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ISSUE 13 OCTOBER 2000



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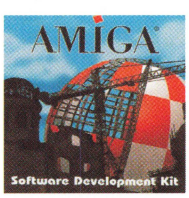


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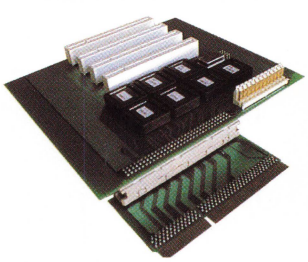
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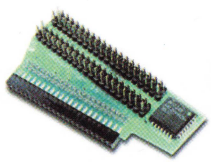


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See Page21 For Details

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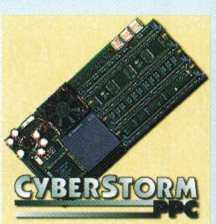
Blizzard 2040 40MHz 68040 - Inc SCSI	£269.95
Blizzard 2060 50MHz 68060 - Inc SCSI	£369.95
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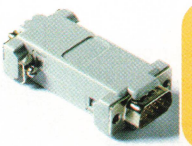
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ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

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Save pots of cash, and keep getting Amiga Active! How?

55 Gallery
The Cyber Insaniac Surfers. Sound crazy? Yes, they are.

58 Guru
Dodgy disks, problematic PPCs, absent apps...

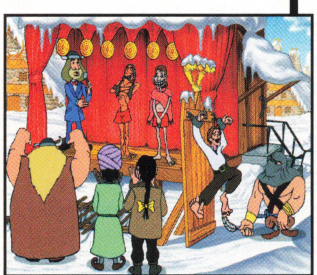
60 Online
The ins and outs of PHP explained, just for you.

62 Next Month
Maybe a bus. If petrol ever gets sold again.

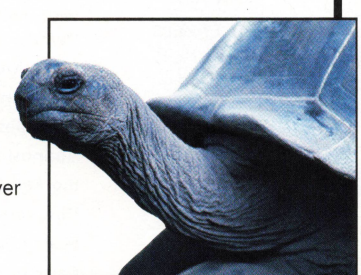
64 Retroactive
"Old and slow" Neil Bothwick gags aplenty!



10: An Amiga. A slow one. Argh.



44: Gilbert. He's here! Almost...



64: Must avoid 'one foot in...' gags.

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Previewing the next line in Amiga web browsers.

26 FXPaint 1.5
Continually evolving, now with even more features!

28 Istar
Knowledge is power, someone once said.

32 Monitor Roundup
Stare blankly at a screen, such as one of these.

34 Perfect Paint
Some claim! How good is this art package, really?

35 Wheel Mice
The wheel reason you need a real mouse. Er...

36 Shareware
See-through menus and colourful gadgets.

38 Ted, I've a iMac
A-ha! See if you can work that one out, clever clogs!

46 Hell Squad
That's its code name, don't you know.

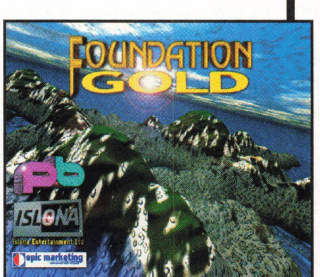
48 Foundation Gold
Like The Settlers, only your people walk on grass.



24: Browsers previewed.



32: Big (in some cases) and clever.



48: Play Gold. Or is that "God"?





Features

12 ECTS Show
The recent European Computer Trade Show had an extra visitor this year... us! Amiga Active reports from the Kensington Olympia exhibition centre.

14 SEAL Show
A busy month for shows! Not only did we sneak into ECTS, we popped along to the Northlands Park community centre in Basildon, Essex to meet up with the lovely people from SEAL.

15 Now we are One
We are borg. No really, we are. With wires and everything. Look! You will be assimila... assim... Oh, okay, it's just our birthday.

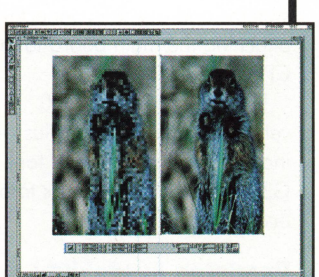
22 Napster
The digital music revolution may have to wait a while, given the recent controversy surrounding MP3 downloads. Allow us to explain the implications of it all...

40 Pagestream Tutorial
In this, the concluding part to our Pagestream Masterclass, we elaborate on professional quality printing from the Amiga using Softlogik's page layout program.


12: SEAL: Unexpectedly popular



15: Us: The best of.


40: Twin rodents invade Pagestream

AACD 13



We're now into our second year with another CD full of material that is useful, interesting, fun or any combination of the three. As always, make sure you double-click the Welcome icon the first time you use this CD (unless you use Autorun, of course).

What's on AACD13?
The Magazine drawer contains additional programs and information for articles in the magazine. We have a superb animation created with LithTech, as featured in last month's magazine. It wasn't ready in time or AACD12, but it is worth waiting for.

Games
Games players can find a good selection of games and addons. We have the long-awaited Nehahra for Quake.

Graphics
ImageFX users should look at Time Machine, described as "AutoFX on layers". The Graphic drawer also contains Perfect Paint, along with updates for SuperView and Frogger.

Online
This month's Online drawer contains a wealth of networking utilities. From proxy servers for those using their Amiga as an Internet gateway to the latest version of Samba, it's all here.

Resources
This drawer is on every AACD and contains a range of essential programs. If you get stuck, or you need to start again after a hard drive problem, this is the place to look.

Utilities
A real mixture of small utilities and large programs. Open it up and see for yourself!

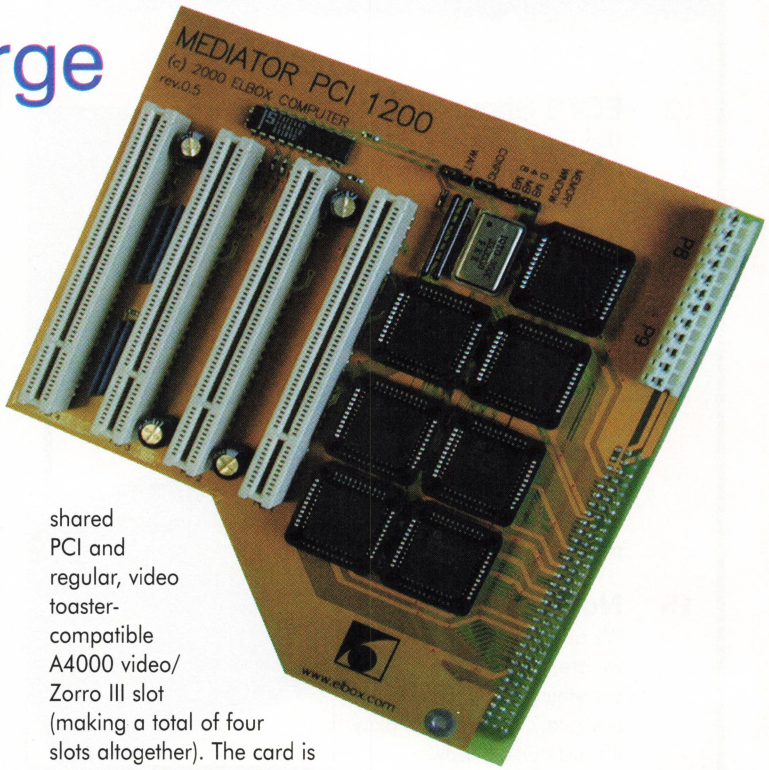
And there's more...
It's impossible to give more than a brief glimpse of some of the contents of the CD. Put the disc in your Amiga and explore the contents yourself.





Mediator & Predator PCI

More Details Emerge



Typical! Not only do we wait for years only for two to come along at once, but when PCI finally looks like making its way to the Amiga, confusion erupts.

Over the last month, rumours and accusations have been thrown around the Internet about both upcoming PCI busboards for the Amiga, the Mediator and Predator, resulting in much public confusion. *Amiga Active* talked to the various parties involved to discover and disseminate the truth about both cards.

The Facts: Mediator PCI

There was concern that the Mediator would have access to just 8MB address space. Manufacturers Elbox have strenuously denied this accusation, and have stated that the card allows access to the full 4GB of PCI address space through the Amiga's 8MB window via the Mediator's hardware.

Rumours that the performance of high-end PCI graphics cards would be crippled as a result of the speculated 8MB limit are also untrue, according to Elbox. Data exchange through the 8MB window requires *"execution of just 7 additional writing operations for over 8,000,000 writing operations."*

"In practice, transmission [of] over 8MB of data to a PCI graphics card is very rare, as [the] majority of modern PCI graphics cards memory is allocated for storing textures."

Elbox's Mini-FAQ is at: www.vgr.com/mediator/

The Facts: Predator PCI

In the news pages of our last issue, we reported on the development of the Predator PCI, AGP and SDRAM board, which was to be distributed by Eyetech. Whilst there are plans for such a card, Eyetech have confirmed that a PCI-only version will be manufactured first to ensure quick delivery of the product.

Therefore, there will be two versions of the card - the "Predator SE" and "Predator Plus" - both available in separate form factors for A1200 tower and A4000 desktop systems.

The Predator SE and Predator Plus for the A1200 will be based on identical PCBs, as will the two versions of the card for A4000 systems. Both versions of the Predator SE and both versions of the Predator Plus will contain the same logic, as they will all attach to the local bus connector on BlizzardPPC and CyberstormPPC cards respectively. These slots are identical on both boards and currently used for connecting BlizzardVision and CyberVision graphics cards.

"There will be two versions ... the Predator SE and Predator Plus."

The A1200 tower version will include three PCI slots and one AGP slot. It will fit in any tower capable of taking a Z4 busboard, as it will require the same mounting points and knockouts to be present in the tower case (Eyetech and Power Computing both manufacture such towers).

The A4000 desktop version of the Predator will come with two PCI slots, one AGP slot and one shared PCI and regular, video toaster-compatible A4000 video/Zorro III slot (making a total of four slots altogether). The card is essentially made up of two parts, with the main section intended to take the place of the Zorro riser in A4000 desktop systems and a small connector attaching the main board to the CPPC bus.

Both A1200 and A4000 versions of the Predator Plus will include an additional slot for G3/G4 and SDRAM cards to be accommodated.

Predator Availability

The design of the PCB for the A4000 version of the Predator SE is complete, with the A1200 form factor board expected to be finished around the time you read this. Testing of the A4000 Predator SE is expected to commence in early October with the board becoming available in good time for Christmas. The A1200 version will follow the A4000 version approximately four weeks later.

The Predator Plus is expected to arrive shortly after Christmas. A trade-in option will be available for those who wish to upgrade to the boards which will have functioning AGP, G3/G4 and SDRAM connectors, so potential buyers can rest assured they will not lose out by purchasing the Predator SE when it becomes available.

Next Month

The Mediator, which is being manufactured by Elbox and distributed by Power Computing, is now available for A1200 tower systems. It connects to the A1200's trapdoor expansion connector, with a pass-through for existing accelerator cards to remain attached and functional. We have one, it is pictured above and we will be reviewing it in full next issue.

Further info...

Contact the main distributors for each board:

Mediator: Power Computing +44 (0)1234 851500 or www.powerc.com

Predator: Eyetech +44 (0)1642 713185 or www.eyetech.co.uk

An Innovative Future?

Innovative, the German software company behind FXPaint and VHI Studio, have announced a new strategy for multi-platform portable applications. Citing diminishing sales and the slow rate of progress for hardware development in the Amiga classic market, Innovative will shift their emphasis to encompass Windows and Linux platforms, as well as the next generation Amiga.

Innovative will continue to develop and update their current software range for the original Amiga platform, but will be concentrating on developing their new core software technology, codenamed InNT (Innovative New Technology). Inevitably this means that development of their current software portfolio will slow down, but Innovative have made it clear that they will continue to support and develop all their current product lines.

Innovative are reluctant to release information about InNT at the present time, but claim that it will improve the look and feel of future applications, as well as making them more portable across multiple platforms.

Innovative toolkit?

They remain secretive about the exact nature of the technology to protect their intellectual property, but it would appear most likely from the limited information available that it is some kind of advanced multi-platform GUI toolkit. With the interface technology available on each platform, porting software would be a relatively simple task, taking days instead of months.

When InNT is completed, it will be used to produce new versions of Innovative's current line of applications, such as FXPaint, for multiple platforms. Innovative will be making upgrade deals available to existing customers and they aim to have InNT applications running on a range of platforms which will include Windows, Linux, MorphOS and the next generation Amiga, although the list has yet to be finalised.

www.innovative-web.de

Crystal Interactive Now Hiring

Now that Crystal Interactive Software have completed Gilbert Goodmate and the Mushroom of Phungoria for the PC, they are looking for talented Amiga coders to work on porting the title to the next Amiga platform.

"Unfortunately for us, the in-house team we do have is currently working on other projects, so we need to form a separate team for the conversion of Gilbert," Andrew Reed told us. *"We are looking for one already-formed development group or individuals that we can make into a new team. They must be able to code for the NG Amiga, so proof of previous work is required."*



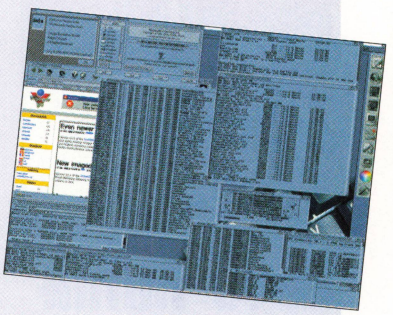
"We will be paying the development team as a whole once it has been set up. Terms will be discussed with those concerned."

Interested individuals or development teams are asked to contact Andrew Reed of Crystal Interactive Software directly, at the following e-mail address:

andy@crystal-software.com

News in Brief

MorphOS apps



A number of applications and utilities for MorphOS, the PPC native Amiga compatible OS and emulator, have started to appear. As well as ports of IXEmul, Asyncio.device, TD64 Fast File System, BZip, TAR and LhA, several larger scale applications have begun to appear, including PGP 5.1, UAE, AHI, Frogger and the image decoders for Voyager. Software developers will find working on MorphOS easier thanks to ports of VBCC, GCC, and Barfly.

www.morphos.de

REBOL gets a better View

The latest experimental release of REBOL/View available to download from the Rebol web site now stands at a rather cryptic 0.10.31.1.1. The Visual Interface Dialect (VID) has received an update and a new start panel has been added since the last release.

www.rebol.com/xpers/xpers.html

LinuxPPC 2000 installer

The LinuxAPUS (Linux for Amiga PowerUp Systems) team have announced the release of a LinuxPPC 2000 installer, available from the "Install" section of their web site. So, if you've ever thought of running another OS on your PowerPC hardware, now is as good a time as any to take a look.

http://linux-apus.sourceforge.net

fxScan 3.0 soon

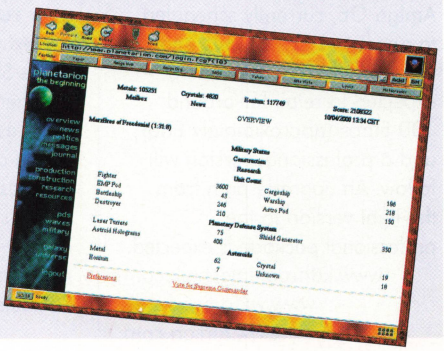
Innovative have announced that they will shortly be releasing a significant upgrade to their fxScan scanning software. Improvements include the use of PPC where available for JPEG encoding and an intelligent OCR (Optical Character Recognition) routine for turning scanned text into ASCII. FxScan will cost 69DM (about £23) with a discount of 10DM (£3) for people upgrading from version 1.0 or 2.0.

www.innovative-web.de

On-line game becomes on-line fiasco

Planetarion, the massively multi-player on-line space strategy game which has become popular amongst Amiga users (because it uses a standard web interface) has become embroiled in controversy.

The Norwegian game, which has become successful enough to attract a partnership with UK on-line gaming giants Barry's world, has suffered unprecedented levels of player protest due to significant gameplay changes made during the middle of a round. The gameplay changes, designed to redress the balance of power between large and small players but likely to have the exact opposite effect, have caused many players to leave the game. Others have threatened to follow.



www.planetarion.com



Have Taifun With The New Amiga!

WK Artworks and KDH Datentechnik have announced the development of Taifun, a special effects and animation package, for the next Amiga platform.

The successor to the award-winning special effects and animation package Wildfire 7/PPC, Taifun is currently being developed using Amiga's SDK and is making *"great progress."*

"We are confident that Taifun will develop into a 'killer app' for the new AmigaOne. We're investing into the Amiga future and feel certain that many other companies will pick up on the development or the conversion of Amiga Classic applications. For this purpose, we highly recommend the Amiga Software Developer Kit in conjunction with the Amiga Inc. support feature to all developers." said Andreas Kuessner at WK Artworks.

Taifun's release will be scheduled to coincide with that of the AmigaOne, Amiga's first planned device to run the new Amiga OE, currently scheduled to appear in Q1 2001. A 'light' version will be released first, expected to retail for around 100 Euros (approximately £60) and a professional version will follow. An upgrade path from the light version to the professional package is expected.

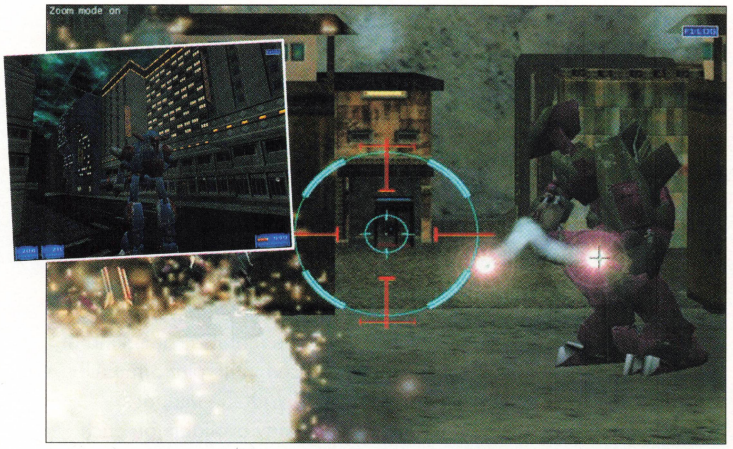
www.kdh-datentechnik.com
www.wk-artworks.de
www.amiga.com

Shogo Approaches

Hyperion Software's work continues apace, with the Amiga version of Shogo: Mobile Armor Division nearing completion. Linux and Mac versions of the PC title are also approaching release, as Hyperion's Thomas Frieden explains:

"Things have been progressing rapidly in recent weeks after the completion of the software renderer for LithTech V2 (Windows) featured in Monolith's upcoming game 'Bots'. We are now about 98 percent done with the Mac and Linux versions and about 95 percent with the Amiga version. Most if not all remaining work revolves around the client and more specifically, the OpenGL renderer."

Hyperion's OpenGL hardware renderer is now virtually complete, boasting speed and image quality on a par with the DirectX version. The code that handles in-game sound for the Linux version of Shogo has been implemented in a way that will enable it to be ported with the minimum of effort to use AHI on the Amiga.



The video system used on Hyperion's Linux version of Shogo allows the user to switch between windowed and full-screen mode during the game - something that was not possible with the original PC version - and Hyperion are considering a similar approach for the Amiga version.

Meanwhile, SIMM-strapped users may be pleased to hear that memory consumption has been kept to a minimum (under 64MB) by some clever coding on Hyperion's part, forcing memory allocated to textures, models and sounds to be freed before loading a new level, with the welcome side-effect of reducing memory fragmentation.

Internal beta testing of the Macintosh and Linux versions of Shogo have now commenced, with the Amiga version expected to go into beta within a few weeks of this issue of *Amiga Active* going on sale. A demo is expected to appear shortly afterwards. More information is on Hyperion's web site.

www.hyperion-software.com

Amiga 2001

a 'change of place' odyssey

The 2001 Amiga St. Louis show will be taking place on March 30th-April 1st next year, in a new location. The Henry VIIIth hotel, which has been the venue for the show for some years, is being torn down to make way for a new runway at the airport.

Next year's show will be held at the Sheraton Westport Plaza, a rather better located venue with easy access to shopping, eating and entertainment facilities, and has a much larger 3,000 space parking facility. Further information about the show will appear on the Amigan St. Louis web site shortly.

www.amiga-stl.com

It's Frog vs. Dog vs. Cow!

The first beta release of Frogger 1.62 is now available for the Amiga. Frogger, the movie player which now runs on 68k and PPC systems - including WarpOS and MorphOS - now sports an improved Dolby Digital decoder (*"almost 80% faster"*) and even some new start images.

http://frogger.rules.pl/main.html

Meanwhile, preview 2 of AMP (AmiDog's Movie Player) has also been made available. Boasting AHI support for sound as well as triple buffering for CyberGraphX users, the CLI interface has been tidied up with the removal of some options that were never used.

www.amidog.com/amp/amp2.html

But that's not all... Epic Interactive have announced the successor to MooVID Pro as well! MooVID Pro 2 (no, really) should be available by the time you read this. Besides the usual optimizations you would expect from a whole new release, support for both PowerUp and WarpOS has been added. Owners of MooVID Pro (the first version) will receive preferential rates when upgrading. For more information, see Epic Interactive's web site.

www.epic-interactive.com

Next Generation Archive Format

Patrick Roberts and Wayne Martin have announced that they are developing a new archive format for the next generation Amiga. The AmiPak file format, written in VPCode, is intended to become a new standard for the Amiga OE platform, in the way that LhA has become the widely accepted compression format on the original Amiga.

AmiPak is claimed to be more compressive than any other popular compressed archive format, while compressing and decompressing at comparable speeds. The AmiPak handler program will offer a GUI interface for handling bzip, gzip, tar, zip and lha formats as well as the native AmiPak (.amp file extension) format. As well as single file compression, there will be support for package installation from a single compressed archive and self-extracting executables. A beta release of the AmiPak archiver is expected during October.

Another Storm Brewing



Haage & Partner have announced StormC 4.0, the latest incarnation of their market-leading C/C++ compiler for the Amiga. The most significant change to the package is that the compiler backend is now based on the GNU compiler - a change aimed largely at improving code portability between the classic and next generation Amiga platforms. It is anticipated that an Elate version of the compiler will be developed eventually.

The modified Storm-GCC compiler is said to be very compatible with the older Storm compiler, and supports both 68k mode and PowerPC using the WarpOS Hunk Format. Significant improvements have also been made to the IDE (Integrated Development Environment), particularly in the area of project management and network functionality.

Storm 4.0 supports CVS (Concurrent Version System) to track code changes from multiple users in the case of a team of developers working on the same code base. There is also a distributed Make function, whereby the same code can be compiled on several networked computers simultaneously.

Improvements to the IDE also concentrate on project management, with an internal documentation scheme for to-do lists and bug reporting as well as full hierarchical searching. There will also be an enhanced debugger.

StormC 4.0 will cost around 500DM (about £155), or 198DM (£65) as an upgrade. It will be released in October, and we hope to be able to bring you a review as soon as it is ready.

Editorial

A year? It feels like...

It is well known that time is in fact non-linear. A minute spent playing a computer game passes very quickly, while a minute spent waiting for a train may take several times longer. This is not merely perception, but fact - British Rail have acknowledged this by making the British Rail hour last 63 minutes in an attempt to make their trains appear to arrive when they are supposed to.

Time is not just elastic, it is also downright perverse. This is why time passes quickly when you are having fun, and slowly when you are bored. It is also why, on a month like this when freelancers are late with copy and review products are failing to turn up, deadlines hurtle forwards at a startling rate. Oddly, they manage to do this despite the fact that you are waiting forever for copy and products to arrive - a strange paradox.

There appears to be a similar mangling of the timelines for our readers, too. It usually only takes a couple of weeks before people start asking us when the next issue is due out. Despite this apparent stretching of time between issues, a lot of people seem surprised that *Amiga Active* has now been going for a year. The only explanation I can come up with is that reading a copy of *Amiga Active* takes a negative amount of time, although this would contradict Einstien's laws of special relativity, which determine that it is impossible for information to travel faster than the speed of light.

However, the truth of the matter is that *Amiga Active* is a year old. Given that many people were dubious that we would last beyond three issues, we are very happy about this. While the process of honing its content will continue for as long as the magazine does, I think that over the year we have managed to develop *Amiga Active* into something that all of us on the team can be proud of.

Give a wave, Dave

While the magazine is very much the product of a whole team of dedicated people, I'd like to take this opportunity to sing the praises of one particular team member, Desk Editor David Stroud. I first met Dave when he came to CU Amiga to get some work experience during his Journalism degree course. He impressed us enough that we took him on as a freelancer and invited him to come back for more. When I was contacted by Publisher Mark Hinton about editing this magazine, the first thing I did was propose he hire Dave.

Apart from any other qualifications, Dave had the advantage of living just outside Bournemouth, where *Amiga Active* is published. I edit the magazine from outside the editorial office (I am too much of a city boy to move from London), so to make this arrangement possible, Dave has acted as my right hand in the editing of the magazine. Although he came to *Amiga Active* with little professional experience, he has picked up the necessary knowledge at an impressive rate. Perhaps time dilation has something to do with it.

Over the next few months, I will be sharing an increasing amount of Editorial responsibility with Dave. This makes sense as, being in the office every day, he is already the number one point of contact between the magazine and the industry. It also makes sense because, quite simply, he has earned it.

Andrew Korn



Rants and Raves

In defence of ...the PC?

One request we receive from readers from time to time for more controversy in Rants & Raves. For those of you who've asked - this one is dedicated to you.

Being controversial is easy. You just have to say something that people are likely to disagree with. It is not, as at least one computer games journalist thinks, simply being mindlessly objectionable. Genuine controversy requires that an argument can be argued with reason and rationality, yet is counter to the feelings of many. In the Amiga world, one of the most fondly held beliefs is that the inelegance of the PC compared to the Amiga are such that Amiga Inc. would be criminals to use PC hardware for their next generation machines. I disagree, and here's why.

First of all, let me explain my terms. When I am talking about the PC here, I am referring to a hardware platform based on the Intel x86 family of processors and compatible processors from other manufacturers. This hardware platform is hugely varied in the details, but all the versions of it are fundamentally compatible in terms of the hardware and the way the hardware hangs together, allowing them to share the same software. What I am not talking about is Windows - I do not care to defend the indefensible. The x86 PC platform is a computing platform that is capable of running Windows, but it is also capable of running Linux and many other Unix variants, QNX RtP, the new Amiga OS and BeOS, as well as countless other minor and embedded operating systems.

Legacy: horrendous

Many people will point out that OS issues aside, the x86 platform architecture suffers in comparison to others - the horrendous legacy issues, the hotch-potch way chip designers have forced compatibility onto their CPU cores, the historical bottlenecks in the underlying architecture. Yes, it's absolutely true that there are many, many flaws in the design. However, from the user's perspective, the important thing is how well it operates. It's possible that a PowerPC based system coul be 50 percent more efficient at an given clock speed, but if your x86 system has a 50 percent greater clock speed, then it balances out. The x86 may have many architectural disadvantages, but it has one major advantage - ubiquity.

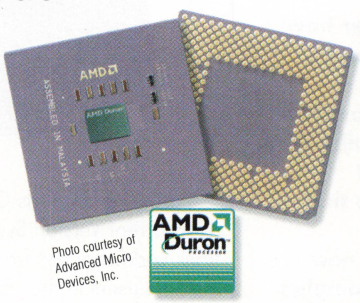


Photo courtesy of Advanced Micro Devices, Inc.

"...I do not care to defend the indefensible."



Photo courtesy of Intel Corporation.

The x86 is the de facto standard for desktop computing. More than 90 percent of all desktop computers use this type of hardware, and it is made by various competing manufacturers, each fighting for their share of this huge market. The result is that manufacturing is done in huge quantities, and prices are very low. The PC platform has simply had so much research and development behind it, that brute force has compensated for many of the flaws.

For the top end systems where money is no object, x86 is not the right way to go. However, for most people, the advantages of this hardware - being not far from the best at far cheaper prices, and being available in every high street - count for an awful lot. With the new Amiga OS caring very little what the underlying hardware is, we really need only consider the performance it achieves and the amount it costs. While I hope there are options in the future to buy Amigas based on Alpha, Arm and PPC processors, we would be making a grave error to dismiss x86. Machines based on this architecture can be made easily, quickly, cheaply, and to a high quality.

All-in-one

In low-end systems, the work on integrated x86 motherboards offers a very easy route to a sub £400 A1200 style all-in-one machine. This territory, ce Amiga's, is now PCs using Intel's 810 chipset, which includes graphics, sound, modem and Ethernet on a cheap motherboard. Art-X have developed a motherboard chipset which has 3D graphics rated at 12.5m polygons/second, with cutting edge features such as transformation and lighting. Similarly, processors offer a great deal of CPU power for their price (a 650MHz AMD Duron is half the price of a 50Mhz 68060, and while it may not be the most advanced processor on the planet, it's really rather good). If we want to regain this territory, we should use this hardware.

If Amiga can provide an operating system with the simplicity of the original Amiga OS, without the major bottlenecks of Windows, and at a cost which is more suited to this end of the market, the x86 platform can serve them - and their customers - very well indeed.

Andrew Korn A

Rants and Raves

Don't just stand there...

Chris Green tries to persuade the world that nothing is better than jam today.

At the last Kickstart user group meeting, I heard, sadly not for the first time, someone turn round and remark: *"No - I'm saving my money for the new Amiga"* when advised to make a small upgrade in the form of a new serial port.

At this point I could have screamed - in fact, I think I did. Only in the Amiga community would I hear people who are clearly not early adopters pledging all their future spare cash to a new platform that they haven't seen, often don't understand and have no other excuse for buying other than their misconceptions of what it will be and will offer.

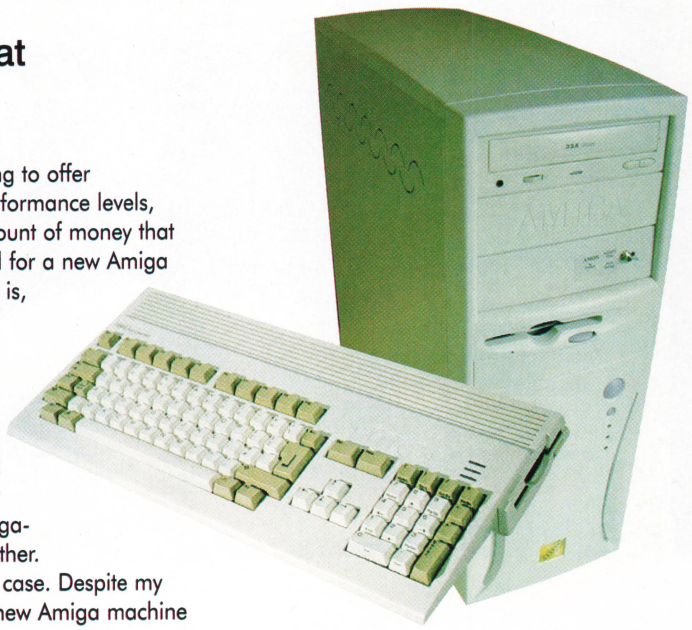
But what is most infuriating is that people are prepared to stop all spending on their current Amiga while they await this new creation, despite the fact they are still actively using it, and instead talk and complain about what they would like to do now with their computer but can't.

Rethinking requirements

Recently I finally forced myself to rethink my computing requirements - casting an eye around my study I saw several PC's, my Windows 2000 server, my Mac and three Amigas - my 4000, my 3000 and my ridiculously over-expanded towered 1200. After much consideration and examination, I decided that these days, I do not do enough on the platform to justify having three machines. However, I do still use it enough that one high-spec machine would do nicely.

So I set about selling off my 1200 and 3000. I then took from them any expansions I still wanted and that would fit the 4000, and used some of the money from the sale of the other two to fund the necessary expansions I needed for the 4000 to give me the level of enjoyment I sought.

Now, I could have hung on to a desktop 4000, with an '030 CPU card, 16MB of RAM and a couple of devices hanging off the internal IDE port, struggling to offer anywhere near decent performance levels, and pocketed a large amount of money that probably would have paid for a new Amiga once they appear. Trouble is, I would be left with an Amiga that would no longer do what I want it to or excite me, and probably would have started a downward spiral that might have eventually led to my leaving the Amiga-owning community altogether.



Thankfully that isn't the case. Despite my commitment to buying a new Amiga machine in the future, I was still committed to investing in my current machine to make it do what I want from it, and so as I write this on my newly towered 4000, with all seven Zorro slots full, I await my '060 PPC card and CyberVision PPC to arrive - and still have a few quid left over to stick towards the new Amiga when it appears.

"Trouble is, I would be left with an Amiga that would no longer do what I want it to or excite me..."

I still accept, though, that for some people the Amiga may no longer be able to do what they need it to do and that there may not be an upgrade available to fill the hole for a justifiable price. It was just such a scenario that brought me to the Amiga from the Amstrad CPC many years ago.

Early adopters

I have already committed myself to buying one of the upcoming new Amiga-based machines when they appear, but for me there are unique reasons for this. As a journalist in the computing press I need to be an early adopter so that I can advise others before they take the leap themselves. If you are actively using your Amiga, you should be prepared to invest at least something into it when necessary to continue your enjoyment of it. There is no fun sitting on your wallet waiting for a new platform that at best is months away, and even then will be unlikely to immediately boast all the features you would need to upgrade your current Amiga to enjoy.

In closing, I'll leave you with this final thought: I've pre-ordered Sony's PlayStation 2, and I am totally committed to buying it. Yet I continue to use my PlayStation 1, and most importantly, I continue to spend money on both software and hardware for it.

As with the Amiga, some of this spending will be of use on the new one, some won't - the important thing is that I am getting the benefit and enjoyment from it now, instead of sitting around being miserable, waiting for a next generation machine to come along that may or may not be the right thing for me!

Chris Green A



ECTS

Amiga may not have had a presence at this year's European Computer Trade Show, but plenty of other companies were in attendance. Including *Amiga Active*...

Every September for years, the Kensington Olympia exhibition hall has been the venue for the European Computer Trade Show, the premier UK event for the computer entertainment industry. It provides a forum for buyers from around the world to strike deals, and companies to show off their latest technology. It is also the number one event in the UK games industries' calendar for bored games coders to drink beer with their colleagues and ogle the "booth bunnies" hired to stand around looking good, usually in some game-related costume.

Two of the companies exhibiting at this year's show have been closely associated with Amiga Inc. - Criterion Studios, who are developing their impressive Renderware 3D games development toolkit for Tao's Elate, the Amiga Foundation Layer OS, and Matrox, the Canadian graphics processor company that recently linked up with Amiga.

Matrox

Matrox were there to promote their new G450 graphics card. Based on the same technology as the G400 that has been Matrox's flagship product for the last year, the G450 offers significant enhancements through an improved architectural design and a die size shrink to 0.18 microns.

A high grade 360MHz RAMDAC (Digital to Analogue Convertor), 256 bit wide Dualbus architecture with 32MB of DDR (Double Data Rate) RAM and the new Vibrant Colour Quality technology offer very high image quality with resolutions up to 2048x1536 in 32bit colour - either in 2 or 3D.

Environment-Mapped Bump Mapping, a 32 bit Z buffer, trilinear filtering, stencil buffering, anti-aliased vectors, vertex and table fogging and specular highlights are available to the 3D rendering array. While some of the most modern features such as Transformation and Lighting (T&L) don't put in an appearance, the 3D performance is high and the image quality superb.

The G450 also boasts dual head as standard. With two outputs at the back of the card, it can utilise two monitors to get a greater desktop area, or can use the second display as a slave to the first, mirroring it, zooming in on part of it, and outputting it to a TV set if desired.

"We pressed Matrox on the subject of the G800..."

We pressed Matrox on the subject of the G800, rumoured to be their next generation graphics processor that will be included in the AmigaOne, but Matrox weren't saying anything beyond *"there are always rumours..."* Of course, they weren't denying that they were developing a next generation of hardware, they just wouldn't tell us anything more about it, except that the

timeframe they are hoping to reach is about the same as the timeframe Amiga have already talked about for the AmigaOne.

The Matrox staff were from Matrox UK, and haven't had any direct experience of the Amiga partnership - all they could tell us was that they had *"seen the press release."* We seemed to know rather more about it than they did at the time, but they were eager to know more and enthused by the possibilities the partnership offers. I'm sure we will be hearing more from them in the near future!

Criterion and Renderware

Criterion were out in force at the show, demonstrating the growing power of their Renderware system. The idea behind Renderware is that it is a cross-platform API set, but it utilises a plug-in architecture to allow optimisations for different hardware platforms. On display, for example, was a particle effects plug-in for the Playstation 2, which utilises the vector units in the Emotion Engine CPU. Various technology demos on show at the stand demonstrated the capabilities of the Renderware system, and impressive they are too.

This being a show for the computer games trade, much of the emphasis of the Criterion stand was the development environment Renderware provides. On show was Codewarrior for Renderware and a rather nice plug-in for 3D Studio Max (one of the standard 3D rendering packages used in the games industry) which allows models, textures and lighting to be output to any Renderware target system specified by a network IP (Internet Protocol) address (in this case they used a PlayStation 2) for instant previews.

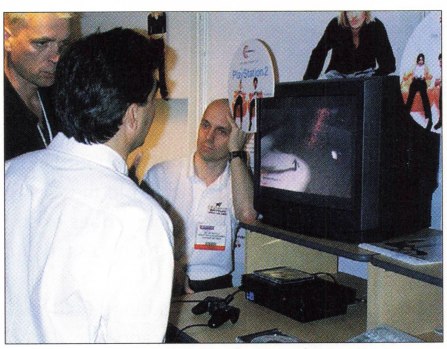
According to the blurb available at the Criterion stand, Renderware is a cross platform system that runs on Playstation 2, Dreamcast, PC and Macintosh, although they will also offer, in the future, Linux, STBs (Set Top Boxes) and *"a couple of platforms we can't talk about."* We don't know whether they are meant to be talking about XBox yet, but one of the Criterion team didn't seem to mind mentioning that they were developing for that - and also that they weren't bothering with the Dreamcast much any more, a common refrain from the show.

Whether Amiga and Elate are one of the platforms they can't talk about right now or not, we wouldn't like to speculate. It is part of Criterion's plan to get Renderware onto as wide a range of platforms as possible, including embedded operating systems which are likely to be used in STBs, such as VXWorks and QNX. Criterion did not seem to mind admitting that true portability is still a little bit of a dream due to the problems of having to scale models and textures to the hardware capabilities of the target platform. However, Renderware on Elate will offer another dimension to the cross platform potential of Renderware.

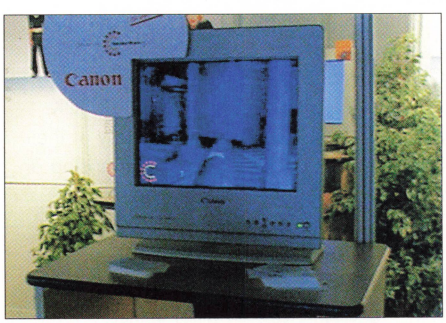


Above: Our friends from Canada.... well, Buckinghamshire, to be totally accurate.

Below: Criterion showing off the powers of Renderware.



"...Renderware on Elate will offer another dimension to the cross platform potential."



Above: *"Of course the photograph is only 2D..."*

2D in 3D

One very intriguing device on display was a 3D monitor from Canon (pictured above). Used to demonstrate a first person perspective Renderware game, this screen uses two fields directed through finely etched prisms to different eyes (a similar principle to those '3D' pictures with a coating of ridged plastic material) to produce a true stereoscopic effect without resorting to headsets, green and red glasses, or LCD shutter specs. The effect of viewing depth on a flat screen is surprising to say the least, but very effective - definitely a technology to watch. Interestingly this should be something that a computer that has dual head video output as standard (the new Amiga, for example, given the relationship with Matrox) will be at a great advantage in providing.

Elsewhere there was little to do with the Amiga, old or new. Motorola were there showing some of their new mobile phone / gaming systems, including the P1088 Timeport, powered by Intent JTE from Tao. Early versions of small, compact devices with colour screens were a glimpse into the future, capable of displaying far better images than the tiny monochrome screen on the Timeport.

The Dreamcast was conspicuous by being scarce, already written off by many developers (most Amiga games developers would be surprised to know just how few copies Dreamcast games sell). The Playstation 2 was in abundance, but showing little by way of truly impressive software. The most interesting thing Sony had to show was a technical demo of a future research project into video based controllers. This demo allowed people to stand in front of a computer with their arms outstretched, flying an aircraft in a flight sim by tilting their arms the way they want the wings to tilt. Another demonstration showed a first person perspective game in which a sword on screen followed the movements of a plastic sword held by the demonstrator. Elsewhere, the Nintendo Game Cube and XBox were shown behind closed doors and the hall was flooded with companies showing distinctly second-rate PC products.

Tamer than before

The stands themselves were in general not as wild and over the top as previous years - a result, one assumes, of the belt-tightening that the games industry has undergone recently.

One disappointment was the lack of an Amiga Inc. presence. While there's little point to them having a stand yet, ECTS represents the main opportunity for European games companies to discuss strategy and partnerships, and it seems to be an opportunity missed that Amiga did not have a representative there, if only to tell people that they are back. However, it's not long now until Amiga will be attending shows like this as exhibitors, and that's when the fun will really start!

SEAL-O-RAMA! 2000

Show Report

London's ECTS wasn't the only computer show held in September...

Sunday, September 10 was possibly the warmest day of the year. It was also the day SEAL (the South Essex Amiga Link) decided to hold their first ever Amiga show at the Northlands Park Community Centre in Basildon, Essex.

Despite the weekend being this issue's publishing deadline, *Amiga Active* attended the show to sell subscriptions and back issues of the magazine. Other Amiga retailers in attendance included show co-sponsors Analogic, Blittersoft, Eyetech, Gasteiner and Forematt Home Computing.

Games publishers Crystal Interactive Software were also in attendance demonstrating their new release Bubble Heroes (which we'll be reviewing next issue) and previewing their long-awaited adventure game, Gilbert Goodmate and the Mushroom of Phungoria - albeit on a PC. Response to the game was very positive, and Crystal are now looking for a team of developers to port the game to the new Amiga platform - see the news section this issue for details.

> **"...judged a success by visitors and organisers alike..."**

Call in the Mediator!

Blittersoft's stand, ably manned by Paul and Simon LeSurf, attracted the crowds with their demonstrations of the new Mediator PCI busboard installed in an A1200 Power Tower. A basic (4MB) PCI graphics card using the S3 ViRGE graphics chip was shown running an Amiga Workbench along with several other pieces of software to prove that it was fully functional, but most of the crowd's interest was focussed on the A1200's insides, more interested as they were in what the board looked like and how it connected to the Amiga. Rest assured folks, it really does exist, and we'll be bringing you all the necessary information next issue.

Several games competitions being held in the hot and crowded games arena also attracted a lot of interest as the punters competed with one another at WipEout 2097, Sensible World of Soccer and Heretic II, with prizes including a copy of WipEout and an A1200 Magic Pack for the winners.

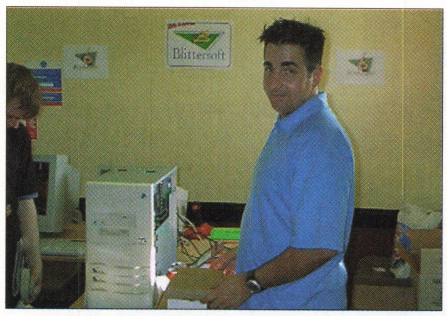
Analogic were giving away free gifts for those who took out a subscription to SEAL's Clubbed magazine at the show, whilst Eyetech were demonstrating Amiga's SDK running on an LCD monitor courtesy of their EZDev TransAm tower systems comprising an Amiga and PC together in a single tower.

Payback time

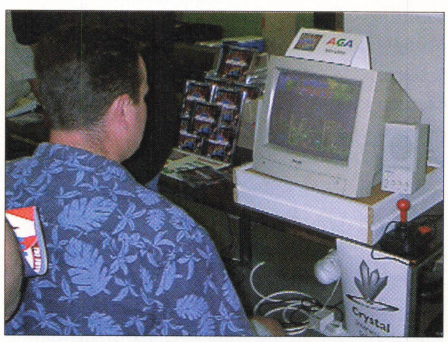
As well as the Mediator, Blittersoft were also showing off preview versions of Apex Designs' GTA-style game for the Amiga, Payback (previewed extensively in this very magazine) and upcoming war simulation FUBAR, which is expected to be released before the end of the year. At the end of the show at around 4pm, a raffle was held with prizes including a copy of OS 3.5, an A1200 Magic Pack and a subscription to *Amiga Active*.

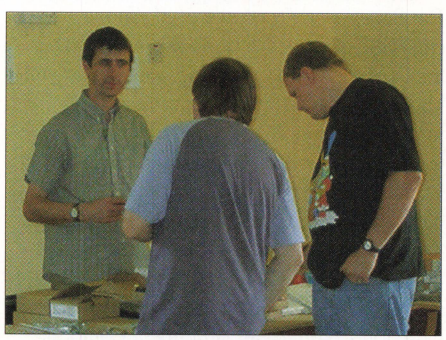
All in all, Seal-O-Rama 2000 was judged a success by visitors and organisers alike, and plans are already underway to hold another event next year when, who knows, new Amiga devices could steal the show and attract thousands of visitors. You'll need a slightly bigger venue though guys - and one with air conditioning!











Top to bottom: In the absence of a bar, Ray McCarthy of the Kickstart usergroup props up a monitor • Simon LeSurf from Blittersoft • *"Hot, isn't it?"* • Someone inconsiderately leans on a copy of *Amiga Active* whilst playing a demo of Bubble Heroes • Mike from Eyetech.



They said it couldn't be done, but we did it...

Now we are one

We made it! Actually we made it some time back, as completing our twelfth issue, which we did the second week of August, marked a year of producing *Amiga Active* for us. However, the arrival of this issue is what marks a year of people reading *Amiga Active* - and what a year it has been.

In our short life, we have reported on some of the most amazing things to have come out of the Amiga market. We started at what turned out to be a bad time, with Jim Collas, the 'saviour of the Amiga,' departing just as we finished assembling the first issue. We knew even then that there was another buyout in the offing, but couldn't say so, leaving us the rather tricky task of launching a magazine into a market that appeared to be about to finally die.

Extraordinary times

Since that issue, we have seen the future of the Amiga take shape under the new owners. The new Amiga have moved faster and further than their predecessors, managing to get an SDK pre-release of their new Operating System out to developers within a mere six months - half the time it took Gateway / Amiga to even announce their SDK. Amiga remain frantically busy, keeping our news reporters happy with a good flow of press releases, and the market happy with new partnerships and the promise of real live next generation Amiga computers with a huge range of launch titles by early next year.

We have also reported on various exciting Amiga related developments such as AROS, QNX and MorphOS and the announcements, finally, of PCI solutions for Amigas. We've watched Amiga graphics software soar to impressive new heights with ImageFX 4, Photogenics 4.5, FXpaint1.5 and ArtEffect 4. We've had Amiga developer boxes, the Z4 busboard, Pagestream 4, Cycas, X-Surf, Heretic 2, WipEout 2097, PFS 3, T-Zero and Wasted Dreams. All this at the lowest point in the Amiga market?

The creation of *Amiga Active* owes itself to two separate lines of development. The first is Bournemouth-based Pinprint Publishing, an offshoot of Icon Imaging, who have served the Amiga market as a specialist print house for over ten years. Developing significant expertise in the print industry, they went on to provide training services, and finally a couple of years ago formed Pinprint to start developing magazines.

Third time lucky

Pinprint initially started work on a local interest title for Bournemouth, but that idea was scuppered when a rival company beat them to the mark. A brief dalliance with the notion of a Science Fiction magazine ended abruptly when it became clear just how rarely they succeed. Then, with the closure of CU Amiga leaving a hole in the Amiga market, Pinprint - as long-time Amiga enthusiasts - jumped at the chance to fill it.

Separately, a group of staff and freelancers from the defunct CU Amiga magazine were planning to produce a CD-ROM based title, with an interface that would allow a unique degree of interaction. When Blittersoft's Paul LeSurf put Pinprint in contact with Andrew Korn, the editorial team discussed the project at length before deciding that moving the articles onto paper and keeping the parts of the interactive front end for the cover CD would be the ideal solution.

Amiga Active took one year from conception to launch. This wasn't simply how long it took to come up with the style, format and structure of the magazine - it was also the time it took for Pinprint, who had never published a magazine before, to do the huge job of sorting out the financing, administration, duplication, advertising and distribution of the magazine.

Amiga Active was previewed at the World Of Amiga show in 1999, with a dummy issue on display and the presence of a team of well-known Amiga journalists on the stand finally proving to people that the rumours of a new magazine were very real. Immediately after the show, work began in earnest on the first issue. Two months later, the magazine was available in shops.

Office World

In Pinprint's offices, work on issue one of the magazine was frantic as the first print deadline loomed. David Stroud, Desk Editor extraordinaire *(please, no more jokes about sawing the legs off tables -Desk Ed.)*, took the incoming copy from Editor Andrew Korn and handed it on to the designer, who shortly after starting work on the magazine realised how easy it wasn't and did a runner, leaving the rest of the Pinprint staff up the creek without a much needed paddle.

Tensions ran high as the one-sandwich-short-of-a-picnic team struggled through numerous late nights to pull together the first issue of Amiga Active. The tried and tested formula of magazine production, evolved over many years as publishing companies and technology improved with the digital age, was thrown out of the window to be replaced with Pinprint's own mix of caffeine-rich beverages, cholesterol-laden foodstuffs and crash-happy computer systems.

"The office gave a collective sigh of relief as the first issue was completed on schedule... then collapsed in a heap..."

The office gave a collective sigh of relief as the first issue was completed on schedule, then collapsed in a heap as Gateway announced they were dropping their

Amiga Active Gold Awards

The Gold award is a prize we give to top-notch products. It's not directly tied to score, but rather indicates a product we feel is very effective in its field. Something that is flawed but contains marks of genius might earn it; likewise something unexciting but perfectly formed.

Here, then, are the Gold-award winning products from the first twelve issues of *Amiga Active*:

Issue	Product	Developer	Supplier	Score
1	Photogenics 4	Paul Nolan	Paul Nolan Software Ltd.	9/10
1	2GB Jaz drive	Iomega	Various	8/10
1	PFS 3	Great Effects Development	RamJam Consultants Ltd.	9/10
1	T-Zero	ClickBOOM	Weird Science	9/10
1	Wasted Dreams	Digital Dreams Entertainment	Weird Science	8/10
2	STFax 4	Simone Tellini / Active Tech.	Eyetech	9/10
3	NetConnect 3	Active Technologies	Eyetech	8/10
3	The Castlewood ORB	Castlewood	Blittersoft	8/10
3	WipEout 2097	Psygnosis / Digital Images	Blittersoft	9/10
4	Digital Almanac	Achim Stegemann	Schatztruhe	8/10
4	GoldEd Studio 6	Dietmar Eilert	Alive Mediasoft	9/10
7	Plexwriter 12/4/32	Plextor	Various	4/4
8	CYCAS	Verlag Anja C Frese	Verlag Anja C Frese	4/4
9	Photogenics 4.5	Paul Nolan	Paul Nolan Software Ltd.	3.5/4
10	FXPaint Update	Innovative	Innovative	3/4
11	Eyetech EZTower Z4	Eyetech	Eyetech	4/4
11	Intuos A4 tablet	Wacom	Wacom	4/4
11	Spitfire 2	Ralph Torchia	Ralph Torchia	3.5/4



plans for the Amiga. Not that it mattered, however - this was a magazine dedicated to the Amiga, not its multi-billion dollar owners. Dusting ourselves off, we looked to the future and saw...

Alright, to be honest we didn't see that many late nights to begin with, but in the world of publishing they could be considered a necessary evil. As expected, we found ourselves having to call in a few favours from old friends along the way, and we are indebted to a number of individuals who popped in to the office when called upon - whether to take the role of freelance designer, proof-reader (you can never have too many), or to supply the team with doughnuts and words of encouragement during one of many late-night workathons. You know who you are and we'd like to take this opportunity to thank you, as without your help, we wouldn't have made it this far. Well, we might - but we'd have made plenty more mistakes and been an awful lot hungrier!

And that's only the beginning...

We hope that, rather like a fine wine, we've been improving with age. Compare this issue with our first (which, incidentally, we still have a few copies of if you'd like a piece of history - turn to page 53) and see if you agree. That's not to say we've reached a stage where we're happy with the magazine though - far from it. Next issue, we'll be revealing the results of our "Time for a change?" survey and you can expect to see a few more tweaks to the *Amiga Active* formula over the next year as we search for the best possible combination of news, reviews, previews, tutorials and features.

"...still young, still finding our feet and, yes, still waiting for the next generation of Amigas..."

We could fill another dozen issues with stories about the last 12 months, but we'll save them for another, more nostalgic time. At the end of the day (anything from 5:30pm to 4am, depending on deadlines), we're still young, still finding our feet and, yes, still waiting for the next generation of Amigas. A good number of people ask us why we bother. Pinprint isn't another Future or EMAP (yet), Amiga Active isn't a million-seller (yet) and its staff aren't paid in gold bullion (chance would be a fine thing :-), so why bother? Have the last 12 months been worthwhile?

We started out producing this magazine because we believed in the Amiga. Not only that, we believed there were other people out there who shared the same belief and wouldn't settle for cashing in their A1200 or A4000 for a blueberry iMac or 1GHz WIntel box. We believed we could make a magazine that we enjoyed making and you enjoyed reading. We also believed that the Amiga was too good a machine not to have a comeback, and we could see the advantage of being ready for that comeback!

Editor's Choice Awards



The Editor's choice award is given out only rarely, indicating a true landmark product, something that redefines the state-of-the-art. Though awarded infrequently, you can be assured it's to a product in a class of its own.

Hyperion Software's conversion of Raven Software's epic third-person RPG, Heretic 2, was the first product to receive this award back in issue 7. Since then, only one other Editor's Choice has been awarded, to the Wacom Graphire graphics tablet in issue 12. What will the next twelve months bring? We shall have to wait and see...

That was the year that was...



Issue 1

Cover Date: October 1999
Published: 30.09.1999

September was a turbulent time for the Amiga with some very positive - and some very negative - news. The main headlines were the arrival of a new Amiga magazine (we didn't believe it either) and OS 3.5 going into production, but overshadowing everything was the departure of Jim Collas.

The very popular Collas had taken over as president of Amiga the previous January and seemed the best hope for Amiga; his departure was felt as a great blow. Amiga announced that Tom Schmidt, Chief Financial Officer, would take over at the helm - but few had much faith in him.

Amiga Active announced in a stop press that Fleecy Moss and Bill McEwen were up to something secret that they hoped they would be able to reveal a few weeks later. As it happened, the announcement took several months to materialize.

Nobody mentioned: *The black and white logo.*

Issue 2

Cover Date: November 1999
Published: 28.10.1999

Confirming everyone's fears, October saw Amiga officially drop plans for the MCC (Multimedia Convergence Computer). In response, the Phoenix Platform Consortium was announced. This group of developers, teaming up with QNX to support the QNX OS originally selected to be the new Amiga OS, replenished the rapidly dwindling supplies of hope for a future for the platform.

On a more positive note, this month saw the release, after half a decade of waiting, of OS 3.5. Our review gave it 8/10. Other important developments reported on in *Amiga Active* included IBM's commitment to PoP, the open PPC motherboard standard which promised a modern hardware platform that could form the basis of PPC Amigas.

Perhaps most importantly, we reported that Gateway had recalled hundreds of thousands of foamy stress-release spongy cows due to a choking hazard!

Nobody complained about: *Our apparent disregard for the safety of small, supple pygmies.*

Issue 3

Cover Date: December 1999
Published: 25.11.1999

Overshadowing announcements in all corners of the computing industry this month was the news from the Microsoft trial - the beast of Redmond was declared in the findings of the US courts to be misusing their monopoly position in a way that was damaging to consumers. This decision laid the groundwork for the possible break-up of Microsoft currently being discussed.

For Amiga users, the big news was an extraordinary month for product releases, - we reviewed NetConnect 3, the new Z4 busboard, the rather wonderful WipeEout 2097 (the first commercial PowerPC Amiga game) and a promising new graphics package called FXPaint.

In another cryptic stop press, *Amiga Active* reported that there would be a major announcement around the time of the Cologne show, though it didn't materialise until somewhat later.

Nobody looked too closely at: *The model's face, complete with a pair of black eyes.*

Issue 4

Cover Date: January 2000
Published: 30.12.1999

We reported on the Cologne show, but unfortunately there was not a whole lot to report about. It was to be the last year that the big German show would be held in Cologne, and while attendees enjoyed the show as much as usual, there was little optimism - and little in the way of products - to be seen. Most notable was the AmiJoe PPC card, which was shown to people behind closed doors - although since then the release date has been much pushed back.

The biggest release on the software front this month was the long awaited Pagestream 4. However, it was released in a somewhat unfinished state, prompting us to hold a full review back until a later issue.

Nobody whinged about: *The somewhat lacking-in-detail screenshot of WipEout 2097.*



Issue 5

Cover Date: February 2000
Published: 27.01.2000

Finally we were able to put the 'stop press' reports to bed - the announcement had been made. Gateway had sold Amiga to Bill McEwen and Fleecy Moss' Amino Developments. The new Amiga Inc. revealed the work they had been doing prior to this - the latest in a long line of buyouts - by promptly announcing that they already had an OS partner, Tao Group of Reading, UK.

Tao Group and the new Amiga are run by people with a sense of humour, and it wasn't long before this showed in a silly but very enjoyable press release, in which Tao boss Francis Charig was described as *"CEO and international stud."* This press release was shortly afterwards removed from their web site, presumably showing that Amiga's backers have less of a sense of humour. Fortunately, it was reproduced in full in *Amiga Active*, preserving it for posterity.

Industry comment on the buyout, printed in the same issue, showed responses ranging from indifference to ecstasy, but it was clear that the depression of the previous few months had been suddenly replaced by cautious hope for the future of the Amiga.

Nobody wanted to buy: *Our faithful reproduction of an Andy Warhol artwork.*

Issue 6

Cover Date: March 2000
Published: 24.02.2000

'Thank &%*$ for that!' feelings continued this month as we enjoyed a clearer picture of the path the new Amiga would be taking, a far more enticing prospect than the gloomy possibility that Gateway held out for us over the last few months of their ownership.

Amiga Active lead with a massive interview with Francis Charig and Chris Hinsley, the two men at the top of Tao group. The discussion touched issues such as Transmeta, heterogenous multi-processing, Java portability and climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. Details of Tao Group's impressive technology helped tip cautious optimism in the marketplace to genuine excitement.

Other news covered this month included the announcement of Heretic Fortress, a USB Zorro card, and the development of Fluorescent Multi-layer Disc technology, promising 140GB CD-ROMs. (*Amiga Active*'s CD compiler declined to comment).

Nobody would have guessed: *It was only going over one page with an hour to go before deadline.*

Issue 7

Cover Date: April 2000
Published: 30.03.2000

A sad month for the Amiga market, as Future Publishing finally closed down our friends and competitors at Amiga Format. Editor Ben Vost and staff writer Richard Drummond were given jobs on other magazines at Future and Richard has since continued writing Amiga articles in this very magazine. Richard was actually involved in the early development of *Amiga Active*, so it's nice to have him actually writing for us at last!

Amiga helped cheer people up a little with the announcement of their first few hires. Interestingly, they opted to hire some talented and well-known developers from the Amiga development community, including Andreas Klienert (AKDatatypes), Wouter van Oortmerssen (Amiga E) and Dean K Brown (innumerable accelerators and other hardware add-ons for the classic Amiga).

Gary Peake, head of the Team Amiga user group organisation, was hired as VP of Development. Coupled with the announcement that Amiga had relocated to Snoqualmie, where Twin Peaks was filmed, jokes about 'damn fine Java' were bound to follow.

Nobody believed: *The IMAX cinema alluded to in the cover feature still wouldn't have opened its branch in Bournemouth some six months later.*

Issue 8

Cover Date: May 2000
Published: 27.04.2000

The St. Louis Amiga show provided us with a lot of announcements and plenty of interesting developments. Fortunately, *Amiga Active* were there to report from the show floor.

Amiga themselves showed off their new devbox (as pictured on that month's cover) and outlined their plans for the future in an after-dinner speech by Bill McEwen. During this speech, McEwen announced partnerships with Haage & Partner, DCE, Epic, Hyperion Software, Titan, Met@box and others from the Amiga industry, whilst also talking about partnerships with Corel, Red Hat and Sun Microsystems.

Elsewhere at the show, the major story was that the BoXeR had been sold to AntiGravity, a California-based company. AntiGravity pledged that their financial backing would see the BoXeR released in reasonably short order, whilst Phoenix and Amiga jointly announcemed that Amiga would be joining the Phoenix Platform consortium.

Nobody wanted to see: *Kitty's Tats.*



Issue 9

Cover Date: June 2000
Published: 25.05.2000

The main news in issue 9 was QNX's announcement that their operating system, Neutrino, was to be released as freeware for private use. A partial open-source model would make the OS - once targeted for the new Amiga and now part of the Phoenix Platform consortium along with Elate - freely available to developers.

In other news, the US Department of Justice called for sweeping measures to be taken against Microsoft, Alien Design announced the development of their Repulse sound card for Zorro-equipped Amigas and Hyperion released MiniGL, a subset of the OpenGL 3D graphics standard, to the Amiga community.

Our cover feature was split into two parts: an interview with Ben Hermans of Hyperion Software on their plans for Amiga development and a look at LithTech, the complete 3D game engine from Monolith as used in Shogo:MAD which the German company was also porting to the Amiga. Yes, they're certainly very busy over at Hyperion...

Meanwhile, a back-to-back feature on the Amiga's three web browsers made for some interesting reading with advocates voicing their slightly partisan opinions on each, and Active Gallery visited the Imperial War Museum in London who use Amigas for their gallery exhibits and interactive presentations.

Nobody apparently noticed: *The lack of colour.*

Issue 10

Cover Date: July 2000
Published: 29.06.2000

The big story this month was the announcement of the Amiga Software Development Kit. Although release 1.0 contained Tao Group's OS without enhancements from Amiga themselves, it offered the environment to allow people to start developing for the new Amiga OS, and gave us the opportunity to give the new operating system a try, first hand.

This was a good month for Tao Group. They announced that they had joined the DVB (Digital Video Broadcasting) Consortium, the group defining the standards for the future of television and broadband multimedia services, and their Intent JTE (Java Technology Edition) was awarded official JVM (Java Virtual Machine) status by Java overlords Sun.

This month also saw the announcement of the Mediator, a PCI card backplane for the A1200 being manufactured by Elbox. Amiga users have fervently desired PCI for the Amiga for years, and finally we're going to get it. Also this month, we finally decided that Pagestream 4 was functional enough to review, and although we still weren't quite happy with the finish, we declared it to be, *"an awesomely powerful beast of a program."*

Nobody has yet seen: *The first issue of "Your Tree" magazine.*

Issue 11

Cover Date: August 2000
Published: 27.07.2000

While the Amiga market was being flooded by announcements of Amiga developer boxes from companies like Computer City, Eyetech and Power Computing, the most exciting news was the announcement that Vapor were, finally, rewriting their layout engine. Always the weak point of Voyager, the HTML 2 legacy made it slow and in some cases inaccurate. The new layouter promises not just a great speedup, but significantly increased stability.

This was the month that Microsoft announced C# (pronounced 'C sharp'), a development which encroaches on Amiga and Tao Group's technology. As yet, it doesn't look like much of a threat, but you must be ever watchful of the beast.

This issue of *Amiga Active* was also a birthday issue, celebrating the 15th anniversary of the first public showing of the Amiga. The editorial office was promptly flooded by requests for a slice of the birthday cake, but it was too late - Bluey the office mailhound and canine tyrant had already eaten it.

Nobody *really* knows: *What happened to the last bit of cake. Except that we do, and Mark ate it. "No thanks, I'm on a diet," indeed!*

Issue 12

Cover Date: September 2000
Published: 31.08.2000

You wait for five years, then two come along at once. Following issue 10's announcement of the Mediator, this issue broke the news of the Predator PCI card.

In a welcome return of the 'Stop Press', we were able to announce at the very last minute that Amiga had signed a partnership with their very first OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer), Infomedia Networks, who will be launching Amiga-powered Set Top Boxes.

AntiGravity announced that they had signed ex-Amiga engineer and all-round crazy guy Joe Torre to help out with BoXeR development, while Amiga announced that they had entered into a partnership with graphics chip manufacturer Matrox.

This month saw *Amiga Active* give a full review to the Amiga SDK and take a look at the options available to the devbox buyer. We also took a first look at MorphOS, currently in beta. This PowerPC operating system / emulator is designed to allow Amiga software to run natively on PPC, avoiding the bottlenecks that plague current Amiga PPC solutions. While there is still some way to go with MorphOS, it is already very promising indeed.

Nobody could think of: *Anything we could say about this issue. We're all off down the pub...*



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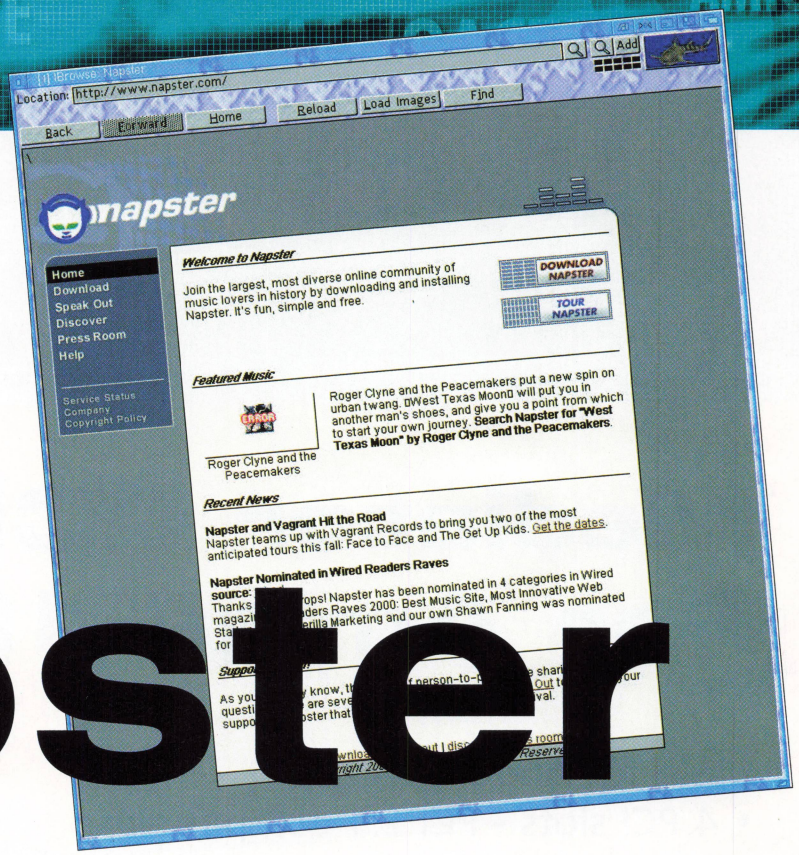
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MEDIATOR PCI 1200 OPENS THE WORLD OF PCI CARDS TO YOUR AMIGA

Flying the Jolly Roger or freeing the musicians? We take a look at the little piece of software that has the world's music industry in an uproar.

Napster



So you want to download music off the 'net, eh? With the advent of Mpeg layer 3 audio encoding, better known to all of us as MP3, combined with your computer's ability to serve as a rather good jukebox - this really isn't surprising!

MP3 is an audio compression technology that enables users to record music at CD quality levels using their computer and reduce it to about one tenth of the size normally associated with such files. You can then either store the tracks on your machine's hard disk or on CDs and Zip disks to listen to at a later date or send them to friends over the Internet with no degradation in quality.

Critics have argued that enabling users to record music in this way encourages piracy and is harming not only the music industry, but also the musicians themselves. The thing is, the vast majority of MP3 format music on offer on the Internet are actually pirate tracks,



"...pirate tracks, encoded from albums and singles released by the world's major recording labels..."



Above: Amster, the Amiga's equivalent of Napster.

encoded from albums and singles released by the world's major recording labels and performed by top selling musicians, both of whom don't take too kindly to their work being given away for free by other people.

Advocates, on the other hand, say that the technology itself does not promote copyright infringement, which has already been going on for years anyway. They also claim that MP3 web sites make it easier for unknown musicians to gain exposure, as anyone logging onto the site can listen to their material.

Enter Napster, a web site and utility intended for exactly this, which has enjoyed worldwide acclaim and enraged the record labels.

The Napster web site is essentially a trading exchange, putting users in touch with each other so that they can swap MP3 files. The Napster utility is essentially a search and FTP tool, allowing you to query the users online to see if anyone has the file you want, then allowing you to actually download the file. For Amiga users, we have the Amster application that allows us to access the Napster network. In addition to file searching and downloading, all Napster clients offer chat and ICQ-like Notify lists, so that you can track if particular users are connected to the system.

Napster and the law

The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) has filed a suit against MP3 music site Napster, accusing it of operating as a haven of online piracy. It is charging the site with copyright infringement and alleges that it has created a base for music piracy on 'an unprecedented scale'.

In contrast, Napster claims that it is trying to promote unknown bands in the same way as other sites such as MP3.com. However, once users have downloaded the Napster software and log onto the company's servers, their personal MP3 collections - which could (and often do) include copyrighted material - are available for download by any other users logged on at the same time.

Napster operates in a grey legal area in terms of both UK and US copyright law. Officially, Napster does not support the piracy of copyrighted music material, but its users are openly using the service for just this purpose, which would suggest that Napster is wide open to



prosecution. On the other hand, the Napster system has been planned very well as to confuse the issue. None of the MP3 files being traded actually touch a Napster server, as the transfer process involves direct peer-to-peer movement from user to user, without it ever passing through the systems based at Napster.com or any other Napster-owned installation.

Industry pressure to change

Napster's main argument is that its members - which it now says have swollen to 22 million - are not violating copyright as their actions are protected in the US by the Audio Home Recording Act. This allows all non-commercial copying by consumers of digital and analogue recordings (music, TV, Radio etc). Therefore, it argues that if its members are doing nothing wrong, then neither is Napster.

The incredible popularity of MP3 music and growing demand from the public for distribution of commercial music in electronic form has also caused some labels to approach the situation from a more sensible angle; trying to service demand themselves, thus beginning to remove demand for sites like Napster.

Universal Music, which has just won a $118 million lawsuit against another MP3 site My.MP3.com, has announced that it will begin letting customers download and pay for music over the Internet, admitting that a new model for music distribution is inevitable.

Universal has begun to experiment with its own music distribution format known as Bluematter. The system was developed in partnership with a number of technology companies including InterTrust Technologies, a developer of distributed digital rights management technology; digital commerce service Magex; and RealNetworks, the company that developed the RealAudio and RealVideo streaming media formats.

Off to court

Napster goes to trial against the RIAA on October 2, having already avoided an initial injunction forcing it to immediately shut down back in July. The implications of any verdict will be wide ranging. Napster's success has already spawned hundreds of copycat sites and applications, and many high-profile Internet businesses such as search engines Lycos and Yahoo already have dedicated search systems to aid the location of copyrighted MP3 content available on the Internet. Online retailers such as Amazon, who are advocates on online electronic music retail, will be concerned that a negative ruling could put back the emergence of electronic music by several years.

There are also non-music considerations, as the Napster concept has also expanded to other industries. Groups of pensioners are using web sites as a means to trade knitting pattern templates. The golden-oldie surfers are scanning patterns, and then uploading and downloading the images from web and FTP sites on the net, saving themselves upwards of £10 a time, causing publishers of knitting pattern books to consider legal action of their own.

Chris Green



My.MP3.com

Trying to do the right thing?

The problems surrounding the legality and control of electronic music distribution are not unique to Napster, though its popularity makes it the prime target for record labels and public prosecutors.

My.MP3.com is a web-based site that, unlike Napster, actually stores the files on its own servers, allowing users to download directly from it, without the need for any specific client to establish a direct connection between users. Being platform agnostic, My.MP3.com is popular not only among Amiga users, but also among users of other niche platforms such as Linux, BeOS, Unix and handheld devices such as Windows CE units.

The content on offer consists mainly of material encoded by the site's owners, but also features some material uploaded by users. My.MP3.com has taken a different approach to free itself from the threat of litigation. Unlike Napster, it has sought to agree cash settlements with the major record labels to compensate them for past infringement of copyright on their property. To date, it has paid out an undisclosed nine-figure sum (dollars) to a group of leading record labels including Sony Music Entertainment EMI/Warner Music Group and BMG Entertainment in compensation for distributing work from their collective back catalogues in MP3 format.

The unique part about the My.MP3.com approach is that they have then proceeded to agree terms with these labels to continue distribution of these MP3 files via the site. In order to do this, it has had to alter the way that it offers its vast collection of material.

My.MP3.com works in a different way to Napster in that it now only allows you access to material that you already own the corresponding CD for. You will also be able upload your own MP3 creations of commercial albums and singles, but if the record label has not yet agreed terms with My.MP3.com you won't be able to gain access to them from the site until that label agrees a deal with the site. This approach allows you to easily obtain MP3's of your music collection, but not to expand it using pirate MP3 files.

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First Look: Next G

Voyager 3.3

Vapor has released a preview of their current work on Voyager 3.3. So we, well, preview it.

All is not quiet on the browser front. Plenty of work has been going on behind the scenes on all three browsers. Vapor recently released an alpha version of Voyager 3.3.

An alpha version is usually only used by a small number of internal testers, before a beta is released for wider testing. While it's normal for a beta to have a few bugs or features that don't work properly, alpha releases are expected to be downright flaky. In fact, the Voyager 3.3 alpha proved stable during testing. Ironically, the only crash came from Voyager 3.2 when I ran it to compare rendering speeds.

This is second public alpha release of Voyager 3.3 and is more a test bed for the new code than a program for regular use. Many basic features are still missing, but it is better to have a small number of items implemented correctly and then add the rest. The alternative approach of throwing in as much as possible at the start and trying to fix the bugs later may make for more impressive early releases, but it can take much longer to get a stable program.

Built for the future

The core HTML rendering engine has been completely rewritten, for faster and more accurate rendering of HTML. It should also be easier to add new HTML features to the new program. This means that it should be quicker for Vapor to update it to add things like CSS (Cascading Style Sheets). It's hard to say how much quicker the new engine is, since several key HTML elements are not implemented yet, such as frames and lists. In its current state it feels faster than the previous release, particularly in its handling of tables. This has traditionally been the Achilles heel of Voyager but the new HTML engine seems to handle them faster and more accurately.

Image decoding remains impressively fast. This is particularly useful in the alpha, as the option to disable image decoding doesn't work yet. MorphOS users now have a progressive image decoder that uses the PowerPC for even more speed. This is not practical when AmigaOS is running on the 68K chip, as the context switches use more time than you gain from the faster decoding.

Not yet, maybe soon

It's difficult to recommend using this version, but then it's not intended for general use. Too many key features are not yet implemented. Some pages appear rather like they did in the old AMosaic, but a hell of a lot faster and more reliably. As an indication of what is to come, it looks promising.

Provided that the addition of the missing elements doesn't compromise speed or stability, this bodes well for the future of Voyager. In typical Vapor fashion, we expect to see several releases over the coming months.

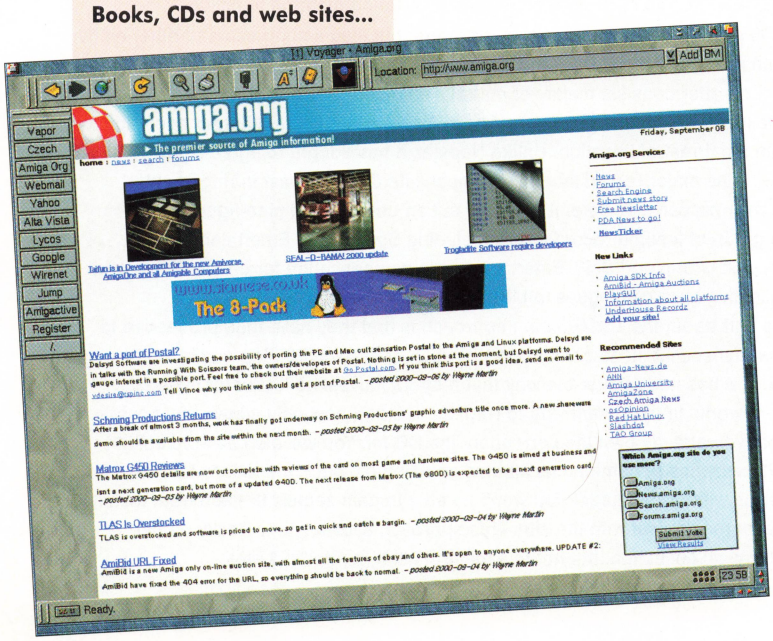
They're all at it

Vapor have made a public release of their "work in progress" version of Voyager, and we had access to the AWeb beta. IBrowse is also undergoing further development. Version 2.3 is being beta tested and we hear this version answers many of the criticisms of the current release, including improved JavaScript.

The Amiga market isn't large enough to justify full time development on most programs, especially when there are three good products fighting for market share. But it is good to see that all three authors continue to find time to work on their browsers.

"...Voyager 3.3 alpha proved stable during testing."

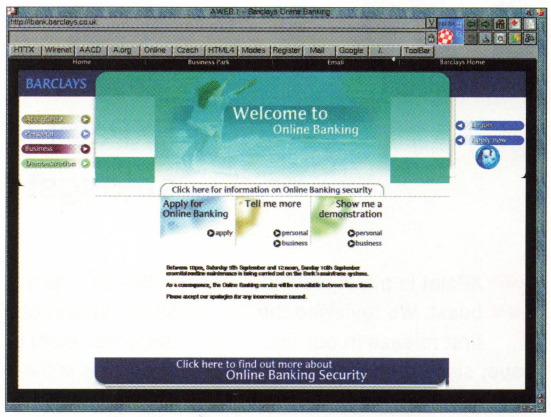
Below: It looks the same on the outside, but it's all new underneath.



Generation Browsers

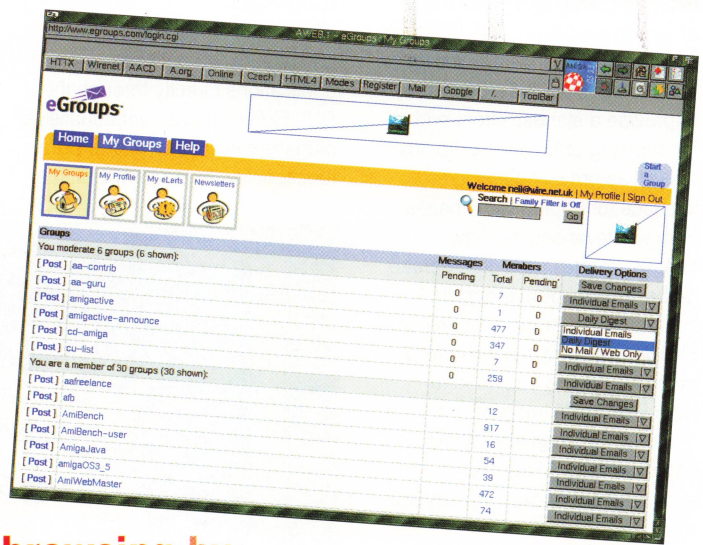
AWeb 3.3

AWeb 3.3 is nearly a year old - time for plenty of upgrades to make it into the next version!



Right: Online banking with AWeb and AmiSSL.

Below: sites like eGroups are more pleasant to use when you don't have to wait for adverts to load on every page. Note the popup list on the right in place of the old SELECT list.



Amiga browsers seem to play a never-ending game of leapfrog. There is no clear "leader" and the feature sets overtake each other with each new release.

Vapor tend to release new versions quite often, with small changes between each. AWeb is not updated that often - the last time was in November 1999 - but each release is a significant upgrade. We looked at the first private beta copy of AWeb 3.4, and while things may change between now and release, it is enough to give a good idea of where the program is going.

Improved features...

There have been a few changes to the JavaScript handling. AWeb's implementation of JavaScript was pretty complete, but a few stray bugs have been fixed. Support for some JavaScript 1.2 properties has been added. They have also added a few new "bugs." These were needed to match the JavaScript handling of PC browsers, thanks to 'webmasters' who prefer to do whatever their own browser permits instead of following the standards.

"...speed up web browsing by avoiding the time wasted waiting for banner adverts..."

AWeb now has support for AmiSSL for secure transactions. Previous versions required a registered version of Miami. This is good news for those that prefer a different TCP stack (or those too mean to register). AmiSSL worked as well as MiamiSSL, although we did experience some warning messages about unverified certificates. This is probably because it is some time since AmiSSL was updated; a new version is due out soon. AmiSSL is a system library. It is free and requires no other software. This is the way SSL should be implemented on the Amiga, as an independent shared resource for all programs.

The option to suppress advertising banner windows has been enhanced; the previous version still opened them under certain circumstances. This is now complemented with an option to suppress the loading of images from a different host to the document containing them. This can speed up web browsing by avoiding the time wasted waiting for banner adverts to load. It works a treat at places like eGroups.

...and improved looks

The AWeb GUI gains several enhancements. A form's SELECT objects appear as popup menus instead of the ugly lists used in previous versions. Context sensitive pop-up menus now use the colour scheme of the system menus. Wheel mice are supported directly instead of relying on external patches.

There is also an option to display "tooltips" as with the PC browsers - these show the ALT text of an image as the mouse pointer moves over it. It may seem a little gimmicky at first but it's useful when visiting a site that uses a lot of small images for navigation, too small to display the ALT text within the image box. The imitation of a Workbench menu on Czech Amiga News is an example of this.

The recent addition of <FONT FACE> support to IBrowse and then Voyager generated a lot of interest. AWeb now has the same functionality. As the typefaces usually specified on web pages don't exist in the standard Amiga format, AWeb is able to alias them to any font you like. Or you can download the standard TrueType fonts and use then with ttf.library. You can also find the library and fonts on AACD 5.

AWeb 3.4 will be a step forward. The improved JavaScript and extra features will make web browsing a more pleasant occupation. The GUI elements within HTML pages look fine, but we really need a way to change the appearance of Reaction's text buttons. The previous version of AWeb was generally stable, except that it would occasionally Guru when quitting. This has not happened since installing 3.4, where stability so far is 100 percent. This is a beta, so there is still some work to be done, but it appears to be fairly complete. There is no indication yet of when an upgrade will be released.

Name FXPaint 1.5
Price £59.66 (two CDs)
Supplier Innovative
Contact www.innovative-web.de

FXPaint 1.5



FXPaint is evolving a unique niche for itself amongst the Amiga's many graphics packages.

FXPaint is a fast moving beast. We reviewed the first release in our first issue; since then there have been a couple of enhancement packs, and now there is an official new release, v1.5. In that time FXPaint has not just been tweaked and enhanced; it has begun to find a niche for itself in the pantheon of Amiga graphics programs.

While Photogenics specialises in subtle, detailed application of processing effects and fluid drawing, Art Effect offers unrivalled brush control, and ImageFX is a powerhouse of effects and image processing, FXPaint is becoming a kind of generic graphics interface; almost a 'GOS,' or Graphics Operating System, if you like.

Paint package and more

As we've covered FXPaint in some detail before, I will be very brief about its basic functionality. FXPaint is an effects painter using a similar paint layer scheme to Photogenics. Paint is applied to a bitmap layer over the image itself. The bitmap layer is effectively a mask for whatever effect you want to apply; this can be colour for a straight paint function, or it can be a blur effect, allowing you to "paint" a blur onto the image. The image itself is not modified until you hit the "fix" gadget, allowing any effect to be replaced or tweaked until the desired result is achieved.

While FXPaint is, broadly speaking, a Photogenics-influenced paint package, its real strength is in the broad and ever growing way it handles images of every sort. This isn't just a matter of how many filters it has; FXPaint integrates with Innovative's own VHI Studio and RBM's ScanQuix to provide a standard front-end for sourcing or creating graphics. As well as providing a single interface for coping with images from whatever source (new images, images from disk, screen grabs, images from a digital camera, video grabs or scans), FXPaint provides you with pretty much everything you need to work with those images.

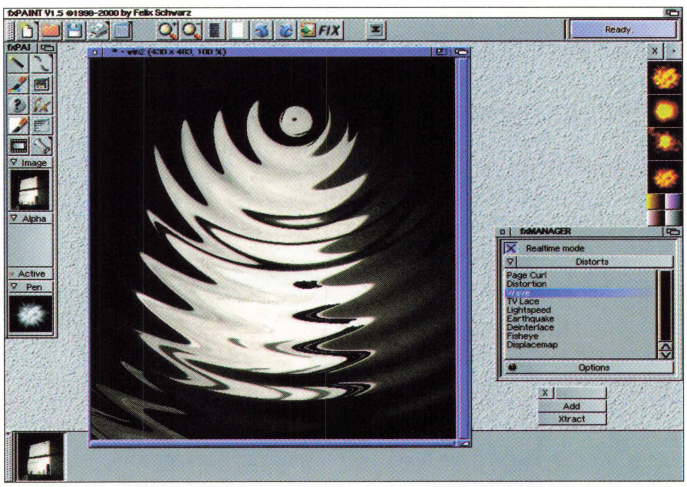
FXPaint 1.5 contains all the enhancements of the two enhancement packs, plus several significant new features. The only new effect is a specialised blur function designed for decreasing the effects of jpegging (a very useful feature), but various modules (notably the album handling / creating parts) have been significantly improved.

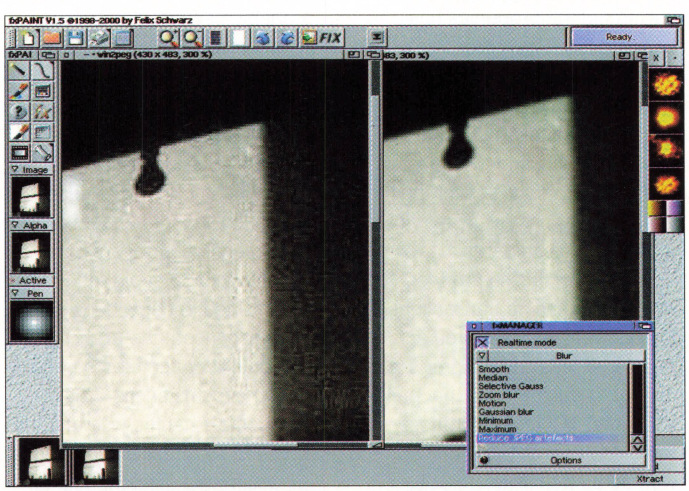
ARexx scripts can be launched direct from a toolbar button, and there have been many ergonomic tweaks. The colour picker is a particularly pleasing modification - it now supports proper gradient patterns, definitely a significant missing feature of earlier versions, and for web compatibility will export the HTML values of the current colour to the clipboard.

> **"...FXPaint is becoming a kind of generic graphics interface..."**

Stretching the boundaries

As is appropriate to the role of a generic graphics handling application, FXPaint is a very extensible package. As well as direct ARexx support, allowing script automation and communication between applications directly through the GUI, FXPaint has a comprehensive plug-ins system that allows extra functionality (in the form of first or third party plug-ins) to be dropped into place. Current plug-ins include loaders and savers for datatypes and other specific file formats, a fire plug-in for painting fire effects, the ICS colour correction plug-in, a WAP image optimisation and creation plug-in and so on. There are also internal modules supporting a movie file format for help videos, batch image conversion, picture album





Above: FXPaint's new "Reduce JPEG Artefacts" option.

management, and creating image maps for web use.

The power of FXPaint derives from the way it brings so many aspects of graphic usage together. By interfacing with VHI studio for digital camera and video capture as well as ScanQuix for scanning, it becomes a common interface for bringing pictures onto your computer. In its album creator it has a way of sorting and cataloguing your images, and can create HTML galleries or slideshow presentations of those images. It provides all you need to prepare images after capture; you might want to tweak the gamma of a scan, or rotate a digital camera photograph taken in portrait rather than landscape format, and it will utilise TurboPrint for the highest quality reproduction of these images, whatever the source.



Left: FXPaint's new, better, colour picker.

something more complex you can use a specialised application. With the ARexx port, there's no reason why you shouldn't even access that specialised application through the FXPaint front end.

The revisions to FXPaint have been largely a matter of expanding current functionality - there is no major upgrade to the fundamentals, and there's no doubt that a full version increase should offer some improvements to the still slightly quirky painting functions. However, this release brings FXPaint a truly impressive degree of integration, and a broad suite of graphic functionality. It's easy to use, it looks good, it has PPC support and it's cheap. For anyone who handles images on a regular basis, FXPaint is an excellent all-purpose purchase.

Andrew Korn

"It's easy to use, it looks good, it has PPC support and it's cheap."

Jack of all trades...?

The main problem with FXPaint as it stands is that while it does a lot, it's almost trying too hard to be all-inclusive. It might have a function for what you need, but it doesn't necessarily perform that function perfectly.

For example, the batch conversion utility does not offer a way to change file extensions, which would be useful (if you are converting a lot of .ilbm files to .jpg files, it's nice if the software handles renaming for you), the album feature offers no sophisticated cataloguing, the screen grabber only grabs screens and can't do individual windows and so on. None of these things are actually faults or omissions so much as features that just haven't made it yet; the result, I would assume, of trying to do everything rather than perfecting what is already there.

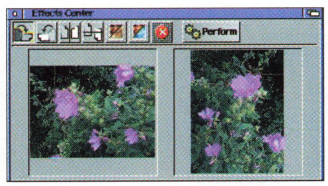
In a way, it doesn't matter much, as a general interface for graphics usage only needs to have the featureset you require 90 percent of the time - on the odd occasion where you want

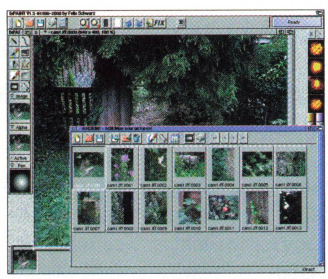
FXPaint 1.5

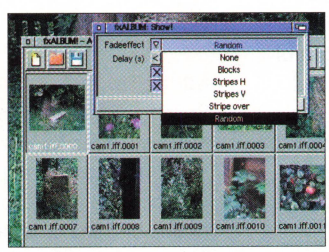
SYSTEM: OS 3.0+, 68020+, 6MB RAM. More RAM, faster CPU and graphics card recommended.

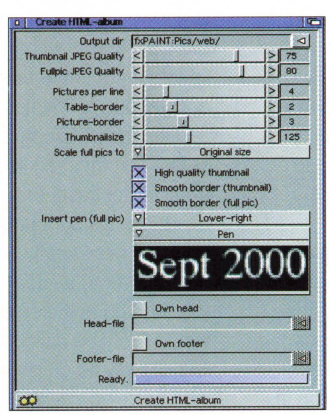
SUMMARY: A uniquely integrated graphics program that is evolving into a universal graphics front end for the Amiga.

Image handling the FXPaint way









This short demonstration is designed to give you some idea of the range of functionality of FXPaint for image handling.

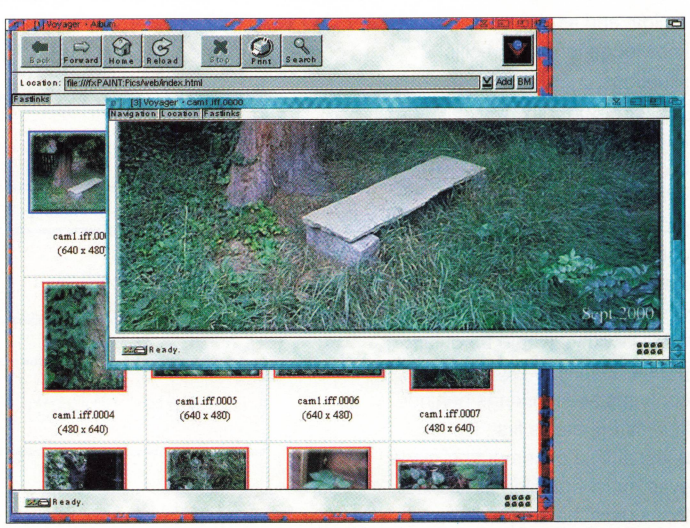
1. FXPaint will interface to VHI Studio (available separately), allowing you to download digital camera images straight into FXPaint. Through the VHI Studio interface, orientation of the images can be easily corrected and minor tweaks performed before saving images singly or as a batch.

2. The collection of digicam pics can now be loaded into fxAlbum for cataloguing. Individual images can be selected from the thumbnails and opened up for modification or processing.

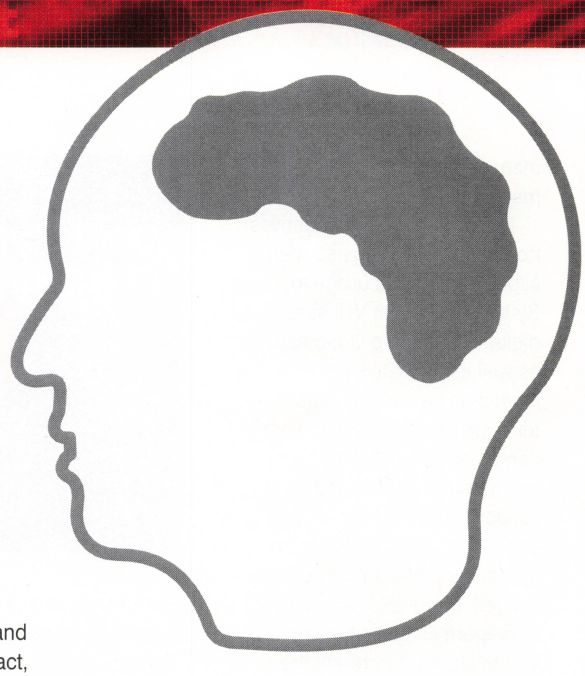
3. Using the fxShow option, it is very easy to create a simple slideshow of your album images, with a range of fades available.

4. You don't need FXPaint to view the gallery. The HTML generator will create thumbnail images and main images to your specification. Note the option to apply a brush to each main image, ideal for signatures, dates, copyright notices etc.

5. There we have it! From camera to web page in the minimum of mouse clicks.



ISTAR



Knowledge is Power. Share it with others using your Amiga and a small utility called Istar...

If Amiga ever float on the stock market, how are you going to decide whether or not you will buy shares in the company? For some, such a decision would be based purely on the blind belief that Amiga will go from strength to strength, changing the world and making its shareholders a ton of money in the process. For others, careful consideration will be the order of the day. They will weigh up the various pros and cons before making an informed decision, which is less likely to be wrong than one based on gut instinct alone.

Ideally, we'd all take various factors about a company into consideration before deciding whether or not to make an investment, but we're not all experts on how to deal in the stock market. That needn't matter, however. So long as someone, somewhere, knows about share-dealing, Istar will enable you to use their knowledge and wisdom to make your own decisions.

The basic premise is a simple one: Take something you know about such as share dealing, describe its various aspects and the relationships between them and make your knowledge available for others to use. Then, anyone with an Internet connection can log in to your knowledge base, which runs on your Amiga, and apply your knowledge to their specific situations.

Istar is currently available for free from author Andrew Basden's web site at www.basden.u-net.com. The program itself is somewhat complex in its workings, so instead of reviewing something which few of our readers will be familiar with, it would be of far greater benefit to explain the concepts and workings behind knowledge bases first. It's an unusual field of computing made even more intriguing by the fact that it uses the unique features offered by the Amiga's operating system and hardware to great effect. So much so, in fact, that Istar currently runs only on the Amiga. The exact reasons will become clear later on, but first, it is necessary to understand what you would use Istar for.

Knowledge Bases and Inference Nets

Sharing your knowledge with other people requires you to build a knowledge base (or "KB"). To best describe this relatively unheard-of concept, it is best to stick with our initial example of share dealings.

In essence, Istar allows you to create what is known as an "inference net" - similar in principle to a flowchart - by drawing boxes and linking them together, giving each box a name and various properties which describe the relationships they have with each other.

The first thing an inference net needs is a goal. In our case, this would be "Should I buy shares in this company?" In real life, you wouldn't necessarily come up with a 'yes' or 'no' answer to such a question, and unless you worked in the stock market for a living, it would likely be difficult to work out the answer without relying on gut instinct. Likewise, Istar won't give you a "Yes" or "No" answer. Rather, it will tell you how confident it is in the goal.

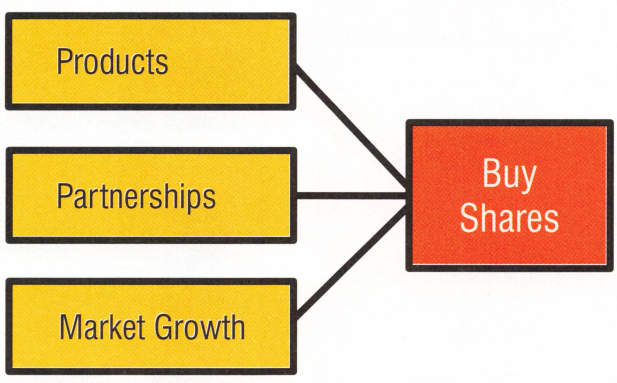


Fig 1: The structure of a basic inference net for buying shares.

"The first thing an inference net needs is a goal..."

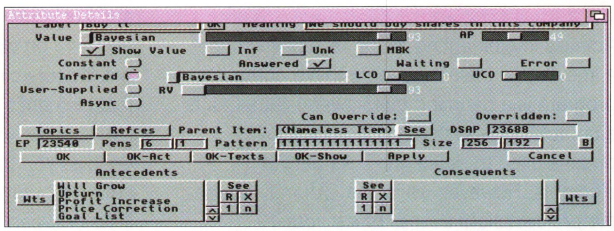
Buy! No... Sell!

To do this, it needs to know about the factors which influence the goal - in our case, buying shares in a company. There are numerous factors which may influence your decision in this case, but let's stick to three to keep things straightforward:

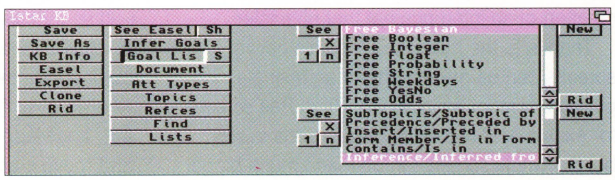
- Is the company making new products?
- Are they partnering with other companies?
- How is the market sector performing?

Representing this information in Istar works in much the same way as drawing a flowchart with pen and paper. First, draw yourself a box and label it "Buy Shares." Next, draw three boxes to the left of the first, aligned vertically. Call them "Products," "Partnerships" and "Market Growth" and link each of them to the "Buy Shares" box as shown in **fig.1** (left).

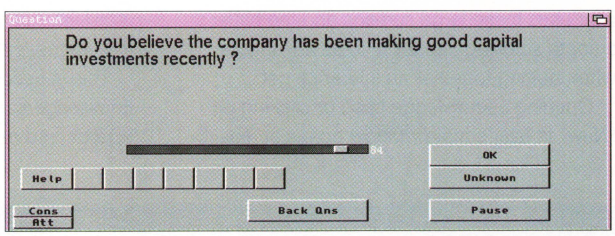
Next, you'll need to define how each of these factors contributes to the goal of buying shares. "New Products," in its simplest form, could contain one of two values, "Yes" or "No" - either the company is producing new products, or they're not. "Partnerships" could also be limited to these two values, but "Market Growth" isn't quite as simple. You may be able to say



Right: Setting an element's attributes. The Amiga's hardware may help when creating an inference net, but Istar's GUI leaves a lot to be desired for the uninitiated.



Right: Istar offers many complex ways of linking objects in a knowledge base - from simple boolean Yes/No to more complex methods such as probabilities.

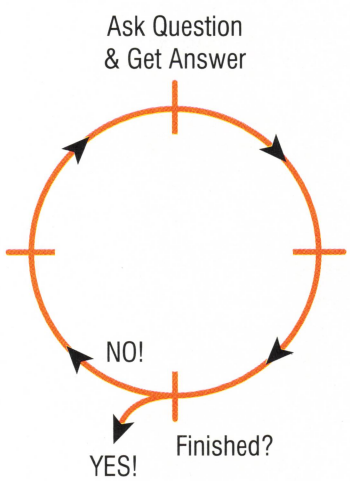


Right: Working through an inference net as you create it allows you to see how it all fits together. Running Istar as a server, an HTML interface asks the same questions via your browser, which is much friendlier.

Below: Fig 2: The method in which Istar works to calculate a result.

that a market sector is going to grow, but only the plot of "Back to the Future" becoming a real possibility will help you to say by how much. It would make more sense, therefore, to define the confidence you have of market growth with a sliding scale.

Let's assume this is all the information we need to decide whether or not we should buy shares in a company. The goal, "Buy Shares?" isn't limited to either a "Yes" or "No" answer - it's dependant on each of the three factors outlined above, but to different extents. Forming new partnerships may be less important than producing new products, for example. Market growth, meanwhile, is the most important factor - what good is making new products and forming new strategic alliances if the market is shrinking?



The chains that bind

Creating an inference net like this is only one part of Istar, however. The fun comes in using it, and to do that, the information needs to be saved as a knowledge base file. There are a couple of example knowledge bases supplied in the Istar archive - one of which is a much more advanced share-dealing example than the one we've talked about here.

Using a knowledge base is achieved via a web browser - Istar must be running on the Amiga, as must a TCP stack. After adding a line to Istar's server preferences file and running the program in server mode, you just need to launch a web browser on the same machine and go to "127.0.0.1:7007" (localhost, port 7007 - the port number which Istar listens to for incoming requests). You will be greeted with a brief introductory page where you can select the knowledge base to log in to.

"Using a knowledge base is achieved via a web browser..."

Once you're in, Istar works by "backward chaining" from the 'goal' of the knowledge base to the attributes that feed it. These attributes don't contain a value to start with, so in the case of our example, the Istar server would go back to the "Products" box and ask us for a value to assign it - either "Yes" or "No", these being the values previously defined when creating the inference net.

After setting this value, Istar cannot "backward chain" any further - we didn't define any other boxes that fed into the "Products" box - so it "forward chains" to the goal. Upon reaching it, Istar tries to work out the result, and finds that it can't because it depends on the values of our other two boxes which haven't been assigned a value yet. This cycle of forward- and backward-chaining (as shown in **fig.2**, left) continues until the goal can be given a value.

Continuous re-interpretation

This is not where it ends, however. At the same time as telling you the confidence it has in the goal, Istar can also show how it arrived at its decision, listing the attributes that directly contributed to the goal and the values assigned to them. Istar then allows you to re-visit an attribute and give it another value, playing out a "what if" scenario.

This is where the power of such a system becomes evident. If the confidence in the goal is low initially, you could return to one of the contributing factors and assign it another value - for example, changing the "New Products" attribute from "No" to "Yes" - before returning to the goal to see if this changes the result. ▶

Unique to the Amiga

Actually implementing all the relationships that a knowledge base requires within a computer program is a daunting task - even Istar's GUI is a complex one, with many windows full of options used to define the links between elements. However, whilst the GUI may not be the prettiest sight ever to grace your TV screen, the Amiga's hardware does make creation of an inference net that bit easier.

Thanks to the blitter, the Amiga's native screens can be much larger than a single physical screen. A single PAL: High Res screen, for example, is merely 640x256 pixels in size, but the whole screen can be made much bigger - more than 16,000 pixels in both directions. Istar uses these large screens and the blitter's smooth scrolling capability to its advantage when putting together an inference net.

Opening a knowledge base or clicking on "New" in Istar's main window opens an easel - another screen, several thousand pixels wide and tall - on which you draw out the inference net. Double-clicking a box on the easel opens that element's attributes window on Istar's main screen, whilst clicking once and dragging enables you to move elements around in real time - not only do the boxes move, but the links between boxes are updated as you move the box.

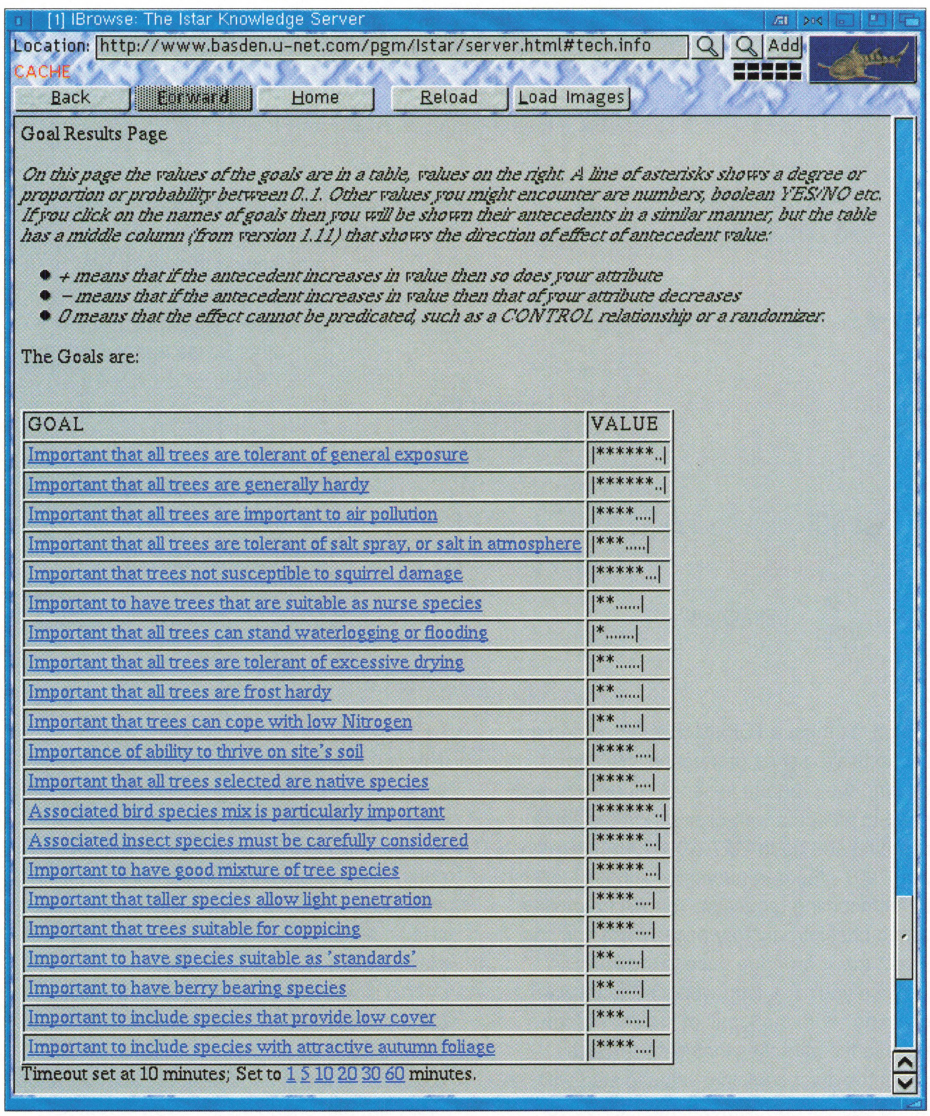
It sounds like an insignificant feature, but as Andrew Basden told us, it really helps when putting together complex knowledge bases. Andrew even found that when building one, the "knowledge engineer" would pick up a box and move it around as they thought about where it should go - making the process far more intuitive than would be possible without the unique features of the Amiga's hardware.

This is necessary because building a knowledge base requires that you start from scratch and re-arrange things as you go. The method of creating an inference net must be flexible so that you can experiment with different concepts and move things around quickly and easily - for which large screens and smooth scrolling are fundamentally important.

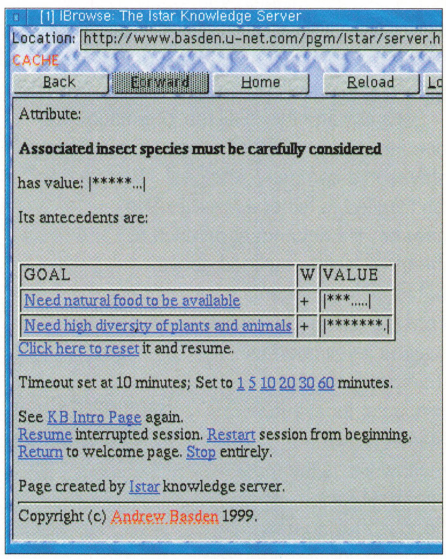
Beyond basics

There is far more to Istar and the whole concept of knowledge bases than we have been able to explain here, but if your appetite has been whetted, stop by Andrew Basden's web site at www.basden.u-net.com the next time you're online. If Andrew's Amigas are online when you visit, you could run through an example knowledge base.

Once you see the flexibility of the system, you may be tempted to download the program to see how it works for yourself. Either way, it's good to see something unique being created on the Amiga. Even if you do have to look at a PAL screen again!



Above: After running through a knowledge base and answering a number of questions, you reach the goal, which lists the importance of various elements and - by clicking each - allows you to track back to see what influenced their values.



Above: Tracking back from a goal allows you to see what influenced its value and change it to play out "what if" scenarios.

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Nokia 446 Pro

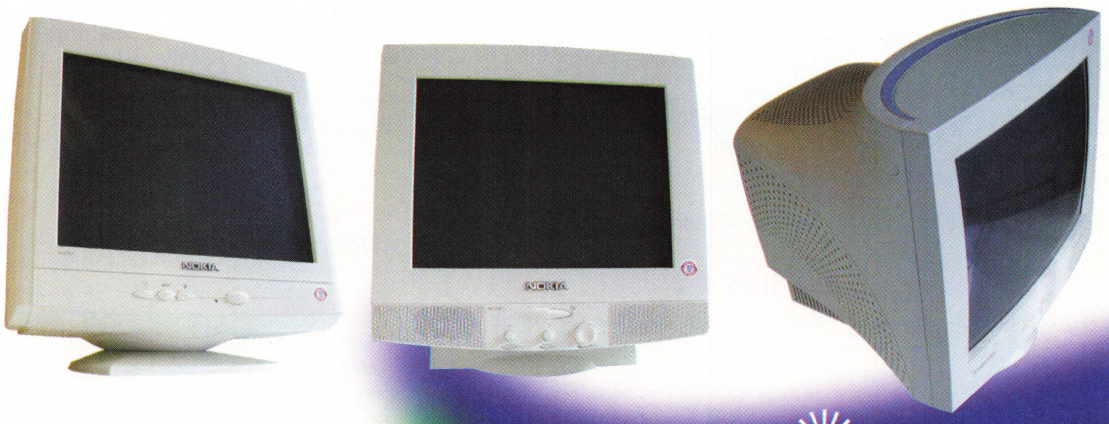
Size:	19" (18" viewable)
Resolution:	1600x1200 @ 85Hz
Dimensions:	471x470x464mm (WxHxD)
Pitch:	0.24-0.25mm (Dot)
Price:	£379 ex. VAT (£445)

Nokia 447 Pro

Size:	17" (16" viewable)
Resolution:	1600x1200 @ 75Hz
Dimensions:	433x432x441mm (WxHxD)
Pitch:	0.24-0.25mm (Aperture Grille)
Price:	£265 ex. VAT (£312)

Samsung Syncmaster 900SL

Size:	19" (18" viewable)
Resolution:	1600x1200 @ 87Hz
Dimensions:	469x493.5x471mm (WxHxD)
Pitch:	0.26mm (Dot)
Price:	£339 ex. VAT (£399)



Monitor Wizard

Time to pick a new monitor? Whether it's a bargain 17-incher or something with a little more bite, you can't go far wrong with one of the following.

Connecting Pixels

Nokia? Don't they make phones? Well, they make monitors too, and here's the proof: a pair of Nokia screens, the 446 Pro and 447 Pro. If asked, from this information alone, to say which was the smaller, you'd probably assume it would be the 446. But you'd be wrong.

Curiously, the 446 is a 19" beast, capable of 1600x1200 at 85Hz, whereas the 447 is a mere 17" monitor which will nonetheless hit a quite respectable 1280x1024, also at 85Hz. Neither sport BNC connections, but the 447 appears to have a built-in USB hub and speakers, with rear connections for stereo audio inputs as well as a microphone jack, and a headphone socket on the side.

We say "appears to have" because none of this is mentioned in the rather poor excuse for a manual that comes with both monitors, containing only two pages of English instructions and a single page of technical specifications. The real manual, it turns out, is provided on CD in PDF form. Considering the fact that someone buying a monitor may not have plugged it in before wanting to read the manual, it seems a peculiar decision not to include a full printed version.

That aside, the 446 is a good-looking unit, at least compared to the 447. Take the rather overstated Nokia badges off the front of both monitors and you'd be forgiven for thinking they came from completely different manufacturers.

The 446's buttons are nicely aligned under the display, but the 447's controls look rather more of an afterthought. Two dials are dedicated to brightness and contrast (which can be turned, curiously, either with a knob or a wheel which protrudes from the underside of the monitor), whilst another large wheel resembling a video controller's jog/shuttle facility doubles as an "enter" key (when pressed) and an adjustment controller (when turned).

Whilst this is more intuitive to use than many monitors' "+" and "-" buttons, aesthetics have had to take a back seat. USB connectivity (capable of handling up to four devices such as mouse and keyboard - although not until we get USB cards or BoXeRs) and built-in speakers make it a good all-in-one unit, but it does have a small screen and suffers from being one of the ugliest monitors we've ever seen. The 446 Pro is far more desirable.

Everyone's Invited

Offering both BNC and D-Type inputs, Samsung's slightly more modest Syncmaster 900SL clocks in with a sizeable 19" (18" viewable) screen, which is slightly curved (like ViewSonic's GS790). Capable of resolutions up to

Taxan ValueVision 1910

Size: 19" (18" viewable)
Resolution: 1600x1200 @ 75Hz
Dimensions: 450x450x460mm (WxHxD)
Pitch: 0.26mm (Dot)
Price: £235 ex. VAT (£276)

Taxan ErgoVision 2280

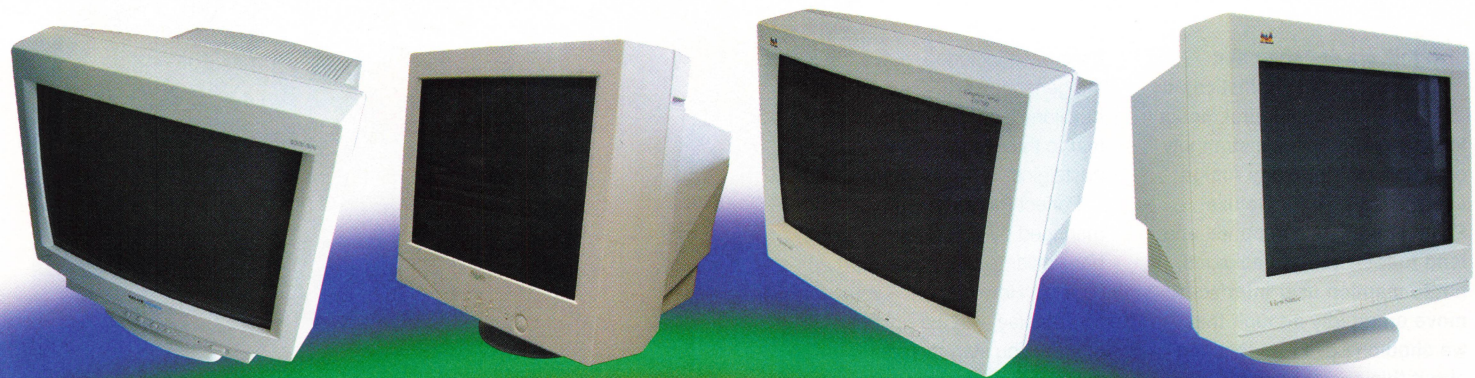
Size: 22" (20" viewable)
Resolution: 1920x1440 @ 83Hz
Dimensions: 505x499.5x495mm (WxHxD)
Pitch: 0.25-0.27mm (Aperture Grille)
Price: £789 ex. VAT (£927)

ViewSonic GS790

Size: 19" (18" viewable)
Resolution: 1600x1200 @ 77Hz
Dimensions: 448x470x412mm (WxHxD)
Pitch: 0.26mm (Dot)
Price: £319 ex. VAT (£375)

ViewSonic PF775

Size: 17" (16" viewable)
Resolution: 1600x1200 @ 77Hz
Dimensions: 417x430x450mm (WxHxD)
Pitch: 0.25mm (Aperture Grille)
Price: £239 ex. VAT (£280)



1600x1200 at a rock-solid 87Hz, it beats the 19" ViewSonic model by a mere - but perhaps vital - 10Hz. Physically, the Samsung is larger and boasts slightly more radical styling, with its purple 'smile' on top and radiating ventilation holes on the side. "Tres Chic."

Picture quality is what counts, however - and no amount of case styling will pull the wool over our eyes. Problem is, the picture's just as clear and vibrant as the rest of the monitors here. An anti-reflective coating minimizes distractions from the real world, and a 0.26mm dot pitch matches that of the ViewSonic GS790 for sharpness and detail.

Super Tax

We could only afford space in the *Amiga Active* offices for one monster monitor, and this is it. Taxan's ErgoVision 2280, unsurprisingly intended for the high-end user rather than your average game player, offers truly stunning big-screen views of your Workbench. Capable of up to 1920x1440 at 83Hz (and laughing in the face of the more usual 1280x1024 which it can throw out at a whopping 117Hz), the 2280 is somewhat future-proof. With its 20", wonderfully flat viewable area, this monitor is well suited to graphical design and desktop publishing work.

Who better, then, to test out the clarity of this beast than *Amiga Active*'s own Art Editor, Leanne, who says *"Yes, it's great,"* and *"Shhh, I'm trying to concentrate,"* when asked what she thinks of the monitor. Getting her to budge over whilst we take a considered look at its picture quality and features proves even more difficult.

Finally, after tempting Leanne away with the offer of a free bar of chocolate and a copy of the Daily Mirror, the verdict: more features than you can shake a bunch of BNC connectors at (the Taxan offers both D-Type and BNC inputs), a beautifully flat screen and rich, vibrant colour reproduction. The office whip-round, however, yields barely enough cash to power the monitor for five minutes. I guess we'll just have to keep this one...

Either that, or make do with Taxan's smaller offering, the Valuevision 1910. Despite the lack of a truly flat screen, picture quality and features are to the expected high standard of Taxan monitors. Capable of up to 1600x1200 at 75Hz with an 18" viewable area, the 1910 sports a respectable 0.26mm dot pitch and is the cheapest of the monitors we've covered here, beating the ViewSonic PF775 by a sock full of pennies. Bargain!

ViewSonic Boom!

From the company with the colourful bird logo comes a pair of delightfully priced monitors. The 19" GS790 boasts an 18" viewable area from its comparatively compact size. Unlike many of today's top quality monitors, the screen isn't perfectly flat, but that's the only disappointment. Whilst boasting the usual array of controls from an on-screen display, including pincushion and balance, top and bottom hook and user definable colour temperature, the GS790's marginally curved screen is its only compromise in the cost and quality stakes. Capable of up to 1600x1200 at 77Hz and with a 0.26mm dot pitch, this is an impressively compact monitor.

If it's a flat screen you're after, however, fear not. Viewsonic's PF775 may be slightly smaller than the GS790, but using ViewSonic's 'PerfectFlat' technology, this 17" monitor also features an abundance of controls from its OSD (on-screen display) menu, including ViewMatch colour, allowing user-definable colour temperatures for accurate colour representation (also present on the GS790). To top it all off, both ViewSonic monitors also have an anti-reflective, anti-glare screen coating. That clear? Perfectly! A

Name Perfect Paint
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Perfect PAINT

It's not quite perfect, but it's more than a little bit Deluxe...



In this era of 24bit paint packages with sophisticated layer systems, natural media tools and so on, it is a strangely common refrain; many Amiga users still yearn for Deluxe Paint. I'm rather a neophile and tend to feel that art packages, not to mention user interfaces, move on rapidly enough that we shouldn't even be thinking about this ancient paint package. Nevertheless, I do.

For all its failings, DPaint created a superb environment for its time. These days we use 24bit paint packages and have sophisticated brush management tools - but is it as easy to pick up a bit of a picture, perform a perspective transform on it and stamp it down again? No. Will most modern paint programs let you create animations and paint with multi frame brushes? Will they... well, you get my point.

New pretender

For some time, the DPaint market has been filled with Cloanto's Personal Paint. It works in fairly similar ways and is immediately familiar to DPaint users. It is unfortunately limited to 256 colours (something DPaint overcame eventually) and offsets a few strong new features of its own with a few omissions the DPaint faithful miss. It has also joined DPaint in the ranks of undeveloped software.

Step forwards Perfect Paint. A freeware package still being actively developed by author George Halvadian, Perfect Paint appears to be an attempt to produce a modern DPaint. The most obviously needed modernisations, such as the ability to handle 24 bit images and the use of image windows have been included, but the general user functionality will bring a tear to the eye of DPaint nostalgics.

Perfect Paint is largely managed by a floating tool bar similar to DPaint's static offering. However, once you start to play with the options offered, you start to see more and more of the DPaint influence, from the radial painting tools to using the right mouse button to select tool preferences.

The approach to image manipulation also harks back to DPaint. These days, the tendency is for graphics applications to try to imitate the materials they are often used to replace, while DPaint made no bones about being a pixel manipulation package. Perfect Paint is very similar in that respect - thus, for example, instead of getting a 'smear' tool, Perfect Paint offers a 'warp' function, which has pretty much the same effect but uses outlines to show which pixels it is going to move (and how far).

Above: Perfect Paint's text effects, like many others, are held together with ARexx, making new effects user-definable and easy to add.

Almost inevitably, given that it crams more into the toolbar, using Perfect Paint can lead to some frustrating tool-hunting. The user interface simply isn't all that mature yet, and thus tools aren't always in the right place. DPaint had seven versions to get that right, so hopefully we can expect Perfect Paint to catch up. While some of the classic DPaint features are still not there, many old favorites can be found, usually in an enhanced form.

Lessons of the past

Perfect Paint will evolve. Currently, the options for paint methods are scattered around dependant on the origin of the effect, which may be logical but doesn't aid usability. It's good to know exactly what your effect is doing, but sometimes for creative purposes you just want to abstract all the technical stuff and let it flow.

Similarly, the DPaint style palette - a great solution for colour-mapped images - isn't appropriate for 24bit work.

Perfect Paint is a work in progress. There are some very rough edges (the manual tells you where everything is but doesn't explain how to use it, for example). It may not feel complete in the way DPaint does for a while, but when it does, it will do the DPaint thing so much better that we might finally be able to put the nostalgia to rest.

Andrew Korn

"...will bring a tear to the eye of DPaint nostalgics."

Perfect Paint

SYSTEM: '030 with FPU or better CPU, OS 3.0+ and a graphics card.

SUMMARY: A DPaint for the modern age. Flawed, but sometimes it's the best tool for the job - and it's absolutely free.

Wheely Nice Mice!

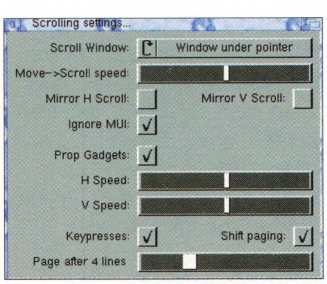
Considering the purchase of a wheel mouse? Not entirely sure you want one? We are...



There's been a lot of talk about wheel mice recently, and no less than three companies have recently released their own PC-Amiga mouse adapters. Merlancia have just announced production of their own device, we've already seen Power Computing's Punchinello Mk. 2, and now Eyetech's EZMouse has arrived on the scene. But why all the activity? Aren't two or three buttons enough for one hand to cope with?

Both the Punchinello and EZMouse are supplied with a floppy disk containing software to drive their wheel mice. In the case of Eyetech's EZMouse, this is Alistair Robinson's FreeWheel utility, whilst Power's contribution also includes MuiWheel by Alessandro Zummo.

These utilities are freely available from Aminet, so you could download them and read through the documentation to find out what all the fuss is about - but that wouldn't give you much of an idea of the benefits to be gleaned from using a wheel mouse. So instead, put your feet up and allow us to elaborate on their behalf...



Above: FreeWheel allows you to configure various options via a standard GadTools interface...

Above right: ...whilst MuiWheel allows similar configuration in glorious colour!

Software: Freewheel v2.1
Author: Alastair Robinson
From: util/mouse/FreeWheel.lha

The native Amiga Gadtools equivalent of MuiWheel if you like, FreeWheel is a commodity which maps wheelmouse events to cursor key presses or scrollbar movement. New to v2.1 is the ability to ignore MUI windows, where MuiWheel might already be running, so software clashes and unpredictable results from running two separate driver utilities can be happily avoided.

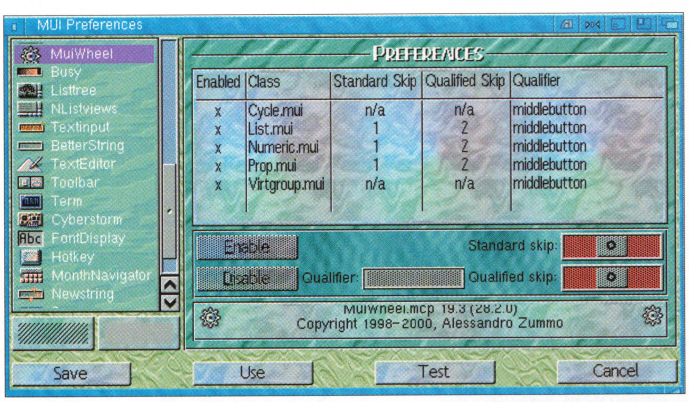
Horizontal and Vertical movement of the mouse can be set independently of one another, meaning those running a Workbench screen without a 1:1 aspect ratio needn't suffer from their cursor sluggishly crawling across the screen but shooting up and down at twice the speed.

Perhaps the main use you'll get from such a utility, however, is the scrolling of windows. Whether it be a nice long text file in your word processor, a web page or a Directory Opus lister, you could soon find yourself relying on wheel movements and forgetting scrollbars ever existed for any other reason than to show you how far down the page you are. It may sound trivial to those who haven't tried it, but until you have, you won't realise the added ease of use it gives ordinary applications.

Freewheel can also assign events to third and/or fourth mouse buttons, much like the well-known commodities MCP or MultiCX. Popping windows to the front or back of your Workbench or toggling screens need only be a click or two away. Freewheel really does give your cursor the freedom it's always secretly craved - you don't even need a wheel mouse to take advantage of some of its features. If you have a three-button rodent, for example, you can set the third button to toggle scrolling so that you can click on a window and move the mouse up and down to scroll a document, then click again to de-activate scrolling, which - if nothing else - gives you a feeling of what you could do with a wheel mouse.

Alessandro Zummo's MuiWheel is a "complex patch" which maps wheel mouse events to some of MUI's classes. Supplied with a preferences program (pictured below), MuiWheel will patch several MUI classes to allow wheel-mouse activation of cycle gadgets, sliders and lists.

Copying the MuiWheelPatch file to your C: directory and adding a single line to your user-startup file is all that is required to run the patch, and although a simple installation script that did this for you would have been ideal, it only takes a few seconds to set up yourself.



Software: MuiWheel 1.4
Author: Alessandro Zummo
From: util/mouse/MuiWheel14.lha

FreeWheel's fine for standard Amiga programs that use the native Gadtools user interface, but plenty of Amiga programs now use Stefan Stuntz's Magic User Interface (MUI) to provide their users with colourful and configurable front ends. Trouble is, your MUI programs won't automatically take advantage of a wheel mouse, so you'll need to install another small utility.

If there was a small script, however, it could also take care of copying the MuiWheel.mcp file to MUI:Libs/mui/ too, so you can set the preferences via MUI itself, but perhaps that would be too lazy. No, on second thoughts, it would be nice. After all, you don't want to go wearing your new mouse out unnecessarily!

Active Shareware

Add some colour to your Amiga's life with the pick of the latest freely distributable software.

Colourful Gadgets

The Amiga, as the first really colourful personal computer, was the first to address the problem of how the user can mix and choose colours. This was simply not a problem that the monochrome Macs of the day or VGA PCs with a fixed set of sixteen colours had to deal with.

In the early days, the Amiga was limited to a 12-bit colour palette, made up of four bits or sixteen levels each of red, green and blue. The user picked the colour they wanted by trying to select the right balance of red, green and blue from this palette. This is not a terribly intuitive method, though, principally because there is no simple way to visualize the three-dimensional RGB colour-space on a two-dimensional screen. Things get even clumsier with the RGB model when using a true-colour palette, so with the release of AGA and OS3.O Commodore adopted the HSB (Hue, Saturation and Brightness) model for their standard GUI components for mixing colours.

If you take a look at the Workbench Palette preferences editor in OS3.0 and above, you will see a coloured disc and a slider. These are the so-called 'colorwheel' and 'gradientslider' BOOPSI gadgets, which, when combined, map out the HSB (Hue, Saturation and Brightness) colour-space as a cylinder and allow a user to pick a colour.

The top surface of this cylinder is represented as the colorwheel, and the gradientslider shows a particular slice through the cylinder's height corresponding to the point you choose on the colorwheel. The surface of the disc is divided radially into hues, where the hue is a measure of the dominant wavelength of the colour, while the distance from the centre of the disc represents the saturation or purity of that hue.

False Start?

The Amiga Workbench, despite its many unique features, is beginning to show its age. One thing it desperately lacks is an easy method to launch applications: you either have to hunt through a series of drawers until you find the executable you want or leave out program icons on your desktop and so clutter up your screen. WB2000 (on Aminet, util/wb/WB2000_15.lha) is a solution to this age-old problem and is a clone of the Windows 'Start' menu / taskbar combination.

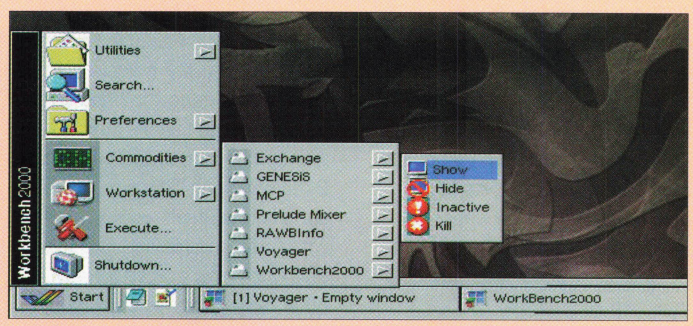
At this point, the devout among you will no doubt cry that they don't want anything to do with Windows anywhere near their Amigas and, anyway, Windows' Start menu is a hideous piece of interface design. True, but you have to admit it is certainly an idea that has caught on. So much so, most desktops these days sport something similar.

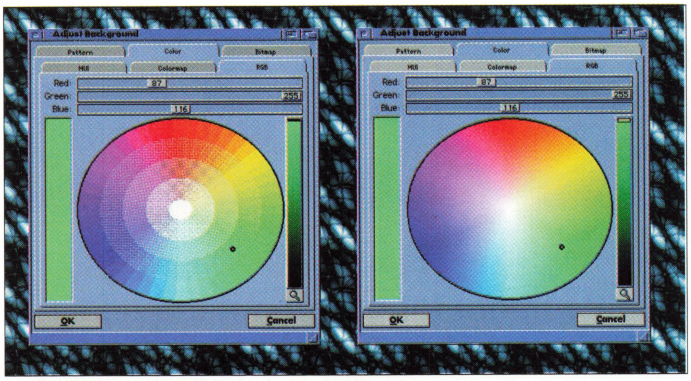
Whatever your views, WB2000 does an adequate job - but little more. It does have some nice features including a Commodity browser on the Start menu, which shows any Commodities running on your system as a sub-menu, each with options to show, hide, stop and remove them. Also, you can add short-cuts to applications as buttons on the task bar, so that you don't even have to search the menu for frequently-used programs. The task bar itself is particularly useful on the Amiga, since it has poorer controls for depth-arranging windows than some other systems. Rather than having to manually hunt through a stack of windows for the one you require, you simply click on its entry on the task bar to bring it to the front. WB2000 also now has the controls to filter which tasks' windows are shown in the task bar.

The trouble with WB2000 is that it lacks style and panache. For example, the program doesn't clone the system command path, so that you have to type in the full path for any commands you enter into the execute command function. The preferences editor is badly designed and laid out, and then there's the problem of images: All the images that WB2000 draws - whether icons for menu elements or button images - are supposed to have transparent backgrounds, but this isn't implemented properly to work on RTG screens and the whole thing just looks a mess.

WB2000 is usable, but isn't desirable just yet.

Below: WB2000 has some neat features, but attention to detail is sorely lacking.





Above: On the left, the dull, old OS 3.5 palette gadgets, while on the right, the new, improved versions ported from AROS.

Zero saturation - that is, white - is at the centre of the disc and full saturation is at the circumference. The familiar colour spectrum is thus mapped out on the edge of the disc, starting at red at twelve o'clock and going clockwise through orange, yellow, green and so on back to red. The gradientslider then shows the range of brightnesses at the hue and saturation that you have chosen in the colorwheel, with full brightness at the top and black at the bottom.

All this is great in theory and it allows you find the colour you want much more quickly than with the RGB model, but the original OS3.0 gadgets were designed to be used on the low colour-depth screens that the original and AGA hardware supported. Even if you are running on a graphics card in high or true-colour, both gadgets will be still be dithered down to 256 colours, making the job of choosing an exact shade more difficult than it should have been.

AROS to the rescue! AROS (see www.aros.org) is the project that is attempting to reverse-engineer AmigaOS 3.0 to be portable across any hardware, and this obviously means recreating BOOPSI gadgets such as the palette gadgets described above. And, because AROS is designed from the outset to take advantage of modern graphics hardware, the designers didn't feel the need to recreate the limitations of the originals: the AROS colorwheel and gradientslider gadgets will work in full colour on 16-bit and 24-bit screens.

"AROS to the rescue!"

This advance needn't be restricted to AROS, however, and since AROS is compatible with AmigaOS at the source code level, it was a fairly easy task to get the improved gadgets running on the Amiga itself. Stephan Rupprecht has ported the AROS colour gadgets to AmigaOS and the result is available on Aminet (in the dev/gui drawer).

These replacement colorwheel and gradientslider gadgets are a drop-in replacement for the originals. Thanks to the modularity of BOOPSI, software that uses them will never know the difference. You, on the other hand, most definitely will - if you own a graphics card, that is.

The one penalty is that these more colourful gadgets take longer to render, especially if you have a low power processor. It might be nice to see the calculation off-loaded asynchrously to a sub-process, so that the drawing of these gadgets doesn't slow down the opening and re-sizing of windows, but that's just being picky. The extra colour is well worth the price.

The AROS project is potentially fruitful ground for further improvements to the Amiga's operating system and hopefully we'll see other such developments finding their way back to the Amiga in future.

Richard Drummond

Now, That's Magic!

MagicMenu is one of those long-enduring hacks that most Amiga owners use. What makes it so delightful is that it improves Intuition both functionally and aesthetically: it lets you operate all system menus via the keyboard, lets you pop them up anywhere you please on screen (rather than just as pull-down menus at the screen's title bar) and improves their visual appearance with that cool, MUI-like 3D look. (Oh, and if you want to take a screen grab of an Intuition menu, then running MagicMenu is the only way that will allow you to do it in software).

There hasn't been an Aminet release of MagicMenu in years, so the less observant might have thought that development had ceased. There has been the odd beta release available on the project web site (www.magicmenu.de) for the adventurous to try out, but now, the latest tweaks have beeen given a clean bill of health and an updated, stable version has made it to Aminet (util/wb/MagicMenu_II.lha).

Users of the recent beta releases will probably be disappointed, though, because there's nothing much new in it. Those who haven't updated their version for a while will be most impressed. MagicMenu is now more robust and less likely to deadlock your system (it is a hack, after all), but the winning feature for most will be the funky translucent menus. On high and true-colour screens, the backgrounds of menus can be rendered semi-transparently, so that anything underneath is still partly visible. Okay, so it's a feature with little practical use, but it looks quite delectable, you have to admit.

Below: Ever wondered how magazines took screenshots of menus? Here's the answer.



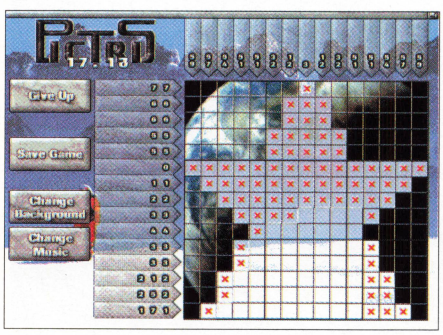
"menus can be rendered semi-transparently..."

Active Media

A thinking-man's puzzler, a book offering enlightenment for programmers and frustrated computer users alike, and a few interesting online resources...







Pictris

- CD Puzzle Game
- APC&TCP
- Price: DM 39.95 (around £12.50)
- Contact: www.apc-tcp.de

The name of this game may lead you to bury your head in the sand, believing it to be another Tetris clone. We nearly did - but thank goodness for common sense, which dictated we should play it before casting judgement.

Pictris is, in actual fact, a logical puzzler. It doesn't involve falling tiles or tessellation - instead, you are presented with a grid of squares within which is hidden a pattern. Think of it as a cross between Minesweeper, Battleships and those Logic Puzzles you used to get in magazines - the ones consisting of grids of squares that you had to tick off with the aid of textual clues to reveal the solution to the puzzle.

In Pictris, clues to the pattern are given in the form of numbers next to each row and column of the grid, telling you how many groups of blocks are hidden in the tiles. A "5" next to a row, for example, indicates that in that row, there are five blocks next to each other. If, as in the game's tutorial, there are only five squares in the row, you can click all of them.

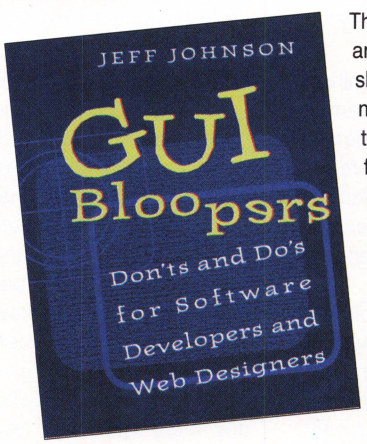
Revealing a pattern becomes much trickier on the larger grids you will find in the main game, which requires you to complete a large number of grids in sequence to finish the game. As with many popular puzzle games, the premise is engaging but simple, making the game quite addictive. The challenge comes in the form of a time limit. You're given 30 minutes to complete each grid, which may sound far too generous - your first mistake will only cost you a single minute - but subsequent mistakes double your time penalty to 2, 4, 8 and 16 minutes. Hence, make five mistakes in quick succession and you're finished.

Without this killer time penalty, tactics would go out of the window and you'd be free to unleash your mouse in a bout of frenzied clicking all over the grid to complete a level in record time. With it, however, Pictris becomes a highly addictive thinking man's game, which should be easy, but often calls for much head-scratching. If there was a portable Amiga to play it on, it would make an ideal train journey time-killer... it already makes a good "I really should be doing some work" time-killer... **DS**

"As with many popular puzzle games, the premise is engaging..."

GUI Bloopers

- Paperback, 256 pp
- Written by Jeff Johnson
- Published by Morgan Kaufmann
- Price: £28.95 from amazon.co.uk
- Support Amiga Active - buy this book through our web site at www.amigactive.com



The Amiga community has an abundance of shareware programmers, many of whom are very talented at writing good, functional programs. This, however, is only one part of the quest to produce a truly enjoyable game or useful utility.

Unfortunately, it is often the interface of a program - the GUI - that puts off potential users. Make a program easy to use, and people will use it. Sounds easy, but like so many things in life, it's usually the simple things that are the hardest to master.

In his occupation as a *"user interface consultant,"* Jeff Johnson has witnessed many

GUI bloopers, from a lack of keyboard shortcuts to the overuse of buttons, from a proliferation of separate program windows to the use of inconsistent or tiny fonts - all of which make programs far more difficult to use than they should be.

Frustrated by the lack of good interface design and the abundance of common errors, he has compiled this book which contains not only examples of the stupid things some programmers write into their GUIs, but also illustrations of the way things should be done.

"Despite its sheer size, GUI Bloopers is easily digestible..."

Despite its sheer size, GUI Bloopers is easily digestible in bite-size chunks with separate sections on GUI Component, Layout and Appearance, Textual, Interaction, Web and Responsiveness Bloopers as well as an introductory chapter covering first principles and 'reviews' of real-life software. With all this, not to mention its sections on Management Bloopers (which Johnson hopes will lead companies to *"take the additional steps necessary to design an organization that produces usable and useful products"*) and a chapter on designing controls for a set-top box, you can't help feeling that this is a book Amiga should be reading, just to make sure that we don't see examples of poor user-interface design in the upcoming line of new Amiga devices.

GUI Bloopers not only gives you a chuckle at some of the 'features' of PC and Mac programs, it will also prove to be a goldmine of information to Amiga shareware programmers with its insights into the way users love (and hate) to interact with computer software. So, whether you're going to write a piece of software or if you're just curious to find out what possesses programmers to include certain "usability howlers" in their creations, you need to read this book. **DS**

Anagram Genius

- Web Site
- URL: www.wordsmith.org
- URL: ww.anagramgenius.com/index.html

You're reading, 'Ted, I've a iMac,' otherwise known as 'Came via tide' or even... 'Active Media.' If you find pleasure in jumbling up the letters of a phrase, take a look at the anagram engine at www.wordsmith.org. As well as providing a few minutes amusement by creating anagrams of your friends' names, it also provides some useful services.

Dictionary, synonym and thesaurus services are available, mainly by e-mail. Another similar site is Anagram Genius. This only covers anagrams but has more ways of searching for them, including by category. **NB**

Free Online Dictionary of Computing

- Web Site
- URL: http://foldoc.doc.ic.ac.uk/foldoc/

Do you get a little lost when people start talking about "heterogeneous asymmetrical multiprocessing"? Do your EPROMs get mixed up with your SDRAMs? Or do you simply want to impress some geeky friends?

The solutions to all of these problesm can be found in the Free Online Dictionary of Computing. It's not a flashy site - I counted a total of one graphic in the various pages I visited - but it does contain a lot of useful information. There's an off-line version you can download, and even an option to download a file containing changes since your last download, meaning you can keep your off-line copy up to date without having to download a couple of megabytes each time. **NB**

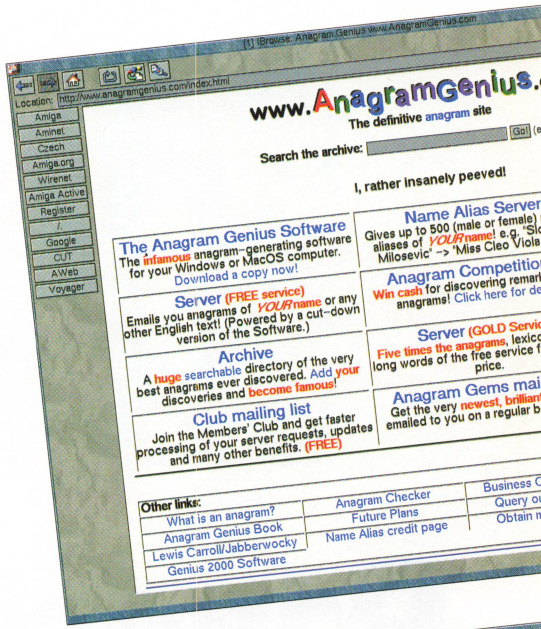
MovieTrak

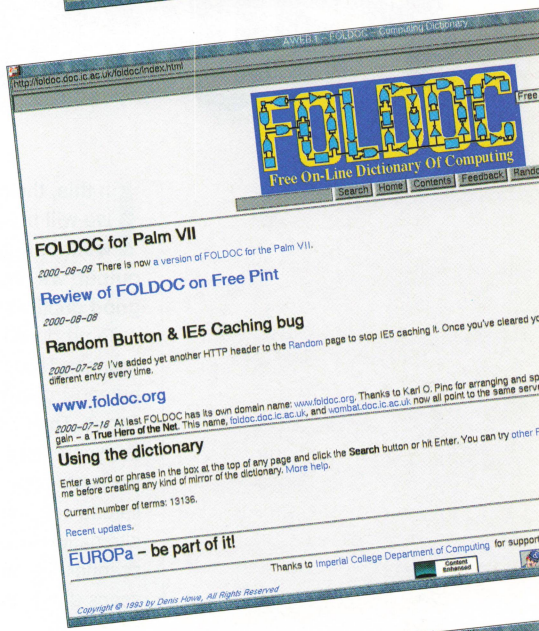
- Web Site
- URL: www.movietrak.com

Most Amigas can't handle DVDs fully, but that doesn't matter. Who wants to watch a movie on a computer monitor when you can watch it on TV, stretched out on the sofa with a few cans? There are several sites selling DVDs online, but this one is different - it rents them.

Movietrak.com is a mail order DVD library, with online ordering. There is a search facility, enabling you to find DVDs based on the name of a film, actor or director. Each DVD has a synopsis of the film, along with other information such as running time, certificate and a list of DVD-specific features.

Ordering is achieved via a standard shopping basket system and DVDs are delivered my snail mail with a prepaid return envelope. It's no good for those, *"oh, 'quel surprise!' There's nothing on TV tonight. Right, let's pop out and get a video,"* situations, but it's worth a look for those who plan ahead. **NB**









High quality printing doesn't require a Macintosh or PC. Professional output from your Amiga does, however, require a little technical know-how.

Part 2

Pagestream Tutorial

In this, the conclusion to our Pagestream tutorial, we will be looking at scanning and outputting your work to high resolution devices. For professional output, we need professional input. High resolution, good quality scans are the key.

To produce high quality scans, you should use a drum scanner. These are normally accessible through service bureaus, usually listed in your local copy of the Yellow Pages. They will scan your original photographs or transparencies and place digital files on CD. If you do not have access to a drum scanner, the highest quality flatbed scanner you can afford is the next best alternative. Theoretically, the more you pay for a flatbed scanner, the better definition you will obtain from your scans due to the higher quality optics that are used.

Producing a Match Print

A match print is an analogue process which is produced using cyan, magenta, yellow and black pieces of film and a substrate (a specially coated white sheet of paper).

The cyan sheet of film is laid down on top of the substrate, followed by a piece of acetate which contains the cyan pigment. When exposed to ultra-violet light, the cyan part of the image is laid down onto the substrate. This process is repeated with the magenta, yellow and black sheets of film and acetate respectively, creating what is known as a 'press proof'. These proofs are normally used by the printer as a true guide to run to when printing the final job.

Scanning and Resolution

Desktop publishing traditionally uses images at 300dpi (dots per inch). Why 300? Well, the DPI depends on the LPI (lines per inch, sometimes referred to as "line screen" or "line screen frequency") capability of your output device. For example, a desktop laser printer is typically capable of 65lpi, so the optimum scanning resolution (simply worked out by doubling the line screen frequency) would be 130dpi. A high-end imagesetter can produce anything from 65 to 400 lpi. Its DPI capability, on the other hand, can be anything up to 3,500 - but this is irrelevant to the DPI of your scan.

Tradtitionally, film from an imagesetter would be output at 150 line screen, therefore multiplying this figure by two gives us our magic figure of 300 dpi for scanning. To find out what line screen frequency your output device is capable of, consult your manual or speak to your friendly local service bureau (look them up in the Yellow Pages).

When having scans provided by a service bureau, ensure they save the resulting files in TIF (Tagged Information File) format for best results. In our experience, JPG files - though often used for on-screen high colour images - suffer from a loss of colour and saturation when output through Pagestream. EPS (Encapsulated Postscript) is another industry standard format, but has seen little support on the Amiga to date. When using TIF files, LZW compression can be applied to reduce the size of the image file. This differs from the compression routines offered by the JPG format as it is "lossless" - unlike JPG all the original information is retained, hence image quality is not affected. The only down side is that the file is bigger and takes longer to process as a result.

Check your scans

As mentioned in part one of this tutorial, BME (the bitmap editor supplied with Pagesteam) is the first step to checking your scans. Normally, scans from a service bureau need not be touched unless they require special effects or manipulation (such as rotation or scaling). It is always best to manipulate images in BME or another pixel-based imaging package such as Photogenics or FXPaint because it will cut down on processing time (Pagestream has to produce a mathematical equation when rotating and skewing images, which produces extra postscript when printing). The colour balancing and saturation of drum scans should be perfect, though flatbed scans may need adjusting.

Unfortunately, there's a 'chicken and egg' situation when first using your system for desktop publishing. Your monitor will not be calibrated, so what you see on screen may not reflect the printed article. This is also true of desktop printers, so outputting a proof to your inkjet will not give colour accuracy for professional printing.

"...what you see on screen may not reflect the printed article."

Before doing any professional printing, a colour accurate proof is essential. To achieve this, take a scan using your flatbed scanner, then send the scanned material to your bureau to have it scanned professionally using a drum scanner. The drum scan can be brought directly into Pagestream, while the flatbed scan is duplicated several times and manipulated in BME.

These scans can then all be placed on an A4 sheet and printed to a file for your service bureau to output to film. Once films have been produced, an analogue proof (or 'match print' - see boxout) can be produced from the films. Once you receive your match print, you can hold it up to the screen to verify colour accuracy, adjusting your monitor to obtain the best possible match, bearing in mind you should be viewing your document on a true-colour, 24bit screen.

When scanning the same image professionally at 300dpi, the resulting file retains this information. Scans made on an Amiga, however, may need changing from 72dpi to their true resolution, which can also be done in BME. When changing the dpi of an image (by setting the horizontal and vertical resolution in the BME's 'Effect/Resize' window to 300, for example), only the header of the file is altered. No information is lost or gained by changing an image's resolution, but when it is brought in to Pagestream, it will be displayed at 100 percent and at its optimum resolution.

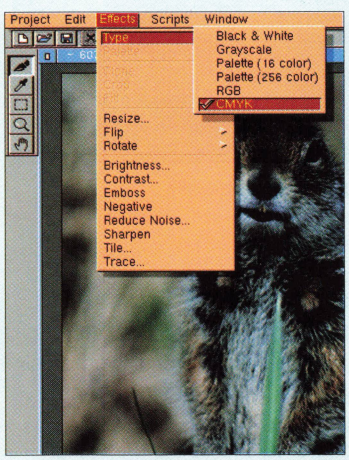
When having an image scanned by a bureau, they will need to be told the size at which the image is to be printed. Any less, and image quality will be lost because the graphic will need to be interpolated (increased in size from the original information). In other words, if you have an A5 original which needs to be output to A4, it needs to be scanned at 140 percent.

Importing images

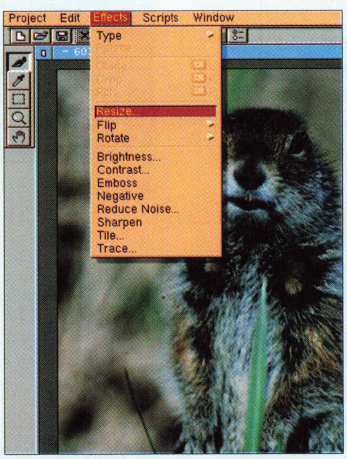
As discussed in part one, we recommend leaving all four-colour (CMYK) images external to Pagestream. If you wish, you can embed bitmap (1 bit) images (logos, for example). The reason for leaving images external to your document is so that the Pagestream file remains small and easily manageable.

Bringing a 72dpi TIF into a new A4 document, selecting the image and clicking on the 'Information' button in Pagestream's toolbar (or selecting the 'Edit/Information' menu option) shows that the image is a CMYK TIF, external to Pagestream.

As explained earlier, the only difference between our 72dpi image and its 300dpi copy is in the header of the file - nothing has been altered in the image. When bringing the 300dpi file into Pagestream, it is shown at its optimum output size for a 150lpi device. Generally speaking, there is usually enough tolerance to be able to blow up an image by 25 percent. Any further, and degradation of the image becomes noticeable.



Above: Converting an RGB flatbed scan to the CMYK colour model for printing is as easy as selecting a menu option in BME.



Above: Changing the resolution of an image with BME.



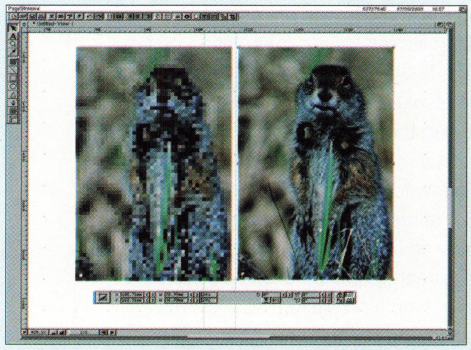
Above: The 300dpi image (the smaller of the two) when first brought in to Pagestream. The large image is at 72dpi.

Image differences

Image files that are produced by flatbed scanners will usually be in RGB (Red, Green and Blue) format and will need converting to CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black - or "key") before printing. In BME, this can be done with the Effect/Type/CMYK menu option.

On the Amiga, software writers often insist on making everything 72dpi which is fine for video, the web or anything else which will only be shown on screen, but causes confusion when talking to anyone in the publishing field. Print oriented file formats retain the dpi information from a scanned image, but not all Amiga software takes it into account. Therefore, if you scan an image at 300 dpi, the resulting file may still be displayed at 72 dpi on the Amiga, even though the file itself records the fact that it is a 300dpi scan.

Right: A 300dpi image, blown up to the size of the same 72dpi graphic. Don't be fooled by how it looks on screen!







Above: This is how both images look when printed. Spot the difference? Exactly.

"Don't be fooled, it's only an on-screen representation of the final print. What you see is not what you get!"

Problematic Pixellation

There is a problem with the way Pagestream displays images over 72dpi. For some reason, they look pixellated. Don't be fooled, it's only an on-screen representation of the final print. What you see is not what you get! To get around this 'feature' of Pagstream, we recommend you do the following:

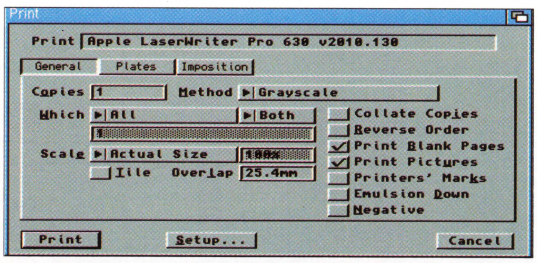
First, you will have to change the resolution of images that are supplied by your service bureau to 72dpi so that Pagestream shows them on screen without pixellization.

When imported, however, the image will be shown approximately four times its optimum size and will need reducing to the size it would be shown if it were a 300dpi image. This is easily achieved by scaling the image using Pagestream's 'Edit Palette' (accesed from the 'Windows' menu).

Scaling it to 24 percent (on both axes) will display it at approximately the same size it would be shown if it were a 300dpi image. This is worked out by the simple calculation: (72 / 300 = 0.24). In other words, 72 is 24 percent of 300.

"This will allow you to place images with more accuracy in Pagestream..."

This will allow you to place images with more accuracy in Pagestream - it doesn't actually change anything other than the way Pagestream displays images, making it easier to make out what you are doing. Also note that when increasing the size of an image by up to 25 percent as discussed earlier, you need to consider the print size of the image at 300dpi, even if you brought the image in at 72dpi to improve its on-screen clarity.



Above: Printing from Pagestream, professionally.

Professional Printing

From Pagestream's 'Print' dialog box, open the 'Print Setup' window. In the first drop-down menu, there are six different types of output listed. As we are talking about professional output, and as all professional output devices use postscript, we will choose the "Postscript" type from the popup menu.

Next, select the PPD (Postscript Printer Description) file from the list supplied. If you are using an output bureau, they will be able to supply you with the correct PPD for their output device. PPDs are stored in the Softlogik/Printers/PPD folder, which contains subdirectories for lots of different printer manufacturers.

As we discussed earlier, every device has a screen frequency (lpi). These will be listed in the 'Screen' menu. 150 line screen is a commonly used setting for outputting to film.

Our document is an A4 page, but in 'Paper Size' when going to an imagesetter, we need to allow for crop marks and registration marks. This is the information that is placed around the outside of the page, such as job name, plate colour (CMYK), time produced, screen angle and frequency used, trim marks and registration marks. The registration marks are used by the printer to line up each piece of film accurately before printing.

As our page is A4, we have chosen "A4.extra" as our printed size. You can also go to the 'Custom Page Size' option and add 25mm to the size of your page, which in

the case of an A4 document (210x297mm) would make the print size 235x322mm. Adding 25mm either way is enough to accomodate registration marks and crop marks. Unless otherwise told by your service bureau, do not touch the 'Margin' or 'Feed' options in the Print Setup window. The 'Orientation' setting should be set to that of your document. In our case, Portrait (vertical).

Leave the 'UCR' (Under Colour Removal) and 'GCR' (Grey Component Replacement) alone. UCR compensates for over-inking by subtracting equal amounts of cyan, magenta and yellow from shadows and dark colours, replacing them with increased amounts of black, cutting down on the amount of ink required - but this is only useful for large print runs.

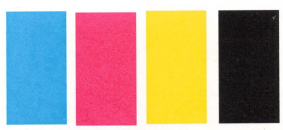
Under 'Options', the 'Include error handler' option should be off (unticked) and 'Include EOF' should be on. If you do not have the high resolution output device connected to your Amiga, you will need to create a postscript file. Choose "Disk File" from the 'Send to' popup menu and make sure you've got enough room on your hard disk.

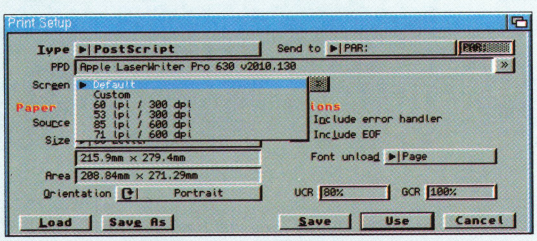
Colour Separations

When the 'Plates' tab of the Print window is selected initially, the screen frequency and angle settings for each plate will be shown as 'Default'. Double-clicking on each line frequency setting will reveal these default figures. If any of the settings are empty, contact your service bureau or the person who supplied you with the PPD. These values are required for all plates.

You will notice from the screenshot (below) that the spot colour shares the same angle as the black (i.e. 45 degrees). Under nearly all circumstances, this is fine. Do not change this to any other angle unless you are aware of the implications.

Returning to the 'General' section of the Print window, make sure 'Print Pictures' and 'Printers Marks' are both enabled. The next option, 'Emulsion down' reverses the image when printed and is always used in litho printing, but not when producing work for silkscreen printing. Ask your service bureau or print company if you are uncertain about this setting. This also goes for the 'Negative' option which you will find on the 'General' tab.



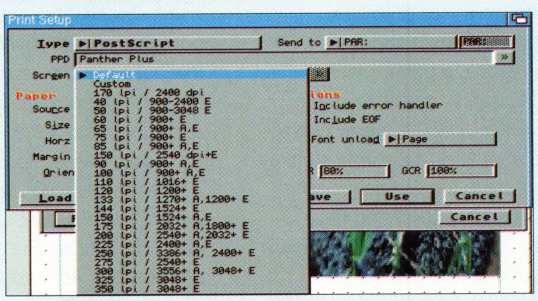


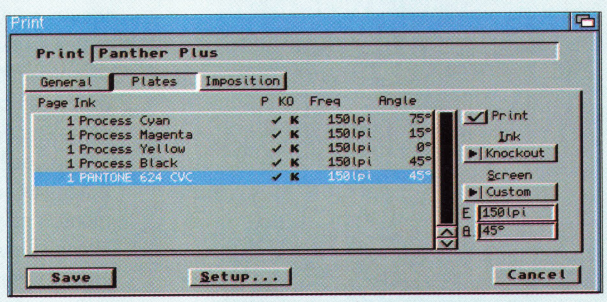
"Do not change this to any other angle unless you are aware of the implications."

Below: Printing colour separations. The 'Plates' tab, showing the line screen frequencies and angles of each plate).

Above and Right: Available line screen frequencies for an Apple Laserwriter and Panther Plus imagesetter.

Note the wider range of options available for the imagesetter (right).





Click 'Save' in the Print Setup window to return to the Print window. In the 'Method' popup menu, there are five options: Greyscale, Colour, Colour Separations, Process Separations and Spot Separations. Colour Separations will place CMYK and any spot colours (i.e. Pantone colours) on separate sheets of film. Pantone is a reference used by printers to specify a single colour ink. This reference will be printed on the film and will be produced in addition to the CMYK films.

Process Separations will convert any spot (Pantone) colours to Process (CMYK) by finding their closest CMYK values in order to simulate the spot colour. Be warned: these colours will not be emulated exactly, because of the different colour ranges (gamuts) covered by CMYK and Pantone colour models. Spot Separations will only output spot colours, ignoring the cyan, magenta, yellow and black components of your document.

After hitting the 'Save' button, save your file, making sure you have enough hard drive space, as postscript files can be quite large. Ensure that the filename ends with ".ps" so that it will be recognised by other systems as a postscript file.

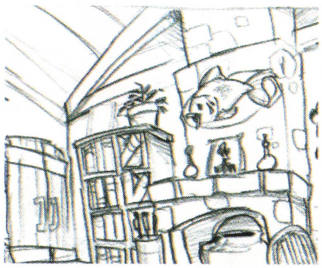
If the resulting postscript file is no larger than a couple of megabytes, you may be able to get away with e-mailing it to your service bureau. If not, you'll need to transfer your postscript file to a PC formatted Zip disk or ISO9660 CD so that it can be read by the bureau. They may accept other media, but whatever you do, check with them first. You won't get very far if you supply your work on an ORB disk, as few bureaus have ORB drives!

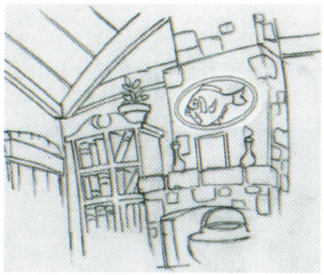
Amiga Friendly

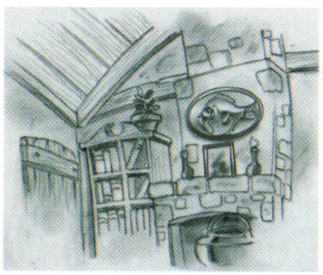
When producing professional quality output from Pagestream, it's always best to output your work via an Amiga-savvy service bureau, as you will be able to send the original Pagestream file along with the images without having to worry about producing a postscript file. Your work can then be output direct from Pagestream at the service bureau and can be ammended should any changes be required at the last minute, which could save you a lot of unnecessary work and expense!

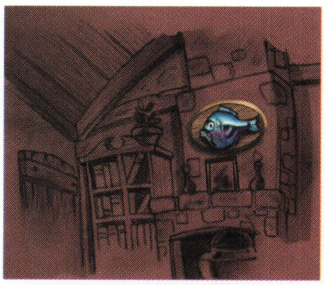
Crystal Clear

Amiga Active weren't the only Amiga-related presence at this year's ECTS show in London. Crystal Interactive Software were there too, extolling the virtues of our favourite platform and raising a few eyebrows along the way.









Andrew Reed of Crystal Interactive Software is a busy, but happy man. Having attended the ECTS show in London recently, he called *Amiga Active's* offices brimming with enthusiasm about the Amiga. Rather than taking a public presence at the show, Andrew's time was spent deep in conversation with some of the industry's biggest players. The reason? Crystal is branching out into other markets - not to leave the Amiga behind, but to support their continued development for the platform.



Phunky Phungus

Their main weapon is a title that originated on the Amiga, yet one we have still to see materialise: Gilbert Goodmate and the Mushroom of Phungoria, a game which we first previewed back in issue 2, has finally been completed for the PC. Crystal are now hoping to put together a team to port the epic Monkey Island style adventure to the Amiga (see this month's news pages for details) and have already previewed the game at the SEAL show in Essex (see page 14).

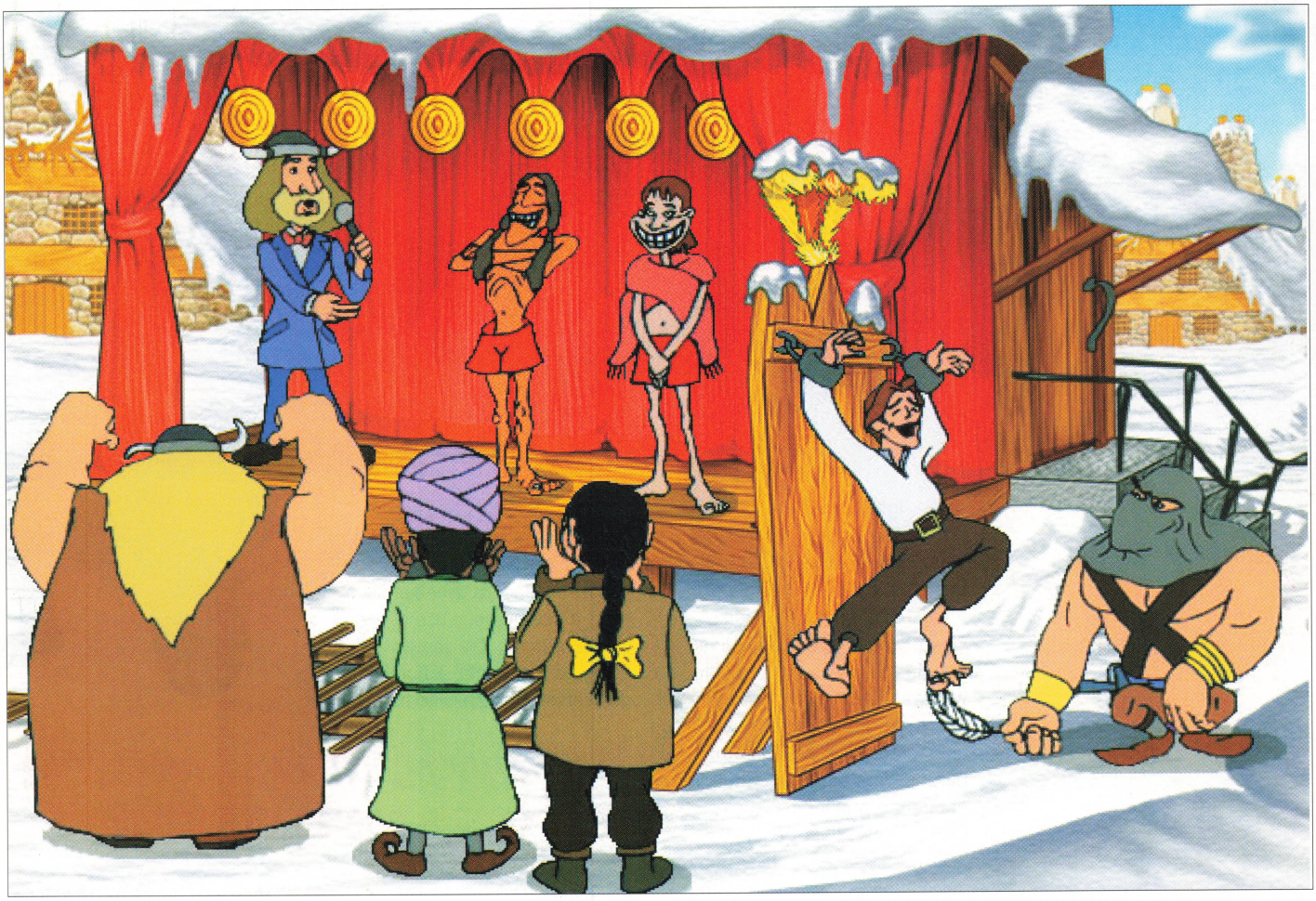
Crystal attended all three days of the ECTS show and spoke to several prospective publishers of Gilbert. Andrew Reed elaborates:

"We had meetings arranged with publishers such as Rage, SCI, Disney Interactive, Take Two, THQ, Kemco, Sunsoft, Sega and a few more. A lot asked about Gilbert's origin, and when I mentioned he was born on an Amiga 1200 a few eyebrows were raised, and in some cases the discussions veered off for a few minutes talking about how they loved the Amiga and how they still have an Amiga back home. These were men and women in high powered positions within the gaming industry that have the choice of any platform to play games; Dreamcast, Playstation 2, in some cases even the X-Box - and they stilled played games on their Amigas now and again!

"We met up with some familiar names to the Amiga, Guildhall Leisure, and had a long chat about the Amiga. The showed me some new software that Acid (formally an Amiga developer), had created. What struck me was the lack of knowledge that any of them, even the old Amiga companies that have now moved on, had about the current Amiga situation. None knew that a new machine was imminent, and they were very surprised when I told them about it. Come on Amiga Inc., let's start telling the gaming community you're here!"

Crystal have continued to develop for the 'classic' Amiga, and have just completed Bubble Heroes (see Active Gamer in issues 3

"We had meetings arranged with publishers such as Rage, SCI, Disney Interactive, Take Two, THQ, Kemco, Sunsoft, Sega..."







"Bubble Heroes will be our last game for the 'classic' Amiga, but we are talking to Amiga Inc. about developing for the new machine..."

and 7) which we will be reviewing in our next issue. Unfortunately, the other Amiga title they had planned, Dark Millennia, has been fraught with development problems and will not be appearing. Not ones to be pessimistic, Crystal are, however, planning to put a lot of resources into development for the next Amiga platform.

Development hell

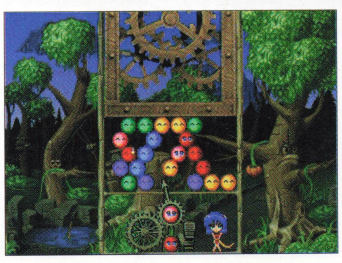
"Unfortunately for us, we have signed several development teams, working on different projects over the last two years, that have failed to meet deadlines," Andrew explains. *"Bubble Heroes will be our last game for the 'classic' Amiga, but we are talking to Amiga Inc. about developing for the new machine."*

For a company who were formed in February 1998 and started out producing games for the Amiga - although Gilbert Goodmate, it should be noted, has been in development for four years now, since 1996 - Crystal InteractiveSoftware have come on in leaps and bounds.

They're currently developing titles for the PC and Colour Gameboy (including games based around Steps - yes, the pop band - and Terry Venables - yes, the ex-England football manager) as well as the Amiga, and are now actively seeking a group of developers to work on porting Gilbert to the platform it was originally intended for.

"Looking to the future, we are actively seeking official developer status for the GameBoy Advance, Playstation 2 and Dreamcast. It would be nice to be recognised by Amiga Inc. as an official NG Amiga developer, too..."





Name Code Name: Hell Squad
Price See adverts in this issue
Developer Digital Dreams Entertainment
Contact www.dd-ent.com

Code Name: Hell

Up for a bit of alien bashing? Waste some green-skinned guys and solve a few puzzles in Code Name: Hell Squad.



Digital Dreams Entertainment's Wasted Dreams (reviewed way back in the very first issue of *Amiga Active*) was a popular, very playable and imaginative arcade adventure game. While we await the sequel, with new improved graphics and extra characters, DDE have been hard at work and thoughtful enough to provide us with Code Name: Hell Squad.

Originally slated for release by Vulcan Software some years ago under the rather sillier name Hell Pigs, it was lying in computer game limbo until DDE picked up the rights and polished it off.



The game is in a very similar mould to Wasted Dreams. Most notably, it employs the same control interface, a user-friendly system making good use of animated icons. The same slightly cocky, tongue-in-cheek humour is present here, which is no bad thing either. Hell Squad, like Wasted Dreams and countless other classic Amiga games, is firmly in the find-objects-and-work-out-how-to-use-them-to-progress category, and it's a pretty good example at that.

"Some young lovers ...probably on an al-fresco nookie expedition..."

Cheesy horror flick

A good way to introduce the game is in the same way that DDE have, with a video. Think Blair Witch Project. No, actually, scrap that, think of the beginning of the video for Michael Jackson's Thriller, before the groovy dancing zombies turn up.

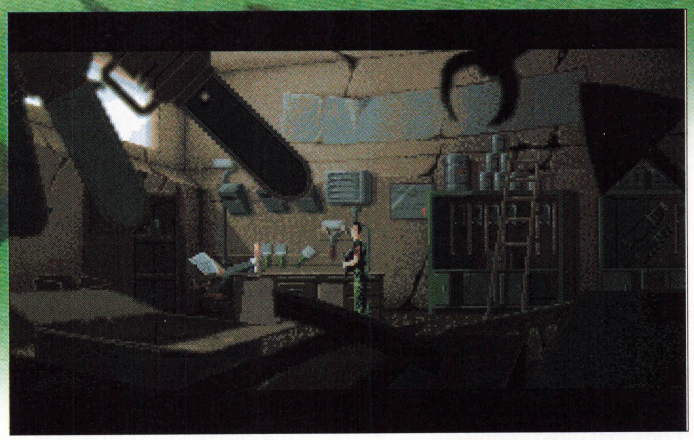
You know - that kind of hammy acting, combined with the sort of direction and technical ability common to most first-year art-school films. Some young lovers (probably on an al-fresco nookie expedition) are attacked, and seemingly vaporised by an alien presence in the woods. The local cops (headed by a guy in a ridiculous trilby), are warned off the scene by the FBI. Cut to close-up scenes of a squaddie kitting up.

Then, zap-bonk! You're in the game: a capsule (a bit like the one in which Ripley sleeps in the Alien films) has just fallen from the sky and a soldier gets out, looks around and squats on the ground. The first time I saw this sequence, I was rubbing my hands with glee, remembering how very cheesy Wasted Dreams could be with a surprising fondness. If you've played that game, you'll find it very easy to pick up Hell Squad. You'll soon be wandering around, solving puzzles and shooting aliens.

The first big difference from Wasted Dreams that you'll notice is the perspective. Instead of a top down view, you're side on, and closer to the action. The graphics are colourful and bold, not high-resolution or particularly detailed, but functional and fun.

The character you control is a soldier who can move around the environments freely, being able to walk away from the screen into the distance and back, as well as from left to right. Pressing the fire button causes him to unleash a

Squad





torrent of automatic gunfire, and he can swivel about to aim.

Waste those alien scum!

When you encounter the enemy, you'll find that they're pretty easy to dispose of, and that you've got infinite ammo. DDE haven't gone out of their way to make this game difficult, as far as the arcade/shooting part goes. If your soldier is getting hit, you can even switch to another character.

You've got a squad of four soldiers, and when they are not active, their energy bar will be replenished. A slight moan here is that while you are supposed to have four different soldiers, they all look and act the same.

It would have been good if they each had different characteristics, and this is a missed opportunity. Having four soldiers is a boost to gameplay, however, as it can save you a lot of aimlessly walking about. If you've got your squaddies scattered all over the place, you can just switch to the one nearest to where you want to get to. Also, if one character picks an object up it is available to all the others. So, if one character is trapped in a room, say, he can pick up an object, which can be used by the others to free him. Okay, so it's not exactly realism - but if it improves the gameplay, so what?

The adventure element of the game is very much in the old school of gaming - very Monkey Island. The puzzles are of a satisfying degree of difficulty. Some won't have you troubled for more than a few minutes, and it's plain sailing. Others, however, will demand a bit more thought.

Leave your Amiga for a moment, drink some coffee, watch telly and come back later. When you see the answer, it'll seem so obvious. There appears to be a fair amount of game to get through - you aren't likely to finish it in an afternoon.

The good news is that it keeps you coming back for more. That's the thing with good adventure games - when you've got so far, you just want to carry on until the end, which is definitely true of this game; it's easy to get hooked, partly because Digital Dreams have employed the same narrative trick as in Wasted Dreams, where only a tantalisingly small part of the plot is revealed at a time, so you get quite eager to reveal more.

"I still want to go back for more."

A bit rude

The same familiar humour is in here, as are some of the chuckle-inducing translation problems (remember the bloke in Wasted Dreams who had *"fallen into a comma"*?) It's a bit sad, then, that some of that charm is affected by the gratuitous language in this game. I don't use the word "gratuitous" lightly either; the language here just doesn't seem necessary. If you shoot at nothing in particular, your grunt will let rip with the sort of expletives that would cost a film an 18 certificate. Some conversations are similarly peppered with invective, which is rather childish - after all, who are the writers trying to impress here?

If I was an under-twelve *(or Quentin Tarantino - Ed.)* I might nudge a friend and giggle, but I remain unimpressed.

On the whole, though, this is a worthy game, offering hours of puzzle-solving fun. There's certainly nothing revolutionary here; the graphics and sound are pleasant enough, but certainly not anywhere near stunning. There's more to good game than technical prowess, however, and Digital Dreams have produced a winner here. There's something very satisfying about the user interface - it's a lot more fun than the old point-and-click technique. From the few screenshots and the scanty information DDE are giving us about Wasted Dreams 2, it seems as though we're in for a treat, but Code Name: Hellsquad is an impressive stop-gap. If you had fun with Wasted Dreams and can't wait for the sequel, get yourself a copy of Code Name: Hell Squad now.

Paul Cavanagh A

Hell Squad

SYSTEM: OS 1.3+, ECS or AGA, 3MB RAM, CD-ROM.

SUMMARY: Nothing groundbreaking, but a very playable arcade adventure game which will keep you going for some time.



Foundation Gold

The ultimate Amiga strategy game finally finds its ultimate format.



The original Foundation was easily the best attempt at a Command and Conquer-style strategy war game ever to find its way onto the Amiga, despite the raft of bugs that often crippled it. Thankfully, its author Paul Burkey has stuck with the game, firstly correcting all the known bugs through a series of patches and upgrades, then with a whole new version, the Director's Cut, which comprised all these upgrades in a single version.

The latest version, Foundation Gold, basically consists of Foundation Director's Cut combined with the recently released 'Undiscovered Land' mission pack, along with a few more tweaks and fixes.

Playing God

Foundation follows the C&C concept pretty closely. Graphics consist of beautifully drawn 3D terrains with small, yet highly detailed people, buildings and other constructions. All this is animated and lifelike, with you viewing things from an almost God-like aerial position. In your overseeing role, you organise your people and their resources to complete various tasks, be it to fight and win a war with a neighbouring race, build new buildings and fortifications or to stage a rescue mission, all the time keeping a watchful eye on your available resources.

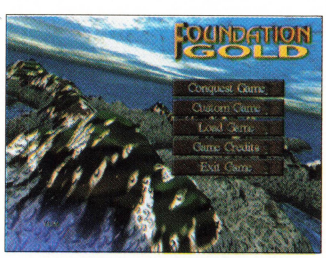
Foundation characters behave just as real people do. You have to feed them or else they become weak and unhappy. You also need to vary the food you give them else they become bored and complacent.

Game control is pretty straightforward, with a control panel down the left edge of the screen for issuing 'Quick Orders' to get things rolling, as well as a map control and various statistical screens showing you the state of your kingdom.

The new Gold edition boasts a total of 80 missions. 40 of these are the original ones, with slight 'enhancements', though I couldn't really find any difference over my original Foundation edition. The 40 new missions from the Undiscovered Land pack are very good, injecting a much-needed new challenge into the game. The new missions are also helped by several new gameplay features, most notably the new 'Hard mode' which is intended to address the often weak computer intelligence of the original. As it stands, the new mode makes Foundation a much tougher game for existing players, while anyone coming into it for the first time will have a much better range of difficulty to play with.

"... vary the food you give them else they become bored and complacent."







The game engine has been tweaked, with a revised user interface and markedly improved in-game animation, in particular the water effects along the islands' shores and the animation of minute details such as doors on buildings and flags. Control options have also been improved with the introduction of many new keyboard shortcuts.

Meeting demands

Foundation is a graphically demanding application, and so you really need a graphics card equipped machine to get the best out of it. Personally, I run it in an 800x600 Workbench window (yes, this can be done quite happily) which runs at 1024x768 in 16-bit colour off a Piccolo SD64 graphics card. With the vast majority of the graphics load taken off the processor, Foundation will fly along even on a slow '030 or '040 (I'm just using a basic '040/25 at the moment).

Overall, Foundation Gold is a timely upgrade to an already good game, giving it a fresh degree of challenge. My only gripe is that Gold is simply a bundle of the existing Director's Cut and the mission pack, making it fairly unappealing to existing players, as half the included missions will already be familiar to them.

Chris Green A

Foundation Gold

SYSTEM: AGA (Graphics card recommended), '030, 6MB RAM, Hard Drive and CD-ROM.

SUMMARY: New missions and several tweaks and bug fixes have helped to extend the life of a great game, though existing players are better off just buying the mission pack.

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TALES FROM HEAVEN

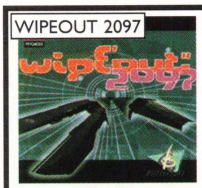


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'. . . I enjoyed playing for hours on end' Amiga Format

WIPEOUT 2097



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'A magnificent, adrenaline-pumping game' - 92% AF : AA-Gold 9/10 - AmigActive

T-ZERO



A side-scrolling arcade action shoot-em-up of the highest quality. Includes superb 2-player gameplay, big end-of-level baddies, full 16-bit audio track & BIG 3D intro with cut sequences Essential for Project-X fans!
Needs AGA, '030/40, 8MB, HD, CD

£24.95

'Fantastic! Get it now!' 93% - AF
AA-Gold 9/10 - AmigActive

QUAKE

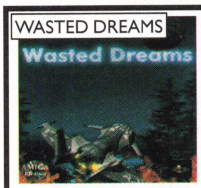


Quake is one of the biggest games ever to hit the Amiga. A total classic in its own right - however it can be upgraded with literally hundreds of great 'Total Conversions' to keep you playing for years!
Needs AGA, 030/40+FPU, 8MB, CDROM

£24.95

'Worlds hottest game' 94% - AF
'King of games - buy it' 95% - CU

WASTED DREAMS

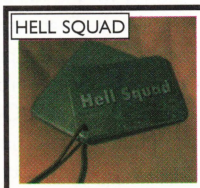


Another outstanding game by Digital Dreams. In this highly acclaimed action/adventure you mould your character into anything from a blood-thirsty killer to a diplomatic negotiator. Highly involved strategy game with an arcade feel.
Needs '030/40, 8MB, HD, CDROM

£19.95

'A brilliantly executed and absorbing game' 8/10 - AA. 'A great game' - AF

HELL SQUAD

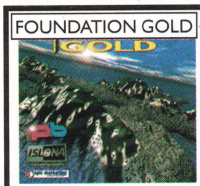


NEW! The next masterpiece from the creators of Wasted Dreams... Hell Squad is an enticing army-based strategy game with a stunning FMV intro. It has both a puzzle solving requirement and a need to stay alive!
Needs '030/40, 8MB, HD, CDROM

£39.95

Forthcoming Review

FOUNDATION GOLD



THE Amiga real-time strategy war game. This latest version contains the full game but optimised for gfx cards with an all-new rendering engine with gouraud shading, transparency & lighting FX, and the levels from the 'Missions' CD add-on.
Needs '030/40, 8MB, HD, CDROM

£24.95

'If you missed it first time round, buy it NOW!' - Amiga Format

NAPALM



This gruesome game needs no introduction. Incredible graphics, astounding CD audio and gameplay to make you weep. A huge game with over 100 different types of units/buildings and a fistful of awards from the critics!
Needs '040/25, 16MB, HD,CDROM

£29.95

'This is an absolutely cracking, original Amiga game' - AF, Gold Award

VIRTUAL GP

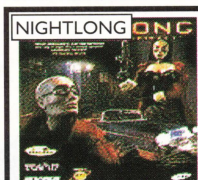


The most up-to-date Formula 1 car racing simulator on the Amiga with some of the most realistic gameplay ever seen in an F1 game. Now with all the latest teams from the 2000 season and a brand new arcade model too!
Needs '030/40, 8MB, HD, CDROM

£19.95

'A must buy for dedicated F1 simulation fans' Amiga Format

NIGHTLONG



Team17 and ClickBOOM join up to bring us one of the biggest games to ever hit the Amiga!
Stunning 16-bit graphics, jaw-dropping full-screen movies, over 80 gorgeous and detailed locations and full speech.
Needs Gfx card, '030/40, 16MB, CDROM

£34.95

Forthcoming Review

MYST



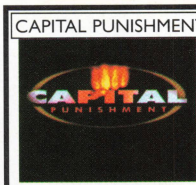
Myst is the best selling CD-ROM game of all time. Originally released on PC and Mac, Amiga owners are now able to enjoy one of the most atmospheric and challenging adventure games ever made in gorgeous rendered 3D.
Needs AGA, 8MB, '030/40, HD, CDROM

£24.95

'Myst is now here.' 'A superb game which looks great too.' 92% - CU Amiga

THE EYE-PLAY GOLD SELECTION

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

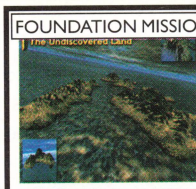


Capital Punishment is THE original Amiga beat-em-up. This is one of ClickBOOM's biggest titles ever. Featuring many moves and gorgeously detailed characters, this is a game you won't be putting down in a hurry!
Needs 8MB, HD

£14.95

'There's only one word for the graphics - SUPERB!' - AF, Gold Award

FOUNDATION MISSIONS



Do you have Foundation or Foundation DC? If so, you need this - 'The Undiscovered Land' missions CD! This CD contains 40 new and challenging missions to keep you busy for many more months!
Needs '030/40, 8MB, HD, CDROM

£14.95

Forthcoming Review

UK Bank/BS cheques, Visa*, Mastercard*, Switch, Delta, Connect, Solo, Electron. Postal/Money orders accepted. (* 3% clearance charge applies to all credit card orders). Due to space limitations some of the specs given are indicative only - please ring/write for further details. Please check prices, specification and availability before ordering. **If ordering by post, please provide a daytime telephone number**. Goods are not supplied on a trial basis. E.&O.E.

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THE FUTURE OF AMIGA CLOTHING...

AA

Here at Amiga Active, we think you should have access to the best Amiga clothing. So each month, the best letter we receive - the one which makes us laugh the most or think the hardest - will win its author an Amiga Active T-shirt*. If the lucky star (above) makes an appearance next to your letter, you can expect one in the post shortly afterwards.

Note: You must include your postal address in your letter or e-mail to be in with a chance of winning.



*Style of T-shirt may differ from that pictured here.

InterActive

Your chance to pester the Editor! Write to: *Amiga Active* Magazine, 3-11 Spring Road, Bournemouth BH1 4PZ. Or, if you enjoy the pleasures of being online, send your e-mails to us at **interactive@amigactive.com**

Active in Finland

Firstly I would like to thank you (and your publishers) for sorting out a distribution deal so we Finnish Amiga users can now read your mag too. I really like your mag very much and think that it is the best Amiga mag ever. The only negative point in your otherwise great mag is your somewhat confusing scoring system. Wouldn't it just be easier to rate your reviews with a more normal percentage mark (0 to 100%) just like Amiga Format did? Keep up the good work!

J.A.B., Finland.

Scoring a product simply isn't that exact a science - how do you tell whether a product is worth 67% or 68%? The score is just a guideline anyway - to get the real story, you have to read the words.

Big Box Bust?

A while ago, I took the decision to sell my A1200T for a better computer. I wanted a machine that could be expanded in ways its designers actually intended. I wanted powerful hardware that wasn't a hack that dangled precariously off my motherboard. I wanted a CPU upgrade in a CPU slot, and expansion cards in proper expansion slots. I bought myself an A4000.

"...big box Amiga users can just get stuffed."

For a while, this looked like a great idea. G4 cards were on the horizon, and I could use that graphics card that never seemed to work in my dodgy Zorro II backplane. I pre- ordered a 400MHz G4 and bucket loads of RAM to go with it.

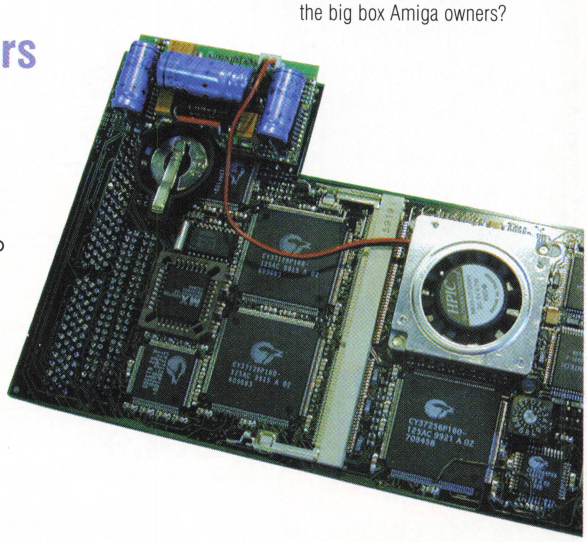
Then, out of the blue, Phase 5 went belly up. Great. Never mind, I'll get an AmiJoe. But now it seems I won't get that either. The A1200 owners get the 680x0-less PPC cards, and now a PCI backplane too, and the big box Amiga users can just get stuffed.

I don't necessarily blame Met@box for cancelling the big box version of their AmiJoe card, after all the A1200 has a larger user base, but I can't shake the feeling that something isn't quite right here. My perception of the *"average big box Amiga user"* is one of the power users with the money for the faster, more expensive hardware. There may well be more A1200s out there, but the people who have A3000s and A4000s generally have faster CPUs, graphics cards, I/O cards etc. and their computers are usually (but not always) more stable than a hacky 1200 tower system.

It just seems so unfair that we are now starting to miss out on the cooler upgrades that the users of the "inferior" A1200 will shortly be able to get their hands on. It was annoying enough that we had to wait for ever more delayed cards, but there are no words to describe the extraordinary levels of frustration of seeing the cards disappear from reach because you own the "wrong" Amiga, one which would be more suited to the cards in the first place!

Peter Gordon, UK.

Below: AmiJoe - but what about the big box Amiga owners?



It does seem strange. There certainly are a lot more A1200 owners out there, and it's true that the BlizzardPPC has outsold the CyberstormPPC, but then there was quite a cost difference between the two. The good news is that there are both PCI backplane and PPC card solutions still in the works for the A4000, although certainly the A1200 owners are getting it easier. At least you have an A4000 - my A4000T is the last thing any expansion gear caters for!

MorphOS

I like MorphOS

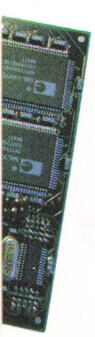
Just read Issue 10 and read about MorphOS. I was very excited by what I read - far more so than by the incomprehensible mumbo-jumbo put out by Amiga Inc. In my opinion, Amiga has been held back by two things: (1) reliance on old 68k CPU's; (2) reliance on the ancient AGA chipset. If MorphOS is breaking these two dependencies and bringing Amiga legacy software into the 21st century with native PPC and powerful modern industry standard graphics cards, then I think Amiga still has a future, maybe a great one.

"Pure PPC accelerators for the old machines will surely not be far away..."

Personally, I would never have considered buying one of these hybrid 68k + PPC cards just to run the odd bit of software, but if we have a PPC OS then not only does a PPC accelerator became a lot more attractive, but there will be no more need for these expensive old hybrid cards. Pure PPC accelerators for the old machines will surely not be far away, or maybe a POP motherboard? - Whatever, I will be lining up for one! This could really be the rebirth of the Amiga for which we have all waited and prayed for so long.

On your C articles - I think if anyone is serious about programming, they will buy a book rather than try and learn through a magazine. So if you are going to write articles on programming, either make them of interest to experienced programmers (i.e. tricks and tips) or do not bother with such articles at all. Just my view.

Steven, Australia.



While I'm immensely glad that Ralph Schmidt, Frank Mariak and co have put in the effort to provide us all with the software necessary to run native PPC Amigas, to be honest I don't think it will cause a rebirth of the Amiga. This is the killer solution for those of us who want to expand our classic Amigas, or to replace them with another machine that runs all the old software, but I can't see MorphOS reviving the Amiga as a mainstream computing platform. Too much ground has been lost for the Amiga to regain its old glory without offering something very new, while MorphOS is more of a way of letting us keep the old.

Amiga's "mumbo jumbo" will make a lot more sense to you when you have the chance to play with it, and offers something unique enough to give the Amiga another shot at the big time. MorphOS may well be the dream solution for current Amiga users, but I can't see MorphOS systems pulling in many new punters. It would make a superb solution to the legacy problem if it were ported to VP, though...

As for the programming articles - we wanted to give people enough of a taste that they will go and buy a book, and we wanted to give people a notion of how to actually go about planning and executing a project, something the books often leave out. The programming series will be returning soon to cover some rather less familiar ground...

Shocked

I was shocked when I found this issue (11) in Sweden. It's great. I read in the issue that some people in Sweden can't find it... well, they got to look harder, it's here!

Thomas, Sweden.

Hopefully, Swedish Amiga users will be finding it increasingly easy to get *Amiga Active* over there, as our distribution improves. We're doing our best!

Please no CISC!

Hello, in *Amiga Active* 11 you had an article about the history of the Amiga. There you wrote that you thought that the processor likely to be used in AmigaOne would be an AMD. I truly hope you are wrong about that, if AmigaOne uses any kind of Intel-clone or any other kind of CISC-processor (are there any?), I would never buy the new Amiga.

That would surely kill the Amiga 'cause it would not be an Amiga any longer. What would the point be to use a processor type that has been about to die for many years in an Amiga that should be defining the new standards of personal computing? Or maybe you are only affected by the negative spirit that often strike us old Amiga users that used the Amiga during the Glory days of Amiga and has gone through the terrible time that was to follow?

Urban Åhlin, Sweden.

While the x86 is theoretically a CISC chip, the fact is that modern designs use hybrid solutions to overcome the limitations of CISC technology. If you read my Rant & Rave in this issue (see page 10), you'll already know why I disagree with you - but I'm going to make one more point.

Until recently, the CPU did indeed define the standards of computing. No longer. The world is now full of very powerful chips. Technology has taken even the x86 line to a level vastly beyond the Motorola M68k series we all use in our current Amigas (CISC technology, by the way). They are all, simply put, good enough.

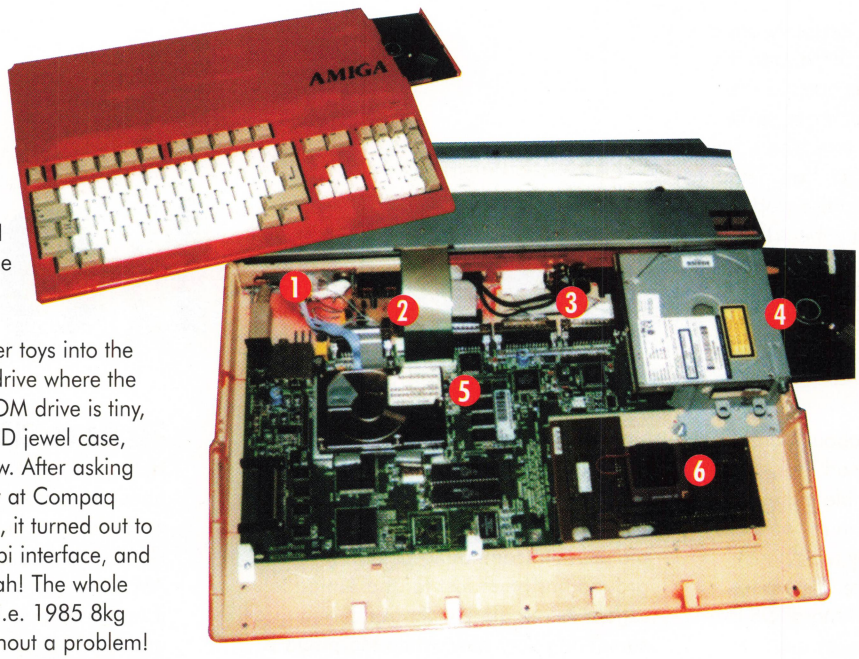
There's no way that Amiga could beat the top-of-the-line x86 processors for performance without specifying an expensive chip, so whatever happens, the cheapest Amigas are going to be less powerful than the most expensive PCs.

How, then, can the Amiga stand out? By offering far better software than Windows, which has unique features that make computing a better experience, that's how.

Who needs a tower?

I decided that my power-towered miggy looked too much like a PC (people wouldn't believe me when I told them it was an Amiga) and in a flash of inspiration I noticed how much smaller the 1200 is than the 500, and that I could wrestle the midi interface and all sorts of other toys into the 500 case, along with a CD drive where the floppy should be. The CD-ROM drive is tiny, about the size of a normal CD jewel case, and cost me £100 brand new. After asking some bemused technical guy at Compaq questions about the interface, it turned out to be a standard mini EIDE atapi interface, and IDEfix spotted it first try, hurrah! The whole thing runs from an original (i.e. 1985 8kg type) A500 power supply without a problem!

Ric Hardacre, UK.



1. Scandoubler SVGA out (board under Hard Drive)
2. MIDI interface
3. 1/4" Jack Pug Audio output
4. 24x CD-ROM drive (from Compaq Deskpro PC)
5. 1.3GB Hard Drive
6. 25MHz 68040, 16MB RAM

Left: Ric Hardacre's A500 case, packed to the grilles!

Thanks for telling us about that, it's an interesting idea for people who don't like large cases. I suspect you could get a BlizzardPPC and BlizzardVision in there too... now that would be quite an A500!

Has anyone else got a uniquely customised Amiga? Have you transplanted yours into the back seat of your car, or a case made from marble? Tell us about it!

AmiJoe again

1st wap email 2nd attempt. Great mag etc. Where is the Amijoe review?

P McIlroy, via WAP.

The AmiJoe review awaits an AmiJoe card. We're not expecting one for some months yet, unfortunately.

What about Voyager?

First off, before the sledge, let me congratulate you on a damn fine magazine and an exceedingly welcome cover CD. You have shown a great deal of faith in a market that so many have given up and you should be thanked for that. Thank you.

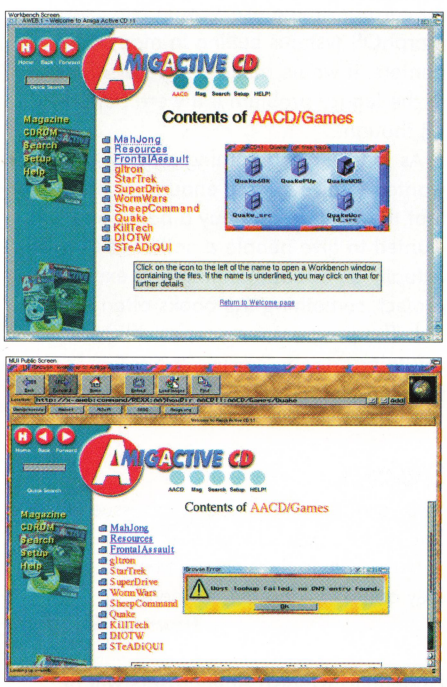
All of that aside though, why do the AACDs now use AWeb almost exclusively? Don't get me wrong, AWeb is a fine product but I went out and spent some of my hard earned cash on a Voyager registration some time back, (again when V^3 arrived), so why does it seem that you're determined to help squeeze V and IBrowse out of the market?

Back when I first started buying your magazine (issue 4) the CD tried to accommodate all the Amiga browsers out there. What happened since then? Now I can't even access most of the disk-based HTML using the browser that I decided to pay the author for.

Doesn't all of this go, however slightly, against the grain of what the Amiga stands for, that being freedom to choose? If I didn't want freedom of choice, I'd be using a PC.

Douglas Jackson, Australia.

"...so why does it seem that you're determined to help squeeze V and IBrowse out of the market?"



Top: If it wasn't for the label, would you know it's AWeb?
Above: Nice web browser, but without the features we need to make our coverdiscs truly interactive.

I understand your frustration, but it's a little misplaced, because Voyager and IBrowse aren't quite in the same market. They're great for the web, but simply don't cater for static multimedia display like AWeb.

We use a browser as it is the most efficient way of being able to display multimedia content for our CDs. We have created our own interface, so we need none of the normal browser interface functions that IBrowse or Voyager provide - they just take up screen space. AWeb allows us to present the front end of the CD as it is meant to appear. What's more, AWeb's ARexx interface allows us to open windows and run executables from the interface, which adds an awful lot to the usefulness of that front end.

We'd love to be able to offer Voyager and IBrowse options, but doing so would mean stripping out an awful lot of functionality. AWeb is designed with this kind of interactive interface in mind. Hopefully the authors of Voyager and IBrowse will add the features necessary to let us use their browsers too, but the ball is in their courts on that one.

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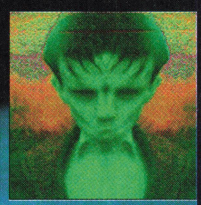
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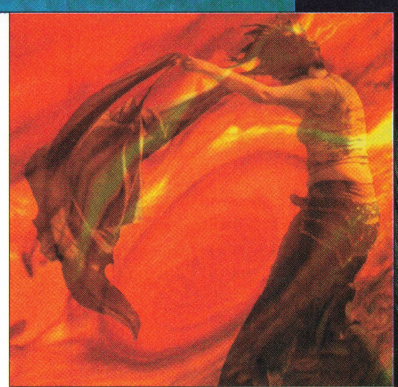
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It's the Cyber Insaniac Surfers!



No, it doesn't make sense to us, either. Nevertheless, *Amiga Active* balances on the waves of the digital world...







After reading every issue of *Amiga Active* and seeing little to rival his own brand of art, Ogy of the Cyber Insaniac Surfers contacted us to tell us about his work, all of which is generated with little more than a camera, a darkroom, a seemingly endless supply of film and, naturally, an Amiga or two. Funnily enough, it seems a healthy dose of insanity doesn't go amiss either. Intrigued, we asked Ogy to tell us more...

"My real name is Ognjen and I am 24. Before I started University I was a photographer and darkroom technician in the English version of Twin Peaks - Henley on Thames - and I always loved watching films, listening to music, looking at pictures, reading books, travelling - while soon this lot was joined by people and life itself. Contribution to these fields is what I see as my career."

***Amiga Active:** How, and why, did you start using an Amiga to create this stuff?*

"Well, I've been an active Amiga (only!) user for over 10 years now. I study Contemporary Media Practice (BA) at The University of Westminster in London, with only one more year to go before graduation, while my free time is usually occupied with extended audio/visual explorations of the world we are living in.

"A couple of years ago, I was getting ready to move to London and start my course (regarded as one of the best - if not the best - media courses in the country) where people are taught almost everything media-wise, from conventional photography and film making to digital manipulation of image and sound.

"At the time, I was armed only with a relatively unexpanded A1200 which I decided to sell in order to get a new machine to cope with the demands of academic studies and any work opportunities that might arise once I moved to London. With around £600 in my pocket and only a couple of months before the start of the course, I found myself deeply contemplating the past, the future and wondering which turning to take on this difficult digital highway.

"Although the PC was out of the question, there was still the rather juicy PowerPC Mac which was more powerful, cheaper and more easily obtainable than any high spec Amiga (not to mention compatible with university demands). Flicking through the pages of Loot that judgement day, I came across a Picasso IV equipped A4000 for a relatively decent price, so I decided to go and have a look before making the final decision on what to buy... Mac or Amiga?

"When I saw a 24bit Workbench and my favourite apps displayed in true colour I had no more doubt... It had to be an Amiga!"

AA: *Now, we realise we may not want to know the full answer to this question, but... The Cyber Insaniac Surfers? Please explain!*

"When I moved to London and started at Uni, I met this very unusual looking bloke with similar opinions and attitudes towards art and philosophy and, as proper audio fanatics, one of the first things we talked about was music. It turned out he had almost the same record collection as me, played guitar and did a lot of sampling... using a couple of Amigas! From that point it was obvious that we were going to join forces, and The Cyber Insaniac Surfers were born."

AA: *But where did the name come from? Does "Surfers" refer to the kind that hails from Newquay or the Internet... or both?*

"We thought of the name half way through the recording of our first album. Driven by some strange forces, we were inventing words and putting them in some very bizarre sentences. The next day, the only words we could remember from the previous night were Cyber Insaniac Surfers. Yes, "Surfers" refers to the Newquay species as well as the online kind and many, many others... it's about balancing on the waves."

AA: *So, what is it that the Cyber Insaniac Surfers do, exactly?*

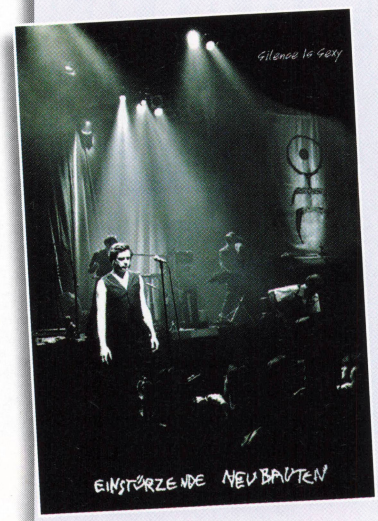
"Our main areas are photography, music and graphic design - with a couple of bigger projects on the sketch board that will include animation and moving images."

AA: *And you do all your work on Amigas, for real?*

"All the fears I had before starting uni - that the Amiga would not be enough to cope - proved to be rubbish. Not only was it more than suitable for my university projects but also for outside freelance work and presentations. Here's just the small list of what I've used this great machine for:

- *Very demanding colour photography project for BA studies (one of the best marks).*
- *Regular contributions for Amiga Format's gallery pages (couple of awards).*
- *Sampling and composing CDs.*
- *Slideshows and animations both in- and outside university.*
- *Graphic design and soundtrack for the film "Hobgoblin" [see issue 10].*
- *Photography and graphic design for the alternative short film "Hush".*
- *Designing CD and video covers.*
- *Multimedia presentation of a short film.*
- *Putting together our web site.*
- *Band photography including Einsturzende Neubauten and 16 Horsepower."*

Alternative Music on the Web!



A few months ago, Ogy decided to invest in an Olympus camera to take around London's alternative music venues. Not one to err on the side of convention, Ogy's artistic creations typically consist of several separate images, fused seamlessly using his Picasso IV-equipped A4000, ArtEffect, ImageFX and Photogenics.

"I wasn't after conventional gig shots (singer with wide open mouth ready to swallow microphone stick) which I usually find very boring. Instead, I was capturing artists (and crowd) in situations that would most likely present a band and atmosphere during a gig."

After pulling together quite a collection of images, the Cyber Insaniac Surfers decided to use them in a new project, a monthly webzine dedicated to alternative music with an emphasis on high quality images that will be available either as downloads from the web or, if you so desire, posters and t-shirts. More info, as always, is on the web... see boxout, below right.

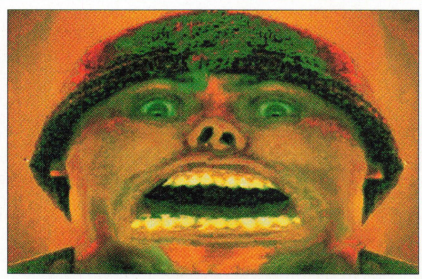
AA: *That's some varied work. You must have a good collection of hardware and software!*

"We've got a Telecaster and Park amplifier, Ricoh KR-10 Super SLR camera with a set of lenses and an Olympus Mju:2 camera. My Amiga 4000 with Picasso IV, Cyberstorm 040/40 and 124MB RAM is kitted out with a Toccata sound card, Epson GT 5500 scanner, 17" Vivitron monitor, Zip drive, a few large hard drives, external MIDI interface, Epson Stylus Photo printer, 56k modem and even a Commodore keyboard!

"In the way of software, unfortunately we haven't got much choice these days... being limited to 68k systems we use ArtEffect, Photogenics and ImageFX for photo manipulations / graphic design and Soundprobe, SoundFX and Octamed SoundStudio for music. Nothing spectacular, but it does the job so far - although I wouldn't mind having one of those overpriced and nonexistent CyberstormPPC accelerators with Wildfire7 and ProStation Audio packages."



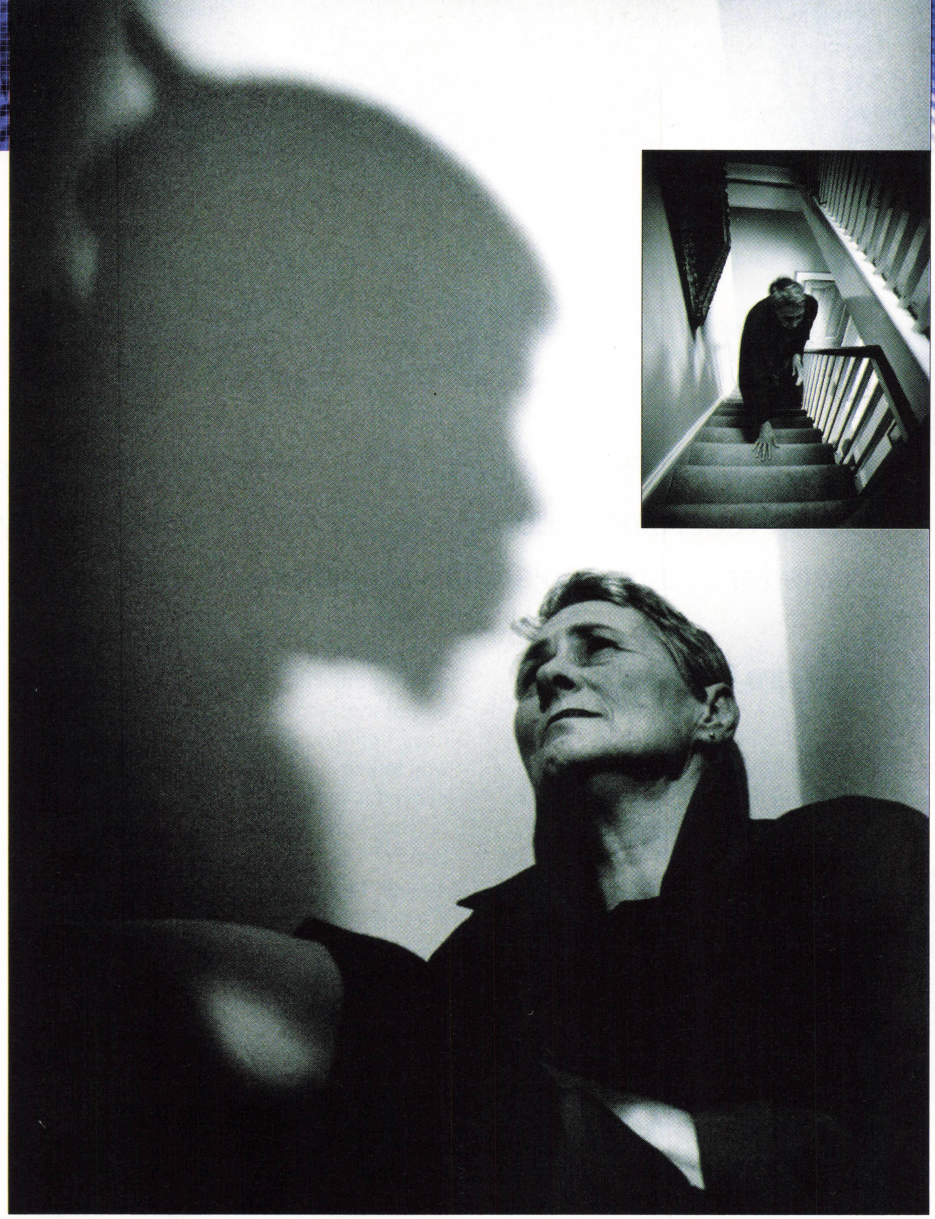
Above: Artwork created for the band Einsturzende Neubauten.

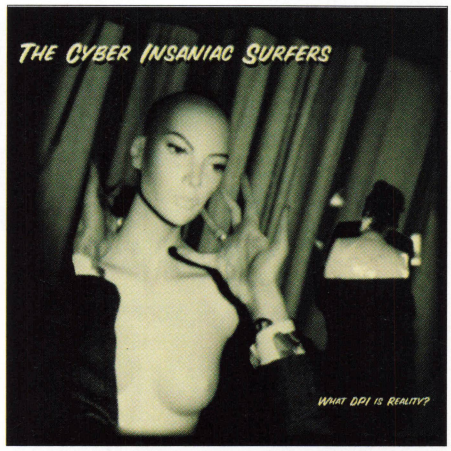


Digital: "These pictures reflect just a small selection of digital images we used for previous photographic projects and an exhibition we are planing to have as soon as we find some place that would allow us to do so."

AA: *Give us an example of what you've created, and tell us why you used Amigas to do it.*

"We spent a few intense months at the beginning of this year recording and producing our first album, using almost everything that we could put our hands on - from metal tins for "industrial" percussion sounds, to a couple of amplified guitars, MIDI drums and keyboards hooked to an A1200 and A4000, mini disk for digital bouncing, Soundprobe2 and Sound FX for the sample







Above: Images from the low-budget film Hush, as worked on by the Cyber Insaniac Surfers.

manipulations, Octamed SoundStudio for sequencing and Megalosound and Toccata for sampling and high quality output. MasterISO burnt the CDs, whilst ArtEffect, Photogenics and ImageFX were used to design the cover, printed using an Epson Stylus Photo and Turboprint.

"That's how our first album was born. At the moment we are working on our next EP project. We've also put together a short film, which involved doing loads of scanning and image enhancing using ScanQuix and Photogenics, ArtEffect and ImageFX. When it comes to 2D graphics, nothing can beat Amiga's multitasking and software."

"To create the CD cover images, I used my standard PicassoIV/A4000 set-up, scanning various images from my huge photo library and gluing them together in order to reflect the mood of our audio projects as closely as possible. I love using ArtEffect because of its great brush management and cloning tool; ImageFX has a very delicate "rub through" feature and tons of effects, while in my opinion there is no better tool than Photogenics for regional graphic manipulation and last touches to an image."

***AA:** Finally, what about the future? What would you like to see from the next Amiga platform to make your work that much more enjoyable?*

"I think the whole situation is very simple - we need a new OS and hardware at affordable prices. Then software will come. The problem with this is that we would need to perform further modifications on 8yr-old motherboards, which all sounds like a dead end to me. Realistically, hardware independence, VP code and some degree of compatibility is the only way to go... I greatly believe in what Amiga Inc. is doing. As for software, the answer's very simple - New Amiga OE ASAP!

"The AmigaOne would break the ice and pretty soon we would have DV [Digital Video] support, the latest 3D acceleration, very fast 2D and great sound. It's great seeing Paul Nolan [author of Photogenics] joining Amiga, WildFire being ported to the new system, Haage & Partner staying in touch, etc.

"I believe there are many people out there who would like to see familiar or new software running on decent hardware and a new OS... I am certainly one of them."

Make contact... ...if you dare!

You can find out all the information you'd care to know about the Cyber Insaniac Surfers by visiting Ogy's web site at www.vrljicak.freeserve.co.uk. Alternatively, you can drop Ogy an e-mail at ognjen@vrljicak.freeserve.co.uk

Says Ogy, "The site represents just small selection of the stuff we are doing and is still in 'beta' stage at the moment with regular updates to follow shortly..."



Ask the Guru

Dodgy disks, Problematic PPC's, absent applications and re-recording records are all on the menu of tasty treats for this month's Guru selection.



Above: Instability with PPC: Hardware or software?

More PPC problems

Hardware

Dear Guru,

I know that I am not alone with this problem, as I've met lots of people on IRC with the same problem. My Amiga is an A1200T, BlizzardPPC240+ 060/50MHz BVision, 12x CD-ROM, two HD's, extra floppy and SilverSurfer.

The software I have installed is OS3.5, MUI 3.8, Opus Magellan (with OS3.5 patches) Cgfx 3 (latest BVision update), Voyager 3.2, AmIRC 3.5 and a few other things. My problem is that the Amiga locks up, or freezes randomly. It can happen when I press a link in Voyager, or the "back" button. It also happens sometimes when clicking an icon in Workbench or opening a new DOpus window. The funny thing is that after a lockup when I reboot, it often takes 2 or 3 reboots before it works. It locks up right before the icons are shown in WB, or while waiting for the background screen.

I feel that I need an answer since I've spent a lot of money on hardware and registered all the software I have listed. I don't think it's a power problem, because I've tried to disconnect one HD, CD-ROM and floppy, but still the same problem. I also can't believe it's a heat problem as it happens so randomly, and often several times in a row just to work an hour or two afterwards. Can it be a MUI or Cgfx problem? Or would it be hardware? Please help me!

Odd-Magne Vea, via e-mail.

Have you tried running the system with the PPC disabled? This may show up what particular part of the hardware could be causing this mess. You can disable it at boot-time by holding down the '2' key during the boot sequence. Also, you should make sure you have the latest PPC Flash update which will also require the PPC to be disabled during the upgrade. If you are running any PPC datatypes, it is possible one of these could be unstable and may need updating. Failing that, the only real way to know if it is hardware or software derived is to create a small boot partition on your hard disk and install the most basic of Operating Systems, just giving enough to get the system working. If this proves stable, you'll have to start tearing your normal system partition apart until you find the rogue. We have included the latest PPC drivers and a variety of PPC datatypes on this month's cover CD.

Music to my ears

Creative

Hello Guru,

I have a couple of cases of vinyl LPs from the days when I was young, and I would like to copy a number of them to CDs instead of tapes as I usually do. Would it be possible for you to give me an idea what I am likely to need to do the job?

I have an A4000/060 with CyberSCSI II and 128MB of RAM, 4.3GB IDE hard drive (with lots of room left) Early Buddha IDE card (non reprogrammable) CyberVision 64 (4MB) and a Mitsumi 400 CD-ROM drive. I will obviously need a CD writer, but IDE or SCSI? Sound card? Software?

I hope you can help. Many thanks,

Frank Hodges, via e-mail.

This is a relatively trivial task provided you have the necessary hardware, but it could get expensive. Firstly, you'd need to record the albums track by track to your hard disk, and once there you could then manipulate the sampled music to clean up any noise from the record deck and pressing (vinyl does tend to suffer from clicks especially if it is scratched). These samples could then be written to CD using MakeCD or similar as audio tracks. As for the choice of CD writer, that will be subject to your budget,

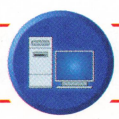
Feeling Blue? Ask the Guru

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3-11 Spring Road,
Bournemouth,
Dorset BH1 4PZ.

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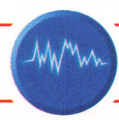
What do they mean?



Our lovely Guru will sort out your silicon.



Sloppy software? Bug the Guru!



Networking and the art of Zen explained.

but certainly SCSI will be faster. We did a roundup of CD Writers in issue 6 and the preferred units were the Teac CDR58S and the YamahaCRW8424SX, with the later being available in both SCSI and IDE.

For sampling the audio, a soundcard will giver better overall performance and playback, but you could equally use a 16-bit sampler if you can find one nowadays. Checking out the Amibench classifieds (on our CD each month) may yield some kit

"...soundcards are certainly in short supply at the moment."

you can utilise as new soundcards are certainly in short supply at the moment. This is most certainly going to be a time-consuming and costly exercise, and one which only you can decide is worth the initial expense.



Not so hard disks

Dear All-Knowing Guru,

My current system is: A1200 Tower, OS3.5, Blizzard 1260/50, 32MB RAM, 1.3GB Hard Drive, 34x CD-ROM, 4-Way IDE card.

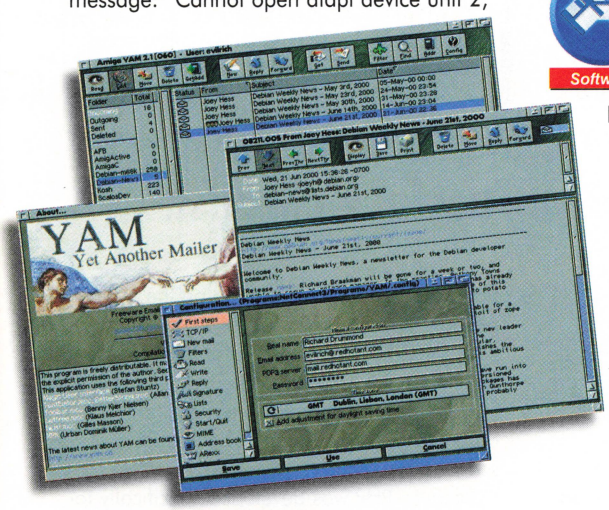
I recently added a second 8.4GB hard drive, connected through the IDE card in serial with the CD-ROM drive. Following the instructions with IDE Fix 97, the jumper on the CD-ROM drive was set as master and the hard disk as slave. When I boot up, I get the message: "Cannot open atapi device unit 2," and if I abort this error everything boots up without a problem. If I leave it, the intuition program doesn't work and Workbench boots up in default low-res 4-colour mode (argh!).

When I check the device list in IDE Fix, it lists the CD as both an atapi and an IDE device, I think this is where the problem is but I don't know were to go from there.

Also, can you recommend a good e-mail program? I'm using AmigaMail that came with OS3.5, but there don't seem to be any instructions and I'm not sure what I'm doing.

Hope you can help...

Nick Williams, via e-mail.



Above: Which e-mailer would you recommend?

Well, let's look at your IDE problems first. The atapi.device is used by IDEFix to access any devices on the second IDE port. Usually, any devices present on the first channel can be accessed by addressing the scsi.device, units 0 and 1. Devices on the secondary will require the use of the atapi driver, and this is usually units 2 and 3.

Try SCSILister or SCSIProbe (both on this month's cover disk) to get a more accurate description of these devices. If this fails to reveal the fault, try hooking up the main hard disk on the IDE bus by itself and see if this helps. The general rule is to set disks as master and CD-ROM drives as slave, so try switching your drives around first.

As for a good e-mail client, how about YAM (reviewed in issue 11)? Some love it, some hate it, but it does almost everything you could want from an e-mail program.



Where are you?

Dear Guru,

Where have all the Amiga software retailers gone? I'm trying to get a copy of Amos Professional and the Professional Compiler, but can't find anyone that sells this type of software. A couple of years back you couldn't open an Amiga mag without being hit by loads of adverts selling software. It seems that only the latest game or OS updates are available. Please could you give me some sources I could contact for older Amiga software?

Yours Sinfully,

John Lee, via e-mail.

I wish I could John, but sadly the diminishing Amiga market, and the moving of Europress Software to pastures new, has meant that titles such as the AMOS series are no longer available. Perhaps checking out the Amibench adverts which we carry on our CD each month may reveal someone selling the item you require. To get the latest Amibench adverts, go online and point your browser at www.amibench.org.



You gotta speed it up

I have a scandoubler / flickerfixer plugged into my A1200 (motherboard revision 2b) and it works okay, but there are faint lines about 5mm apart on the screen. If I use the Commodore VGA adapter I still have the same problem. Is there a hack to fix this?

Also, I have the Power Flyer and can only get about 800k/sec transfer rates through it, whereas others are getting up to 8MB/sec - why the difference? I have the latest updates from Elbox. My setup is:

- A1200 (tower)
- DKB 030@50MHz, 64MB RAM
- 4x4x24 Sony CD Writer
- 40 x Fujitsu CD Reader
- 8.4GB & 4.3GB hard drives
- Power Flyer, Silver Surfer and OS 3.5

Kind regards,

Mark Krawczuk, via e-mail.

You haven't specified which monitor you are using, but it is possible that it doesn't like scanning down as low as the Amiga's output level. If possible, try another monitor and see if the problem persists.

Without seeing the set-up of the Power Flyer it is difficult to try and diagnose the problem here, but I notice that you have two hard disks and two CD units.

If you have these devices configured with one hard disk and one CD unit on each IDE channel, this is most probably the problem. Having a CD-ROM drive on the same bus as a hard disk will slow down transfers to that disk. Try putting both disks and both CD-ROMs on the same bus - this should speed up the hard disk transfers.

The other thing to try is looking at the MaxTransfer settings for the hard disks; if this is set too low, it will slow the drive down. A good setting is 0x1fe00, and this can be set from within HDToolBox.

The Guru A



Get the most out of your Workbench.



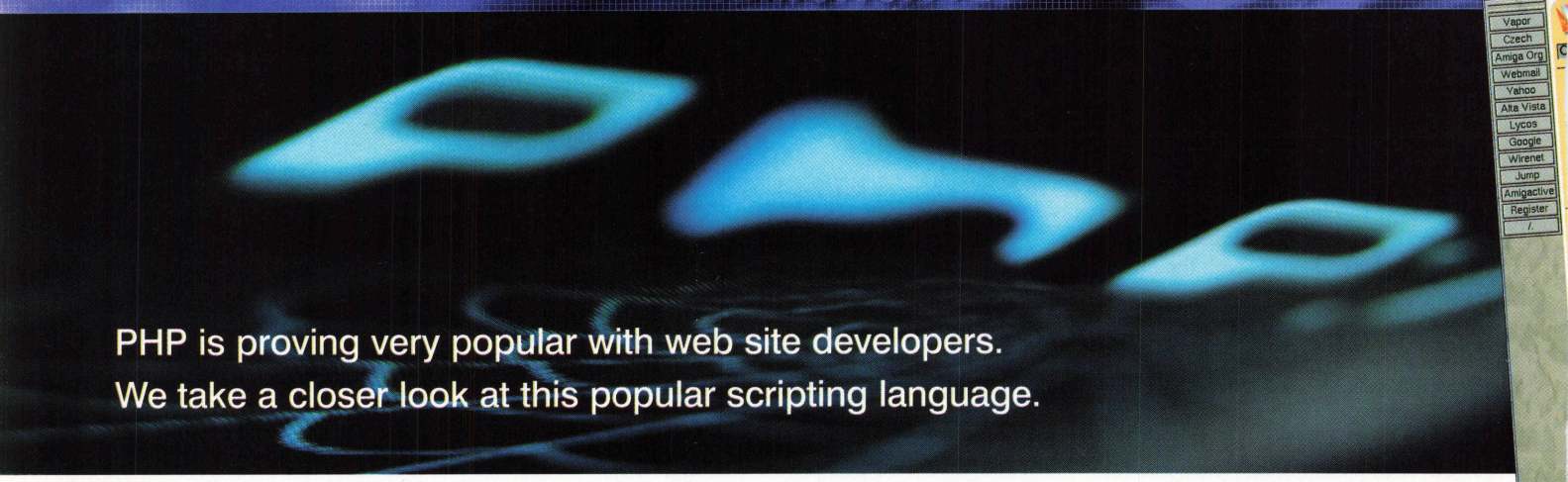
Confused about your creative potential?



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Say WHAT? You must be bonkers!



PHP is proving very popular with web site developers. We take a closer look at this popular scripting language.

Last month, we looked at using CGI scripts with web pages. CGI (Common Gateway Interface) is a way of running a program or script from a browser. The programs reside on the web server and are executed there. This is the opposite approach to JavaScript, where the script is usually contained in the web page, and is executed locally by the browser.

You have probably seen pages that have the filename extension ".php" or ".php3", instead of the usual ".html" or ".cgi". These use the PHP scripting language.

PHP (a recursive acronym for PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor) is an open-source server-side embedded scripting language. In English, that means that the script is included in the HTML of the page (like JavaScript) but executed by the server (like CGI scripts). A PHP page is sent out as normal HTML, until the server finds a "<?php>" tag. The contents of the tag are executed and the output is sent to the browser. Skipping the inevitable "Hello World" example, see *listing 1* for a basic example of the sort of thing Perl can do.

"preg_match" has nothing to do with those kits you buy at a chemist. It's a string pattern match, checking to see whether the browser's identification contains the word "Amiga".

HTML of a page, the way he or she must with a CGI program written in Perl or C. He writes the page as normal HTML, only scripting the parts that need processing. An example of this is the classic formmail.pl script used universally to process the contents of HTML forms and send them by e-mail.

The original Perl script is 24KB, whereas a port to PHP is just 8KB in size, despite having extra features added. Although a scripted language, since version 4 PHP scripts are compiled before execution. This doesn't make much difference on a straight "start to finish" script, but any loops will execute much faster. Incidentally, Perl is also compiled immediately before execution.

Uses for PHP

PHP can take care of keeping a consistent look to a site. The code in *listing 2* could be placed in one file, called header.inc, then you could replace the top section of each page with the code in *listing 3* to achieve a consistent look to all pages of your site.

The header file consists mainly of HTML code, with just a couple of PHP commands. That's all it takes to give the whole site a consistent style. When you want to change the look of the site, you only need to edit one file to change all pages.

Listing 1

```
<h2>Welcome to our web site</h2>¶
<?php¶
   if (preg_match
("/Amiga/i",$HTTP_USER_AGENT))¶
      print "Your computer is
suitable for viewing this web
site.<p>";¶
   else¶
      print "Your computer will
work with this web site, but we
recommend you upgrade asap.<p>";¶
?> blah, blah...¶
```

Listing 2

```
<html>¶
<head>¶
<title><?php echo $title;
?></title>¶
</head>¶
<body bgcolor="white"
text="black">¶
<div align="center">¶
<img src="logo.jpg">¶
<h2><font color="red"><?php echo
$headline; ?></font></h2>¶
</div>¶
```

"preg_match has nothing to do with those kits you buy at a chemist."

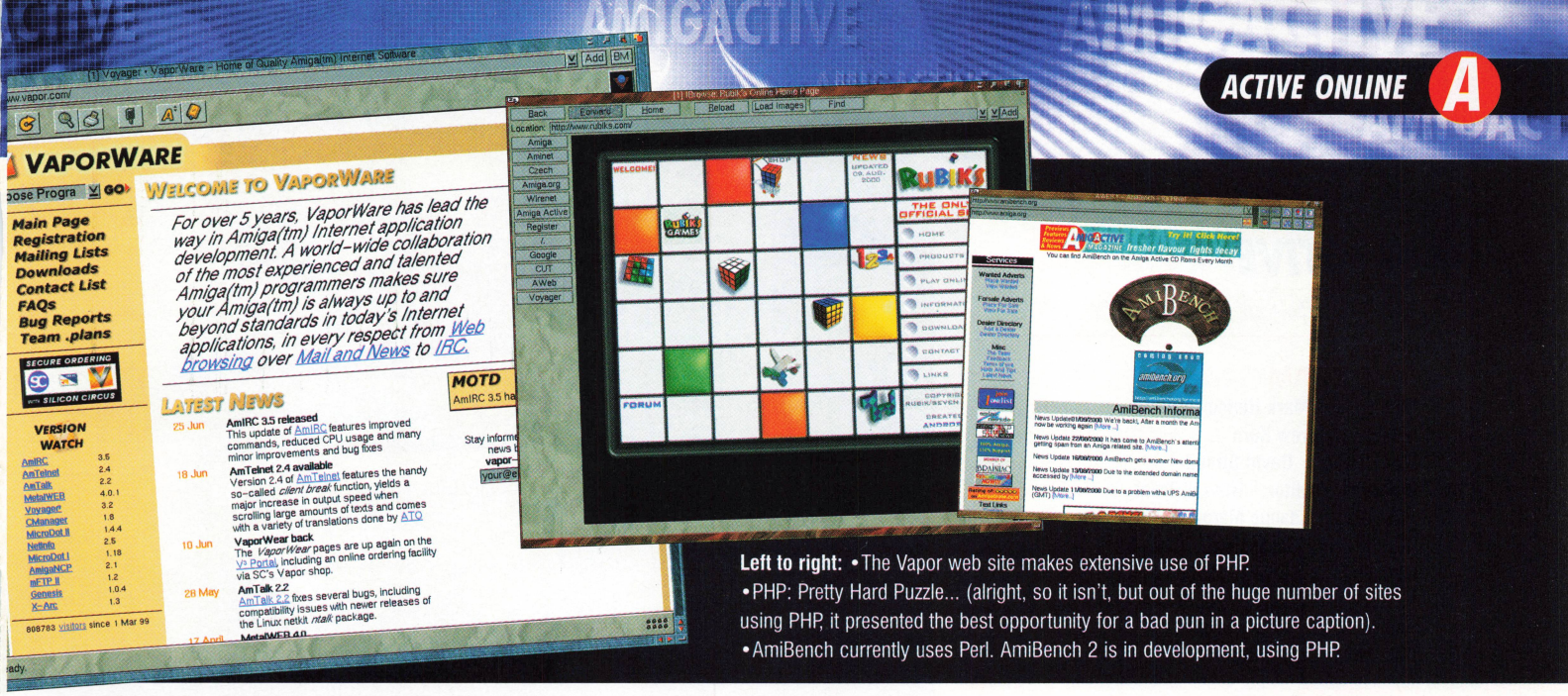
Development of PHP started in 1994, but it was with the release of PHP 3 in 1998 that the language really took off. Why has PHP proved so incredibly popular? The first reason is that the webmaster knows exactly how his script will work. It is always executed by the same machine, rather than being subject to variations in the JavaScript implementations of different browsers.

By embedding the script within the HTML, the script writer doesn't have to concern himself with sending the HTTP headers and

PHP allows for the easy creation of dynamic web pages. That is, pages where the content is customised for the user. This is most obvious on e-commerce sites, but it can be used on any type of site, even if it's only to customise the output to suit the user's browser. It really comes into its own when dealing with database information, as would be the case for an e-commerce site.

Unfortunately, this is also the reason many web hosting services, particularly free ones, don't provide PHP support. Running a database can put quite a load on the server, possibly slowing down access for everyone. However, PHP's database commands make creating a site around a database, whether for Internet or intranet use, easier and quicker than using a general purpose scripting language.

Because PHP was developed specifically for web applications, it is much easier to work with in a web environment than, say, Perl. Perl was created for more general use, so the parts specific to HTML usage have to be



Left to right: •The Vapor web site makes extensive use of PHP. •PHP: Pretty Hard Puzzle... (alright, so it isn't, but out of the huge number of sites using PHP, it presented the best opportunity for a bad pun in a picture caption). •AmiBench currently uses Perl. AmiBench 2 is in development, using PHP.

Listing 3

```
<? $title="Test page";
$headline="banner text"; include
"header.inc"; ?>¶
```

Listing 4

```
<?php¶
switch ($password) {¶
   case "":¶
      include "header.inc";¶
      ?>¶
      <form action="login.php">¶
         <input type="password"
name="password">¶
         <input type="submit"
value="Login">¶
      </form>¶
      <?php¶
      include "footer.inc";¶
      break;¶
case "sesame";¶
      include "index2.html";¶
      break;¶
default:¶
   include "header.inc";¶
   ?>¶
   Incorrect password!<p>¶
   Press the back button on your
browser and try again.¶
   <?php¶
   include "footer.inc";¶
}¶
?>¶
```

added to the script or imported from a module. Also, the close relationship between developers and users (in that the developers *are* users) ensures that PHP is developed to meet real needs.

Easy form handling

Form handling is far easier in PHP than it is with other languages. *Listing 4* (save this code as login.php, for example) shows how easy it is to password protect a web site.

If called without a password, as when first loaded, it displays the login form. When the "submit" button of the form is pressed, the page is reloaded, but the '$password' variable used in the script now contains the password input by the user. If the password is correct, the script jumps to the index page, otherwise it displays an error message.

Notice how the first and last options actually jump in and out of the <?PHP> tag during processing. Instead of having to use PRINT statements to output HTML or body text, you simply exit the script with "?>", write the HTML and go back into the script with "<?php". Putting the password in plain text in the PHP code does no harm, because that part is processed by the server, so the user only sees the output.

This isn't totally secure of course - someone could still go direct to the page if they knew the URL (index2.html isn't a good example) - but it does show how easy it is to construct a page that acts according to user input.

PHP, ASP, iHTML... come again?

PHP isn't the only embedded scripting language. Microsoft have Active Server Pages (ASP), which isn't a scripting language in itself; rather, it's a means of embedding commands from other scripting languages in HTML. As you'd expect, it only works with Microsoft's web server software, making it difficult to transfer a site to a different server. Then again, even if the new server runs Microsoft's software, it still has to be configured to run the same scripting languages that you have embedded in your pages. As some servers only have support for VBScript, this can be a problem. The advantage of this approach is that you can mix and match languages within a site, or even within a page, choosing the best option for each task (although at the expense of portability).

iHTML is another embedded HTML scripting language. It is also cross-platform, working with Windows NT and Unix, which covers the vast majority of web servers. As with PHP, the script commands are embedded in the HTML and executed by the server as it delivers the page. However, iHTML will have an uphill struggle to be accepted, irrespective of technical differences, because of the attitudes in the industry. People using Linux and Apache are drawn towards open source software, whereas users of Microsoft servers will tend to use ASP as it is the supplied and supported option.

Open source, open standards

PHP is open source, which makes it popular with the Linux community. Linux accounts for the majority of web servers, most of which run Apache, an open source web server. It was inevitable that the open source people would embrace PHP, as it's a good companion for Apache.

Being open source, both are developed by those that actually use the software, adding the features they need rather than those that sell. Furthermore, PHP isn't restricted to Linux - there are versions for Windows NT servers and the latest Amiga version of Apache has full support for PHP 4.

Being open source means that PHP is not tied to any one developer or company, and that it respects existing standards rather than trying to impose its own. Its openness has made it popular across the board, from large organisations like NASA and Mitubishi to the "dotcoms." Closer to home, it is being used on the Vapor web site and the new AmiBench web site will use PHP extensively throughout.

Neil Bothwick

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Printing & Distribution: *Amiga Active* is printed by E T Heron & Co. Ltd, The Bentall Complex, Colchester Road, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4NW, ENGLAND and distributed by COMAG Magazine Marketing, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QE, ENGLAND.

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"Excuse me, love. Do you know what will be in Amiga Active 14?"

"Ooooh, I'm afraid I don't know dear, I'm just waiting for a bus."

"You must have some idea."

"Well, last I heard they were hoping to have that PCI busboard in to review, but they said that last month, didn't they?"

"Yes. I heard a bit got lost on the way through customs. What else?"

"Well, it's so difficult to say... You know what the Amiga market's like these days."

"I fancy some games. Anything due?"

"Nightlong and Bubble Heroes should be ready. I prefer articles with an artistic bent, so I'm hoping they will have Photogenics 5 for review, if it's done on time."

"That's the one done by that nice young lad Amiga just hired isn't it? Eee, he must be busy, that one. Still, I'm more of a coder myself."

"Really? Well, I think they said there would be something on Rebol. Oh, and maybe the first part of a tutorial on VP code as well."

"Ah, sounds great doesn't it! When is it out in the shops again?"

"October 26th, according to my diary. From all good stockists! Mmmm. Now, where's my bus?"

"Oh, didn't you know? They're not running today. No petrol."

"Oh. Fancy coming back to my place for a cup of tea and a digestive, then?"

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Retroactive

The most popular Amiga processor upgrade is ten years old.

I'm sure Andrew Korn's sense of humour has a sadistic streak. My CyberStormPPC accelerator failed recently, leaving me to use the A4000's original 68030 processor. Andrew's response was to suggest writing a Retroactive piece on the '030!

In January 1991, I forked out nearly 600 pounds for an '030/25 accelerator card with 2MB of RAM. That is expensive by today's prices, but it was almost a bargain then. It transformed my A2000. The 68030 was so much faster than the 68000, and the extra 2MB of RAM doubled the amount of fast memory I had available. The 68030 was the classic accelerator for the Amiga. While the later big box machines came with an '030 as standard, it was often the first step up for A500 and A2000 owners. The 68020 ran at lower speeds and gained little acceptance, except as the standard processor in the A1200. This was because it was old technology by then, and cheap into the bargain. Good old Commodore and their chequebook engineering!

Later processors provided further increases in performance, but not as great as the leap from a 7MHz 68000 to a 25MHz (or more) 68030. A 68030 at 25MHz is some eight times the speed of a standard 68000 Amiga. The '030 was also the first step in speeding up an A1200, further justifying its position as the classic upgrade. The 68020 was the first fully 32 bit chip in the range, but Commodore initially, and wisely, skipped this as a standard part, going straight from the 68000 in the A2000 to the 68030 in the A3000. The '020 was available in the A2620 accelerator for the A2000, although the A2630 was more useful.

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be

When my A4000's CyberStormPPC card failed, I had to revert to the original 68030/25 card. This was a similar spec to the A2000 expansion, but with 16MB of Fast RAM. Was it as memorable an experience as putting an '030 in the 2000? It certainly was, but not for the same reasons.

"Times change. What was the bees knees is now considered low-end..."

Times change. What was the bees knees is now considered low-end, and with good reason. As performance improves, so do the demands of software. This isn't the bloat mentality of letting a faster processor fix deficiencies. It's a case of making things possible now that couldn't be done in the past, or making previously tedious tasks faster and more enjoyable.

In 1991, Internet connections were rare and the WWW didn't exist. Now we expect more and more of our processors when using the 'net. We want the fastest possible image decoding on web pages, we want to be able to play audio and animations as smoothly as possible, and we want to play all those MP3s downloaded from Napster as long as it lasts.

Large graphics card screens with colourful backdrops and fancy icons also require the processor to shift more data. Whilst my A2000's '030 only had to contend with a PAL interlaced eight-colour screen, the high resolutions and colour depths available from my graphics card means there's more to push around. We had demanding software such as 3D renderers, but we expected to wait to see the results of such programs. Memory was also a lot more expensive, so we multitasked less. All in all, much less was expected of a CPU nine or ten years ago. In that environment, the 68030 was superb. 68040s were starting to appear, but at ridiculous prices, and with nothing like the step up in performance that the '030 gave. The same was true when the '060 came along. PowerPC would have given a greater increase, had the software been available. For those who say the PowerPC cards were too expensive, my 604/233+060/50 CyberStormPPC cost a mere twenty-one pounds more than my '030/25 seven years earlier, and the '030 card didn't have onboard SCSI.

I believe my old CSA Mega Midget Racer '030 card is still in use. It is a testimony to both the '030 processor and the Amiga OS that such an old CPU can still provide a good service ten years on. Where will the 1GHz x86 chips be in ten years time? Come to that, where will they be in one year?

Neil Bothwick



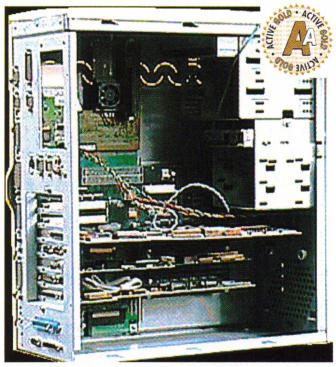
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Tower Options, Pre-built systems, Zorro 4 bundles and the Amiga OE Developer Systems

EZTower and Tower accessories

EZTOWER OPTIONS - *The EZTower-Z4 is the latest state-of-the-art tower specifically designed to take the A1200 Z4 expansion busboard.*



EZTower-Z4 - showing Z4 bus & cards; 1 x SCSI, 2 x DB25, 4 x DB9/DB15HD & audio mixer knock-outs; 7 drive bays (5 external) & 7 aligned card slots
(PSU removed for clarity)

The EZTower Mk5 is designed to take your A1200 and accessories and a full PC motherboard networked in the same box, ideal as a basis for the new Amiga OE development systems. The EZTower Mk5 has a single 3.5" drive with built-in faceplate whilst the Mk4 (which is still available) has two external 3.5" bays but no built in faceplate.

The EZTower Mk5 is also the preferred route for the new Amiga OE Developers System as it enables virtually seamless switching from Classic to NG Amiga and back using the same screen and keyboard. The EZTower Mk5 can also take a Blizzard PPC accelerator and associated BVision graphics card as well as a full ATX motherboard and expansion cards.

EZTower Mk5 with 250W PSU, 6x 5.25" bays & 3x 3.5" bays, floppy drive cable & faceplate, LED adapter and full instructions. (62x42x19cm) **£89.95**

EZTower-Z4 with 250W PSU, 3x 5.25" bays & 4x 3.5" bays floppy drive cable & faceplate, LED adapter and full instructions. (48x44x18cm) **£99.95**

EZTOWER ACCESSORIES

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plus time-of-purchase options

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PRECONFIGURED A1200 EZTOWER-Z4 SYSTEMS *We've put together some pre-configured EZTower systems to suit different budgets and functional requirements - see the table below for configuration options. Alternatively if you want a brand new tower system at a rock-bottom price - and are happy to do the assembly work yourself - we've also designed a bundle comprising a full A1200 FDD Magic Pack, an unconverted EZTower-Z4 with 230W PSU, custom back & side panels, PSU/LED adapters and floppy drive cable, PC keyboard and keyboard adapter and full instructions for just £189.95!*

AOE Developer platforms

After detailed discussion with Amiga Inc we have specified four levels of authorised hardware to suit different budgets and intended development environments. Each is available in the stand-alone d'Amiga form (with three different case styles to suit the hardware), as the EZTower-TransAm model (Transitionary Amiga system with the EZTower Mk4/5 case to take your existing A1200), and as upgrade kits for existing EZTower (not Z4) owners - for whom we also offer a collection, fitting and delivery service. An A1200-to-dev system integration pack is available, as is a preconfigured A1200 pack for TransAm purchasers wanting the Amiga side preinstalled.

The first two hardware platforms are aimed at 'leisure' computing programmers, who wish to experiment in porting games, applications and utilities from the Classic Amiga platform to the Amiga OE. The multimedia platforms are ideal for commercial multimedia games and program developers who wish to work at the forefront of development under the Amiga OE.

NOTE: Only Amiga-approved developer systems come with 90 days of nominated-contact personal support from Amiga Inc and 12 months TrailBlaser intensively moderated web-based support, which is only otherwise available for an additional fee of £795 pa.

d'Amiga, TransAm & Upgrade Pricing

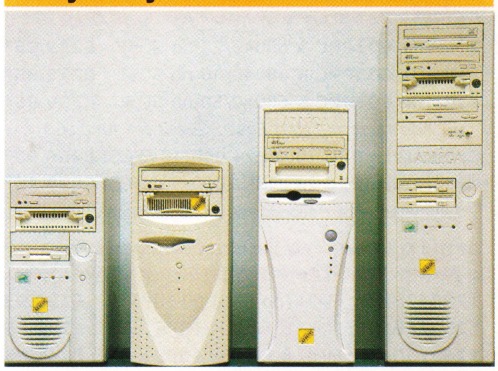
	Entry Level	Utility Developer	Multimedia Level 1	Multimedia Level 2
d'Amiga	£429.95	£599.95	£749.95	£1179.95
TransAm Twr	£499.95	£649.95	£799.95	£1229.95
EZTower u/g	£399.95	£549.95	£699.95	£1129.95

Prebuilt EZTower-Z4 configurations

Configuration	Fully assembled	A1200 m/b	Timing fix	Fix Alice, CCReset	A1200 MP s/w	Mouse	K/b i/f & k/b	HD size	CDROM speed	EZCD buf i/f	Accel & mem	Z4 busboard	CV64 gfx	INFF Mk2 SD+FF	AMON Switcher	O/S Rev	Audio mixer	Port Jnr	Price inc VAT
DIY FDD Starter	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes	PC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.1	-	-	£189.95
Starter FDD	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	PC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.1	-	-	£249.95
Productivity-Z4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	PC	4.3GB	40x	Yes	'030/40+8	-	-	-	-	3.1	-	-	£399.95
Z4 Graphics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	PC	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.1	Yes	-	£589.95
Professional-Z4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A4000	17.2GB	48x	Yes	'040/33+32	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.5	Yes	Yes	£899.95

Time of purchase options: *A4000 keyboard/adapter +£20* | *Upgrade to EZKey-XS +£20* | *Video slot enabler (Picasso IV) +£25* | *PCMCIA right angle adapter +£25*

Utility - Entry - M/MLv1 - EZTower TransAm



EZDEV BASE SPECIFICATIONS - *Common to all EZDev systems detailed below.*

- AMD K6-2/500MHz CPU
- 128MB PC100 memory (64MB on entry system)
- 17.2GB UDMA HD (8.4GB on entry level system)
- Removable hard drive bay so that other operating systems can be used, including the native Amiga OE when available.
- 48x CDROM (40x on entry level system)
- Keyboard & 3-button PS/2 mouse
- SDK-compatible Linux operating system
- Amiga DevPack licence & support package (normally approx £800).

ENTRY-LEVEL SYSTEM - *As base specifications plus:*

- Integrated motherboard with sound, graphics (8MB AGP), ethernet UTP (10/100 Mbps), 56Kbd modem, 2 x USB connectors
- Motherboard change required for upgrade to Matrox AGP graphics card
- d'Amiga system comes in a compact MiniTower case with 3 external drive bays (4 in total)

UTILITY DEVELOPER SYSTEM - *As base spec plus:*

- Gigabyte super socket7 PCI/AGP motherboard
- ATI Rage or similar graphics card
- Crystal CS4281 full duplex PCI sound card
- PCI 10/100 Mbps ethernet card
- Fully upgradeable to the top level of multimedia functionality, as below.
- d'Amiga system comes in a compact MiniTower case with 4 external drive bays (5 in total)

LEVEL 1 MULTIMEDIA SYSTEM - *As Utility upgraded to:*

- Matrox G400 32MB single head 300MHz RAMDAC graphics card AGP (upgradable to twin head)
- Soundblaster live 1024 PCI sound card
- d'Amiga system comes in a MidiTower case with 5 external drive bays (7 in total)
- 56K V90 hardware modem card

LEVEL 2 MULTIMEDIA SYSTEM - *As Level 1 upgraded to:*

- Matrox G400 Max 32MB dual head 360MHz RAMDAC graphics card AGP
- Soundblaster Platinum PCI sound card with front bay analog & digital I/O and controls
- CDReWriter

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Graphics, Scandoublers, xMON

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23F/15HDF buffered PC SVGA monitor to A4000 RGB for DBL & Productivity screen modes **£14.95**
9DM/15HDM PC VGA - SVGA cable 1m **£9.95**

xMON HIGH RESOLUTION MONITOR & KBD SWITCHES - *Seamless monitor (& optionally keyboard) switching between AGA & graphics card on an Amiga, between two Amigas - or between an Amiga and a PC. BMON connects direct to a BVision or CyberVisionPPC; SMON to any other graphics card and AMON directly to a CV64-3D. Model AMON autoswitches depending on the screen mode in use. Other models are manually switched either by a front panel toggle switch or by a keyboard keystroke sequence. Standard models connect direct to EZVGA Mk2 internal SD/FF's. Adapters are available for external scandoublers or the Amiga 23pin RGB socket (for use with multisync monitors).*

BMON/F for BVision/CyberVisionPPC & EZVGA internal Scandoubler Mk2 or SD/FF Mk2 **£39.95**
SMON/F for Ateo/Picasso/PC 15pHD graphics cards & EZVGA internal SD Mk2 or SD/FF Mk2 **£44.95**
AMON/F Autoswitching mechanism for CV64-3D & EZVGA internal SD Mk2 or SD/FF Mk2 **£42.95**

xMON 'AGA'-SIDE ADAPTERS

For 15pHD ext'l SD/FF specify xMON**/V** **+£4.00**
For Amiga 23p RGB specify xMON**/A** **+£4.00**

xMON ADD-ONS/ACCESSORIES

KMON dual output xMON-synchronous keyboard sharing switch for 2xAmiga or Amiga/PC **£19.95**
EZKey-SW/A A4K keyboard adapter with keystroke operated xMON switch A1200/A4000 **£39.95***
EZSwitch keystroke operated xMON switch for A1200/A4000 (clips on A1200 CIA U7) **£29.95***
EZKey-XS multifunction A1200 A4k/PC k/b adapter with keystroke/infra red control of xMON **£39.95**
** Deduct £10 as a time-of-purchase upgrade with an xMON*

GRAPHICS CARD,SD/FF, xMON BUNDLES - *See also Z4 busboard and EZTower-Z4 bundles below.*

BVision + BMON/F (manual switch) **£224.95**
BVision + BMON/F + EZVGA INSD2 **£279.95**
BVision + BMON/F + EZVGA INFF2 **£309.95**
As above bought with BlizzardPPC - deduct £10
CV64-3D + AMON/F (auto switch) **£199.95**
CV64-3D + AMON/F + EZVGA INSD2 **£259.95**
CV64-3D + AMON/F + EZVGA INFF2 **£279.95**

SVGA Monitors and SD/FF bundles

HIGH QUALITY SD/FF-COMPATIBLE MONITORS WITH ON-SITE MAINTENANCE - *Monitor resolutions are usually quoted as the maximum resolution at the lowest vertical scan rate. Higher scan rates are available at lower resolutions. A rate of at least 72Hz is recommended to avoid eye strain. All our monitors have digital controls and auto scan rate detection. Note that some PC monitors may not work correctly with Amiga scandoubler/flickerfixers.*

15" SVGA 0.28DP 1024x768@60Hz **£119.95**
17" SVGA 0.27DP 1280x1024@60Hz **£179.95**
17" SVGA 0.25DP 160MHz video bandwidth, 1600x1280@75Hz Diamondtron super definition tube.
Highly recommended for BVision users **£299.95**
Special Purchase: 19" SVGA 1600x1200@75Hz high spec monitors - limited stock - just £249.95

Special Offer: 30% off the price of EZVGA-Plus SD/FF (15% off other SD/FF's) purchased with any of the above monitors.

*We also have a few brand new 15" digital monitors available with restricted SD/FF compatibility (but fine for Productivity mode/graphics cards/PCs) for **just £79.95**. Please ring for details.*

A1200 Expansion & Zorro Cards

A1200 FLOPPY & EIDE BUFFERED INTERFACES - *Please note all the A1200 EIDE interfaces supplied by us are fully buffered on both data and control lines, which is not the case with some other interfaces. This is especially important as it protects the main A1200 data bus from electrical noise and/or damage from connected hard drives and CDROMs. The Mk4 interface is recommended for higher performance systems (ie 1230/50Mhz and above) as its AIPD technology gives faster acting control signals than is provided by other designs. The EZDF0 interface allows a standard PC floppy drive to be used as DF0 in a tower system. The Mk2 Catweasel allows such a drive to read and write in standard and high density Amiga and PC formats. The IDE-Plus combines a Mk2 Catweasel and three IDE/ATAPI channels (6 devices) in a single Zorro2 card.*

EZCD Mk4 4-device fully buffered interface with AIPU technology. With A1200 CDROM s/w **£28.95**
EZCD XL 4-device fully buffered interface. Comes with unrestricted A1200 CDROM s/w **£14.95**
for 3-conx40w cable & 2-conx44w cable *+£10.00*
for EZIDE ATAPI HD/CD/ZIP/LS120 s/w *+£10.00*

UK NEXT DAY*/USA 2-7 DAY*
INSURED DELIVERY CHARGES

OS 3.5, S/W, Cables, EZCD I/F = £3/$10
2.5" HD's, Accel'tors, Manuals = £7/$18
3.5" HD's, FDDs, PSUs, SX32 = £9/$25
CDPlus, Scanners = £11/$Quote
EZTW, EZPC, Monitors = £15/$Quote
Tower with monitors = £23/$Quote

* FROM DATE OF DESPATCH

HIGH SPEED SERIAL AND PARALLEL PORT EXPANSION COMPATIBILITY

Board Type	Chip Type	Price Alone	Price Bundle	Serial Ports	Serial Speed	Serial Cache (B)	Parallel Ports	Par Scnr/ Zip driver	A1200 Clk pt	Z4 bus Clk pt	Clockup Port 0	Clockup Port 1-3	Surf-XS Clk Pt	Surf-XS/ IDE+ Hdr	Z2/3/4 Slot
PortJnr	'650	£24.95	£20	1	460KBd	64	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
SilverSurfer	'550	£24.95	-	1	460KBd	32	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
IOBlix-12S	'650	£39.95	-	1	1.5MBd*	64	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-
IOBlix-12P	'C36	£49.95	-	-	-	-	800KB/s	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-
PortPlus	'553	£69.95	£50	2	460KBd	64	800KB/s	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
GoldSurfer	'552	£49.95	£40	2	460KBd	32	800KB/s	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-
Hypercom3i+	'552	£49.95	£40	2	460KBd	32	800KB/s	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Hypercom4i+	'552	£79.95	£70	4	460KBd	32	2x800KB/s	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
IOBlix-Z2+	'650/'C36	£119.95	-	4	1.5MBd*	64	2x800KB/s	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes

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EMAIL: sales@eyetech.co.uk **WEB:** http://welcome.to/amiga.world

DELTA SWITCH ELECTRON SOLO VISA MasterCard

EZIDE Software ATAPI HD/CD/ZIP/LS120 EIDE enhancement software **£34.95**

EZIDE upgrade from competitive product **£14.95**

Catweasel MkII Universal IDE or clockport fitting HD/DD Amiga/PC floppy disk controller **£49.95**

EZ-DF0 To use a PC FDD for DF0 (880KB) **£9.95**

IDE-Plus Zorro2/3/4 card with built in Catweasel Mk2 controller & 6xEIDE/ATAPI hard drive/CDROM controller and connector for GoldSurfer **£69.95**

Sony FDD 880/1.76MB high quality PC FDD **£19.95**

A1200/A600 original FDD (no faceplate) **£19.95**

EZDF0, 34 way cable & SonyFDD **£29.95**

Catweasel MkII, cable & SonyFDD **£64.95**

CLOCK PORT FITTING I/O INTERFACES - *Clock port* interfaces can provide some of the most cost-effective expansion routes available to A1200 users, particularly now additional clock ports are available on the Z4 busboard, the Surf-XS and via the ClockUp A1200 clock port expander. However some care is needed as not all clock port devices can be used on all possible clock ports. Please see the compatibility table in this advert for details. Note that for technical reasons sound cards can only be used DIRECTLY on the original motherboard clockport. (* the 22 rightmost pins of P9B)*

PortJnr Mk2 460KBd serial interface with 64 byte FIFO buffer for low CPU overhead - **£24.95**

IOBlix 12S 1.5Mbps serial i/f with 64 byte FIFO buffer. (Current driver to 460Kbd only) - **£39.95**

IOBlix 12P EPP parallel port 800KB/s with parallel Zip drive & Mustek 600CP scanner drivers - **£44.95**

PortPlus Mk2 2x460KB serial (64 byte FIFO) + 1x800KB parallel interface for printer **£69.95**

SilverSurfer 460KBd serial interface with 32 byte FIFO buffer **£24.95**

GoldSurfer 2x460KB serial (32 byte FIFO) + 1x800KB parallel interface for printer (also fits as an expansion on the Surf-XS Z2 ethernet card and the IDE-Plus Z2 HD floppy + IDE controller) **£49.95**

ClockUp 4-way clock port expander for the A1200 motherboard clock port **£19.95**

Prelude 1200 high quality full-duplex sound card for A1200 DT console only **£129.95**

Prelude A1200 tower with right angle clockport connector and tower I/O bracket **£149.95**

Zorro 2/3/4 Cards - *See also graphics and EIDE cards above*

HyperCOM3i+ 2x460Kbd serial (32 byte FIFO) + 1x800KB parallel interface for printer **£49.95**

HyperCOM4i+ 4x460Kbd serial (32 byte FIFO) + 2x800KB parallel interface for printer **£79.95**

IOBlix Z2 - 4x1.5Mbd serial (64 byte FIFO) + 2x EPP port (with parallel Zip & 600CP scanner driver compatability - needs ScanQuix5 software) **£119.95**

Surf-XS SANA II ethernet card with UTP/BNC connectors, 2x dual IDE ports (needs IDEfix2000), 2x clock ports, GoldSurfer 2xS+1xP connector (see 'Networking' below for bundles) **£79.95**

Hydra Z2 SANA II ethernet card BNC **£99.95**

Prelude Z2 16 bit full duplex sound card (limited availability) including samplitude s/w **£189.95**

EXTERNAL AMIGA AUDIO INTERFACES

MIDI-Plus Optically isolated serial port MIDI interface for all Amigas with Octamed SS s/w **£24.95**

EZ-Sample 8-bit variable sensitivity stereo 100Mhz parallel port sampler with Octamed SS s/w **£29.95**

PS/2 Mouse and Trackball adapter

EZMOUSE - *Hardware-only PS/2 mouse/trackball to Amiga mouse adapter. Supersmooth action compared to the older serial mice adapters. Comes with software to support 4-button and wheeled mice and trackballs.*

EZMouse PS/2 to Amiga converter **£19.95**

Amiga to Amiga & PC Networking

HIGH SPEED ETHERNET NETWORKING - *All our ethernet networking products - from the PCMCIA ethernet card for the Amiga at £44.95 to the top of the range Surf-XS card - now come complete with the 5-click EZNet Amiga-Amiga & Amiga-PC networking software (Amiga TCP/IP s/w - eg Genesis or Miami - is a prerequisite).*

Bundles are available for networking A1200/A600's (via PCMCIA), Zorro equipped systems (via Surf-XS) and PC's (via PCI card). A push-on CC_RESET fix adapter is available to correct the Gayle chip fault present on all A1200's.

Our minihub allows you to network up to 8 computers via straight UTP cable with an additional BNC connector for adding a server, internet router or ASDL modem to your network.

Surf-XS SANA II Ethernet card with UTP/BNC connectors, 2x dual IDE ports (needs IDEfix200), 2x clock ports, Goldsurfer 2xS+1xP connector **£79.95**

Surf-XS+PC PCI ethernet cards with 3m of crossed UTP cable & Eyetech EZNet software **£99.95**

Surf-XS + PortJnr Mk2 460Kbd serial **£99.95**

Surf-XS + GoldSurfer 2 x 460Kbd serial & 1 x 800KB/s parallel expansion interface **£119.95**

SurfCard ethernet card (UTP) with Eyetech EZNet software & CC_RESET instructions **£44.95**

2 x SurfCard PCMCIA ethernet cards with crossed 3m UTP cable, Eyetech EZNet software **£89.95**

SurfCard+PC PCI ethernet cards, 3m crossed UTP cable & Eyetech EZNet software **£69.95**

MiniHub-8 5xUTP + 1xBNC network links **£39.95**

3m UTP cable (crossed/straight - specify) **£9.95**

NETWORKING SOFTWARE & ACCESSORIES

CC_RESET Push-on Gayle reset fix **£14.95**

CC_RESET purchased with SurfCard **£7.50**

EZNet 5-click installer for Samba & NetFS **£14.95**

Genesis TCP/IP software (needs WB3.0+) **£24.95**

All A1200 PCMCIA ethernet cards need the CC_RESET fix to ensure reliable operation

SERIAL NETWORKING - *for occasional Amiga-Amiga & Amiga-PC file transfer.*

2m null modem cable (no software) **£9.95**

10m null modem cable with TwinExpress PD Amiga to Amiga/PC networking software **£19.95**

Dial-up Communications

NETCONNECT-3 INTERNET BUNDLES - *All you need to get on the internet with your 6MB+, WB2.1+ Amiga*

EZSurf bundle comprising Dynalink 56Kbd voice / data / fax modem, award-winning NetConnect-3 internet software, free internet access (0845 lo-call charges only) with web retrievable email. **£99.95**

TIME OF PURCHASE OPTIONS

ISDN Home Highway terminal adapter (instead of modem) **+£20.00**

PortJnr Mk2 - high speed 400Kbd serial port for A1200 clock port **+£20.00**

PortPlus Mk2 (2 x high speed serial + 1 x high speed parallel) for A1200 clock port **+£50.00**

HyperCOM3i+ (2 x high-speed serial + 1 x hi-speed parallel) for Zorro Amigas **+£40.00**

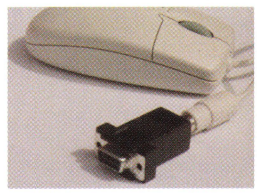
HyperCOM 4i+ (4 x high-speed serial plus 2 x high speed parallel) for Zorro Amigas **+£70.00**

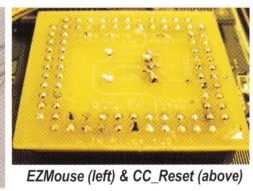
STFax-4 Amiga fax & voice mail software **+£30.00**

Digital Imaging

SCANNER BUNDLES - *Parallel and SCSI bundles for desktop and towered A1200 systems*

Parallel bundle Mustek 600 CP A4 flatbed scanner, IOBlix-12P high speed parallel EPP port (fits on clock port), ScanQuix5 award-winning Amiga software (& PC & MAC scanner software), 25D-M to 25D-M scanner cable. No other interfaces needed **£139.95**





EZMouse (left) & CC_Reset (above)

SCSI bundle A4 flatbed Scanner, ScanQuix5 award-winning Amiga software (PC SCSI card and scanner software included) and SCSI-1 cable. **£139.95**

Classic Squirrel SCSI PCMCIA interface with 50F-50F cable adapter bought with above **£49.95**

Application and System Software

OPERATING SYSTEM SOFTWARE & A1200 ROMS

Amiga OS3.5 A modern operating system for Classic Amigas on CDROM. Requires 3.1 ROMs. Documentation in HTML on the CD. **£34.95**

OS3.5 + A1200 3.1 ROMs bundle **£54.95**

OS3.5/A1200 ROMs/Magic Pack s/w **£69.95**

Magic Pack software (OS3.1+) with Wordworth, DataStore, TurboCalc, Organiser, Photogenics, PPaint, Whizz & Pinball. Printed manuals. **£24.95**

OS3.1 or OS3.0 operating system disks **£9.95**

OS3.1/A1200 3.1 ROMs, printed manuals **£39.95**

OS3.1 Magic Pack upgrade set with ROMs. As above + full Magic Pack software & manuals **£49.95**

CDPlus-SE 32x external CDROM purchsed with OS3.5 or OS3.5 bundles. Special price. **£59.95**

APPLICATION SOFTWARE - *The very best serious and productivity software avalable for your Classic Amiga.*

Scala MM400 The best Amiga presentation software which can also be used for video titling **£54.95**

Scala MM400 upgrades from MM300 **£34.95**

EMC Phase4 Scala backgrounds & fonts **£14.95**

TV Text Professional v2 Video titling software with comprehensive reference manual **£49.95**

Ultraconv 4 Comprehensive image and animation conversion program. With batch facility & PPC enabled for even faster operation **£24.95**

ImageFX4 The ultimate image manipulation and animation package for Classic Amigas **£99.95**

ImageFX upgrade from Version 2 or 3 **£59.95**

ImageFX PPC module for faster operation **£49.95**

ScanQuix5 comprehensive multi scanner supporting software for Classic Amigas on CDROM **£54.95**

PhotoScope scanner software for UMAX SCSI scanners including ArtEffect 1.5SE image s/w **£34.95**

TurboPrint 7.1 Print driver software **£38.95**

Turboprint 7.0x to 7.1 update **£14.95**

Turboprint 6 to 7 upgrade **£18.95**

Cybergraphics V4 RTG s/w for gfx cards **£24.95**

Cybergraphics V4 bought with gfx card **£20.00**

Samplitude LE multitracking audio full duplex sampling, editing & effects software **£49.95**

Samplitude Opus As LE with realtime filters, virtual projects (original samples unchanged) **£149.95**

MakeCD TAO-P Amiga CDROM burning s/w **£38.95**

NetConnect-3 Internet software suite **£49.95**

NetConnect-3 upgrade from version 2 **£34.95**

STFax4 Comprehensive fax & voicemail s/w **£34.95**

STFax4 upgrade from version 3 **£24.95**

Genesis TCP/IP software (needs WB3.0+) **£24.95**

CamControl Serial download software for Kodak, Fuji, Minolta, Mustek, Casio & Olympus **£24.95**

UK Bank/BS cheques, Visa*, Mastercard*, Switch, Delta, Connect, Solo, Electron. Postal/Money orders accepted. (* 3% clearance charge applies to all credit card orders). Due to space limitations some of the specs given are indicative only - please ring/write for further details. Please check prices, specification and availability before ordering. **If ordering by post, please provide a daytime telephone number.** Goods are not supplied on a trial basis. A1200 items are tested with a Rev 1.D.1 motherboard - other boards may need modification. Items subject to mechanical wear & tear (eg keyboards) are limited to 90 days warranty on those components. E.&O.E. All prices include VAT at 17.5%. Orders sent outside the EC do not incur VAT - divide the prices shown by 1.175 to arrive at ex-VAT prices. All goods are offered subject to availability and our standard terms & conditions, copies of which are available upon request. **AA13**

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SO THE WORLD MAY KNOW



AMIGA®

Begin exploring the new AmiVerse

This SDK is a good first look at the architecture and framework of the new Amiga Operating System.

It is designed to introduce Virtual Processor (VP) coding: the language of choice for the new Amiga OS. With it, developers can begin creating tools to aid themselves and others in porting and creating applications.

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System Requirements:

- A compatible AMD or Pentium Processor based personal computer.
- Red Hat Linux 6.1 running XFree86
- 32 MB of RAM (64 recommended)
- 100 MB of hard drive space.

Developers may contact Amiga Inc. by phone at the Amiga support line: +1 425-396-5640 or get more information at http://www.amigadev.net

Some portions of the AmigaDev site will be under NDA. If you wish to obtain an NDA, simply e-mail your request to developer@amiga.com

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