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WhatIFF?-Issue 2.09 March 2023
For The Creative Amiga User

ENTER MAGAZINE

Welcome to WhatIFF?

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-# WhatIFF? - Issue 2.09 - March 2023 #-

--EDITORS DESK-- -MEET THE WRITERS--

A few word from the current editor about the magazine.

---SHELL TALK---

A place for WhatIFF? writers and readers to air out their Amiga laundry or just talk about anything Amiga related!

-----REVIEWS----- ---GAME REVIEWS----

Reviews of hardware and software, old and new covered.

-----GUIDES----- -----ARTICLES-----

Guides and support to all things Amiga.

-TALKING AMIGA--

Hear from the people making hardware and software for the Amiga.

-----LINKS----- ---AMIGA VENDORS--- ---AMIGA GROUPS----

Amiga related links and Amiga vendor websites.

-INVENTS CORNER-

Kevin Saunders regular column for WhatIFF?

NEXT ISSUE *All content copyright of the respective authors 2023*

From The Editor's Desk

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From The Editor's Desk - by: Timo Paul

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Happy New Year and welcome to first 2023 issue of WhatIFF?, as I sit here writing this on my A1200, it is sunny but cold weather outside. If are a regular reader of this magazine you may have noticed the change in release schedule, from this year on we will be coming out every 3 months and it seems to be a comfortable schedule for the writers and myself. We are not paid to do this and everyone is contributing their free time to magazine, so I want to thank everyone who has written for this issue.

Also this issue welcomes a new writer to the magazine, Rob O'Malley who has written several articles, how to create ProTracker compatible MODs in OctaMED, Aminet Goodies, Tanks Furry review and has created our first coverdisk! Not content with that he has also interviewed the developer of Settle The World. In addition we have our usual writers with John Scolieri reviewing AmiCynix update v1.7 for OS4.1, Steve Lord reviews the BFG9060, Ivan Sorensen writes about Zen and the Amiga and a guide to choosing the best joystick. Kevin Saunders updates us on his latest projects and up coming games. In addition there the latest updates in the LighWave and Brilliance tutorials.

Regarding interview this issue, we have a total of 4, talking to Andreas Magerl of Amiga Future, Tony Horgan of CU Amiga fame, Douglas Compton of 10 Minute Retro Amiga Cast and last but not least the developer of Settle the World, Christian Wiegel.

Some of your may have noticed that we have game reviews for the first time, while we will not make games the focus of the magazine, tutorials and creative use of the Amiga will be our mainstay, it was decided we could expand the scope of the magazine a bit by including some game reviews and interviews with game developers.

Well that is enough gibber-gabber from me, I hope you will enjoy this issue and if you want to write for the magazine or even just write a letter about something you did not like, or even like, please contact us at: submissions@whatiff.info

Have a wonderful spring and see you again in the summer June issue!

Free For All About The Amiga

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Shell Talk - by: Timo Paul

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A Pi In A Storm Of Dilemma

I am in a bit of a conundrum, like most Amiga users I have seen much about the PiStorm cards available for the A1200. They seem too good to be true at times, RTG, super fast CPU speeds, network and more. All for just over 130 USD, yet I find myself sitting on the fence over buying one. From my limited understanding the card is emulating a very fast 68000, but the rest is using the Amiga hardware such as the graphics and audio chips. Obviously the RTG is being handled by the Raspberry Pi piggybacked onto the A1200 board. It is a great idea, bringing high resolution and colour to the smaller Amigas but I still cannot shake the feeling that it is like putting an emulator into a real Amiga and then running the emulator with the real Amiga ... might it not be cheaper in this instance to just do emulation with a cheap laptop or even just use the Pi itself as a standalone Amiga emulator, it certainly will take up less space, you have less hassle and when things go wrong you don't have two systems running at the same time. I have seen users running Caffeine OS which is then run from an SD card on the Pi, at this point the Pi is running the majority of the show, what is the Amiga 1200 at this point? If you constantly run Caffeine OS it is just an input device.

Sorry, this sounds very negative and I do not want this article to read that way but I have never felt this way about buying an Amiga expansion before. When it was buying more memory, the Indivision, or even the TF1260 these seemed like logical purchases. When I had my A3000 and A1200 in the '90s I bought a Picasso II board which made sense. For my A1200 I got a PPC card with BVision card, the PPC never really got used at the time but the BVision was nice ... for having a large workbench but at the end of the day I mainly used Brilliance and OctaMED. None of them used the PPC or BVision.

I can see myself buying a PiStorm, using it for a while, wow the speed the high resolution workbench but after a while getting fed up having to switch inputs from the native graphics to the HDMI output from the Pi. Most likely I would install Caffeine OS and then run the Amiga most of the time that way but then why did I not just emulate the Amiga completely and cheaply on a standalone RaspberryPi?

Maybe you can see why I am going around in circles over purchasing one of these very exciting boards.

The PiStorm is something I want to try but if I am truly honest with myself, I can see it being more of a "I want it to see what it is like" but most likely it will not be used to its full potential. I like seeing what can still be achieved with the original chips in the A1200.

We will be having a review next issue of the PiStorm from John Scolieri and I am very interested to see what he will think of it. If anyone wants to respond to this article, write an alternative view or just complain about my misunderstanding of what the PiStorm truly is, then contact us at: (submissions@whatiff.info) and we will publish it in the next issue.

Welcome to the reviews section!

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- Reviews -

Hardware Review: BFG9060 Accelerator Card

Steve Lord has a look at the BFG9060 card for big box Amigas, find out inside if this is the big box accelerator card of your dreams.

Hardware Review: TerribleFire 1230 Accelerator Card

One of the most recent releases to come from the TerribleFire range of cards. How does it stand up to the competition, find out inside.

Hardware Review: A1200.net KeyCaps

With the A1200.net keycaps now available again, we take a look at the latest batch and see if it is worth the asking price.

Hardware Review: Amiga Case Badges

Are you bored of the standard Amiga badges, have changed your Amiga case or want to show off what is inside your Amiga then find out if these badges are what you have been looking for.

Software Review: AmiCynix update v1.7 for AmigaOS 4.1

John Scolieri takes a look at the latest update to the Unix environment for OS4.1.

Software Review: SoundBox

An indispensable audio tool or just another audio oddity to be looked over for other software?

Software Reviews: Aminet Goodies

Writers top Aminet selection, each issue a writer will write about their top downloads from Aminet.

#Reviews - WhatIFF? Issue 2.09 - March 2023#

gamereviews

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- Game Reviews -

Game Review: Tanks Furry

Rob O'Malley reviews the first game for WhatIFF? choosing one of the newer class of Amiga games.

tanksfurryreview

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Game Review: Tanks Furry - by Rob O'Malley

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Product Name
Tanks Furry

Developed By
R3D 2016-2021

Available From
Aminet
nl.aminet.net/package/games/shoot/tanksfurry1-3

Price
Download Version Free

Hardware/Software Requirements
OCS/ECS/AGA, 020. 1MB Chip & 0.5 Fast
(As of v1.3 MC68000 CPUs are supported)

Test Machine
Amiga A1200+FAST RAM
FS-UAE

Review

Anyone who is familiar with the original 8-bit NES console may recognise this game is a remake of the classic game Battle City which is available for that system. Albeit with four-player local multiplayer functionality and other improvements and additions. But for the rest of you, it may seem to be somewhat different from what you might expect from the title, cliched stereotype jokes about the sexual predilections of people who enjoy wearing fur suits aside, the word "Tanks" in the title might suggest some kind of shoot em up.

Now while this may be true in a sense, as this game does feature Tanks quite prominently and shooting explosive shells at things is kind of what they were made to do. One thing a tank is generally not designed for is manoeuvrability or agility, and the tanks in this game behave accordingly. What this means in a practical sense is that you must adopt a more strategic approach to shooting your enemies if you want to survive, almost like some kind of real-time chess. Carefully making your movements to put your tank in a good position to eliminate your opponents' tanks without him being in a position to eliminate you. Charging straight into battle, guns ablaze will quite possibly result in your swift demise.

And in this game, almost everything on the map can be destroyed as long as you, or the enemy "mole tanks", pump enough shells into it. So success in a level often involves hammering a path through various walls, which generally take 3 hits to destroy, which can be quite useful in providing cover for your calculated assault on the enemy units which you must eliminate to progress to the next map.

In addition to destroying all of the invading enemy forces on each level, you must also defend a "Radar Station", which is usually well protected by a strong wall, but sometimes is painfully exposed. You really don't want to accidentally shoot the radar station and don't let an enemy get a clean shot at it either, as it's an instant game over if so much as a single shell collides with it.

I found the most common way I would reach the game over screen is when my radar station took a single hit and was destroyed! Most levels feature

some pretty strong fortifications to prevent this from happening, but many later levels feature little if any cover for the radar at all, and some levels place the player inside this fortification, requiring you to blast your way out at the beginning of the map. And in one annoying case on mission 17 you must be careful not to press fire at the same time as dying, for the game spawns the player facing the radar station, so that if you died just as you were about to fire you could quite easily accidentally and prematurely cause the game to come to an unsuccessful conclusion. But that only seems to happen in that one level, so it's not like this game is filled with 'cheap shots', just that one.

I did feel the way the destruction of the radar station triggered a Game Over was perhaps a little harsh, and deducting a life and restarting the level would be fairer. But then it does lend a certain urgency to some of the levels as you rush to defend a vulnerable base I guess. And as we've already established, it is a remake of a NES game, and while I'm not familiar with Battle City, I imagine that the original game did this also.

Both the player and the enemy tanks can only have one projectile on screen at any one point in time, this means that you can fire quite rapidly when you are right next to your target but if you miss a moving target from the far edge of the screen then you may be in for a long reload time. I'm not saying that this is necessarily a bad thing, but it is something you will need to consider in your strategy. It's not a good idea to take a shot at an enemy which is a long way away when there are threats nearby.

Also the mole tanks appear to have rather random AI routines, indeed the word 'intelligent' might not be the best way to describe how the enemies behave at all. As rather than intelligently pursuing the player or targeting the radar they shoot and move at random which actually makes them harder to dispatch than they might be if they behaved in a more predictable fashion. Although carefully blasting a path through the scenery for the enemies to follow can be effective in forcing them to move a little more predictably.

The game features a little over 40 single-screen missions, 42 if I have counted correctly. Although I must confess that I have only made it to around level 35, I watched a long play on YouTube to see what I was missing out on and I noticed that it will probably take you 45-60 minutes to complete the game from the first mission to the last. But even on easy difficulty this is quite a challenge, and an experienced gamer will have many hours of gameplay before they have completed it. Obviously, there is no easy way for me to check how much time I have devoted to this game as the Amiga will not log your hours played like Steam does with your Steam games, but I might estimate that I have spent at least 20 hours, and maybe closer to 40 hours playing this game so far and I have still yet to complete it. Although I do usually play on normal difficulty.

In the first couple of missions, you will face enemy tanks which only require a single shot to kill, but as you progress you will soon encounter more heavily armoured varieties of the grey enemy "mole tanks" you are defending the townsfolk from, and even the occasional UFO, which while only requiring one hit to destroy can be quite elusive as they teleport around the map at random.

On easy mode, this game seems to be pretty generous with the lives, and much like a cat, you will have the maximum number of 9 of them most of the time. But that does not mean you won't die a few times, and finishing this is reasonably challenging in one-player mode even on the easiest setting, just that there is a really good chance of collecting extra men along the way. But on the normal or hard difficulty, it is a different story, so you can take this fact to mean that the difficulty levels are appropriately named. Easy is fairly easy, normal provide an adequate challenge, and hard is only for the hardcore. This might sound elementary, but using misleading difficulty-setting names in games is a pet peeve of mine and one which I am happy to report that this game does not do.

The game manual does state fairly early on that this game is made by gamers for gamers, and I imagine that R3D, the team behind this game have both the hardware and social skills necessary for a four-player local multiplayer game of Tanks Furry. And therefore if you are similarly equipped in both the hardware and friends departments then ignore all the scores I have posted at the bottom of this page and just get this game right now. Don't even read the next sentence, just do it immediately!

If you are using a real Amiga a four-player adaptor may be quite hard to come by, and even when the Amiga was a contemporary software platform they were rare. But if you are using UAE on a PC then you will easily be able to use 4 XInput controllers connected to your machine, or even map joystick controls to the keyboard, so the only real difficulty may be finding three other people to play against you.

Now that I've covered what the game is like to play I will just say a few words on how it compares to other games. For an Amiga game of the early 90's it's really more of a 'straight to budget' or shareware quality game rather than a full-priced commercial release. But that is not necessarily a bad thing as I could name at least half a dozen top-quality Amiga shareware titles which actually cost the same or more than the floppy version of this game to register.

I might even go so far as to rate this just beneath the 2011 re-release of the excellent Amiga platformer, Alien Fish Finger. And that is second only to Llamatron in my opinion!

One thing you will see in the manual is that this is a 'premium' Amiga game, and while it may not have the polish of, say, a 90's Team 17 or Psygnosis game, that is not to say that the graphics or sound are lacking in any way. Just that they have more of a 'premium 8-bit console' style than a 'premium 16-bit computer' style. With bolder colours, no subtle shading and a simple but effective design.

But it must be noted that the animated 'tiled' graphics mode featured in this game, which the Amiga's graphics hardware is not really made to do is quite a technical achievement for this system and one which the graphic style suits perfectly. Indeed playing this game brought back some pleasant memories of playing games on the Sega MasterSystem (ironic considering the rivalry between Sega and Nintendo:) console.

Now if I had to compare this game to what's currently available on Steam for between 1 to 10 USD then I would have to rate it somewhere between the 75th to 85th percentile. While perhaps just a tiny bit on the average side of good, when compared to modern indie games, is still very much "a good game" in my esteem, and I will re-iterate that it rates exceptionally high when compared to other Amiga shareware games which were available on floppy for over a pound back in the '90s.

But for around \$10 USD you get a box with a CD (and optional floppy for one euro more:), which is both convenient to use with FS-UAE on a modern PC and a lot more than you'd get with a digital download.

Although sadly the disc does not support the Amiga CD32 console (You will need to burn a custom CD32 compatible ISO if you want to play it on that system:). This is because R3D did not wish to use any copyrighted material and invite legal proceedings against them by using the code required to make a bootable CD32 disc. And while I cannot really fault them for taking this precaution, the lack of CD32 support means that I cannot recommend this quite as highly as I might have otherwise.

This game really needs a Motorola 68020 or above processor in addition to 1.5 MB of free ram. So it is obviously made for nothing less than a stock AGA Amiga, in particular the currently popular A1200 model or even CD32 console, and if you are running this in UAE the standard A1200 configuration may be your best choice. But it technically runs on the 68000 processor featured in the standard Amiga 500, and it does not do

anything that requires any enhanced graphics functionality found in later Amiga models. But on an A500 it will simply run too slowly to be playable, as well as a few 500's actually having enough RAM, although MY Amiga A500+A590 which I purchased when I was a teenager did!

While this sucks for you if you want a game you can play on your classic stock OCS machine, it does mean that "it runs on all Amiga's" so I am considering that to be a good thing. If you have, say, a modestly pimped-out Amiga 2000 then it should cope just fine.

Anyway, the game is available for free download from a number of sources, including the Aminet archive, in addition to their being a boxed CD version and professionally duplicated and labelled floppy.

Rob O'Malley

UPPERS

- looks as good as it plays
- simple concept done well
- four-player deathmatch

DOWNERS

- sluggish controls
- demanding system requirements
- instant game over can happen quite easily in later levels

GRAPHICS - 7

Simple, clean, stylish. Lots of animation happening on screen.

SOUND - 6

Apart from the introduction tune, purely functional.

GAMEPLAY - 8.5

It's Battle City, but modern. If you're familiar with the original then that should be enough! If not, give it a go anyway, it's free to download.

81%

Reasonably good action, strategy indie game. And absolutely excellent Amiga PD title.

BOTTOM LINE

The full boxed package is a must-have for anyone who collects boxed games for vintage systems. And the free download is recommended for everyone who's interested in Amiga games or unusual indie games in general. Perhaps one for fast-paced arcade fanatics to avoid though.

bfglinks

AmiBay - Torsti78

<https://www.amibay.com/threads/bfg9060-accelerator-w-128-mb-fast-ram-for-amiga-3000-4000.2438618/>

Amiga68K.com

<https://amiga68k.com/?product=bf9060-68060-cpu-accelerator-board-for-amiga-3000t-4000t>

Hardware review: BFG9060 Accelerator Card

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Hardware Review: BFG9060 Turbo Card - by Steve Lord

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Product Name
BFG9060 Turbocard

Available From
Amibay (Torsti76)
Amiga68k.com

Price
300 Eur/429 CHF without CPU

Hardware/Software Requirements
Amiga with a CPU slot (A3000/A4000)
Expect some incompatibility issues or extra work with an A3000.

Test Machine
Amiga 4000D, 402MB RAM, ZZ9000, Deneb USB, USB Sound card and Ethernet
OS 3.2.1, Roadshow, P96.

Review

The BFG9060 is a turbocard designed by the legendary Matze. It's been in development for around 3 years, originally called the A4000-TK. The card is a replacement for ailing Cyberstorm accelerators. But does it live up to the hype? Lets find out.

Firstly, Matze doesn't build the cards. The BFG9060 is very much in TerribleFire territory. People build cards and sell them online. I bought mine trouble-free from Torsti76 on Amibay. Torsten has a Gitlab page[1] with plenty of info to get you started. The board's a1k.org thread[2] is probably the place to get info about incompatibility issues.

[1] - <https://gitlab.com/tkurbad/amiga-hardware-info/-/tree/master/BFG9060>
[2] - <https://www.a1k.org/forum/index.php?threads/73349/>

The board itself is a classic A3000/A4000 turbocard with CPU socket, 128mb of RAM, and several nice-to-have features. Depending on the build it can take a 68040 or 68060. This review is for the 68060 board. Do not put a 68040 in a 68060 board or vice versa.

The board can be configured to operate at 50, 75, or even 100mhz. Your success will vary. Active cooling is needed above 50mhz. Later 68060 chips generally run better at higher speeds than others. Rev 1 68060 CPUs will also get hotter than later revisions.

The CPU is typically not supplied, although some vendors do CPU and cooling bundles. I used a heat sink and Noctua NF-A4x20 fan, although other cooling solutions may be more effective.

The board uses the Amiga's internal 25Mhz clock. This means the following Amiga motherboard jumpers must be set before the card can be used:

Amiga 3000:

- J100 (Quad Clock): 1-2 (25mhz)
- J102 (Board Clock): 2-3 (INT)
- J103 (FPU): 3-4 (ON)
- J104 (CPU Clock): 1-2 (INT)

Amiga 4000:

- J100 (CLK90 Clock Source): 1-2 (INT)
- J104 (CPU Clock): 1-2 (INT)

On the card itself, JP1 determines CPU clock speed. The speed at which your Amiga can comfortably run will depend on your CPU and cooling setup. Two jumpers, S0 and S1 determine CPU speed settings:

- Set S0 to 0-M, S1 to M-1: 25Mhz mode, the BFG's RAM is unavailable.
- Set S0 to M-1, S1 to M-1: 50Mhz, the default setting and starting point.
- Set S0 to open, S1 to 0-M: 75Mhz, works with *some* CPUs.
- Set S0 to M-1, S1 to 0-M: 100Mhz, use a Rev6 CPU and cooling

68040 Board users have the same jumper configuration options. These boards run at half the CPU speed.

Updating the on-board firmware will be cumbersome for most people. Torsten has a raspberry pi image that can be used to update the card. For everyone else, it's a build-your-own update and flash with a programmer affair. I would've loved to use a micro-SD to store a firmware binary. Even flashing from inside the Amiga would've been better. I suspect this probably wasn't feasible, otherwise I'd assume Matze would've built it.

Initially I had major instability issues. Then I remembered I'd swapped out a Cyberstorm and needed to change my 68060 libraries. I also forgot to remove these libraries from my Deneb's flashrom. Before inserting your BFG9060 check your libraries, hardware flash space, and back up your machine.

The BFG9060 works best with MMULib. It takes some reading to set up. Torsten's Gitlab (linked earlier) has an mmu-configuration file you can borrow for inspiration. MMULib looks scary at first. With patience reading through the documentation you can set up the full suite bit by bit over time.

Once purged of Cyberstorm material my A4000 became rock solid. The 50Mhz BFG9060 was mostly slightly slower than my 55Mhz Cyberstorm MkII. Fast RAM access was much much faster. My bustest results overall were in-line with Wrangler's excellent video[3]. I'd also recommend watching Chris Edward's[4] and 10MARC's BFG9060[5] videos too.

[3] - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgE1xg1xCZ0>

[4] - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eILgsr6V05A>

[5] - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtmfwrZEE9U>

Like 10MARC you could use an FPU-free LC060 with Thomas Richter's SoftIEEE. You might get the odd crash from software hitting the non-existent FPU directly. Most software should work, although SoftIEEE is also very slow. You'll know whether the extra cost for a 71E41J Rev 6 68060 is worth it for you. It was for me, but YMMV. Things that are noticeably better at 100mhz include:

- Rendering animations with VistaPro, Lightwave etc.
- Web browsing with IBrowse and NetSurf
- Playing high-end games like AB3DII, Genetic Species, Duke Nukem 3D etc.
- Playing Internet radio in 44.1khz 16-bit stereo
- Light photo editing in ImageFX and Photogenics/AE4
- Night sky tracking with Digital Almanac
- Anything using MUI 3.8
- Handling modern graphics formats like JPEG, PNG, WEBP
- Operations across large files or large amounts of files (e.g. archiving and unarchiving)

The BFG9060 Comes with some nice extras. There's a built-in sensor monitoring CPU core temperature and card voltages. Your Amiga can access

this via a CPLD/IC card. I have a project planned to take an ATtiny and small OLED screen, and hook this up to the i2c pins on JP2. This will save me a Zorro slot. Another alternative is to follow the schematics in the i2clib40 package[6] on Aminet. Inside are plans for an i2c controller with serial, parallel, or external floppy ports.

[6] - <http://aminet.net/package/docs/hard/i2clib40>

Another nice touch is the 512kb F0 Flash RAM chip. This is accessible from the Amiga and allows users to flash libraries for quick access. To manage this use the FlashBFGCli tool. For example, to add icon.library and workbench.library, use the following command:

```
FlashBFGCli libs:icon.library libs:workbench.library
```

If you want a stable 50mhz 68060 turbocard with nice features at reasonable prices, just order one. It's every bit as good as a Cyberstorm MkII. You don't need an expensive rev6 CPU for 50mhz, although I would suggest a full 060 unless you know what you're doing. Even at 50mhz your experience will be at the top end of most users outside of Vampire and Pi-storm owners.

If, like me you do have a rev6 CPU then things get pretty amazing pretty quickly, with caveats.

Running the BFG9060 at 100mhz results in an incredibly fast system. The only way I can describe it is that it feels like emulation. Alien Breed 3DII is buttery smooth. Bszili's Duke Nukem port is even more joyful. TBL's Starstruck is silky smooth. High end ports also run well. I sometimes touch 20FPS on Quake. Even Quake II, while is almost not a slideshow. Lightwave and POV-Ray scream. Vista Pro is amazing. OctaMED Soundstudio took anything I threw at it. AdPro is lightning quick. Art Effect, ImageFX and Photogenics are great with large photos. IBrowse is pretty fast. Playing 16-bit stereo high-quality Internet radio is a blast. Even VCD-quality MPEG-1 video is almost playable. I haven't tried Cinepak or other codecs.

On Shapeshifter, MacBench 4.0 and Speedometer claimed 25%-50% faster CPU speeds than early PPC Macs. PPC Mac FPU performance was around twice the speed. The Amiga 4000 was still in the same league even compared to an 8100/80. System 7 was noticeably more unstable at 100mhz, as was quite a lot of Mac software. It's too hard to say whether this is just my system or something else.

Windows 3.0 on PC-Task is noticeably faster, as is Windows 95 on Dosbox, but Shapeshifter is better. MAME runs better, as do most emulators.

Mac stability issues aside, what else is there? Well, even a Rev6 68060 puts out heat at 100mhz, and that heat has to travel somewhere. With the lid off, it's fine for a 4-6 hours of heavy use. With the case fully closed I get 20-40 minutes of use before the crashes and reboots start. This isn't the fault of the BFG9060, it's Commodore's decision to cut costs and with it, airflow. I ran a lot of tests to make sure the RAM was OK, that it wasn't a library problem, that there weren't issues elsewhere. The temperature is the only thing left. At the time the crashes start happening, the case metal is warm around where the CPU should be. It may not be the core CPU temperature. If the hot air isn't expelled other parts of this 30+ year old system might not like the heat.

I haven't tried running the BFG9060 at 75mhz yet. I probably should, but I really like it at 100mhz. Right now I'm looking for ways to address the airflow without cutting the case. I suspect a second fan to blow the air out through the back of the machine will help. I haven't had the time to try yet.

There are other smaller niggles as well. At 100Mhz, the Amiga pretends to boot but doesn't until I perform a soft reboot. I suspect either my

FastATA or Deneb card might not have enough time to initialize on power-up. This would be similar to a recently addressed issue caused by the ZZ9000 not being able to keep up.

And this is the biggest problem I have with the BFG9060. It is a card so fast that my A4000 struggles to keep up. It feels like I put a jet engine into a Nissan Micra. My A4000 keeps telling me in it's best Star Trek Scotty impression, "She cannae take it anymore cap'n!"

That's not the BFG9060's fault, that's on Commodore and I. Yes the card is expensive, and the CPU possibly more. But if you wanted cheap you wouldn't have a big box 32-bit Amiga. It ticks the boxes. It's the best you're going to get. If you need a 50mhz 060, it's a great board. If you need a 100mhz 060, get one.

Likes

- * Speeeeeeeeeeeeeed!!!
- * Rock solid at 50mhz
- * You're not stuck to rev6 only, cheaper 060s work fine at 50mhz
- * Temperature sensor
- * Flashrom is a nice touch
- * Speeeeeeeeeeeeeed!!! (I had to write it twice)

Dislikes

- * Excess heat at 100mhz (Not BFG9060's fault)
- * Bit of a faff to upgrade firmware

Bugs

- * Expect weird bugs, moreso at 100mhz, moreso if you have non-stock hardware
- * Lots of issues for A3000 owners

Conclusion

You'll either buy this because you want a modern A3000/4000 turbocard or you want a 100mhz big box Amiga. I absolutely cannot fault it. Don't get an A3660, get this. Don't get a Cyberstorm, get this. The BFG9060 is the standard by which all Amiga turbocards will be measured. I suspect for a long time to come they'll be found wanting.

Pros and Cons

- + Did I tell you this was fast?
- + Excellent at 50mhz
- + The card is good value around 300EUR, your choice of CPU may or may not be as good value
- + Even Excellenter at 100mhz, with caveats
 - Needs lots of attention to heat management at higher temperatures
 - MMULib is quite complicated to set up
 - Flashing might be difficult for some

Scores

Ease Of Use: 9 (with a stock A4000, otherwise 7)
Documentation: 6
Value For Money: 10
Overall: 99% - WhatIFF? Gold

Hardware review: TF1230

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Hardware Review: TerribleFire 1230 Accelerator Card - by Timo Paul

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Product Name
TerribleFire TF1230

Available From
www.amigastore.eu
www.retroami.com.pl
www.ami64.com
www.retro32.com
www.retropassion.co.uk
www.retroready.one
www.sordan.ie
www.versalia.de
www.ebay.com
www.amibay.com

Price
USD 180 / EUR 166 / GBP 147

Hardware/Software Requirements
Amiga A1200
Kickstart 3.1+

Review

The Terrible Fire family of accelerator cards have gained a reputation for reliability, power and affordability. Of all the cards that have been released the TF1260 is the most coveted and well known. Around mid 2022 another card had been released, the 1230. As you probably already know from the TF naming convention this is an 030 card, with MMU and clocked at 50mhz.

When the TF1260 was released it changed the Amiga landscape by bringing the power of the 060 to us mere mortals without a bottomless bank account. Again Stephen Leary does it with the 030 card, bringing down the cost of owning an 50mhz 030 Amiga. The card was bought from AlenPPC for the cost of 150 usd which comes in at around 130 ukp making it one of the cheapest 50mhz 030 cards available.

Following on from design of the other TerribleFire cards, the card is sparsely populated with a total of 8 chips, making for a very clean design. As with the other cards it also has an E-IDE connector though it's not bootable without a custom Kickstart. My card came with 64MB of ram however you can also obtain cards with 128mb if you pay a little more.

The card as you will probably already know does not come with an FPU socket which is brilliantly highlighted on the board with the text:

Predicted Ignorant EAB Comment "No FPU? ... Useless!"

A very true comment if there ever was one. However as most users will not be needing an FPU it becomes a moot point. If you are one of those who does use software that requires an FPU this card could still be useful. The A1200 motherboard has a place for an FPU socket, if you install one the TF1230 will recognise and use the FPU.

Installation

Installation of the card is as simple and as hard as most A1200

accelerator cards however as with the TF1260 you want to make sure to loosen the motherboard and align the connector correctly. Some A1200s do not have a bevelled connector, if this is your A1200 then it is suggested that you sand down the edge to make it more rounded. The reason for this is that it is easy to damage the new connectors and several users with unbevelled connectors have damaged their TF cards.

Luckily for me, my A1200 already has the bevelled connector so it was not a chore to install the card, though I had loosened the motherboard screws allowing the A1200 motherboard to raise a little.

Unlike the TF1260 there is no need to install extra libraries or utilities, however you do need Kickstart 3.1 or higher to recognise the memory.

In Use

The TF1230 is a fast little card giving your A1200 a speed boost of 50mhz and with the speedy fast ram access you have a nicely souped up Amiga. I had hoped to compare the card with other 030 cards but did not get any responses from the hardware manufacturers and did not have the budget to buy any other cards. So I thought I would compare the card to the another Terrible Fire, namely the 1260. It may be a bit of a unfair comparison but the TF1230 is a good 100gbp cheaper than the 1260. Other reviews have given you the speed test via memory access speeds, disk access and SysInfo so for this review I thought I would give you some more real world results.

To compare the cards I used the LightWave 3.5 Texture Sample Scene with default settings:

- *Medium Resolution
- *Overscan
- *D2 PAL
- *Adaptive Sampling
- *35mm Motion Picture

I rendered the scene three times with the TF1230, TF1230 with FPU and the TF1260. The results are below:

- *TF1230 10 min 52 sec
- *TF1230 + FPU 7 min 52 sec
- *TF1260 3 min 3 sec

Obviously the TF1260 came out on top, however it is interesting to see how much the FPU even at 14mhz still knocked 3 min off the rendering time of the TF1230. It should be noted that seems like it is possible to double the speed of the onboard FPU by attaching a wire to a pad on the motherboard.

When I had my ACA12121c I had also rendered the same scene and it had clocked in at over 20 minutes. It would be interesting to see how the TF1230 stacks up against the other newly available 030 cards. If you have another 030 card and a copy of LightWave 3.5, render the texture sample scene and send us the results and we will create a list comparing other 030 accelerators.

In general use the card made using my A1200 a much more enjoyable experience. It should also be noted that there seems to be a higher level of compatibility with software compared if you use an 060 card. Where some software would cause issues the TF1230 ran the software fine.

Final Thoughts

While the TF1230 may not have been as groundbreaking as the TF1260, it is still a solid card at a reasonable price. Upgrading the firmware is not as easy as the ACA series of cards but at it's core and it does not have all the features that come with an ACA. But at it's core it is a card

that gives your Amiga a lot of power at a price that does not break the bank. The TerribleFire cards are the homebrew of Amiga hardware, you can build them yourself, buy them pre-built, they are simple but good hardware.

If you are looking for a way to speed up your A1200 so you can play Doom or just experience a faster Workbench, you can't go wrong with the TF1230. The price is right and it does what it sets out to do. For those looking for a card with more features than the more expensive ACA or Vampire cards might suit you better.

Pros and Cons

- + Cheaper than other cards
- + Fast and reliable
- + Easily available
- Not easy to upgrade firmware for everyone

Scores

Ease Of Use: 7

Features: 5

Value For money: 9

Overall: 70% - WhatIFF? Bronze

Hardware Review: A1200.NET Key Caps

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Hardware Review: A1200.NET Key Caps - by: Timo Paul

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Product Name

A1200.net Replacement Key Caps

Available From

www.a1200.net

Price

USD 79 / EUR 73 / GBP 65 (Inc. 20% VAT)

Hardware/Software Requirements

A500/A600/A1200/A2000/A3000/A4000

Mitsumi Switches

*Not A1000 compatible

Review

In the last issue I reviewed the A1200.net - A1200 translucent case, in this issue I will be looking at the recently made available again key caps for all Amiga models except the A1000. At the time of writing there are only black keys available, though in the past more colours had been available. Originally I had been hoping to purchase the multi shaded grey keys as I imagined they would have looked great with my case but it does not seem they will be made again or going for prices way out of my budget.

At the moment it looks like the key caps are only available from A1200.net unlike the Amiga cases. However they have said that the caps are being sent to other resellers so perhaps with the Covid resurgence there will be delays with shipments again.

Purchasing from the A1200.net website was easy enough and the next day I already received a shipping notice. The parcel was being sent from China, so perhaps directly from the place of manufacturing the key caps or it could be because I live in Japan and Japan is much closer than Europe. It took about a week and half to arrive and came well packed with lots of bubble wrap. The box looks like the A1200 case but just smaller. Inside you get the keys attached to board, all you need is something to poke out the keys, I used a chopstick as it seemed the perfect size and would not damage the plastic. You get some extra keys for an A600, and the larger enter key for A500 and external keyboards.

Once the keys had been popped out it was time to open the Amiga and thanks to the new case this was a much easier task, if you are interested in the case then please read the review in issue 1.08. The next part was the most time consuming, taking each of the keys off and then cleaning the board underneath. It was a little alarming to see how much dust, food particles and sticky stuff had got there. I usually keep my Amiga with a cloth cover so perhaps it was not as bad as it could have been. However when doing this have a small hoover and some alcohol wipes ready to clean underneath the key caps.

To remove the keys I used a keyboard remover tool just to make sure I did not damage the keys, I was not sure if I would like the new key caps yet. After about 30 minutes I had all the keys off and was cleaning the board underneath.

Installation

Now I could install the keys, I decided to start with the larger ones such as the enter key and space bar. The reason being these keys have a metal bar that can make it harder to install if other keys are surrounding them. After that it was just a simple case of placing the spring and pushing in the key. It should be noted that you need to transport the white struts from the space bar to the new space bar, the other keys have new struts but at least for my keyboard the space bar one was not supplied. Take your time when doing this as it is easy to confuse some of the keys such as the arrow keys. After about 15 minutes or so it was finished.

With all the keys put on it was time to put the keyboard back into the case, this was easily done and in no time I had the Amiga put back together and could admire my work. It looked better than I had expected especially with the translucent case, they compliment each other well giving the A1200 a very modern look. The print is easy to read on the keys something that I had been a bit worried about moving from a white to black keyboard. The new springs have given the keyboard a bit more push back which overall makes it feel like a new keyboard as well. As I type this review on the new keys it feels very comfortable, there is still the softness of the keyboard which I really enjoy, it gives better feedback compared to the newer keyboards with less travel, and you still have that lovely clickly sound.

Final Thoughts

I had been initially apprehensive about changing the colour of my keyboard but after having moved the A1200 into a new case the white and slightly yellowed keyboard seemed a bit amiss. Originally I had hoped to buy the two tone keyboard which mimics the CD32 colour scheme however after installing the black key caps I am very happy with the result.

The Amiga looks pretty nice now, even my wife commented thinking I had bought a new computer. Typing is still as easy with the previous caps and perhaps a bit nicer due to the new springs and I find that it is a little easier to find the keys with the white on black.

If you are looking to update the look of your Amiga then the key caps from A1200.NET are a great albeit expensive option. I have included some before and after photos with this issue so you can get a better idea of how the new key caps look.

Pros and Cons

- + All Amiga models except the A1000
- + Replaces all keys with proper Amiga keys
- + Different key maps available
- Expensive
- Currently only black available

Scores

Installation: 6

Features: 8

Value For money: 7

Overall: 70% - WhatIFF? Bronze - Makes your Amiga look good but comes at a high price.

Hardware review: Amiga Case Badges

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Hardware Review: Amiga Case Badges - by Timo Paul

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Product Name
Amiga Badge

Available From
www.retro8bitshop.com
www.amigakit.amiga.store
www.retropassion.co.uk

Price
3.25 euros and up

Hardware/Software Requirements
An Amiga

Review

Of recent I have been on a "renovation" trip with my Amiga, while in the past I use to own several Amigas now due to space and money constraints I have only one Amiga. As it gets heavy usage everyday, it had become a bit frayed around the edges as such after the barrage of internal upgrades it was time to upgrade the exterior with a new case and then new keycaps. With the new case I was however stuck with the original badge and it seemed wrong after all the work I had put into to making my Amiga better inside and out to ignore that small feature. Luckily during my Twitter sessions I came across badges advertised by Retro 8BIT Shop, they had several photos of the badges available, so I quickly went to their online shop. It should be noted that the badges are available from other resellers and I have listed them at the beginning of this interview.

Retro 8BIT Shop sells a lot of items, Amiga, Commodore, Sega and Nintendo items, essentially anything retro computing related. The badges in kind are not only limited to Amiga ones. You can find badges for Atari, Arcade Commodore, Microsoft, and Nintendo, you name it and they probably have a badge or more for it.

The Amiga selection is quite varied, ranging from the original recreations to custom badges for your Vampire or TerribleFire expanded machines. For my A1200 I chose two badges, a traditional Commodore one and a custom black and red one emphasising the Terrible Fire 1260 inside. Due to my timing with ordering I recieved the Commodore one first and the TF a bit later.

The Badges

Delivery was fast and I received several e-mails regarding shipping and one even on the supposed day of delivery, very impressive as I had forgot about my order. The badges came in a pleasant white padded envelope that had colour print and stickers on it. These small touches make a difference when receiving a parcel, it reminds me of the envelopes that Amiga Future is delivered in. It gives me just a little bit more joy to see the red, white and blue envelope in my mail box.

First impressions were very good, the Commodore recreation had the same texture and raised lettering, it was solid and had a strong sticker on the back. Installation was easy, just peel and press, initially my badge did not sit flush with the case but after some heavy pressure it slid in flush with the case. It looked very nice, if I did not know it was a recreation I would have been completely fooled.

About two weeks later I received my other badge, the TF1260 one, this time I got an extra badge free, the class boing ball which was quickly attached to my MacBook Air M1 to give it the class it has been missing. The custom badge for the A1200 looks very different from the Commodore recreation one, it has a black background with the TF logo in a red and organge gradient, TerribleFire writtenin white at the top, a horizontal line in the typical Amiga gradient and then Amiga 1260 written in white on the bottom. It is a very solid badge that does not really bend and has a slight raise on the TerribleFire text. It looks pretty good to be honest. Installation was easy and this time the badge slid in without the need for any major pressure.

Stepping back to admire my A1200, the badge made a bigger impact than I had expected, it looks really good! The black keyboard and translucent case compliment the black and coloured badge. This is an Amiga that looks good enough to be on the cover of Vogue let alone any Amiga magazine.

I never thought I would write such passionate words about a simple badge for a computer case but it just highlights how a small thing like this can make a big difference.

Final Thoughts

If your Amiga badge is a bit worn out then you can't go wrong buying from one of the places mentioned at the beginning of this interview. However if you have a custom case then the badges really come into their own and can be the perfect finish alongside a new case and keyboard(caps).

Pros and Cons

- + Looks almost like the original badge
- + Custom badges are colourful and give your Amiga a new look
- + Easy it install and the correct size
- Some badges did not fit correctly the first time

Scores

Installation: 10

Quality: 9

Value For money: 7

Overall: 86% - WhatIFF? Silver - Looks amazing but not an essential purchase, but who cares when your can look this good.

AmiCygnix for OS4.1 Review

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Software Review: AmiCygnix Update v1.7 for AmigaOS4.1 - by John Scolieri

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AmiCygnix update v1.7 for AmigaOS 4.1

In January 2023 the latest update v1.7 for AmiCygnix was released by the developer Edgar Schwan.

So what is AmiCygnix?

Simply it's a Unix environment for AmigaOS 4.x. In more detail, it is a fully featured release of the X Windows Environment. The X Window System is the base for all graphical user interfaces on Unix or Linux systems. The system is split into a server and a client part, which is typical for unix-like systems. The server is responsible for processing the graphics and handles the user events like mouse-moves or key-events. The client is an application (e.g. a paint program or a text editor etc.), which is using this system for displaying the application screens.

What is the advantage to have this running on Amiga OS4.1?

With AmiCygnix you can use modern applications, such as AbiWord (Word compatible word processor), Gnumeric (Excel-compatible spreadsheet), Gimp, Pidgin, email clients (Claws) etc natively under AmigaOS4.1. You can open any X11 Application as a window directly on the Workbench giving tighter integration between AmigaOS and X11 Applications.

It also makes it easier to port open-source software to the Amiga, because the sources for the GUI part can be compiled without any (or at least very few) changes. Switching between the AmiCygnix and AmigaOS4.1 workbenches is a simple Amiga-M key combination when required.

So what's new with v1.7?

Version 1.7 brings some innovations around the topic "start of external programs" (remote start). One of the coolest features of this update is the ability to open either a Unix or Amiga shell natively on the AmigaOS4.1 workbench without having to switch screens between AmiCygnix & OS4.1.

New in AmiCygnix-Base:

- * All display drivers for the Workbench now have a menu for starting a Unix or an Amiga shell. The environment of these shells is specially adapted to AmiCygnix.

A further menu item can be used to open a preference editor for changing the access rights to the X server.

- * Until AmiCygnix 1.6 there were some dependencies to the OS4-SDK. The commands of the coreutils package needed by some shell scripts were not included in AmiCygnix.

Especially the R0X-Filer was affected by this. These commands are now included and can also be used in the shells.

- * Due to an error in Newlib the arguments of some shell commands were not read correctly. Especially the backslash "\" was affected. This has now been fixed.

- * The shell commands of AmiCygrix compiled with Newlib did not have wildcard support (resolution of "*" in filenames). The versions of the OS4-SDK compiled with Clib2 did. This has now been implemented so that no Unix shell is required anymore for the affected shell commands.
- * Contains now a special version of the ABC shell adapted to AmiCygrix called "acxsh" for better compatibility with AmiCygrix.
- * In the new directory "Prefs" is a preference editor to edit the access rights to the X server. Important for the call of remote applications.
- * A script named "Start_XServer_Only.bat" allows starting an X server without starting an application. Is mainly intended for starting external programs.
- * Update of the SSL/TLS layer "GnuTLS" to version 3.7.3. Fixes some problems with certificates.
- * The integrated root certificates for GnuTLS and OpenSSL have been updated.
- * Now includes the new GTK default theme "Adwaita", which is now also the default theme for GTK+ 2 and GTK+ 3 programs.
- * Support for GTK+ 3 programs was buggy. Bug has been fixed.
- * Revised version of the preference editors "myX11Setup" and "myX11SetupLight".
- * When using the window manager "dwm" (Dynamic Window Manager) introduced with AmiCygrix 1.5, key combinations with ALT could not be used. For key commands of "dwm" the left Amiga key is now used.
- * The library "libaos4util" used in all AmiCygrix programs has been completely revised and all programs have been re-linked to it.
- * The support of the old "threads.library" has been removed. This is no longer needed by any of the current programs.
- * The printer tool "lpr" could crash. Has been fixed.
- * The data for the time zones have been updated.
- * With the installed AmigaOS4 SDK the commands of the SDK are preferred now with the environment variable "PATH" of the ABC Shell. Basically, general environment variables are set at the start of AmiCygrix only if they are not present in ENVARC:.
- * Many more bug fixes...

I highly recommend using AmiCygrix as OS4.1 users have been waiting a very long time for a modern native PPC office suite and with the lawsuits still ongoing between the new Amiga Inc. owners and Hyperion who knows if it will ever be released? In the meantime we are fortunate to have AmiCygrix to use and enjoy!

The update can be downloaded from os4depot.net. You need to download and install both the base package and Tools package. Both packages can be easily installed to a drive/folder of your choice and all required libraries/dependencies are taken care of by the installer and within minutes you're ready to go.

If you use and enjoy AmyCygrix I strongly recommend making a donation to the developer at:

Software review: SoundBox

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Software Review: SoundBox - by Timo Paul

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Product Name
SoundBox

Available From
www.aminet.net

Price
Free

Hardware/Software Requirements
Workbench/Kickstart 2.04+

Review

Sometimes there comes along a piece of software that is so well designed and useful that it instantly becomes your go to tool. Released in 1997 SoundBox is an audio conversion tool that supports RAW, IFF, VOC, WAV, AIFF, AIFC, MAUD and Maestro. Originally a paid product the programme and key are now freely available on Aminet.

At it's core it is a simple audio convertor, but what makes it stand out from the rest of the audio convertors is it's useability. While other audio software try to pack in as much as possible creating a powerful but complex UI. SoundBox opens up on your Workbench with a window showing containing three panels: Sample Wave ,Format, and Player. When you load an audio file the wave form will be displayed in the main window. In the Format panel you can change to any of the supported formats, change from mono to stereo to mixed, 8 or 16 bit resolution. For more options go to the menu bar for Effects and Rate. Effects allows you to: Flip Sign, Flip Endian, Optomize Length, SoundTracker Init, Reverse Sample, Adjust DC Offset, Max Amplitude and Fade at End. The second menu item allows you to half or double the sample rate.

All actions can be done via the keyboard making for a fast and efficient working environment. When bringing over samples from my Mac I find SoundBox is the tool that I go to, just three key presses and I have already loaded, converted and saved my sample ready for OctaMED.

The programme benefits greatly from an accelerator but even for those with a basic machine the interface is fast and simple. Only when doing any actual conversion will you feel that you need a faster Amiga.

Final Thoughts

If you do any audio conversion on the Amiga you know how time consuming it can be. SoundBox offers a fast working environment, that is Intuition compliant, supports many audio formats and is easy to understand and master.

Aminet Goodies - Writers top downloads from Aminet.

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- Aminet Goodies -

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Welcome to Aminet Goodies section, each issue one of our writers will list their top 10 downloads from Aminet. Taking the reins this issue is Rob O'Malley, hopefully you will find something new or of use in the list.

1. OctaMED SoundStudio

<https://aminet.net/package/mus/edit/OctamedSS1.03c>

-Powerful tracker software with many useful features such as 16-bit support, fast ram playback, 64-channel mixing and many more useful features. Too many to list here.

2. New Amiga Font Collection of Yesteryear's Inspirational

<https://aminet.net/search?query=NAFCYI>

-All the classic typefaces, and probably more fonts than you'll know what to do with. All in Amiga bitmap font format *and* Postscript format. Just be sure to have lots of room in your system directory, or use the assign FONTS: ... ADD command.

3. Visual Prefs

<https://aminet.net/package/util/wb/VisualPrefs>

-Drastically alter the appearance of the operating system.

4. Copper Demon

<https://aminet.net/package/util/wb/Copper-Demon>

-Displays a copper gradient on the background of any AmigaDOS screen.

5. Speak 2 Sample

<https://aminet.net/package/mus/edit/Speak2Sample>

-Generate samples using the narrator device. Note that this will require the Workbench 1.3 Say program to be present in SYS:Utilities directory.

6. Magic Menu

https://aminet.net/package/util/wb/MagicMenu_II

-Replace the standard drop-down right-click menus with a more modern right-click menu which pops up under the mouse cursor.

7. Ancient Domains of Mystery

<https://aminet.net/package/game/role/Adom>

-Amazingly detailed and complex rouge-like role-playing game. Also available in 020 and 040 versions.

8. Musicline Editor

<https://aminet.net/package/mus/edit/mline115>

-Powerful music sequencer software with real-time synthesis, but take my advice and do your preliminary composition in the format of a ProTracker MOD due to the unfriendly track editor.

9. Fullpalette

<https://aminet.net/package/util/wb/FullPalette22>

- Replacement for the workbench prefs palette program which allows one to edit and save all 256 colours.

10. Magic User Interface

<https://aminet.net/package/util/libs/mui38usr>

- Not really an application in and of itself, but rather a collection of GUI libraries which are used by a large number of Amiga applications which makes this an essential download.

Welcome to the guides section!

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- Tutorials/Guides -

Watch YouTube Videos On Your Amiga Pt:2 ECS Users

Steve Lord takes us through the process for downloading and converting YouTube videos for AGA Amigas. This is part 1 with the 2nd part coming out in the next issue.

Creating Mods in OctaMED that are ProTracker Compatible

The first guide from a new writer to WhatIFF? - how to modify your OctaMED tracks so they can be played in ProTracker and PT1210.

LightWave 3.5 - 101 Creating a Star Field

In our seventh installment of the Lightwave 101 series we get to work on creating your own star field for use as a background or as an animation.

Brilliance - Essential Shortcuts

Brilliance is already an amazing piece of software making the art of moving pixels a more enjoyable experience. This time we will look at some of the essential keyboard shortcuts you need to know.

Choosing a Joystick

If you are thinking of getting into Amiga gaming there are a large variety of joystick options available, Ivan Sorensen takes us through the pros and cons of each type to help you choose what suits your gaming needs.

#Tutorials/Guides - WhatIFF? Issue 2.09 - March 2023#

Watch YouTube Videos On ECS Amigas Part 2

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Watch YouTube Videos On Your Amiga Pt: 2 ECS Users - by: Steve Lord

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AGABlaster For OCS/ECS Machines

Markus Schordan's AGABlaster plays CDXL movies exceptionally well on AGA Amigas. You might be forgiven for thinking that AGABlaster only works on AGA machines. For most versions of AGA blaster, that's true. There is a 1.3 compatible version, and with care you can play full screen full motion video even on 68000 systems.

On a 68000 machine like an A500, 600 or CDTV you can't expect DVD quality. But in this article you'll learn how to identify and convert video that will play well on any 1Mb Kickstart 1.3+ Amiga.

AGAConv For 1.3 Systems

The main factor affecting playback on an ECS/OCS machine is transfer speed. Expect 12FPS 160x100 HAM6 video with 11025khz mono audio on a single-speed CD-ROM. That's about 150k/sec. Hard disks are faster and RAM disks faster still. At some point you will hit a wall. That wall is usually way below modern video quality. Don't expect Hires laced 50FPS video in full 22.5khz stereo.

Although CDXL doesn't need much CPU power an 030/50 and fast drive will make a world of difference. I suspect some of this could be due to 32-bit RAM. Unfortunately AGABlaster isn't open source and I lack the time to pull apart the binary.

If you're selective about what kind of video you want to play on your Amiga, you'll have a much better time. Some types of video are better suited than others.

Almost any Amiga can play CDXL files, but AGABlaster needs chip RAM. Short clips will work with 512kb of chip and 512kb of slow RAM. Full videos will need 1Mb of Chip RAM to avoid out of memory errors.

Choosing The Right Video

For 68000-based machines, the main trade-offs are between:

- Resolution
- Colour depth
- Frame rate
- Sample rate and channels

AGABlaster plays CDXL-derived video files encoded with the AGAConv tool. CDXL works by exploiting the Amiga's DMA and HAM6 capabilities. You're not tied to HAM6, which isn't as much of an issue as it might first appear if you choose the right types of video.

15 FPS at 160x120 is definitely doable on a fast SCSI setup. 15 FPS 320x200 may struggle to keep up. Doubling video resolution quadruples the amount of data drawn to screen.

The Amiga also stores graphics data using bitplanes. This means that using 6 bitplanes to store a pixel (HAM6) requires twice the data needed for 3 bitplanes. There is a noticeable difference between HAM6 and 3-bit-plane performance on 68000. The biggest difference is video size. Full screen HAM6 video benefits most from 1Gb+ of storage and transfer capacity. An SDBox is great for transferring larger files. It's less than optimal for

playing from over parallel port. 5 Bit-plane mode is a decent quality and file size compromise for many videos. Another advantage with using OCS rather than HAM modes is conversion speed. By all means use HAM6 for videos you love, but prepare to wait for ham_convert to finish.

A frame is going to take a certain amount of time to transfer, buffer, and draw to the screen. Higher frame rates mean less time to update frames. A video with less motion will look better at a lower frame rate than one with lots of motion.

The elephant in the room is audio. HAM6 provides a limited form of video compression compared to raw 12-bit frames. CDXL Audio is raw PCM data. The player has to send this to Paula and draw the frame. 22050hz 8-bit mono would take about 1.25MB per minute, or a little over 21K per second. Stereo doubles that. This must be loaded, buffered, and transferred while the player does the same with video data. Thinking about audio can make space for improvements elsewhere.

I've had good luck with the following video and settings on a CDTV with a SCSI2SD. I would expect similar results for A2000s and A500s. A600s may vary.

For Music videos, the key things are movement, stereo and colour depth. I use 22050hz mono, and switch to 11025hz for stereo. If the video is black and white, OCS4 or OCS5 is usually fine. If it's colour, I'll use OCS5 or HAM6. If there's a lot of movement, switch to mono or 160x120. If there's not much movement, lower the frame rate. The CDTV works well with live performances from the 70s through the 90s. This tends to be mono and masks lower bit-rates. Be prepared to drop to 160x100 if you want stereo 22050hz audio.

For animations, try OCS5 and OCS6 before HAM6. 11025hz Mono is fine for stories and TV shows. Mono 11025hz Audio enables higher frame rates at full screen. I can reach full screen 10FPS with 11025hz Mono. Playing with dithering can yield great results.

Old black and white movies are exceptional on a 68000 machine. Source audio quality tends to be quite low. Fixed cameras were the norm until the late 40s and early 50s. This helps with lower frame rates. 320x256 at 10FPS with 11025hz audio in OCS6 works really well here. Even Schindler's List worked well dithered in 16 colours.

Old home videos with analogue equipment from the 80s and 90s work well with 22050hz mono. Frame rate and colour depth will depend on what's happening.

For shorter, modern films expect to reach 160x100 at 15FPS with 22050hz mono. You might find stereo works well, or you might see flickering, indicating the system can't keep up.

A Worked Example

I'll assume you've installed agaconv and yt-dlp, as covered in the previous issue's guide. Lets use yt-dlp to test a clip from Laurel & Hardy's 'The Music Box', before converting the full video. IBM Had Charlie Chaplin, but Gould and Ali were as close as Commodore got to a golden-era comedy duo.

Note the final files may be quite big (over 1Gb in some cases). Think about how you're going to get them to your machine. Also consider using the fat95 filesystem, or PFS instead of OFS. You'll need:

agablast0_0_9_71_kick13.lha
<https://mschordan.github.io/amiga/agablast0.html>

Later versions will not work on Kickstart 1.3.

...

```
yt-dlp 'https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnNTkDDEWXY' -f 18
```

```
ffmpeg -i Laurel\ \&\ Hardy\ -\ The\ Music\ Box\ |\ 1932\ |\ Classic\ Movie\ \[nnNTkDDEWXY\].mp4
```

```
ffmpeg -i musicbox.mp4 -ss 00:08:01 -t 00:00:10 LH.mp4
```

```
mkdir testlh
```

...

Once done you'll have 3 mp4 files:

- The original Laurel & Hardy video from YouTube featuring a commentary after the movie. You can delete this.
- A shorter 29 minute and 13 second video containing just the movie, called musicbox.mp4
- A 10-second clip file called LH.mp4.

Short clips are good to quickly test settings. There's no need to transcode the whole video each time. We'll start by testing audio, then colour depth, and finally frame rate. Using this sequence, you'll identify the best settings for the media and your system.

Old Laurel & Hardy films have mono, low quality audio. Start by creating two 160-width versions with 8000hz, 11025hz, and 22050hz mono audio:

...

```
export tgt=LH.mp4
```

```
export prefix=testlh
```

```
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_160_5_8k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs4 --audio-mode=mono --frequency=
```

```
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_160_5_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs4 --audio-mode=mono --frequency=
```

```
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_160_5_22k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs4 --audio-mode=mono --frequency=
```

...

Once complete, test videos should be in the testlh directory. Copy these to your Amiga, or use a virtual one to identify the lowest acceptable sound quality. While 22khz is best quality, there's little gained over 11khz. I'll use 11khz for the rest of this article.

The next step is to test colour depth. Testing with a low frame provides time to check image quality during playback. Tweaking dithering parameters may improve quality at lower colour depths. I've left this as an exercise for the reader as it's quite subjective.

...

```
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o4_160_5_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs4 --audio-mode=mono --frequency=
```

```
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_160_5_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency=
```

```
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o4_320_5_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs4 --audio-mode=mono --frequency=
```

```
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_320_5_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency=
```

```
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_h6_160_5_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ham6 --audio-mode=mono --frequency=
```

```
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_h6_320_5_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ham6 --audio-mode=mono --frequency=
```

...

I've put the HAM6 encoder commands at the end of the above list as HAM6 encodes the slowest. If your encoding computer has an Amiga emulator you can test OCS modes while the HAM6 videos encode.

Play the same resolutions back to back and work out what's acceptable to you. Then play each resolution back to back with the same color depth. OCS4 looked acceptable at 160 pixel width, but the flashing palette put me off at 320. While HAM6 looked better, I settled on OCS5 as a middle ground. The increased rendering speed means I can always play with dithering later.

Knowing what's acceptable for resolution and audio, it's time to test frame rate. As before, what matters are your priorities and what works best for your setup and video. If you need 12 FPS, 160 pixel width might be a necessity. If 10 FPS plays fine and 12 doesn't, dropping audio quality or screen depth might get you the desired extra FPS.

```

...
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_160_5_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_320_5_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_160_10_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_320_10_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_160_12_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_320_12_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_160_15_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_320_15_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_160_20_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_320_20_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
...

```

This is the only stage needing testing on real hardware (if you have it). Emulators don't generally simulate slow drives. Full screen 25FPS HAM6 should play fine on WinUAE. If you have real hardware, transfer the clips and test them. Check for audio drops and flickering. This means your hardware is pushing beyond it's limits for the file. If you're unhappy with the trade-offs, try re-encoding and tweaking your settings.

At 320 pixel width, 5 FPS was too low for my liking. 12 FPS flickered, but 10 FPS worked well enough to not notice. 15 FPS was fine at 160 pixel width and I suspect I could've gone higher, but the size was too small for my liking.

At this point it's worth looking at each file's size. The clip is 10 seconds long, while the full movie is almost 30 minutes (1753 seconds) long. Multiply clip sizes by 1753 / 10 to get a figure for full video size requirements. Here's a template to reuse:

```

Clip length: 10 seconds
Clip name: lh_o5_320_10_11k.cdxl
Clip size (in bytes): 4960000
Clip size in KB: 4843.75
Full video length in seconds: 1753
Full video KB: (1753 / 10) * 4843.75 = 849,109.375
Full video MB: 829.21 MB

```

On my machine the actual encoded figures came out at just under 829MB. On my CDTV's PFS3 scratch partition the figure was slightly over. If the file is too big, ffmpeg can trim the movie into several clips and encode these as separate files. You can play the files in sequence using an AmigaDOS script, but there will be a pause between clips. If you do this, it's best to cut the movie on scene boundaries.

Putting It All Together

Once you've found your ideal settings combination it's time to put it all together. Use whichever agaconv command gave you the best results. Set the tgt variable to point to the full movie excluding commentary:

```

...
export tgt=musicbox.mp4
./agaconv "$tgt" ${prefix}/lh_o5_320_10_11k.cdxl --color-mode=ocs5 --audio-mode=mono --frequency
...

```

Once encoding has completed, the next step is to get it onto a physical Amiga. Even a 30 minute film will come in at over 1Gb for most configurations. Bear in mind that a 1.3 Amiga will struggle with larger files and partitions. When using a machine from an era of 5-20mb hard drives, know that the struggle is real.

Copy the file from your transfer medium to local storage and reboot the machine. This ensures nothing will interfere with the machine when you first try.

Kickstart 1.3 users just need to supply AGABlaster a filename to play.

If you're using 2.x or higher, specify FMODE=0 on the command line to avoid jumbled displays.

If all goes well, you'll watch two executives drive a business into the ground through their own incompetence, all from the comfort of your 68000 Amiga. Thank goodness that kind of thing never happens in the real world.

One final point on AGABlaster. It's not unusual for CDXL files to crash an Amiga. This is especially the case with the version of AGABlaster available. Unfortunately finding and fixing the root cause is difficult. AGABlaster isn't open source (although AGAConv is). If you experience crashes, there are various things to try. Splitting the video sometimes helps or blanking the frames sometimes helps. As does changing the settings. I suspect the available version of AGABlaster has memory leaks. But bear in mind these machines were never built to handle files this large. That in 2023, you can play a full screen Laurel and Hardy movie on a 68000 Amiga at all is incredible.

Only Amiga makes it possible.

LightWave 101 - Creating A Starfield

=====

LightWave 101 - Part 7 - by: Timo Paul

=====

Starfield Part 2

Welcome back and a happy new year, I hope you had a enjoyable Xmas and new year celebration. It has been three months since we worked on this tutorial, if you are still a bit rusty, I recommend refreshing your memory by having a read of issue 8 again. All finished? Okay let's get back to it then. As you hopefully remember we were working in the modler creating a starfield make up of several objects, hopefully by now you are ready to go to Layout, or the Lightwave program. Once there, quit Modeler if you have not done so yet, then click on 'Camera' in under the 'View' and 'Edit' headings and then *This is very important* reset the camera to the origin, this can be accomplished by simply clicking on 'Reset' near the bottom left side of the screen. Next we want to create a Keyframe, this can be done by pressing the 'Return' key or using the button at the bottom of the screen labeled 'Create Key', when a requester pops up just press 'Enter' again or click 'OK'.

An Appearance of Depth

Now all the hard work we did creating the particle objects will come in useful. What we need to do is apply different particle size to each of the objects, this will give the appearance of depth. If we were not to do this the stars would all look like they were at the same distance and it would not look so realistic. First load all of the 7 star objects that we made in the laast issue. Once you have them loaded we can edit the particle size in the 'Objects' panel and near the bottom of the panel, you will find the setting for 'Particle/Line Size', there are three options available:

Automatic Small Medium Large

The default setting is 'Automatic', so what we want to do is set the Star objects 1-4 as 'Small', Star objects 5 & 6 as 'Medium' and Star object as 'Large'. If you want to save some rendering time you can turn off each object's 'Self Shadow', 'Cast Shadow' and 'Receive Shadow' options since they will not be affected by any light source.

Colouring

Next we will move to the 'Surfaces' panel and set each of the object's surface 'Luminosity' and set it to 100%, and 'Diffuse Level' to 0%. Since it would be boring starfield if all the stars were white, change the surface of some of the objects which can be done clicking on 'Surface Color' and playing around with the sliders, maybe have some yellow, blue or red stars. It is also a good idea to adjust the 'Luminosity' of some of the objects, have a play around after rendering your first test image. Before we test render the scene, go to the 'Lights' panel and change 'Light Intensity' to 0%, next go to the 'Camera' panel and set the 'Antialiasing' to at least 'Low'. Finally click on 'Save All Objects' in the 'Objects' panel and then save your scene under 'Save Scene' in the 'Scene' panel.

Test Render

Now you will be able to do a test render, make sure to save the image under the 'Record' panel, choose either HAM-8 or 24-BIT IFF, I usually save the image as a 24-BIT IFF image just in case I want to use it on the Mac for something. If you feel that the field is not rich enough in

stars you can go back to the Modeler and subdivide the object into multiple surfaces, hopefully you remember how we did that in previous tutorials. Have a play around with rendering settings and surface colour attributes.

Next time we will take a look at how to use flares to add a make your field look more realistic. Good luck and see you next issue!

sampleediting

Sample editing tricks:

In my sample list, I have a silent 2-byte IFF sample called "_NewSample_", so whenever I cut a portion of a sample I can just type "_NewSample_" into the sample name field in the main control, into which I can then paste the previously cut sample data in the sample editor.

When cutting up a sample into regular-sized pieces I start from the beginning of the sample, I select a range which ends where I want the loop to end and then just delete the number in the range start box, setting it to zero, take note of the number in the range end box. Cut the data, paste it into a new sample, go back to the original long sample, enter the value which I took note of into the range end box, cut and repeat until I have all the individual pieces in their own samples.

When I need to boost the volume of a sample, instead of reaching for the *Change Volume* function, instead I go to the *Echo* function and *set the Echo Rate to 1*. This will noticeably boost the volume of the sample in a somewhat pleasing way, applied liberally it puts me in mind of the filter on the 303. And if I find that the sample is sounding a bit muddy or muffled after doing so I use the *Filter/Boost* function, with a *boost, with averaging set to 11*, although I find it's important to be sparing with this, as applying it too many times will create an unpleasant hiss.

trackediting

Track editing tricks:

For a percussive effect, like a kick drum. I sometimes use a sample with a short loop and pitch slide down, portamentau, and finally portamentau and fade on consecutive lines like so:

```
00 A-3 1 0210
01 C-1 1 0320
02 --- 0 0506
03 --- 0 0506
```

For an echo/delay effect, which OctaMED can automate for you, but I prefer to do manually, you can repeat the note with a lower volume command each repetition. The following will produce the quickest delay/echo rate possible, add spaces between notes for a slower echo rate.

```
00 A-3 1 0C40 ; you could also leave this blank
01 A-3 1 0C20   if the default volume is 40
02 A-3 1 0C10
03 A-3 1 0C08
04 A-3 1 0C04
05 A-3 1 0C02
06 A-3 1 0C01
```

Instead of chopping up, say, a drum loop into separate samples you can use the wave offset (19xx) command. If the sample were exactly 64KB in length you would use 1900, 1920, 1940, 1960, 1980, 19A0, 19C0 and 19E0 for each 8th of the loop. But of course, our samples are rarely exactly 64K, so to get the approximate numbers for the drum loop cue points you can use the same method as you would for a time stretch...

...You *could* calculate the final 256-byte frame in the sample by dividing the sample length by 256. But personally, I just take an educated guess of what the end frame is and adjust my numbers until I am getting just a tiny snippet of the sample before it reaches the end of the sample. If you go over then it will play the sample from the start.

Once you have found the final value for your time stretch place that 19xx value on the last line you want the sample to play and place a 1900 command on the first line, then apply a generic slide. That's how one does a time stretch and also you should now have the values needed to jump to specific points in the sample in a convenient table.

Now personally I have never really used the tremolo command, preferring to do my own manually. Here's how to do a fast tremolo using volume fade

```
00 A-3 1 0D0F
01 -|- 1 0D0F
02 -|- 1 0D0F
03 -|- 1 0D0F
                                00 A-3 0C40
                                01 --- 0C00
                                02 --- 0C40
                                03 --- 0C00
```

And here's how to do a slower tremolo using set volume

OctaMED SS to create ProTracker MODs - Creating A Starfield

=====

Using OctaMED SoundStudio to create ProTracker MOD's - by: Rob O'Malley

=====

Sample Editing Guide Tracking Editing Guide

OctaMED SoundStudio is arguably the best traditional tracker software for our beloved Amiga with many useful features like fastram playback of large samples, up to 64 channel mixing mode, patterns of virtually any length, versatile transpose and many, many more. But it can also be great for creating ProTracker compatible MOD files, as long as you are to take a few things into consideration.

If you are using OctaMED to create a ProTracker MOD the very first thing you will want to do is *set the tempo to BPM mode, and set LPB=4*. Then, unless you wish to use the default values of 125 BPM (command 0F7D), 6 vertical blanks per line (command 0906) you will be wanting to *put your initial tempo values on the very first line of your module*. Which you would also want to do if you were using the traditional ProTracker software. Also, for tempo commands *don't use any primary value less than command 0F21 or a secondary value greater than command 0920*.

Next, you will be wanting to open the *Song Options* window. Now you will definitely be wanting to be using *4 channel mode*. Set the volume commands to *Hex Volumes* and check the *No Slide On First Pulse* box, if you are converting a MED module without this box checked, you may wish to add one to whatever values you are using on any volume slide (0Dxy, 05xy, 06xy) or pitch slide (01xx, 02xx, 03xx) commands found within your module for the resulting MOD to sound similar to the original MED file.

All of your song patterns should be 64 rows in length, if you really need a shorter pattern you can use the pattern break command (0F00) on the last line of the pattern you wish to play, and if you have longer patterns then you can use the Split At Cursor function found in the Block menu on line 64 of the long pattern. Just be sure to update your playing sequence accordingly.

Now when it comes to instrument properties, *you cannot use Hold/Decay or Transpose*. But Default Volume and Finetune are fine to use. Also, it's only a minor thing. But if you are writing song information in the sample names, be sure not to use any more than 32 characters for each sample name as the extra information will be cut.

Be aware, in a ProTracker MOD you cannot use volume commands 0C80 to 0CC0 to set the default volume as you can in OctaMED. Although the values will save without throwing up an error, they will simply do nothing in ProTracker.

When using vibrato, *only use the 14xy ProTracker compatible vibrato*, never use 04xy. This is half the depth of the standard 04xy command, so if you really need a wider vibrato you might try alternating pitch up/down commands (01xx, 02xx) on successive lines.

If you are using the loop command (1600 - 16xx), the replay line command (1Exx), set finetune (15xx), note cut (18xx), fine slide up (11xx), fine slide down (12xx), the fine fade up command (1Axx) or the fine fade down command (1Bxx), *don't use any values greater than 0F*. For the delay/retrig (1Fxy) command, you can only use one of the functions at any one instance of the command. For example, you can delay 2 (1F20, one-third of a note with tempo command 0906) OR retrig 2 (1F02, play three times quickly with tempo command 0906) but not both in the same line.

Another minor inconsistency between OctaMED and ProTracker with the

delay/retrig (1Fxy) command is that if you have a 1Fxy command on a line with no note data in OctaMED it will do nothing, but in ProTracker it will apply the command to the last note played on the track.

Do not use the special commands (0FFx) as these will be interpreted as very fast tempo commands by a ProTracker MOD replayer. Instead of Note Cut (0FFF) you can simply use a volume command set to zero (0C00), Instead of 0FFD you can use the portamentau command with a high value like 03FF or simply have a note with no sample number next to it. Instead of using 0FF2, 0FF4 and 0FF5 to delay a note you can use 1F30, 1F20 and 1F40 respectively (assuming a speed of 0906). And by the same logic, instead of using 0FF1 and 0FF3 to retrig two or three times, you can instead use 1F03 and 1F02 (again assuming you are using the default tempo of 0906). And if you really need to stop the song playing as you would with the FFE command I recommend simply creating a blank block and placing it at the end of your sequence, maybe with some really slow tempo commands just to be sure.

Do I really need to tell you that ARexx commands (2Dxx) are out? As is the synth jump command (0Exx), secondary command pages and sub-songs. But if you have composed a track made up of playing sequence sections it will be fine as it will convert the section list into a single playing sequence when saving.

And finally, it should go without saying, that:

you can only use 8-bit samples.

That means, no synth sounds, hybrid sounds, 16-bit AIFF samples, MIDI, or anything other than the basic 8-bit sample. And for full ProTracker compatibility:

ensure that your samples are no longer than 64KB in length.

It's also worth noting that using notes C-4 and above is a no-no. But then, if all you are using is standard 8-bit samples with no transpose then this should not be an issue anyway.

Happy Tracking

Postscript: while I have done my best to ensure that I have covered all the idiosyncracies of creating MOD files with OctaMED it's possible that I may have overlooked something along the way, if you discover such an issue then please do not hesitate to contact me on the email address listed in this magazine.

Brilliance 101 - Reflections

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Brilliance 101 Part 8 - by: Timo Paul

=====

In previous issues we have been looking at the tools and techniques you can use to create certain effects. This time round we will be delving into the program shortcuts and useful features.

Brilliance is a great art package and it is made more so by the extensive keyboard shortcuts. In the back of the Brilliance manual there is a list of the shortcuts, with Brilliance 2 the manual stayed the same but there was an another 2-3 page addendum listing features that were unique to Brilliance 2, such as the Rub Through option. Listing all the shortcuts would be beyond the scope of this guide so instead we will look at the most useful ones saving you having to search out the manual online.

To begin with we will look at the operation control which is probably most useful to the majority of Brilliance users. Please note that the command will be caps sensitive so if you see the letter in capitals then you will need to hold the shift key.

Operational Control

- K - Clears the current page
- n - Center the screen on the mouse pointer
- N - Pan the page
- S - Show the page
- Space Bar - Toggles the menu bar on and off
- Tab Key - Turns colour cycling on and off
- ESC - Aborts the current operation
- DEL - Toggles the mouse cursor on and off
- Up, Down, Left, Right - Moves the screen
- Amiga + Q - Quits Brilliance

Buffers

Most Brilliance users are aware of the buffer for working with multiple images or used a place to store elements of your image. This is usually activated by press the letter 'j' however there is more control that can be done via the numeric pad.

- (- Go to previous buffer
-) - Go to next buffer
- / - Add new buffer

These commands are a great way to increase your work flow allowing you to spend less time in the menus and more in the creative zone.

When You Make a Mistake

Brilliance was one of the first, at least when it came out, art packages on the Amiga that had multiple undo, this was a real deal breaker for me back in the day and one of the reasons I switched over the Brilliance in a snap.

- u - Undo
- U - Redo
- Alt-u - Undo all
- Alt-U - Redo all
- Ctrl-u - Reset undo buffer

Brush Control

Quick access to brush control can be very helpful when you are deep in a project, instead of having to go through several menus these shortcuts will save you a lot time over the period of your work.

- x - Flip horizontal
- y - Flip vertical
- X - Double horizontal
- Y - Double vertical
- Z - Stretch or size the brush
- h - Halve brush
- H - Double brush
- (Hyphen) - Reduce brush size by 1 pixel
- _ (Underline) - Reduce brush by 10 pixels
- = - Increase brush size by 1 pixel
- + - Increase brush size by 10 pixels

These are the shortcuts that I have found most useful over 30 years of using Brilliance. Once you get into the habit of using them it makes using the program much faster and distracts you less from the work.

To help you memorise them, here is printable of the most useful shortcuts that can be printed from your Amiga. Useful Brilliance Shortcuts

Useful Brilliance Shortcuts

BRILLIANCE USEFUL SHORTCUTS

Operational Control

K - Clears the current page
n - Center the screen on the mouse pointer
N - Pan the page
S - Show the page
Space Bar - Toggles the menu bar on and off
Tab Key - Turns colour cycling on and off
ESC - Aborts the current operation
DEL - Toggles the mouse cursor on and off
Up, Down, Left, Right - Moves the screen
Amiga + Q - Quits Brilliance

Buffers

j - Switch between main and working buffer
(- Go to previous buffer
) - Go to next buffer
/ - Add new buffer

Undo

u - Undo
U - Redo
Alt-u - Undo all
Alt-U - Redo all
Ctrl-u - Reset undo buffer

Brush Control

x - Flip horizontal
y - Flip vertical
X - Double horizontal
Y - Double vertical
Z - Stretch or size the brush
h - Halve brush
H - Double brush
- (Hyphen) - Reduce brush size by 1 pixel
_ (Underline) - Reduce brush by 10 pixels
= - Increase brush size by 1 pixel
+ - Increase brush size by 10 pixels

Picking a good joystick

=====

Joysticks - by: Ivan Sorensen

=====

Picking A Good Joystick

Gaming on the Amiga is associated with the joystick, giving us a cheap plastic imitation of a cool fighter pilot control scheme (with cheap often being the key feature!).

If you are looking to play games on your Amiga you will need a joystick (or two for multiplayer) and there is a host of options available on the market. Many current options are only available for a brief time or while stock lasts, so instead of suggesting specific models I am going to talk about general options you have available.

Basic Functionality

First let us take a look at the basic functionalities. The ideal Amiga joystick has two separate fire buttons for games that support this and an autofire option (so you don't destroy your hand playing Transplant). Auto fire is typically a switch on and off though some controllers have it switchable for each fire button separately. One flaw of the typical system is that in games where holding down the button activates a function (such as Chaos engine or Turrigan) you have to switch off auto fire to use that option.

A few controllers like the Gravis Gamepad has a separate auto fire button for each fire button, letting you use both functions smoothly but this is uncommon.

Many joystick available at the time were single button (even if they had multiple buttons) since that is what was used on the 8 bit systems though with some skill you can modify the joystick to be a proper two button input.

It is a common misconception even among many long time fans that the Amiga doesn't support two buttons. This is completely false on the hardware side but games can be hit and miss in supporting it, though you may be surprised how many do natively. If you check the game options and see 'Gamepad' mode it usually refers to two button controls. Additionally many WHDLoad installs feature it as an option.

Many modern controllers will have a button wired to 'p' which can be helpful in platformers and some racing games. This is also fairly easy to modify yourself if you are so inclined.

Additional Functionality

A lot of modern controllers will offer additional functionalities like macros, mouse emulation (especially for some playstation adapters) and more. For a while there was even an attempt to add rumble functionality to an Amiga controller! Another oddball example is the old Gravis pad allowing you to reverse the buttons for left-handed use.

These options can be very cool but their availability is often limited so see what you can find out there.

Joysticks

As noted the standard input device was a joystick. Joystick have some advantages over pads: They tend to do diagonals better which is useful in

top down games like Chaos Engine or Sensible Soccer and of course if you are playing a flying game or space ship shooter, a joystick is a must so you can pretend to be a cool fighter pilot.

There was a huge array of joystick configurations with buttons on the top of the stick or at the base. If you enjoy shoot em up games do NOT get a joystick with only a button on the top and no auto fire function. You may die from thumb induced exertion.

Joysticks of the era can often be uncomfortable to hold in your hand, as they were typically intended to be planted on a table for a stable position. Most come with suction cups underneath (which may be in various states of use after 30+ years). If you prefer to sit with the controller in your lap, consider the model of joystick carefully.

Gamepads

Pads are usually associated with game consoles but they were available for the 8 and 16 bit computer era as well, though less common. Pads are often preferred for fighting games and with a button mapped to up, they are often viewed as superior for platformers. The downside of a pad is that the directional controls are often uncomfortable for diagonal movements.

In my experience pads tend to be more likely to support two button controls and are meant to be held in your lap for a more relaxed pose.

Ultimately the choice is one of personal preference and I find myself using both depending on whim and what game I am playing.

CD32

The CD32 was a short lived system and the original game line up was fairly limited. However a lot of games now support the CD32 controller and many CD32 games are playable on a standard 1200 with WHDLoad.

The original controllers or the superior Competition Pro version are quite rare and expensive, but aftermarket options are available as well. CD32 pads are usable for normal Amiga games as well though the additional buttons may be an irritation if you don't intend to take advantage of it. I would not say this is an essential purchase.

Other Systems

Famously pads for the Sega Master system and Megadrive/Genesis are also usable. Master system pads work as is while Megadrive pads will give you trouble with the third button unless the pad is modified.

It is generally recommend not to use unmodified megadrive controllers directly on your Amiga.

Old vs New

There is a huge array of old joystick and pads available on the second hand markets like Ebay. These may be in all manner of conditions and shape after 30+ years. These devices were often cheaply made and treated pretty roughly.

On the upside they are often cheap so you can grab a couple and see what works for you. When searching online try to look for Commodore and Atari joysticks as well as Amiga.

If 'New old stock' items are available go for them unless the price is outrageous. This means it was never opened and should work more or less like new (though with age, this is not guaranteed). If you prefer not gambling there are various brand new (often custom built) options available at any given time whether through Amiga vendors or independent

sellers on Ebay or Amazon. These options can be a few more bucks but you get a new item (and have a support source if it arrives defective) and these newer controllers often include more functionality.

Adapters

Another option is an adapter that lets you use a controller from another system. Playstation 1/2 adapters are fairly popular and these allow you to a comfortable and familiar pad with your Amiga. These adapters may include additional functionality as well, though they rarely take advantage of every button on the pad.

Playstation adapters usually allow using the analog stick as a joystick as well as using the directional pad, giving you both options. Some even include mouse emulation using the stick.

I find the analog stick to be a little awkward in games requiring sharp diagonal movements but it works pretty well in general.

Some modern USB adapters may even permit the use of USB game controllers though I have not had a chance to test any yet.

Picking For a Purpose

When selecting a controller it is worth bearing in mind what kind of games you intend to play, how you like to be seated and your general circumstances.

Sports games often benefit from sharp diagonals but don't require frequent button presses, shoot em ups usually mandate an auto-fire switch, platformers are aided by an 'p' button and so forth.

Of course with the huge variety available it is likely that any serious Amiga gamer ends up investing in multiple controllers for a range of purposes. For example I have a particular joystick that I prefer for sports games but don't use otherwise.

Extension Cables

Regardless of your choice consider investing in a pair of extension cables. These can be had cheaply and Sega cables are perfectly fine. Most joystick have plenty of cable but if you swap out controllers frequently (and you will be doing this for two player games) you will put wear and tear on the pins and port. For aging equipment this always worries me, but with an extension cable you can just swap controllers at the end of the cable instead.

Additionally if you prefer to sit on a couch and have your Amiga hooked up to a TV or large monitor this makes it easier to play from across the room. If you use them at your desk just tape them down or get some small plastic hooks with sticky or velcro strips to pin them place.

Switchers

A final option to consider is a joystick/mouse switcher. This is a little device that plugs into your Amiga and lets two input devices be connected to it such as a mouse and joystick or two joystick.

Most work by just letting you push a button on the controller you want to use and it automatically activates that one. A few have a physical button on the switcher itself.

This is helpful for two player games since you no longer have to unplug your mouse to connect a joystick (only to have to switch back when you exit the game and want to select another game on your hard drive). It is also nice if you have two different joystick you like to swap between.

I have run into difficulties using my Cocolino mouse adapter with some switchers while others have worked flawlessly but when you get adapters connecting to adapters connecting to switch boxes connecting to alien space technology, some trouble is bound to happen and a little experimentation can sort you out.

Articles

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- Articles -

ST-01: The Legacy

We delve into the history of this defining sample pack, where the sounds come from, why it was made and more. Take a trip back to 1987 and turn up the sound!

Kickstarting Your Zen

Ivan Sorensen takes us on a journey into Zen and your Amiga, join him inside to see if he will make you think differently about your Amiga.

#Articles - WhatIFF? Issue 2.09 - March 2023#

ST-01: The Legacy

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ST-01: The Legacy - by: Timo Paul

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With the advent of the Amiga, true music production became a reality for anyone owning an Amiga, especially with the release of Ultimate SoundTracker, over the decades' various forms of the tracker would be released from ProTracker to NoiseTracer to OctaMED, and the ultimate tracker Renoise. However, for this article, we are not going to look at the history of the tracker but rather at a very influential sample pack, namely the ST-01. If you were to listen to a random sample of Amiga music from the late 80s you will probably find that quite a few will contain samples from this groundbreaking pack.

Why is this so important? As most of you know the Amiga was one of the first computers to have the ability to play multi-channel samples, before that it was all synth sounds generated by the computer. As such, no real pack of sounds could take advantage of the Amiga's audio capabilities. Of course, users could buy a sampler and bring in their own sounds, but this could be a daunting task for many people who wanted to get into music production but had no experience. This is why the ST-01 sample pack was such a game changer, it contained a large collection of samples that gave you the sounds you needed to make a complete song.

During my research for this article, I came across several websites that listed the samples and where they came from, it is interesting to see what hardware the sounds come from and how they sounded originally. The short samples were sampled at 8/11khz in low 8-bit resolutions, hence you get a lot of artefacts and they can sound quite different from the source material. The sounds come from the Roland D-50, Yamaha Dx21/27/100 and Casio Cz1-1/1000. A very interesting website page lets you listen to the ST-01 sample and then the source synth for comparison, the link to which is at the end of this article.

Another individual on the internet, HideawayStudio has also managed to identify most of the sample sources, as can be seen, it ties up with the findings at polynominal.com:

ST-01: Source Synth: Source Preset & Name:

Call ROLAND D50 I-16 Living Calliope
DigDug YAMAHA DX21 G13 P1 Solid Bass (aka Lately Bass)
DigiHarp ROLAND D50 I-12 Metal Harp
DXBass YAMAHA DX21 G13 P1 Solid Bass (aka Lately Bass)
DxTom YAMAHA DX21 G9 P1 Electro Tom
FaeryTale CASIO CZ-101 Fairytail
FunkBass YAMAHA DX21 G13 P6 Elec Bass
Heaven ROLAND D50 I-61 Staccato Heaven
HeavySynth YAMAHA DX21 G10 P1 Heavy Synth
Heifer YAMAHA DX21 G9 P8 Heifer Bell
Hooman ROLAND D50 C-67 Choir
Horns YAMAHA DX21 G5 P1 Horns
JahrMarkt2 ROLAND D50 C-12 Metal Harp
Jetes ROLAND D50 I-54 Jete Strings
Koto YAMAHA DX21 G6 P7 Kotokoto
Licks ROLAND D50 I-85 Bones
Mechanic1 ROLAND D50 I-81 Intruder FX
MetalKeys YAMAHA DX21 G7 P4 Metal Keys
MonoBass YAMAHA DX21 G13 P4 Mono Bass
MuteClav YAMAHA DX21 G11 P5 Mute Clav
Nice ROLAND JUNO 106 A33 Xylophone
NightMare ROLAND D50 I-71 Nightmare
Outlaw ROLAND D50 I-21 DigitalNativeDance

PingBells ROLAND JUNO 106 B77 Pingbell
Pizza ROLAND D50 I-44 Pizzagogo
PolySynth ROLAND D50 I-55 Stereo Polysynth
PopBass YAMAHA DX21 G13 P1 Solid Bass
RichString YAMAHA DX21 G4 P6 Richstring
RingPiano ROLAND D50 I-78 Pianissimo
Shamus ROLAND D50 I-41 Shamus Theme
SixTease YAMAHA DX21 G3 P6 <6 Tease>
SlapBass ROLAND D50 I-83 Synth Bass
Stabs ROLAND D50 I-25 Harpsichord Stabs
Steinway YAMAHA DX21 G1 P1 Deep Grand
Strings7 ROLAND D50 I-A1 Legato Strings
SynClaves YAMAHA DX21 G9 P3 Breakin
SyntheBass YAMAHA DX21 G13 P3 Synthe Bass
TineWave ROLAND D50 I-56 Tine Wave
Touch ROLAND D50 I-16 Living Calliope
Voices ROLAND D50 I-17: D50 Voices

The sample pack ST-01 was created by Ultimate SoundTracker programmer Karsten Obarski, according to previous interviews he created the tracker to make it easier to write music for his games. You can hear the first ever Soundtracker module made with Ultimate SoundTracker and maybe the first use of the ST-01 samples in the title screen for the game Amega. It is classic Amiga mod music but also bears the title of first module music, so if you have not heard it yet, look up Amegas on YouTube and listen to a piece of Amiga music history.

Over the years the ST sample packs expanded and currently are up to 115 packs/disks. The later packs include more genre-specific sounds such as those used in hardcore and jungle music. In years past the ST-01 has been derided as being overused but its place in history and importance cannot be denied. The sound that defined many of the Amiga games and demos from the late 80s to the 90s, can be found in that drawer of samples, and anyone who grew up with the Amiga will most likely find themselves taken back to the early days when it was in its prime.

Having gone back to the sample pack after many years of making my own samples, it is quite refreshing, in a nostalgic way. The beauty of the pack is it has sounds to make most music, and if used properly new and pleasing music can still be created with this history-making pack. The synths, strings and pads sound rough due to the low sample rates yet they still retain their musical charm over 30 years later. Snares and kick drums bring back memories of games and demos, it is startling how much a single snare sound can trigger a memory of playing a game or demo. Suffice it to say I ended up going down the rabbit hole of ST-01 and started making new modules after just a few minutes of playing around with the sounds. It was a journey of nostalgia and creation.

If you feel inclined after reading this article to have a dig into the ST-01 pack again and find yourself creating a new track, please feel free to send it to us and we can include it in the next issue, the more the merrier! Until then, enjoy revisiting the ST-01 and get creative!

amigazen

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Kickstarting your Zen - by: Ivan Sorensen

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In the last year or so I have spent a lot of time reading about the concept known as *Digital Minimalism* which consists of reducing the amount of digital and online distractions and making our use of electronic devices more deliberate.

How does that fit with the Amiga? Very well I should think!

Amiga owners often cite the simplicity of the platform as part of the appeal: Everything is pretty much out in the open, the system was extensively documented and many aspects can be manipulated with only minimal understanding of programming. I've never written any code more involved than a 3 line bash script but if I can find the right configuration file on an Amiga, I can usually suss out what needs to happen.

That is not quite what I am talking about however.

Some years ago, I had my Amiga online. I think it is probably a bit of a rite of passage because we associate the internet with modern computers and the Amiga is very much a child of the pre-internet era originally. Of course *online* existed and was very popular for the Amiga but for its active history, it meant something a bit different.

When I was evaluating what to do with my Amiga after a short break I decided to take it offline. I deleted all the internet software from it and ended up getting rid of the PCMCIA networking card I had been using. I did experiment with a little device that lets you access BBS's through your wireless internet connection and that was fun but I got rid of that as well.

You see with everything else I do in life, I am bombarded by the internet and with age I find it increasingly aggravating and frustrating. My work involves the internet so I can't even shut it off while I am at work. But the Amiga is an escape from that. When I turn on my Amiga I am stepping away from the internet both literally and figuratively.

When I play a game it is just me and the game. There is no temptation to tab out and go check on a forum while I wait for something to load. If I boot up a word processor, I can focus on just writing what comes into my head. It is the same vibe as taking your laptop to a place where you don't know the wifi password, which is a favorite of many writers.

The machine exists as it does, without any outside influence.

Now of course we like to talk about our hobbies on the internet and Amiga is no different, but lately I have begun exploring what happens if I make even some of that private. What happens if I rely on old magazines to inform me of games or to find codes, cheats and walkthroughs? Why not check out old cover disks and CD's for music to listen to instead of trying to wrestle with collections of trillions of mod files?

Part of what made Amiga so magical was that it always felt like a process of discovery and it is easy to miss that these days. You can download a thousand Amiga games and then click around never playing any of them for more than 3 minutes or you can read through magazine reviews and pick out one or two you want to play and then really put in some time to do so.

I think the online world can often cause a distraction in that it

relegates the use of a retro computer or retro console to a tool to create internet content. Often this can be very helpful: We all enjoy a good review video of a new piece of hardware or software but that approach does not make me feel satisfied personally. I use my Amiga because I want to experience things on the Amiga and gaining that experience is a goal in and of itself.

Trying to connect that to the swirl and chaos of the internet undermines the feeling for me, because I always have to stop and think about whether I need to take a particular photo or if I need to be able to explain or justify something. You could argue that this is all overthinking things, but of course that is the exact problem:

Sometimes I don't want to overthink it. Sometimes I want to find zen.

Welcome to voices of the people behind Amiga hardware and software.

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- Talking Amiga -

-= Amiga Future's Andreas Magerl Interview =-

To celebrate 25 years of Amiga Future we sit down with the head honcho of one of the longest living Amiga magazines and discuss the history the magazine and its future.

-= CU Amiga's Tony Horgan Interview =-

If you lived in the UK during the 90s and were an Amiga user you will probably already know of Tony from CU Amiga, his initial role editing the audio articles to becoming the editor of one of the greatest Amiga magazines.

-= 10 Min Retro Amiga Cast's Douglas Compton Interview =-

We sit down with the creator and presenter of the 10 Minute Retro Amiga Cast, Douglas and get into his history with the Amiga and details of his show on YouTube.

-= Settle The World Developer Interview =-

Rob OMalley sits down with Christian Wiegel the developer of the new Amiga game Settle The World and gets delves into the game development.

#Talking Amiga - WhatIFF? Issue 2.09 - March 2023#

settleworldlinks

https://www.theotheoderich.de/settletheworld/release/introudate/Quick_Start_Guide_EN_2302.pdf

[https://www.theotheoderich.de/settletheworld/release/introudate/Schnellstart_Anleitung_DE_2302](https://www.theotheoderich.de/settletheworld/release/introudate/Schnellstart_Anleitung_DE_2302.pdf)

Christian Weigel Interview

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Interview - Christian Weigel (Settle The World)

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First, could you tell us a little bit about yourself and your history with the Amiga computer?

Hello, my name is Christian Wiegel aka TheoTheoderich. I am from Germany and work as a Visual Basic for Applications programmer for a large telecommunications company.

Computers had an influence on me quite early. When I first experienced an Atari 2600 at a friend's house in 1981, it was like a miracle for me. It was not only possible to watch something on a television, no, it was also possible to control something on this screen. That fascinated me incredibly (to this day). Unfortunately, my parents didn't have the necessary money to bring such a wonder machine into our house. When I was nine, I had a C64 together with our neighbour's boy. It stood in his children's room and was connected to a black-and-white television and only had a datasette.

Together we spent all the money we had saved on a 1541 drive. The neighbour's boy, however, was only interested in playing and whenever he went to football practice, I was allowed to use the computer alone. Fortunately, this happened very often as his father was the coach of the local football club.

The C64 manual was very detailed and became my evening reading. I was unbelievably taken with the possibilities of writing my own small programmes with Basic, saving them on diskette and being able to load them again later. A completely new world opened up. Later I always wanted to have my own C64, but my parents always refused, pointing out my poor performance at school. Then, one Christmas a few years later, there was an Amiga 500 under the Christmas tree. I couldn't believe my luck. Brand new and including a 1084 monitor. The picture quality was brilliant.

It came with Workbench 1.2, including Amiga Basic, which excited me at first. But the more I tried it out, the more frustrated I became with the only Microsoft programme for the Amiga. Unstable and extremely slow, those are the two words that still come to my mind about Amiga Basic.

Since I didn't have the money for computer magazines either, I just played for a few years because I wasn't up to date with the latest programming software. I quickly started pirating, with four floppy drives, night after night, and also downloaded games from America via an acoustic modem, until one day a good friend of mine had his house searched and the police rang our doorbell. Fortunately, I had disposed of thousands of floppy disks in time and the police only questioned me.

Since then I have only bought original games. I played far fewer different games, but I played them as originals and much more intensively than I had played pirated games before. At that time, Railroad Tycoon, SimCity, Historyline and later Civilization made a big impression on me.

Thanks to an internal turbo card and external hard drive, my Amiga was also well equipped for such games. Nevertheless, it had to make way for a 486 DX2/66 PC at the end of 1993, after I had seen Civilization in 256 colours on a friend's PC and was thrilled by it.

Well, a few years later I bought an A1200 as a second computer, then more Amigas came along. Today there are many Amiga computers here that I love very much. But my favourite computer is my A500+ with FireBird, external

1011 drive and external A500-HD8+. It is simply a dream.

What inspired you to create a new strategy game for the Amiga platform, and what do you hope players will enjoy most about it?

The idea to create a strategy game came from my 11-year-old son. He loves games where you can trade with others. This quickly turned into the idea of having different islands or continents and using ships to transport goods to other players. How it could look was also very quickly clear similar to the games I love, "Colonization" and "Civilization".

I haven't been programming with AmiBlitz3 for long and my first real project was Caves & Cargo, a Gravity Force clone. That game is on hold in favour of Settle the World, but the map editor from Caves & Cargo was the base of the map rendering for Settle the World.

Then my son also wanted to have cities on the maps for the ships to travel between. That's when I had the idea of programming the city management the way I remembered it from the game "Colonization".

Settle the World was never meant to be a "Colonization" clone, nor to become as extensive and complex as it is now. Originally it was meant to be a pure local multiplayer game, where two to four friends would meet and trade with each other while sitting in front of an Amiga computer. I thought that would be the most fun for the players. Playing together on a computer, just like when we were young. However, I soon realised that most Amiga users don't have anyone nearby who is also interested in Amiga.

Can you tell us about some of the gameplay mechanics or features that your game offers, and how they are similar to, or differentiate it from other strategy games?

Oh, the game mechanics are still not fully built in, nor is it even fully thought out. The idea is to build settlements on a foreign continent and connect them to each other.

There are three levels of prosperity for citizens to reach. Each city starts with citizens of the settler class. If certain buildings, such as a school or a tavern, are now built AND the citizens are additionally supplied with certain finished goods every turn, they can advance one level, then they have reached the worker class. This unlocks new construction options for buildings and units in the city. If you make a lot of effort, the citizens can also reach the class of aristocrats. Once the citizens have reached a certain class, they cannot drop back to a lower class. If they are now not sufficiently supplied with finished goods, they become unhappy.

In the current version, the satisfaction of the citizens has hardly any effect on the game. Later, however, it will have a great influence that there will be free elections every few years. If you lose the election, the game is over. Otherwise you can move units and explore the map, in many places you can discover abandoned cities or shipwrecks, where you can find useful things with a little luck.

Pioneers can build roads on which units can move faster. They can also remove forests, plow fields and build mines. Soldiers can capture units from other players and also fight against other units (including flanking bonuses and taking terrain into account when defending). In cities, you can build production workshops and bring in the needed raw materials by ship or transport wagons. Finished goods can also be loaded and brought to other players' cities by trading ships to exchange goods. There are whaling ships to produce lamp oil later. You can also catch wild horses to upgrade your soldiers to dragoons. All units can also be moved to the desired destination via pathfinding. Each unit has a certain range of vision. Forests or mountains can block this view.

All this is a big mix of games like "Colonization", "Civilization",

"Anno 1602" ("1602 A.D." called in other parts of the world) and "Tropico". I am quite bad at inventing something myself. But I am quite good at putting existing ideas together again. If this way of creating a game leads to a good game I don't know yet. To come back to the question, yes, some things are similar to the games mentioned.

Can you tell us about the process you use to create the graphics for Settle the World? What tools and software do you use to create the graphics for your game? And do you work with a dedicated artist or team, or do you create the graphics yourself?

The ingame pixel graphics of Settle the World are all pixelated by me. First I needed some 16x16 pixel graphics for the map, like grasslands, forest or ocean. For these images I had the squares similar to the ones from the game "Railroad Tycoon" in mind. The first of these images were still very simple and were reworked several times to achieve more contrast or depth (which is not easy on so few pixels).

For the units, resources, trade goods and many other small graphics for the game, the game "Colonization" was unmistakably the inspiration. Here, too, I drew all units and small graphics myself. I deliberately kept the graphics similar to "Colonization", because I like this style of graphics very much.

For pixelating I mostly use PPaint and rarely DPaint IV. PPaint is in my opinion the perfect tool for this. The biggest advantage is the automatic reallocation of colors, e.g. after a change or adjustment of the color palette. This automatically applies all the colors in the image to the new palette without making any major changes to the image. Enormously practical, since it took me about two weeks to get the color palette acceptable in my eyes.

The game is created in 32 colors, as I won't go through the effort of creating a game in AGA with 256 colors. Working with that many colors is not possible in the limited time I have. The effort to do this is immense.

The buildings in Settle the World's city view were originally drawn in pure 2D side view. Later, some depth was added to the buildings. Actually, they were supposed to be shown in isometric view, since I'm very good at pixelating isometric buildings. Unfortunately, the available space of maximum 32x32 pixels did not allow this kind of perspective. Too bad actually.

I never liked the buildings in the "Colonization" game. I didn't have any models for the houses either. Most of the time I have a finished image in my mind and then it's just a matter of pixelating that image. Of course, the available colors limit the quality of the building images a lot. At times I experimented with HalfBrite mode with 64 colors. This looked really good because I had another color with half the brightness for each color. Unfortunately, this mode costs too much Chip RAM, so I didn't continue with it.

Larger images in the game, such as the ones in the intro, were created using Midjourney AI. This is an AI for image creation, which I subscribed to. Here images are created from text input. Now this sounds much easier than it is in reality. Sometimes it took me many hours and endless attempts until a usable image came out.

All images of the Midjourney AI were then post-processed on the PC with PaintShopPro 9. For this, the color saturation was massively increased (Midjourney often creates too gloomy images) and the images were downsampled to 24 colors. 24 colors because these graphics in the game have their own color palette, except for 8 colors needed for the image borders, etc. For some images, I had to start all over again at this point, because the images just looked awful with fewer colors.

After the graphics were saved in PaintShopPro 9 in 160x160 pixels (or even 320x200) as PNG, the format was set to a 32 colors IFF with PPaint on my Amiga 500+. This resulted in no color loss, since the images had already been downsampled to 24 colors on the PC. Adjustments were then made to the color palette and the images were manually post-processed to remove unwanted pixels or unsuitable image elements.

Again...I always have a picture in my mind of how something should look later in the game. Then I sometimes spend a lot of time either pixelling this image myself or having the AI create it until it looks like it does in my mind. And that sometimes takes a really long time...

How did you balance the need for a challenging and engaging game with the desire to create something that's accessible to both new and experienced players?

This is a difficult question to answer. I haven't been able to balance it all out yet.

For Settle the World, I have a very dedicated tester who has tirelessly restarted the game over and over and told me what could be changed. Without Christian Dold, the last -Intro Update- would be far from finished. I don't have that much time at all to program and test the game. Either one, or the other.

Further development of the game will be very challenging in this aspect, because the happiness system of the inhabitants has to be balanced. However, this will have to wait because feedback on the last update showed that players would rather have a single-player mode including computer-controlled opponents....and I have never developed anything like this before.

The issue of accessibility to the game is a very difficult one for me. The game is quite complex and today's players are no longer used to intensively familiarizing themselves with a game they are unfamiliar with.

In November 2022 (after the first release) I was totally frustrated by some YouTube videos. The players there started the game and had no idea what to do. They were moving the starting units back and forth for a few minutes and then quit the videos. The -River Update- at the beginning of December 2022 had therefore already included some help texts in the game. That was also necessary, because apparently nobody looked at the ReadMe file.....

For the *Intro Update* I created a Quick Start Guide in English and German as a PDF and linked it on my itch.io project page.

Links

I really hope it helped some players to get started with the game.

What challenges do you face during the development process, and how do you overcome them?

There are many challenges during the development of Settle the World. One is the programming environment AmiBlitz3 itself.

AmiBlitz3 is still under intense development and constant improvement, but even so, there are sometimes bugs that can hold you up for days when things don't work as they should. A big difficulty is that in AmiBlitz3 (in BlitzBasic basically!), you have to have functions in the "right order" in the program code. You can only call functions if they are in ahead of (i.e. higher up) the place in the code that calls them. This kind of thing doesn't exist in modern programming languages anymore, and it drives me so crazy from time to time that sometimes I'd rather pixelate on buildings than continue coding.

I had many problems with the Copper control. This is not well described

in the BlitzBasic manual. In Settle the World, a simple wave effect is created on ocean fields and coasts using a Copper effect. It took me weeks to get this effect to work well for me. I spent evenings just changing values in the code, starting the game, seeing how it looked, quitting and modifying the next value. Many hundreds of times! (I call it brute force programming because I do something over and over again without understanding exactly what I am doing there).

Another challenge was generating maps. I wanted to use procedurally generated maps early in development. On the PC, I've done something like this before in BlitzMax using a Perlin-Noise example (explaining Perlin-Noise would go too far here now). Unfortunately I didn't succeed in converting this example into BlitzBasic code for the Amiga. Many evenings I searched the net for program examples for Perlin-Noise for the Amiga and found nothing.

But I had the solution right in front of my nose....

In the code samples of AmiBlitz3 there is an example for Perlin-Noise which can be used to generate a procedurally generated wood texture on graphic cards. I modified this example so that instead of a wood texture, it now creates mountains, grassy areas, and oceans.

Pathfinding of units is also challenging. Here I converted a PC code for AmiBlitz3 and also tested, changed, tested, changed again.... hundred times. I am not that good at programming. Actually, I am Visual Basic for Applications developer at work.... Algorithms I am not good at. So my pathfinding in Settle the World still has problems when units have to move down a long distance to the left....

The Amiga platform has a devoted fanbase, but it hasn't seen many new games in recent years. What motivated you to develop a game for this platform, and what do you think the future holds for Amiga gaming?

To answer the question about motivation is easy. It was the BlitzBasic Jam 2022 that motivated me to develop an Amiga game. At first, you only had three months to develop a game, later that time was increased to six months.

I have never finished a game in my life. At some point, my two children said to me "Dad, finish a game for once in your life!". Quite simply, that was the trigger...and I love programming!

For something like this, a game jam is perfect.

- * There is a clear period of time.
- * There was a Discord group and all participants regularly showed their progress and motivated each other.
- * It created a kind of social group pressure for me. So I was forced to deliver something playable in November.

Of course, by the end of the competition my game was far too complex, partly not understandable and difficult to use. Nevertheless I reached the third place in the competition and had the motivation to continue working on Settle the World.

I think the Scorpion engine from earok will probably bring some nice games to the Amiga community in the next years. The games future for the Amiga will be safe. But the Amiga will always be an absolute niche product globally.

Of course I could have written Settle the World for the PC with BlitzMax and then I would have been overwhelmed with comments and constructive criticism...would have been much easier for me...but I grew up with the Amiga and love these computers more than anything else!

Finally, Tell us where can the reader find more information about this

game?

On my itch.io project page:

<https://theotheoderich.itch.io/settle-the-world>

And of course on our Discord in English and German language (News, Dev-Snippets, Screenshots):

<https://discord.gg/UJyZSJJqYg>

Thankyou for taking the time to discuss the development of Settle the World with WhatIFF? Magazine, we wish you the best of luck with future development of this game.

I have to thank you, it was a lot of fun answering your questions. It's great that the Amiga community is so active and also that even in 2023 there is still interest in a turn-based Amiga game with only 32 colours. I would never have thought that possible as a teenager.

(Footnote: all of the answers were written in German and translated using DeepL.com with some corrections)

Andreas Magerl Interview

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Interview - Andreas Magerl (Amiga Future)

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1. Hello Andreas, thank you for taking the time for this interview, to start with can you tell us a little about yourself?

So my name is Andreas Magerl, I am the founder of APC&TCP and I also founded the Amiga Future, among other things.

2. How did you get started with the Amiga?

Probably like many other Amiga users too. I also used to have a C64 and at some point it was the logical step to buy an Amiga. And somehow I stayed with the Amiga. :)

3. Amiga Future has been going for over 20 years now, what made you decide to start an Amiga magazine in the first place

In January the Amiga Future will even be 25 years old. We are currently working to finish this magazine. We are also working on a release that should appear before Christmas.

That's why everything is a bit stressful here. Please forgive my bad english.

About 25 years ago there were still many Amiga magazines in Germany. But all these magazines only dealt with applications. There weren't even any game magazines anymore. We wanted to fill this gap. With time and the loss of other Amiga magazines, Amiga Future has become a magazine for all areas related to the Amiga.

4. What kind of problems did you have when first starting the magazine?

Our biggest problem was finding a publisher. But we did it. We only had the really big problems when the publisher also stopped its Amiga business and we decided to do the Amiga Future completely on our own. So writing, layouting, printing, selling texts, sending out invoices, magazines and so on. With the exception of the texts, the publisher had taken care of everything beforehand.

5. Amiga Future was initially in German only why did you decide to do a German and English edition?

Germany is our home country and so it was clear that we would do a German magazine. We've always thought about an English version (just like a C64 magazine), but it's difficult to start something completely new.

But then we were contacted about taking over the English magazine Total Amiga. We did that and a such there has also been an English Amiga Future for well over 10 years.

6. Did it cause a lot of trouble having to produce a bilingual magazine?

Yes and no.

We first had to find enough translators (and we're still looking for good translators) and also proofreaders. The other problem was, of course that we also had to set up an infrastructure for selling and shipping the Amiga Future abroad.

It used to be stressful... but once it works, it works.

There are always new challenges, e.g. To pay the sales tax for the newspaper in all EU countries separately.

The big advantage is basically that APC&TCP is in the background.

7. Which version of the magazine sells the most?

Interestingly, the German magazine. And that although English is spoken in many more countries. This may also be due to the shipping costs worldwide but we have no influence on that. Deutsche Post determines the postage here.

8. What have been most proud of over the last 20 years of Amiga Future?

That we still exist, although there were many people who said that we wouldn't last 3 months. And now it's 25 years. That the sales volume increases. Very slowly, extremely slowly, but it's increasing.

9. Are there features that you would like to improve or add to the current Amiga Future?

A lot, but as always, there is a lack of time and money.

For example, we would like to add more pages. But this makes the printing of the magazine a lot more expensive. And what many overlook... the postage will also be more expensive.

Maybe that will work someday. But for that we still need many annual subscriptions.

10. How has the Amiga scene changed from when you first started the magazine?

Well, she got smaller. There are fewer Amiga companies and of course fewer users.

11. With the growing interest in the Amiga, would you consider changing to a monthly format?

This growing interest in the Amiga is more virtual than real in my opinion. Because of the Amiga 500 Mini, e.g. again there are some new Amiga users. But the vast majority of these "new" users don't spend any money in the community. They want to download an image with software from the Internet and that's it. When someone buys a new game, real Amiga hardware or a newspaper... that rarely happens.

12. Are there any parts of the magazine done on the Amiga?

We used to do our subscription management and billing on the Amiga. However, since January 1st, 2021 we have been using professional software on the PC. On the Amiga this is simply no longer suitable. The texts... each editor does it differently. Some write the texts on the Amiga, some on the PC, some on the Apple. We don't make any rules for the editors.

The layout is done on a PC. It just doesn't work on the Amiga.

13. In addition to Amiga Future you are also involved with APC&TCP, how did you get started with APC & TCP and how is it important for AF?

APC&TCP was a computer club for the Amiga that emerged from the two clubs APC and TCP. There were many programmers in the computer club who also programmed good software for the Amiga, but did not agree with the way the publishers of the time worked. At some point we founded APC&TCP Publishing to commercialize this software.

Incidentally, APC&TCP turned 30 last year. And currently we are working

on two releases.

Without APC&TCP, Amiga Future simply wouldn't exist anymore. Amiga Future uses the infrastructure of APC&TCP. The online shop, the postal delivery, the tax bill (and we pay a lot of taxes), the billing software and APC&TCP is practically the publisher of the Amiga Future.

14. What Amigas do you own and which model is your favourite?

Unfortunately I haven't had much time to deal with the Amiga for some time now. :(

I have an Amiga 600, Amiga 600 Acryl, Amiga 4000T, Amiga 1000, CTDV (which unfortunately seems to be defective at the moment) and two CD32s. In addition, two C64 that are not set up.

I would like to have a few other Amiga models, especially for the Amiga shows, but everything costs money. :)

15. Before we finish, is there anything you would like to add or say?

I would like to thank you for 30 years of APC&TCP and 25 years of Amiga Future.

And because people keep asking... No, we won't stop with Amiga.

Thank you Andreas for your time and insight behind Amiga Future, it is a truly unique magazine with writers from around the world with long standing heritage. If anyone wishes to support the magazine I suggest taking a subscription to keep the magazine going and therefore support the Amiga community.

Tony Horgan Interview

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Interview - Tony Horgan (CU Amiga)

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1. To start off can you tell us about your introduction to computers and why/how you got into them?

First, let me thank you for having me. It's an honour! The first time I heard of someone having a computer in a house was when a friend told me that his older brother had a ZX80, and that he'd built it himself from a kit. That was in 1980. My impression of computers at the time was based on the flashing lights and reel-to-reel tapes that controlled the Turin traffic light system in the Italian Job.

I'd seen a ZX81 in shops such as WH Smith and Tandy, but I hadn't taken much notice. Most of the time they'd be off, or displaying some kind of error message, because you couldn't just type words directly - keys were shortcuts to BASIC commands. Fortunately for me, my older brother Michael got a ZX81. He understood it immediately. Some people are like that with music, mechanics, maths, art, sport or something else. They just get it. Michael was like that with computers, and even better, he had the ability to teach me.

I was already a big coin-op fan, so when he told me that you could make games like Space Invaders with simple programs, I was hooked. Michael taught me all about BASIC: algebra and variables, routines like FOR, TO, NEXT loops, how to redefine ASCII text characters to make sprites, READ and DATA statements, keyboard inputs, how to move things around the screen and lots more. He even taught me to solve a Rubix cube in about 60 seconds.

2. You are best known for your work on CU Amiga, but you worked on other Amiga magazines such as Amiga User International. How did you get started writing for Amiga magazines?

I began my secondary school years (from the age of 11) around the same time that we had that ZX81 at home. It was Michael's, but most things were shared amongst me and my three brothers. Soon we upgraded to a ZX Spectrum, and then a Commodore 64. During that time I was reading computer and games magazines, often for the reviews because I never had much money, and didn't want to waste what I had on a duff game. I realised the importance of magazines for kids like me. I could see that some of the magazines were pretty bad, some were OK and some were actually quite good, and I could pinpoint the reasons. I understood magazines, maybe in the same way that my brother Michael understood computers.

In the early 80s, many of the magazines were made by boring old men from a bygone era. Games were viewed as a frivolous distraction from the serious business of printers, RS232 ports and accounting software. I knew I could do a much better job than most of the people working in computer and games magazines at the time. When Newsfield launched Crash for the ZX Spectrum, and then Zzap!64, clearly staffed by young writers, I could see there was a job opportunity for me somewhere in the near future.

With that in mind, at school I focussed on subjects that I'd need for a job in magazines, so I took Typing (a specialist subject in those days) and Computer Studies, and made sure that I passed English and Maths. While I was still at school, aged 14 and 15, I'd write letters to magazine editors on a regular basis, about once a month. First I just sent letters, asking if they had any jobs. Then I started to send sample game reviews. Finally, I started making full page layouts, with colour

screenshots placed onto A4 pages with text typed around them.

I was sending these to all the main computer and games magazines that were based in London, getting very little response. I left school in 1986, aged 16, and continued sending things to editors, doing temporary jobs like washing up in cafes and filling envelopes for mailouts. I was determined to get a magazine job, so I only went to a permanent job interview if my dad insisted (I was living with my parents at the time). My perseverance paid off in 1987 when the Managing Editor and Publisher of Commodore Computing International, Antony Jacobson, called me in for an interview.

I got the job and became the main game review writer. It was a very small operation. I had a huge workload, but I was the only person in the office who knew anything about computers or games. Even Antony didn't know the first thing about it. He would hold a Kempston joystick backwards and wonder why things were moving in the wrong direction. The rest of the magazine was written remotely by freelancers.

Commodore Computing International was the company's main publication, but they also had another magazine called Commodore Business and Amiga User. It was sold on a subscription-only basis, which we mailed out from the office. That magazine became Amiga User International, the UK's first Amiga magazine, and was distributed in high street shops. Most of the Amiga content was duplicated from CCI into AUI, and vice versa. Over time, AUI became the dominant magazine.

3. Which magazine did you enjoy the most, if you are able to say?

I think CCI was the most fun. It certainly wasn't the best magazine, and it wasn't easy because I was very overworked, but it was very satisfying to have fulfilled my ambition. I was at the bottom of the ladder, so I didn't have the stress of managing anyone or any responsibilities other than my own job, so I was able to enjoy it more than some of the jobs I had later on.

It was based in London, not far from Fleet Street (where most of the national newspapers were made), in the days before desktop publishing had really taken over. That area from Clerkenwell to Holborn was a publishing hotspot. There were small businesses in every street offering print and publishing services: photography studios, film developers, typesetters, scanning companies and printers. Part of my job was to fetch and carry things to and from those places. I'd take all the game screenshots in the office on a 35mm camera, then drop the film off at Metro, a professional photo developer around the corner, pop back later to collect the transparencies and take them to the nearby scanning house to be blown up into four colour film separations, then bring those back into the office to be placed onto the pages, alongside columns of pristine, crisp text on bromide paper that had just come back from the typesetters. The magazine pages were literally cut and pasted on boards in the office. It was a great way to learn how to make a magazine, and to experience the physical processes that are now more theoretical or digital. One downside was that the floor of the office was permanently sticky from all the Spray Mount aerosole glue that was used to "paste" everything onto the pages.

There were lots of special moments in the early days of that job. I was still 16 when I started there. My desk had an Amiga 1000 and a Commodore 128D. I'd never seen an Amiga before. There weren't many games for it at the time but I loved playing around with Deluxe Paint in kaleidoscope mode, setting up a palette of rainbow colours, putting it in colour-cycling mode and then drawing in random directions. Try it, it's fun! I'm especially fond of the earlier Amiga games that came from the US. I remember the adventure game *Deja Vu II*, which used the mouse and windows environment in a new way. There was *The Faery Tale Adventure*, which was a kind of role-playing game, but with a big area to explore, atmospheric music using interesting sounds and a new input method.

Another favourite of mine was The Sword of Sodan, which had huge sprites. That wave of innovation in control methods and interfaces faded away in the later years. I always appreciated an original idea or a new game format. I suppose I'd been spoilt, because the 70s and 80s were almost a continuous stream of new, original game styles.

It was great to have game developers coming to the office to show me their latest games. Jon Hare and Chris Yates of Sensible Software came with Wizball, leaving me a 5 1/4" disk with cheat modes. The Bitmap Brothers brought Xenon on the Amiga, and I gave them a hard time about it being a port from the Atari ST, not using the Amiga's sprites or Blitter. They weren't expecting that!

4. Many readers were introduced to your writing via your articles on audio in CU Amiga. What did you enjoy most about writing those articles?

By the time I moved to CU Amiga, I was all gamed out. I needed to write about other things. I was very excited about the sampling abilities of the Amiga. I loved electronic music, and until the Amiga came along, a sampler was far too expensive for me. Those four channels of 8-bit samples were enough to make some great music, and do it really quickly. I was keen to show people how much of a revolution in music production this was. The Atari ST had the reputation as the music computer because it had MIDI ports as standard, so developers made sequencer software for that format. However, you still needed a lot of extra money to buy synths, samplers and drum machines to make any use of it. With the Amiga, you could do so much with just the computer itself. The Amiga coincided with a time in my life when I was starting to go out to raves, discovering an alternative music scene that was perfect for me: friendly, exciting, energetic and experimental. It was great to be able to combine that scene with the Amiga, taking inspiration from music I'd heard, people I'd met, and citing examples of techniques that could be replicated with the Amiga. I enjoyed having the ability to demonstrate these ideas with samples and music on the coverdisks.

5. Did you ever run into any problems writing those articles?

The main problem with music features in CU Amiga was that they didn't appear to attract readers overall. For example, if we lead with a music feature on the cover, or a music-related coverdisk, the sales of that issue would be lower than if we lead with a big graphics theme, or perhaps a big game in the earlier years. So while people who liked making music loved those music features, for many readers they were a complete turn-off. It seemed that "music-making readers" were a completely separate sub-set of the main readership. The music-makers would be interested in some of the other things (graphics, games etc) but the other readers didn't share the interest in music. It meant that if we went big on music in a specific issue, we knew we'd take a sales hit, so it was hard to justify doing anything more than those regular music features at the back of the magazine.

6. After working as a staff writer you became the editor of CU Amiga. What changes to the magazine did you do during your time as editor?

I was a very hands-on Editor, in terms of the pages themselves. I wanted to be sure that the writing was of the highest quality, from the headlines and captions to the body text. I was probably too involved in the word-to-word editing of the magazine at times. In terms of the bigger picture, I wanted to start, literally, with a bigger picture. The covers had been a mess in recent years, lacking consistency of branding, visual style and overall tone. I decided to make the covers as iconic as possible, so that they would be very visible on the newstands and convey a clear message. My plan was to give every issue a strong theme, pairing the coverdisk software with a big feature, backed up by a checklist that offered something for everyone in each issue.

I think it's easy to forget that in the 90s, the Amiga magazine readership wasn't a single group with the same interests. It was a mix of people with various degrees of interest (or none at all) in many areas, such as 3D rendering, games, music, programming, animation, 2D graphics, hardware, desktop publishing, video, the demo scene, the internet and more. It was easier to give readers good value for money in the early 90s, when there was enough advertising revenue to finance a big magazine.

Trying to please all of those readers with a much smaller magazine and a tiny budget was a real challenge.

7. In the November 1995 issue of CU Amiga, you had a CD attached and on it was a sample collection. Can you tell us a little about the sample collection, was this made for the CD in particular, or was it your personal collection, what sampler did you use, if you can remember what were some of the sources of your sounds?

I put a lot of music and samples on the disks over the years. That one was a compilation of the best samples I'd collected up to that point. Some were sampled from my own record collection. Others came from various sources, maybe ripped from games or from sample CDs. Looking at the OctaMED music "mods" on there, I think I made all of those. I remember the names. I'll load them onto my Amiga and have a listen when I get a chance.

8. What were you most proud of during your time at CU Amiga?

It's very nice to be remembered after so long by so many readers, and to hear how I helped to inspire young musicians and producers. That was always my intention. People contact me now and then to say how much they enjoyed my music tutorials, and how those features helped them in the early days. We had a huge readership, peaking at about 100,000 readers per month in the early 90s. I'm not taking credit for that figure, but when you're in a position to reach that many people, especially people who are just starting out, with ambitions to become music producers, movie makers, animators or programmers, I think there's a responsibility to use that platform to help people along the way.

9. Recently you got an A1200 again in your studio, what has it been like getting back into the Amiga?

I love it! All the keyboard shortcuts came back in a flash, especially the OctaMED ones. My original Amigas went about 20 years ago when I needed to downsize my entire music set-up. In theory, a PC could do everything and more. However, I found that I didn't like working with modern music software alone. It's hard to stay focussed on a project when so many options and processes are available at the same time: sound design, composition, arrangement, mixing and mastering. The temptation is to jump between each of those stages while a project is ongoing, but that's counter-productive. Since then, there's been a wave of new, affordable hardware synthesizers and drum machines. Now I can use my Amiga as a sequencer and sampler, controlling the hardware synths and drum machines that I now have. That keeps the creative part separate from the mixing and mastering stage. I can record multitrack digital audio on my Tascam DP24, then bring that onto my Mac for the mixing and mastering, balancing up all the different sound levels. For me it's a much better way of working, and much more fun.

10. What has surprised you most about the current Amiga scene?

I've been surprised to see how it's not just a retro scene. There are people making high quality new games and remakes of coin-ops that didn't make it to the Amiga the first time around. I knew I could use an Amiga as a MIDI controller and sampler, but I thought it would be harder to integrate it with modern file systems and that kind of thing. I'm impressed by the options that are available now, replacing floppy drives and hard drives with memory cards, so I can move things like that sample

collection from 1995 onto my A1200.

11. You recently released a book, 'How Synthesizers Work: A Simple Guide' can you talk about the genesis of the book and who it is aimed at?

I left my last magazine job at Stuff (a gadget mag) because I needed time to look after my children. Freelance writing wasn't working because my availability and freelance jobs were never in sync, so I started writing, designing and publishing my own books. I started with a series of officially licensed guides to a range of synths and drum machines by Korg. That was at the start of resurgence in new analog synths and drum machines. The big synth brands had eventually realised that everyone wanted synths with knobs on, and started making them again. Now there are loads of affordable synths out there. That's great, but the controls are still labelled with things like "LFO", "EG" and "CUTOFF INT". The manuals don't explain these terms properly, and nor do most of the things you'd find on the internet. So I decided to make a book that tells people what all of that means, using simple language, icons, diagrams and practical examples. Anyone with an interest in synths should be able to use one. That book is designed to break down the barriers created by all that technical jargon.

12. Do you have plans to write any other books about synthesizers or the Amiga?

My next music book will be about drum machines. It'll be called "How Drum Machines Work - A Simple Guide". That's an exclusive for you! I hope to have it ready at some point in 2023. I have a rough idea of a Commodore-themed book, which I've written a few chapters for. If I finish it, it'll be a series of memories and stories from my time in Commodore and Amiga magazines. I think that's probably the most interesting and entertaining Amiga-themed book I could write, but I haven't got very far with it because I'm not sure there's much of a market for it. I struggle to picture someone who would be interested in it, because it would probably end up being a rather disparate collection of half-baked sketches that were about my life in magazines in the late 80s rather than Commodore or Amiga-specific things. I suppose I could make a list of about ten people who might enjoy reading it, but only because they were there with me at the time.

13. Are you releasing your own music, and if so are you producing it on your Amiga, Mac/PC or a combination of both?

Yes, I am releasing my own music, but in a low-key, 2023 kind of way. You can find my latest album, Turbines, on Bandcamp:

<https://tonyhorgan.bandcamp.com>

It's an abstract, experimental soundtrack album. I listen to it a lot. It would be great if it was a hit, or used for a movie, but it won't be. However, I love listening to it. A while ago I stopped trying to make music to please other people and started making music for myself. It might sound arrogant to say that it's my favourite album of the last few years, but it's true. I'm listening to it right now, picturing myself on the beach soon after dawn on a clear winter's day.

That album was made on a Macbook using Ableton Live. I made it over the course of about two years, in little pockets of time that I managed to find for myself. More recently I've been using my Amiga in my tiny home studio. The Amiga 1200 is running OctaMED, working mostly as a MIDI sequencer. I've used it for a few commercial jobs, so it's paying its way. I haven't officially released anything made with the Amiga recently but I will soon. The last commercial release from my Amiga was the 12" single "Can't You Feel It" in 1999. Since then, I used the Amiga speech synthesiser for some effects in the soundtracks I made for the DVDs mounted on the PlayStation magazine "PSW" and Xbox World (I was Managing

Editor) in the early 2000s.

14. You covered OctaMED a lot in CU Amiga, so I must ask are you in the OctaMED or ProTracker camp and why?

Definitely OctaMED. I started out with a Soundtracker clone. My memory tells me it was called GoldTracker but I can't find anything about that online. It was a standard Soundtracker clone with a brown or yellow interface. I found the original 4-channel MED (Music Editor) soon after that. I preferred it because it had more commands and control over the samples than the Tracker clones, and later versions had MIDI output, so I could control any synths or drum machines that I had at the time. ProTracker was great if you needed to embed something into someone else's game or demo, but that standard came with a lot of limitations, and every version had an awful interface. I never really used OctaMED in 8-channel mode because the sound quality was so much worse. It's hard enough getting good sound from 8-bit samples at about 16 or 20kHz, but 8-channel mode was unworkable. OctaMED was great in 4-channel mode: lots of control loads of MIDI channels and a good sample editor.

15. Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions, is there anything else you would like to say about the Amiga, your experiences or plug, music, books etc?

It's funny how things come around in a retro loop. I couldn't have continued using my Amiga for music indefinitely. I did need to switch to modern systems and embrace the new technology of the 21st century.

However, it's great to go back to my Amiga two decades later and find that it still has a legitimate place in my music set-up. It's my main sequencer, which sounds boring because I'm not talking about "gritty, lo-fi samples", which is what the Amiga is supposedly good for. By the way, back then, nobody was trying to make lo-fi music - quite the opposite, and it was hard work getting good results! My point is that it took a break of 20 years for me to appreciate the Amiga (and OctaMED) again. It's lovely to have it back. The best thing about it? The keyboard with those lovely tappy-tap keys.

Finally, thanks for the invitation to plug my books! You can look me up on Amazon for my print books, and for ebooks, have a look on Apple Books and Google Play Books. I've got two channels on YouTube, one specifically for Amiga content. I'm on most of the social media sites. Try me on Twitter @TheTonyHorgan

Thank you your time Tony, best of luck with your book, unfortunately we did not have time to review it for this issue but a review of it will feature in the June issue. Until then I highly recommend anyone who has even a passing interest in synths to buy this book, I am half way through it and have been learning and enjoying it with every page.

Douglas Compton Interview

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Interview - Douglas Compton (10 Minute Retro Amiga Cast)

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1. Hi Douglas, thank you for taking the time to do this interview. To start off can you tell us a little about yourself?

Thanks for thinking of interviewing me! My name is Doug... Not Marc like many people think. I grew up in the 70's and 80's and I am certainly a product of those times. I was first introduced to computers with a Commodore PET in our Elementary school - we had one computer shared with about 12 classrooms. Then in 1981 I saw my first VIC-20 at a County Fair, they were playing "AMOK" on it, the Berserk clone. I fell in love, and within a few months I was the proud owner of a VIC-20. In late 1984 I ended up with a nice Commodore 64, and my love for technology and Commodore specifically just kept growing.

2. You experienced the Amiga in the States, what stands out most in your memory about the Amiga in the States?

In the United States the Amiga was very much seen as a creativity and productivity machine, and far less a games machine. Of course we all knew it had fantastic games, but most of us Amiga users were digitizing with our Digi-Views, creating artwork with DeluxePaint and buying new hardware add-ons. This is very much reflected in our many Amiga magazines here like Amazing Amiga and AmigaWorld. About 90% of the content was reviews of software and hardware, fantastic tutorials and discussions of what was coming, and maybe 10% (probably less) was dedicated to games reviews.

When Desktop Video started gaining popularity, actually well before the Video Toaster, many American Amigans started getting Genlocks and nice video equipment and opening video business's. Of course when the Toaster did ship, a huge amount of attention centered around that wonderful piece of hardware.

We actually paid very little attention as to what was happening in Europe. By the early 90's we all aknowledged that Amiga was selling very well over there as a gaming platform, but many of us saw the European games as kind of cheap and poorly made. We were having a blast with "It Came From The Desert", "Dungeon Master" and "Black Crypt" so repetitive platformers really did not seem to interest us.

3. How did you get introduced/started with the Amiga?

I started following the Amiga in late 1985. My favorite Magazine, Computes! Gazette would often have articles talking about the machine. It was too expensive for me when I was 16 years old, but when the A500 was finally announced in 1987, I saved my pennies to get one. In early 1988, my shiny new Amiga 500 and 1084 monitor were delivered and I was in computing heaven. Within a few weeks I got the A501 memory expansion and a second floppy, and that got me through 1991 when I ordered my Amiga 3000. My time on the Amiga was spent with Photon Paint, Digi-View, Prowrite and a ton of Public Domain software. Believe it or not, I did not own a copy of DeluxePaint until the mid 2000's! One unique thing about me is that I never pirated software on my Amiga. There were plenty of opportunities to of course, but I was very against piracy. I bought every piece of software I had. In 1991 I received my Amiga 3000. I honestly cannot remember the date I got it, but it was fairly soon after it was generally available. I had the 16 Mhz version, and loved that thing to pieces. I ended up getting a 386 Bridgeboard, and external 44 MB Syquest drive and a good VGA monitor for it. There was nothing like it. My friends' PC's just felt like jokes running DOS or Windows 3.0. And the

PC games did not impress me at all at the time. By 1994 I was selling PC's for a living so I got one myself, but it was not until Windows 2000 was released years later that I felt Microsoft had caught up to what the Amiga was capable of.

4. What attracted you to the Amiga over using a PC or Mac?

In 87 there was no competition. I was a C64 user, and I felt that was more useful than most green-screen Pc's of the era. They were a pain to use, and honestly offered me nothing that my C64 could not already do. Macs were just overpriced in 87. Yippee! A two color single-tasking machine with a microscopic monitor and horrible audio for 5 times the price of an Amiga! PC Computers did not reach an affordable price point until the early 90's, really. Anything that was inexpensive was a boring 286 machine that did not even rival the Amiga 1000. If Commodore had not folded in 94 I would have kept using and buying Amiga computers for sure. I only went to a PC after they went out of business, and I never truly liked it, and continued to use my Amiga 3000 until it failed in 1998.

5. You are best known for your YouTube show the 10 Minute Amiga Retro Cast, can you tell us a little about the genesis of the show and why you decided to start a show about the Amiga?

From 1998 until 2017 I was in a repeating cycle of bringing out my Amigas and having fun with them for a few weeks, and then putting them back in storage. In that time I did buy a new Amiga 1200 in maybe 2002 from Amigakit, and then scored some beautiful Amiga's from a friend in 2005 but it was always the same. Hook them up, get nostalgic for a week and put them away. I figured the only way to really get back into using them would be if I had something I was kind of obligated to do with them. I had been watching some of the Amigos, and Amiga Bill and others for a while and saw an opportunity to start a new channel that was not centered on games like almost everyone else, but to delve into the true power of the Amiga like its graphics potential and neat hardware that was available.

I felt like many YouTube videos were too long and people might lose interest, so I decided on a 10 minute format. Well... You all know how that worked out! Within the first few episodes I realized I had so much to talk about I could never keep to just 10 minutes! So now it is just a bit of a joke in the community, which I enjoy. One of my mottos is "Anything beyond 10 Minutes is Free Bonus Content"

Once the show started to take off, I soon became friends with many members of the Amiga Community and "10 Minute Amiga Retro Cast" kind of took on a life and persona of it's own. After a bit I started thinking about my old Commodore 64, too. Mine had long since been non-functional, as I sold the VIC Chip to a customer in 2004 to repair his machine. I went online and before I knew it I had a room full of C64's, VIC-20's, C128's and tons of disk drives! So of course I had to bring them into my videos to justify them. So I came out with my sub-channel "ChickenHead Chronicles" where I talk about the 8 bit machines and the fun stuff to do with them. In my free time, I pretty much equally use 8 bit and Amiga's. Every now and again I toss in another machine, often an Atari show.

I am going to be celebrating the 5th year of "10 Minute Amiga Retro Cast" this year, which amazes me!

6. What have been the hurdles, if any, starting/making the show?

Getting my brain in the frame of mind to talk to a video camera was tough at first. I did a few test shows that I just tossed away because I did not like the presentation. I have never had any issue talking to crowds and presenting. Put me in front of 1000 people to speak and it would not bother me. I finally decided on a conversational style to the show. Instead of never being in front of the camera and just showing hardware and software, I wanted to chat with the audience and just have a nice talk about the topic I am covering. I also like to toss in a bit of fun with my videos

and try for a few chuckles from the audience.

Now the biggest issue is free time. From 2018 until early 2022 it was not too hard to keep a weekly schedule, but in mid 2022 things started to get a bit crazy, and even my weekends are often full of work now. I never fall below three videos a month, but keeping up with four or five a month is difficult. It is not from a lack of subject matter, though! I have dozens of ideas for shows that constantly float through my head that eventually get made into a show.

7. The show has grown rapidly in popularity, what has surprised you most about the show?

I am really happy with how positive most people are about it. Some channels get a lot of spammy and trolls posting on their channel, and I have had very little of that. I am also surprised with the recognition of my show in the community. It is fun to be known all across the globe for something!

Our American Amiga community is actually quite close. The Amigos, Chris Edwards, Amiga Bill, Hold and Modify, Pintz and Amiga... All of us are pretty tight and often keep in contact with each other. Sometimes to share information, but more often than not just to chat.

8. Why did you choose the 10-minute format?

Ha! My last 10 minute video was in 2018 I think...

9. What you like to do in the future that you have not done yet?

More collaborations are always fun. I also plan on integrating the Video Toaster into my shows for some fun effects and text scrolling. The biggest issue with that is fitting my huge Amiga 2000 in the studio while I work! Having a larger studio than the 12' x 20' one I use now would be nice. I would love to keep more of my machines plugged in at one time.

I also have some thoughts about occasionally livestreaming, possibly with the Toaster. Finding time to do it all is the biggest hurdle.

10. Over the years the Amiga has become a popular topic for YouTube creators, what do you do to try and stand out from the rest?

I stand out by not just covering video games, but instead concentrating on other uses of the Amiga. Not just Art and creativity, but things like Networking, using modern equipment with the Amiga, Talking about creative ways to capture video from the Amiga, etc... I am not a hardware repair guy for the Amiga, although in my real life that is exactly what I do with PC's! I don't do board level repairs like soldering chips, but instead I like to solve software and hardware compatibility issues and learn how to push these machines to their limits.

11. In addition to the 10 Minute Amiga Retro Cast, you are also in charge of the Amiga Art Contest, what made you want to create the it?

I wanted to contribute something of value to the community, and I figured concentrating on Art on the Amiga would be a neat thing. I have an old Commodore magazine from 1988 that had an art contest for C64 and Amiga computers, and thought that would be a really neat thing to get people involved in. Honestly I did not know if it would do anything at all, or if people would be interested. Now we have dozens and dozens of people contribute hundreds of pieces of art, photography, music and animations every year! I had no idea it would grow so big, and I have a lot of fun doing it. I was blessed to have Vicky "Pixel Vixen" be my co-host for many years and Kevin Saunders "Invent71" be my co-host this year. Kevin also has been creating the posters, flyers and animations for the contest for years.

12. What has been the most interesting aspect of the Amiga Art Contest?

Getting everyone together and sharing the creations have been wonderful. Everyone has a different style, and the Amiga is the perfect platform to experiment with many styles. Making good friends along the way is great too. I would say the most exciting thing is hearing stories from people who have not touched their Amigas in years, or maybe not even experimented with Art before come tell me they are doing something for the contest. That is a good feeling. Getting people to use their Amigas for more than just playing "Lemmings" is one of my goals.

13. Will there be any changes to the next Amiga Art Contest?

I have been chewing on a few ideas, like opening up a "Demos" category. Or maybe opening up an "8 bit Commodore art" category, but the Livestreams average three hours as it is! I will continue trying to show at least 90% of the artwork on real Amiga hardware. There were just a few animations this year that needed to play back on my PC.

14. What is your favourite creative application on the Amiga?

Art Department Professional is my most used application. I love its ability to bring in JPEG images and convert them to Amiga formats while keeping the integrity of the original image. It has some great filters and effects, too. I would say ImageFX is my next most used program. Honestly, I have never been a Deluxe Paint guy, although I certainly appreciate its power. I always used Photon Paint back in the day, and I use Personal Paint a bit more than Deluxe Paint.

15. What is your favourite Amiga, and non-Amiga computer?

My favorite Amiga honestly depends on my mood! My most used Amiga would probably be my Amiga 1200, followed by my Amiga 4000. I really enjoy my Amiga 3000 and Amiga 1000 aesthetically - they are the most beautiful models. My least used Amiga is possibly my Amiga 500. I have three of them, one in a Checkmate case with a vampire and two wedge machines, but they get less use than my other machines.

Next up, the Commodore 64C and 128D are some of my favorite machines. I just love them, and the 128D is a surprisingly powerful machine! I do have a love for Atari 8 bit machines, and own an Atari 800XL that I love. I would have gone the Atari Computer route if they were as inexpensive as a VIC-20!

Modern machines mean very little to me. They are just tools to use. I am not fond of the direction software and operating systems are going. They are far too bloated, and the new subscription model that software is using is just garbage.

16. What Amigas and other computers do you own?

The only Amigas I don't own are the CD32 and the A3000T and A4000T. I don't really want the towers - they take up too much space. I love my CBM PET 8032 and keep it in the front room of my house. It is the first thing people see when they walk in my front door! I have several Commodore 64's, with the 64C version being my favorite. I have a few C128's, but the 128D is my pride and joy! Follow that up with a Plus 4 (which I actually like!) and a few Atari's and lastly a Texas Instrument 99/4A.

I honestly own quite a few American versions of the ZX Spectrum, and an NTSC Sinclair QL, but truth be told they mean nothing to me.

17. Thank you for your time, you do have any final words before we finish?

I did want to mention that this was 100% written and emailed to you on my

Amiga 4000 using Final Writer 97 and SimpleMail!

Thanks for all you do for the community and thanks for your great magazine! I really appreciate the opportunity to be interviewed. Oh... And one last thing...

AMIGA FOREVER!

Welcome to the links section!

Links

www.amiganews.net/en/

One of the most up to date and comprehensive sources for Amiga news from around the globe.

www.eab.abime.net

English Amiga Board, the majority of the users are from Europe, a very friendly and helpful Amiga forum.

www.exxoshost.co.uk

The resource if you need help or information about the new Terrible Fire cards.

www.amibay.com

A great place for buying and selling Amiga hardware, they also have some very nice people to give advice about. Of recent it has become very hard to register on the website since their server migration.

www.amiga.org

Probably the longest running Amiga forum on the world wide web, most American Amiga users are on this board.

www.amigaworld.net

Another large Amiga website covering all Amigas, includes news, discussions and classifieds.

www.amigans.net

English Amiga website covering next generation, emulation and classic Amigas.

www.amigafuture.de

The longest running Amiga print magazine, issues are available in English and German.

www.amiga-addict.com

Newest English Amiga print magazine, if you are missing the likes of Amiga Power and Amiga Format, then this is the magazine for you.

www.ka-plus.pl

Commodore and Amiga print magazine available in English and Polish. Lots of games content.

mancave-ramblings.blogspot.com

Our own John Scolieri's personal website.

If you have a link that you would like added to list
contact: submissions@whatiff.info

Welcome to the Amiga vendors section!

Amiga Vendor Links

Alinea

<https://www.amiga-shop.net>

Amedia Computers

<https://www.amedia-computer.com>

Amiga 68k

<http://amiga68k.com>

Amigakit

<https://amigakit.amiga.store>

Amiga MC1

<http://amiga1.com>

Amiga Shop

<https://www.amigashop.org>

AmigastoreEU

<https://amigastore.eu>

Amiga on the Lake

<http://amigaonthelake.com>

Arananet Retro Products

<https://www.arananet.net/pedidos>

Arcade Shopper

<https://www.arcadeshopper.com>

BuyElbox

<http://buy.elbox.com>

Electronics Is Fun

<https://electronicsisfun.com>

GGs Data

<http://www.ggsdata.se>

My Amiga Shop

<https://shop.myamigashop.com>

Relec

<http://www.relec.ch/fr>

RetroAMI

<https://retroami.com.pl>

Retro Passion

<https://www.retropassion.co.uk>

Retro Ready

<https://retroready.one>

Sell My Retro

<https://www.sellmyretro.com>

Retro Rewind

<https://retrorewind.ca>

Sordan

<https://sordan.ie>

Tindie

<https://www.tindie.com>

Vesalia

<https://www.vesalia.de>

#Amiga Vendor Links - WhatIFF? Issue 2.09 - March 2023#

Welcome to the Amiga Groups section!

Amiga Group Links

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*****
*                                     *
*   United Kingdom United States Canada Germany Sweden
*                                     *
*   France Belgium Czech Republic Denmark Finland
*                                     *
*   Australia Russia Ireland Scotland Malta Japan
*                                     *
*****
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#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

uk

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Amiga Group Links

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United Kingdom

Amiga North Thame

<http://www.amiganorththames.co.uk/>

Birmingham Amiga Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BhamAmigaGroup/>

LINCS Amiga Group (LAG)

<http://lincsamiga.org.uk/>

Norwich Amiga Group

<https://norwichamigagroup.co.uk/>

North West Amiga User Group

<http://www.bambi-amiga.co.uk/spudmiga/nwag/index.html>

South West Amiga Group

<http://www.southwestamiga.org.uk/>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

usa

Amiga Group Links

USA

Sacramento Amiga Computer Club
<http://www.sacc.org/>

Central Texas Amiga Computer Society
<http://main.org/ctacs>

Central New York Amiga Computing Enthusiasts
<https://www.meetup.com/CNY-Amiga-Computing-Enthusiasts>

Central Texas Commodore Users Group
<https://www.meetup.com/Central-Texas-Commodore-Users-Group/>

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club
<http://www.amigamccc.org/>

Southern California Commodore and Amiga Network
<http://www.portcommodore.com/dokuwiki/doku.php?id=sccan:start>

Fresno Commodore User Group
<http://www.dickestel.com/fcug.htm>

Westchester Amiga User Group
<http://www.westchesteramigausergroup.org/>

Amiga Computer Users Long Island
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/202303702519>

Southeast Amiga User Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SoutheastAmigaUserGroup/>

Stamford Peterborough Amiga Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/spaguk>

The Other Group of Amigoids
<http://togausergroup.org/>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

canada

Amiga Group Links

Canada

Amiga Computer Users of Edmonton
<http://www.amicue.org>

Amiga Users of Calgary
<http://www.amuc.ab.ca>

Toronto PET Users Group (TPUG)
<http://www.tpug.ca>

* Started in 1979, TPUG is also the operator of the annual World
of Commodore computer show.

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

germany

Amiga Group Links

Germany

AUCB Treffen

<http://www.amigaclub-bautzen.de/>

Amiga Club Munster

<http://acmuenster.de/>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

sweden

Amiga Group Links

Sweden

Swedish User Group of Amiga
<http://suga.se/>

Amiga Computer Group
<http://www.amiga-cg.se/>

Syntax Society
<http://www.syntaxsociety.se/>

france

Amiga Group Links

France
Triple
<http://www.triplea.fr/>

AFLE
<http://afle.free.fr/>

AmigaPower
<http://www.amigapower.net/>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

belgium

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Amiga Group Links

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Belgium

Belgian Amiga Clubâ€™<http://www.amigaclub.be/>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

czech

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Amiga Group Links

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Czech Republic

Luky & Amiga Klub Forever + Czech PowerPC User Group
<http://powerpc.lukysoft.cz>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

denmark

Amiga Group Links

Denmark

Amiga Club Denmark
<http://www.amigaclubdanmark.dk/>

Danish Amiga User Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/101927439851660>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

finland

Amiga Group Links

Finland

Finnish Amiga Users Group
<http://saku.amigafin.org/>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

australia

Amiga Group Links

Australia

Sydney Amiga Users Group
<http://www.saug.org.au>

Amiga Users Group
<https://www.amiga.net.au/>

MAUG
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MAUGr/>

Perth Amiga User Group (PAUG)
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/perthamigausergroup/>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

russia

Amiga Group Links

Russia

Amiga Information Center (AIC)
<http://amiga.org.ru>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

ireland

Amiga Group Links

Ireland

Amiga Ireland Meetup
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/amigaireland>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

scotland

Amiga Group Links

Scotland

Scottish Amiga User Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/626138110921245>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

malta

Amiga Group Links

Malta

Amiga Malta

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/amigamalta>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

japan

Amiga Group Links

Japan

Commodore / Amiga Fan Club Japan
<http://cfc.amiga.co.jp/>

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF?#

#Amiga Group Links - WhatIFF? Issue 2.09 - March 2023#

Invent's Corner

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Invent's Corner - by: Kevin Saunders

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Welcome to 2023 and we are already in March, where does all the time go :)

KillerWatt C64 - Amiga Port

I have decided to put some focus into KillerWatt game for the Amiga Port, hopefully by June the asset pack will be released. Rather than me coding (scorpion engine) the game myself will make all the assets available online to anyone who wants to give it a go.Â Killerwatt is only available for C64 - www.mobygames.com/game/65310/killer-watt/ at the moment, and im keen on seeing more ports coming to the Amiga.

Boss Machine

Boss Machine is making slow but steady progress, updates are always on my Patreon Blog, The latest post was a new boss enemy and shows the breakdown of the 5 stages of destruction, the various weapons and move patterns. This particular design is all pixel art. What you will also notice is the new colour palette for the Segitarious Level enemies. I plan to post another update within the month (more enemies and fine tuning some background art)

Amiga Art in 2023

If you often visit the Facebook group - Amigaartwork, Doug/10Marc has recently started a new challenge using one of the less common Amiga modes. The screen mode is for any ECS Amiga.

Super-HiRes Laced
1280x400 @ 60Hz (NTSC)
1280x512 @ 50Hz (PAL)
6 bit color depth (64 colors) up to 4 colors

A few people have posted some very interesting 4 colour Super-HiRes Laced image, well worth a visit.

LINK:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/amigaartwork>

Amiga Screenmodes Link:
<https://amiga.lychesis.net/knowledge/ScreenModes.html?>

On my todo list this year I plan on creating a promo video for this year's Amiga Art Contest.

Apollo-X (for Vampire Amigas)

Work also continues on the shoot em up Apollo-X. We are working on a second tech demo that is of the resolution of 848x480 with two layers of parallax. I have made some good progress with two level ideas and the plan is to have another working tech demo in the next month. From there we will do a few tests to see how much we can push the hardware, this will include things like bullet hell scenarios, two player support and various enemy types.

Well that's it for this issue.

Take Care,
Kev | Invent

What's coming up in the next issue?

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Next Issue - 2.10 June 2023

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Thank you for having joined us for another issue of WhatIFF?, I hope you enjoyed the content this issue. From this issue on we will be coming out every three months, giving more time for the writers to contribute. In the next issue we have several hardware reviews planned namely, the HID2AMiv2 mouse adapter, the A314-cp, Commotron Gamepad Turbo 2000 Super and the book How Synthesizers Work: A Simple Guide. This is only the fraction of the coming content, expect new interviews and guides to help you use your Amiga in better and more exciting ways.

#Next Issue - WhatIFF? Issue 2.09 - March 2023#

Meet the writing staff of WhatIFF?

Writing Staff

WhatIFF? is an independent magazine created by Amiga enthusiasts from around the world looking for a more serious magazine. The main writers at the moment are a small group but hope to grow in coming issues.

* Main Writing Staff *

Ivan Sorensen

John Scolieri

Kevin Saunders

Rob O'Malley

Steve Lord

Timo Paul

We are always interested in new articles, guides or stories, if you have something you wish to submit please send it to:
submissions@whatiff.info

#Writing Staff - WhatIFF? Issue 2.09 - March 2023#

timopaul

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amifan (EAB)

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www.binarybeats.xyz

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Bio:

My journey with the Amiga started in either '87/'88 when the family got an A500 (Back then it was a computer for the whole family), I remember the monitor and A500 boxes almost being as high as myself. Before this time I had only been exposed to the ZX Spectrum and C64, using the blue Workbench for the first time was an amazing experience. When I saw DigiPaint in action I could not believe my eyes. From that moment I was a devoted Amiga user going through various Amigas, A500+A570, A600, A3000 and A1200. Over the years my Amiga has been used to creating digital artwork and for making or shall I say trying to make music. Then in the year 2021 I decided for some crazy reason that the Amiga scene needed a digital magazine similar to Amiga Report. It was my intention to have something that picked up where the great Amiga magazines such as Amiga World and Amazing Computing left off, providing a more serious look at Amiga usage through tutorials and reviews.

stevelord

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Name: Steve Lord

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stevelord (EAB)

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www.thedorkweb.substack.com

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Bio:

Steve enjoys doing impossible things on his Amiga 4000 and CDTV. Whether it's using his CDTV for email, playing Internet radio through his bluetooth speakers from his Amiga 4000, or talking to the world via the ISS from either. If people say the Amiga couldn't do it, he's probably looking for a way to do it. Steve writes his WhatIFF articles mostly using Arnor ProText.

johnscolieri

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Name: John Scolieri
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Aliases:

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mancave-ramblings.blogspot.com

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Bio:

Like many Amiga users my first computer addiction was the mighty Commodore 64! One day close to Christmas of 1986 I drove to my local Commodore store called Comspec...I was in high school and played rep hockey at the time and didn't have the time I used to when I was in grade school to visit Comspec each weekend to check out the latest magazine and games. Imagine my surprise when I stepped into the store and immediately in front of me was THE AMIGA! It was looping the Defender of The Crown intro and I fell in love instantly! From that day on it was my mission to buy that Amiga but I had just worked a few part time jobs to help pay for my first ever used car and didn't have a hundred bucks to my name lol. The Amiga was close to \$2,000 Canadian dollars (after taxes) and unlike my C64 my parents didn't fall for the 'I need it for school' rant again.

To (try) to make a very long story short I didn't save up to buy my Amiga until I started University in 1989. In the mean time I saw another Amiga called the Amiga 500 at Comspec and it was a lot cheaper than THE AMIGA but my eyes and heart and soul were only set on THE AMIGA! When I finally bought it that was the proudest/happiest moment I've ever felt and I jumped straight into University with Excellence! word processor and Logistix spreadsheet/ database. In my 2nd year I bought my first ever hard drive, a whopping 33MB which had its own case which sat atop my Amiga 1000 case. Later fast ram side cars showed up and I mingled with Manx Aztec C compiler in computer science class. Of course all the great games with awesome music/sound effects made my Apple/PC friends envious!

By my 3rd year we had a small Amiga computer club and a few of us got our first accelerator boards for our Amiga which was called LUCAS and was based on a design in a Transactor magazine. It had a 68020 at 16 MHz with FPU on it and it really helped out with the more complicated spreadsheets and compiling programs. Life was good, the internet was just starting up, I graduated University and got my first full time job and then the bad news of Commodore going bankrupt hit the newspapers, magazines, and BBS boards! There was so much activity going on still in user groups and computer stores so us Amiga users just figured that it would sort itself out. At work there were only PC's running AutoCAD and I despised using the early Windows systems and couldn't wait to get back home to my Amiga. Over the years busy with work and 'adult life' many of my Amiga friends moved on to PCs and I ended up getting my first Amiga 1200 and later Amiga 4000 for great prices. I was still amazed how the Amiga community was still active and so helpful up to the early 2000's. By then I was married and working harder than ever to save up to buy a home instead of

renting an apartment and my Amiga's were left at my parents house until around 2010 or so I read about a brand new Amiga which was coming out based on PPC CPU called the AmigaONE X1000 running a new AmigaOS4. I was skeptical at first after hearing about the technical issues with the earlier SE, XE boards with the initial AmigaOS4 release but after consulting with some friends I joined the beta test team to get one of the first X1000 boards and I immediately felt at home with AmigaOS4.1 and have used it as my home Amiga ever since. Once I got some space set up in my house I got my Amiga's out of my parents house finally and eventually my original Amiga 1000 sits next to my AmigaONE X1000 and original C64 and of course my Amiga 1200 and 4000 came along too and with new accelerator cards and ram boards and spare motherboards and parts etc etc etc. Here I am today grateful to the Amiga computer and especially to the amazing Amiga community who back then and today has always been resilient, creative and helpful !

kevinsaunders

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Name:	Kevin Saunders
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www.youtube.com/KevinSaunders
www.twitter.com/invent71
www.instagram.com/invent71/
www.ko-fi.com/kevinsaunders

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Bio:

My journey with the Amiga started around 1988, The first time seeing the Amiga 1000 in the shop window playing animations such as the Amiga Juggler I fondly remember. My Brother and I saved up for an A500, and eventually bought an A4000 (cybervision 64 card) and then an A1200 with an 030 accelerator. I loved collecting every Amiga Magazine with demo disks. My interest in game designing for the Amiga started with deluxe paint and I did dabble with The Miracle Keyboard but that skill in music didn't last. It is because of the Amiga that I now work in video animation and game design.

ivansorensen

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Name: Ivan Sorensen
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Weasel Fierce

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Websites:
everydayamiga.posthaven.com

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Bio:

Danish Amiga fan since the 90s. Started with a 1200 and a 1200 is my machine today. I am interested in the casual and the philosophical aspects of the Amiga computer.

My cats enjoy Turrican.

robomalley

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Name: Rob O'Malley

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Aliases:
anaki rob
Mr.Roboto

Contact info:
anakirob@whatiff.info

Websites:
systemofsound.org

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Bio:

Rob has been making music on Amiga ever since in the mid to late 90's his guitar teacher suggested that he get a drum machine to practice along to, and he instead opted to use OctaMED on his Amiga 500+ with A590 to craft beats and basslines

Favourite quote:

'...all she wanted to do was play with my ears all night' :P

danielreimann

Name: Daniel Reimann

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Websites: Translator for www.amiga-news.de

