

A-START!

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| COLLABORATORS |
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| | <i>TITLE :</i> A-START! | | |
| <i>ACTION</i> | <i>NAME</i> | <i>DATE</i> | <i>SIGNATURE</i> |
| WRITTEN BY | | March 28, 2025 | |

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Chapter 1

A-START!

1.1 A-START!

A-START! v0.90B (April 1996) voidParrot Software 95/96
Programming for you!

Please do not send me bug-reports on this one, since it is only a buggy demonstration of all the new features, the next version will have. I just wanted to release this to show you, that i'm still alive and developing. Thank you.

New features For those, who have used A-Start before.

Introduction What is A-Start?
Requirements What do I need to use A-Start?
Features What can it do for me?

Installation How to install A-Start.
Usage How to use A-Start.

Preferences How to configure A-Start.

Legal stuff! Crime does not pay!
Register! Support shareware!
Graphicians PPaint,DPaint,Brilliance!

Future What is yet to come.
Author All about the author.

Programmers, who wan't to be a part of A-Start, be free to contact me!

1.2 A few introductory words:

Introduction to A-Start (preview version):

Before I start telling you about A-Start, I would like to remind you that this is only a preview version, with which you will only get a

limited feel for what A-Start can do. Many of A-Start's features are not present yet.

A-Start is a multi-function utility. It is a handy alternative to tool managers and program launchers, but that is not all. Its GUI gives you an easy and intuitive way to control and keep track of some of the most important and often used functions of your system. For example editing your preferences or like launching your favorite programs are now just a few clicks away. You'll have fast access to your projects, whether it is programming, graphics, or sound: two clicks, and you are in your programming-environment, paint program, or music editor editing your project.

Using A-Start, you can browse through your partitions in no time, and do whatever you need to do with the files encountered. A-Start recognizes the file types for you, and will start your preferred viewer or editor. All with beautiful graphics and relaxing sound(n/a yet). But wait, there's more! Deleting or renaming files is a snap with A-Start!

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1.3 System Requirements

What you need in order to run A-Start:

Kickstart 2.04:

This version of Kickstart nowadays is no longer standard, so get yourself OS3.1 if you are running an amiga under 3.0!

MagicWB:

To make A-Start look its best, you need MagicWB colors.

Screen mode:

It is recommended that you use a screen mode with a 1:1 screen pixel aspect & a large page-size (min. 640*400).

Hard disk:

A-Start is not very useful without a hard disk, and with today's hardware prices, every Amiga user should have one! HD's are to be thought of as standard equipment.

Font:

You need the XHelvetica font, which comes with the Magic-WB package.

WBStart-handler:

A-Start needs Stefan Becker's WBStart-Handler:

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1.4 What can A-Start do for you?

A-Start features:

- Easy to use: pop-up windows and intuitive gadgets
- Graphically pleasing look-and-feel
- Easy control of your preferences
- Easy access to your most used programs
- Easy access to projects you are working on
- Fast file-browser always within reach
- Automatic recognition of file types
- Delete/rename files intuitive
- Much more...

Please remember that this describes what the A-Start preview can do: the full version will have many more features. Please see the future page for more information.

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1.5 install

How to install A-Start:

To install this software, double-click on the install icon and the installer will guide you through the installation.

PLEASE DO ALWAYS USE THE INSTALLER SCRIPT

To enable running of A-Start on every BootUp after the initial installation, copy the A-StartWBS program to your WBStartup directory. Please make sure that the A-Start path is typed in correctly in the only tooltype of A-StartWBS.info.

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1.6 usage

How to run A-Start:

Two programs are included in this package: the A-Start main program, and the small A-StartWBS program. Because the main program has to reside in its own directory with specific subdirectories it cannot be placed directly in your sys:wbstartup/ directory. If you want A-Start to start every time you boot your system, you may put the A-StartWBS program into sys:wbstartup/. (it will run A-Start from the directory specified in its only tooltype. Make sure this tooltype is properly set to be the A-Start home directory)

For example: `APATH=dh1:utils/A-Start/`

How to use the PREVIEW version of A-Start

First of all you have to start the program by double-clicking on its icon, or by running it from the CLI. A small button should appear at the bottom left of your workbench screen (note that if your workbench screen is not open, A-Start will open it). Click on that button, and the main window pops up, presenting you with seven different selections (selected by moving the cursor over it):

| | |
|---------------|---|
| MyComputer | Browse through your mounted drives. |
| UserProgs | Start your most often used programs. |
| FileList | Start your most important projects |
| Utilities | Start a system utility program(n/a). |
| Preferences | Quicklink to your preferences directory |
| Command | Issue a CLI command |
| Reboot (quit) | Quit A-Start/Reboot your Amiga (TM) |

| | |
|----------|--------------------------|
| HotLists | Delete/Rename/Edit files |
|----------|--------------------------|

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1.7 mycomp

MyComputer:

After pressing this button, a window pops up showing all your mounted disk devices by name. Selecting one of the disk gadgets brings the root directory of that disk to front.

You may to your liking create hotlinks to directories and display them in this window. If you for example have a directory full of pictures and often take a glance at them you may find it easier to create a hotlink in order to get to that directory rather than to browse through subdirectories after subdirectories. To create a hotlink just drag and drop the corresponding ICON onto this window and the hotlink will be created.

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1.8 Define your most used programs

UserProgs:

This gadget brings your progs-window to front. This is a window where all your favorite programs reside. Drag the icon for the program you wish to have fast access to, and drop it into this window: it will

be redrawn, now containing your program.

It is not possible to drop drives or directories into the window, but you may organize your programs even better, through "program independent" drawers: Select the HotList-option 'Add Drawer' of any file in the UserProgs-window to add such a drawer.

Back to usage

1.9 A button to launch your projects fast

FileList:

This works like the UserProgs window, but in here you may only put projects you are currently working on. A-Start will check the default tool for the selected project, and load the default program. This allows for a rapid return to editing your source code again, after for example your last test run crashed your system. Only project-icons are allowed to be dropped into this drawer.

Back to usage

1.10 This is not implemented yet!

Utilities:

In this version of A-Start, this window does nothing.

In future versions this is where you have ultra-fast access to all the important features to help you work better with your Operating System.

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1.11 prefs

Preferences:

This is a quicklink to sys:prefs/ for quick and easy (am I repeating myself?) access to all the preferences programs of your Amiga(TM).

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1.12 command

Command:

After pressing this button, a requester pops open where you may enter a CLI command, which A-Start will then execute. This is (almost) like pressing rCommand e on newer OS-versions.

Back to usage

1.13 reboot

Reboot:

You may shut down A-Start by clicking on this gadget and holding the left mousebutton for one second pressed. After releasing, A-Start will terminate.

To SoftBoot your machine simply double-click onto this gadget.

In the prefs-editor you can enable a security-option, so that A-Start asks you if you really want to reboot/quit or not.

Back to usage

1.14 gfx

Yes, send me GFX! I need all kinds of icons for FileID-recognition. These icons are 16*14 big and use standard MWB-palette. So if you just wanted to have a own icon for your FileType, then just attach the picture to a email you send me and I will include your pic into the next version of the program(only if it is good enough, of course) If you have questions, contact me!

How to contact the author

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1.15 author

Address:

Tuomas Artman
Päärynäpolku 3
02710 Espoo
Finland

Email: aartman@snakemail.hut.fi

****BEWARE!**** * *

Email-address MAY change in near future. So if you cannot reach me,
and only if you cannot reach me send me mail to:

vps@zumzum.tky.hut.fi

***** * *

Feel free to send me comments, suggestions and/or psychedelic ideas.

Acknowledgements:

Frederick Hacklin:
(good ideas and support).

Stefan Stunz:
(his fabulous MUI).

Eric Totel:
(his excellent MuiBuilder. But when does 3.0 appear???)

Stefan Becker:
(his WBStarter utility).

Brem:
(software support).

Rickard Johansson:
(for beeing the first one to register)

All of you who mailed me:
(for convincing me that A-Start really is
good:-))

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1.16 This is a preview!

A-Start is currently being developed, and V1.0 will be released in
'near' future. To see how you can support me, and how to get me to
release the next version more quickly, see the Register page.

1.17 The HotList

HotList-How to make it pop up?:

To make the HotList pop up, simply press the left mousebutton over the icon (the small picture left of the name) of any File-entry and keep it pressed. releasing the button selects the highlighted option.

HotList-What to do with it?:

The most important feature of the hotlist is that you can define for each FileType (iff,gif,guide,lha,...) one or two functions additional to the function, which is executed, when you select the entry. These are called the 2nd and the 3rd function. In the prefs-editor you can simply enter these two functions in the same manner you entered the main-function. Additional to that you have to define the names for these functions as they will appear under that name in the hotlist.

Imagine for example a lha-file:

The main function should be the command, which you most often will execute. Imagine browsing through your HD and finding a LHA-archive with a name you do not recognize. Wouldn't it be nice if you could just double-click on it and see a list of what it contains? No problem: Just enter the function 'LHA l {f}' for the main-function of a LHA-archive. But what if you then find out that you have found the lha-archive you have been looking for and want to unpack it to your Data-directory. With A-Start you do not have to start the CLI and type the unpack command in, no! Just enter for the 2nd function of a LHA-archive the name 'Unpack LHA' or something like that and for the function itself 'LHA x {f} dh1:Data/'. Then with the HotList you are able to unpack LHA's to your Data-directory.

If you encounter for example a IFF-picture you most likely want to take a look at it and then decide if you want to load it into your paint-program, right? Then enter for the main-function 'Visage {f}' and for the 2nd function the name 'Paint iff' and for the function itself 'PPaint:PPaint {f}'.

It's as easy as that!

HotList-What else to do with it?:

There are three useful default-parameters defined for every HotList:

- 'Remove entry' removes a file from the UsrProgs or FileList-windows. This was on earlier versions done with the 'D'-button

- 'Delete' marks the current file to be deleted, when the user closes the window in which the file is in. There is a security-option, which will ask you if you really want to delete files, once the window is being closed. Ofcourse you may remove the deletion-flag before closing the window.

The delete-option can not be used for directories or drives.

- 'Rename'. With this you can rename the current file or dir.

1.18 The Prefs program

Preferences:

You actually do not need a description of the prefs-program in this manual, because all buttons are described in the prefs-program itself. Just let the mouse-pointer rest for a second or two (depending on your MUI-settings) on the gadget you want to get information of.

If you have problems to make your own FileTypes look at the pre-defined ones and all should be clear.

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1.19 Stefan Beckers WBStart-handler

About WBStarter:

WBStart-handler is a handler copyrighted and written by Stefan Becker.

Short Description:

WBStart is a handler wich lets you run programs in "WB-mode" from CLI. The program now thinks it has been started from the workbench, by double-clicking on its icon.

A-Start NEEDS WBStart-handler. Most of you have it in your L: directory, but if it ain't, please get the WBStarter package from Aminet. A-Start does not use the WBStarter library, because it needs OS3.0 to function.

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1.20 Magic User Interface

About Magic User Interface:

MUI is shareware, copyrighted by Stefan Stunz. You do not have to register MUI in order to use the A-Start preferences program, but I really think you should, because of the superb quality of the MUI system.

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1.21 Legalize it!

A-Start is (c) copyright Tuomas Artman/vPS (1995/96)
All rights reserved

1)

The programs are provided "as-is" and the author can not be made responsible of ANY possible harm done by them.

2)

The program may be freely distributed IF:

2.1)

the whole and nothing but the whole ORIGINAL package is spread and absolutely no changes have been made to it.

2.2)

only a small amount is charged to cover media expenses.

3)

No changes of any kind may be made to the software, this guide file, or to any other file in the package without the permission of the author.

4)

The program may be put on PD series or other kinds of software collections without the permission of the author, but the author would appreciate it if he could be informed of such inclusions and if he would be sent the collection.

5)

This program is, at this stage of development, considered to be 'FreeWare'.

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1.22 Register and support shareware

How to "register" and why?

At this stage of development, this software is considered to be FreeWare. This means that anyone may use it without any restrictions.

So why "register"?

By registering you first of all give me feed-back that A-Start is a useful program, thus inspiring me to finish the 1.0 version more quickly. The 1.0 version of A-Start will be released as shareware.

The fact is that I will continue developing A-Start no matter how many users register or send me comments. I think it is a useful piece of software, and that it should be developed further into new dimensions. And why not support a programmer who's software you use? I haven't slept for many weeks to give you the pleasure of using this program, now its you're time to do something for me ;).

Why do I write "register" in quotation marks?

At this stage you cannot 'register', due to the freeware status of the program. You can only support me. BUT: All users who support me at this stage will be treated as registered users of future A-Start releases.

To "register": send US\$15/20DM/60FMK, along with a letter, to:

Tuomas Artman
Päärynäpolku 3
02710 Espoo
Finland

*If you are using a keymap which cannot show special characters then
*note that this -> ä <- is an 'a' with two dots on top of it.

If you have no possibility to get one of the currencies mentioned above (US Dollars, German Marks, Finish marks) you may send me money of any other currency (the value beeing equal, of course). But please try to find a bank somewhere, will you?

The letter should contain the following information:

-<First Name : (Tuomas)
-<Last Name : (Artman)
-<City&Country : (Espoo/Finnland)
-<Email address : (aartman@snakemail.hut.fi)

-<OS-version : (3.0)
-<Monitor : (PAL/Multisync/VGA)

If you do not have an own email-address, you can ofcourse give me one of your friends email-address. If you do not have any friends with email you have to include your full address.

You will receive your KeyCode when the 1.0 Version of A-Start is ready.

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1.23 What is to come?

Future versions of A-Start:

A-Start is right now going through serious development and many things WILL change and be included in future versions!

The ToDo-list is very big, be sure of that!

Please read the Register and the Graphicians pages!

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1.24 New features of A-Start

late May 96- A-Start v0.9B is ready

New features and improvements:

-The Prefs-editor has been rewritten. How to use the new Editor is not documented within this guide, but for every button there is a bubble-help. Just let the mousepointer rest for a few secs on the gadget you don't know what to do with.

-FileType-recognition has been rewritten. It is now possible for the user himself to add new Types and enter functions for them. This is what took so long for this version to become available.

-The user may change the icons of the FileTypes from the given list. He cannot YET paint his own icons to use with A-Start

-There is a HotList-window for every FileType available. Just click on the 'picture' of the file you want to delete/rename. The user may add two entries to this HotList with the FileID-section of the prefs editor. Now unpacking a lha is as fast as viewing a picture.

-The user may rename the MainWindow-entries.

-Graphics have been enhanced a bit.

early April 96 - A-Start v0.87 released

New features and improvements:

-I have decided not to send KeyFiles to the registered users, because many do not have e-mail. I have decided that A-Start will ask the user for their name and a specific code. All registered users will be send

this code, so that they can use A-Start withoout any restrictions.

-If you want to reboot you now have to double-click on the 'Reboot'-gadget. If you want to quit A-Start hold down the 'Reboot'-gadget for one second.

-You have to change your prefs-settings concerning the programs to start when a specific file-type is beeing selected. Now you must enter something like this:

```
Sys:Utils/Multiview {f}
```

you may also add parameters for the programs as for example:

```
C:ShowGif {f} -aga -fullscreen
```

or

```
C:ShowMeAJpeg -24Bit -SuperDuper {f}
```

The '{f}' will be replaced by the complete path and name of the selected file. This must be present, because otherwise A-Start cannot know, where the name should be stated.

-A-Start's stability has been increased very much. Many Enforcer-hits have been corrected.

-The 'START-gadget' may now be placed wherever you like. An option has been added to enable the user to define, whether the main-window should be opened up- or downwards. It is noe also possible to make A-Start open its sub-menus from right to left instead of from left to right. All this can be set up in the prefs-editor.

-By pressing the right mouse-button, when a filewindow with sliders is open A-Start will encrease the size of the window to fit the whole screen.

-You now may add hotlinks to directories in the MyComputer-window. Just drag a directory-icon onto this window to add the hotlink. A new entry then appears just like in the proglis and filelist-windows which enables you to open that drawer with only two clicks. You could for example drop your pics-drawer onto the MyComputer-window and so have fast access to your pics.

-Some minor improvements to the Prefs-editor.

-CPU-usage has been reduced dramatically.

-It is now possible to leave out the graphics of the main-window.

-Subdirectories in Proglis didn't make it to this version, sorry.
Neither did the recognition of other file-types. Send me comments
for/against A-Start using WhatIs.library!

March 96 - A-Start v0.72 ready

New features:

-A-StartWBS-program added to the package. With it you can start
A-Start on every bootup from your WBStartup-drawer.

-THE FILELIST-WINDOW IS NOW IN USE! Read the usage-section to find
out, how and why to use it...

-Possibility to choose the look of the gadget, appearing below the
mouse-pointer. Use A-Start prefs to configure it.

-A-StartPrefs rewritten. The v0.72 A-StartPrefs-program does NOT
support the v0.52 Env-file, but all newer versions of A-Start will
be backward-compatible.

-Possibility to define your prefs-drawer in case you do not put your
pref-files into 'Sys:Prefs/'.

-You may now choose if A-Start closes its windows after viewing a pic,
reading a text..., or if the windows should remain opened.

-Support for Mod and Med- MusicDataFiles and Sound-effects.

-Bugfixing. A-Start SHOULD work now better on 3.1 platforms.

late February 96 - A-Start v0.52 hits the net.
