Amiga Mail News

Commodore and NewTek Join to Market Amiga 4000 and New Video Toaster 4000

Commodore Business Machines, Inc. is pleased to announce it is participating in a joint marketing effort with NewTek, Inc. built on bringing powerful, cost effective technology to the video marketplace. The vast acceptance of Commodore's Amiga® computer and NewTek's Video Toaster™ as quality video products is unprecedented. The newly formed alliance coupled with NewTek's announcement of the Video Toaster 4000 will encourage further widespread acceptance of the Amiga and Toaster within the rapidly growing personal video production industry.

Since its introduction in 1985 the Amiga has been recognized as the most video oriented microcomputer. Every Amiga is equipped with an array of video features such as NTSC horizontal scan rate compatibility, interlaced and non-interlaced video modes, RGB analog signal and overscan capabilities. A dedicated video slot provides easy access to the Amiga's video bus for integrating performance enhancing devices like NewTek's Video Toaster.

In September of 1992 Commodore introduced the Amiga 4000 featuring the Advanced Graphics Architecture™ (AGA) chip set. AGA greatly enhances the computer's video graphics capabilities by enabling users to display and animate graphics in selectable resolutions at up to 256,000 colors from a palette of 16.8 million.

The Video Toaster 4000 hardware includes a real-time effects engine and two 16.8 million color broadcast-quality frame buffers. Also included is an advanced character generator, a four input switcher, a broadcast-quality paint program, color effects, a 3D modeling and animation program, and a luminance keyer.

NewTek Announces New Generation of Toaster

Advancing its position as the recognized leader in low cost, broadcast quality video production, NewTek announced the introduction of a new product, the Video Toaster 4000. The Video Toaster 4000 is an enhanced version of NewTek's popular Video Toaster, and provides a significantly higher level of performance at a lower price point.

According to NewTek president Tim Jenison, ''The Video Toaster 4000 is designed to take advantage of the increased capabilities of the Commodore Amiga 4000 computer. This powerful combination of new technologies has resulted in hundreds of new features

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in the Toaster 4000, many of which have never been available before on any video system, at any price.''

The Video Toaster 4000 replaces the original Video Toaster as NewTek's flagship product. It is priced at $2,395, a lower price than Video Toaster System 2.0.

''NewTek's goal has always been to create a broadcast quality video production tool at a price everyone could afford,'' asserted NewTek Vice President Paul Montgomery. ''The original Toaster stunned the video industry, attracting thousands upon thousands of people who were looking for a low cost video production solution. The Toaster 4000, with its powerful new capabilities and lower price, is the next big step in the personal video production revolution.''

The Video Toaster 4000 includes a switcher with four video input and three internal digital sources. The system features close to three hundred video effects, from dissolves and wipes with user adjustable durations, to complex digital effects and animated transitions. Many effects feature drop shadows, glints, and smooth, full color animation. Toaster 4000 also includes an integrated graphics loader, which allows users to load and display video frames, still stores, and animations. Both still graphics and animations can be displayed with variable transparency, adjustable drop shadows, and can be keyed over video sources.

The system includes a 24-bit 35ns resolution character generator. Toaster CG features full support for PostScript fonts, including automatic kerning and text sizes up to 400 lines tall. Users can change font, color, shadow, and outline options on a character-by-character basis.

The new Toaster CG can also load brushes from ToasterPaint, the Toaster 4000's 24-bit video paint system. Brushes and text can be positioned anywhere on the screen using the CG's mouse driven ''drag and drop'' interface.

NewTek has focused significant attention on the development of LightWave 3D, the Toaster's 3D modeling, rendering, and animation system. With the introduction of the Video Toaster 4000, the company has added more than three hundred new features and improvements to the system. ''Even with its new capabilities, LightWave is still the most user friendly 3D package ever,'' said Montgomery. ''We designed it to have all of the power and functionality of a $30,000 3D animation workstation, but maintained one of the biggest strengths of the Toaster--namely, an easy-to-use interface.''

Among LightWave's new abilities are its significantly enhanced rendering options. Users can now have LightWave automatically create lens flares, motion blur effects, and even adjust the depth of field to create images with realistic focusing. The Bones feature allows users to create skeletal systems for an object, and is ideal for character animation. Image quality has been improved with new color dithering and anti-aliasing routines, and at the same time render times have also been speeded up by 100% to 800%.

LightWave's Modeler now includes support for PostScript fonts, which makes 3D logo and text creation automatic. Modeler also features powerful new Boolean functions, which allow user to combine or cut holes in objects. The program also allows users to draw objects with spline curves, which provides for simplified creation of rounded, organic objects.

''With all of the new features, probably the best thing about LightWave 3D is that it's a workhorse,'' said Jenison. ''Our beta testers are Hollywood's top animators and special effects artists, and they've been using the program for months in the most demanding situations imaginable.''

LightWave has become a major player in 3D software for Hollywood. LightWave animations have been used on shows such as *Babylon 5* and *Unsolved Mysteries*. The Toaster 4000 will also be used to create 3D graphics effects for Steven Spielberg's new series *seaQuest DSV*, which will debut this fall on NBC.

Montgomery is not surprised that the networks have been quick to embrace the power of the Video Toaster. ''What's exciting to us is that ordinary people who've used the Toaster to create their own personal visions are attracting so much attention from the broadcast industry. Toaster users are changing the face of television.''

For more information about the Video Toaster, contact NewTek at 215 SE 8th Street, Topeka, Kansas, 913/231-0100.