WORLD EXGLUSIVE!

Sid Meier takes Civ to the next millennium. See page 53



ZONT EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

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EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

WING COMINIANDER:

PROPHECY

YOUR VERY OWN POOL TABLE!

QUAKE 2

The definitive review

LONGBOW 2

The best chopper sim ever?

ACTUA SOCCER 2 VS FIFA: RTWC Has FIFA finally lost its crown?

CARMAGEDDON - SPLAT PACK

Much more blood & gore

FI RACING SIMULATION Better than FIGP2?

OKW TUO OU WON WHAT! SEE PAGE 59



PC Zone Awards 97

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PLUS!

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- SiN We chat to Ritual Entertainment about their new Quake beater
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Finally, we get our hands on some reviewable code to give you the definitive review of iD's awesome sequel.

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Another year, another FIFA. But have they finally managed to get it right this time?

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84

Another year, another *Actua*. But is it better than *FIFA*? Turn to page 84 and all will be revealed...

Heavy Gear

87

It's another Mech game, except that it's got baby mechs in it, called 'Gears'.

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It might have the official licence, but how does it fare against *Screamer Rally* and *Rally* 4? Find out on page 88.

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More gore, more pedestrians, more cars, more levels – more fun?

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Our resident propeller-head reckons this is the best chopper sim ever. Turn to page 94 to find out why.

Madden 98

96

Another year, another *Madden*. But is the annual graphical overhaul and new stats enough to recommend it?

F1 Racing Simulation

98

Watch out Geoff Crammond, there's a new boy in town. He's good-looking, clever and he's after your crown.

Men In Black

100

You've seen the film, sang the song, bought the T-shirt, now play the game. It looks great, but how does it play?



Is the fifth title in the Wing Commander series more of the same, or simply out of this world? Find out on page 70.









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ew year, new games and a new browser for you to peruse our monthly delights. Pop the CD into your CD-ROM drive as per usual, now double-click on PCZONE.EXE to run it. The DOS browser is run by double-clicking on DOSDEMOS.EXE and if things go pear-shaped go into the ZONE directory on the CD and double-click on BROWSER.EXE to bring back the old familiar browser. If you have any problems installing the games through the new browser please e-mail us at LETTERS.PCZONE@DENNIS.CO.UK or drop us postcard with details of your machine's specifications.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

u'll need at least a Pentium 90 with 8Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.

Many of the programs are designed to run under Windows 95 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 133 with 16Mb 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 Windows 95. DOS and 3D accelerator only.

Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's being a total bast? Don't worry - phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990 Any week day between 9am and 4pm

CD-ROM HELP

Phone ABT on 01708 250250

Any week day between 11am and 5pm (Please DO NOT phone the PC Zone office as your calls will NOT be answered)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

No CD?

If you're unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HDs from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

CD Exchange (59), PC Zone, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol, BS12 OBO

Your details (please print clearly)
Name:
Address:
Post code:
Please make cheques payable to:

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD. CDs from previous issues are also

available

WING COMMANDER: PROPHECY



HRIS ROBERTS, THE CREATOR of the first four Wing Commander games may have left for pastures new, but does that stop Origin from churning out a new one? Not bloody likely. In this exclusive demo you must fight off successive waves of Kilrathi fighters. 'Scuse me did we say 'Kilrathi'? Yep. There may be new aliens to be fought in Prophecy, but don't you just want to blow up those ugly critters from the first four games - just for old time's sake? Of course you do.

Controls: Joystick, keyboard

↑ ☐ Directional control

Autopilot -/-Throttle up/down Full speed F **Full guns** G Cycle guns E Decoys I Change targets Lock current target U Target & lock closest target Match speed with

BACKSPACE ALTE ALTIX

TAB F1-F12

Q/W

target Roll **Full stop Eject** Exit game Curry afterburner Camera views

ALT Wingman attack target ALT Wingman break & attack

ALT F Wingman form on my wing ALT H Help me I'm about to die



NHL '98 E

EA Sports

ITHOUT A DOUBT THE BEST LOOKING ICE hockey game yet — EA sports have outdone themselves because this plays like a dream as well. The demo allows players to puck it out between Detroit Red Wings or the Philadelphia Flyers.

Controls: Gamepad, mouse, keyboard



X

Z

Movement
Shoot/hook/save
Pass/change player
Speed
Special move/block/cover



THE GREAT BATTLES OF HANNIBAL (I-Magic)

To describe this game in three words is easy peasy: hex, turn and strategy. The antagonists are the mighty Roman army versus the elephant-trousered Carthaginians. Unfortunately there's no in-game help, but the Windows-type interface is easy to get the hang of. Anyway it's turn-based, so you've got time to work it all out, haven't you?

Controls: Mouse

TOCA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

(Codemasters)

Analogy warning: driving games are like chocolate bars. They're addictive, popular and there's little to choose between them. Well not much. Here then is an exclusive tasty chunk from the latest chocolate-coated driving biscuit soon to hit the shelves from Codemasters. Choose one of two cars from the full version and zoom about the Donington circuit in all sorts of

weather conditions. Driving in the rain was never so much fun. Remember – if it all becomes too difficult you could always play with your horn.

Controls: Keyboard, joypad, joystick, wheel



C

Steer left/right Accelerate/brake Gear up/down Horn Change view



ZORK: GRAND INQUISITOR (Activision)

Just as you can rely on Gary Glitter to drag out his bloated carccass for yet another festive gangbang, you can always rely on a new *Zork* adventure to pop out from time to time. Let's hope the silver-suited one's got room on his hard drive for this demo. The aim is to escape underground and try to access each of the three areas located off the crossroads. Inside each area you should find some 'interesting' pics — erk. (We love ya Gary — you're The Leader.)

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

CONTROL S Save
CONTROL R Restore
CONTROL Q Quit
Skip scene
F5 Inventory
F6 Spell book
F8 Put away current object





TOTAL ANNIHILATION

(Cavedog/GT Interactive)

If proof was needed that *Total*Annihilation is the best real-time strategy game available, then this demo is it. Play three whole missions from the full version and see why our review was bang-on. Normal *Command & Conquer* rules apply except you have two resources to worry about and a Commander to protect. Check out the game's extensive readme file for full details.

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

CONTROL 1 - 9	Assign teams
ALT 1-9	Select team 1-9
1-9	Team menu
FI	Current unit info
F2	Options menu
F3	Select last
The same of the sa	reporting unit
F12	Clear chat
CONTROL	Select all units
CONTROL	Centre screen on
	commander
CONTROL	Self destruct
CONTROL	All units on screen
CONTROL	All units of same
	type
A	Attack
В	Build
C	Capture
D	Use D-Gun
E	Reclaim
F	Toggle fire orders
G	Guard

H	Share resouces
K	Next unit
0	Order menu
P	Patrol
R	Repair
S	Cancel previous
	order
T	Track selected
	unit
V	Toggle move
	orders
-/-	Change game
	speed
Hold SHIFT	Queue orders
ENTER	Message bar
	Select previous
	next menu



Pause (doh)

MEN IN BLACK(Gremlin)

PAUSE

If you've seen the film, bought that dire single and insist on wearing the damned T-shirt then maybe you should try the demo of the game based on the latest Hollywood merchandising machine. In this Alone In The Dark-style adventure you must save yourself from a gunman by simply showing him the inside of his own head.

Controls: Keyboard

\uparrow	
SHIFT 1	
CONTRO	
ALT 1	$\leftarrow \downarrow \downarrow \rightarrow$
CONTRO	MITICA

Movement Run Jump Attack Dodge left

TEST DRIVE 4 Electronic Arts



T'S NOT OFTEN YOU GET TO DRIVE a Dodge Viper through English country roads. Never mind, at least those kind-hearted souls at EA have provided us with the means to do more than imagine what it would be like in the latest in the hugely popular *Test Drive* series. The aim is to

get to the next stage before the timer runs down. Remember to watch for cars coming the other way – this isn't *Carmageddon* you know.

Controls: Keyboard, gamepad, joystick

	Accelerate/brake
	Steer left/right
	Brake
A/Z	Gears up/down
X	Horn (fnirk)
ESC	Pause
FI	Change view size
F2	Change view distance

Change camera

HD ZONE

TZ MINI GOLF (TZ Games)

Oh dear, didn't you have the extra pound needed to get the CD version of the mag, or was it that the newsagent had run out of copies? Never mind, cheer up, why not try six holes of the golfing equivalent of Micro Machines and feel proud in the knowledge that those who bought the CD version of PC Zone are without this essential game. Lucky you. After placing the ball, use the mouse to direct your shot and press the left mouse button to strike the ball. The length of the line denotes the strength of the shot so be careful you could take someone's eye out...





CONTROL ALT →

[NS]

DELETE

HOME / END

PG UP / PG DN 1-0 F1 F2

ESC

weapons Cycle items Select weapon Use/pick up Controls Options Main menu

Dodge right

Toggle icons

Inventory

Drop item

Cycle



GENOCIDE (Kaos Kontrol)

Some people can't get enough abuse. If you're one of them, why not drain your spuds onto an electrical fire. Alternatively, try this *Abuse*-style one-level demo. It may be 2D but the control system is inspired and second nature to any half-decent *Quake*ster.

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Mouse LMB RMB Movement
Targeting
Fire
Change weapon
Zoom in/out



CRICKET '97: ASHES TOUR EDITION (EA Sports)

Cricket, the embodiment of an English summer and the culprit that drives a mass exodus of England's youth onto Spanish beaches. Try a few overs in EA's new version of *Cricket '97* that takes the game down under to Australian soil. The controls are quite complicated so take time to view the readme file before you start or you may become frustrated and take a sudden winter break abroad.

Controls: Keyboard

TAB Options
H Help
R Replay
Pause
F1-F5 Camera
Change view

Numeric keypad+ALT/CONTROL
Plays various shots



YOUNGBLOOD (GT Interactive)

No it's not a hormonely-charged ice hockey game starring where-is-he-now '80s heart-throb Rob Lowe, but more like a *Waterworld* meets Marvel Comics action game. The aim in this demo is to stop Dr Leviticus from finding the Drachma Codex. *C&C*-style controls apply.

Controls: Mouse



DILBERTS DESKTOP GAMES (Microsoft)

If Quake is likely to bring your office network crashing down around you and result in a written warning appearing in your in-tray, why not try this five-level demo of Techno Raiders - one of ten games featuring everyone's fave reluctant cartoon hero. Press ESC as soon as you smell your boss coming and he'll be none the wiser.

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

EI			
F2			
F3			
1	4	T.	
W	A	5	D
	₩		
W	S		
EN	ITER		CAPS
"	/I	AB	

Help One-player game Two-player game Movement (P1) Movement (P2) Use elevator (P1) Use elevator (P2) Shoot P1/P2

Use invention P1/P2

CLOSE COMBAT 2: A BRIDGE TOO FAR (Microsoft)

Schijndel Road, famous for being the birthplace of the semi-fictitious dutch poet Schlapp De Meet. Some would also remember it for hosting a particularly fierce battle between Tommy and Jerry at the tail end of WWII. We just know it as the setting for this real-time strategy demo where you can choose to control one side and blow the other to bits.

Controls: Mouse



WAR PLANETS: AGE OF CHAOS (Trendmasters)

Four planets are at war and you can choose from two of them in this simple real-time strategy game. Choose the forces of Planet Rock or Planet Bone and try any of the eight missions that are available in this demo. You know the drill - C&C-style mouse control.

Controls: Mouse, keyboard



Auto-teleport Centre view on telepad Radar on/off **Return units** CONTROL Q Quit



DARK REIGN (Activision)

Now you can decide for yourself whether Dark Reign deserves to sit at the top table at the C&C impersonators ball this Christmas. It isn't as beautiful as Total Annihilation but it's got more bells on, and you can never have enough of those. Try one of two missions from the full release and prepare to be amazed.

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

CONTROL / 1	-[0
1-0		

Assign teams Select team 1-0 Attack

ov
op
ext
ov
de
iild

M

В

P

C

ESC

unit e mode rs menu d menu Paths menu Comms menu **Options** Help

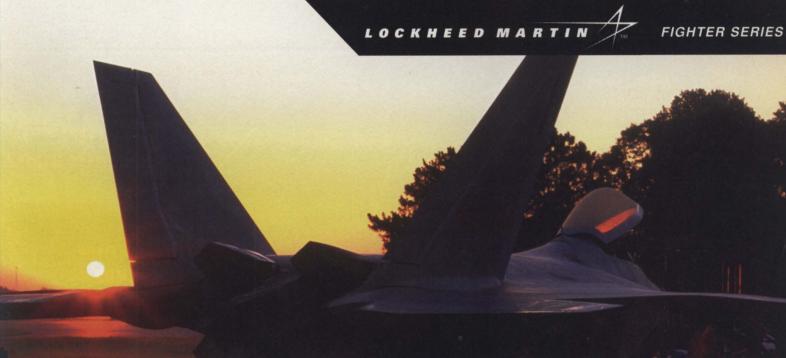
ck without



GUBBLE II (Actual Entertainment)

Just in case you missed him first time around, the strange alien platform star has returned - in much the same guise as before. Guide the little sprat around the mazes and avoid the nasty little entities intent on carving away your purple plug-like ears. Simple and fun well we think so anyway.

Controls: Keyboard, joypad, joystick



OUR F22 RAPTOR SIMULATION COMES WITH A FEW STANDARD FEATURES...

NOVALOGIC

CARMAGEDDON CHRISTMAS SPECIAL Stainless/SCI

his Christmas forget Eric & Ernie re-runs, Bond films and the Queen's speech. Instead why not invite some pedestrians round to dine on your windscreen? This level is exclusive to PC Zone readers and should keep granny out of your hair for a while at least. All together now 'Deck the roads with gobs of blood, fa la la la la.....'.





Select weapon PBC

Normal/rapid fire

Select contact type

Target contact under

Target last contact

Target next enemy

Autopilot: approach

Full-screen mode

Autopilot: stop

Target nearest enemy

Target current contact

Target nearest weapon

Show contact/cycle camera

Cycle contacts

Decoy

crosshair

Select missile weapon



Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Movement

Fly Jump

Duck

Stop

MYTH: THE FALLEN LORD

The threat of having unlimited points of

view initially filled everyone with dread,

until we realised that Ann Robinson

view refer to the latest 3D real-time

at the one training and two massive

hacking. Check out the game's readme

levels from the full game. Happy

file for more detailed commands.

strategy game from Eidos. Try your hand

wouldn't feature as heavily as we might've imagined. Instead the points of

Keypad 8/2 Keypad 6/4 C TAB

BACKSPACE

INS

D

(Eidos)

Accelerate/brake Steer right/left **Tighter turning** Handbrake Change view Toggle map Repair Recover vehicle





ENTER

DELETE

F

M

T

Q

R

W

E

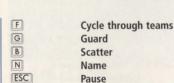
V

F5

F6

TAB

BACKSPACE



F1/F2 F3/F4 F5 F6 F8

F12

Scatter Name Pause Game speed up/down Volume up/down Toggle resolution Toggle toolbar Key list Auto camera



I-WAR (Ocean)

Pilot the spaceship equivalent of a marrow, one that is of course armed to the teeth. This five minute demo will give you a taste of the navigation side of the full game where you'll also be able to try out the commander's seat, gunnery chair and engineering room. In this demo the aim is to destroy the Arcturus base and liberate the Navy vessels. Expect a full review next issue.



TUROK (Acclaim)

Put on your red coat, blow your horn and send forth the hunting dogs. The fluffy dinosaurs are on the loose and it's up to you to hunt them down in this new version of the Nintendo 64 shoot 'em up that last month was awarded classic status. This version will run with or without one of those 3D cards in your machine. Whoever said you needed 3D cards to play decent games these days. Oh we did, didn't we?

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

1-0 PG UP / PG DN HOME / END

Movement Weapon select Strafe Look up/down Quick look Run

TEN PIN ALLEY (ASC Games)

We've all gone bowling, wondered at the genius who designed the compulsory footware and slipped arse over tit to the hilarity of all present. Now you can do it all again but without the embarrassing bits. Note you'll have to install the game by double-clicking on the SETUP.EXE icon in the DEMOS/WINDEMOS/TENPIN directory.

Controls: Mouse

PATCHES

If you want an Iron Maiden patch to go on your smeg encrusted denim jacket, simply pop down to Carnaby Street, they're everywhere. If instead you seek a 3Dfx patch for Shadow Warrior then take a look in the Patches directory of the CD. You'll also find updates for Dark Reign, Ignition, Uprising and a good few others for your pleasure. Just run the self-extracting zip files to the relevant directory and breath new life into those not so old games.

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

WIS	Camera forward/bac
ZVX	Camera left/right
Q/E	Camera orbit
	left/right
A/D	Pan left/right
C/V	Zoom in/out
H	Centre view on
	selected unit
LMB	Select unit
SHIFT LMB	Select multiple units
ENTER	Select all units

Stop

Assign teams

Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick		
\bigcirc	Directional control	
-/-	Speed up/down	
1	Corrected thruster flight	
	Free thruster flight	
	Flight mode LDS on/off	
U	Unlock	
FII	Command module	
	separation	
Y	Switch roll/yaw axis	

LMB+11-0



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AIR, SEA &
GROUND TARGETS

SPECTACULAR
GRAPHICS WITH
GROUND SMOOTHING



NOVALOGIC









Further education for gaming fanatics

PAGE 17

SPECIAL REPORT

PC Zone looks forward to 1998's most wanted...

PAGE 22

Limited edition violence

Riding high after their recent 'appeal' victory over the BBFC, SCi have decided to enter into the Christmas spirit by

THE MAN WHO KNOWS

All the latest industry sleaze and gossip

PAGE 24



Get into Winona Ryder's pants

Or Sigourney Weaver's. Or choose one of the other characters from Fox's new Alien-frying shoot 'em up based on the new film.

One of the more appositely-named

titles planned for the shelves next Easter is Alien Resurrection: The Game. This is because (a) it's the game of the film Alien Resurrection; and (b) Baby Jesus himself was resurrected around this time. (Roughly.)

Fox Interactive are so sure the game's going to be a humdinger that Aliens



(Above) Film vehicles appear in Fox's game adaption. (Inset) A bit of a bad birth.



upcoming titles that's very well thought of, has purportedly had its release date put back so as not to clash with it.

So what d'you get? Well, rather like the second bit in Fox's Die Hard Trilogy, it's a third-person viewed shoot 'em up. You'll be able to

choose from one of five playable characters, and you'll be playing out tasks given to you by 'Father'. It's a bit like being a Conservative MP's 'special friend', except instead of having a velvet whip with tassels on it, you'll have a frightening array of death-dealing weaponry. And in this case, Father's actually an on-board computer rather than a rubber-clad fat bloke.

You're isolated aboard the crumbling military research vessel Auriga, and it's a race against the clock through dark and scary alien-packed levels: the

demented Dr Wren is trying to escape to Earth with his demonic cloning experiments, and you have to stop him. Smart cameras will frame the action as you fight, and destruction fans will be pleased to hear that everything on the

levels can be blown away. And if you can do it without crapping your pants, you may even get bonus points. 10

(Above left) You need to get your hair cut love. (Right) Winona and Sigourney ham it up. (Below) Have some of that!



Final Fantasy VII on PC! Eidos secure exclusive rights

Arguably one of the finest games ever produced... and if not that, certainly one of the biggest selling, Squaresoft's epic RPG Final Fantasy VII will be appearing on the PC in mid 1998, as previously rumoured. On December 3rd Eidos Interactive announced that they had signed the exclusive PC publishing rights to the game - then shocked us further by implying it would be with us within six months.

Unless you've been living under a rock for the past few months it's been hard to avoid the buzz surrounding the PlayStation version of the game. Established as the fastest-selling game in both Japan and the US, it was only recently bettered in the UK by the launch of Tomb Raider II.

Spanning three CDs, the game is an epic tale that blends traditional fantasy elements with science fiction in the way that only Japanese producers and script writers seem to be able to carry off with any style. Using a blend of beautifully rendered environments with polygonal characters, the game sends you on a quest that incorporates exploration, puzzle solving and turn-based combat whilst unfolding a wonderful story that draws in the player with an almost movie-like grip.

Believe us when we say that this will be the game that revitalises the RPG genre on the PC. Oh yes sirree. Watch out for more information in up-coming editions of PC Zone. 10



(Above) PC gamesplayers will now get the chance to play with cute young girls in cut-off jeans. (Right) FFVII in action.

releasing a limited edition Carmageddon pack. You'll have to be quick though — as you read these very words, limited stocks (only 2500 have been produced) are already disappearing from the shelves of Virgin Megastores across the nation (a deal rewarding Virgin for all their support during SCi's troubled times). The pack contains the full 'zombie' version of the game, a copy of the Splat Pack, a key ring, a mouse mat, a T-shirt, a poster, a Windows 95 sticker (Eh? – Ed.) and a Carmageddon tips book to help guide you through it all. You'll also get a signed and numbered certificate as well, which you can proudly nail to your door so that the puritans of the BBFC can easily identify you as a member of the 'corrupted'

youth' and haul you away during the night for 'correction'.

Answay – how much will this cost?

Anyway – how much will this cost? Why, that'll be a mere thirty of your good honest English pounds, that'll be.

MGM quick to capitalise on film success

The 1983 film WarGames, which most of us in the office are either too young, or too discerning, to have seen, is going to be made into one of those new-fangled computer game things just 17 years later.

Looking good, even though it's 17 years late. WarGames: based on the eponymous 80s film



Actually, despite our scoffing at their tardiness (haven't they heard that punctuality is this year's brown?), from

what we've seen so far it looks like it might turn out to be pretty good. It's a wargame (surprisingly) – a sort of cross between *Total Annihilation* and *Incubation* (but don't tell them we said that or it will be all over the bloody box before they've even finished the game).

The campaigns and dialogue have all been scripted by the original film's writer/director. There will be 30 single-player missions and split-screen, serial link and Internet multi-player action. As in the film, hacking plays an important part, allowing you to access cash, vital information and power-ups. So start working on those coughs now.

Try www.mgm.com if you hanker for more information. (2)

Another 'F' in flight sim



Some flight sims merely look great while others are nothing short of drop -dead gorgeous. F/A-18 Hornet: Korea, is already looking like one of the tastiest 'birds' we've seen thus far (see the suite of screenshots on our cover CD if you're in need of convincing). It may sound like just another jet sim with an 'F' in the title, but in

producing the visuals, developers Graphic Simulators have bypassed Direct3D and instead have chosen to patch straight into the 3Dfx GLIDE API – cutting out the middle man. Just like Eidos' *JSF*, in fact.

Underneath the meaty visuals F/A-18

Hornet: Korea warrants further attention by providing an incredibly detailed mission builder, new aircraft and a 'newbie' training mode for those of us who couldn't perform a barrel roll, even if they were trapped inside a barrel. The usual multi-player and training missions will of course feature as standard.

Empire Interactive are hoping to publish the game in the UK, so save a space on your hard drive – we should have a review shortly. **12**

The evil that men do



Resident Evil, having just made its first full-blown appearance on the PC, is almost certain to be followed up by a sequel sometime deep into next year, although nothing so far has been officially

announced from developers Capcom.

A playable PlayStation version has already been shown to the press and is looking good – being more of the same pseudo 3D, head-blasting zombie action, but with vastly improved graphics and a slightly more comprehensible plot that picks up



immediately following the events of the first game. This time players will take control of two new characters – Leon and Eliza – in a bid to rid Racoon City of its walking dead. Expect more announcements soon.

Bloodlust for life

Independent British games developer System 3 (the people behind Acclaim's *Constructor*) have struck a deal with Atari Games

Corporation that will see one of their future PC titles released as a coin-op next Spring.

Bloodlust – currently due Autumn '98 on PC — is a new 3D fighting game that draws influence from System 3's expertise in the

field. (System 3 were recognised as one of the world's leading developers in the fighting genre during the '80s when games like *The Last Ninja* and *International Karate* enjoyed enormous success.)

"That a company as experienced and professional as Atari is taking the virtually unprecedented step of taking *Bloodlust* straight to arcades speaks volumes about this title's quality," said System 3 MD, Mark Cale.

Captain's log

MicroProse are currently hard at work on a new strategy game set within the Star Trek: The Next Generation universe.

The world of *Birth Of The Federation*will be populated with a multitude of races,
encounters and events drawn directly from
Star Trek: The Next Generation and will allow
players to control one of the major Star Trek



Star Trek gets a strategy workover in Birth Of The Federation. Will it blow?

alliances. Gameplay will focus on resource management, combat and diplomacy and, depending on which alliance the player chooses, he will have different abilities, strengths and weaknesses.

Like LucasArts' forthcoming Star Wars – Supremacy, Birth Of The Federation has masses of potential, but could possibly suffer from limited and confusing combat; in particular, Federation's turn-based play may prove too much of a turn-off to all but the most ardent Trek fans. Still, it's early days yet and the promise of five-way Internet and LAN play and a few more months in development may be enough to turn the project around. The advice from the PC Zone team couldn't be more straightforward: "Make it so!"

It's good to be free

The Descent series has always been renowned for its almost claustrophobic tunnel action – up until now, that is.

The announcement of *Descent* off-shoots *Freespace: The Great War* and *Outrage* demonstrates that the setting isn't the only change to the series. Developers Parallax have split in two and assigned both divisions a game each.

Information on *Outrage* is very scarce at present; on the other hand, Volition are singing *Freespace*'s multi-player joys like a songbird – especially the fact that team play rather than plain old one-on-one shoot-outs will be an essential element. *Freespace* leans heavily towards *X-Wing Vs TIE* and *Privateer II: The Darkening* territory (ie it's set in outer space, rather than in stifling corridors like the original). There are computer opponents that 'learn' how an opponent operates, a 'terrain engine' that kicks in should a player enter the atmosphere of a planet, some eerily gloomy visuals and marvellous Dolby Surround Sound. But you can do more than just read about it – go and have a gander at the rolling demo at www.pxsoftware.com.



Freespace: The Great War will see the Descent series departing from the suffocating confines of 'corridor city' into deep, dark space.

D'ya wanna be in my gang?



Electronic Arts sign promising new *Mad Max* 'em up.

Set in what seems to be either a postnuclear wasteland, or Moss Side, Redline is Accolade's brand new gang-warfare sim.

It claims to be the first 3D shoot 'em up to incorporate character development and it looks really cool. As well as wandering about on foot shooting the shit out of everything, you'll also be driving about in a car shooting the shit out of everything. There are ten vehicles to play with, network support for 16-player gang-versusgang warfare and full 3D support. Think of the fun you'll have

wearing a handkerchief on your head, doing those upside-down bunny rabbit hand signals and partaking in drive-by shootings.

Cruise over to
www.beyondgames.
com if you want more
information on how to
join the gang. (2)



Europress go compilation mental (again)

Once again Europress are providing more cheap things to do with your spare time than a Russian marriage bureau, with the release of another two price-busting compilations. *Total*

Football offers FIFA 97 and Actua Soccer Club Edition, along with a management game, Total Football Management (probably a Rinus Michels

sim). They've also chucked in *The Ultimate Encyclopaedia Of Soccer* – and if you can't work out what that is,

apply to your local Euthanasia Society office today for one of their special starter kits.

Also on offer is *Total Racing*, which gives you *Screamer 2*, *Need For Speed II*, and the onlyminutes-old *International Rally Championship*.

Both compilations cost £44.99 – Europress are appearing soon on *How Do They Do That?* 2



After the match both teams gather for a 'focus group' meeting to discuss missed chances.



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Jack it in

City traders have apparently been calming their nerves during the recent bout of market turbulence by 'Jacking Off' during their lunch



break, according to a needlessly offensive press release from BMG Interactive. But don't worry, they're not masturbating furiously (not at work, anyway). Instead it appears that during quiet moments many a malodorous yuppie can be found

hunched over the keyboard playing You Don't Know Jack as a means of relieving work-related stress. Funny that. Here at Zone we relieve all our tension by going out and beating the crap out of flash city boys. With heavy vinyl sticks.

Make games at school



"Johnny wakes up at 7am and shoves his recommended study aids into his school bag.

One notebook, a copy of Quake, and a poster of Lara Croft..." Well, almost. David McCandless reports.

It sounds like a dream, right? Going to university to study computer games. Playing strip network *Quake* with freshers. Stealing cut-outs of stormtroopers instead of traffic cones for your bedroom. Having all-night deathmatch sessions instead of 24-hour drug marathons.

Hell, you play games. Why not learn how to make them? Well, you could – right now, right here in this country. If you have the necessary talent and the academic acumen, you too could join 30 of the UK's finest would-be games designers at Abertay University, Scotland, for a 'games' degree course starting in 1998.

This is obviously something of a first for the occasionally snotty world of further education, but the ball started rolling when local businesses such a *HEDZ* developers Vis Interactive and electronics giant GEC Marconi complained there wasn't enough 'talent' in the Dundee area. A certain Dave Jones, MD of DMA Design and past graduate of Abertay, also had a few things to say.

The University responded by giving Course Director John Sutherland, himself a respectable gamesplayer and associate of a very famous virtual reality lab in Japan, the responsibility of designing a modern degree for games development. And the

result? A BSc (Hons) in 'Computer Games Technologies and Virtual Environments'.

"Some people have strange ideas about virtual reality," says Sutherland. "They think it's like the holodeck on the Starship Enterprise. We like to encourage its use in 'virtual heritage', which is all about preserving old buildings and castles and local points of interest in digital form — which fits

(Left) Great big flapping hands – should've been a goalkeeper...

in with the concept that 'virtual worlds' is still very much alive, whether it be a recreation of a cathedral on the desktop or futuristic LA in *Duke Nukem.*"

The course is four years long, and will cover every aspect of games development: computer games, virtual reality, programming, business and maths, plus extra sections of work placement with local companies to get grimy hands-on experience of this dirty industry "even if it means they have to hump boxes around".

We asked Sutherland what games he likes to play, and discovered that he's a *Civilization* fan, although he has been known to dabble in *Duke Nukem* and *Quake*. But isn't he scared that his pupils may well be 'distracted' by all the toys around them? "Oh, I know what they get up to after class," laughs Sutherland. "We're connected to other universities by fibre optic link. As soon as the end of the day comes they're all there – attacking another college in *Quake*." But Sutherland has a pragmatic approach: "If you're going to learn what makes games work, you have to play them."

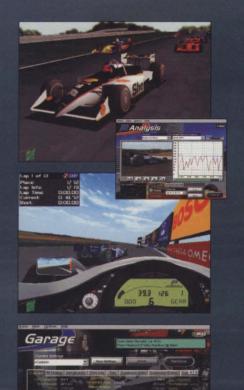
No complaints here. 10

Watch this space

We'll be following the progress of this games degree in later issues of *PC Zone*. If you're interested in more information log on to www.tay.ac.uk, or phone the University Computer Department on 01382 308600.



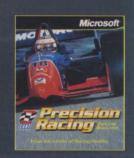
The driving force behind Abertay's new BSc (Hons) in 'Computer Games Technologies and Virtual Environments'. From left to right: David Jones (DMA Design), Professor Bernard King (University Principal), John Sutherland (Course Leader), and Ian Marshall (Head of the School of Computing).





With Microsoft CART Precision Racing you will see, hear, and feel the same things real CART drivers do. You will race on all 17 official CART tracks, based on

razor accurate GPS data. Your view will shift in anticipation of the curves ahead. Your pulse will rev at digitally sampled engine sounds and with force feedback support, if you take the bend too fast, you're



not going to need a monitor to tell you. To improve your lap time, stop into the garage to tweak your set-up, analyse the Pi Research telemetry and connect with multi-player action on the Internet gaming zone. Then get back on the circuit and burn some rubber!

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Kixx winner revealed

This hirsute individual is Mr Jatin Sheth from Edgware in Middlesex, and he's a very happy man indeed. "Why is that?" we hear you ask.



"Has he been 'touched up' by Yasmine Bleeth? Has he cancelled his subscription to *PC G*mer*? Or has he gone and won the National Lottery?" Well actually, it's far better than all of those. This guy has just won

himself a subscription to *PC Zone...* oh, and a top-of-the-range ninja *PC* — all because he entered an in-box competition ran by *PC Zone* and the Kixx budget range. Which just goes to prove; you've got to be in it to win it.

We are going to eat you



Paying homage to zombie films: Segasoft's Flesh Feast.

We're a bunch of leering gorehounds here at the Zone office, which is why we began rubbing our hands together with unsavoury pornographic relish at the news that Segasoft are to release Flesh Feast, a 3D action game which cites George A Romero's seminal Dawn Of The Dead as its primary influence.

Promising much 'gruesome combat and bloody death', Flesh Feast puts you in control of a team of humans trying to escape countless shambling hordes of the living dead. The screenshots are a bit confusing – on the face of it, it's vaguely reminiscent of Syndicate – but hopes are high (round these parts, at least) that FF could turn out to be the definitive zombie game. Watch this space... 2

From D-Day to Liberation Day

Interactive Magic are to follow up their *iM1A2 Abrams* tank game with the soon to be released *iPanzer '44* – a World War II strategy/sim covering both the Battle of the Bulge and the Eastern front altercation between Germany and Russia. Players will be able to trundle about in T-34s, Shermans or Panthers, as well as calling on and directing support from infantry, artillery and fighter-bombers.

We've briefly mentioned *Liberation Day* before – but now we've got screenshots to whet the appetite and news that it's on schedule for a Christmas release. It promises 70 wide-ranging missions over five continents and three uniquely characteristic races to set against each other.

For details of both *iPanzer '44* and *Liberation Day*, you can take a squint at the I-Magic website at **www.imagicgames.com**.





(Above) The follow-up to Fallen Haven. (Right) Another tank game with an 'i' in the title.

Hot news from Ossett

1998 sees a three-pronged assault on the PC from Ossett-based ex-retailers Team 17, who are releasing three markedly differing titles.





(Above) Take a bite of Fun Double Magic Land and float to the clouds... (Left) Phoenix Rising: Team 17's space shoot 'em up.

Fun Double Magic Land is another in the increasingly

popular genre of 'walk anywhere, do anything' platform games. The story is set in a mystical theme park with anonymous owners. It's up to you to run, crawl, climb, swim and even snowboard about the place, taking on 50 varied opponents in an attempt to unmask the park's operators. It's also compatible with an analogue pad, making the puzzles and platforms easier to cope with.

Second spike on the release fork, *Phoenix Rising* (working title) is a space combat affair apparently based on stark '40s 'film noir'. It's entirely mission based (70+ are on offer), has 100 heavily-armed space buggies to zip around in, plus Internet facilities; however, info's scarce regarding sound and vision. With action software currently so popular, *Phoenix Rising* will have to 'kick much arse' to make a significant impact on the scene.

Nightlong – another working title – is being developed in Italy by Trecision for Team 17. Promising 'cinema quality' graphics, 38 pieces of FMV (hmm...) and 30 minutes of speech, Nightlong is the story of ex-army-turned-PI Joshua Reeve. It's a detective game that marks Team 17's debut in the adventure market. We just hope it doesn't turn out to be a 'Magnum' 90s remix'.



m gonna love you all Nightlong... Hur, hur. Hoo, hoo.

Activision get Shanghied

January should see Activision release their next 'Shanghai' puzzle/strategy title, Shanghai: Dynasty. The main selling point? Network and

Internet play. Four modes are available: Classic, Pandamonium (sic), Dynasty and Kids, along with the original Mah-Jongg (which can be played in an American or Chinese stylee). Play modes will allow for numerous players, tile design and even the odd bit of 'edutainment' (Argh! Don't mention that word - Ed) - 'Kids' is said to help students with their "ABCs... and ..spatial cognizance (sic)", so says the press release. Should render school obsolete, then



DATAPAD

Revenant to rival Diablo?



While role-players across the world wait patiently in their bedrooms for Eidos' Deathtrap Dungeon to appear, the industry supergroup have announced - wait for it another 3D RPG. The difference here is that Revenant is more of a Diablo-style affair, using an isometric viewpoint to present its wares.

Boasting a list of graphical innovations,

Revenant promises to include real-time 3D characters, "revolutionary new" lighting effects and artwork designed by one of the artists responsible for the fourth Alien movie.

Of more interest, though, is the proposed open-ended gameplay that lets players explore as much of the world as they want, a magic system that allows the invention of their own spells and an interesting enough storyline to divert the player's attentions away from the fact they haven't washed in months. Revenant is scheduled for an April release - we'll bring you more news soon.



Elegantly-styled destruction in Art of Flying.

Bunch of Arts

Ask any jack-the-lad down the pub just what 'th art of flying' is, and they'll tell you: it's the ability to avoid hitting the bloody ground. Ask someone from weirdo European development BlueMoon the same question and they'll give you a different answer: it's the name of their brand new flight sim stroke shoot 'em up. Eschewing clear-cut polygon graphics in favour of a QAD-style fractal mish-mash, The Art Of Flying certainly looks, er, different. According to the

press release, it's "a visual experience that will surprise even the most discerning of players". Quite. Anyway, The Art Of Flying is apparently "being released by a major US publisher" soon, although details regarding exactly which company this might be were suspiciously thin on the ground as we were going to press. Still, if you want to know more, swerve your virtual car toward www.bluemoon.ee and download the demo.

Give a little bit of cart and soul

Bizarrely-monikered Finnish developers Carts Entertainment have announced a brace of in-development titles which they're hoping to flog to a welcoming publisher. First up is Lightning, a sci-fi racing game which sounds a bit like WipEout 2097 on wheels. Players are promised plenty of jaw-dropping 3Dfx visuals, arsequaking weaponry, brain-bending racecourses, and all of that malarkey.

Anyway, they're also working on Crash, another racing game which sadly isn't affiliated with the Cronenberg movie of the same name. Crash is set firmly in the present tense and features plenty of scorching penetration and messy facial shots, with full-screen FMV hardcore porn cut-scenes in between each level. No it doesn't. We're being silly. It's actually got loads of cars and tracks and weather effects in it. But our idea's better. Why not pop to www.cartsgames.com and tell them so? 7





wheels? (Above) Crash: No porno cutscenes yet, but it's got loadsa cars.

Deadlock returns

Deadlock 2: Shrine Wars is a resource management space colonisation affair in which the player controls one of over ten unique alien races and attempts to control one planet after another until either the galaxy is theirs, or the Monopolies & Mergers Commission decides to step in and stop the party.

Deadlock 2 will be packaged with many new and unique features, including full diplomacy options, advanced computer AI and the usual raft of multi-player options that often provide Internet cafés with their only tangible source of income.



Apparently plans to call the game Deadlock '98 (in order to ride on the back of their popular sports range) were dropped at the last minute when it was felt that EA couldn't get away with pulling the same trick twice. (Joke, yeah? - Ed.)

Deadlock 2 is currently scheduled for release in January, so remember to empty the 'waste bag' in your pressure suit for then. 🛂



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DUT NOW

CM2 97/98 top of the league

As if anyone really needed any proof that the Collyer brothers' Championship Manager 97/98 was the best game ever, sales figures

for the month of November have confirmed it as one of the biggest selling PC games ever Outselling Microsoft's Flight Simulator 98 by four to one and shifting six times as many copies as LucasArts' Jedi Knight, the megaselling football management title has helped reassert Eidos' status as a big player in the PC market. So, if you're still one of the few who hasn't fallen under its spell, buy it now and see what you're missing.



Most Wanted for '98



The coming of 1998 will be a time to reflect on the past and look forward to pastures new. PC Zone readers have already paid tribute to the top games of this year (see Awards on page 59), and are no doubt scrutinising news and previews to pick out their most anticipated games of next year. The PC Zone team pick their 'most wanted of '98' to help sort the wood from the trees.

Alpha Centauri

(Firaxis/Electronic Arts)

It's no surprise that an eager legion of Civ fans have Alpha Centauri at the top of their wishlist. With improved graphics, the ability to completely customise your units, and the opportunity to explore uncharted areas of space, Alpha Centauri is sure to be massive in O3 next year.



Anachronox (Ion Storm/Fidos Interactive)

Tom Hall's RPG Anachronox is already causing ripples in the PC gamesplaying fraternity, even though it's not due for release until Christmas of next year. Using the Quake engine from a fixed isometric viewpoint should result in something rather extraordinary on the frontier of role-playing.



Carmageddon 2 (Stainless/SCi)

Could the most controversial game of this year become the most controversial game of next year? Those boys down at Stainless have already proved that anything could happen. Expect more mayhem. more gore, more cars and more cows. Let's hope they throw in a few nuns and Popes.



Civilization III

(MicroProse/GT Interactive)

Sid might have gone, but MicroProse own the name and they intend to hang onto it. Little is known about the third instalment although in light of the Age Of Empires you can pretty much bet that it will be real-time, sport a much needed graphical make-over and numerous multi-player options.



Championship Manager 3 (Sports Interactive/Eidos Interactive)

The Collyer brothers promise new, quicker code, a global manager arena, youth squads, media interest, stadium development and a zillion other ideas. If you have any ideas, check out www.comuplink.co.uk/ ~champman/ and they might just



Daikatana

(Ion Storm/Eidos Interactive)

Check out the Hot Shots section in our last issue if you need confirmation of why this game is going to be absolutely huge. John Romero and co. have held back the release date of Daikatana to make absolutely sure they produce a game that will have Quake fans spoogeing their heads off.



Dark Project, The (Looking Glass/Eidos Interactive)

Warren Spector may have left Looking Glass to work for Ion Storm, but the team he left behind on The Dark Project seem more than capable of polishing things off to an amazingly high standard - as new versions of their medieval combat adventure have



Descent: Freespace (Parallax/Interplay Productions)

No longer confined to the claustrophobic corridors of the original, Freespace: The Great War takes Interplay's classic Descent series to the stars and into space with a rousing mixture of openended stellar combat and heartpumping ground-based missions. Should be a cracker.



Diablo II (Blizzard/Sierra)

If Warcraft II was the game that put Blizzard on the gaming map, Diablo was the one that finally established them as a force to contend with. With more villages, more characters and more weapons, Diablo II will surely be worth the wait when it finally appears.



Duke Nukem Forever

(3D Realms/GT Interactive)

Duke fans will be up to their knees in jiz at the sight of Duke Nukem Forever - the Quake-engined seguel to one of the most enjoyable games of 1996. A whole host of new weapons and monsters are promised, as is that same old 'sense of humour' and incredible attention to detail



Dungeon Keeper 2 (Bullfrog/Electronic Arts)

The sequel to one of the most original releases of '97 is pencilled in for a Xmas '98 release. Developers Bullfrog promise polygons instead of sprites, a faster, smoother engine and even more emphasis on strategic, fastpaced gameplay. If anyone can



Earthsiege 3 (Dynamix/Sierra)

This is the game that could well put Sierra at the top of the big robot ladder, with gorgeous graphics and a very strong singleplayer element which goes some way towards explaining why the game has slipped to May. It will be interesting to see how this one squares up against MechWarrior III.



EBT Tank

Masters of the military sim DID are currently working on a high-octane tank game that, from what we've seen so far, could turn out to be one of the highlights of the new year. Incredible graphics (3Dfx-arama) and wonderful physics are already evident - and it's only 50 per cent complete.



FIGP 3

(Geoff Crammond/MicroProse)

Since we were first wooed by the lush F1GP2 almost two years ago, many other developers have set about stealing Crammond's crown. To date only UbiSoft's excellent F1 sim has come close. Our hopes however, are still undeniably high for Geoff's next effort which is due for release "sometime in '98"



Falcon 4.0 (MicroProse/GT Interactive)

Using the latest 3D technology, Falcon 4.0 sports realistic texturemapped terrain based on digital aerial photography and authentic F-16C flight modelling with over 10 different radar and HUD modes. Will it be better than DID's awesome F-22 Air Dominance? Guess we'll find out come Summer '98.



Movies, game and videos

Given the oft-quoted rampant desire of creator Chris Roberts to do so, it will come as no surprise to anyone to learn

that Wing Commander is going to be made into a moving picture show. The film will be based on characters, storylines and themes from Wing Commander I to IV. (Lovers of quality

sci-fi will be hoping the twodimensional, six-pixel aliens from the first version figure strongly). An animated cartoon series has already been made of the game by Universal

Studios - unfortunately, it was only broadcast on the USA Cable Network With Wing Commander: Prophecy also here to stay, it looks like being a busy time for Roberts.



Grand Prix Legends (Papyrus/Sierra)

Cleverly dodging all the pricey licenses that modern F1 games demand, GP Legends is set in the golden age of motor racing - the 60s - when Lotus ruled the world and men weren't proper drivers unless they had a great big 'tache.



Grim Fandango (LucasArts/Virgin)

Monkey 3 proved that LucasArts are still the best creators of point-andclick adventures. We've only seen a few screenshots of Grim Fandango, but even that's enough to have us all promptly predicting that it will be nothing short of brilliant.



Half Life (Valve/Sierra)

The ubiquitous Quake engine once again shows off its outstanding versatility in Valve's forthcoming sci-fi shooter Half Life. With a well designed story, some wholesome Al, ridiculously detailed accelerated 3D graphics, plus many, many big guns - Half Life almost certainly has 'hit' written all over it.



Messiah

(Shiny/Interplay Productions)

There's already a massive buzz about Messiah, due in part to Dave Perry's tireless self-promotion and the fact that his team are well on the way to producing a game that blends state of the art graphics with innovative gameplay.



Populous III

(Bullfrog/Electronic Arts)

Bullfrog's first release sans Peter Molyneux is pretty much finished and is now going through the play testing mill. A slick new 3D engine, an endearing graphical style and potentially awesome multi-player action make it a must have for '98.



Prey (3D Realms/GT Interactive)

Pushing graphics and gameplay to the limits - that's what Prey is all about. And from what we've seen so far, Apogee are on course to wow us all with their acceleratoronly first-person shooter. Prey will introduce 3D Realms' new character Talon Brave, as well as a whole host of other surprises.



SIN

(Ritual Entertainment/Activision)

SiN is the first full game from the creators of the excellent Scourge Of Armagon, so expectations are very high. From what we've seen so far it looks as though Ritual are on course to produce something that could out-Quake Quake II..



ST: First Contact

(MicroProse/GT Interactive)

After the disappointing Star Trek Generations, MicroProse are keen to make amends. Consequently, First Contact will be much more action-orientated, and as it uses the Unreal engine, should at least look better than its predecessor.



Tanktics

(DMA Design/BMG)

Mallo's 'top tip for '97' never saw the light of day due to slippage. Still, the game remains on course for an early 1998 release and looks far better than it did when we first saw it. Comedy tanks, wonderful 3D landscapes and fluffy, burning sheep are still on the menu, so stay tuned for a full review soon.



Ultima IX

(Origin/Electronic Arts)

We can't wait to get our hands on the most eagerly-awaited RPG in the entire universe. If Ultima IX retains the same kind of interaction that made Ultima VII such a massive hit, his loyal legion of fans won't be disappointed.



Unreal

(Epic/GT Interactive)

Massively overdue, but looking better every time we see it, Unreal is crammed with every 3D feature known to man. The finished version will come with an Unreal editor - the icing on the cake for this shoot 'em up 'pilot'.



X-Files, The (Fox Interactive)

Shrouded in mystery, Fox Interactive's forthcoming X-Files adventure game is being developed in conjunction with the show's creator Chris Carter, so should be well worth a look when it comes out next March. Stay with us for a preview in the very



near future.



Top tips for '98, innit!



Jeremy plumbed for Champ Manager 3 as his top tip for '98, "I've spent hours - no, weeks - of my life playing Champ Manager 2," says our esteemed Ed, and I'd say about 20 per cent of that time has been spent waiting for the stats to update. CM3 should alleviate the waiting time. Also, I really want to play it multi-player." Don't we all?



3D Realms' Duke Nukem Forever is top of Chris's shopping list next year. "Combining Duke Nukem gameplay elements with iD's Quake engine is sure to pay dividends," he says, "they simply cannot lose." And being one of the very few people to have actually

seen Origin's Ultima IX, Chris you have to listen when he says: "no one does it better than Richard Garriot."



Mallo's having trouble choosing his top tip for '98 as he is currently salivating at the prospect of a number of new games. Prey, Blade and Daikatana he "wants baaaaad," but reckons DID's EBT Tank could be massive. "It looks and feels absolutely marvellous." he

says, "but I'd prefer an action game, rather than a heavyweight sim."



Rich is really looking forward to Monolith's forthcoming Blood 2 and Stainless Software's Carmageddon 2, but admits that Sierra's Half Life is his most highly-anticipated title of next year. Why? "Because it looks like the AI will be something

really special," says Rich. "It should make single-player games an outstanding experience."



hottest games and their current release dates

m

MARCH

MAY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

NOVEMBER

HEDZ (Hasbro)

Half Life (Sierra) Populous III (EA) SiN (Activision) The X-Files (Fox Interactive)

Daikatana (Eidos) Grim Fandango (LucasArts) Incoming (Rage) ST: First Contact (MicroProse) Tanktics (BMG) Unreal (GT Interactive) -

Blade (Gremlin) Descent Freespace (Interplay) Earthsiege 3 (Sierra) EBT Tank (DID)

Grand Prix Legends (Sierra)

The Dark Project (Eidos) **Duke Nukem Forever (GT Interactive)** Falcon 4.0 (MicroProse) Gabriel Knight III (Sierra)

Blood II (Monolith) -

Evolva (Psygnosis) Prey (GT Interactive)

Champ Manager 3 (Eidos) Civilization III (MicroProse) Diablo II (Blizzard)

Carmageddon 2 (SCi) F1GP3 (MicroProse) Messiah (Interplay) Ultima IX (EA) Total Annihilation II (GT Interactive)

Anachronox (Ion Storm) -Dungeon Keeper 2 (EA)

From arcade to PC

GT Interactive are rushing out two arcade conversions in time for Christmas, each one a snip at £30. Maximum force is a Virtua Cop-style

shoot 'em up where you kill baddies who pop up regularly along seasickening camera trails while avoiding the innocent civilians who always seem to get in the way of your bullets. *Hang Time* is a 2D basketball sports game which has been ported from the successful 1996 arcade hit of the same name. Both games are simple affairs that hint at the promise of uncomplicated gameplay. After playing early versions we can only hint at the promise of future reviews.



DATAPAD



Wrongs righted, rights wronged, and industry gossip revealed months before anyone else.

ans with especially keen memories may recall the issue 55 instalment of this esteemed column, where, as an addendum to the token Lara Croft story, I casually mentioned that the busty adventuress was due to be depicted in a Hollywood movie by the actress Liz Hurley. Imagine then, my surprise, when after a particularly lively Sag Aloo with Bindi Bhaji – and in the absence of any quality two-ply – I reached out for a copy of *The Sun* to be greeted with the 'EXCLUSIVE' news that "Liz Hurley is set to star in a Hollywood film version of the mega-hit computer game *Tomb Raider*". Credited to Dominic Mohan, a Showbiz Reporter (whatever that is), the story carried some quotes from a "source on the project", who revealed that "Lara is a tough cookie and knows how to look after herself. Liz is perfect for the part and the producers really want her." Page-filling nonsense, naturally, but it does beg the question of how a national newspaper can claim to break a story three months after it's become yesterday's chip paper.

Moving on to more recent matters, poor old Microsoft have been the victims of crime. Not of the lame software piracy variety, but proper crime, as in 'Queen's evidence... bang to rights... ten stretch... put the money in the bag... shut up and nobody gets hurt... keep the motor running... you said no shooters!'. In a scene more suited to an episode of *The Sweeney*, four masked raiders stormed Microsoft's Scotland manufacturing facility in East Kilbride and held staff at gunpoint — three employees were also bound and gagged. The thieves made good their escape with around £10 million worth of knock-off, including 100,000 CD-ROMS, 200,000 certificates of authenticity, and a variety of computer equipment. Among the software lifted was *Windows 95*, *Office 97*, *Windows NT*, and — astonishingly — even some Microsoft games, lending a new meaning to the phrase 'thick as thieves'. It is not thought that the robbers will be casually hawking their ill-gotten wares down the Tottenham Court Road Computer Exchange, but rather that they will attempt to pass it off as discounted software available through mail order. Keep 'em peeled.

The Psygnosis Formula 1 '97 farrago would appear to have reached a workable conclusion. The brouhaha began when complaints were received from the licensing body of the sport concerning use of certain logos. The game was withdrawn from the shelves while Psygnosis set about making the necessary alterations, although the Formula One types then went about attempting to obtain an injunction preventing the game from being relaunched, which is a little bit small-minded (just a touch). The Court refused to grant the injunction though, and the repackaged game was given the green light. Psygnosis would like to stress that Formula 1 '97 was not and is not licensed by Federation International de L'Automobile, Formula One Administration Limited or Giss Licensing BV. I too would like to take this opportunity to stress that I am not licensed by anyone either, but will nevertheless gladly accept any free stuff in return for favourable publicity.

Merger news sees Pulse Entertainment straddle the flailing frame of 7th Level, the unholy alliance yielding a new company called P7 Solutions, although whichever dead-eyed marketing skunk came up with that name should go and have a long hard think about his first quarter spend. P7 will concentrate on creating authoring tools for on-line games. Borrowed time.

As a precursor to the above union, 7th Level sold the distribution rights to their *Monty Python* series to Take 2 Interactive, formerly known as Gametek (arf). The next instalment, *The Meaning Of Life*, should surface early in the new year. An American said, "We love your Monny Pie-thon."

Parroty Interactive, the people behind spoof titles Star Warped, X-Fools and Pyst, are due to release a lampoon of Microsoft and Bill Gates, hilariously entitled MicroShaft WinBlows 98. Bill Gates is obviously unimpressed — at the recent Comdex show, a Gates doppelgänger promoting the product was allegedly thrown out of the hall, prompting Parroty's Rob Halligan to ask, "Don't these people have a sense of humour?"

Meanwhile, Billy Boy himself is set for a move to London. Mind The Gap!

Septerra Core blimey!



The PC RPG, it seems, is 'turning Japanese' - first Final Fantasy VII, now Valkyrie's Septerra Core...

Viacom New Media may be as dead as a recently-murdered doornail, but it seems that at least one of their projects has survived the apocalypse. The team responsible for *Septerra Core*, an allegedly ground-breaking RPG, have banded together to form Valkyrie Studios – and are currently hard at work on their labour of love. *Septerra Core* promises masses of sumptuous locations, surprisingly articulate non-player characters, and an unusual 'Japanese' ambience. As befits such a huge undertaking, *Septerra Core*'s projected release date is some way off – late 1998 to be precise. Impatient, mewling RPG fans can just chew their own bags until then.







Final Fantasy VII has a rival in Septerra Core – a new Jap-style RPG from Valkyrie.

You read it here first

More tasty morsels to digest as we go to press... Readers eager to catch up on the latest edition of *PC Zone's* hilarious *Cybertwats* comic strip will have to wait until next month for the next instalment — Mr Brooker's submission for this particular issue has been deemed 'potentially libellous' by our in-house legal experts. Rather than risk an ugly and protracted legal case, we have been advised not to print said strip. Still, all is not lost, since

Charlie assures us that as soon as he is able, he'll be placing it 'on display' at a top-secret Internet location. "Anyone who really wants to see it can e-mail me," he says. "I'll point them in the right direction." Only problem is, they'll have to work out his address first...

We've just heard that George A Romero has directed a *Resident Evil 2* TV ad. Should be gore-o-licious!

Shiny Entertainment have changed the name of their

smart-looking new 'copter game. It'll now be known as *Stunt RC Copter*.

Milestone, the people behind the excellent Screamer series, are to release Superbikes in January – a 3Dfx-fuelled sports racer with big bikes in it. Look out for first shots next issue.

Finally, BMG are about to announce *Monkey Hero*, an action adventure game based on the seminal 'Monkey' TV series. BMG willing, we'll have more for you next issue.

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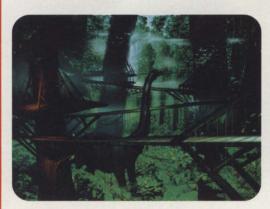
THE SUCCESSION WARS THE PRICE OF LOYALTY

A merry Chrimbo from the people at Hot Shots, the galaxy's biggest and best screenshot gallery. The festive season brings us a snowy sprinkling of this new year's top-looking games - from Europress' XLR8 to 5D Games' Millennium Four: The Right. Just what you asked Santa for, right?

XLR8 (Speedworks/Europress)

We took our first look at Speedworks' futuristic bike racing game XLR8 last issue and were pretty impressed by the lush visuals and speed of play. Looking a little like Bethesda Softworks' now-ancient Delta V, XLR8 has been described as a 'white knuckle ride' (Make that 'blurred knuckle ride' - Ed) through eight varied game worlds - ranging from the volcanic deserts of Venus to the prehistoric rainforests of some place called Triaz.

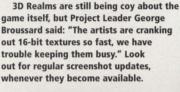
Europress claim that XLR8 will be "completely free of any pre-rendered graphics" and that it's "one of the most technically accomplished games we have ever seen". Let's make sure the gameplay lives up to the graphics, eh fellers?





Duke Nukem Forever (3D Realms/GT Interactive)

Stop the presses! As we were about to send the mag off to the printers, in came these new Duke Nukem Forever screenshots. Admittedly they are a bit blurry (Pretend you've had a few pints - Ed), but they do show off the intricate architecture (a decaying Las Vegas and a dilapidated desert outpost), plus there are a few examples of the sort of weaponry we should expect (check out the cool multiple rocket launcher).













Dark Omen (Electronic Arts)

Everything went dark

Those of you who saw our in-depth preview of Warhammer: Dark Omen in issue 54 may have noticed that it's changed publishers since we first took a look at it. Mindscape were down to publish the game, but it now resides in the hands of Electronic Arts, who predict an early '98 release.

Following on from where Shadow Of The Horned Rat left off, Dark Omen will feature more in-depth missions and more character interaction than the previous Warhammer title. A "dynamic campaign scenario" will develop the story based on player actions, while added resource management elements will provide the opportunity to build up really huge armies to play around with.









Then went light again

Warhammer: Dark Omen mixes colour-lit accelerated polygonal landscapes with a proprietary 'particle' system (used for special effects such as explosions etc), a 3D line of sight system (not too dissimilar to the technology shown off in Bungie's Myth) and immersive 3D sound to create a believable atmosphere (if you believe in goblins and orcs, that is).

Electronic Arts say that:
"Although a great deal of
effort is being expended
to ensure that Dark Omen's
technical and presentation
values are of the highest
quality, by far the most
effort is going into
improving the gameplay
itself." Which is nice to
know. Our fingers are
crossed for the arrival
of a fully reviewable
version next issue.







HOT当 Shots







Actua Ice Hockey (Gremlin Interactive)

February '98: the time to look out for Actua Ice Hockey the official game of the Nagano Winter Olympics courtesy of Gremlin Interactive (with added technical advice from the Sheffield Steelers). The game is to feature the full Olympic competition recreated in its entirety (although Gremlin admit that a little "artistic licence" was needed to create a Great Britain team), plus some fluid animation thanks to the use of a 10-camera motion capture system (one of only two in the world apparently). Actua Hockey's 'True 3' engine will take full advantage of PowerVR native effects, including coloured lighting, real-time shadows, translucency and fogging.









Millennium Four: The Right (5D Games/GT Interactive)

5D Games announced Millennium Four: The Right some months ago, and PC Zone has been following the game's progress intently ever since.

"It'll be the largest true 3D universe ever," said Designer Dave Konieczny, "with seamless integration of two separate gaming genres: space combat and first-person shoot 'em up."

Recruited into a guerrilla war between 'co-operative' forces and 'freespacer' rebels, Millennium Four: The Right, is to feature full 3D hardware support via Direct3D or OpenGL,













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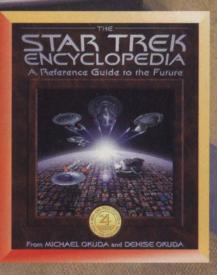
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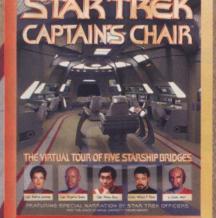
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ourprice

Welcome to PC Zone's version of The Chart Show, sponsored by Our Price. Each month it'll feature the titles we think will be flying off the shelves in the coming weeks, and it will also play host to exclusive news and competitions.



BLADE RUNNER (Virgin Interactive)





TOMB RAIDER II (Eidos Interactive)



World Cup, but the great new game FIFA 98: RTWC is released. The game allows players to trace their team's success right through from the initial qualifying rounds to the final, with all the ups and downs along the way.



QUAKE II (Activision)

FIFA 98: RTWC

(EA Sports)



CHAMPIONSHIP **MANAGER 2 97/98**

(Eidos Interactive)



MONKEY ISLAND 3 (LucasArts/Virgin)



WORMS 2 (Ocean)



G-POLICE (Psygnosis)



ACTUA SOCCER 2 (Electronic Arts)



WING COMMANDER: **PROPHECY**





(Electronic Arts)



OOTBALL FANS WILL BE IN HIGH SPIRITS THIS YEAR, FOR NOT only has the England team qualified to go through to the

The excellent graphics and challenging game levels combine to make sure that FIFA 98: RTWC will stay a family favourite - so watch out, football mania is well and truly hitting our screens.

To take part in this month's Our Price Top 10 prize giveaway, just put pen to paper, answer the question below and send it in to: PC Zone, Our Price Competition (59), Dennis Publishing Ltd, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ.

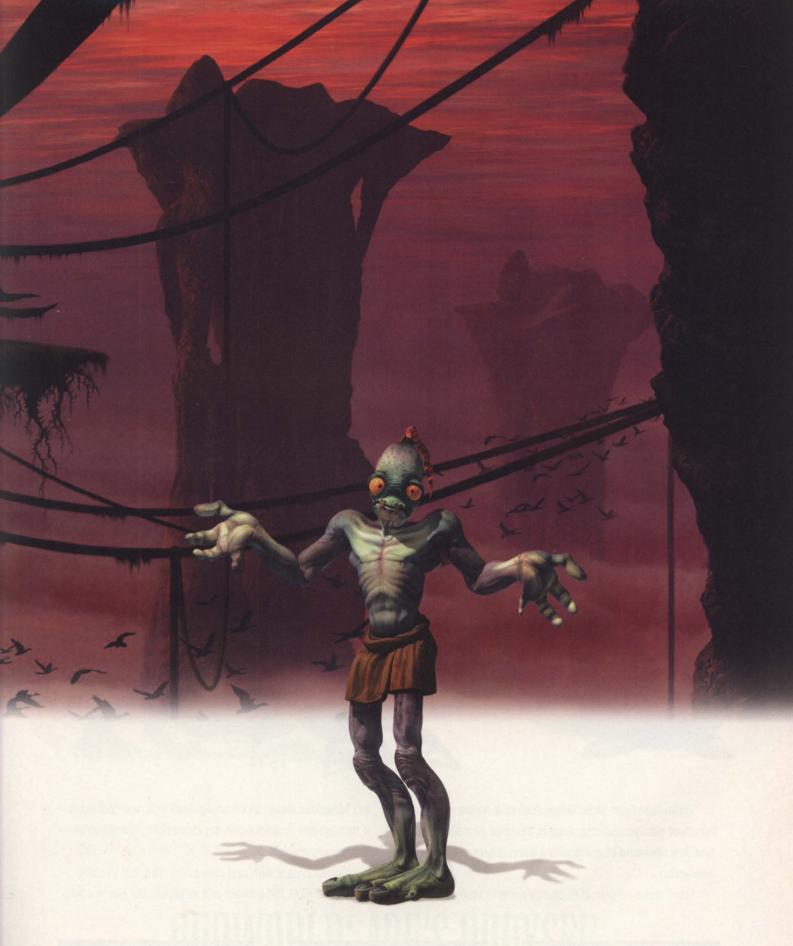
Our Price Question:

WHICH MANCHESTER UNITED AND ENGLAND PLAYER FEATURES ON THE BOX OF FIFA: RTWC?

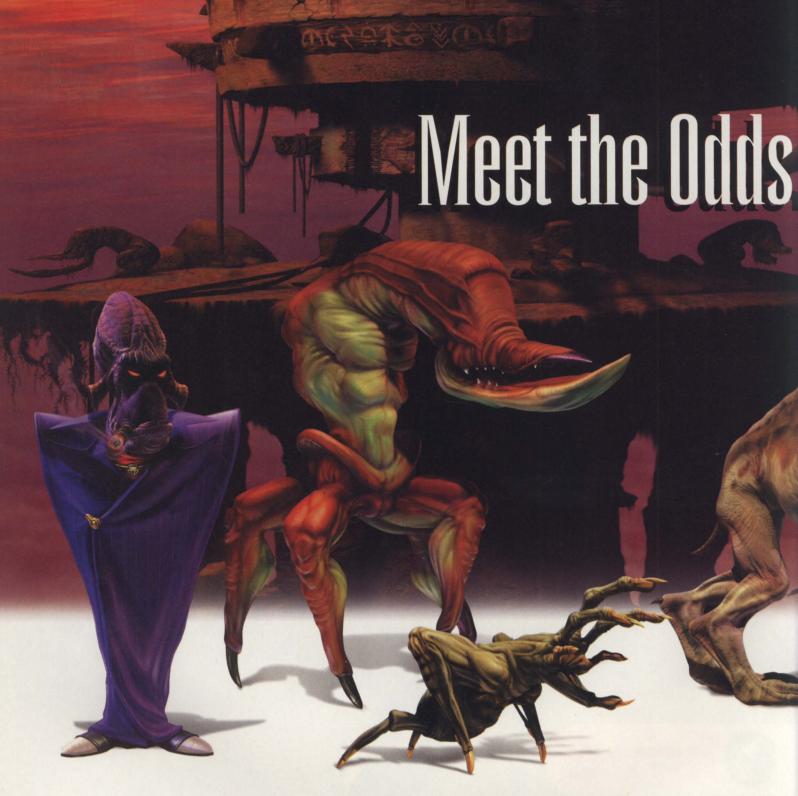
Rules and restrictions: All entries must be received by Friday 16 January 1998. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final and the winners will be notified by post. All other usual restrictions apply.



DISCLAIMER: The Top 10 printed is correct at the time of going to press but positions, titles and prices may vary throughout the month.



He's skinny. He wears a loincloth. He has no weapons. (He's the guy that you play.)



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you've ever seen and blends them into one seamless, surreal, sensory overload of pure gaming. So take your loinclothed butt and claim your destiny. Saviour. 'Or salami.

ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE







the idea of a turn-based game. It's a way of allowing you to put a lot of different things into a game but not have them

Sid Meier knows a thing or two about games, particularly of the strategic variety. He cofounded MicroProse, but left last year to form Firaxis, who have just released their first game, *Gettysburg*. Sid flew to England to talk to Steve Hill, who doesn't know a great

OLLOWING A LUDICROUSLY overpriced meal at London's stiflingly opulent Oxo restaurant, the babble of besuited dullards is too much for your correspondent's

deal about anything.

rudimentary Dictaphone, forcing relocation to an exterior balcony high above the moonlit Thames. Buffeted by a fierce wind, with only a stiff drink for respite, the chat commences... PCZ: The *Gettysburg* game, is that something you've always wanted to do?

Sid Meier: Yes. Actually, before I even started writing computer games professionally, I put together a Civil War game on my Atari 800. I've tried a couple of different approaches, but because the Civil War's such a large topic, I never really found a way to keep it all manageable. About a year ago, I decided that I would focus exclusively on a single battle and bring the action on the battlefield to life as opposed to trying to simulate the entire war. What I remember as a kid, reading about the Civil War, what stuck in my mind was the action of the battlefield, the smoke, the charging, the cavalry, the cannons and that the most interesting most fun game would be to really be able to get on the battlefield and command an actual army in battle. PCZ: In Civ II you stuck to turn-based action. A lot of people were thinking that would be the first real-time game. Is there any reason for that?

SM: Well, the Civilization style of game is really based around





The phrase 'industry veteran' is often bandied about liberally, but in the case of Sid Meier it can't really be argued with. The man has been there since the start and continues to be hugely influential. Nice sneakers, too.

the idea of a turn-based game. It's a way of allowing you to put a lot of different things into a game but not have them overwhelm the player. I think that the problem with real-time games is that if you try and put too many things in there and the player can't control the pace of the game then the player is essentially deluged with information and decisions and you end up with the phenomenon of the game playing the player as opposed to the player playing the game. With Civilization there's too many things that really need to be in there to make it a real-time game. You need time to think about decisions, you need time to balance politics with economics and with the military, then weigh up all the different factors. I think real-time would detract from the game. I think it works better as a turn-based game than a real-time game. PCZ: What do you think makes a good strategy game? SM: I think the thing that made Civilization successful was the idea of having a number of different elements that are simple and easy to understand in their own right, but that interact in ways that create a lot of complexity and interest. In Civilization there's a fairly simple military system, a fairly simple resource management system, a fairly simple economic system and a fairly simple diplomacy and political system, but once you get all those things working together the complexity arises as you trade off or between the military, economic and diplomatic. So it's very easy to start playing because individually all the elements of the game are easy to understand. But once they start to interact with each other, the game starts to get interesting.

PCZ: You've recently left MicroProse. Why was that? SM: Well, an opportunity came along to work with some people that I really wanted to work with and in a smaller

"It makes sense to work with small groups — that's where the creative work is." Sid Meier

> company environment. I think that the time had come where the pressures, the kind of quarterly demands of working in a larger company had got to be something that we wanted to get away from. And it's really kind of a trend with a number of designers; Peter Molyneux did it, a couple of the iD guys have gone off to form their own company, and Mr Wing Commander, Chris Roberts, has also gone off to form his own company. It's a realisation, I think, that creativity is fostered in a smaller environment whereas large companies do a great job of marketing and selling. But we're really kind of swinging back from about five years ago when we started using CD-ROMs. What happened was people said, well, gee, we can put 700Mb on these CD-ROMs so we're going to really have to start making movies with incredible scores and dialogue and video. We're going to need 50 people to put a game together so let's create these massive in-house development groups. And that happened and then a game like Doom came along. And it was a massive success; it was done by five guys in a basement. And software companies said: "Wait a minute, we've been spending all this money to have 50 people trying to grind out some Hollywood movie/game combination that nobody really wants to play, whereas these guys have done this great game in their basement." So the pendulum has

at's Your Game?



swung back now and big companies are saying it makes sense to work with small groups because that's where the creative work is being done, not with these massive in-house groups. PCZ: You've been in the industry 15 years. What changes have you noticed? Is it a lot more up its own arse, to use a British phrase?

SM: (Laughs) Obviously there's been a lot of technological change over 15 years but one thing that's really struck me is that there's been very little change in terms of what games are about. A lot of the games we played ten years ago would still be fun to play today if we had the hardware to do it on. What we've also seen is a real globalisation of the games industry. Ten years ago, when I was starting out, you really had to rewrite games to go into England or to Germany or to other countries because they had different hardware, even a whole different style of gaming, whereas today there are still some differences but it's a more global gaming community. PCZ: You've always been known for God games. Do you think you're God?

SM: (Laughs) It's true the last few games I've done have been God games - Railroad Tycoon, Civilization and Colonization but before that I did a number of simulator games, F-19, Silent Service, Gunship, I did a role-playing game with pirates. I tend to get burnt out or bored with certain styles of games and move on to something else. So Gettysburg is very much a departure from the God type of game; it's a historical game, it's a real-time game, it's a very intense kind of experience. In

"A lot of games we played ten years ago would still be fun today if we had the hardware." Sid Meier

Gettysburg you're in the middle of the action, as opposed to taking a God's-eye view. So, I don't see myself as God. I think because of the people we have at Firaxis we are able to work in a fairly democratic, non-Godlike fashion.

PCZ: How do you make a game?

SM: I'm fortunate, unlike most development groups I do the designing and the programming so I don't have to have a meeting and convince somebody else to run with my game idea. I can basically wake up in the morning and say 'You know, today I'd like to do a game about X, Sid. What do you think? Oh yeah, that's a great idea, let's go do it'. Since I'm designing it and programming it at the same time I jump back and forth between kind of being the game player to the game designer to the programmer. I'm constantly bouncing back and forth and I spend a good half my time, probably, during development actually playing the game and kind of putting on my game player's hat.

PCZ: Do you think that Civ 3 could be the same without any of your input? How precious are you about the name? SM: (Laughs) I'm not real hung up on: 'only I can do Civilization. I think each designer puts their own individual stamp on their products, so I think a Civ 3 done by somebody else would not be the same game that I would do as Civ 3. But that doesn't mean it would be a bad game, it would be a different game. But I'm not saying that nobody else can do a Civ game except me. A lot of people have looked at Civ and said 'Hey, we could do that' and done something similar, so I don't have a particular problem with it.

PCZ: Are you cold and would you like to go back inside?

SM: If you have enough information.

PCZ: That's plenty Sid, I think.

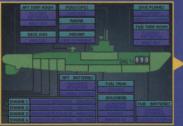
SM: Okay.

PCZ: That's cool, thanks for that.

SM: No problem, a pleasure.



Sid Meier chronology



1986 — SILENT SERVICE



1987 — PIRATES!



1989 — F19 STEALTH FIGHTER



1990 — GUNSHIP



1990 — RAILROAD TYCOON



1992 — CIVILIZATION



— COLONIZATION



1996 — CIVILIZATION 2



1997 — GETTYSBURG



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First

Welcome to First Encounter.



HE LATEST ADVENTURE from Take 2 will come on eight CDs (count 'em). Richie Shoemaker's received the first one, as well as lots of friendly advice as to what to he should do with it.

AKE 2'S BLACK DAHLIA WILL GO DOWN in the record books, if only for the fact that it will be released on so many shiny silver discs. If you multiply projected sales by said number of CDs, Take 2 could, in terms of CD turnover, outsell the Spice Girls. Whatever next? Black Dahlia duvet covers, body fragrance, cheese and onion potato snacks? There could be big money in this.

But before I actually tell you anything about the game, I'm going to do the 'writing about games' equivalent of farting in a crowded lift - Black Dahlia is an interactive movie (prrrrp). We'll just let that circulate and wait for some of you to alight at the next floor. Right. Anyone still with me? Good, let's continue.

As you'll already know, interactive movies are generally regarded as rubbish - so why on earth would anyone want to make another one? Steve Glasstetter, the game's Production Co-ordinator, is convinced that Black Dahlia will be an exception to the rule: "Most interactive movies are bad because they are designed first and foremost as movies, and not as games. With Black Dahlia we've invested considerable energy in integrating outstanding gameplay into an intricate storyline. We chose to use full motion video because, when done properly, it's unequalled in creating a realistic look and feel."

The story and plot are obviously integral to any adventure game. Black Dahlia is based in wartime America, where you're brought in to investigate the 'torso' murders. It covers a five year period, takes you to nazi Germany and brings in the occult, madness, and the ever-soslightly unhinged Dennis Hopper. The level of depth is considerable. But how does the level of interaction pull itself above the norm?

Steve continues: "Players will find they have an unprecedented freedom to move about within the locations. Many of the characters, situations and incidents encountered are based on people and events that actually occurred. The plot is not dependent on dialogue - players must examine the facts unearthed by thorough examination and inference. As for the puzzles, they've all been integrated into the game environment as much as possible.'

Perhaps Take 2 have struck the right balance with Black Dahlia. Let's hope it shows all those first-person adventures the true meaning of the word 'depth'. When it finally arrives on those eight (gulp) CDs, we'll see whether they combine to make either a great game or a shiny set of matching coasters, perfect for when you invite friends round to watch a good movie. (2)

Encounter

Much more than Hot Shots, but not yer average Blueprint!

Black Dahlia



'Hey, bud. I'd recommend you take the stairs, someone floated an air biscuit in the lift." (Heh-heh.)





Product details

Developer: Take 2 Publisher: Take 2

Release Date: Spring 1998 Website: www.bdahlia.com



THE ONLY OFFICIAL EXPANSION PACK FOR ...

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powerful but inefficies weck exploit by changi direction of Attack of

- Probe the complexities of the mysterious new character class The Month
- Seek your destiny in 8 all new randomly generating levels
- Amass and master 12 new formidable weapons
- ♦ 5 new magic spells let you create deadly walls of lightning or escape enemies in a flash
- ♦ Battle 29 new foes in your quest to stop a new master villain

pressure between fifth and sixth rib.

abdominal,



sharp and capable of snake-like reflexes.

NEEDS THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF DIABLO







IERR

http://www.sierra-online.co.uk

E HAVE A CLOSE-KNIT TEAM
of people in the PC Zone
office, all of whom work
together in harmony –
apart, that is, from Patrick
McCarthy, who undermines
everything with his unpleasant nature. We
thought he would be perfect to have the
first look at something that might just
change his ways. We live in hope...

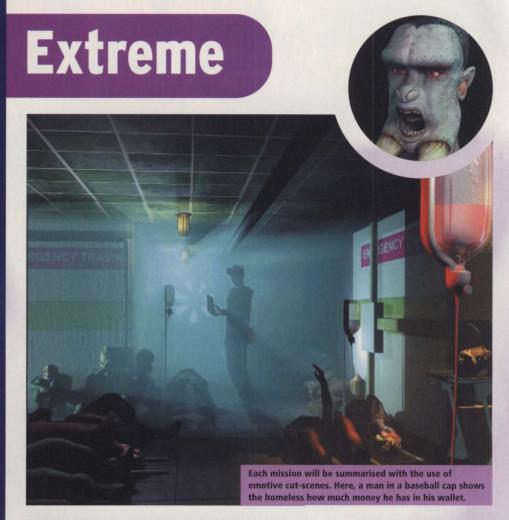
JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT THAT THE REALtime strategy combat game market was well and truly saturated, along comes another addition to the genre. *Extreme's* scenario isn't exactly unique: the human colonists on *new* Mars are being attacked by unfriendly aliens, who believe Mars to be the sacred homeland of their ancestors, so naturally it's only a matter of time before a big fight ensues.

But Extreme's approach is certainly different. It's been designed entirely with "massive" (exact numbers have yet to be specified) multi-player Internet action in mind. Where most combat games still pitch you head-on with everyone else, this is designed to promote co-operation and reward teamwork. It's no good if you think you can survive simply by looking after number one – success will only come to your army if you work with your allies as a cohesive unit. It's even a departure for the developers, Trilobyte, who brought you the adventure point-and-clicker The 7th Guest. That's quite a leap in game styles.

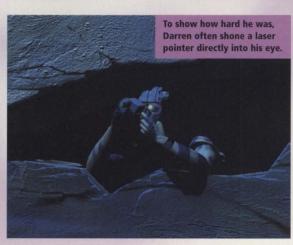
You can opt to join the side of either the human or sway forces, taking the role of a vehicle commander. There'll be a selection of vehicles to choose from, including tanks, helijets and scout cars. But before you start a mission you'll have a few things to deal with first there'll be tactics to sort out and even a bit of enemy misinformation to sift through. And then off you'll go into real-time combat, executing your part in a larger whole for the good of all, in a way that sounds positively communist. For example, as a helijet commander you might be called upon to fly supplies to the front lines or destroy an enemy bunker. Meanwhile, one of your opponents may well be detailed to take you out. (No, by that we don't mean on a date, or anything. Don't get excited.) Mission scenarios will be varied - for example, one side will try to evacuate a specified number of wounded men from a hospital, while the other tries to finish them off. Bastards.

As you can see from the screenshots, the battle itself's seen from a third-person viewpoint, and it looks pretty good – and 3D hardware compatibility should ensure it looks just as good even when the battlefield's absolutely chocka with exploding metal and flying eyeballs.

There are public and private chat features, so that you can have fun slagging people off behind their backs – but you'll have to put in plenty of practice and perfect your gaming technique if you don't want to look stupid in front of your mates, because there'll even be player statistics, saved somewhere public, so that everyone knows how good or bad you are. Obviously the crap ones will then find themselves in a nightmare playground-style 'last-one-to-bepicked' scenario. But they'll just have to get used to it – this is war, after all, and there can only be one winner. 2









Sometimes Gerald just drove his tank into the desert and shot the mountains into humorous shapes.



Product details

Developer: Trilobyte
Publisher: Red Orb Entertainment
Release Date: Spring 1998

Website: www.ea.com



on your sofa



AY BACK IN THE MIDDLE ages armies used to pour barrels of boiling oil over their enemy's heads. These days that sort of warfare is generally considered barbaric. However, in Richie Shoemaker's case we

think we'll make an exception.

ECHNICALLY, THIS SHOULDN'T BE A FIRST Encounter at all - a sort of follow-up investigation to find out what in Sam Hell happened to it would be more appropriate. We first saw Siege at ECTS last September and, if I remember correctly, it was supposed to be on the shelves by 6 November. Slippage has obviously set in, but we can only assume this is a good thing. The designers have obviously taken a good look at the recently-released Myth and taken a big wooden pole to its castle doors.

Siege is a real-time strategy game set in the 14th Century, and the aim is to lay siege to and eventually take over enemy fortresses. The multiple 3D viewpoints may look familiar, but Steve Whittle, the producer of Siege, says it's much more than just Myth-with-castles.

"From what I've seen of Myth, I would say that our resource management aspect adds an extra level of gameplay. In Siege you can play to your personal strengths and weaknesses without being channelled into certain situations, so you don't feel as though you're not in control of your own destiny - different players have different playing styles and we're not going to penalise them for it. For example, when you capture a castle, you have to decide how many and what kind of troops you should leave behind to defend it from being recaptured. In addition to this, Siege will give you the option to move resources between castles to bolster defences as and when needed - but if you do decide to go this route a time span will be associated with the distance they must travel. Knights will move at a slower rate than archers, and siege machines will need a certain number of peasants who can be used to move them as they are very heavy objects."

It's fairly obvious that Siege will be much more than your average Command & Conquer clone, but what about the action - what kind of units can we expect?

"Your troops are made up of archers and crossbowmen, who you can play in the first person, controlling the aim and the firing of arrows. Then there are knights, who you'll use to scale walls, macemen, whose main purpose is to guard the castle's dungeons, and peasants to move siege machines. Later on you'll be able to enlist engineers who'll build siege machines, and spies who will provide valuable information on castles you wish to attack."

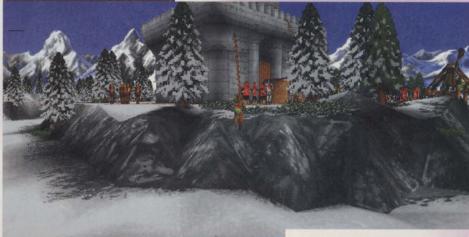
So dar it's all sounding too good to be true a sort of Fantasy Quake meets WarCraft but with non-linear missions, experience points, cracking good 3D graphics - and all from a team who've worked on games from the C64 classic Rastan Saga to this year's Grand Theft Auto. Just for some Trivial Pursuit-type brain-floss, we're also told that one of the lead artists spent almost six years illustrating Spiderman for Marvel Comics. Cool. With that amount of pedigree behind it, let's hope Siege delivers the goods. Well, we've waited this long, I guess we'll just have to wait that little bit longer. @

Siege

Stick around a while and a long winter may set in. Never mind, you could always have a good snowball fight. → × 16 4

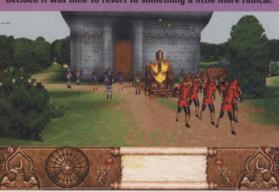


The humble ladder may get you into the first castles, but later





When no one would open the door, the Jehovah's Witnesses decided it was time to resort to something a little more radical.







Siege is Fantasy Quake, sort of.



Here's where you manage thing



Product details

Developer: Telstar Publisher: Telstar Release Date: May 1998 Website: www.telstar.co.uk





ACTION ON THE EDGE OF YOUR SEAT



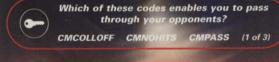
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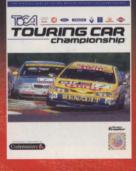




Crash Out



Bump & Grind



Thrash It Out



Cane It



(Codemasters (h)

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1997's Real Cars, Real Tracks, Real Teams, Real Drivers, Real Views



OULD THE QUIRKILY-NAMED
Pumpkin Studios have
come up with a next
generation C&C beater?
Jeremy Wells is the man
salivating over his keyboard.
Well, that's what he said it was...

AMES SUCH AS TOTAL ANNIHILATION and Myth have proved that it is possible to apply new technology to the Command & Conquer genre and make it work. Cavedog used polygons and a more comprehensive theatre to spice up the action, while Bungie's ambitious 3D terrain and in-yer-face effort was ultimately limited because the player was locked in too close to the action. Both games also suffered from lapses in artificial intelligence and route finding – but then what C&C-style game doesn't?

In an effort to take their game to the next level, Pumpkin have set out to make use of the latest 3D technology and incorporate a full range of transparency effects and a Gouraud shaded, rotatable landscape, with the intention of making it the best looking game of its kind. "Warzone: 2100 is full 3D with in-depth game play and blisteringly fast action," explains Pumpkin's Jim Bramba. "The graphic effects are quite simply stunning and make use of every aspect of 3D technology. You get to recover artifacts, conduct research and design over 2000 different droids. A strong narrative drives the game forward across three huge campaign maps and over 20 smaller mission maps."

Early indications suggest that there'll be a lot more to Warzone: 2100 than lush graphical effects however. All the vehicles and units are made of polygons and constructed from three distinct components: bodies, propulsion units and turrets which will allow the player to design their own vehicles. This feature alone, coupled with the fully-rotational, Gouraud shaded landscape mentioned above, texturemapped buildings and structures and a zoom in/out über-engine that allows you to view the action from numerous viewpoints, should be more than enough to get the juices of any die-hard C&C fan flowing, but what does it have over Westwood's ageing classic? "As well as all the features I've mentioned and a dynamic 3D engine, we've been working hard on developing sophisticated AI systems that govern droid behaviour and combat the idea being that the longer you can manage to hold on to your droids, the better they'll perform for you. You will not wanna lose these guys. Similarly, the player's base lasts for the duration of each campaign, so you've got to look after it. Instead of rebuilding it for each mission, it stays as your base of operations. You get to add more buildings and defences and even use it to fly missions to other mission maps."

Clearly, Warzone: 2100 already looks the business, though whether Pumpkin can deliver the gaming goods is yet to be determined. From what we've seen so far however, we'd be inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt, though we'll obviously reserve judgement until we get to go a few rounds with the team in a heated multi-player session once things are in place early next year.

Warzone: 2100



Product details

Developer: Pumpkin Studios
Publisher: Eidos Interactive
Release Date: September 1998
Website: www.eidosinteractive.com



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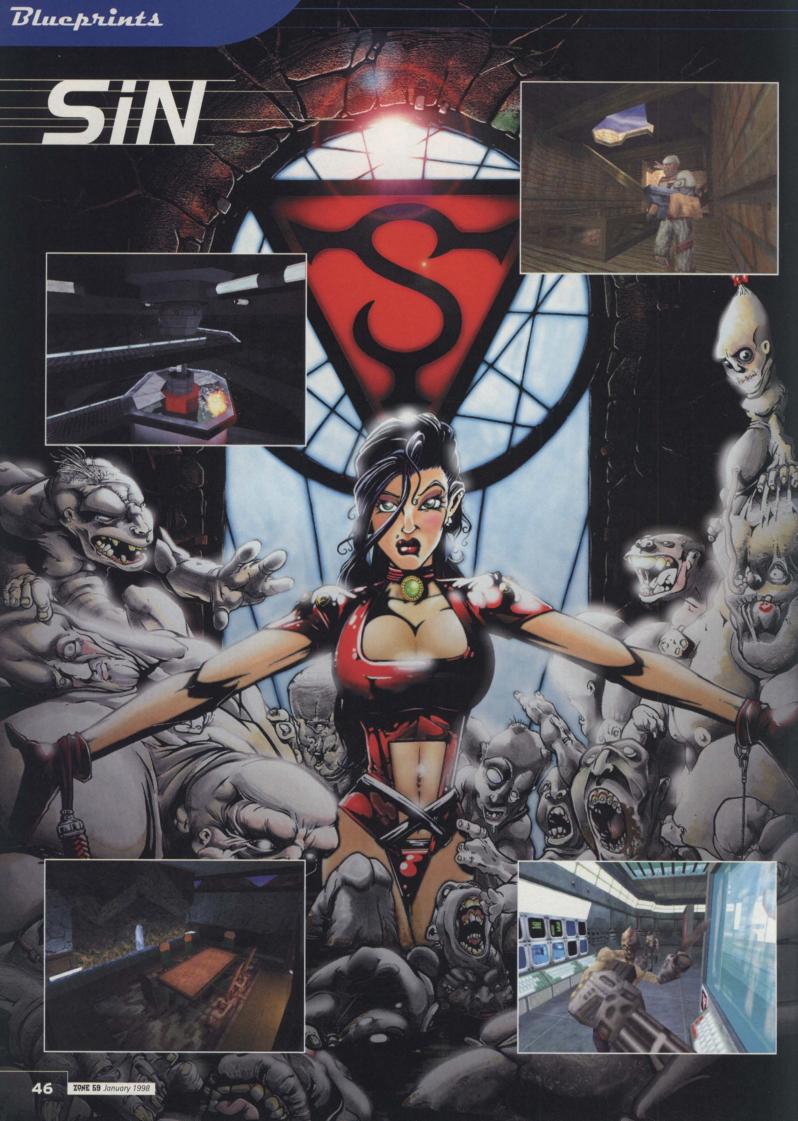






Ubi Soft

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Ritual Entertainment are currently kicking up a storm in the world of first-person shooters. Steve Hill went to Dallas, Texas, to drink weak beer and put dollar bills to good use. He sure does have a purdy mouth...

> N THE WORLD OF 3D ACTION GAMES, Dallas is fast becoming the Hollywood of the genre, with the likes of iD, Ion Storm, Rogue and Apogee/3D Realms in residence. New cocks in the roost are Ritual

Entertainment, formerly known as Hipnotic Interactive, under which name they earned recognition with their first project, the irksomely titled Official Quake Mission Pack #1: Scourge Of Armagon. Forced to change name due to a trademark issue, they are currently in the closing stages of their first game proper, SiN, which uses the Quake engine.

Located a hubcap's throw from the spot where JFK famously sullied the upholstery of his limo, Ritual are situated above a karaoke bar in the shadow of the imposing Dallas skyline, as featured in the title sequence of the soap opera of the same name (that's Dallas, not skyline). The JR Ewing of the operation is Harry Miller, who juggles his multiple duties of CEO, Biz Guy, Secretary and Janitor between sleeping and playing solo games of Tic-Tac-Toe.

Who, how, why?

Harry relates how the company came about: "It started out with five guys at Apogee; Jim Dosé, Mark Dochtermann, Michael Hadwin, Robert Atkins and Richard Gray. They all decided to leave for whatever reasons and start a new company, and they were short of a business guy. They also called Tom Mustaine because he had done some really incredible work with Doom. We all came together and got a deal with iD to do their expansion pack, which was fantastic for us because it allowed us to jump straight into a project right away, and gave us money so we could own the company ourselves. It also allowed us to do a project as a team, together in six months, which was really neat because it's one thing to work on something, it's another thing to finish a project by yourselves. That allowed us to do that in a really short period of time





(Top) A construction worker meets a sticky end. (Middle) An impressive exterior view. (Above) Blue would appear to be the theme here.

Product details

Developer: Ritual Entertainment

Publisher: Activision

Website: www.ritual.com

Release Date: March '98

and was a really big confidence booster for us."

While working on the Quake pack, the company was based in the house of programmer Jim Dosé and artist Michael Hadwin, which, according to Harry, led to some especially unique problems.

"For them it was a bitch. You can imagine, we're already working 15 hours a day, especially with that pack. It was really working non-stop, and everyone else gets to go home and relax whereas these guys can't because that's where they live. They can't go and sit in the living room and watch TV and relax or bring chicks over, that kind of stuff, cos if they do, they gotta share. Things got messy a few times."

Good neighbours

Furthermore, the neighbours were understandably confused as to the nature of their business, believing it to be more narcotic than Hipnotic, as Jim Dosé explains: "We were shopping around for publishers at the time for our next project which was SiN, and so we'd always have these people in suits coming over with briefcases. And of course Jon Romero would stop by in his MV and he'd be wearing this big overcloak thing and what with his long hair an all, he looked like some kind of rock star or drug dealer."

Eventually a local newspaper ran a story revealing what really went on, which in turn led to an immediate eviction order for running a business in a residential area. Doh!

They remained in Dallas though, which makes sense, as Harry says: "There's so much stuff going on in Dallas right now with this industry, especially this genre, it's just the natural place to stay for a while."

But surely, in such an incestuous industry, there must be rivalry with the other local developers?

"There's some. A lot of the original guys here worked at Apogee and when they left there was bad blood. With the employees of Apogee - the programmers, level designers we go out once in a while and have a good time, there's no issues. But the management over there, these guys have a little problem, but generally everyone gets along really well."



Exemplary attention to detail is paid in all areas of the game. Just check out the quality of the pointing on that brickwork and the lighting effects.

Old shoot

Programmers Mark Dochtermann and Jim Dosé have worked together on a number of projects, including Rise Of The Triad, Prey and Duke Nukem. They also share a love of classic arcade games and are in the process of filling the Ritual office with the spoils of their regular auction hunts. Currently taking up valuable working time are Robotron 2084, Missile Command, the impossibly difficult Defender Stargate, Pacman, Ms Pacman, Capcom Bowling, LifeForce and even a fabled sitdown Space Invaders, replete with ashtray. All that's missing is somewhere to hang your school blazer and the hard kid from the year above to take your last life.

But are these games merely an entertaining aside, or are there ideas to be taken from them?

Mark Dochtermann: "Definitely."

Jim Dosé: "It's weird, there's just so much gameplay in such a simple, simplistic style, you had one screen..."

Mark: "It reminds you to keep focus on the basics, well, to keep focus in general because you look at that game and the graphics are so simple yet the game is so good, it's so enjoyable, so addictive...

Jim: "Robotron, for example. That, if anything, is the closest classic arcade

game to the first-person action game genre. That embodies the spirit of the shooter cos it's all constant action, non-stop action, and it's just damn fun. It's amazing that I remember playing that back when I was a kid and thinking how hard it was, as far as eye-to-hand co-ordination. And nowadays, it's funny, I guess because of the mouse-playing in Quake and Doom and stuff, that kind of configuration just seems totally natural." Mark: "No matter how pretty a game is or how many cool special effects it has - which certainly helps make the game look cool and feel cool - if the gameplay isn't there, if it's not exciting or addictive then you have a problem. And those games really show us that lesson, teach us it again and again." So has anything specific been taken from the games room? Mark: "I think it's more of a generality, it's hard to adapt certain things from the game. One game, for example, during the Quake Mission Pack #1: Scourge Of Armagon, we were playing a lot of this one game called Mini Golf which was a little trackball. And we were thinking of putting some of the actual golf courses in the pack somewhere, hidden somewhere, because it was like that game got us through the pack. We played every day, it was a silly game but it was like that much more fun because it was good to drink beers with and just hang out and play. So it was more of an alternative creative influence than anything else."



The boy Hill gets down to some 'proper' games in the Ritual arcade



SiN programmers Mark Dochtermann (left) and Jim Dosé, hard at work

Gray as a Lord

Level designer Richard 'Levelord' Gray is slightly less charitable about his former employers: "Everyone at Apogee except for a couple of people have gone somewhere else. No one ever stays there. And there's still bad blood. I wouldn't have bad blood. They're mad at me because I just upped and left, I didn't even give them a day's notice. We left on a Monday and I didn't know about it until the Friday before - so I didn't have much time to make my decision. But I just upped and left; Sunday night, I came in, grabbed my stuff and left. So they're pissed at that, as far as I know that's what they're pissed at. But I am just beyond reproach with them for taking my name off the second Duke Nukem that came out, the 'Atomic pack' whatever, where they added on the fourth episode. But they took my name off all the stuff I'd done, the third episode for the original Duke and about four levels in episode two. Nothing, my name's nowhere on it. You just don't do that, you don't take an artist's name off his artwork cos he's going to work for some other gallery. So, don't ask about Apogee. But everyone else, we get along fine, we go out and party a lot together."

Bastard ball

Regular drinking buddies are the nearby lon Storm, although a recent basketball game tested this friendship to the limits. Harry Miller takes up the story...

"Both being very competitive – Ion Storm having three times our size in personnel – they challenged us to a game of basketball, and the winner would have his logo put into the loser's game. They were pretty confident they were going to have Ion Storm in our game. This was after many, many days drinking excessively, I have to admit, but I was part of that as

"A newspaper ran a story revealing what really went on, which led to an immediate eviction order." — Jim Dosé





(Top and above) How do you make a game? Using your mind and some clever stuff like this.

well. Come Saturday morning we're all ready to go and they're looking pretty confident until we bring out our secret weapon, Beau 'I don't drink' Anderson, who hadn't been drinking all week because he doesn't drink, he's a Mormon. They were quite surprised that we brought Beau along and not too happy about it. So it was a pretty close game the first half, I think we were ahead by like a point by the first half. But in the second half Beau turned it on and we just crushed them, just stomped on them over and over again. It was pretty cool cos we dressed for the part, we had our like 70s uniforms on, those little short shorts you know, and the knee-high socks and the big jerseys and the great big afros. It was really funny, it was a great game."

The upshot of the Ritual victory is that the SiN logo will now appear in lon Storm's Daikatana, something Harry relishes. "They're not happy about it. But it can't go on in a non-appealing way, it has to look good. We'll see."

Apparently Ion Storm supremo, Jon Romero, had no knowledge of the bet.

"He didn't know anything about it. I don't think he's happy about it. He was kind of curt, but he'll be a good sport. I hear they have to go through him when they make bets now."

It's a safe bet that SiN will be the game to look out for in March 1998. Read about it in next month's Blueprint.



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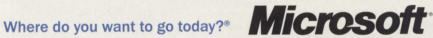
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It's been a long time coming.

Now the latest incarnation of Bullfrog's acclaimed God 'em up is just around the corner.

We sent Charlie Brooker to the company's Guildford HQ to take a peek at one of the most eagerly-awaited games of 1998...

OPULOUS, AHH, POPULOUS.
Few games can justifiably have a big label bearing the words 'landmark' stuck to their chests, but this is definitely one that can. Way back in 1989, Populous was the first of the so-called 'God' games. Not only did its release kick-start an entire genre, it also marked Bullfrog as a development house to watch – and sure enough, they didn't disappoint.

Now, eight years later and post-Peter Molyneux, Bullfrog are gearing up to unleash *Populous III*.

But there wouldn't be any point in bringing out a sequel unless progress had been made, and it was with this in mind that your caring sharing *Zone* asked *Populous III* Project Leader Richard Lienfellner to spell out precisely what's changed...

"With Populous III there are similarities to the original game, and there are differences. As far as similarities go, you still play a god, you've still got a simple objective – to destroy the opposing gods – and the way to do that is basically to build your settlement and become more populous. There's still the notion of a spiritual leader, there's still the notion of mana, there are still spells and the modification of land. Those are the similarities.

"As for the differences - for starters, this is a fully-

rotational, three-dimensional environment, very different from the isometric fixed viewpoint of the original games."

He's not kidding. What he neglected to mention was that it looks absolutely stunning. One peek at *Populous III* in action, and even we hardened *Zone* correspondents began gurgling like excited children. The action all takes place upon a small, shockingly convincing globe, which the player can rotate at will, zooming in and out wherever necessary. Meanwhile, the surface teems with life: your followers (and your enemy's followers) mill about hither and thither, just *itching* for a good hard click from your mouse.

"We want it to be the kind of game where you can see it for the first time and love it." Richard Lienfellner



(Above) You wait, I'll call Powergen and see what they've got to say for themselves. (Above right) Eeee, look a'that. That be a planet. (Right) This year's Tribal Gathering was marred by an unfortunate incident with the BBO stall.





They even leave footprints as they plod across the plains. To plunge headlong into the depths of hyperbole for a moment, this is a game whose visuals grab you by the scruff of the neck, then seductively whisper "play me, you god, you" right in your ear. Indeed, it looks so damn nice, we blithely assumed Richard was showing us the 3Dfx version. He wasn't. That looks even nicer.

Good God in heaven

So we asked, pretending to be clever, does it utilise another update on the *Magic Carpet* engine?

"No, it's a completely new engine. What we think is quite unique about it is the curved horizon. Unlike other 3D engines where you have fogging or you see things clipping in, with this, the objects just roll in over the horizon. It gives you the impression you're playing on this small planet. And, if you like, you can zoom out and use the world view, which shows you the entire planet. You can play the entire game in this mode, if you like."

So, great graphics then. But that's not the only difference.



Looks like the entire population's suffering a bad wind problem. Ho ho.

Bullfrog have released a visually superior yet essentially identical version of Populous before. That was Populous II. For the third entry in the series, the team decided to go back and reinvent the gameplay. So the question that needs to be addressed is: because the game's quite different, are you expecting any flak from committed fans?

"From the absolute die-hard fans, we are anticipating some resistance, the 'it's just not Populous 1', reaction. It doesn't have the isometric view, you're not raising and lowering land constantly, you have direct control over your people. Right from the beginning, we didn't want it to simply be Populous 1 with better graphics. Plenty of time has passed since the first one, and we've seen so many good strategy games in that period, so obviously we want something that's going to stand out. We also want it to be accessible to a wide range of people - including those who've never played the original games."

And how would you go about explaining the game to

"It's a fun - I'd stress the word fun - strategy game. We want it to be the kind of game where you can see it for the first time and love it, spend five minutes playing it and become addicted. We don't want it to be complicated. It's going to be as simple as the original Populous, but with modern influences. For a modern strategy game, you could level the criticism that it's too simple - that there aren't enough different buildings or types of people - but that's actually by design. We didn't want to over-complicate it. We want a simple feature set, which allows complexity and depth through the way you can combine different elements. For instance, one of the characters you can control is a

'spy', who goes around sabotaging enemy settlements. That's all very well, but he might get spotted. Unless you also use your shaman to cast the 'Invisibility' spell, so the other side can't see him."

Spies? Shaman? What other types of people are there for us to treasure?

"There are two basic types of people. One type are these 'wildmen', who wander around in loincloths. They don't follow any religion, they've got no faith - you can't control them in any way. The other type are the 'followers', who wear coloured clothing. These guys you can control, in many different ways - the easiest of which is simply to point and click. It's all quite intuitive - if you click on a person and then click on a tree, he'll go and chop it down for you. Simple.

"There are different types of follower - the shaman, for instance, is a very powerful character. You can command her to fall into a special trance and go around converting wildmen into followers."

So she's like a missionary, basically? "Yes. That's right."

I suppose you tell her to stand in the 'missionary position'? "Ha ha. She's also got special powers and can cast spells." Are there thousands of levels, just like the first one?

"No. There's going to be thirty. Unlike the original Populous where you had thousands of ostensibly similar levels, these are all very balanced, fine-tuned stages. That way we can carefully choreograph everything to make for a more strategic game. Having said that, we're going to release the level editor and place it on the Internet, so people can create and trade their own levels. Ideally, we'd like to encourage a thriving Populous community."

How has the advent of network play affected the design of the game, and by what degree?

"When we started, we had an eight-way multi-player mode, but it turned out to be far too chaotic. We've limited it to four players, simply because it makes for a better game. But the thing to realise is that the single-player mode is identical to multi-player. There are levels where you'll be up against three computer opponents, and our aim is to get them playing so they're indistinguishable from an intelligent human player. Obviously, we won't be able to do that, but we'll get as close as we can."

Wait for it

By now, you must be just about peeing yourself in anticipation. Good. Now you'll have to wait. However, Populous III will be out very, very soon... probably in March. Rest assured, as soon as is humanly possible, we'll bring you a full-on, explicit, no-holds-barred review. Written with words and printed on paper. Just for you. Be patient.

Product details

Developer: Bullfrog

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Website: www.bullfrog.co.uk Release Date: March 1998





(Top) The local firework display proved a little too successful. (Above) Coventry during the war. Note that the inhabitants actually seem pleased with its destruction.

It's a kind of magic



















Populous just wouldn't be Populous without a healthy range of cataclysmic magical spells. Nothing's quite as much fun as playing the angry, vengeful God, and to this end Bullfrog have created some spectacularly destructive bits of sorcery. Tornados, earthquakes, floods, plagues of hornets - you name it, it's here. Special mention must go to the eye-popping 'erupting volcano' sequence, which is enough to make anyone believe in the power of God. The producers of Sky TV's appalling 'rubberneck' show When Disaster Strikes could fill an entire season with some of this footage, y'know...

You wouldn't want to accidentally sit on that now, would you?

Eat, Sleep, Play.... [CCCCFF



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ALPHA CENTAURI

From the creator of Civilization comes a potentially breath-taking futuristic wargame.

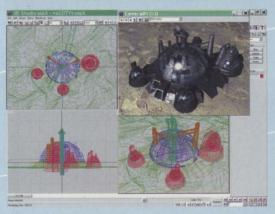
The question is, can Sid Meier keep turn-based strategy games alive with his latest creation? Chris Anderson asks the questions, Firaxis supply the answers.

QUICK STROLL AROUND FIRAXIS' OFFICES in Washington is enough to explain why Sid Meier chose to break his partnership with MicroProse and form his own company. As I walk from one office to the next it's interesting to see that everyone I meet is relaxed, happy and incredibly enthusiastic about their new project, Alpha Centauri. No one's in any hurry to get the game out the door and one and all cite the Firaxis philosophy that a game is only released when it's finished to their satisfaction and not before.

My first port of call is the office of Brian Reynolds, Vice President of Software Development. I asked him the question that a multitude of *Civ* fans have been asking *PC Zone* over the last couple of months: *Alpha Centauri*, we all know it's going to be *Civ* in space, but is that it? "*Alpha Centauri* is going to be much more than an upgrade to *Civilization*,"







The historical buildings of old have been replaced with suitably futuristic structures like this one here.



The terrain plays a much more important part in Alpha Centauri than in previous Civ games: players can raise or lower the land as they see fit, a bit like Populous.

says Brian. "One of the key changes from the original *Civ* game is the ability to design new units. An average ship with an average laser can be upgraded to use better lasers and better armour for example, making it much more efficient in battle. This will obviously come at a hefty cost of course, but you've got to offset the expense you'll incur against the advantages you'll gain during the game. You can also select a special ability, thus creating a sort of super vehicle as it were. There are 20 or 30 of these in the game at the moment but this may grow as we continue development. An example of the kind of special abilities



End of twrn?

With so many publishers churning out one real-time strategy game after another, one wonders if the days of the turn-based strategy genre are numbered. This is a worrying trend, as more often than not, turn-based games offer far more depth than their real-time counterparts. As Sid Meier himself pointed out during my visit to Firaxis: "Turn-based games require the player to think and plan ahead, offering more of a challenge than real-time games which can often be frantic, confusing affairs. We'll continue to make turn-based games as long as people continue to buy them." Ya hear that turn-based fans? Stick with Sid and you'll be alright.

Tclctcxt trauma

There I was in Washington, a long way from home and without any idea whether or not England had beaten Cameroon, or who'd won and lost the World Cup qualifier play-offs, and with no way whatsoever of finding out. I flicked on the TV in my hotel room and searched for the Teletext button on the remote control. I couldn't find it. I rang reception and they said "We don't have that over here, sir." Shit! I couldn't believe it. No footie results. And this is supposed to be one of the most technologically advanced nations in the world. It's just as well Chelsea didn't have an important match on while I was over there, or there would have been trouble.











at your disposal is the stealth option, which when selected will place a deep radar on your vehicle thus allowing that particular ship to move around the play area undetected."

All change

The ability to create your own units will obviously change the way you play the game to a large extent, but Brian is very keen to stress that this is not the only major change in the game design: "Although there were many different ways to achieve success in Civ I and II, the easiest way was to build up your military arsenal to the point where you could simply wipe out all the other players, and that's the way most people chose to play the game. You won't be able to do that quite so easily in Alpha Centauri. Many of the units will have psionic powers which will make it very difficult for players to take them out by normal means. This will encourage you to find other ways of gaining the upper hand over the opposition, be it through economical pressure,



The new environments may be a culture shock to Civ veterans but the fundamental gameplay remains intact.

diplomatic use of alliances or whatever other means the player can find. I'm not saying players won't be able to win through military conquest, I'm just saying it won't be nearly as easy to do this as it was in Civilization I and II. This should make for a much more challenging game."

Fancy that, a peace 'em up from the makers of some of the most confrontational and violent games ever. Whatever next? How about throwing in a few elements of Populous to stir things up a bit? As it happens, Firaxis are about to do just that. Brian explains: "Another really cool feature in the game is the ability to terraform. This allows the player to raise or lower the land as they see fit, depending on the situation at hand. You can use terraforming to your advantage in many ways. If for example you've got a mountain with rain on one side and desert on the other, and you don't like the fact that you've got a desert in that particular place, you can lower the mountains which will cause rain to fall on the other side of the mountains. This

"It won't be nearly as easy to take the enemy out as it was in Civilization I and II." Brian Reynolds









These are the new races in Alpha Centauri. Just like their historical counterparts they all have their strengths and weaknesses and excel in different areas of technology.

reflects real-life weather patterns, which is something we're particularly proud of. Another reason you might want to build a mountain is military units get a bonus if they're on high ground. This will take a few turns but it's worth it for the advantages it gives your army. For this reason terraforming near enemy lines is considered to be an act of war, so don't do it anywhere near races you've got alliances with, unless of course you want to break that alliance." There are far too many new features planned for Alpha Centauri for us to go into any great detail in two pages: we could fill these pages just by explaining the incredibly detailed unit building, which is so intricate you can mix and match components from all your different units to make completely new ones. Fear not however, as we'll give you the full gen when we return to the project as it nears completion next year.

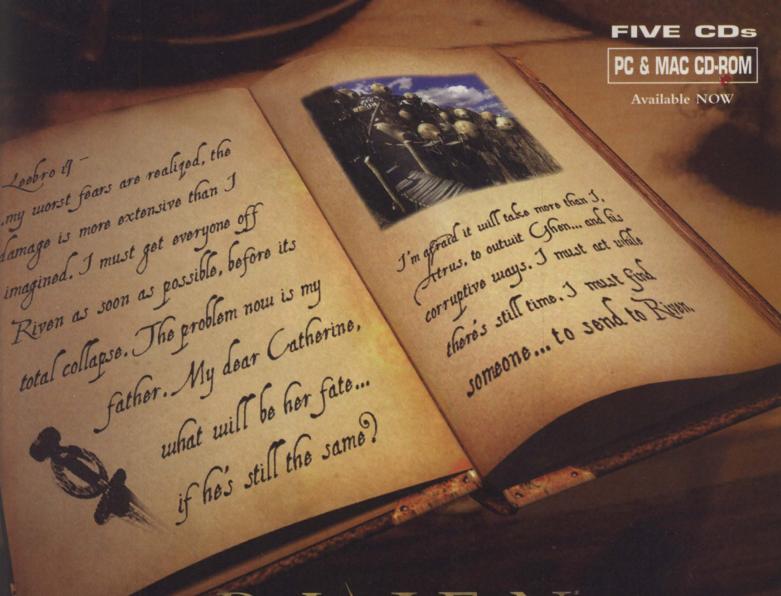
Product details

Developer: Firaxis

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Website: www.firaxis.com

Release Date: Autumn 1998



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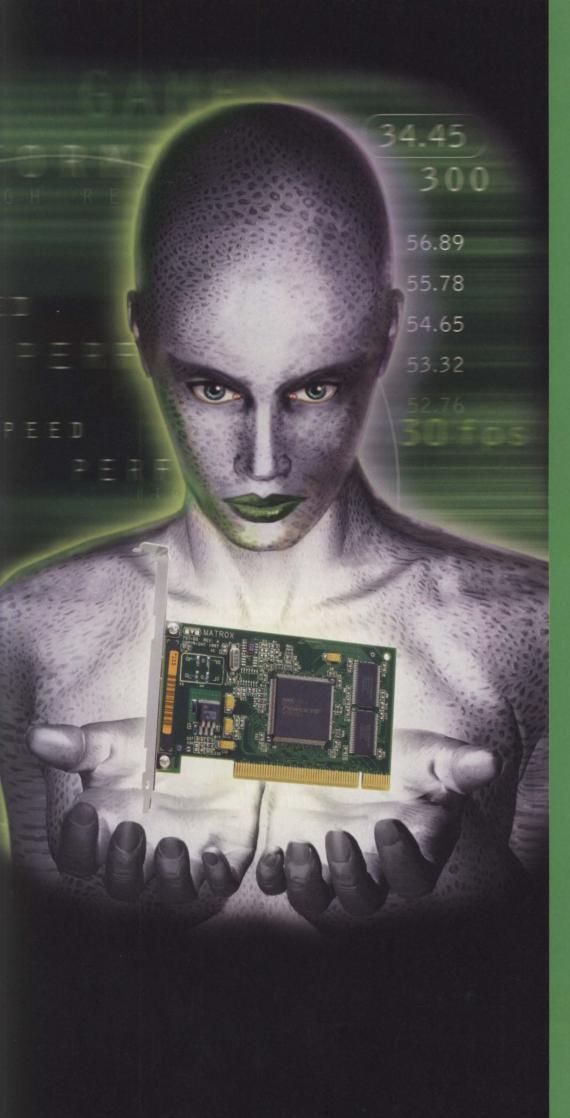
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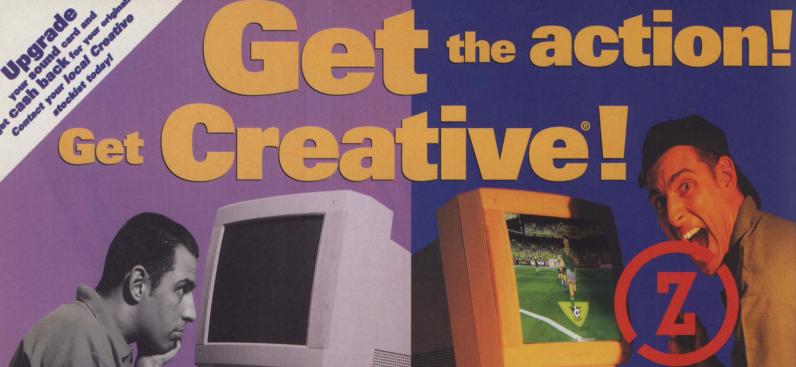












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SPEAKERS



PC Zone Awards 97

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Welcome to the first ever *PC Zone*Awards... the only PC games
awards voted for by the people
that really count – you, the readers.
Three months ago we started the
ball rolling and your votes have
been flooding in from the forms we
provided in the magazine and the *Zone* website and our AOL area.

AVING SAT DOWN AND EXHAUSTIVELY COUNTED EVERYTHING, we eventually arrived at what you will see over the next six pages. Of the 12 awards shown here, all but two of them were voted for entirely by Zone Readers... and quite astonishingly, there was a clear winner in virtually every category. At least we can be certain that you all agree on what your taste in games is.

As you read through the nominations and winners you may find a few surprises – but on the whole we are confident this is the definitive list of what you think are the finest games of 1997. Regardless of marketing waffle, of advertising or review scores (although nearly all of the winners are PC Zone classics) – this is what you loved.

Looking through all of the nominations it's clear that above all else one thing is important, and that's gameplay. Say what you will about something like *Carmageddon*, but above all else it's a damn playable game. If you want the definitive list of the games you *should* own... this is it.

Best Action game

ELL SURPRISE, SURPRISE, SUR-BLEEDIN'-PRISE. Bit of a shock this one isn't it? With more than 40 per cent of the total votes cast, Quake was by far and away the best loved action game around - threatened only by Lara Croft's pneumatic chest in the popularity stakes. Having sold more than a million units around the world, Quake is still the undisputed king.

Almost certainly owing to the incredible expandability of the game engine and the versatility and sheer orgasmic fun posed by the multi-player aspects of the game, Quake has now been at the top











QUAKE

of everyone's playlist for more than a year. Add to this the fact that it's now available on GT Interactive's Replay budget range for less than fifteen quid and you can hardly go wrong.

It's not going to stop either. QuakeWorld is getting bigger and bigger all the time and the success of Wireplay's Quake area is testament to the games' longevity.

As we look forward to 1998... will we see Quake II sharing the accolades bestowed upon what we originally tagged 'the most important PC game ever'?



WINNER

REVIEW SCORE: 96

QUAKE

iD Software

GT Interactive

NOMINATIONS

Hexen II Jedi Knight MDK Quake Tomb Raider



Best Adventure game

FTER AN INTERESTING ATTEMPT AT VOTE rigging from the Terris-playing community on AOL (Terris as best action game anyone? Or how about as a simulation? We soon knocked that one on the head), the adventure game category finally settled down late in the day. This one was a real fight to the finish between Blizzard's highly-regarded role-player Diablo and LBA 2: Twinsen's Odyssey, but when we finally closed the voting, the beautiful French game made a last minute dash for the finish and ended up substantially ahead.









LBA 2

Blending superb graphics with a compelling story and wonderful design in a manner only possible from a French development team, LBA 2 was certainly a hit with Mr Brooker when he reviewed it earlier in the year. It really is huge, and the seamlessly linked puzzles and original quirks have secured it a place in the adventure-gaming hall of fame. Even more so than the original (which was fab).

If last month's girls and games feature is to be believed, this really is a game for everyone... without a doubt a worthy winner.





WINNER

Discworld II LBA 2: Twinsen's Odyssey



REVIEW SCORE: 93

CARMAGEDDON

F ALL THE AWARDS, THE WINNER OF THIS ONE was completely obvious right from the first few days of voting. Nearly all of the votes cast in this category were for SCI's supremely playable splat-fest. The number two game in the category only had a tenth of the votes!

Best Driving game

Described by many (mainly Daily Mail readers and Mary Whitehouse sympathisers) as a 'shock racer', it was deemed so tasteless by the BBFC that all of the fun stuff involving running people over and wheelspinning their guts into the pavement had to be





removed... only to be put back in again in a slightly different form much later. Early in November SCI were successful in their appeal against the government agency and had the 'ban' lifted on the original content of the game. This was apparently only the fifth time in the BBFC's 83-year history that such an appeal was successful - and PC Zone readers were partly responsible for helping this happen. Doesn't that make you feel good? As a special reward, check out the 'Christmas Special' demo featured on this month's cover CD.







WINNER **CARMAGEDDON**

REVIEW SCORE: 95

Stainless

SCI

NOMINATIONS

Carmageddon Need for Speed II **Network Q RAC Rally** Screamer 2



Best Puzzle game

HE PUZZLE GAME MARKET HAS BEEN A BIT quiet over the past year... but when there are games like Puzzle Bobble appearing, why should anyone even try and compete? Not since Tetris has there been a game quite so playable. Two little dinosaurs, some catapults, some bubbles and a recommendation that you have a few hours free. There may be some confusion over its name, as it's also known as Bust-A-Move 2 on other formats, but is an absolute bona-fide classic, make no mistake.

Of all the categories in these awards, this is one of









environment and every navigational aid and realistic

graphics! In a genre that is particularly over-crowded

with gorgeous-looking games, it's certainly one of the

nuance you could possibly want. Just look at those

Flight Simulator 98 provides the purest flying experience you could possibly want - especially with

all of the numerous new features included in this

1998 revision, such as the superb 3D accelerated

graphics, enormous maps with 3000 airports and



PUZZLE BOBBLE

those that we had particularly strong views on. How could anyone justifiably vote for something that isn't Puzzle Bobble? Such sacrilege.

As a one-player game, Puzzle Bobble is a distracting and amusing way to while away the time - but as a competitive two-player frag-fest there are few games that can compete. Choose someone to play this against with extreme care... it has a habit of forcing normally mild-mannered and pleasant people into wild, slavering beasts capable of spitting forth the most foul swearwords known to man.



WINNER

REVIEW SCORE: 94

PUZZLE BOBBLE

GT Interactive

NOMINATIONS

Atomic Bomberman Baku Baku Animal **Puzzle Bobble** Quess Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo



Best Simulation game

FLIGHT SIM 98

T'S NO REAL SURPRISE THAT ONE OF THE OLDEST series of PC games picks up at least one award here. Originally appearing on 8-bit machines with 8088/86 processors in only 16 colours, this has remained the de facto flight simulator for the past 15 years. It's testament to the nature of the true propeller-head that of all the flying games on the PC, the one that wins out in the end is a civilian simulator - no missiles, no heat-seeking nukes, bombs or highcalibre machine guns. No wingmen, no ground support... just a pilot, an amazingly realistic









best-looking you can buy.





WINNER

REVIEW SCORE: 94

FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98

Microsoft

NOMINATIONS

Comanche 3 Flight Simulator 98 Flying Corps Super EF2000 X-Wing Vs. TIE Fighter



Best Sports game

ACTUA SOCCER CLUB

IKE SO MANY OF THE CATEGORIES IN THESE awards, Gremlin's Actua Soccer Club Edition was by far and away the runaway success story in this genre, ranking up nearly twice as many votes as its nearest competitor. The fact that this particular product won overall confirms a number of things: a) People love football games above all others. b) The Actua brand is extremely strong and now confirmed as the de facto footie sim - notice the lack of any nominations with 'FIFA' in the title.

c) People prefer to play as club teams as opposed to



the typically featured internationals.

When the original Actua was released it was met with tremendous acclaim. It may have had its little quirks (like goalies that ignore the ball and players that fall over for no reason) but it was fundamentally a massive leap forward in footie game design. Motion captured players, slick camera movement and great gameplay made it the best step forward since Sensi. Club Edition, released considerably later, gave the game the extra features that people wanted - namely everyone's favourite teams.







WINNER

REVIEW SCORE: 80

ACTUA SOCCER CLUB EDITION

Gremlin

NOMINATIONS

Actua Soccer Club Edition Links LS **NHL 97 PGA Tour Pro Pete Sampras Tennis**

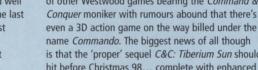


Best Strategy game

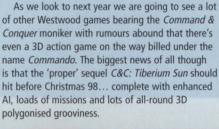
C&C: RED ALERT

LIMEY. THIS WAS A SURPRISE. WELL... KIND of. In a way we were fairly sure that everyone saw it as old news, but at the end of the day it romped ahead to win the first prize. Having sold well over 100,000 units since it was released this time last year, there's no question that it's one of the most successful PC games there is.

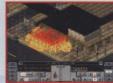
Along with the original, there's no doubt that Westwood's creation is responsible for the past year's surge of real-time strategy titles. However, despite the enormous amount of similar product



king of the hill.



around, it's interesting to see that Red Alert is still the







WINNER **REVIEW SCORE: 96** C&C: RED ALERT Westwood Virgin Interactive

NOMINATIONS

C&C: Red Alert **Dungeon Keeper** Theme Hospital **Total Annihilation** X-COM 3: Apocalypse



Developer of the year

BULLFROG

ULLFROG IS ONE OF THOSE REMARKABLE companies that has the ability to consistently produce high calibre and high profile products. So sturdy is their reputation, that even when they produce something of below average quality, people seem to forget all about it. Hi-Octane anybody? Or going back a few years... Flood?

Things have changed quite dramatically in the past year for Britain's crown jewel however. Once the mighty Dungeon Keeper was out of the door, figurehead Peter Molyneux left to form a new company that would allow him more creative freedom outside of the corporate structure of Electronic Arts. Since his leaving, Bullfrog have been keen to sustain their profile and 1998 looks to be a fantastic year for them. Dungeon Keeper 2 has already been announced for late in the year, but before that we get to taste the pleasures of the third Populous game and a new game in the popular Theme series.

As this issue goes to press, Dungeon Keeper (surely the main reason for Bullfrog winning) has sold nearly 60,000 copies, making it one of the most successful games of the year.



WINNER

BULLFROG

NOMINATIONS

Bullfrog **Electronic Arts GT** Interactive

Virgin Interactive











Publisher of the year

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

ESPITE HAVING ONLY THREE NOMINATIONS for products throughout these awards and all of them focused on the same product (which surprisingly didn't win anything), it's interesting to see that Eidos were ahead of the pack by a considerable margin. Striding forth from the ashes of US Gold and Domark and binding together the strengths of numerous respected developers and international publishers (Core, Simis, Bungie, ION Storm... you name it - they probably do it, or are about to start doing it) Eidos Interactive have very quickly become

one of the highest profile softco's around. While not yet boasting the brute strength of Electronic Arts or GT Interactive (both on the acquisition rampage at the moment having already eaten up MicroProse and Maxis between them) with the help of some high profile deals they have continued to be in the public eye. A certain posh English tart with huge knockers appearing just about everywhere didn't hurt things either. Who knows what next year will bring? Apparently not Tomb Raider III if all of the rumours are to be believed. Blimey!







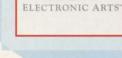
WINNER

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

NOMINATIONS

Eidos Interactive Electronic Arts GT Interactive Virgin Interactive





Game of the year

O SAY THAT THIS WAS A SURPRISE WOULD BE something of an understatement. We knew it was good, and we knew that pretty much everyone loves it - but if forced to predict the PC Zone reader's game of the year I'm sure that everyone on the team would have expected either Quake or Dungeon Keeper to win overall... but no! In fact these two were the next on the list – and ironically scored exactly the same votes as each other.

So congratulations are in order to SCI and the team at Stainless... the only people throughout the course of these awards to win more than a single prize. They're also testament to the fact that people enjoy games that differ from the norm. Carmageddon may have courted controversy right from the beginning but it seems that at the end of the day it has had an excellent year. The game has sold well, it has battled the BBFC and won, it's spawned an add-on pack already and now it walks away with a trophy asserting that it was the one product that PC Zone readers enjoyed more than any other.

WINNER

REVIEW SCORE: 96

CARMAGEDDON

Stainless

NOMINATIONS

Carmaggedon **C&C: Red Alert Dungeon Keeper** Quake Tomb Raider











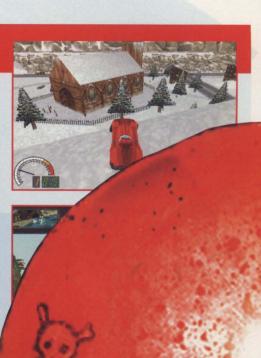


CARMAGEDDON















Best use of innovative technology award

G-POLICE

We also decided to credit two further products with awards specially chosen both by our sponsor, Creative Labs and the team here at *PC Zone*.

WINNER

REVIEW SCORE: 78

G-POLICE

Psygnosis

REATIVE LABS ARE THE SPONSOR (AS IF you couldn't guess – the logo's something of a giveaway) of the 1997 awards and alongside the ten reader-voted awards, they wanted to praise a product they felt made significant leaps forward in the use of technology. Being mostly concerned with the latest movements in graphics and sound technology, Creative wanted to award a game they felt was particularly spectacular – and what game could be more fitting for this than Psygnosis' spectacular *G-Police?*

When we reviewed it a few months ago we found that it supported so many extra special little odds and ends that we ran out of space to shove the icons in our score panel. Direct3D, 3Dfx, PowerVR, AGP ... you name it, *G-Police* supports it. It may not be the most original game ever produced — or indeed the most playable — but as a showcase for 'innovative technology' you'd be hard pushed to find something more advanced.

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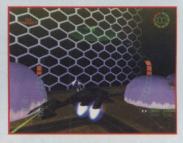
CREATIVE











PC Jone Special Award

JEDI KNIGHT

WINNER

REVIEW SCORE: 94

JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II

LucasArts

a stint of sitting in a room umming and ahhing about which game really deserved to win, we finally settled on this superb game from LucasArts. There were a number of reasons for finally settling on Jedi Knight... but above all else it has to be said that it's a glorious example of game design. Sure, the graphics could be a bit better – but you really can't beat it for atmosphere and scale.

Whilst multi-player is fun, it's in single-player mode that *Jedi* really comes into it's own. The variety in the levels is superb, whilst the story pulls you along at a sufficient enough pace to actually feel involved in everything that's going on. Also, we've found that a number of people here who don't normally get off on 3D action games are really getting into it — surely a sign of a great game?

To be honest there weren't many other games that came close. We considered *Age Of Empires* from Microsoft, obviously Chris was a big fan of plonking an award down in front of *X-COM*: *Apocalypse* and Jeremy sulked for

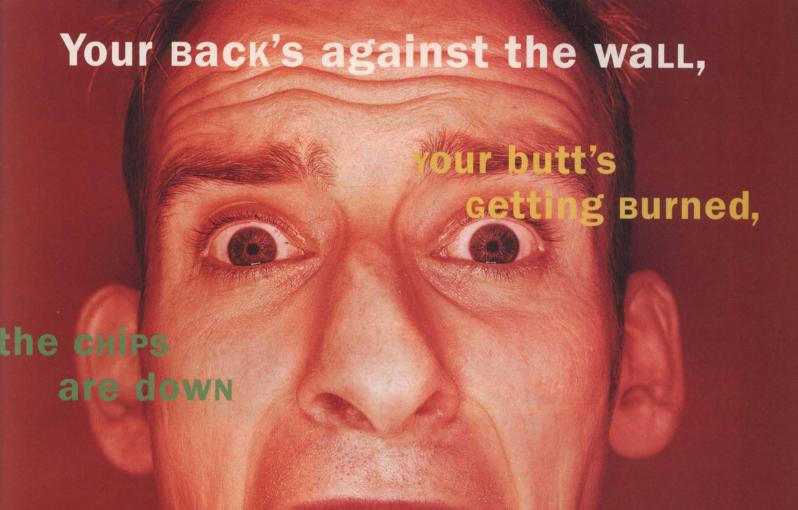
a fortnight when everyone refused point blank to even consider *Championship Manager 2* as a contender. In the end however, the vote for *Jedi* was unanimous.











and you're almost all of metaphors.

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Review 76 THE

This month

It's been a mad month. A reviewable version of

Quake II came in just as we were about to close the
magazine and brought the office pretty much to a
standstill. We'd all been playing the Q2Test to death
and were desperate to play with some final code
since completing Jedi some weeks back. You could almost feel the
relief sweep over the office as it was installed on every hard drive.

O IS QUAKE II THE BEST GAME EVER? WELL, UP UNTIL IT FINALLY ARRIVED, THE ORIGINAL Quake was quite clearly the most played game in the office. The fact that we've got access to a network and just about every Total Conversion available has obviously helped prolong its appeal, and despite the fact we've flirted with the likes of Shadow Warrior, Jedi Knight and GTA of late, Quake is still the firm favourite. Or rather, it was. Quake — the best game ever — has finally been usurped, by its own offspring. Quake II is now the game of choice in the office. Which means if Quake was the best game ever, then that mantle now belongs to Quake II. Of course, all this is based on limited experience. Whether we'll still be playing Quake II this time next year is anyone's guess. Unless it's embraced with the same warmth and

enthusiasm as the original, and that new levels, TCs and editors quickly become available, people will no doubt revert back to the original *Quake*. I guess only time will tell.

Up until 'the best game ever' arrived, *PC Zone* was at war. Not quite physically,

but almost. The cause? The old debate: *FIFA* vs *Actua*. It wasn't pretty. If someone had slipped a swear box into the office they would have made a fortune. The office was split down the middle: Steve Hill, Paul Presley, John, Richie, Dave and myself preferred to play *Actua 2*. In our collective opinion, it was the better game: it was quick, immediate and fun – and at least you could set up your own custom league or cup competition. Chris lead the opposition, which comprised of Wayne, Tim and Dave from *Computer Buyer*. They maintained that although much slower, *FIFA* was much better looking and had more depth, if you could be bothered to stick with it long enough. The real problem? We only have two Microsoft SideWinder gamepads in the office. You try playing either game without them and you'll realise what all the fuss was about. So who came out on top? Without giving too much away, *Actua 2* received a *PC Zone* 'Classic' rating and *FIFA* scraped a 'Recommended'. We suggest you play both demos before you actually commit yourself. And don't write *Sensi 2000* off either.

Our cover game this month is *Wing Commander: Prophecy*, the fifth instalment in the ever-popular space combat series. To be perfectly honest, I've never been much of a fan, always preferring *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* to the FMV-laden Origin epics. However, *Prophecy* has forced many people to take another look — me included. For starters the space looks and feels a lot less flat, the ships are now very detailed, the combat is pacey and spontaneous. The biggest bonus is that you're not forced to sit through hours of FMV if you want to get anywhere — although the intro does seem to go on for hours. If the previous *Wing Commander* games haven't held your attention, then try the EXCLUSIVE demo on this month's CD and see what you think. It might just change your mind.

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Scoring system

90+ CLASSIC



The highest accolade a game can attain. Not only is it innovative and highly original, but it's extremely playable and has masses of long-term appeal. Games that receive the 'Classic' award should be seen as a benchmark with which to compare other games of the same genre.

80–89 RECOMMENDED



An excellent game that simply lacks that certain something to make it a gaming classic. It may not be necessarily highly original, but it contains some new ideas and variations that add to the genre that are well implemented. Well worth checking out.

70-79

If a game scores within this bracket it's good, but not good enough to be recommended. It's not exactly original and somebody's probably done it better already, but it's still playable all the same. Basically, it's worth shelling out for, especially if you're a big fan of the genre, but don't expect anything innovative. Whatever you do, don't discount games just because they don't quite hit the recommended mark!

Games that fall into this bracket are distinctly average and don't really offer anything new. There's nothing much wrong with these titles, but then there's nothing much to recommend them either. They're just average. Okay. Not bad. Alright. We've seen it all before. A lot better on budget. You get the picture.

40-49

Okay, so you're not really going to buy this, are you? We'd advise you not to. It's below average, it's not very playable, you'll probably be disappointed. It had a few nice ideas, but they were badly executed. Give it a miss.

21-39

Oh dear. This should never have got past the ideas stage. It offers absolutely nothing new to the genre, is very limited in terms of gameplay, frustrating to play and ultimately a complete waste of money. Avoid disappointment. Avoid this game.

20 AND BELOW PANTS



Absolutely bloody awful. Unplayable, due to bad design or bugged code. Crap with a capital 'C'. Naff with a capital 'N'. Do not buy this game, it will ruin your life and all those who come into contact with it. It doesn't get much worse than this. Have we made ourselves clear?

This is designed as a purely visual guide to how games of a similar style compare. The bars do not relate to previous review scores... they are simply an indication of how the reviewer feels about the products on a sliding scale.

Game 1

THE BENCHMARK PC

At PC Zone all games are played and tested on a DAN Technology Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM, a 2Mb graphics card and a quad-speed CD-ROM drive. We also use Maxi Gamer 3Dfx

> cards for releases that support D3D and 3Dfx



PC Zone use Dan PCs exclusively 'cos they're absolutely fab. If you want any more info on Dan machines. Choice you can call them on:

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only run under

The software is

MMX









Native Version



Native Version







The software



The software will



THANKS THIS ISSUE TO: Ritual Entertainment

David Wilson @ FA Activision Sid Meier

Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at supposed to be doing nore important stuff...



Quake II

Actua Soccer 2 Longbow 2

F1 Racing Simulation

NHL 98

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "Please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...



Daytona USA Deluxe

Monopoly Star Wars Edition

◀ Postal

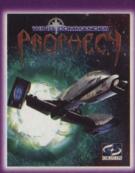
Shanghai: Great Moments

Cyber Bikes





I-WAR



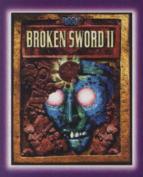
WING COMMANDER PROPHECY



FIFA 98: ROAD TO THE WORLD CUP



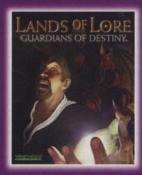
BLADE RUNNER



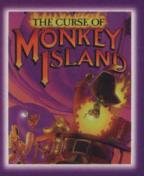
BROKEN SWORD II



JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II



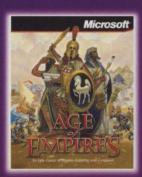
LANDS OF LORE 2: GUARDIANS OF DESTINY



THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND



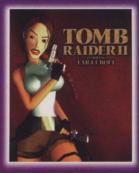
WORMS 2



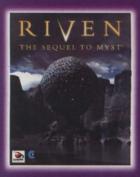
AGE OF EMPIRES



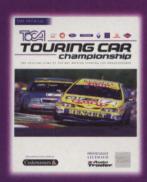
FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98



TOMB RAIDER II



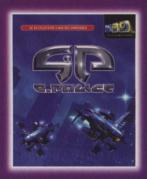
RIVEN
THE SEQUEL TO MYST



TOCA TOURING CAR



STAR WARS MONOPOLY



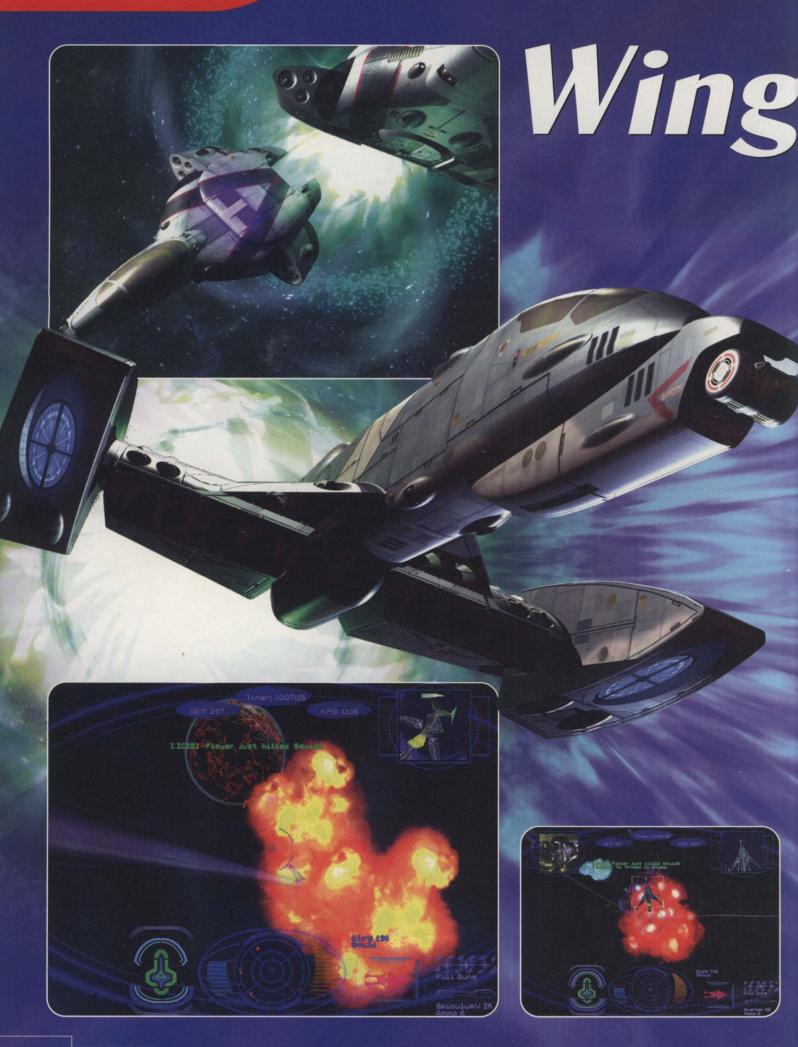
G-POLICE

Free PC mouse worth £9.99 with PC CD-ROM games'

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Commander:



Prophecy

Seven years after Wing Commander first appeared on PC, the Kilrathi have finally disappeared, but only to make way for a new alien threat. Chris Anderson's still

here though.

AN IT REALLY BE SEVEN YEARS SINCE
Wing Commander was released? I'm
shocked. I can clearly remember walking
into a games shop and seeing a large group
of people in the corner who were obviously yer

of people in the corner who were obviously very excited about something. A very enthusiastic sales rep was almost killing himself trying to explain why Wing Commander was the best thing since sliced bread. He needn't have bothered. No one was taking any notice of him. They were too busy staring in disbelief at the (then) incredible graphics on the computer monitor before them. Mouths fell open as the cut-scenes before each mission showed the pilots dashing to their spaceships to take on the alien menace. Ears fell off as the incredible sound track roared from the speakers courtesy of a Roland LAPC1 sound card. (Are you sure about the ears? - Ed) In short, Wing Commander heralded a new era of cutting-edge PC games and was probably the sole reason why Origin designed all their subsequent games on very high-end PCs. The success of the series speaks for itself: millions of copies sold worldwide, resulting in three

sequels and new games based in the Wing Commander universe (Wing Armada, Academy, Privateer 1 and 2) and even today the series is still going strong. Which brings us neatly to the subject of this review: Wing Prophecy.

Horses for courses

Seven years and several sequels later, can gamers really handle another hefty dose of one of the longest-running PC games series ever? The answer, if I know Wing Commander fans, is a resounding yes. The Wing games have always had an almost fanatical following, despite heavy criticism from certain corners of the games press and serious competition in the form of the X-Wing games. Wing Commander fans simply won't be told that enough is enough. They don't care if the later games in the series were stuffed full of FMV. They're not interested in the fact that apart from the obvious plot differences, all of the Wing games are more or less the same, with the notable exception of the Privateer series. I know this to be true because I'm one of them. Obviously there are those of you out there who will want to argue the toss with me, which is why I'm going to say at this point that if you've always preferred X-Wing to Wing Commander, or just weren't taken with the Wing series in general, you may as well turn the page now and make your way to the next review because Prophecy, as you may have gathered, is essentially more of the same.

When you think about it, this is no great surprise. Do you really think that Origin would risk completely redesigning the series (and possibly cocking it up in the process) when they know they've got hundreds of thousands of people out there who like it just the way it is? I think not. Obviously the plot has changed, though. Quite dramatically in fact. Long-serving Wingsters the Kilrathi have finally called it a day. But of course, there's always someone waiting to step into their shoes as Confed cannon fodder.

Alien mither

The war with the Kilrathi is finally over. At the end of Wing Commander IV, Christopher Blair (Mark Hamill to you and I) destroys the planet Kilrah, putting an end to the crazy cats' murderous antics and leaves the designer of Wing V without a suitable adversary for budding space pilots. To fully explain how the new enemy in Prophecy came to be, one must allude to the final days of the Kilrathi, during which they spoke of a prophecy, called Sivah. According to the final words of a Kilrathi priestess, it goes thus: "There shall come a time when our faith will be tested. When many will be misled by the selfish motives of a ruling clan. The Great Warrior, who has the heart of a Kilrathi, but is not Kilrathi born comes to deliver justice to the wicked. Our great loss will bring

The Kilrathi prophecy warned the Confeds that evil plans were afoot, and it looks as if they were right because here come lots of alien scum to kick your head in.



Big is beautiful

One of the best things about *Prophecy* (as was the case with *The Darkening*) is the sheer scale of some of the ships you'll come across. You'll quite simply be amazed at the size of some of these things, and much fun can be had at the end of a mission



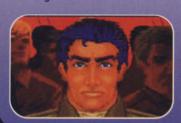
just flying around an enormous enemy ship looking at the detail on it. (cue annoying football rant): Are you listening, are you listening, are you listening X-Wing fans?

Wing Commander: the story so far

The illustrious Wing Commander series moves relentlessly on, crushing all would-be pretenders to its hard-earned throne in its path. Well maybe not, but it has sold bucket-loads the world over and played host to a wealth of movie types. This then is the story so far:

WING COMMANDER

The game that single-handedly redifined expectations of what you could do with a 386 and a Roland sound card. Notable for some of the first ever animated cut-scenes in a PC game.



WING COMMANDER II

More of the same except with much-improved graphics, and lots of nice new special effects (if your PC was up to it you'd see debris flying around your craft and your pilot's hand moving in the cockpit).



WING COMMANDER III

The first game to feature FMV.
Enter stage left Mark Hamil and his
mates in an attempt to inject an air
of famous-luvvy type authority into
the proceedings. Fab story line with
a great twist at the end too.



WING COMMANDER IV

Origin made the mistake of using the same game engine used in Wing III, resulting in mediocre review scores from several games magazines. Personally I felt this was a bit harsh, but there you go.



with it dark enemies of our clan who will seek to feast on our bones." Simply put, this prophecy warns of a time when the Kilrathi no longer exist, and hints at a more powerful, more dangerous race that will take their place. At the beginning of Wing Commander Prophecy, an unarmed Kilrathi colony is attacked. Confed pilots rush to the seene (this is your first mission) and you encounter the new enemy at long last. During the course of the initial missions you will discover

Fantastic explosions and dazzling lighting effects make Prophecy a visual delight.

that your new adversary is a)

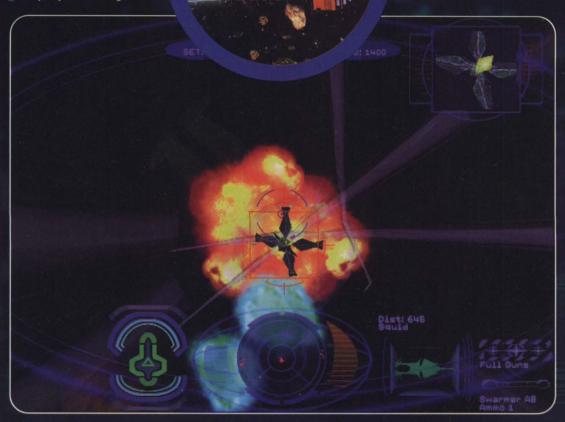
alien b) responsible for the

annihilation of the Kilrathi and c) none too pleased that you've showed up to spoil the party.

You take the role of Casey, a rookie pilot who's just been assigned to the TCS Midway (your base at the beginning of the game). Casey, unlike Hamill who starred in the last two games, is a bit too much of a smart-

arse for my liking, and he won't win any

awards for acting either, although that could be said about most of the actors this time round to be honest. The acting's a bit too cheesy and forced, and the few impressive appearances of Hamill himself only serve to highlight the amateur performances of most of the 'cast'. Thankfully, the multiple-choice questions which



Porn free



Ginger Lynn Allen appeared in Wing Commander III and IV alongside our Mark. But unlike Mark, Ginger is extremely versatile and has taken the leading role in many of her own 'educational' movies such as A Taste Of Ginger, Superstars Of Porn and Ginger's Sex Asylum, to name but a few. A talented lass and no mistake.







(Above left) Casey shows his aptitude for creating nice big explosions by giving this alien what-for. (Above right) While popping down the pub for a swift half, our heroes bump into an unfeasibly large and well-pissed off alien ship. Yikes!

appeared at the end of the FMV scenes in the last two games have been dropped, so you can't say anything during these scenes that will affect how the game is played out. This means you can skip the FMV altogether if you wish, and use the mission briefings as a guide to what you've got to do next in the game. Which brings us to the game itself. I hope you've all remembered to buy that 3D graphics card you had your heart set on.

3D-tastic

You don't have to have a 3D card to play Wing Commander: Prophecy, but if you don't have one you'll be missing out big-time. The graphics in Prophecy with a 3D card (particularly 3Dfx or PowerVR) are absolutely amazing. Apart from the obvious increase in frame rate you get with a card, the special effects are dazzling. Everything outside your ship feels like it's really moving about in space (debris, stars and all the other ships) and of course lens flare is used all over the place to remind you why you spent a hundred guid on a 3D card. Mission structure is pretty much par for the course: get your briefing, look at nice swirly map depicting all your nav points, fly mission (kill enemies, escort transports, blow up big enemy structures in space etc) and the whole thing is driven along by the between-mission meetings with the rest of the pilots on your ship who'll tell you how the war's going, or how well they did on their last mission, or even how their love life's going. It's all part of the wonderful world that makes up the Wing Commander universe. The familiar thrill of chasing the enemy through space at the speed of light, turning at the last moment to find yourself on their tail, and then letting loose with a missile (the missile trails look absolutely gob smacking by the way) and watching the bast blow up (the explosions look fab too), it's all present and correct and just as much fun as it ever was. Wing Commander fans will undoubtedly love it, but there's one thing they should take into consideration before rushing out to buy it, and it concerns another Origin product.

The inevitable 'hut'

My only reservation about the game is Origin sort of dug a hole for themselves when they released *Privateer 2: The Darkening. P2*, in my opinion, is far and away the best game in the *Wing Commander* series to date. The fact that you can fly almost anywhere you like in the game area, trading goods between one planet and the next, upgrading your ship as you go along make it a much more interesting and involving game.

There is a set plot in Privateer 2, and a bloody good one it is too, but you don't have to follow it if you don't want to. Wing Commander: Prophecy, on the other hand, is strictly mission-based by its nature and consequently is much more restrictive, although some people may prefer the fluency of a straightforward action game to a game which encourages you to explore and trade goods. The choice, as they say, is yours. Privateer 3 anyone? (Oh please, don't complicate things any further for God's sake – Ed) 2

Commodore Blair (Mark Hamill) explains to Casey (that's you matey) that *he's* the one who's been in *Wing* three times so he'd better show some respect, goddamit!



Hey, no multi-play?

The designers of Wing Commander: Prophecy have decided not to include multi-player options in the game. This is allegedly down to the pressure they were under to get the game out on time and the fact that they felt if there were multi-player options in the game, an Internet facility would have to be one of them, and would simply have taken too long to implement. EA say they will be releasing either a multi-player patch or a mission disk with multi-player capabilities at a later point, though this will do nothing to appease Wing fans looking for their first taste of multi-player Wing Commander action out of the box. We at Zone think the lack of this option may just have something to do with the fact that EA wanted the game out before Christmas. Although we would never say that in print, obviously. (Too right – PC Zone lawyers.)

In Perspective

Whether or not you'll think *Prophecy* is better than *X-Wing Vs TIE-Fighter* will always be a matter of personal taste. Personally I much prefer *Prophecy* which, for the record, is much better than *Wing Commander* IV (thanks partially to a new game engine) and not as good as *Privateer 2: The Darkening*.

Wing Commander: Prophecy

Privateer 2

Wing Commander IV

X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb Processor: P100 Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards Controls: Joystick, keyboard













Scatte

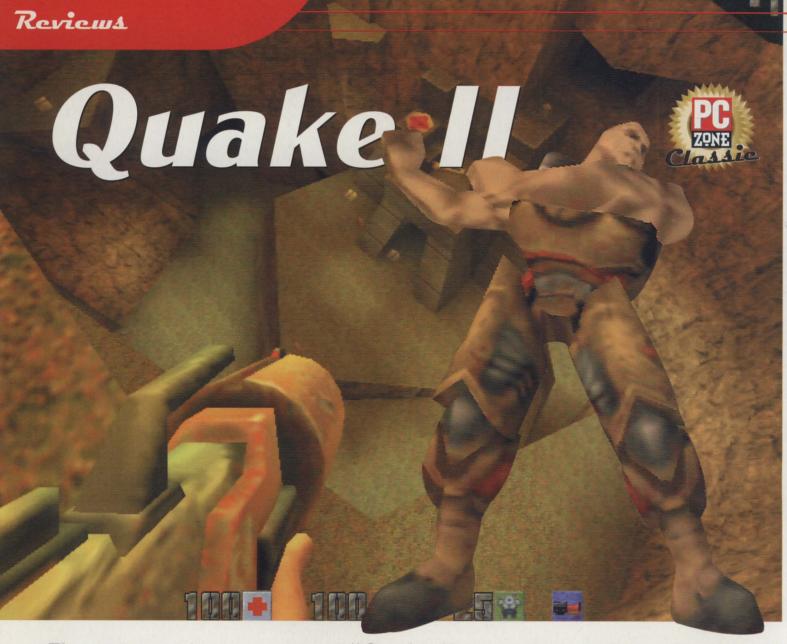
Wing Commander fans will love it, others may not.



Price: £39.99
Release date: Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Telephone: 01753 549442

Website: www.ea.com





This review needs no introduction. So says David McCandless.

HIS IS NOT GOING TO BE A REVIEW IN THE traditional sense. You can gen up on the plot when you buy the game. You can see that Quake II looks marvellous, wondrous and realistic from the screenshots, and if you've played the Q2Test, you already know what Quake II feels like to play. It feels scary. It feels like it really is you versus hordes of 'them'. One false move and you will die, be you pale-faced newbie or designer-stubbled veteran.



"Quake II is pretty much perfect. And it's got open architecture which means brainy Internet people will improve it."

There are some beautiful animations. For example, among the squadrons of aliens you face, there are the lowly grunts. When you gun them down they may collapse immediately, struggle to get up, but then manage to get a few shots off before they die – all with appropriate pain-filled sound effects. The bitmapped explosions of the demo have gone, replaced by vector-graphic mushroom clouds. There's coloured lighting, an extraordinary feature which makes *Quake II* actually look, er – obviously we strapping men are reluctant to use this word but, well – 'beautiful'.

The gameplay is fairly basic. Instead of episodes, we now have eight units: small to large sections made of interconnected levels, often united by a distinct goal (turn off security systems, turn on the reactor etc). The monsters are very definitely clever. They run in zig-zags, get all panicky, and circle you. They also react better to sound, although not always.

Spooge overdrive?

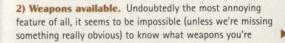
There's too much to say really. And most of it is positive. You want some bad points? Okay, here are the only three we could come up with. They're very specialised:

(Below) If you get lost you can now use these decorative wall hangings to find your way around. A clever way of getting round the absence of a map, or just a cheap way to economise on textures? I guess we'll never know.





1) Keeping Quad damage in deathmatch. Part of the weakness of Quad is the 30 second time limit from the moment you pick it up. How many times have you grabbed it and scoured the level trying to find people – and not found a sole? With the Quake II inventory, you can carry it with you for as long as possible and then activate it when you need it. Result: depressing nightmare. Most people learn to lurk around the Quad damage room, wait for people, turn on the power-up, slaughter everyone and then repeat ad nauseam. Also the distinctive 'uh-oh, here he comes' glow has gone. You can, of course, turn off various options, but you can bet most on-line servers will keep this option ticked for months.











(Above main) The architecture in some of the later levels as you delve deeper into the complex is simply stunning. (Far left) Unit three brings you to some scary outside bits. Not for the faint-hearted or those with only 16 megs of RAM. (Above) The Big Gun – your ultimate aim is to destroy this oversized hunk of weaponry.

Weapons

BLASTER

Less of a blaster, more a firework, or peashooter. Slow rate of fire but pretty good to shove in a grunt's face.

SHOTGUN

As in vanilla *Quake*, has a reasonable spread up close, but is best for medium-range perforation.

SUPER SHOTGUN

Nothing short of awesome. Up close will flatten most monsters with a couple of shots. Achingly slow reload time, but hey, it's not the notes you play, it's the gaps between them.

RAILGUN

Hmmmm, very similar to the gun in Eraser. Fires a concentrated slug of depleted uranium. Very hard to aim, but will happily kill a fellow deathmatcher with one shot and then continue on to kill anyone behind

CHAINGUN

Incredible Gatling gun with hideous rate of fire. Takes time to start spinning and to wind down so once you get it going, you don't want to stop.

HAND GRENADE

Fairly useless, we've found. Irritating to switch to in mid-battle, and never goes exactly where you want it. Avoid.

GRENADE LAUNCHER

Very freaking cool indeed. À la *Quake*'s, the launcher requires a modicum of basic physics knowledge, but is great for shooting around corners or into scary holes.

MACHINE GUN

Uzi-style handheld with upwards recoil. Fantastic up close and personal. Not so fantastic for more distant, forlorn enemies.

ROCKET LAUNCHER

Not even a quarter as fast as the original *Quake* rocket launcher, but that's a plus. More like *Doom*'s rocket, but prettier and deadlier. Good for pinning enemies down before darting in with a shotgun.

HYPER BLASTER

The most penile of the lot. From its rotating glans, it fires red-hot pellets of death which flare out like tracers in the gloomy half-light of *Quake II*'s levels. Very, very effective in corridors and tight spaces.

BFG 10K

The return of the most incredible gun ever to appear in a computer game. The BFG is a glistening green globule of energy which, on impact, delivers immediate death or flesh-seeking rays of death in all directions. Takes a while and a telltale hum to charge up, so RUN!

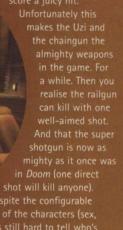
Deathmatch

HAVE TO ADMIT I HAD MY MISGIVINGS. And so will you. The press doesn't sound encouraging. iD have repeatedly er, repeated the fact that they were working on a single-player game, first and foremost. And we all know that Doom and Quake were meant as network games from inception.

Your first taste of networked Quake II will be jumping isn't quite as powerful as it used to be. And there are no good deathmatch-only levels (although 'Security' is a

Like the single-player game, Quake II deathmatch is hard The expansive three-dimensionality of the architecture makes tracking down and dealing death blows to your opponents

bounding boxes increase your margin for error – I mean, you have to aim extremely accurately to



Quake II as you do in 16-player Quake on DM4. It's definitely more of a sniper's game as well. Picking out disorientated newbies has never been so much fun.

There are some more configurable aspects. You can turn switch between deathmatch one (weapons stay when you pick them up) and two (weapons disappear and then respawn after 30 seconds). You can also toggle random spawning or farthest spawning to avoid frustrating respawn deaths.

weapons are a little imbalanced. The BFG 100K takes too shots out of it - devastating in an open space. The rapid-fire

return to the emphasis on skill, mouse co-ordination and reflexes that *Doom* so perfectly honed. Network *Quake* was, at best, a three-weapon game. Quake II is definitely eight to nine. This is not the death-knell for network Quake. The continue side by side for quite some time. Z

Walking back to happiness

One of the best bits about deathmatching in a new network game environment is everyone's enthusiasm for seeing new things. Heh-heh. For the true network ninja, any and every game is a chance to win and dominate your chums. So, during the long and arduous workout we gave Quake II multi-player, this evil writer took the opportunity to tell everyone to "come and look at this" and then promptly killed them as they wandered gullibly in. Har-de-har.



"Wow - what do I look like with the new Quad damage?" was the initial gambit after finding a hidden Quad in a

crawl space, under a stuck warehouse door. The answer is very blue. An obvious azure halo surrounds Quadded players, flimsy and floaty like a crepe paper wedding dress. Now you know to run when you see it coming...



Here's what you look like when you're crouching like you're pissed off and laying a particularly dry and peanutty bum

egg on the cold metallic floor of the Quake universe. You can now see what weapons the characters are carrying, but in the heat of battle, you just don't have time to look.



Here we are. The boys. Lurking under the neon lights in a team play kind of way, waiting for some aggro to come

teleporting in through the floor-mounted pads. Note the hard-looking guy on the left. That's me, that is.



The BFG 10K is going to cause some ripples in the deathcommunity. Here

close range on a couple of adversaries. Note the broad radius of effect, the radioactive



Here it is again. Just before impact. The gun makes this telltale humming sound before it's let off and then all you

see is this massive green globule floating slowly towards you. If it doesn't hit you, you could be dead anyway. Death rays radiate from the point of impact and slice anything in their path.



The peashooter is actually a fairly effective weapon in deathmatch. Its projectiles may be slow and avoidable, but a

few good direct hits will have the toughest opponent limping badly.



Quake II firmly brings the aiming back into deathmatch. With massive levels. higher screen resolution and

more precise weapons, long-distance rocket or projectile kills are now very difficult to achieve. Unless you're skill.



It's a chick thing. Yes, at last, you can play a female character in Quake II. There's none of that RPG-esque stats (run faster,

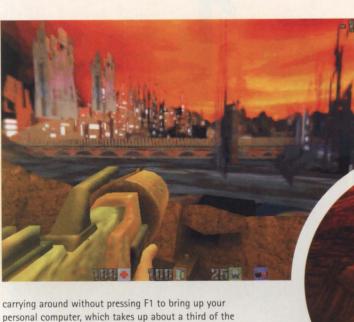
jump higher bollocks). Just a plain and simple physical difference. Oh, and the scream is different. Oh, and you can break your nail if you're a girl. Oh, and you're crap.



As you can imagine, deathmatch in this layered space is exhausting and exciting.



Weapons, you will know, can be positioned on the left, the right and



(Left) The 360 degree background changes as you go further into the alien base. Starting off with a kind of moonscape it graduates quickly to an alien metropolis via some bizarre extraterrestrial industrial buildings. (Below) There's no way you can diss the impressive texture work. Not sure who the guy is, but he wouldn't look out of place on a wall in *Doom*.

carrying around without pressing F1 to bring up your personal computer, which takes up about a third of the screen. In the heat of deathmatch, you do not have the time, space, or inclination to do this. And in the same acrid humidity of death and squalor and screams, you have even less inclination to take notice of what huge chunk of humming metal you're picking up. Result: irritation and no small amount of over-estimation.

3) RAM requirements. Okay, the *Quake II* engine has taken gaming technology to the clichéd 'next level', but not everyone on our tired little continent packs a Pentium II 300MHz with 128Mb of RAM and a 16Mb GL card. *Quake II* runs like a dog on a Pentium 133 with 16Mb of RAM and a GL card. It might be something to do with sound caching. It might be just a raw processing thing. But you get jerks and slowdowns and delays. Our advice: upgrade. Now.

These three meagre little criticisms, we're afraid, are all we can come up with. There are some other minor niggles: there are no dedicated deathmatch levels (but then iD promise to rectify this with an official patch within a month of release). And the single-player game has CD copy protection, so playing your own musak during play is a no-no.

Other than that, *Quake II* is pretty much perfect. And it's got open architecture which means, in a few months, brainy Internet people will start improving it. How do you improve a perfect game? Who knows? Just check out the score.







Quake II just oozes atmosphere thanks to some impressive coloured lighting and transluscent effects. This comes at a price however, so don't even think about running it on anything less than a P133 with at least 24Mb RAM and a 3Dfx card.

In Perspective

Quake II draws comparison with every 3D shoot 'em up in the world. As a single-player game, it shits on Quake, on Quake's first rival Duke Nukem, and on Doom. It neatly sidesteps Hexen II's effort too, due to its 'grittier' story and gore.

Quake II

Quake

Havan

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: Pentium

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick

Note: Pentium 133 or better with 24Mb of RAM; 3Dfx card highly

recommended













Contra

It's *Doom III* and it's beautiful.



Price: £44.99

Release date: Out now

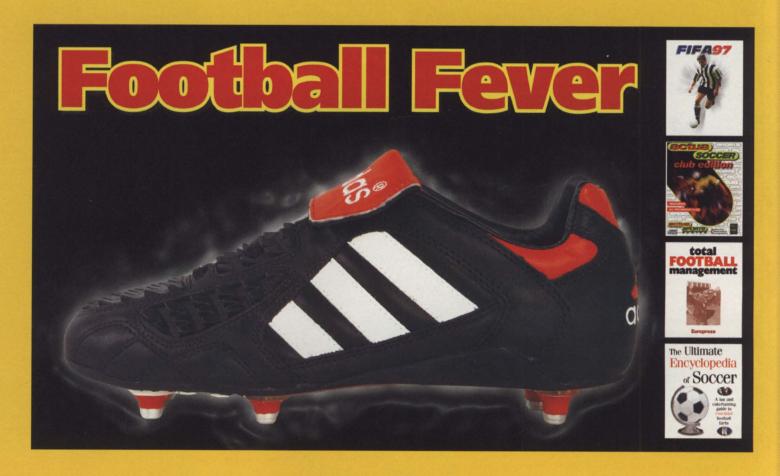
Publisher: Activision

Telephone: 01895 4567000

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4 - 1



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FIFA 98: Recounted Cup



In the wake of the success of Sensi 2000 and Actua 2, FIFA 98 has its work well and truly cut out. Can the latest version of the seemingly interminable FIFA licence hold its own? Chris Anderson is

the man who's out to unearth the answers.

T'S NOT EASY BEING A CHELSEA SUPPORTER you know. Having slaughtered Barnsley 6-0 at home, the silly tossers then go and lose to Bolton. This kind of result leaves even the most ardent Chelsea fan feeling incredibly frustrated and more than a little confused. Which is not entirely dissimilar to how you'll feel when you first get your hands on a copy of the latest version of FIFA. You'll feel frustrated, because the graphics are unbelievably gorgeous, but as a result the game seems to run slowly. You'll feel confused when you attempt to memorise the zillion different combinations of button presses required to execute all the different moves in the game. You'll be exasperated when you realise there is no customisable cup or league options of any description.

Consequently, you'll be embarrassed when you get your mates round for a game and discover you can't set up a league or a cup in which you play against each other, the

only alternative being a two-player friendly. Your patience will be tried as you constantly reach for the escape button every time the ball goes out of play in order to skip the initially impressive but ultimately repetitive animations which for some inexplicable reason can't be turned off from any of the menus. You'll stare at your screen in disbelief as your players are called offside even though a) you weren't controlling them and b) you couldn't even see the part of the screen they were on in the first place. Oh yes, true to form for any 3D PC football game, FIFA 98 has more than





You can play in leagues from all over the world, but you can't make your own. Hopefully EA Sports will sort this out next time.

Slow-down

There are two things everyone says when they first see FIFA 98. The first is "blimey, check out those graphics", which is undoubtedly a good thing. The second is "Jesus. This game is so bloody slow", which is undoubtedly a bad thing. Or is it? The fact the game plays slowly means you get more time on the ball to execute those complicated manoeuvres, but most people just find it downright irritating to the point where they simply refuse to play the game at all. I've got my own theory on this. Before I ever played the PC version of FIFA, a chap at EA told me the N64 version was getting rave reviews from all the N64 mags. They were allegedly claiming it was better than 15564 (which is currently the best football

game in the world). This could be true.

If FIFA PC was a lot quicker it would have scored a lot higher, and there's every reason to believe that the N64 version is much faster because it's running at a lower resolution. Only time will tell.



Sida Franco



◀ its fair share of problems. You may then ask, why are

we recommending it? The reason is simple...

Longevity

FIFA has much in common with Sensi 2000, in as much as you have to get good at it before you are good at it. This is in stark contrast to a game like Actua 2 for example, which can be mastered in its entirety in an hour or two. Some may argue that this is down to Actua's 'intuitive' control system and interface, but the more time you spend with FIFA, the more intuitive the interface becomes, and subsequently the more actions you can perform within the game. Think of Actua 2 as an undemanding arcade blast that requires very little skill and fairly fluent end-to-end action. You'll still be playing it in months to come, not because you'll improve the more you play, but because it's simply good fun. We've been playing it for weeks now (the fact you can set up your

own leagues and cups obviously has something to do with this) and it's still going strong. Think of FIFA as a challenging game that rewards practice by giving you greater freedom over what you do with the ball. There are lots of ways to get round defenders (dummys, side-steps etc), the passing takes a while to get used to because you have to actually direct the passes yourself (as well as manually select the player you want to control the ball) and people are still knocked out by the graphics which look awesome under 3Dfx and PowerVR. So why does FIFA get a lower score? Read the first paragraph again and ask yourself how many people will forgive so many faults no matter how complex the game is or how good the graphics are? The bottom line? Buy Actua first. If you find it doesn't present a strong enough challenge, check out FIFA. Alternatively, wait until next issue when we'll hopefully have demos of both games so you can make your mind up for yourself. 1

FIFA 98 has the best graphics we've ever seen in any

football game. It looks fab under 3Dfx and PowerVR (these shots are from the 3Dfx version) and has got to be

PowerVR. Shame it doesn't play as good as it looks.

the first game we've seen that actually runs faster under

"Think of FIFA as a challenging game that rewards practice by giving you greater freedom over what you do with the ball."

EA presents

As you would expect from an EA Sports game, the presentation in FIFA 98 is absolutely superb. Mindblowing hi-res graphics aside, all the menus in the game are easily accessible and while you're perusing the twenty million or so options in the game you can groove along to Song 2 from Blur which EA have generously included on the CD at no extra cost (Blimey, that must have cost them a bit — a reader). If you're finding the game a bit difficult, you can tweak the options to have the computer assist you in almost everything you do (headers, pass-backs, crosses etc), which helps you tremendously when you first start playing.



Score, and your players celebrate in many amusing ways. They should have spent more time on the gameplay.

In Perspective

Actua 2 is easier to play and as a result is much more popular in the office, but having said that FIFA has its fans too. At the end of the day Brian, it's really down to whether you want a pick-up-and-play footie game, or a longer-lasting challenge. It's also got to be said that FIFA is the best-looking football game ever to arrive in our office – without exception.

FIFA 98

Sensible Soccer 2000

Actua Soccer 2

Kick Off 98

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb Processor: P100

Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Gamepad, joystick













Contra

Actua 2, FIFA 98 nil



Price: £39.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Electronic Arts

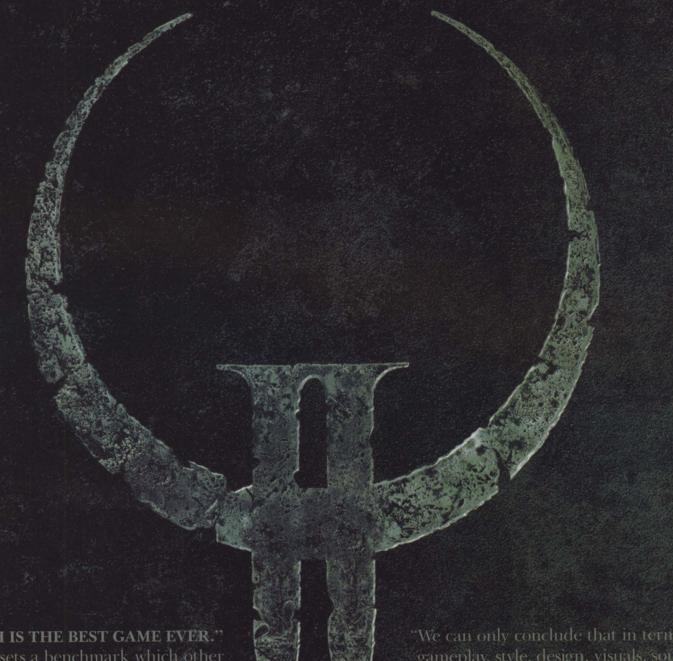
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0

Actua Soccer 2



Football's coming home – again. Jeremy Wells is our man in the commentary box – again.

REMLIN'S ACTUA SOCCER WAS THE first 3D football game to challenge EA Sport's FIFA Soccer. Not only did it look great, but it played – well, okay... better than FIFA anyway. It wasn't Sensible Soccer, but you kept going back to it because it looked so good. People who wouldn't normally play football games in the office clamoured for a place in our daily league. Money was won and lost on penalty shoot-outs. Joysticks (and egos) shattered under the pressure. Actua Soccer changed everybody's expectations completely. It was quick (on a modest Pentium), the commentary from Barry Davies was great (for a while), and even though it was far from perfect, it was great fun. And then came Euro 96.

Essentially, it was the same game repackaged. Fair enough, if EA Sports can do it year in, year out... but it just wasn't enough. Just like Actua Soccer, Euro 96 suffered from the same little problems that really should have been addressed second time round. Actua Soccer Club Edition suffered from similar neglect. Our hopes for Actua Soccer 2, the true sequel, were understandably mixed. Would the keepers still roll the ball out to the opposition? Would the players still fall over all the time and run through each other? Would the auto-





The speed, graphical detail, player animation and intuitive control system make for a very quick and playable alternative to EA's lush FIFA Soccer: TRTWC.



"You can opt to play a league, cup matches, friendlies and even go for a kick about in the park."

player select be any better? Would the teams be in alphabetical order? Would the tactics/formation screen actually correspond to what happened on the pitch? In short, would Gremlin be able to fix the problems that plagued the first game(s) and come up with a result?

A game of two halves

It was never going to be easy. All the die-hard footie game fans had been playing *Sensi Soccer 2000* the previous month as retro fever swept over the office, uniting Chester City and Chelsea fans alike. *Sensi 2000* itself (although 3D), had prompted a bit of a 3D backlash. And then *Actua Soccer 2* arrived. First impressions were promising – it looked fantastic and maintained a blistering frame rate at 640x480 in 8-bit colour when running in software on a P166. When running under PowerVR and 3Dfx it looks even better (obviously), though you'll need more than 16Mb of RAM if you want to avoid the occasional freeze-out.

There's little doubt that graphically *Actua Soccer 2* is very impressive and a massive step up from the original game. The attention to detail in the players and stadia is amazing, as are the weather effects. Similarly, the player animation is excellent: they jig about as they wait for kick-off, leap for headers, pick the ball up and walk to the flag for corners (unless you tap a button) and generally act with a greater sense of purpose and realism. They also appear more solid and (gasp) rarely fall over. Obviously Michael Owen can stay on his feet for longer periods than Andy Sinton, who was called on to do the honours with the motion-capturing last time round. The fog may look a little odd if you haven't got a 3D accelerator card, but the snow, rain and shadowing really add to the atmosphere. As before, Barry Davies' commentary is both coherent and entertaining, while Trevor Brooking's







You can edit the players, strips and tactics. Scenarios are also included.

The weather effects (left) are excellent and the player detailing makes some of the players almost recognisable. Is that really Shearer?

ramblings are enough to make you pause on the ball and fall about laughing – for a while. But then all commentaries tend to become pretty tedious given time, and this will keep you smiling longer than most.

And as far as features go, it's options a go-go. Just about every national side is available and you can opt to play a league, cup matches, friendlies and even go for a kick about in the park, as well as select different weather conditions, referees, off-side and so on- just what you'd expect in fact. The squads appear to be pretty up to date, and though some players are out of position, once you've put things right and saved your formation and tactics, the team stays the way you left it (unlike last time).

Get, give, go

In an effort to keep things simple, Gremlin have kept the control system pretty basic. You've got four buttons (shoot, pass, speed burst/shove and cross/slide tackle) which can be used to execute all manner of shots, passes, headers, crosses and tackles. In practice it works well and is easily picked up, though you'll need a couple of daisy-chained Microsoft SideWinder gamepads to get the most from it, but that applies to just about every football game nowadays. Off the ball you can tap a button to give your player extra pace (though if you do this too much he becomes tired and his performance suffers), shove players off the ball (they've got rid of that pathetically lengthy motion-captured 'stick va foot in' tackle) and execute some truly scything sliding tackles that can land you in hot water (literally) if you don't time them perfectly. With the ball at your feet you can pass to the nearest player, knock it ahead and run onto it, execute one-twos, through balls, crosses into the box, long passes into space, lobs and let off real pile drivers (the longer you hold the shoot button, the harder your player will strike the ball). Aftertouch is a simple affair and the amount of potential bend can be altered depending on what skill

That said, it's pretty hard to score, especially from close range and this can get frustrating. Whereas previously the keepers were quite stupid, they're now very difficult to beat, coming off their line with cat-like anticipation and throwing themselves at the ball with almost laser-sighted precision. You can try and lob them by pressing shoot and pass at the same time, but this is very tricky to pull off and is rarely successful as the keepers seem to have elastic arms once on the ground. As a result of this, goal mouth scrambles that are one a penny in *Sensi* and indeed 'real' football rarely occur. You're much more likely to score by banging the ball in from outside the area with plenty of aftertouch. Admittedly, to

level you've opted for. On the face of it, you've got

more control than ever before.

score in this way does take skill, but it feels a bit hit and miss – and well, it ain't football, is it? The long and hard tactics also make it very hard to defend effectively. The auto-player select is pretty quick, but it's not foolproof and if you've got a two-on-one situation (two defenders against one forward) it's possible to zigzag your way between them while the auto-player select tries to keep up. It's not a massive problem, but it can be frustrating.

But is it better than FIFA?

Everybody in the office has played both games to death, and (surprise) there's been a lot of arguing going on. *Actua Soccer 2* isn't perfect, but for me at least, the speed of play, the precision of the passing and the lush presentation make up for the minor shortcomings. It's difficult to compare it to *Sensi Soccer 2000*, so I won't even attempt to. It's not as glossy as *FIFA* (and it doesn't feature that Blur song) but it is a lot quicker and I've always preferred Barry Davies to John Motson. In all honesty, I found *FIFA* agonisingly slow and frustrating – it may look nice, but the players move like they're wearing Velcro-soled boots and playing on a fuzzyfelt pitch. If EA had made it quicker, it could be good.

In football cliché terms – it's a game of two halves – it depends on what you like. For me Actua 2 is like the Premier League: it might not be the prettiest football, but it's fast-paced, skilfull and entertaining. On the other hand, FIFA is like Italian football: it's much slower, you get more time on the ball and it looks nice. At the final whistle, you pay your money, you make your choice. Give me the Premier League any day.



There are still problems with the auto-player select which means play can get a bit messy sometimes, but the speed and sheer playability help to make up for it.

In Perspective

Actua Soccer 2 represents a definite step forward in terms of graphics and gameplay over the previous versions – and it's very quick, even without a 3D card. If you're a FIFA fan then you'll probably ignore everything I've just said and go and buy it anyway. All I can say is, play both demos and then decide.

Actua Soccer 2

FIFA Soccer: TRTWC

Sensi Soccer 2000

Kick Off 98

Actua Soccer

Tech Speed

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P133

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, gamepad

yamepau







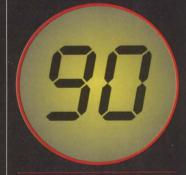






Score

Still a FIFA beater.



Price: £39.95

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Gremlin Interactive

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Heavy Gear

Apparently Heavy Gear is the fourth most popular role-playing game in the world. Richie Shoemaker's never heard of it. "It's a bit like MechWarrior," we told him. "But don't mention that in the review."

F YOU'VE EVER PLAYED ANY OF THE
MechWarrior games (Bastard - Ed), you'll
recall that the Mechs 'ran' with the camp
hybrid grace of Penelope Pitstop and Dale
Winton. They looked threatening enough at
rest, but as soon as they broke into a trot and minced
into the flat landscapes you had to stifle a sigh of despair
and switch to cockpit view to avoid embarrassment.

It's a similar story with *Heavy Gear*, which is in many ways akin to watching Phil Collins perform *Swan Lake* in full power armour: just switch to the outside view and watch your Mech (sorry Gear) as he engages his shopping trolley turbo wheels, sidesteps à la Gene Kelly and pirouettes his way into battle. You just want to shout at the screen: "Oi Gaylord! No!"

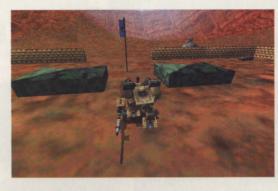
It isn't MechWarrior 3

Heavy Gear is set in the badlands of Terra Nova, where the Confederated Northern City States and the Allied Southern Territories are having more than a little bit of a domestic over alleged border incursions by the South. All the usual training and multi-player missions are in place, as well as the obligatory choose-a-side style assignments; additionally, there's a story-led cinematic campaign where you play Ranger Scott, a top Gear (ho-ho) pilot on board the landship Vigilance. Players must progress through a series of missions lightly peppered with cut-scenes, create new Gears as new weapons and chassis become available and eventually fire some genuinely groovy weapons.

It isn't GearWarrior

Like many people I enjoyed the *MechWarrior* games, but I never managed to complete them. Although the missions were very samey, they had the right balance of action and simulation; they were games





All 3Dfx-ed up with nowhere to go? Why not mince into the enemy base and show them who's boss...

for people who could navigate contentedly in any flight sim without cheating, except when it came to landing. *Heavy Gear* happily still has the same feel of its forefathers, but the little nips and tucks that have been made aren't nearly enough to shout long and loud about. The crouching and sidestepping are welcome, but the key fumbling negates any possible tactical advantage. Gears may be smaller than Mechs, but the sense of scale of the previous games is lost, and though the landscapes are more undulating than before they're still rather empty. The biggest problem is that the missions are the same old mix of following waypoints, finding enemy units and eliminating them. Apart from the improved construction side and the storyline there isn't really much else that we haven't seen before.

It ain't heavy

Call me Mr Negative, but it would've been nice to kick off a new series of games with some new features. Why can't we manage the landship and have an updated version of the classic *Carrier Command* tacked on the side? We could have flown planes, driven about in whopping great tanks and minced about provocatively in more Gears. In terms of graphics and sound *Heavy Gear* tramples all over the previous mech games, but gameplay-wise it sadly fails to offer anything particularly new or innovative to the genre.



(Above) Most flight simulations have more exiting landscapes than this. Still, planes don't have legs – which is a good thing. (Above right) An enemy Gear begs for mercy: "Squeal like a pig, boy!"

In Perspective

In this dawning age of mixed-up genres it would have been nice to see a spot of strategy, resource management or indeed more vehicles to pilot about in. As it stands *Heavy Gear* is a good game; there's nothing new or original, but if you're a major fan of the genre you'll probably buy this no matter what anyone says.

Heavy Gear

MechWarrior 2

MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries

Earthsiege 2

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: Soundblaster compatible

sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

(optional)













Scotte

Mechs behaving badly.



Price: £39.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Activision

Telephone: 01895 4567000

Website: www.activision.com



TOCA: Touring Recommended Car Championship



(Above) How to get one of those dangerous driving penalty point deductions. (Right) The French TOCA drivers strike a blow for working and driving conditions. Again.

There's nothing Patrick McCarthy likes better than a nice quiet drive in the country on a Saturday afternoon. So we gave him TOCA...

H, TOURING CAR RACING. IT'S A WET, cold, dark Saturday afternoon and you have a life-threatening hangover. It may have been the cherry brandy and Southern Comfort you were mixing in the same glass;

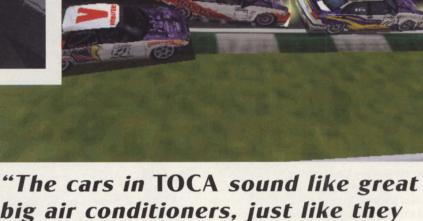
it could have been the deluge of champagne followed by the Irish whisky which preceded it; or it could've been the cumulative effects of the appalling Black Bush jokes. But the only cure is a dozen Nurofen and an afternoon nap.

So there you are, about to fall asleep to the sound of the perfect soporific, with a satisfied smile playing winsomely about your gnarled and experience-hardened, yet curiously attractive, face. The perfect soporific is Peter O'Sullivan's voice, droning away over the horse racing on Grandstand, while the satisfied smile's down to a horse with a thigh

strain, and Pete burbling on about what a shame it is that it has to be shot in the head.

> You slip down one level of consciousness, then another. You're almost asleep, when suddenly there's a horrible, discordant, scarcely human scream and you sit bolt upright, jarring your sensitive stomach, wondering

> > whether the



big air conditioners, just like they do in real life. So that's alright."

humane pistol wielder has accidentally shot Peter O'Sullivan in the testicles by mistake. But it's only Murray Walker, bellowing about something. Trying to focus on the glare of the TV, you can see people bumping each other about in brightly-coloured sales reps' motorway cruisers. Murray's still screaming. You wonder if anyone will notice the small pool of bile freshly arrived on your shirt front. You decide not and, now fully awake, settle back to watch the touring car racing. After all, it's the only thing the BBC can still afford. You might as well make the most of it.

Where were we?

Sorry about that. Right, this is the only touring car game you're going to see (Europress had one in the pipeline but pulled out because Codemasters have the official licence). It's being sold on the basis of being a simulation rather than an arcade game, and as far as car handling goes, that's definitely the case: you have to do things properly, or you'll find yourself backwards and upside down against a wall, looking embarrassed and wondering how you're going to hide the stains down the back of your racing suit on your way back to the motorhome. So it's brake in a straight line, turn in, accelerate, wibble the steering wheel for effect to impress watching viewers - rather than slam the brakes on





(Top) The in-car view looks nice, but the lack of a rear-view mirror makes blocking difficult.







(Above) That'll be an Audi, then. (Above centre) If you can't be bothered to qualify, this is the view you'll be greeted with. (Above right) The first stop-me-and-buy-one curry house, complete with menu on the windows.

and turn in at the same time - slide sideways, add opposite lock and zoom away laughing insanely. If you're used to driving that way, you may get a bit frustrated. Like NASCAR, it takes a while to get used to the way the cars handle.

Casual passers-by will also know you haven't been doing things properly, because they'll see it from your car. Every collision has an effect on the bodywork, and your nicelydrawn, prettily coloured-in repmobile will soon start looking like it was knocked together out of old sheets of corrugated iron. If you try really hard, you can even get the bonnet to fly off. But not into the crowd, unfortunately - the game's distressingly low on the beheading count.

So, a simulation

So, it's a simulation – and yet it has a number of things which are distinctly un-simulationique. For example, of the nine tracks in the game (such as Donington Park, Silverstone, Thruxton, Brands Hatch and Oulton Park), only two are available at the start of the game. You can only race about on the others once you've 'unlocked' them - you can't even have one-off races or time trials on them until you've gained at least 20 points at the two races which take place at each circuit in championship mode. Distinctly arcadey. And if you start a championship you can't get to the next track without doing this, either. (To get 20 points, you need two third places or equivalent - a sixth and a first, for example.) They say it adds longevity. I say it's a bit knob, and you should be

able to get everything from the start in a simulation. The other positively arcadey thing is that there's a

Graphic descriptions

There are four views: two behind the car, from the bonnet, and a HeadCam (from the driver's head). The in-car view's quite nicely done: your gloved hands fight at the steering wheel, the car vibrates and your head wobbles about like Anne Widdecombe's arse on a bouncy castle. But there's no rear-view mirror - you have to use a kind of look-behind-you button to get a generic shot of what's going on at the back, like the one in Formula 1. This makes it more difficult to cut people up or block their passages effectively (put your own joke in here). So one of the outside views, although a bit arcadey for hardened sim fans, is probably the most useful.

Graphically, TOCA won't take your breath away, especially if you see 3Dfx as an instant cure-all. Motor racing tracks are pretty scantily clad at the best of times (it helps keep death off the roads if the road in question is 200 yards from the nearest solid object) but the trees, stands and gawking geeks that form the backgrounds aren't exactly mind-blowing in their graphical loveliness. Even on a P133 it's still a bit jerky, especially when you're throwing yourself into a hairpin.

Four-in-a-bed romps

TOCA sort of falls between two stools. Driving-wise, it's a viable alternative to NASCAR for car handling nuts - but unlike NASCAR, you won't get bored shitless on endless roundabouts. But you also don't get any options for car setup, and the weird points-based unlocking system is a pain. On the other hand, the door handle to door handle, bumping and barging racing is fun and, although seemingly

> are plenty of network, serial and even split-screen options for multiplayer fun, too. Oh, and the cars sound like great big air conditioners, just like in real life. So that's alright. 2



(Above) In an effort to impress the chicks, Charles thought it would be a good idea to drive the entire race upside down. (Above right) "Thank God for reverse gear," thought Theodore, putting his foot to the floor.

Although TOCA calls itself a simulation, it has many things you usually only see in an arcade game - which is why we've stuck it alongside arcade and simulation driving games.

TOCA: Touring Car Championship

Screamer Rally

F1GP2

Micro Machines

NASCAR Racing

Destruction Derby

Tack Speck

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P100

Graphics: SVGA/VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick,

gamepad, wheel















Give it a go. It'll grow on you.



Price: £29.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Codemasters

Telephone: 01926 814132

Website: www.codemasters.com

FIGHTSEBAGK CORNER CORN



A LONG, DIFFICULT MEETING.

Then a 200-mile journey over treacherous mountain roads. Life can be stressful for a top international executive, but that's not your problem. You're a car thief working for the Mafia and you need to rip off his car for a crime mission.

Of course, stealing cars and shooting people creates innocent victims.

Anyway, if the highly-engineered saloon stolen from this advertisement is not your cup of tea, Grand Theft Auto offers you over 30 different vehicles to steal, each with its own handling characteristics, including sports cars, buses, garbage trucks and motorbikes.

In headrush-inducing top-down perspective you race through three different cities, each with its own massive and unique road system and local landmarks.

Your Mafia bosses will require you to commumerous tasks along the way.

But for this much adrenaline, it's criminal not to.

C&VG 5/5 EDGE 9/10 ESCAPE 6/6







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Carmageddon Splat Pack

What happens when the truly horrible becomes even more horrible? Charlie Brooker knows the answer. He once made a chicken 'n' mushroom Pot Noodle with boiled Happy Shopper cola.

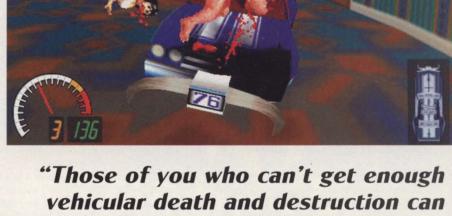
> UST FOR A MOMENT, THINK ABOUT HOW truly incredible computers are. Consider how remarkable it is that the human race has actually managed to create devices that think. Reflect upon the silicon chip's

widespread influence, its seemingly inexhaustible range of applications, its innate significance in the unfolding history of mankind's evolution. There is still some way to go - we're constantly improving our design - yet in a short space of time, computerised technology has come to permeate almost every aspect of our lives. Clearly, this merely marks the beginning. There is a new force at work in the world; the exponential power of countless zeroes and ones. Humans are now beginning to grasp the possibilities such a force presents. Correctly harnessed, this digital energy has the potential to improve the lives of all humankind. Forever. S'yeah, right. Here's an add-on pack for Carmageddon.

Chunky, meaty, fresh

You all know Carmageddon. The game that made the Daily Mail leak a swollen bladderful of warm coward's pee into its collective cotton underpants. The game that so badly irked the BBFC they forced SCI to replace the red-blooded pedestrians with green-gunked zombies and release it with a 'No Gristle Guarantee'. The game we awarded a whopping 95 per cent back in issue 50.





prepare for a second bloody helping."

(Top right) An unusually violent example of an 'upskirt shot'. (Left) Hey, did you happen to see the most mutilated girl in the world?



Now those of you who just can't get enough vehicular death and destruction can wipe clean those feeding bowls and prepare for a second bloody helping. The Splat Pack takes the original game and adds a whole bunch of previously unseen tracks and cars. Oh, and it reintroduces the grisly bits. But more on that delicious development later. For now, let's look at the new bits.

First up, you'll be racing through a new series of environments; a medieval castle, a South American 'Inca' level, an island which houses an immense dam, an 'ice world', a bizarre futuristic city, and rather dramatically, Hell itself. The formula is much the same as before, in that each 'arena' provides the setting for several different courses, with barriers, checkpoints and signposts changing position accordingly. Frank Muir wannabes will be delighted to see that once again, each race is named after an excruciating pun: 'Inca Pacitated' (for a Mayan level) being a particularly grim example. Apart from the new textures and roadside furniture, the new environments also introduce new pedestrians (not zombies this time) to plough through. Bouncing off your windscreen this time around are more



 animals (sheep and warthogs) and people (with a dubious emphasis on scantily-clad women) than ever before.

Here in my car, I feel safest of all

Because we wouldn't stand for anything less, the team has also supplied a new range of cars. The Splat Pack menagerie of automobilia is more diverse than before, with the new vehicles ranging from the very, very big (a Duel-style juggernaut), to the very, very small (a Mini Cooper with full Italian Job regalia). The majority of the original Carmageddon vehicles are also at your disposal, some of which have been souped-up and made-over (your standard car, for instance, looks far cooler than it used to). Mostly, the additional cars are slightly more down to earth than the original Carmageddon beasts, in direct contrast to the distinctly surreal nature of the supplementary levels. There's also a knowing wink in the direction of Interstate '76, with the inclusion of a near-identical car, driven by a near-identical pair (named - bad-pun-tastically - 'Carkey and Clutch').

Okay, so there are some new tracks and vehicles. What else? Well, erm, not much really. Apart from the improved 3Dfx support (which should finally silence those who initially criticised *Carmageddon's* ropey VGA visuals), the only other major difference is that unlike the original neutered UK release, the *Splat Pack* co-stars eyeballs, intestines, livers, spines and bloody great arcing ropes of coagulated gore. Yes, folks, the BBFC may have demanded the removal of red blood and innocent pedestrians from *Carmageddon*, but as you read in *Zone* 58, their decision has been overturned: now it's grue city. In addition to providing new tracks and cars, the *Splat Pack* will magically transform your original *Carmageddon* into the bloodbath it was always intended to be. For the meantime at least, SCI legally allow us all to wallow in

Rumours that a Disney Carmageddon

Rumours that a Disney Carmageddon movie is in the pipeline are likely to prove unfounded.

their mire of vile, sickening, four-wheeled depravity. The readership of the *Daily Mail*, for once, can sit and spin. Hooray for that.

Vroom with a grue

No review of an add-on disk is complete without a sizeable amount of griping about features which *could* have been added but weren't, and hey, I don't want to buck the trend. So here we go. Ready?

First up: multi-player. Carmageddon, in its original, un-Splat Pack-ed state, has a severely flawed network mode. It's just not as much fun as it could be – the arenas are too large, the object a little unfocused. Nothing has changed. The Splat Pack offers no new deathmatch-specific levels – it simply allows you to use the new tracks. The Formula One track is clearly the best option for multi-player racing (especially the figure-of-eight section in the centre), but even that isn't ideal. What we want are a couple of small, tight playing areas. It isn't too much to ask.

Ultimately, how you feel about the *Splat Pack* depends very much upon on how much you like *Carmageddon*. There's lots of new stuff, but there isn't anything here that significantly *improves* upon the gameplay. The team is currently busy planning *Carmageddon II*, and our suspicion is that they are holding onto their very best ideas and improvements. If you didn't like the original, the *Splat Pack* won't do anything for you.

If, on the other hand, you loved it to pieces, played it from beginning to end, and can't wait for the full-blown sequel, this'll do the business. At the end of the day, it costs about the same as a CD by Cast or The Cranberries, so if you've got a bit of money to burn, for God's sake buy this instead. We don't want to encourage them.

The rude awakening of Marcel Dubois

The first in a series of short novellas based on in-game screenshots.

Marcel had always considered gravity his friend. It was always there, his chum gravity – lurking in the background, cheery and benign, keeping the plates on the table and his feet on the ground. He never saw or heard it – hell, he didn't even understand it – yet Marcel felt an undeniable warmth for this unsung, unseen force. He felt affection. He felt admiration. And he also felt that somehow, somewhere, his feelings were reciprocated. All that had changed now. Oh, what a fool he'd been. For the first time, Marcel saw a different, less favourable side to gravity. It could be a friend all right. But its companionship was superficial. For



beneath the amiable exterior beat the black heart of an obdurate scoundrel. And now, Marcel realised, he would drink the black sperm of its vengeance.

In Perspective

The Splat Pack isn't a game in its own right – it's an add-on. So we won't compare it to other games. Instead, let's concentrate on its strengths: namely, that it costs about the same as a CD, and that it totally restores Carmageddon's gruesome bits. So it should appeal to skinflints and gorehounds.

Original Carmageddon

Carmageddon Splat Pack

Grand Theft Auto

Any CD by Cast, Northern Uproar, The Cranberries, Skunk Anansie, M People or Lenny Kravitz

Chopping your thumb off

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb (24Mb for 3Dfx, 32Mb for hi-res mode)

Processor: P90

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards **Controls:** Keyboard, joystick







Scote

Not bad. But not essential, either.



Price: £14.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: SCI

Telephone: 0171 585 3308

Website: www.sci.co.uk







IMPROVE YOUR 6IX APPEAL





Longbow 2



As the new generation of flight sims designed with 3D accelerators steps into the limelight, EA's the first past the post with a serious chopper sim. Tim Ponting loses a week and quite possibly a girlfriend to Longbow 2...

F FAST JET SIM NUTS ARE NERDY, TAKE it from me, helo pilots go the whole nine yards into propellerheadiness. Learning Longbow 2 in realistic mode is a labour of love. Without exception, we, the simulation equivalent of the aliens from Mars Attacks, dribble and scream with delight as translational lift kicks in, and chuckle appreciatively as we flare from 135 knots to a hover without popping over 35ft. Handing over a Priority Fire Zone to our wingman gives a feeling as intense as when Anna Friel snogged another chick in Brookside.

Quake deathmatch fans, this is where you hop off the bus. This is a game for real men, with real acne, real bad breath and a desire to wander around bars wearing white uniforms.

Multiple orgasms

A two-page review and you still want a full multiplayer rundown! Well, it's fab: two players can play via serial or modem connection or TCP/IP Internet, up to four on a network. In addition, you can fly in a number of different ways, players either flying different seats in the same helicopter (including door gunner in Blackhawks!) or different helicopters altogether, either on the same or opposing sides. There's no audio capability, but you can define text macros that can be sent to a chat window on screen, either to all players or just your team or crew-mate. Cool.



"Handing over a Priority Fire Zone feels as intense as when Anna Friel snogged another chick in Brookside."

Maybe that's a bit over the top

Actually, with the arcade flight model in four-way network deathmatch, *Quake* fans might enjoy it, especially dogfighting in the mountains of Azerbaijan. *Longbow 2* has something for everyone, though if you're not interested in flying you may find playing with the external views on the ground boring.

The word on the street a few months back was that Longbow 2 was merely a small hop beyond Longbow Gold, the updated version of the original Longbow complete with mission disk and native Windows 95 support. Much of it hasn't changed, but what has makes it a completely different game. As Doom to Quake, so Longbow to Longbow 2.

Graphic spooges

With 3Dfx installed, Longbow 2 is utterly stunning. The objects have eight times the detail of the original, while the terrain has easily improved four-fold. The lighting and translucency effects of 3Dfx have been used to the full: at times when you have an external view active you think you're watching a rendered scene. No joke. With the exception of Turok, I've never seen such immersive graphics. The beauty of it is that, unlike most flight sims, you can make the most of the external camera views. Because you can hover (and do so during the most exciting bits of a mission) you can switch to an external view and launch 16 missiles at once. Try it at night or dawn/dusk, and a pitch-black screen is punctured by the flash of the missiles shooting off the rail, leaving a translucent trail of exhaust gasses. Simply gobsmacking.

The other major benefit of 3Dfx is the terrain filtering: at low levels the pixels aren't blocky, though the land looks a bit like it's had a paint box smeared over it – but still preferable to a counterpane. It's just a shame that there aren't any trees.





(Top) Kiowas aren't good at taking out enemy armour, so why not shoot up their farms instead? Turkey shoots Bernard Matthews-style... (Above) In the back seat of a Longbow, you can perform all the front seat jobs. Like flying and killing things.



The frame rate is good (tested on a non-MMX P200 with 32Mb RAM and a 3Dfx card), except in the training mode where regardless of the video card fitted it runs at about three frames a second at best – presumably because the CPU is tied up analysing your behaviour and chucking out commands context sensitively.

Campaign boners

This is a major step forward from Longbow, which was basically a set of semi-randomly generated missions linked loosely as a campaign. Longbow 2 has a dynamic campaign along a war-front where each mission affects the next. You lead a flight of 16 pilots spread over four different base camps. Each mission is in fact four related sub-missions. For example, you might be making an armoured push in the north; flights one and two will be tasked with close air support for the advance, while in the south flights three and four carry out a deep strike against a command and control centre and a reconnaissance mission in preparation for a push in the south at a later date. You, as leader, can edit all the mission orders for each flight, adding and changing waypoints and instructions. Occasionally, two flights have interdependent missions: for example, flight three may be tasked with clearing air defences ahead of a troop insertion by a Blackhawk in flight four.

With limited supplies activated you have to conserve missiles and helicopters: if you don't you'll soon find yourself without radar Longbows and MW Hellfires. Though you can opt to turn this feature off, the first missions are extremely frustrating if you choose total realism as all the pilots under your wing are rated at zero per cent until experienced in combat; I found myself reflying several missions that my flight had completed successfully simply because the other three flights had been decimated. Since their success is



The two campaigns – one set in a US training ground and one in Azerbaijan – are dynamic, with supplies and victory effects carried over from mission to mission.

beyond your control (save editing their flight plan) it's frustrating. It would be more enjoyable – and more realistic – to have a few experienced pilots in your squad from day one, as once they hit 50 per cent (which they do after a couple of missions) their chances of survival are much higher.

Gameplay uppers

In terms of gameplay, Longbow 2 is similar to the original. The AI has only been tweaked, so the enemy's still a bit on the dumb side – don't Hokum pilots know that Longbows hide behind ridges? The enhancements come in the avionics suite (even more accurate and controllable) and the fact that you now have four helos to fly: the radar and non-radar Longbows, Kiowa Warriors and Blackhawks. Most of the time you fly the first two, but it's a challenge flying nap-of-theearth (Propellerhead speak for 'low' – Ed) in the others as they don't have a head-up display with the altitude in front of you. Oh, and the new virtual cockpit views are excellent, where your head stays locked onto the target as you fly by.

There's a greater sense of involvement in the gameplay, but this comes from the graphics. At one point in the game I was hovering behind a ridge when a tank I was supporting shot into view from behind me and piled over the ridge, billowing dust in its wake. Fantastic, but there's still no sense of being in the bustle of a busy base of ops like in DI's Hind.

Summary spooge

Longbow 2 is superb. Challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up. It'll run without, but it's no way near as enjoyable. The in-game visuals are so good with 3Dfx, you wish the deeply average rendered intro had used the game engine instead. It's still not perfect: we want trees, better enemy Al, more personalised missions and characters. But it's as good as any flight sim gets, helicopter or otherwise.







(Top left) Order your wingman to pop up and scan for targets. Note the weather effects (grey skies) – looks like Wales. (Above) In heads-down mode as the co-pilot/gunner, you have a full-screen FLIR mode. Cool. (Right) The new virtual cockpit is easy to use as it still overlays the HUD info. As in real life!

In Perspective

It's better than Longbow, Longbow Gold, way ahead of DI's Apache and better overall than DI's Hind, though that still has a few endearing features. I'd say it's presently the best flight sim, period. But forget it if you don't have a 3Dfx card, unless you're a total prophead who doesn't really care about the graphics.

Apache

Longbow Gold

Hind

Longbow 2

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: Pentium 133

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: DirectX compatible cards

Controls: Joystick (plus CH Products, ThrustMaster, Microsoft), mouse,

keyboard













Coatre

Gobsmacking – provided you've got a 3Dfx card.



Price: £39.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442 Website: www.janes.ea.com

Personal Computers Choice

Madden 98





It's appropriate that we gave Madden 98 to Patrick
McCarthy. It's the 98th review of the game he's written over the years.

O MADDEN'S BACK AGAIN. IT HASN'T appeared as often on the PC as on other formats, but it's the best American footie game of all of them and you tend to see it a lot. People were raving about the N64 version at E3, but this year's PC version is a little disappointing. There's nothing wrong with it, but... Well, let's start by telling you what you get...

As usual, the presentation is spot-on. There are only three camera angles, but the best one's the end-zone cam anyway. Graphically, it's improved on last year's version, but once again, the music is a bit dodgy. In fact, if there's a desperate sociology student out there trying to think of just the right research project to keep them at 'Uni' for a few more years, can I suggest 'Electronic Arts' In-Game Music And The Perceived Social Demographics Of The Game's Target Audience'? It's precisely calculated. Basketball gets funky stuff; American football gets 'rahk'. It's the kind of thing the cast of *Friends* would click their fingers to. By contrast, the commentary's excellent. John Madden and Pat Summerall's blathering is essential to American football, in the same way that Richie Benaud is to cricket.

The play's the thing

There are the usual options for exhibition games, league and playoff play, and customised leagues and schedules. As ever, you can play and coach, or just coach. But it's disappointing to see you still can't create your own plays. Front Page Sports Football has always let you do this, and it adds to the game – even if you only ever devise plays that make players run about in ludicrous directions, like Duncan MacDonald used to.

(Above right) As Gervaise did his Highland Fling for the 20th time, his team-mates decided only violence was left.

Once again...

Another thing that hasn't changed from last year is the option to make up your own teams from scratch, either by nicking all the best real-life players and putting them into your Shitesville Shovellers squad, or by making players up from scratch and naming them in a variety of obscene and amusing ways. All the great teams through the 30-odd years of the NFL are there to plunder at will. But that's the thing about this game: all the features were there last year. It looks better and plays slightly faster if you have the hardware, but at the end of the day, they haven't really added anything new. It's a good game, but it hasn't advanced the way NHL has.



Another touchdown routine. In our day a simple hand-shake and a large G&T would've sufficed.

In Perspective

Madden is better presented than FPS Football, and is graphically superior. FPS Football has more depth as you can make you own plays which can carry over from each season, but Madden has an instant playable appeal that may attract the more casual player.

Madden 98

Madden 97

FPS Football

Tech Speed

Memory: 16Mb (32Mb rec)
Processor: Pentium 100

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All Windows compatible

sound cards

Controls: Joystick, gamepad,

keyboard, mouse

Note: 400Mb-plus hard disk space

recommended













Scote

It has instant accessibility, especially with its TV-style.



Price: £44.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Website: http://www.ea.com



The People's Choice









WILL YOURS BE A WATERY GRAVE?



Deep under the sea a terrible battle is taking place. From your submarine your mission is to bring peace to these troubled waters. In Sub Culture you'll experience a stunningly accurate underwater world with real time 3D graphics, night and day special effects and amazing sea creatures with their own A.I. Can you turn the tide of war?



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"All that time and effort and that's the best name they could come up with," sighed Paul Presley.
People in glass houses...

MIGHT AS WELL BE HONEST. I CAN'T think of a better way of opening this review other than by saying that F1
Racing Simulation is simply superb. I can still remember being bowled over by how brilliant the original Formula One Grand Prix by Geoff Crammond was on the Atari ST, and I've been having most of those feelings again here.

It's not just the game's graphics – although admittedly they're part of the whole experience – it's simply the sheer depth of realism. I've never played a racing sim in which the cars feel so true to life or behave so realistically. All of which means, naturally enough, that *F1 Racing Simulation* isn't the easiest of games to get to grips with. Not by any means: if you jump straight in with everything turned up to maximum

Look, no fags

Proving once again that computer games are better than real life, F1 Racing Simulation takes a moral stand that even our (New) masters in (New) Whitehall couldn't bring themselves to do. You can look as long and hard as you want, but you won't see even a hint of nicotine-related sponsorship. The magic that is airbrush has removed their foul cancerous presence from the sides of the cars, erased their images from all the billboards and even wiped their existence from the mouths of



"I've never really understood cars — I'm in the camp that believes engines work on petrol and fairy magic."



As you can see from all the shots on these pages, the graphics and attention to detail in *F1 Racing Simulation* are quite stunning.

reality, you'll be lucky to make it round the first bend intact. However, there's enough in the training modes to give you a good feel for both the cars and the tracks, and switching to easy mode is sufficient to provide you with a fun, albeit somewhat arcadey race. Thankfully, the learning curve has been well thought out: the more you practise a lap, the more you get an idea of how each circuit works. You also find yourself cursing when you come out of a bend too slow or miss your best time by several tenths of a second (no doubt real-life F1 drivers feel more strongly about these things than I do, but I like to think there's some sort of kinship going on).

Under the bonnet

One area of the game that I still find daunting, three weeks on, is the engineering section. I've never really understood cars – I'm afraid I'm firmly in the camp that believes engines work on a combination of petrol and fairy magic. As detailed and comprehensive as the manual is, I can't help feeling as though I need a degree from the Royal School of Engineering to understand what's going on. However, surfing around that particular section was enough to make me realise that if you do want to get your fingers dirty with virtual oil stains, it's all there. And even I, Paul 'What's a car?' Presley, found myself thinking, "Hmm, maybe I should alter the brake pads a little.

Look, no hands

One of the overriding memories that any long-term gamesplayer continues to cherish is the first time they played EA's *Indianapolis 500* (back in the days when PCs with a mouse were considered state-of-the-art). Not because it was a fully authentic racing sim, nor because it moved like Jim Davidson off a shovel, but because when you

crashed into another car, you really did crash into it. It's the reason why the majority of people, on first getting their hands on a driving game, will immediately turn their car around and drive round the track the wrong way. It's also why action replays were invented.

Thus, I'm pleased to report that F1 Racing Simulation takes

car crashes to a level that only Carmageddon can better. Push the realism levels up to max and you'll witness some of the most bone-crunching, car-destroying smashes yet seen in a 'serious' game. Wheels go flying, wings fall off and litter the track – even the body of your car can be ripped into pieces. Smart.





They seem a tad unresponsive" by the time I got to the end of my review period. Which must be a good thing.

However, if what I've said so far has got you itching to get behind the wheel, a word of warning: F1 Racing Simulation is extremely processor-hungry. Ubi Soft maintain it'll work on a P120, but I wouldn't really recommend running it on anything less than a P166 with at least 32Mb of RAM. Oh, and the more powerful your 3D card, the better. Even with all this, the menus can still be painfully slow at times (even on a full install).

It's all about timing

Basically though, like Villeneuve in 96, Mansell in *IndyCar* or the tortoise versus the hare, Ubi Soft have practically sprung up from nowhere and taken the lead from the established names in the genre. Everyone's been waiting patiently for Geoff Crammond's *F1GP3* to come sauntering past the chequered flag, but now... well let's just say that it's hard to imagine what Crammond can actually do that will make his game any better (or more realistic) than this. Better menus perhaps? Friendlier tutorials? It's about all I can think of. For now, a new benchmark has been set.





(Top) Or as Murray Walker would put it, "20 laps to go. That's 20... 19... 18... 17... 16..." etc. (Above) You show me better rain effects than those and I'll eat my umbrella.

Look, no ads

In the interests of research I felt there was only one way to really test the computer's intelligence – a full 60+ lap race with the realism levels set to maximum. Choosing a course at random, the race was held at Silverstone, with all the drivers primed and ready for the gruelling task ahead. Naturally, my presence on the track would be akin to throwing a wide-eyed kitten onto a dog track, so I fell on my fuel-injected sword so to speak and took over Ukyo Katayama's car, running it into a wall at the first bend (after all, authenticity is a key factor).

So how did they fare? Was it simply an elongated parade lap that lasted an hour and a half, or was it an action-packed thrill-a-minute battle of wills? In truth it went astonishingly well. For the main, the drivers behaved like their real-life counterparts – attempting to overtake, taking risks, holding back, fighting for positions and so on. Using the TVcam view and cycling through the action the race often felt a lot like the real thing.

There was one noticeable difference however—the whole back marker issue. When the race leaders started getting caught up in traffic they often had to fight needlessly to get past them. In real life the back markers are obliged to let them pass unobstructed, and can be penalised if they don't. Here it's every man for himself. Other than that it felt incredibly true to life. The AI apparently varies from driver to driver, allocating different levels of aggression and skill, and then combines them with factors such as track position, weather, car models and so on. The result is one of the most realistic feeling racing sims since the original F1GP.



In Perspective

Geoff Crammond's F1GP2 is the only real competition – but it's over a year old and is showing its age (no 3Dfx support, 95/96 season, etc). IndyCar 2 will always be a poor cousin to F1, and Formula One was little more than a glorified arcade game.

F1 Racing Simulation

F1GP2

IndyCar 2

illuy Cai 2

Formula One

The real thing

Tech Speci

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P120 (166 and above

highly recommended)

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, joypad, steering wheel

nort.











Scatte

Geoff Crammond must be gnashing his teeth.



Price: £39.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Ubi Soft

Telephone: 0181 944 9000

Website: www.ubisoft.co.uk



Men In Black

Charlie Brooker's used to dealing with hideous creatures and exotic alien life forms. He's been to (insert name of least favourite city/region/country here). Ha ha ha. Ho ho ho. Here's Men In Black.

HIS SHOULD BE A BARREL OF LAUGHS, yeah? After all, Men In Black (the movie) was both sassy and enjoyable - hardly the most memorable movie of 1997 by any means (that honour surely falls to the infamous Pam Anderson/Tommy Lee tape), but nonetheless, it was fairly engaging, wasn't it? And the central premise - secret government agents performing immigration checks on outlandish intergalactic visitors - should lend itself nicely to a computer game translation, right? And hey, look at those graphics they're grrrreat, aren't they? Well, yes. But...

You can see what they're aiming at. Men In Black (the game) is basically Resident Evil minus the exploding ribcages. The leading players (Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones and Linda Fiorentino) have been 'translated' into eerily accurate polygonal marionettes, complete with scanned fizzogs, hairdos and characteristic animation routines. Indeed, the attention to detail is so meticulous, they've probably even got painstakingly reproduced, millimetreperfect ringpieces, too. With working cleft hair and everything. And little turtle's heads that poke through whenever they need to 'go'. But we're veering off-topic here. Let's go back to the game.

It's dark and we're wearing sunglasses

The idea is that you, Mister player sir, are in complete control of one of the eponymous dark-suited fellows, and must complete a series of taxing missions without getting them killed.



(Above) Linda Fiorentino always gets her man.

The game eases you into the proceedings with the caring demeanour of an experienced courtesan: following an 'initiation' level during which you may control only the Will Smith character, you're ushered into MIB central and encouraged to complete a sequence of yawn-a-licious training exercises before getting to the real 'meat' of the action (and the choice of any damn character you want). As we've already pointed out, the visuals are pretty much top of the pops, the very peak of professionalism - a fact which largely serves to emphasise just how unsatisfactory the actual gameplay itself is. The problem is scowlingly simple: it's a complete pain in the arse to control. The character movement just doesn't feel right. The controls are sluggish, fiddly, and indistinct. Useful objects are often hard to spot. Worse still, the player sometimes needs to manoeuvre himself into position with pinprick accuracy in order to pick up or use a given item. All in all, it's a chore to play: if we hadn't been reviewing it, we'd have happily snatched the CD from the drive and hurled it straight into

the face of the nearest child. At least that way, it would have provided us with a little old-fashioned entertainment. Still, why should Gremlin care? It'll probably sell. (It has - Ed.) Consequently, Men In Black is destined to generate profits on

the strength of some nifty visuals and a popular movie licence - it's just that here at PC Zone we'd have preferred to see a bit more of a game. 🕖



(Above left) The first 'proper' mission takes you to the snowy wastes of the arctic. In a suit. (Above right) The 'MIB' H.Q. is reproduced in loving detail. The graphics, as you can see, are undeniably fantastic.

Men In Black is a crashing disappointment, especially when you contemplate the fact that visually, it's the strongest game on this list. Perhaps it was rushed out in time for the Christmas sales binge. We'd love to see a sequel - with a greatly improved control system. Will Gremlin deliver the goods? Who can say?

Men In Black

Alone In The Dark Trilogy

The City Of The Lost Children

Bioforge

Resident Evil

Tech Speed

Memory: 16Mb (32Mb rec)

Processor: Pentium 100

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All Windows compatible

sound cards

Controls: Mouse







Lovely pictures and that but the gameplay chews bag.



Price: £34.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Gremlin Interactive

Telephone: 01142 753423

Website: http://www.gremlin.co.uk





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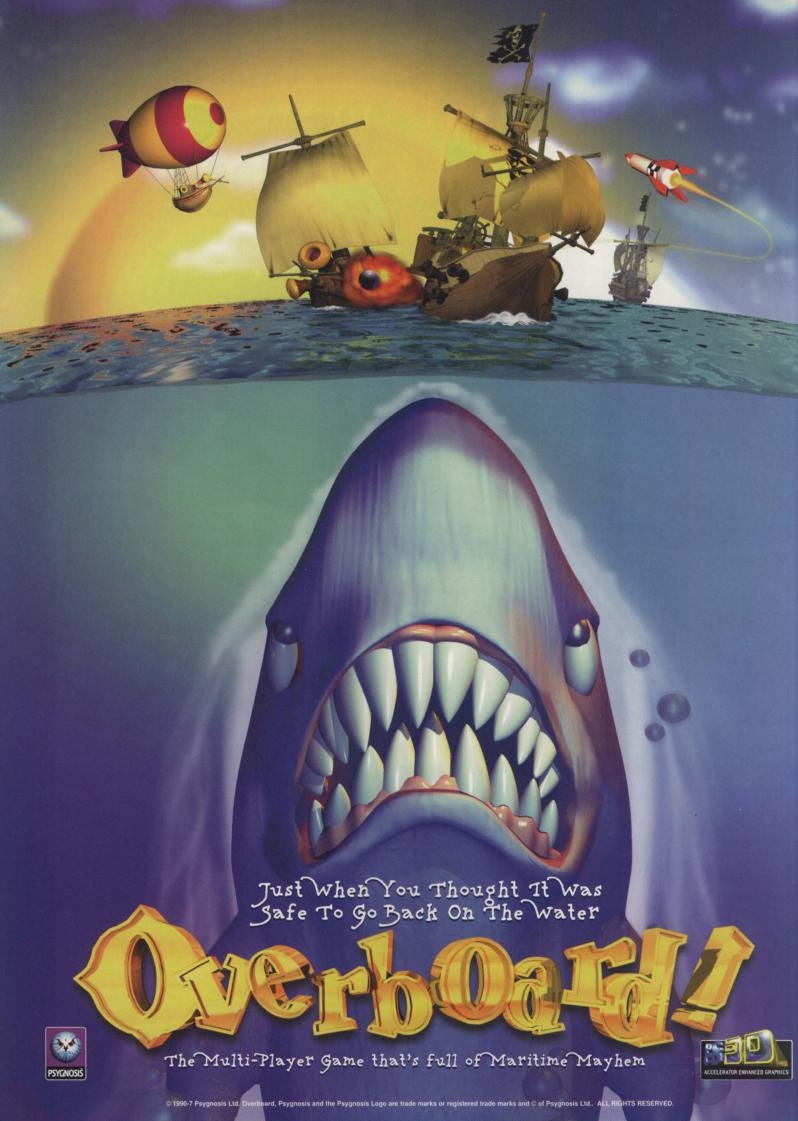
If you're into Baddle-Punchin' mind-bendin' ALIEN-BLASTIN' brain-storming' goal-scorin' puzzle-solvin' race-winnin' PLANE-FLYIN' gob-smacking' car-screachin' high-jumping' bomb-dodgin' world-explodin' wheel-spinnin' weapon-wieldin' HYPER-SPACIN' STRATEGY-BUILDING' depth-delwin' KARATE-CHOPPIN' ass-kickin' gaming, then load the CD's, count down to zero and let your imagination EXPLODE!!!

The largest most comprehensive fun-packed world of games on a unique 2 CD set











Just because a game ends up in here, it doesn't mean it isn't up to much. It's just that we couldn't fit it in anywhere else. So there.



(Above) Of course, when all is said and done, it probably would have been easier to just take the lift back down to the ground floor.

FLYING CORPS GOLD

If you're a fan of flight sims set among the silk scarf-wearing, champersquaffing titans of yesteryear, you'll already have Flying Corps, and are probably clamouring to know what's in it for you if you buy this. Well, it's been 3Dfx-ed up, for a start, which means that the planes are even nicer, the stuff on the ground doesn't look as basic (although the ground itself still looks like a collection of carpet tiles when you get up close and you can still 'land' on the rivers) and you see a shadow if you get below 20 feet.

There's a new mini-campaign and several new one-off 'custom' missions (you can't customise your own, though) including one, 'Ego Trip' in which you have to fly through all the arches of an aqueduct. There are a load



of extra toggleable features in the preferences menu, such as peripheral vision markers, translucent smoke and a 'stiff stick' effect (which many of the old RAF boys would have enjoyed, I'm sure). And there are a couple of new planes - a 'French' Spad (like the other Spad, only you can use it to form roadblocks) and the top-notch Fokker DVII, the Ford Capri of its day. So basically, it's the same excellent, atmospheric game with some extra bits, for 25 quid. If you have the original, you can get an upgrade through Empire for a tenner. Buy it.

Patrick McCarthy

Publisher: Empire Interactive Price: £24.99 Tel: 0181 3437337

REBEL MOON RISING

It's astonishing that any publisher still thinks the first person shooter market has room for yet another Doom clone - and an inferior one at that. Even the plot to Rebel Moon Rising, is lifted from a 1995 Philip K. Dick prize winner, and is so poorly documented that I've read it three times and still don't understand what's going on.

The MMX software engine, replete with splendiferous lighting, is astonishingly fast and testimony to Intel's involvement as project cheerleaders. But as I spent most of my time darting around like a scolded rat,

PC Jone recommends

DIABLO: HELLFIRE

It's odd that Blizzard have decided to release this. Don't get me wrong, I think that Diablo is a superb game - not necessarily a 'classic' but definitely something that gave the RPG genre something of a kick up the backside. To my knowledge though, the main reason that it has become so completely and utterly

mega-successful is the fact that its on-line multi-player features are so fabbo. Blizzard's server Battle.net is reputedly one of the most popular in the world with hosted games apparently hitting the millions. It is without doubt a bona fide success.

Here's something that'll surprise you then. Hellfire is a single-player add-on disc. Buh? Wha? If everyone's playing this multiplayer - why release an add-on pack that doesn't support it at all? There must be some reason...

So what do you get for your money? Well, you get a new single-player only quest that provides you with eight brand-spanking-new randomly generated map-environments. On top of this there are allegedly 29 new creatures (although I haven't seen all of them - I can vouch there are some scary, weird looking things that appear later on) as well as a new bad guy - Na-Krul. This chap was apparently one of Diablo's



minions and what's more, he has a bloody great chip on his shoulder.

Your job, as ever, is to drop down into the catacombs and kick devilspawn ass with the culmination of your quest being the kicking of Na-Krull's peachy young buttocks. There are a bunch of new weapons to help you out including smart new bows that let you fire lightning bolts or fireballs as well as a host of other little titbits. Most exciting of all though - and a possible peek into what Diablo II may offer - is the fact that there is now a new character to play, the Monk.

Excellent at hand-to-hand combat, a master of the staff, not particularly fab with projectile weapons, a bit of a wimp with a sword and a lot of a wimp with heavy armour. He may sound a bit arse - but when you see him in the thick of it, he knows what he's doing

On the whole, Hellfire is a welcome addition to Diablo. It's a bit expensive for what it is - and the fact that there is no multi-player support is disappointing, if understandable (I suppose it's difficult to support games if only a few people actually have a copy of Hellfire). If you enjoyed the one-player elements of Diablo - how can you go wrong with more of the same? It still plays like a very flash version of Gauntlet, and the combat is still a bit repetitive - but it is very good.

John Davison

Publisher: Blizzard/CUC Software Price: £29.99

Tel: 01189 209100





(Left) Nice lighting, shame about the game. (Right) This dude can kill you with one shot. Now where's the fun in that?

Publisher: GT/Fenris Wolf

Price: £39.99

running into walls and feeling travel sick, I'd say it was too fast.

The bad guys are crudely animated and are all so dumb that you can take umpteen pot shots and not get a reaction until you hit home. Many are confined to rooms and certain areas, which means if you run low on ammo you can scoot off for some more and they're unable to follow. The abundant laser turrets are easy prey: stand right in front of one and a glitch in the code means that it'll fire straight through you.

Having witnessed games like Super Mario 64, Goldeneye and Diddy Kong Racing on the Nintendo, it's patently obvious that the PC market has a fight on its hands. It can't afford to simply churn out archaic, overused clones like Rebel Moon Rising, because they're just no good.

Jamie Cunningham

Tel: 0171 2583791

SIGN OF THE SUN

James Mariner is an astronaut who, for various reasons, likes flying his spaceship near to the Sun. Nabbed one day by a tractor beam, he wakes to find himself under the solar surface with the natives plotting to destroy the world and snack on his DNA. His task is rather a stale one: to escape and stop the annihilation of the Galaxy. Even though the universe is depending on him, James has been trapped in an amateurish 2D adventure game.

Play is pedestrian and an overwhelming sense of boredom soon sets in - the installation alone takes a quarter of an hour. There's a lot of

speech, but most of that is your computerised assistant talking garbage.

The blurb says that Sign Of The Sun will fill a retro niche, but retro niches are computerised graveyards, crammed with budget compilations and the still twitching corpses of old Spectrum games. You don't need a PhD in

last. The original game was praised to the high hilt by just about everybody, except our own Chris Anderson, who lead the backlash by complaining that it had "shite" graphics and relied heavily upon "repetitive gameplay."

Sadly, Deeper Dungeons is unlikely to persuade him to change his mind: there's little on offer here that's truly new or surprising. What you get for your money is a set of thirty new levels, half of which are only available in multi-player games, leaving the average (friendless) player with a 'mere' fifteen. There's also a collection of new wall textures and dungeon graphics (woooh), and a few tweaks to the computer opponent AI (some players found it too easy to defeat; the changes enable it to play a more balanced game). Your own minions also receive an IQ boost, and are now less likely to go off into unchartered (and highly dangerous) territory unless you specifically tell them to.



(Above) Wonder if she uses those panty liners with wings? (Right) Unsightly fat bloke regrets heckling at the 1998 Anorexia Sufferer's Convention.

reading between the lines to see the reality: a glossy new game so tarnished underneath that to pitch it against anything other than the likes of Leisure Suit Larry and Tir Na Nog would be fatal. Unfortunately, it's dead already.

If there were more characters to interact with, more things to do and more than one path to the finish, I'd be less of a bastard in my verdict.

Jamie Cunningham

Publisher: Gauntlet/Project Two Price: £tbc Tel: 01908 575600

DEEPER DUNGEONS

So then: Bullfrog's Deeper Dungeons, the first official add-on for the widelypraised Dungeon Keeper, has arrived at

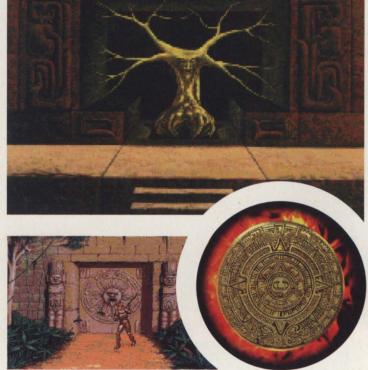


And, er, that's just about it. Not much to it really; the new levels are slightly better than some of the original ones, and the computer puts up more of a fight. Other than that, you can't help feeling that Bullfrog are hanging onto all their best ideas for Dungeon Keeper II, which will doubtless rock, rule, and kick proverbial arse. Deeper Dungeons on the other hand, feels like a stop-gap, a fairly unremarkable data disk: for hardcore DK fans or compulsive shopaholics.

Charlie Brooker

Developer: Bullfrog Price: Etbc Tel: 01753 549442



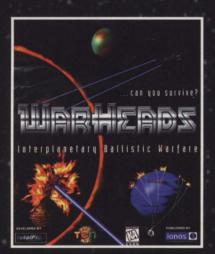


(Above main pic) Ooooh! It's a, err, nasty looking something or other! (Above) Wandering around on your jones is about as exciting as things get.

WARHEADS

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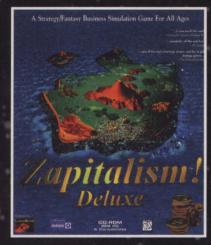




DEMONSTAR

Choose your weapons and prepare for battle!

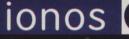
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Pure greed on a CD-ROM

Another get - rich - quick scheme? - play it and find out!







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The ten titles in Activision's Essential Collection comprise 26 games on 16 CDs. We shuffled them and gave three to Sally and four to Bob before asking a confused Richie Shoemaker how many apples were left.



Pitfall TMA: oldest swinger in town.

through rain forests and Mayan ruins it strikes you that it's a bit like Young Indiana Jones meets Mario, which means that unlike the original Pitfall, it's all been done before, and a good deal better. It's also not very original, or particularly addictive. You can get better platform games: Earthworm Jim,

for example (reviewed on facing page).

Reviewed: Issue 32 Price: £9.99

HYPERBLADE

Obviously inspired by the brilliant Speedball, Hyperblade is a violent sports game in which you and your team-mate skate around what looks like the inside of a scooped-out watermelon trying to get a yellow asterix into your opponent's goal. The action's fast and brutal, the 3D view works well and the aerobics add spice, but it really



Hyperblade: attempt a triple twist, then smash someone's face in.

would benefit from having more decent multi-player options. Similarly, the lack of a split-screen mode or even serial link means that it's ultimately pretty limited in the long term.

Reviewed: Issue 46 Price: £9.99

A-10 CUBA!

It doesn't look much, but underneath those straight-laced graphics are some of the best flight dynamics yet seen. The graphics aren't bad - in fact they're incredibly smooth - but it would be an improvement if there was more texturing rather than a polygon overdose. That aside, A-10 Cuba! is an impressive game with



Don't be put off by A-10 Cuba!'s graphics - looks aren't everything.

computer AI second to none. The varied missions are both realistic and fun, and the attention to detail is mind-blowing. If you've only got £2 in your current account we reckon you should risk the bank manager's wrath and go overdrawn.

Reviewed: Issue 47

ZORK: NEMESIS

The Zork truck keeps on truckin'... This Myst-like rendition has great graphics, fiendish posers and insane characters. From the very first moment you arrive in the Zork universe you'll be seduced by the atmosphere the colliding visuals and music create. Mind you, the puzzles are so devilishly difficult that it's easy for anger and frustration to set in. Zork is a tightly woven and very demanding game where you really have to cut yourself off from reality



MUPPET TREASURE **ISLAND**

Muppet Treasure Island is a 'family' game, which basically means that it's a simple point-and-click adventure full of icons that do little more than amuse children.

If you have kids snapping at your ankles or you were a Muppet fan back in the days when the greatest sci-fi extravaganza was Pigs In Space, then investing in this is a must. If you're without offspring it's still a good laugh, but only on one of those weekends when you can't be bothered to do anything other than laze in front of the box watching old episodes of Knight Rider on Channel 5 before tucking into your Sunday lunch.

Reviewed: Issue 44

SPYCRAFT

Spycraft is a post-cold war adventure in which you're faced with averting the imminent assassination of the US President as he goes baby-kissing across Russia. With your all-in-one personal data assistant you must dig your way through evidence of power, corruption and fat porkies by searching through CIA archives, deciphering secret codes and enhancing photos of would-be assassins. With an engaging plot and commendable acting, Spycraft manages to prove an exception to the 'interactive movies are generally shit' rule. The interaction is a little limiting

Reviewed: Issue 38

If Noel Gallagher was a muppet...

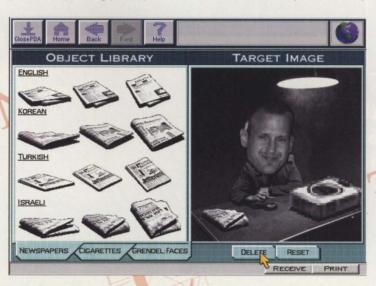
but the puzzles are excellent. It's

compelling stuff and more fun than

reading a crusty old Len Deighton novel.

PITFALL: THE MAYAN **ADVENTURE**

Activision's attempt to update their old Atari VCS classic was laudable for being one of the first games to take advantage of Windows 95 as a games platform. As you swing your way



Spycraft: your chance to avert the assassination of a US President.



Zork Nemesis: good looking, but beware – you need to apply vast amounts of brainpower to get anywhere because it's so difficult. Likely to drive you mad.

to get anywhere – whether you emerge victorious, insane or homicidal at the end of it all will depend on the type of person you are. It's hard work and not that much fun, although if you do manage to make some progress it can be fairly rewarding.

Reviewed: Issue 39

55

MECHWARRIOR 2

When it comes to futuristic combat between the mechanised equivalent of Giant Haystacks and Shirley Crabtree, few games came close to matching MechWarrior 2 for graphics, or indeed excitement. Stomping across barren





MechWarrior 2: big robots shooting their payload all over the place.

vistas, players must choose between two like-minded warring clans before embarking on a series of missions, blowing the legs off enemy robots, protecting weaker units and destroying buildings. The graphics are fluid, especially the way the mechs bob about, and although the landscapes are a bit sparse the varied missions more than make up for it. Players can customise weapon configurations inbetween missions and consequently it's pretty addictive stuff. It's a shame Activision didn't re-release this ages ago – it's over two years old. Ah well, better late than never.

Reviewed: Issue 32 Price: £9.99



COMMODORE 64 15 GAME PACK

Though many of us would like to relive our childhood you only have to look at this collection to realise that the present is a fine and pleasant place to be. Blakes 7 was a great series, Wing Commander was a great game, and even Little Computer People was great in a Tamagotchi kinda way. But that was then and this is now. Compared to what's available today, most of this compilation is appalling and is only really worthwhile if you want to reminisce about the days when you spent 30 minutes loading games and only five minutes playing them.

Reviewed: Issue 59



SHANGHAI: GREAT MOMENTS

I've never been to Shanghai, but I expect that there are greater moments to be had eating live snakes than playing variants of Snap; still, at least this version of Mahjong is pretty to look at. Keiko from Star Trek's Deep Space 9 provides the narration and themed backdrops and tile-sets can be used in place of the dull old ivories. The problem is that it's ultimately uninteresting, as well as being freely available off the Net (albeit without all the graphical knobs on). Let's face



it, the only times when you should pay good money to look at tiles is when you end up blind drunk face down in a pool of urine, or when you're indulging in a spot of DIY, spatulating waterproof sealant around a freshly planted ceramic mosaic. Only recommended to people who wear cable-knit sweaters.

Reviewed: Issue 59
Price: £9.99





you can't get them to mate.

EARTHWORM JIM

Earthworm Jim is a worm with a difference! He's got a cyber-suit, a spine, a death-spitting Uzi and a worm-like willy with which to whip his enemies (well, he is a hermaphrodite).

Hispanic plumbers and hedgehogs be damned, invertebrates make better platform stars and *Earthworm Jim* rocks, if only because it does away with cute little furry thingies and brings instead Warner-esque cartoon humour. It's formulaic of course, but it's well put together – the 20 levels are varied and the characters are nicely animated. A PC-style save feature would've been useful, as well as more dialogue from Jimbo himself. It's not as good as the television series, but for a tenner it's a bargain.

Reviewed: Issue 37



(Above and below) Everyone's favourite Uzi-toting worm.

















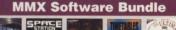




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"Dantum Home Plus PC: Nerds have dreams about PCs like this. Performance is spritely, with the help of the EDO RAM and the Intel chipset. Windows 95 positively flies, while Descent is so fast it almost seems like a new game. If you do a lot of graphical work, DTP and photo-editing for example, or disk intensive jobs

programming and the like - then the dan, with its greater performance and the built-in modem, is the better bet. For these reasons and the combination of other hardware, the dan picks up the award for best-value PC here. It is recommended if you want to get your money's worth - and who doesn't?" PC Format, Best Value Award, (dantum Home Plus), June '96

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CHARGER features 3D acceleration, full 2D acceleration and TV quality video, full-motion, full-screen MPEG playback capabilities. It provides virtual reality graphics and action game play previously only available on game consoles. The 3D CHARGER is upgradable with powerful multimedia options including a TV Tuner and other future expansion options. It is based on the ATI3D RAGE II+DVD graphics processor.





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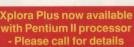


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WHAT PC, Best Buy (dantum Home Plus/133), Aug'96

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Dust off your old games and give them a boost by downloading new files and features from a growing number of sites on the Internet.

T'S A REVOLUTION. AN ON-LINE REVOLUTION EXCLUSIVE to those of us with a modem, an ISP, a search engine and a modicum of games savvy. What am I talking about? I'm talking about add-on packs for the games left rotting on the shelf a year after you bought them: free expansion modules downloadable from the World Wide Web.

As demonstrated - and in many ways initiated - by that open-ended bastion of expandability, Quake, many older games titles are being handed a brand new lease of life by caring developers and enthusiasts alike, as hundreds of weird and wonderful add-ons start to filter through the web and onto our hard drives.



Furthermore, this is not a phenomenon which is exclusive to iD's baby either, as you may well have already discovered for yourself.

Charlie Brooker's Creatures piece demonstrates the fact that a game does not have to be a mega seller for this sort of 'after sales support' to gather momentum either. A year after its release and a whole ring of Creatures websites have emerged, offering everything from simple object add-on patches to mutant hacks that can turn your Albian breeding ground into something akin to a Clive Barker nightmare. What's more, it's all cool stuff, and it's all but a click away if you know where to get it.

Ubisoft, Blue Byte and GT Interactive are just a few other companies offering free upgrades and add-ons via their websites. On the POD site Net surfers can download free cars and tracks; on the Incubation site there are five new levels to try out for free; and at www.totalannihilation.com a plethora of new units can be had for little or no cost at all.

These examples are merely a fraction of what is currently available - whole communities are growing around individual games titles, and now, more than ever, is the time to get on-line and join in with this exciting revolution.

Paul Mallinson

A Creatures comeback

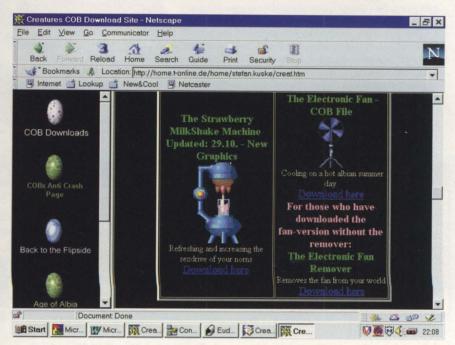
It may have missed the 'virtual pet' bandwagon, but CyberLife's Creatures is still very much alive and kicking... on the Internet. Holding the baby: Charlie Brooker.

Last year PC Zone was breathlessly extolling the virtues of Creatures, the 'artificial life' simulator in which the player attempts to breed a race of cutesy-pie beasties

(called 'Norns') on their PC. We called it the "most enchanting program... in years", and awarded it a whopping great score of 94 per cent. And what happened? It sank without trace. Well, nearly. Several bad things happened. First, it was Christmas, and everybody ignored the game

in favour of Tomb Raider and Red Alert and a million other releases. Second, it was overpriced. Then came the final, crushing blow: Time Warner, the publisher, was dissolved by its parent company soon after publication. That, it seemed, was that.

Not so. Although Creatures sold about ten million fewer copies than its creators envisaged, the game has nevertheless managed to build up a hardcore following of dedicated 'breeders'. Ingeniously, the game affords players the



Get a 'COB on' at your nearest Creatures website. Here you'll find files that can customise your world.



Norns puking up all over the place? Finding blood on their toilet paper? Call the Norn Doc!

opportunity to 'export' specific Norns and trade them with other players. Beneath the Disney-esque visuals, *Creatures* is a serious biological simulation, in which offspring inherit and develop the physical and mental characteristics of their forbears; in other words, a brainy parent begats a brainy kid. And now the Internet is awash with lovingly-reared Norns, from the freakishly intelligent, to the

freakishly deformed, all of them ready to be downloaded in a matter of seconds, then incorporated into *your* game. There are also new objects for the Norns to use (from a 'Speak and Spell' toy to an automatic cheese-making machine), plus a smattering of unusual hack files.

Norn to run

As with any faintly cliquey community, the breeders have developed their own terminology. They speak of 'Wolflings' (Norns which have been left to develop without any human intervention whatsoever), 'Undeads' (spooky, hacked, immortal Norns with no heartbeat), 'COBs' (new object files), and even their own diseases (such as the 'Saturn gene', which gives your Norn the shivers). One thing they all have in common is an apparently unshakeable devotion to their digital babies. Perhaps now, following the popularity of the conceptually-similar, yet infinitely inferior Tamagotchi, and at a new low budget price (£9.99, from GT Interactive), Creatures will finally get the recognition it deserves.









Charlie Brooker's neurotic, shambling dysfunctional Norns. And what a cute bunch they are too.

CREATURES WEBSITES

Official Cyberlife Homepage

http://www.cyberlife.co.uk Your first stop for all things *Creatures*

Norn Underground

http://www.dreamscape.com/lummoxjr/creatures/ Home to many a bizarre Norn

Creatures on the web

http://www.budget.net/~tonyjett/
Comprehensive site, and home of the *Creatures*webring

Creatures Tribes

http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/ Vista/4075/index2.htm Contact fellow *Creatures* nutrags

Age of Albia

http://www.geocities.com/~johnmull/ Another comprehensive site, this time specialising in 'misfit' Norns

The Flinside

http://www.cjnetworks.com/~flipside/ And another one

COR Archive

http://home.t-online.de/home/ stefan.kuske/creat.htm An archive of nifty objects for the game – from remote-control cars to arty statues

FROM THE FROM THE FROM THE OUR REGULAR PERSONAL REPORTER OF LINE GAMING TROWTER

NetStorm

"A peculiar mix of *Chess, Red Alert* and *Baron Munchausen,*" says Jamie Cunningham. "It's been designed specifically for the Internet, it gives glass-smooth performance at 14.4Kbps, yet remains fun single-player. Wow." We think he's impressed.



The scene is the mythical world of Nimbus, where everyone lives on giant islands — vast chunks of land that can hoist sail and soar off into the sunset when the wind gets up.

Each island has its own temple dedicated to rain, wind or thunder, and a high priest in a Grace Jones hat who gives you the ability to manufacture bridges, buildings and weapons.

The plot is to knock seven bells out of the neighbouring island, nobble its high priest and sacrifice him on your altar. The way you go about it should be familiar: build a workshop, build a weapon, point it at your adversary, kaboom. In NetStorm, weapons are available in a limitless supply but need power before they work. They tend to be emplacements rather than mobile units, and they're all targeted and fired automatically. While this may sound a bit backward, it actually provides a welcome tactical twist.

Downsides are few in number. Single-player missions can be too long and too difficult – I'm not ashamed to admit I'm currently stuck on level five. But balance it with head-scratching strategic puzzles, atmosphere, attention to detail, and the fact that there are no 'hard crashes' when forced to disconnect, it remains a game well worth owning.



(Right) A key part of *NetStorm*'s strategy is bridge building.

Product details

Game: NetStorm

Publisher: Activision/Titanic

Max no of players: 8 per game. Infinite

Server: US

Price: £39.99

Website: www.netstorm.com



On-Line News & Gossip

The page with its finger on the pulse of on-line gaming.

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deal gives you basic or contentonly access; you will have to
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LineOne's principal attraction is its UK-oriented mass-market content, available to any user on any tariff, which includes all the latest news, views, sport, weather and assorted on-line forums.

LineOne is at: http://www.lineone.net.



LineOne includes an on-line edition of The Sun. Nork-tastic!

More reasons never to leave the house



NETCHANNEL, the American TV-based Internet service, is due to make an appearance over here in the not too distant

future. Anyone with a goggle box and phone line will be able to hook up to the Internet using a £300 set-top box and remote control. Subscription, which incorporates e-mail and full web access, is pitched at £14.95.

The personalised service consists of seven channels, viewed via TV-style pages. Other features include help and tutorials for newbies, a full suite of parental controls, and secure electronic shopping. Find our more at: http://www.netchannel.net.

sacrifice

SHINY ENTERTAINMENT HAVE RELEASED DETAILS OF THEIR FIRST EVER multi-player action game, *Sacrifice*, to be released "some time in 1998". Although Shiny are playing their cards close to their chest, they have

Although Shiny are playing their cards close to their chest, they hav told us that it will use their revolutionary new *Messiah* graphics technology, combined with a realistic physics model and weather conditions. The game will pit individual wizards against each other in a "real-time modifiable 3D landscape" in which opponents attack each other either directly with magic, or by creating hordes of monsters to do it for them.

"This will be the future of multi-player gaming," said Shiny head honcho Dave Perry. We await with interest. ②

www.cool_site_to_visit.com

http://www.rizla.com

DID YOU KNOW IT'S BEEN GETTING ON FOR FIVE HUNDRED YEARS SINCE the first known paper transaction by Pierra De La Croix of Rizla fame? We have to say we'd be more impressed if they could come up with a glue that doesn't lose its adhesive qualities after two hours in a glove compartment. But we digress.

Rather ironically, the paper people now find themselves on the paper-free world of the Internet. It features a downloadable screen saver, details on the product range, competitions, the world's most super-cool merchandising and a forum page where other students swap stories about how many papers they've managed to stick together.

Set sail in cyberspace with Infogrames

OCEANLINE, THE ON-LINE PROVINCE OF INFOGRAMES, IS YET ANOTHER GAMES PROVIDER WITH A whole host of games available to download and play straight off the web. The only catch is the \$4.95 (around £3.25) price tag for the first hour of play, and \$1.95 (£1.25) hourly bill thereafter. The games library looks sumptuous in comparison to rival services, with pretty much every genre catered for twice over. However, Oceanline's connectivity is decidedly suspect: we tried to log on to their chat server no fewer than six times and on each occasion were greeted with a timeout.

You have to wonder, and we often do, that with almost every game these days coming with its own Internet options included as a main menu selection, who needs an on-line service? If you fancy a look, Oceanline and further details are at http://www.oceanline.com.







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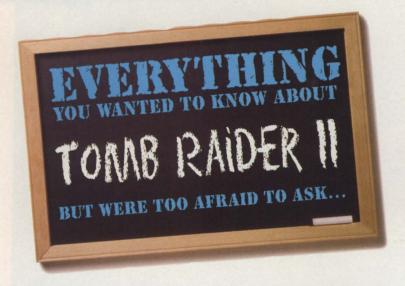
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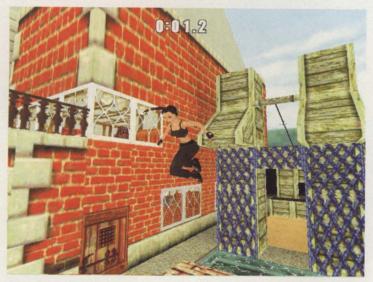


LOW LATENCY MULTIPLAY



NE THING'S FOR SURE, TOMB RAIDER II IS NOT AN EASY GAME, NOR a small one. It's not an out-and-out action fest either: instead, the player's success depends upon his ability to explore, experiment and perform frighteningly accurate leaps across deadly chasms. In other words, you're going to need all the help you can get.

Which is where we come in. As you've probably already noticed, attached to this very magazine is a full-blown, arse-clenchingly accurate walk through guide which will take you gently by the hand and lead you sensitively over every leap and turn in the game. But first, a selection of 'general hints' aimed at easing you into *Tomb Raider II*, without explicitly spoiling your enjoyment of it. Sort of like your first day at school, except no one's going to flush your head down the toilet or draw comedy penises on your satchel. Yet.



Not only is the backward somersault handy for avoiding oncoming peril, it's also ideal for drying your hair in a hurry.

Stuck? Confused? Tearful? Dry those eyes my pretty, dry those dewy eyes and gaze longingly upon this - our bite size tactical guide to Core Design's all-conquering *Tomb Raider II*. Swinging the ponytail: Charlie Brooker.





(Above left) Don't forget you can climb both horizontally and vertically. (Above right) Practise on Lara's obstacle course to truly hone those skills. And there's no sight of Gordon Burns to be found.

WELCOME TO LEGOLAND

The first thing to realise is that – gasp – *Tomb Raider II* is a *computer game*. The environments that Lara passes through have all been created using a deceptively simple landscape editing system. No matter how organic it may appear, each landscape adheres to a strict grid system and breaks into squares of uniform dimension. Look closely and you'll get the idea.

"So what?", you may be thinking. Well, here's 'what': every single manoeuvre in the game, no matter how tricky it may seem, can be calculated beforehand in terms of the number of squares covered by the movement undertaken. For instance, a single backward hop covers precisely one square. Assuming the terrain is level, a jump from a standing position places her two squares

forward – a leap of one square – while a running jump clears two squares, leaving Lara standing three squares forward. Didn't follow that? Then go back and read it again, dunderhead. (Fair enough – Ed)

Okay, let's press on. It's often crucial to precede a jump with a short run-up — but don't go overboard. A run-up of a single square will suffice. If you're on a particularly precarious ledge, hold down the 'walk' (shift) key, and let Lara take three steps backwards. Not only is this equivalent to one square of ground, it's also safer than taking a backward hop (since Lara never falls off ledges during 'walk mode'). Clever huh? Similarly essential is the ability to grab ledges in mid-air. A running jump followed by a grab will allow Lara to leap three whole squares, then clench the edges of the fourth one. Don't forget, however, that the ledge you wish to grab onto must not be higher than the one on which you currently stand.

As in most things, practice makes perfect. Don't be afraid to experiment with Lara's many moves. Make the most of the training level, and memorise as many tricks as you can.



Handy Hints

- Do a backflip jump to reach platforms which cannot be reached face-on.
- When Lara encounters a bunch of bad guys or beasties, be sure to concentrate your fire upon any projectile-firing swines that may be in the vicinity even if another foe is at a closer range. Momentarily taking your finger off the fire button will cause Lara to target another enemy.
- From the bottom of a ledge, hold the walk button, then press forward and control

- simultaneously. Voilà a dainty handstand. It's not very useful, but it *is* fun.
- 4 Practice the 180-degree mid-air spin around: do a forward running jump, then hit the 'backwards' key the instant Lara leaves the ground. If all goes well, she should twist at the peak of the jump. A great tactic for putting the wind up any nearby aggressors.
- Onn't panic if you've run out of flares: pull out the trusty, unlimited-ammo pistols and let off a few rounds and the corridors will be temporarily illuminated in a kickin' strobe stylee.
- When confronted with several gun-wielding cronies, hop backward while firing to keep a lock on your quarry. But for God's sake avoid backing into a wall or corner.



Look at the arsenal on that...

Lara loves weapons of destruction. She always goes gooey at the glimpse of a grenade launcher and mischievously moist at the mention of an M-16. The harpoon gun gets her horny, the automatic sends her half-orgasmic – even the puny pistol prompts passionate precipitation in her primrose-scented pants. She's a woman. She's a sick woman, that's what she is. A sick woman. With plenty of guns.

It's no use darting around waywardly blasting mofo's in the goddamned face, however. A teensy weensy bit more care, attention and worthwhile selection is called for now. In other words, pick the right tools for the job. Here's a wickle guide for woo...

PISTOLS

Use against: rats, spiders, **Dobermans and unarmed men**

Good thing about pistols: they've got unlimited ammo. Bad thing: they're about as effective as an umbrella made of Disprin. Use them primarily for tiny foes such as rats and fish or from a distance on enemies who can't reach you.



AUTOMATIC PISTOLS

Use against: Dobermans, tigers, leopards and armed men

Automated for ease of use: voted 'Gun Most Likely To Reduce A Sophisticated Dinner Party To A Sprawling Mass Of Screaming Bloodied Carnage', at the 1997 Headless Madman Awards. Best deployed against multiple beastly foes or far-off fellows; be prudent with the ammo.



HARPOON GUN

Use against: sharks, frogmen and fish (in an emergency)

You may think you're Lord Muck, having an aquatic javelin-flinging device at your disposal, but take care. Ammo for this maritime murdering machine is hard to come by, and it must be reloaded after three shots. Bear in mind that it's possible to stand on the shore and pick off underwater nasties before Lara so much as dips a toe in. Don't let off a harpoon gun unless you have no other choice. Which is good advice for everyday life, by the way.



Use against: yeti, warrior, monk and Xian

When someone pulls an Uzi out of their jacket, it's time to start agreeing with everything they say and do. Like birthday cake, it should be saved for special occasions: again, the ammo doesn't grow on trees, so make sure Lara doesn't riddle everything in sight with bullets.



Use against yeti, warrior, monk and Xian

The biggest and best weapon in Lara's arsenal. Don't waste a single shot. The M-16 can pick off enemies from a very long distance - it's too cumbersome to be effective at close range and it shouldn't even be used at all until well into the second half of the game. Capice?



Use against yeti, warrior, monk and Xian

The ultimate conversation stopper. Grenades are extremely hard to come by, so don't even think about letting this off unless you're all out of options. In the long run, it's better to use up a medipack than to waste grenades on bad guys who could be eradicated via less spectacular means. And try not to fire it in a confined space. That would be just plain silly.



SHOTGUN

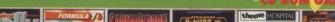
Use against: packs of dogs, armed men and tigers etc.

Scourge of clay pigeons everywhere, this is yer common or garden 'shootah', as seen on Crimewatch UK. Come the collapse of society we'll be nonchalantly bandying these things about like they were sparklers, mate. Mark my words. Anyway, it's most effective when deployed against nearby enemies (one of these in the guts can make a mockery of six months work on the Abdominizer™ in seconds) or when fired wildly into slavering packs of animals. Top tip: hop backwards after firing, and reload on the move.





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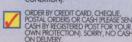
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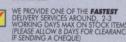








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Incubation Part 1 - A General Guide

Incubation can be bloody difficult in places. Just as well Chris Anderson and the chaps from Blue Byte are on hand to see you safely through the game.

N THIS, THE FIRST OF A TWO-PART GUIDE to Incubation, we offer you some general hints and tips to the easier levels of the game which, we hope, will enhance your gaming pleasure until next month, when we'll be printing a further guide to the more difficult levels.

The basics

Don't hang around. The longer you stay in one area, the more chance the Scay'Ger will have of overpowering and overwhelming you. Keep moving and close all doors behind you. Don't forget: much of the difficulty here is not in the alien intelligence, but their sheer number.

Your tactics should always be kill and then move – not the other way around. This way you'll minimise the number of attacking Scay'Ger to an acceptable level and, therefore, the amount of damage that can be inflicted upon you.

Take your time. Always try to open *all* crates and collect the equipment points and other bonuses on each mission. It pays major dividends in the long run, but *never* be so greedy that you endanger your units. On early missions reduce the enemy to single units and then lead them astray so you can open all the crates. Leave men with bayonets protecting entry ports and then send one man round to clean up the remaining bonus crates.



Don't be tempted to stay in one place killing everything to gain experience: kill fast, move faster. Got it?

Know your enemy

Make good use of the magnifying glass early in the game to remind yourself of the attributes and weaknesses of each opponent. One of the most important factors in the game is preserving sufficient ammunition to see you through each level, so keep tabs on the aliens and you'll know how best to approach each one and avoid wasting firepower. Don't forget to change your viewing perspective regularly to get a better idea of the conditions your squad is facing.

Rest your troops before a critical phase, as it pays to have as many action points available as possible. Keep doors closed until you're ready to move, and always close them behind you. If you're in a room where Scay'Ger can enter through the air ducts, post a unit with a bayonet nearby and let him eliminate any unwanted guests. Before moving into the next



Use the magnifying glass to get vital information on what your enemy is capable of – this will help you to adopt the best strategy to use against them.



Be sure to buy the right equipment for your squad, based on what sort of weapons they're using and what areas they've already got experience in. Make sure your squad has sufficient armour too.

room, position your units in front of the door and make sure they're well rested. You can often clear most of the room by stationing three men on defence, facing into it. The Scay'Ger will happily walk into your trap all day long – just don't waste ammo against infinite opponents.

If you're so far from an opponent that you think you're more than likely going to miss, don't waste your ammo and movement points. Make your way slowly towards the enemy until you're close enough to shoot. Conversely, there's no point putting soldiers on defence mode if you think they'll miss. Rest them instead so that they're fully fit for the battle when they're in range.

Buy wisely

You must try to balance your desire to buy the most powerful equipment with a steady improvement of the squad as a whole – it's better to have a full squad with servo systems and armour than one Rambo who's stretched to protect the others when the going gets tough. Remember, if you're not seen, you won't be a target. Therefore, move slowly and you'll only alert Scay'Ger to your presence in tiny measures.

Get to know your opponents and the hit points required to kill them. When things get really hairy later on, you'll be glad you know exactly what's required for each small victory. Use



Be sure to impress your friends with completely over the top explosions like this one.

this knowledge to calculate your shots.

the expected amount of hit points after one of your shots, don't expect to make up the deficit with the unit's remaining action points – use the ones you have left to plan for some evasive action. This last point is valid, even for the most powerful weapon with the greatest accuracy, but is even

more relevant for the weaker weapons.

Don't immediately destroy objects that can be used to protect your units – use them to block openings. Sometimes it's better to block the advance of a horde of Scay'Ger with an exploding barrel than it is to kill one or two by detonating it.

Servo systems make sense

One of the most important aspects of your squad is their mobility: purchase a servo mechanism for all of your units as soon as possible, and for a one-time shot in the arm the stimulants can get you out of some pretty tight situations. The jet packs offer greatly enhanced mobility, so if you're in a position to purchase one or more, do so.

Give injured units the chance to recuperate by pulling them out of the action where possible. The recuperation is even faster when the unit is in the proximity of the flag.

Don't assume there's no suitable cover; always seek shelter in difficult circumstances – even if it's in a corner. Some of the weapon-carrying Scay'Ger must either move or shoot, so force it to take one step and it will waste movement points, and you've probably saved your squad to fight another day.

Save our souls

Incubation isn't that dissimilar to X-COM in as much as units gain experience points for each mission they survive. It's mega-important then, that you make sure all your marines survive every mission. You may think this is easier said than done, but Blue Byte say they have gone out of their way to make sure every mission can be completed without losing any of your units. Heed these words, or you'll find yourself seriously under-manned in the later missions.





Check out your squad before spending valuable credits. Think ahead to stay alive!

Panicking marines can cause you all manner of problems.
 Surround them with the rest of the squad so that any hits taken are evenly distributed.

When deploying your troops at the beginning of a mission, look around to see what's turned up on your screen before you hit the 'next player' key. The soldier you've just deployed may have been able to spot something important...

Think ahead

When purchasing equipment and weapons for your units, pay particular attention to the skill level requirements which may allow you not only to pick up one piece of

equipment or weapon but other items as well without costing other skill points. For instance, purchase a servo system. This not only provides you with greater mobility but also allows you to pick up the following items without the need of additional skill points: standard armour,

points: standard armour, ammunition pack, light stimulants, scan module and a small medic kit. This type of bundling will allow greater flexibility when you have to ration your skill points.

If more than one unit gets killed during a mission, go back and replay it – the later levels get extremely tough, and you won't succeed if you're fighting with only a partial squad.

Though it's tempting to let the betterequipped marines do the dirty work, make sure to let weaker units get some kills and build up their experience points, otherwise you'll have weak links in your squad.

Rotate units on defence mode – some as bait, some as defenders. Although it's a great way to defend them, if you do it too often with the same units, their guns will heat up.

Safety in numbers

ZONE 59 January 1998

Try to move your units in small groups rather than alone – if you do it this way you'll never be reduced to 'eye-for-an-eye' battles when encountering Scay'Ger.

Don't be afraid to experiment: the 'undo last turn' button lets you quickly go back to your last turn (unless Bratt or your last unit is killed). Sometimes you may find a new or better solution to a difficult area –

and the difference between
victory and defeat can be
a single step. Resting
your units or taking
stimulants at the
right place can make
all the difference.
Use platforms
... wisely: it often
makes more sense to
take the entire team

Back to back

You'll find that some of the monsters in *Incubation* can only be killed by shooting them from behind. To get round this use one of your marines as bait while one of the others creep up behind the offending monster and blast him to bits.



to a new area rather than split them up. If you keep them in a group they'll be able to back each other up if things get out of control. You can also use platforms to move your marines away from monsters, allowing you to take them out from a safe distance with long-range weapons.

So, happy playing. We're sure this handy general guide will add to your fervent gameplaying for another month – but whatever you do, don't forget to tune in again next issue for another guide to the most difficult missions in the game. You'll regret it if you don't.



Incubation is an unforgiving place for solo merchants. Keep your guys together and make sure that a couple of them have spare time units for opportunity fire.

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After a month of intense gameplay, swearing and save game names like "Aaaargh!" "Bastard!" "Arse!" and so on, Pete Davison has finally reached the end...

01 The Savage jungle

At (1) you'll meet Daniel. Give him Kit'Yara's knife. He'll run away and drop it. Pick it up. Go to (2). You'll find a flounder. Pick it up. Eating this gives you a 'rear view mirror'. Now go to (3), the Huline temple. You need a dreamstone to enter, but the Ruloi have stolen it. Go to (4). You'll meet a Huline guard. Give Daniel's knife to him quickly – if you don't you won't be able to finish the game! Follow him to meet Daniel at (5).

Inside the village, talk with Daniel, the herbalist and the Elder. The Elder will help you if you join the tribe. Your first task is to find some silverleaf. He gives you the key to the Dracoid cemetery. Go through the door at the back of his hut. Leave, and head to (6). Clamber down the pit to the ruins.

02 Dracoid ruins

Go to (1). Light the black orb with spark to reveal a bridge. Head to (2), the mage tower. Light the orb to the north and open a stairway down. Get Gauntlets Of Might which let you wield the reiver of the Great Orc. Light the orb to the south of the tower to remove the forcefield. Repeat this process on each floor.

On the fourth floor, kill the creature then take the bracers from the shelf. Light the orb and carry on upwards. On the top floor, jump out of the window onto a ledge. Head north and follow the slope down. Head for (3). Kill the lizard, then get the speaking stone from the back of the electric entity. At (4) is



a door with a bar blocking it: slide the bar out of the way to open an escape route from the arena beyond, should you get thrown in there. Head to (5) – there's a passageway on the north wall. Run down it, hit the pipes with your weapon and run out. Part of the level will flood, filling pits with water.

Now head south to (6), where there's an alcove. Hit the bookcase out of the way and jump through. Head for (7) and jump onto the floating door. Open the building, enter and turn right. Light the orbs and head upstairs to find prism scrolls. Head for (8). Light the orb to open the door. Enter and leap into the portal to go to (9), the teleport room. One portal leads to the jungle, one to the cemetery, and the other back to (8). Go through the cemetery one.

03 Dracoid cemetery

At (1) is the teleport entrance/exit. Use the Elder's sigil to open the gate. Head for (2) and open the tomb. Open and loot all the coffins. Head for (3). Open and search all the coffins, loot them, then head downstairs to the catacombs.

04 Catacombs

At (1) are the steps back up to the cemetery, and at (2) a barrier – we'll find a way around that later. Head for (3), a globe charger. Get the globe from the floor and charge it. Head back upstairs.

Cemetery Go to (4). Open the tomb using a yellow charged globe in the statue mouth. Inside is another opening to the catacombs (the door to the left of the back wall). Through the open door on the right is a globe. Check the coffins for more. Head down again!

Catacombs You'll find yourself at (4). Mark the steps on the map. Head back upstairs and go back to the ruins through the teleporter.

Ruins Climb the tower to the first floor. Charge a globe at the claw then return to the cemetery.





Cemetery Open the tomb at (5) with the white globe. Pull the lever on the south wall to open the tomb at (6). Go there, get the globe from the floor and stand behind the barrel. Click it then walk into it. The barrel will roll into (5). Follow it, stand back outside the tomb and cast lightning. Boom! Go back to (5) and down the new hole.

Catacombs Head for (5). The final charger. Charge two globes here and return to the surface by leaping over the barrier at (6) and climbing the stairs at (4).

Cemetery Open the tomb at (7) with a blue globe. Talk with the spirit, take the urn and go to the ruins.





Ruins Go back through the teleport to (8) and head for (10). You'll find a corpse on the floor. Drag it to the altar and light the two orbs to cremate him. Use the urn on the ashes, then return to the cemetery.

Cemetery Return to (7) and give the urn to the spirit. Go to (8) and use the ankh in the slot. Charge three glass globes, one in each colour, then go down the stairs. Put the yellow globe in the slot marked with spark, the white one in mists of doom, and the blue one in prism. Use the ankh in the new door. Talk with the Emperor, take his bones from the sarcophagus and go back to the ruins.

Ruins Head for (11) (via the teleport first) to find Belial's statue. Use the Emperor on the box to the side of the statue. Follow it. When the worm is dead, the passageway will flood. Go south, but turn off to the west to a temple. Climb the north side, take a running leap onto the floating platform at the north-east of the room. Wait for the water to rise. When you see it, leap north into the passageway by the waterfall.

Run north, around the pit. Head up the first passageway. Climb the slope and you'll come to a raft. Stand on it and drag it over the edge. Drop onto it.

Savage Jungle You'll wake up at (2). Give Dawn bracers of the dead and she'll give you a speaking stone and the human spell. Go to the cemetery at (7).

Cemetery Head to (8), speak with the Emperor. When you leave you'll find silverleaf growing, and a mists of doom scroll. Get 'em and go to the jungle.

Savage Jungle Go to (8) and free Baccata, then (5) and take the silverleaf to the Elder. Fight Daniel and go back to the Elder to get the serum. Mix it with silverleaf to make vapours. Leave the village and go to (9). Enter and get everything. Head for (10), leap the chasm, climb the slope and turn left. Use the vapours to knock the larkhon out and get into the mountains.

05 The Claw mountains

Climb up to (1) and speak to Dawn before continuing on to (2). Cast curse control 3, go into the hole, light the orb, then exit and cast curse control 2. Go to (3). Stand on a floe next to the new structure, jump up and grab the blizzard axe. This is important!

Head for (4). Stay right to prevent yourself falling. Go to (5) to find Kenneth. Click him until you get a picture. Chuck it at the wall and pick up the charm - wear it to increase stats. Drop onto the icy platforms and go north. Leap across the river into the cave and run to meet Baccata. Go to the citadel.

06 The citadel

Save! Kill the Ruloi at (1) with the blizzard axe then click the orb to open the door. Save. Click the orb at (2) and kill the Ruloi. Turn east and destroy all the eggs at (3) by destroying the gun on the ceiling. Activate the orb at the east of the room and go west.





Save. Click the orb, go north. You need to kill about twelve Ruloi. Keep moving, healing and saving. When they're dead, click the orbs to reveal cool items. Head to (5). Use your weapon and pull the lever to release the women. If any Ruloi remain, they won't go.

Go to (6) to find Dawn. You need the Dreamstone. Go to (7) and activate the orb. Head for (8) and climb the floating platforms. At the top, morph into lizard form and run across the light bridge at an appropriate time. Morph back to human and smash all the guns. Go to (9) and open the door to meet Spawn. Kill him and go east to reach Great Forge. Put Thohan's sword on the table to make it extremely powerful. Get the Dreamstone from the pedestal and go through the teleport. Return to (6) and release Dawn. Pick the dreamstone up again afterwards! She'll give you the beast spell. Head for (10), climb the slope and enter the teleport. Use the dreamstone in the pink slot to open the entrance. Pick it up again and leave.

The Claw mountains Drop onto a passing ice floe on the river. Jump onto the riverbank, climb the logs at (6). Go to the savage jungle and the Huline temple.

07 Huline temple

Use the dreamstone in the symbol to enter. Go to (1) and put aloe in the left bowl and poison paint in the right. Both can be found in the chapel to the

east. Drag the body from the entrance to the altar to fry it. Now go to (2) and get the crystal shard. Travel to (3) and move the tapestry aside. Head to (4) to get down to layer 2.

08 Layer 2

Enter at (1). Head for (2). Watch for executioners. Click the button by the corpse - it'll send him to the mincer at (3). Now go around the back and pick up the crate of blood. Slide it into the next machine and get the statuette from the back. Run to (4) and get the storm crystal from a pillar. Then go back to (5). Morph into lizard form and leap down the hole to return to layer 1.

Layer 1 Emerge in the library at (5). On top of a bookcase is an Ancient's stone. Behind another (click a protruding book) are fire crystals. Push the button in the south-east corner and open the door. Go to (6), put the statuette in the empty slot. Get the shard and go to (7). Put a shard in each bowl. Go down the new passageway and use the dreamstone in the slot to reveal stairs. Climb them to reach three doors. Go through the left one, which is marked with a sun.

09 Trial 1

At (1) go straight ahead. Leap from pillar to pillar to the opening on the east. Negotiate the path and get the idol to return to the three doors. Go through the middle one.

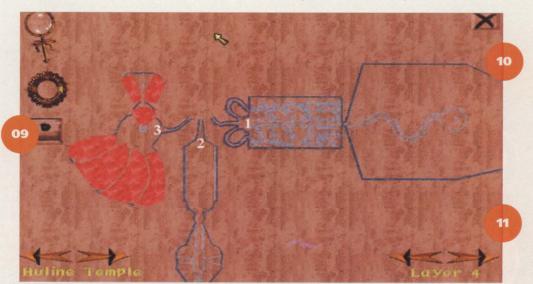
10 Trial 2

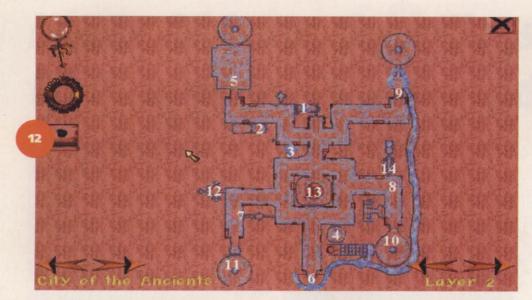
At (2) there are two buttons on each side. Jump up and down on one side of the floor to tilt it. Switch to lizard form, run up the slope and press the buttons. Repeat for the other side. Go through the south door and get the idol.

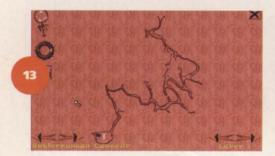
11 Trial 3

Cast mists (1) on the green skulls at (3) to successfully douse the flames. Head down the platforms and push the buttons at the end. Cross the bridge for the third idol.

Back to the three doors. Run south past them, through the flames. Leap the low blades, duck the high ones. Run onto the sloping bit, turn and press the buttons. Stand aside on the bits of path which raise up, then continue south. Put an idol in each case and climb the stairs. Switch to ugly spice and stand on the brown platform to descend. Fight Belial and go through the north door. Use the dreamstone on the pedestal to raise the City of the Ancients.





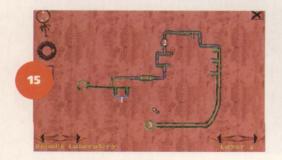


12 City of the Ancients

Go through the south door to get to street level. Go to (1). Freeze the fountains with the blizzard axe or mists, then push the crate onto the floor tile. Go down the side corridor and move the next crate onto the floor tile. Jump onto the crate and go through the gap it has opened. Move the crate on this side over to the gap so you can get out again afterwards. Climb the stairs and get the ivory chip from the gargoyle. Now run like hell, as the ceiling will start to drop! Leap back through the gap via the crate and out again.

Now go to (2). Inside, you'll see a gargoyle on the other side of a chasm. Walk out into the chasm onto an invisible bridge and get the ivory chip. Run back (the bridge reveals itself to help you). Go to (3) and light all four orbs. Light the two down the side passageways to remove the electric fence. Get the third chip and the lights will go out - the room also floods. Swim south and click the wall to open it.

Go to (4) and freeze the fountain (blizzard or mists of doom). Smash it to reveal the fourth chip. Now go to (5), the north-west tower. Use the moving platforms to get onto the upper level. Break the floating brick. Dispel the red smoke with mists of doom. Disperse the white smoke with a fireball from





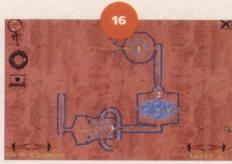
a fire crystal. Once everything's dispelled, a pyramid should break and a fireball should fly north. Follow it, and it will open the tower. Enter and climb the stairs. Push the block through the teleporter and follow it through. Slide it into the hole in the floor. Go down into the wide area and click the diamond that appears. Go back through the teleport.

Go to (6). Cast mists of doom on the sphere above the fountain, then break it by shooting it to make the water flow again. Go to (7). Open the wall into a room with a pit and silverleaf growing on either side. Now go to (8) and use an ivory chip in the slot on the back of the pedestal with the red rods. Run to (7) very quickly. When the bolt from (8) hits the pyramid here, the floor will raise. Run in and get as much silverleaf as you can. When the bells ring, get out! Get the ivory chip from (8).

Go to (9). Plant a silverleaf by the pyramid. Click the diamond to water the area. Click the hourglass to speed up time and break the pyramid. Enter the tower and do the same as previously. Go to (10) and enter the grate on the west and jump the canal. Go through the doors in this order: left, right, left, centre. Cast spark on the oil. Bang! Get the dark bow from the wreckage and go back through the doors in reverse order (centre, right, left, right). When you exit, the tower should be open. Repeat the usual process.

Now, go to (11). Put all four chips in the slots and go through the door. Do the usual tower stuff. Head for (12). Open the secret wall and enter the museum. If you still have the skeleton's key from the Draracle's halls, use it to open the exhibits and get items. Go to (13) and enter the teleport in the new tower you have rebuilt. Fight Spawn then go south. Enter the force field to get the mantle of the Ancients (level 5 magic).

Go to (14). Open all the side doors, light all the orbs. Continue north and open the door. Slide the tapestry aside and go to the back pool with the dragon. Hit it to open a passage to the caverns.



13 The subterranean caverns

Keep moving! Don't attack any spiders. If you kill one, a big brown one will form - and they're bad news. Head straight for (1) and don't bother to explore (that's why the map's incomplete). Hack all the fleshy pillars and enter the squidgy bit. Click the left passageway, then use your weapon. Go through the new hole. Pull on the static green tentacle in the background and wait for a spider to repair it. Now go through the new opening.

14 Belial's laboratory

Baccata's at (1). He'll give you the horn of Belial, which is the only weapon you can use effectively against him. Go to (2). Crouch and chop the grate open. Morph into lizard form and go to layer 2.

15 Layer 2

Enter at (1). Take the left. Morph into human at the edge of the green stuff. Shoot at the three levers in the distance. Jump into the slime and go into the north canal. Hurry, 'cos mana is draining. Peg it to (2). Pull the lever to open the bridge. Follow the map to (3) to get back to layer 1 (again, don't explore).

Layer 1 Emerge at (3). Go to (4). Cast mists on the skulls. Fight the imp. Take the Ancient's stone from his corpse. Drag him to (5) and drop him on the circle under the skull. Open the doors and take the lift to meet Dawn. Click her repeatedly for the ruby of truth.

16 Birthing chamber

Go through the door. Stay at the point where Luther makes his speech and cast curse control 5. Meet Belial. Fight the imps who appear at (1). Batter the door down and run to (2). Fight the imps then shoot the generators on the ceiling. Dash to (3). Fight Scotia then jump across the pillars carefully.

17 Layer 3

Break the block at (1). Disperse the ice cloud at (2) with a fireball and the fire cloud at (3) with the blizzard. Meet Belial at (4) and fight the Draracle. Batter down the doors and head for (5).

Got some stone cubes? Head straight for (6) and plant one at each entrance to the pool. This will stop Belial regenerating. Kill his imps then attack him repeatedly with Belial's horn for about three hours. Then shag Dawn. Nice one... @



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PowerVR: the inside story

IDEOLOGIC'S PowerVR technology has constantly struggled to gain the audience enjoyed by 3Dfx since the 3D wars began last year. This could change with the introduction of their new boards, which cover all aspects of gaming multimedia offering 2D



and 3D graphic solutions and even advanced PCI-based sound technology. Rumours are also rife that Sega's next console will have a nextgeneration PowerVR chip at its heart. This is a blow to 3Dfx who were tipped to provide the chip for Sega, and explains why 3Dfx are taking NEC, VideoLogic and Sega to court for an estimated \$100 million. So, while 3Dfx may have taken an early lead in the 3D battle, there is reason to believe PowerVR will play a bigger part in 3D technology as we move into 1998.

The story so far: 1985: VideoLogic founded.

1989: VideoLogic launched the first full-motion digital video adaptor (the DVA-4000), for which they received the Queen's Award for technological achievement in 1992.

Feb 1995: VideoLogic launched the first range of multimedia-ready 64-bit graphics cards -GrafixStar 700, 500 and 300

March 1995: VideoLogic and NEC signed development agreement for next-generation 3D technology.

May 1996: VideoLogic launched first PowerVRbased 3D graphics card - the Apocalypse 3D.

April 1997: The Apocalypse 3Dx is launched – the first card from VideoLogic with bi-linear filtering.

June 1997: The Apocalypse 5D is launched -VideoLogic's first combined 2D and 3D solution.

Oct 1997: VideoLogic launched new range of PCI-based 3D positional sound cards - Sonic Storm and Apocalypse 5D Sonic.

Chris Anderson

VideoLogic: past and present

EVIN DALE IS SALES AND Marketing Director for VideoLogic's systems business. He also doubles up as their tech wizard and general manin-the-know for all things related to PowerVR. Who better to bring us up

to date on their plans for 1998? PCZ: PC gamers have come to perceive 3Dfx almost as a standard for 3D games, despite better rates of performance from PowerVR on high-end machines. How do you intend to change this?

Kevin Dale: The major issue has never been which chipset performs better than the other, but rather how the individual chips are supported by developers. 3Dfx initially had better support than us (they got in there first basically) and this is what gave them an early lead. But that's rapidly changing and we're now seeing all the major titles supporting PowerVR in-box. This will create a more level playing field and that's when price and performance will become more of an issue. In response to that, we've got a PowerVR-based Apocalypse 3Dx value card that comes with drivers and 15 demos which retails at £70 incl. VAT. The cheapest 3Dfx cards we've seen cost around £100 and don't have any demos in-box. If you want a 3Dfx card with demos you're going to have to pay out about £150. In our opinion this makes the PowerVR card better value for money and brings it within easy reach of mainstream gamers.

The Apocalypse 5D combines 2D and 3D graphics with state-of-the-art sound.





PCZ: The Apocalypse 3D (your first PowerVR card) came without support for bi-linear filtering. How much did this affect the level of developer support you initially had, and was this a contributing factor in 3Dfx's superior level of support when both cards first appeared?

KD: We got strong feedback from both end-users and developers that bi-linear was a pretty critical feature to have. We addressed this as fast as we possibly could with the introduction of bi-linear filtering for the Apocalypse 3Dx. However, we made sure we could provide a cheap and effective upgrade path for existing owners of the Apocalypse 3D, rather than just leaving them in the lurch with the old cards. PCZ: The Sonic sound card is your first venture into sound technology. Is this the first step in a major move into audio for VideoLogic?

KD: Audio will become a major part of the immersive gaming experience over the next 12 months. We've now got DirectX5 with Direct3D sound built-in, the number of audio channels have increased dramatically and with the advent of PCI-based hardware accelerated sound technology, the overall quality of sound in games will improve immensely. We want to be a part of that when it happens.



VideoLogic. We've told you all about them, and now you get to see where they live. You lucky lucky lot... what more can you ask for?

PCZ: Speculation is already rife in gaming circles as to how powerful your next generation PowerVR chip is likely to be (codenamed Highlander). Tell us more about this chip.

KD: You'll see a new family of PowerVR-based products from us next year. We'll make the appropriate announcements when we feel the time is right.

PCZ: Fair enough, but 3Dfx have already announced the existence of their new chip (codenamed Banshee) for the first quarter of next year. Won't this leave PowerVR chasing the pack again, as it were?

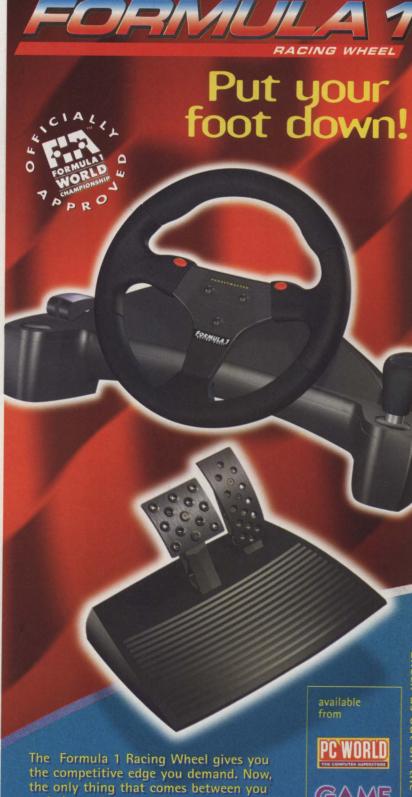
KD: Are you talking about the Voodoo 2 chip specifically?

KD: I haven't actually seen Voodoo 2 in action, but I've seen the spec projections and I'm sure it will be very competent technically. Having said that, we're talking about a product that probably won't hit the market until the end of the first quarter next year, by which time the technology they're talking about will be very average. One point I would like to make here is: I think they've gone the wrong way with this technology. They're talking about a card that will have a larger chip count and a higher cost as a result. A more sensible way to do it would be to produce a card with less chips, lower cost and more functionality. PCZ: By what standards will Voodoo 2 technology be average when it appears? Do you mean in terms of what everyone else will be producing, including yourselves?

KD: We have already stated publicly that we are working on technology now that goes well beyond the capabilities of PCX2. All I am prepared to say at this point is that when Voodoo 2 does finally appear I am confident that we will have an appropriate response.

PCZ: Thank you. 🕖





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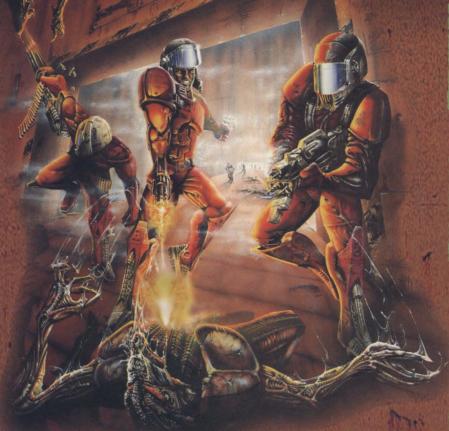
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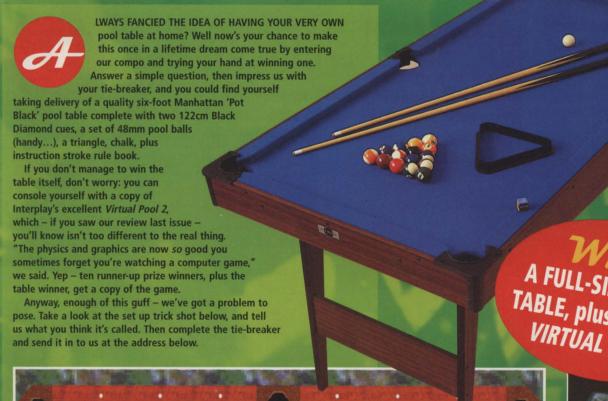
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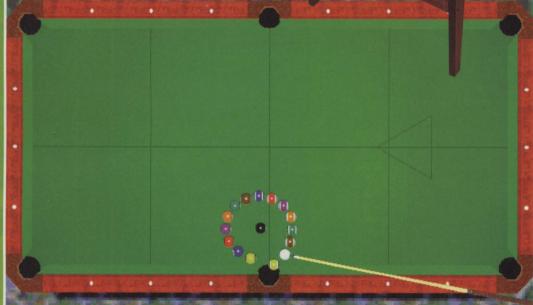


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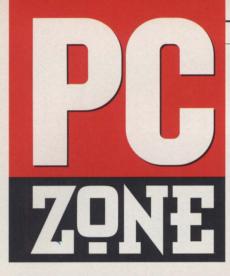
TIE BREAKER

Complete the following sentence in no more than 48 words...

"I'm rubbish at pool because..."

Send your completed strip, along with your name and address to: 'Rude Pool Compo', PC Zone, CPCZ281A, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ

All entries to be received by 1 February 1998. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final. Leicester City are great



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NOT REVIEWED



Clas

Dungeon Keeper

Darklight Conflict

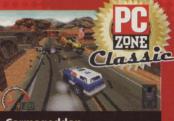




Little Big Adventure 2
SCORE 93



Apache Longbow 2
SCORE 92



Carmageddon SCORE 95



F1GP2 + GP Manager Pack NOT REVIEWED



Magic: The Gathering SCORE 92



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SCORE 90



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PG ZONE

Welcome to the *PC Zone*Recommended section. Here you'll find the cream of the games we've painstakingly reviewed and picked out over the years, plus those we feel should go down in PC gaming history as all-time Classics.

ELCOME TO THE PC ZONE RECOMMENDS section. It is here that you will find, what are, in our considered opinion, the very best games ever released for the PC.

In an effort to keep it simple, we've spilt it up into genres: Action games, Sports simulations, Adventure games, Flight simulations, Driving games, Role-Playing Games and Strategy games.

The top ten games of each genre are then listed, with a brief summary of the game, review score, publisher and contact number. Most of the games listed here were awarded *PC Zone* Classic status (90 per cent and above), and some managed a *PC Zone* Recommended award (80

per cent and above) at the time that they were reviewed. To achieve the highest accolade, a game must not only be very playable, entertaining and offer long-term appeal, but it must also be original and/or offer something new and worthwhile to the genre. To this

end, we've included some sequels, which although scored lower than the original title, are deemed better games (they didn't get a higher score 'cos it had already been done and therefore they weren't exactly bursting with originality — okay?), so this guide isn't a list of the highest scoring games ever reviewed by PC Zone, but a guide to the best games now available.

When you're reading the reviews in the rest of the magazine, please remember to bear this section in mind. The highest scoring game is supposed to represent a benchmark in a particular genre, and we will always be comparing new games with this, in accordance

with the above criteria. As a result, you will see games dropping out of this section as new and better titles are released, so keep your eyes peeled for new entries in each of the genres.

Jeremy Wells, Editor

Action



QUAKE (96)

The seminal 3D shoot 'em up and quite possibly the most important PC game ever released. Very atmospheric when played as a one-player game and untouchable when played over a network. Despite the fact that it's now pretty aged, it's still the office favourite. Definitely 'pour hommes'! Publisher:

GT Interactive (0171 258 3791)



TOMB RAIDER 2 (94)

The first game broke the mould, but the sequel even improves on the original *Tomb Raider 2* sports a curvier Lara, massive new levels to explore and a tidier control system. The game comes with native 3Dfx support and looks better than ever.

Publisher:

Core/Eidos (0181 780 2222



JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II

It's not *Quake*, but then it doesn't even try to be. But it is a compelling, technically superb blend of action and exploration wrapped up in the *Star Wars* universe. Altogether most impressive.

LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



HEXEN II (94)

The long-awaited, hub-based gib-fest sweeps into action with its trusty sword, hoping to carve a big 'H' on the chest of its older cousin, *Quake*. This is a first-person hack 'em off with balls as well as a big chopper.

Publisher:

Activision (01895 456700)



FADE TO BLACK (94)

The unofficial sequel to the excellent Flashback, this is a near-perfect blend of third-person exploration and combat action. The technical precursor to the fantastic Tomb Raider, it's a classic in its own right.

Publisher: Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



DUKE NUKEM 3D (93)

The debate rages on, and there are still an awful lot of people who rate *Duke* over *Quake*. It's not as technically impressive, but brags gameplay by the bucketload in one-player mode and when played over a network.

Eidos Interactive (0181 780 2222)



PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING (94)

The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin to use live action in a positive way. Packed with stars, this is pukka stuff. **Publisher:**

Origin/EA (01753 549442)



DARKLIGHT CONFLICT (92)

It might not have a mega-budget cast or a film licence, but *Darklight* knocks spots off just about every other space combat sim there is. It looks utterly fantastic and the 3D engine is quite superb and very fast. Publisher:

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



TIE FIGHTER (94)

Still rated by many as the finest space combat sim ever released, it successfully blends all the kudos of *Star Wars* with a wicked new engine for super-fast *TIE* on *X-Wing* fisticuffs.

LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



MAGIC CARPET 2 (92)

The original wooed us with its speed and smoothness – this is even better, with new night-time bits, monsters and a very useful on-line help system. Technically exquisite, the game engine's yet to be bettered. Publisher:

Bullfrog/EA (01753 549442)

135

Driving



CARMAGEDDON (95)

Awesome arcade-style racer that's heavy on the hit 'n' run and gameplay. Loads of tracks, three ways to play and a fab multi-player network mode make this

games ever. Publisher

SCI (0171 585 3308)



NETWORK Q RAC RALLY (94)

The seminal rally racer from Europress is the ultimate in skiddy, slidey action. 27 (count 'em) stages, loads of cars, a fantastic eight-way network option and varied terrain and conditions make this superior to the limited Sega Rally. Go buy it!

Europress Software (01625 859444)



MICRO MACHINES 2 (93)
The console classic is converted to the PC as new tracks provide a new challenge. The easy-to-use control system means it's user-friendly for the uninitiated. This version comes with a track designer.

Publisher:



FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 (92)

The amazing sequel to the greatest F1 driving sim ever. Updated brilliantly for the 94/95 season with all-new detailed circuits, cars and teams. Ninja Pentium needed to run the hi-res mode – but it's still great.

Publisher: MicroProse (01454 893893)



NASCAR RACING 2 (92)

A worthy upgrade featuring a new, smoother 3D engine, improved opponent AI, more controllable cars, a simple single-screen car set-up and a multi-player network option. The constant stream of headset messages adds atmosphere. A racing sim fan's must. Publisher:



SCREAMER RALLY (91)

The Screamer games just get better and better. This is by far the best version, with its mad undulating tracks and high-speed network play, there's also a split-screen absolute bargain

VIE (0171 368 2255)



INDYCAR 2 (90)

If you don't mind going round and round in circles but still crave that unbelievable detail, this is the only real alternative to *F1GP2*. Technically mind-blowing, though a little chuggy on anything but a high-end Pentium in SVGA mode.

Sierra (0118 920 9100)



POD (90)One of the first racing games to support 3Dfx, Direct3D and MMX. With awesome graphics and with new cars, tracks and power-ups promised to be posted regularly on the Internet, you'll never get bored.

Ubi Soft (0181 944 9000)



THE NEED FOR SPEED (89)

Exciting arcade racing action at its best, with a good selection of cars and road tracks. Suicidal oncoming traffic and angry cops entrench *TNFS* firmly within the 'arcade' game sector.

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



GRAND THEFT AUTO (92)

This is the game that took over from Carmageddon as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. Micro machines on acid.

BMG (0171 384 7100)

Sports



LINKS LS (94)

and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, luscious graphics, a system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you Publisher:

Eidos Interactive (0181 780 2222)



NHL 98 (94)

Another year, another *NHL*, but this one isn't just the best ice hockey game, it's one of the best sports games we've ever seen. Super 3Dfx-ed graphics, fantastic

EA Sports (01753 549442)



PGA TOUR PRO (94)

Nothing really distinguishes this version from the last, except for the brilliant and very easy to use Internet play facility. Waste no time, go and thwack some Americans now. Your country needs you.

EA Sports (01753 549442)



ACTUA SOCCER (92)

The best PC soccer game, due to a super 3D polygonal engine and motion-captured players. One-player games can frustrate, but it excels in two-player mode; Barry Davies provides knockout commentary



NBA LIVE 97 (92)

Much better than the previous version (which lacked drive), this offering is very well put together. Endowed with excellent graphics, sound effects and a totally hip soundtrack, thankfully it really does play

Publisher: EA Sports (01753 549442)



PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97 (92)

Okay, so this game doesn't quite better Super Tennis on the SNES, but it's as close playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up Publisher:



VIRTUAL POOL 2 (90)

Okay, so Virtual Pool 2 got one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make

Interplay (01628 423666)



PRO PINBALL: TIMESHOCK! (91)

Remember *PP: The Web?* The second table in the series, this is better in every way. Improved ball dynamics, detail and sound effects, plus the world's dirtiest computer game voice returns to "Lock those balls". **Publisher:**



MADDEN NFL 97 (87)

seen on the console versions, with all the features and slick presentation we assume best American footie game on the PC

EA Sports (01753 549442)



SENSIBLE SOCCER 2000 (90)

Can the best really get better? In this case, the answer is a resounding yes. Sensible sensibly decided to leave the gameplay intact for the latest version of their classic footie game. The result? A classic update of the most playable footie game ever.

Adventures



ALONE IN THE DARK 3 (95)

Better than the previous AITD instalments, Alone 3 is a tense, ambient tale of Navajo Indian magic and reincarnation that unfolds in the usual AITD manner. Now available as part of a compilation budget pack. Publisher:

Infogrames (0181 738 8199)



INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS (93)
Follow a post-Raiders Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter character haster it be killingt. and the inter-character banter is brilliant

LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



Publisher: Electronic Arts (01753 549442)





SYSTEM SHOCK (95)

This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the game. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is invigorating.

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



Electronic Arts (01753 549442)

SAM & MAX (93)
Steve Purcell's hilarious dog/rabbit
'freelance police' duo's first and only PC
outing, in which they need to solve a host
of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a massive point-and-click fan.

LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



STAR TREK TNG: A FINAL UNITY (94)
A style oozer. At times it's as if you're inside a Star Trek: TNG episode. Nonlinear and beautifully presented, it's a Trek-head must-buy. Yet to be bettered. Publisher: MicroProse (01454 893893)



DISCWORLD II (93)

Perfect Entertainment's immaculate sequel to Discountd follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. Discountd II is a universally appealing adventure game **Publisher**:

Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)



ECSTATICA II (90)
We dubbed it "An adventure with balls".
It's hard, but it's one of the most rewarding adventures we've ever seen. It constantly surprises and is sure to keep even the most battle-weary adventure fan busy for weeks.

Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)



THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND (92) The third game in LucasArts' classic Monkey saga delivers the goods big-time, much to the relief of adventure fans Virgin (0171 368 2255)

Role-Playing Games



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS (94)
This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction. Publisher: Origin/EA (01753 549442)



TERRIS (88)

A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but so addictive we're still playing it. The quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness' Publisher: AOL (0800 2797444)



REALMS OF THE HAUNTING (93)
Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93% when he reviewed it some months ago.
Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap, ROTH is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG. Publisher:

Gremlin Interactive (01142 753423)



MERIDIAN 59 (86)
This ground-breaking on-line RPG allows thousands of people to interact with each other in the same fantasy universe at the same time. Garish and horrible graphics aside, it's one of the best on-line multiplayer RPGs around. Publisher:



LANDS OF LORE: GUARDIANS OF DESTINY (92)

Four long years in the making, Westwood Studios' mammoth new adventure proved itself to be more than worth the wait atmosphere combine to make Lands Of

Publisher: VIE (0171 368 2255)



RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET

A great improvement over SSI's previous AD&D *Ravenloft* RPGs, the player has to battle his way through a landscape populated by Stone Golems and vicious scorpions. The graphics are average but the intuitive spell/combat system is a joy. Publisher:

Mindscape (01444 246333)



ULTIMA VII (89)

Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Soon to be *Ultima Online*:

Publisher:

Origin/EA (01753 549442)



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS (PRE-PC ZONE)

This took RPGs away from first-person tilebased RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any game in history

Publisher: Origin/EA (01753 549442)



DIABLO (88)

Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but it's pulled off with such style that the overall game experience is addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game.

Publisher:

Zablac/Blizzard (01626 332233)



EYE OF THE BEHOLDER II

(PRE-PC ZONE)
An 'olde-worlde', first-person RPG, but its progressive, party-based gameplay and subtle story elements set it apart from the other dross. The flick-screen graphics are dated, but dungeon design's worth a look

VIE (0171 368 2255)

Strategy



DUNGEON KEEPER (96)

A game with a genre almost impossible to define, *DK* takes *SimCity 2000, C&C* and Ultima Underworld and remoulds them into one hell of a title. Fantastic gameplay, and a lifespan on a par with the Queen Mother.

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



INCUBATION (94)

Deeply atmospheric turn-based strategy game with graphics to die for. This is a welcome change from the endless stream of C&C clones and is as challenging as it's action-packed.

Blue Byte (01604 232200)



SYNDICATE WARS (95)

One of the best strategy games of all time gets a sequel, and what a fabulous sequel it is too. It houses a wealth of intricate levels, gorgeous graphics and enough gratuitous violence to leave a violence t keep anyone happy. Publisher:

EA/Bullfrog (01753 549442)



AGE OF EMPIRES (94)

Think of *Civilization 2*. Imagine the same great empire-building gameplay. some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi- and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of* Empires in a nutshell.

Microsoft (0345 002000)



X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE (95)

A revamped engine and a healthy helping of real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive X-COM series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy X-COM 3 immediately. It'll keep you have for works busy for weeks

Publisher:

MicroProse (01454 893893)



SIMCITY 2000 (92)

A classic game that deserves its reputation as one of the all-time greats in the strategy world. Build and maintain the city of your dreams and cope with all the problems a real-life Mayor would come up against. It's a lot more fun

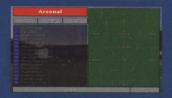
Maxis (0171 505 1500)



COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT (94) ...or C&C in SVGA with a few new units. It's

a testament to the original's gameplay that the sequel can get away with adding few new features and still be fun to play.

Virgin (0171 368 2255)



CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98

The best football management game ever gets its seasonal update and a few added extras – you can now play a number of leagues simultaneously, and change stats.

Publisher: Eidos Interactive (0181 780 2222)



PUZZLE BOBBLE (94)

We can't agree exactly where Puzzle Bobble fits in PC Zone Recommends. Does it belong in here, with the Civs and Sims of the PC gaming world, or should it go in the action section? Who cares, as long as it's in as long as it's in..
Publisher:



CIVILIZATION 2 (90)

Explore the world, conquer territories and research new technologies in one of the most successful strategy games ever. It's not that different to the first one, but it merits a '90s update and a

ublisher: MicroProse (01454 893893)

Flight Simulations



EF2000 (97)

With fantastic graphics and a very realistic flight model, this is one of the best flight sims on the PC. Not even Microsoft's mighty Flight Sim can topple it from the top of the PC Zone prop-head ladder.

Ocean/DID (0161 832 6633)



US MARINE FIGHTERS (92)

Lovely graphics and a realistic enough flight model. Originally released as a mission disk for US Navy Fighters, Marine Fighters now comes as part of the US Navy Fighters Gold pack, so go get that instead! Publisher:

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



FLIGHT UNLIMITED (96)

This was the first flight sim to sport truly amazing graphics and a frighteningly realistic flight model. You don't get to kill anyone (just like *Flight Sim 95*) but it still stands up well against today's competition, and you still need a beefy machine to fly it.

Looking Glass/Virgin (0171 368 2255)



FLYING CORPS (92)
Action-packed WWI flight sim with neato graphics. Nostalgic gamers will recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WWI flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best WW1 sim currently available for the PC.

Publisher:

Empire Interactive (0181 343 7337)



APACHE LONGBOW (96)

The EF2000 of helicopter sims, in as much as it marries fab graphics with a realistic flight model. The structure encourages you to adopt the same tactics as a real Apache are challenging and varied enough to keep you at it for weeks. It's big, too.

Publisher: Digital Integration (01276 684959)



COMANCHE 3 (92)

This latest version of the Comanche flight sim is without a doubt the finest we've seen yet, sporting juicy terrain graphics due to a revamped VoxelSpace engine. Despite an accurate flight model, it still delivers intense gameplay, and is extremely good fun.
Publisher:

NovaLogic (0171 405 1777)



FLIGHT SIM '98 (94)

Another year, and yet another flight sim from Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.

Microsoft (0345 002 000)



JETFIGHTER III (91)

The follow-up to one of the most popular sims ever. Fly over three and a half million square miles of accurately-mapped terrain of South America. You get to shoot things too, but there's no duty free option.

Publisher: Eidos Interactive (0181 780 2222)



SU27 FLANKER (95)

One for flight sim purists. Admittedly the graphics are crap, but our reviewer raved about it. A great flight model and superb mission builder make it an essential buy for prop-heads everywhere, just don't expect your best mate to be impressed.

Mindscape (01444 246333)



A-10 CUBA (90)

Functional graphics (cough) for a game that captures the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Slightly limited with the absence of a fully-fledged campaign but great fun nonetheless, and pretty speedy on a modest Pentium

Publisher: Activision (01895 456700)

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Press Comment

Recommended buy - PC Zone, October 1997



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Press Comment

"Wow! A good idea" 85% rating - PC Gamer November 1997



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SHIFT

The Editor wrestles with the problems with last month's Tomb Raider II demo, the spoddy image gamers have been landed with, plus playing Quake with a gamepad, of all things.



Vrite in!

Send your letters to: WordProcessor, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

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Look out for the PC Zone chat forum if you're on-line.

NB: We at PC Zone reserve the right to edit, change and witty and intelligent.

WOT, NO EXCLUSIVE

ello to whoever's doing letters this month. Your **EXCLUSIVE** Tomb Raider II demo is not as exclusive as you think it is - it's the same as the one on the Official PlayStation magazine.

William S Preston, e-mail

rrh... Well, thanks for pointing that out William, but I think you'll find the demo on the front of the Official PlayStation magazine will only work on the PlayStation and not the PC, which makes the one that appeared on PC Zone exclusive to PC owners. I don't know why we bother sometimes, I really don't.

WHICH 3D **ACCELERATOR CARD?**

elp! I'm trying to decide which type of 3D graphics accelerator to buy and would like some advice. I'm told that there are two basic 'standards': PowerVR and 3Dfx. Apparently 3Dfx offers uniform performance regardless of the machine it's installed on, while PowerVR offers either better or worse performance depending on the power and available memory of the PC. If this is the case, just how good does a PC have to be before it makes sense to buy PowerVR?

Does the games industry offer better support for one standard as opposed to the other, and which way do you see things developing?

Roger, e-mail

e'll be looking at every 3D accelerator card currently available in a special feature next month and giving each one a thorough test. If you can't wait 'til then (and we strongly advise that you do), then please bear in mind that PowerVR tends to need more RAM to run satisfactorily, although some 3Dfx games will suffer from jerkovision if you don't have at least 24Mb RAM in your machine. For instance, I can run games like Jedi Knight and Quake2test on my P133 with 16Mb RAM and a 3Dfx card, but I'll occasionally get serious slowdown while my machine struggles to load in the texturing maps. Essentially, the faster your processor and the more RAM you have the better. Same old story really.

that doesn't even run. As a software developer myself, I wouldn't dream of insulting potential clients/consumers. I for one will not be buying the game, if that's Core's attitude.

Now I'm further pissed off with wasting my money on your mag.

I apologise in advance if there's something I'm missing here, but I really don't take too kindly to being called stupid by a company obviously too stupid to configure their own software properly.

Julian Mitchell, e-mail

ARE YOU STUPID OR **SOMETHING?**



said that it had expired ("Are you stupid or something?"). Since when did you start putting expired demos on your CDs?

What can or should I do? Please help me, I'm dying to see Lara.

Gr. Eugene, The Netherlands

hanks a lot! One of the main reasons I spent a ridiculous £4.99 on your magazine was the demo of Tomb Raider II. What do I get? An offensive message telling me: "This copy of Tomb Raider II has expired. Are you stupid or what?" Hah bloody hah! Somebody's stupid, and it ain't me.

Daryl Fenton, e-mail

bought December's PC Zone specifically for the Tomb Raider II demo. (Having never played the original, I wanted to know what all the fuss was about.) When I tried to run it from the supplied browser, I got the following piss-taking message: "This version of Tomb Raider II has expired. Are you stupid or something?"

Perhaps I was stupid to pay five quid for a mag touting a main demo

e'd like to apologise profusely to all our readers who had trouble getting the Tomb Raider II demo to work. We did everything we possibly could to sort things out,

but some people obviously had trouble running it and got a rather inappropriate message as a result. Please, let us explain...

Core Design sent us the Tomb Raider II demo for our PC Zone CD cover-mount to be mastered. We played through it, checked that everything was okay and then sent our own CD to the duplicators. Around a week later, just as the magazine was about to go on sale, someone in the office loaded up the demo and found to their horror that it had 'timed out'. We rang Core. We then wept, sobbed and shouted and recalled the mag from the shops. Core then told us how to get round the 'security protection' we had every copy of the mag stickered with instructions on how to get the demo to work and the magazine finally went on sale almost a week later.

And why would Core want to incorporate security protection on a demo that would be distributed around the world after it had





special feature on 3D cards next issue before you buy one!

Cetter of the month

I WANT TO PLAY ALONE

hy is the games industry so obsessed with multi-player games? Don't get me wrong, I love blowing up my friends as much as the next person, but surely games developers shouldn't be concentrating their efforts on multi-player stuff at the expense of the lone gamesplayer?

A fine example of this is X-Wing VS TIE Fighter. Gone is the involving storyline and the excellent sub-plots and twists that made the original so compelling, making it a stagnant bare-boned experience for the single-player. I've been playing a few multi-player dogfights recently which are fun, but I just can't afford to play for long. Surely games developers should be developing games that appeal primarily to single players and include network or Internet support as a bonus? I may be wrong, but I'm willing to bet that most people's time is spent playing on their own. No one, save for the super rich, can afford the phone bill required to be on-line for long and if everybody else's PCs are anything like mine then there'll always be something wrong with their modems or connection.

I'm not saying that people should stop developing multi-player games, but just ease off a little. I've seen so many excellent game ideas and opportunities go to waste because the developers have ceased caring about the single-player market. In my opinion Dark Forces is the best first-person game ever written (and as you know it has no multi-player facilities at all), and both Outlaws and Jedi Knight are worth a mention as they're both perfect examples of a well-balanced mix of single and multi-player gaming. I won't even start to slag off Quake (which is just a jumped-up name for Doom 3), but I have to admit that I find its popularity both bizarre and baffling. I realise that my controversial opinions (particularly the ones involving Doom 3) will probably earn me some enemies, but this isn't a popularity contest and I believe in my convictions.

Jacob Hewitt, London



ulti-player games are becoming increasingly popular, but that's only because more people are getting on-line and want to play them. The point you're making is valid, but developers are essentially giving us what we want.

You also have to consider that many games are developed in the US where it's a lot easier and cheaper to play on-line, and as a result developers are developing for their own market. iD have always maintained that Quake was primarily a multi-player game, as did LucasArts with X-Wing Vs TIE. We're also seeing more on-line only games being developed - EA's Ultima OnLine is already one of the biggest-selling games ever in the US and Westwood's forthcoming Sole Survivor will probably do just as well. The text-only Terris is hugely popular the world over, and an increasing number of Internet-only games are in the pipeline.

Ultimately, it's a case of developers embracing new technology and taking advantage of it. They're going to make the most of the thrill of playing against a 'live' opponent - it also means they don't have to spend ages developing Al. In five years time, every game will probably be multiplayer with a single-player mode included so that you can practise before battling with your on-line chums. Get a decent modem, download the WirePlay software and join in. At £1.50 an hour inclusive it's the equivalent of a couple of videos or a very mediocre night down the local.

are reported and he's damn right, the only bit he missed was the transient nature of media attention. They only want to talk about what they perceive as topical and relevant within the screwed-up parameters between which they operate. If games were suddenly 'okay', and not controversial or linked in some flimsy way to a tragedy or two, the media would suddenly lose all interest in them.

Tomb Raider II. Let's see... she's got an animated ponytail and her breasts are less angular. God help us all - I only hope they've added a bathroom to her house so after messing about on the assault course I/she can wash my/her hair and take a well-earned dump. Should I start reading Sugar and playing with Barbie dolls? Maybe I could have my sense of humour surgically removed too. If Core had the slightest clue there'd be the option to play as a bloke or a girl in the sequel. (Maybe a generic male model wanker called Roger Phallus who wears a spray-on skintight body suit like the ones they have in Gladiators?) Oh yeah, and if he gets a bit cold he can don a green balaclava and start living out the deep-rooted SAS fantasies that lurk within us all.

J W Tapper, e-mail

he point I was trying to make in the Reviews Intro to which you're referring is that it's a good thing that games are now generally accepted by people who don't play them as a valid pastime and not some kind of spoddy hobby akin to trainspotting.

How games are represented within the general media is still wildly reactionary and inaccurate and it will take a long time before they are treated in the same way as other forms of entertainment such as films and music.

With reference to your second point. Like, duh? What the hell are you going on about? Have you got a problem with women or something? Have you played TRII? Do you get out much? When was the last time you saw your doctor? Book an appointment now. We've passed your letter onto Scotland Yard/The Samaritans/The Army Recruitment Office. No doubt you'll hear from somebody soon.

accepts videogames and no longer treats people who play them as social misfits? Remember what happens to something whenever the media accepts it? Skateboards maybe, or how about punk rock? You suggest I

such a big deal that the media now

should give myself a slap on the back for helping to make games 'okay'.

But do we really want games to be 'okay', in the way that Carmageddon was brilliant until the media

> noticed it, and now it's just 'okay'. I don't think so. If I'm responsible for this I'll give myself a slap in the mouth. I've just read Charlie Brooker's article on the way videogames

expired? Well, apparently, they've had some code go walkies recently and to prevent pirates getting hold of it they decided to protect everything they burnt to CD. Fair enough, except that they forgot to remove it from the version of the demo they sent us (and everyone else for that matter) and a lot of people got justifiably upset.

All we can do is apologise, but what happened was beyond our control. A user-friendly version of the demo appeared on last month's CD Zone, but if you still haven't managed to get hold of a copy, ring 0990 100444 for a replacement copy. Alternatively, you can call Core on 01332 297777. Sorry.

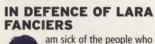
UNNATURAL URGES AND CO.

i, great magazine (two and a half years subscribing can't be bad, right?).

Just a couple of things... First of all, the rocket scientist who pointed out Lara was not actually

real, but only a collection of polygons - hey, well spotted. He probably also claims to find Pamela Anderson unattractive because her breasts are silicone. Lara looks like a girl, blokes like girls, end of story. Stop trying to rationalise it all and start enjoying yourself, you'll be dead soon.

Next up, why is it



say that fancying Lara Croft is sad. They constantly remind us that she's just a bunch of polygons. I bet that most of these people fancy famous celebrities who they've most likely only seen pictures of, be it in a magazine or on TV. Can I take this opportunity to remind them

that these pictures are only blobs of ink or pixels, rearranged in some order? Many people fancy Pamela Anderson, but how many of them have actually seen her in the flesh?

What I'm trying to say here is that people who ridicule Lara Croft fanciers should really shut their mouths and realise that - just like people who fancy Pamela Anderson - they're only fantasising about Lara. They don't expect to actually 'go out' with her (unless they're close to that Rhona Mitra woman...), just as people who fancy the Spice Girls can't really expect to actually go out with them. So my message to the nation is well, urm... okay, I don't have one, but will people just lay off the Lara fanciers? Please? Not that I fancy her myself or anything - all the people I fancy/have fancied I have seen in real life, but let these people fancy who or what they want in peace. 'Kay?

Louis Cowan, e-mail



ave you really seen all the people you've fancied/fancy in real life?

QUAKE QUERIES

think your magazine is really good and wellpresented. It's got all the latest gossip, and the reviews of the

types of games I like are just about spot-on, although it's frustrating to read a review only to have to wait months before getting my hands on a copy of the game.

Now on to the purpose of my letter, which is about Quake. I got on-line recently and am experiencing just how fantastic multi-player Quake is. I thought I was quite good until I played it over the Net.

So far I've only played Quake with a four-button joypad. It's served me well on single-player mode, but I now find this a bit restricting. I've always known about people playing with the mouse/keyboard, and as I've heard that this is the best way to play I'd really like to give it a go.

I've heard/read about .cfg files that you type up depending on the control method before running them through the console. Is this correct? If so, how do I do it and do you have any of your own favourite methods/.cfg files?

Please, please can you help me, as I'm really keen to discover how the experts play the game using this method.

David Atkinson, Cleveland



ou play Quake with a four-button gamepad? Madness! Our preferred mouse/keyboard combo is:

Fire	MOUSE 1
Mouse look	MOUSE 2
Forward	W
Back	S
Strafe left	A
Strafe right	D
Jump	
Next weapon	Q

The idea is that you can select any weapon (the number keys) without moving your hand too much. It also just happens to be the default set-up for Jedi Knight. Hold down MOUSE2 while you move to look around and type in CROSSHAIR 1 in the console to help with your aiming. Make sure

you're always running, and keep moving! Note players' routes, as they tend to follow

a set path for each level. If you haven't played Quake over WirePlay yet, download the software from www.wireplay.com. It's the fastest we've seen. Check out the numerous Quake websites for new skins

and editors, or see last month's special feature and Complete Quake CD for extra levels and TCs.

FANTASY RPG INCUBATION

really loved last month's Incubation demo. Why doesn't someone make a similar decent RPG - in 3D with loads of tension and atmosphere? The best attempt so far's been Diablo, but that's more a case of how fast you can click and has hardly any emphasis on tactics and character development.

Incubation certainly showed that the technology to produce a decent RPG exists, but sadly most are shit. If you have blokes in robes and crap monsters, of course everyone'll think RPGs are for twats. If magic was treated more like guns with ammo (magic points), it'd be a lot better.

Martin Packman, e-mail

s far as we know, developers Blue Byte have no plans to use the Incubation engine in an RPG-style game. Gremlin have a similar realtime RPG project in development, but it's under wraps at present and may never see release. If you feel that strongly, why not ring Blue Byte and tell them? 10





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Communicate argues why and installing games should child's play.



Ciaran Brennan argues why playing and installing PC games should be

SETTING NEW STANDARDS

ET ME QUOTE some figures at you. I've just opened one of the weekly sales reports we get from

the ChartTrack organisation - the most respected compendium of UK games sales figures. The chart I'm looking at is for the week ending 8 November 1997, but it could be any recent week. Now, let's take two games that have been on sale for the same length of time: Nintendo's Lylat Wars (aka Star Fox 64) and LucasArts' Jedi Knight. Both are big-name games which have enjoyed pre-release hype and both have, at time of writing, been on sale for four weeks. Lylat Wars has sold 39,739 copies, Jedi Knight 18,086.

That's less than half. This is even more depressing when you consider that there are roughly 280,000 N64 consoles in the country, compared with - let's take a conservative estimate -1,000,000 active home PCs.

So why the difference? Of course there is no single answer. Maybe Lylat Wars is better suited to its market, or N64 owners are still in that 'honeymoon period' with their machines where they'll buy any big release. However, Nintendo's offering costs £20 more than the Lucas blaster and yet it still managed a sales ratio of better than two to one.

One possible explanation why console games generally sell more than their PC counterparts is that console owners usually approach the act of buying a game with a little more confidence than we do. Like us, they have no real idea of whether the game itself is going to be any good or not, but at least they can be almost 100 per cent confident that it will work as soon as they take it out of its box. When was the last time you had the same degree of confidence about a PC game?

The reason that console owners approach their local software shop with this tingling glow of confidence is that both Sony and Nintendo have rigorous pre-release quality control processes which they put all new games through. Sure, both companies are in a reasonably privileged position where they have complete control over every CD and cartridge that's manufactured for them, but they also do a very good job in policing things for the benefit of their customers.

It's not good enough to simply rehash the old argument that there is no single PC manufacturer



You can count the number of N64 games available using your fingers and toes

PC gaming market will become increasingly fragmented and difficult, to the point where the biggest and brightest talents in the games business will become bored with the hassle and devote their time to the lucrative art of developing console games.

As I write, there are moves afoot

system, but they too would be marked as needing specific hardware and would therefore cause few problems.

There are numerous issues to be resolved - who would police the system and how it would be funded spring to mind - but these are only small problems and, as I see it, well

"Within months your next game could work without the use of a screwdriver and black magic." Ciaran Brennan (Bastion PR)

and therefore a consolestyle system is just another pipe dream. If something isn't done soon, the



Is the PC gamer simply spoilt for choice when it comes to buying a PC game?

within the UK industry to initiate a system which will mimic that adopted by the 'big two' in the video games business. It's early days, but the idea behind this initiative is that a group of the UK's major PC games publishers will get together to decide a minimum hardware standard for the games PC.

All new games would then be tested to see if they run adequately on this specification (which would be updated every six months or so) and, should they pass the test, they would be awarded with an instantly recognisable brand mark which would be displayed proudly on the box. Obviously there would be exceptional games which would work happily outside of this

worth taking the trouble to solve. For your part, all you will have to do is support the initiative by looking out for the brand when it appears and use it as one of your criteria when choosing which game to buy.

Imagine. Within a few months we could be living in a world where we would happily skip down to Mr Software's Games Emporium with thousands of our PC-owning mates, secure in the knowledge that we will get our next game to work without the use of a screwdriver and black magic.

Ciaran Brennan works for Bastion PR and still can't get Resident Evil to run on his machine. (A)

STOP LOOKING BACK



Keep a fire extinguisher

next to your PC to avoid

disappointemnt

this Xmas.

As you read this, you're probably tucking into an over-cooked Christmas dinner, sipping a cheap and sour Christmas wine and watching a pathetic Christmas episode of EastEnders. No wonder

Paul Presley's an atheist.

OU CAN ALWAYS TELL WHEN THE LORD'S birthday is upon us (I kneel at the altar of religious indifference myself). Our popular musical charts are infested with manufactured tripe such as the Spice Girls or the Teletubbies.

Shopping thoroughfares suddenly become more nauseating than ever, thanks to some pencil-headed local councillor's attempt to brighten up Christmas with a tawdry show of flashy lights

> and neon reindeer. And worst of all, any attempt at following a long-running drama serial on TV gets eliminated thanks to the screwed-up nature of

'Xmas Telly Schedules.' I'm sorry Mr BBC, but there is

bloody Nightmare mode if you ask me," he exclaimed angrily). Not only that, but he also had copies of Blade Runner and Monkey Island 3 ready to install and is now having to contend with just staring at the pictures on the box, moving them up and down a bit to simulate animation and making believe that he's immersed in their worlds instead.

No such worries for John Davison though, whose PC is in full working order and who's been playing said two adventures to the full (only taking time out to walk over to Chris and go "Ha ha ha" in his face). Monkey Island, he says, is superb, with bags of humour and a brilliant storyline. Blade Runner, on the other hand, he isn't sure about, echoing my own thoughts that it's a nice enough game, but one that fails to live up to its full potential.

Speaking of Hill, despite a knackered PC, he still manages to take part in the office Actua 2 tournaments that are held on a regular basis (about every ten minutes in Actua fact). He even had the good fortune to play a promising youngster by the name of Alan Shearer last month. The match ended up 0-0 because, as Steve insists, "He was so overwhelmed that I let him draw." Several airborne trufflesniffers have apparently been spotted in the area recently.

The Actua 2 tournies have been enjoyed by just about everyone else this month, as have several other multi-player games. Myself, Jeremy, Mallo, Richie and a large chap by the name of Wayne (an artist on our sister magazine Escape) have all been found glued like static and dead flakes of skin to our monitors at various late hours playing both Shadow Warrior and Grand Theft Auto deathmatches (not at the same time obviously. That would just be crazy). Mallo particularly likes being involved in car chases in GTA – although we're not sure if he's living out a respectable

"Here at PC Zone we have decided to forget the holiday and lock ourselves in a cupboard."



last reserves of 'good cheer' from my body more, than seeing Noel 'Giz-jar' Edmonds reuniting some woefully unattractive Essex girl with her neanderthal Navy husband in the Falklands or somewhere.

We here at PC Zone have decided to forget about the entire holiday and lock ourselves in a cupboard somewhere playing games until it's all finished with and we can go and get pissed on New Year's Eve instead.

At least that was the plan for most of us. Typical irony then that both Chris Anderson's and Steve Hill's PCs decided to blow themselves up rather than face any prolonged exposure to them. Chris is particularly aggrieved since he was on the expert level of Age Of Empires at the time ("Expert? Hah, more like

and healthy Starsky And Hutch daydream or a disgustingly perverted Thelma And Louise fantasy. He's also been getting rather heavily involved in the fantasy blood epic Myth, which he says is, ahem, "rock hard" (again we're not sure if this particular fantasy is respectable or not).

The broken machinery theme continues with Richie – his CD-ROM drive has spun its last disc and joined the great base unit in the sky. Thus he's been forced to emit strange beeping and screeching noises as he logs on to the great wide Net (or whatever it's called) to play with Americans. On-line games such as Planetary Raiders, Quake on Wireplay and Subspace are the games of (limited) choice.

Sticking with the Quake motif, the Quake II beta test has also been causing stirring movements in the pants of several staff members this month. In a bid to prove they've got the largest bollocks, Mallo boasts of completing it twice, Jeremy claims a three count and the UberFragMeister himself, Macca has played it so much he barely had time to remember his new album (details of which are at http://www.wakeywakey.com - music lovers).

And what of my own good, pure, clean self? I must admit to being something of the traitor this month. Aside from the usual GTA/Shadow Warrior/Actua 2 malarkey, I unwittingly found myself handing over a large wad of cash for a, cough, Nintendo 64 and a copy of, gulp, GoldenEye. Which, er, is utterly fantastic. Sorry, but there you go. 🕖

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