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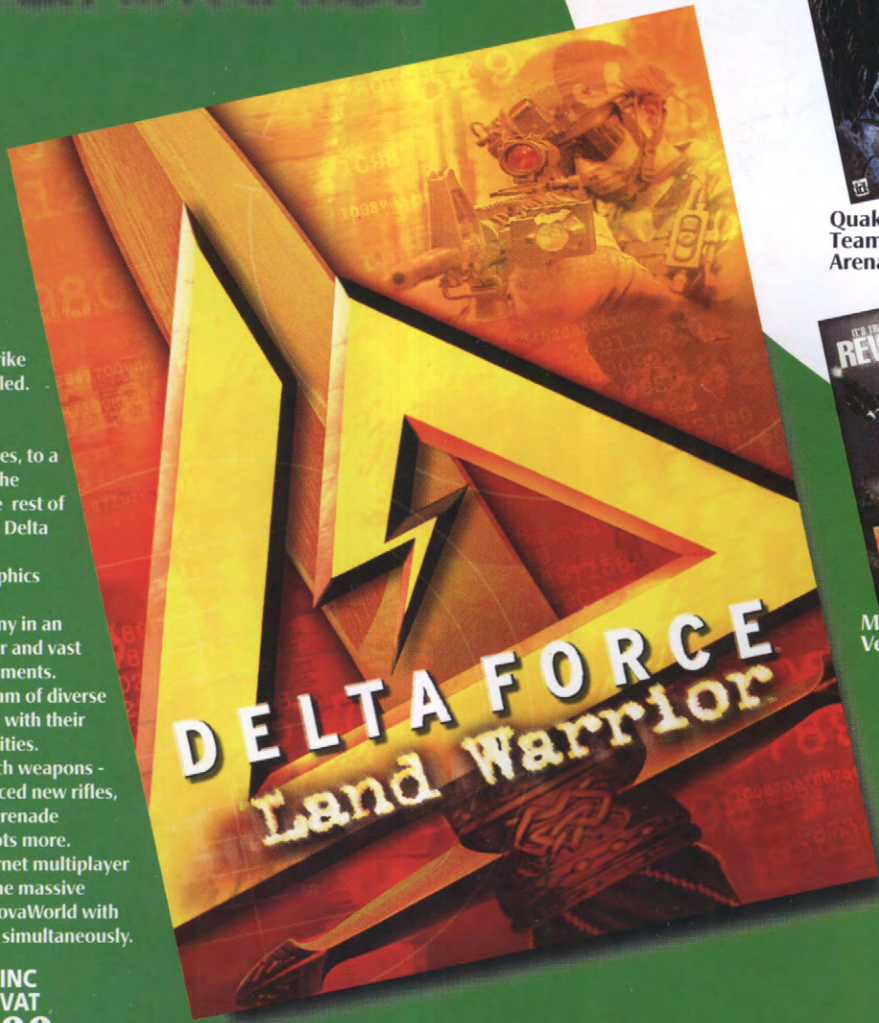
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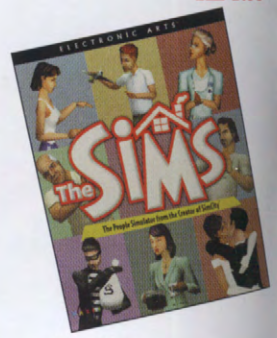
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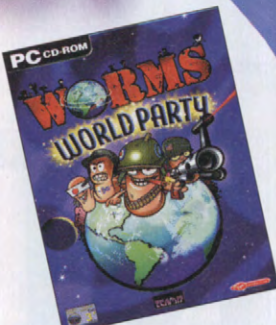
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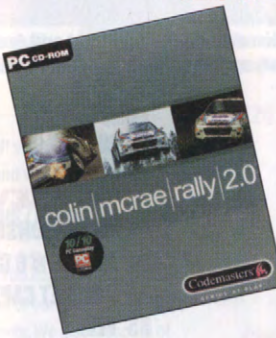
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74 THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PC GAMES OF ALL TIME Who's the Granddaddy?



104 THE (SECRET) HISTORY OF PC ZONE Forget about wars, kings and queens. The only history you need is here, in our trip through eight years and 100 issues of *PC ZONE*.



54 ONI A new beat 'em up from the makers of *Halo*. We review it.



40 EMPIRE EARTH Brand-new strategy from the creator of *Age Of Empires*.



60 THEME PARK INC The latest white-knuckle ride from Bullfrog.



58 QUAKE III TEAM ARENA id extends *Quake III* with this team add-on.

PCZ CONTENTS

PREVIEWS

We take a look at the games we're getting unnaturally excited about

38 ANACHRONOX

Having produced the best and worst of 2000 with *Deus Ex* and *Daikatana*, it's crunch time for Ion Storm. This ambitious RPG has been looking promising for years, but can it live up to the weight of its expectations?

40 EMPIRE EARTH

Age Of Empires meets *Civilization*? It sounds too good to be true. Find out just how Stainless Steel intends to do it.

42 COSSACKS

More historical real-time strategy, this time all the way from the Ukraine.

44 COMMANDOS 2

Can the great WWII strategy game reinvent itself for the *H&D* generation? Pyro Studios has been hard at work updating its game and, hopefully, making it a little bit easier.

REVIEWS

The most definitive reviews section around. All the latest and greatest PC games (and, of course, some of the worst) come under the cynical *PC ZONE* microscope

NEW GAMES

- 48 BLACK & WHITE
- 54 ONI
- 56 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER
- 58 QUAKE III TEAM ARENA
- 60 THEME PARK INC
- 62 THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT 3
- 63 SQUAD LEADER
- 64 STARFLEET COMMAND II
- 67 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001
- 68 SEA DOGS
- 70 FAR GATE
- 70 BATTLESHIP 2
- 71 CHICKEN RUN
- 71 PACIFIC WARRIORS
- 72 THE WARD
- 72 SUPER TAXI DRIVER

73 WARM UP!

73 WARTORN

BUDGET REVIEWS

- 84 CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3
- 84 RAINBOW 6 GOLD PACK ED
- 84 CRICKET CAPTAIN 2
- 85 FLY!
- 85 AIRPORT INC
- 85 THE GOLF PRO 2
- 85 STARS!

SUPERTEST

74 THE MOST INFLUENTIAL GAMES OF ALL TIME

Is it *SimCity*, *Doom*, *Dune 2*, *Ultima Underworld*, *Ultima Online*, *Monkey Island* or *Tomb Raider*?

READERS' REVIEWS

87 FEEDBACK

What you really think of *Project IGI*, *Gunman Chronicles* and *NOLF*.

ONLINE

News, previews and reviews on the latest happenings in online gaming

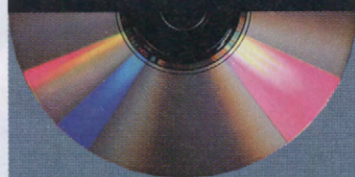
NEWS & PREVIEWS

- 91 MAJESTIC
- 93 FALLOUT TACTICS
- 95 E-RACER

REVIEWS

- 96 SUDDEN STRIKE V1.1
At last the multiplayer patch arrives.
- 97 CALL TO POWER II V1.1
We take the latest *Civ* game online.
- 98 EVERQUEST: SCARS OF VELIOUS
New expansion pack, with added snow.
- 99 TANARUS
Fancy a Sherman?
- 99 TRIVIAL PURSUIT ONLINE V.12
What's the capital of London?
- 100 MOD WATCH
Six new mods reviewed.
- 102 READERS' CHALLENGE
Come and have a go...

ON THE CD



FULL DETAILS
PAGE 135

20 PLAYABLE
DEMOS!
INCLUDING

GUNMAN CHRONICLES

SACRIFICE

FIFA 2001

DELTA FORCE

LAND WARRIOR

IN COLD BLOOD

MOHO

PLUS...

10 MODS

100 MAPS

AND ALL THE

LATEST DRIVERS

AND PATCHES

“Nothing approaches the ideas or standards that this game sets. It is as captivating as it is ingenious”

48 **BLACK & WHITE** Peter Molyneux's epic has been completed and everything genius or flawed classic? We've got the answers in our world exclusive

in *Black & White* finally makes sense. Twisted review. Well, what are you waiting for?

BULLETIN

Quite literally the most definitive games news section in the universe

- 10 DRAGONRIDERS**
Enter the world of Anne McAffrey and her flame-throwing dragons.
- 12 IL-2 STURMOVIK**
The future of the flight sim is here and we've seen the propellers turning.
- 14-33 BULLETIN**
Gaming news from all over the planet.
- 20 TECH HEAD**
A threat to MP3 exposed.
- 25 THE PC ZONE CHARTS**
Current and past PC game charts.
- 30 DIV GAMES CREATOR 2000**
We announce the winners of our compo.
- 34 HOTSHOTS**
Shogun meets dark fantasy in *Warrior Kings*. And it looks great, too.

REGULARS

Lots of stuff about stuff, or something like that

- 36 MAILBOX**
Go on, get it off your chest. Write a letter to the editor and win a Game Voice.
- 104 FEATURE: THE (SECRET) HISTORY OF PC ZONE**
We celebrate 100 issues of *PC ZONE* by exposing some of our greatest – and darkest – secrets. We also let some of our past editors to have a say.
- 112 FEATURE: THE NEW PROFESSIONALS**
Get paid to play your favourite games.
- 128 PC ZONE TOP 100**
An organic buyers' guide that shows you the best games to spend your money on.
- 135 ON THE CD**
Details of all the good stuff we've jammed onto the cover disc.
- 140 SUBSCRIBE**
Save money and get *PC ZONE* delivered to your door every month.

TROUBLESHOOTER

The most extensive and comprehensive tips section in town

- 120 CHEATMASTER**
Having troubles? Well, don't stress, 'cos Keith Pullin's here to help you out.
- 122 DEAR WANDY**
He speaks binary, don'tcha know.
- 124 WATCHDOG**
Got a gripe about a game or a publisher? Have a cry on Adam Phillips' shoulder.
- 127 SITES FOR SORE EYES**
The best walkthroughs on the web, reviewed and rated.

END ZONE

Just when you thought the mag had ended... blimey, a whole lot more!

- 144 EXTENDED PLAY**
Don't buy new games. Change the ones you've got. This month we've got loads of new maps for *Soldier Of Fortune*.
- 142 RETROZONE**
The first of our blast from the past features. This month we take you back to the glory days of March 1993.
- 146 PC ZONE ACCORDING TO THE WORLD**
Enough of our opinions, what does the rest of the games industry think of your favourite magazine? We print the shocking truth, good and bad.

WIN! **THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS** Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (100), PC ZONE, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF.** The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The editor's decision is final. Closing date: Thursday March 8, 2001. The winner of our Christmas (#98) cover compo was Mrs E Young from Surrey, who wins something from the *ZONE* prizes cupboard for sending in the correct answer to our last little teaser.

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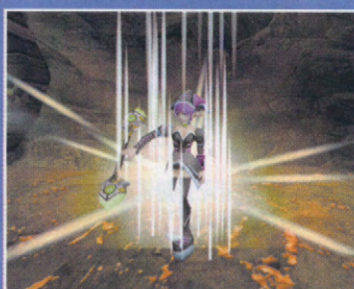
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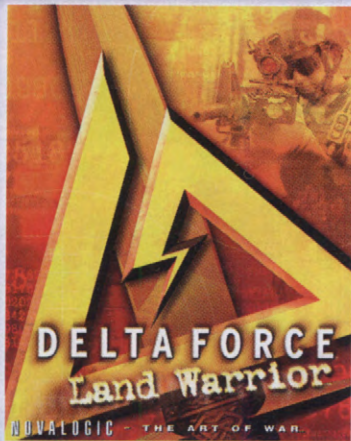
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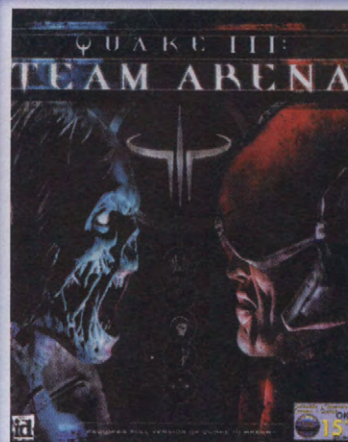
"It achieves things that haven't yet been seen in a PC game...the best we've seen in ages." - 86% PC Gamer



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A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US



It's an honour presiding over any magazine that hits 100, but when it's only your second issue in charge you can't help feeling a bit blessed as well. Certainly more than the old man who croaked straight after reading his telegram from the Queen, although he did die with a smile on his face, apparently.

What's more, going back through 100 issues for our Secret History feature has made me realise the legacy that I have to uphold. PC ZONE was the first dedicated PC games magazine in the world, a title no one can take away, and after eight years we're still going as strong as ever, despite some of the murkier elements from our past. Check out some of our more memorable moments

(starting page 104) where we expose the dark and hairy underbelly of our organ.

And, as well as hitting the 100 milestone, this issue is also special for another big reason. Peter Molyneux's brand new epic, *Black & White* is finally ready and, as promised, we've got the world exclusive review of a game that could be an early contender for Game Of The Year if it lives up to the massive expectations everyone's got for it. The only review in the world that you'll read this month starts on page 48.

Unfortunately, our other exclusive, *Z: Steel Soldiers*, is still being tweaked. We're not prepared to review it until it's finished, so you'll have to wait until next month to find out whether The Bitmaps are back with a bang. Another non-show is Mr Cursor, who rang us to say he would be doing the back page this month. Then promptly disappeared again. If we can track him down we'll get him into issue 101.

We're also introducing a couple of new regulars. Along with RetroZone, our look back through the mists of time, we're finally ready to start playing (or should I say beating) you online. Having abandoned the effort to get around our cursed firewall, we've teamed up with The Playing Fields, where we'll take root every month and hopefully humiliate you at a game of your choice. *Quake III*? Just you try. *Counter-Strike*? Go, go, go, away. *Virtual Pool*? We'll play for money if that's what you want. Check out page 102, get your challenges in and we'll select our unfortunate victims. We're not just talking the talk either. If (and that's a big if) you manage to beat us, we'll give your clan a pretty snazzy prize. And we can't say fairer than that.



Dave Woods
Editor

TOP STORY



D'kor just couldn't shake that I'm being followed by a small dragon feeling.

HERE BE DRAGONS

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Ubi Studios UK
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Autumn 2001
WEBSITE www.grolier.co.uk/

IN SUMMARY

A 3D adventure/RPG set in Anne McCaffrey's popular world of Pern and featuring big, BIG dragons.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Ubi Studios UK has been keeping its Pern baby in perpetual development for the past three years, and reports suggest we can expect a graphically impressive interface, with engaging gameplay and just the right amount of Celtic harp music to get you searching for your *Best Of Clannad*.

DRAGONRIDERS: CHRONICLES OF PERN

Saddle up your dragon and take to the skies, we're homeward bound for Pern

★ BAREBACK DRAGONRIDER Rhianna Pratchett

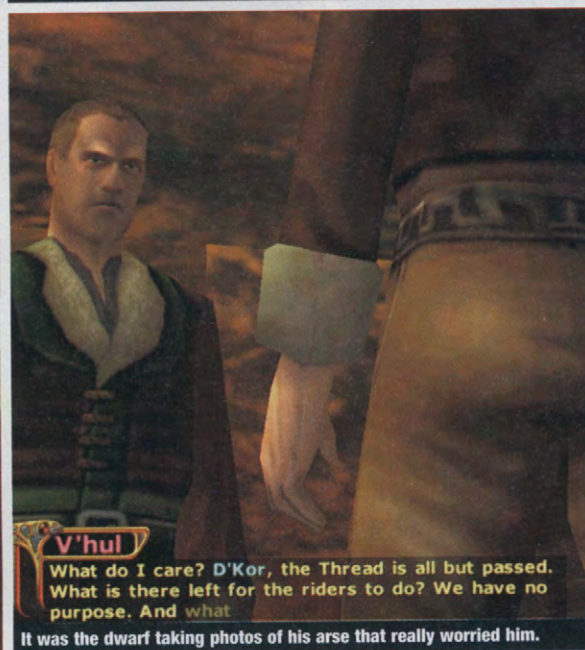


N'eth
Oh for the warm bed of my home cave. This sea

Fluffy collars are very in this season.



Unfortunately, in-flight meals are not an option.



V'hul
What do I care? D'Kor, the Thread is all but passed. What is there left for the riders to do? We have no purpose. And what

It was the dwarf taking photos of his arse that really worried him.



Everybody needs a dragon for a pillow.

If he starts dribbling now I'm a dead man.



D'Kor
That is not true, you are a valuable part of the wing. Your beast has seared as much thread as mine. We are

Look it's hop, jump, hop, jump, then turn.

D'kor is a young dragonrider who's not looking for trouble, so by the laws of fantasy he's destined for a life of excitement, constant adventure and extreme pain. How

fortunate for him that he also inhabits Anne McCaffrey's dragon drenched world of Pern, about to be brought to your small screens this autumn in Ubi Soft's UK's 3D adventure/RPG title *Dragonriders: Chronicles Of Pern*.

There have been rumblings about a Pern-based fantasy game for almost as long as there's been a Pern. However, realistically it's taken this long for technology to become powerful enough to portray McCaffrey's 'low on technology, big on dragons' world, with the richness it deserves.

The story takes place around the Seventh Passing of the Red Star, about 1,400 years after the first landing. For those not familiar with Pern's history, the Red Star is the cause of the mysterious and deadly

Thread, which periodically rains down and destroys all life. Think acid rain with a serious attitude problem. Dragons and their dragonriders have been found to be the only way to combat Threadfall, by destroying the Thread before it hits the ground. With me so far?

Dragonriders develop an unbreakable bond with their dragons

“Dragonriders develop an unbreakable bond with their dragons, they're telepathically linked and one cannot exist without the other – a bit like Richard and Judy”

from birth, they are telepathically linked, and one cannot exist without the other – a bit like Richard and Judy. You play D'kor, a rugged on the outside but squidgy on the inside dragonrider, who along with his dragon Zenth, becomes entangled in a plot to discover the origins of a mysterious disease that is killing off dragonriders.

Although more adventure than RPG, *Dragonriders* has a very King's

Quest: *Mask Of Eternity* feel and contains a number of typical RPG elements, such as numerous puzzles, side quests and 200 plus NPCs. There's also the use of a stats-like system for strength, reputation and knowledge, which individually increase as D'kor performs various tasks.

Ubi seems to have tried to involve fans in many aspects of the game's

creation, using Internet forums as a way to tap into Pern's international fan base for feedback and inspiration. Fans were even offered the opportunity to be immortalised by having their faces scanned and mapped onto individual characters. Obvious care has been taken not to trounce all over the licence by breaking the specific rule of McCaffrey's world: no paper, no

birds and very little fire etc, which is lucky because it's so difficult for the average Pern fan to get a horse's head these days.

But the dragon animation is by far the most intriguing and visually spectacular part of the game, and one area in particular that Anne McCaffrey was keen to get involved with. Your personal dragon Zenth is not only a cool form of transport over the game's 75 locations, spanning five continents, but also offers D'kor advice throughout the game, lists objectives and points him in the right direction. Every dragon has its own skinning code, so their muscles and flesh move as they move, and at more than 20 metres long, in scale, they're easily the biggest single creature animation brought to life in a computer game.

Dragonriders is looking pretty impressive so far and successfully taps into our imaginations, so hopefully, riding that dragon will be as much fun as it sounds. **PCZ**

TOP STORY

We are under attack requesting immediate assistance



The yellow nose and blue propellers kind of defeat the camo job.

A NEW GENERATION OF FLIGHT SIMS

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER 1C
PUBLISHER Blue Byte
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Spring 2001
WEBSITE www.bluebyte.net

IN SUMMARY

A WWII flight sim that concentrates on the war between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's USSR from 1941-1945. With 17 aircraft for you to fly in place for the initial release, and another 14 more pencilled in to be drip-fed (hopefully) once the game comes out, this should encompass virtually every fighter and most bombers used by the main protagonists.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Produced by flight-sim genius Oleg Maddox, it's the cutting edge for a 'new breed' of propeller dog fighting games, which until now have been sitting in graphical limbo since 1997. Not only that, but it concentrates on the Eastern Front, a theatre of WWII that is usually ignored.

IL-2 STURMOVIK

Terror from 5,000 ft. It's another day on the Eastern Front

★ **UBERSTUMANFURAHKOMENDANT JG26/III Daniel Emery**



A bit more choke... that's too much... handbrake off... er...



Now that's what we call camouflage.



As well as being a rather nifty dogfighter, the 109 can be used for killing tanks (and trains).



Keep on rolling, baby...



Herr Gunter knew he should have worn his glasses that day.

Every game genre has its personal god: John Carmack for 3D shooters, Warren Spector for RPGs, Peter Molyneux for god games, and so forth. Well, the flight sim community also has its own deity: Russian-born Oleg Maddox, and he has come up with a wonder for the great unwashed.

Sergei Ilyushin's rugged Il-2 was feared by the Germans, and known as the *Swarz Tod* (Black Death). Its main purpose was as a 'tank buster' and it proved capable of destroying the heaviest-armoured German tanks, including the much-feared Tigers.

Around 40,000 of the aircraft were built, making it the most-produced aircraft in history. It certainly made a big difference to the battles on the Eastern Front, yet until now, this remarkable plane has been largely ignored by most flight sim developers. Some cynics have suggested that as most flight sims are made by

Americans, they tend to ignore/relegate both the equipment and the efforts made by the USSR during the Second World War. Certainly in other sims, the flight models of some US aircraft are, one could say, generous. But we digress...

So what Oleg has done is focus entirely on the Eastern Front air war. And 'focus' is the key word here as the graphics, gameplay and flight models are done to such detail as to make any self-respecting propeller-head kiss the

“You want smoke coming out of the engines when you start? Done. Full cloud effects to hide behind? Easy. Internet play for more than 32 aircraft? No problem”

sky and thank God he's alive. Quite sad really. It's as if Oleg has gone through everyone's wish-list for a flight sim, and made 99 per cent of 'em possible. You want smoke coming out of the engines when you start? Done. Con trails from the wings

when you pull a hard turn? Sorted. Full cloud effects, so you can hide if the going gets tough? Easy. Internet play that supports more than 32 aircraft? No problemo.

The initial crop of aircraft you can fly is quite limited - at present, only the IL-2, LaGG-3, MiG-3, P-39 and Bf-109 are available to fly (apart from the 109, the rest are Russian), although with the sub-variants this comes to 17 different choices.

Considering the game has already been in development for nearly two years, it's a good indication as to the level of detail they're aiming at. They've even added supply trains so you can strafe and gloat in satisfaction when the engine explodes. There are another 21 non-flyable planes, whose aim will be to turn your plane into Swiss cheese, and from what we've seen of the early AI, they do a rather thorough job too. And every type of each aircraft is modelled differently, although you'll probably discover this the hard way.

So what more can we say about *IL-2 Sturmovik*? Well, it looks fantastic, sounds fantastic and (hopefully) is fantastic. Roll on the review code, that's all we can say. [E]

THIS IS YESTERDAY

NEWS EDITOR Mark Hill



Who would have thought that this PC games writing lark would have lasted 100 issues? For the 100th time, people are reading about colourful images moving on a monitor and being controlled by a mouse and keyboard.

Now that even the most pedantic of people have finally conceded that we're in the 21st century, it's time once again to complain just how disappointing it is. The cavemen gamers of 1993 might have been impressed by 1GHz processors, but we should be demanding cables that plug into our brains - à la *eXistenZ* - and transport us into an alternate reality populated by Stormtroopers, goblins, a Premiership football team or whatever takes your fancy. Instead, we can now wave our virtual wands at each other via the marvel of the Internet. Big bloody deal.

I'll tell you what I'd like to see. Well, no more real-time strategies for a start, because they're all rubbish. Online games with more meat to them than shooting bullets and spells at each other, and then moaning about it all in appallingly spelled 'conversations'. And less scaremongering about the PS2 and the Xbox killing off the PC as a games machine. First of all, it ain't gonna happen and, if it does, who cares anyway? We'll change our name to *Xzone* and keep on trucking.

And while I'm in the process of making sweeping, biased statements, let's get rid of scores. Maybe that will stop you complaining about such-and-such game getting three per cent less than you think it should have, and maybe even make you read the words of the review to decide if this is something you'd actually want to pay money for.

And finally, on the subject of money, the ridiculously high prices of PC games: let's get rid of them, too. How many DVDs do you think would be sold in this country if they were all priced at £34.99? Right, time for my medicine now...

TECHHEAD

The latest and greatest hardware news

P.20



THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P.25



ChartTrack

CIVILIZATION III PROGRESS

More details on the legendary turn-based sequel

Firaxis • ETA TBA • www.firaxis.com

Despite the predominance of real-time strategy and Westwood's iron grip on the gaming consciousness with its *Command & Conquer* and *Red Alert* titles, if there's one game that has become synonymous with strategy it's *Civilization*. It's turn-based, it's slow and it isn't terribly pretty, but there's something about Sid Meier's masterpiece that keeps players completely hooked in their quest to develop and expand their civilisation, making treaties, building Wonders of the World, starting wars and establishing trade routes along the way.

Civ II is still being played now, mostly in the new, tweaked forms of *Call To Power I & II* and *Test Of Time*, so there's no denying the world is crying out for a proper sequel. Sid Meier is the creative director of Firaxis, and most of his team is made up of people who worked on *Civ I* and *II*, as well as the sci-fi version, *Alpha Centauri*, so the credentials are all in place to produce a true classic.

Unsurprisingly, *Civ III* is more evolution than revolution, continuing the ideas that Meier introduced in *Alpha Centauri* and developing the game's traditional key

features, while giving the graphics a major overhaul. Another area that will be undergoing major improvements is the combat, which has previously been criticised for being too simple. Each nation will be able to produce gifted leaders capable of leading armies into glorious battle, the kind of people who make it into history books and have BBC mini-series named after them. Experienced players will no doubt notice thousands of little tweaks designed to improve gameplay, mostly based on the feedback that Firaxis has been receiving over the years. As soon as more details become available, we'll let you know. For now, you'll have to content yourselves with these 3D models to get an idea of what the final game will look like.



It wouldn't be a *Civ* game without a phalanx.

Range weapons will be able to soften enemy defences.



INSIDE GAMES

Steven Poole takes a look at military games

P.26



MAN WHO KNOWS

The latest industry gossip

P.28



HOTSHOTS

Grab yourself an eyeful of *Warrior Kings*

P.34



GOD ANNOUNCES ANOTHER MYTH

Gathering of Developers has announced *Myth III: The Wolf Age*

★ Mumbo Jumbo • ETA End of the year • www.ritualistic.com

With Bungie being fully immersed in the development of *Halo* – after hastily polishing off *Oni* – one of its better-known franchises has moved on to the Gathering Of Developers for a much-needed update. Mumbo Jumbo, an off-shoot of Ritual Entertainment, has been charged with bringing the popular *Myth* series into the modern age.

Ironically, they'll be doing this by creating a prequel, following the trend of *Populous: The Beginning* and *The Phantom Menace*. The story takes place 1,000 years before the first *Myth*, at a time when humanity is scattered in tribes who clash violently with each other, as well as defending themselves against the dark, evil creatures that stalk the land.



We're hoping to see plenty of gore soaking into those highly detailed grounds.

Myth III: The Wolf Age's engine will be the same as the one used in *Myth II* but tweaked so much as to make it barely recognisable. There are no sprites and the landscape will be highly detailed even when you zoom in close, taking full advantage of modern 3D cards. The gameplay is still mission based, spread over 25 levels, and will continue the series' ease-of-play for the average gamer, as opposed to the strategic depth of something like *Shogun*.

Neither *Myth* nor its sequel *Soulblighter* managed to successfully marry real-time strategy with full 3D graphics, but their attempts were noble enough to warrant the attention they got. After the likes of *Shogun: Total War* have pulled it off with such panache, it will be interesting to see how many leaves Mumbo Jumbo will be taking out of Creative Assembly's book. In other godly news, Triumph Studios is apparently working on a sequel to *Age Of Wonders*, the *Heroes Of Might And Magic* clone. It is scheduled for release some time next year and is said to feature a 3D engine.

This is the kind of creature you'll be sending your human troops to fight against. You bastard.

GTA GOES 3D

Grand Theft Auto 3 is unveiled

★ DMA • ETA October • www.dma.co.uk

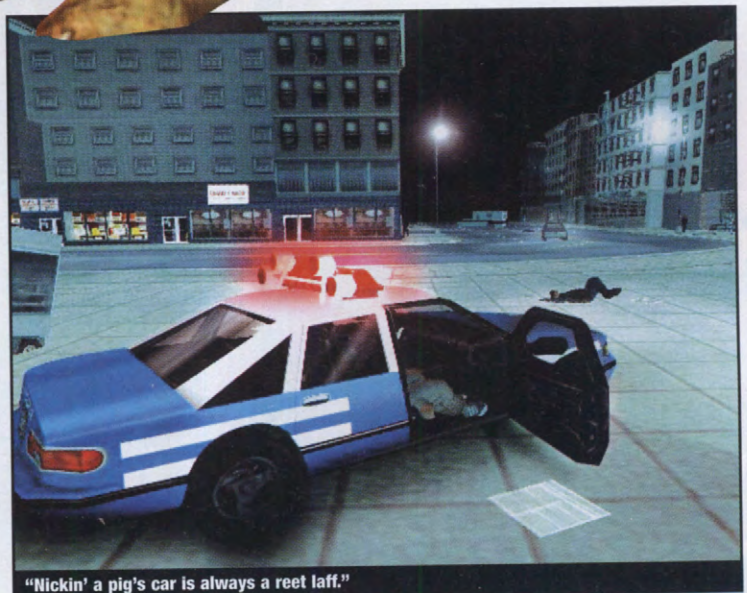
We loved *GTA*, but were quite disappointed with the sequel, mainly because the futuristic gang war setting just wasn't anywhere near as much fun as the real-life city of the original. So it comes as a pleasant surprise to learn that *GTA3* returns to its roots and sets you in a present-day city, stealing cars and performing all sorts of dirty missions for your crime boss.

The 3D perspective (which can be moved to a topdown one if you want) and the real-time clock, which will require you to be at certain places at certain times, should add a different feel while hopefully

remaining as much fun to play. There will be day and night cycles as well as realistic weather changes, so the idea is definitely to move the whole thing beyond the cartoony feel of the first two games.

It will be interesting to see how this will affect the level of violence, especially considering the arsenal you'll have at your disposal – including our favourite, the fully zoomable sniper rifle. Alternatively, you could always bash your target over the head with a baseball bat.

It all sounds pretty fantastic and we'll bring you a closer look in the near future.



"Nickin' a pig's car is always a reet laff."

ORION REMASTERED

The classic space turn-based strategy is back with *Master of Orion III: The Fifth X*

★ Quicksilver • ETA 2002 • moo3.quicksilver.com

Considered by many to be one of the best turn-based strategy games ever made, *Master Of Orion* is to get another sequel, courtesy of developer Quicksilver.

Traditionalists will be pleased to know that the series will remain true to its turn-based roots and will further expand the depth of the previous two titles. While combat is moving towards real-time and uses a level of 3D comparable to that seen in *Starfleet Command*, the emphasis will still be on careful planning before and during the event. The subtitle of *The Fifth X* refers to the traditional features found in space strategy games of this kind:



explore, expand, exploit, exterminate. The fifth one added in *Master Of Orion III* is experience, in reference to the advanced AI of the empire you control, which is made up of thinking organisms that report back to you.

The role you assume has been likened to that of caretaker of the empire, which essentially means you won't have to worry

Ⓢ Don't be fooled by the oversized brain. He's actually very stupid.

about constant micromanagement and inspecting every small detail – although you can do so if you wish – instead delegating all the boring sci-fi admin to viceroys, commanders and desk clerks. The most important resources are the Imperial Focus Points, of which you only have a limited amount to spend every turn. In a sense, this is the only limit on what you can do in the game; your omnipotence over your galactic civilisation means you can mould it in any way you wish.

Quicksilver is promising such a level of detail that players will get sucked into a completely believable universe and will never become bored. Interaction with other species and civilisations will take the form of friendly relations and fierce battles, as per usual, but you will also have to watch out for civil wars causing rifts in your empire, and space pirates who can be hired for dirty jobs.

Technological research and diplomacy have been radically improved, and so has the AI of the other civilisations. Espionage has also been given an overhaul and a lot will depend on your ability to weave a network of spies with the right abilities and targets. Anyone who has read an Iain M Banks *Culture* novel should be slavering like a Pavlovian dog by now. Check out the website for a more comprehensive rundown on the game's features.



Ⓢ You can enslave other species in *Orion III*. Not if they look like this you won't.



At least *Stars!* doesn't take itself too seriously. There are plenty of jokes scattered around.

STARS! IS REBORN

★ Mare Crisium • ETA summer • www.crisium.com

Stars!, which has just been released on budget, may well have been the most boring-looking game ever, but that never stopped it from being immensely popular. As a result, the game usually thought of as *Anall!* is getting a brand spanking new sequel that brushes up on the original's main failure: its looks.

Stars! featured an unhealthy amount of detail, through a screen that made *Championship Manager* look like a sumptuous supermodel, but Mare Crisium's *Supernova*

Genesis – as the sequel is subtitled – actually has pretty pictures and everything. The main elements will still be there: choosing a race, exploring space, trading and wiping out whole civilisations. From the screenshots it looks like there's also some exciting battle scenes, which could certainly spice up multiplayer sessions.

Whether it can compete with *Master Of Orion III* is another matter, but there are always plenty of people who will kill for another handful of stats.



Look – a battle, with explosions and everything.



Will you look at that! *Stars!*



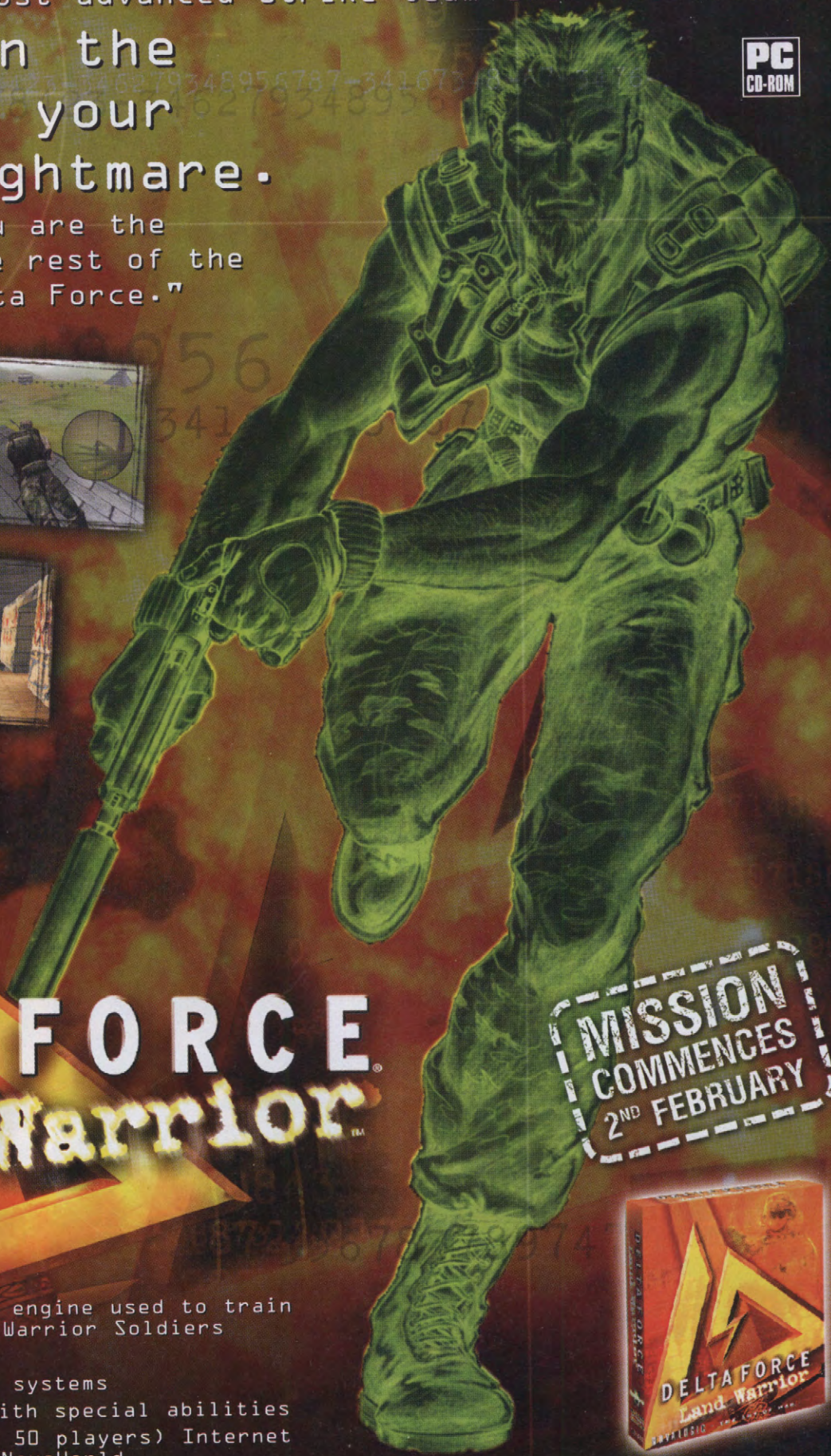
You won't find this much detail anywhere else.

36787-34167348-67-3576-159023-47856
"You command the most advanced strike team ever assembled.

You work in the shadows of your enemy's nightmare.

To a terrorist, you are the executioner. To the rest of the world, you are Delta Force."

PC
CD-ROM

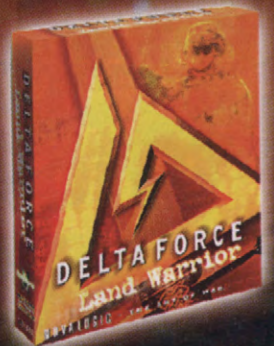


DELTA FORCE

Land Warrior

MISSION
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2ND FEBRUARY

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- New high-tech weapons & systems
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- Design single or multiplayer games with the Mission Editor



NovaWorld

www.novalogic.com

NOVALOGIC - THE ART OF WAR...

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WARNING
This game features explicit
blood, gore and violence throughout.
Some players may find this disturbing.

WHEN STEEL FAILS

FLESH IS YOUR LAST WEAPON

"Absolutely terrific and
absolutely terrifying."

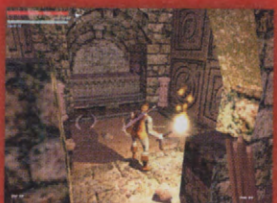
PC Zone



OUT FEB 2001

SEVERANCE™

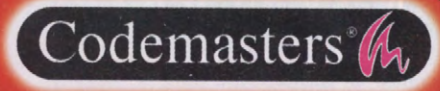
BLADE OF DARKNESS



4 characters. 100+ weapons. 1 fantasy blood-quest



www.codemasters.com



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GENIUS AT PLAY™



There are 11 nations, including Holland, Portugal and Spain.



One of the campaigns is set during the American Revolution.

UP FOR SAIL

Age Of Sail sequel afloat

★ Akella • ETA Spring • www.akella.com

There are people who get seasick just standing on the beach, while others dream of paddling across the Atlantic in a dinghy. In between there's the rest of us, who couldn't give a monkey's either way, which is probably why the first *Age Of Sail* wasn't a resounding success in this country.

Developed by the same salty house that made *Sea Dogs*, *Age II* is a historical RTS where you can blast properly researched warships out of the water across more than 100 scenarios (that were already there in

the first one). While the original's graphics were decidedly ropey, Akella has definitely mopped up that area and is proudly boasting of a very shiny deck. In addition, there are plans to include LAN and Internet multiplayer options.

From the sound of it, it's pretty much just an enhanced version of the first game which, if you're the kind of person who spends their weekend tying complicated knots and molesting ducks with radio-controlled boats, is probably a good thing.

SEA DOGS SEQUEL

Do the doggy paddle again

★ Akella • ETA 2001 • www.akella.com

Sea Dogs, the best pirate sim since Sid Meier's classic *Pirates*, might just be hitting the shelves in this country (see page 68), but it has already built up quite a fan base in the States. On the strength of that success, Akella is already hard at work on *Sea Dogs 2*.

Set 30 years after the original, you'll be playing one of the children of Nicholas Sharp, our hero the first time round, sailing a richer, more detailed archipelago. Random quests and increased strategic features should add more depth and we expect it to look a whole lot better. After playing the first game, we'd recommend Akella hires better voice actors and sorts out all the bugs prior to release, too.

As ever, the release of *Sea Dogs 2* in this country will depend on how well it fares sales-wise, as a good chart position in the States doesn't necessarily guarantee interest over here. Pirate fans keep your fingers crossed, and buy as many copies as you can.

☛ You can be a girl. Tempting?

THE NAMELESS WAR

★ AMC Creation • ETA TBA • www.amc.ro

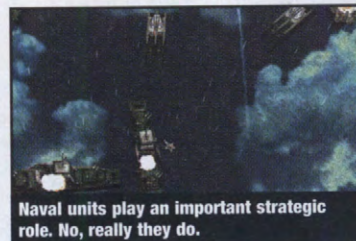
We all know that artists and photographers are an unimaginative bunch, calling every other piece *Unnamed* or *Untitled*. It's uncertain whether Romanian developer AMC Creation has artistic pretensions or is just plain lazy, because it has called its latest game *No Name War*.

This is yet another primitive-looking RTS with role-playing

pretensions, which tries to make up in original details (espionage, diversions, ambushes) what it lacks elsewhere. The story is as insipid as the title, involving the usual race to colonise a new planet malarkey and three different factions with defining characteristics. There will be days and nights, plenty of weather effects and it will support up to 16 people online.



There are rumours that there's a tank in the game.



Naval units play an important strategic role. No, really they do.



That's one big base.



The Ciper engine has been built with online gaming in mind.



The racetracks look wacky and colourful.

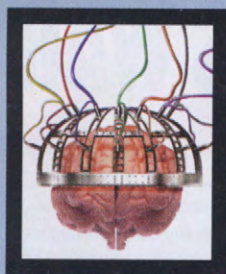
CRAZY CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

★ Synaptic Soup • ETA 2001 • www.synapticssoup.com

Games with the word 'crazy' in the title have traditionally been consigned to bargain bins and wastebaskets around the world, but Synaptic Soup is determined to show us that insanity has no bearing on the quality of a game.

Crazy Car Championship (why is it always racing games that have these zany titles?) allows you to build your own wacky vehicle and race through floating islands against steam-powered hovercrafts and quantum-powered hot-rods while picking up power-ups along the way. The game is powered by the company's own Ciper engine and judging by these first screenshots it can certainly do the business.

A lot of emphasis has been put on the multiplayer side and you'll hopefully be able to drive the cars you've created in the single-player game against your friends.



TECH HEAD

The industry attempts to quash MP3 piracy, while Intel goes for the jugular

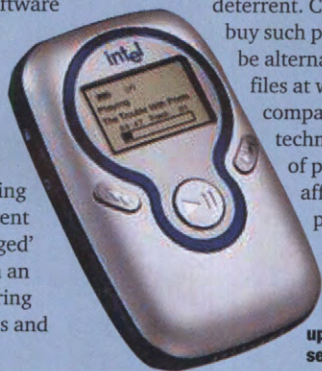
★ RUNNING SCARED Carlos Ruiz

MP3 THREAT

Leading companies are working together to develop digital audio protection

The National Committee for Information Technology Standards (www.NCITS.org) is developing a specification for storage devices that will allow manufacturers to add a variety of protection mechanisms to help combat digital audio piracy. This follows growing concern among record labels and artists regarding copyright infringement of their material, the main violators of the cause being MP3-sharing software such as Napster and Gnutella.

Some companies are already off the mark. IBM, Toshiba, Intel and Matsushita Electric are jointly creating Content Protection for Recordable Media (CPRM), which uses data-scrambling and identification schemes to prevent the movement of protected or 'tagged' files. IBM and Sandisk have shown an interest in CPRM, and are considering using it in their portable disk drives and Flash memory respectively.



Despite the implications for sales, Intel's Pocket Concert is designed to be upgraded and compliant with emerging security standards for digital music.

Indeed, removable storage such as Zip drives and Flash memory (commonly found in portable MP3 players) look likely to be the first to be subjected to such technology. However, if it were implemented in hard drives, users would ultimately be restricted when trying to download MP3s from the Internet.

A big factor, though, is how much harm will be done to sales of devices using this or a similar deterrent. Consumers in the know are unlikely to buy such products when there will undoubtedly be alternatives that leave them free to copy files at will. It may be only the largest companies that implement protection technology, since they have to be conscious of piracy within the industry, and can afford to compromise sales. In any case, protected hardware may be available by the end of the year.

INTEL GOING ALL OUT

Look out, AMD – the king of processors wants his crown back

Thanks to excellent recent yields in Intel's (www.intel.com) chip production, punters all over the world should be able to buy 2GHz Pentium 4 processors by the time you read this, which is good news for Intel in the sense that it is now effectively three months ahead of schedule.

"Expect to see Pentium 4 much earlier than on the roadmap," said an Intel representative. "We're aggressively going for AMD's balls on the speed front. DirectX 8.0 is ready, and lots of apps and games have been optimised, many more than for the PIII launch, which was a real cock-up."

Understandably, the man in question requested anonymity, but his enthusiasm was evident enough to send out signals to AMD that it should indeed expect a much tougher contest this time round.

AMD (www.amd.com) is still riding high, though, and managed to sell out of Athlon production in the latter stages of last year due to consistently high demand. Despite being slightly behind Intel in the speed stakes, the 'Palomino' Athlon range is



considerably more affordable; one reason being that all current Pentium 4 chips are bundled with two 64Mb RIMM modules (RDRAM being the only memory you can use in P4 motherboards at present).

In related news, Intel has unveiled the new Celeron 800MHz, its first desktop value PC processor to include a 100MHz system bus, a technology seen long ago in full-price CPUs. This will offer a wider communications path between the processor and the rest of the system, resulting in faster overall system performance.

"Intel is updating the hardware ingredients of value PCs to bring more performance and capabilities to consumers in 2001," says marketing man Jeff McCrea. "These new technologies are expected to proliferate quickly."

FACTCANNON

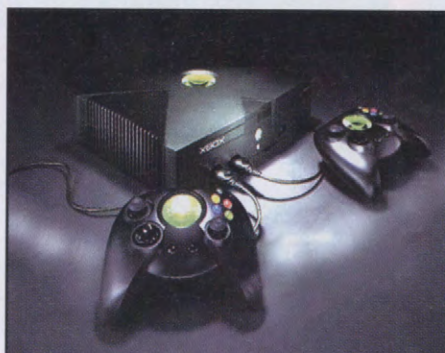
★ NVIDIA (www.nvidia.com) is venturing into pastures new with the release of its first motherboard chipsets in 2001. Its solution for AMD processors, codenamed Crush, will be followed by an Intel-based chipset as soon as a deal is finalised. Meanwhile, Sensaura is licensing its 3D Positional Audio to NVIDIA for use in the Xbox and, possibly, PC sound cards later in the year.

★ Sony's (www.sony.com) new E-Marker device allows Americans to easily find out the name of any song they've just heard on the radio. It works by creating markers that can be used to access an online database which keeps track of such information, making it easy to create a list of the day's hottest tunes, which you can then download on MP3. There's no word yet on a European release, though.

★ Contrary to the news a few months back that SONICBlue (previously S3 Incorporated) had quit the high-end graphics card business for good, the restructured company has confirmed it's actually just taking time to assume a new partnership with VIA, and will be back in 2002 with "something very cool". Its new website is at www.sonicblue.com.

★ Iomega's (www.iomega.com) new 250Mb USB-powered external Zip drive does away with the traditional power supply/cable, receiving all the power it needs via the plug-and-play USB connection. Weighing only nine ounces and being one of the smallest and slimmest drives in its class, as well as offering easy swapping between computers, it's a great option for storing and transferring files on the move. A European release is due for March, with a price of around £140.

★ Speaking of the Xbox (www.xbox.com), Microsoft has finally unveiled the final box and controller design to the public – and very nice it looks, too. The X theme has been neatly incorporated into the casing, and the analogue/rumble controller looks functional, with a swish green 'crystal' in the middle. The DVD drive is tray loading, and there are four controller ports based on a modified version of USB.



BREED LIKE RABBITS

★ Brat Designs • ETA Christmas • www.brat-designs.com

Another RTS. In 3D

The onslaught of RTSs continues to reach epidemic proportions, with new UK studio Brat Designs announcing its as yet unsigned *Breed*. Unlike many 3D real-time strategies proliferating at the moment, *Breed* doesn't eschew resource management, opting instead for the tried and tested method of mining ore, storing it in silos and transporting it to refinery plants, a fact that may or may not set your heart on fire with raw emotion. In common with *Battlezone 2* and Rage's forthcoming *Hostile Waters*, you

can – and indeed have to – take control of individual units, while at the same time co-ordinating massive battles and taking important strategic decisions. The story is what you might call a badly beaten dead horse and once again predicts the invasion of Earth by unpleasant aliens some time in the future. The game will be released on the Xbox as well as PC, but Brat Designs will need to secure a publisher before that happens.

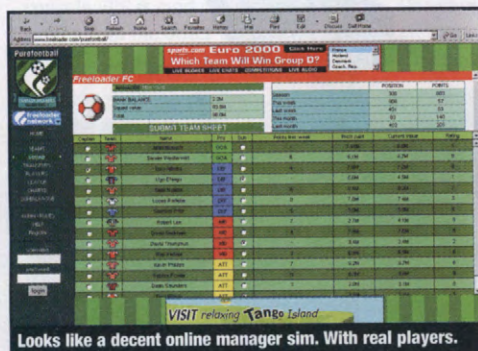


You can also take an aerial view in one of these ships.

Send that tank to the fortress. Or drive there yourself.

MORE LOAD FOR FREE

Those lovely people at Freeloader.com have a whole bunch of new titles ready for download in exchange for having your brain attacked by advertising. Top of the list has got to be *Grand Theft Auto 2*, although we're more intrigued by *Pure Football Manager Online*, which, unlike the brilliant *Soccersim* beta, actually has the real names of players. The other two games are *Creatures* and *Tennis Antics*. They should all be available for download from www.freeloader.com on February 25.



Looks like a decent online manager sim. With real players.

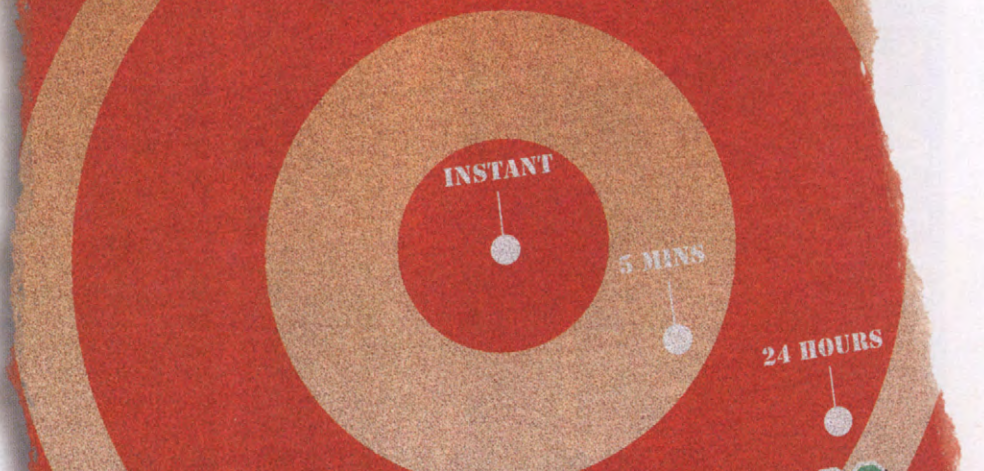
SIN 2 COME?

Down at the rumour mill there's been talk about a much anticipated (by us anyway) sequel to the flawed classic *Sin*. Ritual Entertainment said no final decision has been made, but the company seems keen to have another bite at the cherry. In the meantime, there is already talk of a *Sacrifice* sequel or at the least an add-on pack. It could be a load of lies of course.



Rumours of another *Sacrifice* abound.

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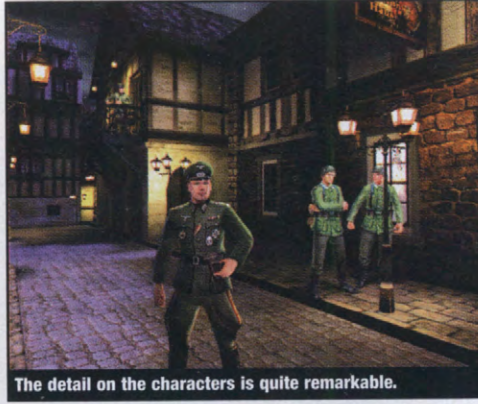
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networking • hard disks • tape drives • desktop publishing software • graphics cards • email • operating systems • components • sound cards • web tools • security



A beautiful, small cobbled town. Before the shells hit it.



The detail on the characters is quite remarkable.



No news yet as to whether you can drive the vehicles or just blow them up.

HONOUR THY MEDAL

★ 2015 • ETA End of year • www.2015.com

Medal Of Honor jumps from console to the PC

If there's one area where PC games excel over consoles – apart from real-time strategies – it's in first-person shooters. Anyone who's used a mouse-and-keyboard combo will find that playing on a PSX gamepad is like dancing in treacle. Which is why it comes as quite a novelty when a console FPS is made into a PC game rather than the other way round.

The *Medal Of Honor* games are probably the most successful FPSs on the PlayStation, but their move to the PC is anything but a straight dodgy conversion with low-res graphics and a poor interface. A look at the screenshots will tell you this is a WWII shooter to rival *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* and *Hidden & Dangerous 2*, and to thankfully bury all memories of the awful *Mortyr*.

Honor uses the *Quake III* engine, but somehow manages to look more detailed, open and realistic than any of the games it has powered to date.

Developed by 2015 – who did the *Wages Of Sin* add-on for *Sin* – in conjunction with Electronic Arts, *Medal Of Honor* follows the exploits of one Lt Mike Powell as you infiltrate enemy camps, sabotage Nazi factories, rescue prisoners of war, and take part in historical moments like the invasion of Normandy. As you

would imagine from the title, completing a mission brings medals depending on just how successful you've been, how many secondary objectives you've fulfilled, etc.

Small French towns in ruins recreate the kind of epic feel of *Saving Private Ryan* with unbelievable results, although you will initially begin fighting in Africa in 1942 before moving on to Italy, France and Germany. Expect a more detailed look next month.

FLY TWO SCHOOL

★ ETA TBA • Terminal Reality • www.godgames.com

Sequel to *Fly!* announced

The original *Fly!* was a bit of a letdown, but it still managed to make non-combat flight sims a little more acceptable. It also convinced thousands of people there's nothing more exciting than a pilot flying from one side of the world to another, fighting turbulence and cloud formations.

Aside from improved graphics, the typographically-odd *Fly! II* makes an even greater effort to bring flight sims to the masses by including lengthy tutorials with increased

assistance for first-time flyers. If you get bored looking at the photo-realistic scenery below you can always switch to the in-cockpit view and peruse the hundreds of knobs, buttons and whistles that are laid out with perfect accuracy.

You'll also find new planes, choppers, pre-configured adventures, airport vehicles (gasp!) and extended online crisis situations. We doubt it will persuade average gamers to learn to use their whole keyboard to fly a plane that doesn't have missile launchers, but it should certainly keep the original's fanbase happy.



And look, there's the irrigated corn field.



Don't look down if you're afraid of heights.

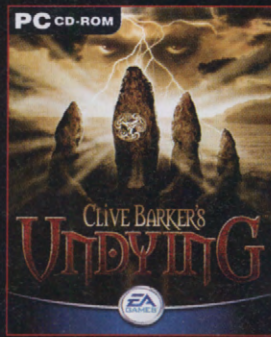
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What does not
kill you
will make you
wish it had.



Clive Barker has shocked people in his books. He's terrified people in his films. Now he's created a game. Undying. Dare you play it?



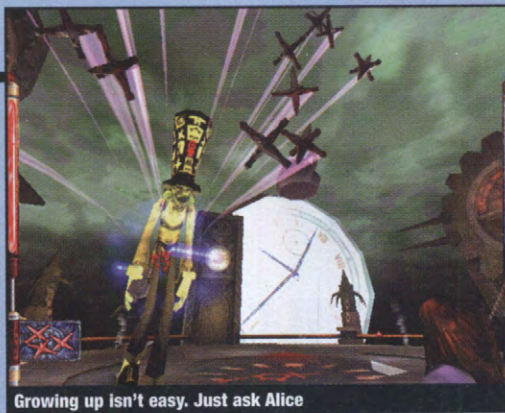
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CHARTS

Everything you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload. Plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what’s hot and what’s not



Growing up isn't easy. Just ask Alice

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

The time just after Christmas is always a slow period for games and this is reflected in the charts. Most of the titles that appear are stocking-fillers – we can only hope that everyone in the UK with a PC already owns three copies of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* and *The Sims* – with the few new games that have been released barely getting a look in. It's a surprise, although perhaps not a big one, to see Lara's latest disappear completely and it's sad to see an excellent game such as *Escape From Monkey Island* dropping out. Great games, including *Project IGI* and *Hitman*, have been snubbed in favour of yet more *Sim* idiocy. It'll be interesting to see how long *Alice* manages to stay, as it's too twisted for kiddies and too simplistic a platform game for adults.

Mark Hill

THE TOP 10

JAN	FEB	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
3	1	RED ALERT 2	WESTWOOD	EA	82%
2	2	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 00/01	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
NE	3	ALICE	AMERICAN MCGEE	EA	75%
1	4	GUNMAN CHRONICLES	REWOLF	HAVAS	87%
RE	5	WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE	HOTHOUSE	EIDOS	62%
5	6	PROJECT IGI	INNERLOOP	EIDOS	85%
NE	7	SUDDEN STRIKE	CDV	CDV	86%
8	8	FIFA 2001	EA SPORTS	EA	83%
10	9	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
6	10	ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND	LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	82%

THE TOP 10



JAN	FEB	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
1	1	WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE	HOTHOUSE	EIDOS	62%
2	2	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 00/01	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
3	3	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
6	4	THE SIMS: LVIN' IT UP	MAXIS	EA	63%
4	5	RED ALERT 2	WESTWOOD	EA	82%
NE	6	GUNMAN CHRONICLES	REWOLF	HAVAS	87%
NE	7	COLIN MCRAE 2.0	CODEMASTERS	CODEMASTERS	86%
NE	8	SUDDEN STRIKE	CDV	CDV	86%
8	9	FIFA 2001	EA SPORTS	EA	83%
NE	10	ALICE	AMERICAN MCGEE	EA	75%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 2000)

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Nice to see *Gunman* doing well, a good game albeit a little to short. Call me a cynic but how much of the profits of that game are going into Valve's pocket?"

Papa Lazarou, Croydon

"*Sudden Strike* isn't at number one. *Millionaire* is. Are you sure this reflects the buying trends, cause it's obvious that quality is never taken into account? There is certainly no comparison between games on this list, it does nothing but misguide those who know little about PC games. To be honest it pisses me off because good games deserve good places on charts. *Millionaire* isn't a GOOD game, it's a cash in."

James Cooper, Nottingham

"Is this upside down? *Sudden Strike* at number eight? *Gunman* at number six? Why do people continue to buy these terrible games?"

Doctor Kebab

"WHERE IS *PROJECT IGI*? Surely it deserves to be in at least the top three, if not the top spot. It's brilliant. Nothing beats the feeling you get when you've been sneaking around a heavily defended compound for the best part of an hour (without saving), then getting what you came in for, setting off the alarms, and escaping under some heavy fire."

Chris, via e-mail

"I think there's a nice mix for PC gamers. There's the crap like *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* and there's good stuff like *Gunman* and *The Sims*, so it's the best of both worlds."

Andrew Watts, Cornwall

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 *Champ Man 99/00* (Eidos)
- 2 *Age Of Empires II: Age Of Kings* (Microsoft)
- 3 *Planescape: Torment* (Interplay)
- 4 *Quake III* (Activision)
- 5 *Tomb Raider: Last Revelation* (Eidos)

2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *Baldur's Gate* (Interplay)
- 2 *Half-Life* (Sierra)
- 3 *Tomb Raider 3* (Eidos)
- 4 *FIFA 99* (EA)
- 5 *Gangsters: Organised Crime* (Eidos)

5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *Screamer* (Virgin)
- 2 *Command & Conquer* (Virgin)
- 3 *Worms* (Team17)
- 4 *Rebel Assault 2* (LucasArts)
- 5 *Hexen* (GT Interactive)

COMPETITION

WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:

QUESTION: What's the name of Alice's cat?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with all the information requested, to the address below.

- ★ Name/address/postcode/daytime phone number/email/job title/company name/ Age if under 18.
- ★ Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies.
- ★ Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (CPCZ0301A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: March 8, 2001.

★ Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.

INSIDE GAMES

WAR GAMES: THE MILITARY CONNEXION



Team Fortress Classic took multiplayer soldier games to a new level.

Videogames have been part of the military entertainment complex since *BattleZone* was bought by the US army in the early 1980s. The author of *Trigger Happy*, Steven Poole, asks whether every PC gamer in the future could be a potential soldier

Playing videogames makes you a better war-monger. Fact. And we're not talking about bespoke US\$20m simulators, but off-the-shelf commercial games. Last year, the US Army Aviation Center announced the results of a field study to determine whether initial practice on videogames would help recruits in their training. The answer was an unqualified 'yes'.

Certain military areas are much more heavily simulated than others in the early stages of training, for the obvious reason of cost. It is clearly bonkers to try to simulate hand-to-hand combat or parachute training with a screen and a joystick. But on the other hand, you don't want a raw recruit crashing and burning a hundred-million-dollar warplane at his first attempt (it's not the recruit you worry about, of course, but the hundred million dollars).

Tank gunnery is another area dependent on simulation, as real shells cost money. This was the first successful symbiosis between the military and the commercial videogame world, when a custom version of *BattleZone* was used by the US Army as a Bradley Fighting Vehicle training simulator.

An up-to-the minute example is *Spearhead II*, an online multiplayer tank combat game, which is used by the US Army's Simulation, Training and Instrumentation Command (STRICOM) to provide the front end and mission scenarios for the military's own battle-command software, as well as to train tank crews and commanders in tactical decision-making.

Jerry Speer, STRICOM's program manager, said recently that *Spearhead*

“As long as games offer the excitement of playing war without the downsides, few joystick jockeys will enrol”

II is “a game you can play and derive training benefits from, which is more attractive to soldiers than picking up a manual about what button to push to send which message. You can actually do it in a game environment.” Hey, guys, war can be fun...

The example of *Spearhead II* shows how the influence between videogames and the military can be a two-way street. The game's co-developer, Mäk Technologies, was awarded a US\$750,000 contract by STRICOM to make the sequel to *Spearhead* more compatible with the military's in-house defence systems.

Meanwhile, Joanna Alexander of videogame studio Zombie VR, who also worked on *Spearhead II*, has a CV that includes work on “nuclear target development” and “the application of virtual reality to air-to-air combat debriefing” at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

Such synergistic feedback between commercial videogames and the military has, it seems, a further, unspoken purpose. The US Army seems to hope that kids raised on

press-ups in the mud, or actually getting your face blown off), not too many joystick jockeys are going to enrol happily for the real thing.

In fact, quite the opposite could be the case. As the field of online wargaming becomes ever more sophisticated – with thousands of players all assigned to accurate military roles as tank commanders, infantry soldiers or pilots, fighting in first-person 3D, while a few generals decide the course of battles through a real-time strategy interface – the minority of hard-core war-fetishists, who would normally join the army as soon as they could, might find all their pugilistic needs met by such a virtual experience.

And so the biggest threat to conventional armies would be a constant and irreversible depletion of manpower. That would necessitate the increasing automation and virtualisation of real war, with much actual fighting driven into the digital realm almost by default. In 50 years' time, will the only difference between war-gaming and actual war be the blood on the ground in a country thousands of miles away from any of the combatants?

Perhaps most notorious in the field of videogame-military synergy is the

detailed, authentic PC war games will form a generation of computer-savvy soldiers, with lightning reactions and strategic thinking honed by years of videogaming. The enlisting of teenagers has flagged in recent years, so it cannot be a coincidence that the new “cool stuff” area of its website (www.army.mil/coolstuff/default.htm) seems to aim to attract young people by means of shockwave and java games. This is both comical and faintly disturbing, but as long as videogames offer the excitement of playing war with none of the downsides (being told to do 200



Killing in a game is one thing, but could you do it in real life?



The US Army is using the Delta Force: Land Warrior engine to create its own simulations.

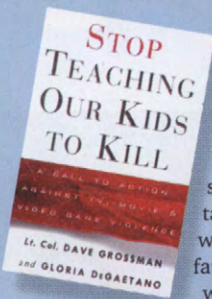
Wind SW, 18kph
 WPT: TRAINING POOL
 Range: 210m
 Distance: 4m
 SICW: Boerz
 Profile: 71
 030
 Delta Force Training Center

well-publicised use of a custom hack of id's *Doom* for videogame training of soldiers by the US Marine Corps Combat and Development Command. This is the example much quoted by Lt Col David Grossman, author of a book entitled *Stop Teaching Our Kids To Kill*, who regularly pops up in the American media (and before the US Senate) to argue that violent videogames are actually training millions of children to become killers.

But his argument is refuted by his own past. Grossman was employed as an army psychologist who used deliberate brain-washing to overcome soldiers' innate reluctance to kill a fellow human being. They could score highly on wargaming and simulation tests, but somebody like Grossman had to be around to convince them to fire real bullets into real flesh.

So videogaming alone – however close it might be in form to military training – cannot provide the motivation to go out and kill in real life. Grossman and his supporters conveniently forget, moreover, that the Marines used *Doom* not as a killing trainer, but as a simulator with which to practice teamwork, of the sort that is now coded into PC classics such as *Hidden & Dangerous*, *Team Fortress Classic* or *Counter-Strike*.

It seems obvious, indeed, that *H&D* and the like are attractive not merely because they're about war, but because a military mission offers a structure in which the virtues of good videogames can excel. The kind of teamwork demanded by something like *Unreal Tournament* is ramped up with suspense, split-second problem-solving, and the adrenaline thrill of virtual danger. We can enjoy the aesthetic pleasure of executing a perfect sniper's headshot, or clearing



⊕ Lt Grossman's book condemns film and TV as well as games.

a roomful of hostage-takers with superb man-management tactics, without actually wanting to dress up in fatigues and spend our weekends in the TA.

Consider, too, the manifold ways in which successful commercial games such as

H&D or *Rainbow Six* are built using certain highly unrealistic paradigms, compared to the maniacally "accurate" models of fighter-jet or tank simulators. While the weapons and soldier animations are well researched and true to life, the games include such ideas as soldier "health" – not to mention symphonic orchestral soundtracks – that have nothing to do with real-life war. And this is essential to good gameplay. One-shot kills, for example, would be far more realistic, but as the developers of *Delta Force: Land Warrior* realised, in order to make the game playable you then have to make enemy soldiers unrealistically stupid. That turns out to be a higher price to pay, in gameplay terms, than allowing your soldiers to survive a few bullets.

Children who used to play Cowboys and Indians in the garden, shooting each other with suckered arrows, can now explore the same play form in much more detail, and with much more excitement, on a computer. But it doesn't mean they are becoming any more violent or aggressive, and it doesn't mean that any more of them will want to join the Green Berets when they grow up. It is precisely because videogames abstract skill so beautifully from content that we can enjoy wargames without wanting to go to war.

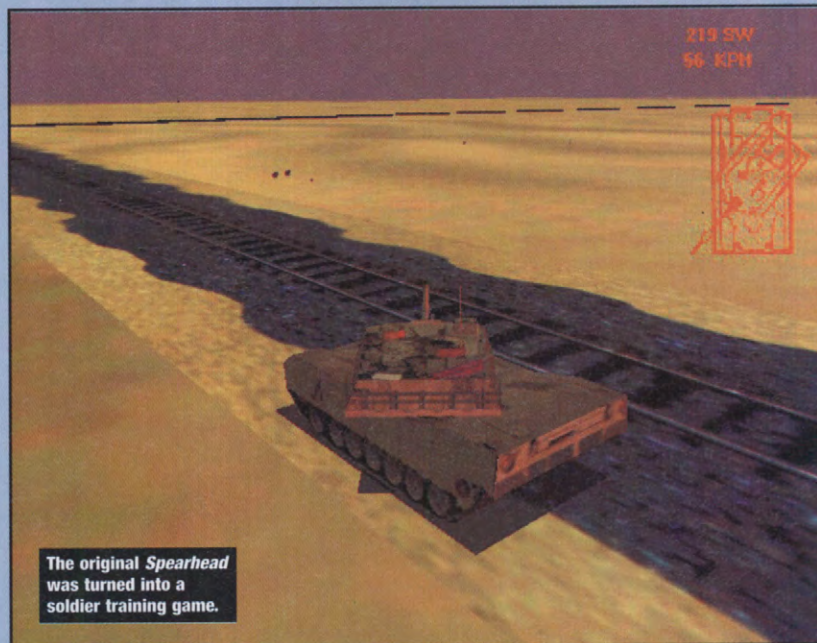
⊕ Steven Poole is the author of *Trigger Happy: The Inner Life of Videogames* (Fourth Estate, £7.99)



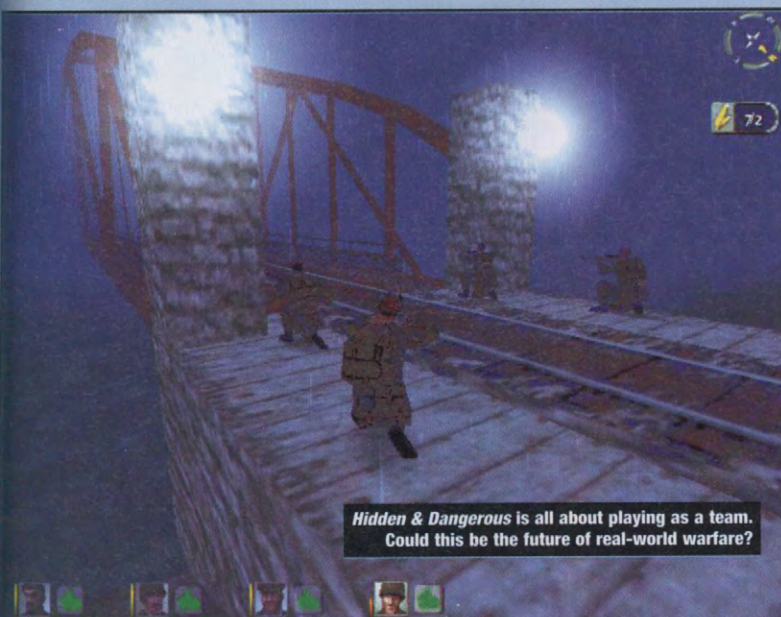
The kind of team coordination *Counter-Strike* encourages is exactly what the army is looking for.

Free-Look Mode

FIRE1 for Next Target FIRE2 for Prev Target JUMP to Change Modes
Your text messages can only be seen by other Spectators



The original *Spearhead* was turned into a soldier training game.

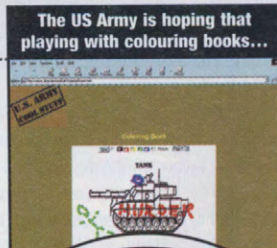


Hidden & Dangerous is all about playing as a team. Could this be the future of real-world warfare?

PLAYED TO DEATH

One small step for gamersplayers?

The US Army Aviation Center conducted an experiment that was designed to tell whether "workload-coping and attention-management skills developed through structured videogame experience would generalise to flight training". New pilot recruits were given 10 hours of training on *Space Fortress*, and their results over the next 18 months of real training were compared with those who had not played the game. The study concluded that the *Space Fortress* players had a technical advantage and a lower attrition rate. This confirmed the results of an earlier experiment conducted with the Israeli Air Force.



...will turn you into one of these.

The Man who KNOWS

NEW YEAR, SAME SHIT

A dirty, filthy, lowlife goblin-fancier is facing 15 years in prison for leaving his nine-month-old son to die while he pranced around the mythical world of *EverQuest*. White-trash **Tony Bragg of Tampa, USA**, viciously assaulted the child and left him unattended for more than 24 hours. A fanatical player, 25-year-old Bragg had previously lost his job at a local **Subway** because of his commitment to the game. Convicted criminal Bragg was on the second day of a **McDonald's** training course when the offence occurred. Apparently, his son's crying was impairing his enjoyment of the game. Prosecutor **Suzanne Rossomondo** agreed that the game played a part in the incident, claiming: "It had some involvement, but more important was Bragg's temper and lack of patience. His neglect of the child was only brought to a head because of the game." She also said that he played the game an inordinate amount, stating: "I won't say every waking moment, but quite a bit." Representatives of **Sony Online Entertainment** declined to comment, although they were pleased to announce that on New Year's Day, the *EverQuest* universe played host to a record 81,858 simultaneous players. Accidents just waiting to happen.

Online bother of a far less serious nature struck *Diablo II* devotees, as fans were devastated to learn that hackers had massacred their hard-earned wizards, loom-operators and trolls in a virtual pillage of the online world. Developer **Blizzard Entertainment** apologised "for any inconvenience or frustration caused" and set about resuscitating characters and returning stolen goods. There is, however, no truth in the rumour that an emergency hotline was cancelled after it was discovered that most players' fingers were too fat to dial the number.

A report in upmarket stroke mag **Playboy** has suggested that men are allowing their genitals to wither in favour of playing virtual reality computer games. The survey showed that eight per cent of men admitted to having less sex due to the lure of consumer electronics, and only three out of four claimed that if stranded on a desert island, a beautiful woman would take precedence over any hi-tech gadgets.

Someone that combines both options is **Angelina Jolie**, who has confessed that she is involved in a high-profile threesome that features skin-tight rubber clothing, gymnastic activities and hoards of wild animals. In an interview with *Empire* magazine, the tattoo-arsed actress revealed that she has agreed to appear in a further two **Tomb Raider** movies, despite her debut not being screened until the summer. If she wants her back doors kicking in, she's only got to ask.



Well, the logo is impressive, anyway

THE THING TRANSFORMS INTO A GAME

Computer Artworks • ETA TBA •

www.artworks.co.uk

"You have got to be ***** kidding"

John Carpenter's 1982 *The Thing* is an extraordinary film that manages to break two rules: it's better than Howard Hawks' black-and-white original and it has Kurt Russell starring in a good movie. Now it has the chance to break another rule by becoming a great

game that can cross platforms as it gets turned into a PC, Xbox, Gamecube and PS2 title.

Having developed the extremely good-looking *Evolva*, we're confident Computer Artworks will be able to translate John Carpenter's nightmarish visions to screen without any difficulty. The game picks up where the film ends, which means that CA's take on the ending – a subject of heated discussion among sci-fi fans – would be that one of the two surviving humans was actually the alien.

Presumably, you'll play a character trying to capture and kill the alien creature, although we're hoping CA goes for a more novel approach and lets you play the Thing itself instead. Although the "jumping into other bodies" theme of *Messiah* didn't quite work as well as it could have, the ability to transform into any person or animal around you in your quest to wipe out every living thing would be significantly more interesting than a *Resident Evil* sort of action/adventure.

We look forward to the level where you get your head lobbed off, and make it sprout long spidery legs before scuttling off into the shadows. Now that would be something to talk about.

GREAT GAMING CLICHÉS

Another industry cliché is outed and dissected with a blunt instrument

#4 BETTER THAN HALF-LIFE?

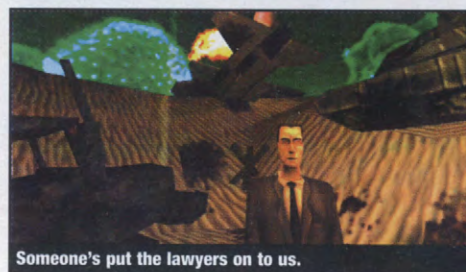
A **PC ZONE** favourite this one – along with the much-loved "Some Game Meets *Quake III*: You Know It Makes Sense™" – relying on the fact that every self-respecting gamer judges everything against the yardstick to end all yardsticks. *Half-Life* (now officially The Best Game Ever) is so good that playing anything else is like going back to a black-and-white TV.

But surely we can't go around looking at everything in production and saying it's going to be as good as Valve's masterpiece, and then pointing our finger and cackling because it's actually nowhere near as good? Developers around the world must be growing to hate the damn thing, especially when they unveil their latest root canal surgery simulator and have journalists complaining that there are no black ops with great AI running after you.


In a more sinister twist, the only game that is likely to beat *Half-Life* is *Half-Life 2*. Which brings us nicely to another great gaming magazine sin. The most heinous propagandistic prevarications contained in three seemingly innocuous words: coming next month. But that's another story.



It doesn't look that good...



Someone's put the lawyers on to us.



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REVENGE

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VENGEANCE

Choose your warrior from 21 Mechs*, then load up with weapons and let the battle commence.
Lead your lancemates in an epic 30 mission single player campaign. Or join fierce multiplayer action for up to 16 MechWarriors.
Vengeance will be yours.

The assault begins 02.02.01

www.mechwarrior4.co.uk

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Where do you want to go today?™



DIV GAMES CREATOR

Judge a game-creation competition? With our reputation? Bingo!

If you want to create your own game there are several paths you can meander down. You can sketch out an idea on the back of a crisp packet, spend years hawking it around various development houses, and then kill yourself. Or you can buy a copy of DIV Studio and code your own masterpiece without having a multinational

publishing corporation breathing down your neck, urging you to release unfinished code. We know which one we'd prefer.

So, when we were approached to judge the entries for this competition we jumped at the chance. It's not every day that you're given the opportunity to check out the raw talent bursting

from the seams of adolescent bedrooms across the globe. And we were pleasantly surprised with the quality on offer.

You see, it's not easy to create a successful game, even when you've got DIV Studio to hand. First you need a concept. Then you need the artistic and acoustic wherewithal to mould your ideas into on-screen reality. And finally, and most importantly,

OVERALL DIV GAMES CREATOR 2000

SPONSORED BY PACKARD BELL

Prize: Packard Bell Platinum 6073 PC

Winner: Bert The Barbarian

Name: Anthony Flack

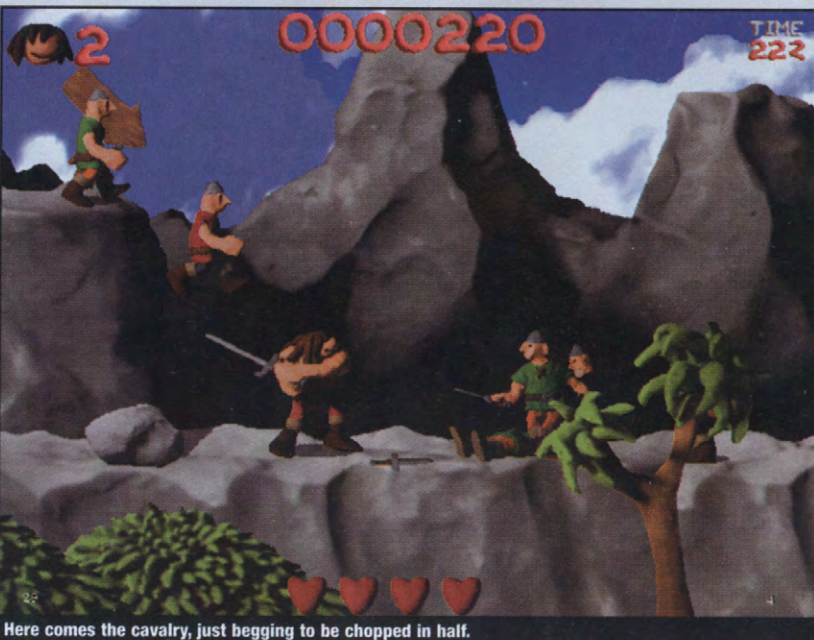
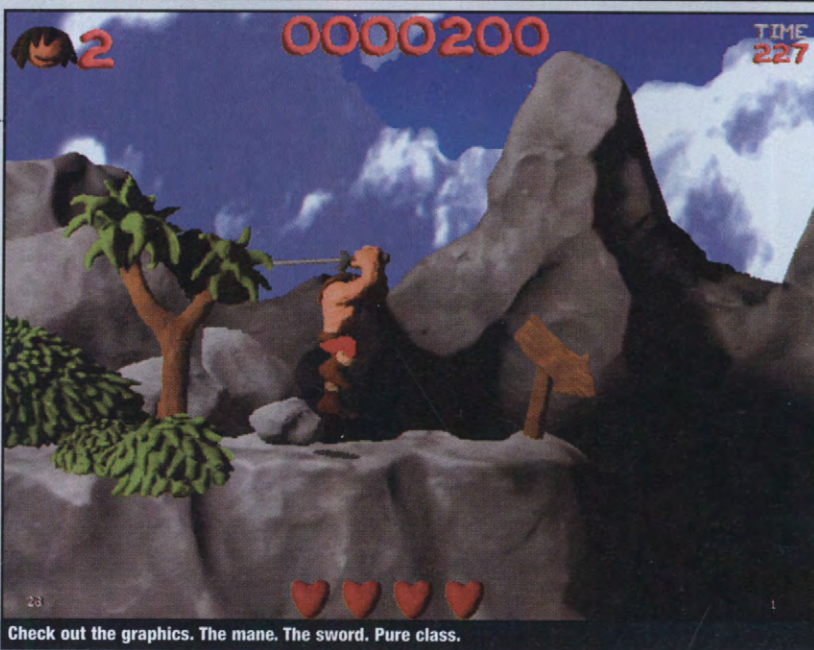
Age: 24

Hot on the heels of *Severance: Blade Of Darkness* comes *Bert The Barbarian*, a hack 'n' slash platform epic that comes close to replicating the guts and gore quota of Codemasters' big money release. Bert isn't too clever, but he can walk left and right, jump, and chop people in half with his trusty axe.

In terms of looks and presentation, nothing else came close to *Bert*. The plasticine-like graphics are superb, and animations and small touches – like Bert's flowing hair – means this romped home in the end.

The gameplay needs some tweaking – it's hard to get off a level, and when you get killed you have to go back to the start – but the way the knifemen back off as you crawl towards them shows a lot of thought has gone into it.

Oh, and a special mention should be made of the opening music. It's fantastic, and the in-game sound is rather groovy too.



10 Runners-up each win a copy of Dance eJay 3

Bomix

Escape From The Crypt

CubeRacer

Defender

Disco Fighter

RTS War

Scavengers

Abyss

Duel

Dronezone



PCZONE

Logitech

2000 COMPETITION

you need that little bit of magic that elevates your game from a frustrating mess of pixels into something that's going to compel players to have just one more go.

The upshot is, after months of careful deliberation and the most rigorous playtesting the ZONE team has ever undertaken, we've finally picked the winners and runners-up and condemned



BEST USE OF GRAPHICS

SPONSORED BY HERCULES

Prize: Hercules 3D Prophet II GTS 64Mb graphics card

Winner: Vertically Challenged

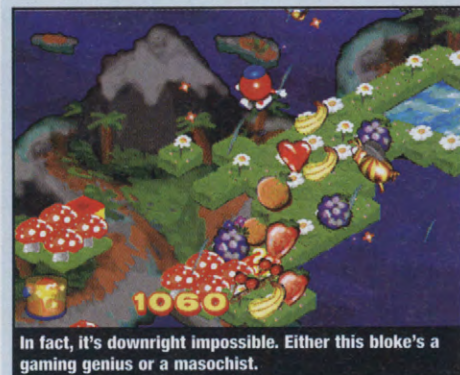
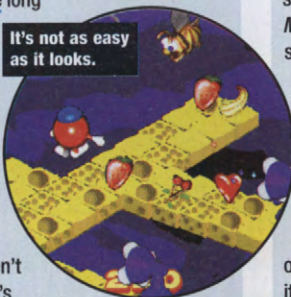
Name: Jeremy Wood

Age: 27

Kicking off with a static intro 'movie', complete with helium-voiced balls, *Vertically Challenged* is just the right side of weird to make an impression. The idea isn't the most original – keep yourself airborne by bouncing across various platforms – and the game itself is almost criminally hard, but with a few tweaks you'd have a game that's eminently playable.

What's more impressive is the use of graphics that are big, brash and colourful. Unless you're super-human you won't actually stay alive long enough to appreciate them, but we were impressed nonetheless.

Oh, by the way, if you can remember the name of the game that this has been modelled on, let us know. We think it featured a bouncing yellow ball, but our collective memories aren't what they used to be. And it's going to bug us for the rest of our lives.



In fact, it's downright impossible. Either this bloke's a gaming genius or a masochist.

BEST USE OF SOUND

SPONSORED BY VIDEOLOGIC

Prize: VideoLogic Sirocco Speakers

Winner: Missile Defence

Name: Michael John Jones

Age: 29

When we agreed to judge this competition we assumed that we were going to be drowned by a deluge of scrolling shooters. We were disappointed. In fact, *Missile Defence* is the only entrant in a genre that's surely crying out to be resurrected by DIV.

In a nutshell, this is a variant on the *Asteroids* classic, with a wraparound screen and loads of great big missiles to repel. You use your cursor keys to control the ship, and the mouse to aim your shots. Unfortunately, this dual-control system actually lets the side down, as it's tricky to manoeuvre and shoot accurately. However, it does sport some impressive old-skool sounds and a rocking soundtrack that wins its creator a whacking pair of Sirocco speakers.



Sort out the controls and there's definitely a decent game lurking in here.

the rest to ignominy. That's what we do. So, without further ado, feast your eyes on the winners of the DIV Games Creator 2000 competition. And, when you've sated yourself, you can look forward to sampling the winners' games for yourself on one of next month's cover CDs.

BEST GAMEPLAY

SPONSORED BY BROTHER AND LOGITECH

Prize: Brother Laser Printer HL 1030 and Logitech QuickCam Express

Winner: Skull

Name: Diogo Paulo de Fonte Lapa

Age: 16

One of the oldest genres in the world is the 2D platform game, and it's probably one of the most frustrating in the world, ever. We grew up on *Manic Miner* and *Monty The Mole*, so we're the acknowledged experts of all things left, right and jump, and *Skull* is pretty damn good.

You might think it's pretty simple to come up with a few playable levels, but out of all the entries we sifted through, this is the one that stayed on the right side of playable. With different power-ups to collect, moving platforms, psychotic robots and the biggest explosions we've seen in a DIV game, *Skull* steals the Best Gameplay award for its creator.



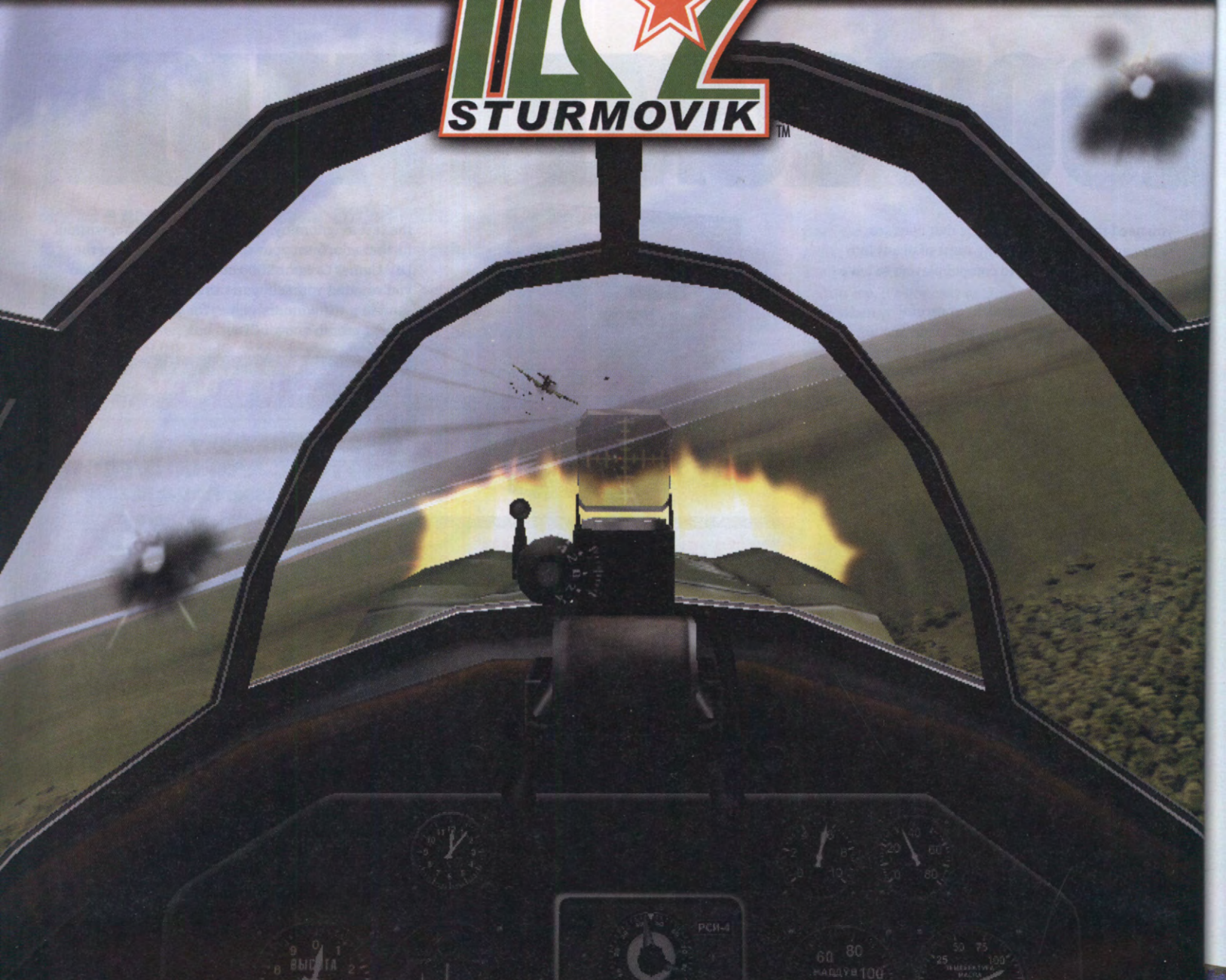
The trick is combining all these elements into a playable cohesion.

Available: Q2 2001 *
* Subject to change!

"This is a simulation that should move the genre forward by at least a generation".
SimHQ.com



"...the new benchmark of how a sim should look and fly...more than just a pretty face."
Combatsim.com



IL-2 Sturmovik is the first simulation that portrays the ferocious air battles that raged over the Eastern front between Soviet-Russia and Germany during World War II.



- ★ Fly accurately detailed aircraft such as the IL-2, Bf-109, MiG-3, P-39, LaGG-3 and go up against computer controlled planes like Yak-9, La-7, U-2, FW-190, He-111, Ju-87 and R-10!
- ★ Experience amazing landscapes, meticulously detailed ground objects, realistic explosions, cloud layers and weather conditions!
- ★ Multiplayer games with up to 32 players in 'dogfight' mode and 16 players in 'co-op' mode over the BLUE BYTE GAME CHANNEL and via LAN!
- ★ Use the Quick Mission Builder to create new Missions!
- ★ Over 65 different vehicles will engage in ground and Naval battles!
- ★ Difficulty levels to suit the taste of any flight sim enthusiast!

Visit the BLUE BYTE GAME CHANNEL for more information, demos, movies, forums & developer chat events: www.bluebyte.net

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Developed by:



www.bluebyte.net

PCZONE READER AWARDS 2000

VOTE NOW!



Come on there is still time to register your votes, as well as giving yourself the chance to win a prize

CATEGORIES

BEST FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

Star Trek: Voyager, Gunman Chronicles, KISS Psycho Circus, Project IGI, Thief II

BEST STRATEGY GAME

Shogun: Total War, Ground Control, Red Alert 2, Earth 2150, Sudden Strike, Homeworld: Cataclysm, Call To Power 2, The Sims

BEST RPG

Deus Ex, Vampire: The Masquerade, Planescape: Torment, Baldur's Gate II, Diablo II, Icewind Dale

BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE

Escape From Monkey Island, Hitman, Rune, Severance: Blade Of Darkness, Giants

BEST DRIVING GAME

Colin McRae 2.0, Midtown Madness 2, Grand Prix 3, Insane, F1 Championship 2000

BEST SIMULATION

B-17 Flying Fortress: The Mighty Eighth, Combat Flight Sim 2, Comanche Hokum, StarLancer, Terminus

BEST SPORTS GAME

Tony Hawk's 2, Championship Manager 00/01, FIFA 2001, PGA Championship Golf 2000, Open Tennis 2000

BEST ONLINE GAME

Counter-Strike, EverQuest: The Ruins Of Kunark, Ultima Online: Renaissance, Allegiance, Starpeace

GAME OF THE YEAR

Deus Ex, Championship Manager 00/01, The Sims, Shogun: Total War, Planescape: Torment, Tony Hawk's 2, Star Trek: Voyager, Baldur's Gate II

BEST PUBLISHER

Eidos Interactive, Activision, Electronic Arts, Havas Interactive, Infogrames, Take 2 Interactive, Microsoft, Codemasters

BEST DEVELOPER

Creative Assembly, Ion Storm, BioWare, Sports Interactive

BEST USE OF GRAPHICS

Severance: Blade Of Darkness, Sacrifice, Vampire, Rune, Alice, Giants

BEST USE OF SOUND

Escape From Monkey Island, Deus Ex, Sacrifice, Tony Hawk's 2, Shogun: Total War, Thief II

MOST ORIGINAL GAME

Deus Ex, The Sims, Giants, Shogun, Counter-Strike

Remember, these are only suggestions and you can nominate any game you like as long as it was released in the year 2000.



PCZONE READER AWARDS 2000 VOTING FORM

BEST FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

BEST STRATEGY GAME

BEST ROLE-PLAYING GAME

BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME

BEST DRIVING GAME

BEST SIMULATION

BEST SPORTS GAME

BEST ONLINE GAME

GAME OF THE YEAR

BEST PUBLISHER

BEST DEVELOPER

BEST USE OF GRAPHICS

BEST USE OF SOUND

MOST ORIGINAL GAME

Name:

Job Title:

Address:

Postcode:

E-mail:

Daytime Telephone:

Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

Please tick if under 18 years of age

*** TERMS AND CONDITIONS:** Entries with all nominations filled out correctly will be entered into the prize draw and winners will be selected at random after the closing date. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into and all winners will be notified by post. This competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing or any other companies associated with the Awards. Only one entry per reader. No cash alternatives will be offered. Submission of entry will be taken as acceptance of these rules.

SEND YOUR VOTES TO: Helen Cribb, PC ZONE, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1P 5FF.

*** All nominations must reach us by March 16, so please start sending them in right away. A photocopy of the voting form or a postcard are fine if you don't want to cut up your copy of the mag, just don't forget to include all the details required. Either this, or you can vote via the website, or through the e-mail we send to you if you are already registered on the site.**

HOTSHOTS

The new royalty in real-time strategy

WARRIOR KINGS

★ Sierra • Out summer 2001

Best described as *Shogun* with a fantasy setting and a deep economic aspect, *Warrior Kings* could make a big splash on the strategy scene this summer. Black Cactus is not only combining all the best elements of its favourite strategy games it's also interweaving a rich story and allowing the players

to choose their own path in the gaming world rather than having to pick a predetermined race at the start. If you lean towards evil magic the landscape around your village will darken and you'll be able to recruit some pretty ugly creatures to fight on your side. On the other hand you could

champion your cause with knights in shining white armour and live in a place where the sun always shines and the sky is always dreamy blue. The 3D engine is looking fabulous, and you only need to glance at the screenshots to realise how much detail is going into the finished product.



MAILBOX



We unravel the mystery of ping, and an old man pines for the days of *Robotron*. Business as usual then

★ ANSWERED BY Dave Woods

CONTACT INFO

Write to us, and if your letter is selected as Letter Of The Month we'll send you a prize.

WRITE TO Mailbox, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1P 5FF.

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

A CLEVER MAN SPEAKS

I consider myself to be a clever man, with knowledge of computers, but there is one thing that is *really* beginning to tickle my chin.

What is ping? Napster has a thing at the end of downloads saying ping, all the games I play over the Net use ping – is it some sort of new language that everyone except me speaks?

I am distraught! If someone doesn't explain to me soon, I will go crazy! Please help me!

Andrew Ritchie, Surrey

★ A clever man with knowledge of computers? You're tickling our chins, surely? Still, in the interests of keeping our readers sane, here's your nugget of info.

Ping is a measurement of speed between two machines on a network. When playing online, your ping is the time it takes for game information to travel from your PC to the server and back. The lower the

number, the faster your connection. And Napster is doing exactly the same thing, so the PCs with the lowest ping are the ones you should be looking at.

Check out next month's 'Getting online' feature for loads more information.



UUUGH

I am writing in reference to a captioned screenshot for *Star Trek Deep Space 9 – The Fallen* in PC

ZONE #98, page 89. I think you know the one I mean: "Oh, you so fine baby. Uuugh." That was probably the funniest caption I have ever read.

Then I got to thinking, it must take a pretty sharp eye and quick reactions to grab a shot like that at a moment's notice. Then I thought, wouldn't it be a good idea if you did a competition where readers send screenshots they had taken themselves and added a funny caption to. You can be the judges and award



Richie's never one to blow his own trumpet, but a reader seems to like his captions. Can you do any better?

prizes for the best ones.

Good idea, huh? At the very least it will give us something constructive to do while waiting for the next mag.

Simon Stevens, via e-mail

★ Richie Shoemaker, our resident headline and caption machine, thanks you from the bottom of his heart. And yes, a screenshot and caption competition sounds like a mighty fine idea. E-mail your entries in JPEG format to letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk (marked Screenshot Competition), or send them in on a floppy to the address on the left, and we'll print the best ones and dish out some insulting prizes in a few months.

SPEED FREAKS

Firstly, I would consider my PC to be of average speed (AMD K6-2 500, 64Mb RAM, Voodoo3), but it seems like almost every decent game

needs a much faster PC to be able to run acceptably. Six months ago, the average was a PII 366MHz with 64Mb RAM and a Voodoo3. Now it looks more like an Athlon 700MHz with 128Mb RAM and a GeForce2. Over six months, that's quite a long leap, whereas graphics and sound in games haven't really changed. So why is more power needed?

I recently bought two games – *Deus Ex* and *Project IGI*. Both of these games (particularly *Project IGI*) run very slowly. *Deus Ex* is OK, and I managed to get through the entire game without losing my head. But *Project IGI* is so slow, it's unplayable (even on the lowest detail setting). If more than two enemies are on the screen at the same time, it chugs unbelievably. I'm only on mission six, and already I'm going to take it back to the shop. It's a great game, but suffers from too much slowdown. Other games with better graphics and sound quality run a lot better.

My point? Developers' perception of the average PC has risen drastically and it's constantly rising. Do games need this much power? Of course not. When will developers realise not everyone has ninja-bastard PCs with all the latest gear?

Ryan Snook

★ Keeping your PC up-to-date is a constant problem, and one that isn't helped by the fact that certain graphics cards won't run with certain games until a patch, released a couple of months after the game, hits the shelves.

The trouble is, if you want to see progress you're

SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON



For the next six months, PC ZONE will be giving away not one, but two of those wonderful GameVoice devices from Microsoft to the writer of the star letter. Using these, you can communicate with other players – including the lucky friend you give your second GameVoice to – online and give yourself a massive advantage over the Luddites who have to stop and type instructions. They're valued at £49.99 each, and are worth every penny. We know 'cause we use them.



Project IGI: huge outdoor maps. Great fun. But pretty tough on slower PCs.

going to have to bite the bullet and accept that you're not going to be able to play certain games without shelling out for the latest kit. The two games you mentioned are both pretty intensive, and *Project IGI* in particular stretches the boundaries of the PC game by sporting huge outdoor environments.

What is a major pain in the arse is publishers printing minimum specs that are obviously woefully inadequate, cajoling people into buying games when their systems aren't up for the job. The only advice I can give you is to check the specs that *PC ZONE* prints before buying a game.

OAP

Call me old fashioned, but are games getting too complicated? Yes, I'm one of those sad 33-year-olds who grew up with classics such as *Robotron* and *Tempest*, when basically all you had to do was kill everything on the screen. You could literally work out what you were supposed to be doing in minutes. I know this isn't everyone's cup of tea, but surely playing games should be an enjoyable experience.

The latest batch of games seem to require an infinite amount of spare time and a clear understanding of nuclear physics.

Take *Deus Ex*, for example. I fired up the demo on your cover CD and started the practice session to find that doors had two types of damage. Bloody hell, talk about hard work. Am I the only one who thinks like this? Don't get me wrong, I admire the work that's gone into a game like this, and it looks beautiful, but who's got the time to play it?

Quake III and *Unreal Tournament* are the *Robotrons* of the 21st century. Fire 'em up and kill everything in sight – just how I like it. This is how games should be, uncomplicated and simple, a bit like myself.

Richard Follett

★ Surely it's horses for courses. There are plenty of simple games around today, but if you

want to relive the glory days check out our new regular *RetroZone* section on page 142, or scour the Internet for an emulator that will allow you to play any of the old classics, like *Robotron* and *Tempest*. Both still play a mean game.

Taking your argument into the world of literature, we'd all be reading Jeffrey Archer novels rather than something that actually requires you to engage your brain.

SQUARE EYES

Why is it that the only adverts on TV for games are for consoles? Most of the games being advertised are ones that only a few sad-minded individuals are going to buy, or really hyped games which turn out to be rubbish, such as *Final Fantasy VIII*.

Friends who are addicted to their PlayStations refuse to believe that PCs can provide the sort of quality that's evident in titles such as *Half-Life* or *Deus Ex*, and without TV exposure I can't convince them to convert.

My point? I would like to see more PC games advertised, so I can kick the ass of someone I actually know at *Counter-Strike*.

Alex, London

★ Unfortunately, there's more money to be made in the land of the console than there is on the PC, which is why you don't see PC games advertised during *Stars In Their Eyes*. More worryingly, stuffy TV

executives seem to be ignoring the PC completely, despite the fact that it's one of the biggest emerging cultures in the world. The BBC has just canned the new *Bleeding Thumbs* show, and no prime-time alternative is planned.

It makes you wonder why we bother paying our licence fee.

GAMEPLAY, GAMEPLAY, GAMEPLAY...

After spending too much time reading your shoddy rivals, I was converted to *PC ZONE* via your cheapo subscription offer. I've found that it's a great mag, up to a point, but I've been getting annoyed recently at certain phrases being uttered by some reviewers. These being (in words of a similar ilk): "it's got isometric graphics, but don't let that put you off", and "it's turn-based, but don't let that put you off".

You seem to be inferring that if it isn't spinny and shiny, or moving so fast that

“Friends who are addicted to their PlayStations refuse to believe that PCs can provide the sort of quality that's evident in titles such as *Half-Life* and *Deus Ex*”

ALEX BEMOANS THE LACK OF TV ADVERTISING FOR PC GAMES

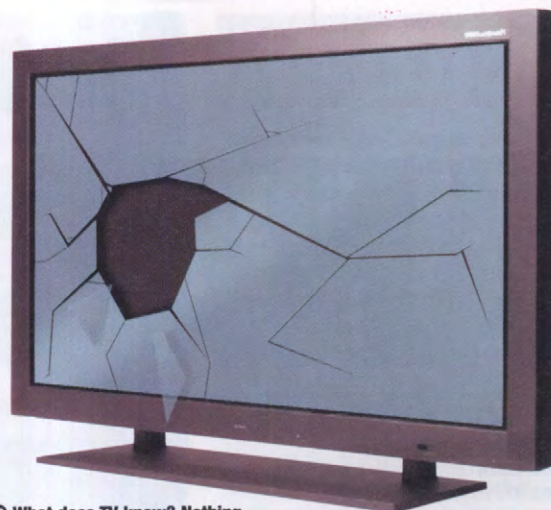
everything's a constant blur, then it's not worth having. Why would people be put off by these features? Are the vast hordes who buy the *CM/Sim City/Civilization* series all misled?

I'm afraid your constant references to the new dawning of 3D just don't wash with a lot of us. The keyword I would like to see in game reviews is gameplay. Beyond this complaint the stricter reviews are cool.

Mark Wileman, Derbyshire

★ Unlike the majority of letters that are sent in by e-mail (hence saving me a lot of work as I can just cut and paste), this one was sent in using traditional pen and biro. But luckily I didn't let that put me off.

But, being the mag that consistently champions *Champ Manager*, I can't really see where you're coming from. Gameplay is all-important, but we



📺 What does TV know? Nothing.

also feel that if a game would benefit from being spinny and shiny (and *CM* obviously wouldn't), then developers should make the effort.

BEARDS

After reading about Steve Hill's recent adventures playing *EverQuest*, I thought I might give it a try for myself. I would normally never play RPGs, but where better to

game and then even more just to have the privilege of playing the damn thing. Almost every game I buy comes with online options, but they don't charge a monthly fee to keep their servers running. Hopefully other online-only games will be released in the future that will consider their customers and not pinch as much money as possible from us.

Ian Morrison, Scotland

★ Now far be it from me to defend a game with more facial hair than Geoff Capes, but there is a reason for the charges. *EverQuest* is a constantly evolving universe and as an online-only entity, the game is constantly updated with patches that improve the balance of gameplay and add new zones and the like. There's a team constantly working on these improvements, and they have to be paid.

So that's where the charges come from.

Allegedly. [E]



Poison from the past...

ANACHRONOX

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Ion Storm
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
WEBSITE www.ionstorm.com
OUT Spring 2001

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Tom Hall's past successes
- ★ Epic storyline and role-playing on a grand scale. Hundreds of locations and characters across six different planets
- ★ Modular weapons system brings countless ways to hurt people in turn-based combat
- ★ Lots of sub-games

Elvis Bacon reveals the truth hiding beneath the overcoat



"So you think you're a big man, do you? C'mon, I'll bite your kneecaps right off."



Turn-based console-style combat.

CV

ION STORM

Ion has had more than its fair share of heavily publicised ups and downs. Tom Hall is president and co-founder, and his past credits include *Commander Keen*, *Wolfenstein 3D*, *Doom*, *Rise Of The Triad* and *Terminal Velocity*.

1999 *Dominion: Storm Over Gift 3* – Tod Porter's real-time strategy game bought as part of the deal when the company was formed. Pisspoor, as *Private Eye* would say.

2000 *Daikatana* – Romero's first-person shooter. The 'D' word is now synonymous with over-hyped gaming flops.

2000 *Deus Ex* – Spector's sci-fi role-playing epic was arguably the best game of last year. A classic.

We're not above degrading our main character," says *Anachronox*'s lead designer Tom Hall. He's talking about a scene where the hero finds himself dancing in a gay bar to get money for a ticket off-planet. It's not what we expected, but then again it's probably not what the lead character had in mind either.

Anachronox has been in development for nearly three years and a certain amount of it is common knowledge. We knew that it'd be a sci-fi epic 3D role-playing game with more than a nod to console RPGs. We knew it used a modified *Quake II* engine, that it'd be dark 'n' moody, and that there'd definitely be a bloke in a long coat in it. But the meat of the game has remained a mystery.

All is now revealed. The game shoehorns you into the role of Sylvester 'Sly' Boots, a down-at-heel

detective with a debt hanging over his head. Your journey begins in the eponymous city of Anachronox, home to every loser in the galaxy, Sly included. The city resides within a time bubble inside Sender One, a planet-sized reflective sphere left by a long-dead alien race and part of a network of Senders forming the hub of trade and galactic civilization. Taking what appears to be a simple protection job, Sly is drawn into a quest to find out what – or who – is causing the universe to fold in on itself.

INSPIRATION IN UNUSUAL PLACES
 "It came to me while I was sitting on the toilet," says Tom Hall. "If you put together 'anachronism' and 'noxious', you get 'Anachronox'."
 "Poison from the past – that's what this game is all about! The city has a

poisonous past to it, and each of the lead characters is hiding some deep psychic poison."

You'll control up to three characters at a time from an eventual cast of seven, as Sly is joined by a bevy of failed superheroes including his lackey robot, an old flame turned mercenary, his holographic secretary, and a renegade scientist. You'll explore six different planets, and tinker with a modular weapons system that allows you to make more than 250 million combinations.

It does indeed use the *Quake II* engine. As Hall says: "It's *Quake II*... well, there are still a few bits of it left! As an engine it's a really good, stable base, and then we've added all sorts of stuff, like 32-bit colour, particle systems and a spline-based camera





Anachronox: a city where everyone but the arches have fallen.



Parking is never a problem.



Welcome to Slutopia. 'Nuff said.



Sly Boots - big on that myth about shoe size.

PLAYING AT GOD

Anachronox is resolutely single player. According to Hall, the team seriously considered a multiplayer element, but realised there would be too many server, story and character issues, as well as technical problems when characters get split up. If only he'd shared this with Romero, we might have been spared the appalling sidekicks in *Daikatana*. However, *Anachronox 2* will be designed from scratch as a multiplayer game.

Once the first game ships, Ion will be releasing a downloadable set of editing tools with which to create and share new adventures. It's an open architecture, so you just make your own .DLLs and dump them in. The creative side of the editing suite is apparently similar to a scaled-down Avid deck (the broadcast industry's standard tool) and using this, the game's script language, a paint package and a sound recorder, Hall claims to have created whole galaxies in less than 15 hours.

scriptor. Probably the most significant improvement, though, is the lip-synching and facial deformations."

Hall is the first to admit that the game is heavily influenced by epic console RPGs such as *Chrome Trigger* and *Final Fantasy VII*. "To me, the console RPG is not just about hack and slash, it's the variety of game and experience you go through in 35 hours of play. It's about a constantly widening experience. I don't like total freedom in a game from the outset, and I don't want a deluge of information at the start either.

"A game should expand with you, unravelling new layers. Once you know what you can do, the whole world starts to open up for you."

The gameplay in *Anachronox* follows the time-honoured fundamentals of exploration and interaction with people and the environment, battle with various galactic foes, and the discovery of unique weapons and items. Scripted

events keep the universe real, while lots of secret areas and a plethora of sub-games provide diversity.

Hall prefers systems of advancement that come with practice rather than spending points. So *Anachronox* uses an experience-based system where each character has different Battle Skills with unique

“A game should expand with you, unravelling new layers. Once you know exactly what you can do, the whole gaming world begins to open up for you”

effects, and World Skills they can use to access places and info the other characters can't. These skills come in two levels and for the second set you have to find your mentor - wherever he or she might be in the galaxy.

Combat is going to be turn-based. Some battles take you by surprise, some can be avoided and in some you can change the conditions to your advantage. Compared to *FFVII* there

will be fewer but more relevant battles - none of that walking two paces and running into yet another matched set of pointless grunts.

The distinctly console-style of combat may raise a few PC-weary eyebrows, but Hall "really likes the way you can combine skills to make something new - the tactics get really

interesting. We considered using a timing system, or bringing more movement into it, but we've gone through three different combat systems and each time we've concluded that if you allow a lot of motion it's not as much fun overall."

Indeed, *Anachronox* may well make it over to one or two console formats. It has gamepad support and would pop over easily. But Hall isn't

going to be drawn on an Xbox versus PS2 debate.

What really hasn't come across in previous showings of *Anachronox* is how warped it can be. There's no pseudo-*Blade Runner* pomposity to a game where your lead character lappances. Or where one of your party members is an old chap whose World Skill is to yammer, moan and bitch until people and inanimate objects give way. That's got to be a first.

Then there's your holographic secretary who forms part of the interface to the game - an interface that is actively pissed off with you because you had the cheek to have her digitised into a cheap system. And how about a sub-quest where you have to obtain a sock from an alien with a gangrenous foot, or meetings with crotch-biting poisonous spiders? You won't get better tests for facial deformation technology than that.

Anachronox: crazy name, quite possibly a crazy game. [X]



Shipyards cricket anyone?

Conquer the world, you know you want to EMPIRE EARTH

Not content with taking over the world here and now, **Martin Korda** wants your past, your present and your future in his hands. It's just not right

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Stainless Steel Studios
PUBLISHER Sierra
WEBSITE www.stainlesssteelstudios.com
OUT Summer 2001

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Set over a 500,000-year period with 12 historic ages
- ★ Huge scope for tactical diversity
- ★ 200 accurately recreated military units
- ★ Scenario, map and unit editor



STAINLESS STEEL STUDIOS

Based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, *Empire Earth* is Stainless Steel Studios' first game. However, chief designer Rick Goodman cut his teeth on the groundbreaking *Age Of Empires*.

1995 Designer Rick Goodman co-founds Ensemble Studios with his brother, and together they create the award-winning *Age Of Empires*.

1998 Rick Goodman leaves Ensemble Studios and sets up Stainless Steel Studios. Work begins on his new brainchild, *Empire Earth*, which Sierra scoops the publishing rights to.

You may have noticed a strange trend within the world of PC gaming over the last 12 months, which has had both a positive and a negative effect on the whole industry – progress. After years of being trapped in a virtual time loop, in which developers repeatedly churned out more of the same, all of a sudden the industry seems to have picked itself up off its sorry arse and tried to take games to the next level. Take *Shogun* and *Ground Control*, for example, or the trend towards online gaming, with classics such as *Counter-Strike* showing us the way forward.

On the flip side, though, we're starting to see a negative outcome from this sudden ambition, with some developers whining that their dreams can't be fulfilled due to technological restrictions – *Freelancer* being a prime example. However, Rick Goodman and his team at Stainless Steel Studios have managed to resist falling into the latter category, and are currently feverishly working on the completion of their latest project, *RTS Empire Earth*.

I was lucky enough to get to see the game first hand at a presentation in San Francisco a couple of months

ago, after which I got to talk to Rick Goodman about his latest brainchild.

Empire Earth is Goodman's second games project, having previously been the co-creator of *Age Of Empires*. His vision when he formed this new development company was to create an RTS on a truly epic scale, in which the gameplay spans a massive 500,000 years of human history, starting with primitive man and ending with a sci-fi future.

EXPAND THAT EMPIRE

EE's central theme is to take an empire – either customised or one of 12 predefined ones – and advance it through periods of history. As each epoch passes, your empire will grow more powerful and more advanced, and you'll even be able to reshape the

past due to Goodman's insistence on historic accuracy. This means you could find your nation embroiled in the Napoleonic wars or battling against Alexander the Great's armies.

At first glance, *EE* looks little more than a cross between *Civilization II* and one of the *Command & Conquer* games, with its apparent isometric playing viewpoint. To an extent this isn't too far from the truth, as the simplest way to control the action will be from the overhead viewpoint. However, Stainless Steel has provided the option of zooming into the action, so much so that you virtually feel as though you're there. You'll be able to watch the land, air and sea battles from a variety of viewpoints, and Goodman demonstrated this to us by moving the camera into the cockpit of a WWII fighter plane, from where we watched an entire dogfight unfold. We were also shown how the 3D game engine works, with walls and raised ground obscuring or reducing a unit's line of sight.

Rick was keen to point out that fun gameplay has always been more important to him than absolute realism. While many of the 200 combat units are modelled on real-life statistics, it was never an option to sacrifice the 'fun element'





"Open up, we've got a gift for you."

(as he called it) in order to make everything as lifelike as possible.

Throughout the eras, there'll be five different resources for you to collect, depending on the needs of the time. There's also going to be huge scope to play *EE* the way that suits your playing style. If your leadership qualities are more Ghandi than Stalin, you can concentrate on building your empire up as an economic power rather than a brutal military one. Depending on how successful you are, you'll be given varying amounts of Civilisation Points, which you can then use to upgrade the different sections of your empire in areas such as farming, economy and the military.

ALL-OUT MAYHEM

We were treated to some truly epic battles, in which ground, air and sea forces all clashed at once. Goodman explained that every unit has its own particular strength and weakness, and every single one has a counter-unit. In addition to this, your planes will need rearming and refuelling, and you'll be able to customise each vehicle by playing around with their statistics in

“Developer Rick Goodman treated us to some truly epic battles, in which ground, air and sea forces all clashed. Each unit has its own strengths and weaknesses”

the game editor. A scenario editor will enable you to create your own maps.

Of course, no modern-day game would be complete without extensive online options. *EE* is set to allow eight players to clash online, and if development time permits, Goodman hopes to raise this to 16. The online experience looks like it's going to be a huge amount of fun, as you'll be able to advance your empire through the ages, meaning shrewder players could well be developing tanks and irrigation systems, while their opponent's units are still dragging their wives around by the hair.

When I spoke to Goodman, I asked what the most exciting moment of this project was for him. “One of the most exciting days for me was after the first 12 months, when the graphics guy got a teapot on the screen. That was an exciting day,” he said.

Perhaps we'd have needed to have been there to truly appreciate the excitement caused by a hot beverage dispenser floating on a blank background, as his zeal was lost on me and the blank-faced journalists around me. Each to their own though. Personally, I saw more than enough of *EE* to get excited about... and there wasn't a teapot in sight.

Finally, I asked Goodman how much *Age Of Empires* had influenced *Empire Earth*, as the two titles bear more than a passing resemblance to each other. “The project stemmed from *AOE* in terms of all the things I didn't have time for in that first

project. I'm getting the chance to do those things now in *Empire Earth*.”

That much is clear, as *EE* is a huge leap forward from those early days of the RTS, and its scope and ambition, if realised in the end product, could well put even the brilliance of *Civilization* in the shade.

Only time will tell if it's just another RTS with a few novelties or a huge step forward for the genre, but if *AOE* is anything to go by, Goodman and co could well have a product that joins the much-welcomed recent crop of games which further their genre. **EW**



The future series of *Robot Wars* should be more interesting than it is now.



Barbed wire fences to stop tanks? That'll work, honest.



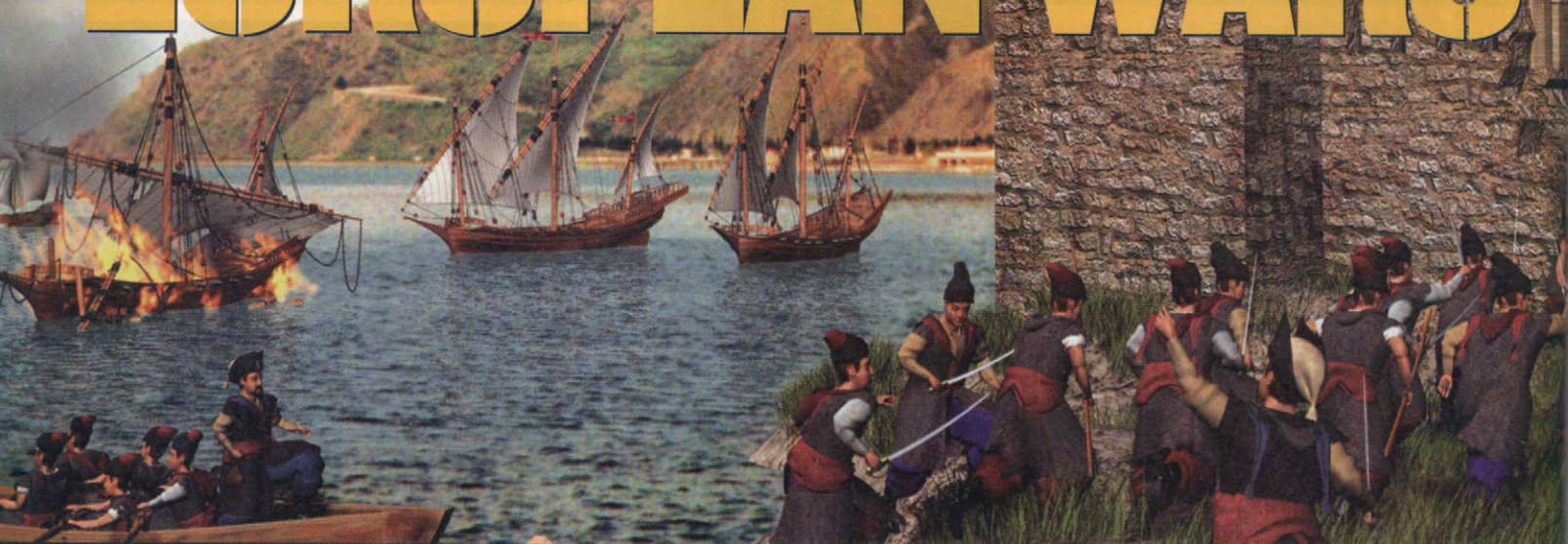
Fight against robots in a futuristic setting...



...or against knights in a historical one.

Big and hairy...

COSSACKS: EUROPEAN WARS



THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER GSC Game World
PUBLISHER CDV
WEBSITE www.cossacks.com
OUT March 2001

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ 16 individual nations and up to 8,000 units with no loss of speed
- ★ Fully 3D landscape with real physics modelling
- ★ 95 campaigns based on real-life battles
- ★ Looks great and plays smoothly

There's no doubt that any game with the *Age Of...* prefix sells truckloads to RTS enthusiasts. So anyone looking to even vaguely usurp Ensemble Studios' cute peasant franchise had better be prepared to walk the walk or suffer the *Star Trek: New Worlds* fate. Luckily, GSC's *Cossacks: European Wars* does more than walk – it dances. In fact, it's soon to dance a cheeky tango of RTS brilliance across your screens.

Work first started on *Cossacks* around the time that the first *Age Of Empires* was released, and by luck as much as anything else it picks up the

One man? Nah, Rhianna Pratchett has 8,000 of them at her beck and call

timeline round about where *Age Of Empires II* leaves off, taking historical strategy neatly from the 16th to 18th century. *AOE* comparisons aside for a minute, the game actually borrows a lot more from *Total Annihilation* than it does from *AOEII*, focusing more on epic battles with, it proudly boasts, "up to 8,000 units with no loss of speed". And that's no idle boast, either. The unit movement is incredibly smooth, especially the ships which use 256 orientations to make them look like they've come straight out of *Hornblower*.

Historical accuracy is stamped all over *Cossacks*, and the developer has gone to great pains to create campaigns and scenarios based on 85 real-life battles from the Thirty Years War to the start of the Napoleonic campaigns.

Units and buildings are also an education in military and architectural history, even if this is slightly exaggerated for effect. For example, the English town hall looks like the Houses of Parliament, while the barracks look strikingly like the

Tower of London. Realistic? Yes. Appropriate? Perhaps not. But such architectural enthusiasm can be forgiven because the highly detailed buildings, which have been individually designed for 16 different nations, are dribble-inducing in the extreme and manage to look beautiful even when they're in ruins.

PLEASE SIR, CAN I HAVE SOME MORE?

The resource-management element of *Cossacks* is a little more complex than most RTS games, with your economy based on six resources: food, wood, gold, stone, coal and iron. But you've not only got to provide resources to create your troops, you've also got to provide enough resources to maintain them. Start running low on food and you could find your troops dying before they've even sniffed a battle. Run out of gold and your ship captains will mutiny, become pirates and start attacking you.

Once you've managed to juggle your resources you have to think about building up your military prowess for some truly epic battles.

This is where it starts looking like the contents of your Grandad's attic has been brought to life, minus several ancient copies of *Boy's Own* and a collection of odd-smelling jars.

From the preview code we've played with, the computer AI looks so good that you could well find yourself wiped off the battle field before you've even managed to build a barracks. In fact, it's rumoured that not even the hardcore strategy experts have been able to beat *Cossacks* on the game's hardest level.

Those players more used to handling 200 units in *Age Of Empires II* may at first be seriously daunted by the prospect of controlling all of *Cossacks*' 8,000 troops. With 300 possible upgrades to consider, it's enough to send the less dedicated running for something not so mentally demanding, probably involving little elephants and sheep. However, calm yourselves – the tutorial scenarios included with the game are particularly helpful at guiding you through all aspects of the game's management.



The English countryside? Er no.



The AI is fond of swarming tactics.



Don't worry, you're not really there.

One of the most interesting aspects of *Cossacks* is the way you control your regiments via a commanding officer, who will allow you to assume different formations going into battle. You'll also need a drummer or a bagpiper to accompany your soldiers into the fray, just to remind them that some things are worse than death.

BRITANNIA RULED THE WAVES

It's worth taking time to familiarise yourself with the nuts and bolts of your military units, because each nation has its own unique strengths and weaknesses. For example, Austria has powerful heavy cavalry units, *Cossacks* are the pride of the Ukrainian army, and because we're harking back to a time when England was regarded as something more than

and you can use your troops to capture peasants and buildings. Once you've perfected the maniacal laughter, you'll have whole armies marching to their deaths in no time.

TIME TO GET HIGH

The landscape is fully 3D, which makes it very important strategically. Your soldiers will naturally head for the higher ground and you'll have a greater advantage if you can capture high points on the map. Real physics modelling means that units will climb hills slower, shoot and see further when they get to the top, and explosions will rebound more strongly in a rocky landscape than they will in a swamp.

The background is also beautifully animated: your wheat fields roll

“Real physics modelling means units climb hills slower, shoot and see further when they get to the top, and explosions rebound strongly in a rocky landscape”

an island of tea drinkers, we have a particularly strong naval force.

It also helps to know how best to arrange your troops for maximum advantage – basically, which units stand in front of which – because the difference between a good formation and a bad one is about 500 little computer-enhanced deaths on your conscience. It's not that easy to steam in and pick it up as you go along, either; you need to know the basics, such as you can only use artillery and grenadiers to knock down walls, you need archers to burn down houses,

gently in the breeze, flags flutter on buildings and waves lap against the shores. It would all be quite peaceful if you didn't have to kill anybody.

The multiplayer aspect of *Cossacks* will support up to eight players online or via a LAN, and will allow you to create random maps or even re-enact actual historical battles (which have been reconstructed in detail, down to the landscape and troop disposition) to see if you can do any better than those who were really there. The expansive nature of *Cossacks* means that serious online battles are likely to last more than just a couple of hours. In fact, *Cossacks*' lead programmer, Sergiy Grygorovych, has had online battles that have lasted three days. So pack a few sandwiches and let someone know where you are.

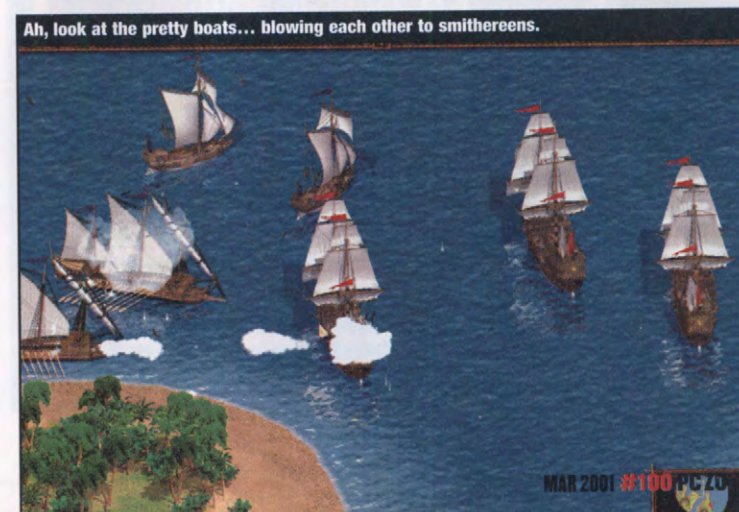
Ensemble Studios has been understandably quiet about the possible release of an *Age Of Empires III*, so whether it's willing to go head to head with *Cossacks* is unclear, but the results should be interesting. *Cossacks: European Wars* looks like being everything you could wish for in an RTS: beautifully detailed, graphically smooth and put together with intelligence and a respect for history. We'll be waiting in anticipation for *Age Of We Wish We'd Got There First*. [EW]



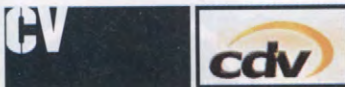
This city is about 20 seconds away from being a smouldering ruin.



The pipes, the pipes, somebody stop the bloody pipes!



Ah, look at the pretty boats... blowing each other to smithereens.



CDV

This German-based publishing company only started distributing games in the UK three months ago.

Dec 2000 *Wet Attack*, sequel to *Lula – The Sexy Empire*. We're not sure why and we don't like to ask. Some things are just plain bad.

Dec 2000 *Sudden Strike*, a dream of an RTS game and one of the best WWII games ever made. Achieved the highly coveted PC ZONE Award for Excellence.

The dogs of war are back... literally

COMMANDOS 2

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Pyro Studios
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
WEBSITE www.eidos.com/www.pyrostudios.com
OUT Spring

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Big, hi-res levels
- ★ New characters should make things easier
- ★ Now with multiplayer action
- ★ 3D spinning interiors



Big knife, small dick.

Despite what Joey said on *Friends*, the commando never goes into combat without a clean pair of underpants. 'What's that got to do with anything?' asks *James Lyon*

Gott im Himmel! There's no doubt about it - *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines* was a bloody hard game. If you played it, you can no doubt imagine the scenario: studying the map for hours on end before making a single move; setting up a multiplicity of cameras to capture the viewpoint from every conceivable position; painstakingly mapping out the perfect route in your mind; then moving your soldier slightly more than an inch to your right five seconds later and getting filled with more holes than an explosion in a sieve factory. Ho hum, time to start again (unless you constantly used the quicksave key, you lily-livered scum).

Commandos required almost perfect timing as you navigated your team of hardened warriors past countless dangers in order to complete your objectives. The fact that you had to keep a close eye on several people at once, all entirely essential to your success, sputtering forward inch by inch, checking

every route and every escape point, didn't make life any easier. To some, it was strategy heaven, to others it was as exciting as defragging the hard drive - but bollocks to that lot, eh? They didn't get this sequel rammed up the commission pipe, did they?

LET LOOSE THE DOGS OF WAR

Thankfully, to ease things a tad for the less cerebral among us, the skills exclusive to each member are available to all others in a reduced capacity, meaning that losing one doesn't mean having to start all over again (not to say you shouldn't keep all your men intact). Whatever the case, there are some new cases joining the original line-up (Green Beret, spy, driver sniper, sapper, dance instructor and marine).

First off there's an obedient dog by the name of Whisky, aiding you in your continuing assault against the march of fascism. As can probably be guessed, Whisky doesn't have much in the way of special abilities, but he is able to act as delivery boy, shuttling weapons and equipment between team members without attracting that bully Hun's attention. Of course, it isn't long before the other side is fighting back, placing freshly mown lawns and other dogs' arses in the way of our wily canine's destinations.

Oh, and call us sick and wrong, but the chance to strap a barrel-load of explosives on to the dog's back and throw his favourite ball through the window of the nearest Nazi mess hall sounds like a winning tactic. But you don't have to worry your pretty little heads about inflicting such cruelty on poor old Whisky, animal lovers: chances are he'll never make it past Level 6's 'Sausage Factory' mission.

Of course, if you're going to have a dog in the game, you're best to balance it out with a bit of skirt as well, aren't you? Step forward Natasha Nikochevski, seductress extraordinaire. Natasha has the enviable ability to turn the enemies' heads in her direction as she pouts and glides, distracting Jerry as our boys sneak past and give them a right good shoeing (Natasha letting fly a hefty kick to the Führers as well). Mind you, with the war going on as long as it did, what with every man being locked up for months on end with nothing but a company of sweaty, grunting males, they might as well have sent in a walrus wearing a blonde wig for precisely the same effect. Or, if we're to believe the more extremes of anti-Nazi propaganda, they could just send in the dog (see, boys and girls, didn't



PYRO STUDIOS

When it comes to PC gaming, it was these guys who put Spain on the map

- 1998 Then, as if from nowhere, *Commandos* appeared. It was the surprise hit of the summer and has sold over two million copies, in Germany mostly.
- 1999 *Beyond The Call Of Duty*, the first and only mission pack for *Commandos*, hits the spot again. *Commandos 2* is announced.
- 2000 Scheduled for a Christmas release, *Commandos 2* slips into 2001. Pyro makes amends by showing off two new games - *Heart Of Stone* and *Praetorian*, both potentially brilliant.
- 2001 A big year ahead, especially if all three games make their expected release dates.



A man swimming in a river beside a church. Yesterday.



The camouflage proved surprisingly effective as the soldiers searched for their missing plane.

we tell you that a barking bomb's the only humane way to an honourable end for our loveable hound?).

Then there's Lupin, the thief who sneaks about in the shadows avoiding the guards' detection far more easily than anyone else on the team. He'll be used for picking pockets and getting past locked doors then.

And let's not forget the chance to give minor commands to NPCs, setting up ambushes and decoys to aid you in your violent crusade.

HUNS UP, BABY, HUNS UP

From the footage we've seen, the animation of each character is looking mighty impressive. While the cartoonish look of the original is still retained, the models have been given a thorough working to ensure that they look as realistic in their environment as possible.

The backgrounds, too, show a higher level of artistic detail than we've seen before. The *Sim City 2000*-

the playing areas are reportedly far

bigger in size than before (not that they weren't big enough to do the job last time). Although to level this out, instead of the 24 missions of the first, the number's been halved to a dozen (though Pyro promises that just as much time will be spent playing the game). The *PC ZONE* Speculate-O-Tron keeps its fingers crossed (which is a bit hard for a machine, believe me) that the large areas don't lead to sloppy play dynamics as the lengthy missions drag on interminably. Still, early days, eh?

THE REICH STUFF

It was always a surprise that the original *Commandos* was such a big hit. It never relied on a flashy campaign or over-hyped enthusiasm to sell it. Whether it's just because it's a good game or whether it's got anything to do with the post-post-WWII generation's unconscious desire to re-enact the glory and

“While the cartoonish look of the original is retained, the models have been given a thorough working to ensure that they look as realistic as possible”

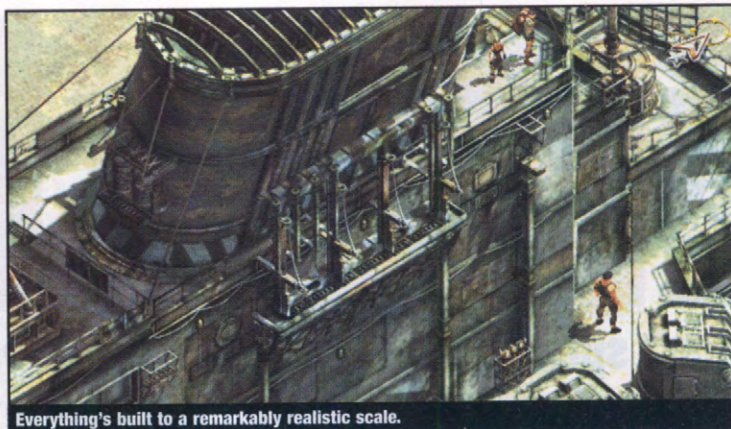
alike ability to rotate the landscape through 90-degree horizontal increments is a welcome inclusion for those who were irritated when inconveniently placed structures obscured the action. Even better, though, is the news that the all-new interior locations are fully rotatable through a full 360 degrees. Ignoring the fact that the rooms seem to reside in an existentially lightless void, it's a nice touch and should allow you to traverse the claustrophobic confines of bases and barracks with much greater strategic precision.

It also helps that the resolution has been upped to today's cosmetic requirements of 1024x768 instead of the shoddy 640x480 (today's resolution equivalent of Brian May). Besides, it's a good job that the resolution's been increased because

machismo of war in a disillusioned, slack society is anyone's guess (or someone qualified to write about the subject at least). Whatever the case, it all looks rather delicious. While most improvements seem to be generally cosmetic, here's hoping that the large interactive environments and additional characters lead to something truly special in the play department. We've already had one data disk looking remarkably similar to the original, we don't need another.

However, from the looks of things the sequel promises to be much more than that - and we haven't even mentioned the new weapons, realistically modelled vehicles, new AI and obligatory multiplayer mode.

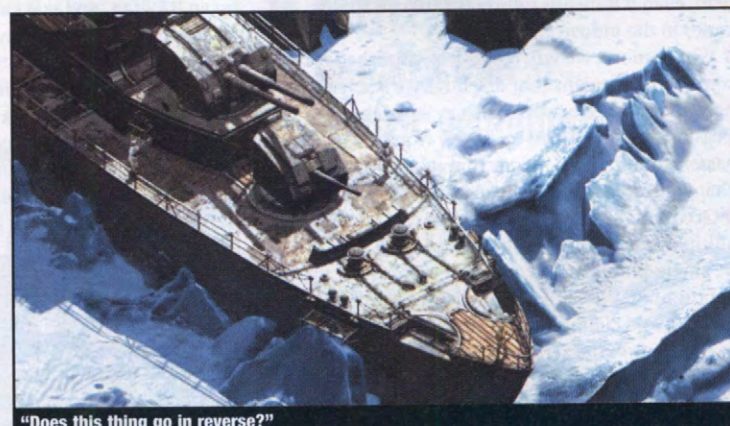
That should even the odds quite a bit when *Commandos 2* is released in a couple of months. [E2]



Everything's built to a remarkably realistic scale.



A beach. Yesterday. No, wait, I've done that one.



“Does this thing go in reverse?”

TANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

A few one-liners you may prefer to forget

If you're making a game about burlesque, larger-than-life heroes of war, it's a necessity that they're kitted out with a bag of one-liners and puns they can drag out to use on their fallen foes. Then let it be no coincidence that yours truly has been commissioned to write the forthcoming script. Here's a taster of what to expect:

- ★ Upon slitting a Jerry's neck: “KNIFE to see you again. Sorry I never THROAT.”
- ★ Upon running over a German with a tank: “CRUSHED wait a minute. Are you STAIN where you are?”
- ★ Upon sliding down a chimney and battering a troop of Nazis to death with a boot: “I've been SANTA give you a message, I'll SHOE it to you now.”
- ★ Upon gutting the Hun with a potato peeler and pissing on his twitching corpse in the vicinity of a viciously powerful generator: “You may think you're a-PEELING but URINE for a world of HERTZ.”
- ★ Upon shooting a Nazi with a powerful gun, and cutting him with a navigational aid: “RIFLE bet MAP was painful.”
- ★ What's this? A gang of angry respectable comedians are coming at me with knives. Well, I've never been in a fight before, but I'll have a STAB (urgh!).

PCZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the *ZONE* reviews first – we'll tell you which games you've got to buy and which games to avoid

MISSION STATEMENT

We're on this planet to serve you. You need to know which games are worth buying, which ones are worth considering for a rainy day, and which ones you should point and laugh at on the shelves. For that reason *PC Zone* works a little differently to any other magazine in the UK.

- ★ Our reviewers are the most experienced and talented in the business. We're all massive gamers and we don't mince our words. If there are problems in a game, then we'll tell you about them, even if it means falling foul of certain big names in the industry.
- ★ What's more, we will only review finished games, which means that any bugs we see within the game will be reported back to you. On occasions we are forced to review from gold masters, but this still means that what we see is what you get in the final boxed product.
- ★ Occasionally this means that we can't review the multiplayer side of the game at the same time as the single-player review, as the servers aren't up and running. When this happens, we won't fudge the issue and claim that 'multiplayer works well', we'll wait until the servers have been running successfully for a month before running a full second review in our Online section.
- ★ We also make sure that we test out the games we review across a variety of different machines and graphics cards. In the office we have access to a whole range of different gaming PCs, from a lowly P233 up to the latest 1Gb behemoth. If we spot differences between the minimum specifications and real-life testing then we'll let you know in the review.
- ★ Our scoring system is the most honest in the industry. If a game is average, then we'll give it 50 per cent. If it's not worth knowing then we'll give it the burial it deserves. On the flipside, you won't find many games getting 90 per cent or above, the prerequisite for our Classic award. Since issue 85 (and

the introduction of the new scoring system), we've only given out seven Classics and this proves that a game has got to be pretty special to get the award.

- ★ We also make sure that every game is reviewed by an expert in the field, which means that each of our reviews can be placed in context with other games of that genre. You won't see a first-person shooter being reviewed by an RTS fan, and you can be sure that the person reviewing a game has played all the important titles in that particular field.
- ★ Every now and again you might disagree with the treatment we've given a game. That's where our Feedback section comes in. This is where you get to have your say in *PC ZONE*, and where your rumblings are answered by the person who wrote the original review in the magazine.



WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call:

Acclaim 020 7344 5000 • Activision 01895 456700 • Anco 01322 292513 • Blue Byte (Germany) 49 0 208 450880 • Codemasters 01926 814132 • Cryo 01926 315552 • Eidos Interactive 020 8636 3000 • Electronic Arts 01932 450000 • Empire Interactive 020 8343 7337 • Europress 01625 855000 • Gremlin Interactive 0114 263 9900 • GT Interactive 020 8222 9700 • Hasbro Interactive 020 8569 1234 • Infogrames 0161 827 8000 • Interplay 020 7551 4222 • Microids (France) 00 33 146 01 54 01 • Microsoft 0345 002 000 • Mattel 01444 246333 • NovaLogic 020 7405 1777 • Rage Software 0151 237 2200 • Take 2 Interactive 01753 854 444 • THQ 01483 767656 • Ubi Soft 020 8944 9000 • Zabloc 01626 332233

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

90-100% If a game scores 90 or above it probably means it's quite good. Classics are games that transcend their parts with the sheer quality of the finished product, creating an experience that will leave an indelible mark on your gaming memory. So, not bad then.



80-89% In this category you'll find great games that just fall short of being truly exceptional. From slightly-flawed genius to a perfectly-executed traditional concept, these might not be true Classics – but they're still worth having.



70-79% These scores are not necessarily a condemnation to gaming hell, in fact, we consider any game that falls into this category as worth checking out. Not Classic or excellent, just very good.

50-69% In this range you'll find games that go from the just-above-average to the alright-really-honest. They're usually good fun but have a limited long-term appeal. Read the review and find out if it's really what you're after before you decide to part with your cash.

20-49% These games just manage to keep their heads above the excrement, although a 20's title is probably pretty damn poor. You can find a game that plays reasonably in this category, but you've been warned.

0-19% Some games are born pants and some have pantness thrust upon them. These games should'nt have been released. Avoid at all costs.



MEET THE TEAM

All *PC ZONE*'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a fan of the genre



DAVE WOODS
GENRE FPS, RPG, arcade
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Virtual Pool 3*



RICHIE SHOEMAKER
GENRE RTS, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Jumpgate beta*



MARK HILL
GENRE Adventure, RPG, FPS
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Tony Hawk's 2 and Virtual Pool 3*



MARTIN KORDA
GENRE Strategy, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Gunman Chronicles*

What is your most memorable *PC ZONE* moment?

Getting the world record for wheat beers the day before we gave it up.

Working with all my heroes.

Putting the keckle on.

Being made the Fire Monitor.

A GAMES ODDYSEY

TIME LORD Richie Shoemaker



Black & White is finally here and contrary to what those who are still in the dark ages might think, the game is in full living colour. It is a game we've been waiting on for many years, and I remember a time when I first joined the

ranks of *PC ZONE* when it was only just announced. Three years and some months later the game is finished. It has been a long hard wait – even harder no doubt for developer Lionhead – a wait that has been well worth it and I'm quite sure that over time it will be seen as one of the few benchmark games in the long history, not only of PC gaming, but gaming as a whole. Uncanny that the game should arrive in time for our 100th birthday issue. Whether it was fate or just a wonderful coincidence isn't important, but what a great game to kick off our second century.

Back to those dark ages though, and as anyone in the *PC ZONE* office will tell you, I've been going through a biannual phase of playing old Spectrum games on my PC via the wonderful ZX32

emulator. As those on the scene know, there are emulators for every conceivable home computer, arcade machine and console since time began, but what has been bothering me is that no one has come up with a DOS emulator that allows us to play pre-Windows PC games on current PCs. Great games like *Ultima Underworld* either refuse to run at all, or do so at a ridiculous speed, usually without sound. Maybe it's just as well.

Which leaves us looking to the future once again, and after *Black & White* everything else seems like an anticlimax. *Quake III Team Arena* and *Theme Park Inc* – both based on age-old classics – have failed to find a regular spot on our hard drives. This shows that when a game like *Black & White* comes along, it moves the goal posts that much closer together and further away. But there are many games worth looking forward to: *Z: Steel Soldiers*, *Operation Flashpoint*, *Duke Nukem Forever* and *Team Fortress 2* – all of which are out later this year and on target to score goals. The present may be *Black & White*, but the future is full of stars. It is 2001 after all.



A CLASS ACT

Certain games deserve to be elevated above and beyond the mass of titles on the shelves. For that reason we've made it hard for a game to receive our coveted Classic award and a score of 90 per cent and above. Each one will have to show originality, take their respective genres to new heights and represent a major step forward in PC gaming. Given this criteria, it would make us look a bit stupid if we awarded two or three every issue, and over the past 16 months since the introduction of our new scoring system we've only given out seven Classics.

This doesn't mean that anything that scores less should be ignored. Instead it's to point to the games that we can call true masterpieces and benchmark titles. The ones that are going to influence the

direction of PC gaming in the near future.

And it doesn't stop there. All review scores in our Top 100 are changed over time, to show their standing as and when new titles are released. So, a game that received 90 per cent a year ago, may not still be considered a Classic today. This means that on any given month you can find out exactly what we consider to be the best games in each individual genre.



REVIEWS CONTENTS

- 48 BLACK & WHITE**
- 54 ONI**
- 56 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER**
- 58 QUAKE III TEAM ARENA**
- 60 THEME PARK INC**
- 62 BLAIR WITCH VOL 3: ELLY KEDWARD'S TALE**
- 63 SQUAD LEADER**
- 64 STARFLEET COMMAND: VOLUME II**
- 67 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001**
- 68 SEA DOGS**
- 70 FAR GATE**
- 70 BATTLESHIP 2**
- 71 CHICKEN RUN**
- 71 PACIFIC WARRIORS**
- 72 THE WARD**
- 72 SUPER TAXI DRIVER**
- 73 WARM UP**
- 73 WARTORN**

74 SUPERTEST

What is the most influential PC game of all time?

84 BUDGET

No cash? Not to worry, here are some cheap games.

87 FEEDBACK

Come on, get it all off your chest.



CHRIS ANDERSON
GENRE RPG, adventure, strategy
CURRENTLY PLAYING *EverQuest: Scars Of Velious*

Sitting in a pub, talking about *EverQuest*.



STEVE HILL
GENRE Football, racing
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Championship Manager 00/01*

Being trapped in a pub with Chris Anderson. Talking about *EverQuest*.



PAUL PRESLEY
GENRE FPS, action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Virtual Pool 3*

Having a haircut.



KEITH PULLIN
GENRE Adventure/RTS
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Black & White*

Being the first journalist to play *Black & White*.



JAMES LYON
GENRE Action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *At getting a degree.*

Mocking up a screenshot for my *Voyager* walkthrough.



PAUL MALLINSON
GENRE Action, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2*

Sitting in a pub with Steve, complaining about Chris.

BLACK & WHITE

Keith Pullin gets his hands on the one we've all been waiting for and gasps a huge sigh of relief...

★ £34.99 • Lionhead/Electronic Arts • Out mid/late February



Any fears you may have had about *Black & White* not fulfilling expectations can be dispelled. After three long years of waiting, Peter Molyneux and Lionhead Studios have unleashed the most original game ever devised for the PC.

If you've followed the progress of Lionhead's debut offering through our diaries and endless

previews, you should already know a fair bit about the game. So, in this review we'll get to the point and concentrate on the things you don't know. We won't, for example, dwell too much on the graphics. Sure, they're totally breathtaking at times, but we've covered all that before. The creature is another subject we've used up many a word on, so while we will talk further about this integral part of the game later

in the review, we won't get too bogged down by repetition.

HELP ME, I'M DROWNING!

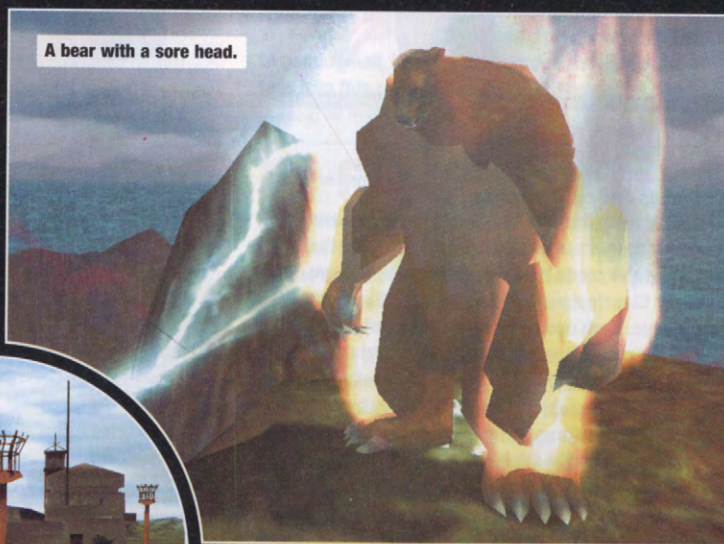
So, just what the hell is going on in *Black & White*? Well, to put it mildly, there's a shed-load going on. We defy anybody not to be overwhelmed the first time they sit down and play it, simply because of the amount of information coming at you. This game takes time and patience. If you aren't blessed with these

handy attributes you may want to go and find some – quickly.

There is so much to learn you can't help but slow yourself down and attempt to absorb things one step at a time. Taking on too much too soon will only confuse and irritate you, so unless you want your brain to dribble out your nose, keep it simple at first. When you start nearing the end of the second land, things start to click into place. But only in land three can you really start



Scraps often resemble arcade beat 'em ups.



A bear with a sore head.



The building part of the game can take some getting used to.



Inside your citadel.

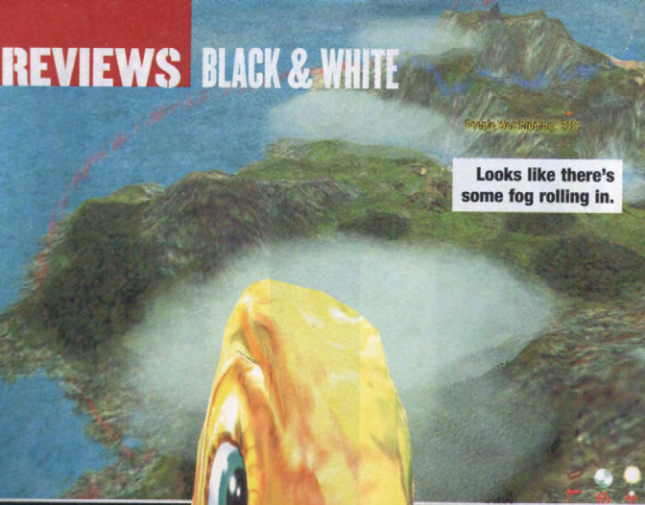


Look out for seagulls, fish and funny-tasting mushrooms.

BLACK & WHITE



“We defy anybody not to be overwhelmed the first time they sit down and play *Black & White*, simply because of the sheer amount of information coming at you”



Looks like there's some fog rolling in.



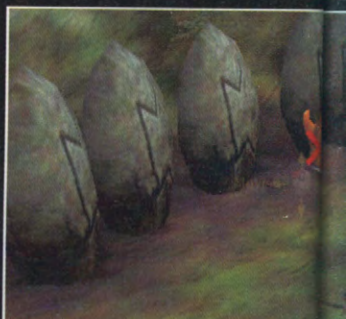
A wolf prowling for sheep.



Another citadel is about to bite the dust.



Villagers attempt to extinguish a forest fire.



playing properly without worrying about whether you're doing something the best way.

So, like chess, *B&W* is not the easiest game to master yet, interestingly, the basic concept behind the game is totally straightforward. The game can be played in three different ways.

The main mode is the story mode, the second is the skirmish mode and the third is the multiplayer. In all these modes you assume the role of a god, but the story mode is where the real action is.

With your trusty pet creature in tow, you must 'impress' your way through five different lands, collecting loyal worshippers and

defeating other gods along the way. Ultimately, your aim is to be the last divinity remaining so that you can bring your own brand of good or evil to the world of Eden.

The whole 'worshippers equals power' thing is a theme that Molyneux has always gone for, so comparisons with *Populous* are inevitable. The considerable resource management in the village expansion section is reminiscent of *Age Of Empires* and numerous other resource-based real-time strategy outings along those lines.

However, if there is one particular game *B&W* resembles more than any other it's *Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time* on the Nintendo 64. The ability to play through *B&W* at your own speed and in your own direction is unashamedly based on the non-

linear fashioning of that classic console adventure.

Like *Zelda*, the story mode of *B&W* is quest-based (the skirmish mode and multiplayer mode remain pure RTS), containing more than 400 missions (or challenges) and a total of 60,000 words of dialogue. Thankfully, you

endings (or 'scripts', if you prefer) ranging from plucking the distraught fellow from the heart of the forest and dropping him into the arms of his loved ones, to horribly murdering him and his family. You don't have to tackle these moral dilemmas by yourself though; a good

“Lionhead's ultimate goal was to produce a giant sandpit in which the player could mess around with everything in it”

don't have to attempt anywhere near that amount to complete the game – you simply pick and choose which challenges you want to embark on.

In the first challenge, a villager is lost in some nearby woods and needs to be found. This quest alone has a total of 20 different

conscience and an evil conscience are always on hand to offer you their own particular thoughts on any situation that may arise. And it's not just in the quests where this open-ended philosophy prevails.

Virtually every part of the game allows the player to do pretty much whatever they want. Lionhead's ultimate goal was to produce a giant sandpit in which the player could mess around with everything in it. If you want to drop a cow on someone, go ahead. If you want to stoke up an almighty forest fire, then let rip. If you want to chuck people off cliffs or feed them to your creature, then go for your life. What we have here is happy hour multiplied by a thousand.

There are obvious physical boundaries to all this, like you can't move mountains or chop someone into precisely 14 pieces. But *B&W* possesses a supreme physics engine that allows for an incredible amount of freedom and scope for wanton mischief.

Yet, it's this very freedom that could conceivably be the game's most brittle area. One worry is that someone will chance upon a

CAN YOU FEEL IT?

Hey maaaaan, those magic mushrooms are giving me good vibrations

Black & White does everything it possibly can to entertain you in a bizarre and original fashion. Playing the game with Logitech's iFeel mouse goes a long way towards fulfilling that mission. Not only does it have a different vibration for each of the textures in the game, there is also a specific challenge that you can only access if you have the mouse.

The idea of one challenge is to go around a large circle of mushrooms, feeling them one by one until you find the most powerful. You know which one that is because your mouse starts shaking. Anyway, give this potent magic mushroom to the nearby hippy and he'll give you a reward, man.



Can you feel anything yet?



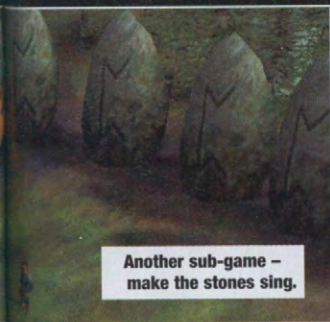
Content with freezing your creature, an enemy creature charges up another spell.



Behold the most powerful weapon in the game – the Mega Blast spell.



A young ape helps some drowning villagers. He's such a kind boy...



Another sub-game – make the stones sing.



A fireball spell that went slightly wrong.

bizarre combination of events that totally ruins the finely-tuned balance of play. Hopefully, that won't happen, but with the sheer amount of possibilities available, the chances are higher in *B&W* than they would be in other less-developed games.

ABOUT TURN

But what of the interface? In a game with this much interaction the control method has to be spot on, and thankfully there are no real problems in this department. The mouse is used for almost everything, with the left button controlling your movement and the right button responsible for actions such as picking up and dropping objects. If, for some reason, you can't get to grips with it, then simply hit F2 to be whisked to a dunces' area, known as God's Playground, where you can undergo a rigorous tutorial.

At this point it's also worth mentioning what an important part sound plays in the gaming interface. Your creature and followers are constantly talking (or growling) to you to let you know what they require. For example, you may hear a villager shout: "We want babies!" And it's fairly clear what their current need is. Likewise, when your creature starts clutching his stomach and groaning, it's pretty obvious he's got some kind of problem. Music also plays an important role and the tempo of the background tune will change depending on your alignment.

Another useful addition to the interface are the camera bookmarks. These handy waypoints mean you can assign certain areas of the map to hot

keys and move straight there without having to manually navigate large sections of the landscape. Admittedly, before we knew about these magical keys we were getting mildly irritated by the amount of scrolling involved. So, bookmark as often as possible – it makes life a lot easier.

A highly recommended way to maximise your knowledge of the interface is to read the many signposts scattered around the landscape. Once read, the information will be transferred to your citadel where you can re-read it at your leisure.

But there's much more to a citadel than signpost information.

The way these imperious symbols of power look in the world is a direct indication of the kind of god you are – they are individually tuned to suit your alignment. They also serve as your home, and within them you can load/save games, view the current state of play, give your creature a safe place to rest, and examine a tactical map of the land.

The true masterpiece of the interface is the now famous Gesture Recognition Technology, the amazing new method of spell casting where you use the mouse to trace a particular shape. Incredibly, it works without a hitch; the images have been kept

basic, and you don't even have to be that precise when you draw them. But what's particularly fascinating and fair about this system is the way the enemy computer AI uses it, too. Just before an enemy creature casts a spell you can see them gesturing in the air with their hand. After a bit of time you can work out exactly what spell is coming and take appropriate action. It truly is an amazing system, and one we're bound to see a lot more of in the future.

Oh, and in case you're the owner of

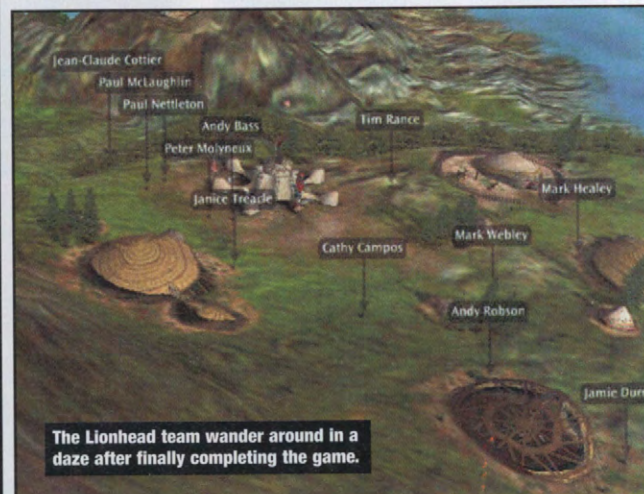


WHAT IS THE POINT?

Your chance to take the weather – and your mates – with you

As in real-life, you can never predict what Mother Nature will do next. One of the game's more wacky features is the ability to log on to a weather website and download your local

weather, which is then loaded into *B&W*. OK, so there's no real point to this, but let's face it – it's another touch of genius that helps create the unique aura that the game exudes.



The Lionhead team wander around in a daze after finally completing the game.

You may also be interested to know that another of *B&W*'s more obscure features is the way that all your villagers are named after the people in your Microsoft Outlook address book. You can turn this option on and off at your discretion, but we suggest you keep it on because it's just downright freaky to see a village populated by your work colleagues, friends and family.

It's especially spooky when one of your villagers is called Paul Presley and he keeps wandering aimlessly from one job to another...



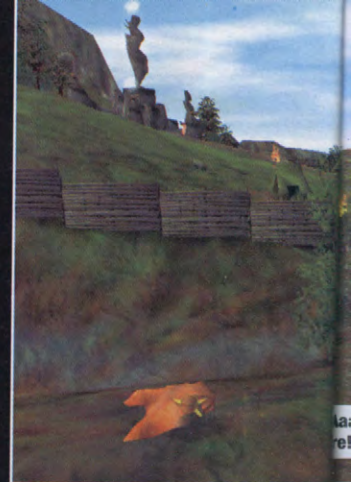
I will be the only god.
But I will not let them threaten my destiny.
Lethys, my ally. You have failed me. I, Nemesis, have arrived to take control.



Now that's my boy
- crush his head!



This light bulb means your creature's had an idea.



MULTIPLAYER

A taster of things to come

We'll go into the multiplayer game in more detail once the servers are up and running, but for now here's a brief idea of the format.

Essentially, the multiplayer section of *B&W* is a fairly straightforward RTS experience with up to eight players battling for supremacy of one land. It can be played over a LAN or the Internet and will contain a variety of game types. The co-op mode with one person controlling the resource

management and another controlling the creature is probably the real highlight, but that's not to say the other numerous modes won't be just as chaotically enjoyable.

Remember as well that your creature is fully portable from the single-player environments to the multiplayer games, which should add a whole new angle to the proceedings...

Look for a specific online review in the next couple of months to find out more.

an extremely dodgy mouse, you'll be pleased to know that you can always revert to the old-fashioned method of clicking the spell icon on your citadel. Like we already said, *B&W* believes in freedom of choice.

In total there are 14 different spell types, ranging from basic defensive and offensive stuff like shields and lightning bolts, through to more curious spells such as releasing flocks of birds or packs of wolves. There are also extra spells that can be used on creatures, including the itch, strengthen, weaken or invisibility.

And if the number of magical treats at your disposal isn't enough for you, check this out: all spells can be powered up by building Wonders. Each time you erect one of these magnificent structures your village becomes more powerful and your spell level increases by one. Interestingly, there's no limit to the number of levels you can power up. So, with enough Wonders, you'll eventually be able to conjure up the kind of fireball that would toast a nation.

There is a catch though - Wonders take an extraordinarily long time to build, so if you want to be that powerful you need to put some serious hours in. There are those who will, of course, dedicate their life to such an apocalyptic mission, and good luck to them.

WHY YOU LITTLE...!?

And now we move on to the real stars - we're talking creatures, of course. At the start of the game you can select whether your little fiend should be a cow, ape or tiger. At first, these moronic lumps of flesh are nothing more than walking disaster areas. You have

Another stunning element of this part of the game is the feeling of satisfaction you get when a light bulb appears above your creature's head and he actually does something useful, as opposed to simply crapping on someone's house.

Eventually, with a careful

“Nothing approaches the standards or ideas that this game sets. *Black & White* is as captivating as it is ingenious”

absolutely no direct control over them, and they can barely control themselves, either. They lack intelligence, manners and hygiene. We were unfortunate enough to choose a tiger that quickly acquired a taste for eating treats and his own faeces. Stick a leash around your creature's neck though, and you can slowly slap them into shape...

If you're an evil god and spend your time doing nasty things, your creature will do the same. If you're a good god and spend your time helping people, your little protégé follows suit.

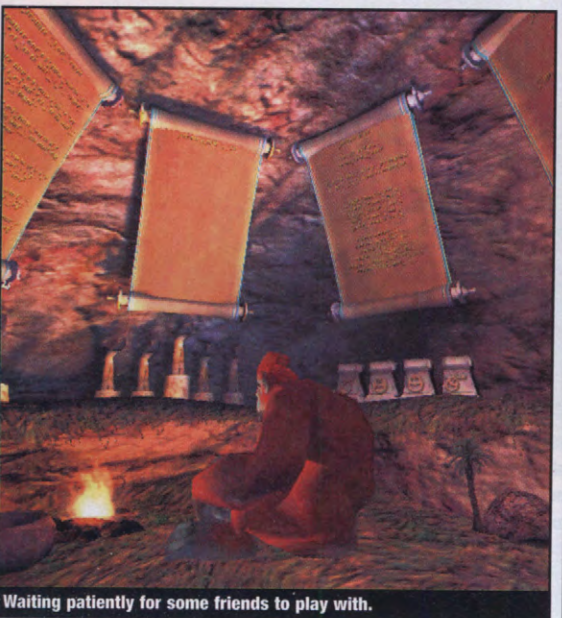
Creatures also learn spells after you've cast them a certain amount of times. So a god who concentrates on aggressive spells such as fireballs, lightning and storms is likely to produce a completely different animal to a god who tends to be defensive and concentrates on expanding their territory by using water, wood and food spells. Again, the sheer diversity of development is truly astounding.

and attentive upbringing, your creature will become your right-hand man and began to act on his own initiative. Unsurprisingly, our pet has grown up with severe learning and behavioural difficulties and now spends most of his time feasting on fishermen. There is no denying it, though - the creature AI is absolutely world class and deserves as much praise as can be lavished upon it.

THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

Progressing across lands and converting settlements to your religion is the only way to grow stronger, and ultimately it is the only way to reach the next land.

To take over a settlement you need to impress the locals. Generally, villagers are impressed by anything you do, simply because you did it. Trouble is, while throwing a large boulder down the high street might work once or twice, it won't keep them awestruck for long. They'll soon get bored and expect something even more inspiring. Point is, even



Waiting patiently for some friends to 'play with.

IMPERSPECTIVE

In its complexity and inventiveness, *Black & White* is head and shoulders above anything else. *Populous* might be worth a look though.

- Giants: Citizen Kabuto
- Sacrifice
- Populous: The Beginning
- Black & White

WALKTHROUGH

WELCOME TO OUR WORLD

You won't have a clue what's happening when you first start the game, so maybe these highlights from the first land will help...



1 At first glance, Eden is the sort of place where you'd probably go on a JMC package holiday. However, danger is not too far away.



2 After an unfortunate incident down at the beach, you appear and save this couple's youngster from certain death.



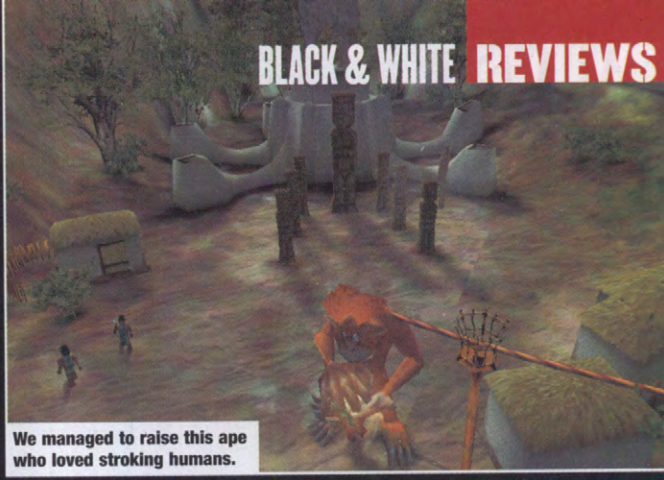
3 By following the family into the village, you can activate your first challenge by clicking on the golden scroll.



"Aargh! My head's on fire! Put it out! Put it out!"



At last! Young Keffy learns something useful.



We managed to raise this ape who loved stroking humans.

if it means sending your creature in to breakdance on their football pitch, you have to get these guys interested in you otherwise you'll get absolutely nowhere.

After conquering a village you need to increase the population by building more homes. This is achieved by building a workshop to supply the scaffolding for your new structures. Mastering this resource-management phase of the game is frankly not the easiest thing in the world to do. For some reason, expansion seems fairly slow. Whether this is down to our own failings as RTS players or a slight imbalance within the game, we're not entirely sure. Still, it is worth putting some practice in so that you know exactly how to make the most of your food and wood resources.

What's hard to appreciate without playing the game is just how real the world of Eden feels. Despite the fact that you are a floating entity, you always get the impression there is a very real world going on down below. Lives really matter – every villager is important, from the woodcutters and the farmers, through to the lucky ones who have been assigned a lifetime of breeding.

This is helped immensely by the graphics. Each landscape is beautifully designed and contains a multitude of visual treats. There are waterfalls, beaches, lakes and more, and a fully working weather system delivers rain and even snow. The spell effects are great, too; the storm is particularly eye-

catching, especially when a twister starts ripping rocks and trees out of the ground and hurling them through the air.

Zooming in close to the villagers is not so graphically inspiring though. While the detail on a person's clothing and general appearance makes it immediately obvious which of the nine tribes they belong to, the mad psycho eyes and thick stumpy limbs are not so pleasing. It's a small shortcoming though, and one that certainly doesn't detract from the overall brilliance of the game.

KING OF THE WORLD

Another admirable trait of *B&W* is its humour and references to films and modern pop culture in general. Look out, in particular, for an excellent parody of a certain *Titanic* scene. Even the consciences are caricatures. The good one is supposed to be a kind old English gentleman, whereas the evil conscience is based on a New York cabbie. Make of that what you will.

A lot of the technology used in *B&W* is so subtle most people won't even notice. But it's details like the real-time lip-synching on the consciences that make you realise how much care has been lavished on the game. Even the logo on the splash screen when booting up the game morphs into your own personal insignia.

You simply have to respect a game that throws in so many new and original ideas. The spell gesturing, for example, could have

gone horribly wrong, the creature AI could have been a disaster, but these brave developers went ahead and did it anyway. It's this kind of attitude that makes a cynical old hack consider the hitherto implausible possibility that maybe the best really is yet to come. And that's probably a good thing.

There really is nothing that approaches the ideas or standards that this game sets. *Giants: Citizen Kabuto* is probably the closest in terms of scale and the freedom to explore your surroundings, but compared to *B&W* even that seems limited and uneventful. Overall, *B&W* is as captivating as it is ingenious. Buy it right now, or miss out on one of the most significant moments in PC gaming history. [PC]

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233
Memory 32Mb RAM, 650Mb HD space
WE SAY PIII 650 with 128Mb RAM and graphics acceleration

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Wondrous AI • Lovely landscapes • Genuinely funny in places • Amazing creatures
• Hundreds of challenges/quests
• Original ideas

DOWNERS Takes time to get into

95 Pure genius



4 Now it's time to choose your creature. The choice is difficult – they're all as stupid as each other, but on this occasion the cheeky monkey gets the nod.



5 Discipline is dished out by either stroking or spanking your monkey. That'll show it.



6 Once you've given your animal a good seeing to, wander around the land and read as many signposts as possible to familiarise yourself with the world.



7 Next, you need to visit a special creature guide on the other side of the land who teaches you how to fight. This lesson is crucial.



8 Just when everything seems to be going smoothly, the arrival of a new god causes your guide to spontaneously combust. You're on your own now – and there's still so much to learn...

ANIMAL HOUSE

Monster munch, assorted flavours

At the start of the game you can choose from just three creatures. But don't worry – as you venture further into the mysterious land of Eden you will come across a whole menagerie of animals that you can transfer your existing creature's personality to. Eventually, this means you can experience the pleasure of watching the distinctive characteristics and movement of bears, turtles, lions, wolves, sheep and more.



The tortoise is slow and stupid, but he makes up for it with his strength.



Make sure the carnivorous tiger doesn't develop a taste for your villagers.



The wolf is cunning and quick and often the preferred choice for evil players.



Though not strictly an animal, the ogre is still definitely worth investigating.

END

ONI

★ £34.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

In this review, **Mark Hill** makes no stupid *Oni*/only puns. Well, *Oni* a couple anyway

Great expectations have a habit of leading to great disappointments, and while we weren't anticipating *Oni* to be the greatest game of all time, the potential was there to fill a gap in the market with real style. It's hard to remember the last time we played a decent beat 'em up (or a poor one), barring the comedy kicks of *Mortyr* and the sub-game in *The Nomad Soul* (*Err... Severance - Ed*).

Unfortunately, there's something not quite right about *Oni*. It's not that the combat isn't up to scratch, it's just that the game around it is completely

empty. The initial plot, although hardly original or intricate, at least shows some promise. It's the year 2032 and you play Konoko, an advanced special agent charged with exposing and fighting an organisation called the Syndicate. While there are attempts to give you more information on the world, revealing terrible secrets about the Syndicate and your

own identity, it's done in such a simplistic and naïve way that you couldn't really care less. Anyone who's played *Deus Ex* will at best be left completely unperturbed, and at worst fall asleep until the next fight. But the biggest problem with *Oni* is that it feels extremely shallow, with little else to do except run around between battles. Though the characters are extremely well animated and highly detailed, for most of the game it feels like you're fighting in a *Star Trek* holosuite that isn't running a program.

The lack of atmosphere is almost palpable. The rooms are

“Out of nowhere, a guard will come running at you and all your disappointments are forgotten as you get lost in the fights”

big, bare and repetitive. The silence is only broken by the occasional grunt or the sudden sound of gunfire. The walls have a really stripped look (apparently, in the year 2032 all decorators have been exterminated). The actual buildings are quite impressive and well designed, but the emptiness inside is oppressive and almost unbearable.

Then, out of nowhere, a guard will come running at you and all your disappointments are forgotten. You get lost in the fights, suddenly pull off a new move and start smashing skulls with glee. But this abrupt adrenaline rush only makes coming down to the dullness of the game itself so much worse, as you realise that to open the door in front of you you're going to need to go into that other room and access yet another console.

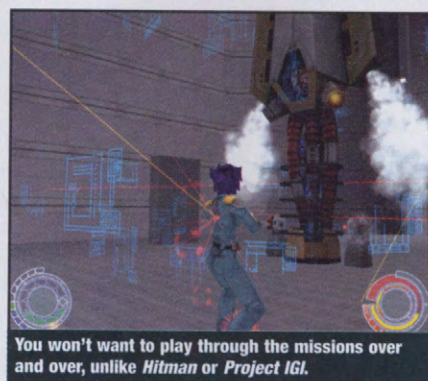
Apart from those damned computer terminals, there's very little else to interact with – some doors, a couple of scientists



Throws are the most satisfying moves to pull off. And the most deadly.



Damage is nicely colour-coded. Shame there's no colour on the walls.



You won't want to play through the missions over and over, unlike *Hitman* or *Project IGI*.



Press Q to pick up weapon.

Threesomes are always much more fun.

IN PERSPECTIVE

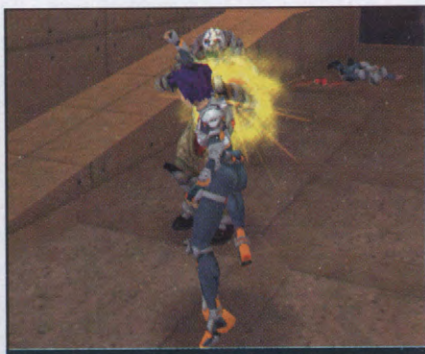
Urban Chaos is probably the closest to *Oni* we've had on the PC and, while there was more of a game to it, the combat wasn't anywhere near as accomplished.

Severance: Blade Of Darkness

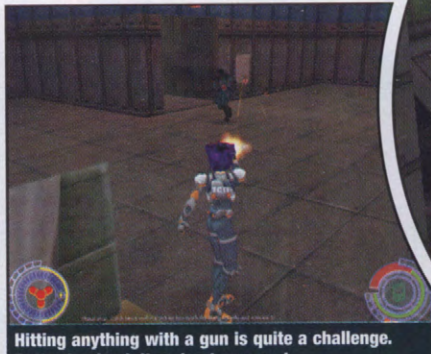
The Nomad Soul

Urban Chaos

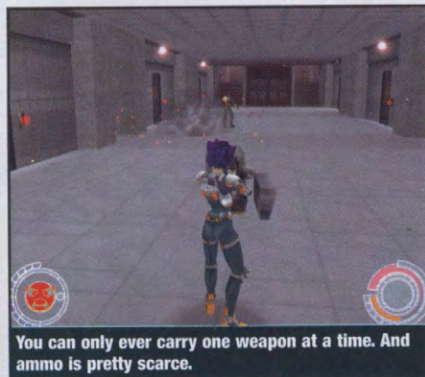
Oni



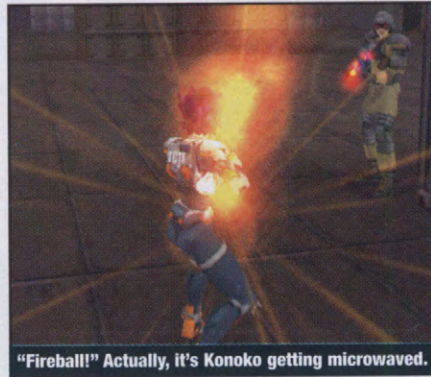
Like most sensible people, she's afraid of clowns.



Hitting anything with a gun is quite a challenge. Better to chuck it and get personal.



You can only ever carry one weapon at a time. And ammo is pretty scarce.



"Fireball!" Actually, it's Konoko getting microwaved.



Enemies have some good moves too, and they're pretty smart.

offering health, ammo or bits of information, and that's about it.

Sometimes there are big, impressive gunfights going on, with agents fighting by your side and shooting across massively domed rooms. But you never feel personally involved and spend most of your time waiting to pick off the remaining guards. And the weapons themselves don't often work too well either. They are only really useful to get rid of people far away or when your health is too low to approach them.

The real meat of the game is kicking, punching and biting your way past the enemy. You learn

new moves as you go along, which makes looking for the next fight even more important, but also serves to demonstrate that it's the only reason you keep on playing. There's no real incentive to see what's in the next level, or find out what great puzzles are going to tax your brain. There's not even an element of exploration, because the "use console to open door" mechanics mean there's only ever one way to go.

GHOST IN THE MACHINE

Despite the fact that *Oni* means ghost (or demon) in Japanese, there is very little scope for

stealth. Sure, you can crouch with the best of them, but enemies have a knack for spotting you even with their backs turned, from long distances and from around corners. A lot of guards are designed to appear out of thin air as soon as you reach a certain area, so the only way you know what to expect in later levels from a place that was completely empty just a few minutes ago is to have played the same level over and over again. Which, believe us, you will do, thanks to the lack of in-game save feature.

There's nothing more annoying than spending ages

getting past a particularly nasty part, only to die a bit later and have to do it all over again. The game saves itself at certain points, which is all very well for the PS2 community (or it would be if it saved itself more often), but for the save-after-every-corner mentality of PC gamers it will prove to be a major problem. The forthcoming patch should correct this, but it's still annoying.

ONI SINGLE PLAYER

And talking about patches, beat 'em ups have always been about kicking your friends' teeth in, so it comes as some surprise that we'll have to wait for a patch for the multiplayer option. While it's true that the combat would have needed some tweaking to make it work in one-on-one fights, there should have at least been scope for teaming up to relive the glory days of *Target Renegade* and *Double Dragon*. We'll have to wait and see what the patch brings.

Oni is halfway to being a great game, but either Bungie decided

to finish it off quickly to concentrate on *Halo*, or spent so much time implementing the combat that they didn't have time to make a game to go round it. It's like a film choreographed by Jackie Chan but directed by a poor Ingmar Bergman wannabe with a Manga fixation. Just stick to the combat, and close your eyes for the rest. [C]

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PIII 266
Memory 64Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** Bit sluggish. A P350 with 96Mb and a hefty 3D card would be better

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Good character animation
 - Excellent combat
 - Brainless fun
 - Good enemy AI
- DOWNERS Shallow gameplay • Weapon aiming not great • No save game • Empty rooms

70 Halfway to being great

WALKTHROUGH

CROUCHING DOOR, HIDDEN TERMINAL

I take hand off you and lead you and show you what happens in *Oni* the computer game. Hai?



1 A simple but comprehensive tutorial guides you through all the moves, led by a high-pitched Manga girlie.



2 Take a pause from the tutorial to see another female agent beating up some bots through a window. Very *Half-Life*.



3 Your first mission is set in the first of many warehouses. Notice the patterns on the walls. Shoot till your bullets run out.



4 Ah. What is this then? A terminal, is it? I'll just use it to open that door with a big red light bulb on it. Oh, it's gone green.



5 Will you look at that? It's another terminal. But the symbol on it is different. Must open a different door...



6 Hurrah! Now you get to kick someone's nuts in before creaking his neck all the way back. Neatola.



7 Yes, it's another terminal. Yes, it opens a door. Yes, this is getting very boring.



8 Four or five hours later you'll be seeing this a lot. Mission failed, you worthless scumbag.



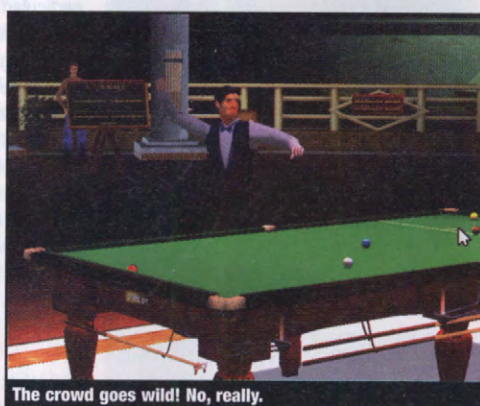
A decent break is made much simpler with magic arrows.



A variety of venues are available, with hallucinogenic carpets to match.



"Pot the reds and screw back for the yellow green brown blue pink and black."



The crowd goes wild! No, really.



Be careful your waistcoat button doesn't touch the ball.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER

★ £29.99 • Codemasters • Out now

He's sung with Davis, and sunk a pint with White. If only Steve Hill could play snooker

IMPERSPECTIVE

Games that require you to hit coloured balls over a piece of fuzzy felt with a tapered stick are few and far between and, let's be honest, pool is far more interesting than snooker anyway. If you agree, *Virtual Pool 3* should be top of your list. *Jimmy White's* is also worth a mention – not only does it replicate snooker rather well, it includes pool and darts and can be downloaded free from www.freelooter.com.

Jimmy White's Cueball 2

World Championship Snooker

Virtual Pool 3

The Real Thing (Pool)

The Real Thing (Snooker)

Through the medium of videogames we can traverse galaxies, inhabit imaginary worlds, surmount all obstacles and stand proudly on the shoulders of giants, masters of all we survey. Or play snooker.

While not exactly beyond the realms of fantasy, for those dissuaded from their local baize emporium by the underlying threat of violence and the poorly-prepared food, *World*

“There is a reasonably exhaustive qualification process before you meet 20 of the world's top players at the Crucible”

Championship Snooker brings all the fun of the cue into your fetid hovel. It's not the first game to attempt this, and – imminent human extinction notwithstanding – it won't be the last.

And therein lies the problem. Apart from bringing the graphics up to the current industry standard, there isn't a great deal you can do with a snooker game. Obviously, realism is the key, but there's still a certain threshold, and once the physics are

perfected, there's nowhere else to go. So in an attempt to capture the 'drama' of the sport, Codemasters has pulled its wallet out and secured the World Championship licence. Which probably explains the name and the familiar theme tune.

OUR FRIEND DEN

With a pseudo-career option, the feeling is clearly that of a young buck trying to make his way in the game, with victory at the

Crucible the ultimate goal. There is a reasonably exhaustive qualification process to go through before you get a sniff of Sheffield, where 20 of the world's top players await. Unfortunately, the days when Alex Higgins head-butted referees, relieved himself into plant pots and threatened to have opponents shot are behind us, but among the modern-day automatons featured are Stephen Hendry, Ronnie O'Sullivan and World Champion Mark Williams.

Of the old guard, Dennis Taylor has been brought out of retirement, and as such is the only player here to have a dedicated verse in Chas and Dave's memorable paean to the green baize, *Snooker Loopy*. He also provides the in-game commentary, offering a master class in the bleeding obvious.

THE LEN GANLEY STANCE

On the table, it's business as usual, and with the requisite aiming aids on, it's the equivalent of being a half-decent player, and is as much about holding position and developing breaks as it is about getting the ball in the hole. A predetermined power bar is used rather than the more erratic system of pretending the mouse is the cue, and while perfectly manageable, it's a little clinical.

Unlike real snooker, it's refreshing to actually be able to play to a passable level. In real life, nobody has ever got a break of more than 16, whereas here a half-century is well within the bounds of possibility. Ultimately, any criticism of the game is also a criticism of snooker, and while it can be dispiriting to have to sit

back and watch your opponent rack up a match-winning break, this can mercifully be speeded up.

If it's possible to imagine atmosphere in a snooker game, then *WCS* captures it, epitomised by sporadic outbreaks of coughing in the auditorium, a phenomenon familiar to legions of TV viewers. Look, we're trying to big it up, but at the end of the day it's a snooker game. If that's what you want then this will do. **✓✓**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166
Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
8Mb 3D card **WE SAY** PII 400, 128Mb
RAM, 32Mb 3D card

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Realistic physics •

Authentic atmosphere

DOWNERS Players are unrecognisable • No real feeling of purchase

67 Just like on the telly

excessive
force



WingMan Force 3D



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It's the closest thing to reality. WingMan® Force 3D. Get the advantage you need to win, the sensations you need to make it real. Feel the force, with Logitech®.

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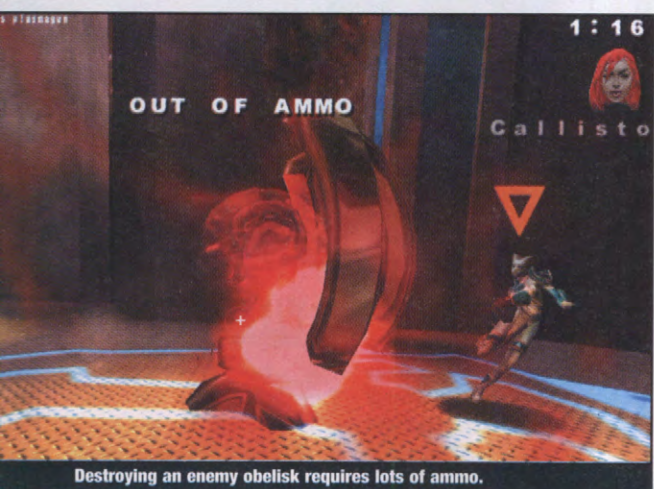

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Make use of jump pads for surprise attacks.



Outdoor maps are picturesque, but way too big.



Destroying an enemy obelisk requires lots of ammo.



Not quite the high that Quake deserves to end on.

QUAKE III: TEAM ARENA

★ £19.99 • Activision • Out now (Requires a full version of *Quake III Arena*)

Has the spooze gone out of Quaking? Phil Wand takes a look at id Software's only disappointment to date

To those of you who sing from the *Quake* hymn book and believe that the Supreme Being at id Software can do no wrong, reading further may prove to be a little traumatic. For despite introducing new weapons, new features and new gameplay, *Team Arena* is poor-to-middling in quality and does nothing to reclaim its sibling's position as top online shooter.

In many ways, id has only itself to blame, having released all its trade secrets in the form of game engine source code. There are now so many first-class mods and conversions available freely on cover discs that players expect a whole lot more from their software when it has a price tag swinging from it.

As an expansion pack, *Team Arena* requires that you have *Quake III* already installed, meaning a total investment of around £50 – not including the 16Mb accelerator card that the new game demands, or the 128Mb memory necessary for the galaxy-sized outdoor maps to render at a decent frame rate. Compare *TA* to *Half-Life* or *Unreal Tournament*, both of which offer similar play styles but at less than half the cost, and it should be clear from the outset that the odds are stacked against it.

ALL THAT GLISTENS

Visually, *Team Arena* is pure confectionery for the eyes. With the super-cheeky *Quake III* engine behind it, the game supports all the graphical tricks and treats we know and love so well, including dynamic shadows, curved surface rendering, specular lighting, bilinear filtering and quadriplegic dribbling.

Trouble is, nobody cares any more. If you've played *Counter-Strike*, you'll be intimately familiar with the single greatest map of all time, Dust. It is by far and away the smallest and simplest setting in the game, comprising one or two monotone textures, a couple of choke points and a few boxes. There are no stairways, balustrades, balconies, ducts, vents, mezzanine floors, vaulted arches, domes, obelisks, stained-glass windows or weird techno-gothic architecture whose only purpose in life is to heat-stress your video card. What makes a map great is the way it plays, and it's here that *Team Arena* falls short.

Included in the pack are 19 new levels, four of which are



rather captivating ("Look, DeATHReAper, floor made of grass!"), they soon become tiresome, with the long trek between enemy bases turning levels into more of a slog than a mission. Additionally, much of the terrain makes the combat al fresco a chore as your progress

“With the super-cheeky *Quake III* engine behind it, *TA* supports all the graphical tricks and treats we know and love”

essentially *Quake III* Capture The Flag maps with the odd nip and tuck, leaving 15 really new ones in total. Four of these are one-on-one tournament-style maps, which by definition don't belong in a team game, and so now we're down to 11.

For the most part, these 11 are fast and well balanced, but like the techno-metal soundtrack and *Unreal Tournament*-style voice taunts, they're pretty forgettable affairs. The outdoor variants – which drag *Quake* players from their narrow factory corridors out into the open air – are too large to be popular with existing players. While initially

is hindered by hills, dips and crests in the landscape.

Both the nailgun and chaingun make a welcome return, although the former is useful only as a last resort, and the latter so powerful it disrupts the balance of play. New to the game is a mine launcher that drops small proximity charges which stick to enemy clothing and explode a few seconds later. Although this may sound fun, it serves only to encourage bad play, with respawn areas, cap points, entrances and walkways often ending up covered in the damn things. Meeting your maker in *Quake* should be an honourable thing,



Near a skull generator, where all the action is.

Fragged by Callisto
Teams are tied at 2

Pegans				Teams are tied at 2			
Status	Name	Score	Time	Flags	Status	Name	Score
✓	Leader Callisto	192	7	0	✓	Neptune	164
✓	James	181	7	0	✓	Khan	123
✓	Khan	110	7	0	✓	FuRyShay_Shao	86
✓	Megan	44	7	0	✓	Ursula	21
✓	Neptune	13	7	0	✓	Leader Choke	1

9%

Spectating:
Harvester Use Score Scroll Keys Score: 1

The scoreboard is now much more organised.



O1 - put that back now.



Quake in out-of-doors shocker!



Left a bit, left a bit more, now say cheese!

your twitching corpse a recognition of another player's skill. Legging it through a level base before spontaneously exploding out back is hardly a noble end.

POWER EXTREME

There are six new power-ups: doubler, ammo regeneration, kamikaze, invulnerability, guard and scout, with each bestowing special abilities upon its owner. There are a finite number of them on each map, so if you're after one in particular, you may have to wait until the player carrying it dies.

IN PERSPECTIVE

If we're talking value here, *Unreal Tournament* is still your best bet, especially since you can now buy it for a tanner, plus download tons of mods. If you want better *Quake III* action, however, the freebie *Jailbreak* is a far better compromise.

Quake III Team Arena

Quake III Jailbreak

Unreal Tournament

In the case of kamikaze and invulnerability, you don't have to wait long. Kamikaze explodes in a huge atomic blast that encompasses a substantial area of the map, while invulnerability renders the user impervious to assault but immobile for the duration. Guard and scout provide a pseudo class structure, with scouts able to run at double speed but with no armour, and guards able to replenish their health without running over spheres.

Trouble is, *Quake III* already had too many power-ups floating about its levels, and *Q3TA* levels are positively festooned with the bloody things. It's reached the point where you have to stop and think twice about which novelty you're walking over and what the hell it does. It also makes newbies a real curse, as they tend to stomp about aimlessly picking everything up ("Ooh, pretty baubles!") and preventing the more experienced players getting the toys they need to win.

At the heart of *Q3TA* are four new teamplay modes, including



In this case it seems more is most definitely less.

your common or garden CTF, Overload, Harvester and One Flag CTF. Overload is without doubt the most entertaining variation, as it encourages your team to work as one and destroy an obelisk set

deep inside the enemy's base. It's nigh-on impossible to destroy this object single-handed, so you need to rely on the co-operation of your team mates in order to get the job done.

Harvester involves collecting opponents' skulls and dropping them off behind enemy lines. Although it may sound good on paper, the reality is it's rather flawed: instead of dropping to the ground when you frag someone, the skulls appear alongside a pillar in the centre of the map and can be collected by anyone, meaning most of the action gravitates towards them, with the remainder of the level remaining eerily quiet.

The same is true for One Flag CTF which, as its name suggests, revolves around a single flag and requires little in the way of tactics or group strategy.

In the final analysis, it has to be said that *Team Arena* does nothing to enrich the lives of existing *Quake* players, especially if they've dabbled in *Unreal Tournament* or *Half-Life*. While gameplay variations such as

Overload will force many people into rethinking the way they play, and should encourage old-skool deathmatchers to evolve into half-decent team players, £19.99 buys three days of modem time - more than you need to cruise the web and download every *Quake III* mod ever made.

For at its heart, that is all *Team Arena* is, and not a particularly impressive one at that. [PCZ](#)

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PIII 300MHz Memory 64Mb RAM
ALSO REQUIRES 16Mb video card
WE SAY You definitely need that 16Mb card. The terrain maps are huge and graphically intensive

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Team-based play may educate the few remaining knuckle-dragging deathmatchers
DOWNERS Price tag • Outdoor maps • Weak skins • Better mods can be had for nowt

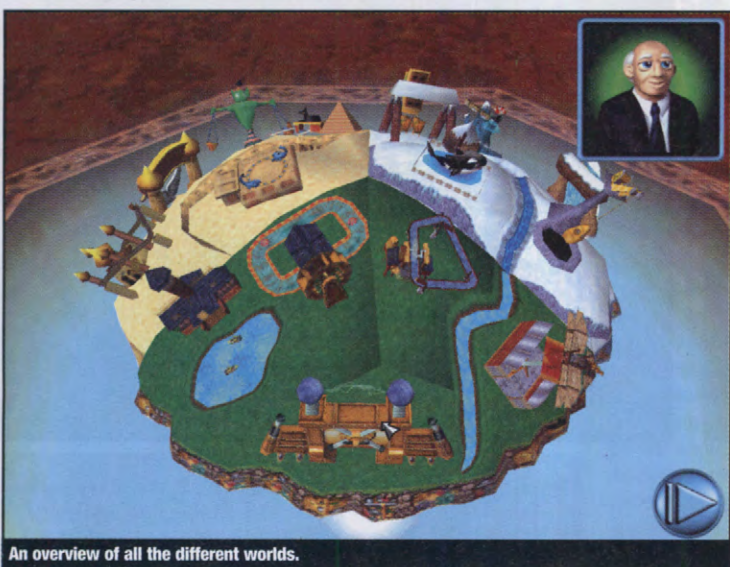
61 Been there, done it for free



Your fat pie eating micro-punters are starving. Good.



This is just plain stupid.



An overview of all the different worlds.



Living proof that The Monarchy should be abolished.

THEME PARK INC

★ £29.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

Daniel Emery looks out for vomit, kitsch tack and more proletarians than Ritz's on Saturday night. Must be Theme Park then...

Many moons ago, back in the days when a Pentium 90 was cutting edge, the Tories were still in government and you could say you'd been to a 'rave' without sounding like a pillock, a game landed that was like the bastard love child of *SimCity* and a lunatic. *Theme Park* was all of the addictive building/god stuff that made *SimCity* great, but twisted it so you could construct a theme park instead. And it rocked. Hours

turned into months as your life drifted by in a haze of Pringles, beer and lost sleep. It was good. Then came *Roller Coaster Tycoon*, which was the same game with a more serious angle. Again, supplies of munchies from Tesco dropped to an all time low. And then there was *Theme Park World*. Which was, frankly, not a patch on its predecessors. So now the latest pretender to the crown enters stage left – *Theme Park Inc*. Initially *Theme Park Inc* seems great, after all it's visually

stunning (all spinnny rotatay), and unlike *Theme Park World*, the graphics are crisp and clean edged and the resolution goes above 800x600. There's a wide variety of rides to build, and your lab technicians can research and come up with a whole load more. But all that glitters is not

tacked on, and looking like an afterthought rather than the crux of the whole game.

FOOL'S GOLD

The game itself is in three parts: Polar, Desert and Invention (substitute the word 'invention' for 'grass'). Within each are three

chimpanzee could do them standing on his head. Tasks such as "Try to get 40 people in your park" when you've already got 500+ parolees queuing for the Go Karts or "We need to sell more Hot Dogs" when just lowering the price to 'Free' solves that tricky little number. And they stay easy as you go through the game. Oh well, perhaps other parts of the game are better.

Sadly, you're going to be disappointed here again. One of the great things with *Theme Park* and *Roller Coaster Tycoon* was both the humour and (believe it or not) the physics. If you built a roller coaster that made its passengers pull massive G forces

“You can build rides into each other, so they merge like a Big Dipper sandwich. It can end up looking like a set from *Barbarella*”

gold. After you play for more than an hour, you start to realise that this is really nothing more than *Theme Park World* spruced up with a set of dubious challenges

or four sub sections which get activated when you complete a challenge. This would have been OK if the challenges weren't so simple that a brain dead



Research without the vivisection. That should keep the Animal Liberation Front happy.



You can walk around your park 'camcorder' style, and go on the rides.

IN PERSPECTIVE

For the most thrilling ride, *Roller Coaster Tycoon* is the safest bet, followed by the original *Theme Park*. The others are mere pretenders.

- Theme Park Inc**
- Theme Park**
- Theme Park World**
- Roller Coaster Tycoon**

then threw them around like a spin-dryer, they would either fly off it in all directions, or at the least, vomit and up-chuck the second they got off. It was sick, masochistic fun. However, the game wasn't stupid – if you tried to build two roller coasters into each other, it wouldn't let you. Not so *Theme Park Inc*, which seems to have rewritten the laws of physics to suit. You can loop the loop at 5mph, yet no one falls out.

And you can even build rides into each other, so they merge like some kind of Big Dipper sandwich. It can end up looking like a set from *Barbarella*.

UNHAPPY MONDAYS
For a game produced in Guilford, by EA developers Bullfrog, it's amazing how un-British the game is; everything's in \$, chips are called 'fries' and they managed to find the world's most patronising voice to do the voice-over for the tutorials. It wouldn't be so bad if you could just disable the voice help, but the problem is that she doesn't just do tips, she lets you know when real problems crop up. The financial management side of the sim (such as there is) seems perfectly suited for the 7+ age range. It's all so damn fluffy.

And that's the problem with *Theme Park Inc*. It's all so cosy and pre-packaged. There's no feeling of open building that you got in *Theme Park*, everything's drip fed. The challenges are way

to simple, and despite looking fantastic, the lack of realism in the rides again shafts any good feelings you may have had. It's definitely the sort of game parents would buy their 10-year-old kid, but everyone else will just find it bland.

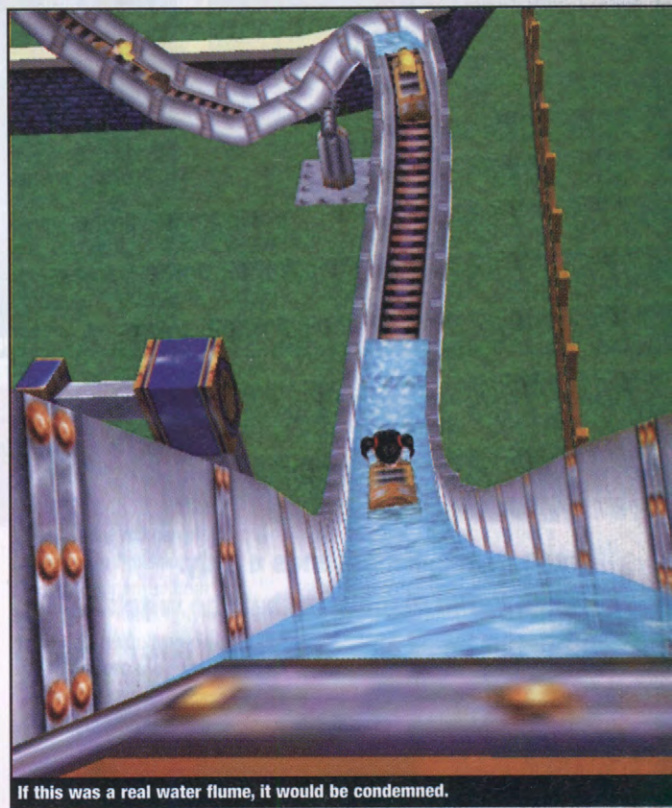
TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233
Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
WE SAY This worked just fine for us, although an 8Mb 3D card would help quite a lot.

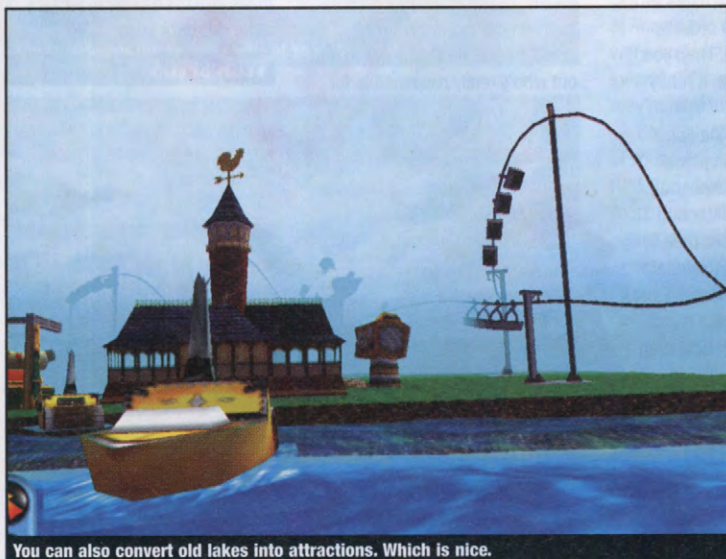
PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** More eye candy than Thorntons • Simple gameplay • One for the younger player
- DOWNERS** Simple gameplay • One for the younger player • Utterly unrealistic

50 All that glitters is not gold



If this was a real water flume, it would be condemned.



You can also convert old lakes into attractions. Which is nice.



Spot the crap Bowie reference.

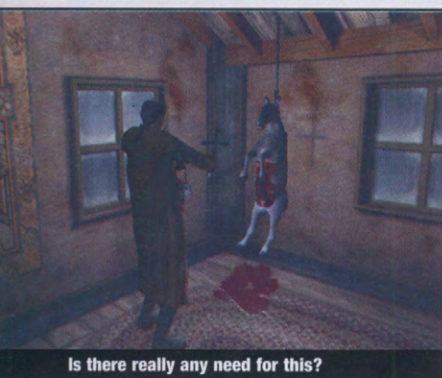
A transparent demon thing pops in for a spot of terrorising.



Multicoloured zombies? Well, it's almost a change.



The lantern not only looks good – it's even quite useful.



Is there really any need for this?



Probably the most impressive part of the game...

You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

BLAIR WITCH VOLUME 3: THE ELLY KEDWARD TALE

Once, twice, three times a lady. **Keith Pullin** discovers that the witch may not be such a bitch after all...

★ £19.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

Are we bored of *Blair Witch* yet? Of course we bloody well are. In this final installment of Take 2's budget trilogy, the entertainment factor disappears faster than the local children. The obvious sense of double déjà vu permeates through the game like a recurring nightmare, and things really aren't helped by a lead character who looks more like

omnipresent lantern is a nice touch, and the burning cross spell is often spectacular. Still, visually things can get a bit murky, which sometimes makes it difficult to see exits. Collision detection is also a bit iffy and there are numerous occasions where you're blocked from walking over seemingly obstacle-free sections of ground. Jonathan is also prone to getting

“Unlike its two *Blair Witch* predecessors, *Elly Kedward* is completely devoid of shocks or even surprising plot twists”

Crazy Legs Crane than an 18th century witch hunter.

Blair Witch 3's reliance on simplistic blasting action rather than any meaningful adventure means it's up to the graphics to keep things interesting, and in fairness there are some notable effects. Jonathan Prye's

himself stuck inside sections of the background such as walls and doors, so save often in order to avoid any nasty repercussions.

NOBODY HOME

Unlike *Rustin Parr* and *Coffin Rock*, *Elly Kedward* is devoid of shocks (apart from a completely

unnecessary hanging goat) or even surprising plot twists. From the moment you start you know what to do. First, you try all the doors on the houses to see who hasn't fled. Next, you listen to lengthy dialogues in order to find out information. Then you enter the woods. Yes, it really is that predictable.

The inclusion of the spirit plane and the demon plane provides some atmospheric variation, but even exploring these two worlds does little to improve the tedious formulaic drivel that is *Blair Witch 3*. Even the Native Indian in the Woods spouts the same mystical crap as in *Rustin Parr*.

Again, as far as the enemies are concerned it's more of the same: devil dogs, phantom demons and zombies – there's nothing that can be classed as even vaguely original or imaginative. Frankly, we're tired

of the whole thing – and judging by the total lack of ideas here it was clearly a mistake to release three short games based on the same second-hand engine.

Maybe we're being a bit over-critical though; after all, it's only £20 and we finally get to find out who's really responsible for

centuries of mayhem in the Burkitsville/Maryland area.

But let's face it, nobody really cares and £20 is still too much money to throw away on a game that's already on sale in two other different boxes. **PCZ**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PIII 350
Memory 64Mb RAM, 850Mb HD space
WE SAY PIII 500 with 128Mb RAM and hardware acceleration

IN PERSPECTIVE

Elly Kedward is the most basic game in the *Blair Witch* trilogy. There is little adventure and hardly any challenge. Very disappointing.

- Nocturne
- Resident Evil Trilogy
- Blair Witch Vol 1: Rustin Parr
- Blair Witch Vol 2: Coffin Rock
- Blair Witch Vol 3: Elly Kedward

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Good spell and lighting effects
- DOWNERS Graphics messy in places
 - Jonathan's legs are too long
 - Unoriginal and boring plot
 - Poor collision detection

47 Burn the witch!

SQUAD LEADER

★ £34.99 • Hasbro Interactive • Out now

Andrew Wright was chomping at the bit in order to get to this one, but he ended up spitting it out...

A cardboard classic, the original Squad Leader board game – and its follow-on, Advanced Squad Leader or ASL – took up most of my waking moments when it was first released back in the '70s. To a whole generation of wargamers it is, without a doubt, the definitive squad-level, hex-based wargame, so when giant games developer Hasbro bought Squad Leader's original publisher, Avalon Hill, I expected a real classic. Let's face it, I've waited nearly 30 years...

To be fair to Hasbro and Microprose, there is no mention of Avalon Hill or the original game anywhere on the packaging or in



randomly-determined letter from home, which either raises or lowers his morale rating. It doesn't work though – the soldiers never come across as much more than a bunch of statistics.

You can choose up to three five-man squads for some missions and add specialists such as snipers, medics, engineers and platoon leaders. In campaign mode you play either US, British or German forces

“You can choose up to three five-man squads for some missions and add specialists such as snipers and medics”

the manual – partly due to complaints from buyers in the US, I suspect, where it was released slightly earlier – but all wargamers know that this was meant to be 'it', the classic board game brought to life on a monitor.

The result is nothing short of a farce. Take an early *X-Com* game, give it a World War II flavour, and you're nearly there. Unfortunately, it's all been done before with *Soldiers At War* and *101st Airborne In Normandy*, neither of which were particularly memorable. Indeed, if there are improvements, they're hard to spot.

Basically the game is a blend of squad-level wargame and RPG. You choose your squad from more than 100 individual soldiers, each of which has a different personality. As you progress through the missions they gain experience and improve their skills. If they don't get killed, of course.

Occasionally a soldier will get a

Graphics don't get much naffer than this, these days.

through ten to 13 missions. Alternatively, you can play single one-off missions or randomly generate them according to taste. However, there's no multiplayer element at all and no scenario editor.

The uninspiring 800 x 600 graphics are little better than those in many DOS games, and the animations are monotonously routine. While the terrain looks good, the vehicles are only vague representations of the real thing.

THE FOG OF WAR

The level cutaway feature, which allows you to remove higher terrain to see what's going on, is pathetic, except for occasionally finding lost men and equipment and working out where you might move to. The big problem with the engine is that there are no tools for gauging line of sight or the relevance of terrain as cover. Place your crosshairs on an enemy and you'll get a percentage chance to hit, but there's no indication that he can see you or how well protected you are by a wall or hedge or whatever.

Just to make it more difficult the enemy soldiers pop up and

IN PERSPECTIVE

Despite being released almost seven years later, *Squad Leader* is only marginally better than the first *X-Com* title. Will somebody please make a decent *Squad Leader*-based computer game?

X-Com: Apocalypse	████████████████████
101st Airborne In Normandy	████████████████████
Soldiers At War	████████████████████
Squad Leader	████████████████████

disappear rapidly during the AI's turn, leaving you hopelessly confused about what's going on. I've heard of fog of war but this is ridiculous. The sound effects are equally retro and weapons sound flat and insignificant. The dialogue is wooden and repetitive too. American soldiers that are hit shout things like "Mom" and "I'm hit" with incredible regularity while the Germans offer much the same but in a different language. Probably German.

Add occasional crashes and the game's refusal to reload some saved games and you've got a pretty dire two-dimensional combat simulation. It might have raised some eyebrows in the mid-'90s, but it's a waste of time in 2001. This game is basically *Soldiers At War* in another guise with little added. It's not the original in any shape or form. A massive disappointment and not far short of a total rip-off. **PCZ**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 **Memory** 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** DirectX 7-compatible video card **WE SAY** It's so undemanding it'll probably work on less...

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS The screenshots on the packaging tell you it's crap • The box fits neatly in the bin
- DOWNERS It's not Squad Leader • It never will be • It's not even remotely close • It's been done before

18 You have been warned



The first thing to do is choose your squad members...



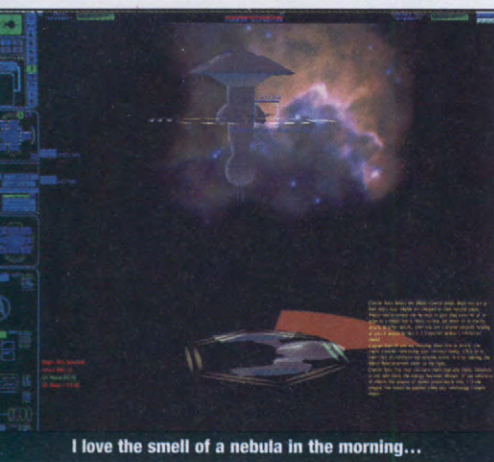
...then equip them with whatever weapons are available.



You've also got trucks and tanks at your disposal.



Placing the cursor over the enemy gives you a percentage hit chance.



I love the smell of a nebula in the morning...



UK copies don't have multiplayer features at present.



Get on his tail and stay there – the red angle shows that the turn will take a while.

STARFLEET COMMAND VOLUME II: EMPIRES AT WAR

★ £34.99 • Interplay • Out now

Andrew Wright thought starships flew themselves – until he got hold of the latest version of this massive *Star Trek*-based space combat sim...

Games based on the *Star Trek* universe have always found their way to the top of the sci-fi genre, thanks to the popularity of the TV series and films. However, there's no huge void out there – in fact there are plenty of decent space combat simulations on the shelves from 3D extravaganzas like *Homeworld* to detailed resource management and trading games like *X – Beyond The Frontier*. There is certainly no room for duds.

The original *Starfleet Command* was a superb conversion of the board game *Starfleet Battles*, a tactical space combat sim that lovingly recreates the *Star Trek* atmosphere. However, its

flat, two-dimensional approach and the incredibly complex command system kept it as a niche product played only by die-hard Trekkies in vast online campaigns and skirmishes.

Starfleet Command Volume II: Empires At War is a huge leap forward in almost every department. Not only does it look gorgeous but the sound effects and music tracks are superb. And while the game engine considers itself to be turn-based, it looks and feels like a real-time game, thanks to the unique way it has been implemented.

THE NEXT GENERATION

To the existing six empires, namely the Federation, Klingon, Romulan, Gorn, Hydran and Lyran

ones, *SFC2* adds the Mirak and the Interstellar Concordium (ISC). More than 100 hundred new 3D objects are included as well, along with many new ship and starbase types and hull variants.

There are new weapons too, like the plasmatic pulsar device, anti-missile defence systems and rearward-firing point-defence plasma torpedoes. Better still are the fighters and pseudo-fighters (basically small fast starships) –

“More than 100 new 3D objects are included as well, along with many new ship and starbase types and hull variants”

and in order to use them, carriers and tenders. Carriers can be lots of fun, although enemy point defence systems can make mincemeat of thoughtlessly-deployed squadrons.

The game's 3D engine has been completely overhauled with new dynamic lighting, true-to-life explosions and weapon blasts

and beautifully-modelled torpedoes and missiles. Progressive damage textures also indicate how much damage a ship is taking.

The interface has been strengthened too, and while it's vastly more complex, veterans will appreciate the new levels of control given to players with more than one ship. A player can start with up to three ships in a fleet and capture three more to make

barely adequate, relying too heavily on the reference section rather than explaining all aspects of the game in a logical order. Thankfully, there is a quick reference card listing all the (fully-configurable) keyboard shortcuts and weapon arcs.

HARD DAY'S FLIGHT

The interface hasn't changed that much in the step-up and it still relies on a control panel to the left of the main window. If necessary you can remove it for a better view, but frankly it's so complex, with so many layers, that learning the keyboard shortcuts is essential in multiplayer games and the more advanced missions and skirmishes, especially as only the Federation control panel is marked in English.

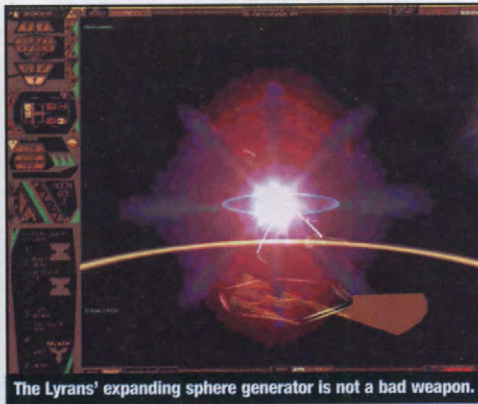
The other races' panels are done in strange scripts, so if you don't read/speak Gorn or Hydran you'll have to get used to the Federation ships first, learn the interface and then switch. It also

as many as six at a time, so flexible fleet control commands are essential. Add additional camera controls, better energy management – including priority setting – and a raft of new shuttle types and you've got a real challenge on your hands.

SFC2 is supplied on two CDs, but the 270-page manual is only



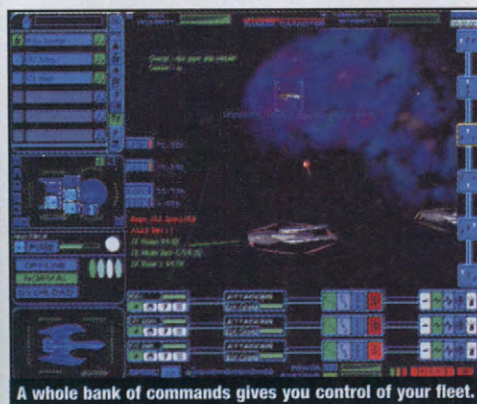
Asteroids like this are definitely best avoided.



The Lyrans' expanding sphere generator is not a bad weapon.



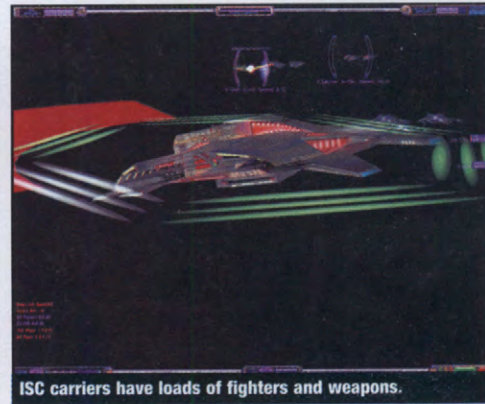
Good old hexes are back in fashion in some campaigns.



A whole bank of commands gives you control of your fleet.



Photon and plasma torpedoes passing in the night.



ISC carriers have loads of fighters and weapons.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Starfleet Command Volume II is great if you're a Trekkie, and totally mind-boggling if you're not.

- Homeworld
- Star Trek: Klingon Academy
- Starfleet Command Volume II

makes playing the Romulan or Klingon empires considerably harder with quite a steep learning curve. Even the half dozen introductory tutorials only deal with Federation ships.

Controlling a single ship is tough work. You need to monitor the basics like energy levels, weapon recharging, shield strength, repairing damage systems, course and speed, as well as taking care of electronic counter measures (ECM) and counter-counter measures (ECCM), shuttles, probes, sensors, and even fighters and pseudo-fighters if you have them.

Weapons include five types of phaser, five types of plasma torpedo, disruptors, fusion beams, hellbore cannon, photon torpedoes, two types of missile, the plasmatic pulsar device and the expanding sphere generator or ESG. Dull it certainly isn't – particularly as you have to simultaneously guide your ship around planets, asteroids, black

holes, suns, nebulae, dust clouds as well as other spacecraft.

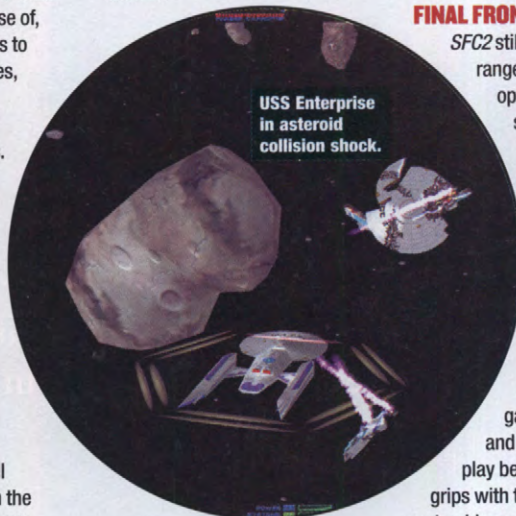
You can also tell your marines to capture damaged vessels or carry out hit and run attacks, order mines to be dropped from the shuttle bay or transported into open space, set your tractor beams to hold enemy ships or repel seeking weapons, such as missiles and torpedoes, prepare shuttles for launch or tell your defence officer to use the phasers for point defence rather than attack. There are several shuttle configurations to make use of, from 'Wild Weasel' decoys to suicide and attack shuttles, transports, admin and 'scatterpacks' which contain up to six missiles.

If you have more than one ship you also have to monitor the fleet controls which let you order different formations, weapon configurations and strategies. To watch the action you have four distinct camera views including an overhead view of the battle, as well as controls to slow down the game (in single-player mode, anyway) and even pause if it gets too hectic.

MULTIPLAYER MISERY

But before you get too carried away, there's a major problem – no usable multiplayer features.

While US players can play on the Mplayer Internet matching service or play dynamic online campaigns using the Dynaverse system, UK editions of the game have had these two features disabled. Interplay claims this was due to complaints from UK customers about the cost of logging on to US servers but this seems rather a thin excuse. Surely online gamers over here know how to get on the Internet using local calls or all-inclusive access?



USS Enterprise in asteroid collision shock.

Whatever the reason, Interplay and developers Taldren have promised a UK patch very soon to re-enable the Mplayer and Dynaverse features. Actually the Dynaverse servers were still in early beta as we went to press, so

if you're thinking of buying *SFC2* for its online element, check before you buy it.

There have already been two major US-version-only patches (to 2.0.03 and 2.0.04) inside the first few weeks, proving that the developers are on the ball and my own feeling is that UK users will be online fairly swiftly. As we were given a US copy, we can confirm that the multiplayer features work but bear in mind that a UK-sourced game won't. Not yet, anyway.

FINAL FRONTIER

SFC2 still has a wonderful range of single-player options – including skirmish and dynamic campaign modes – as well as LAN and direct TCP/IP play, but the Dynaverse and Mplayer bits should have been included before release.

It's certainly not a game to dip into lightly and it'll take hours of play before you come to grips with the job of captaining a starship successfully. Whether that's a plus or a minus depends entirely on you, but it'll no doubt have wide appeal for dedicated Trekkies and space sim fans.

Leaving the multiplayer mess aside, there are still major disappointments. The manual is

average and contains no ship descriptions, while there are lots of 'technical' bugs still remaining to be fixed. For example, some weapons can fire outside their arc, while others cause incorrect amounts of damage. That said, this is a challenging game, and while it doesn't boldly go anywhere other games haven't been, it will give many gamers months of enjoyment. It looks and feels awesome and when it all comes together online, it could well be the best space combat sim in the universe. Well, this bit of the universe anyway... [PC]

TECH SPECS

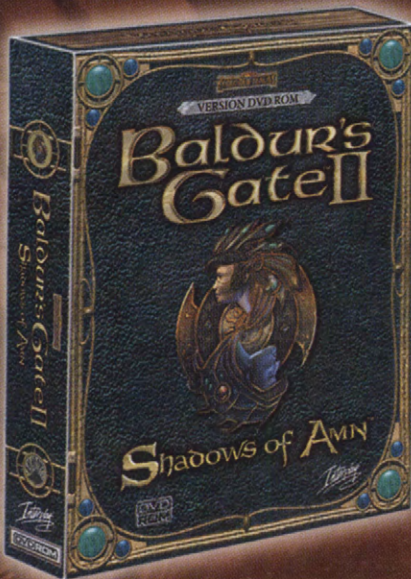
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PIII 500 (without 3D card) otherwise PIII 350
Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** D3D-supported video card **WE SAY** Less powerful machines work fine in skirmish mode, but the specs are just about right for campaigns

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Brilliant animation and graphics • Loads of new ships and weapons • Challenging AI • Supert campaign mode
- DOWNERS No Dynaverse or Mplayer support in UK • Lots of 'technical' bugs • Obtuse interface

75 Probably the best Star Trek space sim around

phenomenal a. extraordinary; unique, amazing, fabulous: n. *the sensational.*



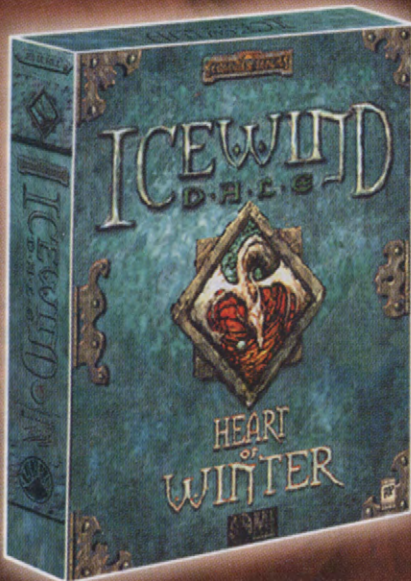
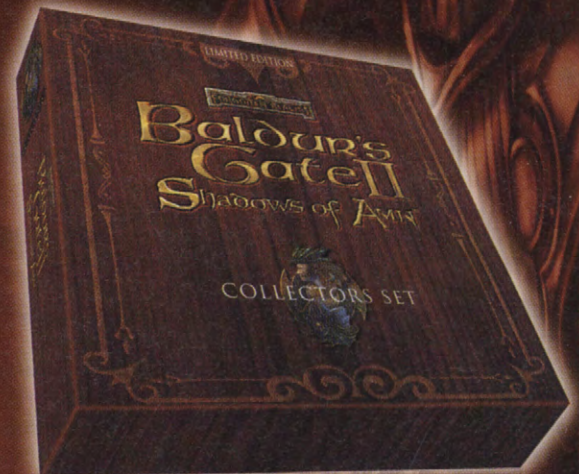
DVD
ROM

baldur's gate 2 dvd a. the world's finest role-playing game on one disc; without disc-swapping syndrome.

PC
CD
ROM

baldur's gate 2 collectors edition

a. highly desirable item; a must have. the ultimate role playing collectors item.



PC
CD
ROM

icewind dale

heart of winter n. the added bonus of more missions for icewind dale. upgrades icewind dale to new features found in baldur's gate 2.



Advanced
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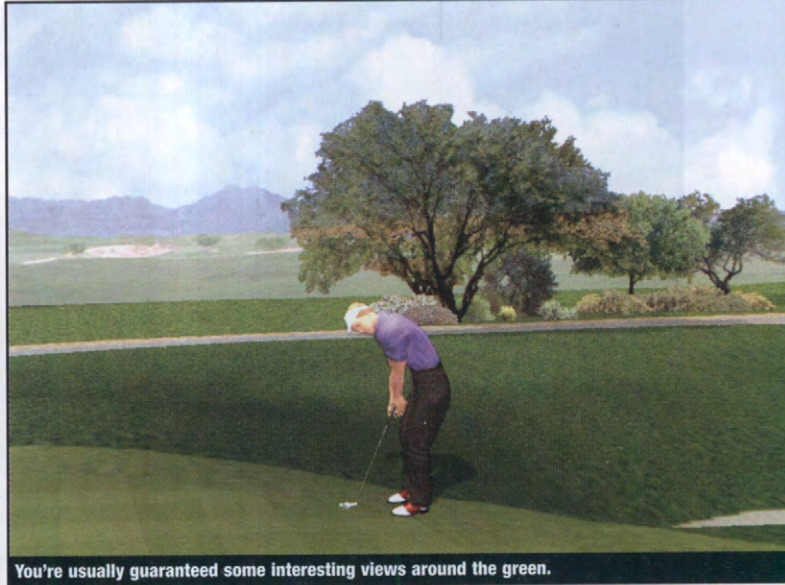
The Official Game of
Dungeons & Dragons
The movie



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Get in the hole...



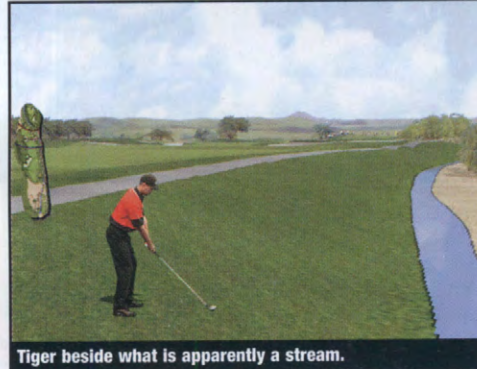
You're usually guaranteed some interesting views around the green.



None of the courses inspire awe or a sense of wonder.



The camerawork's impressive - shame about the graphics.



Tiger beside what is apparently a stream.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001

★ £29.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

Keith Pullin gives the world's greatest golfer a lesson in humility

Tiger Woods is without doubt one of the most naturally talented sportsmen on the face of the planet. He has single-handedly made golf 'cool', and for the first time in history kids are growing up wanting to be professional golfers. It comes as quite a shock then to find that a virtual legend can have his name

and likeness plastered all over a game that will barely scrape into the annals of mediocrity.

NO IRONS

If you thought *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001* would iron out the flaws of last year's tepid offering you would be sadly mistaken. *Tiger 2001* has loyally allowed all its failings to stay. So, it's a big warm welcome back to the same blocky graphics, the same jerky animation, the same awful Pro Swing and the same soul-destroying putting system.

glued to Sky Sports 3, and new courses, including Sugarloaf and River Highlands, do little to improve the personality of the eight uninspiring TPC courses.

If *Tiger 2001* is the result of a year's hard graft, you've got to say it's a pretty poor effort. OK, so *PGA 2000* and *Links 2001* both suffered from minimalist improvements too, but at least (and especially in the case of *PGA 2000*) they were decent games in the first place.

On the upside, the lack of change means that we're treated

that it's still the best camera view of any golf game now. During those rare moments when you plummet out of the sky and straight into the hole, the thrill and excitement is impossible to contain. The little incidental cut-scenes where the camera swoops in for a close-up of your golfer rejoicing after such a shot is also a highly commendable touch.

BEGINNERS' LUCK

Novices will be pleased to know there's a choice of four CPU settings, ranging from poor to exemplary, and an excellent qualifying competition where you aim for the PGA Tour itself. Even the sound effects and commentary are good, if occasionally misplaced. That, however, is where *PGA Tour 2001*'s goodness ends.

Ultimately, like its predecessor, *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001* is a very simplistic golf game with plenty of downsides and

little lasting appeal. Sure, the novelty of the first-person camera makes for some memorable gameplay moments, but with other vastly superior golf games around, this is probably one you can live without. **PCZ**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200
Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** PII 350,
64Mb RAM, graphics acceleration

PCZVERDICT

- ↑ **UPPERS** Great camera work
 - Nice effects and commentary
 - Four CPU levels
- ↓ **DOWNERS** Awful graphics and animation • Terrible Pro Swing • Lacks character and atmosphere • Annoying putting • Too simplistic

IN PERSPECTIVE

While mildly entertaining for PC golfing rookies, *Tiger Woods 2001* comes nowhere near the standard of *PGA 2000* and lurks some way behind *Links 2001*.

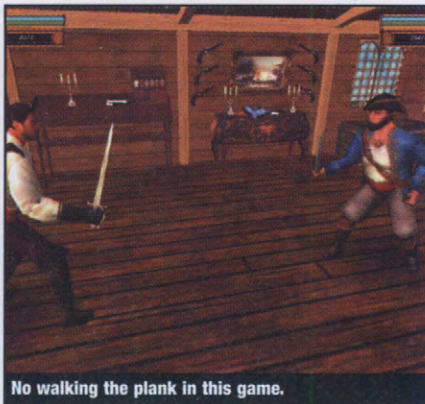
PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF 2000	██████████
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2000	██████████
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001	██████████
LINKS LS2001	██████████

“It's a warm welcome back to the blocky graphics, the jerky animation, the awful Pro Swing, the soul-destroying putting”

The general lack of improvement is truly disturbing. The two new PGA golfers, Stuart Appleby and Jim Furyk, are meaningless names to those who don't spend their entire lives

to 11 match types, Internet options and a truly amazing first-person view of the ball as it sails through the air. This camera angle was impressive a year ago, and you have to say

62 Stuck in the rough



No walking the plank in this game.



That Martin Korda gets everywhere.



The sea battles are one of the game's best features.



It's me. In a storm. Yikes!

SEA DOGS

★ TBA • Bethesda (UK publisher TBA) • Out now US (UK release TBA)

High adventure, role-playing, pirates, naval combat... does this game have everything? Let's ask *Chris Anderson*

Bethesda's latest title is ambitious if nothing else. It contains elements from most game genres in moderate amounts, and it bravely attempts to blend them all into one satisfying whole. There's even something approaching a decent story line in there, with the hero of the tale in constant pursuit of his father whose whereabouts are unknown,

IN PERSPECTIVE

Simple – if you want swashbuckling adventure, choose *Redguard*. If you want added strategy, go for *Cutthroats*. And for a mish-mash, we can recommend *Sea Dogs*.

Cutthroats

Sea Dogs

Redguard

though several clues are given at the beginning of the game as to where he might be.

In the midst of all this melodramatic nonsense you are asked to choose a country to which you are loyal. Given the choice of countries to which you can offer your loyalty (England, France or Spain), the decision is hardly a difficult one. Off you go then, to sail the seven seas in the name of England, trading goods from one town to another, battling pirates, solving quests and working your way up the ladder of respectability, buying bigger and better ships as you go along.

ALMOST GREAT

As a basis for an entertaining game, it's not a particularly bad one – depending, of course, on how each part of the great gameplan is executed. However, as is the case with most games that try to do everything, *Sea*

Dogs works well in some areas and not so well in others.

Graphically, *Sea Dogs* is fairly impressive. Highly detailed characters and environments make for a reasonably convincing atmosphere, and the towns on the mainland, though sparsely populated, serve their purpose in creating an atmospheric background to your dealings

“Although certain elements of it may suggest so, *Sea Dogs* is not a game for the arcade freak – it demands effort”

while on shore leave. Each town has a store where you can buy goods to trade abroad, a tavern where you can hear the latest gossip and recruit crew members, a shipyard for repairing and upgrading your ship, and a town hall, which often provides quest information.

Talking to the townsfolk will sometimes lead you to a quest,

which usually involves escorting someone or taking an item to somebody in a neighbouring town. The throwaway nature of the quests is perhaps the first indication that the game's many and diverse influences are simply placeholders to keep you mildly occupied until you take to the seas and enter into battle.

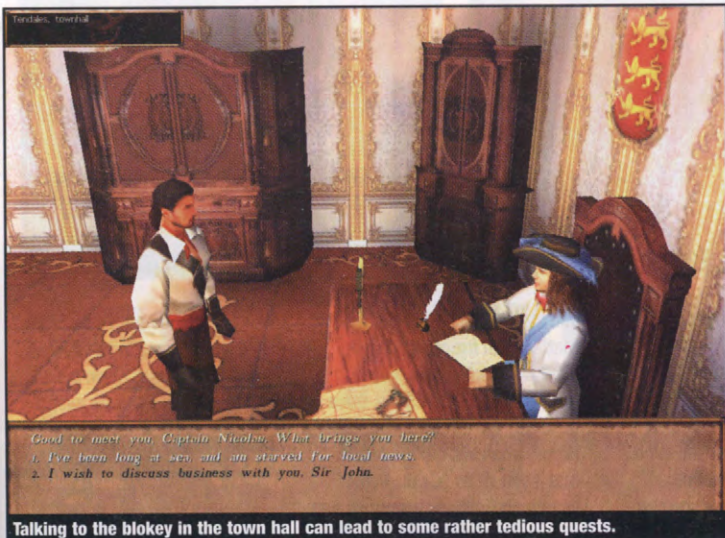
There is also a role-playing element. Solving quests and defeating enemies will give you experience. Gain enough experience and you go up in rank, so you can then buy bigger, better and faster ships (of which there are 20). You also get skill points which you can award to certain areas to improve your performance. The time you spend

on the mainland pottering about with all these things is moderately engrossing, if a little meandering. Thankfully, the sea battles lift the game out of mediocrity.

BOARDING SCHOOL

Your first objective when you leave a town and board your ship is naturally to find somewhere to go. You *could* just sit there admiring the waves as they splash against your ship, but it would not make for scintillating gameplay. As it happens, the alternative is much better.

Set your sights on the nearest town on the map and off you go, only to be interrupted every two seconds by a message explaining there are some ships in sight, and eventually with the info that someone is attempting to end your career before it's even started. In other words, they are trying to kill you.

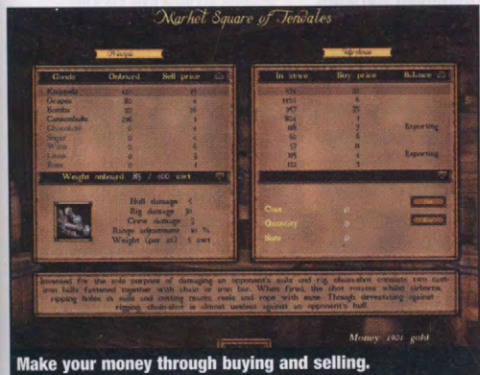


Good to meet you, Captain Nicolas. What brings you here?
 1. I've been long at sea and am starved for land news.
 2. I wish to discuss business with you, Sir John.

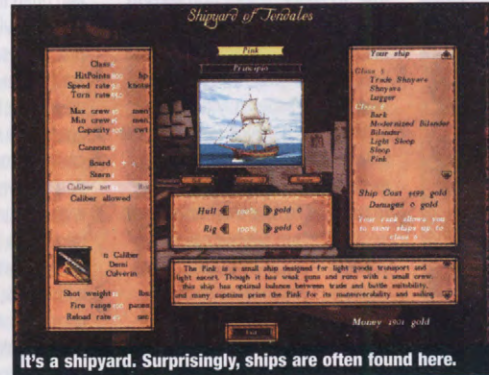
Talking to the blokey in the town hall can lead to some rather tedious quests.



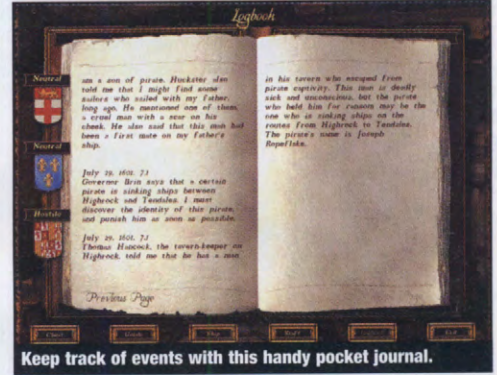
Hire and fire on this very screen.



Make your money through buying and selling.



It's a shipyard. Surprisingly, ships are often found here.



Keep track of events with this handy pocket journal.

Cue battle screen, which looks quite impressive to start with until you realise ship combat is actually quite a difficult thing to pull off. You can switch to first-person mode to target enemy ships and walk around your ship, but this is so awkward you will quickly find yourself switching to third-person view, which is less awkward but still tricky. Taking on the forts that guard the islands is trickier still, especially at the start when your ship is as good as a rubber dinghy against the Bismark. Thankfully, once a decent ship and crew are yours and experience points are withdrawn from the memory

bank, it all becomes second nature, thanks to a good interface and an emphasis on positioning, rather than speed and firepower. Eventually, of course, a victor emerges and if both sides agree (one rather more reluctantly), boarding commences. The two captains face off in a beat 'em up fashion and, depending on who has the biggest and baddest crew and the deftest fingers, one will emerge victorious. **SEEM FAMILIAR?** Those of you with a history of playing PC games will realise *Sea Dogs* seems like a direct rip-off of Sid Meier's ancient *Pirates*, and

you know, you'd be right. Thing is, apart from the poor 2D effort from Microids some time ago (*Corsairs*, I believe it was called) and Eidos' slightly better *Cutthroats*, pirate games are few in number, which is a shame because we've always enjoyed the concept. Nothing quite beats an Errol Flynn movie on a Sunday afternoon and, like watching *Where Eagles Dare* or *Star Wars*, nothing beats playing a game set in the same world. Needless to say, after 90 minutes of *The Sea Hawk*, *Sea Dogs* fits the bill quite nicely. Whether you see *Sea Dogs* as a *Pirates* tribute or indeed an

Elite-style RPG for land lubbers, the fact remains that while the boarding actions are too symbolic to feel authentic and the 3D wandering in towns fairly tedious, the RPG 'levelling up', ship combat and level of graphical detail do make up for a lot. Although certain elements of it may suggest so, *Sea Dogs* is not a game for the arcade freak. It demands effort and if you stay awake through the boring bits, the other aspects of it will make sure you put the hard graft in. Perhaps if the developers had put some of their own ideas into the game and tweaked a few things, we might have had a classic. [C]

TECH SPECS
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium 233 **Memory** 64Mb **WE SAY** Stick with the memory and up the processor to a 450

PCZVERDICT
UPPERS Open-ended gameplay • Nice graphics • Ship combat is nice
DOWNERS Tedious walky-talky bits • Bizarre mix of genres • Very few original ideas

70 Basically, a good game with some not-so-good bits

WALKTHROUGH

TROUBLE AT MILL...

Here it is, the chain of events leading to one of the least-accomplished duel/combat scenes ever written



1 There I am, sailing along, minding my own business...



2 ...when three Spanish blokes in big ships suddenly start picking on me.



3 In this scene, they're blowing me up while I play with my target cursor.



4 Now they're on my ship. Scuffle ensues. Go on, my boys, GO ON...



5 The boys failed to go on. I now get to bash frantically on my keyboard while their captain cuts me up into little pieces.

FAR GATE

★ £29.99 • Microïds • Out now

Richie Shoemaker finds there's no place like Homeworld

There really is nothing to dislike about this credible tribute to the seminal *Homeworld*, except to say that against *Homeworld* and its semi-sequel *Cataclysm*, it just isn't as polished, or, to be more accurate, as finished.

As with *Homeworld* you can select and direct your ships in a true 3D space, unlike *Homeworld*, however, there is really no need to: the enemy attacks from the same horizon. The graphics aren't as impressive, especially the dozens of ships and stations (although the planets and gaseous clouds are more interesting to look at than *Homeworld's* Spartan backdrops).

The biggest problem is that even on a hi-spec PC, the game slows to a crawl whenever the screen fills with units. This wouldn't be such an issue if the game wasn't without some sort of failsafe device. Let me explain:

you start in a solar system, and no matter what the objective, you must first deploy a Pre Fab unit to build a base of operations. Once done you are asked to explore, kill, probe, whatever, but the fact is that if you sit back, rake in the seemingly limitless resources and expand your base to its limit, you can build the maximum 200 ships and win without much effort. The problem is that the missions are scripted in such a way you only encounter the enemy when you physically move your ships into a certain area. Therefore, if you don't move, you can fill the screen with polygons and win every mission in jerky slow motion.

All of which could be rectified with a patch. Elsewhere, the comic-book story line, eccentric soundtrack (that at times sounds like freeform jazz – nice), mission builder and multiplayer options

make up some rough edges, but we'd suggest waiting a while for Super X Studios to finish the game before parting with your cash.

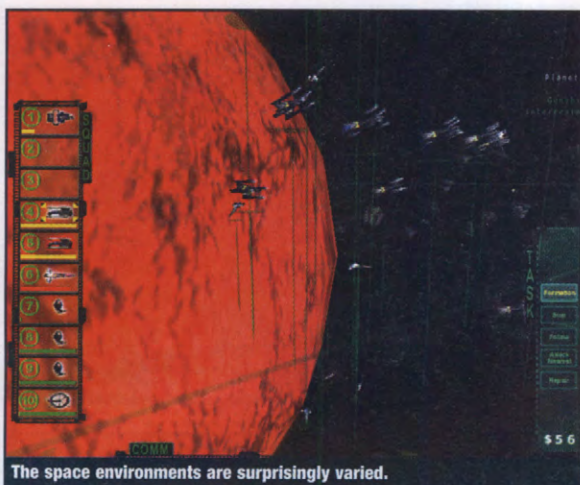
TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233
Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Even on an Athlon 600 with 64Mb RAM and a Voodoo5 the thing runs like a pig

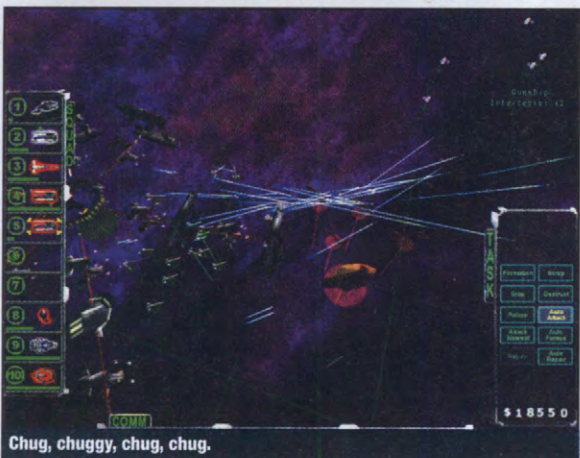
PCZVERDICT

⬆️ **UPPERS** Good story • Impressive backdrops • Quirky soundtrack
⬇️ **DOWNERS** Poor mission structure • Needs a top-spec PC • Unfinished

64 A strangely endearing *Homeworld* tribute that needs more work



The space environments are surprisingly varied.



Chug, chuggy, chug, chug.

BATTLESHIP 2

★ £19.99 • Hasbro • Out now

A4 – Miss, E8 – Miss, B6 – Miss...
Richie Shoemaker looks for a hit

If there was one thing you could rely on in the crazy world of computer entertainment, it was that if there was a board game out there, Hasbro would convert it to PC. But Hasbro's demise as a games publisher in December means that *Battleship 2* will be the last board game conversion, which means, compared to such travesties as *Star Wars Monopoly*, Hasbro has gone out on a relative high. For although the 'you've sunk my battleship' turn-based 'classic' option is marginally better than playing on scraps of paper, the single-player action campaign is quite a lot of fun (ie nothing like the board game at all).

Entirely similar to *Overboard*, the 1997 game that no one will remember, *Battleship 2's* arcade missions task you simply with getting your rather nippy cruiser

from one side of a map to the other, via, of course, the water. To stop you are other ships, submarines, shore-based cannons, biplanes and zeppelins, all of which if hit with enough shots, will erupt into flames and cause your score to increase. In some missions you must rescue life rafts, in others destroy buildings and throughout all you can find power-ups floating around as crates in the briny, some with extra weapons, boosts of speed or health. So far, pretty formulaic and even to a small child with no thumbs, fairly easy to get half-way through the game without too much effort. That said, the game is fairly addictive, well designed and attractive – perfectly suited to anyone at an age too young to play with seamen of their own.



Believe it or not, this can become quite addictive.



Three lives and you're out.



"Come and get me you Fokkers."

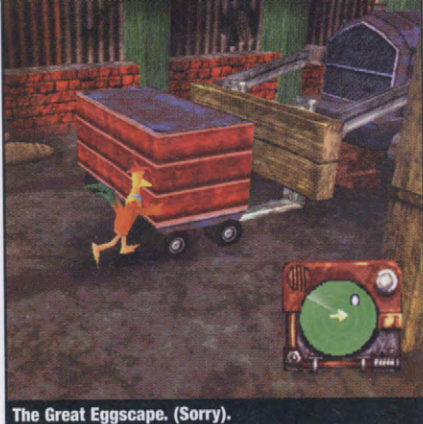
TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166
Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** 3D card highly recommended

PCZVERDICT

⬆️ **UPPERS** Simple arcade action • Plenty of power-ups • Works on a basic setup
⬇️ **DOWNERS** 'Classic' game is rubbish • Some graphical glitches • Too easy

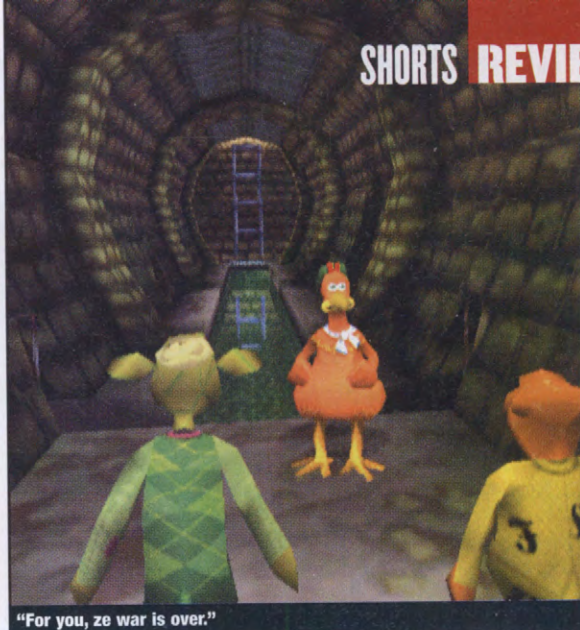
57 An unsophisticated arcade blast



The Great Eggscape. (Sorry).



Wired for hound. (Must try harder - Captions Dept.)



"For you, ze war is over."

CHICKEN RUN

★ £29.99 • Eidos • Out now

Why did the chicken cross the road? Rajiv Awasti investigates

Movie-licensed games are like pizzas. They are either crammed with all your favourite toppings from the film or are cheese and tomato affairs with nothing in common but the name. Thankfully, this chicken-flavoured offering from the makers of *Dizzy* allows you to relive the film – which wasn't a patch on *Wallace & Gromit* – and throws in some sub-games for good measure. The Aardman Animation film follows the eggsploits (sorry) of Ginger, a hen attempting to lead

her fellow chickens in escaping from a prison camp-style farm before they are plucked and turned into chicken pie. The game mirrors the film as you'd eggspect (oops) in as much as *Chicken Run* the film was a cartoon tribute to *The Great Escape*. So it treads *Metal Gear Solid* ground as you manoeuvre Ginger (and friends) around the farm in a 3D overhead view-point, complete with radar and stealth move – although, as this is a family game, there are no guns or strangle holds. Ginger is

assisted by Rocky the rooster, Mac (a smart-egg) and some shady rats that work for eggs. Against you are guard dogs and Mr and Mrs Tweedy, the farm owners who are constantly patrolling the farm. Split into three acts, much of the game involves exploring the farm for various objects. These are assembled into contraptions such as catapults and fireworks launchers to aid escape. Once built, you button-bash your way through simple and fun sub

games, watch a film clip and hit the next level. As a whole the game plays well enough, but there isn't much here. You go through the motions to complete one task, and then the next. There isn't much incentive to return, although younger players may appreciate hidden pictures. If all things *Chicken Run* are your cup of tea then this will sit nicely alongside the DVD, the colouring book and those gorgeous *Chicken Run* slippers. If not, there is always Chuckie Egg...

TECH SPECS
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233
 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY**
 Processor P450 Memory 64Mb RAM

PCZVERDICT
 ⬆️ **UPPERS** Easy to pickup • Family fun
 ⬇️ **DOWNERS** Limited replay value • Requires patience • Fairly linear

59 Chicken in a bun



Badda-badda-badda.

PACIFIC WARRIORS

★ £29.99 • Swing • Out now

Always up for trips to hot and sunny sandy beaches, Richie Shoemaker instead finds himself in a war zone

Although to many modern, big-money developers it seems to be a dead art, there are in the hinterlands of the Internet some cracking old-skool shoot 'em ups to be found, either as freeware or shareware. There is a reason for that: few people want to spend £30 on a simple concept and therefore few people make them. In the case of *Pacific Warriors*, in essence there is little to tell it apart from the 'classic' coin-op 1942, mixed of course with a slice of *Afterburner*.

Well, OK, *Pacific Warriors* offers much more freedom to

get lost among the confusing islands of the South Pacific, and as a flight game, is far easier to get to grips with than any simulator you'd care to mention. But as an action game it is pretty dull. For instance, the seas and island are entirely static, you are more likely to be rammed out of the sky rather than taken out with a well-placed shot and the sound is a dreadful cacophony of looped samples and repeating voice lines.

But for all that, *Pacific Warriors* is one of those games that while you're playing, manages to trick

you into thinking that you're having some kind of fun. As you think you're nearing the end of one level, you're thinking that the next must be better. And it is, just enough for the hope to circulate once more.

TECH SPECS
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200
 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
 4Mb 3D card **WE SAY** PII 300 and 64MB highly recommended

PCZVERDICT
 ⬆️ **UPPERS** Rather mindless to the point of being calmly hypnotic • Simple
 ⬇️ **DOWNERS** Basic in all departments

43 Make sure you keep your receipt



Meeeeeooooooooowww!



Weeee... kaboom!



Yawn... zzzzzzzzzzz.

THE WARD

£19.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

Mark Hill finds an adventure in desperate need of some medication

Point and click adventures have traditionally been funny. Let me rephrase that. Point and click adventures are traditionally meant to be funny, with only a select few actually achieving their goal (such as most of LucasArts' output and the *Discworld* series), while their serious counterparts fall flat on their ridiculous faces for the most part – with the notable exception of *The Last Express*. *The Ward* goes right back to such dead-on-their-feet classics as *Beneath A Steel Sky* or the more recent *Sanitarium* and *In Cold Blood*, going for a dark, brooding atmosphere, logical and unwacky puzzles and plenty of moments where the main character can get killed. The story is pretty unimpressive too: a mission to the Moon goes horribly wrong, all your crewmates are killed, there's

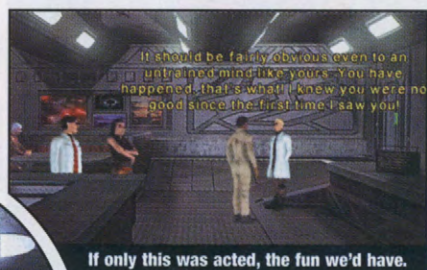
a space station littered with bodies and crawling with aliens, the future of mankind is at stake, yadda, yadda, yadda. The interface is functional enough, but the whole thing smacks of being three or four years old and there is little incentive to blunder your way through the textbook puzzles. It's a shame the dialogue isn't voiced because, judging from the comical quality of the intro's acting, it would have been a laugh a minute in a way that the lamentable *Arcatera* was. It's hard to knock the developer, Croatian company Fragile Bits, who made the game without any funding whatsoever in their spare time and have been waiting almost a year for a developer to show interest. But the fact still remains that you have to pay – even if it is a reduced price – for the finished product, it



"HAL, are you there?"



A puzzle, on a space station, without an alien.



If only this was acted, the fun we'd have.

isn't a free download from the Net, as so many unfinanced mods are, and as such just isn't good enough.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233
Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Well it is quite a primitive game

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS It's a labour of love • It has small grey aliens with elongated heads
DOWNERS Looks ancient • Boring

51 Amateurish and forgettable



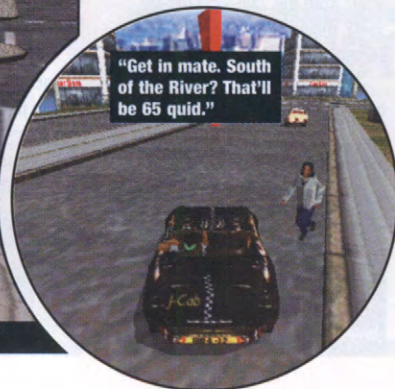
That's right, lie down and take a nap.



Crazy Taxi, anyone?



Super Taxi Driver. German.



"Get in mate. South of the River? That'll be 65 quid."

SUPER TAXI DRIVER

£9.99 • Hemming • Out now

Steve Hill finds a steaming poo on the back seat of his cab

Being a miserable twat isn't all it's cracked up to be. Not only do you have to constantly endure grinning dickheads urging you to cheer up, but you also get the unenviable task of reviewing much of the gaming detritus that trickles into the office. *Super Taxi Driver* falls comfortably into that category, and has done nothing to alleviate the New Year gloom.

A shameless rip-off of the vastly superior Dreamcast game, *Crazy Taxi*, this low-grade

imitation is largely without any redeeming features. Selecting one of three (count 'em) wholly untypical taxis, the idea is to transport nondescript customers from one bland street to another in a graphically murky city that may or may not be San Francisco. The action takes place against the clock (and a background of porn music), with money awarded depending on how much each customer enjoyed the journey. Deliver your fares on time, and you eventually move on to an equally moribund stage.

So far, so plagiarised, but it's all handled in such a leaden fashion as to avoid any accusations of being either crazy or super. Collision detection is ropey to say the least, and it isn't even possible to take any worthwhile shortcuts, as in the world of *Super Taxi Driver*, areas of flat grass prove infuriatingly impassable. Success

is almost entirely dependent on the random positioning of the customers and their destinations, which are often comfortably within walking distance. This kind of muck might be able to keep weak-minded gamers entertained for a couple of hours, but that's only marginally less time than it took to program.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 266
Memory 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** You can't polish a turd

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Cheap
DOWNERS Collision detection • No real structure to the game • Ugly

22 Buy this if you are really stupid



Three wheels on my wagon, and I keep rolling on.

WARM UP!

★ £20 • Lankhor • Out now

Dave Woods finds an F1 game that the FIA hasn't bunged a license to

A bit of an odd one, this is. *Warm Up!* is an F1 simulation that pays little attention to the realism of Crammond's *GP3*, or the playability of any of the other two major offerings, from EA and Eidos. Even stranger is that the game's developed by Lankhor, the people responsible for the more than half-decent Eidos release, *F1 World Grand Prix*. Quite what they were trying to do here is anyone's guess.

You can play in one of two modes. 'Hilarious' arcade mode, which pays scant regard to the trappings of the real world, enabling you to take hairpin bends at full speed, and where the only aim is to overtake as many cars as possible over a set number of laps. Before you finish the first race you'll be reaching for the Quit button. It's not that much better in Simulation mode, to be honest, although there is at



It's not just like watching Brazil.

least a challenge of sorts to be had in keeping your car on the track and out of the pits.

Think *F1* without any of the challenge, *GP3* without any of the good bits and you're halfway there. Look forward to graphics that would leave the PlayStation crowd completely cold (the manual claims photo-realism, but unless the person that wrote this guff takes snaps with a Nintendo GameBoy, he or she would be best advised to actually play the game before making any further bold claims), sound effects that are a complete toss and a general air of

malaise that is summed up by the insipid name of the game itself.

It might sound harsh for a racing game that works, but I've seen much better, so what's the point in pretending? In its favour, and despite the £20 price tag, you're likely to be able to pick this gem up for a mere tenner down your local emporium, which brings a level of respectability to the game that is lacking elsewhere. However, counter this with the fact that there are better budget games on offer, and there's not really much else to say.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM: P233, 32Mb RAM
WE SAY: PII-300, 64Mb RAM

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Martin Brundle doesn't appear

DOWNERS Poor graphics • Useless arcade mode

45 Warm down!



This colourful cardboard box is really a tank (we think).



Spinnny 3D. But not that good.

WARTORN

★ £19.99 • Virgin • Out now

Whether you're looking for a full-on fight or a bit of strategic warfare, *WarTorn* could be just the thing

The concept behind *WarTorn* is an interesting one, even worthy of a Hollywood low on substance, big on explosions, guy film. War tournaments, so the story goes were developed in ancient times, ie now, as an extreme measure to control over population. Now *WarTorn* is being brought back in 2999AD as some kind of *Running Man* type TV show, where wars are fought in an enormous arena, which is large enough to stop spectators getting blood on their popcorn.

The graphics are at best passable and when compared to other 3D strategy fests such as *Ground Control* and *Earth 2150*, it comes up distinctly under par.

The units and buildings are average, nothing special there either, although they do look at their best when they are either firing or being blown up.

You can play in a number of different modes, which run from simple skirmish games where you choose all your units before the game starts and just fight it out, up to full strategy where you need to mine for resources and create your units from scratch. The AI is pretty good and your opponents put up a hell of a fight and often blow you off the arena before you've even managed to locate your shit, let alone get it together.

The interface is a little confusing, as is controlling your godlike camera angle above the arena. When you manage to get

close to your units, it's as much luck as it is pressing the right keys. Overall it's not great to look at, but it's quite fun to play and sometimes that's all you need.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM P-200 MHz, 32Mb RAM, 3d Card WE SAY Works better with a P450

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS The story line • Lots of options

DOWNERS The graphics • The interface

58 Some good ideas, but not enough execution



Turquoise, the only colour for the fashionable military installation.

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL

One of these games will emerge as *PC ZONE's* choice as the most influential game of all time. Prepare yourself for one of the most heated debates in the history of the *ZONE* Supertest. *Chris Anderson* attempts to keep the peace

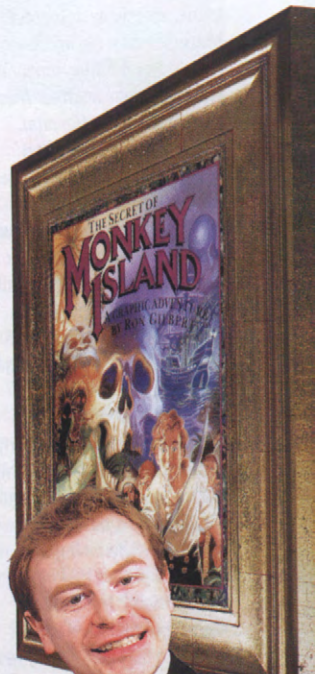
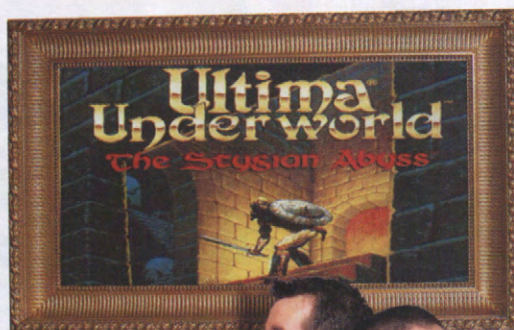


⬆ The protagonists from Left to Right: Steve (I'm not interested unless it's *Champ Manager*) Hill ✪ Chris (Goblin Fancier) Anderson ✪ Dave (Boss Man) Woods ✪ Richie (Deputy Boss Man) Shoemaker ✪ Rhianna (New Girl) Pratchett ✪ Martin (Bone Scraper) Korda ✪ Paul (Champagne Charlie) Mallinson ✪ Mark (News Hound) Hill ✪ Paul (I Am The King) Presley

PHOTOGRAPHY Simon Clay STYLING Victoria Barnes

PC GAMES

OF ALL TIME



Choosing the most influential PC game of all time was never going to be an easy task. There are so many factors to take into consideration: consumer sales, technology, popularity, number of sequels and clones emerging from the original title... it's almost impossible to define one element as being more

important than any other in the great scheme of things.

Rather than define a set of criteria for this Supertest, we decided the best way forward was to simply sit down and discuss the impact of each title, both within and outside the games industry, secure in the knowledge that one title would leap to the fore under close scrutiny.

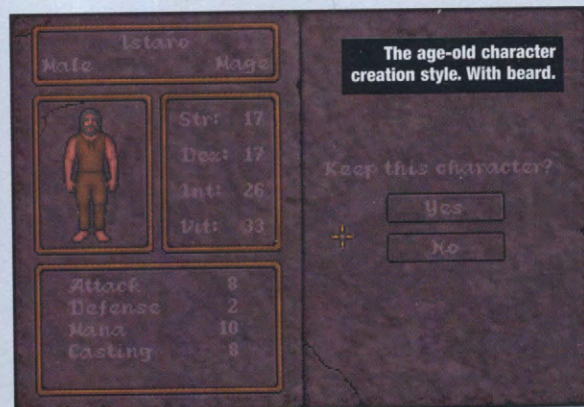
The seven titles on test here today all had a deep impact on the gaming industry in different ways. Each one of them is a classic in its own right, and will be immediately recognisable to anyone with a reasonable grip on the PC gaming scene.

Bear in mind that we are not looking for the *best* PC game of all time, we are searching for the one that played the biggest part in shaping the PC games industry as we know it today. The scene is set.





Before *Ultima Underworld*, 3D was only a pipe dream.



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

Mallo: This was incredible when it first came out. With the 3D engine you could look up and down, tilt left and right, lean backwards and forwards, you could swim, you could jump... it was the first game to introduce all these things in 3D in one game.

Chris: It wasn't just *Ultima Underworld's* 3D engine that was impressive. It had a great story line, and was one of the first games where it was actually worth talking to characters. You even had to learn new languages to talk to some of them. It was a work of art.

Mallo: You could also say that some of it was influenced by the SCUMM interface in *Monkey Island*, with the same multiple-choice conversation system.

Prezzer: But *Ultima Underworld* had everything. The engine, the conversation system, you had to learn how to read various runes, too – it was all part of the *Ultima* universe.

Mallo: Steve, I can see you

Ultima Underworld was the first game to make a technological breakthrough for RPGs. In that respect, it had a huge influence on its genre.

Mallo: Despite the low-resolution graphics it's still hugely playable. I played it a few months ago and it's still excellent. The gameplay is still there. And Warren Spector learned a lot making *Ultima Underworld*, which is why *Deus Ex* is so good.

Prezzer: But *Ultima Underworld* didn't influence any games, except Warren Spector games.

Richie: I disagree. It's influenced all RPGs, but it hasn't had influence outside its genre. If you look at *Soldier Of Fortune* or *Rogue Spear* or whatever, they all use a 3D engine but they're more influenced by *Doom* than by *Ultima Underworld*.

Prezzer: But the people making 3D games would say *System Shock* was more influential because more people have played that than *Ultima Underworld*.

was the game the whole world was talking about, not just people who played role-playing games. It even had a speech pack, which was impressive for the time. You can't tell me would-be developers were not influenced by such a landmark title.

Mallo: I remember reading all the reviews at the time. Every mag gave it really high scores, all over 90 per cent, but in terms of influence I reckon it suffered the same problem as *Half-Life*. Nobody has taken on board what it's done and improved on it. The same is true for *Ultima Underworld* with RPGs.

Dave: It took years for *Half-Life* to break new ground in first-person shooters. We'll probably have to wait longer for the same thing to happen with RPGs.

Richie: *Ultima Underworld* had a different kind of influence than most of the games here. *SimCity* wasn't notable in a technological way, whereas *Underworld* could be said to have influenced some of the other games in this Supertest, *SimCity* can't.

Mallo: It showed other programmers what could be done. They probably never dreamed of doing any of that stuff before they saw this game.

Chris: The point is there's so many things you could do in *Underworld* that you couldn't do in any other game. That's influence, and it goes way beyond genre. Technology is probably more an influence on what developers do than anything else.

Prezzer: I'm not disagreeing with that, I'm just saying that even nine years after *Underworld* came out there's still no game like it, so it can't have been much of an influence.

Dave: You're missing the point.

The technology and game design influenced games in many genres. Just because people didn't make an RPG after seeing *Underworld* doesn't mean they weren't heavily influenced by it.

Martin: It definitely hasn't had an influence on RPGs. Most of the big ones like *Baldur's Gate* have gone for the isometric viewpoint. The thing to ask is, did it have an impact on other genres, on games such as *Doom* and *Quake*, for example?

Richie: If you're going to talk about things from a technological point of view, *Ultima Underworld* is by far the most influential game in this Supertest. Technology-wise, definitely, but in terms of popularity, probably not.

Mallo: But that could just be a symptom of the genre. RPGs are just not as popular as first-person shoot 'em ups, but they've got their attractions. Haven't they, Steve?

Steve: Yes.

Everyone: (laughs)
Prezzer: People don't look at *Ultima Underworld* if they're going to make a first-person shoot 'em up – they look instead at *Doom*.

Dave: That's not true. The *Ultima Underworld* engine was much more advanced than the one in *Doom*. And the gameplay was really diverse. It showed people you could

make a game that wasn't just about shooting people in the head. You could use that technology for any kind of game. You can't say that about *Doom*.

Mark: But you can't use technology as the sole basis to decide how influential a game has been. There are so many other things that go into making a game, not just the engine.

Chris: That's the whole point. *Ultima Underworld* was revolutionary both in terms of technology and its diverse gameplay. It had it all. People would not have noticed the technology much if the game hadn't been so good.

Mallo: Agreed.

Chris: Good. Let's move on. →



shaking your head in despair.

Everyone: (laughs)

Martin: Before *Ultima Underworld* came along you had games like *Eye Of The Beholder*, which were basically flick-screen affairs. In *Eye Of The Beholder* you couldn't swim or jump or look around. All you could really do was jerk right and left a bit or whatever.

“Even nine years after *Underworld* came out there's still no game like it”

PREZ ON *ULTIMA UNDERWORLD*

Chris: That's not true. It was hugely influential. It broke barriers before *System Shock* even happened. It was a typical Origin game of the time in the sense that it made huge technological breakthroughs and you needed a really good system to play it.

Mallo: 486DX2 with 8Mb of RAM, I think it was, which was a lot at the time, but it was worth it.

Chris: When it first came out it



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

A technological masterpiece and an unrivalled role-playing game, *Ultima Underworld* is hailed as one of the best games of all time by many hardcore gamers. Its influence can be seen clearly in games such as *Deus Ex* and, more subtly, in a myriad other titles. Regardless, the old paradigm 'they don't make them like this anymore' certainly rings true for this game. More is the pity.

ORIGINAL SCORE	Not reviewed
DEVELOPER	Looking Glass
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts



THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Chris: Can I just say that I think we should be talking about *King's Quest* rather than *Monkey Island*.

Rhianna: I agree, *King's Quest* was much more influential.

Richie: No way.

Chris: *Monkey Island* is easily the best adventure game ever, but *King's Quest* is the game that kick-started the whole genre.

Richie: In that case, you may as well say we should be doing *Wolfenstein 3D* instead of *Doom*.

Prezzer: Even though *King's Quest* started the genre, every adventure game wanted to be *Monkey Island*. It doesn't matter what came first.

Chris: *King's Quest* brought the

whole PC adventure genre to the fore. Without *King's Quest*, there would be no *Monkey Island*. And regarding *Wolfenstein* and *Doom*, *Doom* was the first really big first-person shooter. *King's Quest* was huge before *Monkey Island* even came out.

Prezzer: Ever since *Monkey Island* came out it was the funniest, the most accomplished adventure game. Nobody has come near it since.

Chris: You're talking about the best game then, not the most influential. I'm not arguing about the quality of *Monkey Island*, I'm just saying it wasn't the game that

invented the graphic adventure on PC and paved the way for all the adventure games that have come since. *King's Quest* was.

Martin: But when people talk about adventure games they talk about *Monkey Island*.

King's Quest had nowhere near as much impact.

Steve: Jesus, calm down.

Mallo: Let's stick with *Monkey Island*. **Chris:**

You're all wrong, but *Monkey Island* it is then. Go on then, Mallo, we're all ears.

Mallo: *Monkey Island* had everything – the great story line, the humour, the

point-and-click interface, the SCUMM system which everyone copied later. It made me laugh out loud.

Chris: That's what I remember most about it – the humour. I've never played an adventure game since *Monkey Island 1* and *2* that really made me laugh, and it was a very clever game too, with really good puzzles. Even the puzzles were comical.

Richie: It was the first game with a superb story line, and the first game that was truly hilarious.

Steve: It had me in stitches. You can't say that about many games.

Chris: If we had a funniest-game-of-all-time Supertest, *Monkey Island* would win.

Mark: Any game where you go around solving puzzles has been influenced by *Monkey Island*.

Mallo: Did the genre die from the lack of another classic adventure? Would there have been a *Tomb Raider* without *Monkey Island*? I've forgotten what I was going to say now. Richie, you looked like you were about to say something.

Richie: I just wanted to get back to the point about *SimCity* which, strictly speaking, only influenced *Sim*-type games. It could be said that *Monkey Island* only influenced adventure games, so maybe isn't as much an influence over games in general.

Prezzer: No, every game that's come along since uses a story line that has looked up to *Monkey Island* because of its great story and gripping gameplay.

Mallo: It can't have been that much of an influence, the genre's been dying ever since *Monkey Island*. Two years ago people were writing features asking if

the adventure game was dead.

Richie: It's still a big influence. When people think of first-person shooters they think of *Half-Life*. When they think of adventures they think of *Monkey Island*.

Martin: One of the reasons it worked so well was you only ever got things you needed, instead of loads of stuff that you didn't know what to do with.

Chris: I think that's one of the

games being complicated? Use your imagination. Do you really want everything laid out for you?

Martin: No, but the last thing I want to do is wander round for ages trying to figure out what to do with the hundreds of things in my inventory. It's about balance.

Rhianna: I didn't enjoy *Discworld Noir*, but I liked the first *Discworld* game. They had the same sort of humour as *Monkey Island*.

“It had a great story line and the much-copied SCUMM interface. It made me laugh out loud”

MALLO ON MONKEY ISLAND



reasons the genre died. Too many games came out that gave you packed inventories with tons of stuff that you had no clue about. You can see why *Tomb Raider* would appeal to some people because of its simplicity.

Prezzer: *Discworld* was like that. It was a nightmare.

Mark: Even with a walkthrough *Discworld* made no sense. It was like they deliberately went out of their way to be obscure. What's the fun in that?

Mallo: Do you think that was *Monkey Island* being a bad influence on the genre? They tried to use the SCUMM system and over-complicated it.

Mark: No. In *Monkey Island* you can play all the way through without stopping once. You can't blame LucasArts for how other people design their games.

Rhianna: What's wrong with

Steve: *Monkey Island* might have been too good too soon. It was a lot for future games to live up to.

Rhianna: The later *King's Quest* games were excellent. They had really strong story lines, just as good as *Monkey Island*. Just because they didn't have the same sort of humour it doesn't mean they weren't as good.

Richie: The thing about *Monkey Island* is it had an influence outside its own genre.

Chris: I agree. Even *Planescape: Torment* reminds me a lot of the humour in *Monkey Island*, warped and irreverent.

Dave: The whole world knew how to make a proper adventure game after *Monkey Island* was made.

Mallo: It was also the first game to give you multiple-choice answers to characters.

Chris: We're all agreed then. It was a huge influence on its own and other genres. Next up is...



THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Renowned as the funniest game on the PC, *Monkey Island's* SCUMM interface and engrossing storyline made it as accomplished as it was humorous. Many have tried unsuccessfully to follow its lead, and if the genre had been blessed with one title of this calibre in the last couple of years, it would surely have survived the onslaught of *Tomb Raider* and its modern-day 3D counterparts.

ORIGINAL SCORE	Not reviewed
DEVELOPER	LucasArts
PUBLISHER	Activision

Lara makes a mummy dance like a baboon. Cruel girl.



TOMB RAIDER

Mallo: *Tomb Raider* is probably the most influential of all the games under discussion here, at least in terms of taking games to the mass market.

Chris: But mostly on PlayStation, not on PC.

Prezzer: But you have to think of the relevance it has for the whole games industry. More people have developed new games because of games such as *Doom* than they have because of *Tomb Raider*.

Mark: We're talking about PC games here. What influence has *Tomb Raider* had on PC games?

Steve: You mean apart from giving the kiss of death to point-and-click adventures...

Chris: If it had any influence at all, it had a bad one. The only *Tomb Raider*-type game that I can think of that isn't rubbish is the 3D *Indy* game. *Tomb Raider* was good

point-and-click adventure. The next big *Indy* adventure that came along was a *Tomb Raider* clone. It still had the puzzles in there, but was a 3D adventure rather than point-and-click.

Prezzer: So it's been influential in a bad way.

Richie: You're only saying that because you're a sad old bag and you love point-and-click.

Dave: What's going to happen is right at the end Prezzer's going to say the most influential PC game of all time is in fact *David Leadbetter's Golf*.

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: *Tomb Raider* is an advance of technology rather than an advance of a genre.

Prezzer: OK, tell me then, what has *Tomb Raider* influenced?

Mark: *Tunguska!*

Everyone: (laughs)

Chris: You can compare it to

without a first-person shooter? The third-person shooter just takes the first-person shooter and puts it behind the character – you're still running around, you're still shooting things and you're still solving basic puzzles.

Richie: *Tomb Raider* wasn't about being a third-person shooter, it was about being an adventure.

Martin: So what influenced the third-person shooter? It was the first-person shooter.

Richie: *Tomb Raider* isn't a third-person shooter, it's an adventure. It's a simplistic adventure game, not a third-person shooter.

Martin: Would there be *Tomb Raider* without an adventure game or a first-person shooter?

Richie: If you're going to say would there be a third-person shooter without a first-person shooter, would there be this game without that game, if you're going to take everything right back again, we might as well just sit here for two hours talking about *Pong*. *Tomb Raider* not only had a lead female character, but it was mass market, it sold millions and spawned cute little games like *Redguard* and the *Indy 3D* game.

Dave: The first *Tomb Raider* game was superb. The fact that we're all bored of it now because it's gone on to *Tomb Raider 76* or whatever doesn't really matter. When *Tomb Raider* first came out it blew people away, and it was influential in the sense it affected the whole adventure genre.

Prezzer: It's been influential in its way but I don't think it was influential in a positive way at all.

Chris: Do you think this game has been influential, Steve?

Steve: What was it again?

Chris: *Tomb Raider*.

Steve: It's good that it killed the point-and-click adventure, if you ask me. Who wants to be pointing and clicking on a computer screen when you can see a big-breasted woman bouncing up and down and jumping about?

Mallo: That's a positive thing, not a negative thing.

Chris: If you're talking about influence, it's been more influential on console than on PC.

Richie: Taking gaming in general, this is probably the most popular game in the Supertest.

Steve: It's been influential on society. It hasn't influenced games greatly, but it's influenced the way games are perceived.

Dave: In terms of influence, *Tomb Raider* has gone way past games and gone into the mainstream, even making its way into films.

Prezzer: Are we talking about influence on gaming or whether games make their way into

awful films like *Wing Commander*?

Mallo: There's no reason we can't talk about the influence a game has on the general public. *Tomb Raider* is responsible for gaming becoming acceptable by the masses more than any other game.

Prezzer: More than *Doom*?

Mallo: Yes, more than *Doom*. If anything, *Doom* is the game responsible for people saying: oh my God, gaming's evil.

Steve: There are people who only buy one game a year, like *Championship Manager*. *Tomb Raider* appeals to the mass market, so has wider influence. The same people who buy *Tomb Raider* probably buy *FIFA* and any other crap they can get their hands on. It reaches the masses.

Dave: We've been talking about games for hours now and it's taken this long for Steve Hill to mention *Championship Manager*. That's quite amazing really.

Rhianna: I think *Tomb Raider* built on what *Doom* and *Doom 2* had already established and what it added was more atmosphere – even though there aren't a lot of things to shoot you think there's going to be. Even though I knew from various sources there was going to be a T-Rex pursuing me, when it happened it was definitely brown trouser time.

Dave: I actually got off my chair and backed off at that point.

Mallo: Also it was the first game with true environment modelling.

Steve: Really? Hold me back.

Everyone: (laughs)



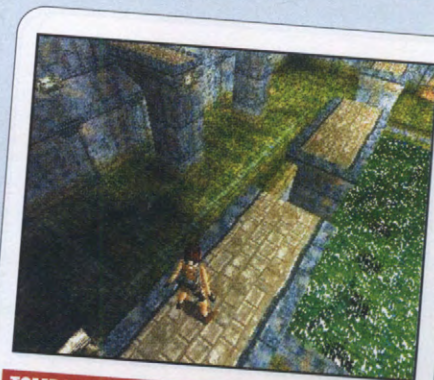
“The first game was superb. The fact that we're all bored of it now we're on *TR 76* doesn't matter”

DAVE ON *TOMB RAIDER*

Ultima Underworld in some ways. Both games had great technology for their time when they first came out. The difference with *Ultima Underworld* is it was a brilliant game as well as a technological showpiece.

Martin: *Ultima Underworld* influenced *Doom*. Would there have been a third-person shooter

technologically when it came out, but the game was nothing to talk about, and the *TR* clones have all followed suit from what I've seen. **Dave:** *Tomb Raider* has to be considered influential. We've just been talking about *Monkey Island* and *Tomb Raider* killing off the



TOMB RAIDER

Tomb Raider was more noted for its technology than its gameplay when it was first released. But it was later to become hugely influential with the emergence of gaming's first real female heroine, and has since made its way into the lifestyle press. The series may have lost its impact with the appearance of numerous sequels, but this game has done more than any other in bringing gaming to the masses.

ORIGINAL SCORE	95%
DEVELOPER	Core Design
PUBLISHER	Eidos

ULTIMA ONLINE

Prezzer: Right, so who's going to start this one off?
Steve: It's got goblins, so it's got to be Chris.
Chris: Goblins or not, *Ultima Online* is the first in a long line of games that will be the future of PC games entertainment. It's the first game that's got people around the world playing against each other and with each other. All genres will go online at some point or other. *Ultima Online* did it first. If you want to talk about how purely influential any of these games are, this is probably the most influential game in the Supertest. All other developers have either already begun to follow Origin's lead, or are in the process of doing so.
Mallo: It was influential in other ways, too. It's the first game that lets you have a career.
Martin: It's the first game with a living, breathing universe that you can interact in.

Mallo: Breathing?
Martin: Yeah, breathing. There's life in there, everything.
Mallo: Imagine what it would be like if they brought proper smells into it, too.
Martin: Well, they wouldn't let you in there for a start.
Everyone: (laughs)
Martin: This is the first game where you can go in and completely immerse yourself in another world and be someone you can't be on the outside. You can do almost anything you want to do. There's never been a game like that before.
Chris: The other thing it's done is brought females to PC game playing. About half the *UO* population is female. No other game has managed to do that. It's the same with *EverQuest*, which only exists because *UO* paved the way first. Women like it because you play with real people and can talk to them and it's not all fighting. Presumably, they'll also play other types of games now if they are online.
Mallo: So there's all these bored housewives on the social, playing *Ultima Online* instead of going out and earning a decent wage?
Everyone: (laughs)
Chris: Yes. When they should be ironing and Hoovering and messing about in the kitchen while they're chasing goblins round the place instead.
Mallo: It's all so corrupt. Wasn't there something about people in the game selling



Glorified chatroom or an isometric marketplace?

their characters for real money?
Steve: *Diablo 2* had problems, too. Some hacker went in and killed a load of characters.
Martin: The thing I like about *UO* is the mortality of your character. You can go in and it's just as risky as real life. You have a lot to lose when you die.
Prezzer: Again we're talking about the quality of a game instead of arguing about whether it's been influential.
Chris: The design of a game has as much of an influence on how new developers make their games as anything else. It's a workable game universe, which is minutely detailed and totally unique. It's made people realise how shallow many single-player games are. It's difficult to go back to single-players after you've played an online multiplayer. You can't argue the impact *UO* has had on the future of PC gaming.
Mallo: What do you think, Steve?
Steve: I don't know, I'm reading the *Mirror*. *King's Quest* is great.
Everyone: (laughs)
Richie: Well, if you talk about how influential it is, the only thing *UO* has brought to game playing is the online side of things, which was bound to happen sooner or later anyway. That's only relevant to online RPGs.
Mallo: That's not completely true. The career system is like no other. The whole layout and design of the game is like nothing that's come before it.
Dave: And taking *UO* as the base, the foundation, look at the

complex games that are promised in the next couple of years.
Richie: We're talking about the most influential games of all time here. If you look at the other games in this Supertest, such as *Doom* or *Dune 2* or whatever, you can easily see the influence they've had on other games. *Ultima Online* might be unique and it has influenced a few games in the short term like *EverQuest*, but we'll have to wait for five years to see what real influence it has on PC games.
Mark: But you can already see the influence it has on all the other online games that are coming out. For example, in the *Star Wars Galaxy* game, you can have people who are just punters standing around, but they're real players. It all

adventure game to talk about was that even though *King's Quest* came first and started the genre, *Monkey Island* was the best and had more impact because of that. Look at *Ultima Online* then, it's the first and the best. Nothing comes near it. In years to come you'll look back on it and compare it to *Doom* or *SimCity* or whatever.
Richie: What we're trying to do is find the most influential game at this point in time, and *Ultima Online* can't be counted in that category because we don't know how online games are going to evolve. It's also one of those contentious games which people either like or don't like, so we don't know how influential it will be.
Mallo: But it kick-started the whole multiplayer genre single-handedly. You can't ignore that.

“You can already see the influence it has on all the other online games”

MARK ON ULTIMA ONLINE



comes from *Ultima Online*.

Dave: More than 300,000 people paying to play it every month has to tell you something.

Richie: But you're saying that *UO* has influenced online gaming. It's too early to say that yet.

Chris: The argument that *Monkey Island* should have been the big

Chris: Whether you like the game or not, it's started an online revolution. You have to wonder how many software companies would be putting money into making online games if Origin hadn't done it first with *Ultima Online*. Steve, are you still awake?
Steve: No. Let's talk about another one.
Chris: *Dune 2* it is then.

ULTIMA ONLINE

This is Origin's most ambitious project and most financially rewarding project to date, with hundreds of thousands of people paying a monthly rate to go online and indulge their role-playing fantasies with like-minded people all over the world. This is the first multiplayer online game, but it will by no means be the last. Where Origin leads, others will follow – *Ultima Online* signifies the start of a revolution.

ORIGINAL SCORE	92%
DEVELOPER	Origin
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts

DUNE 2

Dave: At the moment, real-time strategy games are one of the most popular genres around in terms of sales and in terms of what's planned to come out in the next year. For that reason you have to take notice of the game that started it all and consider it as a serious contender for Supertest winner.

Steve: There's another reason for that. Real-time strategy games and first-person shoot 'em ups are what the PC's good at, they're all it can do. You can't play games like that on PlayStation, that's why they're so popular on PC, not necessarily because they're amazing games in themselves.

Richie: Having influence on the genre is all about keeping a platform alive and other developers following your lead, and real-time strategy games do just that.

Martin: The reason real-time strategy is more important than first-person shooters is because

complex than another one.

Richie: It's been influential because the same mechanics of the game that worked then, still work now. You build a building, which allows you to make more buildings and make troops, etc – it all still works the same way. That's why it's influential.

Mallo: If you dig deep you'll probably find it all started somewhere before *Dune 2*. There must have been other games like that around.

Richie: Yes, like *Utopia*. That was the same sort of thing and I think that came before *Dune 2*. But *Dune 2* was the one that got everyone playing real-time strategy games and made developers want to cash in on their popularity.

Mallo: I remember playing *Dune 2* on my Megadrive. I played it day and night and I remember thinking: wow, this game is going to go far.

Prezzer: Yes, but you could say it



We don't remember any invoices in the book.

went out and started buying real-time strategy games. Look at *Ground Control*, it's still real-time but has done away with the resource management. It shows again how the genre has evolved.

Chris: I can tell he's not going to shut up about that. **Richie:** I'm not sure, but I think Martin's point is *Dune 2* made all these new games happen that are still evolving. Adventure games are dead now so *Dune 2* is more influential than *Monkey Island* in that respect.

Mallo: The other way to look at it is if the genre hadn't started with *Dune 2* we wouldn't have all that mining to do, which is bloody boring.

Chris: There's no arguing that the real-time strategy genre is absolutely massive, but you forget to take into account the online side of things. If you really want to judge how influential a game is, look to the future. And what do you see? You see first-person shoot 'em ups being played by millions online, not real-time strategy games.

Steve: People play real-time strategy games online, too.

Chris: Yes, but not to the same extent. Look at the online games servers and you'll see more people are playing shooters than any other genre. This also has to be taken into account when deciding how influential any of these games are. You have to look at how much the genre the game has created is going to affect the future of games. Real-time strategy is right up there, but it's not the biggest. When the online thing finally takes off, there will be more people playing first-person shooters than real-

time strategy games.

Prezzer: How do you know?

Chris: Because real-time strategy games are more anal by their very nature. People sit there for hours in their little corner, building armies and plotting how they're going to beat the computer.

First-person shooters are more fun against other people. Look at *Quake* – it's one of the most boring games of all time if you play it on your own. Play it against a human opponent and suddenly it comes to life. And that's the future of gaming, playing against other people.

Mallo: I don't know. I much prefer playing first-person shooters on my own rather than against other people.

Prezzer: But that's because you hate people.

Martin: Are you saying *Doom* is more influential because it's easier to pick up? Does that make it more influential?

Chris: No. You said that, not me. OK, let's look at it this way then. All these games created a genre. If you want to judge how big an influence they've had on the PC games industry in global terms, look at how big the genre is going to be in years to come. I can't see real-time strategy outliving

other genres online.

Rhianna: I'm not really a big fan of either genre, but first-person shooters are bound to be more influential because that's what people are playing now. You've got the big *Quake* tournaments and there are more tournaments and leagues being set up around the world all the time. It's even being recognised as a sport. You can't play real-time strategy games as a sport.

Note: At this point the conversation sort of merged into a major discussion on which game was the most influential.

Dune 2, or, of course...

“It's been influential because the same mechanics of the game that worked then still work now”

RICHEL ON DUNE 2



didn't really take off until *Command & Conquer*, that was the big one.

Dave: It was definitely *Dune 2* that started it all. As Richie has already pointed out, the mechanics of the game haven't changed at all. *Dune 2* has an everlasting effect on the gameplay in titles such as *Earth 2150* and *Red Alert*. There is nothing new in the technology, which is a testament to its influence in itself.

Prezzer: But the genre didn't actually become big until *Command & Conquer*.

Chris: We may as well change it to the most famous game of all time then. Same argument again. Are we talking about most influential, or biggest and best?

Mallo: Well, we have to argue about it otherwise we'd have nothing to talk about.

Martin: *Dune 2* influenced *Command & Conquer*, which then influenced the genre and people

the genre has evolved more. Look at *Shogun*, *Ground Control*, *Earth 2150* – everything's 3D with fully pannable environments. First-person shooters haven't evolved.

Richie: Really. Look at *Wolfenstein* and *Counter-Strike*. So there's no evolution there?

Chris: Maybe it's just me, but I fail to see what bearing the stage of technology each genre is at has on whether *Dune 2* was influential or not. Martin, what are you on about?

Martin: I'm talking about the gap between *Dune 2* and *Shogun* and the gap between *Doom* and *Half-Life*. There's no difference between *Doom* and *Half-Life*. RTS has moved on and become more complex. That's why *Dune 2* has been so influential.

Chris: And your point is what? We're talking about whether the game is influential or not, not whether the genre it's in is more

DUNE 2

The game that spawned *Command & Conquer*, which in turn spawned a million other clones, *Dune 2* was single-handedly responsible for creating the real-time strategy genre. While the series is still going strong in the form of *Red Alert 2*, its influence is evident in the form of the countless clones that still continue to appear on a monthly basis. A hugely important and influential title for PC.

ORIGINAL SCORE	89%
DEVELOPER	Westwood
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts

DOOM

Dave: How influential can a game be? Look at the move from casual gamer to professional – that's all down to *Doom*.

Rhianna: There are plans to build the world's first cyber stadium in Dallas to host a league competition. It's all got very big over the last few years.

Mallo: That's the wrong way to go. They should be working on the technology to provide mass spectation on people's PCs at home.

Chris: Is spectation a word?

Mallo: I wouldn't mind logging online to have a look at one of these tournaments, but I'm not paying ten quid to go to a stadium to watch it.

Dave: Yeah, but we don't pay for anything, do we...

Richie: Getting back to *Doom* and how games influence things, in real-time strategy games you still press control F1 to group, and in shooters you still press the number keys to choose your weapons – they still use the same keys after all this time. How much more influential can that be?

Dave: When I finished single-player *Doom* I ended up playing it again for a year, one-on-one across a modem. No other

game before then had made me do that. It worked on so many levels, it had atmosphere, excitement, the lot.

Richie: Getting back to the online thing again, *Doom* was one of the first games to encourage people to play against each other online. It was the fun of playing *Doom* over a network that made people realise how good it would be online, so it had a lot to do with starting the whole online gaming scene as we now know it.

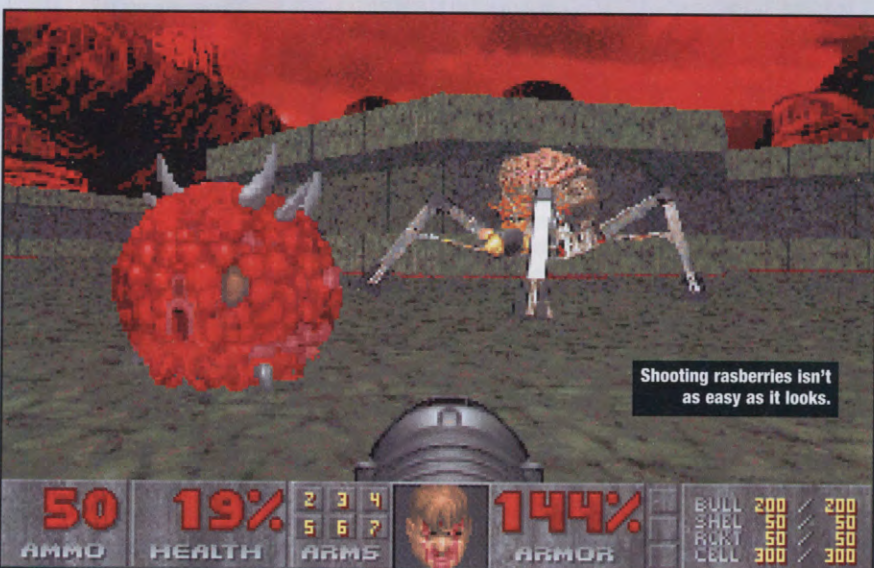
Chris: Yes, and first-person shooters are bigger online now than they've ever been. None of this would have happened if it wasn't for network *Doom*. It's been a massive influence.

Mallo: Another reason *Doom* was so big was the technology needed to play it was within everyone's reach. Hardly anyone could play *Ultima Underworld* because they just didn't have a machine good enough to play it. Everyone could play *Doom*, and the same with *Doom 2* and *Quake*. It proves if you want something to really take off you have to make it available to everyone.

Mark: I think *Doom* was also the first game to get mass media attention because it was so controversial.

Steve: Only in the tabloids, which is hardly a lot to shout about.

Chris: If you want to quantify which game is bigger than which, just look at the anticipation for the genre's biggest titles. Take, for example, *Age Of Empires 2* in the left corner, and *Quake III* in the right corner. Who's going to win the title as 'biggest' release of the year? Let's face it, there's no competition. That's true influence. When the gaming public just can't wait to get their hands on the hottest game in a genre, you know that genre



is big. *Quake III* wasn't even proper single-player and people were still going nuts trying to get their hands on it.

Mallo: *Doom*'s name is still taken in vain even now by media types making reference to it trying to look cool.

Steve: The tabloids still blame everything that's going wrong in the world on *Doom*, which is an eight-year-old game.

Chris: What would you rather have on the front cover of *PC ZONE*? *Age Of Empires 3* or *Quake IV*? You don't even need to think about it. And that's disregarding how much more popular first-person shooters are online.

Martin: You're talking about the difference between ease of play and evolution. Which is more important? If it's evolution, then it has to be real-time strategy.

Mallo: We're talking about which one is the most influential, not which one has evolved the most.

Martin: No, hang on, Mallo. Just let me finish...

Mallo: OK, let Martin talk.

Chris: No, you should never let Martin talk. It's always a bad idea.

Everyone: (laughs)

Martin: More people want to play first-person shooters just because they're easier to pick up.

Mallo: You get an adrenaline rush from playing them.

Richie: Basically, when you play a game you want to be right in there. You want to be part of the game. In *Doom*, you're in there, you're part of the game. In *Dune 2* you're not. It's still the same with real-time strategy games as it ever was. You're not in there, you're still above it all like God is in the clouds.

Rhianna: Personally, I wouldn't have played *Doom* if I hadn't played *Wolfenstein* first. *Wolfenstein* was the one that got me into it.

Mallo: Are you sure about that? You really wouldn't have played

first-person shoot 'em ups, more will say *Doom* than will say *Wolfenstein*. A lot of them won't even know what *Wolfenstein* is.

Prezzer: That's because people just think like that.

Mallo: It doesn't matter what the reason is, the point is it's recognised as the game that started the whole genre off.

Mark: But surely the game that people play most becomes the most influential game.

Chris: If that was the case, we'd be talking about *Half-Life* not *Doom*. We're talking about the game that kicked off the genre



“The tabloids still blame everything wrong in the world on *Doom*, an eight-year-old game”

STEVE ON DOOM

and had most effect on the industry as a whole.

Steve: *Doom* got more people into playing PC games than any other game I've played.

Chris: OK, on that bombshell, let's take a break and when we come back we can finally try to decide what *PC ZONE* considers to be the most influential PC game of all time. The tension is bearable.

DOOM

Doom holds fond memories for many of the *PC ZONE* team. Extended multiplayer shootouts in the office over a network gave us all a taste for what was to become the most popular multiplayer genre online. *Quake III* and *Half-Life* both have so many multiplayer add-ons you can easily see the huge influence *Doom* has had on the gaming scene with the most cursory of glances.

ORIGINAL SCORE	96%
DEVELOPER	id Software
PUBLISHER	Activision

LEST WE FORGET

The titles in this Supertest are not the only ones to have shaped the gaming scene as we know it today. Also worthy of note are the following...

POPULOUS

Bullfrog's intriguing and involving God game is fondly remembered by many veteran gamers. It has prompted its fair share of clones, although ultimately, the influence of this game on the development community was somewhat overshadowed by the huge influx of real-time strategy games that came in its wake.

KING'S QUEST

This was the game that created the adventure genre on PC. *Monkey Island* may have been more of an influence on future adventures, but there is no denying the sheer quality of the *King's Quest* series and its masterful storytelling was a very clear indicator to adventure game developers as to how the genre should progress.

ELITE

The game that launched a million space combat sims. While this genre is not the most popular on PC, it still has a large following and *Elite* was the game that showed all the others how it should be done. Even today, many modern space combat sims lack the complexity of *Elite*, favouring graphics over huge gameworlds.

CIVILIZATION

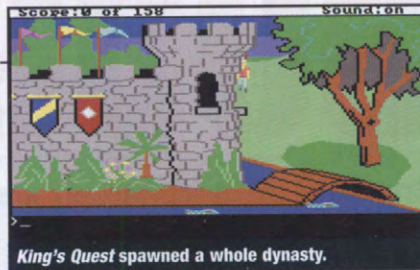
An extraordinary game with the kind of depth developers of real-time strategy games can only dream about. This would have been a serious contender were it not for the fact that the turn-based genre is losing ground to real-time strategy at an alarming rate. Every turn-based game you play – every single one of them – will remind you of *Civilization*.

WOLFENSTEIN 3D

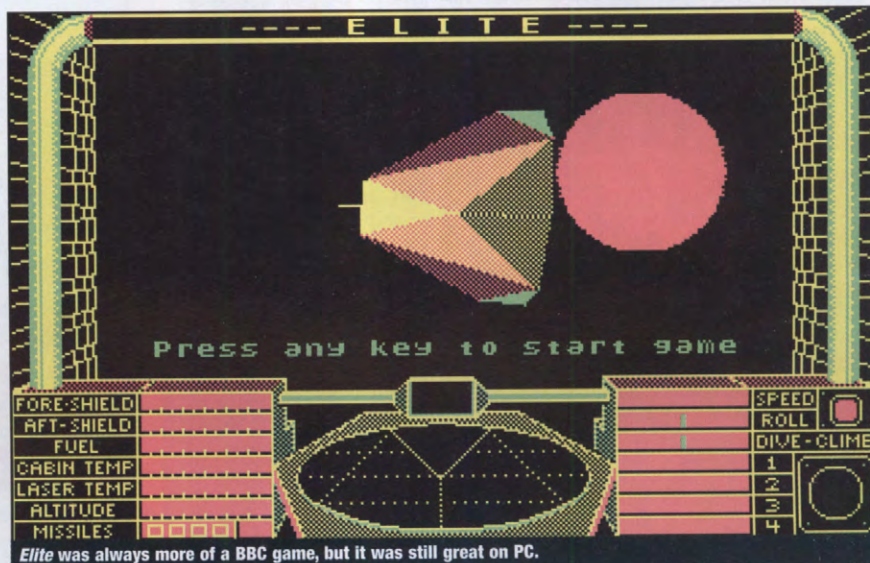
As controversial as it was revolutionary, *Wolfenstein 3D* was the first 'real' first-person shoot 'em up on PC. It didn't have the polish and style of *Doom*, and it certainly didn't have as much impact, but it had the distinction of being 'first'. And it had Adolf Hitler. And you could shoot him. Which was nice.



Populous: a god's view of the world.



King's Quest spawned a whole dynasty.



Elite was always more of a BBC game, but it was still great on PC.



The first *Civilization* was ground-breaking.



Wolfenstein 3D: the game that started it all.

AND THE WINNER IS...

The game that brought multiplayer to the masses

What seemed to be a difficult choice at the outset turned out to be fairly obvious at the end of the day. It was largely agreed that *Tomb Raider* had more impact on consoles than PC, and while it has undoubtedly 'cleaned up' the games scene in the eyes of the masses, its contribution to creative development is minimal. *SimCity* is undoubtedly original, but was seen to contribute to the overall gaming scene in part only, rather than as an entity in itself. *Ultima Underworld* was a technological masterpiece, but for all its creativity it never really encouraged developers to match depth with technology, and *Ultima Online* has kick-started the online gaming scene but its influence will not appear obvious till the genre has stabilised a year or two down the road. *Monkey*

Island defined a genre that was unfortunately doomed for extinction years later. Perhaps if *Monkey Island 3* had been as funny and engrossing as 1 and 2 this may never have happened. We will never know.

At the end of the discussion we had a clear battle for supremacy between two titles: *Dune 2* and *Doom*. It was agreed by all that while *Dune 2* fulfilled much of the criteria for most influential game of all time, *Doom* fulfilled all the criteria. Its huge influence on today's online gaming scene did much to tip the balance in its favour, and we see online gaming as the future of PC games entertainment, so in this respect we expect *Doom's* influence to remain long after real-time strategy games have fallen by the wayside.

OVERALL WINNER



Prepare to meet thy *Doom!*

BUDGET ZONE

Alright you cheap scabs, here are some more budget games to spend your copper collections on

★ WORDS Martin Korda (*Championship Manager 3*: Mark Hill)

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3 **BEST BUY**

★ £9.99 • Eidos • Out now

Anyone complaining that the *Champ Man* seasonal updates are a blatant rip-off, swindling thousands of people and making them pay £20 for the same game again should try reverting to *CM3*, the still great but rough-around-the-edges original.

Just going back to the old font makes you feel like you're playing an ancient game, a sensation that isn't helped by all the out-of-date information and the fact that every time you start a new season it's summer 1998 all over again. If you're used to all the new features available in the 99/00 and 00/01 updates, you'll wonder how you ever played this stripped-down version. Of course, this begs the point that this is a budget release aimed at all the cheapskates who wouldn't fork out 30 smackers two years ago.

If you've got access to the Internet to download the latest stats, it's still one of the most addictive experiences any footy fan could dream of. However, our advice would still be to save your paper round money for a couple more weeks and shop around till you find *CM 00/01* for £20 – it really is worth it.

PCZVERDICT

89%

England Tactics

Formation vs Luxembourg

1 Nigel Martyn
2 Gary Neville
3 Graeme Le Saux
4 Tony Adams
5 Sol Campbell
6 David Beckham
7 Steve McManaman
8 David Batty
9 Darren Anderton
10 Robbie Fowler
11 Alan Shearer
12 Akiyoshi Hinochima
13 David James
14 Phil Neville
15 Dion Dublin
16 Garath Southgate

Batty in the England starting line-up – those were the days.

Juventus Tactics

Does anyone use the original font?

Reggiana 0 Juventus 0

GOAL FOR REGGIANA!

Matches are still a bit lacking.



RAINBOW SIX GOLD PACK EDITION

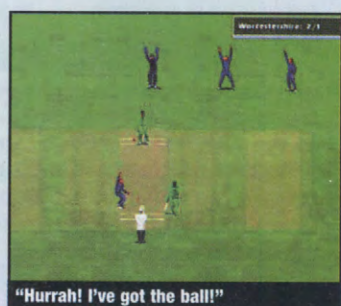
★ £14.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

One of the first ever stealth/shooters, *Rainbow Six* is still a huge amount of fun, even though it's looking a tad dated. Taking control of a squad of special forces soldiers, you must infiltrate a series of terrorist strongholds and rescue hostages. Your team reacts intelligently to your orders and often save your arse by killing that one elusive enemy you haven't spotted quickly enough. However, the real

fun starts when you team up with a mate and play some multiplayer games, which are hugely reliant on stealth and teamwork. With its gripping atmos and the *Eagle Watch* add-on pack thrown in, you'll be hard pressed to find a better deal on the budget shelves this month.

PCZVERDICT

77%



CRICKET CAPTAIN 2

★ £9.99 • Xplosiv • Out now

Cricket is hardly the most inspiring of games at the best of times, which makes it all too easy to write *International Cricket Captain* off as nothing more than a cumbersome attempt to translate the tedious practice of throwing a spherical object at a bunch of sticks, into a management game.

Astonishingly though, it's quite enjoyable, especially as you and a friend can now go up against each other, and sit side-by-side as you throw laconic insults

at the gimp in the commentary box who calls the plays with catatonic enthusiasm.

With far superior AI than the original and a massive amount of strategic options just waiting to be explored, this is the most amount of fun you'll have had with anything cricket related since you switched off the last test match and did something more interesting instead.

PCZVERDICT

70%



Oh my, what a pretty plane.



Looking good.



Now, is that America or England?

FLY!

★ £9.99 • Xplosiv • Out now

Much the same as *Flight Unlimited 2* (which is now available for a mere £4.99), *Fly!* is one of those flight sims in which you fly from A to B, and do very little in between. There's no dog fighting, no bombing, in fact pretty much no action whatsoever. However, games such as this have a huge following, because they allow would-be pilots to indulge their aviation fantasies and fly around (vaguely) realistically rendered real-life locations.

While the US locations are relatively detailed, the rest of the world isn't, which reduces *Fly!*'s sense of authenticity, and makes navigating your way from the US to England as exciting as flying around in a big circle. Buy *FU2* instead and spend the other fiver on a year's supply of paper planes to annoy your work mates with.

PCZVERDICT 55%

THE GOLF PRO 2

★ £9.99 • Xplosiv • Out now

There was a really good reason as to why we didn't include *The Golf Pro 2* in last month's Golf Supertest. It's rubbish. If it wasn't for the pre-game tutorial which teaches you the basics, as well as the run-through you're given before each hole, there'd be almost no redeeming features to it. From the wooden character movements, to the pitiful mouse-swing control system, which involves little more than

a horizontal mouse movement, the whole thing feels shabby. It's near-impossible to gauge the weight of each shot, while the ball physics are adequate at best.

The most amount of fun we had while playing *TGP2* was calibrating the mouse at the start, although even that ended up crashing the game. I won't go on — I think you get the general idea.

PCZVERDICT 24%



Golf Pro: stuck.



There are better budget golf games than this.

AIRPORT INC

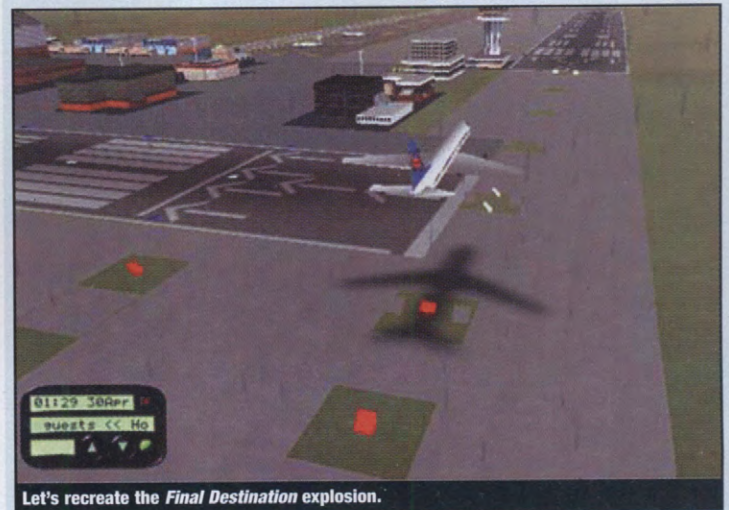
★ £9.99 • Xplosiv • Out now

I didn't like *Airport Inc* the first time round, and the fact that it's now available at a budget price isn't going to make me change my mind.

For the first day or so you're fooled into thinking it's loads of fun, as you build airports, furbish them with the latest equipment to keep your customers happy and try to attract all the best airlines. Then you realise just how monotonous and

one-dimensional the whole thing is. For example, each of the locations you can build on are virtually identical, and you're pretty much told throughout what you need to build and when to build it. Games are supposed to be challenging and fun. *Airport Inc* is neither.

PCZVERDICT 37%

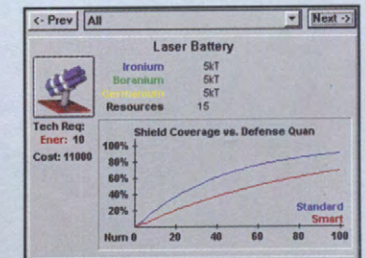


Let's recreate the *Final Destination* explosion.

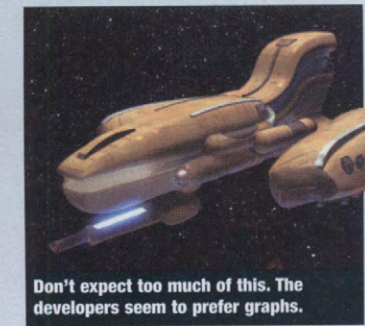
STARS!

★ £4.99 • Xplosiv • Out now

If you were the kind of child who loved it when your teacher gave you Venn diagrams and bar graphs to analyse during mental maths lessons, then you'll probably find *Stars!* mix of intergalactic turn-based strategy and dull stat screens just to your liking. It's incredibly easy to get into, and once you've got the hang of it



This planetary defense is unavailable with the primary racial trait of 'War'.
Look at the curves on that graph. Who said *Stars!* wasn't an attractive game?



Don't expect too much of this. The developers seem to prefer graphs.

PCZVERDICT 50%

ON HEAT



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FEEDBACK

Handbags at dawn in the first-person shooter arena this month. *Martin Korda* jumps in to sort you all out

IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in *PC ZONE* over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1P 5FF

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail them to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

PROJECT IGI

REVIEWED: #97, *PCZ* Christmas 2000
SCORE: 85%

What we said

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE "What sets *IGI* apart is the sense of immersion within a believable storyline and the way in which it all travels along seamlessly at a perfect pace."

What you thought

★ "Having read your enticing previews of *Project IGI*, followed by your review, I dismissed it as yet another game that had promised so much but delivered little. However, after playing the demo I decided it was great, and so I went out and bought the game.

"I've since come to the conclusion that you were a little harsh with your review. Nearly half of your 'Downers' are absolute rubbish. I have to say, though, that upon climbing a pylon I was shot into next week by a flood of men coming out of the barracks, even though I had triggered no alarms. So I reloaded the mission and this time I tossed a grenade into the barracks, tripped no alarms and again proceeded to climb the pylon, only to get shot into next week by a flood of men from the barracks. Can you see a cliché here?"

Neil Roper

★ "I have followed *Project IGI* with great interest. I read your review, in which you talked about the game's dubious AI. Surely it couldn't be that bad I thought, so I gave it try.

"At first, the AI seemed to be OK, but in later levels it just became pathetic. Tanks seem to have eyes in the back of their heads and always know where you are even when there are no cameras or guards around. When spotted you are shot on sight, and they're far too accurate – they shoot through a pixel.

"For example, on level eight, I got smuggled into the camp in the back of a truck, but as soon as I stuck my head out, a sniper killed me (and he wasn't even looking through his sniper rifle, he was using his eyes). How the hell did he know where I was? I walked



Project IGI: great game, but where is the multiplayer?

up to where the sniper was situated and I found that I couldn't even see the truck from there.

"Also, I can't believe that the enemy gets respawned while you only have one life and so few health packs to help you along. It's so pathetic that I just want to take it back, but the

and the challenge it offers and you're left with an absolute classic. The only problem with this game is the fact that there's no multiplayer.

"All in all, it's a fab game, I just hope they hurry up and get the patch out to let us play it multiplayer. 85 per cent?"

“How the hell did this game get past the play testers? It's a prime example of rushing a game out for Christmas”

SIRSCI-FI IS NONE TOO KEEN ON PROJECT IGI

problem is that I actually like this game – unfortunately.

"How the hell did *Project IGI* get past the play testers? It's a prime example of rushing a game out for Christmas without it being finished. I'm very pissed off."

SirSci-Fi

★ "Well, what can I say about *Project IGI*, apart from if you don't already own it, go and buy yourself a copy now. This game truly rocks and it's so good I've even given up playing *Counter-Strike* every night in favour of advancing further with *IGI*.

"The sheer size of the levels and the number of different ways you can complete each one makes for a truly stunning game. Couple this with the fab graphics

Bah, 89 per cent is closer to the mark, methinks."

Scott Abbott (AKA Diddy Bong)

Comment

We came up with four downers, Neil, "nearly half" of which, according to you, were absolute rubbish. Nearly half of four constitutes one in my book, and as two were facts – no multiplayer or mid-mission save options – I'm guessing you're talking about one of the other two. One of these was that the AI was unconvincing, which you seem to agree with. So I can only conclude that the only thing you've got a problem with is our last criticism, that the character movement is

wooden. A point well made, I'm sure you'll all agree.

And as for the cliché you're talking about, I think a quick flick through a dictionary might be called for, as the only cliché I can see anywhere in this matter is the phrase "shot into next week".

SirSci-Fi, if you think you're pissed off, you should have seen how happy I was after spending half an hour correcting your email, and I've still got no idea what the term "shoot through a pixel means". However, we agree with your point on the AI.

Finally, Scott, we're glad you like the game, but with no multiplayer and some annoying glitches, there's no way we could have given it more than 85 per cent.

GUNMAN CHRONICLES

Reviewed: #97, *PCZ* Christmas 2000
Score: 85%

What we said

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE "Considering the desolate state of the first-person shooter market, *GC* is an almost obligatory purchase for trigger-happy gamers who like a single-player story."



← **What you thought**

★ "I think *Gunman Chronicles* is one of the best games I've played in quite a long time – excluding, of course, the excellent *Half-Life*."

"There's heaps of atmosphere and the giant Brachiosaurus near the start of the game scared the life out of me the first time I saw it. Your fellow gunmen are helpful and the rebel gunmen react to things realistically, ducking from your fire and trying to pick you off with their sniper rifles."

"I think you were a bit unfair saying that it doesn't disguise its monorail nature as well as *Half-Life* did. Quite frankly, you can't make it any better, as the monorail in *Half-Life* was very boring and you couldn't skip it."

"Apart from that, I think your review was spot on. My only complaint is that the game is way too short."

Tim Vincent

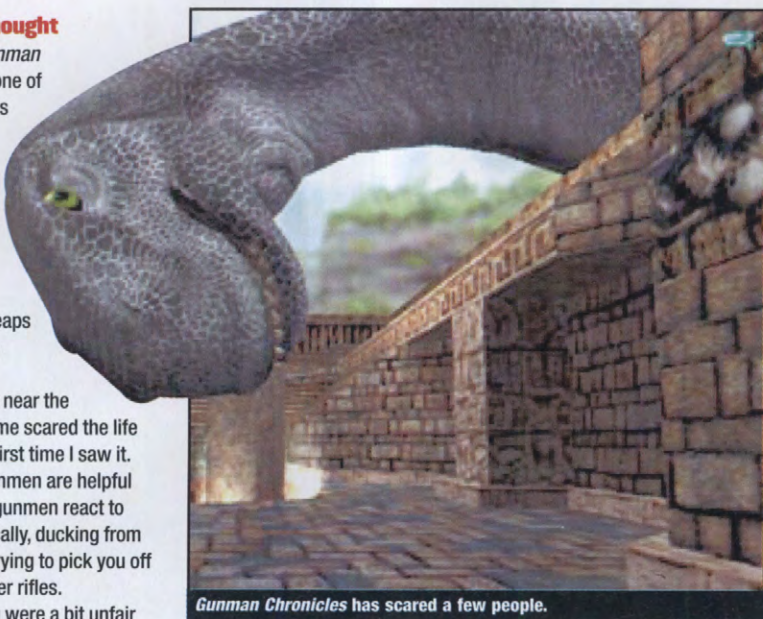
★ "After reading your review, I added *Gunman Chronicles* to my Christmas list, and was pleased that Santa brought it to me. Well, what can I say? Although it's not as good as *Half-Life*, *GC* certainly is brilliant, but here are a few things I'd like to add about it."

"Good points: very scary atmosphere, especially on the last levels; cool weapons; loads and loads of movie-like moments, such as the crocodile pit; cool way of upgrading weapons; cool music; some very cool and scary monsters; loads of gore; and the fact that anything to do with *Half-Life* is just plain cool."

"Bad points: on the box it says there's 40 hours of gameplay, yet I finished it in less than 20; the ending was crap; the cut scenes seemed out of place for a game of this type; and a lot of the time the puzzles took too long to figure out, leaving a feeling of blind-gaming, which nobody really likes. But all in all, this is a brilliant game, worthy of its *PC ZONE* award."

Nicholas J R Jones

★ "*Gunman Chronicles* is a short-lived load of tat. I can imagine it's easy to have your judgment clouded by having impossible expectations for a game. Instead of being sorely disappointed with the game, expectations appear to have rose-tinted your opinions. It's



Gunman Chronicles has scared a few people.

hard to see how you could give *Gunman* 87 per cent, without having been brought up on an exclusive diet of *Wolfenstein 3D*.

"The gameplay consists of little more than breaking into air vents to find yourself apparently trapped in another room. But wait – there's another air vent through which to escape (*repeat ad infinitum*).

"The character interaction also left a lot to be desired, with NPCs making little more than throwaway statements, bereft of advice, along the lines of, 'arrgh [cough] monsters [gurgle]' before dying. It was lucky that the game lasted little more than six hours before I returned it to the shop, despite the claims that it offered more than 40 hours of gameplay."

Joy_n_spices

Comment

I despair, I really do. Tim, there's no nice way of putting this, so I won't even try. When we talked about the monorail nature of *GC* we weren't referring to the intro, neither were we alluding to the opening sequence in *Half-Life* where you're being taken underground by a monorail.

See if you can work out what we were actually talking about from these helpful hints. Mono (single), rail (route that cannot be deviated from). I hope this helps clear things up.

As for you, Joy_n_spices, you've got us banged to rights. The only FPS we've ever played is *Wolfenstein 3D* – after I've finished writing this I'm going to fire up the old 286 in the corner and play some more.

Forget *Gunman's* superb AI, customisable weapons,

character interaction, gripping atmosphere, and engrossing storyline. In fact, we just made up the whole review on the spot and based it on *Wolfenstein*, as we knew *Gunman* would be more of the same.

Its linearity doesn't make it crap, and neither does it make it just like *Wolfenstein 3D*. And anyway, what are you complaining about? You effectively got a free game – even *Wolfenstein* cost money to download.

NO ONE LIVES FOREVER

REVIEWED: #98, *PCZ* January 2001
SCORE: 69%

What we said

"Despite the inclusion of a few sub-games scattered

about, the game is more linear than a one-way street and the AI is bordering on abysmal."

What you thought

★ "I have been a subscriber to your mag for three years, simply because we seem to have similar opinions on games."

"But for once I really have to disagree with you after reading your review of *No One Lives Forever*. You must have been drunk when you played it."

"You say that the graphics are not as good as *Quake III's*. Rubbish, the scenery is absolutely awesome, it never tries to imitate the dark world of *Quake*."

"The AI is some of the best I've ever played. If you'd bothered to play it on higher levels then you'd have noticed that the guards don't follow the same paths when they attack you – that only happens at the beginning of the game. (Have you really played to the end?)"

"Finally, I'd just like to say that I bought *NOLF* and *Gunman Chronicles* at the same time. *NOLF* is a much better game. *Gunman* is just a copy of *Half-Life* and the graphics look dated."

"Please get back to sanity, where you have been for the last three years."

Heine Jensen

★ "Thank you, *PC ZONE*, for your honest review of *No One Lives Forever*. I was going to buy it, but resisted after reading your review. One of my mates ignored my warnings and went out and bought it anyway, and after playing it for a few days, he wished he hadn't bothered."

"It's one of the ugliest first-person shooters I've seen for a

while, and the gameplay is repetitive and dull. You're the only magazine that reviewed it objectively. Well done, and keep up the good work."

Colin Jones

Comment

Every now and then we give a hyped game a poor score, and the complaints start flooding in. Fortunately, just as many of you write in supporting our views.

At *PC ZONE*, we play every game thoroughly, and judge it according to its merits. If you'd like us to review a game on reputation and hype, and tell you it's the best thing ever, even if you'd be better off using the CD it comes on as a frisbee, then you're always going to be disappointed by our reviews.

We all played *No One Lives Forever*, and we all felt the same way about it. OK, the graphics are good (Dave never said they weren't as good as *Quake III*, he said the engine isn't as good as *Quake III's* and if you'd seen the new *Wolfenstein* running you'd agree with us), but there's a general tedium about the gameplay and the AI is awful. Anyway, 69 per cent is not a dreadful score – it's 19 per cent above average – and Dave made several positive points about it in his review.

In the end it does come down to personal opinion, but in our view there are many far-superior FPSs around, and that's reflected in *NOLF's* score. [X]



Well, he won't live forever.



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PC
ZONE
ONLINE

BETA TESTING IS NOW OVER

★ ONLINE EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



This is the tenth issue of *PC ZONE Online* and for want of a better phrase, we've simply been beta testing this section of the magazine until now – finding out what works and what really doesn't work,

rethinking the way online games are reviewed and trying new things out. Next month, however, will be the start of *PC ZONE Online* proper, and we're sure it's going to get better and better every issue.

The biggest change you'll see is a change in size. In fact, anchored into *PC ZONE* itself, it will form almost a magazine in its own right: 16 pages of the best online news, previews, features and reviews you'll find anywhere, bar trawling the Net for hours yourself. And as the number of online games grow, the bigger we'll grow alongside them. You never know, in a few years it may be *PC ZONE* itself inserted into the *Online* magazine.

PC ZONE Online will look, feel and probably smell different and you can sniff our output next month when we'll bring you the first part of a major feature showing you how to get playing online – no previous experience required.

We'll be seeing you on March 8.

PC ZONE ONLINE CONTENTS

93 PREVIEW: FALLOUT TACTICS' MULTIPLAYER GAME

95 BETA TEST: E-RACER

96 REVIEW: SUDDEN STRIKE V1.1

97 REVIEW: CALL TO POWER II V1.1

98 REVIEW: EVERQUEST: SCARS OF VELIOUS

99 REVIEW: TANARUS

99 REVIEW: TRIVIAL PURSUIT ONLINE V1.2

100 REVIEW: SIX OF THE LATEST MODS

102 READERS' CHALLENGE

ONLINE REVIEWS POLICY

When it comes to mods and total conversions (TCs) for games such as *Half-Life*, they are often released in beta form (ie unfinished) and are generally being updated constantly. When we review them we will always try to take into consideration that they are often worked on by teams working just for the love of it and released free for our enjoyment. Even so, there is a lot of pap out there and downloading such things can often be a waste of good surfing time.

Similarly with retail online games, such as *EverQuest*, code is always being updated and although we can't provide regular updates we will try to review major ones as and when they occur.

NEWS

LINEAGE: THE BLOODPLEDGE

The Koreans are back...

When it comes to online role-playing of a massively multiplayer nature, most people recognise that *EverQuest* and *Ultima Online* are the big two, with *Asheron's Call* trailing behind in Lib Dem fashion. We forget, however, that online role-playing is a global phenomenon, and is particularly popular in South-East Asia. *Lineage: The Bloodpledge* – developed in South Korea and boasting between two and eight million subscribers, depending on where you read it, and well over 100,000 simultaneous players – certainly squares up to the big boys in the numbers department.

Currently undergoing beta testing in the US, *Lineage* leans closer to the graphical style of *Diablo* – another big game in Asia – than it does to *EverQuest*, played as it is over isometric landscapes rather than 3D-accelerated terrain. The characters sport blue-rinse *Final Fantasy* haircuts, and although this may seem strange when you see orcs running around, it actually fits the bill rather well considering the story mixes Asian and Western fantasy without a hint of the ridiculous.

Of course, being an RPG, *Lineage* features plenty of character creation

options, offering you the chance to take up arms as a wizard, elf, knight or prince, the latter being the only character able to start up guilds and clans – the price for which is limited fighting and spell ability.

What makes *Lineage* an enticing prospect is that players can rise through the levels and eventually run their own castle. Unlike in *Ultima Online*, however, once you're in command of a mighty stronghold, the town around it falls under your governorship, too.

Different, too, is the matter of alignment. Traditionally in RPGs you design your character to be good, evil or neutral. In *Lineage* everyone starts off neutral and their character evolves depending on their actions online. For those who enjoy killing innocents, *Lineage* errs from the strict line of political correctness evident in US games, offering much more of a politically-based environment to fight in (as hinted at in the game's title.)

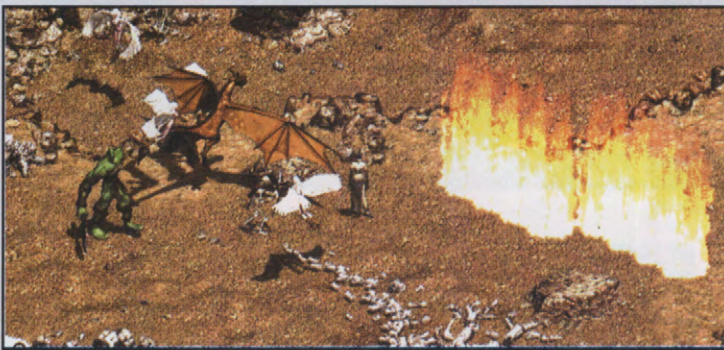
A UK release seems highly unlikely at this time, but as with *Ultima*, UK role-players shouldn't have too many problems signing up to play. Start your journey by visiting www.lineagethebloodpledge.com



A familiar interface doesn't harm.



Take the castle and the town is yours.



It looks better than *Diablo II* – which isn't saying much.



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Even companies have been set up, making sure the boundaries between fantasy and reality are well and truly blurred.

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idle...

Majestic Alliance runs in the background, giving you access to the adventure ahead.

Chemtrail.com

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Chemtrail Theories
There has been much discussion from experts and amateurs alike regarding the composition of chemtrails.

Some have witnessed a mysterious, organic "goo" falling on their car windshields. Those who come in contact with this material often suffer from gastrointestinal problems for days or weeks afterward. Scientific tests on the goo have been inconclusive, hinting only that whatever it consists of is — or at some point, was — alive.

Others postulate that mind-control particulates are being spread by the government (We've even heard that such mind control explains how President Clinton's approval ratings reached record levels).

The government MKUltra and... into the 196... most of th...

testing on individuals only, but it's logical that once might then be carried out on unwitting communities. The timing certainly fits, since chemtrails were first re...

www.chemtrail.com is one of the many sites set up for Majestic.

MAJESTIC

EA's challenge to the online throne

We all know how effective the Internet is at building virtual communities and bringing like-minded people together. But it could be argued that what is taken for granted — the sheer wealth of information available and the interdependence between various machines — is one aspect of the Internet that has yet to form the basis of a game. For instance, online games, be they eight-player deathmatches like

x.com), proudly states that gameplay, characterisation and story are central, but professes to add "inventive use of technology" to its games. "Anim-X makes the Internet not just a platform, but a tool for gameplay," the developer claims. In other words, the Internet, rather than some goblin-infested 3D landscape, serves as the backdrop to the game. And you can access the game not only from your desktop PC, but also from your fax machine or phone.

“The Majestic characters email you, chat to you online, even call you up in the middle of the night. You won't be able to tell you're talking to fictional characters”

Counter-Strike or 100,000-player adventures like EverQuest, are very much set in closed worlds offering limited interaction within their environments. These worlds may be ongoing, but unlike reality, you can leave whenever you wish. Majestic aims to take online gaming onto the next stage. The developer, Anim-X (www.anim-

This in itself is nothing new. There are already a handful of games that can be accessed from PC and/or a WAP-enabled phone, but Majestic will find ways to contact you at inopportune moments. Spooky. EA, which will be publishing the game, seems to be marketing Majestic in a Blair Witch Project manner, and as such it remains something of an

enigma. You only have to pay a visit to www.majestic.ea.com to discover the same for yourself. Essentially an online adventure, Majestic will be an episodic trawl across the Internet, through websites both legit and specific to the game. Named after the Majestic 12 — a group of people assigned to investigate UFO sightings in the 1940s — the game mixes up '90s conspiracy theory paranoia with today's technology, meaning you play a wannabe Mulder or Scully, one of potentially thousands of online investigators in a race to solve the mystery. You communicate with other players through the normal channels (email, ICQ, etc), as well as with the Majestic characters themselves. They may email you, chat to you online or even call you up in the middle of the night. We're told that players will be unable to tell that they will be talking to fictional characters — the voice mechanics are that sophisticated. Now that is double spooky. Anim-X and EA have gone to great lengths to build a network of game-

related material, through buying up hundreds of phone numbers, websites and even setting up legitimate company identities to carry forward the game. In many ways Majestic is about as real as it gets. New episodes are planned for release every month. The Majestic program itself, at a measly 1Mb download, will act in the same manner as a media player, in that streaming video and audio can be accessed, as well as real-time chat. The Majestic website will be the main port of entry for your investigations, with the developers mixing up both fictional and real news articles. The aim, it seems, is to mess your head up good and proper. The first episode should be available to US gamers in early spring — EA UK has yet to announce a localised version. Reaction from testers has been enthusiastic to say the least, but we're going to have to wait a while to form our own opinions.



X-ONLINE

Beyond the next frontier

With *Terminus* already out, *Jumpgate* in beta testing and *3rd World* and *Eve: Second Genesis*, not to mention *Elite IV*, all on the way, the heavens are due to get pretty crowded with online space combat/trading games. And joining them later this year is *X-Online*, the multiplayer extension to Egosoft's universe, first visited in *X-Beyond The Frontier* and its more recent add-on *X-Tension*.

Not only does the *X* universe lend itself well to an online game, but the 3D engine does too, allowing for countless 3D objects on screen without too much of a problem.

Egosoft is already accepting applications for beta testing (check out www.online-universe.net), and says the number of potential players online at any one time is limitless. It plans to add new sectors as and when the number of players demand.

As is the case with current *X* games, *X-Online* will allow players to trade and fight their way across a plane of sectors linked by jumpgates, each containing a network of factories. With enough credits,

players will be able to eventually create their own network of factories, and build ships to ferry raw materials between them to create goods that others may buy. New features include the ability to design your own factories and bases.

Multiplayer missions will be added constantly, as well as goods to trade and items to upgrade your ships, and even buy new ships. Also new is the ability to specialise your player-character, join races and companies, and band together to form trade and pirate guilds.

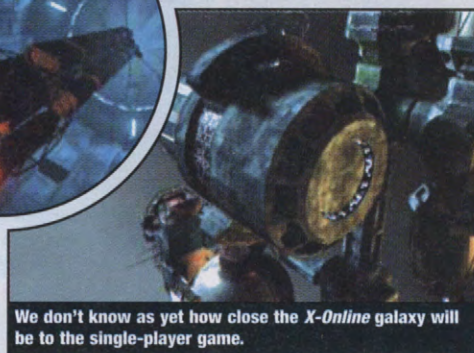
Of course, there is still much to be decided on – for example, whether, like *Elite*, there will be anarchic systems where lawlessness prevails and stable government-led zones where players can trade in relative safety. We've also yet to hear how much the game will cost to play. You can be sure, however, that all will be revealed in a future issue.



X-Gold is still worth a play.



Clans are already starting to form.



We don't know as yet how close the X-Online galaxy will be to the single-player game.



Still holding its own in the graphics department, the next version of X will look even better.

SHORTS

FLASHPOINT MULTIPLAYER

Having kicked off its Multiplayer Network with *Insane*, Codemasters has announced that the soon-to-be-released tactical shooter *Operation Flashpoint* will use the same service for its online component.

Sadly, this isn't going to happen until much later in the year, with the spring release being single-player and LAN-enabled only. Codemasters says it wants to do this rather than hold the whole game back. The multiplayer component is expected to be incorporated into a cheap expansion pack.

Operation Flashpoint is still on target for an April release. Check out www.flashpoint1985.com



INFILTRATOR

In development by Orbital Frog, *Infiltrator: Shadow Wars* combines role-playing and strategy to create an online game set in the near future, where the world is controlled by powerful corporations. Players will join the corporation that mirrors their online ideals within that world, and can join together to thwart the plans of the other companies. Little else is known about the game aside from the background. Those hoping to glean more info should scoot off to www.orbitalfrog.com/infiltrator.

DARK ORE

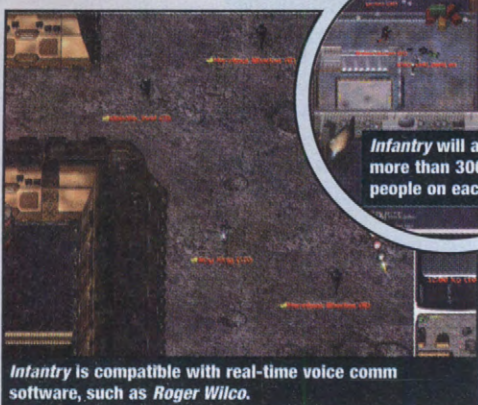
Revealed last issue (page 22), RayLogic's 3D sci-fi strategy-cum-space shooter *Dark Ore* has since become solely an online game. Each player, as the head of a company, is out to earn \$100 million before the others, through trade and combat – either in spacecraft or *Moonraker*-style spacesuits. Catch up on the changes by visiting www.raylogic.com.

WWII ONLINE

Cornered Rat Software's elaborate cross-genre online sim *WWII Online* seems to be getting more ambitious by the day. The first version of the game will of course be set across the Western Front of 1940, with players able to command and control infantry, tanks and aircraft. In the future, there are plans to include submarines and battleships. Also expect new theatres of war – 10, in fact – seven of which will be based in the Pacific. More news at www.wwiionline.com.



Each map is rather large, offering many tactical possibilities.



Infantry is compatible with real-time voice comm software, such as Roger Wilco.



Infantry will allow more than 300 people on each map.

INFANTRY

Online action from the makers of *SubSpace*

Although *Infantry* has been in beta testing for a few months, it's been a while since we've featured the game. So with more than a year having passed since we previewed the game, we thought it best to start again from scratch.

Developed by *SubSpace* creator Harmless Games, *Infantry* was recently signed by Sony's online arm (www.station.sony.com/infantry). It is, to all intents and purposes, a team-based tactical action game, like *Counter-Strike* and *Team Fortress*, only played from above.

Realistic it ain't, but heavy on teamplay it most certainly is, with countless modes of play from team deathmatches, capture-and-hold domination to skirmish, *Team Fortress*-style CTF and even a bizarre future sports hoverbike game called

Gravball. In fact, vehicles will play a large part in every aspect of the game, with dozens of bikes, tanks, buggies and jet packs to choose from, some of which will need more than one occupant and can even ferry others around.

More than 200 weapons are planned at this moment, covering everything you can imagine, from simple lasers and projectile weapons, all the way up to sonic disrupters. It doesn't stop there, either – players can learn psionic skills to complement their combative ones, and gain rank and experience as they fight their way across the huge maps.

We hope to review *Infantry* fairly soon, by which time we should know how much the game will cost to play (probably US\$10 a month). But before then, you can scoot along to the website and play the pre-release version free-of-charge.



Fallout Tactics features a strong storyline for a strategy game.



The game is set before the events in Fallout 2.



There are some places your characters wouldn't want to be shot in.



There will be eight multiplayer maps and you'll even be able to take multiplayer characters into the single-player game.

FALLOUT TACTICS: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL

Not just a promising single-player game, oh no...

Interplay and, more to the point, developer Micro Forte are putting a lot of thought into the multiplayer and online side of the third in the *Fallout* series, *Brotherhood Of Steel*. Those in the know will be aware that, unlike previous games, *Fallout Tactics* is less about post-apocalyptic role-playing and more concerned with tactical combat, which of course lends itself perfectly to multiplayer gaming.

Played in turns (or a pseudo real-time mode called Continuous Turn-Based Play, where action points rebuild while characters are stationary), the game revives the age-old gameplay traditions set down by the *X-COM* series. The player

controls up to six characters in each mission, equipping each and deploying them in tactical positions to wipe out the mutant hordes, aided by a fleet of vehicles, of course. As with *X-COM*, players will have specialist individuals

“Fallout Tactics will offer up to 18 players the opportunity to fight against each other, either in free-for-all, co-operative or team-based games”

available to them within their pool of characters, all of which can gain skills through surviving each mission. But, hey... much of this you may know already (and if you don't you can get your fill at www.interplay.com/falloutbos/), so let's

look instead at what could make *Fallout Tactics* the game *X-COM* never was.

Although not quite what you'd call massively multiplayer, *Fallout Tactics* will offer up to 18 players the chance to fight against each other, either in free-for-all, co-operative or team-based games.

Like the single-player game, we can expect a range of mission objectives – ranging from rescue and escort to demolition and no-holds-barred obliteration of your opponent.

Interplay has chosen Mplayer to run the official online matching

service. However, players will be able to set up their own games for others to join, choosing a map and allocating experience points that others can distribute among their squad.

With a new *X-COM* tactical game still some way off, following the departure of Hasbro from the industry, it seems the mantle rests with Interplay to carry on where that seminal title left off. We've been crying out for a game of this type to initiate a strong online multiplayer component, and thankfully our wimpering has at last been heard.

You can find out for yourself whether the wait has been worthwhile as we will be featuring the multiplayer demo of *Fallout Tactics* (and a few single-player missions) on next month's CD.



GIANTS™

CITIZEN KABUTO



"IT'S GOING TO BE AT **VERY LEAST** CONTENDER FOR THE **GAME OF THE YEAR**"

"IF YOU'LL EXCUSE THE PUN, IT'S GOING TO BE **HUGE, ENORMOUS, MASSIVE, GIGANTIC** EVEN"

GAMESDOMAIN.CO.UK

"WHEN IT COMES TO **ORIGINALITY** AND DEPTH, **THIS GAME DELIVERS.**"

"THE **GRAPHICS** ARE **MORE STUNNING** THAN **CAMERON DIAZ** WITH A CATTLE PROD"

PC ZONE

8/10
Edge

85%
PC Zone

93%
PC Format

90%
Game Over

4/5
Maxim

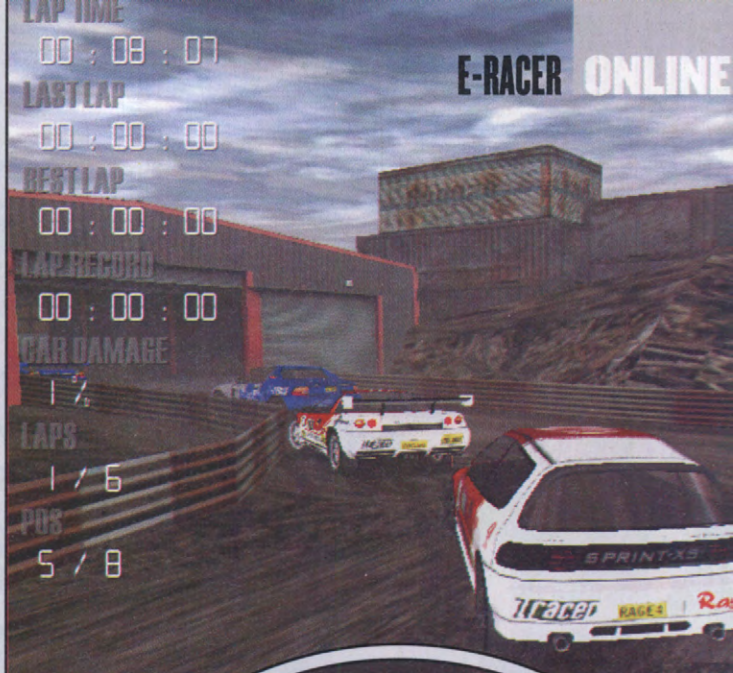
9/10
gamespot.co.uk

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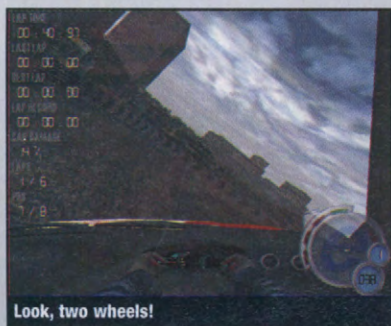




You'll have to progress in the single-player championship if you want to race better cars online.



E-RACER ONLINE



Look, two wheels!



At 150Kb, emailing your replays should be fairly straightforward.

Even via our dodgy old TNT cards *E-Racer* looks good and moves fast.



Er, brakes?

E-RACER

And no, *Richie Shoemaker* has no idea what the 'E' stands for

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Rage
 PUBLISHER Rage
 WEBSITE www.rage.com
 RELEASE DATE April

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Well, there aren't that many online racing games for a start
- ★ Tight, well-designed tracks
- ★ Full damage modelling
- ★ Regular online tournaments with real prizes



“Typical of Liverpool's finest codeshop, the game sports a rather nice set of graphics and shifts them around the screen at quite a pace”

With Codemasters' *Insane* already out and EA's *Need For Speed: Motor City Online* due to be released in a few months, it looks like online driving games are finally going to catch up – if not in quantity, certainly in quality – with the choice currently offered to first-person deathmatchers and online role-players.

However, before what is to be the sixth in the *Need For Speed* series, Rage Software will have a chance to take pole position with its own online driving game, *E-Racer*. And, typical of Liverpool's finest codeshop, the game sports a rather nice set of graphics and shifts them around the screen at quite a pace – which is important for a game like this, especially online.

We at ZONE know all this because we have a copy of the game here, or rather I have a copy, which I have been playing a fair bit, partly because I like it and also because on my soon-to-be-retired office PC, it runs so well that at first I thought someone had swapped it for a 1GHz Athlon.

Crisp graphics and solid performance aside, however, *E-Racer* is something of a typical racing game. Not to alienate those of us yet to sample the delights of competing against other people sat halfway

around the world, *E-Racer* will sport the usual range of single-player options: time trials against ghost cars, single arcade races and a full championship featuring eight cars across 14 tracks. There are a couple of things that should make *E-Racer* stand out, though: one is the aforementioned online stuff, the other is the tracks and cars.

E-TYPES

Unlike those games that feature 'real world' vehicles, *E-Racer* features eight fantasy cars. As you can see, these aren't steam-powered wooden behemoths driven by dwarfs, they are in fact closely modelled on real cars. So why not license real cars, you ask? Because it's expensive. More importantly, car manufacturers don't take too kindly to seeing their vehicles smashed to bits, even if it is on a computer screen. Therefore Rage has introduced a rather nifty damage modelling system where you can disfigure the cars as much as you like – apart from windows, which seem to be unbreakable.

There's still some way to go though, and in terms of physics, there

are a couple of spots on some tracks where you can bounce your car rubber-like off the walls. That aside, the tracks are very good – not too big or small – with some clever turns and spectacular backdrops, which whether played online or off, will be just as good to tear across.

At the time of the game's release, eight players will be able to race across single tracks, and which track they race on depends on whether the player has unlocked them in the single-player game. Best lap and race times will be posted online, as well as replay files. Most importantly, Rage is keen to promote regular online tournaments, with real prizes up for grabs for winners.

The game will retail for around £30 and will be free to play, but there are plans to charge players to enter the big prize (ie win a car) championships. In the future, as well as new cars and tracks to download, we can look forward to teams racing for points in a massive online championship. Providing enough people buy the game, of course. [E]



This ain't no charity parachute jump.



Another chute drop over another beleaguered town. Mwua hahaa.



A nice drive out in the suburbs of Dresden.

SUDDEN STRIKE V1.1

★ £29.99 • CDV • Out now

The Germans are gearing up for an online assault, *Phil Wand* jumps in his tank and gets ready to do battle

They're an odd lot, the Germans. You'd have thought that losing a couple of world wars would dampen their enthusiasm for a real-time strategy game involving Panzerfaust gunners, Nazi officers, Sturmtiger assault cannons and V-1 doodlebugs, especially when the name of the game in question is often shortened to *SS*. Yet *Sudden Strike* continues to gain popularity both here and in the Fatherland, where its Karlsruhe based publisher has recently released a much awaited patch, available to existing users as a 2Mb download from www.suddenstrike.com.

If you already own a copy of the game, you'll be glad to hear that this latest update beefs up the multiplayer side of things by including support for GameSpy. This means that there's now a master server holding information on all *SS* sessions around the globe, and so joining them has become a point-and-click dream. You can get to the action direct

from your desktop without having to do any mucking about from within the game itself. If you've not yet bought the box, or have yet to free it from its Christmas wrapping, make sure you install the patch before you run the game, and then go grab yourself a copy of server seeker GameSpy from www.gamespy3d.com

“As a game, *Sudden Strike* really does lend itself to playing against other people”

KEEP ON MOVING

Aside from a rather limited number of multiplayer options, *Sudden Strike* plays well over any Internet connection, from a 33.6K modem upwards. If you're used to playing arcade shooters such as *Counter-Strike* or *Unreal Tournament*, where the data transfer rates are much higher, get ready for arenas where low latency is no longer king. The very nature of RTS means that the odd dropped packet, lag spike or connection glitch does not affect

the flow of gameplay: tanks keep rolling, troops keep moving, and unless something serious goes wrong, you could be forgiven for thinking that every online opponent was hardwired in to the back of your machine. We did try playing it on a laptop using the infra-red modem on a 28.8K WAP phone as our on-ramp to the Internet, but after a couple of dropped carriers and a lot of MESSAGES IN CAPITALS from increasingly narked adversaries, we decided it was probably a

bit silly and gave it a miss.

As a game, *Sudden Strike* really does lend itself to playing against other people. The fact that combatants don't have to muck about with building factories, training troops and the like means that every game is steeped in strategy and hard thinking from the outset. If you're familiar with *C&C* style blasts, where everyone remains confined to their bases often for hours at a time, hiding behind an ever increasing number of sand bags and gun



Don'tcha just love it when the guns leave craters?

emplacements, *SS* missions will come as a refreshing change. Straight away you're thrown into the melee, dodging distant snipers, creeping down alleyways and blowing stuff up. Certainly you'll find it hard not to look down on *Red Alert* and its brethren as being more than a little brainless – even a little passé. Combine *SS*'s emphasis on tactics with delicious graphics, great ambient audio and streamlined interface (the patch includes improvements to the way you unload troops from carrier vehicles) and in no time you'll be cooking up a

Criticisms are few. It's not quite as accessible as the aforementioned arcade blasters, and quite often you'll find yourself stuck, perplexed as to what to

do next. It's also quite frustrating to have injured units without any way of pumping them back up to full health, but if you're looking to escape the realities of war, you've probably worked out by now that *Sudden Strike* isn't for you. [C]

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Much easier to set up and find multiplayer servers • Surprisingly fast-paced
- DOWNERS Not enough game variations • Not as user-friendly or as wide-ranging as *Red Alert 2*

78 Much improved, but still some way to go



CALL TO POWER II V1.1

£34.99 • Activision • Out now

Andrew Wright was kinda hoping his old copy of CivNet would soon be taking up permanent residency in the dustbin...

It happens to every Civ fanatic sooner or later. You turn up the difficulty level to 'impossible', put yourself up against the most savage and arrogant empire – I never mentioned the Germans – and still end up hammering the AI the equivalent of 6-0. So what do you do? If you're playing *Call To Power II*, you select the multiplayer option, go online and search out a human opponent or two.

Unfortunately, you'll probably search for quite a while. Although Activision has released a patch to version 1.1, supposedly to correct multiplayer 'issues', it's still a pretty flaky game even across a network, with lots of spurious disconnections and frequent syncing problems.

To make matters worse, the company has only allotted two servers to the game and, a month after the game's release, that's still all there is. What's worse, when we checked it out, there was nobody logged on and no games running. Is there a hidden message in that fact?

Hot-seat play and PBEM were dropped from the release version at the last moment, which is probably another indication of the number of bugs on the multiplayer side, although the code is apparently still in there. Multiplayer options are presently limited to Internet and LAN

(either IPX or TCP/IP), but there is no support for online gaming services such as Mplayer.

CIVILIZED BEHAVIOUR?

So how do you manage to play a turn-based *Civilization*-style strategy game over the Internet? First of all, the game can be

specifying starting gold, number of settlers and so on, as well as tweaking the type of map you'll use. You can even exclude any units such as the eco-ranger that you feel can unbalance the game. Sensibly, you can also decide to start in a later era than usual to help online games go faster. Game configurations can also be saved for future use, but sadly you can't play custom scenarios in multiplayer mode.

“Although Activision has released a patch to correct multiplayer ‘issues’, it’s still pretty flaky, even over a network”

played in four different modes: in Normal mode turns don't advance until a player clicks on the button, while in Speed Turns mode each player gets a set amount of time to carry out their turn. Carry Over mode, a variation of Speed Turns, lets you store up those precious unused seconds, while Speed Cities mode gives each player a set amount of time, depending on how many cities they've built.

To speed up play further, Activision recommends a maximum of four players in multiplayer mode and advises against using huge maps. There are no in-game chat features, so player interaction is limited to the same diplomatic choices as in the single-player game. Boring...

On the plus side, you can create customised games by

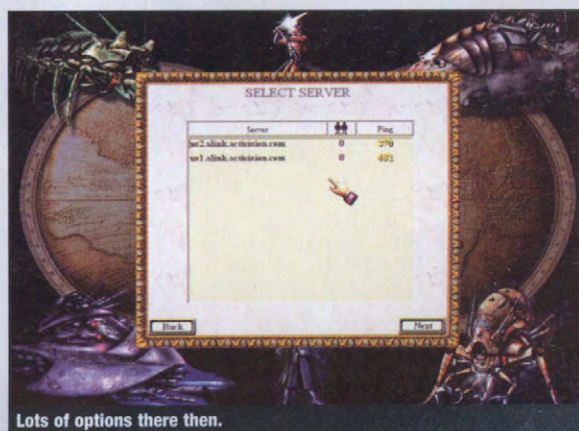
TWO'S A CROWD

What it all means is that *CTP2* is a great single-player strategy game that has missed the multiplayer mark by a couple of continents. It's fine on a local network, but close to being a disaster area in online terms. Let's just hope Sid Meier and Firaxis put a little more effort into *Civilization III*. [C]

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Improved graphics and combat • Lots of strategic options
- DOWNERS Not enough servers • Flaky multiplayer support • Too few end-game options

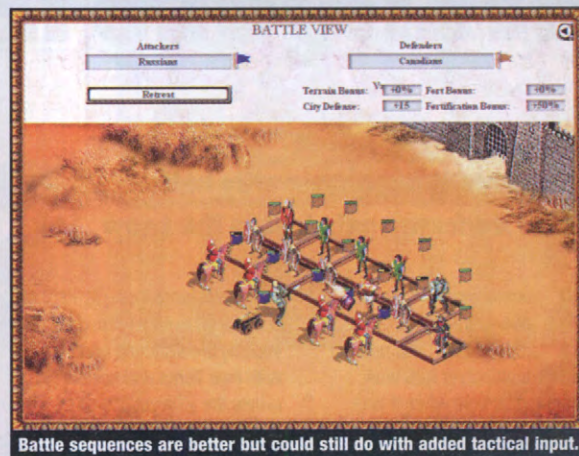
52 Inadequate multiplayer support is a big letdown



Lots of options there then.



Surrender Munich or my cavalry will, er, charge or something.



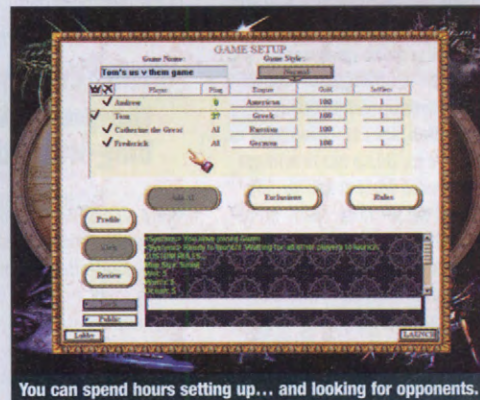
Battle sequences are better but could still do with added tactical input.



Conquer the world in glorious Technicolor.



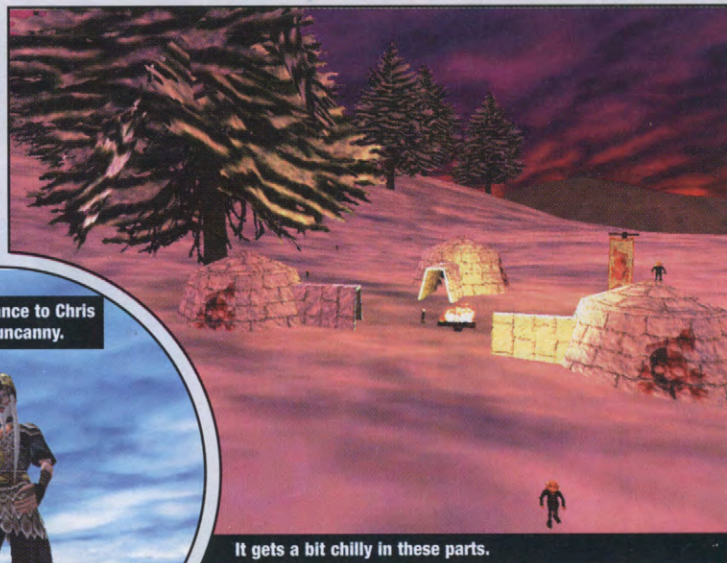
Sail around the world and get a Feat of Wonder message.



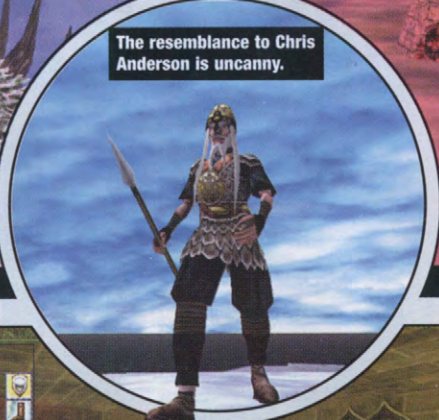
You can spend hours setting up... and looking for opponents.



Now that's big...



It gets a bit chilly in these parts.



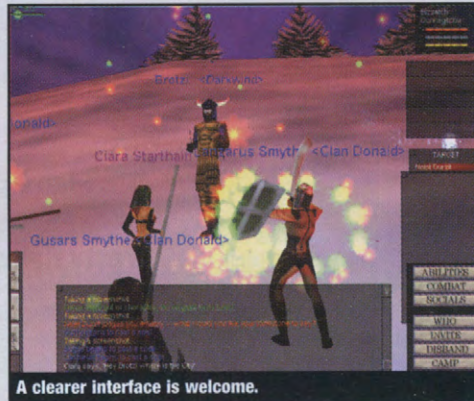
The resemblance to Chris Anderson is uncanny.



Fights always break out at weddings.



"Welcome to Changing Rooms."



A clearer interface is welcome.

EVERQUEST: SCARS OF VELIOUS

★ £19.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

The world of *EverQuest* is now bigger than ever, if not necessarily better. Chris Anderson gets lost in the snow



Looking back on the last two years of *EverQuest*, it's clear that this popular multiplayer RPG was ahead of its time when it was first released. Even now, the lush graphics put many other online games to shame, and with every expansion and significant patch the game goes from strength to strength.

Velious proves to be no exception, with 16 new zones to explore for those brave enough to traverse what is still largely uncharted territory. Many areas have yet to be fully mapped and the only way to find what lies within them is to bite the bullet and dive in to see what happens (death, usually).

But as we all know, bigger doesn't necessarily mean better.

The snow-laden lands of *Velious* are indeed expansive and in parts visually breathtaking and filled with new items and armour to renew the interest of higher-level players who have seen and done it all. But it brings nothing new to the gaming experience and, just like the *Kunark* expansion, is

"The new armour types are stunning and the quests that yield them are not as long-winded as the majority of *EQ* quests"

more an extension to the existing gameworld than a breath of fresh air for long-standing players.

This will, however, be more than enough to appease the vast majority of *EQ* addicts. Many of *Velious'* zones conceal excellent new armour and items that are

visibly unique, addressing the criticism that the game lacked detail in this area compared to others of its type. This was perhaps understandable given the quality of the graphics, but that problem has been addressed here nonetheless. The new *Velium* armour types look nothing short

of stunning, and the quests that yield these items are not as long-winded (and pointless) as the majority of the quests that already exist in the game.

So good news generally for the growing legion of *EQ* fans who rush out and buy *Velious*.

But not everyone will be in a position to take advantage of this impressive expansion – before you can safely enter the lands of *Velious*, you will need to have played *EQ* for a very long time. And levelled your character. A lot.

CLUB 30 TO 60

The minimum level your character must be to safely enter *Velious* is 30 plus. Many have gone there as low as level 27, but they have soon become experts in corpse recovery. This expansion is for mid- to high-level players only, and as such it immediately cuts off a large proportion of the game's population.

Verant argues that higher-level players have been playing the game much longer than newbies, so are more in need of new entertainment. That may be so, but this will do nothing to appease players who rush out and buy the new expansion, only to find they are not in a position to take advantage of it.

There are a few notable interface enhancements (the incredibly annoying change in resolution when switching to inventory is finally gone), but nothing that justifies the asking price alone. *EQ* is still the best online RPG by some considerable margin, and its classic status is well-deserved and still stands, but as a package in itself, *Velious* is worthwhile only for those who have put in enough gaming hours to enjoy it. **EW**

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS 16 new zones • New armour and item types • Lots of snow
- DOWNERS For level 30 and above only • Nothing new in terms of gameplay • Enemy types modelled on existing ones

82 Essential – but for hardcore fans only

TANARUS

★ Out now • Free download (7.5Mb) form www.station.sony.com

Phil Wand gets tanked up

If you've ever dropped 10p coins into a *Battlezone* arcade cabinet, you've got a pretty good idea of what *Tanarus* is about – add in the team-based gameplay of *Tribes* and there's little more to tell.

Online arenas hold up to 20 players organised into various teams, with everyone tucked away inside a variety of heavily armed tanks. The idea is to conquer your opponents, capture their flags, and progress through the ranks until people begin to speak your name in a revered whisper.

At first, it's hard going. You need to be intimately familiar with a boggling array of controls just to drive your tank without people asking if you're looking for a disabled car parking space. But if you ignore the jibes and make

an effort to learn what you're doing, it suddenly clicks and you can really get stuck in.

Now three years old, the game won a number of awards and accolades when it was originally released, chiefly because it encouraged teamwork and strategy and was a real hoot to play – the only downside was that Sony charged you for doing it. That, however, has now changed. *Tanarus* is available as a free download, and there's no cost to battle it out in the multiplayer arenas. You just register on Sony's gaming website, download a 7Mb file and get straight in.

As you might imagine, the game's graphics are nothing to coo-coo at, but they serve their purpose, and on modern machinery they help make the game feel impressively slick.

Sounds are a little weak, but in the middle of battle with the volume cranked high, you really couldn't care less.

If you think *Tanarus* is tops – and we certainly do – take a butcher's at the splendid *Planetside* from the same author at www.verant.com.



An in yer face chat interface means taunts are never far away.



Graphics are none too impressive, but are just right for online.

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Free at last • Good selection of tanks and weapons
- DOWNERS Looks and sounds dated • Too many controls

75 Old but good



Pick a category. Except sport.



WTF are they going on about?



Planned updates mean you'll soon be able to pick and choose your opponents.

TRIVIAL PURSUIT ONLINE V1.2

★ Out now • Free download from www.station.sony.com

Q. Who is *Richie Shoemaker*? A. Who cares?

Although there are hundreds of free trivia games to play online, *Trivial Pursuit* remains king, thanks solely to the unending popularity of the board game.

However, unlike the thoroughly real version – and, indeed, Hasbro Interactive's CD-based volume released a year ago – *Trivial Pursuit Online* is free to download and play, poses much more up-to-date questions, and allows you to play and chat with real people, depicted as they are by crude cartoon caricatures.

The rules are somewhat simpler than you would hope. As with the board game, you have six categories of question, asked depending on whatever

“It is free to download and play, poses more up-to-date questions than the board game, and you're playing against real people”

corresponding coloured square you land on. Additionally, there are 'wild card' spaces and instead of the six main squares that earn

you a wedge in the board game, landing on them here allows you to pick whatever category you wish. Four wedges rather than six win you the game, and because you can win yourself a slice of pie after every correct question,

games are – thankfully in most cases – brief affairs. Although you have no choice who you play against, an

automatching service throws you in with players of similar skill. Unfortunately, only a maximum of three people can play together, one of which you can guarantee will converse in the most obscure of acronyms and become terse whenever you ask him/her to explain themselves.

Additionally, players have to endure ad breaks – that's why it's free. Worst of all, every sport question and a good deal of the posers in other categories are US-specific, which although may explain away losing to dumb Yanks, doesn't help your ranking

in the automatching stakes, meaning that more often than not those same people will be back to taunt you a second time.

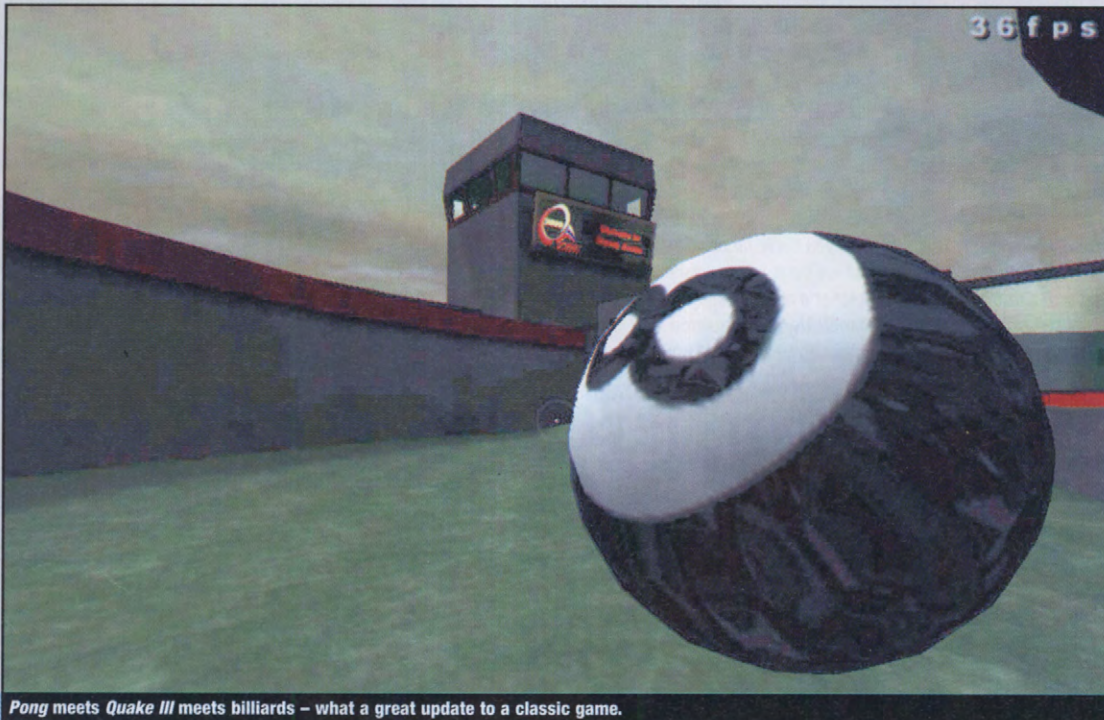
PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS It's Triv • It's free
- DOWNERS Far too many US-related questions • Simplified rules • Ads • Automatching

50 You get what you pay for – no more

MODWATCH

Tony Lamb tracks down and checks out all the latest and greatest freebies



Pong meets *Quake III* meets billiards – what a great update to a classic game.

THE CHALLENGER DEEP

For: Half-Life

Website:

www.planethalflife.com/challengerdeep/

Rating: ★★★★★

Size: 13,768Kb



This is a great single-player mod for *Half-Life* that will keep you busy and scratching your head for ages as you reprise your role as Gordon Freeman, yet again walking into the middle of a botched scientific experiment. In fact, when one of the scientists tells you that they're planning to deviate from the usual procedures, common sense should see you run screaming for the door. But of course you don't run away, the experiment goes horribly wrong, and you're stuck 30,000 feet under the sea without the proverbial paddle.

This then is the scenario on board deep-sea research centre Challenger Deep. Not content with landing players in sticky situations in the middle of a desert, the CD team has gone to the other extreme and plonked them an obscenely long way underwater. Here you won't die of thirst under a burning sun, you've instead got untold billions of tons of water above your head just waiting for a chance to flatten you.

This is a top class mod. Not only does it look good, but it also displays the sort of attention to detail that made the original game so enthralling. Monsters float in display tanks as you arrive to get suited up, scientist types chat inanely to each other if you don't get a move on (so no change there then), and if you don't do things in the right order you'll wind up dead. *Challenger Deep* is all about survival and you'll have to pick up the right things – the crowbar is an essential for example – or you won't be able to get past the many puzzles. Miss a medikit and you're dead. Miss a door and you're dead. Stand in the wrong place and you're dead. You get the picture!

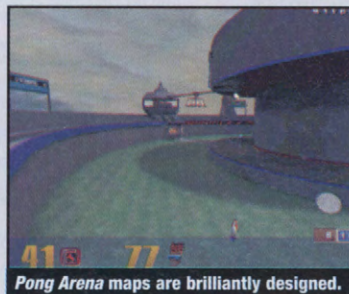
You could argue that there should be more to the game than just solving puzzles to get out alive. Perhaps *Challenger Deep* could do with a little more shooting and a tad less reasoning, but then it wouldn't live up to its name quite so well.



Don't run into the Pong balls – they hurt!



Pong Arena – just like Wembley, only smaller.



Pong Arena maps are brilliantly designed.

QPONG ARENA V1.666

For: *Quake III* Arena

Website: <http://q3pong.teamreaction.com/>

Rating: ★★★★★

Size: 6,052Kb



History first. *Pong* is one of the earliest videogames, from back in the days when the current crop of console-huggers were but glints in their parents' eyes, and it's extremely simple: two players, each with a bat and a ball between them. Miss it and your opponent scores a point. Simple.

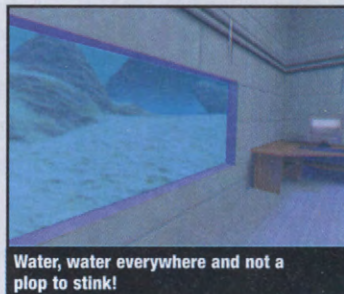
So where does *Quake III* slip into the equation? The answer is that it comes in rather cleverly and plonks you into a series of ever more complex arenas with ramps, obstacles, springboards and power-ups aplenty. The objective is still to knock the ball past your opponents and into their 'goal' (a small variation, but we'll overlook it), but the *Quake* environment means that the game plays somewhat differently from its 2D predecessor. For a start, you don't use a bat to deflect the ball – you use the *Quake*



weapons selection – and the ball, once hit, doesn't just float serenely across the screen, but ricochets off obstacles, zooms alarmingly from floor to ceiling and then does its very best to hit you back. Actually, the damned thing hurts if it smacks into you and if you're a little low on health it's pretty humiliating to blast the ball towards the other goal only to watch it bounce straight back off a wall and wipe you out.

The only major drawback on *QIII Pong* is the fact that you can't run it with Bots – online or on a LAN are the only options. The physics are simply too complicated for Bots to deal with, which is a shame, but not really a surprise. Everything else about the mod is great fun; the maps are good, the idea a clever blend of classic and modern, and gameplay is fast and furious the way *Quake III* should be. And to top it off all, you can even play 'classic' 2D *Pong* as well!

Developed by the makers of *Quake III Jailbreak*, *QPong Arena* again proves that while *Half-Life* may be the home of the 'real world' mods, *Quake III* plays host to best of the more off-the-wall ideas. Long may it continue.



Water, water everywhere and not a plop to stink!



Scientist Hunt is made up of pure revenge and total carnage.



Airfight maps are small but tricky – obstacles are more dangerous than enemies!



Turbo maps are fun and hellishly difficult to get around.



Strike Force screens show health, heart rate and weapons, all in superb detail.

SCIENTIST HUNT V1.0

For: Half-Life
 Website: www.telefragged.com/thefatal
 Rating: ★★★★★
 Size: 5,702Kb



Remember the scientists from *Half-Life*? Those boffin types whose over-confidence in their own abilities started the trouble in the first place? Well, in *Scientist Hunt* you at long last get your chance for revenge. You get to hunt scientists. And kill them.

This, in a nutshell, sums up the *Scientist Hunt* mod, but it doesn't do justice to how much fun it is. The author, Rich Whitehouse, might sound familiar to some first-person shooter fans and that would be because he has an impressive history of writing addons for these games – mainly Bots, the computer controlled AI characters. In fact, the *Half-Life* Jumbot, *Quake II's* Famkebot and the Hidebot for *Soldier Of Fortune* all found life through him. So if you've been a fan of these games for some time there's a pretty good chance you've come up against these enemies before.

Having established that the author knows a trick or two about Bots, it's reassuring to see that the mod lives up to expectations and although a relatively simple idea, it's nicely executed and turns the killing of innocent civilians into good clean fun (if you ignore the bloodstains anyway). You can play as a part of a team – this mod would be huge fun on a LAN – but chances are you'll wind up playing on your own with Bots for enemies and each individual trying to kill as many scientists as possible in the allotted time in order to win. Of course, the Bots will try to kill you too, so it's wise to make sure you don't use up all your ammunition on the hapless scientists.

As a side note, it's good to see a mod released with more than just a handful of half-finished maps. Here there are 16, some of which are excellent and together with the bots, make this one of the better *Half-Life* mods around at the moment.

AIRFIGHT BETA1

For: Unreal Tournament
 Website: www.planetunreal.com/airfight/
 Rating: ★★★★★
 Size: 2,018Kb



While most mods for *Unreal Tournament* have concentrated on the more conventional first-person shooter style with competitors running around on the ground blasting lumps out of each other, *AirFight* makes a refreshing change by taking the action to the air. In this, *AirFight* has definite potential, although much of it is so far unrealised. Like the name suggests, this is Beta1, so you have to bear in mind that there is a long way to go yet, but the team has been careful to make sure its first public release is interesting enough to make people want more. And that it certainly is.

Players can choose from a range of fighter aircraft running from Vietnam veterans the F4 Phantom and Mig-21 to modern day sophisticates such as the F-22 Raptor, Mig-31 and F-117 Stealth. There are ten aircraft in all, each carefully modelled and each with its own strengths and weaknesses in terms of manoeuvrability and firepower, which includes bombs, missiles and the trusty cannon. The maps, although limited in number are nicely designed, but could do with being bigger and having less in the way of obstacles – the idea is to shoot down other planes, not spend all the time trying not to crash!

The camera angle also takes a bit of getting used to. You view your plane from a sort of 'follow cam' position and in tight turns it is easy to lose the aircraft off the side of the screen – which leads to too many crashes. It would also be nice to be a bit closer to the plane – it's just too small on the screen.

In its current state *AirFight* doesn't support Bots, and is therefore limited to LAN play for the most part. Servers are hard to find, but if development continues on the same track, you can expect the situation to change for the better.

TURBO ALPHA4

For: Half-Life
 Website: www.halflife.net/randomnine/
 Rating: ★★★★★
 Size: 5,095Kb



We're a civilised bunch we humans, but very competitive. When we aren't racing each other we're finding animals to do our running for us – we've even seen them race snails on TV – but so far we haven't come across Snark racing. Until the arrival of *Turbo* that is.

That's what *Turbo* is all about; every player has a Snark (those annoying eight-legged biting bug things), and each is fitted with forward-facing machine guns for shooting other players. As you zoom along the track, your faithful racer leaves behind a trail of coloured gas, which painfully betrays your total inability to steer around corners. The objective is to get the fastest lap times and kill your opponents in the process, but this is no easy task considering the high speeds that these things can achieve and the fact that some of the courses are the devils' own job to navigate. These maps are full of obstacles, blind corners and hairpin bends. They are really quite difficult, and great fun when you get it right.

Unfortunately, *Turbo* has a couple of hefty drawbacks. Firstly, its online presence is virtually non-existent, and secondly it occasionally crashes between games. These are disappointments, and limit *Turbo* to LAN usage at best for now, but maybe if the mod makes its way to the beta stage and cures its reliability problem it will win some popularity – it has the potential to be really enjoyable!

In its favour, *Turbo* weighs in at only 5Mb, which makes it a fairly painless download for 56K modem users. Of course this is just an alpha version, small in size and with a tendency to crash at inopportune moments, but it's worth grabbing if you have access to a LAN where crashes don't pose so much of a problem to the other players.

STRIKE FORCE V1.55

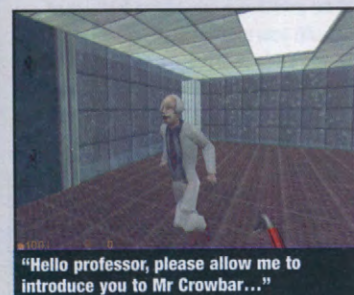
For: Unreal Tournament
 Website: www.planetunreal.com/strikeforce/
 Rating: ★★★★★
 Size: 150Mb+

Counter-Strike eat your heart out – *Unreal Tournament* fans now have *SF* 1.55 and it's a gem! Since we looked at version 1.27 a few months ago, we wanted to see what *SF* would manage when updated further and it didn't disappoint, improving again on what was already a cracking add-on for *UT*.

Strike Force is more than a mod – it's a Total Conversion – and few first-person shooter fans can be unaware of *Strike Forces'* inspiration: *Counter-Strike*, the team-based terrorist/counter-terrorist combat simulation for *Half-Life* that has swept all before it and is now the most popular online fragfest in the world. *Strike Force* can now stand shoulder-to-shoulder with *CS* and hold its head high – all it needs now is the server support! In fact, if you haven't already been indoctrinated into the *CS* fan club, take the time to have a go at both and compare them in the cold light of day. You might well think that the most popular isn't actually the best!

High praise indeed, and although previously *Strike Force* 1.27 lost out by a narrow margin to fellow clone *Tactical Ops*, version 1.55 has addressed these gripes, boosting itself up to a well-deserved five-star rating. At the best part of 150Mb, *Strike Force* is huge (so huge we didn't have room for it on this month's CD, although we'll try to get it on the next issue), but it's essential one for any *Unreal Tournament* owner tired of hearing from *Half-Life* owning friends just how good *Counter-Strike* is.

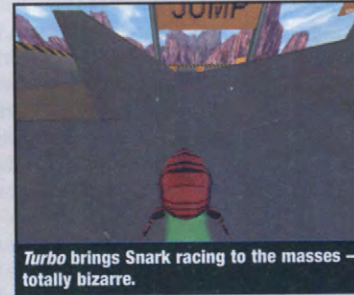
The choice of weapons is typical *CS* fare, with the AK-47, MP5 machine gun and Desert Eagle pistol being the weapons of choice. The maps continue to be imaginative and lovingly crafted, adding greatly to the impressive overall feel. Just choose whether to be a good guy or a bad guy and get on with wiping out the opposition!



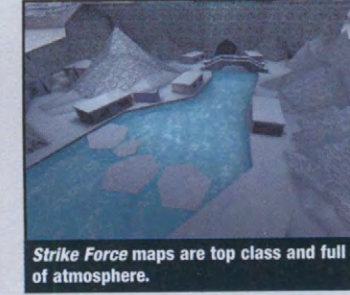
"Hello professor, please allow me to introduce you to Mr Crowbar..."



Airfight has no less than ten great aircraft to choose from.



Turbo brings Snark racing to the masses – totally bizarre.



Strike Force maps are top class and full of atmosphere.

COME AND H

The **PC ZONE** Readers' Challenge and Online Free-For-All are here.

The face of online gaming is about to change forever (honest)

★ WORDS Martin Korda

The day of reckoning has arrived. We at **PC ZONE** are throwing our hats into the online gaming arena and sending out a challenge to all of you who think you're hard enough to take us on.

Once every four weeks, in association with The Playing Fields, we're going to be jumping online and taking on a team of readers at one of the games listed opposite, followed by a free-for-all gaming session for whoever wants to jump online and play with us **ZONE** blokeys, on whatever game(s) servers we'll be running that month. Each issue we'll print the time and date that this will happen, as well as instructions on how to find and join our servers.

COME ON THEN

What we're looking for are clans or groups of gamers (four or five players per team, unless stated otherwise), who are organised and serious enough to set up and keep to a time and a date for the

challenge (victory goals depend on game). We'll then print the results (if we win), and if your group manages to beat us we'll give you a prize.

If you think your clan can handle it, then all you have to do is e-mail your challenge to letters@pczone.co.uk (Subject: **PC ZONE** Readers' Challenge) and we'll pick one each month. Please include the name of the game you wish to challenge us at (from the list opposite - see Choose Your

“Once every four weeks, in association with The Playing Fields, we're going to be jumping online and taking on a team of readers... if you think you're hard enough”

Game boxout), as well as your clan details, your real names, handles, ages and two of your daytime telephone numbers, so that we can get in touch with you to sort out the details.

Please don't bother sending in a challenge unless you're certain you'll all be available on the given date, and please make sure every team member has

access to a machine that allows them to play the chosen game online. Only serious teams need apply, and if we catch anyone trying to cheat, we'll not only disqualify you, but we'll personally come over, rip out your eyeballs and use them as billiard balls. Don't say we didn't warn you.

The first **PC ZONE** Readers' Challenge will be held on Monday March 19, between 6.30pm and 8.30pm, after which there will be a free-for-all from 9pm-11pm (more details next issue).

As we haven't got time to organise a Challenge before the next issue, we'll be having an extra-long, three-hour **PC ZONE** Readers' Free-For-All, to be held on Monday March 5, between 7pm and 10pm. We'll be running a *Counter-Strike* server (IP = 195.149.48.59:27016 Server Name '**PC ZONE** Challenge') as well as a *Quake III* one (IP = 195.149.48.59:27900), the password for both is 'pczone'.

And you're *all* more than welcome to come and get your butts kicked by us.

THE ZONE SQUAD

Here's a quick rundown of the mighty **ZONE** squad, for you all to familiarise yourselves with. After all, it's always nice to put a face to the person who's just beaten you. In order of ability. Expect to see us moving up and down the table in the coming months...

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 Mark Hill aka Leatherface | 4 Martin Korda aka Nameless One | 7 Colin Mackleworth aka Ammaka |
| 2 Dave Woods aka Kid Unknown | 5 Daniel Emery aka Thrax | 8 Rhianna Pratchett aka Raven |
| 3 Richie Shoemaker aka Zapatero | 6 Phil Clark aka Shit Kicker | 9 Elvis Bacon aka Elvis Bacon |



Play against your mates at The Playing Fields.

THE PLAYING FIELDS

A gamer's paradise, The Playing Fields is a computer games bar where you can relax and play games the way they are meant to be played - with someone else. Just 30 seconds walk away from Warren Street tube station (Northern and Victoria lines), you can find it at 143 Whitfield Street, London.

Once there, you can jump on one of the 23 state-of-the-art machines on offer, and either play via a network or over the Net on games such as *Counter-Strike*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Giants*, *Delta Force Land Warrior*, *Sacrifice*, *Rune* and many others. Each machine boasts an AMD 1.1GHz processor, 128Mb SDRAM, 17in monitors and NVIDIA GeForce 2 GTS graphics cards. It doesn't get much better than that.

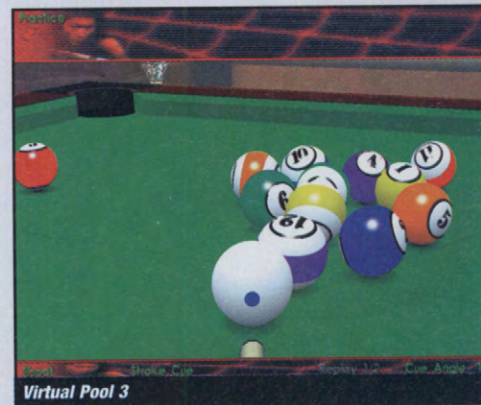
You have to be aged at least 14 to play and ID may be required. The Playing Fields is open

seven days a week from noon to 11pm (10pm on Sundays). For prices and more information, check out www.theplayingfields.co.uk.

And if all that sounds good, you're in luck, as we've joined forces with The Playing Fields to offer you a free hour of play every month. Every issue we'll be printing a slip at the bottom of these pages. All you have to do is fill it in, take it to the Playing Fields and hand it in behind the bar. After that you can play for an hour for free and spend your money on a beer (or an orange fizzy pop if you're not old enough) instead.



HAVE A GO (IF YOU THINK YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGH)



CHOOSE YOUR GAME

Once you've got your team sorted out for the Readers' Challenge, pick one of these games and throw down the gauntlet.

- Counter-Strike
- Quake III Arena
- Quake III Jail Break
- Quake III Rocket Arena
- Unreal Tournament
- Star Trek: Voyager Elite Force
- Half-Life
- Virtual Pool 3
- Age Of Empires II: Age Of Kings (4 a side)
- C&C: Red Alert 2 (4 a side)
- PGA Championship Golf 2000

GETTING CONNECTED

To find our servers, just follow these simple instructions

To join our *QIII* FFA server in *Quake III*, bring down the console by hitting the key located above the Tab key and type the following: /password pczone then hit return and type /connect 195.149.48.59:27900 hit return again and you'll be connected. From the opening *Counter-Strike* menu click 'play CS' then 'InternetGames' and then 'Filter'. Check the box for 'are in my favourites list' and uncheck the other boxes. Now click 'Filter' again, and click 'Add Server' then type 195.149.48.59:27016. You should now see a server called "PC ZONE Challenge" listed on your screen. Double click on this server to join it. The password is 'pczone'. Servers will be available for practice from 12pm. Maps will cycle every 15 minutes to allow everyone a chance to play, so keep trying. If you have any problems connecting, then ring 020 7388 0004 on the day of the challenge.



The *PlayingFields*

DISCOUNT SLIP

Name: Date Of Birth:

Address:

E-mail Address:

Tel No: Date:

+ This discount slip entitles one person to play for one hour free of charge on one occasion between Feb 9 and March 7, 2001, at The Playing Fields, 143 Whitfield Street, London, UK. You must be 14 years of age or older in order to participate in this offer. The slip must be filled in correctly and must be the original from a copy of PC ZONE, otherwise it will not be valid. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Only one slip per reader per issue.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF PC ZONE

Where we reveal the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. No matter how embarrassing

Nearly eight years. That's how long we've been going, and in that time we've been pulled off the shelves, screamed at by irate PR people and questioned by the police. We've dressed up in women's clothing, flown halfway across the world to be presented with a press release and a couple of floppy discs and endured exactly 100 deadlines in the name of (sub-)objective journalism. But it wasn't all good times you know... and if you've been cornered

in a pub for hours while someone extols the virtues of *EverQuest* you'll know exactly what we mean.

Anyway, 100 issues. That makes us the first and longest running dedicated PC games magazine in the world. A feat that can never be repeated, no-matter how many years this miserable planet is around for. In fact, we'd have to invent a new planet, and move everyone from this one onto the other before any other magazine can claim to be the original and the best.

And this is something we're all damn proud of. You should be too, especially the 20 or 30 readers who've endured the whole eight years of our irreverent rantings.

As for the rest of you, allow us to indulge you in a musical trip down memory lane (only without the music). Settle back and join with us as we take you back in time to a land without CD drives, where the words *Half-Life* were only used in conjunction with the country's recently-departed lady Prime Minister. A time when not everything turned out the way we expected. The time of *ZONE*.

#1 LET THE GAMES BEGIN

And so it begins. *X-Wing* on the cover, *Ultima Underworld II* inside and Mr Cursor providing DOS-inspired artwork from France. *PC ZONE* was the first dedicated PC games magazine and right from the start set itself up as something a bit special. Macca, Duncan MacDonald, Paul Lakin, Patrick McCarthy, Tim Ponting – all names recognisable to readers of top 16-bit games mag *Zero* – which combined top quality games journalism with completely off-the-wall comedy.



#7 TURNING JAPANESE

The first instance of a keyboard overlay (see below) in the mag, with Mr Cursor making the comparisons between RAF bombing missions and digestive biscuits in the back. New sections include a CD-game round-up and an add-on disk special. A feature on Anime games provides a cheap excuse to show Japanese soft-core porn on the cover and across four pages inside.



#13 DOOMED

Life is never the same again as Macca brings us the first official review of the gaming legend that is *Doom* (see this month's Supertest on page 74), scoring an almighty 96 per cent. Macca is forever altered and refuses to answer to anything other than UberFragMeister. Mr Cursor examines the problem of *Doom*-dreams. The rest of the mag might as well contain blank pages for all anyone cares.

PAUL LAKIN

PC ZONE's launch editor and all-round nice guy takes an embarrassing trip down memory lane

I remember a moment of horror during my *PC ZONE* year. I appeared on Sky News. Once. It was a disaster. I was called up by a researcher, because they wanted to run a story about the classification of videogames, and asked if I was prepared to go on TV. I said yes. It was then they told me the interview would take place in Osterly. At 7am.

Well, they sent a car for me, so that was OK. Until I got there. I was jumpy anyway as my ex worked at Sky and I was terrified I'd bump into her. But, I wasn't too worried about the interview, which I thought would be pre-recorded.

Oh no. You know those moments on ITN news when the newsreader turns to a guest sitting beside them and starts discussing the story? Well I was said guest. To make things worse when the newsreader read the introduction to the story it was an almost verbatim summary of what I had said to the researcher. So I had nothing else to say. The final horror was that I made the fatal error of trying to start my reply with a pre-planned joke, which I cocked up. From then on all I could do was stare blankly into the newsreader's eyes. Oddly, they never asked me back."



#6 TOUGH CALLS

Harsh scoring was the order of the day even in early days of *ZONE*. It was, of course, deliberately tough, in order to give later issues plenty of breathing space when true classics come along. *Day Of The Tentacle* gets a mere 85 per cent, while *Sensible Soccer* rates a lowly 70 per cent. Still, at least hardcore flight sim *Tornado* notches up a healthy 93 per cent, starting a trend for flight sim reviews that continues to this day.



#14 NEW-BOY BROOKER

FRANK STEIN		STA BUY ADD HST	
AGE	25 YEARS	CHARACTER	UNSELFISH
CLUB	MMH LTD	PASSING	TACKLING
COUNTRY	ENGLAND	FACE	HEADING
CONTRACT	EXF 1/1	FLAIR	CREATIVITY
MADE	333 P/M	STARTING	INFLUENCE
VALUATION	400000 C		
INSURANCE	NONE		
POSITION	DR		
SIDE			
AVAILABLE BY 70% MATCH #11 - SHIRT #0-01			
THIS SEASON		LAST SEASON	
APPS	0	APPS	02
GOALS	0	GOALS	0
DISP	0	DISP	18
	AV R		AV R
	2.43		2.43
	MIN R		MIN R
	0		0
	MAX C		MAX C
	0		0

A legendary new game unlike any other (well that's as far as we're concerned anyway), *Championship Manager*, gets its first review in this memorable issue.

Sadly, Steve (Mr *Championship Manager*) Hill has yet to be employed by the mighty *ZONE*, so it only scores 79 per cent instead of the 95 that Steve (and other *ZONE*-types) believe it so rightly deserved.

Macca devised a very classy Top Trumps cut-out-and-keep game based on PC games. This 14th issue also marked the first appearance of a young, and reasonably amusing, writer going by the name of Charlie Brooker. His first assignment on the magazine was to review the god-awful shooter *In Extremis* (67 per cent). He will never last.



#16 FLOPPING OUT

After months of mounted floppy disks the first cover CD appears. Demos of *Myst*, *Reunion*, *Lil' Divil*, *SimCity Enhanced* and *Space Hulk* sit alongside slideshows and rolling demos of top-rated *PC ZONE* titles from the past six months. Floppy disk owners have to make do with a demo of *The Horde* and a rubbish shareware *Boulderdash* clone.





#39 OOPS

This was the month of *Euro 96* – the tournament and the game – the month in which we secured the exclusive, hammered the game, and had to print an apology telling everyone to ignore the review. (It was re-reviewed a few issues later and got the same score.)

Editor John Davison remembers: "After being summoned to Gremlin's headquarters for a severe tongue-lashing, imagine the chuckles as the game crashed while Jeremy tore strips off it in front of the boss of the company and the people responsible for developing it."



#43 QUAKING

"I spent f*****g hours doing that opening image," says David McCandless of what was a first at the time – a full 16-page review of *Quake*. Also rather innovative was his summing up of the game as "F*****g brilliant". Unsurprisingly, *Quake's* publisher overlooked the summation and forgot to put it on the packaging.



#45 WELLS: "IT WAS ME!"

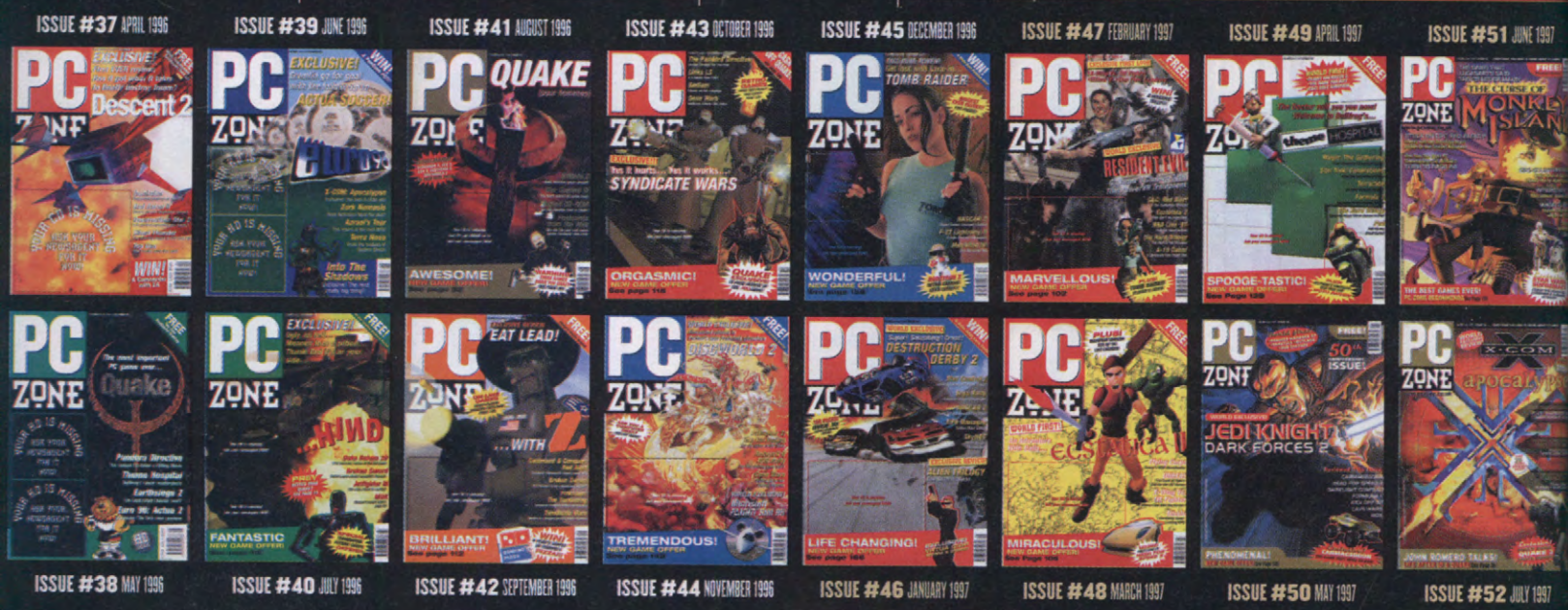
This was the issue that we created a monster. It was, of course, the review of the now ubiquitous *Tomb Raider* and on the cover was Natalie Cook, the first in a long line of real-life Laras. Overlooked by most now, it was editor Jeremy Wells' decision rather than Eidos' to use a real-life image on the cover rather than a rendered one. Because of this Jeremy is of the opinion that if it wasn't for him, this year's *Tomb Raider* movie would never have happened. Nice one Wells. You can count us in on the commission.

#53 RICHIE-RICH

With *Quake* still nestling on hard drives and *Quake II* due for release before Christmas, the big cover story was of John Romero's exit from id and his just-announced shooter *Daikatana*.

"I remember my unbelievable spooging over *Daikatana*," says David McCandless. "I spent the whole magazine spooging about *Daikatana*." Macca's final question for John Romero was: "So is *Daikatana* going to be cool?" Romero replied: "It's going to rock!" And rock it just might have if it had made its Christmas release date.

Elsewhere, *Dungeon Keeper* – Peter Molyneux's last game before embarking on *Black & White* –



CHARLIE BROOKER

For a time *ZONE* was synonymous with Brooker's twisted humour. Then the shit hit the fan

"Perhaps the most notorious thing I was involved with was the Cruelty Zoo debacle. I was doing a monthly page of cartoons or weird jokes, and I sat up all night mocking up photos of kids chopping up and mutilating animals, in the guise of a spoof advertisement for 'Lara Croft's Cruelty Zoo'. The 'joke' was that it was a theme park where parents let their kids run amok, beating up and murdering animals. Look, you had to be there, OK. I showed it to the editor, Jeremy Wells, and he only had one change – lose the Lara Croft references. So I did. I suppose we

were all used to my sick sense of humour and hadn't received any complaints. The presses rolled, and The Cruelty Zoo edition of *ZONE* went on sale – for about ten minutes. I think HMV pulled it from the shelves first then Woolworths, before long nowhere was stocking it. It made the *News Of The World* and *The Mirror*, etc. Looking back, I can't imagine what I was thinking. It was so obviously going to push all the wrong buttons in all the wrong people. Still, it wasn't the most offensive piece of material I had published in *ZONE*. Check some of your back issues..."

#50 BBFC GO HOME

Someone once said that to get to 50 issues of a monthly magazine is fairly impressive. This line of wisdom however went over everyone's head, with previewable code of *Jedi Knight* having snuck into the *ZONE* office along with a final copy of *Carmageddon*, the first game ever to be banned by the BBFC. Of course, it wasn't that final, because it was full of red blood rather than green. Still, you had to laugh.



#54 MR CURSOR RIP

Having written for *PC ZONE* since before *PC ZONE* ever existed, it was time to bid farewell to Duncan MacDonald and his alter-ego Mr Cursor. The readers wailed with sorrow, the team with laughter – until it was realised they had to find something to put on the back page. Mr Cursor never sent a postcard as he said he would and until resurfacing off the coast of Malawi last December after three years of snorkelling, Duncan was given up for dead. Thankfully, he lives. Somewhere. If you're out there, ring us.



found itself earning a rather hefty 96 per cent, a serious case of over-rating according to Chris Anderson. Similarly, so was Richie Shoemaker who was interviewed for the job of staff writer. He got 47 per cent, but we took him on regardless.



#59 DIRTY OLD TOWN

Apart from giving *Quake II* 97 per cent – the highest-scoring game in living memory, Issue #59 heralded the first ever PC ZONE Reader Awards, set this first time in crusty Camden. It was the night *Carmageddon* scooped Game Of The Year, just after which Macca stumbled in with an award of his own from Q magazine, which he lost after getting drunk.

#65 BRAND NEW TROUSERS

An important month in PC ZONE's history. In this crazy world of hyper-inflation and unflinching capitalism we decided to take a stand. But instead of stopping lorries distributing rival titles, or planting an explosive device in the local bank, we opted to cut the price of your favourite magazine. By a whole £2. That's, oh, about 40 per cent off, and we didn't start this special on Boxing Day and finish it at the end of January. In fact, the ridiculously low price stayed on the cover of ZONE until our special Millennium Edition, which hit the shelves in January 2000. What do we take back in return? One solitary CD, therefore leaving you with a

beauty of a magazine that gave you more words for less cash than anything else in the world. Aside from maybe the Gideon's Bible.

And the changes didn't stop there. As well as the price drop, ZONE went in for a makeover and came out looking better than a Sunday afternoon pint of Guinness. Of course, the new look

attracted more readers, which (briefly) put us back on top as the best-selling PC games magazine.

Inside there was a scoop on *X-COM Alliance*, a game that could soon be as delayed as *Diakatan* was, plus a review of *Unreal*, which was pretty damn good at the time.



#60 SHEARER'S CRUELTY ZOO

A typically lean new year issue saw *Star Wars: Supremacy* on the cover. Steve 'don't like *Star Wars*, don't like strategy games' Hill was asked to look at the game, which he agreed to do after we promised him an interview with a footballer:

"Having England striker Alan Shearer make me a brew was a bit special." Remembers Steve.

"Unlike the interview, which was a predictable series of yes and no answers. Rapidly running out of questions, I asked him if he based his interview technique on the equally terse Kenny Dalglish. Shearer's swift denial left me no option but to ask the question again, at which point England's most dour footballer briefly bared his teeth in something approximating a smile.

Issue #60 however went down in PC ZONE folklore for Charlie Brooker's 'Cruelty Zoo' cartoon, which actually got us yanked off the shelves.

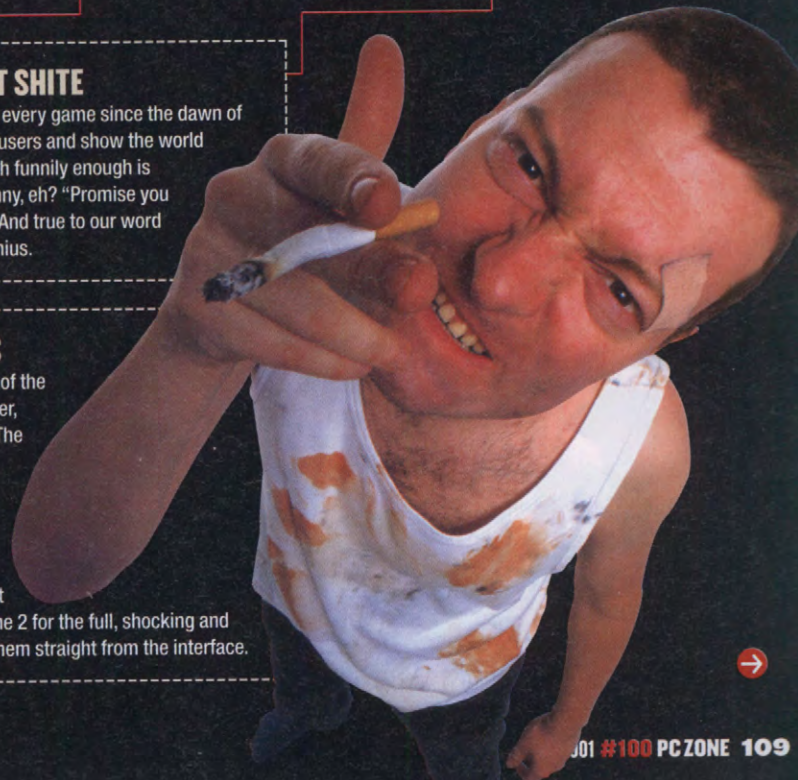


#66 BLACK & NOT SHITE

Not content with scooping almost every game since the dawn of creation, we unzip Molyneux's trousers and show the world his new baby, Black & White, which funnily enough is reviewed in this very issue. Uncanny, eh? "Promise you won't laugh", he said at the time. And true to our word we haven't. You don't laugh at genius.

#62 PHONE WARS

The first and only time a member of the PC ZONE team made it on the cover, and it had to be Charlie Brooker! The reason: his feature entitled 'Haranging On The Telephone', where he locked himself in John Davison's old office, got pissed and phoned technical support lines complaining that he couldn't get games to work. Check CD Zone 2 for the full, shocking and hilarious truth. You can listen to them straight from the interface.



#71 HALF-LIFE

"I loathe blowing my own trumpet," lied then editor-in-chief Mark Higham after learning of ZONE's triumph at winning industry rag CTW's Best PC Games Mag accolade. Mark was well known for blowing his own trumpet and in issue #71 he had good reason: *Half-Life* had arrived, scoring what some thought a rather low 95 per cent. Three years and hundreds of mods on, we'd probably score it the same.



#85 SO FAIR...

Question: if you buy a magazine to point you in the direction of which game to buy, do you want honest scores that you can trust, or do you want a scoring system that starts at 80 per cent and ends at 99.9 per cent? Typically, the latter is the rock on which the games industry has been founded, but by issue 85 we'd had it with the corporate line.

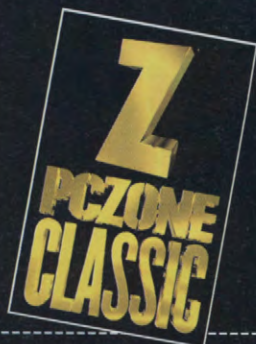
So editor Chris Anderson and his new deputy, Dave Woods, introduced a harsher scoring system, that pulled out the true PC classics. More than a year on, we're still committed to bringing you the most trustworthy reviews in the UK, and true to our promise, in the last 16 issues we've only given out seven classics, including Peter Molyneux's *Black & White* opus, reviewed on page 48. As a result, we've lost a few exclusives, and given out a few eyebrow-raising scores, but hopefully you've come to rely on us.

Still, elsewhere in the mag it was business as usual. The ZONE curse struck in the Meet The Team section where we asked for our brightest hope for the year 2000. From 12 good men, only Steve Hill actually managed to keep himself from naming a game that was subsequently delayed, or canned, but then he always votes for *Championship Manager*, so he's disqualified. As for *Duke Nukem Forever*, *Team Fortress 2*, *Obi Wan* and *Halo*, it's a case of one down, three to go.



#89 IT'S A CLASSIC

After four issues of resolutely refusing to give out our new coveted classic award, Richie gave in and bestowed the gold, shiny Z onto *Shogun*, a game that "slaps traditional wargaming across the face by being totally absorbing, realistic and fun".



#74 ARSE

Carmageddon II. A good game, some might say, but a name that sends shivers down the spine of pretend hard-man Charlie Brooker. He made the tragic mistake of bestowing the gift of invincibility on this four-wheeled mix of "pornography for anarchists" and proclaimed that if it didn't win the Game of the Year award he would eat his arse. A rash claim indeed, and one that reader David Gower (no, really) spotted, writing



in to claim his pound of flesh. Well, Dave, if you want it that badly... This issue also saw the first of the regular Supertests move from the teetotal round-up into a no-holds-barred drinks-fest. A flaxen-haired, baby-faced Richie Shoemaker (no, that really is him) was in attendance in his new Christmas jumper. Mark Hill joined the team in a work experience capacity and didn't make a single cup of tea. Two months later he was a full-time staff member.



#80 THE OUTCASTS

After redesigning the mag back in June '97, we introduced our feedback section and thanks to a less-than-favourable review of *Outcast*, Feedback henceforth became much more "lively" than it had been before. Some of you were quite upset that we had thought so little of the game, while others agreed, and after some serious soul searching we realised we were right all along. *Outcast* wasn't much cop. Neither was *Delta Force*. Or *Sacrifice* more recently, and after hearing that a fourth *Tomb Raider* game was on the way, we were just glad we could finally play a real game like *System Shock 2*.

#86 KORDA

To celebrate the fact that we were still a year away from the true millennium, we went overboard and released a millennium special, a hard-hitting look into the future of the game's industry. Only Charlie Brooker came anywhere near the truth.

Elsewhere, *Quake III Arena* became the first victim of our new scoring system, failing to register the 90+ per cent that half the world seemed to expect. Lack of a single-player campaign, botchy play over a 56K modem and the fact that Mark Hill is an annoying bastard with the railgun were just



#93 WHEATOS

Two equally destructive forces booted down the door and introduced themselves to an unsuspecting ZONE team. First-off, *Counter-Strike* became an obsession that still holds to this day. Equally destructive was the new golden wheat beer that Richie discovered at a pub just around the corner from our offices. The colour of urine and as cloudy as a Blackpool sky, wheatos became the new nightly obsession, leading to six months of illegal behaviour, full-blown arguments and several bodily injuries. The world record was set, everyone decided that we should quit while we're still alive and the legend was dead. We haven't been back to the pub since, and Korda still crosses the road rather than get too close to the magnetic pull of the Yorkshire Grey. Oh, and there was *Deus Ex*.



#95 STEVE HILL AND BEARDS

Freelancing isn't supposed to be fun, but resident statistician Steve Hill managed to rake the money in, bag the press trips that ended up in Tel Aviv brothels, and spend his entire life playing *Championship Manager*, while simultaneously holding down a successful relationship. In a bid to throw him off course, we commissioned him to don cloak, false ears and sprout unsightly facial hair in order to make sense of online phenomenon *EverQuest*. Despite spotting Chris Anderson poncing around in a leotard (or maybe because of this), Hill got nowhere, making the fatal mistake of turning himself into a player-killer and thus alienating himself from all the chimps that were running round in full medieval garb. A future attempt to strike up a relationship in the game dressed as a woman also failed, surprisingly.



#91 DIRE-KATANA

John Romero's *Daikatana* showed up. Dave Woods licked his lips, installed it, and promptly puked over his keyboard. Needless to say we didn't give it a Classic award, although rather generously it didn't get a new pair of pants to strut around in. John Romero stuck to his guns – apparently the game's great. Every review was wrong. Make your own minds up.



three of the factors that contributed to its downfall. Salvation came in the arrival of work experience boy Martin Korda, PC ZONE's new whipping boy, and he was so good at making tea he soon signed on the dotted line.



STEVE 'CHESTER' HILL

It seems like Hill's been around for nearly all of our 100 issues. Who better to ask about the life of a freelancer?

"Much of the freelance experience involves sitting at home, on my own. That said, you do occasionally send me to more exotic locales. Indeed, within weeks of agreeing to write for ZONE, I found myself in a Tel Aviv brothel with a fistful of drachma and an invitation to fill my boots. Thankfully, common sense prevailed and I returned the money to the generous PR person involved (but not before he'd emptied his back wheels into an emaciated peasant).

"As for bother, the sweltering heat of an Atlanta E3 show almost spilt over into ugly, wanton violence. Idly vandalising some escalator-mounted promotional cards for distributor Jack Of All Games, I was unlucky

to be spotted by an obese American, clearly furious at the desecration he had witnessed. Attempting to calm him with the cursory putdown, 'Go home, your mum's got cake,' only incensed him further, and with a crowd gathering, he bellowed, 'Would you like for me to feed you some cake? Would YOU like for ME to feed YOU some cake!' This sent Caledonian colleague Dan Emery over the edge, as he became a cartoon windmill of flailing fists in an audacious attempt at an assault on the behemoth. Later the same day, a gun-toting cabbie didn't take kindly to an innocuous criticism of his driving, explaining to Mallo that if I'd been American he would have shot me. Nice city. Can I go home now?"

#100 NOW

Now. The present day. And you don't need to be told anything about this because you're a part of it. The question is, will you still be here come issue 200?



THE NEW PROFESSIONALS

Can you earn a decent living from playing games? *Rhianna Pratchett* visits the *Quake III* World Championship and uncovers plans for the world's first cyber stadium

You'd think that working on a computer games magazine was all about playing games all day in a warm office... but you'd be wrong. I barely had time to die horribly at *Counter-Strike* before *PC ZONE* bundled me off to Dallas to cut my teeth in the big country and cover the World CPL (Cyberathlete Professional League) *Quake III* tournament. I haven't been able to look at a steak since.

So once upon a time on a cold winter's morning, five set out on an adventure entitled 'Five do Dallas', a journey into the frag-filled land of *Quake* and not to be mixed up with anything Debbie has ever done there. Those five were my good self; the British No 1 and 2 *Quake III* players, Timber, aka Ian Holder, and B10key, aka Chris Hoare, on their way to compete for a share of the US\$150,000 prize money; and Nick and Glenn from London's prestigious LAN café The Playing Fields, which, along with *PC ZONE* and AMD Computers, was sponsoring the two players in their quest.

So five touched down and despite enduring a taxi ride with a driver who made Forrest Gump look quick witted, our spirits were high, our faces were jet lagged and we were already regretting the airline chicken. It was Wednesday night. Or possibly Thursday morning. But definitely 5am where our brains were, so after a drink with Sarah and Nigel from Channel 4 who had come along to cover the event, we headed to our rooms, barely awake enough to notice there

was *no mini bar!* After a night of rotating in our enormous beds, we went to sign in, dressed in our *PC ZONE*/Playing Fields/AMD tour shirts, looking like (we hoped) the epitome of British gaming.

If you've never been to a games tournament before or even read about one, it's difficult to sum up what it's actually like. Imagine hundreds of computers squeezed into one room (many people bring their own machines to participate in friendly LAN games). Add numerous sweaty, harassed men running round with cables, goatees and long black coats as far as the eye can see. A bit like *The Matrix* meets *Rentaghost*.

Timber and B10key were desperate to get some practice in, so we headed down to Dallas' local LAN café, only to find that most of its computers had been nabbed for

the tournament. Slightly disheartened, we took the opportunity to walk back to the hotel and explore some of Dallas. Firstly, we found that no-one walks in Dallas, unless they're tourists, and the reason the people don't walk in Dallas is that, secondly, everything in Dallas is built to make the average pedestrian feel like an ant. Depressingly, we managed to get lost in a bank.

BACK AT THE RANCH

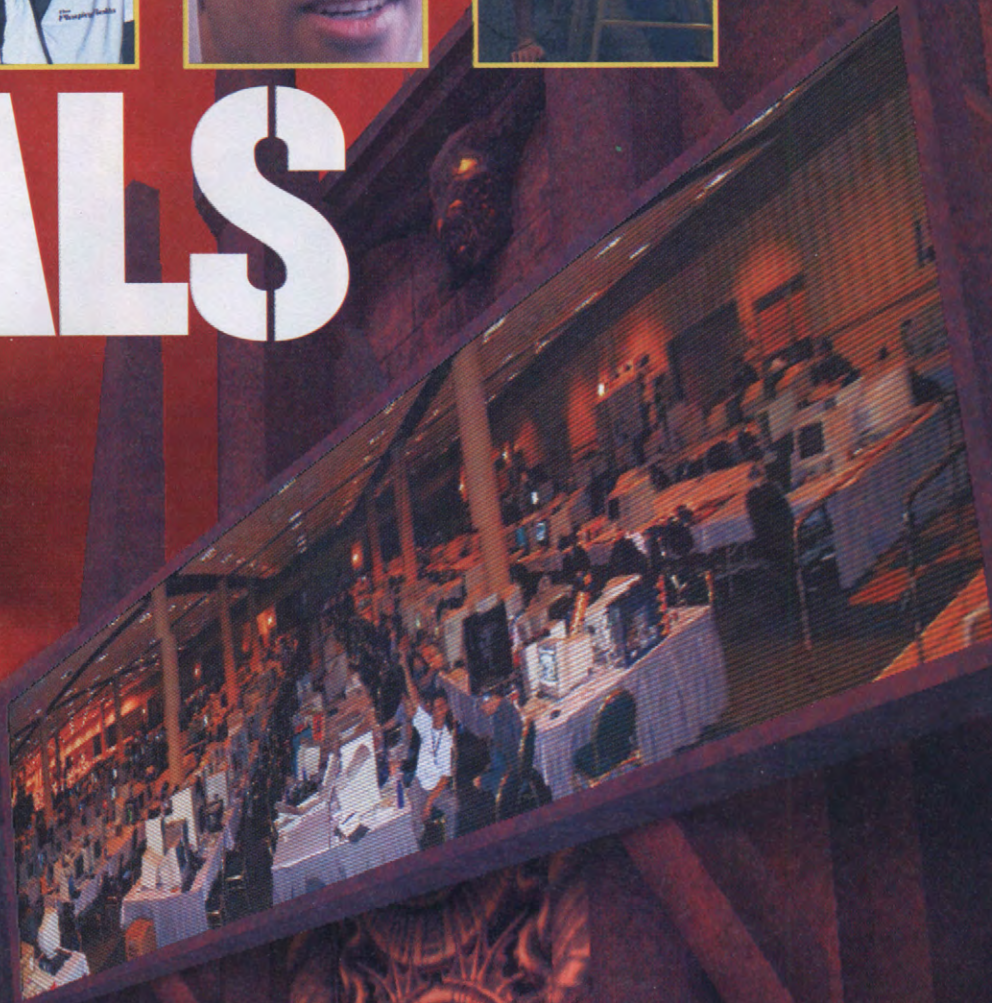
After a few technical hitches, the all-female tournament was the first to get underway on Friday afternoon. It's stating the obvious to say that *Quake III* requires very little physical strength to play, so in theory the field of battle lies open to all gamers, male and



“Imagine hundreds of PCs squeezed into one room. Add numerous sweaty, harassed men, running around with cables, goatees and long, black coats... *The Matrix* meets *Rentaghost*”



ONALS



female alike. Despite this, only 15 girls sat down to do battle for the US\$7,500 prize money.

"There are a lot of stereotypes around," explained the No 1 female seed, 69 Succubus, aka 24-year-old Cary Szeto, who was ranked 85th in the main tournament. "In a recent interview I was asked if I was a tomboy when I was growing up. I was like, 'Errr, no, I liked dolls, I had Barbies!'"

The all-female tournament is a bit of a bone of contention among some of the male gamers, who argue that it creates a gaming sub-class. More loudly they argue that because women can compete in the main tournament as well, they can effectively compete for more money than the guys can.

Twiggy, the No 3 female seed, hit back at the critics in her column on the xsreality.com website, claiming the female tournament encourages women to play *Quake III* in the first place and, more importantly, to compete.

"I hope that a girl who wouldn't want to compete in a major tournament would feel more comfortable doing so in a tourney of all women, and so build up the confidence to play in the main event," she wrote.

Vangie Beal, creator of gamegirlz.com, also had a few things to say on the subject of female gamers. "There's no difference in their style of play to the guys," she said. "When you watch these matches you can see

they're just as hard core. They have a serious tournament mindset, but I think somewhere along the line because they are a group of girls they are still going to have fun."

DID SOMEONE SAY DEUS EX??

The guys weren't scheduled to play their first matches until Saturday so that gave me the opportunity to speak to some of the developers who had hauled

their asses over to Dallas to show off their latest games and keep the *Quake III* players in free T-shirts for the next six months.

Ion Storm was there touting the multiplayer patch for *Deus Ex*, so I took the opportunity to probe designers Monte Martinez and Ricardo Bare about the *Deus Ex* multiplayer experience and



Warming up for the all-female QIII tourney.



And the crowd chanted as one: "Get the railgun."

anything else they could tell me about the sequel. Anything at all. Anything.

"We've been getting some really positive feedback about the patch so far," says Ricardo. "We never intended *Deus Ex* to be multiplayer, so we focused all our resources on making the best single-player game we could. A small subset of the original team have worked for the past three months on the multiplayer patch."

Monte and Ricardo confirmed that they were still at the conceptualisation stage with *Deus Ex 2*, so were reluctant to give much away about

This point was clearly illustrated when a loudspeaker announcement boomed across the tournament arena: "The GOD games girls will now be giving out T-shirts." Suddenly there was a mass exodus of excited young men to a room outside the arena, where Rachel and Lori gave out T-shirts in the way only a stripper knows how. Several hundred young men went into that room red and giggling, and several hundred men came out even redder, a little quieter and thoughtful, clasping T-shirts like they were the Turin shroud.

"A loudspeaker announcement boomed across the arena: 'The GOD games girls will be giving out T-shirts.' There was a mass exodus of red, giggling young men"

the game. What we do know is the team working on *DE2* has changed quite a bit with the acquisition of three new programmers from Looking Glass. In addition to this, they have also picked up the *Thief 3* licence, and have been working closely and sharing ideas with the *T3* team.

"Everyone working on the game is experienced and really hyped up about first-person immersive simulators, so I think we have a really powerful team and hopefully we're going to turn out a really good game," adds Riccardo.

So *Deus Ex 2* looks set to be even better than its predecessor, and we know how much you liked that. It will contain some surprising new plot twists, and judging by the feedback about the *Deus Ex* multiplayer patch, we may see both single and multiplayer in the one game this time.

Unfortunately, it won't be on the shelves for another couple of years, but it's reassuring to know the cogs are turning. Watch this space.

WHAT GETS A QUAKER OFF HIS COMPUTER?

Well, it's pretty much the same as what gets most men moving – the promise of large breasts. Not that you're predictable or anything, guys.

David Eddings was there promoting a few of the recent GOD games releases: *Kingdom Under Fire*, *Rune* and *Serious Sam*. But in truth he just seemed to be having a tremendously fun time, possibly something to do with the bevy of bouncing beauties he had in tow.

"This is our core audience, we want to show a little bit of appreciation," David enthused. "We want to say, come over, hang out with us, get one of our GOD games bikini calendars, help yourselves to some of our demos, have your photo taken with our girls."

Some of the female tournament participants were understandably a bit narked at the silicon heaven some of their male competitors were experiencing, but David was more than happy to consider the possibility of bringing along something for the ladies next time. "We would consider taking male strippers or male models to female tournaments – I mean, why not? It's only fair!" Damn right.

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Saturday saw the completion of the all-female tournament, with Succubus beating the No 2 seed Trillian, 14-0. Meanwhile, Timber and

B10key made it comfortably through the first two rounds with only a slight attack of nerves and a few kamikaze lava jumps from Timber. Things didn't start to hot up until the third round, which saw some spectacular matches played by both guys. Timber managed to claw his way back from 17-4 down against Matador to secure a spectacular 24-21 win, and B10key won his match against Trindy by just two frags (8-6).

A big shock was our top professional gamer Sujoy, who's now moved from the shores of Blighty and surrendered to the light side of California, who went out in the third round 16-10 to fellow Clan 9 team mate ViE.

"I was disappointed with the result," says Sujoy. "With all the moving about and settling into the new house in San Diego, I didn't get much opportunity to practice for the event. Also I managed to draw my least-favourite map against a good player [q3dm6]. Next time, I will need to ensure that I have a proper

the lead with victory eventually being clinched by B10key. Timber was eventually knocked out by the No 1 seed Fatal1ty, aka Johnathan Wendel, while B10key was knocked into the lower bracket by Zero4.

A WORD FROM THE WISE

Fatal1ty is probably one of the world's best-known gamers – pretty impressive for a 19-year-old who's only been pro for just over a year. Here's a guy who thrives on what he does, who genuinely loves his 'sport' and exudes more enthusiasm about games and gaming than you see in some of the world's top sporting professionals. Plus he's got one hell of a handshake!

"It's what I was born to do. I'm a competitive drone," claims Fatal1ty, who first cut his gaming teeth on *Doom 2*, *C&C* and *Warcraft 2*. "When I get into tournaments I get psyched up and I'm ready to go. I get really excited. You go out and frag all your enemies and you go, 'yeah, I feel good now' and you go to bed pretty happy."

Fatal1ty is firmly behind the concept of the CPL and the idea of the professional gamer. "I think companies such as Nike and Coke will eventually get into the scene of gaming and see the reasons why they should sponsor it, because it is such a huge community. It's very important for gamers to get sponsorship – it's what makes them professional and gives them the opportunity to do it for a living. I believe it will happen."

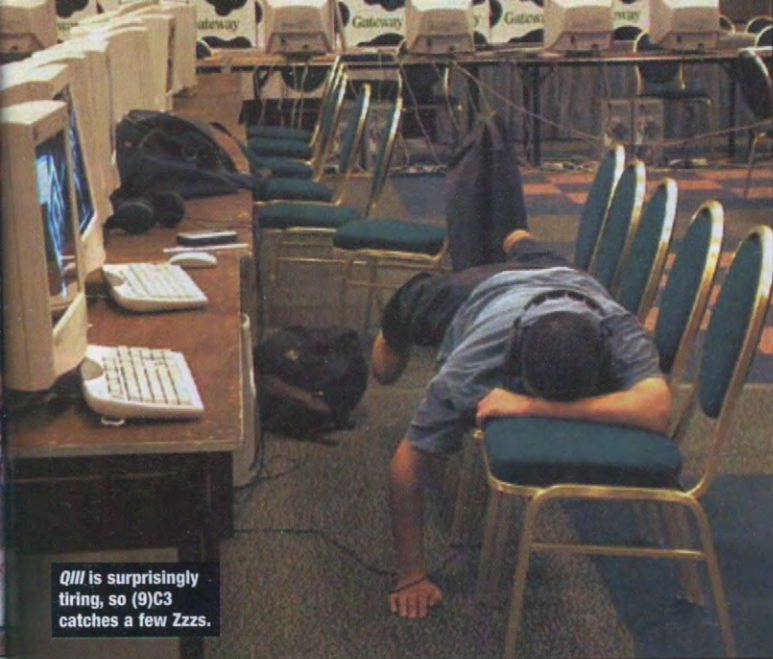
Our guys did us proud and Sunday marked B10key's eventual departure from the tournament having secured 6th place and US\$5,000, while Timber came away with 16th place and US\$800. In the end, the tournament crown went not to the favourite Fatal1ty, who actually ended up in 7th place behind B10key (not that we're smug or anything), but Zero4, aka John Hill of San Diego, California, who triumphed 21-8 over Sweden's Oskar 'Lakerman' Ljungstrom.



For the boys back home, Rachel and Lori, the GOD girls.

training schedule in place before the tournament and practice on the maps I don't like."

The rest of Saturday's matches continued into the wee small hours of Sunday morning, the most exciting being the battle between Timber and B10key which saw both guys taking



QIII is surprisingly tiring, so (9)C3 catches a few Zzzs.

IN THE FUTURE... DO WE DARE TO DREAM?

The idea that people can play games competitively and actually earn a living from it like Sujoy and Fatal1ty do is a phenomenon that's only appeared recently. The CPL has become a vital force in competitive gaming, organising events all over the world and building on the idea of the professional gamer.

Angel Munoz, president and founder of the CPL, is no longer content to keep tournaments locked away in the back rooms of hotels. He wants to get game playing recognised as a sport.

"When we did our first event we had barely 200 people. Now we have around 6,000 people competing in the league worldwide, and that will keep growing. A combination of a lot of different factors makes me believe that the time is now," he says.

And what Angel thinks it's "now" time for, as he announced to a cheering crowd, is to start making the CPL more like the NFL and to build the world's first cyberstadium.

"The cyberstadium is going to be just brilliant," raves Stevie Case, aka the legendary Killcreek, the Quake player who famously defeated John Romero, who she now lives

with. Now there's a man who went down smiling.

"It's going to provide a central location and give the league an identity. We're very much going to give the league a visible place where gamers can congregate from around the world. I think that's going to be such a cool thing for everybody."

Stevie became the CPL's first cyberathlete back in 1997 when she left university to take up a

career as a gamer - so you could say she

knows a thing or two about professional gaming. "The idea behind the CPL is that the only way to have a real, fair and professional competition is

when you bring people together on matching hardware and have a real sporting event. To have a stadium really allows that concept to bloom and become a reality."

Angel adds: "The goal is to get this moving worldwide - I see stadiums all over the world. We're going to have seasons within the league, events every week and then move to having different stadiums and different teams. And that's what I want more than anything else"

There's no doubt that the atmosphere running through a crowd watching a computer game being broadcast on giant screens is exactly like that at a football game or a tennis match. Every move is followed, every point is cheered. Angel's vision has implications for gamers everywhere and could change the face of gaming as we know it.

In fact, the next cyber sporting hero of the future, well... it might just be you.



Stevie Case and John Romero, the King and Queen of Gaming.



Stevie Case gives the the top 3 winners something to write their memoirs on.

* Channel 4's coverage will be shown on E4's Generation E, in the week commencing February 11.



This is why we were told to keep sharp instruments away from Timber.

OUR BOYS

The best of British show 'em how it's done



Handle (UNR) Timber
Real name Ian Holder
Age 19
Location Crowborough, East Sussex
Seeded for tournament 26th
End placing 16th

Gaming history Competing in tournaments for the last four years. His first notable win was at the Fusion 98 Quake World 1-on-1 competition

Gaming style Fast, dextrous and aggressive. Likes to rush his enemies



Handle (UNR) BIOkey
Real name Chris Hoare
Age 18
Location Brighton
Seeded for tournament 40
End placing 6

Gaming history First started competing in tournaments about 18 months ago. Since then he's played for the UK Quake II and III teams and competed in CPL tournaments in Dallas and Korea

Gaming style Methodical, calm and good at reading his opponents



Handle (9) Sujoy
Real name Sujoy Roy
Age 25
Location San Diego, California, formerly London (Ealing)
Seeded for tournament 23rd
End placing Joint 25th

Gaming history Playing in competitions since Quake began in 1996. Won a number of tournaments in the UK, started making money mid-1999 and quit his job last year to take up professional gaming as a career

Gaming style Calm and collected with an offensive style. Likes to mix it up and develop trick moves and special strategies

WIN THE W
ADVANCED G

WIN! THE W ADVANCED G

How many times have you opened the pages of this magazine to see loads of fabulous-looking pictures of games with such multicoloured landscapes and highly detailed characters it made you want to weep? And how many times have you looked at the system requirements and found that the Voodoo 1 you bought second hand two years ago from a dodgy, balding middle-aged and overweight man from the back of his van just isn't going to make it?

Well, the 3D cards we're offering you the chance to win are not only more than capable of running the latest games, they are also the most sophisticated and powerful accelerators currently available on the market. The ATI Radeon has every bell and whistle you could possibly want – and then some. In benchmark tests it outperformed the Voodoo 5500 and was on equal terms with the GeForce2 Ultra.

What you need to know most of all is that the Radeon has many in-built technologies that are only just starting to be used by developers now. So, as well as having a killer card for current games, winners will be able to take full advantage of games that will be released months – maybe even years – from now.

But it's not only games the Radeon is good at. It's by far the best card on the market to connect your PC to your television (and even comes with its own TV tuner built in), offering superb DVD playback. So if you've been saving up your pennies for a DVD player, this prize could be just what you need.

What more can we say? The prizes for the four runners-up are only marginally inferior, coming as they do with 32Mb RAM instead of 64Mb. But when you consider that games won't be taking full advantage of the extra memory for some time, it's still a superb prize.

HOW TO WIN

Which of the following features does the ATI Radeon not have?

- A Texture transformations
- B Cubic environment mapping
- C Vertex skinning
- D Anti-diverticulitis aperient
- E Range-based fog

Just answer the question and send your answer on a postcard, along with *all* the information requested, to the address below.

- ✦ Name/address/postcode/daytime phone number/e-mail/job title/company name/age if under 18
- ✦ Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies
- ✦ Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Send your entry to: ATI Radeon Competition CPCZ90301B PC ZONE, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK. (Closing date: Thursday, March 8)

✦ Terms and conditions: only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. And all that. Phew!



WORLD'S MOST GRAPHICS CARD

Fancy swapping your tired old 3D workhorse for one of these babies? Of course you do – owning an ATI Radeon is like having a rocket in your PC



1ST PRIZE SIX ATI RADEON 64Mb DDRs – WORTH £299!

Want some detailed specs? You got 'em: fast, flexible hardware transformation, clipping and lighting (TCL); skeletal animation and skinning; vertex skinning with up to four matrices; keyframe interpolation (vertex morphing); three filtered textures per pixel; 3D textures; bump mapping; emboss; dot product 3; environment mapped bump mapping (EMBM); texture transformations; environment mapping; spherical environment mapping; dual-paraboloid environment mapping; cubic environment mapping; projective textures; priority buffers; shadow mapping and range-based fog. It adds up to one hell of a card!

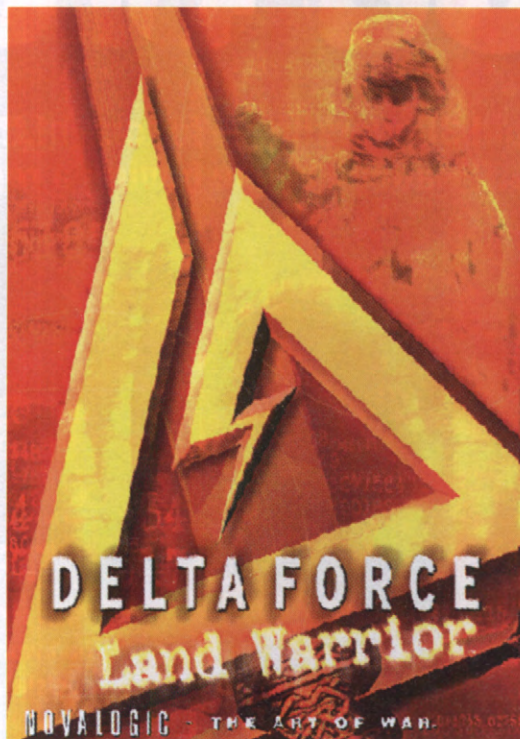
RUNNERS-UP FOUR ATI RADEON 32Mb DDRs – WORTH £259!

All of the above, but with slightly less memory.



FEEL THE FORCE

(NOW THERE'S A REASON FOR WEARING COMBAT TROUSERS)



DELTA FORCE: LAND WARRIOR

- Delta Force Land Warrior gamers control a team of US Army Elite Special Forces in covert operations across the globe.
- A new 3D engine, single and multiplayer options, advanced weapons, amazing indoor and outdoor environments and uniquely skilled team members make this another sure-fire NovaLogic hit

WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON



PC GAME OF THE MONTH



MECH WARRIOR 4: VENGEANCE
Control a 40 foot high, 80 tonne, 90 miles per hour war machine. It's time to get revenge.

WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON

Virgin

megastores

A BIRTHDAY BONUS

★ RELAXING AT HOME Martin Korda



We've reached the big 100, and while everyone in the office is enjoying the deadlines, I find myself at home

recovering from a toe operation. But before my forced absence I was pleased to put into action one of the first steps in the revamping of this section - getting rid of countless pages of walkthroughs and giving you the directions to find the best help around on the web instead.

Our walkthroughs were always constrained by space, and could never be as detailed as we wanted them to be, which is not the case for a fanatical fan who wants to write a 50,000 word in depth walkthrough on the web. What we'll be doing from now on is telling you where to find the best sites to help you out when you get stuck. The freed up pages will be used for something more interesting, and hopefully over the next few issues this section will become even more entertaining and colourful than it is now, but more on that next month.

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

120 CHEAT MASTER

The cheater's cheat, Mr Keith Pullin bares his soul and reveals some sneaky little manoeuvres.

121 DEAR KEITH

Filled with agony and gaming woes? Uncle Keith is here to help.

122 DEAR WANDY

Need to find a solution to a niggling technical pain? Our resident techie Wandy is here to help.

124 WATCHDOG

Have you got a gripe with the industry? Then allow the consumers' champion Adam Phillips to find out some answers...

127 SITES FOR SORE EYES

Why waste your time trawling through pages and pages of useless stuff on the Internet, when you can just let us find the good stuff for you?

YOUR HOSTS



Adam Phillips



Keith Pullin



James Lyon

CHEAT MASTER

More cheats and tricks for your gaming satisfaction

★ CHEATING GIT Keith Pullin

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, you can solve them if you...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/Cheat Master, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with Dear Keith or Cheat Master in the subject line.

PROJECT IGI

Eidos Interactive

On the start-up window where you choose to either configure or play the game type 'Nada'.

Once you're in the game type:

- allgod** God mode for you and your team
- allammo** Maximum ammo
- easy** Easy mode
- ewww** Destroy all enemies

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

Activision

This is a bit of a long cheat, but it's worth it. Pause the game, hold down 'Numpad 7' and press 'space', 'space', 'space', 'c', 'v', 'up', 'down', 'left', 'up', 'c', 'v', 'spacebar', 'v', 'b', 'space', 'v' and finally 'b'. The pause screen will shake if you entered the code correctly. Then just select the 'End Run' option from the pause menu and all cheats, FMV sequences and skaters will be unlocked.

AMERICAN MCGEE'S ALICE

Electronic Arts

Dazzled by weirdness? Maybe these cheats will help. Go to the 'Settings' and the 'Game Options' menu and enable the 'Console' window. Now, during the game, press '~' and enter one of the following:

- god** God mode
- wuss** All weapons
- give all** All weapons and full ammo
- health [1-100]** Set health
- cg_cameradist -45** First-person view
- cg_cameradist 128** Default view
- notarget** Disable enemy AI
- noclip** No clipping mode
- map [map name]** map select using the following map names:
 - centipede1 centipede2
 - facade fortress1
 - fortress2 funhouse
 - garden1 garden2
 - garden3 garden4
 - grounds1 grounds2
 - gvillage hedge1
 - hedge2 hedge3
 - jlair1 jlair2
 - keep pandemonium
 - potears1 potears2
 - potears3 qlair
 - rchess skool1
 - skool2 tower1
 - tower2 tower3
 - utemple wchess1
 - wchess2 wforest

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO Interplay

During gameplay press the 'I' or 'Y' button and enter the following codes:

Allmissionsaregoodto go

Unlock all levels

Basefillerup Full base energy

Pleasehealme Full health

Gimmiegifts Gift shop appears

Itsmyparty Instant pub

Basepopulate Instant Smarty work force

Mapshowitall Show entire map

Basegoverlyfast Fast base construction

Ineedspells Unlimited mana

SHEEP

Empire Interactive

If you're playing as Motley, press 'q', 'w', and 'e' quickly to make him bite a sheep. This causes the ewe to jump over any obstacle in your path. You may also be interested to learn that Adam Half Pint can drop pints to get the sheep to follow him; just type 'pint' while holding 'Alt' and 'Shift'.

DEEP SPACE NINE: THE FALLEN

Simon & Schuster

During the game, press 'Tab' and type 'panacea'. Press 'Tab' again and type any of these:

- god** God mode
- fly** Fly mode
- walk** Disable fly/Ghost modes
- allammo** Full ammo
- killpawns** Kill all enemies on the level
- skiplevel** Skip to next level

☹ Alice - she sure is one angry young woman.



STUPID COMPETITION

Where cheating and pointlessness are qualities to be admired

So, you fancy yourself as a bit of a cheatmaster, do you? Well, here's your chance to prove it. For the next few months (and even longer if you're lucky), we're going to be running a Stupid Compo. All you have to do to enter is send us your most ridiculous and pointless cheats. If we think your cheat is stupid enough, we'll not only print it and your name, we'll also send you the most ridiculous prize we can find in the PC ZONE prize cupboard. What more incentive do you need?

Please send your cheats, with the title



Stupid Compo, a brief description of what they (allegedly) do, along with your name and address, to letters@pczone.co.uk. Make sure to include all your correct details, so if you do win, we know where to send your special prize (see left). Congratulations to this month's winner, Tom Wright of Essex, who has some pretty useless cheats for *Rogue Spear*. Press 'Enter' to bring up a window and type 'monocole' for monocole mode, 'meganoggin' for big head mode and 'stumpy' for, you never would have guessed it, stumpy mode.

open [mapname] Open map from list below:

- M01_KiraL1A M01_KiraL2
- M01_KiraL1B M01_SiskoL1B
- M01_SiskoL1A M01_Worfl1
- M03_KiraL2 M03_KiraL1B
- M03_KiraL1A M03_SiskoL2
- M03_SiskoL1A M03_SiskoL1B
- M03_Worfl2 M03_Worfl1
- M04_KiraL1 M04_SiskoL1
- M04_Worfl1b M04_Worfl1a
- M05_KiraL1 M05_SiskoL1b
- M05_SiskoL2 M05_SiskoL1a
- M05_Worfl1 M05_Worfl2
- M06_SiskoL1B M06_SiskoL1A
- M06_SiskoL1C M06_Worfl1B
- M06_Worfl1A M06_Worfl1C
- M07_KiraL2 M07_KiraL1
- M07_SiskoL1A M07_SiskoL3A

- M07_SiskoL1B M07_SiskoL2
- M07_SiskoL3B M07_Worfl3
- M07_Worfl2B M07_Worfl2A
- M07_Worfl1 M10_KiraL2
- M10_KiraL1B M10_SiskoL2
- M10_SiskoL1B M10_SiskoL1A
- M10_Worfl2 M10_Worfl1B
- M10_Worfl1A M11_KiraL1
- M11_SiskoL1a M11_SiskoL1b
- M11_Worfl1 TrainingRoom
- Entry DS9_Ops
- DS9_Promenade

GUNMAN CHRONICLES

Sierra
Load the game with the '-dev -console -game rewolf' command line parameter.

During the game, press '~' and enter one of the codes listed:

- /god God mode
- /impulse 101All weapons and full ammunition
- /noclip No clipping mode
- /map [map name] Select map from following list:
 - takeoff rusted meltdown
 - highnoon frontier cinematic1
 - cinematic2 cinematic3 cinematic4
 - city1a city1b city2a
 - city2b city3a city3b
 - end1 end2 mayan0a
 - mayan0b mayan1 mayan3a
 - mayan4 mayan6 mayan8
 - rebar0a rebar0b rebar2a
 - rebar2b rebar2c rebar2d

- rebar2e rebar2f rebar2g
- rebar2h rebar2i rebar2j
- rebar2k rebar2l rebar2b
- rebar3d rebar3e rust1
- rust2a rust2b rust3a
- rust4a rust4b rust4c
- rust5a rust6a rust6b
- rust6c rust6d rust7a
- rust7b rust7c rust7d
- rust7e rust8a rust9a
- west1 west2 west3a
- west3b west4a west4b
- west5b west6a west6b
- west6c west6d west6e

/give [item name] Give item from following list:

- weapon_fists
- weapon_gausspistol
- weapon_shotgun
- weapon_minigun
- weapon_beamgun
- weapon_dml
- weapon_SPchemicalgun
- ammo_gaussclip
- ammo_buckshot
- ammo_minigunClip
- ammo_beamgunclip
- ammo_dmlclip
- ammo_chemical
- item_healthkit
- item_armor
- player_armor
- vehicle_tank

SACRIFICE Interplay

Press 'Ctrl', 'Shift' and '~' during game to bring up a small text icon at the bottom of the screen, then type any of these:

PHONE FOR HELP

Having trouble with a game and can't wait to see a reply in these pages? Then you need to check out...

THE PC ZONETIPS HELPLINE ON 0906 466 4475

OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, 9AM-11PM

On the rare occasion that they can't help, your query will be passed on to a support team who guarantee to find you an answer within 24 hours.

- Calls cost £1.50 per minute at all times. Charges will appear on your standard telephone bill. If you do not pay the bill yourself, seek permission from whoever does pay it before calling.
- If you have any problems, please call customer services on 0870 800 6155

@ bythepowerofgrayskul Full heal

@ ihavethepower Full mana

@ yourbulletscannothamme Invincible

@ dontfearthereaper Adds souls

@ castratetheheathens Can pick-up red souls

@ timeisonmyside Resets spell timer

@ aplethoraoof [monster name] Summon four monsters of type [monster name]

DEAR KEITH

Keith Pullin brings hope to the disillusioned...

WOODEN MONKEY

Q I'm playing *Escape From Monkey Island*, but surprise, surprise - I'm stuck. I don't know what to do with the artificial hand. I've tried using it in all the obvious places (that I know of) but cannot seem to work it out. Please help, because this is really starting to get my goat.

Alan Farr, Eastleigh

A Prosthetic hands are sometimes made out of wood, so, what in the game is associated with wood? Exactly. The termites. Duh. Simply use the hand on the termites in the Bait Shoppe to swipe them without the owner noticing. From there you should be able to cause some havoc with a walking stick. Good luck.

A BIT STEEP

Q I think you might be able to help me on this one. In *PGA Championship Golf 2001* sometimes get an awful lie where my ball is halfway up a really steep slope. Whenever I try to hit it straight out

it barely moves and always dribbles back to virtually the same spot. I want to know if there is a way to chip it to safety without having to go backwards?

Liam Bride, Chichester

A Unfortunately there isn't. The only way out of that irritating situation is to play the ball back down the slope to safer ground. It's a bummer but that's the way it goes.

HIT AND WALK

Q I have a problem with *Hitman: Codename 47*. Whenever I run up to somebody when I'm in disguise they immediately start shooting at me. Why is this? I'm not being aggressive or anything.

Shelly Gayday, email

A You are being attacked because you are running towards them and it's putting them on edge. When in disguise always act nonchalant. Do not run and definitely do not sneak about, and whatever you do, don't show a weapon. Don't alarm civilians either

because they can raise the alarm faster than you can pop a cap into the back of someone's head.

BLACK SHEEP

Q My family and I purchased *Sheep* just before Christmas and we're having problems getting the little fellas to follow us. Maybe it's just us but it seems extremely difficult to use the mouse to control them. I would like to know whether there's any advice you could offer that can force these sheep to do what we want.

Bill O'Connor, Shepton

A The majority of the sheep tend to wander all over the place, however, the Modern Pastoral sheep will follow any character if you chase them around the same object five times. Be careful if you try this tactic with Shep though, he tends to get a bit dizzy and throw up. Try using a different control method as well - keyboard works surprisingly well.

COFFEE BREAK

Q Are there any cheats at all for *Airfix Dogfighter*? It's really hard and I keep crashing into the coffee table.

Nigel Foreman, e-mail

A Nasty. Here's a cheat you could try. Type 'prometheus' on the mission selection screen to access all missions. Hope that helps you Nigel.

HOPE SALVAGED

Q Aaaaarghh. I need cash now. How do I make a stack of money in *X-Com Interceptor*? It's really hard to buy new weapons and stuff when you haven't got anything to buy them with you know? Please help a weary space combat-pilot.

Darren Graham, Fort William

A Yeah, it is difficult - but there are always methods my friend. Selling captured weapons can make most of your money. My advice therefore is to disable your enemies rather than destroy them, so you have a better chance of salvaging more things.

DEAR WANDY

Think your PC is about as much use as a one-legged man in an arse-kicking contest? Tell *Wandy*, he'll make it aaaaall better

★ FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE Phil Wand

COME IN, SIT DOWN

Send us a query or a top tip and you could pocket £50. Share your techie or gaming-related problems with us, and we, in turn, may share them with thousands of readers via these very pages in a big communal love-in type of thing. And, as an extra incentive, if we think it's an amazing tip or interesting query, we'll offer you a cool £50. No, really. Send in as much relevant information as you can.

WRITE TO Dear Wandy, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF

EMAIL Address your letters to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading *Dear Wandy*

Please note: while we can assure you that we read every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

“I am always being beaten online by players with a better connection than me. Will an external modem help?”

MAT HILLMAN PUTS IT ALL DOWN TO PING

WinProxy is a good product, but for ease of use you can't beat connecting directly.



POXY PROXY

Q At home I access the Internet through a proxy server (WinProxy). I can browse the Internet fine, but I now want to play games online. My dad (whose computer is connected directly to the Net) won't let me play games on his machine, so I am trying to play through the proxy server. However, when I go to Find Internet Games in *Unreal Tournament*, it says it can't find the master server.

I have tried doing the same thing on a friend's computer, which connects to the Internet directly and works first time, every time. I have also tried *Counter-Strike* but experienced the same problem. I have searched through all the *Counter-Strike* forums and have found other people who have the same problem, but apparently there are no answers. Please could you help – I really want to play online.

Ray Smith

A Unfortunately, playing online via a proxy server can be a real minefield. A proxy works by having the host machine (ie your father's PC) connect to a system on the Internet (ie the WON masters for *Counter-Strike*) and relay all messages it receives back to you across the LAN.

The reason you're not getting data back from the servers is because the games are chatting on weird and wonderful port numbers. To configure your copy of WinProxy to work with *Half-Life*, visit ositis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/ositis/search and enter *Half-Life* into the search box.

The most reliable solution is to connect directly to the Internet, even if it means you running as the proxy server and your father browsing via your machine.

WANDY IS MAGIC

Q I noticed that in issue #96 you had a letter from a reader who couldn't identify his motherboard manufacturer. Equipped only with the model number, you came up with the goods 'just like that'. Well, guess what, I've got the same problem.

I'm looking to upgrade my PII 350 to a PIII 600 or 700, but have no way of knowing whether my P6BX-A+ motherboard is up to the task. The company that put my PC together has since gone belly up, and the user manual reveals only the model number.

Could you tell me if there's some means of tracking down the manufacturer from just the model number? Many thanks.

Duncan Macphail

A P6BX-A+ is an ECS (Elitegroup Computer Systems) board. Assuming the BIOS is up to date, the company website claims it will support up to a 600MHz PIII. More details and a BIOS update are available from www.ecs.com.tw.

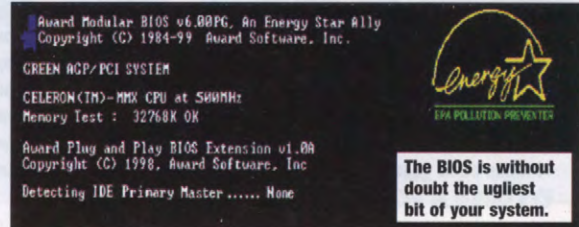
To be honest, there's no magic at work here – I visited AltaVista at www.av.com, fed P6BX into the query box, and hey presto: on the sixth link down the results set was the ECS website. Sometimes you have to dig a bit, but at the least you'll find the name of the manufacturer on a review site (www.tomshardware.com is perfect for this), usually with a link straight back to their home on the web. If not, the BIOS section in www.infiles.com usually lists it.

Now I've destroyed my oracle status, all that remains is to deliver a few truths about the existence of Santa...

HIGH PING LOSER

Q Please help me! I'm branching into the online gaming world with the likes of *Quake III: Arena* and *Elite Force*. However, I am always getting beaten by players with better connections than me.

I have been told that there are some external modems that will



The BIOS is without doubt the ugliest bit of your system.

speed up my connection so I can be more competitive – is this correct? If it is, what type of modem and how much? Cable connections sound superb, but the cost is too much to swallow at the moment.

I have a Packard Bell PII 433MHz, 64Mb of RAM, ATI Rage Pro Turbo AGP 2x graphics card and a MDP3858V-WE modem.

Mat Hillman

A External modems can be much faster, but this isn't due to them being in the outside air, it's because it's impossible to implement what is known as a software modem via a serial cable. Software modems use your PC processor to deal with the signal instead of using dedicated circuitry on the modem board itself, resulting in a severe performance loss if your CPU is busy with other things. And yours is a software modem.

If you want our advice, go for a Hayes Accura, or phone up your local cable company and get a quote for a cable modem. They're cheaper than you may think, and £40 a month gets you unlimited, round-the-clock, high-speed Internet access.

Last, I'd say that unless your current connection speed is truly awful, lag and latency are cramping your style a lot less than you may think. Practice makes perfect, not a low ping.

FUTURE CODEMASTER

Q I've been a keen PC enthusiast for some five years now, and have quite extensive knowledge of hardware and Windows 9x operating systems. I would like to have a go at programming or writing software for the Windows 9x

platform, but have never done any programming at all before.

I would be grateful if you could recommend some books to help get me started, the sort of PC you need (mine is a couple of years old now) and if I'll require extra software. I have attempted to read about programming on the Internet, where there's a lot of talk about different programming languages. There seems to be so many I wouldn't know which one to use or learn first.

I would like to be able to write my own 3D games rather than business software, plus I would also like to create professional-looking websites using HTML (rather than using a program such as FrontPage which writes all the HTML – I want to be able to create things more hands on).

Thanks for any pointers you can give me.

Dave Charlton

A Your current machine should be fine to learn on, everything will just run slower. It's best to save your money for the software you are going to require to express your more creative side.

You are probably best starting with Microsoft Visual Basic. Basic, by definition, is pretty easy to learn and use, although with the arrival of Windows, things became a little more complex (some instructions can only be accessed through messy routines). Basic is also far slower as it's an interpreted language, so the processor has to spend time translating what you want the program to do every time it is run. However, it will give you good experience of working with Windows.

If you have your heart set on writing games, then you really

don't have much choice. C++ is very powerful, but unfortunately your programs will look more like a Hong Kong phone directory than those from the far more readable Basic.

This is not to say that there isn't a powerful middle ground. Borland came out with Delphi, an interesting rewrite of the Pascal language, some years ago, and it's gathered quite a following. It is fully compiled, and therefore produces fast programs like C++, but the code is quite a bit easier to read.

Unfortunately, although it's possible to write storming 3D games in Delphi, most of the commercial games world works in C++ – so if, for example, you plan to use the *Quake* or *Half-Life* graphics engine to create a mod, you're going to have to know how to read and write C++ code.

As for books, have a look on www.amazon.co.uk for *Visual C++ 6 Programming Blue Book*, *C++ How to Program*, and Marco Cantu's indispensable *Mastering Delphi 5*.

HTML is far simpler to get to grips with. If you have a copy of Notepad (you do), then you can write HTML pages. Plus, when you go to a website, you can right-click and view the source which makes that page, and see how it works. You can even throw a page together in Microsoft FrontPage and view the source from inside FrontPage itself, or just open the .HTM file in Notepad or a text editor such as UltraEdit. Microsoft provides some useful introductions at msdn.microsoft.com/workshop/author/html/beghtml.asp

DIRTY, DIRTY DRIVES

Q Can you please dish out some of your life-saving advice? I've gone through a recent bout of updating my computer with faster and better parts (OK, maybe not exactly supercomputer material), but it still seems to be lacking

hugely. The last straw was the arrival and installation of an ATI Radeon 64Mb DDR graphics card this morning, only to find that some games still run sluggishly.

For example, the recent *Gunlok* demo, at 640 x 480, 16-bit colour, medium detail, low shadow detail, and with all the other fancy settings off, still jerks around. It's not as bad as it was, but it's not much better. The *Ark* demo that comes on the Radeon driver CD hardly runs at all. Where am I going wrong?

My last graphics card was a Voodoo3 2000. I have an AMD Athlon K6-2 500MHz processor on a SOYO Socket7 motherboard and 128Mb RAM (all recent upgrades). I know there are performance issues with Radeon on AMD equipment, but I'm hoping the new drivers will sort it out.

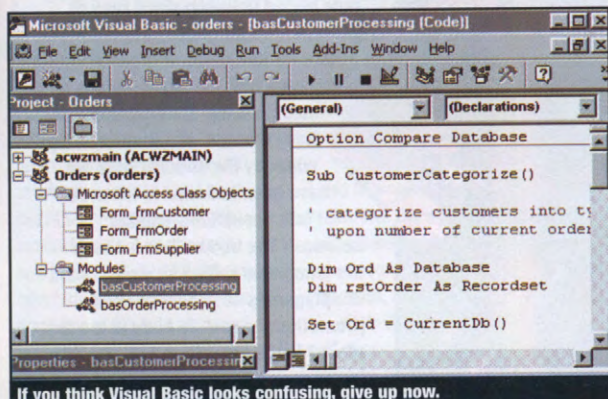
I refuse to spend more large sums of money on my system, but I don't know what to go for. New processor? Which make? More memory? How much? A bit of both?

Dave S

A When updating parts, especially video components, it's important to remove all the drivers for the old card. You can do this by telling Windows it's got a standard VGA card, and then booting into Safe Mode. Uninstall all the old bits and pieces, restart Windows, and install your new drivers.

As you have recently upgraded the motherboard, you might have old motherboard chipset drivers still installed within Windows itself, and they're a little trickier to deal with. The best solution is to download all the latest drivers, unzip them, put them somewhere safe like C:\Drivers and then install Windows from scratch.

A bit theatrical? Well, doing this will ensure all your old drivers have gone for good, and you'll get a tidy Registry again. After doing this, there is no reason on earth why your new card shouldn't dazzle you. [X]



If you think Visual Basic looks confusing, give up now.

PCZONE

COMING NEXT ISSUE

After the glorious *Black & White* next issue might seem like a bit of a come down, but if it all goes to plan (and as you know quite often it doesn't), we should have another cracking issue in store as *PC ZONE* enters its second century...

Z: STEEL SOLDIERS

EXCLUSIVE
REVIEW
& DEMO



The Bitmap Brothers, perfectionists that they are, decreed that it was a tad too early for us to review their first PC game in four years. Next month, however, we are assured they will be finished on what is sure to be the most frantic real-time strategy game in years.

INDEPTH PREVIEWS STAR TREK: BRIDGE COMMANDER & STAR TREK: AWAY TEAM

Traditionally hit and miss affairs, *Star Trek* games have recently achieved a level of consistency that – unthinkable as it was a few years ago – have put recent *Star Wars* games to shame. *Bridge Commander* (ironically from the developer of the last great *Star Wars* game, *X-Wing Alliance*) seems certain to continue this upward trend. Supported by the *X-COM*-style *Away Team*, the future looks bright for all things Trekkie.

PC ZONE ONLINE

Already work has started on a first for *PC ZONE* – a unique mini-mag that will bring all the latest news, previews and reviews for all the online games that matter. Don't miss the first issue for the first part of a major feature showing you how you can join in on the online fun.

PLUS: Reviews of *Hostile Waters*, *Worms World Party*, *Cossacks: European Wars*, *Clive Barker's Undying* and much more besides.

ON SALE THURSDAY MARCH 8

WATCHDOG

The software industry can sometimes be a closed shop when it comes to punters and their complaints. Let *PC Zone* ramraid their premises for you and snatch some answers...

★ MAN ON A MISSION Adam Philips

LIVING IN A WORLD O' HURT?

"That's the last straw!" If this is so, we're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing, drop us a line.

WRITE TO Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF.

EMAIL Email us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading "Watchdog".

FALSE PROMISES

Q I am writing to convey my disappointment with Home Software World. I saw its advertisement on your website offering great joining deals. I committed myself to buying its products for two years, during which time I had to buy four pieces of software from HSW. After joining though, I discovered that the games are offered at a price which more than makes the company its money back!

For example, HSW offered *Championship Manager 00/01* at £29.99, which is a great saving of £10 off their RRP of £39.99, but *Gameplay* is offering it at £19.99 and high street retailers are selling it at £24.99. Plus HSW takes at least a minimum of two weeks to deliver, for which it charges £2.99.

I believe HSW cons consumers into joining the club so it can

fleece them. I would advise PC ZONE readers to stay clear of HSW because it makes false promises and you can find cheaper prices elsewhere.

Mark O'Donnell

A Serious allegations indeed, which HSW should have the right to reply to.

"The very low prices of products in our introductory offer are, of course, set to encourage potential members to join the software club," offers a spokesperson for the company. "We believe, however, that the prices charged to current club members also represent very good value for money, as well as the convenience of home shopping."

HSW claims that individual software products are sold at widely different prices throughout the market and,

under these circumstances, it is impossible to guarantee that it will always offer the lowest prices.

"However, our prices are set to reflect this competitive market place," HSW explains. "It is only by offering continuing value for money to our members that we can retain and develop the membership of this club."

The company says it cannot agree with you, Mark, that it is in any way making false promises. "A potential member can apply to join the club from one of our normal recruitment advertisements, which offer a number of software products at very low introductory prices," it says. "On receipt of a



membership application, HSW sends out an introductory parcel on approval."

Apparently, this introductory parcel includes a membership guide explaining in full how the club operates. "The potential member is then free to inspect the introduction product and look through the membership guide and club

SIMPLY TERRIBLE

A special offer that turned out to be a long way from special

Q Way back in August, I received a promotional e-mail from Simplygames offering *Deus Ex* for £19.99. I responded to this mail within five minutes of receiving it, and ordered the game, only to learn a couple of days later that they had run out of stock at that price.

It appears to me that they never had the stock in the first place, seeing as I was so quick to respond to them and still didn't get the game. Anyway, I duly complained and a couple of days later received a long-winded excuse. I thought nothing of it. About two weeks later, I received a £5 money-off voucher from Simplygames. Being the forgiving sort, I used the voucher to order *Deus Ex*, this time at £21.99, which I felt was fair enough. I still had to wait one month to receive the game...

Anyway, imagine my surprise when my next bank statement arrived and I discovered Simplygames had withdrawn £26.99 from my account. Nowhere could I find evidence of them returning the £5 to my bank account, so I wrote them an e-mail. This was on November 6. On November 18, I wrote again. I have received no response to either e-mail.

Andy Malcolm

A Simplygames is apologetic for the cock-up, as a spokesperson explained: "We are in the process of designing new systems to enable stock to be checked in real time. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to offer this facility, and therefore allocate sale stock on a first-come,

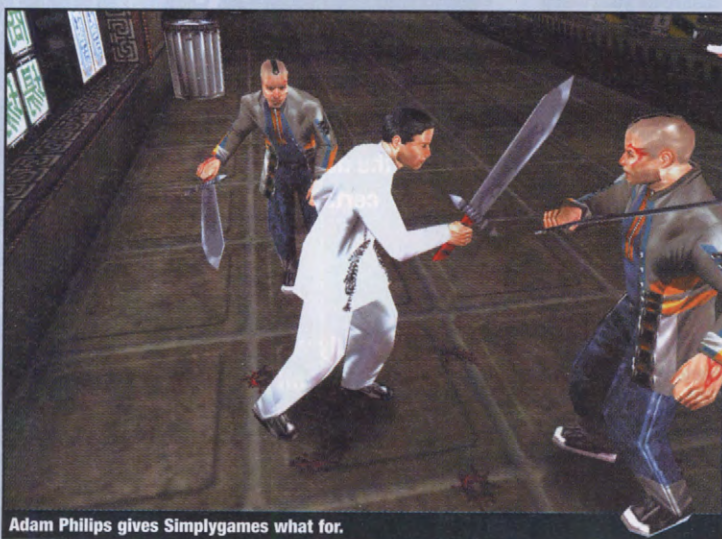
first-served basis. In the meantime, we attempt to make the fact clear that promotional stock is subject to availability."

In *Deus Ex's* case, Simplygames said it tried to fulfil as many orders as it could from its existing stock. "When we were unable to secure further

stocks of *Deus Ex* at the reduced price, we informed customers for whom we were holding orders. When we secured more special-purchase stock, a revised offer for the title was made available on the site. On this occasion, stock was again snapped up very quickly. We took the decision to hold the orders as we were informed that we would be able to secure more stock within a number of weeks."

Simplygames said that as soon as this *Deus Ex* stock arrived, it was dispatched to customers. "Due to the time period between stock receipt, there was something of a backlog of orders for this game. It is unfortunately the case that the high volumes of stock leaving Simplygames may have resulted in a human error, whereby the voucher may not have been included in the order."

Talk about 'long-winded excuses'! The bottom line is that if the game was selling so well, should Simplygames have sent out that promotional e-mail to Andy in the first place? In the meantime, you should have received a refund, Andy.



Adam Philips gives Simplygames what for.



Fuel shortage holding up PC deliveries? A likely story.

magazine to decide if they want to proceed with their membership," explains HSW. "The club magazine shows the current range of products on offer, together with the price charged to members.

"In this way, the potential member can get a real feel for the club before deciding whether to confirm their membership. If they decide not to proceed with membership, they simply return the introductory parcel and that is the end of the matter."

The moral of the story? Check the small print and shop around for competitive pricing before signing up to anything.

SLAMMED UP!

Q I'm not an unreasonable person and after seeing my letter printed in your magazine, I thought to myself: "This should give Slammer an incentive to get a move on." And I was willing to give them extra time to get my PIII 600MHz to me. When I contacted Slammer, I was told: "You're on the top of our list."

I've coined the phrase: "Time flies when dealing with Slammer."

"I ordered a PIII on August 20, and have contacted the company at least ten times. I've heard the most annoying excuses"

CHI-KIN NAM LOSES HIS PATIENCE

I ordered the system on August 20 and have contacted Slammer ten times since then [as I haven't received anything] and I have heard some annoying excuses, including: "the fuel shortage hasn't helped", "we're expecting a new batch of processors", and "I don't know, the lady who works here is at lunch".

I blame the company for offering a product which it could

not supply. It has broken numerous deadlines and it's just getting a bit tiring. Many of the problems have been to do with defective components which, to be honest, is not their fault but that of the supplier.

Slammer has automatically upgraded the PC to 700MHz as compensation for the delay. And, yes, a refund has been available to me from the start, but I don't give up that easily.

I don't know what else I can do but wait. I think this is seriously unfair when I have ordered, paid for and have been waiting for three months for something that should have only taken a few days to get to me.

Chi-Kin Nam

A Watchdog asked Slammer what was going on. "First let me explain how this PC fiasco came about," says a spokesperson for the company. "We were offered PIII systems by one of our suppliers in August, which we then offered to some of our customers.

"Our customers were advised to allow 28 days for delivery as this was the

timescale that was given to us by our suppliers."

Apparently, 28 days went by and Slammer had still not received the systems from its suppliers, which blamed faulty components for the delay and, later on, the fuel scarcity.

"We then decided to contact all those who purchased the system from us to inform them of the delay," says Slammer.

"They were informed that they could cancel their order at any time if they wanted to, which some decided to do. The months rolled on and we found ourselves in November. We then decided to go out and get the systems ourselves through another supplier at a loss of £99.99 per system, which we started sending out earlier this week."

It sounds like it's been a total nightmare for Slammer as well, Chi-Kin, if that offers any comfort. In the meantime, the company says that you have now received your PC.

CREDIT CRISIS

Q On October 16, I ordered two games from Gameplay. One was listed as restocking so I expected that within two weeks, and the other was a pre-order for a game coming out on October 23.

Gameplay promises delivery on the day of release for pre-ordered games, so when it didn't arrive as expected, I sent them an e-mail. I was told there'd been a problem with the publisher and the game would arrive on October 27.

I was away until the beginning of November. When I arrived home, neither game had arrived. The next day, I checked my account status page to find that my order had been cancelled. I e-mailed Gameplay asking why and for the reinstatement of my order. I was then told that the transaction had been rejected by my credit card issuer and to check with them to find out why.

I was assured that if I reordered when that problem had been sorted out, Gameplay would deal with the order as quickly as possible. Fine, but when I checked with my card issuer, they were unaware of any problems. Furthermore, Gameplay had taken £27.99 as payment for the pre-ordered game from my card on October 25. So much for responding within 24 hours and not charging until the dispatch of the goods!

On November 3, I phoned Gameplay. I was told that my card had been rejected because the cardholder's address was not the same as the address they'd been given. Fine, I said, that's an issue for me to take up with Barclaycard, except that I'd been charged anyway and wanted my games.

I was told that the order would be put back on. Yet here I am a week and a half later with no games. And to top things off, a catalogue arrived in the post last

week – although they can't give me the goods I've paid for, they can still ask me to buy something else from them!

So a month after placing my order, I've been charged for a game that's apparently never been dispatched.

Matt Craddock

A Explain yourself, Gameplay! "We regret that Mr Craddock has experienced problems using Gameplay," says PR manager Jo Upton.

"Having checked our database, I can confirm that while we received his order on October 16 for two PC games, there does appear to have been a technical anomaly that prevented the order being processed once the stock was made available. Our credit card system was not interfacing correctly with our database.

"A very unfortunate consequence of this problem

was that Mr Craddock's order appeared to fail our credit card checks when we tried to get authorisation from the card issuer.

"With reference to the charge on Mr Craddock's card, as previously stated the technical problem has now been resolved. It has never been Gameplay's intention to mislead our customers or fail to follow our own policy. In light of this problem, we have now put into place a procedure that will alert our customer service team of any similar problems."

Gameplay says that it has offered you its sincerest apologies for the problems experienced and refunded your credit card for the amount of £27.99. In the meantime, it has dispatched the goods to you free of charge as a gesture of goodwill. [E]



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BRADFORD 1651	Charlton 1652	COVENTRY 1653	IPSWICH TOWN 1654	Arsenal 1461
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SUNDERLAND 1660	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR 1661	ROVERS 1469	CHELSIA 1462	SCOTLAND 1485

MORE GREAT GRAPHICS...

MyGirl 1367	HOT 0730	britneyspears 1685	1712	1662
Five 1548	1479	westlife 1549	1665	1666
SPEED 0707	0699	0438	1478	1731
Emmalee 1556	1563	BROOKSIDE 1551	1554	1547
0812	0710	1566	0595	1832
BECKHAM 1833	0452	1326	0670	0677
X-MEN 1717	0684	0686	0687	0688
0828	1364	0701	0845	1475
0659	1669	0586	0587	0832
1552	1557	1564	1567	1555

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1836 The Rock entrance theme | 1512 Zombie Nation - Kernkraft 400 | 0322 If you had my love - Jennifer Lopez |
| 1838 The Undertaker entrance theme | 1513 Stan - Eminem | 0335 King of my castle - Wamdue Project |
| 1841 Stone Cold Steve Austin theme | 1518 I believe I can fly - R Kelly | 0340 Lvin la vida loca - Ricky Martin |
| 1837 Triple H entrance theme | 0267 American Pie - Madonna | 0374 Sex Bomba - Tom Jones |
| 1839 Raw is War theme | 0395 Thang song - Sisco | 0357 Oops I did it again - Britney Spears |
| 1840 Too Cool theme | 0151 Star wars theme | 0377 She's the one - Robbie Williams |
| 1842 Warrior theme | 0346 Millennium - Robbie Williams | 0285 Born to Make you Happy - Britney Spears |
| 1590 My love - Westlife | 0402 What a girl want - Christina Aguilera | 0273 As long as you love me - Back Street Boys |
| 1505 Rock DJ - Robbie Williams | 0382 Sweet like chocolate - Shanks and Bigfoot | 0404 Why does it always rain on me - Travis |
| 1507 Dancing Queen - Abba | 0299 Don't call me baby - Madison Avenue | 0407 You Say it best - Ronan Keating |
| 1509 I turn to you - Mel C | 0296 Crazy - Britney Spears | 0353 My love is your love - Whitney Houston |
| 1579 The way I am - Eminem | 0284 Boom boom boom - Vengaboyz | 0331 I want you back - N Sync |
| 1588 Heart of asia - Watergate | 0282 Bittersweet symphony - The Verve | 0327 It's alright - East 17 |
| 1586 Stamp - Steps | 0309 Fall apart - Sugar Ray | 0292 Cartoon Hero - Aqua |
| | 0268 Angels - Robbie Williams | 0271 Ameno - Era |
| | 0259 I only kiss when the sun don't shine - Vengaboyz | 0132 The Simpsons theme |

The Following Nokia handsets receive both graphics and tones - Nokia 3210, 6090, 61XX, 702, 71XX, 8210, 88XX, 9000, 9110 - Models 402, 51XX can receive logos, and Tones are compatible with Sagem Models 930, 932, 939, 959. This is a service from Teleworld, CY-1087, Nicosia, Cyprus. Calls cost £1.00 per min.

SITES FOR SORE EYES

On the Internet, somebody else can do all the hard work for you. Cunning, eh?

★ SLACKER Keith Pullen

METAL GEAR SOLID

REVIEWED: PCZ #96 SCORE: 82%

★ http://www.game-revolution.com/games/codes/s/ony/metal_gear_solidwalk.htm

Although this is a text-based PlayStation link, it contains a fairly detailed walkthrough and equipment info, which is undoubtedly helpful for the PC. Also includes a Q&A section and lots of bizarre rumours and tips from other players. Game Revolution also has a whole load of extra hints for the PC if you look for *MGS* under the cheats page.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ <http://www.metal-gear.de/english/index.html>

The official *MGS* website is currently furnished with hints, screenshots and other downloads, including MP3s and screensavers. True, it's not as detailed as you might hope, but Konami assures us the site will soon be bolstered by a larger FAQ section, along with snippets

from the official game guide.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ <http://www.cheatcc.com/pc/metalgears.html>

A good *MGS* site covering every known cheat, including the elusive developer ghost cheats. In other words, if you take a photo of Sniper Wolf's corpse, you can see Jerem Blaustein's ghostly apparition in the background. Other special locations are revealed and with any luck you'll soon have an exciting collection of ghostly Japanese portraits. Mmmm, nice.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ <http://www.gamesdomain.co.uk/cheats/2526.html>

Chris Wilkins has pulled out all the stops by producing a superb *MGS* walkthrough. Sections of it could be more detailed, but any shortcomings in that department are made up for by the inclusion

of relevant screenshots. If you can't complete *MGS* with this, you've got problems.

Rating: ★★★★★

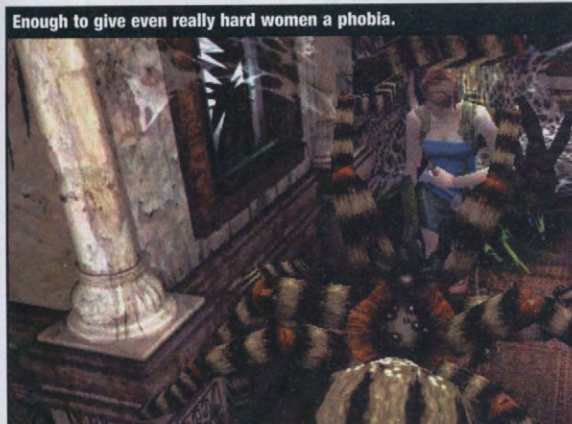
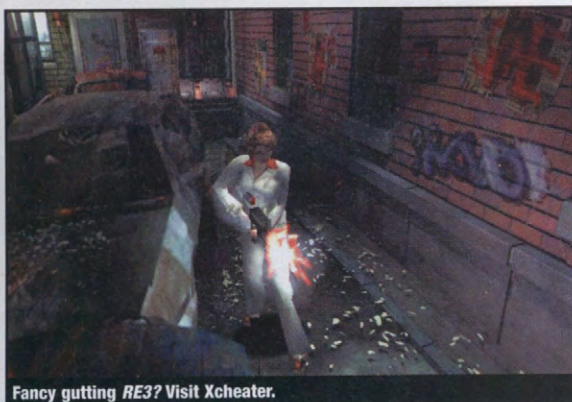
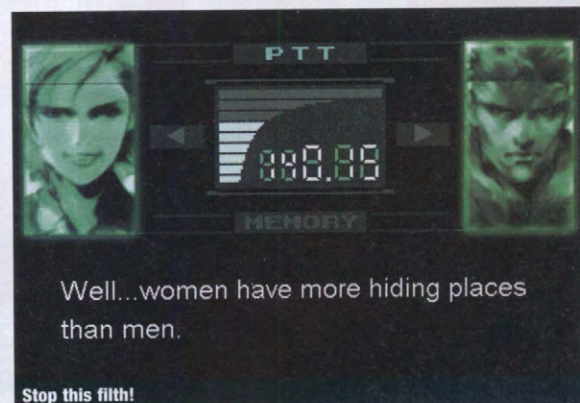
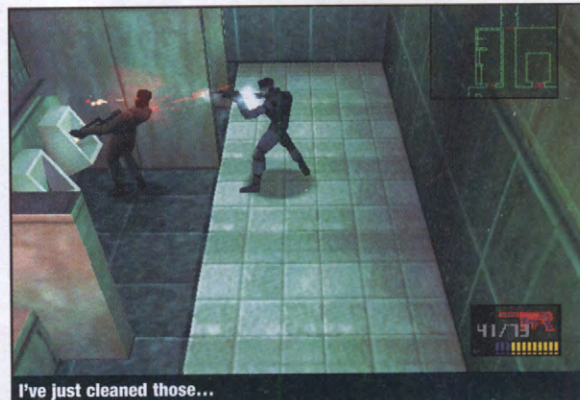
★ <http://www.cheaters-guild.com/cheat-display.asp?category=Walkthroughs&GameName=Metal+Gear+Solid>

A text-only walkthrough and it's pretty scant on information about the bosses. Nonetheless it's detailed in other areas and definitely worth a look.

Rating: ★★★★★



Can't win with this? Then you're completely rubbish.



RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS

REVIEWED: PCZ #94 SCORE: 81%

★ <http://www.gamesdomain.co.uk/cheats/1421.html>

Games Domain is one of the few *RE3: Nemesis* sites to contain a walkthrough. On the downside, it's a fairly untidy, text-only affair and it also appears to be the PlayStation 2 version. Still, it's highly detailed and the PC and console versions of the game are exactly the same, so there shouldn't be any problems.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ <http://cheats.gamez.com/games/pc/residentevil3/nemesis-1.html>

If you're after interesting cheats and secrets rather than a good old-fashioned walkthrough, this is the site to hit. Everything from 'mercenary mode' to hidden character epilogues are revealed. This has to be one of the finest selections of *RE3: Nemesis* hints available on the Internet.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ <http://www.joystyle.com/akyeren/>

Walkthroughs, onsite maps, screenshots, cheats, hints, galleries, downloads – it's all here. Everything you could ever possibly want to know about *RE3: Nemesis* can be found on this absolutely fantastic site. On top of excellent content, it's also brilliantly designed, boasting a superb flash intro and an overall clarity that's a joy to behold. There are also weekly updates, so if for some reason you can't find what you're looking for, the chances are it'll be there soon. Excellent stuff.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ <http://www.xcheater.com/pc/r/144.shtml>

Xcheater's site may be relatively low on detail, but it does contain downloadable files, allowing you to edit your save game files and fiddle around with other hex-based goodies. If you have an overwhelming desire to mess

about with the guts of the game, this is the site you should visit.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ <http://residentevil3.00server.com/>

Again we come across a good site with nice character profiles and plenty of interesting extras. That said, there are large parts of this site that are still unfinished, especially when it comes to the walkthrough section. Hopefully it will be finished soon – so we advise you to return regularly to check out the latest improvements.

Rating: ★★★★★



PCZONE TOP 100

Welcome to the definitive buyers' guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages represent the best titles across all genres. Check here for regular updates

This is the new *PC ZONE* Top 100. Within it you will find the best games you can currently buy for your PC. All the games here deserve a place in our illustrious Top 100 as we go to print, but that could

all change next month when newer titles come in and older games receive new ratings to reflect where they stand in the great scheme of things. Shrewd buyers will always check here first before parting with their money.

BENCHMARK GAME

Benchmark titles are the games that you simply must have if you are a fan of the genre. They are considered by the *PC ZONE* team to be absolute classics and should be bought without hesitation. All new games are compared to their genre's benchmark title when they are reviewed. Bear this in mind before writing into Mailbox

complaining that the latest 3D shooter didn't automatically get 90 per cent: check here first to see what it's up against! Additionally, all games in that genre will receive a new rating every time a new benchmark title comes along.

NEW ENTRY

In the wonderful world of PC gaming, new titles come in every month, some of which are better than the games currently in the Top 100. When this happens, they will gain their rightful place in the Top 100 and lesser titles will drop out to make room for them.

BUDGET

If a game in the Top 100 is available on budget, it will be tagged accordingly. Games that are lower in price than other titles in their genre do not necessarily receive a new score to reflect this. The latest score the game received will still apply – it's up to you to decide whether or not the game is worth buying at its new price point.

Under the *ZONE* scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. There are now very few titles that can justifiably be described as *PC ZONE* Classics. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all *ZONE* Classics are must-have titles – the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre – but that does not mean you should discount games that

score 80+ per cent. These games receive the *PC ZONE* Award For Excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them, but when we say a game is a classic, we *mean* it.



FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

STRATEGY

HALF-LIFE



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #71 • 95%

✦ Taking the first-person shooter as its starting point, *Half-Life* redefines the genre with an engrossing story, cracking atmosphere and some of the best AI ever coded. *Half-Life* is probably still the best game you can install on your PC, and it's now available with the superb *Opposing Force* add-on in the 'Generations' pack.

PUBLISHER Sierra
• 0118 9209 100



BUDGET

UNREAL TOURNAMENT **PCZ #81 • 90%**

✦ Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake III's* multiplayer, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. The single-player mode might be too short, but it's still going to be more than a challenge for most.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199



QUAKE III ARENA **PCZ #87 • 89%**

✦ The biggest brand name in PC gaming is back. The sheer speed, intensity and unrelenting action of *Quake III* make it an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans, but sadly the lack of variety prevents it from topping *Unreal Tournament*.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



GUNMAN CHRONICLES **PCZ #97 • 87%**

✦ While comparisons to *Half-Life* are inevitable, *Gunman* contains more than enough nuances to stand out on its own merits. With a superb array of weapons, intense battles and a gripping atmosphere it's a must buy for any fan of the genre.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209 100



PROJECT IGI **PCZ #97 • 85%**

✦ Combining the action of *Soldier Of Fortune* with the stealth of *Metal Gear Solid*, *Project IGI* is the thinking man's FPS. It features vast, open landscapes, and its clever changes of pace and espionage orientated storyline will keep you engrossed throughout.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



MECHWARRIOR 4: VENGEANCE **PCZ #99 • 84%**

NEWENTRY This fourth offering in the popular combat series is a feast of superb graphics, challenging missions and er... realistic snow. The multiplayer option is great, but like all big robot games, it's still only likely to sell in America.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000



STAR TREK: VOYAGER - ELITE FORCE **PCZ #94 • 84%**

✦ The first single-player game to use the *Quake III* engine, *Voyager* offers enough thrills to please even the hardest of Trekkie haters. A new scripting system and some clever team fighting by your side, renew faith in an increasingly multiplayer genre.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



THIEF II: THE METAL AGE **PCZ #88 • 82%**

✦ The original *Thief* set new standards in FPS titles with its move away from mindless action towards stealth and its excellent use of light and sound. This sequel delivers more of the same quality gameplay, minus the out-of-place zombie levels.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



ALIENS VS PREDATOR **PCZ #77 • 80%**

✦ It might not be the best FPS you can buy, but it's definitely the scariest. *Aliens Vs Predator* is also the only game that offers three distinct ways of playing through the game, so if you're looking for a solid single-player blast, this provides excellent value for money.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

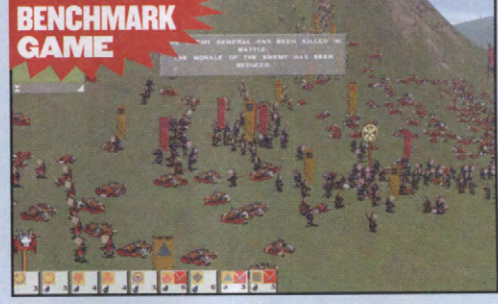


SOLDIER OF FORTUNE **PCZ #89 • 79%**

✦ More like an arcade explosion of unmitigated violence than a FPS in the *Half-Life* mould, *SoF* is a great deal of fun. It's also very sick. If you can stomach amputations and decapitations, then we can guarantee you pure, mindless entertainment.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #89 • 93%

✦ *Shogun* is the first strategy game that has blown us away in a long time. Command enormous armies in epic and bloody battles, send ninjas to assassinate enemy generals and conquer your way through the map of feudal Japan. The 3D engine works beautifully and the in-game options never get in the way of instant playability.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442



AGE OF EMPIRES II **PCZ #84 • 88%**

✦ It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *AOE II*, the gameplay has been honed to perfection with balanced units and strong single and multiplayer campaigns. Forget the hype of *Tiberian Sun* and opt for this classic RTS.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



GROUND CONTROL **PCZ #92 • 87%**

✦ RTSs are increasingly dropping resource management in order to concentrate on strategy. *Ground Control* pulls this off with flair, gorgeous looks and a brilliant camera. If you're after a 3D strategy title but don't fancy samurais, this is the answer.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



CALL TO POWER II **PCZ #98 • 86%**

✦ *Civilization II* is one of the best games of all time, but that doesn't mean it doesn't need updating. It might not have the official *Civ* endorsement, but *Call To Power II* still retains the spirit of the game, while polishing almost every aspect of the gameplay.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



SUDDEN STRIKE **PCZ #96 • 86%**

✦ *Sudden Strike* mixes WWII action with a heavy dose of realism, in order to create a compelling RTS. Its clever resource management, huge selection of units and separate campaigns, make it a must for RTS fans looking for something a bit different.

PUBLISHER CDV • 0208 880 4144



ZEUS: MASTER OF OLYMPUS **PCZ #97 • 85%**

✦ From the creators of *Pharaoh* and *Caesar III*, comes this intricate yet hugely playable micro-management god game. It's hugely addictive, but suffers slightly from its lack of multiplayer options and a poor combat system.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209 100



HOMEWORLD: CATAclySM **PCZ #96 • 85%**

✦ Relic's mission to improve the already superb 3D RTS *Homeworld*, has proved to be a great success. The *Homeworld* universe has been expanded, providing a more elaborate storyline and greater scope for tactical options than its predecessor.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209 100



BATTLE ISLE IV: THE ANDOSIA WAR **PCZ #99 • 84%**

NEWENTRY A real step forward for strategy gaming, *Battle Isle IV* combines real-time and turn-based elements in a fully-rendered 3D world. The graphics and camera angles are awesome and despite the linear, artificial feel to the gameplay the result is absorbing.

PUBLISHER Blue Byte • (00 49) 208 450880



EARTH 2150 **PCZ #90 • 84%**

✦ A fantastic 3D engine and great detail team up with sheer playability to make this one of the best RTSs around. Second only to *Shogun* this year, *Earth 2150* is a more traditional strategy title, but it takes the genre even further than it has been before.

PUBLISHER Mattel Interactive • 0144 424 6333



C&C: RED ALERT 2 **PCZ #95 • 79%**

✦ After the disappointment of *Tiberian Sun* we weren't expecting much from this sequel, but we were pleasantly surprised. *RA2* manages to mix a believable story line with enhanced gameplay and extremely versatile units. An entertaining sequel.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

DEUS EX

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #93 • 94%

✦ Warren Spector takes the finer elements of *Half-Life*, *System Shock 2* and *Thief* and weaves an RPG of complex beauty that revolutionises computer games. A fascinating sci-fi plot and complete player freedom are just some of the reasons why *Deus Ex* is such a landmark wonder.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
 • 020 8636 3000



SYSTEM SHOCK 2

PCZ #80 • 91%

✦ Definitely one of the most compelling, original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully mix the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it in the house on your own with the lights off to prove how hard you are.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE - REDEMPTION

PCZ #92 • 89%

✦ This amazing RPG is a treat to play. An epic storyline, tactical combat and great acting and music more than make up for the fact that it's a linear hack 'n' slash game at heart.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000



PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

PCZ #87 • 87%

✦ An incredible game from Black Isle, creators of *Baldur's Gate*. It's a dark, adult scorcher of an RPG. Moreover, the character development is the best we've seen in any game of its kind and the story is compelling, with well-scripted dialogue.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



BALDUR'S GATE II

PCZ #96 • 85%

✦ The original *Baldur's Gate* was hailed as one of the best story-driven role-playing games ever. Although this sequel is not vastly different, it is bigger, better and extremely addictive. *Baldur's Gate II* is a must for all RPG fans.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



FINAL FANTASY VII

PCZ #66 • 80%

✦ Despite the recent release of *FFVIII*, we still rate this earlier episode in the series above it. The story is better, there are more subgames and the whole thing is more involving, especially if you like Japanese-style cartoony graphics. And it should be out on budget soon.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000



FALLOUT 2

PCZ #71 • 79%

✦ Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you liked the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper and one of the best RPGs money can buy.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



DIABLO II

PCZ #93 • 72%

✦ Blizzard might have repackaged the original *Diablo* and produced an even bigger version with the same graphics and gameplay, but its fans aren't complaining. It's already one of the hottest and biggest-selling games ever.
PUBLISHER Havas Interactive • 0118 920 9100



ICEWIND DALE

PCZ #93 • 75%

✦ Despite the introduction of larger enemies, *Icewind Dale* is little more than an add-on pack for *Baldur's Gate*. It looks the same and it plays the same, which isn't surprising since it's made by the same people. Very good, but we'll wait for *BG2*.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



ODIUM

PCZ #87 • 70%

✦ Imagine an RPG in the style of *Final Fantasy* with battle sequences à la *X-COM* and you'll have a pretty good idea of what *Oidium* is like. The story is set in a European city populated by UN soldiers and a variety of monsters. In short, it's curiously compelling and it will keep you hooked for a while.
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

ACTION/ADVENTURES

GRIM FANDANGO

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #71 • 88%

✦ If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. Sublime graphics and genuine humour ensure it's a classic of its genre. A word of warning: it's bloody hard and, if your mind doesn't work laterally, you'll be playing it until the day you die.
PUBLISHER LucasArts
 • 020 7368 2255



BUDGET

DISCWORD NOIR

PCZ #79 • 87%

✦ Although the point-and-click adventure genre is dying, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games and is all the better for it in our opinion, particularly if you're not a fan of Terry Pratchett's zany, off-the-wall humour. Don't miss it.
PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7258 3791



SEVERANCE: BLADE OF DARKNESS

PCZ #98 • 87%

✦ Anyone who doesn't mind being splattered with the kind of gore rarely seen outside of *Soldier Of Fortune* will find much to like in *Severance*. But it stands out from the usual hack 'n' slasher with its amazing engine and console-style combos.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814 132



THE NOMAD SOUL

PCZ #83 • 86%

✦ Distinctly odd, but original nonetheless, *The Nomad Soul* is a huge, intricate world populated by lap-dancers and David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost manages to pull it off.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



HITMAN: CODENAME 47

PCZ #98 • 85%

✦ Bringing back memories of *Leon* and *Day Of The Jackal*, *Hitman* recreates the cool excitement of carrying out a contract. Snipe from rooftops, disguise yourself in your victims uniform and walk away from explosions with calm elegance.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



BLAIR WITCH VOL 1: RUSTIN PARR

PCZ #96 • 84%

✦ As well as being a truly scary action/horror title, this is one of the finest action/adventure games we've played. The suspense is incredible, and a constant stream of jump-out-of-your-seat moments will leave you with a distinct lack of clean underwear.
PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

PCZ #84 • 83%

✦ LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for its latest *Indy*, with the adventure elements still in place. Not bad, but not for traditionalists.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000



DEEP SPACE NINE: THE FALLEN

PCZ #98 • 82%

✦ It's not often a game with little promise on paper surprises us so nicely. *DS9* is a third-person action/adventure that offers you the chance to control Sisko, Kira or Worf. Gameplay is different for each character, which provides longevity in spades.
PUBLISHER Simon & Schuster • 01256 707767



METAL GEAR SOLID

PCZ #96 • 82%

✦ Although it's been ported pretty much identically from the console version (with a few graphical improvements), *MGS*'s tense gameplay, well-designed levels and variety of challenging bosses makes it stand out from the majority of similar PC titles.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



MESSIAH

PCZ #85 • 81%

✦ Shiny's wonderful shooter features a chubby cherub, but also a bunch of whores and lots of gratuitous swearing. As Bob, under-age agent of God, you must possess people's bodies and, like a good and typically hypocritical Christian, kill everything that gets in your way.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

RACING GAMES

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2.0

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #98 • 86%

★ With all the rally games available it was always going to be interesting to see how 2.0 would fare. Unsurprisingly, it blows away the competition. The graphics are superb, the detail all-encompassing and the car handles beautifully. If you have been waiting patiently for the definitive rally game, this is it.

PUBLISHER Codemasters
• 01926 814132



MIDTOWN MADNESS 2

PCZ #96 • 84%

★ Buckle up for some high-speed driving action, as you race around the streets of London and San Francisco in this sequel. You won't find a more entertaining arcade driving game. The original *MM* was a belter, but with more cars and races, and improved controls, *MM2* is the new daddy.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



F1 CHAMPIONSHIP: SEASON 2000

PCZ #97 • 82%

★ While lacking the detailed realism of *GP3*, EA's latest F1 offering provides more fun and adrenaline pumping moments than any other PC F1 game. With its mixture of arcade action and realism it is both accurate and easy to pick up.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549 442



LE MANS 24 HOURS

PCZ #87 • 81%

★ Although not quite as challenging as the race it's based on, *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a driving game for skillful players who know their brakes from their elbows. You can even get involved in a rewarding career mode, culminating in the famous race itself.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199



GRAND PRIX 3

PCZ #94 • 80%

★ This F1 title displays all the customary Crammond perfectionism. The detail is amazing, which makes it all the more puzzling as to why there is no team work. Don't expect much more than a 3D accelerated *GP2*, but if that's what you're after you'll love it.

PUBLISHER Hasbro Interactive • 020 8569 1234



INSANE

PCZ #97 • 78%

★ Primarily an online racing game, *Insane* allows you and your friends to indulge in some off-road racing mayhem in a range of different vehicles. Its wide selection of races will have you in hysterics, but the novelty does wear off pretty quickly.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE 2000

PCZ #90 • 78%

★ Not as good as hooking up with your mates at the arcade, but still a damn good conversion of a damn fine game. Forget realism and concentrate on flinging your car around the track as fast as you can. Who needs depth when racing is this exciting?

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



RALLY MASTERS

PCZ #89 • 77%

★ Rally games tend to blend into one another quite seamlessly. After all, the cars look exactly the same and they go round the same tracks. *Rally Masters*, however, offers the all-important feel of a great driving game together with loads of options and some tasty graphics.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199



TOCA 2

PCZ #76 • 76%

★ Predictably, Codemasters has gone and done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrolheads. Graphically, it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it definitely is.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

PCZ #84 • 75%

★ Close, but no *McRae*. That was the verdict from the boy Hill on this new racer. It looks fantastic and the on-screen Ordnance Survey map is a nice touch, but it's let down by some poor camera angles and unnecessarily solid obstacles. Ouch.

PUBLISHER Actualise • 01625 855015

FLIGHT SIMULATORS

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #99 • 89%

NEWENTRY Allow yourself to be immersed in one of the most exciting and realistic combat flight sims. The graphics and general gameplay aren't groundbreaking, but *Battle Of Britain* is one of the best examples of a game that is capable of transporting you right into the cockpit. Tally ho!

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive
• 020 8343 7337



FALCON 4

PCZ #72 • 89%

★ We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that, for once, we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* features incredible 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure that leaves the competition standing still.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893



B-17 FLYING FORTRESS: THE MIGHTY 8TH

PCZ #96 • 87%

★ *B17* reproduces the experience of piloting a WWII bomber. Everything's covered, from planning missions to dropping bombs. A must for WWII and realism freaks.

PUBLISHER Hasbro Interactive/Microprose • 01454 893 893



COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2

PCZ #97 • 87%

★ If WWII dog fighting is your thing, then this is the game you have been waiting for. Its excellent user interface, engrossing campaigns, intense combat and superb graphics all come together to create a true sense of excitement and realism.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



BUDGET

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR

PCZ #68 • 85%

★ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece may seem a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you who are looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this title.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633



F/A-18E SUPER HORNET

PCZ #83 • 84%

★ If you like your flight sims to be realistic with a great big capital 'R', look no further. In fact, this game is so life-like that the US navy has adopted it for promotional work and ground-based familiarity training. But make sure you watch out for friendly fire.

PUBLISHER Titus Software • 01926 335 5400



MIG ALLEY

PCZ #80 • 84%

★ *Mig Alley* gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't let that put you off. If you're willing to put in the work, this title will repay you with a wealth of excellent in-flight graphics and a selection of brilliant mission-planning elements.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337



FLIGHT UNLIMITED III

PCZ #82 • 83%

★ For all those sim aficionados who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than as a lame excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this (along with the *Flight Sim* series) is an object of worship and devotion. It certainly deserves high praise.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



CRIMSON SKIES

PCZ #96 • 82%

★ This game moves away from the detailed simulation mould of so many plane games, and concentrates more on all out dogfighting. It's instantly gratifying, fast paced, entertaining and adds a much needed twist of humour to an otherwise serious genre.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



FLANKER 2.0

PCZ #85 • 82%

★ Hardcore pilots with a taste for Yankee blood need look no further. Extremely hard to fly, but very rewarding nevertheless, *Flanker 2.0* recreates the real thing in minute detail. However, be warned: hours of practice are needed before you can go off shooting stuff.

PUBLISHER SSI • 01293 651300

SPORTS

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #98 • 88%

Pro Skater 2 is an unbelievable experience. The sense of speed and balance is uncanny, and there is almost as much satisfaction to be had from pulling off an acrobatic new move as there is from watching your skater break every bone as he smashes his face against the concrete. Oh, and the music's fantastic too.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000



VIRTUAL POOL 3

NEW ENTRY

VP3 has the perfect physics and graphics of its predecessors plus some cool new features, including multiplayer options, career mode and training videos by pool diva Jeanette Lee. And with 18 different pool games it's a must for pool fanatics.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423 666

PCZ #99 • 85%



FIFA 2001

Once again the FIFA franchise gets its yearly make over. There are only minor improvements over the last version, but it's still the best football game for the PC. The player animations and presentation are immaculate.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PCZ #97 • 83%



SUPREME SNOWBOARDING

Snowboarding is not a sport you'd expect to captivate a PC audience, but this game gives as exhilarating an experience as you could hope for without breaking a leg. Oh, and all the streetwise attitude you'd expect, of course.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 8738 8199

PCZ #85 • 83%



PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF 2000

It's really not much different from last year's title, but this edition has enough subtle tweaks to make it a worthy purchase. It also has the best control system we've seen in what is definitely the best golf game available.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

PCZ #92 • 82%



NBA LIVE 2000

As slick as always, but what makes this special is the inclusion of teams from the '50s onwards, comedy haircuts and all. It's not quite as immediate as *Inside Drive*, it's a more complete simulation of the sport all round.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PCZ #85 • 82%



OPEN TENNIS 2000

Not since *Super Tennis* on the SNES have we had so much fun hitting a ball back and forth over a net. After some initial reluctance, the whole office stopped fragging and started lobbing. Incredibly playable and unsurpassed in multiplayer.

PUBLISHER Cryo • 0121 250 5070

PCZ #92 • 81%



JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL 2

The finest snooker simulation on the PC. Chalk your cue and take on the PC or your mates and, when you're tired of the baize, you can move round and have a go on the fully-featured darts board instead. Saves going down to the Working Men's Club.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive • 020 7368 2255

PCZ #68 • 78%



ACTUA SOCCER 3

If you can't get on with *FIFA* then *Actua* is the second port of call for footy fans. It plays a faster game and there's a good range of options and a huge number of teams to play against, which goes a long way to helping maintain its shelf life.

PUBLISHER Grenlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

PCZ #72 • 72%



MILLENNIUM GAMES

Everyone remembers the good old days of Daley Thompson's joystick-wagging *Decathlon*. Sergei Bubka might not have quite the same pedigree, but this athletics simulation is loads of fun nonetheless and should keep you entertained for a while.

PUBLISHER Midas • 01782 633500

PCZ #93 • 65%

MANAGEMENT

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER: 00/01



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #96 • 93%

This update for the greatest management game ever, sees the series improve yet again. New features include increased media involvement, greater backroom staff participation, a live league table and more player information. All this adds to the game's addictiveness, which will once again drain you of your free time and take over your life.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



THE SIMS

This game offers a staggering amount of possibilities. Essentially, you create your own person, or family, and guide them through the ups and downs of life. It's the definitive docu-soap and makes for compelling gameplay.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PCZ #87 • 85%



CAESAR III

Starting from scratch, you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens. So what? So it's utterly absorbing and probably the most addictive god sim in existence.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

PCZ #70 • 84%



SIMCITY 3000

Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and new addicts alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442

PCZ #74 • 83%



ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

Pack out your own theme park with the most fiendish rides your imagination can conjure up. From rickety wooden dippers to *Nemesis*-style, white-knuckle gurners, *RT* is hugely addictive.

PUBLISHER Hasbro Interactive • 020 8569 1234

PCZ #75 • 82%

SPACE COMBAT

X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #82 • 87%

The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic from Germany, in which you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. The combat side of the gameplay may not be the best on offer, but with goods to trade and races to discover, it rewards patience with variety and months of play. This title is deeply hypnotic and beautiful, rather than tense and frenetic.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656



TERMINUS

Who says the days of independent bedroom programming are over? *Terminus* proves you can make a great game on your own if you have the talent and the passion. It just edges out *FreeSpace 2*.

PUBLISHER Vicarious Visions • www.vvisions.com

PCZ #93 • 86%

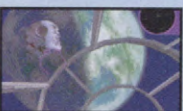


FREESPACE 2

Completely different from *X*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. It boasts a superb interface, epic story and amazing graphics, but it's a bit short-lived if you don't play online.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4222

PCZ #84 • 85%



X-WING: ALLIANCE

At last! Fly the Millennium Falcon in the final episode of the long-running *X-Wing* series. Certainly the best-looking *X-Wing* game to date, *Alliance* is slow at first, but boy does it pick up later on.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

PCZ #77 • 81%



STARLANCER

While *Starlancer* doesn't do anything startlingly new, it is a highly polished affair with compulsive gameplay and gorgeous visuals. A must for space sim fans.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

PCZ #91 • 80%

3D ACTION/STRATEGY

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS



BENCHMARK GAME

BUDGET

PCZ #79 • 90%

☛ You don't get a second chance in a real war, and *Hidden & Dangerous* is the game that comes closest to putting you in the middle of hell on earth. From the first mission it grabs you by the balls and doesn't let up until you're dead, with a bullet in the head. As a strategic shoot 'em up, games don't get any harder, or more compelling and atmospheric.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



SWAT 3

☛ Artificial intelligence doesn't get any better than this. Add some truly spectacular graphics, an ingenious command interface and edge-of-your-seat gameplay, and you've got a top title.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

PCZ #85 • 87%



GIANTS

☛ This mammoth and original 3D action/strategy game, includes third-person shooter, RTS, RPG and real-time combat elements. It also features a superbly balanced multiplayer option.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

PCZ #95 • 85%



ROGUE SPEAR

☛ We loved *Rainbow Six* and, although this follow-up can't match *Hidden & Dangerous* for intensity, it's a superb romp through the world of terrorism. Pick your team, kit them out and plan your missions carefully.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

PCZ #84 • 83%



BATTLEZONE 2

☛ Stunning graphics and a winning blend of strategy and first-person action in this sequel to the highly acclaimed *Battlezone*. The fight for world domination has never looked so good.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

PCZ #84 • 79%

ONLINE ONLY

COUNTER-STRIKE V1.0



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #98 • 93%

☛ The most widely tested game ever finally comes out of its Beta stage. Most people had reservations about the new models, but you soon get used to their camp animations and begin to appreciate how much more detailed they are. You can expect to see the game improving, as the V1.0 tag suggests there will be plenty of updates in the future.

DOWNLOAD www.counter-strike.net



EVERQUEST: THE RUINS OF KUNARK

PCZ #92 • 90%

☛ The combat-oriented online RPG of choice just got a whole lot better. Chris Anderson has spent months casting spells with hundreds of other people and never stops talking about it, so there must be something special going on.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000



ALLEGIANCE

PCZ #91 • 82%

☛ The first true online only space combat sim, *Allegiance* is a complex yet rewarding beast. Now you can fly around with hundreds of others, co-ordinating strategies and establishing chains of command.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

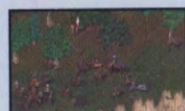


ASHERON'S CALL

PCZ #88 • 76%

☛ The graphics and freedom to do almost anything make this title a commendable addition to the genre. But, as in real life, it's a great tragedy you can't kill other humans as most of the ones you meet deserve a good kicking.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000



ULTIMA ONLINE: RENAISSANCE

PCZ #92 • 75%

☛ It's been at the top for a while, but now that the sequel is on the way the original looks dated. *Renaissance* isn't enough of an improvement for it to compete with *EverQuest* — online RPGs are moving on.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PCZONE ALL-TIME CLASSICS



DOOM

☛ This is the game that needs no introduction. Without *Doom* we wouldn't have had *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament* or *Half-Life*. Every time you play a first-person shooter you should take five minutes to pay homage to the game that changed the world as we know it. *Doom*, we thank you.



ULTIMA VII

☛ Still the best of all the *Ultima* games, and probably the finest RPG ever seen on a PC. The graphics might be old-hat, but the gameplay certainly isn't. *Ultima VII* blends exploration and character interaction, and it's the last title in the *Ultima* series to give complete party control.



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

☛ We reviewed this game back in the first issue of *PC ZONE*. It was a landmark RPG then and it's still a landmark RPG now, although the graphics obviously look a bit tired and dated. Do we think it's the best RPG ever? Almost, but not quite. Cast your eyes up the mag a couple of inches for the answer to that question.



DUNE II

☛ If you know your strategy, you'll know that *Dune II* is the game that's done more than any of its rivals to define the genre as we know it today. The 2000 update was disappointing, but only because it didn't add anything new. The fact that it still plays better than many new titles is testament to its staying power.



SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER

☛ EA's *FIFA* series might look the part, but we're convinced that *Sensible Soccer* was and is the ultimate example of gameplay over presentation. With its famous top-down view, *Sensible* offers fast frantic action that does more to replicate the real-life game than any of its predecessors.



UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN

☛ This game came out of nowhere and took the world by storm. Compelling strategy, tense turn-based battles and a myriad of research options made this the most addictive game ever upon its arrival. Subsequent sequels were just as addictive, but this is the game that originally captured our hearts.



MAGIC CARPET

☛ Drawing gasps of amazement from everyone who saw it, Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet* was one of the most original and inventive games to be released in the early days of 3D. So original, in fact, that it never got the recognition it deserved. We still think the blend of action and strategy was spot-on.



WING COMMANDER

☛ The original space combat game spawned the first big-budget PC series. In fact, the *Wing Commander* series was so hugely successful that they went and made a film. Inevitably, this was absolute rubbish and the public stayed away in their millions. Will these people never learn?



TOMB RAIDER

☛ She might be getting a bit rusty round the gills, but when Lara first bounced onto the small screen, we fell in love with her instantly. 3D action adventure games haven't been the same since and at the time nothing could touch it. Do you remember your first encounter with the T-Rex?



CIVILIZATION

☛ The original and some say the best turn-based strategy game. When *Civilization* first appeared, it was hailed correctly as the first game that changed and evolved depending on how you played it. Recent versions have presented more of the same, but in this case that is definitely no bad thing.

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BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points

- If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- You need at least a Pentium 266 with 32Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95/98 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium II 300 with 64Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are 3D-accelerator only.

DISCLAIMER

- This disc has been thoroughly tested at all stages of its production. However, it is always wise to use a virus checker on any software before running it.
- Dennis Publishing Limited cannot accept any responsibility for any loss, disruption or damage to your data or your computer system (including hardware) which may occur while using either the disc or programs and data on it.

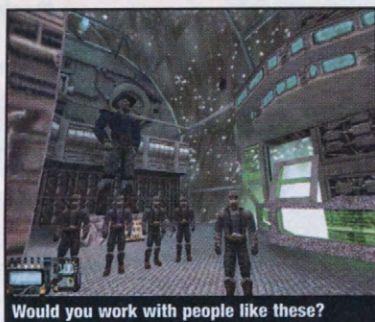


DEMOS

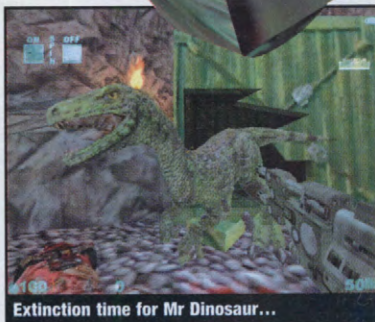
CDZONE 1



Why doesn't Richard Branson just give it up?



Would you work with people like these?



Extinction time for Mr Dinosaur...

GUNMAN CHRONICLES

Havas Interactive

Gunman Chronicles has been much criticised for being a *Half-Life* mod dressed up as a full game, but as a quick bit of shooting fun you can't really fault it that much. Essentially a sort of *Half-Life* in space with dinosaurs and weird weapons, *Gunman* won't strain your brain cells too much, but it does provide some good enemy AI and nice scripted moments to keep you on your toes.

You have to admire Rewolf the team that developed the game, originally intended as a mod until Valve came along and stuck some cash in, if only for being a group of young enthusiasts scattered across the world. There is more than the engine here to remind you of its true origins: even the story has some bearing in the *Half-Life* universe and involves a similar brand of aliens called the Xenomes. This demo offers enough for you to make up your own mind about its merits. It starts off on a space station – where, predictably, things start to go wrong – and includes a detailed tutorial on some of the major weapons.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard

SACRIFICE

Interplay

There's no doubt that *Sacrifice* is a visual treat, heavy on the special effects and flashy lights. We'd go so far as to say it's mind candy, if we were the kind of games magazine that endorsed such clichés. You play a wizard stranded in a mysterious world after inadvertently destroying your own, and we all know how easily that can happen.

You find that this new world is ruled by five gods who bicker among themselves and decide to adopt you as their new plaything. The demo teaches you how to get to grips with wizarding and summoning creatures to do your dirty work for you. You then get to test this out in various missions for two of the gods – Persephone, goddess of life, and Stratos, god of air.

Despite various claims, *Sacrifice* is much more of a straight RTS than an action shooter, and while the full version of the game has a tendency to be rather formulaic mission wise, this demo is an ideal good-for-an-hour-or-so hit.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard



You just can't stop the grooving.



Convert nasties into innocent blue souls.



Gambling. A mug's game.



Up the Arse.



Looks comfy.



I feel sick.



But don't you just love it?



Faster buddy, faster.



Wow, that looks interesting.



Around and around we go...

MICROSOFT CASINO

Microsoft

Most people can't afford a trip to Blackpool for a spot of gambling, never mind Vegas. So here is your chance to squander money you don't actually have without getting beaten up in the process.

The full game offers a range of casino fun: Blackjack, Baccarat, two varieties of poker, roulette, plenty of slot machines and, of course, craps. For this demo you will have to content yourself with good old Blackjack. Still, it has a full assortment of "delightful" voices for the other people at your table, and you can win complimentary meals and drinks depending on how well you play. Amazing.

Controls: Mouse

FIFA 2001

EA Sports

EA's yearly update adds yet more fine-tuning to the gameplay and more improvements in the graphics department. Among the new features is a useful power bar that gives you greater control over each shot.

The demo comes with a Premiership clash between bitter rivals Arsenal and Man Utd. Although the AI is better than ever and provides a balanced match, *FIFA* is still a game that should be played with a friend, so invite one over and have a good kick-around before deciding if this is different enough from *Euro 2000* to tempt you to shell out more money.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

IN COLD BLOOD

Revolution

Lots of Brits and Rusksies shooting at each other in this not-at-all Bond-esque adventure game. You play John Cord, who's nothing at all like James Bond in the least (honest), on the 'raid on the land train mission' about halfway through the main game.

Your job, should you choose to accept it, is to rescue the lovely Chi Ling Cheung and discover the secrets she holds, by making your way through the train picking off guards and solving a few puzzles. The control system takes some getting used to, so don't be surprised if you spend a lot of your time playing dead.

Controls: Keyboard

NASCAR RACING 4

Sierra

Racing for people who've got a yearning to go round and round in circles is given an upgrade, with a brand-new engine that provides loads more interaction between your car and the left-turn-only tracks. This translates into being able to get air, take rolls and have tyres that actually spin around. Now that's what we call futuristic.

However, mocking aside, *F1* gets slammed for providing no overtaking, whereas with *Nascar* you're guaranteed to be passing your opponents every other second. Concentration is a must unless you want to get familiar with the aforementioned rolls.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad



Kick him, kick him.



"My legs, my legs! I can't feel my legs!"



I can see my house from here.



Time to blow up some pyramids.

RUGBY 2001

EA Sports

This is strictly one for followers of the sport. Despite being a well put together game, you can't get away from the fact that most people find rugby union incredibly boring. (You can't tell that Mark Hill's a rugby league fan, can you? - Ed).

The visuals are a little on the plain side, but all the rules are in place for a decent scrum. This demo includes an international game between England and Australia.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

MOHO

Take 2

In the future, rogue androids have been imprisoned and de-legged, their limbs replaced with a giant ball connected to their bodies by a laser, making escape from prison a bit tricky. This demo allows you to play as two of the imprisoned androids, forced to compete in MoHo, a *Roller Ball* meets *The Running Man*-style entertainment show.

Roll your way around challenges to become the champion and win back your freedom... oh, and your legs.

Controls: Keyboard

CLOSE COMBAT: INVASION NORMANDY

Atomic Games

The fifth installment in the *Close Combat* RTS series, this demo gives you a tutorial and one playable introductory mission to play at being soldiers.

Unfortunately, neither the graphics nor the engine have changed from *Close Combat IV*, so it's strictly for addicts of the series. Not a patch on *Sudden Strike*, but fans of the series will no doubt lap it up regardless.

Controls: Keyboard and mouse

DELTA FORCE: LAND WARRIOR

Novalogic

Play one mission as agent 'Gas Can', who's called in when the Armed People's Front starts causing trouble in Egypt and kidnapping tourists.

Good fun in a would-be *Counter Strike* kind of a way. Get in, get the hostages and get out again, preferably with maximum bloodshed. You'll have to use a combination of tactics, stealth and sharp shooting if you're going to get out of this one alive.

Controls: Keyboard and mouse

CDZONE 2



QUAKE III TEAM ARENA

Activision

A long time in the making, and not the massive leap forward we were expecting, *Team Arena* is still a worthy official add-on from the id team. Check out our review on page 58 for the full low-down. This demo incorporates all of the three new game types, One Flag CTF (self-explanatory), Harvester (frag players and collect the skulls that are deposited in their wake) and Overload (destroy an obelisk located in the heart of the enemy's base), and you can try out any of these on the single map that's included.

You can also sample the delights of the new Proximity Launcher, which enables you to leave explosives scattered around in the hope that someone's stupid enough to get too close. Power-ups are one of the biggest new features and there are three in the demo: Guard (200 health and 200 armour), Ammo-Regen (which helps you hold on to your favourite weapon) and Doubler (like the old Quad Damage, but not as good). And that's about it, apart from the new Kamikaze item, which turns you into a suicide bomber – in fact, it's worth firing up the demo just to check this out.

This is a standalone demo, which means that you don't need a full copy of *Quake III* installed to give it a whirl. If you've got *Quake III*, you don't need to install it in your main *Arena* folder. Just accept the defaults and get to work.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard



ON THE CD 'AVIN A LARFF

Brooker's wind-ups

Charlie Brooker decides to give tech support departments a hard time. You can play these classic audio files direct from the CD interface, or drag them from the CD on to your hard drive. Check out www.superkaylo.com for more of his twisted genius, and our Secret History feature (page 104) for more from our shady past.

ON THE CD PATCHES

The latest patches for your favourite games

Championship Manager 00/01 v3.86 with update – installing this will overwrite all of your existing player data

Quake III Arena Point Release v1.27g

Homeworld Cataclysm 1.0.0.1
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2000 v1.4
Hitman: Codename 47 Service Pack 1a
Diablo II v1.04b

ON THE CD MODWATCH

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Scientist Hunt v1.0
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Frontline Force v1.1
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Lambda Arena v1.0

ON THE CD 100 MAPS

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We've got over 100 maps to help you get more out of your favourite games. Got a copy of *Unreal Tournament*, *Quake III*, *Counter-Strike*, *Voyager* or *Soldier Of Fortune*? Then we've got something for you. Just unzip the maps into the relevant directories or refer to the read-me files inside for specific installation instructions.



No use looking at your shoes now.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001

EA

Have you ever felt the need to shout: "I'm Tiger Woods"? Then you're a very sad individual. Everyone else should fire up this demo and find out what it's like to be the best golfer in the world, across this single hole par four on the Sugarloaf course.

You can whack the ball using the traditional three-part Click Swing, or by utilising the more realistic and harder to master Pro Swing. This simulates a real golf club with the mouse – move your mouse in any direction to increase the power of the shot and play the ball by sweeping the mouse back the way you came. You'll get there eventually.

Strangely, you can only play the hole in single-player mode, which is a bit of shame, as there's nothing better than playing against your mates. If you want to experience PC golf as it's meant to be played, you'll have to go out and buy the full version. Make sure you've checked out our review – on page 67 – before parting with your cash though.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard



Err... is there a pilot in there?



Take me higher, baby.

ACES HIGH V1.04

HiTech Creations

As we went to press, V1.05 of this flight sim was released. This included the option for players to man anti-aircraft guns at sea and on land and more than 20 WWII aircraft. But you can still enjoy this version, which includes offline play and free eight-player head-to-head mode. We'll run the latest version next issue.

If you want to play online, download the latest files (full version is 14Mb) and for two weeks you can play free, after which it'll cost you US\$29.99 a month.

Go to www.hitechcreations.com for the latest news, features and the full manual.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard/joystick (recommended)



Glide to be here.



Look at those textures.

MICRO-FLIGHT

Ilan Papini

From the makers of *Hang Sim* – easily the finest hang-gilding simulation ever – comes this all-encompassing sim of low-speed flight, allowing you to take to the sky in anything from ultralights to trikes and paraplanes, plus a few other strange flying machines.

This demo, as well as the full game, features a realistic flight model, weather that simulates the flow of air, thermals and real topographical data. If you like what you see, you can order the full game for \$25 from www.hang-sim.com/mf.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard/joystick (recommended)



Watch out for the passing swimmers.



A boat. Last Tuesday.

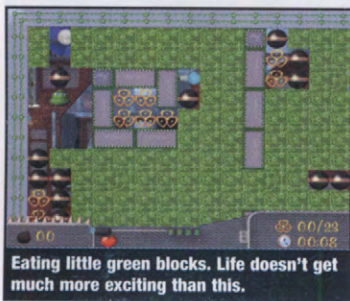
JETBOAT SUPERCHAMPS 2

Small Rockets

Watersports – not everyone's cup of tea, but if you're bored of the conventional then we reckon it's got to be worth a try. Alternatively, you could check this out.

Take control of a floating thing and try to steer it across choppy waters, through checkpoints, over jumps and safely home before the other floaty things that are racing against you.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad



Eating little green blocks. Life doesn't get much more exciting than this.

GREENFACE

Take 2

You know the type of puzzle game where you can't stop playing, and you're not quite sure why? *GreenFace* is one of those, and the object is very simple: place explosives strategically to enable you to get from one level to another. Of course, there are loads of enemies who are hell-bent on stopping you reaching your objective and you've either got to avoid or divert these.

Highly addictive and rewarding, this is one you shouldn't start playing on a rainy day. It's a shame the game's creators can't spell.

Controls: Keyboard



Yep, those cars are dirty alright.

DIRT TRACK RACING: SPRINT CARS

Take 2

A typical racing game this may be, but there are two things worth thinking about if you're in the market for a new driving game. Firstly, *DTR* has a fair old stab at incorporating *Gran Turismo*-style gameplay as you pick and choose which competitions to enter and spend the prize money on upgrades to your fleet of cars. Secondly, Take 2 released *DTR* as a mid-priced game, bundling the *Sprint Cars* expansion in for free.

So before making a decision, why not take this demo on a test drive first?

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad/wheel



Simple and hugely addictive. But then you probably already know that.

ALHADEMIC TETRIS

Alhademic Group

If you haven't got a version of *Tetris* on your PC then you're missing out on a slice of retro-history. One of the finest and most addictive puzzle games ever invented, the beauty lies in its simplicity.

Revolve different-shaped blocks and fit them together to make complete lines, which then disappear. Hit the top of the screen and you're a goner.

Controls: Keyboard



Not quite madness.

MOTOCROSS MANIA

Take 2

Take to the skies once more in a game that has no shame in ripping the name from flag-bearer *Motocross Madness*. Two tracks are provided in this demo, one motocross and one supercross, and both can be played in either single race, practice, Baja and freestyle modes.

You can also take a quick squizz inside the garage, although the ability to buy and sell upgrades is only available in the full version. Multiplayer is available though, which means you should be able to extract a fair bit of play from what's on offer.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

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RETROZONE

MARCH 1993

Step through the mists of time as we take a look back at gaming's past

LOOKING BACK Richie Shoemaker & Dave Woods



DUNE 2

The spice of strategy

Whoever thought of the term 'real-time strategy' should really have trademarked it. If they had, they would, over the course of the last seven years, have earned enough from royalty payments to buy a small island – Australia, say. If anyone can find a more recent PC games mag that excludes those three words, then you've obviously too much time on your hands.

Looking back at the review of *Dune 2* in PCZ #1, the term real-

time strategy is noticeable by its absence – easy to understand when you realise *Dune 2* was the first ever real-time strategy game. Well, maybe not, but it's certainly the game that, more than any other, has shaped the genre as it stands today.

It was one of the first strategy games designed to be fast-paced, easy to learn and fun to play. And it most certainly was all of those things. Question is, would *Command & Conquer* have happened without it?

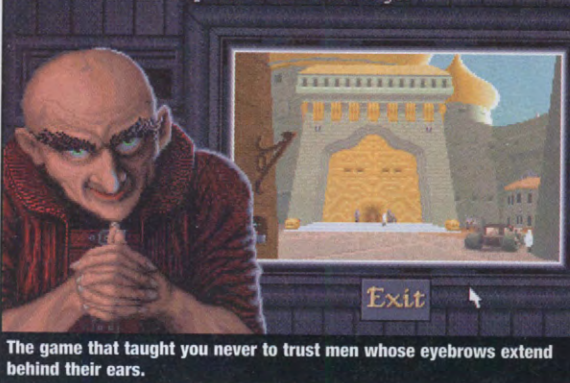


My, how things change...

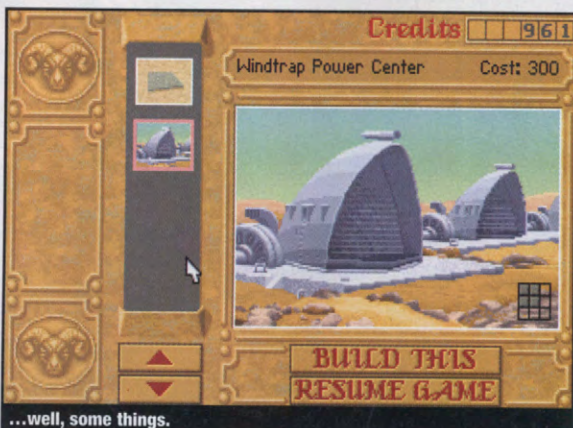
HEADLINES: MARCH 1993

PC ZONE, the UK's first PC games magazine hits the shelves • Ben Johnson is banned from racing for life • Two 10-year-old boys are charged with the murder of James Bulger • Gunfight between US agents and religious cult in Waco, Texas • Fidel Castro says Hillary Clinton is a beautiful woman

Utilize your Palace's special option whenever possible, for it costs nothing and it will recharge.



The game that taught you never to trust men whose eyebrows extend behind their ears.



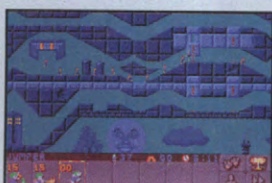
...well, some things.

THE BEST OF THE REST



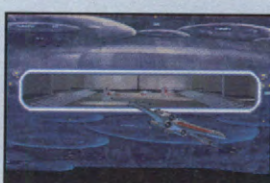
ULTIMA UNDERWORLD II (PC)

Although this sequel to Warren Spector's original wasn't nearly as ground breaking, it was arguably a better and certainly a bigger game. Most importantly of all, *Underworld II* went down in history as the first-ever PC ZONE Classic. A far cry from last year's *Ascension*, an inglorious end to the series, for sure.



LEMMINGS 2: THE TRIBES (Atari ST/Amiga/PC)

OK, so it wasn't much different to the first outing, but still a cracking sequel where the aim was to guide the green-haired ones to the end of each devious level. Though technically bettered in last year's *Lemmings Revolution*, *Lemmings 2* came out before everyone got sick of the series and the subsequent sequels went rubbish.



X-WING (PC)

This, the first *Star Wars* game on the PC, was a long time coming and to be honest it wasn't, technologically at least, particularly stunning, with plain-coloured polygons rather than textured. The gameplay, however, was spot on and even though the music consisted of Adlib-style warbles, everything else hit all the right notes.



VIRTUA FIGHTER (Arcade)

1993 wasn't exactly a golden year for arcade machines, but as the first beat 'em up to use polygons, *Virtua Fighter* was an eye-opening, if slightly clunky, game. It came from the mind of Yu Suzuki, responsible for other seminal works such as *Space Harrier* and *Hang-On*, and the more recent *Shenmue* on the Dreamcast.



STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION (Pinball)

Admittedly, this wasn't a patch on the classic *White Water* table, but it's still around today, which points to the fact that it's an eminently playable and well-constructed pinball table. Another reason for its success was the stirring music and the largest collection of voice talent ever put together for a pinball table. Make it so, indeed.

« PAST FORWARD »»

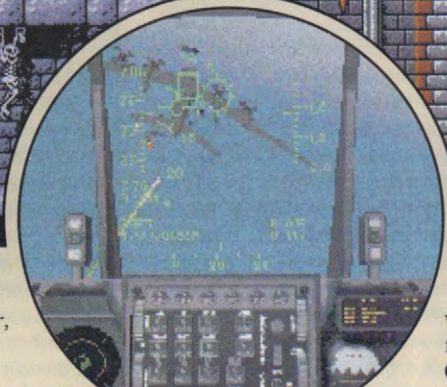
GAMING NEWS FOR MARCH '93



Fantasy World Dizzy — coming to PC.



Codemasters' pre-Colin McRae hard-boiled hero.



Strike Commander, delayed again. Where have we heard this before?

★ The gaming world was still waiting for the much-hyped *Strike Commander*, the action-based flight sim spin-off of the phenomenally successful *Wing Commander* series. The game eventually took to the skies in the summer and required a pretty meaty 486 PC (top of the range at the time) to run it.

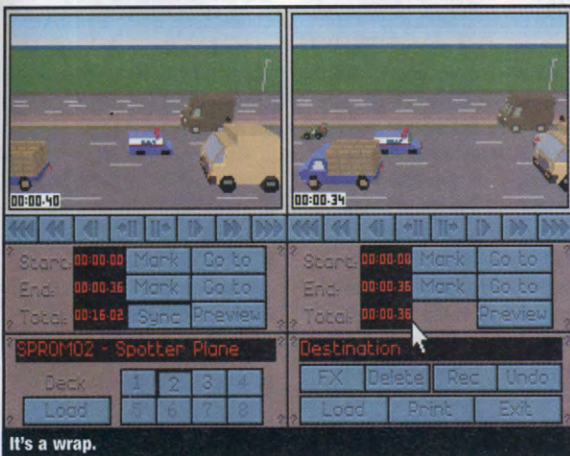
★ UK budget developer/publisher Codemasters announced it was going to start developing PC games and, true to form, it was sticking to cheapo games. Its first release would be *The Dizzy Collection*, a set of four PC

conversions of such 8- and 16-bit classics as *Fast Food* and *Fantasy World Dizzy*. How things change...

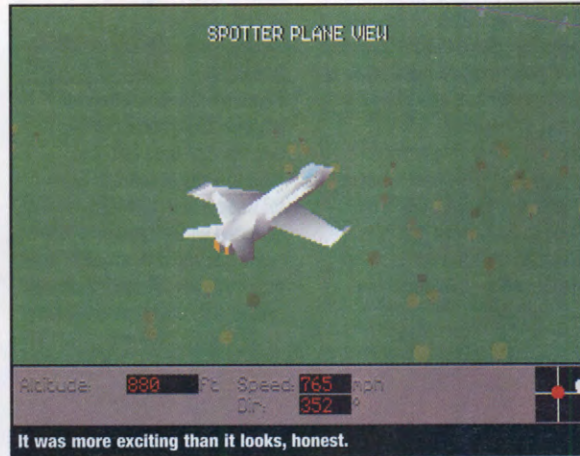
★ You may complain that games are expensive today, but back then your typical new release would set you back £45, with some PC games (*Stunt Island* included) costing as much as £49.99.

Even budget games were expensive, with Mindscape's Classic range retailing for £19.99.

★ As with DVD-ROM today, CD-ROM was the 'next big thing'. The days of swapping 3in floppy disks around — up to 12 or more for some games — were almost over. Of course, CD-ROM games were few and far between (about 20 were available), but on the way were six CD-based games from Psygnosis (one of which was *Microcosm*) and LucasArts (remember them?) planned to release *Rebel Assault* and *Maniac Mansion 2 (Day Of The Tentacle)* on CD.



It's a wrap.



It was more exciting than it looks, honest.

STUNT ISLAND

Will we ever see its like again?

While today we lament the demise of the flight sim, back in 1993 flight sims were all the rage. Just out were Rowan's *Reach For The Skies*, F-15 *Strike Eagle III* and Domark's *Harrier Jump Jet*, but the most original flight sim of them all

was about to appear. Set on a Pacific island, *Stunt Island* was a little bit different to the rest, in that flying was only a small part of the action.

It could be argued that *Stunt Island* wasn't a flight sim at all, more a 3D editing suite where you set up props, camera positions,

special effects and animations, flew one of 48 planes across replicas of Stonehenge, the Golden Gate Bridge and the like, and finally, edited your film.

Pull off the right stunts and show a good film and you earn cash, with which you can buy new planes and props until

you're crowned the best stunt pilot on the planet.

It wasn't that *Stunt Island* was the best flight sim ever (it wasn't), it was the fact that it was just so original, to the point that apart from perhaps the Director's Mode in *Driver*, there has been nothing like it before or since. Shame that.

ROSE-TINTED SPECS

Big money for very little action

The best PC money could buy was the last of the pre-Pentium PCs, a 486DX processor running at 66MHz. With a 120Mb hard drive, 4Mb RAM, 14in SVGA monitor mouse and a copy of Windows 3.1, this baby would set you back around £1,700 — and that's without a soundcard, speakers, games or a CD-ROM drive! And a single-speed, bottom-of-the-range CD-ROM drive would set you back a further £200.

Most PC players were content with a 386SX system, which with a SoundBlaster card, joystick, speakers and a couple of games would rip around £800 from your wallet.

Of course, you could always have plumped for a Megadrive, SNES, Atari Lynx or GameBoy...

TOP 5 1993

PC GAMES

- 1 X-WING
- 2 SLEEPWALKER
- 3 LEMMINGS 2: THE TRIBES
- 4 FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX
- 5 ULTIMA UNDERWORLD II

CONSOLE GAMES

- 1 LEMMINGS
- 2 SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2
- 3 PGA GOLF TOUR 2
- 4 SUPER MARIO KART
- 5 STREETS OF RAGE

Compiled by ChartTrack

EXTENDED PLAY

This month, a dose of blood 'n' guts mayhem has crept into the Extended Play pages with fans of wholesale slaughter given the opportunity to stain their monitors red with the in-yer-face gorefest *Soldier Of Fortune*

✦ EXTENDING YOUR PLAY Tony Lamb

TRY IT YOURSELF

ON THE CD On this month's cover CD we've got all the maps mentioned in these pages. Installation of these add-ons should be straightforward – most install to the `SOF/user/maps/dm` directory – but always double-check the author's .txt files for any special instructions as well as to find out who did the hard work! If you're new to *SOF*, remember to disable software firewalls such as ZoneAlarm – *SOF* won't work if they're active – and if you're running Bots then set your multiplayer options to "LAN Play Only".

“*Soldier Of Fortune* could be standard training material at Psychos 'R' Us, with classes showing students how to blast or machine gun their opponents into bloody lumps”

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Since its release, Raven's *Soldier Of Fortune* has quite rightly earned something of a reputation as the bloodiest first-person shooter around. It isn't as nice to look at as *Quake III*, or as rounded a game as *Unreal Tournament*, but if the opportunity to selectively blow off your enemies' limbs is more important to you than super-slick graphics then this is the game for you. In fact, *Soldier Of Fortune* could be standard training material at Psychos 'R' Us, with classes showing students how to stab, blast, barbecue or machine gun their opponents into bloody lumps. It's quite sick... which is part of its appeal, of course.

The background story (as if such a thing were needed) is that you are US Army Special Forces nutter John Mullins. You managed to survive three tours of duty in Vietnam without getting yourself killed, and having left the army you've set yourself up as a maniac for hire, travelling the world and leaving a trail of carnage and mutilated bodies behind you. In the game proper your task is to track down and eliminate a terrorist group, while in Deathmatch the aim is rather more simple – kill everything that moves.

Before looking at the maps however, a word about Bots (artificial players) in *SOF*. Basically, they're a bit more difficult to set up than in other shooters such as *Unreal Tournament* or *Quake*, and this, combined with a not-so-healthy online presence, has meant *SOF* simply hasn't been as popular as it could have been – so owners of the game must be crying out for help by now. Therefore, this month's add-on selection includes a few maps that you'll find online, one that has its own specific Bot file (yes, really), some other maps suitable for setting up for LAN mayhem and even a new Bot program that will beef up the game somewhat.

✦ Hidebot v1.1

Filename: hidebot11.zip
Size: 946Kb
Rating: ⚡⚡⚡⚡
Type: Improved BOT • Needs *SOF* Gold!
 Coming from Rich 'TheFatal' Whitehouse – author of the original *SOF* Gold Bot (and others) – the Hidebot is essential for use on both the maps included with the original game and most third-party maps that are equipped to run Bots (ie that have waypoint

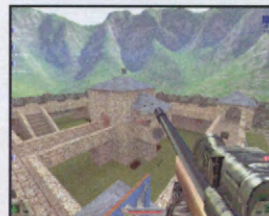
navigation data). It's highly configurable – see the .txt file for full details – and more dangerous than its predecessor. All you need to do is extract the whole thing to your *SOF* directory (a directory called "Hidebot" should appear as a new branch) and then create a new shortcut icon to your *SOF*.exe file. Next, change the properties of that shortcut to read "`<dir>:\sof\sof.exe +set console 1 +set game hidebot`", save the amendment and you're ready to go. Once *SOF* is running, go into the "Parental Lock" section and set Pure Server to "Enabled". That's about it.

✦ Snowblind

Filename: snowblind_all_modes.zip
Size: 803Kb
Rating: ⚡⚡⚡⚡
Type: All modes multiplayer • Runs Bots (NOT Hidebot)
 Snowblind is a medium-sized map with a mixture of buildings and outdoor areas. It's set in a night-time, arctic-style environment, so your surroundings are either brightly lit or steeped in gloom – with little in between. The vehicles dotted around add yet more hiding places for enemies to pop up from. Weapons, health and armour are in good supply, although the layout did mean that Bots had a tendency to congregate in a 'central courtyard' area. Note that this file has to have the .pak file installed into the \SOF\base directory or it won't work.

✦ Strongholds

Filename: Strongholds.exe + shbots.exe
Size: 1.8Mb + 37Kb
Rating: ⚡⚡⚡⚡
Type: CTF • Map-specific
 Bots apply
 A classic CTF-style map with two opposing castles with both tunnels and a river dividing the two. What sets this add-on apart is that as well as the map, there is a devoted bot file, which when installed will allow you to play the map with Bots, instead of having to set up a LAN. The Bots aren't the best you'll come across, but they're perfectly capable of giving you a run for your money. The map is well designed and would make a good online or LAN map too, with lots of weapons and health dotted around – even underwater. The tunnels and bridge make for good chokepoints, which lead to lots of frantic action, even snipers get their turn with the tunnel exits exposed as players run to steal the opposing team's flag.
 The same team is also responsible for the D-Day map reviewed here, and others are available from their website: <http://renderman.i.am/>. Check out our web addresses section at the end of Extended Play for their online server details.



✦ Strongholds – a top-class CTF map for online battle or with its own bots.

✦ D-Day CTF

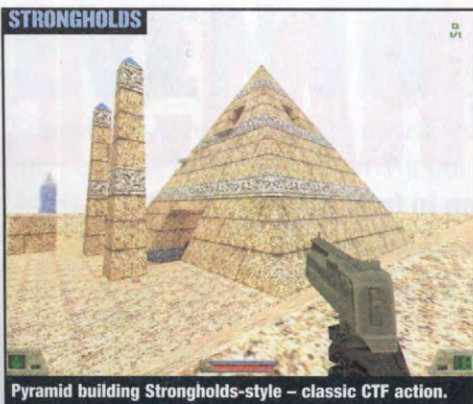
Filename: d-dayctf_v1.0.exe
Size: 3.57Mb
Rating: ⚡⚡⚡⚡
Type: CTF • No Bots.
 The biggest map here by far, and an absolute essential for your collection. It's a huge



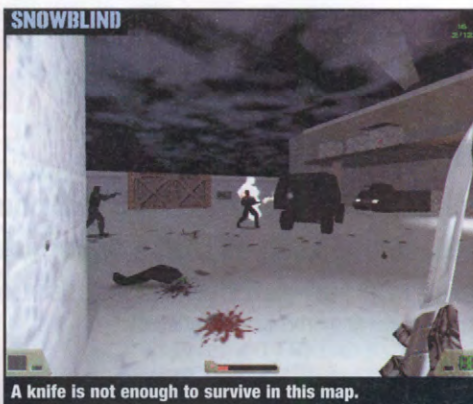
✦ Snowblind is brilliant fun, and is packed with well thought out Bot action.



SMG versus Rocket Launcher – no contest.



Pyramid building Strongholds-style – classic CTF action.



A knife is not enough to survive in this map.



Your objective, viewed from a safe distance.

shame there aren't more servers carrying it online. This is a D-Day assault map and an absolute monster at that, with a great atmosphere and superb levels of detail. The beach has two defensive towers linked by a maze of underground tunnels and near the water there are two bunkers full of weapons, armour and health. There are also two tanks that attackers can hide behind, but beware, these can be destroyed if they come under heavy fire for long enough. The towers have a commanding view of the beach, but even once these are bypassed and you've made your way underground the action is far from over. The tunnels have a wealth of lifts, passages and even machines that can be switched on and off. This is truly a top class *SOF* map, well designed and executed.

firepower in support. But here's a hint – use the fuel truck to break through the fence, and then sneak into the tower via a bunker... it can be done. There's another way in too, but we'll leave you guessing on that one. When you install this map (it's a .pak file), make sure you read the .txt file for full instructions!



Feeling exposed? Keep moving and run for cover before you get mown down.

★ **BB Crypt**

Filename: bb_crypt.exe
Size: 678Kb
Rating: ⚡⚡⚡

Type: Standard DM • No Bots
A simple map, but enjoyable nonetheless. The idea is that you're in a maze of underground tunnels and there are weapons and health dotted around for you to use. The design and choice of textures is reminiscent of old favorite *Doom*, and the lack of wide open spaces means that the action when it happens is fast, furious and bloody. You'll need to keep your health topped-up as it is all too easy for people to appear behind you and you'll need to be able to react pretty quickly before your head gets blown off. No frills fun.



This one could easily pass as a *Doom* map, and it's suitable for online play, too.



D-Day: even better when you get underground, a great map for online play.

★ **Snipers Nest**

Filename: snipersnest.zip
Size: 1.3Mb
Rating: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

Type: CTF • Standard DM and Realistic • No Bots
In the middle of an enclosed square stands a tower surrounded by a tall, wire fence. There is no apparent way in. You have to capture the tower while dodging the snipers within. If you're in the open you're in danger so you'll have to keep moving. Luckily you have access to the sniper rifle too, so it isn't all one sided – just make sure you have some strong

★ **High Noon**

Filename: highnoon.exe
Size: 1.4Mb
Rating: ⚡⚡⚡

Type: Standard DM • No Bots
This map looks very much like a wild-west mining environment with tunnels, slatted rope bridges, whopping great big holes in the ground (careful you don't fall) and lots of guns. You'll half expect to see Bugs Bunny and Yosemite Sam running around too. The map is pretty large and well thought out in terms of item placement. The open spaces make long-range killing an option and the tunnels will keep fans of the in-yr-face shootout happy too.



High Noon – it's Indiana Jones meets the Gunfight At The OK Corral.

★ **Scrap Iron**

Filename: scrapiron.zip
Size: 277Kb
Rating: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

Type: Conquer • Control and all DM types • No Bots
A nicely made medium-sized map set in a factory with a building site outside too. There are plenty of opportunities to climb ladders and sneak around above your enemies' heads – both indoors and out – so lots of fun creeping up behind people to take them unawares is in order. The map has some neat touches – the lifts inside not only look the part but work too, and you can even riddle an oil tank with holes and watch the oil run out (well, it looks like oil anyway). There are plenty of weapons, lots of health and enough twists and turns to keep the action going.



Building sites have never been so much fun.

★ **Conbeach**

Filename: conbeach.zip
Size: 228Kb
Rating: ⚡⚡⚡

Type: Conquer • All Standard DM • No Bots
A straightforward and quite small D-Day style assault-the-beach map, which is a nightmare to attack. Defenders have the high ground, bunkers, plenty of

ammo and a major tactical advantage. Attackers have only the weapons they come into the game with. There are obstacles to get past, barbed wire to deal with, very little to hide behind and lots of opportunities to get shot. There are no tunnel complications, vehicles or frills, but good fun for a LAN session or setting up on a server. [KZ]



A defender's dream – total firepower coverage.

NET ADDRESSES

Considering the problems with Bots, and the limited number of online servers supporting *Soldier Of Fortune*, it was something of a surprise to find so many third party maps about – we've only listed a few here. Less surprisingly, there are also a fair number of dedicated websites... check these out for size.

www.pczone.co.uk

Your first port of call for what we like to think is the best PC games mag around. News, downloads, reviews and more literary jewels than you can shake a mucky stick at.

<http://www.telefragged.com/thefatal/>

Hideout of Mr Rich Whitehouse, author of the Hidebot for *SOF*, Jumbot for *Half-Life* and Famkebot for *Quake II*. Lots of bot-related goodies, and forums for answering questions too.

<http://hidewp.sphosting.com/>

Waypoint files for the *SOF* Hidebot. Only a couple here so far, but watch this space.

<http://renderman.i.am/>

The home of RenderMan and DarkLord who did the StrongHolds, SofiaCTF, GizahCTF, D-DayCTF and Colossus maps. These maps are great examples of what *Soldier Of Fortune* can do, so keep an eye on this site in case they design any more.

Find their maps online at these servers:

Sins House Of Balls:	24.15.18.9:28910
jolt.co.uk – sof (02):	195.149.21.45:28920
The Cage CTF:	216.42.139.151:28910

www.planetsoldier.com

Part of what is rapidly turning into the planet-everything family; this site is a wealth of news, mod information, links and lots of detail on the game itself. If you're an *SOF* fan, you must bookmark this one.

<http://www.sofcenter.com/>

Websites don't get much more packed than SofCenter. News, maps, patches, mods – you name it, it's here. Another one to put on your bookmarks list.

www.ravensoft.com

This is where to find the team behind the game (they're also responsible for *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force*, *Hexen II*, *Heretic II* and more). You'll find news, game details, links and forums for discussions as well.

SICKENING PRAISE

Even though the Queen has yet to send one, birthday greetings are still pouring in from all over the globe. Here are some of our favourites, shamelessly reproduced for your enjoyment and ours. (Oh, come on. Surely we can be smug and self-satisfied for one issue at least?)

“Congratulations on making it to the ripe old age of 100! Speculating about the reasons for success is something of a fool’s game but, in the case of *PC ZONE*, I think it’s safe to say that good, genuinely witty writing and dead-accurate reviews provide some solid clues. Here’s to 100 more issues of insightful (or should that be “inciteful?”) commentary and criticism.”

WARREN SPECTOR, ION STORM

“Let’s just say I am not at all happy with *PC ZONE* right now. They have reviewed our game *Sacrifice* at 62 per cent! 62 per cent is SO unfair I cannot believe it... You will not be hearing from Shiny again. Ever.”

DAVID PERRY, PRESIDENT, SHINY ENTERTAINMENT

“The fantastic thing about *PC ZONE* over the last 100 editions is that its writers manage to be both informative and humorous. For this reason I have always had the greatest of respect for the magazine and have taken this to its logical conclusion by employing one of *ZONE*’s ex-writers, Pete Hawley, here at Lionhead.”

PETER MOLYNEUX, LIONHEAD STUDIOS

“*PC ZONE* – a magazine that employs gamers who love gaming, instead of journalists who love schmoozing. A place where reviews really DO mean reviews, and opinions are worth more than their weight in joy sticks.”

BERND LEHANN, EGOSOFT

“*PC ZONE* has been the one magazine where we always know we are going to get fair reviews, and for that we will always be grateful. Their support has been very important in the continuing success of *Champ Manager*, and we’ve made a few good friends from the magazine like Steve Hill and Jeremy Wells. Keep up the good work! And don’t play *CM* too much – you’ve got deadlines, you know.”

OLIVER AND PAUL COLLYER, SPORTS INTERACTIVE

“To me *PC ZONE* is probably the final bastion of the good old fashioned, very British, balls-out games magazine. This has been aided by the fact that it is still largely targetted at a slightly older audience than all those console mags and that the staff have consistently been more from the Rock ‘n’ Roll school of journalism than most of their competitors, and all power to them for that.”

JON ‘SENSIBLE’ HARE, CODEMASTERS

“I remember the first time I picked up a *PC ZONE* magazine (about five years ago), I was delighted by the combination of informative reviews and cheeky humour. Since then, there have been a lot of other mags that have tried to copy this format but none have surpassed *PC ZONE*’s ability to mix stupid humour with a level of seriousness akin to a Saddam Hussein bomb threat.”

MINH LE (AKA GOOSEMAN), COUNTER-STRIKE

“Congratulations to *PC ZONE* on its 100th birthday! From Zero to 100 in seven years would be a totally woeful performance for a car. But for a magazine... You deserve a toast. A letter from the Queen, even! Live long and prosper.”

STEVE JACKSON, LIONHEAD STUDIOS

“*PC ZONE* means pulling no punches. *PC ZONE* means big screenshots. *PC ZONE* means sticky jewel CD cases. *PC ZONE* means numbers with that funny ‘£’ next to them instead of ‘\$’. *PC ZONE* means wondering why Tara Leathers didn’t change her name. *PC ZONE* means slick, cool, insightful gaming news. End of story”

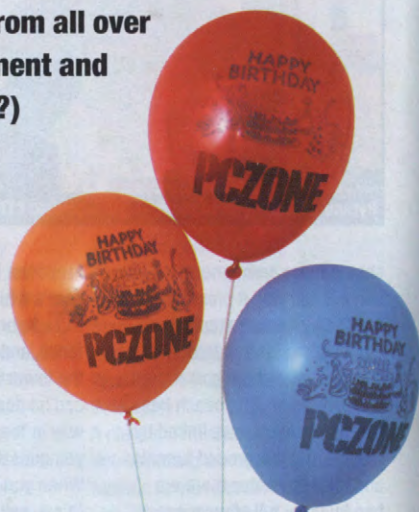
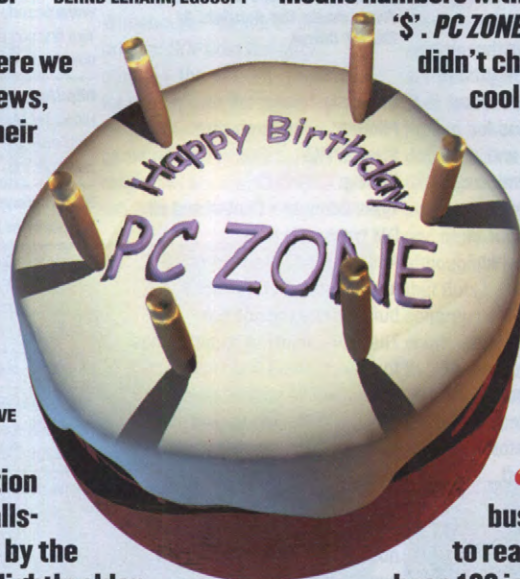
TOM HALL, ION STORM

“*PC ZONE* has evolved a lot, as the gaming industry has also done, but it’s always kept the same objective of being very close to the gamer. That’s why I always look forward to receiving my next issue of *PC ZONE*”

JUAN DIAZ-BUSTAMANTE, REBEL ACT STUDIOS

“One has to be sick to work in the games business, but the worst part of it is having to read *PC ZONE* every month (has it already been 100 issues?). But seriously, We hope to have you around for at least another 100 issues. Please don’t change, making games wouldn’t be as entertaining without your magazine. (By the way, aren’t we the nice guys who deserve a 100 per cent score?)

IGNACIO PÉREZ, CEO, PYRO STUDIOS



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