CLUBBED

a SEAL production

Issue 9, Winter 2001
£3.50

SHOGO

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PAYBACK

We play the new
PPC/Warp3D Version

For Amigans, By Amigans, On Amigas!

NEWS

Contents

Do The Write Thing

We'd like to make Clubbed more "interactive" so we need your input!

Got a question you'd like answered or an opinion you'd like to share? Write to us and we'll include it in a letters page.

Got a tip for other readers or even an article up your sleeve? Send it in and you could very well see your name in print.

Got a suggestion or comment on the magazine? Let us know and we'll try and make Clubbed better for you.

Editorial

Welcome to the ninth issue of Clubbed, if everything has gone to plan you could well be reading this just before the World of Amiga South East show which we're all working hard preparing for as I write.

I'm sure regular readers won't fail to spot that this issue is on time for a change! I would like to thank all the contributors to this issue, and everyone who lent a hand in getting it finished. Special thanks should go to Mick Sutton who spent a lot of his evenings helping me with the layout, in addition to writing several articles.

The next few months look like being a time of significant changes for Amiga users, several major products, from Amiga and others are expected in this time frame. There is the Amiga One and OS4, then there are the other solutions based on OS 4 from Elbox, Matay and anyone else who chooses to take up a license. MorphOS, probably best described as an Amiga compatible PPC OS, with the BPlan Pegasos motherboard will probably be shown to the public for the first time at a show in Cologne, Germany in mid November. Finally we have the Amiga OS XL x86 emulation package from H&P, which gives Amiga users yet another option!

From a Clubbed point of view we'd like to hear your opinions on these developments, and which products, if any, you choose to buy when they are released. We can then start thinking about the future direction of the magazine, although that will also depend on the choices made by our contributors.

Along with the big changes in the Amiga world we have had quite an eventful month here at Clubbed. Currently the magazine is printed for us by SEAL member Jeff Martin who works in the printing department of a large insurance company. This means we get Clubbed printed at cost price and in the excellent quality you saw in issues three to eight (and the second print run of issues one and two). Unfortunately Jeff has informed us that the printing department is closing at Christmas and more importantly for us the machine used to print the Clubbed covers has broken down and probably won't be fixed. Therefore

we've had to look for a new printer for this and future issues.

Before I go into the ramifications of this I would like to thank Jeff for all the hard work he's put into getting Clubbed printed, including putting up with my last minute phone calls of... "don't print it yet, I've spotted a major typo!" (oh yes folks, Issue 7's cover very nearly referred to the little known prehistoric era the "Scantasic" instead of "Scantastic"!). Everyone at Clubbed and I'm sure all our readers wish Jeff the very best of luck in finding a new job.

From our initial enquires with local printers it seems that our printing costs are going to increase considerably, probably nearly doubling in fact. Because Clubbed is non profit making there is no way we can absorb this increase. Therefore we have had to make a decision as to how to continue without making a loss on every issue sold. As we need to have the magazine printed in time for World of Amiga South East (exactly four weeks away as I type this) we have decided that we must put up the price of the magazine in time for the show. The new price is £3.50 per issue with UK subscriptions at £14.00, current subscriptions will not be effected, but renewals from this issue will be at the new price. We hope people will feel the magazine is worth it and we will do our best to make it good value for money.

Well that's about it from me, enjoy the magazine and see you at World of Amiga South East!

Robert Williams

SEAL Update

Meetings

It has to be said that things have been fairly quiet at SEAL meetings over the last few months, we think there are several reasons for this. Firstly it has been the summer when many people are on holiday or at least would rather be outside than sitting in front of a computer. Secondly it has been a quiet time in the Amiga market as a whole, there is a great feeling of "wait and see" with several big developments on the horizon. Finally several of SEAL's movers and shakers have been very busy with the forth coming WoASE show which has also meant that this issue of Clubbed has greater urgency than usual too.

All that said we have had some interesting meetings, bizarrely most featuring CyberVision 64/3D graphics cards! We had a go at fitting an AMon automatic monitor switch to Alf Whitfield's CV64/3D. Next Elliott Bird asked for some help setting up a CV64/3D in his A4000, he had installed the card under Picasso 96 but it was very unstable. This turned out to be a hardware incompatibility between early DCE manufactured CV64/3Ds and Zorro II (see Top Tips on page 38 for more details). Then Steve Willis brought along a Power Tower, Z4 bus board and, you've guessed it, a CyberVision 64/3D making him the latest SEAL member to experience the wonders of high resolution, high colour fast screens.

But not everything revolved around the Phase 5 designed card, new member Philip Beasley had trouble with booting his A4000, when we opened it up at the meeting it not only had some interesting hardware (a time base corrector for video work and a GVP '040 accelerator) but it also showed just how much dust can collect in a machine that hasn't been opened for six years. We also found a leaky battery, as mentioned in the Top Tips section of issue eight. Sam Byford is another member with an interesting Amiga, his A4000 is in a Power Tower with the new Elbox PCI bus board, he's just waiting for the Mediator PCI logic to arrive so he can use those exciting and inexpensive expansions.

Future Meetings

Once the show is over we aim to revitalise SEAL meetings, hopefully this will be aided by the release of new hardware and software at around the same time. So SEAL members, now is the time to be thinking about topics you would like to see covered at future meetings and if you could contribute in any way to make them more interesting.

One idea we do have is a "bring and buy sale" where members can bring along any kit they want to sell and can also buy from other members, we had one of these in SEAL's first year and it was a success. Also SEAL has received several donations of hardware and software in the last year and those items which are not needed for the club machines will be available for sale at this meeting, all contributions going to club funds.

SEAL on the 'net

SEAL has several, rather under used, resources available on the Internet, with more and more members getting on line I think it's time to give them a bit of a plug. There are several mailing lists which use the Yahoo Groups service, these allow anyone with EMail to easily receive information about the club. Seal-announce is for club related announcements and is a very low traffic list, it would be great if all members with EMail could join this list as it makes sending announcements much easier. To join the list, which is free, simply send a blank EMail to: seal-announce-subscribe @yahoogroups.com Seal-talk is an interactive list for members to communicate outside meetings, to join send a blank Email to: seal-talk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Then you can post your Amiga problems and comments to everyone belonging to the group by sending one EMail to: seal-talk@yahoogroups.com.

SEAL also has an IRC (Internet Relay Chat) channel on Arcnet called #SEAL, here you can chat with other members in real time, for more information on IRC see Elliott Bird's tutorial on page 41. There are full details of all SEAL's Internet activities on the website at:

www.seal-amiga.co.uk

Clubbed.info

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Telephone: +44 (0) 1268 569937 (19:00 - 22:00 UK time only please)

Only Amiga Made it Possible

Clubbed is designed and laid out using:

Hardware:
Amiga 3000
CyberStorm PPC/060
CyberVision PPC
128Mb RAM, about 8Gb HDD space.

Software:

Amiga OS 3.9 by Amiga
PageStream 4 by Softlogik
ImageFX 4 by Nova Design
Photogenics 5 by Paul Nolan
Final Writer 5 by Softwood
Ghostscript 6.50 from Aladdin Enterprises

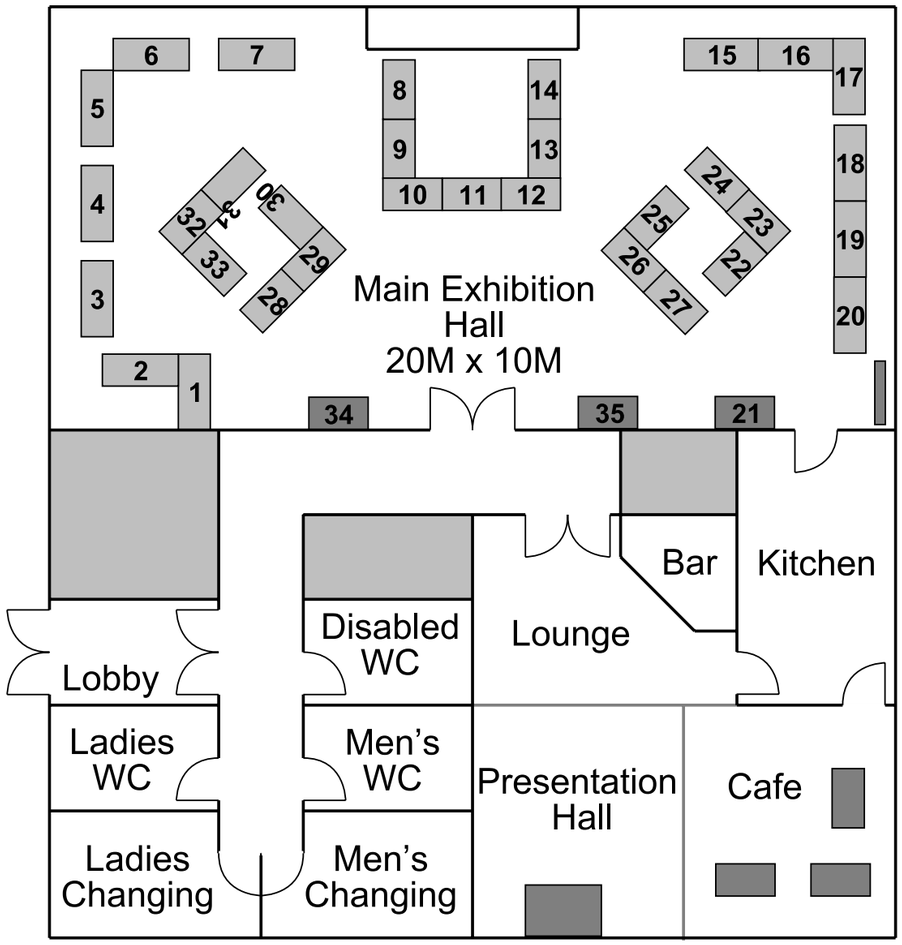
There are also some essential utilities we couldn't live without: Directory Opus 5, SGrab, MCP, Turbo Print 7, MakeCD.

Our thanks to the creators of this and all the other great Amiga software out there.

Clubbed is entirely created on the Amiga, no other machines are used at any stage of the design or layout process.

Legalese

World of Amiga South East



Preparations for the World of Amiga South East have been going very well, we now have a list of exhibitors and a floor plan as you can see here. In addition to the main hall, the venue boasts a bar which will be staffed throughout the show and a smaller hall that will be used as a café and presentation area.

This is the current list of exhibitors, as usual with these things there will probably be some minor changes by the day of the show but this is what to expect:

1-2	Kicksoft
3	Pagan Games
4	HAUG and Blackpool user groups
5	To Be Announced
6	Amiga
7	Cloanto
8-14	Eyetech
15-16	Formatt Home Computing
17	100% Amiga
18	SEAL
19	ANT
20	Kickstart
21	ASA
22	Elbox
23-24	Mediator Support
25-27	Virtual Programing and Amiga Active
28-30	Weird Science
31-33	Stellar Dreams
34	Hyperion Games Area
35	Gloucestershire Amiga Group

We also have an assurance from Haage and Partner that they will be there to demonstrate the Amiga OS XL package but we don't know exactly what form their attendance will take yet.

Apart from the bar other highlights of the show will be several presentations including one from Fleecy Moss of Amiga and several games tournaments. Keep an eye on the show website for further details and a time table of presentations.

The show is taking place on Saturday the 3rd of November 2001 at:
Poplars Hall,
Poplar Drive,
Hutton,
Brentwood,
Essex, CM13 1YU.

It will run from 12:00 until 17:00. If you haven't bought your tickets already they will be available on the door at just £3.50 each. Full details including directions from the M25 and on public transport are on the show website:

http://www.worldofamiga.com

AmigaOS on x86

In the Amiwest update sheet included with issue 8 of Clubbed we were surprised to find that two, ostensibly similar Amiga Emulators were being developed in tandem. One was Amithlon, developed by Harald Frank and Bernd Meyer, which was demonstrated by Bill McEwen at Amiwest and the other, previewed in Amiga Active issue 23 turned out to be AmigaXL from Haage and Partner.

Similarities

Both emulators run on a host OS, Linux for Amithlon and QNX for AmigaXL, but hide the fact from the user. They are both derived from UAE although Amithlon's developers say almost every aspect has been rewritten, we don't know yet how much of UAE remains in AmigaXL although H&P do say it uses a "modified and highly accelerated 68k emulator". Another common factor between the two is their claimed speed, on a fast x86 PC speeds of up to 20 times '060 have been quoted, which is quite amazing! Finally both will read your existing Amiga hard disks allowing easy transfer of programs and data. With both emulators offering such similar facilities and Amiga and H&P being partners in various developments it seemed clear they would have to come to some sort of agreement. The end result is that Haage and Partner will publish both emulators in a package called AmigaOS XL which includes all the necessary licences, neither will be available separately.

Differences

Until the package is released or at least demonstrated it is hard to know how the emulators will compare in performance and the "feel" of their emulation. From the specifications and other information released so far it seems that the main difference between them is how much use they make of the services offered by the host OS.

Amithlon seems to make very little use of its Linux base, it uses Linux drivers to access basic motherboard resources (mouse, keyboard, IDE and SCSI controllers etc.) and to initialise graphics cards. From that point on you must have Amiga drivers to support your hardware, for example if you want to print on a modern inkjet you would still need TurboPrint. From what has been said Using Amithlon will be very much like using a very fast 68k Amiga, it will still have the limitations of an Amiga such as limited driver support, but on the other hand it you like your Amiga driver software for scanning, printing, CD writing etc. you should be able to continue using it, just much faster.

AmigaXL is said to make much more use of the underlying QNX operating system, for example it uses QNX printer drivers and network access is via the QNX TCP/IP stack. From what has been said it doesn't seem possible to access the various interfaces of the PC as Amiga devices from AmigaXL, the FAQ states that several applications requiring device level access to interfaces (for example CD burning and scanning) will not work under the emulation. On the plus side being more reliant on the host OS means that AmigaXL can offer features like USB support and even access to QNX programs like Opera and Voyager web browsers (complete with SSL, Macromedia Flash, MPEG, RealAudio, JavaScript and Java-support) within the emulation.

From the FAQ it seems that AmigaXL will also have some what better support for programs using the Amiga chipset than Amithlon which is purely for programs that run on a graphics card. However with a fast PC there is no reason why one couldn't run UAE within either of them to support older software.

The AmigaOS XL package with both emulators, licensed OS 3.9, 3.1 ROM image, QNX and Picasso 96 will cost 299DM which is about £100. For loads more information visit Haage and Partner's AmigaOS XL web site at:
http://amigaosxl.haage-partner.de/

Note: The detailed information is under the "Products" link at the top of the page.

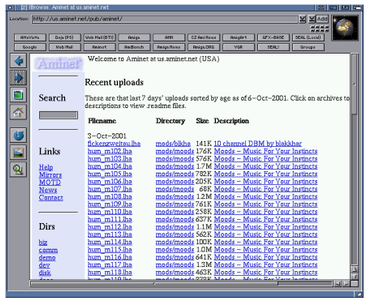
The UK distributor for the Package is Virtual Programming:
http://www.vpltd.com
+44 (0) 1202 411117

New Look Aminet

The main Aminet website has been given a make over, the site is still simple and quick to load (if anything I think the one graphic is smaller than before) but now all the common functions are easily available on the main page. Straight away you can see the list of the last week's uploads and the search function is in the side bar along with direct links to the top level directories.

At the moment the new look only seems to be available on the US site at:

http://us.aminet.net/pub/aminet/



Mediator Fast Ethernet

Elbox has announced new drivers for Ethernet cards based on the Realtek RTL8139 chipset, which supports 10MBit/s and 100MB/s operation, this will be the first 100MB card available for the Amiga. The new drivers are available for Elbox's Mediator range of PCI bus boards and will also require the user to own the recently released Mediator Multimedia CD (see our preview on page 24 for further details). The RTL8139 is used on many PCI Ethernet cards and tends to be very economically priced, you should be able to find a compatible card for well under £20.

Mediator boards and the MMCD are distributed in the UK by Power Computing, for further details visit:
http://www.powerc.com
or telephone them on (01234) 851500.

Elbox have a website at:
http://www.elbox.com

MorphOS DV Editing

Titan Computer have released some specifications and screen shots of their new non-linear digital video editing package Motion Studio. Titan are the publishers with the product being developed by Motion Studios, the people behind the Elastic Dreams and Fantastic Dreams image manipulation packages. Like those two titles Motion Studio features a very flash non-standard user interface which you can see in this screen shot.

Motion Studio is designed for MorphOS and supports the bplan Pegasos motherboard, using its Firewire connection to load Digital Video (for example from a digital camcorder). 40 video effects are included and most of them are performed in real-time on a system which meets the minimum specifications. There is also full sound support with over 20 sound effects including echo, fades and decrackle. Plugins are supported so additional effects can be easily added. Finished projects can be saved in common Quicktime and AVI formats and we assume back to a DV recorder.

To run Motion Studio you will need a computer with a PowerPC G3 running at 400Mhz, firewire ports and MorphOS 1.0. Titan ore obviously aiming this product at computers based on the bplan Pegasos motherboard which is expected to be shown to the public running MorphOS later this year. In the mean time, to whet your appetite take a look at the titan website:

http://www.titan-computer.com/motionstudio

Blittersoft

Long standing UK Amiga hardware and software dealer Blittersoft has been bought by Virtual Programming, a relatively new company developing, amongst other things, software for Tao's Elate platform that forms the basis for the AmigaDE. One of VP's directors is Mark Hinton, the publisher of Amiga Active and he is joined by Paul Lesurf of Blittersoft.

Virtual Programming say that they intend to support both the classic Amiga and new Amiga markets and will continue to support Blittersoft's existing customers. You can find Blittersoft's range of classic Amiga products on the VP website and development is set to continue.

Further details can be found on the new Virtual Programming website at:
http://www.vpltd.com

AMP Plays DVD!

A new version of AmiDog's Movie Player has been released with a major new feature, it can now play DVD movies, the first utility on the Amiga to do so! AMP version 2 (not to be confused with Amiga AMP the MPEG audio player) is a PPC only movie player using WarpUP, in addition to DVD it also supports video CDs and MPEG video files. DVD playback requires a fast PPC card and a DVD-ROM drive attached to a fast interface, the author recommends a SCSI drive on a DMA controller. For owners of slower PPC cards there is a low resolution which decodes the video at half the width and height approximately doubling playback speed.

Although AMP is a command line program it is supplied with an attractive MUI GUI allowing you to easily change its options and basic controls are provided in the playback window to seek to a position in the movie and to pause and restart. There are several options to get a registered copy of AMP, you can send

£10 in cash to the author, buy on-line and get the keyfile EMailed to you through regnet for 18USD or buy it on CD from Kicksoft for £18.

The program can be used for 30 days before registering, so you can download the latest version from:
http://www.amidog.com
and see what you think.

You can order from Kicksoft at:
http://www.kicksoft.co.uk

Details of the other registration options are in the AMP documentation.

GREX Bites Back

In the last few weeks DCE have announced a host of new drivers for PCI cards installed on their GREX family of PCI expansion boards. At the time of writing none of these new drivers have been released. Here is a run down of the drivers being developed and some other GREX related news.

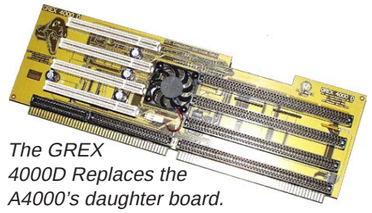
USB

Drivers for Universal Serial Bus PCI cards will enable many common, low cost peripherals to be connected, initially Human Interface Devices (HIDs) such as keyboards and mice will be supported and according to an interview with the developer "many other devices will soon follow of course". There are two standards used by USB controllers (such as those found on PCI cards), OHCI and UHCI currently the driver supports UHCI and has been tested with a card based on the VIA 83C572 controller, OHCI support is planner for the final release.

TV Cards

Visionary is a new driver system for TV cards based on the popular Booktree 878, 879 and 848 chipsets with Microtune or Philips tuner chips are supported. This encompasses many cards from different manufacturers, the Vision Factory site already lists thirteen different cards which have been tested and found to be compatible. The developers also say that Visionary is designed to be easily expanded to support more chipsets and tuners where developer documentation is available.

Visionary features a "skinnable" user interface which allows the user to design their own GUI, from the screen shots provided it seems to be very flexible, with the option to reposition the elements of the GUI, as well as changing the graphics. It supports Visual Reality skins which are supplied with TV tuner cards from companies including STB and 3Dfx .



The GREX 4000D Replaces the A4000's daughter board.

To run Visionary you will need CyberGraphX running on a PCI card in your GREX. No release date has been set but it is expected to be available some time in October, probably coinciding with the new GREX board for the A4000 desktop.

Other GREX News

According to DCE the second model in the GREX family of PCI bus boards has now entered production. The GREX 4000D is a replacement for the A4000 desktop's Zorro daughter board and provides four PCI slots, four Zorro slots and one video slot. Unlike the other options that will fit a 4000 (Matay's Prometheus and Elbox's Mediator Z3 and Mediator 4000) the GREX will fit properly in the standard A4000 desktop case. A CyberStorm MkIII or PPC is required because the GREX plugs directly into the local bus slot of these accelerators.

In addition to the Visionary TV card drivers DCE have also announced that drivers for three other PCI cards will soon be available for GREX users. The first is for 100MBit Ethernet cards based on the popular and inexpensive Realtek RTL8139C chipset. Two sound cards will also be supported with AHI drivers, the Terratec128i and 512i, Terratec is a German company and from what I can see both these cards are affordable at around £25 and £50 respectively. In the Visionary screen shot you can also see the sound mixer utility for these cards.

http://www.vgr.com, the official Vision Factory site is an excellent source of news on the GREX, Visionary and matters graphics card related.

http://www.dcecom.de also has some interesting product information.

Earth Ten Years On

E.P.I.C. Interactive have announced that they will be publishing a port of Earth 2150: Escape from the Blue Planet, the follow up to Earth 2140 reviewed last issue, they plan to release a Mac version and then one for MorphOS running on bplan Pegasos hardware. Like Earth 2140, 2150 is a real time strategy game but unlike it's predecessor it features a true 3D environment. The game was very popular in the PC world, in fact there has already been a sequel, The Moon Project and yet another E2150: Lost Souls is about to be released. E.P.I.C. state that ports of these games will follow at a later date.

For further details visit the E.P.I.C. Interactive website is at:
http://www.epic-interactive.com

The official Earth 2150 site is:
http://www.earth2150.com

Hyperion Spread the Curse

In the last issue of Clubbed we reported that Hyperion had released Voodoo 3 Warp3D drivers for Matay's Prometheus PCI board enabling Warp3D applications, in particular games such as Shogo and Heretic II to take advantage of the Voodoo 3's hardware 3D acceleration. Since then drivers for DCE's GRex board have been released and Hyperion have signed a deal with Elbox to produce Mediator compatible drivers. As we go to press Elbox have announced that the Mediator drivers are now available and that they also support the Voodoo 4 4500 and Voodoo 5 5500. However Ben Yoris or Hyperion has stated "We did do Voodoo 3 drivers for them but no Voodoo 4/5. It's a remote possibility that these Voodoo 3 drivers work on a Voodo 4/5 but...we have no way of testing or knowing this." We will wait with interest to see exactly what is going on!

Hyperion are at:
http://www.hyperion-entertainment.com

On their site you can register and then download the latest version of Warp3D from the download area.

While compiling the news for this issue we noticed several software packages that had been given a minor update, although these updates might not normally make the Clubbed news page we thought these programs were so good or interesting that they were worth mentioning.

ProStation Audio

Italian developer Audio Labs has made several announcements regarding their professional audio software ProStation Audio. If you're not familiar with ProStation it is an application for editing, mixing and mastering digital audio. It provides a virtual mixing desk and time line user interface which supports automatic and manual control. ProStation supports some sound cards directly such as the Sunrise AD516 and all cards with an AHI driver, it is compatible with many audio file formats, ideal for working in a multi platform environment.

Audio Labs' first announcement was of a new upgrade to ProStationAudio 4.20 which provides enhanced plug-ins support. Next was that they have tested PSA with a Mediator and Sound Blaster 128 sound card in a professional studio environment and found the combination passed their tests. Later a similar announcement was also made about the DCE GREX and Terratec PCI sound cards, again they are said to work well and Audio Labs are working with DCE to ensure the best compatibility. Audio Labs also noted that these bus boards support the installation of two PCI graphics cards, ProStation supports this configuration with two monitors to increase the screen real estate available.

ProStationAudio is available in several configurations starting at 125USD (about £90), a demo version can be downloaded from:

http://www.audiolabs.it

TurboPrint 7.20

A new version of Isreesoft's essential print enhancement system is now available, 7.20, like the earlier 7.10 release is a pure driver upgrade, keeping Turboprint up to date with the new printers that are constantly released. As there are no functional upgrades you don't need to upgrade unless you have one of the newly supported printers.

Some of the new printers supported:

Canon BJC 1000, 2000, 4400
Canon BJC 3000, 6000, 6100, 6200, 7100, 8200 with full support for photo cartridge
Canon S 400, 450, 600, 800, 4500 with full support for photo cartridge
Epson Stylus Color 460, 660, 670, 760, 860,880, 900, 980
Epson Stylus Photo 750, 790, 870, 890, 1200, 1270, 1290 with full photo ink support
HP DeskJet 810, 812, 815, 830, 832, 840, 882, 930, 950, 970, 98x, 99x

For a list of all the printers TurboPrint supports visit the IrseeSoft homepage: http://www.irseesoft.com

The full version of TurboPrint costs £38.95 from Eyetech, they don't yet list the 7.20 upgrade but according to Irseesoft lit it is 69DM, about £20.

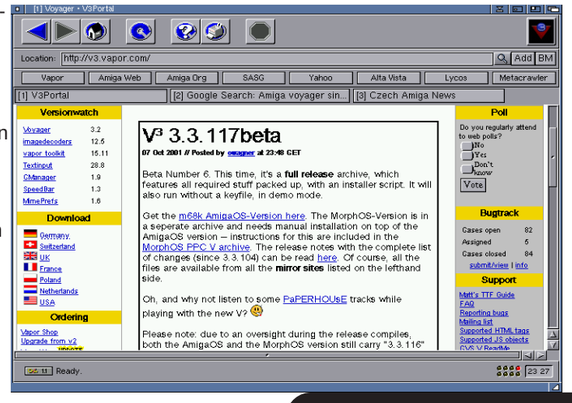
The Voyage Continues

I thought it was about time we gave Vaporware's Voyager web browser another mention in these news pages as at the moment it is by far the most frequently updated Amiga browser, new beta versions for the 3.3 are being released approximately monthly and the beta is now becoming very usable. Voyager is also the only browser to support Flash and PDF plug-ins that display these files inside the browser window. The major feature in version 3.3 is a new layout engine which is being designed for better HTML, Javascript and Style Sheet compatibility and to be much faster too. The latest beta versions which the Voyager team note still contain a debugging code and lack optimisations are already much faster on complex pages than previous versions.

Apart from general bug fixes and speed ups here are the major additions in recent betas:

- Big overhaul of the download management.
- Javascript improvements, many to fix problems with specific sites.
- Single window mode, multiple pages can be shown in one window, using tabs at the top.

Beta versions can be downloaded from the V3 portal at:
http://v3.vapor.com



Perfect Paint 2.7

Georges Halvadjian has been at it again, gradually improving the freeware Perfect Paint making it a really comprehensive package, particularly for detailed work like game and web graphics. Here are some of the useful features which have been added since we last looked at Perfect Paint way back in version 2.4:

- A new bridge tool that enables you to exchange pictures, brushes, palettes and animations with any program with an AREXX port, settings files are provided for most common graphics applications and also Final Writer and PageStream.
- Load and save transfer anims for Voyager, AWeb and IBrowse.
- Many improved animation features including transitions between two frames, dissolves and motion blur.
- Perfect Paint is now localised, a 98% complete French translation is supplied and users are asked to contribute other languages.
- Improved gradients which can now have translucent elements and up to 10 different colours.
- A thumbnail bar which shows you the currently open images (buffers).

Download the latest version of Perfect Paint, absolutely free, from:

http://gothic.fr.free.fr/amiga/

MUIBase

MUIBase is a powerful shareware relational database with, you've guessed it, a MUI interface. It supports multiple tables with an unlimited number of records which can be dynamically loaded from RAM. A wide selection of field types are allowed including datatypes fields for displaying images and other file types. Other features include a query editor and powerful search, sort and filter functions.

The latest version, 1.6, adds an AREXX interface (which compliments the built in programming language), enhancements to printing and relationship display and improved HTML documentation.

MUIBase is well worth a look, the evaluation version is slightly limited and times out after four weeks, registration costs $30 which is around £20. For more information visit:

http://www.muibase.de

The Future of the Amiga?

Mick Sutton and Robert Williams try and make sense of recent developments, it's thought provoking stuff!

When Amiga announced the Amithlon Amiga OS emulator for x86 Pc's at AmiWest 2001 it caused a huge uproar amongst Amiga users, since then much more information has become available and another emulator has been announced, Amiga XL from Haage & Partner. Both these emulators claim to run modern 68k Amiga software at speeds far in excess of current 060 based Amigas using run of the mill PC hardware. As these two emulators are potential competitors and both require a licensed AmigaOS 3.9 Amiga and Haage & Partner decided to release them both together as a package called AmigaOS XL.

The idea of running your favourite Amiga programs at break neck speed on readily available and therefore cheap hardware is pretty exciting stuff for many Amiga users. However,if the emulators are successful they could well jeopardise sales of the AmigaOne and other OS4 based systems, especially amongst Amigans who would find it useful to run other OS's and have access to their software on the same machine as the AmigaOS. If the world becomes split between "classic" 68k Amiga users, OS4 PPC users and x86 emulator users, plain 68k code will be the only thing that runs on all the platforms, which could stifle the development of OS4 specific programs.

So what about PPC programs that we know won't be compatible with the x86 emulators? Many PPC programs are also available in a 68k version that should run much faster than on a current '060 system, they could well perform at a similar speed to the PPC versions on current hardware! While there are major PPC only programs these tend to be ported games which, to be brutally honest, can probably be found in the bargain bin of your local PC store, they may be good but they're not going to be a selling point of a new platform.

The AmigaOne (and other similar systems such as Elbox's Shark) will certainly have many good points for example it should have much better compatibility with older software, especially titles which use the custom chipset and will also run existing PPC software. But probably most importantly it will be the platform for future AmigaOS development, the x86 emulators will be stuck with OS3.9 (although on OS4 port would almost certainly be technically possible).

It is increasingly hard to see where any future AmigaOS development will come from, either for OS4 or OS3.x, there are now very few developers of any size, can you imagine a major new application or original game being released in the current Amiga market? In a market with little new development the difference between OS4 on the AmigaOne and OS3.9 on x86 is much less, you are running your existing programs under emulation in both cases. But x86 also offers you the option to run other OSs complete with their library of programs.

Maybe we've got this all wrong, and as Amiga say current PC users will try AmigaOS XL and, to miss quote Victor Kyam "like it so much they buy the AmigaOne"! Maybe there will be some major developments for OS4 that make it really worth while, we'll just have to do what Amiga users do best... wait and hope!

What Price the Future?

Reader Jamie Winter wonders how new Amiga compatible machines will compete against low priced PCs.

Most Amiga owners will recognise the concept of having to go undercover to enhance their machines. At one time or another we have all visited our local PC World or stack 'em high, flog 'em cheap dealer to buy a hard drive, a digital camera, a scanner, a printer or whatever. On the first occasion we've probably been quite bold about telling the staff that we are Amiga owners, but after the assistant has ummed and ahhed for a bit and then confidently announced that: "It's a hard drive; it won't work on an Amiga," we probably don't bother again.

Instead, many of us will do our research through Amiga Active, Clubbed or via the Internet and then we will sneak surreptitiously into our local PC warehouse, find the item required, pay as quickly and as quietly as possible and leave, hopefully with little or no fuss.

But why do so many of us go through this strange and slightly embarrassing ritual? Well, price is clearly one of the driving factors. I'd love to support Amiga dealers when buying generic peripherals, but frankly they're too expensive and they're usually too far away, which generates unwelcome postage costs and raises the possibility of damage in transit, with all the return and replace problems that generates. No, give me the undercover-but-save-money approach for bog standard peripherals any day.

And yet, as I write this during the not so sunny month of August, I am told that everything is about to change. I may have to buy my Amiga One board from Eyetech, but in theory I will be able to shop around for pretty much all the add-ons as they will be PCI, USB, Firewire or whatever and will therefore be easily sourced and very good value for money.

So, all I need to do is buy an AOne board (preferably from an Amiga show), sling it in a tower and start adding all those whizzy peripherals. Great!

Oh, hang on, maybe not so great. There's still a big question mark over whether I will be able to buy a standalone AOne board, and the signs are not looking good for the foreseeable future. If Eyetech want to make money on their investment costs, they'll presumably want to sell packages, not standalone goods. Why? Because they can make better profit on selling me the peripherals than they can on the board itself. I don't criticise them for this - they need to earn a living after all - but they cannot then criticise me if I choose to delay my purchase of an AOne in the hope of a better deal in the future, or indeed if I choose not to buy one at all.

Secondly, it seems that OS4.0 will require the attachment of a classic Amiga to the AOne to work. As a desktop A4000 owner this isn't very helpful, suggesting I would need to buy some monster tower thing to fit the A4000 (or an A1200) into so that the AOne and classic boards are next to each other. Even then this is only for a temporary period, as the AOne board will standalone once OS4.2 comes out.

Then, of course, there is the issue of cost. The PPC is a fine chip but it's not cheap when compared with its CISC cousins on billions of PCs near you. Eyetech have hinted that the AOne will be of similar cost to a high end PPC accelerator for the classic line. It's not clear whether this means the whole system (unlikely) or just the board itself (more probable). Looking at the latest Power Computing ad in Amiga Active a high end PPC accelerator costs between £460 and £560 depending on whether you want the A1200 or A4000 version.

Merlancia have also just announced pricing for their high end, stainless steel AOnes, which start at $2,000 (around £1,400 assuming you get a straight exchange rate). Looks like dreams of a £300 super computer are up the Swannee, then.

My local PC dealer is advertising an AMD Duron 800MHz PC for £350. Sticking Windows on it adds £80, giving £430 for an operational(!) system. If you want to go the whole hog you can add M$ Office Small Business edition for a further £170, giving a fully functioning and productive(!) system for £600. And this assumes you're starting from scratch. I suspect that Eyetech will not be able to compete with this level of pricing. Reading between the lines I'm probably going to have to spend between £750 and £1,000 for a decent AOne system. Alternatively, I could buy my nice PC and wait for OS5.0.

By the time you read this you should be able to check my assumptions against some real pricing from Eyetech at WoASE or beyond. I would not claim to be an Amiga Zealot, but I am a big Amiga fan and I sincerely hope that Eyetech and others will prove me wrong, or will provide a system that is so - dare I say it - revolutionary, that price doesn't matter any more. As it stands I am unconvinced, but I remain willing to be persuaded.

There is also a further advantage for everyone if I am indeed wrong, as you all get to say "I told you so" in as smug a tone as you like, and I will happily suffer that mild embarrassment for a future in computing heaven.

Visit the Clubbed Website

We've got some exciting developments coming to the Clubbed website that should be on-line by the time this issue hits your doormat!

Gary Storm's Map to the World Wide Web.

New to the we? Want to add some variety to your surfing?
Gary rounds up interesting sites on every topic under the sun!

Clubbed Back Issues in PDF Format

We bring you all the out of print Clubbed back issues, as they were originally printed, in cross platform PDF format.

Surf along to http://www.seal-amiga.co.uk for this and much more!

Payback Update 4

Robert Wiliams and Mick Sutton find that the latest version of Payback is "bigger than your average update"!

Since it's release in February this year, Payback development has continued and three updates have been released fixing some bugs, improving many aspects of the game and adding new features. As we go to print update four has just been released and is the biggest yet with major changes and enhancements to the game engine. We've been tried a late beta version of this new update to give you a feel for the enhanced game.

For those of you who have been kept in the cellar for the last few months, Payback is a overhead view driving game where you play a criminal driver and must steal cars, evade the cops, mow down pedestrians and generally have good fun! It's impossible to avoid comparisons with the classic Playstation title Grand Theft Auto except here you drive on the left... well mostly, you won't get far obeying the highway code!

The big new features are support for PowerPC cards running WarpUp and accelerated 3D support via Warp3D. The extra power from the PPC has been put to good use, the whole game runs a lot faster and is much smoother especially in higher resolutions on a PPC system. The effects, in particular the lighting has been greatly improved since the original, lights on Belisha beacons (at zebra crossings) and other vehicles illuminate the surroundings naturally and buildings cast atmospheric shadows.

In the original game the action is viewed from above on a fixed axis, as you drive the city scrolls keeping you roughly in the centre of the screen. A major improvement in the update is the new rotating 3D view which is available if you have a PPC accelerator and/or a 3D accelerated graphics card. In rotating 3D mode the camera is still above but you always face the top the screen so the city seems to rotate as you drive. We found this view much easier to get to grips with as you always know which way your character or vehicle is facing. As you pick up speed the camera zooms out giving you a wider view and pulls back slightly which enhances the 3D effect. The Warp3D support on my Permedia 2 also adds a little speed to the game, especially in the rotating 3D mode (James Daniels informs us that there should be a larger speed increase in the final version when the debugging code is removed), but the main improvement is in the graphical quality, the display looks much smoother and more detailed.

Other improvements to the look of the game include gouraud shading, which is responsible for the light effects, improved vehicle textures and scaling of the fonts and images for higher resolution screens.

One of Payback's features is a map editor which has been put to good use by several Payback users who have created their own cities to compliment the three supplied with the game. Update four allows the use of new textures in user cities which should allow completely new scenarios to be created.

Having played with this latest beta for a few days it rocks! The game looks great, is more fun to play and still has a wicked sense of humour! Update 4 is free for existing Payback owners so rush over to the Apex Designs website now! If you don't own the game you can purchase it from an Amiga dealer or on-line from the Apex site.

http://www.apex-designs.net

The three cities shown in these screen shots offer different weather conditions, summer, rainy night time and winter. The winter shot in particular shows off the new rotating 3D view.

FEATURES

Desktop Publishing Explained

The Amiga is an excellent platform for Amateur publishers, Robert Williams covers the basics.

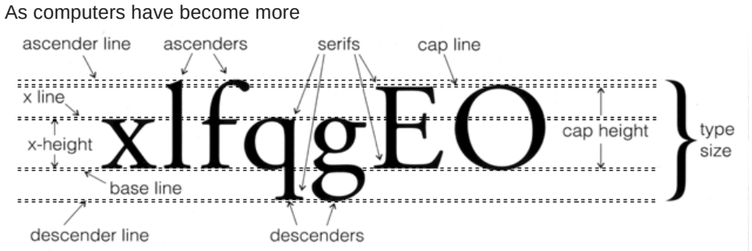
Desktop publishing (or DTP for short) is the creation of complex page layouts including text in various styles and graphics. Today it is one of the major uses of computer systems, but in the mid 1980s DTP was an amazing new application for personal computers! it enabled anyone with a relatively inexpensive home computer to create documents which had previously required huge investments in equipment. In those days the big improvement that DTP programs brought over word processors of the time, was the integration of text and graphics in a single package and a graphical display which showed the users what the printed result would look like, often called WYSIWYG for What You See Is What You Get.

Before we go into more detail on exactly what DTP is, and how you can go about creating documents on your Amiga we should separate the activity of "Desktop Publishing" i.e. creating complex documents on a desktop computer, from a DTP application such as PageStream. The activity of DTP commonly uses a variety of applications to create the content of the document, be it text, graphics or drawings which are then brought together in the DTP program itself to produce the final pages. For example I am not typing this article straight into PageStream, I could, but it is a large complex application with a relatively slow screen display, I find it much quicker to use FinalWriter and in fact I could be using a simple text editor just as well. The same also applies to bitmap graphics and some drawings, they are created separately and imported into the PageStream for the final layout.

As computers have become more powerful it is now possible to do many things inside the DTP application, for example PageStream has a powerful set of drawing tools and it would be quite possible to write articles straight onto the page too. While DTP programs have developed, wordprocessors have also moved on, gaining many features that were once the sole preserve of DTP applications, let's take a look at some of the differences that still exist.

The Difference Between Wordprocessing and DTP

In the last ten or so years the difference between a wordprocessing and DTP application has blurred, mostly as a huge range of features have been added to wordprocessors, in particular support for graphics, scalable fonts, text boxes which allow text to be freely placed on the page and WYSIWYG displays. However wordprocessors are still largely based on pages containing one or more columns of text, this makes it easy to launch a wordprocessor and start typing a document without needing to consider page layout. In contrast most DTP programs start with a clean page and let you place text columns where ever you wish. They support linking columns into complex layouts and much more powerful formatting controls. Finally a DTP application will normally enable you to produce higher quality output and support the standards necessary for professional printing. In essence a DTP program provides more flexibility and freedom than a wordprocessor but also demands that you put some effort into designing your document.



The parts of a type face and how it is measured.

Anatomy of a DTP Document

A typical DTP document will consist of content from a variety of sources, here are some of the key types:

Text

Text forms to bulk of most documents, and luckily for us the ASCII standard means that to a large extent text is widely compatible between programs and between platforms. As a major part of the DTP application's role is to format text, it is easiest to import text from a plain ASCII file with no styles or other formatting (other than basic paragraphs) and then do all the work in the DTP application. If text for inclusion in your publication is supplied in another format some DTP applications support loading other formats, for example from wordprocessors, directly, otherwise there are plenty of utilities which can be used to convert these formats to plain text before importing. Once your text is sitting on the page the average DTP program offers you a myriad of formatting options, let's explore some of the text related terminology:

Fonts

Font refers to the style of lettering used for text, in fact the font is the overall style, for example Helvetica or Times is a font, each font can have a number of type faces, for example Times Bold or Helvetica Narrow. Literally thousands of fonts are available, many can be found on the Internet or in CD-ROM collections, you can also purchase professionally designed typefaces. There are a wide variety of font formats available, you need to make sure you obtain ones that are compatible with your chosen software. First there are two basic types of font, bitmapped and scalable. Each character in a bitmap font is defined as a pattern of pixels, they are commonly used in computer displays because they are fast to process and can be tailored to look good on a relatively low resolution monitor, the standard fonts that come with your Amiga such as Topaz and bitmap fonts. While they work well on computer displays bitmap fonts don't look so good when printed out because any modern printer is capable of printing plain coloured text at much higher resolutions than a monitor. This is where scalable fonts come in, each character of a scalable font is described as a series of lines, curves and fills, this means it can be scaled to any size and resolution without pixels appearing, much better suited for printing.

As you might guess all DTP programs (except for a few of the really early ones) use scalable fonts, however before you start hoarding fonts right left and centre there is another stumbling block, scalable fonts come in a variety of formats and you need to get ones which are compatible with your DTP application. Here are the most common types:

Adobe Type 1

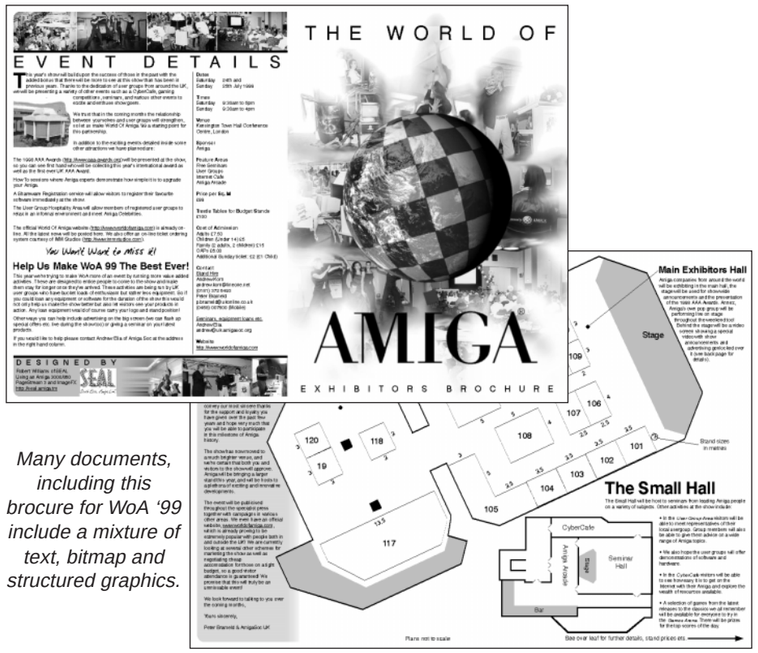
Adobe developed this scalable font format for use with their industry standard Postscript page description language which is used by all high-end print devices, therefore it is the most common format in professional DTP circles. Type 1 fonts are supported by many Amiga packages including PageStream, Final Writer, DrawStudio and ProPage. For overall compatibility I have found type 1 fonts to be the best choice.

TrueType

This format was developed by Microsoft and Apple and because of this now probably the most commonly fond on the Internet and other sources of fonts. TrueType is not as widely supported by Amiga programs but it is gaining ground. PageStream 3 had an optional TrueType font engine that is now included as standard with version 4, Wordworth (from version 3 I believe) also has TTF support. A freeware TrueType font library, ttflib, is available which means all programs which use the Amiga's standard fonts system can use TrueType fonts. Sadly most DTP programs tend to use their own font systems so this doesn't effect as many programs as you might hope, in fact TurboPrint's Graphics Publisher is the only one that springs to mind.

AGFA Compugraphic

The Compugraphic format was chosen by Amiga and is supported by the OS from version 2.04 onwards, of the three listed here it is the least common on other platforms. A large number of



Many documents, including this brocure for WoA '99 include a mixture of text, bitmap and structured graphics.

Amiga programs support Compugraphic fonts, these include PageStream, Wordworth, ProPage, Graphics Publisher and quite a few others. Notable exceptions are FinalWriter and DrawStudio.

Size

The size of text printed on the page is measured from the bottom of the lowest descender (for example the hook on a lower case "y" or "g" to the highest ascender (e.g. the top of a lower case "f" or "h"), it is usually measured in points (pt), one point is 1/72nd of an inch so the overall height of a 12pt font would be 0.1667" or 4.233mm.

Leading

This is the technical term for line spacing, it is pronounced "ledding" which refers to the days when the space between the lines of metal type was packed with lead. Leading is also measured in points and is the distance between lines of text. It is common for the leading to be 20% of the type size so 10pt type would have 2pt leading.

Styles

DTP applications usually offer some way of formatting text in a consistent way, one of the keys to creating a professional looking document. This is normally achieved using style tags, these work by holding all the information about the style, for example the type face, size, colour and other details in a named tag. For example you might have a style tag called "Sub Heading" that defined 12pt Times Bold text. Text can then be selected and a defined style tag applied, automatically the text then gets those settings defined in the tag, ensuring all text assigned that tag is consistent. But that's not all, if you then go and change the settings for a previously defined style tag, say we went from 12 to 14pt in our example, all the text with that tag applied would change, enabling you to change the style of a document in a few clicks. Many packages have style tags for both single bits of text and whole paragraphs, allowing you to control paragraph specific settings like line spacing and indents. Some publishers have extended to the concept of style tags to other parts of their program, for example in PageStream you can have object style tags which define settings like the line thickness and fill colour of drawn objects.

Graphics

The other key component of a DTP document is graphics, the images and drawings used. There are two distinct types of graphic files used in DTP documents, bitmap and structured. These vary not necessarily in what they can be used to represent (each of which is best suited to different types of image), but in how they store the image data.

FEATURES

Bitmap Graphics

Bitmap graphics are composed of a pixel grid (just like bitmap fonts) with each pixel being a defined colour. They can range from mono or 1bit images (each pixel is represented by 1bit of data, that is either on or off, usually black or white although any other two colours can be used.) up to 24bit image which represent each pixel using 8bits of red, green and blue data, 24bit images are full colour and can be used for photographs. Like bitmap fonts, the quality of a bitmap image on screen and on the printed page will depend on its resolution which is defined by the number of pixels it contains and the size it is displayed or printed. For example a monitor has a resolution of between 70 and 100 pixels per inch, taking the high end of that scale an image 3 inches wide on screen would therefore need to be 300 pixels wide to display at full quality, a lower resolution image could be used but you would be able to see the pixels which make it up, it would begin to look blocky. Common printers have 1200dpi (dots per inch) or more resolution, in real life dots this small tend to run into each limiting the true resolution which in any case is only achieved with the printer's primary colours. Any other colour requires a combination of coloured dots reducing the effective resolution further. Even so good quality printers can achieve about 300dpi in colour and 600dpi in mono, this means that images for print need to be at significantly higher resolution than those for screen display.

Structured Graphics

If bitmap fonts are similar to bitmap graphics structured graphics are the twin of scalable fonts. Instead of an image made of pixels at a fixed resolution a structured drawing is described as a series of lines, shapes and fills it can then be reproduced at any size and resolution without the any pixelisation. While structured drawings are will suited to diagrams and logos they don't work well for continuous tone images like photographs which tend not to contain well defined shapes.

Most DTP programs include a selection of structured drawing tools, enabling you to draw simple graphics such as boxes, lines and arrows straight onto the page however there are also dedicated drawing programs, like DrawStudio which generally have more tools and effects.

Clip Art

A huge selection of pre-made graphics for use in DTP documents are available from a number of sources including on the Internet and in CD-ROM collections. These graphics are called clip art and can be in bitmap or structured format. A clip art image can be easily dropped into a document to brighten up a page, most is supplied in standard formats and is compatible with Amiga programs, for example bitmap clip art is often in the widely supported GIF or JPEG formats. Structured formats are a little more difficult with WMF and EPS being the most common formats, these are directly supported by some programs and can be converted with Metaview (see review on page 20) to more Amiga friendly formats with varying degrees of success.

Page Layout

The main task of a DTP application is to enable you to layout pages consisting of the elements I have already mentioned. Most packages provide a variety of tools to make this easier, and provide consistency between pages, particularly in longer documents and publications.

Page Spreads

A page spread, as you can probably guess is a group of pages which can be viewed together, the most common type is a double page spread (DPS) which you see in any normal folded publication, there can easily be other types to though, for example in a double folded booklet or menu would have three-page spreads and a book or magazine or book with fold-out sections could have more. Most DTP programs support double page spreads, allowing you to layout your pages as they will be seen in the finished publication. Page spreads also allow you objects to cover both pages, for example a picture or headline which spans the middle fold. Some programs offer more powerful page spreads which can consist of a number of pages.

Master Pages

Pages in a document can be based on a master page, usually it is possible to have several master pages, for example one for each section in the publication. The master page contains elements that appear on every page, a common use would be for headers and footers. Variable elements can also be placed on master pages so they can also be used for information that must appear on every page, like the page number. Master pages can be edited at any time during the document creation so, like text styles, they enable the look of the publication to be adjusted quickly without editing every page.

Grids

Two types of grid are commonly found in DTP applications, the first is the evenly spaced grid which covers the whole page, objects such as text columns and drawn shapes can be set to snap to the grid ensuring they are neatly aligned and evenly spaced. The grid can usually be set to the desired interval, for example 5mm squares and changed at will.

The other type of grid defines the general layout for the columns of text on the page, this does not have to be even and can be set as the designer wants. Of course there doesn't not have to be a column grid at all, you can just place text boxes as you wish. However deciding on a grid and largely sticking to it does once again add to the consistency of the publication as a whole or to a particular section. For example in a magazine a grid that works well for a review may be hopeless for the news sections.

In Clubbed you will notice that we usually use an evenly spaced three column grid with a 5mm gap between the columns (called the gutter). We hose this layout because we found four or more columns made each one too narrow. However a grid with few columns does make the layout fairly inflexible, to fit neatly an image has to be one or two columns wide which doesn't give you many size options. For sections such as the tutorials which tend to have lots of graphics we switch to an irregular grid with one wider column, this gives more flexibility and also allows us to put captions in the wider gutter. So think about whether your publication needs a grid and if it does which layout each section will use. DTP programs generally have some way of creating column grids, it may be automatic or you may have to define your own with page guides.

Page Guides

Like the page grid, guides help you align and position objects on the page, guides can usually be defined at any horizontal or vertical position on the page and objects will snap to them at any point along their length. Programs often automatically create guides showing where you have defined the margins of the page so text boxes and other objects can be easily aligned to the edge. As I mentioned above it may be necessary to use guides to define your column grid.

Alignment

Another useful feature to have in a DTP program is an alignment tool, this allows you to align objects to each other and the page, for example you could place an object exactly in the middle of the page or move several objects so their left edges all aligned. Other object manipulation tools often included in DTP programs allow you to move multiple copies of an objects to quickly make grids and tables.

Document Structure

Complex or long documents such as books, technical reports, and even magazines often have a structure consisting of sections and/or chapters. Some applications include support for these features allowing, for example, page numbering to change in different chapters. These mechanisms are also sometimes related to style tags and master pages so each chapter can have its own look (or just a different header and footer). Other features useful features for long documents are automatic generation of tables of contents, tables of images (figures) and indexing. These features usually require the words or images to be added to the table to be marked in some way.

Output

The final purpose of any DTP program is to produce some sort of document, for many years this meant printed output and while that is still a big part of it we must now also consider electronic documents too.

Pagination

When you layout a document which is going to be folded and bound you will want to work on it how it will be read, that is with page 2 and 3 (for example) next to each other in a page spread. However if you think about the actual pages that are to be printed 2 and 3 will not actually be next to each other. Take a look at this copy of Clubbed (or any other stapled magazine) and turn to page two (the inside cover) you will see it is printed on the back of page one and to the right of it on the same sheet is the inside back cover, page forty three. Page three on the other hand is on the front of page four and to its left is page forty two. So as you can see before we print this type of document the pages have to be re-arranged, this is called pagination. Some applications, including PageStream 4, have automatic pagination built in, one of the excellent Don's Genies gave ProPage this feature. Otherwise it is usually possible to manually paginate a document by moving the pages around by hand although this needs to be carefully planned to avoid getting terribly confused.

Local Printing

The most simple method of printing is to print to a printer directly attached to your Amiga through the standard AmigaOS printer drivers. Almost all applications support this and assuming you have a driver for your printer it is straight forward. However, for a number of reasons you may want to consider other options. For example you may want a large quantity of a document printed that would be impractical on a home printer or maybe you want a format that your printer does not support. Lets take a look at some other options:

Postscript

Postscript is a page description language developed by Adobe, a Postscript file describes the page in terms of where each character is located, its font and size, where shapes, lines and bitmaps are located and their format. A Postscript printer contains a processor and memory which runs software (stored in the printer's ROM) called a Postscript interpreter which processes the page into a bitmap at the correct resolution for the printer to print. As all this work happens in the printer printing to Postscript is usually much quicker than to other types of printer. The down side is that Postscript printers tend to be significantly more expensive than their relatively dumb counterparts. On the Amiga there is another use for printing Postscript, most Amiga programs print using the AmigaOS printer drivers which up to OS 3.5 only supported 12bit colour data, the classic 4096 colours. Even with a print enhancer like TurboPrint if an application, as many do, only passes 12bits of colour information to the driver the colour quality will be limited. Since version 7 TurboPrint has come with Ghostscript, a software Postscript interpreter, this enables any application that can print colour Postscript to output to any TurboPrint supported printer in perfect colour.

Printing Bureau

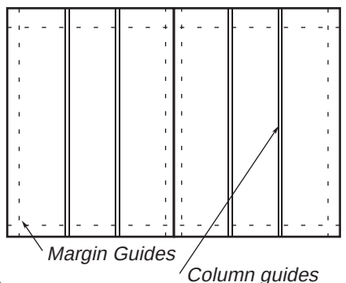
If you want to have your work professionally printed there are several ways of getting your document to the printing bureau. Some expect you to supply your work as an application file from an industry standard program like Quark Express and are unlikely to be able to handle the files of Amiga programs. However there are lots of other options:

Camera Ready Artwork - You supply printed copies of the pages you want printed, this was the method used for early issues of Clubbed and magazines like JAM (Just Amiga Monthly), for this method you need a printer that can output in your chosen format, to create the artwork for Clubbed issues 1 and 2 I used an A3 format HP Deskjet 1120C. Printing from camera ready artwork will usually give noticeably poorer results than methods which are printed directly from the digital data.

Postscript - The document is output as a PostScript file using the Postscript Printer Definition (PPD) file for the print bureau's output device which ensures you use a supported paper size and the postscript is tailored for their machine. This method gives the bureau least control over what is printed and they are basically trusting you and your software to get everything right, however it is

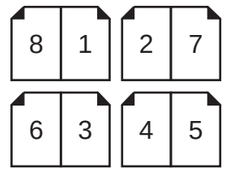
Page Layout

A typical double page spread layout with a three column grid. The lines show some guides:



Pagination

Even a simple eight page booklet made of two sheets of folded paper has to be paginated properly:



Pages 1 and 8 will be the front cover with 2 and 7 printed on their reverse.

compatible with all software that can produce PostScript files.

EPS - An Encapsulated Postscript file is not device specific and is intended to hold one image, in this case it would be the image of a complete page. EPS gives the printing bureau more control as they can size the pages to fit the paper, control the order in which they are printed and choose the printing process they use. EPS files have to be imported into another program before they can be printed so this method is more time consuming than plain PS. Since issue 3 Clubbed has been printed from EPS files.

Portable Document Format - PDF is another format based on Postscript, it allows a whole document to be stored in one file. PDF is commonly used to publish documents on-line so PDF output may well be the final result you are after. PageStream has a PDF saver and the open source GhostScript utility can be used to turn PostScript documents into PDFs. As PDF has become very popular on other platforms many print bureaus will print directly from PDF files.

Software

Although there isn't the choice of publishing software on the Amiga that exists on other platforms, there is something available to support most levels from the beginner to the serious amateur publisher. Much of this software is no longer available new so you may need to scour the second hand listings on Amibench to find a copy. This section isn't intended to be a review of each application, but I hope to give you an idea of their capabilities.

Word Publishers

As word processing applications have been developed many DTP features have been added, on the Amiga both Final Writer and Wordworth followed this development path and became known as Word Publishers, wordprocessors with many DTP features.

Final Writer - Softwood

Final Writer is a very powerful word processor and it has always had some DTP features which are also useful to Wordprocessing including both text and paragraph style tags and master pages. However it wasn't until the last "Final Writer 97" release that multi-line text boxes were adding which enable Final Writer to be used as a mini-DTP program. Graphics support includes graphics via datatypes and structured drawings in EPS format. Output is via AmigaOS printer drivers or PostScript and in my opinion generally works rather better than Wordworth, particularly for colour documents.

Wordworth - Digita

The later versions of Wordworth included many DTP like features such as powerful text boxes that can contain formatted text in multiple columns, although I don't think these columns can be linked. Another DTP like feature is style sheets which are the Wordworth equivalent of style tags mentioned earlier. Page handling is also very powerful, allowing you to have facing pages and double page spreads with objects spanning two pages, this is completed with a handy multiple page view. Images are supported via datatypes for bitmap graphics structured drawings in the CGM format. Wordworth's weak point has always been its printing, it supports AmigaOS drivers but does not take advantage of enhancements like TurboPrint for 24bit quality. The Postscript output seems to be limited to greyscale for bitmap image which limits the use of Turbo Print's GhostScript support.

DTP

PageStream 2 - Softlogik

PageStream 2 is still a useful DTP program and to Softlogik's credit still works well on current Amigas. It is fine for black and white work although if I remember correctly it is lacking for colour work. In its favour is an attractive AmigaOS 2 look interface which is easier to get to grips with than ProPage.

PageStream 3/4 - Softlogik

PageStream is the only Amiga DTP program currently in development, however despite very shaky beginnings in the mid '90s it has matured into an excellent product. It has far more features than any other Amiga programs and runs very well on modern systems with full graphics card support. PageStream has excellent support for all sorts of text, document, graphics and drawing formats, there are also third party loaders that expand this even further. It is very flexible in the types of documents it can create, you can vary the page size within a document and their is full support for longer documents with sections and chapters. The range of output options is also very wide, supporting AmigaOS printer drivers, PageStream's own drivers and Postscript. Many other features round off the package including a bundled text editor and image processor, finally if you find something it can't do there is a powerful AREXX port for automation.

Professional Page - Gold Disk

ProPage was the king of the Amiga DTP scene for much of the early 90s and it is an extremely powerful package with most of the features you would need. The final release before Gold Disk stopped Amiga support was version 4 which included AGA support. Many publications have been produced using ProPage including subscription magazines like JAM and Em and the French newsstand magazine Amiga Info (and probably many more). Sadly ProPage does not work well on graphics cards so it has slipped behind quickly on modern systems. If you don't have a graphics card it is well worth seeking out a second hand copy.

Page Setter - Gold Disk

The PageSetter series was GoldDisk's introduction to DTP for home users, remember this was in the day when ProPage and PageStream cost hundreds of pounds. PageSetter 3 is the last version and really the only one you should consider when buying second hand, it supports AGA machines and reviews of the day rated it highly. As with ProPage sadly PageSetter isn't so happy on machines with a graphics card.

Drawing

DrawStudio - Andy and Graham Dean

The most modern structured drawing program available on the Amiga, with lots of cool features like transparent fills and useful features like object snap. DrawStudio is also very useful for combining structured and bitmap graphics. For full details see our review in issue 8.

Art Expression - Softlogik

Softlogk's companion drawing program for PageStream 2 with the same attractive OS 2/3 interface, PageStream 3 incorporated most of Art Expression's features so the product was dropped when the new PageStream version was released.

Professional Draw - Gold Disk

The drawing companion to Professional Page, for many years the best drawing program on the Amiga. ProDraw supported it's own ProDraw Clip file format which enabled many drawings to be saved in one file. The last version was 3 which sadly, like other Gold Disk software doesn't work well on graphics cards.

ProVector - Stylus Inc.

Version 2 was given away on a cover disk in the early '90s and was a useful program supporting the IFF-DR2D format. A version 3 was released with an attractive OS 2/3 style interface however it was very expensive at the time and quickly dropped afterwards.

Hardware

It's hard to put together a list of "requirements" for DTP on the Amiga because there are such a range of things you could be doing, if you are working on mono documents consisting of mostly text then a basic machine, say an '030 with 8Mb of RAM will be adequate. On the other hand if you're working with very high resolution graphics weighing in at tens of megabytes each or very long documents then even the fastest current Amigas will begin to feel the strain. Another aspect to bear in mind is that DTP tends to involve using several applications at once. In addition to a DTP program, you may well have a text editor or word processor and various graphics programs running, this tends to put an even bigger drain on resources.

As an example for a long time I have produced Clubbed on my A3000 with 64Mb of RAM, this worked quite comfortably with no problems, however I recently upgraded to 128Mb and this now means I can run another major application (for example ImageFX) along side PageStream with a complete issue loaded.

Conclusion

Desktop publishing to a reasonably high level is easily possible on the Amiga, and while PageStream is relatively expensive you can get started with older software or one of the Wordpublishers on a small budget. Getting good output is one of the Amiga's weaker points but Turbo Print 7 with Ghostscript has improved that area no end, especially as DTP programs almost always have good Postscript support. Getting into DTP can turn your Amiga into a really useful tool!

DTP Utilities

Robert Williams unearths some of the most useful companions to your DTP application.

PgS Universal Filter

By Wolf Faust - uni.coloraid.de

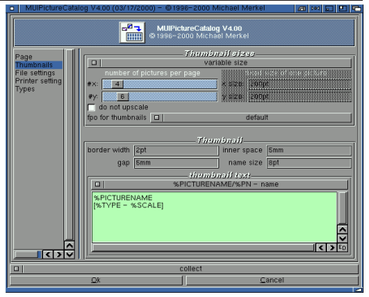
The universal filter adds to PageStream 3 and 4's already extensive support for bitmap graphics formats. Originally this filter was only available to users of Wolf's commercial Studio print enhancement package, but now he has made it freeware. Until the release of PageStream 4, the most important inclusion was the JPEG loader which otherwise had to be purchased as a rather expensive optional extra from Softlogik (I have no problem paying for most extras but a JPEG loader is pretty standard now!). With version 4 Softlogik bundled many of the extras including the JPEG loader. However, the universal filter still supports a wider range of file types and also is very compatible with variations on file format (for example different levels of compression). Altogether ten types are supported and it will fall back to datatypes for formats not supported. Some of the more common supported formats are: BMP, GIF, IFF ILBM (including HAM, HAM8, EHB, CMYK), JPEG, PNG and TIFF.

Although not directly DTP related, I will also mention Wolf's excellent ICS scanner colour calibration software here, this allows you to calibrate your scanner and then automatically corrects images as you scan improving colour accuracy. It is directly supported by most popular scanning software and can also be used as a post processor. ICS is also freeware, available from http://ics.coloraid.de.

Picture Catalog, Font Catalog and other AREXX scripts

By Michael Merkel - home.t-online.de/home/Merkel.Michael/

Michael has written a whole host of interesting AREXX script for PageStream 3 and 4, many are enhancements of the scripts supplied with PageStream or of internal functions. For example he has new transform function which can scale by factors to give more complex effects



The RxMUI interface of Picture Catalog 4.

and txtRotator which is a more flexible version of the text-on-a-curve effects in the TextFX add-on.

Picture Catalog

This script generates overview sheets for images in one or more directories that you specify. Michael has three versions which use different GUI engines, the first has a simple GUI using PageStream's built in tools, the other two both use MUI, one via MUIRexx and the last and most highly developed using RxMUI. This last version seems to have every option you could think of, it is possible to define the size and number of thumbnails per page, their spacing, the text shown with each one and many more options.

Font Catalog

As you might guess this creates a very useful overview of the fonts you have installed for use with PageStream. Font Catalog is similar to Picture Catalog in that it lets you set the layout and spacing of the sample print, you can define the text that will be used for the font preview and how it will be labelled. If, like me, you have a huge font collection then you will appreciate the option to choose which fonts you wish to print.

Fuzzy Shadows

Creates a nice soft shadow under the selected object which can add a professional touch to documents, as long as you don't over use it! As with all Michael's scripts this is very configurable, you can choose the colour (al-

though it must exist in the palette) and intensity of your shadows, their offset from the object and the quality of the final effect.

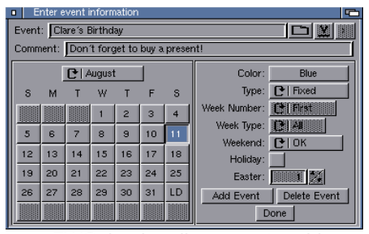
In addition to the scripts I've mentioned there are also many others which just makes life with PageStream even easier, if you're a PageStreamer you'd be mad not to check Michael's page out!

FW Calendar

By Ron Goertz -
home.earthlink.net/~goertz/Ron/

Another fantastic AREXX script, and this one is so flexible, not only does it support both Final Writer (version 4+) and PageStream (3 and 4) but it also works with two GUI systems Triton and ClassAct... all in the one script, amazing! The purpose of FWCalendar is... you've guessed it... to generate calendars and it does this with great aplomb. Firstly you have the choice of two styles, either a number of months (up to a year) on one page or one month per page. The script is supplied with preferences files containing the public holidays for many countries so special days will be appropriately marked when you generate your calendars. Then there is a separate utility to add events to your country's calendar, for example birthdays, anniversaries or holidays. Events can stretch for more than one day and you can select for them to be marked on the calendar with a colour, or even a small image which can be in any format supported by the package being used.

FWCalendar is an exceptionally full-featured script that performs a very useful function, another one that's well worth a look!



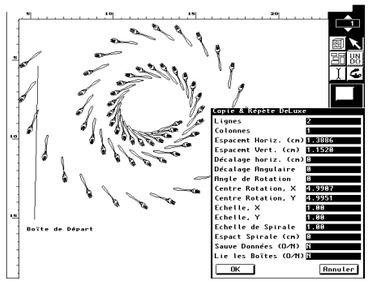
FWCalendar allows you to add custom events to your calendar.

ProPage Genies

By Don Cox -
Aminet, text/dtp/DonsGenies.lha

Shareware $15 (about £12)

I have to admit that I've never done more than dabble with ProPage myself (I've been a PageStream guy from the version 2 days), but I remember reading at the time about the excellent ProPage Genies written by Don Cox, who's name is now often seen adorning the review pages of Amiga Active. A Genie is GoldDisk's name for an AREXX script and in this archive Don has included nearly seventy genies which range from the handy to the downright amazing.



One of the effects you can acheive using the Step and Repeat genie.

Some of the most impressive are:

Border Repeats which can be used to make perfect borders for boxes out of any graphics you select, there are several options to get just the effect you want.

Border Simple Shapes draws simpler a border around the selected box from presets built in to the macro.

Step and Repeat Deluxe which again uses selected graphics or objects, copying and moving them in various ways, while this sounds mundane the options allow you to create anything from tables to spiral effects with this tool.

As I mentioned in the main DTP feature one of the genies, booklet, enables ProPage to carry out automatic pagination for printing folded publications, for example an A5 booklet on A4 paper (it requires a Postscript printer or software interpreter).

The genies are supplied in both English and French, the French documentation includes many example images explaining the effect of different settings which apply to both languages so, as Don recommends, make sure you take a look at both sets of documentation.

Please note I have no idea whether Don is still accepting registrations for this package if you decide to register make sure you contact him first to get a current address etc.

Doc Datatypes

By Don Cox -
Aminet, text/dtp/DonsGenies.lha

Shareware $15 (about £12)

If you're having trouble getting a text format into your DTP application then DocDatatypes is probably a good bet, it is a collection of text datatypes which support documents from a huge range of wordprocessors both old and new. While they don't support complex formatting, images and the like these datatypes are ideal for DTP applications where you don't tend to want those details anyway. Altogether there are eleven datatypes supporting over 20 different applications (and that's not counting the application versions supported), some of the keys ones are: MS Word (DOS, Windows, OS/2 and Mac), Lotus AmiPro, WordPerfect, Rich Text File, Pocket Word, Psion Word, Palm DB TEXT Doc and Mac Text.

Support for text datatypes has never been as wide spread in applications as it is for graphics datatypes. For this reason you will probably not be able to load text directly into your DTP application using the DocDatatypes. Instead use Multiview (or another datatypes aware text viewer) to load the document, then save it as plain text, compatible with all applications.

DTP Links

Software

SoftLogik (PageStream)
http://www.grasshopperllc.com

Kicksoft (DrawStudio and more)
http://www.kicksoft.co.uk

Truetype Font Library
http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/ragriffi/ttflib.htm

Aminet
http://www.aminet.net/~aminet

Second hand software:
http://www.amibench.org
or the comp.sys.amiga.marketplace newsgroup.

Info.

Some interesting history of type setting and font related information:
http://www.graphion.com/

REVIEWS

Metaview

Robert Williams finds a companion for DrawStudio.

Ever since its inception the Amiga has been blessed with a large number of bitmap graphics applications including great paint packages and image processors. Structured drawing programs like DrawStudio, reviewed in our last issue, have always been much less common on the Amiga, I'm sure you could count the number released in the last 10 years on the fingers one hand! This also means that support for structured formats in Amiga programs has been lacking, each structured drawing program tends to have its own file format and programs that import drawings such as wordprocessors and desktop publishers tend only to support a small number of formats. Just getting a drawing from one program on your Amiga to another can cause a problem. On other platforms a wide range of drawing formats are used, some of these such as EPS and CGM are supported by many programs where as other programs such as CDX are proprietary to a particular program, Corel Draw in this case. A quick search on the Internet reveals literally thousands of websites specialising in clip-art in structured formats, which would be great to use in Amiga programs.

As it isn't likely that Amiga programs are going to suddenly start supporting more structured formats what we need is a utility to convert between formats, luckily this is the main function of Metaview. Metaview is based around a new drawing format called the Amiga Meta File or AMF for short, unfortunately AMF has not taken off as a format and as far as I know Metaview is the only program to support it. However Metaview includes facilities to import many different drawing formats, converting them to AMF as it does so and it can then save them out in other format providing an effective conversion utility.

Product Information

Developer: Henk Jonas
Distributor: Kicksoft
Tel: +44 (0) 1737 215432
WWW:
http://user.cs.tu-berlin.de/~jonash/
http://www.kicksoft.co.uk
Price: £15

Installation

Metaview is supplied by Kicksoft on CD-ROM with a huge collection of clip-art in the WMF format which can be converted to suit the program you want to use. The clip-art is helpfully organised into drawers each containing clips on a particular subject, from Actors to Winter. The program itself is installed to your hard drive using a standard installer and is accompanied by detailed AmigaGuide documentation and a selection of example AREXX scripts. If you want to load EPS and Adobe Illustrator you will also need the GhostScript and PS2Edit utilities installed, these are readily available from Aminet but it is a pity they are not included on the CD.

After installation you start Metaview by clicking on its icon, the main window opens and a drawing with "Welcome to Metaview" is displayed. Along the top of the window is a tool bar with buttons for common operations such as load, save and print.

When you load a drawing it is displayed in the main window replacing the welcome graphic. Metaview does not include any editing options but you can zoom in to view the drawing in more detail, using an elastic box to select the area you wish to view. Strangely I could not find a way to scroll to other parts of the drawing once zoomed in, you have to zoom out and then select a new area.

Formats

As you can see in the box out Metaview supports a large number of drawing formats, to test out its support I downloaded a selection of clip-art in as many different formats as I could find from the Internet. Of my selection I found Metaview loaded about 80%, which I think is very good considering the variety of file types and sources. The files which loaded included several Corel Draw (CDX) files where the Metaview documentation says the loader is still in development. The quality of the loaded files was generally good but I did notice a couple of problems. Firstly some formats, particularly WMF (a very common format supported by most Windows programs) seemed to end up with a line around each shape even if they were not intended to be outlined, this could be corrected easily in a drawing program like DrawStudio by setting the line weight to "None" but it is annoying to have to do it every time. A more serious problem is that some conversions (again WMF was particularly prone to this) seem to produce extra lines linking shapes of the same colour, sometimes these are unnoticeable or easy to edit out but often they require significant editing of the drawing to remove.

Importing my own drawings created in DrawStudio worked much better than the WMFs, everything came through with no additional outlines, although Metaview does not support some of DrawStudio's more advanced features such as translucent fills and bitmap images (bitmaps are supported in some of the other formats). I also found that Metaview does not support the PostScript fonts used by DrawStudio so it is better to convert text to curves before saving from DrawStudio. One nice feature is that when Metaview comes across a font it doesn't understand it offers you the option of choosing a replacement from the system fonts.

While testing Metaview on my '060 based A3000 I had a number of crashes, although I couldn't pin them down to any particular operation they seemed to occur after Metaview had trouble loading an image.

ProDraw

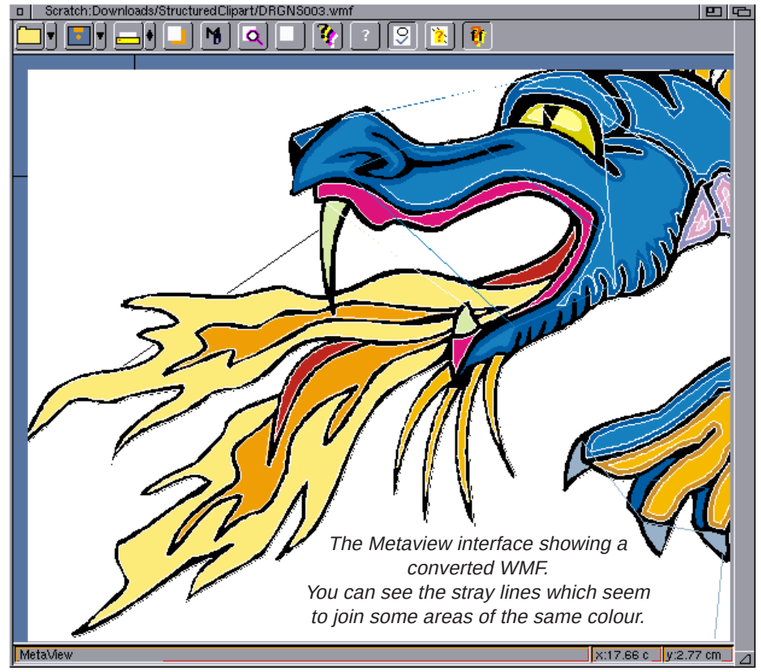
We have had a question from a reader regarding converting ProDraw (a drawing program from Gold Disk) clips with Metaview. As far as I can see Metaview does not support the ProDraw format, however Softlogik used to have a ProDraw to IFF DR2D converted freely available on their website. This could be used to get ProDraw clips into Metaview or any other program supporting DR2D files. As I write this I cannot find the converter, called ClipConv, on the new Softlogik website (http://www.grasshopperllc.com/) so anyone interested in it would need to EMail them and see if it is still available.

Export

Once the drawing is loaded you can choose to export it in any of the supported formats, there are also several print options. Standard printing via Workbench drivers, Postscript printing and Plotting which sends the file in HPGL format. Each printing option has a settings requester where you can select the paper size and the area covered by the drawing. Your settings are shown on a preview of the print area.

Picture Index

In addition to viewing and converting drawings to other formats Metaview has a useful Index feature, this displays thumbnails of drawings in any supported format in a separate window. As many clip art collections give their files arbitrary names this is exceptionally useful. Once the thumbnails have been generated double clicking on one loads the drawing in the main Metaview window. Right clicking on the thumbnail produces a menu of options including Save, Print and Send which sends the drawing to another program using a user-definable AREXX script, example scripts for sending to DrawStudio and PageStream are supplied. Indexes can be saved to disk so they don't have to be created every time, this also allows you to browse through an index without loading the disk containing the drawings.



The Metaview interface showing a converted WMF.
You can see the stray lines which seem to join some areas of the same colour.

Batch Conversion

While MetaView does not include a Batch Conversion option to covert several files from one format to another in its interface, instructions are provided in the manual showing how to build a simple shell script to carry out this task. Metaview also has an AREXX port so you could create a more sophisticated batch conversion script, a number of example AREXX scripts are supplied mostly concentrating on loading into other programs via Metaview.

File Formats

Import and Export

AMF	Amiga Meta File.
CGM	Computer Graphics Metafile.
DR2D	IFF structured drawing format.
GEM	Structured format of the GEM windowing system.
HPGL	HP Graphics Language, commonly used by plotters.
WMF	Windows Meta File
XFIG	Unix drawing tool.
EPS/AI	Encapsulated Post Script/Adobe Illustrator

Import Only

CMX	Corel Draw
DSDR	DrawStudio
DXF	CAD drawing format, used by AutoCAD and others.
WPG	WordPerfect Graphics.

Export Only

ILBM	Amiga bitmap.
JMF	Java Meta Format.
BMP	Windows bitmap.
TIFF	Bitmap.

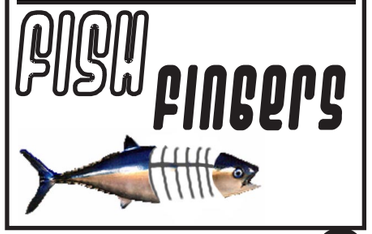
Conclusion

Metaview is a very useful program which sadly has some fairly serious shortcomings as I have described. However it is the only utility of its kind that I am aware of on the Amiga and the price is reasonable. If you are prepared to put in some work manually tidying up the converted drawings from some formats then you can get good results.

Results

Pros
Wide file format support.
Useful index feature.
AREXX support.

Cons
Many converted files need manual tidying.
Unstable for me.



REVIEWS

ArtEffect PlugIn Collection

Robert Williams is spoilt for choice by this extensive collection of addons for H&P's image processor.

In our review of ArtEffect 4 back in issue 7 one of our few niggles was with the speed and control offered by its effects (called Filters in the program). Perhaps Haage and Partner have been listening to us (well you never know!) because their latest product is a new collection of Plugins for ArtEffect. These consist mostly of new filters but there is also a Postscript print module and a loader/saver that allows you to use the Superview library.

Installation

Before we dive in the Plugins must be installed from the CD, a simple process using the standard installer. One of the new filters provides a selection of borders, as these take up several hundred megabytes of disk space you can choose to leave them on the CD. Once installed the Plugins appear in the appropriate ArtEffect menus, for example the filters are in the right sections on the Filters menu and a new option, "PostScript..." is added to the Project menu for the Postscript printing module.

Documentation is supplied in HTML format, each plugin has a page describing its operation and a sample image which you can click to see the effect. I'm really impressed with this documentation, it puts the facilities offered by an on-line guide to good use.

Filters

Most of the plugins are new filters which apply some sort of effect to the image. Just like the standard filters these are applied using the current stencil if one is in use so you can select just a section of the image for them to work on. When you choose a filter a small window opens, most of these have a preview thumbnail at the top and the controls for the filter below enabling you to preview settings before committing yourself. The thumbnail can be zoomed and panned so you can view the area of the image you are interested in.

Product Information

Developer: Haage and Partner
Distributor: Haage and Partner
WWW:
www.haage-partner.com
Price: 89DM (about £30)

And now, without further ado lets take a look at the new filters in this collection...

Shine

Adds a shine of the current foreground colour around the edges of an object on a layer with a transparent background. You can set the size of the "shine", how quickly it fades and how transparent it is.

Glow/Dark Glow

Glow makes bright parts of your image glow, affecting the areas around them. The colour of the glow comes from the colour of the part of the image glowing but you do have the option of limiting the glow to particular colour channels, for example only red or green and blue. Other options let you control the strength of the glow and the threshold at which an area is considered bright enough to "glow". This works best with a light subject on a plain dark background, for example bright orange text on a black background begins to look like fire after a strong application of glow.

DarkGlow is similar to "Glow" except it works on dark areas of the image rather than light.

"Fun" Effects

These three filters that change the image's colours to achieve "interesting" effects: Psycho, Neon and Alien.

Solar

This filter has a really interesting effect, it isn't just the normal solarise found in other programs, it also applies some sort of blur that makes the image look really liquid, it reminds me or neon lights reflected in water... great! Settings allow you to vary the amount of "blur" and the look of the colour effect.

Highpass

Mutes areas with little contrast and brightens areas of high contrast, several controls enable you to achieve a variety of different effects.

Border Effects

This filter adds a border around the image, a large selection of border styles are supplied on the Plugins Collection CD-ROM. The border uses the foreground colour and vary from giving a slight texture to the edge of the image to putting it in an shaped (for example oval or pentagram) frame. While the range of borders is extensive only using one colour does limit what can be achieved. Another difficulty is finding the boarder you want as all the variations on each type are similarly named, a preview requester with thumbnails would have been useful here.

Light Change

Enhances the blue channel of the image and dims the red, simulating night time (the human eye sees blues better than reds in low light conditions), strangely there are no controls over the strength of this effect, personally I feel it is a bit harsh for many situations.

Object Warp

Allows you to warp the image by adjusting the position of the four corner points. This plugin is really limited by the ArtEffect interface, rather than having control points to move on the image you must enter co-ordinates or use sliders to move each point, it can be difficult to relate the sliders to the effect you want to achieve.

Oil Painting

This is slightly different from ArtEffect's default OilPaint effect, the main improvement is that it offers a much greater degree on control with 22 levels rather than the original's 3. The result achieved is also rather different than the original, with less blurry and more defined "brush strokes".

This is the slowest plug-in in my experience, processing my image with a Factor of 6 took about three minutes.

Page Curl

This is the classic filter that makes the edge of an image look as if it is peeling up off the background. This implementation is pretty nice with selectable transparency (for the curled over area) and shadow. You can select the size of the curl by setting a stencil over just the area you want to effect using the rectangular masking tool before applying the filter.

Polar

Warps rather as if it were wrapped around a cone. This is one of those effects that is quite clever but I for one can't really think of a time when it would be useful.

Wabble

Distorts the image into fragments looking like drops of water pooling together on a window, a very attractive effect with plenty of control over the look of the end result.

Wave

Produces the classic rippled effect, as if a stone had been dropped into the centre of your image. You can set the number and strength of the waves and a number of other options control exactly how they are rendered. Strangely there is no way of defining the centre point of the ripple.

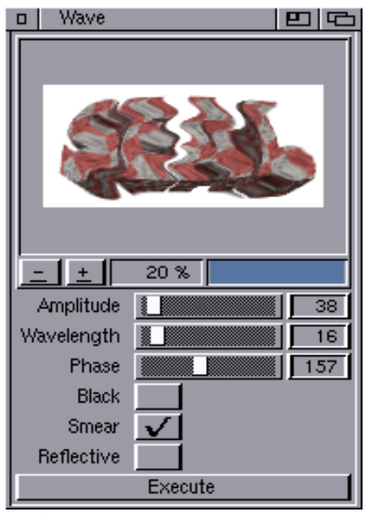
Auto Level

Adjusts the colour levels in an image to make it use the full spectrum, for example if you had a scan where the blacks were in fact dark grey this filter would force them to pure black, enhancing the contrast in the rest of the image too. AutoLevel has several modes, Auto Contrast which considers the picture as a whole and alters the levels with out changing colours, Auto Level which considers each colour channel separately and could change colours and FG/BG Level which allows you to pick which colour in the image should be moved to white and which to black.

Gaussian Blur

An improvement over the standard "Gaussian" blur supplied with ArtEffect that is faster and has more options. There are radius and finetune sliders so you can get exactly the blur you require. The blur can also be applied to the alpha channel of the image with a click on the mode cycle gadget.

Smart Blur / Smart Median



The filter settings windows for "Wave" and "Softener" (top right).

These two blurring filters are specifically designed for removing artifacts from images without losing detail. They attempt to blurs only flat areas of colour and not sharp edges. They are especially useful for removing dither and moire patterns from scanned printed images.

Softener

A filter which convincingly simulates the soft focus effect often found in "sentimental" films and photographs.

Unsharp Mask

This filter sharpens images but retains a very "natural" look, it is ideal for improving slightly "soft" photos. The filter includes a good range of controls again helping you to get exactly the effect you're after.

Blurs

The collection includes several other blur effects so you're really spoilt for choice!

Other Filters

The other filters in the collection are:

Threshold+, changes the image to mono with selectable threshold and smoothing.
Color to Gray, Changes a colour image to greyscale with adjustable levels.
Prisma, Overlays warped versions of the colour channels on the image, no options.
Shift, Shifts the colours of an image towards blue/red, no options.
Warp, Pulls the image towards a user defined point, set by sliders.
Rankorder, Various smoothing operations: Minimum, Maximum and Median.

Helpers

Auto Crop

Automatically crops images with the subject on a plain coloured background, a tolerance setting allows it to cope with slight variations in the background colour.

Eraser

A quick way of erasing the current image or layer to the background colour, foreground colour, black or white.

SuperView

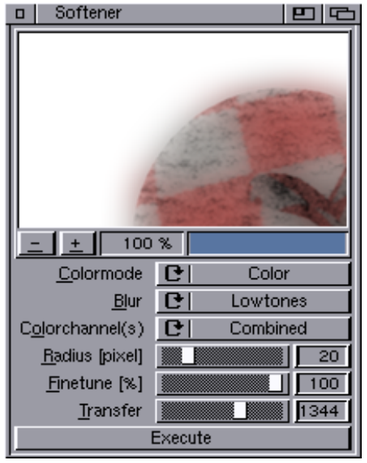
Allows ArtEffect to load and save via SuperView's range of loaders and savers for many different formats.

PostScript Print

Allows ArtEffect to print an Image direct to a PostScript printer or to an EPS file which can then be imported into packages like PageStream. This module has so many options I won't try to explain them all here, suffice to say it is very flexible!

Speed

Unlike some of the filters supplied with ArtEffect I have been impressed with the performance of all the plugins in this collection. My test machine is an A3000 with a 50Mhz 060 and on an 800x600 test image most of filters completed in less than half a minute, many in significantly less time.



Conclusion

This is a substantial collection of plugins and I'm pleased to say that rather than having loads of frivolous effects that you would probably only use once or twice it concentrates on really useful tools. The cost seems reasonable for the number of filters and modules although it might seem a little steep if you bought ArtEffect at the recent special offer price. If you use ArtEffect for Photo editing then the level balancing and sharpening plugins will be very handy and if you scan a lot of print the smart blurs are fantastic and as far as I know not available for any other Amiga package. Altogether I recommend this collection wholeheartedly to all ArtEffect

Results

Pros
Wide range of filters and utilities.
Good performance.
Really useful effects you won't find anywhere else.

Cons
No PPC support.
Some interfaces limited by ArtEffect's architecture.

REVIEWS

Mediator Multimedia CD Preview

Robert Williams helps Chris Emmins with the latest additions to his Mediator.

If you've read our PCI update feature in the last couple of Clubbed issues, or paid any attention to Amiga sites on the net or other Amiga magazines, you will have heard about the Mediator, Elbox's PCI busboard family. More specifically the A1200 version that was the first Amiga PCI busboard to reach the market when it was released last year. Since the original release Elbox have been enhancing the original drivers which shipped with the card, these were for S3 Virge graphics cards and for some 10MB/s Ethernet cards. Importantly they have also added support for the 3Dfx Voodoo range of graphics cards which offer better performance than any previous Amiga card and should also excel in 3D acceleration once Warp3D drivers are available.

With these basic driver requirements dealt with many Mediator owners and potential owners were waiting impatiently for the drivers for other PCI cards to be released, particularly eagerly awaited were drivers for sound cards and TV cards which had been promised since the Mediator's release. With the released of the MultiMedia CD package Elbox have catered for both these requirements, the CD contains drivers for Sound Blaster 128 sound cards, a range of TV cards along with enhanced graphics card drivers. Before we get into the nitty gritty of the MultiMedia CD package, what can these new cards actually do for us?

Sound Cards

An add-on sound card typically offers several advantages over the Amiga's built-in sound system, firstly it provides a 16bit, at least CD quality stereo sound output. Sound cards also allow you to record in the same 16bit quality and finally offer the facility to mix different sound sources, for example CD audio from a CD-ROM, built-in Amiga audio and sound card output.

TV Cards

These cards contain a TV tuner and allows you to display a television picture in a window on your computer screen while you continue to use the machine as normal. Most TV cards use DMA (direct memory access) between to the graphics card allowing them to display a picture with minimal system load. Other features sometimes offered by TV cards include FM radio and recording TV pictures into an animation.

SEAL committee member Chris Emmins has a Mediator installed in his A1200 tower and when the MultiMedia CD was announced he purchased a suitable sound card and TV card. When Chris received his CD I went to see him and help get the new goodies installed. As the CD arrived so close to the deadline for this issue of Clubbed we decided to treat this as a preview rather than a full review because we didn't have time to properly test the cards and software.

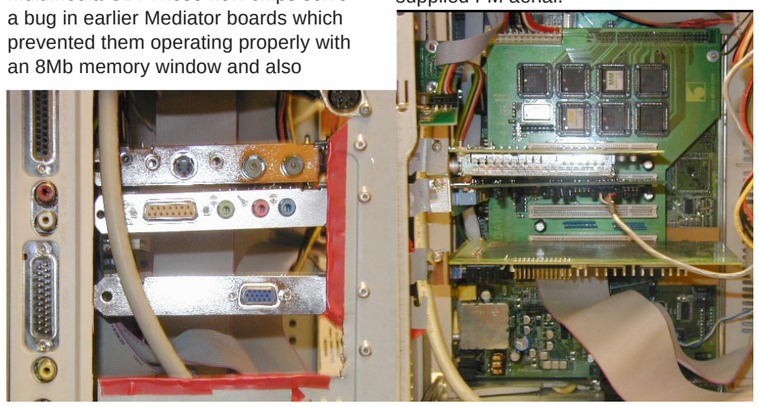
Before you Start

Now, before we go any further it's important to note that both the sound card and TV card drivers require you to have a Voodoo graphics card installed in you Mediator because they must use some of its memory for DMA.

Hardware Installation

The first step was to replace two programmable logic chips (commonly called MACH chips in the Mediator world as that is the type Elbox uses) with the updated versions supplied with the MultiMedia CD. These new chips solve a bug in earlier Mediator boards which prevented them operating properly with an 8Mb memory window and also provide a hardware key to reduce piracy of the drivers on the CD. A small tool is provided to lever out the existing chips and the new ones push quite easily into place, the whole procedure is shown with step-by-step photographs inside the CD cover. The two new cards, a Creative Sound Blaster 128 and a Hauupage WinTV Primo FM could then be fitted. In a PowerTower or other similar A1200 tower conversion this would simply be a case of removing a back plate for each card, slotting them in and doing up a couple of screws. As Chris has a home made tower he had to make up a couple of small brackets and pop-rivet them in position to hold the cards. Once the cards were installed some cables then needed to be connected.

The TV card has a line out jack which is connected, using a supplied lead, to the line in of the sound card. Inside the tower the sound card has three internal audio inputs, we hooked one (marked CD) up to the CD-ROM using a standard cable supplied with the drive. It will also be possible to connect the Amiga audio up to one of these internal inputs but a special lead which goes from the phonos on the back of the Amiga to the four pin connection on the card will have to be made up. The TV card needs a standard aerial connection and will also handle analogue cable TV if you happen to have it. As Chris' TV card included an FM tuner we also had to connect a supplied FM aerial.



From top to bottom the Win TV card, Sound Blaster and Voodoo 3 installed in Chris' tower.

Software Installation

Each of the drivers on the CD has a separate installer, the sound card and Voodoo drivers are very straight forward, just run them and the drivers and installed or updated respectively. The TV card installation asks you several questions including your model of TV card (we needed to pick Hauupage New for ours), region of the world (West Europe) and TV system (PAL-BDGHI). It is obvious from the range of specific TV cards supported (there must be over 20) and the number of TV systems catered for that Elbox have worked hard to make their drivers widely compatible.

TV Card Usage

Currently the interface for the TV card is very basic, it consists of a script file set to run from an icon on Workbench for each of the channel numbers, 1 to 69, in your region. Double clicking on a channel icon opens a Workbench window showing the chosen channel, TV stations only broadcast on certain channels so we went through the icons in turn and found the stations for our area. Once found we renamed the scripts to reflect their station names and dragged them onto AmiDock for easy access. Each script calls the command TV which is installed in the C: directory with the PLL keyword defining the frequency of the channel. The TV command has other options to change settings like the brightness and contrast of the picture and it is also used to tune the radio. This is achieved using the FM switch and setting a frequency using the PLL keyword. For both TV and radio channels the frequency of the channel in Mhz must be multiplied by 16, so for example our local radio station, Essex FM on 96.3Mhz would use the command C:TV FM PLL=1541 (we found you have to round the frequency up to a whole number (96.3 * 16 is actually 1540.8)). The drivers do not currently support generating an animation from TV or video input, saving frames to disk, teletext or other advanced features.

Product Information

Developer: Elbox
Distributor: Power Computing
WWW:
www.elbox.com
www.powerc.com
Tel: (01234) 851500
Price: Mediator 1200 £149.95
MMCD £24.95

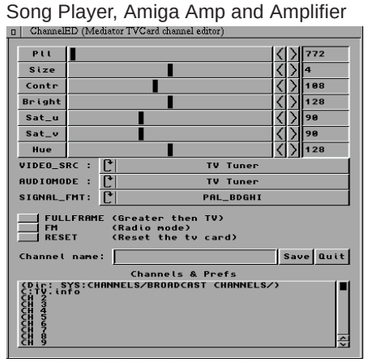
It works! TV in a Workbench window.

Initially we had some problems getting the TV window to open, but the sound came through OK. Fortunately we had read a message on the Amiga-Mediator mailing list from another user with this problem. He had found the TV window would open after quitting AmiDock or if he reduced his icon rendering quality on the Workbench preferences program from Best to Good. We quit Amidock first and then the TV window came up so then we changed the icon colours and rebooted, all was OK. It seems like the icons in AmiDock were using too many colours so the TV card window couldn't allocate those it needed.

From a fairly quick look the TV card's output seems very impressive with a good clear picture comparable to a television connected to the same aerial. The window can be resized without any loss of performance although inevitably the picture starts to look blocky on a high-res monitor. Having the TV card running seems to have no noticeable effect on the performance of the rest of the system, including graphics re-draw, extremely impressive!

Sound Card Usage

An AHI driver is supplied supporting recording and playback through AHI compatible software, this includes most audio programs, player utilities such as Song Player, Amiga Amp and Amplifier and some games. The Sound Blaster drivers add a whole raft of audio modes to the AHI preferences including 8 and 16bit, mono and stereo options. On Chris' system we experienced some crackle during playback but many others on the mailing list and SEAL member Tony Johnson aren't having any problems so we're hopeful this isn't a general problem with the card or drivers.



ChannelEd makes setting up new TV stations much easier.

Also supplied is a Mixer program with a nice MUI interface, this allows you to set the playback and recording levels for all the outputs and inputs on the Sound Blaster card to get the ideal mix. It is particularly useful when you have inputs at different volumes, for example the built-in Amiga audio and CD audio, as you can stop one swamping the other. The mixer also offers a master volume control for the overall output level, balance controls and the facility to mute particular inputs or outputs.

Third Party Software

If I had to make one negative comment about this package it would be the lack of a graphical interface for the software, fortunately the Mediator has several very active users on the Amiga-Mediator mailing list (http://graups.yahoo.com/group/Amiga-Mediator) who are working on GUI's for various aspects of the system. Richard Brooklyn has written Medication, a MUI utility which aims to hold controls for all the cards connected to a Mediator. At the time of writing Richard has released screenshots of a new version with support the TV card and sound card. ChannelEd by Philippe van Calsteren allows you to control the TV card and define new TV and FM channels from a comfortable gadtools GUI. Finally Pawel Filipczak has released TaskiMixer which is similar to the Mixer supplied with the Sound Blaster drivers but offers all the controls in one window instead of on separate "pages" of the GUI.

Conclusion

Altogether we were very impressed with the MultiMediaCD, the hardware installation was easy and the cards supported are inexpensive and easy to obtain. The software was also easy to install and seems reliable (except for the slight sound problem which I'm sure we'll solve). Hopefully Elbox will add a GUI and some of the more advanced features to the TV card drivers but this is an excellent start, especially when combined with a third party GUI.

Epson Stylus Photo 790

Mick and Sharon Sutton are "Printing for Two"!

New Printer Needed

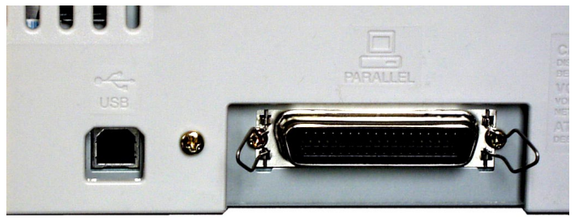
Recently my wife purchased an Apple iMac which we needed to get a printer for, having thought about it I wanted to connect it to my nice Epson Stylus Photo 700 (reviewed in issue 3 of Clubbed by myself), which I had connected to my Amiga. After trying both Belkin USB to Parallel and USB to Serial adapters (the 700 has parallel and apple serial interfaces) with no luck in getting them to work, I decided to bite the bullet and get myself a printer that had both USB and Parallel interfaces so I could connect both computers without hassle.

A Choice is Made

As I was impressed by the output quality of Epson printers it was my natural choice as a successor to my trusty 700. Looking at the Epson range I noticed the Stylus Photo 790 which had both Parallel and USB interfaces and had an advertised maximum resolution of 2880 x 720 and cost less (just) than £100, too good to be true I thought! Time to check what drivers were included in my version (7.06) of Turboprint, damn it wasn't listed there. I went online and checked on the Irseesoft website (http://www.irseesoft.de) to see if any updates included the driver for this printer and to my joy there was a beta driver (7.18) as an upgrade to version 7.10. As I only had version 7.06 the first thing was to purchase the latest version to enable me to upgrade with the latest drivers.

Once I had got myself the latest version (7.18) of Turboprint I went straight out and got myself a spanking new Stylus Photo 790 and couldn't wait to get it connected to my Amiga (and my wife's iMac of course).

The Printer



The USB port (left) and the parallel port (right) can be connected to two computers simultaneously.

Once out of the box it was just a matter of removing my old printer and replacing it with the new one. The style (no pun intended) of the 790 is a little different to my 700 I had connected at the time, it is a little curvier in design and has a blue mechanism cover (no doubt following the iMac look trend), but is quite similar with only three buttons on the front and an in-built sheet feeder which takes up to 100 sheets of A4 paper at the rear. The footprint of the printer is just a little larger than that of the 700 and is 45cm x 25cm with the paper tray (at the front) folded up. At the rear of the printer is the power inlet socket, centronics parallel, and USB interface.

Again like my older 700 Photo the 790 has two cartridges, one for pure black and the other one being a five colour type (but not the same ones as used in my 700). The cartridges are easily installed into their respective carriers by simply lifting the top clamp and slotting them in and closing. The cartridges themselves are quite well priced due to the fact that the print heads are in the printer thus reducing manufacturing costs of them.

Installation of the printer just like any other and is just a matter of finding a space for it (in my case replacing the old one), having a power socket close by and within reach of the centronics parallel cable from your Amiga, and in my case of course within reach of the USB lead from my missus iMac.

OK, Lets Get Going

Now it's time to get this new toy of mine working, put some paper in the sheet feeder, power it on via the button on the far right, and watch as it does its party piece of going through the head cleaning and alignment routines (about 2 or 3 minutes) which is I may say quite noisy (nearly woke the kiddies) but is only done when you use it for the first time or if you have not used it for a long time. The operation of the printer itself is very easy (almost identical to my old 700) with three buttons,one for power on, a second button (hold for 3 seconds) to do a head cleaning operation should you need one and a third button to operate the sheet feeder manually if needed.

To see what this printer performed like first of course I had to install the supplied printer drivers for the iMac (it's a pity this isn't the case for the Amiga) and try it out to make sure it worked ok (which it did). Now it was time to check it worked ok on the Amiga , first I selected the correct driver in Turboprint prefs, set a few options such as paper type, output resolution and dithering pattern and that was it, ready to go. I ran Graphic Publisher (included with Turboprint) and loaded an image from one of my own Photo Cd`s and for this particular printing job set the resolution to the highest available (2880 x 720) and chose the Photo Glossy paper option within the preferences.

Is it a Photo or is it a Print?

Once the printer started printing I noticed that it was much quieter in normal operation than it was when it was doing it's head cleaning business, which was a bit of a relief!

The resultant printout was absolutely incredible such was the quality, it was sharp, band free and almost totally indistinguishable from an original photograph with no sign (to my naked eye anyway) of any dithering. These quality printouts are a result from a combination of the high resolutions the printer is capable of (2880 x 720) and the fact it uses five colours instead of the three found in most colour inkjet printers. I must say that due to the very high resolution and the fact that I printed the image at about A5 image size it took about 45 minutes or so to complete. As the iMac was all set up and ready to go I decided to print the same image at the same size and resolution and it took about 20 minutes. This I believe is due to several factors, the first being possibly that the processor on the iMac is much faster (600 Mhz G3), and that the USB interface is much faster than a parallel one especially a bog standard one on an Amiga! The image printed from the iMac was also slightly more vibrant in colour, but as I mentioned earlier the driver in Turboprint is a Beta and may need some tweaking to get the best results. Having said that I was more than happy with the results I got in printing photo quality images from the Amiga and also text printing is of very high quality and fast too.

Conclusion

When I reviewed my Epson Stylus Photo 700 in issue 3 of Clubbed I thought I had seen something special, but time marches on and technology improves, now with this model I can say the same again. So in conclusion the Epson Stylus 790 Photo is just brilliant for people who want to print very high quality photo images, want to output high quality text at quite high speeds and have a budget of £100. What more do you want from a printer?

Results

Pros

Excellent Photo quality
Easy to use
Very good value for money

Spyrus RD300S

When the time came to upgrade my trusty Kodak DC210, I faced a bit of a dilemma, one that faces a lot of Amiga owners when it comes to choosing a digital camera.

I had been using the 1 Megapixel DC210 with the Amiga, by means of the freeware "DC210 Wizard" and the Amigas serial port. Now I was looking to buy a 3.4 Megapixel camera, and very few came with serial ports, USB was really the only viable option to transfer the large graphics files to computer.

As we all know, USB is not yet available for the Amiga Classic, and so, having considered several possible cameras, I settled for the Canon PowerShot G1, and resigned myself to having to use my Pentium3 Notebook computer to download the pictures from the camera.

As my A4000 is networked to the Notebook, it was still relatively easy to transfer the pictures to the Amiga, but the network isn't always set up, as the laptop is usually packed away in its case ready to be used away from home, and setting it all up just to download a few pictures is a pain.

I happened to be discussing the matter of digital cameras and the problems associated with downloading pictures to an Amiga with Neil Bothwick at the Kickstart 2001 Show, and he told me that he uses a SCSI Card Reader, with PCMCIA CompactFlash adaptor. "Tell me more" I said...

Neil went on to explain that all that is needed is to connect the CD ROM sized reader into a SCSI2 bus, and mount it using MountDOS. MountDOS is a very small and clever piece of software that allows the mounting of devices on the Amiga OS. All that is necessary is to change the MountDOS icons tooltypes to suit your controller device name and number, then double click on the icon to mount the device - simple!

It sounded ideal, but where could I get hold of one? "As it happens, I have a few for sale" says Neil. The deal was done there and then, and as soon as I got back financial arrangements were completed, and a SPYRUS RD300S Card Reader arrived in the post a few days later. The unit itself is slightly smaller than an external CD-ROM, and very much lighter. It has twin slots on the front, each with a separate eject button, and will take type I and II Cards. There are twin condensed 50 pin SCSI2 connectors, power connector, Unit ID selector and terminator switch on the back. Four LEDs on the front panel show Power, Status, and "In use" (one for each slot).

Power is 9v AC, and as the original PSU was 110 volt, I didn't bother to have it posted to me, the PSU from an old Supra modem fitted the job perfectly (most modems have 9v AC PSUs)

Installation was simplicity itself, I plugged it into the back of my Epson Scanner as the last unit, set the termination to "on" and the Unit ID to 1. So as to mount the cameras CompactFlash card into the reader, I bought a Jessops adaptor locally for £7.99, and plugged that into one of the Card Readers two slots, and that completed the hardware installation.

I had already downloaded MountDOS from Aminet, and set the device to my Oktagons device name, with the unit set at 1. I also used the Fat95 option to allow long filenames.

So, all was ready for the big moment - double click on MountDOS, and Bingo! I had a "POWERSHOT" icon appear on my Workbench! Using DOPus 4.1 (I know, I'm a Neanderthal;) I opened the pics into one window, and downloaded them to disk, the whole sixteen megabyte card taking just over a minute. I have now made a menu option on Toolsdaemon to mount the CompactFlash card, which has streamlined the operation even more.

I can't tell you how pleased I am that I can now download pictures so easily to my A4000, and also have the option, by purchasing SmartMedia or MemoryStick adaptors, to be able to use almost any digital camera on the market with my Amiga!

Kevin Twyman

Results

PhotoScope

Elliott Bird finds the ideal software for his Artec scannner.

The Amiga certainly has quite a lot of scanner software available, both commercially and shareware, from the likes of ScanQuix, ImageFX, BetaScan, Scantrax, and of course PhotoScope. Support is sadly limited these days, you can just go out and buy any scanner you fancy, and assume it's going to be supported by Amiga scanner software. This is mainly down to the fact that the majority of scanners these days are USB, not Parallel or SCSI sadly.

PhotoScope only supports Umax and Artec scanners (sorry Mustek, Epson and HP users!). But I've found PhotoScope to be one of the very few supported scanner software for my Artec scanner, lucky that it was bundled with my scanner really!

PhotoScope comes on floppy disk and has a separate manual, which is well detailed and not too complex for beginners. It is set out in steps complete with screen shots and I find it very good to follow.

PhotoScope is reasonably easy to install, as it comes with the usual custom installer. Once installed, it's a case of calling up the PhotoScope preferences, finding your scanner, setting the right unit number, and of course finding the adequate device driver that your scanner is hooked up to, which doesn't take too long at all. Once you've done that, your ready to go!

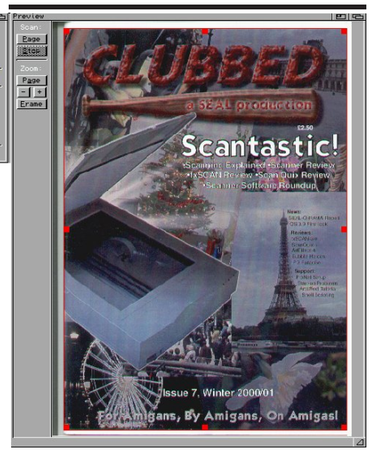
When you fire up PhotoScope, a small window appears with a "scan" button. This may take a while to notice if you are running on a high res, graphics card screen mode. :) But it is located in the top left hand corner of your screen. When you press this scan button, you get two windows open up. The one on the left is where you can adjust your image. Towards the top you can adjust the image resolution and manually change the size of the image. Below that is where you can change the scanning mode; "Colour", "Black and White" for greyscale images, or "Text" for scanning text or line drawings. Below that are the correction sliders, which adjust the contrast, brightness, colour, and gamma value. If you want to go back to the defaults, you can do so by clicking the Reset button. Next to that is the Analyse Image button, which automatically adjusts the brightness, contrast, gamma, etc. to suit the image better. The results are rarely satisfactory, but you can still adjust the image with the correction sliders. Any adjustments made to the image are done in real time, which does seem to be rather slow, even on a graphics card screen. It can sometimes take a few moments to catch up.

The other window is the actual preview. The buttons include the page button, with this you can start any preview scans. The preview window will update in real time while the image is being scanned. It can be stopped at any time. If you have a preview image, you can easily zoom in and zoom out. On the outside of the image is a red frame with 8 squares, anything within this frame is the area that will be scanned when you perform a full scan. You can resize this frame with the 8 squares, to fit around the area you want scanned.

This saves screen space when the image is viewed afterwards, as well as cutting down on file size.

When you come to performing a full scan, both of the two windows will disappear and a file requester will appear, where you can choose where to put your scanned image, and name it. Once this is done you will be asked whether you would like the image saved as an IFF or a JPEG. When you have made your choice, a progress bar will appear, showing the progress of the current scan. The scan can of course be aborted at any time. Once

PhotoScope has finished scanning, you are back with the small window with the scan button in it. To view the image you have just scanned, you will need to open up and external viewer to view it with, or



load up your favourite image program, such as Photogenics or ImageFX. If you decide to do some more scanning, click on the scan button again, and you will see your previously preview scanned image. And you can just use the same method as before.

PhotoScope can't be customised very much, and you will find that your settings are all split up into different parts of the menu. PhotoScope can be run on its own screen or on your workbench screen. You can change to have the preview in colour or greyscale, as well as change some of the scaling methods, and even the measurement unit (inches or centimetres).

The requirements to run PhotoScope are at least 6 meg, Workbench 3.0, and a hard disk (duh!). A Picasso 96 or CyberGraphX display is recommended.

Overall, PhotoScope has pretty much what I expected from it. There are a few small hiccups, nothing much to worry about, thought there is some room for improvement, if it is still being developed, which I think is unlikely due to the fact that there hasn't been a new version out for about 3 years. I still think it's worth it for the price and the minimal requirements to run it.

Product Information

Distributor: Eyetech
WWW: www.eyetech.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1642 713185
Price: £34.95

Shogo:MAD

Mick Sutton goes MAD for Hyperion's new anime themed shooter!

Some of you may remember back in issue six of Clubbed magazine, I did a review of Heretic II, and I must say that I was mightily impressed with that game. Now several months later we have another release from the same producers of that game (Hyperion-Entertainment) in the form of Shogo or Shogo:MAD (Mobile Armour Division) as it is officially titled. After which seems an eternity of any decent games whatsoever, we have had in pretty quick succession Quake GL (a bit old now), Wipeout 2097, Heretic II, Earth 2140 and now Shogo. Maybe they have not been released in as quick a succession as I seem to remember it, but that's just me showing my age!

So what sort of game is Shogo then? It is a first person perspective shooter which to me looks like a subtle combination of Mechanical Warrior 2 (Playstation game) and Quake with a Japanese anime twist (Manga etc). I say subtle but in reality this game is really slick and far more involved then either of those two games. There are several points around the game which you are armoured to the high teeth, with your high tech robot suit (MCA) which you drive more than wear due to it's immense size, and points where you are a "soft target" human being with a pistol and your wits to protect you.

What Will it Run On?

Before we get carried away with the review lets have a look at what sort of Amiga you are gonna need to play this baby. The following specs are really a minimum and the more grunt your machine has the better, so lets see a PPC accelerator, 3D graphics card (using Warp 3D), 64 Mb of RAM, CD-ROM and around 400 Mb of hard disk space. The machine that I have (and therefore this review is based on) is as follows, 603e+ 240 Mhz PPC with 060, BVision graphics card, 128 Mb of RAM, 32 speed CD-ROM and the installation on my machine took up 425 Mb of hard disk space. Also to get the most from the game I found a three button mouse handy, and there are other enhancements via the likes of AHI (so sound cards are supported).

Product Information

Developer: Hyperion Entertainment
WWW: www.hyperion-entertainment.com
Price: £35 approx.

Half an Hour Later!

The game is packaged pretty much the same way as Heretic II was, it came in a box with the CD inside and comes with a 20 page manual that is written in German and English, although it's not extensive it does give you enough information to be getting on with. I have for the sake of convenience put my game and it's manual in a DVD case which is much neater and easier to access.

Installation is a bit of a long winded affair taking about half an hour or so and uses the new highly graphical installer found on OS 3.9, whilst you are installing the game sound music is played to you which is a bit different than what we are used to, having said that it was quite simple and worked first time out of the box for me.

Lets Go

On running Shogo you are first greeted with a GUI that has many options accessible via tabs along the top. Although you could choose to "Launch Shogo" using the default settings if you are impatient, it is wise to look through the various options. The most important option that you will need to set is in the "Display" tab, here you must first choose the rendering mode (software, if you don't have a 3D card or hardware if you do) and then the display resolution. If you don't choose a render mode and resolution from these options then Shogo is... well er... no go! As I have a BVision I chose the hardware renderer (mgl.ren) and 640 x 480 resolution. The many other options are not essential but do allow you to tailor Shogo to your system by reducing sound and video quality to increase speed and vice versa.

The Shogo Launcher has full control over the game.

OK Lets Launch Shogo and Kick Arse!

Once you launch Shogo from the GUI an FMV plays which consists of short clips from within the game and gives you an instant feel for what's to come, you can abort this at any time if you are just itching to get going. The game menus now appear where you can set further in game options, for example key mapping, sound volumes and gore level! Now we are ready to rumble or quiver depending on what difficulty level you set.

When the game starts in earnest you are thrown into the thick of things, with your aim to get back to base safely. This gives you a feel for the game and a chance to master the controls. At this point you are in your MCA (mobile combat armour) and the resistance is feeble (just a few tanks) which are dwarfed by your MCA. No doubt this part of the game is intended as a training area in all but name. Your base gives you the opportunity to try out some other aspects of the game play, such as opening doors, activating switches and using lifts. It is here where you are summoned to the Admiral (Akkaraju) and given your initial orders. Before visiting the Admiral you are instructed to go to the information centre to collect all the data you need for your mission, if you fail to do this the Admiral reprimands you which is a pretty good demonstration of how Shogo is structured, your actions influence the outcome throughout the game. Before you set out on your mission the final task at base is to select your MCA from the four models avail-

REVIEWS

able. These vary in their capabilities of speed versus armour, you pick the one that's suits (you sir!) your playing style, fast and furious or slow and stealthy.

Throughout the game you receive helpful hints and messages from your comrades, these are both audible and displayed on your screen. These messages are an integral part of the game as they give you new objectives as you progress through each level. To compliment these, short cut scenes flesh out the plot and between each level there is a summary of the next mission (there is plenty of time to read it as level loading takes quite a long time).

Hard or Soft Sir!

As I have mentioned earlier there are two basic types of mission in Shogo, one with you in your MCA, the other on foot with hand held weapons. These two types of mission styles are required to complete the game, and fit into the story as it progresses.

The MCA's are absolutely huge with heavy body armour and can carry much more powerful weapons than when on foot. When in your MCA you get a sense of it's size when the enemy come running out at you on foot, soldiers look like ants and tanks look like toys, the enemy MCA's however are not so easy to crush under foot as they are the same size as you and armed to the teeth likewise! Despite their size the MCA's are quite nimble and don't feel cumbersome, which is pretty handy as battle conditions can get quite frantic with enemies coming at you from all angles. As this game has a true 3D environment (like Quake and Heretic II) enemy fire often comes from above and below. With all these enemies after your blood, there's only one thing for it, give em hell with whole arsenal of arse kicking weapons (once you have collected them of course). There are several types of weapons ranging from a sniper rifle (complete with telescopic sights), laser cannon, juggernaut (rocket launcher) and spider which creates a whirlwind of destruction around the victim it hits. All of these weapons are eye candy to watch being fired, so much so that sometimes I forget to watch out for enemy incoming fire-power!

On foot the world seems to be a much more dangerous place to live, the only protection you have is light body armour and first aid packages that are sparsely scattered around the levels. You are initially armed with a pair of pistols (aka Lara Croft) and can collect shotguns, assault rifles and machine guns, but at the end of the day nothing to compare with what you can carry with the MCA. This means that your style of play now has to change to a more stealthy approach, creeping up on your enemy and using objects for cover is the order of the day. It only takes a couple of hits to put you in a critical condition and make you start looking for those precious first aid packs.

Your commrades often contact you as shown in this grab.

In both these types of mission you are often fighting alongside allies, which can be "wingmen" who assist you or could be other troops in need of your support. In general these allies seem pretty dumb but they add another dimension to the game. If nothing else they help draw fire-power away from you which is a good plan in my book!

Visit interesting Places and Destroy Them!

One of the outstanding aspects of Shogo is the varied locations that are included, there are indoor and outdoor levels with terrains such as deserts, cities and snow covered mountain regions. The indoor levels see you everywhere from factories to space ships, which will have the usual lifts, doors and corridors. One level I really enjoyed had many vertical shafts with fans blowing air up them creating currents you could ride. Solving this level involved finding switches to reverse the airflow and destroying red hot heat sources enabling you to navigate your way through the shafts. This level is typical of the problem solving in Shogo, it involves a bit of thought but doesn't detract from the action.

Although Shogo has many varied and interesting locations, overall I didn't find the graphics as impressive as in Heretic II, maybe this is more down to the setting of the game than the quality of the graphics themselves. For example in Heretic II you could turn a corner and find a temple or other impressive building, Shogo's post apocalyptic cities just don't have the same jaw dropping impact. Having said that the graphics still evoke a good atmosphere and suit the style of the game. There are also some impressive effects especially the smoke trails from some of the weapons, which blend smoothly into the background making them look very realistic indeed. With all the graphical options set to maximum quality Shogo runs at an acceptable frame rate on my Amiga, noticeably a bit faster than Heretic II. In common with all 3D games it slows down when lots of activity is on screen, but you can obtain higher rates by reducing some of the quality options.

The sound quality of the game is also very good, particularly the transmissions you get from your comrades giving you help and guidance. The usual sound effects from the various weapons are there too of course, but we expect that don't we? A point of note that when the interactive short cut scenes are playing, I noticed there were no timing glitches that Heretic II seemed to be bugged with. In Heretic II there were several short cut scenes where the sound and movement were totally out of synch, that does not seem to be the case in this game however. There is also quite a bit of music (Japanese pop style tracks) that plays between levels and whilst in the menus, however you can turn these of if they irritate you, having said that they are suited to the game unlike the soundtracks found on Earth 2140!

Meet interesting People and Kill Them!

Like Heretic II and Quake before it, this game also supports networking. In multi-player mode up to 128 (!) players can fight it out deathmatch style. Shogo only supports TCP/IP networking so you'll need a stack like Miami or Genesis running on each machine, the physical connection can be anything your TCP/IP stacks support so you could use a simple null modem cable, Ethernet cards or even the Internet.

Once the TCP/IP connection is established you can enter Multi-player mode from either the launcher or the game menus, Shogo then starts its Multi-player Wizard which guides you though the setup step by step. First you choose whether to host a new game or join an existing one, then you choose a name for your player, which MCA you wish to use and its colour scheme. If you're hosting a game the next few screens let you set parameters such as the number of Frags (kills) or minutes after which the level will change, how many players will be allowed to connect and so on, finally you choose which levels you want to play on. There are about 20 levels to choose from, some you will recognise from the single player game and others are specially designed for death matches. As in the game some of the levels you fight in an MCA and others are on foot.

If you're connecting to an existing server the Wizard lists any games available, if you want to join an Internet game you need the IP address of the server. To find the addresses of currently active Internet servers visit the Servers page on http://www.shogo-mad.com/. I tested local networking using a null modem connection running at 57600bps with good results although there did seem to be some slow-down when the action was particularly frantic. I was only able to briefly try Internet play however it seemed to be rather slow, again especially when there was lots going on. As usual with Internet speed issues It's hard to say whether Shogo needs a particularly fast connection or if I just had a slow connection to the server.

That was Fun

All in all I think this is another top quality game release from our gaming heroes Hyperion, this sort of game, like Heretic II pushes our current hardware to the limit. Those of you who have Voodoo 3 graphics cards will get an even better performance out of the game, as I believe the weakest link in the Amiga gaming hardware isn't the CPU but the limitations of the Permidia 2 based graphics cards (BVision), so I can't wait to see it on an Amiga One. But you do get an acceptable frame rate out of it to be able to enjoy the game, particularly if you fiddle with the settings to obtain more speed. This game is really enjoyable and quite addictive, playing to the early hours of the morning is quite often the case!

Results

Pros

Excellent gameplay
Varied missions
Engrossing story

Cons

Very high hardware requirements

REVIEWS

PD Paradise

Mick Sutton and Robert Williams take a look at two excellent free utilites.

Simple Mail

By: Hynek Schlawack and Sebastian Bauer
License: GPL (Open Source)
Available From:
http://simplemail.sourceforge.net

As reported in the last issue of "Clubbed", SimpleMail is a new open source E-Mail program. Currently I am a regular user of Yam ,but I find it annoying that it doesn't directly support HTML E-Mails, so I thought it was a ood idea to give SimpleMail a bit of a go. After downloading and installing it on my system (just drag the directory to wherever you want it) time to have a little look.

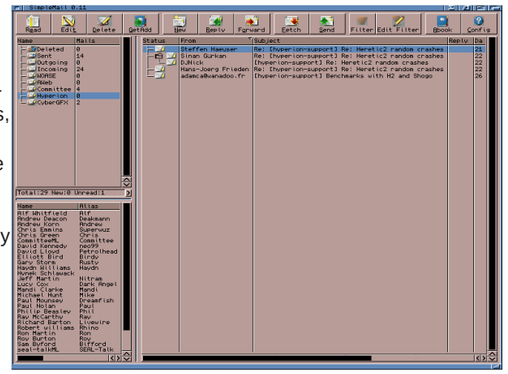
GUI

At the time of writing this article the version is 0.11, and the GUI looks very similar to that of Yam (see screenshot) and both use MUI. The most obvious difference is that SimpleMail has its address book displayed on the main GUI, which has it's uses (more on this later). I have tried three versions of SimpleMail in as many weeks such is the development pace, and I must say each version is looking better and seems very much faster. Setting up SimpleMail is very easy with the user just having to put all his or her internet logging in details via the configuration window. Within the window are settings for accounts (support for multiple accounts), receiving mail, writing mail, reading, signatures, phrases, reading plain and reading HTML. Although the configuration options are adequate they don't match Yam's flexibility, but it is early days yet.

Viewing an HTML attachment in the message read window.

Usage

Within the main GUI is a list of mails from the selected folder, when you double click on the mail, a window opens with the header at the top, any plain text in the main section and a row of icons for each part of the message at the bottom. If the mail has an HTML part you can single click on it's icon to display it directly in the read mail window complete with formatting and graphics (if set within the preferences), no more messy HTML code cluttering the mail text. The reading HTML option is a really good feature of SimpleMail, as far as I know it is the only Amiga mailer to do this, others such as Yam have to launch an external browser via arexx. Other attachments are handled in the same way, for example if the mail has a JPEG image attached, then it too will have an icon associated with it, and when clicked on will load the image into the mail window. Right clicking on an attachment icon produces a menu allowing you to save the attachment to disk. The only major function missing as far as I can see is a print option, hopefully this will soon be included!



The main Simple Mail window.
The address book is at the bottom left.
The message list is showing the threaded view.

Two functions are included that are particularly useful for people on mailing lists, filtering and threading. Filtering enables you to sort mail into separate folders based on information within the header, for example you could sort all the mails from a list into it's own folder. Threading groups together related mails in sequence so you can see all the replies to a message in a tree layout. I found this makes long conversations on mailing lists much easier to follow.

Writing mails is very straight forward and can be done in several ways, you can for example select the new mail option from the buttons on the top of the gui and then drag the recipients name from the address book into the "To" field, or you can simply double click on the recipients name and the new mail window will appear. Most of the usual functions are there such as Copy, Cut, Paste and Attachments.

As stated earlier SimpleMail is in it's infancy and is being very actively developed, that said it already has all the functions for every day E-Mailing and indeed some really good features that are new in an Amiga mailer. It may already suit your needs, go on give it a try!

By Mick Sutton

SecondSpin

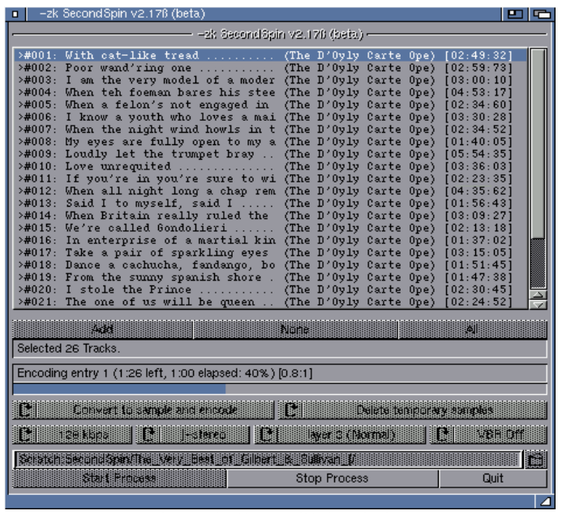
By: Lauri Ahonen
License: Giftware
Available From:
http://personal.inet.fi/bailu/zuulikuuli/secondspin.html

SecondSpin is an all in one CD Audio ripper and MPEG audio encoder, giving you all the functions you need to encode MPEG audio files in one program.

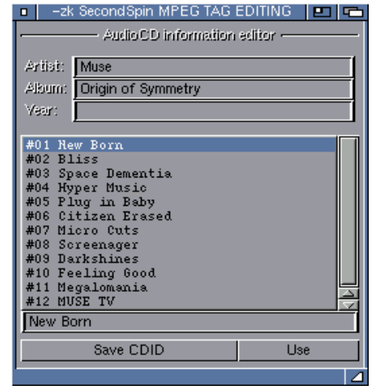
Now if you want to turn a track from an audio CD into an MPEG audio file (MPEG Audio layer 3 or MP3 is the most common type) then first you have to read the audio data from the CD. While this could be done by sampling an entire CD into the Amiga through a sound card, the easiest way is to extract the data directly across the IDE or SCSI bus to which the CD-ROM drive is attached. Not all CD-ROMs support audio extraction across the bus although if you have a reasonably modern drive you should be OK. The second problem is that some drives support audio extraction in slightly different ways, to get over this problem SecondSpin allows you to specify the type of drive you have, for my Plextor Ultraplex I found I needed to choose the "Sony compatible" option.

When you run SecondSpin or insert a CD while it is open a list of the tracks on the CD appears in the window. If you are connected to the Internet SecondSpin then looks up the CD on the freebd.org database and automatically fills in the track names for you (freedb.org is an Internet service that holds the track information for tens of thousands of CDs)... which is nice! If you don't have an Internet connection you can input the CD and track names manually using the track information editor window. In this window there is a button to save the information as a CDID file, compatible with most CD player software. In the main track list you can pick the tracks you want to process so you don't have to encode a whole CD. It is also possible to add other types of audio files you want to encode instead of CD tracks, these could be AIFFs which you have previously ripped from CDs (or other sources), WAVs, a variety of module formats, PlaySID formatted SID tunes or MIDI songs (requires Timidity++ which must be downloaded separately). SecondSpin can be used to convert existing MPEG audio files into different MPEGA formats and back to AIFF samples too!

With the tracks or files you want to work on chosen you can set whether they will be converted to samples, and then encoded in one pass or the samples will just be stored on disk. The second option has the advantage that you could rip the tracks from several CDs (usually quite a quick operation although it depends on your CD-ROM drive) and then encode them (a slower operation) all in one go, perhaps over night.



The main SecondSpin window.
Here you can see the tracks of the CD, their names have been automatically retreived from freedb.org.



If you're not on the Internet you can manually enter the track details in this window.

Even with a PPC (both PowerUP and WarpUP are supported) based system MPEG encoding is a slow process, my system (CyberStorm PPC, 233Mhz) manages about 1:1 encoding speed so each track on the CD takes about as long to encode into a MP3 file as it does to play. SecondSpin is designed with this fact in mind, once you have selected the batch of tracks on a CD you wish to encode you can just leave it to get on with the process (in fact I am encoding a CD as I write this).

Even though SecondSpin uses several external programs to carry out the rip/encode process, for example CDDA to extract the audio and other tools the process the sample types, one of its strengths is that it is so easy to setup and use. Everything required is supplied in two archives, one with the main program and the other containing the LAME encoder. After decrunching you simply run the installer, which asks all the setup questions, and you're ready to go.

Overall SecondSpin is an excellent and very well thought out package, it encodes MP3s with the minimum of fuss and the author has obviously thought about how the program will be used "in real life", he really deserves that gift!

By Robert Williams

Top Tips

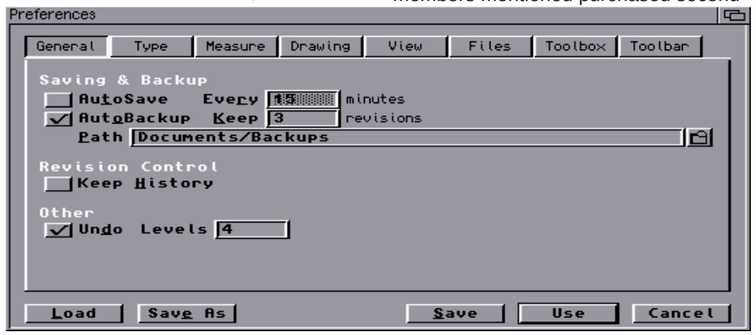
Robert Williams dishes out another selection tantalising tips.

DrawStudio Postscript Printing

As DrawStudio supports printing through Turbo Print for full quality, most people probably don't use its Postscript output. However, as far as I can tell one limitation of DrawStudio is that it can only print on A4 paper, I have an A3 printer and even if I set the page size to A3 in DrawStudio when I print, I still only get an A4 size portion. So sometimes I print using PostScript through GhostScript or into an EPS file which I then place on a page and print from PageStream. For quite a while I've been puzzled that most of the time this works fine but occasionally GhostScript throws a wobbly and won't print a particular file. After comparing the files that won't print with those that will I think I have found the solution... dotted lines. Any DrawStudio file that contains a dotted line will not print through GhostScript. I don't know whether this is a bug in DrawStudio's PostScript output or in GhostScript but anyway now I know how to get around it... avoid dotted lines!

PageStream Backups

PageStream keeps a backup whenever you save a document so you can easily revert to an older revision, by default it saves three revisions. If you are working on a large document these backups can take up a large amount of disk space and also increase saving times. On the "General" page of the PageStream Preferences window you can set the number of revisions to be kept and the directory where they will be stored, you may want to turn the feature off altogether if saving times are important. Also be sure to check your backups directory regularly and delete unwanted files.



You control PageStream's backups from this page of the Preferences window.

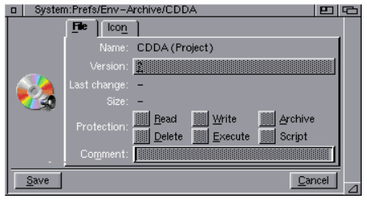
CyberVision 64/3D Zorro III Support

Two SEAL members have fallen foul of a problem with some DCE manufactured CyberVision 64/3D cards which does not seem to have been very well publicised so I thought I would mention it here. First off a bit of history, the CyberVision 64/3D is a Zorro II/III graphics card originally manufactured by Phase 5. Shortly before Phase 5 closed it was passed to DCE who started producing a new version of the card which also supported the fast Zorro II feature of the then new Apollo Z4 A1200 busboard. Unfortunately it seems that in the early batches this change broke the Zorro III compatibility of the card. The two SEAL members mentioned purchased second hand DCE manufactured CV64/3Ds for their A4000s and neither would work, with both CyberGraphX and Picasso 96 either locking up during boot or being very unstable. As soon as a Phase 5 CV64/3D was inserted the machines ran reliably again. The only reference I have seen to this problem was in an Eyetech advert some months ago where they said something like "CyberVision 64/3D, now Zorro III compatible". So I assume later batches of boards have this problem fixed. Be warned if you have a Zorro III machine and are looking for a CV64/3D graphics card find out who made it, if it is a DCE card make sure it comes from a later batch which is Zorro III compatible!

NOTE: According to the CV64/3D FAQ on www.vgr.com/cybergfx the board doesn't have a jumper to force Zorro II operation in a ZIII machine so that is not a possible work around.

Setting the CDDA Icon and Default CD Player

The CD file system is the software which allows your Amiga to read data CDs in a CD-ROM drive, when you insert an audio CD most file systems show a special icon on the Workbench usually named CDDA (Compact Disc Digital Audio). As an audio CD does not contain files what happens when you open this icon? The two most common CD file systems, AmiCDFS (uncrippled shareware) and CacheCDFS (supplied with IDEFix, OS3.5 and 3.9) start an audio CD player when you double click the icon so you can listen to the audio CD.



Check the icon you choose is a Project type. RaWbInfo, shown here, can be used to change the type if required.

Changing the Icon

The first thing you may want to do is to change the icon used by the CD file system to show an audio CD. For both file systems the icon is stored in the Env: directory which is copied from Sys:Prefs/Env-Archive/ on boot up. The icon for AmiCDFS is in the Sys sub-directory and is called def_CDDAdisk.info. CacheCDFS uses CDDA.info directly in the Env-Archive directory. To change the icon for either system simply find an icon you prefer (there are plenty on the OS3.5/9 CDs and yet more in collections on Aminet) , copy it to the appropriate directory for your file system and rename it. You will also need to check that it is a project type icon, if you use Directory Opus 5 or RaWbInfo you can do this from the Icons/Information requester, otherwise use an Icon Editor.

Changing the Icon Type

RaWbInfo (freeware Information requester replacement, included with OS3.9):
Click once on the icon, select "Information..." from the "Icons" menu. In the window appears go to the "Type" menu and select the type required. Click Save in the window.

Directory Opus 5 (commercial file manager and Workbench replacement):
Click once on the icon, select "Information..." from the "Icons" menu. Right click anywhere in the window appears, select the type required from the second section of the pop-up menu. Click Save in the window.

Icon Edit (Utility supplied with AmigaOS in the Tools drawer):
Choose "Open..." from the "Project" menu and select the icon in the file requester. Select the type required from the "Type" menu, choose "Save" and then "Quit" from the "Project" menu (note this is from the OS3.9 version, older versions may vary slightly).

CacheCDFS Preferences has lots of options but the ones we're interested in are on the Audio menu.

Selecting a Player

Now you've got a nice icon the next job is to make it call up the player of your choice. You need to have an audio CD player program set up and configured so it runs properly when you double click its icon. Doing this is beyond the scope of this tip but take a look at our CD feature in Clubbed issue 4 for detailed information.

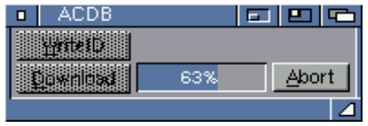
AmiCDFS

This file system calls the default tool of the def_CDDAdisk.info icon when you open the CDDA icon on Workbench. So to set the player you want to use go to the Sys:Prefs/Env-Archive/Sys drawer and find the def_CDDAdisk icon, select the icon and open the Icons/Information window. In the default tool text gadget type the full path to your player. For example I use a CD player called "Plugged" which I keep in a directory on my Work partition so my default tool is: Work:Utilities/CD/Plugged/Plugged.

CacheCDFS

By default CacheCDFS will play the CD starting from track one when you double click the CDDA icon. If you want to change this you can use the nice preferences program which can usually be found in the Sys:Prefs drawer. In CacheCDFS Preferences go up to the "Audio" menu, first check that the "Audio On" and "External Audio Player" player items are enabled (ticked). Then select the "Player Path..." item, this brings up a file requester where you can chose the program file of your audio CD player. Once that's all set simply "Save" those settings.

NOTES: With both file systems you may find you need to reboot before the changed settings take effect, especially if you've had an audio CD in the drive before making the changes. For these settings to work you must have a CD audio player configured and working for your drive, both file systems simply run the external program you choose.



ACDB's GUI couldn't be more simple!

CDDB

Many audio CD player programs offer the option of entering the title of each disc and the names of all the tracks, once the details are saved the program can automatically find the track list when you insert the CD again. If you have a large CD collection this soon gets pretty time consuming, not to mention boring! In 1997 an Internet database called CDDB became available, this holds information on thousands of CDs. Until recently CDDB used an open protocol for access and many CD player programs used this to connect to CDDB and retrieve the details of a CD, saving some typing. Then the owners of CDDB changed the method of access and provided development support only for specific platforms, Windows, Mac and Unix. In addition the owners of the database now insist users register for the service and that every application must be validated before it accesses the service. Of course this leaves smaller platforms, including the Amiga, out in the cold.

Fortunately there is a solution, a free CD information database has been developed and is available at http://www.freedb.org this is compatible with the original CDDB protocol and most applications can be set to use it simply by changing the server they connect to for CD information. You should set your software to use the server: freedb.freedb.org, more information can be found on the freedb website.

CDDB support is not widespread in Amiga audio CD player utilities but there is a solution, acdb.lha which can be found in the disk/cdrom directory on Aminet. This utility can read the ID of one or more CDs and then connects to a CDDB server to retrieve the track information. To make it work with freedb you just need to edit the tooltype HOST to read HOST=freedb.freedb.org, remember to set the DEVICE and UNIT tooltypes to point to your CD-ROM too. ACDB then creates CD information files which are compatible with many Amiga CD player utilities.

TUTORIAL

Desktop Publishing Tutorial

Robert Williams uses a simple layout to show some of PageStream's powerful features.

In this tutorial we'll be creating a simple page layout in PageStream 4 (although you should find version 3 pretty much identical for this). The idea isn't to show you how to make a beautiful layout (as you can see from the screen grab!), but to demonstrate some of PageStream's features that are useful in a longer publication, I'm particularly concentrating on text styles and page guides.

Setting the Measurement System

I have my copy of PageStream set to use millimetres as the unit of measure and therefore this is what I will use in this Tutorial. If you want to set yours the same choose "Preferences..." from the "File" menu and click on the "Measure" tab. Change the horizontal unit to "Millimetres" and set the vertical and relative units to "Same as Horizontal", I would leave the Text measurement set to "Points" as that is the standard in all other packages. If you don't want to change your measurement settings, you can still enter my millimetre measurements, just make sure you follow them with "mm", for example 22mm and then PageStream will automatically convert them into your chosen unit of measure, clever!

Create a New Page

Click on the "New" button in the Navigator window or choose "New..." from the "File" menu.

In the "New Document" requester set the page size to "A4 Letter", make sure Double-sided and Facing Pages are selected then set the margin guides as follows: Inside 10mm, Outside 15mm, Top 20mm and Bottom 20mm. Because we are going to use an uneven grid we can't use PageStream's automatic column guides which place the columns evenly across the page, so we'll set "Columns" to 1 giving no extra guides.

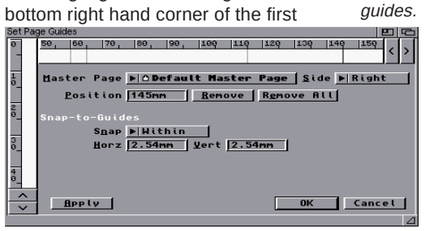
TIP: If you want to set these settings as the default for each new document click on the "Remember" button in the "New Document" requester.

Click OK, and the first page of your new document will be displayed in document window, PageStream indicates the margins you set with guides, you can change their colour on the View tab of the Preferences window. Because this is the first page of the document, the front cover, it does not have a facing page. Click on the right pointing arrow at the bottom of the document window next to the page number button (currently showing 1/-) to move to page 2. Because page 2 faces page 3 the Facing Pages option we set earlier means that both are shown in a double page spread.

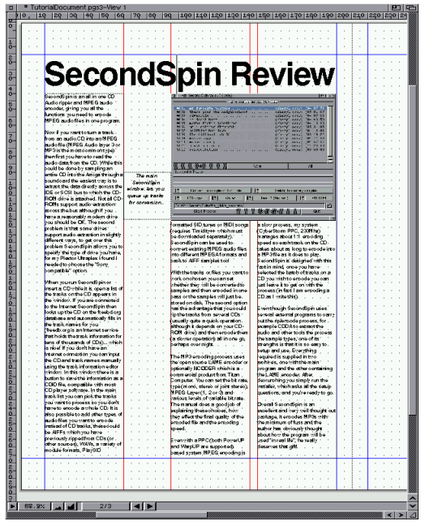
Get Organised with a Grid

Before we start on any layout we need to decide on a grid, to make life a bit more interesting I've decided on an uneven three column grid with one 5mm gutter (the space between columns) and one 30mm gutter. As an A4 page is 210mm wide this will give us three columns 50mm wide, to help layout the page we can set some page guides. Choose "Set Page Guides..." from the Layout menu, in the requester that appears you click on the grey number part of the rulers to set a horizontal or vertical page guide. Once one is set you can change its exact position by editing the Position text gadget. Guides are set individually for each side of the spread (so you can have a different layout on each side) and are held against a masterpage so they can vary in different parts of the document. We'll start with the left hand page, make sure Side is set to "Left" and define vertical (along the top of the requester) guides at 65mm, 95mm, 145mm and 150mm. Switch to the right "Side" and define vertical guides at 60mm, 65mm, 115mm and 145mm.

When you click OK you should see the guides appear on the page marking the grid we are going to use. To actually place the text we need to add some text frames, click on the text frame button in the tool bar, check it is set to draw a single column. Now click on the left hand page at the top left hand corner of the margin guides and drag down to the bottom right hand corner of the first column defined by the page guides. By default snap to guides is switched on so it should be easy to get the frame in exactly the right place. Draw two more frames on the page following the layout marked by the guides.



Setting the page guides.



Text

Next we'll insert some text into our newly created frames, click on the text tool (the "A" button on the tool bar) and then click in the left hand frame you have just defined, a cursor should appear in the frame. Choose "Insert Text" from the "File" menu and in the file requester pick a text file, I'm going to use my SecondSpin review from this issue of Clubbed but you could pick any text file. In the Insert Text options window click "Insert" to accept the default options (if you're importing from a wordprocessor document uncheck the "Retain Formatting" option). After a few moments the text appears in the frame, but it doesn't flow into the other frames we've created, to do this we need to link the frames. Choose "Link Text Frames" from the Layout menu, notice that your pointer changes to an empty box, click in the first frame, the pointer changes to a full box indicating you have started a link. Now click on the second and third frames in turn, you should see the text flow into them as you click. When you're finished click on the pointer tool in the tool bar to come out of linking mode.

Just specify the items you need for a style.

Prepare to Style

It's time to format the text, to do this we will use PageStream's Text styles which would allow us to apply exactly the same formatting to other articles in the publication and change them easily. Before we can format the text we need to create the style, to do this choose the menu item "Edit/Define/Text Styles...". Text styles can apply either to entire paragraphs or to one or more characters we want a Paragraph style so we can change the line spacing and other paragraph formatting if necessary. Check the Type gadget is set to "Paragraph" and you will see a list of predefined paragraph styles, but we're creating a new style, so click on the "New..." button. In the Paragraph Style window enter a name for the style, I'm calling mine "Small Body Text". All we need to set here for the moment is the Font, Size and Alignment. I choose Times Normal, 9pt and Left respectively. Leave everything else as the default, all the items that are blank (like the width) or have an "X" in their check box are not controlled by the style and can still be set manually.

Click "OK" and then "Done" in the "Define Styles" window, to apply the newly defined style to the text choose the text tool, click anywhere in the text and press Right-Amiga+A (or choose Select All from the Edit menu) then click on the paragraph button in the edit palette (marked with a ¶ symbol). Click the style gadget with the left button, point to the "Small Body Text" style and release the button, the text will then be formatted using the new style.

The page looks pretty boring so let's add a heading, for this we'll use one of PageStream's Text Blocks, these allow text to be easily scaled and positioned but don't have a fixed right margin, ideal for headings. Make sure the text tool is selected then click anywhere on the page away from one of the existing text frames, a cursor should appear where you clicked. Now type the heading "SecondSpin Review". As headings tend to be formatted more creatively than body text I don't usually bother using style tags on them, format this heading by selecting it all (RAmiga+A) and in the edit palette click on the Character (C) button. Use the font gadget to choose Triumvirate Bold.

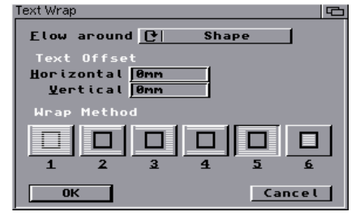
To make space for the heading at the top of the page, we need to size the text frames to move their tops down, we can easily do this for all the frames at once. Choose the pointer tool then click on the first frame, hold down either shift key and then click the other two frames in turn, you should see a set of 8 handles appear around each selected frame. Now release the shift key and drag the top middle handle of any selected frame downward about 25mm, you should see the outline of all the frames move, release the mouse button when you're happy with the position.

Drag the heading to the top left hand corner of the margin guides. While it is still selected drag the handle in the bottom right hand corner of the text to the right margin guide on the page. While you drag hold down a Shift key keeping the text in proportion.

Let's get Graphical

They say a picture paints a thousand words (just don't tell Clubbed's contributors, Ed.) and an image certainly makes a page more interesting. To place an image select "Place Graphic..." from the "File" menu and choose an image in the file requester, I've got a screen grab of the SecondSpin window. Drag the image so its top left hand corner is at the top left of the middle frame. Then drag the bottom right handle of the image to size it to the width of the two right hand frames, notice that when you drag from a corner an image automatically retains its proportions without holding Shift.

Now we have some text hidden under the image so we'll set the image so text wraps around it. Make sure the image is still selected then choose "Text Wrap..." from the "Object" menu or just press the "W" key. In the Wrap requester choose option 5 then click OK, the text flows below the image.



Making the text wrap around an image or other object.

The wide gutter between the first and second text frames gives us an ideal place for a caption, choose the text frame tool to draw a new text frame about 20mm high in the gutter. Click the text tool and then in the new frame and type "The main SecondSpin window lets you queue up tracks for conversion.". To format this text we're going to use another style but this time it will be based on our "Small Body Text" style. Open the "Define/Text Styles..." window from the "Edit" menu and create a new Paragraph style. Call this style "Small Caption" and choose "Small Body Text" as the "Base" style. This means all the settings from that style will be used by the new style except those we choose to override. All I want to do with this style is make it italic and centred. So click the "Italic" checkbox until it shows a tick and set the alignment gadget to "Center". Click "OK" then "Done" to get back to the document and then apply the new style to the caption.

Quite Stylish

Now it's time to see the power of styles, what if we decided we wanted Triumvirate to be the base font for our body text and captions? Well this is now easy, just go to the Define Styles window, pick "Small Body Text" in the list and click "Edit...". Change the Font to Triumvirate Normal then click OK, immediately you should see all the text with that style applied being reformatted, this will include text in the "Small Caption" style because it is based on the style which changed... very handy, particularly in a long document!

TIP: I find I sometimes have to force a page redraw (by zooming in or out or pressing F10) to see all the styles change, you may also need to do some re-formatting because any change is style is likely to make the overall text a different length and paragraph breaks will fall in different places.

I hope this tutorial was useful in providing a practical example of how page guides and styles can be used, if you would like further instalment of this tutorial covering master pages, chapters, pagination and other aspects of PageStream please let me know.

SUPPORT

Back to Basics: Archiving

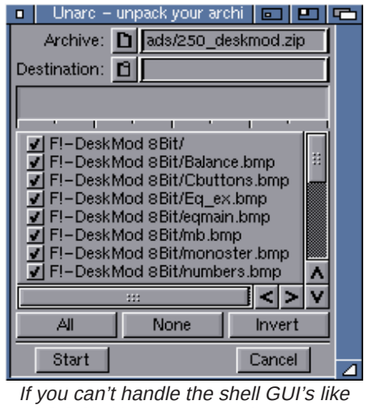
Archives of various types are found everywhere, especially on the Internet. Robert Williams explores the most common types and how to deal with them.

An archive is a collection of files, which can be of any type, stored in a single file, the archive. Most archives can also keep the files they contain organised in directories too. Archives are often used to distribute software because the program itself, documentation, sample files and everything else required can be distributed in one archive. This is by no means the only use for archives however, at any time you need to group a lot of files an archive can be useful. Many types of archive also incorporate some level of data compression so the included files are not only neatly grouped together but also reduced in size. Compressed archives are very popular on the Internet because a smaller file is quicker to download over a relatively slow Internet connection.

Over the years many different archive file formats have been developed, most are available on a range of platforms but each tends to have a defacto standard archive format that most software distributions use. On the Amiga this is the LHA format, whose popularity is largely due to its use on the Aminet software archive, all software for Aminet must be submitted in an LHA archive. LHA is a compressed format, although some more recent formats notable LZX and BZip2 get better levels of compression.

How an Archive Works

To access the files in an archive you have to extract them from the archive, you can extract single files or all the files from the archive which is often called dearchiving. With compressed formats extracting files from an archive is sometimes referred to as decompressing or decrunching. Most archive extraction utilities offer you the option of retaining the directory structure in the archive or just extracting the files.



If you can't handle the shell GUI's like OS 3.9's Unarc come to the rescue.

Creating an archive is usually just a case of specifying the files you wish to include and the name of the archive you wish to create. Often the same utility can be used to create an archive and later extract files although many formats also have a stand alone extractor for use when disk space is at a premium.

Different types of archive have different features, often the main difference is the speed and level of compression provided however some also have additional features, for example password protection.

Archiving Tools

Most archiving utilities use a shell based interface, this is very useful for developers who can use them in installation scripts, but for users who are not used to shell programs this can make them rather intimidating. At the end of this article we have a tutorial on the basic operations of the LHA archiver where you will hopefully find it isn't too much to worry about. However there are also a host of archiving utilities with graphical interfaces which should be easier for new users to handle. These tools generally fall into two types:

Stand Alone - separate utilities which handle creating and extracting archives, these generally allow you to load the archive, view a list of files and extract the ones you wish to use. Some are more sophisticated allowing you to view files without extracting them (technically the file is extracted but this is hidden from the user). AmigaOS 3.9 is supplied with a dearchiving utility called Unarc, if you are using DefIcons (also supplied with 3.9) Unarc is launched if you double click on an archive that does not have an icon from Workbench.

File Managers/File System - Many file managers, notably the perennial Directory Opus, include facilities to handle archives as if they were another directory, "opening" an archive simply produces a list of files it contains which can then be manipulated like any other directory list. For users without a file manager there are archive file systems which work with Workbench however these tend to be somewhat more cumbersome as Workbench isn't as customiseable as most file managers.

Common Archive Formats

.lha
(Aminet, util/arc/LhA.run)
http://lha.warped.com/

LHA is by far the most popular archiver on the Amiga and lha archives can be found on most Amiga websites and CDs.

.lzx
(Aminet, util/arc/lzx121r1.lha)

LZX was designed as a replacement for LHA with improved compression, making for smaller archives. It is quite popular although it never gained really widespread acceptance. Many developers still use LZX to distribute their programs although as it is not accepted on Aminet an LHA version is usually available too. LZX used to be shareware but the programmer moved on to other things and kindly released the keyfile as freeware. As LZX is no longer developed it seems unlikely it will gain popularity.

.zip
(util/arc/UnZip.lha and Zip.lha)

ZIP is the most popular format on DOS and Windows based PCs where it is supported by a huge range of GUI tools such as WinZip. Many Amiga Zip tools are available including command line versions such as those listed above, UnZip is for extraction and Zip is for the creation of Zip archives. Many DOS and Windows software packages are supplied as a self extracting ZIP archive, these are a standard ZIP archive which also includes the software required to decompress the ZIP on the target platform, as they are executable they have the standard program extension ".exe". If you come across one of these archives which contains information you want you can still extract them on the Amiga just feed them to UnZip as if they were an ordinary .zip, you will see the message like "skipping corrupt or extraneous data" and then the files should be safely dearchived, the data skipped was just the extractor program.

.tar
(util/pack/UntarV1_11.lha)

Tar is an archiver very commonly used on Unix and similar systems such as Linux, unlike the archivers listed above Tar does not include any file compression, to overcome this limitation it is often used in combination with a file compressor such as the two listed below.

.gz
(util/pack/gzip124x2.lha,
util/arc/untgz.lha)

GZIP is the GNU (GNU's Not Unix) free software version of the ZIP command, the archives it creates however are not compatible with Zip. GZip is often used to compress tar archives on Unix systems, these are given the extension .tar.gz. In fact this combination is so common that there are a couple of Amiga programs which deal with both at once, such as the one listed above.

.bz2
(util/arc/bzip2.lha)

Bzip 2 is one of the most efficient compressors available however it is purely a single file compressor and is usually used with an archiver such as tar on Unix systems. The current Amiga ports seem to be a bit rough around the edges, make sure you set at least 32kb stack (issue the command stack 32768 before any BZip2 command) and be aware that it compresses in place so the file you are compressing is replaced with the compressed version.

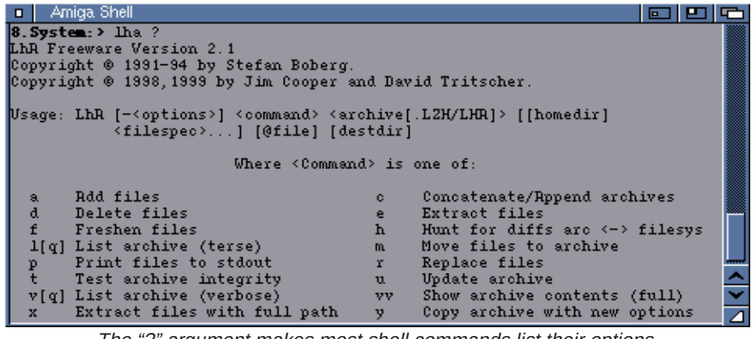
NOTE: The file names given for these archivers are just one or two examples of the programs available to deal with a particular archive format, check Aminet for the other options.

TIPS: Many of the archivers above are ports from Unix like systems, unlike Amiga commands which use the "?" option to display their command template (the options they accept) the standard on Unix is "-h". Therefore if you type the command name followed by -h, for example "UnZip -h" you will often get a nice listing of the options allowed. Another common feature of these commands is that many don't allow you to specify a destination directory for the extracted files, they extract into the current directory. So before you set one of them off it is a good idea to change to the destination directory.

Other Formats

Disk Images

Although not strictly an archive (it is rarely possible to extract individual files) disk images are another popular way of distributing software on the Internet. As the name implies a disk image is the contents of a floppy disk dumped into a file, as with archives some formats offer compression. On the Amiga the most popular disk image formats are DMS (Disk Masher) a compressed format and ADF (Amiga Disk File) which is the uncompressed format used by the UAE emulator. Both have extractors available which will write the image back to a real floppy disk, if you don't want to bother with real floppy disks utilities are available to extract direct to a hard drive or you can setup a virtual floppy using a utility such as FMSDisk from Aminet (disk/misc/fmsdisk.lha).



The "?" argument makes most shell commands list their options.

LHA Tutorial

Although LHA isn't the most modern archiver around it is by far the most common format on the Amiga, also new versions have released in the last year that support more efficient compression methods. If you download an Amiga program from the Internet if will almost certainly be available in an LHA archive. So here is a tutorial on the most common operations LHA can perform, as you can see the lha command is used to both add and extract files from an archive. When you issue an lha command you tell it which lha command you wish to perform (only one command can be performed at a time) and which options you wish to use. Commands are specified by single letter codes, for example "l" to list the contents of an archive. Options are specified by single letter codes preceded by a "-", for example "-r" for recursive, you can combine options by listing them after the "-", so "-ar" would mean preserve file attributes and recursive. Here are some examples of typical operations:

Listing the Contents of an LHA Archive

Before you extract files from an archive you might want to see what it contains, to do this use the "l" command, e.g.:

```
lha l archive.lha
```

Press Return and a list of all the files in the archive is shown in the shell window. For a more detailed list which shows the directory structure of the archive (which is needed when you want to extract individual files in subdirectories) use the "v" (Verbose list) command instead of "l".

Decrunching an Archive

Extracting all the files from an archive onto your hard disk or into the Ram Disk is probably the most common archive operation you will perform. For this we need to use the lha command with one command "x" for eXtract with full path and specify the name of the archive and the destination where we want the extracted files to end up. The syntax for this command is:

```
lha x archive.lha volume:path/
```

If you do not want the files to retain the path (directory structure) stored in the archive use the "e" (Extract) command along with the option -x0 instead of "x".

One thing which often catches out new users (I can remember if frustrating the

hell out of me for ages) is that the destination volume or path must end in the trailing colon or slash, in our example volume:path would not work even if a drawer called path existed. Let's have a real world example, suppose I had a downloaded archive called acdb.lha in my Downloads drawer on my Scratch: partition and I wanted to extract it to the Ram Disk, here is the command line I would use:

```
lha x Scratch:Downloads
/acdb.lha "Ram Disk:"
```

When you press Return LHA lists out all the files in the archive as it extracts them, if any of the files already exist in the destination directory LHA prompts you with some options, "overwrite? (Y/N/A/S/Q)", these stand for:

Y = Yes overwrite the current file and continue, ask me again if another file exists.
N = No, don't overwrite the current file but continue extracting the other files.
A = All. Overwrite any files from now on with the ones in the archive and don't prompt me.
S = Skip all the files that already exist but extract the rest.
Q = Quit the extraction.

Just press the appropriate key, there's no need to hit Return. Finally LHA gives a completion message, if everything went to plan it should be something like:

```
40 files extracted, all files
OK. Operation successful.
```

If any files fail to extract the most likely cause is an incomplete archive, especially if it has been downloaded from the Internet. Try downloading it again and make sure the file on disk when the download is complete is the full overall size shown by the download software.

Extracting specific files

First use the verbose list command, "v", to identify the file in the archive you want to extract. Then use the "x" command as before but specify the file(s) you wish to extract after the archive name. For example if I wanted to extract the files acdb.guide and test.rexx which are both inside the acdb directory in the archive acdb.lha I would use the command line:

```
lha x
Scratch:Downloads/acdb.lha
acdb/acdb.guide acdb/test.rexx
"Ram Disk:"
```

Creating a New Archive

Creating a new archive and adding files to an existing one both use LHA's "a" (add) command, you simply specify that, the name of the archive and the names of the files you wish to add, for example:

```
lha a ram:test.lha s:startup-
sequence s:user-startup
```

You can use wild cards to specify files, for example "s:#?" to add all the files in the s: directory. If you want to add files in subdirectories of the directory you choose add the -r (recursive) option. For example:

```
lha a -r ram:Utilities.lha
Sys:Utilities/
```

TIP: Be careful, the options, unlike the commands, are case sensitive.

When using the recursive option if you want to include the top level directory, in our example "Utilities", in the archive specify it without a trailing slash, if you also want the icon for the directory add it to the command line:

1> lha a -r ram:Utilities.lha Sys:Utilities Sys:Utilities.info

Adding Files to an Archive

To add files to an archive follow exactly the same procedure, but specify an existing archive instead of the new name.

Removing Files from an Archive

You can remove files from an LHA archive without rebuilding the whole thing using the "d" (Delete) command, for example to delete the file acdb/test.rexx from the acdb.lha archive you would use the command line:

```
1> lha d
Scratch:Downloads/acdb.lha
acdb/test.rexx
```

As with extracting files you can use wild cards or multiple file names too.

Conclusion

I hope this has given you a good overview of archiving and enough knowledge to use LHA effectively, another popular Amiga archiver, LZX has a very similar command set to LHA so you should be able to apply most of the tutorial to LZX too, certainly extracting files works in the same way. Now if you can't stomach all this shell work, or just find a GUI program easier, look in the right column for Elliott Bird's Archiver GUI roundup.

Archive Utilties

Elliott Bird looks at some useful GUIs that make archives a bit more friendly.

Unarc

Unarc comes with AmigaOS 3.9, and is extremely easy to use. Simply double click the archive you want to extract, and it will launch itself! Or you can manually launch it from your AmiDock bar, or wherever you have it located. All you have to do, is tell it where your archive is (the source), and tell it where you want the archive extracted (the destination), and it's done. It couldn't be simpler! Unarc supports many archive formats, including lzx, lha and zip.

BurnGUI - Aminet, util/arc

BurnGUI, is more complex than Unarc, and supports slightly different archive formats, yet still reasonably easy to use. It supports dms, lzx, lha, uuxt, zip and unzip, however they require the original executables. The GUI is set out into 4 different tabs, About, configuration, disk compression and file compression. I can't help thinking of DOpus 4/DiskSalv when I look at the file compression section! What's more, you'll be pleased to know that BurnGUI is free to register (e-mailware / cardware).

Archiver - Aminet, util/arc

Another simple to use archiving utility, this time a shareware one. Although sadly it doesn't look like it's supported anymore, with the latest version being from 1996. Archiver, like BurnGUI, has a GUI split into several tabs, for different archive formats. Archiver supports lha, lzx, gzip, dms, and more. There are a number of check boxes for each section, including the obvious options for compressing or extracting. Tick the options you require, then it's a case of selecting the source and the target (destination).

DMS-Face - Aminet, util/arc

DMS-Face is a sole DMS extracting and compressing utility. It is the oldest of the bunch, and again is easy to use. The GUI isn't brilliant, as it is based on Magic Workbench (hence why it is enclosed with a "click for colours" executable). It's fine if you are one of the few users who still use Magic Workbench. DMS-Face can be switched between 3 different modes, view, write, and read. What's more helpful is that it has a status box at the bottom, telling you what it's up to! :)

An Introduction to

Internet Relay Chat

Elliott Bird gets you up and chatting with people all over the world.

Talking over the internet has become increasingly popular over the years, not only because it's easier to use than ever, but also because in most cases it's cheaper than talking to someone over the phone, especially if you have a free call unmetered internet service provider. What's more, you can even talk to people over the other side of the world! With so many methods of talking over the net now, one of the most popular has to be Internet Relay Chat, commonly referred to as IRC.

The main reason why it's so popular is due to the fact it contains more features than any other chat clients available, like ICQ. But where does your Amiga come into the equation? Well actually it has the best IRC clients available, AmIRC (developed by Vapor, the makers of Voyager and Microdot), and BlackIRC (from the makers of FxPaint and FxScan), both of which are full of useful features and easy to use. These are the two little gems we will be concentrating on. :)

How does it work?

Basically, IRC is a network of computers, otherwise known as servers, which are connected to each other either over the internet or via a Local Area Network (LAN). This can be connected to with IRC software, and allow you to chat to other people who are also connected to this network of computers. This network is split into channels, with different topics of conversation and groups.

But when it comes down to the actual conversations, they contain a lot of abbreviations and expressions, which are covered on the opposite page.

Getting Started

In AmIRC

Each time you first load up AmIRC, you will see the server list window come up. It contains a list of servers, as well as channels to connect to. More importantly towards the top of your window, you will see where your nickname, real name, and user name can be entered. If AmIRC has been launched for the first time, these boxes will be empty, so you will need to fill these in.

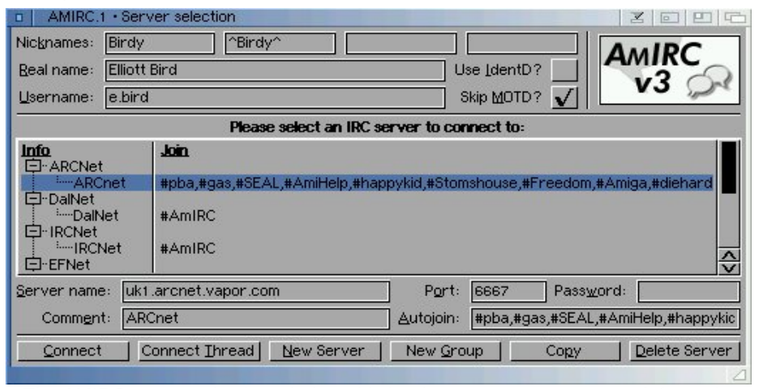
You will notice there are three boxes for nicknames, you need to put in at least one, although it is sometimes handy to fill in the second and possibly the third one as well, in case your nickname may be already in use by another user on the server. The nickname is the most important part to fill in, as the nickname you choose is what you will be known as when you connect to IRC. You can always change your nick once you are connected by typing "/nick newnickname", where "newnickname" is where you put a nickname of your choice.

The next field is where you can put in your real name. It's not really essential, but it can be handy so that other users can find out who you really are without actually asking you. You never know, there might be someone in the channel who already knows you!

Then there's the user name box, which may be shaded out, depending on whether you use Miami or Genesis. The IdentD box may also be shaded out. IdentD is software built in to AmIRC, that allows an IRC server to authenticate the identity of a client. This is disabled if an external IdentD is running.

The tick box below skips the message of the day (MOTD) on the server if it is ticked. The message of the day can be pretty much anything.

Below the list are more fields, which will already be filled in if you have a server selected. The server name field shows the server host of the server you can connect to. Then there's the Port



The AMIRC server selection window, this is where you enter your user information and setup the servers you want to connect to.
BlackIRC has a very similar arrangement on its Servers tab.

SUPPORT

Above: An AMIRC channel window. Below: the equivalent tab in BlackIRC.

number, which is usually 6667. The password is optional, but very few channels require a password. The comment is the name of the server. And finally is the autojoin field, which is where you can enter in the channels you want to join when you decide to connect to the IRC server. If you are feeling adventurous already, you can easily enter in more than one channel to join by entering the channel names with the # in front of each one, with commas following each channel name, but no spaces. Or if you are already connected and on a channel, you can just type "/join #channelname", where #channelname is the name of the channel you want to join.

If your IRC server is not listed, you can easily add a group for the server and the server details within the added group.

Now you are ready to connect with AmIRC, just highlight the server you want to join, and click connect!

In BlackIRC

Believe it or not, considering BlackIRC is freeware, it is slightly more complex than AmIRC. Although we will only cover the most used and important aspects.

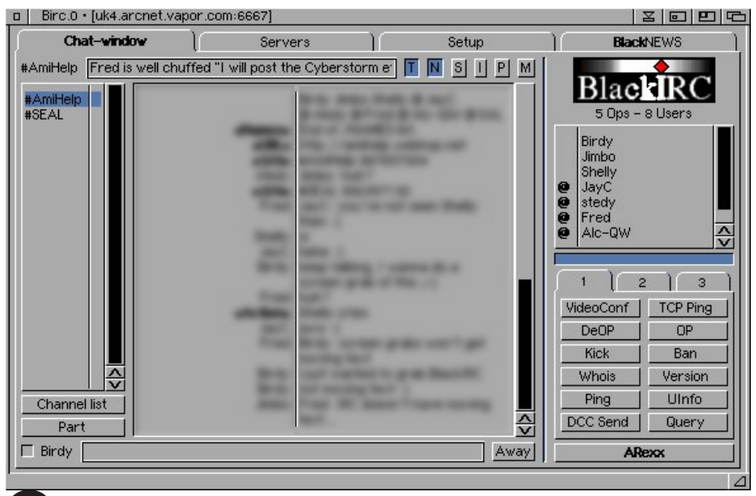
When you first load up BlackIRC, like AmIRC, you will be faced with a server list, and is pretty much the same as the AmIRC one, except you are given a different list of servers. Again, you can easily add servers and channels of your own to the list. Don't forget to fill in the details of your real name and chosen nickname if it is your first time.

Unlike AmIRC, BlackIRC has everything in one window, but split into sections with tabs. Once you have connected, you need to click on the "Chat-window" tab, which is where everything happens. And you are away with BlackIRC!

What now?

Ok, now we are connected and have joined a channel, you can pretty much sit back after all that setting up! :) But when you first join, you may well be greeted by other users, it's always polite to say hi back to them.

But you are probably looking at all those buttons and other things on your window by now, and wondering what the hell they do?



Channels

Here are some channels I recommend to get you started.

#pba

Mainly a general chat channel, as well as Amiga related discussions (hence PBA = Powered By Amiga)

#AmiHelp

Got any problems with your Amiga? You go here!

#diehard

For hardcore Amiga users!

#SEAL

SEAL's very own IRC channel! For members and anyone interested in SEAL.

Server

All of the above mentioned IRC channels are on the ARCNet IRC net work (short for Amiga Relay Chat Network). A suitable server to connect to is "uk1.arcnet.vapor.com" with the port number being "6667".

At the top of your window (both AmIRC and BlackIRC) you will see a long box, usually with text in it. This is where the topic goes for the channel, and the conversation in the channel doesn't necessarily have to be related to the topic. Then next to the topic you will see several small buttons; T, N, S, I, P, M. There are additional buttons on AmIRC; L, K, B. These control modes for the channel and can only be changed by channel operators. "T" is for Topic protection, if this is enabled only channel operators can modify or change the topic. "N" stops people massaging from outside a channel, although you can still message users privately in the channel. The "S" button makes the channel secret until it is joined by users. "I" sets the channel to invite mode only, so that only users within the channel can invite users in to join. "P" sets the channel mode to private, this means that the channel is invisible in the global channel list. And "M" sets the channel mode to moderated, so that only channel operators and users with "voice" can communicate into the channel. In AmIRC, "L" controls the number of users that can enter the channel, if active. "K" is where channel operators can password protect a channel by entering in the keyword required to enter then channel if active. And "B" shows a list of users banned (if any) from the channel.

Down the right hand side of the window is the users list, which shows who is currently in the channel. Some users may have what looks like an LED light beside their nickname, green means that they are a channel operator and can obviously control the channel. Users with voice have a yellow light beside their nick, which doesn't really mean anything, except if the channel is moderated at any time they can continue communicating in the channel. However on Black IRC this is different, channel operators have a "@" beside their nick, and users with voice have a "+" beside their nickname.

Below the user list are the user command buttons. The most commonly used buttons include the "Query" button. When you click once on a nick and click on the query button, another window/page appears where you can talk to that selected user in private. You can make it even more private by clicking on the "DCC Chat" button in the query window/page, or highlight a nick and click the "Chat" button in the main IRC window (if you don't have a query window/page open already) and you can now have a direct client to client conversation (hence DCC), while experiencing less server lag. Lag is a term often used in the IRC world, it means that the connection between you and the server is delayed. AmIRC will tell you when you are experiencing server lag with a flashing red bar below the user list, and will also tell you in the main dialogue box.

And of course finally, below the dialogue box is a long box (identical to the topic one) where you can enter your text and communicate with other users in the channel. You do this simply by entering your text and pressing enter/return.

And that's the basics of IRC! Take a look at the box-outs on these pages for some useful commands, abbreviations and URL's, so that you can make the most of your IRC sessions.

Web Links

Information

http://www.irchelp.org
IRC channel on another network, thought it contains some very useful IRC information.

http://www.support.arcnet.vapor.com
The ARCNet support site, which also contains some very useful IRC information

http://www.arcnet.vapor.com
Official ARCNet site

IRC Clients

BlackIRC

Freeware from
http://www.innovative-web.de

AmIRC

Shareware/included with NetConnect bundle.
http://www.vapor.com/amirc

Abbreviations

AFAIK	As Far As I Know
AFK	Away From Keyboard
A/S/L	Age/Sex/Location?
ATM	At The Moment
BBIAB	Be Back In A Bit
BBL	Be Back Later
BRB	Be Right Back
BRT	Be Right There
BTW	By The Way
CBA	Can't Be Arsed
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question
FLBKAC	Fault Lies Between Keyboard And Chair
FYI	For Your Information
GTG	Got To Go
ICBW	I Could Be Wrong
IIRC	If I Remember Correctly
IKWYM	I Know What You Mean
IMHO	In My Humble Opinion
IMO	In My Opinion
LMAO	Laugh My Arse Off
LOL	Laughs Out Loud
LTNS	Long Time No See
NOYB	None Of Your Business
NP	No Problem
RE	REgards
RL	Real Life
ROTFLMAO	Rolls On The Floor Laughing My Arse Off
ROTFLOL	Rolls On The Floor Laughing Out Loud
RTFM	Read The Flippin' Manual
TBH	To Be Honest
WB	Welcome Back
WH	Welcome Home
WTG	Way To Go
WUWY	What's Up With You?

Keep Up-to-Date with the clubbed-announce Mailing List

Clubbed now has its own Internet mailing list to keep connected readers (or anyone with an EMail address) better informed about the magazine. The mailing list, called clubbed-announce, is hosted by the YahooGroups service.

We post a minimum of one update to the list per month plus any important announcements, but your mail box will not be flooded because this list can only be posted to by the editor.

How To Join

Subscribing to the list is free, just send a blank EMail to:

clubbed-announce-subscribe
@yahoogroups.com (all one line)

Or go to the list page on the Yahoo Groups website, if you subscribe on the website you will need to register (if you haven't already for another list):

http://www.yahoogroups.com/group/clubbed-announce (all one line)

We hope the list will keep you better informed about Clubbed and encourage you to join.

Next Issue

What's coming your way in issue 10?

News

We'll keep you up to date with the happenings on the Amiga scene and try to make sense of the expected announcements and releases.

Reviews

- Payback PPC/Warp3D
- AmiDog's Movie Player
- Perfect Paint 2.7

Support

- DTP tutorial part 2.

Issue 10 Due: January 2002

NOTE: This is a provisional contents list and is subject to change without notice.

Shogo: MAD

The weapon effects are spectacular....

...and there are lots of different types available.

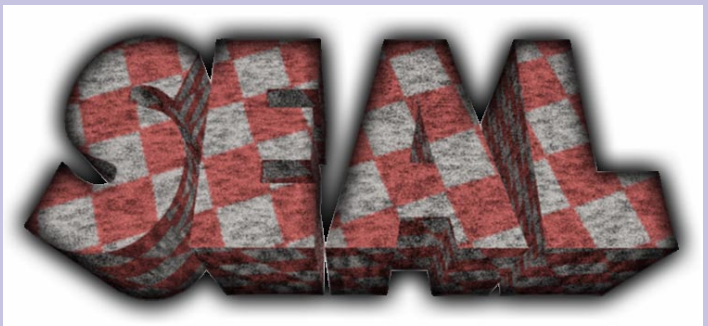
When you are "on foot" the game has a different feel and set of weapons.

Cut scenes like this one add atmosphere and fill in the story. The "!" shows the person who is talking.

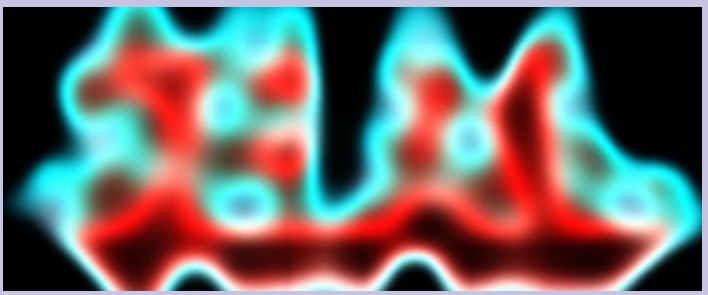
It's almost worth dying to see effects like these!

ArtEffect PlugIn Samples

Neon



Shine



Solar

Softener

Visit the SEAL website at:
www.seal-amiga.co.uk