

AmigatoPC

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Chapter 1

AmigatoPC

1.1 Amiga and PC comparison.

Comparison of the Amiga to the PC and a brief overview of the Amiga.

Written and designed by Ben Clarke

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v0.8cc Preliminary Version (26/8/95)

[Introduction](#)

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1.2 Introduction

Introduction

This AmigaGuide file is intended as a reference for all those who wish to prove to all those sad PC owners how much better the Amiga is than their PC.

It is NOT intended to be biased at all. As far as I am aware, all the facts in this file are correct. As far as I am concerned, there is no point in trying to convince PC (or Mac, or Archiemedes, or Atari...) owners how much better the Amiga is by simply slugging them off. You need to hit them with hard facts, and that is what I have attempted to do here.

It also gives you some basic information about your Amiga and other aspects of computing. There is more to this than proving that Amigas are best!

If you know that any of the facts contained in the document are incorrect, please send me a note so that I can correct it for the next edition. See [Author](#).

This is a standard AmigaGuide® file, which you can either load by clicking on the "Start" button, or by loading the file into Multiview or AmigaGuide.

It uses all the standard AmigaGuide functions, such as linking to buttons.

For example, by clicking on the [Operating System](#) button, you jump to the Operating System section.

1.3 Amiga Specs

Amiga Specs

The following are all the Amigas available to date with as much info as I can glean from various sources about each one. They are listed in order of release.

A1000

Processor: 68000

RAM: 256k

Workbench: 1

Kickstart: 1

Chipset: Original, 16bit

Expansion: 1 Zorro

A500

Processor: 68000

RAM: 512k

Workbench: 1.2 / 1.3

Kickstart: 1.2 / 1.3

Chipset: Original, 16bit

Exapnsion: 1 DMA, 1 trapdoor

A2000

Processor: 68000

RAM: 1Mb

Workbench: 2

Kickstart: 2.04

Chipset: Original, ECS, 16bit

Expansion: 5 Zorro-II, CPU slot, Video slot

A3000

Processor: 68030

RAM: 1Mb

Workbench: 2

Kickstart: 2.04

Chipset: ECS, 16bit

Expansion: 4 Zorro-III, CPU slot, Video slot

A500+

Processor: 68000

RAM: 1Mb

Workbench: 2

Kickstart: 2.04

Chipset: ECS, 16bit

Expansion: 1 DMA, 1 trapdoor

A600

Processor: 68000

RAM: 1Mb

Workbench: 2

Kickstart: 2.04

Chipset: ECS, 16bit

Expansion: 1 PCMCIA, 1 trapdoor

A4000

Processor: 68030 or 68040 (2 versions)

RAM: 6Mb

Workbench: 3

Kickstart: 3

Chipset: AGA, 32bit

Expansion: 4 Zorro-III, CPU slot, video slot

A1200

Processor: 68020

RAM: 2Mb

Workbench: 3

Kickstart: 3

Chipset: AGA, 32bit

Expansion: 1 PCMCIA, 1 trapdoor

CD-32

Processor: 68020

RAM: 2Mb

Workbench: --- (v3 when appropriate)

Kickstart: 3

Chipset: AGA with Akiko, 32bit

Expansion: 1 32-bit slot.

A4000T

Processor: 68040 or 68060

RAM: 6Mb

Workbench: 3.1

Kickstart: 3

Chipset: AGA, 32bit, Cyberstorm Technology

Expansion: 6 Zorro-III, upgradable CPU Slot, 2 video,
direct processor port, memory card

1.4 History of the Amiga

History of the Amiga

Commodore was founded in 1954. Its full name was Commodore Business Machines, or CBM for short, and its first role was as a typewriter repair business.

Commodore's first computer was released in 1977, and this was the Commodore PET. This was a huge success and riding on the wave of popularity the world famous C64 was released. With its groundbreaking 64k of RAM it stormed the market and was the base of all US and UK games and continued right up until 1989.

In 1982, a group of computer enthusiasts got together to design what they believed would be the "ultimate" machine. The three men responsible for this amazing feat were Jay Minor, Dave Morse and RJ Mical, all of whom had had computer building experience. They got backing from three dentists in the US and set up a small workshop in Silicon Valley, where they built their super machine under the pretence of being joystick manufacturers. In fact, they were so secretive that they gave all of their chips special

code names in case their phones were tapped. These code names were their girlfriends' names, and this is where the tradition of Amiga chips having names comes from. Hence the company took on the name Amiga, which being Spanish for "girl friend" was an appropriate name.

When they needed an operating system, the company gave the task to a company called Metacomco who only had experience of writing operating systems for mainframe computers. Hence when they saw the power of the Amiga system they became very excited and gave AmigaDOS the multitasking power of a mainframe system.

However, the money began to run out, and the business was taken over by Commodore. At this stage Commodore did little but fund the three designers, but nonetheless it was a very important step.

The first Amiga, the A1000, was released in 1985 and excited many the world over, but due to its £1500 price tag the sales were not huge. It was not until the release of the A500 later that year that the Amiga really took off.

At this time, the IBMs and clones were huge, monochromatic machines with the amazingly unfriendly MS-DOS and no Windows. The Amiga, on the other hand, had 8bit stereo sound, 4,096 colours and a good user-friendly operating system. Now it is 1995 and the PC is only just getting anywhere near the standards of the old A500!

Commodore's main rivals at the time were Atari, but the war between Amiga and Atari was a short one and it was quite clearly won by the Amiga. The Amiga was more expensive than the Atari, but it was always a better machine and in the end it was that that won the fight.

Commodore continued to develop the Amiga platform to its full potential, with the release of machines such as the A2000 which was at the cutting edge of technology.

However, when the CDTV was released, even the Amiga community were shocked that Commodore had included the old ECS chipset, which is the same as the old A500's, and that it was not running Workbench 2.

Subsequently, the machine failed, even though it was the first ever CD-ROM computer and true multimedia platform. Commodore lost faith in Amiga technology and decided to start making PCs. Commodore therefore started a large, expensive and ambitious advertising campaign, they built new factories and opened new

workshops. But although Commodore's PCs were very popular, they lost a lot of money and with the advent of the 32-bit Motorola chips, Commodore gave up making PCs to concentrate on the Amiga platform again.

It is from the failure of the Commodore PCs that Commodore began the long, winding road into liquidation. They produced the A4000, which, although good, was not good enough, and they just managed to get the A1200 out in time for the Christmas rush. However, the management only ordered a few of these machine to be made, and they sold out from the shops very quickly indeed. Because of the lack of supply, Commodore is reckoned to have lost \$350,000,000 that year, and if you have seen a Commodore profit-and-loss graph, it looks more like the White Cliffs of Dover.

The management were the ones to blame. All along they had been saying that there was absolutely no way that they could produce any new chips. Then, they refused to make more than 100,000 Amigas for the Christmas rush.

On April 29th 1994 Commodore and many of its subsidiaries filed for bankruptcy in the Bahamas.

After that, Amiga owners went through a year of suspense and waiting. Finally, almost exactly a year later, on the 21st April 1995, Commodore and its assets were bought by Escom AG of Germany.

It had been a long year for Amiga owners, waiting to find out what would happen to their favorite machines, and many did not make it and transferred to other systems, believing the Amiga dead.

However, Escom's buy-out of the Amiga was a godsend - arguably the best thing that happened to the Amiga in its existence. Escom pronounced the Amiga a "superior technology" and set up a subsidiary company, Amiga Technologies GmbH, who would be in control of researching and developing the Amiga. Escom also said that they saw the Amiga as the only true multimedia machine and that they saw the Amiga as the pathway to making Escom a multimedia company, rather than just a PC company.

The name Commodore was completely separated from the Amiga.

Commodore is now the name used on Escom's high-end Pentium PCs which are sold to resellers for distribution in places other than the Escom range of shops. Incidentally, Escom do intend to sell the Amiga through their high-street stores as well as distributing them through the usual channels, i.e. to mail order companies and computer shops, in order to maximise distribution.

1.5 Operating System

Operating System

The Amiga's operating system is far superior to the PC's Windows

Link Windows} and

MS-DOS and I am not just saying this. The Amiga

uses Workbench and AmigaDOS

which integrates into one thing.

Both systems use Icons, which are small pictures used to represent programs.

But Windows is really only just a menu, whereby you can select a program

that you have had to add to the Program Manager.

Workbench on the other hand uses icons to display the contents of a disk

drive, whether it be data files, programs or tools. This is far more

powerful because it allows file management to take place directly within

the operating system, as opposed to loading a separate program to do so.

Underlying Windows is MS-DOS. This is the basic operating system of the PC,

and it is from here that file operation can be carried out. However, it

does not integrate with Windows, and Windows programs cannot be loaded

through MS-DOS.

AmigaDOS on the other hand takes a completely different approach. AmigaDOS

will integrate perfectly happily with Workbench, and Workbench programs can

be loaded from AmigaDOS.

AmigaDOS is also far more flexible than MS-DOS. For example, you have the

ability to set up Assigns that enable you to create

virtual drives containing the files of your choice.

AmigaDOS is also a ROM based system, i.e. it resides in the computer's

hardware and does not require software to run. This allows it to be very

fast indeed, far faster than the hard disk based MS-DOS.

The Amiga's operating system is also fully pre-emptive Multitasking

link Multitasking},

unlike the PC's operating system which simulates being multitasking by

quickly flicking backwards and forwards between Applications, thus

overburdening the CPU and causing a vast reduction in speed.

1.6 Microsoft Windows

Windows

Windows is the PC's program launcher and operating environment. It is

basically a series of icons that launch programs. These icons are not

positioned automatically and have to be added by the user.

It is essentially an environment. A program that runs "in Windows" is rather like a program that runs "in Workbench" in that it has a standard set of gadgets such as the Close, Minimize and Maximize gadgets. This is useful on any platform because it maintains a universal method of control that the user can easily get to know and use.

Windows runs "on top of" MS-DOS, which means that you waste memory. Unlike **AmigaDOS**, which is only there if you want it, Windows is a higher level than MS-DOS and is always there whether you like it or not.

The disadvantage of this system is that there is absolutely no file handling.

In order to do this you have to load a separate file management program, which is slow due to the fact that for all operations it has to revert to **MS-DOS** (although you do not notice it).

1.7 Price Comparison

Price Comparison

Have you ever calculated the cost of a full Amiga setup to the cost of a full PC setup?

Well, I have done it for you.

Prices are not yet available but Escom have hinted that they would like to sell the Amiga 1200 at around £399, compared to £699 for their cheapest, bog-standard PC (Non-sale prices).

Remember that you can run your Amiga through a TV and save buying a monitor to save even more money. This is especially true of home users, who may not need a monitor to play games and Word Process etc., as a monitor, although giving a clearer display and allowing flicker-free access to all the AGA graphics modes, is not always necessary.

Also, when you buy an Amiga, you know that it is made and manufactured by a reputable company. This is not always true of a PC. In order to cut costs, you may go for a less well-known firm, and the computer may not be up to what you expected. This is not to say that all PC manufactures are bad, in fact this would be a gross malignment to say this. My advice to perspective PC buyers is always to pay that little bit more and go for a reputable firm who you know are going to have good after-sales support etc. (and lets face it, if you buy a new PC you almost always need after-sales support!)

1.8 Amiga Workbench

Workbench

The Amiga's Workbench is the **Graphical User Interface** that is used in conjunction with **AmigaDOS** to form the Amiga's powerful **Operating System**

It is based around the Unix operating system, which is widely believed to be the most powerful OS around.

Workbench is based around a drag-and-drop and mouse/point/click **GUI**.

This is very powerful and very user-friendly, because you can, for example, double-click on a picture file and it will load your paint program with that picture in the edit area.

Another powerful feature of Workbench is Datatypes. This is a system whereby any program with datatype support can load or save in any file format that you have a datatype for. For example, if, in your datatypes draw, you have a PCX datatype, then you could load or save pictures in your datatype-supporting paint program in PCX format.

Workbench/AmigaDOS do not require software drivers for additional devices. The Amiga does have what it calls "DOSDrivers", but these are only settings files which the computer refers to and are not required to be loaded into memory as on the PC, thus saving valuable memory and hard-disk space.

Features of Workbench include:

- * Full pre-emptive multitasking
- * Complete integration with AmigaDOS
- * Extreme user friendliness
- * The ability to control files and programs from the GUI
- * The configurability of the system
- * Datatypes
- * Requires one eighth of the resources required by Windows
- * The ability to have multiple screens open at once
- * The ease of upgradability

1.9 AmigaDOS

AmigaDOS

AmigaDOS is the base of the Amiga's **Operating System**.

It is a very powerful, text based system that can do anything from launching **Workbench** programs to directing your printer output to disk or managing your files.

AmigaDOS integrates fully with Workbench and therefore when you shell to AmigaDOS you are not "dropping down" into DOS as you are on the PC, as AmigaDOS and Workbench are all on one level.

1.10 Assigns

Assigns

Assigns are like "virtual" disk drives. For example, you could create a virtual drive called "PICS:" to contain all of your pictures. You can then tell the computer where on your disk your pictures are (they can be in as many places as you like) so that when you want to use a picture in, for example, your Desktop Publisher, you can tell the computer to go to the disk drive called "PICS:", and you then get a list of all of your pictures.

Assigns are also particularly useful for re-routing programs from one place to another, and for making software which is not supplied with a hard disk install to work from hard disk.

1.11 MS-DOS

MS-DOS

MS-DOS is the PC's DOS, rather like **AmigaDOS** but far less powerful. MS-DOS runs separately from Windows, at a lower "level", and controls all of the file operations made by the computer. It does not integrate with Windows, and does not multitask at all.

MS-DOS is a disk based system, which slows it down considerably.

1.12 Graphical User Interface (GUI)

Graphical User Interface

A graphical user interface is a system by which a computer can be controlled graphically, usually using icons and a pointing device.

The Amiga's GUI is **Workbench**, whilst the PC's is **Windows**.

1.13 Multitasking

Multitasking

Multitasking is the ability of a computer to do more than one thing at once. The Amiga uses a system called pre-emptive multitasking which allows it to 'multithread', i.e. perform one task whilst another is still going on in the background. The PC uses a system called 'timeslicing' which involves the OS switching between the two tasks very quickly. This inevitably leads to a loss of speed and available processor power.

1.14 Graphics Software

Graphics Software

There is a multitude of graphics software available on the Amiga, as it is really a graphics workstation.

Titles such as Deluxe Paint 5, Photogenics and Brilliance 2 allow you to create pictures in up to 16.8 million colours (24-bit graphics) and animate in the same number of colours (memory permitting, of course).

TV Paint, as its name suggests, is used by many TV companies to produce graphics for Television.

Titles such as ImageFX 2, Digital Illusions and Art Department Pro allow you to image process your pictures, creating all sorts of effects. Some of these programs even have direct scanning support to allow you to scan straight into the program using either a flatbed or a handheld scanner.

ImageFX 2's main rival is Photoshop on the Apple Macintosh®, but up until recently Photoshop has been the better package. However, a new version has just been released and it is said to have more features than Photoshop, and as usual on the Amiga, it costs a fraction of the price.

Lightwave and Imagine are examples of software that allow you to render and to do animations of rendered graphics. Lightwave in particular is used by film companies to produce the special effects in **Films**.

See also:

Graphics

1.15 Sound

Sound

All Amigas come with sound as standard. The A500, A500+, A600 and A1200 all have 8-bit, 4-channel sound, whereas the A4000 has 16-bit sound.

All of these can be upgraded using modules such as the Aura or Clarity 16 to give improved sound across the board at very low cost.

The basic PC, on the other hand, has a small internal speaker (capable of little more than the average error beep) to its name. However, if you are willing to pay the price of a brand new A1200, you can upgrade to a 32-bit sound card for your PC. But the sound card then requires drivers and devices to control it which fill up the PC's tiny 640K MS-DOS link msdos} conventional memory limit.

See also:

Sound Software

1.16 Software

Software

Serious

Games

Educational

Graphics

Sound

CD-ROM

Full price

Shareware

Public domain

1.17 CD-ROM Software

CD-ROM Software

At present the PC has more CD-ROM software than the Amiga. This is because the PC has a large CD-ROM userbase, whereas the CD32 has only just been released and the number of A1200 CD-ROM drive owners, although increasing, is small. However, this does not mean that there is no software for the Amiga CD-ROM. There is, of course, all the CDTV software, and all the CD32 games that are available.

As well as these, there are lots of Multimedia CDs for use with programs such as Lightwave, Imagine, Desktop Publishers, Art programs and even AMOS. The PC has loads of CD-ROM software. The downpoint is that if you buy a PC CD-ROM, you have to install at least some of the files from the program onto your hard disk. Why? Who knows.

Another point is that, as with 99% of PC peripherals, you need a CD-ROM driver to make it work. And this has to be made not to conflict with the sound card or graphics or anything else you may have added. Furthermore, you have to make sure that you do not use up your valuable 640k memory limit that you have when running **MS-DOS**.

1.18 Sound Software

Sound Software

There is plenty of sound sotware on the Amiga: OctaMED, Bars and Pipes Pro; Deluxe music 2; Quadra Pro; etc. Deluxe Music Construction Set 2 is also one of a kind, allowing the composer to simply place appropriate notes on

a score, and set it up as one would when composing a standard score.

But how much does this cost? Well, actually it costs absolutely nothing.

OctaMED and Quadra Pro are available through any good [PD](#) library.

The music that you hear when you start this program is a standard computer "mod", or "module", which was written in one of the aforementioned programs.

The PC also has a small amount of sound software but seeing as the PC does not have sound as standard (other than an annoying beep) there is not really an incentive for companies to produce audio software for the PC. And surprise surprise, it's expensive too.

Programs like Bars & Pipes Pro show that there are things that can only be done on the Amiga, other than [Graphics](#).

See also:

[Sound](#)

1.19 Serious Software

Serious Software

This is one area where the PC is ahead of the Amiga. It is not the quality of the software on the PC that is better, but the choice.

For example, Wordworth 3.1 on the Amiga is a good match for Word for Windows 6 on the PC. In fact, it has more functions than Word for Windows 6; and it is certainly better than all the other PC wordprocessors available.

However, on the Amiga you really do not have much choice. If you want a good WP then you can really choose between Final Writer and Wordworth, which although both very good, does not leave you with much choice.

The PC on the other hand has far more choice. However, some of this is created by the fact that people who do not run Windows cannot run most of the good WP's, and so a whole new market is opened up in the way of DOS based WP's.

At desktop publishing, the two are about equal. The Amiga has got Pagestream 3.1, for example, at the high end of the market, whilst the PC has its own titles. Microsoft Publisher® is a very good low end desktop publisher for the PC, but it does not come close to Quark Express® on the Mac® (used for most magazine and newspaper design) or its main rival, the aforementioned Pagestream 3.1 on the Amiga.

It cannot be denied that the PC has got better spreadsheet programs than

the Amiga. However, Softwood are producing their "Final Calc" spreadsheet which is said to be able to carry out functions that a spreadsheet has never previously been able to do. What exactly these functions are, and how useful they will be to the average user, remains to be seen. So all in all the only thing that the PC has over the Amiga here is choice. The quality of the software is in most cases no different, and the Amiga's software is usually around half the price. Word for Windows can be picked up for around £250, whilst Wordworth 3.1 is available for £80 (Digita's price as of May 1995)!

1.20 Games software

Games Software

Ok, so the PC has got "Doom." But we have got "Alien Breed 3D" and others which are just as good, and allow you to play two player head-to-head, which Doom won't do.

Apart from the "first-person perspective" games, look at games like Super Stardust, Cannon Fodder, Lost Eden, TFX, Megarace, Tower Assault, Bloodnet... the list goes on and on and on. All these games are better on the Amiga than on any other platform, particularly the PC which, in general, uses sad VGA graphics due to the fact that Super VGA takes up huge amounts of memory, which the average user does not have. The Amiga however usually uses Hi-Res graphics, which, as its name suggests, is higher resolution.

In general, though, the Amiga is far superior games wise. With its advanced Graphics chipset, the Amiga is particularly good at scrolling games as well as 3D and other games. Note that the CD32 is particularly good at 3D graphics due to its Akiko chip.

After all, what computer was it that classics like "Lemmings", "Monkey Island", "Cannon Fodder", "Sensible Soccer", "Sensible World of Soccer", "Settlers" and many, many more came out on first? Yes, it was the Amiga. However, in general most games will come out on all platforms, although the graphics in many Amiga games are noticeably better than the PC version.

1.21 Educational Software

Educational Software

Educational software in general is multi-platform and because it does not usually involve anything amazing it is normally exactly the same on both computers..

The Amiga has a large range of educational software, helping it to fulfill its role as a multitasking home computer.

1.22 Graphics

Graphics

General

Video/TV

Films

Software

1.23 Graphics - general

Graphics - General

The Amiga is a long way ahead when it comes to graphics. There is nothing on the PC to allow you to do animation for below £100, in fact I have never come across a piece of software to do animation at all on the PC, whatever the price (being unfortunate enough to own one myself)

There is a program called Autodesk on the PC which allows you to do rendering, but the slight disadvantage is that it costs £2500! You can get a version of Imagine on the PC, but it does not have the features or capabilities of the Amiga version. Lightwave, on the other hand, costs £300 and has been used to create films such as the new "Star Trek" film and many shows such as "Babylon 5" and "Seaquest DSV." It is used extensively by American TV networks and also by "Meridian Television" (the South East of England's local TV station) to create graphics.

Deluxe Paint 5 is the perfect system for artists of all levels of ability, which allows you to animate, create easy perspective images and has effects such as light table and rub through. Not to mention programs such as Photogenics, Brilliance 2, Art Department Professional.

Image processors on the PC however is just a no-go area. I have never seen one and if anyone ever has please send me some details such as price and functions so that I can include this in a future version.

The Amiga has the advantage of being able to be plugged straight into a television or video recorder. This is very useful for recording animations, titling videos or genlocking. To plug a PC into a TV is very expensive and the quality is not all that good.

All of the above can be done without having to improve your hardware or buy a graphics card at all. However, it is possible to buy 64-bit graphics cards or the amazing "Video Toaster" which is used extensively by television companies and professional graphics companies.

Screen resolutions on the Amiga without extra cards can be as high as 30,000 x 30,000 using Lightwave, and 1,024 x 1,024 in Workbench. Using a video card Workbench can be in a screen mode of up to about 4000 x 4000.

The highest screen resolution on the PC is Super VGA, 800 x 600, or you can change this to be higher in one direction but lower in the other. However, SVGA is so memory-guzzling that it is hardly worth using in games, although Windows uses it which is one of the factors that makes it even slower.

See also:

[Graphics Software](#)

1.24 Television/Video

Television/Video

It is very easy to connect your Amiga to a television. In fact, this is how most users do view the output from their Amiga. This is due to the fact that the A1200 has a built in TV modulator, and the A500 comes with one. It also has an RGB port (Red, Green and blue) which is for a monitor. It is also possible to use both at once.

It is very difficult and very expensive to connect a PC to a television, and the quality is quite low.

The ease with which you can plug your Amiga into a TV opens up a whole new range of possibilities: video titling; digitising; recording animations to video; etc.

1.25 Films

Films made with the Amiga (often using the Video Toaster system):

- * Star Trek "Generations"
- * Babylon 5
- * Seaquest DSV
- * The Wrong Trousers (video control)
- * "Electric" Television Adverts
- * "Crunchie" Television Adverts
- * "Chewits" Television Adverts
- * Numerous American Network TV shows
- * Cyberjack
- * Quantum Leap
- * Batman Forever

These are just a few of the films produced with the Amiga. Most are made with Lightwave and the Video Toaster from NewTec.

The Video Toaster system is also used by Meridian Television, the regional TV station for the South East of England.

See also:

[Graphics](#)

1.26 Full price software

Full Price Software

Full price software on the Amiga is often far cheaper than on the PC; for example Word for Windows 6 costs £250, whilst Final Writer 3 costs £70 and is just as good.

Games are also cheaper, although some prices are beginning to rise slowly.

As for graphics software, Autodesk on the PC costs £2,500 whilst Imagine 3 costs £250!

See also:

[Serious Software](#)

[Games Software](#)

[Graphics Software](#)

1.27 Shareware

Shareware

Shareware is software which is distributed free but must be registered after you have used it for around a month.

Sometimes the shareware version of a program is a cut down version and on registering the software you will be sent the full version and/or the manuals.

1.28 Public domain

Public Domain

Public domain software is absolutely free. It is written by the author for fun/to make a name for himself/because he cannot afford a commercial program/because there is not a commercial program.

It can be obtained through PD libraries, where you may pay a little for the price of the disk and the management of the library. Normal costs are around £0.99 per disk.

PD can also be downloaded using a modem.

PD can be distributed as much as you like but the source code usually remains the copyright of the author.

This program is an example of PD - it costs nothing and may be distributed freely..

PD is only very rarely found on the PC but it thrives on the Amiga.

1.29 Expandability

Expandability

Both computers are very expandable. They both have Zorro type slots which can have practically anything plugged into them.

Even the A1200, in a keyboard case, is very expandable. It has only one Zorro type slot, which is underneath, but also has one PCMCIA card slot which will allow almost anything to be put in it, from a SCSI controller to a CD-ROM drive to a hard disk to extra RAM. It also has a built in IDE controller.

The PC has a built in IDE controller and a number of Zorro slots.

However, one of these is filled by the video card, and another by the multiport controller card (which looks after the serial and parallel ports).

Then another is used up if you want to have any sound, not leaving you with very many to spare.

1.30 Copyright notice

Copyright

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Disclaimer

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1.31 Disclaimer

Disclaimer

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1.32 Communications

Communications

Thanks to the wonderful RS232c, any modem can be used on either the Amiga or the PC. However, if you have a PC you then have to ensure that you have a serial card that is fast enough to support your modem, otherwise you will get data loss. Typical, more upgrading/fiddling with IRQ's etc. etc.!

On the Amiga you can plug in any modem to the serial port or through the PCMCIA port and off it goes at whatever speed the modem goes up to.

So, the hardware is the same, but what is the software like? Well, the best Amiga software to use with your modem is **PD**, i.e.

you don't even have to pay a penny for it. And what is more, it is excellent. It is very fast and allows you to carry out any functions that you would expect from a your terminal software, including phonebook, autodial, off-line editing etc.

On the PC, though, you have to buy your software to run your modem. There is a terminal addition to **Windows** but it is not very good and does not really have a huge list of functions.

See also:

The Internet

FidoNet

1.33 The Internet

The Internet

Well, we couldn't go without mentioning the latest buzzword in computing, could we? I shall try not to use particular phrases linking people who stand on specially shaped boards whilst in the middle of the ocean with the latest computing trend.

What is the Internet? Well, the internet is a way of sending information between one computer and another, via a special bulletin board system, down the telephone line.

Whether it is a text file, like a letter, which you are sending to another person, (known as E-mail), or receiving files from the bulletin board onto your own computer, or looking up anything from how to wire a plug to how to make an atomic bomb, the chances are that you will find it on the Internet.

At a price.

The average fee is around £10 a month which you pay to the bulletin board system to which you subscribe. They then manage your electronic "postbox" and give you access to the World Wide Web (or WWW for short).

The WWW is a system combining graphics and text by which you can find information about almost anything you like. It is among the pages of WWW that you may come the Amiga Format® home page, or news updates from Escom®, or press releases from Downing Street. You name it, it's there.

So now that you all want to go out and buy a modem (if you haven't already got one), how about looking at the cheaper alternative to the Internet, **FidoNet**?

1.34 FidoNet

FidoNet

The FidoNet is a cheap alternative to the **Internet**.

It does not offer all the services of the Internet, for example the World Wide Web. But then the FidoNet is absolutely free! It is run simply by bulletin board controllers who have special "gateways" allowing them to send files to each other.

You can still E-mail people, although it may take about a day to get to the person, and you can still upload and download files. In fact, if you are looking for a piece of info, the easy way find out the answer is to leave a public message that anyone can read and answer. There is bound to be someone who can tell you what you want to know!

See also:

Internet

1.35 Networking

Networking

It is possible to network both the PC and the Amiga. Both can use a system called Ethernet which involves adding a card to your computer. Only the big-box computers can do this, though. The keyboard case Amigas and most PC portables won't have the room to fit the card in. However, it is in general far easier to network PC's, simply because there is the software to do it, which is easy to use and widely available. This is because the PC is used so much in large offices where a network may be practical.

There is software to network Amigas, but it is very hard to get and not so easy to use.

The alternative to a full network, of course, is the **Sernet** and it's brother **Parnet**. These allow two or more computers to share each other's files and in the case of the Amiga, the CD32 or CDTV can be used as a CD-Rom drive for another Amiga.

1.36 Sernet

Serial Network (Sernet)

The Sernet is a system by which two computers can be connected together by way of the serial port and using either a **Null Modem** or a **Modem** to exchange files or data.

See also:

Parnet

1.37 Parnet

Parallel Network (Parnet)

The parnet is a means of transferring data from one machine to another by means of a cable from one machine's parallel port to the other's. It is widely used on the Amiga as a means of data transfer, as it is quicker than floppy disks.

See also:

Sernet

1.38 Modem

Modem

A modem is a device used to send computer data down a wire (often a telephone line) to another computer with a modem. Modems come in different speeds, the faster taking less time to transmit the same amount of data.

See also:

[Null Modem](#)

1.39 Null Modem

Null Modem

A null modem is simply a wire to connect two computers together via the serial port. Data can be sent between the computers at the maximum speed of the serial port. This is often called a [Sernet](#).

1.40 Trade Marks

Trade Marks

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1.41 The Author

The Author

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It is time to convince the world that the PC has taken off, but like any overburdened plane will come crashing back down to Earth, whilst we have the answer to the ultimate computer!

1.42 Notes

Notes

This .guide file is best viewed in Hi-Res laced or equivalent screen mode, even on a flickery monitor like the Philips CM8833-II.

Written in the Amigaguide HyperText language.

Please email bug reports to Ben@paulsfrm.demon.co.uk.

Information has been extracted from a variety of sources, but mostly from that most excellent of publications, Amiga Format, as well as PC Magazine.

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