Notes for SLCC-Atari Zoom Meeting 3/24/26

Hosted by Kevin

In Attendance, Kevin, Robbie, Don, Richard C., Scott, Ron, Bob

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The meeting focused on various Atari-related topics and personal updates among the participants. Kevin discussed his issues with an early FujiNet adapter, which took about a minute and a half to boot when connected to a real drive, and considered purchasing a new one or modifying a drive to address the problem. Bob shared details about his custom 14MHz upgrade board for Atari 8-bit computers, which could fit in multiple models and offered significant performance improvements during calculations. Richard expressed interest in potentially using Bob's accelerator for his AI project. Robbie mentioned upcoming plans to test his 800XL and monitor cable. The group also discussed various personal topics, including lawn mowers, cars, and skiing plans. towards the end, Richard and Kevin briefly talked about a potential visit and a possible drive to Folsom to check out Atari STs for sale.

Next steps

- Kevin: Send the FujiNet boot log/thread link to Richard for analysis with the Atari 8-Bit AI agent.
- Kevin: Test modifying a drive by cutting out capacitors as suggested, and report results.
- Kevin: Consider purchasing a new FujiNet and report back on results with real drives.
- Kevin: Test daisy-chaining the FujiNet and drive as suggested by Richard and Scott, and report findings.
- Richard: Analyze the FujiNet log/thread with the custom Atari 8-Bit AI agent and report back if any new findings are identified.
- Kevin: Suggest to the magazine editors the idea of dedicated issues for Atari, Apple, etc.
- Bob: Continue work on the 14/16MHz accelerator board and provide an update next week on progress or findings.
- Richard: Coordinate with KLund1100 to schedule a visit (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, or Sunday) to work on the Blue SCSI and TT-RAM expansion board testing.

- Kevin: Check Facebook Marketplace (or referenced site) for the Atari ST lot in Folsom and report back if interested.

Summary

FujiNet Adapter Boot Issue Discussion

Kevin discussed issues with his early 2020 FujiNet adapter, which takes about 1.5 minutes to boot up when connected to a computer or real drive, compared to 5 seconds without the drive connected. He identified that capacitors on the SIO lines were causing the problem but decided not to attempt replacing the tiny components himself. Richard offered to analyze Kevin's log file using his Atari 8-Bit AI agent to potentially identify alternative solutions. Kevin also mentioned that cutting out capacitors in both the drive and computer might solve the pull-down issue, though he was unsure about the impact on normal operation without the FujiNet connected.

Technical and Magazine Discussion Meeting

The group discussed technical issues with drives and computers, particularly focusing on Kevin’s problems with multiple drives and computers. They explored potential solutions including modifying drives and testing new Fujinnat equipment. The conversation then shifted to magazine content, with Kevin suggesting that the publication should create dedicated issues for different computer platforms like Atari and Apple, and the group discussed the potential for focused editions.

Ryobi Mower Blade Replacement Issues

Bob discussed troubleshooting issues with his Ryobi electric mower, specifically trying to replace the blade but struggling to locate the deck release handles. Scott shared his experience with removing mower blades from a larger lawn mower, suggesting Bob check the manual for specific instructions. The group noted that Ryobi's online instructions and customer service were inadequate, and Kevin suggested searching online for specific model information or consulting the downloaded manual.

Lawn Mower Safety Incident Discussion

The group discussed a lawn mower incident where Bob encountered an issue while mowing near a creek bed and rock pile. Bob explained that the safety system cut out when it hit an object, though he couldn't identify what caused the problem. The

conversation briefly touched on mower features and maintenance, with Bob noting he likes the manual deck lowering feature but needs to find the release handles. The discussion ended with a brief mention of Bob speaking with a Polish person on AtariAge.

Atari 1200XL Distribution Experience

Bob shared his experience of having multiple 1200XL Atari computers and distributing them to interested users globally over the past 10-15 years. The group discussed the benefits of the 1200XL model, including its internal space for upgrades compared to other models like the 600XL. The conversation briefly touched on a popular video where someone demonstrated fitting various components into a 600XL Atari, which generated significant discussion in their Atari club.

RAM Upgrade Technical Discussion

The group discussed technical issues with RAM upgrades, particularly focusing on problems with cheaper SRAM that caused consistency issues. They recommended watching a recent educational video about these upgrades, which runs approximately 20-25 minutes and includes detailed troubleshooting information. The conversation also covered Bob's custom 14MHz upgrade board with battery-backed memory, which can fit in various Atari models including the 600XL, though it requires modifications for keyboard compatibility.

VBI Impact on Game Performance

The group discussed how game performance is affected by vertical blank interrupts (VBI) on older computer systems. Bob explained that while calculations run faster on systems using the Antic and GTI chips, the actual screen updates remain at the standard 1.7 bus speed. Richard expressed interest in how this could benefit his project, particularly for background calculations during processing time between screen updates. The discussion highlighted that while the processor could perform up to 7-14 times more calculations during the waiting periods, the actual screen display speed remained unchanged.

Hardware Board Development Progress

The group discussed Bob's hardware board development, with Bob explaining he has about 8 different versions but none are ready for distribution due to ongoing issues. Bob demonstrated the board's ability to change clock speeds, including

support for 600, 800, and 1200 machines, with the current design using a 30MHz clock that can be divided down to different frequencies. Richard expressed interest in using the board for offloading CPU-intensive tasks through FujiNet to microservices, and Kevin noted the importance of avoiding feature creep in the development process.

8-bit CPU Accelerators Discussion

The group discussed CPU accelerators for 8-bit systems, particularly focusing on the Rapidus and Flash Cat accelerators. They noted that while accelerators exist for other components like Pokes and Antic, dedicated CPU accelerators are limited and can have reliability issues. The conversation also touched on a graphical OS for 8-bit systems and the potential for combining accelerators with GUI systems, though this area hasn't seen significant development in about 15 years.

Atari Content Production Planning

The group discussed plans to produce and share accelerator content on Atari Age, with Richard agreeing to move forward with the project.

Project Planning and Equipment Discussion

Richard and Kevin discussed scheduling a meeting to continue their work, with Kevin offering availability throughout the week. Richard mentioned finding Atari ST equipment for sale in Folsom and suggested a potential visit. Kevin shared that he recently received his new car after repairs and plans to visit the dealership regarding reimbursement for lease payments. The conversation concluded with lighthearted discussion about electric vehicle sounds and repair possibilities.