Interviewed

Marshall Alexander
Paper Enginner

Johan Van Den Brande
C64 Twitter client

Arcade Retro Gaming
www.arcaderetrogaming.com

New Cosine Game Preview!

Geos &
Role Play Games
and how to create them...

John Fielden's
C16 and Plus4 Pages

Commodore
Computer Club UK
Mini Meet Report
...plus photos!

...and all your usual Commodore Free news, reviews and tutorials!

The Editor: Speaks...

S omeone I know is a fanatic about 'X' brand of Coffee

Nothing else will do, and yes I have tried offering different varieties and pretending its brand X, but he can taste the difference. This leads me to hardware in a very round about way to.

Many Commodore users are fanatical about there machines. This isn't a problem; I may upset some of you here by saying I am not just a Commodore user. When I worked for Silica shops in the U.K. (anyone remember them?) I became quite attached to the Atari Falcon!

Now ok every machine has its strengths and weaknesses and I know the Falcon wasn't blessed with all the greatest features, especially if teamed up next to the Amiga 1200. However I was quite drawn to the DSP (Digital Sound Processor) in the Falcon and wondered how far the machine could be pushed. Sadly, the Falcon never really took of (I know some diehard Atari users will claim otherwise; but hey you should be reading and using Atari fanzines not Commodore ones) I also quite liked the Atari Jaguar, Atari's 32bit console although I think they marketed it as 64bit because it contained 2 x 32bit chips so 32 and 32 = 64bit The Atari Jaguar seemed to have a lot of features, Jeff minter was backing the machine, and a quite excellent version of Doom existed for the device, and quite a nicely designed hardware box (although again you may claim differently as this is subjective matter) placed next to the CD32 that

used CD media instead of cartridges, well personally I think the CD unit for the Jaguar should have been provided free of charge.

Some Hardware technical type people seem to like bits and pieces from one system and hate other features from other systems. The Commodore 64 gained an advantage because of the SID (sound

interface device) although I think it should have had 2 SIDs in the initial hardware design but then I suppose there was a costing element involved. Of course the

"A great many systems have appeared and failed due to lack of software, or features, or bad design."

hardware sprites made the machine more flexible and produce Arcade style graphics. Now I may upset people by saying I was never a fan of the Zx80, Zx81 although these was the first machines I ever "touched" as a child to program, starting with the now famous "hello world" and "input your name" style applications, but I suppose we all start somewhere. The Sinclair machines suffered from the

membrane keyboard ,strange input methods of characters and of course no hardware sprites, and the sound well it virtually wasn't there (the zx81 didn't have any and the Spectrum just had a small internal speaker that fuzzed a little).

Watching the Television recently I found someone praising the glory of the Atari 2600 console, and I remember sitting at the machine with a friend playing "Tank Command" quite a remarkable offering (at the time) from Atari something the whole family could crowd around take turns and beat each others high scores.

A friend at school also had an Oric atoms now I cant remember off hand about the specification of this machine, I just

remember the small size and keyboard. Yes many other systems have existed and I still remember using some form of Timex system with a small cassette and till roll printer, this was version I produced my not so famous "wall paper estimator" application that told you how much wall paper to buy, some years later and I still haven't perfected the program fully; although I have used it to calculate how many rolls of paper I need and it does function to my needs, just a little clunky. A great many systems have appeared and failed due to lack of software, or features or bad design.

Of course I have just touched on a few machines here; but it leads me nicely into memories and retro computing. Remember your grandparents always said things were better in the old days, well I don't really buy into that, yes they seemed more exciting for me when I was a young child, and watching my sons excitement at an imminent thunderstorm and other "grown ups" around just shrugging and saying "umh another thunderstorm going to get wet again" Now my young son was amazed shouting "look the black clouds are coming" and then "we will get lightening" and constantly shouting "it's a thunder storm it's a thunderstorm..." took me back to when I saw "Monty mole" on the Commodore 64! I purchased the Cassette version from a local cosmetics store called "Boots" mainly for the screen shots, but also I had heard about the sound track. The game loaded and My friend and I looked in amazement; "how is this music coming from the Commodore 64, its not possible!" We then told all our friends that "The music is amazing listen.." and taped it onto Audio cassettes to play whenever we found a unit to place them in.

Not all retro was great
Slow loading, large floppy drives are all a thing of the past, now we have SD cards hard disks and IDE interfaces, we also devices that can load games from memory in seconds (although really this isn't that new a feat for Commodore users".

So while some look back at Retro with rose tinted glasses, just remember it wasn't all good. Do we remember our childhood as great and so every-thing about it was great, music, computers, TV, etc...

I do remember with fond-ness some of the old shows and toys from my childhood, heck they still look great today, is this just my fondness of my youth or was there some-thing special happening. Back then it was all inno-cence, today teenagers just want to link into face-book and brag about the number of friends they have.

Well to my mind it seems to be this; Some people just collect systems to place in a museum never to see the light of day, maybe they have to much money or just like the thought of collecting all the boxes, its like a "Clarice Cliff collector" collecting everything she made to place on display in a large glass cupboard. If the device isn't used for the purpose is was made I cant really see the point of owning it, however some people would dis-agree. I know there are museums you can go round and look at the items, and preserving history is a worthwhile cause but a "closed" mu-

"Retro is becoming big business, people are making money out of selling old systems."

I remember that although playing computer games was amazing, when the sun came out playing "kick the can" was also as good. I never really got on well in school, maybe this was the teachers, and maybe it was a rebel-lious streak.

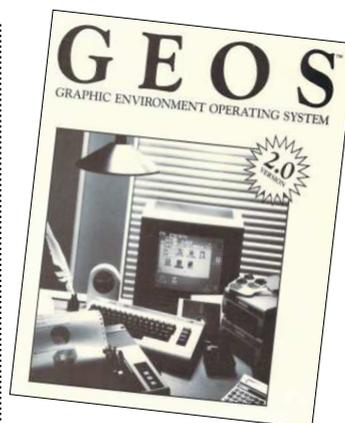Retro is becoming big business, people are making money out of sell-ing old systems.

Who is buying the sys-tems?

seum that only the collec-tor has access to..

Then we have the nostal-gic; someone who re-members the unit as a child and it evoked strong memories, they want the feeling of childhood ex-citement back so buy the unit and for a while its fun; but then they get fed up and the unit ends up back on eBay or in the loft.

Next we have the normal users, pushing the hard-

ware like Geos users printing out colour post-script files. Programmers creating new and amaz-ing demos, musicians getting more and more voices from the SID chip.

So then to sum up
I am not just a Commo-dore man I like many con-soles for differing rea-sons; the thrill of "Tank command" the memories of laughing at others fail-ing to beat our high scores, the BBC micro and in my mind the best version of elite; coupled with the joy at gaining the "elite" status and tak-ing photos of the screen to brag at school, the thrill of tempest2000 the flashing colours and the thumping techno music and all that superb eye candy, the feel of a unit in your hand the stylish look.

Even today those feel-ings, for me, have not gone away, amazing Commodore demos of such programming skill I still look at the screen in absolute amazement; how the heck can this be done. Nothing is impossi-ble, heck we even walked on the moon. Bring on the console bring on the chal-lenge...

Errrrmm...

That's it for this editorial see you next time!

Thanks

Nigel

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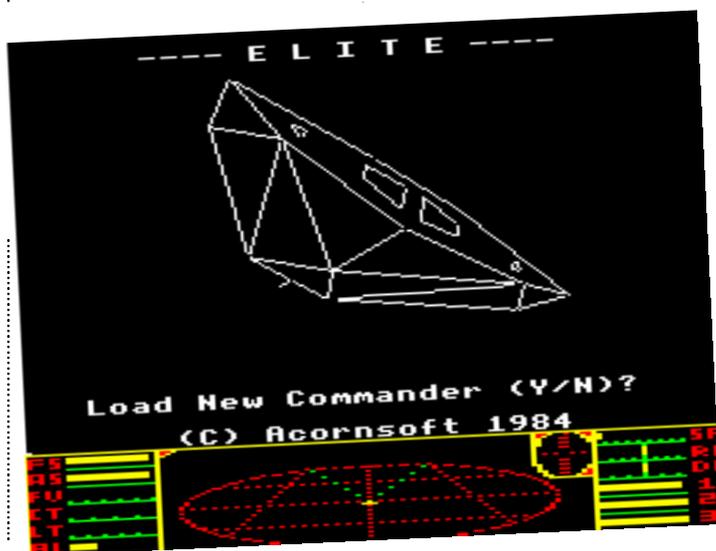
News: Round-Up

Classic Amiga Games and Joystick Released in Combination Package

Arcade Retro Gaming have released 185 Classic AMIGA Games and original Competition Pro Joystick in a unique combination Package.

The use of very robust micro switches for the two main buttons and the USB connector for connecting to the PC make the only difference between the old and the new.

"This Joystick is nearly unbreakable and even more solid than the original!"

This Joystick is nearly unbreakable and even more solid than the original. The COMPETITION PRO is suitable for all PC games that support digital input devices.

The joystick is perfect in combination with emulators that make classic Amiga, C64 games or ATARI Games playable on the PC.

Of course, it also looks good as a decorative object on the shelf unit.

And anyone wanting to remind an classic C64 or Amiga fan of the glorious old days will certainly find an ideal gift in the COMPETITION PRO. With this joystick memories come flooding back !!

Who doesn't remember the star from the eighties? Indestructible and always ready for action.

With the new edition all characteristics were taken over 1:1. The dimensions are the same, the stick is made of solid metal and the extremely long-lived micro switches produce characteristic clicking The optimal joystick for beginners!!

Four firing buttons and the turbo function permit enough control to defeat every opponent.

Made of robust material the joystick is perfectly suitable for every game

sequence. Perfect for use with an Amiga emulator on the PC.

- Extensive collection of games: 185 Amiga classics;
- Back to the '80s: 4 digital buttons which make the original sound;
- Digital joystick with micro switches;
- Auto fire mode;
- USB connection;
- Extremely robust sprung metal stick;
- No driver needed.

http://arcaderetrogaming.mybisi.com/product/158821/185-Classic-AMIGA-Games-original-Competition-Pro-Joystick_781219.html

Go RETRO with Amiga Classix Diamond Edition

This CD will take you on a journey back in time. A time when computers were fed with diskettes and only had 1MB of memory.

The Amiga began its triumphant journey through the living rooms back in 1985 with its unbelievable graphics and sound characteristics.

Hundreds of brilliant games were released for this system and most of these titles easily beat many of today's games in game design and game play. You can experience the incomparable feeling of classic Amiga games once again.

It includes a detailed simulation of the original computer models.

At the start of a game you will hear the familiar sound of a working floppy drive again. Also the loading times do not differ from the original ver-

sions.

Modern programs have been used in order to be able to offer you the fun of the past on modern computer systems.

List price $34:99
Sale price $29:99

http://shop.ebay.com/merchant/arcaderetrogaming

http://arcaderetrogaming.mybisi.com/

Some of the games: 1497-Five Years After, 18th Hole, 1942, Aardvarks, AmiBee, Amiga Mini Tiles, Amotrix, Aquakon, Argus, Astatin, Automobiles, Ball Lightning, Ball Master, Battle Duel - Striving for Glory, Battle Othello, Black Dawn, Bobble Puzzle, Bobbydash, Bomb Jacky, Bomber Blaster, Bop'n'Plop, Brain Race, Buzzy, City Cars, Crack Out, Crazy 8's, Death Angel, Deconstruction, Defender of the Crown, Denjoy, Diplomacy 2.0, Duel Duel Sword Dudes, Emeraude Empire, Epsilon 9, Fatal Impact, Ford Capri Challenge, Fortress, Free Trading Company, Furmyre, Goal!, Indigo, Interphase, It Came from the Desert, It Came from the Desert II - Antheads, Jimmy's Fantastic Journey, Judgement Day, Jump'n'Roll, Kingdom at War, Knightwoode, Krypton Egg, Last Lap, League Soccer Cards, Lethal Formula, Lords of the Rising Sun, Magnatron, Marbles, MegaTron, Metal Warrior, Mobsters City, Norse Gods, Omega, Pepsi - All over the World, Pick Out, Push'n'Pull, Raid, Raid II - Mission X, Raid III - Total Fire, Raid IV - Super Raid, Rattlesnake, Realm of Sendai, Relics of Deldroneye, Relics of Deldroneye II, Return to Zantis, S.D.I., Shisen-Sho, Sinbad and the Throne of the Falcon, Solius the Sorcerer, Somewhere in Time, Space Job, Starbase 13, Strike Commander, Swibble Dibble, Teen Agent, The Amazing Adventures of Harry Haddock, The King of Chicago, The Lost Prince, The Shepherd, The Simulator, The Task, The Three Stooges, The World of Magic, The World of Magic II - Ghelae and the Death Sword, Tubes, TV Sports Baseball, TV Sports Basketball, TV Sports Boxing, TV Sports Football, Ultimate Gameboy, Virtual World, War, X-Balls, Zalycon.

1541 'Ultimate II' Announced. Message from Gideon, the creator of the original cart...

Dear 1541 Ultimate enthusiasts,

Some of you might have noticed that the order form has been temporarily closed, and many questions and rumors' have been going around about the future of the 1541 Ultimate.

The reason behind all this, is that behind the screens I have been working on a successor of the "1541 Ultimate". How this unit will be called has not yet been determined, but it could be something as simple as "1541 Ultimate II" or "Ultimate Cartridge".

What is it, and why was it designed?
Basically, it is a scaled down version of the 1541U. It will provide similar functionality, although some things have been changed. It will no longer support full-size SD-cards, but only MircoSD, or "Transflash". Also, Ethernet will not be supported until further notice. It will support tape emulation out of the box (without the need for special FPGA images) and it will provide a real-time clock function with battery back up.

Audio output has been significantly improved, which might seem useless for just the drive sounds, but this enables the creation of FPGA images that provide additional sound channels of useful quality. The power consumption has been reduced as well. There is one extra cool feature that will not yet be disclosed... ;-)

And last but not least...
This unit will come with a case! At least, that is the plan; there are some negotiations going on with

manufacturers for plastic insertion mounding. It seems feasible to have this done, although it's pricy for low quantities. A prototype is 3D-printed this week; the prototype board is already there and functional.

Now speaking of the case...
Since I like to keep the high compatibility with the 1541, the big DIN connector is still there on the board. It might be an option to use a custom connector for this, with a custom cable that needs to be made for this unit, but to be honest; this does not have my personal preference.

I would need to have these made separately, and stock them separately as well. So, let's say that the big DIN connector is a fact, how do we enclose this?

There are two options (see image 1 and 2 on the right).

As you can see, the first one has a "strange" bulge, but is for the rest rather elegant, while the second one is symmetrical, but bulkier. Which of the two it should be, I don't know.. Maybe I'll open a poll for this, what do you think?

Availability: It will still take around 12 weeks before these units can be delivered; which means late October 2009. Price: I tried to keep the price acceptable. Due to the case, it has to go up just slightly though. The selling price including tax is € 125 (excluding: € 105).

Please let me know what you think.

Regards,
Gideon
http://www.1541ultimate.net

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Open Sourced!

The software part of the 1541 Ultimate is from now on Open Source! Although the hardware still needs to be documented, people can already check out the source code, edit it and build new applications for the 1541 Ultimate!

The source is released under GPL 3.0, which in short means that every addition to the source code will also need to be open sourced and the code or parts thereof may not be sold. The full license agreement can be found in the 'root'(trunk) of the SVN archive.

In order to build the software, you need to:

Install Cygwin, or run under Linux. Make sure you have:

- GNU make in order to run the makefiles.
- GCC compiler, in order to build the conversion tools.
- Install CC65 (http://www.cc65.org) and make sure you have the required environment variables and path set.
- Install a SVN client package (either command line in Cygwin) or a graphical client such as Tortoise SVN.
- Check out the repository from http://svn.xp-dev.com/svn/gideonz_1541Ultimate/

Go to the trunk directory and type 'make'.

At this point, the archive is read-only. If you are a developer and want to make a significant contribution to the 1541 Ultimate, please contact me and we can discuss being a write-user on the archive. Bug fixes from others can be E-mailed as patches, which I'd happily merge with the archive.

Preview of New SEU Game from Cosine

Jason Kelk (TMR) of Cosine has release a very nice looking preview for 'GR9 Strike Force'.

Writing on his YouTube page, TMR says, "This is GR9 Strike Force, a C64 game, I'm writing for Retro Reunited in September. This is an early prototype of the first level, the attack wave driver is set to loop around six attackers for the moment and there's not much in the way of map data yet…".

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRh1QFS9zWY

Bezerk Redux Updated to V1.2

After 345 downloads of V1.1 the new 1.2 version has the following changes:

• Any drive number can be used to load the game, not just drive 8.
• A load error is reported as a load error and not as a crash.
• Updated music routine that sounds better with SID 8580. The
• 6581 is fine and remains unchanged.
• Player shoot sound effect updated from zerozillion's SEUCK data tweak.

http://noname.c64.org/csdb/getinternalfile.php/77624/BerzerkRedux.d64

Low Cost C64/C128 Ethernet Cartridge

The Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club (CCCC) is now shipping the low cost 64NIC+ Commodore 64/128 Ethernet card. Designed to provide entry level Ethernet connectivity for the C64 and C128, the unit emulates the popular RR-NET and will operate with applications designed for the RR-NET.

In addition to basic Ethernet functionality, the cartridge offers an auto-start ROM capability, enabling auto-boot Ethernet equipped machines. Both C64 and C128 modes are supported. In addition to RR-NET emulation, the unit offers NET64 emulation and can be mapped to any 16 byte address bank in either IO1 or IO2.

Designed by Brain Innovations, the cartridge is offered for sale by CCCC. Base pricing is USD$55.00.

Please contact CCCC for more information and ordering details:

http://www.geocities.com/c64-128-amiga/

JiffyDOS License Acquired

Brain Innovations has acquired a license to once again offer the venerable JiffyDOS disk drive enhancement solution for the Commodore computer line.

Now setting up for sales, the company will offer not only physical ROM replacements but also ROM images. All drive and machine ROMs will be available for sale and/or download. More details and the ordering information will be available at:

http://www.jbrain.com

As written by Jim Brain on his website, "As announced at the C4 EXPO, I am working with Mark Fellows (Highland IT Solutions) to finalize a licensing agreement for 'JiffyDOS' ROM Overlay manufacture and distribution. In addition to hardware ROM enhancement units, I will also offer image downloads for 1541 Ultimate, C64DTV, and emulator users, as well as an amnesty offering for unlicensed copies.

To minimize manual manufacturing processes inherent in the current EPROM-based JiffyDOS offerings, my goal is to utilize the ROM-el EEPROM/FLASH solution for JiffyDOS hardware offerings."

C64 Hacking

This is unbelievable, a Commodore 64 emulator "Frodo" running a game, with a difference; on the left of the screen you can see the memory map and different areas of memory changing in real time!

Ok this is good but then we see the user jump into these memory areas showing the individual bytes that make up the memory map. The user then changes these bytes in real time and the emulator screen updates again in real time to reflect the changes.

You need to see this to believe what is happening. Then when you have picked yourself up I suggest you sit down for at least 30 minutes with a cup of tea to recover, this is unbelievable.

This is a preview of a new hacking tool that provides real-time view and edit of C64's internals. Enjoy the hacker's view of Commodore 64 available at the end of the summer!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjcvR5McmSg

The C2N-II Datassete Project

The C2N-II Datassete is a M.S. Thesis of the student Pablo Tomás Campos Valladares.

This project is directed by the professor Francisco Javier González Cañete in the University of Málaga (Spain). The objective is to develop a hardware device to replace the C2N Datassete of Commodore computers.

This hardware will be able to play the TAP image format (this format is a dump of original cassettes). As this is a digital format, no errors will occur during the loading of the software, as can occur with cassettes). The TAP images will be stored in USB Drives and the C2N-II will let you to select the file and play it. This hardware will be compatible with the Commodore PET, VIC 20, C64 and C128 models.

8 July 2009
The first prototype has been released (see above) and it has been tested for the first time using a real Commodore 128. Some minor bugs with the SENSE and MOTOR signals were found and corrected. The USB Drive is working fine. It can obtain the directory list and navigate in the directory structure. 8 games with different loaders have been tested and 4 loaded. The timings have to be improved in order to get a 100% statistic.

22 July 2009
The final boxed C2N-II has been released (see below). Some of the games that previously did not work now do. The firmware is going to be improved to load even more.

http://pc23te.dte.uma.es/C2N-II/

BBC & SID?

A BBC computer has been adapted to contain a far superior sound chip from the Commodore 64, the SID chip. The one thing the BBC always lacked was decent sound; now it has it!

A small and very badly shot recording of a BBC Master with a little black box that connects the SID chip to it for sound (the game is a prototype, in development at the moment) is on YouTube. **CF**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KufZAu5Ioc

Interview: Marshall Alexander
Paper Engineer

Growing up in the seventies and eighties, my child-hood memories basically consist of videogames, bright plastic toys and TV cartoons. Any time that was left I spent drawing and programming games for my Commodore 64.

At a later age a few of my childhood dreams became a reality when I temporarily moved to Melbourne, where I worked as a videogame programmer, I did oil-painting in a studio and had my work displayed in one of the local galleries.

After a course in Graphic Design I made a career-switch and became a graphic designer/illustrator. Currently back in The Netherlands I work at a small design company and spend my spare time illustrating my childhood memories and designing paper toys.

I specialize in one-piece paper toys that consist of a single flat piece of paper, which by intricate folding is transformed into a 3-dimensional model. All models are available for free download, so collect them all, start building and enjoy the world of paper toys.

Commodore Free: Can you give our readers a little history about yourself?

Marshall Alexander: I'm a 38 year old graphic designer / illustrator who started out as a (game) programmer. Computers and games have been an important part of my life and growing up in the golden age of computer games has helped a lot with that.

I still play games very actively and the fact that I have two kids provides me with a nice excuse.

CF: You worked briefly as a programmer was this with 8 bit machines, and what software were you writing?

MA: I taught myself programming on a ZX81 and later on a C64 when I was still very young and wrote my first (amateur) games.

Later on I studied Information Technology and ended up as a game programmer in Melbourne where I worked on games for the Playstation 2, PC and also the Gameboy Advance.

Ultimately programming was not the thing for me so I did a career-move and started doing graphic design.

CF: Please tell our readers about your website http://www.marshallalexander.net/

MA: The site is an outlet for my personal projects for which there is no room at my day-time job.

I enjoy having complete freedom with these projects and not being restricted by client demands, corporate culture and other creativity killers.

Plus it's an attempt to get my fifteen minutes of fame of course :)

"I even had two Commodore 64's and had them connected in a simple network, which was pretty cool!"

"It's great to see there's still such an active community online dedicated to these old computers!"

CF: So on the site there are paper models to download and make for FREE!

MA: Isn't it great! The paper toy community is all about sharing, collaborating and interacting with your fans and part of this philosophy is offering your models for free download. It's pretty similar to street art, where the art is there for everyone to enjoy, freely accessible and occasionally ends up in galleries.

CF: Did you ever think about selling the models or the ideas to someone?

MA: When clients approach me to design a model that they will use to sell their products or want to sell as a product itself, I will charge for it as if it is a normal illustration job. I'm talking to a few clients at the moment for which I might have to design some models, but generally designing paper models does not seem to be a very lucrative business.

CF: 3 of the models are easily recognised a Commodore 64, an Atari and an old pong game, do you reminisce about your childhood?

MA: My childhood memories are an important inspiration for my personal work. It provides me an opportunity to relive some great moments from my youth. Also the seventies and eighties somehow seem to have produced some great toys and computers that are still very popular and still have very active fan communities nowadays.

CF: The Models are in a stylised way and look like little men were there any reasons for this rather than just models of the machines as they were?

MA: The models are part of the Foldskool Heroes series, a bunch of models that pay tribute to heroes of my youth. All models are based on the same template, so I generally have to fit all my ideas into this template.

In the case of the game consoles I therefore had to take some liberties regarding their layout and just try to convey the general look of the console. And it makes them look a bit more like characters as well, which I thought was nice as well.

CF: Do you still or did you own any Commodore Computers?

MA: Of course :) At one time I even had two C64's and had them connected in a simple network, which was pretty cool. I wrote a simple chat program and placed the second C64 in little brother's room so we could talk to each other. The funny thing was that the chat program that I installed on his C64 had some hidden features in it that I could trigger from the C64 in my room. I would drive my brother crazy with sudden flashing screens and stuff like that. Nowadays I don't own a real C64 anymore, but I occasionally play some old games on a C64 emulator.

CF: Do you have any plans to

model other retro machines?

MA: There are a few ideas that are in concept stage right now, so I'm hoping to do another series of retro machines. I had some excellent suggestions from fans around the net as well. But I've got so many other ideas and projects I'm working on as well that it might take a while before they see the light of day.

CF: The drawings on the website are very nice and bright!

MA: Colours are good! And most of the toys I illustrated where bright toys to begin with. It's one of the things that sells toys too, so I'm hoping it will attract people to my work as well.

CF: What's the CD I notice at the Foot of the website "love bytes" have you released some music and if so can our reader download a sample of this work?
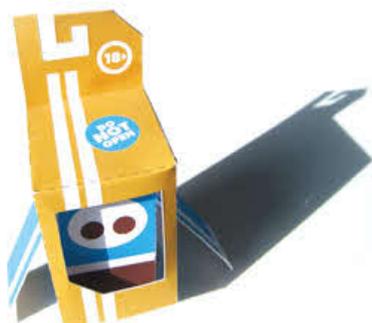
MA: Love Bits is the first released CD of musician Unicorn Dream Attack for which I designed all the artwork. The guy creates some fantastic music using old Gameboys and 'bended' toys. Check out his MySpace page at www.myspace.com/unicorndreamattack to learn more and listen to his music.

CF: Have you any comments you would like to add?

MA: Sure. It's great to see there's still such an active community online dedicated to these old computers. It's a great way to share your childhood memories and for me an endless source of inspiration. Keep up the good work! **CF**

http://www.marshallalexander.net/

http://members.chello.nl/m.egtberts2/pdf/fs9.pdf

MARSHALL ALEXANDER
PAPER ENGINEER

FOLDSKOOL HEROES

MARSHALL ALEXANDER
www.marshallexander.net

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

FOLD OVER TO CREATE HAND →

FOLDSKOOL
HEROES
#9
64K RAM

64K RAM

POWER

CUT OUT THIS
PART AND STICK
KEY THROUGH IT

FOLD OVER TO CREATE HAND →

ZFOLD AND GLUE
TO INSIDE OF BACK

ZFOLD AND GLUE
TO INSIDE OF BACK

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

GLUE HERE

11

64 **JOE GUNN**

GOLD EDITION

retro GAMER
SIZZLER

micro mart
9/10

DIGITAL DOWNLOAD
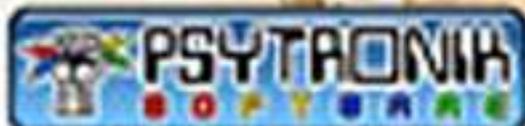
PSYTRONIK SOFTWARE PROTOVISION

Tutorial: C64 Ringtones

Would you like a C64 SID ringtone on your phone?

SID is the Commodore 64 Music interface device called the "Sound Interface Device", normally abbreviated to SID.

I would like to talk a little about getting SID tunes (Commodore 64 music files) onto your mobile phone. Of course as SID is such a classic sound that's why I started the text about SID tunes.

Other Commodore machines like the Amiga and plus4 also have distinctive sound tracks, but for me it's the SID sound chip that creates a unique feeling. In the case of the Amiga, music files are usually called Mod files and I will look at these later.

I love the Sid sound so much that I am concentrating on these as ringtones, however some of this article will be useful for other Commodore machines and even some games systems.

Distinctive
Sid sounds need no real introduction, many call the sounds just pops and bleeps others call them genius musical works of art, because of the creativity needed to get the best out of the limitations of the hardware.

The SID sound chips tones are instantly recognisable. It has also been said that because the SID chip contains analogue circuitry that no 2 SID chips sound alike due to variations in manufacture, heat etc.

There were 2 main revisions of the Sid chip, there was the 6581 and

the 8580. This isn't a SID history lesson and if you want to find more I suggest reading here for a start http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MOS_Technology_SID.

People often say one SID is better than another, this I think really depends on the musician, as he/she will have designed the sounds and music for a particular chip and it may sound odd using the opposite chip for which the sounds were designed.
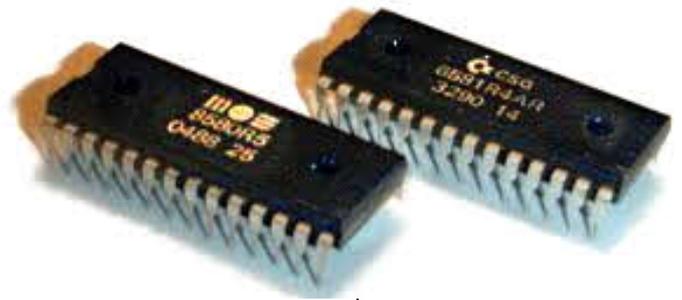
There are differences, but as this is just about ringtones, then it's just a case of finding music you like most modern demos will list the Sid chip used to design the music with.

"Wouldn't it be great to have a SID ringtone on your mobile?"

As A True Commodore SID music fan, wouldn't it be great to have a SID ringtone on your mobile phone, to replace that Nokia tune? Dependant on you phone and of course the devices age, this would dictate the sort of sound you can have.

Some Mobile phones for example can play polyphonic ringtones, some can play wav file, some support midi file or some are only tone based; the tones are generated with the phones internal composer application.

Once you have the speci-

fication of your phone, then you can investigate how to get the sound or tune onto your phone. Of course if you have an older Nokia phone like the classic 6310 this phone has tools to create "composer" music or RTTTL files.

The following is an example of a RTTTL file:

> Sanxion Loader:
> d=4,o=5,b=125:16g6,16g6,16d6,16p,16f6,16p,16c6,16d6,16p,16a#,16p,16f,16g,16p,16f6,16g6,16a#,16a#,16c6,16p,16a,16p,16c6,16f6,16a#6,16a#6,16a6,16p,16f6,16p,16c6,16c6,16a#,16a#,16c6,16p,16a#6,16p,16c6,16a#6,16c7,16a#6,16c6,16p,16a#,16p,16f,16p,2g

These RTTTL files are normally saved as ASCII text files and can then be imported into your phone, again it depends on the phone how you would do this but you could use a Commodore 64 to create the text file remembering to save the file as ASCII.

Nokia phones usually have an application called composer where you can type into an applications the tunes data, some phones show musical staves where graphical "notes" can be dragged and dropped. Here is an example of a Nokia Composer tune.

Start the Nokia composer and set the Tempo to 125 then press the following keys in this order:

588*, 5, 2, 0**, 4, 0**, 1, 2, 0**, 6**#, 0, 4, 5, 0, 4*, 5, 6**#, 6#, 1*, 0**, 6**, 0, 1*, 4, 6#, 6#, 6, 0**, 4, 0**, 1, 1, 6**#, 6#, 1*, 0**, 6#, 0**, 1, 6#, 1*, 6**#, 1, 0**, 6**#, 0, 4, 0, 5999

The end result is, you set this file as your phones ringtone and you have a squeaky mono tune playing out the theme to Sanxion loader.

Nokia
http://arcadetones.emuunlim.com/c64.htm

Polyphonic
So you have a newer phone, one that can play midi files. Well there are various ways of extracting midi note data from Sid files for example the sid2midi application, or just have a look on the internet, listed here are a variety of websites hosting midi versions of the SID tunes.

But depending on your phone you may be surprised and disappointed at the results that these midi files present. Although the notes and timing is correct it's doubtful the instruments will sound anything like the classic SID chip inside your commodore machine.

Remix.Kwed.Org
THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO C64 REMAKES

RING TONES COMMODORE

http://www.vgmusic.com/
music/computer/commodore/
commodore/i
ndex-classic.html

http://home.c2i.net/skot/c-
64f4_1.htm

http://almighty.c64.org/
http://midi.thehylia.com/
downloads/commodore

MP3

Depending on your phone, you may have the option to play Wav or MP3 files and if you visit the following website you can download remixes of Commodore tunes:

http://remix.kwed.org/

You will be presently surprised that people have already Remixed well known SID tunes using modern synthesisers. The resulting files are available to download free of change!

Some stick rigidly to the original tune others are very different interpretations. Some people though will still prefer the original SID sound rather than a remix, and to be honest I love the originals, so what options do we have for getting the SID sound onto our phones?

Phone SID Emulators

Below are a couple of SID style emulators for various phones, you need to check your make/model to see which is applicable to you, whether it's a windows mobile or a Symbian based model check with your phone manufacturer for details about your phone. There is even a SID player for java enabled mobile phones.

PocketSID for example is a music player for Windows Mobile 2003 and Pocket PC 2002 mobile phones:

http://
pocketsid.progenitus.com/

SID player for Series60
v2:

http://mikie.iki.fi/symbian/
sid.html

A Java-based Commodore 64 emulator for mobile:

http://sourceforge.net/
projects/jmec64/

Still not good enough

We haven't quite finished, you could use win vice for example and record the output to a wav file Do this by starting the application in Vice then on the menu select SNAPSHOT then select record sound then select where you want the file to be saved and a name to call the file.

Notice Vice displays a message to let you know sound is recording giving a "sound Recording started" at the bottom left of the screen.

When you have finished select the menu item snapshot then the submenu "stop sound Recording" you may need to tidy up the wav file a little in your favourite sound editor, then copy the file to your phone somehow, this would depend on the phone some use USB some have removable storage for example SD cards.

If your phone can't support wav files, you could convert the file to an Mp3. Although again this is emulation of the SID chip rather than a real machine. You could go directly to the superb website:

http://www.6581-8580.com/

Stone oak valleys Mp3 recordings of Commodore Sid files and download the MP3 of your choice.

Ok, so Mp3 isn't a format you like and you want a none compressed Wav file or some other audio format supported by your phone, the options here are to record directly from SID or an amplified version of SID chip.

Using an AV cable is the best method to record directly from SID to a recording device, the cable connects into the back of the Commodore 64 AV port and has a yellow RCA connector and a white connector one outputs video the other sound, remember the SID was mono so there is no stereo output.

Protovision still sell these cables and here is a direct link:

http://www.protovisiononline.
de/catalog/product_info.php?
prod-
ucts_id=108&osCsid=00ec
D790aea2787703475319767
d2a10

PROTOVISION

This will give you the noise and interference associated with the SID chip, some people say this noise and interference is what makes the sound, others just feel this is distortion and try to filter out the noise with graphic equalisation or compression.

You could of course send the output directly to an amplifier or computer to clean up the sounds and filter out any noise, but to be honest I think the noise and interference are really part of the SID sound, then you need to save the file to your mobile phone. You will need to read your phones documentation to find how this is done.

Amiga Files

Of course a similar connection from an Amiga to a receding device could be used for Amiga Mod files. There are websites to download remixed Amiga mod files and MP3 recordings of Amiga files like the Commodore 64 again you could try Stone Oak valleys Paula website:
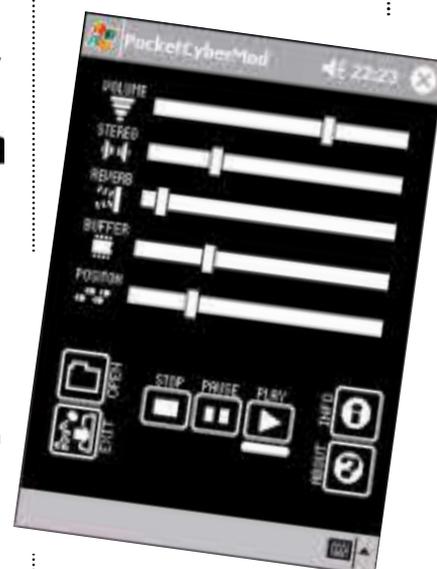
http://www.paula8364.com/

There are also modplayer websites where the phone can run an emulator and then play the mod file. I am unsure if this can be used to play as a ringtones though and do not have a new phone to test it with. **CF**

Mod Players

http://www.pdagold.com/
software/detail.asp?s=404
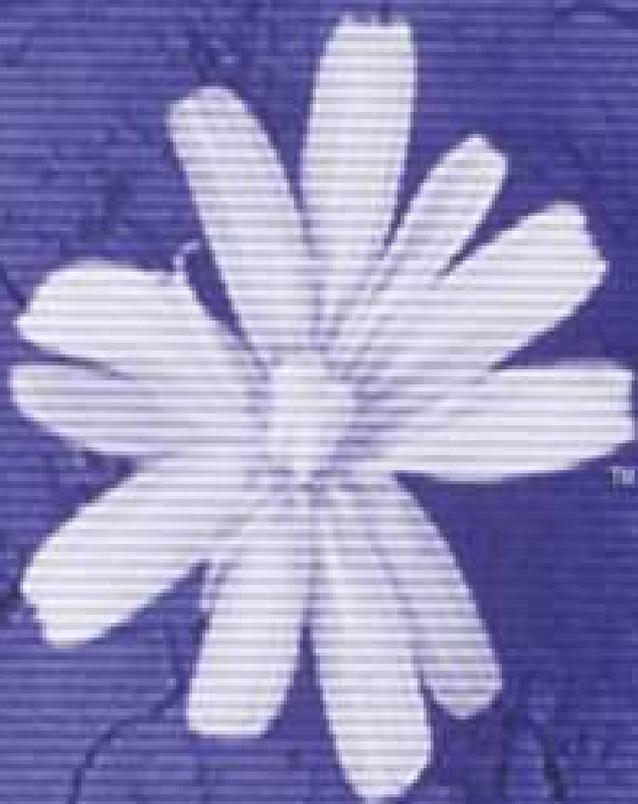
http://
www.pocketpcfreewares.com
/en/index.php?soft=15

"Some people say this noise and interference is what makes the sound [of the SID], others just feel this is distortion and try to filter [it] out."

C64 Forever

Tutorial: Geos & RPG

Lord Ronin from Q-Link discusses Geos and Role Playing Games

I have a habit of threatening the #acug <irc.newnet.net> IRCgroup with this subject when they are quiet on CyberSpace meeting nights. But in truth, I though it has become a running gab. This is a real topic, one that combines my love of the Commodore, Geos and Role Playing games, being a creative way to make things for both my users group and my game group.
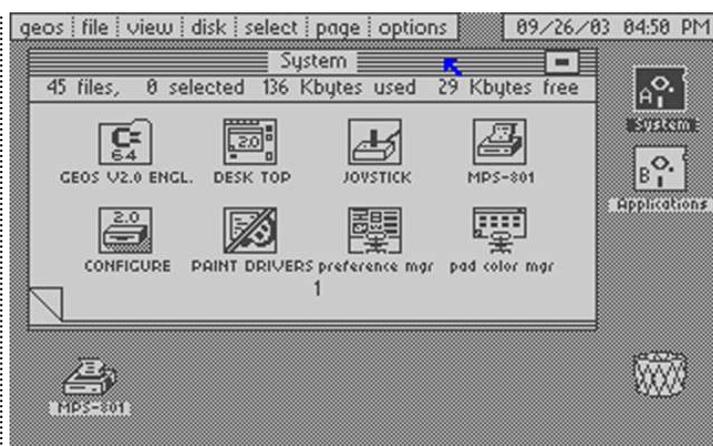
"I have a habit of threatening the #acug IRC group with this subject…"

OK then I have been in Commodore since 1993. Been in Geos since around 1997. I progressed to Wheels a few years later than that, and the same for PostPrint, But I have been in Role Playing Games [RPG] since March 11th 1978. I was 28 at the time, and it was a new thing to make the mind work. Well open truth time, Role Playing Games; specifically Advanced Dungeons &

Dragons got me off of drugs, and I have been clean since 1978. So yeah it is an important thing to me.

For those readers that have no idea of a RPG, Sorry this isn't the place to really explain the game concept; Also it has changed since I started. Let's leave it as a form of mental theatre, where the player takes is puppet alter ego avatar and other words for his Player Character PC). Which he enters into a confused high risk situation to attain some goal, Besides staying alive to continue along to the next adventure. In short this is a from of mental theatre. A game of "lets pretend" with guide lines. Call that very vague, because since the original game was released in January 1974. thousands of this style of game have been released. Each with different guidelines and ways to create the PC. Rant for a moment. Not gamers making games for gamers anymore. RPG is a multi million plus dollar international business, started on a kitchen table in Lake Geneva Wise.

Let's leave that part for now. We are Commo-

dore users and this should explain how Commodore hardware and software is used to create the games. Well this bit is on the use of Geos for game things. But I do want to say that the Commodore was used to make computer RPGs, as well as tools to use for the RPGS. I saved as many of these as I could in the last days of Q-Link. Dice rollers, data bases of items to be found in different games. Tools to create items as well as PCs, and a mess of AD&D PC sheets to be printed out. One example to present is for the 40c mode on the 128. DMs mnemonic enhancer is the name probably spelled wrong. This 128 tool will keep track of all the characters, the time the torch will burn, random rolls for monsters appearing, the experience points for the characters and more, for the DM in an AD&D game. IMNSHO takes too much away from the DM and the players, But that is my opinion.

The elements of a RPG that deal with the Commodore, when creating anything.
Well that is simple to say at the start; you need to write a story and make the maps for the game that you are playing. I say that means some sort of word processor and some sort of drawing programme. I started with

Word Writer 4 and FlexiDraw. Guy in the international game group I was in at the time, used an apple and there where no maps |EG).

Story is a plot line where things are set with a lot of holes. These holes are for the interaction of the players with the environment of the game. Each game is of course different. I started 31 or so years ago. Still like and use the original style of writing up the text. Example follows:

ROOM 34:
20x20
\door in the north and in the cast.
Cabinets line the walls, and there are over a dozen desks in a cubicle style in the room.
Party sees...

Well that is the simple thing. That description would fit almost any RPG. The writer puts in more descriptions that the characters would see; and then notes for that room, for the DM the guy running the game. Things like the loot, and or the clues and or the opposition and the stats for all of that is relevant to the specific game.

Hey! Guess what man GeoWrite will do that and you can code for an easy scan of the information using different fonts and different styles. I do that

in my adventures. I key some of that to the map so I can take a fast look to the map and then to the text of that particular encounter area, as no one likes the game to slow down by having to look things up.

Jumping now to the idea of a map,

Well a map is a thing that is created to indicate the play area. Wow that is a fancy way of saying it is a maze, with things the players want to encounter and things that they don't, stuck around in the maze, really it's just that. Be it a cavern, dungeon, castle, office building, ruined city, interior of a space ship. Halls and rooms make the maze. Enter GeoPaint for map making, now the average RPG uses a scale of 1" squares. Nice for a map board, inaccurate for actual scale in the game, Too large to use in GeoPaint. or even in store bought graph paper.

Well unless you are getting larger than poster sized sheets of graph paper. Yeah I did that as well. Now I made a 1/4" grid for my game work, members of my users group have made different sized grids and hexes. Which work for indoor and outdoor maps for different games. In making these, well it takes time. 40c GeoPaint or 80c, doesn't matter, it still takes time. Many hours and days will be spent trying to make them. Oh yeah if you do that, leave constraint OFF. Smegs up the map, especially in hexes. Squares are easy to do, though it still takes time. I have used the line tool to make the X & Y axis lines on the squares. Gotten to the point that on normal edit I can put
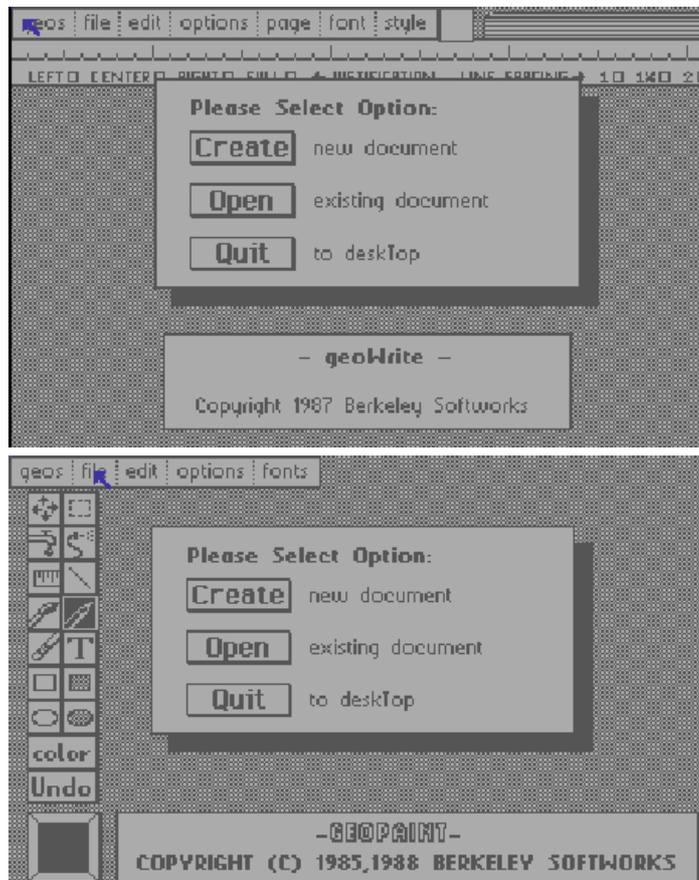
the pencil where I want and just use the cursor keys without too many errors.

Tell you that there is a set of map squares that where on GEnie and I think before that on Q-Link for GeoPaint. They used larger than 1/4" squares but the documentation for it was excellent. IIRC it is bout 8 files in cvt.Dox in it, blank map page and the rest is a sample of how the pages can be used. What is great is that the author shows how to make a map that is larger than one sheet. Going up and down, that is easy. Here he shows how to go off the one map top, bottom, left and right. Great idea here to have some sort of indicator on the map sheet to work like a matrix, row X column 7 sort of thing. See one of the things that happens in a

game is that the players will move through the map, sure that is obvious to all of us. However not all gamers play on a big map board. One of the players is called the "mapper" his job is to keep track of where the group has explored. Some add things found and notes about the encounter areas. But for this piece the mapper is actually making a copy of your game map during the course of the game. So what I do is simply print out a blank copy of my map form. When the game starts I tell the mapper the X & Y starting point and then it is my job to make certain I describe all the rooms and halls in direction and in size. The team of players can look at that map to figure out what they have missed, or where they are at the time, as games of this nature can take many days to play.

OK then, back to the map and now the contents.

Remember that no matter the game it is still a maze. In the past I spent hours with a ruler, pencil,

fine point pen, coloured pens, graph paper just to make a map for the game. A lot of frustration because my art is so bad we say I can't draw flics in Atlanta Georgia on an August day. Enter again Geos covered the idea of making or finding a map sheet. Ah. duplicate it for your work. Sounds obvious, but I know one old pipe smoking radical hippy that got ahead of himself and smegged the master copy of the file.

What to put on the map and how.

First part is difficult to answer. I mean unless I go into a specific game. Sure you need a legend for yourself. Which way is North, or what will be effective for North. Hard to do that in a space ship that you found floating out there in the darkness. Your symbols for the things on the map, as I think about that one I need to explain that part; You can make a bare-bones map. By that I mean you have created the rooms and the halls. Oh yeah you can make maps for out doors as well. The trees, bushes, hills are the walls, and the trail to go through the area is the hall. The other type of map that you can make is more detailed; I have over 30 RPGs in my collection. Each one has examples of maps; mostly to show movement and data for combat. Taking that Geo Write example above a 20x20 room is easy; You cover that many squares depending on the scale of 1 square equals how many feet, in that legend thing. Here I will rant a bit. Walls in games arc not made by the contractors that make motels, they really have some thickness to them. So on your map; make the walls as thick as you see fits the environment. I mean by that the walls of the office building are thinner than the walls found in say an underground complex/cave.

> "I know one old pipe smoking radical hippy that got ahead of himself and smegged the master copy of the file..."

"My example is from an AD&D game. I use the font "dungeon", for indicating on the map where treasure is located."

Here we can use the brush tool and adjust the size to make the walls as thick as you want. If they arc very thick, you can use the fill tool. Oh wait a moment; new thing to state. Ah I am cheap, so I use the gray looking fill pattern for walls. Not only does it take less ink on a print out, but after looking at it in the game for hours, the map isn't as hard on the eyes.

Highly detailed maps are a good thing and a bad thing. They take a lot longer to make, and are more complex lo make. Thanks to Geos. you don't have to go out and buy a mess of templates to use for creating the details for your map. BTW: a lot of times those templates arc not the right scale anyway, so spoke the voice of experience. I have no idea as to how many fonts there are for Geos. But I can tell you that there arc graphic fonts. Some of them work fine in the games; though they arc a bit off scale.

Oh wait a moment there are font editors, those will let you make the fonts you want. I mean you create the say iris valve door for the space game then save it as a font, and then put it in the map. But for graphic fonts that already exist, you can use the font editor to scale the font up or down. Truth be told you may need to do a tad bit of clean up work on the font after scaling it to size. Hilgard 1 & 2. from IIRC a RUN disk, have nothing but graphic fonts.

Between them I have made a forest of different trees for an outdoor map. I made the men and girls bathrooms for a Zombie game. As the items for those rooms arc in the graphic fonts. Also there is the cardinal points, the compass that I use in my legend. Potted plants, chairs sofas and even some buildings, which worked good on the outdoor map. In fact there arc some silhouettes of people. I had others that worked in making game maps. But they arc on the Hard Drive with Maurice for the last 3+ years.

The font may not be in the right angle, GeoPaint has a tool that will let you reverse and rotate the font. This is how I had a row of toilet stalls on one wall and another on the opposite wall in the Zombie adventure.

Ah but there is another problem; typing in the font, will run it on your map and like it was on a GeoWrite page. I mean in a line, and what you have underneath is erased. Now that is a bummer man in making that outdoor forest map. Ah but we have a copy option in GeoPaint. So I just put one tree for example, on the map. Then I "copy" it in a random pattern on the screen. Slowly building up my forest with that one tree font. Adding other tree fonts later. OK I admit that I am not great at this. So I have to go into pixel edit and clean up a bit.

Well you can see that if you want a detailed looking map GeoPaint is the way to go in Commodore programmes. You can scale the font, make your own fonts, make your own map scaled grid or hex, allowing you to make your own maps for your game. My tip is that when you make indicators on your map; that is the room numbers, treas-ure, pre-set monster encounters and that sort of thing. You code them by using a font and a style on the map that you repeat in the text that you write in GeoWrite. My example is from an AD&D game.

I use the font "dungeon", for indicating on the map where treasure is located. This is the only font that I still have which uses the British pound symbol. So I use that for a treasure mark on the map. Tells me that there is some sort of treasure in that room. That font is at 8 point and fits quite well in a 1/4" square. While the other font called "dungeon ii" is 16 point, and takes some careful planning and movement to put it in the square. But I use it on the map to make an outlined capital "M". Telling me that there is a placed monster.

In the text I do the same. So that room would have the pound symbol and the M. Both on the map and in the text. The use of text is up to the guy writing the adventure. Based on his tastes, the use of the adventure, his font collection and his printer. I use Times Roman from the Laser Lover's disk by Dale Sidebotom.

I understand that LW_Roma is about the same for a stock GeoFont this is for the main text. Explain the reason for this in a bit, my examples have been mostly in AD&D a sword and sorcery themed game. But as I said near the beginning, there are thousands of games.

Not all of them are sword and sorcery. I actually rather play the Sci-Fi, post apocalyptic and espionage games. This brings me into the font choices for different games; being used for chapters, headers, footers and other code work in the text. What to use and how much. Like at the top of this paragraph, up to the guy doing the adventure. Personally I like to use fonts that in some way reflect the theme of the same.

Using those dungeon ones for sword and sorcery games alone with a font called Sepulchre and one called Medallion and another called Vatican. There are also some Gothic fonts that I once had as well as Old English ones. Since I have different sword and sorcery games I had combinations of the above fonts set up for each of the games.

Let me know at a glance for which game the stuff had been written. Ah but for the Sci-Fi games that is a bit different, as they run a gauntlet of themes. Most of the time I would use a font that looked electronic. I Had several of them, but not anymore. Basically they looked like LED read outs, I even made one once that looked like the old nixie tube read out.

Espionage Games
I use a simple typewriter font. In fact that is what it is called.
Horror Games
I haven't found a font that sets the atmosphere for me, as of yet.

Now then, these fonts generally will have more than one point size. Not always, but generally. Besides with the font editors you can make them in different point sizes. So then by using the point sizes as well as the styles, by that I mean in Geos bold, italic, underline, outline and combinations of those styles.

You can create a varied collection of chapter headers and titles for your pages. Beats me using a lettering guide and an ancient typewriter, hey that beat trying to hand write the whole mess.

I had on that HD63 printer drivers for Geos. But I have to state for the record that not all printers like all GeoFonts. Take that Sepulchre font above. OK on my oki-mate 10, same for the star 1020. No way on a couple of HPs, including the laser one with post-print. Oh many times it will default to something else. On my laser printer it defaults to courier. But this font locked me up. Yeah to the point of having to reset printer and the I28D.

You can imagine the terror I was feeling. Before I knew it was the font even specific drivers for printers have not accepted fonts. As an example my original copy of the "who " font, from Dr. Who this wouldn't work on any printer in GeoWrite. I gained a copy of it from the author's site. The font doesn't work on my postprint system. OK in GeoPaint, but not in GeoWrite, that is a thing to keep in mind when selecting fonts.

Yeah I could do a long tutorial about how to use GeoWrite and GeoPaint to make RPG adventures for ones game group, but that would require doing it for specific games. I don't think there is that big of an audience for that level of information. Way too specific for us in here. What I do want to explain is that I use the Commodore, Geos, Wheels, Post Print to make the adventures for my game group. My way and style is not the same as everyone else's. I have been doing games for over 31 years I have way too many shortcuts gained over that time.

But something to state here for those that want to pretty up their GeoPaint maps. You can use colour! Right, you can colour code the maps, or just make that tree green. Does mean that if you arc printing it out, you need

colour abilities on your printer.

Ah but if you have GeoPub as well.

Then you can make columns for the text. Making the print out like the old late 70s an early 80s modules. Can add some small input of photo scraps into the text in GeoWrite. Or easier do it in GeoPub. Like the control box at the door, or the magical crown, the manual, the disk or whatever loot, object item that the team sees and needs.

Even print these things out on paper, along with the information about them. Cut that out and lay it on the player that collects the item. Such hand outs were in the old game adventures. Even make a newspaper, or scroll. By using the best looking text and create that as a clue/hand out then pass the copy to the players when they find it in the adventure. Done in GeoPub As you can place images in the page layout part where you want and scale them, as well as having the text flow around the image.

Ah but if you have Post Print. Then you can do more, with colour in GeoPub, 32 colours as I remember your maps can be colour as 1 stated earlier. But you can also make colour text, boxes, lines, circles and more in GeoPub with Post Print. Bruce Thomas has a great manual on a tutorial for GeoPub.

http://members.shaw.ca/cue64/geopindex.html

Also one can add jpegs in the GeoPub document. So yeah you can make something for the game. Shoot it with a camera. Insert it in the text and you have a colour image. Or if you don't have colour abilities on your printer. Gray scale the image and insert it. But if
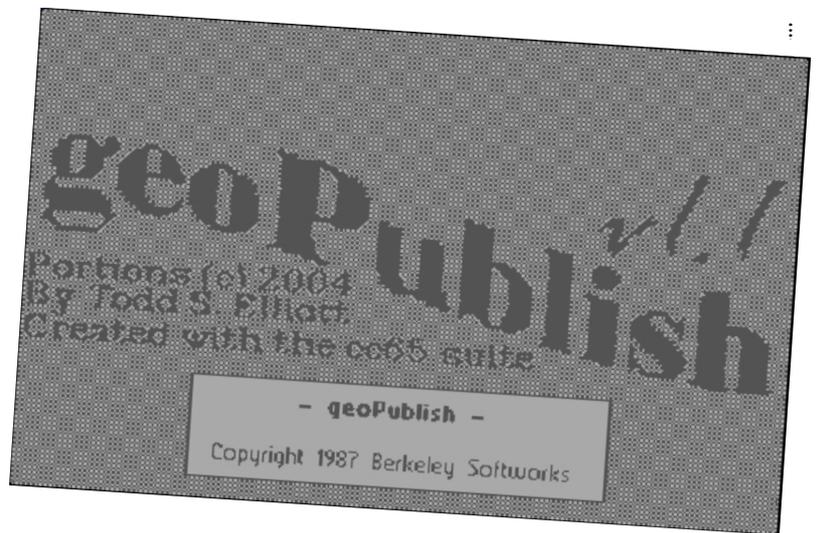
you have GeoDos and a FD along with a floppy drive on your other computer. Ah there are other ways of bringing across the file. I just don't know them. You can make a post script file of your adventure. Then put it on the other machine. Convert it to a PDF and bingo, you have the adventure in colour if you made it that way in a format that no Commodore/Geos setup users can see and use you colour map.

That is what we are doing in my users and game group. Making the Geos

created adventures into PDF things. Then saving them up for a CD of Commodore created RPG things. A fanzine of adventures for long out of print games. Supplement items for those games hint and tip things. Sure it is for gamers and old school gamers of older games but the point of this is that save for converting to PDF and the actual CD burning parts. All of it is done on The Commodore and in the Geos world. Wonder what others can make like this for their own hobby or work interests? **CF**
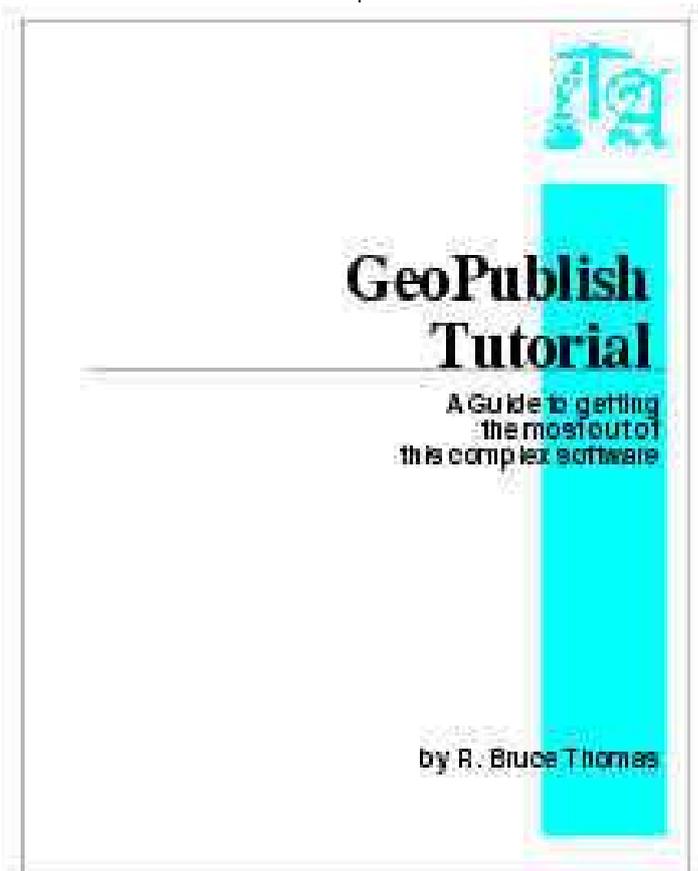
Interview: Johan van den Brande

Producer of the Twitter64 C64 Application Speaks!

Commodore Free: Please introduce yourself to our readers.

Johan van den Brande: Hi, I'm Johan van den Brande, 37 years old and father of two children. I live and work in Belgium.

My profession is software engineering, although I'm an electronics engineer by education. One of my hobbies is tinkering with the C64, which I have been using since I was 16 years old.

CF: Was the Commodore 64 your first computer?

JVDB: No, it was not my first computer. At the age of 12 I received a ColecoVision video game console.

Although not a real computer that you could program, you could expand it to a full computer; that expansion was called the Adam. It came bundled with a printer as well, which made more noise then a gun, and had a digital tape deck.

I must have been 13 years old when I bought the Adam expansion. The strange thing is that the shop owner showed me a C64 as well, but the Adam expansion was priced at a bargain and had 80K of RAM, and a C64 only 64K. So in all my naivety I choose the Adam...

CF: Can you tell our read-

ers firstly "what is Twitter"; some reader may be wondering what twitter is all about?

JVDB: Twitter is a social micro blogging site where people can say what they are doing and other people can subscribe to that.

So when I would post a status, all the people that follow me get this message. The crazy thing is that the length of one message is limited to 140 characters, just as with the SMS service.

Some people just say what day to day things they are doing, but others

give out rather nice bites of news. Another thing you see is that twitter is used for automated systems that twitter there status. As an example, there is this crazy botanicals project
http://www.botanicalls.com
where pot plants can twitter if they are thirsty. Another example would be the tweet-a-watt system, that sends out your electrical power consumption via twitter
http://www.ladyada.net/make/tweetawatt/
personally, these were the projects that got me interested in twitter.

CF: Can you now explain what twitter 64 is?

JVDB: Actually I called it breadbox64, because the 64 is often called the 'breadbox' and because that one was still free on twitter. So, breadbox64 is a twitter client for the commodore 64. It is a fairly simple client. You can get status updates

from the people you follow and you can post a new status as well. Other functionality you commonly see in other twitter clients, like following the public timeline or adding yourself as a follower to some users are not available.

CF: What hardware do you need to run twitter?

JVDB: I use an MMC64 and RR-Net expansion on a C64 and C128D, so I'm sure that combination works. I have not yet tried other setups, but I don't see why the won't work as long as they are supported by Contiki (http://www.sics.se/contiki/).

Contiki is the underlying OS I used to write breadbox64. As an alternative, you can use a C64 emulator to give it a go. For development, I used VICE on a Mac book, but it will also work on Linux or Windows (I guess).

CF: Do you need any extra software or can you just load the twitter program and start "twittering" JVDB. You just need the twitter client. It is one PRG file and one configuration file that Contiki uses to store the network settings.

At the start of the program you need to provide your login name and password for the Twitter service.

CF: Will there be a specific 128 80column version of twitter?

JVDB: Good question, I wanted to have that feature myself, but my 1084 monitor broke this winter, so I can only see 40 chars on the setup I use now.

So, maybe if I find a better setup I'll give the 80 character mode a try. It should be possible, because the Contiki OS also can run on the C128.

CF: How do you configure the client for example the IP address etc? Can you give our readers a brief walkthrough- so you load twitter64 then..

"'Why do you still use a C64? You must be crazy'. I often hear this question when talking to people about this hobby. But I'll leave it to your readers to answer that one themselves..."

JVDB: Ah, you need to get your own network setup file via this site:

http://contiki.cbm8bit.com/

save it as IP.CFG on your breadbox64 disk and give it a try. You just load it and run it, as you would with any other C64 program. Preferably you need a speed loader though, as it is almost 200 blocks in size.

CF: Does the software need a mouse or joystick to function or is it just keyboard input only?

JVDB: Everything is directed by the keyboard. The underlying Contiki OS has nice support for a mouse and even has a text UI library on board (CTK), but I choose to do that part myself.

CF: Are there any TO Do's still outstanding on the client or is it now finished?

JVDB: It is in a workable state as it is now, it is not perfect, but it does what I intended it to do. Saying that, I do have some plans; cleaning up the code so it is platform independent and can be compiled for other targets supported by the Contiki OS.

CF: Some readers may be wondering "what's the point" so why create a Twitter client for the Commodore 64 what was the motivation?

JVDB: My motivation for all this was to learn the Contiki OS. I'm at a crossroad in my career as I'll become an independent contractor in October of this year. The idea is to find a job as an independent embedded software developer.

Now, I learned to know the Contiki OS a few years ago when they released that demo with the C64 web server and browser. For me it looks like a nice tool to have in my toolbox as it is used in sensor networks and other low power systems.

CF: Do you have any other projects for the Commodore 64 you can share with our readers?

JVDB: I really would like to write a game for the C64. I have some ideas brewing, but nothing concrete enough at the moment to talk about; at the moment, I'm toying with the user port of the C64, trying to interface with an AVR micro controller.

CF: Have you plans to develop maybe a suite around twitter, web client, mail, ftp client etc?

JVDB: Actually, as breadbox64 is developed on top of Contiki, there is already a complete Inter-

net suite available. Contiki comes with all of them. To be honest, compared to the web client and other software available for the Contiki OS, the twitter application is just a small fish.

The protocol is fairly simple as it is based on HTTP and some XML. Without Contiki, I would never have been able to write breadbox64. I did not need to write everything from scratch, the TCP/IP stack was already there, there is a concept of threads etc.

So basically a complete set of APIs sits there waiting for somebody to write a nice networked game for the C64!

CF: If you could change 3 things about the Commodore 64 when it was being designed what 3 things would you change?

JVDB: Well, probably not much. The C64 has this advantage of memory mapped graphics. If you compare it against the MSX, they had a separate video memory and pumping data to that video RAM is dead slow.

So, looking at it like that,

the design engineers made the correct decision. One thing that bothered me is the clock speed. I would have bumped it to 2 MHz. And also the memory layout for high res graphics is not optimal, but probably doing it differently at that time was not an option.

"...a complete set of APIs sits there waiting for somebody to write a nice n e t w o r k e d game for the C64!"

CF: Do you have a question you feel was left unanswered?

JVDB: No, not really, well maybe this one: "Why do you still use a C64? You must be crazy...".

I often hear this question when talking to people about this hobby. But I'll leave it to your readers to answer that one themselves! **CF**

c16 plus/4 pages

by

john fielden

Hi c16 fans! Apologies if I've missed a month or so. It seems everything piles up all at once. For those wondering how long I may be around: subject to the editors kind hospitality and health permitting, I hope to eventually demonstrate that some programs for other formats such as the Amiga and beyond can work on the c16/plus4.

Before we start with the essential debugging

It is important to note that the extremely long program called "Business Calculator" will work on a genuine Commodore16. But you might need to strip away the non-essentials to preserve memory when saving. Like the many lines of instructions that aren't needed as you already have them in the maga-zine! You can change the border colour control to lose the menu, and in-stead of up and down controls. Just have it go-ing one way when the user presses 'c', and re-setting at the upper bound to the lowest legal number -or, vice versa, if you prefer. The last main change I can think of is to take out the first pro-gram. "VAT Calculator". To give some assistance with this I have included as a stand alone pro-gramme for this months feast, Though it may vary slightly. You already have the original accompany-ing notes, So even the most inexperienced nov-ice should be ok.

Having said all that

Both programmes should work on the other com-modore 8bit formats like VIC-20 or C=64 as there are no POKE or PEEK commands. In fact, the only stumbling block I can see is The "SCNCLR" com-mand, which means Screen Clear. And can be changed to PRINT" and then press shift and CLR HME key ". On other for-mats this may convert to CLS.

Debugging

In order to keep enjoying something; It is important to take the time to play. In fact if something is new then 70 or even 80 percent of the time with it should be spent on little else. In theory, the more time you spend with something the better you get. Of course learning to get things right first time is preferential, if you can manage to. But often the best programmers are those who learned to deal with getting it wrong. (So, I must fast becoming some kind of "Guru"...Any-one seen the film??? -enough of that!) The other day I saw fit to purchase a newer com-puter. (new to me at least). In the process, I decided to play around with YAPE, the c16/plus4 emulator for windows PCs. available through: www.commodore16.com

And so having copied it across wrote the follow-ing:

```
10 FORJ=0TO20
20 COLOR0,,J
30 NEXT J
```

First, it is worth noting in line 30. The 'J' is optional. But it is good program-ming practice to have it in as it makes the pro-gram easier to read. Sec-ond, the response I got on typing RUN was as fol-lows:

SYNTAX ERROR IN 20

It became obvious there are two commas, where there should be only one. So corrected this; and just assuming that was it, I again typed RUN.

Still the above error. The program still being on screen, I could see that "colour" is spelt how the computer likes it. So I typed

PRINT J

Producing the answer 0. Typing HELP still brought the insistence that line 20 is somehow wrong. I've checked spelling, and corrected typos. The 0, is a valid command in the line. i.e. ...0,J So what is wrong? Try changing line

10 ...J=1 to...

You'll see the effect. Try adding:

25 FORK=1to350:NEXTK

You might add after that:

PRINTJ

I still got the error mes-sage:

ILLEGAL QUANTITY ER-ROR IN 20

To find why type print j. We find the value of the variable 'j' and see it must be over. So change line 10 where it says ...20 to the value one less from the computers complain-ing and whining on. (Honestly! Computers are soooo clever you'd think they'd be able to correct little things like this them-selves! NOPE.)

A useful program for find-ing the colour, or combi-nations you like best. Try adding a random ele-ment, and a line for col-our 4,l The border. You might go through all the combinations of the back-ground with one border colour. Before moving to the next. If you need help with such a program, let me know. More fun (or "messing about" if you wish to be critical) brought about this pro-gram. Try to work out what is wrong before looking at the answers. A nice easy one.

```
10 PRINT"JOHN",X
20 IF X=4 THEN END
30 FOR X=1 TO 9
40 GOTO10
50 NEXT X
```

Questions

Try working out what will happen, before typing RUN. if you guess cor-rectly, you won't need the answers below:

What is the absolute un-necessary line in the list-ing?

How should the program list?

Answers.
Type RUN to see if you were correct.
You don't need the goto statement, if you're line order is correct.
The correct order is:
10 should be 20, 30 should be 10, while what was 20 (ifx=4...) fits at 30. Either delete 40, or put REM in front of it, and leave it intact as a re-minder of the folly of try-ing to be clever with cod-ing.

Programs This month

We've covered VAT Calc.

already.

Tally Counter

Have you ever been in a situation where you need to quickly make and re-member a count of some-thing, or even multiple things. This program saves paper, even with the cleverly devised sys-tem of 4 1s, followed by a strikethrough for 5. In case you don't know what this is; "GraphicTally" is designed to show you. But, please don't expect too many graphic pro-grams as I am by no means competent at drawing.

GraphicTally

An interesting demonstra-tion of the tally mark as it is/was used on paper. Of course the above pro-gram may reduce such a need. It's still useful to know, if you didn't al-ready. The program has the added benefit of help-ing to understand the plotting of graphics. And there is a way to write the program using loops and maths and reducing pro-gram size, but as it does less to show the plotting, was less appealing for this exercise. If you key in lines from 2000 early, you can run the program after about line 50 every two or three lines to get a feel for the progress. Finally, the first version didn't save! The pains I've been through. If you saw the amount of error correc-tions I had to do. You might become a genius overnight! This skill will come in advancing the program. To give you an idea; try making an edu-cational program for young children. Timing how fast they can count a random number of tallys appearing on screen. And even make a competition with two or more players. (I may print this in a fu-ture edition, but see how you go, as it will show how there are different ways of doing the same thing).

Happy Programming!
Jn.

Graphic Tally Commodore 16+4 by John Fielden

A demonstration program to show the use and form of the old fashioned Tally Mark. An ingenious invention! That is the tally mark rather than the program. The latter has been written in such a way as to untangle the maths from it. So that bare numbers don't get in the way for the beginner to see how the plotting of screen graphics work.

I reiterate, there are other ways to write this program that others would consider faster coding. But they didn't flunk maths and are on billions of currency, have big housing, "loving" wives and the rest of it. Swipe over for the month. I will help demonstrate in the next issue when we concentrate on generating SOUND on The C16/plus4 how an extra loop or two, some variable names, and the use of data statements not only allow us to repeat ourselves less, but give a whole new dimension to the programmes capabilities.

The lines up to 450 create the main demonstration with Graphics and text explaining the procedure. 455 to 500 having started with the Graphic screen reverts back to the 'normal' text screen to reiterate what has been said. (not just because I learnt a new word -init- but to demonstrate the potential of using multi-screens -say "Yes John!"). 510- Rounds off the demonstration.

The GRAPHIC statements occur with a specifically coded function. Either consult the manual, if you have it. Or experiment with your own short programs. The various errors will indicate where you're going wrong.

The CHAR statements are a special version of PRINT' where you can plot the column and row on screen of where you want to print. Again play around with short progs. to work this out. The statement is useable on the normal screen as well as with graphics.

The DRAW statements as the name suggests prints graphics to screen. The FOR..NEXT loops slow the program down. So that the user can take the information in.

```
10 REM .GRAPHICTALLY.
20 REM (C) JOHN FIELLDEN
30 GRAPHIC1,1
40 CHAR1,0,0," GRAPHIC TALLY "
50 CHAR1,0,1,"PROGRAM TO DEMONSTRATE TALLY
MARKS"
100 DRAW 1,20,20 TO 20,35
110 CHAR1,4,10,"ONE MARK REPRESENTS: 1"
120 FORJ=1TO550:NEXTJ
130 DRAW 1,30,20 TO 30,35
140 CHAR1,4,11,"TWO MARKS REPRESENT: 2"
150 FORJ=1TO550:NEXTJ
160 DRAW 1,40,20 TO 40,35
170 CHAR1,4,12,"THREE MARKS REPRESENT: 3"
180 FORJ=1TO550:NEXTJ
190 DRAW 1,50,20 TO 50,35
200 CHAR1,4,13,"FOUR MARKS REPRESENT: 4"
210 FORJ=1TO550:NEXTJ
220 CHAR1,4,14,"WHAT YOU SEE NEXT IS SPECIAL"
230 FORJ=1TO650:NEXTJ
240 CHAR1,4,15,"PRESS A KEY"
250 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN250
260 DRAW 1,20,35 TO 50,20
270 CHAR1,4,16,"THE STRIKE-THROUGH COUNTS 5"
280 CHAR1,4,17,"THIS REPRESENTS ONE GROUP OF
FIVE"
290 CHAR1,4,18,"AS THE COUNT GOES ON,"
300 CHAR1,4,19," MAKE MORE OF THESE"
310 CHAR1,4,20,"PRESS A KEY"
320 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN320
350 DRAW 1,70,20 TO 70,35
360 FORJ=1TO350:NEXTJ
370 DRAW 1,80,20 TO 80,35
380 FORJ=1TO350:NEXTJ
390 DRAW 1,90,20 TO 90,35
400 FORJ=1TO350:NEXTJ
410 DRAW 1,100,20 TO 100,35
420 FORJ=1TO350:NEXTJ
430 DRAW 1,70,35 TO 100,20
440 CHAR1,0,24," ANY KEY FOR MAIN SCREEN "
450 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN450
455 GRAPHIC0,0
460 SCNCLR: PRINT" GRAPHIC TALLY"
470 PRINT"{down}{down}{down}{down} IT IS EASY TO
SEE
2 X 5 = 10."
480 PRINT" TWO GROUPS OF FIVE EQUALS TEN."
490 PRINT"{down}{down} YOU THEN SEE IF THERE IS A
REMAINDER"
500 PRINT" AND ADD IT TO THE TOTAL."
510 PRINT"{down}{down}{down}{down}{down}{down}
PRESS A KEY FOR DEMO."
520 REM GRAPHIC0,0
530 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN530
540 GRAPHIC1,0
550 FORT=14TO20
560 CHAR1,0,T," "
570 NEXTT
580 CHAR1,4,14,"THE STRIKE-THROUGH COUNTS 5"
600 DRAW 1,120,20 TO 120,35
610 FORJ=1TO300:NEXTJ
620 DRAW 1,130,20 TO 130,35
630 CHAR1,4,17,"THE TOTAL COUNT HERE IS TWELVE
(12)"
1980 CHAR1,0,24," ANY KEY TO END PROGRAM "
1990 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN1990
2000 FORJ=1TO350:NEXTJ
2010 GRAPHIC0,1:GRAPHIC CLR
2020 IFA$=" "THENLIST
```

Tally Counter
by John Fielden

10 REM name of program (c) John Fielden 2009

30 D% represents a number for automatically choosing. I guessed the most common need for tally counting would be: Yes, No, Don't Know

But of course other answers may be required such as: Don't Care, Didn't Answer, 8 out of 10 cats preferred it etc.

You have a pre set maximum of 9 answers which should be enough for most surveys. However there is a way to extend this and use more / all of the letter keypad. Are we going to cover this here?

Err. No, at least not yet. Many will get it. A clue is to use the CHR$(), VAL codes to convert the keys. Though this would not be in pretty QWERTY rows but A=10, B=11 C=12 etc. And bear in mind that you can only comfortably fit about 20 on screen.

45 Again, I saw fit to write instructions into the programme, you never know George Bush Junior might need it! Sorry, George that is "program"...of course, sir (Please don't call me a terrorist. I buy burgers and watch your imported telly - programs- honest!)

50 If D% is greater than the maximum, tell the user "I'm not buying this!" -unless its American, ah-hem Sir! (shuffles feet and looks down to the ground).

70-90 IT% used to make a copy before making sure the user is happy with his selection.

120 loop for above ends at selected number of options.

130 - 170 Print to screen the statistics so far.

180 and 186 control what the screen displays dependent on whether the user is backtracking.

190 wait for next instruction from user.

200 to 240 upon receiving instruction, carry out request and reprint screen with the updated statistics. That just leaves the instructions. And return to the start.

Future upgrades could include the option to go up and down in bigger numbers for various key presses. And change the name of a choice within the prog. Or edit its position.

```
10 REM *TALLY COUNTER*
20 SCNCLR:PRINT"{black} TALLY COUNTER"
30 D%=3
35 PRINT"TYPE A NUMBER":PRINT" (BELOW 1 FOR IN-
STRUCTIONS)"
36 PRINT"NO HIGHER THAN 9"
40 INPUT"HOW MANY THINGS TO MARK";D%
45 IFD%<1THEN300
50 IFD%>9THENPRINT"NOT ENOUGH MEMORY":GOTO40
60 D1%=48+D% :REM *CHR$ CODE*
70 FORJ=1TOD%:IT%(J)=0
80 INPUT"NAME OF ITEM";IT$(J)
90 PRINT:PRINT"{orange}";IT$(J);"{black} IS THIS COR-
RECT
Y/N?"
100 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN100
110 IFA$="N"THEN80
120 NEXT J
130 REM *SET TALLY NUMBER*
140 SCNCLR:PRINT" TALLY COUNTER":PRINT:PRINT
143 PRINT" X TO END":PRINT" (SPACE) TOGGLE ADD /
DELETE":PRINT:PRINT
145 IFX>1THENX=0
150 FORJ=1TOD%
160 PRINT"PRESS ";J;" = ";IT$(J)" ";IT%(J)
170 NEXT J
180 IFX=0THENPRINT"{down}{down} ADD";
185 IFX=1THENPRINT"{down}{down} DELETE";
190 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN190
200 IFA$="X" THENEND
210 IFA$=" " THENX=X+1:GOTO140
215 IFA$< CHR$(49) ORA$>CHR$(D1%) THEN190
220 A%=VAL(A$)
230 IFX=0THEN IT%(A%)=IT%(A%)+1
235 IFX=1THEN IT%(A%)=IT%(A%)-1
240 GOTO140
300 REM *INSTRUCTIONS*
310 SCNCLR:PRINT" TALLY COUNTER"
320 PRINT:PRINT"INSTRUCTIONS":PRINT
330 PRINT"DESIGNED TO REPLACE OR REDUCE THE
NEED
FOR PEN & PAPER"
340 PRINT" A LINE DOWN REPRESENTED 1 IN A TALLY
MARK."
350 PRINT" AFTER FOUR 1S 1111. A LINE WAS PUT"
360 PRINT"THROUGH THE GROUP REPRESENTING 5."
370 PRINT"AND THE 1 COUNTS WERE STARTED AGAIN"
380 PRINT"NEXT TO THE STRUCK 5. AND SO THE"
390 PRINT"PROCESS CONTINUED.":PRINT
400 PRINT"IN YAPE YOU CAN SAVE WHERE YOU ARE
AT"
410 PRINT"ANY POINT.":PRINT" JUST GO TO FILE, "
420 PRINT" EMULATOR SNAPSHOT.":PRINT"A SUB-
MENU
WILL APPEAR AND YOU ARE "
430 PRINT"GIVEN THE CHOICE OF A QUICKSAVE, OR
OF"
440 PRINT"GIVING YOUR FILE A NAME OF YOUR OWN "
450 PRINT"CHOOSING.";:PRINT" TO RETURN TO LATER
WITH THE SAME "
460 PRINT"MENU & PROCESS -USING LOAD..."
470 PRINT" ";CHR$(18);" ANY KEY ";CHR$(146);"{up}
{up}"
480 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN480
490 GOTO10
```

Listing of vat.prg
by John Fielden

VA is current VAT level.

T is short for Takings and set to 100 to test that everything is working properly. And to avoid the annoying "DIVISION BY ZERO ERROR".

Q provides a base for the mathematical sum to be stored concerning how much VAT to be taken or added to "takings".

The added sum is given purely for the sake of covering all bases, as such may help with pricing an object or service.

The rest is self explanatory.

```
10 REM *VAT CALCULATOR*
12 REM *(C) JOHN A. FIELDEN 2009*
16 CLR:SCNCLR:PRINT"{black} VAT CALC."
18 COLOR0,2
20 VA=17.5:T=100
30 INPUT "TAKINGS /AMOUNT: ";T
35 Q=T*VA/100:PRINT"AMOUNT: ";T
40 PRINTQ;" VAT AT: ";VA;"%"
50 PRINT"{brown} TOTAL IF VAT TAKEN: ";T-Q
60 PRINT"{lblue} ...IF VAT ADDED: ";T+Q
70 PRINTCHR$(18);"{black} ANOTHER AMOUNT Y/N? "
75 PRINTCHR$(146)
80 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN80
90 IFA$="N" THENEND
100 GOTO16
```

Report: CCCUK Mini Meeting

Commodore Computer Club U.K. Mini-Meeting August 9th 2009

http://www.commodorecomputerclub.co.uk

The day started well enough, with glorious sunshine beaming out of a cloudless sky, the problem this causes is that my "computer room" is in the loft space at the top of the house and as a consequence it heats up rather quickly in these rather rare sunny conditions.

I decided to install 3 fans, making a mental not that I need either some form of air-conditioning unit and or some form of vent to at least let the warm air escape out of my room.

I opened the window in the "computer room" in the misguided hope that by some miracle would permit the wind to at least slightly blow, and try and cool the room down. It was a glorious day, and nope there wasn't any wind.

Even the birds had given up singing and just sat in the shade keeping eerily quiet.

My mobile phone rang and it was "Shaun" he explained he was close to my house (coming in on the train) and asked if Allan had arrived, "no Allan" I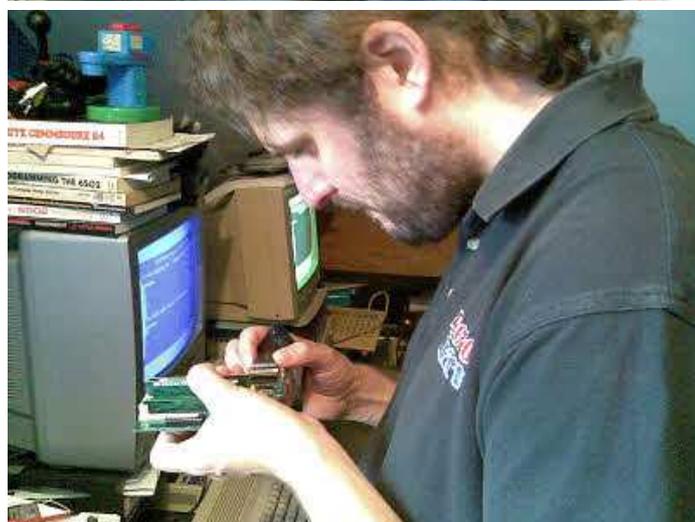 said but Shaun confirmed that "Allan said he was on his way so he should arrive soon" As Allan knew the way to my house; I said I would meet Shaun at the local Train station, and guide him in as he was unsure of how to get to my house from the train station. I walked down the road and within 5 minutes and I was soon standing next to Shaun and Chris Syntichakis.

We chatted briefly and made the customary hand interactions then talked about Commodore while walking back to my house, we began cursing about the sun even though a few days before I was cursing about the cold and rain!

We arrived inside the house and I made some tea, don't really drink tea myself so I made a glass of milk, we chatted a little then want to the "computer room up in the loft" Chris started work remanufacturing a cartridge case to fit a Retro replay card with connected network card for Shaun.

No sooner had we started setting things up when the door bell went, I walked downstairs and met Allan, I invited him in made a cup of tea, we chatted briefly then I explained Shaun and Chris were upstairs and he said "come on then what are we waiting for" we went upstairs to the "computer room" and Allan greeted Shaun and was introduced to Chris.

Now the attention turned to my broken RamLinks; I had 2 that suddenly stopped working, well that's not entirely true I had 1 working and 1 broken.

The broken one I tired chip swapping with a completely knackered one Shaun had lent me, I swapped over the chips and ….well nothing it was still dead, I tried my working RamLink and … Oh that's dead as well.

Shaun set to work clipping out chips and swapping memory after what seemed like an hour I had 2 working RamLinks with 16mb of memory on each and now both had clocks! Fantastic!

Shaun then looked at my faulty 128d Allan suggested it could be a number of faults from my description so we powered up the machine… Can you believe it the thing worked without problems!

We powered of the machine left it a few seconds then powered the device back on Working no problem! Ok must be a slight blip I had then.

So that's 2 working RamLinks 1 Working 128D and just at that moment Chris produced a Cartridge Retro replay with sticking out network card nicely

> "I opened the window in the 'computer room' in the misguided hope that by some miracle would permit the wind to at least slightly blow, and try and cool the room down…"

cut to house the device and keep away static hands.

I showed the team the amazing DC2N device that allows dumping and loading of Tape file on a Commodore machine; also the 1541U was also briefly demo (more about this device later).

1541u

Chris and Shaun both asked about the 1541U, its been some time since I used the device and Chris wanted to know if one particular game would work with the device as he had problems running this game from the mmc64 device, we un-plugged the SD card from the MMc64 and plugged it into the 1541 and pow-ered up, after a few sec-onds the game appeared Chris was amazed we agreed that it must be the emulation on the 1541u that made the game work and must not be as good on the MMC64 device, I explained there were still problems as I loaded some demos and it complained I was using an emulator and not a real 1541, although the demo did run without problems.

Shaun expressed an in-terest in the IDE64 v4 and wondered if it would help him transfer postscript files to and from his Com-modore, I have used ver-sion 3 to do just that over a serial connection trans-ferring 5 MB files and up to 1gb have all been transferred, Shaun said

he may be interested in purchasing either device as they would help him producing magazines us-ing Commodore GeoPub-lish and transfer the files to a PC to produce PDF versions in razor sharp text.

I, Shaun and Allan de-cided we needed to get our heads together and resolve some problems with the CCC U.K. club. So we headed off to a local McDonald's for some food (although McDonald's isn't something I eat so I watched them eating and we headed back to the house where I made some food for myself).

The first issue with the CCC U.K. was to sort out the full handover of treas-urer to Allan from myself. Due to health problems and not being able to check emails, and a pend-ing surgery operation; we decided it better to re-move the job from myself so I could concentrate on getting better and think-ing about appointments instead of worrying about money subscriptions and the shop.

With that out of the way Shaun mentioned that he had purchased a colour laser printer for use with Wheels the upgrade from Geos. We briefly reviewed printing from geos and Geopublish to postscript devices then moved onto the other issues.

The next major issue was outputting the Commo-dore 128 80 column onto a flat screen TV, I had a device I purchased YPlus model A-22 RGB-to-Composite Converter.

http://www.arcademvs.com/

We looked closely at the device, well others have done this very thing so it cant be complicated can it,

http://home.comcast.net/~kkraus nick/c128-svideo/index.html

We then looked at the devices supplied con-nector. I produced some cable and we set about trying to get the unit up and run-ning with out much success.

Next Chris suggested we were using the wrong interface as the board has 2 connec-tors but only supplied with a cable to con-nect to one of the in-terfaces, Allan said he had been to Maplins to get a connector but they didn't sell any-thing to fit this particular slot on the device, we googled on the interface and came to the conclu-sion Chris was right. So now how can we connect the wires, well we could solder directly on the board, ok its Sunday I have no solder and Maplins is quite a drive, I said I have seen this con-nector before on Hp print-ers, Shaun said yes then we looked at each other and said 1541 drive.

I had a drive and we un-screwed the unit sure enough it had a connec-tor on there that did fit the device we cut the ca-bles on the 1541 and con-nected the connection to the display circuitry using some tape and twisting wires, yes it was very low-tech Boom we ha a picture using a composite output but it was a bit bright and blurry but it was a picture 80 columns.

Allan suggested using SVideo and connection this via SCART to the back of my TV. I had a connector and we tried this, the picture was bet-ter but to bright so we decided to turn the volt-age down on the input of the A22 board this im-proved things but the col-ours were not right, Allan said he had the same unit and would carry out fur-ther tests at home.

We finished with a chat about Maurice and CMD what devices we would
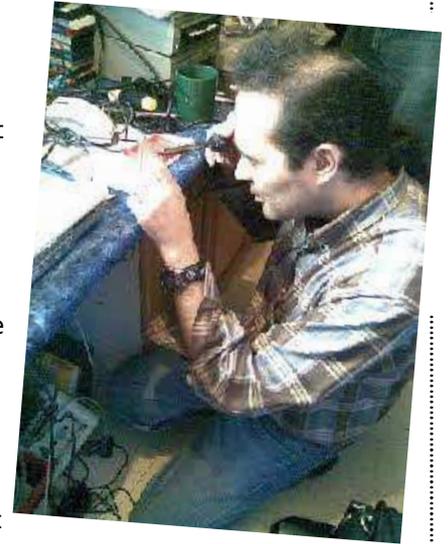
like to be manufactured and about Jim Brain sell-ing Jiffy dos legally with instructions and the Bi-nary to download "hurray" the end talks were about Doom and how to create 3d environ-ments but with none of us technically proficient at such things we could only "what ifs".

It's a rare treat nowadays to spend a full day work-ing on my Commodore with so many commit-ments I hardly find any spare time. All the guys were very courteous and although I had met Chris for the first time I seem to get on with him no prob-lem he seemed to be a great guy very knowl-edgeable, but all things must come to an end.

Allan had to leave to be in time for work and within 30 minutes Shaun and Chris were ready to leave to catch the train. I walked with them to the station and waved as I left. **CF**

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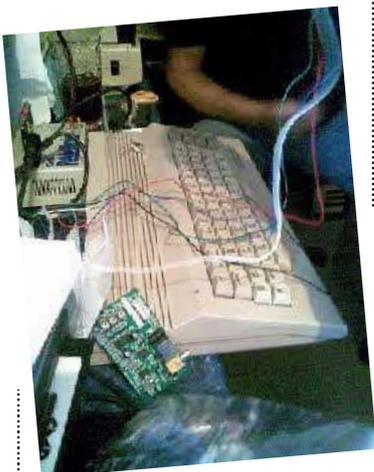
Interview: Arcade Retro Gaming

www.arcaderetrogaming.com

COMMODORE FREE: Please introduce yourself to our readers; also can you describe ARCADE RETRO GAMING - The classic Gaming Experts?

ARCADE RETRO GAMING: www.arcaderetrogaming.com was created in Spring 2009. The founder Dirk Dudenbostel and co-founder Frederic Requin both grew up with classic computers and games. Arcade Retro Gaming is an independent computer game technology company that uses its deep domain knowledge to build a bridge into the 21st century for classic computer, retro games and Arcade Gaming.

Our main goal is to develop user-friendly classic game platforms for the general audience that the current market is not offering. This will preserve the classic game experience from all different kind of classic computers for the future. This becomes more and more important as the classic hardware won't be available for long.

We also sell a wide variety of classic games and accessories for modern computers and consoles to preserve the classic gaming experience. This includes the original Competition Pro Joystick for AMIGA available in a modern USB version or the classic DB-9 connector. The USB version includes 185 classic AMIGA games for the PC.

We included now for the fall season an ARCADE Joystick with support PC and Playstation 2-3. Espe-

cially designed for Street Fighter Arcade but enables all other games as well.

From the gaming side we included the Dragons Lair, Space Ace and Dragons Lair 2 titles in our product portfolio. Who wouldn't remember Dirk in his adventures to rescue the princess? This DVD's can be played on every DVD player, Computer and are now even available in an HD remix version for Blue-Ray DVD players.

Please find enclose the links to our two Online Stores:

http://shop.ebay.com/merchant/arcaderetrogaming

http://arcaderetrogaming.mybisi.com/

You will support with each purchase; the development of the multiple classic computer. Donations in any for are welcome as well. Please contact us under ARCADE RETRO GAMING, e-mail:

contact@arcaderetrogaming.com

CF: Can you explain the function of the MCC?

MCC: The Multiple Classic Computer (MCC) from ARCADE RETRO GAMING will emulate the real hardware from the past. It will support a menu structure which guarantees easy of use. The MCC will preserve the real experience in terms of real time emulation which current software emulators can't offer. It will be expandable with different cores which allow the system to

emulate all different kinds of 8, 16 and even up to 32 Bit machines. For the 1st development ARCADE RETRO GAMING concentrates on the classic Commodore computers C-64 and the Amiga series. The MCC comes with all interfaces to connect the device to a standard TV or Computer monitor. It will support stereo out via Head Phones or an external speakers. We have integrated all different kind of input interface to support Keyboard, Mouse, Joysticks and other peripheral devices. To support future devices we even included a USB port.

CF: Can you give our readers some technical specifications about the MCC?

MCC: Technical Specification:

• Reconfigurable hardware core inside an FPGA, including main CPU, graphic engine, sound engine and interfaces
• Integrated SDR SDRAM Memory of 16 MByte
• Integrated non volatile memory of 8 MBit for different classic computer platform realization, programs and games (enable up to 150 and more games in a closed system)
• Support of external key-

board and mouse (PS-2 and USB interface)
• Support of classic ARCADE Joysticks (DB-9 or USB interface)
• S-Video or RGB Video output
• Stereo Audio Output
• SD-Card interface for external programs
• Battery or external power supply support via USB
• Core update and Firmware upgrade via USB interface

CF: Do you need any special skills to set the unit up?

MCC: No. The Unit will come fully equipped with the 1st two classic cores. You just need to connect the power supply, TV or PC Monitor, Audio and the Joysticks. The MCC will read the Software and Games from the SD-card and display the titles in a menu. You can browse thru the menu and select the game you like. The MCC will fully automatically load the game and start the game.

CF: Can original disk drives be used or is it purely from an SD card?

MCC: The original software in the 1st implementation will reside 100% on the SD-card. In future implementations the support of USB Flash Drives or other USB media storage could be possible.

"Our main goal is to develop user friendly classic game platforms for the general audience..."

CF: The Commodore 64 uses D64 (disk images). I presume these and other disk images will be supported by the unit?

MCC: Yes for sure we will support the .D64 images for the C-64. We will support as well the Amiga file format .ADF (Amiga Disk File).

CF: Can the old cartridges be used on the hardware?

MCC: You can load cartridge images the same way as you would load it with an emulator.

CF: You can use the old hardware joysticks and paddle devices with the unit?

MCC: We can use the joysticks, but not the paddle (the device has no analogue inputs). The CBM mouse 1350/1351 is emulated through the PS/2 mouse connector.

CF: When did the project start and can you give our readers a brief history of its design?

MCC: The project started 9 months ago. We where looking for something that plays Amiga games, C64 games and Arcade. With the progress in programmable logic, memory and solid-state storage, we think that we can make this affordable to a lot of people. The first computer we decided to emulate was the C64 (it was my first computer 25 years ago). Contrary to other implementations, we created a full digital SID in VHDL. We also implemented a complete VIC-1541 to support games, like Summer Games II through D64 images.

CF: Have you seen individual Computers C- One (configurable one) and was the unit designed in response to the C- Ones limitations?

MCC: It is designed to be booth cheaper and more powerful than the Minimig and the C-One. We do not really see it as a C-One replacement, but more like a Minimig replacement. The main idea was to create a more powerful hardware emulation for different kind of classic computers that will be affordable for a broad audience. It should be easy to use and the setup should be possible from everyone.

CF: Is there a limit to what hardware can be "Emulated" by the device?

MCC: 16/32 bits system, like the Amiga and the Atari ST, will be supported. The limit is the number of colours (12-bit RGB, can be pushed to 18-bit with delta-sigma modulation), the memory (up to 64MB, 133 MHz), and the FPGA logic (~1 million gates).

CF: Out of the Box what systems will be supported?

MCC: We will start with C64 and Amiga for this year. Depending on the market demand and the success in the market ACRADE RETRO GAMING plans hardware emulations for :MSX, Atari ST, Neo Geo or Archimedes. We are also thinking about real arcade machines like "1943" (that was already ported to a different HW platform by us). If someone has interest in this direct ARCADE emulation, or likes to support the porting of multiple cores to the FPGA please contact ARCADE RETRO GAMING:

contact @arcaderetrogaming.com).

CF: Who writes the cores or "emulation" software?

MCC: Cores are a mix of open source VHDL and custom VHDL, i.e. the C64 has the 6510, 6526, 6502 and 6522 from the Open Source World. The VIC-II, SID and drive logic are custom. There is also a bit of 6502 or 68000 assembly for the menus and the SD-Card management.

CF: How do you change the system to "Emulate" a different device?

MCC: The system supports SD-Card Interfaces for the games and the classic computer emulations. In addition the system supports a USB cable to update the system with an additional core similar to update the Software from modern cell phones, I-Pod's and other devices.

CF: Could the unit be configured in a way that the Commodore 64 could have 2 SIDs?

MCC: Already done. The SIDs also have digital filters. We plan to put a pseudo-stereo mode that uses the second SID since almost no SW supports 2 SIDs.

CF: Will the project be "open source" with the SDK (software Development Kits) available to download Free of charge or will this be a Closed system ?

MCC: Some parts will be open source for tinkers. Everyone who like to put hands on VHDL or Software development on the MCC please contact us under ARCADE RETRO GAMING:

contact @arcaderetrogaming.com

CF: Will the users have to "purchase cores" for different system extra to the hardware cost or will they be Free to download and use when new devices are "emulated"?

MCC: ARCADE RETRO GAMING is currently defining their business model to expand the supported cores on the system. One option could be the purchase of the different emulations. Another could be to get some capital investment via donations. Last but not least we like to encourage the developers to support us.

CF: How much will the unit cost and what will be included in the box, for example does the user need to purchase a power supply, also where will the unit be sold?

MCC: We are looking into a selling price below the current Minimig including Power Supply and ready to connect to a PC monitor or a standard TV set. We plan to offer in addition a version which will include two Competition Pro Joysticks and a unique selection of the classic Games we all enjoyed so much. The selling price for the whole solution is not determined at this point.

CF: What users are working on the system?

MCC: We have multiple developers working on different parts of the system. One big part of the development is the FPGA software development. Another big part is the hardware and mechanical development. Today all this development takes place in USA and Europe. We are looking into production of these units as well in USA or Europe and not in China. Our product will clearly market as MADE in USA.

CF: When will the unit be available?

MCC: We are looking into distribution for the Christmas sales. **CF**

Multiple Classic Computer Platform

CLASSIC COMPUTER SUPPORT

Unique realization to preserve the classic computer experience and enable the real behavior

EXPANDABLE DESIGN

Allows user to add Keyboard, Mouse, DB-9 Joysticks and has an SD-card interface.

ENHANCED FEATURES ON TOP OF THE ORIGINAL DESIGN

A lot of enhanced feature improbe even the experience compare to the orignial. On demand they could be disabled.

- One hardware design which can emulate multiple different classic computers

- Easy to reconfigure for different Emulations

- All emulation done in real HW design and not Software based. This ensures the original behavior and reaction time for games

- New algorithms improve the sound and picture quality

- Improved loading times compare to original classic computer

This Multiple Classic Computer Platform lets dreams come true.

The Classic Computer and Classic Arcade fan just waits on a device which allows them to go back in the good and easy operation and gaming experience from the past.

A lot of people still have unique Software developed and a lot of programs which are still unbeatable in the easy of use.

The reconfigurable and generic design will allow for easy switch between multiple different realizations and representations of classic computers. When we look to the 80ies and 90ies names like Atari ST, Sinclair's ZX-Spectrum, Commodores VC20, VC-64 and the whole Amiga Series 500, 1000, 2000 come to our mind.

Old Joystick interfaces allow the usage of classic input devices. A stereo audio output allows the connection the each TV set, Amplifier or Computer monitor to explore enhance sound. Different versions for the PAL and NTSC regions allowing for seamless usage and compatibility. All this paired with newest available Hardware and new interface like SD-Card, S-Video and RGB Output improve the picture quality and the openess of the systems.

Internal memory allows for permanent storage of favorite games and applications, Menu overlay will allow for easy selection of the application or game and the desired classic computer.

Arcade Retro Gaming

Service Features and Benefits

Arcade Retro Gaming mission is to enable partners with a low cost application design based on this classic computer platform. Potentia applications are not limited to the following examples: integrated stand alone Joystick including games, stand alone mini computers, classic game boxes with game software distributed on SD-cards and integration into Arcade Cabinets.

Other non- gaming applications in all areas e.g. computer terminals, cash systems, registration devices, based on classic computer designs are possible. Our engineers are passioned about the classic computer area and have extensive experience in hardware and software design.

Technical Specification

- Reconfigurable Hardware Core including main CPU, Grafik engine, sound engine and interfaces

- Integrated DDR Memory 32 MBytes

- Integrated non volontile memory 128Mbyte for different classic computer platform realization, programs and games (enable up to 150 and more games in a closed system)

- Support of external keyboard and mouse

- S-Video and RGB Video output

- Stereo Audio Output

- SD_card interface for external programs

- Battery or external power supply supported

- Dimensions: 110 x 90 x 20 mm

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Hardware Design
Software Design
Product Design support
Application Support
Maintenance
Small scale production support
License of Technology

Arcade Retro Gaming

COMMODORE FREE Presents

BACK TO THE PAST

An **ANDREW VAISEY** Column

Back to the Past is a new column where we look back at previous issues of Commodore Free to see what was going on in the Commodore World back in days gone by. In this edition, we go back two and a half years to January 2007 and issue 4...

Sadly, issue 4 kicks off with an explanation of why issues 1 to 3 are no longer available to download, with legal threats being made by various companies relating to some content and use of logos in a 'free' magazine. Strange that a few would feel so strongly in what is essentially a celebration of all things Commodore and, let's face it, free publicity...
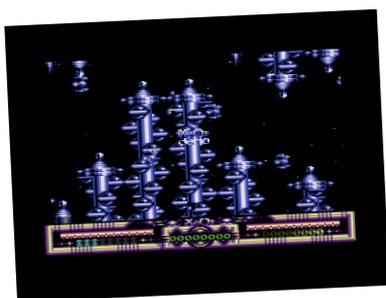
On a lighter note, we provided an in depth guide on a Plus/4 game in production called XeO3, with information about everything from the graphics and sound to the gameplay and design.

An interview with Aleksi Eeeben introduced us to C64 SID emulation on the VIC20 and explained the challenges in getting such a feat to work.

Luke Lynde wrote a rather in depth article about Commodore emulation and offered his thoughts on the two most popular emulators, VICE and CCS64.

For those reading the mag who didn't actually know what on earth they were reading about, Commodore Free reproduced an article from oldsoftware.com which explained exactly what a 'Commodore' is. So now you know the ins and outs of everyone's favourite machines, you can talk in great depths at dinner parties... ZZZZzzzzz....

Another interview, this time with the team at the High Voltage SID Collection (HVSC), a group which rips and preserves SID music from C64 games, demos and productions. Provided was an in depth FAQ section explaining how to rip SID's yourself. How many of you followed the guide and have killed a few hours in the evening ripping C64 music then? Honestly?

Fancy using your Commodore 64 with a monitor instead of that crusty old TV? Commodore Free Issue 4 provided information and diagrams for building a monitor cable, but remember, if anything goes wrong and you toast your 64, it wasn't us...

Know what a Mega Game Cartridge is, or how to use Loadstar's 'Quickmenu' package or where to buy your Commodore kit online? You know where to find out? Yup, ish 4! What a surprise...

What? Somebody who still uses their Commodore in the workplace? Read all about it on page 8 of issue 4. Wait... no, page 9. Huh? Oh! The contents and pages don't match all the way through this issue! DOH!

And that, as they say, was issue 4! **CF**

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SUB HUNTER

DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

PSYTRONIK
SOFTWARE

www.psytronik.com