

2003 In Review

To analyze the events of the year in the Amiga Community is very simple. It is basically identifying how the two major system elements, the computer motherboard and the operating system, have failed to materialize on a timely basis for the two competing systems that tend to be of primary interest to the Community. Obviously, the efforts to get both major elements of the Amiga One/OS-4 and the Pegasos/Morph systems to market have not been the only events of interest to the Amiga Community during the course of the year, but they have so totally overshadowed any others that all others pale by comparison. Interestingly, the problems encountered by each of the systems have been diametrically the opposite of the other. With both systems, early on, their intent was to have both the motherboard and the Operating System available initially and include them both as a package. Both began promising initial availability around early second quarter to mid 2002. The availability continued to slip, until very near the end of 2002. At that point, products were beginning to become available in very small quantities.

Amiga One hardware was available, but its path to market was delayed hoping OS-4 would be available very soon so they could be marketed as a package. It didn't happen. The major problem was that Amiga, Inc. had chosen Haag and Partner to update the Amiga OS for versions 3.5 and 3.9. However, they selected Hyperion to develop the new OS-4.0, which converts the OS to operate on the Power PC chip set. This caused hard feelings that resulted in a lack of cooperation requiring Hyperion

to, essentially, develop the entire OS from scratch. This was complicated by the need to maintain compatibility with the previous OSs. As it became clear OS-4 would be delayed, it was decided to proceed with marketing the Amiga One motherboard, providing PPC versions of LINUX with it, so it would be a useable product. By this time, OS-4 has been demonstrated all around the world, but the demonstrations, apparently, continue to be done with alpha and beta versions. The release date seems to continue to slip. In the meantime, Amiga, Inc. appears to be in severe financial problems. One wonders, since the actual products for both parts of the system are being developed, produced and marketed by separate firms, what will happen if Amiga, Inc. goes away.

On the other hand, at about the same time, the Pegasos/Morph system hit the market. The Morph OS was fully operational, although some elements were still in development, the Pegasos1 was available and they were sold as a package, along with a PPC version of LINUX. Early on, however, problems appeared with one of the chips used in the Pegasos. As an interim fix, a replacement chip was supplied to purchasers and a small additional group of Pegasos1s were sold with the new chip. The decision was made, at that point, rather than continue with a compromise

solution, the motherboard would be redesigned to solve the problems. Thus was born the Pegasos2. It was also decided to give purchasers of the Pegasos1, the option to trade them in on a Pegasos2 for an additional charge. Therefore, for most of the year, Morph has been available without the Pegasos. Pegasos2s were to be available by mid December, but apparently someone has purchased their entire first production run, so the availability of the Pegasos2 motherboards is still an unknown.

It does appear that things are finally coming together and sometime in early to mid 2004, all the problems will be solved and that both systems will finally be available to anyone who wants one. The primary hope, then, is that there will be enough demand for both systems to make them economically viable, support their developers and ensure their continued development.

...Ron Schwartz
AmiTech-Dayton Gazette,
December 2003

OS4 News

Leuven, Belgium
December 25, 2003

Hyperion Entertainment and the OS 4.0 development team are pleased to announce that OS4 development has now

sufficiently advanced for a comprehensive Developer Pre-release of Amiga OS 4.0 to be distributed to all current AmigaOne owners shortly after the New Year.

In view of the fact that quite a few of you reminded us that you do not have broadband internet access, the original idea to offer an initial version of OS 4.0 for download was abandoned in favor of an "easy to install," self-contained distribution on CD.

Whilst this will obviously entail more cost to Hyperion and require more time for duplication and distribution, the upside is that we will be able to provide developers with everything they need to start developing for OS 4.0.

The developer material will include sample source-code, an initial version of the AmigaOS 4.0 SDK as well as native OS 4.0 compilers (GCC 2.95.3, GCC 3.4 and VBCC) and cross-compilers for various platforms (Linux x86/PCC, Mac OS X etc.).

The Developer Pre-release will require an upgrade of the AmigaOne firmware which was bumped from U-Boot 0.1.1 to U-Boot 1.0 and which is currently undergoing final testing.

Further details will be announced shortly.

Hyperion Entertainment and the OS 4 development team would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your continued support and patience.

AmigaMCCC News

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January Calendar

January 12 — Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — University Center, Pedernales Room
W. First St. & S. West St., Arlington

January 12 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
Approx. 10:00 pm — TGI Fridays
Cooper Street just south of I-20, Arlington

January 15 — Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — Junkins Building, SMU
Dyer and Airline Extension Rd., Dallas

January 24 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

The fact that you are still here, 10 years after the demise of Commodore, has been a tremendous encouragement to us during these 2 years of laborious development.

Make no mistake: your patience will finally be rewarded with the fastest and most powerful incarnation of AmigaOS ever.

Merry X-mas and a prosperous 2004 to all of you!

Web news: I am in the process of putting the old MCCC newsletters on the web. 1983 through 1986 are online as of this writing. More will be added soon.