



Publication of **AMICUE Amiga Computer Users of Edmonton**

November 2002

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## Letting the World Know

November 19, 2002 - With the AmigaOne now shipping and AmigaOS4.0 in its final stages of development and testing, the time has come to begin letting the rest of the world know the good news, that the Amiga is alive, well and ready to let the World have fun with computing again.

We all know that the current hard core of Amiga users is not enough to build a sustainable and thriving community. We have to appeal to those who, for whatever reason left the Amiga months and years ago but who still retain a fondness for their old platform. Whether disillusioned with their existing offering, looking for a new way or simply wanting to return, the marketing for the reborn Amiga must concentrate itself on these people, the five million or so who once owned an Amiga and who could do so once more.

The last six months has seen us experimenting with presence at various multi-format shows and nurturing relationships with TV, web and paper publications in order to test the waters and to set out our stall for the big push forwards. Even in this informal process, the response has been fantastic, whether in the US, the UK, Europe or Australia. People remember the Amiga and want it back.

We have taken all this research and, in conjunction with Amiga developers, retailers, user groups, publications, Amiga Inc, Eyetechnic and Hyperion have decided that we will concentrate on four official large scale multi-format shows around the globe, in order to maximize our presence, message and exposure. This will compromise a show roughly every quarter, one for Europe, one for the US and Canada, one for the UK and one for the Antipodes (Australia, New Zealand and Asia).

The first of these shows will be the official launch of the AmigaOne and AmigaOS4.0, to occur at the CeBit show in Germany in March (and before anyone asks, this does not mean this is the release date for AmigaOS4.0, it means that CeBit will be the public launch of it). With the huge exposure and attendance that CeBit brings in, and being in Germany, one of the spiritual homes of the Amiga, we think this an appropriate and exciting venue.

In addition we will support several other important national shows on a cooperative basis with the dealers, user groups and organizations in those countries. Commitments have already been given to attend the SINTEP show in Toulouse, France in April 2003, and at least one of the Micromart shows in Birmingham, UK.

**AMICUE Saturday Coffee SIG**  
**Every Saturday**  
**1:30-3:30**  
**Haps Hungry House**  
**159 St Stoney Plain Rd.**

Alberta Amiga is a publication of AMICUE the Amiga Computer Users of Edmonton.

Alberta Amiga is published monthly to inform and support the  
Amiga Community in Northern Alberta.

AMICUE meets on the third Thursday of each month at  
ArchBishop Jordan High School 2021 Brentwood Blvd.. Sherwood Park.  
Yearly Membership fees of \$20.00



**After Meeting  
Get Together  
Boston Pizza  
Sherwood Park**

*Good Food  
Good Friends  
Good Times*

# Asha's Sunday Chats

Every Sunday evening (in most places) a few Amigans (and former Amigans hoping for the best) gather to chat and share information on a wide range of topics. Subjects will range from the Amiga (of course) to books, TV, and movies to whether or not aliens have visited our planet.

Come join us on the IRC  
The network is ExodusNet  
The new servers are:

irc.superhosts.net, irc.midnightrose.org,  
irc.codemain.com  
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](http://www.reefer.org/chat4.html)  
or  
<http://www.reefer.org/chat.html>

I put my cam up Sundays so that you can see me as we chat. If you're using an Amiga, get WebVision Aminet, or, if that's down, email me and I'll send you the latest version I've got). It can live on the same screen (MUI) as AmIRC and is easy to use and setup. You can also see the cam on the Web (using a browser).

The cam address is  
[www.ashafx.com/cam](http://www.ashafx.com/cam). There's always a picture up, but it's only live on Sunday nights.

We also love playing with sounds. You can grab all (or some) of the sounds we are playing by going to:  
<http://enja.org>

We have a nice group of friendly folks sharing information, help and humor as we wend our way through the Great Amiga Odyssey.

Hope to see you there!

Please repost this anywhere you find Amigans online!  
Asha, [asha@ashafx.com](mailto:asha@ashafx.com),  
<http://www.ashafx.com>

We will also support local dealers and organizers of the main Amiga user group shows worldwide (subject to fitting in with the schedule of the larger shows above) such as the Alt-WoA and WoA-SE shows in the UK, as well as the main shows in France, Germany, the USA and Canada. If you currently - or would like to - organize such a show during 2003 and would like Amiga Inc, and/or Hyperion and/or Eyetech to attend please contact us as soon as early as possible during the planning stage. Given the limited resources we all have, and the cost and complexity of planning for the quarterly shows, we cannot guarantee attendance but we will do our best to support the community wherever it gets together to enjoy the Amiga platform.

So much for 2003 - what about the remainder of 2002, and in particular the Aachen show? We have all, both as individual companies and together, thought long and hard about this show. It has been decided that the timing could not be worse from our respective points of view.

Eyetech is committed to delivering the Earlybird systems for Christmas that week and Amiga Inc is fully occupied fulfilling an AmigaAnywhere contract, and product launch. Whilst visiting with all of you is important, we believe that it is more important to ship products right now, and we simply can not work the show into our schedules.

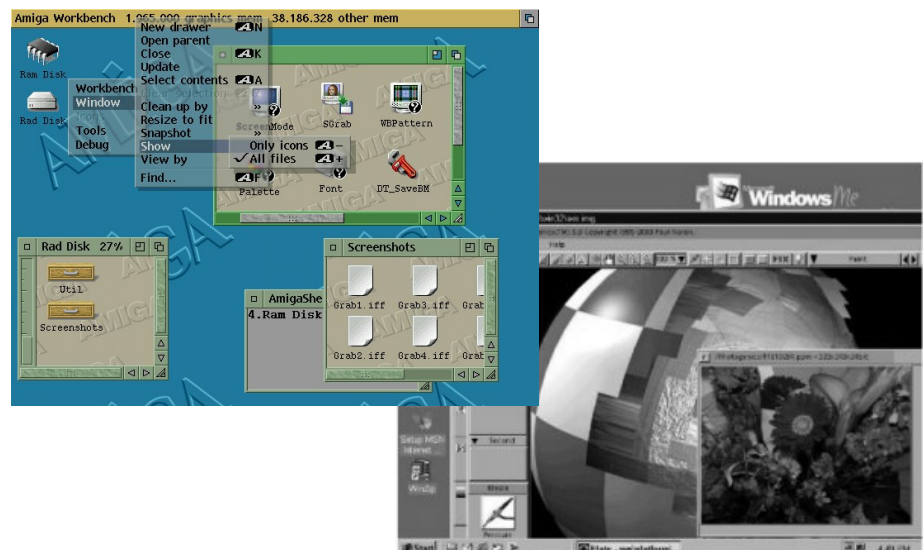
We wanted to share this with you because many in the community have asked the same questions that we have asked ourselves. How will the community grow and thrive? It can only do so through increased sales, and that means increased awareness. As we move from survival mode to growth mode, the small, local shows, however much fun cannot provide this level of exposure and awareness. By marching proudly and strongly into the mainstream shows, and taking the community with us, we are announcing that we are back, once and for all.

Have no doubt that after 8 years of darkness, 2003 will be the year that the Amiga once again makes the World remember that there is a better way.

Thank you, as ever, for your continued support and commitment.

Bill McEwen and the team at Amiga Ben Hermans, Hyperion Alan Redhouse, Eyetech

1996-2002 Amiga, Inc.



# Amiga One

[Transcriber's note: What follows is not word for word what Alan said. Some references to other parties have been edited and Alan has proof-read and expanded parts of the text to aid understanding without the support of the visuals. All edits are my responsibility - tony wyatt 15/nov/2002.]

Alan Redhouse:

What I really wanted to do was tell you a bit more about the stuff you probably haven't picked up on the web. And also give you a chance to talk to me, ask me questions and for me to inform you about some of the basic stuff which really hasn't been relevant to spell out during the process of the AmigaOne development.

Some of you will have guessed some of this stuff, some of you won't but I thought it was time to come clean, as it were, and say what has actually been going on. So, the sort of things that I have put down [to talk about], and what seem to me to be to be interesting topics that people have emailed me about, are:

"What the hell's been happening for the last two years",

"This relationship with Mai, what's it all about, don't they just build the boards and you sell them?"

"What's all this about special firmware and this dongle code?"

And then one of my own. I think there's been quite a lot of nonsense talked about the interaction of choice and competition in this sort of market and I'd really just like to share with you some of the thoughts from my perspective on this and how I think everyone can get value for money, not necessarily by bashing the hell out of people who are supplying it.

And finally the AmigaOne availability options. Many of you will know, just before setting off [for the show], we managed to get a typo-ridden statement up on the web, in which hopefully a few of the corrections have been made by now.

Okay, History Of The World, Part 1. What happened, how did we get involved?

In September 2000, Fleecy [Moss] came over - he doesn't live very far from where we are based. We had a few beers and a chat and the AmigaOne seemed a good idea and [we discussed] what could we do, would we like to help and all the rest of it. So, in principle, I said yes, we'd like to help but clearly we need to put some things down on paper as to what needs doing, who is going to do it etc. Then a few days later Bill [McEwen] announced it at the Australia show - dare I say like a typical American marketeer. We didn't actually get the details of the development contract with Escena sorted out until December (2000), and that obviously involved detailed negotiations, legal agreements, etc. That was signed in December, so nothing started until December 2000.

What did start in December is that we started paying, and early in 2001 there was some progress [on the hardware design] but it was quite slow. OS4 at that time was due to be done by H&P [Haage and Partner] and I can't comment on details about the contract between H&P and Amiga, but I think it's fairly well known now that their mutual suspicion goes back quite a long way - probably from this point.

The upshot was that nothing happened on OS4 but we were still putting money into the [hardware] project without seeing any sign of return, because without OS4 there was no AmigaOne. [Without any progress on OS4] we weren't prepared to put any more money in, and told Escena to stop actively working on it. And then I persuaded Ben Hermans [Hyperion] to join me in going into some fairly lengthy negotiations with Amiga Inc, to get OS4 produced. I wanted them [Amiga Inc] to be realistic that they weren't going to afford to pay for OS4, and that unless we could find a formula where we could get it developed between ourselves and Hyperion, such that it would really be delivered, the AmigaOne would be dead. And as those of you with long memories will remember, we ultimately found a way through and that agreement was signed here last year [2001].

So that was Phase 1, a complete waste of a year and a fair bit of money.

Part two, is a lot more encouraging. [On the OS4 front] Hyperion made contracts with the developers, but the first stumbling block was that H&P wouldn't play ball with them either, wouldn't release the OS3.5 or 3.9 sources.

And [on the AmigaOne front] Escena finally

## Animation SIG



Meetings  
Last Friday  
of Each Month  
Contact:  
Gord Raboud 449-6657

admitted defeat on their own northbridge design. So, in order to look for a way around that, I started negotiations with MAI, who had produced their own PPC version of the northbridge chip (that's the thing which basically handles the memory, the CPU, the PCI bus, etc). Theirs was the only northbridge, apart from Apple's proprietary ones, which was available to support AGP. IBM also do one that supports PCI only, but we thought that was not the way to go for the desktop market.

I went over to the States a few times to talk to MAI, and we formed a partnership agreement. At the end of the day, this is an agreement between two companies and two individuals who believe they can get more out of working together than they can working alone. And that has actually worked well for both us and MAI this year. The result was that we took a licence, not just for their northbridge, but for the whole Teron board design, and we terminated our contract with Escena. And that's where the story really starts.

So, as many of you will remember, in March this year [2002] I made a big thing about saying that the developer boards were on order, etc. They actually were on order and the money was placed for them. The initial boards were shipped with some firmware (that's the bit that on the motherboard and makes sure all the bits are working, initialises the graphics cards and all the other bits you actually need to install an operating system where there's none there) called SofteX firmware, which was closed-source, and should have worked, but in fact didn't.

In fact it didn't work with some of the enhancements, for example, the UDMA-100 chipset which we had specified for the board. In the meantime, in fact before we even started talking to them, MAI had also decided that they needed source code for the firmware which was going to be on their boards, so that they could offer that as source code to their [set top box customers'] developers. They had already let a PPCBoot porting contract with an American software house. Their [MAI's] customers/developers are the people who MAI expected to buy many hundreds of thousands of these chips for incorporation in set-top-boxes, etc. They [MAI] were never into the desktop market, they had built a few boards [to the Teron design] solely for those developers. But in the end their [PPCBoot] contractors in America actually did hardly anything.

I wasn't prepared to let any more boards out until we had the right firmware in place (that is the firmware that was actually going to run on the end-user boards), because otherwise there's no point in shipping them to our developers, for developing and testing out things that are not going to be shipped to the users. So again, as part of the partnership agreement, MAI's Chairman and I had some lengthy discussions - and I eventually persuaded Hyperion that it would be in all our interests to let MAI pay them [Hyperion] (instead of the American company) to adapt PPCBoot. I have to say hats off to those Frieden brothers who did an excellent job, something that this American

company (big company, lots of engineers), didn't manage to do in six months. They did it in a month, and they did it in a way which was a lot more flexible than had ever been envisaged before. [From a start date of the end of July] we had the first working release of PPCBoot right at the end of August. That's a terrific achievement.

Of course, it's all plain sailing from then on, isn't it? No, you just get going and something else comes and kicks you in the teeth. The Articia chipset - the northbridge - had always been designed for set-top boxes and embedded systems - things which aren't really going to move huge amounts of data around. We discovered (I have to say independently the boys from bPlan discovered), that when you start moving large amounts of data between different PCI busmasters using that chipset, it hangs. And that is a fault with that chipset. MAI had not known that fault because it had never been tested in that environment. And every board on sale now and that is out there has that fault, without exception. All our developers' boards have that fault, all the set-top boxes have that fault, and any other desktop systems have that fault. And that means there's a very good chance that the system will hang when you're moving a lot of data out between two different PCI devices. But that's been fixed, and I have today on our stand, the first two boards with that fix on, and that is why nobody's seen the rest of the developer boards and that's why we were only just able yesterday to announce that the user boards will be available.

In the next production run [of the Articia], probably mid next year, it will no longer be a fix, but it will be incorporated into the next mask revision of the Articia chipset. But at about \$200,000 [for] a mask revision, it's not something that MAI are going to do immediately or that we're going to wait for. Because the majority of applications for these chips don't face this problem, it's only the relatively few boards in global terms that bPlan and us are shipping that have that problem. It will happen when the rest of the stocks of chips are sold. I'm not prepared to put up a hundred grand [UKP] (or even fifty grand if we share it with bPlan) to get that mask done early, and in any event it would delay us a few months. So all AmigaOnes will ship with this completely acceptable hardware fix for the foreseeable future.

So, a little bit more about the partnership: MAI are an eight-year-old start-up - eight-year-old in the sense that they have been working on their [Articia] chip design for eight years. Start-up in the sense that they haven't really sold very many, so they're still right at the early stage of their program. And they have sample volumes out there, volumes that are working well but not in mass production in the set-top-box market. They expect huge volume breakthroughs to come very shortly, and I'm sure you'll read about them in the press.

**AMICUE**  
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**Music SIG**

**Contact Larry Bolch**  
**484-9879**

So we're their [MAI's] biggest customer for chips, and I think Thendic are close, I'll say a close equal and be generous, OK?

MAI also commissioned the Teron PX boards, not for sale, but for internal use, as pure development boards in sample quantities, both for themselves and for those [developers] of the companies that they wished to sell their Articia chipset to in the set-top box/embedded market. They only had a few tens, maybe even low hundreds made. That's why they were costing \$4000 on the website, that's the real cost of the boards. I do emphasise that we are really right at the beginning of the Articia chipset lifecycle. There are some developments which are not yet implemented but are down the track, which will give it higher graphics speed and all the rest of it. This is a chip which is about to go into mass production but hasn't done yet.

What does [the partnership agreement] give?

Well, it gives us the exclusive rights to the Teron based designs in the Amiga and Linux markets

It dramatically reduces the cost to MAI's [customer's set top box] developers in buying boards, because they can buy one from us for the four or five hundred pounds mark, instead of the [previous] \$4000. And that is very important, because whilst MAI are very interested in getting their chipsets out and evaluated by as many developers as possible, they can't afford to give \$4000 boards away, maybe ten at a time, to each of their potential customers.

It gives us a state of the art design at the lowest cost, a lot lower than going out there and engineering it from scratch, and much less than the cost we would have paid Escena for a design we now know is fundamentally flawed.

It gives MAI a royalty on each AmigaOne board sold (or

each board sold for Linux that we sell), so that helps amortise their costs and helps with funding the commissioning of new board designs. We have been talking to them about some quite exciting prospects which may take the Amiga back to the all-in-one compact design where it was a few years ago.

And as far as we and Amiga (and Hyperion) are concerned, that close relationship also opens up the possibility of using OS4 in set-top boxes and embedded systems. OS4 would be very good for that, with its near real-time code and all the rest of it, so there could be licence fees flowing both ways. And also a lot of opportunities for people who have got some skills in developing under OS4 on the AmigaOne to get into the real commercial marketplace at real commercial rates... (wish I could program!).

Okay, so next a little bit about the AmigaOne firmware. One of the big advantages of PPCBoot is that it's open source. And that means that Hyperion can amend it, to make it a lot nearer how the Amiga operating system works. For example, it's possible to boot the AmigaOne, both Linux and the Amiga OS, from the rigid disk block, the RDB, just like the Amiga does, as well as from USB, serial and all the other things. In a stroke of genius, (Ben [Hermans of Hyperion] may have told you this earlier), the Frieden brothers actually grafted on an X-86 emulator to execute the BIOSs on any cards which actually need to be initialised. PC cards generally speaking (video cards obviously), have a piece of code on board which needs to be executed right at the beginning, and that's the thing that puts the logos up on your PC screen when you boot, before the operating system starts booting. So this code will allow any card that goes in there (any graphics card, and any other card that requires initialisation to boot), to initialise itself. And you have to do that, otherwise you've got no means of installing an operating system. If you like, PPCBoot is the mini operating system which allows other operating systems to be installed. That's very important, because it means that you can use PC-standard hardware with PC BIOSs on board (not special PPC-native execution code or open firmware execution code). It also means that you don't have to cater for that exclusively within the drivers that you write in the operating system, so in other words, it would be \*possible\* not to have this at all, and install the operating system blind, loading some code first to try to initialise the cards but that would be too cumbersome for words.

[The adoption of PPCBoot] means also that the process of these graphics cards' initialisation is also able to be monitored [via the serial interface for example] and understood, which makes it a lot easier (with their OS4 hats on), [for Hyperion] to graft that code into OS4. So although ostensibly it's taken some time out of the schedule, it's also added a huge amount of value into the OS4 process.

I know on ANN and other lists, my friend Seehund and other people have said quite a lot of things about the dongle code, but to me it's a very simple issue. The dongle code is there so that Hyperion get their rewards for every copy of Amiga OS run. That's important because that's how they've done their sums. If they'd done their sums assuming some level of piracy (or just a percentage takeup), it would have been either unaffordable or never done. So that's my contribution, if you like, in saying that I will try to protect Hyperions revenue stream against piracy. We will sell boards to the Linux market, but they will not run Amiga OS4. Of course, someone may pirate the dongle code and all the rest of it, but to be quite frank, for the small difference in price, it's not going to be worth the effort. And if it's done on a mass scale it'll be easy to spot. Nothing more than that, the AmigaOne will run any other OS for which it is licensed. Bill Buck told me in France they'd had Morph OS running on it, I think it was a bit of a tongue-in-cheek thing, I think they've had MorphOS running on the Teron CX developer board with SofteX that they'd bought from MAI some time ago but, you know, there may be some potential there if they want to do it, that's fine. Their licence copy protection scheme is up to them [if they want to prevent MorphOS piracy]

Another thing which we touched on, as you know, is "we won't pirate OS4, but we think the dongle infringes our civil liberties" attitude. In other words, "it removes the ability [for us as potential users] to exercise our judgement not to pirate OS4". I think that's bollocks. Others have quoted the example of MorphOS, but I think MorphOS is just as tied to the hardware as we are. The other interesting misunderstanding is that (for anyone who understands the principle by which OS4 is written), OS4 has to be specifically tied to the hardware implementation on every type of board on which it runs. We use a different Southbridge chip, and various other things which are different from Pegasos, you cannot take the CD that will be supplied with an AmigaOne, and stick it on a Pegasos machine or on a CyberStorm, and expect it to boot. They [the OS versions] have to be specifically done to match the hardware platform. The only reason the dongle code is there is to stop people from going around buying Linux boards, and pirating OS4 to use it on those.

Okay, so that's that. A couple of things which I'd like to add, my sort of payback, I guess, is some stuff on competition.

Now, everyone remembers the good old days of the Amiga market. Five million systems sold, lots of users, even five years ago, tons of users. Now it's a very small base but a lot of people still think [that] the more hardware competition you've got, the cheaper prices will be. Not true. If you're talking about a huge volume market, a few hundred thousands boards or whatever,

of course it does, because the more people that come in, the more economies of production kick in and the lower unit price margins can be. But we're talking now, essentially, certainly at this stage, about a closed market.

So if there are ten thousand potential purchasers and I'm the only supplier, my unit board cost will - for example - be about two thirds' [what it would cost me to make] a run of half that number of boards. If that ten thousand [boards] is shared between two [manufacturers], then the total cost of each board to me, and therefore to you, will be more, by - in this example - 50%. If we divide that even further it just becomes untenable, and people drop out. In fact, Fleecy will tell you that I said if there's any more than two people involved in this Amiga marketplace I wouldn't play ball because I couldn't make the sums add up. So competition is not necessarily best for price with these products; what you're really getting is a low volume bespoke board at approaching volume quantity prices. And that's really because we've been very careful about how we've done the deals and Hyperion have been very careful about the way they've spent their money, and how they've incentivised their developers.

Right, this [Amigaone pricing and availability] is quite probably old hat by now, but it was quite new when I wrote it yesterday. There are three models, designed, debugged and production-ready. Two models in production before Christmas, that's the SE model (the entry-level one with the soldered-on CPU) and the XE G4. And this is the reason why it's a last-minute posting, we've only this week got the confirmation of the deal through from Motorola and that makes that sort of price possible. And I think the general reaction from the comments I've seen is that it's below people's expectations of price and above performance level expectations. I hope it is, I'm sure it's going to be an excellent product. In fact I know it's going to be an excellent one because I've tried it.

The other thing we have to do, and I'm very keen on doing, is making sure that we build into these things adequate margins for the dealers, to survive, and support, and advertise, and market, little by little, not big splashes, not television advertising. To be able to attend shows for example, they have to make money and they have to make that out of the margin on the boards.

It includes the licence fees that we pay to Amiga Inc. and to MAI.

It includes a two-year warranty, which we have to hold at our expense because it just isn't practical to ship volumes of boards backwards and forwards to the far East to get little fixes done.

And it includes an adequate return for us because you know, my time, my people's time is money, and we've spent a huge amount of time on this and quite a lot of money. Of course we've tried to be very careful in how we do things and do good deals, but you know, my bank manager also

expects a return on the money we have to put up front for board production (in fact he expects a whole lot more, actually, but that's his problem).

So, what are you waiting for?

That's all I'm going to say, not whizzy-bangy, but hopefully it's cleared a few issues and maybe raised a few more, so I'm very happy to take questions.

## VirusZIII 0.9

Review by Peter Hutchison

Viruses are a curse for all computer users and that includes the Amiga. VirusZ III 0.9 is the latest virus checker for the Amiga. VirusZ is simple to install. Just copy the program icon to your hard disk, preferably, WBStartup, so that it will run as soon as you boot up.

VirusZ does require some extra libraries installed in particular, xvs.library, reqtools.library, xfd.library and the optional xad.library and disassembler.library. These libraries provide extra functionality to look for types for viruses, uncompress archived files and look at bootblocks.

When VirusZ is run, a small minimised window is opened on Workbench. Its unobtrusive and you know its running. VirusZ gives two sets of menus.

The Project menu provides various checks of your system including File Check which will check all files for viruses. Since its using reqtools requester, you need to select all the files and directories you need to check. I did a full check of my system and it was pretty fast and fortunately, no viruses found.

There is a Sector Check (which is not implemented check) and a Boot block Lab check to check for those floppies with bootblock viruses. The Vector Check will check for memory resident viruses the attach to system vectors or addresses. It will display valid system changes as well as suspect ones. The Memory Monitor will display contents of memory if you suspect you have a virus and need to check if its there. If you know where to look...

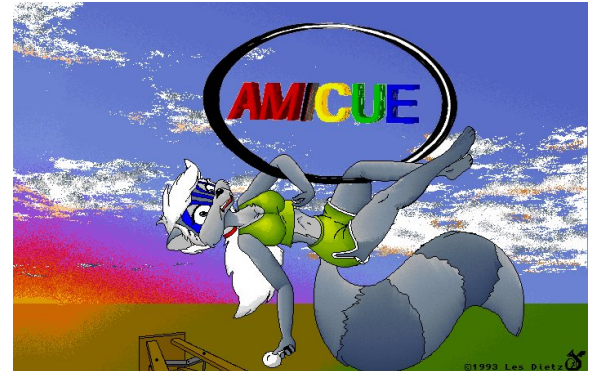
The Show menu will list all the bootblock, file and link viruses and all known patches which you may have installed. Technical Info will display information about libraries installed and About displays some info on the program and the Author. The second menu, Preferences, will allow you to customise VirusZ to your preferences. A preference for each of the checks and labs is available so you can turn various features on or off to your liking. Documentation on the program and a complete history is available as well.

VirusZ is an essential utility for your system. Its free and easy to use. Recommended

Available from: [Aminet:util/virus/VirusZ.lha](mailto:Aminet:util/virus/VirusZ.lha) ([Download This](#))

Overall: 90%

## Next AMICUE Meeting December 19th 7:00 PM ArchBishop Jordan High School Sherwood Park



## WinUAE 0.8.22 Release 3

Posted on Tuesday, November 19 @ 02:36:24  
EST by Sinan Gurkan

A new version of WinUAE is now available.

- o Ports-tab crash fixed
- o joystick handling fixes
- o hard drive configuration save fixed (trailing spaces are now removed from HD ID-string)
- o fixed stuck keys when switching between WinUAE and Windows
- o sprite fix (some games had flashing sprite garbage)
- o thread priority tweaks
- o setupapi.dll error when running under Windows 95 (not confirmed yet)

New feature:  
implemented harddisk and CD-libs that flash during HD/CD access