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The Commodore® Amiga Technical Newsletter

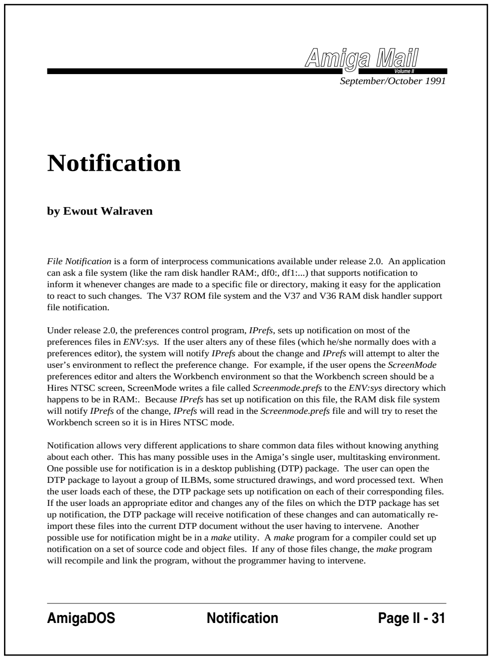
Amiga Mail
Volume II

Amiga Mail is published six times annually by the Commodore Applications and Technical Support Group (CATS). Its purpose is to support third-party developers of Amiga software and hardware worldwide by providing technical information and programming guidelines. Each issue features a collection of news and technical articles of special interest to Amiga product developers.

The Amiga Mail Reference Book (Volume II)

Collectively, the articles from this issue and past issues of Amiga Mail form a reference book. The book is broken up into chapters covering different aspects of Amiga programming (Exec, IFF, AmigaDOS...). All Amiga Mail issues are printed on three hole punch paper so they can easily be filed in a three ring reference book binder. To file the articles from this issue in the reference book, use the chapter and page numbers that appear at the foot of each page. Each page's chapter number is shown as a Roman numeral followed by its page number within that chapter.

For instance, the Amiga Mail article below ''Notification'', would be filed in chapter II of the binder, which is the ''AmigaDOS'' chapter. The article starts on page 31 of that chapter in the binder.



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Notification

by Ewout Walraven

File Notification is a form of interprocess communications available under release 2.0. An application can ask a file system (like the ram disk handler RAM:, df0:, df1:...) that supports notification to inform it whenever changes are made to a specific file or directory, making it easy for the application to react to such changes. The V37 ROM file system and the V37 and V36 RAM disk handler support file notification.

Under release 2.0, the preferences control program, *IPrefs*, sets up notification on most of the preferences files in *ENV:sys*. If the user alters any of these files (which he/she normally does with a preferences editor), the system will notify *IPrefs* about the change and *IPrefs* will attempt to alter the user's environment to reflect the preference change. For example, if the user opens the *ScreenMode* preferences editor and alters the Workbench environment so that the Workbench screen should be a Hires NTSC screen, ScreenMode writes a file called *Screenmode.prefs* to the *ENV:sys* directory which happens to be in RAM:. Because *IPrefs* has set up notification on this file, the RAM disk file system will notify *IPrefs* of the change, *IPrefs* will read in the *Screenmode.prefs* file and will try to reset the Workbench screen so it is in Hires NTSC mode.

Notification allows very different applications to share common data files without knowing anything about each other. This has many possible uses in the Amiga's single user, multitasking environment. One possible use for notification is in a desktop publishing (DTP) package. The user can open the DTP package to layout a group of ILBMs, some structured drawings, and word processed text. When the user loads each of these, the DTP package sets up notification on each of their corresponding files. If the user loads an appropriate editor and changes any of the files on which the DTP package has set up notification, the DTP package will receive notification of these changes and can automatically re-import these files into the current DTP document without the user having to intervene. Another possible use for notification might be in a *make* utility. A *make* program for a compiler could set up notification on a set of source code and object files. If any of those files change, the *make* program will recompile and link the program, without the programmer having to intervene.

AmigaDOS **Notification** **Page II - 31**

Each issue of Amiga Mail also comes with an update to the book's table of contents.

From time to time, an issue of Amiga Mail is published with correction pages which replace existing pages in the Amiga Mail reference book. These appear at the end of an Amiga Mail issue after the Table of Contents update.

For more information on how to obtain a binder, chapter separators, and past issues of Amiga Mail, contact your local Commodore support manager, or, if you are in the U.S., contact CATS at (215) 431-9180.

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