

TOTAL AMIGA

Issue 14, Spring 2003

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Biggest
Issue Ever!

Quake 2

Read our comprehensive review
of Hyperions's latest port.



Hollywood

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

For Amigans, By Amigans, On Amigas!

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The Show Must Go On!

SEAL's Mick Sutton gives us an insight into the production of WoASE.

Back in the good old days we had World of Amiga shows put on every year, usually at a high profile site (Wembley) and all well attended. Everybody wanted to be there and be seen, Amiga was seen as a very popular alternative to the cumbersome PC. After the collapse of Commodore commercial shows gradually shrank with World of Amiga 99 being the last commercial show. Several Amiga user groups were not satisfied without a regular show and decided to organise their own shows.

After several smaller shows SEAL, Kickstart, ANT and ASA got together to organise a joint show in the South East of England. So the idea of World of Amiga South East was born and the first task was to find a venue.

It was obvious from the start that any venue had to meet certain criteria. Excellent transport links by both road (close to M25) and railways are essential as is good car parking (preferably free) at the venue. We all know Amigans like a drink or two so a licensed bar is also a priority. The venue has to also be the right size, big enough to hold the exhibitors but not so big that you have enough room for a game of football as well! Another important consideration is that the venue is near at least one of the usergroups so they can do all the pre-show groundwork. Above all the venue has to have all these qualities at a price the

usergroups can afford. To give you an idea a venue capable of holding between 300 and 500 people can cost anywhere from £500 to £1000 (outside London) for a day.

Whilst on the subject of costs there are also other expenses to consider such as ticket printing and distribution, insurance, food to be sold (or not) and hire of projectors, PA etc. Most of these costs have to be paid up front by the usergroups and we then hope to get our money back from stand charges and ticket sales. One of the advantages of usergroup run shows is that the stand prices are very affordable compared to commercial shows. As shows have to be planned about six months in advance (venues get booked up very quickly) it's very difficult to judge how many visitors will come particularly in the current Amiga market (will there be a BIG release at the show)?

With the date and venue decided, advertising for the show can start. With no news stand magazines it centres on the internet and smaller publications like Total Amiga to get the word out. At the same time companies have to be approached (coaxed) to exhibit at the show, some companies are always very supportive whilst others won't come to a usergroup show on principle (you know who they are). When the bookings start rolling (or trickling) in it's time to get the floorplans out and design the layout of the show. This is a

balance between space for the punters and giving the exhibitors the stand space they require (some companies get a real bee in their bonnet about where they are situated). The floorplan goes through many revisions before the final layout is agreed (I should know!)

As the day of the show approaches there are lots of final preparations which must be completed. The usergroups have to identify members who will help set up the show, act as stewards, collect tickets and many other tasks. Any presentations, demonstrations and tutorials have to be planned and we try to make a timetable but often we don't find out what companies are going to do till the day of the show! The keen eyed amongst you will have noticed various posters and signs dotted around the venue, of course these all have to be designed and printed.

On the morning of the show many hands are needed to set up the venue following the floorplan, this all has to be done before the companies arrive. This is the reason why one day shows tend to open at around midday as we don't have access to the venue the night before and companies have to travel from far afield.

So now you've got a feel for the work involved in putting on WoASE turn to our show report to see how it turned out on the day!

Editorial Candy for OS4

Welcome to another issue of Total Amiga, as you will no-doubt have noticed this issue is rather late, which is a pity as we had improved our punctuality over the last few issues. Unfortunately the main reason behind the delay was that the SCSI controller and PPC on my CyberStorm PPC accelerator have stopped working (miraculously the '060 side still seems to be okay) and it took a while to get things sorted so I could access my data again. Anyway I'm back up and running now and the delay has had one positive side effect - we were able to complete more content for this issue making it the biggest magazine we've ever published at 52 pages! A special thank you must go to everyone who contributed to this issue, and I should point out that the delay is down to me, not the contributors, all these pages certainly wouldn't have been possible without you! We'll do our best to get back to regular three-monthly publication for issue 15.

I don't have space here to talk about all the great things in this issue so you'll just have to read through and find out for yourselves!

As usual I hope you enjoy the magazine and if you have any comments and suggestions please get in touch.

Robert Williams
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Candy Factory is a graphics application designed for making logos and other graphics with high quality 3D textured effects quickly and without the need for a complex 3D package or spending hours combining effects in an image processor. Many readers will remember that this program caused quite a stir when it was released a few years ago, nothing like it had been seen on the Amiga before. One of the key features of the original release was it's support for PPC accelerators which meant that most effects could be adjusted in real-time, great for perfecting the look of a graphic or just playing around to see what could be achieved.



A built-in character generator allows you to add effects to text in any font without leaving the program. You can also load shapes (for example a logo) created in another program and add effects to them.

Some of Candy Factory's features include:

- Material effects, used to create the look of materials such as wood, metals and glass.
- Beveling to instantly give your graphics a 3D look.
- Glow, creates a bright smooth glow around objects.
- Drop shadow, casts a drop shadow based on the position of the light source.
- Bump-mapping, gives objects



texture again based on the light source.

- Texture mapping, colour your objects using an image.

When you've found a combination of effects you like Candy Factory can save them allowing you to re-use them on another project. The package is supplied with a range of example settings so you can make great looking graphics straight away.

Now ZeoNeo, well known for their AmigaDE games such as Planet Zed, have acquired ownership of Candy Factory and the original programmer, Milan Pollé, is one of their developers. Version 2 of Candy Factory for AmigaOS 4 will be ZeoNeo's first desktop AmigaOS product. The new version will not only take advantage of the new features of OS4 and the power of the new PPC hardware but it will also have more effects, new features and an improved work flow to offer even more possibilities.

More information on Candy Factory 2 should be available on the Zeoneo website by the time you read this:

<http://www.zeoneo.com>

About Total Amiga

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Only Amiga Made it Possible

Total Amiga is designed and laid out using:

Hardware:
Amiga 3000
CyberStorm PPC/060
CyberVision PPC
128Mb RAM, about 13Gb HDD space.

Software:
Amiga OS 3.9 by Amiga
PageStream 4.1 by Softlogik
TypeSmith 2.5 by Softlogik
ImageFX 4.5 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.

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

Fonts

The body text of Total Amiga is set in Triumvirate Normal as supplied with PageStream, the heading typeface is Forgotten Futurist by Ray Larabie. Take a look at Ray's huge range of freeware fonts at <http://www.larabiefonts.com> and his commercial foundry at <http://www.typodermic.com>.

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

Please Note: Total Amiga is produced by SEAL members in their spare time, while we will always strive to produce the magazine on time and include all the advertised contents this is not always possible due to other commitments. The price you pay for Total Amiga covers our costs and nothing more, we don't make a profit from it.

Legalese

If you wish to contact a contributor please send your message to one of the addresses in this section and we will pass it on.

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Stefan Grows New IBrowse!

At last the wait is over... Stefan Burstroem and the IBrowse development team have released a new version of their well known web browser. At first glance version 2.3 doesn't look much different from 2.2 which came out about two years ago but under the skin a lot of magic has been worked. IBrowse has been tweaked to render many pages better and many long standing bugs have been squashed. Version 2.3 has been extensively tested and everyone reports it to be much more stable than earlier versions (although I didn't have many problems with 2.2 I know some people did). The biggest improvement however is in the Javascript support - this is the scripting used on many pages

to automate functions - because it is used by so many sites the improved Javascript along makes a lot more web pages compatible. The key user interface change is the improvement to the tabbed browsing mode, this is now a joy to use, take a look at Top Tips on page 40 for more information.

Along with IBrowse 2.3 version 2 of AmiSSL has also been released, this package is used by IBrowse to make secure connections to websites for on-line shopping and banking amongst other activities. The cool thing about this is that IBrowse users no longer need a registered version of Miami and MiamiSSL to make secure transactions. The combination



IBrowse 2.3 is compatible with more websites including many on-line banks like this one. Notice the handy browser tabs along the top of the window.

of improved Javascript and security now means IBrowse will work with many bank's on-line services.

IBrowse 2.3 is a free upgrade for IBrowse 2.x owners, just download the demo version install it and copy over your key file. IBrowse 1.x owners can upgrade for 34.99Euro (about £22) and the full price is 54.99Euro (£35). Currently IBrowse is only available for

purchase on-line from the new distributor IOSpirit who also host the demo and AmiSSL downloads: <http://www.iospirit.de>

For more information on IBrowse including an extensive log of all the changes and an FAQ visit: <http://www.ibrowse-dev.net>

USB gets the Flipper Treatment

You can't seem to move for USB cards in the Amiga market at the moment so it was a surprise when a new team, Creative Development, announced that they were working on another card with Jens Schoenfeld of Individual Computers. This product, the Ultrabus, has a few tricks up its sleeve however. The first is that it is a "flipper" card with Zorro II, clock port and "Individual Computers" expansion connectors for compatibility with most Amigas. In Zorro mode the clock port connector on the card can be used to connect clock port expansion devices. 512Kb of flash memory on the board allows the card to be active at boot time so you can boot from USB devices. Finally the card will come with a new USB stack - few details are available on this at present although from the mention of booting from USB devices presumably it supports the USB mass storage class. The developers also say it is compact, efficient and fits in with the Amiga system architecture. Developer documentation will be supplied for so third parties can write drivers for more USB

devices. The USB stack is also designed so it can support other cards - including USB 2.0 highspeed - if appropriate drivers are written.

From a more practical angle the Ultrabus has 4 built-in USB ports and supports USB 1.1 and 2.0 devices however it does not have USB 2.0 highspeed mode (480Mb/s) and so is limited to 12Mb/s. At the time of writing the final prototype of the Ultrabus has been delivered to the developers and it will go into production after testing is complete. For further information visit the Creative Development website at: <http://www.credev.com>

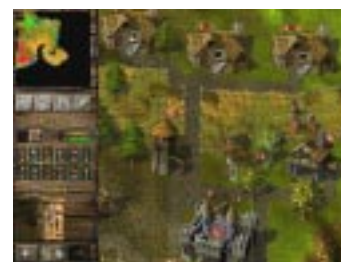


The Ultrabus prototype.

Knights and Merchants for MorphOS

Knights and Merchants from Epic Interactive is the first commercial game to be released supporting only the MorphOS platform. The game is a real-time strategy title ported from the PC original. It is set in the middle ages and casts the player as a captain defending the last royal province. Your task, should you choose to accept it and have a Pegasos with 64Mb of RAM running MorphOS 1.0, is to win back the surrounding provinces which once belonged to your king.

The game involves not only fighting but also sustaining the economy through building, planning your towns and roads and organising production. As a player you have indirect control over the economic side of the game, you decree what you would like to happen and your serfs get on with it. On the military side you can control your armies directly making



battles more exciting. Knights and Merchants boasts a wide range of units and over 25 building types all of which are displayed in an attractive hand drawn style.

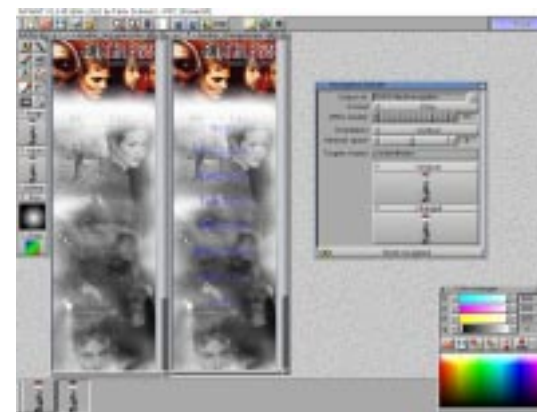
Knights and Merchants costs 45Euro (about £29), for more details visit: <http://www.epic-interactive.com>

fxPaint 2.0

A new version of IOSpirit's paint and image processing package fxPaint is now available. Version 2.0 has numerous improvements to the core package, the available effects and the included plug-ins. fxAlbum which enables you to create thumbnail indexes of your pictures has been greatly improved with many more options, increased speed and a much more powerful HTML export feature which uses skins to give the album pages a slick look. Another feature that will be useful for web designers is the navigation builder. This lets you cut buttons out of an image and will automatically build the HTML to display them, roll-overs are supported.

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

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



- Many new effects.
- Speed improvements

fxPaint runs on 68k Amigas and also has direct support for WarpUp, PowerUp, MorphOS and Amithlon. Support for OS4 is planned when the OS is available. fxPaint 2 is available direct from IOSpirit via their on-line shop and from Amiga dealers. An upgrade from 1.x costs 49.99Euro (about £35) and the full version is 79Euro (£55). We'll have a full review in the next issue of Total Amiga but if you can't wait that long visit the IOSpirit website for more details and to download a demo version: <http://www.iospirit.de>

Caught in the CrossFire Again

CrossFire II is a new space shoot-em-up game which is rather like a cross between asteroids and a vertical scroller like Xenon II, the game is played over a 360 degree scrolling area. The full game comes on CD and the missions are tied together into a story with a rendered intro movie



CrossFire II features colourful (honest!) graphics and great explosions.

and cut scenes. There are various mission types to complete including escort, defence and large battles with many ships. During the game you can buy weapon upgrades at the between level shop, there are about 40 types of weapon to try. The game also has two multiplayer modes each with up to four players. Dogfight see you up against human opponents, in survival mode the human players must co-operate against computer controlled enemies. Although the game only runs at 320x256 resolution it does have lots of cool graphical effects including transparency and great explosions. The game needs at least a 68030 with 16Mb of



RAM but a PPC system and 32Mb is recommended. Graphics and sound cards are supported and the game has been tested on Amithlon and MorphOS too.

CrossFire II is published by APC/TCP in Germany and costs 39.90Euro (about £25), more details and a demo can be found on their website at: <http://www.apc-tcp.de>

Bytes...

Alt.WoA Postponed

The organisers of the Alt.WoA show which was due to be held in Huddersfield UK on the 26th of April have decided to postpone the show until the availability of AmigaOS 4 has been confirmed. Keep an eye on the show website at <http://www.alt-woa.org> for news of the new date.

Deathbed Vigil DVD



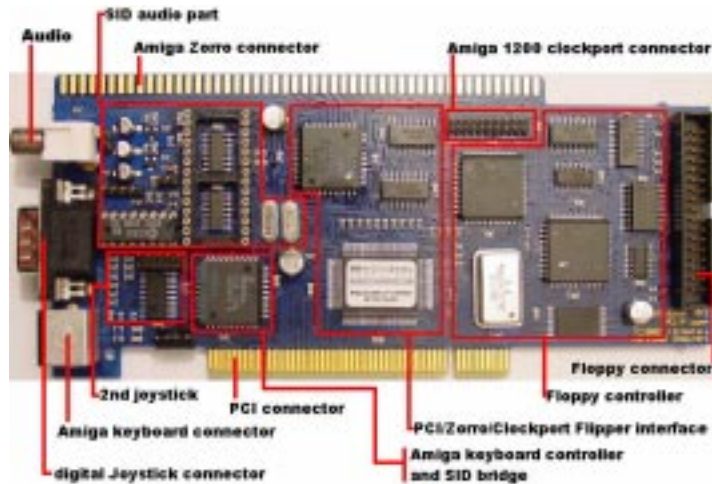
Well known ex-Commodore engineer Dave Haynie has released his classic video "The Deathbed Vigil" on DVD. The film is about the final few days surrounding the bankruptcy of Commodore and includes a tour of the West Chester plant with footage of the development labs. It also features interviews with some of the people involved with making and supporting the Amiga with plenty of interesting anecdotes.

The DVD release includes extra features not found on the original video. These include a new short film "50 views of Amiga's impact". Dave's photo album has pictures covering everything from the C128 to Dave's post-Commodore years. There's even a music video "Chicken-Lips Blues"! The Deathbed Vigil is supplied on a region free DVD-R or DVD+R (your choice) in NTSC format (supported by most modern European DVD players and TVs) and costs \$35 (about £22) direct from Dave. For more details visit:

<http://www.jersey.net/~dhaynie/dbv/>

Catweasel Flips Out!

Individual Computers seem to have a knack for building lots of handy interfaces onto one board and they've really gone to town with their latest release the Catweasel Mk3 PCI Flipper! The main feature of all Catweasel products has always been their floppy drive interface, the Mk 3 is no different, you can connect a normal 1.44Mb high density PC floppy drive and use it to read high and double density Amiga disks as well as disks from all manner of other platforms. For those emulating older machines 5.25" disk drives are also supported. What makes this board so special is the PCI Flipper part, this means the Catweasel Mk 3 can connect to a PCI slot in a computer such as a PC, AmigaOne or Pegasos. On the other side is a Zorro slot and there is also a clock port so it can connect to most Amiga systems too. With the PCI



The Catweasel Mk3 PCI Flipper couldn't be more flexible. It's ideal for current Amiga users, the AmigaOne, Pegasos and anyone into Emulation.

connector the other features make sense, these are an Amiga keyboard port (so you can use a proper Amiga keyboard with your AmigaOne or under UAE), a digital joystick port and a C64 SID sound chip. The SID chip allows Commodore 64

emulators to output authentic sound.

Visit Individual Computers at their new (and rather cool) web address for more: <http://www.ami.ga>

Faster Spider

Elbox have released a new Poseidon hardware driver for their Spider PCI USB card which enables it to work with USB 2.0 devices in Highspeed mode. This makes the Spider the first highspeed USB 2.0 card for the Amiga. USB 2.0 is the current standard and supports data transfer rates of up to 480 megabits per second (nearly 60 megabytes per second). In real life the data rate is limited by the speed of the USB device, protocol overheads and the Mediator interface however USB 2.0 highspeed should still be a big jump over USB 1.1 and makes using devices like USB CD recorders and hard disks a more practical proposition.

The USB 2.0 upgrade arrived too late for our Spider review on page 22 but if we can find some USB 2.0 devices to test we will bring you an update next issue. For more details on the Spider visit the Elbox website at: <http://www.elbox.com>

Poseidon gets Booted by ROMulus!

Michael Böhmer of E3B and Chris Hodges author of the Poseidon USB stack have been busy once again with another add-on for their Highway Zorro II USB card. The new expansion module is called the ROMulus and as you might guess from the name it contains a 512Kb flash ROM. The purpose of the board is to allow you to load software modules into the ROM so they are available at boot-time. An obvious example is the Poseidon itself. With the USB stack and classes loaded into ROM you could boot from a USB mass storage device and, with recent OS versions, use a USB keyboard and mouse in the early startup menu. However other modules can also be loaded into the ROM the system upgrades normally loaded by SetPatch (causing a double boot) in OS3.5 and 3.9 can be loaded as can non-patching Blizkick modules. The only limitation is that you can't load a complete Kickstart



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

replacement. The boot loader used to load the modules uses compression so 700 to 900 Kb of modules can be stored in the flash ROM, a list on the E3B website shows 27 different modules including Poseidon and its classes taking up just over half the available space.

The ROMulus attaches to the Highway's expansion port and has a pass through for the Norway Ethernet card. The whole expanded card only requires one Zorro II slot. Before you can use the ROMulus the Highway's bus

interface logic needs to be upgraded, for this upgrade you need to return your card to E3B. The ROMulus is expected to cost about 35Euro (about £22) including the upgrade.

For more details visit E3B at: <http://www.e3b.de>

The Highway is available from KDH in Germany (<http://www.kdh-shop24.de>) and Forematt Home Computing in the UK (<http://www.forematt.co.uk>), telephone (08700) 112234.

Hollywood Update

AirsoftSoftwair have announced the first upgrade to their recently released script-based multimedia application Hollywood. Version 1.5 will include many new features, improvements and bug fixes but will not introduce a slide design GUI. Some of the new features include:

- Full support for AHI (sound samples & music modules)
- Multiple layers
- Improvements to the inbuilt undo system
- Support for off-screen rendering
- Even more cool 24-bit transition effects!
- New flexible object moving system

Version 1.5 will be a free upgrade for existing Hollywood owners, the full package costs 49Euro (just over £30) and can be ordered from: <http://www.airsoftsoftwair.com>

HD-Rec Goes Public

The first public beta version of a new MIDI and audio sequencer has been released by its author Thilo Köhler. HD-Rec supports up to 256 tracks and can sequence AIFF, WAV, MAUD, RAW, CDDA, 8SVX, MP3 and MIDI sounds. As you might guess from the name one of HD-Rec's key features is that audio recording and processing is not limited by available memory. The program has a very slick font sensitive GadTools based interface and sequences can be arranged by drag and drop. Some other features include:

- Real-time audio effects (not in the current public beta).
- Bars & Pipes style notator for MIDI elements.
- Audiomaster style editor for audio elements.
- Powerful plug-in system.

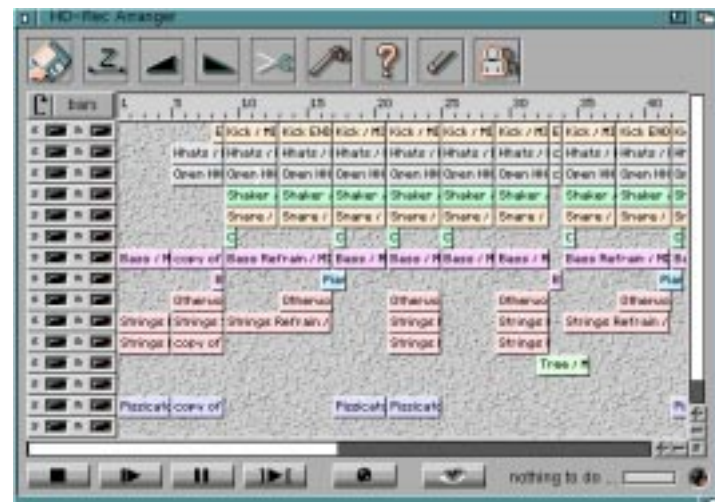
HD-Rec needs a powerful system for good performance, an 040 25Mhz is the minimum

and the developer recommends a 060, he also recommends an AHI supported sound card and a graphics card with at least 800x600 resolution. HD-Rec was developed on an Amithlon system and will benefit from the increased performance of a fast x86 processor even under emulation this should also be the case on MorphOS and

AmigaOS 4 when it is released but this has not been tested by the author. Direct PPC support is not planned although it could be implemented in third party plug-ins.

When released HD-Rec will be shareware, further details are available on the developer's website:

<http://www.hd-rec.de>



OpenPCI Encourages Driver Development

Open PCI is an attempt to make a common API for accessing PCI cards on the Amiga. This means a PCI card driver could be written once and then work with that type of PCI card no matter which Amiga PCI bus it was connected to. Open PCI sits between the driver and the PCI software supplied with the bus board or computer basically acting as a translator between the two. Currently DCE GRex and Matay Prometheus bus boards are supported as are PCI cards in PCs running Amithlon and in Pegasos computers running MorphOS 1.0. Unfortunately Elbox's Mediator bus boards are not supported however they do have better native driver support than the others. Version 1.0 of Open PCI has just been released and the first driver available is for Realtek 8139 based Ethernet cards. Drivers for PCI sound and USB

cards are also in the works from the OpenPCI team.

You can download the latest version of OpenPCI and request a developer kit if you are interested in making PCI drivers from: <http://www.chez.com/titan/DevPCI.html>

AmithlonTV

The first third party application to use OpenPCI is AmithlonTV, as you can guess from the name this was originally designed to allow Amithlon users to view TV programs via a PCI TV card in their PC. By using OpenPCI AmithlonTV can now work on a range of PCI busboards and has already been tested on a Pegasos running MorphOS.



AmithlonTV uses OpenPCI to support a variety of PCI busboards and motherboards, including Amithlon.

Amithlon TV supports a range of PCI TV cards and can also work the FM radio tuners found on some models. More cards can be supported by writing a plug-in driver for the chipsets they use. The program has a configuration GUI where you can set up the channels you wish to view and adjust your preferences. The TV picture is then displayed in a window on the Workbench or other screen.

AmithlonTV is giftware, to download the latest version go to its homepage at: <http://www.vmc.de/amithlon/amithlontv>

Bytes..

Amiga Forever 5.1

A free update to version 5.1 of Cloanto's officially licensed Amiga emulation package "Amiga Forever" is now available using the software's automatic update facility. The new version includes an updated emulation, upgraded support software such as Amiga Explorer and improved documentation and help files. Amiga Forever 5.1 now includes officially licensed copies of the classic Amiga "narrator" speech synthesis software which has not been shipped with AmigaOS since 1991.

For more details visit Cloanto at <http://www.amigaforever.com>

SimpleMail 0.19

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

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

Download the latest beta from <http://simplemail.sourceforge.net>

End of Aminet CDs

Urban Müller the maintainer of Aminet (the biggest collection of Amiga software on the Internet) has decided to stop producing the regular Aminet CDs. This decision was taken due to shrinking sales probably due to the fact that Internet access (and fast access at that) is now widely available. The demise of the CDs does not effect the Aminet Internet sites which will continue as normal. The final Aminet CD is number 52 - December 2002 which contains a full version of Superview Productivity Suite 2. As usual you can visit Aminet at: <http://www.aminet.net>

Features

MorphOS Update & Pegasos

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

CoreOS and Emulation

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

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

The ABox has a re-implemented PPC native Exec kernel (the core of AmigaOS) which allows PPC and emulated 68k code to mixed without task switching which caused an overhead one the 68k and PPC PowerUP accelerators. Exec has been

enhanced in other ways to with better multi-threading support, better memory handling and control over running tasks.

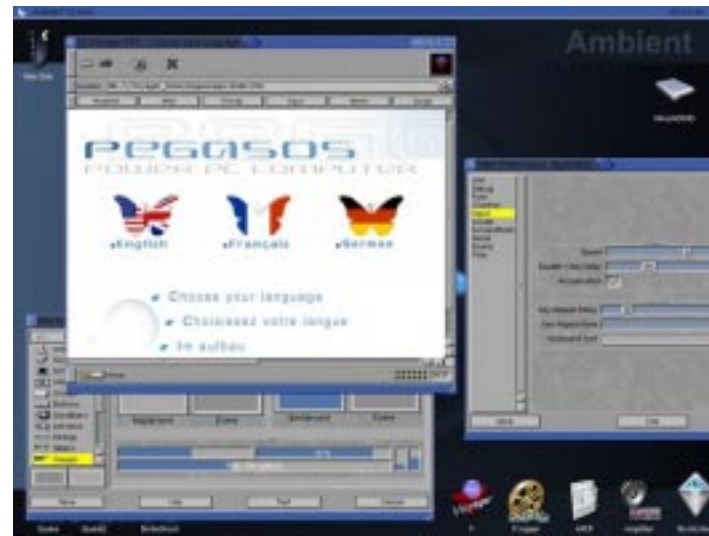
Graphics and Ambient

Font support has been enhanced, PostScript, TrueType and OpenType fonts can now be used and antialiasing is supported. System wide antialiasing support in the graphics.library is in development.

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

Ambient the MorphOS desktop user interface - this is the "face" of the system when you first start it. Ambient is based on MUI and it has a fully multi-threaded design so you can perform several actions at once and the desktop does not block while an action completes. Ambient supports all existing Amiga icon formats including NewIcons and OS3.5+ icons as well as its own 24bit PNG based icon form which benefits from alpha-channel based transparency. Also on the subject of icons cacheing makes re-opening a drawer much faster as the icons are cached. The preferences programs have been integrated into a single MUI application and can also be run separately.

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



The MorphOS Ambient desktop.

optimisations have been made. It seems that MUI is the native MorphOS GUI toolkit.

Sound is supported via AHI so existing applications which use this standard will work. Drivers are supplied for the on-board sound of the Pegasos motherboard and two sound cards from Terratec, the 128i PCI and the 512i digital.

AmiTCP 5

An enhanced version of the classic AmiTCP will be supplied as the MorphOS TCP/IP stack along with a suite of standard network tools (ping, traceroute etc.). Version 5 supports PPP over Ethernet needed for some cable and ADSL modems (although not for UK ADSL) and DHCP support is planned. AmiTCP uses SANA II drivers to access network hardware and MorphOS is supplied with drivers for the Pegasos on-board networking, Realtek 8029 and 8139 PCI cards and for the XSurf and Ariadne II Zorro II Ethernet cards. To get you started on the Internet MorphOS is supplied with a full version of Vaporware's Voyager web browser and the Simple Mail E-Mail client, both of these applications are PPC native.

Supplied Utilities

A bundle of native software comes with MorphOS including the following: FroggerNG plays back a wide range of movie and video clip formats such as MPEG, AVI and Quicktime (MOV). Frogger supports popular codecs including DIVX and MPEG4. Mystic View is a picture viewer which uses

datatypes, MorphOS has PPC native datatypes for JPEG, IFF-ILBM, PNG and GIF images amongst others. A new version of APDF is supplied to view PDF files up to version 1.4. It supports antialiasing, image transparency, password protected files and progressive display. A registered version of TurboPrint 7, the excellent print enhancement package that will be familiar to Total Amiga readers, is included with MorphOS to handle full 24bit printing.

Pegasos

For the past couple of months it has been difficult (probably impossible) to purchase a Pegasos computer, the last production run was released at the Aachen show in December and has long since sold out. As I complete this article Genesi have just announced that a new batch of 400 Pegasos motherboards (of which 300 will be for public sale and 100 for developers) will be available to order from Amiga dealers from Monday the 24th of February. This will be the last production of the existing Pegasos design. Instead a new Pegasos II is being worked on and will be available in September, this machine will have a faster system bus, three gigabit Ethernet channels and dual G4 processors. Owners of existing Pegasos boards will be able to get a discount on a Pegasos II.

It's nice to have some solid information on MorphOS at last, we have asked Genesi if they will supply us with a Pegasos for review so hopefully we'll be able to give you an even better insight in the next issue of Total Amiga.

The Light at the End of the Tunnel.



The Operating System:

Who?

The MorphOS development team includes the authors of highly acclaimed software solutions such as CybergraphX, Magic User Interface (MUI) and Voyager. These applications have been in daily use by thousands of computer users for up to ten years...

What?

MorphOS is a well named combination of the old and the new. It originally started in 1995 with a plan to migrate Amiga to PowerPC® but eventually 'morphed' into an entire Operating System in its own right which includes compatibility with many old Amiga applications. Some of its features are built-in USB support, AHI Audio, Hardware 3D support (3dfx, 3DLabs, SIS & more to come), fully skimmable User Interface and New Ambient Desktop with 24BIT colour support.

How much?

MorphOS comes **free** with every PEGASOS board. Also included are Debian Linux and Mac-On-Linux.

The Hardware:

MicroATX mainboard
(236 mm x 172 mm)

133 MHz processor slot

600 MHz PowerPC® G3 750 Cx6
upto Dual PowerPC G4 MPC 7450

PC133 RAM (two sockets), upto
2 GB AGP slot

PCI subsystem with 3 slots, optional
Riser Card

IEEE1394 (Firewire) VIA VT6306
with 100/200/400 MBit data transfer

10/100 MBit Ethernet Connector

USB I/O system VIA 8231 with
four connectors

AC97 sound subsystem Sigmatel
STAC 9766 Codec with mic input,
line in/out and headset connector

IRDA for infra-red remote control

ATA100 VIA 8231 with 2 channels
for upto 4 ATA devices

PS/2 mouse connector, serial port,
Centronics port, Floppy, Gameport
for PC-compatible joysticks



MorphOS & PEGASOS

Soon available with 1Ghz PowerPC G4 processors.

For more information contact your local
dealer or visit us on the internet:

www.pegasos-uk.com
www.pegasosppc.com



Amiga One Update

AmigaOne G3SE boards are in the hands of their proud owners, now Alan Redhouse updates us on the rest of the family.

Yes we did actually make it - in part at least. Most developers and 'Earlybird' customers did actually get their AmigaOneG3-SE systems before Christmas. We would have been able to get all orders out if only UPS hadn't lost part of the consignment en route from the Far East!

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

Having sorted this out however I am pleased to be able to report that - as expected by us (and contrary to the difficulties apparently being experienced in other quarters with similar technology) - the 7451 @800MHz is delivering its expected performance - ie much higher than that of the G3-SE, and that (in the tests carried out) is without using Altivec or the 2MB level 3 cache! In fact the performance against x86 technology is even more remarkable, with some real-world applications running between 2 and 3 times as fast (under Linux) as their x86 counterparts with the same



The latest AmigaOne G4XE motherboard on test.

clock rate. We will publish full benchmarks in the next issue of Total Amiga.

All this means that volume shipments of A1XE/G4-800's are starting in earnest at the time of writing - initially as Earlybird systems with Linux/UAE (and a free copy of OS4 when available). However as we individually test each board before shipping there are practical limits to how many we can ship each week - so, as we will be sending out systems in chronological ordering order, some of you may still not have received your systems by the time this issue hits the mailbox. Don't worry, your A1 will arrive soon.

A1-XE/G3 & dual G4

The A1-XE/G3-800 using the IBM 750FX cpu module - which has already been fully tested by Hyperion - will be shipped towards the end of March. These cpu's also give excellent performance. The higher clock speed, coupled with a more advanced architecture than the 750CXe make this cpu around 60-70% faster than the G3-SE in real world applications.

In addition Hyperion have also been testing the dual-G4 cpu module for the AmigaOne-XE. As OS4 has been designed to be SMP compatible truly jaw-dropping performance can be expected. We will not be

releasing this module for general purchase until OS4 has been shipped for the AmigaOne.

A1-SE Lite

But what of the AmigaOne-SE? Since the AmigaOne-XE became available many individuals have opted to upgrade to this in preference to the A1-SE, and with the current size of the Amiga market it is only practicable to produce one board type at once. But we are very conscious that, even in relatively low volumes, there is a need to produce a lot lower cost entry-level single board computer, not just as an entry-level Amiga and/or OS4 games console, but as something that can form the basic module for stand-alone multimedia applications running under OS4. This would form, for example, a replacement for the CD32 and A1200 motherboards have been used by us and others in embedded kiosk and entertainment applications to date. We have already produced the initial specification for this small-footprint 'AmigaOne SE-Lite'. Negotiations with IBM have over cpu specification and pricing are already in train at the highest level and indications are that this expansion-limited A1-SE Mk2 can be very aggressively priced. We aim to put this into

production towards the end of this year.

AI and Linux

All this begs the question as to whether the market for AmigaOnes - with OS4 - is large enough to support these sorts of development. Well no, it isn't - at least not at present. So with MAI's agreement all the existing AmigaOne dealers (as shown on our website) who wish to can now also sell the Teron motherboard designs (on which the AmigaOne is based) for Linux, and with direct links from the MAI website.

Who would buy these designs for Linux when x86 motherboards are so cheap? Well any company who runs a significant number of servers - an ISP for example - can save up to £110/cpu/year on energy consumption alone. That's over £100,000 pa for a modest ISP with 500 dual-cpu servers, and 10 times that for some of the larger ISP's. And these PPC boards also fit in 1U high rack cases whereas most x86 servers need a 4U high box to get sufficient air circulation for cooling purposes. That alone might represent a quartering of the real estate costs needed for a server farm - which of course also represents a very considerable cost saving.

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

It's all part of the grand plan.

See you next issue

Alan

Fleecy Speaks

Amiga Inc's technology chief says good riddance to 2002 and looks forward to a brighter 2003.

2002 was a bad year for Amiga. The world economy slowed, customers tightened their purse strings and Amiga Inc, dealers, developers, users and editors were all subject to attacks from a third party intent on convincing them that the Amiga we all know and love was dead and that they were the only solution for an Amiga future.

Luckily, the Amiga community is not fooled that easily. The main damage was done because the work on the AmigaOne and AmigaOS4.0 has been going on in the background, away from the public eye. Screenshots and demonstrations of small pieces of the technology were effective in communicating progress but still left the door open for malicious rumours and untruths.

Despite this public onslaught, the hearty and passionate group that has come together under Hyperion's excellent guidance continued to do its work, initially on 68K and PPC accelerated 68K machines and finally on AmigaOne machines themselves. Although it was tempting to take shortcuts, to throw out a product much less than what we wanted, we never forgot that Amigans never settle for second best. Work continued on through the shitstorm of accusation and smear and as

time passed, the bulk of the work slowly fell behind us and the sweet, pure air of the summit of success began to make itself felt.

Projects of any kind are always a roller coaster of emotion. They start out with great excitement and energy, elements quickly consumed as the individual project tasks start, split and seem to engulf the original passion, days turning into weeks turning into months before finally things start to come together, results appearing more frequently and that original passion returning as the project approaches completion.

Well we at Amiga and in the AmigaOS4.0 team are very excited now. 2003 has swept away the tiredness and toil of 2002. Every day, tasks are being ticked off the project schedule, beta test completed. As the disparate parts come together, the whole that was dreamt of 12 months ago is now becoming proudly and rudely visible.

The joy of this is that we can now share it with you. Over the Christmas holiday, when stomachs were groaning and heads throbbing, Ben Hermans, the project manager for AmigaOS4.0 was busy putting together the first version of a public feature set document, drawing together all of the work

that had been done into a community accessible format.

What was fantastic was the reaction to it being released to a private test group. For a year they'd had nothing but a stream of disinformation and then suddenly, to be confronted by the magnitude of the work that constitutes AmigaOS4.0, they were dumbstruck; but not for long.

By the time you read this, that feature set document should be publicly available on the Amiga Inc website, and maybe even reproduced in this magazine, although at 20 very concentrated (no diagram) pages just for version 1, that might be too much.

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

And it is just the start of the rebirth of the Amiga desktop platform. With a brand new foundation in place, the Amiga Generation 1 (AG1) systems that have been brought across will be replaced by brand new, designed

from scratch Amiga Generation 2 (AG2) systems that look at the Amiga technical legacy, our competitors, the requirements of our existing and potential customers and all the rocket science research currently being carried out in each area. 2D graphics, 3D graphics, audio, video, user environments, connectivity. Each will do what Amiga has always strived to do, show the rest of the world how it should be done.

You may also find in this issue the first advert of the AmigaOS4.0 advertising campaign. We believe that computers should be there to allow anyone to embrace "digital living"™, and that this consists of four base elements, the requirements to work, play, create and connect. This campaign and all the artwork has been done by Amigans and we believe it will succeed in letting the world know the good news about Amiga whilst also carrying the unique Amiga spirit within it.

Good riddance to 2002, and hello to 2003, the year when we can start smiling again; and you know what they say - laughter is infectious.

Buzz Word...

Bringing you the latest news and comment from the Amiga world.

There are lies, rumours and sometimes (rarely) there are truths. Sorting out the wheat from the chaff is difficult at times. However there is so much F.U.D. (Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt) being spread about the Amiga Community that the following items may indeed be pure speculation by others.

Double Agents

Buzz Word has heard that one of the AmigaOS4 Betatesters based in the Mediterranean is allegedly reporting all findings and or discussions back to a

certain rival company. Naughty Boy.

AmigaOS4

It looks very likely that Amiga will not be attending the forthcoming CeBit Show in Germany.

The reason circulating is that Amiga were hoping until the last moment to see if OS4 would be completed in time for CeBit. Sadly circumstances have conspired to make it highly unlikely that OS4 will be completed in time for the show. Buzz expects Amiga to

have made an announcement in relation to this matter by the time this issue goes to press. Sources suggest that Amiga will now aim to attend the Cebit Show in May which is held in Australia.

Work is proceeding and a May/June 2003 Release is not beyond the realm of fantasy.

Amiga Website

It is rumoured that Amiga webmaster Ray Akey is working with a prominent Amiga graphics artist to design a new website for the

forthcoming AmigaOS4.0 launch. A new marketing strategy may cause a rebranding of AmigaOS to distinguish it from AmigaDE products. It is rumoured that the graphic artist involved is the same person responsible for the latest Amiga

advertisement in this issue... About time too! The current Amiga website really needs a total overhaul.

That's all for this issue, see you all next month with more "insider" reports and rumours.

Features

World of Amiga South East Show Report

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

The show venue was split into two main areas with the all important bar in between. The smaller of the two housed the usergroup area and the presentation stage with working PA (unlike last year) and projector. In the bigger main hall the commercial exhibitors were displaying their products and of course selling them to visitors.

Eyetech's stand was immediately in front of the entrance doors to the main hall in addition to their range of "Classic" Amiga products they had an AmigaOne G4XE motherboard on display and a G3SE system up and running. For the first time Eyetech were accepting pre-orders on AmigaOne SE and XE boards and systems with an added bonus of a free copy of OS 4 when it is released. The Frieden brothers (key OS 4 developers at Hyperion) were demonstrating the AmigaOne BIOS and OS 4's ExecSG on this machine although the 68k emulator isn't yet implemented allowing it to boot into a full OS they were able to show that the kernel booted on the AmigaOne and that various features such as multi-tasking and virtual memory are already working.

Next to the Eyetech Stand were Amiga Inc. and Blackpool Amiga Club, we mention them together because both tables were covered with computers running Hyperion's Quake 2 port that was released at the show. Quake 2 really drew the crowds and seems to run smoothly



Thendic brought an array of Pegasos running MorphOS.

on existing Amiga hardware, best of all the game was on sale at the show. Matt Morris of BAC had his modified A1200 tower complete with side window and custom paint job as featured in Total Amiga issue 13. Finally Chris Morris (not a relation of Matt's) had some OS 4 components running on his Amiga including the new TCP/IP stack which was put to good use by networked Quake 2. In fact many visitors seemed to be more interested in Quake 2 than the OS components!

Zeoneo were demonstrating their AmigaDE products including the soon to be released Crossword Evolution. Also on their stand was information about a forthcoming release of Candy Factory Pro for AmigaOS 4. Next to Zeoneo was The Crypt web magazine who showed their latest issue. Michael Battallina of Cloanto had the latest release of AmigaForever with the JIT version of UAE for sale at a very reasonable price and as usual did a very simple and stylish job of decorating his table. Cloanto also supplied several copies of AF5 as prizes for the entry ticket raffle.

Next up was our Total Amiga stand manned by Elliott Bird, David Lloyd and Robert Williams. We had the latest issue of the magazine along with several back issues. It was great to meet so many Total Amiga readers and recruit some new subscribers. Altogether the show was a success for the magazine. Next to us was Kickssoft with Ray McCarthy in full swing selling a variety of serious software and games. In particular Ray had PageStream 4.1 at a special show discount. Weird Science's four tables were loaded with Amiga CDs and other software at show discount prices.

Thendic France had the largest stand at the show with eleven Pegasos PPC machines housed in stylish aluminium desktop cases with silver 17" TFT monitors. Most of the systems were running MorphOS (Thendic's Amiga compatible PPC operating system) with a variety of applications and games loaded including ImageFX, Candy Factory, Voyager, Software Tycoon and Quake. A couple of the Pegasos machines were running PPC Linux including the impressive MacOnLinux emulator. Visitors could sit down and try the systems and help was on hand from several Thendic staff, all smartly dressed in suits looking

rather like characters from the Sopranos (only joking Bill!) . At the centre of the Thendic stand was the "Video Microwave" this was a microwave oven with an LCD panel mounted in the door and a Pegasos motherboard inside, it looked cool and certainly drew visitors attention!

For many people including SEAL members WoASE was the first opportunity to see MorphOS in action, and most of us came away with mixed feelings. The Pegasos machines and Ambient GUI looked great and ran very smoothly. The fact that classic Amiga applications ran at all on completely different hardware was also very impressive. On the negative side everyone we spoke to experienced at least one crash or lockup when using the system, when we spoke to Thendic they said that the beta version at the show was the first to have JIT 68k emulation implemented so things should improve with further development. We also noticed that only very basic OS utilities were installed it remains to be seen what will be implemented in the future.

The Mediator Support Team had their own stand at the show and it proved to be one of the most popular and interesting. SEAL's own Sam Byford showed his A4000 Tower with Mediator 4000 with PCI cards including the new Spider USB and a TV card through which Sam could demonstrate his video camera. Sam was also demonstrating the newly released Tales of Tamar on-line strategy game on his system. Also on the Mediator stand was a Playstation 2 playing on a graphics card screen through a TV card and the new 6 slot Mediator 1200SX.

At the back of the main hall was Forematt Home Computing with their huge range of Amiga software including many classic games. In addition to the classic games they also stock many recent games including Software Tycoon, Tales of Tamar and Quake 2 all of which were released at the show! 100% Amiga, the monthly CD based Amiga magazine, was on display showing off the new interface that works on all Amigas and in fact any computer with a web browser.

In the presentation hall four user groups, HAUG, ASA, ANT and SEAL all had tables where they sold some second hand Amiga gear and software. ANT were running a SCALA presentation



Sam Byford demonstrates Tales of Tamar on the Mediator stand.

about their group. On the SEAL stand Robert gave a demonstration PageStream as it is used to produce Total Amiga.

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

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

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

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

By Robert Williams & Mick Sutton

The Legend Continues...



Embrace Digital Living

AMIGA
<http://www.amiga.com>

AmigaOS 4 Update

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

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

The features list released by Hyperion is a detailed document spanning about twenty pages and covers some ground I've mentioned in previous updates, so in this feature I'll try to pick out the new and interesting stuff. If you're at all interested in OS 4 and especially if you're a programmer please go to the Amiga site at <http://os.amiga.com> and read the document yourself if you haven't done so already as there is a lot of detail I won't have room to mention here.

ExecSG

Exec is the AmigaOS kernel which controls the very basic functions of the OS such as memory management and prioritising tasks. ExecSG is the new PPC native version for OS 4 with lots of important new features. Limited memory protection stops critical memory areas such as the kernel, code areas and unused memory from being written to in error or corrupted. New applications can use a new MMU to protect their memory from other processes. The new kernel includes support for the AltiVec vector unit found in G4

processors which can dramatically accelerate certain operations. The features list also confirms that ExecSG will support existing WarpUp PPC applications via a built-in emulation. A new memory system has been implemented which uses a virtualised address space meaning that addressable memory can be larger than physical memory. Applications can request physical areas of memory if required as in the current Amiga model. Memory can be optionally swapped to disk - this feature can be disabled is not required and in certain circumstances be toggled on the fly.

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

Emulation

The 68k emulator will be integrated into OS4 to allow existing Amiga applications and OS elements which have not been ported to run on the PPC processor. Using a Just In Time emulator performance is expected to be very good with even a PPC 603e 160Mhz (the slowest PPC on a production PowerUP card) achieving similar performance to an 060/50Mhz. Performance on faster PPCs and particularly on a more modern system with faster RAM and fewer bottle necks like the AmigaOne should be very impressive (and much more than the additional processor speed

would imply). The emulation has been directly integrated with ExecSG to keep it as responsive as possible and to allow 68k applications to make limited use of some of the new Exec features.

PCI

Support for PCI expansion cards has been brought into the OS using the expansion.library. In addition to the PCI slots provided by the Artica S northbridge of the Amiga One, Prometheus and Mediator PCI bus boards are also supported.

Graphics and GUI

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

Many changes have been made to the Intuition and Reaction GUI systems, here are some of the most interesting: A new type of toolbox window is available, these cannot be activated and

are useful for palettes where application developers want to keep the document window selected. Windows can be moved and re-sized opaquely in real-time without the use of hacks or patches. A new pop-up menu class has been added to ReAction. The look and feel of all GUI elements can be controlled by a new preferences program, various frame styles are available (3D, XEN or flat) and most elements can filled with a bitmap texture. Both GadTools and ReAction GUIs will take their look from the same preferences program in almost every detail so programs using these GUI tools will get a consistent look. GUI settings can be customised on a screen-by-screen basis or all screens can have a common look. A usable demo version of MUI will be supplied to support existing MUI applications, this will be configured so MUI applications fit in with the default OS4 GUI's look and feel.

As we go to press Hyperion has made an announcement that will massively increase OS4's graphics card support. Hyperion have entered a strategic partnership with SciTech to port their SNAP product to OS 4. SNAP provides 2D graphics support for over 170 different graphics chip sets including the

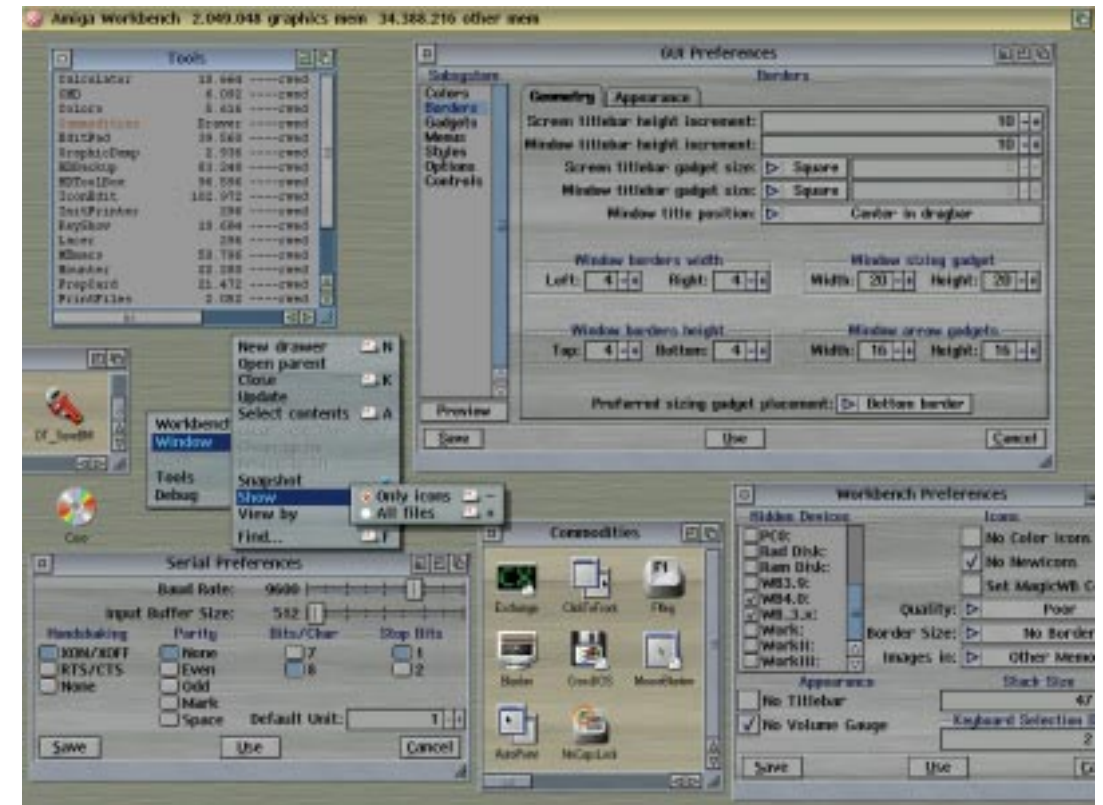
latest offerings from the likes of nVidia and ATI. Hyperion have explained that SciTech will port SNAP to Linux PPC and then they will integrate it to a Picasso 96 driver which will slot straight into the OS4 graphics system. This move should give OS4 much better graphics driver support with minimal effort. Hyperion's Ben Hermans was particularly keen to point out that supporting so many chipsets was particularly important for the embedded market where he would like to see OS4 gain a foot hold.

Initially SciTech will only supply 2D drivers but Ben says that Hyperion plan to work with them to add 3D support for cards where the necessary documentation is available. The initial release of OS 4 will be supplied with Warp 3D 4 - this supports the 3D functions of Permedia 2 and Voodoo 3 based graphics cards, ATI Radeon support is also planned. A port of the OpenGL compatible Mesa 5.0 3D API will also be included to aid the development and porting of 3D applications. Later a new release of Warp3D, code named NOVA will be released with a much more advanced design capable of supporting the latest 3D technologies and games.

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

CD, DVD and USB

The new CD and DVD file system deserves a mention, in addition to supporting all common formats such as RockRidge (Unix and Amiga), Joliet (Windows) and HFS (Mac) it can also read audio tracks as AIFF files and Video CDs. More interestingly it can also packet write to a CR-RW meaning you can use a CD-RW disc rather like a large floppy disk without dedicated CD-writing software. The CDFS also supports the new Mount Rainier standard for packet writing to CD-RWs if your drive implements it.



This is just one of the examples posted by Hyperion showing the flexibility of the enhanced Intuition and Reaction. Notice how custom bitmap textures have been used for most GUI elements.

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

New Utilities

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

the utilities a PPC native version of this popular filesystem will be included as a contribution.

Two new utilities will make handling PDF and PostScript files much easier. AmiPDF is a new PDF viewer with support for PDF version 1.4. AmiPDF can display many font types and antialiasing to smooth out the jaggies. It can open password protected files and has direct printing support. The interface allows multiple document windows to be opened. AmiGS is a front-end of a new port of GhostScript (the popular open source PostScript display and processing package) this allows postscript files to be displayed and like AmiPDF has full antialiasing and printing support.

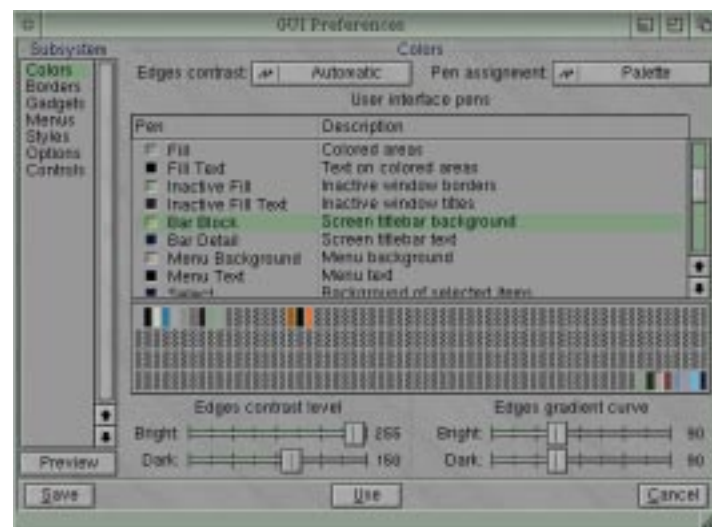
A new PPC native version of MooVID will give OS 4 users access to movies and video clips in AVI, QuickTime (MOV) and MPEG4 formats. A wide range of different codecs are supported including DIVX 3, 4 and 5, MPEG4 versions 1, 2 and 3, Intel Indeo and Sorenson video.

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

and from my experience so far seems to be much more stable is compatible with many more websites than 2.2. IBrowse 2.3 is a 68k application so it will run under emulation on OS4 however with the emulation performance being quoted it should get a nice speed increase on all but the slowest PPC hardware.

What Progress is Being Made?

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



The new GUI Preferences offers much more control over colours than the old Palette prefs.

Robert Williams guides you through creating your first webpage in a tutorial designed to introduce the basic concepts of HTML.

Over recent years the world wide web has become the "face" of the Internet, the great thing about it is that almost anyone with a connected computer can publish what they want for little or no cost. All you need is a some basic information on how web pages are constructed and how they are uploaded so they are available over the Internet. In this feature there's no way I will be able to explain, even briefly, all the features of HTML (the language used to define web pages). So what I've decided to do is show you how to create a very simple page and make it available on the web. For more in-depth information you'll find links to lots of great websites and tutorials. If you wish in future issues we'll run more detailed tutorials on specific aspects of web design. If you're an old hand at creating web sites then I'm sure this feature won't really be for you however perhaps you might find some of the software mini-reviews at the end interesting.

How Web Pages Work

A website consists of a number of pages which are stored on a computer connected to the Internet. This computer is called the web server and runs software that will send pages to other computers on the Internet that request them. Although it is possible to run a web server on your Amiga because most people don't leave their computer connected to the Internet all the time normally pages are copied on to a dedicated server - this is called hosting a website. Each web page is a simple text file which contains the text on the page and special codes called mark up which indicate to the web browser how the page should be displayed. The structure of web pages and the "codes" used to define them is called the Hyper Text Mark-up Language or HTML for short.

An HTML document consists of a number of elements, each element is defined by one or more tags. Each tag is enclosed in angle brackets ("**<**" and "**>**") so for example the tag that begins a paragraph element is "**<P>**". Many elements have a closing tag, this is indicated by a forward slash ("**/**") before the tag name, for example "**</P>**".

`<P>Paragraph text...</P>`

Some elements have parameters which effect how they are interpreted by the browser, these parameters are called attributes. The value of an attribute is set in the opening tag of the element and should be enclosed in double or single quotation marks (" or '). For example the "P" element has an "align" attribute which sets whether the text of the paragraph is left, right or centrally aligned, it is used like this:

`<P align="right">Paragraph text...</P>`

The Tools You Need

Because HTML pages are simple text files you don't need any special software to create them - just a text editor capable of saving ASCII files. On the Amiga you could use Editpad (or even Ed) or a third party editor such as GoldEd, Cygnus Ed or BEd. There are also some programs dedicated to web page creation, on the Amiga most of these just assist in the writing process by highlighting HTML tags, allowing you to insert tags from a list and set attributes within requesters. There are also programs that aim to let you create a web page graphically - as you would create a document with a DTP program. However because the way HTML is displayed depends on the browser displaying it and the options the user has set these programs are not usually very successful. Even if you end up using a graphical editor it is a good idea to start writing HTML pages by hand so you understand how they work then you will have the knowledge to understand what the editor is doing and make manual corrections if necessary. Personally I found once I got to grips with HTML I found it simple enough not to need a more advanced editor than GoldEd (which has an HTML tag highlighting mode).

Basic HTML Structure

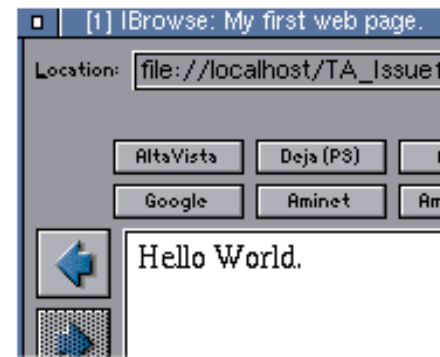
The first line of any HTML document should be the document type declaration (DTD), this informs anyone reading the document which version of the HTML specification you are following. Full details of the specifications are available from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) site, see the address in the "Learning More" box out. If you are complying with the HTML 4.01 specification then the DTD to use is:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN">
```

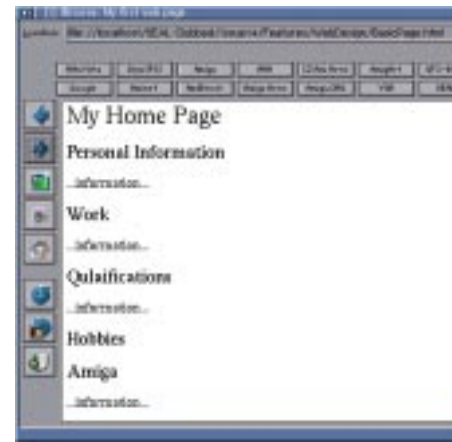
Every HTML page is enclosed within an "HTML" element, this means it starts with the <HTML> tag and ends with </HTML>. Inside these tags are two other essential elements, "HEAD" which contains information about the document but is not displayed within the page and "BODY" which contains the content which will actually be displayed. Within the HEAD element you can define the TITLE of the page, this is normally displayed in the Browser's window title bar, at the top of a printed page or as the title of a bookmark. So a very basic HTML page would look something like this:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN">
<HTML>
  <HEAD>
    <TITLE>My First page.</TITLE>
  </HEAD>
  <BODY>
    <P>Hello World.</P>
  </BODY>
</HTML>
```

An important point to note is that HTML doesn't care about how you layout the text in your editor. In the above example I have indented the lines so you can see how the elements fit within each other however I could have left out the indenting or even written all the tags on the same line, the resulting page would still look the same in the browser. If you insert multiple spaces, for example between words, they will be treated as a single space by the browser.



Open the HTML file you have saved in a web browser to check it looks as you expect.



Using the "H" element you can structure your page with headings.

Starting Your First Page

Let's take the example of a simple home page with some personal information, we'll build up the page step by step and introduce some common HTML elements along the way. Open a text editor such as Editpad and type in the HTML code as shown in the "Basic HTML Structure" section. Then save the file from Editpad making sure the extension is ".html". If the page you are creating is to be the front page of your website it is a good idea to call it "index.html". This is the default page that most web servers will display when a user visits your site. To view the page so far start a web browser and then load the page using the "Open local file" menu command.

Organising Your Site

Before we go any further it's a good idea to think about the organisation of your web site. Because each page of the site will be a separate HTML file and these files will call on separate image files (as we'll see later) it will keep things tidier if you make a new drawer in which to keep all the site's files. If your site gets bigger you can make subdrawers within the main site drawer to hold particular information such as the content of a particular section of the site or the images. When you've made a new drawer for your site move the HTML file you've just saved into it.

Text Formatting

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

HTML defines six levels of headings (the H1 to H6 elements) which are used to structure your page. These are generally rendered by the browser is descending size from H1 (biggest) to H6 (smallest). If you check your browser's font settings you will probably find an option to change the size of these headings. However the Hx elements and not

designed for formatting the document - they are for structuring the sections of a page. For example on our home page we might have information in several groups such as personal details, work, qualifications, hobbies etc. Under some of these might be subsections of information. We can use headings to lay this out neatly, for example:

```
<H1>My Home Page</H1>
  <H2>Personal Information</H2>
    ...information...
  <H2>Work</H2>
    ...information...
  <H2>Qualifications</H2>
    ...information...
  <H2>Hobbies</H2>
    <H3>Amiga</H3>
      ...information...
    <H3>Architecture</H3>
      ...information...
    <H3>Cinema</H3>
      ...information...
```

Delete the "Hello World" line from your HTML file and enter the code above in its place below the "<BODY>" tag. Where I've put "...information..." you can type a few lines of text if you wish.

Paragraphs

The body text of a web page can be split into paragraph (<P>) elements, you can use the "align" attribute to change the alignment of a paragraph to left, right or center. Using the </P> ending tag is optional, the browser assumes the last paragraph has closed when it encounters another block element such as a heading or another paragraph. If you use an the alignment attribute it is wise to use the ending </P> tag otherwise the alignment can be carried over to future paragraphs. For example my Hobbies/Amiga section could look like:

```
<H3>Amiga</H3>
I have been interested in Amiga computers since my parents bought me an A500plus for Christmas in 1991...
<P align="center">
Now I help to run South Essex Amiga Link and edit Total Amiga magazine!
</P>
```

Use the P element to format the text you've entered in your HTML file into paragraphs.

NOTE: It is safest to use the American



Get to know the the "P" (paragraph) element, you'll be using it a lot!

This text is bold
this is bold and italic
this is big and bold!

The effect of combining text style tags.

spelling of "center" in HTML code as the British English spelling may not be correctly interpreted by all browsers.

Line Breaks

If you wish to start a new line rather than a new paragraph you can use the
 tag which forces a line break but does not introduce any additional vertical space.

In-line Formatting

You can change the format of sections of text within a paragraph or other element using a selection of elements. For example for bold, <I> for italics and <TT> for a mono-spaced typewriter style font. You can also set text to be <BIG> and <SMALL>. All these elements can be combined and all must be closed with the corresponding tag. For example:

```
<B>This text is bold</B>
<B><I>this is bold and italic</I></B>
<BIG><B>this is big and bold!</B></BIG>
```

Be careful to close the tags in the right order.

Preformatted Text

If you have a piece of text which you would like to keep in its original format (rather than being re-formatted in the browser window) you can enclose it in the <PRE> element. This is useful for presenting data such as screen dumps from text based systems or emails. Note that you can't use other HTML elements inside "PRE".

Special Characters

If you want to use special characters which cannot be typed on the keyboard or characters that have a special meaning in HTML, angle brackets for example, then you can use a character entity. If you know the number of the character you wish to insert you can reference is as follows: "&#;" where "#" is the character number in decimal or hexadecimal notation. To make life easier HTML also provides a number of symbolic names that can be used to reference characters, for example & represents an ampersand ("&").

There are four character entities you will commonly require because they are used in HTML mark-up, using these characters directly in your HTML page can cause errors: "<" represents the < sign. ">" represents the > sign. "&" represents the & sign. """ represents the " mark.

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

Images

Images can be inserted into an HTML page and viewed along with the text. Most graphical browsers support images in JPEG, GIF and PNG formats. Which format you choose depends on the type of Image you wish to display.

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

GIF only supports images with up to 8bits (256 colours) this makes it a poor choice for photos. However it offers good compression and works well for line drawings and diagrams which generally have few colours. GIF images can also have a transparent colour where the background shows through and can be compiled into simple animations.

PNG is a newer format designed in part to replace GIF which is expensive for software makers to license (this is why GIF support has been removed from some Amiga applications). PNG can store image in either palette mapped (up to 8bit) or true colour (24bit) formats using a variable level of lossless compression. In true colour mode it



Inserting images into a page is easy.

stores images with no loss of quality but the files are substantially bigger than JPEG which uses lossy compression (reduces the quality for a smaller file size). If JPEG quality is adequate it is a better option than 24bit PNG. Palette mapped PNG is a good alternative to GIF and has a more powerful transparency feature using an alpha channel, this means areas of a PNG image can have different levels of transparency. However PNG does not support animations.

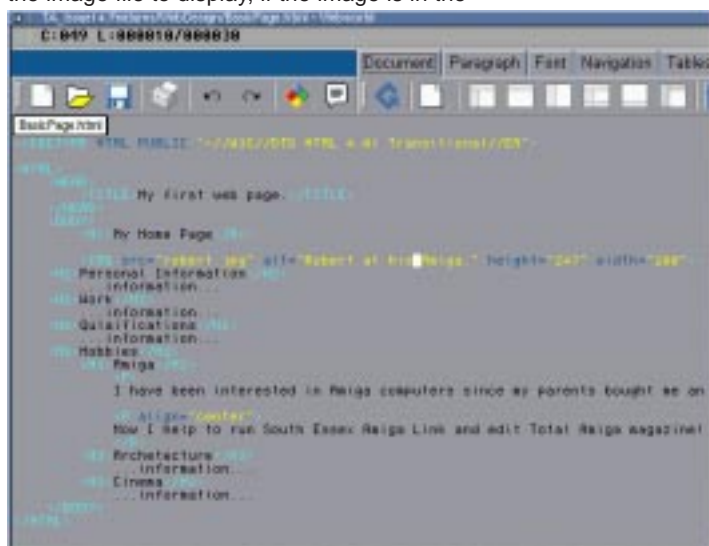
What Size Should the image be?

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

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

Adding an Image to a Page

Images are added to the page using a element. The "src" attribute defines the image file to display, if the image is in the



same directory as the HTML file you just need to specify its file name. If the image is in a drawer below the HTML image file you can specify the path relative to the HTML file. For example if you keep your images in a drawer called "pics" you could specify an image from the drawer: src="pics/image.jpg".

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

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

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

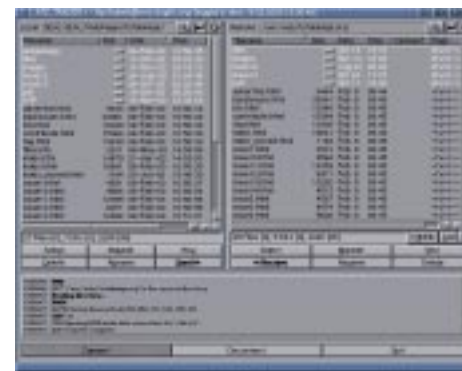
To add an image to our page below the top heading we need to add the following tag:

```

```

This assumes that the image file "robert.jpg" is in the same directory as the HTML file. If it

The finished page in GoldEd. The buttons and the code highlighting are both provided by the WebWorld module.



Uploading the Total Amiga website with AmiTradeCenter, a freeware FTP client. was in a subdirectory below the HTML file called "images" we would need to put src="images/robert.jpg".

Linking to other pages and files

Most of the power of the Web comes from the way it joins information together, using hyperlinks you can easily move to another page of your site or to a different Internet site altogether with the click of a mouse.

Linking to another page on your site

Links use a pair of <A> and tags to surround the text and or image elements which will become the link.

```
<A href="address.html">My contact details.</A>
```

You can link to another HTML page or any other type of file - what happens when your link is selected will depend on the type of file you link to and the user's browser configuration. For example an HTML page or an image will probably be displayed while an LHA archive might be downloaded to disk. The URL or path you want to link to is specified in the "href" (which stands for hypertext reference) attribute. As with images if the page or file you want to link to is in the same drawer as your webpage just enter the filename. You can also specify the path to the file if it is in a subdirectory or the URL to link to another website. For example to link to a page called address.html you would use the following code:

```
here is <A href="address.html">my address</A> if you need it.
```

To link to another site just use the full URL, you can link to a specific page if you wish:

```
Come and see us at a <A href="http://www.seal-amiga.co.uk/">South Essex Amiga Link</A> meeting.
```

Uploading Your Page

With our simple example page complete it's time to upload to the web server. Most Internet service providers give you some space on their webserver when you sign up for an account so, if you're on the 'net, you will most likely have some space waiting to be used. Most ISPs and hosting companies

let you upload your pages using an FTP client - many if these exist for the Amiga including AmFTP, SimpleFTP and AmiTradeCenter (which is freeware). There is also an excellent FTP client built into Directory Opus 5. From your ISP you need to know the address of the FTP server where you need to upload, which username and password to use (normally these will be the same as you login details) and what the address of your website will be. Most ISP's post this information on their website.

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

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

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

TIP: If there are any problems when you try to access the site from a browser - and the same site worked from your hard disk - check that you have put the files in the same places on the web server and that you don't have any case problems in the file names (see "Adding an Image to a Page").

Conclusion

That completes our very simple page. I hope this has given you enough information to start creating your own pages. However there are many more features in HTML I haven't been able to cover here, I highly recommend that you look at some of the pages in the "learning more" boxout which have the space to go into much more detail than I have been able to here.

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

Learning More

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

Spifications

<http://www.w3c.org/>
The official body that sets standards for the World Wide Web. Their site has loads of information and on-line utilities for checking the validity of your pages.

<http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/>
The HTML 4 specification which defines all the available elements and how they should be used.

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/getting-started/> Making a Website more accessible actually makes the site easier for everyone to use. Good usability advice from the WWW standards authority.
<http://www.htmlhelp.org/> Lots of useful information about HTML standards including an excellent style guide.

Tutorials

<http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/tut/lessons.html>
A good basic tutorial that covers more aspects of basic HTML than I've been able to fit in here.

<http://archive.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/index.html>
A more technical reference.

<http://www.w3schools.com/W3Schools> - Tutorials for the aspiring Webmaster on many aspects of web design.

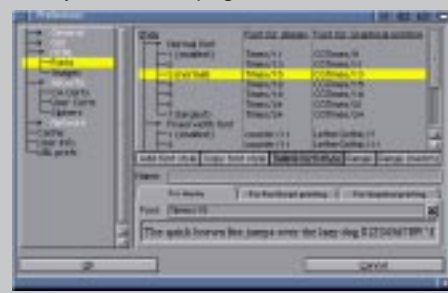
Style

<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/>
Jakob Nielsen's column on web usability. Indispensable for the professional Webmaster.

<http://www.webstyleguide.com/>
A complete on-line book guiding you through the

Browsers

When designing webpages it is important to remember that different browsers will render the page differently. Most browsers have many options effecting how the page is displayed. In this screen grab you can see IBrowse's extensive control over the fonts used for display. Finally there are non-graphical browsers such as those based on braille and speech synthesis for the blind which do not have a "display" at all. Check the "Learn More" box out for some sites which will help you create a widely accessible page.



Useful Utilities *for Web Design*

GoldEd Studio AIX

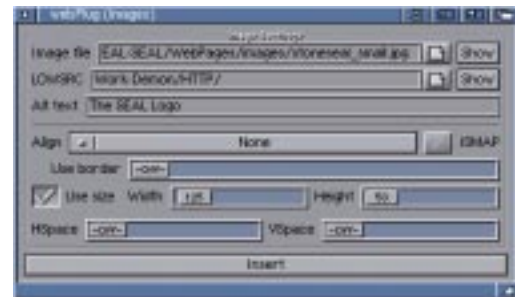
Author: Dietmar Eilert
License: Commercial
Price: 59.99Euro
From: <http://golded.dietmar-eilert.de/>

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

Most of the HTML related controls are in a new tabbed section of the main toolbar at the top of the GoldEd window. Each tab has icons for inserting tags related to

different HTML functions for example paragraph, font or navigation related. If the tag to be inserted has attributes then GoldEd opens a window where you can set them. The tag windows help you set the attributes correctly, for example if you need to specify a colour there is a colour picker which will calculate the hexadecimal colour value and if you need to select a file you can use a file requester. GoldEd can also calculate the size of images and automatically generate an "ALT" attribute. A nice feature is that you can use the attribute setting windows to edit existing tags, just place the cursor on a tag and press F2 or click the "Edit attributes" button and the appropriate window appears with the current values filled in.

The current page can be displayed in a web browser at the click of a button. GoldEd supports AWeb, IBrowse and Voyager and sends the page to whichever happens to be running at the time so there's no configuration needed.



All three HTML editors allow you to setup each tag in an easy window like this one from WebPlug.

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

When your page is finished WebWorld has a built-in version of the "tidy" utility from the W3C which checks for basic errors in the HTML and makes some style suggestions. When tidy has finished running a list of errors are presented and you can jump to the position of each error by clicking on it in the list view.

Overall the WebWorld module for GoldEd takes much of the

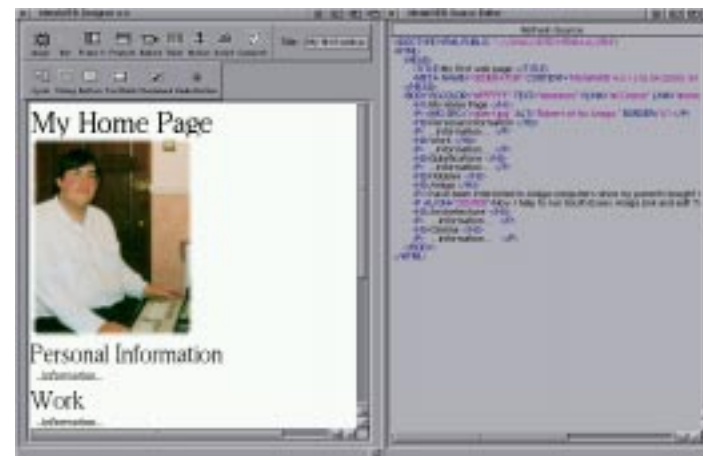
drudgery out of writing HTML pages and has some very nice features. When you consider that it is only one part of a powerful editor it make the package excellent value.

HSC (HTML Sucks Completely)

Authors: Thomas Aglassinger and Matthias Bethke
License: Free software (GPL)
From: www.linguistik.uni-erlangen.de/~msbethke/software.html

HSC isn't an HTML editor, in fact it is a command line program with no GUI at all. What it does is allow you to add commands to your pages which are then processed by HSC into standard HTML. On their way through HSC also checks the pages for standards compliance and good style. I won't go through all HSC's functions here but I'll try to give you an idea of some of things it can do. If you have "IMG" tags in your HTML HSC can automatically insert the "height" and "width" attributes based on the size of the image files. It can insert the contents of another file into your HTML, so if you have a common header or footer you can change it on all your pages by changing one file. If you link to local files or other HTML pages HSC will check that they exist and can also include information such as their size or modification date in the HTML page.

What makes HSC so powerful is that it has many scripting



WebPlug is the Amiga's only graphical HTML editor.

features so you can create loops which automatically generate repeating parts of pages (the list of back issues on the Total Amiga site is a good example of this) and include "if" statements so parts are only included if certain conditions are met.

If you're creating one or two pages or are new to HTML then HSC probably isn't for you. However if you have a more complex site with common content on several pages then a bit of work setting it up with HSC will make keeping the site updated much easier in future. For example on the Total Amiga site when a new issue comes out all I have to do is write two feature lists (a short version and a long version), change a variable (which tells HSC what the current issue is) and run the pages through HSC. This updates every page which mentions the current issue and moves the old issue onto the back issues page... easy.

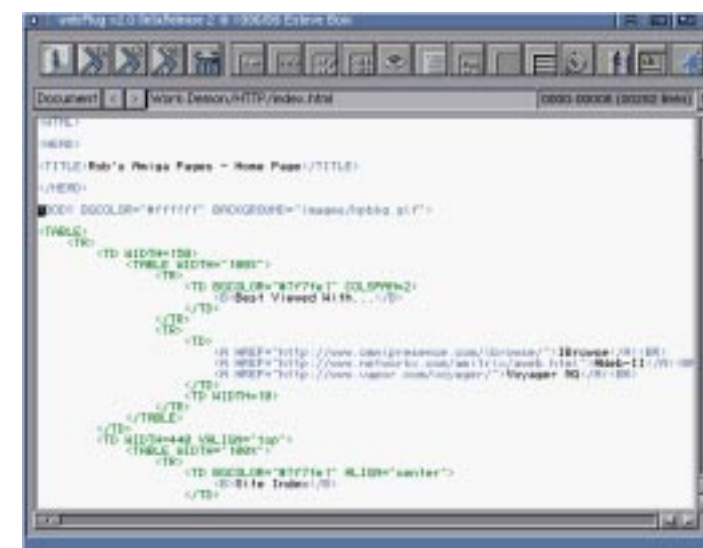
MetalWeb 4.01

Authors: Josep Rubiralta and Pedro Mieza
License: Shareware
Price: £20
From: www.vapor.com

MetalWeb is the only Amiga graphical HTML editor I know of. This means that rather than editing HTML code and perhaps previewing it in a browser MetalWeb attempts to let you build a page by manipulating the text and objects as they will appear in the browser. There is a

fundamental flaw in this concept because how a page is rendered is largely defined by the browser being used to view it. However as long as you accept that a graphical editor could be easier to use, especially to begin with and for some of the more complex HTML elements like tables.

In Metal Web you build your page by Entering text and inserting other elements by clicking buttons on the toolbar. You can display an "Edit" window which shows the attributes for the currently selected element or piece of text. In this window you can also apply styles to text such as bold, italics or headline formatting. If you wish while you build your page you can view the HTML source that MetalWeb is generating however it is not possible to edit the source by hand and then see the results in the MetalWeb window.



Like GoldEd, WebPlug version 2.0 highlights the different parts of the HTML code.

While MetalWeb works well enough for simple pages with images text and links more complex elements such as tables are less successful. There is also another major problem, Metal Web is not very stable and prone to crashing with annoying regularity. If you must have a graphical HTML editor give the MetalWeb demo a try but in the long run I think you'll be better off learning the basics and sticking to a text based editor such as GoldEd or WebPlug.

WebPlug

Author: Esteve Boix
License: Freeware
From: Aminet, comm/www/webPlugv145.lha and webPlugv2beta.lha

WebPlug is a MUI based HTML code editor in a similar vein to WebWorld. The main window contains an edit area for the HTML code and a toolbar along the top with buttons for various types of HTML element. Most of the buttons bring up a palette window which list all the available elements of that category. For example the text style palette has a list of styles including bold, italic, big, small and strong. Usually double clicking on an element in the list will insert it at the cursor position. If you have text selected the tags will be placed around the text, for example to make the selection bold. If the element has further attributes

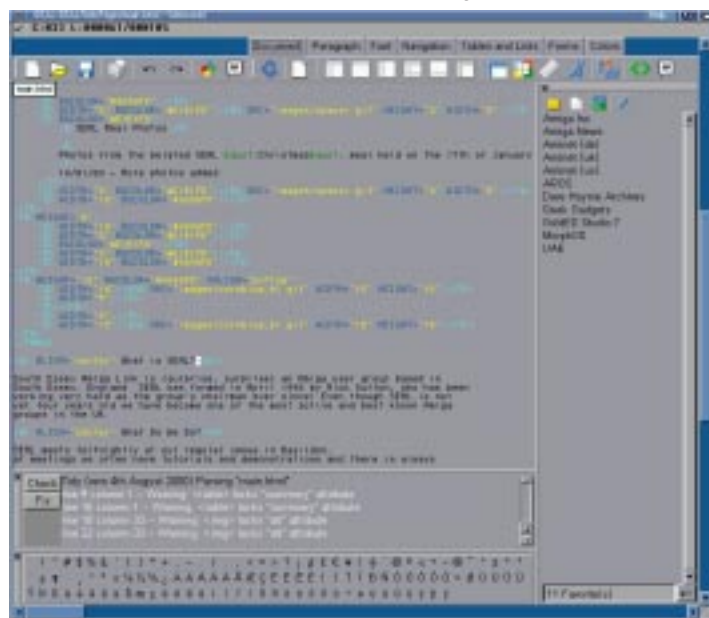
its name is show in italics in the list and double clicking it brings up a new window where you can edit the attributes before insertion. Once you have set the attributes they are remembered for future uses of that element.

In the editing windows WebPlug makes setting attributes as easy as possible. For example it can determine the sizes of images automatically. When you are asked for a colour you can pick from a list of named colours or select one using a colour wheel, there is also a button that will select the nearest "safe" colour for those browsing on 8bit displays. You can leave as many of the palette windows open as you wish which makes formatting an HTML page with the mouse very quick and easy, simply select the text you want to format and double click on the appropriate tag.

You can have several pages open at once and easily swap between them using the document palette. WebPlug supports several browsers including the "big thee" so a preview is just a click away. The main limitation I've found with WebPlug is that you cannot use the attribute GUI to edit an element once it has been inserted, you must either delete it and insert a fresh copy with the change or edit the element by hand.

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

I found WebPlug to be a very handy editor and I think it would be excellent for beginners in HTML, accompanied by a good reference book or website.



GoldEd's WebWorld provides a powerful HTML editing environment. The toolbar at the top allows easy insertion of tags. A hot-list of common sites (right) allows you to make links quickly. At the bottom of the window are areas for the output of the integrated "tidy" HTML checker and a selection of special characters which can be inserted with a click.

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Hooray for

HOLLYWOOD

At last! A multimedia program that works on graphics cards... Robert Williams Investigates.

We often claim that the Amiga pioneered multimedia before that term was even coined with its powerful graphics and sound hardware and innovative software such as Director, AmigaVision and Scala. However it's sad that in recent years there has been a dearth of new multimedia software and nothing that supports graphics cards, an add-on which many Amiga users consider essential. In issue 12 we had a news item on Rainboot 4, an update to the popular multimedia boot program, that update has turned into a full blown multimedia system which has been christened Hollywood by its author Andreas Falkenhahn. Andreas describes Hollywood as a "multimedia application layer", this description points to the fact that Hollywood is not designed for a particular task such as to create presentations or kiosk applications. Instead it provides a set of tools that can be used to create all kinds of applications which focus on media, including graphics, sound and animations.

One of the features that makes Hollywood so different from other Amiga multimedia systems is that it has been designed for modern Amiga systems and also compatibles (it works on Amithlon and MorphOS too) as well as on Amigas without a graphics card. The minimum requirements are AmigaOS 3.0 and a 68020 CPU. The program itself will run in minimal RAM but depending on the graphics and sounds used a script may need much more. Although the minimum specs are low Hollywood has been designed with modern Amigas in mind so a fast accelerator and plenty of RAM are definitely an advantage. A few third-party libraries are required, these are supplied on the CD. Installation is straight forward and updates the required libraries if necessary, the whole package takes up about 13Mb of disk space.

Multimedia applications created in Hollywood are based on a text script file which uses a simple BASIC-like scripting language. There is no user interface to help you create scripts and you will need to use your own favourite editor. This means Hollywood will take some time to learn if you have no programming experience. If you have dabbled in BASIC or AREXX or any other language then you will be able to pick it up quickly. To help you get started about 20 example scripts are supplied on the program CD ranging from simple slide shows to quite complex multimedia games, you can use these to get a feel for what is possible or even use one as a basis for your own script. In the AmigaGuide manual there is a tutorial on how to create a photo slide show and extensive reference documentation on all the functions available.

by the script. Each keyword is preceded by a "%" symbol. The keywords section is ended by "%CODE". Keywords can be used to define the background of the presentation window, images, text, sounds, music modules, button positions and other settings that will be used during the whole presentation. Any items specified as keywords that need to be loaded from disk (images, sounds, animations etc.) will be loaded into memory at the start of the presentation so they are available instantly and don't need to be loaded during the presentation. Some settings made in the keywords section can be changed during the script if you require.

Objects

Hollywood has a number of different object types that can be displayed over the background. These include brushes (images), animations and text objects. All these objects have to be generated first (with a command such as "LoadBrush") with a specified number and are then referred to by that number. Once loaded the object can be displayed in a number of ways. Brushes and text objects can simply appear in a defined position, be moved (scrolled smoothly) on to the screen at a set speed or be displayed using a transition effect (such as a fade or a wipe). Animations can be played at a defined position on the screen or be moved while playing. Once displayed objects can be moved at any time although you have to specify from and to co-ordinates which means working out what their current position is. To remove



This working calculator demo supplied with Hollywood shows how you can create interactive applications. It also demonstrates a transparent background effect.

objects from the display you use the "Undo" or "UndoFX" commands, both of these require and type and number of the object. "Undo" simply clears the object and "UndoFX" removes it using a transition effect.

Texting

In addition to text objects Hollywood also offers two other methods for displaying text. The "Print" command is the most powerful, it displays the text you specify within user defined margins. Print will automatically wrap text at the end of lines and supports tabs for tables and the like. You can send several print commands and the text will be added to what is already on the display, because of this you can change fonts and colours within a block of text created with several "Print" commands. Hollywood supports standard AmigaOS bitmap and Compugraphic fonts and also TrueType fonts using the ttengine.library. TrueType fonts can be displayed antialiased with the "Print" command which smooths out pixelisation and looks really professional in a presentation. Unfortunately antialiasing is not supported for text objects (I asked the author about this and the reason is because antialiasing would be too slow when a text object is moved). The disadvantage of

.info

Developer

Andreas Falkenhahn
www.airsoftsoftware.com

Price

E49, about £31

Requirements

AmigaOS 3.0
68020
16Mb RAM

Recommended

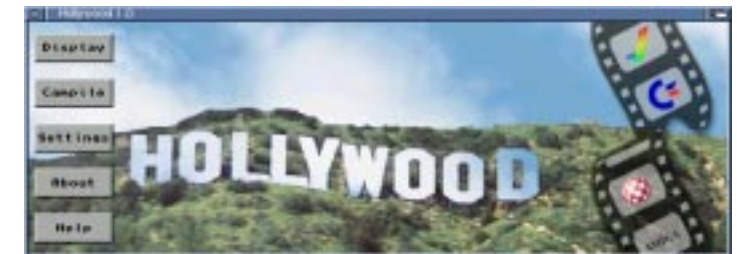
Graphics card

Test System

A3000
CyberStormPPC
060 50/604e 233MHz
128Mb RAM
CVisionPPC

Keywords

At the start of a Hollywood script is a section containing keyword declarations. These lines define various pieces of data required



The Hollywood GUI lets you run and compile scripts however there isn't a GUI for creating the scripts themselves.

"Print" is that the text cannot be removed without clearing the whole display completely (brushes, background and all) so it is not suitable for text that changes during the presentation. The "TextOut" command is a compromise between a text object and using the "Print" command. It does not support multiple styles in the same block, tabs or automatic wrapping however you can place the text at any position when antialiasing is used. Unlike text objects, text blocks created with "TextOut" cannot be moved and you can only remove blocks one by one starting with the last drawn using the "Undo" command. All this means if you're creating a complex presentation which changes as the user interacts with it then it can be quite difficult to have antialiased text.

Let's get Graphical

Graphics for backgrounds and brushes can be loaded in any format for which you have a datatype, for both types you can specify a colour that will be transparent. Transparent backgrounds can be used to create applications with a non-rectangular window as shown in the Euro Calculator example presentation. Transparent brushes allow the background or other brushes below them to show through. As in other areas of Hollywood where you need to specify colour the transparent shade is set using HTML style as three hexadecimal numbers, for example "FFFFFF" is white and "000000" is black. In addition to displaying a complete brush or background you can also display a portion of the image specified by co-ordinates. This allows you to have several elements in one image or to display part of an image, for example to swap an unselected button for a selected one. Finally brushes can be scaled to a different size although I found this seems to

depend on the datatype you have as it doesn't work on my system with the CyberGraphX picture.datatype.

Like graphics, animations are loaded using datatypes this means IFF ANIM is supported and any other types you can find a datatype for. Animations can be started and stopped at will using commands. The play command starts the animation then immediately the next command in your script is executed so other events can happen as an animation plays. The "MoveAnim" command allows an animation to be scrolled across the display as it plays at a user defined speed.

Transitions

Hollywood has a wide range of transitions which can be used in many circumstances. For example to display or hide most objects or to change a background image. There are about 40 effects in total which range from simple wipes to various blinds, curtain and stripes type effects. Probably the most impressive are the fade and blend effects which change smoothly between images, these look great on 16 and 24bit displays. Some effects (particularly the fades) offer a pre-calculated option. On these effects the frames of the transition are calculated in advance. Although this leads to a delay before the effect takes place it means it plays smoothly even on slower systems.

Sound

Hollywood can play sound samples in IFF8SVX format and can also play MED, Player61, Protracker and THX modules. Like animations you can start a sample or module playing and then continue with other script commands while the sound plays in the background. Commands are available to control the playback once it has started. Module and sample playback can be stopped, in addition the volume and pitch of samples can be changed and modules can be paused or a specific sub-song played. The script can be set to wait until a sample has finished or until a particular module position is reached.



Here's a presentation I made with Hollywood while writing this review. It has three sections (along the top) with animated transitions and can either be navigated by clicking the buttons or run as a slide show.

User Interaction

To allow the user to interact with your script Hollywood can be set to monitor for different key presses and for clicks on certain areas of the display. These hot spots are defined areas of the display and are not linked to objects displayed. If you want to see if the user clicks on a certain brush you must define a button over the same area. When a button is clicked or a monitored key pressed Hollywood jumps to a labelled point in your script, for example "ONBUTTONCLICK1", where you can execute the appropriate commands. Buttons also have an "ONBUTTONOVER" event which is activated when the mouse pointer rolls over the button. This enables you to create images that change as the pointer rolls over them amongst other effects. For simple scripts Hollywood has commands to wait for the left mouse button to be pressed before proceeding.

Normally while the script is running Hollywood does not look for user input. You have to insert a "WaitEvent" command when you are ready for the user to click buttons or press keys. If you want to respond to user input while other functions are running (for example during a continuous slide show) then you have to "EnableEventHandler". This makes Hollywood jump to the subroutine associated with the button or key pressed even while another part of the script is running. If you use this feature you need to make sure the code

in the subroutine won't upset the script at any point where it may be called.

Miscellaneous Functions

On top of the overtly graphics related functions Hollywood has a number of other features which are useful in scripts. Firstly there is the normal collection of string handling functions such as Right(), Left() and FindStr() which enable you to manipulate text in various ways. There are DOS functions so you can read and write external files and get directory listings amongst other things. Reading and writing files is especially useful as you can load large pieces of text from external ASCII files rather than including them in your script. Hollywood can open simple requesters with multiple buttons and file requesters to get file names and paths. Another useful function allows you to run any external program that can be started from a shell. Harking back to its Rainboot heritage there are also functions to get all kinds of information about the current Amiga system including the type of CPU, amount of RAM, disk space, OS version and the like.

Scripting

The Hollywood scripting language has most of the features you would expect, including if, else if and else conditional statements, while and for, next loops and variables.

If you do not declare the type of a variable Hollywood assumes it is a long integer. Otherwise you can declare the variable type manually or include a "\$" character in the variable name for a string or "!" for a float. You can include sub-routines in your script by naming them with a "Label" command, and jumping to the routine with a "GoSub" command. It is not possible to pass arguments to a subroutine but as all variables are global you can use them to pass data.

In Hollywood all items are referred to by number rather than a user defined name and often you need to enter co-ordinates. Because of this I found writing Hollywood scripts could get a bit mind bending at times but apart from that the language is easy to pick up. There are a few limitations, in particular one function cannot use the returned value from another and expressions with symbols (such as "+" or "/") are not possible (you have to use functions such as add() and div() instead). These limitations makes some scripts more long-winded than necessary however

they aren't a major problem for most projects.

Distribution

If you wish to distribute your scripts to users without Hollywood there is an option to compile your script into an executable which should run on any Amiga that meets the minimum requirements. Any files which have been declared in the keywords section are automatically included in the executable so it is possible to create a multimedia application that requires no external files. Of course if you prefer you can also leave the files external by loading them later in the script. These compiled scripts can be freely distributed as may any scripts you have written. As the Hollywood interpreter is a commercial product it may not be distributed.

Conclusions

Overall Hollywood is an excellent way to make media-oriented applications which will work on the vast majority of Amiga

systems (although you will need a reasonable system to get good performance). It is less suited to making "PowerPoint" style presentations. Although these type of largely static slide shows are certainly possible you will need to put in a fair amount of work to get the basic framework up and running and then editing blocks of text and adding graphics within the script is rather awkward. Andreas mentions in the readme file that after many requests from potential buyers he is considering a GUI script editor for common functions and I wouldn't be surprised if a third-party "presentation creator" appears at some point so hopefully Hollywood will become

more suited to this type of application. So in all Hollywood does what it was created to do reliably in a way that is easy to pick up despite some limitations of the scripting language. For a version 1.0 it is very well featured and the variety of examples supplied show its flexibility. Anyone who is interested in multimedia or media intensive applications and has a modicum of programming knowledge would be well advised to give Hollywood a try. Even if you have no programming experience it shouldn't take too long to pick up enough to create simple presentations.

Results

Pros

- + Works on most Amigas and compatibles.
- + Powerful functions.
- + Script compiler.

Cons

- Language limitations.
- No slide design GUI.

Pretty Good!



Another interactive demo script. This one is a quiz that keeps score.

FLASHBACK By Mike Powell

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

In the early 1980s, the Personal Computer was not synonymous with IBM and Windoze, as many different companies were making home computers, eager to get their cut out of this new and exciting market. Commodore were one of those companies, and their C-64 model was selling like hot cakes.

Whilst the big C were riding high on the Commodore 64's success, some American men decided to make their dream of creating the best games machine in the world a reality. The San Jose team was lead by a very ambitious fellow called Jay Miner, who had previously designed such popular machines as the Atari 400, not only wanted it to be the best games machine, but a computer that would redefine the meaning of the home computer for good, and open up a new world of possibilities for creative users.

This small group of people who was actually founded by a small group of dentists (!) called

themselves Hi-Torro, and had a \$7 million investment to make this dream come true.

The machine they were developing was code-named Lorraine, after the wife of one of the investors and was one of the first home computers to use the new 16-bit Motorola 68000 processor. It was to use the latest 3.5" disks for data storage (when most machines used cassettes, 5.25" disks were a luxury), was going to use a Graphical User Interface, using a mouse as standard, it was going to have multi-channel stereo sound, and to add to the true multimedia experience the designers intended, it was going to have a colour palette of 4096 colours. It was also going to have automatic hardware recognition, which is now known as plug and play, and a truly multi-tasking operating system (which believe it or not, MS still can't seem to get right - try carrying out a task whilst formatting a disk in Windows 98!). And this was all kept a secret. They worked under-cover, developing games and peripherals for Atari computers to distract people. As time passed by Hi-Torro hired some excellent skilled people

including RJ Mical (responsible for Intuition, the AmigaOS screen manager) and Carl Sassenrath (helped out with the design of AmigaOS and worked with Viscorp for a while). As time rolled on even further, the people at Hi-Torro decided that they needed a proper name for Lorraine. They wanted something at the beginning of the alphabet and something which emphasised friendliness. They came up with the name "Amiga" which is Spanish for girlfriend.

Then 1985 rolled around, and the Amiga was presented to the world at the Consumer Electronics Show in prototype form. During the night before the show Dale Luck or RJ Mical wrote a demo of a bouncing red and white chequered ball, and when it was demonstrated to the press on the day of the event, people were amazed. It wasn't all having fun and celebrating at Hi-Torro though, as the cost of the project had exceeded the original investment and a buyer had to be found, and quickly.

At this time, Amiga were friendly with Atari, and the boss of Atari, Jack Tramiel, loaned them a million dollars. When Amiga failed to pay back the loan in time, Atari offered them a 98 cents a share for the company. Three days before a final decision had to be made, things were getting pessimistic until

Atari's bitter rival, Commodore, stepped in and bought Amiga for \$4.25 a share! Commodore needed a new machine, and immediately invested \$27 million in investment. Then on July 23, the Amiga 1000 was presented to the world by creative legend Andy Warhol and Blondie singer Debbie Harry, although it wasn't the games machine that the original team intended it to be. The Amiga 1000 unfortunately didn't sell in the masses as the state of the art technology came at a price. \$2000 to be exact (around 1200 UKP). It was the ideal computer for artists, musicians, and programmers. The Amiga was much admired by the public, although hardly anyone was willing to pay \$2000 for one in the cynical days of the mid-80s.

Fast forward to 2002, and if you want to buy a PC from a big-brand name, it is likely that it will be priced as a four figure sum, but times have changed. The home computer, or "PC" as most people now prefer to call them, is no longer seen as a machine which is fun to use, but more of a tool which people have to know how to use to get a decent job.

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

AmigaOne-XE



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Left: AmigaOne-SE in Naya Design case

Right: AmigaOne-XE/G4 being tested at Eyetechnology

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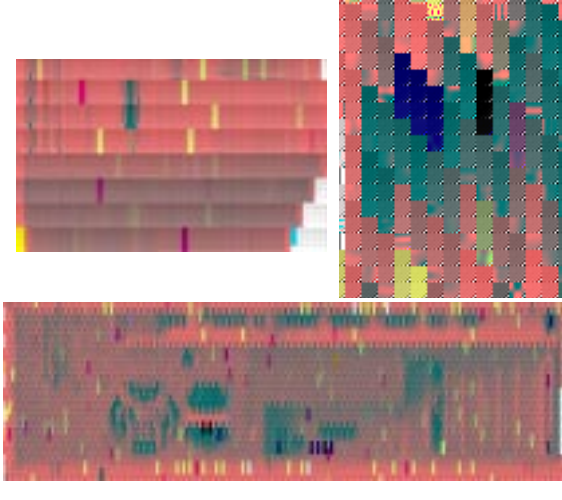
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Silversurfer 460Kb/s clock port ser interface £20 (25)

CDROMS & DVD ROMS

CDPlus 40x external A1200 CDDROM, cables, buffered interface, PSU & instructions £65 (90)

52 speed ATAPI CDDROM mechanism £30 (40)

EZCD buffered interface - pack of 2 for £20 (30)

CDREWRITERS & MEDIA

CDReWriter bare ATAPI burnproof 16x10x40 (needs buffered i/f & MakeCD) £80 (150)

CDReWriter bare ATAPI standard 4x4x24 (needs buffered i/f & MakeCD) £50 (130)

External case, i/f cables & PSU for above £30 (50)

10x blank WORM ODR discs jewel cased £5 (10)

1x blank CDDROM disk jewel cased £3 (5)

2.5" & 3.5" HARD DRIVES (please ring for other sizes)

10GB 2.5" HD, cab, w/inst'd Magic Pk. s/w £90 (150)

40GB 3.5" hard drive (needs OS3.5+) £75 (140)

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MIDIPlus serial port MIDI i/f - any Amiga £20 (30)

MICE, MICE ADAPTERS & JOYPADS/JOYSTICKS

EZMouse PS/2 mouse adapter+2-B mouse £20 (30)

EZMouse mouse adapter+ 4D scroll mouse £25 (35)

EZMouse + optical scroll mouse £35 (40)

EZMouse + RF cordless scroll mouse £35 (40)

EZMouse + optical, RF, rechargeable mouse £55 (65)

EZLink IR send receive controller for joystick £25 (30)

CLASSIC AMIGA GAMES - NEW (Our selection)

Eye-Play Classic selection 10 games £10 (60)

2.5" HARD DRIVES

170MB 2.5" HD, WBS.1 w/inst'd MP s/w £30 (60)

250MB 2.5" HD, WBS.1 w/inst'd MP s/w £40 (90)

ACCELERATORS

Apollo 1240/ 28MHz/MMU/FPU (21Mips) £70 (100)

MICE, MICE ADAPTERS & JOYPADS/JOYSTICKS

Amiga logo'd mouse - pack of 3 £10 (30)

Logic3 Action amiga joystick £7 (15)

Logic3 Attack digital joystick £7 (15)

A1200 ACCELERATORS

Apollo 1240/ 28MHz/MMU/FPU (21Mips) £70 (100)

2.5" HARD DRIVES

170MB 2.5" HD, WBS.1 w/inst'd MP s/w £30 (60)

250MB 2.5" HD, WBS.1 w/inst'd MP s/w £40 (90)

CLASSIC AMIGA GAMES - NEW (Our selection)

Eye-Play Classic selection 10 games £10 (60)

AmigaOne Prebuilt Systems
with Linux/UAE-PPC installed (including free OS4 licence for systems ordered before the OS4 release date is announced)

A1-XE G3@600 starter system £899.95
40GB HD, 52x CDDROM, 512MB registered memory, cpu cooler, floppy drive, ATI Radeon 7000 gfx card, PS/2 keyboard and mouse, 7-bay Midi ATX tower with PSU & mains lead, cables etc. Linux PPC distribution inc manual, LinuxPPC & UAE preinstalled, OS4-enabled BIOS and OS4.0 licence. On board ethernet and USB. Assembled, tested and burnt-in.

A1-XE G3@600 power system £1349.95
2 x 40GB hard drives, DVD ROM, CDRewriter, 512MB registered memory, cpu cooler, floppy drive, Soundblaster Live sound card, ATI Radeon 8500 gfx card, PS/2 multimedia keyboard and optical, RF, rechargeable mouse, 7-bay Midi ATX tower with PSU & mains lead, cables etc. Linux PPC distribution inc manual, LinuxPPC & UAE preinstalled, OS4-enabled BIOS and OS4.0 licence. On board ethernet and USB. Assembled, tested and burnt-in.

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Please note: These prices are before SDK and 'Amiga Club' rebates which are being handled directly by Amiga Inc.

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Comprehensive range in stock - please ring

Classic Amiga Software

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TXTxt Pro 2.0 Video titling software £20 (100)

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Turboprint 7.3 printer driver software £35 (39)

Turboprint 7.x to 7.3 upgrade £20 (25)

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Netconnect 3 Full internet software suite £40 (50)

STFax 4.5 Amiga Voicemail & fax software £35 (40)

Genesis TCP/IP s/w for internet/networking £20 (25)

EZNet PC-Amiga & Amiga-Amiga 5-click networking software (needs TOP/IP s/w) £10 (15)

GAMES (carriage charges apply for all mail order purchases)

Eye-Play Gold. See also www.eyetechnology.co.uk

Heretic II £35 (40)

Wipeout 2097 £25 (30)

Shogo MAD £30 (35)

Tales from Heaven £20 (25)

Hell Squad £30 (35)

Foundation Gold £20 (25)

Napalm £25 (30)

Foundation Missions £10 (15)

Capital Punishment £10 (15)

Earth 2140 £20 (25)

Wasted Dreams £15 (20)

AMIGA DE

Amiga DE SDK for Windows £60 (78)

Amiga DE SDK for Linux £60 (78)

SuSE Linux w/ manuals, 6 CD's for above £15 (40)

UK NEXT DAY* INSURED DELIVERY CHARGES: OS3.9, SW, Cables, EZCD IF = £3; 2.5" HD's, Accelerators, Manuals = £7; 3.5" HD's, FDD's = £9; CDROMs, Starters = £11; Systems, Monitors = £15; Tower + monitors = £23

UK Bank/BS cheques, Visa, Mastercard, Switch, Delta, Connect, Solo, Electron, Postal/Money orders accepted. (*3% clearance charge applies to all credit card orders). Due to space limitations some of the specs given are indicative only - please ring/write for further details. Please check prices, specification and availability before ordering. If ordering by post, please provide a daytime telephone number. All goods (excluding opened or used software) may be returned in perfect condition within 7 days of invoice date for a refund (excluding carriage, services and card clearance charges). A1200 items are tested with a Rev 1.0.1 motherboard - other boards may need modification. Items subject to mechanical wear & tear (eg keyboard) are limited to 90 days warranty on these components. E&OE. All prices include VAT at 17.5%. Orders sent outside the EC do not incur VAT - divide the prices shown by 1.175 to arrive at ex-VAT prices. All goods are offered subject to availability and our standard terms & conditions, copies of which are available upon request. | A14

email: sales@eyetechnology.co.uk

www.eyetechnology.co.uk

Developer

Elbox
www.elbox.com

Distributor

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

Dealer list available at:
www.elbox.com/buy.html

Price

Spider Card£39.95
 Poseidon registration
 (required) E19.99

Requirements

68030
 Mediator PCI bus board
 Free PCI slot
 Voodoo graphics card
 Elbox MMCD

Test Systems

A4000
 CyberStorm MkIII 060
 Mediator 4000
 Voodoo 3 3000

Further Information

Visit the Poseidon website
 for USB stack upgrades and
 information:
www.platon42.de/poseidon.html

Users of Poseidon can also
 join the YahooGroups E-mail
 list by sending an e-mail to:
highway_usb-subscribe@yahoo.com

*The Spider installed in a
 Mediator 1200. Note the fifth
 internal USB port.*



Spider/USB

Sam Byford tries out Elbox's latest addition to the Mediator family. Is it the best way to bring USB to your Mediator equipped Amiga?

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

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

The Spider is a USB2.0 card that can also run older 1.1 devices. For now it does not have the necessary EHCI drivers that would run 2.0

compliant items but with a future release this will finally be implemented which means the use of high-speed USB2.0 devices will be available for use and Elbox assure me this release is not far off.

It is equipped with 4 external ports which fit neatly onto one blanking plate and one internal one. This is one more than the Highway/Subway and four more than the Thylacine. Each port provides 500mA of power (if required) to connected devices so hardware that does not have its own power source can run safely. The Spider is of course totally "hot-pluggable" meaning you can insert and remove devices while the computer is turned on and they will automatically be seen without needing a reboot.

The Need for Speed

The USB2.0 standard will mean the Spider can transfer up to 480Mbps or (currently) 12Mbps for 1.1 devices. I could not do a direct speed comparison however from digging on the 'net I managed to discover that the Highway reported a transfer speed of 495kB/second on a Amiga 4000 with 060 Cyberstorm mkII while the Spider produced a speed of 734kB/second (on an Amiga 1200 I believe) so we can see that the Spider is at least 50% faster on some systems than the Highway (results may vary of course).

Elbox e-mailed me to say: "In the case of Spider the speed of mass storage USB 1.1 devices do not depend on the Amiga turbo (processor) card. You always reach the maximum speed of these... This is the same speed as you reach in the PC or in the Mac computers." So unlike other solutions which are limited to the bus speed of the Zorro slot,

or the clockport data transfer rate the Spider will run at maximum speed.

When users are sent the EHCI driver the Spider will make use of the faster 2.0 devices but the results will be entirely dependant on the processor used and as such the results on the Amiga will be slower than that of a PC. Elbox estimate that on an 060/66 you would reach about 50% of the speed of a PC. But it is still the fastest available USB implementation for the Amiga.

Making the Web

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

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

You will also need an 68030 or higher, the MultiMedia CD (MMCD), a Voodoo card (for DMA purposes) and a registered version of Poseidon.

Poseidon is required as this is the interface that Elbox decided to use. However they did not come to an OEM arrangement with Chris Hodges which meant they could only provide an unregistered version with the Spider, so every user has to send Chris a registration (and payment) in order to get a keyfile. This used to be available only via snail-mail with cash (Euros) but recently on-line payment and download via IOSpirit's site (<http://www.iospirit.de>) has been available simplifying the process enormously.

The Poseidon software (un-registered) comes on a 3" CD and has a basic Installer script to install Poseidon into the necessary places. Also on the CD is a Readme file explaining how to register your Spider. Once you have registered (via e-mail) Elbox will send you the latest Spider.lha update which includes the usb.device file that needs to be placed into Devs:USBHardware/ - the Spider is then active.

Using the Spider

Elbox recommends that you should place the Spider in any Mediator slot which has a higher number than the slot your Voodoo card is placed in. This, presumably, is due to DMA transfers but everyone's system is different and you may have to play with the order a bit to get all cards working nicely together. On the 1200 Mediator they recommend placing the Spider in the lowest (4th) slot.

The Spider has its ports split into two separate control links with Ports 1, 3 and 5 on the first unit and ports 2 and 4 on the second. This means that two separate devices need to be setup in Trident: in the Hardware section click on "New" and select the Devs:USBHardware/usb.device file and set its unit to 0, then do the same again but with it set to unit 1. This gives you two devices. Save the preferences, click "Online" and you should have all 5 ports available for use.

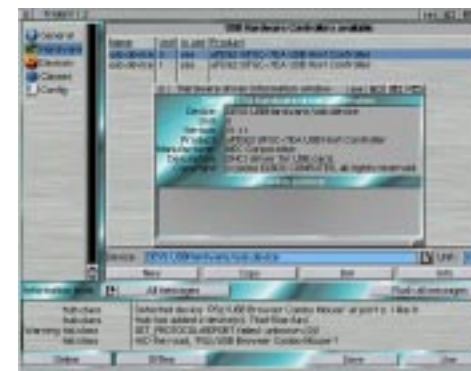
Once that is done devices should show in the "Devices" and "Classes" sections of Trident the same as with other USB hardware. If you are at all unsure about how to configure Trident I suggest you refer to Total Amiga issues 13 or 14. There is also the highway_usb mailing list which caters for all Poseidon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

When it first came out I found that with the Spider, a soundcard and a TV card all installed my wireless optical mouse refused to work. I had to set the VoodooMem Envar setting to 14 rather than its usual 15 setting otherwise the mouse juddered and was unusable. One of the recent updates appears to have cured this problem and now it works as it should. If you encounter problems I suggest lowering the VoodooMem setting to 14 to see if it helps.

Ethics

So far the Spider seems to be the perfect solution. However a rather ethical debate has recently risen its head which could stand to ruin Elbox's chances of staying as a contender in the Amiga Scene. A report by an anonymous user appeared on an Amiga news site that has threatened to pull the community apart even further than it already is.

From the start there has been curiosity as to the origins of the Spider. Many people believe it is simply a re-badged NEC 720100 PCI Adaptor card. However, as I mentioned earlier it is possible that some internal item needed to be altered for that card to work properly on Amigas but it threw up the question of "can you use any PCI USB card that I want to?". One person (quite possibly through illegal means) decided to hack into Elbox's driver and found, in the disassembled data some specific code which he claimed would trash the RDB (Rigid Disk Block) information on your hard drive. That would mean your computer would lose all record of where each partition is stored.



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

Elbox state in reply: "Yes, we use anti-piracy safeguard measures... they are completely safe for legal users of our software... The only result of activation of the anti-piracy safeguard in the cracked code is overwriting the first RDB sector of the booting hard disk... This sector does not contain ANY information about disk partitioning, either. What is stored in this sector is only information about the model and parameters of the hard disk and technical information... (it) can be read from the hard disk with HDToolBox software, even if this sector is completely overwritten."

As a direct response to this information Chris Hodges has implemented a new driver check into Poseidon. He said: "Elbox has no licence agreement with me. They 'only' wrote the driver to give the users the opportunity to use Poseidon. They did not pay me. They accused me of cracking and spreading lies. They had illegal code in their driver. They never apologize. They might produce good hardware, but in my opinion, they have no ethics at all." From now on all Poseidon updates will test for the RDB code and if it is found Poseidon will refuse to work. Elbox has now released a new version without that code so the risk is

now gone and Poseidon runs with the latest drivers from Elbox.

Conclusion

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

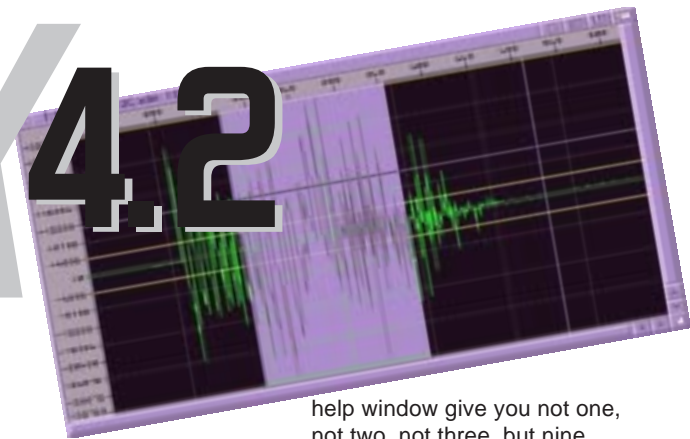
So as a USB solution it is top of the range. Updates, as with all updates from Elbox are regular and solid and if you have a Mediator already and want to use USB devices then it's a must, but if you don't there are other solutions available. Its main down-falling is the controversy surrounding Elbox, and only the user can decide who's side they will take on the matter.

Results

- Pros**
- + Small
 - + Fast
 - + Constantly updated
- Cons**
- Possible ethical debate over anti-piracy code
 - Needs MMCD

Pretty Good!

SoundFX 4.2



I'm a sound guy. That is, I'm into sound. I love music and I love to do things with it. So naturally I'm always on the hunt for Amiga programs that let me work with sound. In particular, I was on a long hunt for a good program that would let me load a sample or a song and tweak it with reverb, phasing, and other nifty effects. One of the most popular of such Amiga programs was inexpensive but unfortunately also loved to crash my machine at random times. Another popular piece of software, which combined multitrack recording with sound processing, was much too pricy for my budget. I found Stefan Kost's shareware program called SoundFX, which promised me virtually limitless sound effects possibilities at an affordable price; I figured with a registration fee of \$26 (the unregistered

version doesn't allow the use of ARexx scripts, virtual memory, or saving), I couldn't go wrong.

SoundFX is specifically designed to take short samples and manipulate them to your specifications; however, with enough RAM or virtual memory drive space, you can work with large samples that perhaps you'd rip from a music CD. SoundFX can also act as a sound converter, supporting almost every major audio format (including Studio16 and MP3 but notably not RealAudio); there's even a batch conversion option that will convert an entire subdirectory of samples, which can be a godsend when a Windows-loving friend wants those cool 8SVX sounds you have in your Directory Opus themes! I was particularly pleased that SoundFX has a built-in AHI sound recorder; anyone who might want to record old vinyl albums to CD and attempt to clean up the pops and scratches without running a separate program might especially find this feature useful. And not only can SoundFX alter your samples, but it can also generate sounds as well with its synthesizer operators. So, what we have here is a four-in-one program: a recorder, a processor, a synthesizer, and a converter – basically, a mini-sound studio on your desktop!

Now, what do you need to run this little four-in-one studio? To start, an Amiga with at least a 68020 processor. There is a binary archive available for download for all CPUs from the

'020 to the '060, including separate versions for FPU's. (A binary from an earlier version is also available for the '000.) Stefan recommends an '060, at least 64MB of RAM, a graphics card, OS 3.5 or higher, and, understandably, a sound card.

When you start SoundFX, the program opens on its own screen in various shades of gray and its own font. (Don't worry – if you don't like the default fonts and colours, the preference editor will let you choose your own!) An appicon also appears on your Workbench screen, which is a real treat if you like to drag'n'drop. And if you so choose, every time you open SoundFX 4.2 you're given a random "Tip of the Day." The GUI is a bit on the strange side – the main toolbar gives you a handful of somewhat cryptic icons. For example, there are four magnifying glass icons, each of which performs a slightly different action; and to add to the confusion, there are four question mark icons (for loader, saver, audio mode, and sample options) with no way to distinguish them from each other visually! The status bar with ten unlabeled windows at the bottom of the screen is even more cryptic. The window at the far left of the bar is for "quick help," which describes the functions of the toolbar icons as the mouse pointer moves across them. The windows to the right of the quick

help window give you not one, not two, not three, but nine different parameters about the sample in the sample window. The documentation tells exactly what each of these windows does, but it's still hard to keep straight what information each window is showing!

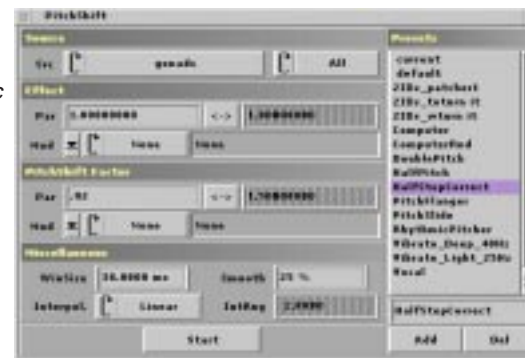
RTFM!

Speaking of documentation, it is available in both English and German in PDF and HTML formats, and there is great online support via both www.sonicpulse.de and a fairly active discussion list on Yahoo! Groups. Not only is the documentation provided in HTML and PDF files, but the PDF file comes in two sizes: "letter" size for U.S. users and A4 size for the European side of the Atlantic. Pressing the "Help" key from within SoundFX opens a web browser and takes you right to the section of the documentation that discusses the window you have open. The documentation has a nice layout to it – it's outlined and numbered by section. However, I noticed that there are blanks by many section numbers. Being absolutely sure that I installed the program properly, I asked Stefan about this, and he confessed that he hadn't finished the English documentation yet. But this could actually be a good thing – the lack of documentation on some features may encourage you to do some experimenting, which could give you some very interesting results. In fact, the user is encouraged to "...TRY AND PLAY AROUND!!!! – you [can] not destroy anything."

Just Playin' Around

...which is absolutely true. One feature I love about SoundFX is that after you modify a sample, a new window will open with the resulting sample while the

These are the settings I used to make a basic half-tone pitch correction effect.



original is still open. This way, you don't have to reload the original sample if you don't like the effect, and you can do all sorts of things to your sound without affecting the original. And it gives you all sorts of opportunities to play around with various effects – which is exactly what I did to write this review. I put some examples of what I did online at <http://www.wallnet.com/~dauber/SoundFX.html> to demonstrate what kind of effects are possible without even tweaking anything.

SoundFX gives you sixty different processed effects, called operators, to play with. Each operator comes with a group of effects that you can apply. You can add your own effects to each operator, giving you virtually limitless possibilities. For example, I was recently transferring some cassettes to CD. One cassette played back a half-tone too fast. Although I didn't have the patience to try correcting the actual speed of the recording I made of it in SoundFX, I did use the "PitchShift" operator and added an effect that would lower the pitch by half a tone.

Of course, some basic effects like echo, reverb, and reverse are included. If you have some samples that are too high-range or low-range, there are some equalizer operators to help even out the sound. Of course, you can adjust the frequencies via waveforms like sawtooth and sine wave, but hey, I said I like sound, I never said I was into the scientific part of it! Thankfully, there's an option for bare-bones folks like me to boost the treble, bass, and medium just by plugging in some bigger numbers. Audiophiles will undoubtedly appreciate the operator that converts a quadraphonic sample to surround sound stereo. And folks who wish to dump scratchy old records to a digital format might

find the "DeCrackle" and "DeNoise" operators to be a godsend. (Unfortunately, I couldn't figure out how to use them properly!)

Registered users get the benefit of ARexx functionality. Admittedly, I know next to nothing about ARexx, but in my "playing around" I've found the ARexx capabilities to be fun to use. Several ARexx scripts that combine different operators are included with the program, and they have produced some really cool effects during my experimentation. My personal favorite is the "GhostEcho" script, which gives your samples sort of a reversed-reverb effect.

Room For Improvement

SoundFX, as with most programs, is not without a few flaws. The program handles MP3s and decodes them surprisingly fast, although I was unable to get the MP3 savers to work, and many users (myself included) report crackling spread throughout decoded MP3 files. I've found that using the "Edit" menu on larger samples crashes my system often; then again, SoundFX is really designed for handling short sound bites! I've mentioned the incomplete English docs, but the program itself isn't completely in English – there are a few requester messages that appear in German.



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

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

Helpful Hints

I've found that some of SoundFX's functionality can be a little bit quirky at first, so to save you from some potential puzzlement if you decide to give this program a go, I'll let you in on a few of the tricks I've learnt.

Many users have reported an abundance of digital distortion when playing samples via AHI devices, making the samples sound much worse than with the Amiga's built-in hardware. The trick here is basically not to be so quick with your mouse button! When you have AHI chosen as the audio mode, click the "Audio Mode Options" icon in the toolbar – that's the third circle with the question mark. A small window will pop up allowing you to choose an audio mode. When you click the drop-down arrow, you'll be given a list of available audio modes. Highlight the audio mode you want and, before you click "OK," look closely: there's a frequency selector at the bottom of the list, an often overlooked feature! See how low the default frequency is? Crank that sucker up to 44100, and your samples will sound brighter than ever. (A user once asked Stefan why he didn't raise the default frequency. The reason is to avoid problems with hardware that can't handle frequencies that high.)

Any useful sound editor will have some kind of "normalize" feature that boosts a sample's volume to its maximum level before distortion comes creeping in. I've found that using the "MaxVol" effect on the "Amplify" operator,

which is supposed to perform this function, has very little (if any) effect on samples, even after tweaking the settings. However, the default effect on the "Dynamic" operator seems to get the job done well.

Finally, there's an undocumented feature in the Record window. The first time I recorded via SoundFX, I looked at the Record window and was unpleasantly surprised by the lack of a pause button. After several recording "sessions" that involved stopping the recording, saving the file, starting again and specifying a new file, I figured out that the record button actually doubles as a pause button!

Overall

In writing this review, I was literally trying to find fault with SoundFX. Well, it wasn't easy – as you can see, I could only come up with two, and both of those problems are easily fixed by using other simpler programs for those functions. For both basic and not-so-basic sound file processing, you can't go wrong with SoundFX, especially with its low registration fee.

Being an amateur musician, I like to record and experiment with sound. I've noticed that the Amiga is tragically short of all-in-one packages that provide multitrack recording, mixing, effects processing, and CD mastering. However, with some CD writing software, SoundFX, with its processing and built-in recording features, provides an invaluable part of an Amiga user's basic desktop digital recording studio. It's been quite useful for my purposes, and in reviewing version 4.2, I've found a lot of cool effects that I never realized I had at my fingertips.

.info

Developer

Stefan Kost
www.sonicpulse.de

Price

26USD, 20Euro

Requirements

68020

Recommended

68060
64Mb RAM
Graphics Card
Sound Card
AmigaOS 3.5

Test System

A4000
TekMagic 4060/50
144Mb RAM
Picasso IV
Prelude ZII

AmigaOS 3.9 BB1
Picasso 96
Directory Opus 5.82



What? Don't like the default colours and fonts? No problem – change 'em yourself!

Results

Pros

- + Cheap
- + Tons-o-effects (and you can create more).
- + Good support from the author and users.

Cons

- Incomplete docs.
- Cryptic GUI.

Pretty Good!

Tales of Tamar

...UPDATE...UPDATE...UPDATE...UPDATE...

Sam Byford updates us on the latest happenings in the world of Tamar.

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

Updates

Version 0.46 added the following (main items only):

- Diplomacy: Personal messages can be sent and received in-game
- Tales is now running on MorphOS
- New BardsTale stories
- CGX V5 is now recognized

Version 0.47 includes the following:

- Movement of cavalry is improved.
- Second map screen
- Mini map and unit locator
- Added winter graphics

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

In the next update things will become a lot nicer for the lesser Lords of Tamar. Rebellions have been added! You can expect larger land owners to start searching for

people to be their vassals (Lords who agree to be loosely ruled over and governed). If they do not take vassals then they may find that without precautions they will start to have uprisings and could loose towns to rebels. Taking vassals will help lower the possibilities of this happening. People who become vassals may become better off as their Over-Lords have to give them land, help, advice and general aid. However it also means that any decision you make should also be agreed upon by your "boss".

I myself have recently become a vassal to Count Lucksi and am currently annexing one of his towns so that I have a second town, this one with access to the sea.

Hints & Tips

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

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

The general rule is that new players are placed in Tamar on land which has very few established players on it. You will be spaced away from other

players which gives you room to expand. However do not take this as the law; often when a island is short on space new players may find themselves placed in any available gap and this can make things tough. There are of course plenty of ways to survive, but they are for you to find out about.

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

Buffers

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

Forum

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



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

Next issue?

So that is the second chapter in the Tales. In the third instalment I will talk you through weapon statistics and armour information as well as details on what research you should do in the initial stages in order to do survive. Feedback on this article is, as usual, always welcome via the usual channels.

Yours in the Tales,

Lords Devery & Biffordicus.
(a.k.a. Sam Byford)

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Software

Computer games publishing was a huge growth industry in the 1980's when some of today's household names were started in a back bedroom. Michael Carrillo finds out if he's got what it takes to become a Software Tycoon.

Tycoon

I am probably the worst person in the world to review sim games. Why? Because I love the genre, I have strong opinion on what makes a good SIM and what doesn't.

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

The first category is the creme of Amiga Sims the second, well, let's just say they don't

quite reach the peak, either through horrible controls, limited playability or some other ghastly mistakes, Software Tycoon has all three!

It's not that Software Tycoon is a complete disaster, but it has some flaws that can drive you up the wall. First of all in case you don't know what the game is about here is what it says in the box. "In the early eighties, developers shot up all over the world like toadstools - it was the birth of a new industry. Computers and consoles began a triumphant advance into people's homes and spread like wildfire. But, not only hardware was sold. Software, and particularly computer games, sold like hot cakes. This development began with simple games such as 'Pong'. But soon progressed to much more complex programs which created their own market. A battle-field from the very beginning.

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

Installation.

The game fully installs on to your hard drive, there is no need to run anything from the



You can even choose to package freebies with your game.

CD ever again. Once installed click on the icon of choice, Amiga PPC, 68k or Pegasos (the latter two I deleted since I didn't need them, but it would have been nice if the installer had asked which version I wanted to install).

Starting the Game

The game is executed by clicking on it's nicely rendered icon and it immediately launches a screenmode requester window. Select the resolution and colour depth and the game intro loads. It's best that you always use a 256 colour screen, for one, it's faster and there is no noticeable difference in graphics depth. Once the intro's are out of the way (mouse click skips them) you are asked which language you want. Choose from English or German next comes the screen with new game, load game, options, etc. If you choose new game you are taken to a new screen where you enter your company name, choose a logo and the difficulty level. Next comes the missions screen. Yep, that's right you can select missions on this game. The first one is open play where you start in 1982 with X amount of money (depending on the difficulty

level) and it runs through until 2005. The missions are basically targets, the first one is make \$500,000 within two years of starting up, next win a software award etc. You cannot select the next mission/target until you have successfully completed the previous one. Having made your choices, the game begins. What is irritating though is that the next time you start the game you will be presented with the screenmode requester and your language preferences all over again (Once is enough).

The Game Screen

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

Toolbar

Situated underneath the game screen you have current balance, current date (starts 1st of Jan 1982) a briefcase (for putting your games titles, film licenses, into etc) current time, balance sheet, normal time icon, fast time icon, room information icon, disk/game options icon and a laptop computer (which runs 'Sokio OS' and office software which were all the rage in 1982 apparently).

I was going to write a detailed introduction on how to get started and what all the bits do, but to be quite honest, I doubt if it will be worth while, considering just how irritating some of the game play can be. Yes you can get mileage out of this game, if you are not as fussy as I am about sims.

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

Once your concept is ready you will need to hire

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

Whilst you wait for the program to be completed or dateline achieved, you can take a trip to the bank, deposit some savings, invest in securities, ask for a loan or bank balance. Scroll right to visit the Game shop, here is where you will drop off the sales license of your latest creation, view sales charts and read the latest reviews on not just your releases but your competitors as well. Next door we have the advertising agency where, finances depending, you can promote your latest release from leaflets to cinema/TV commercials. Scroll right to enter the +Labor+ The Laboratory where you can pay an independent company to research the mysteries of



This scrolling street provides the interface to the game screens. Unfortunately the slow speed of the scrolling can make it rather frustrating after a while.

Joystick control as well as better graphics, sound and Genre (you start with a Skill game then research your way to Shoot-em ups, Puzzle, platform, and so on). Obviously each piece of research costs money, up to \$1000.00 per day, which on the easy level starts at 10 days for the basics, whilst the equivalent research on the Hard level takes 34 days. What annoyed me about this is that whilst it comparatively takes a short amount of days to research the Joystick, it took over a month to research how to integrate a mouse. - duh! On the plus side you are only allowed to research a finite number of items per year. Preventing you from being able to write a Quake type game in 1986.

Exit the +Labor+ scroll right and enter the Cinema, here you can bid on the current film of the month. Enter an amount and exit the cinema, if you are lucky you will be informed by the current month's end whether you have been outbid or whether you won the bid. Why on Earth couldn't have the whole bidding process have been made real time is beyond me. For those of you who recall Theme Park there was an Auction process in that game that was dealt with there and then, it shouldn't take up to a whole month to find out whether you have been outbid.

Exit, scroll right and enter the Pizza place where you can ask

the local Mafia to provide you with the tools to sabotage your opponents. This ranges from popularity ratings drop through to their next release not getting as high a score as it should have done.

Next is the Arcade, which we have already covered and finally on the production factory. Once your latest masterpiece is finished you bring your trusty masterpiece here. Note the number of Stars your game has as you pack it away in your briefcase, the higher the Stars the longer it will sell for. Enter the factory and at the back there is a production room, go through and you will be presented with an empty game box, put your masterpiece inside, next from the right hand toolbar decide what gifts you wish to include, these range from T-Shirts to a pen. Plus of course you have the option to decide on colour or monochrome manual. At the bottom of the toolbar a total cost is given for your latest project, plus the ability to set how much you want the game to sell for.

Once done, exit the design room to re-enter the main publishing floor, here you have three production lines with only production line, No.1, having only one machine available at a whopping 250 copies per day. You do however have the option of buying more machines at \$100,000 each, increasing your capacity by



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www.epic-interactive.com

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or
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Graphics Card

Test System

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BlizzardPPC/040
BVisionPPC
AmigaOS 3.9

Reviews

another 250 copies per day, per machine.

Select on the number of copies required, a rating of 6 stars or more and you can expect to sell over 100,000 copies, get only one star and you will struggle to sell 10,000. Don't forget that you are paying for the number of copies run off a day and this will show as a debit on your balance sheet until you have sold some copies. Once you are satisfied with the number of copies to produce, quickly scroll back to the Game shop and drop your Sales license agreement (created when you exit the design room in the production factory) straight to the Game shop and drop it off on the shelf. Your game is now on sale.

Waiting

If you are short on cash and whilst you wait for the money to roll in, you can either; go to the bank and get a loan or visit your office and dismiss all your staff. If you have some money you can send them on holiday or give them a bonus, this helps with morale, yet another factor for you to worry about. Once you have enough money or have spent sufficient money on research, you can start on your next blockbuster.

So What's Wrong With this Game?

Whilst this game isn't a total loss by any means, it has got some concept/flaws that mean it will never be ranked amongst the classics sims mentioned at the start of this article.

These are.. In the production room, when setting the number of copies required, the counter is incremented by 50, via means of a + or - signs. This can be annoying because the auto repeat feature, is very slow, and if your game is a sure fire hit, you will want to run off at least 80,000 copies. It takes a while to get to 80,000 copies, the Bonus's, Research, Holidays, all use the + or - increment method, after a while you it gets to be a pain.

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

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

Also the scrolling idea of an outdoor shopping area whilst novel, is irritating as hell. Say you are in the development office (left hand side of screen) and you realise you need an additional programmer to speed up development. You exit out of the office, (RMB) and scroll the screen (via mouse) to the right and on to the Arcade to hire an additional programmer.

Hire your programmer, exit scroll all the way back to the left-hand most side of the screen, enter development office and assign programmer. Whilst there a requester pops up and informs you that you are running low on stock. Exit



The aim of the game: getting your title on the store shelves.

development office, scroll to the right most end of the screen and enter production building. You then get another requester saying a particular piece of research is complete. Exit production building and scroll back towards the left again. All the whilst you are being plagued by stupid requesters about mother's and asteroids etc, and you find yourself clicking the "fast time" button over and over.

Finally, You would think the developers would have tried their best to make it sparkle. Nope sorry. They must have taken a leaf out of the game, the game needed xxx days and the publisher said xx days. The publisher obviously won. Some of the in game background are in German, such as the game shop and the production factory. The main high street has a German Language name for the Advertising shop. Add to that, the rendered animation of people on the street, surely it couldn't have been beyond the developer's means to have actually co-ordinated the characters walk in relation to the floor? As it stands

everyone appears to "moonwalk" throughout.

In all this game just isn't finished. It obviously wasn't play tested properly either, the screenmode requester at the start of launch, the which language option, the + or - incrementation method and finally the game only filling up 90mb of a 700mb CD is a dead giveaway.

In closing, whilst this game isn't totally bad, it isn't wonderful either, to say something nice about it I could mention the handy autosave option, and the graphics, whilst not out of this world are nice and functional. It's interesting to note that Software Tycoon was originally slated for Apple Mac release only, it is even more interesting to note that as I write this article, the Mac version has yet to appear. Perhaps Epic Interactive Entertainment will release an update for this game, but so far there is nothing.

Results

Pros

- + Some innovative ideas.
- + Attractive cartoon graphics.

Cons

- Slow and frustrating gameplay & interface.
- Feels unfinished.

Okay 😐

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Requirements

68060 or PPC
64Mb RAM

Notes: some Mods may require more RAM. A 3D card is not required but the game looks better if you have one.

Test System

A1200
Blizzard PPC 240Mhz 060
BVision
128Mb Fast RAM

AmigaOS 3.9 BB2
CyberGraphX 4

Quake

The second installment of one of the world's biggest software titles makes it to the Amiga, can Mick Sutton take it on?

Within the games industry there are few titles that command the respect that Quake receives, it popularised the whole genre of true 3D first person shooters which must now account for a large proportion of all games sold. With Quake II ID software enhanced every aspect of the game and created a game engine that was used in many other successful titles. Well now my friends it's time for us to enjoy this modern classic on our humble Amigas.

Back in December 2001 ID Software released the Quake II source code under the GNU General Public License, this basically means that the software can be modified (for example to run on other operating systems) but the changed source code must be made available. Soon after the source code was released Hyperion announced that they were working on an Amiga port. Finally at the World of Amiga South East show in November 2002 the result of their efforts was released. The package consists of a CD with the Amiga executable and installer, a CD of Mods (more on these later) and the original PC version of Quake II which is still required for the game data files.

Get it on Your Hard Drive

Hyperion have done their usual excellent job of providing a smooth installation using the Amiga Installer, because the installation needs both the original Quake II CD and the Hyperion CD unless you have two CD-ROM's you have to copy the Hyperion CD to RAM

and make an assign before starting the installation. This process is described on a note included with the game. The mods that come supplied on a third CD have to be installed separately. If you install the movies onto your hard drive you will need about 400 Mb of free space.

Before you start to play the game we recommend that you install the updates found on the Hyperion website, at the time of writing there have been two updates which made the game run faster as well as fixing some minor bugs.

Will my Amiga be Man Enough or Will it Quake With Fear?

For best performance a PPC system with a 3D graphics card is recommended, then you can play in high resolutions and 16 bit colour. Quake II will also run without a 3D card and even on 060 based Amigas but of course the performance will be slower and the display is only 8



The single player levels have an involving story. Here you can see your crashed pod at the start of the game.



Check your objectives and progress in the level by pressing F1.

bit. A minimum of 64 Mb of RAM is required for the standard game, some mods require more.

Nice and Easy GUI

If you run Quake II from a workbench icon (recommended at least the first time) a GUI window appears with several tabs of settings. On the "Gfx" tab you can choose between hardware and software rendering and whether to run in full screen or in a window on Workbench. The "Audio" tab has the option to use AHI and you can set the CD-ROM device to play the audio from the game CD if required. A

mouse, keyboard, joystick (Amiga or PC) or a PSX joypad can be used to control the game this is selected on the "Input" tab. Multi-player options can be set on the "Game" tab and you can also enter the name of a mod to play (if installed) here. Finally the "Optimisations" tab has a whole plethora of options to tweak the look and performance of the game. Once you "save" or "use" the settings in the GUI Quake II launches in the window or screenmode you chose.

Let's go Frag!

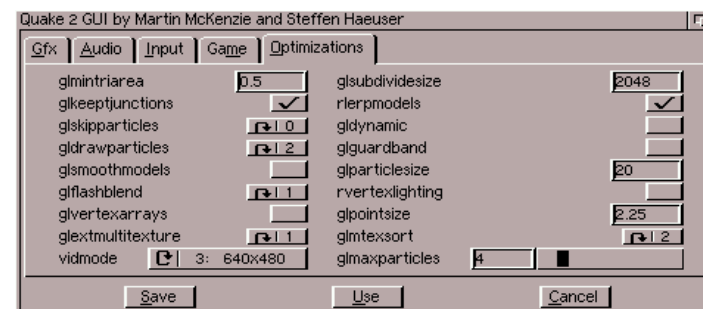
When Quake II loads you are initially greeted with the animated ID Software logo, at this point a text console appears and you are left wondering what to do next! In fact if you press the Esc key the main menu (that will be instantly familiar to Quake I players) opens. It is here that you can set various in game options such as key mapping, video settings and other control options.

Once you have set up to your liking it's time to get fragging! So select your level of mayhem (from easy, medium or hard) and you're introduced to the story by a short movie. This shows your character being launched in a pod towards an enemy planet and crashing into the complex surrounding a huge gun which, of course, it is your job to destroy. You start the game proper standing beside your crashed pod in a heavily damaged area of the base with just a feeble hand weapon to take on the now really pissed off enemy! It is at this point that your commander radios you your instructions for this part of the mission, it's not just blasting enemies, oh no,

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

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

Fortunately you won't be stuck with the equivalent of a space cadets water pistol for long as there are many varied weapons scattered around the levels (excellent internal security). Some of the weapons are really impressive both in their power and graphical effect, ranging from present day weaponry such as shotguns and grenades to the monumental BFG10K (Big F**king Gun) which sweeps all away before you. Damn these guns look so cool when you fire them off, grenades explode with a fireball, lasers beam brightly and rockets stream



The GUI lets you adjust most of the game options easily.



Much of the scenery is really impressive and the lighting effects bring it to life.

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

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

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

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

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



Enter the world of Quake 2 at your peril!!!

Support

to perform your task leads you into the next area in a logical manner. For instance to destroy the base outside defences requires you to shut down the reactor and then the communication centre before your buddies can fly in and bomb the area, just don't forget to get the hell out of there as they don't ask if you are clear!

Despite the high quality of graphics and sound Quake II runs well on relatively low spec systems (compared to 2GHz PC's anyway). For example the game runs smoothly (at around 20 FPS) on my 240MHz PPC with BVision at 640 x 480 resolution and would be even faster if I had a Voodoo 3. If you enable "gldynamic" (dynamic lighting effects) and some of the other eye candy goodies on the optimisation tab of the GUI the game slows significantly (to about 12 FPS). Again this was on my BVision, a Voodoo 3 should fare better. Sam Byford runs the game on his A4000 with an 060, Mediator and Voodoo 3 and gets a respectable 10 FPS on average. This specification Amiga is the minimum we would recommend to play the game. You can enable the frame counter by pressing the apostrophe key (next to the 1 key) to open the console and then typing "gl_showfps 1". Overall Quake II is noticeably faster than its predecessor and Hyperion's other 3D shooters Heretic II and Shogo.

Now Let's go Frag the World!

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

Apart from being a novice and therefore being annihilated within the first thirty seconds or so this game really rocks on-line. It is almost a different game to the single player mode, there is much less time to think how you will handle different situations and the



Levels are quite varied with caves (like this one), out door areas and, of course, the obligatory corridors.

action is always frantic. This doesn't mean you don't have to use strategy but you can't afford to stand around working it out... or you will die! On my broadband connection the game runs nice and smoothly which is essential to even have a chance against experienced players.

You can if you wish set your Amiga up to be a Quake II server so other computers running the game (be they Amigas or other platforms) can connect to you locally or over the Internet. While acting as a server you can still join the fun. As the server you set the type of game (death-match or Co-operative), the maximum number of players and when the level ends (either time of frag limit).

Brave New Worlds

So what do you do once you have played the game all the way through and are bored with being fragged instantly when playing on-line? Fortunately many third party developers have released mods which change various

aspects of the game. Hyperion have recompiled many of these mods for the Amiga version, some are supplied on the CD with the game and others can be downloaded. These mods vary in style and quality, some are intended for on-line games and others can be played in single player mode. Many of the mods have a theme such as 007, D-Day landings and Star Wars.

Conclusion

If you like first person shooters then why are you still reading this review? Go and buy Quake II now! It has an excellent single player game with an involving story and plenty of variety but that's only the tip of the iceberg. The on-line game is heaps of fun and there are plenty of active servers (see boxout). Finally the mods add a huge number of new challenges keeping the game fresh and interesting. Add to this that it runs well on a range of configurations and you have one of the best games released on the Amiga.

Are you Being Served?

Quake II Servers On-line

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

<http://www.gameaholic.com/servers/quake2/>

Downloading Mods

<http://www.knight-industries.de/q2>

This is the official site for additional Quake II mods which have been ported to the Amiga version (many mods are included on a CD with the game).

Results

Pros

- + Good graphics and sound.
- + Plays well on a range of systems.
- + Involving single player game.
- + Excelent lastability with mods and on-line play.

Top Notch!



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PD Paradise

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

I've noticed Report Plus, which is described as a "multipurpose utility", in the Aminet recent listings several times over the last few years. Curiosity finally got the better of me and I decided to download it and find out what it was for. It turns out to be a collection of utilities built into one program with a common Reaction interface. Some of these utilities will mainly appeal to programmers while others are more generally useful. The initial program window has a graphical button for each of the 10 Report Plus functions of these are split into groups concerning editing, viewing, processing, reporting and conducting a test.

The first editing option allows you to create or edit a bug report in the official Commodore format. The window has fields for all the information you need to submit and drop down boxes so you can easily select such options as the type of bug and what AmigaOS subsystem it effects. There is an area to enter the details of your Amiga system and the OS versions are automatically filled in. You can also setup your contact details so you only need to enter them once. I don't know whether this bug reporting system is still



The main menu has a button for each ReportPlus function.

used, the program lists a Haage and Partner E-Mail address, but if it is this is an easy way to a correctly formatted report.

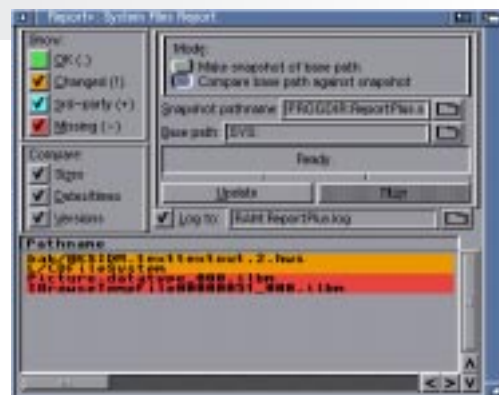
The Aminet Readme editor is used to prepare and edit readme files for Aminet uploads. Again all the required fields are available and there is a text box for a long description. You can select the appropriate Aminet directory for your upload from directory and sub-directory lists.

The battery-backed memory editor allows you to make changes to a small area of memory in the A3000 and 4000 which holds some system settings between boots. This is most useful on the A3000 where some SCSI settings such as the ID of the internal controller and whether synchronous transfers are used are held in this memory. The Report Plus editor allows you view and change the actual binary code or, for the weak at heart, change the settings using check boxes and a number gadget.

Report Plus can show you details of the expansion cards installed in your Amiga based on their manufacturer and product IDs. It has the details of many cards in its internal database and can also use the boards.library (supplied) for a larger list. If you know the manufacturer and board IDs you can look them up without installing the card.

One of the most interesting features is the IFF FORM viewer, this allows you to view information in various types of IFF file. While most of us associate IFF with images many types of file on the Amiga use the IFF structure. For example IFF ILBM is the proper name for an IFF image,

The system files report keeps track of changes on a partition.



IFF 8SVX is for 8bit sound samples, and IFF DR2D is a structured drawing format. In the IFF FORM viewer you can select an IFF file and see the information contained within. For example an ILBM has information such as the pixel dimensions, resolution, transparent colour and many other parameters.

The Icon Processor allows you to select one or more icons and perform operations on them. It can change the icon type (from a tool to a project for example), optimise the colours and remove planar (needed prior to OS 3.5) image data - making the icon files more compact. The text file converter can change text files from PC (CR and LF) or Mac (CR) style line endings to Amiga (LF) style or vice versa. It can also be used to convert tabs to spaces and to remove line wrapping in paragraphs (this is very handy for the magazine, where we need to set new margins).

The Path Size utility will scan through a hard disk partition of your choice and calculate the total size of each directory and sub-directory. This is then presented in an indented list so you can find the drawers that are taking up the most room quickly. This utility also has the option to set the RWED protection bits if you wish.

Now we come to the final option which, in my opinion, is

probably the cleverest and most useful of all the options in Report Plus - the System Files Report. This utility can scan any disk and make a list, called a snapshot, of all the files, their size, date and version. At a later date you can run the utility again and ask it to report the changes that have occurred since that "snapshot" was taken. The resulting list shows files that have changed (size, date or version), files that have been added and files that have been deleted. The author suggests running this after installing your system so you can monitor what has changed. I would also suggest that it's worthwhile before a major upgrade or installation. If things go wrong you can use Report Plus to see what has changed and help you diagnose problems.

Report Plus is a strange program - partly because most of its options are not reports! It has the feel of a tool created for the use of the author and added to as and when he needed new utilities. However that's not to put it down! Most of the options are useful and I can imagine many Amiga users finding a need for some of its functions from time to time. Report Plus is well worth the few hundred kilobytes of disk space it takes up even if you only use it once in a blue moon.

PicShow 1.23

Author: Thomas Rapp

License: Freeware

Available From: <http://picshow.1st.to>

The readme file for PicShow states that it aims to be a "picture viewer in directory tools" but in reality it has developed to be much more than that. You can run PicShow either from the Workbench or a Shell Prompt, if you do not specify a file name it opens a file requester so you can choose a picture to show. PicShow uses datatypes to decode image files so it will support all the picture formats you have datatypes for. If you have problems with some files it may be worth upgrading your datatypes to some such as Oliver Robert's excellent Warp series which are available from <http://www.nanunanu.org/~oliver/>. The selected image is displayed in a borderless window on Workbench or on a new screen if you set that option. It is also possible to move PicShow onto its own screen when you start on the Workbench. Although the window does not have a border you can still move it by dragging the top edge and depth arrange it by clicking the top right corner. The window can also be re-sized by dragging the bottom right corner, when you do this PicShow scales the picture but keeps its correct proportions.

While PicShow looks simple it has many hidden talents, the first is that when loading an image it also reads a list of all the other images in the same directory. You can use the right arrow key to view the next image in the directory and the left arrow to view the previous one. Pressing space shows a random image from the directory. If you want to view a particular image just right click on the image window - this



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



PicShow uses a borderless window so there's no clutter. Notice the button bar at the bottom of the window and the tool-tip showing the filename, size, colour depth and file type.

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

When a picture is displayed you can use the "+" and "-" keys to zoom in and out. PicShow can also be set to automatically scale each picture to fit the screen using optional interpolation (which increases the quality but takes longer). Images can be rotated 90 degrees in either direction and mirrored horizontally or vertically. There is also a colour adjustment window which lets you change the contrast,

brightness, gamma and saturation of the image in real-time by dragging sliders. You can save the currently displayed image in IFF format or copy it to the clipboard. When copying to the clipboard you can select an area of the image to copy. The save options saves what you see on-screen so it includes any image manipulations you have applied in PicShow but can't save a picture larger than the screen. The latest version of PicShow (1.23) at the time of writing has a print function. This looks good and has the option to position and scale the picture on the page but so far I have been unable to get it to print in colour. Because 1.23 is in beta test and doesn't have updated documentation I'm not sure where the problem is.

PicShow can operate in slide show mode which changes to the next picture automatically after a user defined time. If you run the program on its own screen it can use a transition effect between images, there are a number of different effects to choose from and a random option if you can't decide. The length of time the transitions take can be set too.

One of PicShow's best features is its flexible user interface. Most operations can be carried out with a single key press and you can adjust the key mapping by editing the PicShow.keys file. This is a simple text list of keys and which PicShow internal command they map to. In addition to changing key mappings you can also add keys to launch external commands such as sending an image to a dedicated image processor. If you prefer using the mouse to remembering key presses PicShow offers two options. Move your pointer to the top of the screen and press the right mouse button to access the familiar Amiga menus. Here you can select all the program options and see the keyboard shortcuts. Finally pressing F5 opens the navigation panel which has graphical buttons for most program options. Like the key mapping you can define the look of the panel with your own graphics and edit which commands appear by changing the tooltypes of the picture's icon. Each icon has a help bubble which pops up when you hover the pointer over it for a few seconds. If you do the same over the displayed image it shows some information such as the size in pixels and the colour depth (this option can be disabled if it is not required).

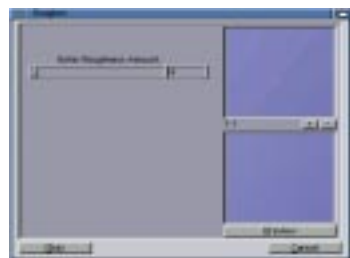
Altogether PicShow is a fine piece of software and one of the most feature rich picture viewers I've come across, yet it doesn't need a complex interface. It is particularly nice to be able to browse a list of images within the viewer. The only feature I really miss is pre-loading to make image viewing smoother, hopefully that will be added in a later release. So give PicShow a try - it may well become your default image viewer.

Top Tips

16bit Workbench Backdrops

Most of the time a 16bit display is pretty much indistinguishable from a 24bit one, takes a third less memory and can often be displayed at higher resolutions and/or refresh rates on a graphics card. For these reasons many Amiga users choose a 16bit screenmode for their Workbench screen. However if you choose a backdrop picture with smooth gradients of colour you may notice ugly banding because a 16bit screen doesn't have enough colours to make smooth transitions. You can get around this problem without changing your screenmode by lightly dithering the image in an image processor. For this example I'll use ImageFX but you can find similar effects in most Amiga packages.

First start your image processor then select a 16bit screenmode so you can see the effect of the process. In ImageFX you change the screenmode in the "Preview Options" section of the "Prefs", just click the "Select Custom Screenmode And Depth" button and select a 16bit screenmode. Now load the backdrop image you want to smooth, one of the "boing ball" backdrops supplied with OS3.5 and 3.9 is an excellent example. Now to smooth out the bands we need to roughen



The ImageFX Roughen effect... also useful for smoothing!



the image slightly. I know this sounds contradictory but mixing the pixels up slightly will disguise the banding in the smooth gradients... trust me on this one. So click the "Effect" button and click "Roughen" in the pop-up menu. In the Roughen window set the amount slider to a small value (I used 4) and click the "Preview" button to see the result. Remember you can pan to another area of the image in the top preview area before clicking "Preview" to see the result in the bottom area. When you are happy the process is removing the banding without roughening detailed areas of the image too much click "Okay" to apply the effect. The result should be an image that looks much better on your desktop.

Notes

A similar effect can be achieved using the "Add Noise" (use a low "Amount") paint mode in Photogenics 4/5, I couldn't find a suitable filter in ArtEffect 4.

The AmigaOS 3.9 picture datatype supports dithering on 16bit screens which largely removes this problem however this is very processor intensive and makes the datatype decoding much slower. You may want to try disabling dithering on 16bit screens by unchecking "Dither HiColor" in the PictDT preferences

program and use this method to improve the look of your backdrops.

IBrowse 2.3 Tabbed Browsing Tips

I couldn't resist writing something about the eagerly awaited IBrowse 2.3 upgrade in this issue although unfortunately there wasn't time to write a full review. One of the coolest features of IBrowse 2.0 is tabbed browsing, this lets you open several websites without the clutter of many windows. However in earlier 2.0 versions the functionality was limited and some users might not have noticed it even existed. With version 2.3 tabbed browsing has matured and has many excellent features, however some of these are not terribly obvious so I thought it would be worth mentioning them here.

Tabbed Browsing

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

Dragging and dropping

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

Showing Tabs and Space

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

browser..." from the pop-up FAB (fast action button) menu.

Tab FAB

Speaking of FAB menus, if you right click on a browser tab one pops up allowing you to close the browser or re-load it without selecting the tab first.

New Tab Button

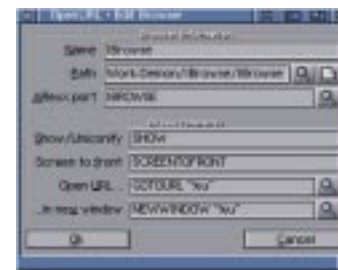
If you don't like tabs showing all the time but don't want to access the menus to open a new tab it's easy to add a "new browser" toolbar or fastlink button. Go into the GUI settings section and double click to open it. Then select the Toolbar or Fastlink page and add a new button or fastlink. Set the "Action" to "AREXX" and click on the "INT" button to select an internal AREXX command. Choose "NEWBROWSER" from the list. Enter a name for the button and for a toolbar button and select a suitable image. When you accept the settings you should see a new button which you can click to open a new browser tab in the current window.

Tip

You can add a button to open a new window by choosing the "NEWWINDOW" internal command.

Pop-Tab

If you would prefer requests for a new window to open a new tab by default (for example for pop-up windows) you can set this behaviour on the "General" settings section, just click the "New browser" radio button. OpenURL.library is used by many applications to open a URL in your selected web browser. If you have this set-up to use IBrowse you might like it to open pages in a new tab rather than in a new window. To set this start OpenURL preferences and double click on the IBrowse line in the browsers list. In the "Edit Browser" window change the "...in new window" command to read "NEWBROWSER %u". To make this setting take effect



Configuring the OpenURL.library to use a new tab.

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

Router Upgrade

If you purchased the AMX-CA64E ADSL Ethernet router we reviewed in issue 12 you may be interested to hear that there is a firmware upgrade available which can be applied from the Amiga. After the review was completed Mick Sutton noticed that his router would occasionally loose the ADSL connection and needed to be switched off and then on to regain it - this happened about every 10 days. Although I had the same router and the same ADSL service I didn't have problems and my router stayed connected indefinitely. We noticed that Mick's router had an earlier firmware revision (1.0) (shown on the first webpage when you access the router) where as mine was version 2.x (I can't remember the exact revision).

Important

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

Also we only recommend you update your firmware if you are experiencing problems with the router. As with any ROM update process there is a small chance your router could be

damaged if the update failed for any reason - there's no point taking that risk if it's working well. Total Amiga is not responsible for any damage or problems caused by following this procedure.

You can download the firmware update from the router's manufacturers, who are called, incidentally, Amigo! Go to their download webpage at <http://www.amigo.com.tw/download.htm> and click on the AMX-CA64E link to go to that section. Choose the latest firmware revision (labelled "Firmware download (CA6XR-GN.0924.00T) port range + mapping" at the time of writing) and download the file to your hard disk. Also check out the "How to upload Firmware..." link for brief instructions on how to do the upload. The upgrade is delivered in a ZIP archive so the first job is to extract the file. If you don't have an unzip command you can download "unzip.lha" from the util/arc directory on Aminet. Copy unzip into your C: directory and then open a shell and type:

```
cd ram:
unzip drive:path/firmware.zip
```

This will unzip the firmware file into the Ram Disk. Now open a browser and enter your router's IP address, log in using the username and password. In the left hand frame scroll down to "Admin Privilege" and click the "Misc Configuration" link. Check the "FTP server" is "Enabled", if it is not enable it, "Submit" the settings and then "Save Settings". Next click "Code Image Update" under "Admin Privilege". Select the extracted firmware file (which ends in .dlf) from the RAM Disk using the file selector. Click the "Upload" button to start uploading the file and wait for the "File successfully transferred" message. Then click the "Reboot" button to restart the router with the new Firmware. Now go through and change the router setup as you did when you first installed it.

CC_Reset Software Patches

Also in connection with our ADSL feature we have noticed that a hardware fix is no longer required to use PCMCIA Ethernet cards in the A1200 with the cnet.device. A small motherboard modification used to be required to ensure that the card was properly reset, several dealers sold a small clip-on upgrade to fix the problem without soldering. Now two clever software utilities are available which perform the reset without the need for any hardware mods. We found a combination of CardReset (Aminet, util/boot/CardReset.lha) and CardPatch (Aminet, util/boot/CardPatch.lha), both by Artur Pogoda, meant Mick's A1200 could go without it's CC_Reset hardware patch. Just download both utilities, de-archive and copy the program files to your "C:" directory. Then add the following lines to your user-startup file, if you run your TCP/IP stack in your user-startup make sure these lines come before it is started:

```
;BEGIN PCMCIA Fixes
CardPatch
CardReset
;END PCMCIA Fixes
```

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

3Com PCMCIA Ethernet Driver

On the subject of PCMCIA Ethernet I have noticed that a driver for some 3Com PCMCIA Ethernet cards have been released on Aminet. We haven't tested this but if you have a 3Com card handy (they're a pretty common brand) it is well worth a try. A full list of supported models is included in the archive which can be downloaded from Aminet: [hard/drivr/3c589.lha](http://aminet.net/drivr/3c589.lha).



GoldEd Studio Configuration Tutorial

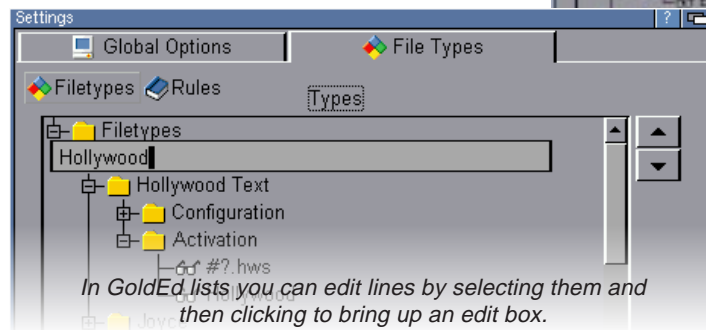
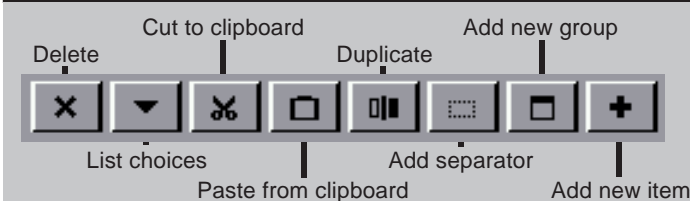
As Sam Byford discovered in his review in the last issue, GoldEd is a powerful editor supplied with a range of configurations for editing many types of file from HTML pages to C++ source code. Another aspect of its power is the wide range of configuration options many of which can be tied to a specific file type. Whenever a program has lots of options it can be difficult to understand how they fit together and with GoldEd this problem is exacerbated by the multiple file types. In this tutorial I will use two examples of creating a new file type and modifying an existing one to give you a feel for the configuration process.

The configuration requester is opened from the Extras/Customize menu item. This requester holds some "Global Options" on the first tab which apply to all sessions of GoldEd whatever the type of file you are editing. The "File Types" tab allows you to customise the editor for a particular type of file. A number of example configurations are supplied, you can choose which you want to have installed during the GoldEd installation so your list might look different to mine.

Filetype Specific Configuration

To change the configuration of a particular file type click on the "File Types" tab in the "Settings" window, the main list on this tab shows the currently defined file types.

Listview Icons

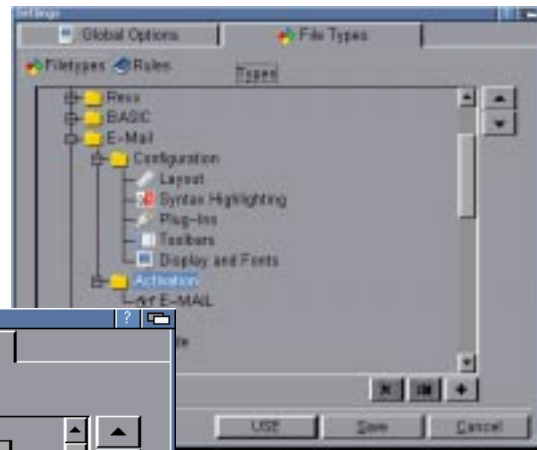


Adding a New Filetype

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

Editing an Existing Filetype

If you wish to edit an existing file type click on the "+" symbol next to its name to expand the tree, you will see that each file type has two sections, "Configuration" and "Activation". Open "Configuration" by clicking the "+" sign and you will see icons for all the items that have been



this click on the "Activation" folder for the file type then click on the "+" icon at the bottom right of the list view, this adds a new activation item called "#?". Now rename this to a new identifier by single clicking on the highlighted name as we did for the filetype name. In my case I chose "HOLLYWOOD" as the identifier for my new filetype.

By File Extension

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

By Rules

If you want GoldEd to be more intelligent that simply taking the file type from its file name you can use "Rules" to have GoldEd determine the type of a file from its content. Before rules can work a file type has to have an identifier so set one up as detailed in the "Manually" section above. Now select the "Rules"

configured for the selected file type. The "Activation" section controls which files will be recognised by GoldEd as this type. If you configure this correctly GoldEd will automatically switch to the correct configuration when you load a file of the associated type

Activation

GoldEd can determine the type of a file in three ways, the first is for you to manually select the type of file after it has been loaded. To do this load the file then click on the select file type icon in the default tool bar (this is a diamond shape with four colours) and select the file type you wish to use. New file types are not present on the menu by default, to add one see the "Adding a New File Type..." section later in this tutorial.

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

Manually

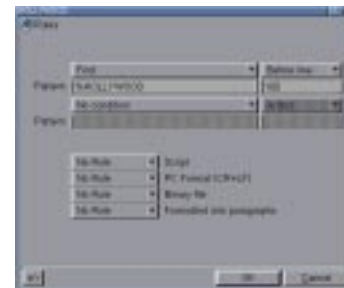
To make a file type available for selection you must add at least one item to the type's activation section. If you just want to be able to manually set this filetype then you just need to give it a unique identifying name. To do

button at the top of the "File Types" tab this brings up a list of the defined rules. I'll add a new one for Hollywood by clicking the "+" icon, by default this is called "TEXT" so first I'll rename it to "HOLLYWOOD". Note that the name must match the identifier you setup in the file types list earlier. With that done double click on the new item to edit it, this brings up a new window. In this window you can set up to two conditions that will check the content of the file and several other rules. Hollywood scripts should always check the version of Hollywood using the "%HOLLYWOOD" command so it is safe to assume that a file containing this string near the top will be a Hollywood script. To set this rule set the top left drop down gadget to "Find" and the top right one to "Before line" then enter "%HOLLYWOOD" in the left text box, this is the string to look for and 100 in the right box, this will tell GoldEd only to look in the first 100 lines. It is good to limit the number of lines searched as searching the whole file could slow down recognition on larger files.

NOTE: You can also tell GoldEd to look for a string on a particular line or even in the icon tooltypes for identifying strings. If you add a second condition you can choose if both patterns must match (And) or if only one needs to match to identify the file (Or). At the bottom of the window you can set some other conditions that the file must meet to satisfy this rule, for example you can check if the file is a binary file as opposed to a text file.

Adding a New File Type to the Selection Menu

When you've finished defining your new file type you may want to add it to the file types menu on the standard toolbar. To do this open the "Extras/Customize"

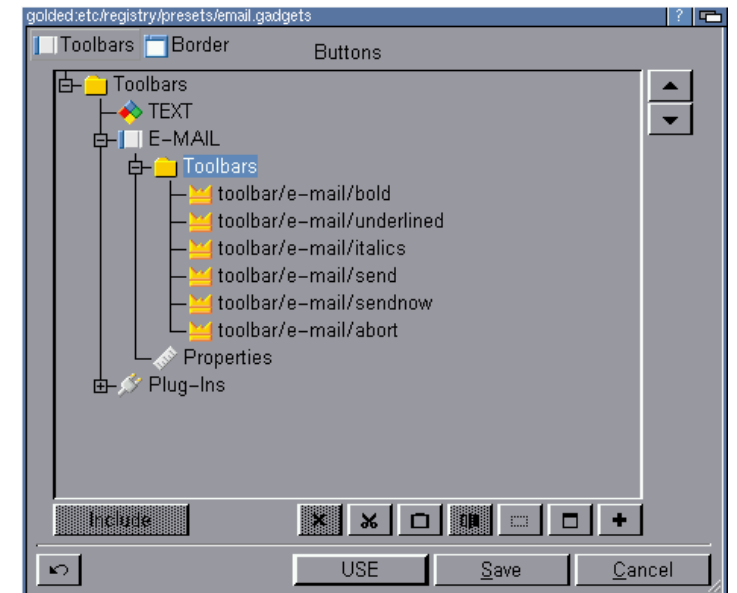


Using rules can identify files without using a file extension.

window and choose the "File Types" tab. Click on the Pool button at the bottom of the Filetypes list, this brings up a list of all the custom settings defined. Open the "Toolbars" folder by clicking the "+" symbol then double click on "standard.gadgets" to open an editor window. In the list under "Toolbars" open "Standard" and then open the "Toolbars" folder, here you should see a list of all the standard buttons starting with "new", "open" and "save". Find the "filetype" item and open it to show a list of the file types in the menu. Now we'll copy an existing item and edit it to change to our new filetype. Highlight an existing filetype by clicking on it once (I'm using "Rexx") then click the duplicate icon at the bottom of the list. Rename the duplicate item to suit your new filetype then double click on it to edit the action performed when the menu item is chosen. The window you now see shows an event definition, this allows you to define what action or actions GoldEd should take when this menu item is chosen. Currently the only item in the list is "SET TYPE VALUE=".rexx" this sets the current filetype to ".rexx". I need to edit this for my new HOLLYWOOD filetype, my new event reads "SET TYPE VALUE="HOLLYWOOD"". When you're happy with your event click "OK". Now, in the "Toolbars" section, you might want to move the new menu item so it's in alphabetical order. To do this highlight it and then use the up and down arrows to the right of the list.

Custom Configuration

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



Every aspect of GoldEd, including the toolbars, is configurable.

is quite basic so I added a number of configuration options to it.

Layout

The first thing I wanted to do was to make GoldEd word wrap the lines in my E-Mails to 72 characters as per E-Mail convention. To do this we need to add the "Layout" configuration item, open the "E-Mail" filetype's folder in the list and click on the "Configuration" folder. Now click the add icon to pop up the "Pool" of available configuration items. In the list open the "Layout" folder which should have "standard.layout" inside. We could add standard.layout to our e-mail configuration but any changes we make to this will also effect other configurations using standard.layout, to avoid this it is safest to make a copy. To do this select "standard.layout" and click the duplicate button. In the "Input" requester that appears give the duplicate a new name, in this case I'll call it "EMail.layout" then click "OK". Now make sure the duplicate is highlighted and click "OK" again to add the configuration item to the E-Mail filetype. Double click on "Layout" under E-Mail/Configuration to edit it.

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

In the "email.layout" edit window set the right margin to "72" and ensure that "Use left margin", "Word wrap" and "Reformat

hyphens" are all ticked. I personally leave "Reformat while typing" off as I find GoldEd's automatic re-formatting is a bit overzealous, you might want to experiment with those options. When you're finished click "Save" to save the changes to the "email.layout" file.

TIP: If you don't have "Reformat while typing" on GoldEd only word wraps the current line which can let paragraphs get out of shape particularly if you edit them. To clean this up you can manually re-format the paragraph using the "Layout/Paragraph..." menu item appropriate to the justification you're using..

Toolbars

Next I'd like to add some new toolbar buttons for use when writing E-Mails, I'm going to add buttons to close the editor when I've finished writing an E-Mail, to automatically send the E-Mail I've been writing and to cancel the current mail. The standard E-Mail file type already has a toolbar set up with some text formatting buttons so we can simply add new buttons to it.

Send Button

In the "Filetypes" list under "E-Mail/Configuration" double click on "Toolbars". In the edit window open the folders "Toolbars", then "E-Mail" and "Toolbars", here you can see the existing buttons listed. Select the last "Toolbars" folder and add a new item. We can now rename this item to the

name of our toolbar button, you can either type in the text to be displayed on the button or enter the path to an image to be used on the button. I have some images prepared so I'm going to use them. By default toolbar images go in the "GoldEd:etc/images/" directory so you should use either a full path or a path from that directory. My images are in "etc/images/toolbar/e-mail" so for my send now button I just need to put "toolbar/e-mail/send" ("send" is the filename of the image, note that you have to type this as there isn't a file requester).

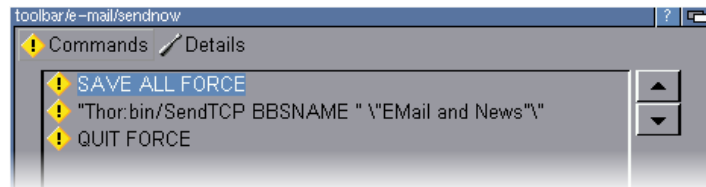
Now we can assign a command to this button, double click on the new button's line in the list to bring up the event definition editor. Click on the add icon to add a new command (NOP by default). Then click the list choices icon to show a list of all the available GoldEd commands. We want this button to save the file and then exit so find "SAVE" in the list, select it and click "OK". The command line inserted lists all the possible options after the SAVE command we need to edit it so it saves the complete file and then exits and does not warn us that the file will be overwritten. To do this we just need the ALL, EXIT and FORCE options.

Edit the command line so it reads "SAVE ALL EXIT FORCE". While we're in this window we can also set some other options for this toolbar button. Click on the "Details" button at the top note that you can set a hot key which will trigger the same event as this button. Another option is "Online help" here you can enter a comment in quotes ("") which will be shown in the tooltip for this button.

TIP. GoldEd has many internal commands, to find out more about them and what all their options do take a look at the "Internal Commands" section of the AmigaGuide manual.

Send Now Button

The next button should save the file, run an external program to send E-Mail and then close the editor. So add a new button and set its name to "toolbar/e-mail/sendnow" to pick up the correct icon. Edit the new item



Several commands of different types can be issued from one button click.

and add the internal command "SAVE ALL FORCE" in the same way as before. Now click the Add icon to add a new command and use the down arrow to move it to the bottom of the list. Set this to be a "DOS Program" using the Action pop-up. Click the list choices icon to open a file requester where you can choose the program to run. In my case it's SendTCP which is located in the Thor:bin directory. This DOS program also needs an option to tell it which BBS to send e-mail from so the full command line is:

"Thor:bin/SendTCP BBSNAME \"E-Mail and News\""

NOTE: You must type this command line exactly as printed with all the quotes. The backslash before the quotes around "E-Mail and News" escape those quotes and ensure they get put into the final command line. I found through trial and error that the quote immediately after "News" was required for the command to work, I think this may be a bug in my version of GoldEd.

If you use Thor then you'll need to change this line to reflect the name used on your system. If you don't use Thor then you can use this method to run almost any external program from a GoldEd button. Finally add another internal command "QUIT FORCE" to close the editor after the EMail has been sent.

TIP. If you want to pass the name of the current file you're editing to an external program on its command line then you can insert the variable name (which must be prefixed with a backslash) "ABSNAME". For example the command line ""Multiview \"ABSNAME"" would display the current document in Multiview.

The inner set of quotes are required to ensure a space between the command and the argument. The variables section of the manual has a list of all the

built-in variables you can use in this way.

Abort Mail

The final button runs an AREXX script to quit GoldEd without saving and then delete the E-Mail from Thor's list of outgoing events (if you don't do this and just quit the editor Thor will send a blank E-Mail). To do this we just add a button and name it point to an appropriate icon. Edit the button and add a command, now select Rexx Macro from the Action pop-up. Edit the command line and type the full path to the AREXX script. A suitable script is supplied with Thor called "Thor/rexx/Rexx/GoldED/CancelEvent.ged". I found I had to edit this script slightly to make it work in the my version of GoldEd AIX. Simply load the script into an editor (GoldEd itself is fine) and change line 40 from "QUIT NOSAVE" to "QUIT FORCE" and save the script. With the script selected just "OK" the window and save your settings, it's as simple as that!

Some Other Useful Configuration Items

Hopefully going through the configuration items above has given you a feel for how GoldEd's settings work. The only remaining problem is how to find the configuration item you want to change amongst the 19 categories available! Below I've tried to identify some of the common items you might want to change and where to find them.

NOTE: I've not gone into too much detail on these items, to get a description of what they do you can click on the "?" icon in the window title bar and then on the gadget you're interested in to get a description. If you would like a see a more in-depth tutorial on some of the other configuration options in a future issue of Total Amiga please let me know.

Automatic Completion and Case Correction - These features use the word list in the Dictionary configuration item.

Screenmode, Colours and Fonts - In the display item you can set GoldEd to open on its own screen in the mode of your choice, it can also open on a specified public screen or the front-most screen. The colours used for various items can be defined as can the fonts used in several different circumstances. Display also has Layout options that amongst other things, control the size of the toolbar buttons as mentioned in Sam's review last issue.

Menus - The Menu item, fairly obviously, allows you to customise GoldEd's menus however it is worth noting that every menu and item can be changed here, you're not just limited to adding custom items. If you want to add menus to the default set you can create a new set of menus and then include the menus of another filetype using the "Include" button.

TIP. "Including" also works for toolbars.

File Settings and Backups - These are mostly configured in the "Miscellaneous" item. Here you can set an overwrite warning, whether to save icons, various icons settings, the path for backups and how many backups are made.

Mouse and Keyboard - Events can be defined for key and mouse button presses including combinations in the keyboard and mouse items.

Tabs - Older versions of GoldEd (4.x and earlier I think) did not support real tabs (they inserted spaces instead) newer versions do support them but they are not enabled by default. If you want real tabs go to the "Tabs" configuration item and change the "Tab key function" to "Insert Tabs". In this item you can also change the tab stop positions and set automatic indenting to use tabs rather than spaces.

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

Poseidon Tutorial

With its new Human Interface Device class the Poseidon USB stack offers much more control over keyboards and mice. Robert Williams dives deep into the possibilities.

Chris Hodges has recently added a Human Interface Device (HID) class to his excellent Poseidon USB stack. This new class brings full support for USB keyboards and mice as well as many other input devices including graphics tablets.

NOTE: Poseidon supports devices that follow the USB HID standard, devices that need custom drivers on other platforms or do not follow the standard may not work properly or at all. That said most of the USB mice we tried worked well as does my HP keyboard. For a list of the devices tested take a look at the supported devices list on the E3B website: <http://www.e3b.de>.

Mouse

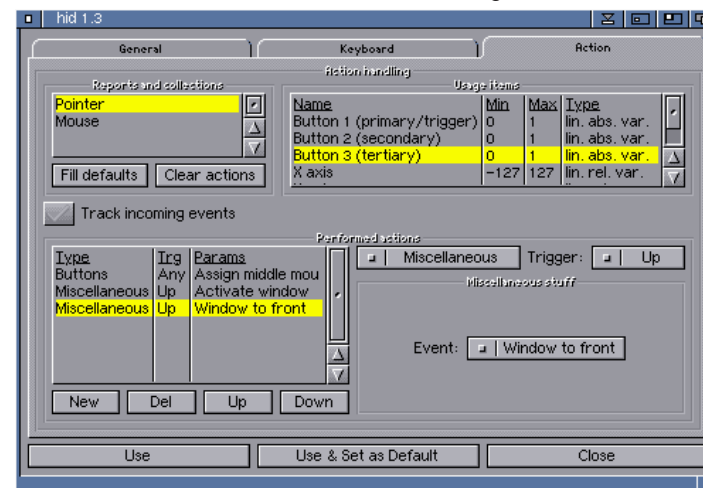
By default the standard buttons, movement axes and wheel on USB mice should be supported without any manual configuration. This means that if you plug in a USB mouse while Poseidon is running you should be able to move the pointer and click on things straight away. For full functionality you should opt to install the new input.device

during Poseidon installation, this allows USB devices to completely emulate the standard Amiga mouse and keyboard. For example I found that without the new input.device certain applications did not respond to mouse clicks.

While the default mouse settings are quite adequate you may have a mouse with additional buttons to which you would like to assign some functions. In this example I'll show you how to set-up the middle mouse button to bring windows to the front, this is useful if you want to see a window whose depth gadget is obscured by other windows.

Click to Front

Open the Trident preferences program and choose the "Devices" page in the list on the left hand side. This page shows all the USB devices connected to your Amiga. In the "USB Devices..." list select your mouse by clicking on it once and then click the "Settings" button, this opens the settings window for the class to which that device is bound (shown under "Bindings" in the list). In the case of a mouse you should see the HID class settings window. In the "hid" settings window click on the



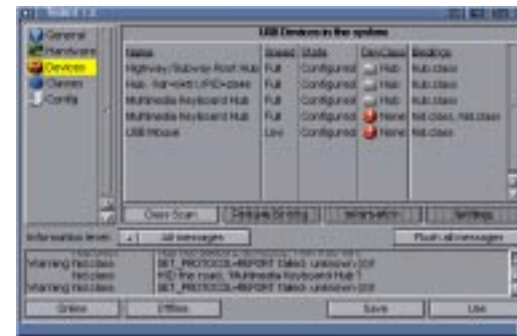
Adding a "click to front" function to the middle mouse button. In Poseidon's HID class you can trigger multiple actions of different types from one button.

Action tab, this has three list views. The "Reports and collections" list shows the groups of controls (buttons, wheels, movement axes etc.) available on the device. The controls in the currently selected group are shown in the "Usage items" list. In the bottom half of the window you can configure the action or actions that take place when the controls are triggered in some way (a buttons is clicked, the mouse moved etc.).

As I mentioned all the basic mouse functions should be set by default so let's move straight to setting up our click to front. On my Logitech mouse all the mouse controls are in the group called "Pointer" so click this in the "Reports and collections" list. I want to assign my actions to the middle mouse button which is "Button 3 (tertiary)" in the "Usage items" list so click that as well. In the actions list you should now see one item that has been placed there by default, "Buttons". If you click on this item you will see that this is assigning button 3 to the "middle mouse button" action, this means that the middle button will act just like the middle button on a standard Amiga mouse.

TIP. You can adjust the default mouse button assignments if you wish. For example if you use the mouse with your left hand you could swap the left and right buttons by assigning Button 1 (left) to the right mouse button action and vice versa.

Now, we still want the middle mouse button to act like a normal mouse so we need to leave that action in place and add a new one using the "New" button at the bottom of the list. The new item defaults to "No action" so we now need to define what we want it to do. We can select various types of action from the cycle gadget just to the right of



The Trident preferences program allows you to configure your USB devices from a comfortable GUI.

the actions list, in this case we want to set this to Miscellaneous which contains the window control commands built into the HID class. The next job is to set what event should "Trigger" the action, this is set with the right most cycle gadget. The action can occur when the button is pressed down or when it is released (Up). In this case we want the it to occur when the button is released so we can cancel the action by pulling off the window before releasing the middle button. So set "Trigger" to "Up". In the "Miscellaneous stuff" section there is a cycle gadget where you can select the event you want, if you look through you'll find "Window to front", which seems just what we want. However "Window to front" brings the active window to the front (whether it is under the mouse pointer or not) so first we need to activate the window under the pointer. Set this first action to the "Activate window" event. Then add another miscellaneous action as before but this time choose the "Window to front" event. Now try clicking on an obscured window with the middle mouse button, it should be activated and then pop to the front of all other windows.

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

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

different events. It is also possible to assign these events to keyboard keys if you wish.

Wheel Support

The HID class sends out standard mouse wheel events which can be interpreted and used by applications. The upshot of this is that the wheel will only initially work in applications with wheel support such as Directory Opus and AWeb. You can install MUIWheel to give wheel mouse support to MUI applications and FreeWheel which implements wheel support in most other programs. Both these utilities are available from Aminet in util/mouse.

Keyboard

As with mice the HID class automatically assigns an

Buying a USB Keyboard

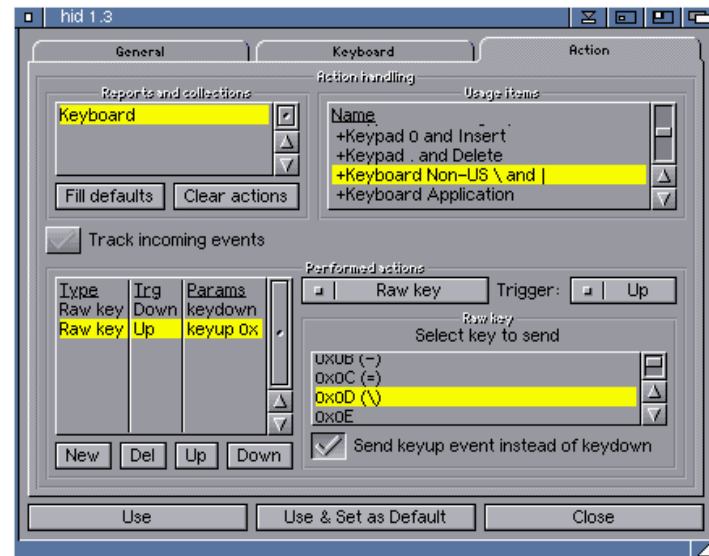
Obtaining a USB mouse is very easy, you'll find many mice intended for PCs and Macs at any computer supplier and the vast majority of them will support USB. Some will have a PS/2 adaptor too. However when it comes to keyboards it is much more difficult. For some reason USB keyboards don't really seem to have taken off and PS/2 models are still by far the more popular. Those USB models that are available tend to be rather expensive, most of them come as part of a cordless desktop package for £50 or more. When the HID class was released for Poseidon I wanted to test it and, not being able to find a USB keyboard I liked locally for a reasonable price, I purchased an HP multimedia keyboard from a seller on EBay for only £7.50. This is a nice keyboard but it has a French Canadian layout, as the letter keys are the same (QWERTY etc.) this doesn't really bother me. This is the keyboard shown on these pages and featured in the configuration tutorials. The mouse used is my Logitech Wheel Mouse Optical, a simple mouse with two buttons and a wheel.

appropriate mapping between the standard keys on a USB keyboard and the normal Amiga keys. You only need to change the settings if you dislike the default mapping or want to set-up non-standard keys. My cheap USB keyboard has a French Canadian key layout (to find out why I got this odd keyboard see the "Buying a USB Keyboard" box-out) which does not have a "\ and |" key in either the normal Amiga or PC positions. So my first job was to map an unused key to this Amiga key.

Assigning Letters

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

As with the mouse the first step is to select the key to which we want to map an Amiga key press. With the mouse it was easy to find the buttons but with so many keys on a keyboard we could use some help. Click the "Track incoming events" check box and then press the key you want to map (I chose a key with double chevron



When mapping Raw key actions be sure to specify both key up and down events.

symbols that I won't use often). You should see the highlight in the "Usage items" list jump to the key you pressed. In my case the key description in the list was "Keyboard Non-US \ and |". I then realised that the key I had chosen was the position for these characters on a UK PC keyboard anyway!

However the HID class's automatic key mapping did not work for this key so I still needed to set it up. In the Performed actions section select the default "Keymapping" line then change the action to "Raw key" using the cycle gadget and set "Trigger" to "Down". Under "Select key to send" scroll down the list and choose the key on a standard Amiga keyboard you want to map in my case it's "0x0D (\)". Note that this simulates a keypress on a standard Amiga keyboard so it will give the "|" symbol when shifted because that is the shifted character on the standard Amiga key. You might think that we are done but there is still one more step. As I mentioned with mouse buttons pressing a key sends two events a "down" when the key is pressed and "up" when released. If we just define the "down" it will be as if the Amiga key is never released and we'll get a stream of "|||||||"! To prevent this add another "0x0D (\)" "Raw key" action exactly as before but this time set the "Trigger" to Up and tick the "Send keyup instead of keydown" box.

Now you can try typing in a shell

window with the newly defined key to check it works.

With boring key mapping out of the way now we can get on to the more exciting topic of assigning commands to the extra "multimedia" keys offered by many USB keyboards. My keyboard had some audio controls (play, pause, next track etc.) and some buttons designed to quickly launch applications. These buttons could be assigned to any function but in this tutorial I'm going to use them logically by setting them up to launch and then control the music player program SongPlayer.

Assigning Commands

As a separate HID device holds my keyboard's additional keys I now need to move my attention to the second "hid" settings window. Looking at this window the various controls are then split up into three different groups in the "Reports and collections" list, "Consumer Control" for the vol and mute controls, "System Control" for the power, sleep and wake buttons and "Unknown" for all the other controls. Choose a button to launch the application (I went for one labelled with a musical note for SongPlayer), click the "Track incoming events" check box then press the button to find out its name (mine is an "unknown" button). With the correct button highlighted untick "Track incoming events" to prevent the selection changing when you press other keys.

Add a "New" item to the "Performed actions" list and set the type to "Shell" and the

"Trigger" to "Up". The shell action type allows us to run a shell command when the key is pressed. However it would be nice to launch SongPlayer as if it was run from Workbench so it picks up any Toolstypes you have set in its icon. As the HID class doesn't support launching Workbench programs directly we need to use a shell command to do this for us. One example of a command that launches a program as if it had been double opened from Workbench is "WBRUN". This is included with OS3.9 and for earlier OS versions can be downloaded from <http://stephan-rupprecht.de> as part of the WBStartEmu.lha archive (it should be copied from the archive into your C: directory). Now we can enter the command to launch SongPlayer into the "Command" text box, in my case it's "WBRUN Work:Utilities/Music/SongPlayer/SongPlayer" you'll need to change the path to suit your system. Now tick the "ASync" check box, this will stop the HID class waiting for the command to return which could potentially block later key presses.

TIP: If you just need to run a shell command (or any program that can be run from the shell) you can just select it using the "Command" gadget's select file button, remember to add any arguments the command requires afterwards. If the command needs an increased stack size you can set it on the "General" tab of the "hid" settings window. If you need to execute several shell commands you could add several "Shell" actions or write a shell script and then run it using the "execute" command in a "Shell" action.

Assigning AREXX Commands

In many cases you'll want to use keyboard keys to control running applications, a very good example of this is using transport controls (play, pause, next track etc.) to control a music player program. It's really handy to set-up keys like this because you can use them to control a program even when you are on a different screen or while the player's interface is hidden. To achieve this we can set the HID class to send appropriate AREXX commands to SongPlayer (or most other music

SongPlayer_PlayPause.rexx

Here is the AREXX script which toggles Play and Pause in SongPlayer.

```
/* Toggles play and pause in Song Player */
Options Results
Address "SONGPLAYER.1"
Get_State
If result = "PLAY" Then Do
    Pause
End
Else Do
    Play
End
```

NOTE: You can download this script from the Issue 14 page of the Total Amiga website, to use my command line it should be saved into the S: directory. If you type the script in yourself be sure to include the first line (a comment beginning with "/*") or "rx" will not recognise it as an AREXX script.

players) when a key is pressed. Although the HID class has an "AREXX" action type in the list it hasn't yet been implemented. We can work around this using the "Shell" action and the standard "rx" command which runs an AREXX command line or script.

My keyboard has stop, previous track, play/pause and next track keys which are all listed by name in the "Usage items" list. Starting with "Next Track" we need this button to send an AREXX command to SongPlayer to play the next track. Looking at the SongPlayer AREXX documentation that command is "NEXT", the other thing we need to know is the name of SongPlayer's AREXX port (to ensure that commands go to the right program), and the docs tell us that it is "SongPlayer.1". So add a "New" "Shell" action with the "Trigger" "Up" to the "Next Track" item. Now we can set the "Command" line using the "rx" command that will send "NEXT" to SongPlayer:

```
rx "address SongPlayer.1;NEXT"
```

NOTE: In AREXX the semicolon (;) acts as a line separator so this command line is actually sending two lines of commands, "address! SongPlayer.1" and "NEXT".

And that's it, we can now go through and set-up the previous and stop buttons in the same way using the following command lines:

```
rx "address SongPlayer.1;PREV"
```

```
rx "address SongPlayer.1;STOP"
```

Assigning AREXX Scripts

The Play/Pause button is a little more complex because we need to check the current status of SongPlayer to know whether we need to send a Play command (if it is currently paused) or a pause command if it is currently playing. To do this I have written a short AREXX script which I called "SongPlayer_PlayPause.rexx" and saved into my "S:" directory (see the box-out for details). This script checks the current status with the "GET_STATE" command and then sends the appropriate command. As I mentioned "rx" can run AREXX scripts as well as command lines so we can set-up the Play/Pause button in exactly the same way as the others but with the following "Command":

```
rx s:SongPlayer_PlayPause.rexx
```

This tutorial has given an overview of configuring the Poseidon HID class with some, I hope, practical examples. It is well worth reading the HID section in Poseidon.guide (installed in the Sys:Locale/Help directory by default) for more in-depth technical information and for details of all the options available...

Happy USB typing!

Total Amiga Mailing Lists

Keep up to date with our progress with new issues of Total Amiga and get news of website updates and previews of the content of new issues by joining the Total Amiga announcements mailing list. This list is only posted to the editor so your mail box won't be flooded. Expect a maximum of 4 or 5 messages a month, as a minimum we post a monthly update.

To join just send a blank EMail (no subject or body text is required) to: totalamiga-announce-subscribe@yahooogroups.com

We also have an open discussion mailing list where you can chat to other readers and talk to members of the total Amiga team. The subscription address for this list is: totalamiga-subscribe@yahooogroups.com

Next Issue

Coming up in Total Amiga issue 15:

News

- All the latest news on AmigaOS 4 and the AmigaOne.

Reviews

- Pegasos and MorphOS
- Subway USB
- IBrowse 2.3
- FXPaint 2

Support

- Enhancing scanned images tutorial.

Regulars

- P D Paradise
- Top Tips

The new issue is due in:

June 2003

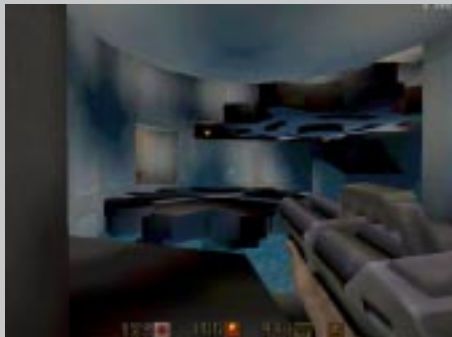
Note: Total Amiga is produced by volunteers and this means sometimes issues run late. If you're concerned about the status of the next issue please take a look at <http://www.totalamiga.org> or contact us by EMail or phone (details inside the front cover).

Quake 2

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



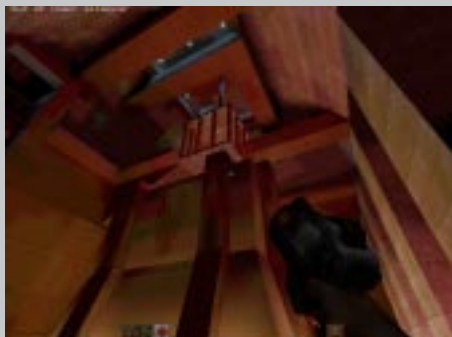
The scenery is impressive and the lighting effects are superb.



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



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

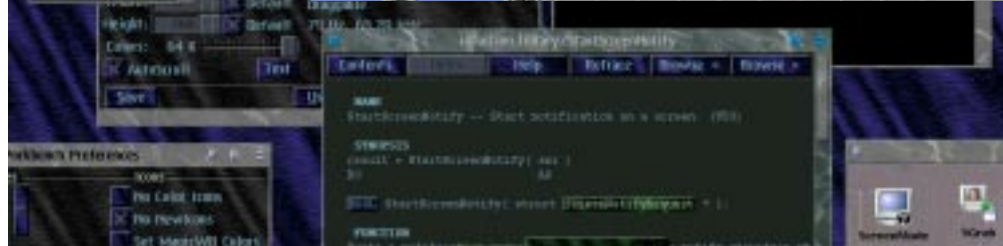


Some levels are interesting while others just take your breath away!

AmigaOS 4 Intuition and Reaction



These screenshots demonstrate the level of customisation possible with the new AmigaOS 4 Intuition and ReAction GUI systems. Please note that none of these reflect the final default look.



CrossFire II

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



1:53 Something heavy's coming in! Stay away!



0:11 Our heavy units will arrive soon!

