

UPGRADE_WB

PJHutchison

COLLABORATORS

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Chapter 1

UPGRADE_WB

1.1 Upgrading WB

Upgrading Workbench

Welcome to my latest guide about how to upgrade Workbench without much cost using freeware or shareware now widely available from BBS' and Aminet (includes

Workbench 3.1 Upgrade

Preferences

Hardware Drivers

Top Essential programs

Replacement WB programs

Libraries

Backdrops and icons

Contacting the Author

1.2 Workbench 3.1 Upgrade

The current version of Workbench is 3.1 and is available for all Amigas from the lowly A500 to the new A4000T. It comes on 6 disks: Workbench, Extras, Storage, Fonts, Locale and Install.

Utilities and tools are few and basic and rather old. Workbench uses four colours for its default screen mode and its icons and looks dated although much better than 1.3's color scheme.

The main new features provided since 1.3/2.x are as follows:

AGA Support - Support for 256 colour screens.

- Datatypes - Allows programs to load from different types of files whether graphics, sound or text based.
- DosDrivers - Uses separate files for each device rather than a single mountlist. Automatically loaded on startup.
- CrossDos - Allows you to access 720K/1.44M PC floppy disks and hard disks and zips etc.
- Monitors - Better support for different monitors and screen modes.
- Printers - More printer drivers such as CanonEpson.
- Workbench - Much more improved workbench screen since 1.3.
- Preferences - Wider range of preferences to configure your workbench
- Locale - Support for different languages other than English
- CDROM - A new CDROM Filesystem is supplied as standard.
- CLI Commands - New LoadResource command

1.3 Preferences.

There are some preferences you can install to improve your Workbench as follows:

util/wb/SystemPrefs37.lha

System prefs. If you have an 030 or better CPU then you can set the Caches, Burst Modes, Copyback, VBR and Superscalar settings for your CPU.

util/sys/SerialPrefs292.lha

A new Serial preferences which allows more speeds above the current 31k limit.

util/wb/AssignMan124.lha

Assign manager allows you to set up all your assigns with this Assign Manager and run it once in your user-startup for all of them!

util/wb/VisualPrefs.lha

Visual prefs changes all aspects of how your Workbench looks with new types of gadgets, windows, boxes without going for ClassAct or MUI.

Translator

New Translator allows you to use different accents when the computer speaks to you.

MenuPrefs

Allows you to assign hotkeys to Workbench menus. Essential for commonly used menu commands.

util/libs/Board217.lha

Boards library allows you to identify and display what expansion boards you have installed.

util/libs/ReqToolsUsr.ha

Requester toolkit for users. An ASL replacement.

1.4 Hardware Drivers

Hard Disk FileSystem

The FastFileSystem currently has already reached its limits as bigger and bigger hard disks are appearing. The minimum for 3.5" IDE is now 2Gb. Amiga International now supply a beta v43 of the FFS for free from their web site and along with SCSI_IDE and NSDPatch can pass the 4Gb limit. See <http://www.amiga.de/>

Besides Amiga Intl. FFS there is also FFS64TD which is available from Aminet which also allows larger hard disks with the above patches.

Printers

Dot Matrix printers were the normal when the Amiga first appeared, now inkjet, laser and colour printers are now widely available. Drivers are now available for free for Epson, Canon, HP and other less well known printers in Aminet in text/print.

Scanners

Drivers and scanning programs for Epson, Microtek, Highscreen, Mustek, HP and others are available on Aminet to drive your flat bed scanners. See hard/drivr for the software esp. ScanTek, ScanTrax.

CD ROM

CD ROM and CD ROM Writers are well catered for with more recent drivers than Commodore's effort. Look for IDEFix which includes CacheCDFS, AmicDFS and AmicDROM. CD ROM Writer software is also available particularly in demo format such as BurnIt. See disk/cdrom on Aminet.

Tape Drives

SCSI tape drives for backup purposes are catered for with programs such as Tape_Handler, BTN. See disk/backup on Aminet.

Sound Cards

The best sound driver for a number of sound cards such as Toccota, Prelude and so on is now provided by AHI driver software.

Graphics Cards

The Amiga can support a number of Graphics cards in particular Picasso, CyberGraphics and so on although older cards aren't updated these days. Software to look out for is Picasso96 and RTGMaster. See gfx section on Aminet for this software

PCMCIA Drivers

As you know the A1200 and A600 have PCMCIA ports which allow type 2 cards to be used for memory, hard disks (overdrives), scsi controllers and cd rom drives (Overdrive, Zappo, Q-Drive).

Support for modems are now proved with PCMSER for some models and also support for PCMCIA networks cards as well with the CNETDevice.

Network drivers

To set up your amiga for the network you can have Peer-to-Peer software such as ParNet, Pronet, Sernet. For TCP/IP networks you can use AmiTCP or Miami and there are drivers for Netware networks. See comm and hard/drivr for this software.

1.5 Top 20 Essential programs

The following list is only a guide and may or may not meet everyone's tastes, so apologies if it doesn't include your favourite or includes a program you hate.

These programs are considered to be essential, something Commodore, forgot to include or never got round to writing one. They are not in any specific order.

1. ToolManager.

Allows you to add menu items to the 'Tools' menu in Workbench (a daft oversight by Commodore). Also, allows to provide docks, sounds, icons or access objects on the Workbench. Saves time by providing short cuts to your favourite programs.

2. ReOrg

After a lot of use, your Hard Disk will suffer from fragmentation and will take longer to boot and load files. The program will optimize your hard disk and make it faster.

3. FastView

A very good picture viewer program which will view all sorts of pictures in various formats, includes animations and various other options.

4. BED

The Editors provided by Workbench are very old and limited. BED or Blacks Editor is a reasonable small text editor which is Freeware. There are lots of other editors about, some specialised, some complex

and some simple ones. Another editor worthy of mention is GoldED
.

5. DiskSalv

This program has saved me a lot of trouble in the past and it is essential you get this (or a equivalent). Repairs disks and undeletes files for you. Version 2 is shareware and widely available, newer versions are commercial. Another salvage program is Quarterback Tools.

6. HDToolbox

Another essential utility as it preps your hard disk. Not everyone gets this but if you can get hold of it then you can manager your hard disk better. As well as settings up hard disks and partitions it can also Verify the Data Surface and map out those annoying bad blocks which DiskSalv cannot fix. Other prep software worth having is RDPprep and GVPPrep.

7. SnoopDOS

This program can help you when your programs stop working. It will display all the libraries, drives, config files and so on programs access and whether it was successful or not. An absolutely brilliant program to have.

8. SysSpeed

Ever wondered how fast your Amiga runs or what the configuration is then SysSpeed is the program to have which supports all CPU including the 68060 unlike some older software. Lots of modules are available that give the setup and speed results for different Amigas and accelerator boards. A simpler and older program to look out for is SysInfo but its Speed calculation is source for controversy! Another new program to look out for is AIBB which will speed test your hardware too!

9. XOper

This advanced program will display tasks, libraries, devices and other resources and allows you full control of tasks and intuition. A good program but be careful it can crash your Amiga!

10. Installer

Most Amiga programs are installed by this recent program which uses a standard interface to install other programs for you. Ensure that you have the latest version (V43) which fixes most of the bugs.

11. LHA/LZX/DMS

These are the most common archiver programs for the Amiga. If you use Comms/BBS' or the Internet a lot and download files then you will need these to unarchive them. If the CLI gives you the shivers then there are plenty of Archive GUI Interface programs around to make it easier. LHA and LZX are file archivers while DMS (Disk Masher) is a disk archiver.

12. ARQ

Requesters in Workbench are quite boring, so ARQ provides animated requesters instead and if you set up UPD as well, you can play your favourite samples as well such as an Explosion if a disastorous error occurs, or a Scream if the Amiga Gurus. Great fun!

13. VirusZ II

Unfortunately, Viruses occur on the Amiga and to protect your self you must have a Virus checker program to detect and remove virus. VirusZ is a popular memory resident virus checker. There are many other Virus checkers available but make sure it doesn't go out of date...!!!

14. HippoPlayer

If you enjoy listening to music then this essential utility is a must as it will play most music modules (MODs), there are thousands of modules available especially on Aminet Mirror sites! Other players are about including OctaMEDPlayer which specifically plays MED modules.

15. PicBoot

Sick of looking at a boring screen when booting your Amiga? Well, Picboot allows you to display any ILBM picture while your Amiga is booting up.

16. ValidateWait

Has your Amiga ever crashed and then the hard disk is invalidated? If so, then if you reboot, the Amiga tries to Validate the HD while booting up and causes a lot of disk thrashing. To prevent this, include ValidateWait in your startup-sequence to wait until validation is finished before booting up the Amiga. A useful util to have about.

17. Assign Manager

A lot of Amiga programs require assigns to be set up for it to be used and that can make your user-startup very, very big and slow down booting up. Assigns allow you to make ALL your assigns in one go with just one command! Includes a prefs program to add or delete any assigns without resorting to Editing user-startup.

18. Interplay

If you have a CDROM then you can also play Audio CDs as well and a program such as Interplay can be used to play them. It supports different CD ROMs including SCSI, IDE and Zappo drives. It also allows you to name the different track so that they're easily identified.

19. MCP

To make life a lot more easier to use Workbench and enhance it the multi-commodity program like MCP can make Workbench easy and better to use. I use it for Title Clock, Click-to-front, Screen titles, WB and memory patches. It has many more features than can be useful.

20. ReKeyit

Another useful program is Rekeyit which allows you to assign key strokes to Workbench menus and sub-menus so that a quick keystroke is only needed for commonly used functions such as Show All Files and Delete etc.

1.6 Replacement Programs

Amiga Workbench comes with a few utility programs to look at files, print them out and enhance the way your Amiga works. Unfortunately, over

time they have become quite dated. Now, there are thousands of Public Domain and Shareware programs available to update them with more features and enhance current facilities.

Utilities drawer

System drawer

Tools drawer

Commodities

AmigaDOS

Workbench

1.7 Utilities Drawer

This drawer tends to fill up with all your favourite utility software, programs which you tend to use day after day. Here are a few you could include in your collection.

Picture Viewers

There are many picture viewers with built-in code to read other file types much faster than Multiview. See gfx/show for some viewers.

e.g. ViewTek, FastView, Visage, PPSHOW etc.

Text Viewers

There hundreds of text viewers from the simple TYPE and MORE programs to more advanced viewers with XPK support, search facilities, Guide compatible and so on.

e.g. Evenmore, Muchmore, MUIMore, PowerGuide, AmigaGuide.

PDF and Postscript files are now possible to be viewed on the aminet although it tends to be slow. Look out for Ghostscript, pdftops and xpdf4d.

Animation Players

The Amiga is well suited to creating and playing various types of animation. There are many different formats such as Amiga's ANIM format, MoviePlayer, MPEG, AVI and Quicktime formats. All are catered for on the Amiga.

e.g. ANIM Viewers: ViewTek, CyberAnim, Xanim,
MPEG: XAnim, amipeg, Xingplay
QT: QT, Xanim

Good general ones to look for are XAnim and MainActor!

Sound & Music Players

Multiview supports 8SVX but there are many other modules types which it does not support. A dedicated music player(s) is required.

e.g. HippoPlayer, Octamed Player, HD-Play, Eagle Player etc.

Some players will support audio direct from an audio CDROM.

e.g. Interplay, Octaplay,

Clocks

The standard clock is rather old and can be a nuisance as it opens a window to display the time. Replacement clocks now put the date and time on the Screen menu bar out of the way at the top of the screen. See util/time on Aminet for a whole load of clocks.

1.8 System Drawer

The system drawer contains programs to for the Operating System and things like disks, fonts, the shell, memory and so on.

Replacement Shells

The shell is a useful and powerful feature to access the AmigaOS. To enhance the current shell there are some replacements about, the all time favourite is KingCon which provides menus for certain shell functions, file name completion (using TAB) key, iconisation and a history.

A more recent shell to appear is called VINCEd which provides: its own clipboard, scrollers, macros, menus, history, special characters sequences, ANSI colour and so on.

Disk Formatters

A good replacement is MyFormat which add BadSector, BadTrack options, and the option to save a bootblock - a major oversight on CBM's Format command.

Other formatters allow you to map out bad blocks on damaged bits of a disk. Although such disks really ought to be thrown out as they can get worse over time. Check out WorseFormat.

Disk Copiers

The standard diskcopy program is quite slow but reliable, if you wish to copy other disks quicker or copy Non-DOS disks then you will require more specialised copier programs such as DCOpy, AFCopy.

System Monitors

To find out what is running on your system, whats loaded into memory and what happens when you run a program requires a monitor type program. XOper is an excellent system monitor program, it tells you whats loaded into memory, what tasks are running and you can enter commands to change

things about tasks, windows, screens and so on. Other programs such as Snoopdos and ARTM allow to see in real time what files, libraries and resources are loaded as you load and run programs. Ideal to find out why certain programs fail to work. See util/moni on Aminet for other monitor type programs.

Speed Testers

Lots of people like to find out whats in their computers or how fast their machine runs at. A number of speed programs have appeared as ShowConfig with the WB is rather limited. Programs to look out for are SysSpeed, SysInfo and AIBB which give some decent speed comparisons. SysSpeed is the latest and works with the 68060 cpu.

1.9 Tools Drawer

Icon Editors

It is usually better to use a paint package, such as PPaint to create your icons, and import them into IconEdit to save as icons. Iconian is an excellent IconEdit replacement with a bigger editing area and lots of features!

If you want to copy icons from one file to another it was only possible via the Shell or a file manager. Now we have Icon copy programs to do it for you, just drop the file into the given window and it will over write the icon file without losing tooltypes etc. Programs to look for are IconCopy, MAGicWB's IconCopy.

There are also programs that will edit the tooltypes, stack, default tool and so on much more easily than Workbench can. Look out for DoIcon, ToolTypeEditor, DefaultTool, IRT.

Calculator

This is a simple calculator program with no other functions than add, subtract, multiply and divide. There are many calculator replacements some more specialised than others. For advanced calculations, a spread sheet program is needed, such as TurboCalc.

System Configuration

The ShowConfig program displays the hardware configuration of your Amiga. Unfortunately, it cannot easily identify cards added to the system and doesn't display other items such as Hard disks or CD-ROM drives. The best programs to use are: SysInfo, AIBB, ShowConfigEnh, SysSpeed.

Picture Dump

This program outputs pictures to the printer and results can be rather disappointing on modern printers. Results can be better from a Paint package or a freeware program such as EasyPrint which can provide a wide range of features to output your pictures.

1.10 Commodities

Commodities are programs which run in the background and wait for various intuition events to occur whether from the keyboard, mouse, or window changes or insertion of floppy disks. They can affect how things happen via patches and so on.

Commodity Exchange

To control commodity programs there is the Exchange program which can display Commodity's interface and end commodity programs. There are a few commodity exchange replacements which do similar things using different interface libraries such as MUI, BGUI etc. Ones to look out for are: Mexch, CxBar, Magic_Exchange and BExchange.

Screen Blankers

If you leave your Amiga on all the time, then a screen blanker is a useful program to have to save burn in on your Monitor. There are replacements around with a choice of animations such as BlitzBlanker, BServe, GershneBlanker and MCP and MCX commodities etc.

Other Commodities

These are simple commodities that affect windows, the mouse and the keyboard. Instead of having more than one program loaded, some people have written multi-commodity programs that can do lots of things. Ones to look out for are MCP, MCX and YAK.

Some commodities are specialised for specific tasks such as sound effects on events, window events, file finders and so on. Many of these can be found on Aminet in util/cdity.

1.11 AmigaDOS (CLI/Shell)

AmigaDOS Shell commands that reside in the C: directory can also be updated with more up-to-date versions and added to with more powerful commands. For example:

```
AKCC      - Adds a whole load of powerful CLI commands.
WKUtils  - Requester commands, split and join commands
GCopy    - A Copy replacement with a progress bar
zDir     - An 'ultimate' dir replacement
GetInfo  - Returns information about memory, files and disks
```

There are also a whole load of boot commands which you can run from your startup-sequence or user-startup:

```
PicBoot  - Displays a picture while your Amiga Boots.
UPD      - Adds sounds to Workbench events (comes with ARQ)
NoClick  - Turns off those annoying floppy drive click sounds
SetPens  - Allows more than 4 colours on Workbench properly
FastExec - Moves exec.library from slow chip ram to fastram
FastIPrefs - Improves speed of preferences
WaitValidation - Pauses boot up while disk validation occurs
```

WBStartupPlus - Decides which programs to run on Startup
NewPassword - Asks for password before you can complete bootup
BootChange - Selects random samples and pictures on bootup
CheckDrive, IfNoDrive - Reboots if no hard disk found first time

These and a whole lot more can be found on Aminet in util/cli and util/boot and other places.

1.12 Workbench Replacements

Workbench itself is provided with LOADWB and the workbench.library. There are a number of complete replacements about which adds multi-tasking, threading and better menus and facilities than WB itself. e.g. MBench.

Windows 95 provided the 'Start' button and this can also be simulated on the Amiga with programs such as: Win95, Taskbar, StartMenu, RunBar.

MagicMenu allows you to replace the menu system with popup menus from anywhere other than the top of the screen.

The Tools menu is not supported directly by Workbench but there are plenty of replacements: ToolManager, ToolsDaemon.

If you find Workbench itself too limiting then there are replacements for that too! File Managers such as Dir Opus, DiskMaster, SID and so forth are quite popular.

1.13 Libraries

AmigaOS uses shared libraries for its operation and this allows programmers to expand and enhance the Amiga by writing and releasing their own libraries. There are hundreds and hundreds of libraries, some are specific to particular applications and some are more general and can be used by any program.

MUI - Magic User Interface

Workbench programs used to use Intuition for WB1.3 and then GadTools for WB2/WB3. MUI is a replacement user interface library system for programs to provide a powerful and pleasing graphical user interface. It is getting popular but requires an expanded system to make full use of it.

Requester replacement Libraries

Until WB2.04, programmers had to write their own File Requesters from scratch for their programs and ARP (Amiga Replacement Project) provided a library to fix this oversight. Req and Reqtools replaced ARP and CBM's ASL library.

Compression Libraries

These libraries provide functions to compress files and then decompress files usually in real-time by compress-aware programs such as PPMore, PPSHOW, Muchmore and many other programs. They are helpful when space is at a premium and compressing large files and saving them to disk would free up vital space and using a program to decompress them for you when you need to view or modify them.

Common libraries: Explode, PowerPacker, XFD, XPK, Decruch.

Unix IXEmul Library

This library provides Unix type functions to AmigaOS and makes it easy for certain Unix programs to be easily converted to the Amiga.

Translator Library

This library is an up-to-date speech synthesis with locale support for the Amiga and can now be used on Amigas with WB2 or better!

Maths Libraries

If you have an accelerated Amiga and got an FPU then there are some replacement libraries that can make use of your FPU without needing an FPU specific program.

Identification Libraries

There are a number of identifying libraries. Some can recognise types of hardware you have (Boards, Expname, Identify), or the type of files you have (FileID, Datamaster), useful for Dir commands and Virus killers.

Datatypes Library

This library is provided with WB3 or above and allows programs to read different filetypes such as pictures, sounds and types of text files. A few are provided by many, many more can be added:

GIF, JPEG, PNG, MacPaint, Wave, MacSnd, SVG, Animation, MPEG, Metafiles, Faxx, MacPaint, MacPict, Protracker, Icon, Tool, AIFF, Targa, Koala, Reko, ZX Spectrum, XPM, BMP, NewIcons, PostScript, VOC, TIFF, AU, C, Fonts, WPG, HSN, Sun Man, PCX, QRT, Sun Raster, BeOS.

1.14 Backdrops and icons

Workbench uses a standard 4 colour icon system which is quite bland and boring. To improve the way Workbench looks, there are replacement icon collections available to make Workbench more colourful:

Magic Workbench

This is a direct icon replacement using 8 colour icons using a grey/blue/pink type palette. It is very popular and doesn't require much extra system resources to ensure speed isn't affected.

NewIcons

This is a special icon replacement. Instead of using normal icon images like Workbench, the images are stored in the icon's tooltypes and the standard icon image appear as small squares. A program is required to be run to see the new style icons. The icons appear as 3D colourful icon and look completely different to the normal Workbench icons.

Multicolour Icons

There other other sets of icons with more colours, typically 16 and 256 colour icons but can slow down Workbench as the more bitplanes required for the icons make bigger .info files. These are ideal for people with graphics cards which can cope with these larger icons. There is one called Iconographics which is nive colourful icon collection.

Backdrop Pictures

As well as improved icons the Workbench screen can be made to be more interesting by either using patterns or pictures called backdrops and this can be set up using the WBPATTERN preferences program to automatically load a picture onto the Workbench screen. The picture must match the screen depth and palette in use.

1.15 The Author

This guide has been written for those people would like to make their Workbench more up to date and more productive for their use. I hope some of the information will be useful. Almost all the programs described can be readily installed and used from the many utility collections, the best place is the Aminet archives either via the Internet or on CD. There are some CDs with Workbench Enhancements included as one collection and are worth looking at.

How to contact me:

Peter Hutchison

E-Mail: pjhutch@blizzard.u-net.com
Web: <http://www.blizzard.u-net.com/>
Fidonet: 2:250/366.24

Other Guides to look out for:

The Printer Guide
Workbench 1.3 Guide
Expanding the Amiga Guide
PC Task Guide
Hard Disk Guide

See Aminet/docs/help or hyper for the above.
