

**am2\_1-2\_2**

Beth Wise

**COLLABORATORS**

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# Chapter 1

## am2\_1-2\_2

### 1.1 Welcome

[Amiga Monitor Logo]

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NEWS AND EDITORIAL

[Editor's Notes](#) By Michael Webb

[The Sam Report: Amiga Online?](#) By Sam Ormes

The world's largest online service is, without a doubt, America Online.

However, it is an exclusive organization, available only for Mac OS and

Windows users, and Amiga-only users need not apply. But in this day of a

potential Amiga resurgence, one might argue that it is high time for AOL to

be made available for the Amiga. Sam Ormes, Amiga user and AOL member,

illustrates further.

[Guest Viewpoint: To PPC or not to PPC](#) By Tim Molinder

As the Amiga prepares to move into the future, questions about processors

for the next generation, and how to implement them, continue to be raised.

The PowerPC is certainly among the most likely of contenders, but even then, exactly how to make the switch is not entirely clear.

#### FEATURES

**The History and Direction of the Computer - A Personal View** By Jim Kuzma

Jim Kuzma returns to the pages of AM, this month to conclude his perspective on the path the personal computer has taken so far, and to give his own warning on where, in the face of logic and good sense, it appears to be going in the future.

**Cryptic Findings on the Internet** By Michael Webb

We found something interesting on an Amiga site recently, and thought the AM readers might like to take a look...

#### REVIEWS

**Book Review: @ LARGE** By Robert Davis

Robert Davis takes a look at a true story about challenges to security and administration in the modern Internet age.

#### SPOTLIGHT ON GAMES AND ENTERTAINMENT

**Nemac IV: The Director's Cut** By Steve Duff

Steve Duff looks into Nemac, a game with an admirable level of OS-friendliness and future potential, but possibly not quite up to spec in the other departments.

#### DEPARTMENTS

**Lame Humor Department** By Kyle Webb

A satirical, sarcastic, sardonic, and sometimes downright silly look at affairs in the Amiga community, and life in general...also known as The Amiga Monitor's comic page.

The Amiga Monitor: 1996-1997, Excelsior Digital Publishing

The Amiga Monitor's home site is at the URL's

\* <http://mrw11.resnet.cornell.edu/monitor.html>

\* <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb>

Converted from HTML to AmigaGuide by Beth Wise

## 1.2 Staff

The Staff of The Amiga Monitor

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## 1.3 Mirrors

Amiga Monitor Mirror Sites

This list is subject to growth and change

Primary Sites

\* The Webb Server, <http://mrw11.resnet.cornell.edu>

A new site running on an actual Amiga, via Ethernet. This is now the official home site for The Amiga Monitor, containing all issues in all formats, including online-readable. May periodically (though rarely) be inaccessible. New issues appear here the soonest.

\* The Webb Site, <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb/>

The Official Home Site for The Amiga Monitor. All formats are available here. Contains past issues archived, and current issues in online-readable form. New issues appear here the soonest.

\* CUCUG, <http://www.cucug.org/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>

The main server for the Amiga Web Directory. Mirrors all issues of The Amiga Monitor online in HTML format; also contains a topical AM search

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engine.

\* Aminet, [http://wuarchive.wustl.edu/aminet/dirs/docs\\_mags.html](http://wuarchive.wustl.edu/aminet/dirs/docs_mags.html)

one of the biggest online software archives anywhere; AM can be found in the form "amX\_Yhtm.lha" and "amX\_Yag.lha" (where X=volume number and Y=issue number) in the "docs/mags" directory.

World Wide Web Sites

Australia

\* <http://www.livewire.com.au/amiga/cucug/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>

The AWD's mirror in Australia

\* <http://www.comcen.com.au/~paulm/index.html>

Paul Morabito's Amiga News Page; includes AM in HTML Online and HTML LhA formats, and may archive various back issues.

\* <http://www.vision.net.au/pjackson>

Peter Jackson's web site; includes AM formats HTML Online, HTML LhA, and AmigaGuide LhA for current issues, and HTML LhA archives.

Denmark

\* <http://home4.inet.tele.dk/beowolf/>

StarTrecker's Homepage on Amiga and IRC; includes the current AM issue online, and HTML LhA archives.

Italy

\* <http://www.vol.it/mirror/amiga/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>

The AWD's mirror in Italy.

Poland

\* <http://www.ispid.com.pl/mirrors/cucug/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>

The AWD's mirror in Poland.

United Kingdom

\* <http://www.iprom.com/amigaweb/amiga.html/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>

The AWD's mirror in The United Kingdom.

United States

\* Aminet, [http://wuarchive.wustl.edu/aminet/dirs/docs\\_mags.html](http://wuarchive.wustl.edu/aminet/dirs/docs_mags.html)

one of the biggest online software archives anywhere; AM can be found in the form "amX\_Yhtm.lha" and "amX\_Yag.lha" (where X=volume number and Y=issue number) in the "docs/mags" directory.

\* The Amiga Web Directory, <http://www.cucug.org/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/> mirrors all issues of The Amiga Monitor in online-readable HTML format; also contains a topical AM search engine.

\* Ink's Web Site, <http://www.toptown.com/centralpark/ink/monitor/>

Beth Wise (Ink)'s home page, and Amiga page. Mirrors current issue online in HTML.

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\* Midnight's HomePage, <http://internet.net/~midnight/monitor/index.html>  
Phil Beazley (Midnight)'s home page. Mirrors HTML and AmigaGuide online, and contains LhA archives of current and past issues. Located in North Carolina.

\* San Diego's "Aminet Source," <http://www.tmisnet.com>  
Carries archives of The Amiga Monitor. Other status information uncertain at this time.

\* The Webb Server, <http://mrw11.resnet.cornell.edu>  
A new site running on an actual Amiga, via Ethernet. This is now the official home site for The Amiga Monitor, containing all issues in all formats, including online-readable. May periodically (though rarely) be inaccessible. New issues appear here the soonest.

\* The Webb Site, <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb/>  
Once the Official Home Site for The Amiga Monitor, now a lesser mirror for The Webb Server. All formats for current issues are available here, and past issues are available in archived format.

\* World Wide Amiga Online!, <http://www.amiga.org/magazine/monitor/index.html>  
Mirrors HTML and AmigaGuide online, with AmigaGuide archives. Located in Huntsville, Alabama, USA.

#### Bulletin Board Systems

\* AMUSE: Phone #: 206-282-1198  
Uploads by Kevin Orme carries AmigaGuide archives.

\* Glenn's World BBS: Salem, Oregon, USA; Phone #: 503-581-0067 (28.8K)  
Maintained by Glenn J. Schworak, carries AmigaGuide archives.

\* Gramma's Phone #: 206-744-1254  
Uploads by Kevin Orme, carries AmigaGuide archives.

\* WAVE II: Pinellas Park, Florida, USA; Phone #: 813-544-1976  
Maintained by Lee Jenkin, carries AmigaGuide archives.

#### Online Service Providers

\* The AmigaUser forum on CompuServe, <http://www.compuserve.com/cgi-bin/exp?amigauser>  
You must be a member of CompuServe, and have your browser properly set up for interfacing with CIM, to follow this link. Or, if you are a member not using CIM, simply type "GO AMIGAUSER" at the prompt. Once there, search the libraries for keywords such as "Webb" or "Monitor."

\* The Starship Amiga Roundtable on Genie  
You must be a member of Genie in order to access this. Type in keyword "Amiga," or "Move 555" to get to the Amiga RT, or use navigation buttons if you have a Genie frontend program. Once there, search the libraries for keywords such as "Webb" or "Monitor."

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## 1.4 How to Register Your Site as an Official Mirror

How to Register Your Site as an Official Mirror

Send e-mail to MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM with "Register AM Mirror" as the subject, and specify the following information:

- \* A precise URL to be listed as the mirror site
- \* An e-mail address to which new issues of AM can be sent, and with which we can communicate with you
- \* A short description of the site
- \* The format(s) you will be carrying (HTML online, AmigaGuide online, HTML LhA, HTML ZIP, AmigaGuide LhA)
- \* Whether you will keep archives of old issues available
- \* A country or general geographic location of the server supplying your site

That's it! If we register your site as an official mirror site, you get a listing in the mirrors.htm file that comes with every issue, and eventually on The Webb Site itself. Thank you for supporting The Amiga Monitor.

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## 1.5 Write for The Amiga Monitor

Guidelines for Writing for The Amiga Monitor

The Amiga Monitor will gladly publish contributions from other members of the Amiga community. There are several guidelines we would like you to follow, however, if you are interested in writing for us.

There are two types of articles we will accept:

### 1. Prearranged Articles

1. Contact our Senior Editor, Samuel Ormes, by sending an e-mail message to s.ormes@genie.com, in which you express your interest in writing, and briefly explain what type of writing you would like to do.
2. A member of the Editorial Staff will respond to your message with information about upcoming deadlines, and a general time frame within which we would be working.
3. You would then send us your article, and assuming there are no serious problems, we will publish it. You would be listed for that month in the Staff List as a Contributing Writer.

### 2. Unsolicited Articles

The Amiga Monitor may, at its discretion, choose to publish articles sent to us without any prior contact between the writer and the AM staff. We prefer to have you contact us first, but it is not absolutely necessary. If you do

choose to send in an unsolicited article, please remember to include your name and e-mail address. Anonymous submissions will be frowned upon; "pen names" and aliases are acceptable, however.

If you do choose to send an unsolicited article, please send it to

MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM.

A few notes on article submission...

- \* Articles should be written in English.
- \* Articles should be sent in ASCII format; HTML codes are permissible.
- \* Images are permissible, and in fact welcomed, as judicious use of graphics can greatly increase the quality of an article. If you do choose to include images, please use IFF, JPEG, or GIF format, and archive your entire article with LhA, LZH, or LZX.
- \* Personal e-mail signatures, URL's, etc. are permitted to be included in an article.
- \* Once sent to us, your writing becomes public domain under the AM Reprint Policy unless you explicitly request otherwise.
- \* We often count on you to come up with specific ideas for articles. Although you are welcome to get in contact with us simply to announce your interest in writing for us, please do not be surprised if we don't have any specific "assignments" for you right away. It is generally best if those who wish to write know exactly what they want to write about.

And lastly,

- \* It is ultimately at the discretion of the staff of The Amiga Monitor as to whether articles will be published.

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## 1.6 AM Mailing Lists

AM E-Mail Distribution Lists

Join The Mailing List!

You can have The Amiga Monitor delivered to you via e-mail. There are currently three lists; click on one of the following e-mail links to send a message to subscribe to the list, or send e-mail to MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM in which you specify the information given further below:

- \* HTML LhA
- \* HTML ZIP
- \* AmigaGuide LhA

Important Information

- \* If you have an account on CompuServe, America Online, or Genie, specify
-

this to have files transferred to you directly. Otherwise, they will be sent in UUEncoded form.

\* Please specify the list(s) you would like to join (if you aren't using one of the three links above).

\* Although your name is not required, it helps with our record-keeping if you include it.

\* The e-mail address to which you would like the files to be sent

If we successfully receive and process your request, you will receive notification that you have been added to a list. If you do not receive a response within two weeks, please check to see that your correct e-mail address is included with the message, and resend your request.

A Few Notes on the Distribution Lists...

Our Publisher sends the AM archive out through his mailbox enough times each month without it coming in several times as well. Please make his life a little easier, and do your best to prevent bouncebacks:

\* Please notify us if your e-mail address changes.

\* Also, please make sure your provider can handle fairly large attached files.

The AM archive currently ranges in size anywhere from 50k to 300k. We can tolerate it if you have problems with some of the larger ones, but if there are consistently problems with smaller archives, we may have to consider finding a different way to deliver the magazine to you.

Also, if you are one of our AmigaGuide readers, be warned that since our primary format is HTML, there will be a delay in the production of AmigaGuide-format issues (converting HTML to AmigaGuide is not easy, and we have limited resources). We hope to narrow the gap between the release of HTML and AmigaGuide versions, but in the meantime, you should be aware that there is a delay.

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## 1.7 AM Reprint Policy

AM Reprint Policy

Because the Amiga community must have unity if it is to survive, it must be able to share information throughout. Therefore, Excelsior Digital Publishing grants general permission for material contained within The Amiga Monitor to be reprinted in other publications. We ask that, if you choose to do so, you fulfill several minor obligations:

\* Please contact us via e-mail to [MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM](mailto:MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM) first.

\* Please include the name, position at AM, and e-mail address, if possible,

of the original creator of the material being reprinted.

\* If possible, at least one of the following URL's should be included:

\* <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb/>

\* <http://www.cucug.org/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>

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## 1.8 Suggest an Article

Suggest an Article

Do you know about something important in the Amiga community that has been overlooked? Is there a story you would like us to cover?

You can suggest something you would like to see covered in the pages of The Amiga Monitor.

You can check the [Staff List](#) if you want to send

e-mail to the staff member who is most appropriate for the subject at hand, or you can just send e-mail to the Publisher at [MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM](mailto:MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM)

If you do choose to notify us, please consider the following:

\* Include an e-mail address so that we may contact you, unless you wish to remain anonymous.

\* Grant or refuse permission for us to use your name in connection with the article, e.g. to give credit.

\* Include possible sources (URL's, etc.) where we may find more information about the story, if any are known.

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## 1.9 Submit Product For Review

Submitting a Product For Review

Product reviews are as important a part of a magazine as any other. Although most products we review are those that we have purchased or otherwise obtained for our own purposes, we often review products at the request of the company or individual producing or developing them. If you have something you would like us to review at The Amiga Monitor, you can contact us about doing so.

If you would like to contact the member of the staff most appropriate to the nature of your product directly, see the [Staff List](#). Otherwise, you can send e-mail to the Publisher.

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## 1.10 Information About AM

### Publishing Information

#### The Amiga Monitor

The Amiga Monitor is published monthly online by Excelsior Digital Publishing, ©1996-1997.

The Amiga Monitor and Excelsior Digital Publishing are based in Binghamton, New York, USA.

The Amiga Monitor is published monthly in HTML format, and then translated by Anthony Becker into AmigaGuide format. The HTML version is posted in LhA and ZIP archive formats, while the AmigaGuide version is posted in LhA archive format only.

The HTML version of The Amiga Monitor requires a tables-supporting web browser to render the HTML properly; however, it should be readable with other browsers. The HTML code in The Amiga Monitor is currently optimized for IBrowse on the Amiga.

#### How to reach us:

\* The main address for Excelsior Digital Publishing and The Amiga Monitor is MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM. You can contact us at that address for any general business or concerns.

\* Those interested in writing for The Amiga Monitor can send e-mail to s.ormes@genie.com.

\* The e-mail addresses of all members of the staff of The Amiga Monitor can be found in the [Staff List](#).

\* In addition, you can usually find the e-mail address of the author or each article within that article.

#### Availability of The Amiga Monitor

The Amiga Monitor is available in a number of sites throughout the internet and other online sources of information.

The primary sites of The Amiga Monitor are the following:

\* The Webb Site, <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb/>, where all formats are available, past issues are archived, and new issues become available the soonest; also the official home of The Amiga Monitor.

\* The Amiga Web Directory, <http://www.cucug.org/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>; mirrors all issues of The Amiga Monitor in online-readable HTML format; also contains a topical AM search engine.

\* Aminet, [http://wuarchive.wustl.edu/aminet/dirs/docs\\_mags.html](http://wuarchive.wustl.edu/aminet/dirs/docs_mags.html): one of the biggest online software archives anywhere; AM can be found in the form "amX\_Yhtm.lha" and "amX\_Yag.lha" (where X=volume number and Y=issue

number) in the "docs/mags" directory.

You can also [view the current complete list](#) of official mirror sites, or register your site as an official mirror.

#### Legal Information

The views expressed within this magazine are not necessarily those of the publisher, the magazine itself, or of the organization comprising the magazine. The Amiga Monitor is an independent publication, not legally or fiscally bound to the former Commodore or any of its subsidiaries, ESCOM, Amiga Technologies, VIScorp, Phase5, PIOS, or any other company or organization involved now or ever in the development or manufacture of the Amiga personal computer.

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## 1.11 Editor's Notes

### Editor's Notes

By Michael Webb, Editor-in-Chief, MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM

The leaves are starting to turn, the days are getting shorter, and there is a chill in the air. Yes, autumn is gradually setting in here in New York, and another summer is already memory. Another summer for us, and another summer for the Amiga. It was certainly an interesting one at that, as for arguably the first summer in years, the platform appeared to have a measure of stability, and solid, concrete hopes for the future.

Indeed, it was only a year ago that the Amiga's future was in serious jeopardy, the platform having felt the collapse of two corporate giants in too short a time for anything to have been accomplished in the interim.

People were not quite sure what to think about VIScorp's potential involvement, and they were rightly concerned that there might not be anybody else out there looking to buy the Amiga technology, and actually carry it forward.

But in a story that has practically become fable, or perhaps legend, Gateway 2000 swooped in, apparently out of nowhere, and for all intents and purposes, gave the Amiga at least a new lease on life.

So we have been left to tread water for a few months, but I greatly admire Gateway and AI for not appeasing us with vaporware (with all due respect to the organization of the same name) and other empty promises. A lack of news is better than news without substance.

But now, in only the last few weeks, Gateway has stepped forward and spoken to a certain degree on the future of the Amiga. We can now be fairly

confident that there will be new computers bearing the Amiga name, and though specifics remain largely unknown, it appears that Gateway wishes to remain true to the Amiga philosophy. Once again, time will tell.

As far as the rest of this issue is concerned, you may have noticed that it is a combined August/September issue. We had to do this because of some timing, scheduling, and resource problems, which also caused some promised items to be bumped. They will appear here eventually, however.

But yes, as the summer here fades away, let us remember that the Amiga's summer, so to speak, may only be beginning. One cannot make promises or bold assumptions, especially after everything the Amiga community has been through, but the platform might just now have its best chances yet. For the many who have not abandoned ship, you should be congratulated. You stuck with it, and all that waiting and hoping may soon pay off. In any event, we should soon have a better idea of just what "Tomorrow's Amiga" will be.

For as it has been said, summer can't last too long...

Michael Webb

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

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## 1.12 The Sam Report: Amiga Online?

The Sam Report: Amiga Online?

A call to bring down the anti-Amiga barriers to the largest online destination in the world

By Sam Ormes, Senior Editor, Sormes@aol.com

Let's face reality....there is one universal online service and its name is America Online! Now that it has swallowed CompuServe, it will become even more overwhelmingly universal.

Only problem is...you can't get there from here! Despite the fact that Steve Case, the founder and CEO of AOL, got his start by creating Q-Link which was an early online service specializing in Commodores and Amigas, he has excluded us from AOL. Many Amigans have strong negative feelings about Case.....understandably.

I wasn't around in the Q-Link days and I don't bear that emotional baggage. When I inherited an old Macintosh last November, I decided to give AOL a try. After some years on Genie (a totally text-based service) which has (had) a strong Amiga presence, the graphical AOL experience was life-changing!

Although AOL has no Amiga forums as does CompuServe, I spend maybe 70% of

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my time online there involved in Amiga matters. This includes reading the Amiga newsgroups, reading all our wonderful sites such as AWD, Fishwrap, amiCrawler, etc. and especially chatting online real-time with fellow Amigans about Amigas. E-mail with my friends is a snap on AOL and that often includes exchanging Amiga graphics as attached files.

Obviously I like AOL. What I do not like is having to access it exclusively on another platform, and now I am finally getting to the point I wanted to make. The time has come..... with AOL absorbing CompuServe and its Amiga areas, and with a major player like Gateway owning our Amiga..... for America Online to be made available to Amigans everywhere!

I hereby challenge our new friends in South Dakota to use their clout to make this happen....to get this exclusion ended and bring their new baby closer to the mainstream in this new era of online communications. Let's make "Back for the future" a meaningful slogan.

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## 1.13 Guest Viewpoint: To PPC or not to PPC

Guest Viewpoint: To PPC or not to PPC

As the Amiga prepares to move into the future, questions about processors for the next generation, and how to implement them, continue to be raised  
By Tim Molinder, Contributing Writer, [tmolinder@earthlink.net](mailto:tmolinder@earthlink.net)

Now that the question of who will own the Amiga has been resolved attention must turn to the future of the platform. All of the Amiga's components, after many years of neglect, need upgrading. The processor, graphics, sound, and OS all combine to determine what price and capabilities users expect. This is the first in a series of articles that will explore each of these systems and speculate on directions Amiga International, AI for short, and third parties might take based on my own thoughts and opinions as a professional Amiga user since 1988. The CPU more than any single factor determines system speed. The Motorola 680x0 series powers the Amiga but since the '060 is the last of this series a new chip must step up to replace it. The major contender, the PowerPC, was anointed successor by Amiga Technologies before the Escom bankruptcy and remains the front runner. With Phase 5 already well on the way to delivering the first PPC-powered Amiga accelerator cards, what path should the Amiga take to its new processor home?

Follow the leader. Apple has made a successful transition through software emulation. This allows a clean break with the 680x0 and gives developers a

strong incentive to port their software. The emulator allows current applications to run and all that is required is designing a new A4000 processor card and new A1200 motherboard.

A second approach has been proposed by phase 5 with its PowerUp boards. A 680x0 chip and PPC chip are combined on the same board allowing current code to run at native speeds while new software can access the PPC. Phase 5 has done a significant amount of work in providing a PowerPC development environment and ported versions of its CyberGraphX software. A PPC-native Workbench and PPC-native application software, while the logical next step, are not required for users to benefit from PPC acceleration. This allows more time to make significant upgrades to Workbench and AmigaDOS while developers can quickly bring PPC-accelerated applications to the market. Both approaches have advantages. A clean non-680x0 approach through software emulation sounds attractive but is fraught with peril. Apple got lucky and numerous developers ported their code to PPC. The emulator barely worked and even when it did programs ran slow. Are Amiga users going to buy a new \$2000 Power Amiga if it runs Lightwave or Imagine slower than a stock A1200? While Apple had a healthy market and aggressive developers to push the users through the transition quickly the Amiga has an anemic market and relatively few active developers. How many will spend the time or money to port to PPC until the number of users becomes a viable market?

In contrast the phase 5 dual processor PPC boards have the advantage of running existing applications as fast or faster than previously while providing a path to even greater speed with PPC-native code. Developers can transition parts of programs which can benefit the most from the PPC's speed right away without having to port the whole code. More importantly development can begin immediately without a complete a PPC port of Workbench and AmigaDOS. While phase 5 has developed libraries to allow software to use the PPC this is not a completed port of the Amiga operating system. Even more exciting are the possibilities of PPC and 680x0 processors working together with the PPC spared from the task of running the OS and free to devote all of its speed to applications code. In fact this may be a stepping stone to a multi-processor Amiga. Is there a downside? A problem arises if developers continue to produce 680x0-only code and the incentive to port Workbench and AmigaDOS wanes. The alternative is waiting for the PPC versions. But is it important to have a PPC Workbench and AmigaDOS since Workbench runs at a speedy clip even on an '020? It's applications software like Lightwave and ImageFX that need the speed boost. Each successive version of the OS would become more and more

PPC-native until eventually all of it runs on the PPC. The vacancy left by the departing 680x0 processor could be filled with a second PPC making the Amiga a dual-processor system like the BeBox. A radical application of this approach would be the addition of other types of processors. If a 680x0 and PPC can coexist why not a DEC Alpha or Pentium chip or even systems with all three. Windows 95, Windows NT, Linux, and MacOS could all run together as tasks of the Amiga Operating System much as Emplant and ShapeShifter run MacOS. Users could use any application regardless of the operating system. The PowerUp board proves that the core OS and applications need not use the same processor or type and software tasks can be divided between them. Not only is this the best way for the Amiga to transition to the PPC but also points the way to a new future for the Amiga.

As a footnote an upgrade letter arrived from Impulse this weekend as I was finishing this article. It described the features in the upcoming Imagine 6.0 and one little line caught my attention: PowerPC support! Developers are catching PPC fever and while no specific mention was made of phase 5's boards, since they are the only announced PPC devices for the Amiga, it seems logical to assume that the reference is to them. It's an exciting thing to see a developer who was on the verge of canceling its Amiga version come roaring back into the market. While Imagine has its flaws I encourage all past and present users to give it a serious look and upgrade as I have. Kudos to Impulse!

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## 1.14 The History and Direction of the Computer - A Personal View

The History and Direction of the Computer - A Personal View

Jim Kuzma concludes his series on where computers have been, where they are, and where they may eventually be

By Jim Kuzma, Contributing Writer, KOOZ@CompuServe.COM

(...continued)

So now we are faced with operating systems so large that it takes a CD-ROM (or two or six) just to load them. Megs are now gigs, and you need 10 gigabytes of disk, 30 megabytes of ram, and a Pentium running at hundreds of megahertz just to be able to click on an icon and not fall asleep waiting for something to happen. Just a few days ago, an audible gasp was heard from a spectator as I typed a command from a DOS prompt. Speed and features are everything to me on a workstation, and why would I want to run a Windows version of a perfectly good CAD package? To make it slower? To

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force me to buy a bigger machine? Ah, there's the reason. Code bloat, lack of concern over speed of execution, and laziness has lead us to believe that the latest releases are better, and if they are too slow, just buy a faster machine. Both industries in hardware and software are in cahoots. One can't exist without the other, and they are in a symbiotic and mindless rush towards inefficiency.

Bugs are nevermore to be corrected, releases come faster than they can be installed, and closets are full of dust-collecting processors, which only years ago were eagerly bought as the latest and greatest available, and wasted more time than they saved while they were running. Who cares if a two thousand-dollar active matrix display doesn't last three years? By that time, the machine will be useless anyway. You won't even be able to type DIR. But the new ones will still have windows that jump behind the desktop and scroll bars that hop to the top of the file when the arrow leaves its border. Yeah, yeah, that's what I want!

One of these days, some enterprising and brilliant software company will boil all the fat off of the operating systems and release a compatible platform that will efficiently run programs in a graphics environment multitasked. But wait, isn't that what AmigaDOS did over a decade ago? No wonder that machine still has devotees. It's nice to work with. But the world is Windows now and you won't find many Amigas on desks, or laptops running AmigaDOS. It's a shame.

I'm being dragged, kicking and screaming, into the quagmire. I'm forced to contract software development for Windows that costs a fortune. I'm forced to run new hardware accessories in Windows because they aren't supported anywhere else. But I'm content to write this article in DOS in my favorite text editor that I use to write everything but e-mail. It will always be fast because it was fast on an XT. The macros I wrote over the decade still serve me well, and I don't have to unlearn them and "upgrade" to something different. I can still buy a used machine for a few hundred dollars that gets all of my work done, and it will all fit on the puny, uselessly small drive that no one else wants. Well, I've always been a hoarder, a repairer of old and solid appliances that continue to operate for twenty or thirty years after they were thrown away. Maybe I'm just an anachronism fated to be left behind in the dust while the rest of the world gallops full speed ahead. But, it sure looks like there's a cliff over there.

Maybe I'll have some satisfaction. I am, after all, a control systems designer. Maybe my obsessions with efficiency, longevity, reliability and ease of use will be the key differences that make our products stand out in a crowd. I can only hope that those qualities are still in demand in this throw-away world.

(completed)

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## 1.15 Cryptic Findings on the Internet

Cryptic Findings on the Internet

We found something interesting on an Amiga site recently...

By Michael Webb, Editor-in-Chief, MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM

Recently, in my travels upon the World Wide Web, I happened upon a particular page that had more than met the eye.

It is called "the Broken web site," Internet home to an Amiga-oriented organization by that name ("Broken"), and the URL is

<http://www.crystal.com.au/~hweight/>. If you follow a link to their "News" page, an item dated October 2, 1997 gives a cryptic description of something on the site.

As it turns out, it is a riddle, the answer to which lies somewhere between the site itself, and the web visitor's creativity. I was able to figure out part of the trick, but haven't had much time to explore further. I thought I would feature this particular site here, however, in case we have any great code-crackers/deriddlers out there in the Amiga community that would like to give it a try.

How do you find the answer? Well, I can't tell you. After all, that wouldn't be fair, would it? But I can tell you there is a clue in this article.

This could, incidentally, be the start of a regular department in which we feature one or several Amiga-oriented sites each month. Such things are all in the planning stages, but keep that in mind for the future, especially if you have an Amiga page with your own unique twist to it. Riddles not required, of course...

Other than that, if you do try to solve the riddle, good luck!

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## 1.16 Book Review: @ LARGE

Book Review: @ LARGE

A true story about challenges to security and administration in the modern Internet age

By Robert Davis, bobdavis@cadvantage.com

Like Cliff Stoll's book, @ LARGE begins with a Unix System Administrator on the left coast of the United States suffering difficulties with a computer cracker. Also like Cliff Stoll's experience, the sysadmin has huge problems getting law enforcement interested in investigating.

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Unlike the earlier story, in this one the sysadmin actually finds out who is tormenting his system. The cracker is a young man in the sysadmin's own city, and is well-known to some of the staff at the university in Portland, Oregon, where the affected computer system exists. The cracker never does intentional damage, but some of his programs-gone-awry crash computers on the Internet, forcing other sysadmins to cut off net access to hundreds of people and he generally makes life miserable for thousands of people all over the United States who try to use the Internet for work or play.

University computer systems, networked government systems, even machines which could have been used to accidentally trigger floods and medical emergencies were penetrated by the cracker. At one time, the entire source code for the Sun operating system Solaris was stolen (downloaded) but the cracker did not have a big enough hard drive on his own machine for the hundreds of megabytes of data. When the cracker stored the source on a networked computer, he picked one which itself was short of hard drive room, and the crash of that computer was one of the clues which eventually led to his undoing.

At one point, with the FBI wiretapping the cracker, his data communication became unintelligible to the law enforcers. FBI officials thought he had started using some sort of encrypted 'stealth' modem. Actually, he had purchased a higher speed modem, but never could get the thing to work right. He went back to his old, slower, modem and the FBI was back in the wiretapping business.

@ LARGE is a true story, and has enough technical detail to keep most of us nerds engrossed with specifics of the shortcomings in Internet security. It also has adequate explanation of the technical stuff to allow non-techies to understand the problems a Unix sysadmin goes through to keep his system both secure from outside attack and freely open so legitimate users are not frustrated by extreme system security.

By the way, with the expected release of Holger Kruse's new version of Miami late in 1997, some Amiga owners are going to have to learn about network security. The new Miami will allow Amiga owners to run network server applications with ease not currently available to users of the rather hard-to-set-up AmiTCP/IP. @ LARGE is a good book to read just to get an idea of what hard work it is to keep a machine on the Internet around the clock, providing services to others.

Much of the book covers a two-year period in the early 1990's, mostly 1991 and 1992. Eventually the FBI did get into the investigation. In fact, the FBI planned to make the capture and prosecution of the cracker a test case

to show the effectiveness of the new federal law which attempts to keep nefarious persons from messing with others' computer systems. The authors even quote from 18 U.S.C. 1030 (Fraud and Related Activity in Connection with Computers), section (A) (S) (a) on page 53.

But the big high-profile case came apart when the FBI discovered the identity of the cracker. There was no prosecution. Why there was no prosecution of such a serious case of Internet cracking is a large part of @ LARGE.

Freedman and Mann tell a good story. The book is easy and interesting to read. This is one of those few books which I had to read in one setting, from start to the bibliography. @ LARGE is worth your attention.

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## 1.17 Nemac IV: The Director's Cut

Nemac IV: The Director's Cut

An OS-friendly game with promise, but room for improvement

By Steve Duff, Contributing Writer, [sduff@wolffenet.com](mailto:sduff@wolffenet.com)

Screen Shots (Mapped down to 16 colors in order to reduce file size):

[First] | [Second] | [Third]

\* Nemac IV: The Director's Cut

\* Developer: Zentek

\* Distributor: Pernat

\* Price: \$59.95

\* Reviewed by Steve Duff

Overview:

Nemac IV: The Director's Cut is a Doom-clone in the sci-fi Marathon vein.

Your task is to infiltrate Nemac IV, an automated defense installation gone haywire. The installation will vigorously defend itself with armies of robots and embedded systems. Your task, as in all such shooters, is to kill everything that moves and survive to the exit.

Requirements:

To quote; "Any Amiga computer with 68020 or better, AmigaOS 2.0 or better, 2MB of Memory and 5MB on Harddisk." Worth noting is that a CD-ROM is also required, both to install the game and to run the animations while playing.

System Used For Test:

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A4060T, 18MB RAM, CV64/3D 4MB, 4X SCSI CD-ROM.

The Good Stuff, Part One:

Nemac IV is a model of good behavior on the installation and OS-friendliness end. It installs easily off the CD-ROM, supports OCS, ECS and AGA machines, supports Picasso and CyberGraphX standards, supports 3D I-glasses and has a great configuration window. From this window you can set the screen mode, activate I-glasses support, choose to go with CPU or CPU+Blitter, set-up your keyboard or joystick, and basically do everything but set window-size. This is actually a good thing, because the opening animation is a bit finicky. Depending on your configuration, it has very definite ideas about the window-size it wants to play smoothly in. On my machine, it played best quarter-screen on an 800x600 CGX screen, or a 640x512 PAL or NTSC screen off AGA. Actually, the AGA playback was never as good as the CGX, a theme throughout the game. As to the opening animation itself, it was impressive work accompanied by a powerful synth soundtrack. Cranked through my 3-piece Yamaha set, it annoyed everyone in the house!

The Good Stuff, Part Two:

Unlike any other Doom-clone, Nemac IV puts you in the perspective of a 'Walker,' rather like those of Mechwarrior fame. The theme is complete down to the deep bass 'boom-boom-boom' as you walk, which imparts an enjoyable sense of rhythm and power to your movement. There are guns on each side of the Walker and their animation is very nicely done. The game also has sharp textures, which allowed great latitude in window-resizing. I was able to play in a 320x256 CGX screen with the game window expanded to practically full-screen on a 17-inch monitor. Even so, the image was not seriously degraded, and the game ran very fast. The same could not be said if you tried to play on a 640x480 screen with window-size bumped-up. Although the window's default size is 320x240, expanding it on a 640x480 screen resulted in the game becoming a slideshow.

Aside from the sharp textures, Nemac IV had better-looking sprites than most Amiga Doom-clones, though they are still a far cry from those of Doom or Marathon. I'm not quite sure what the problem is, but basically, the monsters in Amiga Doom-style games leave a lot to be desired. Partly making up for this, the game has excellent explosions and some nice associated physics. Blasting a toxic barrel gives an impressive and thunderous blast accompanied by dead robots shooting across the floor! Really cool!

Unusually, you can also move the barrels around -- supposedly an important consideration in later levels.

Wrapping things up on the graphics end, the CD-ROM contains over 90

screenshots done in 640x512. They must have been playing on a top-secret multiprocessing rig when they took those! Also, there are 18 rendered images, some of truly photorealistic quality. Very nice work.

In terms of gameplay, the controls are very smooth. I set all my movement keys on the numeric keypad, since it offers easy and smooth circle-strafting, i.e., circling an enemy while keeping it constantly under fire. Alas, this strategy proved less effective in Nema IV than in Doom, since nearly all the enemies have rapid-fire weapons and many of them tend to spray fire all over the place. Oh well. As to the feel, Nema IV gives a good sensation of straight-ahead, rapid-fire carnage. However.....

#### The Bad Stuff, Part One:

It's actually generous to call this game a Doom clone, since it only has a Wolfenstein-grade engine. The only vertical variable I noticed in 12 levels was ceiling height. Although one assumes the floor could be varied as well, perhaps the engine uses some sort of inflexible deckplane-style reference. In any case, the levels are all flat mazes. Further, aside from the complete lack of stairs, there's also no windows, nor is there open sky. Lighting effects? Nope, not even sector-based lighting. Nor did I see any animated textures. Basically, very little in the way of cool architecture or mood-building atmosphere. Even if an editor existed for this game, it would offer little for the budding designer to work with.

The level design itself is mostly quite pedestrian. The first seven levels are for practice, and while not entirely lacking in charm, they have little to recommend them against games with a superior engine. The gameplay is very easy in these early levels as well, and even though three difficulty settings (Normal, Hard and Impossible) are offered, I saw very little difference between them. However, the designers began to cheat, making the levels harder by hiding necessary powerups behind secret doors. Most of these are nearly impossible to find since there's no visual cue, such as a texture offset or lighting variance, to betray them.

Level 7 is fairly difficult and has a nail-biter ending. After this, the gloves come off. Level 10 is a grueling adventure and Level 12 starts you under heavy fire, after which it only gets worse.

Making life all the more insufferable is that games can only be saved between levels. While some purists (masochists) enjoy the high difficulty this gives a game, the fact is that for most players it's just frustrating and boring. It would be one thing if skill alone could get you through, but 3D shooters have a high 'random factor.' They never play the same way twice. You can get practically to the end of a level, then get whacked, and

then take five more tries just to get back where you were. In the case of Nematic IV, you'll quickly lose interest because the levels themselves are fairly dull. In Doom parlance, they would be termed 'room-by-room' shooters. Open a door, shoot at the enemies inside, then go in and mop up the survivors -- again and again and again. Better level design would offer tripwire traps and complex moving sectors, where you suddenly find yourself surrounded by enemies, but these are not found here.

As luck would have it, the enemies also have terrible AI. They cannot turn corners or open doors. Their typical 'see through walls once awakened' line-of-sight tracking actually causes them to crash into walls and get stuck. It's almost tragic to watch their little metal feet scraping uselessly against the ground as they try to burrow through the walls.

Oddly, this actually makes the game more difficult. In Doom, the superior movement routines of the enemy can bring them to the doorway, where you can wait and pick them off. Not so in Nematic IV. You have to blast them to smithereens from outside, but eventually plunge in only to find enemies freeing themselves from the walls to fire on you.

The enemies also have no personality. They aren't named in the manual, so you really have no prior notion what you're up against before plunging into action. Without doubt, the most annoying enemy is what looks like a 'walking rangefinder,' or perhaps a surveyor's telescope. This critter has a pistol on it somewhere that creates an ungodly racket. Get a few of these in a room and they can drive you insane. Most of the enemies are also quite weak. There is a flying teakettle robot with a plasma gun that will account for most of your deaths, along with a tough but seldom-encountered Walker sporting dual plasma guns. Other than that, you really only need to watch out for the 'flying bombs' that resemble giant floating cough drops.

Alas, the game is unambitious in the sound department. There is no music for the levels, no ambient sounds, and the enemies make no noise except the sound of their firing.

The Bad Stuff, Part Two:

Then there's the bugs. Like, call an exterminator for this one! Nematic IV is the buggiest game I've encountered on any platform. First, it was the annoying 'ammo bug.' This one caused my maximum bullet allowance to drop from 800 to 256 once I grabbed bullets on Level 3. Then came the bugs in the clipping and drawing routines. Nematic IV seems uncommonly prone to narrow vertical texture rips around sharp edges. This is true of all texture-mappers, but more in Nematic than the others I've played. Also, if you stretch the window to an odd size, you'll get 'hall of mirrors' effects

around wall edges, notably on AGA screens. Using an odd-sized window can also make the doors too small for their openings. If there are any monsters behind these doors, they will see you and open fire, where normally they wouldn't. One positive side effect is that thin slivers of light can betray the otherwise unfindable secret doors!

The biggest clipping bug I encountered was on Level 5, where I was able to walk right through a solid wall! Otherwise, there seems to be a flaw in collision-detection with closing doors. You can easily run through a mostly-closed door, or shoot grenades through it. Once, I saw a flying teakettle pass like a ghost through a door almost completely shut.

Most recently the game has suffered audio and movement bugs that bring the whole affair to a halt and cause a crash on quitting. Another bug (after a recent re-install) can see you start a level surrounded by corrupt textures. You can count the seconds until the crash. Then there's a bug where, if you play several levels in a row, the game can 'load up' and temporarily slow to a crawl.

I took out MCP and most other tools, as the docs suggest, but the bugs persist. Your mileage may vary. Chances are that the A4000 design has some problems here as well.

Summary:

Nemac IV is a promising first effort by Zentek. They did a lot of things right, but these were outweighed by the things they did wrong. Even if the game was less buggy, it would still suffer from a PreCambrian engine, third-rate level design, poor enemies and an overall sense of boredom by comparison to similar, but superior games. It shows, yet again, why no Doom clone has quite matched the original game. As usual, concentration is placed on extraneous 'features,' such as cool explosions (in this case) while gameplay takes a back seat. This game also lacks support for deathmatch and co-op play online, vastly reducing its lastability. Also, I think it's a good idea for Amiga Doom-clones to include level editors, rather than hoping a third-party programmer writes one. With a level editor provided, it might be possible for players to stretch the engine a bit and get more mileage and excitement out of the game.

I think Nemac IV should also serve as a warning to the teams behind Brainkiller and Genetic Species. Really guys, it's awfully late in the day to be bringing out souped-up Wolfensteins, and it's getting later by the minute. Please, take a look at Breathless, or Trapped 2, and if you still can, get at least a variance in floor and ceiling heights, then throw in stairs, windows, and sky textures. We'd really like that, hint-hint. :>

Highs: OS-friendly, easy install, cool animated opening, great configuration window, sharp textures, smooth controls.

Lows: Terrible enemy AI, obsolete Wolfenstein engine, lack of atmosphere, supremely buggy and ultimately, just plain boring.

Rating -- 65%

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## 1.18 **Lame Humor Department**

Lame Humor Department

[Comic]

By Kyle Webb

Feedback - [KyleWebb@aol.com](mailto:KyleWebb@aol.com)

Kyle Webb, ©1997; Excelsior Digital Publishing, ©1996-1997

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## 1.19 **Editors@HelpDesk**

Editors@HelpDesk

The Editorial Staff of "The Amiga Monitor" handles your questions and problems.

Write us!

Do you have a question you would like us to answer? send e-mail to Editors@HelpDesk at [MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM](mailto:MikeWebb@CompuServe.COM). You will receive notification as soon as we receive your message. We do not necessarily publish all letters, but we attempt to reply to them all.

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