

Amiga Reviews & Magazines

The days are getting shorter, and colder. It seems to be happening quickly, too. Anyway, there hasn't been a lot going on recently in the world of Amiga stuff, though for whatever reason, I'm not really seeing that as bad news. One nugget of interest is the author at OSNews who reviewed Amiga OS4 a while back (I talked about his article back when as well) just reviewed MorphOS 2.3 as well. The article can be found here:

http://www.osnews.com/story/22315/MorphOS_2_3_EFIKA

What makes these reviews interesting (to me at least) is they are written by someone who is not already Amiga-savvy, nor viewing everything through Windows or Mac-colored glasses (though some bias does creep in from time to time). It's about as close to impartial as a review such as this is likely to get. One small downside here is that the author was limited to using the Efika hardware, and noted running into issues, mainly with the system's limiting 128 megs of hardwired RAM. To be fair, he likens this to trying to review Windows 7 on a similar spec, so he couldn't review fully, and was forgiving of limits he ran into, not so much with MorphOS itself, but the applications run on it. He did note that Morph was quite fast and responsive, even with the limited hardware. He also noted the interface design made more "concessions to the modern world," feeling it was a bit more accessible to those not already familiar with Amiga-style

design, mentioning the "browser-paradigm" file manager interface versus the "spatial-paradigm" interface of OS4. (The author shows his ignorance here, as Morph is capable of working either way, at least to an extent.) Still, it was a worthwhile, if short, read.

Sometimes, when I think back to the glory days of Amiga, one of the things I miss most is the magazines. There were the American magazines, the larger British mags with their floppy discs (and later CDs), even specific magazines for Amiga gaming and the CD-32, (however short-lived). Reading most of the magazines was both a source of news and a joy. Not every magazine was great, and not every article was about something that interested me, but the ratio was always well above average.

Nowadays things are different, as the vast majority of Amiga-based publications are long gone and the Internet gives quicker access to information than any magazine could. Also, the overall world of computers has changed. My computer experience has extended from Amiga to Mac and Linux. Mac magazines are interesting, but they are really "anything Apple makes" magazines. I don't feel I'm getting much value out of a publication where half of the coverage is on stuff for iPods and iPhones, so that interest ratio is much lower. Linux magazines are no better, simply because Linux covers such a wide field of interests, applications, and distributions. Any one Linux user, especially if they aren't using Ubuntu or one of the other most popular distros, is going to have a pretty limited amount of press that they can directly relate to. There is a light in the darkness though. When I see the

Amiga Future magazines, even in this time of less Amiga news and less that can't be found on the Internet first, I find the feeling I get from reading Amiga magazines back in the 'nineties still exists, justified or not. If only everyone could recapture past feelings so easily.

...by Eric Schwartz
from the AmiTech-Dayton Gazette,
October 2009

FCC & Net Neutrality

The fight for Net Neutrality took a big step forward on Monday with the chair of the Federal Communications Commission announcing plans to expand the rules to protect a free and open Internet.

In a speech at the Brookings Institution, Julius Genachowski said the FCC must be a "smart cop on the beat" preserving Net Neutrality against increased efforts by providers to block services and applications over both wired and wireless connections.

Genachowski's speech comes as a breath of fresh air in a Washington policy environment that has long stagnated under the influence of a powerful phone and cable lobby.

"If we wait too long to preserve a free and open Internet, it will be too late," Genachowski said, citing a number of recent examples where network providers have acted as gatekeepers:

We have witnessed certain broadband providers unilaterally block access to VoIP applications (phone calls delivered over data networks) and implement technical measures that degrade the performance of peer-to-peer software distributing lawful content. We have even seen at least one service provider deny users access to political content.

A Call for Wired and Wireless Neutrality

The agency has earlier noted concerns about the blocking of applications and services on new handheld Internet devices such as the iPhone.

Genachowski, who was an architect of President Obama's technology agenda, proposed that the agency adopt new principles that would prevent discrimination and require full transparency from ISPs that seek to manage their networks. The new principles are additions to the "Four Freedoms" endorsed by the FCC in 2005.

Genachowski asked the FCC to adopt all six principles as Internet rules that are "essential to ensuring its continued openness." FCC Commissioners Michael Copps and Mignon Clyburn have already indicated they support stronger Net Neutrality rules.

"The rise of serious challenges to the free and open Internet puts us at a crossroads," Genachowski said. "We could see the Internet's doors shut to

entrepreneurs, the spirit of innovation stifled, a full and free flow of information compromised. Or we could take steps to preserve Internet openness, helping ensure a future of opportunity, innovation, and a vibrant marketplace of ideas."

The Right Rules, Right Now

In a panel of experts following the speech, David Young of Verizon Communications stated that his company is able to "live with" Internet openness standards. "Openness and innovation are keys to our success," Young said, but added predictably that he prefers a "hands off approach."

Young later added a familiar lobbyist refrain that he "doesn't understand what the problem is that we are trying to solve" with openness rules. Verizon has already deployed 194 lobbyists at a cost of more than \$13 million this year to fight Net Neutrality both at the FCC and in Congress.

"The Internet is inevitably going to have a regulatory structure around it," Free Press Policy Director Ben Scott said in response to Young. "What we're deciding is: What is it going to look like?"

"What we heard today is a very common-sense approach," Scott said. "But in this town, doing something common sense is considered bold."

"[This is] about fair rules of the road for companies that control access to

the Internet," Genachowski concluded. "We will do as much as we need to do, and no more, to ensure that the Internet remains an unfettered platform for competition, creativity, and entrepreneurial activity."

The FCC Opens Its Doors

Now the FCC has to actually write the new rules and invite comments from the public and interested parties.

To engage more public participation in the process, Genachowski announced that the agency would hold a series of public workshops on openness. In addition, the FCC launched a new Web site, www.openinternet.gov, so the public can "contribute to the process."

...by Tim Karr
September 21, 2009
URL:
<<http://www.savetheinternet.com/blog/09/09/21/fcc-chief-boldly-commits-net-neutrality>>

November Calendar

November 2 — Amiga-By-The-Loop Chapter
7:00 pm — Main Grand Prairie Library
901 Conover Drive, Grand Prairie

November 2 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
Approximately 9:15 pm — Location TBD

November 21 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

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<http://www.amigamccc.org>