Australian Amiga Gazette

M. S. U. E

Helpline

Kids Corner

NEWS

Classified Readers

AMIGA

Jan 98

200 MHz Amiga Powered
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<tr>
<th>HARDWARE</th>
<th>SOFTWARE</th>
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<tr>
<td>LASER POINTER PEN $49.00</td>
<td>ALL NEW, NO SECOND HAND GOODS</td>
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<td>HYPER MOUSE II $35.00</td>
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<td>ROCFIRE JOYSTICK $24.00</td>
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<td>HAND SCANNER 64 G/S $150.00</td>
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<td>AMINET CD 8.10.13.15. $10.00</td>
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<td>880K EXTERNAL DRIVE SOLD OUT $35.00</td>
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<td>ROCGEN A600/500/2000 $150.00</td>
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<td>A2000 A600/1200 INT DVE $290.00</td>
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<td>ORDER TO POWER COMPUTING GOING IN FOR JANUARY</td>
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<td>ORDER YOUR POWER COMPUTING PRODUCTS NOW!!!</td>
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Most of the stock from November sold out. New stock arriving soon.

Computa Magic Pty. Ltd.
44 Pascoe Vale Road, Moonee Ponds, Vic. 3039.
Phone (03) 9326-0133 Fax (03) 9370-8352
email commagic@magnatfield.com.au
Bankcard, Mastercard, Visa, Amex, Diners, Eftpos, direct Deposit, COD, even Cash
Contents

Australian Amiga Gazette Jan 98

* Editorial Dribble .......... 4
  Michael dribbles forth about Amiga games and the new BoXer Motherboard.

* Game Info ................. 22
  A short review on the game, "The Final Odyssey" (Theseus vs Minotaur).

* News, News and More News .. 5
  Paul Morabito gives us stacks of the latest Amiga news and happenings.

* Help Line ................. 24
  AAG throws out a help line to some of our readers in distress.

* Change of Address .......... 10
  Just sneaking in another chance to remind you of AAG's new cyber address.

* Classified Readers .......... 25
  A free service for the private sale of Amiga gear. (Better than the tradingpost)

* Reader Survey Results ...... 11
  We reveal some surprising statistics regarding Amiga owners in Australia.

* New Amiga MotherBoard ..... 12
  Index Information's new BoXer Motherboard is set to revolutionise Amiga.

* Myst Review ............... 26
  Mario Nitschke tries out Myst and gives us his verdict.

* The Best of Public Domain .. 28
  This month Daniel reviews MRQ, FX, MagicTV and FontView.

* Kid's Corner ............... 14
  Jenny reviews a shareware version of CP, a paint program for children.

* Amiga & Video & Sound ....... 30
  Paul Graham explores SFX using paint programs to modify images.

* DIY Project ............... 20
  Here's another DIY - Floppy Drive Track Display - for you to try.

* The AAG Info Page ........... 35
  Earn $25 dollars and the gratitude of our readers by writing an article for AAG.
Welcome to another issue of AAG or as we call it around the office PLAG (Perpetually Late Amiga Gazette). First up you may have noticed that the price has risen from $3.50 to $3.95. The reason for this is that anyone having an article published in AAG will receive $25 for their efforts. This I hope will encourage more Amigans to become involved in writing for AAG.

Based on the 1997 AAG survey results, we are changing AAG around over the coming months. This month we have started a new column titled "Kids Corner" (I know the name is not very original). This column is for the young ones aged from 2 to 14, covering childrens' software reviews, both fun and educational.

We have moved our internet sita to a new cybarsuburb at www.acay.com.au/~aag. Email address is aag@acay.com.au, so don't forget to note the new address in your email/browser programs.

Over the last two months I have received a bunch of calls enquiring as to whether we are going to organise another "Australian Amiga Gathering" Amiga show for 1998. Unfortunately Melbournians missed out last year due to the cancellation of a show that was being organised by the "Australian Amiga Gathering Organisers". I haven't heard from them regarding their future plans and assume that they won't be going ahead with their show. So yes, we will be organising another show, but at this point no firm date or location has been decided.

I would like to get your input on the type of show we should setup. If you would like to add your two cents worth please do so via post or email (I am not great at taking notes over the phone). Commercial interests are invited to express their support.

Wow it has been interesting month - Myst has been selling like hot cakes - many of the Amiga dealers I spoke to have sold out and are getting more in. If you haven't had a look at this game, take the time to check it out. The graphics are excellent; especially on a doublepal screen. Doom has been ported over to the Amiga, another top game, and Clickboom has announced the intended release of Quake in the near future. All these games have one thing in common; they have incited Amiga
Shaf Information & Technologies PVT. LTD of India recently signed an order for 2000 Amiga 1200's. The agreement was signed during the BCS India '97 fair, an "International Exhibition & Conference on Broadcast Cable and Satellite" and is the biggest ever order in the Asian region for Amiga International. Delivery of the Amiga's will begin in February 1998. The Amiga's will be used by cable operators, and the broadcast and videographics industry. Pradeep S. Kohli, Director Finance, Shaf, has been quoted as saying "AMIGA is one of the best and efficient solutions". Both Amiga International and Shaf hope this is the beginning of a new relationship bringing success to both companies. Shaf can be found on the Web at http://www.shafindia.com.

ClickBOOM to release Amiga Quake

After many months of rumor and speculation ClickBOOM have officially confirmed that they have reached an agreement with ID Software to release an official port of Quake to the Amiga. Early last year Quake was ported to the Amiga by an Amiga coding group from stolen source code and development quickly halted when ID Software threatened legal action. The ClickBOOM Quake will be identical to the original PC version and is fully compatible with all Quake add-ons. It will also fully support network and internet play so an Amiga can connect to a Quake server and play against PC and Mac users (the ultimate revenge!). Quake will require at least 8mb Fast RAM, CDROM and 35mb of hard drive space. While Quake will work on a 68020 nothing less than a 68040 is recommended. As an added bonus Quake will fully multitask and is compatible with AHI, Picasso96, Cybergraphics and AGA. More information can be found at http://www.clickboom.com.

DOOM finally on the Amiga

When DOOM was released in 1993 for the PC it revolutionised the games industry and spawned many copy cat games. ID Software, the owners of DOOM recently released the Linux DOOM source code free. Amiga coders worldwide took the opportunity to finally port the game to the Amiga. Within two weeks of the source codes release Amiga ports began to appear. Currently there are five known ports of DOOM, each with varying quality. While specifications and requirements differ between ports the minimum configuration recommended is a 68030, AGA chipset and 8mb of available RAM. Some ports are reportedly compatible with the ECS chipset but this could not be confirmed at the time of print. All the latest news on Amiga DOOM, where it can be found and compatibility with various WAD's (levels) can be found at http://www.pluk.com.

PlayableTV & Newtek News

For those who haven't yet heard a new presentation system based on the Amiga and the VideoToaster from Newtek has been released by a new US company, PlayableTV. It can deliver performance and features that cannot be replicated on any other system. When shown to prospective buyers such as NASA and other prominent companies it reportedly blew their socks off so to speak. They were so impressed they have already made a substantial preorder. However there was a distinct possibility

Amiga International Sends Seasons Greetings

In a bid to boost spirits in the Amiga community Amiga Inc have sent Amigans an online "Seasons Greetings" card. The card which features graphics by well known Amiga artist Eric Schwartz was uploaded to the internet just before Christmas. We have reprinted it on page 17.
PlayableTV would never see the light of day due to Newtek and PlayableTV not coming to an agreement which would assure supply of VideoToasters to the company. A legal Fulfillment Commitment has been drawn up and sent to Newtek. Currently PlayableTV are waiting on Newtek's reply. Amiga International have already assured supply of Amiga 4000Ts to PlayableTV and are reportedly very excited. It is expected that Newtek will come to an agreement with PlayableTV very soon. After that PlayableTV can enter full scale production.

CrossDOS 7 Released

CrossDOS, the program that allows the Amiga to read PC formatted disks has been upgraded and is now at version 7.0. Many users may already be familiar with CrossDOS, a cut down version was bundled with every copy of AmigaOS since version 2.0. Version 7.0 includes support for Windows95 long file names and the whole CrossDOS suite of programs has been upgraded. For more information on CrossDOS and its pricing and availability contact your local Amiga Dealer.

Alive MediaSoft

Alive MediaSoft of England have devised a different, innovative way of getting popular games onto the Amiga, through software emulation so Alive decided to create a specialised software Mac emulator which would make Mac games appear to run like native Amiga titles. However the problem has been obtaining a license from Apple Computer to use a software image of the Mac ROM. While the exact stage of negotiations is unknown it has been strongly rumoured at the time of press that Alive are on the verge of releasing their first Amiga-Mac title, DOOM II. More news if and when it arrives.

Crossgrade from ADPro to ImageFX

Nova Design, creators of the Amiga's best image processing program, Image FX, is offering all users of Art Department Professional the chance to upgrade to the latest release of ImageFX for only $US179. To qualify for the offer AdPro users must send in the inside cover of their AdPro manual with a cheque or credit card information. For more information on the deal visit Nova Design at http://www.novadesign.com or contact your local dealer.

Sadeness release OnEscapee

Sadeness Software's latest Amiga game, OnEscapee was released just before Christmas. OnEscapee is an action adventure game in the style of the Delphine classics Flashback and Another World. It was coded by a little known Hungarian group called Invictus Team and is also available for the PC. The game is said to contain excellent graphics, addictive game play and a stunning soundtrack. Already OnEscapee has received many accolades including being awarded the prestigious "Game Of 1997" by respected Amiga games WWW site Amiga Flame. OnEscapee requires an AGA Amiga, CDROM, 68020 or higher and a minimum of 2mb of Fast RAM. A 5.2mb demo is available on Aminet game/demo/OnEscapee.lha.

AirMail 2.0 Pro

Toysoft Development has just released AirMail 2.0 Pro. AirMail originally appeared in 1995 as a shareware program with a lot of promise. Since then it has been significantly updated and upgraded to justify its commercial release. The latest version fully supports SMTP and POP protocols and is fully MIME compatible. It also includes many features unseen in any other Amiga email client including "Mail Peek" which allows you to screen email before downloading it. AirMail Pro should be available in Amiga shops soon.
What is a graphics tablet?
A graphics tablet is a flat, electronic art pad with a matching pen. The pen acts as a mouse, doing everything a mouse can do but so much more. A single tap is a single mouse button click, a double tap—a double click. Dragging and dropping, editing, highlighting, cutting/pasting are all done with ease on a graphics tablet.

All Wacom graphics tablets offer 256 levels of pressure sensitivity to pick up every nuance of artistic expression. They also come with the exclusive Wacom Erasing UltraPen®, which is cordless, batteryless and pressure-sensitive. This is the key that allows you to draw, paint and edit images naturally.

The ArtPad II 4x5 combines Wacom pressure-sensitivity and the features of larger, more professional graphic tablets all into one small, affordable, entry-level package for the creative hobbyist, artist, or computer enthusiast in business, education or the home. ArtPad has a 4" x 5" active area and provides the superior feel and control needed to take full advantage of today's graphics software, while realistically simulating traditional media, all at a low cost.

The ArtZ II 6x8, with its transparent overlay, programmable menu strip, and 6" x 8" active area, provides the right balance of professional features, functionality and size to meet the needs of creative professionals needing to illustrate, paint or manipulate images on a computer. The ArtZ II 6x8 provides high-end design capability and functionality in a size that fits easily on a desktop, in a briefcase, or on your lap.

The ArtZ II 12x12 is a full-featured graphics tablet featuring a 12" x 12" active area that provides the flexibility for the professional whose artistic style or mechanical requirements require room for full arm motion, full page creation at scale, or extensive 8 1/2" x 11" page layout and image manipulation tasks, or desires full page tracing of art.
Mystique receives support from Amiga International

Mystique Corporation, a WWW site and organization dedicated to improving Amiga children's software has been officially sponsored by Amiga international. Education and children's software has always been a poorly neglected area of the Amiga market and Mystique finally hope to change this.

Myst gets CyberGFX add-on

In the rush to get Myst released by Christmas ClickBOOM decided to leave out the promised CyberGraphics support and release it at another date. The patch is now available directly from ClickBOOM and allows any Amiga with a CyberGraphics compatible graphics card to utilise the faster and improved graphics resolutions of their card.

Amiga Flame names top 10 of 97

Amiga Flame, the premier Internet Amiga WWW games site has named its top 10 Amiga games of 1997. And while games releases have been slow and infrequent at times throughout the past year the top ten highlight the quality of the releases. As previously reported OnEscapee has been selected as the best game of 1997. A full list can be found below:

10. Burnout
9. Trapped 2
8. Tiny Troops
7. Testament
6. Big Red Adventure
5. Shadow Of the Third Moon
4. Final Odyssey
3. Myst
2. Uropa2
1. OnEscapee

Championship Manager 2
96/97 finally released

Eidos Interactive has finally completed and released the long awaited Championship Manager 2 96/97. The game which was originally due to be released in early 1996 was continually delayed as Eidos struggled to port the game to the Amiga. Major problems were struck when it was revealed that the publisher wanted the game to be able to run on a minimum specification Amiga. Because of this the game does not take advantage of high specification Amiga's and is not hard drive installable. Early indications from those that have bought the game suggest it is a massive disappointment with some reporting it takes over an hour of disk accessing and processing to play a game.

Games Master System

The Games Master system is an attempt to enhance the AmigaOS's support of games. It is delivered through a shared library which includes many powerful features including object oriented kernel design, sound support, dynamic resource allocation, fast Blitter, is fully multitasking and supports screen switching. For programmers the system includes a fully functional resource tracker and debugger as well as safe task destruction features to further eliminate the chances of a system crash. Interestingly the system can be ported across to other platforms and it is predicted in the future GMS programs could run on other platforms without recompilation. In reality this will only work if the two systems utilise the same CPU such as 68k Mac's and 68k Amiga's. Example source code and extensive documentation is included for C, E and Assembler.
Currently the system is available in User and Developer archives free from Aminet, dev/misc/gms_dev.lha.

Flyin'High Add-Ons

P.U.R.E. Design has released data disks containing 2 new worlds for Flyin' High, the 3D racing game released in August 1997. Each world includes 5 new levels and new background music.

New Games Developers.

Black Flag, a new Amiga development team are currently working on its first title, Caveman Species. The game is a real time strategy war game with a difference, it is set many thousands of years ago in the prehistoric age. Caveman Species is currently only 5% complete according to the developers and is due for a Spring 1998 release.

Skillo Interactive, another new Amiga development team has a new Warcraft II style game in development titled Martian Tales.

Continuing with the announcement of strategy games is "Great Nations", a game inspired by Civilization. The game is even strikingly similar to Civilization in many ways except it is more advanced. Multiplayer support will be included through TCP/IP. A demo is now available at the Great Nations website, http://gn.gameshock.com.

Quiet Please Tennis from Italian development group The Spooky Fellows has been in development since 1996. However due to various problems the game was cancelled but has now been resurrected. The game will sup-

port various modes including playing the full ATP tour in either doubles or singles. Currently there are only plans for an AGA version. Quiet Please Tennis is due sometime this year, no firm release date has been set due to the Spooky Fellows having trouble locating a publisher.

Lambda is an attempt to make a 3D space combat game similar in style of Wing Commander for the Amiga. The game is still in the early stages of development however the demo available highlights the power of the new 3D engine the game will utilise.

The long awaited Genetic Species from Vulcan Software is nearing completion and to celebrate Vulcan is giving away 10 free copies of the CD-ROM game. For more information visit www.marble-eyes.dk. In other Genetic Species news demo version 3.0 is now available from the above mentioned site and Aminet.

Opera Browser on Amiga?

Opera Software, developers of the low cost, resource efficient WWW browser, Opera for the PC has launched Project Magic, a "unique initiative to gauge interest in Opera, our marvellous web browser, for operating systems other than MS Windows". While Opera isn't as feature packed as Netscape or Internet Explorer it is small, powerful and perfect for low end machines. The full version of Opera costs $US35. If you are interested in an Amiga version email amiga@operasoftware.com or visit www.operasoftware.com.

The BoXeR has attracted the most attention from Amiga users because it represents a real move forward. The system realizes the shortcomings of the A4000 motherboard, of which there are many and aims to eradicate them and also deliver a real high end Amiga. The system now sports 68040 signalling (a standard A4000 has 68030 signalling which explains the comparatively poor performance of 040 accelerators) and the memory limit has been increased from a meagre 16MB to 2GB. There is also built in ISA slots and a PPC connector as well as all the standard Amiga I/O ports. The BoXeR can use PC or Amiga keyboards and supports the 68040 or 68060 processor from 25mhz up to 75mhz.

Interestingly, Index Information only plans on selling BoXeR motherboards and not complete systems. Index Information, reason is that this gives the Amiga dealer greater power to customize the BoXeR system to suit the local market and also create their own branded product. The motherboards will be distributed internationally by Blittersoft.
The insideOut

This is basically an Amiga on a PCI card for the PC. It will be a complete Amiga in that it will include the AGA chipset, Kickstart ROM and CIA chips and even has IDE, floppy, keyboard and video connectors. The system is still in development but promises to achieve double the performance of the 68060 because the PC processor does all the I/O. The InsideOut will support all PC expansions such as super fast PCI graphics cards and sound cards while still retaining compatibility with all existing Amiga software. Currently Index are working with HIQ, designers of the Siamese system to allow the Siamese software to run on the card. When this is completed the InsideOut promises to be the ultimate expansion for any PC and combined with a software Mac emulator such as Shapeshifter it would be possible to have 3 platforms in one!

HIQ Project Alpha

HIQ has announced Project Alpha, an ongoing project to integrate the Amiga system with the Alpha processor. Already the Siamese software has been ported to the Intel and Alpha processors and within 18 months HIQ hope to have a fully ported AmigaOS available for the Alpha processor. Stage one of the project which included the release of the Siamese 2.5 software is already complete and future stages will incorporate Index Information's Access and eventually the revolutionary insideOut. Project Alpha is due to be completed by the first or second quarter of 1999 and by then the AmigaOS would have been fully ported to the Alpha processor relying only on the InsideOut to run legacy Amiga software.

A Bit More Dribble

owners to sell up and go clone (IBM compatible). Like many Amigans now-days I am not an avid games player, but games are a big part of any computer platform’s sales and with the increasing number of excellent titles being released on the Amiga this will improve Amiga’s saleability.

An Amiga revolution is about to take place. Until now we have been reliant on the original Amiga motherboard. With the announcement of the “BoXer Motherboard” made by index Information (turn to page 12) we will have the freedom to specify our exact system requirements. The practical aspect to the BoXer is that it will fit any common clone PC case. You can buy cases ranging in price from $39 to $900 - you have the freedom to choose. The major aspect of the BoXer is the implementation of ISA slots on the board. To the dedicated Amigan this is a new term, which standards for “industry Standard Architecture”. ISA is commonplace in IBM clones. This means that you will be able to purchase many of the inexpensive PC cards; e.g. network cards, sound cards, etc. This is where the major saving will be building your new future Amiga.

Until next month

Michael Burak

We have changed our cyber address:

Email: aag@acay.com.au

Australian Amiga Gazette Jan 98
1997 Reader Survey Results part A

The following graphs represent some of the results gathered. Our thanks goes to everyone who participated in the survey. The data collected helps us know what you want in AAG.

Most common add-on owned

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Most common Wb ver

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Amiga models owned

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 Been using for years

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Most common Ram config...

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The age of our readers

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The New Amiga Motherboard!

This is a great moment in Amiga history. Amiga users worldwide have been finally freed from the shackles of Commodore. No longer will we be dictated to by a heartless conglomerate.

But seriously folks the “BoXeR” motherboard provides the freedom to configure your future Amiga to your own requirements using low cost common PC components.

The “BoXeR” motherboard delivers a medium cost home/semi-professional Multi-Media computing motherboard based on the Amiga Chip Set and Operating System. This will allow complete machines to be priced between the A1200 and A4000, providing low purchase price and expansion options, while delivering a performance in excess of the A4000.

The strategy for marketing is to sell through OEM dealers who customize the unit to their own particular markets. By providing low cost, while allowing flexibility and local customization it is the intention that the BoXeR will empower distributors and dealers to push the market forward and distribute the marketing effort worldwide.

The worldwide distributor for the “BoXeR” is “BlitterSoft”.

The motherboard is in prototype and was shown for the first time at the Computer ’97 show on 14-16th November 1997.

The “BoXeR” will be sold in three ways.
• As the heart of the new Blittersoft range of “Black Box” Amiga systems.
• As a single motherboard solution to the customer, to build their own unique system.
• Through OEM dealers who may customise the unit to their own particular markets.

Key Design Points
The all-new leading-edge design uses the AGA chip set for compatibility but has completely redesigned logic to achieve the highest performance and most flexible design. Supports 68040 or 68060 from 25MHz - 75MHz. Designed to achieve low system cost. Supports 4x standard 72 pin SIMM’s for total FAST memory of 2Gb. High-speed CHIP memory read/write technology which can boost access by up to 30%. Mounts in standard PC baby-AT case. (Huge selection of cases available from a wide range of suppliers at the lowest price points). Processor connector to support a low cost PowerPC upgrade (in development). This expansion allows the on-board 680x0 to remain in place so that the upgrade is little more than a PowerPC on a card. MPEG/Genlock module with high quality output and broadcast quality genlocking is in development. Has live working 16-bit ISA slots to support low cost peripherals such as Modems, Ethernet and Sound cards. FlashROM allows software and hardware updates. CD-ROM File System in ROM allows booting from CD.

Blittersoft do not have a final shipping date or prices. This information will be available shortly.

Contact BlitterSoft
Sales & Marketing
+44-(0)1908-261488
Email: boxer@blittersoft.com

Contact Index Information Ltd
+44-(0)1256-703426
Email: index@cix.co.uk
Main Features

• 100% Amiga compatible. Baby-AT motherboard based on Amiga technology.
  - fits in any standard PC Desktop/Tower case.
• Motorola 68040 or 68060 at 25-75MHz supported in a single processor socket.
• On board 2Mb CHIP RAM. 4 x 72 pin standard SIMM sockets allowing up to 2Gb FAST RAM.
• Dual IDE Hard disk interface, with standard pitch 40 pin header.
• Flash ROM 2Mb, 32 bit wide. Used to provide kickstart ROM's and resident modules.
• Floppy disk drive interface, operating as DF0:, including 0.5sec delay on RDY.
• CD-ROM audio input connector and mixer.
• Real Time Clock, using NiCad.
• Keyboard port is a standard DIN connector for PC keyboard or Amiga keyboard (Auto-detection).
• 2 x 16 bit Active ISA slots, in-line with 4 x Zorro 3 slots.
• Amiga Video slot.

Connectors

• Printer port, 26 pin header.
• AV slot - provides audio, composite and RGB signals.
• RGB video (on rear AV board).
• Serial port 10 pin header Joystick and mouse port, 10 pin headers.
• Audio header, 4x1.
• Power In - standard PC 12 pin connectorIDE - 40 pin (Dual) Floppy drive DF0:/DF1: header.
"CP" is a shareware program for children which enables them to paint/draw on a scrolling screen. The Guidefile states that "Currently it consists only of an early version of the paint package but will go on to include many games, utilities and educational tools, all fluidly integrated into the one great package". The crippled version is easily obtainable from the website of Mystcorp, being located at www.mystcorp.unet.com.

After following the easy downloading instructions from the website, my children and I were treated to a delightfully simple paint program which encourages self expression and fun. Large, brightly coloured "buttons" are featured in order for the child to choose colours, drawing tools, drawing shapes and stamps. "CP" was then handed over to my two child consultants, who were more than happy to play for an hour each (which is a long time for a child).

The Guidefile states that "... yet is so simple to use that even a four year old can use it!" - this is certainly true and I would of course drop this age to three. Child consultant number one is, in fact, 2.5 years old and has limited experience using a "puter", as he calls it. Firstly, he was dead keen when the graphics appeared and was delighted at the verbal greeting which CP offered. After waiting patiently for 40 seconds for the arrow to be offered (giving time for adults to read the warning notes), the appropriate buttons were clicked on various screens to start him off.

Like most toddlers and new computer users, he had difficulty in the manipulation of his mouse. This he conquered after about ten minutes. After realising he needed to lift his finger off the mouse button in order to access the palette, child consultant number one settled down a bit and started to draw. This is one little aspect that would be useful to correct if the authors wish to target very small children; i.e. that it doesn't matter if the child is holding down the left mouse button when trying to move from the "drawing screen" to the palette.

All-in-all, consultant number one found the button sizes no problem
to manage and, in general, he felt in control of the program, even though he missed several fun features such as the stamp. Also greatly enjoyed was the fact that each colour, when clicked, gave an audio colour recognition; i.e. "dark red" was heard when that particular coloured button was clicked. The drawing screen occupies the top half of the screen and scrolls left or right - a feature much used and enjoyed. Other buttons enabled erasing, removing the last doodle drawn, viewing the whole picture at once and a few other palette options to enable brushing, spraying and multi-coloured effects to name a few.

After consultant number one became thus occupied in the sandpit an hour later, consultant number two (being 6.5 years old) lent her opinion to the program. This consultant has Deluxe Paint experience and currently enjoys creating animations. Fearing she would become bored quickly, I was pleasantly surprised to find that she, too, had become "CP hooked".

Being older and more experienced, consultant number two took to CP easily and readily availed herself of features which the previous consultant had been too busy to notice. Stamp, cut and paste, multi-coloured doodling was embarked upon at once and she found the scrolling screen, button size and audio feature "good". Consultant number two also appreciated the colourful screen transitions and background and overall rated the CP program as "good".

Unfortunately, consultant number one was only able to rate the program by screaming at consultant number two, "Get off the 'puter - that's my CP!". I think most parents would take that as thumbs up from the kids.

Registration by email of this program is required by Mystcorp in order for you to avoid the time restriction, access many more tools and to receive updates. The cost for the Harddrive Version is 8 pounds (English Sterling) for Australians (Rest of World) plus an extra 2.50 pounds for additional versions. A Disk Version is also available by normal mail at a cost of 7.50 pounds plus 2 pounds for additional versions. Mystcorp cannot, at present, accept Visa and requests that you order by post only. Note: Please make sure you specify which Version you require; i.e. Harddrive or Disk.

The commercial version lists many impressive features, which include: full animation, fully customisable with each user having their own preference file, many stereo tracks, animated help system, slideshow/book generator, games and utilities to name a few. The commercial version will be released as soon as it is finished.

**Installation:**
The shareware version is downloaded from the internet as a .lha file and extraction is simple. CP comes with a harddrive install script that uses the standard Commodore installer Version 43.3.

**System Requirements:**
The Guidefile states that "CP should be compatible with all versions of Workbench and all Amiga setups including Power Amigas. CP should run on any Amiga computer or compatible OS from Workbench V1.3+ with 1mb+ of ram. CP has been designed principally for use with a harddrive but there is a version currently available for those users who do not have a harddrive ... the disk version will not run as efficiently as the HD version". Unfortunately CP did not like my A2000 using WB2.0, so it is currently sitting on AAG's A4000.

**Documentation:**
The documentation, at present, comes in the form of a Guidefile, which is summarises installation, a history of CP, System Requirements and a list of features; however it does not include instructions on CP usage. Our two child consultants seemed to be able to use the version without the need for instructions, however, as a parent, I would like to see some documentation (perhaps with the commercial versions) which explains the features fully so full use of the program can be exploited by the child.

**Mystcorp Details:**
13 Ardmore Park
Belfast BT10 0JY
Northern Ireland
cp@mystcorp.u-net.com

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**Overall Rating:**

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<tr>
<td>Installation</td>
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<td>Overall Performance</td>
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Hopefully more about Mystcorp and their promotion of children's software for the Amiga in next month's AAG. If you have any queries regarding this review, please feel free to email me at: aag@acay.com.au
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Have you ever wondered what your floppy drive was doing when it seems to keep reading the same track over and over again? I decided to add a track indicator to my disk drive to show exactly what it was doing! Unlike the software only track indicators, this device requires no software initialization of any sort, and will therefore always be ready every time you turn on your computer. This means that it will even work with non-DOS software. The basic idea is simple. The Track Display monitors the signals sent to the floppy drive (as well as a few from the drive), and duplicates the head motions of the drive. It also indicates the disk side being accessed and the state of the R/W line. Amiga drives will only accept commands when their drive select pin is enabled. There are four drive select pins, one for each drive. For the external drives, the drive select lines are moved over by one for each drive in the chain. The external drives move their 2nd select line (SEL2) to SEL1 on the expansion connector, and SEL3 to SEL2 and so on. Therefore each drive in the chain only needs to respond to SEL1. The internal drive selects are not passed to the external drive connector, so if you wish to monitor an internal drive, you will need to pass those select lines to the Track Display circuitry.

About the circuit.
The drive select line is inverted, and used to enable an octal latch. This causes the latch to pass the signals fed to it from the Amiga drive connector. There are two CMOS up/down counter chips (CD4510) and two BCD to 7 segment LED display drivers (CD4511) that keep track of the current head position. The TRKO signal is buffered and sent through a capacitor, which is used to reset the counters to 00 whenever the drive steps to track 0, thus synchronizing the counters to the drive. The capacitor is used to deliver a single reset pulse rather than a continuous signal. The DIR signal determines whether the counters count up or down, and the STEP signal is used as the counter clock. The SIDE and Write Enable signals are buffered and sent to the decimal points on the 7 segment displays to indicate the current side and write status. The displays are buffered with 330 Ohm resistors to limit current.

Construction is not critical.
You can either mount the device internally or externally. I chose to mount mine inside the voluminous A1010 drive. I cut a small square hole in the upper right corner, in which I placed some 1/8" smoked plexiglass. I mounted the displays upside down behind the plexiglass so that the SIDE and WE points did not look like decimal points. After compensating for the pin changes, I mounted the resistors and display drivers to the back of the 7 segment displays. This limited the number of wires needed to the rest of the circuit which I mounted on a small piece of perf-board and placed along side of the 1010 drive. The fast connections were to the Amiga drive connector inside of the A1010. I used short pieces of ribbon cable, which were small enough to feed around the edge of the metal shielding. The project works great! Instead of making one for every drive, you can wire up a selector switch to the other SEL line for the other drives. This allows you to monitor any drive in the system. Be careful when wiring it up.

Double check your work.
A stray piece of wire could permanently damage your Amiga! Once you've built one of these devices, you'll be amazed to find out what your floppy drive has been up to all this time! Good Luck! -Mark Spankus

Mark@Shorty.CS.wisc.edu

The circuit diagram for the "Floppy drive Track Display" can be found on page 34
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Dear AAG
I have an A1200 with workbench: WB3.0, expansion: 030. My problem is that my hard drive partition will not validate. I have tried quarter back tools and similar software. Block out of range message keeps coming up.

Dear Darren
The best program I have found that will help you is "DiskSalvage", available on Aminet. If this program doesn't help, it is most likely that you have a hard block error, which is in practical terms, a physical fault on the surface of your hard drive platters. The only solution to this would be to do a data verification using HDToolBox. HDToolBox will mask out the errors. Please note this procedure will require you to reformat the affected partition.

Dear AAG
I have a A4000 with heaps of memory: using workbench: Wb3.1. I am actually learning HTML and I want to learn how I can read forms that have been transmitted with the <submit> tag. I guess I need an CGI script, but how can I create such a script for example in c?

Dear Lars
There are some basics you need to understand before you can get stuck into your HTML. Firstly, anything that is a script usually means that it is created in standard ASCII text; such as a CGI script. This you would created using any standard text editor. To save you the time and bother, next time you are on the net, type in the phrase (mailto) and you will receive an abundance of available public domain CGI scripts designed specifically for that purpose. The next step is just to make minor changes to some of the variables within the script that pertain to your form requirements and environment (your site details), this then gets uploaded onto your web site and you create a matching form within your HTML pages. Much of the details will be included within the archives of the CGI script. Email us if you get it up and running.

Dear AAG
I own a A3000 memory: 8meg expansion: NetCom voiceMaster 288 and I have just registed the program Miami upon receiving my keys files, I installed version 02 on top of my evaluation program. I can't get the program Miami to run. When I click on the icon, it appears to load, but nothing happens. If I attempt to run the program once again, I get the message (TCP/IC already running) I can't do a thing. Please can you help?

Dear Alan
Without some more specific information it is hard to give you a complete solution, but I would recommend that you find a file called "Miami.default" and back it up to a safe place, then delete your old Miami drawer and its contents and reinstall a registered version of Miami. After that you will need to import your old Miami.default file and, fingers crossed, it should work. If that doesn't solve the problem, just give us a yell.
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Who had thought it! "MYST" on the AMIGA. Probably nobody, but "ClickBOOM" has shown us that the AMIGA is not yet on the scrap heap and still is capable of doing a lot of things.

In 1996 "Capital Punishment" was released. It was a great success and - from my point of view - the best debut game that has ever been developed. "ClickBOOM" obtained for itself a reputation among the Amiga users after a very short time and it was clear that it would not take long until their next game was released.

"ClickBOOM" had taken it into their heads to convert the "best-selling CD-ROM game of the year 1996 (PC)" for the AMIGA. Well, some users were more or less involved in this decision, and after the licensing agreement had been made, "ClickBOOM" could begin working.

Getting Started
Before starting, "MYST" has to be installed. There is an installation script for this task on the CD. After starting the script and choosing the destination drawer, you can decide how much you want to install. It is possible to install 5 MB (smallest installation), 40 MB, 270 MB or 310 MB. Even with the biggest installation (310 MB) the CD is still needed.

Altogether the CD contains 629 MB of data; apart from the game itself, there is a 14 minute film about the making of "MYST". Though this film deals not with "ClickBOOM"'s conversion, but with the development of the PC/Mac version. The film is available for viewing right after the installation.

A story is told about an old book, that reports about an island named "MYST". In the middle of this book is a picture, on which the player clicks, and in a mystical way, he will be "teleported" to the island "MYST". Arrived at the island you explore it first, and you notice very soon, that you are alone on the island. It does not take long to find the note with a message for Katharina. The player naturally does not know who Katharina is, and so he can not do anything about it. It should be said, that the myst player is not put in somebodys else's place like in other adventure games. You play yourself, you are practically caught on this island.

The Island
"MYST" is a mixture of progress and past. You can find an old wooden house, secret corridors, a hidden lift, a space ship, and a lot more. In the library you can find diaries, from which you can get rather a lot of information. If one reads these books, he gets the impression as if he had experienced and written down everything for himself. It did not take long until I found the first hidden corridor and solved the secret of the big clock. It is just fun to search on the island for new information and to solve the -
mostly quite fiddly - mysteries. But until I could get into the second world, I had to find out quite some things. And then I could hold the book in my hands, that took me into the second world... into the "Mechanical".

System Requirements
"MYST" runs on an AGA Amiga or an Amiga with graphics card. In addition to this 8 MB fast ram and at least a 68020 processor are needed, as well as a hard disk. A 68060 computer with 16 MB would be the best.

Gameplay & Sound
The Gameplay is kept simple. The "mousepointer" is being displayed as a hand, with that you can pull levers, turn on switches and examine objects. On the screen you click onto the left or right respectively upper and lower area to walk into this direction. The game control is simple, easy to learn and functions well. The sound is often limited to murmur of water or gloomy sounds in hidden rooms. But there are also some melodies you can listen to. The music does not get on the nerves and underlines several "scenes" of the game. The speech output is all right, clear and easy to understand. In fact, there are very few people you can meet, but when... then you can listen to what they say. Initially, as you get to know from the "Making of Myst", there should have been no music, but this surely would have been a mistake, because you already walk through a (nearly) "dead" world and this without music? No, this would have been really bad, but positively there is some.

Graphics & Animation
The graphics have been completely rendered and have full 256 colours on an AGA Amiga. Here and there the Amiga version looks better than the PC/Mac version, although the latter also provides 256 colours. Naturally, graphics cards are supported. Furthermore, the screen mode is adjustable, and at a size of 720x550x256 the graphics are fantastic. There has been nothing better, okay... those graphics are stills with integrated animations, but nevertheless! The animations run dependent on CPU and memory - smoothly and look good as well. Sometimes a bird flies over the water or a butterfly crosses your path. So, graphics and anims are top! Unnecessary things have been left out, the only things I miss are treetops (leaves and branches) moving in the wind, and the water is not animated.

Conclusion
"MYST" is really a very good game. The graphics are the best since years, and once when you are in the wonderful world of "MYST"... you enter this island full of fantasy and explore it, you can not get away from it. This game is the crowning end of a.... let us say "satisfying" year 1997.

"MYST" is available for about $90 at your Amiga dealer, though the price seems a bit high to me!

Mario Nitschke

Rating:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Graphics</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gameplay</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>96 %</td>
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Australian Amiga Gazette Jan 98
MRQ
The standard Amiga Workbench requester has never been all that exciting, and for years now it has been calling out for a change. MRQ is a small commodity that replies to the callout. Although not the only requester enhancer that I have seen MRQ did stand out above the rest for its enhancements and features. The changes are subtle, but distinct, and mainly involve adding some graphics and splashing some colour to give the requester a new appearance.

To my surprise MRQ has quite a degree of flexibility and features; not something you would expect from a commodity like this. The most noted feature of MRQ is that it uses MUI. This opens up a lot of other features that make MRQ the better alternative to other programs of this kind. You can configure MRQ's fonts, frames, group layout to suit your personal tastes. Each requester has an image associated with it which can be remapped. Images can be of any depth and format, and thanks to MUI's image class library, they do not use memory, as they are loaded as they are required. I would advise that some consideration be made to the format chosen.

MRQ extends beyond its normal call of duty with the ability to combine every image with an Arexx command. Using this you will be able to send messages to any program when a particular requester pop up, and it is even possible to start programs or shell scripts through the Arexx system interface.

Aside from the programs noted features and overall enhancement, the only disappointment to MRQ is the absence of an installer script. Although manual installation was simple, the addition of an installer script would have made MRQ flawless.

Requirements: MUI3.0+, OS3.0+, 020 CPU Programmed By: Mathias Bethke Available From: Aminet archives

FX
Since I first used the sound preferences in Workbench I have not been impressed. Perhaps I was asking too much when I discovered that only one system function could have sound attached to it. Wanting to add some personality to my Workbench by adding sound samples to various functions I began to search for a suitable alternative. A utility called FX was the solution. FX will allow you to add sound samples to any system function in Workbench, with the most noted option being the use of datatype.

In all there are thirty-one system functions that you can choose to have a sound sample added to. These range from opening and closing a window to sending a screen to either the front or back, to even deleting a file. The sound formats are issued to each function through the use of the preferences program. Simply select from the list what function you want a sound item attached to and select a sound sample. You can choose to have the sound active or not and you can set a delay for the sound. The best feature of FX is the ability to save several settings, where each setting could have a set theme. If you get bored with one theme, simply change it.

FX will let you add some personality to your computer. The only drawback, I could imagine, is that assigning a sound sample to each function will result in your Amiga blowing out endless sounds from your
speakers, which can become annoying rather quickly.

Requirements: Amiga OS 3.0+ and 020 CPU. Programmed By: Markus Albrecht. Available From: Aminet sites or Aminet CD 21

MagicTV
For years now I have been using my Amiga with a resolution that is interlaced. Not having the funds to go out and buy a non-interlaced monitor, I simply sacrificed the quality of my screen and possibly my eyesight, for the sake of having a higher resolution. Not ever expecting a software alternative to resolve the flickering screen, I was surprised when I came across a small software application, called MagicTV which claimed to reduce the flickering of interlaced screens.

Eager to test out the program I immediately noticed an improvement in the amount of flickering from my screen. Text became easier to read and small detailed graphics such as icons became more clearer. The change can be best described as appearing soft and more smoother. Interested to find out how this works, I was disappointed to not find anything in the documentation on how this software marvel actually works. All I can tell you about its operation is that it does not darken the colours of your screen.

The solution does however come with some disadvantages. The foremost disadvantage is that you are limited to only using a sixteen colour palette for your screens, and the second disadvantage is that MagicTV messes up the pointer colours, by making it appear dark.

Magic TV is an impressive solution to a common problem that many Amiga owners, such as me would like to have fixed. If you have been putting up with the same problem that I have, and can live with the two small setbacks to the program, then MagicTV will be a welcome addition to your Workbench.

Requirements: AGA chipset
Programmed By: Neil Crawforth
Available From: Aminet archives

FontView
FontView, as the name suggests is a utility that lets you view your fonts. Often with fonts you are unable to view them separate from the program that uses them. FontView is good because it lets you view your bitmap or compugraphic fonts in the simplest way possible, and without having the need to go to the program that uses them. This makes viewing fonts a lot easier.

FontView uses its own GUI that is fast and easy to use because all the FontView options are available on the GUI interface, so there is no need to go through menus to get to an option. Selecting a font to view will result in almost immediate results being displayed. There is a requester which will allow you to move the screen from the default Workbench screen to any of the public screens that are available. The advantage of this is that you will be able to view the fonts under various screen modes, making it easier to see whether a font will suit your needs in that particular environment.

When FontView is first loaded it automatically scans your system font directory, and other font directories that it can find, and displays the fonts as a scrollable list. If required you can change the font directory. Using FontView I did not notice any restrictions on the type of fonts that I could view. All the characters are displayed in a clear view window, and you can choose to view the fonts in plain, bold, italic or underlined or a combination of the lot. The most notable feature of FontView was the fixfonts option button, that when clicked runs the FixFonts program to update the fonts files. This is useful when you add or remove a particular size font from your hard drive. Using this option you can eliminate the use of the FixFonts program all together.

Using FontView is a worthy addition to your line up of utility software, particularly if you an endless list of fonts. I found FontView to really shine when viewing large directories of fonts. The programs speed and ability to view all kinds of fonts together, makes FontView a better alternative to viewing fonts.

Requirements: OS 2.04+
Programmed By: Steve Banham
Over the last few issues we have been dealing with Special Effects and some of the things that can be achieved with our beloved Amigas, but how about our Paint Program, couldn't we create special effects in that? Well we most certainly can use a paint program for special effects. You will have the most freedom in the area of SFX with a paint program. Used in conjunction with Genlocking units, image processors, digitisers, animation programs or just by itself you can create literally thousands of special effects with a paint program. Most of the effects done with a paint program are just a matter of creativity and a bit of paint program skill. Paint programs are ideal for creating attractive, professional looking flow charts and graphs. You can even animate them using other programs, but today's paint programs have animation effects already built in. I use Deluxe Paint IV and Personal Paint 6.

An image grabbed from the screen or digitised can be cleaned up or modified. You can use the paint program to airbrush out unwanted elements (a plastic bag in that lovely looking landscape) or put new elements (how would the missus look with a moustache?). A variation of this technique has been used in Hollywood Movies for years. After the movie was shot on film an artist would go back and paint out unwanted Telegraph poles, overhead wires or unwanted buildings to name a few. A simple way to remove an object from the scene is to fill a paint program screen with colour 0 then genlock the video and the paint program, then select a brush and any colour other than colour 0. Bring up the 'brushes' colour palette and try to make your brush match the colour or pattern of an area right next to the object you want to remove. As you lay down the brush over the offending object it should disappear.

As I've already mentioned earlier, you can use a paint program to create almost any object real or imaginary and superimpose it over the video. Flying saucers, a full moon in an empty sky, a statue perhaps. All these things and many more can be created with a paint program and a bit of skill. All you have to do is colour everything else in the picture, where you want the video to come through, colour 0.

Hollywood film makers have been using a special effect called 'Matte Painting' for years. This was a complex way to create dramatic scenery with double exposure of the film. The camera would be set up in the position to record the scene with a sheet of glass in front of the camera lens, a matte artist would come in and...
draw a line around the objects to be saved. The glass would be taken away and two masks would be made that followed the lines drawn by the matte artist, one for the area to be left in the scene and one for the area to be created or the matte. The scene would then be shot with the matte mask in front of the lens and then filmed with the unwanted areas masked out. This way only the action needed would be recorded on film. The artists would then come in and paint the background on the other sheet of glass as in the film epic, Ben Hur, where the hills of Rome were just a matte mask painting blocking out the Hollywood Hills where the scene was actually shot. In the old classic The Wizard of Oz the Emerald Palace and the witch’s castle were both matte paintings.

This way of removing unwanted objects from film was and still is a very costly exercise but since the video invasion we have a much easier and faster way of achieving the same results with our paint program, skill and a bit of spare time. Since the

genilocking device will cleanly superimpose computer images of the live video we don’t need sheets of glass, mattes or double exposing of film but a frame grabber will help quite a lot.

Here is a simple exercise that will give us the results achieved by Hollywood but at no extra costs to us if we have the right equipment.

Firstly shoot your video footage keeping in mind that we will be creating SFX with the finished video. While playing back your footage grab a frame that you want to change from the scene. If you don’t have a frame grabber then you can genlock the scene and freeze frame it or just keep playing it back. Now with your paint program draw a line around the parts you want to keep or the parts you want to change using COLOUR 0. You can now turn off the VCR so you can concentrate on the matte painting. Fill in the parts of the screen where you want the video to show through with COLOUR 0. When you get the background the way you want it, go back and then genlock the graphics you just created over the top of the scene while recording to the master tape. If you’ve been careful enough with your drawing you should be able to see the live video and the new background on the same screen. With a digitiser or frame grabber you’ll be able to take this exercise one step further. Draw an outline on the video picture the same way as before, then pick up the outline as a brush. For best results it’s a good idea to use the keyboard commands so that the mouse doesn’t move. Next, load in a grabbed or digitised IFF picture, but one that doesn’t have colour 0 in it, you can use an image processor to fix this if the colour 0 exists. Now, paint the brush of the outline down on the new picture without moving the mouse because the line might move, then using the fill command from the keyboard fill the parts
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>MVC-FD5</th>
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</table>

<table>
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<table>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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with colour 0 where the video is to show through. Genlock the video image whilst recording to the master again and you will have a digitised or frame grab picture for your matte painting along with the untouched video in the foreground.

With this method it is possible to do this with every frame of your video and both these methods work better with the camera mounted on a tripod. These methods will seem like a lot of trouble to go to but the genlocking devices that are currently available will only allow you to superimpose graphics over video and not video on top of graphics— for this you need another device called a Chromakey, but that is another story.

Brushes can also make quick and interesting pointers that will grab the viewers attention. When superimposed over video you can draw your audience's attention exactly where you want it. This won't be appropriate for all your video productions, but is useful in demonstration, industrial and educational purpose tapes. Simply draw a brush pointer that doesn't use colour 0. It can be as simple as an arrow or as complex as a rendered human hand, even a company logo filled in on the arrow. To try this have your brush or pointer at the ready and fill the screen with colour 0, genlock the video and use the mouse to control the brush or pointer and you can move it around the screen as you wish. If you want a flashing pointer just draw it in place and use the undo command to flash it on and off.

Well that's another rap for this month, with so much to talk about it looks like we'll have to do some SFX next month. See you then.

Paul.

Circuit Diagram for “Floppy Drive Track Display”

Australian Amiga Gazette Jan 98
Amiga Dimension p23
Amiga Genus p21
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Computa Magic P/L p2
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MVB p23
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Unitech Electronics P/L p18, 19
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Helping Hands

If you live in the local area and would like to be involved in helping preparing AAG please contact Michael on (02) 4736-8055. No experience is required, just some spare time and a sense of humour.

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Writers Wanted

If you are interested in contributing to Australian Amiga Gazette we would like to hear from you. We can offer an incentive of $25.00 if your article is published on-top of our gratitude and that of our readers. Articles should submitted as plain text files. Graphics as iiff or gif format. Please do not send your originals just a copy.
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