AMIGA

Alberta AMIGA
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February   2002

Amiga Computer Users of Edmonton

Inside

Hints & Tips

Disk Salvage Stuff: DiskSalv is okay unless you have Hard Drivs bigger than the 4 Gig limit, though I've found it useful to have DiskSalv v2 around as well; it's older but still has the old Validate button there which is handy to get the system to start revalidation when it otherwise doesn't seem to want to. For bigger hard drives you can try either QuarterBack Tools or DiskMonTools.

The old CD not recognizing on bootup anymore? Take it out, give it a thorough cleaning, then pop it back in again and see how well it does then. Might want to dust out the old floppies while you're at it.

Tired of the same old WB backdtrops then use something like RndBG in your startup-seauence AND attach it to a hotkey. At a single keystroke you can change your backdrop pic to anything else you got on that hard drive.

If you decide to upgrade to OS 3.5 or 3.9 then don't forget to turn off all your hacks and make a clean boot, especially ones that hack into existing system libraries. It's often the case that some new fix in an OS upgrade will make at least one of your hacks obsolete or bunp into something ele. Read those docs for any changes in the OS as well as those Warnings you'll often find in the doc files for your system hacks; they'll tell you what you need to know.

Asha's Sunday Chats

The network is ExodusNet
    The new servers are:
irc.elric.net
irc.beaniefetish.com
fantasy.ExodusIRC.net
irc.darkspot.net
irc.reefer.org
irc.absolute-reality.org
Diesel.ExodusIRC.net
irc.betelgeuse.org
irc.starfyre.org
stats.exodusirc.net
chat.exodusirc.net
beerbong.exodusirc.net
services.ExodusIRC.net
irc.hostile.cx
    The channel is #team*Amiga
    The time(s) are each Sunday evening (9:00pmEST-11:00pmEST 2:00am Monday to 4:00am Monday GMT)
    For those who can use Java chat, point your browsers at: www.reefer.org/chat4.html
        Hope to see you there!
Please repost this anywhere you find Amigans online!

FMS Installation

If you have Amithlon up and running on your x86 one thing you need is a Floppy disk that is Amiga type. One way to achieve this is to Install FMS it will create 4 Virtual floppies that function as the fastest Amiga Floppies you have ever seen.
Requirements.
 The only real requirement is a hard-disk. As it's pretty pointless simulating a floppy device on a floppy only system ;^)
You'll need at least 900k free. No other special requirements are needed, unless you want to run the 68020+ version ;^) in which case;

INSTALLATION

   1. Copy the correct device for your processor to the DEVS: directory
        68000 and 68010 users:
            C:Copy fmsdisk68000.device devs:fmsdisk.device
        68020+ users:
            C:Copy fmsdisk68020.device devs:fmsdisk.device
   2. Assign FMS: to a directory on your hard disk where you want the
      900k virtual floppy file to be.
   3. Append the Mountlist included onto the end of your current
      DEVS:MountList using your favorite text-editor.
   4. Mount the device using
      C:Mount FF0:
   5. The first time you use the device, you'll need to initialize it
      this is done by simply formatting it. You only need to format it
      the first time to create the file.
      SYS:System/Format drive FF0: name Empty NoIcons FFS

To create additional virtual floppies, create extra mountlists, naming each one differently, ie, FF1: FF2: e.t.c... and use the same methods as above.
You will also need adf2fms which is a simple program that can convert adf files to fms floppies. On your real Amiga you will need ADFBlitzer or something similar to create the adf files which can then be archived and copied onto a Windows 720k floppy.

Amifish

Review by Pascal Ruyter

Utility   :Amifish
Version   :v1.18
Requires   :an Amiga computer
               :an Internet connection
Author   :Matthias Bocker

My first impression? What is this. You will be presented with a very tiny non ajustable window (well at least you can adjust it in the horizontal way).
The use of this program is rather simple, you type in your text, to the left of it there is a small button which read "e2d", that means you will be translating your text from english to german. Took me awhile to figure out that pressing that button will give a list with all sorts of translations, even from english to japanese or korean.
I would however like it a bit more if there was a little bit more to show, like the name in the top bar for instance. You are adviced however to connect first to the internet (those of us without unmetered access) and then type in your phrase and press enter. Otherwise you will get a window, telling you that connection to babelfish was not possible. Good Work I thought first, and after clicking the button marked "oh no!", (What is wrong with the text OK?) my sentence was gone, replaced by the very text of the previous mentioned window.All in all, it is a very small program, although if you translate a sentence to a foreign language and you re-translate it back to english you'll have a laugh. This is not the programs fault, but more a problem at babelfish.
For rough translations it does the job well, for the rest I suggest you buy a translation dictionary or follow a course in the foreign language of your choice.
 Available from: Aminet:comm/tcp/Amifish.lha (Download This)

Freespace Review

Review by Vincenzo Morra

Freespace, a flight simulator developed by Volition and published by Interplay was a game well received by the PC community and managed to get good reviews across all the major game magazines at the time it was published. Hyperion Entertainment - with Steffen Haeuser as captain - has worked very hard to port this game to the Amiga community and, after a long and painful waiting, I have finally got hold of the full final version (revision 1.06) and put it through an intensive test to verify if it can stand up the test of time.

THE STORY

The game takes place in the 14th year of the war between the Terrans and the Vasudans, where both races had to put aside their differences and give space to the technologically superior Shivans.

An opening movie (displayed in low resolution on 1/2 screen) shows a pilot flying his severely damaged ship in the Ross 128 system. He screams and cries for help while trying to get in touch with the main installation. He mention unknown attackers; he talks about destruction and death. Then, suddenly, the unknown attackers with a very large ship in command jump from behind. The attack on Ross 128 is great - far greater than anything the Galactic Terran Alliance (GTA) has ever seen, and your job is to steal the Shivans technology and their secrets.
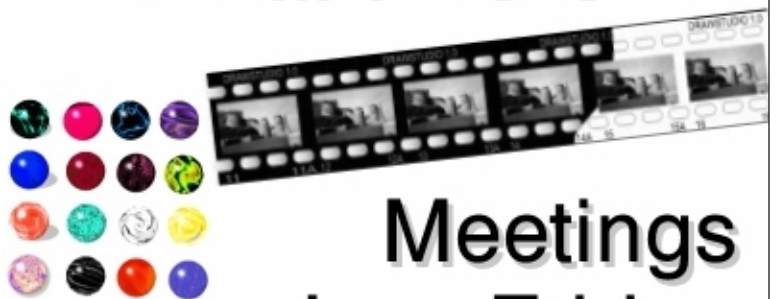
INSTALLATION

The game comes in an convenient DVD case which contains a registration card. If you want to receive the latest patches or upgrades make sure you send it or register online. I believe Steffen and his team are already taking note of all the problems and incompatibilities few people are experiencing to prepare a new revision. Don't get me wrong the game is fully working, but a handful of people are experiencing weird crashes which Steffen is trying to reproduce on his system. More of this later.

According to Hyperion the game needs a PPC or a 68060 processor to run with a graphics card and 64 MB of ram. Usually 3D games are very demanding in terms of cpu power and memory. Fortunately Freespace does not heavily rely on 3D graphics and can be run smoothly on a minimum configuration. Also, this is the first Hyperion commercial port that supports the 68060 processor. This, indeed, is good news for all the owners of a 68K system which have not seen a good game in years (apart Payback of course).

On the cd there are also the latest versions of Warp3D and WarpOS which are necessary to run the game. Make sure you install them if you want to avoid problems. As bonus a demo of Heretic II, for the few Amiga users who still have not bought it (what are you waiting for?), is also available.

Freespace can be fully or partially installed and a partial installation can take up to 429 MB of space on the hard drive. In my installation I have left the cut scenes on the cd and it did not cause any slow down. If you are a Punchinello (pc mouse adaptor) owner make sure you disable the wheel mouse support which, apparently, is cause of incompatibilities on some systems. Steffen mentioned that this is not a bug in Freespace, but a problem of the Punchinello driver. Indeed, this was also an issue with Heretic II and I believe Elbox has been informed of this problem. Unfortunately, nothing has been done so far to update the driver.

Once installed the game can be launched using the Freespace Launch GUI. So far all Hyperion games have the facility of a launch GUI which is becoming a useful and elegant standard de facto. Through the GUI it is possible to modify the settings, read the docs (readme file), connect to the Hyperion website or quit the game. In my version the installer failed to install the "readme" file and I had to install it manually. The setting section in the GUI is very detailed and it is possible to modify all the factors which control the quality and the speed of the graphics. I advise you to refer to the readme file for a detailed description of the GUI.

THE GAME

It is now time to get your CV ready and apply for a job that no men want to do. A job where leadership, combat skills and team work are the basis needed to fill the vacancy. Ready?! So launch the game, input your name and... make yourself a cup of tea. In fact the process of inputing my name was one of the most painful operation I have ever experienced with a game and it took me a full five minutes just to write it. The system takes ages to recognize (when it does) what key I am pressing and I spent a huge amount of time playing with the various keys and using backspace to delete the mistakes. Thank God that is a process that only needed to be done once (unless you decide to change your name every time you play the game). According to Steffen the animated menu system of the game does a complete screen refresh each frame at a resolution of 640x480 which can be the cause of the problem. Inside the actual game, during the flying and shooting time, there are absolutely no speed problems, not even on a slow CPU.

If you have finished your cuppa it is time to go to the Hangar and get ready to begin. There are different areas you can access, and each one will take you to a different section of the game. Click on the main computer and you can modify some of the game settings; get in the room on the first or second floor and you can view the available campaigns, weapons or ships. The option screen is so detailed that it is virtually possible to change anything you like. Just have a look at the list of keys needed to control the ship. There is no way you could run this game on a console unless you were provided with a keyboard. Virtually every key on the keyboard has a function needed to play the game. For instance, there are 38 keys just used for target control and communications. The best solution is to have a print out of them so you can refer to it any time you need.

LETS BEGIN

So, time to enter the ground floor room and get ready for the first mission. Being a cadet you will have to go through an intense training session. The difference between this game and any other game is that the training sessions are not only there at the beginning of the game, to get you used to the controls, but are very much part of the whole experience and present throughout your all career. You start with a three part training. An instructor will guide you through all the different phases helping you to pass them with full marks. Complete the initial training and it is time to embark in your first mission. Succeed, and you will be awarded wings, medals or ensigns, new ships and more powerful weapons. You will also receive a much more in depth training that will transform you in the most prepared pilot of the GTA.

Freespace is not about choosing a ship, loading the weapons and jumping in the universe to kill a few enemy. Freespace is a pure adventure where you are in control of a team of people who rely on you to complete the objectives without losing their lives. In each mission you will be assigned a team of fighters. The communication system will allow you to give them orders such as engage in combat, destroy your target, cover you, protect your target and much, much more. The game is so detailed that it is possible to destroy the weapons system or the engine of an enemy ship leaving the rest of the target intact. You can even ask a comrade to do it for you so you can approach the ship without danger. The voices are in "real time" where your wingmen will compliment you if you kill an enemy, or answer to any of your orders with a little picture of them appearing in the top left of the screen. Another key allows you to target priority enemies that are targeting you, which is important if you want to survive. A shield management system will let you divert energy power to certain parts of the ship (Scotty more power to the shields). This is truly an experience which viewers of Star Trek are familiar with. It is great!! The missions are all very different and the story line can be compared to those space opera available for the big (and little) screen. At the beginning of each mission you will receive a briefing, in full speech, from your superior. Pay attention to all the primary and secondary objectives. All the missions can be completed by achieving the primary objective, but full success can be reached only by completing the secondary objectives too. At the end of the mission you will be given some feedback and/or recommendations on how to improve your performance. You can repeat

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Music SIG

Contact Larry Bolch
484-9879

the mission, if you are unhappy with the results, as many times as you like; or you can carry on with the story. Team work is necessary if you want to survive the more advanced adventures. Communication with your wingmen may be crucial to your or another ship's survival, which can mean life or death, success or failure.

CONCLUSIONS

Freespace is not a recent game, and with its surrounding being the open space the 3D engine is not very demanding. Therefore the game runs fast, and I mean very fast, even on a 68060 processor. All the graphics on the screen (ships, cranes, asteroids, etc.) make full use of colored lighting, shielding, lens flares with the explosions in the game looking very realistic. polygons and models are satisfying to see and the ships are well designed. I am just a bit concerned about the bitmaps, especially if you look at an object very closely. You can change the color of the HUD display and decide the amount of information you want to have available on the screen. Indeed, to make it easy you can choose to have some of the HUD displays pop up only when needed. I am disappointed about the opening intro which is run at low resolution. I believe this is no fault of Hyperion but more a limitation of the hardware we have which is way too old compared to the modern PC and consoles. Indeed, Hyperion is making miracles in porting those games onto the Amiga system and truly deserves our money. The sounds effect are pretty good (I was disappointed about the collision one which was not very realistic), the music is excellent and the voice acting is professionally done although the voices of the various characters seemed a bit too similar to each other. The control system is pretty spot on and there are different ways to control your ship. You can use a combination of mouse and keyboard, keyboard only, PC analogue joystick and CD32 or PSX joypad. I found the mouse control very annoying. Rolling the mouse will cause the ship to move while the two buttons can be used to fire the primary and secondary weapon. As you can understand the space on a mouse pad is very limited, so I had to keep lifting the mouse at the edge of the mouse pad and bring it back to the original position to move the ship resulting in a very annoying process. It is best to use the keyboard control for ship movement and the mouse for fire accuracy although, the best control system is an analogue PC with an Amiga adapter. Using the little software provided on the CD is possible to calibrate the joystick to respond to your control accurately.

CRASHES, CRASHES AND CRASHES

The main concern I had with this game were the crashes I have experienced. Since I installed Freespace I have had at least a crash per game. That really put me off and I have spent several days with Steffen trying to identify the problem. First of all, if you are the owner of Miami Deluxe then switch it off because it is a major cause of crashes/freezing on my system. Also, I believe there is a problem with the audio streaming code. In fact, if I disable it the crashes disappear completely. I am aware few people have had the same problem and I have informed Steffen who is working on it. Some people have benefited by increasing the audio and graphics caches. I am personally providing Steffen with all the information he needs to rectify the problem. Regarding Miami Deluxe, Steffen mentioned that there is an incompatibility with Holger Kruse software and he runs Freespace happily with AmiTCP. Unfortunately, I was not able to test the online mutliplayer mode because I have only managed to write this review two days before the AIO deadline (due to the time I spent to get the game running on my system), hence I had not access to a different TCP stack. But as I mentioned before it seems only few people have experienced those crashes and the rest of the community is pretty happy with this game.

In conclusion, I find Freespace an amazing and rewarding experience. I believe this is one of the best space combat simulator and a guarantee of many hours of pure fun. It is also good value for money, especially if you want to earn all

the wings, ensigns and medals available, which will definitely take up all your spare time for the weeks coming. It is a cinematic experience which deserves to be installed on any Amiga hard drive as soon as possible. My congratulation go to the Hyperion team that, once again, has managed to do a wonderful job in converting a great PC game. Well done guys, more of this for the future.

Available from:
  Freespace: http://www.haage-partner.de/freespace (Go There)
  Freespace Demo: http://www.hyperion-entertainment.com (Go There)
  Documentation: http://www.volition-inc.com (Go There)
For information about the game email steffenh@hyperion-entertainment.com
Graphics   : 93%
Sound   : 91%
Playability : 94%
Lastability : 96%
Overall   : 95%

P.S. The above score does not take in consdieration the crashes I have experienced.

AmyGate

Review by Pascal Ruyter

Utility   : AmyGate
Version   :v1.1a
Requires   :an Amiga computer
             :an Internet connection
             :easylife.library (comes with the archive)

Programmer :Pietro Ghizzoni

If you are like me, and you frequently download something from Aminet, then this is truly a must have, it is well laid out, it is easy to use, and as a bonus you can subscribe to the Aminet mailing list daily or weekly, unsubscribing is also possible with this program. You can have instant access to all the uploads of up to the last 7 days to Aminet.

Although AmyGate is very easy to use, and comes with several Aminet specifics, like rating a program and the Aminet chart (the charts which shows which program is downloaded the most) it is a shame that the download window (called Network Window) doesnot come with a resize gadget. This is a bit annoying especially if you've got more to download than the Network Status area can show, so your forced to use the slider to see if you have got everything you wanted to download. I like my windows to be resizeable so I can follow the entire download operation. But this is personal, I'll mail the programmer to see wether he will implement this feature in his next version.

When you move the mousepointer over the icons the windowtitle will change giving you the name of the icon's function, this is a nice thought and removes the need for seperate textfields below the icons. An additional bonus is the feature to chooce icons for MagicWB, and 2 sets of GlowIcons, perhaps a future version will allow the loading of other icons (selfmade or downloaded from the net)? Speaking of future versions, althought the AmyGate Toolbar shows a ghosted Upload icon, this will be implemented in a future version of Amygate.

The documentation (although you'll problably won't need it) is well laid out and explains all the functions in a bit more detail.

Available from: Aminet:comm/net/AmyGate.lha

Next AMICUE Meeting

March 21st 2002 7:00 PM
Arch Bishop Jordan High School
Sherwood Park

N →

Boston Pizza

Wye Rd.
(Sherwood Park Freeway)

Sherwood Blvd.

Broadmore Blvd

Baseline Rd.
(101 Ave)

ArchBishop Jordan
High School

Oak St.

Doors

Parking