



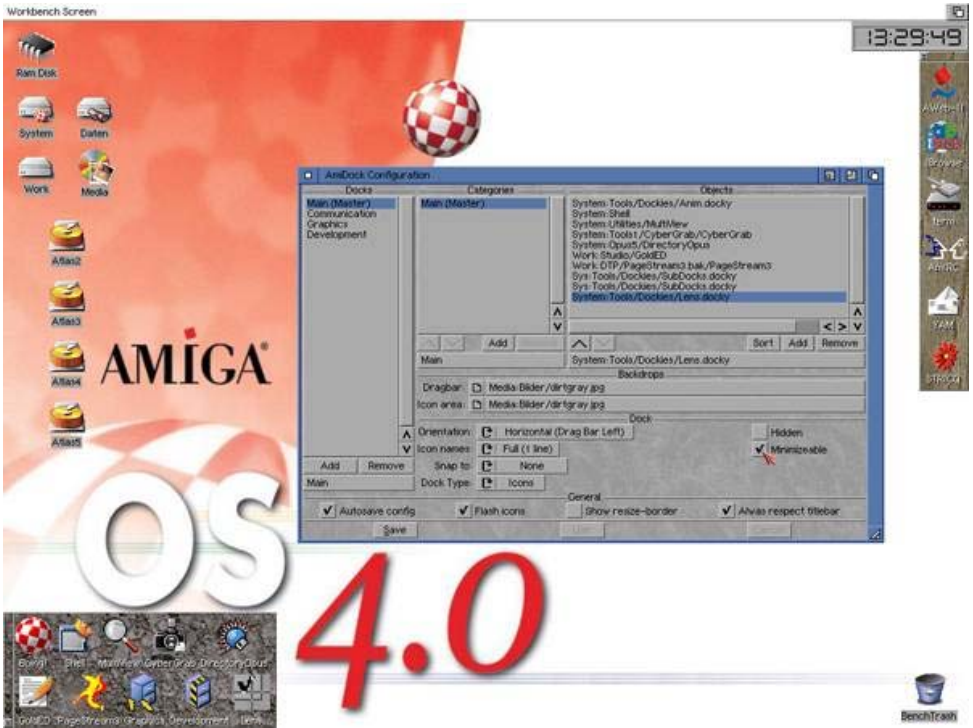
Workbench

September 2002

Issue 184

**Amiga Users
Group Annual
General Meeting
This Month !!**

**Build Yourself an
A4000 Tower.
Choosing a Printer.
Electronic Ink.**





Editor

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Contributions

Contributions can be soft copy (on floppy½ disk) or hard copy. It will be returned if requested and accompanied with a self-addressed envelope. The editor of the Amiga Users Group Inc. newsletter Workbench retains the right to edit contributions for clarity and length. Send contributions to: Amiga Users Group P.O. Box 2389 Seaford Victoria 3198 tonym@net2000.com.au

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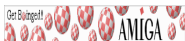
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Editorial

This month is our Annual General Meeting. It's here where AUG members can vote and nominate for a position on the AUG committee.

Being on the committee isn't hard and it's a great way to use your computer in a productive fashion. You can say to your spouse, "But I am working on the computer" and really mean it ;-). A committee member as the first on the scene of something new, generally has first pick of any goodies, however let's not forget that a committee member is also responsible to their chosen position.

As an incentive to and reward for those on the committee we have give aways consisting of Amiga CD and disk collections. For new committee members only.

Tony Mulvihill



**Last Months Meeting
August 18th 2002**

A busy meeting, lots to see and do. We compared an Amithlon machine to a Linux machine using MP3 encoding and I'm pleased to say they were about equal.

We also had news of a newly released six slot PCI Mediator expansion card, plus Scott of Boing.Net brought in a production model of the Thylacine Amiga Zorro USB card.

**This Months Meeting
September 15th 2002**

It's AGM time :-)

For those new to the group the AGM or Annual General Meeting, is the time when elections are held for positions on the committee.

It's when members can have a chance to nominate and be elected to a position on the committee. Normally members cringe at the idea but this year I'm hoping things will be different.

Being a committee member is a great way to personally advance your computer skills (no matter what machine you use) while at the same time helping the group and fellow committee members. So please consider as any help as a committee member is much appreciated.

Also a reminder that all current committee members should be in attendance.

Membership Renewals

Membership renewals have been slowing trickling in. Those of you who haven't yet renewed will receive a reminder with your issue of Workbench. Remember it's your membership of AUG that makes AUG the group it is today. The reminder sent this month will be the last, so don't let your membership expire.

Bytes & Pieces

New Executive Update

Amiga Inc. have released a new Executive Update.

[http://www.amiga.com/
corporate/090502-mcewen.shtml](http://www.amiga.com/corporate/090502-mcewen.shtml)



AmiDock is a completely redesigned version of OS3.9's AmiDock for OS 4.0

There were a lot of improvements in terms of usability, loading-speed and optical feedback. The most important addition to AmiDock is the new Docky-System which allows active content within docks. Active content is provided in form of PlugIns called Dockies.



<http://os.amiga.com/os4/OS4AmiDock.php>

Bernie Meyer writes,

Let me extend congratulations to an unknown user who accesses the Internet from dial-847.jgora.dialog.net.pl



who, at 7:56am on Friday morning, Melbourne local time, brought the number of distinct IP addresses from which the contrib3 archive was downloaded up to the number of copies of AmigaOS XL which have been sold (according to the sales reports I have received).

As the contrib3 archive is utterly useless for anyone not actually running Amithlon, this would seem to indicate that for each copy sold, there is at least one active user. Of course, I cannot disclose the number of copies sold; That would be one of those business secrets of H&P which I am not allowed to speak about, so please don't ask.

And while I am at it — let me express my heartfelt gratitude to each and everyone who has signed the "Support Bernie!" petition, or mailed me with words of encouragement, or offered to help in some way. Much as I'd love to thank

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everyone personally, there is only so much time in a day, and I have this kinda project going that is taking up lots of that time... :) So if you didn't hear back, please don't think it's not appreciated. It's just appreciated quietly, by myself (and sometimes shared with the wonderfulwebmistress of amithlon.net).

Since next meeting is our AGM I've typed up a list of committee positions.

The first list of positions are those that are absolutely required because AUG is an incorporated user group.

The next list are assistant positions. These positions are for those jobs that need to be done to keep AUG a smooth running group for the benefit of everyone.

Please consider taking a position and helping out the members who are currently assisting the running of the group. It's a good experience and you can learn a lot as well as use your computer (doesn't matter what computer you use) in a productive fashion. So give it a thought. the jobs are not hard and just take a little commitment from yourself.

Committee Positions *Main Committee* **Co-ordinator.**

Responsible for the general running of the group, co-ordinating the committee and events.

Current holder Michael Green.

Assistant Co-ordinator

Assists in the co-ordinating of the group

Current holder Peter Margerson

Treasurer

Maintains the financial records. Pays the bills. Organizes and approves expenditure for daily running of the group. Seeks approval for abnormal expenditure through the committee.

Current holder Michael Mavracic

Membership

Maintains the database of membership, keeps the membership records and prints the membership cards.

Current holder Michael Mavracic

Secretary

Liaises with the committee and general public.

Current holder Tony Mulvihill

Meeting chair

Chairs the meeting and brings the latest news to meeting attendees.

Current holder David Myers

Additional Positions *General Committee*

Newsletter Editor

Edits and produces the AUG newsletter.

Current holder Tony Mulvihill

Newsletter assistants,

Packaging and Postage: Staples, folds, envelopes and posts the newsletter.

Current holder John Hopkins

Article writing: contributes articles each month

Current holder David Myers

Article writing: contributes articles each month

Vacant position

Web Master. Maintains the AUG website and introduces new website technology.

Current holder Michael Green

Mail list assistant moderator. Moderates the email list, approves/disapproves new maillist members, updates members email addresses.

Current holder Peter Margerson

Meeting room open/close. Responsible for the meeting room opening and closing and key control.

Current holder Barry Woodfield

Librarian Maintains the AUG library

Current holder Colin Roberts

General committee members

The general committee member is available to assist other committee members when needed.

Current holders

Damien Stewart **Merv Stent**

Jim Lewis

Towerising the A4000.

By David Myers

This month's article deals with towerising an A4000 desktop computer using an ATX type PC tower case. Due to the fact that these come in many varieties, this article will only give a broad outline of what to expect when attempting this modification. For those of you who are interested in taking this idea further, I will be bringing the A4000 described in this article to the next AUG meeting so you can have a good look at it.

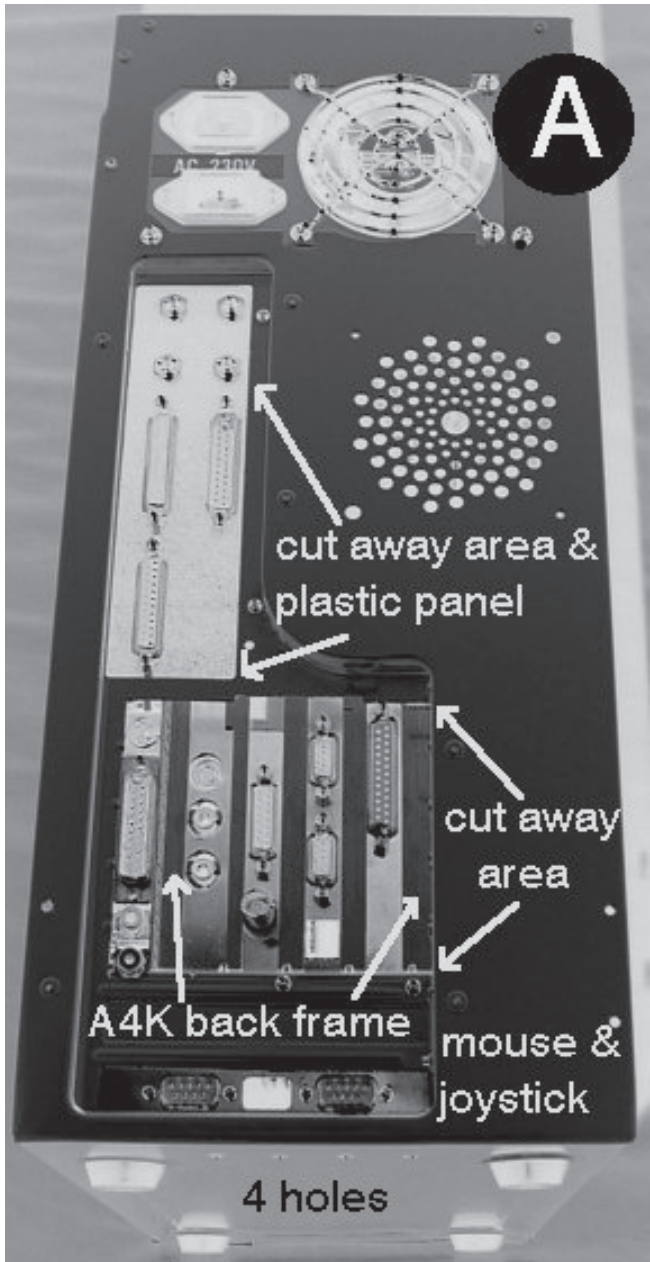
Firstly, the inevitable disclaimer.

By performing this mod you run the risk of blowing up your hardware. This mod also involves modifying mains operated equipment, so take care.

I will not be held responsible for any mishaps caused by doing this mod. You have been warned.

You will need a variety of electronics and metal working tools and a good knowledge of electronics.

The case I used is sold by Jaycar, which I chose for two

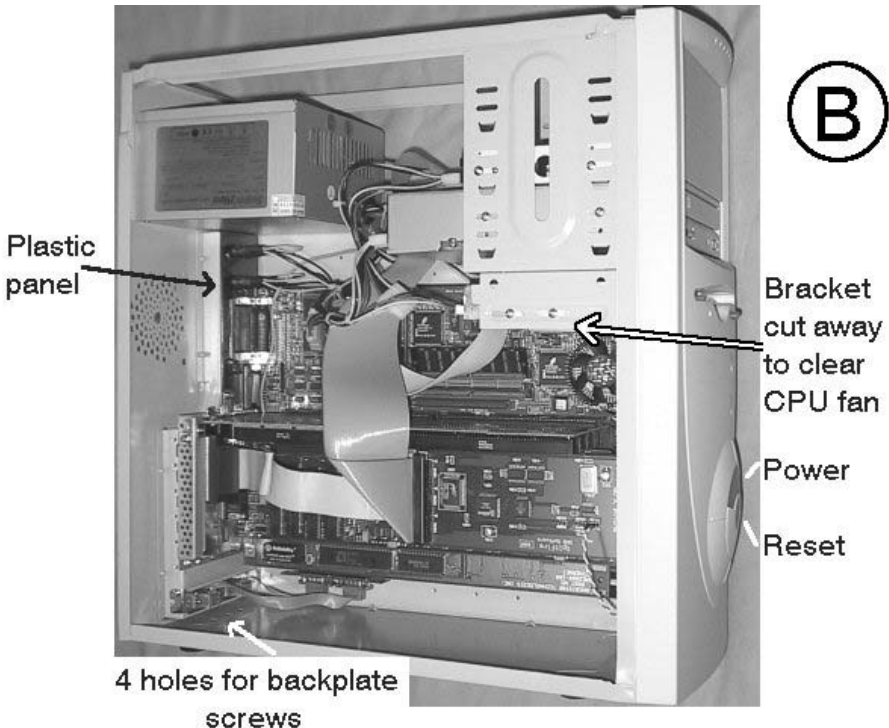


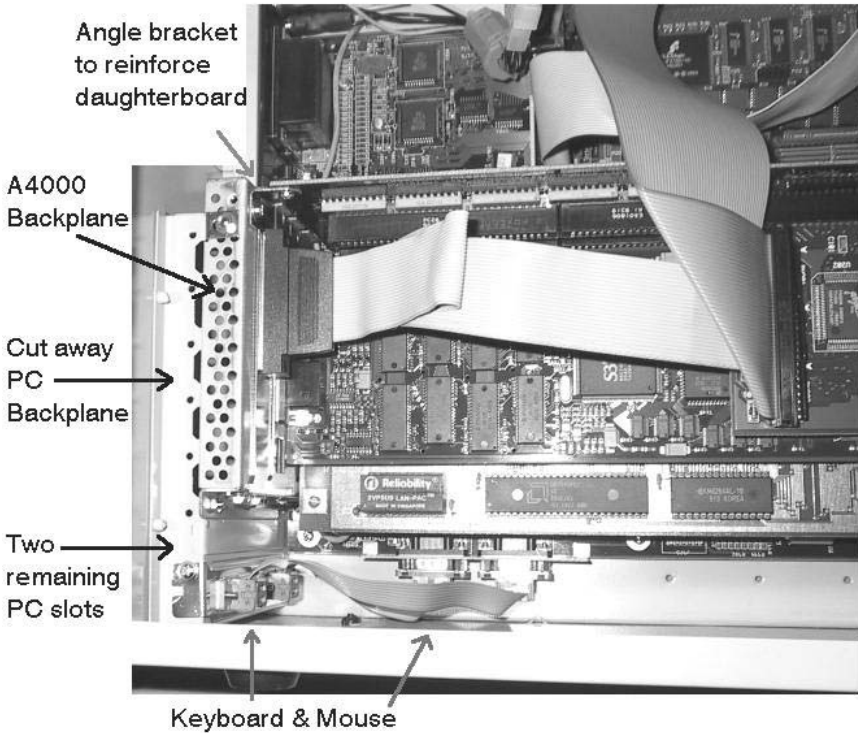
reasons. Although it's expensive, there is a good chance they would hold stocks of them so that other people may be able to purchase the exact same case. Also the internal metalwork is powder coated which helps prevent corrosion and also helps prevent sharp corners. I remember slashing open my hand once on a very sharp case. All the other hardware mentioned in this article can be purchased from jaycar, including nuts, bolts, spacers etc.

The first thing to do is to modify the case so that the A4000 motherboard will fit inside. This involves using a metal nibbler tool, which can be purchased from Jaycar or Dick Smith, to cut away part of the backplate assembly. (See picture "A"). Leave the bottom two backplates intact. The idea is to enable the backplane assembly from your A4000 desktop case to be attached over the hole you have just cut away, providing the correct slot arrangement for the A4000. Note in the picture how the keyboard,

video and audio ports on the motherboard fit neatly between the A4000 backplate assembly and the edge of the PC case. Some small right angle metal tabs and some 3mm nuts and bolts hold the frame in place.

You then need to remove the rectangular metal plate next to the above backplane assembly, which is where the PC's USB, serial, parallel etc. connectors normally go. This plate is replaced by a plastic plate with cutouts to suit the A4000 serial, parallel and floppy



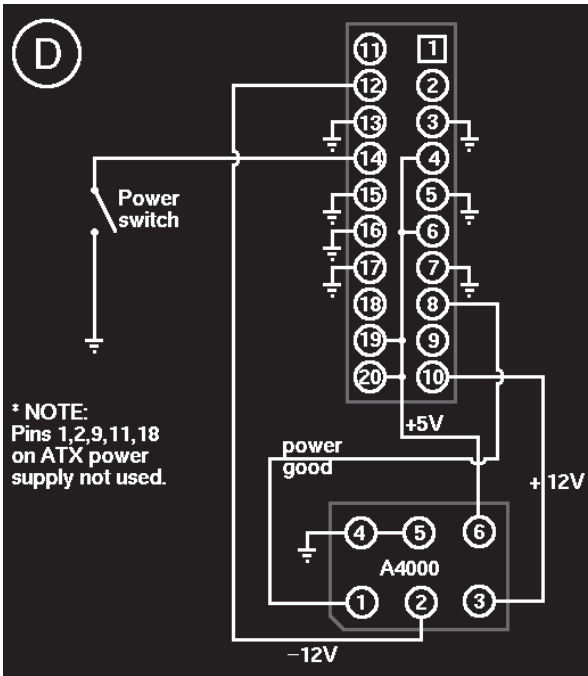


ports. Ignore the 4 round sockets in my picture - they are to provide 12V power to power a telescope and imaging system for astrophotography. These are not required in the basic mod. The plate is held in place with a few 3mm nuts and bolts. A row of 4 holes were drilled in the appropriate place on the bottom of the case to allow the insertion of a screwdriver to allow removal of the screws holding the Zorro cards to the Amiga backplane.

Finally, a number of holes need to be drilled in the case to take the A4000 motherboard mounting holes. The motherboard is then screwed in place using 3mm nuts and bolts and spacers of the appropriate length to position the motherboard correctly. You may need to cut away part of the floppy/hard drive bracket to prevent fouling of your CPU card. (see Picture "B") In my case, the bracket fouled the heatsink/fan

on the 040 processor used in the GVP accelerator I have. Because the 040 is at the other end of the Commodore A3640 card, owners of standard A4000s may not need to cut the bracket away. When cutting the bracket, make sure you leave enough behind to allow installation of your A4000 floppy drive.

With the motherboard fitted firmly in place, and all holes and slots lined up correctly, plug in the A4000 expansion



places on the power supply PCB as shown. Remove the ATX plug and all it's leads, making sure there is no possibility of shorts.

The original momentary type power switch has to be removed from the tower case front panel and a latching type one has to be fitted in place of it. (See Picture "D" again). Note that this power switch only carries a low voltage, so you don't need 240V rated insulation. The reset button can be connected between the motherboard ground and anywhere on the _RESET line on the motherboard e.g.: Pin 16 on "Alice" or pin 53 on the 100 pin Zorro connector on the motherboard. The front panel hard drive activity light can be connected to your controller as normal.

That is it! you now are the proud owner of an A4000T!

One important thing to bear in mind is that like all ATX PCs, your new Amiga will be partially powered up, even when switched off at the front panel.

ALWAYS remove the power lead if you intend doing anything inside the Amiga - even unplugging a hard drive power connector could fry your machine!

slot riser card, and attach a right-angle bracket to the top left corner and to the adjacent corner of the A4000 backplane frame. This helps hold the riser card in place. (see picture "C"). Remove the bottom blanking plate of the two remaining original PC slots and attach a standard PC blanking plate with two 9-pin "D" sockets, with 9-way ribbon cable running to two 9-pin "D" plugs. These are inserted into the mouse connectors on the edge of the A4000 motherboard. (Also see picture "C"). Before attempting the next section, it might be a good idea to read

up on the theory of ATX power supplies. Do a Google on the Web to find the relevant sites. Don't forget this part involves modifying mains-powered equipment, which is dangerous. Remember that the power supply has to be unplugged from the mains before you start hacking it!

Disassemble the old A4000 power supply and remove the 6-pin power plug and it's leads as a complete unit. Remove the ATX power supply from the tower case and open it up. Referring to picture "D", connect the 6-pin A4000 connector to the appropriate

Dot Matrix, Inkjet or Laser? Cheap, cheaper Cheapest!

By Michael Czajka

Dotty about the Dot Matrix! Some might think you crazy but for anyone on a budget or flat broke you really shouldn't go past a good dot matrix printer. There are essentially no running costs for dot matrix printers! You should be able to print forever on one black ribbon (not exaggerating). Colour ribbons do not last quite as long.

As nobody wants dot matrix printers, any more you should be able to pick up your dot matrix for nix! Aim for a 24-pin printer if you want speed and quality.

Dot matrix printers can also be quite fast in draft mode, reasonably fast in NLQ and you can get quite good quality out of them. Being almost indestructible, they are ideal around kids and you'll never worry about ink again. Even if you do decide to change the ribbon it's sub-\$20. Re-inking is also possible for B&W. At a recent auction, we could not even give ribbons away!

Inkjet\$ \$uck big-time! Inkjets are cheap to buy (from \$100) but their consumables are expensive. Manufacturers make a profit by charging \$40-\$60 for a cartridge. Sometimes a cartridge will only last 100 pages. Manufacturers usually state 300 pages per cartridge but they mean at 5% coverage! I do not know anyone who only uses 5% coverage!

As the average kid goes through paper like a cow goes through grass it is not unusual to find a household consuming 10 or more cartridges a year. That is \$600 a year! Do yourself a favour and buy a refill kit! It's a bit messy but it brings the cost of a page down from .25c B&W & up to \$1 colour to about 10c and 20c (or thereabouts) respectively. The more ink you buy the cheaper it gets. The more times you can reuse your cartridge the cheaper it is! Expect to stuff it up the first time and ruin a cartridge.

Inkjets are not much faster than dot matrix printers. Their redeeming feature is that they are quiet and do decent colour.

Warning! Inkjet ink runs when it gets wet!

Remember when buying any kind of printer that every printer has compatibility modes. Usually those modes are Epson and IBM Proprinter. Sometimes they can include others. A search on Aminet may also prove useful. Usually the manuals mention which printers your printer is compatible with. Sometimes they do not. If you are not sure just run through one printer driver after another until something works. Do not assume that because they are different brands or different type of printers that they will not work! As an example, my Canon BJ 10ex inkjet printer worked with the Epson LQ2550 Pagestream driver. The Epson LQ is a 24-pin dot



Choosing a Printer

Get Bored!!

AMIGA

matrix! What's more, the quality you get out of the LQ driver is better than any other driver including Turbo Prints built in drivers. Unfortunately, it uses a lot of ink but it is near to laser quality.

Pagestream in particular has many printer drivers and I can usually find one that works with even weird and wonderful new printers. Only colour can be a bit of a challenge.

Laughing with Lasers

If you print a lot or go through many inkjet cartridges, you are tired of constantly changing cartridges, refilling them regularly or you are just getting tired of blowing your beer money on ink then consider a Laser printer!

Laser printers cost \$600 to

Below is a typical modern laser printer



\$1000 new. You must buy a printer that works without windows! The advantage of lasers is that they are whisper quiet (good for shift workers), very fast (you are talking pages per minute not minutes per page) and very cheap to run. A page costs only about .03c and cartridges last about 3000 pages!

That's a figure based on many years of usage (I've owned 4 lasers).

Lasers also produce wonderful, water-fast B&W at resolutions up to 1200 dpi!

Beware! There are some cheapo lasers floating around at under \$600. They are often windows printers. If the sales person isn't sure make very sure that they won't mind if you return it.

Always refill your used laser cartridges. Properly reconditioned (recycled) cartridges are as good as new ones. Government certified suppliers tend to recondition to a higher standard and offer better warranties on the cartridge than non-certified shops.

A Canon Inkjet printer



They also tend to be cheaper (about ? new prices). That is about \$80-\$120 per cartridge refilled. Refills also tend to put out 25-33% more pages!

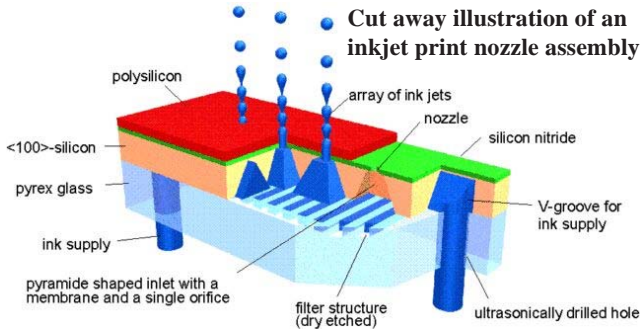
My current Laser is a Lexmark M410 with USB & serial connections 4Mb memory, does up to 1200 DPI, 12 pages per minute, has postscript emulation (useful sometimes) and a large optional 12,000 page cartridge. It's fast to warm up and spits out those 40 page reports in 4 minutes. The Amiga recognizes it as a HP laser. HP is a common emulation for printers.

Careful! Some lasers use standard memory and some do not! Proprietary memory can be \$\$\$ expensive to buy and hard to get!

Laser printer speeds currently range from 6-8ppm for home

Choosing a Printer

Get Bored!!



number! Get them to put the return conditions in writing on the receipt! Pay an extra few dollars for the piece of mind!

LaserZ RuleZ

You do not miss the colour at all with a laser! Think .03c v s \$1! Think about the cartridges that you save. Think about the refills that become unnecessary. Think clean hands. Think water-fast text. Think print jobs that finish in a jiffy! Think speed. Think whisper quietness! Think decent resale values.

As the cost of a Laser is often less than the cost of years ink for an inkjet, it is surprising so few people have one!

use although 12 or 16ppm is possible for under \$1000.

Caveat Emptor! The good news is that you can sometimes find a good used laser for little more than an inkjet. Ask to print a few pages and get permission to return it if you are not happy.

However if the test print is OK then it is probably going to run for years. Usually a months warranty should suffice to test the laser. Most vendors will oblige if you insist and explain that you are not connecting to a PC. Do not forget to get a receipt and make sure it includes at least a phone



Meeting pictures from last months meeting



Electronic Ink

By Tony Mulvihill

Just what is it ?

Well it's ink....more so electronic ink is ink that has the ability, to be able to change from black to white and back again on the application of an electrical charge. It all sounds truly fantastically high tech but the principle of operation is really quite low tech.

Imagine a large clear ball filled with ink and hundreds of ping pong balls. The ping pong balls are white and float. So if you look down on the top of the clear ball you'll see a white surface which is made up of the hundreds of white floating ping pong balls. Now



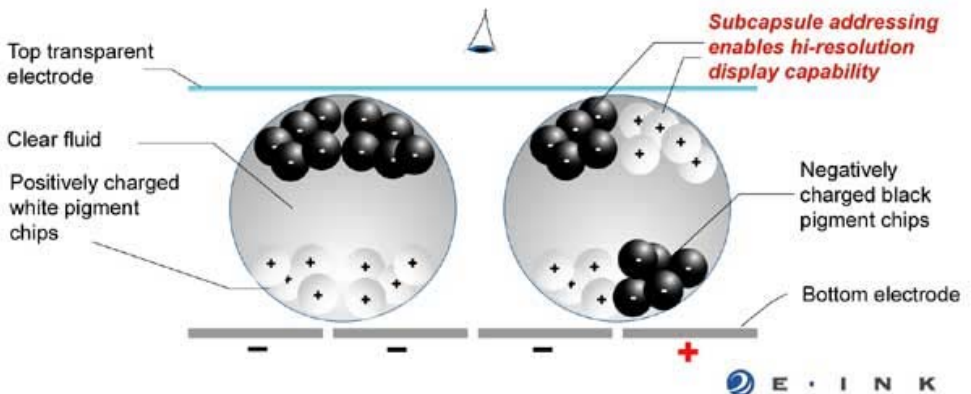
if these ping pong balls could be made to sink to the bottom of the ink and you then looked down onto the top of the clear ball, you'd see a black surface. This is the principle of electronic ink except the scale is much smaller, on the nano scale level.

Around sixteen thousand of these clear balls would fit on a square centimetre and by altering the electrical charge of the balls that reside inside the clear balls, they can be

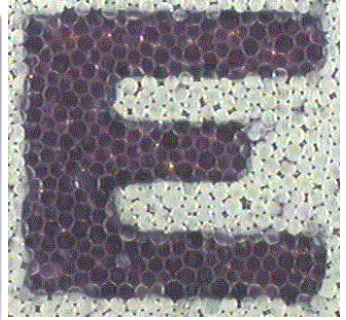
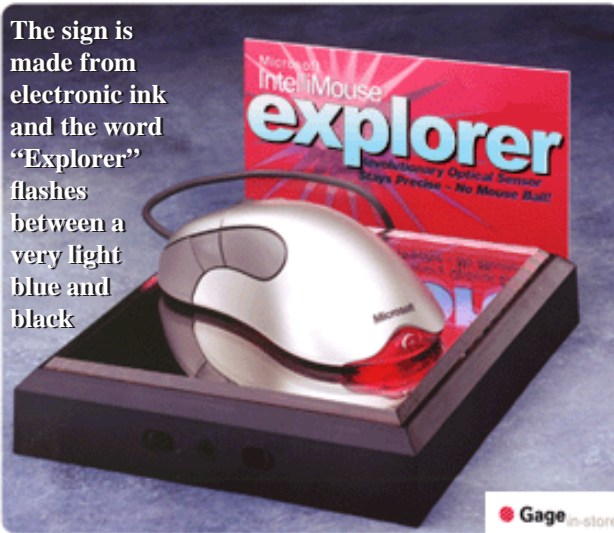
made to float to the top or sink to the bottom, thus changing the colour from white to black and vice versa. In actuality the clear balls are filled with both white and black and the white or black balls are either at the top or bottom depending on the electrical charge.

A good thing is the only time electrical current is used, is to change the electrical charge status of floating balls in the fluid. Otherwise no current is drawn and a typical small

Cross-Section of Electronic-Ink Microcapsules



The sign is made from electronic ink and the word "Explorer" flashes between a very light blue and black



information up to date from a central location. In fact electronic ink is already in use in just such situations as commercial display signage.

I wouldn't expect it to be too much longer before we start to see more electronic ink type products appearing. New advances are occurring all the time. I've already recently seen the phone with the colour LEP display from last months Future Tech in TV advertisements.

Next month we'll have a look at what makes these new products possible, the plastic transistor.

scale device can run for a year on a couple of double A sized batteries.

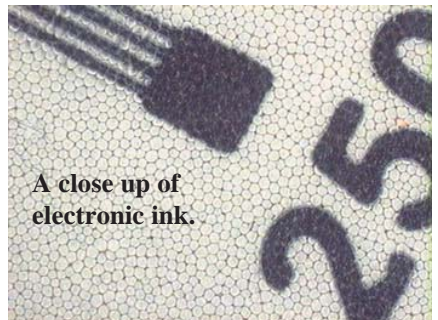
This has enormous implications for the print industry. Typically no printing would be required. A new age electronic newspaper may be a single sheet of paper like material, with the daily news downloaded into it. As you finish reading a page you tap/touch the papers controls and the next page reforms in front of you.

A "book" made of suitable materials and with the pages coated with electronic ink could have the contents downloaded into it and the writing will form on the pages in front of your eyes.

Currently one such company is working on just this type of product with the electronics embedded in the spine and capable of holding the contents of around ten average novels.

You could buy one book and have the authors entire series ready to read at your finger tips and these type of electronic books are not that far away either. Perhaps as early as 2003/2004.

Such devices would also be great in shops for displaying information and being able to easily keep the



A close up of electronic ink.

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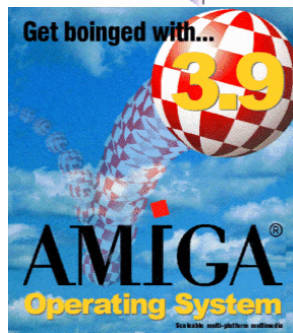
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About The Group

The Amiga Users Group Inc. is a non-profit association of people interested in the Amiga family of computers and related topics. We do not support or condone software piracy. To contact us

<http://www.aug.org.au>

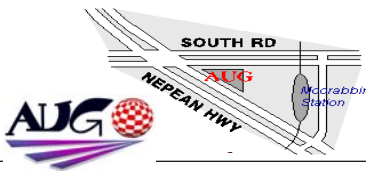
Membership

The AUG Inc. membership year runs from August to August. If you are joining in:

August-September	\$25
October-November	\$21
December-January	\$17
February-March	\$13
April-May	\$33
June-July	\$29

Mail to.

Amiga User Group
PO Box 2389 Seaford Vic 3198



Amiga Disk and Book Library

AUG has a collection of Amiga books, magazines and programs. Members can borrow for a period of one month. The library is available at most meetings.

World Wide Web Access

The vast array of internet providers can make choosing a provider for yourself a difficult task. The AUG can help with advice and a helping hand with setting up your own internet access.

Members Mailing List

The AUG moderates a members mail list at Yahoo Groups. Help, advice or anything Amiga related can be discussed.

http://yahogroups.com/group/Amiga_Users_Group_Vic

The Dead Letter Department

The AUG's BBS run by Craig Hutchison has access to all the latest AmiNet files as well as other goodies. Registration is free to all members.

Phone: (03) 9571 7194

Meetings

The Amiga Users Group meets at the Moorabbin Arts Centre Complex, 979 Nepean Hwy, Moorabbin (see map) on the 3rd Sunday of each month from 2:00pm to 6:00pm. There is ample parking at the rear of the complex off South Road. Meetings are held in either Workshop 1 or the Sun Room. Ask at reception if you get lost. Cost: \$2.00. This is to cover some of the rental costs.

Membership Form

First Name:.....Surname:.....
 Address:.....
 Post Code:.....Email:.....
 Phone (AH):.....Phone (BH):.....

I have enclosed a cheque or money order as outlined in the table above. Once admitted as a member of the Amiga Users Group (Vic) Inc. I agree to abide by the rules of the association for as long as I continue to be a member.

Signed: _____ Date: / / 2002

If joining by mail please allow 2-3 weeks for your membership to be processed. (The following is optional)
 Year of Birth: _____ Amiga models: _____ Occupation: _____

Where did you hear of the AUG ?:

Can you assist the AUG to provide services ?: