

A Commodore USA Branded Amiga?

Just when you thought the Amiga world was finally getting its act together, finally making things a little less obtuse for outsiders, this happens. So, we have the AmigaOne X1000 coming up, a brand-new PowerPC computer, running the real deal—AmigaOS 4. In the meantime, Commodore USA—the one with the sketchy website—has apparently secured rights to the Amiga hardware brand, and is planning to release Amiga-branded computers running AROS. In the meantime, Hyperion, the Belgium company behind AmigaOS, who is working with A-EON on the AmigaOne X1000, claims this is a clear violation of the settlement between them and Amiga Inc., and has notified its US lawyers.

Commodore USA sent out a press release yesterday in which they state they've reached an agreement with Bill McEwen of Amiga, Inc. (one of the two companies named Amiga) in which Commodore USA may use the Amiga hardware brand on computers running AROS, the open source Amiga-inspired operating system.

“We are ecstatic to be partnering with Amiga Inc. in this new, exciting product launch,” states

Barry Altman, President and CEO of Commodore USA. “The legacy of the Commodore and Amiga trademark brand, reunited once again after so many years, and our reintroduction of the legendary All-In-One computer keyboard form factor, combined with the twenty-five year anniversary of the introduction of the first Amiga computer by Commodore International, is a once in a lifetime opportunity.”

My first thought was—wait, doesn't this violate the settlement agreement between Amiga Inc. and Hyperion, which finally settled all the legal mumbo-jumbo in the Amiga world? It appears Hyperion believes that this is indeed a violation, and as such, they have asked their lawyers in the US to investigate the matter.

“Our American lawyers will take action against this,” Hyperion states. “This is blatant violation of the rights Hyperion Entertainment secured in the settlement agreement with Amiga Inc., Itec and Amino.”

The facts here are that if there's two companies I would blindly trust in the Amiga world, it's Hyperion and ACube. These are the only two companies that have kept their promises and delivered actual working products we can buy today. Everyone else—including A-EON (until they ship the X1000)—are fair game.

The only conclusion I can draw from this is that my initial distrust of this Commodore USA thing was more than justified. Their website (shoddy doesn't even begin to describe it), their rebranded products, their unilateral press releases which can't be confirmed anywhere else but on their site... It all reeks of a massive con. Are their products even shipping, after months of promises?

Unless proven otherwise, I'm assuming for now that Commodore USA is, at best, a hoax, and at worst, a very inept con. They are properly registered as an LLC, though.

...posted by Thom Holwerda
1 Sept 2010
<http://www.osnews.com/story/23753/>

A Commodore USA Amiga?

It's been a time of curious and unusual developments in the world. Perhaps I should get the more mundane ones out of the way first. My Amiga anniversary animation (AAA?) project proceeds, not slowly, but not all that quickly either. The problem with ambitious projects is one rarely has a good idea how long it will take to finish until they are elbow deep in it. I'm still not too

sure myself, but at least I have some mostly-final clips to show for it, and I'll be bringing them with me to this month's meeting. Hopefully they aren't too embarrassing.

Recently (actually a couple months ago) I completed a short interview, which appears in the recent issue 80 of Retro Gamer magazine. I've done similar interviews in the past with various Amiga magazines, and they usually come out about the same—once I see the final version in print, I find it's been hacked to the bone by the editors. Sometimes it's merely some trimming to best fit the page, others seem to change the entire tone of my words. This time it was closer to the former, but a lot of text was sacrificed regardless. Having these kinds of first-hand experiences always force me to wonder what happens in other interview articles I've read. Is what I'm reading even close to what was actually written or said? Am I missing out on some juicy tidbit or insight because another photo or advertisement had to fit on the page? Is the person interviewed actually anything like the tone presented in the article? It makes it difficult to trust what I read. I guess there's a bias to the media wherever you go, whether in pundit-laden news or a simple interview.

In the Amiga realm, there is a (more or less) newcomer to the stage: Commodore USA (at least that's what this Barry Altman guy calls it) is following up upon their Commodore PC (basically an all-in-one keyboard PC including a C64 emulator, that suggests the design of the original) is planning to release a Commodore Amiga PC along the same lines. They say they have licensed the Amiga name (from whomever has the authority to do that now, possibly Bill McEwen), and the system(s) will use the AROS open source operating system. Not too surprisingly, Hyperion Software is apparently not happy about this, as these Commodore Amiga systems might distract from their interests in selling the Amiga OS4 and the eventual upcoming Amiga X1000 hardware. Normally I wouldn't care too much about all this, as I doubt there's any such thing as bad Amiga exposure at this point, and the Commodore USA and Hyperion/A-EON Amiga systems appear to cater to different audiences. The downside seems to be an apparent sleazy quality to the C-USA CEO. There seems to be a pattern of announcing and even producing without making sure the legal i's are dotted and t's crossed. For one, it's been uncertain whether C-USA actually had legally licensed the Commodore

trademarks or not, and design artwork related to their upcoming Amiga system was said to be used without obtaining permission from the original artist. To top it off, Barry the CEO has a nasty habit of posting very unprofessional attacks at anyone if not everyone who is uncomplimentary to C-USA or its products. Perhaps he's just trying to be an Internet-age Jack Tramiel, but it does not inspire confidence. I guess all that can be done is to see how it all plays out, find out who sues who, and who comes out the winner. I would like to say that we win no matter who loses, but I'm not sure of that at all. I guess I can wish for the least objectionable possible outcome, anyway.

...by Eric Schwartz
from the AmiTech Gazette,
September 2010

October Calendar

October 4 — Amiga-By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 PM — Main Grand Prairie Library
901 Conover Drive, Grand Prairie

October 4 — Board of Director's Meeting
Approximately 9:15 PM — Location TBD

October 23 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 AM

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