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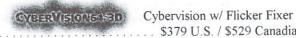
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Mission: To provide an accurate and reliable resource of information pertaining to all things Amiga®, and to connect readers with developers, their products and the Amiga community at large.

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From the Editor's Desk:

It's only been a little over 3 months since Amiga International (AI) was formed, and already people are com-



plaining they aren't doing enough. You see these complaints in email, on Usenet and in mailing lists. Why hasn't Phase5 or PIOS been

signed up? Why isn't there a new OS available? Where are the new machines?

While Amigans are a very dedicated bunch, they are also justifiably impatient. I too have had a long, anguished wait for the Amiga's return, but I've learned to temper my impatients with common sense.

The facts are that things *are* moving. Maybe not as visibly as we would like, but they are indeed moving. AI is following a definite plan, the first part of which is licensing. Evidently, that plan is going well, with 6 Amiga clone makers already announced publicly. Likewise, worldwide distributors are being named weekly.

AI is playing by rules set down by Gateway. Rules that include strict guidelines. Unlike Escom, who announced the world and delivered little, AI will most likely announce nothing until it is well planned and nearly ready to go. Gateway's track record doesn't include vaporware and I don't think it ever will.

Other things are happening that haven't

yet officially been announced. For instance, AI is working with organized Amiga development groups. They are listening to what these groups are saying and will make a statement about this subject soon. There are detailed plans as to what the next Amiga OS will include, and those plans will soon be placed into motion. By who, you ask? None other than the newly selected General Manager of Research and Development. I can't tell you his name at this time, but he is an important figure with Gateway, and will be publicly named in early August. He is currently working to fill key development positions at AI with people very active in the Amiga community.

I could go on, but you will have to wait for the next issue to get all the positive details. The main point of my ramble is this: be patient and give AI a chance. Don't expect a new, all singing and dancing Amiga to appear by Christmas. There is a lot of work to be done. If it is to be done correctly, it will take a little more time.

So, while we wait for the latest details of the Amiga's rebirth, read through this issue. I trust you'll find it full of enough information to keep you occupied while we wait for the next chapter of the Amiga to unfold.

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Fletcher Haug

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The Lively Computer, La Mesa, CA

Turtle Lightning, Midland, TX

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By Brad Webb

ne of the first results of Gateway 2000's acquisition of Amiga almost seems like a paradox. These days, if you want to buy an Amiga, you don't have to buy an Amiga. Instead, you can purchase one of a growing number of Amiga compatible computers. As I write this, I know of six different companies involved in one way or another with Amiga compatibles. Germany's MicroniK, Draco and Eagle, Britain's Intrinsic Computer Systems and Index Information Systems, and China's New Star all are companies that have announced or built Amiga-based systems. The situation can be confusing even to veteran Amiga watchers. As we will see in a moment, not all of these compatibles have the same status in this new age of Amiga, and not all are true "clones."

First, let's examine why these machines exist at all. I recently interviewed Petro Tyschtschenko, Managing Director of Amiga International (AI) on the subject of Amiga compatible computers. In a follow-up note he made some interesting points: "Gateway 2000 would like to see Amiga grow . . . To develop new products takes time, so our strategy is to open the market with broad licensing, to upgrade our OS and to develop new products based on open standards to the home computer and video and graphics market. This strategy will support the existing Amiga community and leverage the existing Amiga technology."

The AI strategy laid out here, and in many other statements by Mr. Tyschtschenko, is clear. The first phase of the Amiga's relaunch involves licensing the technology to help create a bigger market. It's essentially the strategy that helped the IBM compatible succeed, only the Amiga is doing it on a smaller scale. This isn't exactly new territory for Amiga as there have been compatibles being made for some time.

Not all the companies listed above have

a current license to make Amiga compatibles. This is the result of the bankruptcies and ownership changes which have plagued the Amiga since Commodore International expired in April 1994. Currently, only MicroniK and Index hold valid licenses from the newly formed AI. The most recently announced licensing arrangement at the time of writing is Intrinsic's. They've announced an "interim" agreement which doesn't allow the use of the Amiga name. It remains to be seen what the actual status of this compatible will be.

The other three, New Star, Eagle and Draco, all predate the formation of AI. Those licenses are legally terminated by the restructuring of the company. However, talks are underway which should see the renewal of at least some of these licenses.

At the same time, there are other compatibles on the horizon. Innovation Lights of Malaysia is in the process of acquiring a license to build an Amiga 1200 tower configuration. They have also expressed interest in building a desktop Amiga 4000 compatible unit. Negotiations continue with a South African firm which wants to build an A1200 tower model.

The A1200 tower configuration is by far the most popular model for clones, perhaps because it can be sold for less. Of the computers mentioned, only the possible Malaysian 4000, the Index models and the Draco are non-1200 based computers. Of these, the Draco "Vision" can't be considered an Amiga clone. It lacks the Amiga's custom chip set, relying instead on emulation. It is also a fairly slow selling machine and an expensive one intended primarily for high end video editing, leading to some doubt about the renewal of its license.

The Index strategy is unusual in two ways. Unlike the other genuine clones, the Index "Access" will use a circuit board designed by Index itself. The basic plan followed by the others, at least so far, is to base the systems on mother boards from AI. The second difference the Access computer features is in its target market. It is not being aimed at consumers, but rather corporate markets which need multimedia delivery platforms. This is an interesting strategy that offers new venues for the sales of Amigas if it goes well.

On top of this, Index is working on a second Amiga compatible currently called "Inside Out." This somewhat mysterious compatible is billed as "a new generation of high-end Amiga computers," according to published information from Index. While the hardware is finished, it will reportedly be two or three months before the software is complete. The finished product will deliver "exceptional performance and a wide range of high performance, but low cost, expansion options," claims Index. The features list includes compatibility with all standard Workbench applications. Also listed are "RISC processor performance" - note that this doesn't actually say a real RISC processor will be used; accelerated display - 64/128-Bit with optional 3D acceleration, maximum resolutions beyond 1280x1028 providing 24-Bit color; a PCI bus with driver support for most PCI expansion cards; and network support for TCP/IP, NetBIOS, and others. This is an impressive, if occasionally vague, list. We hope this model does see the light of day and isn't restricted to corporate markets.

The other current licensee, MicroniK, shows the way the clone makers in general approach their products. Beginning with a standard A1200 motherboard, a feature laden tower configuration is built up. MicroniK's "Infinitiv" tower is available in three models, allowing different levels of expansion. The top of the line A1500 provide five Zorro II/III slots, one PC-

Petro Shares Philosophy For The Future

By Aaron Ruscetta

• n Saturday, May 31, 1997, in his first public US appearance since becoming the Managing Director of Amiga International (AI), Mr. Petro Tyschtschenko spoke at the monthly meeting of Amiga Atlanta, Inc. Since I was also able to spend a few one-on-one hours discussing Petro's ideas, I felt compelled to share the following synopsis of his visit.

This was the first opportunity Petro had to speak freely (without legal restriction) since Escom declared bankruptcy. It was also his first opportunity to personally address the Amiga community since the Gateway purchase had cleared the courts and his role as the head of AI was confirmed and defined.

I took an instant liking to the gentleman which quickly grew into trust and respect. I spent several hours interviewing him and later conversing more casually over a couple of after dinner beers. The more he shared his ideas and philosophy for the future of the Amiga, the more I liked the thought of this person at the helm. And make no mistake, Petro is definitely in charge. He has been given highly autonomous control in choosing the current and future directions for all Amiga assets and technologies, with the added promise of substantial business and financial support from Gateway 2000.

The Amiga future that Petro plans and describes can be summed up in two words. One word that he used repeatedly in his presentation, interviews and conversations was the word OPEN. The other word that kept coming up whenever Petro elaborated on his vision for implementing his Open Amiga policies was the word SIMPLE. Here follow Petro's ideas on several topics.

Open Amiga Licensing:

"If you have a new platform, application

This logo is a Registered Trademark and will

be used exclusively for licensees of Amiga

International products and technology.

or product that needs all or part of the Amiga's technology, you will be able to license it," says Petro. The only requirement being that if you use Amiga technology in a product, you should acknowledge it on the product. Petro's idea here is for a logo ID or decal for licensed products that say Powered by Amiga.

Simple Amiga Licensing:

A certification process will be put into place to ensure the quality and constancy of Amiga empowered products. He outlined a simple pricing structure for licensing, based on per unit pricing with a fixed schedule of volume discounts. He said there will be no exclusivity agreements with any licensing contracts. He does not believe that exclusive contracts are in the best interests of the Amiga.

MIGA Open Amiga Product Distribution:

Sale of products produced by AI will be opened up to include not only complete systems but component and OS packages as well. For instance, Petro mentioned selling 1200 & 4000 mother

continued on page 6

ISA slot, two PC-PCI slots, an optional video slot, a SCSI-2 controller and a CPU accelerator slot, plus "Snap-and-Click" addition of extra drive bays.

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The Infinitiv A1400 with Bus-Board "Z-2i" comes with five Zorro II slots, an optional video slot, a SCSI-2 controller and the CPU slot. The bottom of the line A1300 seems to contain a standard A1200 mother board. MicroniK is talking about world wide sales, creating hopes of units being available on this side of the Atlantic.

Besides the promotion of Amiga "cloning," AI is pushing to reopen Amiga markets in other ways. Of most interest to Amiga Informer readers might be the efforts for North America. At this point, AI is negotiating with Software Hut for a license to market Amiga OS 3.1. Paxtron has been contracted as a distributor for spare parts. VIScorp, once a leading contender for ownership of the Amiga, is apparently still interested in obtaining parts of the Amiga operating system. These are all small steps in the North American market, but steps forward nonetheless. While most North American Amigans would like more to be done, it's worth remembering that there still are dealers in North America, and they do have computers to sell. Substantial change in this part of the world will only come after new models appear.

In Europe, Computer City was named distributor for Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg on July 15. Stoke Radio and TV has just become the Amiga distributor in New Zealand. In addition, the sale of 1,200 Amigas (that's the number of Amigas, not the model) to the New Zealand Government Railways was just completed. Finally, during the week of July 20, a contingent from Moscow, Russia is scheduled to meet with Mr. Tyschtschenko for negotiations. Combine these initiatives with those in Malaysia, South Africa, England and Germany, and it's clear that efforts are underway over much of the world.

It hasn't been all that long since Gateway 2000 bought the Amiga and

formed Amiga International. During that time, the company has had to build up from essentially nothing, and try to find a focus and strategy for the future. The rash of Amiga "clones" is the first step in a realistic plan to rebuild the Amiga market. Given the fact that development of new models will indeed take some time, it's a shrewd first move. The plan seems to be starting well. We can only hope it continues well and accomplishes its objectives. In the meantime, it will be vital for AI to work on a new generation of computer. The inclusion of an operating system upgrade and the development of new products in the statement of purpose Mr. Tyschtschenko has made is reassuring, as is his enthusiastic and open manner. Of course, good plans require much detail work and careful execution to succeed, so only time will tell how all this will work out. However, if the progress of Amiga International on the compatibles front is any indication, things are looking up.



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Petro Shares con't from page 5

boards to companies interested in packaging them in their own cases. Whatever the Amiga product-Chip sets, OS ROM's or Boards-if it can be priced and packaged it should be available.

Simple Amiga Product Distribution:

Petro's thinking would call for simple per unit pricing tied to a fixed schedule of volume discounts. Petro suggested that the minimum order for complete machines would be as small as one pallet [32 computers]. So, any company, school, group or individual that has the money to buy 32 stock machines at one time should be able to buy directly from AI. There will be no regional or exclusive agreements for Amiga product distribution either.

Open Amiga Development:

Petro promises to expand and open the lines of communication from AI to the entire community. When new products or new directions for the technology are decided, the information will be made immediately available. No unnecessary confidentiality, no rumor mill, no guesswork. While he does not claim a great deal of technical expertise, Petro fully appreciates the unique character, creativity and ingenuity of Amiga's world wide development community. He hopes that his open policies will strengthen the spirit of cooperation and contribution that is needed to get Amiga development growing again.

Simple Amiga Development:

Petro feels strongly that AI should maintain control of Amiga's Operating System development to assure everyone of a consistent, reliable, standardized and expandable Amiga product line. He said that he would also like to see future Amiga hardware incorporate more 'off the shelf' parts and technologies-where there are technically sound standards-to keep prices down and make Amiga manufacturing more flexible.

Beyond dropping one hint that an OS upgrade may already be close at hand, Petro would not address more specific items, speculative issues or time frames. That level of decision making is simply not reasonable or even possible at this time. He asks that we please, be patient! To use Petro's own analogy, "A baby takes 9 months, if you try to rush the process the baby can be badly injured!"

Petro's most immediate concern is assembling the essential leadership team members of AI. The first position on the list and, after Petro, the most influential to Amiga's future is that of Director of Engineering. We did not discuss which other AI positions he would be implementing, but Petro did stress that he wants to keep the core of AI lean and streamlined.

The final and crucial issues that Petro spoke of involved AI's role and relationship with Gateway 2000. On these points he was consistently positive and enthusiastic. He seems thoroughly assured of the backing and support he will need to succeed and he speaks glowingly about most aspects of the Gateway organization. Beyond Gateway's financial support, Petro hopes that Gateway's strength and resources can be employed to persuade major players in the PC industry to support Amiga products and recognize the Amiga's markets. Leveraging Gateway's influence, AI could more easily convince manufacturers to provide the processors, chip sets, drivers, peripherals, and software needed to expand the Amiga's application base.

Petro says he will continue distribution of existing products and repair parts through active suppliers and from the substantial inventory he has assembled. Research and development efforts will continue once a new head of engineering has been selected. The emergence of AI should not cause interference with any product release scheduled by third party

What It All Might Mean By Aaron Ruscetta

Open licensing:

This will allow the Amiga's unique technologies to be applied to any conceivable market: from power workstations to low priced, compact desktops & portables to dedicated video & entertainment boxes and on to a thousand 'smart' appliance applications where WinTel technology is far too bloated, clumsy and unreliable to be useful.

Open distribution:

This policy means that companies supporting Amiga products will also be operating in a fair market, without hinderance from restricted, exclusive or territorial distribution contracts. If any entrepreneur or company sees a market for an Amiga empowered product, they will be able to build that product, pursue that market, and expand the Amiga user base.

These non-exclusive policies should also serve to protect those companies which have been or are currently supplying Amiga products. Their current inventories and established support retain their value. They can continue their Amiga operations without interruption while the potential for future growth and new, diverse Amiga product sources improves.

Open development:

A consistent, standardized Amiga OS will address the innovative, independent and public minded spirit of the Amiga's development community through the free exchange and accessibility of information. An absence of favoritism or stratified support should encourage better developer cooperation and help to consolidate Amiga's already prolific 'freely distributable' market. A uniform target OS will speed the improvement and creation of development tools, reduce compatibility issues, and provide solid ground for OS improvements, extensions or ports.

Petro at the Helm:

Petro is clearly committed to the Open ideal; not just in terms of Amiga technology, but as expressed to me in some rather 'libertarian' views on business as well. Having met the man and spoken with him at length, I could not doubt his sincerity or conviction.

I am equally convinced that Petro has the perseverance and experience to make the Amiga empowered future happen. For more than a decade he was in charge of the world wide production, manufacture and distribution of Commodore and Amiga computer products. He has industry contacts and distribution experience in almost every developed country of the world and has managed manufacturing operations in many of them. He has been in the front line trenches for months at a time, fighting to keep the Amiga holdings intact and alive through two parent company bankruptcies. He

suppliers for the coming months.

Speaking for myself, I do not think that anyone could be sending a more positive message to the Amiga community than the one that Petro delivered here. I have long been a proponent of the 'Open Amiga' philosophy, and believe that it will provide the best and most diverse possible future for both the Amiga's technology and its creative community.

Now I'm off to the optometrist to buy some extra heavy duty shades because, after meeting with Petro, I think our future is looking very bright indeed!

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If you get a 'Please insert volume HELP' requester when you use Multiview (or AmigaGuide), it's because the needed helpfile can't be found. Add the line **"Assign >NIL: HELP: LOCALE:Help DEFER"** to your S:Startup-Sequence to fix this problem.

knows, uses and appreciates the product line he is trying to rebuild. He is an active participant in his own committed community of customers and, above all, he LISTENS to the ideas, opinions and criticisms coming from that community.

To analogize, Gateway 2000 is sponsoring the Amiga racing machine, and they've put a knowledgable, experienced and dedicated Amigan named Petro Tyschtschenko behind the wheel. For the first time in its history, there is someone in the driver seat who truly appreciates the car he's driving, who understands the track it's running on and who can fully empathize with the fans in the bleachers. He will still need a few months to team up with the right mechanics and crew before the season starts, but once that green flag drops, Amiga should quickly be setting the pace and breaking all the records once again!

Distribution In North America

here's been a lot of concern by some North American dealers as to what can be expected from the new owners of the Amiga. With Amiga International being based in Germany, there is uncertainty as to how they might implement their ideas of distribution. Recently, The Informer had a chance to ask Petro Tyschtschenko, Managing Director of Amiga International, a few questions that are on the minds of North American dealers.

Amiga Informer: How does Amiga International intend to promote product in North America and will there be a North American Amiga International distribution office? Will the existing dealer network have to change the way they get product, and how will Amiga product warranties be handled? Petro Tyschtschenko: Amiga International will install in North America potential distributors. For example, Software Hut and Paxtron are already acting in this area.

We require new products which we will develop ourselves or in license. If the turnover and the interest start rising, we will set up a distribution office in North America, too. Presently, all orders concerning our existing product range are shipped from Germany to their destinations. The dealer network can keep their former distributors as well as their sources. All the existing dealers are registered with their addresses and are discoverable on our webpage at www.amiga.de. Guarantee (warranty) service is managed by our logistical center in Braunschweig, Germany by way of exchanging boards or components.

To revive the Amiga market we just started to transform our existing A1200 PAL units to NTSC versions. Unfortunately, there is only one company worldwide which produces NTSC modulators and the delivery periods are quite long. We will try to revive the North America market by making aggressive prices. Therefore, I ask all dealers to support us as soon as we have developed new products.



VRML could be the next huge step in computer reality. What's VRML? Virtual Reality Markup Language. With a fast enough computer, the VRML concept allows a user to connect and download the 3D aspects of a room-texture mapping and all, like Doom-and then allows you to virtually walk around in it. The cool thing is that it will have hypertext buttons within this 3D environment, along with display objects and teleporting doors. You will be able to access this virtual room along with other people and interact with them in a virtual environment. It's the first true step toward author William Gibson's idea of the 'Net' as a Virtual Reality environment. The Amiga may soon have VRML. Vormel is a VRML 2.0 browser for the Amiga that will plug into IBrowse. It will support most of the VRML 1.0 files but will focus mainly on the 2.0 filestructure. Vormel is now in a prebeta stage and still needs a few final touchups before its release, but will support MUI and CyberGFX via CyberGL. Vormel will require Amiga OS 3.0, 2 Mb RAM, CyberGL or MESA, MUI 3.6 and IBrowse. The internal data structures are now being programmed to include Routing, Sensoring and Interpolating which will allow the viewing of animations. The code of Vormel is being written so that JavaScripts can be used in the future providing very interesting behavior in your Virtual Reality objects. Have a look at these sites for related info:

Homepage of Vormel author: www.efd.lth.se/~d94sz

VRML 2.0 Homepage: http://vag.vrml.org/VRML2.0/FINAL Amiga Mesa Homepage: www.efd.lth.se/~d94sz/ames:

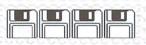
From Finale Development comes a new Usenet newsgroup newsreader. Dubbed New York, the reader boasts a friendly, intuitive interface, a Quick Start Guide, encoding, decoding and hierarchal subscription management. The fastest text parsing routines available are claimed for the product. A limited demo version of New York is available at ftp://ftp.finaledev.com/pub/NewYork/NY201Demo.lha. You will need 2 Mb of RAM, a TCP/IP stack and Amiga OS 3.0 or higher to use New York. The program is distributed in North America by GamaSoft. Get more information at www.mich.com/~twalling/gamasoft/products.html or GamaSoft LLC, 2644 Botsford St., Hamtramck, MI 48212, 313-365-8414. New York is available now for US \$34.95.

Mr. Hardware Computers announced they are looking for a programming partner to help with the further development of SBase4Pro for the Amiga. "SBase4Pro, SBase4 and the SBase4Pro runtime module share extremely complex source code with a multitude of C source code modules," said Joe Rothman, Co-Owner of Mr. Hardware Computers. "The SBase4 family is seriously in need of updating in certain areas, such as networking and better graphics board support." If you are interested in programming with Mr. Hardware, please contact them. They are willing to make the right programmer a very lucrative offer for participating in the further development of the SBase4 family.

In addition, Mr. Hardware is looking for the Programmer of TimeTracker. His name is M. Joel Guerra and his former company is called Inventure. Mr. Guerra's TimeTracker program is a very slick Amiga reminder program. Mr. Hardware would like to contact him regarding further development of TimeTracker. If Mr. Guerra isn't interested in developing TimeTracker any further, they are interested in purchasing the rights from him. If anyone knows how to locate Mr. Guerra, please contact Joe Rothman by email at: hardware@li.net or; Phone/Fax: 516-234-8110.

Aladdin 4D 5.0, perhaps one of the most anticipated upgrades to a consumer 3D package on the Amiga, is now shipping! Nova Design is currently taking orders for this highly anticipated upgrade. The upgrade price, which includes a completely new manual, is only US \$99.95. If you would like to own ImageFX as well, Aladdin 4D owners get an extra bonus and can order and 'crossgrade' to ImageFX 2.6 directly from Nova Design, Inc. for only US \$124.95 when ordering their Aladdin 4D upgrade. Likewise, ImageFX owners can also order Aladdin 4D at the above upgrade price and get Aladdin 4D 5.0 for only \$99.95. This is a limited time offer. Call 1-800-IMAGE-69, or (804) 282-1157, to order Aladdin 4D and ImageFX on this special offer. Nova Design, Inc., 1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 204, Richmond, VA, 23230. For customer support or information call (804) 282-6528, or send a Fax to; (804) 282-3768. URL: www.novadesign.com. Look for a full review of Aladdin 4D 5.0 in a future issue of The Informer.

ClickBOOM is committed to converting PC games to the Amiga and to develop for the future PPC chips. They are showing this commitment by providing gamers with a way to vote for the games they would most like to see ported to the Amiga. Through their "Wish List," clickBOOM hopes to determine the most popular contenders and use that information to evaluate which game licenses they will pursue for conversion. As of July 20, the leading contenders and the number of votes they received are as follows: #1- Monkey Island III, 1303; #2- Quake, 1261; #3- Red Alert, 1123; #4-Diablo, 829; #5- Settlers 2, 784; #6- Tomb raider, 749; #7- Civilization 2, 712; #8- Grand Prix 2; 661, #9- X-wing / Tie-fighter, 627; #10- Warcraft 2, 563; #11- Duke Nukem 3D, 548; #12- Command & Conquer, 501. If you would like to put in your two cents, visit www.clickboom.com to cast your vote.



Once a favorite text editor with Amiga users, new versions of CygnusED have been unavailable for years. Now author Stefan Ossowskis Schatztruhe has announced plans to update the editor, fix bugs and other problems, and release a new version by year's end. Furthermore, they're actively soliciting ideas for improvements and features from all Amiga users. Send your suggestions to schatztruhe@cww.de. Your submissions will entitle you to take part in a lottery for one of ten copies of the revamped editor.



Fusion, a premiere Macintosh emulator, was announced on July 1 by Microcode Solutions. A software emulator, Fusion works with any Amiga with a 68020 or higher processor including: CD32 w/SX1 or SX2, A1200, A1400, A2000, A3000/T, & A4000/T. It provides the ability to mount any Mac device so it's visible from the Amiga, and provides an InterCommunications Port which programmers can use to share compatibility with Amiga Power PC boards as they become available. You will need an Amiga with at least a 68020 processor and 4 Mb of RAM and a set of Macintosh RAM's. Recommended are a 68030 processor and 8 Mb of RAM. For more information, look to http://www.ctaz.com/~msdei on the web. Fusion's introductory price is US \$59.99. Look for a full review of Fusion in a future issue of The Informer.

Controversy Over Clone By Colin Thompson

The latest Amiga clone was announced on July 22 by Lotus Pacific. Their press release stated in part that, "Its direct subsidiary, Regent Electronics Corp., has an agreement with Rightiming Electronics Corp. to acquire certain technology related assets and

rights for \$5 million and 8 million shares of Regent common stock."

"The acquired assets include all Commodore-Amiga's patents, licenses, trademarks, and copyrights to be registered and used in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao and the bordering

countries between China and the former Soviet Union."

In a letter to their shareholders Lotus announced:

"We are pleased to announce that as of June 3, 1997, Regent Electronics Corp., a

wholly owned subsidiary of the Company, completed the acquisition of certain technology related assets and rights which were previously owned by Rightiming Electronics Corp. for an aggregate consideration of US \$5,000,000 (five million US dollars) plus 8,000,000 (eight million) shares of common stock of Regent Electronics Corp."

"The acquired assets include all Commodore-Amiga's patents, licenses, trademarks, and copyrights, and a series of

multimedia electronic products including Wonder TV A-6000, Wonder TV A-6030 and Work Station A-5800. These multimedia electronic products feature an allin-one box system, combining functions of a multimedia personal computer, a facsimile capability, a Karaoke machine, an Internet box, a CD player, a VCD player, and an electronic game machine. The acquisition decision, by the management of the registrant, is to purchase a product similar to Web-TV and market it in China and other Asian countries...." Lotus Pacific, Inc. –James Yao

Patents? How is this possible? As far as I knew, Gateway owned the patents on the Amiga. Intrigued, I sent email to Gateway, asking for clarification. The following morning my phone rang. It was Gateway's Dr. Jim Taylor asking me if I knew anything else about the Rightiming deal. It seems that Gateway was unaware of the Rightiming/Lotus transaction. Dr. Taylor knew that Rightiming had acquired "some" rights last year, and

We dispute their license, their right to sell any license, and we dispute any claims they have made with respect to Amiga patents, copyrights, or trademarks.

-Gateway 2000

promised to look into the matter. I suggested he post a clarification on the Amiga International website.

It appears that Gateway did some research overnight and concluded they, and they alone, owned all the patents and all the licensing rights to the Amiga. The



The A-6000 Wonder TV is to be produced in China for the Asian market. An agreement with Sichuan Changhong, China's largest TV manufacturer, was reached to produce 200,000 units before the end of 1998. Included software is unclear, but a unique web browser is provided. Visit www.lpfc.com for further info.

next day, the following was posted on the Amiga International website:

"As owner of all Amiga, Inc. patent rights worldwide, we at Gateway 2000 want to clarify a recent story on the apparent sale of all Amiga patents, trademarks and copyrights by Rightiming Electronics to Lotus Pacific, Inc. for use in China, Taiwan, Macao and the bordering countries between China and the former Soviet Union. Rightiming purports to hold a license to manufacture Amigas and has apparently attempted to sell this purported license to Lotus Pacific. We dispute their license, their right to sell any license, and we dispute any claims they have made with respect to Amiga patents, copyrights, or trademarks. Gateway 2000 owns all Amiga patents, copyrights and trademarks worldwide and will continue to license Amiga technology to qualified companies."

Jason Compton, editor of Amiga Report, posted a bit of interesting news on the Usenet that muddies the waters even more. According to Compton, Rightiming secured their claim directly from the sale of Commodore, and not from Escom. His post reads as follows:

"It's been well established since the 1995 Commodore auction that

the Amiga rights had been divided into two regions, basically 'China and related markets' and 'the rest of the world.' Escom got 'the rest of the world' while the 'China and related markets' rights went eventually to Rightiming. Gateway acquired 'the rest of the world' rights to the Amiga."

At this point there are more questions than

answers. Will Gateway seek legal action against Rightiming or will they seek to arrange a licensing deal? This could drag on for a while, so check back next issue.

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Rightiming Electronics is based in New Jersey, and they trade in China as NewStar. Rightiming recently entered into an agreement with Regent Electronics Corporation, which is owned by Lotus Pacific, for the sale of certain Rightiming high technology assets. Lotus Pacific is a young New Jesey based company, publicly listed on NASDAQ as LPFC, that has been doing business for about three years. It was formed to exploit emerging business opportunities in China. Apparently, these assets were obtained by Rightiming through a contract with Escom AG, who owned the rights to Amiga before Gateway 2000.

The Informer

Endless Possibilities Over The Internet

By Adrian Pickering

The latest incarnation of the Siamese system from HiQ will now let you control your Amiga from anywhere in the world as though it were sitting on the desk in front of you.

The Siamese system is a revolutionary accessory that allows you to connect your Amiga to an inexpensive PC clone and take advantage of cheap storage media and high quality mice and keyboards. With the release of version 2 RTG in May came the ability to redirect all the display routines across the Serial port to the PC, effectively giving users a high resolution graphics card for Workbench compliant applications.

Amiga owners have long envied the low cost, high performance graphics cards available to PC owners that are faster than a Picasso IV or CyberStorm and a fraction of their cost. Since release 2 of Siamese, Amiga owners with access to a Windows 95 or NT computer have been able to take advantage of these graphics cards, treating the PC as a slave to the Amiga. Although the nature of the Serial port means that sending data-heavy bitmaps can become tedious, general Workbench usage and certain graphical functions, such as basic line drawing, can be accelerated offering an increase in performance over AGA and, to some extent, even CyberGraphX.

Version 2.1, due for release as a free upgrade for registered 2.0 owners at around

the time you read this, adds a remarkable new feature: TCP/IP support. The biggest drawback of Siamese has always been the slow, narrow bandwidth of the Serial port. The clever minds of Steve Jones and Paul Nolan at HiQ, based near Bedford in England, have developed drivers to allow any TCP/IP connection to replace the standard Serial link. The two main benefits of this are: 100 times the bandwidth using Ethernet cards; and, the ability to control your Amiga from a PC over a modem from anywhere in the world.

Approximately coinciding with the launch of the sub \$100 Amiga network card (see Argent Announcement), Siamese 2.1 will give comfortable graphics performance for almost all serious applications. It will also allow users to wave a farewell to awkward SCSI networking.

One of the most exciting developments of TCP/IP support is that an Amiga connected to an intranet or even the Internet, anywhere on the planet, can be used as though it were on the desk in front of you. A notebook PC with a dial-up account could act as the mouse, keyboard, hard disk, CD-ROM and display of your Amiga at home while you sun yourself on holiday!



A couple of Informer exclusives straight from the mouth of HiQ's Steve Jones:

• Paul Nolan, the principle developer behind Siamese (as well as Photogenics) is said to be working together with "other companies" to develop a compatible Open GL engine. Compatible with what? With Cybervision and Picasso formats we hear...

• Steve Jones is planning on developing a showcase Amiga network computer. Currently dubbed the TVNC (television network computer), it will provide an inexpensive way of getting on line, much like a set top box, but as a fully-functioning Amiga. It will also feel at home in an intranet with PC's, Mac's, etc. Watch this space . . .

> Siamese is extremely light on resources, too. An unexpanded A1200 (2 Mb RAM, no hard disk) can boot Siamese RTG and still have enough grunt left to run Cinema 4D.

> These advances to an already respectable product will undoubtedly inspire Amiga owners. Together with the knowledge of continuing R&D at HiQ (Open GL support coming soon plus lots more waiting in the wings...) the Siamese system should be well up the list of desirable purchases for PC owning Amigans.

The Siamese home page can be found at www.siamese.co.uk

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ICOA Appoints Temporary Steering Committee

By Colin Thompson

n the last two months, the Jay Miner Society (JMS) sponsored Industry Council of the Open Amiga (ICOA) has achieved all the phase 2 goals it set for itself. In this short span, it has defined its charter and elected knowledgable, influential Amigans to serve on the Temporary Steering Committee (TSC).

The five member TSC was elected to coordinate the efforts of hundreds of Amiga developers. In turn, the TSC will represent these developers to Gateway. The goal is to provide a co-operative forum for the advancement of the Amiga and to develop a portable, non-hardware specific Amiga Operating System that will run on several platforms, including the Macintosh, x86, and many more.

The TSC officers were elected in July by

the participants of the ICOA mail list. The five members are: Alain Penders from Finale Development; Andy Finkel from Pios; Dean Brown, president of DKB; Fleecy Moss, of the Jay Miner Society; and Jesse McClusky of Alternative Concepts Inc.

The TSC officers were elected to six month terms. During their term in office, they are expected to establish the basic framework that allows the developers to set standards in their area of expertise. In addition, they will refine their mission statement and finally turn over the reigns to the permanent Steering Committee.

The first task of the TSC was to contact Gateway and open a dialog, and this was immediately accomplished. Gateway was quite receptive to the TSC's offer of assistance. Both Gateway and the TSC look forward to working together to bring a modern, unified Amiga to market.

When contacted for comment, Fleecy Moss had this to say: "As soon as is possible, the Industry Council of the Open Amiga will be a real entity. It will open its doors and begin to grow, forming working groups, setting strategies and providing a new impetus to our platform in partnership with Gateway 2000. The status at the moment is that the TSC is working hard to move forwards with the living document [charter] and we will be issuing press releases as soon as we have something more to say."

Look to future issues of The Informer for complete coverage of the ICOA and their work. For more info visit www.jms.org.

Aurora Entertains With High-End Gameplay

By Ted Wallingford

ames Ceraldi, the CEO of Canadian game maker Aurora Works, has taken his company to the forefront of North American Amiga game development by creating Amiga entertainment products that are advanced in both gameplay and technology. Assisted by programmers James Harrison and Tim Konkel, Ceraldi says that his company's main purpose is to address the gaming needs of high-end Amiga owners.

The high-end, in this context, means an Amiga with at least an 030 processor running at 50 MHz or faster. It also means AHI, the new open standard for retargetable audio, and CyberGFX, the longtime standard of driving many different types of video cards from the same application. This combination of support makes for some very advanced gaming possibilities, namely high-speed 3-D graphics and 16-Bit sound.

The first game released by Aurora Works will be Hover Bomber, or H-bomb for short. This action game employs a 65,000 color top-down display of the game surface in a much-enhanced Combat-style multi player battle field. Up to four players, either across the Internet. by null-modem, or on the same Amiga, can play at the same time, racing little hover-tanks around and avoiding obstructions, all while shooting bombs at each other and picking up weaponry powerups. The game offers incredibly addictive, party-style gameplay and a riddling soundtrack. While a good soundtrack and fun gameplay can be achieved on a stock Amiga with a low-end processor, Hover

Bomber won't run unless your Amiga is equipped with high-end goodies, like an 030 processor and CyberGFX.

Why not? One of the most obvious reasons was explained by programmer James Harrison. "The game engine gives you 150 moving objects in 16-Bit color on the screen at the same time," a feat which isn't possible using standard Amiga program-ming methods. "Besides," continues Harrison, "standard Amiga games use hardware blitter, which is slow." This prohibits the user from multitasking.

nology that made showcase games like Shadow of the Beast possible in 1989 is also what limits the advance of Amiga games today. Aurora Works is finding solutions to these problems through CyberGFX, and topping their games off with Lightwave-rendered 3-D animation, 16-Bit soundtracks, and a multitasking environment to boot.

Hover Bomber isn't completely newwave, however. Recognizing the long, special history of the Amiga, Aurora Works has enlisted the help of famous Amiga cartoonist Eric Schwartz to design the characters, in this case, Hover Tanks. "Each one has its own characteristics. If a player shoots a fatal shot, his tank character may say a particular thing that indicates that character's personality," Ceraldi explains.

In addition to Hover Bomber, Aurora Works plans to release a network-ready, AGA-compatible strategy game by Christmas. About the same time, James Ceraldi hopes to have released a longterm Civilization-type game called Star Barons, based on a science fiction story original to Aurora Works. All of these games will ship on CD-ROM, complete with a plethora of rendered animations and aural goodies. The gameplay mechanisms are so original, Ceraldi claims, that they have already begun seeking a patent for them.

Upward growth is important for an Amiga that is trying to remain competitive, so dropping support for the low end may no longer be viewed as a bad move. From the standpoint of Aurora Works, it makes perfect sense. James Ceraldi sums it up by saying, "We have a vision, and if the Amiga doesn't stay around, our vision is sunk. But at least we're having fun!"



The crew of Aurora Works show off their high-end games at the open house hosted by National Amiga. Pictured are James Ceraldi (r), Jim Konkel (c) and James Harrison (I).

So the blitter tech-

National Amiga Hosts Open House By Ted Wallingford

Ational Amiga, an Amiga computer store in London, Ontario, hosted an Open House on June 21, 1997. Amigans from all over Ontario and as far away as Detroit, Michigan were in attendance, as was Canadian Amiga developer, Aurora Works. During this Open House, attendees were invited to tour the store, try out the latest products, and attend several seminars.

The seminars, conducted by store staff, covered several topics including the Video Toaster, the Flyer, and the use of Internet software with the Amiga. The highlight of the Internet seminar was a head-to-head comparison of YAM (Yet Another Mailer) and Voodoo, two excellent Internet email packages for the Amiga. Greg Scott, one of the managers of National Amiga, conducted the Internet seminar, assisted by a projection unit which illuminated the wall with an 060-powered Workbench display. Greg also discussed the Aweb and Ibrowse web browsers, as well as Finale Development's New York newsreader.

During the video seminar, professional Video Toaster and Lightwave techniques were exhibited. Such techniques included the use of Lightwave to pan around still images, a technique useful for making photographs more interesting on the TV screen. Also discussed was Newtek's Flyer non-linear editing system.

National Amiga operates an Amiga-hosted web site, which visitors to the Open House could actually be "a part of", thanks to the "Web-cam," a camera mounted in the store which displays current snapshots on the web site. On display and in use throughout the store were the Picasso IV and CyberVision 64/3D graphics cards, which provided some really great-looking Amiga Workbench displays.

Visit National Amiga at www.natonalamiga.com

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The descriptions and opinions stated in this column are not necessarily those of The Informer. We are not responsible for the validity of these announcements.

AEMail v1.21

From: John F. Zacharias Email: jzachars@calweb.com

URL: http://www.calweb.com/~jzachar

AEMail is a mail client designed to read, process, compose and send email over the Internet. The POP3 and SMTP protocols are built into the program and no other external programs or modules are required. It provides an easy to use graphical interface designed specifically for the Amiga and connects to an internet sever through any TCP/IP stack (AmiTCP, Miami, or Termite TCP). AEMail supports MIME and UUENCODED attachments and can be used as a "MailTo" agent in WWW browsers. AEMail is shareware. Certain features are crippled until the US \$30 registration fee is paid. The latest version of AEMail, including a readme file that lists the latest enhancements, can be obtained from the the AEMail web site. NOTE: Special to Informer Subscribers: The shareware fee is reduced to \$24 for Informer subscribers through September 30, 1997. Be sure and include your name and address as it appears on your Informer subscription and write "Informer Subscriber" on the registration form.

Argent Ethernet Card

From: Digital Lightyear Technologies The Argent Ethernet network interface card is a Zorro-II Auto-configuring adapter that will allow your A2000, A3000, or A4000 computer to be easily connected to any Ethernet network. Transfer speeds are claimed to be a fast 10 Megabits/sec. Features of the Argent card will be: Zorro-II AutoConfiguring; 100% Ethernet 10-2/10-T compatibility; easy Internet connectivity; and included easy connection utilities. The Argent Ethernet Card has a manufacturer's suggested retail price of only US \$99.99 per unit. Advance orders are currently being taken. Contact Digital Lightyear Technologies for dealer information or direct sales information at: 1517 105th Ave. Ct. E., Edgewood, Washington, 98372. Phone: 206-927-3817

Geek Gadgets 2 & Amy Resources CD

From: Cronus

Email: info@ninemoons.com URL: www.ninemoons.com

Cronus and Fred Fish are pleased to announce the release of Geek Gadgets Vol. 2. This CD-ROM contains the Amiga Developers' Environment (ADE), a project organized by Cronus to produce and support Amiga ports of dozens of the most popular development tools and utilities from the Free Software Foundation, BSD and other sources. The CD contains all the tools you need to get started programming on the Amiga, including: advanced C; C++; Fortran and ADA compilers; assembler; linker; EMACs editor; source code control systems; text and file utilities; GNU debugger; text formatters; and more. Geek Gadgets also includes a developer version of P-OS from ProDAD Software. The MSRP is US \$24.95. Likewise, Cronus and Fred Fish are pleased to announce that they are the exclusive US importers of the Amy Resources-US Edition, Vol.1 CD-ROM. This is a comprehensive collection of software that includes top quality shareware, selected collections of graphics, demos, mods and a complete suite of registered packages that are installed and ready to run. It features full registered versions of Amiga E3.21, ProgED2.4, ImageStudio2.3, plus many more! The SRP is US \$24.95 These products are available through Cronus, 2176 McCulloch Blvd., Ste 8A, Lake Havasu City, AZ, 86403. Voice: (520) 680-6300; FAX: (520) 680-6477.

PageStream 3.3

From: SoftLogik Email: support@softlogik.com URL: www.softlogik.com The premier Amiga desktop publishing package just got better with the latest release of version 3.3. Some of the new features found in PGS 3.3 are: new Flyout tools including rotation, column layout, and scallop; bevel and insert box tool; pie tool; star, wavy, scallop and puffy polygon tools; point-n-click bullet characters; RTF import and export module; improved Illustrator import and export modules; user-placed and scalable graphics; auto switch paper orientation; non-Postscript printing options like print process & spot color seps, cropmarks, mirror, negative, and thumbnails; improved halftone, ordered and Floyd Steinberg dither options; automatic font substitution for cross-computer documents use; easy document restructuring; improved color palette; improved printer drivers for HP and IBM printers; improved on-line help; black & white or grayscale colorizing; drag duplicating; cycle object selection; and more.

Registered owners of PGS 3.2 can upgrade for US \$50 and v3.0 / 3.1 owners for US \$85. This upgrade also includes a completely updated and rewritten manual that encompasses all the major changes since the initial PGS 3 release. Manuals are also being sold to registered customers on a one per customer basis. Call 1-800-829-8608 to order. Softlogik, 1732-A Westpark Center Drive, Fenton, MO, 63026.

Voice: 314-304-7878; Fax: 314-305-7874

Picture Manager Pro v4

From: Jürgen Schäfer

Email: sales@blittersoft.com

URL: http://blittersoft.wildnet.co.uk/ pmpro.htm

Picture Manager Professional v4 (PMPro) is a commercial image categorization program with a large number of features for the creation and handling of thumbnail tables. It is designed as a universal graphics tool for administration, processing, scanning, printing and coveting bitmapped graphics and IFF animations. The user gains an overview



of all graphics files on hard disks, CD-ROM's, etc., and can access these by mouse clicks. These files may be exported directly into other programs and an automatic conversion function allows conversions between many file formats. The user can also scan through LHA and LZX achieved images. Requirements are an Amiga or Draco with OS 2.1+, hard drive and 3 Mb Fast RAM. The English version of PMPro can be obtained by your local dealer or from Blittersoft in England. Call: 44 (0)1908-261466 or Fax: 44 (0)1908-261488

ProClient Series

From: Oregon Research Email: support@orres.com URL: www.orres.com

Oregon Research released their Professional Client Series of internet client software. These are professional versions of the internet clients supplied with TermiteTCP. Some of the programs included with the ProClient Series are Termite Mail PRO, which provides multiple mail box support, automatic email posting and retreival, flexible addressbook, macros, and drag & drop mailing; Termite News PRO allows you to retreive, read, post, and archive news articles, and offers complete Newsgroup list maintenance, and a unique Newsgroup monitor mode; Termite FTP PRO uses the complete FTP command set. dual directory view, and drag and drop file transfers; and, Termite Telnet PRO gives you features like editable review buffers, programmable keyboard macros, and zmodem file transfers. All Pro clients work perfectly with Termite TCP, AmiTCP, and Miami. They are available seperately or together as part of the ProClient Series Pack, which includes additional bonus clients. The ProClient Pack is available now from Oregon Research, 16200 S.W. Pacific Hwy., Suite 162, Tifard, OR 97224.

Voice: 503-620-4919; Fax: 503-624 2940

Siamese Supports TCP/IP & Goes Alpha

From: HiQ

URL: www.siamese.co.uk

The Siamese System (which integrates a Windows95/NT PC with any Amiga with an 020 and Amiga OS 3.x) now supports

the TCP/IP protocol for transferring all file data, Screen Retargeting and other Siamese Systems. An Ethernet link will allow any Win95/NT system to run the Siamese System software from an Amiga as long as they are both linked by Ethernet and have TCP/IP stacks available to them. So far, tests have shown file transfer rates of over 500 Kb/sec on budget type Ethernet cards. Video Toaster/Flyer users will soon be able to control their Amiga video system from any Win95/NT system and, for example, will be able to transfer data to and from an Alpha LightWave system. Now the Siamese System supports Alpha based WindowsNT workstations. In conjunction with Digitals FX32 translation system, version 2 of the software runs transparently and at high speed. High end Alpha 21164A CPU's are reaching 600 MHz, and have competetive prices, making Alphas the perfect machines to Siamese with your Amiga. The rendering speed of the Alpha in conjunction with the video capabilities of the Amiga/Toaster/Flyer are unmatched. See article on page10 for more details.

Video Escort v2.5 Promo & Retail Escort v4.1Demo

From: Mr. Hardware Computers Email: hardware@li.net URL: www.li.net/~hardware Mr. Hardware Computers is having a promotional sale on their Video Escort business management program for videographers. Video Escort provides: accounts receivable: tons of business reports; customer memos; easy contracts; appointment tracking; mailing list importing; videotape and mailing label printing; directions database; videotape, music, and graphics Libraries; job price quotes; unlimited customizable packages and option sets; and more. Until August 31, 1997, the price for Video Escort is US \$100. This price includes a registered copy of SBase4Pro-RT at no charge. In addition, when you register The Video Escort and SBase4Pro-RT you are entitled to participate in all future upgrade offers for both SBase4Pro and Video Escort. The Video Escort v2.5 demo is available for download at www.li.net/~hardware or from Aminet under the name biz/dbase/ve25demo.lha.

Mr. Hardware also released the demo version Retail Escort v 4.1, their Amiga Point of Sale software. This complete business management system helps you run your business with: accounts receivable; accounts payable; tons of business reports; checking accounts; credit cards; customer notes; easy invoicing; inventory control; order tracking; price quotes; purchase orders; mailing lists; label printing; plus a whole lot more. The Retail Escort v4.1 demo is available for download on Aminet under the name RE41DEMO.lha. Search for Retail to locate it. Mr. Hardware Computers, 59 Storey Ave., Central Islip, NY, 11722-2332. Voice or Fax: 516-234-8110.

And More ...

Here's a short list of some of the many programs that have recently been released or that are very near release:

Aminet Set 5 - Aminet archives CD Big Red Adventure - adventure game Burn It - CD writing software Catweasel - HD floppy driver hardware Casablanca - video editing device Castle Kingdoms - action puzzler game CheckHTML v1.3 - HTML compliance software Cocktel - video conferencing software Cosmic Battles - space battle game Delfina Lite - DSP audio card Evetech IDE Doubler - buffered IDE splitter Gemini- Amiga/PC transfer software Hexagon II - play by email wargame Insert 104 - PC keyboard adaptor MasterISO v3.8 - CD file system update MCCInstall v43.19 - MUI installer script MicroDot 2 - newsreader/email client NetConnect - CD suite of internet software Network PC - Amiga/PC transfer software Picasso IV - 24-Bit graphics card P-OS - New Amiga-like OS PortPlus - A1200 serial/parallel expansion ShapeShifter v3.8 - Mac emulation Trapped - Doom-style RPG game UltraAccounts 4.1 - home accounts software VideoTurtle - RGB to S-Video converter Wendetta - shoot-em-up game Whippet - buffered high speed serial expansion

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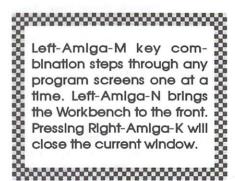


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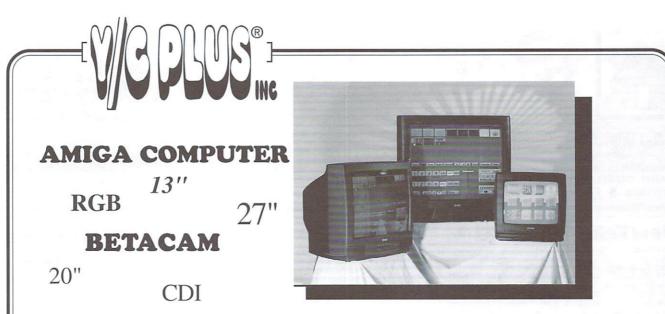


AmiCON - The second annual Amiga Central Ohio Network's Midwest Amiga Exposition will be held again this year in Columbus, Ohio. This two day event will take place at the **Concourse Hotel at Port Columbus** Airport, in Columbus, Ohio. The dates for the event are November 1 & 2, 1997. The show floor will be open from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM Saturday and Sunday. Tickets will be \$15 the day of the event and \$12 in advance and are good for both days of the event. Table rentals for User Groups are US \$75 for the first table and US \$50 for each additional table. Table rentals include 3 admission tickets. Hotel phone number is: 614-237-2515 or 800-541-4574. For more information, write AmiCON, Attn: Midwest Amiga Expo, P.O. Box 18311, Columbus, Ohio 43218. Email: Greg Finzer at rom310@infinet.com; URL: http://www.amicon.org/mae.html

Note to Subscribers: If you have a new email address (or have just joined the Internet), or if your mailing address has changed, please let us know. Contact info on page 3.



Issue 9



Y/C Plus has teamed with the Professional division of Philips to offer a new line of color monitors with low cost solutions for basic Amiga computer and other video needs. All of the new monitors have the following inputs in common: *RGB*, *Y/C* (*S-Video*), *Composite*, *Audio and 181 Channel Cable TV inputs*. The monitors have a host of different cables to interface directly to either Amiga Computers, CDI players, Quad Splitters or any RGB (15.75 kHz) signal.

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The "**R**" series of monitors includes RGB input and a 6 foot cable with (4) BNC connectors is included.

The "**B**" series of monitors include the BetaCam video signal along with the RGB input. The monitors are supplied with a 6 foot cable. Please note the monitors require sync input, which can be reference video or composite video can be used for sync if reference video is not available.

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KB Software started serving the Amiga community when the Amiga was first introduced in 1985. The company originally started by doing contract programming and consulting work for the Radio Shack TRS-80 and Sanvo series MS-DOS clone computers. Some of DKB's first products for the Amiga (now discontinued) were the Insider Memory expansion, the KwikStart and the MultiStart. Since then the DKB product line has expanded to 7 different products with some having several variations. Over their 12 years in business, DKB, led by president Dean Brown, has become well know as the makers of rock solid hardware, and earned a reputation for quality products and service.

DKB products are sold through both mail order and local dealers. All products come with complete and well presented documentation and are designed to install and operate with minimum difficulty.

The currently available product line of DKB is as follows:

MegAChip: The MegAChip replaces the Agnus chip in an A2000 or A500 and provides a total of 2 Mb of Chip RAM. There are two versions, one for PAL and one for NTSC.

SpitFire: The SpitFire is a Zorro II SCSI II controller for the A2000, A3000 and A4000. It is a low cost board particularly well suited for adding CD-ROM drives to the A4000.

RapidFire: The RapidFire is essentially a SpitFire with the addition of the ability to add up to 8 Mb of Fast RAM. Available memory configurations are 4 Mb, 6 Mb and 8 Mb.

There is also room on the board to add a hard drive in 'hardcard' the style.

Cobra: Accelerator boards for the A1200 that add a

68030 processor, up to 128 Mb of DRAM in a single 72 pin SIMM, a clock/calendar, and a socket for a

FPU clocked at speeds up to 40 Mhz. There are two available CPU options for the Cobra, a full 33 Mhz 68030 and a 40 Mhz 68EC030 (the EC version does not have a MMU).

Ferret: The Ferret is the SCSI II controller for the Cobra series accelerators. It supports full autobooting and installs without requiring the disassembly of the computer. The SCSI port is a DB25 connector that extends out the provided knockout hole on the A1200.

1202: The 1202 is a combination 2 SIMM 8



ShadowWorks Software was launched in June 1997 to provide shareware software packages to the Amiga community. Their goal is to provide commercial quality software, support, and documentation in affordable shareware applications distributed on the Internet. The company has released its first product, BarNone. It is billed as a new type of system controller software for your Amiga. It can be used to control a variety of system functions. It is extremely configurable, and may be used as a program launcher, a graphical public screen utility, a CPU monitor, and much more. The ShadowWorks website lists other planned projects and provides a means for concerned visitors to express their thoughts about current products and future direction. Give them a visit. ShadowWorks Software, 405 Pulsar St., Fort Collins, CO, 80525. Email: srk@frii.com; URL: www.frii.com/~srk/ShadowWorks/.

Mb memory expansion, clock/calendar and an optional FPU at up to 40 Mhz for the A1200. The memory can be configured in several different ways and also includes software that allows the PCMCIA socket to be used in certain configurations.

WildFire: The WildFire is a 50 Mhz 68060 accelerator for the A2000 that also includes a 64-bit wide memory interface that supports up

to 128 Mb of DRAM in 4 standard 72 pin SIMM sockets. Also included is a PCI style interface that sup-



ports the on-board SCSI II Fast controller and the 10base-T ethernet communications port. Both the SCSI and ethernet are DMA driven

for maximum transfer rates. There are also two expansion slots on the WildFire that provide access to the PCI interface for future add-ons.

DKB's usual policy is to not announce products until shortly before release. However, the next product to be released by DKB will be the Inferno video card for the WildFire accelerator. This will be a 4 Mb video card based on the Cirrus Logic 5446 graphics controller. It will attach to the WildFire via the PCI expansion slots. The Inferno includes a built in monitor switch to support a single monitor solution. Planned upgrades to the inferno include a deinterlacer and a video capture card. The board is currently running and device drivers for CGX 3 are already written. September 1997 is the planned delivery date for the Inferno. Other products are in the works, but there is no available information at this time.

Tech support is by phone or fax. A new web site will soon be created for DKB which will provide comprehensive online support including email tech support. The limited warranty on all hardware is for one year. What DKB doesn't warranty is obvious user damage to the products, so be careful or have your dealer do your hardware upgrade. In most cases, DKB will honor owner transferal registrations. DKB Software Inc., PO Box 930433, Wixom, MI, 48390-0433.

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Norkbench

By Brad Webb

ost Amigans are aware they can customize how their machine boots by using the WBStartup drawer of the Workbench, or the User-startup file in S:. But what do you do if you want to boot your system without some or all the programs you ordinarily start at boot time? What if you want to change those programs often? As it turns out, there's a way to accomplish all this, and more.

The program that works this magic is called WBStartup+. Its purpose is to give you much more control over the WBStartup drawer and its contents. It does this by creating two subdirectories in WBStartup, one for "enabled" programs and one for "disabled" ones. It then installs itself at the WBStartup directory level and directs operations from there. You tell WBStartup+ what you want by using the Startup+Prefs program. When you click on its icon, it opens a small window with a list of all the programs in both the disabled and enabled directories. You select which programs you want to actually use by clicking on a small gadget next to the program's name, then click on Save. At that point, programs with a check mark are moved into the execute directory. Those without a check mark are moved in the disabled directory. The next time you boot, WBStartup+ will be activated by the Amiga's WBStartup routines and will run only the programs in the enabled directory. Like most good ideas, it's simple and quite effective. Once the Workbench screen comes up. WBStartup+ begins its work. It opens a small window in which it displays the name of each program launched, as well as showing its icon. It also presents you with a "gas gauge" display that shows the percentage of completion for launching all programs in the active directory.

Like the auto salesman says, "But wait, there's more!" The listview in Prefs has a priority setting for each program. By using this setting, you can select a startup priority for each program. This allows you to determine the order in which programs will be executed during startup. If you have any commodities that you must run before others, this feature is a lifesaver. One weak point is that the priorities must be adjusted with a slider gadget. There is no way to type in the priority number you desire.

Besides the listview window, there are pulldown menus associated with the Preferences program. Some interesting features are located there. One is the Icon Window selection in the Edit menu. This

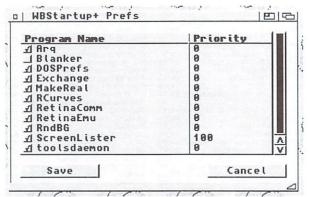
brings up the standard icon information window for the program currently selected in the listview window. This means you can set tooltypes and protection bits, as well as adding comments, without hunting up the actual icon.

If you have several programs you always enable or disable together, you can form them into a group. You can then enable them in the future by using the Select/Group menu item. There is no way to directly deselect all the members of a group, but you

can first select the group, then use Select/Toggle. The method of creating a group is a bit crude, but it works. You first select only the programs you want in the group and deselect all others, using the listview in the Preferences window. From the pulldown menus, choose Edit/Create Group. A requester pops up into which you can type a name. Click on Save (Preferences window) after assigning a name and your new group is preserved. Note that when you use Save to preserve your group, you will also adjust which programs are enabled and which are disabled, so be sure to readjust the status of individual programs before rebooting if you don't want to use the new group right away.

One other feature deserves special mention. If you find yourself trying to boot with a program that causes you problems, or if you need to boot without running WBStartup for some other reason, all you need do is hold down the left shift key when booting. WBStartup+ will disable all programs set to start at boot time, allowing you to gain access to your computer so you can fix whatever went wrong.

Finally, it's very easy to add programs to your WBStartup set using WBStartup+. All you need do is drag the icon for the program to be started onto the preferences window. A small requester will open with several options. You can chose whether the program to be started is placed in the enabled or disabled directory, and whether to make a



The WBStartup+ Prefs priority settings allow you to determine the order in which programs are launched.

copy of the program or to move it there from its present location.

WBStartup+ was tested on an A3000 with 14Mb of RAM and Amiga OS 3.1. It requires Amiga OS 2.0 for WBStartup+ and AmigaOS 3.0 for the preferences program. It should run regardless of memory or disk size. It's available on Aminet in util/boot/WBStartupPlus.lha. It installs with the standard Amiga install program. Installation provides the only major "glitch." If you select to have an installation logfile, it will be written to your WBStartup directory. Move it from there unless you want it typed to the screen every time you boot your computer.

The current version as I write is 2.8. Unfortunately, this is the last update to this excellent program unless someone else picks it up. Source code is included in the archive – any takers?



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Can We Talk? By Davis Sprague

K, you're on the Internet at 2 am and suddenly your server starts acting funny. Being an Internet aficionado-having read The Informer for some time-you pop up your finger utility and finger your server. Three accounts show up as active, yours, your sysop's and Joe Hacker telneting in from some anonymous site. You want to get your sysop's attention, but you know it'll take minutes to get him by email. Don't you wish you could just yell over to him, "Can we talk?"

Well, "we can" is the answer. Talk is one of the few Internet protocols that we haven't yet discussed in this forum. It allows real-time terminal to terminal communication for short typeable messages. In the standard UNIX version of Talk, a talk request is first sent and displayed on the recipient's terminal. If he agrees to talk with you, a window is created for what he types, and what you type, on both computers. Then you can carry on a real-time conversation. When either participant ends the session by canceling the talk program, both participants exit the program.

This is great for short, urgent, interaction with someone else on the Internet. It doesn't have the hassles of finding an IRC server to connect to for real-time interaction. It alerts the recipient when you need them, providing that they are on-line. It speeds communication because the reply often gets started scrolling across your screen before you complete asking your question.

Unfortunately, until lately, talk has been minimally available on the Amiga. It was the last of the available protocols to be ported from UNIX. Although there was a talk program as well as a talk daemon (a program that waits for someone to ask you for a talk session and announces it when it happens) available for AmiTCP, it used the CLI as a window, and required a fairly in depth knowledge of the Amiga OS to make it run. The first attempts at Amiga talk programs also went astray from the Internet standard into special protocols like YTalk, that allowed Amigas to converse, but wouldn't connect with any other type of computer on the Internet.

Finally, to complete the Amiga's assembly of Internet software, Vaporware has created AmTalk. This MUI based program creates an Internet standard, UNIX compliant talk window on your Amiga, so you can send those important urgent 2 am messages to your sysop, or anybody else with talk protocol software. Oh, and by the way, talking to the sysop on non-urgent matters is fairly poor form,

and might obligate you to buy him a pizza. In any case, that's what the Talk is all about.



Help

Sysop! Can We

Talk?

Zip-ity Do LhA By Davis Sprague

ompression is an interesting concept in information theory. It has to do with removing redundance from communication. For example, if I type "I lov u", you know that I mean "I love you.", but I've shortened the message by more than one third of the characters. Since the message could be reconstructed into the original exactly, this would be considered lossless compression. By comparison, "lossy" compression is used to produce something that approximates the original to a lesser or greater degree depending on the amount of compression.

The prime example of "lossy" compression is the standard JPEG protocol which is used for photographic type images, and compresses them up to one tenth the size of the original, often with little degradation of the image on decompression. In "lossy" compression, the degree to which the decompressed image bares likeness to the original is inversely proportional to the amount of compression. Anyway, in this article we will review some of the methods of lossless compression, used to store and transmit binaries files on the Internet.

There are many ways to compress data files based on the fact that there is some sort of redundancy in all of them. When we talk about compressors, we often talk about algorithms. These are simply procedures that the computer goes through to identify and eliminate different kinds of redundance. Obviously, different types of data may have different types of redundance, so there are various protocols that use algorithms specific to graphic, audio, text, animation or other file type. These vary from the simple Huffman algorithm to the complex and elegant wavelet transform algorithm. In general it is not necessary to understand the details of this, but rather what compression program is good enough in a given circumstance, and how to use it.

As will become apparent, there are a



Decompression Cheat Sheet

The first line is the compressor program's name, followed by its common file extension in parenthesis. The second line is the path to the file on Aminet. The last line is the basic file extraction command used to decompress the file, usually from a shell command line. The name of the file you want to decompress goes in place of the brackets. Make sure you change directories to the same location where the file resides before executing a decompression.

Arc (.arc) utils/arc/arc.lha arc x [filename]

ARJ (.arj) utils/arc/UnARJ241.lha unarj e [filename]

DMS (.DMS)* utils/arc/DMSII_V1.0.lha Use built in GUI *extracts to a disk (see article)

GZIP (.gz .z) and compress (.Z) utils/pack/gzip124x2.lha gzip -d [filename]

(

myriad of compression standards. The reason is that different types of files have different types of redundance. Another complicating factor is that several of the compression algorithms are copyrighted, either in the USA, outside the USA, or both.

The current Amiga standard for binary data compression is LhA. This comes in various flavors and generations, but is generally indicated by the suffixes .lha or .lhx at the end of a file name. The shareware version of LhA is available on Aminet, and should be the first program you get, because virtually every other binary program on Aminet requires it for decompression. It bares mentioning that there is a special case of LhA called SFX (.sfx suffix), which is self-extracting. That is, to decompress an SFX file you just have to run it. It has a built in LhA decompressor, and will recreate the original file or files in the directory from which it is run.

LhA (,lha .lzh) utils/arc/LhA_e138.run (run the file to extract) lha -m -x -r x [filename]

LhARC (.lharc) utils/arc/lharc-1.30.lzh lharc x [filename]

LhWARP (.lhw) utils/arc/lhwarp-1.40.lzh lhwarp WRITE [drive #] [filename] *note this expands a file to disk like DMS

RAR (.rar) utils/arc/Unrar202.lha unrar e [filename]

Shar (.shar) utils/arc/Unshar.lha unshar [filename]

Stuff-It (.sit) utils/arc/unsit-1.5c2.lzh unsit -u [filename]

Tar (.tar) utils/arc/DeTar12.lha detar [filename] *continued on page 28*

The newer contender for the Amiga standard is LZX (.lzx). This in general provides marginally better compression than LhA, but this depends on the specific type of file. LZX operates very similarly to LhA, and can also be found on Aminet.

UNIX programers developed a compressor specifically for UNIX systems called "Compress" (.Z). To decompress these files, you'll need the Amiga port of Compress from Aminet. To further complicate things, the UNIX programmers realized that there is more redundance in several files stuck together than in several single files, so they created a program to stick several files together into one big one before compressing. This program is called TAR (.tar). This, of course, leads to the need to first use Compress, and then UNTAR to decompress files in UNIX standard format (.tar.Z). If that wasn't complicated enough, the public domain operating system GNU, which is similar to UNIX, uses the GZIP compressor (.z or .gz), and requires GZIP to decompress it. Phew!

Not to be outdone, the IBM clone standard is called ZIP (.zip). This is similar to GZIP, and requires one of the versions of ZIP that includes decompression, or more likely UNZIP. These are both available on Aminet. I found UNZIP to be entirely reliable, although I keep ZIP in case I need to send a file to someone with an IBM clone.

Of course Apple would not let this be, and consequently MacIntosh binaries available on the Internet are compressed with the aptly named Stuff-It (.sit). Not to be outdone by the UNIX programmers, Apple also introduced a hexadecimal encoding program, sometimes used in conjunction with Stuff-It, called HQX, hence you may find ".sit.hqx" at the end of Mac binaries on the Internet.

Surely, these are the current standards, but who knows what you'll find searching around in some musty ancient archive on the Internet. Previously, there was a multitude of Amiga compressors before LhA became the de facto standard. These include ZOO (.zoo), ZOOM (.zoom), LhARC (.lharc), ARC (.arc) and ARJ (.arj). For all of these, there are decompressors on Aminet if you find a file that needs them. WARP (.warp) was one of the first self-decompressing protocols, so for these programs, running them causes them to be decompressed, and then run.

One final topic is the special purpose compressor Disk Masher (.DMS). This program took an entire floppy disk and converted it into a compressed file. Because of this, it can only be decompressed back onto a floppy disk. Special attention should be paid to this, because if there was a boot block virus on the original disk, it will be reconstructed on the new disk on decompression. Consequently, after running Disk Masher to decompress a file onto a floppy disk, it is important to scan the disk for viri. Of course, whenever you download and decompress a file it is a good habit to scan it for viri.

Well that's the compressed version of all you need to know about compression protocols, especially when getting binaries from the Internet. Go fill up your hard drive.

2



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Phase 5 digital products has a complete product line of PowerUp accelerators for various Amiga systems under development. All these accelerators are being primarily designed as upgrades for those users who already own a 68k-based accelerator for their Amiga. They come with a socket for either a 68030, 68040 or 68060 processor which they need as a companion processor, and which can be taken from the user's existing 68k accelerator card or purchased in addition to the PowerUp accelerator. After installation of the 68k processor on the PowerUp accelerator and the installation of the PowerUp accelerator into the Amiga, the world of PowerPC/68k multiprocessing is open for the user immediately! With this upgrade technology, the investments which once went into the existing accelerators are saved, as the old processor does not become obsolete.

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Technical Data CYBERSTORM PPC Accelerator Board:

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Memory Option SIMM Sockets

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max. 128 MB four

Ultra-Wide A3000/A4000(T)





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New streamlined user interface provides a highly interactive workspace for animators; includes real-time texture mapping, non-modal environments and user-definable interface color and configuration. New color wheel options provide better control of color

selections (in both Layout and Modeler). Multiple items can be loaded simultaneously (affects both the Layout and Modeler).

Performance

Enhanced Inverse Kinematics boasts a 500 percent speed increase and new calculations to maximize accuracy. Multi-threaded rendering takes advantage of multiprocessor systems.

Direct 3D support (Intel MMX technology) is available in addition to OpenGL and QuickDraw; users can choose their API for real-time shaded environments.

Render GL support provides high-speed rendering; takes advantage of OpenGL hardware during the rendering process.

New ScreamerNet commands provide processor status and user-definable node update times.

Improved Animation Capabilities

Morph Gizmo generates facial animations very quickly and easily.

Volumetric lighting engine creates ultra-realistic lighting effects.

Lscript allows users to create scripts to control almost all functions available in LightWave 3D 5.5.

Super Cel Shader turns 3D models into 2D cartoons and Anime-style films.

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shadows and user-definable light size.

Linear light source simulates neon and florescent lighting and irregular specular highlights.

Interactive texture mapping includes scale, position and rotation.

Animatable textures enable the animation of size, position, rotation of image maps and algorithmic textures. Users can move, rotate and scale entire motion graphs interactively.

Enhanced Scene Editor has options for loading audio files, selecting item visibility options and time slider options for frames, seconds, or time code.

Unseen by Camera options can "hide" an object from the renderer.

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New and Enhanced Layout Functions

Add Item function quickly adds objects, Null objects, bones, and point, spot or distant lights. Play mode enables users to view animations without creating a preview and make changes to an animation interactively while the scene is playing. Undo for key frame modifications. Improved Camera control provides direct input of camera lens focal length plus horizontal and vertical fields of view. Animatable modeling functions include twist, taper, bend, shear, vortex, and pole. New item selection tools and view control widgets are included. Enhanced transport controls feature Play mode and variable time display.

New and Enhanced Modeler Functions

Interactive text modeling tools includes real-time typing, position, scale and font selection. Users have greater control over deformation tools for modeling Knife modeling tools slices objects rapidly. Pen tool quickly draws polygons. MetaNURBS features support for triangles and quads. Enhanced modification tools are more intuitive and interactive. Protractor tool quickly measures angles. Multiple backdrop images enable template modeling. DragNet and Smooth Scale are two new modeling tools for working with organic models; especially useful with MetaNURBS objects. Statistics window can stay open to allow review or selections at any time User settings are preserved across sessions, or can be loaded

User settings are preserved across sessions, or can be loaded and saved individually.

Plug-Ins

An enhanced Lazy Points plug-in created organic deformations based on an object's motion.

A motion-capture data conversion plug-in is available for Acclaim and Wavefront formats.

A Skeleton Maker plug-in easily creates bone hierarchies for character animation.

An Extender plug-in provides more control when creating objects with MetaNURBS.

The application features an enhanced plug-in architecture that offers new functions as well as a friendlier environment for developers.

Requirements 486 w/FPU, Pentium or better Windows NT 3.5 or Windows 95 MIRPS R4400 or better Minimum RAM - 32MB windows NT, 16MB Windows 95 CD-ROM





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Decompression Cheat Sheet

con't from page 23

utils/arc/gnutar.lha gnutar -x [filename]

utils/arc/untar.lha untar [filename]

Tar and GZIP (.tar.gz or .tgz) utils/arc/untgz.lha untgz [filename]

WARP (.wrp) utils/arc/warp-1.11.lzh unwarp [filename] TO [devicename] *note this expands a file to a disk like DMS

GZIP (.gz .z) and compress (.Z) utils/pack/gzip124x2.lha gzip -d [filename]

ZAP (.zap) utils/arc/zap-1.41.lzh zap W [filename] *note expands a file to DF0: including boot blocks

ZIP (.zip) utils/arc/Unzip512x.lha unzip [filename]

ZOO (.zoo) utils/arc/zoo2-10.lzh zoo2-10 e [filename]

ZOOM (.zoom) utils/arc/Zoom_5.4.SFX (run file to extract) Use GUI *note expands a file to disk, and checks for virus.

A

Ooops . . .Correction

Please note the following correction to the Site Seeing "Getting Connected" article in Issue 8:

Thanks to Rick Rudge who pointed out that although IBrowse can be packaged with TermiteTCP, it is not part of the basic package. Furthermore, although AmiFTP is compatable with TermiteTCP, it is not part of this package either.

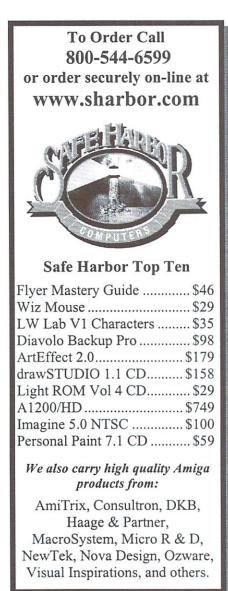


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PC Task v4.20

s long as PC's dominate the small desktop computer market, I suppose emulation will remain popular on the Amiga. One way to emulate a PC is with software, though this approach is good for only limited use at best. One of the most popular software PC emulators for the Amiga is PC Task, from Chris Hames of Quasar Distribution. Comparisons with the other leading emulator, PCX, are probably inevitable so we will allow a few in this review.

The current version of PC Task is Version 4.20. It emulates a 486 based PC, whereas PCX emulates a 586. The difference does not translate into any great speed variance. It might be expected to affect compatibility with newer software, but I know of no examples.

As with other PC emulators, you need to supply your own copies of MS/DOS and Windows. We ran PC Task through the usual suite of programs we've selected for testing

emulators. To my surprise, an old MS/DOS word processor, which we've successfully run on just about everything, failed completely. However, most other MS/DOS test programs ran well. The game, "Alternate Reality, the City," ran very well, as did several other games. Some MS/DOS games, like some of the utility programs, wouldn't run at all. My advice is to obtain the demo version of the software and test the programs you're most interested in, or ask to test your programs on a friend's computer with PC Task installed before you buy.

It's difficult to put meaningful numbers on speed comparisons as there are several elements involved – loading software, graphics updates, movement of objects, audio, and so on. Overall, PC Task seemed a bit faster but a bit less compatible than PCX when running MS/DOS software, including games. It definitely played many game sounds at a quicker, more acceptable speed.

As with PCX, we were unable to do anything meaningful with Windows on our A3000 with 25 MHz 68030 CPU. You will need at least a 040 CPU, but a 060 is probably required for meaningful use. The good news is that PC Task will allow you to run Windows 3.11, not just 3.1. This is because it utilizes paging, and therefore can do virtual memory, meaning most programs that require this should run on PC Task, where they wouldn't on PCX. Windows 95 will not run at present,

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buse driver has been activated		

Windows. We ran PC Task through the usual suite of prothrough the usual suite of pro-

but should be working in the not too distant future. This capability will be part of a free upgrade.

There were several features of PC Task that I found particularly pleasant. A utility named "pctmouse" may be run from your AUTOEXEC.BAT to easily enable use of your Amiga mouse under MS/DOS. It works extremely well. There are also COPYTOA and COPYTOI to enable copying of files back and forth between the Amiga and IBM sides of your computer. Both work well, but neither allow wildcards. This makes copying multiple files unnecessarily tedious. Working from the Amiga side can solve this problem. Using the included PCTCrossMount utility, you can mount your PC Task hardfiles or partitions and access them as any Amiga device. Also useful is DIRA which lets you display an Amiga directory from the emulator, handy when using the MS/DOS copy utilities.

These utilities do seem to present a "chicken and egg" problem. They are shipped on an Amiga disk. Since most Amigas have CrossDOS as part of the operating system, it's not hard to move them to an MS/DOS disk so you can copy them to your PC Task C: drive. If you don't have CrossDOS, how do you access them without already having them installed, so you can read them from an Amiga disk? PC Task provides for this. A program on the PC Task disk will make

> an MS/DOS disk for you with all the utility files on it if you wish. You can then copy them to C: directly from the emulator.

PC Task allows for two methods of creating a C: drive for use with the emulator. You can have either a dedicated Amiga partition assigned to PC Task, or use a hardfile. A hardfile is a very large Amiga file which pretends to be a hard drive. This method is significantly slower than the dedicated partition. PCX uses both methods as well, but its

dedicated partitions leave a strangely named icon on your Workbench. It's a minor point, but PC Task's partitions do not show up at all under Workbench, which I find preferable.

If you have an Amiga with low memory, or have trouble running a particular piece of software, PC Task gives you an interesting option. There are two versions of the program provided. One uses dynamic compilation for faster emulation; the other uses interpretive methods and can run in less memory. Sometimes switching from one to the other will get stubborn programs running.

Overall, PC Task is a good product performing a difficult task. The principle differences between it and PCX are three:

-

PC Task can run a more modern version of Windows; it's slightly faster with some software; and it's less compatible with some other, mostly older, software. Both are fine products, and both need to be checked carefully to see if they'll run the particular software you're interested in using. As I've said before, if you need to constantly run PC software, buy a PC or at least look at hardware emulators.

Note to users of RetinaEMU, at least on Z2 boards (I was unable to test on a Z3): all versions of PC Task have had problems with RetinaEMU. You'll need to run it in a window on the Workbench screen to use it with RetinaEMU, and then you'll get no cursor, or the ability to run most programs with graphics. PCX has no such problems, so is the clear choice for you.

I rate PC Task an A-, primarily because of its ability to run a more usable version

Page Monster

n the world of HTML editors there are quite a few options. There are text editor patches, stand alone editors, even a WYSIWYG editor in development, but there is only one monster. Page Monster is a unique approach to editing HTML code (the code used in writing web pages). Page Monster is available in its current version 1.0.

This program takes an interesting approach to designing an editor in that the entire suite of multimedia events that make up the program are connected as an AmigaVision script. Not only does this allow for a flexible design and easy upgrades, but it allows true multimedia events to take place within the program. For example, no other HTML editor has a soundtrack. Of course AmigaVision was developed to depend on system resources, and in the past was responsible for most of the Amiga-based kiosk displays. As such, it requires many standard and nonstandard resources. In trying to start Page Monster the first time, you are likely to see a window complaining about the system resources that you need to have in your SYS:C directory. If you aren't used to the structure of the standard Amiga file system, or how to get resources from Aminet, then you will be out of luck. It took me fifteen minutes to get and install

of Windows. It has the potential to reach an A with an increase in compatibility and adding the capability of running Windows 95. PC Task 4.20 will run on any Amiga with 2 Mb of RAM, Amiga OS 2.0 or greater and a 68020 or greater processor. It was tested on an A3000/25 MHz and an A1200/26MHz with 68030 processors, 14 Mb of RAM on the A3000 and 8 Mb on the A1200.

PC Task 4.2 normally sells for about US \$90. You can contact the manufacturer in any of the following ways: on the web at www.ozemail.com.au/~pctask; by surface mail at PO Box 101, Vermont, 3133, Australia; Phone: +613 9887 2411; Fax: +613 9887 2511; Email: pctask@ozemail.com.au

Rating: A-

By Brad Webb

the needed public domain programs to make Page Monster run, and I have a lot of experience in accessing Aminet and installing software.

After the proper resources are installed in the proper directories, the installation is automatic with the Commodore installer tool. This too can be problematic. The program installs in two directories and requires 2.3 Mb for the main directory, and just over 3 Mb for the voice support files. After all this however, you are ready to go.

Clicking the project icon starts the public domain AVplayer program, and you are greeted by an exceptionally slick interface with charming full voice support. The architecture is modular, so the program adapts to your system. It makes system calls when needed to run your choice of browsers for preview, as well as your choice of editors, viewers and directory structures for output. This is virtually seamless. For the beginner, there are scripts to help you create your first document. The voice help is excellent for the beginner, because as you load modules, the voice tells you what they are for and how to best use them. For the experienced Amiga user, there is an option to add ARexx or AmigaVision scripts to the package for procedures you find

continued on page 32

NetConnect CD

-100 92%

90%

93%

88%

90%

Amiga Format 6/97

"All the parameters needed to tailor your setup are available under the control of one easy to use program. Configuring the NetConnect system to your requirements is simple. If you need to get online, then this is the easiest way to do it."

CU Amiga 6/97 89%

"It's a great collection of some of the best software as it is but with updates promised in the slightly weaker areas, things look extremely good. A high performance no-fuss solution for Internet access."

Amiga Computing 7/97 92%

"Heartily recommend this superb package to both seasoned surfers and Net novices. Make no mistakes: NetConnect offers exceptional value for money. Only a fool would miss out on the chance of buying such an excellent suite of programs."

TurboPrint 5

Amiga Format 4/97

"The big change in v5 is the replacement of the Print Manager with the Graphics Publisher. This is a much more powerful interface. We tested the program with a couple of printers and the results were stunning."

CU Amiga 6/97

"Whether it's changing the dither, the color balance, or the position of an image on your paper, using TurboPrint is very intuitive. It's also very quick. A superb way to produce stunning output."

AmigaEm Issue #13 95%

"The Graphics Publisher, which allows you to print more than one image per page, does a superb job of producing near photographic output on modern printers like the Epson Stylus."

Amiga Computing 5/97 86%

"TurboPrint is a system that enhances your Amiga's printing abilities or more precisely, replaces the Amiga's original printing routines for its own far superior ones."

Picasso IV

CU Amiga 4/97

"Plug and play, unless you have an A2000. Whether you're buying your first card or upgrading, I'd recommend the Picasso IV. So far, the best graphics card available for the Amiga."

Amiga Format 6/97 94%

"Dead easy hardware and software installation. It's expensive, but you get a lot. Blinding video performance and a flicker fixer to boot. Quite simply the God of graphics cards."



AmigaEm Issue #13

"A great printer! Quality is a touch down on the Epson but it does have separate ink cartridges and a free printer driver."

Amiga Computing 5/97 90%

"The Canon BJC-620 is an excellent printer in its own right. The Color Management System (CMS) makes it easy to set up for fuss free printing."

PageMonster

con't from page 31

lacking in the initial distribution. One fascinating advantage of this sort of program is the use of real-time on-line program support. If you need to contact the manufacturer, at the click of a mouse, your Internet connection script is launched, then your browser, and finally you are connected to their web page – all from inside Page Monster.

Regarding the technical specifics of the program, I found no dongles or copy protection. It ran effortlessly on my A1200 with and without an 030 accelerator, though it needs a fair chunk of RAM. It was tested on a 2 Mb Chip RAM, 20 Mb Fast RAM system. As stated, it requires 5.5 Mb of hard drive space to install completely. I ran it under Amiga OS 3.0 and recommend that level or higher. There was no manual in my evaluation version, however, the on-line help was more than adequate.

Page Monster is hard to compare to other HTML editors. It takes full advantage of the Amiga OS and the multitasking environment which is a big step forward for any program. On one hand, the rich help and support makes it ideal for the beginner. On the other hand, its installation requires some intimate knowledge of the Amiga and the Amiga OS. For the advanced user, if offers expansion options that are virtually unlimited, but at the cost of massive hard drive space. As an excellent use of the Amiga's power and flexibility it deserves an "A," but after functionality, ease of installation, and system requirements are considered, I give it a "C+." I recommend it for the beginner who can get someone else to install it on their system, or the advanced user who wants to add to the project with scripts or plug-in modules.

Rating: C+

By Davis Sprague

A

Electrics ❣ ᠯ ፤ ▫▫ ᆃ -: ♥ む ◙ ☞ ◊ ♀ 느♥ //// ♦

Clectrics is software that won't be needed by everyone, but if you are one of those who needs it, there's not much else that you can use. Fortunately, this is a good product. Electrics lets you design and simulate digital electronic circuits. Best of all, you do much of the work graphically in a series of related windows.

Electrics is actually a suite of programs. There's a Project Manager, Schematic Designer, Simulator, Viewer, Digits program and ARexx Shell. You begin your circuit design by establishing a project, using the Project Manager. Next you draw a schematic using the Schematic program. You can use up to 99 sheets in your schematic. There's room on each sheet for several design elements. These are selected from libraries of symbols provided. You'll find all the standard logic gates, in the more familiar older symbols, as well as a good library of "74" TTL chips. As might be expected, there are no microprocessors to work with. Processor simulation is an order of magnitude more complex, and beyond the scope of this sort of simulator. The principle limitation of the schematic program is the lack of any way to print out completed Schematics or, for that matter, to print the output from any program in the suite.

Once the schematic is complete, you

can use the Simulator program to apply signal levels to it. You can use logic 1 and 0, and X (unknown) and Z (floating). The workings of the circuit can be followed using the Viewing program. The documentation claims that over 4 billion time units may be recorded for over 64,000 signals.

The Digits program is a special program. It consists of a multi-element seven segment display which may be connected to the Simulator. It can be set up as common-anode or common-cathode. You could design your own digital clock and display the entire thing on your screen if you so desire.

The final program to consider is the ARexx shell. This allows interactive simulation and signal probing. To get the most from this package, you'll need to know or learn some ARexx programming. This is not unreasonable for an engineering program, but may prove a deterrent for some.

All in all, this is a complete package for designing non-CPU based digital circuits. It also provides a challenge to review, since the real proof will only be known after a complete digital project is accomplished, something I was unable to do. With that in mind, I could see little to fault in working with the programs. Once you understand the flow of a project and how it's organized, all the programs are easy to use and do what's expected. There are several sample projects that come with Electrics to get you going. I would recommend examining them closely before starting on your own, unless you're a simulation veteran.

The programs arrive on one disk, and documentation is in AmigaGuide format with only a single printed sheet describing the programs. This proves to be adequate, though I feel a program of this nature should have a printed manual. The software runs on any Amiga with OS 2.0 or greater. The more memory, the better, but you should be able to do modest projects on even a 1 or 2 Mb machine.

All in all, this is an innovative, well written program suite that should be of value to anyone designing small to moderate sized digital circuits. Keeping in mind that I did not lay out a board and test it based on an Electrics design, I'd give it an B. The inability to output to a printer results in the principle reason for not giving it an A, though the lack of a printed manual contributes as well.

Electrics cost US \$30, plus US \$2 shipping and is available through the author, Chris Sterne, at 1111 West 7th Ave., Vancouver, BC, Canada V6H 1B5. Email: chris_sterne@panam.wimsey.com

Rating: B

By Brad Webb

MRBackup

'll be honest, I'm a Diavolo bigot. I've used it religiously for years, loved it religiously for just as long, and it's never let me down. Without Diavolo, I'd have long since joined my data in magnetic hell.

However, Diavolo isn't for everyone. It carries quite a price tag, and with that hefty price come a number of features that not everyone will need. If you're on a budget, or just plain have no use for 1,001 different ways to back up, MRBackup may be the utility for you. It's simple and inexpensive with lowoverhead.

The system requirements for MRBackup are Amiga OS 2.04 or above, one floppy disk drive or other removable media device (such as a Zip drive) or a SCSI streaming tape unit (such as a DAT drive), and a hard disk volume mounted by the Amiga OS to back up. For testing, I used an A3000T 040 MHz with 32 Mb RAM, OS 3.1, Cybervision 64/3D, Cybergfx v3 rev66, hard disks, and an Iomega Zip drive. I also tested on an A3000 with 8 Mb Fast RAM, OS 2.04, hard disk, and a floppy disk drive. I no longer have a tape drive, so I couldn't test MRBackup's tape support, and my Amigas are in different counties, so I couldn't test MRBackup's network support.

The software comes on one floppy disk. There is no printed manual, but you may print out the on-disk documentation. Its documentation is the one area in which MRBackup really shines. The manual is comprehensive and extremely well written. If only all software were documented this well.

However, the rest of the package doesn't quite measure up to this lofty standard. The interface, essentially a bunch of gadgets pasted onto a shell window, hearkens back to the early days of Amiga software. Usable it is, but pretty it is not. The interface doesn't scale, so if you make the window smaller, orphaned gadgets are left behind. Also, for those of you using Cybergfx, make sure to run MRBackup on its own screen – it doesn't like Cybergfx's Workbench emulation.

Performance is perfectly acceptable, but there is no built-in support for backing up multiple volumes at once; you have to use the supplied ARexx script. Also missing are advanced features like incremental backups and built-in support for automatically making an emergency backup boot disk.

These, however, are side issues compared to the main concern of any backup program: does it maintain data integrity and allow you to easily restore lost data? The answer is, with one exception I'll get to momentarily, yes. I didn't have a single problem backing up from or restoring to FFS partitions.

However, I use AFS, a replacement filesystem, on most of my partitions. MRBackup trashed any AFS-formatted partition it restored to approximately 25% of the time. IAM has not heard of this problem before. Fourth Level Development, the company that currently handles AFS, is notoriously unavailable for comment of any kind about anything whatsoever, even on pain of death, so I

was unable to pin down the cause of this problem. All I can say is, AFS users beware.

The problems with AFS and Cybergfx were the only ones I came across, and to be fair, with a system like the Amiga, which hasn't had centralized updates in years, and has become a patchwork quilt of utilities and enhancements from dozens of different sources, it's not easy to be perfectly compatible with everything.

If money is not a

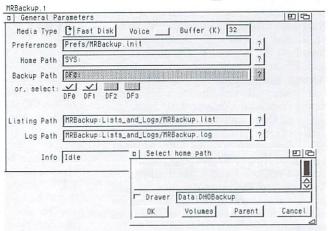
problem, and especially if you have advanced needs, MRBackup is not the utility for you. Furthermore, MRBackup does not offer the kind of fine-toothed control over virtually every element of backing up your data that other utilities do. It definitely does not come with all the bells and whistles. However, if you are on a budget, if you don't have a bigbox Amiga decked out with all the latest hardware and shareware patches and utilities, or if you just want a basic, reliable tool, MRBackup is a solid solution.

Retail price of MRBackup is US \$45 and is available from IAM. Voice: 610-853-4406; Fax: 610-853-3733; Email: info@iam.com; URL: www.iam.com.

A

Rating: C+

By Paul Idol



No bells and whistles, but straight forward and reliable backups are what you get with MRBackup.

AmTelnet

mTelnet is one of the latest releases from the people at Vaporware. Vaporware is dedicated to bringing you the most complete suite of Internet access programs, including the Voyager browser, the Microdot mail and news reader, AmIRC, AmTerm and AmFTP. AmTelnet is a full featured telnet device that multitasks in a window on your Amiga. Telnet is a protocol that allows you to log on to distant computers over the Internet, and run programs on those computers, with output to your screen.

Requirements for AmTelnet include MUI, a running TCP/IP stack (AmiTCP, TermiteTCP, or Miami), and at least Amiga OS 2.04. I recommend Amiga OS 3.0 or higher, but it is not necessary. The program is compact, fast and runs on any public screen. It is keyfile activated and is available as shareware over the Internet at http://www.vapor.com/amtelnet. Installation uses the Commodore installer, and requires installation of a new MUI custom class which is the same that is used in AmTerm. This class creates a custom terminal window that is configured with respect to text font, color, and other parameters. In addition, AmTelnet is configured for various terminal emulations, and character mappings.

I tested AmTelnet on an A1200, with 030 accelerator and 882 FPU, Amiga OS 3.0, 2 Mb of Chip RAM and 20 Mb of Fast RAM. It worked flawlessly, without

continued on page 34

AmTelnet con't from page 33

any detectable bugs. Features include a pop up list of addresses to connect to, and full MUI configuration. The program is version 1.3.

AmTelnet has few competitors, since for the casual user there is no need to use a telnet protocol. Its contemporaries are the original telnet distributed with AmiTCP, napsaterm, and a new version of the AmiTCP telnet. These are both CLI based, and require fairly good know-

Aminet 18 & 19

minet CD's are a prolific series of freely distributable shareware compilations that give you an impossibly large amount of software on each CD. Programs from good to bad, large to small, and popular to the obscure can be found on the Aminet CD's. Aminet 18 and 19 are no exceptions to this rule. Aminet has hundreds of Megabytes of compressed files uploaded monthly. Each newly released Aminet CD contains many of these uploads, plus some specially offered commercial programs to boot. Aminet 18 features a commercial version of Xtreme Racing, and Aminet 19 boasts CanDo 2.5 and AmiAtlas Pro 1.3. Some of the CD's content comes ready to run, but most need to be unpacked (done at the click of a button) and started from your system.

There is a useful hyperlinked index that provides access to things like the new features of the CD, a troubleshooting help section, useful instructions, customizing options, and recommended selections. There is also an included 'Filer' program that operates like Dopus 4 or DiskMaster, allowing you to move and extract files to your system. As for content, there's 16 directories that include everything from Business to Utilities. Each of these directories has from 3 to 35 subdirectories that contain from 2 to 100 files each. This will give you a hint as to the size and richness of each of these CD's.

There's not much more to be said. Aminet 18 and 19 are well compiled, smoothly presented CD's with more programs than you will ever have time to examine. While they can't possibly contain everything that is uploaded to Aminet, they contain a huge amount. I hardly think anyone could finish discovering the treasures hidden in these complications. A must have for every Amigan with a CD-ROM drive. Check with your local dealer for pricing and availability. ledge of telnet and the CLI to use. AmTelnet also includes a set of transfer protocols such as X-modem and Zmodem, to send binary files. These are lacking in the other telnet programs. Documentation is adequate and is in AmigaGuide format.

Registration and shareware fee documentation for receiving your key by mail or email are available on the shareware program using the provided Internet registration tool.



AGA Experience 3

hen it comes to Shareware/Demo compilation CD's for the Amiga, there's no shortage. AGA Experience 3 (AGA3) from Sadeness follows in a series of Experience CD's that manage to get better with each release. The beauty of this CD is that most of the contents are ready to run. Click a setup button and you're usually ready to load and run the file of your choice. AGA3 provides a very smooth, if slightly limited, HTML front end, allowing you to cruise the CD's contents with a web browser. An AWeb demo browser is already set up to use, but you can easily use your own. Not everything can be launched from the browser, so you will have to search the handy index for a file, open to the file's window and launch it by Icon.

The contents of this CD are top notch. Even though most files are not compressed, there are still hundreds of great programs. These files include some of the best and most needed software. Not everything will run on NTSC machines, but most will. The included full version of XCAD2000 is one glaring example of this incompatibility

Just to touch on the contents, there's a wealth of graphics tools, 10 commercial demos, over 50 ready-to-run games, a varied selection of communication software, the first 6 issue of Amiga Monitor electronic mag, and over 12 issue of Amiga Report on-line mag, plus much more.

If you don't have access to the coverdisks found on the British magazines, or you don't have the time for frequent visits to Aminet, this CD should be a complete and easy to use product. Check with your local dealer for availability and pricing.

A

Overall, if you are in need of a telnet client program, for distant log on, or MUD playing, AmTelnet is an excellent choice. I give it an "A-" simply because telnet isn't as useful to the average user as mail, news, and hypertext protocols. As a telnet program it is excellent. AmTelnet is shareware and available from Vaporware. For more info, see www.vapor.com/amtelnet/.

Rating: A-

By Davis Sprague

Hidden Truth CD

ver wonder where Fox Mulder of the X-Files gets paranormal and UFO information? He probably has a copy of The Hidden Truth CD from Sadeness Software. This CD compiles information gathered from many WWW sites and puts them all together with a slick HTML Browser front end. As you link from topic to topic, fittingly spooky music and sound clips play to set the mood. Throughout the CD appear numerous photos, audio samples and animations. A Datatype installer is included that helps setup your system to run mpeg, way, avi, mov and au files.

The range of main topics include UFO's, Paranormal, Science Fiction, Human Atrocities, Government Coverups and Space, and each has many subtopics. Not everything on the CD involves Aliens or UFO's. There is a wealth of information on things like Astral Projection, Crop Circles, Bigfoot, Loch Ness, Ghosts, The Bermuda Triangle, Nostradamus, Pyramids, and more. You'll find an excellent section on the solar system, packed with great photos and true facts. There's also information on blackholes, comets and Mars. I was very happy to find a Skeptics area that provides a reverse perspective view of much that's on the CD. Things can get very heady when you take in this CD, and the Skeptic area provides a good way for you to come back down to earth.

Overall, Hidden Truth is an impressive CD. If you're a believer, you'll love it and could spend months going through everything. If you're a skeptic, you'll find yourself struggling to come up with enough suitable answers to explain all that is presented. If you have even a passing interest in this type of stuff, you'll want to get this CD. It requires an AGA or Graphics card Amiga with OS 3.0+ and at least 6 Mb RAM. Check with you local dealer for availability and pricing.

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Nemac IV: The Directors Cut

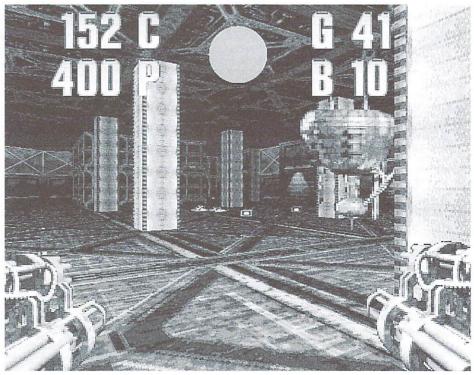
ou can add Nemac IV: The Directors Cut to the long list of Doom clones for the Amiga. This statement sounds rather odd considering not too long ago sceptics were saying the Amiga was incapable of such a feat.

There are now too many Amiga Doom clones to name, but Nemac IV is unique and deserves some recognition. First, while many other Amiga games developers are threatening to release titles for CD-ROM, Zentec has gone and done it. Nemac IV is a CD-ROM only game that will run on any Amiga with at least a 68020 CPU, OS 2.0, 2 Mb RAM, and 7 Mb of hard disk space. Nemac IV supports the Picasso II and Graffiti graphics devices as well as the 3Di-glasses.

The installation is effortless-just a couple of selections and you're done. If you do not have at least a 4X CD-ROM drive and a fast CPU, you must select lo-res animations during installation. The animations are well rendered and it's nice to see these kind of added goodies on an Amiga game. Even the credits are done in 3D and there are also splendid between-level animations that appear every few levels.

After the introductory animations play, several screens of text appear explaining the whole story line behind the game. The keyboard options screen allows you to change the default settings as well as select the mouse or joystick as your controller. The manual that comes with the game is rather sparse but the CD-ROM documentation more than makes up for this omission.

Nemac IV has very nice on-screen mapping that can be toggled on and off. The thing I like most about Nemac IV over other Doom style games is the vast arsenal at your disposal. Most Doom type games make you wait a long time to build up credits before you can upgrade to more powerful weapons. With Nemac you have a machine gun, grenades, plasma, and



Smooth scrolling texture-mapped graphics appear in most Doom clones and NemaclV certainly has some of the best. However, unlike other Doom clones, it works on a wide range of Amigas. And to top it off, you get serious weapons early in the game, to satisfy your destructive impulses.

bombs right from the start. Certain weapons are more effective on certain enemies. Nemac IV has both realistic and smooth gameplay and kept me glued to it for hours.

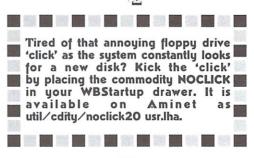
Everything about Nemac IV's graphics are superb. From the cracks in the stone floor, to the shiny marble pillars supporting the tiled ceiling, to the incredible lighting and explosions, the artwork really shines. Even if you don't have an AGA Amiga or a graphics card, the game still looks good. This is because Nemac IV utilizes the 64 color extra half-brite mode (HAM) on non-AGA Amigas. On a 68060 A1200, you will be able to display the game at full screen 1x1 pixels in lo-res with no loss of speed. I did encounter one level where things got very choppy until I eliminated most of the many opponents. I believe the problem was confined to that level since it never happened again.

Nemac IV is well worth the asking price and has left me craving a graphics card and a faster CD-ROM drive; I give it an A rating.

Nemac IV: The Directors Cut is distributed by clickBOOM of Canada and is developed by Zentec of Germany. It is carried by many dealers so check around for pricing and availability. If you're in the market for a Doom clone and own a CD-ROM, this game is highly recommended.

By Jerimy Campbell

Rating: A





Burnout

B urnout by Vulcan Software is not your traditional driving game, it's more like demolition bumper cars played to the death. The object is simple. Destroy all your opponents without being destroyed yourself. You can do this in many ways, including smashing your enemy into nasty spikes surrounding the arena, shoving them over the edge of monstrous cliffs, and other similar devious acts.

There is a nice variety of vehicles to choose from and each has its own specialty for destroying your opponents. Choose the Heavy Metal to squash enemies with your pondering mass, or try using quick speed and flanking shots with the Trike, or split the difference with the Hoverbug. These vehicles can also be upgraded with neat little additions like shields, heavy duty brakes and weapons, making them much more fun to use.

Burnout was tested on an A1200 with an 060 CPU, 3.0 OS, and 18 Mb RAM. It requires an AGA Amiga with a minimum of 6 Mb RAM, and a hard drive. I think 6 Mb RAM is cutting it too close and would suggest having at least 7 Mb. It comes on seven disks, has no copy protection, and is provided in the smallest packaging possible. No waste here.

Small packaging is great, but the same does not apply to manuals. The manual covers mostly the installation process which, although rather lengthy, is easy enough to do. The installation primarily involves dragging files to the designated drawers on the hard drive. Once you have all the packed files in their proper drawers, you have to unpack them by simply double clicking on them. The onscreen unpacking interface is the most advanced and easiest to use I've ever seen.

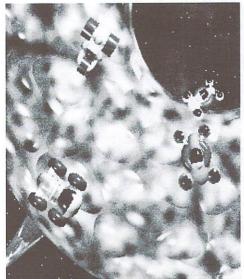
At first I was unable to get Burnout running, but soon figured out that you need to select the PAL display mode from the Amiga Early startup control menu and boot Workbench from floppy. You can also select PAL mode and choose 'boot without startup sequence.' Then, at the CLI prompt, type the command to run the program. For example, if you have Burnout installed in your Work:games/Burnout drawer, you would type "work:games/burnout/burnout" at the prompt to make it run.

After you manage to get the game running, you'll find it was worth the effort. The well done sound and polished 256 color rendered and raytraced graphics are most impressive. At first I thought I was looking at a HAM-8 screen. With graphics like that I honestly wasn't expecting such enjoyable and addictive gameplay.

It seems that most games are either too hard or too easy, but Burnout finds a happy medium in the gameplay department. Burnout allows you to select between human (up to four) or computer opponents and also allows you to select the computer opponent's difficulty level. One of the things I liked most about Burnout is how quickly you get the feel for it.

Vulcan promises expansion disks that will add to the paltry four arenas provided with the game. Along with an editor, this will provide great expansion opportunities. For those connected to the web, you will find that Vulcan's web page has many new cars and arenas available as free downloads. These should help to keep the game interesting long into the future.

In conclusion, I give Burnout a B+ rating. It would have received an A if I hadn't had the problem getting it to run and if the documentation was more sub-



Whoa!, there goes another one over the edge. Scratch one Hoverbug!

stantial. Burnout is advertised for US \$39.95 and just about any Amiga dealer that sells games carries it. Discount prices should be available. Contact Vulcan America at: 800-426-7687; Email: steve@sagsoft.ald.net; URL: http://www.vulcan.co.uk

Rating: B+

Jerimy Lee Campbell

Bograts & Kang Fu

tating that a game is a platform game can be misleading. The two games I reviewed, Bograts by Vulcan Software Limited and Kang Fu by Great Effects Development, are both platform games. Both are for AGA machines, have good soundtracks, have good graphics and both are good games. However, they are both very different platform games.

Bograts is a puzzle/platform game. You must figure out the right path through each screen, guiding two little bograts who are set on collecting the golden treasure eggs. By controlling the parent bograt, you open and close doors, move obstacles, deactivate traps and make the way safe for your two adventuresome offspring. Each of the youngsters has their own talent to help out. The blue helmeted child can scare monsters away while the red helmeted one can collect and use the keys needed to get through the screens. As the parent Bograt, you can also collect hearts. One heart is lost every time a baby Bograt gets hurt. If you get hurt you lose two hearts. A different twist is added by charging you 20 hearts for saving your game.

Bograts is for the A1200 only, installable on your hard drive with no copy protection. It does require PAL, so NTSC machines would need to boot in PAL mode or use a PAL/NTSC software switch like Degrader (available on Aminet).

I give Bograts an A as a very enjoyable puzzling and rather addictive game. A demo version is available at www.vulcan.co.uk and Aminet under game/demo/aabograt.lha. Vulcan can be reached by email at: paul@vulsoft.demon.co.uk.

Kang Fu is a shoot-em-up/jumping platform game. You control the cool kancontinued on page 38

Bograts & Kang Fu

con't from page 37

garoo with sunglasses as he jumps and collects a variety of candy, flowers and other items hanging in mid air. There are baby kangaroos as well, that must be captured and safely tucked into the pouch. There are an amazing assortment of creatures trying to stop you. Worms, bees, creatures with guns and assorted nasty tricks. You can start with the beginner level which will arm you with one bomb and a dozen eggs as weapons. You will find other and more powerful weapons as you progress. My favorite was the boomerang.

The background on each level is a high level scanned picture and the foreground images are clipped-out scanned pictures. In contrast, the kangaroo, point icons and the rest of the moving pictures seem rather cartoonish and flat. Some of the objects you can climb or jump on are not obviously climbable.

I did find the joystick handling a bit

JetPilot

etPilot is a very configurable Flight Simulator. You can configure everything from the version plane you fly (English Electric Lightning, MiGs, or F-104), to things like the weather, time of year, time of day, and types of mission. Air traffic control is also available that can provide you with weather reports and detailed ground controlled approaches. JetPilot is definitely a complete game. With 3 planes, 60 missions, 27 airfields, air traffic control, radar, mapping of the plane in flight, and many other items, it gives you a lot to choose from.

The game comes with a small instruction booklet that covers the bare essentials needed to get into the very basics of the game. From there, the best way to further find out about the game is to use the on-line help and start playing.

It is also proficient in the range of machines it will run on. From a basic A500 with 1 Mb of RAM and a 68000 CPU, up to a 68060 Amiga running at 50 MHz and lots of RAM. The graphics are configurable so you can get the best looking game and the best performance

for your machine.

touchy and had some dif-

ficulty switching weapons

(pulling joystick down and

right or left) instead of grab-

bing the baby kangaroos

(pulling joystick straight

game and runs on CD32,

SX32, A1200 and A4000. It

also requires PAL mode which

can be a problem with NTSC

Enjoyable but the difficulties

of using the joystick detracted

from the playability. A demo

version is available on Aminet

Check with your local dealer for pricing

under game/demo/KangFu

I give Kang Fu a solid B.

Kang Fu is a CD based

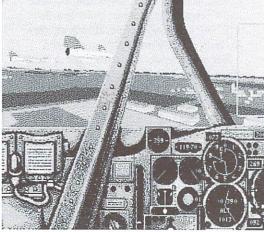
down).

CD32's.

Demo.lha.

and availability.

As stated, Jet Pilot is complete, but that is also part of the problem. A novice might find there are far too many items to configure and come to grips with. You can configure nearly every aspect of the game, and it becomes rather tedious getting it all set up the way you like. Once that is done, you need to get yourself acquainted with the controls of the game. This is not covered in the print manual, but rather in the on-line manual. This leads



Lots of choices that work on lots of different Amigas. Good gameplay, but the graphics are only average.

Ratings: Bograts: A Kang Fu: B By Royan Webb to flipping back and forth between the

RSL 1

As the momma, you have to make your babies work to get through each level. They each have their own special talents, so the trick is getting them in the right place at the right time.

> manual and the simulation until you feel competent enough with the setup to proceed. The game has a lengthy learning curve that is more suited to an experienced flight simulator enthusiast then to someone new to flight simulations. With that in mind, I believe this game deserves a B-.

> The game was tested with the following configuration: Amiga 3000/25 MHz, 2 Mb Chip RAM 12 Mb Fast RAM, OS 3.1, and a Picasso IV graphics card. No special hardware or software is needed to use the product. It is compatible with all Amigas, 1 Mb RAM minimum, with a recommended 68030 and 6 Mb RAM. A hard drive is not required and the game can be played from floppies. There are 4 disks included and installation is a breeze with the provided installer program. A demo version is available at the Vulcan website at www.vulcan.co.uk/. Email: paul@vul-soft.demon.co.uk. Check with your local dealer for pricing and availability.

> > A

Rating: B-

By Bill Schuck



Preview

dislike making comparisons of games, but Foundation leaves me no choice as it is so similar to Populous, PopulousII, Powermonger, and Dune II. The game is larger than any of the aforementioned and has many unique differences, but the graphics are extremely reminiscent. The fact that Foundation has similarities to these other games is not a bad thing since they are all excellent games. Even though I have been playing the Beta/Demo version which is far from finished, I caught myself playing Foundation for nearly an hour each time.

Foundation

Foundation allows you to select any screen mode with a preferences program. I found that in order for the graphics to look proportional and the game to be playable you must use Lo-res Pal. The graphics are surprisingly detailed, full of rich textures, and appealing even in Lores Pal. The included document promises increased speed as well as many bug fixes in the final version. In Foundation you are responsible for building many structures: mining for gold, iron, stone, and coal; training troops; and much more. Foundation has enough differences to make it interesting, and I now find that I am eagerly awaiting the finished version.

This demo worked fine on my A1200/060, OS 3.0, 18 Mb RAM system. When we asked programmer Paul Burkey about some of the technical features of Foundation, he had this to say: "The technical specs of the game are very wide. It will work on an unexpanded A1200 or even an older ECS machine with 1 Mb Chip RAM and at least 2 Mb of total RAM. On the other end of the range there will be support for GFX cards via CyberGFX or Picasso96. I plan to add AHI for sound card support. If the machine has more than 6 Mb of RAM and a fast processor, there is also a Hi-res graphics mode with very high detailed graphics. You can also use any screen mode from 320x200 up to 800x600 and bigger. Internet link is also another area that I plan to cover."

Foundation will be published by Sadeness Software and will be available on CD-ROM by the end of the year. One North American distributor will be ClickBOOM with others to be announced. It should retail for around for under US \$50.

By Jerimy Campbell



Space Hulk

pace Hulk from Electronic Arts places you in the future as a Space Marine. It is a time where warp drive has existed for 10,000 years. Your mission for the Emperor of the Imperium is to eliminate unfriendly aliens living in spaceships stranded in warp space. These ships are known as Space Hulks because the inhabitants scavenge the wreckage of other spacecraft and join the remains to their own vessel. Space Hulk is similar in many ways to the Dungeon & Dragon computer games, but does have improvements such as more fluid movement of enemies and smoother movement

Desert Strike

Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf, from Electronic Arts, is a classic Amiga shoot-em-up game. The excellent graphics take advantage of the Amiga's 64 color extra half-brite mode giving you very realistic explosions, shadows, and smoke. In Desert Strike, you pilot an Apache helicopter in the Middle East. General Kilbaba has threatened to start Armageddon and your mission is to destroy all of this madman's defenses. The game has a very slick intro as well as beginning and between-level movie sequences that explain the story line in detail. You view everything from overSummary

through corridors. As Captain of a squad of Terminator Space Marines you view and control each of their destinies from a control room just as if you were that Terminator. Space Hulk comes with two manuals and a reference card; one manual explains the story and missions; the other manual explains the technical information. The game is impressive and has good graphics, but does require some study and may not be for a beginner. Space Hulk will work on virtually any Amiga. It is not hard drive installable, so a second or third floppy disk drive is highly recommended.

Summary

head and at an angle and the scrolling is very smooth. The look and feel of your Apache chopper are quite realistic, not to mention the digitized sounds taken from actual Apache maneuvers. During the game, POW's will yell at you to rescue them and they can usually see you before you see them. Pressing the F10 key brings up a map that gives you different information, from where the closest fuel drums are, to what your next target is. Desert Strike will work on any Amiga with 1 Mb of RAM and is a must have. Check with your local dealer for pricing and availability.

The Informer







Question: I have an A4000 without a video card, and I am using a Commodore 520 video adapter to display on a 27" Sony TV that has inputs for NTSC video at 15khz. When I use it in High Res Laced mode I get a lot of flicker, which I know is due to the low refresh rate of 15kHz. Is there any device to reduce flicker when using a TV as a monitor, say something like a line doubler?

A nswer: Unfortunately, there's no device that you can plug in to eliminate the flicker using a standard TV. One thing you might try is to have one of those Anti-glare screens - they help a little, but I doubt you'll find one that big. Most of them are made for computer monitors (i.e. 14" - 17"). Another weird approach that helps is to put on sun glasses (I'm not joking - it really helps).

The best thing to do is adjust the colors of your Workbench and your applications so the flicker is minimized. Basically flicker is caused by high contrast, especially on thin lines. For example, if you were to draw a one-pixel-thick horizontal line using black color on a white background - it would flicker the most. If you make that line to be 2-pixels thick, you'll see some improvement. If you change the background from white to gray, you'll see even more improvement. In other words, stay away from high contrast color arrangements. As you said, 15khz is too slow a scan rate, and because Amiga hi-res modes take two sweeps to display the entire contents of a screen, our eyes catch it in the act and interpret it as flicker.

Oleg Moskalensky has been in the computing business for the past 17 years, working on a vast variety of hardware and software, including design, development & implementation of just about any business computing task imaginable. As the owner of Productive Computer Systems, Oleg has been providing Amiga multimedia business solutions to businesses for years. Oleg wrote software for and ran an info/advertising channel on TCI Cable for 6 years. Currently, he works to bring TV channels into individual businesses. Oleg remains a huge Amiga believer, especially after becoming know-ledgeable in other "popular" platforms. Visit Oleg's web site at: www.accessone.com/~olegm

Question: Do I need to get a video card to solve the flicker problem?

A nswer: For the problem you describe, you do NOT need to get a video card, just a decent monitor. If you really want to eliminate the flicker problem, I'd highly recommend using a multisync monitor of some kind that'll scan both at 15khz and 30khz. Your A4000 already has the needed hardware in it, so all you need is a monitor. You'll be able to use the rocksolid display of Productivity mode (640x480) for most stuff and only revert to NTSC when you need it. However, if you use a multisync monitor in 15khz mode, you'll still have a flicker.

Question: Years ago I had an Amiga 500, and played game after game, but now I primarily use high-end Mac's for business. A friend of mine brought around an old Amiga 500 recently and the names of great games came flooding back. I used a Mac to download Amiga games from the net for the A500, but how do I transfer the files to my Amiga? How do I read/write to Amiga formatted disks? I've tried PC exchange in the hope it might read the Amiga disks, but I've had no luck.

A nswer: That's not a problem, just buy a program called CrossMac(TM) from Consultron and you'll be set. It works very much like CrossDOS(TM). It sets up an environment where the system automatically senses and recognizes what format of floppy is inserted, allowing you to read and write disks in that format. Once you install it, every time you put a floppy in a drive, you'll not only get DF0:, but MAC0: too. You can even have multiple drives if needed. Anything you do on MAC0: will be in Mac format, everything you do in DF0: will be in Amiga format.

[CrossDos and CrossMAC are trademarks of Consultron. Contact Consultrn at: Voice: 313-459-7271 M-F 10 am to 6 pm EST; BBS: 313-459-7271 (available during nonbusiness hours); Email: consultron@ c o n s u l t r o n . p l y m o u t h . m i . u s ; www.cucug.org/consultron]

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A4000 Internal 880k			
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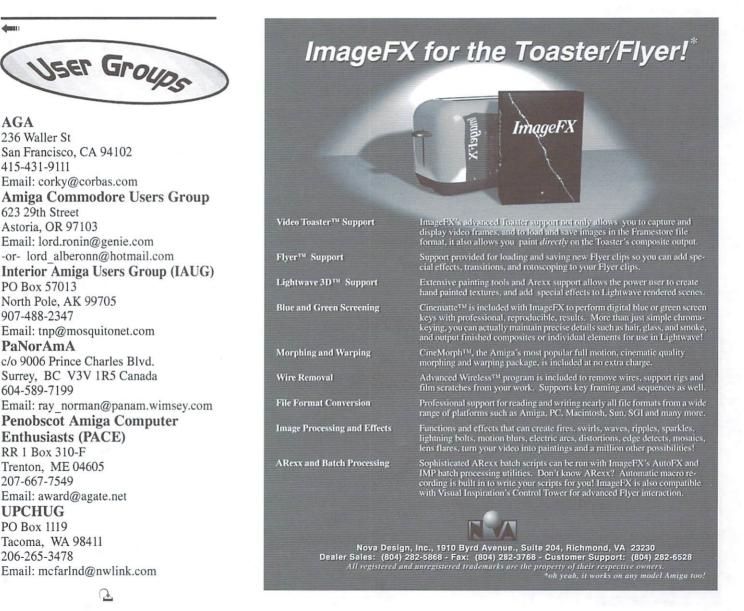
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The Informer



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NewTek products have always played a vital role in keeping the Amiga alive. Their recent decision not to upgrade Amiga LightWave to 5.5 came as a blow to many users. However, we must understand their valid reasoning for this decision and remember that the door is open for this upgrade depending on what Gateway does for the future Amiga. NewTek's support for the Toaster/Flyer continues to be strong and, in fact, a new upgrade to the Toaster is just around the corner. NewTek isn't in sync with the Amiga market like they used to be, so all Amigans need to let NewTek know we are out here ready to support their continuing upgrades for their Amiga products. NewTek Inc., ATT: Jim Jenison, 1200 SW Executive Dr., Topeka, KS, 66615. Email: customer service@newtek.com

Likewise, NewTek is looking for qualified Amiga programmers to help with the future development of Toaster/Flyer software. If NewTek can get some killer Amiga Programmers working on the Flyer, it will help ensure its future. If you fit that bill, or know of someone that does, contact NewTek and send your inquiries to: Harold Russel: Product Manager of Flyer Development, NewTek Inc., 1200 SW Executive Dr., Topeka, KS, 66615. Fax: 913-228-8099; Email: harold@newtek.com





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