

Gateway4Amiga.html

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Chapter 1

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1.1 Gateway4Amiga.html

bGateway 2000 for Amiga?ub

I'm writing this on the day that I heard the news, so by the time you read this, well before this issue is actually released even, things may well have changed - A year ago it was announced that Viscorp had bought out Amiga Technologies - hopefully this is not another false alarm.

Whatever, I shall leave this article here for you to read, a few of my thoughts, hopes and fears of what this could mean...

bGateway i2000uiub ? I thought. (This was early in the morning, and I was reading it from a Weird Science advert that I get sent from time to time.) Aren't they those PC manufacturers with an obsession with cows?

Whatever farm animals they were into, we now have the Amiga's future dividing into three ways - Phase 5 with their A\Box, ProDAD and PIOS with pOS and PIOS 1, and now Gateway 2000, with who knows what. Now I certainly believe it is better to have three futures than no future - but the fact remains things could be so much better with a little bit of cooperation; they should be allies, not enemies.

With PIOS/ProDAD and Phase 5, I realise cooperation is rather difficult. Both have their own 'AmigaOS derivatives' on the PowerPC platform, which are likely to have notable differences. One has opted for PCI graphics cards, the other for custom chips. But Gateway 2000 are new here - they may talk about things, but they haven't actually done anything yet.

Let me explain. One great danger is that Gateway 2000 may not like the idea of the aforementioned companies using the AmigaOS for free, while they had to pay for it. The worst scenario would be for them to prevent them from releasing the machines (although how would this apply to pOS, technically a new operating system in its own right?). Or they may give them licences, but what would they then do? Think about porting AmigaOS to Alpha, or Pentium MMX?

If Gateway 2000 were to work with (say) Phase 5, things could be so much better, as Phase 5 have plenty to offer in return. Although Gateway 2000 may own the AmigaOS, it is Phase 5 who have ported it to PowerPC, so it would be pointless for Gateway to produce their own port. Also, Phase 5 are working on their A\Box - reportedly with stonking new hardware, like Caipirinha. Looking at it this way, Phase 5 have a lot more to offer than Gateway and Amiga International (Amiga Tech's new name).

But we mustn't forget the marketing of such a machine - just as important as the machine itself. Arguably, Gateway 2000 have much better experience at this sort of thing. I don't know, but I wouldn't have thought that Phase 5 would have the resources to advertise through national media, but Gateway have, and with their experience of PC manufacturing and distribution, would be a lot better suited for this.

Phase 5 have expressed their willingness to licence their hardware, and indeed, they started out working with Amiga Technologies; they had to go it alone when Escom went bust.

Why Phase 5 and not PIOS/ProDAD? I hear you ask. Well, I don't really have much of an idea, but as pOS is a new operating system created by ProDAD, would Gateway have any rights over it. It may be AmigaOS compatible, but can you copyright

compatibility? On the other hand, Phase 5 have reportedly worked by porting the existing AmigaOS to PowerPC, and then updating/modifying it as necessary.

It was great news to hear that PIOS and ProDAD had got together to produce a PowerPC based Amiga compatible. It would be just as great, if not more so, if Gateway 2000 and Phase 5 were to get together to produce the A\Box.

But They Make PCs!

The fears of Escom all over again - but in hindsight, those fears were well founded. I hope they aren't going to do Escom all over again - say they will do some wonderful things - then do nothing except sell old technology at rip-off prices. If they do, they will move into slot no. 2 of my 'Most hated companies', currently occupied by Escom themselves (take a guess who's at no. 1...) A warning to Gateway... mess with the Amiga, and mess up, and you will go bust... it is your destiny...

In some ways, it is difficult to see a company so dedicated to PCs taking a liking for the Amiga. But with their acquisition, the AmigaOS is theirs, not as in Windows, which is of course not theirs.

Deja Vu?

Is it 1997 or 1995? Read this - 1997 is in brackets. Commodore (Escom) go bust in 1994 (1996). We think it will be sorted out in a couple of months, as Commodore UK are attempting a management buy-out (as Viscorp want to buy the Amiga). But with one thing and another, a year passes, and it seems that Commodore UK (Viscorp) just haven't got the cash to buy the Amiga. Along comes Creative Equipment International (Quikpak) - apparently they have been involved with distributing A4000s in the past, and although they may have the cash to buy Amiga, will they produce anything for home users, or just relegate the Amiga to the realms of high end video? Then, out of the blue come Escom (Gateway 2000), a large and successful PC manufacturer / distributor wanting to buy out the Amiga. And they succeed. (?)

Hmmm... Are we in some sort of time loop, or something, condemned to live out an infinite number of sequences, with minor variations as we transverse from one quantum reality to another? Only time will tell (maybe).

But finally, it ain't all the same - before we didn't have third party companies working to bring us itwoui PowerPC based Amigas! If Gateway 2000 want to let this spiral of events continue, then let them, and the Amiga's real future can go with PIOS, ProDAD and Phase 5 (even if it does mean a divided future). But if they want to be a part of the Amiga's future, then even better... why else do you spend millions buying out a company?
