

## Interesting Times

It's an interesting time in the world of Amiga-esque stuff, at least somewhat. Probably the biggest, realest piece of news is that of the Amiga X1000 boards entering production, and thus closer to reaching end users. While I have little idea what to expect, I do respect A-EON and their relations for attempting to create a new and innovative PPC system with Amiga OS in mind, that is not at an embedded system or netbook-like specification. Regardless of my presumptions and MorphOS bias, I wish them all the success they can handle.

Our old f(r)riend Commodore USA has been getting some press lately, with some promotional material connected to the DVD/Blu-Ray release of the movie "Tron Legacy." For those not already familiar with C-USA, they intend to put out various generic PC hardware in cases that mimic the form factor of classic Commodore or Amiga computers — a direct replica of the Commodore 64 case in one specific example, and include Ubuntu Linux with Commodore or Amiga emulators included and "skins" to put across some of the legacy look. I wonder exactly who will be the ones taking the bait for these "Commodore" machines. The hardware is nothing to write home about, and the software can pretty much be had on your own PC for next to nothing — which just leaves

the cases. Some of those can even be had from other sources. It feels like a pretty half-assed attempt to cash in on ignorant nostalgia, but I guess if it helps the Commodore and Amiga names to get a little more attention, it can't be all bad, even if the actual product might be.

Speaking of getting the name out there, an image surfaced recently of Chinese-made Android tablet computers with the Amiga logo, presumably part of some of the licensing agreements made a while back. If the price is right, the hardware isn't terrible and it wasn't some kind of April fools' hoax, I'd be tempted to get one, though this really isn't any different in principle than all the Commodore USA stuff I bad-mouthed above (aside from type of hardware being shilled for names and nostalgia).

Finally, I thought I'd share one more bit of something I found in what could be called "spring cleaning." Last month I brought in a bunch of Amiga (and related) magazines, giving club members a chance at them before I tossed them into the recycling bin. It went better than expected, and several magazines found new homes, most going to Bill Core. The number of mags I gave away or recycled pales in comparison to the amount I held on to, but at least I got to clear some space, as well as read through a lot of old magazines to determine which to keep. It's sad to look back and realize how much was done with Amiga hardware and software in the eighties and nineties, and how little is being done today.

Anyway, there was one special treat I found in the April 1994 issue of Amazing Computing — roughly the same time Commodore was declaring bankruptcy, though this was not known to AC yet. In a sort of April fool, they present a news item from the far-flung year of 2004 — the debut of Commodore's Amiga personal Augmentation Device (PAD) 28. It was presented as a hand-held device with a color touch-screen, built-in camera and video capabilities, and wireless cellular networking. Sound familiar? Not all the details match up of course, but it certainly seems similar enough to Apple's iPad to notice, even if hypothetically Commodore beat the truth to the punch by a few good years. I'm guessing neither Commodore/Amiga nor Apple would be likely to choose Mel Gibson for their advertising like the article suggested. Maybe Charlie Sheen is available instead?

...by Eric Schwartz  
from the AmiTech Gazette  
April 2011

## 802.11ac Wireless Tech

The wireless networking industry is already making plans and developing products for the successor to 802.11n — a standard both the IEEE and the Wi-Fi Alliance refers to as 802.11ac. In fact, in a meeting I attended last week with representatives from

one of the top networking hardware vendors, allusions were made to the fact that the company has started focusing on developing products for this new generation of wireless technology.

There isn't a lot of detailed information available on the 802.11ac standard, so I wanted to get the latest information from the folks in the know — the Wi-Fi Alliance. Kelly Davis-Felner, marketing director for the group, provided some insight into the process of 802.11ac's ratification.

802.11ac only operates in the 5 GHz spectrum, which is a clearer spectrum with less interference. It is also called VHT, short for Very High Throughput. 802.11ac is ideal for home digital applications like video as it is capable of performing at 1 Gbps of raw data rates. Compare that to what we have today, the most powerful 802.11n networking devices can achieve 600 Mbps.

Davis-Felner said that kind of throughput could "transmit 3 HD videos at the same time." She also said that the Wi-Fi Alliance has a task group in place for defining the market requirements for 802.11ac. The Wi-Fi Alliance is the body responsible for certifying networking products as being compatible with a particular wireless standard and you

can often see its label on most major networking products' packaging.

Davis-Felner expects certification to launch middle-to-late next year. She said one of the most asked questions about the standard is, will it take as long to ratify and certify as 802.11n? Davis-Felner said that the Wi-Fi Alliance's members say, "there are lots of things from a progress standpoint to make sure it doesn't take as long" and that "the Wi-Fi Alliance takes its cues from the marketplace and not the IEEE."

That means we can expect to see 802.11ac products available on the market before the IEEE ratifies the standard. Remember all of the 802.11n draft routers that were available before 802.11n was ratified in September 2009?

According to the Wi-Fi Alliance, in 802.11ac, devices are required to support 20, 40, and 80 Mhz channels. The use of 160 Mhz channels is optional but supported. 802.11ac pushes channel bonding even further than 802.11n. Channel bonding is a technology introduced with the 802.11n standard that improves bandwidth by combining channels. There are a few caveats with channels and 802.11ac however, mostly based on geographic locations. Channels exceeding 40 MHz bandwidth in Europe and Japan have not received regulatory approval. VHT 5G devices confined

to 20 MHz and 40 MHz channels would be closer to 802.11n devices than to the expected positioning of VHT 5G devices. Also, in China, the limited available bandwidth implies that 160 MHz channels are not available.

I also asked Davis-Felner about WiGig, a wireless technology standard that is capable of 7 Gbps throughput that's seven times faster than even wired Gigabit Ethernet. While WiGig is not a replacement for 802.11n and 802.11ac, it can complement both of those standards. Davis-Felner explained that 802.11n and ac can provide coverage for an entire home and that consumers can have available an "island" of WiGig that operates at the 60 GHz band and can be dedicated for high-quality video and audio streaming or transmitting high performance wireless data.

...by Samara Lynn  
PC Magazine  
Tue Mar 29, 9:38 am ET

## Current Position of the ISS

<http://iss.astroviewer.net/>

### May Calendar

May 9 — Amiga-By-The-Loop Chapter  
7:30 PM — Main Grand Prairie Library  
901 Conover Drive, Grand Prairie

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

May 28 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 AM

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