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Adok, Mon 01 Jun 2009

Amnesia

By Adok/Hugi

Amnesia was a diskmag by Paranoid, a former member of Eclipse. Its only issue can be downloaded from scene.org; it has been downloaded about 160 times so far. The diskmag is Windows-based and works on modern PCs without any problems.

Amnesia #1

Amnesia #1 was released in March 1999. Although it is supposed to be a demo scene diskmag, it also contains many articles about hacking, phreaking, and piracy.

The mag comes with an installer. The interface was coded in MS Visual Basic 4.0. It is pretty simple, runs in windowed mode, has MIDI music (which unfortunately cannot be stopped) and is without any graphics. The reason is that Paranoid could not find any graphician or musician who was willing to do something for his mag in time.

The mag runs in a black window with a size of 640x480 that is displayed in the center of the screen. So if you want a full-screen view, change your screen resolution to 640x480. On the top of the window, the name of the current article, icons for returning to the menu, switching to the next or previous article and quitting the mag are located. Below that, there is a red Amnesia 'logo' in a Windows standard font; that is why Paranoid credited the "Microsoft font drawers" for the graphics. The text is displayed in an ordinary RTB control. It is stored in the Rich Text Format (RTF), so it supports various fonts, colours, sizes, styles etc.

After exiting the mag, the credits are displayed. You can stop the program with a simple mouse click.

250 kbytes of texts are in this issue, which is quite a lot considering that Paranoid has written most himself. It's 35 articles in total.

In the Editorial and the following texts, such as "Amnesia Technical Info", Paranoid makes excuses for the delay and anticipates possible criticism regarding the interface, the articles, etc. That was a good move. The readers see that he is honest and realistic. In general his writing style is relaxed, the texts are refreshing to read and in a good English. Paranoid gives the magazine a "voluntary age classification" of 15 or over. He warns that illegal topics, such as piracy, hacking, and phone fraud, are covered in the mag too, but nobody should complain about it to him because that is the free nature of the mag. Nothing will be censored.

In "Eclipse - Some Information" Paranoid states that he wanted to get a small crew together before releasing the mag. He had been in the rather successful group Eclipse back when he was active on Amiga. This crew also released the original "Amnesia" diskmag. Most of the former Eclipse members he now asked to re-join forces, however, said they did not have enough time for the scene. So in the end, Paranoid was the only one left and decided to dissolve the ghost-group. He knows that it can be dangerous to produce something without assistance, without people he can rely on for graphics, music, articles, etc. But he hopes that a gang of regular Amnesia supporters will be built up with time. Then a group will not be necessary anyway.

"Amnesia Vs The World" should actually be called "Amnesia Vs The World Wide Web". Paranoid explains why he decided to publish Amnesia as a diskmag rather than an online magazine.

Since the mag was so heavily delayed, it contains some old, outdated articles. An example is the following text, "Essential Scene Links!". As Paranoid writes, he only did some quick editing before finishing the mag. So some important new sites are missing or wrong. The links mainly concern the demo scene, and there are only a few warez sites. All addresses have a few lines of comments. More URLs are located in the "Amnesia Scene Directory", however without any comments.

This issue contains three interviews: one with Paranoid himself, one with a famous demo scener (Marvel of Future Crew) and one with an underground BBS scener (Tornak). The serious questions are customized for each individual, and all interviews are rounded off with some fun questions: for instance, what the guys would do if they had to live alone on an island and were allowed to take only three things with them, who the sexiest woman is and what they were wearing when filling in the interview form. Good.

Some of the General Scene articles are already known from Hugi, such as "Ramblings On The Scene", "Computers For Mankind!" or "Linux Hate Campaign!". They were written by Paranoid. Some other articles were taken from scenelink.org, a mainly warez/underground scene support site, and finally, some texts were made exclusively for Amnesia. One of them is "Prophets of Doom!". Here Paranoid presents his views on the debate whether the scene is dying, that had been initiated by some incorrigible pessimists. He says things like, it had been believed that the scene was dying years ago, when he was still active on Amiga. Nevertheless, in his opinion the PC scene is only a poor cousin of the old Amiga scene which he lists arguments for along with suggested remedies.

"Warez Sites Are Shit" is harsh criticism on the semi-commercial, entirely scene-unrelated warez sites that dominate the Internet underground. In the following article, "Emulation Zone", Paranoid reviews some video game emulators for PC. Next comes advice for people who want to start a new scene group. The article ends with the self-ironic sentence: "There ya go, follow these steps, and your group could become the next Razor 1911 or the next Future Crew - ignore them, and your group will become the next Eclipse! "

"Killing Modem Time!" is a rather humorous article with some suggestions on what you can do while downloading something off the net or a BBS. It was written while Paranoid was downloading Netscape Communicator 4.

The General Scene section ends with an article that is completely unrelated to the scene: In "Video View!", Paranoid reviews and rates several movies.

The next section is called "Hacking + Phreaking". It contains three articles: a brief (well, 26 kbytes!) history of hackerdom, taken from scenelink.org, an article about "The Secret Warez Underworld", which was originally published in the commercial magazine Forbes, that might be good for a laugh for people who are involved in the warez scene, and an entertaining text by an anonymous person using the nickname "PhreakMaster P" about his experiences with a phreaking technique called carding.

The last section, "Amnesia", contains everything that did not fit any other section. "The Melting Pot" is a collection of snippets, i.e. "small thought-provoking pieces" that could not be dragged out to full articles without digressing. Everyone is welcome to send in any thoughts for this column. The "Amnesia MailBag" contains some real letters sent to Paranoid and some that were invented. Amusingly, we also find a so-called "Hugi^Amnesia VoteSheet" in the diskmag, which is the votesheet that was attached to Hugi issue 11 - another indication that some articles are already a tad old. Finally, Paranoid introduces a few diskmags (Hugi, Fleur, and Pain) to the readers and says goodbye till the next issue.

Amnesia contains some very good articles. One clearly sees that Paranoid is no beginner. If he had found enough supporters, improved the outer appearance of the mag and released Amnesia on a semi-regular basis, it could have made it to the top of the PC diskmag scene.

Adok/Hugi