THE AMIGA INFORMER

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A summary of information and support for Amiga users

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QuikPak Submits Bid For The Amiga

QuikPak, of Norristown, PA, emerges as the leading contender in the bid to purchase the Amiga. QuikPak has been manufacturing the A4000T since 1995, and all 4000T motherboards are made and distributed from the PA site. They made their intentions to buy the Amiga known in a public statement released December 24,1996. QuikPak submitted a final comprehensive bid for the assets and intellectual properties of the Amiga on January 31. All bids will be reviewed during February, and a winning bid will be selected by February 28, 1997 [ever hear this before?]. When the outcome of the bidding process is resolved, QuikPak will make a public announcement.

VIScorp, the prior leader in the effort to obtain the Amiga rights, failed to buy the Amiga in the agreed time frame and at the agreed price. VIScorp's renege on their earlier agreement again threw the Amiga liquidation proceedings wide open. Turmoil seemed to hit VIScorp as first Carl Sassenrath and then Jason Compton resigned. Soon after this, former CEO Bill Buck was relieved of his position as head honcho. VIScorp's web site no longer makes many references to the Amiga. However, they entered another bid and are still considered to be in the race.

There were reportedly many bids for the Amiga, most of which remain undisclosed. There is some validity to reports that MicroSoft and Sony are interested, but to what extent is not known. There were also reports that Paxtron Corporation and former VIScorp CEO Bill Buck teamed up to enter a bid, hoping to liquidate the Amiga assets if successful. However, Paxtron's President Joel Kornreich denies this report, saying Paxtron has been in contact with many of the parties interested in the Amiga, but are not involved with Bill Buck and certainly did not place a bid.

While the sale drags on, QuikPak continues to offer several computer models based around the A4000, as well as 060 accelerator cards. The 4000T is the standard 040/25Mhz tower system. The 4060T is the same as the 4000T but with a 060/50Mhz CPU. The 4040L is a "luggable" computer with a built-in high resolution LCD screen. It comes in several versions with either an

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Mount Sassenrath ERUPTS

Carl Sassenrath, one of the original creators of the Amiga OS, announced he is developing a completely new computer language called LAVA. Unrelated to Java-an object-orientated programming language-LAVA is a solution-oriented language. It is designed not for engineers, but for the rest of us who require a smart, practical approach to solving a wide range of computing problems. It is an easy-to-use, powerful, efficient, and portable language for creating small graphical, audio, multimedia, network, and control applications. It is not restricted to a particular hardware platform, operating system, or processor.

According to Sassenrath, LAVA has gone through various stages of refinement for nearly ten years. The current prototype has been up and running for several months. There are still a few important modules to complete, but the expected release for the alpha-test version is March 1997. A beta release is scheduled for sometime in May 1997 with a final release later in the summer.

There are a few varieties of LAVA, depending on your needs and requirements.

LAVA- The basic LAVA language, including the translator (compiler) and execution environment. It is useful for scripts, configuration, shells, file manipulation, etc. Because of its small size, it is excellent for small control systems (e.g.

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From the Editor's Desk:

Greetings:

The new year begins without the sale of the Amiga being resolved. It seems VIScorp is now out of the picture and QuikPak is in. I regret we can't bring you all the sorted details, but it would fill the entire issue. However, we do have a piece on QuikPak (see cover story) that should inform you on some of the events.

While the Amiga is still waiting for an owner, there are a few things we can all do to keep our favorite machine going. As you know, the Amiga market is still active. Thriving, maybe not, but dead, no way! In fact, NewTek reported better sales of their Amiga products in 1996 than the year before, and there are tons of new items available.

One of the biggest problems I see in the Amiga market is the "wait and see" approach many users take. These users aren't buying product until they hear a positive report on the Amiga's future. They stand around waiting with hands in pocket. To me, this makes no sense. If you need a product, buy it. We all need to show our support by purchasing products now, not later. We, the users, are the real power behind the Amiga!

Another thing we all need to do is support shareware. Shareware authors are the future commercial developers. Take a look at your hard drive. See any shareware programs? Some of the greatest programs around are shareware. If you use a shareware program regularly, register it. If we don't, these developers will go away.

Probably the most destructive thing anyone can do is to pirate software. This will kill development quicker than a 100 megaton nuke. We must not give illegally copied software to our friends.

We Amigans have had to pull together for a long time now and frankly it isn't easy. But there is a reason we hang tough. We know what we have in the Amiga and we want to see it stick around. A lot is happening. There is a growing movement away from single OS dominance (Windows/Intel) and we want to see the Amiga lead that movement. Keep the faith and stay informed. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

Fletcher Haug, Editor

QuikPak con't from page 1

040 or 060 CPU and is available complete with NewTek's Video Toaster and Flyer on board. Prices range from US $4,495 to $9,995. They also offer an 060 accelerator card for the A3000/A4000 desktop and various A4000T computers. These cards are reportedly the fastest 060 cards available and offer built-in Wide SCSI 2 support.

QuikPak's new 5050T prototype uses a hybrid motherboard containing both a 68060 CPU and a Pentium 150. The 5050T uses the Siamese system from Hi-Q of England. It will run both the Amiga OS and Windows simultaneously and allows easy switching between both operating systems. The Retargetable Graphics (RTG) feature of the Siamese system allows you to run Workbench on a Windows screen.

QuikPak also mentions a model 1630LD on their web site. Due to the bidding process, QuikPak representatives can not publicly comment on the 1630LD's features. However, it is based on a fast 030 CPU and will contain many upgraded features and an excellent price. Both the 5050T and 1630LD are ready for market if and when QuikPak wins their bid for the Amiga. Keep your eyes peeled to The Informer for future details.

For full information on QuikPak and their products, visit their web site at: www.amigasupport.com/quikpak
Email: qpinfo@ix.netcom.com
or call 1-888-784-5725

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embedded controllers) and educational purposes.

Hot LAVA- The network enabled version of LAVA for use on TCP/IP local area or wide area networks (including the Internet). Provides client side protocol support for http, ftp, mailto and lava protocols. LAVA programs can be distributed using existing WWW servers and interconnectivity without modification.

Molten LAVA- The multimedia enabled version of LAVA. Supports graphics, sound, music, video, video effects, sequencing, timing, and event handling. Provides support for graphical user interfaces, presentation systems, media authoring and editing.

Hot Molten LAVA- Provides all of the above in a single system. This networked, multimedia version of LAVA is only limited by your imagination.

Magma OS- A compact, efficient multitasking operating system which fully integrates LAVA for use in configuration, scripting, messaging, IPC, databases, etc.

LAVA will be available for the full range of Amigas, from the A500 through the A4000T. The initial release will function only with V2 and V3 OS, but an eventual release of a V1.3 capable version is expected. Hot LAVA for the Amiga will require TCP/IP support. Molten LAVA is for some Amiga models and will operate with

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The INFORMER Prize Drawings

Each Issue of The Amiga Informer will feature a random prize drawing for an Amiga product (software, hardware, book, etc.) and subscribers are **automatically entered** to win for the duration of their subscription.

[No purchase necessary. If not subscribing, send one postcard for each drawing with your name, address, phone number, Email address and date to: The Informer, PO Box 21, Newburgh, NY 12551-0021. Postcard must be titled "Free Informer Prize Drawing Entry" and received at least two weeks before each drawing. Drawings held bimonthly.]

Congratulations to Burt Kritt of Los Angeles, CA, Winner of MRBackup and MegaBall 4!

Next Issue's WINNER will receive: an Avalon CD from Syndesis -AND- Capital Punishment provided by Safe Harbor Computers!

To Subscribe See Page 23

AMIGA News

Hot New Emulators From Microcode

Jim Drew and Joe Fenton, formally of the defunct Utilities Unlimited, formed a new company called Microcode Solutions [briefly known as Persistence Software]. They released an exciting new 80x86 emulation program called PCx and will soon release a Mac emulation program called "Fusion." With emulation being on the minds of many amigans, The Informer talked to Jim Drew, the CEO of Microcode Solutions, to get some answers.

Amiga Informer (AI): You offer two Mac emulation products, Mac1200 and MacLite. How do they differ?

Jim Drew (JD): We don't offer Mac1200 and MacLite. These were products of the now defunct Utilities Unlimited.

AI: Do you own the rights to these products?

JD: I own the rights to all of Utilities Unlimited's products. I am no longer producing anything that came from Utilities Unlimited.

AI: Does this mean that Mac1200 and MacLite are no longer in active development?

JD: Correct. I don't have a problem fixing something if it is broken, but at this point there will be no more additional features added to anything that Utilities Unlimited sold.

We are releasing a completely new Macintosh emulation called Fusion. It offers all of the features of MacPro for the Emplant hardware without the need of any additional hardware. There are many new features that will make Fusion even better than the Emplant stuff we did.

AI: Does the Emplant board have any advantage over the software-only emulation?

JD: Yes. Speed and compatibility. For this reason, Fusion will use the Emplant hardware if you have it. When Joe Fenton and I designed the Emplant board, we wanted to make the hardware handle most of the programming problems. So, the Emplant is actually a complete duplication of a Mac IIcx motherboard without the ADB port and floppy controller. By letting the hardware handle all of the Mac's interrupt and timing functions, valuable Amiga resources are freed up, thus making the Amiga run faster, which in turn makes the Mac emulation also faster.

AI: How has the response been to PCx, your new 80x86 emulation program?

JD: Staggering! Sales are good, and people are really surprised how much faster and more compatible PCx is compared to PCTask.

AI: How does PCx differ from your main competitor, PCTask?

JD: PCx is faster than PCTask, especially on faster (040/060) machines. The CPU Transcription makes slow machines no less than twice as fast as standard mode. The compability is near perfect because the emulation is a hardware-level emulation. This means that we emulate each piece of PC hardware at a low level...so if a program 'pokes' at the hardware, it is going to find it! We also have Sound Blaster support, the ability to 'mount' an Amiga partition as a PC drive, and native drivers such as ANSI, ASPI, and CD-ROM. We just have a lot of neat stuff that goes with this package.

AI: Are games that run on a 486 PC playable on an AGA Amiga with an average 030 processor?

JD: Any CGA/EGA game and simple VGA games run quite well.

AI: What is the suggested hardware requirements to run PCx effectively?

JD: We optimized PCx really for an 040/060 system. Although a stock A3000 (25Mhz) works very well for DOS based applications and CGA/EGA game playing.

AI: If the same program were to run in Mac emulation and in PC emulation, which would give better performance?

JD: Definately the Mac emulation. Not only is the CPU the same, but we rewrote portions of the Mac's OS to use the Amiga's hardware to make it faster.

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Note to Subscribers: If you have a new Email address-or have just joined the Internet-please make sure you let us know so you can take advantage of automatically receiving the latest news from Amiga Update. See Subscriber Benefits, Page 23, for more details.

Ever found yourself needing a special cable to make one of your more esoteric Amiga projects work? If so, than you should try a place called Redmond Cable in TN. They are very familiar with Amiga needs. Call 423-478-5760.

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Editor: Fletcher Haug
Design & Copyedit: Betty Haug
Netsetter: C. Davis Sprague
WB Enhancements: Brad Webb
Support Staff: Walt Meyle and Cristina Rodriguez

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All inquiries should be directed to:
The Informer, PO Box 21,
Newburgh NY, 12551-0021
(914) 566-4665
or Email at: eldritch@mhv.net
http://www1.mhv.net/~eldritch

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The Informer is produced entirely on Amiga computers! The equipment used:
A1200, Blizzard 060/50 Mhz, 32 Mb RAM
A2000, 2630/28/28 8 Mb RAM
Generic 33.6 modem
HP Scanjet IIp scanner
Epson Stylus Color printer
PageStream 3.2
Image FX 2.6
Brilliance 2.0
Final Writer 5.0
Termite 1.2
Termite TCP
IBrowse 1.02
Link-It! 1.0
Directory Opus 4
Freely Distributable Software

Any dealer or distributor who wishes to sell The Informer should contact Eldritch Entprises for complete details. 5,000 issues are currently distributed with each printing.

Special Thanks to Frank Alexander for providing the on-line subscription form.

Rate for six issues is (US) $14 USA, $16 Canada, and $21 all others for first class mail delivery. Personal checks from USA only, all others in Money Orders or Bank Checks payable in US dollars and made out to *Eldritch Enterprises*. Group discounts are available for 10 or more subscriptions sent to the same address. We are not responsible for cash sent through the mail. Subscription Form provided - See Page 23.

BYTES

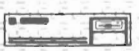
AHI is a new audio system developed by Martin Blom of Sweden. It is a set of routines used to talk to audio cards–even Paula, the Amiga's custom audio chip. Once installed, it replaces the current sound subsystem and programs that support AHI will work in 16-Bit sound and in more than 4 channels. Music and audio programs written to take advantage of AHI will work on all supported audio cards. This saves a programmer the effort of writing separate drivers for each different audio card. A list of programs that work with sound cards can be found at Pauli Porkka's support page which can be linked from the AHI homepage. Hardware currently supported by AHI are: Aura (sampling only); Delfina DSP; Paula; Prelude; Toccata; and Wavetools. There is planned support for DLT's Hypersound 32 and Plasma 32 audio cards. Version 3.0 will soon be available for beta testing. Interested developers should reference the AHI homepage at: http://www.lysator.liu.se/~lcs/ahi.html. AHI can be downloaded from the AHI homepage or from Aminet at: dev/misc/ahi.lha. Email Martin Blom for more info at: lcs@lysator.liu.se

IAM announced they will continue their low holiday sale prices indefinitely! Additionally, the bundle of DiskSalv4 and MRBackup (called SYA or Save Your *Behind*) is reduced even further to only US $49. While supplies last, all direct orders for Amiga products from IAM will include a free metallic Boing logo (a decal originally produced for the A1000) described by the Amiga Web Directory as "the quintessential Amiga collector's item." Unfortunately, the Deathbed videos and cool T-Shirts offered by IAM are no longer available. IAM products can be ordered direct from IAM via the web, mail, fax or phone. URL: http://www.iam.com; Email: info@iam.com; Voice (orders only): 610-853-4406; FAX: 610-853-3733

On the heels of the VillageTronics Picasso IV graphics card comes The Picasso 96 software package. Picasso 96 is a new graphics card driver technology that uses very little fast RAM. It supports a multitude of graphics cards and includes drivers for Photogenics, Mac emulation programs, and XiPaint. Features of the Picasso 96 software driver are: 8, 16, 24, and 32-Bit Workbench; Improved use with Mac emulators; Ability to work with 2 monitors at the same time; High software-application compatibility; and CyberGraphx compatibility. Picasso 96 features a ScreenManager which is responsible for the screen displays, flicker fixer, double buffering, scaler, color space conversion, and the "VideoWindow" display on the Workbench. The Picasso 96 API is available for developers, and a demo is freely downloadable from the Blittersoft homepage at: http://blittersoft.wildnet.co.uk

Team AMIGA is organizing a database of Amiga-specific companies and businesses. Developers, dealers, retailers, and publishers–anyone involved with the Amiga platform will be accepted. You do not have to be a Team AMIGA member to sign up. This database will be shared with anyone asking for information on where to purchase Amiga related products. If you want Amiga users to be able to find your business, you need to be listed. You must agree that your predominant focus is on *Amiga* related activities. PC only advertising will not be accepted. To get a Company Info Form, Contact: Gary Caine, Box 464, Dalmeny, Sask., Canada, S0K 1E0. Or Email him at: gcaine@the.link.ca or Fido: 1:140/58.1. The form is downloadable from Aminet in the docs/misc directory.

ProDAD of Germany has a new operating system called pOS. Built entirely from scratch, pOS will be released in an Amiga 68k and PowerPC version. According to ProDAD, the system can be installed parallel to the Amiga OS. pOS was developed on the Amiga making it possible to run both operating systems simultaneously. This fact makes it easy for developers to port software, and also enables users to maintain compatibility with existing software. Thanks to a 2/3 compatibility to the Amiga OS, ProDAD claims software written in standard ANSI C or C++ will run under pOS after being modified with just a single compiler pass. The first applications based on this operating system will be available in 1997. A great deal more info about the pOS is available on the ProDAD Web site at:
http://www.prodad.de/eng/p-OS.html



Nova Design, Inc. announced the availability of a demo tape featuring footage from videos and films using ImageFX and Aladdin 4D. Specially commissioned sequences demonstrate all the newest features of ImageFX including animated fires, blue screen composites, lightning, distorts, morphs, liquid effects and much more. Amiga dealers, Video Toaster/Flyer dealers, or stores carrying Amiga software can get the video by calling 804-282-5868 M-F between 1- 5pm est. Amiga user groups are also welcome to the video and can receive a copy by sending their user group newsletter along with a note requesting the video to Nova Design, Inc. They must also put Nova Design on their newsletter mailing list. Others can get a copy for $10 by calling 800-IMAGE-69, or 804-282-1157, M-F 1-4pm est. Nova Design, Inc., 1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 204, Richmond, VA 23230. Voice: 804-282-6528; FAX 804-282-3768; URL: http://www.novadesign.com/

A new magazine is born to fill the void left by the loss of Video Toaster User (VTU). It's called NewTekniques (NT) and it will be published by Advanstar Communications. The Editor in Chief is Joe Tracy, formerly of VTU magazine. Other contributors include: John Gross, formerly of LWPro; Mojo from Foundation Imaging; and Scott Wheeler from Area51. NT will be a resource for all NewTek related products and will give readers the best and most reliable information and news on these products. Readers will find helpful tips, tutorials, and special techniques aimed at making their work easier and more effective. While NT will focus on all NewTek supported platforms, there will be special sections dealing with specific Amiga products and news. NT will start as a quarterly with 3 issues released in 1997. However, response has been so strong that Advanstar Communications has committed to going bimonthly in 1998. The first issue of New Techniques will appear at the NAB show in April and will contain at least 100 pages. For more info contact: jtracy@main.rosenet.net. Subscribe by calling: 800-346-0085.

PCx is a new software-only 80x86 emulation program from Microcode Solutions. This emulation includes the Pentium and 686 instruction set and the Intel undocumented P5 instructions. PCx runs on any Amiga with a 68020 or later processor. It features a slick user interface, is self configuring, and allows a wide variety of display modes. Mono Sound Blaster emulation is built-in as is support for video cards including the Graffiti Graphics Box. The Graffiti Box is an affordable graphics device that outputs data in chunky format, so no chunky-to-planar graphics conversion is necessary, making a 320x200, 256 color PCx display really fly! PCx also offers the ability to mount Amiga partitions on the PC side and provides CD-ROM support. You can download a demo version of PCx from the Blittersoft web site (http://blittersoft.wildnet.co.uk/). PCx retails for US $59.95. Owners of the Emplant e586DX emulation module can send in their original e586DX disk and get PCx for half the normal retail price. Look for a full review of PCx in our next issue.

Erupts con't from page 2

limited display quality. This is due to restrictions in color capabilities and processor performance. Support for third party graphics cards is being considered, but is second priority to native operation.

LAVA will also be released for the PC. It is critical that LAVA gain a large user base as rapidly as possible. The only way to do this is to support various PC configurations, including Windows (95, 3.1, and NT) and DOS. In time other platforms will be considered, possibly including phase5 A\Box, Be Box, PIOS, VillageTronics, Apple Macintosh (68k and PPC), Unix flavors including Lynx (useful as LAVA servers), Sun, SGI, Next, and other workstations and special custom or proprietary systems.

LAVA will be available as shareware for personal, non-commercial use. Visit www.sassenrath.com for complete details and a downloadable version when available. Email comments to: lava@sassenrath.com. LAVA, Hot LAVA, Molten LAVA, Hot Molten LAVA, and Magma used in reference to the LAVA language are trademarks of Carl Sassenrath.

Microcode con't from page 3

AI: Is Microcode working on the next version of PCx?
JD: We are always working on PCx's enhanced mode (Windows 95) support. Once this is complete, then we can release Fusion, and then we will also release our first non-Amiga program called, "PowerCLONE." This is a 80x86 emulation for PowerMac machines, based on the PCx technology.
AI: What other development products are in the works?
JD: We have a lot of neat products just sitting around from the days at Utilities Unlimited. We plan on doing a market survey to see what the public wants.
AI: How do you see the Amigas future as a desk top computer?
JD: I see the OS surviving, and the hardware changed to modern technology.
AI: Any comments?
JD: We still believe in the Amiga, and we hope that the public will believe in our abilities to keep the Amiga alive.

Microcode upgrades and product information can be found at: http://blittersoft.wildnet.co.uk

Expansion Systems

Expansion Systems of Fremont, CA have been producing and supporting hardware for the Amiga since 1986. They created over 40 different products and have shipped thousands. President and owner, Richard Taylor, remains busily involved with many Amiga projects including some exciting new products and an extensive retail oriented web page called Amigacom.

Expansion Systems offers a wide variety of Amiga hardware. This hardware is designed to offer expansion options for Amiga users. These products consist of:

HighFlyer: Provides additional expansion slots, 3.5 inch drive bays and power to the A4000. Allows use of all four Zorro III and two powered PC slots with the Toaster installed.
DataFlyer CDS-XDS: External CD-ROM chassis for the A1200. Add any IDE CD-ROM to your A1200. Includes special ATAPI only version of AsimCDFS. Also available without ATAPI software as the CD-XDS.
DataFlyer SCSI+1200: Internal SCSI controller for the A1200 providing external DB-25 connector on rear panel. Mounts on IDE header and allows continued use of internal IDE hard drive. Works with CD-ROM, ZIP drives, and up to 5 SCSI devices.
DataFlyer SCSI+4000: Provides a SCSI controller in the A4000 without taking up a Zorro slot. Mounts onto the Amiga IDE header and converts it to SCSI without disturbing the IDE hard drives. Provides external DB-25 on rear panel. Works with CD-ROM, ZIP drives, and up to 5 SCSI devices.
DataFlyer 4000SX-25: Zorro SCSI controller for the A4000 that controls up to 7 SCSI devices.
DataFlyer 2000: SCSI controller for the A2000 that controls up to 7 SCSI devices.
DataFlyer 500: External SCSI controller for the A500 that controls up to 7 SCSI devices. Accepts 8 Mb fast RAM if using the DataFlyer RAM card.
DataFlyer RAM: 8 Mb RAM card for the A2000 and DataFlyer 500.

Expansion Systems just released their new line of CD-ROM Chassis (CDS-XDS– see review in this issue) for the A1200. They are now working on an Amiga Digital Camera. This camera will be similar to the popular QuickCam by Connectix but no further information is available at this time.

Expansion Systems offers a full one year parts and labor warranty for repair or replacement on all their products. In addition, they accept unlimited customer service calls from any customer who has an Expansion Systems product. However, warranty repairs are limited to the original owner.

EXPANSION SYSTEMS

Tech support is provided in a variety of ways including phone, Fax, Email, and from their web site. The web site has all the latest versions of their driver software, answers to the most asked questions, technical support phone numbers for hard drive manufacturers, and much more.

Products can be purchased directly from Expansion System or from the many dealers who carry their product line.

Expansion Systems, 44862 Osgood Rd., Fremont, CA 94539
Voice: 510-656-2890; Fax: 510-656-513;
Email: expsys@sns.com
URL: www.sns.com/~expsys
Amigacom: www.amigacom.com

Correction . . .

We would like to correct some information reported in Issue 5 about Digital Lightyear Technologies. The Plasma 32 is in fact a DSP audio card, not a CISC card; and the FlopNET just uses the Ethernet packeting system, and is not in reality an Ethernet device.

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.

AsimCDFS v3.7

From: Asimware Innovations

Asimware's AsimCDFS v3.7 maintenance update is now available. AsimCDFS software package is a CD-ROM control system which allows the user to read most CD-ROM discs with an Amiga computer and a suitable SCSI or ATAPI CD-ROM drive. Features of this update include support for Amiga protection bits and file comments; support for new CD-ROM drives, improved Raw Sector volume handling; and updated French and German catalogs. Registered users can obtain this release via BBS, WWW or FTP sites. Your AsimCDFS serial number is needed to obtain access. FTP: ftp.asimware.com; URL: www.asimware.com/; BBS: 905-332-9207; Voice: 905-578-4916

Mongol Commander v2.0

From: Frankenstein Software

Mongol Commander is a high-end simulation of the campaigns of Genghis Khan and the Mongols (1206-1405) in Eurasia. It features an operational level game that uses a zoom-down mode with scaling bitmap animation on a fractal landscape for combat resolution. Mongol Commander also features a real-world logistical system based on animal physiology and 13th century ecological conditions. Mongol Commander now features enhanced graphic routines, hotkeys, and a 47-page historical reference manual. Retail price is US $49.99. Screen shots and downloadable order forms available at web site.

Requirements: 68030 + CPU, OS 1.3 or higher, 4 Mb RAM, 1 Mb Chip RAM, and 12 Mb hard disk space. Frankenstein Software, P.O. Box 138, New York, NY 10116-0138; Voice: 516-538-6420;
FAX: 612-397-9675;
Email: 71175.1676@compuserve.com
URL: www.cucug.org/amiga/aminews/frankenstein.html

Tour of Mars CD-ROM

From: Chaocity
Email: chaocity@chaocity.com.

Chaocity released the first in a series of VistaPro animation CD-ROM's. The Tour of Mars CD takes you on a guided tour of the Red Planet, with animated flybys of actual Martian chasms, volcanos, mons, valles and montes. There are also futuristic flyovers of a terraformed Martian landscape that includes Tartarus Montes, Noctus Labyrinthus, and the Cauldera of Olympus Mons. These animations were rendered using an alpha version of VistaPro 4.0, with stratified cliffs, new tree types and phong shading. Animations are provided in Amiga HAM ANIM5 and HAM8 ANIM7 formats. The CD includes the DEM's as well as the VistaPro scripts used to make the animations. Both Huge and Small DEM's and scripts are provided. The Tour of Mars CD is manufactured to order and is available for US $29.95 plus S&H from Chaocity. Voice: 805-925-7732; FAX: 805-928-3128; URL: www.chaocity.com

Audio Thunder v1.0

From: Asimware Innovations Inc.
Email: info@asimware.com

Audio Thunder is a new audio conversion software package for the NewTek Flyer. Audio Thunder allows you to convert audio samples to and from the proprietary NewTek Flyer audio clip format. It can import and export to many popular audio file formats, including: AIFF, Studio16, CDDA, WAV, Flyer, MAUD, and Amiga 8-Bit. Preprocessing functions such as cuts, resampling and fusing are also available. Audio Thunder also contains a multiple clip sequencing module. This allows you to easily assemble various audio clips into a single track, based upon time code information. Available through Asimware, 600 Upper Wellington St., Unit D, Hamilton, ON, Canada L9A 3P9. Phone: 905-578-4916;
Fax: 905-578-3966; URL: www.asimware.com/;
FTP: ftp.asimware.com/

Kang Fu

From: Great Effects Development
Email: pelt@a1.nl

Great Effects Development of the Netherlands is proud to present a new Amiga CD game called Kang Fu. It is a platform game for the CD32 or AGA Amigas with a CD-ROM. It is already available in Europe and will soon be available in the USA. Some features of Kang Fu are: About 1000 on-screen colors; Dual playfield with HAM non-interlaced hires; 50 Frame per second; Digitized HAM backgrounds; More than 750 animation frames; 22 Original CD soundtracks; More than 150 high quality samples; 10 Levels + 10 sublevels-over 600 screens large; Uses 100% 68020+ code; Works on all AGA Amigas with any CD-ROM; Works with Fast RAM, MMU, 030, 040 processor and uses optional FastMem for enhanced graphics and sounds; Boots easily from any screen-mode; and much more. Kang Fu is distributed by: Alter Interservice, Hagengracht 68, 7607 EE Almelo, Holland.
Voice: (+)31 546 818915
FAX: (+)31 546 817727

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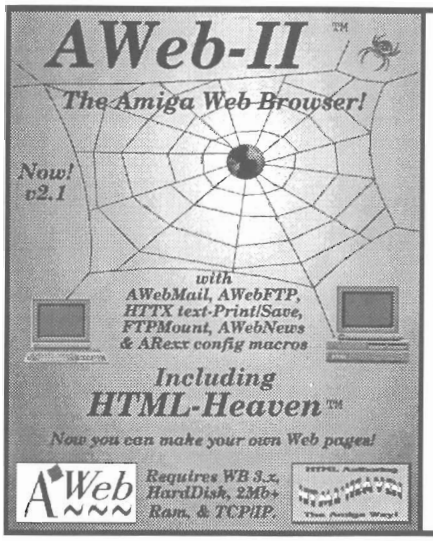

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Electrics Digital Designer v1.1

From: Chris Sterne
Email: Chris_Sterne@panam.wimsey.com
Electrics Digital Designer is a group of programs for designing and simulating digital electronic circuits. A circuit design (single or multiple sheets) is drawn using simple gates, and complex TTL gates. Multiple signal levels and drive strengths permit realistic simulations. The activity of over 64,000 signals can be viewed as a waveform (single and bus) for over 4.2 billion time units. Price: US $30 + $2 shipping. Available from: Chris Sterne, 1111 West 7th avenue, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6H 1B5. Phone: 604-733-6972

Aurora Works Inc.

From: James Ceraldi
Aurora Works (AW) is an Canadian-based game company dedicated to supporting the Amiga. The goal of AW is to create quality computer entertainment and they promise solid, enjoyable game play in all their games. Their focus is on supporting the higher end Amiga computers and the next generation machines. Their products are developed for the current retargetable graphics standard on the Amiga, Cybergraphx. When performance standards can be met, games will be ported to Amigas that don't use graphics cards like the A1200. Every game AW makes will be system and multitasking friendly. All AW development, including their web based material, is created exclusively using Amiga computer systems and quality Amiga software. For more info, Email: ceraldi@auroraworks.com or visit URL: www.auroraworks.com

Video Magician

From: Bio-Con
Bio-Con South Pacific is offering a new Scan Doubler/Flicker Fixer to the Amiga consumer. The Video Magician works on all big box Amigas (A2/3/4000) and offers these features: Double scans the Amiga signal into a VGA 31.5 Khz signal; Installs in the Amiga video slot; Flicker free in all 15 Khz modes; Flicker switch for flicker free or 15 Khz Amiga output; 24-Bit full color resolution; RGB encoded signal in CVBS & SVHS (Y/C) output; Optional Genlock and Video decoder daughter boards; Full plug and play; Auto detect NTSC/PAL and all Amiga display modes for output in VGA, CVBS and SVHS; Input: RGB signal via video slot and CVBS RCA input for Video decoder daughter board; Output: VGA HD15-pin female connector, CVBS RCA output Jack and SVHS (Y/C) MiniDin 4-pin output jack. The retail price is approximately US $265. Email Bio-Con at ptech@ptech.wanganui.gen.nz. Available in North America through Randomize Computers and

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Voyager-NG PreRelease I

From: VaporWare
After a long wait, Voyager-NG has finally arrived. Voyager-NG is the latest version since v1.0, and is the first Amiga web browser to support frames! Other new features include: Tables and frames support; Fast web page output; Chip RAM efficiency; Full HTML-2 implementation with growing HTML-3.2 support; Plug-ins, allowing such features as a built-in search engine; Use of a proxy server for FTP, gopher, and WAIS; Animated GIF support; Context-sensitive RMB menu popups; Supports Client Side Image Maps, Netscape Level 1 extensions, and HTTP Access Authorization; Document cache with lastmod-based verification; Full support for hicolor displays; and Multiple windows. Voyager is shareware and can be downloaded from URL: http://www.vapor.com

UltraAccounts v3.4

From: Richard Smedley
Email: rsmedley@cix.compulink.co.uk
UltraAccounts is a full-featured and easy-to-use shareware accounts program. It has

continued on page 8

a specially designed user interface that is suitable for non-computer users as well as experts. New features for V3.4 include: a redesigned user interface; support for up to 50 seperate accounts, 50 tags, 50 standing orders, etc.; and numerous other enhancements and bug fixes. Requirments: OS 2.0 and 2 Mb RAM. Available from Aminet: biz/misc/ultraacc.lha

Oberon System V4 for Amiga V1.4

From: Stefan Ludwig, Claudio Nieder, Oliver Joos, Ralf Degner
Email: ludwig@inf.ethz.ch
Oberon System V4 for Amiga (O4A) is both a programming language and an operating system. If features single-process multitasking, dynamic loading, graphical user interface and much more. System V4 implementations exist for Amiga, Mac, Power Mac, Windows (NT), Linux, IBM-RS6000, Sun-Sparc, HP-Workstations, and NeXt. You can use a program written on one implementation on any other without change. The system runs in its own task and can run parallel with the Amiga OS. The O4A package contains: A full Oberon-2 compiler; Development tools; XE, (editor); Kepler (2D vector drawing); Paint (paint program); VT100 terminal emulation; Games; and more. Oberon is freeware.
Requirements: OS 2.0 +, 68020 CPU, 1.5 Mb free RAM; 3 Mb disk space; URL: http://sun1.rrzn.uni-hannover.de/~nhbidegn/oa-e.html FTP: ftp.inf.ethz.ch/pub/Oberon/Amiga/ V1.4/ Aminet: dev/obero

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Imagine v5

From: Impulse
With the release of Imagine 5.0, Impulse will be making a special offer to all Amiga users. Anyone can get the 5.0 version for just US $100. This is an effort to keep the Amiga version alive and to continue development for the platform. Imagine needs better user support to continue on the Amiga. Version 5 includes ARexx and CyberGraphX support with all the power of Imagine 4.0. Contact Impulse at 800-328-0184 or Email sales@coolfun.com

Independent Amiga Rejuvenation Survey

From: Gunnar Liljas , IARS
Email: s96gunte@student.adb.gu.se
The Independent Amiga Rejuvenation Survey is now running at:
http://www.skip.adb.gu.se/~gunnar/iars/
Please visit it and submit your views!
IARS has received an official recognition by Phase 5 Digital Products. Wolf Dietrich commented, "The IARS project seems to be an excellent means to collect and analyze the views and opinions of Amiga users all over the world." Others who have shown their interest for IARS include ProDAD and Carl Sassenrath, who said that "It will be very insightful to see the results." The survey will be running until March 30, 1997.

And More . . .

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

Directory Opus 5.5 – file manager
TurboPrint 5 – print driver utility
Personal Paint 7 – graphics
DataChrome 2 – file format utility
Chaos Engine 2 – game
PCTask 4 – PC emulation
Draw Studio 1.1 – structured drawing
Art Effects 1.5 – graphics
Wordworth 6 Office – word processing
TurboCalc 4 – spread sheet
LightWave 5 – 3D
Storm C 2 – programming
Final Writer 6 – word processor
MUI 3.7 – GUI interface
Aladdin 4D v5 – 3D
Sound Studio – music
Blitz Support Suite – programming
MasterISO 1.25 – CD writing
SMD-100 – MPEG video CD
Grafiti Box – graphics card/box
Prelude – audio card

SofTalk, TransMaker and PhonMaker

SofTalk from Parth Galen is a software speech synthesizer for the Amiga. But it is definitely not a replacement for the voice synthesizer that used to ship with all Amigas.

SofTalk does try to read text aloud. It works with the old "say" command, and with the old "speak" device. It just doesn't produce output that's very understandable. The lack is in hard consonants, or "stops." B's, D's, P's and T's especially aren't pronounced. If you input a string of these letters each is pronounced "e." This will not do for intelligible speech.

What you can do is experiment with computerized speech, though the basic SofTalk package won't take you very far. It consists of a narrator device and a translator device, like the old Amiga OS. The difference is these allow much more user intervention. SofTalk comes with a demonstration program that allows you to enter text or phoneme codons (more about them later). The program will then pronounce the text you entered. You can vary a number of parameters to do some minimal experimentation. It's really only enough to get you started.

The real value of SofTalk is seen when you add one or more of its companion programs, "PhonMaker" or "TransMaker."

We need to understand the computerized speech process. First, text is translated through the translator.library into special symbols called codons. The codons are passed to the narrator.device, which uses them to select individual sounds to pronounce. These sounds are "phonemes." The old Commodore system provided no control over codons or phonemes. With SofTalk, TransMaker and PhonMaker you have complete control.

PhonMaker edits phonemes. You can replace any or all of the default phonemes with your own. The program arrives with a lot of information. You'll need it - not because the program is difficult, but because the task of designing phonemes properly is complex. It is also fascinating, and PhonMaker is a well thought out program for doing it. Given time and the will to create phonemes, most people can learn to do it.

A nice feature is the ability to input data from a sound sampler. Such phonemes sound much better than the defaults. However, the lack of consonants/stops persists.

The TransMaker program is also complex, and comes with three manuals and a reference card. It's used to create or modify translator library look-up tables. In theory, you should be able to create tables for any language or accent. In practice, this is going to be an absorbing, challenging job. Like PhonMaker, TransMaker is a well designed tool. Unlike PhonMaker, it is not properly font aware. When I ran it on a computer which doesn't use the default Topaz font, I came up with a window having oversized text in overlapping labels for the buttons and gadgets. Once I figured out what was what, the program worked flawlessly despite its strange appearance.

It's difficult to rate these products. If you wish a text to speech reader, then the grade is a D at best. Matters improve greatly when you use SofTalk with its companions, and I strongly recommend this is the only way you use it at present. For exploring computer phonetics the programs are in a world by themselves. They're fascinating, fun and informative. They deserve an A for effort, but the end results you hear will likely never exceed a C. Even with all three programs, truly intelligible speech is probably unattainable. This is not a set of software for everyone.

All three products are from Parth Galen Software, 24475 158th Avenue, Cold Spring, MN 56302. Materials carry a 30 day warranty. The programs have custom installation scripts and are easy to install. SofTalk is designed to run on all Amigas and all operating system versions. PhonMaker and TransMaker require any Amiga equipped with Amiga OS 2.04 or later. Suggested US prices are: SofTalk, $7.50; TransMaker, $47.50; PhonMaker, $47.50.

Rating: D/C

By Brad Webb

Power Football

Power Football, by Frankenstein Software, is a single player (human vs. computer) strategy football simulation offering a coaching perspective as weli as an arcade mode.

It comes with a 13 page manual from a cancelled OS/2 version that is supplemented with an addendum for the Amiga version. The documentation seems to be complete enough, giving the user a work-

continued on page 18

✔ Amiga Repair Kit

0 — 100

Amiga Format 11/96 85%

"This disk should contain the programs that you'll need to improve your chances of recovering from hard disk mishaps. It's a sound investment for most Amiga users. . ."

Amiga Comp. X-mas/96 85%

". . .Gives you the best possible collection of Amiga antibiotics which will enable you to back-up and restore all your data. The only drawback is the price."

Amiga Shopper 11/96 80%

"It's quality, not quantity, as we have to remember, and getting DiskSalv 4, RDB-Salv and a couple of the modules from UpperDisk Tools . . . has to be good value for the money."

✔ Apollo 1240 Accelerator

CU Amiga 10/96 90%

"Installation is incredibly simple for both hardware and software. A superb value refit to give the A1200 a serious boost. This is more like what accelerators should cost."

Amiga Computing 10/96 81%

"Fitting the 040 version of the board is as straightforward as any other A1200 board. In use the 040 works fine - it stays quite cool and the fan in conjunction with the heat sync does a good job."

✔ Directory Opus 5.5

Amiga Format 12/96 92%

"Slow to load, but running speed mainly depends on your screenmode. A more than fair price for such a professional piece of software. Quite simply the best file manager you can buy."

Amiga Shopper 12/96 95%

"Opus 5.5 is a major step forward in file management programs, not just because of its new feature, but because of its improved reliability and documentation."

Amiga Computing 12/96 81%

"There is much to commend in this program. For those willing to endure a period of hard work familiarizing themselves with Opus 5.5's quirky ways, it will no doubt prove to be a valuable product."

CU Amiga 11/96 87%

"Amazingly versatile and overflowing with features for the more adventurous. Sensibly priced, with a good ring-bound 260 page manual. Much more than a directory tool."

✔ XiPaint 4

Amiga Shopper 8/96 80%

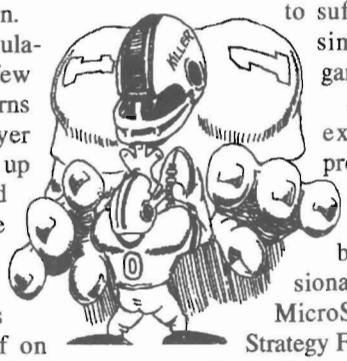
"XiPaint is, as far as we know, the only 2D program in the world that supports raytracing, image processing and painting. Its strongest feature is its support for multiple layers."

Amiga Computing 9/96 81%

"Another new addition for this version, along with the ability to raytrace, is animation. It's quite user-friendly . . . As a package, XiPaint handles all the major functions that any other package does."

Power Football con't from page 17

ing knowledge of everything required to run the game. It is written at an intermediate level. Power Football is easily installed by the Commodore Installer and is not copy-protected. No bugs were found during the evaluation.



The game is a good simulation. There are quite a few formations and pass patterns to choose from. The player first acts as coach, setting up the offense or defense, and then, once all the decisions are made, the action goes to the arcade mode. The player controls either the free safety, if on defense, or the quarterback on offense. As quarterback, you can pass or hand off the ball. All the arcade action is controlled by the "Virtual Joystick" of the mouse.

The arcade section of the game suffers because the program tries to cover the whole range of Amigas - being able run on a 512K Amiga OS 1.3 machine through today's machines. The graphics in the arcade section seem quite blocky, which I suspect is due to the game being programmed to run on an Amiga OS 1.3 / 512K machine. Along the same lines, the text in the coaching portion of the game is quite small and difficult to read. The playability of the game would improve a good deal if the text was more easily readable, and the graphics in the arcade mode were smoother. The graphics seem to suffer by comparison to the simulation portion of the game.

Admittedly, I have no real experience with other products of this type. I have been able to find reviews of "Amiga CD Football" by Commodore, "Professional Football Simulator" by MicroSearch, and "Tom Landry Strategy Football" by Merit Software. Each of the reviews seem to imply that the games are much more extensive than the game under review. Then again, I am not sure if these products can be found, and they were priced quite a lot higher then "Power Football."

Power Football is a good simulation, but suffers because the text in the "coach" set-up section is small and hard to read. The graphics in the arcade portion of the game are passable, but could use improvement. Overall, the game rates a C, with good simulation but only fair graphics.

Frankenstein Software, PO Box 138 New York, NY 10116-0138. Telephone: 516- 538-6420. FAX: 612-397-9675. Email: 71175.11676@compuserve.co URL: http://www.cucug.org/amiga/aminews/frankenstein.html. The list price is US $19.99. Requirements: 512K RAM; OS 1.3; Hard drive not required; Hard drive installable; 68000 or better CPU. Tested on: 68030 Amiga 3000 / 25 Mhz with Amiga OS 2.1 and 3.1, 2 Mb Chip RAM and 12 Mb Fast RAM.

Rating: C

By Bill Schuck

CD Summary

Utilities Experience (UE) is, as you would expect, full of useful utilities. What makes this CD so attractive is it's organization. Everything is laid out in an orderly fashion. All drawers are cleaned up and snapshoted, as are the drawer's contents. When you open the UE icon you have a CD-prefs drawer that will give you several options for configuring the display. The "useful" drawer contains a "clickme" icon that, once clicked, will temporarily set up your system to interface smoothly with the CD. This allows most programs to work directly from the CD.

UE contains 15 separate drawers that represent the subjects of Business, Emulation, Graphics, DataTypes, Video, Icons+Tools, Demos, Comms, Music, Disk Tools, Misc, Workbench+Shell, Text Files, Rendering and Programmers. Nearly all these drawers contain a "contents" file that lists the programs within the drawer and gives a brief description of what these programs do.

There is a large selection of commercial demo programs including DPaint 5, Twist, SBasePro, Digital Universe, AdPro and many more. Some drawers, like Graphics, contain scores of programs, and the DataTypes drawer has dozens of datatypes at your disposal. All the other subject drawers are likewise filled with hundreds of files.

Any CD compilation containing public domain software will become dated. Certainly, some of the programs contained within Utilities Experience have since been upgraded. However, many remain the latest version and will undoubtedly give you a wealth of utilities to improve your computing experience.

Utilities Experience is available through many Amiga dealers. Our summary copy was provided by Zipperware.

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Workbench Extras

By Brad Webb

The Amiga's user interface is still one of the most friendly and usable available on any computer of any size. Like any complex creation though, some portions are better designed than others. One of the strangest design decisions involves the graphical deletion of files.

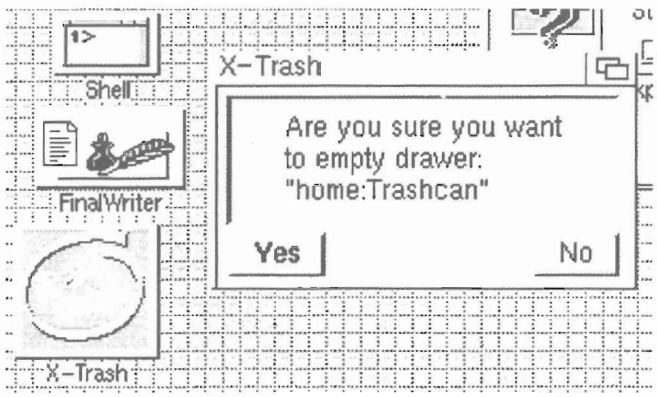
There are two ways you can remove a file, or an entire directory of files, from the Amiga's disks. First, you can always use the "Icons/Delete" item from the Workbench pulldown menu. A more graphical method involves dragging the file or directory to be deleted into the Amiga trashcan. You might use this method when you want to get something out of the way for now and plan to really remove it later, since items remain in the trashcan until you deliberately select Empty Trash. This gives you a chance to change your mind.

Actually, it's more correct to describe this second method of removing files as dragging them to 'A' trashcan rather than 'THE' trashcan. Unlike any other operating system I know of which uses the trashcan motif, the Amiga gives you not one but many. And that's a problem. Every Amiga filesystem has its own trashcan. That means every floppy, every hard drive partition, even the RAM disk has its own trashcan. You must drag a file into the appropriate trashcan or you'll just make a copy of it and leave the original file right where it was. Furthermore, you have to find the trashcan to use it. You have to ensure you can see the appropriate trashcan, often forcing you to open additional windows. It would be much nicer if the Amiga had just one trashcan sitting on the Workbench, like other systems have.

In fact there have been many programs over the years written to resolve this dilemma. The one we'll discuss is called X-Trash written by Rudi Chiarito. X-Trash is Freeware and can be found at http://www.cli.di.unipi.it/~chiarito/ under projects. It should be available on Aminet under util/app, but the current version (1.3) seems to be missing. The archive is about 33K bytes long. You'll also need to obtain and install the reqtools.library by Nico Franois found on Aminet in /util/libs/ReqToolsUsr.lha.

X-Trash will run on any Amiga with OS 2.0 or higher. Installation is simple. Copy the reqtools.library into your libs: device. Then, drag the X-Trash icon into the WBStartup drawer if you want it always active, or just place it anywhere else you wish if you want to start it manually.

X-Trash doesn't replace the individual trashcans, it provides one central point from which you can manage them. Best of all, it does this by placing an icon on the Workbench, where it's always visible. The icon placed there is a special sort called an "appicon." Here's how it works. When you want to "trash" a file (or entire directory), drag the file's icon over the X-Trash appicon and drop it. X-Trash will immediately move the file into the appropriate trashcan. If no trashcan exists for the file system containing the item to be deleted, one will be created. When it comes time to delete items, double click on the X-Trash appicon. X-Trash will open a window with four options to choose from; Empty, About, Quit and Cancel. Cancel, Quit and About do as you'd expect. Empty gets the work done. Clicking on this button brings up another window with four additional choices; All, Select, Icons and Cancel. As before, Cancel allows you to back out of the deletion. All lets you empty all trashcans currently available - that is, all trashcans on disks currently mounted by the Amiga. A requester will pop up for each trashcan, stating the file system the trashcan belongs to and asking for a mouse click as confirmation. Requesters will only be displayed for trashcans which have contents. It's all very much quicker and easier to do than to describe. The Select option will open a standard requester listing the filesystems which have non-empty trashcans. It will also tell you how full each filesystem is in percentages. I have been unable to make the Icons button on the Empty requester work. Supposedly, if you single click a filesystem (disk) icon, then use this button, the trashcan for that filesystem will be emptied. It doesn't work for me, but I don't miss it. All and Select should cover just about any needs you have.



By placing an "appicon" on the Workbench, X-Trash manages all your system's trashcans from one central point.

It's a simple concept but simple often leads to the best ideas. X-Trash, or some program like it, could easily become one of your favorite Amiga OS enhancements.

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By C. Davis Sprague

FTP - Internet Express

What's an FTP? FTP is another in the seemingly endless string of protocols used to transfer information over the internet. Whereas SMTP is for sending Email, and NNTP is for posting to Usenet, FTP, which stands for File Transfer Protocol, is specifically used to transfer any type of file between machines on the internet. If you get shareware from Aminet, you are usually using FTP.

FTP was originally designed to act like a directory tool, so if there weren't graphic interfaces, it would still be easy to use. However, like everything on the internet these days, there are several graphic interfaces to play with.

First, it would help to understand the power of the native FTP interface. FTP was designed for a maximum speed of transfer, and so it has separate modes for text and binary data. The binary protocol allows for transfer of essentially random 8-Bit messages, whereas the text protocol is optimized for 7-Bit blocks of ASCII information. This is important because though the binary protocol can transfer text, albeit slowly, the text protocol cannot transfer binary data. If you try to get a binary file via text protocol you'll end up with a corrupt file.

FTP allows you to move through a directory tree on the machine you are requesting the file from, and provides formatting commands, and commands to "put" or "get" a file.

As with all access over the internet, you need permission to do anything with a file. This permission is gained by logging on to the file serving machine. FTP allows two kinds of log-on's. The first is the standard log-on with your user name and a password. The second and more common is "anonymous" log-on. This has been dubbed "anonymous FTP" for short, and it means that when you log-on to the file server, for user name you use "anonymous," and for the password you use your Email address. This gives you access to special files designed for public access via FTP.

There are three shareware packages available on Aminet to access files by FTP. The first is FTPmount (comm/tcp/FTPMount-1.0). This bit of software takes advantage of the similarity of FTP with the directory-based AmigaDOS file system. It mounts a device called FTP, and with some configuration, can make FTP sites appear as directories. For example, you can use FTPmount to transparently mount your favorite Aminet site as a directory in your file system. This would allow you to type "dir FTP:aminet/recent" in the CLI and get a list of the recent files on Aminet. This is even more convenient if you use a directory tool like Directory Opus or DirWork, because you can use these as graphic interfaces. You just go into the FTP device and copy the file you want to your hard drive. It's that simple.

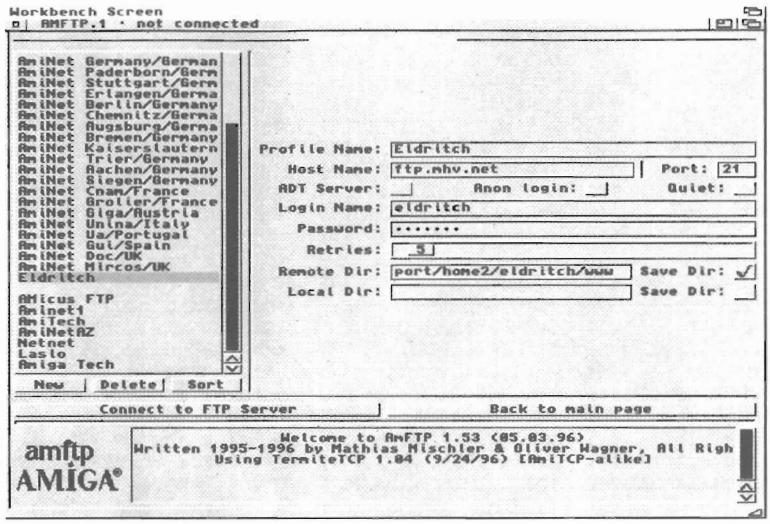
The other two packages are full FTP GUI's, and go by the confusingly similar names of AmFTP (comm/tcp/ AmFTP1.65.lha) and AmiFTP (comm/tcp/ AmiFTP-1.607.lha). Of these, the first is a time limited demo, so you'll only have a short while to evaluate it until you have to pay the shareware fee. Both programs offer intuitive graphic interfaces that resemble directory utility interfaces.

AmFTP offers two directory windows, one for the server, and one for your computer, so you can redirect where you are sending from or receiving to on your machine. AmiFTP on the other hand offers a larger window size for server file information, but you have to choose the receiving directory via a requestor, and change it from the menu.

Both packages sport a special Aminet recent file interface, featuring an ADT (Aminet Download Tool) interface. This allows you to get a list of new files on Aminet since the last time you signed on.

AmFTP has one impressive function not found in the competition, and that is a direct Archie interface. Archie is a database program that contains a listing of files available throughout the internet. There are several Archie sites across the net and they are updated regularly. In the early days of the internet this was a quick way to search the entire internet for a file by using the files name. With the boom on the internet, this searching has slowed to a snail's pace, but if you can't find a file you know the name of, Archie is still an excellent place to look. AmFTP's Archie interface allows you to send an Archie request. Once found, you can click on the filename and AmFTP will FTP to the site and get the file.

Well that's FTP in a nutshell. Now it's back to the net to FTP



AmFTP offers a direct Archie interface allowing you to send a request and download the file once found.

PD Pick

Web Page Editors

When I started writing HTML, I did it the way I learned Basic and APL. I got a manual and poked around the net grabbing other peoples pages and downloading them. From there, I messed with the code and repeatedly reloaded things into the browser until I knew what the hypertext tags did. Once you get to this point you can easily advance to power web publishing with a dedicated web publisher program.

Currently available are several dedicated HTML editors, all found on Aminet. The first program is Magic WWW page Maker (comm/www/mwm212.lha) and it is non-MUI. It handles all the sophisticated HTML

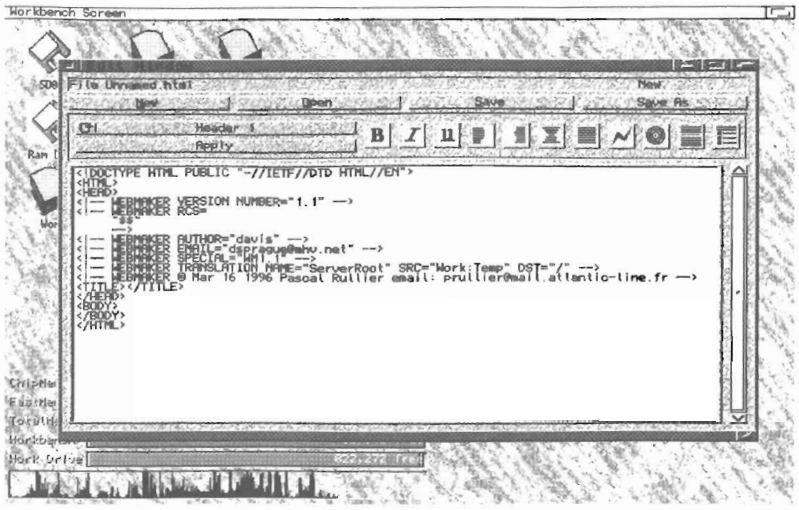
continued on page 15

Editors con't from page 14

tags including FORM tags, and will dump the created file to your web browser for viewing at the click of an icon. It has a main window where a text document can be loaded, and a "What is" window to indicate how the hypertext tags are effecting the text on that line. It seems to be based around converting existing text files and is very configured within the limits of the GUI. Personally, I find the display confusing, but this is individual preference. It also has a helpful log window that gives you information like the default format for a line of text. The shareware version doesn't allow me to save out the files, but I believe the registered version will.

By contrast, I've test constructed several pages with the MUI interfaced WebMaker. (text/hyper/WebMaker1_1.lha). This is a fully functional "donationware" HTML editor, and for someone who reads HTML it is a lot more intuitive. MUI allows you to configure windows and screens with the standard MUI preferences program. Basically, WebMaker is a text editor with built in HTML tagging. It covers most of the same tags as MWM and includes some Netscape HTML 3+ extensions that aren't standard, but are in general use. It has only one window which shows the HTML code as it stands during the editing process, which I find less confusing. It doesn't have a one button web browser interface, but this is easy to get around. I run IBrowse and WebMaker on the same screen. By hitting the WebMaker save button followed by the IBrowse refresh button (opened to the local file), I view the page as I work.

Another new contender is WebDesign (comm/ www/WebDesign13.lha). WebDesign works by a series of buttons that cover the top half of the screen. The bottom half is the usual code editing window. This editor adds some more HTML3+ codes, but still falls short on things like frames. WebDesign's layout is very clear and intuitive.

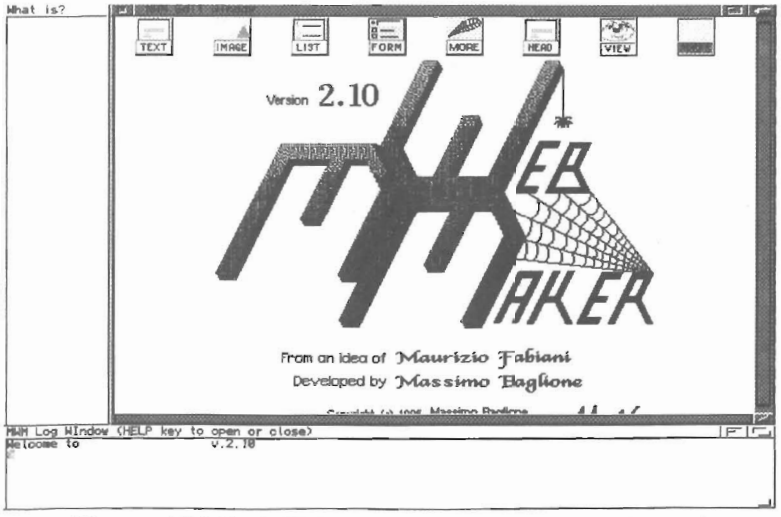


WebMaker provides all the usual MUI polish along with an intuitive interface and HTML 3+ extensions.

The latest full function editor is WebPlug (comm/www/WebPlug v121.lha). WebPlug has a configured screen, and covers most HTML tags. It functions well in competition with the other editors, but I suffered several system crashes with the shareware version I tested.

Another program to consider is WebFactory (comm/www/WebFactory.lha). It doesn't do quite what the others are capable of, but it fully supports header META tags, which are how you place authoring information and keywords for web search utilities. These are important because they allow you to define how you want your page to appear when Lycos or AltaVista refer a browser to your site.

Finally, there is a full featured editor in sight which may well out do all the competition. This is Arachne, and it is being developed by NightSpeed Software of Rhode Island. We will definitely have more on this developing program when available.



The non-MUI Magic Web page Maker offers a log window and a view button that dumps a file to your brcwser for viewing.

Another interesting item is a graphics map editor called Ptolemy (www.ids.net/~nightspd). This program allows the easy construction of clickable imagemaps, and requires no knowledge of HTML imagemap code. If nothing else, this is a great stand alone utility.

In addition to the above dedicated programs, there are many HTML add-on's for all the usual text editors as well. The HTML-heaven suite, for example, adds menus, cycle gadgets, or button bars to almost every available text editor via ARexx. Likewise, GoldEd has a public domain plug-in to do WWW editing.

Well, that's all there is to it... Wanna see my homepage?

Trade Talk

SMTP- Simple Mail Transfer Protocol. The standard protocol for mail exchange between systems.
NNTP- Net News Transfer Protocol. Standard for exchanging UseNet news through TCP/IP.
ASCII- American Standard Code for Information Interchange. The code most computers use for representing letters, numbers and symbols.
GUI- Graphical User Interface. The visual front-end of a program that allows you to input information by mouse clicks or keyboard commands.
CLI- Command Line Interface. Text orientated user interface. The AmigaDOS standard "shell" is one form of CLI.
HTML- Hyper Text Mark-up Language. The programming language of the World Wide Web. It is one of several "mark-up" languages now in use.
Imagemaps- A graphic image containing defined areas that are hyperlinked with HTML codes.
Lycros, AltaVista- Just two of the many World Wide Web searching engines.
META- An HTML tag used to set variables on the reading computer to hold data about the HTML document (such as author, keywords or content).
APL- A Programing Language. This extremely rich language used initially on IBM's educational networks allowed massive programs to be reduced often to a single cryptic line of code.

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Reviews

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DataFlyer CD-XDS v1.1

More and more Amigans want to access CD-ROM's. SCSI modules are one way to attach a CD-ROM drive to your system, but IDE devices are still cheaper than their SCSI counterparts, making them appealing. The A1200 and A600 come with a built-in IDE controller that will control up to two devices. Since most users are running only one IDE device (a hard drive), it make sense to utilize the unused IDE address. Recognizing this, Expansion Systems offers the DataFlyer CD-XDS as a way to add an IDE CD-ROM to a system.

The CD-XDS package includes a two piece aluminium chassis, a IDE power/data cable and a small but detailed manual. Optionally, you can order a 5-pin DIN power cable for connecting to an external power supply. You may also wish to purchase the CD-XDS bundled with Asimware's APATI compatible file system. This is only the APATI file system found on Asimware's CDFS software. No other part of the CDFS software is included. In all cases, an APATI file system is necessary to read the information on a CD-ROM.

We tested the CD-XDS on an A1200 that included an Apollo 1240 40 Mhz accelerator, 32 Mb fast RAM, and a Squirrel SCSI controller with 2 devices attached. This system also had an external hard drive housed in a DataFlyer XDS chassis.

A separately purchased Mitsui FX400 Quad speed CD-ROM Drive was mounted into the CD-XDS chassis. This standard 5 1/4 drive screwed easily onto the CD-XDS chassis. Connecting the power supply plug, the IDE cable, and setting the power jumpers was straight forward and easy. After sliding on the chassis housing, it was ready to connect to the A1200.

It is necessary to open your computer to connect the power/data cable to the IDE header. By following the well diagramed manual, making the connections inside the computer was a snap, and within 10 minutes, we had the CD-XDS running.

We also connected the CD-XDS to our external DataFlyer hard drive. This required a bit more thinking, because the manual failed to detail this procedure. After a brief call to tech support, we were on track and installation proceeded without a hitch. It is worth noting however, that if you are attaching your CD-XDS chassis to a DataFlyer external hard drive, it may be necessary to power the CD-XDS with a separate power supply. We where not able to power the CD-XDS through the computer.

Once installed, the CD-XDS worked flawlessly. I have only two minor complaints. I found the chassis cover was difficult to slide over the CD-ROM drive. This was caused by a mounting screw not setting fully. However, after a little lubrication it slid on securely. The other minor complaint was the lack of documentation on installing the CD-XDS to an external DataFlyer hard drive. I was assured that this documentation would be posted to their web site to remedy the oversight.

This is an excellent and well made product that installs easily, and does what it says. The CD-XDS rates an A.

List Price for the CD-XDS is US $109 or $149 with Asimware's ATAPI software. The CD-XDS has a full one year limited warranty. Expansion Systems, 44862 Osgood Rd., Fremont, CA 94536. Voice: 510-656-2890; FAX: 510-656-5131
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Fletcher Haug

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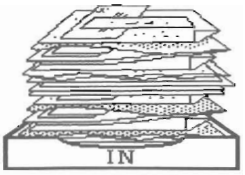
Yet another uniformed internet magazine editor has struck. In the February issue of "The Net" magazine, Editor-in-Chief, Jon Zilber, offered a not so polite response to an Amiga user's letter. The Amigan asked if "The Net" was planning any articles or news on the Amiga. Jon Zilber responded: "Sure–right after our feature story on browsers for slide rules." Now, I don't know about you, but I don't like the implication that the Amiga is as obsolete as a slide rule. I suggest you Email Mr. Zilber at jzilber@thenet-usa.com and let him know your thoughts. Please, don't go postal on the poor man. He may just be uninformed about the Amiga. Enlighten him in a polite and mature manor. We don't want him believing the rumors that we are all a bunch of rabid fanatics! :)

Jon Zilber, Editor-in-Chief of "The Net" magazine. Email: jzilber@thenet-usa.com



We Want YOUR Input

Our goal at The Informer is to help connect the entire Amiga community. Through our print publication and our web site, we want to let you know what's happening with the Amiga. To help us do this, we are asking developers and users alike to contact us. Here's what we are looking for:

Product Announcements- If you have a new commercial or shareware program, upgrade or piece of hardware, let us know and we'll announce it. We cater to all developers, large and small.

Product Reviews- If you have a hardware or software product you want to see reviewed and the results printed, contact us to make arrangements. We'll review any type of commercial or shareware (registered versions only) software.

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Please remember we only have a limited amount of space in each issue, and we dole it out on a first-come first-served basis. Submitting Information by Email is preferred. Contact us if you have any questions. The Informer is here for all Amigans, be they developer, vendor or user. Help us help the community. Stay connected–stay informed!

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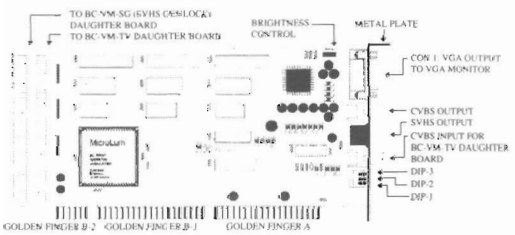

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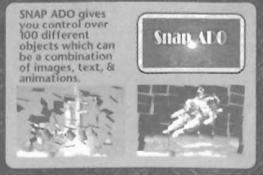

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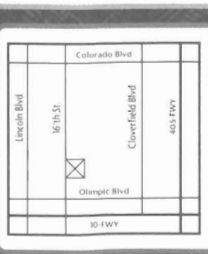

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Information Society (CA)
916-8723711

Morgue (OH)
513-742-2005

The Hideaway (NS, Canada)
902-465-6863

Internet Sites

www.sci.fi/~petsoff
Home of Petsoff, maker of the Delfina DSP audio card and DblScan 4000

www.act-net.com/prl_eng.html
Information about the Prelude sound card

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Haage-Partner/E.htm
Haage & Partner, Amiga PowerPC developers and distributors of fine Amiga products.

www.coolfun.com
Homepage of Impulse, makers of Imagine 3D

www.vulcan.co.uk
Homepage of the largest Amiga game distributor, Vulcan software

www.auroraworks.com
Canadian-based game company developing on high end Amigas

www.wordbench.com
Homepage of Alex Electronics with excellent info and links

www.randomize.com
Specializing in off-shore products

www.pnc.com.au/~mother/aughelp.html
Amiga user group help page

www.amigazone.com
Harv Lazer's famous Amiga haunt now on CalWeb–the Amiga friendly Internet service provider.

www.netrover.com/~thknight/
Todd Knight's excellent search page. Links to Web search engines, WWW yellow pages, 800# listings, currency converters and more!

www.znet.com/~colin/hardware.html
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[redacted]

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