New Computers

I thought I'd try something a little different this month…writing about computer-related news and information. I'm doing this mostly because there actually is a little bit of new information out there, which hasn't happened in a while. In this case, the news is about various new hardware that MIGHT (not necessarily will) run Amiga OS or MrophOS. In a recent interview, Bill McEwen gave his usual "things are gonna be great" message, but there were some hints about possible new hardware to run Amiga OS4 (or 5). Unfortunately, the hardware shown is not really an improvement on the Amiga One models, or the Pegasos 2. It's likely the hardware was designed for simple embedded applications and the like, but not necessarily a workstation.

Another interesting piece of hardware is Bplans's EFIKA board, which does not have particularly impressive specs either compared to a Pegasos 2, but the whole system is concentrated into a tiny board, with most of it on a single chip. The EFIKA system was shown running MorphOS 1.5 at a recent computer show, though it likely won't be bundled with it. Some people are jumping the gun a talking about it like it's replacing the Pegasos, but that doesn't appear to be the intent. The EFIKA is undoubtedly meant for those who need one, or several, medium-capability systems where minimal size and power consumption is advantageous. If MorphOS was available for it, and

the price was right, I would be more than interested in a tiny EFIKA-based system.

Also of note relative to this news is the impression that MorphOS 1.5 may be on the way, possibly as early as the holidays. It appears that this OS upgrade will have to be bought, but that shouldn't be an issue, as long as the price is not too far out of line with the gains.

Finally, work is progressing on something called "Clone," a clone of the Amiga chipset on a single chip, similar to the Atari and Commodore 8-bit setups that have come before. I'm watching this project pretty eagerly, even though I'm not sure what the plans are for it once it's finished. It could potentially be anything from another plug-into-the-TV game joysticks to a full system in a small package, albeit based on an A500 spec. It's a bit much at this point to expect the equivalent of my A4000 with a 68060 in that form yet, but I can always keep hoping, and keeping an eye on the project.

I think maybe I'm just waiting to have a Pegasos, and a "classic" Amiga, all scaled down to a minimal form-factor, so my Mac Mini can't claim technical superiority simply because it rides around in a silver cookie box.

…by Eric Schwartz
AmiTech-Dayton Gazette, October 2006

Interview with Bill McEwen

Author: Vidar Langberget.
Posted : 2006-10-04

The saga of the Amiga continues.. Amiga Inc, thought to be dead after stopping all communication with the Amiga community, have reappeared. The long spell of silence was broken when they answered 25 questions from the readers at Amiga.org. In the answers, the CEO of Amiga Inc, Bill McEwen revealed some information that once again brought back some hope in the Amiga community.

Contrary to popular belief, they have been working to fullfil their vision from before 2000, of a "scalable, embeddable, multi-threaded, memory protected operating system or digital environment that would run from a cell phone to a server".

In the meantime, Hyperion Entertainment and their partners have been busy working on Amiga OS4, which has been in available in pre-release form since April 2004. The final release is held back by the lack of suitable PPC motherboards to run OS4 on, but this seems to be finally resolved, and a final release is expected this year.

The Amiga.org interview left a lot of questions unanswered, especially with regards to Amiga Inc's plans for OS5. So to get a clearer picture of where they are headed, I asked Bill McEwen to answer some

questions:

1.) You recently reappeared in public for the first time in a long time, answering 25 questions from the Amiga community at Amiga.org. What prompted this reappearance?

It was time to let everyone know that we are still moving ahead, and that we are progressing with our plans. We had been quiet for far too long, and I went to the board and asked that we change that and get back to the community. The community is an important asset to Amiga, and it is time that they are treated that way.

2.) In your 25 questions at Amiga.Org you mentioned that Amiga has been working on OS5 for almost 2 years. What is the planned release date for OS5?

We have a schedule, but at this time we are not going to put that information out there. I should also state that the name OS 5 is going to change. The product that we are going to ship is going to be much better than OSX from Apple, so OS 5 is not an accurate name or description of the product offering.

3.) How many people are working on OS5 at the moment?

There are 5 on the team at this time, and we will be adding another group in the next few weeks.

4.) Is Fleecy Moss still in charge for the development team at Amiga?

That is correct.

5.) During a recent IRC chat, The Frieden brothers said

AmigaMCCC News

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November Calendar

that they were contacted by Amiga and asked if they were interested in developing the kernel for OS5. This implies that the kernel hasn't even been started. If the kernel work hasn't even started, the eventual release of OS5 seems very uncertain and far away, even if you've been working on it for 2 years. When do you expect to have the first beta release for developers ready?

I am surprised that the Frieden brothers would say that, but so be it. Portions of Five will be in the hands of developers soon. We are using a new development method and strategy that will allow us to get portions of the code in the hands of developers so that we can better determine our progress, and the features that they are looking for.

[See more of this article on the web.]