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Issue 14
June/July 1998

The Amiga INFORMER

A summary of information and support for Amiga users

The Amiga IS Back For The Future

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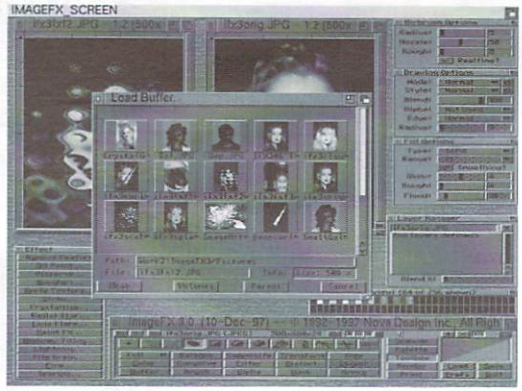

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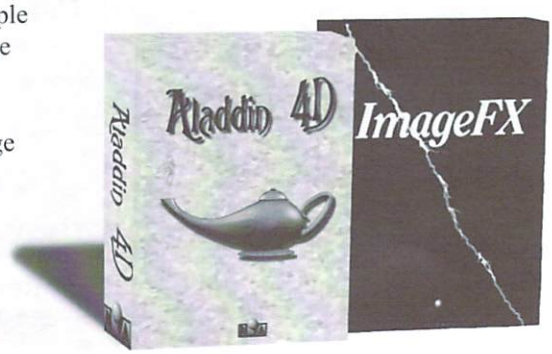

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Mission: To provide an accurate and reliable resource of information pertaining to all things Amiga®, and to connect readers with developers, their products and the Amiga community at large.

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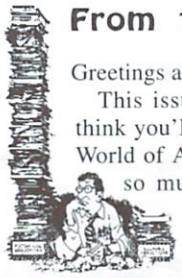

From the Editor's Desk:

Greetings all,

This issue was a bit delayed, but I think you'll find it worth the wait. The World of Amiga (WoA) show revealed so much information it was impossible to meet our original print deadline. Hopefully these types of delays will be far and few between in the future.

As wonderful as the internet and electronic publishing is, it cannot replace good old hands-on journalism. Print media's weakness–its slowness compared to the internet's instant journalism–can also be its strong point. In the rush to get WoA news out to internet readers, misinformation surfaced. Initial reports from the show only provided half the story. I am sure these half-reports will be corrected, but their release was disconcerting and potentially damaging. Because I had several days after WoA to compile a story, I was able to verify the events, place them in perspective, and give a full report to our readers.

Much important information was learned behind the scenes and a lot changed from Friday to Sunday. Many conversations took place out of the public's eye and were reserved only for the press. It is these face-to-face meetings that convince a writer of a person or company's honesty. After three days and nights of talking to everyone at Amiga Inc., I am now convinced that the Amiga has a real future. Over the course of the next several months, things are going to take off, so fasten your seatbelts and stay with us.

Amiga Inc. still has a way to go in the PR department. They have yet to find an effective way to relate their ideas to the community. They need to know what is being said and done outside of Amiga Inc. They need to put someone in place who can feel the pulse of the community, keep Amiga Inc. abreast of community activities, and effectively convey the ideas of Amiga Inc. back to the userbase. Granted, the staff at Amiga Inc. is working hard and are focused on the future. They are in the process of hiring more people too, but I cannot stress how important it is for them to attend to the current userbase and respond to its concerns.

In closing, I'd like to say how enjoyable it was attending the WoA show in London. Email and phone calls are nice, but they can't compare to a handshake, a look in the eye, and a conversation. I personally met people I've known "virtually" for several years, and it was a real pleasure putting faces behind the names. I kindled new friendships too, and I'm sure they will last for years to come. London is a beautiful city, and I was fortunate to have a go around town before leaving. My thanks to all the guides who showed me about. I was in their hands and they didn't let me down. I'm sure I'll be back again.

Fletcher Haug

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Amiga Inc. Announces Plans For The Future

By Fletcher Haug

The World of Amiga show in London, England will go down in Amiga history as the rebirth of the Amiga dream. It was here that Amiga Inc. finally revealed their future vision and direction. However, this conclusion was by no means apparent at the beginning of the event. In fact, it wasn't until the very end of the show on Sunday that it all came together.

I had the pleasure of spending three full days and nights talking and listening to Amiga Inc. staff and leading developers. Long hours were spent in interviews and conversations over fine English ales. By the end of the show, much had been revealed. I will try to explain in this article what I learned at the show.

At Friday morning's press conference Amiga Inc. revealed its plans for the future. Because they were unable to formalize a deal with a strategic partner by the time of the show, a great portion of their presentation had to be scraped, leaving General Manager Jeff Schindler to present his ideas on the fly. This led to some confusion and a focus by Schindler on the future instead of the present. It was this emphasis on the future and how Amiga Inc. plans to get there that caused a series of rash internet reports claiming the Amiga OS was moving to the Intel processor. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Jeff Schindler (L), General Manager of Amiga Inc. & Allan Havemose, the new Head of Development.

First and foremost is this: Amiga Inc. has an approved budget and a green light to carry out their plans. All the political and budgetary roadblocks are gone. Key figures have been hired and the money and creativity are flowing. They no longer have to check with Gateway on everything they do and involved Gateway officials are very enthusiastic.

Jeff Schindler's new boss at Gateway, Jim Collas, is a huge supporter of the Amiga plan and was instrumental in getting the ball rolling. As VP of Worldwide Development, Mr. Collas is a major player at Gateway. It is no light matter that Mr. Collas attended this show. Frankly, he seemed surprised and overwhelmed at the commitment, knowledge and passion of the Amiga community. I trust his baptism into the Amiga community will keep him faithful to the Amiga spirit.

> **"Amiga Inc. has plans for the future OS and architecture that will take your breath away."**

Over the course of the three day event, Amiga Inc. listened to the massive feedback of the community. They met privately with the leading developers in the community and the press and listened to the comments of the users.

By Sunday they showed their desire to maintain the support of the community by calling an unscheduled press conference. There they revealed there would indeed be an OS upgrade to version 3.5 which will support Classic Amiga architecture. This project is being spearheaded by several developers including Phase5, Haage&Partner, Access Information and others with the blessing of Amiga Inc. Dubbed the Amiga Classic because it will focus on the current 68k and PPC processors, Amiga Inc. promised to let this line of development continue as long as demand dictates.

Because of Phase5 and Haage&Partner's involvement, there is little doubt it will include PowerPC products. In fact, because of the necessity for cooperation in this project, Phase5 and Haage&Partner settled their long standing PPC development feud. Shortly after WoA Phase5 and Haage&Partner posted a joint press release declaring their dispute a thing of the past. They also announced their full and continued support for PowerPC integration and their full support of both developers and users of PPC technology.

With these two companies in agreement on Amiga PPC development and working as partners, we can be assured of quality Classic Amiga development. We could see OS 3.5 by November, and while it will likely not be PPC native, it should include a great deal of PPC support and OS improvements. This is wonderful news for Amigans because we will now see centralized upgrades and support for the current architecture. While life continues for current systems, new Amiga-based motherboards and systems like the BoXeR and Pre/Box will offer an open-ended solution for those wishing to upgrade. As Amiga Inc. works to bring us OS 5, Classic Amiga development will be in the hands of those who arguably understand the current Amiga community best.

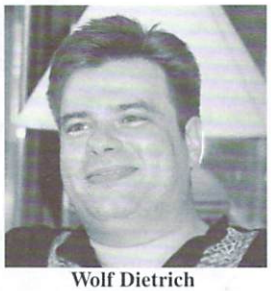
But that is only the begining of the Amiga's rebirth. Amiga Inc. has plans for the future OS and architecture that will take

your breath away.

The cornerstone of the future lies in bringing a new core kernel to the Amiga OS. Because the current OS is so dated, it would take years, according to Amiga Inc., to bring Amiga OS up to date without a partner. That is far too long to wait. Instead, Amiga Inc. found a partner with which to integrate the Amiga OS. Any OS core kernel to be used with the Amiga requires that it be advanced in multimedia, offering digital video, digital audio and digital communications, along with 2D and 3D functions. It must have open standards like OpenGL, MPEG2, AC-3 and Java. Most important it must have realtime, threaded, protected, preemptive multitasking. Some contenders are JAVA, BeOS, Linux and others. Of these, BeOS seems the most likely as it is very similar to Amiga OS and would integrate well.

Jurgen Haage of Haage & Partner

Amiga Inc. claims 95% of all requirements of the Amiga OS that will be added to the 3rd party OS kernel are complete. Once this integration is finished, which is expected by November of 1998, it will form the new Amiga 4.0 development OS and development for version 5.0 will begin. Amiga Inc. plans to make OS 4.0 based developer boxes available by November 1998 at a price point under US $1,000.



Wolf Dietrich of Phase 5

It is important that any future Amiga support industry standard architecture such as CD-ROM, DVD, SVGA, PCI, and AGP. In addition, developers should have the absolute best development tools at their disposal. For these reasons, Amiga Inc. decided that the Amiga 4.0 developer OS will be based on the x86 (Intel) chip architecture. It was this announcement which caused a huge outcry amongst the Amiga community, who traditionally hate anything that deals with Intel or Windoze. Because 4.0 development is taking place on a x86 platform and will use an Amiga PCI hardware card (index information's InSideOut card) for backwards compatibility, many Amigans wrongly assumed that the Amiga OS was moving to an Intel architecture.

The crowds finally died down a bit on Sunday afternoon for vendors to catch a breath. The folks at Epic Marketing were nearly exhausted by the end of the show.

We must remember that OS 4.0 will be a development release used to create Amiga OS 5.0. It will not run on the current Amiga architecture. When 5.0 is released, it will not run on an Intel chip, but on a chip system as yet undisclosed. Those who are skeptical must bear in mind that the Amiga 1000 (the first Amiga) was developed on a Unix Sun SPARC station. Sony's Playstation was developed with a Playstation PCI card in a x86 box. Because Amiga OS 5 will be developed on an x86 platform DOES NOT mean it will use Windoze or run on Intel chips. It is being developed on the x86 because it simply offers all the tools needed for the quickest, richest and cheapest development of 5.0.

One very important note is that Amiga Inc. claims they are talking with Phase5 and Haage&Partner to come up with a PowerPC 4.0 developer system. This is in negotiation and by no means assured, but it is a hopeful sign for those who want to utilize the PPC processor.

So just what is OS 5.0 about? In a nut shell, it's about bringing the power of the next generation of computing into the hands of everyone. Vital goals for Amiga Inc. are ease of use, affordability, high-performance multimedia, open architecture, evolvable to changing standards, and, most of all, fun. Amiga Inc. envisions the Amiga OS and its new architecture as covering a host of convergence-ware areas, including home computers, internet applications, games machines, digital multimedia, student portable systems, big screen TV/PCs, digital projection, special cameras and appliances, home security, settop boxes, phones, you name it. For those interested in a home computer, Amiga Inc. believe they can deliver a loaded, powerful system for under US $500.

The details of OS 5.0 are in the works and more will be reveled as the project gets underway. Dr. Allen Havemose, the new head of Development at Amiga Inc., explained OS 5.0 in some detail at the developers conference. I can assure you that what he described was convincing and raised more then a few eyebrows. Without exception, the developers I talked to were sold on what 5.0 is promising.

At the highest level 5.0 is very much like an Amiga from the hardware perspective. It will use multiple highly scalable units (not unlike the current Amiga's proprietary chipset), including rendering, processing, and video units, all of which run at the silicon level either independently or together. This all works together through a highly networked realtime, multimedia open architecture system which sends output to the network of units. This allows the processor to just direct the various processes– like MPEG and 3D rendering– to the correct units as needed. At present development, this new system is 11-12 times faster at 3D functions then the best selling PC video card and utilizes 24-bit trilinear processing, similar in power to today's mid-range workstations.

This system will define itself by its video and digital capability and will be powerful

continued on page 6

Amiga Inc. Employees

***Jeff Schindler*, Managing Director**
***Marilyn Flint*, Director of Operations**
***Allan Havemose*, Head of Development**
***Bill McEwen*, Marketing and Software Evangelist**
***Fleecy Moss*, Project Management**
***Joe Torre*, Senior Hardware Engineer**
***Derrick Lisle*, User Group & Events Coordinator**
***Kelli Newby*, Administrative Assistant & Bookkeeper**

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Amiga Inc. con't from page 5

enough to decode even the highest-end digital TV specs (2020x1200 high-definition resolution). It will implement a client/server style for performing graphics functions. In this way you could issue a command to the rendering unit, for instance, and as it performs that function, you can move to set up your next command and hundreds thereafter.

Intuition will be upgraded to use what is dubbed "personalities." A personality subsystem will be available from the window manager and a developer will be able to chose a personality based on what type of application is being developed. This dynamic, automatically reconfiguring subsystem will take into account things like languages and font sizes and will work with all types of input devices. Personalities can be plugged in just like the current Amiga libraries, and the system will have enough logic to provide the rules for each personality's operation. So, for instance, a home computer application might use the standard menu and toolbar interface personality, while a touchscreen kiosk system might use a personality that presents a button back down the center of the screen. This system is all about giving choices and not imposing limits. Therefore, a programmer will not be required to use these personalities, but they will streamline the process if used.

This is just a touch of what this system can do, and it is real. It is not just on paper, but in a programmable stage of development. Amiga Inc. slate the release of this machine for the end of 1999.

And the chip used to drive 5.0? For now, the general community will have to accept that it is a full solution that will integrate many of the peripherals of today. The whole design of the system will allow for the creation of small motherboards to be used in varied applications.

More chip information will be revealed as it becomes practical and safe for Amiga Inc. to do so. Let's face it, if a competitor got wind of Amiga Inc.'s alliances and plans, great pressure could be applied to Gateway and/or Amiga Inc. which would result in a slowdown or complete stoppage of their efforts. This is in no one's interest and Amiga Inc. will reveal all when the time is right.

Amiga Inc. is in a good position to market a new product. They are lean like a startup company, but backed by a large corporation. They have the advantage of a fiercely loyal userbase that is hungry to show the world they have been justified for holding on so long. The marketing power of Gateway is responsible for growing the company at nearly exponential speeds in the past and turned a cow into a corporate icon. They should be able to do wonders for Amiga.

I for one am convinced that Amiga Incorporated's vision of the future is real and obtainable. At WoA they convinced me and many others that they mean business and intend to lead the way into the future of computing by using the Amiga technology and ideals. In spite of a rough start and all the frustrating silence, they have won over my confidence. It seems as though the light has finally been reached at the end of the tunnel. I hope every Amigan follows their lead into the future.

Adding It All Up:

◆With Microsoft suffering from anti-trust lawsuits leveled by the Federal Government and 20 states, the timing is perfect for Amiga Inc. to introduce a new revolutionary product.

◆Gateway knows they are vulnerable as a PC-only company and realize they must diversify and introduce new products.

◆As a PC maker, Gateway is in a position to know what the future holds for the Intel chip over the next 2-3 years. With that in mind, it speaks volumes that Amiga Inc. is not using Intel for their future systems.

◆Amiga Inc. wants to maintain the support of the current Amiga userbase as evidenced by the continuation of the Amiga Classic line. This move guarantees the loyalty of users and current developers.

◆By forming an agreement with the leading Amiga developers to continue the Classic Amiga line, and let it progress to the PowerPC, Amiga Inc. support the current market leaders and assure that the Classic line is attended by those who know it best.

◆By integrating the Amiga OS with another OS kernel, Amiga Inc. increases its available developer core. For instance, BeOS has over 10,000 registered developers that will be on board for OS 5 development if BeOS should be the integrating OS.

◆Amiga Inc. has the go-ahead from parent company Gateway with the enthusiastic support of high ranking corporate officials. Money is now in the hands of Amiga Inc. to be used as Jeff Schindler sees fit.

◆Staff hirings are underway, with recent additions of Fleecy Moss as Projects Manager and Dr. Allen Havemose as head of Development. Dr. Havemose is forming a core group of 5-10 engineers to head up centralized Development in Silicon Valley Calf., the leading technology recruiting area.

World Of Amiga Show - London

Traditional home to the World of Amiga (WoA), the Novotel in London, England, awoke on Saturday, May 16 to a long queue of computer enthusiasts. WoA is always a popular event, and this year there was added excitement as Amiga Inc. used the show to reveal their plans for the future of the Amiga.

The feel of the show was positive. If you've only been to North American Amiga events then you would marvel at the size of the crowds and the extent of the displays and vendors. At times many booths were packed three rows deep and the aisles were always crowded. All the presentations, such as Siamese Systems RTG, ImageFX 3.1a, and the new release of Photogenics NG were filled throughout the event. Big software sellers were Genetic Species, Foundation and Quake, which all debuted at the show.

Hats off to the organizer PBA Events. They presented a professional and organized atmosphere throughout the event. Of particular note was PBA's Sales Executive Norah Hodgson who added a great deal of enjoyment to the entire show. PBA can be contacted at 44 161 477 7151 or by email at: norah.hodgson@ukonline.co.uk.

The icing on the cake of this show was its location. London is beautiful. In addition to attending a grand Amiga event, attendees were also visiting one of the best cities in the World. I would suggest that no one miss the next WoA show.

ICOA Update

By Fabian Jimenez

The Industry Council Open Amiga (ICOA) has spent much of its time in preparation for the Amiga Inc. announcement at World of Amiga in London. This isn't to say that nothing much has progressed since the Amiga'98 Show in St. Louis. In fact a lot of behind the scene logistics have occurred concerning the role of the ICOA between Amiga Inc. and its developers. Of particular importance is the election of the new Steering Committee, the establishment of an information channel, and the exchange of ideas between current developers.

Temporary Steering Committee member Fleecy Moss has announced that the election of the new Steering Committee has been delayed until after the World of Amiga show in London. This is to clearly demonstrate Amiga Inc.'s endorsement of the ICOA, and to increase the membership and support for the ICOA in the developer community. One of the first functions of the new Steering Committee will be to meet with Amiga Inc. to map out future cooperation and efforts. Such efforts include an online developer resource called ICOAnet to be located on the ICOA web page.

The ICOA has also begun its efforts to create an information channel. Gary Peake of Team Amiga fame has been taken on by the ICOA as its new Press Officer. Gary's role will be to relay ICOA related press to several mainstream Amiga news sources including web pages, magazines, mailing lists, journalists, and user groups. An Amiga Community Liaison Group will also be established to allow Amiga entities to keep each other aware as to their activities.

The various ICOA work groups and mailing lists have already allowed several Amiga developers to exchange ideas and information to update the Amiga, as well as implement some nifty features. Topics have ranged from modifying the IFF file structure to allow things like PDF datatypes and the implementation of FPGA devices.

FPGA, or Field Programmable Gate Array, is a hardware programmable logic device. The purpose of this device includes prototypes, low volume production runs, debugging, and "on the fly" (actually several seconds) reconfiguration. FPGAs are based on either SRAM or Anti-fuse variants. The difference is that Anti-fuse allows for one-time-only programming. The programming information is typically stored in ROM and can be loaded or updated by a variety of methods. What this could allow for is the implementation of a device that can handle a whole range of activities on your Amiga, depending on the instructions it executes. Things like DSP processing, MPEG decoding, and even modem emulation are possible by this device. For more information on FPGAs surf on over to http://www.optimagic.com.

At this time it is unclear whether these and other ideas will become part of the future Amiga path. After the World of Amiga Show, many things will become clearer concerning the ICOA and Amiga Inc. What is clear is that in Fleecy's words, "the ICOA has been officially recognized as the developer support mechanism" for the Amiga. Visit these websites for related info: Amiga News Feed, http://web.wt.net/~gpeake/news.html; Amiga Community Liaison Group, www.jms.org/aclg; Team Amiga, http://web.wt.net/~gpeake/; ICOA, www.amiganet.org/icoa; Jay Miner Society, www.jms.org; User Group Network, www.amiganet.org/ugn.

Ooops . . . Corrections

Due to editorial error, an answer in Issue 13's Ask Dr. Amiga column was unclear. It falsely indicated that it's possible to use AmigaOS HDToolBox to partition SCSI drives. This is not possible because Amiga scsi.device works on the built-in IDE interface and doesn't talk to SCSI. Manufacturers of SCSI cards usually provide their own software for partitioning/formatting SCSI devices.

In issue 13, we incorrectly spelled the name of RJ Mical. Our apologies to Mr. Mical.

If your Amiga is locking up during bootup, boot from a floppy or use the boot menu to skip the Startup-Sequence. Then add the command "SET ECHO ON" to the start of S:Startup-Sequence. This will make every command echo to a visible Shell window so you can track down the problem.

ACLG Creates Amiga News Feed

The Amiga Community Liaison Group announced the creation of the Amiga News Feed (ANF); http://web.wt.net/~gpeake/anf.html. The ANF is a free service whose goal is to provide Amiga magazines, news sites, user groups, and interested parties with timely unedited Amiga press releases by a read-only mailing list. Amiga Inc. has agreed to issue their press releases through the Amiga News Feed.

To issue an Amiga related press release through the ANF, send email to tamiga@wt.net in plain text. The email must also contain the contact's name, email address or web page URL. Only first hand confirmed information will be accepted; rumors or slander will be deleted. Once verified, the press release is pushed through the ANF unedited.

To subscribe to the Amiga News Feed send email to majordomo@ninemoons.com, and type "subscribe tamiga" in the body of the email. The Amiga Community Liaison Group is a joint effort between the ICOA, Jay Miner Society, Team Amiga, and the User Group Network to promote communication and coordination between these organizations.

User Rep Election

Due to poor publicity, fraudulent votes, and tight time restrictions the Jay Miner Society (JMS) and others have been granted permission by the Transitional Steering Committee to conduct another User Rep Election for the Industry Council/Open Amiga. The bylaws of the ICOA call for one voting position on the Steering Committee to be occupied by a user representative.

The JMS will provide a list of valid nominees after June 2nd. Votes can be cast by regular mail, FidoNet mail, email, or by web form between June 2 to June 20. Voters are allowed only one vote and must give their name and email address. For additional information go to the JMS web site at http://www.jms.org. Shortly after June 20, the JMS, Team Amiga, and others will announce the election results, hopefully by June 22.

BoXeR Continues Classic Amiga Line

By Paul Morabito

Access Information's (formerly Index Information, Ltd.) BoXeR Amiga clone is one of the few truly innovative Amiga clones to date. Aimed at the home or semi professional segment of the Amiga market, Access Information hopes the BoXeR will fill the void between the low cost A1200 and the expensive A4000 and produce an ideal mid range Amiga.

The BoXeR motherboard is a true leap forward, a totally new design based around an AT motherboard which can fit into any PC desktop or tower case. It is still 100% Amiga compatible. When designing the BoXeR, Access was particularly keen on addressing weaknesses that existed in the designs of the previous motherboards. The BoXeR supports 68040 signaling which results in a huge speed increase when using 68040 and higher processors. The A4000 had only 68030 signaling. Also new are 4x72 pin SIMM slots with a theoretical limit of 2 Gb of RAM. Chip RAM read/writes have also been boosted by up to 30% depending on the nature of software being run.

Also making its debut in the BoXeR is a new chip dubbed the BGA (Ball Grid Array). This will soak up Bridgette, Fat Ramsey, Fat Gary, Buster and a handful of TTL chips and PAL's to further reduce costs and expand on the features found in the original A4000 devices. Access also plans on producing an MPEG/Genlock module with high quality output and broadcast quality genlocking. The BoXeR is fully compatible with NewTek's Video Toaster.

Other features of the BoXeR include: support for all Motorola 68040 and 68060 processors including the soon to be released 75 MHz 68060; a dual IDE interface; real time clock; PC keyboard support; Amiga floppy disk interface (including 0.5s delay on RDY, critical to compatibility in some cases); as well as two ISA slots and four Zorro 3 slots. A 2 Mb flash ROM is included on the board for Kickstart and other resident modules including a CD-ROM filing system. This also allows the contents of the ROM to be upgraded through software. In theory, you could upgrade to a future Kickstart by running a simple program. All the standard ports are present including parallel, serial, joystick, mouse and RGB ports.

Of special interest is the cooperation between Access Information and Phase5. To the end user this means easier and cheaper access to the PowerPC. Much of the logic and signals required by PowerUP will be present on the BoXeR motherboard, thus reducing the cost of a PPC upgrade. Another first for the BoXeR is that the PPC will be allowed to boot independently of the 68k, so the PPC can operate without the 68k controlling it. This will allow future systems to ship without a 68k processor and possibly run a PPC native AmigaOS and emulate the 68k. No release date has been announced for the BoXeR PowerUP card, but it is expected to be announced closer to the BoXeR's release.

The BoXeR will be manufactured in England, USA, and other parts of Europe. Access Information is currently looking for further manufacturers and is trying to hunt down an Asian manufacturer to help push down the cost. Contrary to rumors that custom chips are fast running out, Access owner Mick Tinker said, "[I am] happy that we can get the chips we need."

Blittersoft UK has been appointed global

In Brief . . .

The Global Posse is running an art competition for their Greeting Card Workshop program at www.nfinity.com/~amicom/gcw/contest.html. Check out the site and enter to win! Amiga Solutions of New Zealand released a new ***Amiga security program titled MULog***. Get more info and a demo at www.enternet.co.nz/client/personal/bensalt/. Carl Sassenrath's ***REBOL Technologies*** has secured substantial funding from Avalon Investments, a company headed by former Gateway president Rick Snyder. Visit www.sassenrath.com for full details. ***JDW Developments*** is seeking submissions from Amiga software developers. JDW can provice developers with market access, promotional services, as well as access to various payment options. For more info contact Jeffrey D. Webster at jweb@primenet.com. ***Bitz!, a new Amiga company*** from Ireland is looking for people to join their mailing lists. Every week an email newsletter is mailed detailing offers on Amiga related products. To join the list, send an email to amiga.offers@bitz.clara.net. A paper catalogue of the entire ***F1 Software USA*** and Mushroom PD collection is now available. To get a copy of this 14+ page catalog send $1 to Mushroom Software, 75 North Perry Street, Elizabethtown, PA 17022-1146. Email mushypd@redrose.net for more details. ***Y/C Plus released a new genlock*** unit for the Amiga that offers NTSC and PAL signals. The base unit will offer composite only with software and manual key, and is designed to work with the new 4000 and 1200 series computers as well as the Classic series of Amigas. Visit www.ycplus.com for full details. The official ***Foundation mailing list*** is now open. Subscribe by sending a blank email with SUBSCRIBE DIGEST or SUBSCRIBE in the subject line to: mushypd-foundation@redrose.net. Do not make postings to the list until you receive confirmation. Paul Manias' ***Games Master System v 1.0***, a developers kit based on the Amiga shared library standard and aimed at games programming, is now available from Aminet in dev/misc/gms_dev.lha. Visit http://gms.ethos.co.nz/gms/ for more details. ***BattleDuel V1.7.85***, featuring up to 8 players, computer opponents, and normal & tournament modes, has just been released. Downloaded it from Aminet at game/2play/BattleDuel.lha. Schatztruhe released ***Aminet 24***, their latest in a long line of Aminet CDs. This edition features a special version of IBrowse 1.2 with an attractive upgrade option. Look to www.schatztruhe.de/ for full details. ***Vulcan Software*** signed yet another developer called ***Black Flag***. This Portuguese programming team is responsible for Caveman Species, a real-time strategy wargame set in the prehistoric age. Check out www.vulcan.com for more info. German based games developers ***APC & TCP*** have a long list of upcoming titles including Phoenix, Testament 2, Forest Dumb Forever, Daydream, Marbleous 2, Pulsator, Skimmers, as well as many more. More info at: www.chiemgau.com/apc&tcp.

Siamese Systems' PCI Project

By Paul Morabito

Steve Jones of Siamese Systems is responsible for giving us the incredible Siames System and is leading the ambitious port of the Amiga OS to the DEC Alpha chip through Project Alpha. The Informer's roving reporter Paul Morabito caught up with Mr. Jones before WoA and talked with him about his SiamesePCI project.

Amiga Informer (AI): Your SiamesePCI project is quite exciting. Has there been a lot of feedback and interest from the Amiga community?

Stephen Jones (SJ): The users are really keen on this card which is proved by the fact that around 500 people are on the list to buy one when ready, and over 100 have sent in actual deposits before the product was even working. As for developers, well they need to see the product working. Remember though, the secret of the Siamese System has always been that you don't have to change your code to support it.

AI: Give us a little information about the SiamesePCI?

SJ: Basically the card is a miniaturized A1200 and 040/060 accelerator on one small PCI card that fits into a PC or Alpha host. It has the full Amiga AGA chip set, 2 Mb Chip RAM and uses the host's RAM as Fast RAM.

Using the Siamese RTG v4 software, the card uses all of the Input/Output services from the host machine for every function except processing the Amiga progRAM code. This is similar to the way the existing Amiga uses the AGA chip set to speed up the overall Amiga performance, but we use the faster modern PCI equivalents. So, for example, the Amiga instantly has 16-bit sound, Silicon Graphics like graphics power with the Diamond FireGL range of PCI cards and access to Ethernet, Internet, UDMA IDE drives, Universal serial bus devices, Infrared devices, etc.

Windows95 or NT then becomes a slave OS handling the updates for Device drivers that the Amiga never needs to update again. They are always updated for the PC market and we just use them for our own purposes. So if you want to use the latest Video recording wonder card for your Amiga or update your graphics, you can use it the same day it is released for the PC and know the drivers are written and available to the "PCI Amiga."

The Amiga will operate in two modes :

Mode one–Hide Windows: The Amiga will look the way it has always looked and most people will believe it is an Amiga only, until they see the Windows apps appearing in windows as if emulated by the Amiga. This will no doubt be the most popular.

Mode two–Let me have it all: The Amiga apps will appear in windows along with the Mac desktop on the Windows display. This is probably the best mode because all apps just run together in a seamless environment, or as I like to call it, the "MultiOS" environment. No longer will people need to worry about the OS they use, they will have access to Amiga, Windows 3.1, MS DOS, Win95, WinNT and Macintosh applications at the same time.

AI: Will the SiamesePCI be upgradable in any way?

SJ: All improvements will be software based, and will be making the link between the different Operating Systems as powerful as possible (Windows is not the only OS). For example, the Amiga OS can have sections written to allow the Amiga to use the host Pentium or Alpha to be used for processing parts of the Amiga progRAM to speed up its operation, i.e., use the Alpha to run floating point calculations, decode DVD, etc.

AI: Is it fully compatible with Amiga games and applications including the Video Toaster?

continued on page 13

distributors of the BoXeR and will sell bare motherboards to OEM's and end users alike. Access Information will not sell full BoXeR based Amigas. Instead, users can fully customize their systems and OEM's can make machines more suited to local markets and sell their own brand as well as the bare BoXeR's to those who request it. Interest from OEM's has already been strong. Blittersoft announced they will produce "Black Box" Amigas based on the BoXeR.

Closer to home Anti Gravity Products will produce "The Neila" BoXeR system which will include an 060@50-66MHz, 16 Mb RAM, 2 Gb hard drive, 24x CD-ROM with audio input connector and mixer, high density floppy drive, dual IDE hard disk interface, keyboard, mouse, OS 3.1 and manuals, internal 56k modem, internet software kit, and a ClickBOOM games bundle. All this will be housed in a mid-sized tower with a 235 watt power supply and a full 1 year parts and labor warranty. It will sell for an almost unbelievable US $1,495. According to Anti Gravity, they will have full manufacturing facilities in the US and expect to have the Neila available by sometime in mid 1998.

A bare BoXeR will retail for around US $700. According to Mick Tinker, "There are various component price reductions in the pipeline along with some cost reduction plans which will help us to lower the price as the product matures." The BoXeR is expected to be available in late July, although a small number of potential manufacturers will receive boards earlier. The boards will be available to end users sometime in August.

For more information on the BoXeR visit: Blittersoft at www.blittersoft.com; Access Information at www.cix.co.uk/~index; or, Anti Gravity at www.antigravity.com.

Feature

ARexx And The Amiga

No Coding Necessary

By Oleg Moskalensky

Before you drop this article like a hot potato because it has the word "ARexx" in the title – stop! ARexx, although a programming language, can be used by non-programmers with some exceptionally useful results. I promise that even though there will be ARexx programming involved, you will not have to write a single line of ARexx code for this session.

I'll demonstrate a process that will enable you to perform a variety of image processing effects and even create some very elaborate animations easily and painlessly. All that's required is ImageFX from Nova Design and good old ARexx that silently comes with every Amiga.

The smart folks at Nova Design built into ImageFX the ability to "learn" your desires. Other programs also allow this learning, like PageStream, but we will use ImageFX in this example. By using a Shell-like interface (available by hitting the Escape key), you can order ImageFX to perform direct commands. The only command we will use in this tutorial is the "learn" command. This little command simply instructs ImageFX to document all your actions in the form of an ARexx script. In other words, you can tell ImageFX to record what you're doing and play it back at any time, as many times as you desire. Even though the instructions ImageFX needs are written in ARexx, you don't need to write them, ImageFX will do that for you.

To try this feature load ImageFX, hit the Esc key and when a small Shell window opens type "learn ram:test" and press enter. Then load an image, and perform one or more image processing command(s) on it. Now click inside the Shell window and type "learn stop" and press enter. You've just created an ARexx program that when run will tell ImageFX to duplicate all of your actions.

The ARexx program that ImageFX created for you was stored in RAM: and it was named test.ifx. Since this was simply a test, it was sufficient. When you create these ARexx scripts for future use, you would probably want to store them on your hard drive or floppies and you can name them anything you like. Giving descriptive names to these scripts will help you immensely when you need them again.

This capability of ImageFX is very useful for repetitive use of certain image processing tasks. For example, maybe you would like to have an easy way to reverse the color of a loaded image and then create an embossed look.

Let's break this process down into 7 easy steps:

1) Load the image of your choice
2) Hit 'ESC' key to open ImageFX Shell and type "learn imagefx:rexx/reverse.emboss". You'll be asked if you'd like to "Record current settings?" – click on Yes.
3) Click 'Color' on the ImageFX Toolbox menu, followed by a click on 'Negative.'
4) Click 'Convolve' on the main ImageFX Toolbox menu, followed by a click on 'Relief Map,' setting the Relief Intensity at 128 (or 50%)
5) Click 'OK' to finish the process
6) Click 'Render' on the ImageFX Toolbox menu and then 'Render' on the Render menu to see the new image
7) If you don't have the Shell anymore, press 'ESC' to get it back and type "learn stop" which will stop recording your commands and a small requester stating "Macro Recording Stopped" will appear.

From now on to process any image in the same fashion all you'll need to do is follow 3 simple steps:

1) Load an image of your choice.
2) Click 'ARexx' on the ImageFX Toolbox menu and select the script that you've saved in the "learn" process above from a file requester that comes up (we used reverse.emboss, so we would select 'reverse.emboss.ifx' file). You'll see your loaded image being processed quickly and precisely.
3) If you wish to save your new creation, simply click 'Save' and follow normal saving procedure.

That's it. If you follow these simple steps you can create all kinds of wonderful and useful effects for future use. Experiment at will with various options and settings, ImageFX has a tremendous variety, just don't forget to have it 'learn' what you're doing through the power of ARexx.

In Part 2 we will utilize the above technique for creating some very elaborate animations, easily and painlessly, all thanks to ImageFX & ARexx. If you have any questions regarding this technique, please feel free to email them to me at pcs@accessone.com.

What is ARexx?

ARexx is the Amiga counterpart of the IBM engineered REXX programing language. It is an interpreted language that has the advantages of using standard ASCII characters and easy text parsing. On the Amiga, ARexx is used for communications between applications. Several programs running simultaneously in the multitasking environment can send commands to each other and to the system through what are called ARexx Ports. These are virtual channels where an ARexx program can issue commands to the system or an application as if these commands were entered by a user. In this way, processes which require several programs to complete can be automated. For example, consider that I like to use Image Engineer but I like the Sphere effect of ImageFX. I can design an ARexx script which can be run from within Image Engineer, that will tell the system to run ImageFX, save the current file to a temporary file, load the temporary file into ImageFX, process the file with the ImageFX Sphere effect, save that file as a temporary file, quit ImageFX and reload it into Image Engineer. This can be done so seamlessly that it appears to be part of the Image Engineer program itself. For more information, check out the Commodore User's Guide to ARexx (if you can find it–it's out of print).

The Power Of ARexx

By Bohdan Lechnowsky

ARexx has been an important part of my work at home and on the job. It is the hidden gem of the Amiga OS. I'd like to show you I'm using Arexx, so here are a few of my projects.

At work, I've been programming an application in ARexx which processes data output by a UNIX utility called CVS. It is attempting to make a history chart of modules which are in development. The hardest part about this project is figuring out what the data means so I can have the ARexx program process it properly. It is currently over 500 lines long and I develop it on UAE (the Amiga emulator) and an A3000.

Also at work, to assist with the transfer of text files from the PC, I wrote a quick ARexx script to strip off the "line-feed/carriage-return" combination and replace it with a carriage return only.

At home, I wrote an ARexx program to assist in keeping up with the latest stock news. This program accesses the AWeb v3.1 hotlist, finds all the hotlist entries under any stock subheadings, visits each page one-by-one, saves the HTML of the page to the RAM disk for processing, checks through the entire page for any news links with today's date, remembers all the news links it finds, and then visits all the news links individually sending each one to the printer after it loads. This way the ARexx program can be allowed to run on its own. After about 10 minutes, a personalized newspaper is ready with all the details from any of the dozens of interesting stocks. Surprisingly, this program only took about three hours to write including the time spent trying to figure out AWeb's ARexx commands. This is running on our A4000.

The above program could be modified easily to be a web crawler where it visits all links it can find to build a database of WWW pages. Other modifications could make it into an Amiga news gatherer. The program could check all the Amiga news sites and collect all the new links, download them, convert them to text format, and email them to my work address to be read at my convenience.

An even more ambitious project (but still easy as far as ARexx is concerned) would collect all email from my account which contains a specific word in the subject, append the email to a webpage, and upload the modified page to my internet account. This would allow people to send each other messages through a website. This could be done continually or only a few times a day. Using this, my programming team could send messages to each other about problems they are running into and they could receive responses from any of the other members through such a webpage.

Yet other possibilities include an Amiga-based Web-cam, email information on demand, remote control of your Amiga by email while you're away, automatic uploading of any webpages that you are developing on your local Amiga to your internet provider, etc. With Amiga and ARexx, the possibilities are nearly endless.

MasterISO con't from page 32

they are to go in. Master ISO will read the audio data files and automatically convert the file to Compact Disc Digital Audio (CDDA) format so that a standard CD player can read them. Audio formats supported include AIFF, Wave, 8SVX, Studio 16, and Samplitude.

The Feature list for MASTER ISO v2 is exhaustive and includes support for ISO 9660, Joliet, and Rock ridge with Amiga extensions. Support for autobooting CD32 and CDTV discs is included. Disc at Once (DAO) is supported for users with a 68060 Amiga. DAO is a method of recording to the CD which results in a master CD that is suitable for commercial duplication. Since DAO requires that Master ISO provide the error correction on the fly, it is very CPU intensive. The Track at Once method (TAO) will be the choice of most users and allows the CDR to perform the error correction, therefore lowering the amount of CPU overhead.

The 228 page manual for Master ISO is one of the best thought out manuals I have ever seen. It is divided into sections according to the different projects, which means no flipping backward and forward to cross reference information between chapters. The manual also has a very nice Appendix that details some of the terms encountered, and it goes into some depth on the particulars of SCSI and File systems.

There are a few caveats to using this program. First, if you intend on doing any direct CD to CDR recording, you must have AsimCDFS V3.x or higher (current version is 3.9a). The manual also recommends a 68040 processor for the advanced features and a 68060 for DAO recording. The program performed admirably on my 68030 processor so I am unsure of exactly what features would require the 68040 processor. Currently Master ISO does not support PPC and I was unable to find out if a PPC version is in the works.

The box that Master ISO comes in is a sturdy plastic box about the size of a textbook, perfect for the bookshelf. It may seem insignificant, but to me it illustrates the point very well of how Asimware has paid attention to the user's needs down to the last detail. Their website is an excellent resource for technical information on Master ISO, and even includes an Update page on what will be included in the next release. You can also subscribe to their mailing lists from the site. This software package is extremely easy to use for the beginner, and for the more experienced user control is allowed over nearly every aspect of the recording process. This attention to the end user's needs and its OS friendly, rock solid performance earns it an A rating. MasterISO has a MSRP of US $89 and can be found through most Amiga dealers. It was tested using an A2000 30/50 MHz, 16 Mb RAM, Retina graphics card, and a Phillips CDD-2000. Minimum requirements are OS 2+, 4 Mb Fast RAM, hard drive, and a compatible CDR/RW SCSI or ATAPI drive. For a current CD and CDR/RW compatibility list see Asimware's website at www.asimware.com.

Rating: A

By Chris O'Donnell

BYTES

On the backdrop of the World of Amiga trade show in London was the launch of the new Amiga Inc. website, at www.amiga.com. The Detroit-based Pantheon Systems used Amiga development products to create the site including, Lightwave 3D, DrawStudio, ProVector, and WebFTP. Pantheon's network operations center and design office are home to four Amiga systems–two Amiga 4000s, a 2000, and a 1200. The firm has garnered acclaim for mainstream websites including Nolan and Cunnings (nandc.com), Moneylab, Inc. (moneylab.com), and of course they are the creators of The Amiga Informer website. Pantheon Systems was also awarded electronic mail routing and hosting responsibilities for Amiga Inc., and they intend to offer a robust, Amiga-based infrastructure for business communications before the end of the summer. More information on Pantheon Systems can be found at www.pantheonsys.com.

Opera Software announced the development of an Amiga version of their popular web browser, Opera. Opera is known on the PC for being very compact, resource efficient, and surprisingly feature laden–making rival products Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer appear bloated in comparison. The port is a direct result of Project Magic, an investigation into the viability of porting Opera to other systems. Project Magic received a huge response from Amiga users. A UK company, Ramjam Consultants, will be completing the port with an expected release date of December this year. A price hasn't yet been announced, however it is expected to be in line with the Windows version at about $35.

ID Software approved ClickBOOM's Amiga port of Quake, and copies of the game are currently being produced with its release coinciding with WOA. In related ClickBOOM news, after the success of Capital Punishment, Myst, and the almost certain success of Quake, ClickBOOM announced their latest titled, a realtime strategy wargame titled Napalm: The Crimson Crisis. ClickBOOM investigated licensing an already available PC game, but decided to release their own with the best aspects of all currently available games. The game is set in the not too distant future where intelligent aliens, designed by humans, are attempting to take over the world. Already, the game is looking brilliant with screenshots revealing the attention to detail that is common in all ClickBOOM games. No release date has been announced. Everyone who pre-orders goes into the drawing for $1,000 (CAN). Weekly drawings will be conducted and the winners will receive a ClickBOOM game of their choice. As an added incentive, those who are registered users of all previous ClickBOOM titles can pre-order Napalm for half price. For information on pre-ordering visit www.clickboom.com.

Fabio Bizzetti, creator of the revolutionary 1995 go karting simulation Virtual Karting, has finally completed the sequel. Fabio attributes the long delay to trouble with his previous publisher, the defunct OTM. However, Fabio has now signed with Islona Games. Virtual Karting 2 includes an impressive new 3D engine which offers up to 50 fps, even on an unexpanded Amiga. There are six tracks, with the choice of two carts. Virtual Karting 2 is said to be a very realistic simulation and is set to be released late in May through Islona Games in the UK, a part of the Epic Marketing group. For more info visit Epic at www.valivue.demon.co.uk.

Faced with a year 2000 problem of a different kind from software vendors, Gateway 2000 gave itself a name change. From now on, the Amiga's parent corporation will be known just as "Gateway." Along with the name change Gateway released a modified logo which has less emphasis on the traditional cow imagery. The new logo and name are already in use on the company's website, www.gateway.com.

Mystique Corporation International announced several new efforts in its Made For KiDS project. First is a new folder on Aminet, created by Mystique working in conjunction with Aminet organizers. It contains software just for children. By working with Aminet, this software is readily available all over the world. The second item is a new directory on their website which divides software into several categories, and provides information you can use to decide whether or not to download the software. The directory contains reviews of software, compatibility information, and screenshots to help you with your selections. The Mystique website can be found at www.mystcorp.u-net.com.

Syzygy, developers of the excellent astronomical simulator Digital Universe, are now offering a low cost CD-ROM version of the program. The CD distribution includes only an online manual. Every other aspect of the CD-ROM version is identical to the floppy version of Digital Universe 1.03. The CD-ROM version is available for almost half the cost of the floppy release. Syzygy has indicated strong sales of this version will go a long way to ensuring version 2.0 gets developed for the Amiga. Syzygy is also currently investigating the possibility of a PPC version of Digital Universe. For more information on ordering visit www.syz.com.

A recent edition of the PBS computer show "Computer Chronicles" posted an Amiga trivia question to the contestants. To answer the question, contestants had to name the company which recently acquired the Amiga. While we didn't see the show, we are informed no one got the answer correct. Perhaps some advertising would help?

PanCanvas: Motion Control for ImageFX 2.6 and above is a new product from Chicago's Legacy Maker. Written by Ola Olsson, the program will turn ImageFX into a professional quality motion control station. It's used to pan across a still image to create the illusion of animation. Functioning as a plug-in to ImageFX, PanCanvas will output a sequence of frames (IFF or JPEG) which can be used to generate Flyer clips, Amiga ANIMs, MPEGs, and others. Included is PanPost, a post-processing engine which can enhance the output of PanCanvas. Costing only US $35.95, PanCanvas is available now at select Amiga dealers or directly from Legacy Maker at 773-465-5158 via credit card (add $3.95 for shipping in the US).

Amiga Events

AmiWest 98, July 10-12, 1998

This officially sponsored show will be held at the Ramada Inn at Haggin Oaks, Sacramento, CA. It will include announcements by Amiga Inc., ICOA Developers Conference, seminars and workshops, and an Art and Video show. Get the latest details on all show events at: www.sacc.org/amiwest/, or email John Zacharias at: jzachar@calweb.com. Snailmail: AmiWest '98 c/o Sacramento Amiga Computer Club, P.O. Box 19784, Sacramento, CA 95819-0784.

Midwest Amiga Expo, Oct. 3-5, 1998

The 3rd annual MAE show will be held in the Hyatt Regency, Columbus, OH. Officially sponsored by Amiga Inc., this show offers more than double the space of last year's show. Classes, seminars, workshops, ICOA conference, games, contests, and hourly door prizes are all lined up. Get all the details at: www.amicon.org/mae.html, or email Dave Pearce at: dpearce@infinet.com.

Toaster Flyer Symposium, Nov 8-12, 1998

DVS Direct and the Association of Video Professionals will host a Toaster Flyer Symposium during the APV Conference being held in Pittsburgh on November 8-12. A booth will be available for any interested party. Anyone interested in participating should contact Jim Davis of DVS Direct at: 814-371-5640, or email: jed@penn.com

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Siamese con't from page 9

SJ: Yes, as long as the games can run on an AGA machine with an 040/060. As for the Toaster/Flyer, there will be an add-on board to give the appropriate Video and Zorro slot for this most important piece of Amiga hardware/software. This board will be purely for the NewTek product, and backed up by the fact that the Siamese v4 PCI Amiga has the full AGA chip set which the Toaster needs, and an emulator cannot deliver.

AI: You have stated that the SiamesePCI will be quicker than a real 68k Amiga. In short, how is this achieved?

SJ: Basically the Amiga usually has to take care of all I/O, graphics, sound, file access, serial, parallel and many other function. Obviously the chipset helps, but the processor still has to wait for a lot of operations to finish. With our system, the Siamese software just hands over the task to the Host PC or Alpha and then the 68k processor in the Amiga carries on processing the actual progRAM code. The host will also complete these functions in a fraction of the time the fastest Amiga ever could and again the Processor does not have to wait.

AI: How much do you expect a complete Siamese system with 040/060 CPU will cost? When will it be released?

SJ: Hard to say at the moment, we are hoping to get a good deal on these processors. At present the card is US $499 without the processor ($200 is for the AGA chips). I would hope to have the 040 around US $100-150, and the 060 around the US $250-300 range. Remember that a lot of people already own a suitable processor and can move that to the card. Its release will hopefully be August - September, 1998.

You can contact Stephen Jones and Siamese Systems Limited at: 9 Church Lane Hockliffe, Beds, LU7 9NQ, England. Tel +44 1525 211558; Fax +44 1525 211558; URL: www.siamese.co.uk; Email: steve@siamese.co.uk

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.

Amiga Forever 2.0

From: Cloanto
URL: www.cloanto.com

Cloanto, buoyed by the success of the initial Amiga Forever package, just released version 2. Amiga Forever is the only officially licensed Amiga emulator. It ships with the latest release of UAE and Fellow, as well as Kickstart ROM's and the Workbench software from 1.0 through 3.0. Also included is an elusive interview with Jay Miner, the Amiga Reference Guide–an excellent source of information on all things Amiga and version 2 of the Amiga Explorer networking software that allows easy networking between a PC and an Amiga. Other added bonuses include a full copy of Personal Paint 7.1, Ami2RTF,–which allows converting between PC and Amiga text files, and many more utilities designed to improve the integration between the PC and Amiga. Amiga Forever 2.0 should be available for about US $60. Upgrades for registered users are being handled by Software Hut and cost about US $30.

PhotogenicsNG

From: Paul Nolan
Email: pnolan@cix.co.uk
URL: www.pnolan.dircon.co.uk

Paul Nolan previewed PhotogenicsNG at the World Of Amiga show. Due to problems with Mr. Nolan's past publisher, Almathera, this release was long delayed. The new version is almost totally rewritten and sports a new user interface as well as many new features. New to Photogenics NG is the exclusive Paint Layers technology, a paint on image processing feature that allows the user to apply effects by drawing with any of the media tools. Also included are natural edit tools, paint-on pyrotechnics such as lensflares, fire, and explosions as well as an unlimited number of layers. The version previewed at the WOA is still incomplete and many more features are due to be added before release. No publisher, price or release date was available at the time of print.

Professional File Safe 2

From: Great Effects Development
Email: info@greed.nl
URL: www.greed.nl

New from the author of AmiFileSafe (AFS) is the Professional File System 2 (PFS2). Touted as the "best filesystem for your Amiga" it includes many modern features that the aging FastFileSystem (FFS) lacks, including much improved performance and reliability, and a reported 500% increase in performance over FFS. Disks are always validated and there is easy file recovery with all deleted files spooled to a "Delete" directory much like the Recycle Bin found in Windows. Concurrent access of files is supported without any performance loss and there is automatic truncation of log files. Many tools including recovery and optimization utilities are provided as well as extensive user and developer documentation. PFS2 is also fully compatible with AmiFileSafe disks. The software ships on CD-ROM with CPU optimized versions available for anyone with a 68020 or greater. Registered AFS users receive a generous discount on PFS2. Also, those who order early are entitled to a free copy of the game KangFu, a game created by the same developers. Consult their website for pricing and availability.

ShapeShifter 3.9

From: Christian Bauer
Email: cbauer@iphcip1.physik.uni-mainz.de
URL: www.uni-mainz.de/~bauec002/ShapeShifter3_9.lha

Christian Bauer, author of the hugely successful Apple Macintosh emulator Shapeshifter, has released version 3.9. Features include support for MacOS from System 7.1 through 7.6 (soon supporting 8.x), and full ECS, AGA, Cybergraphics and Picasso96 compatibility. Macintosh disks can be simulated through hardfiles or a partition, and there if full support for Mac floppy disks (though a high density disk drive is required). Shapeshifter also includes full networking support, including Ethernet compatibility. New features in 3.9 include improved CD-ROM support and CD-ROM booting. There is also improvements in filedisk operating speeds. Shapeshifter requires any Amiga with OS 2.1, 68020 processor, 4Mb of RAM and a HD floppy drive. A software image of a Macintosh ROM is also required (it is only legal to own one of these if you own the ROM's themselves). Shapeshifter is shareware, with registration costing US $40.

Tornado3D 1.5

From: Eyelight
URL: www.tornado3d.com

Haage and Partner released an update for Tornado3D, the Amiga's latest 3D rendering program. Version 1.5 adds a number of improvements and extensions as well as correcting many bugs. Features include full Cybergraphics support and improved object rendering and animation support. One of these improvements is the introduction of the Pose Manager which makes the maintaining of object properties much easier and enables you to enter and extrapolate new keyframes from existing ones. Version 1.5 also increases the range of available object materials by offering displacement maps and textures. Displacement maps cause a real modification to an object's geometry which makes possible numerous and realistic effects that could not be achieved through bumpmapping– a purely optical effect. The camera model now offers an almost complete simulation of a real reflex camera, and project saving has been made safer and more convenient. Version 1.5 will be shipped to all registered users directly by Eyelight. Tornado3D is distributed in the US by Safe Harbor (www.sharbor.com).

Wildfire

From: Nova Design
Email: bob@novadesign.com
URL: www.novadesign.com

Nova Design, producer of the award winning ImageFX and Aladdin 4D, has been appointed the exclusive distributor of Wildfire in the US. Wildfire is an exciting new animation package by Andreas

Maschke that uses sequencing, 3D effects, and transitions. Until now, it was only available in Germany. Features include full Cybergraphics support, timecodes editor, transition maker, 24-bit animation player, storyboard animation interface, font sensitive GUI, realtime feedback, optional sound in animations, and a preview option available for almost any operation. Wildfire is an open development platform with developer information available for creating plug-ins. It also has a comprehensive ARexx interface with over 400 commands. Wildfire comes on a CD-ROM and is available in 68k and PPC formats. The 68k version retails for US $149.95 while the PPC version costs US $199.95.

WorldNews & AirMail Pro

From: Toysoft Development
Email: danny@toysoft-dev.com
URL: www.toysoft-dev.com

Toysoft Development announced the release of their new multi-threaded news client, WorldNews 1.0. Features in WorldNews include user definable subscribable groups, user defined filters including excellent anti-spam support, and a complete address book. Also in WorldNews is the WorldNews Spooler which is used for background batch downloading thus allowing you to read usenet messages offline, and Helper files that allow you to view multimedia files within WorldNews. Since WorldNews has a built in mailer, it can also integrate with AirMail Pro 3 to provide the ultimate mail and news client. WorldNews requires an Amiga with Workbench 3.1 or higher and costs US $35 plus $5 for shipping and handling.

In a similar statement, Toysoft Development announced version 3.0 fo AirMail Pro, their highly featured multi-threaded email client. New features in version 3 include Super Mail Box, a separate module for both sending and receiving mail, enhanced clipboard support, further improved support for URL addresses that will allow you to click on a URL address and have your web browser immediately take you there, cache for all system folders to improve mailbox access speed, and improved anti-spam filters. AirMail Pro 3.0 works with any Amiga with OS 2.1 or greater and is available at select retailers or direct from Toysoft for US $40 plus $5 shipping and handling anywhere in the US. Toysoft is currently offering both AirMail Pro 3 and WorldNews for US $65 plus $10 shipping and handling.

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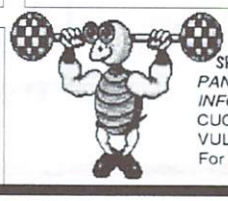

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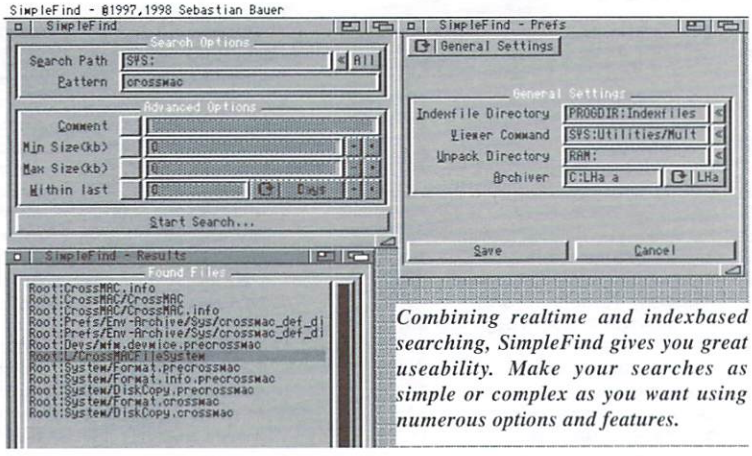
By Brad Webb

If I had a nickel for every time I've tried to remember the location of a particular program or datafile over the years, I'd have retired to a life of leisure long ago. Instead, I've wasted much time trying to locate wandering files. Most operating systems provide some sort of a "find" command to help users in this sort of predicament, but AmigaOS has never had one. The "which" command is some help, but can only locate programs in directories that are in your search path.

Fortunately, there are many good find programs available that fill this void. They come in two types, which we might call realtime and indexbased. A realtime find command will search a specified portion of a disk or directory tree by examining it every time you ask it to locate something. An indexbased program will consult a previously prepared index file of your disk(s) and tell you where a file is based on the index. The advantage of an index file is speed. The disadvantage is you have to keep the index up to date, usually by running an index creator manually. Any programs or datafiles added to your computer after the most recent index update will not be discovered during a search.

There are find programs that combine both realtime and indexbased searching. SimpleFind (SF) by Sebastian Bauer is an excellent program of this type. To install, just unpack the file and drag the resulting directory wherever you wish the program to reside. Someplace in your search path is best as SF can be run both from the shell and from a very well thought out GUI. The GUI does not require MUI or ClassAct, so it will work on all Amigas with a 3.0 or better OS.

When first activated in GUI mode, a Search Options window opens. You can do a basic search by entering a disk or directory path in the Search Path text box, and a pattern to search for in the Pattern box. Click on Start Search and the work begins. All files and directories in the path you specified will be displayed in a second window, called the Results window. True to its name, SimpleFind is simple to use. However, there's a great deal more it can do for you. First, you can enter multiple areas to search by separating them with the pipe symbol {|} (Shift + \). For instance, you could look in both Sys:utilities and Sys:tools for a program by entering sys:utilities|sys:tools in the Search Path window. Also, there's a set of advanced options you can activate with a mouse click. These allow you to search based on comments (filenotes), minimum or maximum size of the files, or the file's date within some number of days, months, minutes or hours. Pulldown menus add to your options by allowing you to decide whether searches will use case sensitive matches, among other options. All this flexibility can allow for very sophisticated searches of your disks.



Combining realtime and indexbased searching, SimpleFind gives you great useability. Make your searches as simple or complex as you want using numerous options and features.

Once you have a list of files matching your search criteria, SF provides many options for manipulating the results. You can bring up the icon's information panel, show the file with a previously defined display program (default is Multiview), copy a file or delete one. You can also add a file to an archive, or undo any archives that are located. These functions are all accessed through simple mouse clicks.

With all these possibilities, there has to be some way to configure SimpleFind. A well thought out SimpleFindPrefs program is provided for that purpose. You can define which programs you wish to use to show files and archive them, as well as setting default directories for various functions. You can even modify menus and buttons. The good news is, none of this need even be looked at if all you wish to do is use the basic find capabilities, so there's no need to be an Amiga wizard to benefit from the program. However, if you later want some advanced search and manipulate capabilities, they're available.

Index files are optional with SF, but if you decide to use them, there's a special configuration window with many features that you can use to create and update the indexes. You can even configure the index files to be automatically updated, though this could actually slow the program down.

If you chose to run SF from the shell, all features will still be available to you. A command line help template in standard Amiga format is available by typing "simplefind ?" in the shell just as with a standard Amiga DOS command. Documentation is provided in AmigaGuide format. It's well organized and complete enough to cover any situation you're likely to encounter. As noted, the program is simple enough in its basic operation that many users may never need the documentation.

SimpleFind is freeware and should run on all Amigas with OS 3.0 or above. It's recommended for 020 or better processors, but may be acceptable to you on a 68000. The current version is 2.1, copyright 1998.

There are a number of good find programs you can add to your Amiga. Once you have one, you may wonder how anyone could get along without one. SimpleFind is one of the best, and you can find it on Aminet under util/dir/simplefind.lha.

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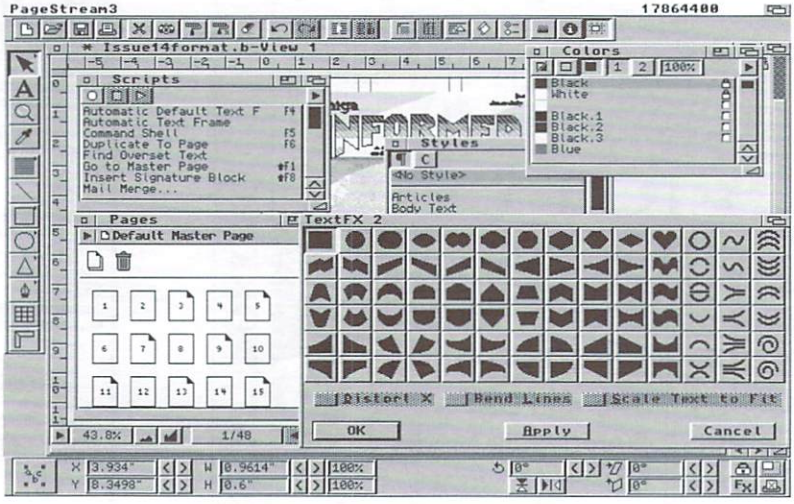
PageStream 3.3

PageStream (PGS) is a powerful desktop publishing (DTP) program from Softlogik that has been a source of pride to Amigans for many years. With the release of version 3.3, it has finally matured into a program on par with DTP packages found on other platforms. Make no mistake, PageStream can create and handle the largest of jobs, including manuals, books, newspapers and magazines. This review tested PageStream 3.3/3.3a. The 3.3a patch can be found on the Softlogik website and it corrects many minor bugs.

The systems used to test PageStream were an A2000 040/40 MHz, 16 Mb RAM, and an A1200 060/50 MHz 32 Mb RAM, both using OS 3.1. While PGS will run on an OS 2+ 68000 ECS Amiga with 4 Mb of RAM, I can't see it really being effective with anything less then an 030/50 MHz with 8 Mb RAM.



PageStream's floating tool palettes keep often-used functions a click away. Normally you don't need all these open at once, but with high resolution screens, there would be plenty of room.

If you are working with a lot of color, you will find the AGA chipset very sluggish. This is easily remedied with a graphics card and PGSs Cybergraphics support. With this setup, your color displays will redraw quickly and you will be afforded high resolution screens. The Informer, being a grayscale publication, has no problems with the speed of redraws and displays using our 040 and 060 systems.

PageStream is packed with professional features. I would need an entire issue of to detail them all. Instead I will focus on the added features of 3.3 and 3.3a.

One of the most useful new features in 3.3 is the flyout toolbox menus. By holding clicking on the box, polygon, column, pointer, oval or freehand icons of your tool menu you get several varieties of preset shapes to choose from. No need to navigate through pulldown menus to find what you want. There are new tools as well, including an object grab rotation tool with selectable rotation point and x, y, and z rotation, drag zoom magnifying tool, and a note tool for leaving movable sticky reminder notes.

There is now Rich Text Format (RTF) export which makes for easy text transport to other platforms. Font handling is greatly improved with definable font substitution. If you open a document that contains fonts not installed on your system, a menu appears which allows you to select a font from your system to substitute. The feature is a godsend!

Creating and moving chapters throughout a document is a breeze using the document palette. For that matter, all the floating palettes (color, style, script, and page) bring improved usability to the program, giving it the well deserved reputation of being easy to use. The color palette now allows direct tint percentage adjustments, gradient fills and color swatch previews.

Printing in PageStream 3.3a is vastly improved. In our tests using an Epson printer we found the printing alignment problems of prior versions resolved. In addition, PGS printer drivers out perform the Epson drivers found in Turbo Print 5 (at least on the Stylus Color). When using the Softlogik dither settings (as apposed to the system settings) you are able to correct the gamma of color settings and the spot/freq./angle of halftone screens. Likewise, there is now thumbnail, negative, mirror, and crop & reg marks for non-postscript printing. However, when printing in 720 DPI, the default print settings saturated the paper with ink calling for a large dose of gamma correction.

There are many further improvements in addition to those listed above such as, better Adobe Illustrator filtering, a drag rotation feature, more language support, auto page orientation, tab/shift cycling, colorizing of grayscale graphics, DPI calculator, loading and savings of printer prefs, and color separation previews to name but a few.

Let's not forget that PGS includes two other powerful programs: BME, a bit map editor; and PageLiner, a text editor. All text and graphics used in PGS can be internally sent to these editors at any time. BME

continued on page 27

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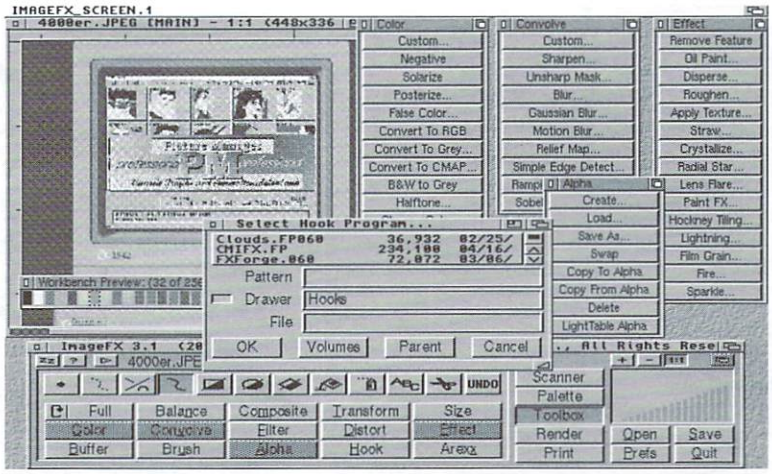
ImageFX 3



ImageFX 3.0 introduces a new user interface with multiple image windows and function menus that stay open for easy access. With more power, functions, and unlimited layers, ImageFX is the undisputed king of image processing.

In the world of Amiga image processing software there have been many changes over the years. From the initial releases of The Art Department and Imagemaster, to the newest of these commercial products ImageFX, there have been massive generational changes. The first programs were simple scaling and palette modifying programs. Next came true image modifying programs that could do color correction and sophisticated manipulations like gamma correction, convolutions and proportional image warping. After this came the revolution of morphing software, responsible for the glut of half-human half-animal images of the early nineties. Finally, came the effects programs of the late nineties, used to make fractal images of fire, lightning, and clouds. The newest of these image processors is ImageFX 3 from Nova Design.

Before I start to discuss the phenomenal scope of this software package, let me first make a complaint. ImageFX 3 as it was shipped initially contained some severe software flaws. Aside from a number of system crashing bugs in the special effects software modules, the displays of the previews were very problematic. This has all been corrected in version 3.1 which is available from the Nova Design website. The advantages gained by this patch in both functionality and stability can't be overemphasized.

The look and feel of ImageFX 3 are similar to the prior versions of ImageFX, with some important new changes. Like ImageFX 1 and 2, there is the familiar toolbox at the bottom of the screen, but unlike these, it has taken the form of a window. The previous versions used a backdrop to display the preview of the image being processed. This has been completely replaced by a series of windows. This is part of the new layers system of composition developed for ImageFX 3. The layers concept, which is fairly new to image processing on the Amiga, allows several images to be designated as layers of an overall image. Various features of these images can then be composed to the final image. ImageFX 3 can accommodate as many layers as your Amiga's memory can hold, and the layer management system makes manipulation simple.

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PageStream con't from page 23

comes with a basic selection of effects that can be applied to any bitmap object. However, if you decide to buy the add-on Gary's Effects, you get twelve additional effects. There are several other Extras packages including, Borders 1 & 2, TextFX 1 & 2, Truetype font engine, JPEG filter, Wordworth filter, Direct templates (for Paper Direct products), and Home and Office forms. Even though these extras cost from US $20 to $50 each, it is worth it to buy those that serve you best.

It is worth mentioning how well this program is laid out. Everything is easily accessed. An editable toolbar allows you to easily configure the toolbar to your liking with just about any menu function being represented by a sensible icon. The Edit and floating palettes keep nearly all program functions a mouse click away. The PGS screen is without a doubt one of the most intuitive Amiga programs around.

PageStream 3.3 ships with a new manual. Unfortunately, this manual is less then half the size of the first manual (220 pages) and much less detailed. While functional, it doesn't nearly cover as much information. The index is lacking many references that the old one had (like listings for drop caps, DPI, keyboard shortcuts and many others) and is missing most of the prior manual's Appendixes and charts. One could argue that the excellent HTML on-line help system provided with 3.3 makes up for this shortfall, but I still find myself referencing the old manual.

There is always room for improvement, although I would be hard pressed to find any. Perhaps having JPEG and Truetype font support inclusive, instead of as add-ons. A JPEG export option would be nice too. PowerPC support is being consider, but Phase5 has yet to send Softlogik a PPC board. PageStream lacks surprisingly few features. Quark Express has a few features not found in PGS, like Indexing and Trapping, but PGS makes up for that by offering features not found in Quark like, advanced drawing tools, scriptability, frameless text objects and configurable tool styles.

This program deserves a solid A. PageStream is the best, if not the only DTP program for the Amiga. Softlogik proves their commitment to the Amiga community with constant upgrades and support. They actively seek the suggestions of users. I can safety say Softlogik has finally exterminated nearly all bugs, and after three months of constant use I experienced not one crash. There is nothing like it on the Amiga. It is a must-have for anyone serious about making professional documents.

PageStream can be purchased from most retailers for around US $170. Softlogik can be reached at 1732 Westpark Center Drive, Fenton MI 63026. Info: 314-305-7878; Fax: 314-305-7874; Email: support@softlogik.com; URL: www.softlogik.com. You can join their support mailing list by emailing listhelp@softlogik.com. The 3.3a patch is available from their website.

Rating: A

By Fletcher Haug

Image FX con't from page 27

Aside from the usual array of general processing commands, like gamma correction and convolution which processes the image using a matrix, ImageFX 3 provides some basic paint program functions, as well as a large number of special effects, a full featured morphing program and an interface to the filtering functions of the PC based Photoshop program.

The paint functions of ImageFX 3 include the usual control of brush types, drawing controls and modes of drawing. Aside from the expected drawing modes, the control of the drawing features includes colorizing, changing the hue, saturation or value, blurring, sharpening, converting the image to relief, chalk or watercolor drawing, etc. The drawn image may also be controlled by an "alpha" or "control" channel. The drawn line can be "feathered" along its edge, and dramatic effects can be created by altering the fill parameter to cause shapes to be filled with various rainbow-like color patterns.

The special effects in the basic effects menu include an advanced lightning effect, and a realistic fire effect. Beyond these two effects–that can be modified to create a myriad of different fractal generated images–there is a very realistic lens flare generator that simulates the glare caused by lights shining into a camera, a radial star generator that places stars with various numbers of rays coming out of them with colored coronas on an image, and paint and texturing effects. This is enough to play with for hours. But that's just a start, because the hooks menu gives you even more external effects. These include water ripple effects, splash effects such as water splattered on a camera lens, page curl, bubbles, and clouds. The last of these is a full featured fractal cloud generator. The fire effects and clouds can be animated realistically using the simple animation controls. The effects menu can even add simulated film grain, to make images appear more "realistic" yet.

The ImageFX 3 package, like ImageFX 2, includes CineMorph, a complete 2 dimensional morphing program. This program allows an initial image to be reformed into a second image in several sequential steps. This is used to create the popular shape shifting animation effect.

One important new feature of ImageFX 3 is the special hook referred to as FXForge. This hook program is able to apply image filters used in the Mac/PC program Photoshop to the images in ImageFX. There are literally hundreds of these filters that are available in the public domain, with a huge number available from the ImageFX website. These filters will do everything from drawing complicated fractal pictures, to applying sophisticated special effects that defy description.

Aside from these features ImageFX 3 sports a full ARexx interface with public domain ARexx programs springing up on Aminet and elsewhere at a fair rate. There are loading and saving modules for most of the popular image formats, with the exclusion of GIF due to CompuServe's copyright policy. However, a pubic domain GIF loader/saver module can be found. As an added bonus, ImageFX works with Digiview, Epson and HP scanners directly. It also has printer modules for the standard preferences printer, postscript printers and the Fargo Primera printer.

Although I didn't have the equipment to test the graphics card features, there are modules to interface with any cybergraphics compatible display, as well as Video Toaster displays. The system used for testing was an Amiga 1200 30/33 MHz and FPU, OS 3.0, and 20 Mb RAM. The reliability of the software was still a bit problematic, with the occasional system crash due to a module. Particularly problematic was the radial star module, but the specific problem that caused occasional crashes couldn't be isolated.

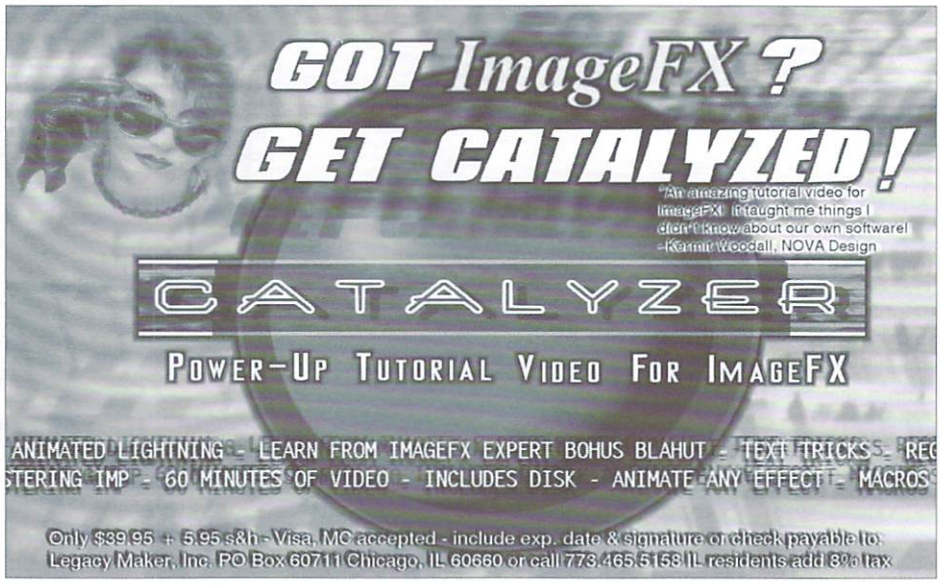
The manual supplied was from ImageFX 2.6 and a 60-page addendum describing the new features of 3.0. Both are well written, and other than the obvious inconvenience of two manuals, they were not difficult to use or understand. They are written at a basic level in general, and should be intelligible to even the novice. The technical support was excellent, and the folks at Nova Design are very cordial and helpful.

There is truly no single package as versatile as ImageFX 3. Other programs may have specific parts that I think are better, but the broad spectrum of techniques that ImageFX offers makes it an overall winner. Two things that might leave room for improvement are the image display window, which is much clearer and better detailed in Image Engineer, a shareware image processor, and the speed and responsiveness of the drawing tools which are a bit better in Photogenics, a similar commercial product. Overall, ImageFX gets an A-, with room for improvement in the stability department and the quality of the image windows. Kudos to Kermit Woodall and the folks at Nova Design for a fine product.

ImageFX 3.0 is available from most Amiga retailer for around US $230. Call Nova Design's support line at 804-282-6528, or fax at 804-282-3768. Further info is available at www.novadesign.com

Rating: A-

By Davis Sprague



If you need to print several copies of a graphics-intensive document, save time by printing the document to a file and copying the file to the printer several times. Some programs (like PageStream 3.3 and TurboPrint) allow you to print to a file, or use the AmigaOS CMD command to capture the printout. Then copy the file to PAR:

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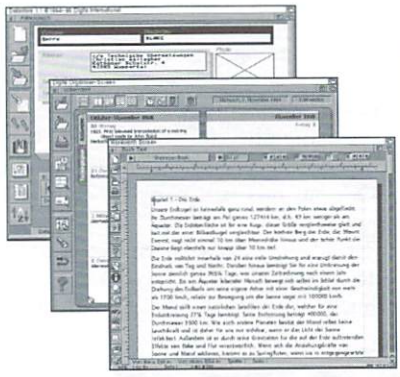

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Control Tower

The basic storyboard interface of the Flyer edit screen is much faster to use and easier to learn than any timeline based system. As shipped, however, the Flyer software doesn't provide much in the form of tools and extensions needed to easily manipulate more complex edit operations or control the post processing of various video, audio, CG and image elements.

This would be a drawback to the Flyer system if it weren't for 3 things: 1) The Flyer lives in an Amiga; 2) Amigas have ARexx; and 3) The Flyer systems have extensive access to functions and data through their ARexx ports.

This ARexx access has brought forth a number of very creative third party products that integrate Amiga's powerful software with Flyer functions to shore up the Flyer's weak spots and provide one of the most flexible and capable nonlinear video systems available.

One of the long time names in this growing list of integrated Flyer ARexx products is Control Tower (CT) from Visual Inspirations and Merlin's Software. Control Tower allows you to assemble a list of image files or video clips, select a processing tool from a long menu of ARexx functions, and then automate the actions of the Toaster, Flyer and ImageFX tools to perform that process on all the listed files.

I explored Control Tower using a basic Flyer system consisting of a stock Amiga 4000T with a 25 MHz 040, OS-3.1, 18 Mb RAM, Video Toaster 4000 and, of course, the Flyer cards and hard drives and 4.1 software. This system is a business tool for me so I avoid running much in the way of Workbench enhancements or background utilities. Beyond DirOpus and WShell, the testing environment was basically stock AmigaOS.

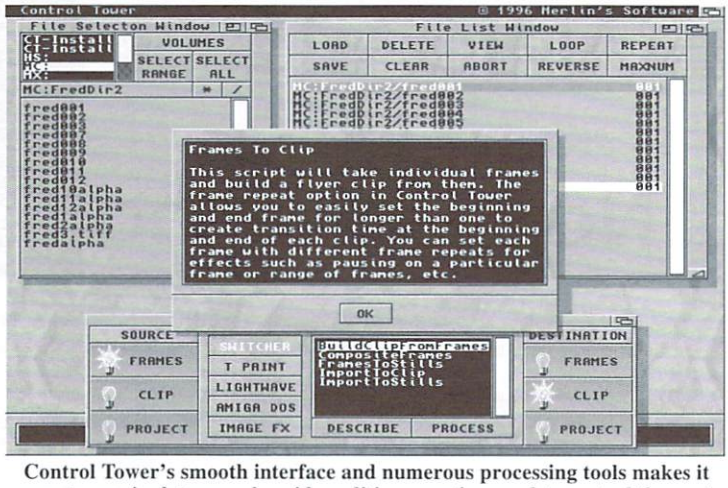
While Control Tower is quite functional as a front end for the Flyer alone, using the program to its full potential requires that you own Nova Design's ImageFX software as well. My testing of CT was done using ImageFX 2.6.

Installing CT is simple; just a double click on an icon and insert the second floppy disk at the prompt. The documentation is really only a pamphlet, but it covers the basic interface, configuration of the (cool) Flyer Menu utility, common new user questions, and a handful of very brief tutorials. Offsetting any shortage of manual pages is Control Tower's useful and usable on-line help where text windows display concise process descriptions and usage directions that can be called up at most any time.

Control Tower's main interface screen consists of a couple dozen self explanatory buttons located on 3 windows (see illustration). The first window is a slightly offbeat File Selector that I found rather limited in scope. It doesn't support any type of multi-select and was especially clumsy to use when pulling multiple files from within a longer sequence. In any case, this is where you navigate the system and select file names to add to the List Window.

The List Window displays the files selected for processing. It has a few more useful buttons for editing and modifying the file list. Multi-select blocks can be set up here using a shift-select first, select last combination. Files can be viewed, frame counts set, and the list files can be saved, loaded or appended.

The third window, the Process Window, is a nicely designed layout for setting the Source & Destination file types (FRAME, CLIP or PROJECT), and the processing tool (SWITCHER, T PAINT, LIGHTWAVE, AMIGADOS or IMAGEFX). Based on the settings of



Control Tower's smooth interface and numerous processing tools makes it easy to manipulate complex video editing opeations and to control the post processing of video, audio, CG and image elements.

Air Mail Pro

Since the last review (see Issue 10) of Air Mail, much has happened to this email program, including a new Air Mail Pro (AMP) version.

The new Air Mail Pro is easy to use. Controls are generally well laid out and intuitive. Getting email to and from both individuals and mailing lists is simple with this program.

I previously complained of the lack of BCC (Blind Carbon Copy). This is a normal part of a complete mail package, and should not be missing. BCC can keep mail headers to a manageable size when sending messages to large mailing lists. It can also protect the privacy of addresses on those lists. Air Mail Pro still does not support BCC, but it does have the ability to suppress the To: field. There will be occasions where you need real BCC, but this is a work around for many cases.

New features have been added. Mail Peek allows you to check your mail messages while still on the server, and only download those which you're interested in reading. Messages may be marked as read, unread or replied. Even PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) is supported. "Reply to all" is a welcome new feature, and there is even special support for Aminet updates.

You can set the interface up with large icons, small icons, or buttons. You can now cut and paste into all string gadgets, something sadly missing from most mailers. The new AMP can even be configured to bring up your web browser when you click on URLs embedded in messages, something available on other platforms but rare in Amiga mailers. We had a few problems with stability of this feature, but it does work.

Air Mail Pro supports multiple folders, and can use filters to direct mail to specific folders. You can configure multiple "helpers" to allow you to see or hear attached sounds, images and animations.

Attachments are handled well, though a slightly complex combination of add and

Source, Destination and Tool, you can then select one of the listed ARexx process functions. Hitting the DESCRIBE button here will open a text box explaining the function and usage of the highlighted macro. Selecting PROCESS will run the macro and initiate processing with an ABORT option available at all times.

The Control Tower suite also includes an extremely useful interface tool, called Flyer Menu, that may be the best feature of the program. When running, FM adds a large pull down menu listing directly on the Flyer Edit screen! The menu is accessible from the Flyer with a standard right mouse button operation and the entries can be set up to run Amiga programs, initiate Flyer functions, or execute macros. Flyer Menu can be run independently of the main CT interface, though CT is where the 40-item menu can be readily configured and even added to the Flyer startup script.

I put CT to work immediately compiling about 5,000 LightWave animation frames from Jaz disk files to Flyer clips for editing. I have assembled animations on the Flyer numerous times using a "Frames2Clip" type ARexx script that I have re-written to include automated processing of frames through ImageFX and better sequence control. My home spun methods, however, proved to be somewhat slower and a lot more brain intensive than using Control Tower for the same task. Since CT offered more than one process for compiling images to clips, it took a little experimenting to choose the most efficient. After that, CT ran the entire job without a hitch.

Once the animation project was out of the way, I also spent considerable time experimenting with CT's clip transitions & effects involving ImageFX. There are quite a few options and prepackaged effects macros in this area of CT, including transitions of ImageFX parameters over the length of a clip. These offer some interesting possibilities, but I would like to have found more input control of transition factors like duration, delay, direction and limits.

Trying all the provided CT processes and combinations could keep you busy for a month. Control Tower invites experimenting and it seemed like every time I sat down to it, I found another set of processes to try. Of the couple dozen that I did explore, all worked as advertised.

Overall I found Control Tower to be a solid tool with a lot of applications and potentials. I have to add, however, that in light of the program's weaker areas and lack of more extensive controls for effect transitions, I think that the suggested retail price of Control Tower is definitely on the high side. Given the pricing and the fact that some of the project operations are better done in other available products, I have to give it a B rating.

One final note is that Control Tower is just one of a suite of effects & batch processing tools from Visual Inspirations. Other offerings provide user-friendly front end controls for a number of Amiga products including other disk recorders, 3D packages and several Amiga image processing packages. With the recent releases of ImageFX 3.0, Aladdin 4D and Photogenics NG, this review may be rather timely after all! Those new Visual tools might supply the needed inspirations to invent even more creative program control products!

Control Tower retails for US$249.95, but can be purchased from most Amiga dealers for considerably less. Visual Inspirations, 809 West Hollywood, Tampa, FL 33604; http://www.vionline.com; 813-935-6410

Rating: B

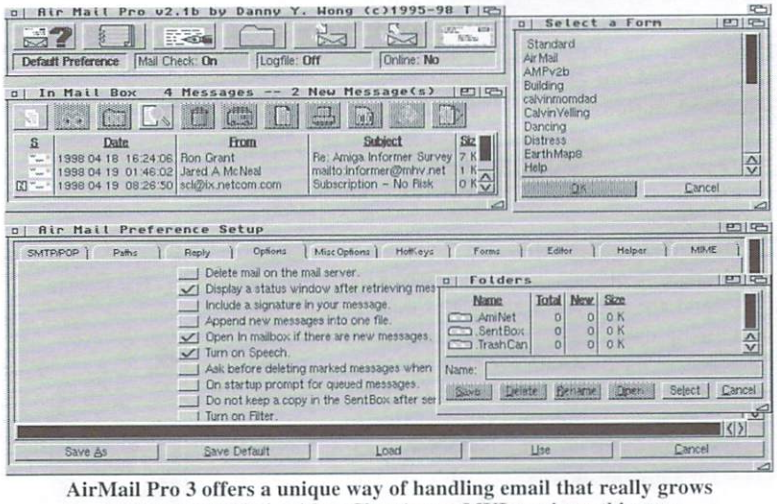
By Aaron Ruscetta

save buttons must be used. Done once, it's not difficult to remember. You have your choice of MIME or uuencoding for the attachments, a good feature.

The latest version does many tasks with a program module called Super Mail Box. This allows you to continue reading and writing messages, while Super Mail Box handles sending, retrieving, filtering, spam control and the like. Yes, we said spam control, a switchable feature. This is a very good idea, though only a longer test than we could provide would tell how well it handles all cases. Danny Wong is to be commended for including it.

Along with the changes noted, Air Mail Pro retains the unusual features of Air Mail. These include the graphical forms and true signatures that can only be used when communicating with another user of Air Mail Pro. Finally, there has been a continuous development effort by Toysoft Development. They are clearly dedicated to swatting any program bugs, and improving their product.

Over the weeks I used the new Air Mail Pro, I found myself turning to it in preference to the mailer I'd been relying on for years. That says a lot about the comfort level it established. It proved to be reliable and capable. We did have a few unexplained crashes, but they were few and hard to duplicate.



AirMail Pro 3 offers a unique way of handling email that really grows on you. Available in either ClassAct or MUI versions, this program is the most feature-rich Amiga email client around.

Air Mail has pulled itself up to a B+ grade with the new Pro version. Add true BCC, make it a bit more stable and it would rate an A. If you're in the market for a mail program, this is one you must check out.

Air Mail Pro is a commercial product of Toysoft Development. It requires Amiga OS 2.1 or later, and 1 Mb of RAM. You'll also need a functioning connection to the Internet. Air Mail Pro is available from many Amiga dealers or direct from Toysoft for around US $40. The current version is 3.0. Visit www.toysoft-dev.com for full details.

Rating: B+

By Brad Webb

MasterISO 2

MasterISO v2 is a CDR/RW authoring package from Asimware that allows you to create Data and Audio CDs on your Amiga. The software comes on one floppy and installation is a straightforward matter of launching the installer and selecting a drawer. When the program is launched it brings you to a menu where you can select the type of project you would like to create. From here beginners and experts alike will find it extremely easy to create their own CDs. Pull down menus allow you to create or close the projects from anywhere in the program and there are keyboard equivalents for each pull down menu selection.

The first step is to ensure your hardware is up to the task, which is accomplished by clicking on the test hardware button from the main menu. Here it takes you to screens where you can test your CD-ROM drives, hard drives and CD writer. This step is not actually required but should be performed the first time out as it gives you a good idea of attainable speeds and it ensures your hardware is functioning properly.

Next you can begin the recording process by creating a new project from the pull down menu. CD to CDR copying is by far the simplest method of recording. All that is required is selecting 'CD to CDR' from the main menu, selecting the source CD and the destination CDR, then clicking write. The program will duplicate the CD without burdening the user with details of file formats and the like. There are also advanced options available for more experienced user, such as, the write format (TAO or DAO), write speed, whether or not to use an intermediary hard drive, and buffer sizing.

Since CDs last a lifetime, can store a good amount of data, and are fairly fast, they lend themselves well to the task of backing up data. Master ISO makes this an effortless process. Again create a new project, select 'hard drive to CDR' and you are presented with a directory tree of files to write to CD. Click on 'add' and a requestor pops up showing drives available. If you want to write an entire hard drive to the CDR, select the drive then click on OK. Master ISO will automatically load all the files and directories contained in that volume into the directory tree. You can also select files to be added on an individual basis.

Many Amigans will want to create their own audio CDs. This process is very similar to creating the data CDs. Simply select the audio files to be written and the order

continued on page 11

Game Zone

Prototype

Review

Prototype from F1Software America is a new fast paced target shooting game similar to Capone, Predator, Zombie Apocalypse or Operation Wolf. With your mouse or CD32 joypad you place cross hairs over enemy soldiers and targeted objects and blast away as fast as possible. This type of game is always a great tension reliever; it's just plain fun reeking havoc with a machine gun. The colorful graphics are well done and if you have a 68030 or better processor, parallax scrolling and increased frame rates are enabled.

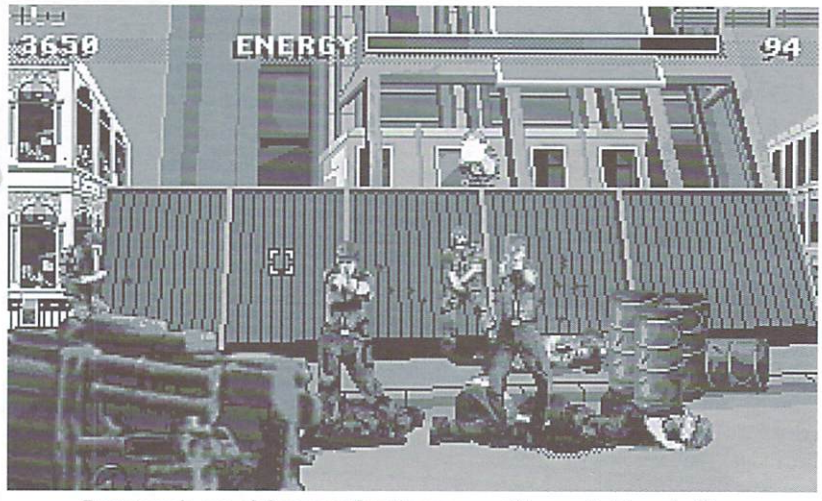
Prototype also has some decent digitized sound effects of speech, explosions and music that plays during the intro, credits, and high score screens. There is more to this game than just shooting at bad guys who are trying to shoot at you. You must take out fuel drums for energy & bonuses, towers, enemy aircraft, incoming missiles, and avoid shooting wounded allied soldiers and gasoline pumps, etc. You can also acquire missiles and armor piercing bullets adding even more to the excitement. As I mentioned, the game works with either mouse or CD32 joypad, but I found the mouse to be much more fun as it gives you a higher degree of control.

My major complaint with the game is that when you are killed you have to start at the very beginning; there's no save option or continuing on at the level you died. Also, even with the difficulty set on easy, it's still pretty tough; which seems typical of Euro-games.

The game will run just fine in NTSC, but it's almost too fast to be playable. I highly recommend putting your machine into PAL display mode before playing the game. It looks better and the pace is quite a bit more reasonable.

Prototype comes with its own hard-disk installer and good accompanying installation documentation. The game installed and ran flawlessly on both an A1200 '060 and an A600 '020. Prototype's easy installation and high degree of stability impressed me very much. I've bought expensive commercial games recently and they could take lessons from Prototype's reliability. Adequate on-disk documentation is included.

There's a lot to be said for a game that is fun as well as challenging and Prototype is definitely both. I think Prototype is a good value at US $13.50 (plus $3 S&H) considering that it comes on five disks and works on virtually any system. Minimum requirements for Prototype are any 2.0 OS Amiga with 2 Mb of RAM (yes, it will run



Prototype is one of the many fine licenseware titles available and offers commercial quality graphics, sound, and game play at shareware prices.

from floppy), but it recommends an A1200 with 2 Mb chip RAM, 2 Mb fast RAM, and a hard drive. Prototype is impressive considering it was developed by an individual, not a development group. I give it a B rating that would be upgraded to a B+ if a save option was added.

It is available in the US only through Mushroom PD, 75 North Perry Street, Elizabethtown, PA 17022-1146. Payment can be in Check or Money Order made payable to Andy Kellett. A free demo and catalog of hundreds of other Licenseware titles can be found at http://www.mushy-pd.demon.co.uk/f1software/.

Rating: B

By Jerimy Campbell

Licenseware is a fairly new method of selling and distributing quality software. It differs from other types, such as Shareware and PD, as the programmer will always receive a small royalty payment from each copy of their program sold. The price of licenseware is generally less expensive then shareware. Licenseware starts from as little as $6.50, and catalogs usually contain descriptions of the game and comments from any written reviews. Demo versions are usually available to try out first. Because Licenseware titles are closely inspected before being placed on the market, a high quality is usually assured. Licenseware titles are also exclusive to the distributer so you cannot find them anywhere else other than the legal distributor. Licenseware offers a wide range of titles including high-quality educational software, utilities and games. F1 Licenseware is one of the bigger outfits and is distributed in the US by Mushroom PD. You can get a free catalog from www.mushy-pd.demon.co.uk/ f1software/index.html

Gilbert Goodmate And The Mushroom of Phungoria

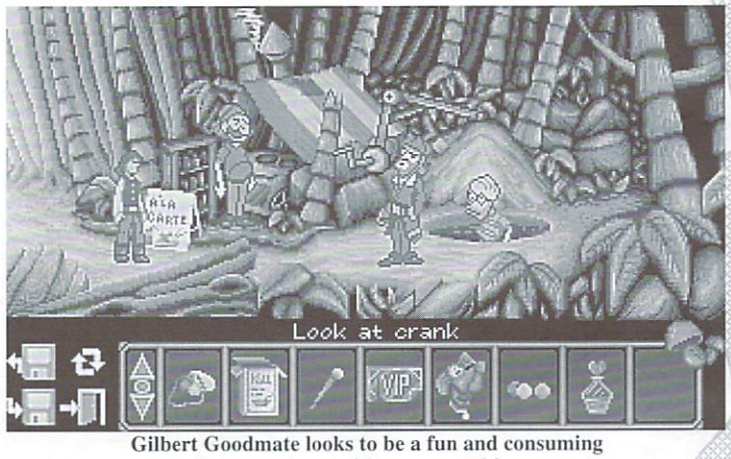
Preview

Gilbert Goodmate and the Mushroom of Phungoria is currently under development by Prelusion (a Swedish programming team) and will be published by Alive Mediasoft Ltd. Gilbert Goodmate is an adventure game that will be released on CD-ROM in the fall of 1998. I received a two level or two screen demo of the game and was very impressed. The Task in the demo is to find a plant rejuvenation recipe for your Grandpa's decaying mushroom and then find all the ingredients and somehow combine them.

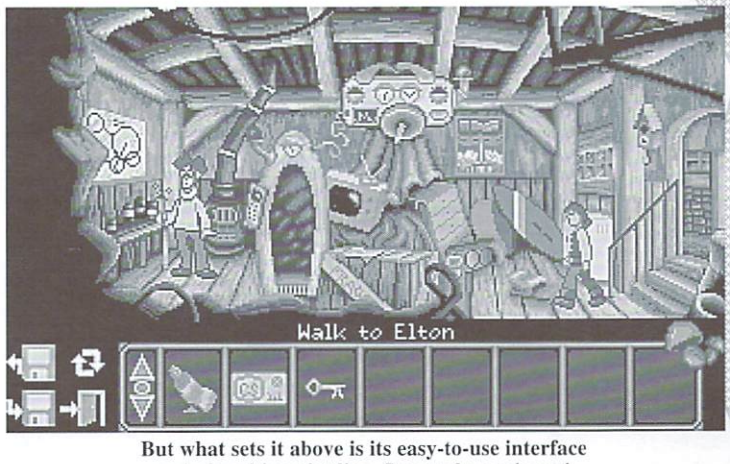
The goal in the actual game will be a bit different. You have to rescue your Grandpa from jail by proving he's innocence of not taking proper care of the town's treasured mushroom. I found it to be quite a lot of fun finding all the necessary items to complete the demo. The exquisitely hand drawn graphics actually resemble a cartoon more than a game, especially compared to similar games I've seen. The background graphics and animations are well done and fun to watch. The music and sounds playing during the demo are exceptionally clear and an absolute joy to listen to. The games intuitive interface is one of the most user friendly I've come across; everything is done with the mouse.

Many graphic adventure games take awhile to get familiar with, but I feel most people will pick this one up right away. The most amazing thing about this game is the minimum requirements. It will run on any Amiga with 68000+ CPU, OS 1.3+, 2 Mb RAM (at least 1 Mb Chip), hard drive, and CD-ROM, but it does of course take advantage of more expanded systems. I honestly thought that the requirements would be considerably higher due to the high quality of this game.

The finished version promises digitized speech for every character in the game, which is something I haven't seen in an adventure game yet. Adventure games have never really been quite my cup of tea, but there is just something irresistible about this one; so all you adventure game enthusiasts out there will most likely enjoy it immensely. I can't wait to try out the updated demo and full version myself. Keep your eyes peeled for it at http://home1.swipnet.se/~w-10215 or email andy@alive.demon.co.uk.



Gilbert Goodmate looks to be a fun and consuming adventure game with great graphics . . .



But what sets it above is its easy-to-use interface and absorbing plot line. Sure to be a winner!

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By the integration of fast PowerPC 603e processors for the A1200 PowerUp models and the high-end PowerPC604e processors for the A2000/A3000/A4000 PowerUp models, these Amiga models can be upgraded to performance levels that compete with todays fastest personal computer systems available. Independent reviews of the US computer magazine Byte have shown that a PowerPC603e-based computer achieved a performance level up to two times faster than a Pentium-based system with the same processor clock speed, while a PowerPC604e-based system at 200MHz still reached a performance of 20-60% beyond the performance of a 200 MHz Pentium Pro-based system. For the Amiga user who upgrades his Amiga with a PowerUp board this means that applications which are optimized for the PowerPC processor can run some 10 to 15 times faster than on todays fastest 68060 based accelerator cards (or some 30-50 times faster than a stock Amiga 4000) - really an impressive and breathtaking leap into a new dimension of performance!

The sophisticated PowerUp combination of hardware and software allows software developers to easily start porting their existing applications to make use of the superior performance of the PowerPC processor. phase 5 digital products has been shipping developer versions of the PowerUp boards to leading software developers worldwide since end of 1996, and has supported the start of the development of key applications for these new processor boards. Many leading Amiga software developers are already working on products that support the vast power of the PowerPC RISC processors, opening a completely new dimension for powerful applications, among them 3D and ray-tracing applications, image manipulation tools and paint packages, development packages, internet browsers, emulators and even games. With the release of the commercial versions of the PowerUp boards in 1997, an increasing number of commercial software applications that support the PowerUp can be expected; beyond that, a strong response by shareware and freeware developers and several PowerPC programming contests sponsored by phase 5 will support the upcoming release of many professional and powerful shareware/freeware tools for the new generation of PowerUp Amigas.

Solutions for everybody

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

Software that comes along with the PowerUp accelerator boards

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

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

CALL for prices

PowerUp specials for owners of phase 5 accelerators

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

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Both include built in Ultra SCSI III	
Cybervision 64 3D w/4MB Ram	$ 249
Scan Doubler for Cybervision 64 3D	$ 119
Blizzard 1260 (A1200) 68060 @ 50mhz	$ 589

CYBERSTORM PPC -150, -180, -200

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

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

Technical Data CYBERSTORM PPC Accelerator Board:

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

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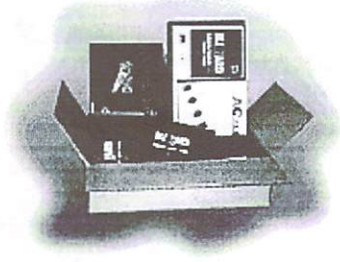

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w/Memory Management Unit.
Requires VXL 32 for memory expansion (A500 / A2000 Series) — 89

MicroboticsVXL30 68030@50Mhz
w/Memory Management Unit.
Requires VXL 32 for memory expansion. These brand new left over accelerator boards are from their last batch and are of the newest revision. Great for people who have a VXL 30 and want to speed up their system. (The older VXL 30 accelerators cannot be upgraded to 50mhz) If you're look ing for an inexpensive way to add a fast processing MMU, this is it! Plugs internally into the CPU SOCKET of Amiga 500 or 2000 — 99

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Audio Adventures

Rob has been a composer and student of the musical and recording arts for 18 years, and runs RBProductions, a recording & audio production studio in Connecticut. Email Rob with Amiga audio topics and questions you'd like to see addressed at cyrano@calweb.com. You can visit the RBProductions web site at http://www.calweb.com/~cyrano.

By Robert B. Pigford

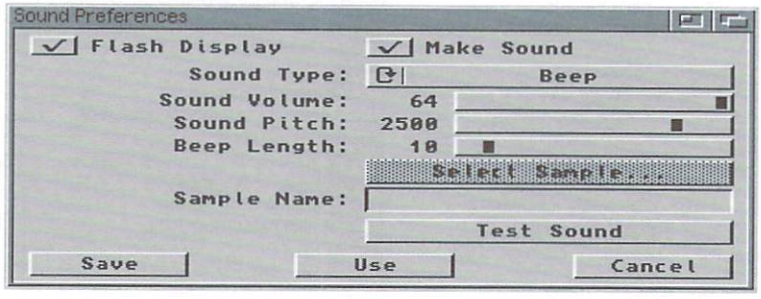
That's right – with the amazing Amiga computer, you, yes you, can make beautiful music! From rock and roll to rhythm and blues to rap and reggae, with an Amiga it's all at your fingertips. Just type a few keystrokes, then sit back and be surrounded by the aural genius of your own musical masterpiece. Amaze and impress your friends! Win record contracts! Hob-nob with the stars! Only Amiga makes it possible.

Sigh - If it were only that easy. Fact is, an Amiga does not a musician make (as many of the thousands of MODs on Ami-net demonstrate). The Amiga can make it easier though, and can be the hub of just about any audio system you can imagine.

In future editions of this column, we'll look at software, hardware and techniques to help you get the audio most out of your Amiga. First and foremost, let's get that Amy hooked up so we can hear something. Then we'll come back and look at more technical detail on how we're making that sound.

You'll need four pieces to put this together: An Amiga, a stereo RCA patch cable, an amplifier and speakers. The RCA cables are the same as those you've used if you ever hooked up a stereo system. The amplifier and speakers can be any of a thousand varieties. The Commodore 1084S and Toshiba TIMM monitors (among others) have amplifiers and speakers built in. You can use your home stereo by hooking the RCA cables from the Amiga to the AUX IN or TAPE IN jacks on the back of the receiver (DO NOT use the PHONO IN connections!).

Now we want to see if it's working, and we run into our first point of frustration– for all its audio possibilities, the Amiga OS comes with only one built-in sound–a beep! Well, let's try it anyway. Open up your Preferences drawer and double-click the Sound icon. A requestor should appear like the one in the illustration. This requestor is actually controlling what type of notice we get when the OS wants to get our attention (like when we make an error). Make sure the Make Sound box is checked, and press the Test Sound button. If all is well, you should hear a beep from one of the speakers. If not, try adjusting the volume (on the 1084S, etc.).



Notice the Sound Type selector box in this requestor. You have the option to make this attention sound any 8-bit IFF sample you like. Imagine Homer Simpson announcing "Doh!" or 2001's HAL saying "I'm afraid I can't do that" and you can start to see the possibilities.

Sound samples are available most anywhere you'd normally look for Amiga Public Domain software (Fred Fish, Aminet, Turtle Lightning, etc.). If you're fortunate enough to have the Aminet 2 CDROM, there is a whole directory (mus/smpl) loaded with samples that are not on Aminet anymore (likely due to copyright issues). The mods/smpl directory has quite a selection, too.

Ready for a whole bunch of terms in one sentence? Here goes: The Amiga is capable of stereo, four-voice, 8-bit real time playback, and output at line level.

Let's look at each of the terms independently. Stereo is something most of us are familiar with, as we generally have two ears. Our brain is able to discern the time lag between reception by our left and right ears, and uses this to tell us the direction of a sound's source. By the 1950s a memorable fellow by the name of Les Paul figured out how to make two-channel, or stereo, recordings.

If stereo means two, then what's this four-channel stuff? Think of the four voices as A, B, C and D, and the two channels as Left and Right. Now think of two of the voices standing to your left and two to your right. The Amiga can play any two voices simultaneously on a single channel. The 8-bit comes in when we look at how much digital information makes up each sound.

To avoid getting into too much detail now (we'll get into it when we talk about sampling in a future column), suffice it to say that 8-bit is good, but 16-bit is better, and most of the rest of the electronic music world has moved on to 16-bit. By storing more information about a sound, the computer is able to recreate it more precisely. The 8-bit Amiga is far from obsolete, however. Just as a talented artist can create

What Is a Decibel?

A decibel (abbreviated dB) is a measure of sound intensity. The dB range is logarithmic, not linear, which means the intensity goes up very rapidly. For example, a 10 dB sound is twice as loud as 5 dB, but 100 dB is three times as loud as 90 dB. Absolute silence is 0 dB, a normal conversation would be 50-60 dB, and a home lawn mower about 100 dB. Sustained levels over 90 dB can cause ear damage.

When naming a series of files with the date, use the format YYMMDD to make file requestors list them in the proper order.

beautiful art with two colors that a child couldn't produce with 8 different finger paints, many Amiga musicians are proving that creativity, talent and attention to detail are much more important than the latest technological gizmos.

You might be thinking, "If I have two 8-bit voices per channel, can't I have one 16-bit voice per channel?" Smart question –shows you're thinking. The answer is still no, sorry. It's not quite that simple, and has to do with hardware and speed limitations.

The line-level business means we can't just plug the Amiga's audio ports directly into speakers. Think of the Amiga's signal as more like that of a tape or CD player than a speaker level. Line level means the amplitude (think volume) of the signal is approximately -10 decibels (dB). Wait a minute, you say, 0 dB is absolute silence – how can a signal be quieter than silence? In this case, dB are used as a measure of electrical signal strength, not sound intensity. The audio output from the Amiga must be amplified in order to be audible. Hence, the amplifier and speaker combination we discussed while getting everything hooked up.

That's enough mumbo-jumbo for now. If you're feeling a bit confused, don't worry – you don't have to be a computer scientist or electrical engineer just to make music with your Amiga (though understanding some of the fundamentals never hurts). In the meantime, I want to hear from you – what audio questions and topics would you like to see explored in this column? Drop me a line at cyrano@calweb.com.

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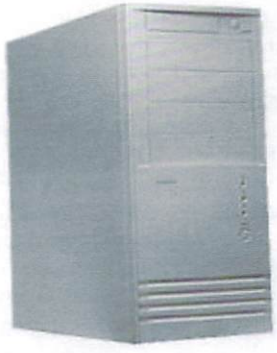

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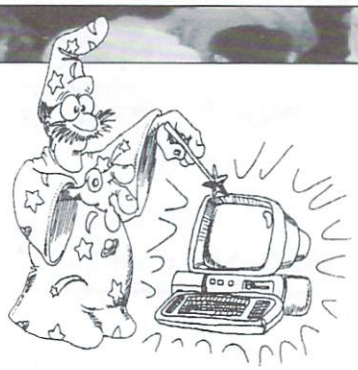

Oleg Moskalensky has been in the computing business for the past 17 years, working on a variety of hardware and software. If you have an Amiga related question you would like to ask the Dr., visit The Informer's homepage at www.amigainformer.com or send email to: pcs@accessone.com. You can also visit Oleg's webpage at: www.accessone.com/~olegm.

By Oleg Moskalensky

Question: I need information about converting graphic files from my PC to the Amiga. Adobe Photoshop 3 will save files in IFF format but obviously neither computer will read the others disks. Is there program that can be installed to help?

Answer: Part of the AmigaOS is a program called CrossDOS that has the ability to read/write PC-formatted floppies. If your files aren't bigger than the 720k double density floppy disk, you won't need anything special to transfer the files, Simply open your boot disk, find a drawer called Storage and within it find a drawer called DOSDrivers. Inside it you'll find an icon called PC0, Double click on PC0 to activate the above-described ability. Now you can insert either 720k PC floppies or 880k Amiga floppies into the same drive and the system will recognize which one is which. It will be totally transparent to all applications, except instead of using DF0: to reference the drive, use the PC0: if you want to reference a PC floppy.

If you need to have bigger size files, you could use a High Density floppy drive or you could always use the Internet to FTP the needed files from your PC to some server and then FTP them back to your Amiga from that server. If you wanted to do direct FTP from machine to machine you'll need to have both machines online and some sort of FTP server running on one of the two machines to make it work. Usually it's a lot easier in the home environment to simply get connected to your ISP, FTP the files to their server, then get offline. Once you've done that, get back online using the Amiga and FTP the files back. Alternatively, you could just email yourself all these files as attachments and then read your mail. Another approach would be to hook up a PC and Amiga via serial ports using a null-modem cable and then use any telecommunications program on both boxes to transfer the files. All of these approaches would work.

Question: I have an A2000 with a GVP 8-Up card, a GVP Hardcard+8 and a Derringer 030, running at 50Mhz. I've also just added a 1 Mb Agnus. I've got RAM on the hardcard, the accelerator and the 8-Up, amounting to 16 Mb, but my machine recognizes only 7 Mb.

Answer: Well, mixing and matching doesn't always work very well, especially if you don't use the software that comes with these boards. Back in the old days most RAM cards came with software, like AddMem, which allowed you to add that card's RAM to be used. If the software wasn't used, you didn't even see this RAM. Also, it makes a difference which RAM you add in first. So, if you have the docs for the cards, use the instructions there and try adding RAM, one card at a time. Make sure the RAM is recognized prior to moving to the next card's RAM. Also, you can try using the AddMem program, that used to come with older versions of Amiga OS (up until 1.3, I believe).

Question: I discovered how to start-up YAM when I click on a website email link, but it won't pass the Email address from IBrowse to the "To:" line of YAM. I can't even paste the address into YAM after saving the address to the clipboard in IBrowse. How do I make this work?

Answer: This part works using an ARexx script. You configure IBrowse to execute a small ARexx program that takes the needed info from it and then tells YAM what to do next. Do the following:
1) Pull up IBrowse's Network Preferences and select Email & Telnet tab.
2) Make sure to fill in the proper info in the Settings box to work with your ISP, and in the MAILTO: box click on Type: External, and in the Command: put in something like sys:rexxc/rx webmail.yam %h

The sys:rexxc/rx webmail.yam part simply means run an ARexx script called webmail.yam (which should reside in your REXX: directory). The "%h" part supplies the only needed parameter, which is the email address. Make sure to select Save Preferences in IBrowse and you're done.

Question: How do I unpack LHA'ed programs that I download from the net?

Answer: You'll need to have a program called lha, found on Aminet under util/arc. Simply copy the program into the C: directory of your system partition or disk. Most of the archives for Amiga use this format of compression. Anytime you need to unarchive a file follow these steps:
1) Download the archive to a directory or to RAM:
2) Open a Shell and go to a directory where you want to extract the archive to, i.e., SYS:archives/newarchive
3) In the Shell type "lha x disk:directory/file" (where <disk> represents the disk where the archive currently resides, <directory> represents the directory it is in, and <file> represents the archive name). For example, typing "lha x sys:archives/newarchive" would require that you have a file called newarchive.lha located in the sys:archives directory.
4) You can start using the newly dearchived files.

Please keep in mind that there are many other archiving utilities, such as zoo, lzh, etc., and dearchivers for them can be found on Aminet. Typically you can follow the same process by putting the dearchiver programs into C: and then using them from any shell session.

You can also find out what the various options are for archiving and dearchiving by simply typing the command without any options into a shell. For example, type "lha" and press return to get a listing of helpful info on options and usage.

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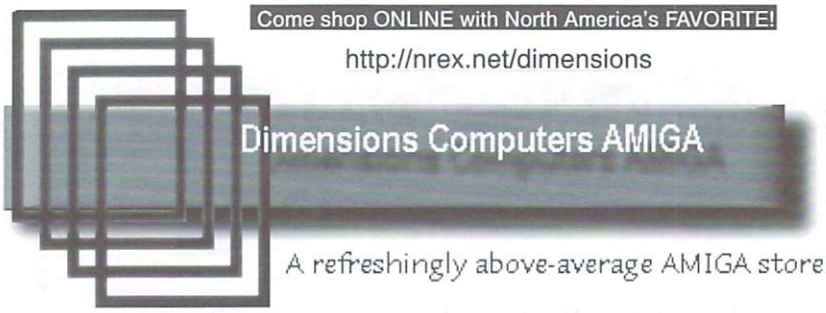

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For Sale: A2000 computer with lots of extras. Call Dennis at 715-743-4968 or email: maddoc@badger.tds.net

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For Sale: PAR card, tested and approved by D.P.S., 1.8 GIG Metropolis hard drive and all cables, software and manuals; $650. Call 516-937-1694

Wanted: Book: "Making Music on the Amiga", perferably with disk. Call 203-734-2867 or email <cyrano@calweb.com>

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Wanted: AFS Professional or AFS User. LZX Register version. Disk Expander. Also For Sale: 1 Mb GVP SIMM32 $10. Email: mrbig2000@aol.com

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While the AmigaOS doesn't discriminate between upper and lower case, selective use of capitalization does make organization easier and your directories easier to read. For Example: ArtForInformer. The use of an underscore is also a good idea, like Art_For_ Infomer. Never leave a blank space in a directory or file name as in can often cause problems. Also, the use of a "/" or ":" is not allowed.

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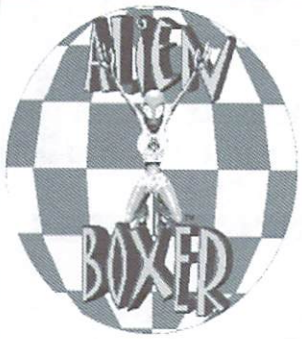

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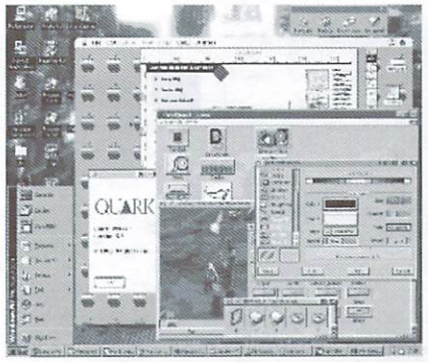

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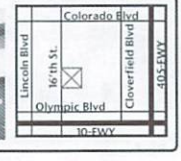

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Congratulations go out to **George Darr of Carrollton, IL**. George was the winner of the Amiga Informer Survey prize drawing and won a box full of over 21 software and hardware products. Thanks to every one for filling out our survey. We had well over 500 completed forms returned to us. Your input will help us bring you a better magazine.

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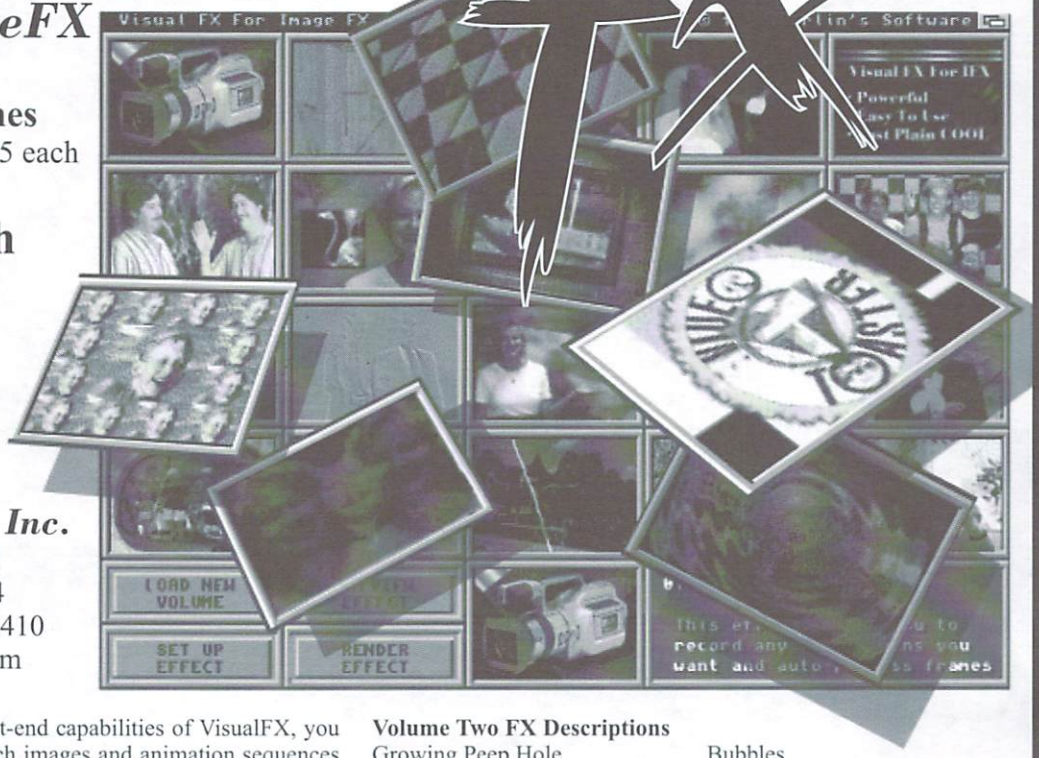

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- Slide Bar
- Fire Effect

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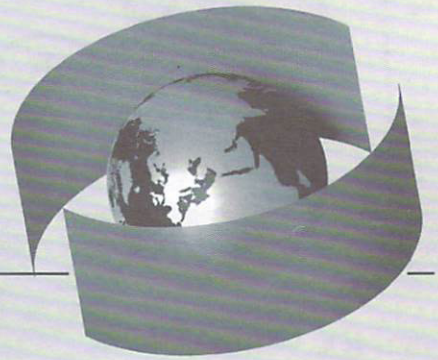

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