

FutureGateway.html

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Chapter 1

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1.1 FutureGateway.html

bThe Amiga's Futureub

i...Gateway 2000 / Amiga International!ui

New owners, and not wanting to spill to many of their ideas to us yet. For all we know, this could be Escom all over again - but we don't know.

They broke their silence at the World of Amiga show in May and stated their commitment to the Amiga platform. I had the fortune to hear the conference from CU Amiga's CoverCD (the wonders of MPEG Audio!) - It really is something worth listening to. I really hope that Gateway are nothing like Escom were... I imagine that maybe in the future, this press conference could be seen as an important turning point, a sign that things will never be as bad as they have been.

But before I get too carried away... As I said in a previous article, I still think the best thing will be cooperation between them and Phase 5. They said many times in the conference how they wanted to work with other companies.

One thing I can't help thinking is that although Amiga International are the owners of the Amiga, it is other companies that have taken the Amiga far beyond what they have done. Of course, Phase 5 and PowerPC, but even Direct Software are selling a machine which makes an A4000T more laughable than ever before (what is this? Amiga 4000s are so expensive that any other system will beat them at about a grand cheaper - including other Amigas!) And an A1200 at £400 - cough, splutter. I mean, if you visit AI's Web Site, you'd mistake them for some little retailer. If a PC owner asked you where the 'Amiga Home Website' was, I would definately point them in Phase 5's direction...

So they at least own the operating system. True, but how far have Phase 5 already ported it to PPC? Certainly more than they have, and if they are promising a new OS by the end of this year (hmmm, haven't we heard that one before?), how will that fit in with Phase 5's work? Will this new OS run on PPC, or not? The only way to solve these problems will be, as I see it, some sort of deal between Gateway/AI and Phase 5 - as I said elsewhere, there's not just machines and the OS to consider, there's marketing and distribution, which hopefully AI should be able to do better, with Gateway behind them.

Now... new machines. At the press conference, they stated that a new machine would take about a year to do. This is fair enough - they can't just pull machines out of a hat, but like it or not, Phase 5's A\BOX will be out before anything they can produce, and they again would be foolish to ignore this machine and have nothing to do with it.

But what about now? They talked about releasing A1200s at £300. That is surely more outrageous than £400 was 2 years ago! There is a problem here - new machines take time to develop, and all they have are A1200s.

But am I missing something? Unless Petro has been taking a kip for the last few years, he will have surely seen the wealth of add ons for the A1200. So why not sell an A1200 with a few of these add ons. Let me see...

bAmiga International's Shopping List...ub

Amiga 1200 - £250 (Themselves)

Blizzard PPC 175MHz 603e & SCSI2 with 50MHz '030 - £330 (Harwoods)

8MB SIMM - £30

500MB 3.5" IDE Hard Disk - £100?

SCSI External 4x CD ROM - £100?

bTotal - £810ub

So we have an Amiga with 175MHz 603e, and 50MHz '030 for 680x0 software, 10MB RAM, 500MB hard disk, SCSI 2 interface with 4x CD ROM - for £810. Now this isn't some wish-list Amiga that would be ever so nice if someone could produce, it's what we can buy, right now, if we wish! Sure, not as good as a PC, but a lot better than what we have been used to (and an '030 Walker...)

But if someone were to produce this hardware bundle, then firstly it would save you the hassle of ordering from loads of different companies, and sticking it all together. Secondly, it should be cheaper, after, they will be buying loads rather than just one of any bit of hardware, so can expect discounts from the greater purchasing power.

And if you are thinking along the same lines as me, you will think of how Direct Software have already done this - it's more high end, with Tower, monitor and Gfx card (so what), but it's not PPC (hopefully they'll change that soon!)

So I hope for two things: Firstly, that more companies get involved in selling Powered up A1200s (preferably PPC based), and secondly, that Amiga International choose that option too, rather than simply bunging out basic A1200s at ridiculous prices - at least in the short term before real new machines become available.

It has to be done! No one is going to buy a basic A1200 without intending to give it a load of upgrades anyway, and who would they expect to buy it? Amiga owners who already own them? PC owners? Other people who have no idea that the machine exists?

But selling tooled-up A1200s, it's a completely different story. Take a look at the example I gave above of a PPC A1200. Surely, with the might of Gateway 2000 behind them, they could secure a price less than £810, just as Direct's machine is cheaper than if you were to buy the separate bits yourself. Even at a price of £750, that would be good value. As far as the power of the machine is concerned, it would be as good as any PowerMac, if not better, for the same price. It may lack any slots for graphics card, but this would be a machine for those not intending to buy a graphics card.

We can only wait and see what happens in the Amiga world, but I have to say that the future is looking far brighter than it has done for many years...
