

## Common Misconceptions

It's a special time of year (again), whether you're in it for the deep spiritual meaning, or just enjoying the secular commercialism. Everyone seems to find their own meaning and reason in the season. For me, Christmas is about appreciating my family and friends. Over the years it's become more about giving than receiving for me, as I've grown more into a family head role in maturity. That doesn't mean I don't still appreciate a good toy at Christmas though. I can only hope you all find your holidays as meaningful and enjoyable this year. I hope to see you at the meeting. Just a reminder—we will be having our usual holiday party, with music and games (courtesy of a visiting Amiga CD-32), and a Yankee swap gift exchange. If you wish to participate, be sure to bring a wrapped gift (roughly \$5–\$10 value) to the meeting.

Over the last several months, I've written repeatedly about my Amiga 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary animation project. Most of you reading this probably saw it in its almost-complete form at the November meeting, but in any case, I'm very pleased to report the animation was completed in late November. It can be viewed here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNR5vxAR22A>

I hope you all enjoy it anywhere near as much as I enjoyed creating it. Whenever I do anything related to the Amiga anymore, I'm reminded of the system's place in this "victors write

the history" world, along with the ignorance of the modern-day average computer user. This ignorance falls into several categories that I've seen:

***“Every computer is a (Windows) PC.”***

These are the people who ask things like how well your Amiga or Pegasos or Mac or whatever plays whatever recent popular Windows game (or even X-Box), and assumes a Microsoft Word file is standard for everyone the world over. An unfortunate fact is this is probably closer to justified today than in the past, as most desktop or laptop computers produced today share a similar general hardware structure, regardless of whether it runs a Windows or Linux or Mac operating system.

***“There are two kinds of computers, ‘modern’ and ‘retro.’”***

In most cases “retro” means “something you run an emulator to play with” here. While not exactly a false statement, it is incredibly oversimplified, as home computers have gone through several generations and constant evolution. For an Amiga user, it's often frustrating to see it lumped together with Commodore 64s, Atari 800s and Apple IIs, when those 8-bit machines were not its contemporaries of the time. Even so, Amiga has its own “modern” and “retro” in the form of the Amiga-like operating systems that run on PPC or Intel processors, and those based on the original 68XXX-series, with emulation potentially going either way, depending on how it is used.

***“If it's not successful now, it couldn't have actually been superior in any way.”***

Some show a naivete in belief that the superior system automatically wins, and things like management and marketing don't strongly affect those results. By extension, if a system didn't “win,” it must not have been very good, and whoever's on top must be best by default. There are a bunch of Betamax video tape fans waiting in the wings to refute that.

***“Computers don't actually improve, and were the same a decade ago as they are now.”***

While most people don't literally believe this, they still act like they do, if only on a subconscious level. This results in comparisons and judgements of systems and the works created with them done without taking time into account. I've seen 32-color and HAM Amiga graphics compared directly with 24-bit color works. I've seen Amiga-made music dismissed for having neither the audio quality of modern hardware nor the “retro charm” of 8-bit chiptunes. It's not an uncommon thing though. Many pioneering forces in technology or entertainment are viewed as tame or even lame after years of copying and surpassing the pioneers, especially by those who don't recognize the pioneers for what they are. I'm sure there are plenty of people who think “Toy Story” had pretty crappy CGI compared to—say—“Toy Story 3” as well. On the bright side, this kind of assumption has worked in the Amiga's favor once or twice, like when people see a 3D animation

played back, and assume it's being rendered on the fly like in a game.

***“If someone actually wants to use something other than a ‘modern’ system, something is apparently wrong with them.”***

There may be truth to this one, except when some replace “modern” with Windows PC without exception. In any case there’s always someone out there to go “People still use Amigas? This is 2010, not 1990. Stuff today has a zillion times more speed and storage and RAM and everything else.” Sometimes I liken it to something like a classic car. One could say, “Why bother with that stupid Mustang? This is 2010, not 1970. Today’s cars are far more safe and efficient, and have CD and MP3 players in the dashboard. You’re just being stubborn for holding on to that dinosaur.” The response is that it’s something they enjoy, and my answer would be much the same. It’s fun to work with a favored machine, and even push it beyond its original intents. Different Amiga users have their own preferences and reasons. For me it’s a mix of preference and familiarity, a feel that has never been matched, a standard that has not been met. I’ve been guilty of this prejudice myself at a time, when looking at the lengths some go to for their 8-bit Commodore and Atari systems. I was bemused by the hardware and software tinkering to keep these systems relevant to the modern world, wondering why they bothered and didn’t get a newer system instead, before realizing I was doing the same

as any “outsider” would to me and my Amiga preferences. It’s easy to fall into the same trap you’ve seen others plummet into sometimes.

As I finish my rants, I conclude this article by wishing you all a happy and festive holiday season, and a good new year. We shall see what 2011 has to bring. Something good and Amiga-related would be excellent.

...by Eric Schwartz  
from the AmiTech Gazette  
December 2010

## AmigaOne X1000 CPU

London, 21 December 2010  
<http://www.a-eon.com/>

AmigaOne X1000 CPU revealed—the cake is no lie!

A-EON Technology is pleased to finally reveal the identity of the mystery CPU powering the AmigaOne X1000. It's none other than the uber cool PWRficient PA6T processor developed by fabless chip designer PA Semi. The PA6T-1682M is a high performance, low cost, cool running dual-core, 64-bit, 2 GHz Power CPU specifically designed for embedded military and industrial applications. PA Semi was acquired by Apple in 2008 and all indications were that they purchased the company for its intellectual property and planned to

shut down the PA Semi product line. However, following demand from military and industrial users, Apple agreed to continue supplying chips to pre-existing PA Semi customers for a limited time period. Fortunately Varisys, our AmigaOne X1000 hardware partner, had a long-standing relationship with PA Semi and we were able to secure a supply of PA6T CPUs for the AmigaOne X1000 project, making it the first and most probably the only desktop computer based on the unique PA Semi CPU technology as Apple have now closed down the PA Semi product line.

Following intense speculation on several Amiga forums over the identity of the mystery CPU, Thom Holwerda, the Managing Editor of the OSNews website commented on AmigaWorld.net:

“I can assure you all, with 110% certainty, that the X1000 will NOT carry a processor from PA Semi. If it turns out it does, I will eat my socks and post the video as proof.”

We decided to give Thom an exclusive on revealing the identity of the mystery CPU inside the AmigaOne X1000. Rather than the usual staid press release and forcing Thom to eat his own socks we took pity on him and shipped him a special cake decorated with a pair of edible “Boing Ball” socks with a note saying the cake was a gift from A-EON Technology.

## January Calendar

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

January — Board of Director's Meeting  
11:00 AM — Location TBD

**No January Meetings**

January 29 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 AM

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