tricks which compare favourably with Scala.

PowerFont

Because PowerCrawl uses a propriety font format called Cfonts (PowerPage uses standard Amiga fonts) there needs to be a way of converting normal fonts to Cfonts, and PowerFonts does just that. Cfonts are colour fonts but must not be confused with standard Amiga colourfonts.

RATINGS

PowerTitler

FEATURES	86%
PERFORMANCE	84%
DOCUMENTATION	90%
EASE OF USE	88%
VALUE FOR MONEY	96%
Overall Rating 89%	

INFO

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There's a strange light coming from Mark Blackham's bedroom. He says it's an Aura.

The 12-bit sampling sound barrier has been broken by HiSoft! Wait, they've already cracked 16-bit, and we're getting tired of 8-bit sounds. What the heck are HiSoft doing releasing 12-bit sampling hardware! Well, it seems that no one really beat down the HiSoft doors to buy their last 16-bit hardware, Clarity 16, so they've come up with something cheaper - Aura. Aura is 12-bit sampling hardware/software that comes in a box the size of two fists which plugs into your PCMCIA port. There's no thru port, so if you currently use the PCMCIA you're out of luck. The first thing you are told to do by the well-produced manual is to mount four little rubber feet (supplied) to the bottom of the hardware so it sits on the desk and doesn't hang off the PCMCIA slot. My feet were still clearing the desk by a good few millimetres. Somewhere along the line a random piece of plastic covering the interface card fell off, and the Aura logo, stuck crookedly on the top, began peeling back. Those are minor niggles, since the real test is how the equipment and software works.

Superb

In the area of raw sampling and processing Aura is superb. Apparently it records and plays back samples in 12-bit but processes the sound at 16-bit. This appears to improve sound quality but how significantly is up to your ear more than the technical reports. The sampling software is powerful and flexible. Editing options and real time effects include impressive compression, EQ tweaking, three levels of frequency filters, pitch bend, phaser, echo and reverb. Some impressive graphical representations of the samples are available to help you analyse them. Oscilloscopes, spectrum analysers and 3D frequency display. The sample sequencing facility is similar to that introduced by AudioMaster, where a list of samples or segments of samples

can be played back in a pre-programmed order, or assigned to a MIDI keyboard.

There has to be a catch, and with AURA it is a major one. Aura samples cannot be loaded into existing trackers and sequencers to be played on the four internal Amiga channels. They can only be played back through Aura itself. That means sequencing software must be able to tap the hardware to use the extra two Aura channels. Resample

AURA



Aura's editing suite is well equipped, quick and easy.

Your only options are to resample Aura samples down to 8-bit, or use the Aura 12-bit output as a MIDI device connected to your synth. Resampling does end up with marginally better-sounding 8-bit samples, and with the Aura as a 12-bit MIDI device, you'll have to play the samples in real time while your Amiga sequencer churns away doing other preprogrammed stuff. HiSoft are obviously well-aware of the huge problem Aura faces in

being integrated into an Amiga-based music studio. The hardware comes well equipped. The back has two phono receptacles for the sampling source and two phono outs to the amplifier. Unless you have a mixer, the Aura outs would hog the amp/monitor audio inputs, so two extra phono ins have been provided so you can route the Amiga audio output through Aura and to your speakers.

Compatibility Question

Dave Woodhouse of HiSoft says Aura is really aimed at Amiga users wanting a good quality sampling kit. He reckons that those into top notch music generation on the Amiga are probably equipped with stand-alone dedicated samplers. It's a big assumption, and one that ignores those users working their way up.

Don't hold your breath for sequencer compatibility. Mr Woodhouse condemns the developers, apart from Octamed who have included Aura compatibility in an update, because they



Aura - The size of two fists, and packing as much punch.

"can't be bothered" to attempt the coding work required to access the audio through the PCMCIA. His annoyance is understandable because to a large extent his product relies on the participation of software developers.

Conclusion

Don't let the fact that you cannot use 12-bit samples in your sequencers or sound trackers put you off Aura if you are interested in getting a mid-range sampling package. It is well-priced, well-presented and very powerful, especially if you consider it simply as an advanced quality 8-bit sampling system. **AUI**



Use Aura as an extra MIDI module for your keyboard.

RATINGS

Aura	
FEATURES	91%
PERFORMANCE	90%
DOCUMENTATION	92%
VALUE FOR MONEY	80%

Overall Rating 90%

INFO

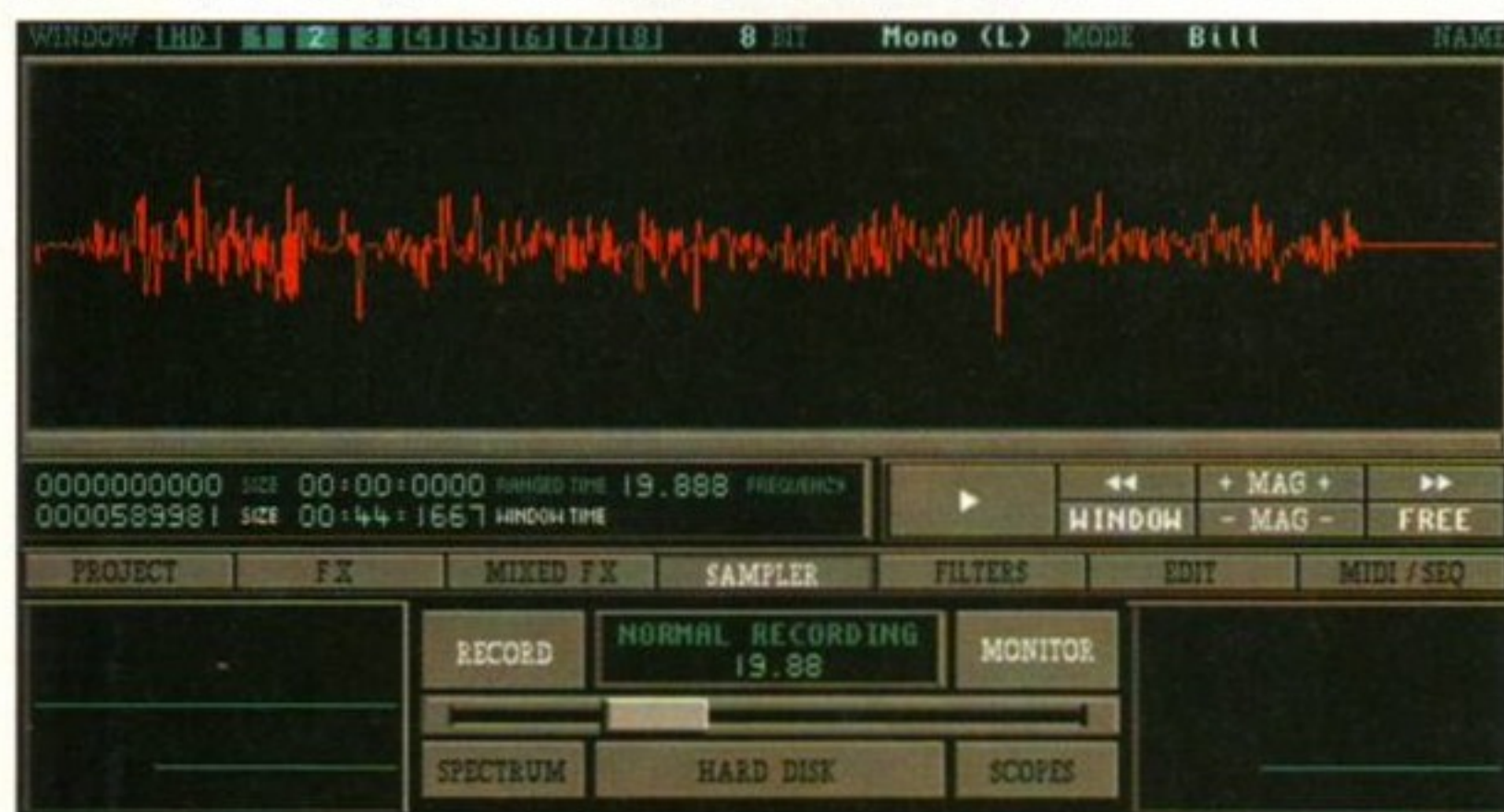
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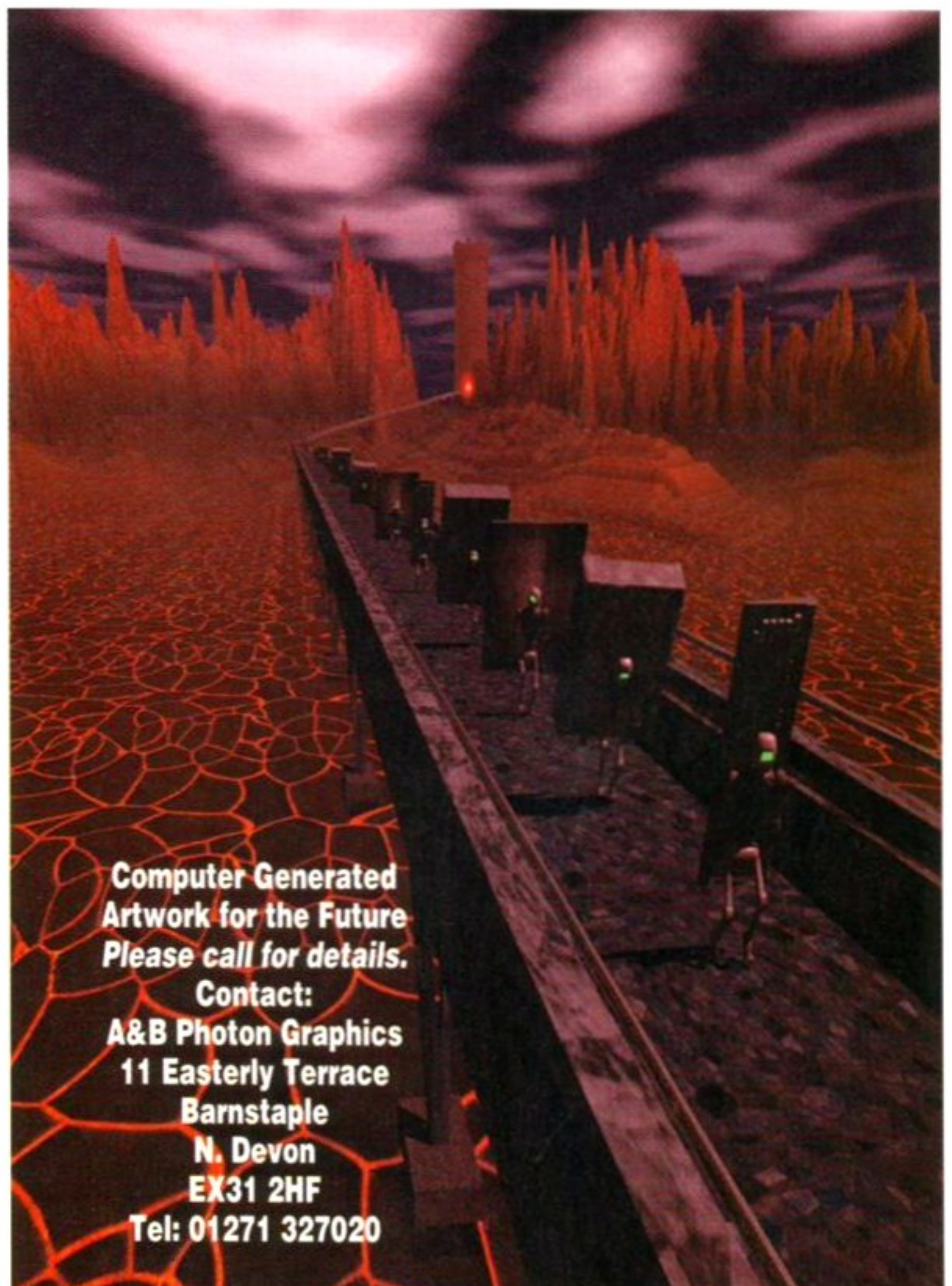
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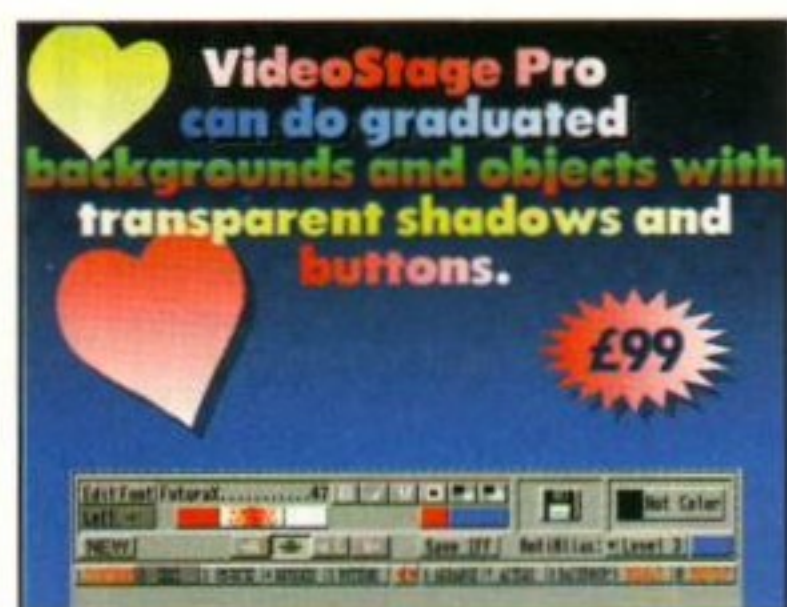
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VideoStage Pro

Gary Fenton test drives Oxxi's affordable multimedia authoring and titling package.



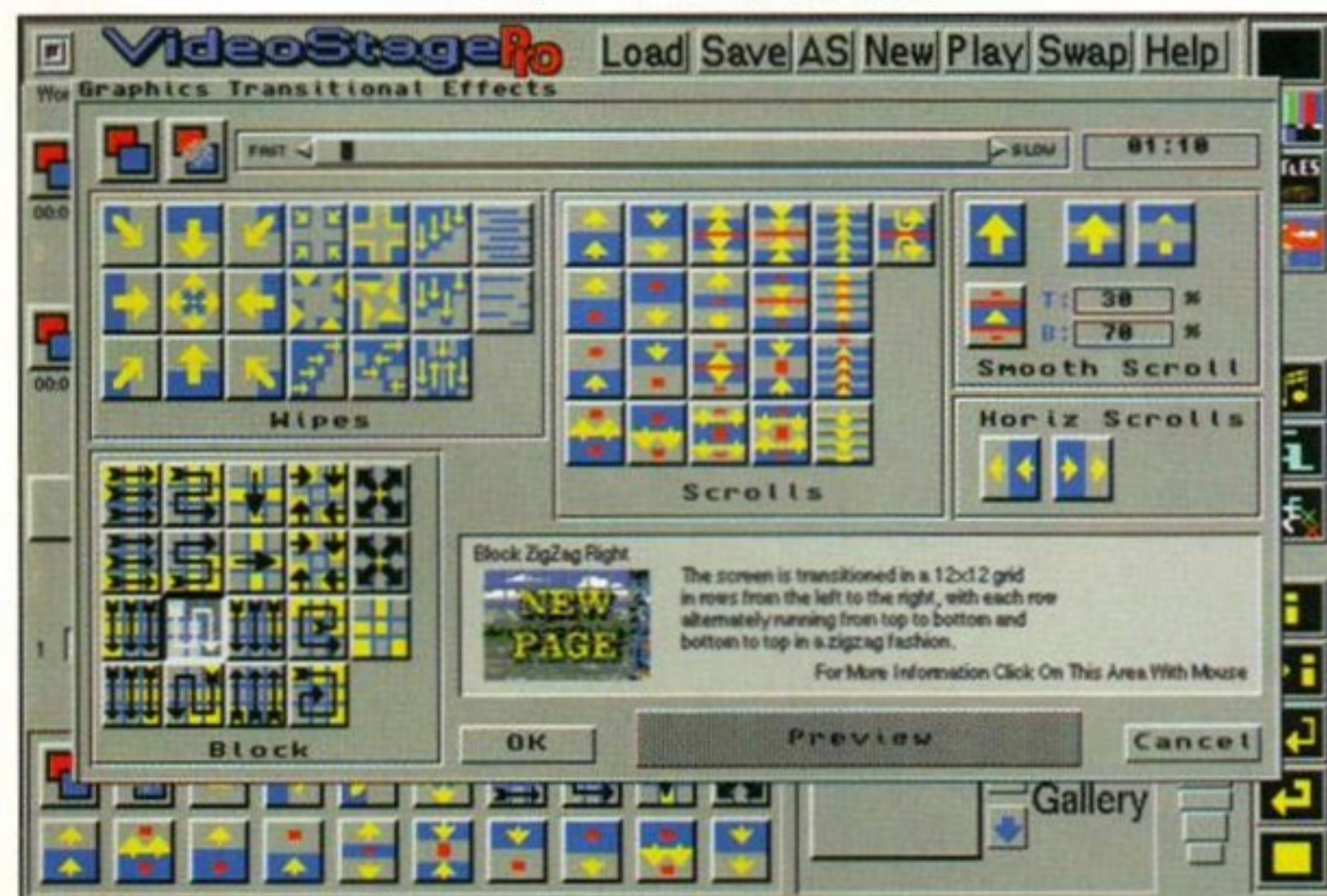
VideoStage can create some pretty screens, eventually.



Buttons can easily be created for interactive applications.



VideoStagePro's main storyboard screen.



The transition effects window.

System Requirements

Oxxi recommends any Amiga with AmigaDOS 2 or greater with 3Mb RAM to run VideoStage Pro. At least 1Mb of that should be Chip RAM and any extra RAM won't go amiss. You also need a hard disk. There's no copy protection so you can run your VideoStage scripts on multiple Amigas using the stand alone player program.

At half the price of MediaPoint and one third of Scala's, VideoStage Pro does sound like an interesting purchase if you're involved with video production, or more so interactive information and presentation systems.

The concept is similar to those of the aforementioned competitors, but the interface is quite different. I guess you can like it, lump it, or grow to like it which is what I've tried to do. The core of VideoStage is the Storyboard screen which shows you the order of visual, audio, Arexx, genlock, or interactive branching events. A simultaneous time line display is also available allowing you to synchronise events exactly for perfect timing.

Transitions

VideoStage has over 60 transition effects to wipe from one page to another. As you click on each wipe button from the selection window a description of the effects appears together with a visual demonstration of the effect (shown as a thumbnail). This is a very useful feature which is normally found on professional PC products.

When creating an event which incorporates text or graphics you are whisked off to the page editing section of VideoStage. This is made up of eight main sections for text entry, objects, brushes, buttons, arrangement, actor effects, backdrop control, and the preview feature. At first it seems odd dashing between lots of menus if you are familiar with Scala's interface. If you enter some text and want to reposition it you have to go to the arrange menu. And if you want to change any attributes of the text you must visit the font menu. There's quite a bit of travelling to do between menus to get something finished but the results are often worth the effort.

From the actors menu there are nearly 50 transition effects from which to choose. This is one part of VideoStage which I feel is better supported than any other similar program, even including Scala. Unlike the competition, VideoStage can move several objects/actors around at the same time using different effects! This is achieved by employing a timed delay between effects. A negative number will make the current actor come in early, appearing just after the previous actor has appeared.

A transition normally occurs to one line of text at a time. VideoStage, however, can make a transition occur to each letter of a line at a time. Each

line can also be broken up into a user definable grid, so blocks defined by the grid will transpose individually. This makes transitions much more exciting since more things can occur simultaneously. Curved motion paths are particularly impressive although I found VideoStage's effects not quite as smooth, in most cases, as Scala's.

Other Features

Other important features include transparent shadows for objects and buttons (not text), transparent buttons, graduated text, objects, and backgrounds, tiled backgrounds, 3D rotating of objects (9 basic object shapes to play with, such as box, heart, triangle, arrow, etc), three levels of reasonable anti-aliasing and good (but in the same breath restrictive and uncontrollable) automatic palette handling and remapping which also warns you of illegal colours (for video).

Conclusion

The storyboard and timeline screen can, in theory, use any screen mode you like. Curiously, VideoStage used a 256 colour screen every time regardless of my numerous attempts to tell it to use a 16 colour screen on my A4000. This resulted in a very slow user interface as the Amiga struggled to update the 256 colour screen. Also, I must point out that VideoStage won't load anim8 files, only anim5. Palette remapping seems inconsistent.

VideoStage doesn't come close to the usability level of Scala, but it does offer similar features even though you can't zip around the interface as quickly as you can with Scala. For the money, it's really good value if you can't afford the alternatives. However it'll probably do what you want which is admirable for the asking price. A multimedia solution well worth looking into. **AUI**

RATINGS

VideoStage

FEATURES	90%
PERFORMANCE	78%
DOCUMENTATION	85%
EASE OF USE	79%
VALUE FOR MONEY	89%

Overall Rating 84%

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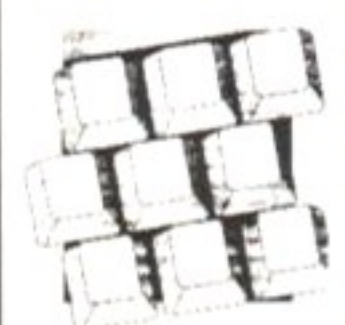
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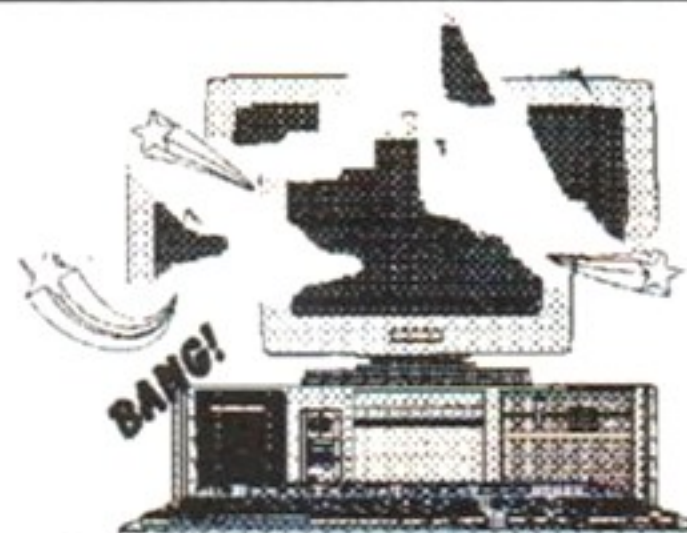
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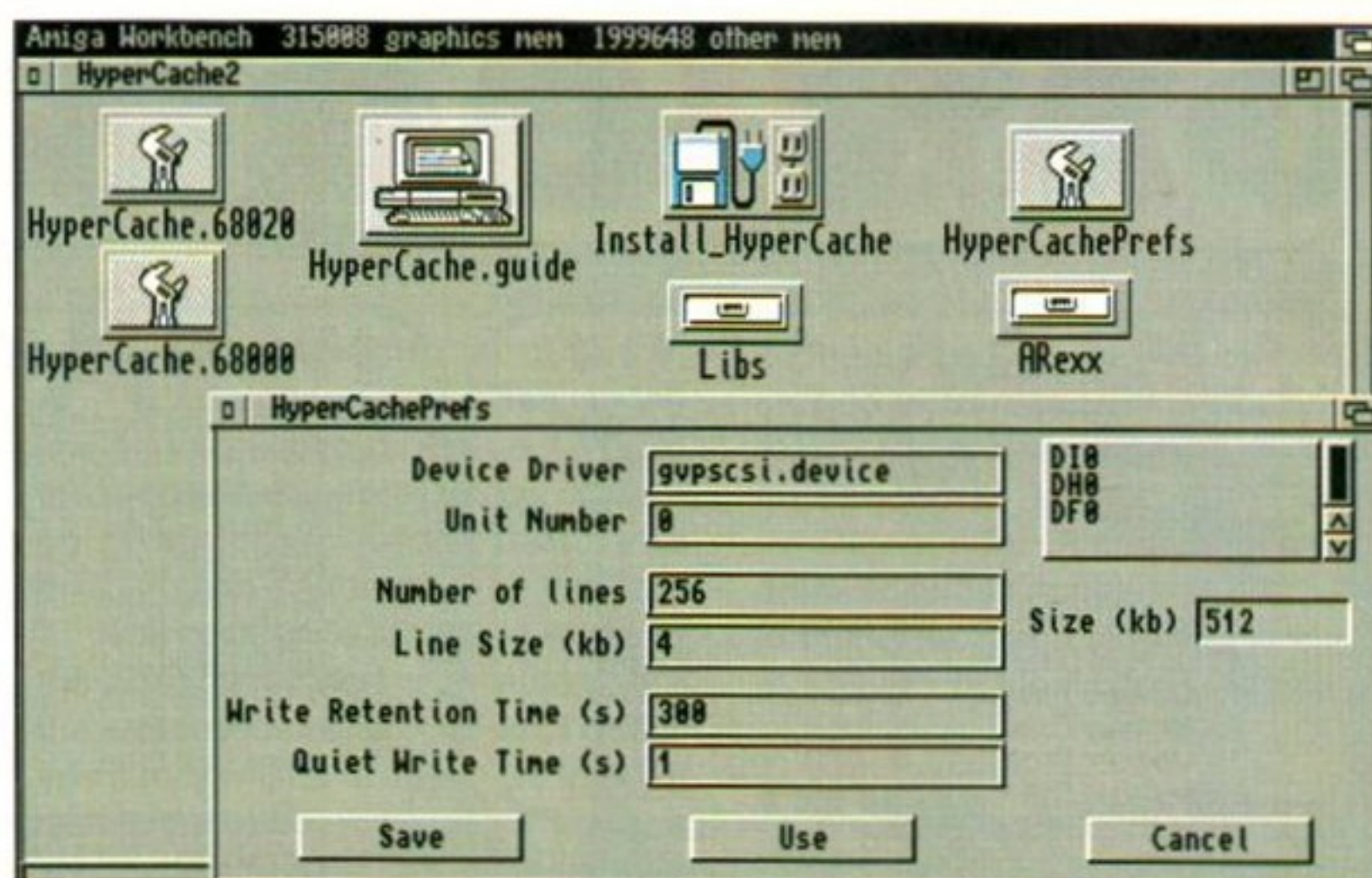
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The search for increased computer speed is like the holy grail. The quest is never completed. Amiga users are not immune to the attraction of this mystical goal. Thousands of them have bought products on the strength of promised speed increases which never occurred or were never enough.

There has been a lot of rubbish written recently about making the Amiga faster for bugger-all investment. Let's get this straight - productivity is not an increase in your Amiga's processing speed. The only real way you will increase your speed significantly is to change the CPU to a faster processor, such as a 68030, with extra RAM. A very few software solutions do offer

it reads more than requested to RAM, so when you ask for data from the same source again, it's probably already in RAM. The application takes it from there, rather than the drive - saving valuable time in reading the drive again.

When you write data to a drive, Hypercache intercepts it and holds off actually writing it until the Amiga is less busy. This system is based on the premise that much data is actually only temporary and may be changed again. Therefore, why waste time writing it? If you haven't rewritten it again after five minutes (or what-ever you choose), or the processor goes idle, Hypercache will write the data to the drive. Obviously this really does increase the operating speed since it saves your CPU



HyperCache

(Professional Version 2)

true speed increases. They usually do this by altering the way your Amiga manages its processing tasks. Hypercache 2 is one such program.

Hypercache fiddles with your Amiga operating system. If the thought of such things makes you shudder, then approach Hypercache with caution. Take time to check out how and why it operates. If you know why a solid, reliable tweak of the Amiga OS would improve things, then think seriously about this software.

A lot of your time, as well as that of the Ami, is taken up waiting for floppy drives, CD-ROMS and hard drives to be read or written. Hypercache creates a specially isolated section of RAM (user-definable, but 512K as default). When you load up data for the first time,

Fast food, fast cars, and a faster Amiga? Mark Blackham finds that speed is in the mind of the beholder.

valuable processing time.

Most people will notice at least slight speed improvements, like their application moving straight on after 'writing to disk', and Hypercache doing the actual writing a short time later. For many people, that may be the best they get out of the program.

At A Price

Speed comes at a price. Since Hypercache pretends to be the drive to

which your application is writing (and then chooses its own time to really write to disk), your application will be satisfied that all went OK even if Hypercache later strikes a read/write problem. Even though you could now try to resave the data yourself, if you have already exited the program thinking all was completed, you have probably lost the data. You're stuffed.

The only solution is to let the computer go idle and wait until you see Hypercache save the file before proceeding with exiting the program or closing down the Amiga. Installation of Hypercache is a breeze, thanks to the usual Commodore Installer program, and a very helpful manual. You have to choose which drive you normally write / read from, and the device driver is automatically set, then the size of your RAM cache which will store information.

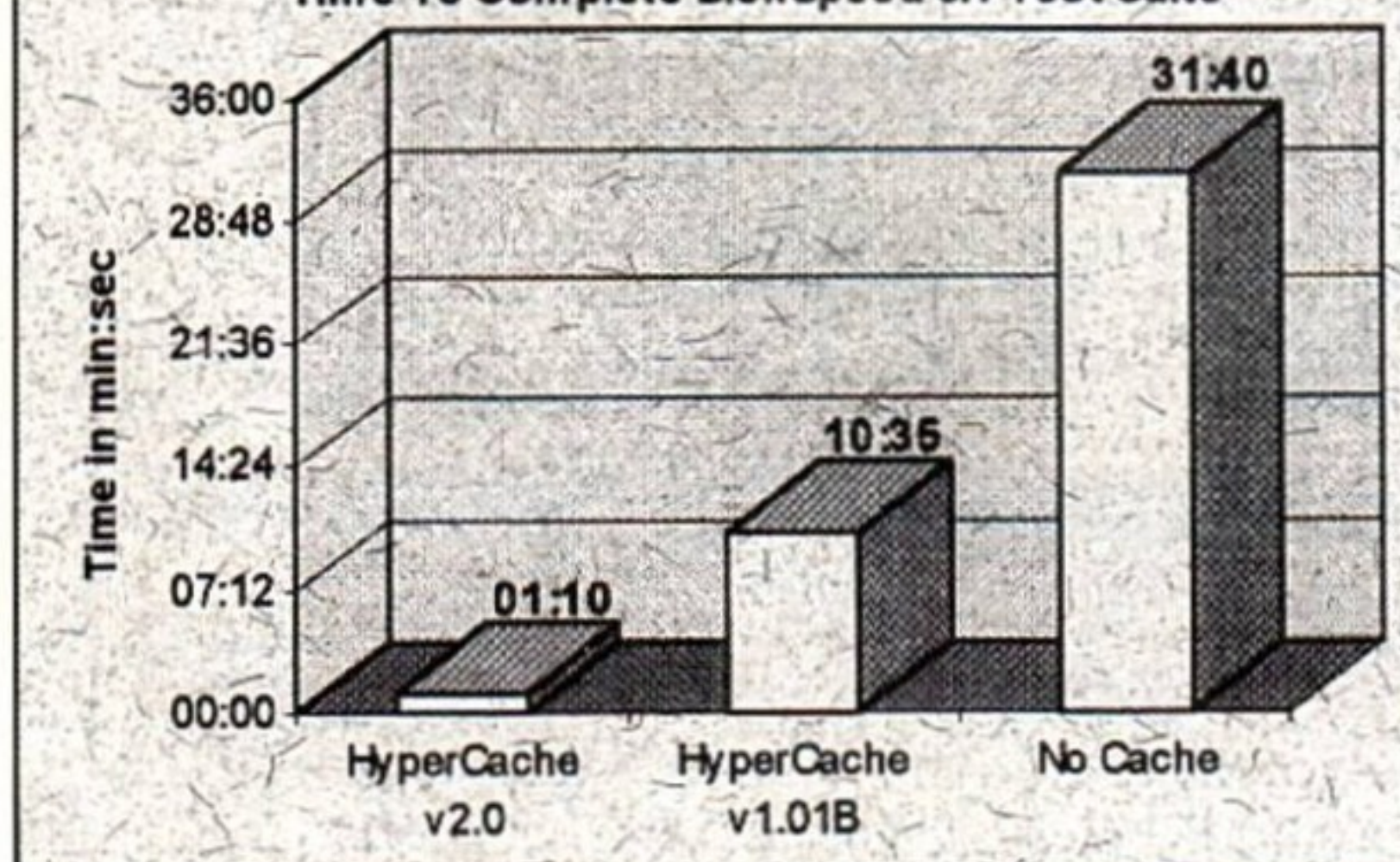
You can also define the length of time data is retained before being written, as well as the time Hypercache waits after the processor goes idle before writing to disk. "Power users" have plenty of options for custom configuration such as multiple caches, starting Hypercache from user-startup, AREXX compatibility, and monitoring running statistics.

The specs and statistics prove that Hypercache can make a substantial difference. Silicon Prairie claim increases of 3000% from their test suite.

Conclusion

Speed, despite the stats, is relative. It has to be said that in normal use I did not notice any significant changes. My usual application demands are pretty standard, so Hypercache was never pushed. If you are a power user, or even an average user with a lust for speed, then Hypercache should be in your armoury. Hypercache, and other programs like it, are really concerned with fine-tuning the Amiga engine. But let's face it, the real path to the Holy Grail of Speed lies in getting a faster engine. **AUI**

Time To Complete DiskSpeed 3.1 Test Suite



RATINGS

Hypercache Professional Version 2

FEATURES	85%
PERFORMANCE	86%
EASE OF USE	94%
DOCUMENTATION	78%
VALUE FOR MONEY	82%

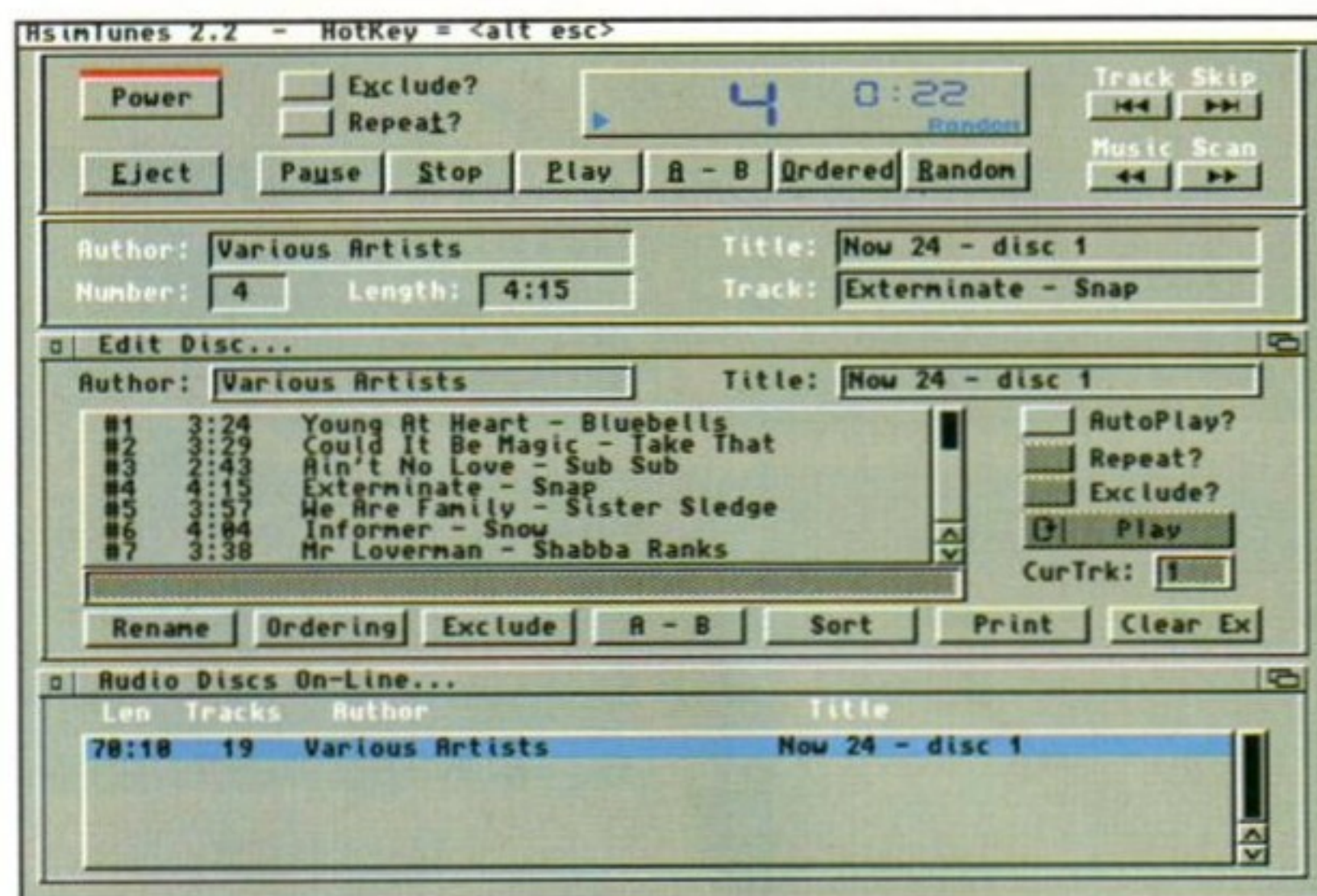
Overall Rating 84%

INFO

Price: £24.99
Contact: Wizard Developments
PO BOX 490, Dartford
Kent, DA1 2UH
Tel: 01322 272908

Asim CDFS

A large volume of software is already available on CD and all you need is a CD drive and a CD filing system. Gary Fenton test drives a new CD filing system from Canada.



Asimware's CD audio player software in action.

Unlike hard drives you can't simply "plug in and go" with a CD ROM drive. A special filing system for CD drives must be installed first to make your Amiga recognise the drive. Asimware Innovations have come up with their own package of CD software aimed at being the "total" solution for CD owners.

The package consists of the filing system, a PhotoCD viewer and converter, an audio CD player and librarian, and a CD containing Fred Fish disks 260 to 1000. Installation is straight forward and the actual filing system takes up less than 60k of your hard disk, although the audio and PhotoCD programs take up a tad more space.

Asim CDFS doesn't require much of an Amiga to work with - so long as you have AmigaDOS 2 or greater, a compatible CD drive, and 512k of RAM. The CDFS (compact disc filing system) reads three types of CDs: ISO9660 (the international standard as used by Amigas), High Sierra (an old format which is dying out), and the Hierarchical File System (HFS). HFS is the main file format used on Apple Macs for large capacity devices.

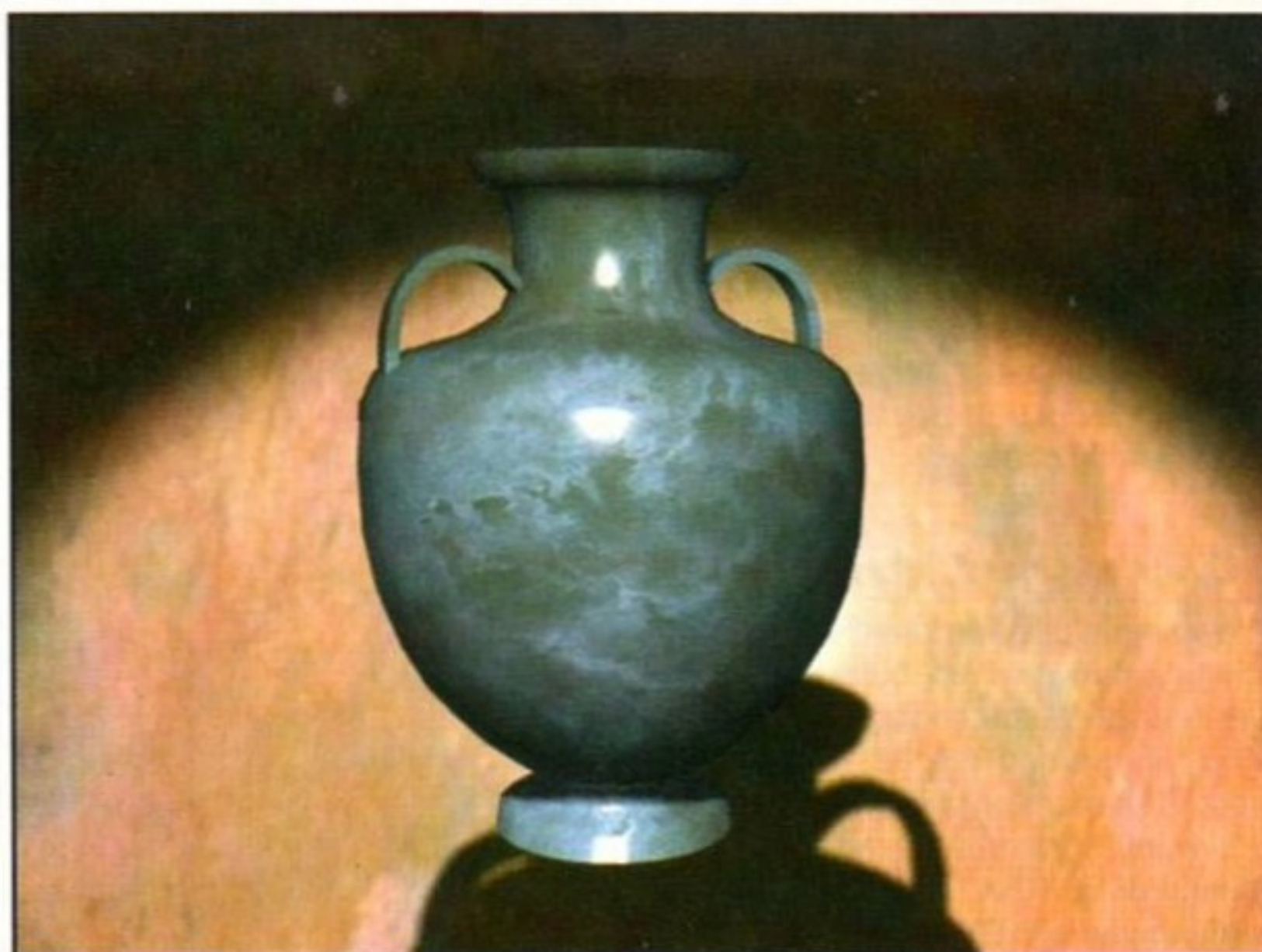
Not all CDFSs will work with all combinations of SCSI controllers and CD drives. Some of the controllers that ASIM CDFS works with include the Commodore 2091, 4091, A590, and Amiga 3000 (with 6.6 ROMS). GVP's Impact Series II and Combo cards (with 4.4 ROMS) are also supported, and so too are the IVS Trumpcard (with 4.9 ROMS), Fastlane Z3, and the Warp Engine.

The list of compatible CD drives is far too long to list here. Generally, Toshiba, Panasonic and Chinon drives work very well and most NEC, Pioneer, Sony, Hitachi, Matsushita and even the Apple PowerCD drives work. Although my drive (Media Vision SCSI 2 from Silica) was not listed, it does work with Asim CDFS without a hitch.

If you have a multi-changer CD drive then a neat program supplied with Asim CDFS will allow you to select discs by clicking on the disc's name. The CD audio program lets you play regular audio CDs and catalogue your disc collection. Because all CDs are unique, the software knows which CD you've inserted and lists the names of the songs - providing you've previously typed in the information.

New CIX Conference

If you've access to CIX and own a CD drive (or are contemplating buying one) then why not join the new CD conference just for the Amiga? It's called amiga_cd. See you there.



I wrapped one of the textures from Field Of Vision around an Urn in LightWave. The collection is excellent for all graphics people.

Picture Box

The PhotoCD player looks good but I have not yet been able to get it to work properly. The supplied CD called FishMarket is however excellent. A program called KingFisher lets you wade or search through the massive collection of Fish disks on this one CD. There's the equivalent of 740 floppy disks on it!

The sad thing about Asim CDFS is that there's comparable software which does a similar job in the public domain. I can name PD filing systems like AmiCDROM or AmiCDFS which work just as well, and CD audio software like JukeBox, MCDP, or YAK. There are even PhotoCD converters in the public domain. I'm not knocking Asimware's package because in its own right it's actually very good with a helpful manual. The choice is yours. **AUI**

RATINGS

Asim CDFS

FEATURES	88%
PERFORMANCE	90%
EASE OF USE	90%
VALUE FOR MONEY	75%
Overall Rating 85%	

INFO

Price: \$79 or DM98 (£50)
Contact: Asimware Innovations,
101 Country Club Drive,
Hamilton, Ontario, L8K 5W4,
Canada.

Tel: 905 5784916
Hirsch and Wolf, Germany.
Tel 010 49 263183990

Picture Box textures can also be used with Scala, Media Point and other such software.

They make great backgrounds for presentations.

Field Of Vision (who have been in the media industry for 17 years) have recently launched a new collection of art backgrounds on CD for professional use. The first disc contains 60 high quality, royalty free, abstract images. They're perfect for wrapping around objects in 3D packages, backgrounds for presentations, DTP, and many other applications.

The PhotoCD format has been employed for the collection which means any computer platform and software package which supports PhotoCD can access the images in resolutions of up to 3072x2048 pixels. There are PhotoCD loaders for ADPro and Photogenics, and IFF converters in the public domain. **AUI**

RATINGS

Picture Box
Rating 93%

INFO

Price: £40
Contact: Field Of Vision
Tel: 0171 263 5054

You have two choices when are looking for a new monitor for your Amiga. You can try to find a Commodore 1942 or similar which will work in all screen resolutions with all Amigas. But the 1942s etc are quite expensive and usually only come in a 14" size. However, you can go for a VGA monitor which is not so compatible but is a considerably cheaper.

Compatibility

The compatibility problem lies in the Amiga's native video output. It was designed to output video resolutions which lie around the 15 KHz mark. Most VGA monitors will only accept a minimum horizontal scanning frequency of 30 KHz. The solution was partly solved by AGA which introduced Double PAL which output a 30 KHz signal. The only way completely to solve the problem was either to buy an A3000 which has a built-in flicker fixer, or to buy a separate flicker fixer card, which can be expensive. It is, however, very important to buy a decent monitor that doesn't flicker. You only have one pair of eyes. Nobody knows how long they (or your sanity) will last when stuck with a flickery TV screen.

Double Pal

Without an A3000 or a flicker fixer you will not be able to use the standard PAL modes, only Double PAL. This



Save your eyes and your sanity with flicker free viewing.

Screen Star

will cause problems when playing games or running demos, as nearly all of them will use standard PAL.

So how does the Idek monitor perform? The screen is very flat and has a non-glare coating. I was impressed by the way the glass was anti-static and didn't attract dust. The picture is very sharp with only minimal focus loss at the extreme edges. There are push button controls for Vertical and Horizontal size and position, Brightness and Contrast, Trapezoidal, Pin-cushion, and Paralelogram. The last three buttons are to adjust various distortions with the picture. The first time you switch on your monitor, you will need to use these buttons to stretch and position your screen to your preference. This will need to be done for each resolution.

The controls for Brightness and Contrast are analogue dials. I found to get an acceptable picture, I had to set both dials to maximum. While the picture was excellent on these settings,

Gideon Overhead test drives the Idek, an interesting addition to the range of monitors now available for the Amiga.

there are occasions when I would want to turn up the brightness to illuminate a dark picture and I wouldn't be able to do it.

Before the Idek, I used a basic Philips 8833 monitor, and though I only used Hi-Res Non-Lace with it, the Idek was easier to look at. Perhaps it was the low dot pitch which meant a higher detail was displayed, or perhaps it was just because now I couldn't see my reflection in it!

Conclusion

I really like this monitor. I have only a few caveats. The first is that the brightness levels don't go high enough. The second is a sync switching delay. If

you are quickly switching between certain screen modes, for example from Productivity to PAL Hi-Res Lace, there is a two second blank screen while the monitor switches frequencies. This doesn't happen when switching from Hi-Res to Hi-Res Lace though.

This problem won't occur when using the monitor with a PC, as PC owners don't switch between resolutions quickly as we Amiga users do. PC users would have to re-start Windows every time!

On the subject of PC's, the connector on the Idek is a standard VGA type. This won't be a problem if you own an A3000 but for the rest of us, an adapter will have to be bought. The AMI-VGA which was reviewed in **AUI**

December 94's Video Column would be perfect.

Monitors are coming down in price all the time, and the 15" and 17" sizes especially are dropping fast. The list price for the Idek is about £299+VAT but if you shop around you could pick it up for less. **AUI**

RATINGS

Idek

VALUE FOR MONEY	80%
FEATURES	90%
DOCUMENTATION	80%

Overall Rating 87%

INFO

Price: £299.00 +VAT
Contact: Iiyama (UK) Ltd
8 Viewpoint, Babbage Rd
Stevenage, Herts SG1 2EQ
Tel: 01438 745482
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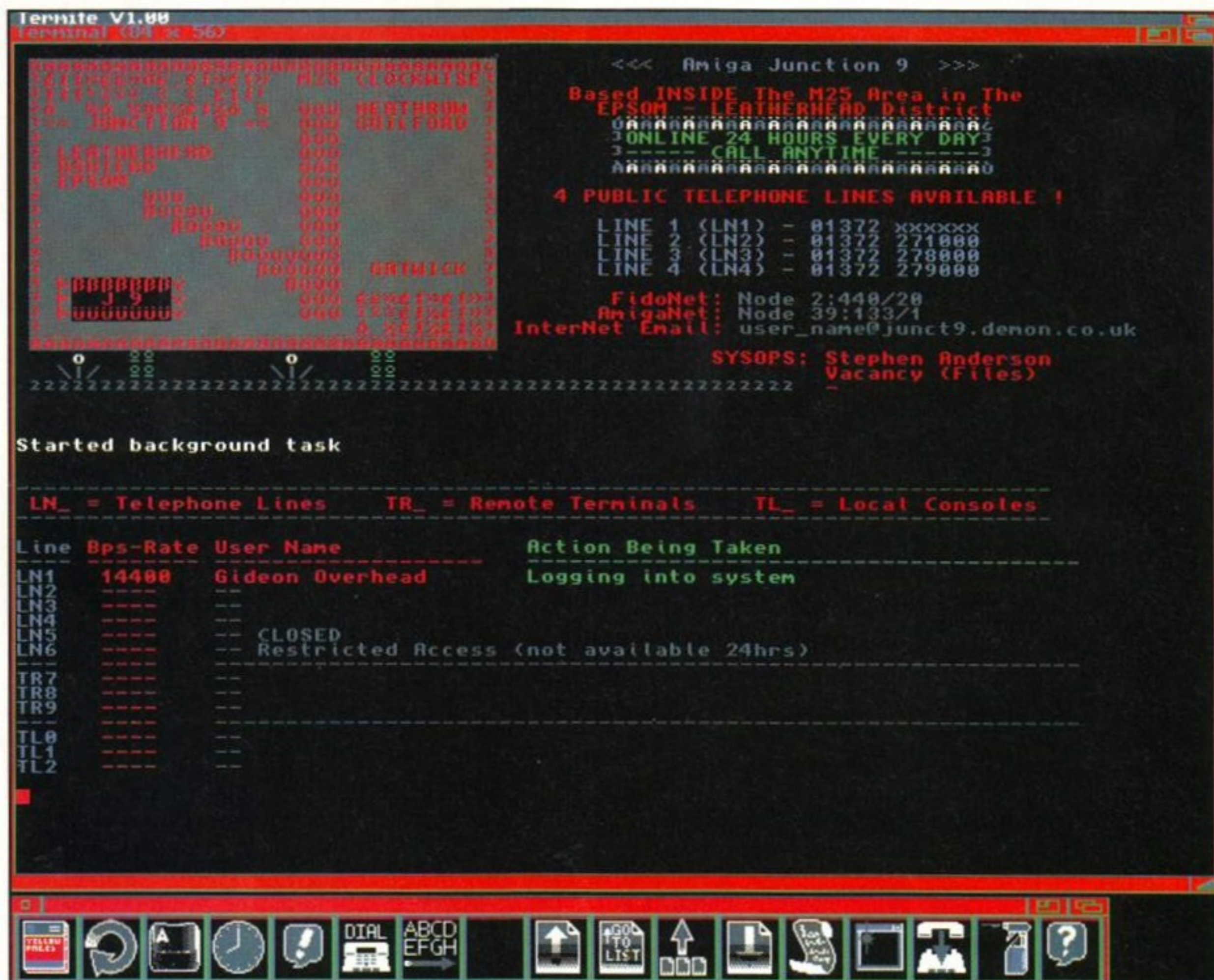
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Since I have been using a modem with the Amiga I have tried several communications programs but ended up going back to using the same program, Ncomm. This wonderful piece of software is Shareware and what makes it so popular is that it does the job and is easy to use and, of course, is very cheap. I didn't really need anything more... Or so I thought until Termite.

Termite offers many features, most of which are very useful and because of them, my comms sessions have been speeded up, saving money.

Termite arrives on a single disk and is accompanied by an easy to read and helpful spiral bound manual. The Commodore Installer is used to make life simple and before you know it, the main program is ready to run. When Termite is first loaded you will probably need to change many of the settings to get it running.

It is just so configurable. Take the Phonebook for example. If you know a BBS with multiple phone lines, you can enter all of these numbers into the queue which means that when you want to dial that BBS. If one of the numbers is engaged, it will move onto the next. You can also change the screen mode and font for each phonebook entry which can be useful. Each phonebook entry can be added to a separate "dial" pull down menu so connection is just one click away.



Termite logging onto my favourite BBS.

Termite

There is an excellent upload dock feature which I found a boon. This is an icon which sits on the Workbench screen. When you want to upload multiple files that reside in different directories, all you do is drag the files onto the icon and they are put into a list. When then want to send them, all you do is select "Upload from list" from the Transfer menu and the rest is automatic.

AREXX is fully supported by Termite, but if you find this language a bit daunting, there is a useful option to record a logon script. You start the script recording, and go through your normal

Gideon Overhead gets online with a new package.

procedure when logging on to a BBS. When you have done this, the right mouse button is pressed and the script ends. When you want to log onto that BBS again, all you have to do is run the script and everything you did before is repeated.

Macros

Macro keys are well supported. These are keys which can be configured to echo frequently used pieces of text to the screen such as for example your email address and/or logon name. Storing your password as a macro is not a good idea though, just in case you hit the wrong key by mistake.

There is also a button bar which is like the macro feature but instead of echoing text, it carries out specific functions at the click of the mouse button. This bar appears in almost every Windows application but I found

it out of place in Termite, and did not feel the urge to use it once.

One small feature which I really wanted in Ncomm, is included in Termite. This is the ability to download many files of the same name without the program overwriting them. This feature was useful when downloading CIX multiple scratchpads which I frequently do. The file names would be SCRATCHPAD, then SCRATCHPAD.dup, then SCRATCHPAD.dup2 and so on.

Conclusion

I will definitely be switching to using Termite full time. After briefly returning to Ncomm, I found I missed the features and the flexibility that Termite offered me. The other main competitor is Term which is Shareware but I found this a bit slow and awkward to use. If you are serious about

comms and need a program which is flexible and full of features, then look no further. AUI

RATINGS

Termite

DOCUMENTATION	90%
FEATURES	95%
VALUE FOR MONEY	85%
PERFORMANCE	96%
EASE OF USE	90%

Overall Rating 95%

INFO

Price: £39.95
Contact: HiSoft
The Old School, Greenfield
Bedford MK45 5DE
Phone: 0525 718181
FAX: 0525 713716
Internet:
hisoft@cix.compulink.co.uk



Martin Witton test drives two lively programs from 10 Out of 10.

Driving Test

Not a program for younger Amiga fans, unless they want to do some homework in preparation for joining the traffic jams at the age of seventeen but why should they hog the keyboard all the time?

Driving the Amiga proves more manoeuvrable than getting to grips with the intricacies of road markings and symbols, so what better way to get some off the road practice? Driving Test also covers useful information for experienced drivers such as Continental Driving and has a "You and Your Car." section.

In the well tried 10 Out of 10 games format, Driving Test comprises six games in over 2000 combinations. You can monitor your progress and proceed through the games at your own speed, enjoying the trivia questions en route!

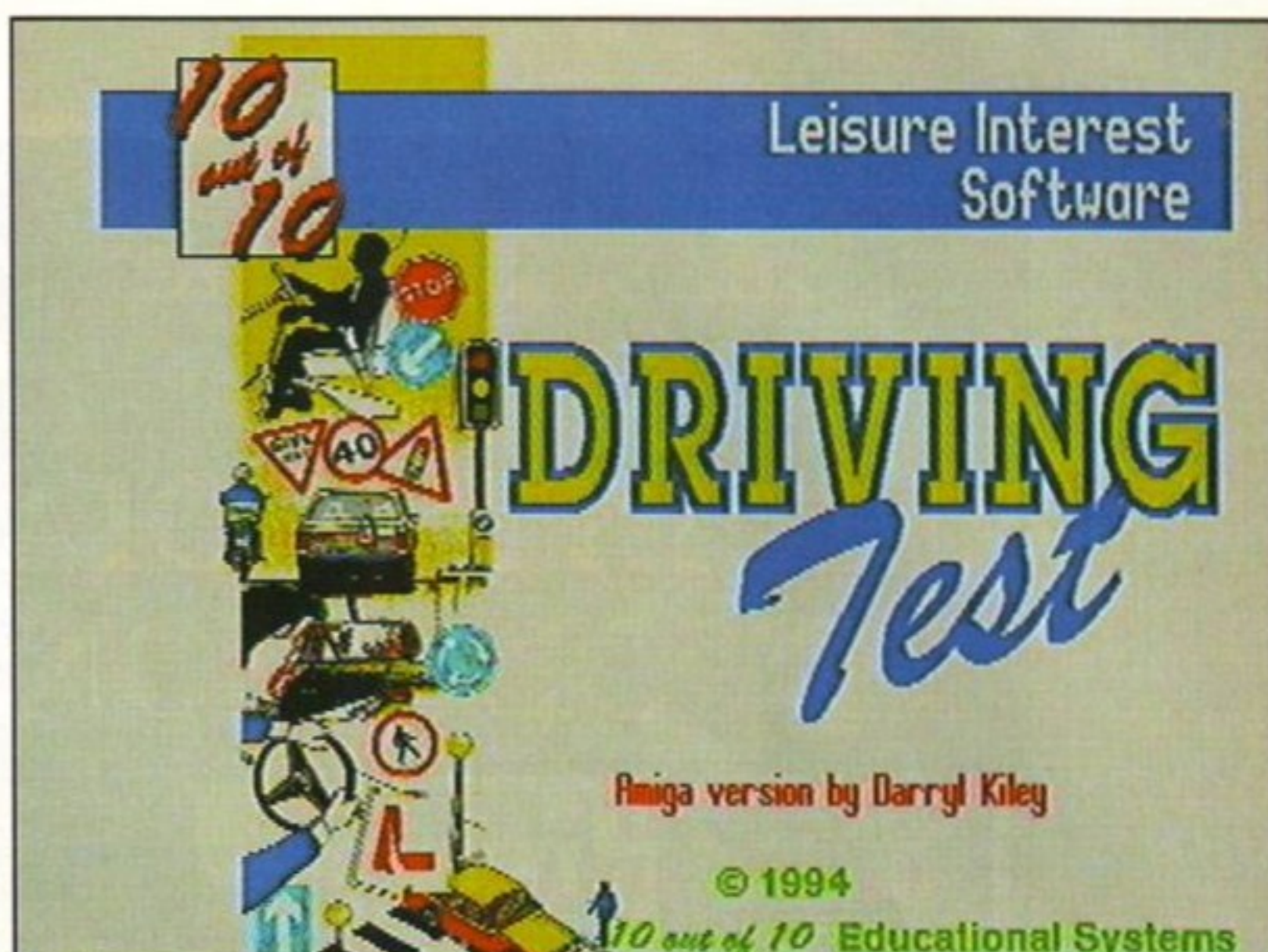
Some of the games are extremely helpful in enabling new drivers to iden-

tify and remember road signs, such as Clunk Click, based on 'pairs' where you have to match road signs to their meanings.

Mental agility is tested through Rear Mirror and players who like a gamble will enjoy the Challenge, and Speed Trap which really keeps you alert as accuracy and speed are required skills to answer questions and race to the line.

We particularly enjoyed Signpost which is designed to test reflexes as you discover hidden signs in the shortest number of tries. To complete the set, Work Park is a word power game where answering questions will reveal letters which make up the hidden word, and Patience, which tests your powers of observation.

The levels are set in an appropriate way which reflect the difficulty of the questions such as Motoring General Knowledge, Beginners Driving, Test Standard and Specialist and Advanced



Can this help you be safer on the roads.

Knowledge. As in real life, Motorway Driving is not suitable for beginners but the trivia questions on General Motoring, Motoring History, Motoring Abbreviations, Motoring Statistics, Motoring Racing and Motor Mechanics should prove entertaining and instructive however long you have been driving.

"Continental driving" will provide you with useful information on your

chosen country, from the Baltic States to more often visited Europe.

Conclusion

We can't promise that you will become a safer driver through Driving Test but you will certainly be a more informed one!

**1 Meg minimum.
Rating 7 out of 10.**



Race against the rats for early learners.

Move out of the driving seat, Mum, and let the kids have a turn! Junior Essentials provides a real Pandora's box of edutainment. If your cash is limited or you have had enough of paying large sums for so called educational games which are abandoned by the kids after a day or two, look no further than this wonderful assortment for children from 5 to 10 years. Not only should all junior school aged children find something to interest them but parents won't moan that ALL he does in his spare time is PLAY worthless games.

The clever part about this program is that children probably won't even realise just how educational it is! Would you imagine, if you were, say eight years old, that one single program could contain elements of history, geography, science, arithmetic, logic, spelling and grammar? Best not to show them the box then! Just start playing and their curiosity will be aroused, if your children are anything like mine.

It was difficult to persuade our testers off the first level of Shark, a magnets game in the quick fire format where you had to shoot the correct answer, judging

JUNIOR ESSENTIALS

whether the magnets attract the item if it contained iron or not. This seemed rather advanced until you realise that the relevant key stage in the National Curriculum involves science at this level.

The same game, Shark, changes at level two to present the opportunity to distinguish between fact and opinions and fiction. Again this seems quite an advanced concept but the game makes it easy to understand. By the time the player has experienced all the levels up to grade six, s/he will have had practice in multiplication, word puzzles, spelling and the editor's favourite 'Use of the Apostrophe' (Get them early!).

The five other games also offer six levels of play, each with a variation on the theme. Rat Race naturally involves chasing rats around while you learn geography or maths. There is even a game which involves naming parts of the body. Rats and the body may sound incongruous but just try it! The other games are Break Up - where you need good ball control to play word games, maths games and even matching labels to objects, which sounds easy until you find out it is in French!

Artist has the added attraction of being printed out as a paint program, but no doodling here, copying yes, even then you have to get it exactly right. Name the towns on a map of the UK may be useful in later years at especially at quizzes but percentages also come

into the frame besides recognising parts of the body - in French again (OK if you have a French au pair, but will she want to play! ANY kind of games!)

It is difficult to do written justice to this program, and I can only recommend you try it for yourself. The single criticism is that 10 out of 10 have restricted themselves in specifying the recommended age group, (5 to 61 would be better!). Even know-it-all teenagers will enjoy this too, particularly if they want plenty of action and a diverse range of activities. It should suit the shortest of attention spans.

Conclusion

10 out of 10 have really surpassed themselves this time, with all the popular features of their other programs such as progress charts, 'could do better', fun comments and high score tables. The games can even be customised if you want to alter the preset format. We think though, they are brilliant as they are. **Junior Essentials gets 10 out of 10 and so do 10 Out Of 10 for creating it.**

INFO

Prices: £29.95
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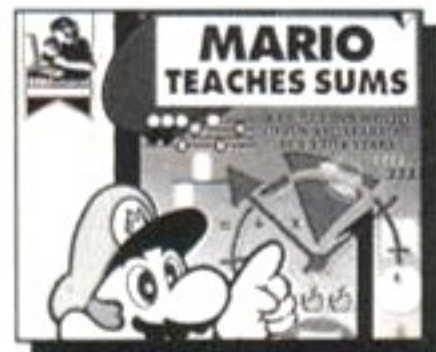
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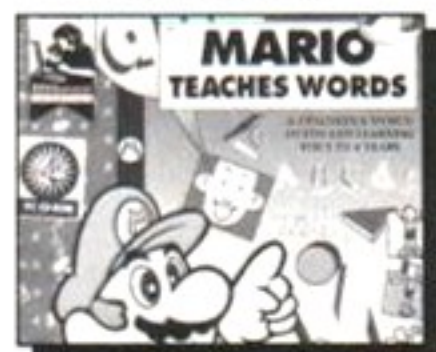
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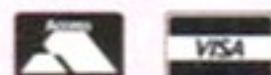
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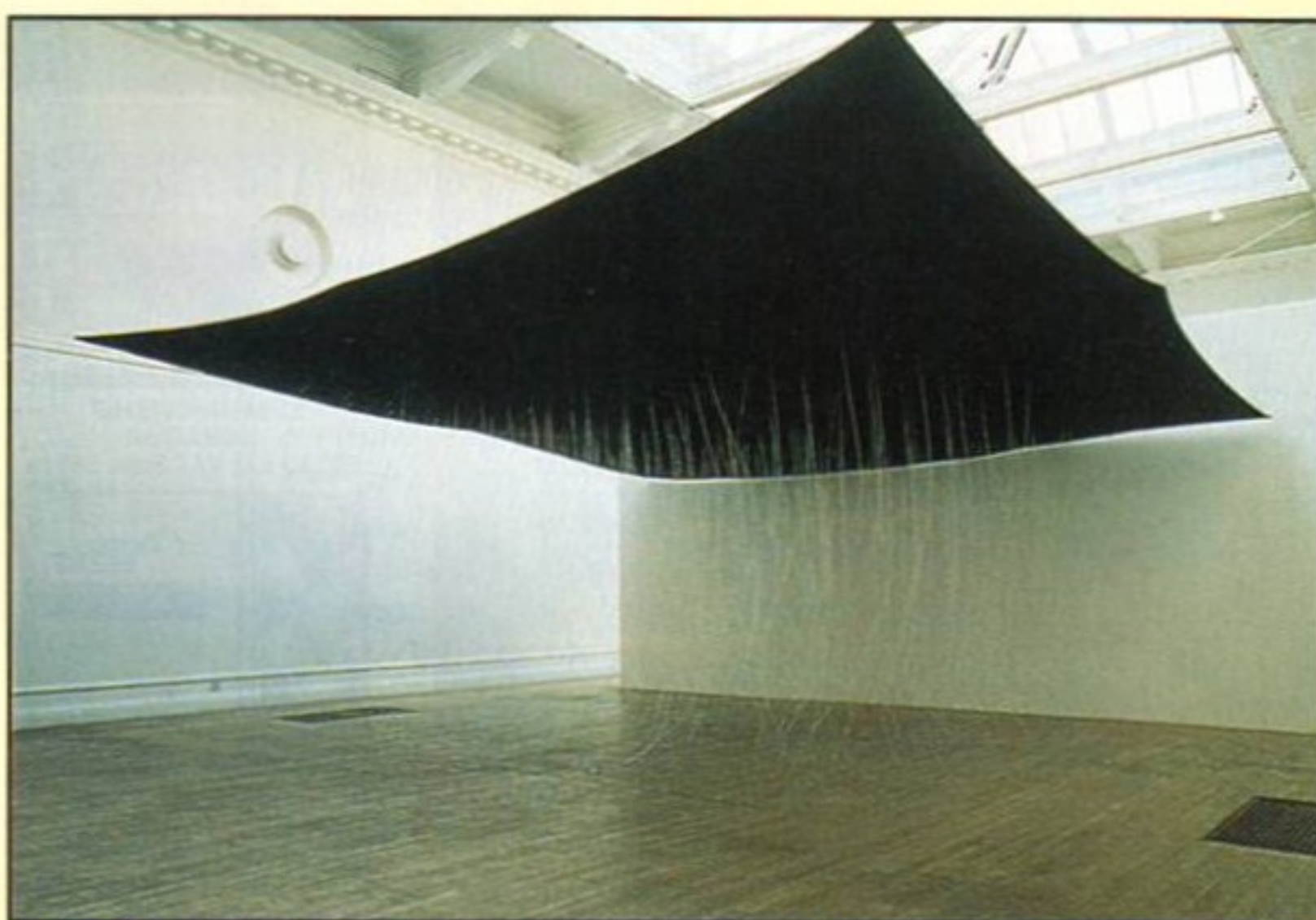
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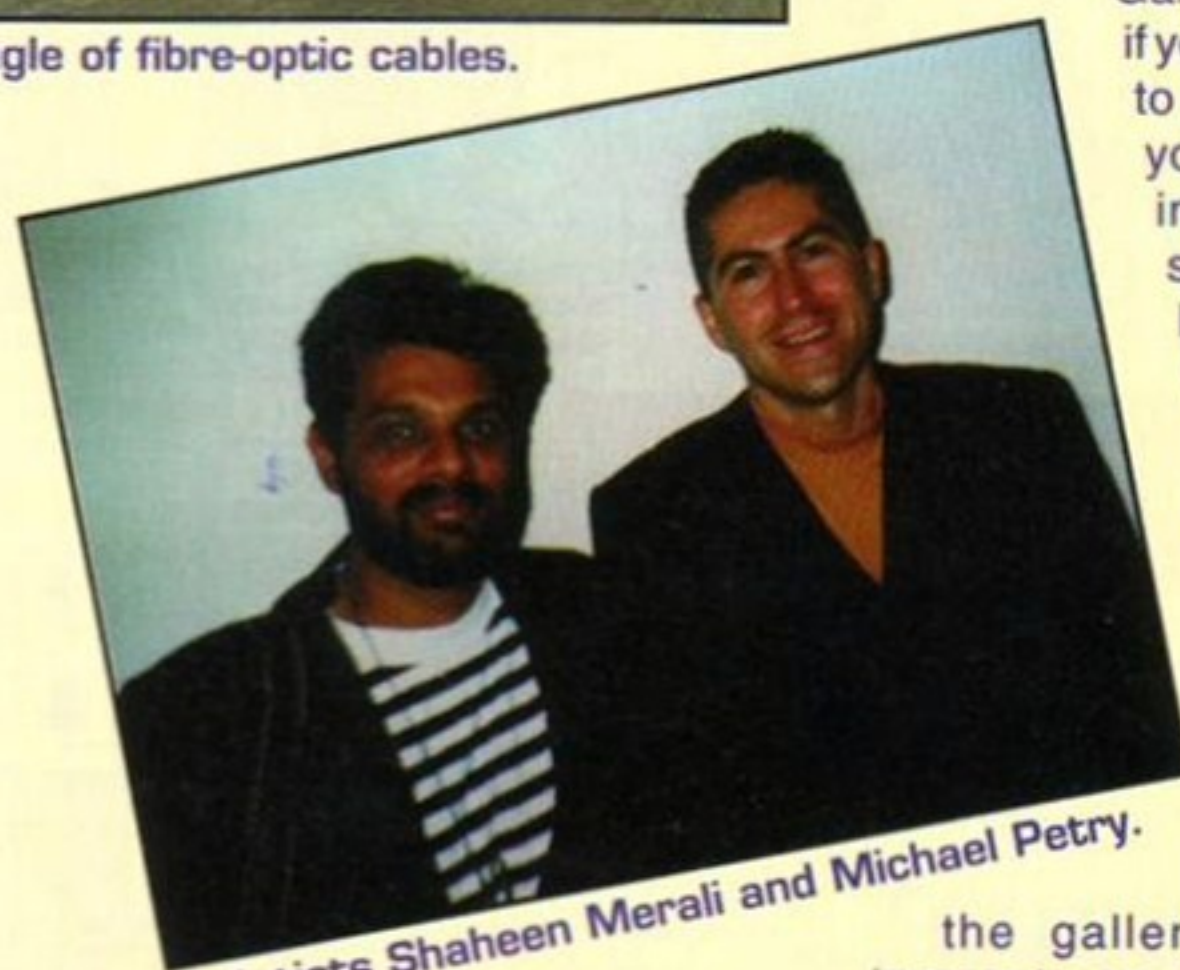
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State of the

Michael Rumbelow explores the strange and even incomprehensible world of computer generated art.



The Garden of Enlightenment: a jungle of fibre-optic cables.



Artists Shaheen Merali and Michael Petry.

see it is a practically impossible task. Especially since the cables are jumbled around before coming down through the cloth. As the South London Gallery leaflet has it: 'The physical fragmentation of the image acts as a poetic equivalent for the dysfunctional relationship'. Oh really?

Also the artist is apparently highlighting the 1984-style conspiracy theory that while hundreds of bits of information like credit card transactions, motorway speed-trap camera pictures etc. seem trivial on their own, when they are grouped together in the right order by 'the powers that be' they can be made into comprehensive evidence of an individual's activities. Just as in 'The

Garden of Enlightenment' if you know in which order to arrange the cables, you can make a meaningful picture out of seemingly meaningless glowing cable ends.

On another level Petry is keen to show what the actual information superhighway type fibre-optic cable is like physically, to the eye and touch.

Then, according to the gallery blurb again, he 'presents us with the problem of regarding his media, (the raw material of opto-electronic science) as an all embracing panacea to the difficulty of communication'. So now you know, don't you?

Channels and Echoes

'Channels, Echoes & Empty Chairs' on the other hand is a slightly more accessible but just as deep and peculiar installation piece by Shaheen Merali and Philip Chambon. Fifteen poster-size back-lit images are displayed around the walls. Each has an astrological chart drawn on the wall above it, showing the positions of the planets at a given moment in time. Below each picture

transmitted, live, to the other end. If you pick up the end of any of the fibre-optic cables hanging down you can see the rapidly changing colours of a particular pixel. And by bunching lots of ends all together you can get quite an interesting effect.

So there you have it, physically. But does it mean anything? According to Petry, he had several things in mind when he was designing the piece. One is the difficulty of gaining total 'enlightenment' of the truth or total intimacy with another person, which he expresses in the way it's difficult to divine what's playing on the video.

The video image is all there, every point on it is visible at the end of the cables, but bunching together the cables in the right order to be able to

VCR hidden in a special sealed section behind the wall. The video - made to professional quality, the artist hopes to have it broadcast on Channel 4 one day - is of a man in his lover's bedroom reflecting on "the difficulty of gaining enlightenment and the nature of intimacy" (according to the leaflet blurb). Incidentally for keen EastEnders fans the actor is Michael Cashman.

The fibre-optic cables are the same kind the telecommunications companies are digging up streets to lay down around Britain, higher quality than those in the late seventies decorative table lamps with a mass of gently swaying points of light, but based on the same properties; the cables can carry light from one end to the other with almost no loss of brightness. If you shine light down one end it just keeps on bouncing from side to side inside the cable all the way to the other end, without leaking, which is what makes it useful in telecommunications for carrying digital light pulses, almost perfectly preserved, for hundreds of miles.

In this installation all the fibre-optic cables hanging from the black cloth actually extend above the cloth, come down behind the wall and bunch together in front of this video screen. So the light coming from each point on the image on the hidden monitor goes into one end of a cable and is

Monitors

In the nineteen seventies and eighties artists began getting hold of video cameras and VCRs and there was a trend for 'video installation' art in galleries: a circle of video monitors continually showing close up recorded footage of the various orifices of the artist's body, for example. The energy and thought that went into creating these installations was often amazing. But there was something physically clumsy and ugly about monitors themselves which was distracting. Nowadays some artists seem to have realised this taken and they eliminate monitors from view in their work even when they involve computers.

Enlightenment

'Garden of Enlightenment' by Michael Petry looks at first like hundreds of strands of fibre-optic cable hanging from a square black cloth roof, with the sound of a man talking playing in the background. If you didn't know any better that might be about as far as you would get with this installation. As with a lot of modern art, you have to read at least the title if not several pages of explanation to have an inkling of what the name of the artist's game is. In the case of this piece you really need to read the blurb on the exhibition leaflet or, ideally, hear the artist talk about it.

It turns out that the talking coming from the loudspeakers is the soundtrack of a fifteen minute digitally-edited video being continuously played on a

Art

resting on the floor is a circular piece of glass with an astrological interpretation of the chart above written on it. In the background rhythmic, trance-like music plays with a woman singing melancholically, not in English. As you move around the space you soon notice that your movement is triggering various sounds on top of the music.

Again, it is a shame in a way that people might not make much of this work without more information. Because listening to Shaheen Merali speak about his installation you begin to realise what a painstakingly composed and many layered piece of art this is.

It turns out that Merali has a hobby, or habit, of buying little nick-nacks wherever he goes. Especially anything which portrays dark-skinned people and in particular South Asians from a Western point of view. So he has picked up hundreds of little statues, cards and dolls. Over the last two and a half years he carefully noted where and when he bought items.

He took photos of the nick-nacks, scanned them in along with photos he has taken of himself and his friends and then mingled, composed and touched up the images with image-processing software before printing them out, to create the final set of pictures. The pictures are displayed in back-lit light-boxes.

He also has an interest in astrology and particularly event astrology, the idea being that you can read astrological charts for any significant event, not just births. He had a friend of his who is an expert in event astrology cast charts for the exact time and place when he bought the nick-nack featured in each image and how these events would have affected

his feelings at the time. Hence the charts and interpretations above and below each picture.

Music

The music was specially composed in collaboration with professional electronic music composer Philip Chambon, who created the backing track, a hybrid of reggae dub and Indian music. A woman sings in Hindi in the traditional Indian raga style over the backing.

The song itself was written by Merali and is the lament of an Indian woman living in Britain, slowly going mad. (You'll recognise the feeling, won't you?)

She feels her mind and identity gradually breaking up under the conflicting pressures of the traditional Indian family and cultural obligations she feels, and the everyday necessity of getting by in British society.

Ultrasonic beams

The ultrasonic beams register movement and can also detect how far away from them the moving object is. Any movement in their path triggers a

producing a gratifying audible response - a change in pitch or sound. This enables people who don't have the coordination to play a conventional instrument to make a kind of music.

In this exhibition the beams have more or less the same effect. People inevitably tend to begin waving their arms around and walking to and from the sensors to hear what sounds come out. At some distances you trigger sampled snatches of speech or strange gurgling noises, at others the distance seems to be correlated to the pitch - a birdcall for instance, rising and falling in pitch as you move your hand nearer and further away from the sensor.

Merali says he is trying to get

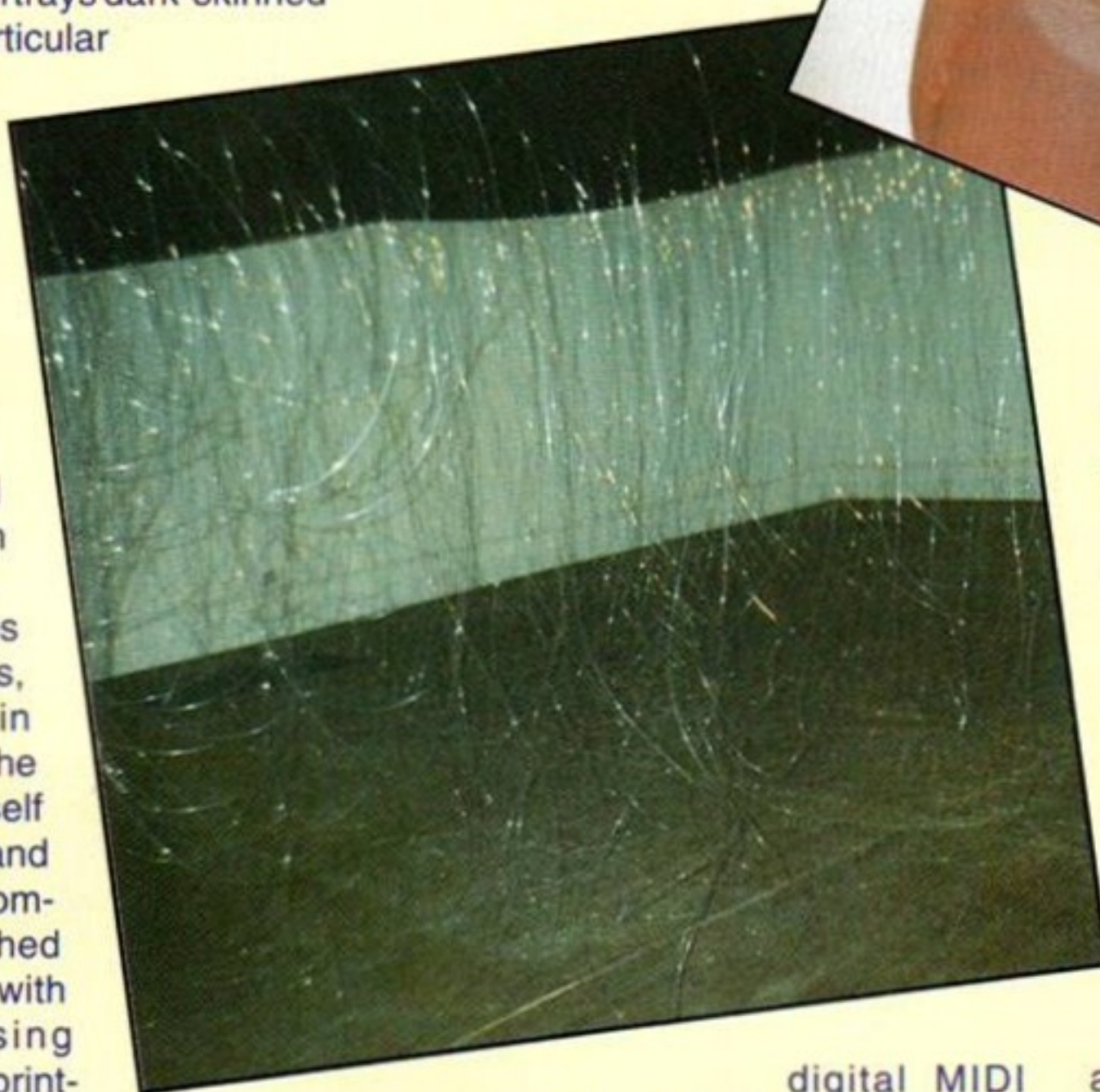
interpretations are down on the ground, so people naturally tend to stretch up and then bend down to look at them as they go round.

'Channels, Echoes and Empty Chairs' is a bit more sensual and less cerebral than 'Garden of Enlightenment'. At first it draws you in gently with its warm colours and music, but as you spend more time in it you find some quite startling images and mind-boggling astrological under-tones.

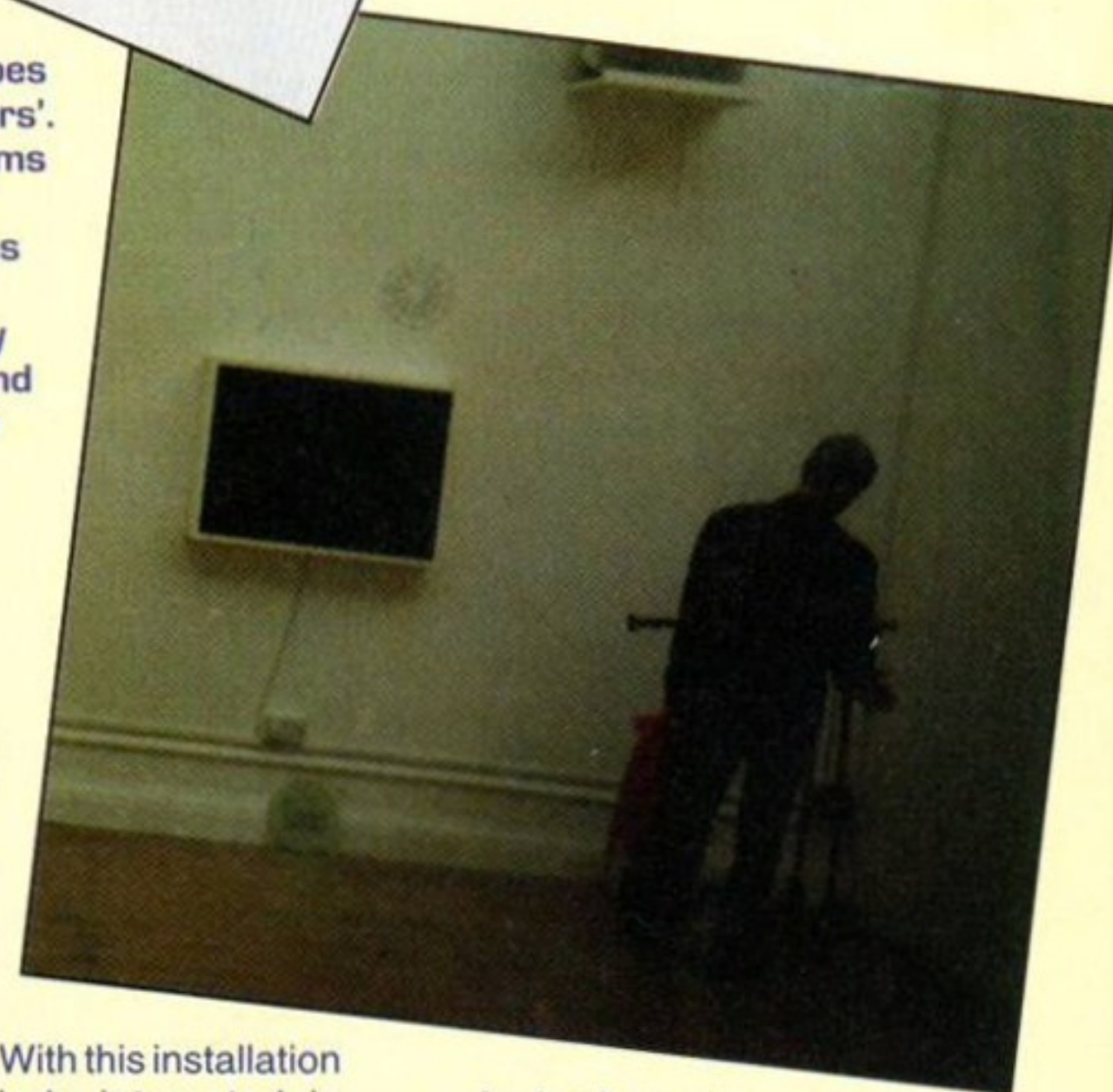
Art

Pieces of art like these two installations aren't for everybody, the sound-beams and the glowing cable ends might be entertaining, but what was all the rest of it about? As with a lot of art though, the more you get into it the more you get out of it. Appreciating art isn't always a conscious thing; visiting these installations might strike a chord with some people who find them beautiful or at least thought-provoking, but leave others cold.

If nothing else, partly due to the innovative use of computer technology, they will probably be more fun for casual 'Art' fans than going to see rows of paintings on a wall. As pieces of interactive multimedia art, they are certainly more innovative than a lot of the 'interactive multimedia art' around on CD-ROM at the moment.



Clockwise:
'Channels, Echoes
and Empty Chairs'.
Ultrasonic beams
play your
movements as
sound.
A visitor duly
waving his hand
in front of a
beam.



digital MIDI message to a hidden synthesiser which plays a sound on the loud-speakers. These MIDI messages vary according to the distance of the movement from the sensor. So if you wave your hand immediately in front of the sensor you trigger a different sound from that which you create if you walk past several yards away.

These beams are used in therapy for severely disabled children, to encourage someone in a wheelchair for example to move their arms by

away from the traditional idea of an art gallery as a place in which you just stand and look at art, by making it more interactive. With this installation he was particularly interested in getting people to move their bodies, as if in a kind of unconscious dance. In addition to the sound-beams, the way that the astrological charts are above the pictures and the

And when are we going to see some Amigas used in such a creative way? Are there any Amiga artists out there creating "state of the art" stuff? If there are, we'd like to hear from you. **AUI**

Your Amiga can be the heart of a powerful music studio says Mark Blackham and shows you how.

Let us ignore the fact that the Amiga, for a variety of insubstantial reasons, is not the first choice for making music on a computer. You have an Amiga and you want to set up a MIDI studio in your home. Here's how to do it.

The Basics

Let's get some fundamentals out of the way. We are talking here about using sequencing software to control external MIDI devices such as synthesizers and drum machines, as well as the Amiga's four internal sound

MIDI

This information is known as MIDI. A computer can send MIDI information to an electronic instrument telling it to play notes in a certain way, in a certain sequence. Similarly, when you play the keyboard, the computer can listen to the information sent over MIDI cables and record it. To record and manipulate this MIDI data, your Amiga needs SEQUENCING software. Sequencers show the MIDI information on your computer screen in three main forms - graphical, nu-

A MIDI STUDIO

channels. This is what "real" musicians use to produce the modern synthesized music you hear on radio and at raves. Your Amiga essentially be-

comes the heart of a system where it acts as the "recorder" of your music, and the conductor. The Amiga will tell electronic instruments attached to it how and what to play. merical or standard music notation. That means you can alter the information on screen - changing notes, copying sequences of notes and pasting them to other areas, altering tempo, key, etc. It's a powerful, but surprisingly simple concept. Now, here's what you need to set up your own home studio.

AMIGA

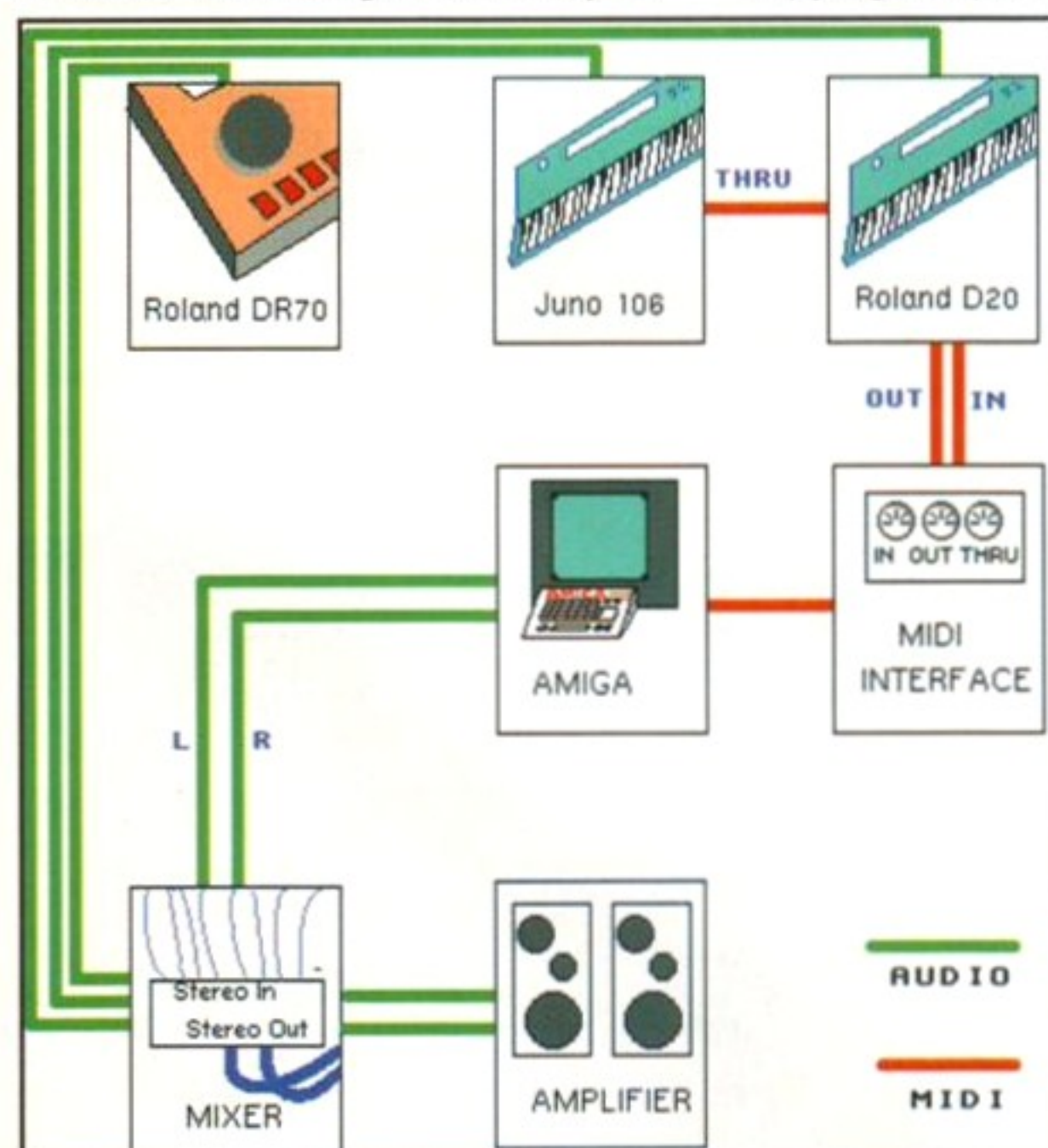
Any Amiga will do the job. The faster the processor and the more memory you have, the better the performance and room for songs and samples.

MIDI Interface

This connects to the Amiga parallel port (yes, if you have a printer you'll need a switch box or a MIDI interface with thru' port). The Amiga sends its instructions and information through the box and out to your electronic music equipment. The box should have a least one MIDI In port, MIDI Thru' port and MIDI Out. It's preferable to have two MIDI Outs if you are going to connect a lot of equipment to the chain.



A good starter "Workstation" synth.



A basic home MIDI studio set-up.

comes the heart of a system where it acts as the "recorder" of your music, and the conductor. The Amiga will tell electronic instruments attached to it how and what to play.

Electronic music has now been translated into data a computer can understand. Each press of a piano keyboard, for example, can be described in terms of the note, the pressure and speed at which the key was hit, the duration, and so on.

MIDI Cables

Few MIDI interfaces come with MIDI cables, but you need these to link the interface with your equipment. The cables have male DIN plugs at both ends and are bi-directional. Your local music equipment shop is more likely to have this stuff. To begin with you'll need at least two cables. Don't skimp on the cable length.

Equipment

A simple system should probably begin with a basic synthesizer keyboard. That means you can enter notes into the sequencer in real or step time from the keyboard, and play back the music using the machine's internal sound banks. See the "Selecting a Synth" box.

Amplifier Speakers

The audio output of your synthesizer and Amiga will need to be channelled to an amplifier which takes external output (Aux). You don't need a special amplifier nor speakers. A basic mini shelf stereo will suffice, although a stand-alone amp is preferable. Mount your speakers somewhere at least at standing head height.

Shelf speakers and Mini stereo with Aux inputs will suffice for a starter studio.

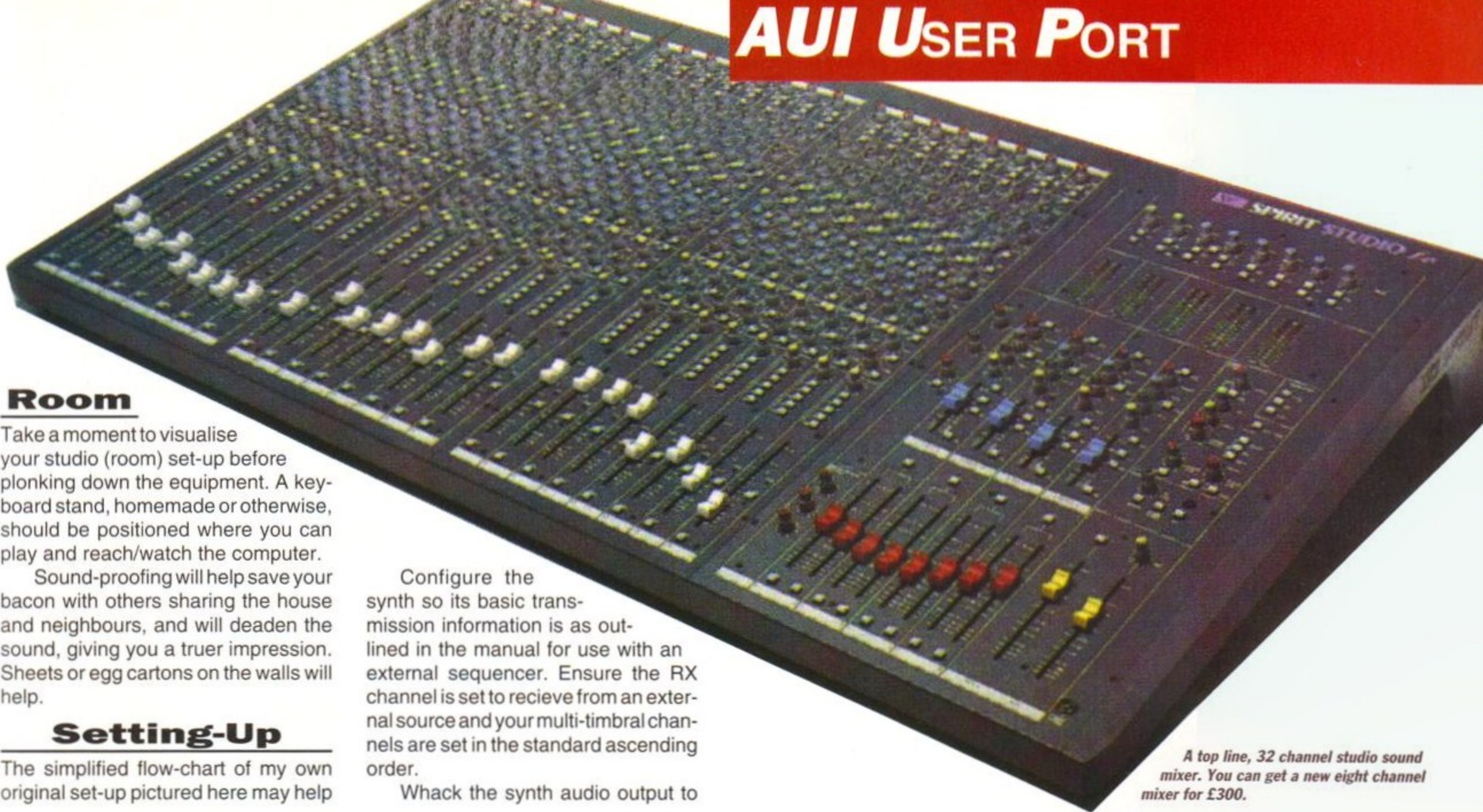
Mixer

The amplifier is only going to take two stereo inputs. If you are combining Amiga and synthesizer output, or two or more synthesizers, their output must pass through a mixer. You can choose too a basic Line-Mixer which has multiple inputs to two outputs, but no independent control over volume, EQ, pan, etc. which you control through your sequencer.

Other options include more expensive small mixing desks with traditional slider controls, and some even with powered internal amplifier to run speakers.

Your own workstation synth will probably have a drum channel.





A top line, 32 channel studio sound mixer. You can get a new eight channel mixer for £300.

Room

Take a moment to visualise your studio (room) set-up before plonking down the equipment. A keyboard stand, homemade or otherwise, should be positioned where you can play and reach/watch the computer.

Sound-proofing will help save your bacon with others sharing the house and neighbours, and will deaden the sound, giving you a truer impression. Sheets or egg cartons on the walls will help.

Setting-Up

The simplified flow-chart of my own original set-up pictured here may help

Configure the synth so its basic transmission information is as outlined in the manual for use with an external sequencer. Ensure the RX channel is set to receive from an external source and your multi-timbral channels are set in the standard ascending order.

Whack the synth audio output to

TO CALL YOUR OWN

you in preparing you own. Although I've put in my separate drum machine, I have not included it in the system network because it requires a different system set-up. Your own workstation synth will probably have a drum channel. You can set this up to run independently upon receiving a start signal from the sequencer, or use the drum sound bank to play a pattern arranged by the sequencer.

Connect the MIDI Interface to the parallel port and plug in MIDI cables to the IN and OUT ports. Connect the Interface IN port to the synth OUT, and the Interface OUT to the synth IN.

Selecting a Synth

Synthesizers and other electronic music equipment have whole specialist magazines dedicated to them. Check these out to get a feel of your options before you buy. If the steep price of new kit scares your wallet, check out second-hand selections in the aforementioned specialist mags, the music press, or your local news rag.

The best option to start with is an all-in-one synth - known as a workstation. These are multi-timbral (i.e. able to play at least 8 different instruments at the same time), have in-built drum machines and basic sequencers, all three MIDI options (In, Out, Thru) and a touch-sensitive keyboard.

Your first keyboard should have some element of pro-

grammability, so you can explore sound-making. How the programming system works is not too important at the moment. You can use the internal factory set sounds and even twiddle with the parameters of those if you wish to experiment.

Be careful of older analogue, single timbre synths. Although fantastic-sounding these are almost all way-overpriced due to the retro / techno trend. Some good starter synthesizers include the Roland D-10 / D-20, Ensoniq ESQ1, Korg M1, and the Yamaha SY35. Once you're underway you can expand the equipment to include modules (synthesizers in a small box with no keyboards), analogue synthesizers, a dedicated drum machine, and so on.

your aux. amplifier input. If you have a mixer, combine the Amiga and synth output, then connect the two mixer outs to the amplifier.

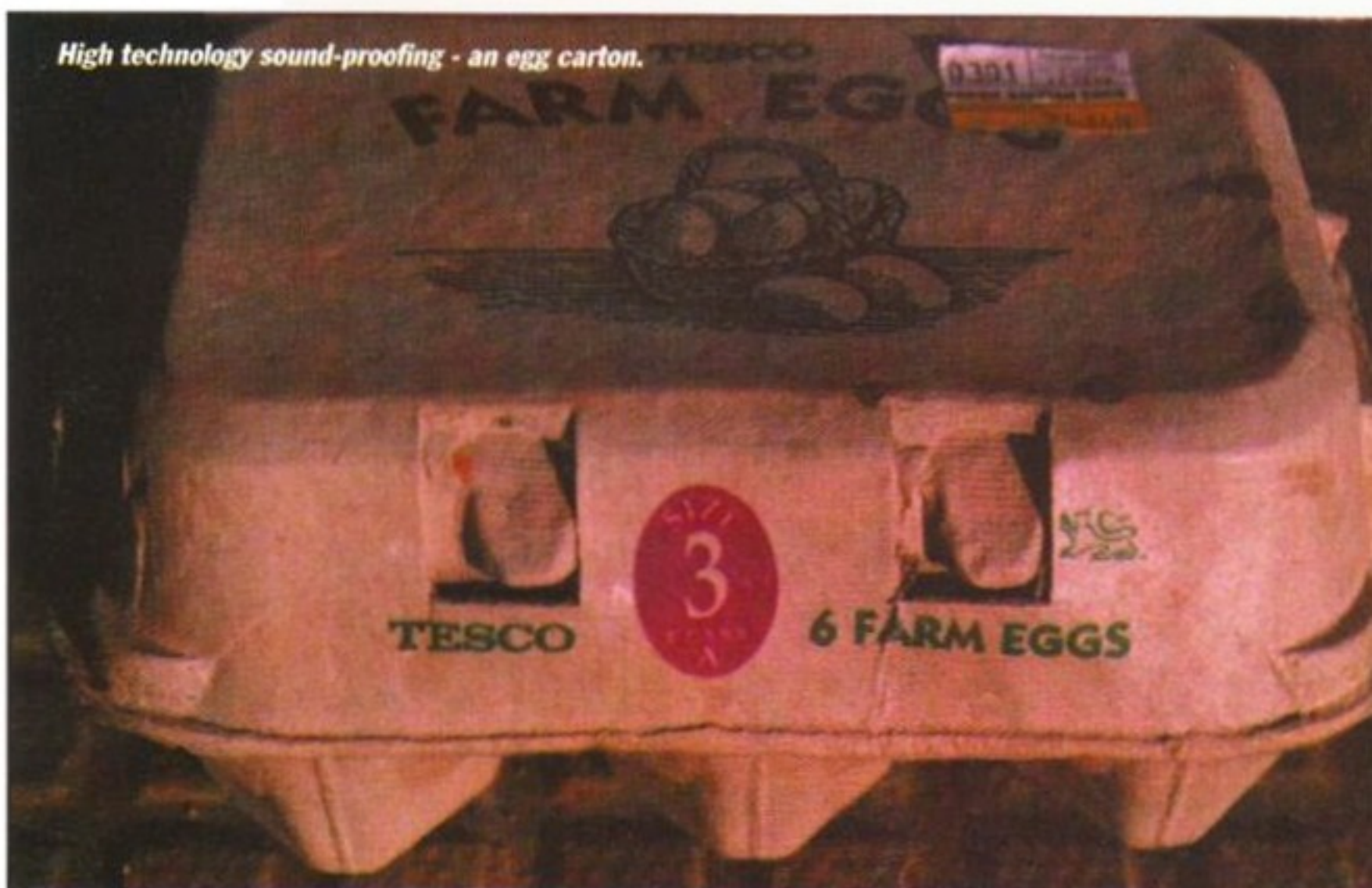
Record

Now fire up your Amiga sequencer and record 15 seconds of you belting away at the synth. Rewind the sequencer and playback. That sequence of notes should be replayed through the synth exactly as you originally played it - mistakes and all.

If not, check out your system connections and the core configuration of the synth and sequencer. **AUI**

Next month we'll explain how to use your sequencer and synths in harmony.

High technology sound-proofing - an egg carton.



Quadra Composer

When you load up Quadra you will see a welcome screen. Click past this and you'll see only a menu bar. Although it's not immediately obvious, you can achieve almost everything from this simple menu bar. Move it to the left of the screen for the moment, and click the top left button. This calls

Here's a quick guide to using the powerful Quadra music composer on this month's SuperDisk (AUIAPR95a). Mark Blackham wields the baton.

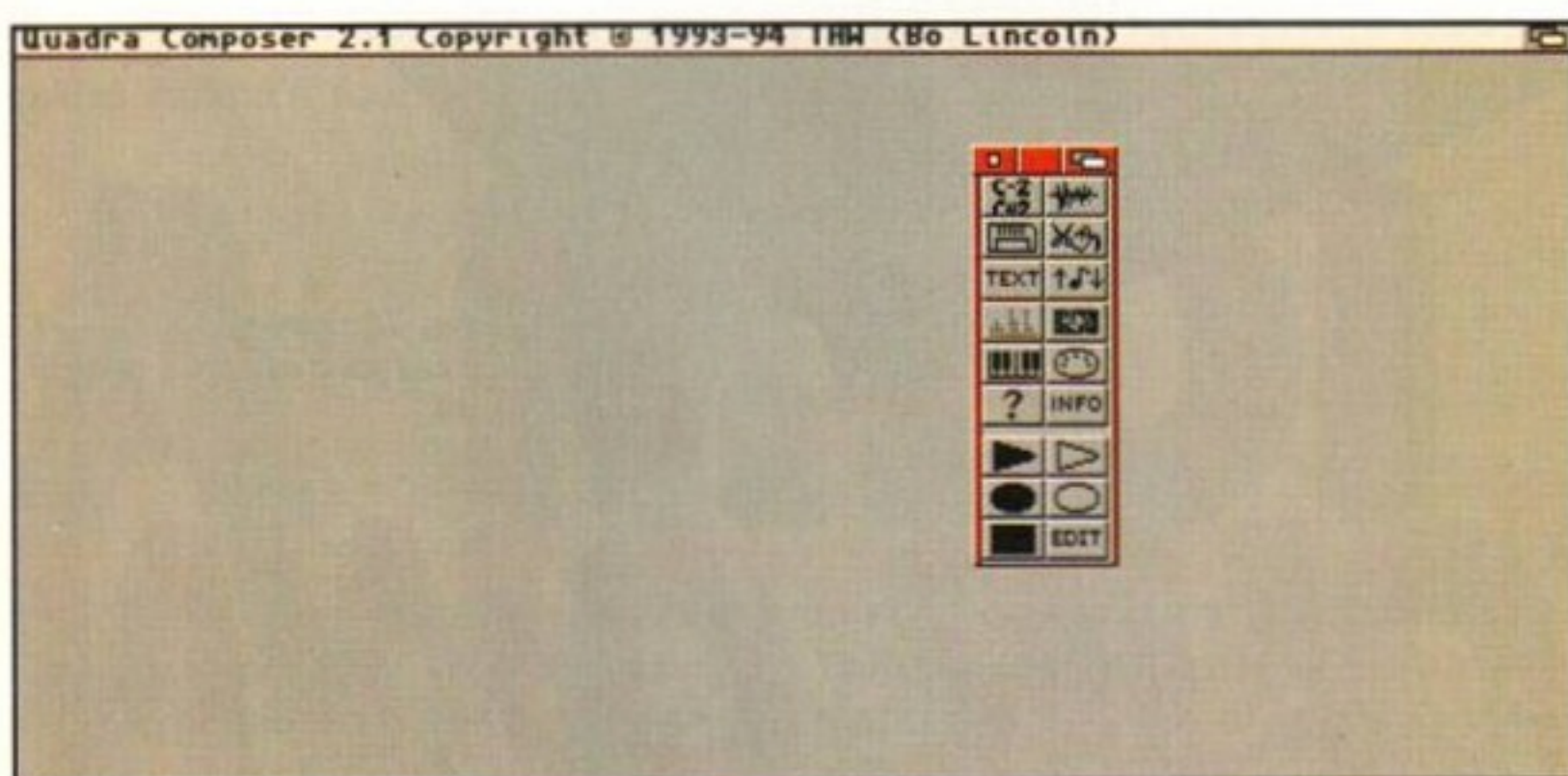
Recording and Playing

We'll use another sample to demonstrate the real time note entry method. Click in channel two, and then increase the sample number (fifth button down on the left) to 2. Select a new sample. Set the E SKIP button to zero, or it will interfere with real time note entry. Find the Quantise button, immediately under E SKIP. It helps you place notes in proper time. Lower numbers place the note closer to the time when you actually hit the key. Higher numbers force the notes onto main beats. If you set it to 4, for example, it will push each note you enter to the closest fourth event, no matter when you hit the key.

Click the unfilled arrow button to hear the drum pattern, so you can practice how you will play the new

board and the pattern will scroll down through the 40 events. Once it reaches the end it returns to the start of the pattern. The first thing to do is set the length of your song. Find the SONGL switch on the bottom left of the window, just above TIME. Clicking once on the UP arrow will increase the song length by one pattern. Click it up to about four or five. You can increase it later as your song grows. Now click in

Click the unfilled arrow button to hear the drum pattern, so you can practice how you will play the new sample.



The "what do I do now" Quadra opening screen.

up the main note window, where most of the composing and playing action takes place. You'll also need the DISK window on screen, from which you can load modules and samples. Call it up by clicking the button with the disk on it - under the Note button you've just clicked. Tidy these panels up. This will be your workspace. Within the DISK window is a settings selection. Select Save to ensure this screen set-up appears every time you start up Quadra.

In the DISK window find the Sample section and select LOAD. Find your sample drawer and select a bass drum sound. You can take a look at this sound

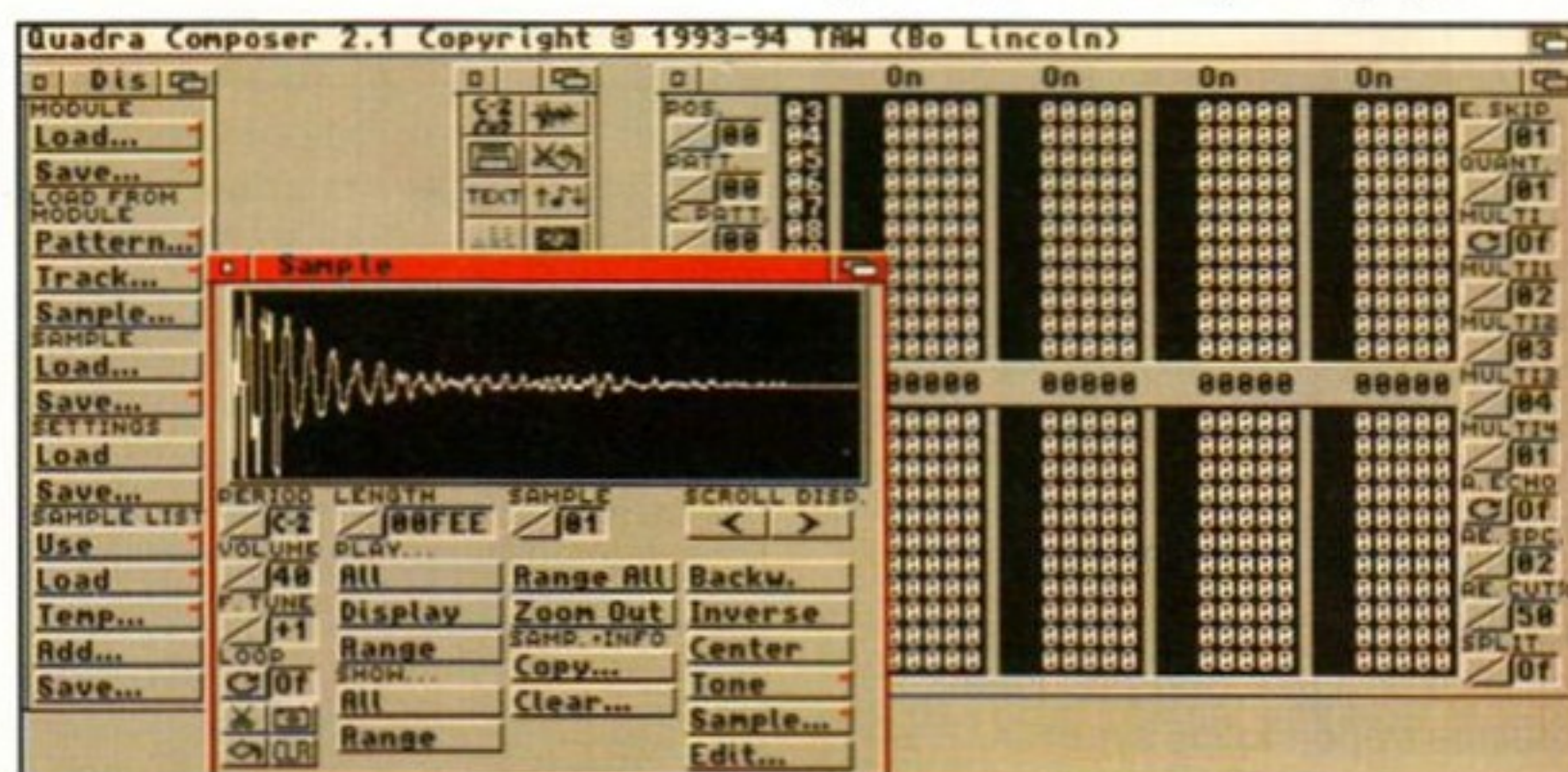
by calling up the sample window - which is the top right button of the floating main menu bar. Here you can edit the sample and set up loops if needed. Pressing keys will play the sound at different pitches.

Quadra's basic music-making system is to set songs out as a series of note (or event) patterns strung together.

Making Music

Get rid of the sample editing window and turn your mind to the main note window. Quadra's basic music-making system is to set songs out as a series of note (or event) patterns strung together. What you currently see is the four channels, empty of any music information, of the first pattern. Touch the down arrow button on your key-

board and the pattern will scroll down through the 40 events. Once it reaches the end it returns to the start of the pattern. The first thing to do is set the length of your song. Find the SONGL switch on the bottom left of the window, just above TIME. Clicking once on the UP arrow will increase the song length by one pattern. Click it up to about four or five. You can increase it later as your song grows. Now click in



Checking out the BassDrum sample before entering the notes.

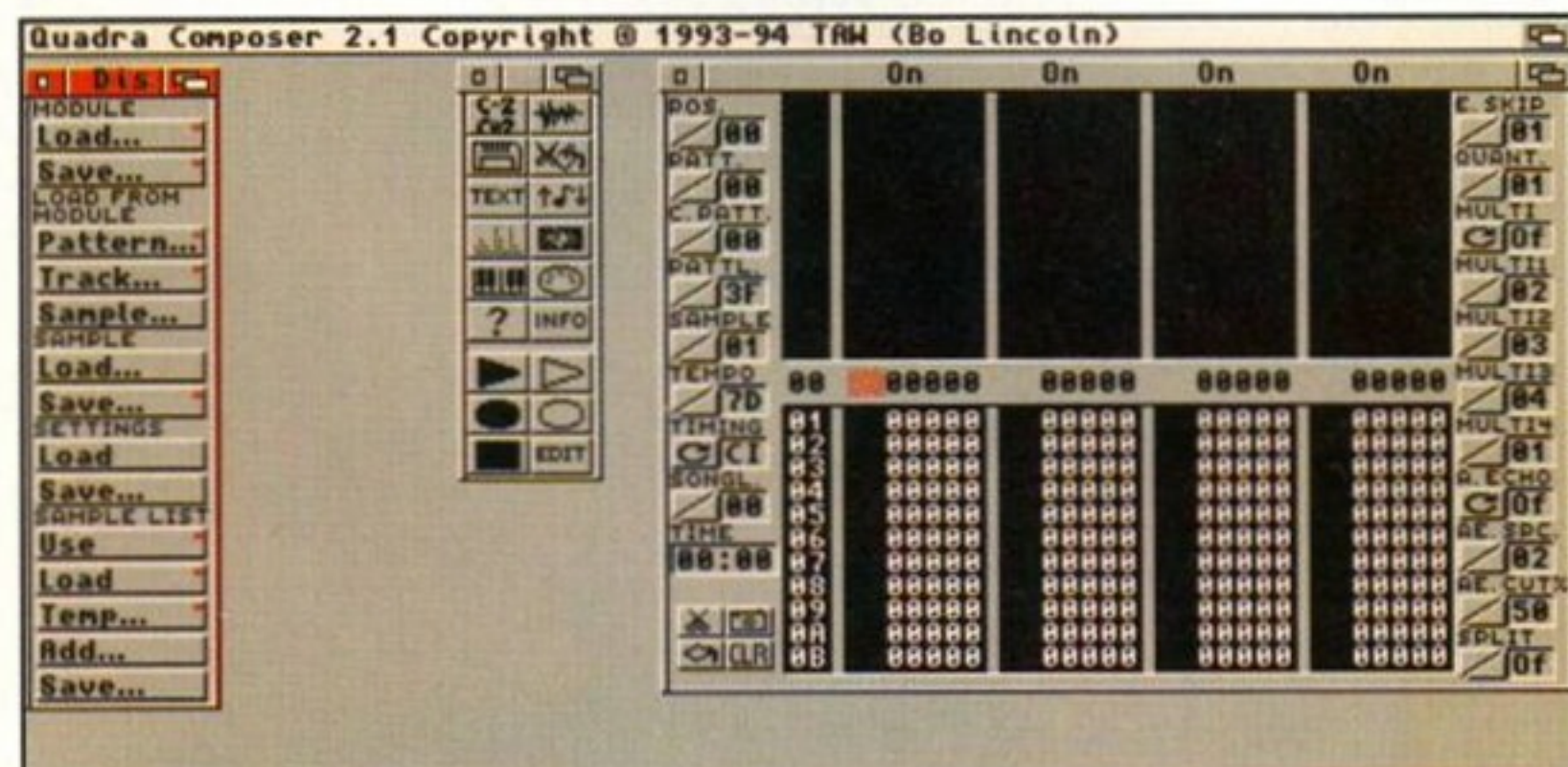
channel one of the bar stretching across the middle of the window. A red cursor box lights up. The space bar flicks this between a strong red, meaning you're in editing mode, and a mottled red, which isn't.

Entering Notes

Step entry mode is simply a matter of pressing a key while in editing mode. The drum sound will play and you'll see the note number (e.g. C-3) replace the zeros. A simple way of establishing a beat is to set the top left "E SKIP" button to 4, which means the cursor skips to the 4th event after where you have just entered a note. It is currently set to 1, which means it travels on to the event immediately following the one you just entered.

sample. When ready, click the unfilled circle to start recording a pattern. Start playing the new sound and it will be recorded. To start a new pattern simply change the pattern number (second on the left) and start editing. The button above sets the position in the song sequence at which the pattern will play. While this is an immediate way of setting the pattern position, the mixer window is more flexible. In the mixer mode you simply click on the pattern number you want and drag it to the desired place in the sequence.

Those are the basics. There is much more available which you will find as you explore. Some helpful facilities include copying and pasting of notes and sequences and MIDI-in for using a music keyboard. **AUI**



Remember to save this working screen setting.

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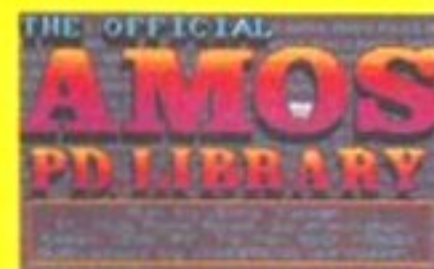
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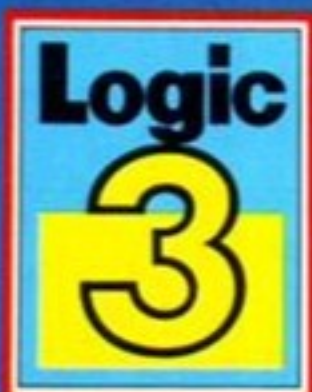


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Portability!

***You can take it
with you!***

An AUI Special Report

Mobile computing is moving forward and at an accelerating pace too! We are seeing more and more connecting up, allowing you to be on the move but still keep in touch. Though there is no portable Amiga there are plenty of ways in which you can link it to you wherever you are – and even be on the move but still make it a part of your life.

Portables are no longer “luggables” they are down to a size that makes them look no bigger than 8 bit Nintendos. Simon Gardener, Mark Blackham and the AUI team lead you into the fast moving and fast growing world of portability.

You can take it with you. These days, in fact, you have to take it with you. All of it - quantities of data, dazzling graphics, communications capability, and sheer computational horsepower. Work doesn't stop just because you are out of the office. Numbers still need crunching, presentations need punching up, monthly reports need writing. And you need to stay in touch.

However, technology is keeping up with demand for mobility. If you are willing to pay the price, you can replace every piece of your high performance desktop with a portable alternative. The PC is now small and light enough to fit in a carry-on bag or on a desktop.

Thanks to the accelerated pace of technological change, there has never been a better time to look at portable PCs and peripherals. Mobile computing has now reached its potential with fast CPUs, brilliant colour, ample storage, and high speed communications - all packed into a small, capable, highly integrated package that's home just about anywhere. You have portability!

Where have we been ?

It all started back in the early eighties with the introduction of the "luggable". You could take this beast of a computer home with you and plug it into the mains in order to continue work that you had not managed to get finished back at the office. The first that made an impact - and if you dropped it on your foot the impact would have been disastrous - was the Osborne, which created a sensation when launched in the USA. Less of a sensation was Commodore's own portable attempt the SX64, a development of the most popular computer of the time, the C64. One of the favourite uses for this lumpy box with a small screen was for games companies who wanted to take their unfinished games to show to distributors or even to let magazines get a preview. But the cost - around £350 worth about £1000 now - and, of course, the weight, it checked in around 10 kilos, meant that Commodore never sold enough to consider it a success. Though there are those who swore by it and there are even a

few still in use now. A good example of the luggable developed by a British company was the Amstrad PPC640 which was the size and weight of a small fridge, used floppy disks for storage and had all the processing power of a modern digital data-bank watch.

After these early attempts things progressed quite rapidly and the next generation of luggables began to emerge. These machines were much more like the notebooks we know today, with their LCD or gas plasma screen, hard disk drive, floppy drive and enough memory to run Word Perfect. However, they were still tied to the mains electricity supply because the components and screen drew so much current that a battery could just not supply enough juice to keep them going for more than a very short period of time. These machines were also extremely expensive and only really affordable by big businesses that needed to take the machine to clients in order to, for example, give a demonstration of a new

piece of software.

One of the best portables to come out in the eighties was, surprise, surprise, created by Sir Clive Sinclair's Cambridge Computers. The Z88 was light, with a pleasant rubberised keyboard and ran on ordinary pencil batteries. It could take 128K eproms or later on even 1 Meg of RAM. At around £250 in 1988 it wasn't cheap but it was useful and effective. But the big public just didn't take to it though it's fans are, the Editor of this magazine among them, still using it.

Shrinking

The next stage of development for the manufacturers was to shrink every component that could be shrunk and while this was being done the processors were enhanced for low voltage use. LCD displays became easier and cheaper to produce and new technology, such as SuperTwist LCD, made viewing screens for long periods of time much less tiring. Backlit screens began to appear on the market, hard

drives began to fall in price and with small improvements in battery technology the lap top computer started to become a reality.

The first generation of "industry standard" laptop computers only had an Intel 8086 or 8088 processor, usually only about 640K of usable RAM and a floppy disk drive, a hard drive of approximately 20MB was seen as a luxury. Soon Intel improved its range of processors and launched the 80286 which was more powerful than the 8086, but not by a huge margin. The laptop manufacturers did not hang around and they brought out more and more powerful machines that were gradually getting smaller and smaller. The 80386 and 80486 processors followed the 80286 respectively and again the laptop manufacturers adopted these for their machines.

The size of laptop computers gradually reduced until the notebook computer came into being. With approximately the area of a piece of A4 paper this represented the height of

You Can Take It With You!



Road Ready?

In the past three years the sales of mobile systems have soared, thanks to two key factors: power management and price. Implementation of Advanced Power Management, the battery saving specification developed by Intel and MicroSoft (among others), helped usher in a generation of notebook computers based on power hungry 486 CPUs.

Today the 386 notebook is dead. The 486-based sub-notebook is much more common and Pentium based notebooks are increasingly taking over. With the downward price slide of the 486 CPU, there is simply no reason to settle for anything less.

A few years back monochrome display was the norm, but with the advent of improved battery technology and power management it is now possible to run an active-matrix colour display without a huge penalty in battery life. Meanwhile, prices for active-matrix technology have spiralled downward. It is now possible to purchase a 486-based active-matrix notebook for under £1500. Though if you shop around you can find full specification monochrome 486s at about £500.

But, should you choose not to, you no longer have to settle for a monochrome display when active-matrix technology is available at an affordable price. After all, if you have to stare at a tiny display for hours on end, it should offer sparkling clarity and rich saturation of hues. Colour lets you pack more information on your screen and allows information to be communicated more effectively. Despite highly improved passive-matrix displays in notebooks it is a fading technology. If you are going to get colour, make it active.

Of course, not everyone needs Pentium computing capability on the road. (And with Intel's problems with the bugged chip, quite a few people don't even want it at home!) For fetching email, tweaking a spreadsheet budget, or letter writing, sub-notebook computers have finally come into their own. At approximately two kilos or even less you can have a Windows capable PC with an active-matrix display and a keyboard large enough for

touch-typing, you won't think twice about carrying one with you in your bag, even for short trips.

Revolution

Other mobile systems have begun to mature as well and are even starting to challenge the traditional mobile computing approach of the notebook computer. Companies such as Apple and Sony are trying to overtake the portable market by offering hand-held computers to assist your lifestyle at home or away. Pen computing and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) purport to be able to help you organise your life so that you can get the most out of it with

the minimum of effort. (We know some girls like that too!) The Apple Newton was hailed as the beginning of a revolution in portables because it would accept hand written instructions. Amstrad also brought a "pen" based computer at about the same time but, as is to be expected, very much cheaper. Neither of these has been a resounding success, per-

haps largely because the wittily-named Newton got the reputation of achieving a high level of gobbledygook through glitches and bugs that led to it failing to be able to read the handwritten data and so becoming the butt of jokes about the PDA - "Positively Damned Asshole" - technology. Apart from the inconvenience and annoyance of one's own computer refusing to recognise the instructions you are trying to give it or even, it seems, sometimes the user's own name or password, the "early adapters" - those who are willing to try and also spend money on the newest technology - don't like to be thought suckers for failed technology or carrying around with them a machine that makes them look foolish. When Apple brought out this interesting piece of technology was originally announced

in San Francisco in book shops as a multimedia interactive program as an experiment and sold out its first edition of 3000 copies in three days. The portable revolution had arrived.

Sub-Notebook

Today the next generation of notebook PCs has mostly used the Intel486 processor, but now this is being replaced with the even newer and more powerful Pentium processor. Colour LCD displays have become easier and cheaper to produce than they have ever been and are becoming more common in portable computers. Battery technology is, at last, showing signs of being able to keep up with the other portable computer technology and the introduction of Nickel Metal Hydride and lithium-ion batteries means that, with good power management software, usage can be stretched to as much as six hours of continuous use. The size of the machines also continues to be reduced and advances in miniaturization techniques have bought about the introduction of the sub-notebook computer.

The sub-notebook computer is approximately 30% smaller than the average notebook computer, but is almost as powerful as its big brother. The only area the sub-notebook seems to have compromised on is that they often do not include a floppy disk drive built into the machine, but rely on an external model. This is not as much of a drawback as many people would initially think because while on the road much of the time you do not actually need the disk drive.

Most people find that the only time they use the disk drive is when they are first installing their software or swapping data between machines using floppy disks. In cases it is easy to just plug in the external drive for the duration of usage and then put it away again when it is finished, in order to save extra weight

while the machine is travelling.

Technology never stays still and major advances in portable computing are happening all the time. In this Special Report we will show you some of the advances that have been made in the last few years and preview some of the technology that will be the next step in the forthcoming generation of portable computers.

Battery technology is, at last, showing signs of being able to keep up with the other portable computer technology.

technology at the end of the eighties. Screen technology gradually caught up with miniaturization techniques and colour LCD screens started to appear, but at first with extremely high prices.

By the early nineties the average portable computer was a notebook PC comprising of a 386 processor, a couple of megabytes of RAM, a 3.5" floppydisk drive, a hard disk drive of 40 megabytes or more and a backlit monochrome LCD screen. Even though processor technology had improved in hugely, battery technology had not been able to keep up consequently usage was limited to a maximum of a couple of hours.

The prices also stayed up there at the luxury level. You would have had to pay around £4000 for your computer status symbol to go with your posurphone.

And the portable to be seen with was not an Intel-based job even at that price but the favourite of the Silicon Valley crowd, the Apple Power-

book. This was the portable that led the way with a clear screen which made reading it on your flight between San Francisco and LA a pleasure instead of a strain. It was also good enough, and had sufficient trendy and wealthy, cultivated users to prompt the first electronic book designed for a portable. "Beethoven's Fifth" was launched for the Powerbook

as "the future of portable computing", but this has proved to be a somewhat over optimistic statement. The original Apple Newton had a pressure sensitive reflective LCD screen, the size of the average paperback book, and employed hand writing recognition as its user interface with a PCMCIA II card slot and an infrared link to provide communication between peripherals and other units. In theory it was a great idea, but the technology had its limitations. In practice the hand writing recognition was slow and not always accurate, the machine took a while to learn the user's hand writing style, and with just 640K of usable RAM the Newton did not have enough room for more than a couple of the very useful third party utilities that were freely available. Apple addressed some of these problems by releasing an enhanced version of the Newton with more memory, faster hand writing recognition software and a more stylish case, but perhaps was too little too late.

One other problem for the Apple Newton was its price. At just under £500 it seems to many a very expensive technological toy rather than the extremely useful and probably cost effective PDA that it could be if Apple were to sell it for less than £200.

The Amstrad pen-based computer came out at the time when Amstrad were finally looking like pulling out of the computer market which probably didn't give buyers a lot of confidence. Though a useful machine, it never caught the public's imagination maybe because the Amstrad name is not one that says anything but cheap which is a pity because if the Amstrad pen-based machine had achieved success it could have changed the whole thrust of UK computing by putting this country in the vanguard of technology instead waiting for whatever is developed elsewhere. There is the more traditional approach to hand-held computing such as the ever popular Psion 3a which is a palm top computer incorporating a small keyboard, LCD screen and a card interface that is similar to, but not compatible with, PCMCIA cards. In many ways it resembles a somewhat larger notebook computer.

The latest technology to hit the street is called the Personal Intelligent Communicator (PIC) and in last year, Sony Corporation became the first company to introduce and ship a product based on this technology and incorporating Magic Cap, the General Magic operating system. Motorola was the first to announce such a product, but they are not expected to bring out anything for a few months yet.

General Magic's Magic Cap operating system is a great implementation of a graphical user interface. It functions well, gives good performance, and moving around within it is intuitive. However, it does not provide seamless connection between a desktop PC and may not be the right operating system at the right time.

Shall we talk?

Communications is not a trivial matter - it's the key application that most travelling computer users require. Mobile computing can only go so far before you find that you need access to data from your home, office or other place of work. Unless you can get your machine connected to the outside world then there is no way that you are going to access any data that might be of use to you. The same also goes for the data stored on your machine, the chances are that the report you are working on, the spreadsheet you are processing or that letter you are writing is going to need to be seen by someone other than you in the not to distant future.

For some people a portable computer is only part of the travelling technology road show. Converting facts and figures into hardcopy is just as important and in

these situations a portable printer is the only solution, whether you are thousands of miles from home or just on the train.

While hard copy output maybe

the solution to some people's needs, there are better solutions to moving data about while you too are on the move. With the advent of cellular phones back in the eighties, mobile voice communications became the accessory to the trendy man - yuppie poseur or drug dealer - in the street. But now it is almost as common to see someone chatting on the phone, while they stroll down the road, as it is to see someone using an umbrella. Okay, that might be a slight exaggeration, but before long it will become a reality that few of us will be able to escape!

And now with the implementation of digital cellular phones mobile data is a very real possibility.



PLUS PRINTER

Canon have produced a very agreeable portable computer that has within it a full spec inkjet which produces work suspiciously like the popular 10C we have in the AUI office. While there are quite a few portable printers around, at relatively low prices, they do have the inconvenience of making you carry two slightly clumsy objects instead of just one. The Canon BN range gets round that problem and at between £1499 and £3499 it would seem a shade costly but helping you to have to tote a only single package. It is surprising that more of these combined units have not been launched by other manufacturers to bring real portable computing, in all its requirements, that much nearer.

In The Mainstream

One of the neatest applications of mobile communications at a real domestic level we have seen was a woman in a video rental store communicating with a remote partner on pocket-sized phone and discussing the films available. Saves having rows about having picked the wrong movie, doesn't it? But there are dangers too. The Editor's car was parked recently on meter and the Mercedes of the MD of another publishing company (Publishers get rich, editors don't, says the ED.) parked just behind had the drivers window smashed and grabbed the TWO phones in the car were stolen. The Pioneer radio in the Merc wasn't touched. It shows how fashionable and a part of the mainstream mobiles are becoming, doesn't it?

Who needs Technology?

With all this talk of incredible computational power in tiny mobile packages you maybe wondering just exactly who uses it.

At the beginning of the mobile computer revolution, and it is a revolution, portable computers were aimed squarely at the business community. Their high price dictated that businesses people were the only ones that could actually afford these hi-tech machines. However, as the power and performance of portable computers grew their price actually started to drop. Today you see students, who are often seen as a low income group, owning and using

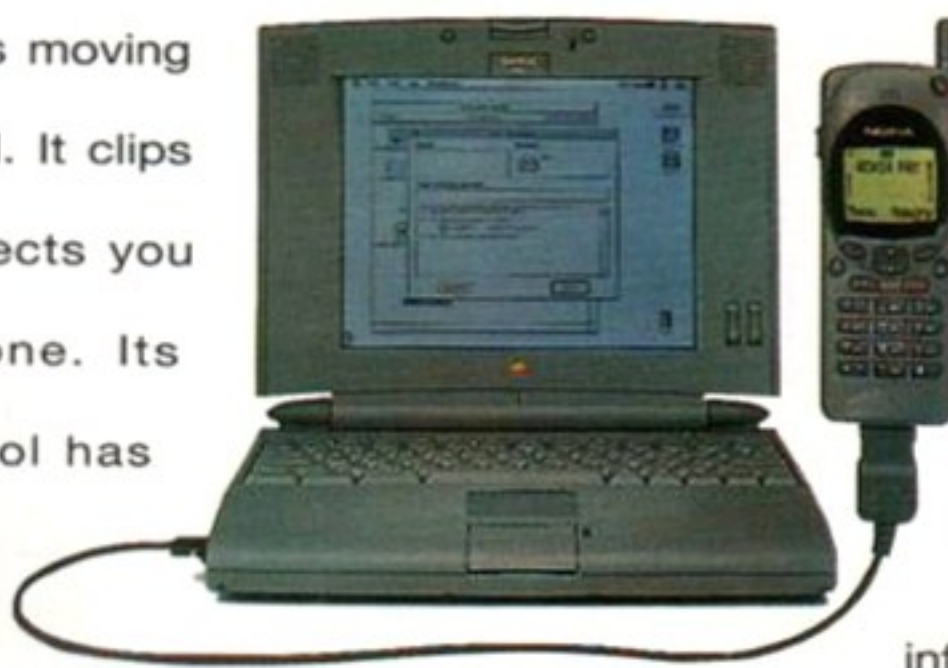
laptop computers in everyday life.

So, we saw this technology start its life as a business tool in the office and then migrate out with the travelling salesperson for demonstrations in other businesses. It also appeared in large organisations such as Marks and Spencers where you can see in store checks on stock being carried out all day long using hand-held Psions. The next step for portable computers was with the small businessmen so that they had access to a mobile office. One of the latest

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NOKIA
CONNECTING PEOPLE

Who needs Technology?

c o n t i n u e d

trends is moving towards the virtual office.

The virtual office allows the "virtual" businessman to conduct business from anywhere in the world. You may now be wondering what, if any, difference there is between this and the more traditional mobile office. The mobile office is usually just an extension of the equipment installed back at the real office. The notebook PC often only carries the software that is vitally important for the job in hand and would not normally be used for the more mundane tasks such as accounting and letter writing. The virtual office would include all this type of software, but the biggest difference is that the mobile office almost always has somewhere to go back to that is called base. The virtual office does not have this and the machine, user and any peripherals are the sum of the office.

Anyone conducting business with the virtual business person in his or her virtual office, would not know that a physical office did not exist. Back to the drug dealer again... (One of whom made a mistake when in danger of

arrest deleting the incriminating files from his portable not realising that deleted files don't necessarily really disappear - only the file name. The Fuzz set up the machine's memory on a powerful Mini computer and retrieved the lot. Collapse of one defence case...)

The other recent trend is that of the "Road Warrior" and this is a similar concept to that of the virtual office. Computers are more than just a business tool. There are plenty of people who actually enjoy using computers for things other than work. (You may know one or two.. Amiga users..) Whether they run their financial or social lives from it, use it as a communications tool with email, fax and file transfers, connect to the Internet and gather data or just play the latest game on it, they like their machine to be where they are and not the other way around. They are freed by the fact that they do not have to go to their machine, but rather it goes with them wherever they decide to go, be it down the road to the park or the middle of the Sahara desert.

Whatever the reason for using a portable computer people are finding them more and more useful in everyday life.

size of the phone fell, the price dropped accordingly. Consumer technology continues to move rapidly forward both in lower prices and smaller machines. You can buy a mobile phone now for well under £50 and Sony have a cellular phone on the market that is even smaller than a packet of cigarettes.

The next step in the cellular phone market was the introduction of digital cellular technology

The next step in the cellular phone market was the introduction of digital cellular technology. The first digital cellular telephone net-

work was, once again, launched by Vodafone.

The Vodafone digital network is based upon a standard known as GSM. This standard was developed to become a global cellular telephone system and has, so far, been implemented in the UK and much of Europe, as well as in Australia, Hong

Kong and is being built in parts of the Middle East and China.

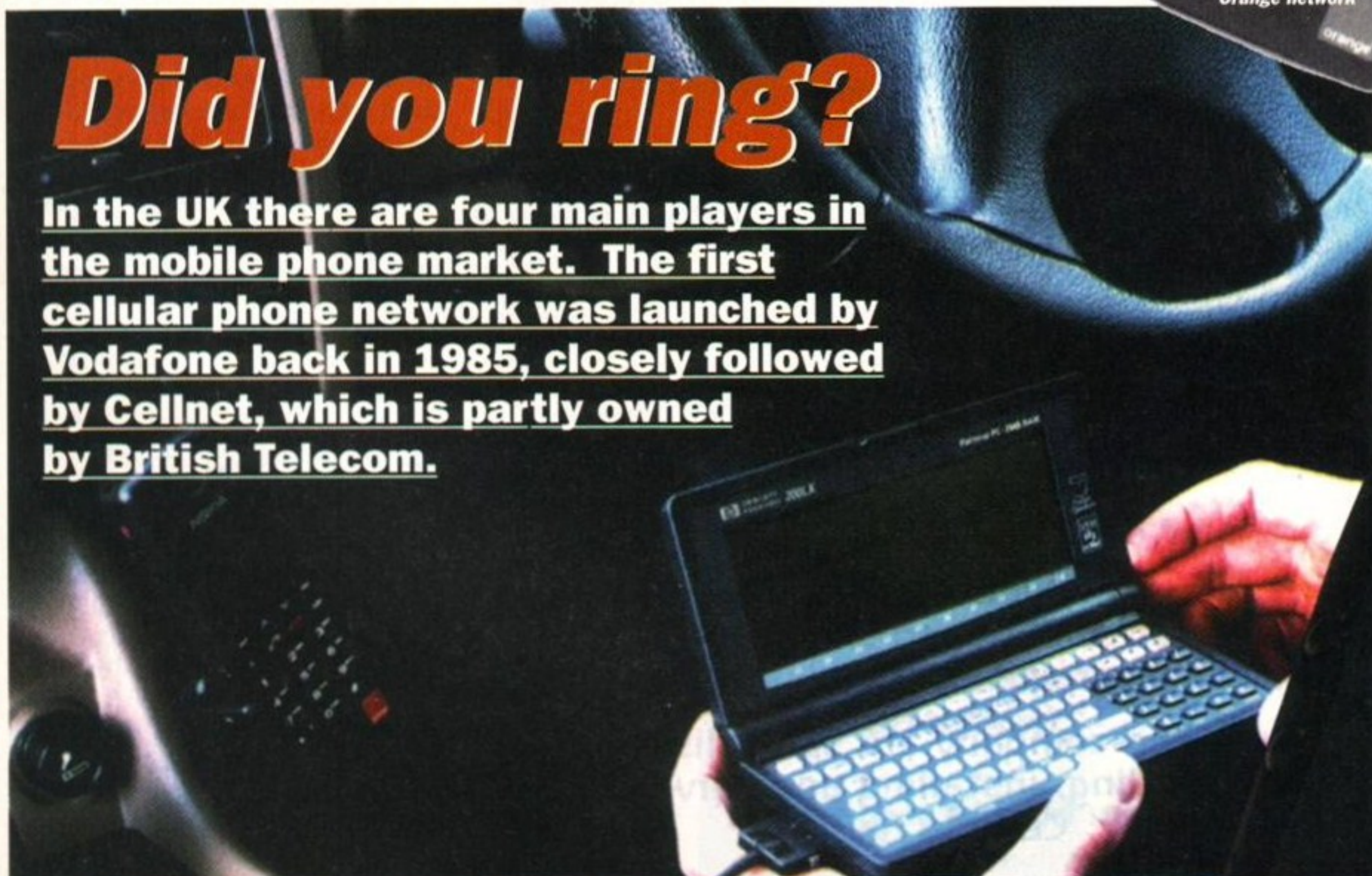
GSM allows you to take your phone with you when you travel abroad and make and receive calls on it, just as if you were at home. There are drawbacks to this system as there are still large areas in Europe that are not yet covered and other major countries such as the USA and Japan have developed and implemented their own incompatible digital cellular telephone systems.



The Nokia Orange PCN phone for the Orange network

Did you ring?

In the UK there are four main players in the mobile phone market. The first cellular phone network was launched by Vodafone back in 1985, closely followed by Cellnet, which is partly owned by British Telecom.



These two telephone networks are based upon analogue radio technology and are still in wide spread use, with in excess of 3 million users between them.

When the networks were originally designed and implemented the cost of a mobile phone was in excess of £2000. These early phones were usually fixed in cars and used quite high transmission power in order to

communicate with the then sparse network. What hand-portable phones that were available were extremely bulky and were often referred to as "brick" phones.

As the networks grew and the technology improved, so the availability of hand-portable phones increased. The cost of production fell and miniaturization techniques improved to such an extent that as the

A Hewlett Packard HP200LX connected to a Nokia Orange phone via the Nokia PCMCIA data adaptor

A prototype Iridium phone

PCN

It did not take long before two other companies, seeing the profits to be made, joined in the cellular telephone market. The next player in the UK mobile phone market was a joint venture between

US West, a US telecom

muni

cations

com-

pany,

and Ca-

ble &

Wireless

which, in

turn, own

Mercury

Communica-

tions Ltd. In

1993 Mercury

One-2-One was

formed and the first

ever Personal Commu-

nications Network

(PCN) network was

launched.

PCN networks are very similar to the GSM networks that are spreading across Europe and around the world and use a

very similar digital signalling system. The main difference is that PCN networks run at twice the frequency of GSM networks (1.8GHz) and use lower power phones, but employing a much more densely packed network to provide good coverage.

Presently the Mercury One-2-One network only covers a small proportion of the UK and does not plan on 90% coverage until the turn of the century. Coverage currently is in the area in and around the M25, Birmingham and Southampton.

Although Mercury One-2-One was the first PCN network to be launched in the UK, it was not long before another network was hot on its heels.

On April 28th, 1994, Hutchinson Telecom unveiled, the oddly named, Orange PCN network on the world. Hutchinson had previously launched the ill-starred RABBIT network which needed you to be near a local retransmission point to be able to call. There weren't many of them and not many people took to the idea of having a Rabbit through this system either.

Orange started life with a much greater network coverage of 50% of the population and has already increased that to 70%, giving it a potentially larger market than Mercury One-2-One.

The next generation of mobile phones are likely to be based on a network of satellites orbiting the globe, rather than the more traditional land based network.

Satellite

Satellite phones actually already exist and use the InMarSat communications satellites currently in operation. The major drawback with these satellite phones is that they are both extremely expensive to buy, at approximately 10 000 pounds each, and they are rather large and heavy to carry. Current models come contained in an average sized brief case and need to be used out of doors with the aerial,

**Bill Gates has a dream
of a network even
more ambitious
than Iridium**

which is contained in the lid of the case, pointing directly at the satellite.

Future satellite phones plan to be more affordable hand-portable models communicating with many satellites orbiting the Earth. There are currently two proposed networks, the first from Motorola which is called

Iridium. The system was named Iridium because 77 is the atomic number of the element Iridium and planned on using 77 satellites to provide global coverage, but since the original concept the satellite network has been redesigned and full coverage can now be achieved with only 66 satellites,

but they are not going to rename it Dysprosium, which has the atomic number 66.

The other network is being backed by Bill Gates of MicroSoft fame. Bill Gates has a dream of a network even more ambitious than Iridium as it plans on using approximately 800 satellites

in low Earth orbit as the network for his system.

The fact that both these satellite telephone networks are going to cost many billions of dollars and take many years to build, means that you should not expect to see them in use until, at least, the year 2000.

Can we move now?

We want information to move as fast as data compression and error correction standards allow. With sales of high speed modems set to quadruple by 1998 the mobile computer user is demanding that they should not miss out on what is happening.

The only problem the mobile user has is that they either cannot or do not want to be tied to a fixed telephone line in an office or home.

Over the past few years the cellular telephone networks have improved to the extent that they are now able to offer the quality that is required for a modem to operate correctly. The first networks to offer mobile data were the analogue systems, but initially this was only using a high powered carphone connected to the laptop computer by a data interface that was sold separately. This method was still restrictive due to the fact that you always had to be in your car to be able to connect to the carphone. Using this method it is possible to get transfer speeds of up to 9600bps, but 4800bps is more common.

A year or so later, data interfaces were launched for a select few hand-portable cellular telephones, but due to the lack of transmission power of the hand-portable phone, they were only really viable while stationary and were realistically capable of a mere 2400bps communication. All these data interfaces still required you to connect them to a traditional modem in order to communicate with the machine called.

Recently a PCMCIA card has been launched for a Motorola hand-portable flip-phone that combines both the traditional modem and data inter-

face into one package. A special cable is included that plugs into the PCMCIA card and then directly into the specially designed plug on the bottom of the phone. This setup would allow 4800bps communication and is quite reliable for collecting small files, for example.



Example plugs for interfacing analogue phones to cellular modems

Data Adaptor

The latest innovation for mobile cellular data has been implemented on the GSM network and is soon to be launched on the Orange PCN network. Nokia have recently launched their cellular data PCMCIA card for GSM and PCN. It would appear to be just a normal PCMCIA modem, but comes complete with a special cable that plugs directly into the Nokia 2110 GSM or 2140 Orange phones. Once connected to the phone it is capable of extremely reliable 9600bps communications, even while on the move.

The difference with this system is

that the Nokia PCMCIA card is not a modem, but a data adaptor. The GSM and PCN networks are digital and so all the Nokia card has to do is interface the computer directly to the phone so that it can talk directly to the network. Once the computer is connected to the network it connects to the mobile telephone exchange where racks of normal fax modems are stored. The computer links up to one of these and uses it as a port to call out to the modem at the far end of the telephone line you want to reach. In order to connect to the service of your choice and with the appropriate software you can also send and receive faxes.

In practice it works very well and allows connections of 9600bps, even when travelling on trains. Due to the fact that the digital networks have error detection, as long as you have a signal indication then you should be able to transfer data. As with other systems, the data adaptors have their drawbacks, the main one being the cost of the PCMCIA card, which retails for approximately £500. In time this price will fall to an acceptable level, but at the moment it is far too high for the average person to consider.

Wireless

With the introduction of mobile digital data communications we are actually starting to move in the right direction.

The next logical step would be to remove the telephone and setup a wireless data network. To some extent this has already been done but is limited to certain metro areas in the UK. It is a similar story in the USA but given time these networks could grow to give the kind of coverage we have come to expect from cellular telephones. In the not too distant future portable computers, or more likely PDAs, would have a two way, wireless modems or data adaptors built into them to allow high speed data communications with a similar unit connected to your home machine, the office or the Internet, for example. This wireless freedom would make the PDA a very powerful and extremely useful tool to be used in everyday life. You could pop down to the pub or local cafe and while you sit drinking a coffee or eating lunch you could read and reply to your morning's email.

In the USA a product has just been released that will allow you to do just what has been described above.

QUOTE Richochet wireless modems are not cellular phones, but use similar technology.

Meticom have released a small wireless modem called the Ricochet. The idea is that you either rent or buy a pair of these wireless modems and this will allow you to connect two machines. If you have more than one unit then you can connect your machines in a local star network and they even include point-to-point protocol (PPP).

The Ricochet wireless modems are not cellular phones, but use similar technology. They operate in the "free-spectrum", which is local digital radio that has been set aside by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the USA for low-power devices. Using a 4 inch omnidirectional rubber aerial the Ricochet has a range of approximately 1500 feet. In the USA, Meticom also run a city wide network of modems that are sited on just about every other lamp post. The Ricochet also supports speeds of up to 77Kbps through put, which is faster than a 56Kbps leased line.

These modems are also extremely small, measuring less than 8 inches long, 2 inches wide and an inch deep. The battery lasts for six hours of continuous use and they come with either a 9 pin or 25 pin serial cable so that you can just plug in and play.

The cost of the Ricochet wireless modems are \$495 each (about £250 but it is possible to rent them for \$20 (£14) a month. Link this with a flat rate fee of \$10-\$30 to connect to the city wide network and you have seamless, wireless Internet service for everyone at an affordable price.

We just wish it were available in this country, at those prices, now!



The Meticom Ricochet wireless modem



A PCMCIA sound card.

Get the Card?

Developed in 1989 by the Personal Computer Memory Card International Association, the PCMCIA card has changed the face of mobile computing more dramatically than most technology in the past few years.

It is completely open, non proprietary bus standard, designed for notebooks, sub-notebooks and palmtops that allow you to plug any make or model PCMCIA peripheral into your portable computer.

The PCMCIA cards are approximately credit card sized, but there are several different types of card available and these mainly define

the physical thickness of the device.

Just about every type of peripheral is supported by PCMCIA cards from the most typical memory card and fax modem. Full I/O capability supported by the standard also allows mechanical devices such as tiny hard drives to use the slots as well as PCMCIA LAN cards, sound cards, SCSI and CD-ROM controllers. And,



Two PCMCIA flash RAM cards - 80MB and 2MB (Left to right)

of course, beginning with the A600, the Amiga has been able to take PCMCIA cards which have proven popular particularly for extra RAM.

There is, however, still a hefty premium to pay for these PCMCIA devices when compared to full sized expansion cards but that should not stay that way forever.



Some PCMCIA hard drives

A wireless PCMCIA ethernet adaptor and laptop



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Where are we going?

In the past five years we have seen technology improve to such an extent that the machines now on general sale are twice as powerful, half as small and less than half the price they were then. Technology will continue to improve exponentially and at the same time prices can be expected to fall at a similar rate. So the

arrival of the electronic watch price mobile communicator may not be too distant.

Wrist Size

Fast technological growth makes predicting the future extremely difficult, if not impossible. We can only guess at

what technology will be invented in the near future and to what use it is put. It is entirely possible that the next thing we see is wearable computers, very much like the personal communicator badges in Star Trek - The Next Generation, or in Babylon 5. Indeed we are somewhat towards that right now, with databank wrist watches that

can be programmed by holding them near your PC screen, pager watches and even the telephone watch.

How far our innovation will go and how long technology can support it we just cannot tell, but maybe one day we will all have computer implants that assist and accompany us in our everyday lives. Go, go, gadget phone!

It is entirely possible that the next thing we see is wearable computers, very much like the personal communicator badges in Star Trek.

PRODUCT REVIEWS

Simon

Ever since AT&T decided to enter the computer market in the early 1980s, people have been talking about the impending merger of computer and communications technology. At first sight, given our increasing need of staying in touch no matter where we are, this seems to be a match made in heaven. When Bell South introduced Simon into the USA in 1993, people took notice because the Simon was so unlike any other PDA or personal communicator on the market, and because it was one of the first credible attempts at combining a computer with a phone. If you actually stop and think about it, combining a computer and a telephone is rather a good idea, so it is a real wonder why this has not happened before. Yet computer and communications companies still have not got together and the consumer continues to cry out for cellular phones that they can connect to their laptop computers in order to transfer data quickly, reliably and cheaply. When will this stalemate come to an end?

Simon says now, but only in the USA.

The Simon was designed by IBM and is distributed by Bell South Cellular Corporation in the USA. It was introduced in November 1993 as the "first fully integrated, hand-held cellular phone, wireless facsimile machine (send/receive), pager, electronic mail, calendar, appointment scheduler, address book, calculator and pen-based note pad/sketch pad." It only became publicly available in the summer of 1994.

Simon looks like a rather bulky cellular phone, but with a keypad. In place

of the keys there is a large LCD screen that is touch sensitive and controls the use of the phone. While other companies tried grafting a mobile phone onto a computer IBM/Bell South have actually put a computer into a phone making the Simon a fully functioning PDA.

The Simon weighs in at 510 grammes and measures 8" x 2.5" x 1.5". Its back holds a large rechargeable NiCad battery that lasts up to eight hours in stand-by. In place of the keypad there is a 1.5" x 4.5" backlit pressure-sensitive LCD screen that can



be operated either by hand or a small pen. Using your fingers works surprisingly well. Since the Simon is not supplied with or has storage for a pen, there will be times when your finger is the only "pen" at hand. The internal memory of 1MB is adequate for normal use but it can be upgraded by adding a PCMCIA memory card in the Type II card slot. An optional alphanumeric PCMCIA pager is also available. The only other I/O port on the phone is a 33

pin connector for future use.

When in phone mode Simon acts just like a normal cellular telephone, except that it has a touch-sensitive screen that takes a little getting used to. When the phone is left unattended it is possible to set it so that it answers automatically and then plays a short tone. If the caller knows what to do a telephone number can be left using the touch tones on their telephone.

Simon includes a Mobile Office software suite of programs that uses icons to run various functions such as a clock, a calculator, a list of things to do, and a notepad. Email facilities have also been included and the ability to send and receive cc: Mail messages is supplied. Text input is easy as it can use a standard QWERTY keyboard layout on the LCD.

Sending and receiving faxes is now also possible using the built in 9600bps fax/modem; anything that is typed or drawn can be sent. Receiving is also made easy but the screen ratio maybe a little hard to get used to when displaying received faxes from normal machines.

Overall this is a very nicely integrated mobile device that performs its tasks well. It can be a little slow from time to time, but on the whole it is fine. It maybe priced too high at almost \$900 but then again it is the only such product on the market and has no competition.

Fundamentally, it is a phone, or at least a concept, that we would love to see introduced to the UK as soon as possible.

Oh, and it also has a great name! (Says a certain S. Gardener!)

RATINGS

Asim CDFS

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

Overall Rating 80%

INFO

Price: £550 (\$899)
Contact: Bellsouth (US)
Tel: 001 800 746 6672

The Sony Magic Link

In a perfect world, someone else would handle all your faxes, email and messages. Someone else is here, or so the advert says.

The Sony Magic Link was designed to be a Personal Intelligent Communicator (PIC) and is based upon Magic Cap, the General Magic operating system that uses the desk, hallway, room, road, city metaphor system to control all operations.

When designing the Magic Link, Sony did not try to find a consumer market for the product but instead worked with other

companies to attempt to produce a product for which the public were ready.

The hardware is based upon Motorola's 68349 16MHz CPU and has 512K of accessible RAM. A 4MB ROM contains the operating system and the built in applications. The screen is reflective touch sensitive LCD. Sound is taken care of by a single speaker and audio input is via an internal microphone. Communications are handled by the built in 2400bps modem with 9600bps fax send capability. There is also a 14 pin serial connection and an infrared link capable of

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- THE CAMBRIDGE Z88 lap-top computer with 32K built-in memory, is one of the most portable, low cost, comprehensive computers ever designed.
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- The ingenious word-processing/spreadsheet package lists all commands in the menu for easy of use, while a page map outlines the text you are working on for quick reference.
- On the Cambridge Z88 you can also create directories, sort into alphabetical order and work with as many suspended activities as you like.
- Idea for home or business use, data on the A4 sized lap-top can be transferred to and from IBM compatibles PCs, Apple Macintosh computers and output onto any standard printer.
- The 32K built-in memory allows up to 20 pages of text, or 150 lines in any one document. There is the option to expand the memory up to 3 Megabytes and store it on Eprom back-up packs.
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The Sony Magic Link

C O N T I N U E D

38.4Kbps that will also control any Sony AV equipment.

Currently the Sony Magic Link is only available in the USA and consequently comes loaded with US software. Release 1.0 of the operating system is in ROM and also includes AT&T PersonaLink, Pocket Quicken, a spreadsheet called Pen-Cell, Spell Finder and a couple of games. The AT&T PersonaLink software takes care of your email messages, any faxes that you may wish to send and any alphanumeric pages you may receive with the optional alphanumeric PCMCIA pager card installed. It manages your schedule, helps you arrange meetings, coordinates appointments, and even updates your electronic address book by reading digital business cards that are sent with every email from another Magic Link.

Connect the Magic Link to a telephone socket and it will go away and get any new email that you may have waiting, send any faxes and retrieve any other information that you asked for. A telephone headset can also be attached to the unit and you can have the Magic Link automatically dial people for you, so that you can chat with them, as you continue to read your email or process other information.

Another accessory that is available is a rechargeable battery. This is no ordinary battery though, it is the same battery that Sony uses to power all of its new camcorders and thus the 7.2V lithium-ion battery can be obtained anywhere Sony

products are sold. An external keyboard is also available for the Magic Link and if plugged in is automatically recognised by the unit.

Unfortunately the basic Magic Link does not sell with any of these optional accessories but does come with the battery charger/power supply, six AAA batteries, a back-up battery, stylus, phone cable, and soft carrying case and commands the rather high price of \$995.95 (about £600).

Once out of the box, the Magic Link is comfortable to hold and the 5.5" diagonal LCD screen is angled naturally downwards to provide a comfortable writing position and has a pair of option buttons, one either side with the speaker on the right side and the microphone in the bottom left corner. The on-off switch is located on the right-hand side of the unit, along with the PCMCIA card slot, contrast control, pen compartment and battery cover. The left hand-side houses the plug for the phone cord and the serial port. The infrared port is on the top of the casing, next to the power jack.

The Magic Link's operating system is very user friendly but it is maybe just too "cute" for some people. After a while it started to annoy me, mainly when I found that I had to repeat half a dozen actions to get just one thing done. The unit itself is nicely designed and highly integrated with many of the features I would imagine I would want. However, as with other sys-



A side view of the Sony Magic Link



The Sony Magic Link, the BellSouth Simon, the Apple Newton (Left to right)

tems, the Magic Link too has its shortcomings. A2400bps modem, in this day and age, is just too slow for any serious work and not being able to receive faxes is also a pain. It would have been better to have included a wireless data connection of some sort, possibly even an integrated cellular phone that is connected to the telephone headset, and would allow data to be sent and received while on the move.

The Magic Link is a great little machine and I liked it a lot, but if Sony added a wireless modem, or better yet, a cellular

telephone and bundled the telephone headset with it then I think they would be onto a real winner. It would provide great functionality, flexibility and represent better value for money than the currently available unit.

RATINGS

Magic Link

BUILD QUALITY 85%

FEATURES 70%

VALUE FOR MONEY 85%

Overall Rating 75%

INFO

Price: £650 (\$995)

Contact: Sony (US)

Tel: 001 800 5562442

Hewlett Packard HP200LX

When a laptop computer is just too big to be really useful and the pen based PDAs are too fiddly to get used to or do not run the PC compatible software that you require then it is time to call on Hewlett Packard's latest palm top PC.

The HP200LX is aimed at the professional user who wants a keyboard, instead of pen input, and PC compatibility in a palm top computer. It comes in either a 1MB or 2MB version, has an Intel 80C186 7.91MHz processor, and 80 column x 25 lines 640x200 CGA screen, weighs just over 300 grammes and measures 16.0 x 8.64 x 2.54cm.

Despite only having 1MB or 2MB of RAM the HP200LX has a whole slew of software that is built



The Hewlett Packard HP200LX

into its 3MB ROM. MS-DOS 5.0, Lotus 123 Version 2.4 and Pocket Quicken are included, along with a general database, a data communications package, a text editor, a note taker, an HP financial calculator, cc: Mail Mobile and even a couple of games.

Flash disks can be used to expand the memory up to 80MB using the included Type II PCMCIA slot. Communications is provided by the full serial interface and built in 115K baud infra-red interface.

Power is supplied by two 1.5V AA batteries or rechargeable batteries which give approximately 60 hours of usage.

The HP200LX is not cheap at approximately £500 but then this was designed for people who need to travel light, who are on the job even when not at their desks, and who perform best when they stay in touch. Putting 300 grammes of PC power in your pocket makes the world your oyster or rather your office. After a short while I found the HP200LX to be an invaluable help in organising my business and personal life and connected to my GSM PCMCIA data adaptor it was the perfect tool with which to read and reply to email.

Now I am wondering how I ever managed without it!

RATINGS

HP200LX

BUILD QUALITY 85%

FEATURES 85%

VALUE FOR MONEY 85%

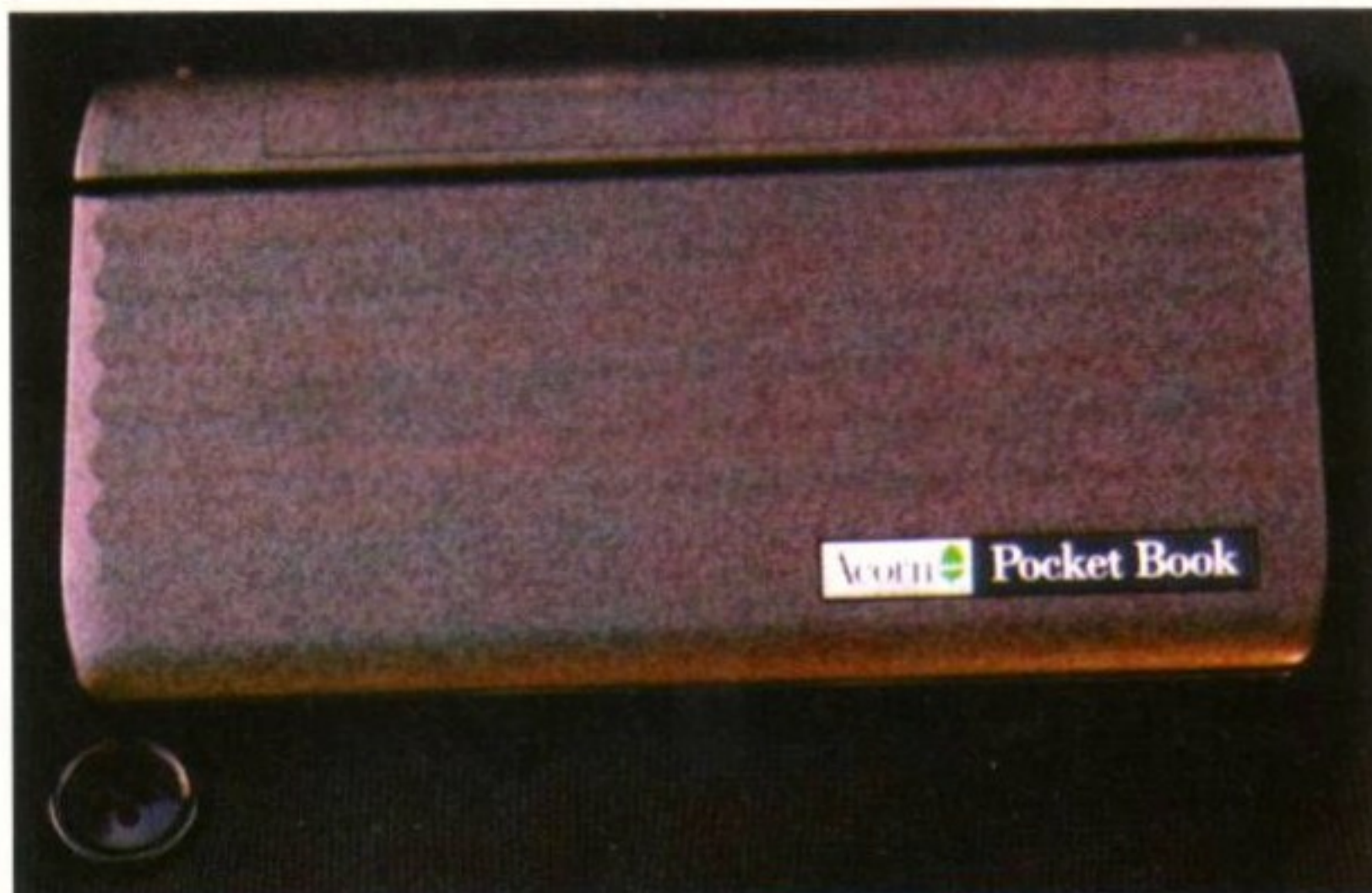
Overall Rating 85%

INFO

Price: £599

Contact: Hewlett Packard (UK)

Tel: 0344 360000



Put power in your pocket with Acorn.

Acorn Pocket Book

The Acorn Pocketbooks come in three versions - all of which are essentially re-badged Psions. We took a look at the basic model - equivalent to the Psion Series 3. If you want a fan of this computer, go no further than our answers wiz, Andy Eskelson. Technology has now achieved the personal computer which you can carry in your pocket. Advances will increase the capabilities and style, but the miniature size has been achieved. The Acorn stretches across my hand, from tip of the middle finger to bottom of the palm. It's a sensible size. Smaller, and you get really fiddly buttons and tiny screens. Bigger and you lose the essence of unobtrusive pocket portability.

Powered by two AAA batteries and a tiny backup battery, the Acorn operating system boasts a 16 bit CPU and 256K RAM. The keyboard is small and not built for long use, so don't hope to write your masterpiece on it. Every key press produces barely audible clicks, but it is still awkward to produce a constant stream of text without typos.

The LCD screen displays mono colour graphics and text clearly for a card file (addresses etc.) utility, word processor, spreadsheet, calculator and clock / alarm.

You can save your work files to the internal memory or to an external disk drive.

All external communication, with disk drives, other computers etc., is achieved via a tiny serial port on the left hand side. With the right cable connector and software (like AmigaNCP), files can be transferred directly into a master computer.

The Acorn is handy and truly portable. The models at the bottom end of the range are cheap options for making your Amiga portable.

One of the strong points of the Acorn / Psion range is the add-ons, support and service. As the AmigaNCP program shows, there is

plenty of support around to ensure you can get the best from the machine.

Yet the Acorn pocketbook, like others, really has to provide at least the facilities of a personal organiser like the ubiquitous Filofax, if not more, before it becomes absolutely indispensable.

RATINGS

Acorn Pocket Book

FEATURES	70%
PERFORMANCE	83%
EASE OF USE	86%
VALUE FOR MONEY	74%

Overall Rating 75%

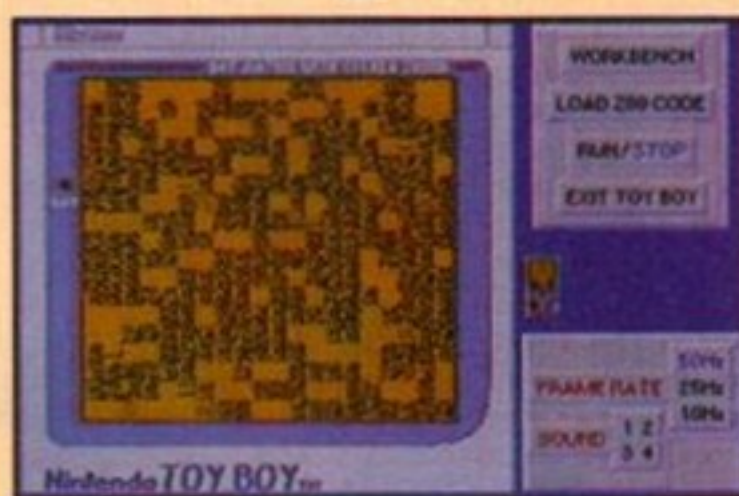
INFO

Price: £169.95

Contact: Acorn Computers

Tel: 01223 254 254

Are you Game, boy?



The GameBoy has become such a piece of pop culture, there are now pseudo-GameBoys on the Amiga.

Years ago, we saw pocket calculators with games on. The hand held game machine then went even smaller and you could play Space Invaders on your watch!

Trends change though and these soon lost favour. Nintendo saw a gap in the market and launched what must be one of the most popular portable computers, the GameBoy. It has a LCD display and black and white

Portables Project

A useful government quango (a rare breed indeed) called The National Council for Educational Technology has been piloting the use of portable computers in schools.

The NCET has put over £2m worth of portables in more than 250 schools to see how they help the students and teachers. After two years, studies have shown a marked improvement in students' literacy, motivation, success in learning and access to technology.



Students take portable computers into the field.

Portables have overcome the insular and inflexible computer rooms of the eighties by taking computer technology into classrooms. Being inobtrusive, powerful and robust, portables have integrated well into the curriculum. Classes have used them in science to record environmental factors in a pond or playground, make up a newspaper, teach languages and write up projects.

The NCET is now using the knowledge gained from the pilot projects to teach schools how to keep up with modern technology and implement their own portables programme.

Contact: NCET, Milburn Hill Rd. Science Park, Coventry CV4 7JJ. Tel: 01 203 416994

graphics. It is, truly, crap and the game that made it so successful was Tetris. But it is also wildly successful. With the success of such a low power machine, Atari thought "If these are popular, imagine how much money we could make with a hand held sixteen bit machine." Wrong. Why?

Well, the Atari Lynx (based on Amiga-style technology) was a great machine. It had wonderful graphics on a small screen, the capability to receive TV with an adapter. It beat the GameBoy hands down every time, but it still failed and the GameBoy marches on. The problem, largely, was that it ate batteries. Where the two colour GameBoy could keep going for hours, sixteen bit colour drains a lot more power and people weren't prepared to pay for a never ending stream of batteries. If only someone had thought of putting a rechargeable pack with it!

The Portable Amiga

A strong point in favour of portable computers is that they increase the flexibility of your Amiga.

You can turn your Amiga into a portable machine by making the real portable a "slave" of the Amiga. Files, data and other information can be transferred easily between the desktop Amiga and portable computer.

For example, half-completed word processing or spreadsheet projects on your Amiga can be transferred to the portable so you can work on them while on the move. Clearly, this also means that ideas and work started while on the move, can be loaded into Amiga applications when you return to the home or office.

Connecting the Amiga to a portable requires some sort of serial cable and software. Some answers to the connection question effectively turn the Amiga into the master platform - making the portable part of the filing system, while others simply transfer files between machines.

The control software can either be a Comms program which treats the machines as if they were talking over modems, or specifically tailored data transfer. The latter allows a more sophisticated connection which can even turn the portable into a slave - an extension of the Amiga filing system.

Note that the portable will probably use a smaller serial plug, so a special serial to serial cable is needed. It will also soak up your portable's batteries, so use a mains adaptor.

Before making the investment in a portable, ensure that there is a way of transferring files. Not all systems are compatible.

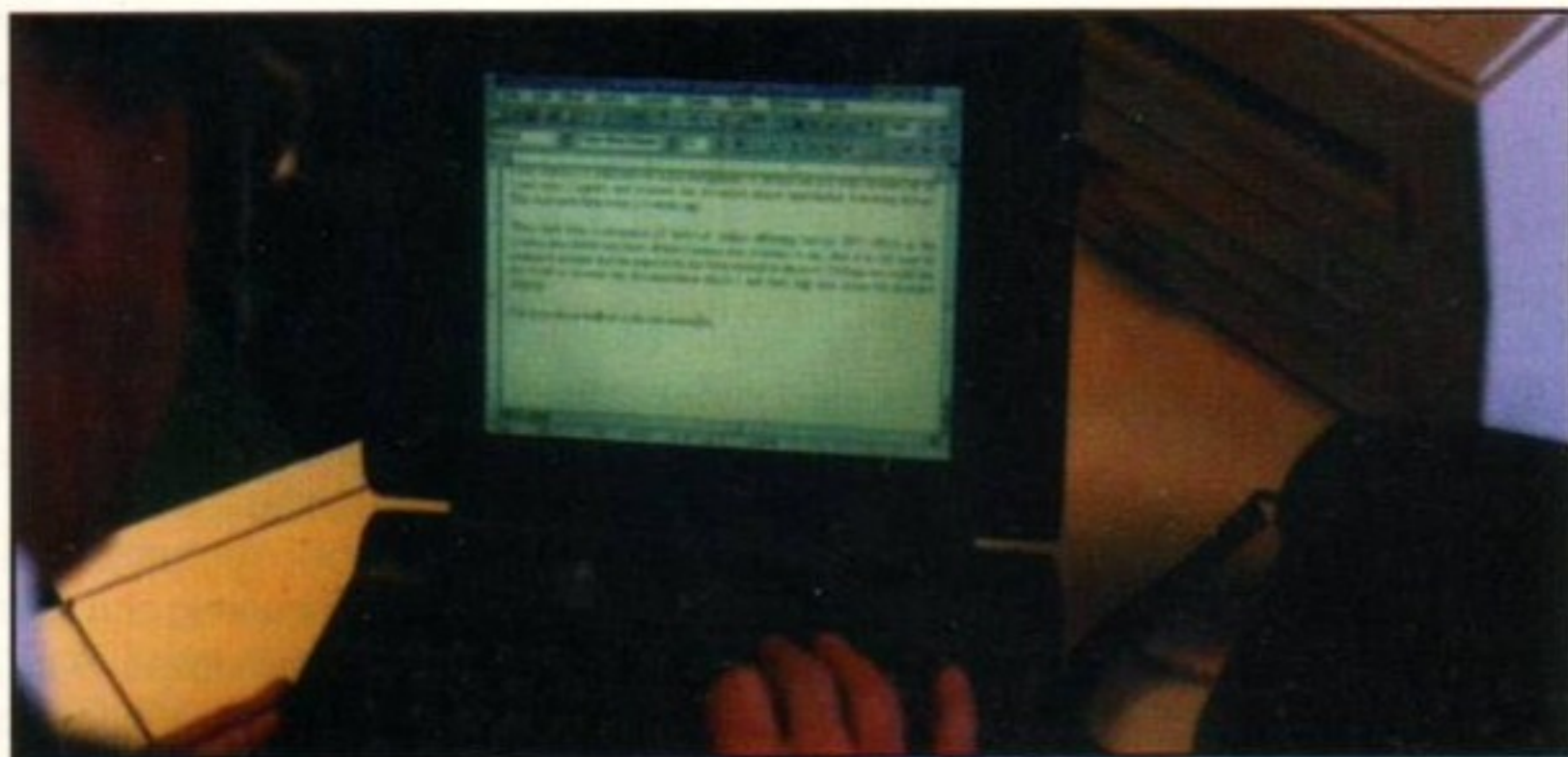
The Psion 3 and Acorn palmtop (a rebadged Psion) can use a program called AmigaNCP. Contact: B&B Computersysteme, c/-Michael Balzer, Winchenbachstr. 12h, D-42281 Wuppertal Germany.

The Z88 uses a package called Z88-LinkII, which comes complete with cable from The Music Suite Ltd, Cenarth, Newcastle Emlyn, Dyfed SA38 9JN.

If you are using a PC portable, it is much simpler to have your Amiga read or write a PC floppy disk. The other option is connecting them up via serial ports and a null modem cable and transferring files via a Comms program.

Both options are also possible, with a few more difficulties (such as the High Density disk issue), between an Amiga and Apple portable.

These issues were covered in depth by Aitor Ibarra in his three part feature "No Amiga is an Island" back in the January AUI.



The Samsung purrs nicely on the move or on your desk.

Samsung Notemaster 486P (T)

The market is currently flooded with portable computers. Despite prices being higher than the equivalent desktops, they are selling well. There was a period recently where notebooks / laptops offered virtually the same power as a standard desktop but with the added element of portability. This made them incredibly attractive. Desktop technology has raced ahead again, with the specs of an average machine being substantially raised.

We chose the Samsung Notebook 486P to review for no particular reason, but the specs place it in about the middle of the range. It uses an DX2 50MHz with an 8KB internal cache and 4MB DRAM, upgradable to 20MB.

It uses a removable Hard Drive - which is a bonus security factor, as well as allowing easy upgrades. There is of course a 2.5 inch floppy disk drive.

Physically, the machine looks like all the other modern portables - grey, slim and a measly 6.2 pounds weight.

Open it up and you'll see the power switch situated prominently at the top of the keyboard, balanced neatly by the 19mm trackball below the spacebar. Two inlaid "buttons" curve around the trackball. I have always found trackballs a bugger to use. The Samsung is no exception, and it's not helped by the pointer buttons which seem to fight back when you try to press them. Samsung have thoughtfully provided a 6 pin connector at the back of the machine to connect a mouse.

The 84 key keyboard has a clean, determined, and very responsive feel, which matches the way the internals whiz rapidly to obey your commands.

External connectors include a 9-pin serial port, 15 pin external CRT display port, 25-pin parallel port, an extra expansion port, and two PCMCIA slots.

Beyond the pacy speed and capacity for ample software, there isn't much that can be said about the performance. It does what it should with Windows, DOS and other software at a pace that would be

acceptable on a desktop.

The 32 Bit VESA local bus, 1MB video DRAM, simultaneous LCD/CRT Super VGA display and up to 256 colours ensures good graphical speed, colour and definition, but don't expect miracles.

PC manufacturers have to work hard to make their machines stand out from the crowd. Samsung have done this with some nifty extra features. These include a battery recharge at any time the AC mains adaptor is connected.

A Hot Replacement feature allows you to replace the battery without turning the machine off, but placing it in a REST state. There are five different power states; full on, doze, standby, REST and REST to RAM (where contents are saved to memory and all devices are turned off. Resumption will power contents back up to their previous state).

This type of portable computer is virtually stand-alone and self-contained. It doesn't need to be used in conjunction with a master desktop. This would only be necessary if your files had to be loaded back into a networked set-up.

Use with the Amiga is simply a matter of getting the Ami to read and write PC disks. Then files can be transferred both ways.

RATINGS

Samsung Notebook 486P (T)

FEATURES	86%
PERFORMANCE	88%
DOCUMENTATION	90%
VALUE FOR MONEY	77%
Overall Rating 85%	

INFO

Price: £2675
(street price about 8% lower)
Contact: Samsung Electronics
Tel: 0181 391 0168

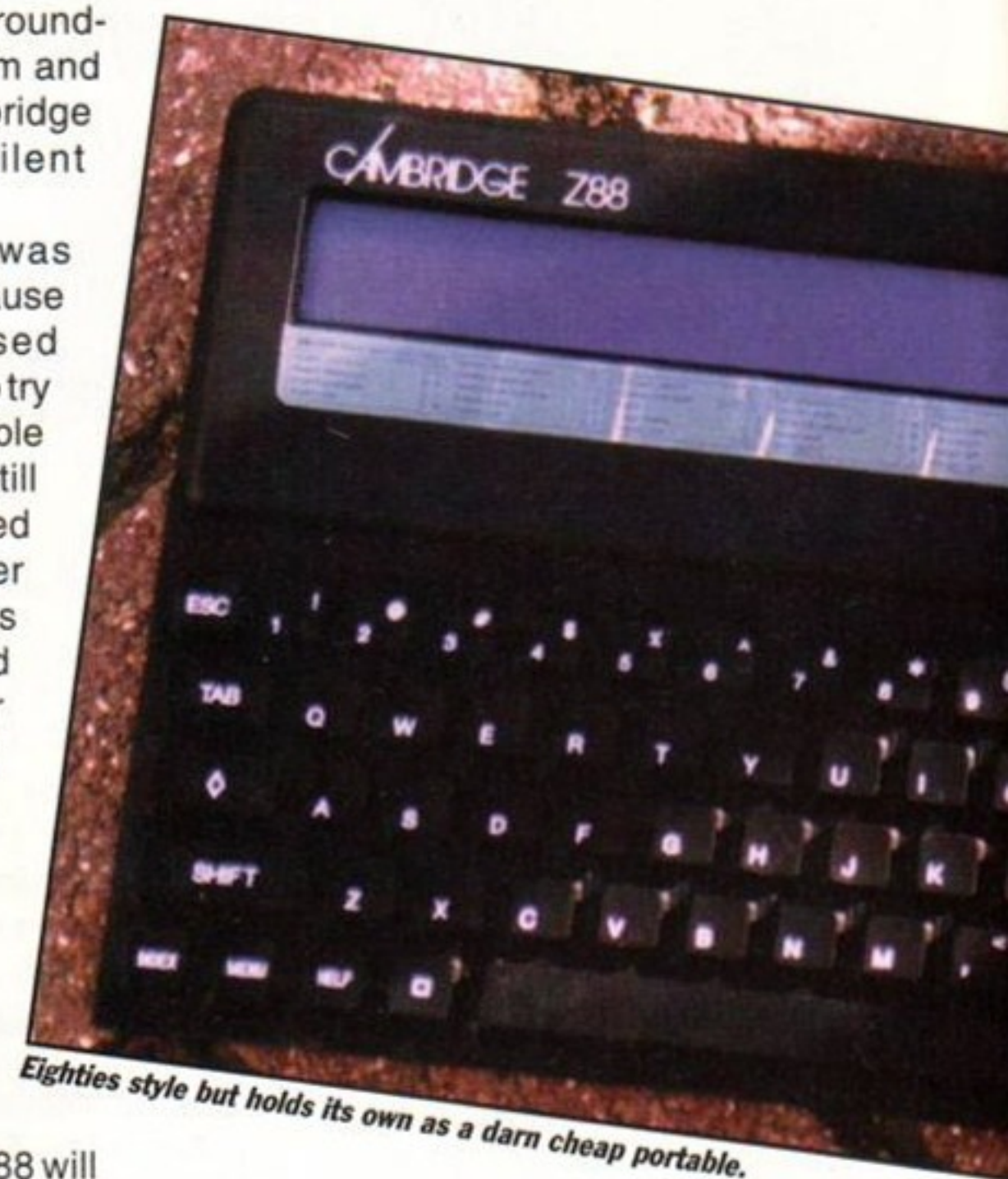
Z88

The Z88 is a Z80A processor based portable computer designed by the infamous but ground-breaking Sinclair team and released as the Cambridge Z88 in 1988 to silent applause.

The reception was muted at the time because the machine used tottering technology to try and leap into the portable age. The machine is still around, and supported by an enthusiastic user club, because of its quirky nature and powerful facilities for price. £80 will get you a machine with diary, word processor, spreadsheet, calculator, time/calendar, alarm, and even a built-in BBC basic programming language.

Importantly, the Z88 will easily become a portable extension of your Amiga. There is a simple program and cable available which lets you run the Z88 programs from your Amiga and transfer files.

The most obvious use is for word processing or spreadsheet work that you complete while on the move. When you're back home this can be easily loaded into your favourite Amiga-based applications as ASCII files. The Z88 looks and feels like a



Eighties style but holds its own as a darn cheap portable.

real laptop. A generously proportioned LCD screen is built into the body, which also sports a full sized, 64 key, rubber keyboard (the Sinclairs were ideal for those with a rubber fetish). The small size and light weight (900g / 1.98lb) means it fits easily into your briefcase, satchel or plastic carry bag, although a special carry case is also available. It has been many years since

Moving



we've seen memory specs like this; 32K RAM, 128K ROM and optional 128K / 256K EPROMS/. While the height of coolness in the mid-eighties, EPROMS (Erasable, Programmable, Read-Only Memory) are almost unheard of now. Files are saved to the EPROM chips in add-on cartridges but once there they cannot be changed. When full, the EPROMS must be completely erased with a special eraser - which is a machine

the size of a power

adaptor.

System

and app-

lication

software

is pre-

loaded

in the Z88

ROM and

selected

from the main

menu screen

on start-up.

The most use-

ful of these is

PIPEDREAM,

which doubles

as a word proc-

essor and spre

adsheet.

Activities can be

kept suspended in

RAM (1 Meg add

on available) while

the machine is

turned off, then

restarted when you

power-up sometime in the future. While

this avoids wasting space in EPROM,

users are warned by the manual that

the RAM can be unreliable. However,

I have never struck any problems.

The diary uses the in-built clock

/calendar to store appointments and

bring up daily reminders. It works

simply - flicking through a calendar

and choosing a specific day brings up an editable list of your appointments and plans for that day. A portable computer should be all the things you could need while on the run.

That means an address book would be essential. Although the Z88 has no specific address-book application, the manual describes a way in which the Pipedream spreadsheet can be adapted for this purpose.

Printing can be achieved within most applications, although a special printing facility has been included which helps define the nature of the output and the type of printer you are using. You'll need a special parallel printer cable (£9.95).

Programming buffs will find the ROM-resident BBC basic V.3 handy to write new applications or simple games, or to delve into the machine's shallow (by today's standards) inner sanctums.

A Terminal program connects you, via the mouse-port style serial port, to other computers, including your Amiga. Software is available to help you control the Z88 and transfer files to and from the Amiga, PC, Mac and BBC. That means you can load in files on which you'd like to work while you travel, and load back files when you return to the waiting arms of your beloved Amiga.

Power comes from a mains adaptor or four AA batteries. The latter will provide twenty hours use. There is a small back-up battery to retain data temporarily. Overall, the Z88 can be described as an advanced electronic typewriter with illusions of grandeur. It has a typically eighties non-user friendly approach. Highly skilled computer users like AUI readers will find using it an amusingly archaic doddle. Computer-illiterate

users - those who the machine was originally aimed at - might find it a shade awkward.

Palmtops are personal assistants and laptops are portable computers. The Z88 falls somewhere in-between. While it may not look that cool, it operates admirably as a work horse. The full keyboard, lightness and good range of applications make it an ideal portable companion to your Amiga.

Many people waste their laptops by using them solely for intensive word processing. For this purpose, as well as diary and spreadsheet needs, the Z88 is a much better option. As long as you accept its limitations and raw style, you cannot go wrong at the price. For £80 a real live portable which connects to your Amiga? That's a real bargain!

RATINGS

Cambridge Z88

FEATURES	62%
PERFORMANCE	58%
EASE OF USE	50%
DOCUMENTATION	78%
VALUE FOR MONEY	83%

Overall Rating 72%

INFO

Price: £79.99

Contact:

Universal Trade

Tern Valley Business Park

Shropshire TF9 3FR

Tel: 0630 655 797

A Mobile Gardener

Simon Gardener is not just an enthusiast for but also a constant user of mobile communications.

"I have been using mobile computing technology for the past 5 years or so now and find that I can no longer do without it. The machine I use every day is a Toshiba T3400 sub-notebook which has an Intel 486-33 processor, 12MB of RAM, a 120MB hard drive, external floppydisk drive, a backlit monochrome screen and employs a lithium-ion battery to give me, with power management software, approximately five hours of continuous use.

I connect to the outside world using a Toshiba 14400bps PCMCIA fax/modem, when I am near a fixed phone line. When I find myself on the move I use a Nokia GSM data

adaptor, connected to a Nokia 2110 GSM phone to give me mobile data and fax.

I collect my email from CIX, which is a commercial email and computer conference system based in south London. I connect to the Internet via a SLIP account in order to use telnet, ftp, irc and go web browsing.

For voice communications I use a Nokia Orange PCN phone and a Nokia 2110GSM phone when I am overseas.

As it is small, light and extremely portable I use my sub-notebook every day and it has rapidly taken over from my desktop machine as my main computer."

there have been through its life many rumours of a portable Amiga, no such machine has emerged. Perhaps the new structure that will rise from the Commodore ruins will remedy that. However, in the meantime, with an increasing across format compatibility arriving through the systems used to connect computers, phones and other devices, there are many other ways of linking the Amiga to the outside world. Portability is the future in computing and other communication areas of our lives. It's not going to go away, it is going to move on - and probably faster than we will find comfortable too. AUI

Prices of mobile electronic devices, mainly the telephone and the computer, are now falling fast. Performance too is improving rapidly. Both these factors are bringing the accessibility of mobility to the ordinary user. No longer confined to the trendy or the rich, they are enabling all of us to remain in two way contact with our information sources or delivery points. And this trend will increase. Sadly, the Amiga has never progressed to take its place in the mobile world. Though

Years ago the fastest way to find out what was going on was to pick up a copy of The Times. Reuters got the drop on everyone by setting up a chain of fast horses to bring back the news from Waterloo before anyone else. Radio communications meant everyone could get information much faster and television added yet more to the immediacy of information.

Today, there is one method that leaves all of these behind. The Internet is the place to find information before anyone else. Whatever your interest, news will generally break there earliest. After the first free elections in South Africa, exit polls and opinions were there before the news crews could switch their camera on.

But we get ever more demanding. It's no longer enough to be able to go online from the office or the home. We need to be able to hook up whenever and wherever we want.

It's particularly apt then that with the **AUI** Special Report in this issue on mobile computing that this modem should be launched in the UK.



Rocket Power

Limpet Mine

The Rocket has been described as the "size of a limpet mine" by one of the **AUI** team. Exactly how he knows what size a limpet mine is, we didn't investigate. Don't be fooled by the size though, this modem hides the power of a limpet mine too.

The Rocket has a top speed of 14.4K and while the future is V.34 with speeds of 28.8K, 14.4K is more than fast enough for email collection which this modem will be used for when on the move. The throughput of the Rocket is a respectable 57,600 BPS with both MNP 5 and V42bis data compression. It supports all the CCITT modem standards, V32bis/V32/V22bis/V22/V21/V23. FAXing is a must when on the move and the Rocket supports this function as well.

Like any other modem, the Rocket has a through line so that you can plug your phone in and keep the modem connected. Of course, you can't use both at the same time as there's only one line, but it does save on swapping them over or subjecting a caller to an earful of beeping noises.

Don't be fooled by the size though, this modem hides the power of a limpet mine too.

David Taylor and Gideon Overhead go walkabout with a very neat pocket modem from Andest Communications.

The serial connection that comes with the modem is really for use with a PC. If you've got a CD 32 with the SX-1, this means you can hook it up directly. If you have a standard Amiga, you'll need to obtain an adapter. There relatively cheap, so it's not a problem.

In addition to the main adapter that plugs in, the Rocket will run off a battery. If you just use an Amiga, this is not so much of an advantage, because you'll need to be near a power supply anyway. Mind you, if you're near a phone line, you also likely to be close to a power point, so I can't imagine the real need to use the batteries at all in normal circumstances. It does mean though that you don't have to carry the adapter around with you, which is quite handy and should you damage or lose your power supply, you won't be left offline either.

Amiga Connection

Although there is no portable Amiga, that is a battery powered one, there are many options for using true portables with Amiga, either transferring files manually or by connecting the machines together. However, you may not want this if all your work is on the Amiga and you need to take it elsewhere or if you simply can't afford a second computer.

We know people who simply throw their A1200 in a case and carry that around because they can't stand the PC and find this solution much more acceptable. Your A1200 can be a standard machine, but easily transforms into the ideal powerhouse. Throw in a half gigabyte drive. No problem. An accelerator, a maths co-processor, extra RAM. You can carry a real beast in your case.

This modem gives an extra dimension to the idea of a portable Amiga. Now you can collect your email, files and information anywhere that

you can find the sockets. When you consider some of the unfriendly PC comms packages, this can be a dream come true.

Conclusion

The Rocket is hard to fault. It does exactly what it is supposed to do. Simply link it up and you can dial away. It logged onto every BBS we tried at the maximum 14.4K. With V42bis data compression it managed an average of 1700 CPS on compressed files and about 3000 on straight ASCII, which are both very respectable speeds. At the price, if you're in the market for a modem, the Rocket has to be one to consider. **AUI**

RATINGS

Modem

DOCUMENTATION	90%
PERFORMANCE	93%
VALUE FOR MONEY	90%

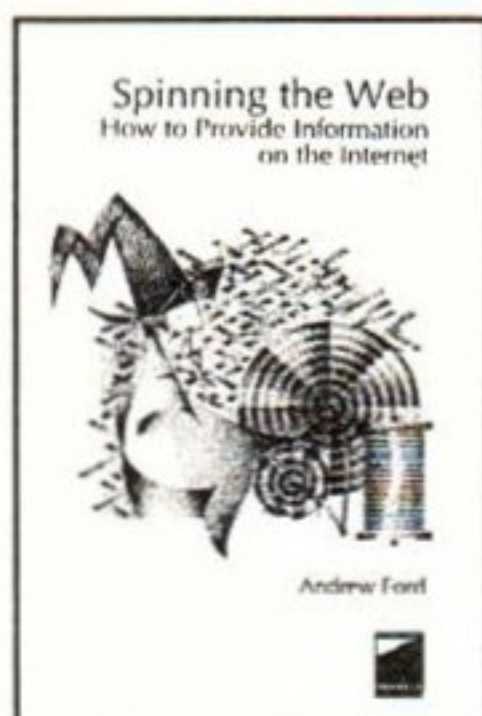
Overall Rating 91%

INFO

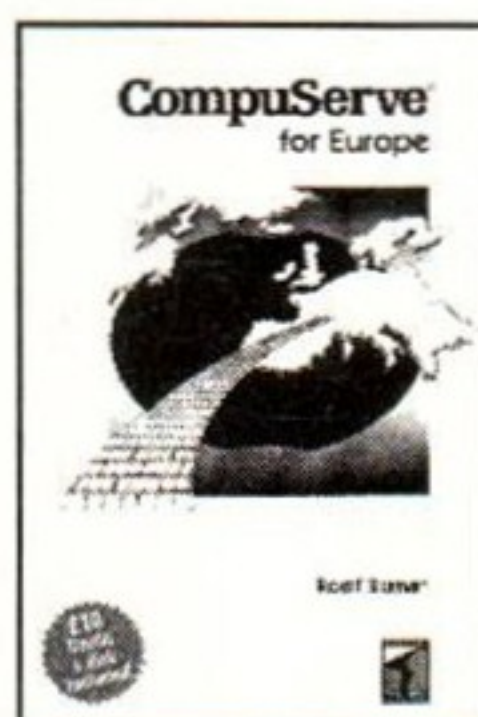
Price: £129.99
Contact: Andest Rocket Offer
Unit 2, Alpine Works
Oak Road, Crawley
West Sussex RH11 8AJ

INTERNET BOOKS FROM INTERNATIONAL THOMSON PUBLISHING

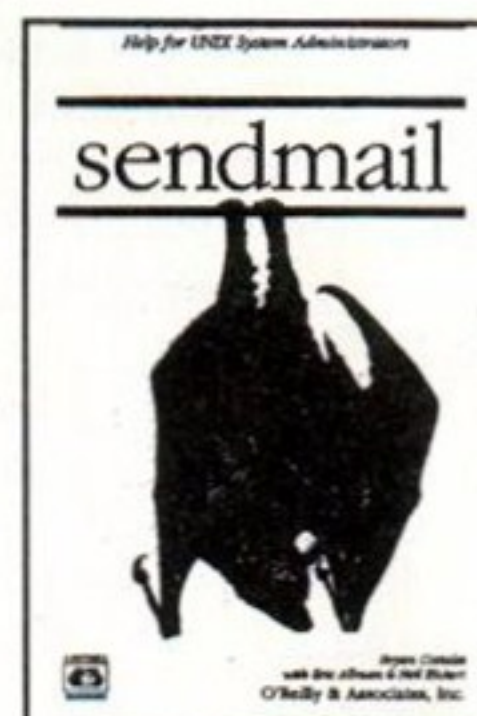
Liu/Managing Internet Information Services
1-56592-062-7/£21.95



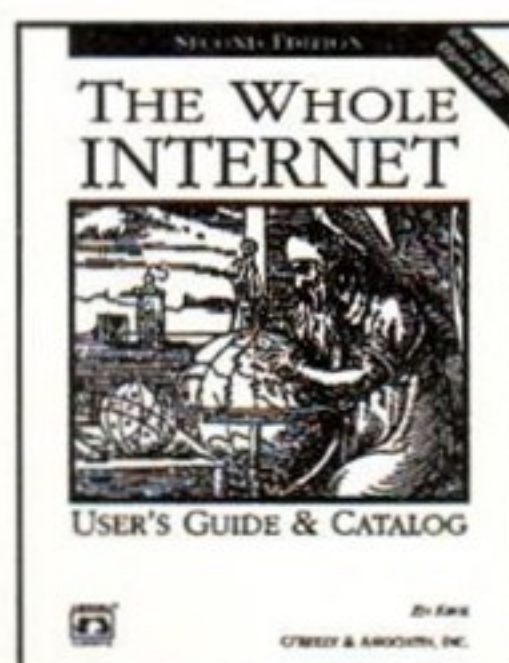
Ford/Spinning the Web
1-850-32141-8/£19.95



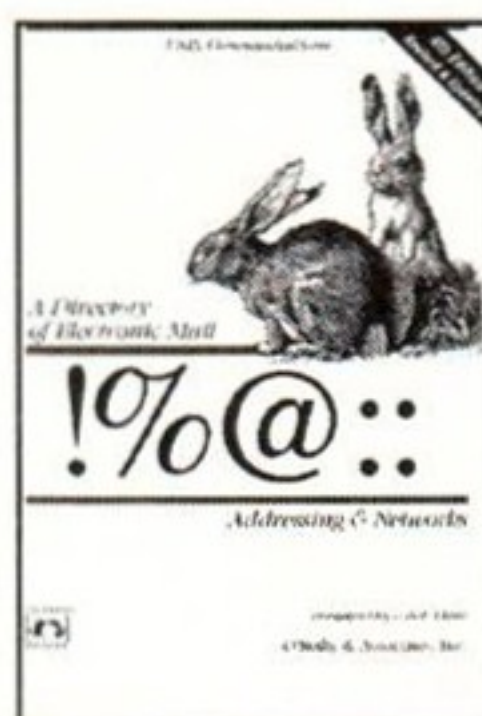
Sluman/CompuServe for Europe
1-850-32121-3/£19.95



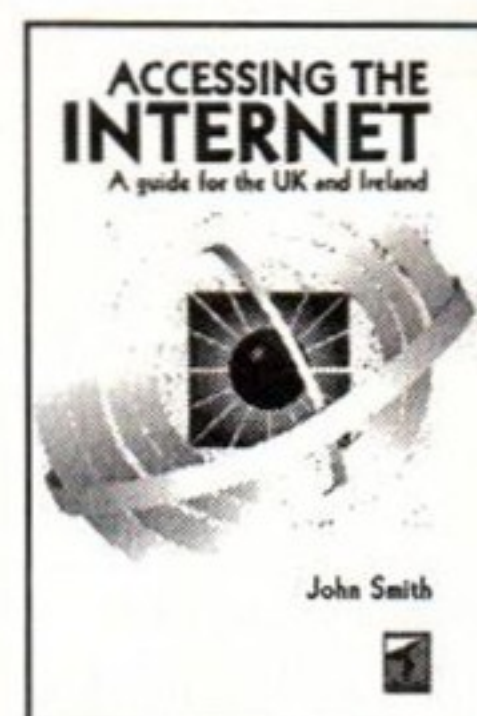
Costales/sendmail
1-56592-056-2/£24.50



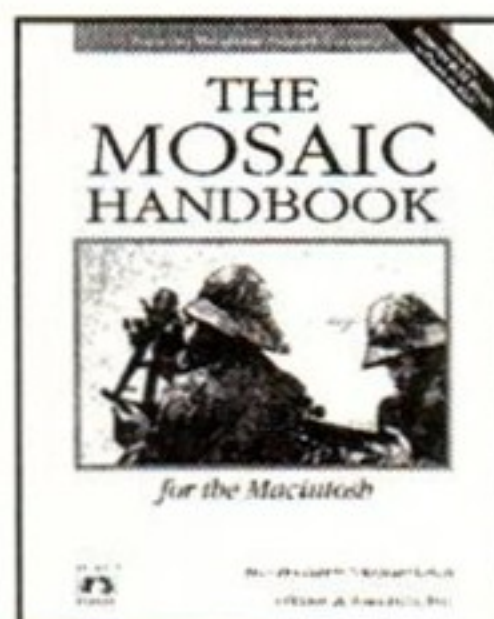
Krol/The Whole Internet Users Guide
and Catalog 2e
1-56592-063-5/£18.50



Frey/!%@:: A Directory of Electronic
Mail Addressing & Networks 4e
1-56592-046-5/£7.50



Smith/Accessing the Internet: A
Guide for the UK and Ireland
1-850-32147-7/£8.95



Koman/The Mosaic Handbook
Microsoft Windows, 1-56592-094-5/£22.00
X Window System, 1-56592-095-3/£22.00
Macintosh, 1-56592-096-1/£22.00



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On Line

Everyone likes a good discussion now and then, and especially a bit of juicy gossip. Just one of the Internet's biggest features is Usenet which plays host to over 5000 discussion groups called newsgroups.

You're free to roam from one newsgroup to the next, skip messages, and join in with your contribution. Out there on the Internet are some of the world's greatest minds who gladly share their knowledge and thoughts with others. In contrast, at the other end of the scale, are the complete dimwits who have nothing better to do than post stupid messages. Thankfully these people are rare on the Internet and the

are quite a few but only a handful will technically support the Amiga. Both Demon and CIX are the most popular and affordable providers in the UK. For more information on this, please see the January and February 1995 issues of **AUI**.

If you can't obtain an Internet connection yourself, then some BBSs around the country are able to provide you with a Usenet connection allowing you to participate in the thousands of newsgroups. Ask your local BBS sysop if they have Usenet facilities.

Both CIX and Demon have excellent Usenet facilities but this depends on what software you use to read the newsgroups. If you're a CIX user then

Threads

Threads are messages which are replies to previous messages of the same topic. Let me give you an example. Suppose you posted a message to the Madonna newsgroup asking about her next concert. While you're writing about that, other people could be writing about her new album or their look-alike girlfriend! So, the newsgroup can become saturated with different discussions which would normally leave you lost among a stream of messages which don't seem to relate to each other.

Because the Internet requires each message to have a unique number and an optional title, Usenet readers can keep track of individual conversations so you can read one discussion at a time in an ordered manner. Your reader could organise the replies to your question about Madonna's next concert to appear one after the other in a linear fashion. This is called following a thread. (Just like threading cotton through fabric!)

vast majority of people are just like you and me. (Intelligent, good looking, greatest minds etc..)

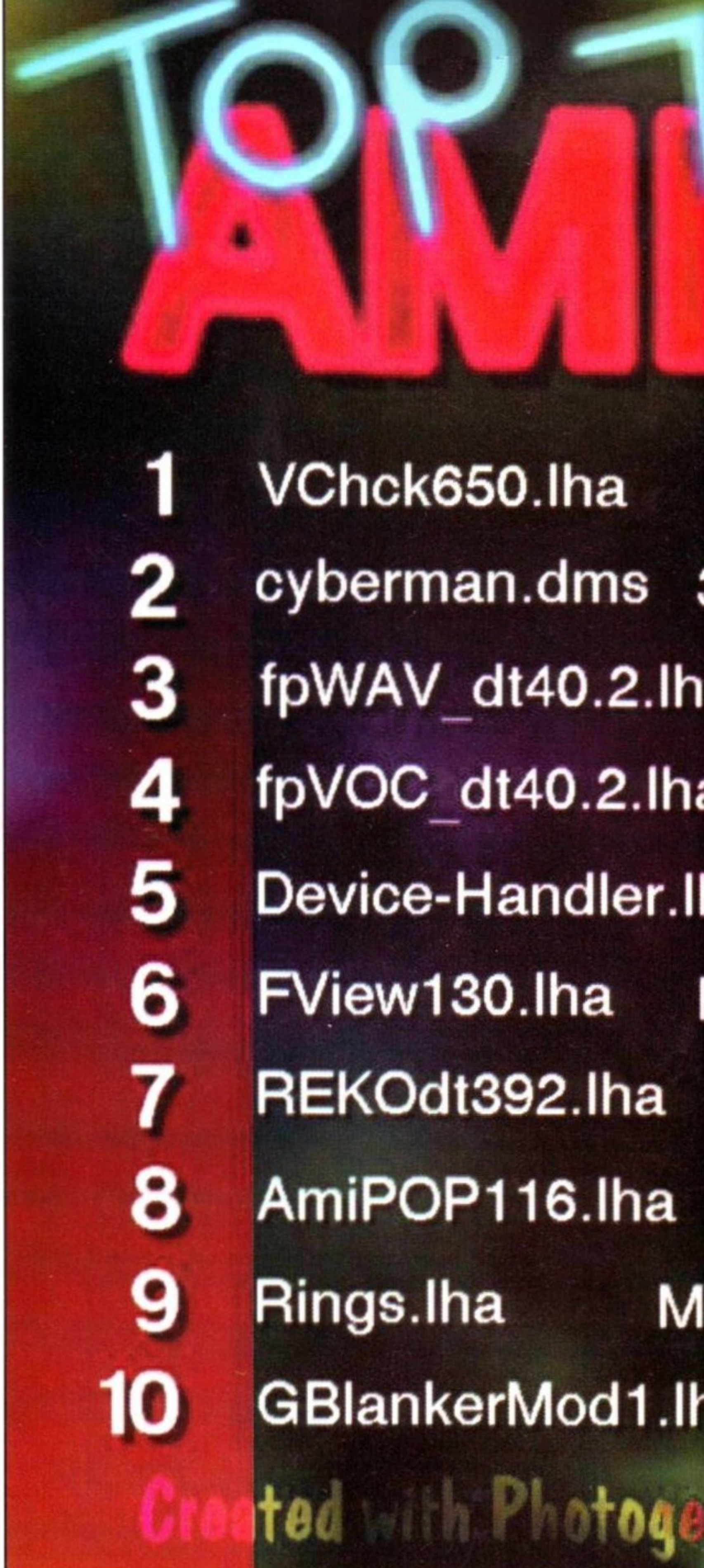
So how do you join Usenet? Well, if you've been following this column for the past three issues you will know that it's necessary to be a subscriber to one of the Internet providers. There

it's possible for some OLRs (off line readers) to download newsgroup messages along with the regular CIX conferences and e-mail. Unfortunately, no Amiga OLRs for CIX yet support Usenet. The feature has been promised for the near future so it's just a matter of waiting.

Newsgroups

Here's a list of just a handful of the thousands of newsgroups which may be of interest to you. Some I've listed just to show how diverse some topics are.

alt.alcohol	comp.sys.amiga.programmer
alt.alien.visitors	comp.sys.intel
alt.amazon-women.admirers	rec.arts.books
alt.comedy.british	rec.arts.cinema
alt.drwho.creative	rec.arts.startrek.misc
alt.fan.madonna	rec.arts.tv.uk
alt.fan.u2	rec.aviation.military
alt.food.fat-free	rec.boats.paddle
alt.music.prince	rec.collecting.stamps
alt.psychology	rec.food.recipes
alt.supermodels	rec.humor.funny
alt.tv.babylon-5	rec.motorcycles
comp.graphics.packages.lightwave	rec.pets.dogs
comp.sys.amiga.announce	rec.radio.amateur.misc
comp.sys.amiga.applications	rec.scuba
comp.sys.amiga.audio	sci.geo.meteorology
comp.sys.amiga.cd32	sci.physics.fusion
comp.sys.amiga.graphics	sci.space.news
comp.sys.amiga.hardware	uk.jobs.offered
comp.sys.amiga.multimedia	



- 1 VChck650.lha
- 2 cyberman.dms
- 3 fpWAV_dt40.2.lh
- 4 fpVOC_dt40.2.lha
- 5 Device-Handler.lh
- 6 FView130.lha
- 7 REKOdt392.lha
- 8 AmiPOP116.lha
- 9 Rings.lha
- 10 GBlankerMod1.lh

New at number one this week is the latest version of the excellent Virus Checker. (Aminet chart 29/1/95. See March issue for more info on Aminet)

**From the latest in world news
to bizarre hobbies and
interests, Gary Fenton
explores Usenet.**

EN
NET

NEW VIRUS CHECKER 6.5
PAC-MAN, DOOM LIKE(?)
BEST WAV DATATYPE
BEST VOC DATATYPE
ERM, DEVICE HANDLER!
ST IFF/GIF/JPEG VIEWER
TYPE - REKO CARDSETS
AMIGA POP3 CLIENT
IVING RING GRAPHIC TOY
SCREEN BLANKERS
s (text done in Brilliance)

Using the connection to the Internet that CIX provides, you can navigate through all of the newsgroups but it's a

slow and expensive way of doing things. A fairly recent addition to CIX is a Usenet reader which lets you quickly

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

AUI USER PORT

Net News

- Demon is no longer offering technical support for AmiTCP which is the best Internet software for the Amiga. This is because AmiTCP has gone commercial and users must pay about £60 for version 4 of AmiTCP. I get the feeling Demon aren't too happy about this move and as a result now only supply AmigaNOS to new Amiga users. If you can still get the free 3.0 version of AmiTCP then I suggest you do that!
- International Thomson Publishing have launched the first book ever to be released simultaneously on both paper and through the Internet. Called "Spinning the Web", it's a guide explaining how to use the World Wide Web and create your own hypertext documents for use on the Web. For more information, contact Josette Garcia at josette@itpuk.co.uk.
- CIX have announced they will be introducing SLIP access to the Internet by the time you read this. It would potentially allow customers to interact with the World Wide Web and other Internet services via a full graphical interface. No more details are available at the moment but "competitive prices" have been promised.
- Remember chain letters? One has recently been passed (or plagued) around the Internet promising great sex within four days of passing the letter on or bad luck if you break the chain. It then detailed several amusing stories of good and bad luck, such as the man who tried to pick up a prostitute but was picked up by the police instead because he broke the chain!
- The Internet Movie Database 3.1 is now available on Aminet. It covers over 38,000 movies, 470,000 entries, and occupies 27Mb of hard disk space! It's a must for all fanatical movie buffs.

browse through messages and follow threads.

Usenet on CIX

Accessing Usenet on CIX is documented in the lovely ring bound manual which is sent to all CIX subscribers. I won't be tedious about this so here come the instructions in brief. Log on to CIX using a comms package such as NComm and at CIX's main prompt type "go usenet" without the quotes and press return. If this is your first time here you'll be greeted.

Type "reader" to use the interactive Usenet reader. CIX's normal commands don't work here so type "h" for a list of available commands. To join a specific newsgroups type "g" followed by a space and the name of the newsgroup. For example, typing "g comp.sys.amiga.graphics" will join you to the newsgroup which is all about Amiga graphics. Pressing space will advance through the messages. "q" will quit from the reader and "s" will save the current message to your scratchpad.

After you have quit from the reader you can file all unread messages to your Usenet scratchpad by typing "batch all endbatch". This may take a while to do but when it's ready type "download messages" to receive the scratchpad so you can browse through the newsgroups at your leisure without paying CIX's on-line fees.

To get a complete list of every newsgroup, type "download newsgrouplist". I recommend doing this once because the file will act as your bible of the newsgroup.

Usenet on Demon

At the moment, Demon is the best place to participate in newsgroups if you're an Amiga user - which you are! There are a few OLRs available which download all of the newsgroups and let you read and post to them off line in your own time.

If you are using AmiTCP then you probably have an OLR called Tin. New users can experience problems when posting Usenet messages so please check that the file POSTNEWS in the AmiTCP:bin directory has the S bit set. To make sure, go into a Shell and type "protect amitcp:bin/postnews SRWED".

When you next log on to Demon, type "link up news" and Demon will collect and download your newsgroup messages for you as a background task.

To join and leave newsgroups, you must edit a text file called NewsGroups which lives in the AmiTCP:usr/lib directory. Just type the full name of each newsgroup per line followed by a space and a number. This number is the number of days the newsgroup's messages will be held on your hard disk before being deleted. It's called the "purge time". **AUI**

Contacts

Demon's joining fee is £12.50 and there's a monthly charge of £10 (plus VAT). There's 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 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).

David Taylor turns book worm once more for another guide to the Internet.

Last month I reviewed a book that dealt with Compuserve and which talked of the changing face of comms and how it has become trendy. In reflection, I'm beginning to wonder if this is true. Don't get me wrong. The 'net is growing. More and more people are going online but I suspect that it's the younger generation who have grown up with computers and have simply reached the age where they can get a modem. How many people who avoid computers have suddenly changed their minds. Very few, I think. Certainly none of my relatives are itching to surf the 'net.

Of course, some people have been forced to learn about the 'net for professional purposes. It has reached the point where certain companies are in areas where you cannot afford to be waiting for snail mail or faxes even.

So maybe there is room for an-

pieces: fairly obviously, we're amigauser, cix is the provider, etc, etc. The way all this works is explained.

In itself, email is a very useful service but, as always, we want more. And there is more. There is also a way of transferring files, which means that programs, music, pictures, anims, anything you can do on your computer in fact, can be transferred. What's more you don't even have to access the computer that holds the information directly - something that isn't possible some of the time. This may be because you don't have access to it or because you don't have their modem number. This is the way most files are acquired, through a third party.

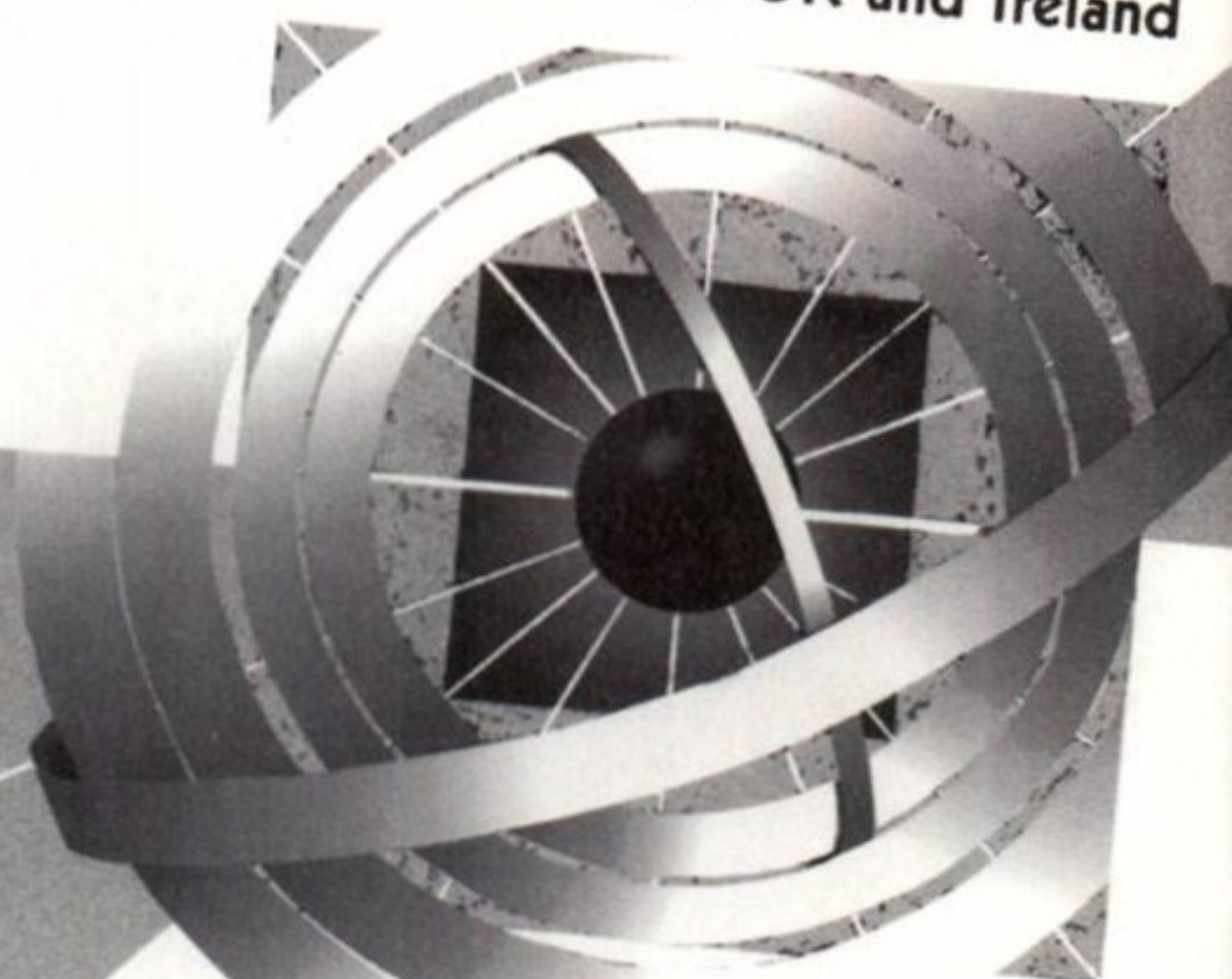
Terminology

Of course, when you start dabbling with files, you're looking at transferring megabytes of information. This means

It's obviously very hard to come up with a cover picture for a book about the 'net.

ACCESSING THE INTERNET

A guide for the UK and Ireland



John Smith



Accessing The Internet

other book, one that serves as introduction and reference book.

Gateway

Accessing the Internet starts by examining the sort of network that people are used to at work and explaining that really the Internet is merely an extension of this idea. It's a good idea to start with an area people are familiar with to make them feel more comfortable. It then goes into the idea of accessing a remote machine and how you can use that to access somewhere else - in the way that AUI access CIX as a gateway to the Internet and then FTP to gain software from a different computer. FTP? File Transfer Protocol.

Let's backtrack. The first area considered is email. Electronic mail is a way of sending simple text messages, ASCII in other words. To direct messages to people you need an address, such as our own:

amigauser@cix.compulink.co.uk
This address singles AUI out from all the other users on the net. As with any address, it can be broken down into

Spinning the Web

Also available is a book called Spinning the Web (ISBN 1-850-32141-8, £19.95) from the same publisher. As the Amiga is lagging behind, despite Amiga Mosaic allowing access to the WWW (World Wide Web), this book is really of interest to PC users. If you are interested in how to provide information on the Web though, this book may help you.

you must look at the way you are physically accessing the 'net. The author looks at standard modems and discusses the terminology used to baffle. Why is baudrate important? Well, it's not the speed at which you lose interest waiting for files to transfer, it's an indication of speed.

There's also an examination of ISDN (the very flash way of connecting), which makes this a very thorough study.

In addition to these, there's information on online and offline readers. All of this is to give you the best idea of how much time and money each way with costs and therefore which is more likely to suit your needs and purse.

With the Internet and bulletin boards covered, there is also a refer-

ence section which covers the services, such as CIX, together with what they offer and how much they cost.

Then, and here's something the beginners will be pleased to see, there's a glossary of terms. Yes, someone has actually gone to the trouble of explaining it all. This is a very good guide that will be of use to those who

need to know what on earth all this means.

Conclusion

Accessing the Internet is a good guide but may not be of continued use to you. After you've read it and consumed the knowledge, chosen your service, and had practical experience, you may not need this book again. If your library has it (and I think every reference section should), borrow it. Otherwise, you may have to spend your own cash on it but you should recoup it quickly by using its information to your advantage.

A very good piece of work! AUI

INFORMATION

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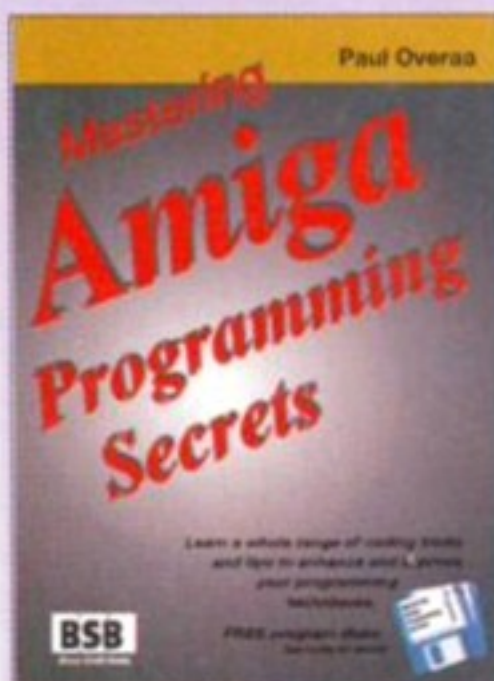
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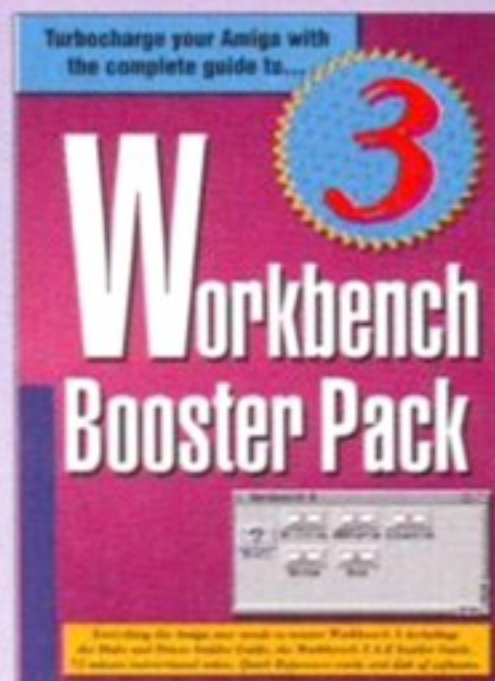
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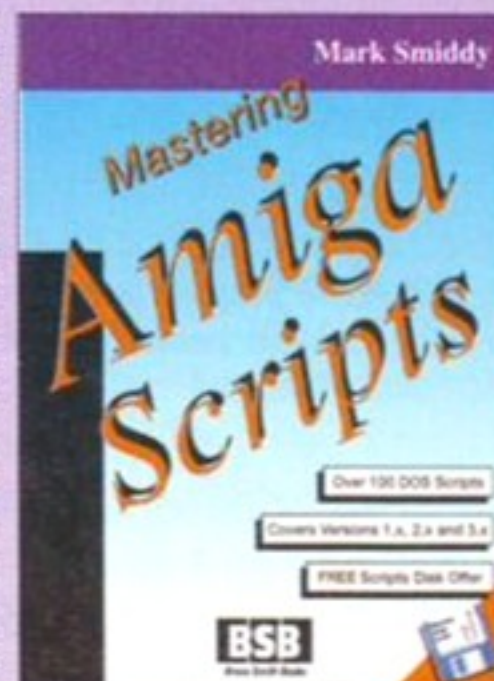


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AReXX

INFO

I recently discovered that a super new version of OctaMED Pro is being worked on by Teijo Kinnunen. It's going to be called the OctaMED Professional Sound Studio and is expected to include just about everything anyone has ever asked to be provided with (including the ability to import standard Midi files). If all goes well the program should be at the Beta testing phase within a few months and officially released before the end of the year.

Hearing about Teijo's new offering reminded me that a lot of Amiga users find ARexx useful for controlling the playing of background music modules. So I thought it would be a good time to recap on a couple of the music related uses of ARexx, beginning with the current OctaMED Pro facilities.

The freely distributable OctaMEDPlayer program which comes as part of the package includes a set of commands suitable for most people's music and multi-media control applications and figure 1 provides details of some of the currently implemented commands. If you want to actually run the OctaMEDPlayer program from within an ARexx script you can do it using AmigaDOS's run command.

Because the AmigaDOS operation of loading and starting a new

This month Paul Overaa goes on the music trail with details of useful ARexx controllable music programs.

address command 'run OctaMEDPlayer'
address command 'WaitForPort OCTAMEDPLAYER'
address 'OCTAMEDPLAYER' /* speak to player */

From this point on commands for external programs will be sent to the OctaMEDPlayer utility. If, for example, we wanted to load an OctaMED module called 'testsong' from drive df0: it would be done by issuing the instruction: 'loadmod df0:testsong'.

This could then be played simply by issuing a 'Play' instruction. The OctaMEDPlayer program is, incidentally, extremely easy to learn how to

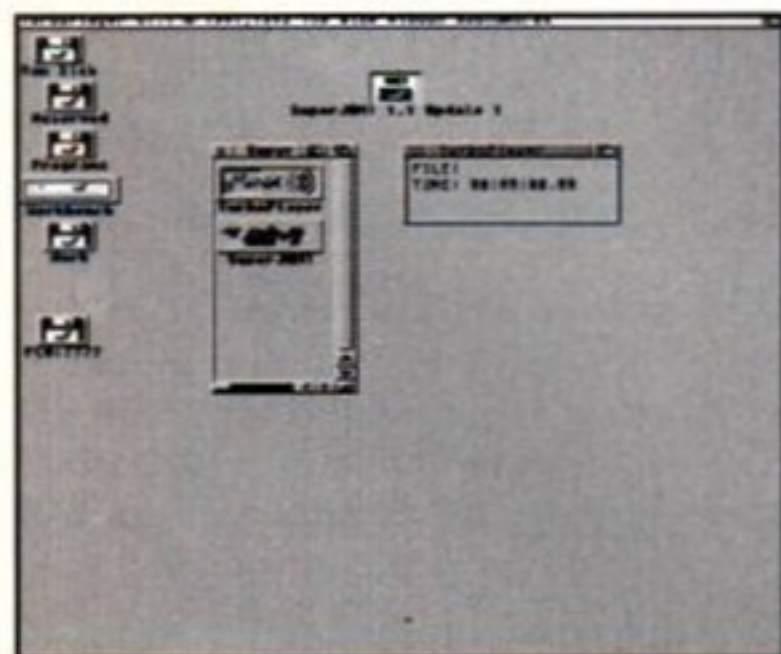
Because TurboPlayer was designed by the same software team as the Bars & Pipes sequencer, you will actually find plenty of common ground between the ARexx commands of these two programs. This is

obviously quite useful and you'll often find that products from a particular company will tend to use broadly similar types of ARexx commands in this way. Scripts related to the control of such product groups are always easier to convert and re-use and, in some cases, may even work with more than one software package unchanged.

Unfortunately things are not usually like this when it comes to the ARexx commands of different software developer's products. You'll notice that although the TurboPlayer and the OctaMEDPlayer program are both music playing programs the syntax of their ARexx interface commands bear no direct relation to each other. This, as far as script portability goes, is not an ideal situation by any means but it is just something that ARexx users have to learn to live with. **AUI**

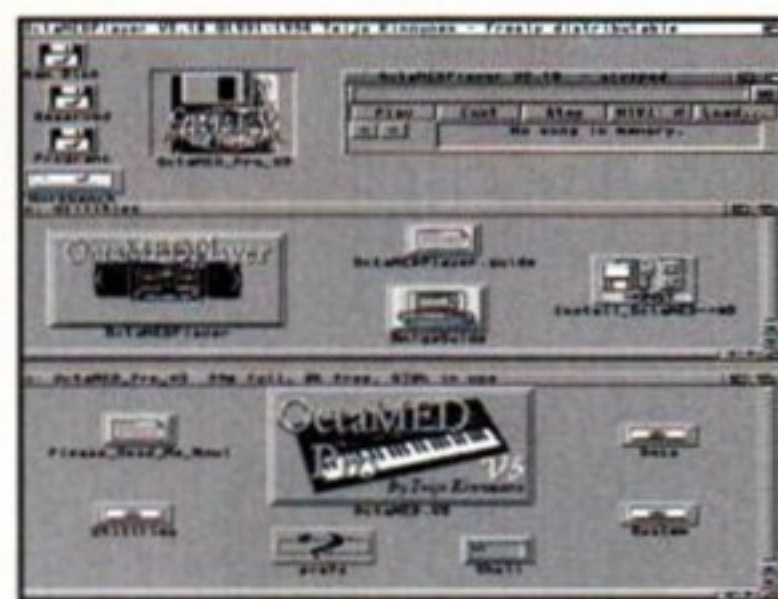
PLAY	Plays the current module.
CONT	Continue playing.
STOP	Stop Playing.
LOADMOD <filename>	Load a module.
SONGNUM <song number>	select a multi-song module song number.
GETSONGS	returns the number of songs in current module.
QUIT	close down the OctaMEDPlayer program.

Figure 1: Some Currently implemented OctaMED Player ARexx commands



The Blue Ribbon Soundworks TurboPlayer program display may not look much but this utility has a very powerful ARexx command set.

program takes time it is usually necessary to ask the ARexx script to wait until the specified program, OctaMEDPlayer, is up and running and the easiest way of doing this is with the 'WaitForPort' (the port name, for the OctaMEDPlayer program is, as you might expect, called OCTAMEDPLAYER). The following code fragment asks ARexx to start up the player program, execute the WaitForPort utility and, once OctaMEDPlayer is active, logs into its communications port.



The OctaMED Player program is easy to operate using its ARexx remote control instruction set.

control (because of its small ARexx instruction set) and so if you are new to ARexx, and fancy playing around with some example scripts that actually do something useful, then OctaMED provides a good place to start.

SuperJAM

This very popular Blue Ribbon Soundworks program is able to create song arrangements almost automatically and once such songs have been prepared they can be played either from SuperJAM itself or from a standalone player program called TurboPlayer. In this case the ARexx port name is 'TurboPlayer ARexx' and you'll find the commands that it recognises shown in figure 2.

FADE volume frames	Fades to the specified volume over a set amount of time (in frames). Volume range is 0 to 63.
FRAME smpteframerate	Sets the SMPTE frame rate. Valid rates are 24, 25, and 30.
INSTALL filename	Installs a preloaded file, making that file the current song.
LOCATE SMPTE hh:mm:ss.ff	Repositions the current song position to the specified time.
OPEN SONG filename	Loads and installs the specified filename.
PRELOAD filename	Loads the specified filename (even while another song is playing).
QUITTURBO	Causes the program to exit.
REMOVE filename	Removes the specified filename from the list of loaded files.
START	Starts current song from the beginning.
START SMPTE hh:mm:ss.ff	Starts playing the current song from the specified SMPTE offset.
STOP	Stops playing the current song.
VOLUME volume	Sets the volume to the specified value. Valid values are 0 to 63.
WAIT STOP	Waits until current song stops.
WAIT SMPTE hh:mm:ss.ff	Waits until the specific SMPTE time is reached.

Figure 2: SuperJAM's ARexx command set

PROGRAMMING TIPS

Banded background shading has been used in hundreds of demos and games but although it is 'old hat' in terms of modern day graphics tricks there are still a lot of coders who aren't sure how it is done. Last month we laid out a typical routine for doing this and it's now time to explain how it works and give you some runnable example code to play around with.

To generate a cyclical shading pattern we are talking about setting the colour of each screen scanline to a slightly different shade. The main problem here has little to do with the Copper or the Amiga at all - it is to do with working out how to generate a series of cycling numbers. These numbers, will be jammed into hardware colour registers.

When calculating colour register values it should be obvious from the start that they will need to be kept within the allowable colour register range. A good choice here is to use a modulo function to keep the numbers within chosen limits.

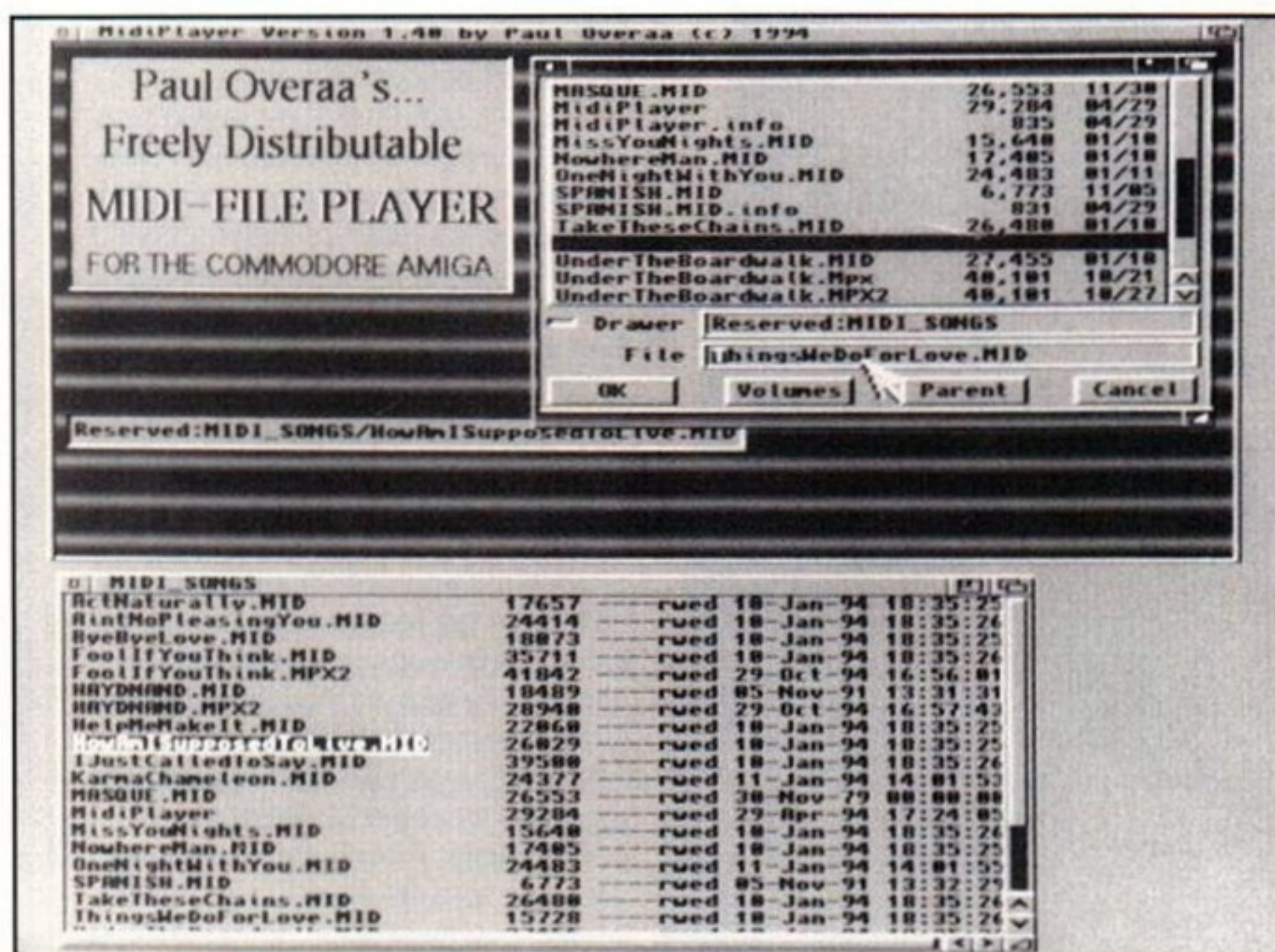
```
for (i=0; i<SCREENLINES; i=i+1)
{
    j = i % m
    Set line 'i' to colour 'j'
}
```

If m is set to 5 then j will take values from 0 to 4 and the colours used down the screen will follow this pattern... 0 1 2 3 4 0 1 2 3 4 0 1 2 3 4 etc. It is usually better to produce an oscillating sequence rather than a direct cycling sequence and so instead of generating the above pattern it is better to opt for one based on a 0 1 2 3 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 type of arrangement. To do this we have to modify the generating function slightly.

```
for (i=0; i<SCREENLINES; i=i+1)
{
    if ((i/4) % 2 == 0) { j=j+1; } else { j=j-1; }
    Set line 'i' to colour 'j'
}
```

This code does produce the required result but most C programmers would tend to use C's increment/decrement operators combined with an 'implied' i test, and so would write the loop like this.

Paul Overaa completes his notes on the use of 'user copper lists' to create background shading for Intuition programs.



Adding a user copper list to the Workbench screen is not strictly legal - but the routine described this month did nevertheless get used to brighten up Paul Overaa's freely distributable Midi-File Player program display.

```
for (i=0; i<SCREENLINES; i++)
{
    if ((i/4) % 2) { j--; } else { j++; }
    Set line 'i' to colour 'j'
}
```

Even this form can be improved by using the ternary operator ? to select the operation performed on j.

```
for (i=0; i<SCREENLINES; i++)
{
    ((i/4) % 2) ? j-- : j++;
    Set line 'i' to colour 'j'
}
```

Using The Amiga's Hardware

Having used some kind of oscillating function to produce suitable colour values we need to get those numbers into the Amiga's colour registers. This is where the Copper arrives on the scene because it can be programmed to jam colour values automatically

into appropriate colour registers as the video beam moves down the screen. This means that once the user copper list has been installed the program itself doesn't then have to concern itself with this aspect of the display.

The two Copper instructions we are interested in are those that allow us to wait for the video beam to reach a particular screen line and load a colour value into the colour registers. Not surprisingly they are called Wait and Move and the graphics library macros CWAIT and CMOVE (mentioned last month) provide the easiest way of generating these instructions from C. The macro CINIT is also needed to initialise the list.

If you look at the code listing given last month (or the code that you'll find in the copperlist.c file on this month's cover disk) you'll see that we are using a loop which works out the necessary instructions for each screenline and calculates the colour with a function similar to the oscillating function discussed earlier.

In this example I've opted for splitting the component RGB colours and have included a couple of variables for specifying minimum brightness and cycle values. The basic oscillation ideas however are exactly the same as those just explained.

The CWAIT macro creates copper instructions which say 'wait for the video beam position to reach co-ordinates (j,0)' while CMOVE produces the instruction which jams the calculated colour into a colour register. The result of the loop is therefore a list of Copper instructions which continually change the value of a given colour register as the electron beam moves down the screen.

It is necessary to terminate the Copper list with an impossible wait instruction and that's what the CEND system macro does. After that we just link our newly created Copper list into the viewport and remake the display.

The best way to get the hang of this sort of coding is to examine a runnable program and you'll find just such an example on this month's cover disk (the copper test program itself will run by double clicking its icon as per usual).

The copperlist.c file contains the copperlist routine (plus its controlling code) and is based on the ideas described this month. It's necessary to look into the viewport to see if a user list is already present and this allows the routine to on/off 'toggle' the shading effect each time it is called.

The code in the allocator.c file uses my standard stack based allocation techniques to take care of library opening and closing. For this example we are modifying the Workbench screen and this is done by getting a lock on the screen using the V36+ function LockPubScreen().

Because of this the example, at least as written, will NOT run under 1.3 but this has nothing to do with any restrictions in the copper list routine. If you want to make the program run under 1.3 just remove the locking code and get the address of the Workbench screen via the older OpenWorkBench() Intuition library function. The locking approach has been used because most of you are no longer using 1.3 based machines. Do however let me know if I'm wrong about this! **AUI**



Become a futuristic copper in Law N Justice.

Despite the computer age, physical 'analogue' games like pinball are still surprisingly popular. Good ideas don't die, they are just rejuvenated in new forms.

The traditional pinball games are experiencing a resurgence, and the series of Digital Illusions pinball computer simulations have been immensely popular.

The first game in the series, Pinball Dreams, emerged in 1992, and was quickly followed in the same year by Pinball Fantasies. Now, three years later, comes the follow-up game. The coders can't be criticised for failing to come up with any dramatic divergence

from the winning formula.

Pinball Illusions has three tables. This may be a trifle too few since the three different styles may not cover the broad range of tastes.

The Supernatural genre is not covered, for example. What is covered is a futuristic "Law n Justice" scenario, a 50's beach scenario in "Babewatch", and a hard rock / grunge action mode in the "Extreme Sports" table.

I still find it hard to believe the quality of Pinball Illusions. No corners are cut. Meticulous attention is paid to every detail and game aspect. This is clearest in the introduction. Euro-techno music drives through beautifully constructed title and credit screen. Fonts, textures and animation are perfectly smooth and dazzling.

Pinball

These tables themselves are well-planned, well constructed and expertly executed.

The chrome balls have gained an even more realistic dimension. They are very well rendered. The same cannot be said for their movement, which seems to have become a tad less realistic. A minor quibble since the game play is not noticeably worse.

In fact, the gameplay is probably better than before, if that were possible. The scenarios swallow you into their world, and you find yourself physically swaying in your seat with the intensity.

Something to note is the use of the Return key to set the ball in motion, rather than pulling back on a spring shooter using the arrow key. This means there is no control over the flight / speed of the ball. Whether there is any control was the subject of debate in the AUI office, but it is a moot point since there is nothing to be gained by adjusting the ball's starting speed, unlike previous games. The table tilt mode includes the facility to nudge the table up (space bar), left (left Alt key and Amiga key) and right (right Alt key and right Amiga key).

Brilliantly, Pinball can be installed onto your hard drive and run from Workbench. The installation software is on Disk 3. If you have the standard A1200 two megs and lots going on in Workbench, you may need to bypass the normal start-up and run it from CLI (just type the pathname and game name). This shows how close the programmers have run by doing as much as they could within the Amiga's limits.

There is the excellent addition of a facility to leave Pinball and return to Workbench in the middle of a game. Just pause the game, hit the Tab key and you're into Workbench. Select "Back to Pinball" from the Tool menu and you can resume the game where you left off.

Taking advantage of the graphical possibilities, Pinball can be played in two modes.

Hit F9 and you are in the familiar low-resolution mode (the default), where about a third of the table appears on the screen, and the ball is followed in its progress.

Hit F10 and the screen flicks to high resolution mode. The pinball table is shown on the whole screen. The detail is fine and there is very little image shimmering, but you'll need to squint, and can't really be precise with your timing. With the whole table visible,

Watch the beach babes too closely and you'll lose your balls.

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Digital Illusions were able to include a special multi-ball mode where two or even three balls are on screen at the same time. In Law N Justice for example, if you trigger the Riot mode, two extra balls are launched into play, which you use to calm down the riots by shooting them up ramps and at least one into the City Jail.

I'll have to admit that Law N Justice is my favourite table, conjuring images, as it does, of Judge Dredd and a futuristic lawless megalopolis.

Dark military music plays as you propel the ball around the table. Riding pairs of ramps in a row wins combo bonuses, and a ball lock feature captures your ball until released by firing another one at the cage. The real punch of this table is in the missions. Shooting a sequence of ramps starts the modes - signalled by the crackling of a message over police radio and a hover car speeding across the top points panel.

In the Drug Bust mode you have to climb six floors by shooting various ramps, catching drug criminals in the act and reaching Johnny Crack at the top.

The Downtown Shoot-Out mode is a special video game played out on the pixelated top score panel. While they shoot back, you aim crosshairs at appearing crooks and the gun fires when correctly targeted.

The easier modes, like the Hover chase and Arson, involve repeatedly shooting the ball over particular ramps to catch speeding motorists and douse fires.

The most difficult modes include the attempt to de-activate a ticking bomb by firing the ball through all ramps. The tough final challenge level must remain secret - to surprise you when it hits!

Babewatch is an equally challenging and entertaining table. Basic multi-bonuses accrue from spelling R'N'R, but there are special awards resulting from collecting cool dude accessories, the Chicken Race and trying your luck at the casino. Impression modes involve shooting consecutive ramps to pump up your muscles at the beach gym (portrayed on the score panel), ride the waves and eat your weight in food at the burger bar. The babe hunt sees you trying to chat up four girls. If successful you get to smooth-talk your dream babe! A successful chat-up scores you a billion points.

The Extreme Sports table is the least immediately impressive of the three. The iron man race, free fall at-



Take sportsmanship to the extreme.

tempt, bungee-jump and off-piste mode are great fun. You also get a chance to try drag racing, skateboarding, biking and skiing. It's amazing how all these sports are turned into flipping a ball about a table!

Too few reviewers pay any attention to the manual and other presentation materials. If you are paying good money for a game, you want the whole package to be worth every penny. Pinball doesn't skimp on the manual. The stiff spine, colour card cover and glossy pages contain all you need to know about the features of each table, in four different languages.

We are talking an excellent game here. Even if you aren't a fan of pinball, this game is bound to keep you riveted.

Although deceptively simple, compared to say a simulation like Sim City 2000. Pinball is brilliantly conceived and executed. Better than that, it's fantastic fun to play.

VERDICT

Graphics:	97%
Sound:	90%
Gameplay:	98%
Overall:	97%



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Date

Not that I am a suspicious person or the slightest bit cynical, but when a publisher is very mean about releasing review copies of a game to the press you really think only two things. Either we're in for something special or it's a stinker. When that publisher is Virgin, you become nonplussed, because Aladdin was an absolute corker and we had pre-production versions of that by the plenty.

So we, by the law of logic, have to come to the conclusion that Lion King is going to be the second of our two options. A stinker. Which again leaves us confused, because Virgin are sticklers for quality, sometimes, even if it means delays until the product is finally finished to an acceptable standard.

So, finally we get ourselves a copy of The Lion King, and the game's up. The truth of the matter is that coming so quickly after Aladdin, it really had something to prove. Unfortunately, the game fails to captivate even the hard bitten

Add to that a suitably splendid support cast of vultures, wildebeest, and various little creatures who are all out to be little Simba's undoing. Later in the game little cute Simba grows to adulthood, and at last he can whack the baddies with a mighty left hook!

It is here though where any similarity with Aladdin ends, for mediocrity sets in. I mean, how can you compare the bustling streets of Arabia, sliding down washing lines whilst dodging crazy knife throwing fakhirs, with the rolling savannahs and herds of zebras, huh? Sadly, the character control also leaves a lot to be desired with some very strange joystick moves.

You can't help but be



A little father-son bonding. Quality time.

The Lion King

to complete in time for the film release.

No courage? Isn't that what lions have lots of?

Get a life, but don't get this.

**Virgin A1200 only
£30.00**



Let's dance! Just two cats playing around.

out and out Lion King fan that is my own cherished offspring. It doesn't have anything like the charm, vitality and humour of Aladdin but what it does have is lots of aimless wandering around empty platforms, some frustrating scenery that just seems to get in the way.

It does have its good points. Like Aladdin the game is designed as a platformer with many of the graphics taken directly from the film. And, like Aladdin, there are a couple of familiar soundtrack melodies at the beginning. The animation once again is splendid, with Simba jumping and hopping his way from level to level, trying the odd roar, and sometimes clinging on by his claws frantically trying to clamber up onto the platform.



I'll scratch your eyes out!



Little Simba. How sweet.

terribly disappointed by The Lion King. If it had been released by Ocean, or Psygnosis you might have just expected a bit of a let down, but Virgin? Never.

I can only think that somewhere along the way somebody stopped doing what started out as a good project, and it was left to other less gifted individuals



I'm the Lion King. Hear my purr.

VERDICT

Graphics: 91%

Sound: 76%

Gameplay: 43%

Overall: 49%

Tracksuit Manager 2

**Alternative Software
All Amigas £25.99**

Alternative Software have been bright enough to send special review material to AUI of their new Tracksuit Manager 2.

The name suggests that it's a field and track athletics simulation. It isn't, but come to think of it, that would be an intriguing game. You'd get the chance to train athletes, lace their tea with steroids, face the flak when they get busted in a drug test, and end up reading the sports news on some poxy radio station. Pity it isn't about that.

TM2 is about football management. Competition in the football management simulation genre is currently extremely tough, but there is always room for another.

It's now at least five years since the first version of Tracksuit was on the market, so as you'd hope, everything has been radically updated.

The style, flexibility, smoothness and complexity have all been dramatically improved, according to Alternative. Everything you'd hope to do as a manager, from hiring and firing players to precise game tactics, is all there.

Sounds like more precious hours are about to be soaked up trying to achieve an elusive Premiership win!



Take a closer inspection of your players' details.



The Premier League table caught in mid-disaster.



Organise your team's tactics, 'cause you can't leave it those dolts."

ZEEWOLF



Flying around is simple, but full of action.

Howlin' Good Fun!

Get involved in game design with this great competition!

Help design a level for ZeeWolf 2!

ZeeWolf is a brilliant game that combines helicopter simulation with fast and furious arcade action.

The original game saw you jump into the cockpit of the new prototype helicopter gunship, ZeeWolf. For a change, you're battling for the planet. Doesn't seem like a change? Well, I mean it, you are fighting for the planet. One of the major corporations has been overtaken by the desire for wealth and power at the cost of everything, even the state of the planet. You are flying for a smaller, more eco-conscious, firm who had cracked the problems with cheap, safe and clean fusion power. Until the big boys came and stole it,

so well employed. I was particularly impressed with the way the bullets cut up the ground when you fire and how the enemy vehicles remain a smoking mess after you destroy them. Needless to say, I never went for the humanitarian bonus on offer.

The missions, however, are not simply a case of blowing everything up. Some simple ones can be completed that way, but before long, you'll be rescuing personnel, accompanying reconnaissance planes and airlifting required equipment.

The controls of ZeeWolf has been designed to be instantly accessible to the beginner by the joystick which works as in any arcade game, but can be altered to use the mouse for those who've got used to the game. The mouse gives additional accuracy, but takes some skill to master.

hoping to keep the secret to themselves and make even more money.

So, to help the planet, you're going to go and blow them all away.

The game is easy to control and very addictive. Rarely before have polygon graphics been

You see the ZeeWolf is to fly again and you can be a part of it. All you have to do is design a level of the game based on the map printed here. You need to designate a starting place and the position of mission objectives, place the enemy forces, friendlies and give a brief description of the level's aims.

So whether it's a rescue mission, an all out battle or a reconnaissance flight, the only limits are your imagination!

Binary Asylum will try to stick as closely to your design as possible and you'll be credited during the game for your efforts. Not enough? Well, the winner will also get a £200 CASH prize! Runners up who are picked will also be credited and win a consolatory £25!

So, get designing today. Photocopies of this page will be accepted.

To give you an idea of what you can include, here's a brief rundown of the forces:

Friendly:

Kestrel - Unarmed, reconnaissance plane.
Pelican - Transport helicopter
Buffalo - Tank
Camel - Resupply vehicle, for refueling/re-arming
Carrier - The aircraft carrier for returning rescued personnel to
Frigate - Base ship

Enemy:

Bear - Armoured Personnel Carrier
Mantis - Anti-aircraft batteries
Wasp - Scout helicopter
Shark - Patrol boat
Hippo - Amphibious tank
Cobra - Anti-aircraft missile sites
Watchdog - Radar tank
Vulture - Attack helicopter



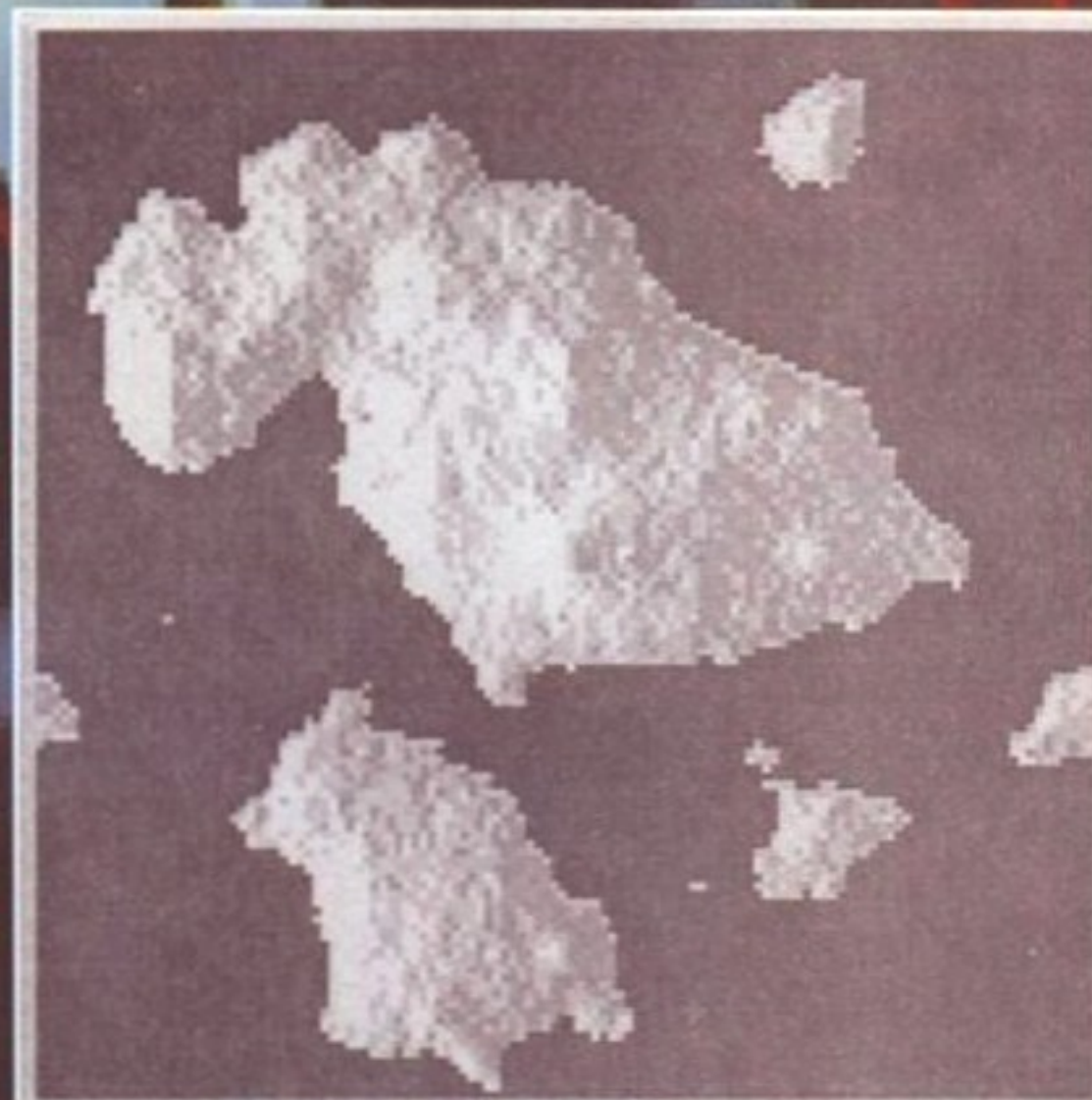
The carrier can be used to refuel and drop off rescued personnel.

Osprey - Interceptor aircraft
Albatross - Transport helicopter
Rhino - Mobile anti-aircraft batteries

Additional Features:

Barracks and bunkers - contain captured personnel
Garages - contain enemy units
Domes - contain any units
Early warning radar
Fusion Reactor
Cooling Tower
Trees

When you have your design, send it to:
AUI ZeeWolf 2 competition
3 Carriage Row
203 Eversholt Street
London, NW1 1BW
Entries must arrive by 1st May 1995.



Do the Math?

Ah, the old enemy. Yes, when Atari sent us an invitation to their press day, I thought that walking into the lion's den was not the best move. But then, the battle between Commodore and Atari was a long time ago and the ST appears to be on its last legs as its magazines fade away. But it may just be that Atari could hold a key to the Amiga's future, by helping to stop the PC from engulfing the whole market while the presently absent Amiga regroups.

With that in mind, I took a stroll down to Soho. And found the conference had been moved. Nice of them to tell me. So, back up to the new venue and I find the place deserted. Wow, turn out that good?

After a bit of waiting, a small gathering is assembled and we can begin.

In the meantime, I've been investigating the machine that Atari believes will dominate the games market for some time to come, the 64-bit Atari Jaguar. They're showing off the game of last year, Doom and I've got to admit, it's pretty impressive. They even claim it's the "best version" of Doom on any platform, outperforming the original PC version that was so lauded.

Personally, I don't know. I thought that the PC had the edge. It would have been more convincing had they managed to get the Deathmatch (where two players compete head to head over a link with two machines



What's new pussycat?
A CD add-on drive actually.

David Taylor puts away old enmities and takes up Atari's invitation to examine their future.



No longer doomed to the PC. The "best version" of Doom is now available on the Jaguar. Oh really?

and two monitors) to work. "We had it working earlier and it was great." Oh well, we all have our hiccups.

Anyway, in we go to the theatre and are treated to the full visual. The main thrust of Atari's discussion was why the Jaguar was best and why it was going to outsell everything. Now, technically the Jaguar is very good and the demos they showed were impressive. In fact, let's take stock of the Jaguar's assets.

It is a cartridge based system which, they say, can be upgraded

to include a CD when it is launched in a few month's time. The total cost of this system should be available for around £300. This will not play MPEG videos, that is to say Video CDs, without another add-on planned for later this year. It does have "Cinepak" built in though, which is a software based compression system that would allow games developers to include full motion video in all CD games. The quality was demonstrated with a clip from Star Wars and it was excellent, better to my eye than MPEG.

Like the CD 32, the Jaguar will play audio CDs. Atari have included another feature here that they hope will make it more attractive - after all a lot of people already have audio CD players, why would they opt to use the Jaguar? The Virtual Light Machine will create a light show to accompany your music. Although there are lots of options, they were all a bit of a gimmick and waste of time, except you've got to have something on the screen if you're playing it through the Jag, haven't

you? It's OK if you're into rave and are having a party maybe, but I doubt it's a major selling point.

So, what can all this hardware do? Well, Atari were quite open about the fact that hardware is only as good as the software that's written for it. And here's where they may come unstuck. Software houses are notoriously fickle. They'll write for a platform if it sells well, but it won't sell unless there's software available. Of course they will port games over - after all why lose any customers? If you're selling the cutting edge though, you need software that exploits it and therefore shows up the weaknesses of its competitors.

What games were on offer and coming up? Well, Doom from the PC and Syndicate, erm, Brutal Sports Football, er, Cannon Fodder, erm, Theme Park, er, Flashback, erm... do these games sound a little familiar to Amiga users? Yes, the Jaguar is lounging in Portover town. There were some exclusive games there, but none that promised to exploit the FMV ca-

pabilities that Atari believes will separate its games from other platforms. They had mocked up a game, based on Alien vs Predator and taken scenes from the films and interspersed them with the game action. The game itself was fine, quite good actually, but they must realise that simply bunging bits of video in doesn't add to the gameplay. In fact, it does nothing for the game at all.

The point of FMV, what all players want from FMV, is for it to be incorporated into the game itself, not as a little bit chunked in here and there for good measure. Take Wing Commander III on the PC. It's filmed in Hollywood, with Mark Hamill (of Star Wars fame), but the video scenes aren't anything to do with the gameplay, however good that may be. They are still two extremities, separate.

Unless someone takes it upon themselves to produce a game that will help the Jaguar beat the competition, then this pussycat might end up on the pet shop shelf.

The Jaguar is a good, cheap games machine. As such, it may stave off the PC closing the games market, something the CD-i is certainly incapable of doing. With this breathing space, a new, powerful Amiga may be able to make a comeback on the grounds that made it successful originally, as a multi-purpose machine capable of breathtaking graphics, sound and games as well as all the serious applications such as word processing, accounts and professional level graphics.

As a person, not even as an Amiga user, I welcome anything that can keep healthy competition alive. A PC monopoly would be a shame for everyone, heralding the acceptance of poor level systems. After all, they're still wetting themselves about getting multi-tasking. If Atari can help keep the future bright, and don't see the Jaguar as some sort of culmination, then I wish them all the best.

One last point. Please change the slogan. "Do the math." How vulgar.

BloodNet

Gametek A1200 Certificate 18 £34.99

With Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire impressing all, it appears the undead are back in fashion. So, this game could come at a very opportune moment and make a killing.

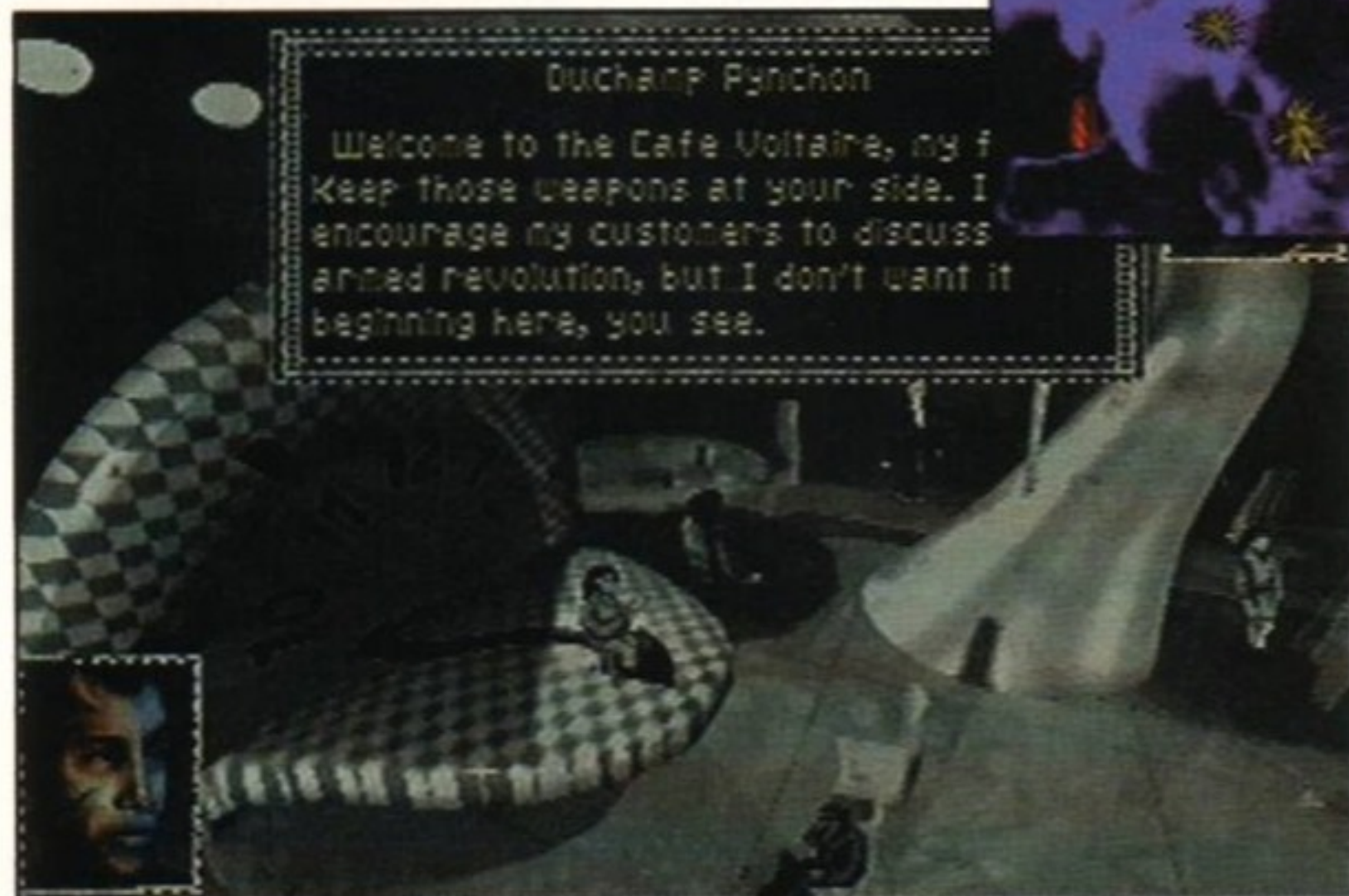
I played BloodNet again and again. A good start, you may think. Unfortunately, it was because I was desperately trying to find something nice to say about it. I failed.

The plot is fine. You're a cybernet expert, who's had trouble distinguish-

ing reality from VR because of the time spent immersed in the net. However, with help from a neural implant, you're back to normal. Until you get bitten by a vampire. You manage, thanks to the old implant, to avoid falling under the vampire's spell and control, which ticks him off a tad, I can tell you. You can



The very exciting starting point. Switch off now!



Chatting with friends gives some good graphics but it's not enough.

guess the plot. Get yourself out of the proverbial.

BloodNet is supposed to be a great game where you swap between "reality" and "VR".

The Cyberspace part. Equally uninteresting.

The graphics of the game, where your sprites shuffle across the screen are dull and indiscernible. The screen looks like a poor adventure game from the very outset. Every time you speak to someone, the screen freezes and turns black and white, which takes a while and then a few nicely drawn faces appear.

The VR section, when you go online, is the weirdest and worst impression of cyberspace I've ever come across. What look like shop dummies

spin around and float across the screen in a pointless graphical interface.

There is nothing to endear you to this game. It could be because of the number of companies that have been involved, Microprose, Gametek, CatFish, TWG, Take 2 Interactive...

If you played it for a very long time indeed, then maybe you'd become engrossed in the plot and want to succeed but I can't see why you'd bother. After your first few games, you'll have had enough of the poor graphics, non-existent sound and total lack of direction.

You can tell this game concerns vampires because it certainly sucks.

VERDICT

Overall: 20%

The Amiga Answer Machine...



APPS

Dear AUI,
The problem that Daniel Wood is having when he tries to compile an Amos program - the 'PROGRAM NOT TESTED' - error is simply due to the fact that the compiler will only compile those programs that are syntax error free. To ensure that this is the case Daniel simply needs to PRESS THE F2 KEY whilst on the Amos editor screen before the program is saved to disk - the program should then compile OK.

If there are any Amos problems that Andy isn't sure of, then please feel free to give me a call at any time - I'm always glad to help readers where I can.

Regarding the question, 'STORING SLIDES TO DISK' from Bill Liversage, there is a way to do it, but it is not cheap and may not be what Bill needs. As you will be aware, Canon produce the ION STILL VIDEO CAMERA and they sell a gadget which will photograph any slide

and transfer it onto disk. You then have to use a Video Grabber to transfer the pictures from the camera. I don't really think that this is a sensible option though and the best way I have found to do this is to have the slides placed onto Photo CD and use something like PhotoWorks to convert them. The end result is very good, saves you a great deal of time and effort and does work out the cheapest method by far even if you have to buy the extra items such as a CD Drive to begin with.

One query I have and that is, I own Audio Engineer and Stereo Master. Both samplers work fine on pre AGA machines when storing/playing Mono or Stereo samples. However, on my A4000 only Mono samples play as they should and the right channel when using stereo is white noise. Using Techno Sound Turbo II software solves the problem, but I would like to know why it happens. Is it something to do with the internal timing of the 4000?

Steven Bennett
West Midlands

Dear Steven,
Thanks for the suggestions on Amos. I must admit that I did not consider that anyone who complains about compiler problems would ever try to compile a program that had not been tested in the uncompiled mode. However, as with many coverdisk giveaways, the lack of manuals is a very big handicap, so taking advantage of the various offers to upgrade to a full version of a program is well worth the expense.

You are correct with the Slide transfer with the Canon ION. However, by the time that you have grabbed it with a Video

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

framegrabber the quality is nothing to shout about. Photo CD is better, but even that is optimised for TV screen resolutions. The very best results are obtained by scanning the slide with a custom device, or a flatbed scanner with a transparency unit fitted. AUI use the Epson GT range of scanners for this purpose and I think that you will agree that the results are very good.

Your problem with the sound samplers: Commodore have screamed and shouted for years about hitting the hardware while programming. Sometimes it is unavoidable but this is one case where problems have almost certainly occurred.

There were major changes in the internal architecture of the custom chipset when AGA was introduced. A few registers moved, and several base addresses changed. This all adds up to problems for the older software.

Another problem that can cause trouble is when programmers use software timing loops. Some processors are very much faster than others and this can cause the program to do unexpected things.

APPS

Dear AUI,
Could you please help me with a problem I am having with unzipping .zip files? I am using UnZip5.1, Amiga A1200, 2nd disk drive and a 340Mb hard drive.

I have tried many times to unzip files using Unzip5.1, but I've had no success so far. This is probably because I am not very good with CLI.

Then along came GuiArc and I thought that all my troubles would be put to an end. I was wrong.

The problem I now have is that I can't configure GuiArc to work with Unzip5.1. So could you please tell me how to do this?

Dave Thomas
Shropshire

Dear Dave,
I can take a guess that it's the instructions of UnZip rather than your CLI usage that is the problem. A little tip with these programs. Type a question mark as the argument to the command i.e. UnZip ? <Return> and you might be treated to a little help page. It's often rather cryptic but you can find all sorts of clues within.

You have to master the CLI command first, as you need to tell GuiArc the same information so:

Put Unzip in a directory that you have a valid path to. The simplest way to unzip things is to unzip them in the same directory as the zip files. So as an example copy a zip file into ram: then open a Shell and enter:

Unzip -x filename <return>

Unzip will then do its stuff and you will have an unzipped file. Note that there seems to be a new version of Zip floating about that is causing problems with old unzippers.

Now onto GUIArc.

You must place Unzip in a valid search path. Next you need to edit the file arctypes that you will find in the GUI directory (use a text editor,

not a wordprocessor). You will need to add the following information:

try to keep this bit formatted correctly, the points between the @ and the last 0 are critical to the function of GULarc config files

; Description for UnZip5.1 as this is an Unzipper only, anything to do with

; zipping a file is not possible.

@UnZip

#?.zip

Unzip -x

-

-

Unzip -l

Unzip -t

-

-

-1

-1

46

0

Be very careful of the formatting, read the GUI docs carefully and follow the examples. Save the file and make a backup. You should find that GULarc will now be able to utilise UnZip without any problems.

COMMS

Dear AUI,
I read with interest in the December AUI Answers column that you use a Psion 3A and download files to your Amiga.

I also have a Psion 3A and have a pressing need to back up files to floppy disk. I considered buying the Psion serial link but the software which comes with it is suitable for PC or MAC only. I would be very grateful if you could explain how you achieve file transfer.

I have an Amiga 600 with 2 Megs of RAM.

Ian Corke
Essex

Dear Ian,
The first thing that you need is the Psion serial link. Forget the software, because that only applies to the PC and MAC and has nothing whatsoever to do with the Psion.

The Psion link consists of a small module, often referred to as 'soap on a rope'. If you look closely at the serial interface connector on the Psion 3A (and on the 3) you will

notice that it has 6 connections. Now have a look at a SSD, you should spot 6 connections. In essence the serial connection is an external SSD connector. The Psion link actually has the communications software in it and it gets recognised as an active device (C::). This was necessary for the Series 3. The 3A has a more advanced set of communications software built in, but it needs to see a Psion link to become active.

The Psion link gives you a reasonable terminal emulator, nothing fancy at all but it works very nicely. It also gives you file transfer capabilities. It is not the most advanced; the highest level transfer protocol that it uses is Y modem. Note that when you select Y modem on the Psion, it is actually Y modem batch, which makes life much easier.

All you need is to connect the Psion link 25 way connector into the Amiga's serial port, load up a comms program such as Ncomm on the Amiga, set the comms parameters on the Psion and Amiga to match, and then send the files across the link using Y modem. This is fairly easy to do.

However, I have just taken delivery of a major advance in Psion - Amiga comms. (You might have already seen my short review in AUI, so sorry to repeat things here). This is the AmigaNCP. This still needs the Psion link, but all you do is run AmigaNCP on the Amiga, and then switch on the link utility on the Psion (Psion L). This will set up a true network connection between the two machines. (Rather like the software for the Mac and PC).

The main difference is that the Psion drives appear as an icon on Workbench, and you can manipulate them just as with any other Amiga device.

On the Psion, the Amiga drives look like Psion devices and can be accessed from the REM:: device on the file device lists. So moving files about becomes a simple matter of dragging things about with the mouse pointer.

AmigaNCP does a lot more than this, but all I can say here is that it is an absolutely first class piece of software.

AmigaNCP is available from:
B&B Computersysteme
c/o Michael Balzer
Winchenbachstr. 12h
D-42281 Wuppertal

Germany

Price DM 60

There is a time limited version called AmigaNCP.lha which is on Cix and AmiNet. It should be in the PD libraries fairly soon so it might be worth asking your local PD library to get it for you.

PRINT

Dear AUI,
I have a problem I hope you can help me with. I have read through all my issues of AUI with no success. I am fairly new to the world of computing and hope this query doesn't seem to be too trivial.

I have recently bought an Amiga 500 and with it a printer. A Mannesman Tally MT90 which of course is a serial printer. When hooked up the only thing it does is a test when I try to print anything. I am obviously using the wrong driver. I have been told that no one has bothered to use these printers because they are too slow. Well, slow I can live with. Actually getting it running will do for me. Could you tell me if it is feasible to use such a printer with the Amiga 500 if so which driver do I use? Any help would be gratefully accepted.

B Hilton
Oldham

Dear B Hilton,
This is not a silly or trivial question. Serial devices cause more trouble than any other device you could connect to the Amiga (or any computer for that matter).

Please read my Toolbox about the Breakout Box program in the November 1994 issue of AUI. This deals with just this type of problem.

I could do with some more information on your problem. Does the printer do a self test when switched on, or when you send a print to it? What form does the test take?

The MT90 is a fairly common printer, and I'm fairly sure that it is Epson compatible. Use the EpsonOld or EpsonX driver. However, for your first tests use the GENERIC printer driver. This is very dumb, but it should send valid ASCII to just about any printer. This will help while you are getting things going.

Serial printers are slower than parallel printers but if the data is sent to the printer faster than the printer can print it, the actual speed is of no importance. Unlike a recent TV advert, Amiga Owners have never had to wait until their printout has finished before doing something else.

Things that you have to sort out:

Set the Amiga Printer Preferences to send data to the serial printer.

Set The serial Preferences to match the settings of the printer.

If the printer is set to 9600bps One start bit, One stop bit, no parity, then serial preferences must be the same.

The correct flow control is necessary. Hardware flow control is the best (RTS/CTS), but software flow control (Xon Xoff) is easier for testing, read the toolbox for more detail.

The correct cable is required. Printers normally need a crossover cable, again see the toolbox where I have detailed a few common configurations.

Once you start getting something going then you can implement the better drivers.

The printer should, when switched on, clunk about a bit and then do nothing. It should print when text is sent (a bit obvious) if it overprints all on the same line, or double spaces you need to either switch on or off the auto line feed switch (if the printer has one).

The page length can be a problem, but most Wordprocessors can sort that out, but once again there are settings in printer preferences that you can adjust. It will depend on what software you intend to use.

If the printer leaves about one inch of blank paper in the middle of the text at times, that will be a perforation skip. This can also be turned off (another printer switch setting).

You should find a big list of all sorts of printer options in the printer handbook.

VIDEO

Dear AUI,
My system:

Amiga 500, Kickstart 1.3, second 3.5" disk drive, GVP

Impact series II 52 Meg with 4Mb RAM fitted, KCS PC-board 1084 monitor A520 TV modulator.

It is with the last item on this list (The TV modulator) I'm having some problems. The TV modulator works fine, although the resolution on the TV isn't that high of course, and I use it to show some demos, to my PC addict friends, and the occasional game.

I've studied electronics and so I wanted to use the TV and the monitor at the same time, and I wanted to be able to switch either of them off-on.

So I bought 2 data switches each of them had a 25D female input and two selectable 25D female outputs. The idea was to replace one output on each of the data switches by a male 23D connector, so that I could plug the TV modulator in one data-switch and the monitor cable in the other, being able to switch both on and off. This I did, of course, a lot of precision soldering and desoldering was involved. Between the data switch and the RGB 23D male connection on the Amiga, I placed a self made 23D female connector cable with a 25D male connector with the last two unconnected resulting in an extension cable of the RGB output of the Amiga.

After having all this DIY stuff tested extensively, I didn't want to blow my dear (yes, all right, dearest) Amiga up, I drank a good swallow of scotch and decided to plug it all in.

Just to see that only one data switch would work, I didn't connect the 23 input of the two data switches to one another.

So I plugged it all together. I think that you would agree with me that this should work just fine. In the end it is just an extension with a switch between, right? All seemed to work fine, apart from the fact that I had thin grey vertical lines about 1cm in between on the monitor screen.

Being a little puzzled, I thought that it had to do something with the shielding I hadn't through connected in the cable, so I did do this alas, this didn't change a thing.

Now my question to you: what is wrong or missing?

I doubt that it has something to do with the cable being too long.

My second question could there be any problems when both the TV modulator and the monitor are connected at the same time?

Dirk Pateet
Belgium

Dear Dirk,
Crosstalk, that's the problem. A data switch is not really designed for video use. Some of the signals, probably the h-sync is getting into the RGB lines normally by capacitive coupling. This could be caused by the wiring in the switch or in the cable. For best results the RGB lines should be individually screened coax cables.

The modulator and the monitor will not like each other very much as they both plug into the same port, so a parallel connection is not on. I would make use of the composite video output on the A500, and feed that into a separate modulator unit, of which there are several about. Maplin, Elector, Circuit have all published designs and stock the necessary parts.

VIDEO

Dear AUI,
Please help! In your current edition I noticed a letter regarding a problems which I have but the solution had been given in the previous edition. It concerns using the Micro Vitec 1438 monitor with A4000/030.

I have used various means for screen modes and DPAL loses so much screen space and when running Prodraw, etc, the ruler measurements are out (shifting Horiz doesn't go far enough to de distort it.) So I can't get a true representation on screen which is most annoying.

I have now reverted to Multiscan Productivity mode which when running Prodraw and Provector causes Pal 640 by 256 screen to come with correct measurement but losing the lines of frequency from DPAL. (Mode promotion is selected throughout above examples.) Please give me advice. I need to do a lot of

graphical work and need correct representation on screen in the best possible screen mode.

Rita Ruban
Nuneaton.

Dear Rita,
If I could make a general plea to readers (it does not matter in this case), please don't use terms such as 'current issue'. I usually work several issues ahead of the one that you are reading and it can make life rather hard to second guess which issue someone is referring to, just put the cover date.

You will never get an exact screen representation. The main reason is that the screen is not square nor are the pixels that make up the screen. You have found that 640 by 256 is fairly good, probably because that it by far the most common screen size. Anything else is going to be try it and see.

There are all sorts of strange problems with screen modes, simply because of the vast numbers of combinations of modes and monitors. There are all sorts of utilities that might help matters. You will find a fair selection of them on your disk which I have returned to you. All of the files are compressed with lha, and have all the relevant instructions in them please read my general README file as well.

Remember that setting up the monitor preferences and options is a long winded process and does take quite a while to do, so be patient with things.

OTHER

Dear AUI,
I am writing to enquire about the following:

My son has at present a Commodore Amiga CDTV and a separate disk drive. I find sometimes that the disk drive does not work properly sometimes with some disk games.

I believe this is because the 1 Meg is divided between the CD and the disk drive. My questions are:

I believe that a CD switch can be fitted to the CDTV to transfer the 1 Megabyte from CD to Disk. Would this improve the

CDTV in regard to disk games?

I also believe that a network CD + parnet cable can be fitted to the CDTV to allow other Amiga systems to be connected. If so what systems?

I also see that a CDTV joysticks can be purchased. Will this improve the use of disk games?

Finally, is there any stockists you know of who would have a list of CDTV games?

David Rhand
Midlothian

Dear David,
The problems are nothing to do with the CDTV memory. The CDTV is an Amiga A500 with a CD ROM drive attached. However, a few modifications had to be made in order to get the CD ROM to work. This included a slightly different operating system, and due to the fact that another device is fitted, this eats away at the memory slightly.

It is the change to the operating system that causes most of the problems. Not the lack of memory.

I've not seen the device that you describe, but things like ROM switches are available but they will not really help you. The CDTV is so old now, that most new games will not work on it at all. (Nor on older A500s for that matter.)

The network CD and Parnet (also sernet) connects to any Amiga system A500, A1500, A2000, A3000, A4000, CD32, A500+ CDTV. It's a reasonable general purpose network link. However, its main function is to share disk resources, not run programs from one system to another.

Joysticks, well, it depends on the game. Some games work without a joystick; others use a controller; some need the joystick.

I don't know of anyone specialising in CDTV only, but Silica and Almathera have listed them in the past.

OTHER

Dear AUI,
First for my system:
Amiga 2000
Kickstart 2.04
Workbench 2.04 and 2.1
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TOOLBOX

Some of you might be asking 'Where are the Toolbox programs?' There has not been a mistake, they are NOT on the coverdisk. The reason is that you already have them as part of the Workbench distribution Disks.

Over the next few issues I am going to take a fairly close look at the use of the startup-sequences script files and few CLI commands that can make life so much easier if you bother to use them.

The first thing to get used to is the Shell. Don't worry, there are no nasty buttons to click that awkward mouse over, in fact you will hardly need to touch the mouse. The CLI, known as the Command Line Interface (some call it Interpreter), is the lowest level that a user normally sees, and is a 'traditional' interface consisting of a text entry and display.

PLEASE do not be put off by this, it really is very easy and so useful that you will wonder how you got on without it. To start the SHELL find and double click on the SHELL icon, then put the mouse to one side.

What you should have is a window that says SHELL, and a prompt of some sort. Open the SHELL window to a large size.

You need to type in the commands from the keyboard so just to get used to things, type:

CD RAM: <ret>

then type

DIR <ret>

You should see a short list of files and directories that are in the RAM: drive. Fancy seeing some more detailed information?

Type list <ret>

You will see the file size, dates and other information. I think that you will agree that using the Shell is quite easy. Now let's work out what you just did.

CD RAM: <ret>, Change Directory. For all you mouse clickers, this is the same as placing the mouse pointer over the RAM: drive icon.

DIR <ret>, Directory. This is the same as double clicking on the RAM: drive icon, however, by default it is as if you have the show all files option selected.

LIST <ret> is a more powerful form of the DIR command.

Paths

Every file 'lives' in its own place on a disk. However, it is common to group files together in logical locations. You might have a Utilities drawer, in which you have a viewer drawer, in which you have a drawer for each type of picture viewer that you have. You can look in these drawers in the SHELL, but first you need to move into the directory. The CD command would look something like this:

CD DF0:utilities/viewers/jpegview <ret>

You separate each drawer with a / character.

Devices

Now we are getting down to the whole point of this Toolbox. The Amiga makes great use of a system called devices. In the normal sense of the word, a device is a piece of hardware connected to, or built into the Amiga. Obvious devices are the disk drives

```

4.Primary:> cd ram:
4.Ram Disk:> dir
  env (dir)
  Clipboard (dir)
  T (dir)
4.Ram Disk:>
4.Ram Disk:> list
  env
  Clipboard
  T
  3 directories - 6 blocks used
4.Ram Disk:>
  
```

File	Permissions	Date	Time
Dir	----rwed	Today	19:44:32
Dir	----rwed	Today	19:44:30
Dir	----rwed	Today	21:06:41

DF0: the printer port PRT: and the serial port SER:

The Amiga also treats the name of a disk as a device, so the AUI Superdisk54, becomes an Amiga device Superdisk54:. Ever wondered how the Amiga knew when you put a disk into a different drive and still managed to do whatever you wanted? Well, that's why.

Now for the real power of this system. You can define a device for your own use. This might seem at first glance to be a little pointless, but remember that the Amiga will treat your device in exactly the same way as any other device. If you had a program on floppy disk that was called CleverEdit, which is a wordprocessor type of program, and you wanted to transfer this to your hard drive, the normal method would be to create a new drawer somewhere and copy the contents of the floppy into it.

When you run the program, you might get a requester saying insert CleverEdit: in any drive. What the Amiga is asking for is the floppy called CleverEdit, not very useful as you want to run the program on your hard drive.

The solution is to create a device called CleverEdit: and tell it where you have put the CleverEdit drawer on your hard drive.

Note that devices always end in a colon (:).

Assuming that you created the CleverEdit drawer in a drawer called editors, which is in the utilities drawer, which is in on the work partition of your hard drive the command syntax to create a device is:

ASSIGN CleverEdit: Work:Utilities/editors/CleverEdit <ret>

You enter this in the Shell and you should notice that all we have done is give the full path to the name of the device. Just to prove the point, you could enter CD CleverEdit: and you would be right

in the CleverEdit drawer without typing the full path. So as well as creating a device, the ASSIGN function also gives you a short-cut method of entering paths.

Once you have created an ASSIGN device, is perfectly OK to use that in another ASSIGN. If you were very lazy and found life unbearable typing CleverEdit: all the time, you could enter ASSIGN Cedit: CleverEdit:

This would make Cedit: and CleverEdit: exactly the same.

Great use is made of ASSIGN. You can get an idea of just how much it is used by typing ASSIGN <ret>. This will print a list of all the physical and logical ASSIGNS that are active in the Amiga.

This is all very well but it is a drag to have to type these commands into a Shell every time that you want to use a program. Fortunately, there is a much easier way to enter the commands and they will be executed every time the Amiga is booted.

In the S: drawer you will find one or two files depending on the version of the Workbench that you are using. Look first for

a file called User-Startup (remember CD S: <ret> DIR <ret>). If you find this file then it is the one to use. Older versions of Workbench will only have a file called startup-sequence - greater care has to be taken with it as it contains some important system setup information.

I will assume that you have the user-startup file. This is a file of text commands that get executed just as if you typed them into a shell. The difference is that if the Amiga finds a User Startup file, it will execute the commands automatically without any prompting from the user. You need to edit the file with a text editor, NOT a wordprocessor. Use Memacs or ED for this job.

All you have to do is enter the commands in exactly the same way as if you were typing them into a Shell save the file and reboot.

A good tip is to comment the file so that you know what part of the file does what. The comment character is a semi-colon (;) so if you were going to add the assign for the CleverEdit program you should do it like this.

```
;BEGIN CleverEdit
```

```
;
```

```
ASSIGN CleverEdit: Work:Utilities/editors/CleverEdit
```

```
;
```

```
;END CleverEdit
```

Only the assign line is acted upon (nothing following an ; is acted upon), but when you review the file at a later date you can easily see what each assign does.

IF YOU DECIDE TO HAVE A GO AT THIS, MAKE A BACKUP COPY OF YOU STARTUP FILE JUST IN CASE THINGS GO WRONG.

Two internal drives
Fat Angus 8372A
Printer on PCB Amiga B-2000
Rev 6
SCSI Controller Supra SCSI
Miniscribe 3180S 152 Mb
Memory 0.5Mb chip RAM 0.5
FAST RAM.

And that's my problem. How can I make my machine have 1 Meg of chip RAM? I tried all the possible combinations of jumpers I101 I500, I900 (what does that jumper do anyway) but nothing happens.

Please tell me a way to fix this problem as a lot of programs need that extra CHIP ram.

If it is matter of a jumper or a Pin from a chip or something like that I may even build a switch to have these options at will. Don't try to be too simplistic as I understand quite a few hardware terms and I'm not afraid to use a soldering iron inside my Amiga (I've already done that).

As I'm talking about hardware, do you know any libraries (PD or else) that have any hardware projects in disks or on paper (specifically for Amiga)? Like RAM expansions, stereo samplers Midi interfaces, SCSI interfaces, IDE interfaces - how to build anything?

And how about writing similar tutorials (projects) in your so interesting magazine?

Dimitris Rainakis
Greece

Dear Dimitris,
You have a fault somewhere in your Amiga system. With your revision of motherboard and 8372A you should have 1 Meg of chip RAM anyway. Use the Avail command from the shell and see what that says is available. Other than that, it needs a trip to the repair shop.

J900 (_BGACK) is a bus control signal which is available to Zorro expansion boards.

The only place that I can think of where hardware topics are discussed is on the AmiNet Internet sites.

I don't think that major hardware projects will feature in AUI, there are just too many things that could go wrong. We have printed a couple of minor projects in the past, and I expect that we will continue to do so.

OTHER

Dear AUI,
Will you please forward this letter to Austin Ralphson.

I have the same problem in trying to expand my A570 to include a hard-drive and memory expansion. There is a connector and cable available as I have been offered a second hand one at half price. Normally they are around £60.00.

The people to get in touch with are CHARTSCREEN, their number is 0425 475515. When I tried, I got an answering machine and so far have not had a reply to my message.

Apparently, they were designed to connect the hard drive to the CDTV. So I am going to try to track down one of these hard drives, they should be reasonably priced as the CDTV is well and truly dead.

I hope the memory can be expanded at the same time as I need an extra 2 Mb and just happens I can get that at £20.00 per Meg.

Get in touch soon and let's crack this problem together. Commodore certainly aren't going to.

Alan Welch
Cheshire

Dear Alan,
Thanks for the clue to the CDTV Hard Drive expansion units. I've not had any dealings with Chartscreen so I can offer no opinion of any products that they produce. I hope that you manage to connect a hard drive successfully.

OTHER

Dear AUI,
I have been reading various Amiga magazines for about a year but AUI is the only one I get every month because of the standard of advice and information given. I am writing to you for three reasons, a problem and two requests for some information.

My system is as follows:
Amiga 600HD (40 meg)
1 Meg upgrade plus clock

External disk Poppy drive (Power PC880B)

Philips CM8833-II monitor
Amstrad DMP2000 printer
Work Bench V2.05

I am not a novice user, working as an electronic and software technician at a research centre and having had an Amiga for about a year.

My problem is as follows, a while back I crashed my Amiga while writing some C code (nothing fancy just extracting a random entry from a file). When the machine rebooted the screen was offset about 20mm to the left, I adjusted the horizontal centre on the monitor and carried on. Later, when I booted from a game disk the screen was offset to the right. I thought a screen preference must have been altered somehow and so I opened up the prefs draw.

It is now several weeks later and I have still not found a horizontal centre screen preference. My question is why do I need to adjust the monitors horizontal centre depending on which disk I boot from? This abnormality causes no other problems than being a bit annoying.

The information I want is on accelerators for A600s. I can't seem to find any advertisements for any. Could you put me in contact with some companies making them or suggest a few that give a general system speed increase?

Another bit of information I require concerns WorkBench. If Workbench is started up with the -debug option you get a new pull down menu called debug. This has two options on it. I want to know what ROMWack does? I assume the other is for pushing unused libraries from memory.

Gary Cousins
Essex

Dear Gary,
It sounds as if you corrupted the monitor settings somewhat. You may have been unlucky, but just in case: if you only have one partition on your hard drive, think about reorganising it into two partitions. Keep the system files in their own partition. It is much more unlikely that during development that you will overwrite two partitions.

The preference settings for the

monitors are produced by two preferences programs. Screen-mode and Overscan - you will need to set each screen mode that you use with these. I would also suggest that you delete all of the monitors in your DEVS: directory and replace them with new copies from your master disks. If you have overwritten some of the data in there, that will cause all sorts of problems.

The data generated by the preferences program is stored in ENVARC: which during the startup-sequence is copied to ENV: which is automatically created in RAM:.. It might be worth checking to see if ENV: is there.

You are correct that one of the debug options does flush unused libs from memory. This command is also available from the shell and is useful if you are testing different versions of a library during development.

The other option, RomWack is a very complex debugging aid. It is a very simple ASCII output to the serial port. It is fixed at 9600 bps and has no flow control. The output is of the CPU registers and lots of other information about system memory.

This can be vital in tracking down bugs that other debugging aids are unable to locate. I must admit that I have never had to resort to RomWack - the debugging aids that we have available now are very much more advanced than what was available when the Amiga was first produced. However, the RomWack code is not too big and it has always been available.

Accelerators for the A600 ... to be honest I would not even bother. By the time you could increase the performance on the A600, you will have spent more than the cost of a new computer. The best method of accelerating the A600 would be to buy an A1200 and get the benefit of the new chipset as well.

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:

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3 Carriage Row
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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.

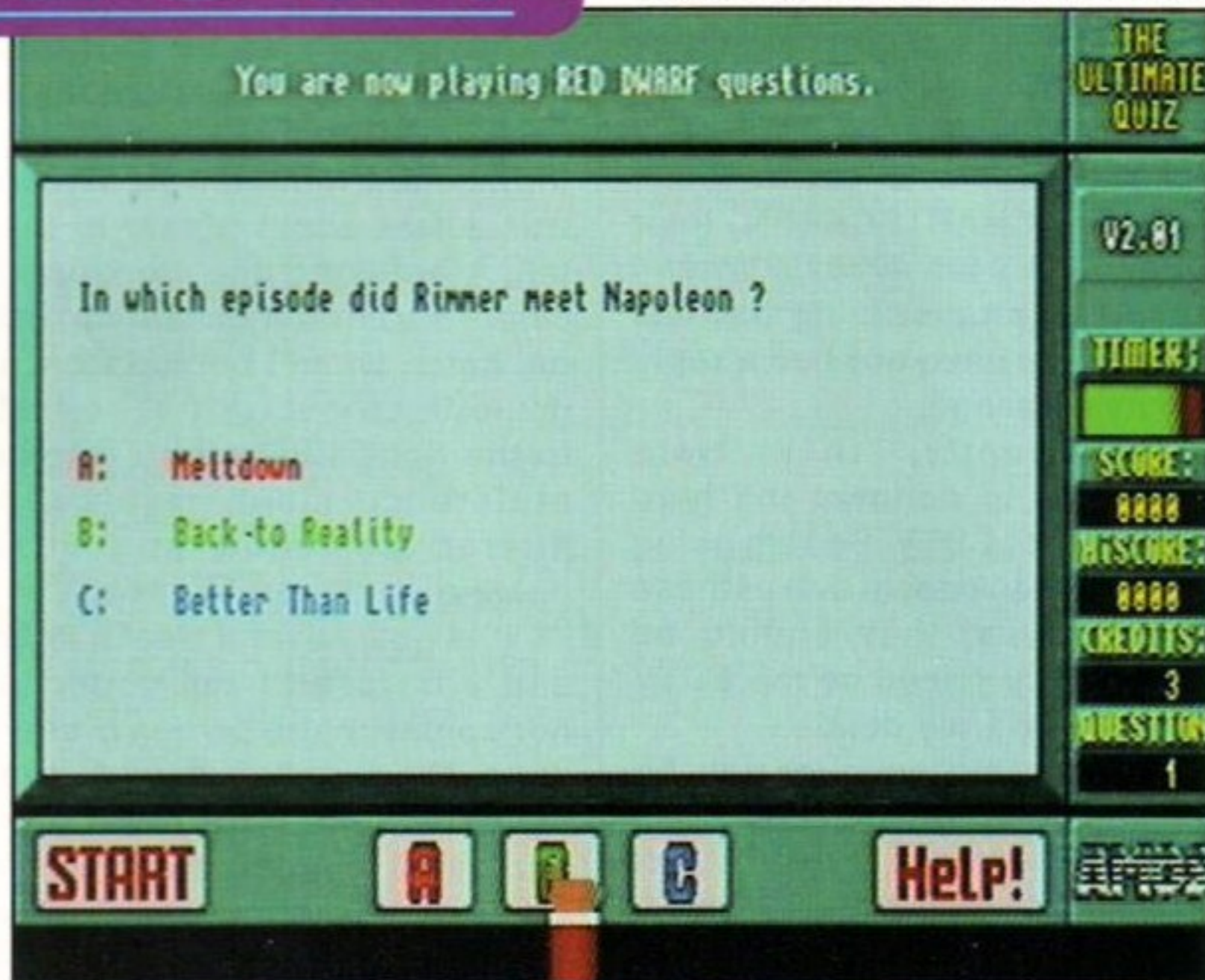
The Ultimate Quiz

Disk F1-060 F1 Licenceware

We have had a demo version of this program on one of our previous coverdisks. It was very addictive and once started, we had to be physically dragged away

from the screen. The full version which costs a very reasonable 3.99 is twice as compelling (you have to have two people to drag you away) as you can choose from a number of different subjects. Most of these are cult TV series such as Red Dwarf, Star Trek, and The Hitch Hikers Guide To The Galaxy.

For strange people who do not like cult TV, there are other subjects such as Pop Music, Big Movies, and, of course, General Knowledge. There are only 100 questions for each subject which means that the same questions do crop up every now and then which can be annoying. This game attracted crowds of people around my computer screen, I had to accidentally fall on the reset keys to get rid of them!



95%

Zaxxon

Disk 3518
17 Bit



This is the latest in a line of games by a fan of the Commodore 64. He has converted several including Donkey Kong, and Popeye, both of which were faithful to the

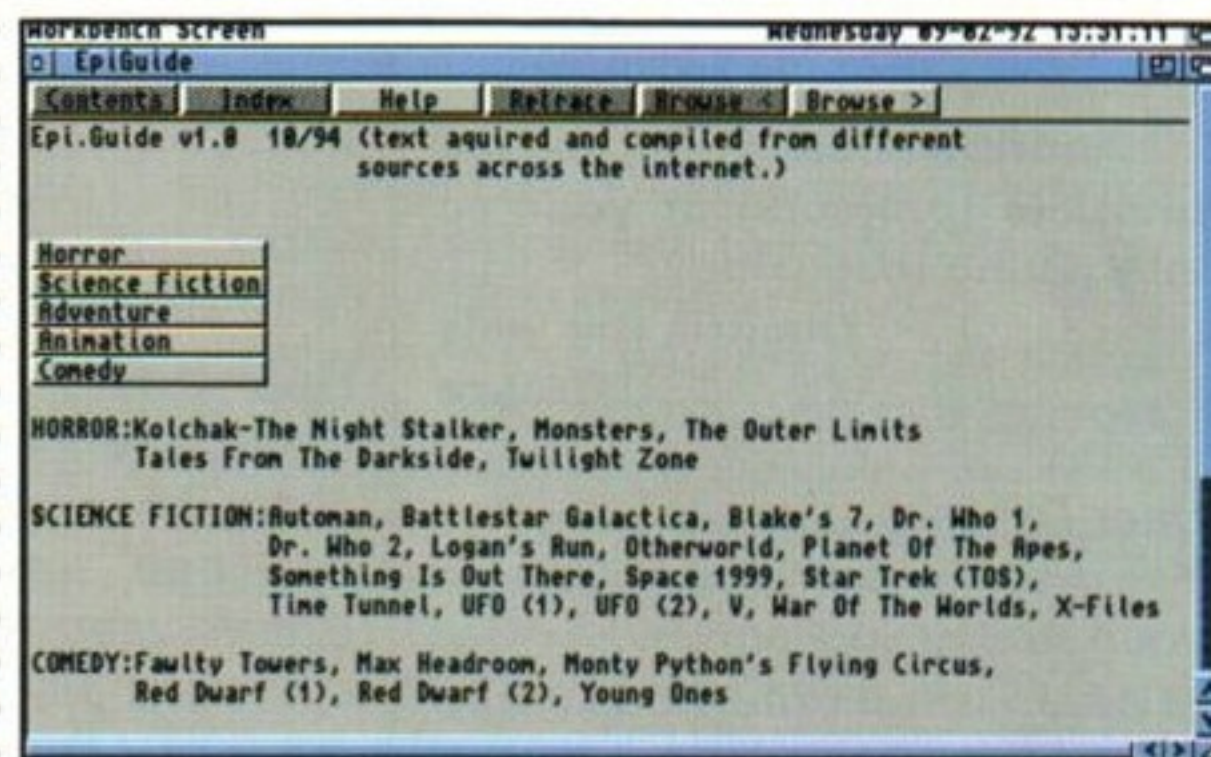
originals. Commodore 64 games were amazingly playable despite their appearance which consisted of blocky graphics and sparse colours.

Zaxxon is a basic shoot'em up but it is slightly different as the action is viewed from an angle which makes judging distance quite difficult.

To destroy any craft, you need to be level with it, and as you can move up and down as well as left and right this takes a lot of practice to perfect. The sound effects are true to the original by being simple beeps and synthesised explosions. It is also great fun to play.



86%



Cult TV Guide

Disk 3503
17 Bit

When I saw this HUGE AmigaGuide document on the screen, which fills a whole disk, I wondered who could be sad enough to write something this big. When I looked at it closer though I found out that it, in fact, wasn't totally written by the author, it was just a compilation of many different programme guides collected from the Internet.

The guide is split into five sections. These are: Horror, Adventure, Comedy, Animation, and the most popular of all, Science Fiction. The section has programme guides for Battlestar Galactica, Blake's 7, Dr. Who, Logan's Run, Space 1999, Star Trek, UFO, V, X-Files, Time Tunnel, the list goes on! There are actually 14 listed in this section.

This is an excellent disk to own as a reference and will please many sci-fi fans.

90%

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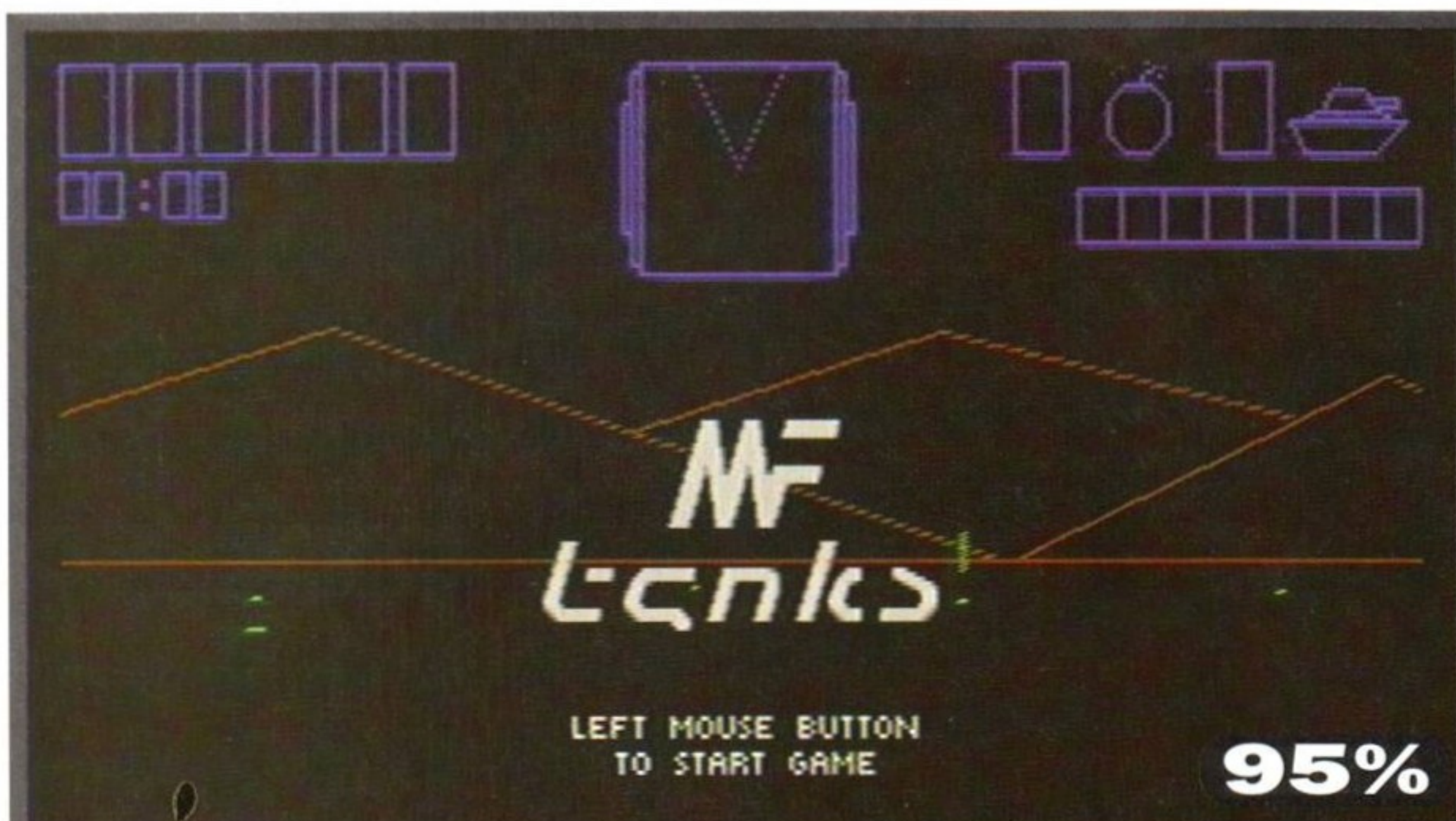
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MF Tanks

Disk G381
Network PD

The game Tanks has to sit alongside Space Invaders as one of the oldest computer games in existence. The object is to destroy every moving object on the ground from within the safety of your own tank. There are three types of objects to destroy. The first is a copy of your own tank which cannot move very fast. There is a more advanced tank which can move very quickly and is very difficult to hit. Lastly there are diamond shaped

machines which move in a diagonal direction towards you which also makes them very difficult to hit.

The graphics are simple vectors and are ultra smooth. There is a Microsoft Windows version of this game and you need a fast 486 DX2 66 processor to get it to run smoothly, I guess that is Windows for you. But this Amiga game is PD and it runs very fast even on a basic A500, and it is only 60K!

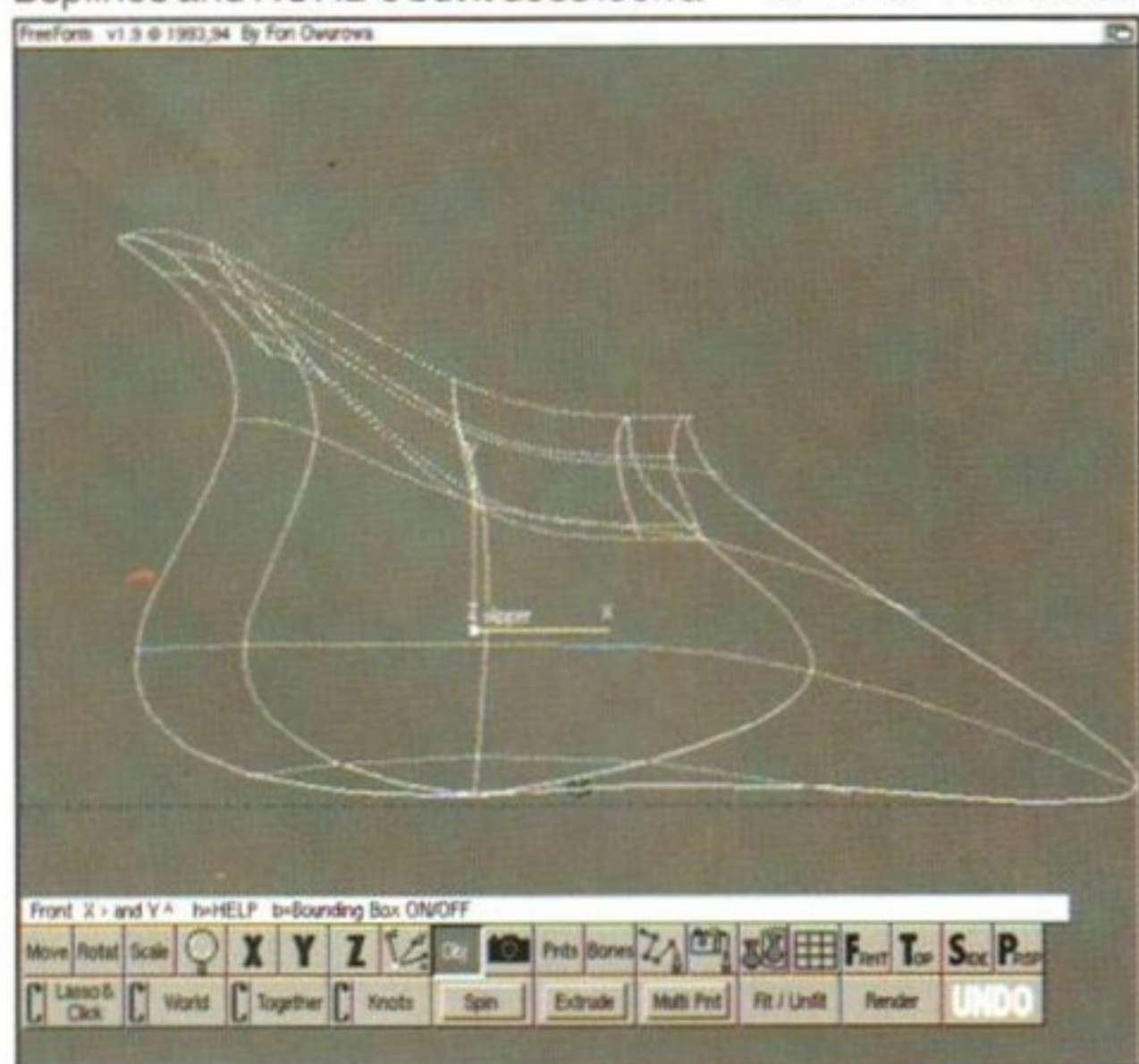
FreeForm

Disk 3502 17 Bit

This very nice looking program is a B-spline and NURB editor for Real3D2, Aladdin, LightWave, Caligari and Imagine. Now I don't know a lot about B-splines and NURB's but it does look a

very attractive program. It is quite fast but does need an 030/040 to work.

It has many functions including animation and morphing, in fact there are so many it is impossible to list them all here. This is a demo version which



contains fewer features than the full version.

This is an impressive looking program considering it is the author's first major C program and he only started learning C, how to program 3D graphics and how to use Commodore libraries just 2 years ago!

85%

Re-org 3.11

If you are like me and are constantly creating, deleting, and moving files around all day long, then your hard drive is going to get pretty fragmented. This means that your files are split up into fragments and as the hard drive has to move around the surface of the disk, it slows it down considerably. The answer is to use a disk optimising program which re-organises the files.

Re-org is such a program and is the best I have come across. It is so much

faster than QuarterBack Tools which is a commercial piece of software. There are also some useful features which came in very useful. I didn't think you could change

AMOSZine #5

F1 Licenceware

Thanks to magazine disks like this, AMOS programs are getting better and better. These AMOSZines are improving with every issue too. This latest issue is approaching the standard set by Grapevine. However this, unlike Grapevine does not have any useless waffling, just waffling about AMOS issues.

A large section of the disk is taken up by archives of source code. This code helps out programmers by giving them small and useful routines to assist them in using AMOS to the full. Of course, if you do not program, then this disk will be useless to you.

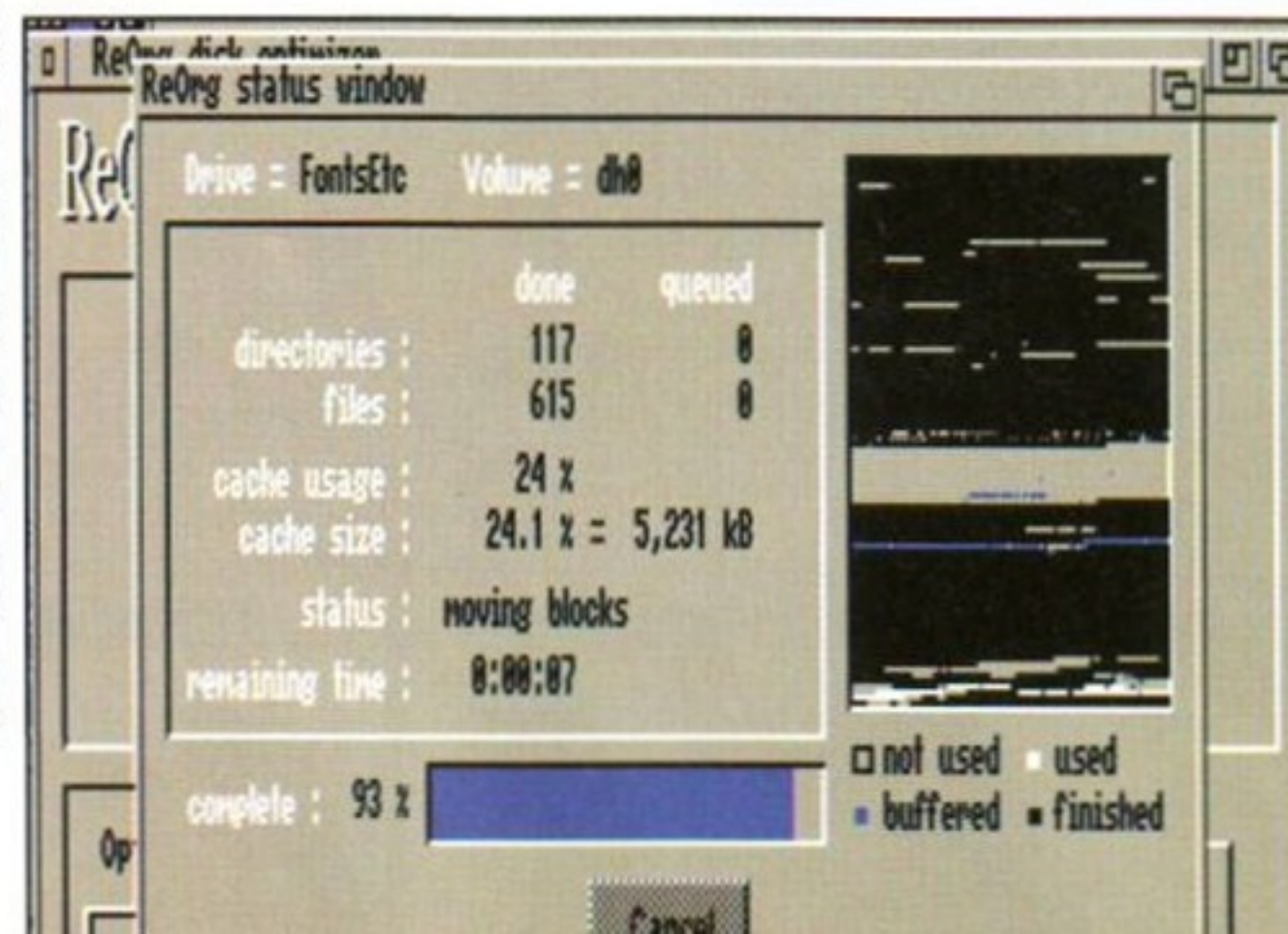
78%



the disk format of your hard drive without re-formatting it. With Re-org I was able to change the format of my drive from FFS to DC-FFS without re-formatting. Re-org did it in a flash.

A word of warning though. Whatever you do, don't change the file structure of your drive if you have an A3000 with softloaded ROMS, even if they are version 3.x. I did and paid the price! It wouldn't boot. The only way to get it to work was to attach the hard drive to an A4000 and then return the System2 partition back to FFS. This was purely my stupidity and not the fault of Re-org!

93%





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G014 WILD FIRE Side scroll shoot up.
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G023 CAVE RUNNER Packman type.
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G038 SMURFHUNT UP scrollshootup.
G042 A1200 TETRIS.
G043 GIDDY Enough said.
G045 GLOBAL THURMONUCLEAR WARFARE 2 player USA V USSR.
G046 PETERS QUEST A 4 game disk.
G048 NEIGHBOURS GAME (2disks).
G049 FIGHTING WARORS 1-2 players.
G050 BOMBE JACKY Remove bombs.
G052 CARD GAMES G053 XENEX Fast astroids type 5 levels, 9 weapons.
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G056 18th HOLE GOLF (2Disks).
G057 SPACE INVADERS Plus 2 others.
G058 SPACE RESCUE Side shootup.
G059 AMOS CRICKET W/B.
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U013 DIGITISED SAMPLE PLAYER

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Game Cheats
Password Paradise

SLIDESHOWS

Cindy Crawford (AGA)
Fit Chicks
Vic Reeves
Gif Beauties
Boris Valejo

Roger Dean
Tobias Richter Startrek
Forgotten Realms
Invisible World
Classic Sci-Fi
Stereogram
Cartoon
Agatron Slideshows
17 Bit Artwork
Colour Cycles
Ray Traced
Exodus 3D Slideshow
Sun Connection
Fractal Slideshow
Mandle Brot
Nasa Slideshow
Global Trash
The Wall
Slideshow Construction Set
Plus many more.

DEMOS

Ambermoon (game)
SuperMega Fruits
Star Ray
Dragons Lair
Pioneer Plague
Resolution 101
Prize Fight
Ray of Hope
Jesus on E's
Odyssey
Nine Fingers
Red Sector
Phenomena Megademo
Red Sector Predators
Megademo
Spirit of Nonsense
Anarchy

Guardian Dragon
Alchemy
Silents Ice
Silents Expose
State of the Art
Desert Dreams
Absolute Inebriation
Many more in stock

UTILS

A1200 fixes 2
Assassins Multivision
(AGA)
SpaceWriter
Home Utilities
WorkBench Replacements
Virus Killers
Med V3.2
Text Fortran Compiler
Sid 2
ProTracker
Basic Compiler
SnoopDos V3.0
Term V4.0
Engineers Kit
Spectrum Emulator V1.6
EdWord V4.0

ADVENTURES

Golden Fleece
Hack
Larn
Moria 5.4
The Holy Grail
Castle Adventure
Dark Staff
Survivor
Wastelands
Night At The Top

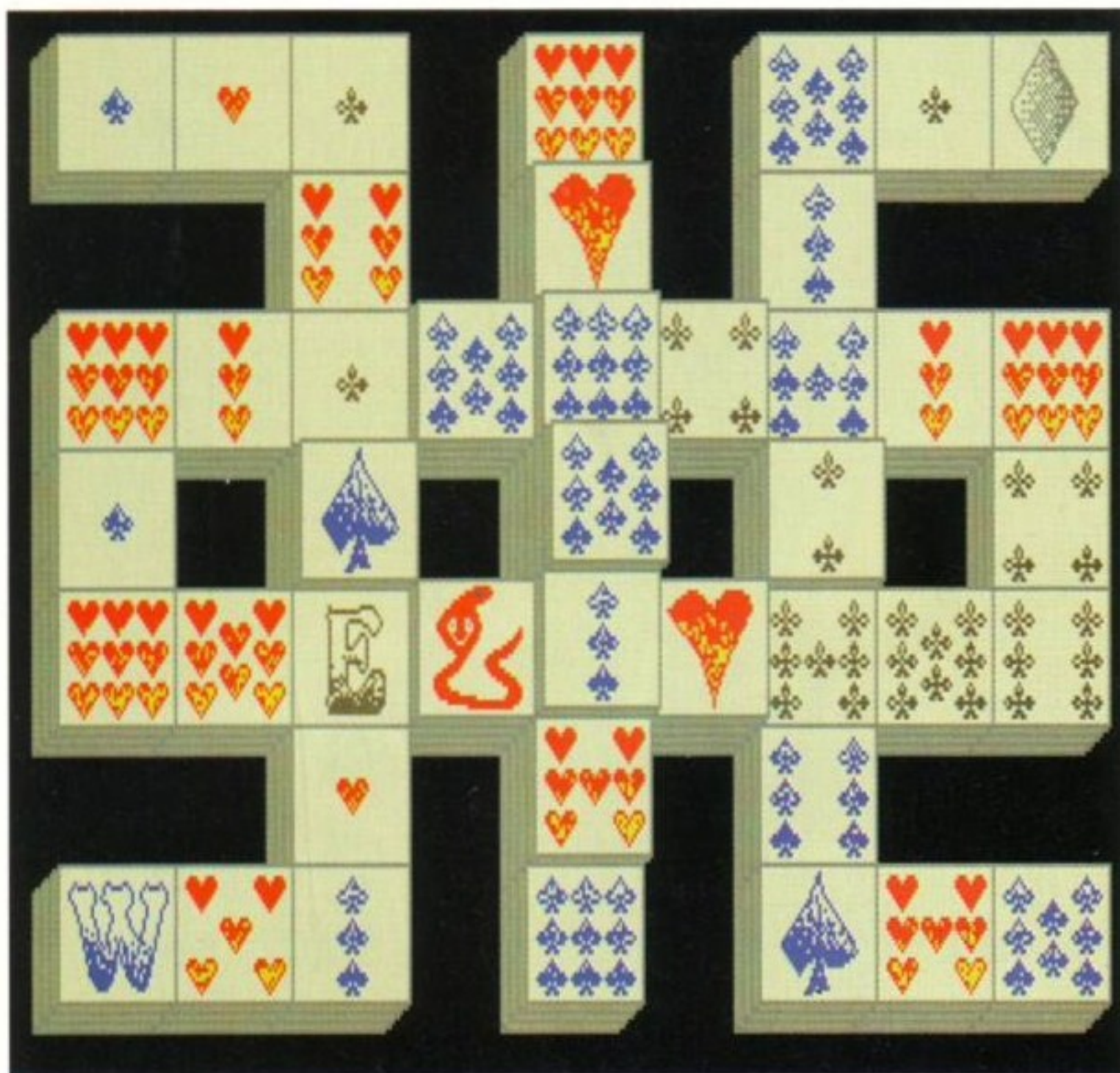
Frustration
RPG Adventure Creator
Castle Nomis
Act Of War
Outerim
Legend of Lothlan
Box Adventure
Advanced HeroQuest Aid
StarBase 13
Dungeon Master The
Solution
Fleece Solution

EDUCATIONAL

StarChart
Learn And Play
Simon space Maths
Gas Turbine Engine
Petrol Engine
Steam Engine
Pictures And letters
World Geography
Japanese Language
Darkroom Techniques
WWII Hyperbook
Childrens Songs
Nursery Rhymes
Discovery Of The Atom
Read and Learn
Dinowarp
Also available: Assassins,
Arug, N2, T-Bag, Fred
Fish, 17 Bit, Scope Fonts,
Anims, Clipart, Books on
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first order.

PD PRICES	1-10 disks	11-20 disks	21-50 disks	over 50 disks	over 100 disks	1.00 each	95p each	85p each (free mouse house)	80p each (free mouse mat)	70p each (free mouse house and mat)	plus 75 pence P&P
Mouse Mats	1.99 + 50p P&P										
Mouse Houses	1.99 + 50p P&P										
100 Cap. Flip Top 3.5in Disk Boxes	4.99 + 1.40 P&P										
100 Cap Stackable Disk Boxes	9.99 + 300 P&P										
Dysan Unbr. DSDD 3.5in Disk (10)	3.50 + 1.15 P&P										

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IMPERIAL

2.65

Disk G1146 KEW=II

There have been several Shanghai games on the Amiga, the most famous of which was called Dragon Tiles but this was Shareware and while excellent, was not a completely free PD title. There was even a commercial version put out by Activision years ago. This one is also shareware, and is as much fun to play as Dragon Tiles. It is also quite versatile and user friendly.

I was quite irritated by the small requesters that appeared every time I made a wrong move, but no problem, there is a menu option to turn them off,

excellent! There are many useful options available via the pull down menus and these include being able to go into edit mode and alter the structure of the cards.

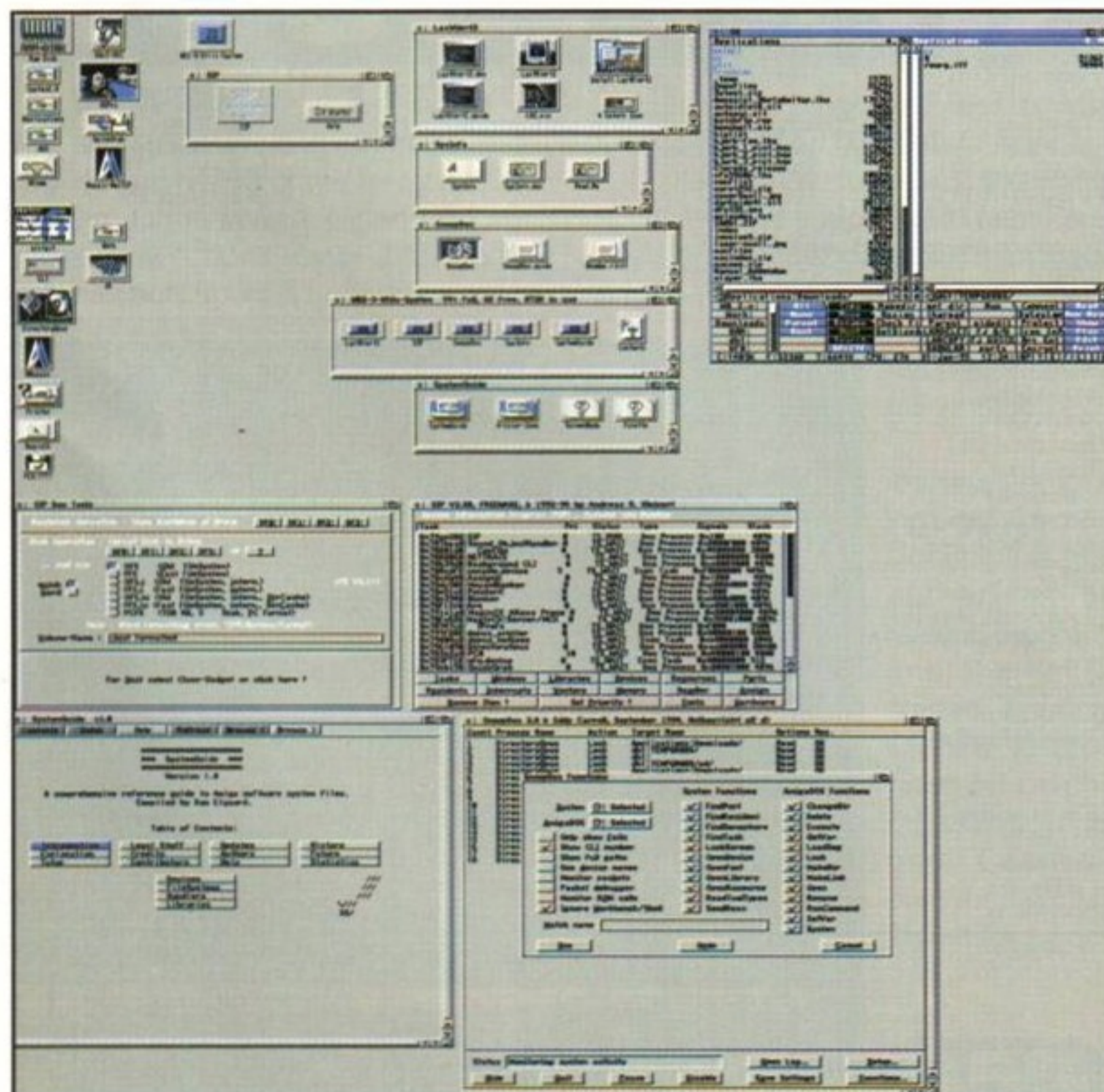
The object of the game is to get rid of all the cards on the screen. You do this by matching the cards up. Every pair you match, disappears. Get rid of all of them and you win.

It is nicely presented and has a selection of oriental tunes to accompany play.

76%

WB 2/3

SYSTEM UTILS



Disk U1123 KEW=II

There are 5 programs on this utilities disk that will help you out if you are having a problem with your system. The first is called Last Alert2 and is useful if you have trouble finding a pen to write down the last guru you got. This program will show you it in more detail and it won't disappear.

SIP is next which stands for System Information Program. While I found this very easy to use and informative, I was happier using the latest version of SnoopDos which is also included on the disk because it has a more usable interface. However SIP does have a agreeable disk formatting feature which SnoopDos does not. But this is not really what SnoopDos is for.

The latest version of SysInfo is included which is always useful. Finally there is a comprehensive reference guide in AmigaGuide document to the Amiga software System files.

85%

GRAC

Disk F1-066 F1 Licenceware

GRAC stands for GRAphic Adventure Creator. There was a program called GAC on the ZX Spectrum and the C64 which stood for the same thing but it was a primitive program which just allowed pictures to be displayed with a text adventure which you had created.

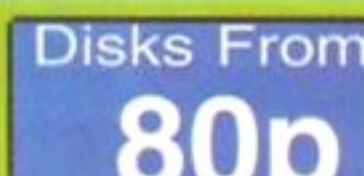
This program allows you to create adventures in much the same style as the Monkey Island games. It is very easy to use and no programming skills are necessary. All you need is a basic understanding of your Amiga. This is a two disk set costing 4.99. There is a sample adventure game on the second disk which is worth the price alone. It contains some wonderful graphics and plays very well.

95%



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Frodsham, Warrington. WA6 6DJ.

ARCADE GAMES

- [] **Automobiles**
2937 A pretty good multi player car race that is actually trying to be like the excellent Skidmarks.
- [] **Bandit Mania**
913 This disk is for all you fruit machine freaks out there who chuck away a fortune on these machines. There are three fruit ones and one superb disk.
- [] **Doctor Strange**
2012 An old platform game completely revamped for the nineties with beautiful graphics and modes of playability.
- [] **Extreme Violence**
1321 An immensely playable and funny 2 player chase each other with big guns game. A classic!
- [] **Firefly**
2065 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 skills all over the shop.
- [] **Kung Fu Charlies**
1138 This is a really cute and fun platform game with a bit of hitting and kicking. Good for kids.
- [] **Last Refuge**
1035 A new slant on the old invaders and Galaxians style which proves a real 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**
2544 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 puzzle.
- [] **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 lots of levels and plenty of neat pick-ups to be had.
- [] **Motorola Invaders 2**
1551 (2 DISKS - Amiga 1200 only). This is a single invaders game with a huge rock anthem to listen to while you play.
- [] **Mutant Games 1**
81 This compilation disk features TEN classic old games for you which should bring back a few memories for those over 21's.
- [] **Nanofly**
1441 A simple action/strategy type game with a little fly thing. It sounds silly 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 only). A fantastically good looking Star Wars style game with stunning 3D visuals and great light Saber combat sequences.
- [] **Road To Hell**
565 A brilliant 1/2 player over-head road racer with plenty of extras and fast action thrills & spills.
- [] **Roketz**
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 computerised sn 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 snazzy arcade space adventure game with plenty of problems to solve and tight sequences 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 casual arcade adventure game in the same vein as the classic Doty games. Simple fun.
- [] **Wipeout**
1923 A very swish looking Asteroids style blaster which is simple and smooth with good increasing difficulty curve.

ADVENTURE AND THINKING GAMES

- [] **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 deep adventures.
- [] **Black Dawn 2**
730 The shareware follow up to the original which some how manages to push the game even further.
- [] **Colonial Conquest 2**
1970 Probably the best 3D strategy type game on the PD scene to date. It's a huge planet developing and exploring and fighting masterpiece of a game, and that's final.
- [] **Knights**
1098 Is an excellent 2 player over-head adventure game which features real time split screen action and a host of missions to complete.
- [] **Raise The Titanic**
2560 (Not Amiga 500) This brilliantly atmospheric 3D adventure game sees you 20,000 leagues under the sea trying your hand at salvage.
- [] **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.
- [] **Quantum**
1451 This is a tough sprawling maze, action, puzzle sort of game that requires some good hand to eye co-ordination in order to succeed.
- [] **Starbase 13**
1213 (2 DISKS) The now classic point and click graphic adventure game which sees you trying to find out what happened to the occupants of the unlucky Starbase 13.
- [] **Sensitive**
2575 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.
- [] **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 Addictio really. It's a computer version of the classic Risk board game, and by creaky is it good!
- [] **Watermine 1**
478 (Not Amiga 1200) As Boulderdash games go this one is pretty challenging to say the least.

SPECTRUM STUFF

- [] **Spectrum Emulator**
1446 This brilliant program actually turns your Amiga into a 48K ZX Spectrum. You can play any of the Spectrum games listed here, and you can even load tape games if you have a sampler. Be warned you need an accelerated Amiga to really appreciate it such as an A1200 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 "Split", "Scrabble", "Hungry Horace", "Ground Attack", "Project Future", "Road Racers" and many more.
- [] **Specy Classics 2**
1499 Includes "JetPac", "Planetoid", "Astro Blaster", "Jumping Jack", "Scuba Dive", "Manic Miner", "Traxx" and yet more.
- [] **Specy Classics 3**
2993 Includes "Space Raiders", "Androd", "Stonkers", "Chopped Flag", "Choke Egg" and more thrills over.
- [] **Specy Classics 4**
468 Includes "Death Chase", "Pitman Seven", "Bruce Lee", "Bugaboo", "Wizards Lair", "PSSST", "Vallhalla" and even more.
- [] **Play Spectrum**
591 Includes "Barnum", "Quasatron", "Thrux", "Beach Head", "Driller", "Paradise", "Dark Star" and codifies more.
- [] **The Ultimate Games**
810 This is a must for anyone who ever had a dear old Specy. You see this disk contains the entire collected works of the fondly remembered Ultimate Play The Game who were a revelation in their day.

ASSASSINS COMPILATIONS

- [] **Assassins 3**
104 Includes an old version of the excellent "Megaball", and a bang up-to-date version of the classic old "Painter" game.
- [] **Assassins 6**
134 Includes a skiing game, a great Pacman clone, the excellent "Welltris" and a pretty old left Minter game conversion.
- [] **Assassins 15**
2048 Includes the excellent 1/2 player 3D race and chase game "Battle Cars" which is great fun to play with a friend.
- [] **Assassins 18**
826 Includes two wrinky old classics, one of which looks remarkably like "Jet Set Willy" which should excite a few older users out there.
- [] **Assassins 22**
1641 Includes the very addictive platform puzzler "Wizzys Quest", which really is a classic game.
- [] **Assassins 25**
1406 Possibly the best one yet. Includes four PD classics. Namely "E-Type", "Hammeroids", "Copper", and "My Wubby". Miss these and you'll regret it.
- [] **Assassins 36**
867 Includes "Dithells Wonderland", "Sub Attack" and a beautifully authentic "Donkey Kong" game.
- [] **Assassins 49**
2086 Includes the two excellent platform games "Crazy Sue" 1 + 2, which should keep you quiet for a couple of hours at least.
- [] **Assassins 51**
852 Includes the surprisingly good and playable Street Fighter 2 rip off "Fighting Warriors".
- [] **Assassins 65**
625 Includes two word search games, a good chess game and the brilliant board game "Paranoids".
- [] **Assassins 68**
1680 Includes a good version of that old favourite "Jumping Jack", which oozes simple playability.
- [] **Assassins 70**
421 Includes one of the best Tetris clones ever "Tetra Pro" which really is highly polished.
- [] **Assassins 95**
286 Includes two completely different football management games which are both very playable in their own ways.
- [] **Assassins 114**
185 Includes the nostalgic shoot-em-up "Insects 2", and one of the few cricket games to be found.
- [] **Assassins 123**
173 Includes the totally un-missable multi player game "Antiflame 2" which no self respecting Amiga owner should be without!!
- [] **Assassins 128**
1632 Has three arcade classics for you, namely "Space Invaders", "Deluxe Pacman", and "Solar System Wars".
- [] **Assassins 153**
1549 A double serving of mind benders is contained on this one, and by golly are they good. Very!!
- [] **Assassins 178**
1328 Includes a brilliant version of the classic Specy game "Cookie" which should appeal to any old Specy-fans out there.
- [] **Assassins 183**
1130 Includes the commercial quality shareware action game "Operation Firestorm" which needs to be played to be believed.
- [] **Assassins 184**
630 Includes a fun 3 player shoot and collect tank game, and a jigsaw puzzler for good measure.
- [] **Assassins 190**
779 Includes a real 3D car race which will literally come out of the screen if you wear those funny coloured glasses.
- [] **Assassins 196**
2360 Includes a real 3D car race which will literally come out of the screen if you wear those funny coloured glasses.
- [] **Assassins 200**
1483 Includes the unlikely game "Pub Darts", and a wacky multi player Battleships game with knobs on.
- [] **Assassins 206**
18 Includes a weird Tetris clone a Bart Simpson game and a conversion of the classic "Mined Out".
- [] **Assassins 216**
1851 Includes a brilliant minter version of "Defender", and the un-missable "Black Dawn 94 Special Edition".
- [] **Assassins 217**
2763 Includes a great overhead multi player car driving game which involves a lot of crashing!
- [] **Assassins 219**
2494 Includes a brilliant 2 player dog-fight game that has you piloting helicopters!! Brill fun.

MUSIC AND DEMO DISKS

- [] **9 Fingers**
383 (2 DISKS) Spectrobelly follow up to the hugely successful "State Of The Art" which takes the whole thing even further. Got it now?
- [] **Big Time Sensuality**
2215 (Amiga 1200 only - 2 DISKS) Beautiful graphics accompanied by that classic song by Bjork really set this demo aside.
- [] **Divine Inspiration**
1525 (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, nice effects and a relaxing tune make this demo a bit of a change from the rest of the ball.
- [] **Equipose**
366 What appears to be a normal demo is lifted by the seriously funny reggae music. Yes I said reggae music!! Utterly.
- [] **Euro One**
2740 (Not Amiga 500) The fastest, hottest, fastest hypnosis ever disk 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 must to behold and hear.
- [] **Full Moon**
1740 (Amiga 1200 only) Fastlight music and graphic extravaganza which features a brilliant motion video sequence at the start.
- [] **Love**
998 (Amiga 1200 only - 2 DISKS) Lovely demo a few far and between, to make the most of this happy little offering while it lasts.
- [] **Real**
2379 (Amiga 1200 only) One of the best 1200 demos 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 ever melodic 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'd 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 bash.
- [] **Techno Mania 2**
347 This is an all time classic Amiga music disk which features six superb tracks of unexpectably good quality.
- [] **Techno React 2**
1117 Four absolutely outstanding tracks on this disk of the highest quality, though they seem a bit Techno, but they're still damn funky. Stick it in and turn it up.
- [] **Techno Tracks 2**
1664 A fantastic demo which features one of the most banging 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 megadisk.

ART AND ANIMATIONS

- [] **3D Picture Show**
1104 (Not Amiga 500) A slideshow of 3D random dot stereogram pictures for you to torment yourselves with.
- [] **Batman Slideshow**
2425 Some nice comic art here featuring the original Batman character, the sinister looking one.
- [] **Daffy Loses His Head**
1588 An amusing little animation featuring Daffy Duck who just seems to have any luck.
- [] **Lemming Animation**
511 A cute little animation featuring everyone's favourites that's just a little bit sad really.
- [] **NLP Rendershow**
2955 (Amiga 1200 only - 2 DISKS) Two disks full of superb HAM8 rendered pictures which are a treat to behold.
- [] **Revelations**
1146 A beautiful collection of fantasy art work that will just make you dwell 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**
2054 (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 Star Trek pictures to really show off your 1200.
- [] **The Magic Factory 2**
7117 (Amiga 1200 only) More hi-res colour Star Trek art work for you.
- [] **Welcome to the Machine**
1064 A collection of three single screen personal motion animations of various contraptions. There's time to look out for in each of them.
- [] **Workbench 3 Screens**
363 Some very high quality background pictures for all you lucky workbench 3 users. It even has a Windows style background - checky.

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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 your 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?

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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 things for kids to create their own master pieces.
- [] **Calorie Counter Diary**
2315 This excellent shareware program can be a real help in planning a calorie controlled diet, whether you are wanting to gain or lose weight.
- [] **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.
- [] **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.
- [] **Lyapunov**
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 doing the pools, and possibly increase your chances of winning (a liver).
- [] **Pro Gamble**
2322 Yet another shareware horse predictor. This one however is different from the rest, is easier to use, and apparently a bit more successful.
- [] **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.
- [] **Tea 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.
- [] **X Beat Pro**
415 An excellent music sequencer which is very suited to both professionals and novices alike. Comes with everything you need to get started.

SOME HANDY DISKS

- [] **A1200 Hacks**
2007 (Amiga 1200 only) This disk features a load of useless but very amusing and quite friendly little things to liven up your workbench.
- [] **Amiga DOS Tutorial**
1978 (Not Amiga 500) This is a really excellent disk for all you workbench 2/3 users out there who want to learn more about the commands you can utilize.
- [] **Amos Eyes**
2767 This program allows you to create good looking text files that can incorporate graphics to help liven up your presentation.
- [] **D-Copy**
2582 Without doubt the best disk copier program around, and still the most popular ever!
- [] **Image Studio**
2906 This is a thoroughly excellent shareware screen converter program that just oozes quality and ease of use.
- [] **Lock Out**
653 This handy little program will provide you with simple and effective security on your hard drive, and so protect your private files from prying eyes.
- [] **NComm 3**
45 This is the best shareware communications software you can get, so if you've got your modem then get this and get connected.
- [] **Program Loader**
894 A nice program to make selecting programs from your hard drive as simple and fast as possible by creating a user friendly menu system for you.
- [] **Radbench +**
1820 (Not Amiga 500) Let this program help you utilize one of your Amiga's best features, namely the reset protected ram disk.

APPLICATION PROGRAMS

- [] **A-Bank**
503 The best shareware home accounts program you can get. It's packed with features and looks very good and clear. It's also very simple to set up and use.
- [] **Home Budget**
1410 This is a really good professional looking home money management program which is chock full of very useful features to help you manage your finances.
- [] **Journal**
2752 A simple double entry book keeping program for all you non-accountants out there who need a bit of help keeping your books.
- [] **Labelbase**
2353 This nice little label printing program has the added advantage of using a simple database to hold the label information. Handy if you have lots of labels to print.
- [] **Music Base**
2411 This is for all you people with huge record or CD collections that you want to keep handy records on.
- [] **Text Engine**
1464 The premier Amiga text editor come word processor. It's simple to use and very clear in its presentation. Recommended.
- [] **The Money Program**
1811 Another home finance manager program. This one has some good analysis features which could help you to track down just where your money is actually going.

NEXUS 7

Freestyle PD

This is the second demo which I feel deserves a review and I think it is one of the best around at the moment. The format is still the same, a number of flashy effects coupled with a great soundtrack. The difference is that the effects are really original and are not on the screen for that long so you don't get bored. They also stick in your mind more as they are each given their own name.

The opening screen shows a spinning Andromeda galaxy which looks stunning. Other memorable effects include motion blur in which a picture is smeared around; plasma zoom, which also looks stunning, and an animation of Luxo Junior who was an animated table lamp originally created by John Lassater, one of the first computer animators. All in all a very entertaining demo.



MOTION

Freestyle PD

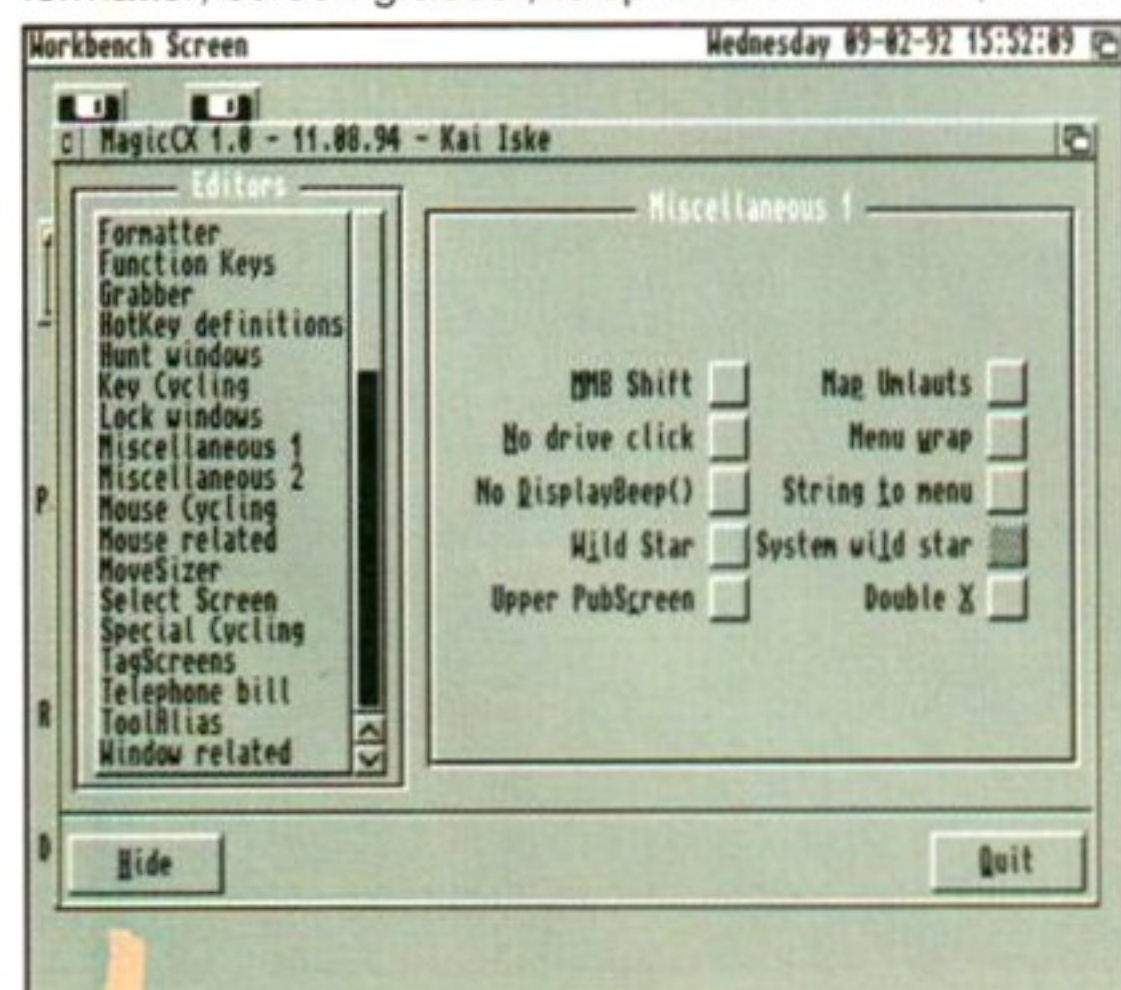
MAGICCX

Disk U1124 KEW=II

Is your workbench startup drawer full of small commodities? One to blank the screen, one to blank the mouse, the list can go on and on. Well, imagine a commodity that will do everything. Everything? Surely you can't mean that? Well, it has every single utility I can think of, and lots more that I hadn't.

I suppose it isn't legally a commodity as it isn't a single program, it has to be installed to a directory and there are several modules which go with it.

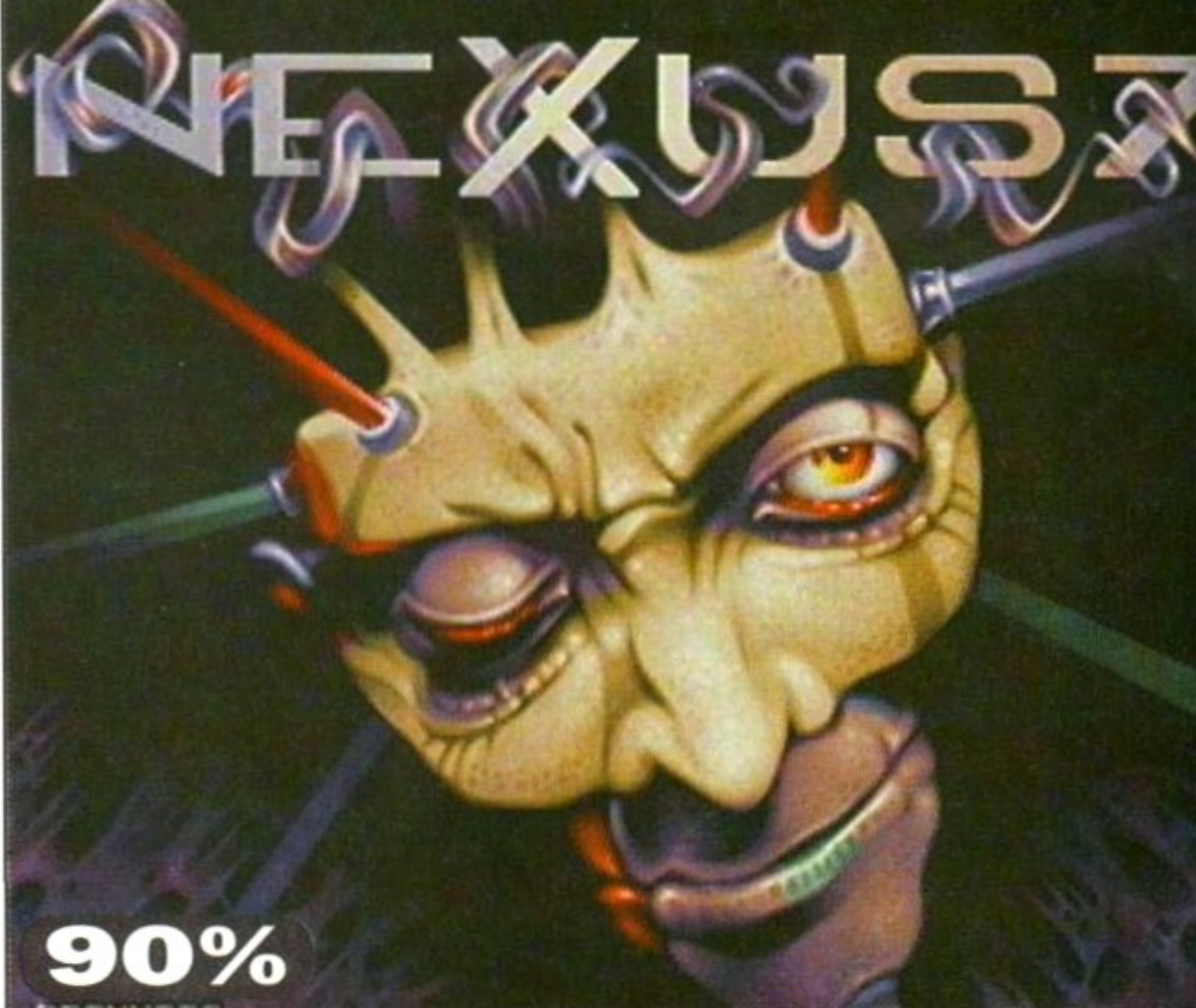
Here is a very brief list. An alarm clock, calendar, exploding windows, disk formatter, screen grabber, telephone bill monitor, screen blanker, function keys, to name but a few.



There are even some small utils which are essentially small hacks. These include being able to stop the floppy drives from clicking, and an option to be able to use the middle mouse button (if you have one) as a shift key.

MagicCX works well but if you are low on memory, you might not want it running all the time.

95%



90%

I have received more demos than ever this month, most of them AGA. I used to love watching demos, they were probably responsible for a lot of people purchasing Amigas solely on the "WOW" impact these have. I used to gaze for hours at those smooth moving vectors, wonder at the humorous scrolly messages.

No longer I am sorry to say. Demos of today are much the same as they were five years ago, and we all have got used to the effects. I have picked two from this new wave which I thought were something a bit different.

The first is called Motion. It opens with a fantastic hand drawn AGA

picture from the film Cliffhanger. There then follows several seconds of rather noisy grinding from the floppy drive after which we experience a trip round a virtual world, then a nice scaling fractal landscape.

Demo makers still seem to be obsessed with Doom and try to emulate it because the next part is a journey around what looks like a building from Doom. The motion is a lot more jerky and the graphics considerably more blocky but you do get the feeling of movement and it does last quite a long time.

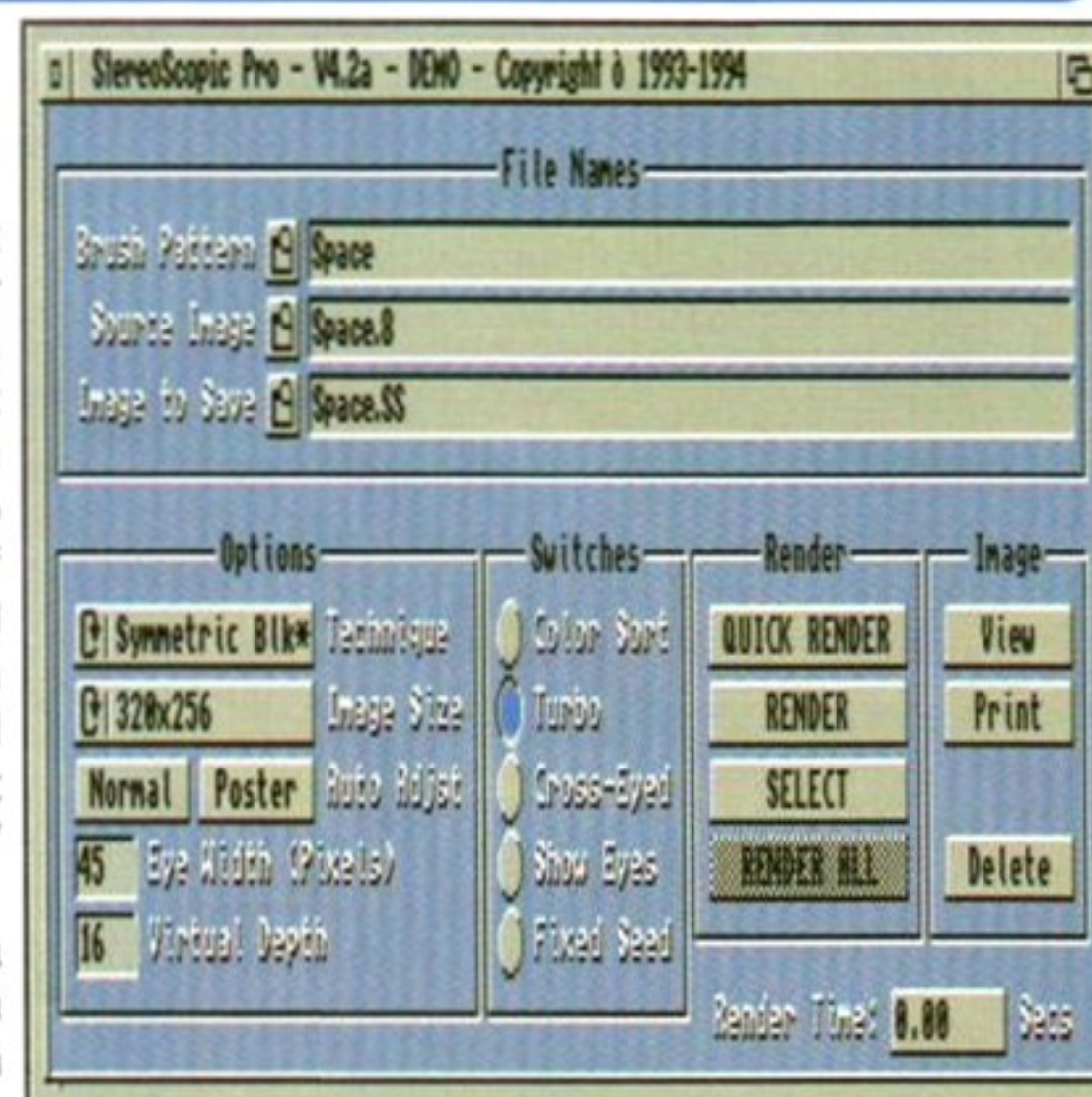
80%

StereoScopic Pro

**Disk GR164
Your Choice**

I received a Random Dot Stereogram poster for Christmas last year and I am sorry to say I couldn't see a single image. In fact, it seemed to me to be a complete series of random dots! It annoyed me even more when people saw it on my wall and said "Oh look at that cool picture of a dinosaur" What? Where?

An RDS picture is a 2D picture encoded with a 3D picture. When looked at in a certain way, they appear three dimensional. Or are supposed to... There are a few RDS programs on the Amiga. Most of these will just use random dots for the background patterns. This professional version will enable you to load in any image and use that as the pattern



background. This demo version will only allow a quick render, but it works well even though I cannot see any of the images...yet!

85%

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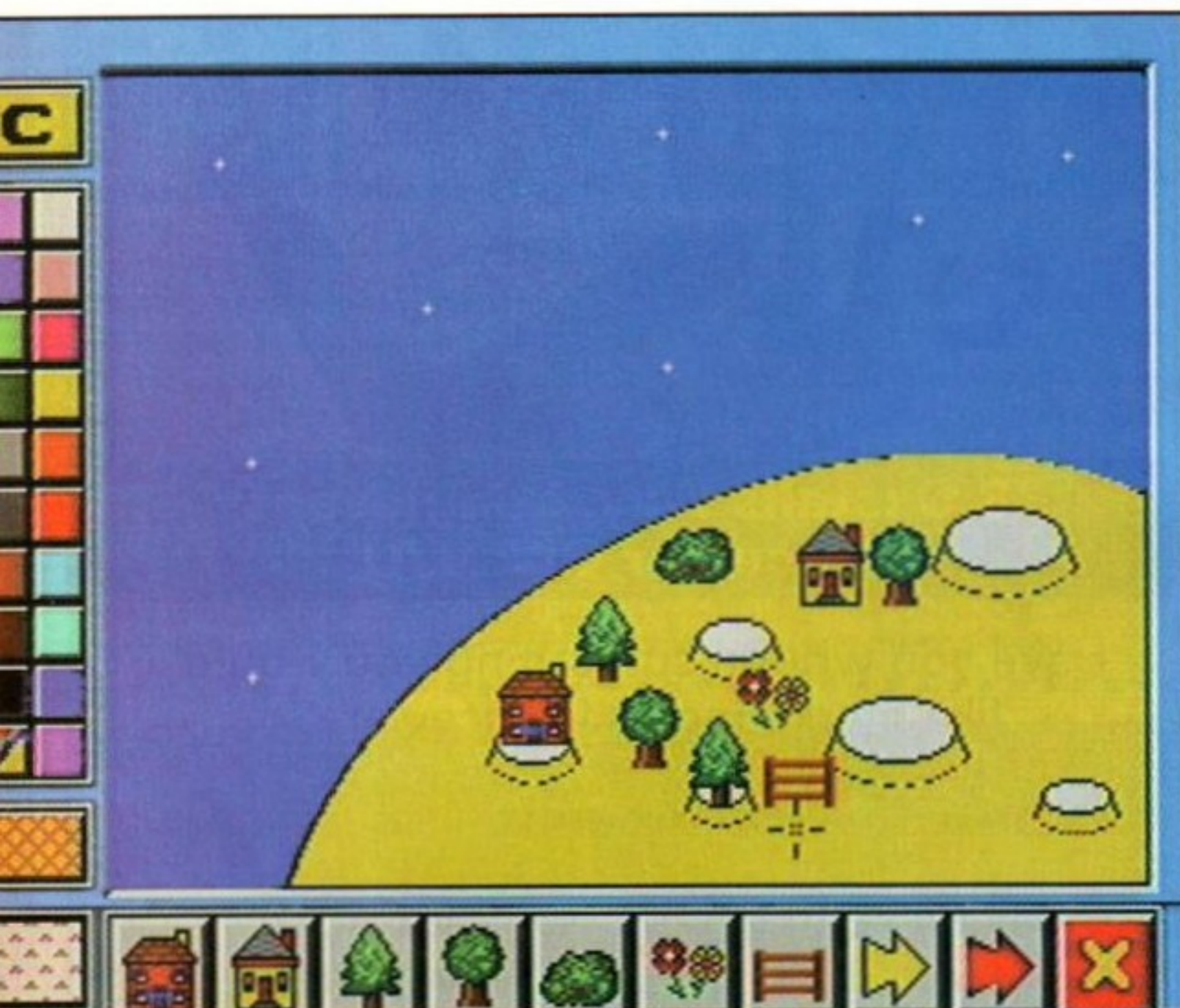
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MAD PD

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Junior Artist

Disk F1-062
F1 Licenceware

Junior Artist is a very simple painting program for young children or people who find DPaint difficult to use! No, seriously, it's for kids and is designed to be ultra easy to operate. It even makes sounds when you press the buttons.

There are several pleasant fea-

tures including a selection of preset pictures on which kids can draw. The icons are also well drawn and simple so you are in no doubt as to what they do. I would say the age range this program is aimed at is between 3-6 years.

75%

Contacts for PD reviewed in this issue.

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West Yorkshire WF1 1DH
Tel: 0924 366982

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190 Falloden Way
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London NW11 6JE
Tel: 081 455 1626

Your Choice
39 Lambton Road
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Manchester M21 0ZJ
Tel: 061 881 8994

Freestyle PD
108 Woodside Way
Short Heath, Willenhall
West Midlands WV12 5NH

Network PD
125 Nicholson Road
Sheffield S8 9SW
Tel/FAX: 0114 810398

KEW=II
PO Box 672, South Croydon
Surrey CR2 9YS

Due to temporary insanity in the editorial dept, the Cam CD that was reviewed last month was listed as sold by 17 Bit. We, of course, meant Almathera and would like to apologise for this oversight to all concerned.

Contact: Almathera
Southern House
Boundry Business Court
92-94 Church Road
Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3TD
Tel: 081 6870040

SIMPSON MURDER MYSTERY

Disk OS165 Roberta Smith

For those of you who are a bit baffled on what is exactly going on in the O.J. Simpson trial, this disk will partly explain. I say partly because at the time of writing this, the trial has only just begun. There is a good chance however that by the time you read this, the trial will still be going. It may even still be going on when you give your Amiga to your grandchildren.

This disk contains some basic background information, it explains who all the characters are and there is a brief profile of each.

The section which contains details on the actual trial is very short as not a lot had happened when it was written but the author is constantly updating the disk as the situation proceeds. The document is nicely presented in AmigaGuide format and includes a few pictures and even two samples but not really enough text. When it is updated, it should be more appealing.

65%

STYXMINE



77%

Disk G379A/B Network PD

I think I played Boulderdash to death on the C64, it was such a brilliant original game. It has been converted before on the Amiga and there have been a few written specifically for the Amiga, not all have been good. One excellent version that does spring to mind was Bondmine 12 which I reviewed in October 1993. StyxMine is almost as good as that, but not quite.

It still has the C64 feel about it which means quite blocky graphics and smooth movement, but lacks the

fun element and it is just too difficult to complete.

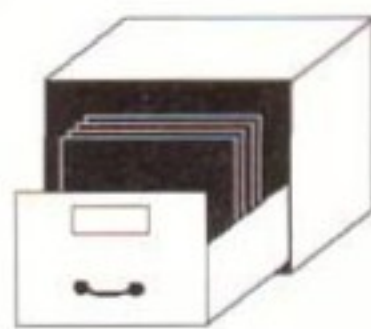
The object is to collect all the diamonds in the play area. As well as the usual monsters roaming around, there were boulders trapped in the earth which would fall down when the ground was shifted from underneath them. It took skill to go round the maze without getting crushed to death by boulders or killed by monsters. There is also a rather fun two player option which you can play co-operatively.

If you have created a masterpiece and you would like it reviewed here or if you own a Public Domain company and want to contribute new and interesting PD, please don't hesitate to send it in. The address is:

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Write to Reply

Bud Vennos gets his wish again - an expanded postbag and more pages! But his temper still hasn't improved.

Dear AUI,
I have recently acquired a Z88 portable computer. I'm not sure whether or not you have come across one of these before, so I will describe it in detail prior to asking a few questions.

The computer has a small LCD screen at the top, with a standard typewriter size rubber keyboard. There are a number of programs built in as follows:

Diary, Pipedream (WP / Spreadsheet). Basic (BBC Version 3), Calculator, Calendar, Clock, Alarm, Filer, PrinterEd, Panel, Terminal, Imp-Export.

It also has three built-in slots which can house cards (cartridges). These slots currently contain two cards; a 128K RAM and 128K EPROM. They and the z88 were manufactured by Cambridge Computers Ltd.

I have a number of questions regarding this very old (1987) computer.

a) Is the manufacturer still trading? If so, how do I get in touch with them with a view to buying some more hardware/software.

b) There are a number of files in EPROM which I can alter the contents of but cannot change the filename or delete them. I find this a little confusing. Why, if I can save files to EPROM can't I delete them too? At this rate I will end up with the EPROM full of files which are obsolete and of no use to me.

c) I would be eternally grateful if anybody out there can provide me with any kind of instructions or help with the Z88. There are a number of functions I cannot work out.

d) There are facilities for printing files from the WP, along with a custom program for setting up a printer driver, but

the only possible place to connect any peripherals is via what looks exactly like a mouse port. So what kind of printer do I connect to that?! I own a Commodore MPS 1270A (if any other readers are thinking of buying one of these then DON'T, because they are crap!)

Please keep up the good work at AUI, providing us with a perfect mixture of topics relating to not just the Amiga, but technology in general. Thanks for printing this letter and thanks for the best Amiga mag going.

Lea Hudson,
Bradford.

Dear Lea,
The test of a pool of talent like AUI is whether we can answer questions about even the most obscure things. As it happens, we even have a couple of the Z88s around the office and use them occasionally when writing on the run. (The Ed. has had one for six or seven years, he says. But made the mistake of lending it to Mike Nelson for one of his trips to the States and coincidentally, of course, it stopped working.

a) Z88s are no longer in production, but about 2000 of the blighters still survive in pristine condition with Universal Trade (see their advertisement in this AUI). You can buy the machines and add-ons from them.

b) EPROM means Erasable / Programmable Read Only Memory. You can save files to EPROMs but cannot delete them. Once it's saved, it stays there. When your EPROM card is full you'll need to save the files you want to keep to RAM, another EPROM or your Amiga and use a special EPROM eraser to erase the whole EPROM.

c) We have a telephone number and address for the once thriving Z88 Users Group, but though we've tried we have been unable to raise them. They may no longer be all that thriving. If they still exist, or if anybody knows of them, please contact us and we'll pass the details on.

d) That mouse port is actually a serial port. The question you should ask is not which printer you connect, but HOW you connect it. The answer is with a special cable using a mouse-port like plug to standard serial plug at the printer-end.

This same cable can be used, in conjunction with software available from the Z88 user group, to transfer information between the Z88 and Amigas. We use the Z88 for basic WP work and to jot down notes and ideas while mobile and then dump the files into our Amiga WP.

The Z88 is a handy and incredibly cheap (£80 - gasp!) option if you'd like a portable computer to use in conjunction with the Amiga. See the review in this month's Portability! Special Report.

Dear Sir,
Hi again! I just read the January issue of AUI - thanks for printing my letter.

Thanks for the game Colonial Conquest II on your coverdisk - it murdered, tortured, and utterly ruined my entire weekend (I got it on a Friday). I finally completed the easy level after three days.

Have you guys heard of the Amiga On Line Manual? If so, please review it.

Have you noticed that, considering Commodore and the Amiga's predicament right now, all the major high street shops - i.e. Virgin Megastores,

Future Zone - still keep the shelves stocked up with Amiga software? It is as if they have inside knowledge or something...

My next comment goes to Steve Sandham, from Cumbria, whose letter was published in the January issue. Why the hell are you using the System() function to mess with graphics in C? From what I can gather, all you seem to want to do is stick a pretty piccy in the background of your program (I hope it isn't a fractal). Now, I confess to not being 'MR C PROGRAMMER 1998' but I have been doing my own bit of tinkering. I believe that you can open a window on the screen of your choice, and define it as type backdrop - this means that there is no poxy menu bar or borders. Of course, the user cannot close the window - just wait for an Intuition Message from the IDCMP to close the Main program window. When this happens, close the backdrop one as well! Please correct me if I am wrong. You probably want to figure out the Graphics.library functions as well. Remember to use GfxBase as the pointer!

My final point goes to Paul Stanbra, from Sheffield, in connection with the letter published also in the January edition. In point 5 of your letter, Paul, I assume you are attempting to put the password on a game disk which has a unique disk loading system. I assume the reasons for doing this is to attempt to prevent nosey parents / irritating brothers from playing them. The answer is - is - no. (Unless you are a Grand Master Hacker or something like that.)

Yours faithfully,

Laga M Hale
Scotland.

P.S. - You put DiskSpare on coverdisk 42 - why again?

Dear Laga
Great name that. Well, er, we weren't sure what to do with your letter since part of it is directed to Andy in the Answers section. We'll reply to your AUI points here and let Andy deal with the rest.

Colonial Conquest II. Yes, it appears many readers have sacrificed their time to this honourable pursuit but on the easy level? Come on! You'll get no congratulations for that. Still, if you like it so much, don't just tell us, tell Christian, the author. We know for a fact he likes all the feedback he can get.

Why did we put DiskSpare on again? As you may have noticed, the SuperDisks have begun to use these disks (for those confused - DiskSpare is a system that allows

the Amiga to read up to 980K on one floppy). When we began using it, we decided it would be best to include the whole archive, with the updated device and support for PFS (Professional Filing System, another domain release) and for HD users, so that you could install it on your system and read SuperDisks normally for those who don't want to use the standard installation procedure. If we'd just supplied the files used on the disk, with no documentation, you wouldn't be able to work out how to use it.

In short, we were trying to help you!

By the way, thanks for your SuperDisk submission; it's under consideration for a future issue.

Dear AUI

I am writing to you concerning the game "Zombies II" included on SuperDisk No.45. this is a very, very good game, much better than "Zombies I" but can you please tell me how many levels this game contains?

After nine hours of play I reached level 102 before being overrun and out of energy (both gamewise and physically)!

It took this long as I have found that if I press pause at the beginning of certain levels, wait ten minutes, then recommence, I have ten minutes of collecting weapons before the Zombies appear. Is this a cheat as mentioned in the doc file? What are the cheats?

I feel it is a shame there is no save facility for this game, allowing a break between sessions in order to finish it, instead of having to spend hours at one go.

C. Hearn
Exeter, Devon.

Dear Chris
NINE HOURS?!? You have more stamina than us! We don't know of anyone who can beat that. As to your question of the number of levels, I'm afraid we don't know. Yes, it does look like you've found one of the cheats but we don't know of any of the others as we didn't program the game.

So, if anyone can beat Chris record, or knows any cheats, drop us a line!

Dear AUI

Please help us - we're losing our marbles!

We are regular subscribers to your magazine and we're very impressed with the great quality of your coverdisks, especially the utilities. We've got two Amigas in the house and both us and the children have come across the same problem. On SuperDisk No.52 you included a rather fun game

called Marbles. This game is single handedly responsible for the family LOSING its marbles.

We are totally baffled at how to complete the puzzle on Satellite World, level 7. We have come to the conclusion that there must be an error on this level as we can't find the solution.

Please help as we are on the edge of a nervous breakdown.

Yours sincerely, gratefully, hopefully,

B Hurst,
Gt Yarmouth

Dear Mr and Mrs Hurst and all the kids,

You say you're interested in the utilities, you certainly spent some time playing Marbles!

We'll be honest, we don't know the solution to that level, but we do know that it's possible, because Derek Baxter from Merseyside has written to us asking for help on the next level. So at least one person has worked it out!

Can anyone help out these poor, lost souls? Send in your solutions for any of the levels and we can save everyone's sanity.

In the meantime, take heart from the fact that if you're eager for more of Marbles, you can have just as much torment from the excellent Peg It! included on SuperDisk No.54 or some welcome brain numbing from Insectoids from Outer Space this month!

Dear Sir,

My name is NADER BAKIER, and this letter I'm sending you is all the way from JORDAN. This is no ordinary letter because it is very very very important to me... Please don't get the idea that I'm fooling about, and this is a bullshit letter that you should throw away...

Sir, PLEASE...

Just Don't Throw Away My Letter before you complete reading it, because :

I REALLY NEED HELP

I'm a 22 Years Young man. And I Can Program In A Lot Of Different Computer Languages, Such As: C - Language, Basic, COBOL, FORTRAN, Pascal, Dbase & Foxpro, Amos & Blitz And Lately Assembly Language. I Have Written A Lot Of Programs & Applications, And I Can programme Very Well And I Have Been Since 1988 Using Different Types Of Computers: 16 & 8 Bits Machines: AMIGA, PC's, MTX, MSX, ATARI's, CBM64, AMSTRAD...

I'm Seeking A Job Offer To Work As A Programmer, Part/ Full Time in any Software House in the U.K. As I Intend To Move On To The U.K. and live there permanently.

I Can Do Any type Of

Programming For Any Machine But Personally I Prefer AMIGA System And I Prefer Designing Games (anything that concerns games design) , such as; making high quality music and sfx/ design in game levels graphics, backgrounds, sprites / coding...etc.

I've Been Using Amiga For The Past Six Years For Nearly Everything For My Own Pleasure, In Addition To Composing Music and programming in different languages, In Which I Have Gained A Great Experience In Programming.

Moreover I've Been Studying Computer Programming In The Last Three Years in a very reputable college. (The Royal Scientific Society).

So,if anybody out there is interested, then Please Help , since I Can't Live Here Anymore, And I Can't Find A Decent Job In Jordan As A Programmer Or Let's Say (Games Maker), Because There Is Simply No Market here For Games Or For Programmers Especially For Amiga Machines - Which I Love - Unlike The U.K. Add To That The Fact Which Is People Here Don't Give A Damn about Computers Or Programmers. << No one cares... >>

And Finally -

I Am A Good Looking - White Young Man, I'm Not Jordanian Although I Have A Jordanian Nationality, But I'm Circassian... Which Means Russian (Caucasian).

And - in all Of My Life - I've Been Dreaming In Working In A Software House In the U.K. , (Games - Dept.) Which Is Still A Dream Until Now! Will You make it come true ?

I'm also Hard Working, Self Motivated, Self Dependent, Creative ... (By The Way ... I'm a GEMINI too) , Full Of Fresh Ideas & Energetic...Just Looking For a chance In this Life, just Want To Be Myself, Live My Life, Work In My Favourite Field In Computer Programming, To Create, To Do Something Creative, neat and mind - blowing (MAYBE) somebody out there would be interested in contacting me - so that he might be able to help me... because I'm hopeless, desperate... and still suffering...

PLEASE , GIVE ME A CHANCE . . .

Sincerely Yours,
Nader Bakier, P.O. Box 141233
Amman 11814, Jordan
Tel: 962-6-811458

Dear Nader,
We're not an employment agency but the the tone - and the capital letters - of your missive so touched us that we've made an exception

and published it.

The letter speaks for itself - and very eloquently too. We hope someone does give you a CHANCE.

Dear Bud Vennos,

The last paragraph of Chris. Mickley's letter, which was published in your Write To Reply, AUI February 1995, has awakened similar feelings in me. Perhaps because I am a similar age to Chris. I cannot quite agree with Chris's "a bit garish" but I think I understand his feelings. For me, your use of Sans Serif bold and italic type are unattractive and irritating to read, as is your use of almost solid columns of text.

Your remark in reply to Chris was that the use of bold type is to emphasise something. Quite so. So use it sparingly!

Your editorial team, along with those of some other magazines of various interests, are so entranced by Sans Serif fonts! But at least these other entranced ones vary the size of their fonts. Amiga Format's letters page is above average in using a seriffed font as are some of its articles but I find their font just a bit too small to read with ease.

Can you coax your team to try out some various fonts on the readership, and at the same time ask for their reactions?

If you have not already done so, how about getting the mag's art department to offer suggestions for making your pages more user-friendly?

Next, will you please cease printing that line or paragraph of flattery of the magazine with which some readers' letters begin? The space released should be used for more readers' letters. (If this flattery boosts the egos of the mag's staff, well and good. Why not pin these letters on the office noticeboard?) I buy AUI out of my hard earned pension to learn all I can about the Amiga computer, not to read readers' blandiloquece. Also, because AUI is the least juvenile of all the current Amiga magazines. Do keep it that way.

Just one more point. I think Write to Reply and AUI Answers should be placed at the front of the magazine, immediately after the Contents pages because our interest in our own enquiries and letters exceeds our interest in the editorial. We can browse through that after having read the letters.

I am,

Yours Truly,

Phil Townsend,
London

write

to reply

c o n t i n u e d

Dear Phil,
I love that suggestion that my pages - or rather your pages - should go up to the front of **AUI** next to the Contents. Though I don't think you go far enough. I think they should be **BEFORE** the Contents. Or even on the cover or what about a special gatefold so that we can stand in lonely - and well-deserved - eminence? Yes, it's time that the readers - and little old me - received our merited place in this world! Thanks for the suggestion. I shall send your letter to the Editor framed so he can hang it on the wall of his office - or somewhere. (He has a collection of oddities that he has stuck up on the wall of his loo. I hope he doesn't put it or use it there!)

As to your ideas about fonts - well, as the bishop said the actress, *chacun a son font...* Eric Gill the great typographer would probably have agreed with you. Did you know that he was a real old goat and tried it on with every girl who came his way, (Perhaps I should rephrase that - every girl he came upon. Hmm, that doesn't sound much better, does it?) including sexually abusing three of his four daughters. Perhaps the fourth shared **my** views on fonts...

And we should cut out the complimentary few words that readers write? Who am I to censor their obviously deeply felt feelings? If they say it, and don't take up too much space, in it goes. I didn't cut out your somewhat self aggrandizing idea of putting your letter right to the front of the magazine or even the rather pompous "I am, " bit of your sign off, did I? Those who with impeccable taste and judgement sing our praises have as much right to their opinion - and our space - as those less elevated beings who scorch us with - rarely justified, of course - snarling gripes.

Dear **AUI**,
I am one of the older AmigaNuts that studies the pages of your magazine with avid interest at every opportunity, I say that as I only get it every two to three months, (poor chap, I hear you say!) as I work in Africa. The reviews on hardware and software have steered me toward certain products on

many occasions, with very satisfying results, making my video setup the envy of many a Wannabe Video freak.

All this makes me very happy, with just one small niggle, which I noticed someone has written about quite recently in your January issue (Yes I jumped into the future by 30 days, or did you just print it early to get some Yuletide off?). This was the letter from Spencer Sabatta, suggesting that Microsoft may be persuaded, by a large Wad, to write a version of Excel for the Amiga; this would be the icing on the cake for so many people, including myself.

It is so frustrating, and sometimes embarrassing, to be caught at work doing my thing on the PC, when just about everyone there has looked at the speed and brilliance of the Amiga and such programs as DPaint, Imagine, Adorage, Broadcast Titler, to name but a few, when the only program I need the PC for is Excel. This is probably the most used program in our business, and there is not a thing on the Amiga that can touch it. I have been tempted to buy a PC for my business use just for that reason, but luckily I came to my senses and out of the coma, and wait for the day when Microsoft see the light and release an Amiga version.

I would certainly be more than happy to donate a tenner to the purpose, if someone somewhere, somehow, could persuade Microsoft to do it. Failing that, with enough support, about 350,000 people should do it, not 35,000 as stated by Mr Sabatta, I will do it myself, as I visit the US of A on business quite regularly, and could fit it in on my next trip. So, come on all you frustrated users, let's get together and get the job done, instead of crying on each others' shoulders.

Yours Faithfully,
Andy Walters
Surrey.

Dear Andy,
More power to your elbow.. It's people like you who make the

world go on turning, especially the Amiga world. You're right, Excel is, as its name suggests, an excellent program. It would do wonders for the Amiga. The problem is that it's difficult to get 350,000 people to combine to do anything - except maybe gamble money on the football pools or the new National Lottery, where they are being offered - though seldom receive - a huge amount for very little. To get the seven million or so Amiga users around the world to cough up a tenner, or even about 5% of them, is not impossible but near to it, I'd guess.

The main reason is that the Amiga was plugged too much in the past as a games machine, virtually a toy. The majority of those who had it for that probably haven't even heard of Excel - and if they had would have had little interest in it, unless it would make their shoot 'em ups run faster.

But don't give up. If the Amiga survives, our Excel-type day will come. A higher spec Amiga making an impact in the world of higher price business-style software will bring the sharp-eyed software entrepreneurs into our market and we might then even see Excel excelled. In the meantime why not drop a line to the ubiquitous Bill Gates of Microsoft - he's even trying to take us journo's jobs by writing a newspaper column - and ask him to get his gates, sorry skates on for an Amiga Excel. And if not, why not?

Dear **AUI**

I am currently a student of advertising design and marketing and I am preparing to finish my course this coming summer. However, before I make my point I should like to thank you, **BUD**, and your magazine for a superb product. It is obvious that you have your readers' interests at heart and you are not afraid to be objective or critical of products or companies which you don't feel cut it.

I don't want to be seen as the winner of this month's Brown Nose Award for ass licking as you are one of only two publishers to whom I have ever taken fingers to keyboard, and I am by no means an easy sale. If a product doesn't come up to scratch I won't even waste brain power thinking about buying.

Your Coverdisks (Capital 'C' for Coverdisks) are out of this world but even without all this wonderful software I would still buy **AUI**.

Now down to business at hand. Due to the unfortunate demise of Commodore I am now in the position of being the proud owner of an A1200 with an extra Cumana drive and a

200mb HD which is (Let's face it, people) about to become a dinosaur of the computer age. I bought this machine on a personal recommendation from a friend of mine, and having previously owned an A500+ and a C64 this was the most obvious step. I would like to make a few comments about this great machine, the Amiga.

1. No product, no matter how good or revolutionary, will sell if people are not aware of it. This holds good for computers to frozen fish fingers.

2. Releasing a relatively revolutionary product into the home market as Commodore did in the mid 1980's is something to sing and dance about in any or all forms of media.

Commodore stuck to Commodore support magazines. Why?

3. Those companies which cannot adapt and overcome are already dead in the water. Commodore died in the late 1980's when it was clear that what they knew about modern marketing techniques could be written in large red marker on a fly's buttocks.

4. If you can't beat them join them is also a marketing term so where is the multitasking PC compatible Amiga? Answer... on the drawing boards (if it ever got that far) in Commodore's offices which are now closing due to management stupidity.

5. If a buyer is found for the now defunct company it will be because someone else can see a market for a well promoted (mass advertised) product, and has the good sense to realise that promotion or lack of it was the only reason for the fall of the company.

6. There is no bloody reason why companies which support the Amiga line could not purchase the company jointly. The market for the products is there. The asking price is pittance. Brand loyalty is excellent. The return from this product could be excellent, not to mention a whole host of support products, which will have to be phased out if the company disappears, will be saved and continue to make profit. This would also be good for the production of an operating system and chip set to be compatible with the owners' own product lines.

I should like to thank all at **AUI** in advance of publication (should you see fit) for this opportunity to air my views and wish you the best of luck for what little future may be left.

Yours Sincerely,
Michael Wright,
Dublin.

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c o n t i n u e d

Dear Michael,
There doesn't seem much for me to say after your incisive summing up. I know that there are plenty of readers who will agree with you.

What I will say is that like the great Irish authors of the past: Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, Yeats and Beckett, you have a brilliant turn of phrase. "Could be written with a large red marker on a fly's buttocks" must be one of the most distinguished expressions ever to appear on the august pages of a computer magazine.

May your ideas always be as sharp, your phrases always as well-turned and your letters always published - in the best magazines, of course.

Dear AUI,
I read recently in Write to Reply (December issue) that someone was looking for add-ons to an A570. The reply stated that these had never been produced.

Here in Germany, many firms advertise those legendary devices, namely 2Mb RAM Expansion and an SCI connector.

I am including the telephone number and address of one of the more major advertisers.

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I hope this helps your readers,

Yours,
Nick Duggleby, RAF Laarbruch.
P.S. RAF Laarbruch Computer club is alive. Amiga PD library ready Feb 1995.

Dear Nick,
Thanks for the information which I'm sure will be useful to many

readers. It just goes to show how insular we are in the UK. If it's not here, it doesn't exist.. Or so we think. If I'm among those who say that sort of thing, I apologise, especially to all those great folk out there in other countries in Europe who have done so much to develop Amiga software and add-ons.

You could opine, as some do, that they have done a damned sight more than the UK which has too often confined its expertise to games. If the good companies such as Almathera, Hi-Soft, Rombo, Optonica and few others were not active, we in the UK would have little to boast of in the Amiga dimension of the computing world.

And if we don't acknowledge the expertise that other countries contribute, we should be ashamed. A bit like that headline in the Times newspaper of old: "Fog in the Channel. Europe Cut Off"

Dear BUD,
AUI is a fabulous magazine with plenty to keep me interested and superb Coverdisks but (there had to be a But) why so many spelling errors? While reading the review of "Pizaz" in the February 95 issue I noticed the following errors: "if thta ultimate description was true" (second paragraph last sentence); "Pizaz can be run straight from the disks or installed to a hard drive on which it ill occupy 4mb of disk space" (Third paragraph last sentence).

And there are numerous other examples dotted throughout the (fab) magazine. Do you not SpellCheck the articles before printing? Final Copy II picked these mistakes out easily.

Now to get to the point. In your October issue you gave an address to send off for a demo of Real 3D. Great, I thought, it even renders, so I got an envelope, stuck on a stamp, put my address on and waited, and waited...Nothing came so I thought it must need a disk, so I again got an envelope, stuck on a stamp, put my address on, popped in a disk, sent it off to

the address given and waited; again nothing happened.

So I phoned Activa UK and a helpful man told me that there was huge demand for that particular demo and told me to wait. So I waited, consoled myself with the next issues of AUI and still no demo. So... I again phoned Activa and was told that they had run out of disks even though I sent them one and so grieved its loss. I then went out and bought the January issue of AUI and what was on the back cover? An advert from Activa which advertises the demo of Real 3D as being FREE. And so I came to the conclusion that the person who told me they had run out was telling a lie.

In contrast to this incident, after reading your preview of "Photogenics", I phoned Almathera and asked if I could have a disk with some example images to see what the program was capable of, they told me to send in some blank disks, which I did, and after 10 days (over the Christmas period) the disks landed through the letterbox (Activa have had nearly five months). I have since put in an order for Photogenics at a local computer shop (as I don't like posting cheques after the hassle with Activa).

So I was wondering, could you send me the demo of Real 3D or get Activa to send it as they already have 2 SAEs and a blank disk belonging to me.

Yours faithfully,

Geoffrey Sproule,
Co. Tyrone.

P.S. I'm sorry if there are any mistakes in this letter; I use a Dodgy TV as a monitor, and I also do not charge \$3.75 for you to read it.

Dear GGoeffrey,
Oh sorry, Gergrey. No, that's not right. Never mind, our spellchecker will catch it. I hoppe.

Oh dear, we were getting better and now it seems all the pizaz is going from our typesetting and typos are becoming the ordure of the day again. Please accept my apologies, someone's limp wrist will be slapped and we'll try hard her.

As for your justified complaint about Activa we are looking into it and will make sure you get your demo disk.

As I said in a previous letter, it's the goodies of the Amiga world like Almathera who make it happen for all of us. May they ever be as helpful and even more successful than they are now. Good service and good products deserve to bring success.

So does good spelllling two!

Send your letters to: Write to Reply

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OPINION

This month the Opinion comes from a reader, John Maragakis who lives in Greece. He wrote, as you will see from his letter, from the heart. We thought his "opinion" represented that of many Amiga users though they may not have expressed their views in print. The Amiga must be a hell of a machine to inspire loyalty like that of John Maragakis. But then we knew that, didn't we?

Dear AUI
These days the problem of Commodore's future is not only a concern to vendors and software-hardware developers, but also a reason for nervous breakdown to the people who care about Amiga and do not want to see a revolutionary machine to fade away.

But, I dare to be in an optimistic mood. Maybe after all, the crisis of Commodore will prove to be a rebirth for the Amiga, as she will either change home, or Commodore will be bought by another big company. It is time that she received the respect and the care that she deserves. Commodore can go to hell (I won't lose my sleep) after all it didn't offer much to Amiga. Third party developers, the love of Amiga enthusiasts and the worth of the machine itself, helped her survive.

You know that building a machine is not enough, it's just the beginning of the project. Every project needs to be supported. It needs to be expanded with reliable hardware and needs new ideas to help it survive through competition.

IBM spends a lot of money to market their crap machines, or to develop them. (Even if Power PC computers are not yet the wonder that everybody expected.) PC's or MAC's are also supported by a lot of quality programs, and to those who know computers well, it's crystal clear that support is more important than the machine itself. You may have a Lamborghini, but if you fill the tank with common spirit it won't go far.

Every time I start thinking the fate of Amiga from day one to the last days, I realise that my human understanding fails to work. I can't swallow that a

"It's crystal clear that support is more important than the machine itself."

computer that thrilled the masses almost a decade before, crushed the domination of PCs and showed to the computer industry how computers should be in the future, is now balancing between life and death. And all thanks to Commodore's award winning

irresponsibility and total apathy for the future of their product.

OK I shouldn't expect from a profiteering company to have the innovative spirit of the people who first built this wonderful computer. I shouldn't expect from those greedy bastards to have an open mind. But at least I expected some respect (I passed from the mystic A500 to A500* and now I proudly own an A1200, this means that I played my part fairly and honestly).

You don't expect me to take Commodore seriously, the first company in the world and history, to bury its own marvellous products. The famous AAA chipset has been under development for 4 years (NASA or Ariane can construct space shuttles in less time) and still nobody knows if it will show up.

"I wouldn't want to use a multi-computer made by people with a lack of fantasy and taste."

All I want to say about the arrival of Power PC Amigas is: if I would ever want to use Windows, I'd buy a PC. I love Amiga's OS. It may appear more simple than the complex Window's look and usability but this is what makes it wonderful. Amiga OS though it has a simpler look, has nothing more or less than what a user would want and it is more flexible and if the standard look doesn't match to someone's taste, he can put backdrops, change the icons, add commands to the menus, put

sound and have the configuration that he likes.

I wouldn't want to use a multi-computer made by people

with a lack of fantasy and taste, a machine that serves more the market needs than the demands of computer users. I don't want a computer that doesn't have the chips, the architecture and shape someone originated. The machine that they had in their minds

can have the personality that they decided on, busting their asses to create it. Multi platform computers are something that

sounds impressive and good but until now I can't find a good reason to buy one.

I do it like every time I look at my desk and recognise the familiar shape of my A1200. I like every time I run its DOS that I tuned, the way I wanted it to look like. I love even its "Guru Meditations" that is maybe the most humorous way for software to fail. I like to play with its speech capabilities (something that rarely has been used in Amiga programs and Commodore rejected just like that from the OS 3.0, instead of developing it).

Last year, a friend of mine who is an administrator of Silicon Graphics computers, took me to the office he's working in, to show me an Indigo machine. After toying with the system, a modelling program and some sound systems (16 bit) he asked me how much impressed I was. To the contrary I impressed him saying that I hadn't seen something that thrilled me.

He was kept asking me "Why?" all the way back home. He couldn't understand that during my life, I got impressed for the first and last time from the one and only computer - Amiga.

In those times, the appearance between Amstrads and C64s, of this computer, made the impression that made the end of cold war between the two dominating forces some years ago, or the recent fall of the wall in Berlin and the joining of Germany. It was like passing from a car to a space shuttle.

The most important step in the chain of any evolution is that from 0 to 1. After this it's far more easy to go from step 1 to 100. To me, computers like Indigo, Power PC machines, Pentium PCs and all the other wonders that will follow, are fairly unexciting. But until now they have all failed to

"The most important step in the chain of any evolution is that from 0 to 1."

match the computer that those remarkable people of Amiga company formed. A computer user-friendly, that people would use it for anything they liked, from work to creativity, or run (Power to the people). Where is the computer that we all saw in the film "Electric Dreams?" This philosophy has been abandoned. Companies saw that people got impressed by machines with cool displays, sound and keeping only this in mind, developed accordingly their machines.

"Computers are tools for our jobs not a powerful toy that we will demonstrate to our friends."

But it's not only power that we must have as scope. We are not slaves of technology. We only use it. Computers are

tools for our jobs not a powerful toy that we will demonstrate to our friends. I don't like this desperate race of companies who try to impress us with flashy and powerful new machines. With only one thought in their minds, to dominate in the market.

The only thing that users can do is to show those "sirs" that we are not so stupid and we won't swallow easily what they will throw at us.

Well, to have choices to make, doesn't only mean that everyone can choose what they like to have, but also means competition, which translates to increasing quality. The Amiga would never have Page stream 3.0 if Softlogik hadn't wanted to beat QuarkXPress, or there wouldn't be a Video Toaster if Newtek hadn't wanted to beat multi-million dedicated graphic workstations. The Amiga above all, doesn't need to emulate other computers.

"I can't find words to thank other companies like GoldDisk that let us down at this critical moment."

So, if Commodore decides to keep the Amiga and continue the game, that's fine, as long as they stop following that shit policy. Amiga has always been from its birth the bridge between workstations and personal (or home if you like) computers. They must preserve this tradition and make it grow but they have to do a hell of a lot of work. At least there are more serious and strong companies that might appreciate Amiga and support her well. I hope the future of Amiga will get better (the Video Toaster, Emplant, Retina, Screamer and programs like Pagestream 3.0 or TV Paint, Bars & Pipes, Brilliance, are great examples of what need Amiga for standing like solid rock to this competitive market). Certainly I'll support Amiga with they a user can. I won't buy illegal software and do some creative stuff with her (I already ordered the new DTP program Pagestream 3.0 and I will buy Brilliance 2). I buy three Amiga magazines a month and I own a couple of excellent PD programs (Epoch Master is one of them). I hope also that companies that promised support will keep their promise (I can't find words to thank other companies like GoldDisk that let us down at this critical moment).

Only time can tell what is going to happen. So relax, sit back and enjoy.

Thank you for your time.

John Maragakis, Greece

NEXT MONTH IN

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INTERNATIONAL

Ten Years of the Amiga!

Absence makes the heart grow fonder? Though none has been manufactured for a year, the machine we all have grown to love, the Amiga, celebrates its decade as the world's most successful home computer. In a special supplement, **AUI** May 1995 charts the highs and lows of the last ten years.

Plus: Test Drives of

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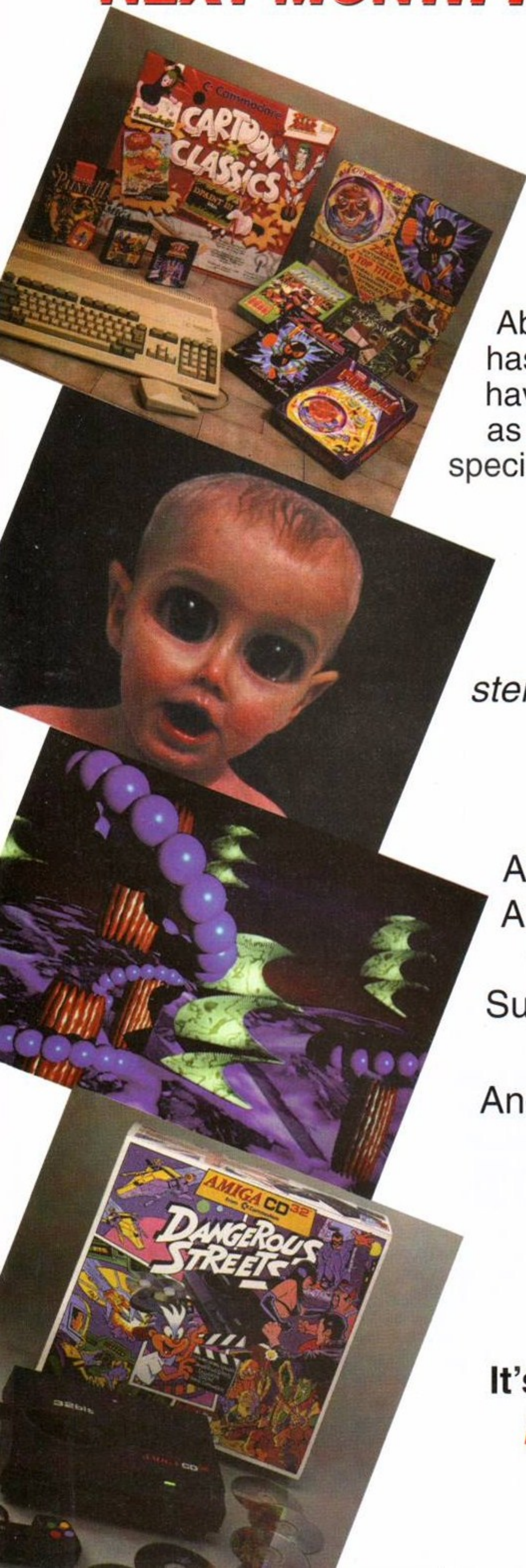
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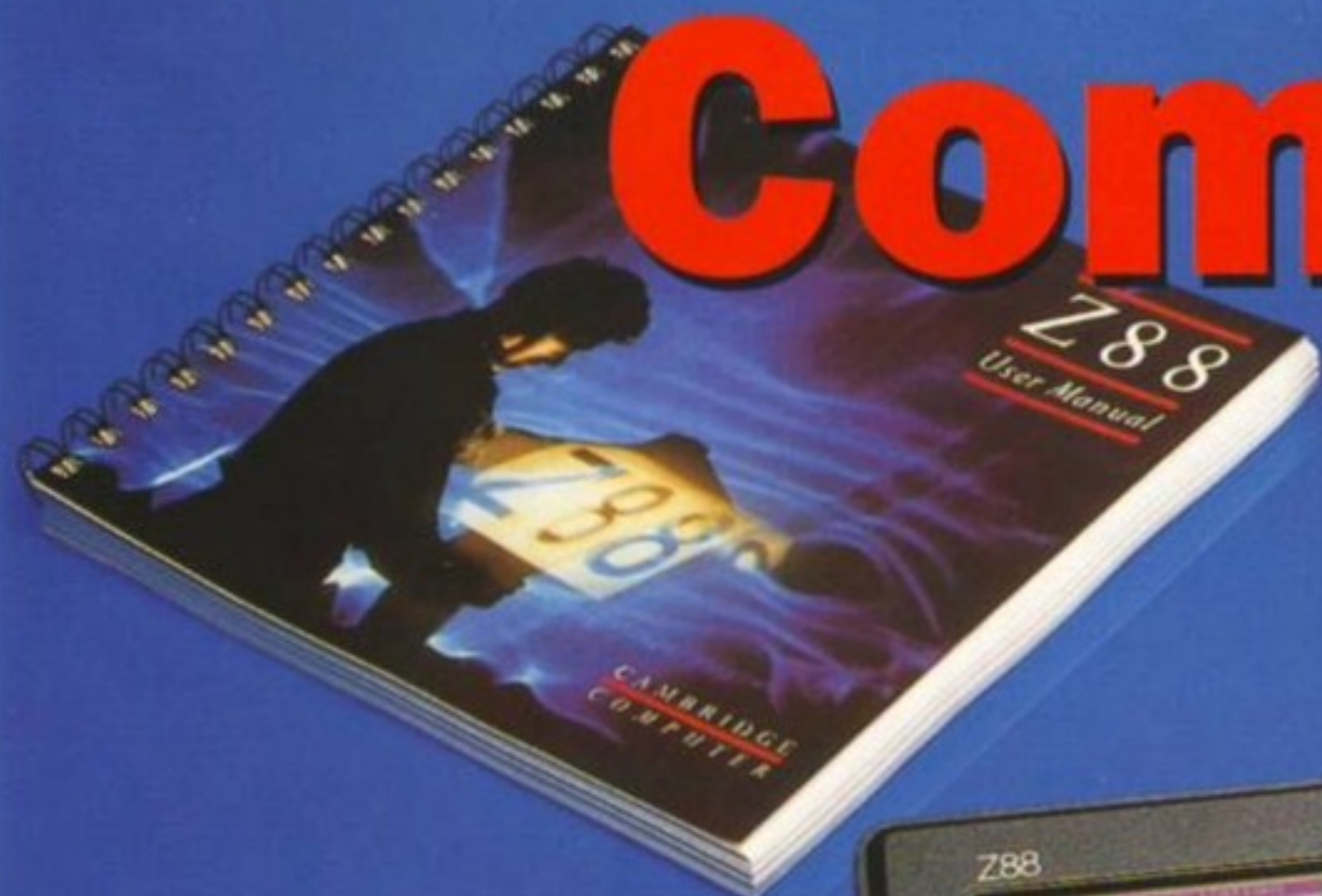
It's on sale the the first Thursday in April.

If you are serious about your Amiga...

Don't miss AUI May 1995!



Win a Portable Computer!



The Cambridge Z88 isn't a new computer but it's an ideal portable for linking up with your Amiga. Even *AUI*'s hard-to-please Editor has one!

Universal Trade have managed to obtain a good stock of Z88s and have combined with *AUI* to provide 5 prizes of these great little portable computers for a special *AUI* competition.

All you have to do is answer the following questions:

1. Whose company originally created the Z88?
2. How much RAM can the Z88 have?
3. What does EPROM mean?
4. What is the wordprocessor of the Z88 called?
5. What were the original big, heavy portable computers called?

(All answers to these questions can be found in the Portability! Special Report)

Five all correct entries will be drawn from the Editor's top hat and each will receive a Z88 computer plus cable to connect it to the Amiga.

Entries on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope to:

**The Z88 Portable Competition
Amiga User International Magazine
203 Eversholt Street
London NW1 1BW**

Entries must reach AUI by May 30th 1995

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