



Fort Worth

Dallas

September 2009

Amiga News & Thoughts on Piracy

Often I lament how there's never any news in the Amiga community. This is not one of those times, however. There's actually a fair amount of stuff going on. The bigger news of the moment is that MorphOS had another update, and is now at version 2.3 (free if you are already a paid customer for other 2.x versions, but you can still use it in a limited capacity if not). As usual, it's for the Pegasos or Efika systems, and word is a version for PowerPC Mac Mini is on the way shortly. I only recently installed 2.3, so I can't say much about it yet, but have no complaints. I may try to show it off at a meeting once I have the chance to look it over in more detail. One of the more interesting changes I've noted so far is the "enhanced layers" system, which uses your system's video card to improve and enhance the performance of the user interface, is now selectable on a screen by screen basis, instead of the all-on or all-off of the previous release. Also the OWB web browser (version 1.4) is now included in the standard software suite, giving the system a reasonably modern way to surf the web. Apparently Flash and video support is in progress, so things are moving along nicely. I do plan on showing "GrafX2" at this month's meeting. It's a paint program similar in style to Deluxe Paint or Brilliance, which is used to create bitmap art in 256 colors or less. I understand it started as an old MS-DOS program, which was later ported to a wide

variety of systems (mainly ones that can use the SOL package). In this case, I'll be showing it on my Linux laptop, running under AROS, for the sake of being properly convoluted. I'll see you all there.

I feel I may have rambled a bit much in my little piece on software piracy last month, in my efforts to write something objective while being fundamentally biased myself. I hope you'll indulge me as I tackle the subject again with a tiny bit more brevity. As I've said previously, the fundamental issue is whether or not digital material such as software, media, or pretty much anything capable of being copied is subject to the same rights of property and ownership as tangible, physical things. There's already one difference in that one can "steal" a file without actually depriving the previous owner of it, unlike a physical object. On one end of the spectrum are those who feel they have every right to copy and distribute any digital anything they wish. Some go so far as to decry any attempts to claim ownership or make any profits on "intellectual properties," though how much of that is some socialist free information ideal and how much is simply justification for piracy is up for debate. On the other end of things are those who wish to protect their properties, for reasons of profit or just control. On the extreme side they would dictate exactly how you use any software or files you got from them, either by legal documentation or "copy protection" which controls how their other software can be used. These measures are meant to protect the creators' interests, but just as often can be too draconian and unfairly punish those who only wish to use their purchased software or media

normally and honestly. Most people fall somewhere in the middle. While they probably wouldn't turn down free stuff given the opportunity, they don't mind paying for their digital data, as long as it's reasonably priced and doesn't punish them for being a customer by such means as "one machine licenses" that force one to buy again if their hard drive crashes or they change or upgrade their system. (It's not bad to not be breaking any laws either). I think the success of iTunes and similar online media sales services is some testament to this. It's a matter of finding the balance in a constantly shifting marketplace with its shifting paradigms. While piracy will probably never be totally stopped, it can hopefully be marginalized, so those who want to make a profit can do so without taking measures that punish the honest folk, and those that hurt their honest customers protecting their properties get passed over for the kinder, gentler software and media providers.

Tune in next time when I write about how terrible everyone is on the Internet.

...by Eric Schwartz
from the AmiTech Gazette, August 2009

C64 Forever

When the C64 was launched in 1982 it immediately set the standard for 8-bit home computers. Its low cost, superior graphics, high quality sound and a massive 64 KB of RAM positioned it as the winner in the home computer wars, knocking out competitors from the likes of Atari,

Texas Instruments, Sinclair, Apple and IBM.

Selling over 30 million units and introducing a whole generation to computers and programming, the C64 shook up the video games industry and sparked cultural phenomena such as computer music and the demoscene. In recent years the C64 has enjoyed a spectacular revival manifesting itself once again as a retrocomputing platform.

To allow you to experience and relive the wonders of this unique computer, Cloanto, developers of Commodore/Amiga software since the 1980s, has introduced C64 Forever, a revolutionary preservation, emulation and support package. C64 Forever embodies an intuitive player interface, backed by a built-in database containing more than 5,000 C64 game entries, and advanced support for the new RP9 format, dubbed the “MP3 of retrogaming.”

Features of C64 Forever include:

- Emulation of C64 hardware (allows you to run C64 software on your PC)
- Additional emulation of related systems: PET 2001, CBM 3032, CBM 4032, CBM 8032, VIC 20, CBM 610, C16, Plus/4 and C128
- More than 200 preinstalled games and demoscene productions
- One-click play support for thousands of downloadable C64 and other 8-bit games, demos and applications

- RetroPlatform Library includes title and configuration data for more than 5,000 C64 games, with online updates
- RP9 Manager to convert between RP9 and other popular formats (D64, T64, etc.)
- Preconfigured and enhanced VICE emulation engine with auto-updates
- Special features and gallery of items of historical interest
- Much, much more...

C64 Forever shares the same RetroPlatform family player, database and content management components as the very successful Amiga Forever series. As such, it also embodies more than 12 years of experience and refinements and a tradition of innovation and long-term continuity and support.

Compared to other solutions for different systems, C64 Forever stands out for features which include the following:

- Smooth setup: it takes only a few mouse clicks to install and run (no additional downloads required)
- Intuitive, simple and refined user interface, in which player, content, database and search are seamlessly integrated (not a “front end” that launches an external emulator)
- Built-in RetroPlatform Library database featuring thousands of titles, with online updates
- As some projects kept adding options year after year, C64

Forever strived to keep options to a minimum, as RetroPlatform components take sophisticated decisions behind the scenes

- If you know how to use Amiga Forever you are instantly familiar with C64 Forever, and vice versa
- Support for revolutionary RP9 format (one click to play, one file per title, no need to zip or unzip games or manage multiple disk images, etc.)
- Support and recognition of other popular disk, tape, cartridge and save state formats, with options to identify uncataloged similar variants (not a simple “checksum” approach)
- Built-in search-as-you-type for installed content and custom one-click Internet search for games and demoscene productions
- Tested on Windows 7 (both x86 and x64)

...<http://www.c64forever.com/>

September Calendar

Sept. 14 — Amiga-By-The-Loop Chapter
7:00 pm — Main Grand Prairie Library
901 Conover Drive, Grand Prairie

Sept. 14 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
Approximately 9:15 pm — Location TBD

Sept. 26 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

MCCC 4418 Sharpsburg Drive Grand Prairie, Texas 75052
<http://www.amigamccc.org>