AM1_4.HTM

COLLABORATORS

	TITLE : AM1_4.HTM		
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WRITTEN BY		February 12, 2023	

REVISION HISTORY

NUMBER	DATE	DESCRIPTION	NAME

Contents

Chapter 1

AM1_4.HTM

1.1   title

[Amiga Monitor Logo]

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handled through email at 103165.3700@compuserve.com and an email address to

the author of each article can be found at the end of each article.

Availability of The Amiga Monitor

"The Amiga Monitor" is published monthly online in a variety of formats. Its

home location is The Webb Site,

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb/

Click here to view the current complete list of official mirror sites.

Check out this page to learn how to register your site as an official mirror!

The Amiga Monitor is based in Binghamton, New York, USA.

The Amiga Monitor is optimized for IBrowse on the Amiga.

(The HTML version, this version is optomized for Multiview)

Join The Mailing List!

The Amiga Monitor is now offering mailing lists so that issues of The Amiga

Monitor can be distributed directly to you in UUEncoded format. There are

currently three mailing lists, varying with format: HTML LhA, HTML ZIP, and

AmigaGuide LhA.

send an email message to 103165.3700@compuserve.com in which you specify

the list(s) you would like to join.

IMPORTANT: IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE A REPLY WITHIN A WEEK, CHECK TO MAKE SURE

YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS PROPERLY CONFIGURED IN YOUR EMAIL SOFTWARE, AND

RESEND YOUR REQUEST.

Become a Writer for The Amiga Monitor!

If you would like to write for The Amiga Monitor, send email to

s.ormes@genie.com} describing what sort of writing you would be interested

in doing. We may be able to publish your work. You can indirectly contribute

to the content of the magazine as well if you have any Amiga-related product

you would like us to review, or any interesting pieces of information that

we could cover or investigate further.

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.

Editor's Notes...

"I stand upon the threshold, in search of resolution, conscious of little beyond my own plight, my own struggle, the essence of that for which I have labored and toiled for so long; the future is nearly realized, the days to come are almost upon us, and the results shall become indelibly engraved upon history, regardless of whether they are consummated in fire or ice, in success or failure..."

And where is the Amiga? In more or less the same place it was a month ago (big surprise). One is left wondering if this will ever end, or as in the case of children born during the Depression or World War II, it seems as though what now exists is the only way it ever has been, and the only way it ever shall be.

I don't know about that, though...something is probably going to happen. And I honestly think it will probably be soon.

If you are into strangely connected events, just for the fun of it, you may recall that last month I mentioned the New York Yankees having their first real World Series shot in quite a long time, and drew an analogy with the Amiga. Well, they went on to win it all. Will the Amiga follow suit? Only time will tell.

It's truly amazing how much can happen in a month while nothing happens at all. For instance, the Yankees won the World Series, Bill Clinton was reelected President of the United States, it snowed in the southern U.S. where it hardly ever does in any quantity, and the Amiga stood still. I would advise you to keep your eyes open, however, because if the Amiga doesn't return soon, its chances of success will be greatly dimished, slim as they already are.

On to issues of this month's Issue, you'll find a number of interesting and varied items in this issue. Among other things, we would like to welcome Sidewinder as a contributing writer. He even got published twice in this issue, actually.

One final thing I would like to mention here is that I received a request to be added to one of the AM distribution lists this month, and when I attempted to reply to the person, the E-Mail address proved defective. I tried as many variations as I could think of, with no success. The reason I mention this is explained in the masthead above: if you send me a message and get no response within a week, please check your E-Mail address in your E-Mail software, and resend the message. I would like to avoid any more "lost" requests. In the meantime, if anybody has ever heard of a provider that is called something like "weynet," kindly let me know what the entire domain name is.

But until then, let us proceed without further delay into the November 1996

issue of The Amiga Monitor.

Michael Webb

Editor-in-Chief

Contents Editor Feedback Next Month

1.2 mirrors

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Amiga Monitor Mirror Sites


This list is subject to growth and change




The Webb Site, http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb/
   This is the Official Home Site for The Amiga Monitor. All formats are
   available here. New issues appear here the soonest.
CUCUG, http://www.cucug.org/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/
   The home site of the Amiga Web Directory. Mirrors The Amiga Monitor
   online in HTML format.
http://www.livewire.com.au/amiga/cucug/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/
   CUCUG's mirror in Australia
http://www.vol.it/mirror/amiga/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/
   CUCUG's mirror in Italy
http://www.ispid.com.pl/mirrors/cucug/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/
   CUCUG's mirror in Poland
http://www.iprom.com/amigaweb/amiga.html/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/
   CUCUG's mirror in The United Kingdom
San Diego's "Aminet Source," http://www.tmisnet.com
   Carries archives of The Amiga Monitor. Other status information uncertain
   at this time.
Craig Graham's web site, http://www.blksheep.demon.co.uk
   Mirrors The Amiga Monitor online in HTML.
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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Check out this page to learn how to register your site as an ←
    official mirror!

Title Page

Contents

Editor

Feedback

Next Month

1.3 register

How to Register Your Site as an Official Mirror

If you are interested in registering your site as an official mirror
site of The Amiga Monitor, read on!

Send EMail to 103165.3700@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 EMail 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.

Title Page

Contents

Editor

Feedback

Next Month

1.4   main

The Time Capsule-Part III
By Greg Noggle

Greg's look back through the history of the Amiga continues this month with an information-packed group of Frequently Asked Questions...and the answers too, of course!

Amiga Music/MIDI: Sound Samples
By Fred Ericksen

Our resident Amiga music expert discusses sound samples, the building blocks of digital music; and how to find, obtain, and use them.

To Program an Amiga...
By Paul Somerfeldt

Unfortunately, something went awry on the internet! Paul Somerfeldt was unable to receive your information last month, so we now publish his article once again. In it, he starts out what promises to be a fascinating series, with the prologue to a comprehensive look at Amiga programming languages. In case you didn't read it before, this one involves reader participation, so if you have any interest in this field, be sure to check this out!

REVIEWS

Mayland
By Michael Webb

Do you have a schedule to maintain? Events to keep in order? This calendar/reminder program can help you.

SPOTLIGHT ON GAMES AND ENTERTAINMENT

Amiga Gaming Retrospective: Part 4 – More on Crystal Hammer
By Michael Webb

It turns out I'm not the only one to remember Crystal Hammer. We are going to dedicate this month's edition of the Amiga Gaming Retrospective to remembering this classic Amiga breakout/arkanoids game, with those who wrote over the last month.

DEPARTMENTS

Editors@HelpDesk
By the Editorial Staff

The staff of The Amiga Monitor tackles your problems and answers your questions, just like we do every night live on Genie.

Feedback
By you, the readers

The readers speak out about the Amiga industry, Amiga community, and The Amiga Monitor.

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          Tone's TidByte
          By Anthony Becker
Tone takes a quick looks at a number of current Amiga products.


          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.


          Next Month
What's in store for you next month in The Amiga Monitor.


          Title Page

          Editor

          Feedback

          Next Month
```

1.5 aol

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AOL Goes Flat!


New pricing plan for AOL'ers

mailto:103165.3700@compuserve.com
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The latest wrinkle in the Online War is an almost shocking one.

You may have gathered from the title of this article that America Online had
gone out of business, but that is very much not the case. In fact, what they
have done will probably go a long way towards guaranteeing that they stay in
business for some time to come.

Mass number of Internet Service Providers (ISP's) have sprung up in recent
times, generally offering users a flat rate/unlimited usage account for
internet access. There's no doubt the Online Services, proponents of the
hourly-charge philosophy, have been feeling the crunch. CompuServe's answer
was to launch WOW!, basically a new online service with flat rate access,
earlier this year. They kept the classic CompuServe network on the

not-so-flat rate, however.

Not to be outdone by the seemingly parasitic ISP's, or by it's biggest
competitor (CIS), online service provider giant America Online made a bold
move recently, putting all its members on a $19.95/month unlimited access
flat rate. They now offer their entire proprietary network, as well as the
internet, to its 6 million or so subscribers, all for one simple rate.

Some subscribers are overjoyed about this change, whereas others use the
network so little that the older, less expensive several-free-hours-
followed-by-an-hourly-rate makes more sense to them. Both plans are
available, incidentally; but some subscribers were annoyed that they had to
expressly inform AOL if they didn't want to be put on the new plan.

What does this mean for...

*   ...America Online? Some people would assume that this new rate
    would hurt AOL, but I seriously doubt it. Keep in mind that they have
    just basically doubled their income from $9.95/person to $19.95/person.
    There were, of course, those who racked up huge bills of several thousand
    dollars per month, but these were clearly in the minority. This will at
    least stem the flood of members abandoning AOL, and I suspect their
    membership (or the rate of increase thereof) will increase. I personally
    believe this is a winning move by AOL.
*   ...AOL members? Anybody who got any substantial amount of use
    out of AOL will probably be quite pleased with this, if they can stomach
    the factor-of-two price increase. This will probably make AOL members in
    general much more likely to stay with the service.
*   ...Members of other online services? Many people who currently
    use other online services are probably going to have to think long and
    hard about their membership. I know from personal experience that having
    to keep an eye glued to the time clock while using CompuServe is very
    frustrating and annoying, and that I have developed the mentality of "the
    less use, the better." I suspect many other people feel the same way.
*   ...Other online services? If I were them, I would worry,
    frankly. AOL is as big, and offers nearly as many resources as any of
    them, and now people are going to feel a lot more freedom in online usage.
    As for CompuServe, specifically, I sent a message directly to customer
    service asking if they had any intention of responding to AOL's maneuver.
    The answer was no, there is currently no known intention of CIS doing so,
    and that apparently they think WOW! is enough. We shall see. Will this
    reporter be leaving CIS in favor of AOL? Not in the immediate future; I
    have several reasons for staying with CompuServe. CIS should be very
    thankful for those reasons.
*   ...Members of ISP's? I don't foresee many ISP users dropping
    their accounts in favor of AOL. Some may supplement them with an
    AOL membership; but in general, once people reach the internet, they seem
    somewhat unlikely to go back to an online service. I don't pretend to
    know all the answers, though, so it should be interesting to see just
    what occurs in the near future.
And last but clearly not least...
*   ...Amiga users? Remember those reasons I mentioned above? Well,
    here's one of them. America Online, in all its vastness, does not have an
    Amiga Forum, and there is no version of the proprietary software used to
    access AOL for the Amiga. Unlike with, for example, CompuServe, the AOL

software is the only way to access it. No ASCII...not that Amiga users
would be thrilled with joining yet another effective ASCII-only Online
Service, anyway. Amiga users can access the internet through AOL as well
as with any other service, however, so it depends on what you need to do.
If you are looking for mostly internet access, AOL should seem like any
other ISP, and you could use a PC or Mac (even with ShapeShifter) to
access the AOL network on those rare occasions when you would want to.
For those more proprietary network-oriented without PC's or Macs, it's
much harder to say. It comes down to what you need/want to do online. If
you have a good setup between your Amiga and an ISP, you should probably
stick with it. As long as CompuServe has Amiga Forums and AOL doesn't,
CIS members might consider staying put. But if you can make use of AOL's
facilities, and also would like internet access, the new flat rate is a
very attractive offer.

This should probably go under the category of "significant events." It's
hard to tell exactly what the results of AOL's pricing change will be,
but it should be a very interesting story to follow.

Title Page

Contents

Editor

Feedback

Next Month

1.6   webtv

... quickest with the mostest ...

Shades of VIScorp! The TV internet revolution hits the market

mailto:p.somerfeldt@genie.com

Recently I was at a store that had a WebTV hooked up. I decided to play with

the thing for a while, and had so much fun that I bought one. Not quite

that shaver guy, but we do what we can with what we have.

A WebTV is a set-top box for "surfin'" the web. A set - top box is basically

what it says it is: a box that sits on top of a television set. WebTV is

about the size of a Nintendo game machine. It connects to your TV via RCA

plugs, or you can buy an S-Video cable, or use an RF modulator. It uses

standard telephone lines to connect to a local provider affiliated with

WebTV. You control your surfing with a remote control very similar to a tv

remote control, or you can buy a keyboard to use with it.

The concept is simple. You use your TV set to surf the world wide web. This

unit costs about $330, and is much cheaper than going out and buying a PC

with Netscape. Or, in our case, getting AmigaOS 3.x, and going through the

torturous installation process of the current crop of surfers. Although cost

effectiveness is your call.

This concept of using the TV set as a surfer is a halfway decent idea.

Although the images on the screen are not as sharp as they would be on a

standard monitor, most Amiga users use an RGB monitor, so we wouldn't

notice much of a difference. All normal surfer functions are available,

although they may work in a different way if you use just the remote control. On WebTV, when you attempt to go to a random URL, a virtualkeyboard appears on the screen. This keyboard allows you to select allnormal keyboard characters, and a few extra functions. However, if youplan to send any e-mail at all, you need to use a real keyboard. WebTVuses an IR remote keyboard containing all normal characters, plus severalextra functions. You can also plug an IBM PS/2 keyboard into the back ofthe box as well, but then the functions are not labelled on the keys. Plusyou wouldn't be able to sit across the room from the big screen TV.

WebTV can only view pages, not download them. They do have plans for

future expansion. They have a slot in the front of the machine that will

supposedly allow you to insert your credit card, and buy things from the

online stores. There is also a port on the side of the machine that will

allow you to connect a printer to the machine. That is all they admit to

right now. According to some press releases, they do not see a market for

connecting a floppy or hard drive to the machine. That is unfortunate, as

it dismisses a large potential market. Those of us who would use the WebTV

as our sole online provider will not be able to download files and transfer

them to our computer. Personally, I use WebTV to find files I would like

to download, and send the website addresses to my Genie address, and then

use Lynx to download the files. Not pretty, but it works.

There are several other set-top box manufactures who have announced products,

including VIScorp. Some say that they will include interfaces that allow

you to connect items like ZIP drives to the box. There is quite a bit of

potential in this market, both for non-users, and those who have computers

that are difficult to connect to the web, such as machines like the old

Atari 8 bits and C64's. Time will tell how all this pans out.

I titled this article with a portion of a quote that dates back to the

American Civil War (I think.) Get there with the quickest and the mostest.

WebTV (Philips/Magnavox and Sony) got here the quickest. So far, they

have the mostest, too. Time will tell whether or not others get into the

market. VIScorp, the company that is rumored to be the new owners of Amiga

Technologies, needs to get on the playing field soon. They announced their

set-top box about a year ago, and have a picture of their box on their

website. To compete with WebTV, all companies need to get to the battle

field soon, and with more than what WebTV offers. VIScorp is correct, this

market can save the Amiga. But they need to be in the market in order to

make any money at it. And this kind of item will sell primarily in the

Christmas season. Less than four weeks until the busiest shopping day of

the year.

1.7   samrept

```
The Sam Report: OFFENDED!


Commodore left us with disappointment, and ESCOM with a void; but where
are we left with VIScorp?

mailto: s.ormes@genie.com




I am offended by the satirical cartoon by Kyle Webb which appears elsewhere
in this publication.  If you haven't seen it yet, please do so now.  I will
wait till you get back.

Good......as you saw, it is entitled "The Three Stooges" and they are CBM,
Escom and VIScorp.  The tag line is "...sitting on offense..."!

The reasons I find this cartoon offensive are not what you think.  It is
cute, insightful, and right to the point.  What does offend me is that we
Amigans are the invisible "Fourth Stooge!"  Commodore at least gave us the
magnificent machine we all use, and Escom tried its best to put it back on
track until they fell victim to the pitfalls of the overall personal
computer marketplace.   Credit where credit is due.

However, this latest situation really leaves me feeling "stooged."  When
the timing is right, I will be revealing some things I have known for a
year and a half regarding our supposed savior "VIScorpse."  In the
meanwhile you will have to settle for the current silence (which speaks
volumes)....and the current nasty jokes ("lots of Bills...no Bucks")...and
the pathetic, apologetic, defensive pronouncements by Jason Compton who sold
his soul for a paycheck even though he knew full well that VIScorp was a
phantom company with no real substance and no intentions no resources with
which to "save the Amiga."

Yeah...I am offended by that cartoon...only because we deserved better!
```

1.8   telnet

Telnet

Logging onto remote systems via the internet

mail to:d.green7@genie.com

This month I will cover the subject of "Telnet".   What is it? Basically,
you are logging onto another computer over the internet and using it as if
it were sitting on your desk. The computer you are sitting at is called the
"local" computer. The other one (the one you are connected to) is called a
"remote" computer. The term "remote" is used whether the computer is across
the room or across the planet. It just means that you are not physically
present at the other computer.

Telnet is very easy to use. Just type "telnet". You will be given a prompt
"telnet>." Next type "open" followed by the host that you want to connect
to. For example, "open fedworld.gov". You can also type directly into the
command line, that is telnet followed by the host name. For example "telnet
fedworld.gov". You will be logged onto a federal government BBS. If you
don't have an account, (you probably don't) enter "new". After reading some
rules, you will be prompted to enter your name and address. You will then
be asked to provide a password. You now have an account on a remote system.
Havefun and explore!

When using Telnet you must also understand what port number means. A port is
a connection between devices. This can also be used to signal to a computer
that you have logged on to use a particular program. For instance, there is
a program that gives latitude and longitude as well as population for a
town. The program is located at "martini.eecs.umich.edu 3000". The 3000
tells the remote host to run the program described. You don't need to know
the name of the program or anything else about it to use it. Once you are
logged on you can type "help" or "?". Either of these will give you
information on how to use the program. The following has beena bridged:

Interpret server replies as follows:

0 <city name>
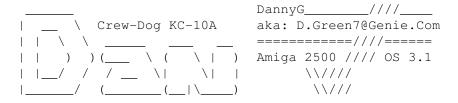1 <county FIPS code> <county name>
2 <state/province abbreviation> <state/province name>
3 <nation abbreviation> <nation name>
A <telephone area code>
E <elevation in feet above mean sea level>
F <feature code> <feature name>
L <latitude DD MM SS X> <longitude DDD MM SS X>
P <1980 census population>
R <remark>
T <time zone>
Z <postal ("ZIP") code>

Enter the town, state and zip and the program will return some information.
For example I used "Garwood, NJ 07027." The program replied:

garwood, nj 07027
0 Garwood
1 34039 Union
2 NJ New Jersey
3 US United States
F 45 Populated place
L 40 39 34 N 74 19 24 W
P 4752
E 100
Z 07027

Some interesting stuff! The biggest advantage I can see for telnet is
to run programs on another computer that you don't have or that would
take a long time searching databases, for example.   Well, I hope you
enjoyed this month's column. See you next month!

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   _____                      DannyG_____////_____
  |  __  \  Crew-Dog KC-10A     aka: D.Green7@Genie.Com
  | |  \  \  _____   ___   __  ============////======
  | |   )  )(___  \ (   \ |  )  Amiga 2500 //// OS 3.1
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                    Title Page

                    Contents

                    Editor

                    Feedback

                    Next Month

1.9 mods

Amiga Music: The MOD

What MOD's are, the theory behind them, and how they developed

mail to: sidewind@txdirect.net

Howdy, my name is Sidewinder. Maybe some of you have heard of my music.

I have been hanging about the Amiga MOD scene for the last 5 years since
1991.It's been one big blast meeting so many interesting folks and learning
constantly from others. I hope I can teach a bit of what I've acquired for
future aspiring MOD musicians around the world, and hopefully spark the same
fire that burns bright in so many others.

What is a MOD?

Okay, that's a good question I hear you asking!

Simple answer...

A MOD or MODule, basically, is a file with a bunch of samples (more on that
later), plus data (sequencer info), all stuck together like peanut butter &
strawberry jam. think of it as a musical sandwich...that's it...it's really
good.

And depending on the content... you can have a great sandwich! Or sticky
fingers.

What Do I Make a MOD With?

First of all, if you're reading this, I'm sure you're on some sort of
computer. Amiga would be a good choice...however, you can use any computer,
generally, for making MODules. Even PC's...eww!! I hear you!

After we've got that taken care of, we get tracking!

ProTracker is basically THE 4-channel tracker on Amiga, although there are
so many others like OctaMED and MLINE which offer advanced features including
8+ channels, MIDI, and Synthetic Sounds. But all generally work similarly in
making music via 'tracking;' that is you input a sound or sample on the
keyboard and it sticks to the screen in each channel you are using...so you
can have drums on one track, bass on the other...and synths and so on, until
you fill up all yer 4 or 8 channels. Then you have a song (or a really nice
way to annoy your neighbor's small pets!) Oh yeah...sounds...

Most trackers offer built-in sampling. If ya got the sampler to plug in,

use it and make wonderful sounds from your room. Otherwise you'll have to
load up sounds others have sampled from their rooms.

Boom Boom Boom...

I Feel Freaky

& THE MUSICAL HISTORY TOUR

The history of MODs can be traced way back to the Commodore C64 with
programs like Rock Monitor and Synth64. However the first truly advanced
(exclusively 4-channel sample-based) form of MODules came into being around
spring in 1987 with a little-known program called 'Sound Tracker' by a
fellow named Karsten Obarski, who basically started the MOD craze years
later since the first 'tracker tunes' were used mostly in early 'demo's'
showing off Amiga's fancy gfx and great audio chips. We still love 'em! and
Karsten too!

Today the scene has exploded. I mean, can you imagine people with Crays can
do MODs? Indeed, anyone with (a) 1 computer and (b) 10 fingers can now do
it. so to speak.

Next thing you know we'll have Willie Nelson tracking a song...

On the Road Again

Sidewinder

email * sidewind@txdirect.net
http://www.txdirect.net/~sidewind
TECHNO * MUSIC * MIDI * AMIGA STUDIO MIX
SIDEWINDER PRODUCTIONS USA
http://lonestar.texas.net/~sidewind"

                    Title Page

                    Contents

                    Editor

                    Feedback

                    Next Month

1.10   capsule

The Time Capsule: Part 3

** Frequently Asked Questions **

mail to: g.noggle@genie.com

What are the 68EC020 and the 68EC030?

Motorola, the company producing the 680x0 family, offers crippled versions

of their processors. They are a little bit cheaper than the originals;

that's why Commodore decided to build the 68EC020 into the A1200 and the

68EC030 into the A4000/030.

The difference between the 68020 and the 68EC020 is that the latter can

address just 16mb of memory. That's why the stock A1200 cannot have more

than 10mb RAM. In most cases you will not notice the difference.

This is not the case for the 68EC030; many owners will notice that the 68030

has an MMU and the 68EC030 does not. There are some important programs that

depend on there being an MMU in the system: for example, Enforcer (a

debugging utility), GigaMem (a program to emulate virtual memory), or all

current Unix versions. Amigas other than the A4000 and the A3000 need an

additional processor card to run these.

What's an FPU?

The first 680x0 processors (up to 68030) could process integers only.

Floating point (decimal/fractional) operations had to be emulated by the

software. An FPU isa chip (or part of a chip) that can process floating

point operations; in other words, a mathematical coprocessor.

There are three separate FPU types on the Amiga: The 68881, 68882 and the

68040's internal FPU. The 68882 is up to 1.5 times faster than the 68881,

because it is split into two parts: a conversion unit (the FPU's are using

an 80 bit format internally) and the arithmetic unit. The 68040's internal

FPU adds a pipeline, but misses the trigonometric instructions of the

others. These are still emulated by the software, for example,

68040.library.

Special programs (Raytracing, DTP, Mathematics, TeX) are offered in aspecial

coprocessor version which will run up to 50 times faster than the original

versions.

Those never-working Esc sequences!

Many printers come with a manual that explains which Esc sequence cause

which action on the printer. But weird things can happen when you try to

send these sequences to your printer: either it does nothing, or it does

something completely different. There is a reason: the Amiga printer

drivers. These drivers are made in a way that they only understand a certain

set of `ANSI Esc sequences', not the special ones defined (differently) by

the various printer manufacturers.

The purpose is that every application on the Amiga just uses this one

standard set of control sequences and this way doesn't need to know which

printer is actually connected. The printer driver then translates these

standard sequences into the special sequences acertain printer understands.

A list of the available ANSI Esc sequences is found in the current Workbench
manuals (or older AmigaDOS manuals). Now if you want to issue a control
sequence to the printer that's not available as an ANSI command, you have
tw oways to achieve this:
* Bypass the printer driver (that would unsuccessfully try to interpret the
sequence) and send your output *only* during this sequence to `PAR:'
(or `SER:', respectively). For this you have to close and open the
printer output channels very often which is rather tedious, and you have
to know where (`PAR:' or `SER:') your printer is connected.
* Use a special ANSI sequence, made exactly for this case: `Esc["'` where
`' is the decimally typed number of bytes in the string `', which
actually contains your special printer sequence. This ANSI sequence
tells the printer driver to not interpret or translate the next `' bytes.
But both methods have one big disadvantage when used in an application
program: you lose the printer independency! If you stick to ANSI sequences,
you can output to any printer on earth, as long as there is an Amiga printer
driver for it. If you start to use special control sequences, your program
will be tied to this single printer model and will not be useful for any
other (or you would have to provide some dozen new printer drivers for your
application).
Are there any Postscript interpreters?
PostScript is a programming language designed to be used to describe
printing on pages. Apple helped make PostScript popular by selling
printers with built in PostScript interpreters. Many programs have
evolved to produce PostScript programs as their output, making PostScript
the lingua franca of printing. Until recently, in order toprint a PostScript
file, you had to have a relatively expensive laserprinter. The development
that changed this was the software "PostScript Interpreter." These programs
allow your computer to interpret PostScript programs, and produce the matrix
of dots to send to your normal graphics printer.
One of the benefits of PostScript is that it is resolution-independent.
What this means is that it can support the highest resolution of your device
and that you can reasonably preview PostScript on a low resolution screen.
There are two free PostScript interpreters for the Amiga. Post and
Ghostscript. Post comes as an Amiga shared library along with frontends for
previewing to the screen and printing. This structure allows others to write
programs that can show PostScript images on screen. In fact, AmigaTeX uses
Post's library to support incorporation of PostScript into documents.
Ghostscript similarly comes in two programs, but not as a shared library.

Ghostscript is the renderingengine, and Ghostview is the front end.

Sources: Aminet (directories`text/print' and `text/dtp'), Fish disk 669.

What are chunky and planar displays?

Simply put, the terms `chunky' and `planar' (short for `bitplanar') refer to different ways of storing graphics information in a computer's memory. They are rather easy to understand, as far as things go, but incredibly difficult to explain:

Computer images are arranged as a grid of pixels, each of which can be thought of as a number representing the color number of the pixel, sort of like a paint-by-numbers scheme. For example, here's a simplified example image, in four colors:

00302132

The Amiga stores this image in a `bitplane' mode. That is, it is represented by several planes of bits (binary digits, 1s or 0s). This is a four-color image, so each color number could be represented by two bits. Therefore, there are two bitplanes:

00100110 Here's bitplane 0

00101011 And here's bitplane 1

-------- Now, let's add them up, binary style:

00302132

Which is the final image. If the image was in two dimensions, it would truly be composed of bit planes. However, I'd need three dimensions to show multiple bitplanes overlayed, and therefore for simplicity we're working in one dimension (which is all we need).

Now, there's another way of storing this image. How about if we localize the bit data in little chunks?

This is the principle of the `chunky' pixel mode.

Both methods of image storage are perfectly logical, and no one can say that one is better than the other. However, there are certain technical aspects which cause certain advantages and disadvantages.

First, if you've seen colored text scroll on your Amiga, you know there is a bit of "flicker" that arises. Specifically, what happens is that while the text is scrolling, its color temporarily changes to something completely different. What's happening is that the computer is moving several bitplanes of data while the raster (monitorelectron gun) is sweeping across the screen. What that means is that, if the raster catches the data while it's being moved, you can end up with some bitplanes being moved and some not. What if we filled bitplane 1 in the example above with 0s? Instantly all the 3s become 1s, and the 2s become 0s! This is what causes "flicker" when

certain colors are scrolled. By contrast, if a chunky pixel display is
caught while scrolling, all we see is a partially-scrolled image; the colors
are preserved (since their units are the small ones).

That's a disadvantage to planar pixels, but what about chunky pixels? Well,
recall that a computer organizes information in terms of 8 bitbytes. These
groups are static; you cannot decide to all of a sudden organize data in
terms of three bytes or something! Therefore, when using chunky pixels,
things get complicated if we decide to use a nonconvenient number of bits
per pixel. In practice, the 8-bit (256-color) mode, and 24-bit
(16 million color) modes are the most common candidates for chunky pixel
displays.

Finally, certain effects can be accomplished with the different systems.
Bitplanar mode is particularly useful for things like shadows (where an
extra bitplane is set with 1s instead of 0s), and chunky mode is great for
perspective and "mapping" (since the data for each pixel is localized in a
single "chunk"). The latter advantage makes chunky pixel mode really great
for games, and is what made Wolfenstein 3-D possible.

We all know that Amigas use the bitplane system for storing images. However,
the Macintosh and PC (VGA) both use chunky pixel modes. While we can
optimize our RAM usage with "bizarre" modes like 8- and 128-color, they
gain the advantages of non-flicker scrolling, and the programming simplicity
of just writing a byte where you want the pixel to go.

The difference between the two modes becomes problematic in things like
emulation. EMPLANT has a "chunky to planar" routine which it uses to convert
a MacIntosh display into an Amiga one. "Chunky to planar" routines are also
useful for getting chunky-inclined things to run on Amigas (see TMAPDemo,
rotdemo). On a side note, there was some confusion as to what EMPLANT used
the MMU for with regard to chunky to planar. The MMU itself is incapable of
performing the algorithm for the conversion; rather, it is used to detect
what portions of the display memory are updated from the Mac side, and
therefore the processor is saved from having to perform the chunky to
planar conversion for the entire display.

What is doublebuffering?

Don't be ashamed if you haven't a clue as to what this is. It's rather
simple, really. Imagine you wanted to animate something by drawing out
each frame. Now imagine you had only one piece of paper. Even if you
drew pretty fast, it would be difficult to see what the animation looks
like because you'd have to erase the frame you just drew, in order to draw
the next one!

What if you had two pieces of paper? Why, then, you could see the difference between two adjacent frames. First you'd draw your first frame on the first piece of paper, then you'd draw the second frame onthe other piece. Then you'd erase the picture on the first piece of paper, and draw in the third frame. Then you'd erase the picture on the second piece of paper, and draw in the fourth frame, and so forth.

This is the principle of doublebuffering. The computer shows you the picture it just drew, then turns around and draws the next one. It then swaps the picture in front of you with the one it just drew, and repeats the process. The result is a smooth animation, because you never need to see the computer draw; all you see is each finished product.

What monitors will work on my Amiga 1200/4000?

Monitors can be classified according to the horizontal scan frequency at which theyoperate. TVs, as well as Commodore's 1084 monitor, run at frequencies of around 15kHz. VGA/SVGA run at approx. 30 kHz. Multisync monitors can take many frequencies.

In short: You can use any monitor you want with an A1200. BUT:

* If you use a regular VGA/SVGA monitor, you can only use a few display modes (like DblPAL, DblNTSC and/or Productivity), e.g.320x200 to |280x512 for DblPAL. This is great for Workbench and all "serious" utilities (DTP etc), but some games (generally the bootable variety, less common today than in years past, but still available in significant quantities) should not be expected to work...they don't use your preferences; they just take over the machine and assume a 15 kHz monitor. Also, you cannot utilize the "Early Startup Control" screen (you know, disable cache, and that stuff), which also requires a 15 kHz monitor. Furthermore, VGA monitors don't have speakers. And the VGA-type modes don't support Genlocks. But for a lot of "serious" work, a VGA monitor is quite adequate.

* You already know what happens with a 15 kHz monitor: the flickering in Interlace mode. A small tip: try to use NTSC instead of PAL. This increases the refresh rate from 25 Hz to 30 Hz, at the expense of lower vertical resolution (482 lines maximum). The NTSC and PAL modes aren't as bad as many people think. If your monitor has high-persistence phosphors (long afterglow), PAL Laced can be quite OK, and it gives you a resolution of 1448x566 in SuperHiRes. That's the highest resolution currently supported on AGA Amigas, in _any_ display mode.

* A Multisync gives you the best of both worlds. The 1940 and 1942 monitors from Commodore are quite OK, although rather cumbersome to use; the h/v size and offset must be set manually each time you switch display mode.

For a VGA/SVGA or Multisync monitor, you'd need a little shiny box which
gives you the standard 15-pin "D" connector. It costs around$15.

Also, you can get a VGA monitor, and hook up your TV to the compositeor RF
port on the Amiga - one monitor for games, one for serious stuff.

How do I switch between PAL and NTSC?

PAL and NTSC are two different video standards, the former being European,
and the latter being American. PAL has a slightly taller screen (256 lines
non-interlaced, non-overscanned) as opposed to NTSC (200 lines), so if you
see the bottom portion of a program's screen getting cut off on your
American machine, chances are the program was written for PAL, and is
running on your shorter NTSC screen. PAL and NTSC differences are some what
less important to European users; since their machines default to PAL,
running an NTSC program is no more thana minor annoyance at having the
screen only appear in the top portion ofthe display.

Therefore, for us NTSC folks, switching into PAL mode becomes important to
avoid loss of some picture on Euro Demos, etc.

First, the most common misconception about switching between PAL and NTSC is
that you need a Multiscan or special monitor for such a purpose. Not so!

Just about any monitor can handle the minor signal difference between PAL
and NTSC (50Hz vertical refresh versus 60Hz). The 108x, 19xx, and 20xx
series, and even most TVs, can display both PAL and NTSC. Sometimes it is
necessary to perform minor tweaking of vertical hold and/or v. size on your
monitor to achieve full display, though this is trivial.

What IS needed to switch between PAL and NTSC in software is a "Fatter"
(1MB) Agnus or better. If your system has more than 512K of CHIP RAM (use
the avail command to find out) you have this chip. If you do not, you can
still construct a hardware switch (see below).

The following directions assume you're an NTSC user who wants to switch into
PAL mode, but the procedure for going from PAL to NTSC is much the same.

The most common use of switching into PAL is for self-booting games, demos,
etc. The best way to accomplish this on pre-3.0 systems is to use Chris
Hames' Degrader program (most recent version: 1.30). Once you have procured
this program, the switch is as simple as selecting "50Hz", and "50Hz System",
then installing the program's ROMTag(little program that runs at boot-time)
by pressing the "SurviveReset(s)" button.

AmigaDOS 3.0 added a PAL/NTSC switch feature to its Boot Menu, and all you
need to do in order to access this is hold down both mouse buttons as the
computer boots. Select Display Options, Display Mode/PAL, and then Boot. If
the program still fails to go into PAL mode (Zool is one I've found), you may

wish to get Degrader anyway and try that.

Software PAL/NTSC switching is easy and painless. Some people have gone even

further by installing hardware PAL/NTSC switches. This results in a system

which even the most nasty hardware-banging programs can't bring to its

original configuration (if it has been switched). The procedure is simple -

most Amigas have jumpers already - but beyond the scope of this document.

Therefore, if your screen is too short or cut off, seek the different screen

mode. You'll "see new horizons", literally!

How do I Read and write MS-DOS disks?

No problem for owners of Workbench 2.1 or higher: The program CrossDOS is

part of the Workbench. All you have to do is mount the device `PC0:' by

putting it into the drawer `Devs:DOSDrivers' or by double-clicking on the

icon in `Sys:Storage/DOSDrivers'. MS-DOS disks in drive `DF0:' can now be

handled in the usual manner, replacing the word `DF0:' with `PC0:'. For

example, the directory can be shown with the command "dir PC0:."

1.11   samples

```
Amiga Music/MIDI: Sound Samples


Where to find them, how to get them, and what to do with them

mail to: 103275.3447@compuserve.com



Hello, Amiga Music People!

If you've been following the past few articles here in the music section,
then you have read about most of the popular MIDI sequencing packages
available for our platform. MIDI sequencing is an external thing, for people
with MIDI keyboards, drum machines, etc. This month we have a special guest,
Mr. Sidewinder, to talk about MOD's. A MOD is an internal, or integrated
type of sequencing using the Amiga 8 bit, 4 channel sound chip. It differs
mainly by using grooves and loops. Rather than sequencing note by note, the
main objective is to use the 4 voice chip like a sampler, so you can have
what seems many more parts than just 4 voices. For instance, the theory is
you can trigger voice one with a 4 beat pre-sampled drum pattern, have it
repeat a given amount of time (say, 4 times for a chorus), then switch to a
different drum beat (or sampled loop) for the next section of the song. This
 way you don't need a lot of memory or specialized sounds to create a
```

complete song. A typical song has a structure of A-B-A-C-A,meaning you only
need three 4-beat drum loops (one for each section). Use Voice 2 for a bass
pattern. Voice 3 could be a combined pre-sampled guitar and horn lick, while
Voice 4 is a layered synth sound. This way you can fool the listener into
thinking more things are going on than just 4 voices. I've heard a lot of
mods that sound absolutely FANTASTIC!

I personally haven't used the Amiga this way much, but do have experience
using external samplers, and it's quite the same thing. One thing I'm sure a
lot of Amiga folks are thinking is, "Where do I get, or how do I make these
samples you're talking about?"

There are a few external-type sound digitizers available. One of the most
recommended I've heard about is MegaloSound. This device hooks into your
serial port. Just hook a microphone in, and sample away! "Sample What?" I
here you say. "I don't have a drum set." Well, you're not alone. You can
still get it done _Very_ easily. In a lot of the "Pro" studios, they'll get
what us "old" folks call a Drum Drops Record. Actually, that was the
forerunner of today's Rap type Groove records, or disks. You can find
sampling CD's with nearly every groove available. Also, there are a lot of
CD's with just about any sound you could imagine: synth sounds, guitar
sounds. Even vocal sounds.

"Sounds interesting" I here you say. "But I don't have a digitizer, and want
to try someting right away". Well, you CAN! Another way to go about this is
to get a "Ripper." This is a program that will find sounds and grooves you
already have!

"I already have samples and grooves?" you say? YES YOU DO! Think about the
games you have. I have a pinball game that not only has drum grooves, but
car sounds, circus sounds, etc. Using a Ripper, you could isolate those
sounds and use them in your own compositions. Do a search on Aminet, Genie,
CompuServe, etc., and I'm sure you can find quite a few differnt Ripper
programs. While you're there, find some MOD sequencing programs too. Look
for Soundtracker, or MED. Both of these will get you on the "MOD Squad"
before you know it!

Good Luck!

-Fred

                Title Page

                Contents

                Editor

                Feedback

                Next Month

1.12 program

To Program an Amiga...

The prologue (again) to a comprehensive look at Amiga programming

languages

mail to: p.somerfeldt@genie.com

Editor's Note: this article was published in the October 1996 issue of

The Amiga Monitor. Shortly after that issue was published, Mr. Somerfeldt's

Delphi address became unexpectedly nullified or unavailable; therefore, if

anybody sent him information, as requested in this article, it was not

received. I apologize for any inconvenience, and ask that you re-send your

information to the Genie address specified above. Thank you.

Michael Webb

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

Once in a while, in a past life, I would program computers. Mostly for a

grade, but once in a while I would do it for fun. Some folks collect

high technology toys as a hobby, I collect programming languages. About

the only rule I have for learning/collecting languages is, it will never be

COBOL.

Recently, Mr. Webb and I were discussing programming languages. We

discussed the utility and currency of some languages. This got me to

wondering what languages were and are available for the Amiga, and how

close to the "standards" these languages are.

My intention is to write a report on what programming languages are and

were available. Mostly because I want to know, but why not share with you.

This won't be a report on what language is better than the rest, but

merely to show what is available, and what they can do. If any of you can

help me by sending me the names of the producers of any of the packages,

and their e-mail addresses, snail-mail addresses, and any other pertinent

information, I can then report on that information to the rest of you. I

am particularly interested in the obscure languages, but any help on any

languages you can offer would be appreciated.

Thanks for your help.

1.13   mayland

```
Mayland
```

A calendar/reminder program to help you keep track of life and keep up
with your busy schedule

Introduction

It may have seemed as if last month was the Month of the Organizer, thanks
to Executive Editor Anthony Becker's review of Everyday Organizer and
Up To Date in the October 1996 issue of The Amiga Monitor. As if to
supplement that, we now take a look at a calendar/reminder program, something
in a similar vein, but by no means quite the same thing.

Enter Mayland, by Allan Odgaard, the author of various pieces of Amiga
software (the Mayland demo, as well as other programs he has written, can be
found on his web page indicated below). Mayland is a shareware MUI program,
now in version 1.0, after a period of beta demos.

[Mayland Screenshot]

At a Glance...

Mayland and MUI (no, that's not a new sitcom) combine to present the user
with a very nice GUI, including another one of those really neat algorithmic
graphical calendar generators like the Amiga OS Time preferences program.

From this window, you can set the date and time with which you are dealing.
On the right is a scrolling list of all events you have created for that
day, limited to seven in the unregistered version. From there, you can Add
an event, or Edit, Remove, or Test an event. Testing, I assume, is available
only in the registered version. A "Master List" of all events is available
in a menu item, as is the ability to clear all events in one fell swoop.

Features

For one thing, Mayland has AmigaGuide online help to assist you at any time.
This is a very big plus in my book. The help facilities are thorough and
well-laid-out.

As is the trend with MUI and the Amiga in general, Mayland supports drag &
DROP. FOR INSTANCE, you can grab an event and drop it anywhere on the
graphic calendar to move it.

Mayland also supports designating various days as holidays, which can be
specified in any manner of logic or template. The facilities are powerful.

Mayland is conducted, more or less, by a commodity that runs from WBStartup.
This triggers events, and also allows you to call the Mayland Preferences
program, the central control panel of the entire application.

Event Editing

[Event Settings]

This window is the central facility for editing events: when, what, and how. You can specify the name of the event, the message to appear "when the time comes" (the popup menu gives you various text-formatting capabilities and field information-insertion, like "current month/day"), and even a command to execute when that occurs. So if you have your Amiga set up for speech, you can have it say something to get you motivated on whatever it is time to do.

Suspensions, another powerful feature, allow you to specify dates (particular ones, or ranges thereof) on which you should not be reminded of something, if you have it set up to go off at a particular time every day, or some such thing. For instance, if you are taking a week off from work, you don't want the computer to keep telling you to work that week. And so it goes...

You can also specify other various options affecting the execution of the event.

When the time comes for you to be reminded, a window pops up on whatever screen you're using at the time, and tells you whatever you told it to tell you. If you don't react with excessive surprise when this occurs, you can acknowledge it and go do whatever has to be done. You are given the option, at that time, of having it come back later, deleteing the event altogether, etc.

The resultant window is oddly non-MUI. I'm not sure why this is. It appears to be a combination of Reqtools, Gadtools, and some custom GUI work.

          [Mayland Eventer]

Bugs/problems?

There are just a few things I've discovered so far:

*   Some button gadget render bugs; this could be MUI or Mayland.
*   Mayland seems to freeze up sometimes when I'm working with the master event list. The rest of the system maintains intact, but even in trying to get the dead process out of the system with Xopa, I haven't been able to get it restarted without rebooting.
*   In the AmigaGuide documentation/online help, the Index button is available, but there is no Index. If you actually look at the ASCII of the help file, however, you see that and Index is promised for future versions. It's nitpicking, but there shouldn't be a button available for something that doesn't yet work.

Conclusion

I have found that Mayland is a very useful program with many powerful features and capabilities. I haven't fully explored it myself yet, but so far, it is impressive. One thing is certain: it will help you to organize your life better, if you have more than a few things to do every week. You can download the latest demo from the author's web site, noted below.

Mayland v1.0

Calendar/Reminder Program, Shareware US $20
Allan Odgaard
Dagmarsgade 36, DK-2200 Copenhagen
Duff@DK-Online.DK
http://WWW2.DK-Online.DK/Users/Allan_Odgaard/

ATTRIBUTES   PERCENTAGE   COMMENT

Installation: 97% Uses Commodore's Installer program
Ease of use: 95% MUI GUI, online help, easy implementation
Compatibility: 96% only a few little bugs
Performance: 93% MUI, as always, slows things down a bit
Features: 98% great configurability, flexibility, and
                                  capability
Interaction with author: 100% very friendly and helpful

Overall Score:

96.5

a very well-done and powerful piece of software; very useful

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

MUI 3.1, Amiga OS 3.0, MC68020, WBStart.Library v2.0+ (included)
(Required)

(nothing in particular)
(Recommended)

-By Michael Webb
mailto:103165.3700@compuserve.com

                    Title Page

                    Contents

                    Editor

                    Feedback

                    Next Month

1.14   cryham

Amiga Gaming Retrospective: Part 4 - More on Crystal Hammer

A continued look at this Amiga breakout/arkanoids classic

mail to:103165.3700@compuserve.com

I probably didn't say it, but the you are all welcome to write me if you
have any thoughts you'd like to share, details you'd like to point out, or
questions you'd like to ask in reference to any of the old games I'm looking
at in this series. It's always fascinating to reminisce with others who
remember those days. If any particularly interesting information comes up,
we will publish it. That includes the two games I've already looked at,
MarbleMadness! and Crystal Hammer, as well as those I'll review in the
future.

Last month, after reading my Crystal Hammer review, Per Jonsson and Hal
Lewis decided to send me messages, and I learned some things I had never
heard before. I'll share them here with you, as you may find them
interesting even if you never heard of Crystal Hammer.

I just wanted to point out that the maker of the music was the Legend
Karsten Obarski who made the first SoundTracker which fast became a standard
and today ten years later the newest tracker is based on that.

I think that this makes the game tune worth a lot more in your score than
just a "good tune".

Regards,
Per Jonsson And in a second letter...

:-) I have had my Amiga for about 10 years now; how could I forget Crystal
Hammer? Among with lot of other games and demos.. (sentimental sob...)

I have tried to find Obarski on AltaVista, asking, people and so on, but I
think he must have gone out of biz. (I have come to the conclusion that
Obarski is a rather common name in Germany though :-)

I don't think he's active today; the last thing I "saw" by him was the game
tune to the game Oil Imperium for 5-6 years ago..

PS: If you find him, TELL ME!!!

Regards,
Per Jonsson

That's a fascinating piece of history. It's also rather ironic that the
"secret" connection Karsten Obarski and modern Amiga MOD music was revealed
to us twice in one issue: once from Sidewinder, and again now.

And now I have somewhat of an "assignment" for all the readers of this
magazine: it would provide a very interesting link to the Amiga's past if we
could find Karsten Obarski, and perhaps contact him. If anybody can provide
any information whatsoever regarding the possible whereabouts, or perhaps
E-Mail address, of Mr. Obarski, please feel free to send us that

information; it would not only provide a sense of closure to our look back
at Crystal Hammer, but also give us an intriguing connection to those
earlier days.

Michael Webb,
Publisher and Editor-in-ChiefAn excerpt from a letter:

Let me tell you a story:

Several years ago, I had one encounter with the game Crystal Hammer and it
blew my socks off. Fifteen minutes of one day of my life were crazy. I got
to play for 5 minutes. I spent 10 listening to the music...

From one fan to another,
Hal Lewis

Thinking back, I realize that it truly was a great game...and not just for
its era, but for the Amiga in general. Too bad you only saw it for 15
minutes...but the music was, I must say, very well-done.

Michael Webb
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

                        Title Page

                        Contents

                        Editor

                        Feedback

                        Next Month

1.15   helpdesk

Editors@HelpDesk

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

Better Display

I need a better display as my (66) year old eyes cannot stand the flicker
too much longer. Also I am on a limited budget. Which is best, a
FlickerFreeVideoII & SVGA, OR A PICASSO GRAPHICS BOARD & SVGA? I would
prefer a MultiSync but they cost too much. Or another board. I have been on
the web for 3 weeks and probably would still not be on except for the ease
of using MiamiDemo & VoyagerDemo. Now I have IBrowse and think it is great,

and registered Miami. Oh yes! I am using a stock Amiga 2000 with ADspeed.

Thank you,
Stan Young

You have a number of options.

First of all, I might add that you are comparing apples to oranges. Both the
Picasso and the FlickerFreeVideoII would solve your problem, but in two
different ways.

The Picasso would give you entirely new video capabililities. You would get
a full 24-bit display (16.8 million colors), higher resolutions (up to
1280x1024 or even 1600x1200, with some boards), and no flicker...except
perhaps in some extremely high-resolution modes. Basically, the Picasso, or
any other board like it (and there are many: EGS, Cybervision, etc.) would
simply replace your existing video hardware. A SuperVGA monitor, I believe,
would serve your purposes well with these. They would install into your
computer's video slot. It would also leave your standard 23-pin RGB socket
vacant, so you could continue to use your Amiga's output if you wanted to
for some reason.

A FlickerFreeVideo II board does not take up a video slot (it plugs in under
your Denise chip), and it does not improve your video or graphics
capabilities, per se. Rather, it enhances the display, as you wish to have
done. It eliminates the flicker in most modes (all if you have the standard
Denise), and eliminates those ugly scan lines in noninterlaced modes. A
SuperVGA monitor would work well with this board, although it would not
support your standard Amiga modes if you installed a bypass switch on the
FFVII, which really doesn't matter, since if you want to you can plug your
old RGB monitor into the 23-pin RGB socket, which the FFVII also leaves
vacant.

There is also another alternative: the FlickerFixer, or another board like
it. This is like the Picasso, in that it occupies your video slot, but like
the FFVII, in that its sole purpose in life is to deinterlace and
de-scanline your display.

You should be able to find a new FFVII board for something in the range of
$150-$200. A new FlickerFixer, if you could find one, would probably be
somewhat more, and a display board such as the Picasso would probably be in
the range of $300 to $500. However, you might also find any of these
available for sale online, in magazines, or otherwise, for a much better
price.

What you should get depends on the degree to which you wish to expand your
Amiga. If you just want to improve your display, an FFVII (or FlickerFixer)
will do the job. I use an FFVII in my A500, and it has served me well. If
you would go so far as to upgrade your video and graphics capabilities
significantly, however, a Picasso, Cybervision, etc. would give you
excellent results.

Something else to keep in mind is that although the FFVII operates
transparently to the system, the 24-bit display boards generally come with
control software that requires Amiga OS 2.0 or greater in order to run, so
unless you already have a newer version of the operating system, you might
have to upgrade that as well to properly use one of the higher-powered

boards. Of course, since you use all this recent software like IBrowse and
Miami, I suspect that's not a consideration in your case.

Michael Webb
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

Default Icons

Hi!

I have run into a bit of a silly problem it might seem, but I just can't get
something to work properly. When I format a disk, the icon it gets after
it's finished is an old 1.3 disk icon. I don't even have this icon in my
env/sys drawer; the def_disk.info there is a MagicWB one, and, well, I just
can't get it to take that icon, nor does it accept to take the def_busy.info
icon, when I format the disk. Then it takes the ordinary MagicWB empty disk
instead *totally mad!* :). Well, I don't know if you can help me out but I
thought you could try it.

Yours Sincerely,
Richard E.

That is an odd problem. The 1.3 disk icon is showing up? Are you sure it's
the 1.3 and not the standard 2.0+ icon (a rectangular harddisk-looking unit)?
For that matter, what version of the Amiga OS do you have?

Did you install MagicWB properly, using the script? Has it ever worked
properly for you? If it isn't a major loss to you, you could probably
attempt to solve this problem by reinstalling MagicWB from the archive with
the installation script.

I can't give you any definite answers from what you told me, but this should
be a good place to start, anyway.

Michael Webb
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

Write us!

Send Email to Editors@HelpDesk to 103165.3700@compuserve.com,
and be sure to include "Editors@HelpDesk" somewhere in the message header.
We can't publish all letters, but we will attempt to reply to them all.

            Title Page

            Contents

            Feedback

            Next Month

1.16 feedback

Feedback

The readers speak out!

"Old" is in the Eye of the Beholder

It's been quite a while since I've written to an Amiga publication, but here
goes anyways.

Some of your readers have mentioned how outdated and/or behind our Amigas
are in comparison to the vast sea of MS-dominated IBM PC clones, which is a
fact that will probably never change til the cows come home (Texas thing).
Well...perhaps we forget at times why we haveAmigas and why things are the
way they are. I for one am proud to have my Amiga; it has stood the test of
time. For example, my PC is a 486 and I got it less than a year ago...STATE
OF THE ART! Wow, blazing. Now what is it? I use it and it's painfully slow
for nearly every piece of software out there.

I've had an Amiga 3000 for almost 5 years. It doesn't have the fastest nor
the prettiest graphics. However, it performs things on which my PC would bog
down, and it makes much better use of 18 Megs than my PC ever, ever would.

I still feel that feeling I first felt so long ago with my first A500. I get
giddy everytime I'm using this old Amiga 3000. Old...well, still the best.
Even a 10-year-old A500 is hard to consider as being that ancient. Imagine a
10-year-old PC...?

Sidewinder

My system is still constructed around an old A500, so I know what you mean.
Somehow, I suspect many other people out there do too. Let me differentiate:
a number of computer platforms are, without a doubt, simply outdated,
although they are still fun and useful for hobbyists or enthusiasts to use.
Amigas, on the other hand, still fall into the "modern computer" category.
This is due in part to a number of factors: the devotion of the users, the
fundamentally good design of virtually the entire system, and the 3rd-party
development support. Those companies have done the technologically
impossible: they have continued to make computers from 1992, 1990, and even
1987 (and if they were so inclined, they could go all the way back to the
old A1000 from 1985) perform on a par with the latest offerings from the IBM
PC and Macintosh world, and all at a very reasonable price. But give credit
to Amiga Inc. and Commodore: no computer without a superb design could ever
be stretched to such limits.

Possibly even more amazing, however, is what you can do with those old
machines as they are. The latest version of the Amiga OS will run on any
Amiga except a totally unexpanded 256K A1000; Amigas with only a little

extra memory, and even some stock machines, can be made to access the internet, something they were generally never meant to do in the first place.

The Amiga has, as you say, stood the test of time; but in a closed system, entropy always increases, and the Amiga can't be left out in the cold forever. Let's just hope that a little added momentum from a serious company can truly restore it to its total technological superiority as well.

Michael Webb
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

Almagica - Scions of a Forgotten World Review

Hi !

I'm a member of the group called DSP that are making the game Almagica. First of all I would like to thank you for reviewing our game. And if you are interested in our progress you can find information on this homepage:

http://www.ind.mh.se/~ing9435/DSP/

Secondly, a little complaint: you have gotten my name and E-Mail all wrong.
 ;)

My name is Bjorn Hagstrom; my function within the group is to program an internal editor, design algorithms, and generally coordinate the project. I have studied Electrics [sic] Engineering for two years, and I'm currently studying on the second year of a three-year Programming/Engineering course.

ping9514@ntostud.mh.se
orgin@eagle.ovik.se

(Note that I spell it "orgin," not "origin." ;-))

The main programmer is named Jimmy Westerlund; he does all the hard programming concerning the game itself. He is studying Electrics [very sic] Engineering and is on the last of three years.

His E-Mail is ing9435@ind.mh.se or jimmy@eagle.ovik.se

Well, if you have any questions about our game, or any other questions ,your are welcome to send any of us an E-Mail.

Greeting from:
Bjorn Hagstrom
Programmer DSP

Oh dear...How did I manage to bungle up the E-Mail addresses for you guys? Well, folks, note the correction and check out their web page to keep up with their progress. I know I will.

Anthony Becker
Executive Editor

No Gloom Over Lack of Doom

Hi, there!

Ariel Magnum (what a name) from Tel Aviv (!?) wrote in "Feedback 10/96" the
following: "You cannot expect games like DOOM (Amiga clones are a joke!)..."
I expect that he never played Alien Breed 3D II, The killing Grounds, or
Nemac IV. I have an A4000 with Cyberstorm 060/50 and Cybervision 64 and I
have a PC (486DX2/66), too! So I can compare the games; against "Alien Breed
II", "Doom" is just a waste of time...

Sincerely,
Peter Sander

Here at The Amiga Monitor, we get E-Mail from every corner of the globe. It
says something about the Amiga's universal legacy, and I would strongly
discourage any one user from raising questions about another's name, home
city, etc. I don't like having to say this, because it sounds condescending
 and because I shouldn't have to.

But back to the point: I can't speak much from personal experience on this
because an A500 (regardless of processor) doesn't exactly texture-map like
the wind, but I have been watching with interest the developments in the
"Amiga Doom" scene over the last few years; there are now many 3D
texture-mapped games for the Amiga, and a number of them have apparently
been regarded as quite good. It's difficult to judge in terms of
performance, and some cynics would undoubtedly say your point is invalid
because you are comparing a top-of-the-line Amiga to a mid-range PC, but
since Doom runs more or less at full speed on a 486DX2-66, that doesn't
really matter. Judging the quality of a game is more subjective, and it
should be noted, in view of what you said here, that many Amiga gaming
enthusiasts are, in fact, quite pleased with the current range of Amiga 3D
games.

Michael Webb
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

Go PowerPC!

In your reply to Ariel Magnum's letter in the October issue, you stated that
you agreed "PPC isn't a good choice right now." This truly surprised me. I
run a PowerWave 604/132 -- a PowerMac 9500 clone -- and it did indeed cost
me $5,000 last year. But this year you can get a 240Mhz/603e PowerBase
system from the same manufacturer with 32MB RAM, 4MB VRAM and a 17-inch Sony
monitor for $3,600. This is little more than the cost of a similarly
configured Pentium 200 system from Gateway 2000.

In reality, PowerPC chips are less expensive than Pentiums in lots of 1,000,
and they're getting less expensive all the time as more clone makers get
going. Moreover, BYTE magazine's early tests of the 603e and 604e CPUs
revealed them to be considerably more powerful than Pentiums and Pentium
Pros of the same clock speed.

This tends to confirm my own experience. I recently purchased a Maximus
Magna Graphics ProMedia P-166 with 512K cache, 32MB of EDO RAM and a 2MB
Matrox Millenium card. It proved a great platform for Duke Nukem 3D, but
when run under Win95 it was painfully slow by comparison to the PowerWave
132. Yet, it's one of the two fastest P-166 systems ever tested by PC
Magazine. It proved to be such a complete, sluggardly pain in the

[expletive] that I sold it to get money for an A4000T '060
still don't have the cash for it yet).

Also, I can't help wondering where Ariel can buy a 'top of the notch' PC for
$1,500. They certainly aren't US dollars! It's clearly not a Pentium 200
system, couldn't possibly have much RAM or a very spacious hard drive, and
clearly needs to leave out such niceties as a 17-inch monitor. You can only
approach this price if you buy a 'headless' box and have monitors and stuff
you can hook onto it. Moreover, a factor often overlooked when comparing
prices of PCs and Macs is that the cheaper PCs are IDE systems, whereas
PowerMacs have a dual SCSI bus. When you put SCSI into a PC the price gap
narrows dramatically. You can easily spend $4,000 plus on a Pentium SCSI
system with top-line components. Try the online configurators at Micron,
Dell, Gateway etc. if you find this hard to believe. You'll be a believer
in no time.

My advice to Amigans is to hang in there. It won't be that long before
PowerPC accelerators are available. Add some RAM, wait for ShapeShifter to
be compiled for PowerPC, and before long you'll be playing the Mac version
of Quake (due in 6 months!) on your Amiga. You'll undoubtedly be happier
than you could possibly be with WinSlug 1895. :-)

Best,
Steve Duff

Just to clarify what I said, since you brought it up in your letter:

I realize that the PPC is a very good processor platform, and I believe that
that is the direction in which the Amiga should head in the future. In fact,
your letter provides a lot of useful, interesting information/statistics to
that effect. Particularly, the information you provide about prices of PC's
versus Macintoshes (and, transitively, Intel 80x86 and clones versus
Motorola PPC) reveals something we often overlook. Yes, you can buy
a reasonably-configured PC for under $1000...but it will be effectively
obsolete in 6 months. A true top-of-the-line PC with any decent measure of
longevity can easily reach the $5000 mark; Dell's back cover PC Magazine ads
have constantly illustrated this. It's a wakeup call for PC advocates.

However, I strongly believe that the Amiga's only hope for survival is for
new models to be developed NOW, and I say that the best way to do so is to
build a new line around the AAA chipset and 68030, 68040, and 68060
processors. Yes, that probably is a dead-end line (only by Motorola's
choice, however), but at this point, they are still comparatively fast
processors, and the power of the 68060 has only begun to be realized (once
you start overclocking it and taking full advantage of its advanced
architecture, it truly flies).

The reasons for continuing to use the 680x0 processors for now are:

* Full backwards compatibility with past Amiga software/hardware
* They aren't dead yet!, but I fear the Amiga almost is, and...
* ...this new Amiga line could be developed VERY quickly (since the OS
   already runs on the 680x0 processors)
* A 680x0-based Amiga would probably be somewhat (I'm not saying
   tremendously, but enough to make a difference) less expensive than a more
   or less equivalent PPC-based Amiga right now.

Since there is NO revenue right now, any development work is basically
useless without some solid financial and industrial backing. A new line of
680x0-based Amigas would allow the new owner (VIScorp...taking thine time?)
to quickly gain a foothold in the market; funds generated from the sale of
these new systems (and believe me, there are a lot of Amiga users who would
buy them, if they were priced reasonably...something Commodore, you may
recall, was able to achieve) would support work such as porting the OS to
PPC code.

Potential buyers of these systems, otherwise possibly fearful of quick
obsolescence, would not have to worry, especially if it was GUARANTEED that
they would eventually be able to get PPC-based accelerators for their
systems. This is not hard to do.

So yes, I agree with you 100% that the PowerPC is THE way for the Amiga to
go...but I fear that by doing so now, and basically compounding upon 4 years
(!) (that's a lot in the computer world, even in the Amiga part of it) of
stagnation, they would lose any chance of reviving the market.
Which is why I advocate design of a new 680x0-based line of Amigas. They
would be significantly more powerful, on average, than current offerings,
and most importantly, could be introduced with a minimum of delay. Because
the PPC port could be done two ways: 1) the right way, which will take time,
and 2) the quick way, in which much of the OS will be running in 680x0
emulation, and thereby actually be slower than a current 680x0 Amiga...Apple
did this, by the way. For Mac: big mistake. For Amiga: the final blow.

In reference to running Quake on ShapeShifter: SS is an extremely useful
product, and it's all well and good to run great software through emulation,
but let me just take this opportunity to say, for what it's worth, that we
shouldn't have to emulate other computers in order to run great software.
Amiga Quake would run extremely well on a 68060/AAA system; if only we could
get things in gear and attract some big-name developers, we could have all
this great software. I must be careful what I say though...who can forget
the last time Microsoft wrote something for the Amiga? It was called
AmigaBASIC, and it was the champion of OS-noncompliant, buggy software. For
those of you who never saw this OS v1.x program, don't worry...you don't
want to. And all due respect goes to existing developers: they
have done very well with what many have called a dead market, and
we very much appreciate what they are doing.

But I must reemphasize that I believe you are right: that Motorola has
chosen to sink its own 68000 ship, and that the best vessel to board at this
time is called the PowerPC. But the lifeboat that will get us there is
called the 68060.

Michael Webb
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

Write us!

Do you have something to say about the Amiga, the Amiga community, the
Amiga industry, or The Amiga Monitor? Send email to "Feedback",
103165.3700@compuserve.com and be sure to include "Feedback" somewhere in

the message header. Note that we can't publish all the letters we receive.

                          Title Page

                          Contents

                          Editor

                          Next Month

1.17 tone

Tone's TidByte

Hitchhikings in the world of the Amiga

BIT ONE: MindEye by Geodesic Designs, Inc.

This package uses your Amiga to make graphical animations and screens from
sound. It consists of a hardware device, which plugs into your Amiga's
joystick port containing a microphone and line inputs, and a piece of
software called MindEye 2.70g. I received an evaluation unit from Geodesic
for review and you will see the full review next month since I just recently
received the new version of the software, which now supports 256 colors on
AGA Amigas. I have decided to includethis small capsule review this month
since they will be selling the new MindEye at the upcoming Video Toaster
conference in LA through AntiGravity. The price tag is $275 at the show.

My first impressions after removing the device, software and manual from the
box were mixed. Having read what it would do on their web page
http://www.MindEye.com/ after receiving their offer to review, I thought to
myself "why would anyone want that?" Hooking up the device was simple with
what appeared to be an overly large manual for such a "simple" (in my mind)
concept. You simply hook up the unit to the joystick port, copy the program
to your hard drive, and you are ready to go. With the built-in microphone
you don't need to hook up a sound source to get started. Just load the
program and make noise. With a big box Amiga you are likely going to want to
hook the audio source directly into the mini-plug inputin the rear of the
device since they tend to be loud. I know my Amiga 2500 is.

On loading the software, you are greeted with a GUI that looks distinctly
OS 1.3. This bothered me at first but turns out to not really be a problem.
The software is designed to be mainly used directly from the keyboard with
the mouse hidden anyway. In fact, many controls appear to be keyboard only.
This point is where the fun began and I have only scratched the surface of
this unique product. You have many different visuals to choose from and

these can be altered by a choice of faders, the ability to display pictures and even video through built-in support for the Live! video capture hardware, color cycling, and the ability to change the palette. This is the reason for the extensive manual and a soon-to-be included instructional video.

The MindEye is hooked up the audio output of my CDTV (being used as an audio CD player) and, using my Amiga 1200 to generate the visuals, creates some beautiful and interesting animated screens. I rarely listen to a CD without loading the software to see what MindEye can come up with. This system was designed with use in public in mind. After you get a setup you like, you can lock out the keyboard and mouse to let MindEye run without fear of interference. Check itout and check out the review next month.

MindEye requires any Amiga, a working and free joystick port, and eyes.

BIT TWO: Netscape for the Amiga?

Well, maybe. An amble over to the Netscape web site (in case you don't know, Netscape is the premier World Wide Web browser for the PC and Macintosh) showsa list of operating systems for which there is public interest in a port of Netscape but no concrete plans. The list is as follows: Amiga, Linux, and NeXTStep. I have to guess any possibility of this occuring hinges mainly ona resurrection of the Amiga as a viable computer platform which, right now, hinges on the VIScorp/Escom deal. Time, as in so many other things in life, will tell.

BIT THREE: AdProStarter V1.1 by Juergen Spaeth

As most people know, the Amigas Operating System allows for applications to simplay access RAM as they need it. Art Department Pro, a popular graphics processing package even long after the demise of ASDG, allocates a chunk of RAM on loading to hold the image information. The size of this chunk of RAM is controlled by the MAXMEM tool type in the programs icon. In the past, if loading an image brought on a visit from the "not enough memory" message, the user would have to exit, call up the icon's information, and change this value by hand. That was then. Now there's AdProStarter.

        [ADProStarter Screen]

As seen in the screen shot above, upon launching AdProStarter you need simply to slide the slider to the desired amount of memory and press the AdPro button to load the program using that value. There is also a button for flushing unused libraries to free up memory and a button for loading both AdPro and Fred, the scripting program.

AdProStarter V1.1 requires OS2.0+, MUI, Art Department Professional and can be found on Aminet as Adprostarter.lha

BIT FOUR: Dinst V0.1 by Thorsten Stocksmeier

Ever want to get rid of a program only to end up being unable to delete the directory it used to reside in? This is often because a program sets up assigns to its directory during installation using an installer script. Well-behaved programs place these assigns in a text file called the User-Startup which islocated in the S: directory and called from the Startup-Sequence. Proper install scripts should place a ";Begin " at the start and a ";end" at the end of the added commands for the program. Dinst

uses these to generate a list of installed programs and, by selecting the
program you wish to get rid of and pressing the remove button, you can
automatically get rid of any assigns for the program. After your next
boot-up, you can delete the entire program from your hard drive.

          [Dinst Screen]

Dinst V0.1 requires OS 2.0+ and MUI and can be found on Aminet as
dinst01.lha

BIT FIVE: MUI-ASL by Flavio Stanchina

MUI-ASL is a replacement for the asl.library. Asl.library is responsible
for file requestors. This replaces the OS3.0 file requestor with a MUI-based
file requestor for all programs that make use of the asl.library. The
archive includes an install script and instructions for installation by
hand.

          [MUI-ASL File Requester]

MUI-ASl requires a 68020+, OS 3.0+, MUI3.3+ and can be found on Aminet as
mui-asl.lha.

BIT SIX: ZJTool V1.1 by Oliver Hitz

This package is software to control the special features of the Iomega Zip
and Jazz SCSI drives. It consists of three parts. ZJWatch both checks each
inserted disk, requesting the password to unprotect and read protected disks,
and placing an Appicon on Workbench to eject any disk dropped onto it.
ZJTool is a CLI program to control features of the Zip/Jazz drives such as
disk protection and drive inactivity spin-down time. ZJToolMUI is a graphical
nterfaced ZJTool using MUI.

          [ZJTool screen]

ZJTool requires OS 2.0+, MUI1.2+, and reqtools.library V38+ for all
functions and can be found on Aminet as ZJTool11.lha.

BIT SEVEN: Car Costs V3.04 by Rudiger Dreier

This program helps you calculate just how much that horseless carriage is
costing you to operate. You must first input the registration number and
mileage for the dependent vehicle to open the new car file. Then you simply
input the mileage, gallons and cost at each fueling, and the support costs
and you can find out if it would be better to catch the bus to work or not.

          [Car Costs screen]

Car Costs requires OS 2.04+, MUI1.3+, and can be found on Aminet as
carcosts.lha.

BIT EIGHT: Serial Prefs V2.1 by Lorenzo Succi

This is a replacement for Commodore's Serial Preferences program. It adds a
better look, sliders, and a few added controls over data length (bits) and
baud rate. As you can see, it also looks nicer.

        [Serial Prefs screen]

Serial Prefs V2.1 requires OS 2.0+ and can be found on Aminet as
serialprefs21.lha.

Oh, just in case you've been living under a rock, MUI stands for the
Magic User Interface system. If you don't know what that is, ask one of us
here at The Amiga Monitor.

-By Anthony Becker-
mailto:commodoreuser@juno.com

                    Title Page

                    Contents

                    Editor

                    Feedback

                    Next Month

1.18   humor

Lame Humor Department

        [Comic]

By Kyle Webb

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

                    Title Page

                    Contents

                    Editor

                    Feedback

                    Next Month

1.19   nextmonth

COMING NEXT MONTH

Be sure to check out the December 1996 Issue of The Amiga Monitor

What you'll see in our next issue:

*   The next edition of The Sam Report
*   The next segment of The Amiga Gaming Retrospective: MindWalker
*   More from the Lame Humor Department
*   The latest incarnation of DiskSalv
*   Amiga Benchmark Comparison: chipsets and processors - a Webb/Ormes   ←
     collaboration
*   Fred Ericksen continues his examination of the Amiga MIDI/Music scene
*   And more!

Look for Volume 1 Issue 5 in Early December
The Amiga Monitor: 1996, Excelsior Digital Publishing
The Amiga Monitor's home site is at:
           URL http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb/

AmigaGuide Version: Anthony Becker
                    Amiga 1200
                    RexxDoesHTML2AmigaGuide by Michael Ranner
                    Blacks Editor v1.01 by Marco Negri

                    Title Page

                    Contents

                    Editor

                    Feedback