

Paul Austin previews a brand new presentation package that could put the sensational ScalaMM200 on the ropes – or maybe even the canvas!

# MediaLink - the Scala beater?

After the rise and rise of the Scandinavian sensation Scala, the presentation market looked to by what is, without doubt, the package in the business.

But suddenly some serious competition has presented itself in the form of MediaLink, a package that takes a dramatically different approach to the art of presentation. It nevertheless remains a direct and able opponent to its all-conquering counterpart.

In the opposition, MediaLink doesn't do the simple wipes and fades – in fact, it's not in the Scala style, the package boasts its own set of modules known as

Xapps. In all but name pretty much identical to EXs enabling the addition of video, laser discs, ARexx commands, commands, sound modules and samplings, CDTV and more.

By employing the abilities of

external devices, the package can also add its own touches to the overall effect via its page design section which allows the creation of graphics and text in all Amiga modes, including AGA.

When the pages are complete yet another familiar Scala option makes its appearance in the form of a huge selection of wipes and fades. Including an excellent variation on Scala's super-impose which effortlessly replaces the existing image in a very videoesque crossfade between two images.

## Impressive

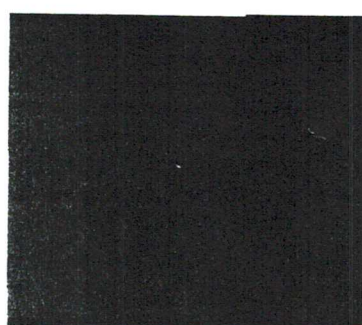
Like its opponent, the number and variety of effects is impressive and again like its counterpart these tricks can be applied to anims and imported graphics with equal skill.

However there does appear one area in which the newcomer may fall short in comparison to the champ. Although special effects can be lavished on complete pages

there appears no way to apply them to individual elements within pages – unlike Scala which offers almost as many special effects for text and brush introduction as it does for the pages themselves.

Having had my obligatory whinge it must be stressed that the version presently in my sticky mitts is firmly at the beta stage. Incidentally, I have been assured by Erik Van Eykelen – a top dog at MediaLink Inc – that more work will be going into the text handling prior to release.

Due to the aforementioned "work in progress", I'm afraid we'll all have to wait for next month's AC before coming to any



AGA graphics in action...

definitive conclusions. As you may have guessed we're planning a big splash for the finished package in the next issue – don't miss it if you're serious about multimedia, presentation and quality DTV!

Apart from the expandability of the software via the growing band of Xapps, it also offers the ability to combine elements via directory-style script building complete with loops and parallel events such as music, samples and Xapps all playing their part in the action simultaneously.

Unlike Scala, MediaLink doesn't have a vested interest in the high-end corporate market like Scala's big brother InfoChannel. If you thought ScalaMM200 was expensive, InfoChannel is enough to induce heart failure.

Although InfoChannel does offer a big-

ger selection of whistles and bells than its Scala sidekick, its primary goal is to offer a centralised network for satellite machines, all of which can be controlled either via comms or direct hardware connections.

Admittedly it does a blinding job in this role; however, even for a small network of satellites with their essential dongles you're literally taking thousands of pounds for the software alone.

The creators of MediaLink have obviously targeted this area of the market as a real money-spinner and as a result every MediaLink comes with its own comms and satellite control elements built-in to the basic package.

In addition the software itself is completely unprotected and shows no sign of the dongle essential to every ScalaMM200 and InfoChannel.

According to Mr Van Eykelen, MediaLink Inc have no qualms about registered users running the package on multiple machines – while employing the software's built-in comms potential as a means of central control with scripts and commands being issued as and when required.

Alas that's all that space will allow, but don't forget that AC will bring you an exclusive and dare I say it definitive review in next month's issue. Tune in next time to see if the all-conquering Scala has indeed met its match...

AC

## Choose your level

Especially well thought-out element of the package is the relation to the user. Unlike many power packages, it's not thrown in at the deep end. In fact, thanks to a required bit of design, the software can be operated in accordance to the particular needs and experience of the user at the controls.

For example, for the complete novice the "test drive" is the ideal starting point allowing even the most phobic user to create a script via a limited number of Xapps such as the anim player, sample/module and static picture viewer.

From this basic selection you can still create a pretty impressive show without running the risk of becoming lost down in the complexities of timecode, external devices and the rest of MediaLink's power features.

Once you've taken your test drive to its logical limits, a step up to presentation, multimedia and finally to the machine's potential as a central or satellite presentation/information centre.

An all new interface which could become very familiar

