Total Amiga

Issue 14, Spring 2003

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Biggest Issue Ever!

Quake 2
Read our comprehensive review of Hyperions’s latest port.

Hollywood
Take a seat and enjoy our full review of this exciting new multimedia blockbuster!

For Amigans, By Amigans, On Amigas!
Back in the good old days we had World of Amiga shows put on every year, usually at a high-profile site (London) and all well attended. Everybody wanted to be there and see, Amiga was seen as a very popular alternative to the cumbersome PCs. After the collapse of Commodore commercial shows gradually died out, World of Amiga ’99 being the last commercial show. Several Amiga user groups were satisfied without a regular show and decided to organise their own shows.

After several smaller shows SEAL, Kickstart, ANT and A3IA got together to organise a joint show in the South East of England. So the idea of World of Amiga South East was born and the first task was to find a venue. It was obvious from the start that any venue had to meet certain criteria. Excellent transport links by both road (close to M25) and railway are as essential in the SE as in London. Price is also a factor to be considered and we had the privilege of a venue.

There are also some essential utilities we couldn’t live without: Directory Opus 5, SGrab, MCP, Turbo Print 7, MakeCD.

We'll do our best to get back to regular three-monthly publication for issue 15.

Editorial

Candy for Amiga

Candy Factory is a graphics application designed for you to add effects to text in any font without leaving the program. You can also load logos and other graphics with high quality 3D effects quickly and without the need for a complex 3D package or spending hours combining effects in an image processor.

The views expressed in this magazine are those of the author of each piece, they do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, other contributors or SEAL.

Contact Us

Contact us at:
editor@totalamiga.org

Features

Content Mapping, colour your objects using an image.

Glow, creates a bright smooth glow around objects.

Some of Candy Factory’s features include:

• Material effects, used to add effects to text in any font without leaving the program. You can also load logos and other graphics with high quality 3D effects quickly and without the need for a complex 3D package or spending hours combining effects in an image processor.

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Welcome to another issue of Total Amiga, as you will find there have been delays in the production of this issue which is a shame as there have been possible without you! We'll do our best to get back to regular three-monthly publication for issue 15.

About Total Amiga

Total Amiga is published quarterly by South Essex Amiga Link. For information about advertising contact us at the address below or our website.

Contact Us

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At last the wait is over... Stefan Burstrom and the IBrowse development team have released a new version of their well known web browser. At first glance version 2.3 doesn’t look much different from 2.2, but which came out about two years ago but under the skin a lot of magic has been worked.

IBrowse has been tweaked to render many pages better and many long standing bugs have been squashed. Version 2.3 has been extensively tested and everyone reports it to be much more stable than earlier versions (although I didn’t have many problems with 2.2 I know some people did). The biggest improvement however is in the Javascript support. This is scripting used on many pages to automate functions—because it is used by so many sites the improved Javascript now means IBrowse will work with many bank’s on-line services.

IBrowse 2.3 is a free upgrade for IBrowse 2.x owners, just download the demo version install it and copy over your key file. IBrowse 1.x owners can upgrade for 34.99 Euro (about £22) and the full price is 54.99 Euro (£35). Currently IBrowse is only available to automate functions—because it is used by so many sites the improved Javascript now means IBrowse will work with many bank’s on-line services.

IBrowse 2.3 has also been released, this package is used by IBrowse to make secure connections to websites for on-line shopping and banking amongst other activities. The cool thing about this is that browser users no longer need a registered version of MIDI and MIDISSL to make secure transactions.

In addition to improved Javascript and security now means IBrowse will work with many bank’s on-line services.

IBrowse 2.3 is compatible with more websites including many on-line banks like this one.

Notice the handy browser tabs along the top of the window.

The new gradient manager is very powerful allowing you to make gradients from an unlimited number of colours, it also supports transparency. Some of the other new features include:

• Improved pyro plug-in for better fire effects.
• New tool settings window keeps all the options in one window.
• Size manager for user-defined page dimensions.
• Colour variations window to compare different levels of effects.
• Improved batch processing and AREXX interface.
• Direct support for TrueType fonts with anti-aliasing.

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Individual Computers seem to have a knack for building lots of handy interfaces onto one board and they've really gone to town with their latest release the Catweasel Mk3 PCI Flipper! The main feature of all Catweasel products has always been their floppy drive interface, the Mk 3 is no different, you can connect a normal 1.44Mb high density PC floppy drive and use it to read high and double density Amiga disks as well as disks from all manner of other platforms. For those emulating older machines 5.25” disk drives are also supported. What makes this board so special is the PCI Flipper port, this means the Catweasel Mk 3 can connect to a PCI slot in a computer such as a PC, AmigaOne or Pegasos. On the other side is a Zorro slot and there is also a clock port so it can connect to most Amiga systems too. With the PCI connector the other features make sense, these are an Amiga keyboard port (so you can use a proper Amiga keyboard with your AmigaOne or Pegasos), a digital joystick port and a C64 SID sound chip. The SID chip allows Commodore 64 and the developer recommends a 060, he also recommends an ABI supported sound card and a graphics card with at least 800x600 resolution. HD-Rec was developed on an Amihlon system and will benefit from the faster native video processing of a fast x86 processor even under emulation this should also be the case on MorphOS and AmigaOS 4 when it is released but this has not been tested by the author. Direct PPC support is not planned although it could be implemented in third party pluggins.

when released HD-Rec will be shareware, further details are available on the developers homepage at:

http://www.hd-rec.de

OpenPCI Encourages Driver Development

Open PCI is an attempt to make a complete API for accessing PCI cards on the Amiga. This means a PCI card driver could be written once and then work with that type of PCI card no matter which Amiga system it is connected to. Open PCI sits between the driver and the PCI system, it is supplied with bus board or computer basically acting as a translator between the two systems. Open PCI includes:

• Real-time audio effects (not in the current public beta).
• Bars & Pipes style notor for MIDI elements
• Audiomaster style editor for audio elements.

Version 1.5 will be a free upgrade for existing Hollywood owners, the upgrade price is 49Euro (just over £30) and can be ordered from:

http://www.airsoftsoftware.com

HD-Rec Goes Public

The first public beta version of a new MIDI and audio sequencer has been released by its author Thilo Köhler. HD-Rec supports up to 256 tracks and can sequence AIFT, WAV, MAUD, RAW, CDDA, VSK, MP3 and MIDI sounds. As you might guess from the name, one of HD-Rec’s key features is that audio recording and MIDI recording is not limited by available memory. The program has a very slick font sensitive GraphTools based interface and sequences can be arranged by drag and drop. Other features include:

• System dependent syx fonts
• System dependent syx fonts

AmithlonTV is giftware, to obtain a copy of the program visit the developer’s homepage at:

http://www.hd-rec.de

Free update to version 5.1 of Catweasel Flipper

A free update to version 5.1 of Catweasel Flipper has been officially licensed by Amiga emulator Amiga Forever which is now fully available using the software’s automatic update facility. The new version includes an updated emulation, upgraded support software such as Amiga Explorer and improved documentation and help files. Amiga Forever 5.1 now supports officially licensed copies of the classic Amiga “narrator” speech synthesis engine. Also a version has been shipped with AmigaOS since version 3.9 can be loaded as well as non-patching Blizkick modules. The only limitation is that you can’t load a complete Kickstart replacement. The boot loader used to load the modules uses compression so 700 to 900 KB of modules can be stored in the flash ROM, a list on the E3B website shows 27 different modules including Poseidon and its classes taking up just over half the available space. The ROMulus attaches to the Highway’s expansion port and has a pass through for the Norway Ethernet card. The whole expanded card only requires one Zorro II slot. Before you can use the ROMulus the Highway’s bus interface logic needs to be upgraded, for this upgrade you need to return your card to E3B. The ROMulus is expected to cost about 35Euro (about £22) including the upgrade.

The prototype ROMulus module (on top) loaded on a Highway with a Norway Ethernet card on it’s pass-through connector.

Amiga Forever 5.1

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For more details visit E3B at:

http://www.e3b.de

The Highway is available from KDH in Germany:

(http://www.kdh-shop24.de) and Forematt Home Computing in the UK (http://www.forematt.co.uk)

SimpleMail is rapidly becoming one of the most popular Amiga EMail applications, since our last issue there have been a couple of update releases with new features including:

• Improved sorting.
• Folder export facility to export all the messages in a folder.
• Added recipient filter rule type (which matches To and CC).
• Very simple IMAP support (fetches complete mail, no move support, no status update).
• Can decrypt signed S/MIME mails using AmiSSL.

Download the latest beta from:

http://simplemail.sourceforge.net

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The first news to report since the last issue is that bplan (the manufacturers of the Pegasos PPC motherboard) and Thendic France (its distributor) have merged forming a new company called Genesi. Also in the last issue I wasn’t able to give you much concrete information on MorphOS because the only details we had were from the old public beta versions and some comments from visitors who had used the system at shows. Now a detailed specification document has been released giving a good overview of the OS itself and the included applications. In this article I’ll pick out the key points but it’s well worth reading the full document yourself.

CoreOS and Emulation

MorphOS is based on the Quark Micro-kernel which can be used on a variety of hardware via a Hardware Abstraction Layer. Currently all MorphOS application run inside the ABox which contains an extended re-implementation of AmigaOS and a 68k emulator allowing existing AmigaOS applications which do not required Amiga hardware access to run. Existing Amiga PPC applications and utilities using both the PowerUP and WarpUP systems are supported by compatible libraries.

The 68k emulation system supports both traditional static emulation and Just In Time recompilation and uses the most appropriate emulation type based on the task at hand. This “intelligent” emulation is designed to add minimum delay and latency to time critical tasks (such as responding to user input) while achieving maximum performance for computationally intensive tasks. Genesi claim that typical 68k applications achieve between 50 and 75 percent of the native PPC speed.

The ABox has a re-implemented PPC native Exec kernel (the core of AmigaOS) which allows PPC and emulated 68k applications to mix on the same system. In this way we can perform several actions at once and the desktop does not block while an action completes. Ambient supports all existing Amiga icon formats including NewIcons and OS3+ icons as well as its own 2468 PNG based icon format which benefits from alpha-channel based transparency. Also on the subject of icons, caching makes re-opening a window much faster as the icons are cached. The preferences programs have been integrated with the ABox which is a single MUI application and can be run separately.

A registered PPC native version of the popular MUI interface toolkit is supplied with MorphOS, this is based on the latest MUI version and has the few features not in the current 68k Amiga release (3.8) including: More configurable and customizable MUI accelerators. A new menu system which can be embedded in windows if you wish. Native support for wheel mice not requiring a patch. MagicASL is incorporated so all system requesters get MUI interfaces. On top of these many performance improvements and optimisations have been made. It seems that MUI is the native MorphOS GUI toolkit.

MorphOS has a skin-able user interface where the user can change to look of window borders and gadgets by selecting a bitmap for each element. Other enhancements over the standard Amiga Intuition include opaque window movement, a very fast and smooth when we tried it at WoASE, the ability to move windows off screen and 68k software on the ABox itself.

Ambient the MorphOS desktop user interface - this is the “face” of the system when you first start it. Ambient is based on MUI and it has a fully multi-threaded design so you can perform several actions at once and the desktop does not block while an action completes. Ambient supports all existing Amiga icon formats including NewIcons and OS3+ icons as well as its own 2468 PNG based icon format which benefits from alpha-channel based transparency. Also on the subject of icons, caching makes re-opening a window much faster as the icons are cached. The preferences programs have been integrated with the ABox which is a single MUI application and can be run separately.

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MorphOS supports interactive applications using the advanced graphics and ambient features. Postscript, TrueType and OpenType fonts can now be used creating a high quality viewing experience.

Driven by advances in hardware such as video capture cards and dual PPG4 processors, the multimedia environment is now enjoying tremendous growth. Current MorphOS applications include applications such as: CybergraphX, Magic User Interface (MUI) and Voyager. These applications have been in daily use by thousands of computer users for up to ten years...
Yes we did actually make it - in part at least. Most developers and 'EarlyBird' customers did actually get their AmigaOneDE-S1 systems before Christmas. We would have been able to get all orders out if only UPS hadn’t lost part of the consignment en route from the Far East!

Unfortunately we weren’t able to get any AmigaOneDE-EX’s out due to a delay in receiving the 7451 cpu’s from Motorola, but it actually turns out that this particular cloud did indeed have a silver lining and we were therefore able to use the new mask revision of the Artica S’ northbridge in the XE. The first batch of these new boards were shipped in early February to existing A1-SE developers - and to Hyperion of course - to fine tune the firmware and Linux kernel onto the new board and cpu modules. This turned out to be more complex than expected because of the documentation on initialisation of the 7451 cpu was only updated in mid February to match the (changed) initialisation routines needed for the cpu versions shipped to us at the beginning of January!

Having sorted this out however I am pleased to be able to report that - as expected by us (and contrary to the difficulties apparently being experienced in other quarters with similar technology) - the 7451@800MHz is delivering its expected performance - i.e. much higher than that of the G3SE. Unfortunately we haven’t been able to test the new CPU in the AmigaOneDE-S1 yet as Hyperion - will be shipped towards the end of March. These cpu’s also give excellent and potentially superior performance. The higher clock speed, coupled with a more advanced architecture than the 750CXe make this cpu around 60-70% faster than the G3SE in real world applications.

In addition Hyperion have also been testing the dual-G4 cpu module for the AmigaOne-DE. As OS4 has been designed to support this expansion limited A1-SE M2K can be very aggressively priced. We aim to put this into production towards the end of April at A1 and Linux.

All this begs the question as to whether the AmigaOne-SE? Since the AmigaOne-SE became available many customers have been waiting to upgrade to this in preference to the A1-SE, and with the current size of the Amiga market it is only practicable to produce one model type at once. But we are very conscious that, even in relatively low volumes, there is a need to produce a lot lower than that of the G3SE and single board computer, not just as an entry- level Amiga and/or OS4 games console, but as something that can form the basic module for stand-alone multimedia applications running under OS4. This would form, for example, a replacement for the C2D2 and A1250 motherboards have been used by us and others in embedded糠 applications. Applications to date. We have already produced the initial software for this new platform ‘AmigaOne SE-Lite’. Negotiations with IBM have begun and IO pricing are already in train at the highest level and indications are that this expansion limited A1-SE M2K can be very aggressively priced. We aim to put this into releasing this module for general purchase until OS4 has been shipped for the AmigaOne.

AmigaOS4.0 is a mammoth effort that has ripped the guts out of the AmigaOS, kept the good parts, retired the creaking skeletons and all whilst moving away from not just a specific processor family but also a highly integrated custom media chipset.

And it is just the start of the AmigaOneDE-XE update. There are lies, rumours and sometimes (rarely) there are truths. Sorting out the wheat from the chaff is difficult at times. However there is so much FUD (Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt) being spread about the Amiga Community that the following items may indeed be pure speculation by others.

What does this mean for the AmigaOne? Simple. Higher volumes quickly translate to lower production costs, and lower production costs coupled with the high delivered performance of OS4 at last gives us a real opportunity to take the Amiga back into the high performance computing arena once more as the leisure computer of choice. Its all part of the grand plan.

See you next issue Alan
World of Amiga South East (WoASE) 2002 was held at Poplars Hall near Brentwood in Essex on Saturday the 2nd of November 2002. This was the same venue as last year’s successful show, but this year there were many more interesting things to see.

The show venue was split into two main areas with all the important items in between. The smaller of the two housed the usergroup area and the presentation hall, while the commercial exhibitors were displaying their products and of course selling them to visitors.

Thendic's stand was immediately in front of the entrance doors to the main hall in addition to their range of “Classic” Amiga products they had an AmigaOne G4E motherboard on display and a GSSE system set up and running. For the first time Eyetech were accepting pre-orders on the AmigaOne SE and XE boards and systems with an added bonus of a free copy of OS 4 when it is released. The Frieden brothers (key OS 4 developers at Hyperion) were demonstrating the AmigaOne BIOS and OS 4’s ExecSG on this machine although the 68k emulator isn’t yet implemented allowing it to boot into a full OS.

On the Thendic stand was a Playstation 2 playing on a graphics card screen through a TV card and the new 6 slot Mediator 1200SX. At the back of the main hall was Forematt Home Computing with their huge range of Amiga software including many classic games. In addition to the classic games they also stock many recent games including Security Tycoon, Tales of Tamar and Quake 2 all of which were released at the show! 100%, Amiga, the monthly CD based Amiga magazine, was on display showing off the new interface that works on all Amigas and in fact any computer with a web browser.

In the presentation hall four user groups, HAUG, ASA, ANT and SEAL all had tables where they sold some second hand Amiga gear and software. ANT were running a SCALA presentation about their group. On the SEAL stand Robert gave a demonstration Pagestream as it is used to produce Total Amiga.

During the show several presentations were made in the hall with PA and projector. Alan Redhouse gave us an update on the AmigaOne PPC systems including information on a fix that had to be applied to the Artica north bridge chip, this will be implemented in the next batch of AmigaOne motherboards.

Ben Hermans gave a talk illustrated with a SCALA slideshow on AmigaOS 4, he started with a progress report on all aspects of the new OS. He explained the status of the ExecSG kernel which is now running on the AmigaOne hardware and said it had exceptionally good performance. Ben stated that about 90% of the development on OS 4 is complete but the 68k emulator still has to be integrated with the system and the complete package needs to be tasted together.

Fleecy Moss summed up Amiga’s current position including an explanation of why Amiga had been hard to contact over the weeks prior to the show. He also revealed a deal with Microsoft for them to distribute Amiga Anywhere products which according to Fleecy will give Amiga stable financial backing into the future. The final presentation was a question and answer session with Fleecy and Ben which was presided over by well respected ex-Amiga journalist Andrew Korn.

Fleecy and Ben Answered a variety of questions from visitors and seemed frank and open in their answers.

If you would like to listen to the presentations or read full transcripts then download them from the show website at:
http://amiga.merseine.nu/woase/files.html

By Robert Williams & Mick Sutton

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http://amiga.merseine.nu/woase/files.html

By Robert Williams & Mick Sutton
It's easy to get frustrated while waiting for a major product release like AmigaOS 4. However since the last issue of Total Amiga Hyperion and Amiga have released several important pieces of information which give us a good idea of what the end product will be like. First they released many screenshots showing the flexibility which has been added to the Intuition and ReAction systems, you can see examples of these screen shots on this page and on the back cover. Next up was a detailed features list spelling out what they plan for the new OS version. Finally as we go to press Hyperion have just announced an agreement with SiTech Software which will give OS4 a 2D support for many more graphics cards.

The features list released by Hyperion is a detailed document spanning about twenty pages and covers some ground I've mentioned in previous updates, so in this feature try to pick out the new and interesting stuff. If you're at all interested in OS4 and especially if you're a programmer please go to the Amiga site at http://os.amiga.com and read the documentation yourself. We haven't done so already as there is a lot of detail I won't have room to mention here.

### Exec65

**Exec** is the AmigaOS kernel which controls the very basic functions of the OS such as memory management and processing tasks. Exec65 is the new PPC native version for OS4 with lots of important new features. Limited memory protection stops critical memory areas from being written to in error or corrupted. New applications can use a new MMU to protect their memory from other processes. The new kernel also includes support for the Active ve unit found in G4 processors which can dramatically accelerate certain operations. The features list also confirms that Exec65 will support existing 68K PPC applications via a built-in emulation. A new memory management system has been implemented which uses a virtualised address space meaning that addressable memory can be larger than physical memory. Applications can request physical areas of memory if required as in the current Amiga model. Memory can be optionally swapped to disk - this feature can be disabled and is not required and in certain circumstances be toggled on the fly.

Also listed are several features which are planned and already partially implemented. Symmetrical Multi-Processing will allow the OS to run on multiple CPUs of the same type. Multi-threading for improved performance and multi-tasking within applications. Pluggable schedulers will allow the user to customise the way the OS prioritises running processes by selecting a different scheduler (you may have seen a similar approach in the shareware Energy framework). We'll wait to see whether any of these interesting developments make it in time for the initial release.

### Emulation

The 68K emulator will be integrated into OS4 to allow existing Amiga applications and OS elements which have not been ported to run on the PPC processor. Using a Just In Time emulator performance is expected to be very good with even a PPC 600e 160MHz (the slower PPC on a production PowerUP card) achieving similar performance to an 060/500MHz. As expected the PPC version will also support saving and loading RAM and particularly on a more modern system with windowing systems these will be very much more than the additional processor speed would imply. The emulation has been directly integrated with Exec65 to keep it as responsive as possible and to allow 68K applications to enjoy the benefits of some of the new Exec features.

### Graphics and GUI

The layers.library which handles overlapping windows has been improved and greatly simplified. In addition to higher speed it offers improved memory management, the ability to hide layers and off-screen layers so windows can be dragged across the edge of the screen. This last feature is optional and can also be permanently disabled using a hot-key.

Many changes have been made to the Intuition and Reaction GUI systems, here are some of the most interesting: A new type of toolbox window is available, these cannot be activated and are useful for palettes where application developers want to keep the window docked on the side. Windows can be moved and re-sized independently in real-time without the use of hacks or patches. A new pop up menu class has been added to ReAction. The look and feel of all window elements can be configured by a new preferences program, various frame styles are available (3D, Flat, Zen or Fast) and most elements can be filled with a bitmap texture. Both GadTools and ReAction GUIs will take their look from the same preferences program in almost every detail so programs using these GUI tools will get a consistent look. GUI settings can be customised on a screen-by-screen basis or all screens can have a common look. A usable demo version of MUL will be supplied to support existing MUL applications, this will be upgraded to full applications fit in with the default OS4 GUI look and feel.

As we go to press Hyperion has made an announcement that will massively increase OS4's graphics card support. Hyperion have entered a strategic partnership with SciTech to port their SNAP driver to OS4. SNAP provides 2D graphics support for over 170 different graphics chipset sets including:

- **OS4** will have a built-in USB stack which includes support for USB mice, keyboards, printers and scanners. A simple GUI to control the stack is included and work is in progress on a more powerful GUI and drivers for USB Mass Storage devices (memory card readers, removable drives, hard disks etc.) and Human Interface devices (multimedia keyboards, scroll mice, tablets etc.). Because the stack is part of the OS USB devices can be available during boot, for example you could use a USB mouse in the early start up menu.

### New Utilities

In addition to the powerful new “Media Toolbox”, a replacement for HDToolBox, “Partition Wizard” will give Amiga users long awaited repair and salvage tools for both SFS and FFS formatted disks. Basic tools are available for both file systems to check a partition, errors, recover files from a damaged partition and to find partitions on a disk with a damaged or lost RDB. For FFS disks Partition Wizard can also repair errors in place and save the disk. Finally it can also optimise (defragment) both types of file system. As you might guess from the SFS support in the utilities a PPC native version of this popular file system will be included as a contribution.

Two new utilities will make handling PDF and PostScript files much easier. PDFView is a new PDF viewer with support for PDF version 1.4. It will display many font types and anti-aliasing to smooth out the jagged, low resolution open source protected files and has direct printing support. The interface allows multiple document windows to be opened. AmiG3S is a replacement for a new open source Ghostscript (the popular open source PostScript display and processing package) this allows postscript files to be displayed and like AmiPDF has full anti-aliasing and printing support. A new PPC native version of MoviView will give OS4 access to movies and video clips (MPEG4, H.264 (MVDV) and MVC444 formats). A wide range of different codecs are supported including DIVX 3, 4 and 5, MPEG4 versions 1, 2 and 3, Intel Indeo and Sorenson video.

Finally a special version of the recently released Browswe 2.3 will be included as OS4's standard web browser. This version 2.3 is the result of a great deal of work and testing by Stefan Burström and the Browswe team.

### New CD, DVD and USB

The new CD and DVD file system deserves a mention, in addition to supporting all common formats such as RockRidge (Unix and Amiga), Joliet (or ISO9660 and HFS for Macintosh) it can also read audio tracks using AIFF files and Video CDs. More interesting still is that the new CD file system will write to a CR-RW meaning you could use a standard CD writer like a large floppy disk with dedicated CD-writing software. The new CD file system also supports the new Mount Rainier standard for packet writing to CD-RW's if your drive implements.

### Latest offerings from the likes of nVidia and ATI

Hyperion have explained that SiTech will port SNAP to Linux PPC and then they will integrate it to a Picasso 96 even which will slot straight into the OS4 graphics system. This move should give OS4 native better graphics support with minimal effort. Hyperion's Ben Hermans was particularly excited about that supporting so many chipsets was particularly important for the embedded market where he would like to see OS4 gain a foot hold.

Initially SiTech will only supply 2D drivers but Ben says that Hyperion plan to work with them to add 3D support for cards where the necessary documentation is available. The initial release of OS 4 will be supplied with Warp 3D - this supports the 3D functions of Permeda 2 and Voodoo 3 based graphics cards, ATI Radeon support also plans to support the OpenGl compatible Mesa 5.3 DAP as well. However this support will be dependent on the vendor supplying drivers for the latest 3D technologies and games.

AmigaOS’s font support will be dramatically enhanced in version 4 with a new font system called FT2Engine. This will provide support for Scalable fonts and bitmap fonts from Windows and X windows. A new font manager utility will allow you to install fonts more easily, view their character sets and set many new options.

- **OS4** 4 2D support for many more graphics cards.
- **CD, DVD and USB**
- **New Utilities**
- **Latest offerings from the likes of nVidia and ATI**
- **AmigaOS 4 Update**

Robert Williams picks the best bits from the recent information on OS 4 to bring you a veritable feast of news.

Features

- **Features**
- **CD, DVD and USB**
- **New Utilities**
- **Latest offerings from the likes of nVidia and ATI**

This is just one of the examples posted by Hyperion showing the flexibility of the enhanced Intuition and Reaction. Notice how custom bitmap textures have been used for most GUI elements and from my experience so far this seems to be much more compatible with many more websites than 2.2. Browswe 2.3 is a 68k application so it will run under Amiga OS4 on CD-RW/DB drives. However this performance being quoted it should get a nice speed increase all but the slowest PPC hardware.

What is Being Made?

We understand that the OS components mentioned in the features list are pretty much complete with only a handful of minor issues outstanding. Most of these components have been with the OS4 beta testing team for some time and there has also been a call for translators to help in the localisation effort. The main area still being completed is the integration of the 68k emulation and this is the focus of work at the moment. Understandably the OS development team are unwilling to paint on completion until now so many delays and so much speculation however do they assure us that a lot has been achieved and that work will not be wasted.
Starting Your First Page

Let's take the example of a simple home page with some personal information, I'll build up the page step by step and introduce some common HTML elements along the way.

Open a text editor such as Edrad and type in the HTML code as shown in the "Basic HTML Structure" section. Then save the file from Edrad making sure the extension is "html". If the page you are creating is to be front page of your website you should do the following: make it a good idea to call it "index.html". This is the default page that most web servers will display when a user visits your site. To view the page so far start a browser to left, right or using the "Open local file" menu command.

Organising Your Site

Before we go any further it's a good idea to think about the organisation of your web site. Because each page of the site will be a separate HTML file and these files will be connected on separate image files (as we'll see later) it will keep things tidy if you make a new drawer in which to keep the Main site's files. If your site gets bigger you can make sub-portals and give them their own sub-directory. You might like to use the end of "<p>" tag otherwise the alignment can be carried over to future paragraphs. For example my Hobbies/Amiga section could look like:

An important point to note is that HTML doesn't care about how you layout the text in your editor. In the above example I have used Edrad or (even) Ed as a plain text editor but for some people the whole of a paragraph is written on the same line, the resulting page would still look the same in the browser. If you insert multiple spaces, for example between words, they will be treated as a single space by the browser.

Text Formatting

Text can be formatted on an HTML page in a number of ways. The key point to remember is that, for the most part, HTML is designed to indicate the meaning of sections of the page not what they should look like. This interpretation is down to the program or device used to display the HTML page.

HTML defines six levels of headings (the H1 to H6 elements) which are used to structure your page. These are generally rendered by the browser as descending size font. However the Hx elements and not the font settings you will probably find an option to change the size of these headings. However the Hx elements and not designed for formatting the document - they are for structuring the sections of a page. For example on our home page we might have information in several groups such as personal details, work, qualifications, hobbies etc. Under some of these they might be subsections of information. We can use headings to lay this out neatly, for example:

Get to know the "<p>" paragraph element, you'll be using it a lot!...
**Features**

Another useful character entity is the non-breaking space, &nbsp;: This forces the browser to insert a space which, as the name implies, does not break at the end of a line. This is useful if you want to keep two words together and force the browser to ensure that more than one space is inserted.

**Images**

Images are integral to HTML pages and viewed along with the text. Most graphical browsers support images in JPEG, GIF and PNG format. Which format you choose depends on the type of Image you wish to display.

In general JPEG is best for photographs it supports a high level of compression with a minimum loss of image quality in such images. Experiment with the JPEG compression quality option in your graphics program to get the smallest file size possible while still retaining the required quality. JPEG is less suited to line drawings, diagrams and text. On these types of image compression artifacts soon start to show.

GIF only supports images with up to 256 (256 colours) which makes it a popular choice for photos. However it offers good compression and works well for line drawings and diagrams which generally have few colours. GIF images can also have a transparent colour where the background shows through and can be compiled into simple animations.

PNG is a newer format designed in part to replace GIF which is expensive for software makers to license (this is why GIF support has been removed from some Amiga applications). PNG can store in either a Indexed image (up to 24bit) or true colour (24bit) formats using a variable level of lossless compression. In true colour mode it stores images without loss of quality but the files are substantially bigger than JPEG which uses lossy compression (reduces the quality for a smaller file size). If JPEG quality is adequate it is a better option than 24bit PNG. Palette mapped PNG is a good alternative to GIF and has a more powerful transparency feature using an alpha channel, this means areas of a PNG image can have different levels of transparency. However PNG does not support animations.

**What Size Should the image be?**

When you are creating an image for display on a web page remember that people with many different computers and web browsers could be viewing it. Also be aware the browser will have to download the image in the first place so the aim must be to keep the image file as small as possible - choosing the appropriate image format will help here. In general it is best to keep images under 80 pixels wide. If you wish to include images that would suggest in most cases sticking to a maximum of about 600 pixels wide.

When you have prepared your image save it into the directory with your web page. Make sure you use a filename with the correct extension, .jpg, .png or .gif for the file format.

**Adding an Image to a Page**

Images are added to the page using an `<IMG>` element. The `src` attribute defines the image file to display, if the image is in the same directory as the HTML file you just need to specify its file name. If the image is in a drawer below the HTML file you can specify the path relative to the HTML file. For example if you keep your images in a drawer called `pics` you could specify an image from the drawer: `<img src="pics/image.jpg">`

**TIP**

Many web servers are case sensitive. This means that you must enter the names of drawings, images and other linked files exactly as they are spelt with the correct capitalisation or the Images and links won’t work when you upload them (even if they work when you test them on the Amiga which is not case sensitive). To avoid this problem I recommend keeping the names of the files you use on your site lower case and doing the same when tyiping filenames into your HTML.

The `<IMG>` element has several other attributes which should be included. `alt` specifies a short description of the image which can be used with non-graphical browsers and when images are off, “height” and “width” indicate the size of the image in pixels and are used by the browser to layout the page correctly before the image itself has been downloaded. This can increase the speed at which your page appears.

**NOTE**

In some browsers changing the height and width attributes causes the browser to scale the image to the specified dimensions. However it is not a good idea to use them in this way, firstly if you scale down an image the full image data still has to be downloaded making the image slower to load and secondly most browsers don’t do a very good job of scaling as your image processor will.

To add an image to our page below the top heading we need to add the following tag:

```
<IMG src="robert.jpg" alt="Robert at his Amiga." height="247" width="200">
```

This assumes that the image file “robert.jpg” is in the same directory as the HTML file. If it is in a drawer below the HTML file you can specify the path relative to the HTML file.

**Uploading Your Page**

With our simple example page complete it’s time to upload to the web server. Most Internet service providers give you some space on their webservers for free. When you sign up for an account, if you’re not on the ‘net, you will most likely have some space waiting to be used. Most ISPs and hosting companies let you upload your pages using an FTP client - many if these exist for the Amiga including AmiFTP, SimpleFTP and AmiTradeCenter (which is freeware). There is also an excellent FTP client built into DirectorX. From your ISP you need to know the address of the FTP server where you need to upload, which username and password to use (normally these will be the same as you login details) and what the address of your website will be. Most ISP’s post this information in a boxout under the tutorial.

When you know the details fire up your FTP client and enter the server’s address, make sure you’re not using anonymous FTP and enter the username and password. Now connect to the server, after a while you should see a list of all the files you have uploaded to the website with no files listed (there may be a couple of system files). Now copy across the HTML page or compression you have made any images or files you linked to. If you have made subdirectories you will need to make them on the server first and then copy any files across. If you have to manually name any directories make sure they are named exactly the same as the ones on your hard disk. Make sure one of the files you upload is called “index.html” as this will be the page the visitor sees when they enter your web address without specifying a page.

**NOTE**

Some FTP clients will let you copy whole directories from your hard disk, others require you to make the directories manually and then copy the files into them. An FTP client has a transfer mode option make sure it is set to binary (not ASCII) as otherwise images may be corrupted on upload.

With the files in place you can now visit your website with a web browser and see if everything has worked!

If there are any problems when you try to access the site from your computer check that you have put the files in the same places on the web server and that you don’t have any case problems with filenames (see “Adding an Image to a Page”).

**Conclusion**

That completes our very simple page. I hope this has given you enough information to start creating your own pages. However there are many more features in HTML such as the following.

I haven’t been able to cover here. I highly recommend that you look at some of the pages in the “learning more” boxout which have the space to go into much more detail than I have been able to here.

If you would like to follow up this feature with a more in-depth look at a particular aspect of creating web pages please let me know and we will consider it for a future issue. Also if you would be interested in writing an item on Javascript then please get in touch too.

**Learning More**

There’s lots more to learn about creating web pages than I’ve been able to cover in this short tutorial. On the sites listed in this boxout you can find loads of detailed information about different aspects of web design.

**Specifications**

http://www.w3.org/

The official body that sets standards for the World Wide Web. Their site has loads of information and on-line utilities for checking the validity of your pages.

http://www.w3.org/Th/month4/

The HTML specification which defines all the available elements and how they should be used.

http://www.w3.org/WAI/getting started/

Making a Website more accessible actually makes the site easier for everyone to use. Good usability advice from the WWW standards authority.

http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/tut/lessons.html

A more technical reference.

http://archive.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/index.html

More technical reference.

http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/tut/lessons.html

A more technical reference.

http://archv.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/index.html

A good basic tutorial that covers more aspects of basic HTML than I’ve been able to fit in here.

http://www.w3schools.com/HTML5/Tutorials-.../index.html

A more technical reference.

http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/tut/lessons.html

A good basic tutorial that covers more aspects of basic HTML than I’ve been able to fit in here.

http://www.w3schools.com/HTML5/Tutorials-.../index.html

A more technical reference.

http://wwwenchmark.com/guide/1918

A complete on-line book guiding you through the

http://www.useit.com/alertbox/

Jakob Nielsen’s column on web usability. Indispensable for the professional Web designer.

http://www.webstyleguide.com/

An elegant reference to the WWW standards authority.

http://www.webstyleguide.com/

A more technical reference.

Tutorials

http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/tut/lessons.html

Good tutorial which covers more aspects of basic HTML than I’ve been able to fit in here.

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http://www.w3schools.com/HTML5/Tutorials-.../index.html

A more technical reference.
GoldEd Studio AIX

Author: Dietmar Eilert
License: Commercial
Price: £59.99
From: http://golded.dietmar-eilert.de/

**GoldEd Studio is supplied with a comprehensive HTML authoring module called WebWorld. When you load an HTML file WebWorld is automatically started, if you want to start a new HTML page set the type to HTML using the filetype pop-up menu. GoldEd uses colour to highlight various parts of the HTML language such as tags, attributes and comments. This highlighting makes it easy to see the structure of the page and spot when you have missed part of a tag (such as a closing “>”).**

Most of the HTML related controls are in a new tabbed section of the main toolbar at the top of the GoldEd window. Each tab has icons for inserting tags related to different HTML functions for example paragraph, font or navigation related. If the tag to be inserted has attributes then GoldEd opens a window where you can set them. The tag window helps you set the attributes correctly, for example if you need to specify a colour there is a colour picker which will calculate the hexadecimal colour value and if you want to select a file you can use a file requester. GoldEd can also calculate the size of images and automatically generate an “ALT” attribute. A nice feature is that you can use the attribute setting window to edit existing tags, just place the cursor on a tag and press F2 or click the “Edit attributes” button and the appropriate window appears containing the information filled in. The current page can be displayed in a web browser at the click of a button. GoldEd also includes Webcruiser and Voyager and sends the page to whichever browser is set up in the preferences. It also allows you to make links quickly. At the bottom of the window are areas for the output of the integrated “tidy” HTML checker and a selection of special characters which can be inserted with a click.

To make inserting images and linking to other pages even easier WebWorld displays a list of possible link destinations and images in the editor window. The list is split into four pages selected by icons along the top. The first two pages show all the HTML pages in the same directory and in sub-directories below the current file by either their filename or HTML “TITLE” element. You can open a page for editing by clicking on it, insert its name into the current page by Shift-clicking and create a link by Ctrl-clicking. The third page lists images in the current directory and sub-directories, clicking on an image opens a requester where you can adjust the size and then insert an “IMG” tag into the HTML. The final page is a list of favours where you store the addresses of sites you commonly link to on your pages, clicking on one of these inserts a link into the HTML. A further aid to writing pages is the special characters panel which allows you to insert character entities by clicking on their symbol.

When your page is finished WebWorld has a built-in version of the “tidy” utility from the W3C which checks for errors in the HTML and makes some style suggestions. When tidy has finished running a list of errors are presented and you can jump to the position of each error by clicking on it in the view. Overall the WebWorld module for GoldEd takes much of the drudgery out of writing HTML pages and has some very nice features. When you consider that it is only one part of a powerful editor it makes the package excellent value.

**HSC (HTML Sucks Completely)**

Authors: Thomas Aaglassinger and Matthias Bethke
License: Free software (GPL)
From: http://www.linguistik.uni-erlangen.de/webtools/hscsoftware.html

HSC isn’t an HTML editor; in fact it is a client for HTML editors. When a Web editor (such as GoldEd) sends a page to HSC it will open the page in the browser and you can make changes to the HTML code. HSC checks the pages for standards compliance and good style. It won’t go through all the functions like GoldEd, it just gives you an idea of some things it can do. If you have “IMG” tags in your HTML HSC can automatically insert the “height” and “width” attributes based on the size of the image files. It can insert the contents of another file into your HTML so if you have a common header or footer you can change it on all your pages by changing one file. If you link to local files or other HTML pages HSC will check that they exist and can also include texts such as their size or modification date in the HTML page.

What makes HSC so powerful is that it has many scripting features so you can create lists that automatically generate repeating parts of pages (the list of back issues on the Total Amiga site is a good example of this) and include “if” statements so parts are only included if certain conditions are met.

If you’re creating one or two pages or are new to HTML then HSC probably isn’t for you. However if you have a more complex site with common content on several pages then a bit of work setting it up with HSC will make keeping the site updated much easier in future. For example you can open an HTML file and HSC will display the attributes for the currently selected element or piece of code. This is very useful for editing tables. In WebWorld you build your page by Entering text and inserting other elements by clicking buttons on the toolbar. You can display an “Edit” window which shows the attributes for the currently selected element or piece of code. In this way you can also apply styles to text such as bold, italics or headline formatting. If you wish while you build your page you can view the HTML source that WebWorld is generating however it is not possible to edit the source by hand and then see the results in the MetaWeb window.

**WebPlug**

Author: Esteve Boix
License: Freeware
From: com/WWW/webplug145.ha and webplug2beta.ha

WebPlug is the Amiga’s only graphical HTML editor. It makes setting attributes as easy as possible. For example it can determine the sizes of images automatically and select one using a colour wheel, there is also a button that will select the nearest “safe” image if you’re browsing on 8bit displays. You can leave as many of the palette windows open as you wish which makes formatting an HTML page with the mouse very quick and easy, simply select the text you want to format and double click on the appropriate button.

You can have several pages open at once and easily swap between them using the document palette. WebPlug supports several browsers including the “default” browser, the web browser you use all the time. Once it has been inserted, you must either delete it and insert a fresh copy with the change or edit the element by hand.

A beta of version 2 has been released unfortunately this isn’t being developed at the moment but from my testing so far seems stable (although make sure you install the libraries and MUI custom classes before running it). This version adds syntax highlighting which helps you spot errors and makes the whole page structure easier to read. It also allows you to save a web project, this groups all the files you need for a site and allows you to load them in one step.

I found WebPlug to be a very easy editor and think it would be excellent for beginners in HTML although expanded into a good reference book or website.
One of the features that makes Hollywood so different from other Amiga multimedia systems is that it has been designed for modern Amiga systems and also ... is straight forward and updates the required libraries if necessary, the whole package takes up about 13Mb of disk space.

In Hollywood are based on a text script file which uses a simple BASIC-like scripting language. There is no user interface, the “Undo” or “UndoFX” commands, both of these require a type and number of the object. “Undo” simply clears the object and “UndoFX” removes it using a transition effect.

If you don’t see what you want, just ask!

Graphics

Drawstudio
This excellent Graphics package available one again! Comes on CD and includes Texture Studio & Image Studio.
£35.00

Photogenics 5
This excellent Graphics package by Paul Nolan. Comes on CD.
£70.00

Image Engineer
Great Image manipulation program. Add effects to images such as Jigsaw.
£25.00

Candy Factory Pro
Create 3D Text from any standard font and use them on web pages etc.
£35.00

Art Effect 4
Billed as “Photoshop@ on the Amiga”. Excellent graphic package. Comes on CD.
£39.99

FxPaint
With over 70 effects this is a superb addition to any software collection.
£60.00

Image FX4
THE image manipulation package @11 effects of.
£99.00

Internet

Inet Dial
Home server on your Amiga©, Includes Apache and Geek Gadgets.
£40.00

AWeb Upgrade
Excellent web Browser. Upgrade from OS 3.5 or OS 3.9. Comes on Floppy.
£30.00

Utilities

PPF 3
The fastest and smallest file system available, up to 300 times faster than FFS.
£35.00

MetaView
The best Clipart viewer on the Amiga©. Comes on CD with clip art images.
£18.00

Diaovio
The best backup program on the Amiga©. Comes on Floppy disk.
£50.00

PhotoFolio V2
The professional way to view, catalogue and manipulate your images.
£30.00

GoldEd
The best Editor, Program Editor, HTML Generator on the Amiga.
£30.00

Turboprint 7.21
Use modern printers with 24 bit output!! The quality is astounding.
Full £40.00 Upgrade £25.00

Make CD (DAO version)
CD writing software.Compatible with most CD writers/rewriters.
£50.00

Firelight 2
If you have a 3com Palm© or compatible then you need this program! Comes on CD.
£25.00

Mediapoint
multimedia presentation tool on your Amiga.
£40.00

Misc

TaskiSAMS
Send Text Messages to mobile phones from your Amiga! Comes on CD.
£12.00

FsScan
The only Scanner software that offers OCR on the Amiga today!!
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Atari’s bitter rival, Commodore, Fast forward to 2002, and if you want to buy a PC from a big-brand name, it is likely that it will be priced as a four figure sum, but times have ... seen as a machine which is fun to use, but more of as a tool which people have to know how to use to get a decent job.

Hopefully, the new generation of Amigas will change this, and remind Joe Public that computers CAN be fun to use!

Reviews

Flashback

By Mike Powell

With the new generation of Amigas now here, I thought it would be nice to write about where it all began.

In the early 1980s, the Personal Computer was not synonymous with IBM and Wintel, as many developers were creating home computers, eager to get their creations into the marketplace. Commodore were one of those companies, and their 64-bit system, Amiga, was an instant success.

Whilst the big C were riding high, the Commodore 64’s success, started a chain of events that made their dream of creating the best games machine in the world a reality. The Amiga system included the type of CPU, amount of RAM, disk space, OS version and the like.

If you don’t declare the type of a variable Hollywood assumes it is a long integer. Otherwise you can provide a type manually or include a “$” change directives during compilation for a string or “f” for a float. You can include sub-routines in your script by naming them with a “Label” command, and jumping to the routine with a “G0Sub” command. Both of these commands pass arguments to a subroutine but in any position where you call data you can use them to pass data to a subroutine.

In Hollywood all items are referred to by number rather than by name. This can be a habit which people will often need to order coordinates. Because of this format you must always get a bit mind bending at times but apart from that the language is easy to pick up.

There are a few limitations, in particular one function cannot return the used return value from another and with expressions such as 10.2 * 1.2 (two floating point numbers) are not possible (you have to use functions such as add() and div() instead). This makes some scripts more long-winded than necessary however they aren’t a major problem for most projects.

Distribution

If you wish to distribute your scripts to users Hollywood there is an option to compile your code into an executable which should run on any Amiga that meets the minimum requirements. Any files which have been declared in the key section of your script will be automatically included in the executable so it is possible to create a multimedia application which only requires external files. Of course if you prefer you can also load external files and loading them later in the script. These compiled applications are not freely distributed as any scripts you have written. As the Hollywood interpreter is a commercial product it may not be distributed.

Conclusions

Overall Hollywood is an excellent way to make media-oriented applications which will work on the vast majority of Amiga systems (although you will need a reasonable system to get good performance). It is less suited to making “PowerPoint” style presentations. Although Hollywood has a wide range of transitions which can be used in many circumstances. For example to display or hide most objects or to change a background image. There are about 40 effects in total which range from simple wipes to various blindfolds and various types of transitions. This makes it really hard to show through. As in other areas of Hollywood where you need to learn to use the language, clarity of language is very important.

Let’s get Graphical

Graphs for backgrounds and brushes can be loaded in the correct format for which you have a datatypes, for both types you can specify a colour that is transparent. Transparent backgrounds can be used to create applications with a window in the middle or a rectangular window as shown in the Euro Calculator example program. Flat brushes allow the background or a user’s data to be shown through. As in other areas of Hollywood where you need to learn to use the language, clarity of language is very important.

Most projects.

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The few past issues have seen reviews of both the Highways and the Thylacine USB Zorro Cards. No doubt someone will provide a Subway (Clockstop USB) review too, but for now it’s the turn of the Spider - Elbox’s PCI solution. Also in the last few issues Poseidon and its Trident GUI have been thoroughly explained, as has all of its classes, so I shall steer clear of all of that in this article and concentrate on other issues.

To run USB on your mediator you have to buy the Spider, you can’t use any old PCI USB card. Elbox’s reason for this is that so only one driver, for one card, need be written. This not only saves them time but it stops compatibility issues arising. From what I can tell the internal coding of one of the chips on the Spider has also had to be altered slightly for it to work with the Mediator. Of course it also brings them extra money (that they would not get if you bought a card externally) which is needed to pay the salaries of the drivers!

The Spider is a USB2.0 card that can also run older 1.1 devices. For now it does not have the necessary HECI drivers that would run 2.0 compliant items but with a future release this will finally be implemented which means the Spider will be a high-speed USB2.0 device will be available for use and Elbox assure me this will be out soon. It is equipped with 4 external ports which fit neatly onto one blanking plate and one internal port which is one more than the Highway/Subway and four more than the Thylacine. Each port provides 500mA of power (if required) to connected devices so hardware that does not have its own power source can run safely. The Spider is of course totally ‘hot-pluggable’ meaning you can insert and remove devices while the computer is turned on and they will automatically be seen without needing a reboot.

The Need for Speed

The USB2.0 standard will mean that the Spider can transfer up to 480Mbps (or currently) 12Mbps for 1.1 devices. I could not find any speed comparison however from digging on the net I managed to see that in the case of 1200s and 1000s the Spider was a lot faster than the Highway reported a transfer speed of 495Kbps/second on a Amiga 1200 with a 640 Cyberlink while the Spider produced a speed of 734Kbps/second (on an Amiga 1200) believe) so we can see that the Spider is at least 50% faster on some systems than the Highway (results may vary of course).

Elbox e-mailed me to say: “In the case of Spider the speed of mass storage USB 1.1 devices do not depend on the Amiga turbo (processor) card. Y ou can see that the Spider is at least 50% faster on some systems. Each system must be run in such a way that the results are:”

Elbox went on to say “It is not clear which one is the right one. The only way to compare is to run the Spider on a system that has the right processor. Then you can see which one is the right one.”

Once that is done devices should show in the “Devices” and “Classes” sections of Trident the same as with other USB hardware. If you are at all unsure about how to configure Trident I suggest you refer to Total Amiga issues 13 or 14. There is also the highway, usb mailing list which caters for all Poseidon users, see the side panel for details.

When it first came out I found that with the Spider the video card would not show up in the Device Manager. To get round this I had to set the VoodooMem Emac to 32MB. I had to then set the Audio card to 32MB and the mouse to 12MB. Some recent updates have appeared to have cured this problem and now it works as it should. If you encounter problems I suggest lowering the VoodooMem setting to 14 MB to see if it helps.

When users are sent the EHCI drivers the Spider will make use of the faster 2.0 devices but the results will be entirely dependant on the processor used and as such the results on the Amiga will be slower than that of the Power PC because we can estimate that on an 660/66 you would reach about 50% of the speed of a PC. It is still the fastest available USB implementation for the Amiga.

Making the Web

Naturally you require a Mediator Board with a spare PCI slot which means the Spider is not tied to any specific hardware. Certain users will find themselves in a dilemma with the Spider as it only have four PCI slots and with a graphics; ethernet; sound and USB board on it even if all slots are taken. This means either they have to take a card out of the PCI slot or the case of 1200 users upgrade to the Mediator 1200SX and that bares the question is it worth the extra money?

Well USB has increasingly become the standard medium for devices like printers; cameras and storage media which means that if we want to keep our Amigas up to date we need USB. Mediator users also have to be able to use the other solutions in their machines (they work perfectly alongside each other) but what’s the point? Having a PCI card running on a PCI board is a lot better for speed and compatibility.

You will also need an 68060 or hige version of Turbo i586CC or in the Mac (MMCD), a Voodoo card (for DMI purposes) and a registered version of Poseidon.

Features

The Spider appears as two devices in Trident, Poseidon's preferences program.

Conclusion

This basically throws the ball into the users court. To my mind the main thing stopping anyone from buying the Spider is their personal opinions on Elbox’s ethics. They may not like for saying it but a lot of the time they run to their own agenda at the expense of others (as any company might). I personally think their hardware is quite good and I would continue to buy their items for as long as I want to upgrade my A4k. I do however know other users that now refuse to touch any new software and have stuck purely with the older drivers that appeared not to have the code in them. Some I know have even left the Amiga scene completely.

So as a USB solution it is top of the range. Updates, as with all updates from Elbox are regular and solid and if you have a Mediator already and want to use USB devices then it’s a must, but if you don’t there are other solutions available. Its main down-falling is the controversy surrounding Elbox, and only the user can decide who’s side they will take on the matter.
I'm a sound guy. That is, I'm into sound. I love music and I love to do things with it. So naturally I'm always on the hunt for Amiga programs that let me work with sound. In particular, was on a long hunt for a good program that would let me load a sample or a song and tweak it with reverb, phasing, and other effects. One of the most popular of such programs was inexpensive but unfortunately also loved to crash my machine at random times. Another popular piece of software, which combined multitrack recording with sound processing, was too pricy for my budget. I found Stefan Kost's shareware program called SoundFX, which promised me virtually limitless sound effects possibilities at an affordable price; I figured with a registration fee of $26 (the unregistered version doesn't allow the use of ARexx scripts, virtual memory, or saving!), I couldn't go wrong.

SoundFX is specifically designed to let sampleists manipulate them to your specifications; however, with enough RAM or virtual memory drive space, you can work with large sample sizes. I was happy to rip from a music CD. SoundFX can also act as a sound converter, supporting almost every major audio format (including Studio16 and MPS but notably not ReAudos); there’s even a batch conversion option that will convert an entire subdirectory of samples, which can be a godsend when a windows-loving friend wants those cool BVSX sounds you have in your Directory Opus. Stefan proudly pleased that SoundFX has a separate version for FPUs. (A binary from an earlier version is also available for the ‘000.) Stefan recommends an ‘060, at least 64MB of RAM, a graphics card, OS 3.5 or higher, and, interestingly, a sound card. When you start SoundFX, the program opens on its own screen in various shades of gray and its own font. (Don’t worry – if you don’t like the default fonts and colours, the preference editor will let you choose your own!) An applet also appears on your Windowbar screen, which is a real treat if you like to drag’n drop. And if you so choose, every time you open SoundFX 4.2 you’re given a random “Tip of the Day.”

Speaking of documentation, it is available in both English and German in PDF and HTML formats, and there is great online support via both www.sonicpulse.de and a fairly active discussion list on Yahoo! Groups. Not only is the documentation in separate versions for HTML and PDF files, but the PDF file comes in two sizes: ‘letter’ size for U.S. users and A4 size for the European side of the Atlantic. Pressing the ‘Help’ key will open up SoundFX opens a web browser and takes you right to the section of the documentation that discusses the window you have open. The documentation has a nice layout – it’s outlined and numbered by section. However, I noticed that there are blanks in some of the sections. Being an Amiga user, I know that this is somewhat expected, but SoundFX 4.2 is just not up to the mark. It’s even more strange that there are no page numbers. This is something that I could not get the ‘PitchShift’ operator to work, and many users (myself included) report cracking spread throughout decoded MPS files. I’ve found that using the “Edit” menu on larger samples crashes my system often; then again, SoundFX is really designed for handling short sound sites! I’ve found it much more reliable with English docs, but the program itself is completely in English. In the user documentation there are a few interesting remarks that appear in German.

Having said that, there are some improvements that have been made since the previous version. I’ve noticed that the batch conversion function is much more stable now. I’ve also noticed that several effects appear to have been added since the last update. The program’s overall stability appears to be significantly improved.

Helfful Hints

I’ve found that some of SoundFX’s functionality can be a bit quirky at first, so to save you from some initial frustration, I’ve decided to provide this guide to get you up and running. Stefan has added an effect on the “Dynamic” operator that appears to be a perfect combination of the “DeCrackle” and “DeNoise” operators to a basis that I couldn’t figure out how to use them properly!

Registered users get the benefit of ARexx functionality. Ideally, I would have added nothing to SoundFX but in my “playing around” I’ve found the ARexx capabilities to be fun to use. Several ARexx scripts that combine different operators are included with the program, and they have produced some really cool effects during my experiments. My personal favorite is the “GhostEcho” script, which gives your samples sort of a reversed-reverber effect.

Room for Improvement

SoundFX, as with most programs, is not without a few flaws. The program handles MPS doesn’t decode them as well as with other programs, surprisingly fast, although I was unable to get the MPS to work, and many users (myself included) report cracking spread throughout decoded MPS files. I’ve found that using the “Edit” menu on larger samples crashes my system often; then again SoundFX is really designed for handling short sound sites! I’ve found it much more reliable with English docs, but the program itself is completely in English. In the user documentation there are a few interesting remarks that appear in German.

Room for Improvement

SoundFX 4.2 has a built-in AHI recorder. The “Record” button doubles as a pause button. Levels can be set manually or automatically.

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Since the initial review the Tales have been continuing apace. Many new Lords have joined the humble race to become a great King and many new features have been added to the game:

**Updates**

Version 0.46 added the following (main items only):
- Diplomacy: Personal messages can be sent and received in-game
- Tales is now running on MorphOS
- New Bard’s Tale stories
- CGX V5 is now recognized

Version 0.47 includes the following:
- Movement of cavalry is improved.
- Second map screen
- Mini map and unit locator
- Added winter graphics

A fairly major addition here is the mini-map (see picture). On the map screen you can now select the arrow and the right hand information section changes to display a miniature map of the land you have discovered. Lower down are a set of icons which provide a selection list of your units (armies etc). Click on one of these and it will automatically jump to that figure on the main map. This makes locating all of your troops each turn much easier and quicker.

**Hints & Tips**

If you truly intend to get along in the world of Tamar you need to interact with other players, form treaties, make allies and help one another. Since WoASE was (World of Amiga South East) I have formed a close alliance with Bill Hoggett (Lord Celebtagar in my Deverry game) and to aid us both we have set up private websites with valuable information on that only we have access to.

The main query I had (at WoASE) from people interested in Tales was, “How am I, as a new player, not disadvantaged when there are other people who have been playing for much longer than me?”

The general rule is that new players are placed in Tamar on land which has very few established players on it. You will be spaced away from other players which gives you room to expand. However do not take this as the law, often when an island is short on space new players may find themselves placed in any available gap and this can make things tough. There are of course plenty of ways to survive, but they are for you to find out about.

Knowing what to research and build is half the battle and will help you survive but don’t be surprised if you die once or twice in your first attempts; I did and it helps you to learn the ways of things.

**Buffers**

One thing several people said to me at WoASE was “I tried the Demo of Tales and it just crashed.” Recently an update started to do exactly the same thing to me and Tales ran maybe one out of ten attempts. Accidentially I discovered that increasing the buffers on my Games: partition solved everything. I used HDToolbox to set the buffers to 600 and Tales has run perfectly ever since. It might not work for the demo but it certainly worked for the game itself!

**Forum**

To be informed of updates, turn problems and to report bugs, wish-lists and queries make sure you bookmark http://www.eternity-computer.de/phpBB/ which is the Tales forum. A fair bit of it is in German but there are English sections for all the parts you would need to use. You need to register by following the appropriate link on the site.

The mini-map makes location your troops each turn much easier and quicker,

Next issue?

In the next update things will become a lot nicer for the lesser Lords of Tamar. Rebellions have been added! You can expect larger land owners to start searching for people to be their vassals (Lords who agree to be loosely ruled over and governed). If they do not take vassals then they may find that without help, advice and general aid. However it also means that any decision you make should also be agreed upon by your “boss”.

**Reviews**

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Your’s in the Tales, Lords Deverry & Biffordicus.
(a.k.a. Sam Byford)
are probably the worst 4 person in the world to review sim games. Why? Because I love the genre, I have a strong opinion on what makes a good SIM and what doesn't.

SIM's or Simulation games if you prefer, on the Amiga come in two categories - They are: Railroad Tycoon, Sim City, Colonisation, Civilization, K240, Theme Park, etc. Or the second category: Detroit, Hill Sea Lido, Sim City 2000, Software Tycoon etc.

The first category is the creme of Amiga Sims the second, well, let's just say they don't quite reach the peak, either through horrible controls, limited playability or some other ghastly mistakes. Software Tycoon has all three!

It's not that Software Tycoon is a complete disaster, but it has some flaws that can drive you up the wall. First of all in case you don't know what the game is about here is what it says in the box. "In the early eighties, developers shot up all over the world like toasters - it was the birth of a new industry. Computers and consoles began a triumphant advance into people's homes and spaces like never before. But, not only hardware was sold. Software, and particularly computer games, sold like hot cakes. This development began with simple games such as "Pong". But then progressed to much more complex programs which created their own market. A whole field from the very beginning."

These early days of the industry are the background for the company you yourself are about to found. Armed with a small start capital, you set out in 1982 to conquer the games market. Develop your own game concepts, create a team and make the hits. But never forget that you have two rivals for the dominance you are seeking... Through they do say competition is good for business. So in a nutshell you start up in 1982 with some capital, depending on level of difficulty, and you set off to conquer the games market.

Installation.
The game fully installs on to your hard drive, there is no need to run anything from the CD ever again. Once installed click on the icon of choice, Amiga PPC, 68k or Pegasos (the latter two I deleted since I didn’t need them, but it would have been nice if the installer had asked which version I wanted to install).

Starting the Game
The game is executed by clicking on it’s nicely rendered icon and it immediately launches a screenmode requester window. Select the resolution and colour depth and the game intro loads. It’s best that you always use a 256 colour screen, for one, it’s faster and there is no noticeable difference in graphics depth. Once the intro is out of the way (mouse click skips them) you are asked which language you want. Choose from English or German: next comes the screen with new game, load game, options, etc. If you choose new game you are taken to a new screen where you enter your company name, choose a logo and the difficulty level. Next comes the missions screen. Yep, that’s right you can select missions on this game. The first one is open play where you start in 1982 with X amount of money (depending on the difficulty level) and it runs through until 2005. The missions are basically targets, the first one is make $500,000 within two years of starting up, next win a software award etc. You cannot select the next mission/target until you have successfully completed the previous one.

Having made your choices, the game begins. What is irritating though is that the next time you start the game you will be presented with the screenmode requester and your language preferences all over again (Once is enough).

The Game Screen
The game starts with a horizontally scrolling panoramic view of your average town centre street. You’ll be pleased to know that the area is pedestrianised so that you can interrogate all the people walking around in peace. To the left of the screen is the building where you and your rivals are all based, your office is on the top floor and your development office in on the bottom floor. Next door is the Bank, next door to the left is the Game shop, Advertising office, „Labor„, Cinema, Pizza, Arcade and finally the production room.

The idea is thus, in your office, you develop a game concept based on what programming & technological skills are available in 1982. At the start you have only got sprites, text graphics and PC speaker sound (you can research, genre, programming technologies, graphics and sound). If you have no home computers in this game, only PC’s Consoles and Hand-holds (from 1990). Once you have selected from what is available, you can then further select spoken languages and testing levels.

Once your concept is ready you will need to hire programmers, graphics and sound artists by visiting the Arcade. Each individual has different attributes which governs how good they are and how much they want in wages. Return to your Development office and assign the various tasks from your game concept to each employee. Once done, clicking on the office clock will allow you to agree the timescales. Be they an arbitrary date set by yourself or the actual date of completion. Chosing the first option will mean that the game concept will be finished on your specified date regardless of whether the staff have finished all their assigned modules. In other words the game will be ready to publish regardless of whether it’s complete, or still missing features.

Whilst you wait for the program to be completed or date/time achieved, you can take a trip to the bank, deposit some savings, invest in securities, ask for a loan or bank balance. Scroll right to visit the Game shop, here is where you will drop off the sales license of your latest creation, view sales charts and read the latest reviews on not just your releases but your competitors as well. Next door we have the advertising agency where, finances depending, you can promote your latest release from leaflets to cinema/TV commercials. Scroll right to enter the „Labor„. The Laboratory where you can pay an independent company to research the mysteries of Joystick control as well as better graphics, sound and Genre (you start with a Skill game then research your way to Shoot-em ups, Puzzle, platform,...)

Exit the +Labor+ scroll right and enter the +Pizza+ where you can ask for programmers, sound artists etc. But if you are broke it is rather difficult to get any help. This scrolling street provides the interface to the game screens. Unfortunately the slow speed of the scrolling can make it rather frustrating after a while.

High security at the bank!
To find out what type of game people want, you select the magnificent glass icon from the toolbar menu and click on them. However this isn’t a sure fire way to gauge reaction, unless you sit down with pen and paper and add them all up. Surely commission led opinion polls in the form of reports would have been better? Music, there is only one in game music track and it’s more suited to Payback, in the end you end up turning it off. The sound effects are nothing to write home about and certainly are not imaginative (one sound effect nearly did it all).

Requests: During the month short e-mail notices appear on the toolbar these vary from the monthly Autosave feature has worked, (admittedly handy) to the monthly new film at cinema requester. This is all very well except that if you choose fast back, (this game takes long enough as it is) it is interrupted by the requester which drops you back to normal time. For example, every now and then a requester pops up conveying the message “An image has crashed onto the Earth. Game over. (Joke!)” Ha, Bloody, Ha. I would much rather the actually going and getting my research or game development time had edged closer. Software Tycoon is not a game that should require you to sit in front of the screen whilst there is nothing else to do within it.

Also the scrolling idea of an outdoor shopping area whilst novel, is irritating as hell. Say you are in the development office (left hand side of screen) and you see something up. You have to scroll all the way back to the left-hand most side of the screen, enter development office and assign programmer. Whilst there a requester pops up and informs you that you are running low on stock. Exit development office, scroll to the right most end of the screen and enter production building. You then get another requester saying a particular piece of research is complete. Exit production building and scroll back towards the left again. All the whilst you are being plagued by stupid requesters about mother’s and asteroids etc, and you find yourself clicking the “fast time” button over and over.

Finally, you would think the developers would have tried their best to make it sparkle. Nope sorry. They must have taken a leaf out of the game, the screenmode requester at the start of launch, the which language option, the + or - incrementation method and finally the game only filling up 90mb of a 700mb CD is a dead giveaway. In closing, whilst this game isn't totally bad, it isn't wonderful either, to say something nice about it I could mention the handy autosave option, and the graphics, whilst not out of this world are nice and functional. It’s interesting to note that Software Tycoon was originally slated for Apple Mac release only, it is even more interesting to note that as I write this article, the Mac version has yet to appear. Perhaps Epic Interactive Entertainment will release an update for this game, but so far there is nothing.
In Quake II the enemies that are trying to kill you are not the only problem you face, oh no, there are plenty of other obstacles. Many areas require you to dodge collapsing floors or doorways that suddenly animate and crush you. There are many ways in which to die my friend!

The levels in Quake II are well away into the distance. I found that sometimes the more impressive weapons were not necessarily the most effective, depending on the enemy and situation you are in. Sometimes getting up close and personal with the shotgun did the trick!

This brings me to the enemy’s intelligence, which is improved from the original Quake. For example enemies duck when you fire at them (that’s not fair) ... at them and can often be found motionless rather than patrolling. Don’t get me wrong here, it’s still friggin hard!

As you work your way through the levels you’ll come up against a multitude of enemy types, each one has different strengths and weaknesses. On the main levels you’ll face the likes of cyborgs with chain guns, flying drones with lasers and the bitches from hell with rocket launchers... Women eh!

You are prompted on screen to access your objectives by pressing F1 (didn’t know he had a keyboard with him) this displays a window with your secondary objectives which need to be completed to meet the primary objective (the major task you need to complete on that level).

Time to get moving now soldier and straight away you notice how good the graphics and sound are as two explosions detonate right in front of you. The appearance of the game will be familiar to seasoned Quake players, but overall the graphic quality is much improved with more detailed textures and enemy models. Some parts of the level, such as windows and cracked walls, are destructible allowing you into new areas often with bonuses. I gotta tell ya this game really suck you into the atmosphere of battle inside the background. Smaller touches like shrapnel, smoke and debris flying around add to the sense of realism.

Fortunately you won’t be stuck with the equivalent of a space cadets water pistol for long as there are many varied weapons scattered around the levels (excellent internal security). Some of the weapons are really impressive both in their power and graphic effect, ranging from present day weaponry such as shotguns and grenades to the monumental BFS10K (Big F**king Gun) which sweeps all away before you. Damn these guns look so cool when you fire them off, grenades explode with a fireball, lasers beam and rockets stream away into the distance. I found that sometimes the more impressive weapons were not necessarily the most effective, depending on the enemy and situation you are in. Sometimes getting up close and personal with the shotgun did the trick!

This brings me to the enemy’s intelligence, which is improved from the original Quake. For example enemy ducks when you fire at them (that’s not fair) and even have the audacity to shoot back at you as they are squirming and dying on the floor (that ain’t cricket either). This makes the combat more realistic and keeps you on your toes. There are still times however when the artificial intelligence could be better. Enemies follow a planned path until you get close even if you are firing at them and can often be found motionless rather than patrolling. Don’t get me wrong here, it’s still friggin hard!

As you work your way through the levels you’ll come up against a multitude of enemy types, each one has different strengths and weaknesses. On the lower levels there are lots of foot soldiers which are easily dispatched further through the game you begin to meet more “interesting” adversaries who are more of a challenge, these include the likes of cyborgs with chain guns, flying drones with lasers and the bitches from hell with rocket launchers... Women eh!

There is work to be done. You are prompted on screen to access your objectives by pressing F1 (didn’t know he had a keyboard with him) this displays a window with your secondary objectives which need to be completed to meet the primary objective (the major task you need to complete on that level).

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Much of the scenery is really impressive and the lighting effects bring it to life. In Quake II the enemies that are trying to kill you are not the only problem you face, oh no, there are plenty of other obstacles. Many areas require you to collect items such as keys or pass-cards to gain further access. This usually involves going back and forth between the sub-levels several times before you can complete the level and of course the key or pass-card you require is usually guarded by a nasty adversary (I’d bastard). Also there are plenty of dangerous areas to contend with, these consist of the likes of molten lava (where is that volcano?) bubbling away waiting to burn the flesh off your bones, liquid toxins to swim in (no, not the local pool) and nasty ledges with deep drops to fall and break your neck. Besides all these there are many areas that require you to figure out how to negotiate them. Some of these require good timing on your part to jump onto and from moving platforms of varying construction. Other areas include “booby traps” like collapsing floors or doorways that suddenly animate and crush you. There are many ways in which to do my friend!

The levels in Quake II are well constructed, they vary quite a bit in style. For example there are underground caverns, open outside areas, underwater passages and of course the usual platforms with corridors inter-connecting them. The game flows well, by that I mean each area you complete...
Now Let’s go Frag the World!

As Quake was one of the pioneers of multi-player gaming especially over the Internet you would expect Quake II to excel in this area, and we can tell you it does! Network games use the TCP/IP stack (Miami, Genesis etc.) to connect to either via a local network or the Internet. Within the multi-player section of the main menu the player option allows you to select the name of your player and the type of model that represents you, there are choices of male, female or cycborg with a variety of different skins. If the game server is on your local network then it appears on the list in the join game menu, if you want to join a server on the Internet then you need to add it’s IP address to the “address book” before it will appear on the list. You can find the addresses of servers using webpages such as those listed in the “Are you Being Served?” box out. When you join a game any new maps, weapons, models and sounds that are needed are automatically downloaded (you can disable this), so an on-line game can be a completely new experience.

Apart from being a novice and therefore being annihiliated within the first thirty seconds or so this game really rocks on-line. It is almost a different game to the single player mode, there is much less time to think how you will handle different situations and the action is always frantic. This doesn’t mean you don’t have to use strategy but you can’t afford to stand around working it out... or you will die! On my broadband connection the game runs nice and smoothly which is essential to even have a chance against experienced players.

Quake II tends to play well on a range of systems. This doesn’t mean you can’t afford to stand around working it out... or you will die! On my broadband connection the game runs nice and smoothly which is essential to even have a chance against experienced players.

Quake II Servers On-line

If you want to find an active Quake II server on-line so you can start fragging players on the other side of the world then take a look at this web page which has a regularly updated list: http://www.gameaholic.com/servers/quake2/.

Downloading Mods

http://www.knight-industries.de/sp

This is the official site for additional Quake II mods which have been ported to the Amiga version (many mods are included on a CD with the game).
One of PicShow’s best features is its flexible user interface. Most operations can be carried out with a single key press and you can adjust the key mapping by editing the PicShow keys file. This is a simple text file of keys and which PicShow internal command they map to. In addition to changing key mappings you can also add keys to launch external commands such as sending an image to a dedicated image processor. If you prefer using the mouse to remembering key presses PicShow offers two options. Move your pointer to the top of the screen and press the right mouse button to access a menu of Amiga menu bar menus. Here you can select all the program options and see the keyboard shortcuts. Finally pressing F5 opens the navigation panel which has graphical buttons for most program options. Like the key mapping you can define the operations for the panels of your own graphics and edit which commands appear by changing the selection of display options.

One of PicShow’s best features is the borderless window which PicShow can modify an image’s colour balance on the fly. This brings up a list of all the images in the directory. Then you can pick one to display with the mouse, easy. While PicShow’s multi-image viewing is very good there are a couple of limitations. Firstly it cannot recurse into sub-directories, you have to view files one directory at a time. Secondly it cannot load the next image in the background so it is ready once you have viewed the current one - this handy feature is on the author’s do to list. Finally picture decoding is significantly slower than a viewer such as CyberShow's dedicated decoding routines like CyberShow (my current viewer of choice) - this would be less of an issue on a PPC machine with PPC (actions on the fly).

The main menu has a button for each ReportPlus function. The system files report keeps a track of changes on a partition.

The system files report shows that it aims to be a “multipurpose utility”, in the Aminet recent listings several times over the last few years. Curiously still got the better of me and I decided to download it and find out what it was for. It turns out to be a collection of utilities built into one program with a common Reaction interface. Some of these utilities will mainly appeal to programmers while others are more generally useful. The initial program window has a graphical button for each of the 10 ReportPlus functions of these are split into groups concerning editing, viewing, processing, reporting and conducting a test.

The first editing option allows you to create or edit a bug report in the official Commodore format. The window has fields for all the information you need to submit and drop down boxes so you can easily select such options as the type of bug and what AmigaOS/68000 bug it is. There is an area to enter the details of your Amiga system and the OS versions that are automatically filled in. You can also setup your contact details so you only need to enter them once. I don’t know whether this bug reporting system is still used, the program lists a Haage and Partner E-Mail address, but if it is this is an easy way to a correctly formatted report.

The file report editor is used to prepare and edit readme files for Aminet uploads. Again all the required fields are available and there is a text box for a long description. You can select the appropriate Aminet directory for your upload from directory and sub-directory lists. The battery-backed memory editor allows you to make changes to a small area of memory in the A3000 and A4000 where some SCS1 settings such as the ID of the internal computer clock and a number of asynchronous transfers are used are held in this memory. You can edit the memory by allowing you and change the actual binary code or, for the weak at heart, change the settings using check boxes and a number gadget.

ReportPlus can show you the expansion pack that you used, the program lists a Haage and Partner E-Mail address, but if it is this is an easy way to a correctly formatted report.

Another useful feature is the battery backed memory editor allows you to make changes to a small area of memory in the A3000 and A4000 where some SCS1 settings such as the ID of the internal computer clock and some of the asynchronous transfers are used are held in this memory. You can edit the memory by allowing you and change the actual binary code or, for the weak at heart, change the settings using check boxes and a number gadget.

ReportPlus 5.64b
Author: James R. Jacobs
License: Freeware
From: Aminet, util/misc/ReportPlus.lha

Support

PicShow can modify an image’s colour balance on the fly.

The main menu has a button for each ReportPlus function.

One of PicShow’s best features is its flexible user interface. Most operations can be carried out with a single key press and you can adjust the key mapping by editing the PicShow keys file. This is a simple text file of keys and which PicShow internal command they map to. In addition to changing key mappings you can also add keys to launch external commands such as sending an image to a dedicated image processor. If you prefer using the mouse to remembering key presses PicShow offers two options. Move your pointer to the top of the screen and press the right mouse button to access a menu of Amiga menu bar menus. Here you can select all the program options and see the keyboard shortcuts. Finally pressing F5 opens the navigation panel which has graphical buttons for most program options. Like the key mapping you can define the operations for the panels of your own graphics and edit which commands appear by changing the selection of display options.

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ReportPlus 5.64b
Author: James R. Jacobs
License: Freeware
From: Aminet, util/misc/ReportPlus.lha

Support

PicShow 1.23
Author: Thomas Rapp
License: Freeware
Available From: http://picshow.1st.to

Support

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Author: Thomas Rapp
License: Freeware
Available From: http://picshow.1st.to
If you don’t like tabs showing all the time but don’t want to access the menus to open a new tab it’s easy to add “Add New Browser” or “Tab for New Browser” to your FAB menu. If you right click on a browser tab one pops up allowing you to close the browser or re-load it without selecting the tab first.

**New Tab Button**

**Dragging and Dropping**

Drag and drop opens up many powerful features for tabbed browsing. You can re-arrange the tabs in a window by dragging a tab to a new position, or you can even drag tabs between windows. Drag a tab onto the fast link button area, into your hot list or onto the URL history window for easy access later. If you want to open a page in an existing tab just drag its link or fastlink button onto the tab. Finally drag and drop a tab to the browser window to open its page in a new window.

**Showering Tabs and Space**

When tabs are showing you’ll notice that there’s a gap, the width of one tab, at the right of the browser window. This is left to indicate that a new tab can be opened. To use it simply drag a link into the space, as the mouse hovers over the space a “[New]” tab appears, when you drop the link a new tab opens for it. If you dislike the new-tab space you can switch it off by unchecking “Show space for new tab” in the GUI settings. Without this space shown you can still drag into a new tab, just drag the link over the right hand end of the tab bar, a new tab will appear, then drop the link.

**Tabbed Browsing**

The first thing to know is that IBrowse refers to a tabbed page as a “browser” so selecting “New Browser...” from the “Project” menu opens a new tab. By default you won’t see any tabs (along the top of the web page display) until you open your first additional tab. The simplest way to see a tab even for one open browser is to open the “Settings” window and check “Show tab for single browser” in the “GUI section” of the OpenURL library to use a new tab.

Make sure “Open URL in new browser” on the “Miscellaneous” tab is checked. This is just one of the great improvements in IBrowse 2.3, we’ll have a full review in issue 15 but if you don’t have a 2.x version already (from which 2.3 is a free upgrade) I heartily recommend downloading the demo version from http://www.browse-dev.net.

**Router Upgrade**

If you purchased the AMX-CA64 ADSL Ethernet router we reviewed in issue 12 you may be interested to hear that there is a firmware upgrade available which can be applied from the Amiga. After the review was completed Mitch Sutton noticed that a firmware update would occasionally lose the ADSL connection and needed to be switched off then on to regain it - this happened about every 10 days. Although I had the same router and the same ADSL service I didn’t have problems and my router stayed connected indefinitely. We noticed that Mick’s router had an earlier firmware revision (1.x) when we accessed the router’s first webpage when you access the router) where as mine was revision 2.x (I can’t remember the exact revision).

**Important**

Before updating the firmware make sure of the settings you need to make on the router for your ISP etc as they will be lost when you update the firmware.

Also we only recommend you update your firmware if you are experiencing problems with the router. As with any ROM update process there is a small chance your router could be damaged if the update failed for any reason - there’s no point taking that risk if it’s working well.

**Support**

In connection with our ADSL feature we have noticed that a hardware fix is no longer required to use PCMCIA Ethernet cards in the A1200 with the comet device. A small motherboard modification used to be required to ensure that the card was properly reset; several dealers sold a small clip-on upgrade to fix the problem without soldering. Now two clever software vendors perform the reset without the need for any hardware mods. We found a combination of CardReset (Aminet, util/boot/CardReset.hla) and CardPatch (Aminet, util/boot/CardPatch.hla), both by Artur Pogoda, meant Mick’s A1200 could go without it’s CC. Reset hardware patch. Just download both utilities, de-archive and copy the program file(s) to your C- directory. Then add the following lines to your user- startup file (in that directory):

```
cc 3com pedmacia driver
```

And that’s all folks, it’s very simple.

**3Com PCMCIA Ethernet Driver**

On the subject of PCMCIA Ethernet I haven’t got a full list of drivers that work with some 3Com PCMCIA Ethernet cards have been released. We’ve tested and released a driver for some 3Com PCMCIA Ethernet cards have been released. We’ve tested and released a driver for some 3Com Card. The full list of supported models is included in the archive which is available for download on Aminet: hard/drivers/3c899.hla.
Adding a New Filetype

To add a configuration for a file type not already listed, select the “Filetypes” item at the top of the list by clicking on it once and then click the “+” icon at the bottom of the list to add a new file type called “Unnamed” (in this example I’m going to make a new file type for Hollywood for a multimedia program reviewed elsewhere in this issue). To name the file type make sure its line is highlighted and then click on the name to bring up your edit box (if you find this too tricky you can also press space to bring up the edit box). In this box you can edit the name to one of your choice, press Return to accept the changes or Escape to cancel.

Editing an Existing Filetype

If you wish to edit an existing file type click on the “+” symbol next to its name to expand the tree, you will see that each file type has two sections, “Configuration” and “Activation”. “Configuration” contains the rules for identifying the file type you wish to use. New file types are not present on the menu by default, to add one see the “Adding a New Filetype...” section later in this tutorial.

TIP: If the selected file type icon is not available in the toolbar or the file type you want doesn’t appear in the list choose “Document properties” from the “Project” menu and enter the name of the file type you wish to use into the “Filetype” string gadget. Clicking “OK” will then set GoldEd to that file type configuration.

Manually

To make a file type available for selection you must add at least one item to the type’s activation section. If you just want to be able to manually set this filetype then you just need to give it a unique identifying name. To do this click on the “Activation” folder for the file type then click on the “+” icon at the bottom right of the list view, this adds a new activation item and the window to enter it. Now rename this to a new identifier by single clicking on the highlighted name as we did for the filetype name. In my case I chose “Hollywood” as the identifier for my new filetype.

By File Extension

If you want GoldEd to recognise the file type by the extension you give the files (or any other characteristic of the file name) you can add an activation item with an AmigaDOS wild card string that matches the file types. To do this add an activation item as you did for the identifier above but instead of a name enter the wild card string. You can match some complex patterns with amsdos wild cards but the most common one is to match a file extension, the pattern for this is "#.extn" where extn is replaced with the extension used. For example Hollywood script files usually have an “.hs” extension so I set the activation item to "#.hs". If you want to match more than one extension you can use a pattern like this: "#.(extn1|extn2|extn3)". For more details see the AmigaDOS manual at the wildcards section.

By Rules

If you want GoldEd to be more intelligent than simply taking the file type from its file name you can use “Rules” to have GoldEd determine the type of a file from a set of rules. Before rules are defined the file type has to have an identifier set up as described above. Now select the “Rules” button at the top of the “File Types” tab this brings up a list of the defined rules. I’ll add a new one for Hollywood by clicking on the “+” icon, by default this is called “TEXT” I’ll rename it “HOLLYWOOD”. Note that the name must match the identifier you set up in the file type section. With that done double click on the new item to edit it, this brings up a new window. In this window you can set up two conditions that will check the content of the file and several other rules. Hollywood scripts should always check the version of Hollywood using the “%HOLLYWOOD” command so it’s in alphabetical order. To do this highlight the text “HOLLYWOOD” in the left text box, this is the string to look for and 100 in the right box, this will tell GoldEd only to look in the first 100 lines. It is good to limit the number of lines searched searching the whole file could slow down recognition on larger files.

NOTE: You can also tell GoldEd to look for a string on a particular line or even in the icon tooltypes for identifying strings. If you’re trying to use your own set of available configuration items. In the open list the “Layout” folder which holds all your custom layout files is quite basic so I added a number of configuration options to it. Every aspect of GoldEd, including the toolbars, is configurable. When you’ve finished defining your new file type you may want to add it to the file types menu on the standard toolbar. To do this click on the “Filetypes” menu and choose the “File Types” tab. Click on the Pool button at the bottom of the Filetypes list, this brings up a list of all the custom settings defined. Open the “Configuration” folder by clicking on the “+” symbol then double click on “standard/gadgets” to open an editor window.

TIP: If you don’t have “Postmark while typing” on GoldEd only word wraps the current line which can make paragraphs get cut off shape particularly if you edit them. To close this up you can manually re-format the paragraph using the “Layout/Paragraph...” menu item appropriate to the justification you’re using.

Custom Configuration

Now we’ve got our filetype setup so that it will be activated at the appropriate times and can be used in the menu lets add some custom configuration appropriate to the filetype. As you may have noticed the “Pool” list there are many aspects of GoldEd that can be configured so in this tutorial I’m just going to introduce a few of the useful ones and hopefully explain the configuration enough so you’ll be able to try the others out for yourself. In this section I’m going to use my E-Mail configuration as an example. I use Thor for my E-Mail and selected GoldEd’s E-Mail for Thor configuration when I installed the editor. However this is quite basic so I added a number of configuration options to it.

Layout

The first thing I wanted to do was to wrap the lines in my E-Mails to 72 characters per E-Mail convention. To do this we need to add the “Layout” configuration item, open the “E-Mail/Configuration” folder in the list and click on the “Configuration” folder. Now click the add icon to populate the list with available configuration items. In the open list the “Layout” folder which holds all your custom layout files is quite basic so I added a number of configuration options to it. Every aspect of GoldEd, including the toolbars, is configurable. When you’ve finished defining your new file type you may want to add it to the file types menu on the standard toolbar. To do this click on the “Filetypes” menu and choose the “File Types” tab. Click on the Pool button at the bottom of the Filetypes list, this brings up a list of all the custom settings defined. Open the “Configuration” folder by clicking on the “+” symbol then double click on “standard/gadgets” to open an editor window. In this window you can see a list of all the file types starting with “new”, “open” and “save”. Find the “E-Mail” item and open it to show a list of the file types in the menu. Now we’ll copy an existing item and edit it to change to our new filetype. Highlight an existing filetype by clicking on it then double click on the duplicate icon at the bottom of the list. Rename the duplicate item to suit your new filetype then double click on it to edit the action performed when the menu item is chosen. The window you now see shows an event definition, this allows you to define what actions GoldEd should take when this menu item is chosen. Currently the only item in the list is “SET TYPE VALUE="new"” this sets the current filetype to “new”, I need to edit this for my new Hollywood filetype, my new line should read “SET TYPE VALUE="HOLLYWOOD"”. When you’ve finished double click on “OK”. Now, in the “Toolbars” section, you might want to move the “E-Mail” toolbars up for editing to get a better alphabetical order. To do this highlight it and then use the up or down arrow keys to move it up or down the list.

TIP: You can check which configuration item you are editing by looking at the title bar of the edit window.

Every aspect of GoldEd, including the toolbars, is configurable. When you’ve finished defining your new file type you may want to add it to the file types menu on the standard toolbar. To do this click on the “Filetypes” menu and choose the “File Types” tab. Click on the Pool button at the bottom of the Filetypes list, this brings up a list of all the custom settings defined. Open the “Configuration” folder by clicking on the “+” symbol then double click on “standard/gadgets” to open an editor window. In this window you can see a list of all the file types starting with “new”, “open” and “save”. Find the “E-Mail” item and open it to show a list of the file types in the menu. Now we’ll copy an existing item and edit it to change to our new filetype. Highlight an existing filetype by clicking on it then double click on the duplicate icon at the bottom of the list. Rename the duplicate item to suit your new filetype then double click on it to edit the action performed when the menu item is chosen. The window you now see shows an event definition, this allows you to define what actions GoldEd should take when this menu item is chosen. Currently the only item in the list is “SET TYPE VALUE="new"” this sets the current filetype to “new”, I need to edit this for my new Hollywood filetype, my new line should read “SET TYPE VALUE="HOLLYWOOD"”. Now make sure the duplicate it highlighted and click “OK” again to add the configuration item to the E-Mail filetype. Double click on “Layout” and “Edition/Configuration” to edit it.

Send Button

In the “Filetypes” list under “E-Mail/Configuration” double click on “Send button”, this opens the send button configuration item. The window displays the list of available send buttons, you can either add a new send button by clicking the “Add new” button or manually set the list by selecting buttons from the list box and clicking “Select”. When you’ve finished click “OK” to save and exit.

TIP: Every aspect of GoldEd, including the toolbars, is configurable. Every aspect of GoldEd, including the toolbars, is configurable.
name of our toolbar button, you can either type in the text to be displayed on the button or enter the path to an image to be used. By default toolbar images go in the “GoldEd/etc/images” directory, so you should use either a full path or a path from that directory. My images are in /etc/images/toolbar-re/ so I just need to put “toolbar-re/send” (“send” is the filename of the image, note that you have to type this as there isn’t a file requester).

Now we can assign a command to our button. Click on the new button’s line in the list to bring up the event definition editor. Click on the add icon to add a new command (NYP by default). Then click the list choices icon to show a list of all the available GoldEd commands. We want this button to save a file and then exit so find “SAVE” in the list, select it and click “Go”. The command listed inserts all the possible options after the SAVE command we need to edit it to fit the complete file and then exit and changes and the button will be overwritten. To do this we just need the ALL, EXIT and FORCE options.

Edit the command line so it reads “SAVE ALL EXIT FORCE”. While we’re in this window we can also set some other options for this toolbar button. Click on the “Details” button at the top right to change the visual appearance of this button. Another Online help here can enter a comment in quotes (”) which will be shown in the tooltip for this button.

If you use Thor then you’ll need to change this line to reflect the name used on your system. If you don’t use Thor then you can use this line to run almost any external program from a GoldEd button. Finally add this line and click “QUIT FORCE” to close the editor after the EMails has been sent.

If you want to pass the name of the current file you’re editing to an external program on its command line then you can insert the variable name (which must be defined in the Tools window) in the “$NAME” command. For example the command line “Multiview “$NAME” would display the current document in Multiview.

The inner set of quotes are required even if you do not set a special escape so you can use the “$NAME” in the argument. If your button does not have a special target you can use it in the “$NAME”.

NOTE: You must type this command line exactly as printed with all the quotes. The backslash before the quotes around “EMail and News” escape those quotes so ensure they get into the final command line. I found through trial and error that if you try to change this line immediately after “News” was required if you want to continue to work, I think this may be a bug in my version of GoldEd.

Some Other Useful Configuration Items

Hopefully going through the configuration items above has given you a feel how GoldEd’s settings work. The only remaining problem is how to find the configuration items that are relevant to you. In the “Settings” window click on the “Configuration” menu and then select “Menu Settings”.

Tabs - Older versions of GoldEd (4.x and earlier I think) did not support real tabs (they inserted spaces instead) newer versions support them but the default settings were not enabled by default. If you want real tabs go to the “Tabs” tab and change the “Tab size” setting to “Insert Tab”. In this case you can choose if you want to change the tab stop positions and set automatic indenting to use tabs rather than spaces.

As usual I hope this tutorial has been useful and will get you started making your own custom GoldEd configurations making the most of this extremely powerful and configurable editor.

TIP: Changes to the HID command take effect immediately so you can try them out without closing your window. Because of this be careful when you are configuring basic mouse movements and buttons, you could make your mouse unusable.

Take a look at the other options in the miscellaneous events list, you might find others are more useful to you than window to front. If you have more than three buttons on your mouse of course you could assign them to...
**Buying a USB Keyboard**

Obtaining a USB mouse is very easy; you’ll find many mice intended for PCs and Macs at any computer supplier and the vast majority of them will work with a USB.Some will have a PS/2 adapter too. However when it comes to keyboards it is much more difficult. For some reason USB keyboards don’t really seem to have taken off and PS/2 models are still by far the most popular. Those USB models that are available tend to be rather expensive, and you may well find that they are part of a cordless desktop set with a mouse and a keyboard or more. When the HID class was released for Poseidon I wanted to test it and, not being able to find a USB keyboard I liked locally for a reasonable price, I purchased an HP multimedia keyboard from a seller on eBay for only £7.50. This is a nice keyboard, but it has a Canadian layout and, as the keys are part of the same (QWERTY etc.) this doesn’t really bother me. This is my keyboard, I don’t change these pages and featured in the configuration examples below. The mouse used is my Logitech Wheel Mouse Optical, a simple mouse with two buttons and a wheel.

**Support**

Support Major News Updates and Previews of the content of new issues of Total Amiga and AmigaOne mailing list. This list is only posted to the editor so your mailbox won’t be flooded. Expect a maximum of 4 or 5 messages a month, as when we publish a monthly update.

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We also have an open discussion mailing list where you can chat to other readers and talk to members of the total Amiga AmigaOne. For more information and to sign up, go to http://www.totalamiga.org or contact us by EMail or phone (details inside the front cover).

**Support**

Assigning Letters

To configure the keyboard mappings select the keyboard in the Trident “Devices” list. Your Keyboard has two lines in the devices list because it has a built-in hub (to connect any additional USB devices), if yours is the same be sure to select the line bound to the “hid.class.” Now click the “Settings” button, your keyboard presents itself as two “hid.class” (hid.class, list under “Bindings”!) so two settings windows open for me. If I look at both the HID settings windows it is clear from the list of “Usage items” that one shows the standard keyboard keys and the other the “multi button” along the top of the keyboard. So for now we just need to select the window with the standard keys.

As with the mouse the first step is to select the key to which we want to map an Amiga key press. With the mouse it was easy to find the buttons but with so many keys on a keyboard we could use some help. Click the “Add key” button, check box and then press the key you want to map; I chose a key with double chevron symbols that I won’t use often). You should see the highlight in the “Usage items” list jump to the key you pressed. In my case the key description in the list was “Keyboard Non-US Sign” and then realised that the key I had chosen was the position for these characters on a UK PC keyboard anyway!

**Support**

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**Support**

Assigning Commands

As a separate HID device holds my keyboard’s additional keys I now need to move my attention to the second “hid inputs” settings window. Looking at this window the various controls are then split up into the different groups in the “Windows and collections” list. “Consumer Control” for the vol and mute controls, “System Control” for the power, sleep and wake buttons and “Unknown” for the other controls. Mousing over this control will highlight underlined text. In the “command” list you will find a list of all the commands that the HID class supports in this HID device. To achieve this we can set the HID class to send appropriate AREXX commands to SongPlayer (or most other music players) when a key is pressed. Although the HID class has an ‘AREXX’ action type in the list it hasn’t yet been implemented. We can work around this using the “Shell” action and the standard keyboard, which runs an AREXX command line or script. My keyboard has stop, previous and next buttons (or any program that can be run from the shell) you can just select using the “Command” gadget but in this tutorial I’m going to use them logically by setting them up to launch and then onto the SongPlayer program SongPlayer.

**Support**

Assigning AREXX Commands

In many cases you’ll want to use keyboard keys to control running applications, a very good example is using your keyboard to control transport applications, play, pause, next track etc. To control a music player program you’ll need to map a suitable button (in this case I chose “0x0D”) to another key (or perhaps double click an existing key) and then click “Add a new item” to the “Performed actions” list and set the type to “Shell” and the

```
rx “address SongPlayer.1;PREV”
```
These screenshots demonstrate the level of customisation possible with the new AmigaOS 4 Intuition and ReAction GUI systems. Please note that none of these reflect the final default look.

screenshots from APC & TCP's new space shoot-em-up, take a look at our news item for more information.

Screenshots from Hyperion's fantastic Quake 2 port, reviewed on page 38.

The scenery is impressive and the lighting effects are superb.

There are many opportunities to be sliced, diced and minced!

The maps aren’t all pristine, there are collapsed walls and jagged boulders.

Some levels are interesting while others just take your breath away!