

**A-START!**

**COLLABORATORS**

	<i>TITLE :</i> A-START!		
<i>ACTION</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>SIGNATURE</i>
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**REVISION HISTORY**

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# Chapter 1

# A-START!

## 1.1 A-START!

A-START! v0.5b (23.2.1996) voidParrot Software 95/96  
Programming for 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!

Programmers!

Sam wants YOU!

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Future  
What is yet to come.

Author  
All about the author.

## 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 player. All with beautiful graphics and relaxing sound. But wait, there's more! Delete, move, or rename files is a snap with A-Start! It is like a mini file manager!

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## 1.3 System Requirements

What you need in order to run A-Start:

Kickstart 2.04:

This version of Kickstart should be standard, so get yourself OS3.1 if you are running an Amiga under 2.0!

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!

WBStart-Handler

:

A-Start does not necessarily need it, but without it you are not able to use some functions of A-Start

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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

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.

You also can install A-Start manually:  
your sys:l directory and A-StartPrefs to your sys:prefs directory.

There is no need to make an assign for the A-Start directory. If you encounter problems with A-Start, please make sure the two sub-directories caches/ and utils/ are present in the A-Start path.

To run A-Start on every BootUp, copy thr A-StartWBS program to your WBStartup directory. Please check, 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  
Reboot your Amiga (TM)

Terminate

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How to terminate A-Start

Back to main

## 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.

In future versions there will also be an ASSIGNS drawer, from where you will have fast access to all your assigns. There will also be an option to put all your important drawers into this drawer, so you have fast access, for example, to all your graphics and sound files.

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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 in future versions it will be possible to organize your programs even better, through "program independent" drawers: there will be an option to put related programs into specific directories, created with the A-StartPrefs program.

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## 1.9 A button to launch your projects fast

FileList:

This works like the UserProgs window, but in here you should 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

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for example your last test run crashed your system.

Back to usage

## 1.10 This is not implemented yet!

Utilities:

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

In a future version this is where you can place any program you wish to have quick and easy access to.

Programmers: look at the  
programmers  
page.

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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 depressing this button, a requester pops open where you may enter a CLI command, and A-Start will execute it. This is like pressing `rCommand e` on newer OS-versions.

Back to usage

## 1.13 reboot

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Reboot:

Hmm? What do you think this does? Yes, it softboots your Amiga!

Back to usage

## 1.14 programmers

As you may have noticed, there is a button named "Utilities" on the main window of A-Start. It points to a directory in the program dir called Utils. Currently, this drawer is empty and when you press this button you get a "Directory not found" message. This is where YOU can help:

The Utilities button was created to organize a number of system tools to help the you communicate with the OS. The idea is to predefine these tools and integrate them with A-Start, so they are always present. These programs would help the user control the Amiga OS and its most important functions. They would have their own small id-icons, and would be provided and updated with every new version of A-Start. The problem is that neither I, nor any other member of voidParrot Software has the time to design and code these programs... So I ask you to help us.

Programs like the following would most certainly be integrated to A-start and published with it:

- Commodity exchange tool
- File finder
- Calculator
- ...

All these programs should be intuitive and graphically enhanced. Interested programmers should email me, to receive a detailed description of what to do. We can also provide programmers with graphics, sound, music, and tips.

At the time there are programmers working on:

- Clock tool
- CPU info

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-adress MAY change in near future. So if you cannot reach me,  
wait for the next release of A-Start!

\*\*\*\*\* \* \*

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).

Stefan Becker:

(his WBStarter utility).

Brem:

(software support).

AlienSoft:

(their superb MCP).

The user, who mailed me a better version of the guide:

(for fixing this guide. Sorry, don't  
know your name anymore :). Please mail me!)

Rickard Johansson:

(for beeing the first one to register)

John Hughes:

(for 'lending' me the prefs-icon in v0.5)

All of you who mailed me:

(for convincing me that A-Start really is  
good:-) )

Escom & AT:

(Yes, thank you, but why don't you allow clone  
makers to produce Amiga machines? Give AMIGA  
the freedom to develop on a larger scale. Only

if many organisations develop for the Amiga,  
can it get out of its grave!!! DO IT NOW!!!)

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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 Prefs program

Preferences:

To configure A-Start to your own liking, start the prefs program (located in your sys:prefs/ drawer after successful installation). The preference program requires MUI 2.2+

In the main prefs window you will see three different pages:

Cache:

Store file type in file comments:

A-Start tries to save the file's type in its file comment, so the second time (even after rebooting) the filetype check will work much faster. For this, A-Start needs six bytes at the end of the comment string. If the file comment is so large that it covers the last six bytes, type caching is not done (because the last six characters of the comment could be destroyed). If you don't care if your file comments are clobbered, you can enable the option to always save the file type in the file comment.

This may improve type checking speed, depending on the size of your file comments.

Use WBStarter whenever possible:

When this checkmark is set, A-Start will check if your files have corresponding .info files, and if so, they are started with Stefan Beckers

WBStarter-handler

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. Otherwise  
a normal CLI run command will be issued (with or without icons).

LowMem/HighMem:

Here you can choose whether you want to use lots of memory and keep disk activity low, or vice versa.

THIS OPTION IS NOT YET AVAILABLE!

FileWindow:

Maximum Y-entries:

Here you enter the maximum number of entries that will be shown in a file window. If the number of files exceeds this number, "slide pointers" will appear on top and bottom of the window.

Y-Slides:

Here you enter the number of entries which will be scrolled when you depress one of the slide pointers.

Maximum X-size:

Here you define the maximum X-Size of the FileWindows. FileNames, which exceed this length will be shortened and will be marked with three dots at the end. ('...')

Viewers:

Here you enter the paths for viewers to show text files, IFF, GIF, and JPEG pictures, and AmigaGuide files. The viewers must support arguments.

Players:

Same as Viewers, except you define here the Music- and Sound-players.

Misc:

Gadget-look:

Here you may define the look of the Gadgets out of three possibilities.

Prefs-Directory:

Here you must define the directory, where your preference-programs lie. Normally this is 'Sys:Prefs', but I have heard of users, who use a different directory for their preference-programs.

Lots of options will be added to the 1.0 version of A-Start!

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## 1.18 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 does not NEED WBStart-handler, but without it you will not be able to use the 'WBStarter' option in the prefs program, nor the FileList-window. Most of you have it in your L: directory, but should it be otherwise, please get the WBStarter package from Aminet.

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## 1.19 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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## 1.20 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

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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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## 1.21 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\$13/16DM/50FMK, any along with a letter, to:

Tuomas Artman

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Päärynäpolku 3  
02710 Espoo  
Finland

The letter should contain the following information:

Name  
City  
Country  
Email address

If you do not have an email-address, you have to include your street address and zipcode, and a formatted disk!

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

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## 1.22 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:

- It will be possible to enter "drawers" into the proglis and file-list-windows. This will give you another way to organize your files and projects (for example, put all gfx programs into a proglis/gfx directory, and all text editors into proglis/text).
  - The command window is UGLY. This will change in future versions.
  - All graphics will be redrawn, and many, many more will be included. The idea is to have a GUI with nice and intuitive graphics everywhere.
  - The "slide" method of the FileWindows is not very good. In future versions the user may choose if he wants to use the current method, or a scroll bar on the left (or right) side of the window.
  - Requesters will be replaced by my own requesters. They will have lots of nice graphics and other neat stuff.
  - The whole program will be speeded up (especially opening and closing windows).
  - Many more file-types will be supported. If you have a file type that you want included, please e-mail me!
  - Currently the program is unstable and there are many known bugs. All these will be fixed. Please report bugs as you encounter them!
  - The program uses a lot of CPU time when the start-button has been
-



pressed. Although this should not be a problem for most users, it will be changed to use less processor cycles in the future.

- Not only a lot of neat graphics will be added, but also music and sound-effects. Of course with full ability to customize.
- Lowmem/highmem option is not present yet. In future versions it will be possible to keep A-Start memory consumption low, with an increase of disk activity. All graphics are flushed from memory when not needed.
- Some serious bug hunting and subsequent extermination will be done.
- Does anyone know how to open these wb drawer windows with icons?

Yes, there is a lot to do, and I really need your help!

Please read the

Register  
and the  
Programmers  
pages!

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## 1.23 How to quit?

How to quit A-Start:

If you want to quit A-Start you first have to activate one of A-Starts windows (for example by pressing one of A-Starts buttons) and then press the right mouse-button. A-Start will clean up and terminate.

If you just want to close the file windows, simply click somewhere on your workbench. Note that this does not work if you have opened the UserProgs or the FileList window. In that case just click the button at the bottom left marked "Amiga", and all windows will be closed.

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## 1.24 New features of A-Start

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early March 96 - A-Start v0.75 ready  
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New features:

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

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-THE FILELIST-WINDOW IS NOW IN USE! Read the usage-section to find out, how 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 v0.75 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.

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