

Ambush

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	<i>TITLE :</i> Ambush	
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WRITTEN BY		February 6, 2023
		<i>SIGNATURE</i>

REVISION HISTORY

NUMBER	DATE	DESCRIPTION	NAME

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Chapter 1

Ambush

1.1 Ambush V1.03a

Ambush User Guide

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What does Ambush do?

How do I make it work?

Who are Silicon Based Life?

And what do they want?

1.2 What does Ambush do?

WHAT DOES AMBUSH DO?

A short story,

Once upon a time, the Amiga's operating system existed in versions 1.2/1.3. Although hard to believe to those that never started there, these versions had no 3 dimensional buttons, a colour scheme popular with 70's interior decorators, and all the text was displayed in topaz 8, especially the default text for the title bars of windows etc. Many great Amiga programs were written and still function flawlessly even on the very latest version of Workbench, thanks to careful observation of Amiga programming rules and practices. Cute furry animals skip and jump in the forest, picking flowers and singing love songs.

An evil demon lurks in the trees however. What many programmers failed to do, was to explicitly specify the topaz 8 font in their programs, relying on the fact that the system font would always be set to topaz. With the arrival of Workbench 2 and above, a new preferences program allows the user to change the default screen font into a much larger, often

proportional typeface, to make workbench look more attractive and title bar text and menus easier to read (this is especially important with the advent of AGA and the 1942 monitor, and also display cards such as the Retina, which both allow flicker free high resolution Workbench screens). As a matter of trivia, this practice of not specifying, but assuming topaz, was not correct even under 1.3, as the then global preferences program allowed the selection of 60 column topaz over 80 column topaz causing text to spew from the right side of gadgets and other objects.

Many of the old programs described and even some new ones (I have even found a shareware program which REQUIRES Workbench 3 that does this - no names) have not had the simple changes made, but are still on sale and become unusable, or simply unpleasant to look at and embarrassing to run in anything other than topaz 8. Having found this problem with a number of programs, such as the Professional Page and Professional Draw utilities (Gold Disk), Trace, Clipmap, Makefont... and Real 3D 1.4.x/ Classic (RealSoft) utilities DeltaConvert, DeltaToIFF... I mused that a program to intercept just these programs and provide them with the environment they require (a topaz workbench screen) would be a worthwhile investment of my time, if only for my own use. Shortly afterwards, Ambush was born. The fluffy bunnies once again danced through the flower meadows to the song of Nightingales.

If you have never run Workbench with a 22 point title bar font such as I do, you may have never experienced what I describe, Ambush therefore is not for you. If you do use a large screen font, but have not experienced this problem, then you are far richer than I, to be able to afford the latest versions of the software. If you boot all your software from floppy then you can set the prefs for the individual disks, and it is probably set right to start with anyway.

Naturally, from the description, you will require at least workbench 2 to use Ambush.

DEVELOPERS.

Ambush may also be of use to developers, who may wish to test programs for their appearance on a standard 640x256 four colour workbench (Ambush always uses 640 across regardless of overscan settings). This neatly avoids the hassle of changing the preferences settings (Close all windows...). Indeed I used Ambush to ensure that this AmigaGuide document looked correct by ambushing MultiView.

1.3 How do I make it work...

HOW DO I MAKE AMBUSH WORK?

How do I set up and use ambush so that it can be operated,

From the shell

From an icon

With a particular software package
I've run it, now explain the
'Ambush Control'
window, please.

1.4 Running Ambush from a shell.

RUNNING AMBUSH FROM A SHELL.

Ambush is designed to be run from the shell or from a script.
The general format of the Ambush command line is as follows,

```
AMBUSH D=DELAY/N/K,L=LACE/S,N=NO3D/S,A=ACTIVATE/S,C=COMMAND/F/A
```

What this all means is,

DELAY: This allows you to adjust the time in seconds (up to 10 minutes) for the ambushing of your command to be completed. You would want to do this if for example, the command that you run takes a number of seconds to open it's window(s). (It loads in from a floppy disk?)

The default time is 2 seconds, after which control is returned to the Workbench screen. If you find that your application is opening onto the Workbench, try increasing this value. (Alternatively see ACTIVATE below.)

```
Example: 1.SYS:> ambush delay=10 calculator  
or: 1.SYS:> ambush d=10 calculator
```

LACE: This puts the Ambush screen into interlace mode.

NO3D: This suppresses the Workbench 2 and higher 3D intuition look (buttons etc.) and sets the colour scheme to the 1.3 style (Yuck!)

```
Example: 1.SYS:> ambush lace no3d calculator  
or: 1.SYS:> ambush l n calculator
```

ACTIVATE: This makes the ambush screen stay active, regardless of the DELAY setting. You may return control to the Workbench screen manually by using the
'Ambush Control'
window.

You would do this if a program opens further windows onto the Workbench in response to your actions (and hence the delay option is inappropriate).

```
Example: 1.SYS:> ambush a calculator
```

COMMAND: The rest of the command line (no double quotes required) is the command which you want to ambush, along with any arguments, as if you had typed it directly at the command line prompt. If you simply wish to open the ambush screen, use a command of "", that is, an empty string, (You WILL need the quotes to do this, of course).

```
Examples: 1.SYS:> ambush d=5 l n calculator tape con:
          1.SYS:> ambush calculator
          1.SYS:> ambush ""
```

1.5 Running Ambush from an icon.

RUNNING AMBUSH FROM AN ICON.

Ambush is not designed to be run directly from the workbench, but to be set up in such a way that it appears to run automatically - You double click an icon to run the application of your choice, the Ambush screen appears, and then the application opens onto it. However, to make this magic work, does require a little work.

Following are the steps that you must follow (in the shell) to set up an application to run on an ambush screen from it's icon. I will use a program `sys:tools/calculator` in my example. It is not a program that needs ambushing, but, is handy to illustrate the process.

- 1) Install Ambush once, somewhere on the search path - I like to keep mine in `SYS:Utilities`. (Alternatively place it into the same directory as each program you intend to ambush, if there is only a couple.)

```
1.SYS:> copy df0:Ambush to SYS:Utilities
```

- 2) Change directory to where the program you want to ambush is kept.

```
1.SYS:> cd SYS:tools
```

- 3) Rename the program to a different name, (but not the `.info` file)

```
1.SYS:tools> rename Calculator Calculator2
```

- 4) Create a simple script file that would ambush your program, using the old name of your application for the script (remember to use Ambush on the new name of the application or you will create an 'endless loop'.

```
1.SYS:tools> ed Calculator
```

```
----- While inside ed.
```

```
ambush calculator2                Remember to use new name!
----- <esc><x>.
```

A number of options are available as command line switches. See the section

'Running Ambush from the shell'
for a
detailed description of these.

- 5) Load the Icon Editor (IconEdit) and load the .info file for your application (calculator.info). Go to the 'Type' menu and change the icon type from 'Tool' to 'Project' and then save the icon again.
- 6) Now find the icon on the workbench screen and select it (click once). Select 'Information' from the 'Icon' menu. Change the 'Default Tool' to read 'iconx' and save (not yet if you have Workbench 2).

If you have Workbench 3, everything is now complete, you can double click on the icon and (hopefully) run your application.

If you have Workbench 2, create a 'Tool Type' which reads,

```
WINDOW=CON:0/0//256/IconX/AUTO/CLOSE
```

the AUTO bit is the important bit, as it stops the irritating window that iconx produces from opening, unless some output occurs (which can always be redirected to nil: in the script).

PROGRAMS THAT REQUIRE LARGE STACKS.

In order to ambush programs requiring stack space of greater than 4096 bytes, you will need to create two scripts,

```
----- file: calculator.script
stack 50000
calculator2                (remember, this is the program)
-----
```

```
----- file: calculator
ambush d=5 execute calculator.script
-----
```

What you are simply doing is ambushing the script file (calculator.script) rather than ambushing the calculator directly, this gives you the opportunity to issue a stack command before executing the program.

1.6 Using Ambush with packages.

USING AMBUSH WITH A PARTICULAR PACKAGE

If you examine the directory 'AmbushScripts', you will find script files for a number of packages for which Ambush has been used. If you cannot find the exact one you need, the selection works as a useful library of examples of the simple process. You will need to follow the procedure described in

'Running Ambush from an icon'
.

IMPORTANT!

You must remember to rename the original package before copying the files. Remember you must ALWAYS keep/use backups of your software (and esp. your hard disk).

1.7 The Ambush Control Window

AMBUSH CONTROL WINDOW

On the ambush screen, in the bottom right corner, you will find a small title bar window called 'Ambush Control'. When highlighted a menu is available which has just a few simple options.

Project/Active/Normal (Workbench)
/Ambush

These allow you to make either the Ambush or Workbench screen the currently active screen. So, if you have a program which opens a new window when you click on a button, which because of the way the program is written, would open the new window onto Workbench, you may temporarily change the active screen to make it appear in the right place. You may also use these options to make Ambush active and then double click on a program icon on the Workbench screen.

Project/About

Tells you what version of Ambush you are running, along with our excellent autoscaling logo...

Project/Quit

Normally, Ambush will shut down when the last application window is closed. However, if you ambush a program which then fails to open it's window or you simply typed 'ambush ""' then you are left with an Ambush screen with nothing on it. Use the quit option to shut down Ambush. (If any applications still have a lock on the screen, then Ambush will refuse, informing you that you still have applications running - not unlike Workbench's behaviour to a quit.)

1.8 Silicon Based Life (SBL).

WHO ARE SILICON BASED LIFE?

Silicon Based Life are a small group of dedicated Amiga enthusiasts, who enjoy to use and to develop for the machine. We attempt to understand and to appreciate all that is the technological masterpiece that the Amiga range represents and try to present it in it's best light in what ever way we can find.

We are a varied group of individuals, each with differing levels of experience, but all with a passion for getting the best out of our equally diverse Amiga computers.

Please enjoy your Amiga, in the knowledge that you have the finest in computer hardware that your money could buy. Thankyou.

1.9 What SBL want from you.

WHAT DO SBL. WANT?

Ambush is freeware, however if you want to help us, please send a letter or a pretty postcard to the address below, stating which product (Ambush) you are using. This allows us to gauge the response to each completed package and to therefor direct our activities as best as possible. Money is of course welcome, but, must be in UK pounds (lots of them!).

If you have any suggestions or have discovered a bug, please write with a detailed description to

James Ling
93 Weatherbury Way
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 2EE
England

Please remember that it is helpful to include a description of your Amiga setup - model, RAM size, Hard disk, monitor type, esp. when reporting possible faults.

Writing does not guarantee a reply, (an SAE increases your chances), but I will try to reply to most sensible correspondence.

DISCLAIMER

Silicon Based Life does not take any responsibility for any damage, loss of data, caused directly or indirectly by the use of Ambush or any of the associated material. A standard text accompanies each package, Legal.doc, which must accompany the package when it is duplicated.

DISTRIBUTION

Ambush may be distributed freely, however, we request that only a minimal fee should be charged to cover the duplication service (if you have paid more than a couple of quid, you've been ripped off.)

The package must be distributed in full, that is, the following files must be present,

```
Ambush
Start-Ambush
Start-Ambush.info
docs/Ambush.Guide
docs/Ambush.doc
docs/Legal.doc
AmbushScripts/#?
```

Please write to confirm if you wish to include Ambush as part of a large distribution such as a coverdisk.