

THE GURU

(formerly C-Watch)

TRUMCUG

Trumbull Computer Users Group

Since 1984

Supporting All Personal Computers

May 1995

Volume 2 Issue 8

P.O. Box 8632

Warren, Ohio 44484

Meeting Notice: Third Wednesday of each month (except July and August) @ 7:00 PM. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 17, 1995 at the Warren branch of Cortland Bank, on Elm Rd. North of McDonald's and across from Sims Buick.

Trumcug Officers 1994-1995



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Future Meetings

Future meetings are scheduled for Wednesday
June 21.

[ED Note: The text in this issue is smaller than usual in order to fit all the recent news.]

May meeting

We're going to postpone elections for one month from May until the June meeting. Jay Shonk is going to demo "Windows '95" from Microsoft software in May.

April's newsletter was lost in the Easter shuffl, which was just as well since the Visiontech people couldn't make it to the meeting. Only five people showed up without the monthly newsletter to remind them to attend.

March's demo was "Where in the World is Carmen SanDiego?" from Broderbund software. The demo was done by Nathan Truhan. The audience enjoyed helping answer questions and tracking down wanton criminals! Thanks, Nathan!

Northeast Micro Systems, who prints this newsletter, has changed it's name, address, and phone number. It's now called VisionTech Electronics, Inc. 2305 Elm Road Extension Cortland Ohio 44410. The new phone number is (216) 372-2116.

GEnie Unveils New Look, Lower Pricing, and Internet Access **Users Gain From Better Benefits, Stronger Value**

Rockville, MD, April 3, 1995--GEnie Services, a leading global provider of business and consumer online services, announced today three key improvements including a new graphical interface, the first step in a streamlined pricing structure and full internet access.

"GEnie is redefining its offering in a way that will deliver value to the end-user," said Doug Wolford, manager of communication and public affairs, GE Information Services.

Details of the announcement include:

Redesigned Front End

Available immediately, the new GEnie front end offers a bold design, supported by creative features such as dynamically accessible icons that enable users to quickly and easily navigate their way throughout the GEnie service. GEnie users now can effortlessly point and click on the next content area of their choice. In addition, an improved E-mail interface allows for direct connections across multiple online services with the simple click of an icon, thus leaving behind confusing symbols or notations that can otherwise impede easy communication.

New Pricing Structure

GEnie will now offer an immediate price change that reduces prime time surcharges by 75% to \$2 per hour, with anticipation of further pricing streamlining in the near future.

Full Internet Access

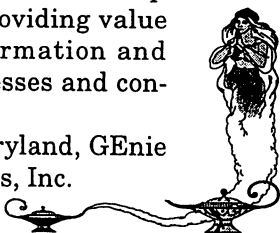
Effective April 11, GEnie now offers full, text-based Internet access, enabling users to tap into this global

web of wide-ranging information and discussion groups. Specially designed Internet "launch pads," available only on GENie, allow users to leap-frog to areas of particular interest with ease.

For novices, GENie has also developed an Internet Education Center that dispenses helpful advice on getting around the global network of networks easily accessed with GENie's new graphical interface.




Operational in 1985, GENie Services is a pioneer in the online market, and a leading source of high quality, comprehensive electronic information and entertainment products. With a subscriber base that spans the world, GENie is dedicated to providing value by meeting the exploding information and communications needs of businesses and consumers.

Headquartered in Rockville, Maryland, GENie is part of GE Information Services, Inc.



3DO announces M2

Unveils 64-Bit M2 Technology




3DO NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 2, 1995--The 3DO Company today unveiled its highly anticipated, next-generation M2 technology. 3DO's M2 64-bit architecture is designed to create a quantum leap in advanced CD entertainment technology. Leveraging 3DO's high-end 3-D image and sound processors and IBM and Motorola's PowerPC microprocessor, M2 technology rivals image quality and performance of workstations and the most popular arcade machines.

"It's a quantum leap for the industry in both graphics speed and quality," said Trip Hawkins, 3DO's President and CEO. "We're raising the bar again."

M2 Performance Breakthrough

3DO designed the M2 architecture to deliver breakthrough processing performance and the highest quality graphics and digital video for consumer interactive entertainment software.

"The M2 polygon performance alone is phenomenal," said Hugh Martin, 3DO's Chief Operating Officer. "M2 easily beats many expensive graphics workstations and outpaces popular coin-op arcade systems. With its advanced graphics, video, and sound capabilities, M2's powerful 64-bit architecture will enable software developers to create titles that provide a whole new level of realism and engaging experiences not previously available on advanced CD entertainment systems."

Based on 10 revolutionary custom graphics, sound, and I/O processors designed by 3DO, and an IBM PowerPC 602(TM) microprocessor specially designed with 3DO interactive applications in mind, the M2 architecture processes more than one million polygons per second. Each of the multiple M2 processors is dedicated to specific tasks to optimize superior image quality and

performance. These processors are supported by the powerful system resources that M2 technology provides, including a 64-bit data bus, 48 megabits of memory, and a memory subsystem capable of delivering 528 megabytes per second. MPEG-1 digital video decompression technology is also designed into the core M2 architecture for built-in VHS-quality digital video capability.

"The superior price and performance of the PowerPC 602 is enabling new classes of advanced home entertainment software," said Phil Hester, General Manager, Systems Technology and Architecture Division, IBM. "Working together with 3DO, we've defined the 602 with unique capabilities to make M2 the best possible technology for interactive entertainment applications. 3DO's 64-bit M2 system architecture will forever change the way people play, learn, and interact."

The highly integrated M2 architecture was developed from the ground up and is the result of working with the world's leading processor, graphics, and audio system designers.

"IBM and Motorola's world class manufacturing process will allow us to achieve superior performance through higher integration," said Hawkins. "With the PowerPC microprocessor and 3DO's custom M2 processors, we have a processor family that offers truly next-generation performance."

Beyond the Bits

M2's revolutionary image quality and performance features will enable development of interactive entertainment software that provides an unprecedented level of realism, with richly detailed interactive worlds containing multiple, complex 3-D characters. With photo-realistic images, high frame rates, VHS-quality video, and theatre-quality sound, the M2 interactive software experience will be radically better than anything consumers are familiar with today.

"The M2 capabilities demonstrated today go far beyond anything currently available on the market or in development for the advanced CD entertainment market," said Martin. "Feature like Gouraud shading, filtered textures, 3-D perspective correction, and complex scenes requiring performance in the hundreds of thousands of polygons per second, will take gamers into a whole new dimension of realism and fun."

"With the first 3DO system, we delivered the very best interactive entertainment experience for the home," added Hawkins. "M2 will once again set the standard -- this time for the 64-bit advanced CD entertainment experience."

Advanced Graphics and Video Features

M2 technology was designed to enable software companies to provide consumers with complex, photo-realistic 3-D worlds and characters and full motion digital video mixed with computer-generated graphics that move seamlessly. M2 will enable software companies to develop interactive entertainment titles that offer life-

like graphics at tremendous speeds with considerably more action than has previously been possible in interactive titles.

3DO's M2 architecture includes several key features for achieving breakthrough image quality and performance. These features, which are built into and performed by the M2 hardware, will enable software developers to easily and efficiently provide richer, more sophisticated graphic images and engaging entertainment experiences. Software designers simply apply these advanced effects to an image and the M2 technology does the rest of the work.

Gouraud Shading and Lighting -- M2 technology allows designers to apply a significant number of lighting effects to an object or scene. Light sources are then reflected realistically off of objects based on where the light source is in relation to the object. Gouraud shading is applied to the object to create the appropriate colors and shadows in the scene. The result is images and scenery with brilliantly curved and smooth surfaces.

Texture Mapping -- Texture mapping is used to apply a graphic texture to polygon-based models to give the modelled object the desired look. 3DO's M2 texture mapping capability renders polygons delivering more than 100 million pixels per second and supports a wide range of data types, including video.

Filtering -- Filtering is the process used to make objects and textures appear smoother and more natural by averaging and softening an image's pixel edges. Filtering creates more realistic images while using simpler geometry.

Mip mapping -- Mip mapping is used to provide a smooth texture appearance as an object moves closer to or farther away in a scene. Through mip mapping, the system dynamically uses different levels of texture detail based on the object's distance from the camera. The images will appear to scale more smoothly and maintain their visual clarity regardless of camera distance, yet only the original texture is needed.

Z-Buffer -- A two-dimensional world is described by two axes -- X and Y, or horizontal and vertical. A three-dimensional world adds a third axis, Z, which allows objects to be placed anywhere within a three-dimensional space. When one object sits in front of a second object, the Z dimension tells the system where each object is relative to others.

The Z-buffer manages complex objects intersecting dynamically and enables automatic hidden surface calculations. The system automatically knows for any given visual perspective what the user will see, and therefore which polygons to render. For example, if a car drives in front of a tree, the system automatically determines that it does not need to render that portion of the tree which is hidden behind the car. M2 Z-buffering is provided in the hardware as with coin-op arcade machines and workstations, while other systems only allow for Z-buffering to occur in software.

Z-buffering provides a big performance gain when using complex graphic models.

Perspective correction -- 3-D perspective correction takes the Z dimension into account when mapping a texture to a polygon. The M2 technology automatically modifies the textures in a scene to appear with the proper perspective, based on user interaction. This results in fewer artifacts and simpler geometry than for competing systems.

Transparency -- Transparency enables complex images and special effects to be built with simple geometric models. The M2 architecture also provides alpha channel support, which enables software designers to control the level of transparency in a model pixel by pixel in real time. For instance, one large polygon can be drawn and a texture can be mapped with transparency applied to appropriate pixels to create the desired effect.

Hardware-based MPEG-1 video decompression -- The M2 technology is designed with built-in MPEG-1 video decompression to provide VHS-quality digital video capability. In addition to using digital video decompression for playback, M2 treats decompressed video like any other type of data. This advanced technique enables designers to apply decompressed running video to an object like any other texture. With this feature, M2 hardware has the video effects capability of machines costing many thousands of dollars. Additionally, multiple streams of digital video can be incorporated in a title at one time.

Software Development Environment

Software design expertise in developing 32-bit 3DO titles is scalable to the new M2 architecture. As part of its M2 technology strategy, 3DO has taken advantage of its current operating system and development tools to minimize the M2 development learning curve. The company leveraged and migrated many critical components of its 32-bit platform development environment to the M2 development environment, including its core operating system, enhanced with new 2-D and 3-D graphics functions to enable software companies to produce M2 titles faster and more easily than developing first titles for other new architectures.

M2 Product Designs

The M2 system architecture was designed to provide 3DO hardware partners with the flexibility to produce products to meet a variety of consumer needs, including add-on upgrades for current 3DO Interactive Multiplayer customers, as well as integrated standalone M2 systems.

"3DO was first to market with a 32-bit system, and others have adopted our concept of the product," said Hawkins. "But nobody else has anything like M2."

The company expects to announce M2 hardware and software partners and specific M2 product launch plans at a later date.

Based in Redwood City, Calif., The 3DO Company

(NASDAQ:THDO) develops and licenses advanced interactive technology to hardware and software companies worldwide. The company's award-winning product design, the 32-bit 3DO Interactive Multiplayer system, was created to deliver a breakthrough in interactive entertainment at an affordable price. 3DO also develops, publishes, and distributes CD-ROM software products and peripherals for the 3DO system. The current 3DO system is available worldwide from Panasonic, GoldStar, Sanyo, and Creative Labs.

Niles First Row rents 3DO

Niles First Row Video (on Rt. 422) now rents 3DO games and systems. They have a extensive selection of both classics (The Need for Speed, John Madden Football, FIFA Soccer, Way of the Warrior) and new titles (Rise of the Robots, Theme Park, Immecary). The rentals let 3DO owners be able to play games they don't have without needing to buy them. The system rentals also let non-3DO owners rent the system for the weekend and try the system out before deciding to put down \$399 for a complete system.

The Final Outcome

by Joshua Galun

Editor-in-Chief of Amiga Link Magazine

Today, after 12 long months, the C= bankruptcy FINALLY ended. And, like the whole bankruptcy up to now, it was not without many problems.

In the auction on April 20, only two companies had bid, Escom and Dell. Escom was the German computer retailer, and Dell is a big American computer company. CEI, long thought to be a bidder, had thrown in their hat with Dell, so that Dell would work with CEI on the Amiga, although CEI would be the ones running the show in respects to the Amiga. Escom's bid was the starting bid of approximately 5 million dollars, as well as the money they spent on the C= trademark, approximately 1.3 million dollars. Dell made a bid at 2 PM of an undisclosed amount. However, that bid was rejected for Escom's bid, because it had conditions attached to it, whereas Escom's bid was unconditional.

After the auction ended, and Escom's bid was accepted, Dell continued to work on, trying to make a more suitable bid. Their second bid was a \$15 million bid, with the condition that they be allowed a 30 day waiting period to look at the Amiga and decide if they wanted to keep it. If they decided not to keep it, they would forfeit their \$1 million deposit, and the whole process of getting another bidder would have to go on again.

In the hearing on Friday, April 21, the Creditor's Committee wanted to accept Dell/CEI's bid. However, Escom felt that was unfair, because Dell's bid was placed after Escom's bid was accepted. There was much

legal wrangling, but finally, the judge asked that during the recess the parties try to work out an agreement. After 3 hours, the court re-adjourned, and Escom said that they would agree to raise their bid by \$6.5 million, to 12 million dollars. Although that was less than Dell/CEI's bid of \$15 million dollars, the Creditor's agreed to drop the objection to stop Escom winning the Amiga, because Dell could back out of the deal and then they'd have to go through the process again.

Escom is working with a Chinese manufacturer to make Amigas, and they said that they should have new Amigas on the market within 2 months. They have said that they are interested in upgrading the Amiga to the Power PC chip, although they have said that the future is wide open, and that no technical decisions are set in stone. They have already hired many former C= technicians and workers to work on the Amiga once again. Escom has said that they will sell Amigas in all their stores, and that they may also use the Amiga technology in other products, such as set-top boxes, as well as possibly licensing Amiga technology to other companies interested in making Amiga clones.

Escom has sales of approximately 2 billion dollars last year.

Escom apparently wants to enter the American computer market, but felt that entering with PCs alone would be very tough, as there are already many PC retailers in America. As such, they wanted to have a new technology, such as the Amiga, to bring to American markets. Escom has said that they will be setting up an American operation very soon.

Commodore UK did not place a bid at the auction, apparently because their backer dropped out. However, Colin Proudfoot of C= UK and Escom have both stated that it 2 weeks they will be holding talks as to Escom either licensing Amiga technology to C= UK, or, more likely, buying C= UK.

Escom has said that they will work with Amiga developers, user groups, and the Internet to support the Amiga.

The Phillipine plant and stock in it wasn't included in the auction, but it will most likely be sold to Escom for \$1 million soon, because it may actually be illegal to sell it to anyone other than Escom.

Joshua Galun

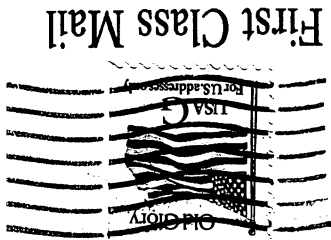
Editor-in-Chief of Amiga Link Magazine

Newsletter

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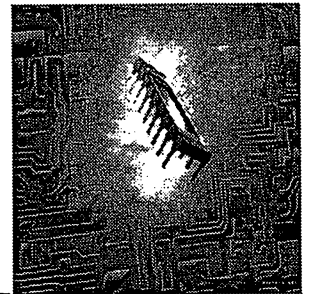


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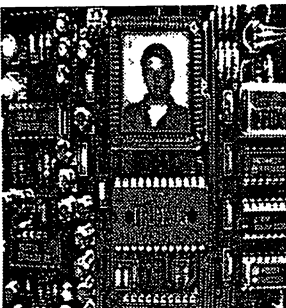
TRUMCUG

Trumbull Computer User's Group



Computer meeting on the
3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00PM
(except July and August)

Warren branch
Cortland Bank
Elm Road-Warren, Ohio



TRUMCUG Dues Notice

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