Amiga Mail News

1991 Amiga DevCons

Denver and Milan were the sites of Amiga developer conferences during the first two weeks of September. This is the first year the conferences have been held back-to-back, with the objective providing the most current information to the entire developer community.

The North American conference drew 265 attendees from six countries (U.S.A., Canada, Germany, France, Austria, and Australia). DevCon Milano was attended by 125 Amiga and CDTV developers. This year's DevCon Notes contain over 800 pages of documentation covering 33 sessions including Intro to Amiga Programming, New High-End Hardware, Localization and CDTV topics. (DevCon Notes are now available from CATS-Orders for $125.00 a set.)

Merit of the conference overall was rated Excellent or Very Good by 86% of attendees. Feedback forms indicate that attendees continue to rate ‘‘Networking Value’’ as the highest attribute of the conference, with 42% giving it an Excellent Rating, 37% rating it Very Good. Attendees had several good suggestions for improving DevCon, including the addition of special-interest round table discussions to identify developers with the same interests to further improve the networking value of the conference.

Some DevCon highlights:

Keynote Address

Jeff Scherb, Vice President, CATS, presented the keynote address, which outlined the accomplishments of Commodore and the development community over the past year. The following is excerpted from his address:

- We are now getting the press coverage we deserve. The Amiga is finally being recognized as a powerful and cost-effective alternative to the PC and Macintosh. We are getting noticed by the professional computing community.
- The A3000 is shipping in volume. The recent ‘‘Power Up’’ sales promotion run by Commodore in the US has exceeded all of our expectations, and has, in fact, resulted in a backlog of orders for the machine.
- The A500 continues to gain momentum, particularly in Europe. Many believe that the 500 is now poised to repeat the success of the Commodore 64.
- CDTV is shipping, to tremendous press reviews. Over 100 titles are already available for the machine. The press now defines the ‘‘interactive multimedia player’’ machine generically as CDTV, rather than CD-I as it did a year ago. We are now the leader that the ‘‘other guys’’ have to follow.
- We are now shipping Amiga running AT&T System V, Release 4 UNIX. This is one of the earliest commercial implementations of V.4, and our implementation includes *Open Look* and color *X Windows* running on the University of Lowell graphics card. Over 150 applications are already available for the machine.
- The A3000T ‘‘tower’’ machine is now shipping -- this elevates Amiga expandability and performance to new levels.
- AmigaDOS 2.0 is now finished, and ROMs are being manufactured.
- Over 1000 developers are registered in the CATS-US Developer support program. Over 500 are

IN THIS ISSUE

registered in the support program in Europe. This is a significant increase over last year.

- Commodore continues to be profitable, and just closed the fiscal year at over $1 billion, for the first time since the ’64 days.
- In the next month or two, we expect to ship the 3 millionth Amiga!

Release 2 Enhancer Kits

One of the most popular announcements at the Amiga Developers Conference was Commodore’s plans to make AmigaDOS Release 2 Enhancer Kits available starting in October. In the United States, a full update to Release 2 (including Release 2 Kickstart ROMs) will be made available through service centers. Manufacturing plans include a controlled production phase-in of Release 2 on all current Amiga models.

Commodore has worked closely with Amiga software developers to ensure compatibility of software with Release 2. Over 300 Amiga software titles have signed up for Commodore’s ‘‘Release 2 Compatible’’ sticker program.

CDTV Sessions

Members of Commodore’s Special Projects Group spoke at eight DevCon sessions. Gail Wellington, Director of Special Projects, reviewed current marketing plans with the developers. Promotion in the U.S. will include a major launch in key test markets, the largest being San Francisco. An aggressive television and print advertising run is scheduled along with a direct mail campaign. A continuing geographically targeted marketing campaign is being planned. It is expected that 10-15 major markets will be launched in the U.S. by Christmas.

A similar campaign, on a national level, is being planned for the United Kingdom. During a recent U.K. promotional campaign fully 80% of respondents who visited the store(s) carrying CDTV purchased a unit.

Gail also announced that Commodore is bundling *Groliers New Electronic Encyclopedia* and Psygnosis’ *Lemmings* with every CDTV unit in the U.S. *Groliers New Electronic Encyclopedia* is one of the best selling CD-based titles, according to industry analysts. *Lemmings* has been a runaway hit for Psygnosis on the Amiga platform.

Perhaps in conjunction with this announcement, Gail (and an entourage including Lauren Brown, Jay Denebeim, Matt Dillon, Harry Evangelou, Chris Green, Robin Lapasham, Dale Larson, Bryce Nesbitt and John Toebes) made an impromptu appearance as Lemmings at the Denver DevCon’s Developers’ Showcase. The group, appropriately decked out in green wigs and blue jumpers, staged the performance accompanied by a tape of the *Lemmings* theme. They blocked, climbed, floated and eventually were nuked to the delight of all present.

You Ask Us: Open Forum

One of the perennially popular and well attended DevCon sessions is the open forum that officially closes the conference. This year was no exception. This session provides an arena for developers to pose questions to a panel of Commodore representatives from CATS, Engineering, Special Projects and Marketing. Forty-eight percent of attendees rated the session Excellent; 43% rated it Very Good.

At this year’s You Ask Us, Jeff Scherb, in a David Lettermanesque intro, listed the ‘‘Top Ten Reasons Why I’m Not 2.0 Compatible.’’ They are:

10. 37.68 is my lucky number.
9. Oops, I thought you meant OS/2!
8. Trust Me! My code works.
7. The code is in the mail.
6. I *like* the Guru.
5. I can’t live without Notepad.
4. It only got two stars in *.info*.*
3. Larry ‘‘Bud’’ Melman is still on 1.2.
2. Bryce doesn’t call me any more.
1. The dog ate my RKMs.

*In an effort to ward off hate mail, the editors of *.info* have asked us to point out that this is a joke -- they don’t actually *review* operating systems, and they never gave Release 2 only two stars.