SmoothGuide

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Chapter 1

SmoothGuide

1.1   Contents Page

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                    SmoothGuide Test Version
                        By Paul Burkey
                     (C) 1995 Paul Burkey
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Welcome to Smooth Guide. This Guide, like the Smooth Guide program itself
is quite basic at the moment. If I get the time or I get asked by enough
users, I'll update both.

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    Why Another AmigaGuide Reader

    Public Domain
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    What Files Do I Need

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1.2   Why Another AmigaGuide Reader

I've always had problems reading Guides. Either the boot disk isn't set up
properly, AmigaGuide.Library and Multi-View etc. or limited memory restricted
me from loading large 300k+ guides. Even with the A1200's 2meg of chip ram
I found it hard to load these guides in.

My first Guide was for my game 'Sneech'. The game was getting complicated and
so was the Document file. Unless you went through the whole document you
wouldn't know where to find the info you wanted. Also, if I updated it,
it would be dificult to find all the updates without reading it all through.

So after re-writing the whole document again in AmigaGuide format I was going
to delete the document file but then I realised! Many users will have problems
reading the guide! So I'd have to keep a Doc file as well as a Guide. I would
have to update the Doc File with the same things as the AmigaGuide file. I am
sure a lot of other programmers go through the same thing!

So thats why I wrote 'SmoothGuide'

Although this is a very early version of SmoothGuide. It doesn't have half
the features the full complete version will have. I'm not going to put
much work into it unless I get asked by a few people first. If theres anything
that you would like to see (check out Future) then let me
know and I'll see what I can do for you!!!

Another thing about Smooth guide....

Every time I write a Utility program I get told that there are other
Programmes that do the same thing and have more options/feature etc. Well
the reason I write Utilities is to get it to do something other programmes
don't do rather than everything they do and more! If theres something
another AmigaGuide Reader does that you need this one to do then please tell
me! If theres something another AmigaGuide Reader doesn't do but you think
I could add to this one then that's great!

The ability to load a Guide from an (lha/lzx) Archiver using either the
command line:-

    Smoothguide UtilGuides.lha DiskSalv.guide

would be useful?

or by selecting an archive with the file selector would bring up a special
Archive list requester asking for the file within?

If you think this is a good idea then I'll get stuck in!!

1.3 SmoothGuide Instructions

Running SmoothGuide

From CLI

SmoothGuide <FileName>

If you include a filename the file will load straight into the Reader and be
displayed straight away. If you don't include a FileName the file requester
will pop up asking you to select a guide file.

From Workbench

You can use SmoothGuide as the default tool or you can simply double click on
the icon which will pop a requester up asking you to select a guide file.

Another way to use SmoothGuide is to select the SmoothGuide Icon with one mouse
click and then double click on a Guide icon. This will load the Guide straight
into the Reader and be displayed straight away.

When you are in SmoothGuide and you have a Guide loaded you will first see the
Contents Page. This is the first page of the document. It is usualy made up of
some titles and a string of buttons with the different Subjects.

Select a Button with a left mouse click. This will bring you to a section of
the Guide that explains this subject.

You can move the Page up and down using the cursor keys or by holding the Right
mouse button down in the upper or lower half of the page.

At the bottom you will see some buttons :-

Contents Page

This brings you back to the First page.

Retrace

This will bring you back through the pages you have viewed in reverse order.
This is used to return to a page after you have selected a Button.

The <- & -> Keys

The Browse Keys are used to move forward and backwards in a Guide from one page
to another.

{This doesn't use the AmigaGuide NEXT or PREV yet but it will next time}

Lastly there is a file requester button used to load in a new Guide.

1.4 SmoothGuide Limitations

SmoothGuide Will NOT read PowerPacked Guides YET?

Another limit with this version is that it won't cope with more than 400 pages
and doesnt display more than approx 120 lines on a page. Most Guides use less
than 100 lines on every page anyway. The whole point in having a Guide is that
the information is split into easy to read chunks.

While testing this version of SmoothGuide I used some Big Guides to test for
memory problems. I had no problem loading a Guide over 750k on a standard
A1200. I would imagine a 1meg A500 would be able to do the same.

The reason SmoothGuide it called SmoothGuide is because of the Smooth scrolling

for each page. This is done using a very tall screen that gets scrolled up and
down using the Amiga's Hardware to control it. It's a BIG cheat in programming
terms but you will find that almost all guides keep the pages short.

Read Future Upates For upgrade info.

1.5   What files do you need

Some versions of SmoothGuide need the AMOS.library in the Libs Drawer whilst
some have the Library built in.

1.6   Future SmoothGuide Plans

Here are some of the things SmoothGuide will do soon...

   I'll try to get the loading speeded up!!

   Any number of pages!
   View Pictures (Possibly Let you Use a viewer like PPShow...)
   Page spliting for large pages.
   Load PowerPacked Guides hopefully.
   Load A Guide from whithin an Archive!
   Indexing
   Search options.
   Print Page or Document.
   Save Guide without Nodes ie. as a Document File.

Much more!

1.7   Bug Reports

Although I have been testing this version for a while I could almost promise
you that it wont work with every guide.

I didn't have any details on how AmigaGuides work. This program was written
using Trial & Error (Mostly Error!) So sometimes I load a Guide in and it
works until I select a particular page and then !&$#@£! ooops! I then checked
the file using MultiView and a Text Editor then fixed SmoothGuide and then
Back to testing again. It's now working quite well but, not knowing what
the limits are with AmigaGuide I don't know whether it's 100% yet!

Some people have written to me saying they love SmoothGuide and they think
it's the best (although simple) AmigaGuide Reading program. Some people
have said that it crashes all the time and it's a pile of crap! so
why not tell me what you think so I can improve it.

Known Bugs

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Remember that it won't load Power Packed Guides and will get confused if
you try to load a normal Text file into it!

You might find a problem with the Iconize gadget! I don't know whether this
part of the program is compatable with all Amiga's? You could always let
me know if it doesn't.

Smoothguide won't display pictures or anything like that at the moment but
if you really want it to then ask.

If Smooth Guide can't find a page or you are asking it to display a picture
or anything it can't do then it will flash the screen red! if it does this
then try the same guide with MultiView and see what it does. If it's just
a normal page then send me a copy of the guide and I'll check it out....

Report It
-=-=-=-=-

If you do find an error or it won't load a guide then first check that the
guide loads okay using MultiView! if it doesn't load into MultiView then theres
not much I can do? Try loading it into PPGuide or any other Guide Readers
if you still insist on reporting an error then you can do! don't forget
to send a S.A.E.

If you are reporting an error then please tell me...

Amiga model A1200, A500, A3000, A4000 etc....
Memory Chip&Fast.
Accellerator Card xxMhz? CPU, FPU
Special Circumstances?

Send me a copy of any Guides that wont load in! If they load into MultiView
then I'll fix it to work with SmoothGuide! You tell me what page to check
for if it loads in a bit!

Please Contact Me if you want to report errors.

Lastly, If I update the program I'll probably upload it to Aminet so if
you like is so far but think it's not up to scratch yet then keep a look
out for the updates......

1.8 Public Domain

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feel free to use on Coverdisks, BBS. You can use it on commercial or
PD/Shareware disks. Please Contact Me if you want the latest version!

1.9 Contacting the Author

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Try and catch me on IRC as 'shoecake'

Cheers for now,

Paul Burkey (27.10.95)