

amigaguide

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Chapter 1

amigaguide

1.1 MultiPro. An Amos programmers Life-Line.

MultiPro Version 1.0. (C) Anthony Brice 1994.

This document is an AmigaGuide script and should be viewed with a utility supporting that format for best results. The MultiView utility on Workbench will work just fine.

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MultiPro was written by Anthony Brice as a development tool for another project I am currently working on and has proven invaluable. Use it and please don't abuse it. If you feel, the need a credit within any program you use the tool to help you develop would make me feel all proud and sentimental etc. It's not really that much to ask after all, and it will spur me on to write future versions.

1.2 About MultiPro.

MultiPro was written over a couple of days as a simple procedure to enable me to get data for a program I am writing. It has the facility to show the mouse coordinates, check Joystick functions in both ports, dump and IFF screen to disk (either packed or standard Dpaint style) and will also give you a run down on the state of any keys on the keyboard. Prior to writing MultiPro I was restricted to writing little test bits of code all over the place so

that I could see the correct mouse coordinates over the screen (Handy when you are trying to work out Zone commands for programming icons or buttons) and key check routines when I wanted to check for a certain combination and could not be bothered to wade through the manual. A joystick checker is always handy and isn't it more convenient to be able to dump a screen from another Amos program at the press of a key rather than all that fiddling with filenames (MultiPro uses the AmosPro file requestor so you can make sure you are putting the screen in the right place), save Iff, Pack screen number etc. To put it simply I wrote MultiPro so I wouldn't need to do all that ever again. One procedure merged into the main program does it all and it won't even mess up any data you already have stored (See note in How-To-Use-Multipro later on).

The Multipro procedure requires access to the MultiPro.IFF file when it is called. There is a disk\$= variable at the beginning of the procedure which you can edit to supply the correct path name.

Please note that although MultiPro works fine at the moment, it is an unfinished program - IE:some of the features are not working yet. This is because I have recently dropped the graphic front-end into it and have not yet had the chance to finish off updating the program. I am only putting it online now because it does what it does well and I want some user info from it. So give me a message, Huh?

1.3 How to use MultiPro

Using the program could not be simpler; just load in your Amos program as normal and then insert the following line anywhere in the program where you will have the screen you want displayed.

```
MULTIPRO [NUMBER_OF_SCREEN,BANK_NUMBER]
```

Where Number_of_screen is the screen you want to get coordinates off - use 0 if you are using the program for another purpose.

Bank_number is the number of the bank you want to pack your picture to if you intend to save it in that manner. If you are not going to use the pack routine then just pass it the 1 flag as it won't really matter. I only put this flag in so that people didn't get any banks overwritten in their code if they were using the same bank as me.

After calling the procedure execution of your program will be temporarily suspended (don't worry it will still be there when we get back). Now you will have a small screen overlaid over the top of it showing all sorts of useful information - Joystick positions, Mouse coordinates and the other

information which MultiPro is used to see. Pressing any key will now give you the relevant char\$ value as well as scancode and ASCII number as well so, if you are like me and keep forgetting how to use the escape key then you won't have to worry anymore. The screen with this information on it can be scrolled anywhere on the screen by holding down the left button on the title bar to move it up or the right button to move it down this way there is no area which you can't see with a little bit of finger pushing. And that is basically all you need to know on how to use it. It really is that simple. Just click on the (q) icon to go back to your main program as if nothing had ever happened.

Remember you can call MultiPro from as many places in your program as you like - for instance if you have a couple of screens which you need to zone out you can just plonk the line somewhere in there as well. I find it a good idea to have a bit of music playing in the background (a module or music file) as it stops you getting bored while you are working out all that data (I know, I hate doing it too).

** Important note **

Multipro currently uses the Amos zone commands for checking icon clicks and the likes so it will overwrite any zone commands you have set prior to calling the procedure. I am currently looking into getting around this by storing the zones in a bank just prior to clearing them out so that they can be restored afterwards. As far as I am aware this is currently the only area which might cause compatibility problems but it can be solved by just calling the procedure before initialising any of these zones in your own program. Once I have finally sorted out the extra features to build in I may also make a custom icon reading routine instead so that none of the original programs data is corrupted to ensure full compatibility. This little quirk will be fixed one way or the other when I do the next revision.

1.4 Restrictions to the use of MultiPro

Basically there aren't any. What I do want though is for people who use the tool and like the idea to write to me with any comments or suggestions for a later version as I would eventually like to make it into a very smart tool indeed. That's all I ask of you all anyway.

I hereby agree that this program is placed totally free of charge to any person who wishes to use it for the described purposes. I also claim no responsibility or liability for any problems or loss of data that might

arise from using it and must specify that anyone who uses this program does so at their own risk.

Having said that MultiPro doesn't delete files or any other drastic actions which could actually damage your data (It appends a .Pack extension to any files which are saved as packed screens so it shouldn't overwrite any screens you save over by mistake) so basically this bit is just me covering my rear.

I would also like to say that I have painfully tested MultiPro over the last few days and have found no errors at all. Having said this someone out there is bound to find one, so please let me know if I missed something. Also as a sidenote: MultiPro works with either Amos or AmosPro just in case you were wondering.

I also grant permission for any magazines to include this on a cover disk of some sort although I would request that they notify me first so I can see my name in lights.

And - finally - I would especially like this program to find its way into the many P.D libraries that cater for Amos and AmosPro users because that's what it is all about. Please pass it on to any library you know.

Okay, what are you waiting for. I'm done here.

1.5 A brief overview of the MultiPro commands

Multipro has the following icons in this version.

IFF will save the current screen data as an IFF standard file.

PCK will pack the current screen to a specified bank number and save it with the .Pack extension so that the original is not deleted.

Both of these routines call up a file selector so that you can choose a file name and the screen is saved in its entirety, IE: the MultiPro window is not shown over it. Remember though that if you use this routine to copy another Amos screen from a program you could be infringing someones copyright. I do not take any responsibility for this whatsoever so please check that it's okay first before you do.

MultiPro also has two small arrow icons which do not serve any function yet but will eventually be used to cycle the background screens around if they exist. This is so the program can be used on any screen and multiple calls to the procedure become redundant.

If you want to check a joystick in the mouse port then you will have to remove the mouse and plug the joystick in first (Kind of obvious that one but I thought I'd better mention it).

1.6 MultiPro and its future

These are a few ideas I have had for future implementation into the Multipro Procedure.

An Accessory extension. Ie: I could have the program do the zoning for you via a point and click method and use the AmosPro Equates thingies to insert Zone lines in the program with the data already set. I haven't researched this much but I think it is possible and I will certainly be looking into it. It would certainly make a great extension.

Multiple screens. If the screens are defined then let MultiPro at all of them via cycle arrows on the interface. That would save the user having to insert the command all over his program.

An AmigaGuide document. Oops, already done that. I just thought I would mention it because this is the first time I have written one and I am rather proud of it.

Module support. It wouldn't take a great deal of programing for the program to let you load a module and listen to it while you work. Well I got that idea from the AmosPro compiler but it's a nice little user-friendly addition.

A Palette requestor. I could adapt the procedure supplied with AmosPro with a little work so that it runs alongside the MultiPro utility so that screen colour settings can be adapted prior to saving out graphics.

1.7 What I want from you

With a lot more work, MultiPro could turn into a very usefull little tool indeed. What I want in return for you using the program now are comments and suggestions about how to improve upon it, and ideas for other development time-savers to stick in. Go on, I'll even take the criticism because I want to take this program further so it has to be user-friendly towards other people as well as myself. All it costs is a letter and stamp, and if you send me a disk I will, of course supply you with the latest version. Which will hopefully take note of your suggestions etc.

The Address then:

Anthony Brice.

42 Edward road,

North Harrow,

Middlesex

HA2 6QA.

You can also catch me on my bulletin board (BackYard - 0181 4242065) or via

the following mail addresses.

email: anthony@backyard.demon.co.uk

Fido: 2:254/255.1

Amiganet: 39:139/13.1

Barnet: 959:102/0.1

Amnet: 69:102/17.1

Compnet: 149:600/1.1

ZeusNet: 85:1/13.1

I hope MultiPro is of use to you and please take the time to give me some information. Thanks.

1.8 How it was all done

MultiPro was developed on an A1200 with 170meg Hard drive, Citizen 120D printer, external drive and the AmosPro compiler (Not that I used it for this routine). The development was aided by the superbly designed Amos system, the invaluable articles on AmigaGuide in March 94 Amiga computing, a rather nifty little green Maestro (although what my car has got to do with it I am not sure), a lot of too and froing of the seperate programs between myself and my pen pal Michael Lysons, before eventually emalgamating (I think I question that spelling rather severely) the routines into what MultiPro has become. It will get bigger and better.

As far as I know, although I haven't had much chance to test it, this routine should work on any system that Amos will run from. It's not much use if you don't have Amos by the way, and I did a check 1.3 compatibility before saving it out so old Amos users needn't feel left out.

The program was developed over a couple of days and after a severe hangover which I suppose, in retrospect, rather serves me right. Feel free to customise the program to your own needs and send me a copy if you do something much better with the program (like using those funny resource things which I haven't got to grip with yet).

In the near future I also plan to build other procedures like a new custom file requestor for those people who write programs which they don't want someone to know they have used Amos for and they can't hack the hassle of writing one themselves. I also hope to write a Bob crunching routine to squeeze sprites to the smallest size they can go without losing any data. In other words a sort of auto-topleft of all the sprites in the bank and then get rid of any space underneath them so that Memory can be freed in large progs which have lots of defined sprites or icons. This is a feature I wanted to see in the AmosPro object editor but for some reason Francois didn't think of it. Never fear maybe I'll save the day.
