

# INFORMER

A summary of information  
and support for Amiga users

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Resurgence

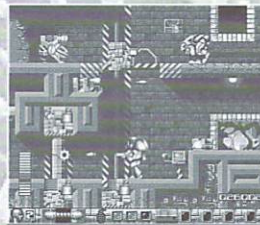
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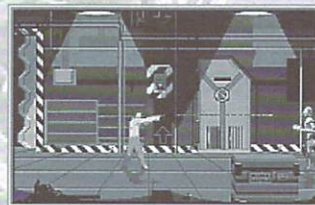


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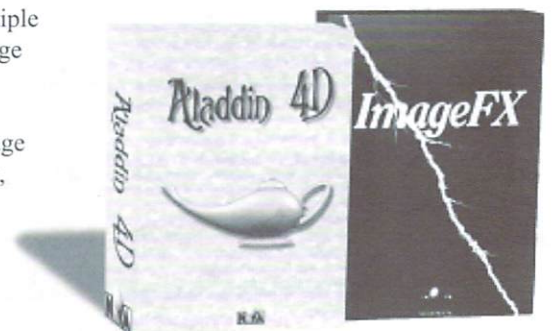
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Editor-in-Chief:

Fletcher Haug - eldritch@mhv.net

Design & Administration:

Betty Haug - informer@mhv.net

News Correspondent:

Brad Webb - bandr@globaldialog.com

Field Correspondents:

Adrian Pickering - adrian@pickering.prestel.co.uk

Robert Pigford - cyrano@goodnet.com

Paul Morabito - paulm@comcen.com.au

Jeremy Campbell - jc@dol.net

Columnists:

Davis Sprague - dsprague@mhv.net

Brad Webb

Oleg Moskalensky - pcs@accessone.com

Aaron Ruscetta - aaron@noel.pd.org

Support Staff: Lance Haug

Cristina Rodriguez

This Issue's Contributors: Ted Wallingford

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The Amiga Informer

PO Box 21

Newburgh, NY 12551-0021

(914) 566-4665

informer@mhv.net

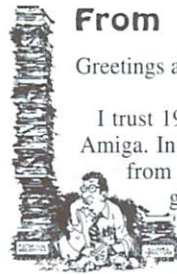
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## From the Editor's Desk:

Greetings all,



I trust 1998 will be a great year for the Amiga. In spite of the frustrating silence from Amiga Inc. publicly, there is a great deal of activity out of the public eye.

I learned from reliable sources that this silence will soon be broken. In fact it's likely a public announcement will be made by the time you read this. I truly hope this is the case, but I will tell you what I hear anyway.

It is my understanding Amiga Inc. has already hired its upper management, including its Development, OS, and Sales managers. New hardware and software engineers have also been hired. Names have not been revealed, but Carl Sassenrath is working for them on OS development.

A marketing strategy is underway that includes the bundling of various software titles on CD and targeting them to be sold with systems and separately. These bundles will be application specific, with graphics, audio, animation, and the internet likely bundle contenders.

There has been a decision on the CPU for the next Amiga. While I cannot say for certain, sources indicate we will likely see a fast clocked 060 CPU before the release of a RISC based system. This will provide 100% Compatibility with current systems and substantial speed improvements while the OS undergoes RISC conversion.

Amiga Inc. is in close contact with Amiga clone manufacturers, in particular, Index Information Ltd. This will ensure that the new clones are compatible with the direction Amiga Inc. is planning.

There's also a 'feel-good' project underway. An 'Amiga Made' competition has started which will solicit and judge images, demos, mods, and animations made with the Amiga. Likewise, a major effort is underway to establish several Amiga web servers which will host Quake competitions. In this way, Amigans can gather to play Quake with other Amigans over the internet.

Much of the above and more is promised to be announced in a February press release. This is great news, but I hope it isn't just a flash in the pan. Amiga Inc. needs to release information to the public and/or press on a regular basis. They must make a major effort to rebuild consumer confidence in the Amiga, which is surely waning. The loss of Rick Snyder from the upper management of Gateway2000 (a true Amiga believer) set the Amiga time schedule back several months while his replacement was convinced of the Amiga's potential. These were vital months lost.

In spite of a decent market, Amiga Inc. must recognize the urgency and importance of acting now or face the loss of the last of its user base. I'm not sure how many more times we can say, "they better do something soon," before Amiga Inc. finds the market has all but slipped away.

Fletcher Haug

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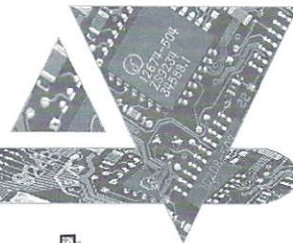
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## Into The Future With Index

By Paul Morabito

Index Information Ltd. of England is one of the most important Amiga hardware companies today. They now make the first truly new Amiga motherboard since the A1200, which offers major improvements over previous motherboards while maintaining 100% compatibility. Index products, including the Access, InsideOut, and the BoXeR, provide a realistic solution for retailers to offer their customers until the next generation of Amiga standards are presented by Amiga Inc.

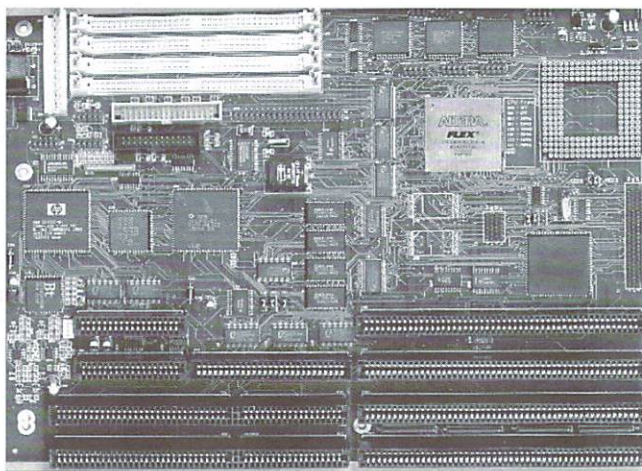
The Informer's Australian correspondent, Paul Morabito, had a chance to talk with Index Information's owner and CEO Mick Tinker. Mr. Tinker provides some very interesting insights into the Index product line and shares them with our readers.

**Amiga Informer (AI):** Give us a little background information on Index Information Ltd.?

**Mick Tinker (MT):** I started the company in early 1991, mainly to produce software for corporate projects. I have a background in electronics and mechanical engineering. Index did various projects for commercial applications including CDTV work for British Telecom, software for a BBC television games show, and a major project at the London Transport Museum.

**AI:** Your first licensed Amiga product, the Access, is in production. Tell us a bit about it. Has there been strong demand?

**MT:** Yes. The Access is aimed at corporate projects. With corporate projects we expect the demand to be steady initially and built up over a period, something that Commodore found hard to live with. The benefit of corporate projects is that they often have longer life cycles, with a stable sales pattern and often substantial volume. We are selling a lot of units that mount in



*The BoXeR is based on the A4000 Motherboard, but offers huge improvements like working PCI slots, Flash ROM, Fast serial and a small design that fits into a standard PC tower case.*

other people's kiosks and cases. There are projects that have CD-ROM towers with an Access in one of the slots and also some projects that stack 8 Access units in a tower case.

**AI:** All of Index's Amiga products include improvements over the standard architecture. The Access is said to be 2.3 times faster than a base A1200. How is this achieved?

**MT:** Some of that is because we have FAST RAM on the motherboard, the balance is because we have been able to improve CHIP RAM access speed by about 30% over the A1200. One of the important elements of our designs is that we use the basic AGA chip set, but our own Logic to integrate everything and control the overall machine . . . allowing us complete control . . . and [easy] performance improvements.

**AI:** The InsideOut promises to be a new generation of high end Amiga computers. What more can you reveal at this point?

**MT:** I looked at the high end market and decided that most people in this area were using graphics cards, wanted ISA for cheap network cards, 16-Bit sound cards, PCI for fast graphics cards, Ultra-SCSI, large

amounts of memory, PC keyboard, etc. We needed 68060 performance and it must of course run Amiga OS.

Working with one of our designers, Dave Westwood, we reached the conclusion that we could use a PC motherboard, retaining a 486 as an intelligent I/O controller. The card was built and worked. All we needed was source for the Amiga OS so that we could re-write some of the initialization code to remove the dependence on the chip set and CIA's, and change the device drivers to use the higher performance ones on the motherboard. All this would be 100% Amiga OS, cheap, and a big leap forward.

We have committed additional funds to the project and produced a second-generation card. This new PCI card is a complete Amiga, including the AGA chip set and CIA's, so that it boots standard Workbench 3.1. It even has IDE, floppy, keyboard and video connectors! We are working with HiQ to run the Siamese software on the card. This gives us an Alpha PC which will run Windows NT, Amiga software at very high speed, and of course Macintosh software. We have not completed all the development work, but we expect to achieve performance about double that of the 68060 on its own because the host processor performs all I/O and graphics across a high speed PCI bus.

What benefits does this have? Compatibility with existing Amiga software. It retains the AGA chip set for video work. PCI, ISA and USB bus on PC/Alpha motherboard. Supports all PCI graphics cards. Supports all local and network drives on the host system. OpenGL, which harnesses the power of the PC/Alpha under Amiga control, MPEG, AVI and Quicktime playback. Digital video recording cards. 16-Bit sound and Wavetable systems using





AHI. Integrates seamlessly with WindowsNT to create a robust and easy to use Amiga/ Macintosh/Windows system. Retains the Amiga video slot capability. 680x0 based Macintosh users can get a huge performance increase and migrate to NT.

**AI:** *The BoXeR stole the limelight from many other Amiga clones on display at Computer 97. Give us a little information on it.*

**MT:** I conceived the design towards the end 1996 when looking inside an A4000T and thinking there had to be a better way of making an Amiga. We have substantially improved the architecture of the motherboard. The A4000 motherboard was actually designed around the 68030, which partly explains some of the poor performance by '040 accelerators when accessing the motherboard, leading to processor boards that have SIMM's, SCSI controllers and even direct links to graphics cards to try to overcome the bottleneck. We have updated the motherboard to use 68040 signaling, while adding support for faster memory and upping the SIMM memory limit from 16 Mb to 2 Gb. We have added working ISA

slots so that it can use cheap PC modems, Ethernet cards, buffered serial cards, etc. We have included a PPC connector and integrated much of the Logic into the motherboard, Zorro 3 slots, video slots, support for Amiga and PC keyboards, support for both the '040 and '060 at speeds from 25 MHz to 75 MHz, the list just goes on and on.

Probably the most significant aspect of the BoXeR is that it can be built using off-the-shelf parts. We are making it available through our distributor, BlitterSoft, to any dealer worldwide as a motherboard without processor or FAST memory. This allows a dealer to specify a range of machines suited to the local market, advertise their own branded product, and stock a standard low cost motherboard. When an order is received, it is a quick operation to turn the motherboard into the final specification machine. This process reduces the stock holding, increases the range of products that can be offered, and reduces delivery times. The dealer knows the customers and can specify, and advertise in the best possible manner to sell the product, something we just could not do effectively worldwide

ourselves. This is similar to the PC market and has resulted in lots of suppliers helping to build the market, something the Amiga desperately needs.

**AI:** *Obviously you have close ties with Gateway2000 and Amiga International through your licensing agreement. Have you been given a glimpse of the Amiga's future?*

**MT:** I have been to both Amiga International's office in Germany and to Amiga Inc., in South Dakota. We do have an NDA and it would therefore be wrong of me to say anything I know. I do believe that Amiga Inc., has a good leader in Jeff Schindler and that they have been able to step back and look not only at what is needed tomorrow, but also the day after and the day after that. The same as everyone else I would like things to progress quicker, but I am confident that things will move from a walk to a flat out sprint quite soon.

More information on Index International Ltd. products can be found at: <http://www.cix.co.uk/~index>



# Games Galore

By Brad Webb



Who would have believed it? The Amiga games market is showing signs of a rebirth, despite still unsettled conditions in the Amiga market as a whole. The Amiga Informer was curious, and looked into the situation.

Recent months have seen several signs of market strength. There are significant new games offerings from a number of companies. Vulcan (UK) will be bringing out Genetic Species around February and recently released three CD-ROM titles; The Strangers, Uropa2, and The Final Odyssey. SAdENESS (UK) has Dafel:Bloodline, onEscapee, and Foundation coming up soon; and of course there's Myst from Canada's ClickBOOM.

Perhaps the biggest news of all is ClickBOOM's porting of the immensely popular PC and Mac game Quake to the Amiga. ClickBOOM, a gaming group within the company PXL Computers, has been licensed by ID Soft to complete the port. Sources indicate the port is already well underway. It will be a full featured port that supports internet play and all additions, and it may be available in February 1998. This would bring it to the Amiga before it arrives on major games consoles like Nintendo 64.

The above is far from a comprehensive list, but it gives a feeling for recent offerings. Other game titles recently or soon to be released are: Trapped 2, Gloom 3,

Nemeses, Pulsator, Maim & Mangle, Explorer 2260, Black Sanctuary, Demistar, Hell Pigs, Golem, Necromantics, Wasted Dreams, The Obelisk, The Haunted, Forgotten Forever, Skimmers and scores more.

There have been consolidations and growth of companies also. As an example, Vulcan recently absorbed World Foundry, adding its high end Amiga expertise to Vulcan's already strong organization. And at long last, CD-ROM's have become the delivery media of choice.

All these happenings are signs of a growing market, at a time when we might better expect a shrinking or cautious market. It's significant that there are few

*continued on page 6*



US companies involved in the resurgence. The Amiga market faded much more completely here than it did beyond our borders. As the computer itself was kept alive by a German company, so the games market is being revived by non-US firms.

It looks as though there's a meaningful amount of confidence in the way the Amiga community is going at present. The Gateway 2000 purchase surely accounts for part of this. The fact that there is now an increasing number of clone makers coming on line, and an active effort to expand the market, won't be lost on software houses.

We contacted people at some of the companies leading the way to get their thoughts on what's happening. We asked for views on why the games resurgence is happening now.

Epic Marketing's Vince Pike pointed out the absence of big software houses in the Amiga market. Most left in recent years as the market shrank and the future for the Amiga looked increasingly bleak. Pike notes: "Due to the lack of 'big name' products/publishers, people like ourselves have seen a market and are trying to fulfill it."

Richard Brown at SAdENESS provided a different and interesting perspective: "I think what's happening is most of the fresh games which are appearing have been in development for some time, anything from a year up to about four years, and most are getting to the stage where they will pick up

lots of interest."

Vulcan's Lisa Tunnah doesn't regard it as a renewal. "Renewal isn't exactly the word I would use," said Tunnah. "Instead the games publishers that continue to support the Amiga are focusing . . . on what has become the core of the Amiga community: those individuals that invested in . . . CD drives, graphics and sound cards, accelerators and now PPC boards."

As Pike indicates, it's very true that most of the movement in the Amiga games market is coming from companies employing just a few individuals. Epic Marketing is typical for the large end of the range with 14 people. The market requires a particular combination of good programming skills, entrepreneurial spirit, and luck in a company sized properly to survive in a small market. It also requires faith that there is and will be an Amiga market to exploit, at least for the foreseeable future. Asked about that Pike commented: "Short term—it appears to be quite successful; long term—we hope it will steadily increase as the Amiga returns."


Like many, Tunnah sees the future depending a lot on Gateway 2000. "Short term we will probably see the trend continue towards upgrading . . . [and] publishers will continue to supply higher spec titles," she says. "The long term future is in the hands of Gateway 2000."

Brown's comments about the future of

the Amiga games market contained just a hint of pessimism. ". . . Only time will tell," he states. "The trouble the Amiga has is those people who have sold up and moved over to the PC are not coming back to the Amiga, they will be happy no matter what products are released for the Amiga. We have lost a massive chunk of the market. So now we have to try and keep current Amiga owners as happy as possible."

Along those lines, Epic's Pike had the following advice for Amiga gamers: "The most important [thought] is the users simply need to keep the market going by purchasing new products/titles. Simply reading about them, and saying 'that looks good' is not enough."

Presumably, one hope for the future lies in Amiga Inc. and Amiga International continuing their push to open up the Amiga market, and bring new computer owners into the fold. With the number of clone and compatible makers actively being increased throughout the world, there is some hope for the Amiga games market to increase on a truly global scale.

The fact is, the Amiga continues to be a very viable games platform. Right now, there are a number of innovative, forward looking companies proving that point over and over. For the Amiga gamers of the world, that's mighty good news. 

### IN BRIEF

**PageStream 3.3a patch** is now available from the Softlogik website at [www.softlogik.com](http://www.softlogik.com). This patch will update version 3.3 owners to the latest version of the best desktop publishing software on the Amiga. French company **Ateo Concepts** is set to start production of the **Pixel64**, a 24-Bit graphic card expansion for the A1200. Ateo is in contact with GVP-M for North American distribution. Look to [www.ateo-concepts.com](http://www.ateo-concepts.com) for all the Pixel64 info. A coup has been struck by **AmiTriX Development**. Their **v3.1 release of AWeb II** supports JavaScript and is the first Amiga browser to do so. It should be available now so visit [www.amitrix.com](http://www.amitrix.com) for all the details. Long time Amiga retailer **Turtle Lightning Software (TLAS)** is the new operator of **Vulcan America** and is now responsible for supplying all Vulcan titles in North American. Contact TLAS by: Phone: 915-563-4925; Fax: 915-563-4315; or Email: [turtleguy@apex2000.net](mailto:turtleguy@apex2000.net). **Mushroom PD** is now an official **US distributor of F1 Software** titles. There are over 150 exclusive full version Licenseware titles to choose from. A full description on-line catalogue will be available soon at [www.mushypd.demon.co.uk](http://www.mushypd.demon.co.uk). Email [mushypd@redrose.net](mailto:mushypd@redrose.net) for futher info. The **source code to DOOM**, by **ID Software**, has been freely released and there are already no less than four known ports available. For links to the source code and information on the Amiga ports visit [www.pluk.com](http://www.pluk.com). **National Amiga's Toaster/Flyer SCSI cases**, which can house hard drives, CD-ROM drives and tape drives, and includes a built in cooling system and three Centronics SCSI connections, are now internationally available. Visit [www.nationalamiga.com/flyercase.html](http://www.nationalamiga.com/flyercase.html) for full details. **ClickBOOM** released the **CyberGFX add-on for Myst**, allowing graphics cards owners to use the game. Currently only available by request from ClickBOOM, it will soon be freely available from Aminet. Visit [www.clickboom.com](http://www.clickboom.com). **Mystique Corporation**, a website dedicated to children and children's software on the Amiga, has been sponsored by Amiga International. Visit [www.mystcorp.u-net.com](http://www.mystcorp.u-net.com) to see what they are all about. **Sadeness Software** announced a CyberGFX patch and an alternative control method for their recently released game onEscapee. Visit [www.sadeness.demon.co.uk/](http://www.sadeness.demon.co.uk/) for full details.



# Gateway's Goals

By Paul Morabito

While the speech by Jeff Schindler, General Manager of Amiga Inc., at the November Computer 97 in Cologne, Germany, didn't reveal exact detailed plans for the Amiga's future, it did give a general outline of what Gateway 2000 has in store for the Amiga.

According to Mr. Schindler, the main goal is for Amiga Inc. to be a research and development firm and for the Amiga to "become a worldwide standard technology for convergence products." This in effect means Amiga Inc. will develop a "core architecture" so that OEM's and licensees can produce whatever product they choose.

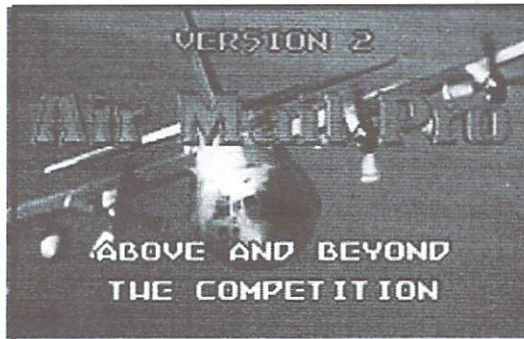
Amiga Inc. is researching the strengths and weaknesses of the current Amiga technology so they can devise a plan for the future of the Amiga. This plan is well under way. Strengths as seen by Schindler include its very efficient yet highly powerful Operating System. Weaknesses include four-year old technology and an aging user interface. Mr. Schindler hinted at the Amiga moving more toward industry standard hardware to eradicate this problem in the future.

Mr. Schindler also stressed the Amiga needs software support for the future and recognized the importance of supporting industry standards. Amiga Inc. is in negotiations with many firms concerning future support and hopes to leverage Gateway's relationship with various software firms to bring some big names to the Amiga. Schindler made it clear that third party support will make or break any new Amiga. He also said the Internet will play a huge part in the Amiga's revival. Gateway sees the Amiga as the ideal Internet computer and want to position it as such.

On an interesting side note, Jeff spoke of the importance of NewTek to the Amiga's future, but because of an NDA with NewTek, could not elaborate further. However, it appears NewTek wants to be a big part of the Amiga's future.

As for the future, nothing is set in stone and Gateway is determined to get it right the first time, even if it takes more time.

To read the complete transcript of Jeff Schindler's speech, visit the Amiga Informer website at [www.amgainformer.com](http://www.amgainformer.com).



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Gravis no longer makes any Amiga Joysticks. Just 220 Joysticks were left when Mr. Hardware Computers bought the last batch. Less than 60 Joysticks are in stock. While they last, we're offering them to Amiga Informer subscribers for just \$25.00 + \$2.00 S&H.



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**On the December 24, 1997 the ICOA finally** received confirmation that their legal papers had been filed. Once the organization is in full operation, it will work with Amiga Inc. to set standards and protocols and aid Amiga Inc. in working with proprietary and open projects. Already some workgroups are in operation with a common RTG standard not too far off. The delay in filing these papers came from the complex legal issues of "ownership, responsibility, accountability and culpability." When the organization is a legal entity, an on-line credit card registration system will be created so developers anywhere in the world can register. Among the Steering Committee members will be one User Representative. A temporary ICOA website is on-line at <http://www.netreach.net/~fleecy/icoa/>.

**After many rumors and almost a year in waiting,** Quake will officially be ported to the Amiga by ClickBOOM. An unofficial version was created from stolen source code by Amiga coders early in 1997, but was quickly halted after ID Software made legal threats. The port, even though it wasn't optimized for the Amiga, proved an Amiga version was possible and ClickBOOM set about obtaining a license to port the game. After prolonged negotiations ClickBOOM has been successful in convincing ID Software an Amiga port is viable. The game will be identical in features to the PC version and is expected to require a high specification Amiga to run. At the moment there is no confirmation of a PPC version, but this is a distinct possibility. Haage & Partner showed a Quake engine running on a PPC Amiga at Computer97 and it was said to be stunning. No release date has been announced.

**The Scientific Amigan website is now in full** operation and is the premier site for those interested in scientific applications and the Amiga. The website was formed from the remains of the now defunct Scientific Amigan magazine and includes all issues on-line as well as new information. There is a wealth of amazing information at this site for your enjoyment. Several detailed technical questions are also posted to the site which ask for reader assistance and input. If you are one of the many technical minded Amigans, visit <http://www.calweb.com/~cyrano> for some interesting reading. Further info is available through email at [cyrano@calweb.com](mailto:cyrano@calweb.com).

**The most technically advanced Amiga compression program,** LZX, first became available in 1995. Since then it has grown in popularity, but it's author Jonathon Forbes decided to cease development upon accepting a job at Microsoft. In a kind gesture to the Amiga community he has decided to release a free generic keyfile which allows the unlocking of many features. The keyfile is available from Aminet at [util/arc/lzxkeyfile.lha](http://util/arc/lzxkeyfile.lha) and every Amigan should install it on their system.



**DCE making Chinese Amiga? Maybe. When news broke** early in 1997 that a company unknown to the Amiga community had designed a set top box utilizing Amiga technology for Chinese and other Asians markets, it created an air of mystery and excitement. The company, Regent Electronics, had designed a machine similar in both appearance and functionality to the CDTV, but technically much more advanced. Recently, there has been strong rumors that DCE Computer of Germany, who have themselves been granted a license by Amiga International to design their own clones, did all the research and development for the machine and will manufacture it for Regent Electronics. Sources indicate between five hundred thousand and one million of these units will be produced and there are tentative plans to market the product in other regions if it proves a success. The information appeared in a German discussion group on the internet and was said to come from a highly placed employee of DCE Computer. Unfortunately, DCE Computer was unable or unwilling to confirm or deny this report in time for print.

**Amiga International has announced the sale of 2,000** Amiga 1200's to India's Shaf Information & Technologies PVT, Ltd. Shaf, an authorized dealer for Amiga International, is a key marketer in India's desktop video market. The Amigas will be used in the cable TV industry, as well as in broadcasting and videography. According to Amiga International, this is the largest sale they've ever made in Asia. Both Amiga International and Shaf see this order as just the beginning of a long term relationship which will see Amiga as a key element in Indian desktop video.



**The International Amiga Marketing Association (INTAMA)** is trying to get off the ground. Being promoted and sponsored by Neather Realm Software, the new organization will be aimed at improving the marketing of Amiga computers and related products and services. A goal is to provide Amiga companies with a comprehensive database of retailers, distributors, manufacturers, publications and service providers, as well as provide vital sales figures and demographics so companies can stay informed on new, growing or diminishing markets. Currently no such database exists and according to INTAMA founders, that can only hurt the Amiga market. The team working to launch INTAMA is currently engaged in surveys of retailers and distributors world wide. If you have information for them or want to know more, contact Michael Kramer at Neather Realm Software - [neather@neather.com](mailto:neather@neather.com); URL: [www.intama.org](http://www.intama.org)



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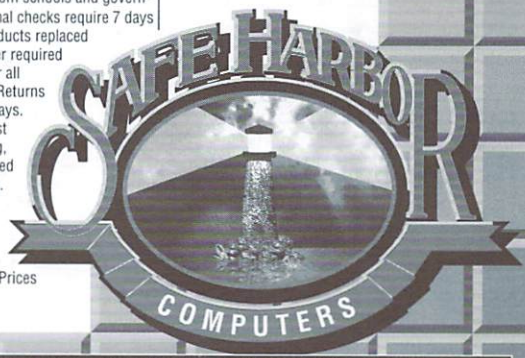
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## Networking And The Amiga Part 3

By Ted Wallingford

# Applications

### Building a Network That Increases Amiga Productivity

In the first two installments of this column, we covered the hardware and software elements that are required to connect an Amiga to a local area network. The hardware elements consists of a network interface which can be an Ethernet adapter, a parallel port network adapter, a modem, or an older interface such as an Arcnet adapter. Together with the new port provided by the network interface, the Amiga's applications can communicate with other machines on the network using specialized software elements known as protocols.

In this installment, we'll examine a number of scenarios that will help you choose the right type of interface and protocol. Getting this combination right is essential to productive networking on any computer platform.

The average user usually has a need for very specific network applications: electronic mail (email), file and printer sharing, or distributed processing. We'll take a look at each of these applications, choosing the correct combination of protocols and hardware for each. For more detail about the client programs that provide a user interface to these applications, please see past installments of Davis Sprague's Site Seeing columns.

#### ELECTRONIC MAIL

Email is a very basic network communications application. Communicating across a network in order to share data and ideas is essential to productive workgroups. Email enables this functionality in ways that don't require much network overhead, so it's usually the network application to be implemented by people using networks to work together.

The largest email network in the world, of course, is the Internet. Using the TCP/IP protocol and a modem the Amiga is enabled for email. The application program required for email, aptly called an

email client, will probably have more system requirements than the TCP/IP protocol itself.

#### FILE AND PRINTER SHARING

The ability for users on different computers to share the same file has a set of advantages that email doesn't have. For example, large files, which would ordinarily take a lot of time and network overhead to email, can benefit by staying in one place while each user accesses them, making the files easier to keep track of.

File sharing usually requires peer-to-peer networking or hub-spoke networking. Peer-to-peer networking allows all users to give access to certain files and directories on their workstations to other users. Hub-spoke networking keeps all the shared files and directories on a dedicated computer, called a file server. For large files that are accessed frequently, hub-spoke is the better choice.

When files are shared, the capability usually exists for printers to be shared also, and the network interface of choice is Ethernet. Using a modem for file and printer sharing can be cumbersome and slow, because the protocols used to provide workgroup sharing functionality are much more bandwidth-intensive, or "talky" than normal protocols like TCP/IP.

Using Ethernet, Amigas can use peer-to-peer and Hub-spoke technology with protocols provided by a number of third-party sharing packages, including IAM's Envoy and AmiTriX's AmigaLink.

#### DISTRIBUTED PROCESSING

One of the best uses for a networked Amiga is distributed processing, wherein many computers work together to accomplish one large task, such as rendering a 3D animation. LightWave 3D has a built-in distributed processing system called ScreamerNet. Computers running LightWave can communicate with each other in order to increase overall rendering speed, regardless of platform.

Distributed processing works best with Ethernet, especially in the case of rendering. A modem would not be suitable for this application because each rendered frame must be gathered in sequence on a file server—a task which requires more bandwidth than a modem can give.

While ScreamerNet uses its own custom protocols, other distributed processing applications may require any number of protocols, including TCP/IP, Novell IPX, or even something else.

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

In the first three installments of this column, we've achieved a basic understanding of network hardware and protocols and the protocol needs of various network applications. In the future, we'll be covering how the Amiga OS handles networking, and we'll examine some very specific applications, including an Amiga Web Server project. We'll also look at Optimizing and Amiga render-farm networks. Stay tuned!



When adding memory to your Amiga 3000 keep in mind you can have unpleasant results if you combine static column and page mode chips. Prior to AmigaOS 3.0, it didnt matter if you mixed the types. AmigaOS 3.x, however, checks the first bank of RAM chips and assumes all the others are the same type. This is fine if the first bank is page mode, as static mode can emulate the page mode type. It doesnt work the other way around, however. If you get the mix wrong, youll find your Amiga wont boot. Instead, it will crash when trying to run setpatch at start-up, unless you turn off CPU caching. Page mode zip RAM chips typically have a -00 extension to their part number, while static column have a -02 extension.



# Monitors For Your Amiga



Feature

## Choosing The Right Monitor

By Ted Wallingford

One of the biggest difficulties Amiga owners face is choosing a video monitor. As the demand for higher resolutions and color depths increases, Amigans are presented with an ever more complex array of display solutions. It can be frustrating to choose the right monitor, but even more frustrating to make it work with your Amiga.

The ideal monitor for all Amigas is one that can handle all the horizontal and vertical scanning frequencies that the Amiga can create. Late model Amigas, such as the 3000, 4000, and 1200, can output a dizzying selection of different scan rates, depths, and resolutions (together called a "screenmode"). Older Amigas could only produce a 15 kHz vertical scan rate, the same scan rate used by NTSC televisions and VCR's. When used with NTSC screenmodes, the Amiga can display 200 vertical scanlines. In order to get higher resolution, a display trick known as "Interlacing" effectively reduces the vertical refresh for each line to 7.5 kHz by displaying one of two image buffers on every other vertical pass. This allows 400 lines to be displayed, but with a tremendous amount of visible flicker.

Back when the Amiga was getting popular for video production, the PC world adopted an entirely different standard, VGA. VGA uses a 31.5 kHz vertical scan rate, roughly double that of NTSC. Consequently, VGA displays can show two or three times the number of vertical scanlines without loss of clarity. When used with 31.5 kHz screenmodes, late model Amigas can display up to 480 vertical scanlines. These displays are flicker-free and non-interlaced. However, when interlacing is used, up to 960 vertical lines can be shown.

The monitor that is best suited to your particular setup will be chosen on the basis of its compatibility with your Amiga, its overall capability, and its cost. One monitor which is tailored to all Amiga screenmodes is the Amiga 1x38 series. These monitors are "multiscan"

monitors, meaning they have the capability to detect and adapt to the vertical and horizontal scan rates being generated by the computer in order to display the highest quality image. These monitors are fairly pricy, though.

One way to defeat flicker and obtain higher resolution is to use a VGA monitor, usually priced at \$250 to \$350 for a 15-inch model. The A1200, A4000, and CD32 can all use a VGA monitor. If your Amiga doesn't have a video card installed, then use the Multiscan:Productivity screenmode and the VGAOnly monitor driver. You'll also need a 25-pin to 15-pin compact video adapter (about \$25 at any Amiga shop) in order to make the VGA monitor connect to the Amiga. Bear in mind that you'll have to boot your Amiga with a 15 kHz NTSC monitor, install the proper monitor files and enable the correct screenmode, disconnect the old monitor, and then connect the VGA monitor. You'll only have to do this the first time if you've saved your screenmode preferences. Note that whenever you boot your Amiga, it will still use its native NTSC display for ROM system messages (such as the Recoverable Alert and Software Failure), and these messages will not be displayed on a VGA monitor. Instead, the screen will just go black. It is wise to create a boot disk that contains the correct VGA screenmode preferences, because if you create a startup call in error, such as a bad entry in your S:startup-sequence file, the Amiga will boot to a blank display. Booting from the boot disk will allow you to fix the problem. The maximum resolution yield for such a setup would be 640x960 with interlace or 640x480 without it.

Note: unless you don't use your CD32 for video games, it is inadvisable to attempt using a VGA monitor, since all CD32 games are made only for 15 kHz displays.

The A3000 supports VGA monitors in a slightly different way: it has its own 15-pin compact connector and a switch that

turns a built-in 15 kHz to 31.5 kHz scandoubler on and off. No difficulty there; just plug the monitor in and flip the switch. The maximum resolution yield is 1280x400 without interlace (through the NTSC:SuperHighRes screenmode). This number of vertical lines cannot be doubled to 800 because the screenmode has already been deinterlaced using the scandoubler.

If your Amiga has a video card installed, using a VGA monitor is usually very easy. CyberGraphX and Picasso96 (which both require OS3.1) are retargetable graphics systems which allow most system-friendly Amiga applications to make use of a VGA monitor. Some Amiga graphics cards even support the use of a scandoubler, a device that forces Amiga-native NTSC screens to be shown on a VGA monitor. This device can be very useful for older video games that are programmed to use only NTSC frequencies. Note that some scandoublers don't work with the Amiga 2000. The maximum resolution yield is limited by the video card, but has often been as high as 1280x1024 with interlace on a VGA monitor.

If you own an Amiga 1000, 500, 600, or CDTV, the likelihood of finding an inexpensive high-res display is practically nonexistent. In order to use one of these Amigas with a VGA or multiscan monitor without interlace flicker, you'll have to use an external scandoubler, a commodity which can cost anywhere from \$150 to \$350. Since these Amigas don't have the Zorro-II bus slots, they cannot house VGA-capable video cards either. The best choice here is still the old NTSC composite monitor, such as the Commodore 1802 or RGB monitor, such as the Amiga 1084, both yielding a maximum of 640x400 with interlace.

As you can see, there are a variety of display options for Amigas, each with pluses and minuses, but hopefully you'll now have an easier time deciding what kind of monitor to choose.





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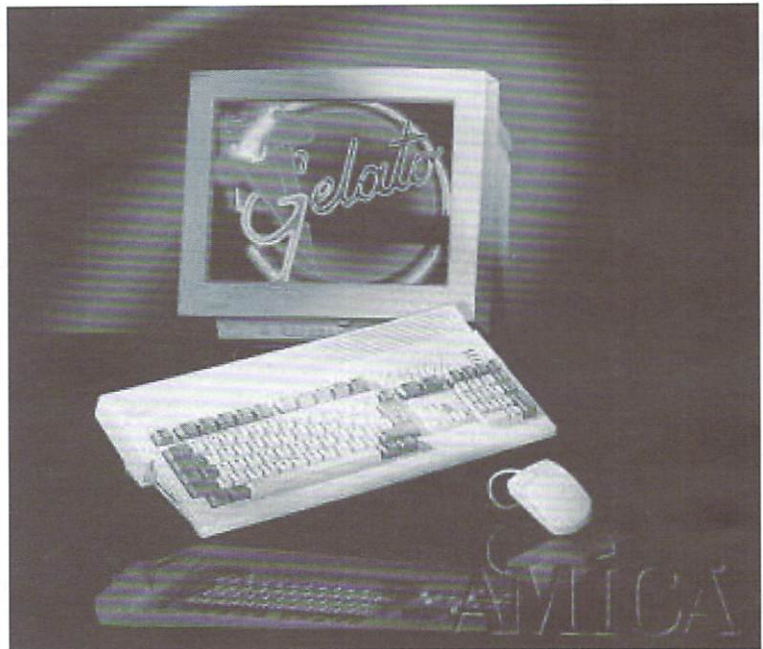
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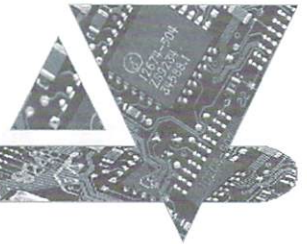
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Email: danny@toysoft-dev.com  
URL: <http://www.toysoft-dev.com>  
Toysoft Development has announced the release of AirMail Pro 2.0 for MUI. AirMail originally began as a shareware program, but has developed into a full featured commercial email client offering features unseen in any other Amiga email program. AirMail Pro 2.0 includes a highly configurable GUI, MIME support including built in viewers and decoders, full SMTP and POP support, a forms creator and "Mail Peek" which allows you to screen messages before downloading. AirMail Pro 2.0 will run on any Amiga with Workbench 2.0 or higher and is compatible with all Amiga TCP stacks. The program is available direct from Toysoft for US \$40 plus shipping.

## Aminet 22 CD

From: Schatztruhe  
Email: stefano@schatztruhe.de  
URL: <http://www.schatztruhe.de>  
Schatztruhe released the latest in a long line of Aminet CD's with Aminet 22. Dated December 1997 the CD includes over 1 gigabyte of software from the largest software archive on the Internet, Aminet. As an added bonus WordWorth 5SE from Digita International is also on the CD. An inexpensive upgrade to the latest release of WordWorth, version 6, is available. Available through most Amiga retailers for about US \$18.

## Developer Book for Blitz Basic

From: Neather Realm Software  
Email: neather@neather.com  
URL: <http://www.neather.com>  
Neather Realm Software announced the release of the "NRS Developer Book For Blitz Basic." The book contains valuable

information for all Blitz Basic programmers from beginners to advanced, including information on trees, compression, collision detection methods, linked lists and expression parsers. The book is 200 pages and includes two disks with sample source code as well as a copy of Blitz Compiler 1.7 free. The book retails for US \$49.95 and is available from Neather Realm Software. Phone 330-945-9047; Fax 330-928-1738

## Games Master System 0.9B

From: Paul Manias  
Email: paul@ethos.co.nz  
The Games Master System aims to allow the AmigaOS to better support games programming. It achieves this through a shared library which includes features such as object oriented kernel design, fast blitter functions, multitasking and screen switching support amongst many other powerful features. The system includes a debugger, resource tracker and, where possible, software based memory protection. The system can be ported to other platforms, and theoretically, GMS programs could be run without recompiling on another platform (only if they use the same CPU). Currently the system is still in beta and is available free from Aminet in dev/misc. Comprehensive documentation including example C, Assembler and E source code is provided. The system is available in user (gms\_user.lha, 230k) and developer (gms\_dev.lha, 450k) versions.

## MasterISO 2.0

From: Asimware Innovations Inc.  
Email: reeves@asimware.com  
URL: <http://www.asimware.com>  
Asimware Innovations has released their next generation CD-R/RW writing software, MasterISO 2.0, which includes many features requested from users and supports even more CD-R drives. MasterISO is the Amiga's oldest CD mastering system and is maturing well. A demo of the program is available from both Asimware's website or Aminet with

the full release available from most Amiga retailers.

## Melody and Simmfonie Distribution

From: Power Solutions  
Email: info@powersolutions.mb.ca  
URL: <http://www.powersolutions.mb.ca>  
Power Solutions, a new Canadian company working towards better distribution of Amiga products, has reached an agreement with Gruner Burotechnik to distribute the Melody sound card in North America. Special introductory pricing of US \$199 (CAD \$275) has been extended until supply runs out. Melody is a Zorro 2, MPEG 16-Bit sound card driven by a special DSP. Melody has native AHI support and Toccato emulation. Any Amiga with a Zorro 2/3 slot can reproduce MPEG audio with Melody. For 16-Bit sound the CPU requirements will change depending on your needs, but AmigaOS 2.04 or greater is required. For complete info on Melody, visit <http://home.pages.de/~kato>. Power Solutions also has North American distribution rights for Simmfonie, a new SIMM adapter for the Amiga 3000 Desktop. Simmfonie is aggressively priced at US \$59 (CAD \$79).  
Phone: 204-453-0527

## ImageFX 3.0

From: Nova Design  
URL: <http://www.novadesign.com>  
Nova Design, Inc., announced the release of the version 3.0 upgrade to ImageFX. Version 3.0 offers an all new user interface with 'child' menus that remain open, instant asynchronous redrawing of your images, larger previews that can be magnified and moved around in, multiple image windows, font sensitivity, real image layers for easy composited image manipulation, improved Flyer support, support for the Photoshop native file format, direct loading and preserving of color-mapped (CMAP) image data, new effects including Clouds, Scatter, Splash, Pagecurler, and FXForge, and many other



improvements throughout. The upgrade from ImageFX 2.0 through 2.6 is only \$79.95 plus shipping. Versions prior to 2.0 can be upgraded for only \$124.95. Available new, through your local Amiga dealer or retailer or order by calling 1-800-IMAGE-69 in the US and Canada or 804-282-1157 elsewhere.  
 Fax: 804-282-3768.

## Amiga Shows

### San Diego Symposium

March 6-8, San Diego, CA. To be held in conjunction with The Lively Computer and the PVTF User Group at the Lafayette Hotel. This working symposium will host 3 days of hands-on workshops and classes and will feature presentations by NewTek, Nova Design, OZware, MegageM, Visual Inspirations and more. For specifics and pricing information call 619-589-9455 or email Tim Roberts at pirate@connectnet.com

### Gateway Computer Show - Amiga 98

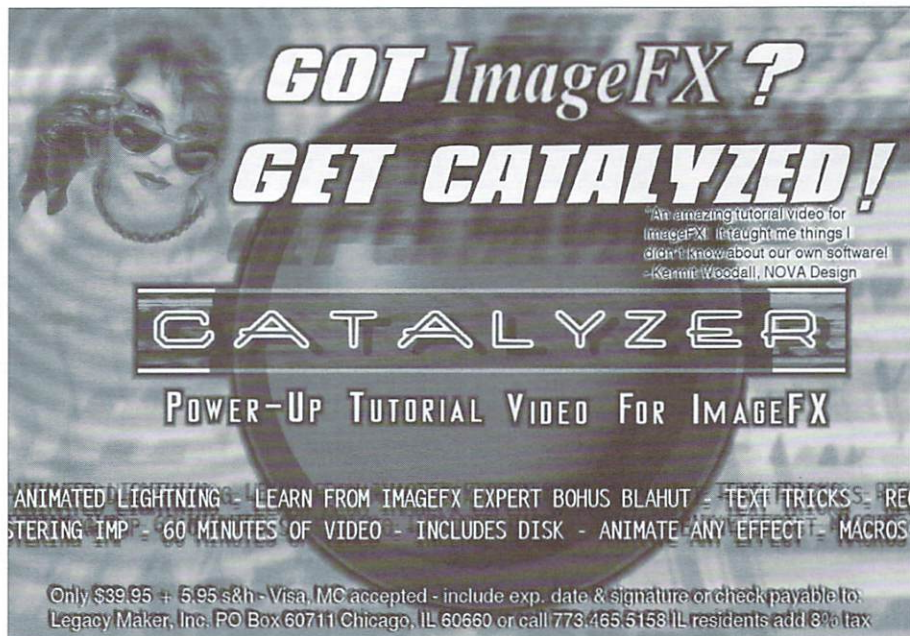
March 13-15, St. Louis, MO. The show will feature dealers, user groups, and Amiga notables including Petro Tyschtschenko and Jeff Schindler. It will also be the site of the 3rd International Developers Conference. For complete information visit <http://www.amiga-stl.com>.

### International Amiga 98

May 29-30, Toronto, Canada. This show is being billed as North America's largest Developer/Manufacturer based Amiga Show. It will feature Phase 5 developer sessions and include Amiga Inc. and many other conferences and training sessions. Visit [www.randomize.com/ia98.html](http://www.randomize.com/ia98.html) for full details.

### AmiWest, Sacramento, CA

Specific details of this show were not fully available at time of press, but the show is sanctioned by Amiga Inc. It will be held in the Sacramento area near the end of July, 1998. The ICOA is planning an official Developers Conference for two days of the show. Further info can be found temporarily at [www.sonic.net/~alanwall/show.html](http://www.sonic.net/~alanwall/show.html). A permanent site will be at [www.sacc.org/amiwest.html](http://www.sacc.org/amiwest.html) when all details are in order.



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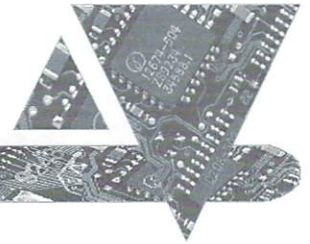
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# Enhancements



Workbench  
Extras

By Brad Webb

I suspect the Amiga's ENV: and ENVARC: devices, along with the entire topic of Environmental Variables, are among the most mysterious parts of the operating system for many. This mystery often results in Amigas which are wasting RAM that could be used for applications. The lost RAM is consumed by the Environment, for variables that are not required.

A quick look at what the Environmental Variables are and how they work is essential. Then we'll discuss two tools you can add to your Amiga to help you manage the Environment. Full use of these tools is not for the faint of heart, but all Amigas can gain some benefits from them.

An Environmental Variable is similar to a line from a configuration file. It controls how a portion of your Amiga is set up. For example, if you have assigned a particular icon image as the default image for disk icons, an Environmental Variable called `def_disk.info` will be created. Any disk inserted in your computer will refer to this variable to obtain an image for its disk icon, unless it has a physical icon file already on the disk.

The versions of your Workbench software and Kickstart software are stored in Environmental Variables, called Workbench and Kickstart appropriately enough. Any program running on the computer can check these variables to see if the versions are recent enough, and issue an error if they are not.

Many programmers make use of this Environment system to set up parameters for their applications. This is NOT how Environmental Variables were meant to be used, but it's common. The variables were meant for system wide concerns, as the disk icon and versions in our examples. Using them for programs means as you add more and more applications to your system, more and more Environmental Variables are created.

The definition files for the

Environmental Variables are written to a disk directory called Env-Archive. This directory is given the logical name ENVARC:, so you can access it as if it were a disk.

A second storage area is also created for Environmental Variables. This is the directory ENV in the RAM disk. It is given the logical name ENV:. This is where a problem may develop. At boot time, all the contents of ENVARC: are copied to ENV:. This consumes RAM, even for variables from programs you aren't using. Worse, if you remove a program from your disk, its variables will stay behind in ENVARC: and be copied to ENV: every time you boot, unless you go in and remove them by hand. I don't

recommend you do that unless you know just what you are doing!

A number of programs exist to help you manage this situation. A good one is "Envman," written by Dominique Lorre. It gives you a Graphical User Interface through which you can examine your Amiga's environment, and make changes. The program documentation begins with this warning: "If you are not a skilled AmigaDOS user: Don't even try this application!" Strong words, and worth remembering. However, if you install Envman you can use it to examine your environment without causing damage. Read the documentation thoroughly and don't delete anything unless you're sure it's not needed, and you'll be fine.

In fact, there's a way to avoid deleting



## Datatypes

By Paul Morabito

Probably the most advanced feature added to AmigaOS 3.x is Datatypes. Datatypes are files which describe a file format allowing any program that supports datatypes to read that file format. Datatypes are tremendously versatile and can be used to support file formats from a simple text file to MPEG video.

Datatypes basically work as filters for any program that supports them. For example, when a program wants to import a JPEG image it merely redirects the decoding to the datatype which proceeds to decode the image into a format understandable by the program, and then sends the output to that program.

Many programs support datatypes, both freely distributable and commercial. Personal Paint allows images to be im-

ported using datatypes as does Photogenics, STFax and AWeb. Multiview, supplied with AmigaOS 3.x relies totally on datatypes to view files.

But there are problems and restrictions with the datatypes and datatype libraries that come with AmigaOS 3.x. First, everybody planning on seriously using datatypes should get a copy of the updated `datatypes.library`, found on Aminet at `util/libs/dtypes454upd.lha`. This includes many bug fixes and improvements over the original Commodore library. Users of graphics cards should get a copy of the updated `v43 picture.datatype` `util/dtype/PictDT43.lha` which allows images of depths greater than 8 bits (256 colors) to be viewed as well as numerous other features unseen in





anything. If you have enough disk space for ENVARC: to grow, and most people do, then there's another way to keep the ENV directory under control. That's through the use of the second of our programs, "HappyENV," written by Martin Gierich. HappyENV restructures the Environment to make it stop wasting RAM. The program replaces the ENV: assignment in the RAM disk with a separate, resizable ram disk of its own and assigns ENV: to this new device. Only Environmental Variables actually needed by the computer are copied from ENVARC: to this new ENV:. This means a slightly longer startup time when you first run a program, but I doubt you'll ever notice it. What you may notice is more RAM available in your computer, depending on how much "junk" you have accumulated in ENVARC:.

Installing HappyENV requires more than beginner knowledge of the Amiga. You have to modify your Startup-Sequence file, something that should never be done unless absolutely neces-

sary. Excellent instructions are provided in the HappyENV archive, but if you are the least bit unsure of the installation, have someone who's comfortable doing such things help you.

Once HappyENV is installed and the computer is rebooted, run Envman. Check the list of Environmental Variables in the "Archive" window (shows ENVARC: contents) and the "Global" window (shows ENV: contents). Keep an eye on these as you work with your system. You may be amazed! The savings in RAM might be substantial, and could easily be justification for using these programs.

If you want more benefits, and you're brave, and you've been tracking the Environment long enough to be sure of what you're doing, you can use Envman to delete simple Environmental Variables that are no longer needed by your software. If your programs set up subdirectories in ENVARC:, you'll have to use the shell or a directory tool to eliminate them. At this point, Envman doesn't handle

entire directories of variables. One other point: don't blame me or either program's author if anything goes wrong and you have to reinstall or reconfigure something. These are very handy enhancements to Amiga OS, but dangerous especially if pushed too far or used without caution. Use them based on your level of expertise, and you should be very happy with both.

Envman is freeware. I could find no version number, but the most recent copy I know of has a 1996 copyright date. It should work on any Amiga with Amiga OS 3.1, perhaps with earlier versions. Find it on Aminet in util/wb/Envman.lha.

HappyENV 1.0 is cardware: the author requests a picture postcard from users, a generous offer. HappyENV runs fine under Amiga OS 3.1 and may run under earlier versions. There are no special processor or RAM requirements. HappyENV is available from Aminet, disk/misc/HappyENV.lha.



the Commodore v42 and lower releases. There are also updates of sound.datatype and animation.datatype available on Aminet.

An organization has also been created, called The Datatypes Association, to ensure that datatypes are developed and improved upon. Its members are largely programmers and developers and they are responsible for the continual improvement and coordination of the datatypes system.

AmigaOS includes a range of standard datatypes for AmigaGuide documents, ILBM images, IFF anims and 8SVX sound files amongst others. However, if you are often involved in exchanging files between platforms, interested in multimedia, or are connected to the Internet you will soon realize there are many other file formats around and those supplied are simply not enough. The

util/dtype directory is a whole directory on Aminet full of datatypes for all manner of common and uncommon file formats.

Every Amiga should at least have a GIF, JPEG and WAVE datatype. Both GIF and JPEG are image file formats popular on all platforms and are extensively used on the Internet, while WAVE is a sound file format popular on the PC and also in widespread usage on other platforms and the Internet. For images the "ak" series of datatypes by Andreas Kleinert (also author of SuperView, see issue 10) are the most stable and up to date. The JPEG datatype is available on Aminet at util/dtype/akJFIF43x.lha. Due to restrictions on the GIF image format, the akGIF datatype has been removed from Aminet. In its place I recommend getting the ZGIF datatype found on Aminet at util/dtype/ZGIFDT39.18.lha. A WAVE

datatype can also be found on Aminet at util/dtype/fpWAV\_dt40.2.lha.

Installing datatypes is a breeze. Usually an installation script is provided with the program, but if one isn't all you have to do is copy the file ending with '.datatype' to classes/datatypes on your Workbench disks or partition. The other file, usually with the name of the file format it is describing, can be copied to either devs/datatypes or storage/datatypes. If you want the datatype active every time your Amiga is booted then put it in devs/datatypes otherwise copy it to storage/datatypes. If you wish to activate a datatype in the storage/datatypes drawer all you have to do is double click on its icon.





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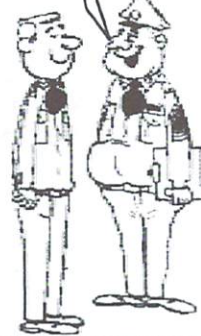
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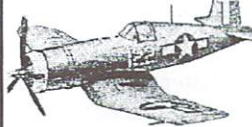
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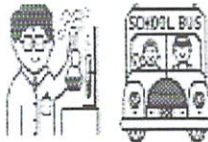
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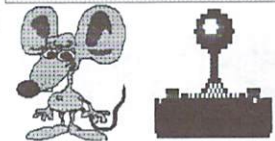


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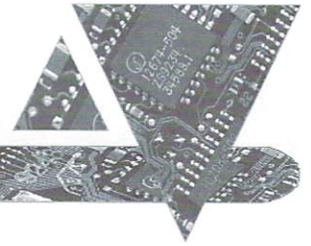
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# Site Seeing



## It's Terminal . . . Direct Communications, That Is

By Davis Sprague

Say you have a file that you want to send to a friend, and for the sake of argument, let's say you don't want to use a network because of privacy considerations. You could put your file on a diskette and hoof it over to your friend and hand it to him. This is what has been jokingly referred to as "sneakernet," and it is the most secure method of transfer. But if you both have modems, there is an easier method and what it requires is terminal software.

The name terminal comes from the old system architecture, where a mainframe computer functioned as the center of a network, with a number of branches like spokes extending from this computer toward the users. At the end of each spoke was usually a dummy terminal. As with many of the early networks, different companies developed different standards for how this information was sent and received. Thus, there are many different proprietary terminal types.

The two emulations that are used today for most of the communications work are the VT102 and the ANSI (or ANSI-BBS) types. These are preferred because they are intuitive and rather easy to use. Other types of terminals may require complicated control character manipulations, but with VT102 and ANSI, generally, what you type is what you get. There are many other terminals that you may wish to try such as RIP, which is used to create a graphic point 'n click style interface.

When looking over Amiga terminal emulation programs, you may see something called an XEM library. This is an eXternal EMulation library which can be called by programs supporting the XEM standard to emulate various terminal types. They are stored in the LIBS: directory, and are called by the terminal pro-

gram to encode and decode data going to and from the network.

Sending a binary data file (programs, images, etc.) is different than sending a set of ASCII characters and requires a function developed after terminals expanded beyond the dummy terminal stage. This function is called a transfer protocol. A transfer protocol is a way of

It can be helpful to know at least a few of the common Hayes command sets, so here are just a few:

'+++': Gets modems attention for command input

ATDT: Dial and connect for touch tone phones

ATDP: Dial and connect for pulse phones

ATA: Answer and connect

ATH: Hang-up

ATZ: Resets modem to default settings

encoding a file so that it can travel through a network and be reconstituted at the receiving point, whole and intact. The commonly used protocols for sending binary data are Zmodem, Ymodem, Xmodem and Kermit. Zmodem is the most advanced at this point, allowing for error checking, error correction, and file completion.

As with emulations, there are eXternal transfer Protocol libraries. These XPR libraries also reside in the LIBS: directory and allow configuration of many different protocols to maximize transmission speed over your particular network.

OK, back to the problem at hand. It turns out that terminals can be connected directly to form a one-to-one network. To do this with your friend, first make sure that you both have terminal software, and that you are using the same emulation

and file transfer protocols. Next decide who is going to be the "caller" and who is going to be the "answerer." Once the connection is established, it doesn't matter which is which.

The "caller" types ATD### where ### is the telephone number of the "answerers" modem. When the "answerer" sees that the line is ringing - usually the modem sends some cute message like "RING" - they should type ATA. After each AT command the modem should send a message "OK" back to your terminal screen. If all goes well, the modems will start making noises. This is called handshaking. With luck the modems soon go quiet and your terminals are connected. Now when you or your friend types, it will appear on both screens (make sure duplex is set to half). The same happens when your friend types.

At this point, you should be able to access the file sending function of your terminal program, select the file to send, and transmit it to your friend's computer. When you are done type "+++", then "ATH" after the "OK" screen prompt to hang up. Most terminals automate some of this process by giving menu items for dialing and hanging up, etc. Likewise, most modems comply at least superficially to the standard "Hayes compatible" set of codes listed above. If your modem does not, you'll have to go through the modem manual to get the command set straight to address your modem directly.

Well that's it, the in's and out's of direct connection of two computers over a modem line.





# TERM

By Davis Sprague

I had first planned to write a comparative analysis of the available terminal programs currently available in the public domain. As it turned out several were only usable if you bought keyfiles, so I couldn't evaluate them properly. Others were quite quirky like Dreamterm, or Nanoterm, but side from their amusement value, they had little special to offer. Then there were the partially enabled commercial programs, like the public domain version of Terminus, but these are crippled demos, not shareware. I consider AmTerm, from Vaporware, to be a weak contender. Although I reviewed AmTelnet favorably in the past, AmTerm—which is essentially AmTelnet configured to run through your serial port—is a very poor offering in the relatively developed area of terminal emulators. Finally, there were the nice but old programs like VLTjr, but they haven't been updated in years and don't take advantage of the newer Amiga OS versions, etc. After eliminating these programs, I was left with one program to discuss and that program is Term.

Term is giftware, and is available on Aminet, as well as through most shareware dealers. On Aminet, it is distributed as a number of files, and a master file called a roadmap. To decide which files you need, get the roadmap file and read it. It will describe the procedure for assembling Term for your system. There are separate binaries for 68000 or accelerated 680x0 processors, as well as libraries, and extra files. These all install easily. The most recent version of term is a patch from version 4.7 to 4.7c. This requires that you download and install term as the roadmap indicates, and then download the latest patch file term\_47c\_pch.lha, unarchive this, and install the patch as well. All this is done with standard installer scripts, so the installation, though complex, isn't difficult.

Term is entirely configurable, so you

can determine whether the display will be a screen or a window, which fonts you want to use, the colors involved, the information display, etc. It is fully system compliant. Term also uses both the XEM and XPR class of libraries and these are also included in the distribution. With XEM, XPR and built in emulations, Term can emulate virtually any terminal necessary.

In my experience, Term is exceptionally stable and has never interacted with my background tasks. If it is launched with the serial port occupied by another program, it will notify you, and load itself without connection to the port. It has all the common terminal functions, including a "Phonebook" to store frequently used numbers. The Phonebook also includes a full set of available preferences for the program with each number, so when the connection is made, the correct configuration of the terminal is automatically loaded.

Several very nice functions not found together in any of the competition are the button bars, appicon, iconify, and ARexx scripting functions. The Fast!Macros configuration function allows a button bar to be created and displayed in a separate window on the screen. This button bar can execute commands and send messages through the terminal. This is aside from the fully configured function keys. If you launch Term as a window on the workbench, you'd find that there is an appicon placed on the workbench as well. Files dropped here are loaded into the upload queue, and are automatically sent when the upload binary file(s) menu option is clicked on. Term can also be set to release the serial port on iconification.

This way, you can connect with your internet server using Term to dial and send the logon information, and then iconify Term and start you're TCP/IP stack. When you're done, term is restarted by clicking on the icon, and it recaptures the serial port. This is especially useful with stack emulators like "mlink."

Term's ARexx scripting function is fairly unique. If you use the Record Script menu item, or click on the Start Record on Connect gadget in the dialing window, Term will write a script to do what you do in response to what the computer you connect to sends, until you pull down this menu and stop recording. Then this ARexx script is stored and you are prompted as to whether you want to use this script every time you dial this number. If so, it is automatically added to the Phonebook configuration file. In this way you can automate sign-on to a distant computer, simply doing it once and recording it. Then when you click on the Phonebook entry, the number is dialed and you are signed on, all by the magic of ARexx.

Overall, Term is an excellent effort, and has diligently been maintained and debugged by its creator, Olaf Barthel. Were this a review, I'd have to give Term an A+, as the standard that all other terminal emulation programs should aspire to. As a giftware project, the value is remarkable, and the program itself is a combination of the best that terminal emulators have to offer. Term is obviously a labor of love, similar to the Amiga OS itself. I only hope Mr. Barthel continues to work on and update Term to keep it in the forefront of Amiga software.



So, you think Term comes ready to download in one easy file? Think again. Here's a list of Aminet addresses for the many available Term files.

**Overview:**

comm/term/term-roadmap.txt

**Binaries:**

comm/term/term-main.lha  
(68000 version)  
comm/term/term-030.lha  
(68020+ version)

**Libraries:**

comm/term/term-libs.lha

**Locale:**

comm/term/term-locale.lha

**Extras:**

comm/term/extras.lha

**Documentation:**

comm/term/term-doc.lha  
comm/term/term-dvi.lha

**Source code:**

comm/term/term-source.lha

**Patches:**

comm/term/term\_47a\_pch.lha  
(4.7 to 4.7a)  
comm/term/term\_47b\_pch.lha  
(4.7 to 4.7b)  
comm/term/term\_47c\_pch.lha  
(4.7 to 4.7c)



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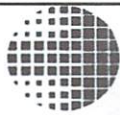
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**Software that comes along with the PowerUp accelerator boards**

The PowerUp accelerators will be shipped with a comprehensive software package. Beside the powerful and comprehensive RISC support multiprocessing library which allows the transparent integration of the PowerPC processor into the Amiga multitasking OS environment, all boards are shipped with CyberGraphX V3 Native including PowerPC-optimized CyberGL 3D libraries and MPEG functions which allow fast 3D applications and multimedia tasks to run on the high-performance PowerPC processors. Also available are comprehensive software tools including a public domain GNU C compiler with PowerPC support as well as free demo software and utilities and developer support via the phase 5 FTP site. With these tools the PowerUp boards are also a perfect solution for all creative users who want to actively explore the performance of a modern RISC multiprocessing system while staying with the advantages of their preferred Amiga OS.

- Cyberstorm PPC (3000/4000(t))
- Blizzard 2604e (A2000/1500)
- Blizzard 603e (A1200(t))
- Blizzard 603e+ (A1200(t))
- Cybervision PPC (for Cyberstorm PPC and Blizzard 2604e)

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**PowerUp specials for owners of phase 5 accelerators**

Owners of a 68030-, 68040- or 68060-based accelerator from phase 5 digital products can make use of special PowerUp upgrade offers which make the PowerUp accelerators even more attractive. The PowerUp upgrade offer is available to original customers of one of the mentioned phase 5 accelerators (except the Blizzard 1230-I) and requires only the proof of purchase and serial number of the product (please note that second-hand purchased products are excluded from the PowerUp Upgrade offer). Registered owners of phase 5 accelerators will receive an upgrade offer by mail shortly before the release date of the PowerUp accelerator that is available as an upgrade to their existing phase 5 accelerator.



- Cyberstorm MK III (A4000/4000T A3000/3000T) 68060 @ 50mhz \$ 675
- Cyberstorm MK III (A4000/4000T A3000/3000T) 68040 @ 40mhz \$ call
- Both include built in Ultra SCSI III
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CYBERSTORM PPC -150, -180, -200

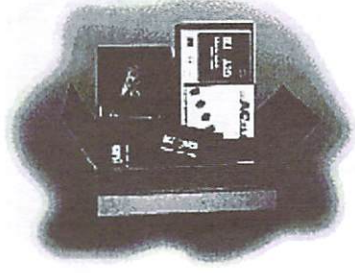
**PowerPC 604e Accelerator Board for AMIGA 3000(T) and 4000(T)**

The Cyberstorm PPC is the high-end PowerUp accelerator for Amiga 3000/4000(T) systems and systems with a compatible processor slot. It features a high-performance PowerPC604e RISC processor in different clock speeds and a socket for either a 68040 or 68060 companion processor, a memory expansion option for up to 128 MByte of ultra-fast 64-bit memory, a Wide-Ultra-SCSI controller on board and an expansion slot for high-performance expansions such as the CyberVisionPPC. This board is ideally suited for all A3000/A4000 users who already own an accelerator with either a 68040 or 68060 processor; for Cyberstorm users it will be the PowerUp upgrade offer.

**Technical Data CYBERSTORM PPC Accelerator Board:**

PowerPC Processor	PowerPC604e
Clock Speed	150-200 MHz
Companion CPU	68040/68060 25-50 MHz
est. PPC Performance MIPS	@200 MHz appx. 350
SpecFP95	appx. 7.1
Memory Option SIMM Sockets	max. 128 MB four
SCSI on board Suitable	Ultra-Wide A3000/A4000(T)

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- 8362 Denise (Resolution) 10
- 8364 Paula Audio Chip 10
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- 8520 CIA Chip PLCC - For Amiga 4000, 1200 and 600 19
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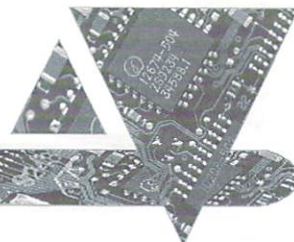
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# Evaluations



## REVIEWS

### Informer rating scale:

**A:** Excellent. Nearly flawless product.

**B:** Above average. Minor complaints or flaws.

**C:** Average. Passable, but needs some improvement.

**D:** Below average. Major complaints or flaws.

**F:** Not recommended. Of little use or value.

## CrossDOS v7 Gold

CrossDOS has long been assisting Amiga owners to live in a world glutted with IBM compatible computers. It's such an important part of Amiga computing that it was added to the operating system some time ago. That being the case, why would anybody go out and buy a copy? The answer is simple—the Wintel computer world has moved on since Amiga OS 3.1 came out, and the version of CrossDOS that comes with your computer no longer meets all needs.

There may be a few Amigans who don't know what CrossDOS does, so here's a brief description. It allows you to use MS/DOS formatted floppy drives, hard drives and removable media as if they were native to the Amiga. There are certain limitations. Since the disks have an MS/DOS format to them, MS/DOS limitations apply. Improvements to MS/DOS have removed most restrictions, but you still can't have Amiga style file notes, or all the protection bits which the Amiga can use.

CrossDOS is not a PC emulator. It will not allow you to run MS/DOS or Windows programs on your Amiga. For that, you must install either a hardware or software emulator. What it does do is make transferring data from a PC to an Amiga simple and painless. That's a very worthwhile goal in itself.

The latest version is CrossDOS Version 7 Gold. This edition has been upgraded in several areas. Most importantly, it can now handle long file names as generated by Windows 95 and Windows NT. No longer are you limited to the old "eight dot three" filename format. As many

companies standardize on either 95 or NT, this becomes a much needed feature. The hard drive configuration program has been improved, and there are changes designed to make the program easier to use and more transparent to the user.

In my tests I found CrossDOS extremely reliable. Using the supplied installer script, it integrates itself seamlessly into the Amiga environment. The only concern I have is that the Amiga's Mount, DiskCopy and Format commands are replaced with new versions. However, I have seen no problems with using these new versions under Amiga OS 3.1. The new command programs are expanded to deal with MS/DOS disks as well as Amiga OS disks.

CrossDOS comes with a commodity to handle text file translations. The Amiga and MS/DOS machines have several differences in the way they handle text files. This commodity, when active, translates between the two systems. It has to make some assumptions, so on very rare occasions there may be editing required on a transferred file. This is most likely when international characters are included in the text, as the two systems handle them differently. Keep in mind that text translation should NEVER be used when transferring binary (program) files as it will likely corrupt them.

In addition to reading and writing from floppies, CrossDOS can work with various hard drive setups. This is really only useful with removable hard drive media, such as Zip or SyQuest drives. It is recommended that such media be formatted on a real MS/DOS computer, but CrossDOS will do it if necessary.

A second type of hard drive CrossDOS can handle is the simulated. Using the supplied configDISK program (not the Install program as stated erroneously in the manual) you can format an Amiga partition to MS/DOS. This may come in handy to users of software emulators,

such as PC-Task or PCx.

Third, the disk configuration program can also set up a simulated hard disk. This may also be useful for users of software emulators or the Amiga Bridgeboards.

A series of useful support utilities are provided. We have already mentioned some. There is also QuickPrep for working with CrossDOS configured hard drives, DiskChk to check the validity of disks, DiskChg for use with drives that don't auto-sense a disk change, and Dr\_CrossDOS to help you diagnose problems.

The manual that comes with CrossDOS is adequate, though you may have to search a bit to answer some questions. My copy had some printing errors, but they were not serious. The one caveat I found is a bug that should be under control by the time you read this. This bug prevents you from copying more than about 200 to 250 files into any directory or sub-directory. [A patch should now be available on the Consultron web site to resolve this problem.- ed]

CrossDOS rates an "A" in my book. This is a supremely useful program for anyone who needs or wants to work with MS/DOS and Windows computers as well as the Amiga. Given changes in Windows machines in recent years, Version 7 Gold is an absolute necessity for such people and I recommend it highly.

CrossDOS is developed by Consultron and was tested on an A3000 with 12 Mb RAM, and OS 3.1. It will work on any Amiga with Amiga OS 2.0 or higher and you will need an Amiga high density floppy to access high density PC disks. Suggested retail price is US \$80. Tech support: 313-459-7271; URL: [www.cucug.org/~consultron](http://www.cucug.org/~consultron)

Rating: A

By Brad Webb







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# New York Newsreader

A marvelous place to obtain information—and misinformation too—about your computer, software and peripherals are the Usenet newsgroups. The Usenet comprises a worldwide set of servers on the Internet, which carry messages on many thousands of topics organized in newsgroups. To read or add to the postings, you need a news reader and a connection to the Internet.

Author Christopher Aldi has created a full featured, well-designed newsgroup reader in New York [the program, not the state -ed], developed by Finale Development. During extensive tests, the program performed very well and the controls proved to be well laid out and easy to use.

As with any newsreader, your first step is to install the program, then configure it to find your Internet Service Provider's NNTP news server. You may need to contact your ISP for details. Other than the name of the server, the small but well-written manual will provide you with all the information you need to get started and to operate New York. Manual author John Kelly is to be commended for his work. The manual is clear, concise and contains the essential information. The only potentially confusing item is where it refers to the "address" for your ISP's NNTP server. What's really needed is the server's name, though you could probably use the IP address instead. I'd recommend using the servers name if possible. That way, if your ISP moves the server to a different address, New York should continue to work without reconfiguration.

One nice feature escaped the manual. The main New York window has two sections separated by a tool bar for selecting commands. The top section of the window displays article headers; the bottom is where you read selected articles. Just below the tool bar is a thin drag bar. Grab it with the mouse pointer, and pull up or down to change the relative sizes of the header and reading areas. Very slick!

The first time New York contacts the NNTP server, it will download a list of all the newsgroups provided by your site. This can take a long time. Once com-

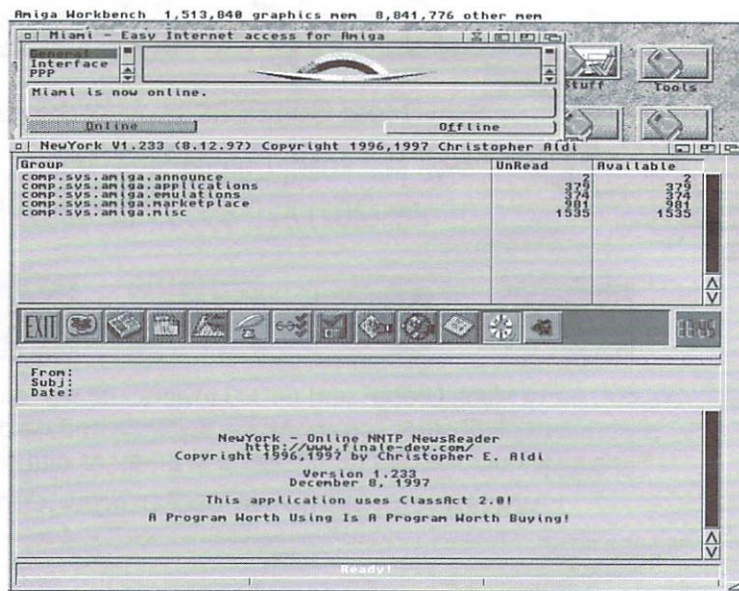
plete, you are presented with a hierarchical display of the groups in a window. This makes it very easy to go through thousands of newsgroups and select the ones you want to use ("subscribe to"). You can tell New York the maximum number of articles it should download per session from each newsgroup. The maximum applies to all groups; you can't set individual limits for each group.

The acts of reading articles, posting a response to the group, responding by email to the author, saving and printing articles, and other common activities, are all controlled by a series of tool bars. These tool bars have icons to indicate their function. Once learned, they work well. There is a Help icon that toggles help bubbles on or off. These appear when you leave the mouse pointer over an icon for a few moments and may be of real value when you first use the program. Functions are also available from pull down menus. Overall, the GUI is well thought out and comfortable to use.

There are 'nice to have' features also, such as a kill list to filter out annoying posters and articles. The manual provides good advice on how to set up such a file. Another is bookmarking. You can keep an article viewable indefinitely using this feature; at least as long as the article is on the server.

The program can decode uuencoded files or MIME encoded files. It can even do this in batch mode, where you select multiple files and turn it loose.

New York offers: multiple ways to sort the articles in the list display; group rescan for articles that arrive while you are on-line; find and hunt commands to help you find specific topics; copying of articles to the Amiga clipboard; and,



*Slick and full of features like reaizable reading areas, inuitive toolbars, bookmarking, multiple sort options, and find & hunt commands, New York is a leader among Amiga Newsreaders.*

many other features.

There is little to complain about with New York, but there are some things that could be improved. We've already mentioned you can set only one maximum download limit which applies to all newsgroups. Another complaint is that New York currently has no off-line capabilities, which might be desired by some. This may be added in a future release.

The help bubbles proved intermittent—sometimes appearing, other times not. I could never get them to appear for the buttons in the composition window used to post or reply to a posting. Since you have four styles of icons for the toolbars, including text, there is a work around.

You may not be able to see all the icons on the main toolbar, unless you resize the window; and there's no indication some may be invisible other than looking at the illustration in the manual. The window can be snapshotted to remember its size once you get it to your liking.

Finally, when you choose to reply by email your mailer will be started, but the address of the poster may not be copied into the "To" field. You'll have to switch back to New York and look it up, at least for YAM, the mailer I tested it with. Addresses are supposed to transfer to Finale's Voodoo mailer program, but I was unable to test that. I'm told there is an ARexx script at Aminet that gets

*continued on page 39*



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## PHASE 5 ACCELERATORS

### POWER PC ACCELERATOR BOARDS FOR AMIGA COMPUTERS

The Cyberstorm power PPC is the high-end Power Up accelerator for Amiga 3000/4000(T) systems and systems with a compatible processor slot. It features a high-performance Power PC604e RISC processor in different clock speeds of 180 and 200 MHz. A socket is provided for either a 68040 or a 68060 companion processor, a memory expansion option for up to 128 Mbyte of ultra-fast 64 bit memory, a Wide-Ultra-SCSI controller on board and an expansion slot for high-performance expansions such as the CyberVision PPC.

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# Storm C

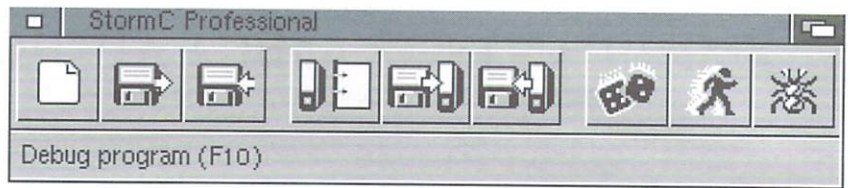
Recently, Amiga developers have been starved of professional development packages. The Amiga Development Environment (ADE) on Aminet offers a multitude of free, feature-rich tools, but newsgroups and IRC are no substitute for the manuals and user support demanded of a commercial release. The program GCC (a freeware C++ compiler) has a very steep learning curve, putting it out of the reach of anyone new to programming or inexperienced with C++.

For an ever-growing number of software engineers and programmers, C++ is the language of choice. It is fast, structured, logical and portable. Although there are easier languages to learn (Pascal, BASIC and Amiga E are all good examples), few can boast the reams of quality books, training, knowledge base and jobs available for C and C++ developers. C++ is the most significant programming language in desktop computing today.

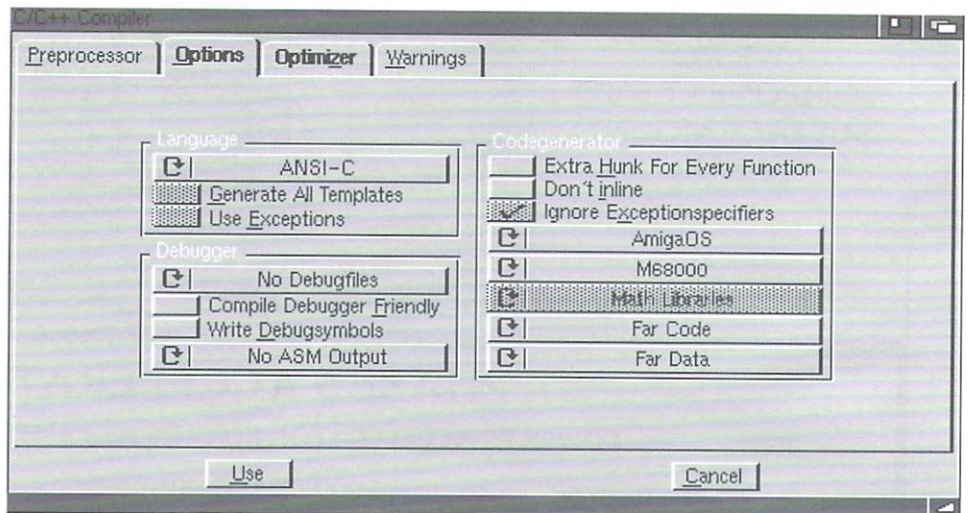
Fitting the familiar story too well, Microsoft Windows developers are spoiled for choice as far as C++ is concerned. PC development tools are a generation ahead of the best the Amiga can offer, and largely contribute towards the phenomenal success of Windows in the small office and the home. Microsoft, Borland and Symantec all offer the kind of visual Rapid Application Development (RAD) environments Amiga owners are thirsty for.

## What is a Compiler?

Programs are written in a programming language and the most basic language is machine language. Programs are a string of instructions used to tell the processor what to do when the program is run, and these instructions are specific to a type of processor and operating system. These written instructions are often referred to as code. A Compiler is a program which takes code and turns it into a machine language program that a particular computer requires to run. The advantage of this way of operating is that it allows the program to be ported to various systems and to be compiled for your individual machine, thus it will be optimized for your processor and version of Amiga DOS. Any program that you receive with the source code can be compiled for your particular machine. The problem with compiled programs is that they can't take advantage of tricks used by machine language programmers to maximize speed and efficiency.



This small, unassuming toolbar window is the glue that holds the Storm environment together.



The Storm developer is a flexible and portable developer with a host of options to satisfy most developer's needs today and tomorrow. The debug options and stack monitor control is also well considered and should help trace those bugs that appear long after the midnight hour.

Haage & Partner set about quenching this thirst by releasing the third incarnation of Storm C. Until HiSoft and Maxon deliver their respective new C++ compilers as promised, the Storm C / C++ package is the only complete mainstream Amiga development tool on the shelf.

The integrated development environment of Storm is presented as the Storm Shell. It provides all the necessary and helpful project management facilities and sports a multiple document interface, although it is not yet RADical (see Rapid Application Development, page 33).

Haage & Partner have obviously con-

sidered—and encompassed—the diverse needs of a range of Amiga developers when sitting in front of the drawing board for StormC. With the core value of portability in mind, StormC offers the user a number of options to aid deployment to different platforms. The target processor may be selected from a range of 680x0 as well as PowerPC and the operating system can be a choice of either AmigaOS or Pios. There is also an option to force the compiler to allow just strict ANSI C and strict ANSI C++.

The compliance to the various C standards is a major feature of Storm C. Haage & Partner have worked hard to ensure that the Storm compiler can understand not only ANSI, but also AT & T, MaxonC++ and SAS/C. This will be welcomed by many programmers migrating to a modern, supported development environment. They have recognized the value of Amiga localization standards, with Storm shipping with English and German language support and Italian localization available from Aminet.

StormC has a host of compiler options, sufficient to satisfy most Amiga developers needs today (680x0 code compiled to AmigaOS) and tomorrow (PowerPC code compiled to Pios). The



debug options and stack monitor control are also well considered and should help trace those bugs that appear long after the midnight hour.

StormC was developed with modularity in mind. Each of the units (StormShell, StormLink, StormEd, etc.) are separate, individual executable programs communicating through an ARExx port, but closely tied together with tricks like the new project assistant. This approach permits the users to easily integrate their favorite editor or assembler, as well as extend Haage & Partner the opportunity to develop alternative compiler engines within the same interface. For example, they have limited the amount of work involved in developing a Java compiler to sit alongside StormC, in much the same way as the Microsoft Visual Studio may support Visual C++, Visual J++ and Visual BASIC, amongst others.

The quoted system requirements of 6 Mb RAM running on Workbench 3 or greater is actually a comfortable setup for small and medium-sized projects, but if you have 12 Mb or more RAM you will have no problems. Although the Guru did pay a few visits to the 6 Mb Amiga, she did not stay for tea.

So, should you buy StormC? Haage & Partner have constructed a highly competent, stable and trustworthy programming environment. The time saved in project management over GNU command lines will soon compensate the cost of this professional offering. Although it does not compare favorably to contemporaries on the PC (this is not a visual tool, remember), StormC can hold its head high above its Amiga peers. This review only touches the surface of the most important features implemented in Storm: details like the StormScreen-Manager, for example, can be real benefits to productivity and StormC is full of such details. For the serious C++ Amiga software engineer, there really is no choice but to purchase StormC 3.0, and I give it a top rating of an A.

StormC is distributed in North America by Safe Harbor Computers ([www.sharbor.com](http://www.sharbor.com)) and retails for about US \$275. Visit Haage & Partner at [www.haage-partner.com](http://www.haage-partner.com) for Full details on StormC.

Rating: A

By Adrian Pickering

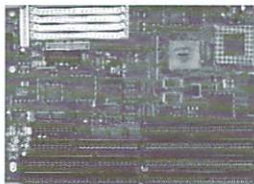


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### Rapid Application Development

The last several years have seen a new way of developing applications rocket in popularity amongst Windows developers: Rapid Application Development, or RAD. Borland Delphi and Microsoft Visual BASIC and Visual C have given non-programmers the instant ability to develop their own professional-looking programs. The RAD idea is clever; the developer "draws" the application on screen and code is generated automatically. Instinct may tell you that automatic code is bound to be sloppy and inefficient, but this is not often the case. Much more importantly, it can reduce development times dramatically. Although StormC is not a RAD tool per se, Haage & Partner do offer Storm Wizard to bridge the gap between the Storm environment and the visual development tools we long for. Unfortunately, StormWizard is not of the same caliber as StormC and falls somewhat short of bringing RAD techniques to the Amiga. Unless Haage & Partner rethink the unintuitive user interface of StormWizard and work a little harder to banish the Guru, the Aminet offers many better alternatives.

### Catalizer con't from page 35

effects. Many subtopics are encompassed, including details on recording macros, using brushes, using the video filter, and using various effects and tool options. Although the video only shows a few examples of how these techniques are applied, it is easy to envision applying what you learn in the video to many projects.

The second two topics, Swirl and Lightning, deal mainly with animating IFX effects. These tutorials are decidedly more difficult to implement than the other sections, but give great detail into how animated effects work. Invaluable examples and tips on macro recording and editing macros will advance your level of productivity substantially when applied to many IFX features and tools.

The IFX software package is a whole lot more than just the main IFX package. There are several very useful companion programs that aid IFX in its work. Two of these programs, AutoFX and IMP, are explained in great detail in the Catalizer video. Learning these programs without the help of this video can be difficult, but becomes rather easy after seeing it done hands-on in Catalizer.

From the start, you can see the time and effort that went into this project. All the in-use screen images are clear and readable, making everything easy to follow. The dialog of Mr. Blohut is clear and to the point. The video recording and sound are of broadcast quality and the effects used in the video production are enjoyable and clean. There is no doubt this is a professional video as good as any I've seen. In my mind, anybody who uses IFX will find this video a great benefit. I give the Catalizer video a B+ rating. This would have been an A except for its somewhat high cost which might make some people think twice about buying it.

Catalizer retails for US \$39.95 plus \$5.95 shipping. It is available direct from Legacy Maker, PO Box 60711, Chicago, IL 60660, and can be ordered by check or credit card. Call 773-465-5158 or visit [www.xnet.com/~jcompton/catalizer.html](http://www.xnet.com/~jcompton/catalizer.html) for more information.

Rating: B+



By Fletcher Haug



# Video Turtle

When the Video Turtle from Turtle Enterprises arrived, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. I didn't have any experience with turtles, but since the word video was in there, I figured I'd give it a shot.

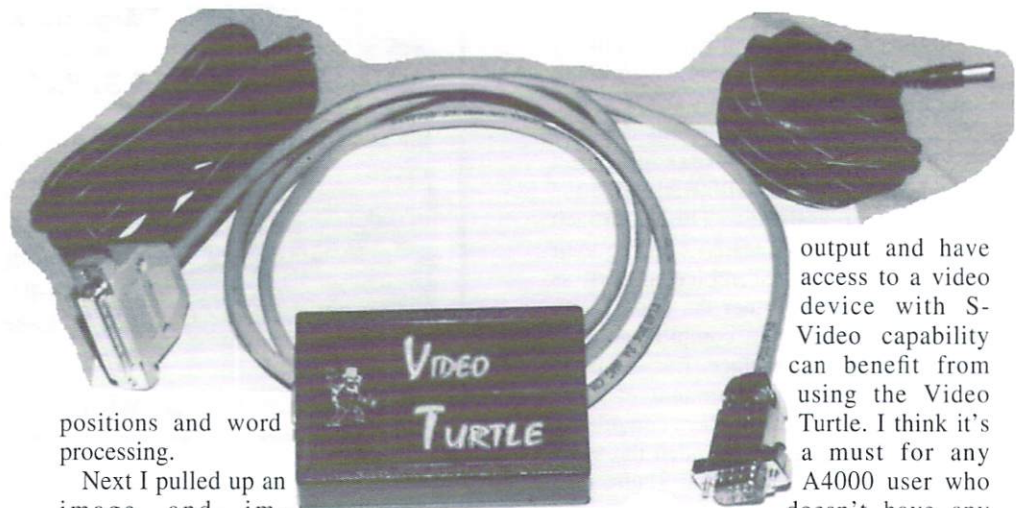
The Turtle package is composed of a small box, a 9-volt DC power adapter, Amiga monitor cable, an S-VHS cable, and a 10-page manual. The manual is small, only covering the Turtle setup and giving a little background on the NTSC TV standard, but the Video Turtle doesn't really need much of a manual.

The Video Turtle box has a 9-pin RGB connector on one end and an S-VHS (S-Video) connector on the other. The RGB cable connects to the Amiga's RGB connector and to the Video Turtle. This requires a custom-made cable, which is available from Redmond Cable (423-478-5760), or it can be purchased as an add-on option to the Turtle package. The S-Video cable plugs into the other side of the Video Turtle and into any S-Video unit, such as a TV, VCR or camcorder.

The idea behind the Video Turtle is simple. It takes the Amiga's RGB signal and allows it to be displayed to a TV's S-Video connection, providing about twice as many lines of vertical resolution as a normal TV.

Before proceeding it should be noted that the Video Turtle is designed to work at the standard television frequency of 15.75 kHz. The Amiga flicker stems from the fact that it is trying to display one screen in two passes. The 15.75 kHz screen refresh rate is very slow and our eyes see the screen's refreshing as flicker. The Turtle doesn't change that and even though it's capable of displaying twice as many lines of resolution, the screen still has to go through the same refresh rate, thus the flicker.

First, I hooked the Turtle up to my 27" Sony TV, turned everything on and I saw my HiRes laced Workbench appear flickering like mad. There is no question that the Turtle displays text sharper and better than regular composite output, but it certainly doesn't come close to a good monitor display. Therefore, you won't use the Turtle for serious email com-



positions and word processing.

Next I pulled up an image and immediately said 'WOW!' I have never seen any Amiga display a graphic to a TV with such good quality. I ran some Scala multimedia work and it was absolutely amazing to see the quality of the displays. Now I saw exactly where this little Video Turtle shines.

I examined the difference between the Amiga's composite output (which comes standard on the A1200 and is available via the A520 peripheral for the A4000) and the Video Turtle. I found the color vibrancy to be very visible and the colors much richer and brighter with the Turtle. Even though there was an excellent saturation of color, dot crawl was practically absent (dot crawl is the unwanted phenomenon that causes curved objects to appear as if tiny dots were scurrying back and forth on them). The Video Turtle, or more properly the True-Vu® Technology it uses, eliminates those nasty little dots.

Composite video also has a tendency to cause colors to 'bleed' from their borders, especially if saturation is turned high. Red can be particularly bad in this sense. Again, the Turtle shows all the colors, including red, with extreme quality and sharpness.

If you view a VHS tape and then view it on a Laser Disc Player, you will see a definite difference in quality, even when viewed on the same TV. This is how dramatic the difference is between the composite display many Amigans are used to and the Video Turtle-enhanced display.

Most Amiga owners that use composite

output and have access to a video device with S-Video capability can benefit from using the Video Turtle. I think it's a must for any A4000 user who doesn't have any

other means of video output. A1200 users might find the built-in composite output sufficient for their video output needs. However, considering the output quality of the Video Turtle, it's a bargain for anyone doing serious video work. If you have a Hi-8 camcorder you'll likewise be amazed at the output using the Video Turtle device.

Video Turtle was run for days without a hitch. I communicated with Turtle Enterprises and they were extremely prompt in responding to my questions. If my communication with them is any indication of their support, it is superb. I'd give it an A-; and minus only because the manual is poorly put together and the price could stand some reduction. However, the product itself is great. So good in fact, I ordered one myself.

The Video Turtle is manufactured by Tex Comp Ltd. and is available with several options. The standard option is the Video Turtle with wall PSU and 3' S-Video cable for US \$149.95 plus S&H. For an additional US \$24.95 you can add either a 1084S cable or a 1084VT custom cable. Tex Comp Ltd. can be reached at 1-800-846-3474.

Rating: A

By Oleg Moskalensky





# KidStop

**K**idStop from programmer Brian Koetting and GreenHouse Interactive Inc. is an enjoyable educational program designed for kids. KidStop has enough different features to provide a child of any age with something of interest. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I'm 30 years old!

KidStop has very high quality artwork, animations, music, and sound effects. It was originally designed for a touchscreen monitor, but I'd recommend sticking with the mouse, not just because it will save you about \$300, but because it's a great way for your child to become familiar and proficient using one.

KidStop's activities are accessed from an animated village menu screen, and some of the highlights are: TravelToons which has multiple humorous animations and accompanying sounds; PlanetPeople to create unique aliens and hear them speak; Count-a-Bunch: is counting made fun; Keyboard Fun provides piano keys with seven different sounds; ABC-123 places random shapes, numbers, and letters on the screen; Ripple Machine draws various ripples of shapes on screen; Coloring Book with many drawings that require coloring.

KidStop is extremely easy to learn and use, just as it should be. While using any of the activities there are only two things you'll need to know. The school bus at the bottom right of the screen takes you back to the main menu, and the gadget at the top right either flips or clears the screen.

This is one of the most polished children's programs I've ever seen on the Amiga and if you have a kid and an

Amiga then you shouldn't be without KidStop. I trust we will see future upgrades and additions to this program. It worked flawlessly on both machines and it would be impossible for me to give it anything less than an "A."

The only requirements for KidStop are 6.5 Mb of hard disk space and 2 Mb of ram. KidStop was tested on an A1200 060, OS 3.0, 18 Mb and an A600 020, 3.1 OS, 10 Mb. A free, partially crippled version can be found on Aminet at [games/misc/KidSTOP.lha](http://games/misc/KidSTOP.lha). The registered fee is US \$15, and can be delivered as a patch to the demo version by email, or can be shipped on floppy for an additional \$5 (\$10 international orders). Orders can be placed by sending check or money order (in US funds) and your email address to: Brian Koetting, 3043-B Oak Green Circle, Ellicott City, MD 21043. The Website is <http://www.qis.net/~spiff/kidstop.html>. Email at [bkoetting@fusen.com](mailto:bkoetting@fusen.com)

Rating: A

By Jerimy Campbell



# Catalyzer Video

**C**atalyzer, the Power-Up Tutorial Video for ImageFX (IFX), is the first in a series of promised tutorials from Legacy Maker, Inc. This video is completely created on Amigas and shows the quality effects and video output possible with this machine. The package includes a 60 minute video and a disk with various images used throughout the video.

The tutorials are presented by Bohus Blohut whose relaxed demeanor lends itself well to presentation and instruction. There are four major topics covered, which include: Using Regions and Introducing Macros; Text Effects using Brushes as Regions; Swirl-animation effects; and, Lightning-animating a complex effect. All these topics deal exclusively with IFX and its included companion programs.

The first two topics, Regions and Text Effects, deal mainly with still images and

*continued on page 33*

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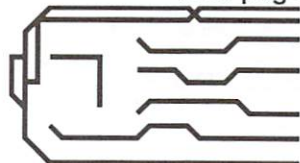
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# Myst

The Amiga conversion of *Myst* has been a long time in the making, but the commercial version is finally available. Its creation required a collaboration of PXL Computers Inc., ClickBOOM, Cyan Inc., and SUNSOFT, and their efforts seem to have paid off. *Myst* is without a doubt one of the most stunningly beautiful graphic adventures you'll ever experience. Brothers Rand and Robyn Miller created *Myst*, and it turned out to be the best selling CD-ROM

game ever and deserves to see similar strong sales on the Amiga.

*Myst* is a book, and somehow you have been interjected into its story line. Suddenly, you find yourself standing on the dock of what seems to be a fantasy world filled with breathtaking beauty and mystery. I liken the experience to being transported into the middle of a dream. The initial attraction of *Myst* is its enticing rendered/raytraced graphics; they simply make you want to see what eye candy the next screen has to offer. *Myst* incorporates smooth animations and digitized audio which helps give it an

eerie and surreal mood.

However, you will eventually become accustomed to the startling graphic scenes and find there are many questions you want answered and puzzles you want to solve. Finding answers always seems to lead to new even greater questions. *Myst* is truly a game of detail and patience; you must open your eyes and mind to the smallest of clues. Get in a hurry and you will have overlooked something crucial and have to backtrack to find it.

At boot up you are presented with multiple resolution choices. I found no reason to stray from HiRes Interlace as it was fast and gorgeous. I believe *Myst's* ease of use is a large part of its mass appeal. All tasks are performed with a few simple mouse clicks which frees the player to concentrate on the game and not on a bunch of confusing key functions.

Installation was as simple as un-archiving an LHA file to my hard drive and then double clicking the *Myst.aga* Icon. *Myst* ran fully from the CD-ROM with no other installation required. No documentation was included with the preview version I received, but a quick visit to ClickBoom's web page revealed a surplus of *Myst* information as well as the option to order it on-line.

I didn't receive the complete package for review, just a recently burned CD-ROM, so I can't tell you exactly what comes with the complete package. But judging from this preview copy, I give *Myst* an A rating simply because the conversion turned out better than I ever imagined it would. The game was stable and ran beautifully. ClickBoom has really done a bang up job and should be commended for giving the Amiga this much needed shot in the arm. Call your favorite retailer and buy this game!

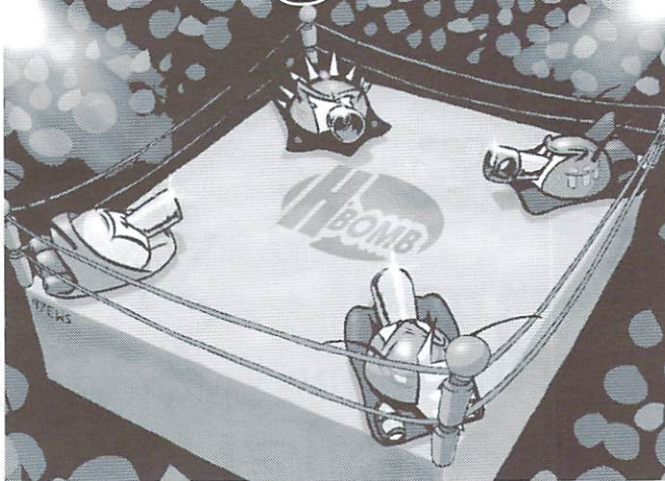
This preview was tested on an A1200 060/50MHz, 3.0 OS, 18 Mb RAM and a 2X CD-ROM drive. Visit [www.clickboom.com](http://www.clickboom.com) for details on system requirements, a FAQ sheet, screenshots, *Myst* merchandise, and other downloads. *Myst* is available from most Amiga retailers for around US \$60.

Rating: A

By Jeremy Campbell



## Coming Soon...

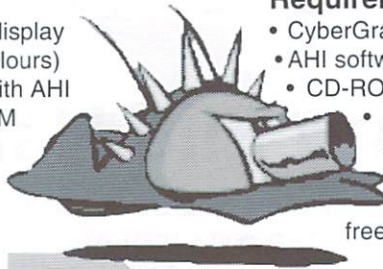


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# Final Odyssey

**F**inal Odyssey from Vulcan Software is the third CD released in their Mega Series collection, and in my opinion, it's the best yet. It is one of the most highly addictive games I've played in a long time. It's hard to label this game because it contains elements of action, adventure, strategy, shoot-em-up, puzzler, and platform games. It's definitely fun, and I had a very tough time quitting Final Odyssey long enough to write this review.

The game comes with a well-done intro animation complete with text, pictures, digitized speech, and good sound effects. The intro explains that you are Theseus, and it is your job to solve the many puzzles in the vast Labyrinth to rescue the damsels and defeat the Minotaur. Final Odyssey also comes with a professionally done theme song and while the song is playing a picture of the Minotaur is slowly drawn on screen. This isn't something you'll be singing the rest of the day but it's a nice touch. As an additional bonus they've included a 2 player maze game, but it requires you to finish the Final Odyssey to acquire the password that enables it: meaning some of us may never see the bonus game.

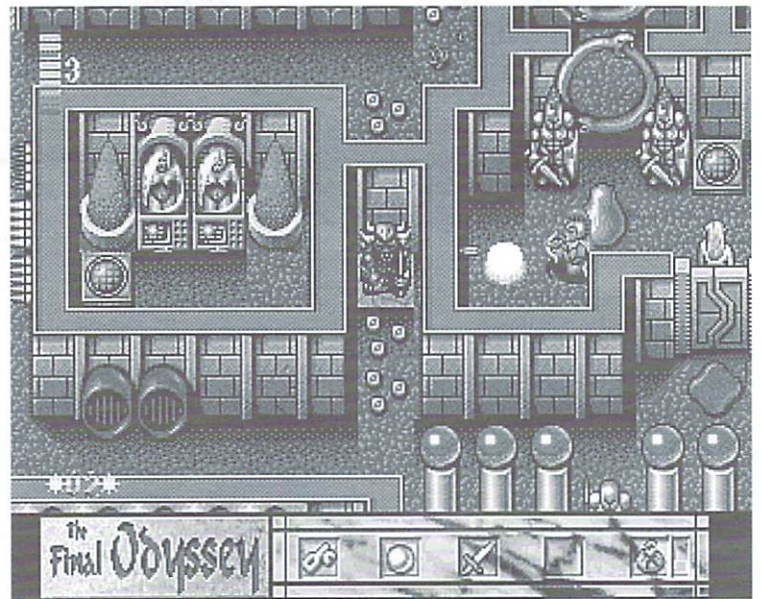
Final Odyssey is definitely a thinking game with many quests and puzzles to be solved in the complex labyrinth. However, I believe anyone can pick up the game rather quickly since most tasks

are completed by simply walking over or up to objects using the joystick. There are very few keyboard functions that require memorization. The energy gauge, Icons, and on-screen information are very clear and concise. Game interfaces don't come much easier to use than this.

You guide Theseus through the maze at a viewpoint that is overhead and at a slight angle. The graphics on my AGA machine are absolutely delightful, full of rich color and high detail. I purposely booted my machine in ECS mode and found that there was no distinguishable difference in the graphics. I asked Peter Spinaze (the sole creator of the game) how he managed to make an ECS game look AGA. He claimed that he used special copper effects

and careful palette selection to pull it off. As I've said before and likely will again, when talented programmers take full advantage of the Amiga's available hardware miracles can be worked. There are certain aspects of Final Odyssey's graphics and artwork that are honestly the likes of which I've never seen in any other game.

The now familiar Vulcan on-line manual with music and digitized speech is fine and it provides plenty of game information. It still lacks a print option and it would be nice to print out the key



Your job is to stumble through the maze, find the Minotaur, and lump him up, but first you will have to stop staring at all the beautiful graphics! The gameplay of this beauty will keep you at it for hours.

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- AmigaLink requires WB1.3, Envoy requires WB2.x





functions or Hints & Tips for reference while playing. Final Odyssey does not work in NTSC so you will either have to boot in PAL or execute a PAL display program, both work fine.

Final Odyssey requires no installation and only uses your hard drive for saving games. It works on any Amiga with a hard drive, 2 Mb RAM (1 Mb Chip & 1 Mb fast), 2X CD-ROM, and will utilize any upgrades you've added. It was tested on an A1200/060, 18 Mb RAM, and 2X CD-ROM drive.

I highly recommend Final Odyssey. It's very polished and offers hours of addictive gameplay and excitement. I give it an A rating. If you'd like to judge for yourself then visit <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~pspinaze> where you'll find a downloadable demo and a plethora of other information about Final Odyssey.

Final Odyssey can be found at many retailers and sells for approximately US \$38. Turtle Lightning is the distributor of Vulcan products in North America. Dealer inquiries welcome, call 915-563-4925.

Rating: A

By Jeremy Campbell



**New York** con't from page 30

around this problem for Yam.

I rate New York an A-, downgraded slightly for the minor problems mentioned. If you need off-line capabilities then for you the grade is less. Otherwise I highly recommend it, and think you'll find it an excellent, professional addition to your Amiga computing.

New York will work on any Amiga with OS 3.0 or better, at least two Mb of free RAM, and an Internet connection with access to an NNTP server. A 68020 processor or stronger is recommended. It worked perfectly on my A3000 with Picasso IV board, so should be fine with any Cybergraphx system. New York relies on ClassAct GUI for its user interface. ClassAct GUI is provided on the disk. New York is distributed in North America by GamaSoft and sells for US \$35. Phone: 313-365-8414; URL: [www.mich.com/~twalling/gamasoft](http://www.mich.com/~twalling/gamasoft)

Rating: A-

By Brad Webb



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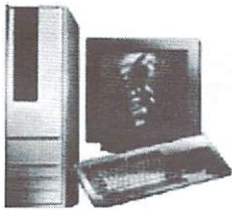
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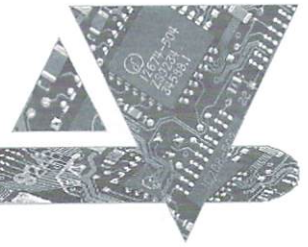
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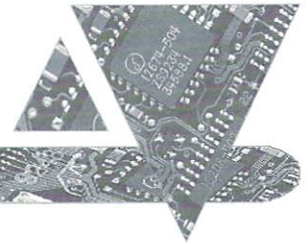
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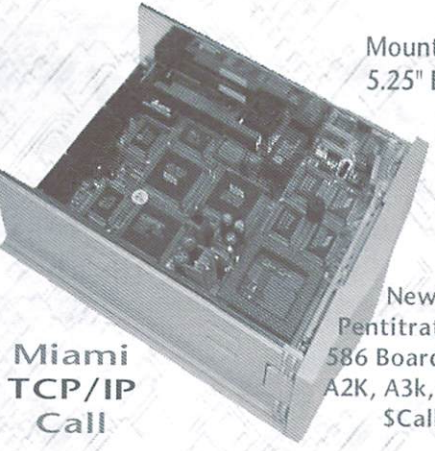
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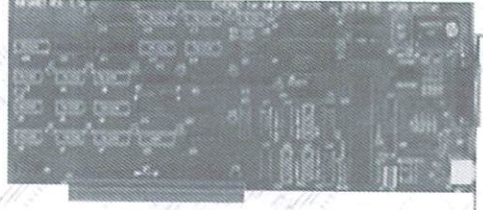
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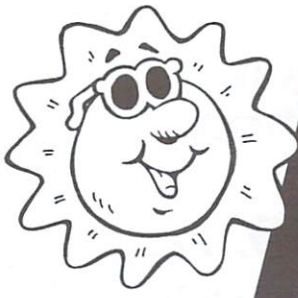
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March 13 thru 15  
Friday, Saturday & Sunday

The Gateway Computer Show is growing again! Yes, it's true! We are expanding the show an additional day. This years show will be 50% bigger than last years, continuing the trend of bringing you better shows each year.

This year Amiga98 will have so much more:

o **Three days (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) of seminars and classes.**

This year we are increasing the number of classes geared towards developers of Amiga Software. Shareware authors, script writers, program developers, can all benefit from these increased classes. We are also improving classes and seminars for the general Amiga user as well as reducing the prices of classes to \$20 each.

o **Two days (Saturday & Sunday) of exhibits and displays.**

The exhibit area will be open Sat. and Sunday, for admittance to the best of what the Amiga has to offer. We have exhibitors coming from Europe as well as all over the U.S. & Canada. Many more exhibitors, with all the latest developments in the growing Amiga market.

o **Special get togethers.**

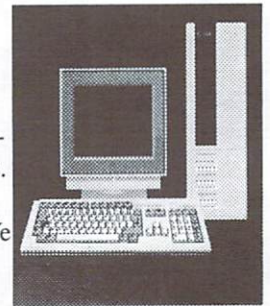
The Saturday night banquet, with the best buffet, and a guest speaker you won't want to miss. The User Group Network luncheon, Saturday afternoon, right after the User Group Network seminar.

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An Amiga4000T has been promised by Amiga International Inc. as the main prize. Check out this and other prizes as companies offer them on our web page: "www.amiga-stl.com".

o **Don't miss this show. It's the best yet!** Amiga98 is held at the Harley Hotel, 3400 Rider Trail South, in Earth City, MO. (St. Louis), 7 minutes from the airport, just west of 70 & 270.

- o the 3rd International Developers Conference
- o Amiga Inc.
- o Amiga International's Petro Tyschtschenko
- o Jeff Schindler, General Manager of Amiga Inc.
- o And many others soon to be mentioned.
- o Even more excitement than Amiga 97.



•Prizes subject to substitution.  
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**Admission Tickets for Main exhibit hall - Sat. & Sunday**  
**Specially priced tickets are available in advance by mail.**

**Two day admission tickets...\$16. U.S.**

**One day admission ticket.....\$12. U.S.**

**Tickets purchased at the door, are as follows:**

**Two day ticket at the door....\$20 U.S.**

**One day ticket at the door.....\$15 U.S.**

**Class Tickets are \$20 each. Check the web site for information.**

Requests received for admission after March 1st will be held at the door in "will-call". Just ask admissions. Persons with advance tickets will have a special line to reduce waiting. Your check(s) should be mailed no later than March 1st or there is a chance that they will not arrive here in time for the show. Send your check for admissions to:

Amigan St. Louis  
c/o Amiga 98  
P.O. Box 672  
Bridgeton, MO 63044

Please include a SASE (Self Addressed Stamped Envelope) to help us return your tickets to you promptly. Thank you!

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