Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the second issue of Clubbed and an especially warm welcome to all the new subscribers and members who have come along since the first issue. Also since the last issue we’ve received lots of positive comments and constructive suggestions for the magazine. Please keep sending in your feedback as we can make Clubbed a monster-mag!

Just before this issue went to press we made an arrangement with two Amiga software distributors (Underground PD and Forematt Home Computing), for them to distribute Clubbed flyers with the packages they send out. Because of their brilliant support we hope to increase the number of subscribers to Clubbed drastically and with a larger subscriber base we will be able to improve the magazine with more pages and content. Read more about these exciting developments in the SEAL Update section!

In tandem with the flyers going out we have decided to increase the price of Clubbed to £2.50 an issue, please see the news page for the reasons behind the increase (current subscriptions are not affected of course).

As I mentioned earlier we have received a number of suggestions for the magazine, many of which we have implemented in this issue. Some of the more important ones are:

- Improved Tutorial - We hope you’ll find the tutorial in this issue easier to follow and more comprehensive than before. We’ve also looked out for more good tutorials so if you’d like to have a go at writing one or have a topic you’d like to see covered please tell us.

- Wider Coverage - In the first issue we concentrated on the high-end user. In this issue we have tried to be more balanced, catering for you whatever your Amiga’s skills and budget. We’ll be improving this further in future and as usual suggestions are very welcome.

- Jargon Busters - In complex articles and features you’ll find Jargon Buster boxes to help you understand some of the technical words and abbreviations used.

More Product Information - With every review we’ve added a box with the essential information on the product including the price and details of the supplier.

I hope these and the many minor changes will enhance your enjoyment of the mag. Don’t hesitate to contact us with any other ideas you have.

The Chairman Speaks

Despite my last attempt at writing an article for Clubbed magazine here I am again.

In this months issue of Clubbed I am trying to convey the message that upgrading your Amiga lets you get much more from it, and can also be done relatively economically.

If you have an older machine like an A500 the best route is often to upgrade to an A1200 as they are much easier and cheaper to expand, and therefore a better base to build upon. For example, it is often cheaper to buy an A1200 and a harddrive than to buy a sidecar harddrive for an A500.

One of the good things about the Amiga is that you can upgrade it in stages, as your budget allows. Even members of SEAL with hi-spec systems (myself included) are still using components of their original Amiga bought 5 or more years ago. The important thing is to build upon. For example, it is often cheaper to buy an A1200 and a harddrive than to buy a sidecar harddrive for an A500.

In this months issue of Clubbed was the Computer 98 show which took place in Cologne, Germany, last November. As you’ve probably read about it by now we’ve just included a summary of the releases and the announcements from Amiga Inc. along with the developments that have happened since. Take a look at the News pages for the gory details and the other exciting stuff that’s going on in Amiga-land.

If you’re looking to upgrade your A1200 we have several items to interest you this issue, with the Blizzard PPC accelerator getting the once over by Mick Sutton and Gary Storm, and an in-depth look at your options for adding a graphics card in my Graphics Cards Explained feature.

For those of you on a tight budget Gary Storm has written a tutorial on making a basic A1200 look really cool using only 16 colours to keep the speed up. We also have another great batch of PD utilities reviewed in our PD Paradise section.

Enjoy the mag.

Robert

The good affordable system for most users would have an ‘030 (£80) or ‘040 (£130) accelerator; 16Mb (£25); a 2Gb Hard drive (£70); and CD-ROM (£90). All these items can be added gradually to your system, enhancing it at each step. If you want to go further it may well be worth getting a tower early on because it will allow you to buy cheaper internal CD-ROMs and fit 3.5” hard drives more easily. A tower also means you’ll be able to use graphic cards and PPC accelerators later on.

So please think about upgrading your machine. If you love your Amiga and want to get the best from it using the latest software, I am afraid some money has to be lavished on the mighty.

Here is a list of up-grades that my machine has experienced over the years:

- IGSTower: £4 3G Hard drive; 32 speed SCSI CD-ROM drive; Phase 5 PPC 240 Mhz with 660 and SCSI controller; Microvision: 17” M1764 Monitor; and a Canon BJ6600 inkjet printer. My latest upgrade is a Phase 5 Vision graphics card which I have just received to add onto my accelerator.

Mick Sutton

Clubbed is published quarterly by South Essex Amiga Link, Fowlers Lane, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7BG.

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If you have any queries or suggestions please contact us at any of the addresses in the Blurb section and you could well have a grey box of your own!

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The Web Site

Just after Christmas we uploaded a major update to the SEAL web site. The new design uses a top navigation frame (we have included a special welcome page for non-frames browsers) which makes jumping from page to page easier. Highlights of the new pages include a much improved news page, more membership information and several new sections in the links page.

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A great place to get the latest Amiga news on the Internet is Czech Amiga News which reports Amiga news worldwide and is updated daily: http://www.realdreams.cz/amiga

A major update to the Clubbed section along with new graphics on the main site will be started with this issue of Clubbed goes to press.

Meetings
Just after the last magazine went to the printers the SEAL committee made the decision to start having meetings at our hall venue every two weeks rather than every four but to scrap the meetings we were having at member’s houses in between. Members will find the meeting dates for the next three months printed on the letter enclosed with this magazine. You can also find the dates and the activities we plan for each meeting on the Members section of the SEAL web site.

In November Robert Williams and Gary Storm gave a presentation on Internet access with the Amiga and explained the various services available on the net and the software packages that allows the Amiga to access them. They also covered the costs of getting connected and what modem cards can be used with the Amiga. At this meeting we were pleased to have a visit from Richard Blair of the Power Amiga User Group in Portsmouth. Richard was working in London for a few days and dropped in to see us.

For the first meeting of the new year Michael Carillo a friend of Mick Suttons and webmaster of the Amiga Yellow pages bought his towered A1200 along for us to help him fit his new BVision PPC graphics card to his PowerUP accelerator. Although it took a bit longer than expected we got him up and running with a brilliant high resolution colour Amiga by the end of the evening.

If any member of SEAL has ideas for activities for future meetings, some software or hardware they’d like to demonstrate or would like to give a presentation at a meeting please let a member of the committee know. We’re keen to cover as many aspects of the Amiga as possible and everyone’s contribution is appreciated.

Discounts!
We have been hard at work arranging support for SEAL from Amiga suppliers, so far we have two very big Amiga companies signed up to help us publicise Clubbed and give our members a discount. Gary Storm is working at presenting more to help us; we are especially looking for a hardware dealer.

Underground PD
SEAL has got together with Underground PD who are a quality PD library located near in Shoeburyness Essex. Not only have Underground agreed to distribute Clubbed flyers with the parcels and mail-shots they send out but they are also offering a 10% discount to SEAL members*. SEAL members will find an Underground catalog disk enclosed with this issue so they can place an order straight away.

We’d like to thank Dave and his team at Underground for their support.

Forematt Home Computing
Forematt can supply you with a wide variety of Amiga software covering both games, utilities and applications. Like Underground they have agreed to distribute Clubbed flyers with their mail-shots, again anyone here at SEAL really appreciates their support.

Forematt have an advert in this issue of Clubbed, see page 29 to get just a small sample of their range. Forematt will also give a discount to SEAL members which varies depending on what you purchase and how you pay.

Voodoo for Picasso IV

VillageTonic have announced that they will be making a Voodoo 3DFX based 3D accelerator for their popular Picasso IV graphics card after over 500 Amiga users pre-ordered the add-on. Due to the number of individuals who have said they couldn’t justify developing the board unless at least 500 people placed firm orders in advance. The Voodoo board will fit on the Picasso IV along with the existing add-on modules already available for the board. Unlike most PC implementations of the Voodoo accelerator which can only give full screen accelerated 3D displays, the graphics cards with 3D acceleration that appear. Warp3D supports both CyberGraphX and Picasso 96.

The first software using Warp3D is already available in the form of the StormMESA 3.0 from the author of Warp3D and a Descent port. Storm MESA is an Amiga port of an OpenGL compatible graphics library. OpenGL is the 3D system used by many serious applications and increasingly games on other platforms.

Warp3D and StormMESA are free downloads from the H&P’s site: http://www.haage-partner.com

Elbox Announce New A1200 Busboard and Graphics Card
Elbox the Polish firm that manufactures the Power Tower and PowerFlyer have announced a new Busboard for the A1200. The new board has 5 standard Amiga Zorro II slots (like the earlier bus boards from Micronik and RBB) plus 2 clock ports and 2 additional bus slots which Elbox call Zorro 4. Despite the name these slots are non-standard, there never was an official Zorro 4 from Commodore, Escom, or Amiga Inc.

The Zorro 4 slots have a transfer rate of about 15Mb/s using DMA to popular accelerators. This design makes them much faster than some native PCI slots on the market. Elbox products are distributed in the UK by Power Computing: (01234) 851800 http://www.powercom.com

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Eager Blizzard has Come

CLUBBED - Issue 2
Winter 1998/99

Af Subscription Prices Slashed
Subscribing to the UK's only newsstand Amiga magazine has just become a whole lot cheaper. As an inducement to either get rid of CD or disk edition now costs only £39.99. This cuts the cost to almost half the street price if you subscribe. With AF becoming harder to find in newsgroups now is certainly a great time to subscribe. At the same time AF have announced that the newsstand price of the floppy disk edition is going up to the same £5.99 level as the CD mag, yet another reason to get that CD ROM drive! You can contact the AF subscription hot line on: (01458) 271102

I can see clearly now the Blizzard has Come
Eager Blizzard owners across the land received a slightly early present from Page 5 when their BVision PPC graphics cards arrived in the post a week before Christmas. the new boards which feature a Fermida 2 3D/3D graphics chip have been enhanced from the original specification with 8Mb of SGRAM (twice as much as was planned) and sell at a slightly lower price too. The BVision at- taches directly to the Blizzard PPC bus giving it a much higher bus speed than any other Amiga card. Mechanically the BVision fits across the A1200 with the video connector on a flying lead making a tower almost essential.

A full review of the BVision will be in the next issue of Clubbed but in the mean time you can read a review of the CyberVision PPC on page 17 which has been enhanced from the original specification by adding 8Mb of SGRAM. (twice as much as was planned) and sells at a slightly lower price too. The BVision attaches directly to the Blizzard PPC bus giving it a much higher bus speed than any other Amiga card.

Emperor Vost
Nick Veitch has moved from Amiga Format to another magazine, and so Ben Vost (ex editor) has taken the helm. He’d like to thank Nick for all his great work over the years on CU and AF. We know Ben’s an Amiga nutter and will kick some more ass!
Kickstart 1999

Kickstart the Surrey based Amiga user group are holding a second sale after the success of the event they organised last year. Along with 18 tables of new and second hand Amiga gear there will also be Doom, Sensi and Skidmarks tournaments. If that wasn’t enough Amiga International have donated an A1200 Magic Pack as a door prize.

The event will be held at Brook Hall, Brook Road, Ottershaw, Surrey from 13:00 to 17:00 on Saturday the 27th of February, admission is £1. See also: http://www.furry.demon.co.uk/kickstart

Amiga Soc Schemes

Amiga Society, a UK wide Internet based Amiga user group have started a couple of initiatives to make buying Amiga products easier:

Shareware
Amiga Soc will give people the opportunity to register shareware at any event they can attend. We’ll be seeing them first at the Kickstart sale on 27th February. This is great news for users, and for the hard working Amiga user group that have brought the shareware that you use... it’s worth it.

Storefinder
In co-operation with the Amiga Yellow Pages Amiga Soc have launched their UK Amiga Storefinder. Using AmigaSoc’s postcode database UK residents will be able to find their nearest Amiga shop or repair centre by simply entering their postcode. AmigaSoc hope that this will encourage Amiga owners to find and support their local Amiga shops.

Aussies Talk Amiga

Petro visited Australia recently, and stirred up quite a bit of interest in the media, with people realising that the Amiga isn’t dead yet. An article in the CPC article asked the question “Can the Amiga fly again?”, and the amount of feedback was astounding with many saying that the Amiga is much more reliable than a PC, and it’s return would be greeted with open arms by many in the tech world. Let’s just hope that Gateway/A-Inc do the business.

PPC Price Drop

In October both the main UK distributors of Phase 5’s PowerUP Power PC accelerators, White Knight Technologies and Blittersoft, substantially dropped their prices. Along with the release of the CyberVision PPC and BlizzardVision PPC graphics cards the price drop makes the PPC cards more attractive than ever. The cost of a BlizzardPPC board and BVision graphics card is now very competitive with the various other A1200 graphics card options too.

Example Prices from Blittersoft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PPC Card</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>160MHz PPC 603e</td>
<td>£199.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160MHz PPC 603e, 25MHz 040</td>
<td>£249.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240MHz PPC 603e, 50MHz 060</td>
<td>£349.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BVisionPPC graphics card (8Mb Video RAM)</td>
<td>£139.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cheaper Ethernet

VillageTronic have introduced a new lower cost version of their Ariadne Ethernet card called the Ariadne II. The A1200 clock port are now available from Blittersoft. There are three versions, the base at £129.95, Plus with MPEG layer II decoding at £149.95 and Pro with MPEG layer III decoding at £189.95.

Hacker Events

The new version of Photogenics is not out yet but Paul Nolan has told us he’s currently preparing the release version. He said it will be ready soon but couldn’t give us an exact date.

WoA 1999

Unfortunately there’s no more news on WoA but we assume it’s still going ahead in May, however I managed to forget to go to the web address for the WoA homepage last issue so here it is: http://www.fortunecity.com/tattooine/carpentier/241/woa99.htm

Amiga Update

Amiga has always had certain strengths that have never been matched by any other operating system. It’s small, efficient, and multimedia-centric. As Allan Havemose has often said, “We just did it right.”

There has been a great deal of excitement and concern over the last few years about the future for the Amiga. With the recent announcement in Germany of our OS partner QNX and the demonstration of what this package can do, we began speeding forward to the future.

When Amiga Inc. was formed our goal was to determine the best road for Amiga to take. We wanted to: Continue the current development path and create another version of the operating system. Build a new team from scratch and re-write the operating system. Locate an operating system with the same ideals and spirit that the Amiga has.

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We joined in a partnership with QNX to create the NG Amiga. But that didn’t mean that the NG Amiga was going to forget about the classic system users and the faithful Amiga community.

We are committed to a long and exciting future for the Amiga, and the community that has kept this magnificent architecture alive.

Amiga 3.5 is a work in progress; it has NOT been abandoned... we are going back to each and every partner in the 3.5 project to make sure that what they are working on is what our customers require. It is critical that we deliver what we promised—a complete package.

Thanks for your patience and support. The Amiga is on the right path, and we look forward to delivering both 3.5 and the NG Amiga soon.

Keep the faith. We’re close.
Jeff Schindler

Updates...

Here are some updates on the news stories we reported in the last issue of Clubbed

Final Office CD

Amiga Community - Final Office CD
Brox Road, Ottershaw, Surrey from developing the next Amiga operating system (version 5) at the Cologne show in November, and will be writing the OS on top of a QNX kernel. QNX gave a demo of the power and flexibility of their system, and even exactly what they dropped, and they found the problem of the decision wasn’t personal (for more see our interview on page 10). Fleecy has... to spearhead the KOSH project, which is building a Kommunity Operating System and Hardware, a cross-platform os guided by the users.

Melody 1200 Sound Cards

These high quality 16bit sound cards for the A1200 clock port are now available from Blittersoft. There are three versions, the base at £129.95, Plus with MPEG layer II decoding at £149.95 and Pro with MPEG layer III decoding at £189.95.

Napalm

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Gary Storm talks to the Dave Haynie who worked at Commodore on the A2000, A3000 and A4000. He is now Vice President of Technology at Metabox Infonet (formerly PIOS)

Gary Storm spoke to Dave Haynie about the future of the Amiga and computers in general.

Right Dodge, for those who don’t know what a nutter you are, tell us about your history in the computer industry thus far.

I started on the Amiga in 1986, though I had been programming it as soon as I could get one. I had been left in charge of the 8-bit stuff at Commodore before the previous head of that HW group, Blz Herd, left the company for greener pastures (he runs jersey.net now). We had a few C128s in the lab, though I could not get it to work. Meanwhile, some others (George Robbins and Bob Welland), disenchanted from their current project (project 900, or the UNIX workstation, kind of a Sun-2 like machine) which was cancelled when C= was put in the running, I thought the idea of a multi-state machine was a good one. They helped me get the funding to put things together using objects. For example, a kernel, not a monolithic thing but rather as a set of independent and replaceable objects that live in a sort of “object sea” (my name for it, but apparently now a rallying point in the KOSH community). There was an Amiga T echnologies as their head of Amiga Technologies as their head of development. I proposed a cool $500 (1996) PowerAmiga system, Andy Finkel put together a project plan to get AmigaOS on that puppy in a year. All was looking good until they hired a bunch of other things to work on work on. We had to move quickly to put things together using objects. For example, a kernel, not a monolithic thing but rather as a set of independent and replaceable objects that live in a sort of “object sea” (my name for it, but apparently now a rallying point in the KOSH community).

I'm slowly working on an object sea editor in your system. I decided later in ‘96 to build a machine to support the PIOS One (the current version is in my cellar here), a far more upscale machine than the cheap Amiga. The One was going well, if not great. The Acutiator architecture, this new thing for building “highly modular” systems, 68K or RISC, it didn’t matter. Then there was a board-level version of the Acutiator architecture for Zorro III. I had a dual processor 68030 card for IBM that was working with a Macintosh, and actually working on a prototype of a AAS module, to test out the new Advanced Architecture at the x86. So that’s basically what I did in from fall ‘91 to fall of ‘93.

By then, let’s see. The AAS proto was chips needed a revision, there was no money, the project was “indefinitely tabled”. The SC51 card had gone to production as A4091. Scott Schaeffer and I had done some Acutiator work. We had revised the spec to use PCI rather than the AML (Amiga Modular Interconnect bus) that was already in use (very similar in intent).

I left Commodore in June of ‘94, just over a month after they announced the new line of products. The decision was made back in May until it was announced (very similar in intent). I was happy with the direction the company was going in, and if the changes they decided to make were the right ones, then I can’t really blame them.

For years I have had ideas for new ways to do things, mainly as hardware objects. For example, a kernel, not a monolithic thing but rather as a set of independent and replaceable objects that live in a sort of “object sea” (my name for it, but apparently now a rallying point in the KOSH community).

Absurdly, there’s nothing you could do today on a 68K of any kind that’s going to be really interesting, at least not over the next handful of years. It’s all going to be based on the existing architecture. People are going to say, “oh, look at the timeframe. The A3000 architecture, the most advanced Amiga system architecture built (the basis for A3000, A3000+, A3000T, A4000, A4000T, and the "Nyx" AAA prototype), was completed within 10 months or less of ten years ago. The AA chips, the best Amiga chips completed, were really an evolution of the ECS chip, jump from the original Amiga chips of 1984. PC system architecture has been evolving at an amazing rate. What can we users do to keep the AmigaOS alive? Should we do anything as it doesn’t seem to be a viable market anymore.

Well, I guess anything I know that would work, I’m doing it currently in my power. I know of lots of folks would like to promote an AmigaOS, any AmigaOS, from Amiga, Inc. But currently, they offer no one any chance to help out. That, in fact, was part of what Fleecy had in mind with KOSH – official involvement of the community.

I became a Be developer to get involved in that, since it was the only real alternative. The AmigaOS came out, and it’s right what you say. The thing is that is specifically because Amiga people got involved early on in the BeOS effort. Just the opposite of what we’re saying: They didn’t want to be good news. But it’s a relative bit of good news, and Amiga fans are still so idealistic, it’s just surprising that so many people are very upset with the whole Gateway thing. We can’t have an enhanced Amiga OS running natively on a Pentium or G3 or whatever (no stink of any Microsoft anywhere near), would you think that as being more than an Amiga OS on a kick-ass Amiga?

Absolutely. There’s nothing you could do today on a 68K of any kind that’s going to be really interesting, at least not over the next handful of years. It’s all going to be based on the existing architecture. People are going to say, “oh, look at the timeframe. The A3000 architecture, the most advanced Amiga system architecture built (the basis for A3000, A3000+, A3000T, A4000, A4000T, and the "Nyx" AAA prototype), was completed within 10 months or less of ten years ago. The AA chips, the best Amiga chips completed, were really an evolution of the ECS chip, jump from the original Amiga chips of 1984. PC system architecture has been evolving at an amazing rate.
What the hell happened, Fleecy? Did you have a major disagreement about the direction A-Inc or Gateway want to take (like just concentrating the Amiga technology for Set-Top Boxes, Consoles, and Votators)? You won't break any NDA's by telling us the circum- stances and leaving out the details.

Amiga Inc did not renew my contract. That is all I can say. I am pursuing my own interests, the development of an innovative, Komnunity-owned platform, built, designed, evangelised and run by those ppl who work with it, in any capacity.

Is your US visa ok, so you won't have to leave your country?

I got it transferred back to my good old Canadian ‘pimp’ who sells my services in the US. I may have something lined up but we have been here for four years and no footy, crap beer and our kids get- ting weird accents is starting to get to us. If we can get a job back in Scotland, we will be returning real soon.

The ‘Evil’ incident relates to the fact that here in Pennsylvania, it takes months to get a birth certificate, and without it, we can’t get her a passport so we can’t take her out of the country. The “threat” of deportation was never a real threat. It was something that the cruel wife of my friend, concerning an ‘enemy’ I had made at Gateway.

Jeff, on a personal level, is a great guy, and I had a lot of fun whenever I was up there, both with him, Mad Dog McEwen and his family. Him getting the blame for that wasn’t fair.

What did you (generally) manage to achieve while you were project manager at A-Inc?

I ‘hope’ I made them realise just how valuable a resource the Komnunity was at all levels. I talked to many developers and designers, went to all the meetings and the like, tried to involve them, and I got along just fine with them.

What would you like to have happened differently?

...what I am doing now :) ...

QNX... tell us more.

KOSH is an attempt to build a commer- cially sustainable platform that is owned by the Komnunity, the ppl who use it, develop for it, sell for it and report on it. It has 3 parts. Kosh - the Komnunity, KOS (the OS and kosh - the hardware templates). It started after A-Inc let me go, caused by the many thousands of mails I was flooded in which developers, users, retailers and journalists vented - it became clear of many of them had just enough of the boom/bust, bust cycle of the Amiga. Now they want to build a platform that is even just to have a foundation on which to earn a living, build a community. Something that is not just a shell pro- ject which I kind of like because it is in- sane really. But you know what, there is just enough talent and frustration with computing in general at the moment, that we might pull it off.

Ppl have said why are you doing Linux this in the above questions. . . but what do you generally think of the Amiga now and if there is a future?

I have no doubt of Dr. Havemose’s and Bill McEwen’s creden- tials and capabilities. I have no doubt about the dedication involved there and hope to see what we are all looking for - a decent os, like our ancient Amiga OS, and a decent os, like our ancient Amiga OS history.

Related to the above, it seems Intel is at last gathering the courage to free itself from Red Hat, the company that distributes Linux, an alternative os. As we know, Billy boy doesn’t like alternative os’s, as they invariably point out how slow and buggy Windows is.

My opinion

There is no intention to cause infight- ing. And there is absolutely no reason that developers should not be free to persue a project with the potential to keep them working, active, and making money until such time as Amiga Inc can release more information to them about OSS.

In any discussion with Fleecy, you will hear that KOSH is not about competition to OSS, but rather an effort to fend for ourselves until such time as Amiga Inc has something to offer. 18-24 months to get a long and short time on the direction on which you talk.

OPINION FF

Surely our last bastion of Amiganess at A-Inc is Dr.Havemose, who has a long and proud Amiga OS history?

Dr. Havemose is well credentialled and is very capable (wth the right team assembled) to carry out the mandate he has accepted. No one should doubt that. Bill McEwen is also every bit as dedicated to the cause of making one heck of a platform as Dr. Havemose, and his family. Him getting the blame for that wasn’t fair.

How can we, as users and developers, help keep the Amiga viable? Or should we just give up and get a Sainsine and run Amiga under Windows?

Again, what is the Amiga dream? Is it developing for Amiga Inc machines? is it developing for PPG machines? The classic? Or is it developing for an inno- vantive, empowering platform rather than a machine?

If yourself, Amiga Inc, Amiga Tech, developers, and users etc were football teams (real football, BTW, not that American padded ‘rugby for girls’ stuff :) ), which ones would you be?

Owl Net is another dream come true for me. It will not just be a shopping mall, but also a place where non-Wintel plat- form people of all manner of OS lineage can come together for sharing and help- ing one another.

At least Fleecy’s idea of a central Amiga shoppe-lookers will be coming along, with OwlNet... we use more.

Yes, Owl Net is a joint venture between Fleecy and myself to provide support for “open systems” users and developers across the board.

Owl Net is another dream come true for me. It will not just be a shopping mall but also a place where non-Wintel plat- form people of all manner of OS lineage can come together for sharing and help- ing one another.

At the same time, Owl Net will be quite modest in its beginning i.e. A-Inc will have a full support area, QNX, unix, and more will have an information portal, a developer support area of their own, plus general areas where all of us wish can share the info from inside our heads, should we be so delighted they were chosen as OS partners personally.

We’ve probably already answered this in the above questions... but what do you personally think Amiga now and if there is a future?

I have no doubt that Gateway has in- vested ample monies into bringing a product to market. I have no doubt of Dr. Havemose’s and Bill McEwen’s creden- tials and capabilities. I have no doubt about the dedication involved there and hope to see what we are all looking for - a decent os, like our ancient Amiga OS, and a decent os, like our ancient Amiga OS history.

The problem has been for us the plat- form dependance we have on the Classic and A1200 which is on a OS that requires a certain hardware and chipset. If Amiga Inc moves to a more “open systems” reference, I feel sure it will spur growth in our markets. QNX seems to have that capability.

Surely spreading the Amiga os around would be a good idea?

Microsoft has made billions by spreading around support and products associated with it (that’s not just amigans talking, either, but most of the PC world). As long as the best power would be known to be squeezed from an Amiga os as an Amiga os is.

What did you (generally) manage to achieve while you were project manager at A-Inc?

I ‘hope’ I made them realise just how valuable a resource the Komnunity was at all levels. I talked to many developers and designers, went to all the meetings and the like, tried to involve them, and I got along just fine with them.

What would you like to have happened differently?

...what I am doing now :) ...

QNX... tell us more.

Great OS. Great ppl (Canadian). Real fans of the community. The bosses both still code, and put technology over political management crap.

So, what’s the hell happened with Fleecy? One minute he’s our best line and shining miggy light (a lone voice in the fog), the next thing we’re reeling (not as much as Fleecy, of course) from the effort being sucked? Is it a case of Fleecy doing a monumental smeg-up? A major development in the direction of the Amiga ethos? A case of ego’s gone wild? Or had he done his job so well (like I had always hoped he would) that he no longer need him anymore? (or of all the above, as nothing is ever so simple as to be blamed on one thing).

I have no idea. This is something between Fleecy and Amiga Inc I would presume.

Where does this leave os3.5? Jeff had already approved it.

I haven’t heard anything yet concerning OS 3.5 except that it doesn’t appear that the original team will be doing it.

What is a decent OS?

QNX sounds like the best choice for me. QNX seems to have that capability.

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A lot of chip and box makers are looking for alternatives. Amiga Inc is poised to make inroads there with QNX and an “open systems” reference. We will have to see how it all plays out I think.

Finally (for the moment), what’s the future for the many PPC users (like me)?

Well, as I said earlier... 18-24 months (last timeline I have seen from Amiga Inc) can be a long or short time depend- ing on whom you talk to. For the next generation (if there is a pure Classic and the Amiga II), I personally think PPC is a great option. Nate also has the references to PPC on the QNX web site.
Eamonn Sullivan, PC Week Magazine

In America, 27 States' attorney generals have spoken in support of the Dept. of Justice's investigations into M$, filing an amicus brief in the Federal Appeals Court of Washington D.C. “It has been awhile since antitrust laws were used for the benefit of consumers and consumer choice. This may be one of the best examples of these laws being used for..." etc.

Recently, Intel has invested in Red Hat, the distributors of Linux, and Dell Computers have offered to install Linux for new customers. The M$ chains are breaking, and there is a growing trend to use open source, non-Windows computing (their operating system) will cease to exist without a communications device that can be included with it.

Removing Internet Explorer could not possibly render Windows inoperative, be-cause it has a very small footprint of other applications other operations rely upon. Just because it can't be used, doesn't mean a car can't work or that it can't be removed. If your car cures removing the battery, you can't argue that engaging such an application is breaking the internet. It's a..." etc.

Microsoft had been sued by Apple over copyright that, under Apple's Quicktime software was pirated and in

Allen has been able since antitrust laws were used for the benefit of consumers and consumer choice. This may be one of the best examples of these laws being used for the good of technological advancement and consumer choice. The American Bar Association has taken a stand against Microsoft's large chunks of their code. If they are found guilty, they may be forced to pay billions to consumers and..." etc.

As a result of these flaws, no Microsoft Internet product is capable of protecting a user's keys from hostile attack," security expert Peter Gutmann said. Microsoft practices are highlighted in these two excerpts from Justice Department files: Wildfeuer, February 24, 1997 (submitted to court by US DoJ on May 18, 1998) "It seems clear that it will be very hard to...", etc.

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Mick Sutton plugs the fastest ever accelerator into his A1200, is it all plain sailing on the PPC? (sorry!) Up until recently I thought my Amiga set-up was ok... an A1200T with a 40MHz '040, and SCSI via the squirrel interface. Not a bad setup, but due to the CPU intensive software I’m using (Art Effect 2.6, Cinema 4D, Quake etc.) I thought it was time to upgrade.

I looked at many options and decided to go for the PPC route, mainly due to the fact that I could upgrade nearly every aspect of my system in one purchase. Also in my mind was the near release of the BVision graphics card, which at the end of the day will be the ultimate gfx card available to A1200 owners.

I decided to purchase the Blizzard PPC 603+ 240 Mhz with an '060 fitted. The card I chose was the top of the range (and expensive) because if I was going to upgrade I might as well get the max.

I ordered the card from White Knight in early July ‘98 but due to the lack of ‘060’s available I had to wait until mid August ‘98 for it to arrive.

To use the board the first thing to do is install the ‘060 software (this must be done before installing the hardware) which is done using the standard installer. The software which integrates the PPC into the system is an upgradeable Flash ROM fitted to the board, unlike the Cyberstorm PPC (for the A1200) software which must be installed on your hard drive.

I was very impressed by the quality of the board (as with all Phase 5 boards). The board is so closely populated with components it’s just amazing that they got it all onto a board of such size (the PPC board is actually smaller than my old Apollo 1040), when you consider that you’ve got the PPC CPU, heatsink, fan, ‘060 CPU, two SIMM sockets and fast SCSI-2 controller in such a tight space.

The board was very easy to fit, simply slotting onto the motherboard edge connector. In fact the compact size made it a lot easier to fit than my previous board. At first I was worried that such a complex card would mess, even in my tower! The board only has a small fan to cool the PPC and nothing to cool the ‘060, however the ‘060 runs very coolly anyway and the PPC fan seems more than adequate as the board never gets more than warm to the touch.

One of the SIMM sockets on the board lies flat and the other is mounted at an angle. When I tried to fit my double sided 256Mb SIMM in the flat socket it wouldn’t fit snugly due to some pins sticking out of the board. In the end I gave up and fitted it in the angled socket which was OK, and by the way - a matched pair of SIMMs is not required by this board which was a relief as I only had one.

To use the fast SCSI-2 on the card I had the insight (actually Robert Williams in our sales call told me) to purchase the adapters and cable required to match up to my existing SCSI hardware. On the board there is a non-standard 50 pin high density header which I bought via a short ribbon cable to a high density 50way ‘D’ connector designed for an external port. To connect to the internal SCSI devices in my tower I needed a 50 way high density plug to Centronics socket adaptor, and a 5 device SCSI ribbon and a crimp on Centronics plug which I bought at Maplins at a cost of about £15 each. A suitable custom cable is also available from White Knight for about £30.

As soon as I changed the Amiga I noticed an immediate increase in speed, in fact it was faster than before and I noticed that accessing it didn’t slow other applications down. This is because the Blizzard PPC SCSI controller is DMA (Direct Memory Access) which means it can transfer data into memory without using the CPU. My old Squirrel controller wasn’t DMA and thus tied up the processor while transferring data. Since I’ve had the Blizzard PPC I’ve tried another CD ROM and my AMD CD burner on the SCSI and they both worked well. In fact I can burn CDs even whilst playing Quake!

Now I’ve got the few problems ironed out I find the Blizzard PPC a very reliable upgrade. None of the software that ran on my ‘040 stopped working on the ‘060 and most things got a very useful speed boost in addition to the very high performance offered by the BVision PCI graphics card, which at the end of the day will be the ultimate board for Amiga owners. The card I chose was the top of the range (and expensive) because if I was going to upgrade I might as well get the max.

I’m not a techie. I don’t have cables and diodes crawling out of my cavities when I’m near anything electrical (as far as I know), and my understanding of ‘electrickery’ isn’t brilliant. I’m just a user who can barely fix the toaster. I upgraded to the PPC because I needed two things: scsi (for the cd-rom), and a graphics card. The ‘040 and PPC were just a bonus, and that wasn’t, much more than if I had bought a scsi kit and graphics card set up (like the above-plug anyway). As to what I think of the PPC, I must admit I haven’t had much of a chance to use the PPC side, except for so-called ‘illegal’ Quake ppcc ports and the brilliant ‘Candy Factory Pro’. I’m quite excited by the PPC side of things though, as there are enough programs out now to do graphics, music, and games, to justify it. And there are many more on the way.

As to the BVision... Wow! What a difference a gfx card makes :) It doesn’t feel like the poor cousin to a P300 anymore.) My opinion of PPC is that there are a lot of developers (except ClickBoom - Boo!) developing for it at the moment, and we’ll see the fruits of their labours soon. Amiga Inc has given it a boost with Os3.5 and PPC things being included, and at the end of the day it’s practically the most powerful thing you can have. If you wanted to upgrade to an ‘060 or ‘040 and graphics card, then I’d say it makes more sense to buy the PPC while you’re at it, for not much more cost than the rest would normally be.

Gary Storm

### Scoring System

Reviews are very subjective, what one reviewer may love, another hates. Such is life. So we decided to have a general score, which the reader can take into account along with the text. So we invented the fish...it’s easy to work out which we feel is a better product...the more bones that show, the smeller the fish :) We also feel that in the % system too many products get “Gold” or similar awards, even if they have a fair bit of room for improvement. Thus we are only awarding Caviar to products that are practically perfect.

### Caviar

The best so far! Can hardly pick anything out of it, not even boogers. Rarer than Nessie.

### Hasty

This product is definitely worth buying but, like most things, still has room for improvement. Crap, but hopefully better getting in future versions (if there are any).

### Nasty

Average, neither too good nor too bad — it works but there are areas which need major improvement or are way behind competing products.

### Smelly

Disgusting, multicolour yeast inducing abomination that insults the Amiga.

### Fish Pinners

Rotten

### Scrumbling

Developer: Phase 5 Digital Prod.
WWW: http://www.phase5.de
Distributor: White Knight Tech.
Tel: 01920 823281
WWW: http://welcome.to/white-knight
Price: £200 - £600 approx depending on config.
Reviewed: £609

### Second Opinion

As to the Bvision... Wow! What a difference a gfx card makes :) It doesn’t feel like the poor cousin to a P300 anymore)

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### Results

**Pros**

- Fast 64060
- Fast PPC
- Fast DMA SCSS!
- BVision graphics card option.

**Cons**

- High spec. boards Expensive.
- Poor documentation and support.
FEATURES

PCB - Why Bother?

Thomas Hurst the webmaster of AmiSite, a popular PCB website, updates us on the latest PCB software available...

It's been over a year since PowerPC cards became available for Amiga users, and we could finally put a processor in our machine that was able to compete with the likes of the Pentium. Many were adamant that it would revolutionise Amiga software. A year down the line, where did this revolution go? Is PPC still waiting to provide us with a wealth of new Amiga software, or has it just become yet another 'techno tragedy'?

Well, right now the estimated PPC user base is around 8,000, and things are just starting to look interesting. Lets take a look at some of the apps available now.

Probably the most heavily used (if a little boring) use for the PPC is in datatubes - the well known and oft updated AK Databusters come with PPC versions for JPEG, PNG, TIFF and a few other formats (although not GIF, due to licencing problems). With these, the raw power of the PPC is obvious - a full screen JPEG can be decoded almost instantly. They are shareware, so unless you pay a fee of about $5 for each one you will only see every other line decoded by the PPC. The AK datatables are available on most AFCG's and Aminet.

Continuing the graphical theme, Candy Factory should need no introduction to web masters - it is a powerful graphics package aimed specifically at creating good looking logos with gloss, shadows and textures. The recently released 'Pro' version provides a lot more speed and features. Candy Factory really benefits from a PPC and a graphics card (in my case, a brand spanking new BVision I'll talk about later), which allow for real time updates - eg. you can drag a lightsource about with the mouse and see everything change, like the effects you see in scene demos, only useful.

The PPC is very well suited to 3D rendering, and packages such as Tornado 3D and the recently released PPC version of Imagine make full use of it's speed. With software like Warp3D (a programmers interface for 3D specifically aimed at hardware acceleration a la Microsoft's DirectX), we can expect real time previews in future versions for those of us lucky enough to have a card with 3D capabilities. Most of us are probably under the impression that sound couldn't possibly benefit from a fast processor, but you'd be wrong. The most obvious example of this is with MPEG Audio, namely MPEG Layer 3, better known as MP3.

MP3 is a highly compressed audio format that has revolutionised music distribution on the internet - a CD quality audio file can be compressed down to a tenth of it's size with no discernible loss of quality. But as you might imagine, this compression isn't cheap in terms of the processor that does it, so this is a place where the PPC excels.

The popular mpega library is now available in a PPC version, meaning any software which uses it, such as Songplayer, MPEGA and many others, automatically benefits from the PPC. Amiga AMP is another popular player based on AMP on other platforms. This has the ability to use " skim" (replacement GUI's), meaning you can either have a very plain Gadtools version, or a bright, photorealistic one to blend in with your Workbench. All these players can decode a full CD quality MP3 using only about 20% of the power of the slowest PPC on the Amiga - a 16GHz 603. And as it barely keeps the 68k ticking over you can happily render that huge Lightweight scene without worrying about slowing it down...

Serious Fun!

A list of some of the more interesting looking PPC games on the horizon:

- Exploror 2600 - Promises to be the best space trading game since Elite, on any platform. Wipeout 2097 - The Playstation hit comes to the PPC.
- FUBAR (A(nother) real time strategy wargame, although as the developer can't afford a PPC card...)
- The Settlers II - the sequel to the well known Settlers.
- Claws of the Devil - Some sort of strategy wargame, although as the developer can't afford a PPC card... Total Combustion - Drive about and blow things up

ending least until a PPC version becomes available.

Encoding is the Holy Grail of MPEGA, and it requires a lot more power than playing. Even so, it is still possible to encode a CD quality sample on the PPC without having to set it off a week before you need it, although you might want to go an make a cup of tea if you have a long sample to encode.

Enough of the Serious Stuff!

Thanks to it's fast CPU, the PPC is well suited to 3D style games, but a lack of good developer tools, documentation and an official kernel has crippled development so far.

Luckily, thanks to Amiga Inc's decision to integrate WarpOS with OS3.5, it looks like PPC gaming is really about to take off.

It's ironic that the most played PPC game on the Amiga is probably the well publicised illegal Quake port. Now into it's tenth incarnation, it is very fast (although it could be faster, reaching on average of 200FPs on a 166MHz 603 and AGA, and a bit more on a GFX card). It also supports versions on-line and Quake, and despite still being a bit unstable with on-line play and on exit, it's still far more playable than the 68k version.

I Have a Vision...

Both the BlizzardPPC and the CyberStormPPC come with a custom chip for a GFX card - the BlizzardVision and CyberVision. These cards utilise the Permedia 2 chipset - one of the better chipsets on the market today with good 2D performance, and excellent 3D capabilities - in excess of those of the PlayStatlon. The recently released Warp3D promises to provide easy access to these fast 3D functions for programmers, so we can expect the likes of Wipeout and Exploror 2600 to be able to fully take advantage of them. Unfortunately we have yet to see a Warp3D driver for either board, but we should see something soon. The boards themselves are excellent GFX cards, despite not having much in the way of support for their 3D functions. I am using A BVision now, and all I can say is GET ONE!

CyberVision PPC

The CyberVision PPC is a graphics card which plugs into a dedicated slot on Phase 5's CyberStorm PPC accelerators for the Amiga A3000 and A4000. As the card is fitted away from the outer shell of the computer, the video connector is on a small separate PCB attached to a blanking plate, which is connected to the main board by a flying lead. The specifications of the CVPPC are far in advance of any other current Amiga graphics card, as it uses a 3D Labs Permedia 2 graphics processor, which has both fast 2D and 3D graphics acceleration. The card also has 8Mb of fast SGRAM allowing the use of very high resolutions at high refresh rates.

For all the high spec's, let's find out how it stacks up in real use...

Using the CyberVision PPC and the recently released Warp3D (a programmers interface for 3D specifically aimed at hardware acceleration a la Microsoft's DirectX), we can expect real time previews in future versions for those of us lucky enough to have a card with 3D capabilities. The card also has 8Mb of fast SGRAM allowing the use of very high resolutions at high refresh rates.

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ending least until a PPC version becomes available.

Encoding is the Holy Grail of MPEGA, and it requires a lot more power than playing. Even so, it is still possible to encode a CD quality sample on the PPC without having to set it off a week before you need it, although you might want to go an make a cup of tea if you have a long sample to encode.

Enough of the Serious Stuff!

Thanks to it's fast CPU, the PPC is well suited to 3D style games, but a lack of good developer tools, documentation and an official kernel has crippled development so far.

Luckily, thanks to Amiga Inc's decision to integrate WarpOS with OS3.5, it looks like PPC gaming is really about to take off.

It's ironic that the most played PPC game on the Amiga is probably the well publicised illegal Quake port. Now into it's tenth incarnation, it is very fast (although it could be faster, reaching on average of 200FPs on a 166MHz 603 and AGA, and a bit more on a GFX card). It also supports versions on-line and Quake, and despite still being a bit unstable with on-line play and on exit, it's still far more playable than the 68k version.

I Have a Vision...

Both the BlizzardPPC and the CyberStormPPC come with a custom chip for a GFX card - the BlizzardVision and CyberVision. These cards utilise the Permedia 2 chipset - one of the better chipsets on the market today with good 2D performance, and excellent 3D capabilities - in excess of those of the PlayStatlon. The recently released Warp3D promises to provide easy access to these fast 3D functions for programmers, so we can expect the likes of Wipeout and Exploror 2600 to be able to fully take advantage of them. Unfortunately we have yet to see a Warp3D driver for either board, but we should see something soon. The boards themselves are excellent GFX cards, despite not having much in the way of support for their 3D functions. I am using A BVision now, and all I can say is GET ONE!
When the Amiga was first released its multimedia (and this was before the word had even been invented) capabilities set it apart from the crowd. Full colour graphics and animation with sound and the realistic HAM modes amazed the world. Over the years competing systems improved and in the last 5 years the very abilities that made the Amiga a success are looking very tired. Funnily enough the operating system which was hidden away in Commodore’s advertising (such that it was) has stood the test of time much better in many respects.

Anyway back to the plot... what many Amigans are looking for is a way to improve their Amiga’s display. As usual many innovative Amiga hardware companies have taken up the challenge and many innovative Amiga graphics cards have appeared on the scene. The two most popular are CyberGraphX and Picasso 96. The reason for this is that they give the widest compatibility. P96 and also has its own API but this is little used as the CyberGraphX API has a much wider user base (P96 and CGx users).

In general the two driver systems seem to be pretty similar and it’s mostly a case of personal preference which you decide to use. There are a few graphics cards where one driver is preferable, on the Picasso IV the supplied Picasso 96 driver is said to be better than the CyberGraphX one and is compatible with the add-on modules for example. Both drivers used to be provided free of charge however starting with the newly released version 4 CyberGraphX has become a commercial product selling for about £25. Picasso 96 is now shareware and costs 30DM (about £10) to register.

It is very important that when you buy a graphics card you make sure it is supported by either Picasso 96 or CyberGraphX or you won’t be able to use modern 24bit software with it, only the specially written software for your card.

Monitors

Because they are based around standard graphics chips Amiga graphics cards work best with a standard monitor rather than at video refresh rates. It is a good thing as you can go out and take your pick from the many high quality monitors available that easily support the full-colour display. Both systems patch Workbench so you can use 24bit background images on Workbench and in windows. There are also 24bit ŗatapies that give much better results in CyberGraphX aware applications.

Programs that don’t have a screen mode requester can often be made to open on a graphics card screen with a little screen promotion commodity. Several of these programs are available on Aminet. Screen promoters run in the background and pop-up a requester every time a program tries to open a screen, in the requester you can choose to leave the program alone or force it to open in another screenmode (for example a graphics card screen). When you’re happy the program runs well on it’s new screen you can save the setting so that every time that program tries to open its screen it is forced into the mode of your choice transparently.

Some programs that access the Amiga graphics hardware directly, particularly games, cannot be made to work on a graphics card. In this case they can still be used with the standard Amiga video output. There are a couple of problems one has to be aware of when using a graphics card.

It is possible to run several AGA programs on one 16 or 24bit screen and they won’t “steal” colours from each other. Both Picasso 96 and CGx will allow you to have a 16/24bit Workbench screen so any programs that run on the Workbench won’t be affected. Many other programs that allow you to pick their screenmode can be run in all the resolutions available. Unless a program is designed to use 16 or 24bit graphics card modes it will only have a 256 colour (if it was designed for AGA) display even if you run it in a 16 or 24bit graphics card screenmode. However you can run several AGA programs on one 16 or 24bit screen and they won’t “steal” colours from each other.

The Software

Graphics cards that are supported by CyberGraphX and Picasso 96 integrate pretty seamlessly into the Amiga environment. Workbench and other programs that allow you to pick their screenmode can be run in all the resolutions available. Unless a program is designed to use 16 or 24bit graphics card modes it will only have a 256 colour (if it was designed for AGA) display even if you run it in a 16 or 24bit graphics card screenmode.

Contacts

The list of screenmodes available on a particular Amiga, you can see this list in the Screenmode preferences editor.

Zorro

The type of expansion slot fitted to big box Amigas like the A2000, A3000 and A4000. You can add Zorro slots to A1200 using a bus board from companies like Micronik and RBM; these bus boards require a tower to house them. There are two types of Zorro slot, Zorro II is a 16bit slot fitted to the A2000 and A1500, most A1200s and also A2000s. Zorro III is 32bit, much faster and was fitted to the A3 and 4000s. ZII cards can be used in ZIII slots but not vice versa.

True Colour or 24bit Display

The colour each pixel in the display is described with 24bits of data enabling a palette of 16.7 Million colours to be displayed. This is enough colours to display photo-realistic pictures.

High Colour or 16bit Display

The colour each pixel in the display is described with 16bits of data enabling a palette of 65 thousand colours to be displayed. Most images will be photo-realistic on a 16bit display but you can sometimes notice banding in smooth gradients.

Refresh Rate

The number of times per second a monitor’s screen is updated.
with this, firstly as your graphics card is plugged into the monitor how are you going to see the output and secondly most Amiga screen modes are not usable on an SVGA monitor that you'd probably choose to use with a graphics card.

Some graphics cards do nothing to help you here so you'll need to buy a second monitor for your Amiga output. If your monitor can display both Amiga and graphics cards modes you could get an external scan doubler (which can degrade the display quality) and if your monitor can't you'll need a scan doubler and a second monitor. Some early graphics cards have a passthrough for the Amiga signal, this means you connect your Amiga output to the graphics card and the graphics card to the monitor. When you switch to a standard Amiga screen or boot from floppy to play an old game the Amiga signal gets through to your monitor. Because the Amiga signal is not altered you'll need a multisync monitor that can handle the Amiga modes as well as graphics card modes (Amiga 1438 or 1701 for example) or a scan doubler that can switch between the standard Amiga modes to be used on an SVGA. The third and best choice is a graphics card that has a built in scan doubler on it (these cards plug into an Amiga with a video slot and take Amiga video from the s-video input).

If you only use application software you'll probably be able to get away without access to the standard Amiga modes as practically all applications from 1992 on can be used on a graphics card screen, many older ones can be promoted. I used my Amiga for over a year with no access to Amiga screen modes however I eventually bought a scan doubler because I missed watching demos which can't usually be promoted.

Benefits
A graphics card will enhance almost everything you do with your Amiga. Even mundane activities like Wordbench can make much more pleasant when you have plenty of resolution and colours to play with. Graphics card screens don't use any chip RAM you can stop worrying about running out and fully utilise the Amiga's excellent multitasking, graphics card screens are also much faster than AGA, on most cards a 256 colour graphics card Workbench will be faster than an 8 colour AGA one and a 16bit one will be very usable (way faster than 256 colour AGA and in higher resolutions to boot). If you get a graphics card you may find you need to upgrade your Fast RAM because the software uses Fast RAM to hold screens that are not being displayed and to suff-er the main display. Also if you start using graphics programs in higher resolutions you'll almost certainly want to create bigger and more complicated projects that need more RAM!

As mentioned before with a graphics card and programs supporting 16 and 24bit screenmodes you can use many programs the way they were intended.

Naturally Graphics programs in par-ticular benefit more than most from a graphics card. Now instead of having a dithered 256 colour or fringed HAM "pre-view" of the image you're working on you can work on the real thing. Another area that really benefits is web browsing on the Internet where many pages are designed for fast high colour displays. Even simple screen acrol can make the display run more smoothly and benefit from the extra res-olution. One of the packages that I found benefited a lot from a graphics card was PageStream 3, not only does it support 16 and 24bit scan modes so that im-ported pictures look stunning but the extra resolution available allows much more of a page to be displayed readily at once.

Conclusion
I think a graphics card is the best upgrade you can get for your Amiga (once you've got the basics like a harddrive) if you use it for applications rather than games. You'll find everything you do transformed with much of your software collection getting a huge new lease of life and a whole range of pro-fessional applications becoming avail-able to you.

It's amazing that the AmigaOS which was never designed with graphics cards in mind has been adapted so successfully by CyberGraphX and Picasso 96 that graphics cards now really feel part of the system. Basically get one, you won't regret it!
Product Information

Developer: GP Software
Distributor: Compute!
Address: 5 Blackden Parade, Sidcup, Kent, DA15 8LU
Price: DOpus: £49.99
Plus CD: £29.99
u/g from 5.6+: £34.99
u/g from 5.5: £39.99
u/g from 4+: £44.99
WWW: www.gpsoft.com.au

Directory Opus is probably one of the most popular file management systems for the Amiga and seems to be found somewhere on almost everyone's machine. When GPSoftware upgraded DOpus (as it's affectionately known) to version 5 they took a big step in abandoning the fixed two file list design of previous versions (and many other file managers) and changed to something more flexible and unlimited windowed design. Many existing DOpus users made the change but quite a few found it just too different. However the change did make DOpus attractive to many new users, myself included.

The version of DOpus I'm looking at in this review is DOpus 5.11, and version number wise it is actually version 5.8. This version is the culmination of all major upgrades since DOpus 5 was released.

DOpus Magellan II is supplied on just 3 DD floppy disks and comes with a sub-stantial manual for version 5.5 (2 versions ago) and an addendum manual for Magellan II. When you come to install the program you find that the disks look like the manuals consist of version 5.5 and an upgrade to Magellan II even if you buy the full version. The means you have to install 5.5 and then upgrade to Magellan II, however the installation is very straightforward and well explained in the manual so this isn't much of a chore. Once installed you have to customise DOpus and this procedure has to repeated if you re-install or move DOpus to your harddisk.

One of the options you get when you install DOpus is if you want to start it in Workbench Replacement Mode (WbR). While you can run DOpus 5 like a standard directory utility, loading it when needed, it is really designed with the WbR mode in mind. If you choose to install DOpus as a Workbench replacement it loads as you boot your Amiga instead of Workbench (which contrary to popular belief is just another program which means you soon get used to checking exactly what is selected before starting an operation. This automatic selection does drastically reduce the amount of source/destination setting you have to do manually.

Initially a DOpus screen (in either WbR or standalone mode) looks very similar to Workbench with icons for all your disks. DOpus can even use your WBPattern preferences for the background and window patterns. If you then double click an icon to open a directory window (called a linter in DOpus) that the changes start to become apparent. In DOpus listers have 3 display modes: Icon mode looks and acts almost exactly like Workbench. Name mode has a list of files and directories like a view by the name Workbench window but it also has a button bank and popup menus so common functions are just a click away. The final mode is Icon Action which is a combination of the two adding name mode buttons to the icon view.

As with Workbench you can snapshot any linter into a particular mode but DOpus goes much further with this functionality allowing you to set up what information is shown (in name mode) and even what buttons are on the button bar for any directory.

Each linter actually runs as a separate process which means that when one or more listers are busy you can simply open another one and get on with something else, this is very different from Workbench where you had to wait for the current function to finish before starting another.

When you want to perform an action between two or more directories, for example copying or moving files you have to tell DOpus where the source files are coming from and where the destination is. Each linter has a box at the top right hand corner that displays SRC, DEST or OFF. If you click this box you get a menu so you can choose a different option for this linter. Normally you can only have one source and one destination but if you want, for example, to copy the same files to several destinations at once you can lock several destinations and DOpus will copy the same files to all the destinations. As you select different destinations DOpus tries to guess which you want to be source and destination, making sure that the current linter window...

Directory Opus provides a huge range of file management commands with everything from simple copy, delete and move to much more complex actions like encryption... whatever you want to do to files you'll almost certainly find DOpus can do it. If it can't then you're free to use your own commands, these can be Workbench or shell programs and ARExx or shell scripts. What's more you can define any combination of these so you could copy some files using the DOpus internal copy command and then work on them with an external shell command with one click! Whether you are setting up a command to be executed from a button, menu, double click or any of the other methods you'll find you always use the same Function Editor so you only need to learn it once.

File Types

DOpus has a built in file type recognition system which lets it recognise a particular type of data file from its file extension (.jpg, .avi etc) or internal structure. OPus comes with a wide variety of file types it can recognise and there are several packages of file types available on Aminet (and the DOpus Plus CD, see boxout). If you can’t find one matching the file you want then you can make your own...
Opus FTP Module

It’s amazing what you can do with a DOpus lister but one of the cleverest features of DOpus which has seen its second manjor update in Magellan II is the FTP module. The FTP module (File Transfer Protocol) is a popular method of moving files between computers on networks and the Internet, for example Aminet is available on FTP sites all over the world so anyone with an Internet connection and an FTP program (often called a client) can access its massive archives of Amiga software.

The DOpus FTP module is an FTP client which instead of being a stand-alone program displays the content of the remote FTP site in an Opus lister. You can then use normal Opus commands on these files even though the FTP server may be on the other side of the world. As an example when I update my website I copy the files onto the webserver using FTP. With the Opus FTP module I simply open a lister on the directory on my harddisk and another for the FTP site and drag the files over.

For use with Aminet DOpus FTP doesn’t support the useful ADF (acronym alert: Aminet Download Tool) mode that AmFtp implements which allows you to view the most recent uploads since you last visited... however DOpus FTP does show you the short description of each file as you browse Aminet which AmFtp doesn’t so if you’re a regular visitor like me you might want to use AmFtp to check what’s new but for general Aminet browsing and FTP work I think Opus FTP now has the edge over its rival.

In Opus Magellan II the FTP module has been enhanced again (there were major improvements in the original Magellan). Some of the cool new features include:

- Custom configurations for each site including custom tool bars for FTP listers.
- Recursive copying and deleting so you can copy whole directory structures in one go, great for websites.
- You can now use the new NEWER option of the Copy command with the FTP module to copy files that don’t exist or have a newer file date than those on the FTP site. With the new recursive operation you can update a website with one copy command.

DOpus FTP is cool and in many ways out does stand-alone FTP programs plus it has the advantage of being integrated into DOpus.

Replacing 3rd Party Hacks

After several years of development Directory Opus Magellan II is a very stable Workbench replacement and in about two years of use I haven’t found anything that won’t run because of it. Because DOpus has functions like toolbars, user definable menus, Newcomer support and is much more configurable than Workbench you’ll probably find many of your current hacks and patches can be removed resulting in a more stable system.

As you would expect DOpus fully supports CyberGraphX so you can have a beautiful 16 or 24bit Workbench if you have a graphics card and also seems to run stably with hacks like MOP which some of us couldn’t live without.

A new feature of Magellan II is themes which allow you to save an Opus configuration complete with backgrounds, colors and sound effects to a theme file. You can then recall all those settings by loading the theme file. This feature will allow you to build up a library of your favorite themes and have a random one each time you load Opus. You can also load themes from the internet or CDs to use (the DOpus Plus CD has many examples, see boxout) and DOpus can convert themes intended for Windows 95 so there’s a huge library all ready and waiting.

But it can’t all be Perfect

I can think of very few bad things to say about DOpus Magellan II but I think it’s main problem is its sheer complexity. Although the concepts are the same all over the program (like the common Function Editor I mentioned earlier) there are still a huge number of options. GP Software are obviously aware of this as one of the changes in Magellan II is to place all the preferences in a single multi-page Environment requester instead of in two requesters which made it hard to find a particular option. However the new Environment requester now has 21 pages so it’s still a lot to search through. Personally I love the way you can setup DOpus to do just what you want and I think the huge number of options are inevitable to achieve this. If you’ve never used DOpus at all before (as I hadn’t when I originally tried it) you probably find it takes some time (maybe a couple of months of regular use) to get comfortable with all the options that are available. Even then occasionally you’ll find new things.

The Opus manual is extremely through going through how everything works, all the commands that are available, and what all the options do. However it is very much a reference rather than a tutorial manual. It’s not the sort of manual you can take to bed and read (OK, I’m that said I’m afraid), What would be great would be a set of tutorials to get new users going (see DOpus Plus CD boxout for details of a tutorial set available) otherwise there’s a good chance some of Opus’ power will be left unused.

Conclusion

DOpus is one of those programs which make you wonder how you ever lived without it. For someone like me who loves to customise his environment and set up everything “just so” it’s great. The work you have to put in to learning it is well worth it for the results you get. Personally complex operations are a snap.

Another question whether the Magellan II upgrade is worth the money, to be honest as you can see from the What’s New boxout the changes are mostly minor improvements making that real a “must have”. For the upgrade price, which is well over half the new price, I would expect this to be a major upgrade. If all the changes to the main program and the FTP module are important to you then it probably worth it. In my opinion GPSoftware would have done better to put the Magellan II upgrade on the DOpus Plus CD and sold it as a bundle. This would give upgraders and new users the really useful tutorials and extras along with the minor improvements in Magellan II for a reasonable price. As it is I find it really hard to call this upgrade good value for money.

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It is possible to open dozens (is there a metric equivalent of a dozen?) of sample windows which can cover the tool windows - so a Projects Window can be opened to handle them all!

From within this Window you can Open/ Delete/ Load/ Save/ Remove and Hide sample windows.

The sample windows themselves all have a size gadget on them so re-arranging them is quite easy. I should mention that ALL the windows including the tools are floating display to choose from! Granted, some of these are very similar and it's mostly cosmetic anyway, but if you like LED's flashing to show you your recording level, or bar graphs, colour multisscopes for each one in the Project Mixer.

Most settings requesters are available from the Settings menu with a choice of several individual requester but each one of these has a cycle button which will take you through ALL the other settings in turn. Once these are set, by loading a default setting for instance, most will not require changing for normal sampling work. Just one important setting is missing from the above requesters and that is the choice of the TYPE of recording you wish to do.

Settings
The configuration of SoundProbe is something you could easily get lost in, so the easiest way to start is to load a pre-configuration file from the Settings menu which coversAura, Clarity, Megasound.

Should you require Generic parallel sampler, PCMCIA, MegaMixMaster you can choose these through the Hardware Settings requester or there is an option for AHI.

Save these settings once you have tried them out.

Recording
With anything less than an O60, it is wise to sample at around 22050 cycles as, although SP works at 44100, it does tend to tie your machine up and this is the speed has improved a great deal. Whilst

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This is an improved version of SoundProbe in which AHI support just sends it's output to AHI and AHI sends it on to your chosen card (or chip), so it is the sound equivalent to re-targetable graphics and should you change the way your sound is sent out from the Amiga i.e. change from the built in Paula chipset to a Zorro soundcard, you just change AHI prefs to point to the card and all your software output will automatically be re-routed to the card.

Most settings requesters are available from the Settings menu with a choice of seven individual requester but each one of these has a cycle button which will take you through ALL the other settings in turn. Once these are set, by loading a default setting for instance, most will not require changing for normal sampling work. Just one important setting is missing from the above requesters and that is the choice of the TYPE of recording you wish to do.

Simply put, you can record direct to hard drive or into RAM and changing these settings is simplicity itself. The Audio I/O control from the Menu bar shows a list of the types available and, as loaded from the default settings, it will be set for RAM - to change this just click on, say, Clarity16_FILE and the file will be transferred from RAM to hard drive with a progress bar showing when the task is completed and that's it! You can now edit, play back AND record from and to the HD.

Also in this version is Arex support for those of you who want to take advantage - scripts will probably start appearing on AmiNet shortly. I shall be keeping an eye out for these as I know as much about Arex as I do about nuclear physics.

Shortly after I started to write this article, the postman delivered a small packet to me containing version 2.11 of Soundprobe which, as well as one or two fixes, also contains access to Arex through a menu item and support for Surround Sound too! So it just got better again even before it had finished getting better!! If I have no idea as to how long it will be before this version hits the shops but I would check out the Sound Probe support web site if you have access to the Internet as upgrade notices have been posted here before. Just make sure you have SPII first of course.

Using SoundProbe is quite easy if you have played around with sample editing software before - all the effects are under an Effects menu so, if you like DeepOz or effects which are Process under - guess what? Process! Simple single menu items are available for DeNoise and DeCrackle for those samples lifted from noisy sources and, should you wish to fade in/ fade out these are also single menu items which act on ranges within the sample window. For instance, if you wish to fade in at the beginning, drag the mouse over the edited part of the waveform (the markings on the Waveform sample window are in seconds) which draws a box around the wave. Select Process/ Volume/ FadeIn - you get asked if you are sure and then it's done. Same for FadeOut and several other effects although quite a lot of them have further parameters which can be changed to suit your requirements. The default settings are fine in all the cases I've tried.

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Gary Storm takes a look at this beat-em-up from the new software house The Real Ologram.

Ologram, by (remarkably enough) The Real Ologram of Italy, who kindly sent us a review copy of their beat-em-up. It arrived at SEAL central all resplendent in a very nice box, containing posters, registration card, manual, a sticker, and 10 disks of blue fury (don’t worry, the final release is to be on CD apparently).

I mugged Robert (he liked that) and rushed home to install this latest foray into pixelly violence. The quality of the packaging and blurb promised much....umpteem fighters, umpteem moves, special powers, umpteem modes of play, and a couple of innovative ideas......your powers grow with experience, and you can upload your high scores to the Ologram webservice to see how you fare against the other would-be alien Van-Damme’s.

Installing Ologram is easy.....all you need is an aga Amiga, and 10 megs of hard drive space. I have an 040/25 with PPC. BOSS!!! We’re away !

A slightly jerky but nice 3D intro appears which introduces your fighters, and takes up only a small part of the screen (for speed, I guess). You’re then thrust into a demo mode if you don’t choose to play yet. The demo mode in this is great in one respect, in that the computer opponents complete a full bout, none of this cuttiing away from the action just when it’s getting hot rubbish.

Unfortunately, the demo fight is a bit jerky too on my 040, but hey, let’s see what the it’s like to play.

I won’t bother you with the storyline, which is, as usual, superfluous, and get straight into picking one of the available characters and having a fistcuffs. And it looks pretty good! The backgrounds are very detailed and colourful without taking your eye away from the action and the music is suitably typical euro-pop (give it a few minutes and you’re tapping away as you fight). The moves are easy enough to achieve (all joystick with one-button type stuff), and the special moves are easier (and still nice looking)... but oh no! It plays like a geriatric in the supermarket with a tendency to the size of SealZilla. OK, nothing’s that bad, but as good as the graphs are, as tolerable as the music is (and the ‘End Game’ music is great, and very well suited by the way......believe me, I heard it often enough), Ologram suffers from frames that end up in the N’th Dimension (it’s jerky, ok?).

On the collision detection and variety of moves front, Ologram claim that their system has many moves, and that different area’s have different damage when hit (another good idea). The moves seem ok, though not all that many, and I’m afraid to say the collision detection is as dodgy as a hermaphrodite giving you a ‘special massage. ‘cough’

Ologram differs slightly from the formula set down by Street Fighter, Mortal Kombat etc, in that you don’t have a ‘best of three fights’ system. You only have the one fight to prove your worth (which I personally like). As mentioned previously, you have special moves, but are initially limited to only one each, of four types of move. It’s a tad unfair, methinks, that the opponents have more amounts of special moves and more health than your fighter, to whom your ass good. And boy is it hard! I like the idea of your fighter gaining experience, leading to better health and more special moves, but I played for hours and only managed to win once. I’m not that bad at beat-em-ups......honest. Practice makes perfect, and I’m sure I could win a few more, but the jerkiness of the animation doesn’t make it an enjoyable experience to want to keep trying. You have to be psychic to defend yourself in this game a lot of the time.

I don’t believe the Amiga is a good machine for this type of game, due in part to it’s joy-stick limitations. Softing’s would be better advised to team up with a hardware developer like Power Computing, for instance, and design a new, multiple button joystick (if possible), for use with these and any other game that wanted to take advantage of it.

Sorry Ologram, I really wanted to like this game, given the effort you’ve put into it’s appearance. Unfortunately, a beat-em-up relies first and foremost on it’s smoothness and speed, then control system, variety of moves, and finally graphics. Look at ‘IK’ on the C=64 or ‘Way of the Exploding Fist’ on the Speccy for an example of gameplay balanced with graphics. Without smooth animations, it’s a chore to play. Ologram is still loads better than Rise of the Robots, and due to it’s interesting new idea’s, a step in the right direction, but it’s just not fun to play. But hey, if you like a still challenge, Ologram is calling you out to meet behind the bike sheds....
Workbench into the best selection. Whack the FPPrefs program into your Prefs drawer and use it to set up the colours. I used the palette suggested by the author of MagicTV. Set the Full Palette colours manually to the values in the Palette boxout, and don’t forget to make sure they’re all ‘locked’.

Next you’ll need to install the NewIcons patch. Go through the installation process, but say ‘no’ to ‘do you want to install New-Icon icons?’. Or you could say yes if you want to save yourself some work, but have a Sesame Street Workbench.

Now that you’ve done that, you’ll need a decent set of icons and backgrounds to jazz up your Wb. I used to prefer ‘Magic Wb’ icons as I think the ‘NewIcon’ icons look kiddy. Fortunately other people thought the same thing, and drew their own icon sets using the ‘NewIcon’ patch (which let’s you use 32 colour icons, instead of the default 8 colour icons). My favourite icon sets are ‘Glow-Icons’ which are gorgeous and glow when you select them (the artist, Matt Chaput, works for Silicon Graphics, and is doing the icons for OS3.5) and ‘Archeoicons’ which are realistic things from archeology (funny that) from all over the world. I’ve also used a tree frog as my RAM icon, ‘TreeFrogIcons’, believe it or not.

There are plenty of NewIcon icon sets on Aminet, CU Amiga and Amiga Format CD’s, so take a look and choose your weapons. Whichever NewIcons you go for, they’ll map themselves to the closest colours in your palette, and look nearly as good as if you had a 32 colour Wb. Just install Icon Installer (I installed it into ‘Tools’) and use that to decorate your screen.

Each line of text is numbered for easy reference, and continues on the next page.

**Ingredients**

Here are all the programs you’ll need for this recipe of Workbench perfection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Aminet Dir.</th>
<th>CD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magic TV2</td>
<td>Neil Crawforth</td>
<td>util/web</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Palette</td>
<td>Massimo Tardignone</td>
<td>util/web</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon Installer</td>
<td>Tom Exstrom</td>
<td>util/web</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NewIcons</td>
<td>Eng Saugasse</td>
<td>util/web</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wcp (Glow Icons)</td>
<td>Matt Chaput</td>
<td>pix/ikon</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archeoicons</td>
<td>Lyle Zapato</td>
<td>pix/ikon</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TreeFrogIcons</td>
<td>Lyle Zapato</td>
<td>pix/ikon</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPaint</td>
<td>Colanto - <a href="http://www.colanto.com">www.colanto.com</a> or your favourite Amiga dealer.</td>
<td>pix/back</td>
<td>24 &amp; 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye-Poppers</td>
<td>Giles C. Hendrix</td>
<td>pix/back</td>
<td>24 &amp; 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional ingredients - add for flavour:

- MCP
- ARQ
- ICON
- PicBoot
- DGopuss Magellan II
- TB Clock
- SwazInfo
- Tools Daemon
- Birdie

To add a random bootpicture which fades in and out every time you boot up, whack ‘Picboot’ into c: and add some commands (depending on where your boot picture directory is, and whatever preferences you have) to your ‘startup-sequence’. For the final effect take a look at the back cover.

**Side Salad?**

Now your Workbench is looking gorgeous here are some add-ons that will make it easier to use too:

**MCP**
To do a lot of little hacky things. I leave most of it turned off (especially any memory stuff), but what I do leave on makes things look better.

**Visage**
The best picture viewer we’ve found so far.

**TBClock**
Whacks a digital clock in the right of your menu bar.

**SwazInfo**
Gives you a better icon information requester.

**MagicMenu**
Gives your menu’s a great 3d look (and other things).

**ToolsDaemon**
Lets you make your own menus very easily.

**Birdie**
Gives your window borders some patterns.
PowerPacker 5
by Nico Francois
Underground PD - £1.50
Have you got a small Hard Drive, need a bigger one but cannot afford it, or would you just like to make better use of the disk space that you have? Why not think about File Compression.

PowerPacker is an excellent and flexible utility which compresses executable and data files. Decompression is very fast and the additional loading time is not usually noticeable, except on very large files and even then it only takes 1 or 2 seconds longer.

The program makes use of the PowerPacker.Library and the Explode.Library; compression rates are very good and offer a choice of 5 modes.

Award Maker
By Cameron J.Shaffer
Underground PD - 4 Disks
This four disk package can produce a vast range of very good quality Awards and Certificates in both colour and black/white. Printing results are very good even on my very basic Epson LX800.

CyberShow 9.1a
By Helmut Hoffmann
Aminet: gfx/board, Disc 28
Shareware, £25 in a package with PhotoAlbum
CyberShow is a multi-format image viewer particularly aimed at Amiga users with graphics cards although it does set up a requirement to support AGA. After you de-archive the package installation is simple. Just drag the CyberShow drawer to the location of your choice on your hard disk, no assigns are needed.

Once it is in place CyberShow can run from it icon or from a shell prompt. Either way there are loads of options controlled by tooltypes or shell arguments respectively. If you start CS without changing any settings the program will use the default behaviour is to show them in turn in a window on the Workbench Screen, this is obviously limited to the number of colours and resolution of your Workbench. By changing some options you can tell CyberShow to open windows on its own screen or show the images without a window on a black screen. For a bit of added interest you can also add a random transition between each image.

When you choose to have CyberShow open on its own screen you can set the screenmode it will use in various ways. Using the BESTMODE option the program will pick the screenmode available on your Amiga that best suits the image to be displayed. Using the SCREENMODE option you can specify a particular screenmode to use. Finally you can use the HEIGHT, WIDTH and DEPTH options to specify the size and number of colours (but DEPTH e.g. 8bit or 24bit) then CyberShow will choose the screenmode closest to your requirements. If you have a conductor like mine that takes time to re-sync between screenmodes changes locking CS to use one screenmode is very useful.

Like most other viewers CyberShow can be controlled simply while you’re viewing pictures, pressing Space moves to the next image and Esc quits the program. For a total hands free experience you can use the delay function to pause on each picture for a definable number of seconds then continue. In both modes when you view one picture CS is pre-loading the next one so once you’ve finished the next picture is usually ready instantly. CyberShow also has menu options (with hotkey equivalents) which you can use whilst viewing. Particularly useful amongst these are Previous Picture which allows you to go backward as well as forward through your selection of images, Picture Information which opens a requester with the filename, size and format of the selected image so you can find it again later and Delete which (you’ve guessed it) actually deletes the image from the disk. You can also toggle some of the options set on start-up using the menus but to make these settings permanent you have to edit the tooltypes or change the shell arguments you use.

If the picture you want to view is bigger than the screenmode you selected CyberShow allows you to pan around using the cursor keys (it does not open a big auto-scroll screen). You can also use the + and - keys or menu options to zoom in and out from the image. You can also set a menu option to zoom each picture to fit the screen automatically. A limitation of the zoom function is that it only scales to whole ratios e.g.: 1:2, 1:4 etc. This means that an image that is only just too big has to be halved in size to fit the screen leaving a wide black border.

CyberShow works brilliantly on graphics cards although it does work under AGA. After you de-archive the package installation is simple. Just drag the CyberShow drawer to the location of your choice on your hard disk, no assigns are needed.

The selection of awards cover an extensive range of subjects from Sport and Education to Personal and Humorous. Many have preset text and pictures with a choice of fonts and borders, but some layouts allow you to add your own text as well. Just add the date and recipients name and away you go.

Award Maker is an unusual package and it would be hard not to think of a use for it. Apart from serious use, I found it fun to print some of the more comical awards just to give to friends for a laugh.

Although there is no Hard Drive Installer supplied, manual installation was easy enough and the program runs equally well from floppy or HD.

CyberShow is the best viewer I have come across, it has far more options than any of the others and is also very fast and smooth in use.

PhotoAlbum 6.0
By Helmut Hoffmann
Aminet: gfx/misc, Disc 29
Shareware, £25 in a package with CyberShow
PhotoAlbum is a multi-format picture catalogue by the author CyberShow and unsurprisingly it shares many features with CyberShow.

Again installation is simple, just drag the draver where you want it. When you run the program it opens its main window where the catalogue will be displayed and a file requester. In the requester you can pick the files or directory you want to catalogue (PhotoAlbum can scan subdirectories too). Once you’ve picked your files the default behaviour is to show them in turn in a window on the Workbench Screen, this is obviously limited to the number of colours and resolution of your Workbench. By changing some options you can tell CyberShow to open windows on its own screen or

compliant with PhotoAlbum which will suit most uses. There is also a script facility which allows you to set up a long list of files to be crunched, so that you can go away and leave them to be processed. I have used EPD and Disk Stacker which compress/decompress all files in a partition in the background, but personally I found them to be a bit buggy, causing random system hang-ups. On the other hand, PowerPacker seems very stable and has been around for a long time.

A number of utilities complement the use of PowerPacked files. PPMore is for crunched text files, PPSShow for pictures, PPGuide for AmigaGuides, PPFtype for printing and PPDIC which is a CUI file decruncher. These can be set as icon default tools or default tools in a File Manager program. There is also a tool the PowerPacker Patch for, a background program which can be run from your User-Startup. It patches the system to

...and resolution of your Workbench. By changing some options you can tell CyberShow to open windows on its own screen or...
The PhotoAlbum window is resizable and there are several options for the size of thumbnails it can generate. You can choose what information to display below each thumbnail. When I am developing web pages I have the filename and image size displayed so I can see at a glance what I am working on. If you want to get a closer look at an image in the catalogue double clicking its thumbnail opens a viewer window which shows the image at full size.

Much of the time PhotoAlbum is so fast there is no need to save the catalogue, you can just generate the latest up-to-date one on the fly. However, if you want to save PA gives you two options: Save the thumbnail images along with the picture title or the same directory so PA doesn’t have to generate them next time. Or save the catalogue in one file and browse it even if the container containing the images isn’t available.

Within the catalogue you can select a thumbnail to work on by single clicking on it, you can Shift-click to select several. Once you have some selected thumbnails you can be used to open, save on the thumbnails. For example you can delete a thumbnail from the catalogue or the actual image from disk, load the image into several image processors (including Photogenics and ImageFx) or get further information on the image.

One very useful option is to pass the filename to a user defined AREXX command, this means you could set up your own picture viewer or automatically process the image. One improvement that could be made would be to allow several such AREXX commands as just one is a bit limiting.

PhotoAlbum performs better under AGA than CyberShow. On a 256 colour screen the thumbnails are generally of good quality although they tend to degrade the further through the catalogue you go. As you view an image, as the viewer window opens on the PhotoAlbum screen and so PA doesn’t have to compute all the available colours are used by previous thumbnails. The only real problem is when you view an image, as the viewer window opens on the PhotoAlbum screen and so PA doesn’t have to compute. If on a 16 or 24bit graphics card screen PA shows thumbnails and views pictures in all their glory.

Hardware Fitting and Software Installation

Within SEAL there are many years of experience, including the fitting and configuration of countless pieces of hardware and the installation and use of numerous software packages. So if you need a helping hand there’s almost bound to be someone with experience willing to help. In particular we’ve become expert at installing hard drives, CD-ROMs and other common upgrades.

Scanning and Printing

Several SEAL members have scanners and many have colour printers, if at any time you need some pictures scanned or documents printed someone is always available to help.

CD-R Hard Drive Backup

3 SEAL members have clubbed (grop) together to buy a CD writer and they can make hard disk backups of each other’s Amiga. The cost is £5 per CD. One very useful AREXX command, this means you could set up your own picture viewer or automatically process the image. One improvement that could be made would be to allow several such AREXX commands as just one is a bit limiting.

I agree with just about everything you have said here Martin, All Amiga users are vitally important for the future of the Amiga. There is no doubt that the Amiga is NOT DEAD. Perhaps SEAL could compile and print a directory of anywhere selling Amiga hardware or software.

Martin Miller

Discounts

As mentioned in the SEAL Update section we now have new arrangements with Underground PD and Fermet Amiga Computer to give SEAL members a discount on their purchases. Undergound PD will give a 10% discount on anything you order and Fermet will give a variable discount depending on your order. We hope to announce more discount deals soon.

NOTE: this service applies to freely distributable software only. NO PIRACY!

Help Line

Several SEAL members have very kindly volunteered to help other members and readers of Clubbed in their areas of expertise.

General Amiga, Shell, AREXX, Directory Opus 5, DTP (PageStyler)

Robert Williams
(01268) 569937 after 6pm
robert.williams@demo.co.uk

3D Graphics (Lightwave, Imagine), Image Processing (Photogenics, Art Effect)

Spencer Janis
(01375) 44641

General Amiga, SEAL Information Mick Sutton
(01268) 761429
sicky@binternet.com

Contact us if you’d be willing to use your skills to help other Amiga users and we’ll add you to this list.

Next Issue

In the next issue of Clubbed our theme is going to be getting on the Internet so we’ll have a feature on how to get on-line, the different Internet service providers, the hardware you need and most importantly what to do and where to go if things go wrong. To supplement this feature there will be reviews of the most popular Amiga Internet Software including:

- Netconnect 2
- Miami
- Bluecat
- Thor
- YAM

We’ll also have our usual mix of news, reviews, features and support items including:

- Pace Solo modem and STFax Review
- Vision PPC Review
- Turbo Print 7 Review
- Cinema 4D Tutorial

Issue 3 is due to be published in mid May, we hope to have the issue ready before the World of Amiga Show. Then we’ll post it out, the subscribers who have an additional show report.
Gallery

Checkmate
By Roy Burton
Roy rendered this striking scene in Cinema4D using the Cinema World plugin to model the mountains.

Porsche
By Tony Kinnear
In this Cinema4D render Tony’s use of lighting, camera angle and background makes a simple composition very striking.

WildFIAT
By Robert Williams
The car was scanned from an advert and the texture was added using ImageFX’s composite function and then smeared.

Workbench Cookbook
Believe it or not the Workbench below uses only 16 Colours. Find out how Gary Storm set it up in his Workbench Cookbook tutorial.

Tunnel
By Robert Tiffen
In this Moody Cinema4D image Robert has used lighting to good effect. I can’t help thinking of “The Duel”.

Visit the SEAL Website at: http://seal.amiga.tm