



The **A**miga

# INFORMER

A summary of information  
and support for Amiga users

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# Alpha & Alpha LT



Every Genesis System comes configured with  
(unless otherwise noted):

- ☐ AmigaOS 3.1 with pre-emptive multitasking
- ☐ Motorola 68060 50 Mhz
- ☐ 32 MB RAM optionally expandable to 128 MB
- ☐ 5.1 GB IDE harddisk, 36x IDE CD-Rom
- ☐ High Density Floppy Disk Drive - PC format and Mac (with Optional CrossMac) compatible
- ☐ Windows95 Keyboard Compatible - 104 Windows95 Keyboard Included
- ☐ AGA Graphics System included on board
- ☐ Video and Genlock capable
- ☐ 4-Channel Stereo Sound standard, each 8 Bit DMA
- ☐ Interfaces: 1 x serial RS-232c (modem), 1 x parallel (printer), 1 x external floppy drive, 2 x mouse/joystick, 1 x 23 pin video RGB (monitor) output from AGA Chipset, 1 x video composite (TV, video recorder), 1 x RF modulator (TV antenna), 2 x stereo audio
- ☐ 250 Watt Power Supply
- ☐ Personal Paint 7.1 CD - Full Version - To get you working quickly!
- ☐ Full Documentation For AmigaOS 3.1, and hardware

Giving you what you always wanted in an Amiga ...  
Speed, True Colour Graphics and PC Monitor  
compatibility to name a few!

- ☐ CyberGraphX compatible 24-bit Retargetable 2MB Graphics Board (provides 800x600 in 24-Bit, 1024 x 768 in 16-Bit)
- ☐ 15 Pin RGB Video output to PC Compatible Monitor
- ☐ **System Price:** \$1899.95 US, \$2749.95 CDN

The Alpha LT provides similar features except:

- ☐ 68030 50 Mhz CPU
- ☐ 16 MB Ram (instead of 32MB Ram), 3.2 GB IDE HD (instead of 5.1 GB)
- ☐ Low Density Floppy Drive (instead of High Density)
- ☐ **System Price:** \$1649.95 US, \$2524.95 CDN

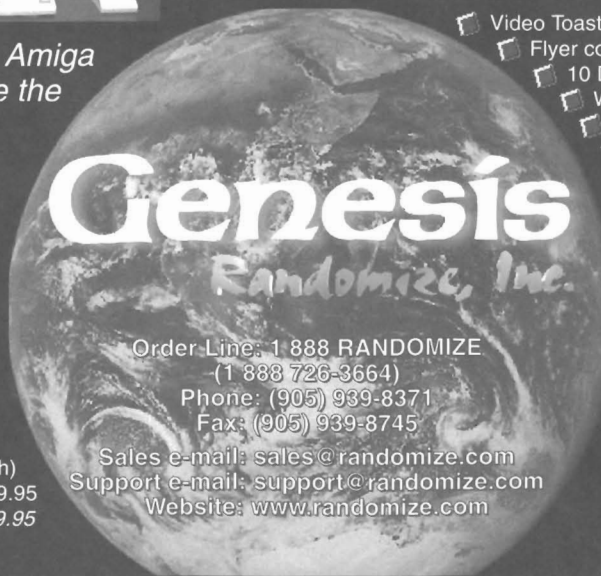
# Towerhawk & Odyssey



The completely expandable Amiga  
from Genesis. We introduce the  
Genesis TowerHawk and  
Odyssey featuring speed  
and flexibility!

Towerhawk Featuring:  
5 Zorro II Slot Bus Board  
**System Price:** \$1899.95 US,  
\$2749.95 CDN

Odyssey Featuring:  
16 MB Ram (instead of 32 MB)  
3.2 GB IDE HD (instead of 5.1 GB)  
Low Density Floppy Drive (instead of High)  
**060 System Price:** \$1399.95 US, \$2139.95  
**030 System Price:** \$1199.95 US, \$1829.95



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# Flyer



Video Toaster / Flyer Compatibility!

- ☐ Video Toaster Compatible Video Slot
- ☐ Flyer compatible Zorro II Busboard with 5 Zorro II slots
- ☐ 10 Drive Bays for System and Flyer Drives
- ☐ Well Ventilated via 3 fans
- ☐ **System Price:** \$2449.95 US, \$3749.95 CDN
- ☐ **Preconfigured System Price:** \$7999.95 US, \$12239.95 CDN - includes Toaster, Flyer, 2 x 9GB Video Drives, 1 x 4 GB Audio

## Application Suitability

- The Alpha and Alpha LT are perfect for most Amiga applications especially system friendly applications with screen requesters
- The Alpha and Alpha LT are not Zorro Bus compatible, but uses the Ateo Concept's Ateo Bus
- The Towerhawk and Odyssey are perfect for general Amiga applications as well as those requiring many internal devices due to it's large number of bays
- The Towerhawk is well suited for any applications requiring ZorroII compatibility
- The Alpha and Towerhawk are *not* Video Toaster / Flyer compatible
- The Flyer is ideal for Video Toaster and Flyer applications due to it's Toaster/Flyer compatibility or any other application that requires video slot compatibility



Published by Eldritch Enterprises

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The Informer is produced entirely on Amiga computers. The equipment used:

A2000, Blizzard 2040/40 Mhz, 16Mb RAM

A1200, Blizzard 1260/50 Mhz, 32 Mb RAM

PageStream 3.3a + Extensions

DrawStudio 2.0

Image FX 3.2

Final Writer 97

Plus many other commercial and freely distributed programs.

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The Amiga Informer

PO Box 21

Newburgh, NY 12551-0021

(914) 566-4665

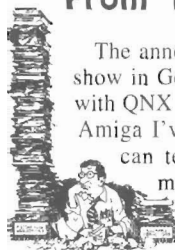
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http://www.amigainformer.com

Rate for six issues is (in US dollars) \$15 USA, \$18 Canada, and \$28 all others. Personal checks from USA only, all other Money Orders or Bank Checks payable in US dollars. Checks and Money Orders must be made payable to **Eldritch Enterprises**. A limited number of back issues are available. Call for ordering and availability.

Printed by Maar Printing Service  
Poughkeepsie, NY 914-454-6860

**From the Editor's Desk:**



The announcement from the Computer 98 show in Germany that Amiga Inc. partnered with QNX was the best bit of news about the Amiga I've heard in months. From what I can tell of QNX, they seem to share many of the beliefs and attitudes of the original Amiga founders. Even more importantly, QNX is a software company and doesn't carry the baggage that came with Gateway.

Equally as moving—in the wrong direction—was the non-announcement of the departure of Fleecy Moss from Amiga Inc. Fleecy was the last vocal proponent for the Amiga community at Amiga Inc. Without Fleecy, there is no one speaking for the community at Amiga Inc. It was also not announced that Marilyn Flint no longer works for Amiga Inc. That leaves only Jeff Schindler, Darreck Lisle and some office help. Bill McEwen and Alan Havemose are only under contract and are not permanent employees.

Fleecy's sacking caused me to reevaluate my thoughts about Amiga Inc. Throughout Amiga Inc.'s ownership of the Amiga they have claimed that the community was the Amigas most important asset. However, to this day Amiga Inc. has done nothing to advance or help this community. Initiatives like the ICOA have largely been ignored, retailers or developers have folded without a word from Amiga Inc., few channels of communication have been opened with the press, and perhaps worse of all, they have given the community no clear vision of the future.

Amiga Inc. has also not carried through on their statements. At WoA 98 in London, the assembled press was told that there was a fully approved budget under the control of Amiga Inc., that a Classic 3.5 upgrade would happen, that a new super chip would be revealed, and that there would be a Classic Amiga card in the upcoming development box. Now we know that Amiga Inc. has little if any budget under their own control, the 3.5 upgrade will likely be scaled back if it ever appears at all, the Classic card is now only being considered, and the mystery chip is no longer important.

Sadly, Amiga Inc.'s inaction has in many ways caused the current dismal Amiga market. Frankly, this is a market that is spiraling downwards and we should no longer expect Amiga Inc. to change that. They missed many opportunities to prevent this condition. In May they should have acted on a 3.5 upgrade, when its launch would have been effective in maintaining the market. They missed their chance to produce a truly community-centered website that promoted the market and generated a clear, exciting vision for the future. Many more things should have been done, but instead Amiga Inc. was indecisive, and their indolence has caused many businesses to fail. Now, most remaining commercial developers are working on or looking at other development platforms, users are buying non-Amiga computers, and retailers are finding it next to impossible to stay in business.

It is hard to see how anyone can survive until the 5.0 system arrives a year from now. When users lose faith, they stop supporting the platform. When all they see is silence and disorder without leader-

ship, they conclude there is little worth waiting for, and leave. Without user support, retailers close, magazines fold and developers pull out. Most that remain with the Amiga do so because they have a profound loyalty and understanding of the Amiga. But even the most optimistic and ardent Amigans have lost faith and trust in Amiga Inc., and all that remains is a conviction in the platform and its community, not the company that controls it.

I would like to see someone else besides Gateway gain control over the development of the next generation Amiga OS. Happily, the deal with QNX may just allow this to happen. Gateway, as a hardware company, likely only cares about making money from their Amiga purchase. By partnering with, or in essence, selling the rights to use the Amiga technologies to a software company like QNX, Gateway could position themselves to make a lot of money. If QNX works its magic and creates a new, distinctive OS, Gateway would potentially gain immense profits by designing and selling hardware around it. There is still a huge shroud of mystery surrounding the recent Amiga Inc./QNX deal, and we don't know the legalities of what transpired. I hope QNX gains control over the deign of OS 5.0 and Gateway sits back and lets them create something we can all look forward to.

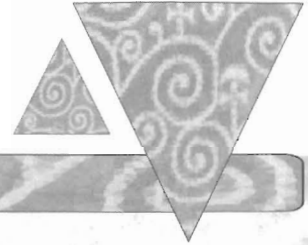
However, one thing is for sure. No matter how exciting any future Amiga OS is, there is a great deal of work needed to repair the loss of faith and trust that Amiga Inc. inflicted on the community. It is unlikely that there will be many commercial Amiga companies left if things continue as they are now, but those of us that are still here when the new OS arrives will need much convincing before we again put our faith and hope into anyone or anything claiming to care for the Amiga community. Until then, the Amiga community must rally around the people that keep this platform breathing, and stop putting faith in Amiga Inc. to save the day.

Fletcher Haug

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## Amiga Inc. & QNX Partners For OS5

By Paul Morabito

Computer 98 saw the first tangible signs of the Amiga's resurrection with the announcement that Amiga Inc. has chosen to use QNX Software System's Neutrino microkernel as the kernel of choice in AmigaOS 5 and beyond.

QNX Software Systems, a Canadian based company founded by Gordon Bell and Dan Dodge in 1980, has enjoyed considerable success in licensing their real-time operating system technology. Their products reflect many of the Amiga's special qualities, and as such, the strategic alliance between QNX and Amiga Inc. is seen as a marriage made in heaven.

According to Dr. Alan Havemose, the man in charge of development at Amiga Inc., part of the reason QNX was chosen was because of their understanding of the Amiga concept, what it represents, its potential, and where it is heading. The founders of QNX understand the Amiga because they are both Amiga users. In fact, an informal survey of QNX employees revealed that over 60% own or have owned an Amiga. This is something Amiga Inc. saw as especially important in their partnership.

QNX is a well respected player in the industry and has an impressive track record both financially and technologically. They have over forty distribution partners and service well over one hundred countries worldwide. They have strategic alliances with many big name companies, including Cisco and IBM, and QNX is seen as an emerging power. Systems based on QNX technology have found themselves in many diverse areas where stability and power are a must, and are being impressively used by international conglomerates such as Sony, Honda, Phillips and VISA International. QNX handles tasks from set top boxes to medical imaging and robotic manufacturing to transaction processing.

The QNX Neutrino kernel offers all the features a modern real-time operating system is expected to have plus more. Designed around a similar manifesto as the Amiga, the two systems clearly share many philosophical similarities. The kernel fully supports multi-tasking, multithreading, virtual memory and

incorporates strong memory protection as well as excellent networking support and transparent networking. Networking and multiprocessing support is so advanced that applications can be switched live from one system to another at the press of a button. You can even control any system on the network. Other features of Neutrino include a built in web browser, TCP stack, real-time services, message passing, POSIX thread services, mutexes, condition variables, semaphores, Java, and scheduling.

Strong memory protection is something the Amiga sorely lacks. Every component of the Neutrino has its own MMU-protected address space. With Neutrino's advanced debugging tools, the memory protection scheme determines which module performs an illegal task, and at which instruction it happens.

Neutrino also offers unprecedented scalability and modularity. It can be scaled down to a mere 100 Kb making it perfect for embedded applications, but it is also equally capable of running in a distributed network of symmetric multiprocessing systems. Neutrino takes a novel approach in creating a "software bus" and scalability that allow a user to plug in needed modules without rebooting. This

scalability means the OS can be used in everything from tiny-kernel-only systems to powerful SMP (multiprocessor) boxes.

This is achieved through the kernel's design. The actual kernel includes only a few core services while all other services are provided through add-on modules, such as the GUI, hardware dependent boot modules, device drivers, filesystems and process manager. Compatibility at a source level is 100% as the core kernel and API (Applications Programming Interface) remain identical. This scalability is highlighted by a demonstration disk on QNX's website. The demo includes the OS, a web browser, and network support which fits on a 1.44 Mb PC floppy disk. Compare that to Windows!

So what exactly does this mean for the Amiga and OS5? The QNX Neutrino kernel will be used as the foundation for the upcoming OS which includes providing low-level services such as device drivers, GUI engine and filesystem. Amiga Inc. will provide things such as the user interface, graphics engine, video, and other multimedia and high-level support. OS5 is expected to include as standard full networking support, Java support, a web browser and OpenGL for high level

### The Next Step

Amiga Inc.'s immediate plans are to complete development of the OS5 Developer system. Due to the prolonged legal negotiations in obtaining an OS partner, Amiga Inc. is running between 90 and 120 days behind schedule. As announced in May 1998 at the World of Amiga show, the OS5 Developer system will be x86 based and probably incorporate a classic Amiga on a PCI card for legacy applications. Emulation is under consideration, but at present it appears most likely that Amiga Inc. will implement backward compatibility through a PCI card.

While Amiga Inc. is aiming for a price point somewhere below US \$1,300 for such a system, it now appears likely to cost more due to the performance requirements for the graphics and audio subsystem. A compiler and other developer tools have yet to be announced. After the initial release of the Developer system, additional modules will likely be released as dribbleware, meaning they will become available as they are completed.

It seems that Amiga Inc. is not yet able to provide a time schedule for the release of next generation Amiga. Currently, the focus is on the architecture and technology and not on specific products. Specific products will largely be the domain of licensees and not directly manufactured by Amiga Inc.



graphics. All these are immediately brought on board by partnering with QNX.

A lot of emphasis is currently on the GUI. Amiga Inc. hopes to keep it as "Amiga" as possible, but also wants to improve on it enormously. The GUI will utilize technology from Photon, QNX's GUI system, but will be totally designed by Amiga Inc. No decisions have been made on the filesystem structure at this stage, but it is expected to be a mix between the logical layout of QNX and the traditional Amiga structure. The aim is to keep the spirit and elegance of the Classic Amiga, but reinvent and reinvigorate it with the help of QNX.

Another great advantage of the QNX Neutrino is that Amiga Inc. is not tied down to any specific processor. The QNX Neutrino is available for the x86, PPC and MIPS as well as numerous other RISC based processors. Amiga Inc. talk of an MMC (Magical Mystery Chip), but a final decision on the processor has yet to be made. It is quite likely that there will be many new chips available by the time OS5 is complete, so doggedly committing to one chip now is unwise. Ideally, OS5 will run on many hardware architectures.

Amiga Inc. is in the process of hiring a development team. According to Dr. Alan Havemose,

this will grow to around twenty people not including the development team already on board at QNX. There is also a possibility that many familiar Amiga names formerly employed by Commodore may be hired by Amiga Inc.

This partnership represents the first visible steps Amiga Inc. has taken toward securing the future and it should help to instill some confidence in their long term goals. Now we need to see that Amiga Inc. can carry through with continued actions and a renewed commitment to the community and not fumble the ball now that things finally seem to be moving in the right direction.

## 3.5 Not Dead Yet

By Brad Webb

Some days it seems like the Amiga is becoming a "good news, bad news" joke. The good news came from the Computer '98 show in Cologne, Germany where it was announced the Amiga Operating System version 5.0 will use the QNX Kernel as its core software—universally regarded as an excellent choice. At almost the same time, the bad news came. Amiga Inc.'s Fleecy Moss left the company, his contract unrenewed. That surely meant the death of Amiga OS 3.5, did it not? After all, the 3.5 page on Amiga Inc.'s website vanished at almost the moment we learned of Fleecy's departure (See Editorial). It seemed to many as if the last, greatest update of Amiga OS for the classic machines was doomed.

Well, apparently not. The 3.5 link has reappeared. The official word from Amiga Inc. is that the project continues. That's more good news, but there are still clouds on the horizon.

At this point, no one involved with the project will discuss who's actually working on it, or what specific pieces will go into the final projects. Usually reliable sources indicate no contracts have been signed with companies widely regarded as likely contributors. In fact, it seems as though no OS 3.5 contracts have even been sent out by Amiga Inc. That could be a very bad sign. In at least one case, an acknowledged contributor has publicly withdrawn from the 3.5 efforts over the loss of Fleecy from the project team. Our sources do insist the work continues, and name Germany's Haage & Partner as being in charge of the effort. Interestingly, they were closely linked to the project by these same sources early on.

We suspect much of the confusion stems from the lack of signed contracts with software contributors, something that should have happened well before now, and that is one reason few details are available from Amiga Inc. If there is a real commitment to Amiga OS 3.5 within Amiga Inc., additional information will become available over the next few weeks.

In the meantime, what do we know about the plans for Amiga OS 3.5? As it turns out, there is quite a bit we can say.

First, it's going to be larger than earlier versions of the Classic Amiga Operating System. You're going to need a CDROM drive to install it due to the number of enhancements and added features. This really shouldn't be a hindrance. If your Amiga doesn't have a CDROM drive, now's the time to get one. For any Amiga, Classic or Amiga II, to continue as a viable computer system, it needs to be up to date in the disk arena and that means CDROM capable. You will also need to have 3.1 ROMs installed in your machine. Again, this should come as no surprise since these ROMs are already needed to take full advantage of the most recent Amiga software.

Amiga OS 3.5 is a transitional release, not a complete rewrite. As a result, it does not offer as much completely new functionality as the 5.0 product will for Amiga II. However, what is planned should make it very worthwhile for owners of Classic Amigas. Many of the features have been requested by Amigans for years.

At the top of the list is RTG or ReTargetable Graphics. This will provide built in support for Amiga graphics cards. Until now, all graphics cards have depended on some sort of unofficial modification to the operating system in order to function, an approach that

is always risky no matter how well done. In a very similar way, RTA or ReTargetable Audio will allow advanced audio boards to work seamlessly with your computer.

The new operating system will include everything you need to connect to the Internet and explore it. A web browser, email client and FTP (file transfer protocol) software are all scheduled for inclusion.

Perhaps more practical is the change to the file system which will finally allow for hard drives greater than 4 Gigabytes in size, and provide built in support for CDROM drives. Also very practical is the plan to enhance ARexx support. This key element of the operating system has been unchanged for far too many years. The practical improvements continue with plans for upgraded printer support, both for newer printers and improvements when using older printers.

The Amiga shell is due for updates, with new features added to the shell itself and to the AmigaDOS commands which run in it. Our hope is that scroll bars will finally be added to the shell, but we have no confirmation of this as yet.

Of particular value to those who've needed increased power in their classic computers, will be the built in support for PowerPC boards. This will provide one official standard at long last.

Finally, there will be a general cleanup and aesthetic improvements. "Glow Icons" by Matt Chaput had been in the plan, but Mr. Chaput has announced his withdrawal from the 3.5 project due to the departure of Fleecy Moss. We have seen no information on what will be the replacement icon set. Sources do indicate that 3.5 will be leaner than originally offered and if anything in the above features list is lost, we'd expect it to be either RTG or RTA, or both. One thing that has become clear is that Amiga Inc. will not include features

*continued on page 6*

## 3.5 Not Dead con't from page 5

that would require changes to the Operating System ROMs, as RTG and RTA just might. For now, there's no official indication that these features will be dropped. We hope this is the case and that our fears are proven incorrect, because RTG and RTA support are perhaps the two most critically needed OS upgrades.

Many of these features will be implemented by incorporating existing quality third party software. This is actually a traditional Amiga approach, going at least back to the days of Amiga OS 1.3. It's a smart way to benefit from one of the most innovative developer communities in any computer market.

There is no official word on what programs will be included. The lack of signed contracts means little can be said. However, we can make

some shrewd guesses. We would expect either Miami or AmiTCP to be used to make a connection to the Internet. Either is a fine product. Miami is the easier to use, but AmiTCP is constructed along more traditional UNIX lines. Recent improvements in AmiTCP mean either would provide up to date networking.

There are several good browsers available, including IBrowse, A-Web and Voyager. Both AWeb and the soon to be released IBrowse upgrade include JavaScript, so those would likely be the leading contenders.

Among the Amiga's mail programs, the freely distributed YAM provides an amazing set of features for free software. It would be a good choice, though there are good commercial mailers as well such as AEMail.

When it comes to CDROM software, there's none finer than AsimCDFs. It has become the defacto standard among Amigans who already own CDROM drives. There are other choices, including developing something entirely new as part of the file system upgrade, but the smart thing to do would be to include AsimCDFs.

The last few paragraphs have indulged in speculation, primarily because Amiga Inc. is just not saying anything specific, nor allowing anyone else to. Only time will tell if our speculations have any merit. The good news is that the 3.5 project is still alive (if long overdue) and moving forward, even if behind a massive shroud of secrecy and apparent confusion and disarray.



## Computer 98 From Cologne, Germany

By Hal Greenlee

Computer 98 held in Cologne, Germany is the biggest Amiga event on the planet. As such, all eyes turn to this show to learn the latest developments in the Amiga market. Most developers aim to release new information and updates at this show and this year was no different. This report covers just a few of the many exciting items shown or announced at Computer 98.

Dr. Allen Havemose, the head of development at Amiga Inc., presented Dan Dodge, Chief Technology Officer of QNX Software Systems Ltd. Mr. Dodge discussed at length the important features of microkernel architecture. While he may have left some listeners behind in parts of his discussion, his demonstration wowed everyone. With two machines networked, he demonstrated that resources could be shared in ways Amigas have never before seen. For example, a network need only have a TCP/IP stack on one machine and it can be shared with all. He opened an application window on one machine's screen, and casually slid it over to the other machine's screen. He did a few operations on that screen, and slid it back. He demonstrated how a machine can be operated with the keyboard and mouse of either machine. Not resting there, he started Doom, and slid it over to another screen while it was going full tilt!

New hardware at the show included the Ariadne II ethernet card from Village Tronic. Supplied with drivers, it features a lower price (US \$120) than any previous ethernet card for the Amiga. When asked about a US/Canada version of the Paloma TV card, Village Tronic said that a needed software re-write



*Petro Tsychtschenko had a lot to smile about. Computer 98 drew tens of thousands of Amigans and was a success by all accounts.*

could not be done for some months yet. Village Tronic was trying to gauge interest in a 3Dfx Voodoo 8 Mb add-on for the Picasso IV graphics card by getting at least 500 pre-orders for it.

DCE-Escena announced their dual G3 processor board for Zorro 3 Amigas, but did not have a working prototype to show. It plugs into a Zorro 3 slot, and uses Haage & Partner's WarpUp software. The system control can reside with the 68K processor that already exists on the motherboard, or can be done with the G3 running 68K emulation.

With Phase 5 seeming to fade, this board, if successful, will offer a somewhat different approach to PPC.

Micronik was offering a replacement for the plastic A1200 Infnitiv tower called the Infnitiv II, and it is all metal. They had complaints that the plastic box was too wobbly. They are also waiting for the loan of a Toaster card so they can test their video slot kit.

RBM has a new version of the TowerHawk which their Canadian distributor has dubbed the ToasterHawk. Based on an A1200 motherboard, it was being demonstrated running a complete NewTek Flyer system.

Polish company E/Box was showing a tower system based on the A1200, called the Power Tower. They also were showing the Power Flyer, an ATA-2 module for the 1200 that squeezes full performance from the latest EIDE hard drives, and offers up to 8.5 Mb per second transfer speeds.

Haage & Partner was showing Tornado 3D 2.0, their 3D modeling and rendering program for the 68K or PPC Amiga. It is arguably the most important application thus far for the PPC. The new features include: PPC support for all previews and renderers; hair and fur generator; particle system for smoke, fire, and explosions; character animation; postscript font support; mesh-painting; and, 3D text generation. Haage & Partner's new Art Effects 3.0 features more layers, more filters, and GIF and JPEG saver. The new VideoFX 2 provides real-time graphic effects, audio effects support for up to four-channel stereo, synchronized video/audio effects, more than 500 alpha channel wipes with ready-made animations, and many other features.

There were many other companies present

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Moving on the momentum established after the MidWest Amiga Exposition in October, the three major Amiga support groups of the ICOA (Industry Council Open Amiga), along with Team Amiga, and UGN (User Group Network) have been busy transforming their organizations into useful resources for the Amiga developer and end-user. With revamped websites and announced projects, these organizations are readying themselves to help Amigans understand what the future holds for them based on developments from Computer 98 in Cologne, Germany.

The ICOA's Kermit Woodall announced that they are refocusing their efforts to become a "professional society." As a professional society, Kermit envisions the ICOA functioning much like a user group for developers by focusing on communications, resources, and relevant developer issues. The initial step in refocusing the ICOA is the establishment of a new website to provide developers with these resources. The new website will be located at [www.amiga.net](http://www.amiga.net). Kermit also announced the desire for the ICOA to release a developer newsletter complete with CDROM. Successful completion of this project is dependent on Amiga Inc.'s contribution.

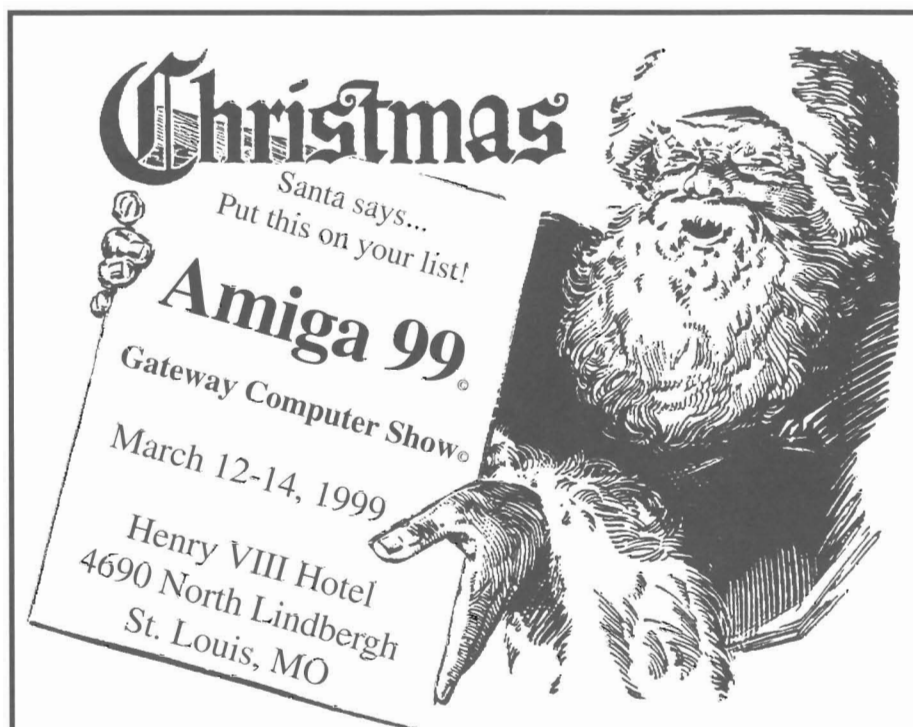
Another project involves the establishment of an anonymous piracy reporting mechanism with the help of Team Amiga's Gary Peake. Gary is requesting that if anyone knows of web or FTP sites that are illegally distributing Amiga software or ROM images to please contact him at [gpeake@wt.net](mailto:gpeake@wt.net). Gary was instrumental in the removal of many allegedly

illegal Amiga software sites, including the infamous Lazarus: The Real Amiga. For this, Gary has received many threatening and hateful emails, but he has also won the praise and respect of many Amiga developers and fans. For more information on Team Amiga or to help Gary shut down these pirate sites, please see their website at <http://web.wt.net/~gpeake/teamamiga.html>.

Lastly, the UGN has been busy revamping their webpage to provide Amiga user groups with the resources necessary to keep them going, or to get started. With expansion of the UGN website at <http://ugn.amiga.org>, the UGN is attempting to provide resources like a

Newsletter Article Exchange, User Group Database, FAQs, Amiga News, and User Group information kits. To this end, the UGN has announced a partnership with Pantheon Systems to provide relevant Amiga content.

Also, the UGN has been very busy keeping the Amiga community informed by providing live web cam and IRC conferences from the various Amiga trade shows worldwide. UGN partners and representatives cover the entire world. For more information about the UGN's projects, or to contact your local representative, see the UGN webpage.



**Christmas**  
Santa says...  
Put this on your list!  
**Amiga 99**  
Gateway Computer Show  
March 12-14, 1999  
Henry VIII Hotel  
4690 North Lindbergh  
St. Louis, MO

Santa's right! The Gateway Computer Shows have been the leading Amiga Computer Shows year after year. In fact, this will be the fifth year that a Gateway Computer Show has been held in St. Louis. They have lead the way in size, quality, value and fun every year. This year we'll be even bigger and better than last years.

Check out our web site for the latest information at:  
**<http://www.amiga-stl.com>**  
or watch this magazine and others for more updates!  
Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays  
the staff of Amigan-St. Louis

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## Amiga Events

### Amiga 99

#### Gateway Computer Show

March 12-14, 1999, Henry VIII Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri. Growing every year, this well organized event promises all the best with larger venues, more dealers, exciting classes, a banquet and door prizes. Get all the latest at [www.amiga-stl.com](http://www.amiga-stl.com).

### World Of Amiga Show 1999

WOA is confirmed and will take place in the UK. Work is well underway, although the date and venue has yet to be confirmed. This event will play a major role in the rejuvenation of the Amiga. For more information on the show, contact Peter Brameld at [p.brameld@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:p.brameld@ukonline.co.uk). A website is already in place at [www.infinitefrontiers.mcmail.com](http://www.infinitefrontiers.mcmail.com).



# Midwest Amiga Expo

By Fletcher Haug

**S**ponsored by The Amiga Central Ohio Network usergroup, this years Midwest Amiga Expo (MAE) was held at the Hyatt Regency Concourse Hotel and Convention Center in downtown Columbus Ohio. Always a popular event, the organization of this show seems to get better each year.

There was strong vendor turnout at MAE (see sidebar) and the show featured an array of seminars and events throughout its 3 days of operation. These seminars included a wide range of topics, including: Beginning ARexx, Webcams and Internet Gadgets; Linux on the 68K; ImageFX tips and tricks; CDROM mastering; TCP/IP programming; Amiga to PC Networking and much more.

There seemed to be a lower then expected turnout at this show. While unfortunate, it was not totally unexpected. In these times of little communication from Amiga Inc. confidence in the Amiga is at an all time low. This lack of confidence resulted in low turnouts and restrained purchases. Unlike Computer'98 in Koln, Germany, MAE didn't get the strong promotional talents of Amiga International.

Perhaps the biggest event of MAE was the release of details on the OS 3.5 upgrade. This announcement was a much needed shot in the arm for the community and it was well accepted by attendees. However, during the follow-up Q&A hosted by Bill McEwen, a somewhat hostile crowd had many pointed questions to ask. It was made clear by those in the audience that Amiga Inc. must follow through with the long overdue work on 3.5 or they risk loosing the support they still have.

Sadly, it seems that Amiga Inc. is backpeddling on 3.5 already. This will only serve to further erode support from an already jaded and dwindling community.

# QuikPak A4000 Shortage Over

By Brad Webb

**R**ecently, a troubling situation hurting the Amiga Classic's chance for survival finally came to a resolution of sorts. With the settlement of the lawsuit between QuikPak and Dr. Bernhard Hembach, the liquidator for the former Amiga Technologies GmbH, the way is cleared for resumption of production of Amiga 4000 computers. Amiga Technologies has since resurfaced as an American corporation, Amiga International, Incorporated, a wholly owned subsidiary of Gateway, Incorporated. The problems began back in April of '96 when Germany's Escom, then parent corporation of Amiga Technologies, announced the sale of their Amiga subsidiary. Instead, Escom went bankrupt shortly thereafter due to overexpansion.

The lawsuit revolved around Dr. Hembach's attempts to obtain the inventory of parts maintained by QuikPak for building A4000 computers under contract to Amiga Technologies. As a result of the settlement, QuikPak was forced to deliver this inventory to Europe, where it's possible Amiga International will be using them to once again build computers.

The lack of A4000s due to the long running lawsuit has had serious repercussions in the

professional video industry. Many small video businesses rely on the Video Toaster board and Video Toaster Flyer, made by NewTek, Inc. of San Antonio, Texas, and the A4000 as key tools. The situation had become so desperate that NewTek announced in October it had made arrangements to create Amiga clones in towers, using existing A1200 motherboards. These systems were modified to accept the Video Toaster/Flyer products, and were enhanced with 50 MHz 68060 processors.

Early reports after the settlement indicated as many as two thousand A4000s could be in the marketplace before Christmas, '98. However, before any can be built, Dr. Hembach will need to sell the inventory to cover outstanding debts owed due to the liquidation. It remains to be seen exactly how all this will play out over time, but the earliest new A4000s could become available is probably early next year. Even this depends on there being a number of usable motherboards in the inventory.

Reliable sources indicate that if new A4000s are manufactured, at least some will be headed to North America, presumably for both the US and Canadian markets.

# Ooops - Correction About Miami

By Fletcher Haug

**A**s is the policy of The Informer, we publish corrections to any unclear or incorrect information we print. In Issue 16 we printed a news BYTE which discussed Miami software by Nordic Global. The software's author, Holger Kruse, contacted us and

pointed out incorrect or misleading information in this article. The following corrections were taken directly from a letter sent by Mr. Kruse that clarifies the disputed parts of that article.

The news BYTE about Miami from Issue 16 contained two errors:

**Amiga Informer (AI):** "It was recently reported on Usenet that Holger Kruse, author of the brilliant Miami TCP software, included a 'back door' in his program to catch pirates."

**Holger Kruse (HK):** This is incorrect. First of all, it was not "reported on Usenet" that Miami contains a back door. What really happened is that a software pirate made an incorrect and slanderous accusation on Usenet, sent from an anonymous account, alleging the existence of a "back door" in Miami. He did not give any conclusive evidence, but instead gave potentially dangerous "advice" how to "circumvent" the alleged "back door," which Nordic Global Inc. immediately denied. The accusation in the original, anonymous article can hardly be considered a "report." Miami does not contain

*continued on page 42*

## Those Present at MAE

### Vendors:

AEMail  
Amazing  
Computing/Amiga  
Amiga Informer magazine  
Amigan-St. Louis  
Asimware  
Compuquick  
Dans Deals  
Digital Arts  
Digital Quill Graphics  
DVS  
Eric Shwartz Graphics

### FWD Computing

Image Architects  
Legacy Maker  
Mushroom PD  
National Amiga  
Nova Design  
OZWare  
Pantheon Systems  
Prowave  
Randomize  
Software Results  
Systems For Tomorrow  
User Group Network  
Weems Ware

### User Groups:

Amiga Dayton User Group  
Amiga Central Ohio Network  
AmiTech User Group  
Cecil Amiga User Group  
Champaign-Urbana  
Computer User Group  
Cleveland Area Amiga User  
Group  
National Capital User Group  
North Coast User Group  
Tulsa Amiga User Group

# Inspecting The G3-PowerPC Card

By Fabian Jimenez

Two weeks before Computer 98 began a little known German company called Escena announced that they were going to prototype a G3-PowerPC based accelerator for the Amiga (see Bytes in this issue for more details). Two things will make this card different from any other existing Amiga accelerator. First, it will not have a Motorola 680x0 CPU onboard. Second, it will fit into any Amiga that supports Zorro 3 expansion slots. Most Amiga accelerators today use the CPU slot, not a Zorro slot. Both these facts raise technical concerns that could affect performance.

First, Zorro cards can generate system interrupts which are needed by the OS. However, Zorro cards can't service these interrupts. This problem can be circumvented by using the old CPU on the motherboard to track and manage these interrupts. Escena's webpage states that Haage & Partner's WarpUp PPC emulation would be used to execute the AmigaOS instructions, but it did not indicate whether the original CPU would be used to handle this task for the PowerPC CPU.

In an email from Dave Haynie, he states that you could program the original CPU to handle the system interrupts and communicate their status using a "higher level protocol." The only interrupt that the PowerPC CPU will need to support is the one being sent from the original CPU saying, "I have a message for you."

Second, Zorro cards can only access the 32-bit resources on the motherboard. Zorro cards cannot access the custom chips, CIAs, and other I/Os. Mr. Haynie again indicated that this could be handled by the original CPU. It could communicate the results of its actions to the PowerPC chips using a "non-cachable mailbox" between the two processors. Dave adds that I/O processes are never cached and that using uncached memory for the mailbox is not a problem.

Third, fears have been expressed concerning memory access as performance hits. Concerning memory access, Dave stated that Zorro 3 slots can access the local bus memory at 10 Mb per second, versus 25 Mb per second from a 68030 CPU on the motherboard. However, the hit is not as bad as it may appear. Dave Haynie stated, "Few of the 68040/60 or PPC interfaces get close to that . . . they all lose something in the translation to the '030 bus."

Depending on how Escena plans to handle the technical issues raised by designing a Zorro 3 based accelerator, Amigans could

have the performance and power rivaling other platforms on their Classic Amiga systems. Mr. Haynie states that if done right with decent emulation and using the original CPU as an I/O processor of sorts, a G3 based board like Escena's could run Amiga code faster than "most 68K-based Amigas."



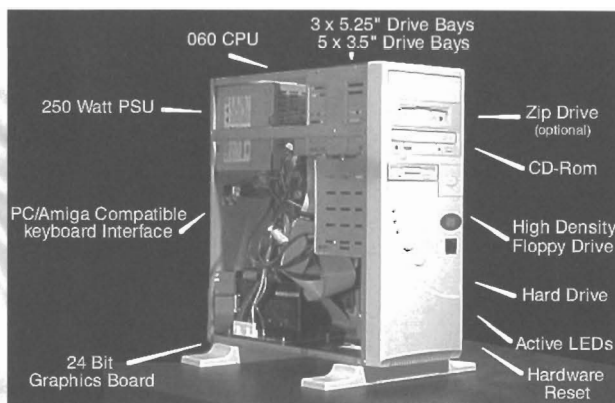
After installing MCP do you get the error message "Vector Changed, GT-Create Gadget, Can't remove patch?" Just reboot and the new change will take place!

## A1200 Tower Options By dthomas trenn

Though it appears that legal disputes with the manufacturing of A4000 computers may finally have been resolved, for a while it has been very difficult to purchase new Amiga computer systems. In an attempt to keep on track, several companies have designed custom-assembled tower versions of the A1200. For some people, this may be just what is needed.

Randomize Inc. is one of several companies providing A1200 tower solutions. On tap from Randomize is their *Genesis* line which includes the *Alpha* and *Towerhawk* A1200 towers. These systems are based on the A1200 motherboard and hardware manufactured by RBM Computertechnik and Ateo Concepts. The *Alpha* and *Towerhawk* base systems are priced the same at US \$1,899.95. Neither system includes a monitor.

Common features of both systems include: A1200 motherboard (AGA graphics); Phase5 Blizzard 1260 060/50 MHz; 32 Mb RAM (expandable to 128 Mb); 32x IDE CDROM;

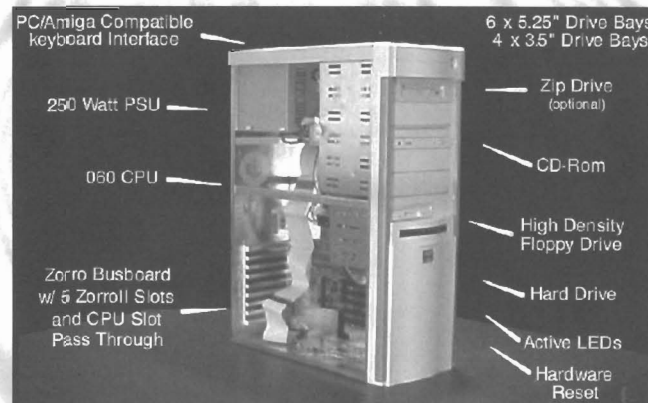


104 key Windows95 keyboard; high density floppy disk drive; 250 watt PSU; AmigaOS 3.1 (hardware/manuals); standard A1200 interfaces ports (1x Rs-232c serial, 1x parallel, 1x external floppy drive, 2x mouse/joystick, 1x 23-pin RGB video, 1x composite video, 1x RF modulator, 2x stereo audio); Personal Paint 7.1 CD; standard PC multisync monitor compatibility; and video and genlock capability.

In addition to the common features listed above, the *Alpha* adds: Ateo Concepts AteoBus expansion bus; Ateo Pixel64 24-bit graphics card; 4.3 Gb IDE hard drive; medium tower case; 3x 5.25" drive bays; and 5x 3.5" drive bays.

The *Pixel64* with 2 Mb of onboard graphics memory provides 24-bit graphics up to a resolution of 800x600 (60/85 MHz), 16-bit up to 1024x768 (75 MHz), or 8-bit up to 1280x1024 (75 MHz). Picasso96 retargeting software is included, providing compatibility with

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# Software Installation: Things To Know

By dthomas trenn

**H**ow many times have you installed a new application, only to discover that other programs no longer work? How much of your hard disk is occupied by unused applications and support files? Ideally, every computer software application should come with safe install and uninstall functionality, but the sad reality is that this does not happen very often.

There is a lot to be said for having a good understanding of what is going on within your Amiga. There is no reason for most Amigans not to have a basic comprehension of the workings of their system. This is particularly important when using freely distributable programs (Aminet); but, this can be a problem with commercial releases, too. Programs that include an installer can often be poorly written and blindly spew files throughout your system.

## Getting Ready

Before installation, you should always make it a point to browse through the files included with a new application. A good file manager like Directory Opus, can make this task much easier, but it can also be done through the Workbench or from a shell using the C:Dir or C:List commands.

By familiarizing yourself in this way, you will be much better equipped to deal with any problems that might arise later. If you decide not to use the new application, you will know what files to delete afterwards.

## Updating Existing Files

A good installation procedure should always confirm that support files (such as libraries, gadgets, etc.) being copied to your system are newer than any existing ones.

Perhaps you have just unarchived a new application into RAM: and you see that it includes the reqtools.library, which you already have installed in SYS:Libs/ for use with other programs. You can compare the versions of each, by using the C:Version command:

```
C:Version RAM:reqtools.library FULL FILE
C:Version SYS:Libs/reqtools.library FULL FILE
```

The FILE option is important because Version will return information about an already in use resource if you do not tell it otherwise. The FULL option is not necessary, but it may tell you more about the file.

Make it a habit to back up any files that will be overwritten, just in case a newer version is not compatible with other programs.

## Doing It Yourself

If you really want to be on top of things, you could ignore supplied installers and do the installation yourself. For this approach, SnoopDos (Aminet:util/moni/SnoopDos30.lha) may be a valuable tool. With SnoopDos on the watch, you will be told what an application is looking for and where it expects to find it. For the most part though, it is obvious what goes where.

If you like to be really organized, keep in mind that .library files do not have to go in SYS:Libs/. You can just as easily add a directory to the LIBS: assignment and put them in an application's directory. Something like this in your user-startup will work:

```
C:Assign LIBS: WORK:Applications/
Example/libs ADD
```

The ADD option adds the new path without removing the existing path. You can do the same for any assignment, so if a program uses its own fonts, put them in a fonts/ directory within the program's directory and add this to your user-startup: C:Assign FONTS: WORK:Applications/Example/fonts ADD "WORK:Applications/Example/" is just being used as an example here, the path could be to any directory on any volume.

## Enforcing The Law

After installing a new application, have you noticed that other programs seem to be crashing while performing functions that used to work okay? If this is a problem, it is likely that the new application is trashing memory or causing other havoc with system resources.

The best watchdog for these problems is a program called Enforcer (Aminet:dev/debug/enforcer.lha). It is generally considered a programmer's tool, but anyone can benefit from its use. Before testing a new application, start Enforcer like this:

```
Enforcer STACKLINES=0 FILE=CON:
0/0/640/150/Enforcer/Auto/Close
Now, if Enforcer detects a problem, it will open a window on Workbench and give you some information like this:
LONG-WRITE to 00000102 PC:
085FF746 USP: 088847C8 SR: 0014 FLSW:
00810200 TCB: 088836F0 Data: 00000000
DDDD1111 DDDD2222 DDDD3333
085FF6E2... Addr: AAAA0000 AAAA1111
AAAA2222 AAAA3333 AAAA4444... ---->
085FF746 - "LawBreaker" Hunk 0000 Offset
00000086 ----> $085ff746: MOVE.L
D0,$0102.W Name: "LawBreaker" Hunk
0000 Offset 00000086
```

*continued on page 42*

# Something to Think About

By Nigel Kent

**A**sk yourself, "What does the Amiga mean to me?"

The word "Amiga" has several definitions, depending on who you ask. For one person, the Amiga is a computer that disappeared along with the rest of the computing marvels of the late eighties and early nineties—just another long-disparaged brand like NeXT or Atari. Others consider the Amiga an operating system that even now has the potential to virulently grow the way Linux has done in the last three years. Still others consider the Amiga to be a 'great machine' whose life was laid to waste by Commodore and, later Amiga Inc.

What keeps Amiga users clinging to our beloved platform is the bold promise of achieving a distant, amazing level of viability in the marketplace. This viability would be driven by the incredible feeling we are predisposed toward: it's the feeling I got when playing Shadow of the Beast II for the first time on an Amiga 500, or the feeling I got the first time I watched NewTek's free video toaster VHS promo tape. We all know the feeling. That's what keeps us running on Amigas—we want the feeling to come back.

The desire to see the Amiga succeed burns no greater in anyone that it does in the minds of people like Fleecy Moss and Olaf Barthel. Hard-core Amiga developers, these guys have poured every ounce of tangible thinking into the Amiga for many years—to no avail. The multitudes of excellent ideas from the Amiga

community have gone unchecked as Amiga Inc. plans a consumer-oriented personal device operating system (whose non-existent capabilities have already been labeled as "highly scaleable" and "ready for everything from the popcorn-popper to a high-end workstation"). Sure, it's an admirable goal to want to create something scaleable, but where will Amiga Inc.'s focus be? Video entertainment consoles? Hand-held organizers? Digitally controlled fingernail airbrushes? This is hardly the Amiga I remember, and the idea of these things doesn't bring back "the feeling," at least for me.

It's no wonder why once-great Amiga bandwagoners are talking down on Amiga Inc. Jason Compton, one of the most serious and vocal Amiga users I've ever met has said in Usenet postings that Gateway rates an F in their management of the Amiga. Phase 5, whose mere presence has kept the Amiga afloat for the last three years, has had less publicized but equally negative commentary about Amiga Inc.

It is my belief that the Amiga OS needs to go Open Source, meaning that the source code of the operating system, while (perhaps) centrally controlled and copyrighted, needs to become freely available to anybody who wants to enhance it. Considering Amiga Inc.'s move to QNX/Neutrino for the basis of the next-generation Amiga operating kernel, what





possible value could they derive from ECS/AGA-only elements of the Amiga OS like Intuition, Amiga Fast File System, and scsi.device?

The benefits of Open Source are more credible than the promises of Amiga Inc. Consider Linux ([www.linux.org](http://www.linux.org)), an Open Source operating system whose market-share has gained a steady 1.5% gain over each preceding quarter in deployment growth versus Windows NT for the last 18 months. Consider Apache, a web-server package that maintains an ever-growing margin of leadership on comparably-equipped web-servers from Netscape, Sun, and Microsoft.

Linux and Apache have been successful because they are free and because they run on nearly every hardware platform and operating system available—including the Amiga OS.

Who could possibly lose out on that type of growth for the Amiga OS? Certainly not Amiga Inc., who has consistently demonstrated (even in their has-been attitude of renaming today's Amiga the "Amiga Classic") that they do not care about the growth of today's Amiga OS or the existing base of users.

With the base of Amiga OS source code scattered across the globe among dozens of developers who've worked on it in the past, the potential for free (albeit illegal) distribution already exists. Furthermore, one group has publicly acknowledged their intentions to clone the functions of the Amiga OS as a part of their project—Amiga Replacement Operating System (AROS). At last check, AROS ([www.aros.org](http://www.aros.org)) was about 50% complete.

It's only a matter of time before projects like AROS reach their goals. Fleecy Moss's Kosh project ([www.kosh.net](http://www.kosh.net)) envisions a community-driven computing environment that is built on the most sound principles of the Amiga's vision. It has gained rapid momentum since Moss left Amiga Inc. and attracted a portfolio of impressive, high-profile supporters.

The bottom-line is this: Amiga users are going to get what they want, and if Amiga Inc. isn't going to provide it, Amiga users are still going to get it from somewhere. The best thing Amiga Inc. could do for the community is help them achieve their goals a little bit faster, by opening the source code, even if they retain control over the officiality of enhancements. In doing so, Amiga Inc. would suddenly be king of the greatest base of development knowledge on the planet, namely the Open Source Movement ([www.gnu.org](http://www.gnu.org)).

Amiga Inc. is more likely to care about the sprawling "open source effect" that might cause the "freely-available" Amiga OS to cloud their precious brand identity once they finally decide to market something more tangible. If the Amiga OS were made open source, their proprietary, consumer-oriented brand will become diluted by the "other Amiga," the one that's free on the Internet for download. The one that can be installed on Amigas, Macs or Pentiums. The one that has less to do with power-hungry business success and more to do with community spirit. The one that could finally give us back 'The Feeling.'

So, Amiga Inc., what does the Amiga mean to you? Is it just a brand name?

## IN BRIEF

*The Pulse* newsletter from Alive Mediasoft features reviews/previews by independent columnists of new and classic Amiga games. To get *The Pulse*, email or phone your postal address to Alive Mediasoft: [jenniealive@innotts.co.uk](mailto:jenniealive@innotts.co.uk) or phone 44 01 623 467 579. *CyberGraphX V4 CD* is available from Schatztruhe and features improved memory management, extensive documentation, FAQ, extended CGXMode, VESA modes, many bug fixes, and much more. Check out [www.schatztruhe.de](http://www.schatztruhe.de) for more info. *ProStationAudio* from AudioLabs now supports the editing and processing of NewTek Flyer audio clips making it possible to integrate audio recordings from different platforms. ProStationAudio provides broadcast-quality, nonlinear audio editing to any AmigaOS compatible platform. Contact [www.audiolabs.it](http://www.audiolabs.it) for complete info. *Aminet Set 7* is now available and offers everything added to the archives since Aminet Set 6 was released, plus full versions of IBrowse 1.2SE, XiPaint 4.0, KangFu SE & Picture Manager 4SE. Get all the scoop is at [www.schatztruhe.de](http://www.schatztruhe.de). Asimware released *MasterISO v2.2*, a maintenance update for MasterISO v2. It adds support for many more drives and Disc-At-Once writing for some drives. Download a demo and get a complete feature list at [www.asimware.com](http://www.asimware.com). *Linux Red Hat 5.1* is available for the Amiga from Schatztruhe. The CD contains the unofficial Red Hat 5.1 Amiga-Version (binaries only). The source code is available upon request. Check out [www.schatztruhe.de](http://www.schatztruhe.de) to get complete information. The *Industry Council Open Amiga* (ICOA) announced that their website is online at [www.amiga.net](http://www.amiga.net). It will serve as a focal point from which developers both large and small can communicate with each other. *Envoy V3* is now available on CD from Schatztruhe. Envoy is the only networking software specifically designed for the Amiga and allows you to share resources like files and directories on networked Amiga. Visit [www.schatztruhe.de](http://www.schatztruhe.de) for all the details. Disk drive maker *SyQuest* shut down operations on November 3, 1998. SyQuest's latest quarter reported a loss of \$42 million, but said it will continue limited support for their customers. The St. Louis *Amiga 99 Gateway Computer show* will feature a contest for a screen saver program and the artwork it includes. Check out [www.amiga-stl.com](http://www.amiga-stl.com) to see what the prizes will be and how to enter. The official *POV-Ray V3.1* release for Amiga is now available. You can find it at [www.amigaworld.com/support/povamiga](http://www.amigaworld.com/support/povamiga), [www.povray.org](http://www.povray.org), and GO POV-Ray on CompuServe. Through January 1999, *Nova Design* is offering a free copy of Catalyzer 1, the ImageFX video tutorial, to any new buyers of ImageFX. You also get a 50% discount coupon for VisualFX from Visual Inspiration. VisualFX offers sophisticated transitions and animated effects for ImageFX. Visit Nova at [www.novadesign.com](http://www.novadesign.com). Vaporware released *AmIRC V2.2*. It includes countless new features and refinements. The upgrade or demo can be download from [www.vapor.com](http://www.vapor.com) and is free to all registered 2.x users. Sidewinder Productions launched *Future Shock 2*, a CD full of Amiga generated music. The CD includes 74 minutes of Sidewinder's best tunes and is available for US \$10 from Sidewinder Productions or select Amiga dealers. Check out [www.txdirect.net/~sidewind/](http://www.txdirect.net/~sidewind/) for full details. On a similar note, French based NoName released *Technodatabase 98* which includes over 200 Techno MODs, mirrors of eight Techno websites, Technovision (a Scala hyperguide), and various tools and utilities for creating music and graphics. Check it out at [www.noname.fr/village/bartechno/](http://www.noname.fr/village/bartechno/). *Cloanto* discontinued the floppy release of Amiga Forever 2.0. This doesn't mean they are leaving the Amiga and will continue to sell and develop Amiga products. Visit them at [www.cloanto.com](http://www.cloanto.com). *Vulcan software* released a demo of *Wasted Dreams*. The demo of this CD only game is available at [www.vulcan.co.uk](http://www.vulcan.co.uk) and the full release is expected very soon. *The Amiga of Minnesota Interest Group Alliance* is considering producing updated EPROM's for the CDTV to allow it to accommodate AmigaOS 3.1. If you are interested in the project email [thedoctor@wavetech.net](mailto:thedoctor@wavetech.net) to show your support. *Phase5* has decided not to proceed with the manufacturing of the Blizzard 2604 A2000 PPC accelerator due to a perceived lack of demand. Visit them at [www.phase5.de](http://www.phase5.de). New Amiga Retailer *ADA Computers* is opening a storefront after working from home for several years. ADA will support both hardware and software. They are located in Elberta, Alabama on Highway 98 between Mobile and Pensacola, Florida. Email ADA at [adfarm@gulftel.com](mailto:adfarm@gulftel.com). Schatztruhe cancelled its involvement with *Bodyguard*, a memory protection system for AmigaOS. However, Bodyguard developer Martin Berndt stated he intends to complete the project. Want to use inexpensive PC expansion cards in your Amiga? You can use *The GoldenGate2 Bus+ card* from Software Results Enterprises. It plugs into a Zorro 2 and PC-AT slot on big-box Amiga and opens up many options. Visit [www.infinet.com/~erd/GG2/](http://www.infinet.com/~erd/GG2/) for full details. South Essex Amiga Link released a new quarterly Amiga magazine called *Clubbed*. It plans to contain news, reviews, interviews, hints & tips, and tutorials all nestled into a full sized 33-page publication. Visit <http://seal.amiga.tm> for more info.



By Robert Bryant

I'm falling in love with my Amiga all over again. I know it's silly, even strange, to feel such an emotion toward a material object, but I can't help it. My Amiga is a facilitator. It helps me to express my creativity in a way no other thing does. It doesn't get in the way; in fact, it enhances my creative musings by stepping up and offering options and work-arounds, new solutions and ARExx.

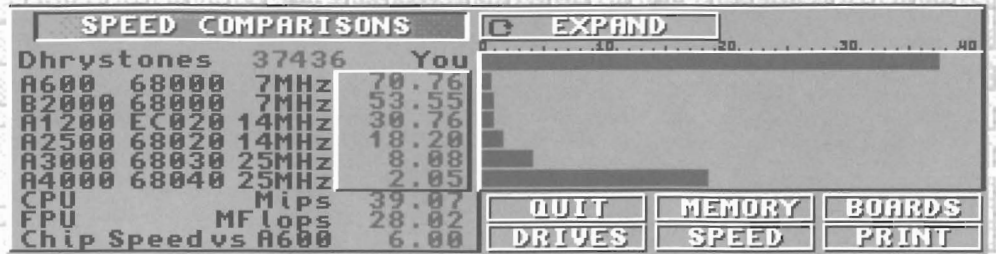
I'd reached a point where some decision was necessary. My Amiga 3000 was as maxed out as it could go in stock trim. I'd even added a separate tower case just to house the growing collection of hard and CDROM drives. My uses of the system were taxing it; desktop publishing, digital audio and CD mastering require lots of hard drive space (okay there), lots of RAM (not too bad) and a fast processor (hmm...). To build a PC-based system to match the capabilities and versatility of my current Amiga setup would require somewhere in the neighborhood of \$8,000.

With promises of a new Mystery-Chip powered Amiga on the horizon in another 18 months, I had to do something now to keep my system viable for the next two years. By that time, the new Amiga should be well enough established and the savings account will have recovered sufficiently to upgrade again.

I should feel lucky that I've come this far—from 1991 to now—with only two Amigas: My venerable A2000 (bought new in 1991) and the used, tweaked out A3000. PC users have had to upgrade or replace systems several times in the few years that I've gotten by with only two Amigas.

I considered the BoXeR, but availability is still questionable—and this for a product that was supposed to be available in mid-August. So with the \$1,500 that would have bought a BoXeR with only 32 Mb RAM and a lonely 68060, I ordered a 200 MHz Phase 5 CyberStorm PPC card with 128 Mb RAM and a Mi-cronik A3000 classic tower conversion case.

The CyberStorm package instills confidence from the start. Professionally prepared, with a spiral-bound printed manual (with both German and English sections), two installation floppies and a CDROM, the set is nothing if not slick. Other hardware vendors could take a lesson from Phase 5. To date, this is the second commercial Amiga title I've received on CDROM. It's about time.



Speed comparisons in SysInfo show quite an improvement over 68k CPUs.

Installation in the desktop A3000 required the INT-2 hack ([www.vgr.com/int2](http://www.vgr.com/int2)). The accelerator board needs a clock signal omitted from the original desktop motherboard design. This involved soldering a wire on the bottom of the motherboard from pin 21 on a CIA chip to pin 182 on the processor slot. This modification is not for the weak of heart nor those unskilled with a soldering iron. There are several Amiga companies that will gladly perform this modification for you, and it will not affect normal, unaccelerated operation of the A3000 desktop. With some skill and experience in basic electronics, I was able to complete the modification in about an hour, including disassembly time (there's an ungodly number of screws to keep track of).

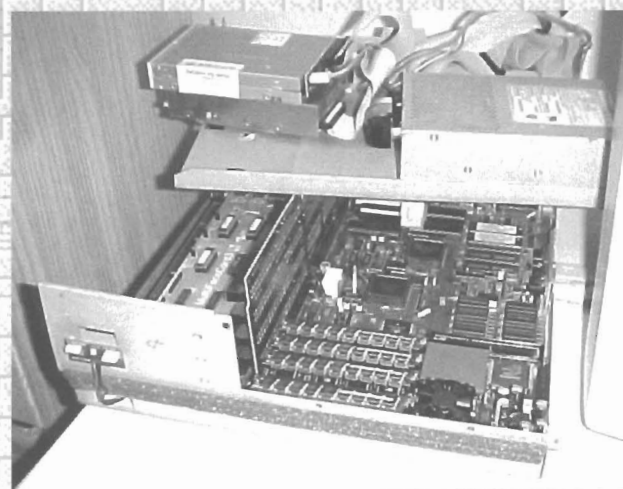
Here's a tip: use a piece of telephone wire. The gauge (thickness) is sufficient, it's a solid conductor, and brightly colored. Use a pair of needle-nose pliers or tweezers to form the end into a small circle, about 1/32 of an inch in diameter, to fit over the protruding pin. Use a fine-tip soldering iron and watch the heat! You don't want to melt any surrounding connections or drip solder. Use a piece of paper with a small cutout so any drippings land on the paper and not on the motherboard.

With the machine reassembled, the jumpers configured as explained in the manual, and the PPC card fully seated on the processor slot, I fired it up and... It wouldn't boot. To spare you the gory details of my troubleshooting, here are a few more tips: If you're using AWS (Amiga WorkStation) during your bootup, remove it. Next, disable the PrepEmul if you're running ShapeShifter. PrepEmul tries to reboot the machine, but it won't. It just stops. Other than that, the thing fired up immediately and wow, what a difference! Crisp, quick graphic displays and image decodings (particularly JPGs). MPEG files play perfectly, routing through AHI with CPU resources to spare. Final Writer and Graphics Publisher printouts go just as fast as the printer can run. The RAM was instantly recognized, and added itself to the 16 Mb already installed on the motherboard. SysInfo reported speeds a full eight times faster than the stock A3000/25, and more than twice as fast as an A4000/040. It's a beautiful thing.

Now the only thing I lack as compared to an A4000 tower is the AGA chipset, so I'm not able to do complete CD32 and CDTV emulation. Any software that hits the AGA hardware is no good to me. With the growing support for RTG (even as a feature of OS 3.5 to come out early next year), this is less and less of a concern.

The only troubles I've experienced relate to the severe lack of space in the A3000 desktop. The drive chassis all but bottoms out on top of the RAM SIMMs, and will cause the 68060 chip to overheat in a hurry. I've added a CPU fan to be on the safe side, but now have to leave the case off and the drive chassis propped up. It's ugly, but it works. Guess it's time to put it all into a tower case.

The bottom line is this: If you need a strong Amiga platform to carry you through the next few years, the dual-processor CyberStorm PPC card is a great choice. You'll wonder how you ever got along without it.



Installation in a desktop A3000 doesn't leave a lot of room.



**Paxtron, specialists in Amiga service, is offering Lithium batteries for US \$14.95 and Ni/CD batteries for US \$9.95.** Paxtron sated that almost 20% of repairs performed at their service center are due to leaking batteries. When battery acid leaks onto the motherboard a whole new motherboard may be required. Paxtron advise that if your Amiga is four or more years old that you replace the battery.

**With the aim of expanding their UK-centric distribution channels, innovative game developer Alive Mediasoft has teamed up with Weird Science to globally distribute Alive's titles which currently includes Putty Squad and Blade as well as many others still in development.** As a result, Alive titles should soon be more freely available from your local Amiga dealer.

**The recent shut down of Softwood's website led to speculation that Softwood had gone out of business.** This is not true. Founder Woody Williams explains that his disabling of the site was due to an inability to fill orders on certain items (expensive-to-reprint manual addenda among them). As noted on the internet, a start-up company called Soft Partners ([www.softpartners.com](http://www.softpartners.com)) has licensed Softwood's product line (Final Writer, Final Calc, Final Data) for release on an "office suite" compilation CD at a heavily discounted price. If the CD sells well, Soft Partners may invest in the development of upgraded versions of Final Writer and other programs. Softwood currently isn't developing Amiga software, although Woody reports, "I'd like that to change. I miss the days when we were hard at work on an upgrade."

**Access Information is very close to completing the BoXeR Amiga clone.** The release date has tentatively been set for December 1998. Blittersoft, the international distributors of the BoXeR, is already accepting pre-orders for roughly US \$800 (motherboard only). The BoXeR will also be at the heart of a new range of Blittersoft "Black Box" Amiga clones as well as numerous other Amiga clones. It was also recently announced that there will be a range of PPC G3 accelerators for the BoXeR.

**Blittersoft and Weird Science have entered into a joint venture to design and release the Cerberus, a "totally integrated Multimedia Home Entertainment System."** The system is based on PC hardware, but through emulation provides access to the wealth of Amiga and Mac software. The system uses the Mpack 2 Multimedia Processor to provide blindingly fast 2D and 3D graphics, sound and DVD. The system also includes an integrated DVD drive and hardware accelerated MPEG2 decoding as well as a built in 56k modem. Amiga support will be enhanced in the future with the option of purchasing the Cerberus with the SiamesePCI Amiga card. No price or release date has yet been announced.

**As a sign of confidence in the Amiga's future, Syzygy Research & Technology has decided to develop Digital Universe 2.0 for the Amiga.** Syzygy recently released the original version of Digital Universe, the very popular and extremely powerful astronomy program, at a greatly reduced price to test the viability of the Amiga market. Sales were stronger than expected and Syzygy is now planning version two. Development will begin once the PC and Mac versions of Digital Universe are complete.

**German based Escena recently announced that they will be releasing a series of PPC G3 accelerator cards including cards which support dual G3 processors.** Few details are known at present, however the card is nearing completion and a prototype is expected by December 1998. The card is Zorro 3 based and ships without a 68k CPU. The board can take processors from 233 MHz to 400 MHz with 512 Kb or 1 Mb Backside cache and up to 512 Mb SDRAM. The board will utilize Haage & Partner's WarpUP driver and PPC 68k emulation software. G3 PPC processors are significantly faster than the PPC processors used in the Phase5 PowerUP cards and, unlike the PowerUP cards, the G3 includes an L2 cache which further boosts performance. No official release date has been announced, however expected release is the end of Q1 next year.

**Promising to revolutionize information exchange over networks as well as computer languages, Carl Sassenrath has officially launched REBOL.** REBOL can be described as something between ARexx and Perl, but it also offers many new features. REBOL is an internet-native, system-independent language, directly handling primary Internet protocols such as email, Web and FTP. No other bundled network or computer applications are needed. Typical REBOL applications might include website building and maintenance, electronic commerce, file transfer, list management, newsgroup processing, email filtering and processing, and web searches. REBOL, along with source examples, extensive documentation, and binaries for the Amiga and all major platforms, is available free for download from [www.rebol.com](http://www.rebol.com).

**The DICE freely distributable C compiler for Amiga, originally written by Matt Dillon, was updated and re-released by Richard Drummond this October.** Now, with the assistance of Matt Dillon, a DICE Development Group has been set up to continue work on DICE. Amiga programmers interested in assisting are invited to mail Richard Drummond at [dice@drummond.u-net.com](mailto:dice@drummond.u-net.com) or Matthew Fletcher at [Matthew.Fletcher@student.shu.ac.uk](mailto:Matthew.Fletcher@student.shu.ac.uk). There is also a mailing list to which you can subscribe at <http://www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/dice>.

**Sad news from several Amiga Internet projects.** Finale Development suspended development of what was probably going to be the Amiga's most advanced WWW browser, Webcruiser and the Java Virtual Machine (JVM), MOca. According to John Kelly of Finale Development, the two programmers working on Webcruiser and MOca have departed. After revisional updates to Voodoo and NewYork, Finale say they will restart development on Webcruiser and MOca. UK based Ram Jam, the team responsible for porting Opera to the Amiga has decided to suspend development due to "the current poor state of the Amiga market." Ram Jam is hoping that the announcement of OS3.5 and the imminent release of details regarding the Amiga's future will reinvigorate the market.

**The Delfina 1200 audio card for Amiga 1200 has been announced by Finland's Petsoff.** The card is based on Motorola's 37 MHz DSP56002 digital signal processor chip. It is compatible with AHI (Audio Hardware Interface), the emerging audio standard for Amiga. The board is fully programmable with the supplied software, and is already supported by several Amiga software packages including Octamed SoundStudio, AudioLab 16 for Delfina and SoundFX.





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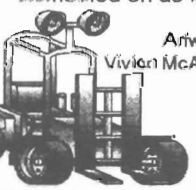
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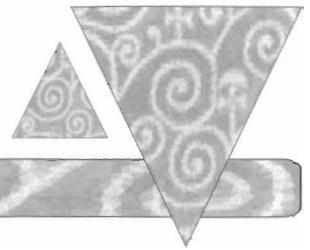
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PD Software: We make no warranty on PD software. Public domain is distributed on as is basis.

# Announcements



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

## AmigaClassix

From: Epic Marketing

Email: [epic.support@dialin.net](mailto:epic.support@dialin.net)

URL: [www.epicmarketing.ltd.net](http://www.epicmarketing.ltd.net)

Epic Marketing released a CD full of over 300 "classic" Amiga games. Most games on the CD are the full commercial releases (permission has been obtained from the respective publishers) and include titles from all major Amiga developers, past and present, and includes games such as Alien Breed 3D, Soccer Kid, Syndicate and many others. As an added bonus there are over 100 all time classic mega demos. However, there is some conjecture as to exactly which games are the full release and which are demonstration versions, so if you're planning on buying the CD for only one or two games it may be best to check with Epic first. AmigaClassix should retail for around US \$29. Check with your dealer for availability.

## Control Tower 2.0

From: Visual Inspirations Inc.

Email: [visual@vionline.com](mailto:visual@vionline.com)

URL: [www.vionline.com/](http://www.vionline.com/)

Visual Inspirations announced the release of Control Tower 2.0 for the NewTek Video Toaster. Control Tower is the perfect front end for Nova Design's ImageFX software and helps automate image processing of flyer clips. The program now includes over 300 macros designed to save time and takes advantage of other popularly used utilities such as the ProWaves package. The user interface has also been totally redesigned and now appears on the Flyer screen and both the manual and online documentation has been extensively updated. Registered users should have been contacted about obtaining an upgrade while the full package is available from most US and Canadian Amiga stores for approximately US \$249.95.

## Directory Opus 5 Magellan II

From: GPSoftware

Email: [greg@gpsoft.com.au](mailto:greg@gpsoft.com.au)

URL: [www.gpsoft.com.au](http://www.gpsoft.com.au)

GPSoftware has been busy updating Directory Opus and presented the Magellan II update at

Computer 98. The update sports many new features aimed at further increasing the power of what is already the best directory utility on any platform. These include: much improved lister functionality; enhanced OpusFTP module which sports a new interface; an even more comprehensive ARExx interface; and, a revised and more intuitive layout of environment editors. The Workbench Replacement Mode has seen significant improvements. Support for random background images and Themes is now included as well as many other small tweaks. Directory Opus 5 Magellan II will retail for around US \$75 while upgrades from Opus 5.x will be about \$50. To coincide with the release of Opus Magellan II, GPSoftware also released the ultimate Directory Opus companion CDROM, titled DOpus PLUS. Tagged as the essential companion for any Opus user the CDROM contains hundreds of megabytes of data. The CD contains numerous Opus tutorials from Opus experts worldwide covering areas from making Opus look glitzy, to using the ARExx interface and programming using the Opus SDK. Also on the CD are hundreds of Themes, start menus, button banks and icons, as well as indispensable Opus ARExx utilities for serious users and beginners alike. DOpus PLUS CD will be available for about US \$45, or \$33 if purchased at the same time as buying Opus or upgrading. Check with your dealer for upgrade pricing.

## GoldED Studio 5

From: Dietmar Eilert

Email: [Dietmar.Eilert@post.rwth-aachen.de](mailto:Dietmar.Eilert@post.rwth-aachen.de)

URL: <http://members.tripod.com/golded/golded.htm>

GoldED Studio 5 has been released and promises to be a "complete editing environment for Amiga OS." Previously available as shareware, programmer Dietmar Eilert decided to release version 5 commercially. Version 5 includes a whole host of new features and can be used for anything from basic text editing to in-depth programming. Support is available for HTML, StormC and SAS/C as well as many other languages. GoldED Studio 5 ships on CDROM and also includes the full Roget's Thesaurus, the spell checking add-on Joyce, and various other tools. GoldED requires a 68020 or better, 2 Mb RAM and at least 5 Mb of free hard drive space. No official US price was available at the time of print however, it

is available for approximately 90DM. As a goodwill gesture to the Amiga community, Dietmar Eilert has released the previous version of GoldED 4.7.3 as freeware. Check with your dealer for availability.

## IOBlix

From: Software Hut

Email: [softhut@erols.com](mailto:softhut@erols.com)

URL: [www.softhut.com](http://www.softhut.com)

Software Hut launched the first I/O card for the Amiga since the GVP IO Extender. Developed by RBM of Germany, the IOBlix—a Zorro 2 card—supplies four serial and two EPP/ECP parallel ports (standard Amiga parallel ports are Centronics). In addition to these ports, there are two module ports with an AHI compatible sound card, Ethernet card and high density floppy drive already being planned. The high-speed serial ports provide 64 byte of FIFO-memory, while the parallel ports support the uni and bidirectional modes for printer compatibility, and has a 16 byte FIFO which qualifies the IOBlix for even the most intense applications. The IOBlix is available from Software Hut for US \$139.95.

## PlayHD

From: Davy Wentzler

Email: [wentzler@limit.nl](mailto:wentzler@limit.nl)

URL: [www.wentzler.limit.nl](http://www.wentzler.limit.nl)

Davy Wentzler has released PlayHD, a 16-bit audio hard disk-recording package based on the AHI audio system by Martin Blom. By using AHI, PlayHD can support audio input from various soundcards, not just the built in 8-bit Paula chip. Interestingly, using AHI the Paula chip can play in a special 14-bit calibrated mode. Features include full mixer automation, full duplex playback, MIDI synchronization, a comprehensive sample editor, various effects and filters such as delay, noise gate, chorus, comp/ limiter, amplifier, and many more. PlayHD is shareware and a demo is available from the PlayHD website. The full program will cost US \$75.

## ScaryFX

From: DiscreetFX

Noted Amiga/Toaster guru Bill Panagouleas released ScaryFX, a CDROM with over 40 different real-time color Video Toaster 4000 effects including ghosts, witches, graves and skeletons amongst other spooky effects. For





users without a Toaster, real-time color full-screen animation brushes are also included so that you can genlock over your videos or layer them into your Amiga animations with LightWave 3D or ImageFX. The Toaster effects are speed adjustable. Matte, overlay, and wipe effects are also included. Both the Amiga and Video Toaster versions of ScaryFX are shipped on the same CD which retails for around US \$49.95.

**SuperView Productivity Suite**

From: Schatztruhe  
 Email: stefano@schatztruhe.de  
 URL: <http://www.schatztruhe.de>  
 Persuasive Softworx released the SuperView Productivity Suite. Based on the popular shareware program SuperView by Andreas Kleinert, the program reads/writes/converts over 50 different graphics file formats and seamlessly integrates with external program packages like XPK, Ghostscript or MetaView. The program also contains extensive editing and image processing features with over 30 different operators. SuperView is PPC aware with various datatypes and operators written in PPC native code. SuperView requires any Amiga with OS 2.04 or later, 2 Mb RAM and a hard drive. Over 20 graphics cards are also supported. SuperView Productivity Suite should be available now from Schatztruhe or Amiga retailers for approximately US \$35.

**Vulcanology**

From: Vulcan Software  
 Email: webmaster@vul-soft.demon.co.uk  
 URL: [www.vulcan.co.uk](http://www.vulcan.co.uk)  
 Vulcan Software is offering every game released in their first three years on a CD compilation titled Vulcanology. Comprising of ten award winning games, including the first three Valhalla's, Timekeepers 1 and 2, Burnout AGA, Hillsea Lido, Bograts, JetPilot and Tiny Troops, the CD promises to be a must have for Amiga gamers. Only 500 units are being manufactured making the compilation a definite collectors item. Vulcanology is available anywhere Vulcan games can be purchased. No price has yet been announced, but a budget price is expected.

**Wildfire 7**

From: Nova Design  
 Phone: 804-282-5868  
 URL: [www.novadesign.com](http://www.novadesign.com)  
 German based Oberland Computer announced the release of Wildfire 7, a special effects system for animations, image sequences and images. Debuting at Computer 98, version 7 has a host of new features to add to the already impressive feature list such as: a totally rewritten MUI based GUI; linear and non-

linear effects system; 3D effects such as light sourcing and phong shading; over 120 plug-ins; and, support for a whole host of filetypes including MPEG, QT, AVI, YAFF and IFF. Wildfire also fully supports PowerPC processors and CybergraphX. Wildfire is distributed in North America by Nova Design. Ask your Amiga retailer for pricing and upgrade information.

**X-Arc & Contact Manager**

From: Vaporware  
 Email: owagner@vapor.com  
 URL: [www.vapor.com](http://www.vapor.com)  
 X-Arc is a new tool created for managing archives on the Amiga. Not unlike WinZip on the PC, X-Arc aims to be the central interface when dealing with all manner of archives in various formats. X-Arc features an intuitive and highly configurable interface making it perfect for beginners and experts alike. The

program is highly modular and makes extensive use of plug-ins to handle the various archive formats including LHA, LZX and ZIP files. X-Arc is available from Vaporware for around US \$25.

Also from Vaporware is Contact Manager, a diary or system address book which allows you to store important user information, web-sites, FTP sites and IRC server/channels in a central location. It was designed to be a replacement for all the various bookmark files and address books a user utilizes. The program can link with other applications. For example, STFax can use the fax number listed in a user's details, and IBrowse can access a URL link in a user's details. Groups and sub groups can be created, and there is multi-user support built in as well as a plug-in interface. Contact Manager is available directly from Vaporware for about US \$17.



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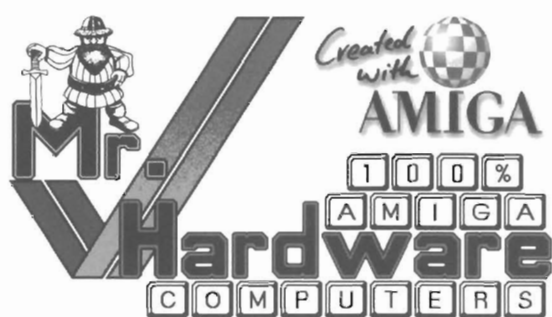
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A4640/A3640 68040 @ 25mhz w/CPU, FPU & MMU (#02085) **\$ 149.00**  
MS Warp Engine 68040 @ 40mhz w/CPU, FPU & MMU (#02079) **\$ 495.00**  
( up to 400% faster )Two simm sockets  
( up to 800% faster )Four simm sockets  
68060 @ 50mhz w/CPU, FPU & MMU **\$ 659.00**

**Memory Options -** ( Minimum of ten megabytes of ram required, more recommended )  
**REMEMBER! We have a lifetime warranty on all memory purchased from De Vine Computer Sales I**  
16 & 32 MB SIMMS are for use with MS Warp Engine & A4660  
**Processor Options, they will not work on the A4000T Motherboard!**  
4MB 1x32 60ns simm (#03400) **\$ 10**  
8MB 2x32 60ns simm (#03401) **20**  
16MB 4x32 60ns simm (#03402) **25**  
32MB 8x32 60ns simm (#03403) **50**

**Video Toaster -** (Hardware + Lightwave, Switcher, Character Generator, Paint Prg. ) **\$699.00**

**Video Flyer 4.1+ -** ( Video Toaster REQUIRED! ) (#02202) **\$2399**

**9.1 GB HD Video Tested** **\$599.00**  
Stores 99%+ HQ5 Mode! That's approximately 35 minutes of HQ5 footage! (Standard mode stores even more! )

**4.6 GB HD Video Tested** **\$ 349.00**  
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**Octopus Cable -** ( Required to connect flyer to external cabinet ) (#03205) **\$ 99.00**

**Midtower Chassis / External Cabinet -** (#03304) **\$ 149.00**  
Houses up to NINE devices, five 3.5" bays, four 5.25" bays, 250 watt power supply, three internal scsi daisy chain cables, 7.7" wide x 18.1" tall, 16.6" long

**32x Teac CDROM Drive & ASIM CDFS 3.8+ -** **\$ 89.00**  
Required to install toaster / flyer software

**32x Teac CDROM Drive & ASIM CDFS 3.8+ -** (#53001) **\$ 49.00**



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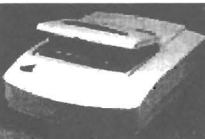
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Perception Video Recorder (#02217)	1590
Perception Capture Option (#02248)	859
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Bundle with external cable (#02227)	2369
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Edit Bay (#02299)	699
Vector Scope (#02211)	795
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SPARK w/o Adobe (#02281)	449
Spark w/ Adobe Premiere (#02280)	595

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7GB uncompressed / 14GB compressed / 60MB per minute / 2 year warranty / SCSI I & II / 8MM 160M

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8MM 160M Tape (#15205) \$15.00

Sony SDT9000 12GB/24GB \$ 999.00

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Miro DC 20+ \$469.00

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- Includes Media Studio Pro 5.0 Full Version

Hollywood FX 3.0 \$349

## CPU&FPU Upgrades and Replacements

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68030RC40 W/MMU (#03409)	39
68030RC33 W/MMU (#03411)	35
68030RC25 W/MMU (#03412)	29
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INTEL PENTIUM 233 MMX	325
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04 MB 72 PIN 1x32 60ns (#03400)	10
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DIMM, SIMM, ZIP, DIP, 8 PIN to 168 PIN

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4.5 GB Viking SCSI (#14631)	349
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6.4 GB Fireball ST SCSI (#14635)	375
6.4 GB Fireball ST IDE (#14632)	229
5400 rpm - >10ms - 3 Years	
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5400 rpm - >10ms - 3 Years	
3.2 GB Fireball ST SCSI (#14556)	259
3.2 GB Fireball ST IDE (#14562)	199
5400 rpm - >10ms - 3 Years	
2.1 GB Fireball ST SCSI (#14572)	235
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2.2 GB Atlas II N SCSI (#14625B)	255
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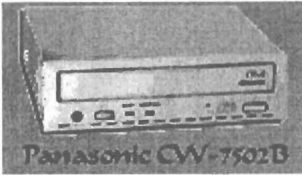
**Yamaha CRW4416E** - 16x Reader 4x Writer & Rewriter  
Internal, IDE, CD-RW & CD-R, Tray Loading, Drive & Instructions & Help Guide  
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**Yamaha CRW4416SX** - 16x Reader 4x Writer & Rewriter  
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Included - 5.25 inch , Half Height, Tray Loading, Disk, Session & Track @ Once Supported. Fixed, Variable Packet Writing,  
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(Twice the buffer of the MP6200S & CW-7502-B!)

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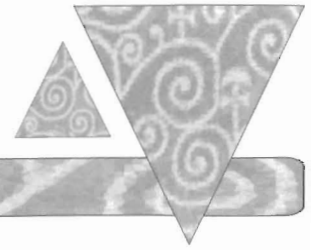
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# Site Seeing



## Caught In The Ami-Net

Dhomas Trenn is the founder of Young Monkey Studios, where he exists as creative interpreter, explorer, designer, programmer, musician, writer, performer, graphic artist and creative consultant. He has worked and consulted on projects in sound, music, film, video, design and performance.

By dhomas trenn

## System Essentials Part 3

This issue we finish off the system essentials mini-series with a few more must-have utilities that enhance the operating system and increase the efficiency of everyday Amiga use. As always, this software has been tested and determined to be system friendly through extended periods of use.

### All-In-One

There are literally hundreds of commodities available, each performing some unique system enhancement. Many of these provide very handy functions, so it is not unusual to want several running simultaneously. The inefficiency in this is that each of these utilities require a certain amount of similar program code to make them function as commodities. In many cases, the actual feature that the commodity provides takes up a very small fraction of the program's size.

And so . . . multi-function commodities were born. This is not a complete solution, because a particular multi-function program may not include all the functions you want. But, it certainly can cut down on wasted memory.

Several of these all-in-one programs are available. Among the best is Martin Berndt's MultiCX (Aminet: util/edity/MCX280.lha) which currently has more than 50 functions, including: screen and mouse blanking, window and screen cycling, opaque windows, window auto-activation, public screen selection and activation, drive protection, track-disk.device parameters, popcli, ASCII enter, memory flush, advanced string gadget editing, and much more.

### Tool Docks

The best way to access frequently used applications is to use some kind of tool organizer. Stefan Becker's ToolManager (Aminet: util/wb/ToolManagerBin.lha,

ToolManagerExt.lha, ToolManagerLoc.lha, etc.) allows you to start applications through the Workbench's Tools menu. Workbench icons, definable keyboard shortcuts (hotkeys), or special image/text button windows called "docks."

In addition to starting workbench applications, ToolManager can start shell commands/scripts, execute ARexx programs, trigger another program's hotkeys or open/close its own docks. It will even play back external sounds to give you that instant feedback, like, "Yes Master, I comply," "Starting Directory Opus," or "Beep, Honk."

### Calculators

One plus one is probably too easy to warrant the use of a calculator. But, for more difficult math calculations there are dozens of utilities to choose from. Two stand out above the rest.

Denis Gounelle's ACalc (Aminet:misc/math/ACalc\_131.lha) provides very basic mathematical operations and 10 storage memory locations. It is a commodity and can be assigned a hotkey for quick access, opening its window on the current screen. Programmers will appreciate modes for working in decimal and hexadecimal to perform base conversions and bitwise operations. Current results are automatically copied to the clipboard or to an environment variable.

If you need something more scientific, Luca Carminati's TotalCalc (Aminet:util/wb/TotalCalc1\_2.lha) adds functions for: roots, logarithms, powers, reciprocals, factorials, trigonometrics and percents. It also has a handy memory viewer for quick recall.

### Workbench Windows

Marcus Tobias's WarpWB (Aminet:util/wb/WarpWB21.lha) commodity provides a unique function for the operation of Workbench. The idea behind it is that when you open a sub-directory window, you no longer need to see the parent directory window. With this in mind, WarpWB performs the function of automatically closing

the parent window when you open a sub-directory window. Whether WarpWB performs this auto-function or not, can be configured through qualifiers or through a list of pattern matched directory names.

### Rebooting

As most Amigans know, holding down the CTRL + Left Amiga + Right Amiga keys causes a system reboot. But, what some might not know is that this is called a warm reboot; it is actually one of two kinds of reboot. The other is called a cold reboot, which is basically the same as turning your computer off and then on again. Generally, a warm reboot is all you need to solve problems; other times, with particularly poor programs, it is not enough.

Miklós Árpád's ColdReboot (Aminet:util/boot/ColdReboot.lha) is a very small utility that causes the Amiga to perform a cold reboot, resetting to a power-up state. Note that system resources such as RAD: will not survive a cold reboot.

### System Monitors

A system monitor is a tool that allows you to monitor your computer resources. It can tell you detailed information about windows, screens, memory, tasks, cpu usage, ports, assigns, expansion boards, interrupts and more. Some even allow you to perform related actions, for example: halting tasks or closing windows and screens.

One of the earliest of these utilities is Werner Günther's XOper (Aminet:util/moni/Xoper27.lha) which provides information in response to various keyboard commands. If you want something with a gadget interface, more functions and network support, try Richard Körber's Scout (Aminet:util/moni/Scout.lha).

If you have a program that you think should be considered for this column send an email to [caught@youngmonkey.ca](mailto:caught@youngmonkey.ca). Please, do not send programs unless requested.





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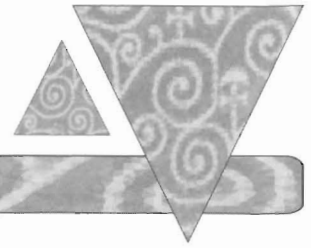
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## REVIEWS

### 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.

## Cycas 1.78

Cycas is an architectural computer-aided-drafting (CAD) program for the Amiga. Using common 2D drawing tools with 3D extensions, and boasting such features as an expandable 2D/3D symbol library, 100 drawing layers and editable three-dimensional views, Cycas allows the creation of complex architectural structures. Cycas' developers have raised the bar, setting a pace hopefully to be matched in the future by other developers. This is truly a professional application.

Installation from two floppy disks was clean and painless using the provided script. Cycas requires no exotic libraries, took only 5 Mb of hard drive space and ran from the installed directory very cleanly, without crashes.

To those familiar with modern CAD software, Cycas' interface will become second nature very quickly. Those seeking familiar Style Guide compliance will have a steeper, but far from insurmountable learning curve.

To create a structure in Cycas, standard architectural elements are used. Walls are placed, then openings (windows, doors, etc) are introduced. These elements, along with other 3D structures (pillars, beams, ceilings), may be modified in three dimensions. Cycas' strength lies with rectangular and angular objects—smoothly curved surfaces require some ingenuity, much as with real architecture.

Objects are created in full scale. That is, if you need a wall that's eight feet tall by five feet long by six inches thick, those are the drawing units that are used. The extensive (and super-fast) zooming controls keep everything visible as needed. Scaling only comes into consideration when adding text and printing. Cycas is heavily geared toward metric units. While English units are supported, entries must be in decimal format (e.g. 5' 4 3/8" must be entered as 5.364583 feet or 64.375 inches).

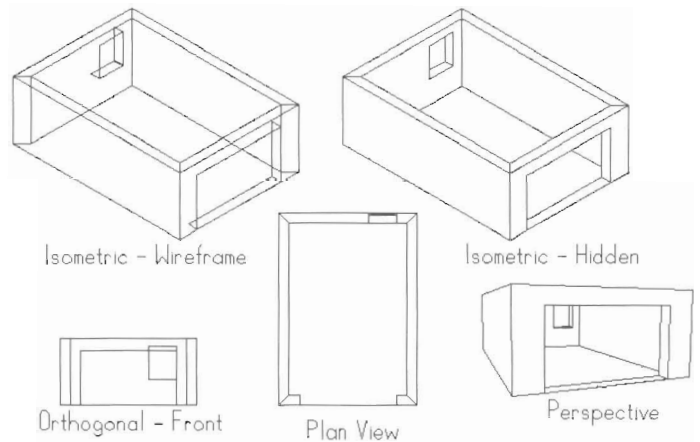
This full-scale approach really shows its strength when using symbols. Symbols are design elements created and saved independently, much like brushes in a paint program.

Symbols may be made up of 2D or 3D components, and retain their true sizes even when imported into a drawing with different base units—all unit conversions are automatic. As they're only DOS files, symbol libraries may be modified, expanded and organized ad infinitum.

Objects may be placed on any of 100 layers. Layers are best thought of as layers of tracing paper—one is worked on at a time, with any number of others visible (but not modifiable) below it. Layers are essential for keeping design elements organized in a complex drawing.

Once a few elements have been placed, it's helpful to view the structure in three dimensions. Cycas supports ten different views: Plan, Orthogonal (four directions), Isometric (four directions) and Perspective. Drawings may be modified in any view, and the perspective view is user-definable by selecting eye and target points.

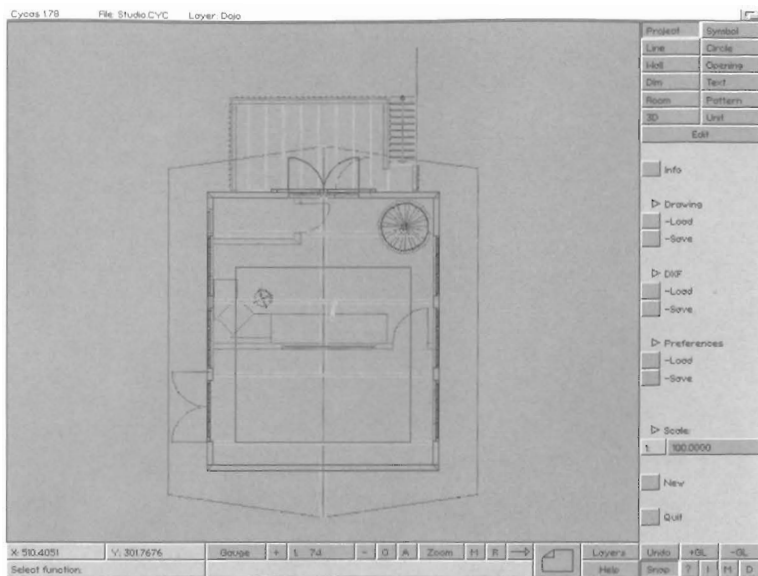
Any view may be 'rendered' to a non-editable wireframe or hidden-line display. These renderings are line drawings only. To apply textures and shading, a 3D rendering package is required. To that end, Cycas objects



may be exported as Lightwave objects for use in 3D renderings. Tests resulted in some strange self-obliterating polygons when in Aladdin4D, though this may be the fault of Aladdin's import routine. Cycas will import







Cycas' user interface is similar to that of commercial CAD software.



DXF files, so compatibility with industry-standard CAD tools is assured.

Cycas' screen representations may be exported as Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) files for use in word processing or desktop publishing applications. Printed output may be routed to a plotter or Preferences-supported printer, and the results were outstanding, as Cycas operates to the resolution settings of the printer. One hitch was discovered when setting up the preferences printer—Cycas requires that page sizes be in metric units, and offers no selector for standard paper sizes (letter, A4, legal, etc.). Here's a tip: US-standard letter paper is 216 mm x 279 mm.

To give Cycas a full workout, I created a building design I've been developing for some time. It's a 24x20' structure, with a recording studio on the first floor and martial arts dojo on the second. Construction in Cycas took about four hours, including adding a spiral staircase, detailed deck and vaulted ceiling with exposed beams. Completing this project, I found several shortcomings.

Once an object is created, there is no way to break it or add points. This is a standard feature of commercial CAD packages, and a gross oversight here. That being said, however, some very complex 3D elements can be created with judicious use of the prism and edit/move points tools.

Cycas is limited to four line colors and an eight-color palette. This seems incongruous with the otherwise excellent RTG support. Additionally, there is no way to enter absolute coordinates for an object, despite those coordinates being visible all the time.

While referencing the nicely complete HTML-based documentation, I found the lan-

guage to be well-translated from the native German, but concepts were not very effectively conveyed. A package of this magnitude would benefit from a printed manual. Likewise, no ARexx support is provided. ARexx would allow the user to automate several tasks and create a seamless application that provides the precision and control of a CAD program, with the texturing and shading options of 3D rendering program available at the touch of a button.

All complaints aside, Cycas rates a solid 10 on the wow scale. This is an application to show off to those who doubt the power and simplicity of the Amiga. When the NG Amiga comes to be, the thing that will sell it is software. If Amiga Inc. wants professionals to buy and use Amiga systems, there must be professional software that exceeds the capabilities of the competition. It must be faster, easier to use, more powerful and cheaper than could be done on other platforms. Cycas fits that bill nicely.

Cycas will run on any Amiga with a minimum 68020 CPU, OS 3.0, hard drive and 2 Mb RAM. With a retail price of US \$170, Cycas is available directly from the publisher at [cycas.core.de](http://cycas.core.de). A limited demo version is available for download. This review was conducted with an Amiga 3000, PowerPC/200 MHz, 060/50 MHz, OS 3.1, 146 Mb RAM.

Rating: A

By Robert Bryant



## APNet Ethernet Card

The APNet ethernet card from National Amiga fits into the PCMCIA slot of the A1200 and A600 computers. It provides 10 Mb ethernet capability to SANA-II networking packages (like I-Net 225 and Miami) using the included device driver.

The APNet offers support for both BNC and RJ45 network connections through an included transceiver device. National Amiga also provides a brief manual which describes the installation, offers hints on how to connect two computers together using a crossover cable (only necessary if BNC cable is not available), and describes a fix for a potentially counterproductive bug in the A1200's Gayle chip, which controls the PCMCIA reset line. The card does work properly without fixing the bug, but the card may not be hot-swappable.

APNet's manual also includes a brief introduction to networking concepts and a description of various networking packages that have been tested with APNet. For this review, I-Net 225 revision 8 and Miami 3.0 were used to test the card. On an unaccelerated A1200, the performance of the card was nearly identical on both I-Net 225 and Miami. With a 68030 accelerator installed, the card performed better under I-Net 225.

The driver was written by Bruce Abbot and supports several other regularly available PCMCIA ethernet cards. National Amiga provides telephone support for the APNet, and sells it for about US \$100. You can order or get more information from National Amiga's website at [www.nationalamiga.com](http://www.nationalamiga.com).

The APNet is a good resource for A1200 owners who need to place their machines on a network. National Amiga will replace faulty cards for up to a year after purchase and support is available online and by calling 519-858-8760. It is a reasonably-priced, no-frills network card that does the trick.

Rating: A+

By Ted Wallingford



*Help! My A4000 only displays 16 colors in HighRes, 32 in LowRes, other resolutions aren't offered in Prefs anymore, and there is no colorwheel. What happened? Make sure that you have the correct setpatch command and that it's called at the beginning of the startup-sequence. In addition to other things, setpatch activates the AGA modes.*

# Fast Fuel 1.04

**F**ast Fuel 1.04 is a new product from brand new Amiga developer Image Architects. Fast Fuel allows you to quickly and efficiently control Video Tape Recorders and Video Cameras, automating clip recording for the Video Toaster Flyer. It is nice to have a new product for the Flyer designed to reduce repetitive operations and data entry. There is no getting around digitizing your footage, but Fast Fuel makes the process much easier.

In a perfect world you would record directly to the Flyer, do all of your editing on the hard drives attached to the Flyer, overlay some cool effects and graphics with the Video Toaster, and output the complete production to the format desired by you or your client (e.g. BetaCam SP, VHS, S-VHS, MiniDV, D2 etc.). Unfortunately, it's not in a perfect world. Since the Toaster/Flyer is installed in a computer, it's not very portable. Collecting any video footage outside your studio will therefore require a portable camera, and in turn, video tape. All this source video then has to be transferred to the Flyer where a product like Fast Fuel can help.

Fast Fuel eliminates many of the tedious and repetitive steps involved in using Cut Clips (a software option built into the Flyer). It supports many types of VTRs, and totally integrates into the Flyer's interface—if you know how to use the Flyer, you already know how to use Fast Fuel.

I tried Fast Fuel with several types of decks and cameras. It controlled everything I threw at it without problems. I tried Lan-C, RS-232 and RS-422 devices from Sony, Panasonic and JVC. The requesters opened up right in the Video Toaster Flyer GUI and were easy to setup and understand. The two included visual reference keymaps made understanding the controls easy, and it made deck operation even faster and more intuitive than a jog-shuttle dial. Fast Fuel really delivers easy to understand deck control and hassle-free clip recording at a reasonable price.

Fast Fuel's basic VTR control works on any Amiga running Amiga OS 2.0 or higher with at least 512K RAM and a free serial port for connecting your camera or video decks. Flyerclip recording and CDL (Clip Decision List) functions require a Video Toaster/Flyer setup and active ARexx. Special control cables are required, and can generally be ordered with the package. It was tested on an A1200, 030, 8 Mb RAM, and an A4000T 060/PowerPC machine with a Video Toaster 4000 and Flyer installed.



The product comes on one floppy disk and installation couldn't be simpler—just drag the icon where you want it on your hard drive. It does not require any libraries, and may even be executed and used from floppy. The manual is well written and easy to comprehend.

The programmer behind Fast Fuel's hardware interface is Mark Adams of Geodesic Designs Inc. ([www.geod.com/main/](http://www.geod.com/main/)). Mark created the famous Mind Eye for the Amiga ([www.mindeye.com](http://www.mindeye.com)), as well as the AIRlink, Touchlink and many other cool Amiga products over the years. With Mark and Aaron Ruscetta at the helm of this new company, expect more surprises and neat products



to come! Fast Fuel is available from professional Amiga/Video Toaster Flyer dealers for US \$139.

Rating: A

By Bill Panagouleas

*Looking for information and opinions about a particular Amiga product? If you don't find it in The Informer then check out the comp.sys.amiga.review archives at <http://math.uh.edu/barrett/reviews.html>.*

## A Video Toaster/Flyer Primer

For the benefit of readers who don't own Video Toasters or have never controlled video cameras and VTRs with their Amigas, let's review the basics of controlling decks on your Amiga, why you need to, and how it ties into the Video Toaster and Flyer.

Take a look at your video camera now. Sony 8mm or Hi-8 cameras made in the last five years have a small connector on the unit labeled Lan-C or Control-L. Other types of cameras and prosumer decks may have RS-422 or RS-232 ports. These interfaces give you a way to control the device from a computer. The computer can actuate the fast forward, rewind, play and stop controls, making everything easier.

For those not familiar with the Video Toaster Flyer from Newtek ([www.newtek.com](http://www.newtek.com)), think of it as a big digital VCR for your Amiga/Video Toaster. Once you capture your source video with the Flyer, you can look at any part of the footage instantly by just moving some big sliders in the Video Toaster's software. This type of control is called non-linear editing—so named because you aren't restricted to a single, linear tape. The Flyer requires an Amiga with a free Zorro slot and it connects internally to the Video Toaster.

Think of the Toaster as a real-time character generator/effects box that includes Lightwave 3D and painting features (i.e. ToasterPaint 4.0). The Video Toaster is able to add effects, titling and genlocked graphics to your videos. It needs an Amiga with one free video slot. If you have ever watched the evening news on television then you have seen what can be done with a Toaster.

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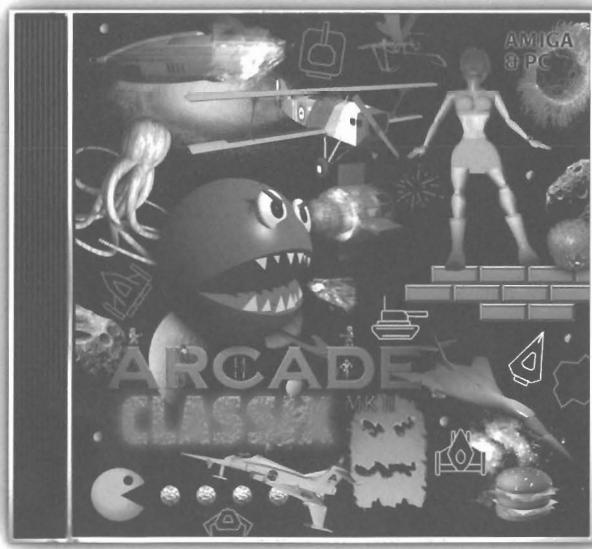
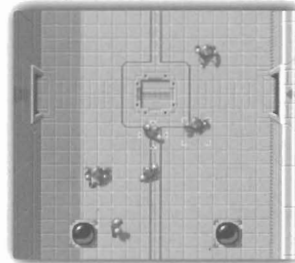
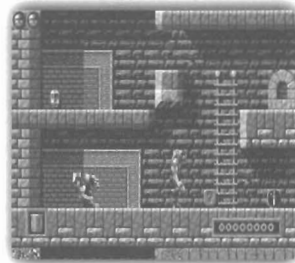


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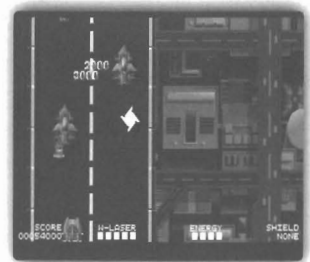
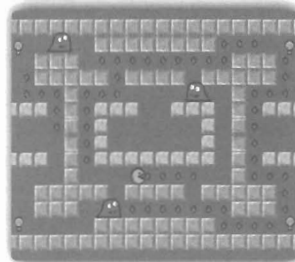
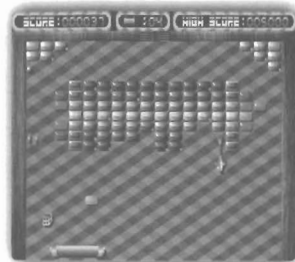
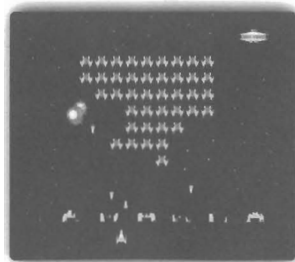
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# Picasso IV Concierto

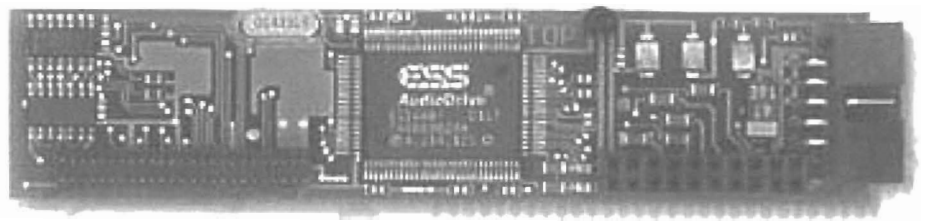
**C**oncierto is a 16-bit sound expansion module for the Picasso IV graphics board. It offers a full suite of useful software tools, AHI support, sampling frequencies up to 44.1 KHz and a built-in Yamaha OPL3 synthesizer. Because the Concierto attaches to the Picasso board and does not take up a precious Zorro slot, it is likely to prove popular for users of 'small-box' Amigas like the A3000.

The implementation is excellent and consistent with the usually high standards of Village Tronic. The two sub-boards that make up the system are of very high quality and fit perfectly (if tightly) onto the Picasso IV. The soundboard plugs into two slots on the Picasso IV, and the I/O board replaces a rear expansion slot cover and connects to the soundboard with a small ribbon cable. The I/O board contains 3.5 mm stereo audio outputs, a mono microphone connector and mini-DIN connectors with patch cables to full-size MIDI-IN and OUT connectors.

The Concierto adds significantly to the audio capabilities of the Picasso IV card. By default, the Picasso IV comes with 3.5 mm stereo inputs and outputs, as well as a four-pin connector on the card for an internal CDROM audio connection. Taking the Amiga native audio directly from the video slot, the provided Switcher application controls which source is heard through the speakers, and allows mixing of CD and Amiga-native sound.

The Concierto comes with all the needed driver software (concierto.device), the CAMD (Commodore Amiga MIDI Driver), an AHI driver, the Mixer and Recorder software, and a development kit for the card and synthesizer. The Mixer is the most useful, as it mixes sounds from all six sources: OPL3 synthesizer; voice output (e.g. from AHI); line in; microphone; optional AV module; and, the Switcher. The GUI sliders on the Mixer can be linked together any way you like, to allow fading of multiple channels at once, and the links can be reversed, so when you turn up the switcher, for example, the line in goes down accordingly. The Mixer may be activated with a hotkey, and is controllable with AREXX. The Mixer proved pleasingly stable—it hasn't crashed my Amiga 3000 in almost four months of use.

I found one annoying flaw. When monitoring audio input through the audio-in on the Picasso IV itself (the original audio output becomes another audio input when you install the Concierto) I heard a slight crackling sound



*This little baby fits snugly onto the Picasso IV graphics card.*

through the speakers when the hard drive accessed. I was unable to eliminate this noise. I believe my A3000 may have been at fault, because the noise did not occur when tested in an A4000.

The Recorder software can load and save samples in IFF-8SVX, IFF-AIFF, and WAV formats. It can record directly from the Mixer's output, or an individual input. The only significant limitation is memory size, as there aren't any direct-to-disk recording or editing features in this program. It's a glaring omission, but there are other programs which use AHI to fill this gap.

The Yamaha OPL3 is an 18-voice stereo FM synthesizer. It is not a wavetable synth, however, and Yamaha's web page provides no information about its programmability. I am not a musician, nor do I have a MIDI keyboard, so I was not able to test its capabilities. It's an unfortunate omission on the part of Village Tronic that documentation barely mentions this part of the card. Any audio program which can select the `concierto.device` (instead of the typical `serial.device`) for MIDI access should be able to make use of the MIDI ports.

The printed manual is in both German and English, and does a good job of explaining the

Concierto's features. It notes that a Picasso IV firmware revision 7.1 or higher is required; an update to version 7.4 will be performed by the installation process if needed. Additionally, the supplied version 1.1 install disk contained faulty AHI drivers—version 1.6 is available on the Village Tronic website ([www.village-tronic.com/amiga](http://www.village-tronic.com/amiga)) and fixes this problem.

The card worked well in my A3000/040 as well as an A4000/060/PPC. MP3 files sound really great with this card! The difference between the true 16-bit output and calibrated 14-bit Paula output is very noticeable—the Concierto is much cleaner, with more dynamic range. This alone makes the Concierto worth the money for Picasso IV owners.

With the positive traits (ease of installation, versatility of inputs, build quality, and Zorro-free installation) balancing the negative (no direct-to-disk recording, slight crackle during hard drive accesses on the A3000, and no vendor support for the synth), the Concierto rates a **B**. The Concierto is available from Amiga retailers for around US \$160.

Rating: B

By Bolton Peck



## Mini Review

# APC & TCP Volume 6

**A** PC&TCP Volume 6 is the latest CDROM compilation from the German computer club of the same name. Most of the included 500+ Mb of programs may be run directly from the CD. Primarily organized into three sections, the CD contains Freely-Distributable software, commercial demos and icons & backgrounds. The 75 Mb collection of icons is extensive, going far beyond the common Magic-Workbench and NewIcon styles.

The CD is designed to help you be more productive with your Amiga, foregoing MOD collections, images and soundfiles for utilities

and programs. While the unarchived format results in fewer total titles than any single Aminet CD, APC&TCP seems much more user-friendly. A handy MUI-based search utility is included, with index files to all six APC&TCP CDROMs published. APC&TCP Volume 6 is available for around US \$15 from Epic Marketing ([www.epicmarketing.ltd.net](http://www.epicmarketing.ltd.net)).

Rating: B+

By Robert Bryant



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# Wordworth 7.01

Wordworth 7.01 is one of three currently competing word processors for the Amiga. Boasting a configurable interface, solid font and footnote support, and a nice Quick Shapes feature, Wordworth is a solid package and worthy competitor of Softwood's Final Writer and Haage & Partner's Amiga Writer.

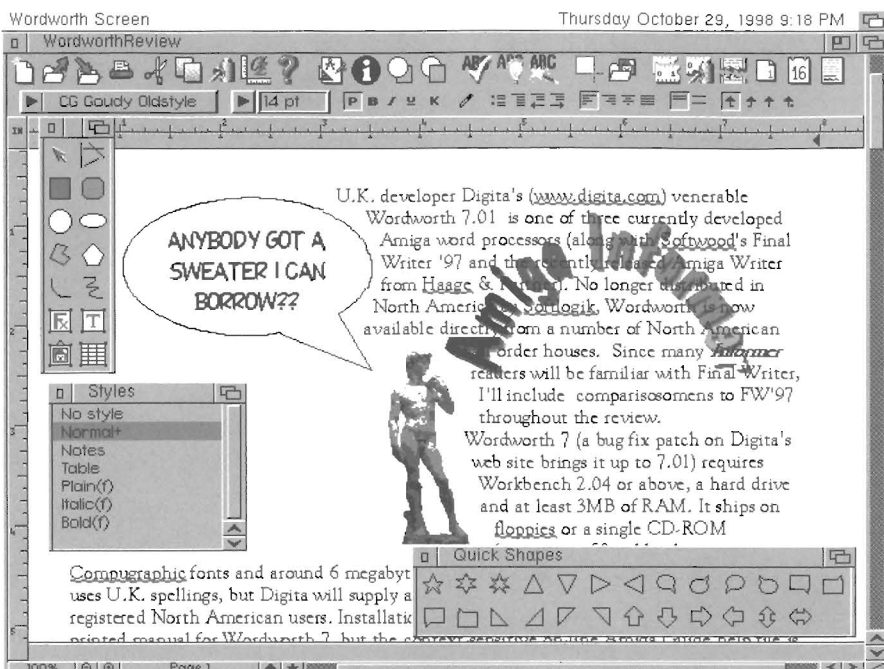
Wordworth sports a clear, attractive interface, including a user-configurable button bar with optional "cool look" borderless buttons. The tool bar isn't as flexible as Final Writer's—there's only one bar, and all of the buttons are pre-defined. While there's no provision for assigning ARexx scripts or user commands, but keyboard short-cuts exist for most commands, and floating palettes for zoom level, quick shapes, drawing tools and style sheets make finding a needed tool fairly straightforward. Wordworth's font rendering is noticeably sharper and easier to read than Final Writer's, although Wordworth's text entry feels a bit slower. Other nice touches include Wordworth's Open Recent document menu and a helpful Show [formatting] Codes toggle.

Editing in Wordworth is a mixed bag. On the plus side, font attributes and text justification may be applied directly from the keyboard, and the alternate functions of the numeric keypad (i.e. Home, End, etc.) are activated to speed document navigation. There's one caveat regarding text attributes in Wordworth: The bold and italic settings only fatten or slant the current font—not a very professional looking solution. To get a proper italic typeface, it must be selected with the mouse from the font menu.

Drag-and-drop text editing and multiple mouse click text selection are supported, though I found myself wishing Digita had imitated Final Writer and implemented double-click as word-plus-trailing-space (instead of highlighting just the word itself), and triple-click as sentence-highlight (rather than the less useful line-highlight). As implemented, after dragging and dropping a block of text, you often have to go back and modify the surrounding spaces.

Wordworth supports Compugraphic and PostScript Type-1 fonts, and adds support for Amiga bitmap and True Type formats. I found a hidden bonus in that Wordworth actually converts True Type fonts to Compugraphic format when they're installed, thereby allowing you to access them easily in other applications.

Wordworth was the first Amiga word processor to support both end notes and footnotes, though the implementation is some-



Wordworth sports an easy-to-grasp interface, floating palettes and cool-looking borderless icons. All this and a powerful word processor too.

what disappointing in that footnotes must be typed into a small string gadget, and text attributes are not supported.

Wordworth also sports style tags, but I was frustrated at the lack of flexibility. For example, I was unable to apply only italics in a character-based style without affecting the font or font size. Other layout tools include a great eye-dropper for copying formatting attributes from one paragraph to another, linkable text frames (for modest DTP projects), and snap-to-grid and object align capabilities.

Wordworth imports many graphic formats (although inexplicably not JPEG), and any graphic may be made into a watermark, i.e. a background object over which text flows. There's a rich set of structured drawing tools (including a table tool) and a unique TextFX feature, which creates fancy logos and text warps. Be forewarned, however, that even on an 030/50 MHz Amiga, rendering TextFX objects was slow. New to version 7 is a very nice Quick Shapes feature, which allows easy drawing of star bursts, arrows, word balloons and other shapes. Unfortunately, Wordworth has no facility for rotating graphics.

Perhaps the best new feature of Wordworth 7 is the implementation of the right mouse button double-click, which brings up a menu of appropriate functions. With auto spell check turned on, any words not in the dictionary will be underlined with a wavy red line as you type. Right double-clicking over such a word brings up a list of alternative spellings, plus the option to add the word to the dictionary. Though new to the Amiga, this feature is a useful part of the industry-leading Microsoft Word.

I've owned previous versions of Wordworth, and 7.01 is the most stable and bug-free yet, although it's not perfect. Footnotes sometimes refuse to place themselves at the bottom of the current page, grid dots print out with your document, and text selection using double-click and drag sometimes yields unpredictable, disconnected blocks of highlighted text.

Wordworth requires Workbench 2.04 or better, a hard drive and at least 3 Mb of RAM. It ships on floppies or a single CDROM containing 50 public domain Compugraphic fonts and around 6 Mb of IFF color clip art. The included dictionary uses UK spellings, but Digita will supply a US English dictionary and thesaurus by email to registered North American users. There's no printed manual, but the context-sensitive AmigaGuide help is superb and explains all features quite thoroughly.

If I had to live with only one workhorse Amiga word processor, it would still be Final Writer 97, but there's a lot to like about Wordworth 7. If you're serious about word processing, you'll likely want it in your software arsenal. I give kudos to Digita (www.digita.com) for sticking with the Amiga, and I give Wordworth a strong B+ rating for its power.

Wordworth 7 is available from Amiga retailers for around US \$90.

Rating: B+

By Steve Folberg





Fancy Something a Little Different?



robert@survivor.enterprise-ple.com  
http://www.crystal-software.com/AmigaSurvivor/survindex.html

AMIGA SURVIVOR is a new Amiga magazine dedicated to all things Amiga. AS brings you news,

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# X-DVE 3.10

The eXtended Digital Video Effects Generator

**X**-DVE from ClassX Development allows graphic objects to be manipulated with special effects to create fluid motion animations. These animations can be dumped to tape and used as part or all of a presentation. With 64 combinable transitions, a host of 2D and 3D effects, ARexx and CyberGraphX support, and VCR-like controls, X-DVE is a solid addition to a video producer's toolbox.

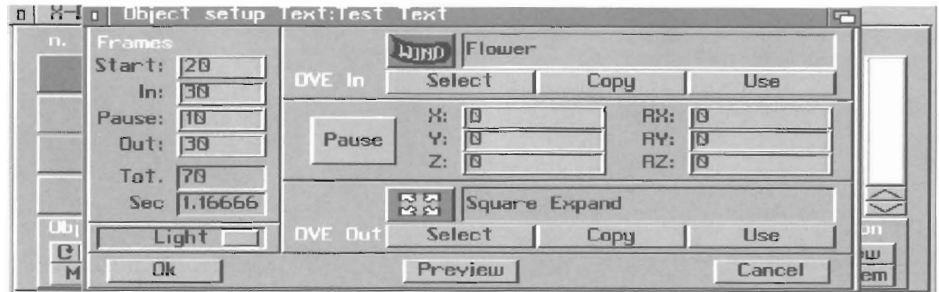
Upon running, a main menu was presented which was quite plain in appearance, and not at all what Amiga users might expect. X-DVE forsakes pull down menus for buttons and multiple screens. Although I was a little apprehensive about this non-Style Guide interface, the time spent playing with it proved that it works more like video editors on other platforms. This makes sense, as ClassX develops products for professional, commercial Amiga and Draco users.

In my setup, I have a PicassoIV connected to an S-VGA monitor as well as a standard AGA display on a second monitor. The AGA monitor usually stays blank until I use an AGA-specific program like D-Paint 5 or Brilliance. To my surprise, X-DVE's menu popped up on both screens simultaneously. Upon creating a new project and selecting a Picasso-specific display mode, the Picasso monitor corrected to a suitable display, and the AGA monitor went blank.

The program claims to work with brushes, text and anim-brushes. Though it says nothing about animations or pictures, I loaded pictures as brushes and full animations as anim-brushes with no problems. The method for positioning objects and text in specific places on the screen was complicated, awkward and the results were frequently less than satisfactory.



Text can be animated with the same effects as other objects ...



and all objects are under total control of the animator.

Rendering speed with X-DVE wasn't bad—right on par with other effects-generation software. Faster processors will, of course, reduce rendering times. Projects may be rendered to Anim5 and Anim7 file formats, as well as to memory. Even with only 16 Mb Fast RAM, I had no problems. Renders in 16 or 32-bit compression are available, though unless your palettes are large, you're wasting resources using 32-bit. Here's a tip: Be sure to click the wand in the Palette box before rendering, to allow you to optimize the palettes in each segment of your animation for faster rendering and less memory consumption.

Playback also worked as advertised, offering a slow speed option and the ability to

loop. As I started the animation, I was surprised to find the playback displayed on both the Picasso and AGA monitors. The Picasso display was of typical good Picasso quality, and the AGA display was surprisingly good as well.

I installed the program after only a quick glance through the manuals, as a new user would often behave. Using the provided install programs (one per each of the three floppies), installation took only about 10 minutes, including time to read the readme file.

Though X-DVE is a commercial product, registration is required to unleash the full

## ADOSguide 2.5

**T**he ADOSguide v2.5 is a hyperbook reference to the Amiga OS. Programmed with Gold Disk's old Hyperbook software (wherein Gold Disk attempted to copy the Mac's HyperCard stack idea), it runs only from a floppy, and only on its own 640x480 high-resolution screen. Coverage of the Amiga 3.1 OS is reasonable, though it doesn't go any further than the printed manual. It may be useful to floppy users without easy access to a printed DOS manual, and would be sig-

nificantly faster if programmed as an Amigaguide file.

The ADOSguide is freeware and distributed by Phillips PD in the US; email philipspd@yahoo.com. Version 2.5 should be available on Aminet in the near future. Contact the author, T. Durbin, at techdoc@piperdoc.co.uk for more information.

Rating: C

By Robert Bryant



**Make all those cheap, huge clipart collections available at CompUSA work on your Amiga using Henk Jonas MetaView (user.cs.tu-berlin.de/~jonash) to convert Windoze meta-files (WMF) to Amiga-friendly formats.**

# Sixth Sense Investigations

**S**ixth Sense Investigations is a CDROM graphic adventure game in which your character, Frank, fancies himself a Sherlock Holmes-type detective. With his partner Ben, who conjures up a ghost, they set out to solve rich folks' mysteries.

If you've ever played any of the Lucas Arts graphic adventures then you'll probably feel right at home playing SSI. The game is witty and humorous due in part to actually hearing the characters' digitized speech. The well-drawn 256-color graphics and smooth animation make for a pleasurable gaming experience. It displays and functions equally

well in NTSC or PAL—quite a pleasant surprise from a Euro-developed game.

I really enjoyed the superb in-game music but found that the speech suffered from some small glitches. Fortunately, these minor distortions and tiny pauses did not interfere with understanding the characters' statements or the overall playability. It's pretty easy to navigate around in SSI using the mouse and left and right mouse clicks. SSI is very large and highly challenging with 30 scenarios to investigate.

Installation was easy but can be lengthy if you decide to do a complete hard drive install

(all 250 Mb). With a speedy CDROM drive, the game will run well and fully from there. There is a small but helpful document included on the CDROM, and a printed manual in the form of a note pad. The note pad manual is cute and does include some interesting information, but it can be annoying when you're flipping through it trying to find something quickly, and the tiny text hindered things further.

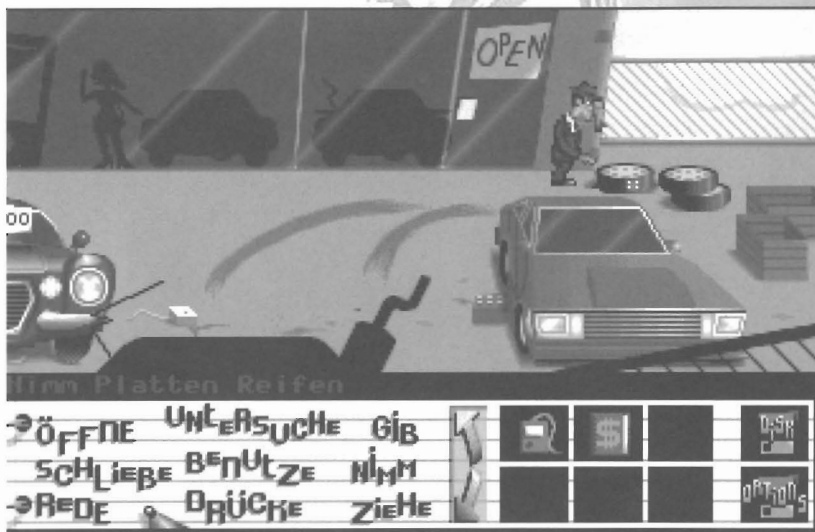
SSI initially did not work on my 68060/50 MHz A1200. I was finally able to make it run by booting with no startup sequence, changing to the SSI directory, and typing the command `Vega GameDefs/6thBed.cmp`. This loaded the game without the intro animation and everything seemed to work fine. An email exchange with Vitorrio Ferrai of CineTECH provided a reported fix to this 060 problem: Replace the `mathtrans.library` file that came with the 060 accelerator with the original Amiga OS version. Roundabout solutions notwithstanding, I feel this bug should have been found and fixed before the game was released.

I had a very tough time getting too excited about this game, as the humor and ideology is geared toward Europeans. The manual itself claims the game is based on totally sick logic and suggests trying things even if they seem stupid. I personally prefer a more realistic graphic adventure that tests problem solving skills. It's obvious that much effort went into the creation of this game, but the highest grade I can grant it is a C+.

Sixth Sense Investigations was developed by CineTECH, licensed by Isona Entertainment, and is distributed by Epic Marketing ([www.epicmarketing.co.uk](http://www.epicmarketing.co.uk)). It requires an AGA Amiga with 2 Mb RAM. The enhanced CD version requires 4 Mb to enable speech. It is available for about US \$35 from most Amiga dealers.

Rating: C+

By Jerimy Campbell



*Frank, the shrewd gumshoe, has to investigate many different situations throughout the entire game. Ah, don't mind the German writing on the interface, it's only that way on our review copy!*

nearly finished a level before dying, you can replay that level and jump in at any time to complete it.

Rotator will run from floppy or hard drive, and works best with a PAL display mode—it runs fine in NTSC but part of the selection screen is cut off at the bottom.

Rotator has an entertaining demo mode, excellent in-game manual (which I recommend you at least skim through first) and a good save option. The only complaint I had was the lack of a difficulty option. It's pretty tough and most people will either love it or hate it, but it's worth checking out nonetheless. Rotator has ten levels in eight worlds, so it should keep you challenged or frustrated for

a long time.

Rotator works on any Amiga with at least 1 Mb of Chip RAM. Cost is \$9.50 (including S&H) for two floppies, or \$13.50 for CDROM, and the game is available exclusively through Mushroom PD ([www.mushy-pd.demon.co.uk/5d1](http://www.mushy-pd.demon.co.uk/5d1)) here in the US. A demo version is available on the website.

Rating: B

By Jerimy Campbell

*When I double-click the install icon for a new program, I get the message "Could not open script." What's wrong? Amiga OS 2.1 put the Installer program in SYS:Utilities. 3.0+ put it in C:. To be on the safe side, put it in both directories. Also, make sure the script's icon is set to use the Installer, either as the default tool, or with the tooltype SCRIPT=<script name>.*



# Gunbee F99

**G**unbee F99 is a new overhead shoot-em-up from German publisher APC-TCP and Peruvian programmer Lobsang Alvites. Gunbee has a Japanese comic book style theme and intro. The intro is unique and entertaining. Your Gunbee ship is equipped with a machine gun, bombs, and a high powered fire beam. The objective is to pilot your ship through the levels and destroy waves of enemy ships for points, avoid enemy ground and air fire, collect power-ups and bonuses, and finally eliminate the end of level monster.

Gunbee is challenging, has very addictive gameplay, and good sound effects. Because of the look of this game, it seems to me that it would greatly appeal to young children. Unfortunately because of the rather high difficulty level I feel most kids would lose interest in it very quickly. However, because of the childish look of the game most adults might not be interested in playing it either. It does have two modes of play but both are pretty tough. Compared to other AGA overhead shoot-em-ups that have been released recently (such as Ultra Violent Worlds) Gunbee's graphics appeared dated. The game has no save option nor does it give any level codes, so when you quit it's impossible to start where you left off.



My major problem with this game is the fact that running anything else before running Gunbee caused a software failure either upon execution or upon quitting. When the software failed upon quitting it invalidated my hard drive, causing the OS to do time consuming repairs. As long as I ran nothing but Gunbee after bootup it seemed to work fine. I don't know about you, but I seldom boot my

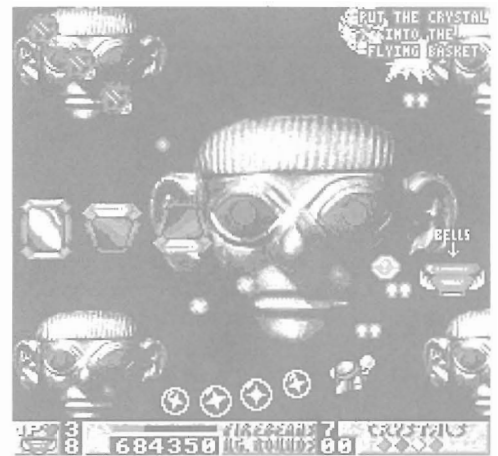
est in it very quickly. However, because of the childish look of the game most adults might not be interested in playing it either. It does have two modes of play but both are pretty tough. Compared to other AGA overhead shoot-em-ups that have been released recently (such as Ultra Violent Worlds) Gunbee's graphics appeared dated. The game has no save option nor does it give any level codes, so when you quit it's impossible to start where you left off.

Amiga only to run one specific game, so this is a serious problem in my opinion.

Even though I liked portions of Gunbee, I regretfully can't recommend it (unless you're just desperate for a new shoot-em-up) because of the software failures. If not for the failures, the game itself would rate a C+, but overall the highest rating I can give Gunbee is a D. I would like to mention that the author he was very receptive and helpful with my concerns. Gunbee F99 comes on two floppies, includes a hard drive installer, and has adequate documentation. It needs AGA, a hard drive, and 4 Mb Fast RAM. Tested on an A1200 060, 50 Mb ram. Check with your favorite Amiga retailer for availability and pricing or visit [www.chiemgau.com/apc&tcp](http://www.chiemgau.com/apc&tcp) for further details.

Rating: Gameplay: C+  
Overall: D

By Jeremy Campbell



## Game News

By Paul Morabito



**C**ombat Remix is a new beat-em-up from Italian developers Low Level Productions. Promising 6 worlds to conquer and a 3D atmosphere the game is already looking superb. The game was demonstrated at the Pianeta Amiga 98 show in Italy. No release date has been announced.

Delsyd Software has already designed a game for the next generation Amiga titled *The Last Patriot*. The game will be a puzzle-oriented first-person perspective shoot-em-up. After 7 months of planning and design Delsyd Software is ready to being work on the game. The Last Patriot is due for release in March 2000 in both PPC and AmigaNG versions.

*Tales of Heaven* from Darkage Software

is a 3D Mario Brothers style game for the Amiga. A demo is already available though no release date or publisher has been announced. *Tales of Heaven* requires an AGA Amiga with an 030 or greater and extra fast RAM. The demo can be downloaded from [www.amigaflame.demon.co.uk/TalesPreview.lha](http://www.amigaflame.demon.co.uk/TalesPreview.lha) (593kb).

*Max Rally*, the multiplayer racing game from new Amiga developers Fortress has been completed and is now available. The game offers many different challenges including a championship mode and multiplayer mode with over 20 varied tracks. *Max Rally* works on any Amiga with 2 Mb or more RAM and there are enhancements for AGA machines. It is only available

directly from Fortress for UKP 19.99. For information on ordering visit [www.allcomm.co.uk/~fortress/main.html](http://www.allcomm.co.uk/~fortress/main.html).

Active German developers APC&TCP released their latest title *GunBee F-99*. The game is a traditional shoot-em-up and requires an AGA Amiga, 4 Mb+ fast RAM and a hard drive. *GunBee F-99* is available from Islona in the UK for UKP7.99.

Rumors are circulating that ClickBOOM is now considering an official PPC version of *Quake*. It has been reported that many users requesting a PPC port have been asked by ClickBOOM whether they in fact own a PPC card.

Australian based Sanios Software is plan-

*continued on page 42*



power of the program beyond the limited mode active upon installation. Fortunately, ClassX responded quickly to my email request with a key code.

The manuals draw mixed reviews. The two volumes, delivered as User and Addendum manuals, were not for version 3.10—the Addendum manual was labeled version 2.50, though it seemed reasonably up to date. While the Addendum manual was of competent print quality, the User manual included several screen grabs of such poor contrast that they were nearly impossible to read. Fortunately, most of the text was legible, and the provided tutorials were plain, to the point, and very useful.

Because I teach video production and love the Amiga, any opportunity to examine video software is met with open arms. X-DVE certainly reinforced my faith in the platform and its capabilities. My overall results were simply terrific. The animation was very fluid, with negligible flicker on the AGA display. This is a solid, well-written program that can allow the user to build useful animated sequences, and at US \$169, is truly a bargain.

X-DVE requires an Amiga or Draco system with OS 2.04, 4 Mb RAM and a hard drive. Testing was conducted on an A4000/040/25 MHz, 16 Mb RAM, OS 3.1, and a Picasso IV with Pablo encoder. A demo version and more information are available from the ClassX website ([www4.pisoft.it/~classx](http://www4.pisoft.it/~classx)).

Rating: A

By Mel Strait



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# Elastic Dreams

**E**lastic Dreams is a real-time morphing and WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) image manipulation program from Motion Studios in Germany. It sports a beautiful futuristic interface with 24-bit sliders and gadgets. Elastic Dreams is not exactly Style Guide compliant, but once used to it, you're not likely to mind.

Elastic Dreams is not an Image processor like ImageFX 3.2, but instead is very similar to a software package called Goo from Metacreations for Mac OS & Windows. Goo is a cool program, but it is not available on the Amiga. However, that no longer matters because we now have something better. Elastic Dreams begins where Goo left off.

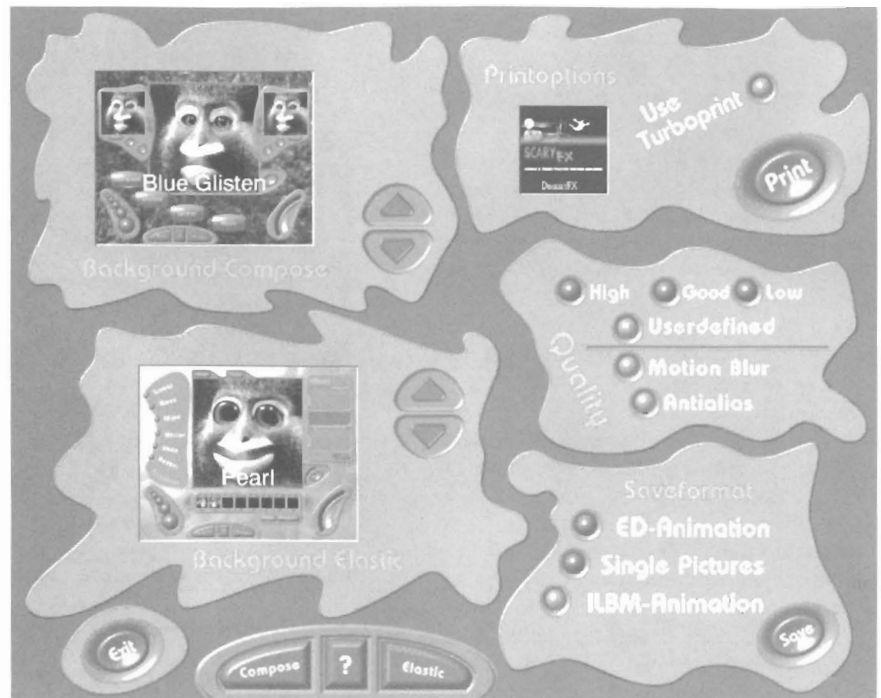
Elastic Dreams is one of a growing list of programs that supports modern Amiga additions like a graphics cards and PowerPC accelerators. The program is very responsive on 060 and 040 based Amigas, but with a PowerPC card, the real-time feedback will make you think someone replaced your Amiga with a SGI!

The interface consists of three different screens: Elastic, Composer and Manager. You do most of your image manipulation in Elastic, using various tools for smearing, wiping, mirroring and moving the image. You select one of the brush sizes (there are five presets), then wherever you click the mouse, you apply the brush and change the image. There are additional tools for complex changes like whirl, rotate, twist, stretch, jitters etc. These tools affect the entire image and are slow without a PowerPC. Changes may be stamped down on a film strip on the same screen and after setting a number of frames, you can watch a real-time animation of your effect.

Composer allows you to combine images, most commonly by rubbing through one layer to reveal another. Small previews of both images are displayed on either side of a large window in the middle showing the composited image. Some very interesting examples of using this feature are included on the Elastic Dreams CDROM. Many sample images are provided for you to experiment, and of course, you can use your own images. Images may be scanned directly into Elastic Dreams using the full ScanQuix support.

The Manager screen is where you configure the program to your personal tastes. Resolution settings, saved image formats, and motion blur and antialiasing controls are all set with this screen. Here you can also select the various cool interface background and foreground textures.

Elastic Dreams comes on a CDROM and



*While certainly not StyleGuide compliant, Elastic Dreams' interface is anything but dull. It doesn't take long to fall in love with it.*

installs effortlessly. It requires at least a 68030 CPU, OS 3.0, 8 Mb Fast RAM and 20 Mb of hard drive space. An 060 and PowerPC with 32 Mb Fast RAM are recommend. The current version is 1.0, but there may be a newer German version available. This review was conducted on an Amiga 4000T, 060/PPC, 64 Mb RAM and Cybervision64 graphics card.

The program ships with no printed documentation, opting for an AmigaGuide-based manual. The English is translated from German and is not perfect, but is understandable, and the PC jokes are somewhat funny.

I really enjoyed using Elastic Dreams and recommend it highly. It is user friendly and fast, with a short and easily-climbed learning curve. It would be nice to have a printed manual with more tutorials and a better English translation, but these are minor points. I rate Elastic Dreams an A and can't wait

to see what Motion Studios ([www.vossnet.de/titanhb/motionstudios](http://www.vossnet.de/titanhb/motionstudios)) dreams up for the next version.

Elastic Dreams is published by Weird Science Ltd. ([www.weirdscience.co.uk](http://www.weirdscience.co.uk)) and available from Amiga retailers for around US \$100. A demo version is available on Aminet as [biz/demo/ElasticDreamsE.lha](http://biz/demo/ElasticDreamsE.lha).

Rating: A

By Bill Panagouleas



*The Elastic screen allows you to smear, wipe, mirror and perform other functions on your graphics.*



# I-Net 225

I-Net 225 from Interworks, is a networking software package that provides Amigas with support for the TCP/IP networking standard. A very complete package, I-Net 225 easily surpasses competitors Miami 3.0 and AmiTCP 4.0 in capability. It's the ideal networking package for serious networking applications, I-Net 225 delivers quick, robust, and seemingly bug-free network framework to any AmiTCP-compatible networking application.

I-Net 225, which uses a three-disk installation routine, offers a very friendly personal Internet setup utility called QuickPrefs. Similar to Miami's automatic detect-and-setup program (MiamiInit), QuickPrefs gets the simplest elements of your network configuration established. Unlike Miami, however, QuickPrefs does not offer a convenient list of modems to choose from when setting up Internet dial-up.

I-Net 225 is geared toward more intense networking roles than merely providing a connection to the Internet. I-Net 225 can be used with multiple network interface cards. As such, it can be used as a router (for bridg-

ing multiple networks) or as a gateway (for extending access to other networks to machines on the local network). The interface used to establish gateway and routing behavior is very easy to work with.

The ClassAct interface which drives most of I-Net 225's configurations is excellent. As the system administrator, you can reliably update most basic settings without editing configuration files manually. More advanced administration, as with many network environments, does require manual configurations to be made in text files.

I-Net 225 comes with an array of client programs and servers. These include file transfer protocol (ftp), network file system (for sharing files among multiple workgroup computers), and telnet (for remotely logging into the Amiga). All worked flawlessly. A number of third-party servers and clients were also tested. Voodoo and Yam, two email clients, both behaved well, and Apache (a web server) performed faster on I-Net 225 than on Miami or AmiTCP. Revision 8 of I-Net 225 maintains compatibility with most existing AmiTCP and Miami applications through its `bsdsocket` library.

I-Net 225 also comes with SANA-II device drivers for most commonly-used networking hardware. In this instance, I-Net 225 was tested with a Hydra ethernet card (Zorro-slot)

and with a National Amiga APNet ethernet card, which came with its own device driver. Again, I-Net worked perfectly in all tests.

The package is sold using a per-workstation licensing scheme. There are two basic licenses available. The first, called "Professional," allows the use of the package on five Amigas, and includes a Network File System daemon. The second, called "Personal," allows one workstation to use the product, and is more suitable for single-user Internet dial-up.

I-Net 225 is a powerful, mature product which includes a formidable array of very useful networking tools. It is superior to Miami 3.0, and is much more easily administered than AmiTCP 4.0. This program deserves more attention and rates a solid A.

I-Net can be purchased from select Amiga dealers or direct from Interworks. The professional version of I-Net sells for US \$349 while the personal package goes for US \$150. Technical support for I-Net 225 is available via Interworks' online "Ask Interworks" program, and by phone. Visit [www.iwork.com](http://www.iwork.com) for contact information.

Rating: A

By Ted Wallingford



## Computer 98 con't from page 6

too. GPS software was showing the new Opus Magellan II, and the Opus Plus CD at the Schatztruhe booth. Schatztruhe was offering CyberGraphX 4.0, Envoy 3.0 software, and Miami Deluxe CD's. Nova Designs demonstrated Aladdin 4 v5.0 and ImageFX 3.2 which sports several new features. Another company called NightShift will soon have available a CD of Scala MM400 that doesn't require the very annoying dongle protection to work. Finally a German computer club known as Zentrum Thuringen will soon offer Linux Red Hat for the Amiga PPC.

This covers only a few of the many exciting companies that attended Computer 98. While the Amiga market continues to contract, it is reassuring to see such enthusiasm, continued support and innovation from the many stalwart Amiga companies. Long may they prosper.



**For improved playback using digital audio software direct from hard disk, use HDToolbox or similar to set the drive's block size to 16 Kb.**

## AI200 Tower con't from page 9

both Picasso96 and CyberGFX supported software.

The *AteoBus* is a proprietary bus system and is not Zorro compatible. Therefore, it will not work with standard Amiga cards. Ateo Concepts claims that various expansions will be available for the *AteoBus* in the future, including a Multi I/O, Ethernet, SCSI and IDE controllers, and a 16-bit audio card.

Randomize suggest that the *Alpha* is best suited for any applications that take advantage of the 24-bit graphics and an 060 processor, such as internet applications, image creation and manipulation, animation, desktop publishing, and Macintosh emulation. Additionally, the AGA chipset makes this system, with an Amiga compatible monitor, perfect for games, demos, etc.

The Towerhawk keeps to the more traditional Amiga architecture, and includes all the common features listed above, plus: RBM ONBOARD 1200 expansion bus; MultiVision Flicker Fixer; 5.1 Gb IDE hard drive; large tower case; 6x 5.25" drive bays; and 4x 3.5" drive bays.

The *ONBoard 1200* provides five standard Zorro 2 card slots that can be upgraded to Zorro 3, with the addition of an *ONBoard ex Z3* module and the *TurboON 32 Blizzard* expansion.

The Towerhawk comes with standard AGA graphics output only, but because it uses the standard Zorro expansion bus, graphics card such as the CyberVision and Picasso can be installed. This system is recommended for any applications that specifically require Zorro card compatibility or that require additional mounting bays for devices (hard drives, etc.).

Randomize offers numerous step-up options for both of these systems, including PPC acceleration with the Blizzard 603e+ 240 MHz, Fast SCSI controller, Macintosh emulation through Microcode's Fusion, multimedia presentation software with Scala MM400, hard disks, memory, and various storage devices. Neither system is equipped with the necessary video slot or, in the case of the Alpha, a Zorro card slot necessary to use the Toaster/Flyer video system.

For more information contact Randomize, Inc. at RR #2 Tottenham, Ontario, Canada L0G 1W0. Orders: 1-888-726-3664; Fax: 905-939-8745; URL: [www.randomize.com](http://www.randomize.com); email: [sales@randomize.com](mailto:sales@randomize.com)



# Game Zone

Reviews

## Blade

**B**lade is a role playing game from Scorpius and distributed by Alive Mediasoft. In Blade you control four characters and explore underground dungeons. During your journey you encounter, and hopefully defeat, many worthy adversaries. You acquire potions, gold, spells, and treasure, and then return to the surface to trade your booty for improved weapons and armor so you may delve even deeper into the underworld and collect more booty.

There is something addictive about Blade's gameplay that I can't quite put my finger on. I suppose it may simply be the desire to see what awaits around the next corner. Though the formula sounds repetitive, in fact levels are randomly generated, so you never play the same game twice.

The big difference between Blade and most other RPGs is the graphic viewpoint. The game is played from an overhead and angled perspective reminiscent of Syndicate. It's also unique in that its primary focus is exploration. Blade does have good sound effects; I especially liked the echoing sound of footsteps while walking underground. The digitized speech, although sparse, was excellent.

On my AGA machine the 256-color graphics were very appealing and detailed, but the scrolling was extremely slow and choppy. Scrolling is done by moving the mouse pointer to the edges of the screen—a method I found very annoying. I would have preferred using the cursor keys, or clicking on arrows or a map.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, it's fairly easy to learn how to play. The control panel is simple and equipped with an ingenious information mode which explains the icons' functions. If it weren't for the tedium of scrolling and the fact that you're forced to take turns playing with your monster/computer opponent (like in a board game), I probably would have played the game more often.

The thing I noticed first about Blade was its deceptive packaging. It comes in a caddy exactly like an AMINET Set, so I was of course expecting a multi-CDROM game. Instead, I found inserts housing four floppies and a stapled, photocopied manual. I was pleased



*Take the role of a powerful hero, cast spells, hack up monsters, and find booty. What could be more fun!*

that Blade did have a manual—few game developers are including printed documentation at all any more.

Installation was performed with the standard installer and was fairly painless. The problems started upon running the program. Blade is extremely Chip RAM hungry. In order to use AGA graphics and sound capabilities, the game must be installed to your hard drive and have a full 2 Mb of Chip RAM available. OCS and ECS users may run

## Rotator

**R**otator is one of the many quality titles from 5th Dimension Licenseware. Mainly a puzzle game, it reminded me in many respects of Bill's Tomato Game from Psygnosis. In Rotator you pilot a small bouncing ship around the screen collecting diamond keys which open the exit, and other objects for points.

Although Rotator is a licenseware game, it is of better quality than many commercial releases I've examined recently. Rotator combines platformer and puzzler gameplay, and requires good hand-eye coordination. This makes it pretty unique in my opinion.

the game directly from floppy and avoid all these shenanigans. I only had an A1200 with 060, OS 3.0, 50 Mb RAM, available, so I was not able to test this feature.

To assure Blade will have enough Chip RAM at runtime, the programmers implemented a reboot start program as the solution. This requires that you have a hard drive partition (not just a drawer) named "Games" with Blade installed there. I found a workaround that I recommend to save time and hair pulling: Simply do a normal install wherever you like, and use the boot control screen (i.e. boot holding both mouse buttons) to select a PAL display mode and boot with no startup-sequence. Then simply change to the Blade directory and run it from the Shell. At runtime, Blade autoconfigures to your system.

I must commend the developers for coming out with a new game that works on a 1 Mb A500/600 or a fully expanded AGA machine.

Alive Mediasoft Limited may be contacted by phone or fax at 01623 467579. Blade is available from Amiga retailers for US \$30.

Rating: C

By Jeremy Campbell







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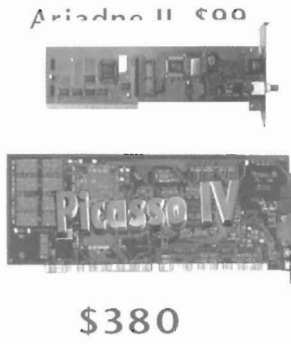
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## Game News con't from page 40

ning on porting many popular quality PC games to the Amiga. Already they have secured the rights to the children's platformer *Lunatic Isles* and are currently negotiating for the rights to *Guts and Garters* with negotiations reportedly proceeding well. On top of that they plan on releasing an adventure game called *Rock Dogs* in which you are a band trying to make it in the big time.

Titan Computer's latest title, *Claws of the Devil*, a Tomb Raider clone is progressing well. The game is played from a 3rd person perspective with over 13 massive levels. The developers are promising that it will include one of the most advanced game engines ever seen on the Amiga. The engine will feature realistic lighting, fog, transparency and other stunning effects. Minimum specifications for the game are a 68060, 32 Mb RAM and a GFX card. A special optimized PPC version will be released taking advantage of the ultra fast PowerPC processor and the

CybervisionPPC graphics card based on the high performance Permedia3D graphics chip. A release date has yet to be announced.

*Zombie Massacre*, described by developers Alpha Software as a "highly anticipated sequel to Ultimate Gloom" is nearing completion. The game features highly graphic violence and sound effects which has already seen publishers Epic Marketing recommend viewer discretion and award it a UK 18 certificate. The game will feature a 65 Mb FMV intro with actors and CDDA tracks. *Zombie Massacre* will require an AGA Amiga, 6 Mb Ram, an 030 processor, and CDROM drive. It will support GFX cards and is PPC compatible.

Marble-Eyes Development released an update patch that allows game players to enjoy *Genetic Species* in full 24-bit color. The update required almost a total rewrite of the main game engine to ensure the game remained fast and responsive. On a A4000/060@50mhz with a PicassoIV GFX

card the frame rate can reach up to 50fps, in full 24-bit color. The updated game engine is available for download from [www.marbleeyes.dk](http://www.marbleeyes.dk).

New Amiga games company Digital Images has confirmed that they signed a deal with Psygnosis for a license to port *Wipeout 2097* to the Amiga. Meanwhile, their first release, *Space Station 3000*, which is a space strategy/trading game will be published by Blittersoft UK. The game is expected to be ready in time for Christmas this year.

In sad news, Vulcan software has announced that Imij Software, responsible for *Hard Target* has decided to cancel further development of the title due to "the economic realities of the Amigas constantly eroding user base," according to Paul Carrington of Vulcan Software.



## Ooops . . Correction con't from page 8

any "back doors." It never has and never will.

A "back door" is, by definition, an intended and concealed mechanism in hardware or software, unknown to system administrators, that allows people outside of an organization to access or otherwise affect hardware or software inside of an organization, bypassing intended security mechanisms, authentication checks and authorization checks, without the system administrators' knowledge. Such mechanisms are usually illegal, and accusing software of having a "back door" is a very serious allegation. Miami does not contain any such mechanism, neither for piracy detection nor for other purposes. There is no intended mechanism in Miami by which Nordic Global Inc. or anyone else can in any way affect a computer running Miami (crash it, break into it, steal files from it, spy on the user etc.), regardless of whether the user is unregistered, registered, or using a pirated copy of Miami. Neither does Miami contain any mechanism by which the program sends unsolicited personal information on unregistered or registered users anywhere, or by which anyone can obtain such information from a running copy of Miami.

**AI:** "Kruse already stated that due to piracy he has "indefinitely" put off expanding his efforts after the release of Miami 3.2 and Miami Deluxe 1.0. This puts his future support for the Amiga in question."

**HK:** This is incorrect. Holger Kruse stated that after Miami 3.2 and Miami Deluxe 1.0

the development of future versions will depend on the state of the Amiga market, which, at the current time, is in a rather bad shape, so it would take some improvement of the Amiga market before we would consider starting to work on any major new versions (Miami 4.0 or Miami Deluxe 2.0). No decision not to develop such versions has been made yet though. One of the factors determining the amount of work spent on future versions will be the amount and extent of piracy. This in no way affects software support for existing software and their customers though.

We never stated that we have "indefinitely put off expanding [our] efforts [to develop Amiga software] after the release of Miami 3.2 and Miami Deluxe 1.0." We are still fully committed to the Amiga platform, and users can continue to expect technical support, updates and bug fixes through the usual channels.

We never stated, "This puts [our] future support for the Amiga in question," either. The amount of time spent on future Amiga software and the scope of future software releases will obviously depend on the state of the market though, as explained above. At this time Miami and Miami Deluxe are fully supported Amiga software products, and we have no intention to change this in the foreseeable future.

Holger Kruse

[kruse@nordicglobal.com](mailto:kruse@nordicglobal.com)

<http://www.nordicglobal.com>



## Software Installation con't from page 10

Do not worry about what it all means, you need only be concerned by the Name: line, which tells you what program caused the problem; in this case, "LawBreaker." If the first line indicates a WRITE operation, as this one does, you can expect trouble. If it is a READ operation, things are not as bad, but not great either.

It is a good rule of thumb to avoid using programs that generate Enforcer hits. If you have no choice, be sure to reboot your computer after doing so.

### Cleaning Up

Many programs create various data files once started. If you are getting rid of an application, it is not always enough to just delete the files you see in the distribution. It is a good idea to peruse your hard disk on a regular basis to delete unnecessary files. The common locations for these config files are in S: and ENVARC: so check there first. You might be surprised at how much junk you can find wasting away. If you are not sure about deleting a file, move it elsewhere temporarily to see if anything is badly affected.

### Friends

Keeping your system under control and well organized can go a long way to making your life easier. So, get to know your Amiga, as you would a good friend.



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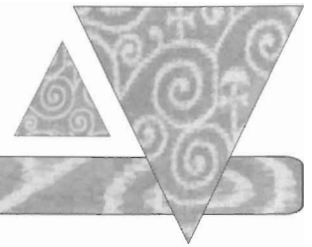
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# Eye on Graphics



Aaron is the owner of Image Architects, a company that provides production & consulting services with Amiga graphics, animation, programming and multimedia. Aaron also teaches computer art and graphics as an adjunct professor at the Atlanta College of Art. Your input will directly effect the topics covered in this column, so email Aaron with your thoughts at [aaron@noel.pd.org](mailto:aaron@noel.pd.org), or directly from our website at [www.amigainformer.com](http://www.amigainformer.com).

By Aaron Ruscetta

In the previous columns, we went into detail on both the physical nature and hardware implementation of the Amiga's graphics system. All that background and theory was leading up to this installment, where we can take an application oriented look at the variety of hardware available for enhancing your machine's graphics capabilities. A lot of the products I mention are only available on the used market these days, but those bargain prices can make acquiring them for amusement and exploration an affordable and attractive proposition. They can help keep you busy and happy for a few more months while the Next Generation Amiga's start rolling in!

First on the list are the encoders and genlocks. These devices allow you to display, distribute and combine your creative graphics work with the most globally compatible formats available: PAL or NTSC Composite Video. (The Amiga 1000 actually has a composite color video output built in.)

The common function for both encoders and genlocks is to encode the separate RGB components of your Amiga output into a standard video signal. Genlocks go one step further allowing you to synchronize the Amiga and its encoded output with a second video signal, so that you can mix or overlay your computer graphics with other video sources. This genlock capability is made uniquely simple and inexpensive by Amiga's video compatibility; for evidence of this, just tune to the program listings channel of any cable system in the US and you'll likely see genlocked Amiga graphics reliably at work!

Over the years, a variety of encoder and genlock peripherals have been available for the Amiga, supporting outputs in either Composite, S-Video or both. A unique feature found on Commodore's own 2300 genlock card is that it also DE-CODES the incoming

genlock video into RGB, so you can view the mix or overlay on your Amiga monitor as well as the composite video output. Like the 2300, some genlocks are internal cards that plug into the video slot of an A2000, A3000 or A4000. However, most encoders and genlocks are external boxes that connect via the 23-pin monitor connector, like the new Video Turtle encoder and the GVP-M G-Lock.

Having tested or used many of these devices, I can affirm that the quality of the encoded video signal is closely linked to the price of the unit. For high quality NTSC output in an external box, you can look to the SuperGen units made by Digital Creations or the GVP-M G-Lock. If you're after the top of the line, try to find a Magni. Magni's main business is making video test equipment, so they had exacting standards for their Amiga genlocks and made both PAL and NTSC versions.

Somewhere between (or slightly to the side) of genlocks and frame buffers on our list of graphics enhancements, there are two interesting Color Encryption devices that bear mention here: DCTV and HAM-E. Both of these are variants on using a few scan lines of the display output to encrypt hundreds of thousands of colors into Amiga images and animations with native display modes of only 16 or 32 colors. The encrypting is done through software, but the decryption process is real time hardware, so even a stock A500 or A2000 can be used to generate full screen, full motion animations displaying the full NTSC color spectrum!

Both HAM-E and DCTV are external boxes that connect to the 23-pin monitor port. The output of HAM-E is also a 23-pin RGB connection, so you can see all the encrypted colors on your regular monitor and use other external encoders/genlocks to take it to video. DCTV goes directly to NTSC Composite Video for its output, requiring a separate (hard to find) RGB break-out addition for

regular monitor viewing or genlocking.

For software, the DCTV unit is a more complete package and ships with its own impressive paint and animation program, the precursor of the Brilliance software for native Amiga displays. I've also found that its encryption format is a little more common and better supported with third party programs. HAM-E, however, does have the advantage of direct RGB output, and a special version of the capable SpectraColor paint and animation program was released to work with HAM-E.

The next class of Amiga graphics hardware enhancers are video frame buffers. On careful consideration, I have four unique products to discuss in this category: the FireCracker24 from Impulse, GVP-M's TBC Plus, the OpalVision card, and the NewTek Video Toaster. On the surface, labeling the TBC Plus and the Toaster as frame buffers might seem an error, but all four DO have three important things in common: they all work with 24-bit data in 16 million colors, they all have their own memory space for holding image data, and they all output at video scan rates and resolutions.

The FireCracker24 is what I would term a pure frame buffer. It is a Zorro 2 card, using the standard data path to pass 24-bit image data to and from its memory "buffer." Its 23-pin RGB output will display stills at the 525 line NTSC scan rate (480 usable) with selectable horizontal resolutions of 384, 512, 768 and 1024 pixels. By connecting its external pass-through cable to the Amiga monitor port, you can also overlay native Amiga graphics and animations onto the full color "background" displays and use external encoders and genlocks to take it all to video. While the FireCracker24 doesn't support real time animation in 24 bit color, it does allow instant A/B switching between two images at the lower resolutions. For software, it has a simple but fast paint program with the unique ability to render Imagine format 3D objects! Lastly, its drivers were well supported by other software products, allowing you to load





and save images to the display card easily.

The TBC Plus can also perform as a "pure" frame buffer. Though primarily a Time Base Corrector (for real time synchronizing and processing of video signals), the software for this Zorro 2 card allows you to use its high speed video memory to load and display 24-bit image data. The nice features here are that you can do real time video still capture, real time video and chroma effects and output directly to either PAL or NTSC video standards (software switchable) without any additional hardware. Its two compromises are that there are no Amiga graphic "overlay" abilities and no drivers are supported for accessing the device from other software, though the TBC Plus software does have an extensive ARexx implementation.

Next is a personal favorite, the OpalVision. This frame buffer card requires the video slot of an A2000, A3000 or A4000, but in most

respects its features are like the FireCracker24, with genlockable 23-pin RGB output, Amiga graphic/anim overlays and good support from other software. Its huge plus is the accompanying OpalPaint software; rich in features and image processing abilities that rival the best paint programs available even today, all addressable through an elaborate ARexx implementation. Other Opal software supports slide sequencing with digital transitions and 12, 16 or 18-bit full screen, full motion animation! The only quirk of the OpalVision is that the display resolutions are a bit off the norm, with a high res output of 736 horizontal by 476 vertical.

Finishing my list is the device we all know, the NewTek Video Toaster. While the Toaster includes numerous video handling abilities and support software beyond the pale of its three cousins, it also shares most of their features and functionality as a frame buffer. It incorporates two 752 by 480 resolution frame

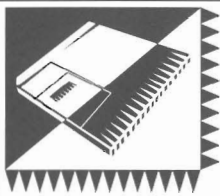
buffers, supporting real time video still capture, composite NTSC output, Amiga graphics/anim overlays, complete paint software, and driver support from other programs.

That's all the room I have for this issue. Join us next time as we continue our discussion on Amiga graphics hardware with a look at retargetable graphics and other goodies of interest. As always, questions, comments, input and feedback are welcome!



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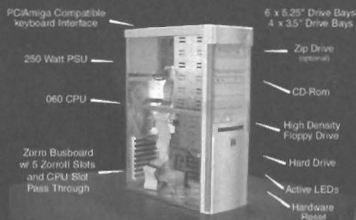
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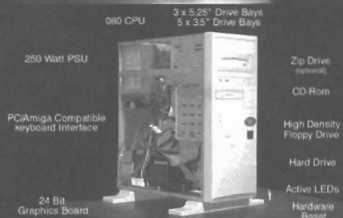
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