

PowerCache

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Chapter 1

PowerCache

1.1 Some glossary and fancy buzzwords (5-Apr-1994)

Documentation for

PowerCache v37.114

A Flexible and Powerful Disk
Caching System for the Amiga

Written by Michael Berg
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Subsection: Glossary

In the documentation for PowerCache I have used quite a few words that may not mean anything to inexperienced users. I guess I'd better explain (briefly) what these buzzwords mean. Please select anything from the index below:

Commodity	What is a commodity?
Key file	What is a key file?
Locale	What is locale?
ReqTools	What is Reqtools.library?
IconX	What is IconX?
Installer	What is The Installer?
WBStartup	What is WBStartup?
Exchange	The Exchange program?
FidoNet	The Fidonet network?
ARexx	What is ARexx?
CHelp	What is CHelp?
ARexxBox	What is ARexxBox?
ReOrg	What is ReOrg?

Note: This document is fairly incomplete. I have mainly been focusing on the actual program and its documentation, and have not really had much time to keep this file on par :-)

1.2 What is ReOrg?

What is ReOrg?

After a period of use, harddrives tend to get "fragmented". Fragmentation happens when file and directory blocks get mixed up among eachother, and data blocks for single files get scattered over an entire partition.

As a result of disk fragmentation, harddisks becomes slow. In fact, it is not uncommon to see drive performance halved when the level of fragmentation rises to a mere 30-50%. Fragmentation can become even more intolerable, depending on what you use your drive for (fidonet sysops will surely agree with me on this :-)

To correct the problem with fragmentation, most harddisk utility packages offer some form of optimizer, de-fragmenter, or reorganizer. Common for all of these is that they scan the harddisk for "bits of files" and reorganize these so that they appear in sequence on the drive. This makes loading, saving and especially directory scanning (and that means icons) MUCH faster.

ReOrg, currently at version 3.11, is one of the best utilities available for correcting a well known problem with most Amiga filesystems. It was written by Holger Kruse, and has been on the market for some time now. It compares extremely well with commercial packages, and in the oppinion of this writer, far exceeds these. Speed-wise, nothing comes even remotely close to ReOrg, and safety-wise - well, I have optimized my harddisk literally dozens of times, and have not ONCE had any problems whatsoever.

Contact:

Holger Kruse
12006 Coed Drive
Orlando, FL 32826
USA

Phone: +1-407-381-3233
Internet: kruse@cs.ucf.edu
BIX: hkruse

The software is being distributed under the concept of shareware (like PowerCache), with a recommended fee of US \$10 (the software is woth ten times as much). Check it out :-)

1.3 What is a commodity

What is a Commodity?

A commodity is a program that remains resident when run. Commodities are controlled by the Exchange program and the commodities library system, and often has a way to "pop up" by activating a hotkey.

Commodities is a Workbench 2.04 facility. It is not available in operating

systems prior to this release.

1.4 What is locale

What is Locale?

Locale is a means of getting programs localized. That is, make programs communicate with the user in whatever language he or she prefers.

For example, if you want PowerCache to speak to you in French, all you need to do is to select "français" as the preferred language with the "Locale" program, located in your Prefs drawer. The rest should happen by itself.

Note that you must have a file called PowerCache.catalog in the directory LOCALE:Catalogs/dansk/ to have PowerCache speak danish to you. If you want PowerCache to speak French, you must have another file, also called PowerCache.catalog, in the directory LOCALE:Catalogs/Français/.

For further information on the Locale system on the Amiga, please refer to your Workbench 2.1 (or 3.0) documentation.

PowerCache 37.114 comes with catalog files for localization in Danish, French, Norwegian, German, Swedish, Italian, Netherlands, Hungarian and English (default language), and since the actual CatComp source included, other locales are bound to follow soon.

1.5 What is Reqtools.library

What is reqtools.library?

Reqtools.library is a set of functions enabling programs to use file requesters, font requesters, palette requesters, screenmode requesters and other notification requesters.

These are all very easy to program, and they look much nicer than the standard 2.04 requesters. They also have a wide range of bells and whistles to make life easier for the user -- and for the programmer.

PowerCache uses reqtools.library for all its requesters, so naturally, it requires this library. It is provided in the PowerCache distribution, and the installation scripts automatically installs it library if it is needed.

Reqtools.library is Copyright by Nico François.

1.6 What is IconX

What is IconX?

IconX is a small program you normally keep in C:, which enables users to execute AmigaDOS scripts directly from the Workbench (i.e. without needing

to start a separate CLI or Shell). All you need to do is fix up an icon for the script, and set the default-tool to IconX.

IconX can be acquired from most Fred Fish disks.

PowerCache comes complete with a script for IconX, but if you have Workbench 2.1, then you should really use the script provided for use with the new Installer program.

1.7 What is The Installer

What is The Installer?

The Installer is Commodore's official tool for installing software packages. It accepts a script in a special language and provides a neat user interface during the installation procedure itself.

The Installer is a standard part of the new Workbench 2.1 and 3.0 operating systems.

PowerCache comes complete with a script for The Installer, so if you have 2.1 or 3.0, then you should use the Installer script instead of the IconX script.

1.8 What is WBStartup

What is WBStartup

WBStartup is a drawer on your system disk (or at least it should be). Any programs located in this drawer will automatically be started by the Workbench as soon as it is activated with LoadWB.

You can put PowerCache into the WBStartup drawer and have it run automatically when you start your Workbench. Remember to add the tooltype DONOTWAIT to PowerCache's icon, or Workbench will try to wait for PowerCache to return (which it won't :-)

1.9 The Exchange program

What is Exchange?

The Exchange program is a standard part of any 2.04 system. It provides facilities for controlling commodities, and is itself a commodity.

PowerCache can be completely controlled by Exchange. Please refer to the relevant system documentation on the Exchange program, for further info on how to do this.

1.10 The Fidonet network

What is FidoNet?

The Fidonet is the worlds largest, privately owned and operated network. There are more than 23,000 computer systems running as "nodes" in the Fidonet network, each carrying a number of "Points", or users, if you like.

Each point in Fidonet can mail any other point also in Fidonet, either by "crash" mail where a message is sent directly from the sender to the receivers node (even if it means calling half way around the world), or it can be routed through any number of other nodes.

Messages in Fidonet are public. Everyone can comment or reply messages written by others, and this way spawn off other discussions and keep the net alive. There are also private matrix areas for personal mail.

I could keep on writing about Fidonet for several pages, and still only scratch the surface of this huge area. For a very good description of Fidonet and the philosophy behind it, I can greatly recommend reading the manual of the (freely distributable) program TrapDoor, which can be found on most BBS systems.

PowerCache will eventually have one or more support BBS'es, each being Fidonet nodes, so that questions and suggestions can be directed at these, as well as directly to me.

My Fidonet point number is 2:230/166.28, and if you have Fidonet access, this is the address you should be directing your questions and suggestions to.

For additional e-mail addresses, please refer to the main documentation file. Take me there!

1.11 What is ARexx

What is ARexx

Rexx is a special language, originally developed for and used on large mainframe systems, for interprocess communication. Bill Hawes has written an Amiga version of Rexx, called ARexx (AmigaRexx), now an integral part of the Amiga operating system.

More and more applications are supporting ARexx, because it enables powerusers to carry out tasks that would otherwise not have been possible, or would have taken very long time to complete. ARexx is also ideal for making applications do specialized, repetitive tasks that would otherwise have taken much effort to accomplish.

PowerCache has a complete ARexx interface. The syntax and description of each of these commands can be found in PowerCacheARexx.guide.

It is quite possible that more ARexx commands will be added as PowerCaches capabilities grow. If you feel that one or more commands are missing, then

please let me know.

1.12 What is CHelp

What is CHelp?

CHelp is a nifty little tool from Robert Wahlström & Mathias Widman, designed for quickly finding structures in the Amiga include files, and function descriptions in the Amiga Autodocs.

CHelp was a big help during the development of PowerCache. I would register it right away (it is shareware), had it not been because it crashes quite often on my machine (too often, actually). I will probably end up writing a similar tool myself, that does exactly what I want.

1.13 What is ARexxBox

What is ARexxBox

ARexxBox is a program that lets you design ARexx interfaces using a graphic user interface. It is inspired by GadToolsBox and behaves somewhat similar. After designing an ARexx interface, all you do is select "Generate Source" from the main menu, and hey presto! You have all the C source code you need to implement that particular ARexx interface.

PowerCache's ARexx interface was created largely using ARexxBox, and this is probably the main reason why it is as extensive as it is. Once you get started with ARexxBox, you just can't stop! Adding a command is so easy, and you don't really think about that until you have to actually code the commands :-)

ARexxBox is a wonderful programming aid, and I highly recommend it. It is Copyright by Michael Balzer, and can be picked up from Fred Fish, or (if you have a modem), from the nearest SAN/ADS link.

1.14 What is a Key File?

What is a Key File?

A key file is a special file that serves the simple purpose of unlocking a program so that all features become usable. The key file doesn't do anything on itself, other than to sit in a directory where the program can find and authenticate it.

PowerCache uses key files to unlock the evaluation version. To obtain a key file for PowerCache, please refer to the section on registering, in the main documentation file.
