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WhatIFF? Issue 3.13 April 2024

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Welcome to WhatIFF?

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-# WhatIFF? - Issue 3.13 - April 2024 #-

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

A few words from the editor and meet the writers of WhatIFF?

---SHELL TALK--- -----TALK BACK-----

Shell Talk: WhatIFF? equivalent of a soapbox and readers letters.
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.

-ADVERTISEMENTS-

Vendor advertisements and more.

-INVENTS CORNER- ---COVER DISK---

Get the latest from Kevin and find out whats on this issue's coverdisk.

NEXT ISSUE *All content copyright of the respective authors 2024*

From The Editor's Desk

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From The Editor's Desk - by: Timo Paul

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Welcome to issue 13 of WhatIFF?, I apologise for the late publishing date but as of 2024 we will be reducing the schedule from every three months to every four months. This is due to the magazine being made completely by people giving up their free time to write about our favourite computer and to allow people more time to finish articles. Hopefully this will also allow us to pack more content and give more time for proof reading as I have had to upload numerous times a new version of the file due to finding writing errors, fingers crossed this issue will fare better.

As I write this the Cherry Blossoms are starting to bloom here and the air is becoming warm as Spring slowly joins us. I would like to thank all the writers who have contributed to this issue, regulars and new. We are privileged to have Andy Vaisey join the writing staff and he starts this issue with an article on game graphics and what not to do. John Scolieri has written about his experience with the Rejuvenator and also interviewed Simone Beivalacqua. In addition there are interviews with Massimo the developer of NEONnoir, 8080 developer of The Deep and Dice Masters for the next generation Amigas. Continuing the next generation theme we also have an interview with Willem, who works on the ApolloBoot and conversion of the Robin Hood game to V4 systems.

There is so much more, with articles for regulars such as Ivan, providing us with his experiences of trying old games again. We also have some guest contributions from Jman who was inspired by the learning difficulties article from last issue. Overall it is a packed issue and I hope you will enjoy reading it. If you have any suggestions or corrections then as usual please contact us at: submissions@whatiff.info

Letters From WhatIFF? Readers

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Talk Back: Letters From WhatIFF? Readers January-March 2024

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Welcome to Talk Back, the section of the magazine where we publish a select few of the letters that we receive. Thank you to everyone who has written in and those who have gone on to write articles for the magazine. We always welcome any written contributions to the magazine. Wveryone has a unique perspective and Amiga story to tell. If you wish to write to the magazine or contribute then please contact us at: submissions@whatiff.info

Date: Wed, 13 Dec 2023

Subject: Thoughts on "Amiga Through the Lens of an LD Learner"

Hi,

I am reading the issue of December of WhatIFF with great interest.

Reading your article about LD people finding themselves at ease with a retrocomputer is really interesting, it's a perspective I never imagined.

After writing this email, I thought that with a few touches it could be turned into an article for WhatIFF but up to you to decide. For now it's just a thank you email for your work :)

Your article reminded of a post on Mastodon quoting an article of another Swedish oldtime Amiga user:

=> <https://merveilles.town/@neauoire/111517890274195985>

The article in question:

=> <https://www.datagubbe.se/30yearcomp/>

I see a parallel with your article and the one I mention. Computing with an Amiga is a less stressful experience both because less distracting and because is "cristallized" in time.

I think it's great fun and exciting observing the wave of new hardware which basically replace the stock chipset with powerhouses at the time not even conceivable. But running Dark Forces on a Vampire is just flexing muscles. An Amiga with a 030 can provide a calm computing experience without trying too hard imagining the "what if" scenario where the platform had a future.

I want to try exploring this "calm computing" experience again. For example, while I am writing this email I am listening to one of your tracks on binarybeats and checking my phone notifications. That's not the kind of calm computing that it was in the Nineties.

Note: if you look up "calm computing" or "calm technology" you'll find definitions that in principle overlap partially with what is meant here. I'm just borrowing and distorting this term for the sake of this email.

I want to get in touch with the Amiga again and discover what this machine can do. Explore it with calm, at its pace without benchmarks or frame per second anxiety. I want to learn a bit of React+ programming on AmigaOS 3.2, I want to learn how to write an AmigaGuide file, I want to make a presentation with Scala400, I want to write a bit of that lisp dialect to write an Installer script. All offline, just with books and guides by my side and hopefully not needing too open to often the browser on the modern machine I am using right now.

It's a kind of isolation that I hope will teach me a kind of computing that is lost today.

An universal installer tool for software? Check.
Programming languages both low and high level? Check.
GUI Programming? Check.
Productivity software? You betcha.
Multimedia capabilities? Entertainment? IPC communication? Scripting engine to connect different applications (ARexx)? Hell yes.

That's common knowledge.

Conscious of its limits, of course. I won't make it look like that an Amiga can do everything I do today. Even pushed over its limits with modern peripherals, an Amiga offers today a subpar experience (imo).

But it's important to touch with hands that everything we have today was already available at the time. I want to make the point that the future was here 35 years ago and in some cases we've been just reinventing the wheel over and over again for small increments in quality.

To be fair, a few things are for me sorely missing compared to the modern computing experience I am used to. Access to the wealth of information of the modern web and a CLI-first user interface (I am spoiled by years of using Linux and AmigaDOS is a joke in comparison).

Certainly I won't power up my Amiga just to take photos of it or run Sysinfo and laugh at the "CALL ME NOW!!!!" bench result. My Amiga is not the old car to be used on Sundays for a short ride and then spending the rest of the day shining it with a cloth.

For now I am enjoying WhatIFF on an emulator, soon I hope I have my Amiga repaired and can enjoy the zine the way it's supposed to be.

Thanks for reading my thoughts, have a nice week!

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Date: 15 Dec 2023
Subject: You guys are a great find!

I LOVE what you are doing with WhatIFF?!
I am an old die-hard C64/128 user since my teenage years of the 80s, and I got my first Amiga in 2023. What a learning curve these are!! I'm still in a very new phase and came across your magazine last night, reading issue 12. Now I'm starting Issue 1 and working my way up.

Thank you for your devotion to such a great computer, cause, and the people behind it. Really awesome.

I work with the guy that runs telnetbbs guide and will have to let him know you gave the shoutout on your review for gurumodem!

Warm regards,
Mike / King Geroqe, VA

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Date: Sun, 31 Mar 2024
Subject: xT Accerator and PiggyBackNot! V3

Hi there,

First up, thanks so much for WhatIFF? An online Amiga Guide creative user mag is such a cool idea and much appreciated :)

Having just received and set up the previously reviewed PiggyBackNot! V3

and the upcoming xT turbo card on my own A600 (rev 2D) I thought I would share my thoughts in a brief ramble. Both are really useful and fairly affordable solutions and should be a decent upgrade for any A600 owner looking to give their system a bit more utility.

xT turbo

Hardware:

The xT turbo card offers a nice little speed increase bringing the A600 to around the same performance as an A1200 with fast ram. Build quality is good and it was easy to fit although it seems to angle up a little bit and the socket over the CPU doesn't sit flush on the right (closest the trapdoor) edge. Workbench saw the extra 8MB fast ram and SysInfo reports just over 28mhz as expected and the new CPU (20mhz overclocked by 40% to 28mhz) runs around 40 deg C which is not bad. The Xilinx CPLD runs a bit cooler. Small heatsinks from a Raspberry Pi could be added if you had concerns. One surprise was the original CPU was up around 50 deg C which I thought was odd because surely it should be disconnected from the bus after the BR/BG/BGACK handshake with the accelerator. Perhaps not, I'm not an electronics engineer but I would have expected the original CPU to be idle and thus cool. Even so stability was not affected and the A600 performed just fine for several hours, maybe I should clean the contacts and reseal the accelerator to see if that helps.

Software:

The Santool command line utility was easy to use, just put it in C, one of the first things to do would be to add *RUN >NIL: santool shadowromon* to your startup-sequence to increase harddisk access speeds, my set up went from 680 KB to 1.5 MB per second. Other commands allow you to enable/disable PCMCIA access, swap DF0: and DF1: and even MapROM. You can add more memory (3MB) with "santool moremem" and bring your total installed ram up to 13MB! Santool is basic but comparable to Furitune and does the job. One thing I did like was being able to turn on PCMCIA access and still use moremem to get 9MB (4 fast, 2 chip, 3 other) of total memory and PCMCIA slot use. Being productive and having use of my CF-PCMCIA adapter was really appreciated.

PiggyBackNot! V3

Hardware:

The board is well designed and I had no problems fitting it, a little snug but it's making good use of the limited space in the A600 trapdoor. Attaching the ribbon cable for the Denise adapter was easy enough just use care and not too much force on the little latch. Fitting the adapter socket to the Denise chip required a little bit of pressure but it clicked into place nicely. Adding the Raspberry Pi Zero and a RTC board to the clock header didn't give me issues and after adding the latest RGB2HDMI files to the Pi's SD card and turning on everything "just worked". Kind of... The clock and ram worked and while I did get the Amiga's video out over HDMI it wasn't configurable at all.

Software..?

Now... There is no software as such for the PiggyBackNot! V3, RGB2HDMI works fine and the install and even Pi I used here work fine in other Amigas using LinuxJedi's adapter boards. However... My HDMI output had an odd palette with blacks displayed as a dark blue and Workbench looking very washed out. No problem let's just change the settings... Nope, I can't get it into One Button Mode. No amount of re-flashing, editing the default profile, re-seating, checking the connections, nothing! The CPLD on the PiggyBackNot! V3 just won't accept any changes at all, as if it has some unchangeable defaults. After several hours of messing about and trying different (and known working) Pis and SD cards

I called it a day. I'm no stranger to RGB2HDMI and I have to wonder if there's a fault with my PiggyBackNot! V3, indeed one of the surface mount capacitors (C11) seems to be rotated 45 degrees from one of its pads and not connected. Also this board does not have the usual XC9572XL CPLD (1600 gates) chip but a different (though perhaps compatible) BGA packaged version (R3064XL, 1500 gates) while previous revisions had the XC9536XL - half as many gates. I'm going to get in touch with Piotr at Archi-TECH and see what he thinks.

I also recently had a lot of fun with a TF536, RGB2HDMI and AmigaStore.eu's 2MB expansion and the logistics of fitting it all in. If you're interested?

Martyn

Free For All About Anything

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Shell Talk - by: Rob O`Malley
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I have heard many people say that the first profession practised by mankind was prostitution, although I would contend that there obviously must have been another profession being practised around the same time in our pre-history or else what would these cave-man hookers be trading their services for? But surely around the same ancient times as the only real career options for a member of the species that would one-day come to be known as homo-sapiens, were hunter, gatherer or whore. Some lazy and dishonest individual must have thought to themselves in their primitive tongue: "would it not be great if I did not have to risk my life hunting, wear my fingers to the bone gathering what might only be a handful of nuts and berries, or fake genuine intimacy with members of my tribe that I don't particularly care for? There must be a better way!" and so following immediately after this thought all those millenia ago, the profession of confidence-artist was also conceived.

Well they must've realised that chasing mammoths with sharpened sticks, scavenging for berries or voluntarily placing themselves into compromising positions weren't exactly dream jobs. Well, in this column I want to share a close encounter I recently had with a modern-day version of that very same grifter, and let me tell you, it almost bloody worked on me so unprepared I was for this scam which I believe to be so new to our culture, emerging simultaneously with complex generative AI image creation tools, that it does not even have an instantly recognisable name that I am aware of like other more well-known scams such as the Ponzi scheme, pyramid schemes, catfishing, the Nigerian prince, pig fattening or good old fashioned phishing among other dishonest ways of encouraging suckers to part with their money.

Well, one day I received a facebook message from a random, unknown facebook user which reads as follows: ?Hello, Are you looking for a professional comic and manga artist, my service ranges from comic pages(pencil, ink, colour), character designs, concept art, cartoons, cover pages, interior pages, illustrations and many others. Thought you'd need an artist. Can I show you my previous works??. Now normally I might just ignore a message from a random unknown Facebook user [red flag count=1], but as it just so happened to be at the time I have recently commenced work on an Amiga game for which I also just so happen to require some assistance with graphics assets, and I had made a couple of post on said social-media platform saying as much. So I did not think this message was anything out of the ordinary.

I responded to this users query in the affirmative, and before too long we were chatting about my projects requirements. Now although they offered to show me some of their previous works in the introductory message, when I inquired about where I might find some examples of their artwork I was informed that the only place I could see examples of their style was their Facebook page [red flag count=2], which only had two, admittedly seemingly well done examples of hand-drawn traditional western style comic art. After a couple of perfunctory questions regarding what I might require, discussion very quickly moved onto my budget, such as how much I could afford to pay and when. And it just so happened that the amount I was budgeting for this project was exactly the amount that this ?artist? was asking to produce the desired artwork [red flag count=3]. No itemised quotes for each individual component of the project, no in-depth questions about required image format, no interest in my project whatsoever beyond the afore mentioned budget and timeframe [red flag count=4]. Also, they informed me that they would not be commencing work on this until they had received payment of the agreed amount in full.

Now I had never commissioned visual art over the internet before at that point in time, and I have since come to learn that a genuine visual artist might be quite willing to provide some simple sketches and or examples of previous works for other clients to show how well they understand what it is that I might be looking for and their ability to deliver satisfactory results, needless to say I got none of this from the ?artist? who had contacted me out of the blue [red flag count=5] who as I mentioned seemed only interested in what I could pay them and when.

Well the date I had told them I would have funds arrived, and right on schedule they messaged me to remind me that I was interested in having some artwork commissioned for my project. Now sadly I had been experiencing some difficulties in my life, such as my main PC failing to work anymore, in the period between when I last communicated with them and this latest communique. And I informed them that this was the case. Well that`s where their tone changed to being quite aggressive, demanding payment, reminding me that I had promised to pay a certain sum, which incidentally I had not actually ?promised? anything but simply agreed that we would enter further discussions when the time came. [red flag count=6]

Also, I had just commenced communications with another visual artist, someone whom I could confirm to be genuine, and when I informed this first individual of this they kinda lost their cool, feigning incredulity at my assertions that with them I had no idea what I might be getting for my money where the genuine artist has many examples of their work and I would have a good idea what I might get for my money. Also asserting that they were in fact capable of doing the best job, despite providing no evidence, and of course reiterating their demands for payment.

Needless to say by this point I had run out of patience, did not appreciate being spoken to in a disrespectful manner, and quickly removed them from my friends list and blocked them across all platforms where we had previously connected over the preceding time period. And not a moment too soon.

I am not 100% sure what this scammers end-game might have been, but if the comments on the two examples of their artwork on their Facebook profile were anything to go by which read ?Where's my project? Stop asking for more money and work on it. Or refund me!!!? [red flag count=7] I guess that they would have simply taken my money then started asking for more without delivering anything. Best-case scenario is I might have received some images lazily produced by one of the many AI image generation tools which I could have probably achieved better results myself. Indeed upon closer examination of the two pieces of artwork on their profile page these were almost certainly produced this way, with some wonky, unnatural anatomical features and other such details which might only be apparent if one were actually looking for them.

Anyway I am not proud to admit that I almost fell for this ruse, coming very close to sending them money before I explained the whole situation to a personal friend who happened to be visiting at the time and was informed that the whole thing sounded a bit dodgy. And I hope that this article might serve as a warning for anyone else out there who might find themselves in a position where they too might be vulnerable to a commission-based confidence scheme.

Finally I might offer the advice that if you are in the need to commission any creative talents there are services such as Fiverr dot com which have many genuine verifiable artists on their platform. Or there is word of mouth, such as asking someone who has developed a project you like about the availability of the talent that did the work for them, and whatever you do, DO NOT engage with random ?artists? cold-contacting you, as probably the only artform they intend to practise is the art of the grift.

Welcome to the reviews section!

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-= R E V I E W S =-----

-= Hardware Review: xT Amiga 600 Accelerator =-

Viewed as the smallest Amiga 600 accelerator, we take a look at the tiny 68EC020 accelerator and see how it stacks up against the competition.

-= Hardware Review: Open Amiga Sampler =-

Occasionally on sale and easy to build, does the Open Amiga Sampler make the original generation of samplers irrelevant?

-= Hardware Review: Apollo Computer V4+ Standalone =-

What really is the V4+ Standalone and is it truly the next generation in Amiga that we were hoping for back in 1994.

-= Software Review: RNOXfer =-

Modern FTP transfer software has been scarce for the classic Amigas but the RNO developer comes to the rescue with a modern FTP client for OS4, MorphOS and Classic Amigas.

-= Software Reviews: Aminet Goodies =-

Aminet top selection, each issue will feature a different contributor.

#Reviews - WhatIFF? Issue 3.13 - April 2024#

Hardware review: xT Accelerator for the A600

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Hardware Review:xT Accelerator for the A600 - by Timo Paul

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Product Name
xT Turbo Card

Developed By
R.G. Chyla (Sanjyuu)

Available From
amiga-shop.net
amigstore.eu
retropassion.co.uk
progmamatory.archi-tech.pl

Price
79 USD

Hardware/Software Requirements
Amiga 600

Test Machine
Amiga 600/3.1/RGB2HDMI PiggyBackNot

Review

Last issue we had a look at the very powerful but flawed Furia card, a card that has a lot of potential but also suffers from hardware compatibility issues. However the Furia is not the only card on the market, there are the A630 and the Vampire series, however, both are quite pricy putting them out of the range of users who are not flush with the cash. The xT Turbo Card comes in at a very reasonable 79 USD approx. and offers some great features for the price.

The features are:

- * CPU: MC68SEC000AA20/28MHz
- * RAM: 11MB (8MB FAST + 1.5MB SLOW + 1.5MB OTHER MEM)
- * EXTRAS: MapROM, ShadowROM, CLI Setup, 4MB PCMCIA Compatible Mode DF0/DF1 Swap/BootSelector

As you can see you get some very nice features, I was originally tripped up with the CPU and was under the impression it was a 020 so when I first tried the card and saw SysInfo showing a 680000 I thought my card was broken. However after a second reading of the card details I understood it being a 28MHz 68000 CPU.

First Impressions

The first thing you notice when you get the card is how tiny it is, the photos on the website do not give justice to the size of the card. It has a very clean design and snaps over the existing CPU very firmly. I did not notice any wobble even after I had to remove it a few times. The card is built so it does not take much space above the A600 CPU, allowing space for a standard RGB2HDMI adapter. If you have a Vampire, Furia or A630 these cards will take up far more room in the A600 case. It is important to mention that if you wish to use the PCMCIA slot with the xT then install the SANTOOL file to your C directory before installing the card otherwise you will need to remove it again.

SANTOOL can be downloaded from here:

=> <https://wiki.archi-tech.com/pl/pliki.santool.zip>

The SANTOOL goes beyond just PCMCIA compatibility it can also help boost the speed of your A600. With the card installed and the SANTOOL settings at default, the A600 gets a moderate speed boost, but you will not notice much in the Workbench. However if you turn on ShadowROM which copies the Kickstart into RAM you will see a considerable increase in speed. Just to give you an idea of the speed increase, below is a chart showing SysInfo disk speed with ShadowROM off and on.

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	ShadowROM OFF	ShadowROM ON	
-----+-----+-----			
MFlops	2.99	3.05	
Disk Speed	928,491 bytes/sec	1,702,233 bytes/sec	

With ShadowROM set to ON, the improvement is immediate after reboot, Workbench pops up much faster, icons appear quickly and the whole system feels much smoother and faster. It is also possible to add the SANTOOL options into the startup-sequence however I encountered some issues with PCMCIA compatibility. I finally ended up having ShadowROM and MOREMEM in the startup-sequence but I left PCMCIA to be added manually. You will need to reboot for the PCMCIA to take effect though. There might be another way to have MOREMEM and PCMCIA ON in the startup sequence but even with the way I have it set up now, it is a very convenient and easy way to get PCMCIA access without losing too much memory. It is a much better system than the cards that require you to open your Amiga and move a jumper.

In Use

I will state first that if you are looking for a card to play Doom or some heavy-duty 3D game then this is not the card for you. However, if you are looking for something that will boost your A600 and make Workbench feel a lot faster then this is a good option. Loading programs are much faster, unpacking files took less time and even graphics speed was improved. DPaint and Brilliance are much smoother and nicer experiences with the xT. Overall I did not have any issues playing games, however, I did not play a large selection of games, to be honest.

With the extra memory and speed, I was interested in how well the A600 would handle ADFs. Using ImageMount was a very pleasant experience and I noticed a good speed improvement over the stock A600. In the chart below I used DPaint IV, the screen was set to PAL HAM and a 45-degree default gradient fill was used. Taking into consideration that the timing was done with a stop watch and there might be one-second difference between the two, the time difference was quite large.

DPaint HAM Mode Gradient Fill Speed Test

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	Standard A600	A600 with xT	
-----+-----+-----			
Fill Time	4 min 16 sec	1 min 3 sec	

The above results illustrate well how much of a speed boost you will get from the xT Turbo Card. While it does not give you roadrunner speeds you get from a Furia, A630, PiStorm or Vampire, it sits nicely at the lower end of the price range with a solid set of options.

Final Thoughts

If you are looking for a card that is easy to install, will allow you the option of adding a video adapter, has good compatibility and gives your A600 a decent speed boost then you need not look beyond the xT Turbo Card.

I was not looking to spend a small fortune on my A600 and while the PiStorm is around the same price I like the idea of having a 'real' CPU in my A600. This card went beyond my expectations so far as to have made the A600 my go-to Amiga now.

With the extra speed and memory, you can play WHDLoad games but also Workbench and graphic work become a smoother and more pleasant experience. If you can find one on sale, grab it now as these cards seem to go out of stock rather quickly.

Hardware review: Open Amiga Sampler

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Hardware Review: Open Amiga Sampler - by Timo Paul

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Product Name
Open Amiga Sampler

Developed By
Brendan O'Callaghan Ratliff

Available From
eBay
www.lectronz.com

Price
25-50 GBP

Hardware/Software Requirements
None

Test Machine
Amiga 1200/3.2 and Amiga 600/3.1

Review

If you were an Amiga user in its heyday it is likely you probably owned an audio sampler as they were cheap and easily available. Fast forward to 2024 and the availability of the Amiga compatible samplers has dwindled with the prices of original generation hardware skyrocketing. In 2020 the files to build the sampler were put into GitHub, as a result, enterprising builders started to sell pre-built kits, some without a case and others with fully 3D printed cases and labels.

For this review, I will be working with Tony Horgan and writing about our experiences of trying to build one to purchasing a pre-build one.

Building Your Own

The information to build your own OAS is available from GitHub at:

=> <https://github.com/echolevel/open-amiga-sampler>

It has all the necessary files that you need to begin your build, the first step was to download the PCB layout files in KiKAD format which then need to be converted into Gerber files. I did this with KiKAD for the Mac but I believe there is also a PC version if you do not have access to a Mac. It is necessary to convert the files into Gerber format as it is the standard format used by PCB printing companies such as PCBWay. Converting the files to Gerber was very easy for someone like me (i.e. I have no electrical building experience), and it was a simple process of creating an account with PCB Way and then uploading the Gerber files. From there on all I had to do was wait, easy so far!

It took about 2 weeks for the boards to arrive, from here on then I needed to obtain the rest of the parts. The BOM is the following:

- * 1 x Maxim ADC0820CCN+
- * 1 x Microchip MCP6002-I/P
- * 1 x DB25plug connector
- * 2 x RCA Receptables

- * 1 x 330ohm resistor
- * 5 x 1kohm resistors
- * 1 x 10kohm exponential potentiometer
- * 1 x 47uf capacitor
- * 2 x 10uf capacitors
- * 2 x 0.1uf capacitors

It is not a long list and I was able to obtain the ADC0820CCN+ and MCP6002-I/P chips for approximately 5GBP total from Aliexpress however when it came to buying the DB25 plug and resistors the prices jumped up considerably. In most cases you had to buy in bulk and as I was planning to only build one this was growing over my budget. While I searched for another source of parts I soldered the two chips that I had. Thanks to the layout of the board this was an easy process and I believe even those with minimal soldering experience will not have problems putting the board together. Finding the extra parts might be more difficult, though I must mention that I am located in Japan and was looking online for most of the parts, shipping costs are probably higher than for those in the States or Europe.

There are places in Tokyo where you can buy the parts but for some reason the parts listed on the BOM were quite expensive coming in at over 60GBP for just the parts which defeated the purpose of building my own. At the time of writing this article the board still sits half-built with the remaining parts not found yet.

I would have to conclude that while building the board is a relatively easy exercise finding the parts might prove more difficult if you are not experienced with buying and building electronics. If you still wish to build your own it would pay to ask someone who has electrical building experience to aid you when buying the parts.

Buying Pre-Built

Since my experiment with building my own AOS did not quite pan out as I had hoped there was still the option of buying a pre-built unit. I was lucky in this instance as Tony Horgan was also on the outlook for one so we both bought the same card from an eBay seller and I also bought another one from an online Amiga store.

The one from eBay had no case and the online store version came with a case and laminated stickers. I paid between 40GBP for the former and 70GBP for the latter, while the prices are not as low as I had hoped they are still cheaper than the OG sampler prices that are going around at the moment.

Both boards are very compact, they have two RCA inputs though the sampler is mono, and the stereo signal is combined into a monaural signal by the sampler. The AD (analogue to digital) chip is a Maxim ADC0820CCN+, the only other chip on the board is an MCP6002-I/P, and the rest of the space is taken up with resistors and capacitors. There is a knob for controlling the input value using a 10kohm exponential potentiometer. I was particularly impressed with the sampler that I got from the private Amiga store, the case did not look 3D printed was put together very solidly and also had professional-looking labels attached. However, we are not here for the looks but for how they sound!

Audio, Audio, Audio!

Before the OAS I was using a DSS8 and Perfect Sound sampler, and will use these two as a reference for the audio quality of the OAS. To begin with, the OAS is compatible with most if not all Amiga audio sampling software, this even includes the DSS8 software. So what do we look for in an Amiga sampler? Taking into consideration the Amiga audio is 8 BIT we do not have as much 'space' to play around with. So it is important to fill the entire sound wave with audio data. If you have an audio sample that is quiet, this will generally induce extra audio artefacts and hiss.

If the Amiga audio was 16 BIT this would be less of an issue, as such it is a rule of thumb when sampling into the Amiga to fill in the entire waveform pattern, or have an as loud as possible audio source so you get a waveform that fills the entire area. With my DSS8 and PerfectSound was possible as can be seen in the following image however when it came to the AOS I found difficulty in achieving a full waveform, there was also an instance of the audio being clipped. This can be seen in this image where at the bottom of the waveform there is a vertical line where the audio just stops. I found this to be the same on both of my AOS samplers and it was also the case with the sampler that Tony Horgan had bought. I have reached out to the sellers to see if they have any ideas why this could be happening but as of writing this article, they have not responded.

If the audio gain is lowered it is possible to get a full waveform but losing half of the audio volume resulting in a very quiet sample. However, there was not as much hiss or distortion as I would have expected with the quieter sample. Comparing the samples from the AOS and DSS8 you can tell the difference easily where the DSS8 sounds louder and fuller. I have been wracking my brains to figure out why the sound is being limited, I tried it with several different sampling software but still had the audio clipping issue.

Final Thoughts

The Amiga Open Source sampler has been a bit of a letdown, I was hoping that it would offer a cheap solution that gave you at least the same quality as the Stereo Master. If this has been an issue with just one board I might have thought it a one-off off but since I had this issue with two boards that I bought and another that Tony Horgan bought it might be something more inherent in the design. As it stands I am not willing to recommend the AOS sampler yet as so far it has demonstrated a lower quality sample than my current hardware.

Hardware Review: Apollo Computer V4+ Standalone

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Hardware Review:Apollo Computer V4+ Standalone - by: Timo Paul

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Product Name
V4+ Standalone

Developed By
Apollo Computer

Available From
www.apollo-computer.com

Price
679 EUR - B.A.S.I.C Bundle

Hardware/Software Requirements
Monitor with HDMI socket

Test Machine
N/A

Review

Few Amiga users forget the promises and excitement that the AAA chipset generated. While we were happy with the advances that AGA brought to the Amiga it was still not on par with what the new PCs and Macs had. As you all know the AAA chipset went down the toilet with the rest of Commodore in 1994 and with it the hopes of ever getting a next-generation Amiga.

A decade later there is news of a new Amiga computer called Natami, that has 24 BIT colour, higher resolutions, 3D graphics, 16 BIT audio and a new version of the 68k processor. I followed the tortured development of the Natami and saved my pennies for when it would be released. Sadly but not uncommon in Amigaland that project also eventually petered out. Or so it had seemed. Around 2019 Apollo Computer appears on the scene offering new accelerator cards with RTG graphics and a new 68k processor, the 68080. This chipset offered much of what Natami promised along with the processor. Similar appearances were not just that because the same team that worked on the Natami created the new Apollo Vampire cards.

It was not until a few years later that the V4 Standalone was released in 2019/2020. This was the first time the Vampire chipset and 68080 were available as a complete computer system, the current version of the V4+SA comes with the following:

Chips: Arne for 16 BIT audio and 16 channels, and Isabel giving us SuperAGA (SAGA) RTG, Trucolour 32-bit with resolutions up to 1920x1080. Anni provides DMA improving on the Alice, bringing about benefits such as 24MB/sec from the FastIDE/CompactFlash controller.

On paper, this sounds just like the modern Amiga system that users were hoping for. In addition, the V4+ Standalone comes in at a lower price point than the PowerPC-based OS4 systems, opening the system up to more users. It was with this in mind that I finally decided to bite the bullet and order one of these fabled systems.

Physical Looks

When first viewing the V4SA, you are surprised by its diminutive size with a height of no more than 10 3.5" floppy disks, it is not an intrusive presence on your desk. You get two DB9 ports and two USB ports on the front

for the mouse and joystick, there are two small LED lights, for power and hard disk access. Looking at the rear, you have a micro USB port for power, A full-size HDMI port, a MicroSD slot, a USB port for the keyboard and a LAN port. It comes in one colour (at the moment), black with the vampire logo in red printed on top. The top cover can be slid off by removing four screws from either the front or back. This gives you access to innards, change the CF drive, add an RTC or use the extra ports on the motherboard. The motherboard is understandably sparse since the CPU, graphics, audio and DMA chips are all contained in a single FPGA.

My V4SA came with a Vampire-branded USB mouse and generic USB controller, there is an option to buy a Vampire branded keyboard but it is only available in a German layout, so I went for a US gaming keyboard. It took no time to get everything plugged in and set up, the power cord has a power switch which is close to the V4SA.

The first thing that struck me when I turned it on was how fast it booted. Bang! It must have been only 3-4 seconds and I was in Apollo OS. Apollo OS is the official OS for the Vampire series of computers and is a 68K fork of AROS. By default, it booted into a 1280x720 24BIT screen which looked very nice on my monitor. I did encounter some problems with the display on certain monitors, however, if you stick to the most common brands you should not have issues.

Software and Use

As of the time of writing Apollo OS is at R9.4, in its current form it can run some Amiga software but there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to clean up a lot of unnecessary code related to PowerPC and 86. Simple tasks such as changing fonts and the ability to show different screen modes are not fully implemented yet. However it is a work in progress and once the OS is ready it will be the OS to use on a V4, as it is the only OS that supports the AMMX of the 68080.

So with Apollo OS still in development, I turned to Amiga OS 3.2.2 and Coffin OS. They both have all the SAGA drivers but do not take advantage of the faster processing offered by the AMMX. Even though the Amiga experience is very fast and enjoyable in either Coffin or Amiga OS 3.2.2. I must note that I used ApolloBoot to install the mentioned OSs. ApolloBoot is a must for those who want to take advantage of the V4 Standalone. While I am not generally a fan of pre-installed distributions Coffin has proved to be a very useful setup that I use most of the time until Apollo OS is ready for everyday use.

So what is it like to use, well when I first got my V4SA, I had a lot of issues running software, with crashes, freezing and display issues. This was both in Apollo OS and Coffin, however after talking to other users on the Discord channel I updated to a later core and just like that my V4SA became a fully useable Amiga. My criteria for fully useable is an Amiga that I can run my favourite art packages such as Brilliance, Lightwave, Image FX all while multitasking. And wow, multitasking is taken to a whole new level with the V4SA, I can have multiple heavy-duty applications open while experiencing no slowdown or crashes. At this moment I have Lightwave, Brilliance, IMP, YAM, IBrowse, and Protext all open and it is as smooth as butter switching between them. The only delay I get is when switching to Brilliance since it is running in an AGA native PAL Hires Laced, but I think this is more due to my monitor. The picture quality I get in Brilliance and Lightwave is rock solid and very crisp, even better than my Indivision AGA Mk3.

YAM which usually takes quite a while to load up on my A1200 with a TF1260 at 62Mhz is open in under a few seconds on the VASA. While there are a lot of benchmarks showing the speed of the V4SA I did my own, it was done with Lightwave 5 and using the Raytrace.LWS in the Benchmark directory. I used my A1200 which has a TF1260 with a Rev 5 060 at 62Mhz vs the V4SA.

The scene took the following time to render:

A1200 with TF1260
2 hours 31 minutes and 38 seconds

V4SA
1 hour 13 minutes 8 seconds

Just a glance shows that the V4SA took half the time, and what is more impressive is that Lightwave is not optimised for the 68080 and did not take advantage of the AMMX. I imagine we would see a much faster time with an optimised version of Lightwave.

Issues

While I had initial troubles getting my V4SA up and running, the help from the Apollo Discord channel has been incredible. A lot of my issues with the screen modes not showing up and freezing of the computer were fixed by updating the core. Since then it has been a much better experience and more stable, however, there is one issue that does worry me. AmigaBill also experienced this, and so did I, there was a sudden error upon booting the V4SA "DH0 has a blockid error in block 1739", unfortunately when this happens there is no way to recover any data meaning you need to re-flash the CF.

I was advised by other users to try a different card, such as the SanDisk Extreme and since then I have not encountered a block id error. In addition, there is a strange error that pops up randomly when using Coffin: "Task Ranchero has a Line 1111 Emulator Error", I have tried to search the error message but have not found anyone else encountering it.

In most cases I can suspend it and save my work but it does require a reboot to get the system fully functioning again. I did not encounter this error in Amiga OS 3.2.2 or Apollo OS so it must be related to some install in Coffin. As a precaution I save often and to the internal SD card. There is a newer release of Coffin R63 but that is not compatible with the current version of ApolloBoot so there is a chance the Ranchero error has been fixed in R63.

Final Thoughts

The V4SA has been a journey of ups and downs, but I have greatly enjoyed it and am in a place where I find myself using the V4SA more than my A1200, which makes me feel a bit guilty to say so. There are some stability issues but they are being addressed and the V4SA is a completely different beast than when it first came out. As it stands it is a viable replacement Amiga offering the chance to experience what a true next-generation Amiga could have been like. While the PPC-based Amiga OS4.1 machines are great and also next-gen Amiga they are very prohibitively expensive putting them out of the reach many users, the V4SA is an affordable alternative.

Prior to purchasing the V4+SA I had read the comments from Dave Haynie and now after having used the V4+SA myself I understand why he likes it so much. Where as the OS4.1 machines are essentially a PPC chip with PC graphics card the V2 and V4 are build like an Amiga with custom graphics and audio chips albeit within an FPGA. If you imagine what the next Amiga would have been like after AGA, the V4 in a very real sense, it is.

However I have to address the elephant in the room, that is the PiStorm. There is no getting around that the PiStorm is faster than the V4+SA, this is done by using the brute force of a modern CPU. While you get The V4SA is not an emulated CPU but it is a completely rebuilt 68K CPU with new graphics and audio modes, it is the spiritual brother of the AAA Amiga that we were all hoping for back in the day. If you are thinking of buying one and are hesitant then please join the Apollo Discord channel to talk to other users and you just might find yourself wanting to be a vampire as well.

Software Review: RNOXfer

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Software Review: RNOXfer - by: Timo Paul

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Product Name
RNOXfer

Developed By
RNO

Available From
aminet.net/package/comm/tcp/RNOXfer_68k

Price
Free

Hardware/Software Requirements
MUI, AmiSSL v5, codesets lib, guigfx lib, render lib

Test Machine
Amiga 1200/3.2/TF1260

Review

While the Amiga has had an avalanche of game support over the last few years, productivity software has still been a bit on the thin side. RNO however has been releasing several new Amiga utilities for the next-gen and classic Amigas. For this review, we will look at a very useful comms utility the FTP client. The last generation of FTP clients have difficulty or are unable to connect to modern FTP sites due to the newer security protocols. With this in mind, RNOXfer is a very welcome release, using AmiSSL you will be able to connect to most modern FTP sites.

There is no need to install the software, you can just extract it to your desired directory. You will need the following utilities and libs installed:

- * MUI
- * AmiSSL v5
- * Codesets lib
- * GUIgfx lib
- * Render lib

They can be easily downloaded from Aminet and the description on Aminet includes the links. When you have the programme extracted to your directory you can start the programme as usual. I should not have to remind you of this but you do need to have a TCP/IP stack running, if you do not have one installed I recommend RoadShow since once it is installed and running you do not have to think about it anymore.

In Use

It takes a little while to load the programme but once it is up you are presented with two panes denoting your local directory (left side) and the remote directory (right side). Clicking on the furthest left button will bring up your server list. From here you can add a new server or access any saved ones. Each pane has action buttons at the bottom such as create new directory, delete, edit file/name, upload and download.

The programme is well laid out, it is easy to find what you want to do and the actions are fast. I found myself up-running and uploading files to Aminet in no time. Vice versa when I wanted to download files the directory

refresh was fast and allowed me to easily download my files.

On a side note, I had planned to include this review in an earlier issue but had trouble getting it to connect to servers and only after I had to reinstall my Workbench did it start to work. Previously I was using ClassicWB with 3.1 but for this review I used Workbench 3.2. If you are experiencing connection issues under ClassicWB or 3.1 it might be worth trying the client on 3.2.

Final Thoughts

While an FTP client might not make for the most exciting review this is an important piece of software. With Internet standards changing and updating it is important to have Amiga software keep up with the times. As it stands RNOXfer is the only FTP client that is kept up-to-date and will allow you to connect to modern servers. It is just the icing on the cake that the interface is very easy to use and fast.

RNOXfer is now my FTP client of choice and one that I highly recommend to other users.

Aminet Goodies - Writers top downloads from Aminet.

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- Aminet Goodies -

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Over the last few months since our issue went out in December 2023 there have been a lot of updates on Aminet. Since there are too many to list in the magazine we have take a pick of the top new uploads and updates to Aminet from January to March 2024.

RNOEffects

http://aminet.net/package/gfx/edit/RNOEffects_68k

RNOEffects is now up to version 2.0 and goes from strength to strength. In 2.0 you get over 34 improvements and additions. The ones that stand out are:

- Added the "Pixel editor" tool with configurable pixel drawing options for left, middle, and right mouse buttons
- Added the "Color picker" tool to show colour information under the mouse pointer and to pick and store multiple colour values temporarily
- Added the "Area selector" tool which can be used to apply certain effects on a limited area of an image
- Added the "Toolbox" tool to reduce pull-down menu use
- Added support for saving images in the palette mode (1-8 bits), optionally with 16 pre-defined palettes including the MagicWB palette
- Palettes can be saved in IFF ILBM, RGB32, LoadRGB4, and LoadRGB32 formats
- Palette images can be saved as chunky data
- Chunky image data and separate palettes can be saved as a C source code
- Added an option to use an opacity map to apply an effect partially on an image (works with Blur, Contrast, Draw/Brush, Gamma, Modulate, Monochrome, and Tint effects)

A great image processor that is starting to step on the toes of the big boys though to get the most from the software you ideally need an RTG display and an 060 or higher.

AmiExpress

<http://aminet.net/package/comm/amiex/Amix561>

Back in the 90s if you were creating your own BBS AmiExpress was the program to go to, now redeveloped in E and with more features this is a great way to start building your own BBS. While it is a bit difficult to get started it modern features that the older software does not support.

5.6.1 01 Mar 2024

- Some fixes to resolve issues when running on 68000
- Added support for conf NDIRS setting in the configuration editor
- Added option to move mail messages to another conference

5.6.0 02 Jan 2024

- Improved password encryption, Full Setup Editor, Installer

Dice Masters Demo

http://aminet.net/package/game/demo/Dice_Masters_Demo

Reviewed in this issue, a great game for the V4 capable Amigas that will tax your brain and reflexes.

Skyballs

<http://aminet.net/package/game/misc/skyballsadf>

A simple but fun game for all Amigas, guess where the ball will fall and catch it before it hits the ground.

GIMemorygame

<http://aminet.net/package/game/wb/gimemorygame>

By the same author, a fun little game where you have to remember the matching shapes, essentially an Amiga version of Snap!

AmigaGPT

<http://aminet.net/package/util/misc/AmigaGPT>

With AmigaGPT now we can have access to the world of AI chats thanks to developer Cameron Armstrong, who we will be interviewing in the next issue. Updated on the 24th March, this version has the following updates:

- Fixes a bug in chat mode in AmigaOS 3.X where the send button stays disabled after an error occurs
- Change the stack size in the program .info file to the recommended 32768 bytes
- Fix bug where accents were not loaded properly resulting in the speech to fail

NetSurf 3.11 os3

http://aminet.net/package/comm/www/netsurf_os3

The beta version of NetSurf for 68k Amigas has been released, it requires Amiga OS 3.2, 3.5, 3.9 and 32MB of RAM. As it is in beta it is quite unstable, so for the moment it is more of a curiosity. But the future possibility to browse the Internet like a modern browser is very welcome.

Recompiled World Construction Set

<http://aminet.net/package/gfx/3d/wcs>

If you can remember VistaPro then you will understand what World Construction Set is already. Recompiled to take advantage of the faster Amiga hardware available. To use the program you need to download the full WCS 2 package that is has been recently made available for free download from: www.3dnature.com

Free icon.library in optimised ASM code

http://aminet.net/package/util/libs/IconLib_46.4

The ultimate icon library has been updated again with a small fix for colour mapping when more than one screen is open and if a mounted disk icon will suddenly appear on the inactive screen background.

Updated HippoPlayer

<http://aminet.net/package/mus/play/hippoplayerupdate>

It is great to see HippoPlayer still be updated with more features, we hope in the future to have an interview with K-P Koljonen in a future issue in mean time here is a short list of the updates in this release.

- List mode toggle button to switch between the list modes
 - Main list
 - Favorites: your favorited modules
 - File browser: browse file system for modules
 - Search view: search internet sites, browse shared playlists
- New Prefs options:

- "Button tooltips": Hover mouse over gadgets to get help
- "Favorites": Right click modules to favorite them
- "Keep list on exit": Continue where you left off
- "Big buttons": Larger buttons
- "PlaySID mode": Enable reSID or SIDBlaster for PSID files
- "MIDI mode": Select how to play MIDI files
- "Enable xmaplay060": Enable a high quality XM replayer
- "Enable MHI": Play MP3s with external hardware
- "Position slider": For displaying and selecting position
- Resizable main and info windows
- Main window font can be changed to any font
- Support for many new music formats, stereo SID support
- Improved scopes: support for more music formats, multiple scopes, spectrum scope, patternscope with two sizes and up to 18 channels ("mini4" font needed for 8+ channel display)
- Support for MP3 streaming, radio stations
- "Add" button in file browser or search view: copy items to main list
- Support for playlists of up to 131071 items.

New keyboard shortcuts:

- Favorite module: [CTRL+F]
- Toggle list mode: [SHIFT+M]
- Navigate to parent in file browser: [BACKSPACE]
- Search modules: [CTRL+S]
- Download file: [CTRL+G]

Infinity Music Player

<http://amnet.net/package/mus/play/imp3>

The ever versatile IMP3 keeps going from strength to strength, with this update the software has become IMPBOX friendly. There also is now a chance to talk with a GPT bot, next thing it will be brewing your coffee for you!

Well that wraps it up for this issue, I hope you found something of use or fun to pass the time. Until next issue!

gamereviews

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-= G A M E R E V I E W S =-----

-= Weasels Gaming Corner: Current Games =-

Weasels Gaming Corner analyses 4 Amiga games he has been playing of recent.

-= Game Review: The Deep =-

A new game for the Vampire series of computers, dive into the ocean to find treasure and riches.

-= Game Review: Dice Masters =-

Fight aliens with dice, guns and bombs in this new game from 8080 for the V4.

Weasels Gaming Corner: Something old and something new

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Weasels Gaming Corner: 4 Games - by Ivan Sorensen

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Welcome to Weasel`s gaming corner.

Today I am going to talk about some of the games I have been playing currently and how they have fared.

I usually pick out a couple of titles that I am playing at any given time. 3 games or so is usually a good number but I may do 4 if one of them is well suited for very short bursts of play.

The current line up is:

Dune 2
Qix
Death Knights of Krynn
Cannon Fodder

Starting with Dune 2 this is a game I had completed on the PC many years ago, but I never did complete the Amiga version, so I thought I would try to knock that one out. The game holds up quite well after all these years and the basic "harvest, build, harvest, build" loop is still addictive. The controls are pretty frustrating. Anything involving multiple units is a pain to do and you have to micromanage things quite a bit. Using the keyboard to hit m and f for move and fire speeds things up a lot.

The path to success is usually to knock out the enemy construction yard first, so they cannot rebuild any other structures you destroy. Once rocket launchers show up, you can inflict a lot of damage by moving a couple of them with a few tank escorts and setting them up at the furthest range possible. The enemy will send the occasional tank to deal with them, but will usually not counterattack in force.

Another trick that works fairly well is once you know where the enemy attacks from, build a bunch of towers in their path. Most of the units will be shot to pieces by the time they get to your defence line.

All in all, the game is still quite enjoyable and the novelty of the speech samples when you click on units is still memorable for me, but once I have finished this one I don`t think it is a game I will end up playing again.

Qix is an altogether different affair, being an abstract arcade game relying on reflex and a bit of moment-to-moment strategy. If you have never played this (or games like it) you move a little dot around the edge of the screen, while enemies in the shape of abstract colours try to attack you. Your goal is to "colour in" parts of the screen to fill a certain percentage.

It sounds a bit strange but it is one of those games you can pick up in a few moments of play, yet still be confounded by the challenge. I have so far not managed to get past level 2 and I am unsure how many levels are actually included.

As a note, this is one I had not played back in the day though I did own a copy of a spin-off called Terrorliner (which became infamous and much sought after at the time due to a hacked version featuring adult photographs).

Death Knights is the second game in the Dragonlance series from SSI and a game I have finished a couple of times before though I do not remember if that was on PC or Amiga. I am a general fan of the SSI `gold box` series and while I think Champions of Krynn is better overall, this has a lot of

interesting quests and features. The combat is quite tactical and as the odds are often stacked against you, you need to pay attention and make use of your characters. You can spend hours thinking about the ideal party composition, but as long as you hit the balance of combat, healing and firepower, you will do pretty well. I went magic heavy this time, but in the past, I have beat the game with only two spell casters and while that is tough, it is definitely doable.

If you play these games, you will need the journal as most of the flavour text and background is provided in that book. If you don't want to map manually, consider a copy of the clue book as well. These are included with the GOG versions of these games and provide complete maps with all the special encounters and treasures indicated.

The simple 3D visuals make it very confusing to navigate a lot of the areas, so you can easily add hours to your playtime just stumbling around.

As a bonus, you can carry over a party from Champions of Krynn, which brings along some but not all of the magical items you found. This will act as a pretty decent leg up in the early game, plus it is fun to follow the same characters even if there is not really any roleplaying or personalisation as such in this game.

Last on the list requires no introduction because it is the mighty Cannon Fodder. Sometimes considered one of the best Amiga games and certainly on any top x list, it is also infernally difficult. Once you hit mission 8 the difficulty increases massively as there are more enemies, you are constantly being pelted with grenades and rockets, the enemies move and shoot quicker and the missions start getting quite long with multiple phases.

The last part really cannot be overstated: A lot of the individual maps (phases) are gruelling to complete and you are likely to lose a few soldiers, even if you beat it in the first go (and in my experience you won't). So over 3-5 phases, you are likely to lose anywhere from 3 to 10+ soldiers, and you only get 15 more recruits after the entire mission is over. And if you get stuck on a mission (like "that" mission with the bunkers and the sole turret in mission 8) odds are you will burn through your soldiers at a much higher rate.

One trick is that you can hit escape to quit a mission that is going haywire (or you are out of explosives) and save your last couple of grunts.

At the moment I am restarting a mission if I fail any of the phases (meaning all my soldiers are killed) but I may have to reconsider that. I do not think I will be able to actually complete the game but we will see how far I can make it.

So there you have it. The games I am currently playing and enjoying on the Amiga, all played on a real Amiga (though I am using WHDLoad). I should note that at least for Dune 2 many would argue the PC version is superior for this or that reason. My answer I suppose is that this does not really matter to me that much. My interest in retro computer gaming is not in Dune 2 (for example) specifically, it is in games on the Amiga computer. And so I will play the Amiga version if I am interested in the game.

thedeepreview

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Game Review: The Deep - by Timo Paul

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Product Name

The Deep

Developed By

8080/Sami Vehmaa

Available From

<https://8080.itch.io>

Price

5.00 USD

Hardware/Software Requirements

060 50mhz+ RTG or Apollo Computer V4

Test Machine

Apollo Computer V4+Standalone, PiStorm A1200 w/RTG, and A4000/060 w/RTG

Review

The Deep is a new game developed by 8080 (Sami Vehmaa) that can be run on on 68K Amigas with RTG or the Apollo Computer V4 series (expansion cards and standalone). It costs \$5.00 and comes in at around 24Mb. The premise of the game is very simple, dive to the bottom to retrieve the sunken gold all whilst dodging sea animals that can zap your precious life energy away. Your diver can be controlled by the keyboard or joystick, while I usually prefer keyboard control, in this instance the joystick felt more natural.

Upon clicking on the item you are presented with a load screen, while it says loading there is no hard disk activity, do not worry but it can take a while to load, probably around 1 minute. When it is finished you are presented with the title screen of a boat and your diver floating in the water, a nice synth track plays in the background. To start the game press 'N' and to quit 'Q'. Pressing 'N' will change the music to sounds of waves which is actually very relaxing. Then it is time to dive into the ocean, once you go under the surface the sounds change again to bubbly underwater sounds, which are once again quite relaxing to listen to.

Controls

Controlling your character is a simple affair, press on 'left' or 'right' to orient your diver and then press the fire button to dive. You can gain a little speed by tapping the fire button again. Your aim is to collect the gold dispersed around the play area. When you find gold swim over it and it will automatically be picked up. You then need to go back to the surface and deposit your stash.

While you are on the surface you can also recharge your oxygen levels. Oxygen tanks are spread throughout the play area, to top up swim over to one and stay there until you have 100%. You can see how much oxygen you have by looking at the light blue bubble in the top right of the screen. It is important to remember where these are and map them out mentally, as you go deeper it will not be possible to return to the surface on one tank. It is not only your oxygen that you need to keep an eye on, there are various sea animals that wish to harm you. While they do not actively chase you they can become quite numerous making it harder to avoid them.

Oh yes, and if you happen to find an arcade machine sitting on the bottom, swim over there right away and enjoy what you can do.

Audio and Visuals

The graphics are very nicely done, while they do not scream RTG or next-gen

graphics they are bold, detailed and nicely animated. The game area scrolls smoothly without any graphical glitches.

Initially, I was unsure of what areas I could swim through though, if there had been more contrast between the water, background and rocks it would make it a bit easier to navigate. The various aquatic animals you encounter are very nicely drawn with some quite large sprites in parts.

Sounds are limited to music on the title screen and background effects while diving, there is no music and I think this works well. Overall the sounds make for a very relaxing atmosphere, which says a lot since the game can become quite intense, especially the deeper you go.

I need to address one issue however that Amitopia brought up about The Deep in an article on 20th January 2024 the writer bemoaned the games that are coming out exclusively for the V4 series of accelerators and computers. Now I will not address this in this review, however they did state that Amiga users lost out on The Deep since it is only for Apollo computers or accelerators. On the itch.io site where you can buy the game The Deep, it states that the game can run on V4 and RTG Amigas. Just to make sure I asked John Soclieri tried the game on his 060 A4000 and A1200 PiStorm both using RTG. While the 060 was too slow the PiStorm ran the game fine with graphics and audio working. The only issue seemed to be a mirroring of the bottom half of the screen but it did not affect gameplay.

So I just want to state that while Amitopia complained about the game being only for V4 users that is not true it will run on your PiStorm Amiga provided you use RTG and even an 060 system that is faster than 50mhz.

Final Thoughts

The Deep is a fantastic game with controls that are easy to learn and a great atmosphere that will draw you in making you want to play just one more time. I have found myself playing this game every day recently for short stints just as a way to relax.

The graphics and sound suit the game well and while the gameplay is very simple it is a very enjoyable game. If you have a V4 or RTG capable 060/PiStorm Amiga then I suggest supporting the developer and enjoying some of the next-generation Amiga games that we are being treated to.

Pros and Cons:

- + Very nice graphics
- + Simple but engaging gameplay
- + Sound effects very effective
- Perhaps some more music during gameplay

Scores

Gameplay: 8/10
Graphics: 8/10
Sound: 7/10
Overall: 7.6/10

dicemastersreview

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Game Review: Dice Masters - by Timo Paul

=====

Product Name

The Deep

Developed By

8080/Sami Vehmaa

Available From

<https://8080.itch.io>

Price

5.00 USD

Hardware/Software Requirements

Apollo Computer V4

Test Machine

Apollo Computer V4+ Standalone

Review

Dice Masters is the latest from the 8080 game studio, Sami is quite the productive developer only recently having released The Deep, which we have also reviewed here. For the first time though his games can run on Apollo OS and Amiga OS, previously his games only ran on Amiga OS.

The premise of Dice Masters is that an intruder has appeared on an alien base on our very own planet Earth. You are the intruder, who appears to be a medieval knight, I guess aliens did visit Earth in the past. Thus the game begins with you having to get past 10 stages to battle the final big alien boss. To do this you need to beat the oncoming aliens, small ones that only need one shot and the larger ones that require 4-6 shots. The gameplay is unique, while I found it a bit confusing at first as I got a hang of the play mechanics I began to enjoy the game a lot.

So how does it play?

The playfield is a dungeon with a nice stone background, and flickering torches and at the top of the screen, you have your weapons and obstacles. The former is a shotgun and a bomb. The latter being a closed barrel, dynamite sticks, a wood/metal box and an open barrel. On the left side, there is an arrow so you can switch between your items and the dice. When the dice are displayed, there are six each showing the corresponding number of dots.

Gameplay involves selecting your weapon or obstacle and placing it on the dungeon floor. However, this cannot be done until a green square appears in the box surrounding the weapon/obstacle. When the green box appears you can place your selected weapon/obstacle. That is not the end of it though, by just placing the weapon you cannot fire it yet. Next, you will need to go to the dice panel which can be reached by selecting the arrow box on the right side. This brings up your dice, if there is a green box then you can select the dice and then select the placed weapon. Once you have fired you need to wait for the dice to be ready again and this is shown by a slow colour fill-in.

Initially, the gameplay might be a bit confusing but once you have figured it out, the game starts to shine. There is a sense of urgency that is quite palpable when the alien monsters shuffle closer, yet the dice is not ready and you need to move your weapon to a better position. It can get quite frantic and hair-raising, it gets the heart pumping. It reminds me a bit of my favourite game from last year, Spheroid, the gameplay draws you in and gets you to find yourself sitting on the edge of your chair.

Audio and Visuals

I will address the graphics first, probably the first thing I should mention is that if you are looking for next-generation graphics, then you might be disappointed. The graphics are colourful and have very large sprites but they do not take full advantage of the power offered by the V4. Now with that out of the way, the graphics are still very nicely done, they are chunky and the aliens are suitably creepy-looking with bulging bloodshot eyes, probably from binge-watching too much on Netflix.

The audio is pretty good in this game, with the title screen music being a blend of industrial dubstep ... I think. In-game music is accompanied by loud and crisp sound effects and the music is suitably dark and sounds slightly alarming. Perfect for the mood of the game.

Final Thoughts

It seems it is only a few weeks ago since I was writing a review of Sami's recent release The Deep and here I am again with another great game from him. This is one of his best releases so far, the gameplay is very addicting and while it takes some time to get used to the gameplay mechanics once you have it down a pat, things get interesting. The audio and visuals both suit the game perfectly and it is steal at 5 USD. It is also nice to see developers taking advantage of the newer Amiga hardware. Overall a fun and exhilarating game that may have a bit of a higher learning curve than other games but stick with it and you will be rewarded with a great game experience.

Pros and Cons:

- + Large and colourful graphics
- + Music and sound effects are loud and crisp and suit the game well
- + Engaging gameplay
- Gameplay mechanics might be off-putting for those who are not patient
- Could take more advantage of the V4 hardware

Scores

Gameplay: 8/10

Graphics: 7/10

Sound: 8/10

Overall: 7.6/10

Great game that deserves a bit more attention from the gamer but well worth the effort.

Welcome to the guides section!

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- = T U T O R I A L S / G U I D E S = - - - - -

- - - - -

- = Game Graphics: What NOT to do = -

Andy Vaisey revisits the making of his game Spheroid and how to navigate the pit falls of creating game graphics.

- = Making Music Modules 101 Part One = -

Tristan and Rob take you through the ins and outs of making a music module be it OctaMED or ProTracker.

- = How To Get Better Samples = -

If you are new to the Amiga or have never sampled into the Amiga were wondering what is the best way then find inside.

- = Creative Graphics: Easy Aztec Graphics = -

Did you ever wonder how you can quickly and easily make Aztec styled images with your Amiga? Then dive in to find out how inside!

- = Brilliance 101 Part 12 - Tokyo Bay Part 2 = -

Second part of the tutorial regarding the steps taken to create the image that was submitted to this years Amiga Art Competition.

- = Creative Graphics: Fun With Smear = -

A second creative graphics guide on using the smear tool and how you can achieve some realistic effects with it.

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#Tutorials/Guides - WhatIFF? Issue 3.13 - April 2024#

Game Graphics: What NOT to do

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Game Graphics: What NOT to do - by: Andy Vaisey

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I've recently released a game for the Amiga. If you've read the interview with me in a previous issue of WhatIFF?, you'll know that the genesis of my game 'Spheroid' began on an A500 way back in the early 1990s. Having pixelled graphics on a C64 prior to this, the step up to an Amiga was a little overwhelming initially! When I then decided I wanted to write a game, I made all sorts of bad choices when it came to the graphics that then haunted me all the way through to 2023!

In this simple little guide, I would like to truthfully lay bare those bad choices so that anyone who is thinking of writing their own game for the first time, while also pixeling their own graphics, can avoid the mistakes I made all those years ago!

Mistake 1 - Wasting too many colours in my 32 colour palette.

Moving from the 16 colours of my C64 to 32 colours from a possible 4096 on my Amiga was absolute bliss but also daunting! I could have so many shades! And that was the problem! For my game, Spheroid, starting with white and a very dark grey for highlights and lowlights, I then chose 6 colours to denote ingame tile colours, no real problems so far (if you're wondering why and how I chose the original 6 colours, compare them to the colours on a C64!). However, I then proceeded to create a further 2 shades of those 6 colours...

That means 18 colours out of my 32 were now tied to and only used for shading the tiles in the game. What a waste! Sure, some of these shades did end up being used for other small things in the game, but ultimately it was a bad decision as I was now already beginning to use up over half of my palette. The strange thing is, I was already used to using greys on my C64 between other colours to extend colour ramps and why on earth it didn't occur to me to do the same thing on my Amiga is anyone's guess! Had I done so, I could have freed up more space in the palette for more colours!

And continuing the theme of wasting palette space, when also counting the dark grey for lowlights, Spheroid has a whopping 10 shades of grey! At the time I knew I wanted a nice fade across the metal ball in the game, but looking at the graphics today, 30 years after they were originally created, I can see that there aren't actually that many greys in the ball and to be fully honest, to this day I can't tell you why there are so many greys or what I intended them to be used for!

However, maybe Spheroid doesn't suffer too greatly since the graphics are otherwise purposefully quite simple to represent the action "it's" only a puzzle game after all! However, in any other genre, those poor palette choices 30 years ago would have probably killed the chance of having a really good variety of graphics.

Mistake 2 - Not using multiple palettes.

It never occurred to me at the time to use multiple palettes for the same graphical images. What do I mean?

Very generally speaking, on the Amiga you can separate the graphical images from their palette and use a different colour palette for the same graphics.

Still don't understand?

Imagine you have a bitmap game intermission screen with a robot represented in shades of grey. Later in the game, you could reuse that bitmap, but load a different palette where the grey shades have been carefully mapped to orange shades to give a bronze-looking robot. You have saved disk and memory space by reusing the bitmap, only taking a resource hit on the small footprint needed to store a second palette.

There are other times where this palette swap trick could be used. For example, in a horizontally scrolling space shooter, the background graphics may be shades of one colour in one part of a level, but later on swapped to a different palette for more variation. Of course, you'd need to hide this swap with a small lull in the background graphics where none are displayed.

Many games use this trick! It's something I've done on the C64 but, again, never occurred to me to do on the Amiga.

Mistake 3 - Not using code to cut out "shapes".

In Spheroid, all the graphics are loaded individually before the game starts. And by individually, I don't just mean bitmaps; I mean every single tile and sprite/bob definition! Although this keeps things simple in code, it absolutely kills the loading time from floppy!

The best way to load all your smaller graphics (sprites/bob definitions, letters and numbers, etc.) is to keep all the graphics in one bitmap file that is then loaded and "cut" up into individual components using code loops. This does take a bit more effort in ensuring that all the individual graphic definitions are spaced equally on the bitmap so they can be cookie cut in blocks, but ultimately it's a lot quicker in the end than separate loads.

The ridiculous thing? The majority of my Spheroid graphics (the individual sprite frames, the coloured tiles, the numbers and so on) are actually on a single bitmap and spaced evenly in a grid! I could have used code but didn't! In my defence, once I'd gotten all the loading code working for separate images and the game engine was up and running, I was loathed to rip that out and use cookie cutting code! I should have, I didn't. Sorry!

Mistake 4 - Check, then double check shapes and sizes.

Eh? What do I mean by this? A rather large admission and apology is due!

The square tiles that make up the play area in Spheroid aren't actually square. They are 17 pixels across by 18 pixels down, technically rectangles! Similarly, the round metal ball is technically an oval being 13 pixels across and 14 down!

How on earth did I end up with such odd dimensions? Quite simply, both the tiles and ball were drawn by eye. At the time, they obviously "looked" fine on my 15" Microvitec monitor, but I'd forgotten that I'd been tinkering with the vertical stretch knob, altering the "actual" shape!

Two lessons to be learned: Firstly, use the magnify function in your bitmap editor and manually count pixels to make sure shapes are the sizes they need to be! Secondly, read the manual for your bitmap editor where you will discover that holding shift while drawing your shape will result in the shape actually being the same size in the x and y directions automatically!

It wasn't until after all the graphics were drawn and the code written to draw the tiles to the screen that I discovered this utterly stupid and easily avoidable gaffe!

Mistake 5 - Write a text plotter...

In Spheroid, every piece of text or message is actually a sprite. Each of these messages are stored separately on disk. Another waste of storage space

and memory!

What I should have done was have my whole alphabet in a bitmap, cut out the individual letters using some looping code and then write a "plotter" that turned messages in the code into messages on the screen, drawing each individually stored letter as a sprite/bob direct on screen as required to form the message. Using this method would have also allowed dynamic movement of each individual letter of each message could have flown on screen in a variety of ways to eventually "write" the message. Watch the Uridium 2 title screen to see a good example of how Andrew Braybrook did this.

The annoying thing? There is half of a text plotter already in Spheroid. Each number graphic is actually stored individually and used as required on screen to dynamically plot the level numbers, the timer, moves and lives remaining and so on. All I needed to do was extend this routine to be able to write text as well. Indeed a missed opportunity.

Mistake 6 - Don't be afraid to try newer versions of or different software.

For so many years I stuck with Deluxe Paint III as my main bitmap editor. Don't get me wrong, to this day it's still a *fantastic* piece of software that I still load occasionally just because I'm still comfortable with it.

However, when I upgraded from my A500 to my A1200, instead of upgrading my graphics software too, I stuck with DPIII. This was a mistake. I never found DPIII stable enough using some of the screen modes the A1200 was capable of displaying, to say nothing of the lack of AGA support.

It wasn't until a few years later when I managed to get hold of a cheap copy of Personal Paint, that a whole load of extra features opened up to me including the ability to load and save in more modern formats such as PNG and JPG.

Having said that, to this day I'm still reluctant to install updated versions of any software I use! The Paint.net install on my development machine is two versions behind for my PC work, I use a 17 year old text editor for writing my C64 6502 code and the 3.2 ROMs for my A1200 I bought a couple of years back are still in the packaging in my desk drawer!

I never learn!

Making Music Modules 101 - Part One

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Making Music Modules 101 - Part One - by: Tristan Shiflett & Rob O'Malley

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By Rob O'Malley, based on original document by Tristan Shiflett, but heavily revised. *Additional notes linked at the bottom of the article.

MOD MODULE FORMAT

In the original ProTracker MOD specification samples cannot go over 64k, or a value of FF in the sample offset command. If using a replayer that conforms strictly to the original specifications, samples over 64k in length will cut off. In more modern versions of the ProTracker MOD format, as well as in OctaMED when using the standard chip ram replayer, samples of up to 128k may be used, however, you will not be able to use sample offset to begin playing this sample at any point after 64k through the sample. When using OctaMED SoundStudio with the fast ram replayer however samples of theoretically infinite length can be used. But be aware that only the official OctaMED SoundStudio version of OctaMED Player, and the most recent version of HippoPlayer support this method of playback and most module players will cut the sample short if it is over 128k.

There are so many versions of ProTracker and ProTracker compatible trackers available for Amiga, asking "Which one is the best to use?" is a reasonable question. The general consensus is to use the most recent version, which is PT2.3F made by 8BitBussy. This might seem a bit strange seeing as there are versions of ProTracker with a version number of 3.x, but those were originally released in the 90's whereas 2.3F is much more recent and fixes a number of bugs present in the original version 2.x ProTracker versions. ProTracker can only use mono 8-bit IFF 8SVX, RAW data, or PAK compressed samples. If you try to load a WAV, or indeed any non-supported data formats as samples within ProTracker, it will load as RAW 8-bit data and sound distorted and weird. OctaMED SoundStudio on the other hand can also load the aforementioned 8SVX and RAW data formats as well as 16-bit AIFF and WAV in glorious stereo if so desired. And these can then be easily converted to 8-bit mono if desired by adjusting the settings in the instrument type window.

Now if you want to render a portion of a MOD to a sample, much like "bouncing down" multiple tracks on a traditional 4-track recorder to a single track, you can use a tool called MOD2SMP to achieve this. Some trackers have this ability built-in, such as SoundTracker 2 and OctaMED SoundStudio also has hard disk recording options in its list of supported output devices which can be used without needing to leave the OctaMED screen.

Finally, if you are using samples with a sample rate of 48KHz, 44KHz, 22KHz or indeed any sample rate which is a nice round number you might reasonably ask yourself "Why are none of my samples in tune??" This is because of the way that Paula plays audio. There is a somewhat complicated formula for calculating the sample rates which correspond to the notes used in standard Amiga tracker software, however, we have taken the time to calculate the results of this formulae for you in this convenient table linked here.

Now all that boring technical information is out of the way, we are ready to begin the process of making some tunes!

CREATING AND CONVERTING SAMPLES

If you want some samples of your own creation or to rip some sounds from some existing audio files in a suitable 8-bit format, there are many tools for modern PCs which can be used.

Audacity is a free and open-source piece of audio editing software for many modern operating systems and will do a reasonable job. However, setting an accurate sample rate for your samples in this editor may not work out how you'd want it to easily.

There is also the commercial shareware sample editing software called Goldwave for the Windows operating system. However, any Linux users out there will probably have no trouble running this software with the WINE compatibility layer. One of the main selling points of using this software application is the batch processing feature in the FILE menu which can really save a lot of time when you want to convert a large number of samples to a suitable format with just a few clicks of the mouse.

And finally, there is the command line audio tool SOX, which can just about do it all and can be another way to batch-process large numbers of samples in a single hit, albeit without the convenience of a GUI. However, as it is also, an open-source tool there just so happens to be an Amiga-native version of this software in addition to versions for Windows, Mac, Linux and many more OS's

USING TRACKER COMMANDS

Now we are going to cover the tracker commands. ProTracker, OctaMED, AHX and well, just about any tracker software you could care to name uses hexadecimal or base-16 numbering format, as opposed to the decimal base-10 system that you're used to using for almost everything. So for example, if you were to do a volume command of 10 thinking it would do to, set the volume at a value of 10 out of 64, you're wrong! If you wanted a value of decimal 10 then that would be hexadecimal 0A. Make sense? Anyway, the Amiga supports 64 levels of volume or 40 in hexadecimal. So when setting volume think of it like this: 40 is full volume, 20 is half volume and 10 is quarter volume.

OctaMED has the option to use decimal values from 00 to 64 instead of 00 to 40 for volume in the song options, which will simply ignore any hexadecimal digits when enabled, however personally I would recommend against using this mode and just stick to hexadecimal volumes. OctaMED also has the option to have slightly more responsive bends and slides, and this I would recommend that you do use, unless you are planning on making a ProTracker MOD file in OctaMED, by not checking the "no slide on first pulse" box in song options.

These are the standard ProTracker commands, unless stated otherwise these commands are also the same in OctaMED, albeit with a preceeding zero.

0xx = Arpeggio

Rapidly alter the pitch upwards of currently playing sample for chiptune like fake chord effect.

1xx = Pitch bend up in semitones per tick

Smoothly increase the frequency of currently playing sample.

2xx = Pitch bend down in semitones per tick

Smoothly decrease the frequency of currently playing sample.

3xx = Portamento in semitones per tick

Smoothly slide to the note designated with a 3xx command next to it, you can use 00 to repeat last used value. Any note with this command next to it will not trigger.

4xy = Vibrato (x = speed, y = depth)

Wibbly wobbly goodness, you can use value of 00 to repeat last settings. In OctaMED vibrato is much deeper, but you can use 14xy command for ProTracker vibrato.

5xy = Portamento and Volume slide

Repeat the last 3xx command while performing a volume slide.

6xy = Tremolo (x = speed, y = depth)
Modulate the volume of currently playing sample.

8xx = no effect
Not entirely useless as this command can be used to trigger events in any program that is looking for it. Some demos use these for triggers of visual effects for example.

9xx = Sample offset
Play the sample from the specified position in steps of 256 bytes. In OctaMED it's 19xx.

Axy = Volume slide
x is to smoothly increase the volume, and y is to smoothly decrease the volume. In OctaMED this is the Dxy command.

Bxx = jump to pattern
00 will go to the very beginning of the sequence, 01 to the second pattern and so on.

Cxx = Set Volume
a value of 00 is silent and a value of 40 is full. In OctaMED you can also use values 80 to set the default sample volume to silent and C0 to set default volume to maximum.

Dxx = Pattern break to row in next pattern
(D32 will go to row 32, D00 will go to first row in next pattern, which is great if you're doing a triplet style ending and it's not the end of the pattern) If you've been paying attention then you will.

E0x = Low pass filter
x can be 0 for off and 1 for on.

E1x = Fine pitch bend up in semitones
Similar to 1xx command but more precise.

E2x = Fine pitch bend down in semitones
Similar to the 2xx command but more precise.

E3x = Glissando
Where x can be 0 for off and 1 for on.

E4x = Vibrato, where x can be 0 for off and 1 for on
Kinda redundant, just use the 4xy command when you want it on and don't when you don't.

E5x = Set finetune
Slightly adjust the default tuning of the instrument.

E6x = Loop section
Use a value of 0 to set the start of the loop and a value greater than 0 to set the end of the loop and the number of times for the loop to be repeated.

E7x = where x can be 0,1 or 2 Set Tremolo Waveform
????????

E9x = Retrigger
x is the delay between triggers in ticks. With 6 ticks a value of 1 will play the note 6 times, a value of 3 will trigger twice, geddit? In OctaMED this is 1Fx0.

EAx = fine volume slide up
Similar to the Ax0 command, but a bit more delicate and precise.

EBx = fine volume slide down
similar to the A0x command, but a bit more delicate and precise.

ECx = Note cutting by x amount
Stop current note playing after x ticks.

EDx = Note delay by x amount
Delay note by x ticks, with 6 ticks a value of 2 will delay the note by one third of a step and 3 would be a half a step delay and so on. In OctaMED this is the 1F0x command.

EFx = Invert loop
????????

Fxx = tempo
In ProTracker values above 20 will set the beats per minute using the CIA chips for timing, assuming the default number of ticks is 6. With the default value being 7D. While values 20 or below will set the number of vertical blanks ticks per line assuming a default bpm of 7D, with 6 being the default. Also in regards to tempo in Amiga tracker software, the default tempo for a PAL machine is extremely close to 125bpm. That is to say a tempo value of 7D AND 06. In OctaMED 9xx is the command to set the number of ticks. Also be aware that in ProTracker you will be wanting to set your tempo on the first line of the first pattern as MOD format does not store the tempo otherwise. Also in OctaMED FFx is used for special commands.

OctaMED also has a bunch of other commands not mentioned here like MIDI commands, stereo panning and whatnot, but we won't worry about those right now.

And now that we have commands out of the way, we can now get to working on our tune! IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF WhatIFF? Magazine :P

POSTSCRIPT: With music modules it is by no means compulsory yet is something of a convention for the artist to sign their handle and crew and anything else they feel like saying to the listener as liner notes in the sample name text field upon completion of a module. It is quite rare to see a module which simply has a list of sample filenames out in the wild. If you are doing this in OctaMED, be sure to do it from the instrument properties dialogue or risk losing important instrument information like loop, finetune, default volume, etc.

Secondary pages:

Table of Note Frequencies Links to Software PT MOD vs MED

modvsmed

MED versus MOD

MOD is a relatively simple format, which makes it easy to write code for. This is why it was the preferred format for many early tracker programs, such as ProTracker. The simplicity of the format also makes it easy to edit and modify MOD files, which is why it is still popular among chiptune musicians today.

MOD is often used to create chiptune music, which is music that is inspired by the sound of early video game consoles. The simplicity of the MOD format makes it ideal for this type of music, as it allows musicians to create music that sounds authentic to the era.

MED is a more complex format than MOD, which gives it more flexibility in terms of musicality. The flexibility of the format allows musicians to create more complex and expressive music. MED is often used to create electronic music, which is music that is created using electronic instruments and synthesizers. The flexibility of the MED format allows musicians to create more complex and expressive music, which is ideal for this type of music. Ultimately, the best format for you will depend on your individual needs and preferences.

If you are looking to create simple and straightforward music, then MOD is a good choice. If you are looking to create more complex and expressive music, then MED is a better choice.

softwarelinks

LINKS TO SOFTWARE

IF YOU ARE USING IT ON AN AMIGA (EMULATED / REAL) I SUGGEST YOU
USE PT2.3F MADE BY 8BITBUBSY!

=> <https://16-bits.org/PT23F.LHA>
=> <https://16-bits.org/PT23F.ADF>

Link to MOD2SMP
=> https://16-bits.org/etc/mod2smp_v081.lha

Link to the Zero-G packs converted to Amiga IFF format (Huge thanx
to DJ Nest for converting these)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cceWjHUGWCHXiS9x05xp-alaKp142aJX?usp=drive_link

notefrequencies

TABLE OF NOTES, PERIODS AND FREQUENCIES

C-1	856	4143.56
C#1	808	4389.72
D-1	762	4654.71
D#1	720	4926.24
E-1	678	5231.40
F-1	640	5542.02
F#1	604	5872.34
G-1	570	6222.62
G#1	538	6592.74
A-1	508	6982.07
A#1	480	7389.36
B-1	453	7829.78
C-2	428	8287.13
C#2	404	8779.44
D-2	381	9309.43
D#2	360	9852.48
E-2	339	10462.81
F-2	320	11084.04
F#2	302	11744.68
G-2	285	12445.24
G#2	269	13185.48
A-2	254	13964.15
A#2	240	14778.72
B-2	226	15694.22
C-3	214	16574.27
C#3	202	17558.88
D-3	190	18667.86
D#3	180	19704.97
E-3	170	20864.08
F-3	160	22168.09
F#3	151	23489.36
G-3	143	24803.45
G#3	135	26273.29
A-3	127	27928.30
A#3	120	29557.45
B-3	113	31388.44

Here's the formula for calculating sample
rates of Amiga Tracker notes
Thanks Hoffman for this information

(For a PAL machine)

$$\text{SampleRate} = \frac{7093789.2}{\text{Period} * 2}$$

Creative Graphics: Easy Aztec Images

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Creative Graphics: Easy Aztec Images - by: Timo Paul
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About 10 years ago I released my first album on a record label called Dark Til Dawn, it was a hardcore breaks album and I had created a special CD case with an Aztec face on the album cover. It looked great but it had always bugged me that it was not created on the Amiga. Now that 10 years have passed I finally wanted to re-create the cover using only Amiga software and while I was at it, create a little guide for those who want to try something similar.

What we will need for this tutorial are:

- * 2D Paint packages: Brilliance or DPaint will suffice
- * PixelPro (Amiga Format Cover Disk 65 is your best bet)
- * 3D Rendering software such as LightWave, Imagine etc.

To begin with I suggest having a look at original Aztec art to give you an idea of the style you are aiming for. Aztec art often has strong lines and almost always with a mouth open, showing teeth and a tongue. Go to Google and type in 'Aztec art' and have a look at the images that come up.

Once you have an idea of what you want to draw, sketch it out on paper first then when you have your image, move over to your Amiga, keeping the sketch on the desk in front of you.

For the next part you can use either Brilliance or DPaint, in my case I used Brilliance. Set your screen to 2 colours and PAL LowRes, make sure that your background is black and the second colour is white. Choose the 'Line' draw tool and select a thickness of at least 3-4 pixels. On Brilliance have a look at the toolbar and find the button that has the letter M mirrored upside down. Right-click on the 'Mirror' button and select the 'Y AXIS' only and then 'ADJUST', draw out a small rectangle box roughly 2-3 centimetres. The reason for doing this is that by default Brilliance puts the mirror mode on the X and Y axis and the area is too far apart for our needs.

If you look carefully at Aztec art it is often a mirror image of each side. The images are very well-balanced. With Brilliance or DPaint this effect is easily done with the 'Mirror' tool. Once you have your settings, have a play around to get a feel for how the 'Mirror' tool works. Then get down to drawing your picture. Remember you only need to draw half of the picture as whatever you put down will be mirrored on the X-axis by Brilliance/DPaint.

Take your time and try to fill in the entire screen and once you are happy with your image change the screen to 2 colours if you have not done it already. Save your image and get ready to hop into PixelPro.

In PixelPro load your Aztec 2 colour image, if you have an issue with it loading double check it is only 2 colours, if not go back and resave it as 2 colours. Once the image is loaded it will take a short while to convert the black and white image into polygons. Those of you with PiStorms, 060s and 080s will not have to wait long. You will see a 2D wireframe of your image but it is not 3D yet, for that, we need to find the 'Extrude' button and where it says 'Value' put in '30', there is no need to change anything else. After a short wait you will be presented with a 3D object of your image, if it seems a bit jaggy, then use the 'Smooth' button to make it look better. Finally save the object in the format of your choice, for mine I am using Lightwave so I chose the .lwob format.

From here it is just a case of loading your object into the 3D program of your choice, setting the colours or textures and rendering your object. If

you want a less boxy look then go into the Modeler program of Lightwave and go to 'Polygon' and find 'Triple' on the left side. Have fun and let your imagination go wild! I have included the 2Dimage, lwob object and test render for your reference.

Brilliance Image Lighwave Render.

See you next time!

Creative Graphics: Fun With Smear

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Creative Graphics: Fun With Smear - by: Timo Paul
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In the mid-1880s French artists Georges Seurat and Paul Signac popularised the painting technique of pointillism. The technique involves painting with small colourful dots, in a way very similar to how many artists work on Amiga artwork. One of my favourite paintings is `Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte` by Georges Seurat painted in 1884. It depicts a warm day with people sitting on the grass relaxing, it is quite different from the hyperrealistic paintings from before. In a way, it reminds me of some of the earlier Amiga artwork that was done in the A1000 days.

As a part of my journey of using the Amiga as an art toolbox, I was interested to see if there is a way that this type of style can be emulated or used in Amiga art. We can just use the paintbrush and paint down dots to get a similar effect, I tried this but it did not achieve my desired result.

It then struck me that using the smear tool might come in useful, this came about when I was working on some clouds for a project. It is funny how a thing can lead to something else completely, on my journey into pointillism I came across a tool that is easy to access but can give you some fantastic results if used correctly.

For this little guide, we will be using my favourite art package Brilliance but you can use DPaint as well since it also has the smear tool. First off let us imagine what you are going to draw, in this instance, I want to create A bright blue sky with white fluffy clouds. Now usually you can use the gradient tool and in this case, we will do so too but to help give the image a more pointillism feel we will use the dither setting. To begin with, outline your clouds and fill them in with white. You do not need to do anything else to the clouds for a little while.

Choose your colours

Next, go to `Palette` and set two colours at the far left and right of the palette, use colour settings of 0 136 255 and 0 255 255, you should have a darkish blue and light blue on the left and right respectively. Now you need to spread the colour and this can be done in the same panel, find the button labelled `Spread`, you need to click on the far left and then far right colours to tell Brilliance which colours you want to spread, if all goes to plan you should see the band of blue to light blue spread out on your palette.

Now we have our chosen colours, we need to go to the `Gradient/Cycle` tool and select the two colours that you used to make the colour spread i.e. 0 136 255 and 0 255 255. When you have set your colours find the `Dither` button and set it between 17 - 25. The reason is that if we leave it at the default setting it creates a hard gradient, very computer-like. With the dithering set between 17-25, it creates a more natural effect in a similar vein to pointillism.

When that is finished it is just a quick trip to `Draw Mode` and select `Vertical`, and use the fill tool to fill in the area above the clouds.

Smearing Fun

You should have a nice gradient above the clouds but also one that has a bit of a rough look to it. At the moment our clouds have a very sharp distinct line between the sky, so to make the clouds look more hand-painted we will use the smear tool. First choose `Pen Tip` and right-mouse click

to bring up the options, select the pen tip size that is 4th from the left.

Now comes the fun part, go to `Draw Mode` and find the `Smear` button and select it. For this part, you will just follow the outline of the clouds while pressing the left mouse button. Right away you will see that the pixels will start to get mixed up. The sharp edges become less distinct and more "fluffy". The blue sky and white clouds will mix and this is why we created the clouds first and then added the gradient sky. If we had done the smear first the gradient sky would not have mixed with the clouds properly.

Have a play around and even put some swirls if you want to make it look like it is a windy day. When you are satisfied with your smearing, next go back to the `Draw Mode` panel and select `Smooth`. Just as before, run the mouse over the smeared edges to give it a natural look. I found that smearing again after the smoothing gave the image a bit more depth and life to the clouds. Please have a look at an Example Picture.

And that is it for this part, have a play around with the smear and smooth tools, they are quite powerful when you use your imagination with them. As usual, this particular series is an exploration of creative ideas and not so much a tutorial on how to best do something. If you have any techniques or ideas you wish to share please contact us.

Until next time, happy smearing!

Brilliance 101 - Tokyo Bay

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Brilliance 101 Part 12 - by: Timo Paul

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In the previous issue, we discussed the creation of the background image for my submission to the Amiga Art Competition. However, the background was only one part of the image. The Tokyo Bay scene was applied to the train window using the "Rub Thru" feature. After that, we needed to add passengers to the image. To get an idea of where to place the passengers and how they would look in the image, I created a simple seat using lighter and darker shades of blue for the backrest and seat, respectively.

Then, I downloaded an image of some passengers on a Japanese train from Google and imported it into ImageFX. I scaled down the image to 640 pixels and reduced the colours to 8. I then saved the "Rendered Screen" as an IFF file and imported it to Brilliance.

I intended to create a sense of lost identity with the passengers. Although the background was a beautiful view of the bay, everyone was only interested in their small screens. Therefore, I decided to create a block effect. Since I am not good at drawing humans, I used the image from Google as a reference. In Brilliance, I selected the "Filled Lines" tool and removed the background using the "Filled Shape" tool. Then, I filled in the body shapes using the "Filled Lines" tool. I started with outlining the hair followed by the face, which I filled with one colour to achieve the desired look. The rest of the body, including the jacket, trousers, shoes, and bag, was filled using the "Filled Lines" tool. The final touch was to draw black rectangles using the "Filled Lines" tool to represent the smartphones that were distracting the passengers from the scenery outside.

The process was slow and required zooming in at times to see where the lines should go. However, once the bodies were filled in, the image started to take shape. Although much of the detail was lost from the initial image, you can still get the impression of people sitting on a train. The image used a contrast between the detailed background and the simple shapes of the foreground. This image shows how simple lines and blocks of colour can be more powerful than many shades of colour and detail. I hope this short tutorial will give you ideas for your next art projects.

If you have any artwork you would like to share, please send it to us, and we will include it in the next issue. Until next time!

How to get better samples

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How to get better samples - by:Tony Horgan and Timo Paul

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When I first began making music on my Amiga in the late 80's I always struggled with getting decent audio samples. Eventually, I started to notice magazines that had articles about better sampling techniques. Well that was over 30 years ago and after recently talking with Amiga audio legend Tony Horgan, permitted me to republish some of the advice that he gave me regarding better sampling techniques.

As you probably have noticed if you sample into the Amiga, it is very easy to get hissy samples, and they often don't quite sound as good as you had hoped. To help combat this we need to do some extra legwork before sampling into the Amiga. One technique that was suggested by Tony was to use heavy compression, here is what he said:

"Preparing some samples for my Amiga, using heavy compression to raise the relative volume of the quiet parts for better reproduction when they're 8-bit at the Amiga end."

In this example, he was processing a batch of drum loops and, "smashed down to -6db then "normalised" back to full volume (0db)"

He goes on to say:

"You can repeat the process (compress to -6db then normalise to 0db) for better results in many cases."

When I asked him for more detail about the compression process he explained:

"My technique: M1->NanoCompressor->Datel Sampler->Amiga->OctaMED. Play a chord. Sample it. Find a good loop point. Trim that. Tiny volume fade start+end. Copy. Reverse. Mix original+reversed. Trim ends slightly so the wave goes in the same direction at loop point (eg. from up to down). Loop."

I then asked him why a compression would help with sampling into the Amiga, and he replied:

"When you sample into the Amiga's 8-bit resolution, quiet sections sound noisy as there aren't enough steps to capture the detail. A compressor between the source and the sampler can boost the quiet parts to make them louder. Better to do it at this stage than amplify the noise."

The trick is to keep the signal as loud as possible for most of the time as it goes into the Amiga sampler. At 16- or 24-bit, there are plenty of steps to describe the quiet parts but when it gets to the Amiga, we're drawing those quiet sections with very few steps."

So as you can see, if you want to get the best quality samples into your sample loud use a compressor. While he used a compressor box you can also use software compressors such as those in other audio software like Renoise.

Articles

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-= A R T I C L E S =-----

-= Completing Games at Long Last =-

Ivan Sorensen continues his series of philosophical Amiga musings and how they relate to gaming.

-= Building a new Rejuvenator in 2024 =-

John Scolieri documents his experience building a new rejuvenator for his original Amiga 1000.

-= Amiga Paradox of Choice =-

What is the Amiga paradox of choice, and why is it more relevant to the Amiga user now than in the past?

-= Amiga Through the Lens of an LD Learner Part 2 =-

A continuation of last issue's article, this time we look at a selection of software that can aid those with LD.

-= Contributing article: Lessons From a 7Mhz CPU =-

Contributing writer Jman writes about his Amiga experiences in a modern world.

#Articles - WhatIFF? Issue 3.13 - April 2024#

The Amiga Philosopher's stance on Amiga Games

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Completing Games at Long Last - by: Ivan Sorensen
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In the past couple of months, I have been doing something I do not usually do: Playing games for the explicit point of completing them.

That sounds funny perhaps, after all, is the purpose of playing a game not to complete it?

Most of the time I am not so sure. How many sit down to play a bit of Turrican 2 just to enjoy the music and the relaxation of playing through the first world or so, but are not prepared to white-knuckle it through the shoot em up and alien stages?

That assumes the player can realistically complete the game at all. Will I ever beat The Chaos Engine? That seems pretty doubtful, so I suppose every time I play that is not to complete it but to experience it.

But lately, I decided that I wanted to try something different and deliberately try to complete more games. I think a lot of people who play retro games tend to play in a pretty scattered form so why not put a bit more in-depth emphasis on each game? I think it is easy to be.

In some cases, this meant revisiting a game I had previously completed years ago, sometimes on the PC. In other cases, it just meant having another play-through. And I definitely wanted to tackle a few games I had never managed to complete before.

Some of the titles would be little games on itch.io and others would be big old RPGs.

I did not set a lot of conditions. It is easy to set all kinds of rules and requirements for this sort of challenge but I think it runs into two problems:

First the more complications the bigger the chance the challenge falters. If you have to beat each release of the game left-handed and write a 13-page walkthrough and do it every Thursday, you will eventually get tired of it and once you skip doing it once, you've sowed the seeds of failure.

Second I realised that I don't have to impress anyone by trying to do more difficult challenges. Nobody cares what difficulty mode you picked for a 35-year-old game for example.

So my conditions were simple:

Play the game at whatever difficulty setting I liked. If I conclude I absolutely can't complete a game, I will blow through it with a cheat code, trainer or walkthrough. If I learned anything useful, try to put a few thoughts on my blog.

For more complex games I will also spend some time perusing the documentation and trying to get into the vibe of the game. Nowadays you can find most of them online.

For a few games, I specifically wanted to try to beat the game at a high difficulty (like the Warlords "every computer opponent on max difficulty" challenge mentioned in the manual), for others, I was happy to just make it through alive (Banshee).

So what has been the spoils?

So far I have beaten:

Alien Breed 2*, Banshee, Battle Isle, Boxx 1, 2 and 3, Breathless, Catacomb 3D (amiga port), Champions of Krynn*, Civilization*, Doom 2*, Leisure Suit Larry*, Magica, Shanghai, Transplant*, Turrican 2*, Turrican 3*, UFO Enemy Unknown*, Warlords*, Wolfenstein 3d.

Those with an asterisk are ones I had previously completed so only a few new titles but ones that felt like big achievements (Battle Isle in particular) or were just fun to experience (the Boxx games are all very short but quite lovely).

Currently, I am working my way through Dune 2 and seeing if I can, in fact, beat Chaos Engine (I remain doubtful). I've also begun Death Knights of Krynn again.

I find that playing a single game at a time tends to be too slow-paced for me. Doing 2 or 3 means I can switch things up and when I am "in the zone" for a game, I can sit down every night and work at it a little bit. For Breathless, I played one level every night, with deaths meaning I tried again the following night.

Have I had any big revelations? Well, I mostly picked games I knew were quite good. Breathless was probably the biggest revelation in how much I ended up enjoying my time through the game. The Amiga port of Catacomb 3D I wouldn't say is a great game but it was fun to experience something I missed back in the day.

Battle Isle I think I am "done with". It was tremendous fun to beat all the maps (and the last few maps are quite challenging) but I probably won't be returning to that one. On the other hand, even after doing what the manual said was the hardest challenge (Starting as Sirians with every enemy set to the highest difficulty) I still want to play more Warlords. If you are giving this challenge a try, be aware that it is heavily luck-based. A more manageable "max enemies" challenge would be Elvallis or Grey Dwarves.

Most of all it gave me the feeling of zen: Of sitting quietly in the evening and working towards a goal and doing so without the rest of the world looking over my shoulder like it often feels on the internet. I suggest you give it a try.

- Weasel

rejuvenator

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Building a New Rejuvenator in 2024 - by: John Scolieri

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Building a new Rejuvenator Expansion board in 2024 for my Amiga 1000

Topside Picture Underside Picture

It was 1990, my Amiga 1000 and I were in University and we were both drooling at a magazine ad showing a new board expansion for the Amiga 1000 that replaced the existing daughterboard inside the Amiga. This wasn't just any 'upgrade' it was the Holy Grail of expansions for the Amiga 1000 which gave users the following:

- The ability to use a physical KS ROM (no more needing a kickstart disk to boot though that never bothered me)
- Internal RTC
- ECS Denise
- Video Port
- and the ultimate upgrade...FINALLY, Amiga 1000 users could have 1MB Chip, or even 2MB Chip RAM with a Fat Agnus !!!

I must have phoned every computer store in Canada and the U.S (which wasn't cheap back then...remember there was no 'online' anything yet other than dial-up BBS') with no luck finding one. I was on waiting list after waiting list for well over a year when I found out that only around 800 Rejuvenators were sold and production was stopped by the developer (Greb Tibbs) who I later found out ran into royalty issues with Commodore (i.e. he never received the money originally agreed upon and left the Amiga scene altogether). For legal reasons, Commodore couldn't sell any more Rejuvenator boards after the legal issues and was happy to pay Amiga 1000 owners to trade in their 1000's to buy a new Amiga 2000 at a reduced price !?

Well, I loved my Amiga 1000 and needless to say, I didn't 'trade it in' but rather invested in more fast RAM sidecars and a 68010 CPU which motored me along just fine for the remainder of my University years while still desperately waiting to see if I can find a used Rejuvenator of the 800 or so that were sold. Alas I never was able to find one until I stumbled on a YouTube video by intric8 (Eric Hill) who also is the Sysop at the website amigalove.com.

In the video, Eric discusses his wish to make new Rejuvenator boards with the help of the Amiga community, not for profit but rather as an homage to the original developer (Greg Tibbs) and for the benefit of the Amiga 1000 community.

That was in 2018 and in the following years, there was a community effort to re-engineer the original boards from existing production boards and also with help from Greg Tibbs himself! A big bump in the road was that Greg Tibbs had lost all of his original files which were necessary for four custom chips on the board. Luckily in 2021, a well-known engineer in the Amiga community based in Germany (Matthias Heinrichs known as Matze on Amiga forums) was able to read and dump the contents of the four custom chips using an old ALL07A chip programmer by HiLo-Systems and with that, all the information needed was in order!

As promised by Eric Hill, all information for building your own new Rejuvenator board is open source for the Amiga community and can be found at the projects github.com page at:

=> <https://github.com/joethezombie/Amiga-1000-Rejuvenator>

If you can handle basic through-hole soldering and have a lot of patience it's truly an awesome project to carry out yourself. I've been slowly building mine (see attached pics) and I'm so happy that there's no SMT involved with this new board lol

For those who want to buy a pre-built board, you can find them currently at amibay.com and sometimes on eBay.

I absolutely love that the names of the team members who managed to get these new Rejuvenator boards available again are printed on the new boards so cheers to:

Joe Carter, Matthias Heinrichs, Christian Stich, Matt Martin, Adrian Garay, Marco Both, Eric Hill, and an eternal thank you to Greb Tibbs who sadly passed away in 2020.

cheers,
G. Scolieri

amigaparadox

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Amiga Paradox of Choice - by: Timo Paul

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The Amiga scene has naturally changed over the last 10 years, and more so over the last 20 years. Those who grew up with the Amiga now have stable jobs and live with disposable income, the Amiga has more new upgrades and hardware than ever before. We have new variations on the Amiga concept, Amigas which are not Amigas and a dizzying array of Amiga installs and emulation options. Compared to what was available in the 80s and 90s it is a lucky time to be a new and original Amiga user.

When I was younger I could not afford more than one Amiga and could only upgrade it to an 030 and hard disk. But as I got older, I got a proper job and more money, I started to buy other Amigas, an A500, A600, CD32 Vampire V4+ Standalone and an A2000. It did not stop there, I also massively upgraded the machines with new hardware. Soon my room was full of Amigas and not only that, retro game consoles. PC Engine, Super Famicom, PC-FX, Mega Drive, NeoGeo, the list goes on. I was very happy as I had managed to obtain much of what I could not when I was younger. During my free time, I would switch between Amigas, or play one console and then another, it was a good life and I was very happy, until a few years later. I started to notice that some of my machines had more dust than others, so I tried to use the other machines more but it started to dawn on me that it became more of a chore. I felt that I had to use the other Amigas and consoles because they were there, they became a necessary choice. Soon I was playing and using my consoles and computers because I felt bad if they were just sitting there and as a result, I was using my Amigas in a less productive way than before. We all use our Amigas in different ways, for me it is about creating. The Amiga was and always will be the creative computer and when it becomes something that I start to use just because it IS, or is there, the magic of the Amiga is lost.

While I was feeling this way, I was studying for a qualification in counselling as it would prove helpful for my special needs teaching. One section of the course covered modern society and an area concentrated on the ill effects of having too much choice. It was here that I started to consider maybe I was having an Amiga paradox of choice, I had too many Amiga choices and as a result, my experience was not as satisfactory as I wanted. There is a great book and TED talk by Barry Schwartz, 'Paradox of Choice', he talks about how in modern-day society we have too many choices and as a result, we are unhappier. There are other studies into this and it rammed home that for myself at least I was not as happy as I was when I had fewer Amigas and Fewer consoles. So I started to cull my Amigas and consoles, as of now I only have my one A1200 and zero consoles. It was a difficult choice at first but I have found myself to be much happier when using my Amiga. I find that I diddle-daddle less and am using it in a much more productive and fun way.

This is not for everyone but I can sincerely say that having reduced my Amiga paradox of choice has made computing more fun, plus I have more money for going on holiday and making new memories with my wife.

It is funny to think of it but while the Amiga is a reminder of our past it is still not immune to modern societal changes and influences. I for one am overwhelmed by the choices available for our Amiga and this is a great thing but I am also happy that I am fine-tuning my Amiga experience and making it into a fine wine that I can sip slowly.

Amiga Through the Lens of an LD Learner Part 2

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Amiga Through the Lens of an LD Learner: Part 2 - by: Timo Paul

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Thank you to everyone who wrote in about the [Amiga Through an LD Learner] I was pleasantly surprised by the comments and interest being this is a topic not much covered in regards to retro technology. For the continuation of this article, I will cover some specific pieces of Amiga software that can be of help to LD learners and the reasons why they are helpful.

To begin with, let's have a look at the humble word processor, the staple of any computer while it may at times be derided as not being important it plays a large part in most computer users' lives. In the last article, we delved a little into why the Amiga is a great tool for children and even adults with dyslexia or ADHD. The [Quiet] and distraction-free environment offered by the Amiga helps keep the mind focused and the lower resolution makes it easier to focus on what you are working on. While we want to keep the working area distraction free we also must take into consideration the way most learners with LD work. Research has shown that it is often the case that LD learners' brains are right-side dominated, hands up who knows what this means? You get a point if you say the right side of the brain is used for art, music, visual and spatial processing. So, with this in mind, if we use a word processor from the MS-DOS era, we usually get a very sparse environment with no mouse, and text on either a black screen or black on white only, it is not conducive to a nice working environment for someone who works visually.

An ideal word processor on the Amiga is Excellence!, it runs in HiRes mode so you get 75 columns, there is not much to do on the screen via buttons etc. The [paper] is white but it is possible to change the colours of the [paper] via the Palette requestor. You may be asking why this is important.

Studies have shown that LD learners can concentrate, read and comprehend better if the background is a colour darker than white. For some, it is a light blue, darkish blue or light yellow. Being dyslexic I was tested in London for my best reading colour, and it was found that my reading speed and comprehension jumped when using a blue-tinted plastic sheet. This is why when choosing a word processor for a child or adult with a learning difficulty it is important to be able to change the paper colour.

Other word processors can do this on the Amiga but I found that with Excellence! the GUI and default colours to be the most relaxing for someone with LD. If you have a favourite word processor on the Amiga try and see if you can change the paper colour to something more relaxing.

I have mentioned Excellence! a lot but as you all know there are many more word processors available for the Amiga with Wordsworth and FinalWriter being the better-known ones. I spent some time digging into FinalWriter to change the background colour, while it seems possible from the Preferences menu it did not change the white background to my chosen colour. There could be another menu but it demonstrates why I find Excellence! a better option when using it for someone with a learning difficulty. I was able to quickly change the background with only three clicks.

Finally, there is the text to speech, while we may laugh about how it sounds today, it was a very helpful tool for those who struggle to read and is still a useful tool that I use myself. The more modern word processors seem to have lost this feature but Excellence! still has it along with other older word processors. Having the ability to highlight text and have it read back to you was revolutionary in the 80s but for a dyslexic, it was a lifesaver! If you had a school report that you had to read out or a presentation for your company, the Amiga was there to help you practice

reading it out loud without making any mistakes.

I hope that if you are a parent or teacher and want to help your child/student who has a learning difficulty, you might consider the benefits of an Amiga.

Lessons from a 7 MHz CPU

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Lessons from a 7 MHz CPU - by: Jman
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Hello, readers of WhatIFF?, this article follows the trail of previous contributions to WhatIFF? describing various aspects of the classic Amiga computing, both technical and philosophical. They are listed at the bottom of this article (feel free to read them in case you missed them!).

There's a thread connecting all these articles and today I'll try to identify four key lessons, so to speak.

1) Calm computing

In WhatIFF 2.12 Timo Paul (editor of WhatIFF) tells about a student with learning difficulties using an almost stock Amiga 600 under their mentoring. The article provides a novel perspective about how such an old piece of hardware turns out to be a surprisingly didactical tool because not jumping on the user with popups and distractions. It's not important what the student is learning, it is important what the learning process looks like.

I am writing this text while listening to music through Bluetooth speakers, compulsively checking phone notifications and email. That's a lot of technology at once! Not the kind of calm computing I have in mind.

Note: if we look up "calm computing" or "calm technology" we find definitions that in principle only partially overlap with what is meant here. I'm just borrowing this term for the sake of this article.

Computing with an Amiga can be a less distracting, more "crystallised" experience. Less distracting because limited resources dictate essential software features without frills; crystallised because it's finished software. For the better or the worse, there won't be another release or a patch. We forgot what a finished piece of software is.

So, the first lesson is that a classic Amiga provides a complete computing platform that respects the user. We used to buy software and use it, period. That was the deal.

2) Offline first, focused experience

When learning how to do something on an Amiga we can choose to be alone with the machine and the documentation. No Stack Overflow (and no advertisement or gamified karma ladders), no Reddit (and dodging the trolling), no stochastic parrot machines (and no filtering the nonsense).

This isolation teaches us about a focused computing experience unusual today. We don't realise anymore how much our brains are over-stimulated and try to frantically cope with billions of stimuli when all you're trying to do is fix a bug.

It's no surprise people find it difficult to get "into the zone" and be productive.

3) How much computing resources do we need?

When I write code, blog posts or check email, most of the time surely the bottleneck is me rather than the computer because I stare at the screen reading and thinking. Like you in this very moment.

It's exciting observing new hardware replacing the stock Amiga chipset with

powerhouses at the time not even conceivable. However, let's try forcing some restraints and see how these limits affect our experience. An Amiga with a Motorola 030 can provide a slow but calm computing experience without trying too hard to imagine "what if" scenarios where this platform had a future (which we now know wasn't really about to happen anyway).

Small video resolution? It's just a small video resolution, software was designed to fully use it. Is ProTracker or DeluxePaint limited software? Or am I the bottleneck because I don't know how to make digital art?

Maybe we want to learn a bit of React+ GUI programming, how to write an AmigaGuide file, make a presentation with Scala400 or just play a bit with the Lispy dialect writing an Installer script. Slowly, but an Amiga will get you there, eventually.

So here we learn that engineer ingenuity gave us good tools already long ago for software development, productivity, multimedia and entertainment purposes. And good tools, even! Even when we look at them through our eyes of spoiled kids of the future.

I mean, there's a reason why my main software tool is Emacs, something first released more than 45 (!) years ago, right? Which brings us to the last point ...

4) Know the past to learn the future

When we touch with hands that a lot of what we have today was already available - in some form - long time ago, we sort of realise that (quoting a book about the Amiga) the future was here 35 years ago.

A classic Amiga doesn't need to be the old car used on Sundays for a short ride and then spending the rest of the day shining it with a cloth. Yes, we are conscious of its limits and I won't make it look like an Amiga can do everything I do today. Even pushed over its limits with modern peripherals, an Amiga probably offers today a subpar experience.

But this is exactly the point: what can I do and how can I do it. There's a threshold behind which if we trade in a bit of time, there's a lot we can do with such a hilariously underpowered machine. By using this "time capsule" we learn something about our technological roots.

I am not nostalgic. I would never give away the Rust compiler (a modern programming language) I use daily that checks all memory bounds in my code for me or a CPU with virtual memory. I live today and embrace the future but just like any other discipline, learning about the past tells us a lot about the present and the future.

Suggested readings:

- WhatIFF 1.06: "Little Things That Made Amiga Great" by Carl Svensson
- WhatIFF 2.09: "Kickstarting Your Zen" by Ivan Sorensen
- WhatIFF 2.12: "Amiga Through the Lens of an LD Learner"
- "Decades of Fun: Computers Built to Last" by Carl Svensson at <https://www.datagubbe.se/30yearcomp/>

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

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- = T A L K I N G * A M I G A = - - - - -

- - - - -

- = Massimo Loi: Developer of NEONnoir interview = -

Last year we reviewed the highly enjoyable game NEONnoir, this issue we are priviledged to have an interview with it`s creator Massimo Loi.

- = Simone Bevilacqua: RETREAM = -

John Scolieri meets up with C64 and Amiga game developer Simone Bevilacqua to discuss Amiga and his game development history.

- = 8080: Game Developer Interview = -

A game developer from Sweden who has been making waves in the Amiga scene with his next gen Amiga releases, namely for the Apollo Computer range.

- = Willem Drijver: Apollo Robin Hood Interview = -

We talk to one of the main drivers behind Apollo Computer and his latest conversion, Robin Hood to the V4 series of Amigas.

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#Talking Amiga - WhatIFF? Issue 3.13 - April 2024#

Massimo Interview

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Interview - Massimo Loi: NEONnoir by Timo Paul

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1. Hello! Thank you for taking the time for this interview. To start, could you tell us a little bit about yourself, such as where you are from, etc.?

Hi Timo, thanks for reaching out. This is pretty exciting! Alright, where to start... where to start... When I was very young, my uncle taught me one line of Basic on his Speccy: '10 PRINT "MASS" : GO TO 10'. As I saw my name zoom past the screen, I was hooked, and I knew right then and there that I wanted to become a programmer and make games.

I had to wait a few years until I got a hold of my school's Apple IIe and IIGS before I really got my chance to fall in love with coding, and I spent countless days and nights trying to make games of all sorts. As usual, with inexperienced programmers, the scope of my projects always eclipsed my talent.

The game I most fondly remember working on (and that was unceremoniously abandoned once a new idea hit) was a wireframe dungeon crawler in the style of Wizardry or Ultima's dungeons.

Several years later, I volunteered to be part of my school's audio/visual lab, where I was first introduced to the Amiga 500 that they used to create the rudimentary graphics for the high school's sports events they'd televise on public access TV. Although I never got to use it for any programming, I got to spend a lot of time with DPaint.

Eventually, I landed a job in the games industry (working on the platform, not the games), where I've been for the last 20+ years. During this time, I never gave up on making my own game, though I have a pile of hard drives as a graveyard for an uncountable number of unfinished projects.

It wasn't until 2020 that I joined my first game jam, which unlocked my dormant ability to finish a game, and I was, once again, hooked. I've participated in many jams since then, but my favorite and most successful was the Amiga Blitz Basic Game Jam hosted by Zooperdan last year, which spawned NEONnoir.

2. How did you start working with the Amiga?

I put the blame squarely on Zooperdan. I had participated in a few of his Dungeon Crawler Jams (note my previous love of 'em), and he mentioned that he would run a Blitz Basic jam for the Amiga. I had a fondness and nostalgia for the system, and I thought, "How hard could it be?" and joined. Little did I know that it would be very, very hard.

I had a blast getting acquainted with the Amiga all over again. I was surrounded by people who had been programming this system since the late 80s, who understood it inside and out, and I felt a bit like the ignorant new kid in the room full of adults.

However, the community was incredibly kind and welcoming to this newcomer. If I had to name every person who patiently helped me, there wouldn't be enough space for other articles in this issue!

3. Have you created any other games for the Amiga or other computers prior to NeoNoir?

NEONnoir is the only game I've made for the Amiga (so far!); prior to it, I created several jam games. My most recent is a silly dungeon crawler

parody of NEONnoir for modern systems that takes the perspective of Daisy, the main character's dog.

4. What made you decide to create a futuristic point-and-click adventure game?

Back in high school, when I wasn't spending time on DPaint, the teacher was cool enough to let me play the one Amiga game on the system, "Rise of the Dragon." I really loved the aesthetic, blending the film noir genre with cyberpunk. Oddly enough, it would be years before I'd see Blade Runner!

When thinking about the game I'd make for the jam, I kept thinking about Rise of the Dragon and how, for me, it was the quintessential Amiga game (after all, it's the only one I ever played!), so I knew I needed to pay homage to it.

Originally, NEONnoir was going to be a dungeon crawler/adventure game like the WaxWorks or the Elvira games. Once again, my ambitions exceeded my talents, and I scaled it back to an adventure/visual novel hybrid.

5. The graphics in NeoNoir are amazing! Can you tell us which parts of the game were developed on the Amiga and which were developed on the PC/Mac?

All the graphics for the game were developed on PC with two very different workflows. About half of the scenes were rendered in Unreal Engine using several assets. The other half was created with the help of Midjourney. In both cases, I would take the image and do a whole bunch of alterations, composition, post-processing, and finally, dithering and color reduction in Photoshop. In quite a few parts, my wife (a talented illustrator, in my opinion) lent her talents to bring the characters to life.

6. What was the most challenging part of creating the game?

I had two big challenges in the creation of NEONnoir. The first was a technical one. I've gotten spoiled by modern programming environments with modern programming languages and modern toolsets. Taking a step back in time and leaving thirty years of quality-of-life improvements behind was a definite culture shock! I did all my coding on Windows (I know, I know), where I wrote the Blitz code for the engine and a bunch of C++ code for a suite of tools that would allow me to create content for the game. I would then build and debug my game on WinUAE and finally (once I could get one) test it on my physical Amiga 1200.

The other challenge was an emotional one. Halfway through the jam, our dog passed away, and I stopped working on the game. About a month later, I picked up my virtual pen and started coding again, resolving to immortalize her in the game.

7. Are there any planned updates or physical releases for NeoNoir?

Yes, there are! I worked (and continue to do so) with a few translators to localize NEONnoir into Italian and German. The German translation is complete, and the Italian one is coming along nicely. That update will be, as always, freely available on my site and is the version I plan to distribute as a physical boxed edition.

I was extremely lucky to win the jam, especially since the grand prize was a boxed version of your game. While that has, unfortunately, not panned out, the dream is still alive.

With my wife's help, I've created and made a tiny run of boxes to give them out as gifts. I decided to go as all out as possible and have floppies (with an installer, which was a small victory), a full-color manual, stickers, and a custom-made USB drive that looks like Coral, the drug featured prominently in the game.

My friends convinced me to ask the Amiga community if they had any interest

in a boxed version of a free game that's a year old, and the answer was a resounding yes.

Right now, my biggest obstacle is that while I'm in the United States, most people who want it are in the EU or UK, so I'm looking at ways to be able to publish and distribute the game in those areas to avoid ridiculously high shipping costs.

8. Do you have any plans for a sequel to NeoNoir?

Absolutely! Plans are in motion for the sequel tentatively titled NEONnoir: The Phantom Reflection. I'm working on rewriting the engine in C and adding features that I could not fit into the original (there are no sound effects in the original version!). Not having the looming deadline of a jam, progress is a little slow, but that's not bad, as I can be a little more intentional about the code. I have a lot of the outline for the story done as well.

As much as I'd like to, I don't expect it will be released this year, but who knows?

9. How has the Amiga community reaction been to your game?

The Amiga community is composed of superstars. They have been amazing, encouraging, and generous. I didn't expect anyone other than the other jam participants to play the game, and they blew me away. NEONnoir seems to have resonated with quite a few folks, and I could not be happier.

I started out thinking that making a game for the Amiga would be "one and done," but this community's support has made me realize that this is definitely a space where I want to be.

10. Thank you for your generous responses! Do you have any final comments before we finish?

First, I'd like to thank you for the interview and for giving me the opportunity to share my story. Magazines like WhatIFF? connect game creators with this venerable platform's loyal fans, and I can't wait for your future issues.

I also want to thank the talented community on the blitzbasic.dev Discord, who has taught me everything I now know about Amiga programming. Many friendships were forged through the shared trauma of tight deadlines!

Naturally, I would be remiss if I didn't also thank the broader Amiga community for welcoming me in as one of their own.

Finally, people can reach me and see my games on my site => (massproduced.games). Thanks again!

Simone Bevilacqua Interview

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Interview - Simone Bevilacqua: RETREAM by John Scolieri

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Dear readers I'm certain the majority of you have played at least one of Simone's games for the Amiga and C64. His games (to me) are unique, easy to play but hard to master, well documented with great graphics/music and gameplay. You can check out his projects at:

=> <https://retream.itch.io/>

1. How and when did you initially get involved in programming games for the C64 and later Amiga 68k and then AmigaOS4 (PPC)?

When I was 7, a cousin of mine got a Commodore 64 as a present for his First Communion. Seeing that machine in action at his home was a jaw-dropping experience which ignited my already wild fantasy. Two years later, in 1986, I asked my parents for a Commodore 64 as a present for my own First Communion. I just had no idea of how big a request that was, considering the wage of my dad - but my wish was granted and a breadbin entered my bedroom! My father apologized for not having been able to afford a color monitor, but I was so happy that even the monochrome Philips monitor he bought (I believe the model was BM7502) was like heaven to me.

The shop provided for free also Sammy Lightfoot, Krypton and Oils Well (all pirated, but I had no concept of "pirated" and "original"), which did entertain me quite a lot (especially Oils Well) but did not steal my full attention: I was also interested in the creative side of the machine. So, I started learning the basics (poor pun intended) of programming from the user's manual.

Unfortunately, the manual was limited (and even terribly translated), my wits were even more limited, it did not even dawn on me that the libraries of my small town could have helped (years later, when I finally searched them, I could not find any useful book - but maybe my inexperienced eyes simply did not spot them) and I knew nobody who was into programming, so I did not achieve anything noteworthy. It was only at 11 that staring at the user's manual finally produced some significant effects: I felt something clicking in my head and finally the doors of programming opened to me.

In 1993, when I got an Amiga 1200 (the only Amiga I have ever had - and which I still have a use), I finally managed to create my first games - thanks to AMOS. Then, in 1995, a book on assembly programming and the Amiga hardware documentation found on the internet (courtesy of the university computer lab) revealed to me the wonderful world of Amiga low-level programming.

I landed on AmigaOS 4 when I needed a computer for "serious" tasks and my Amiga 1200 just could not cut it anymore: instead of buying a Windows machine, in 2002 I decided to buy an earlybird AmigaOne XE, whose Linux side would provide the productivity tools I needed and the AmigaOS side would allow me to somehow stay in the Amiga world. I started various projects on it, but I finished and released only the games Blastaway, BOH, Huenison, KOG and SCRAMBLY DV (a little game which eventually I retired), and the utility glUAE.

I did enjoy creating that stuff for AmigaOS 4, but such system provided only a part of the Amiga experience: I sorely missed the hardware programming side and thus, in 2017, I finally returned to the classic Amiga and remade some of the old games from the scratch (ArtPazz, Follix, MeMO, Ring around the World), created a new one (SkillGrid), re-invented a couple of graphics systems (ALS and PED81C) and tried my hand at demo

coding (with THE CURE). Moreover, in 2008 I had also returned to the Commodore 64 to finally make a few games (MAH, QUOD INIT EXIT, QUOD INIT EXIT IIm and QUOD INIT EXIT IIo) also for that machine.

2. Did you have any formal training in computer science or were you mainly self-taught?

I was entirely self-taught until I went to the university in 1995. Eventually I got a bachelor's degree in Computer Science, but I did not continue down that path as I simply was not interested in the subject per se or in (information) technology in general.

3. The only Amiga demo you made won 1st place in 2020 at Solskogen Demo Scene Competition. How and why did you create your first ever Amiga demo and will you be making any more in the future?

For years I had been uselessly trying to come up with a game that would make use of the dot-matrix "engine" (it is too big a word, but that is what came to my mind at first and then it stuck) that eventually found its place in the demo. But it was just unsuitable for games, so all I had ever done with it was only a bunch of test effects. In 2019 I had made a piece of music, just for the fun of it, that remained unused. In 2020, I thought that a demo could be a good means to finally put the "engine", those effects and that music to good use, to express my view about the terrible state the world was in (and not just for COVID) and to give my minuscule contribution for a change.

Other demos were never planned, as I enjoy making games much more. However, these days I am in an extraordinarily similar situation: I have a graphics system (PED81C) for which I cannot conceive a decent game, a few effects, a new and unused piece of music, and the urge to scream how disgusting are the leaders, the elite who are pushing the world towards total destruction - the only enemies are the warmongers, not the countries and their people!

4. What was the most challenging game to make?

I am afraid there is no answer: given that I always try to invent something new, from both a technical and gameplay point of view, most of the games posed a number of challenges which can hardly be compared.

Moreover, often the games are built upon foundations that I had laid previously and maybe for other purposes, so (part of) the challenge might be there rather than in the games themselves (e.g. ArtPazz and Follix were quite simple to make, but they rely on ALS, which required a lot of design and then programming work).

5. What are your thoughts on the recent modern hardware accelerators for Amiga 68k, i.e. Vampire and PiStorm?

First off, all the new hardware efforts are commendable and I wish them the utmost success.

Then, let me first explain my personal stance regarding hardware add-ons. I am all for increasing the computational power and RAM (like M68k + FAST RAM expansion cards do) and making interfacing with I/O devices easier/possible (e.g. scandoublers, Goteks, CompactFlash adapters, mouse adapters, etc.), but I am not interested in hardware that extends the Amiga's core nature. Therefore, if I had one of the accelerators you mention, I would surely enjoy the extra power they provide (especially for development purposes), but I would not care at all about the extras like SAGA-specific features and RTG.

That said, from a development point of view, I am even more radical and I prefer to target stock/low-end machines, because they are (close to) the original machines and because that is where the challenge and the fun is (in fact, the only production of mine which requires some muscles is THE CURE, which needs a 68030 and FAST RAM - and even that makes me feel

somewhat uncomfortable).

6. I also wanted to ask you about what the next game you're working on, but I know you don't like to mention anything until it's completed (publicly anyhow) as you don't like to be stuck to any timeline etc., and I respect that.

No problem, I can answer this question, too. The only game I am working on is QUOD INIT EXIT IIo for the Commodore 64. As you know, it has been in the making since 2015! The progress is very slow because the content to produce is massive (the levels are huge), extremely complicated from a technical point of view and demanding design-wise (as I aim to make the levels innovative and entirely different from one another). Precisely because it is taking so long and because the world has been in such a precarious balance since 2020, contrary to my usual habits, I have released 6 previews in the past 4 years.

I would love (and I itch) to start making a new Amiga game, but it would not be wise at the moment: real life is - let's say - complicated.

Thanks for taking the time for this interview Simone I'm sure many Amiga and C64 enthusiasts worldwide are looking forward to your next game/project!

8080 Interview

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Interview - 8080: Game Developer by Timo Paul

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1. Thank you for taking the time for this interview. Firstly, could you tell us a little about yourself? For example, where you come from and what you do.

I'm from southern Sweden, manager in microelectronic repair industry

2. What was your first experience with the Amiga? Why did you choose the Amiga for use/development?

I have always been interested in programming, it started with a VIC 20 and jumped on different platforms. Amiga is fun and capable machine

3. You have an extensive backlog of releases on classic and next-gen Amigas such as the Apollo Vampire V4 series. What got you into programming on the Amiga?

It has a special feeling... it's mysterious beast to master

4. What was the first game that you released on the Amiga?

Devils Nightshade 1995

5. Your recent releases have been for the Apollo Vampire V4 series of Amiga computers. Why did you choose this platform to develop for over the PPC OS4 Morph or PiStorm systems?

PPC is like off self old stuff, everyone can't enjoy it, way too expensive and size is like a vacuum cleaner ;)...It should be IBM Compatible hardware that is called PC = Personal Computer, then it would be modern but still not Amiga, Amiga heart is the chipset and brains is the OS ;), PiStorm is fun but it's not a new Amiga... This is how I see it !

6. Can you describe your typical development process?

It has changed over the years, now I only do what I truly burn for...

7. Do you program, create the graphics, and sound all by yourself? If so what tools do you use?

I do program, some GFX adjustments/effects, sound tuning. These days to cut down development time and get more stuff out I use mainly gfx/music/sound created by others, but it depends on the project... !

8. When developing games for the V4 computers, do you develop on a V4SA, a classic Amiga, or a PC/Mac? Why?

I'm pretty new on V4SA so for The Deep + Killer Comet it was started on FS-UAE Mac, I'm so used to that environment, did so called ground work then I moved over to V4... meanwhile I got network running between Mac and V4, for backup and game data, this speeds things up!

My next game Pong has started on V4, I've noticed since I got V4 I'm using less emulation.

9. How has the V4 made development easier/better for you?

V4 is modern and fast

10. You have recently released The Deep for Apollo Vampire V4 computers. Can you tell us about its development and what gamers can expect?

Development was 24/7 for 1 month, this thanks to other providing GFX & audio, I spent 10% time on assets and 90% on code. Depending how sales are on this game I've been thinking of doing another game in this size or greater.

11. Do you have plans for other games after The Deep?

I have Pong, probably I'll do something more...

12. For those who are undecided about getting an Apollo Vampire V4 computer what message would you like to convey to them?

It's a small fun NG Amiga computer, everyone can get one! Development community is strong and moving fast !!!

OMNI Boot lets you easy install your favourite OS and have several install if you like, only this makes it all worth it. It even runs my own made OS3.2 upgrade called 32se(itch.io) that really takes your Amiga to NG.

13. Thank you for your time and hard work in the Amiga community. Before we conclude, do you have any final words?

I really looking forward seeing Amiga grow again... I believe Apollo has a strong momentum right now...

Willem Drijver Interview

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Interview - Willem Drijver: Robin Hood by Timo Paul

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1. Hi Willem, thank you for agreeing to this interview. Can you please introduce yourself and tell us a bit about yourself?

Thank you for bringing us WhatIFF? magazine and I am more than happy to contribute with this interview. My full name is Willem Drijver and you can find me on Discord under my secret nickname @willemdrijver. I was born in the great year 1968 in the Netherlands, where I still live with my wife Monique in a small village near Utrecht.

My professional career started in Utrecht where I was studying "Informatica" (Computer Sciences) at the University around 1986-1990. At that time computers were bulky mainframes and acquiring access for coding time was a challenge. Together with an older friend, I started a business importing the Atari ST into the Netherlands, selling them to my fellow students and soon after also to my professors when they discovered the magic of a personal 68K computer for a small budget (starting from 2500 guilders = 3000 US\$). From there the business grew steadily, first with a combined Atari/Amiga retail shop in downtown Utrecht, which gradually transformed into an IT-Services business and around 1999 the business moved to a large office and grew to 80 employees in 2017 at when I decided after long considerations to sell and retire.

2. How did you start using the Amiga?

Like many in Amiga community, my first real computer was a Commodore 64, where I spent countless hours playing (and pirating) Games and learning Basic programming. At the time I started my study I started using Atari ST (practice what you preach J), but my heart was stolen when the Amiga 1000 was introduced and from there I was lost forever. I do still have my first A1000 right here beside me, revived with an Apollo Firebird. My primary use for Amiga 1000, besides playing games of course, was coding, hacking and doing some amateur-level multi-media stuff.

3. Have you programmed games for the Amiga in the past?

I honestly have to admit that I am a lousy coder and although I did pass all the exams on Assembler, Pascal, C, etc I could never reach the level of some of my coding friends around me who were very productive in cracking games and/or creating their own demos. I was more intrigued with the commercial possibilities, although I always stayed in touch with my engineering roots (I actually was one of the first batch of Microsoft Engineers (MCSE) here in Holland.

4. You're currently working on converting Robin Hood: The Legend of Sherwood for the Vampire V4+ series of accelerators/standalone. Is this your first game for the Vampire platform?

Yes. The project of porting "Robin Hood" to Apollo V4 Series started from my personal wish to learn more about how real professional games are coded. When I restarted learning to code for Amiga on Apollo Vampire V2 and later V4 series, I admired even more than before the beauty of the Amiga architecture. The evolution by the brilliant mind of master Gunnar of that architecture to our current Apollo 68080 CPU and SAGA chipset is simply amazing, so when I was presented the opportunity to explore the fantastic game "Robin Hood: Legend of Sherwood" by Spellbound Studios and bring it to life on Apollo V4 I grabbed this with both hands.

5. What made you choose Robin Hood: The Legend of Sherwood?

This was a case of the right time and moment. On the one hand, I was looking into the coding structures of (Amiga) Games and on the other hand I stumbled by coincidence on Robin and his merry men. I did not know the game myself at all, so I watched some video clips and I immediately was captured by the beautifully detailed graphics and the whole immersive feeling of the game. After some initial studying, I decided to really make an effort to not only port the game but to also adapt it to Amiga style and of course optimize it using the powerful Apollo V4 features.

6. Why did you choose to develop for the Vampire platform instead of classic Amiga, OS4, or Morph OS?

Well, the Apollo Vampire V2 was the reason I rediscovered Amiga as it brought my A1000 back to life and I could re-live all my memories playing games. From there I restarted to take an interest in coding with ASM for the m68k and C for AmigaOS. The more I got into coding the more I understood of the great work that had been done developing the Apollo 68080 AMMX CPU and the SAGA special chipset. When the V4 arrived I had just joined the Team and was responsible for ApolloBoot as my personal project and later also coordinating ApolloOS development within the team. With all the additional features the new V4 Series offered I really started to dive into writing Apollo V4 optimized code. For me personally there is no feeling with either OS4 or MorphOS (this is not a qualification!).

7. What was the most challenging aspect of porting Robin Hood to the Vampire?

Robin Hood: Legend of Sherwood was released in two editions, the first was targeted for Windows and required 200Mhz+ Intel CPU to run. Development continued and in 2005 there was a release for OSX, which was again later in 2012 ported to Linux. For this version the requirements were lifted to 1Ghz+ CPU and a dedicated sound and graphics card. So, the main challenge (still today) is to get good and stable performance to get a smooth quality user experience the game deserves.

To overcome this challenge, I need to understand the complete inner workings and identify all the critical data structures, routines and dependencies. Step by step I have recoded all these critical parts, using Apollo specific features both from C++ level as well as in a lot of dedicated developed Apollo ASM routines.

Time will tell if I (with the help of my teammates) will succeed in getting Robin Hood to a quality level that is sufficient for any form of release. Remember that the whole project is started as an internal and personal experiment, and I never expected to get as far as I have at this point.

8. Will the port run on the V2 or only the V4 series?

Given the challenge described in the previous question, I would already be very happy to get the game running smooth on V4. I very much doubt if it will be possible to make this happen for V2, but I also do not rule out anything at this point.

9. How has the advanced Vampire hardware made the game easier to port?

Apollo 68080 architecture is clean and simple and yet very powerful for developers using familiar 68k style registers and instructions. For example I could relatively easy rewrite the complete Video and Audio parts of Robin which were based on the fine but bulky SDL framework. Dozens of complex Audio routines for handling starting/stopping/mixing channels were replaced by new code with only a few lines and all critical Graphic routines were replaced by short ASM routines which typically take no more than 25 instructions or so. Within my scope of skills and experience this could only be done on the Apollo V4 platform.

10. What is the current stage of the game's development?

It's fair to say that we are beyond our "experimental" level, and I believe a "beta" stage would be the appropriate qualification. There is still some work to do in squeezing out extra FPS to really make Robin and all his friend come fully to life on the V4's of our growing and loyal Apollo community. Also, the game profile manager which handles save games and such is still a pain in the lower part of my body (Never Endian Story). Finally, all our development testing is done in the one "demo level" and I kind of expect some bumps in the road when we start travelling through a grand total of no less than 16 complex Missions.

11. When do you expect the game to be released?

It's still too early to give any indication for that. Amiga community is full of promises, but sadly a lot of them are no more than that. I would like to take the time needed to finish something properly.

12. What game would you like to create or port next for the Amiga platform?

After Robin I will likely take a pause from Game coding/porting and work more on ApolloBoot and ApolloOS. But in the longer run it would be logical to look at Desperados as this is the "twin" from Robin. Also, I have an idea to develop a simple but fun Game fully coded in ASM. I already have the graphics for this, designed by Apollo Team friend Kevin Saunders.

13. For Amiga users interested in buying a Vampire card or StandAlone system, what advice do you have for them?

Don't hesitate and just make the step. Apollo V4 Stand Alone as well as the V4 IceDrake (A1200), V4 FireBird (A500/1000/2000) and V4 MantiCore (A600) accelerators will bring you into a revived Amiga world where you can enjoy both the retro history as well as exciting new developments which come from our very active Team and Community. Visit our Discord server and become part of our little crazy, but always positive group of Amiga fans.

14. Thank you for your time. Do you have any final words before we wrap up?

Again, it is me thanking you and your colleagues for spending precious time on creating WhatIFF magazine and keeping us all informed on all the interesting Amiga stuff. I truly believe that the Amiga community can become more positive and cohesive by means of better communication and information. This is why initiatives like WhatIFF magazine are important. Regarding questions or chats on Robin Hood, ApolloBoot, ApolloOS and other things I am to be found on Apollo Discord (@willemdrijver). Thank you all for reading and have fun with Amiga in whatever shape or form is most suitable for you.

Cheers!

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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.

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

Welcome to the Amiga vendors section!

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- = A M I G A * V E N D O R * L I N K S = - - - - -

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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 3.13 - April 2024#

Welcome to the Amiga Groups section!

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-= A M I G A * G R O U P * L I N K S =-----
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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?#
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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 Club <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 3.13 - April 2024#

Invents Corner

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April 2024 * I N V E N T S / C O R N E R =- by Kevin Saunders

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News from Invent:

KillaWatt - C64 game port to Amiga

Recently posted the image that is about 90% done for the Title page on my Patreon and Twitter/X account. Keeping the options open for both OCS and AGA versions. I should quickly backtrack and say that once I have completed all the assets, I will initially plan to find a coder or Scorpion developer who might like to create this game. I did post an example on my YouTube of my Scorpion demo, however, more work is required. The design of the game so far is keeping mostly the colour palette from the C64 which means OCS 16 colour palette is sorted. Once the game is released (FREE), I plan to then reuse the engine and build a brand new game, this is very exciting and maybe add a few more bells and whistles. I truly believe we need to port more of the amazing 8bit games to our beloved 16bit Amigas :)

Boss Machine

I will be posting all the assets so far for Boss Machine on my Patreon as an exclusive, you will see just how much content I have created for the game. In fact, you probably could make 3 games. This game has been a huge journey and some would say very slow, however, we will complete this game one day. I have had some intense sessions on the game dev side which includes organizing all the assets.

Other Games!

Remember "Mig n Ziggy, or Mutant Monty", I still haven't forgotten these games and eventually they will come back for more dev work. Games for the ApolloOS have been quiet these last few months, so no further work as yet, however, Gunnar and I have talked recently about getting Dr Apollo, Apollo Crown and Apollo Invaders.

AmigaKit - A600 GS

I am working on the promo video for the A600GS, this should be public fairly soon, I think I have about another week or so. Working with Matthew and the legend Paul Kitching with some 3D intro added to the promo.

Amiga Art Contest 2023 - update

No news here, Doug who organizes the contest has been super busy over the last few months and as with all of us, family, and work life come first.

P.S. On a personal level, I've been quite fatigued over the last 6-12 months, so work and this Amiga hobby has had an impact, hopefully over time this will resolve itself soon. I haven't been as productive as I would have liked.

AmigaForever,
Kev | Invent

www.patreon.com/KevinSaunders

Cover Disk Number 4

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-= April 2024 Cover Disk Contents =-----
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You may have noticed that the WhatIFF? file is a bit heavier than usual, that is due to our cover disk game, The Deep by 8080, reviewed in this issue. It needs a pretty beefy Amiga to run but can be run on 060+RTG Amigas or the Amigas with V4 cards. It is a great game and I am proud that we can host the demo with the magazine.

In addition we also have the latest WHDLoad torrent, so you want to update your Amiga game library use this torrent file.

In addition there are the usual accompanying images for some of the articles that can be viewed in the ExtraContent directory.

Thanks goes to 8080 for providing the demo this issue.

What's coming up in the next issue?

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- = N E X T * I S S U E - 3.14 - A U G U S T 2024 =-----

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Thank you for reading this issue of WhatIFF?, the next issue is due to come out in August 2024. In this issue we will have reviews of IBrowse, AmiExpress, Roadshow 1.15, ApolloExplorer and more. In addition to the reviews we will also have more from our resident writers, and Andy Vaisey will start a new series on game programming, a continuation of the Creative Graphics series and more will also be coming.

Until then enjoy the current issue and see you in issue 14!

#Next Issue - WhatIFF? Issue 3.13 - April 2024#

Meet the writing staff of WhatIFF?

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`- = W R I T I N G * S T A F F = - - - - -`

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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 *

Andy Vaisey

Ivan Sorensen

John Scolieri

Kevin Saunders

Roald Strauss

Rob O'Malley

Steve Lord

Timo Paul

Tristan Shiflett

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 3.13 - April 2024#

andyvaisey

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Name: Andy Vaisey

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Aliases:
aNdY/AL/COS (EAB)

Contact info:
andyvaisey@whatiff.info

Websites:
www.cosine.org.uk
www.arkanixlabs.com

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Bio:

timopaul

=====

Name: Timo Paul

=====

Aliases:
amifan (EAB)

Contact info:
timopaul@whatiff.info

Websites:
www.whatiff.info
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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Aliases:
stevelord (EAB)

Contact info:
stevelord@whatiff.info

Websites:
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:

klx300r (EAB)
328gts (amigans.net)
aGS@C64_AMIGA (Twitter)

Contact info:
johnscolieri@whatiff.info

Websites:
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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Aliases:
Invent (EAB)

Contact info:
kevinsaunders@whatiff.info

Websites:
www.patreon.com/KevinSaunders
www.youtube.com/KevinSaunders
www.twitter.com/invent71
www.instagram.com/invent71/
www.ko-fi.com/kevinsaunders

=====
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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Aliases:
Weasel Fierce

Contact info:
ivansorensen@whatiff.info

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

=====

Name: Rob O'Malley

=====

Aliases:
anaki rob
Mr.Roboto

Contact info:
anakirob@whatiff.info

Websites:
systemofsound.org

=====

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

roaldstrauss

=====

Name: Roald Strauss

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Aliases:

MisthaLu

Contact info:

Websites:

www.indiegamemusic.com

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Bio:

Content coming soon.

jman

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Name: Contributing writer Jman
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Aliases:
Jman

Contact info:

Websites:

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Bio:

Article submission metadata:
Date: 20240309
Author: Jman
License: CC BY-SA 4.0

danielreimann

Name: Daniel Reimann

Aliases:

Contact info: daniel_reimann@freenet.net

Websites: Translator for www.amiga-news.de

Tristanshiflett

=====

Name: Tristan Shiflett

=====

Aliases:
Manical

Contact info:
Discord: Manical#1992 / manical90

Websites:
manical.neocities.org

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Bio:
Manical started making music for the Amiga in early 2021 (April) and has released at some demoparties, and is planning to go to more along the way. He's in the demogroups MoonShine and Hokuto Force as a musician, and soon to be a coder or graphician. He started out with Protracker for his first 3 mods, then moved to FastTracker primarily, and then he started exploring Impulse Tracker and started making tracks with Furnace. His songs have gotten good reviews by many famous people in the demoscene, such as Jammer, Purple Motion, Skaven, and cTrix (Most known for his gAtari). Since his music journey, he's entered Syntax 2021, Mysdata 2022, Booazedrome VI (Which his track that he entered ended up on the official Booazedrome tape which was limited to 50 copies).

Favorite quote: 'You see, we are here, as far as I can tell, to help each other; our brothers, our sisters, our friends, our enemies. That is to help each other and not hurt each other.'

danielreimann

Name: Daniel Reimann

Aliases:

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Websites: Translator for www.amiga-news.de

