

Australian Amiga Gazette

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Issue No2

January 97

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Editorial

Dribble



Happy new year! I hope you have had a restful time over the Christmas break and took that long needed holiday because 1997 is going to be a exciting year for Amiga owners.

Amiga will finally be owned, and by a company with the foresight and spirit to project the Amiga into the year 2000. We will see a new Amiga model that will wipe the grin off any PC owner's face, a proliferation of User Groups here in Australia, and a stack of ground breaking software & hardware products to blow your mind.

How can I be so confident that these events will unfold this year? Well Amiga owners world wide (millions of them) have decided they have waited long enough and it's time to take action. Don't forget Amiga owners are a loyal bunch with rebellious tendencies verging on fanaticism and will not allow the Amiga to just fade away. If at this point you think I have lost my marbles and should be committed to a padded cell embossed with Amiga logos evenly spaced 2cm apart, answer me these questions.

Why has the Amiga lasted this long in view that no new model has been produced for years?

Why waste energy promoting a

computer show for a deadend platform where over 3,000 people attended?

Why bid 40 million American dollars for a redundant computer system considered by many as just a toy?

Why develop a new operating system for a product that even Cash Converters will not deal with?

Why do people still want games, mouses etc. for a computer made in 1985?

Finally, why can I write this editorial in Finalwriter while Pagestream is waiting in the background with a 40 page magazine open at page 4 and have my modem connected to the internet which is downloading the new demo of a pc emulator capable of running Windows95 and change tracks on my Beatles CD using the function keys without leaving Finalwriter - all on a computer with only 16 meg of ram, crawling along at only 50Mhz - a computer considered by many as just a toy?

The answer to all the above is simply that the designers of the Amiga have managed to do the one thing that no other platform has. That is, marry together

hardware and software in such a way that each complements and extends the other and does not limit nor hinder.

What this means is that I have no sense of constraint in regard to what can be achieved on my Amiga and in the manner comfortable to me.

An example is called for:

I choose not to use the standard editor that is built into my email program - that's fine. My email program is happy to pass the text to my wordprocessor of choice (Finalwriter). But FW's spelling checker doesn't meet my needs - that's fine too. Finalwriter will conform to my choice of a PD spelling check. Wait one moment. I have changed my mind. I think I will fax this email reply Instead. No problem. With a click of the mouse the fax is on its way. My email program will not complain one bit. Come to think of it, I could use my email program to send faxes directly.

The above is not possible on an IBM compatible without creating a specific program, which in itself incurs limitations.

Well that's the end of my dribble. We have some interesting stuff this month. Please enjoy.



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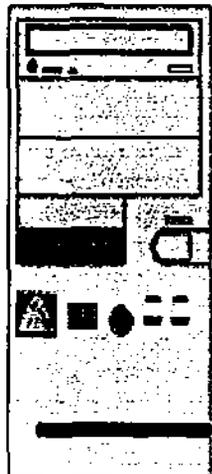
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NEWS

ART-EFFECT

Haage and Partner GmbH, the makers of StormC++, have created a new 24-bit painting and image processing package which sets out to bring the features and the classic interfaces of packages such as PhotoShop and Fractal Painter to the Amiga.

ArtEffect comes with an interface consisting of windows and a primary toolbar (similar to Photogenics). Multiple images may be worked upon in windows, even multiple views of the same image.

ArtEffect includes over 30 effects. Each effect is applied to an image through a large standardized preview window-requester which allows the effect to be manipulated in real-time. ArtEffect also includes a comprehensive range of 'natural medium' drawing tools allowing the user to simulate, crayons, paintbrush, airbrush, chalk, coal, oil and water colour. ArtEffect also allows the user to control the properties of these drawing tools, including, opacity, roughness etc. ArtEffect is very fast at performing these functions and effects.

ArtEffect supports an extensive range of image formats as well as Amiga datatypes and a new 24-bit datatype. Support is also given for the Wacom ArtPad graphics tablet.

No local distributor has yet been

announced. ArtEffect retails for \$198 USD. Haage and Partner may be contacted at: +49 - 6007 - 930 050 or at: 100654.3133@compuserve.com A demo version of this program is available on Animet

SMALL-BIZ SCOUTING

Australian Software developers Small-Biz Software, the publishers of DirectoryOpus 5.5, EasyLedgers2, and GPFax are currently on the look out for new Australian and New Zealand programming talent. So if you have a project which you think may have commercial merit, contact Tony Carmody at:

Small-Biz Software Pty Ltd
P.O. Box 24 Golden Beach QLD
Australia 4551
Phone: (07) 5491 9190
Fax: (07) 5492 6860

DRIFT NETTING

Two of Amiga's leading Web-browsers are now available commercially and are available through local Amiga dealers.

AmiTriX of Canada has recently upgraded AWeb from 2.0 to 2.1. AWeb fully supports HTML 2 and a number of the so-called Netscape enhancements. AWeb is renowned for its speed, for its clean interface, and for the fact that it doesn't require Magic User Interface (opinions are sharply divided on the merits of MUI).

HiSoft Systems have released the first commercial version of iBrowse, the Amiga's premiere web-browser. iBrowse supports HTML 3.2 and a number of the Netscape extensions.

Both programs require a TCP stack such as AMI/TCP, Termite, or Miami. Contact your favourite Amiga dealer for price and availability.

AmiTriX may be contacted at:
+403-929-8459
sales@amitrix.com

HiSoft may be contacted at:
+44-(0)-1525-718181
sales@hisoft.co.uk

QUIKPAK ANNOUNCES OFFER FOR AMIGA TECHNOLOGIES

With the cancellation of Viscorp's bid in November, Quikpak, the North American manufacturer of Amigas is now the leading bidder for the Amiga technology. Quikpak are committed to the Amiga platform in manufacture and development. Quikpak have shown new Amiga computers at the recent Amiga Fest Show in Canada. The machines caused great interest from the crowds attending the Show. Read Quikpak's open letter to the Amiga Community on page 31.

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The DraCo System

By Darren Robertson

"DRACO"- the word means "The Dragon"- but in this case it is a well established AMIGA based Video Editing Suite.

This not so little box quite literally breathes fire, with its DraCo direct slot it can get some awesome transfer rates between its internal cards.

The DraCo has been around for a couple of years now. It is a project that was put together by the people at Macrosystems, the makers of Vlab Motion and Tocatta Cards. They felt the need to have much greater transfer rates between Memory, Hard Drives and the Video Editing card. As the Zorro II technology was not fast enough for the future of Desk Top Video, the DraCo was born. It is based on the current AMIGA technology, but it leaves out one important factor that the AMIGA is built upon- the Custom Chip set. Instead, the DraCo relies on Workbench 3.1 and subsequent Retargetable Graphics libraries.

The Video display for the DraCo is based on the Macrosystems Z3 video board and is capable of running the CyberGFX R.T.G. libraries.

The heart of the beast is a specially designed CPU board that is completely removable. The machine can be purchased with either a Motorola 68040 at 33mhz or the superfast 68060 at 50 or very soon 66mhz. This board contains four Simm sockets for up to 128mb of ram onboard. It contains two sockets for the optional CIA's. These are AMIGA specific

chips for the handling of an AMIGA style parallel port. In the very near future there will be an option to install a PowerPC based processor to give the DraCo the ultimate in speed and future growth.

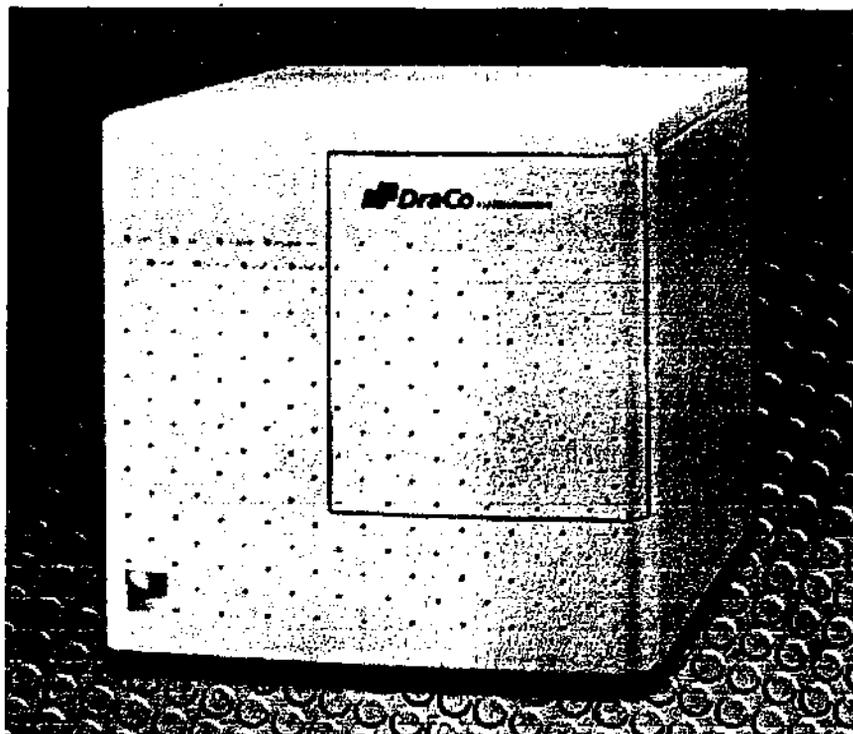
The other card that uses the DraCo direct slot is the DraCo-Motion card. This is a card based on their Vlab Motion card but has the major advantage of direct access to the hard drives and CPU.

The whole system is 99.9% Workbench 3.1 compliant, Macrosystems actually have a full Commodore licence to use the AMIGA OS.

The '060 machine ships with a Quad speed CD-Rom, and Workbench, and all other supplied

software comes on a single CD. Macrosystems have purchased the rights to all of Elastic Reality (ASDG) programs. The CD contains an '060 version of ADPro and MorphPlus. There is also a copy of Xi Paint. I would really like to test the '060 version of ADPro but there isn't enough time.

The Altair video card supplied with the DraCo is capable of resolutions up to 1600x968 in 256 colours on workbench. With a large variety of lower resolutions and screen depths, including 24bit modes up to 1024x768. The system ships standard with a 1.2gb Quantum fireball hard drive for the Workbench partition and it is recommended that it also be used for the audio partition and a 4gb Seagate Barracuda II drive be purchased for video.



Now to satisfy the Technophiles - some real info and statistics.

The DraCo's primary purpose is to edit video in a digital non-linear environment. The AMIGA has always been ahead of the rest of the world for affordable Broadcast Video editing, but this machine goes way beyond that by giving near real-time edits for any video recorded onto the Hard disks, especially for cuts only editing.

The recommended configuration is the Motorola 68060 at 50mhz or 66 mhz, 16mb or 32mb Ram. Even though the whole system could run and multi-task within 4mb Ram- the more the merrier. The Draco-Motion card also contains a version of the Tocatta Audio card built in. The Altair Video card with 4mb ram and built in Fast SCSI II controller. With at least one 4gb Seagate Barracuda II video drive. The system actually works very well without the A/V rated drives but they are so cheap these days it is worth getting them.

The Case contains space for six 5.25' drive bays (1 used for the floppy drive another for the CD-Rom) and four 3.5' sideways mounted hard drives (1 used by system drive). It also contains the expansion backplane, which has slots for the CPU board, 3 DraCo direct slots and 5 Zorro II "FAST" slots. The reason for the Zorro II "FAST" slots is so the DraCo can use any of the standard Zorro II cards ie: 2065 or Hydranet Networking cards.

The DraCo can actually be purchased with no DraCo direct cards, and be made to utilise all Zorro II cards ie: VLab Motion and Tocatta boards. Why one would want to do this is not understood, but it is possible. The reason why these are classified FAST Zorro II

is that the DraCo doubles the clockrate on the Zorro II bus to move data around much quicker.

External interfaces include SCSI II, Serial, Serial Mouse, Parallel, Keyboard RCA Audio, Composite and S-Video Connectors.

How good is it - Broadcast quality, compliant with CCIR 601, 4:2:2 standards for PAL video at 720x576 pixels. This is better than BetaCam SP standard. 16 bit 48khz Audio (DAT Quality). Selectable compression ratios from 50:1 upto 3:1. With the final compression adjusted on the fly to fit under a specified transfer rate. The DraCo is the only system capable of 3:1 compression onto and off inexpensive hard drives. The compression method is Motion Jpeg, where every video field is compressed individually. There are 50 fields a second in PAL video, 2 fields interlaced make a frame. The same as AMIGA PAL interlaced but because it is 24bit colour there is no noticeable flicker.

The transfer rates for the DraCo direct slot are 35mb/sec without any affect on CPU load, unlike the PCI cards in good MAC and lowly PC edit suites. With twice the transfer rate of PCI and no CPU loading, this is the only way to fly. PCI is currently being redesigned again to allow for graphics to be updated while transferring data off the hard drive, but this change will not be enough to allow the PCI bus to keep up with the DraCo direct slots.

Using the Seagate Barracuda II disk drives transfer speeds of 6mb/sec are easily achieved. With the optional SCSI RAID (Redundant Array of Inexpensive Disks) module it allows two identical drives to be addressed as one drive with interleaved data,

thereby increasing the possible transfer rates up to just under 10mb/sec. This speed rating is not the hard drive capability as some systems state it is the real working speed of all components in the system.

How do you use it - All video processing is controlled by Macrosystems proprietary software called MovieShop. The current version is version 4, This software has unparalleled functionality in the Desk Top Video realm. It allows video to be recorded to the hard disk along with corresponding audio. You can select cut and paste, drag and drop methods, which bits of video you want to use and which audio tracks you want to use over the top. All of this is straight forward cuts editing. Movieshop does not stop there, at any point in time you can use any of a wide range of special effects. From simple fades between two sections of video to picture in picture, re-scale, colourise, B&W, and film effects. This all controlled by a time line that vertically lists the effects being applied to which designated piece of video. Each time line can have 1000 effects on it. And theoretically you can have a thousand time lines on a master time line. This is absolutely mind boggling flexibility. The effects are a modular system of plugins that are constantly growing and improving. The current list of effect is about 60 strong. Newer more powerful effects are appearing, like the new drag and drop effect which actually calls Monument Titrer for special titling effects.



The DraCo System Continued

The way the effects are used is to drag a piece of video on to the time line. You could then drag a second piece of video onto the time line, then grab the re-scale effect and drop it in under the second video piece and stretch it to match the second piece. "Voila" you have just created a picture in picture. As shown below, a fade can be done the same way, by overlapping the two pieces of video and dropping in an effect to match. Most effects are not real time. A true cross fade may take 20 secs to create, which is many times faster than linear editing.

What else can you do with it - Well it will run just about any AMIGA program that can run on a 24bit board at the moment. I have used one that was running ShapeShifter 3.7. running DOOM II of all things. It will also run file utility programs like the brilliant Disk Master 2 and Directory Opus. Games will be unlikely to work as they generally use tracker audio files that talk directly to the AMIGA chip set, which just aint there. ImageFX 2.6 runs rather quickly, though at this point I wouldn't say it was much faster than an AMIGA 060 plus Cbervision64.

It can handle running MIAMI TCP suite using a Maestro 28.8 modem no problems. Using lbrowse on a workbench screen that is 1024x768 is just fabulous. It will also run the entire AMITCP suite and utilise ethernet network cards.

I have also used the Iomega Zip and JAZ drives on the DraCo including a Workbench 3.1 formatted cartridge with 16kb block size rather than the standard 512byte

blocks, so the filesystem is proven to be 100% compatible for file storage. The extra CIA's are to allow the Lightwave dongle to work so you can also run lightwave modeler and rendering on the DraCo.

Other programs that work successfully are TV Paint, some may say this program is essential. TV Paint is a 24bit multi layer Paint program with real-time 24bit updating.

As far as audio goes there is not much that is going to work straight off, as the AMIGA audio quality is so good nobody has gone to great lengths to change it over the last 12 years. This means that very few programs allow redirection to another audio source. Two that come to mind as workable are Octamed sound studio, which can play most mod files and send them to the Tocatta. Delitracker is another possibility as it can do redirection also, and if it finds something it can't understand ie: no chip ram, it struggles on the best it can.

When you run Workbench 3.1's Showconfig it shows all available memory as Chip Ram???. But when you look at the work bench title bar it shows 4mb video ram which is on the video card, and the rest as fast ram. There are subtle differences in the 3.1 roms and OS used on the DraCo to cover up its vastly different architecture.

The verdict - This machine is a world leader in its power and functionality for the price. It has an even brighter future with the upcoming hardware and software. If you are seriously into Desk Top Video then this is the machine to

use. It is faster than anything else on the market, it has a proven track record and it has quality second to none. While you use the DraCo for video work it will run most of your old software, lightwave scenes can be dropped in, anything you already have on tape can be dropped on and reused.

The only other thing you really need to make this system work is a very large capacity tape drive. ie 4-8gb uncompressed, as 100% quality Jpegs 50 times a second really use up disk space - about 30mins per 4gb if you are lucky.

The guys down at Macrosystems have not been resting on their laurels either. The SCSI RAID module is available now. In the very near future they will be releasing a PowerPC module to replace th '060. This will run the pOS that is currently undergoing trials at ProDAD. The pOS is an AMIGA OS clone that runs in PowerPC Native mode, as well as run on stock 680x0 processors. Evidently it will also run in parallel with th AMIGA OS an a standard AMIGA.

The advantage of this OS is that it takes very little code changes to get software to run in an AMIGA like environment on a PowerPC right now.

There is also a DEC Alpha bridgeboard coming for the DraCo direct slot. This will allow the DEC Alpha to process the more time consuming Video effects.



We're sticking by the Amiga... how about you?

COOL BUYS THIS MONTH

Aminet 16 CD	\$29.50
EuroCD #1 Oct '96	\$29.50
Worms - The Director's Cut	\$CALL
LightWave 3D v5 (CD-ROM)	\$1949
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BY GRANT REGAN

Cinema 4D is the latest in an extensive and impressive range of raytracing packages for our machine. In truth, Cinema 4D has been available in Germany, its land of origin for the past two years where it has acquired a large and dedicated following, and with good reason. The English version supplied by HiSoft has been available for just under a year, but only now it is available Downunder.

CINEMA 4D - ALL THIS AND A SET OF STEAK KNIVES

Well, not quite. However, bang for buck, Cinema 4D is the most powerful, versatile, and intuitive package in its price range. In fact, it is truly the only available package (at present) within its price range.

Installation initially requires 10 MB of Hard drive space but takes just under 8 MB when installed: this is quite economical when compared to other packages. Installation is straight forward and utilizes the Standard Installer (Why use anything else?). When running, Cinema 4D will work on a 3MB system, but is a happy little vegemite when it has 4MB or over to play with. On these facts alone, Cinema 4D is the most ideal package for those with limited funds or limited system resources (or both). Cinema 4D can run either on its own screen or on the Workbench screen: a very handy memory saving feature! Cinema

4D requires Kickstart 2.0 or greater and has been flogged on my A4000/040 @ 25mhz which has 2MB of Chip RAM and 8MB of fast RAM.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Apart from Lightwave, Cinema 4D is the most intuitive rendering package on the Amiga. Cinema 4D is style guide compliant, pursuing a system based on Intuition. Most of the important modelling tools are to be found in floating icon banks in addition to menus, allowing the user to work with their preferred system without having to resort often to the other. Cinema 4D also includes keyboard shortcuts.

In its default setting, Cinema 4D loads a 3D 'Perspective' window and a floating icon bank on the left of the screen. This primary icon bank contains the essential modelling environment controls. Three minor icon banks may be launched from the 'window' menu as required. These icon banks are labelled, 'objects', 'textures' and 'points' and provide easy access to the primary tools for, as the titles suggest, objects, textures, and points. If this isn't simple enough for you there is an optional Help bar at the top of the screen which gives a description of any feature the mouse pointer comes to rest upon.

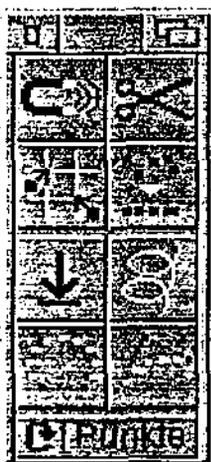
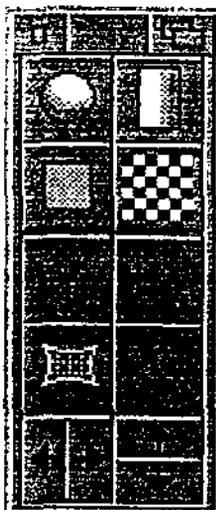
The primary icon bank presents the controls for selecting the

appropriate editing view. There is a choice of six at the bottom half of the toolbar. In the middle of the icon bank are four icons which control the type of rotation and below these are three smaller buttons which enable the three axes to be enabled or disabled in the rotation. The top six buttons allow the user to select whether they would like to rotate or manipulate the environment, the highlighted object, selected points of an object, the axes of an object, the highlighted texture, or the axes of a texture. Lastly there are four buttons which control magnification, parameters for the display (an excellent feature which allows objects to be redrawn as bounding boxes or partial wireframes thus saving time during redraws), redraw, and the rendering options.

The icon banks for objects, textures, and points are as equally well laid out. In the object icon bank, the range of primitive objects (thirteen in fact) are extensive (although a rectangular cube in addition to the cube would not go astray). There are also icons for selecting Boolean operations, for creating polygons (axis, flower, circle, line, N-side, and star) and for polygon objects (lathe, extrude, path, morph, and skinned objects). The Special objects button contains some very useful features. From it the user can select a basic humanoid figure ready to animate. The

'fractal' option generates a basic relief landscape. 'Emboss' creates a relief object from an ILBM brush. The 'Sun' option is a very useful tool which creates realistic outdoor lighting according to the geographic location, time of year and the date. This option, I feel, would be better implemented if the location and the time of year were selectable from a world map rather than keying co-ordinates. The 'Text' option allows the creation of instant 3D font objects. Unfortunately, the user is limited to using the included Diamond and Helvetica fonts as it lacks the option of extruding Postscript fonts. A font engine known as CinemaFont is promised as a future expansion, as is a fractal landscape generator known as CinemaWorld. Apparently, these expansions will simply 'bolt' on to the main package through the 'Expansions' button which is also located on the object icon bank. Finally, there are two buttons which allow the Sky and Ground objects to be easily enabled or disabled.

Equally, Cinema 4D's 'texture' and 'points' icon banks allow complete control in conjunction with the primary icon bank, over points and textures. However, for complete control from toolbars,



Cinema 4D allows the user to manipulate the texture and its properties on the applied object in real-time.

When it comes to the employment of icon banks, Cinema 4D has a few glaring oversights. Selecting the options within a button is performed by pressing the right mouse button. However, selecting the option to adjust default settings is performed by a combination of holding the left mouse button and the SHIFT key. When it comes to icon banks, use of the keyboard should be minimized as much as possible. My other gripe is that there should also be icon banks for the 'Tools' menu which controls features such as 'Crumple', 'Duplicate', 'Deform' and 'Wrap' to name just a few. An icon bank should also be included for the 'Materials Manager' which is otherwise a very intuitive method of applying and manipulating materials and textures to an object.

Cinema 4D employs a hierarchical method of managing objects and their materials: a system which is (quite sensibly) very similar to Workbench. A relatively extensive materials library is included with the package and this may be expanded through standard ILBM files. In the Materials Manager, a

material's colour, transparency, reflectivity, relief, specularly, luminosity, and shine may be manipulated. A texture's degree of refraction, whether it casts a shadow, and fog effect may be adjusted or selected. The Materials Manager however, should include for those using higher resolutions or with beefier processors - an option for previewing textures and materials on a sphere as is found on many other packages.

Cinema4D allows the user to create complex polygon models through contour and path modelling, however, Cinema4D currently lacks nurbs modelling, a method of creating objects by freehand.

RENDERING

Cinema4D provides a rendering option which may be launched within the program or independently if memory or speed are at a premium. Multitasking may be disabled and screen blanking enabled to accelerate the process and to conserve Chip RAM. Renders may be generated as wireframes, shaded displays, scanlines or full renders and Cinema4D can even render a scene in the selected screen-mode and simultaneously save it as a 24-bit image! Cinema4D supports all Amiga screen modes as well as the leading graphic cards and renders may also be performed to a window. During rendering, a progress bar is displayed and the render may be cancelled at any stage. With regards to rendering time and quality, Cinema4D is neither the fastest or slowest of the packages and the quality of the renders are on par with Imagine.



ANIMATION FEATURES

Cinema4D incorporates a number of animation techniques which allow the user to create extremely realistic and complex animations. Keyframe animation is where an animation is created from interpolating between two or more frames. Cinema4D allows the user to accelerate and decelerate, and brake objects and to combine a number of animated objects into a timeline sequence (like Imagine). Cinema4D also includes Hierarchical Animation where sub-objects of a greater object may be given individual animation properties. As well as Keyframe Animation, an object may be moved along a set Path.

Cinema4D also includes Skeletal Animation and Inverse Kinematics where sub-objects are attached to their parent objects through their axes. Selected sub-objects are 'dragged' in a realistic manner according to the set motion of the primary object.

Textures and Materials may also be animated, creating for instance, a talking texture mapped face or a marble vase transforming into a glass vase. Cinema4D allow allows the camera, lights and sun (and their properties) sky, and ground to be animated.

Cinema4D also includes a number of animated effects, including explosions, melt object, a simulated wind effect, a morph object, a pulse effect and a vibrate effect. But at present Cinema4D lacks complex animated particle, gas, and fog effects and it lacks the much used and abused lens flare effect outright. May be these will appear in future upgrades.

AND THERE'S MORE...

Cinema4D comes with an impressive stand-alone object converter called Magiclink-Lite which not only converts objects to and from the Cinema4D format, but additionally converts the textures, materials, and object heirarchies - seriously cool stuff! What's more, Magiclink IS fast (around 5 to 10 seconds for a complex scene on my machine) and converts flawlessly. Magiclink easily surpasses Pixel 3D Pro which to date is the leading object format conversion software on the Amiga.

THE MANUAL

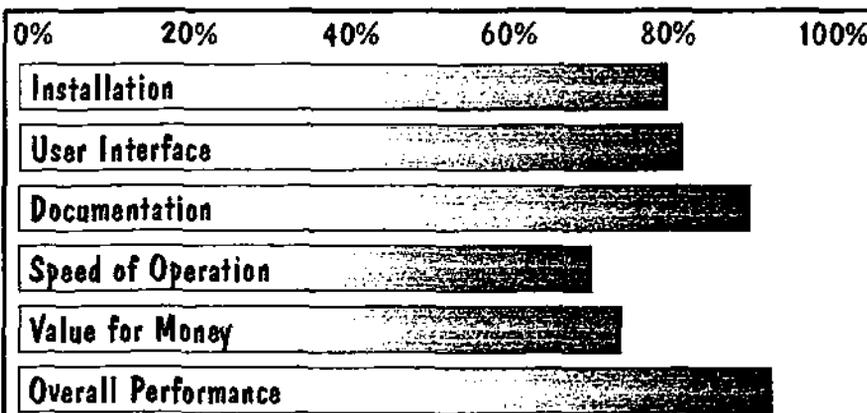
Cinema4D is virtually worth purchasing for the manual alone. The Contents and the Index sections are comprehensive and clearly organized. The manual itself is 426 pages and includes a number of useful tutorials.

Moreover, there are separate sections for the novice and the serious render-head. The novice or Basics section also provides comprehensive information on the processes and the theories behind modelling and ray-tracing without being unnecessarily dry and mouldy or condescending. Cinema4D also includes a quick reference card to the functions of the toolbars and to the keyboard shortcuts.

ROUNDUP

Cinema4D is absolutely ideal for those who are frightened by the price, complexity, or the system requirements of packages such as Lightwave or Imagine. Cinema4D is a powerful, user-friendly and affordable package.

Cinema4D's affordability and low requirements come at a price however, for it lacks some of the impressive features of its bigger brothers. Whilst I wouldn't go so far as to recommend that professionals trade in their copy of Lightwave for Cinema4D, I can certainly recommend it as a worthy and useful addition to anyone's repertoire of packages.



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Clarissa V3 Professional

Reviewer Grant Regan

No, you are not looking at the wrong magazine: ClariSSA isn't a buxom blonde who likes ping-pong, fast cars and candle-lit dinners, and who is really quite a shy girl at heart.

Now that you are over your disappointment I will explain. ClariSSA is an animation manipulation program which allows the user to incorporate multiple animations (each may have a different resolution and palette) into a single animation. In addition, ClariSSA provides the ability to move the animation around the screen during playback and to incorporate a range of effects and wipes.

With ProDAD's SSA system, ClariSSA is capable of compression rates and playback speeds which are unachievable with the standard ANIM format. What is SSA I hear you ask? Well, for those of you who missed my review of Animage in Issue 1 of AAG (shame on you), here is a brief rundown on SSA.

SSA, or Super Smooth Animation is a proprietary animation algorithm which provides the back-bone to ProDAD's range of products. The SSA system utilises Fast RAM if available and thus the availability of Chip RAM resources is not a limitation on playback speed. Furthermore, the SSA system doesn't replay an animation frame by frame but in 'half-frames', rapidly 'blending' the images using an interlacing

method. Therefore, an SSA animation is capable of achieving smooth playback speeds of up to 50 frames per second without the requirement for additional hardware or brute processing power (although a faster processor always helps!).

The capabilities of the SSA system are nothing short of impressive. For example, I loaded an ANIM5 file which was 167,804 bytes and which ran at approximately 20 frames per second. Converting the 50 frames of this ANIM file to an SSA animation was a simple procedure and it took less than 7 seconds on my machine. Once converted the same animation in SSA format weighed in at only 118,222 bytes and ran at 50 frames per second! Enough said!

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

ProDAD claims that ClariSSA will work on a 1MB Amiga with Kickstart 1.3 although of course as with everything in the computer industry, size DOES matter! Therefore, those Amigans using with ClariSSA on a machine equipped with Kickstart 1.3 will encounter a number of limitations with ClariSSA's interface albeit, fortunately, not enough to make it unusable. Users with one 1MB machines will still require a hard-drive, not only because ClariSSA is ONLY hard-drive intallable but because ClariSSA comes with an excellent and indispensable virtual memory management system called DDO (Dynamic

Disk Operation). DDO doesn't require the presence of a MMU (Memory Management Unit) and allows the user to conceivably work with animations which in terms of size far outweigh the available RAM of the host machine.

AREXX is recommended in order to utilise ClariSSA's macros. AREXX comes standard with AmigaOS version 2.0 and higher. Those using 1.3 will have to obtain AREXX separately (or better still, upgrade to AmigaOS 3.1).

ClariSSA was tested on my A4000 which has a 25mhz 040, 2MB of Chip RAM, 8MB of Fast RAM, and AmigaOS 3.0.

INSTALLATION

As with Animage, (which I reviewed last month), ClariSSA unfortunately incorporates a non-standard installer. Even though this installer is simple and painless to use it is nonetheless an inferior substitute to good ol' Commodore's standard installer which we all know and love. Please ProDAD, please consider using the standard installer.

MANUAL

The manual is divided into two sub-manuals with the first sub-manual serving to explain the second! The second manual is in



page
18

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Clarissa V3 Professional Continued

reality the manual which came with the original version of the program. In many respects this manual is superior to the new preceding manual. My advice to those who are unfamiliar with this program is ignore the recommendation and read the second manual first, only delving into the tutorials of the first manual once the second manual has been understood. Nonetheless, barring a few minor errors, both manuals are well translated, comprehensive and relatively easy to understand.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the AmigaGuide help as those of us not blessed with a proficiency in German (hands up) will find it as useful as the proverbial udder on the proverbial bull: it hasn't been translated at all.

HERE AT THE AAG LAB...

ClariSSA's primary interface is well laid out although not exactly intuitive. In other words, ClariSSA is not the sort of program where the user can expect to begin producing stunning effects without first studying the manual. Once the manual has been read however, ClariSSA does prove itself to have a relatively straight forward although somewhat cluttered and outmoded interface.

When loading an animation, the user is asked to load the animation into "Master, Source A, B, C, or D". These are swap buffers for the completion of the final "Master" animation. Four animations may be loaded into the swap buffers for editing and conversion (if necessary) before being combined into one SSA animation.

The main interface consists of two primary windows: the Program/Monitor window, and the Multifunction Gadget Page (MFG). The latter being an excellent approach to launching AREXX macros.

The Program/Monitor window presents a cycle gadget for the swap buffers. Relevant information on the animation in the selected swap buffer is displayed in the Monitor window. The play, conversion and editing tools, including a slide bar which allows the user to step through the chosen animation frame by frame are featured in the remainder of the Program/Monitor window.

A special "Playback Modes" requester is selectable from the Settings menu. This allows the parameters such as "loop-play" and the speed to be set for playback. Other requesters for establishing program preferences may also be launched from the Settings menu and present a vast array of toggle options that may seem bewildering at first but present a powerfully configurable environment once understood.

My primary complaint with regards to the interface and the overall approach taken by the developers is demonstrated with the requesters and windows that are selectable from the Animations menu. The "Animation building" window for example attempts to graphically represent the animation and the applied effects but does this poorly especially when the user is working with multiple animations and their effects within an animation. Furthermore, the icons banks in

this window for editing the effects and the animation screen are cluttered and unclear.

The drag and drop method of applying effects to an animation (dragging the desired effect to its location in the "Animation building") however, is excellent and demonstrates the general intuitive approach that the interface should present. Once applied, the effect may be edited through the selecting of an editing icon or also by dragging the effect icon from the screen onto the editing icon.

ClariSSA presents a bewildering array of wipes and effects and a bewildering method of editing their parameters. A better approach is required considering the sheer number of possibilities available. I would recommend a graphical representation of the screen with the possibility of a Preview of the applied effect which permits real-time manipulation of the speed and direction. As it stands, the process of assigning the parameters of an effect are a hit and miss affair requiring patience and experimentation.

ClariSSA includes a useful screengrabbing feature for grabbing other screens running under multitasking. These may be compiled into an animation. ClariSSA also accepts Viab and AdPro screens through AREXX macros. However, ClariSSA should be able to accept other animation file formats for conversion in addition to the IFF/ANIM format.



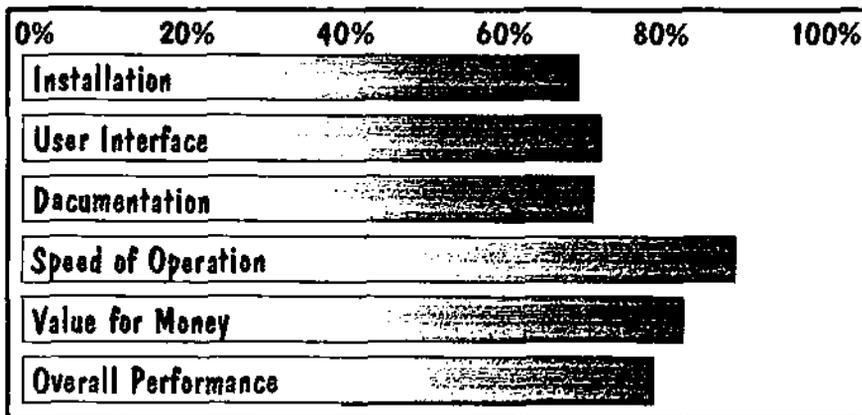
CONCLUSIONS

As with other ProDAD products, the true strength of ClariSSA rests with the SSA animation system. The results achievable are nothing short of outstanding especially when one considers that this is a software-only

solution to creating video, presentation, and multimedia effects.

ClariSSA is an eminently capable and workman-like program which is unfortunately let-down somewhat by its out-moded

interface. ClariSSA's interface needs to be overhauled to bring it into line with Animage's interface, replacing for instance, the annoying cycle requesters with file-card gadgets.



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Dear AAG

Dear AAG,

Thank you for a most informative and enlightening Gazette. I believe that this is what the Amiga community has been asking for, especially with the big hole left after ACAR's demise. I started life with a C=VIC 20 in 1983, then C=16, 64, A500, CD32 & A1200. I still have a 64, 128, A500, A1200 & CD32 with MPEG, and refuse to have an IBM, even if the AMIGA were completely dead, as I can't stand INTEL, Bill Gates or IBM. I am happy to write an article for your magazine if that's OK, and I obviously will be subscribing to your Gazette very shortly.....If I may suggest I would like to see a FOR SALE & WANTED section in your Gazette as I believe this would be most beneficial for the AMIGA community in Sydney especially, as the TRADING POST tends to

deal with complete systems..... beside that, keep up the good work and a B-I-G THANK YOU for assisting in keeping the AMIGA alive.... AMIGA - better by intuition and well (everything else!!)

Peter Martin (via the net)

Dear Peter,

You started life with a C=VIC 20 I that beats me, All I got was a pack of Kimbies and a dummy to suck on, had to wait until I was 14 for my first computer.

I know what you mean, hardly a day goes by where I have to refuse the offer of a Pentium 200pro.

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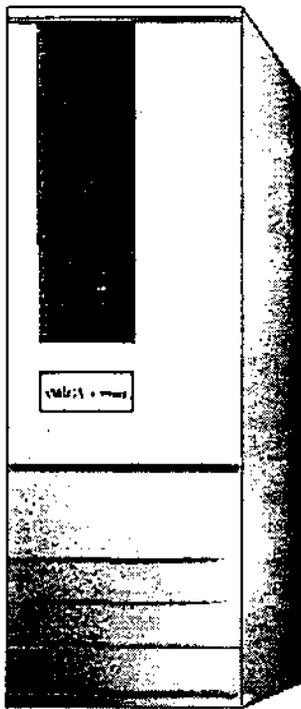
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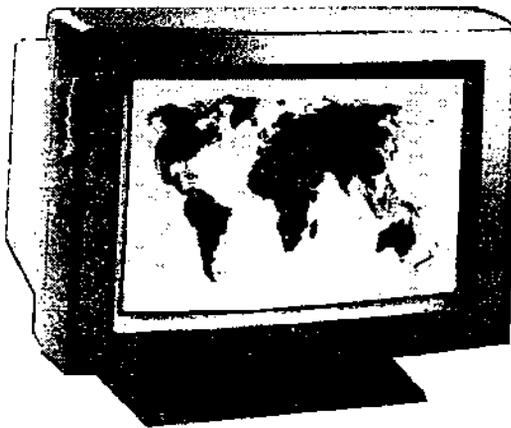


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THE A\BOX

THE NEXT AMIGA?

Unfortunately, due to the strict deadline set for our inaugural issue, we were not able to present this report of Phase 5's incredible new project. Read on and drool!!!

On October 22, 1996 phase 5 digital products, makers of the Cyberstorm and Cybervision cards announced the long-awaited specifications for the new computer system, the ABOX, which is based on a powerful Custom Chip technology.

Phase 5 assert that the ABOX will appeal to all users who have no desire to put up with the: "...limitations imposed by mass hardware products and... the restraining software corsets of systems that are intended purely for passive consumers and users" (our discerning readership of course!). True to the spirit of the Amiga, Phase 5: "...aims to implement a computer design that is as innovative, as outstanding and as exceptionally cool as the Amiga 1000 was 12 years ago".

The following information is an abbreviation of the official phase 5 press release on the architecture and the capabilities of this new system.

The heart of the ABOX is an innovative system controller custom chip, the CAIPIRINHA which is now under development at phase 5 digital and which will be responsible for many important functions in the system such as complete memory administration and processor linkup, all DMA-like

functions including video and audio DMA, blitter-type functions, I/O and control functions.

CAIPIRINHA will be implemented as a VLSI Custom Chip design in 0.35 um CMOS ASIC technology using a modern, probably 575-pole BGA housing (this is one big chip!). With a bus width of 128 bits to the memory bus, extensive dual-port buffers and FIFO's (First In First Out) in the data lines, and clock rates of initially 100 MHz externally and 200 MHz internally, CAIPIRINHA will provide an intense data throughput and powerful additional functions which do not rely on the processor, such as support for 3D and multimedia applications.

CAIPIRINHA manages all access to the ABOX's memory which takes the form of a 128-bit high performance Unified Memory Architecture (UMA) using fast SDRAMs (Synchronous Dynamic Ram) with a clock frequency of 100 MHz and a maximum band width of up to 1.6 G-bytes/second. All external memory access, including that of the processor, only occurs virtually and is administered and implemented by CAIPIRINHA. For the user UMA means that the entire memory in the system is available for all applications at all times. When the memory is expanded with SDRAM modules (the ABOX is expandible to 1 Gigabyte), the additional memory capacity is then always available for all applications and functions in the system. Due to the integration of

the video DMA into CAIPIRINHA the UMA memory can simultaneously be used as a display memory.

CAIPIRINHA provides two video DMA engines with integrated 24-bit DAC's (Digital Analog Converters): one 220 MHz high-performance video output for resolutions of up to 1600 x 1280 pixels with 24 bits and a refresh frequency of 75Hz and a Genlock-capable 135 MHz video output for a second monitor or image output in video resolutions such as PAL/NTSC or S-VHS. The video output of the 135-MHz output can be superimposed as a window on the 220 MHz display while both video DMA's are in parallel operation. Video-in port cinch jacks are supplied for 2 independent video inputs in Y/UV 4:2:2 quality (S-VHS quality).

CAIPIRINHA's video DMA engines function on the basis of a random memory access (Random Access Display), which makes it possible to display any data in visual form at any random screen positions. With this method windows, as hardware windows for example, can be superimposed and moved around with their full content, without delay or jerkiness, even with animation or video sequences. For example an image-processing



application can open a virtual screen of 4000 x 4000 pixels in 24 bits in a system expanded to 72 M-bytes and scroll it in a display that can be represented on the monitor in 1280 x 1024 pixels without any delay or jerkiness. Another interesting feature of CAIPIRINHA's video DMA engines is the fact that windows need no longer be merely rectangular, but can assume practically any outlines. Special pipelines and FIFO buffers within CAIPIRINHA's video DMA ensure a stable data throughput. The complex display possibilities are controlled by an integrated display-list RISC processor (DLRP).

The CAIPIRINHA has a highly complex functional unit (FAME, Flexible Area Movement Engine) for rapidly writing into, copying and linking memory locations or images, and which, in a similar way to the hardware windows that can be displayed with CAIPIRINHA, can assume practically any outlines and not merely the rectangular forms we know from classical blitters (block image transferrers).

The ABOX will incorporate a number bus systems. A PCI-bus interface for medium-performance I/O applications such as ATM and Ultra-SCSI, a local 16-bit DMA bus with 66.7 MHz and a maximum band width of 132 M-bytes/second for universal low-cost applications, and an integrated IEEE 1394 firewire controller for digital I/O applications. The ABOX will also incorporate an integrated Fast SCSI II interface and ISDN.

The ABOX will initially employ the PowerPC processors of types 603e and 604e at 150mhz. Theoretically these can be operated with clock frequencies of

up to 500 MHz. The first ABOX design will come with an option for two processors.

Phase 5 plan to implement an updated AmigaOS compatible operating system. Already, Phase 5 have implemented a functioning PowerPC operating core through their soon-to-be-released PowerUP project for the current Amigas. The new AmigaOS will support transparent multiprocessing. Additionally, phase 5 plan to implement NetBSD and Linux version in co-operation with partners. These operating systems will be transparently integrated into the primary AmigaOS.

An exciting feature of this system is that the ABOX is upgradable by simply replacing your older CAIPIRINHA with a newer chip when an upgrade becomes available. An upgradable 'cut-down' 64bit version of the ABOX may be offered for a price of around DM 1500 (approx \$1500 AUDS). Phase 5 intends to offer an initial system in a price range starting from DM 3,000 (around \$3000 AUDS) net (in the 150 MHz class with 16 M-byte memory, a hard disk in the 1GB range and a CD-ROM disk drive).

So what do you think? For years, many pundits in the computer industry have argued that multiprocessor custom chip computer architectures such as the Amiga are an obsolete concept. They have argued that processor speed will eventually overcome any limitations imposed in systems such as the IBM compatible. The ABOX represents a strong rebuff of this argument.

The ABOX appears to overcome the two main arguments against custom chip designs. One, that they are more expensive to

implement and purchase and two, that they are not upgradable (as with the ESC and later AGA Amigas). The ABOX appears to be both affordable and inherently upgradable. More over, phase 5 intend to pursue OEM deals and partnerships. This means the development of ABOX clones where phase 5 simply becomes an Intel-like controller of the central technology, be it the Pentium processor or the CAIPIRINHA.

The IBM clone has proven itself to be incapable of overcoming the fundamental limitations imposed by its outmoded architecture, despite the incorporation of faster processors and better graphics chips. The ABOX if implemented, will offer a truly elegant system that will never be matched by the PC, hands down.

Phase 5 are rumoured to a leading bidders for the rights to the Amiga, moreover, they have close relations with Pro_DAD who have just created an Amiga compatible operating system. If successful, the ABOX could at last spell the success and the just recognition of the Amiga vision. AAG will keep you informed of any developments.

Phase 5 may be contacted at:

mail@phase5.de
aproject@phase5.de



CONNECT TO THE INTERNET IN "ONE" EASY STEP

BY MICHAEL GRUBER

When you hear people talk about the Internet and the Amiga you always hear them say how great the Amiga is for such an application - how, with the Amiga's multi-tasking ability, you can run all your internet software at once without a worry.

Well I'm not here to talk about that, nor will I be raving on about how cool the Internet is. What I will attempt to do is get you online to the Internet in "one" easy step so you can explore the Internet for yourself.

Before we start I'm assuming that you can do the following;

- 1) You can create directories
- 2) You can use LHArc to unarchive programs.
- 3) You've seen and used the standard Amiga Installer program.

The system requirements for this activity will be an Amiga (of course) with Workbench 3.0 or higher and two or more megabytes of ram and a hard drive.

There are four pieces of software that we'll install on the Amiga which will give you the needed tools to use the Internet. These will take up about four megabytes of space on your hard drive.

MUI: Magic User Interface. This is a system enhancement software package which the TCP/IP and browser program will want running in the background. We require version 3.3 or greater. (Do not use version 3.5 as it has many bugs.) We'll use version 3.6 (Archive: MUI36USR.LHA).

Miami: This is the TCP/IP program that will be used to connect you to the Internet (Archive:

MIAMI11A.LHA).

Voyager: This is the browser program with which you'll use to view Web pages (Archive: VOYAGER.LHA).

YAM: Yet Another Mailer is the program you will use to send and receive E-Mail (Archive: YAM13_2.LHA).

Step 1.0 Shop around for an ISP (ISP: Internet Service Provider) you like and get the following information;

- 1) Ensure they have PPP (Point to Point Protocol) access. This is what we'll be using.
- 2) Their phone number!
- 4) Your login name (or tell them what you want it as).
- 5) Your password.
- 6) Your Email address.
- 7) Their Web address.
- 8) Ask whether they use proxy addresses or not. If so, you will need to note the address and port numbers for; HTTP, FTP, Gopher and WAIS.

Step 1.1 We'll install all the software into one directory, so make a directory called INTERNET on your hard drive.

Step 1.2 Extract the MUI archive into a "temporary" directory, either to your RAM drive or your INTERNET directory. It will create its own sub-directory.

Step 1.3 In the MUI directory click on the "Install-MUI" icon. This will install all the MUI files to a MUI sub-directory in the SYS: directory. Once the install has completed you can delete the files unarchived to the temporary directory.

Step 1.4 Next extract the Voyager archive into a "temporary" direc-

tory, either to your RAM drive or your T: directory. It will create its own subdirectory.

Step 1.5 In the Voyager directory click on the "Installer" icon. "Proceed" past the first couple of pages then select your INTERNET directory for the install.

Step 1.6 Keep proceeding through the install until you reach the "Environment Variables" page. Deselect all the check boxes then continue. Voyager has now installed itself in its own subdirectory in your INTERNET directory.

Step 1.7 Now load Voyager and select "Network" from the "Settings" menu.

Step 1.8 On the "Proxies" page click the "Use" box on if your IP server uses proxy addresses. If so, you will need to fill in the address and port fields with what your IP server gave you. If they do not use proxy addresses then don't activate the "Use" box. Voyager is now setup to use. Your settings will be saved when you quit Voyager.

Step 1.9 Now extract the YAM archive into a "temporary" directory, either to your RAM drive or your T: directory. It will create its own subdirectory.

Step 1.10 In the YAM directory click on the "Install" icon. Then in the install directory click on the "English" icon. Again proceed past the first few pages then select your INTERNET directory to install YAM in. The rest of the install is pretty straight forward (believe me), just click "proceed" until the end.

Step 1.11 Now load YAM and select "Configurations" from the "Settings" menu.

Step 1.12 On the "Start" page enter your name, Email address and password in the fields provided. In the "POP3 server" field enter your IP server's Web address, without the "www" at the beginning.

Step 1.13 Then select the "receive" page and enter your user name in the "POP3 UserId" field. Click on all the check boxes except "Avoid duplicates". The "Check for mail" sets how often YAM will go and check for mail, the interval is up to you.

Step 1.14 Now select the "Send" page and in the "SMTP server" field enter your IP's Web address, again without the "www" at the front. This will get your mailer program up and running. The other options can be tried out later to customise the program to your tastes.

Step 1.15 Now create a subdirectory in your INTERNET directory called MIAMI and unarchive the Miami archive into it.

Step 1.16 In the Miami directory click on the "Miamiinit" icon. Read the text on each page as you proceed through the install. Click "Continue" until you reach the "init string" page. From this page you can select your modem (if it is in the list) or use the default generic settings provided.

Step 1.17 The next page of Miami will ask you to enter the ISP's phone number. Please do so in the box provided (no spaces and area code if required).

Step 1.18 Now select "Dynamic" as your IP address type and "PPP" as the Protocol.

Step 1.19 Next enter in your login name and your password in the boxes provided. The "Use login dialog" check box toggles on/off the login script. If on, then your userid and password will be automatically entered in when you

connect, off and you have to enter them yourself. Some servers won't work with this on.

Step 1.20 The next page is the "dial window". When you get to this page turn your modem on as Miamiinit will now dial-up your ISP and attempt to connect to it. When you're ready click the "Dial" button.

Step 1.21 The first time Miami will get you to enter your userid and password. It will then setup some parameters. Then ask you to enter your real name into the field provided.

Step 1.21 If you want a hard copy of all the settings then ensure the "Print Information Sheet" check box is active, otherwise switch it off. Press "continue" and the Miami installation is complete.

Step 1.22 Everything should be configured, now to use it!

Step 1.23 Go into your Miami directory and click on the "Miami" icon to load it.

Step 1.24 When the Miami screen pops up in the middle of your Workbench screen click the "Online" button. This will have Miami log onto your ISP and establish a connection.

Step 1.25 Once Miami displays "online" in its window you can load your browser. Go into the Voyager directory and click on the "V" icon for non accelerated machines or the "V020" icon for Amigas powered by 68020 processors or greater.

Step 1.26 Once Voyager has loaded there are two things you can do;

1) Click one of the "Fastlink" buttons. They are preset Web page locations you can try out (Voyager allows you to change these from the "Links" page in "GUI" from the "Settings" menu).

2) Select your own Web page location (maybe one you've heard about). It's recommended you go to your ISP's own Web page first. To enter a location in, select the

"Location" field and enter "http://" then your Web location.

For example, "http://www.cucug.org/amiga.html" will take you to the Amiga Web Directory web page.

Step 1.27 Once you get your browser running you might want to try out your mailer. All you do here is go into the YAM directory and click on the "YAM" icon. YAM will load and start checking for mail periodically at the interval you had set earlier.

Step 1.28 Now you should be online and surfing the net. Please note that the unregistered copy of Miami that we are working with times out after an hour and will log you off. Of course the full version will fix this, but this may help those of you who wish to control their use of the net - it up to you.

Step 1.29 I said at the beginning that the Amiga could run all your programs at once, true, but only if you have enough memory. Memory problems can be reduced by turning off all your commodities and just running Miami and Voyager or Miami and YAM, you get the idea.

Step 1.30 Once you have this all running smoothly I really do suggest you read the guides and docs provided as they will describe the software in more detail and provide ideas on how to further customise them. Anyway have fun!

(Well technically it was "ONE" step!)

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DISCOVERING REAL3D CLASSIC

by Geoff Milnes

REAL 3D TUTORIAL ANIMATION

This month I thought we'd look at the animation of objects, observers and aim points.

Almost ALL objects with Real 3D can be animated but we will start with the simplest version by just rotating some objects.

Start by creating an object and calling it 'Floor' or some such as this will be a base. Inside the 'Floor' object directory LMB click on the rectangle icon in the Tool Bar and draw a rectangle that almost fills this Top View Window.

Using the LMB in the bar at the top of the 'Selection Window' go back to the 'root' directory and create another object called 'Objects' and within this directory, create several actual objects to sit on the 'rectangle' (prisms, cubes, pyramids etc.), bearing in mind that the more objects you create, the slower the rendering time will be. The idea of creating SHAPED objects rather than, say spheres, is that rotating around a sphere is virtually like standing still - you can't see much movement unless it has a sharply defined texture mapped to it. In this particular animation we will stick to 'Fast Rendered' screens so that you can see the results fairly quickly. That way, you can appreciate the techniques involved without having to wait for days!

On the assumption that you have created your floor with several objects sitting upon it, go back to the 'root' directory in the 'Select'

window and make sure that 'root' is selected (highlighted). With RMB access the 'PROJECT /ANIMATION/SIZE' menu and release the mouse button. You will be presented with a requester - enter 50 - and then OK. This obviously gives us 50 frames of animation to work with.

IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE- PANIC!

Mistakes are easily made but also easily dealt with. Should you need to change any move in an animation, it is possible to 'un-animate'. Simply select 'PROJECTS/ANIMATION/DE-EXPOSE' and when the requester appears, type in the number of frames the animation consists of (in our case - 50) and click OK. This will return the animation to 50 STATIC frames. If your animation is complex involving different movements for different objects, select the object to have its animation removed and follow the above. This will just remove the movement attached to the selected object.

Just as an aside, for those new to any form of animation, an animation is a series of still pictures played back at up to 25 frames per second to give the illusion of movement and this is what we are about to create.

Having done that, RMB access 'PROJECT/ANIMATION/ROTATION' and release which brings up a different requester asking three questions. As we wish to travel all the way around the objects, leave the first as 360° - we also wish the

animation to cover all 50 frames so again these can be left alone. All that remains is to OK the requester, wait a few seconds (the mouse pointer will change until Real 3D has completed its action) and the animation is complete.

Go to the WIREFRAME screen and when the drawing appears, click PLAY and watch as you go around the objects or the objects appear to spin in space. If you wish, you can go to the RENDER screen and set up a render of the all the frames.

When you first enter the RENDER screen, it will still be set up for single frame so if you wish you can test render any single frame by selecting the frame number using the arrows at the top of the screen and clicking on render.

Once you are happy with the test renders, you need to give Real 3D a path to save the pictures to - unfortunately there are no accessible requesters and the path has to be typed in by the side of 'NAME' where it currently says 'root'. You also need to name the actual animation within the path so let's assume you wish to call this 'RotateAnim' and wish to save it to a drawer called 'Test' on your 'Work' partition, type in 'Work:test/ RotateAnim' and press return.

A word about the way in which Real3D saves Animations is in order here, I think, as it doesn't save in any animation format but as individual pictures to be turned later into an ANIM5 or whatever.

A utility is included with the software to do this so don't worry about having to load individual pics into DPaint. Real 3D will also add a suffix frame number to the name (e.g. 'RotateAnim01') to each frame it saves so you are aware how many frames you have generated and whether the process has actually completed. This is useful for other reasons as, at times my animations are left at least overnight to complete and should there have been a power glitch, the machine will have re-booted leaving only part of the project completed. It is possible to re-start the animation from the render screen part way through rather than having to start from scratch.

The last thing to do is turn off the 'SINGLE' button and click 'RENDER'.

DELTA CONVERT

This is the software which will convert your pics into animations and is accessed from WB by double-clicking. This produces a window on your WB asking for the Conversion Mode. If you wish to use your animation in say, DPaint or Scala then ANIM5 is the one to select (the others, although extremely good are NOT useable outside special players). The text in the window is replaced and you are asked for the SAVE PATH - again there are no requesters to help you select the path so I'm afraid it is again a case of typing in the FULL save path. I would suggest here that a different drawer be used for saving to keep it separate from your pics - if you have 180 pics from Real 3D in a drawer it can be most frustrating finding your ANIM5 file in the amongst them. So, if your drawer is called 'Test2' and your partition is 'Work' then that path to type in is: 'Work:Test2/RotateAnim5'

I usually use the same name as I

used in Real 3D's render screen but with '5' at the end of it - this shows me it is an animation rather than a pic.

The next set of text asks for the path of the pictures and again it is to type in and if we take the same parameters as before this is: 'Work:Test/RotateAnim'. DON'T type in the frame number.

Finally, we have to enter the frame or picture numbers that were added by Real 3D when it saved each individual picture. Please note that these START at Zero and finish at 49 for a 50 frame animation. The first requester is for the FIRST INDEX so enter Zero - Click OK - next is the LAST INDEX and enter 49.

The software will load in each individual picture, add them all together and complete the ANIM5.

NOTE - WHEN YOU REACH THE END OF THE COMPILATION TO ANIM5, THE REQUESTER DISPLAYS TWO BUTTONS AT THE BOTTOM WHICH ARE 'OK' AND 'ALL DONE'. CLICK ON 'ALL DONE' AS CLICKING ON THE 'OK' BUTTON WILL START THE PROCESS ALL OVER AGAIN.

Now you will be able to find your animation and in the above example it would be 'Work:Test2/RotateAnim5' and can be loaded into say, DPaint or Scala to be displayed.

Rotation in animation is simple - you just click on the rotation point and away it goes. But what about rotating in a pattern OTHER than a circle - what then? This is slightly more difficult to do AND a damn sight more difficult to explain clearly.

Use the same objects you used previously and select 'PROJECTS/ ANIMATION/DE-EXPOSE' to set

the objects back to their original positions which will be static. Make sure you are on the first frame in the editor (on the top bar right hand side there are reverse and forward arrows with a number in-between - this number is the current frame) and in the Select Window move back to the root directory. Select the 'curve' icon (Toolbar at the bottom right, third row up, first left) LMB click near the outside of the Top View window and start drawing an irregular line near the edges of the window. When you are very close to the original start point of your line, RMB click to end the drawing process. This is the path your observer (camera) will follow during the animation. We will call this a circle (rename it if you wish).

If the circle is too high or low in the Front View window, move it until it is approximately at the centre-line of the objects in the window. Make sure the 'circle' is selected in the 'Select Window' and RMB in the menu bar, select 'FREEFORM/ POINTEDITING/SHOW POINTS'. When you release the mouse button, black dots will appear on the circle in all the view windows. Let's try a simple move to give you a idea and then you can play to your hearts content.

RMB on 'FREEFORM/POINT EDITING/SELECT NEW' and release. In the Top View window, LMB drag a box around a couple of the black dots nearest to the bottom of the screen - the selected dots will change to green while the rest will remain black. Activate the Front View window (Top left) by LMB clicking in it; pressing the 'M' key will now allow you to ONLY move THE POINTS selected to wherever you require but for now, just move them about half an inch upwards from their current position. When you LMB

click again, the points will be set where and the line of the circle will follow the point in a sharp, upwards line and back down again.

IMPORTANT - SELECT RMB 'FREEFORM/POINT EDITING/ DE-SELECT ALL' AS, WHILST POINTS ARE SELECTED, ALL OPERATIONS WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN RELATION TO THE POINTS AND NOT THE DESIRED OBJECT.

To actually animate following this circle, we need to create an Observer (camera) and attach it to the circle. Make sure you are still in the 'root' directory and LMB click on the icon with 'obs' in it. In the Top View window, LMB click on the circle itself. This places the Observer on the outline of the circle. Checking the other view windows will probably show you that although the observer is over the circle line in the Top View, it is way out in the others. Press the 'M' key and move the Observer over the circle line in the Front View and Side View windows wherever necessary.

To ensure that the Observer is directly above the line, press the SHIFT and COMMA keys with the Observer selected in the Select Window. This zooms in on the selected object, which is in this case, the Observer. If you have positioned it closely to the circle in the first place, you should see an object similar to /| in the centre of the windows with another line close to it. The /| object represents the Observer and the other line is the circle. If you can't see the circle, press the MINUS key on the numeric pad to zoom out slowly until you can see it (or RMB menu 'SETTINGS/DISPLAY/ZOOM OUT'). With a series of 'M' moves you will be able to position the observer with its pointed top touching the line. Having done

this, press the 'O' key (NOT ZERO) and this will reset the screen display.

Now, with the Observer still selected, select 'PROJECT/ ANIMATION/ ORBIT' which produces the words 'define orbit' in the menu bar. Press the SHIFT and "*" keys (the number '6' key on the QWERTY keyboard) which changes the wording on the menu bar to 'select object for point definition'. LMB click on the 'circle' in the Select window if you have renamed it or 'curve' if you haven't. The Select window will have changed into a type of requester and once you highlight the 'circle' or 'curve', click OK and a further requester appears in one of the View Windows giving you the opportunity to alter the number of frames over which the animation will take place. Make sure, in this instance, that it reads FROM FRAME 0 TO FRAME 49 and click OK.

After a few seconds, Real 3D will have completed the animation and by pressing 'SHIFT' and 'P' you can watch the animation play. Go to the Wireframe Screen and click the PLAY button to make sure your distances from the objects are acceptable and you (the Observer) are not too close. If you are, return to the Editor, select 'PROJECTS/ANIMATION/DE-EXPOSE', set the requester to 50 and click OK to set your frames back to static. Now select the Top View window and press the '-' key on the numeric pad to zoom out a few steps, select the 'circle' or 'curve', select 'HIERARCHY/ STRETCH' from the menu (or press 'G' on the keyboard) and re-size the circle larger. When you are happy, LMB click to set its size, re-position the Observer on the 'circle' and re-do the animation as shown in the above paragraph.

Once you are happy with the Wireframe animation, go to the Render Screen and render the whole animation. Although there are a diverse range of features involved when animating in Real 3D, the procedure outlined here is capable of producing some quite professional looking frames capable of being transferred to video tape.

Individual objects can be rotated around their centre of gravity quite easily by selecting the object to be worked on, select 'ROTATION' from the animation menu and click on the centre of the object in question.

Several other operations can also be brought to bear on certain animation procedures like Macros which could be covered in a future tutorial. Please contact me through AAG if you would like further tutorials. If there is sufficient interest, operations such as Boolean, short-cuts for adding backgrounds to animations, lighting and so on could be covered.

For now, though, I have to immerse myself in MIDI for a demo at our local club meeting, so whilst I am bashing my ears into submission with all manner of musical instruments, take care and above all - HAVE FUN!

Geoff Milnes

**Our Thanks to Geoff &
"Third Dimension Disk Mag"
for allowing us to reproduce
this article.**

Getting Involved

We at AAG understand the important role User Groups play in the Amiga community. To continue this support we want to ensure all Amiga users are aware of their location. Below is small list of groups we have contacted. If there are any groups we have missed (believe us, there are a few) please contact AAG so we can include you in this list.

New South Wales

Amiga Creative Enthusiasts

Location: Illawarra Yacht Club
Frequency: 4th Wednesday of each month
Contact: Brian Gale (Secretary)
Phone: 042 752 493
Snail Mail: 16 Cowper St, Port Kembla 2505

Amiga User Group

Location: Rodin Library
Frequency: 3rd Thursday of each month 8:00pm
Contact: Steve Kennedy (Vice President)
Phone: 06 254 6711
Snail Mail: PO Box 409, Curtin 2605

East Coast Amiga Inc.

Contact: Neil Scott (President)
Phone: 043 88 2339
Contact: John (Secretary)
Phone: 043 67 7386
Snail Mail: PO Box 344, Gosford 2250

Muswellbrook Combined Computer Group

Location: Red Cross Hall
Frequency: 2nd Saturday of each month 7:30pm
Membership: \$5 joining fee, then \$10 annual renewal
Contact: Wayne Millard (President)
Phone: 065 41 1024
Snail Mail: PO Box 648, Muswellbrook 2333

Southern Sydney Commodore User Group

Location: Scout Hall Connelly St, Penshurst (Behind the RSL)
Frequency: Every 2nd Monday 8:00pm
Membership: \$20 (Annual)
Contact: Steve Perry (President)
Phone: 02 528 6117
Snail Mail: PO Box 217, Beverly Hills 2209

Tuggerah Lakes Computer User Group Inc.

Location: Berkeley Vale Public School
Frequency: 1st and 3rd Thursday of month 7:00pm
Membership: \$7 (Joining), \$18 (Annual)
Contact: Darrell Keirnan (President)
Phone: 043 32 1087 **Fax:** 043 32 1087
Snail Mail: PO Box 659, Toukley 2263

Western District Amiga User Group

Location: Suite 19 9-11 Abel St Penrith NSW 2750
Frequency: Every 2nd Thursday 6:30pm till late
Membership: Free
Contact: Michael Gruber (Vice President)
Phone: 019 651 284 **Fax:** (047) 215 277
Email: michaelg@dot.net.au
Home Page: www.pnc.com.au/~mother/amigauser.html
Snail Mail: Suite 19 9-11 Abel St, Penrith NSW, 2750

Victoria

North West Amiga User Group

Location: Moonee Ponds Community Centre
Frequency: 1st & 3rd Wednesday of month 8:00pm
Membership: \$25
Contact: Gregory Thomas
Phone: (03) 9337-8788
Email: gdt@minyos.its.rmit.edu.au
Snail Mail: 19 Mary St Essendon Victoria 3040

Queensland

Bundaberg Commodore & Amiga Computer Users Group

Location: 14 Miles St Bundaberg 4670
Frequency: 1st Sunday of month 12:30pm - 4:30pm
Membership: \$24 (Annual) \$1 attendance
Contact: Mr R Attwood
Phone: 071 529 215
Email: bdalton@130.aone.com.au
Snail Mail: 14 Miles St, Bundaberg 4670

Any inquiries or feedback can be posted to Michael Gruber at Australian Amiga Gazette my Email address is: michaelg@dot.net.au

THE BEST OF PUBLIC DOMAIN

BY DANIEL HAJDUK

THE BEST OF PUBLIC DOMAIN IS DEDICATED TO PROMOTING EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC DOMAIN AND SHAREWARE PROGRAMS.

EACH MONTH WE WILL PRESENT A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS, UTILITIES AND ADD-ONS COVERING A WIDE RANGE OF APPLICATIONS.

EACH PROGRAM SELECTED IS THE BEST IN ITS AREA AND ENHANCES AMIGAS EXCELLENT WORKBENCH.

FindFile

FindFile is a particularly useful file/directory search program. I find this type of utility particularly useful for those people who have a lot of files and can't always remember where they put those files. FindFile will install onto your hard disk with a minimal of effort using the standard Amiga installer. The program is fully functioning and does not contain any annoying message or requesters saying that a function is not available. Included with the program is a well documented AmigaGuide file which lists an introduction and instructions on how to use some of the features of FindFile. What makes FindFile better than other file/directory search programs is its detail and excellent environment that makes it easy to use. By using FindFile you can specify your search string, along with a range of conditions such as Name, Date, or Size. There is a advanced option which lets you perform the search using any or all of the three search conditions available along with some more specific conditions which let you perform the search that matches all or any of the conditions. FindFile lets you choose where you wish to perform the search which can be either by drive, partition, directory or file. Once FindFile begins to look for a matching search string it will list

all the matching results in a window which details where the file was found. A search can be aborted at any time by pressing the stop search button.

Overall I found FindFile to be a useful program that is easy to install and use and the large range of options that are available make the program a better choice than all of the other file/directory utilities. FindFile will ensure that all your misplaced files or directories can be found with minimal fuss.

*Programmed by: John Corigliano
Available From: Public Domain
System Requirements: MUI +
OS 2.0 or higher.*

IconCopy

IconCopy is a simple utility used to change icons without changing their tooltypes and positions. Installing IconCopy is quick and is as easy as dragging the IconCopy icon to the destination of your choice. IconCopy comes with an AmigaGuide file which details the use and functions of the program. Personally I found this not to be required because IconCopy is very simple to use and required little explanation through the use of an Amiga Guide file. IconCopy uses a window which is split up in two sections, one for dropping the source icon into and the other to drop the destination icon into.

Once the destination icon is dragged and dropped into the destination window the icon is copied. Unlike other similar utilities, if you make a mistake there is the all important undo option in the file menu. Although not big on the features list, I found IconCopy to be a very useful utility which can be used to copy icons quickly and easily. Simply Drag the destination icon into the right window and it will be copied.

*Programmed by: Tino Wildenhain
Available From: Public Domain
System Requirements: OS 2.0
or higher*

Iconian 3

Iconian 3 is a fully featured icon editor which was designed to utilize every OS 3.0 enhancement. iconian is fully operational and can be installed onto you hard drive quickly and easily by executing the standard Amiga install script. Iconian is quite a large program so I wasn't surprised to find a equally large Amiga.Guide file, which is very well documented and available at all times when using Iconian by pressing the help key.

When I first started using Iconian I immediately noticed its vast range of features. Everything from drawing tools to arrex is available, along with a vast range of functions from scaling to brush effects. One Such feature of

Iconian that I found to be interesting was the ability to save your icons as source code in either C, Amiga E, or ASM. This would be a bonus to those out there who like to program using any of these languages.

Iconian 3 is not limited to designing and editing icons. With an extensive set of drawing tools, plus the ability to import and export many file formats, it is also ideal for designing other small, image related things, and ideally could be used as a Workbench

friendly sketch program. Iconian 3 has support for Image structures, both planar and chunky format and can also be used to design mouse pointer images, brushes and thumbnails. With Iconian 3 it is possible to specify the icon format being (Disk, Drawer, Tool, Project, Trashcan, Device, Kick or Application), size, and appearance. One excellent feature of Iconian, which is not normally found in other programs, is the customizable work environment.

Overall I'd have to say that

Iconian's vast range of features and ease of use would have to make it the best icon editor available for the Amiga, and a product that is of commercial standard.

Programmed by: Chad Randall
Available From: Public Domain
System Requirements: OS 3.0 or higher

Open Letter To The Amiga Community From QuikPak

The past few years have not been kind to the Amiga Community. Since the demise of Commodore, the ownership and future of the Amiga has been continually uncertain. The only thing that has remained constant is the loyalty of Amiga users. It is with respect to this loyalty that we feel it necessary to let YOU know the current state of affairs and what QuikPak is doing to see that the Amiga has the successful future it so deserves.

Back when Amiga Technologies was owned by Escom, QuikPak was selected to manufacture the complete A4000T and components for the A1200. During the collapse of Escom and the subsequent negotiations with VisCorp, QuikPak continued manufacturing and servicing Amiga Computers. Throughout this time of uncertainty, QuikPak continued to support the platform, placing ads in the North American publication *Amazing Computing*, forging alliances with Amiga developers and supporters, and developing new products of our own. Recently, at AmigaFest in Toronto, we unveiled two new

computers and we have been shipping the 060 Accelerator for the A4000T. We believe this product development clearly demonstrates our commitment to the Amiga.

It now appears evident that negotiations between VisCorp and Amiga Technologies have reached a standstill. As a creditor of Amiga Technologies, QuikPak has a vested interest in seeing the future of the Amiga handled properly. To this end, QuikPak has placed an offer in front of the German liquidator for Amiga Technologies, and we are awaiting further information regarding this.

What does this mean to you, the end user? QuikPak believes that there is more to the Amiga than a simple set top box. We believe that the A4000 and its successors have a place in the market. We believe that a model along the lines of the A1200 also can play an important role in the future of the Amiga. We further believe that products currently under development at QuikPak can bring the Amiga back to the

forefront in innovation. We believe that working closely with developers, other manufacturers, distributors, and dealers is necessary to make the Amiga a success. And, perhaps most importantly of all, we believe in listening to you, the person who has kept this platform alive.

We hope that the new year will allow us to bring you good news, that QuikPak will be successful in our negotiations with the German liquidator. We trust that the liquidator will move quickly, and justly, to see these events through. We encourage any and all input from the Amiga Community - let us know what you want to see. And, finally, we encourage those responsible for handling the Amiga Technologies' assets to be as open as we at QuikPak are striving to be.

Sincerely,
Dave Ziembicki
C.E.O QuikPak Corporation

Contact: Dan Robinson
Director of Business Development
of Amiga Computers QuikPak Corporation.

A Spouse's Perspective

By Dianna

It was bound to happen sooner or later. My spouse's souped-up beloved A4000 is having a baby. We have adopted a cute little A600 to complement the A4000 work horse.

To be absolutely honest, dear readers, last month this very column was typed up using an old half dismantled 486 PC with windoz (you read correctly) looming in the background. What a pain! Even as a self confessed computer know-nothing (ignorance is bliss) like myself, I must say windoz seems silly and paternalistic. Anyway, with that bit of guilt off my chest, you may now understand why we now need another computer (Amiga of course) - hence our A600 adoptee.

"How cute", our elder child remarked, "can I play my games on it?". "Yes", I replied cautiously, "it is also for mummy and daddy to send faxes", I quickly added. "It's like posting letters, but only through the computer", I explained. Number one child seemed suitably unimpressed.

No wow or gee wiz from this generation I tell you. Just questions like, "where's the mouse mat gone?", or, "Why is the character in the game always a boy?". Why, indeed? Of course, as a mother who is

supposed to know about everything, I explained that the target market for such childrens' games are boys, so most of the heroes in games are males. Parents of little (and big) girls should note this and, if necessary, complain. Barbie the bimbo has some games out on the PC platform and no doubt our little one (she's a real girl) would love it. However, at present she is content with the fairly gender neutral pre-school games such as Noddy, Fun School, and the like.

So the question begs to be asked. Are computers in general (games, the internet, business software) gender neutral? Well, from my point of view - not yet. My spouse is always showing me things on his beloved Amiga which I find about as interesting as an ad. for a bar of soap which contains one-quarter moisturiser; and the often colourful language used on the internet is of kaleidascopic proportions! The last drop in chat my husband and I had on the internet featured some idiot fellow who wanted to have sex with the Pope! I dare say few women would find this funny. Although I do have a theory - the more a man talks about sex, the less (if any) he is getting. So using the internet or BBS's is often a way for a man to vent frustration.

Ladies, shall we use the internet for our own frustrations? I think, YES. We could chat, send email, check gossip, and compare notes such as: does your husband do the dishes?, pick up his socks?, have domestic blindness?, will letting the children watch the Simpsons or The Nanny harm their sensibilities?, does Hillary Clinton love her husband?, which brand of clothes detergent really is the best and will anyone notice if you use it? These questions can be zipped around the world at lightening speed with the sure knowledge that men will neither know or care about such matters.





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AMIGA and VIDEO PART I

By Paul Graham

So you've got yourself an AMIGA and you want to spruce up those home video movies you've made. Well you've certainly come to the right place because over the next few months we will show you how to put zip and pizzazz into those boring tapes.

The AMIGA and VIDEO are perfect partners. With an AMIGA, it is possible to connect it with a V.C.R. and output to tape the contents of the monitor screen to tape (The A500 and A4000 require a modulator or similar device however).

In recent years, other platforms have since acquired certain capabilities to output to VIDEO, yet the AMIGA still reigns supreme as the choice for the home video producer on a tight budget. Why the AMIGA when other machines such as the Macintosh and the PC can offer the similar output capabilities? The AMIGA provides a unique custom chipset which continues to set it apart. One chip in particular, known as Denise in ECS machines or Lisa in the AGA A1200 and A4000 gives the AMIGA the capability to directly synchronise with an external video source. These chips were

put inside the AMIGA for the sole purpose of giving the AMIGA the ability to work in conjunction with professional video equipment.

Developers of video hardware for the AMIGA have been quick to take advantage of the AMIGA's unique capabilities. They have invented a whole range of video tools such as Genlocks, Digitisers, and Editors (which I will describe in later issues). From this, a new term has arisen- DESK-TOP-VIDEO, (D.T.V.), and it was the AMIGA which inaugurated this revolution.

Many films, music videos, television commercials and programs have been created with the aid of the AMIGA (Babylon5, SeaQuest, Jurassic Park, Batman- the list is long).

Although computer technology changes rapidly these days, anyone with a fairly basic AMIGA, a camcorder, and a second VCR can get involved in the D.T.V world. While most applications are limited by capabilities of the machine they are running on, there is no reason why you can't create anything from a fully titled Wedding Video to your own cartoon series on a basic AMIGA.

By far the most common desktop video application has to be video-titling. Although most camcorder manufacturers produce dedicated hardware-based character generators (some camcorders even have them built in), you would have to pay a lot of money for a character generator which came close to the sort capabilities that the AMIGA delivers. Most character generators are limited to rather chunky monochrome text with just a single font on offer. A video titling program running on your AMIGA allows you to generate and place text onto the television screen with multiple colours and fonts, and (thanks to the AMIGA's animation capabilities) allows you have the text fly onto the screen from different directions and perform different effects. Video titling packages come in a variety of flavours from the SCALA series to ADORAGE, MONUMENT TITLER, ANIMAGE and XDVE. Some of these programs not only handle text, but also let you create animations, perform functions through Arexx scripts and even include audio tracks into the production.

The introduction of outline font support into the AMIGA'S operating system has significantly

advanced the AMIGA's video titling capabilities. Now that outline fonts can be used, it is possible to expand and shrink text to any size with no loss in quality. Combine this with the AMIGA'S SuperHiRes mode and you've got what amounts to the perfect video titling machine.

Scala, the most renowned titling program for the AMIGA offers the video director an extraordinary number of screen transitions and effects. Currently, Scala is up to version MM400, although the penultimate version, MM300 is

bundled with every Amiga 1200 and 4000 sold. Scala is now available on the PC and the Mac, but are in many respects inferior to the AMIGA version as these machines lack bit-plane screen-modes.

Pagestream is a desk-top publishing program which although not designed for video production can be very useful for titling. Thanks to PageStream's use of outline fonts, text remains smooth and without the jagged edges, no matter how much you twist and distort the text. But to use the text

in video, you will need a screen-grabber. Fortunately these are available from any good P.D. library or the Aminet.

That about raps it up for this month. Next month we will look at ways of hooking up your AMIGA to a VIDEO source.

See you soon,
Paul

All the best for the new year.



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Amiga Class 101

By Darren Robertson

Hi There.

I will be taking over from Igor this month as he is on holidays. What we are going to work on this month is files and where to put them.

VOLUMES

What is a Volume? As discussed in last months issue we were working with the Workbench disk and a blank disk that we formatted with a name. These are both separate volumes. For people with hard drives, their Workbench volume will be part of the hard drive that is installed internally. A Volume is just another name for a formatted disk; either a floppy disk or hard disk. So why don't we call them disks? Well technically a disk can be broken down into many volumes each with different names and different files stored on them. With a floppy disk this is impractical so you end up using the entire disk as one volume, called EMPTY or whatever name you used when you formatted it. With a standard formatted hard drive you will find it divided into two volumes - one called Workbench which actually contains copies of all of your original separate workbench disks. The

second volume is normally called Work. This is where you should be storing your personal files. Those people who use floppy disks may want to run the format program and format an unused floppy disk and call it Work. If you have a hard drive in your computer do not call the floppy disk Work as all of your files on the hard drive called Work will be hidden away until you remove the floppy disk called Work. If you have a hard drive but want to do this test on a floppy disk call it Work1. Once you have a Work volume in your Amiga, either as the internal hard drive or your newly formatted floppy disk, it will show up on the Workbench screen as an Icon with the name underneath as Work.

DRAWERS

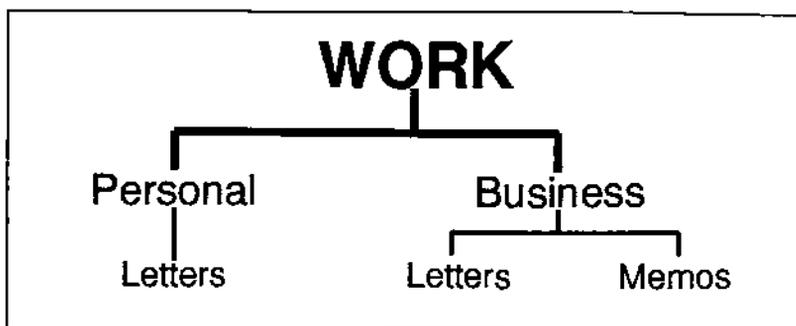
Now that we have a work volume what do we do with it? Well we could put files straight on to it one after the other, but what file names are we going to use and what is going to tell us what the files are for? The Amiga will help us out with some of this by storing an icon with each file, that most of the time will show us where we created the file. There is a way to make things easier, and that is to

use drawers. What are Drawers? They are simply places put files - the same as a filing cabinet. Drawers have to be created before they can be used. We will create some Drawers now. On the Workbench screen you will see an Icon called Work, Double click on this Icon, and if you have done this right a small window will open up with the name Work in the top left hand corner near a little square button. This is your volume called Work. Inside it most of the time is a little Icon called Trashcan - ignore this for the moment. If there are any other Icons there already they may be programs that have been installed or work you have done previously. We will avoid these for the moment. Now that you have the little window open, move your mouse to the top of the screen and hold down the RMB (Right Mouse Button). A bar appears at the top of the screen with four names across it Workbench - Windows - Icons - Tools. If you move your mouse pointer so that it sits somewhere on the word Window a menu will drop down. The first



item on this menu is called New Drawer with a little Amiga A and the letter N after it. Move your mouse down one line so that the item New Drawer is selected and release the RMB. A very small window should appear in the top left hand corner of the work bench screen, called Rename. This means the Amiga has created a Drawer for you and it wants you to rename it to something you will remember. The name it used is "Unnamed1" which is not really useful. There should be a little square cursor sitting at the end of the word Unnamed in the box for New Name. If not, move your mouse pointer to the end of the word Unnamed in the box and press the LMB (left mouse button). Now that we have the cursor at the end of the name press the backspace key. This key looks like an arrow pointing left "<-". It is on the right hand top of the main set of keys on the keyboard. Press this once and the "d" at the end of "unnamed" should disappear. Keep pressing the Backspace key until the box is empty except for the Cursor. Now type the word Personal, and then press the enter key. The enter key looks like "<-|". A new Icon should now appear in the window below that has the name under it of Personal. The Icon should also look like a cupboard drawer. You have just created a Drawer.

What's in a Drawer? Nothing yet. What can be put in a drawer? Any files you want, but in this case we are trying to get organised so we will only put personal files in here. Drawers are like filing cabinet drawers except



for two things: you can have as many drawers as you like in your Volume and you can have multiple drawers inside drawers. Now we start to get a little tricky. We will repeat the process above, but first double click on the drawer called Personal, then use the mouse to select the New Drawer from the Menu bar. Or if you are feeling like a power user press and hold down the right hand Amiga symbol near the space bar, then press the letter "N" and let them both go. This is the keyboard short-cut to the create New Drawer function. The same little window will open in the top left hand corner asking for a new name for "Unnamed1". We will backspace the word Unnamed1 and type in "Letters" and press the Enter key. A new icon will appear in the window called Personal. So we have now created a filing cabinet drawer within another filing cabinet drawer. Now we are really getting organised. If we write any letters we can put them inside the Drawer called Personal which is inside the Drawer called Letters and know that that's where they will be next time we go to use them. As well as creating a drawer called Personal in the Volume Work we could have created one called Business and one called Games. Inside the

drawer called Business we can create a drawer called Letters as well. This Drawer will only contain the letters that were written for the business and none of the letters written for personal use will appear here because they appear only in the Personal filing cabinet or Drawer. Which ever window is highlighted before you select create New Drawer either from the top menu or left Amiga key + N. This is where the new drawer will be created. You could even double click on the drawer Letters that we just created inside Personal and create a New Drawer and change its name to Mary, then you could put all of your personal letters to Mary in here.

FILES

What goes inside these Drawers? Files that's what. What is a file? A file can be a picture you have drawn, a letter you have typed and spreadsheet you did the accounts on. Basically anything you create can be stored in a file so you can get it back with out redoing the entire job. A file can have any name you want within a small number of rules. The name



Amiga Class 101 Continued

cannot be more than 30 Characters (alphabetical letters, symbols or numbers) long. This also applies to Drawer names. It cannot contain the characters : " or / as these are reserved for telling the system where the files are. A : is used to say what the volume is i.e. WORK: and the / is used to show drawers and sub drawers. i.e.

"Work:Personal/Letters/Mary/my letter"
This is called the file path. It is just the text version of the graphical windows that workbench shows you. The " symbol is used to surround a path, to show it's beginning and end. When you are using a wordprocessor or spreadsheet it will ask you where you want to save a file. The save window should have a button called Volumes. If you click on this with the LMB it will show in its list a volume called WORK. This will either be linked to (HD1) the internal hard drive or (DF0) a floppy disk named Work. If you Double click on the word WORK the save window will then display a new list and in this list there should be a Drawer called Personal. If you double click on the line of text that says Personal a new list will appear. Do the same for the Letters drawer. The Save window will also be building a path in another box

"WORK:Personal/Letters". In the box below this you should be able to type the name you want to use for this letter. "FRED Smith Holiday". This could be the file name you want to use for a letter to Fred that was the letter written to Fred Smith about your holiday. By using a descriptive name like this, you know without having to read the letter that it is written to Fred and it contains your holiday adventures. You will also see next to the file a date - this is usually the date the letter was last saved so if you find a letter to Fred in your Letters Drawer but you cannot remember when you wrote it, the date should give you an idea which holiday you were writing about. One thing to remember is that you cannot store two different letters with the same name in the same Drawer. If you want to write a letter to Fred about your new holiday and don't want to delete your old letter, you must change the file name to "Fred Smith Holiday2". This will keep separate files because the names are slightly different; or you could create a New Drawer called "Holiday to Hawaii" and save the letter to Fred as "Fred Smith Holiday". Because it is stored in a different drawer, there is no clash with the file name in Letters. Upper and Lower case letters are

considered the same i.e. a file called FRED and one called fred can not exist in the same Drawer as the spelling is the same even though the typing is different. In the save or load window the Drawers are displayed in one colour and the files are displayed in a different colour. It is also advisable not to use spaces after the file name i.e. "WDRK:picture1" and "Work: picture1 ". These are two different files as one has an extra space at the end but when displayed on the workbench screen or in the load file list the space is invisible.

This should keep you busy until Igor returns from his holidays.



AAG Information

Writers Wanted

If you are interested in contributing to Australian Amiga Gazette we would like to hear from you. Until our circulation builds up we can't offer any incentive other than our gratitude and that of our readers. Articles should be submitted as plain text files. Graphics as iff or gif format. Please do not send your originals just a copy.

Helping Hands

If you live in the local area and would like to be involved in helping preparing AAG please contact Michael on (047) 222-803. No experience is required, just some spare time and a sense of humour.

Audio Writers

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Update

Last month AAG reviewed the 400DPI mouse and neglected to inform you of the brand, which was the Axalen Hypermouse.

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