

BenSpeaks

Ben Vost

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Chapter 1

BenSpeaks

1.1 Welcome to AFCD11

AFCD11

March 97

Oops, nearly put 96 for the date line. I know you, dear reader, won't be reading this until the end of February, but for me, Christmas and the new year still loom large in the memory.

This month's CD is the first that I haven't had a major (if not exclusive) part in compiling. E.M.Computergraphic, those masters of high quality CDs have put it together and will also be doing future ones, improving the standard and adding new features all the time.

On another topic, how many of you watched the Top Gear episode about halfway through January that dealt with the rise, fall and rise again of Aston Martin? As I watched it I was struck by the parallels with the Amiga saga.

Here's a company with an absolutely fantastic product, started in the mid-fifties (sorry I'm not more precise - I failed to catch the start of the program). They bring out a range of critically acclaimed cars, even getting one of them in a James Bond film as possibly the best Bond gadget ever (the DB6 with the bullet proof shield, smoke guns, revolving numberplate, extending bumpers, machine guns and, best of all, an ejector seat for unwanted baddies). Even so, Aston Martin went bust in 1974 - never having made a penny in profit!

A campaign was launched to find a new owner for Amig... oops, Aston, and one of the members of the board of directors, an oil magnate, finally stepped up to the plate and gave it a go. His money and business skills notwithstanding, he sold out in 1981 and now the company is a thriving business - still not making much money on the cars themselves, but an absolute packet on upgrades to engines, servicing and so on.

Now, while there are parallels, the Amiga's situation is somewhat different. For a start, it made an awful lot of money for Commodore who ran it into the ground. But I'm absolutely positive that, like Aston Martin, the Amiga can rise from the moribund and become a major player once again. But I am rapidly coming to the conclusion that the succession of companies seen bidding in the past for

the Amiga's salvation all have a few things in common: namely, they all profess to "love" the Amiga, they are not big companies and most importantly of all, they don't have much money.

Personally, I believe that the Amiga's resurrection depends on rapid development and aggressive promotion, along the lines of Intel's campaign, but none of the companies thus far involved with the possible exception of Commodore at the height of their power, has had the capital necessary to bring the Amiga up to date. The only players that would have are big corporations that are very little concerned with whether or not the Amiga survives.

So is everything bleak? I don't think so. Probably the best hope for the Amiga's survival lies in the emerging technological industries of Korea and the like. Companies like Daewoo have spent millions buying up other people's ideas and then developing them further to create a product that is their own and, hopefully, better than the competition, at a lower price.

Whatever happens with Amiga Technologies, VIScorp, Quikpak and whoever else turns up, I have no doubt that this year will be crucial to the Amiga's continued existence.

Keep your chins up,

Ben
PS. STOP SENDING YOUR MODULES! WE CAN'T USE THEM! (If you don't understand why, try taking a look at the submissions advice
)

1.2 Submissions advice

Print this file out!

HOW TO SEND US YOUR SUBMISSIONS
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IMPORTANT! We can no longer accept your music modules as submissions for the Amiga Format CD owing to copyright problems with sound samples from copyrighted sources. Thanks for all your music submissions up till now, but please don't send any more...

We want you to send us your programs, animations, pictures, game tips and cheats, hacks, hardware projects, basically anything you can think of that you have done with your Amiga. It must be your own work - no passing off Chris Achilleos' greatest masterpieces as your own, and we need a variety of things from you in addition to your submission and we need them on your disk.

1. We need your name and address so that we know where to send your prize. You should also put your name and address on labels on your media.

2. We need two read me files accompanying your work; one for us and one

to go on the CD itself (title them AF_ReadMe and ReadMe). These can be as in-depth as you want them to be, but should contain instructions for us on getting your work running if it is a complicated procedure, including things like necessary libraries and so on. The readme that will go on the CD will be the introduction of your work to the whole Amiga Format reading world so check your spelling and grammar and show people just what is so good about your work.

3. If your work requires files such as libraries which you cannot send us owing to copyright reasons make sure we know about them so that we can either arrange to put them on the CD, or warn our readers about them (you will probably do this in your CD read me).

4. Be aware that we won't be as interested in programs that need to boot or that require to be in a certain place on the CD, unless, of course, that place happens to be in your directory on the CD. Your directory will almost certainly have the path:
"AFCDx:ReaderStuff/your_name/" but then no-one will be able to run your program except from the CD, limiting its usefulness or appeal.

If we do put something on the CD that needs to autoboot, it will almost certainly only be as a DMS that readers will have to extract to disk before they can use it.

You can send us your work on pretty much any sort of media whether it be floppy disks (high or double density, but don't send us work on high density disks unless you yourself have a high density drive. High density disks used in a double density drive aren't as reliable as using double density disks), a floppy disk back up using AmiBack, Quarterback or any of the shareware backup tools, Zip disk, Jaz cartridge, SyQuest 44MB, 88MB or 105MB or EZ Drive, DAT tape backup from any of the above-mentioned programs (the only thing we're not very keen on is the Video Backup System that Power Computing sell in the UK, we've had nothing but trouble with it), FTP upload to ftp2.futurenet.co.uk, (you'll only be able to put your file in the incoming directory, you won't be able to see it once you have finished uploading, but don't worry, it'll be there. Make sure that you name your file with AF at the start so that we know it's for us) basically anything apart from a listing on paper. We don't want to have to type in your program too!

We will return any media more expensive than high density floppies via registered post, so you won't have to worry about losing seventy quid's worth of Jaz cartridge.

Send your submissions to:

CD submissions
Amiga Format
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, BA1 2BW

1.3 Thought for the month

On my soapbox again!

Who the hell do Newtek think they are? You may have already read my review of the latest version of Lightwave and been initially surprised by the low mark I gave it, but is it any wonder when you get so little for so much money?

The Amiga is currently in a renaissance of top-notch, innovative products. Hardware items like HiSoft's SMD-100 MPEG player, Phase5's CyberStormII and CV64/3D and software like Cinema 4D, Draw Studio and iBrowse just go to prove that there has never been a better market for Amiga products.

Not only that, but all this third party development is trying to drag the Amiga, kicking and screaming though it may be, into the nineties. Networking systems like Envoy and Miami are easy to set up and extremely user-friendly, RTG graphics cards free the Amiga from the tyranny of bitplane graphics and now retargettable sound (known as AHI or Audio Hardware Interface) is hitting the market with the same impact that RTG had back in 92-93.

Yet Newtek launch a new version of Lightwave that not only ignores these new features, it doesn't even like them. "The Amiga can't handle OpenGL" say Newtek - "rubbish", I say. Newtek and Phase5 could very easily have got together to create a standard for the Amiga that may well have depended on the user having to upgrade his computer with a graphics card with 3D acceleration, but hell, PC software companies have been doing that for years and now look at the "average" PC.

It's not only Newtek that deserves lambasting for their attitude. Games companies are major culprits in their own rights. Nearly all the Amiga users I know have at least 6MB RAM, a hard drive and quite likely a CD-ROM drive too. Yet still, we get sent games that won't install to hard disk, that don't take advantage of extra memory and so on.

Still, there's not much point me saying all this here on a CD-ROM where none of the companies mentioned are going to bother looking at it. Rather than writing to your local MP and complaining, why not take the opportunity to write to the games company (or Newtek) that annoys you the most with their attitude and really let them have it.

That's all folks!
