

MONTHLY PAGE 7

UPDATE :

This issue of the Monthly Page is slightly different to the others. we are planning to integrate some Linux things as well as Mac, aros and MorphOS in the near future.

Hopefully this will all pan or work out as planned in the coming months.

For this month though, it may only be Linux distro thats gets a mention.

Linux VS Amiga on SAM440EP :

Well, I have some comparisons I can make here, and I must say, I was kind of shocked at first when I first ran Debian Linux on the same hardware.

Firstly, the Amiga OS4.1 is a lot faster and quicker off the mark versus Debian Linux.

Once finally in Debian Linux OS, one starts to load programs, but even loading simple programs takes longer than when loading simple programs on the AmigaOS4.1.

Also tested to play a dvd, and it was all stuttery in Debian Linux, basically it was deemed unplayable.

The same dvd film on the Amiga OS was playing fluently, no stuttering, and with ease.

When going into Abiword, noticed that the load time takes its sweet time, but once in the program, the Debian Linux is now not bad, versus AmiCynix, but overall, AmiCynix is still better in the long run, in the sense of, it loads the program quicker, and is still deemed useable.

Overall, both Linux Debian and AmiCynix do a similar job when

using this program, but I believe it is slightly better on the Amiga Platform still, which kind of surprised me due to it being emulated to begin with.

As for the other programs that one can get on AmiCynix, or native on Linux Debian, they all were similar in load times and useability, but for me, I would not bother going into Debian Linux to use these programs, as Debian Linux is generally slower of an OS versus Amiga OS on this same hardware, SAM440EP.

As for games, well, I suppose I could make some game reviews between these two Operating Systems, whereby talking about games that are available on both Amiga and Debian Linux, like Chromium or BOS wars as an example.

MAC OS game on Amiga :

An older game from the Mac OS is of course on the Amiga platform and is called Marathon 2. First one must download the AlephOne.lha from OS4depot, then you are required to have the datafiles, and viola, playing the game already on your Miggy.

I must say, the graphics are different to the Doom genre, but the game is indeed playable, but is different in over all game play than Doom. Here one can only save a game at a savepost, making it slightly more challenging on harder levels. Also a noticeable difference is the key assignments, and the overall functionality.

The game itself though, does eventually tire itself out in my opinion, whereby one then no longer wants to play it over and over again, but this may be more a personally viewpoint, due to myself having been a Doom or AB3D fan.

Damo's time :

Well hello again everybody. The Stargus port has entered a new phase. The major work on Startool, required to install the game files, is now working and complete. As well as the installer script I wrote for it to make it that bit easier, which now includes a progress bar to top it off. :-)
That was only one half of the equation. The other is the actual game engine in the form of Stratagus. As you found out, the version of Stratagus we had was too old for Stargus and a newer one had to be compiled. I sourced a newer version and began the compile process once again. It was a big source, causing my CPU time to go up almost 100%, and time itself was almost half an hour! Once that was done it was time for some actual real play testing. After all the porting, tweaking and compiling it was about time!

Initial tests running Stratagus were looking good. The game loaded in all the datafiles and then a window opened with the title page. A click later and the title menu is displayed. Okay now for the *real* test. Leaving everything at default I start a single player game and it starts to load. File names swiftly being listed away on the bottom. Finally it has loaded and something is about to happen...

And here it comes. Damn! It's crashed. Okay try and get past it. Damn! It's back again. The game should be here by now but damn! Stratagus has taken down the system. :-o Okay, despite the writers of Stratagus saying it should be endian safe, here it was following in the path of the Startool and just crashing the system down. Well, how appropriate, such a match are the two. :-)

Some further investigation and it looks like the Stargus scripts are causing havoc that Stratagus wasn't ready to expect. Stratagus is built on LUA, a scripting language, and all the games it runs are all controlled within these scripts. All one needs are the graphics and the game can be scripted to run within Stratagus. Usually such a system is safe to use but somehow Stratagus manages to pull it apart by not doing enough checks.

Our port is based on the newer unreleased Stargus and so is a bit raw. So as well as code porting and bug fixing i have to correct errors in the scripts as well. To make things harder some of these scripts are created from the Startool, which makes it slightly harder to track. A check between the older and newer scripts showed some things were missing when the maps were being loaded. This caused such an upheaval within that Stratagus just ran away and trashed memory. So much so that anything else it did just crashed straight away. Even code that worked perfectly fine otherwise. Man, what a blow! I clean all that up and install the fixed files into my Stargus dataset. Run Stratagus again and put it to the test. It loads it all in and something is about to happen...

And Damn! Like so fine. It loads.. Hey, it plays! Oh, what a relief! Water I say, Water, time for a Glass in celebration. What was that? I think I've spent too much coding, how do I play this game? Okay a few moments later and the way of playing a Stratagus game starts coming back to me. Spend some time actually playing the game now. Think I've been in a daze. And snap! Woken up by a crash. Okay it's back to reality and some more debugging until next monthly...

INTERVIEW With AmiBoing :

Hello from us at BlitterWolf Development, we find it very nice of you to do this interview with us,

1. Firstly for our readers, can you state your name, country and some general career information?

Hello, my name is Thomas Claus (imagodespira), i am from Bautzen, Germany (60km to Dresden, 165km to Berlin), i am working as self employed in WebDesign and Computer Services. On our Projects i do all the graphics for the games and also programming in php our websites (entwickler-x.de, amiboing.de). Our Team "EntwicklerX" consists on two people. Frank Menzel (GoosMc Guile) and me. Frank is the coder of all our projects. He coded the Soms3D Engine and did many ports on Amiga. We are both members of the Amiga User Club Bautzen e.V. (founded in 1998), a club founded from amiga enthusiasts.

2. How long have you been thinking about development for the Amiga platform?

Very long :) my dream to build games goes back to the early 1990's but i had never enough time (and brain :)) to code my own games. In this Time i set my focus on graphics. Same Time, around 50 kilometers away from me, frank has begun learning coding on Amiga... in this time we did 'nt know from each other :)

3. What was your first ever owned Amiga and what was your favourite game or software for that system? I had my first Amiga in the early 1990's around 1992 i think. Before i had an Atari 130XE, in this time my dream was an Atari 1040ST, but then on one day i was at my cousing.. he played "Rick Dangerous" on a Amiga 500, wow... from one second to the next i decided to "must have" an Amiga, sold my Atari and bought with my brother An Amiga. My favourit Game: Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge, my favourite Software: Deluxe Paint

4. First Amiga from Frank was an Amiga 500, Favorite Game: Seven Gates of Jambala, Favorite Software: Workbench 1.3

4. Can you list the model range of Amigas you have owned or used over

the years in your lifetime?

imagodespira: Amiga 500, Amiga 4000, Amiga CD32, Amiga 1200 (infinitiv Tower and Cybervision) Goos McGuile: Amiga 500, Amiga 1200, Amiga One, Sam Flex

5. As your website suggests that you have only recently started development for games and or software, is this true? Or have you already developed other things for the platform before placing yourselves onto the internet?

We are developing for the Amiga now for around 2 years, with little breaks in between. we had much to learn in technics (Compositing Engine, writing Data to the website (highscores), The platform itself was a lot of work, in this time Frank has begun coding the subsystem of our engine with compositing Engine. This Engine has a own XML-Based Layout System, so i am (the graphics maker) kan layout the game content without compiling every time. This is a great thing to get faster development times in further projects. Bevore we start to develop with the compositing Engine, the Game "Codename: Petzspender" was developed based on the Soms3D Engine. Now we decided to put it in our new System. Parallel we do some programming on Xbox360 for "indie Games" we have now two releases "A Frog Game" and "Dodge These Balls", the Indie Games on Xbox is a very interesting platform to publish little games. All Games we make will be released On Amiga and Xbox360.

6. What are your overall plans for your website? As in, for example, can other developers upload their creations, and indicate what software or games they are selling or have for free download?

First, at this time there is no plan to upload creations for other developers, but it is a nice idea. In future amiboing.de could be a "little steam" for Amiga Systems :). Our focus now is to bring the first games on start. Our Platform is now in "Wave 1" ready, it consits on Functions like User Lists, User Profile Page, Game List, Game Details, Messages between Users, Highscores with direct upload from each game. Our Plan is to build a little community around Our games, where people can share higscores, find friends, write little messages and later in "wave 2" we will include

online playing for managing game sessions. It all depends on the users, who buy our games. And yes we want to sell the games. Why? Every little developments costs many hours, days and month of our spare time. Nobody can get rich on Development for Amiga, but for me as self employee i can spend more time on working on our game projects if i earn a little bit money. More money, more time i have to develop. Some releases also will be freeware, Dodge These Balls is one of them. For all our games there will be a demoversion to test before buy.

7. Do you own any recent new Amiga hardware, or have plans to get a SAM or future hardware made by either Acub systems or another possible future vendor?

Frank has an Amiga One and a Sam Flex 800, i hope to buy a Sam flex in this year (i just to have sell some frog games on xbox before :))

8. Which computers and operating systems are currently used with each other for your developments of your upcoming products?

Coding for Amiga is done on Amiga One with OS 4.1, graphics made on Windows Vista and Corel Painter or Corel Photopaint.

9. Which other operating systems or devices have been planned to develop for? Or will it be only for Amiga OS? Currently Amiga OS 4.1 and XBox360.

10. We notice currently 11 users on your site, me being one of them, do you expect this to grow over time by a lot, or only a select few?

We have now 13 users:), i hope it will grow over the time. We dont made any advertising, i just have a banner in my signature at os4welt.de, most people found amiboing.de throu this. Time for advertising is if we are ready to release our first games (Bubbelsche Deluxe, Dodge These Balls). And then we will see what happens, hope much people will register, and buy some of our games (which we need to develop more and more).

11. Is it planned for your website to have online chat like a forum in the future, or will it remain as is currently?

Yes, in Wave 2 of our website i want

to integrate a little forum oder a comment function, chat is not planned directly in our website. Our goal is a stand alone Software "Amiboing Client" for the Workbench with all functionality of the website and some features like chat...

12. May we ask, how many developers are currently onboard with you helping you on your projects? We are two developer, Frank Menzel and Me.

13. Will your games and software have multiple language support? Yes, Frank has integratet the locale function in the game engine, it works fine. On amiboing.de the databases is ready for this feature, it just must be translated now...

14. From the question above, will you be looking or needing translators in the future, or do you have enough in house?

We try to translate in english, but it can be that we need a little bit help.

I would like to take this time to thankyou for doingthe interview with us, we at BlitterWolf Development feel priviledged to have had the opportunity to do so.

WHAT WE HAD PLANNED :

We had planned for this issue to have the interview recieved from Realsoft Software, which was meant to be answering the differences between Linux and mac version, as well as if there would ever be a potential to have an amiga version for the modern Amiga times.