

ORPHANED COMPUTERS & GAME SYSTEMS

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If you have visited the *OC&GS* website, you know that back issues are indexed to allow readers to view each article in ASCII format. This makes printing an article or two easy. But what if someone wants to print an entire issue? It becomes a messy process -- and it looks terrible after it is done. There may be a solution, but I would like reader input, especially from subscribers.

I have been translating back issues of *OC&GS* from the original Amiga *Pagestream* format to PDF files that can be read using Adobe *Acrobat Reader*. This completely preserves the format and appearance of the paper newsletter. A print-out of a back issue in PDF format looks exactly the same as an original *Pagestream* page. This seems an ideal way to distribute back issues of our newsletter online. But is it really? There may be some problems with this method.

First, what would be the point of subscribing? If in a few months the current issue is placed online in a printable format, what would be the incentive to subscribe? It isn't as if Chris and I make any money from subscriptions, but there is a good reason for them: feedback. Users who send us subscription forms almost always find a minute or two to jot down some thoughts. Without feedback, the newsletter would feel like a one-way communication. It would become stale for Chris and I.

Secondly, if we decided to

place back issues online in PDF format, how would subscribers feel? If I were a subscriber, I might feel cheated. *OC&GS* doesn't offer up-to-the-minute news on the video game industry. We are not a news magazine. Instead, we write articles commenting on the current and past state of gaming. It really makes no difference if an article is read while it is in the current issue or in six months.

What if there were a separate part of the website that could only be entered with a password? I'm not talking high-tech security here. This would just be an area where back issues in PDF format could be accessed. Perhaps there could be two different ways to subscribe: One would be the normal paper edition, and the other would be a cheaper online subscription. If this were the case, the current issue would be available online as well.

Without your input, a decision will be reached which you may find unsatisfactory. It is up to you to decide if you want to voice your opinion about the future back-issue format of this newsletter. -- AT

Hiya! You'll notice that nowhere in the above disclosure does Adam mention IBMs or Macs. He does insinuate that most people who read these tasty tomes on the 'Net are not using Amigas, because if they were, it would be more feasible to upload the original *Pagestream*-based

documents than to bother with all of this PDF nonsense. Adam likes the online-subscription idea more than I do, and I harbor the semi-secret opinion that he mainly just thinks that PDF files (which are postscript files, basically) are really neat. But, hey, if that's what you guys want, we'll do it. By making oneself available as a purveyor of entertainment (which is, after all, all that the media is, no matter what field is being covered), a writer automatically makes each reader his boss. Please take a second to let us know about these online ideas. We really need to know.

The reason I brought up IBMs and Macs earlier is that there are a couple articles in here about a certain related, infamous company. Hint: The articles aren't terribly flattering.

Some idiot in *Reader's Digest* really crossed Adam's line. As any good parent does, my colleague has pretty strong opinions about who can and can't tell his son what to do. I'm glad his lights came on for this one, because it yielded a fantastic article about violence in video games. I've always said that if a kid can't tell the difference between fantasy and reality, his family shouldn't even own a TV set, let alone a game system to plug into it. Now you can read Adam's end-all of articles about gaming violence.

Of course, there's other great stuff about our favorite classic systems...dig in and enjoy! -- CF