

PC GAMER

SPACE SIMULATOR

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

Beyond the stars
with Microsoft's
amazing stellar
adventure - first
review inside

RISE OF THE ROBOTS

Invasion of the publicity machines!

DOOM II: HELL ON EARTH

The first REAL pictures inside!

COME ON YOU REDS

Manchester United Premier League
Champions - review and playable demo

2 HD DISKS!

September 1994 Disk 1

**Manchester
United
Premier
League
Champions**



EXCLUSIVE! A fully playable demo
of Kysail's latest smash - one of
the best footie games ever!

Control the Red Devils
themselves in a battle
against route-one
meisters Arsenal!

PC GAMER

Guaranteed 100% Virus Free! For more info on how to load and play, skip to page 8

September 1994 Disk 2

Mystic Towers 3D

The latest arcade adventure
from shareware maestros
Apogee - explore treasure-laden
towers, defeat hideous monsters
and beat deadly traps, all in
gorgeous isometric 3D!

The full shareware
version of this new
arcade extravaganza!

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09

THE SEQUEL

STAR TIE FIGHTER WARS

THE REBELS
THINK THE FORCE
IS WITH THEM.

EXPLODE THE
MYTH.

Now you can experience Star Wars®
from a new point-of-view. From the
creators of X-Wing™, comes TIE Fighter™,
the sequel that lets you fly for the Empire.
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dare you respond?

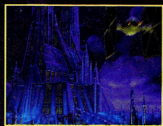


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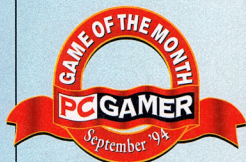
DISTRIBUTED IN THE UK BY VIRGIN INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT (EUROPE) LTD
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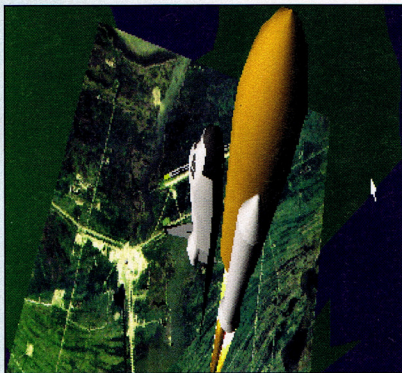
Volume 1, Number 10 September 1994

HOT GAMES FOR SEPTEMBER

46 Space Simulator



After the phenomenal success of the *Flight Simulator* series, Microsoft reaches for the stars with an exhaustive study of stellar exploration. All budding astronauts should proceed directly to page 46, where our world exclusive review is warming up on the launchpad...

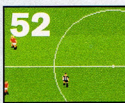


50 The Chaos Engine

Prior to the Bitmap Brothers' mysterious PC-only debut, here's something they prepared earlier – the long-awaited conversion of their 16-bit arcade extravaganza.

Manchester United Premier League Champions

Having conquered the domestic scene, Cantona, Giggs, Kanchelskis et al are now attempting to topple *Sensible Soccer* from the peak of the computer footie scene. Careful with those studs now, Eric...



54 Dark Legions

SSI's latest is neither fish nor flesh, strategy game nor role-player. In fact it's a little bit of everything, and a very tasty broth it all adds up to...

Power Poker

Electronic Arts gives you the chance to hone your poker skills without having to re-mortgage your house and pawn the wife's jewellery. But how can you tell if the computer's bluffing? It's not as if the disk drive light twitches or anything...



70 International Tennis Open

First created by Philips for the CD-i player, International Tennis Open beats the competition in straight sets.

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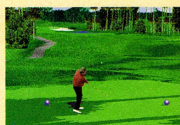
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SCOOP!

A themed trilogy of previews this month, with all the games having a sporting theme. Except *Quarantine*, which doesn't. Erm... ah! They're all driving games! Oh, except *PGA Tour Golf 486*. Oh, just go to page 12 and leave us alone.

PGA Tour Golf 486



Our all-time favourite golf game is back, this time on CD-ROM and resplendent with all the extras the medium provides.

Quarantine



A more original *Doom* clone than most, centring the ultra-violent destruction around the adventures of a futuristic taxicab driver. Are they serious? You betcha.

Superkarts



They said it couldn't be done, but new publishers Manic Media Productions have created a 3D arcade racing game that puts most console efforts to shame.

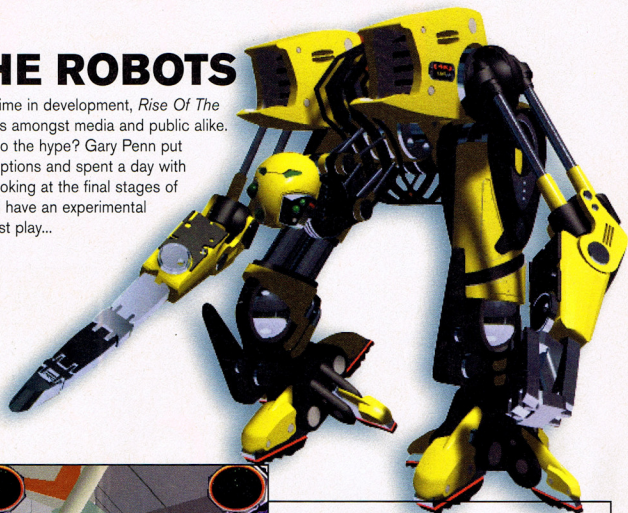
36 RISE OF THE ROBOTS

Almost complete after what seems like a lifetime in development, *Rise Of The Robots* has already achieved legendary status amongst media and public alike.

But can it live up to the hype? Gary Penn put aside all preconceptions and spent a day with Instinct Design, looking at the final stages of development and have an experimental first play...



Do you fancy some, pal, or what? *Rise's* combatants limbering up for action.



88 TIE BREAKER

Pestered by Rebel scum? No problem! Our definitive survival guide to LucasArts' *TIE Fighter* will have you swatting those X-Wings away like flies in no time. PLUS! The final part of our *Ultima VIII* solution and *Monkey Island* cracked in classic fashion...



Invaluable flying and shooting tips in Andy Butcher's *TIE Fighter* guide.

REGULARS

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18 DOOM II - THE FIRST REAL PICTURES!

Direct from the USA, we've got the first actual screenshots (and by that we mean not just some crap blurry ones hastily cut from the pages of an

American magazine) of id Software's *Doom II: Hell On Earth*. The game's almost complete and ready for review, but in the meantime feast your peepers on another Eyewitness exclusive...



Doom II - it's so nearly, nearly here. All we have to do it just hang on a teeny weeny bit longer... oh, its no good - aaaarrggghhhh!!

8 COVERDISKS!

When we tell you that the *PC Gamer* coverdisks bring you the best playable demos and shareware, we're not mucking about. This month's double-floppy bonanza brings you an exclusive playable sample of Krisalis' highly-rated *Manchester United Premier League Champions* (in which you get to score against Arsenal - how can you resist?) and *Mystic Towers*, the latest brain-boggler from Apogee. And don't forget that next month sees the arrival of the first ever *PC Gamer* CD-ROM Edition - you asked for it, and by jinyim you're going to get it.

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081 8135618

Internet users can find Epic shareware games in "/msdos/Games/Epic" on "ftp.uml.edu". You'll also find them in all the best shareware libraries. So, what are you waiting for? Go try jazz Jackrabbit today!



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This magazine comes from Future Computing, a division of Future Publishing Ltd, the largest publisher of computer game titles in Europe. British magazines include: *Edge*, *PC Format*, *PC Plus*, *PC Answers*, *Amiga Format*, *Amiga Power*, *Amiga Shopper*, *ST Format*, *CD-ROM Today*, *GamesMaster*, *Sega Power*, *Total*, *Super Play*, *MacFormat*, *Commodore*, *Format*, *Amstrad Action*, and *PCW Plus*

In addition, we now publish these magazines in the United States: *Game Players*, *PC Gamer*, *Computer Entertainment News*, *CD-ROM Today* and assorted *Game Players* specials

Printed in the UK

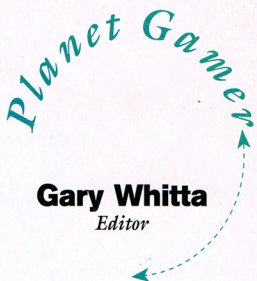
Next issue on sale

Thursday 25 August 1994

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Winnie, where are you?



Gary Whitta Editor

When I meet somebody for the first time and they ask me what I do for a living and I tell

them, the most common response is "wow, it must be great to get paid to play games all day long." It's at this point that I often contemplate giving them a good dig in the solar plexus - as anybody in this line of work will tell you, 95% of the job consists of horrible editorial-type toil, with only the remaining 5% spent playing games - and then most of that's taken up trying to get screenshots (a task which can take take the fun out of any game, even *Doom*) and the like. It's the freelancers (those ugly mugs down below) who have all the fun. Never has this been more true than this month - in-between getting the mag sorted and fretting about all the sexy new stuff we've got planned I've only found time to review two games - a new all-time low. Maybe I should jack it all in and become a freelance reviewer (on second thoughts, looking at the state of some when they visit the office, perhaps not).

"But Gaz!" I hear you cry. "What is this sexy new stuff of which you speak?"

Well, you'll notice that this month we're bigger than ever before - about an inch and a bit bigger in fact. But our conversion from A4 to new extra-bulgy Super A4 is only the beginning - the real thrill-power (as another esteemed publication would put it) begins next month, when our current floppy disk-based issues will be joined by an all-new CD-ROM edition. The magazine will be the same, but rather than being limited to two high-density floppies, CD-ROM owners will be treated to hundreds of megabytes of the latest in game demos, shareware, add-ons and other cool stuff - every month! If you've been wondering when the CD-ROM revolution will finally arrive, be down the newsgroups one month from today and get your answer. Until then, then...

PC GAMER Contributors



Gary Penn

Gary took time out from his habitual addiction to Microsoft's *Arcade Pack* (he's anxiously awaiting the sequel) this month to visit Instinct Design's office in Congleton and look in on the development of their much-hyped (and much delayed) *Rise Of The Robots*. The *Chaos Engine* has also been a worthwhile time-waster for the portly pundit over the last four weeks.



James Leach

The editor of sister mag *SuperPlay* and occasional PCG correspondent got his head round the ecologically-sound *Burntime* this month, but was too busy riding his motorbike in a reckless fashion and eating cream cakes to do much else.



Andy Dyer

A busy bee on the CD front (he's got an exceptionally high tolerance for rendered sequences), our man Dyer has been enjoying the delights of *International Tennis Open* and the slightly more dubious pleasures of *Wrath Of The Gods* for us this month. Much better than editing *TOTAL* magazine any day of the week, we reckon.



Frank O'Connor

Frank is unable to comment on his activities this month, as he is involved in a top secret magazine launch project, but still found time to review *Soccer Kid* and *Shadow Of The Comet* CD for us. When asked for more information on his new project, he told us "all you'll get is my name, rank and serial number, you Nazi scum. Go on, do your worst!" We think he's taking things a bit far.



Simon Williams

Can you imagine a life where you're constantly answering the front door to a motorcycle courier handing you a brand new item of sexy PC hardware, often worth thousands of pounds - for free? Then you can probably imagine being our resident hardware expert Simon Williams - although it's not all freebies. The poor sap spent the rest of his free time plugging various graphics cards into his PC as part of his group test for this month's Systems.



Phil South

Just when you think having a space shuttle nut on the freelance books is no use at all, a title like *Space Simulator* crops up and suddenly someone who knows their

escape velocity from their orbital insertion point is worth a mint. Unsurprisingly, Phil was our first choice to cast his eye over Microsoft's latest tour de force.



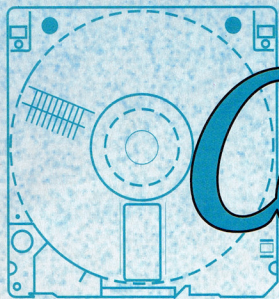
Brian Walker

The former editor of *Strategy Plus* has so far restricted his expertise to reviewing wargames for *PC Gamer*, but this month he casts his net wider with a new column for strategy and simulation players. This monthly feature will cover every facet of the genres - check out the first on page 80. Oh, and he's reviewed a load of wargames as well.



Matt Firme & Steve Poole

Collectively, they're the co-editors of *PC Gamer's* American edition, which they co-edited earlier this year. Steve is the former editor of PCG's American forerunner *PC Entertainment*, while Matt hails from the console side of things, and the *GamesPlayers Sega Guide* - although the seductive charms of *Doom* have since converted him to the ways of the PC. You'll find the first of their regular American reports on page 83.



Coverdisks!

How do we do it? Yet another bulging two disk issue, both of them bursting at the seams with goodies we know you can't wait to get your hands on. One is a fully playable demo of an excellent new game, the other a complete shareware extravaganza.

THIS MONTH'S DISK STARS



Disk 1

Manchester United Premier League Champions

Krisalis

Experience one of the finest footie games ever to grace the PC in this exclusive playable demo that pits the Red Devils against the Gunners and puts you in charge. Skilful goals, superhuman headers, vicious tackles, flukey shots, hideous defensive errors and dodgy decisions by the ref – everything you know and love about real football is in this game, but now you'll have no-one to blame but yourself – choose your own squad, set your own tactics and play the game of your making.



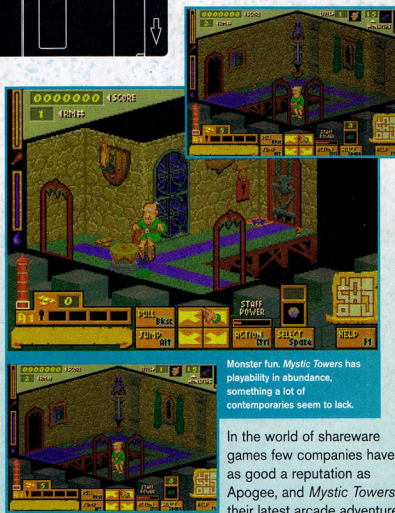
We reckon that this is one of the best soccer games around. You choose your team and tactics, and run your own rewards from skilful ball control, vicious tackles – you name it, you can do it. Of course, you can also blow it.



Disk 2

Mystic Towers

Apogee



Monster fun. *Mystic Towers* has playability in abundance, something a lot of contemporaries seem to lack.

In the world of shareware games few companies have as good a reputation as Apogee, and *Mystic Towers*, their latest arcade adventure, shows exactly why. Magic, monsters, treasure, traps, puzzles and mazes all packed into huge multi-level towers and isometrically viewed – what more could a gamer ask for? In these days of breathtaking graphics and high technology, it often falls to shareware to remind us all of the most important ingredient in any game – pure, unadulterated playability. And *Mystic Towers* has it flowing out of its ears, mouth, nose and every other orifice.

Disk 1

Manchester United Premier League Champions

Krisalis



You know which ones are playing by the little white number that appears above their head. You can control how hard and in which direction the ball is going to travel by practising with the 'Fire' button. Eventually you should be able to curve the ball sneakily into the goal.

System Requirements

The *Manchester United Premier League Champions* demo needs at least a 386, with 500K of free base memory and 4 Mb RAM in total. You'll also need DOS 3.3 later, about 2MB of free hard drive space and a Microsoft compatible mouse.

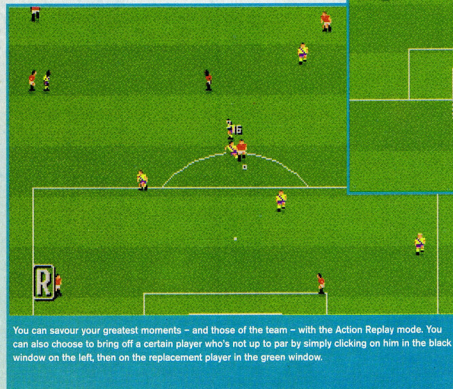
The game supports Soundblaster and compatible sound cards, and a joystick or joypad is highly recommended, although there are keyboard controls.

Installation And Running

Before playing the *MUPLC* demo you must first install it to your hard drive. The game can only be installed and played from DOS, so if you are using Windows quit out before continuing. (Please note – the following instructions assume that drive C: is your hard drive and drive A: your 3.5in floppy drive. If your machine differs from this you'll have to substitute your drive letters in the following commands.)

To install the game, put the coverdisk into your floppy drive, then from the C:\> prompt type A: and hit RETURN to switch to the drive. From the new A:\> prompt type PCG and hit RETURN to begin the install program. After a short pause you'll see the title screen of the game. Press any key or click on the button with the mouse to bring up the configuration screen. Use the mouse to make your selections, then click on the INSTALL button and the program will create a directory on your hard drive and transfer the game files into it.

Once the game has been installed you'll find yourself in the



You can savour your greatest moments – and those of the team – with the Action Replay mode. You can also choose to bring off a certain player who's not up to par by simply clicking on him in the black window on the left, then on the replacement player in the green window.

game directory (C:\KRISALIS\MUPLC unless you changed it on the configuration screen). To play the demo simply type GO and hit RETURN. If you want to play again later, from the C:\> prompt type CD KRISALIS\MUPLC (or whatever the name of the directory is if you changed it on the configuration screen) and hit RETURN, then type GO and hit RETURN once more.

How To Play

Our exclusive demo of *Manchester United Premier League Champions* gives you the chance to play the Red Devils against rival club Arsenal for one complete half. Before the game you can pick your players and decide on a formation, as well as taking a sneaky peek at the opposition. Then it's into the game proper, where the aim is simply to score more goals than the Gunners.



Your Red Devils line up completed, you can quickly sneak a look at the Gunners through the magnifying icon.

Control

The *Manchester United Premier League Champions* demo has two main sections. Upon loading you'll be presented with the Tacti-Grid™ screen, which is controlled entirely by the mouse. Although not all the controls function in this demo version, you can still choose your team and tactics. To change your squad, click on the player you want in the black window to the far left, then on the player in the green window next to it that you want to swap him for. The grid on the far right shows your team's formation. Clicking on the large blue and gold arrows beneath this will swap between several standard formations, or you can design your own by clicking on the player in the grid, then on the square you want to move him to. To view your opponents, Arsenal, click on the magnifying glass icon in the lower right – click again to return to your team. When you're satisfied with your squad and formation, click on the tick icon in the lower right corner to start the match.

You automatically control the player with the ball, he's the one with the number above his head. When you have the ball pressing the fire button kicks it – how hard is determined by how long you hold down the button. You can control the height and swerve of the ball by moving the controller as the ball is kicked – pushing away from the ball lifts it, in the direction of the kick keeps it low, and at right angles to the kick curls the ball in that direction. These directions can be combined; for example, if you're kicking straight up the screen, pull back and to the right as the ball is struck, and it will be high and curl right.

When you haven't got the ball, pushing the fire button will do various things depending on your player's distance from the ball and its current height. For example, if another player is dribbling the ball, pushing fire will perform a sliding tackle, but if the ball is in the air it will perform a header. Whatever the move performed, you can control the direction that the ball will be hit in a similar manner to when you're kicking it.

The keyboard controls are as follows:

Up Q
Down A
Left P
Right O
Fire Space

Be warned: the goalies in this game are really good...

In addition, hitting F1 when the ball is out of play will bring up the Tacti-Grid™ screen, allowing you to change formation and so on in-game, and R will give a replay of the most recent play (these are automatic after a goal).

Hints And Tips

The computer-controlled goalies are very, very good. As such, the only way to score is with a lot of swerve into one corner of the net, or from a rebound, where the goalie dives but doesn't keep the ball. Various types and angles of shot are more successful than others, so you'll need to experiment.

Disk 2

Mystic Towers 3D Apogee



System Requirements

Mystic Towers requires a 286 with at least 500k of free base memory to run, although a 386 with 550k is recommended. The game will use any extra EMM memory you have, but this is not required.

Soundblaster and Soundblaster Pro cards (or 100% compatibles) are supported, as is a joystick or joystick.

Installation And Running

As with *Manchester United Premier League Champions*, *Mystic Towers* must be installed onto your hard drive before playing, and the installation and running of the game can only be done from DOS.

Put the coverdisk into your floppy drive, and from the C:\> prompt type A: and hit RETURN. From the new A:\> prompt, type PCG and hit RETURN. After a short pause you'll see a preview in-game shot, then the title will appear. When the box appears asking you to do so, hit a key (or click on the box with the mouse) and the installation program will ask you what drive and directory to install to. Unless you have a strange PC setup, choose C for the drive, and just hit return to accept the default directory, C:\TOWERS. Hit Y when asked if you want to create the directory, and the game files will be transferred to your hard drive.

When the installation program has finished, you'll find yourself back at DOS, in the game directory on your hard drive (C:\TOWERS unless you changed it during installation). To play *Mystic Towers*, just type TOWERS and hit RETURN. To play the game later, from the C:\> prompt type CD TOWERS (or whatever you called the directory if you changed it), hit RETURN then type TOWERS and hit RETURN. If you have any problems getting *Mystic Towers* running or in the game, type M-HELP and hit RETURN from within the game directory to bring up the help file.

How To Play

You must assume the character of Baron Baldric, and it is your task to make your way through the labyrinthine levels of monster-filled towers, built by your evil ancestor Baron Lazarus. In each tower you must kill all the baddies, then find and destroy the Monster Generator that's spewing out the evil creatures.



Magic is your only weapon in the game, in the form of 10 different spells – five increasingly powerful attacks, and five multi-purpose spells, used for healing, teleporting and so on. At the start of each level you have access to only the



Now you're standing in front of this lever you'll need to use the 'Action' key (CTRL). Magic don't work on everything, it seems...



As Baldric it's your task to find your way out of the Tower. You'll need to be canny in using the various spells you'll find scattered about.

weakest combat spell, which can be cast an unlimited amount of times. Scattered will-nilly around the towers you will find other spells that can be picked up and used, but don't chuck them away too

carelessly, as you only get a limited number of each one.

In addition to the monsters and the spells to kill them, you will also find food and drink to keep you healthy, and many different puzzles, traps and mazes to be solved.

In this, the shareware version of the game, there is one Apprentice Tower and one much tougher Wizard Tower, both containing many levels. The fully registered version has a total of 12 towers – see the Contacts box in this issue's Shareware section (page 76) for Epic MegaGame's UK telephone number if you'd like to order this version.

Control

Mystic Towers can be controlled with the mouse, keyboard, joystick or a combination of these methods. The best thing to do is to read the full instructions provided on the menu screen, but here are the basic key commands for reference:

Movement

Up & Right

Down & Right

Down & Left

Up & Left

PAGE UP, 8 and 9 on the numeric keypad, or the UP ARROW on the cursor pad
PAGE DOWN, 3 and 6 on the numeric pad, or RIGHT ARROW on the cursor pad
END, 1 and 2 on the numeric pad, or DOWN ARROW on the cursor pad
HOME, 4 and 7 on the numeric pad, or LEFT ARROW on the cursor pad

Other Controls

Jump

Action

Pull

Select Spell

ALT

CTRL

BACKSPACE

SPACE or 1-0 on the keyboard

The 'Action' key varies in effect depending on the situation. If you're standing in front of something you'll pick it up, eat it or drink it. If you're standing in front of a door or lever you'll use it, and if you're standing in the open you'll cast the currently selected spell.

To push an object just walk into it – the 'Pull' command is only used when you can't push something in the right direction.

For a full explanation of the various status bars and displays, see the in-game instructions.

Remember that you can go back to the menu at any time simply by pressing ESCAPE, then resume play using the 'Play' or 'Resume Game' option, to check the instructions whenever you want.

Got A Problem?

We do our utmost to ensure that you'll have a trouble-free time with your PC Gamer coverdisk, however there's a slim possibility you might have problems getting yours to work properly. If it just won't run, or if you're not getting sound or something, it may be that you haven't got enough memory or that your machine isn't configured properly. If this is the case, go back to the install program and use the Make Boot Disk option to do just that. Follow the on-screen prompts and the program will format a blank disk (providing you've got one at the ready) especially for this demo. Once it's done that, restart your machine with this new disk in the drive and wait for the machine to boot. The *Manchester United Premier League Champions* and *Mystic Towers* demos should then run normally.

If you're still having trouble, or if the games simply won't install at all, it's possible – although extremely unlikely – that you have a defective disk (there may be many reasons for this). If you're convinced that the disk is dodgy, return it to the address below and a new, working version will be returned to you within 28 days. We can't say fairer than that now, can we?

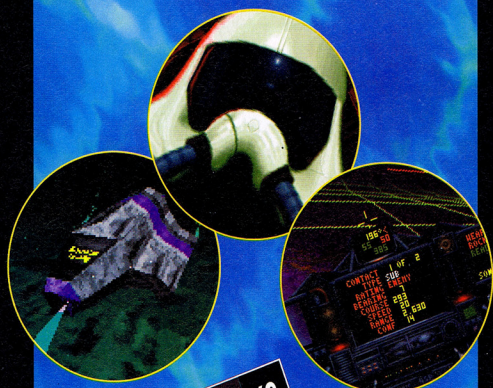
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S I M U L A T I O N

MICROPROSE

SCOOP!

Your First Look At...

PGA TOUR

Electronic Arts' seasoned campaigner gets the CD treatment and finds itself in contention for major honours again.

BY CHRIS BUXTON

It's testimony to the quality of Electronic Arts' original *PGA Tour Golf* game that when we compiled the PC Gamer Top 50 a few months ago, it was the only golf game to make it in there. In fact, it was the only golf game we considered. The reason? Simply that no game since *PGA Tour Golf* came out in 1989 has been as playable. EA Sports' first CD-ROM-only release, *PGA Tour Golf 486*, looks to update the original by adding a new photo-realistic 3D graphics engine and other extras such as in-game commentary, full motion video clips and digitised PGA Tour pros.

So, how do you keep the gameplay of the original and yet make the package more attractive to a 1994 audience? "One key feature that has differentiated our product in the past is the tournament mode where

Driving The Golf



you play against actual PGA Tour pros", said the game's Executive Producer, Sam Nelson. "We knew we must keep this feature in the product line going forward. We've even embellished that by filming our feature PGA Tour pros and incorporating their actual image and golf swings into the game. Other than that... we took a step back and basically redesigned the entire product. Going to CD rather than floppy or cart made it easy to do."

Easily the most noticeable difference between *PGA Tour 486* and its predecessor is the graphics engine. "We wanted to upgrade it and bring the elegance of the sport of golf to the consumer", explained Sam. "We knew that we wanted to incorporate hills and valleys for the first time for the courses represented. The old *PGA Tour Golf* products had no hills whereas *PGA Tour 486* now accurately reflects the look and the feel of the course depicted." Another aspect of the golf courses that Sam and the PGA team wanted to get right was – and here comes the only dismal golf pun of this scoop – the greenery. "We wanted to populate the individual courses accurately with trees and bushes. We did this and, in fact, one of the holes on River Highlands has over 1200 trees alone on the hole. That's a pretty big jump from our earlier products."

There are also other, seemingly cosmetic, changes that the EA Sports team have made that

(Above) With a choice of some of the US's top players, and the knowledge that each and every tiny movement and reaction has been studied and assimilated into the gameplay, you get a real feel for the game. You can almost feel the caddy breathing down your neck and the crowd waiting with bated breath for your next shot.

should make *PGA Tour Golf 486* stand out. "We updated the interface when on the course to a circular metre utilising a new aiming arc." Putting's changed too and the player can now choose to play as one of the PGA Tour pros or to play against them. And, in keeping with EA Sports' obsession with TV-style presentation, each hole is introduced with a video clip and inoffensive muzak burbles away merrily in the background over the game menus. According to Sam, "the key to the TV presentation is that most of the



F.Y.I.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

In a nutshell Electronic Arts' watershed golf game gets a complete overhaul adding all the essentials for any self-respecting nineties game – CD speech, photo-realistic SVGA graphics, a willingness to change nappies etc.

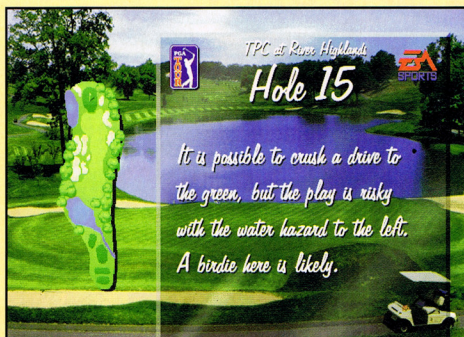
What's so special? There are two new courses – the TPC Summerlin and the TPC River Highlands – a beautiful new 3D graphics engine, new terrain features, nine US PGA pros and it's the sequel to our favourite golf game.

Why should I care? Great computer golf games have the same feel as real golf – relaxing and enjoyable yet challenging and rewarding. *PGA Tour 486* should be a great golf game.

And when's it coming out? October, just in time for... or, the American Football season. Still, I'm sure it's a very clever marketing ploy.

GOLF 486

Game Forward



screen is dedicated to the shot and the view of the individual hole rather than other games that display more "computer" style information. The result is a clean look that shows more of the course. You aren't reminded that you are playing a computer game."

There's also commentary for each hole recorded, again, in the style of American TV presentation as Sam went on to say. "The commentary of the game is purposely done in hushed whispers which is consistent with TV broadcasting. It informs the player as to the game or tournament situation before the shot rather than after the shot which is how other games treat commentary." To further reinforce the televised feel of the game, nine of the American PGA Tour's pros are in the game including Fuzzy Zoeller, Tom Kite, Davis Love III, Brad Faxon and Mark O'Meara. "Each pro's individual swings (drives, chip shots, fairway iron shots, sand blasts and putts) were filmed. We even filmed the pros dropping the ball as though they had hit the water which was their idea. We filmed their reactions as though they made a long putt and then as though they missed an easy one."

The final version of PGA Tour Golf 486 will have three courses, all current venues on the real life PGA Tour. TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Verde, Florida, is where The Players Championship, referred to as "The Fifth Major", is played and it's best known for its 17th hole, the Island Green. TPC River Highlands in Connecticut is a relatively short par 70 course but narrow fairways and hilly terrain should prove a testing ground. Finally, TPC Summerlin in Las Vegas is a desert course designed by Fuzzy Zoeller - apparently, if you stray off the fairways here you'll end up in a right mess.

To accurately reproduce the courses the EA Sports team compiled data from all manner of sources

- course scorecards, magazines, books, videos of TV broadcasts, videos and stills from course walkthroughs, conversation with actual course pros, topographical maps and discussions with the designers of the courses. "We even employ librarians to search



The commentary - given before each shot, unlike other golf games - is delivered in hushed, reverential tones in the style of American TV presentation. It's another atmospheric touch.

The final version of PGA Tour Golf 486 will have three famous US courses, all current on the real life PGA circuit. This is the River Highlands course in Connecticut.

out this information", added Sam, "we even find out the genus and species of the trees and bushes on the course and try to use them in the product."

From what we've seen, PGA Tour Golf 486 certainly looks better than other golf games and, if they make a game that lasts as long as the first PGA they'll have a real winner. "We are currently deciding which courses to include in the future. Any ideas from our friends across The Pond are most welcome!", states Sam. Alright then, how about a European Tour edition with Faldo, Ballesteros, Montgomerie, Olazabal & Co. played at St. Andrews. Or maybe even a special Ryder Cup edition set at The Belfry or Kiowa Island. Or what about... **PGA**



Whole libraries of librarians have spent hours researching the minutiae of the trees and bushes that surround each hole on each course. What genus was the tree, how many bushes are around the fifteenth green... it's an impressive feat in a game that sweats details.

SCOOP!

Your First Look At...

QUARANTINE

Escape From Doom?

Despite the cynical mutterings of many hardened journalists, Doom hasn't given rise to a stream of 3D blasters. Until now, that is... BY ANDY BUTCHER

F.Y.I.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

In a nutshell? *Doom* in car, with a plot. In *Quarantine*, you become a taxi driver in the violent and deadly world of a city-prison wracked by a terrible psychosis-inducing plague, fighting off street gangs and other undesirables in an attempt to escape—imagine a combination of *Mad Max* and *Escape From New York*, with a bit of *Taxi Driver* thrown in for good measure.

What's so special? Apart from the smooth and detailed 3D and the huge variety of weapons, power-ups and enemies, there's actually a plot behind all the mindless violence. On top of all the blasting fun, there's what promises to be an interesting and involving story that develops through the game and gives some direction to the proceedings. Rather than degenerating into just another shoot 'em up, *Quarantine* looks like it may provide enough incentive to keep playing after the initial novelty wears off.

Why should I care? Come on, who wouldn't jump at the chance to cruise around the grimy streets of a crime-ravaged neighbourhood in a heavily armoured and even more heavily armed car? You'll never have to give way at a stop sign again, and if someone gets in your way, you just blast the bits or run them over. What more could you ask for?

And when's it coming out? October, in both CD and floppy versions.



Considering how much effort seems to be put into developing and explaining the background story and plot for most games, it's remarkable how little relevance most of them have. Apart from the odd graphic adventure or RPG, very few seem to pay anything more than lip service to the fevered workings of the poor game designers, frustrated novelists one and all, who put so much time and effort into justifying the proceedings. It's something of a shame, because every now and then the background story of a game is actually quite interesting, and suggests many ideas that the game will typically ignore.

Take Gametek's next major release, *Quarantine*. In the year 2022 the city of Kemo is a

(Left and below) To escape from the prison city of Quarantine you will have to travel between its five zones, each of which has unique architecture and geography, from parks to downtown suburbs.



thriving metropolis, a seething pit of commerce and hi-tech industries... And inner city crime. Despite various initiatives, the situation continues to decline, and so in 2029 the new mayor takes a drastic step and 'Project Q' is put into action. A ring of properties surrounding the crime-ravaged inner city is bought up by the government, which then proceeds to knock them down and build a huge containment wall around the entire area, with internal walls dividing the old city up into five zones. The perimeter is heavily mined and dotted with gun emplacements, and the



(Above) The hood-mounted flamethrower is one of the game's most impressive weapons, complete with a superbly animated burst of fire.

TINE

Game Quarantine
Developer Imaginix
UK Publisher Gametek
Proposed Price £39.99
Now Complete? 80%



(Above) When ammo's running low, or you're just feeling particularly belligerent, you can always ram the baddies into oblivion. This works rather well against motor bikes, smaller cars and pedestrians...

(Left) ...But isn't quite as effective when faced with big armoured trucks like this - hitting them head on does tend to hurt just a little bit. Still, with no big guns and no ammo, what other choice do you have? (Alright, you could run away, but that's no fun at all.)



only exit is heavily guarded. The surrounding city of New Kemo is rendered virtually crime free, and anyone caught committing an offence is exiled to the enclosed inner city, dubbed Quarantine.

After the predictable year or two of rampant anarchy, continuous violence and unchecked crime the inhabitants of Quarantine get a bit bored, and a citizen's committee is formed to restore the community's infrastructure. Power, food and water are all brought back on line, and people quickly start to feel the benefits, not least of which is the re-establishment of the embedded power grid required by hover cars.

Despite the advances, Quarantine remains a violent and lawless place, a situation that isn't helped by the continuous influx of convicted criminals from the rest of country.

"The variety of weapons should be enough to keep even the most firepower-crazed player happy, with some very nasty options thrown in - the best of which are the wheel-mounted buzz-saws."

By 2046 the overcrowding is reaching a critical level and the threat of a massive outbreak of uncontrolled violence continues to grow. In an effort to calm the situation a New Kemo corporation gets permission to treat Quarantine's water supply with a new drug, Hydergine 3444, purported to eliminate 'criminal urges' in patients. Unfortunately, the polluted and disease-carrying water of the inner city reacts badly with the drug, and a psychoreactive virus forms. Those infected suffer progressive neural breakdown, causing homicidal and schizophrenic delusions. The disease spreads rapidly, until half the prisoners have become crazed homicidal lunatics intent on killing anyone who isn't a crazed homicidal lunatic.

Now the majority of games would take all this Escape From New York-inspired background, with all its

potential, and use it as a simple justification for some mindless violence. And indeed, *Quarantine* does just that. Remarkably, though, it also utilises it to give the game a plot and definite objectives.

You play the role of Drake Edgewater, one of the few cab drivers that continue to serve the streets of Quarantine. Up until now your only real ambition in life has been to survive from day to day. But with the outbreak of the neuro-virus and the rampaging mobs of psychotic killers it's caused, you've suddenly found some motivation to escape.

In form, *Quarantine* strongly resembles *Doom*, but in a car. The city is portrayed in smooth, reasonably detailed 3D, complete with street gangs, crazed nutters, heavily armed and armoured vehicles, other cabs, and even the odd innocent bystander. To get anywhere in the game you're going to need a lot of money, and you earn this by giving people rides. As you cruise the streets you'll be hailed by potential customers. Stop and they'll jump in, telling you where they want to go, how much they'll pay and how much time you've got to get them there. Using the built-in map and wayfinder you battle your way through the violent streets and drop them off. Money earned can be used to repair your cab and buy new guns and ammo from the various depot and repair shops scattered through the city.

Even at this early stage, the variety of weapons should be enough to keep even the most firepower-crazed player happy, with some very nasty options thrown in - the best of which are the wheel-mounted buzz-saws, ideal for dealing with motorcycles and slow-moving pedestrians. Unfortunately, everything you can buy is also available to the rabid gangs out on the street.

As the game progresses you begin to pick up clues and rumours from passengers, which you can decide to follow up on and enter the real 'plot' of the game. Several of these leads will result in special missions and new discoveries vital to your quest for freedom. During the game you will discover secret entrances and hidden routes that allow passage between each of the five city sectors, slowly coming to learn which areas in each to avoid and which are safer, helping you decide what fares to take and moving the all-important plot forward.

With its combination of demolition derby, racing and 3D shoot 'em-up all set against a backdrop that combines *Escape From New York* with *Mad Max*, *Quarantine* certainly looks to have a lot to offer. And in a plot and game objectives that should prevent the lack of direction and ultimate boredom of many, more straightforward games, and it looks like Gametek just might have a winner on their hands.

PC



(Above) There's nothing quite like a roof-mounted cluster bomb launcher for tricky moments.

SCOOP!

Your First Look At...

SUPERKA

Ace arcade action on a PC!

What a versatile machine your PC is. Flight sims? A doddle. Role-playing games? Pah, it can do them with its eyes shut. Graphic adventures, strategy games? It's had more than you've had hot dinners. Arcade games? Ah... oh. No, despite its proven technical excellence in just about every genre on the block, the PC has been struggling to gain credibility as an action machine. It's not as if we don't want to play those kind of games - it's just that the PC was never really cut out for them.

But the times, they are a-changing, and as technical awareness of what the PC can actually do grows, the variety of games under development is increasing. In recent months we've seen faster, smoother examples of 2D platform games but the real watershed may come in the form of a game from a hitherto unknown team called Manic Media Productions. The development trio of Jon Stuart, Paul McCracken and Dave Hoskins have turned their years



Play it and believe it - Manic Media's RT3D technology looks as detailed and as fluid as that seen in Doom - but there's cars in it!

of experience on 16-bit computer and console formats towards the PC to produce *Superka*, a super-fast 3D sprite-based racing game in the classic tradition of games like *Powerdrift* and *Super Mario Kart*. But... but... surely such a task is impossible? Well, once you've seen *Superka* in action on screen, your

Eat your Super FX chip out, Nintendo! Stick it up your DVP processor, Sega! This slick 3D sprite-based racing game leaves the competition standing.

BY GARY WHITTA

cobwebby old preconceptions of what the PC is and isn't capable of will simply melt away. It's slicker, smoother and faster than any console-based driving game you care to mention, and, at top gear, it could even give a few coin-ops a run for their money.

Superka's programmer Paul McCracken admits that the game was inspired by what was going on on other formats. "There have been precious few games ever written that convey the thrill of driving a car quickly, let alone those that combine that excitement with fun gameplay," he says. "You either have a true simulation, like *Formula One Grand Prix* - which is a superb game in its own right but too difficult to play

F.Y.I.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

In a nutshell? They said it couldn't be done, but the arcade-style sprite-based 3D racing game is coming to the PC, faster and more impressive than most of its contemporaries. Race around the world in your go-kart, collect power-ups, kick up dirt and win.

What's so special? In a word, RT3D. Manic Media's prototype graphics engine has produced some stunning coin-op quality graphics, faster than any console and enough to send shockwaves through the PC development world. This could be the game that finally breaks the PC out of its "can't do arcade games" mould.

Why should I care? Because if you've got an open mind you'll appreciate the chance to get some decent arcade thrills on your machine without having to buy a console or go back to playing *Doom* again.

And when's it coming out? It's being officially launched at the European Computer Trade Show in London next month.



RTS

(Right) It's fast, it's dirty - it's Superkarts, still looking a little rough around the edges as the final graphics are being put in, but already faster than the rest.

(Below) Superkarts offers an eight-player mode for those with network cards.



to the limit for most people - or you have pure fun racing games like *Micro Machines*, which again is great fun to play but, in our view, ultimately lacks the excitement of racing.

"You really have to look towards the consoles, the Super Nintendo in particular, to see where gameplay meets excitement. It is only recently that some PC games have been able to display these sorts

"The system allows the PC to produce graphics beyond any 16-bit console - even though some people said it wasn't possible"

of graphics at the speeds necessary to allow arcade quality games to appear."

"We looked at why people enjoyed playing racing games, like Daytona GP and Ridge Racer in the arcades so much. We discovered three major reasons:



(Above/right) For designers Manic Media, it's all about taking the rough with the smooth - a high frame rate for the smooth feel and plenty of mud sliding and kart bashing potential for the super-macho rough players. That's the kind of malarkey we can't get enough of.



(a) the frame rate when compared to most PC games was much higher, giving a beautifully smooth, high-speed feel to the game, (b) people loved sliding their cars round corners at high speed and (c) they loved bashing into other cars and pushing them off the

road. We've tried to incorporate all of these features into *Superkarts*."

To tackle the biggest problem - getting a PC to perform like an arcade machine - the team came up with RT3D, a dedicated real-time 3D graphics program which produces smooth-moving texture-mapped environments like those seen in Doom, along with "a unique curved perspective which gives a feeling of depth and speed that is greater than other, similar, systems."

"Superkarts and the RT3D graphics engine were designed with ultimate performance in mind," says McCracken. "The system allows the PC to produce graphics beyond any 16-bit console - even though some people said it simply would not be possible without additional hardware."

The game itself is as straightforward as its console-inspired origins suggest - the player competes over various circuits around the world against a grid of computer opponents. PC racers brought up on *F1* and *IndyCar* games will welcome the chance to kick up some dirt as the low-sliding karts race over a selection of rough terrains with mud splattering all over the shop. Split lap times and all that malarkey don't get a look-in - all you've got to do is finish in the top three to qualify for the next circuit. To help you do so, there are some handy power-ups littering the track, including turbo speed-ups, supergrip tyres and oil slicks. *Mario Kart* players will recognise most of these features, along with the split-screen two-player mode, where the game is sure to come into its own. One thing the humble Nintendo can't offer, however, is an eight-player mode for those with network cards - office managers look out.

Manic Media expects *Superkarts* to raise more than a few eyebrows when it's released.

"As an arcade game platform, the PC of today certainly has the capability of taking on the current range of 16-bit consoles and winning," says McCracken, "and I'd say that with *Superkarts* we're pushing the PC to the absolute limit - the game can't be any faster." So what does the team have planned next? "A holiday..."



EYE WITNESS

Interviews, Opinion And – Yes! – News From The World Of PC Games

Doom II: Hell On Earth



It's here! The hotly-awaited sequel to THE game of the year has been kept under wraps by id Software... until now.

As we revealed last month, *Doom II: Hell On Earth* will feature between 27 and 30 brand new levels and six new enemies. Early shots of the brand new Cacodemons look impressive with a different, gruesome looking head and, although you can't see it on these early screenshots, they'll fire 'Lost Souls' at you (Lost Souls are the

screaming heads trapped in the walls in *Doom*).

We've also got hold of pictures that show what has to be the most formidable *Doom* level ever conceived – the duel between the Spiderdemon and the Cyberdemon. In this level, you enter a room which looks shut behind you and leaves you trapped between the two arch-demons. You have to flick a switch to raise the floor up to the level of the exit. They'll

(Right) *Doom II*'s room of doom. You'll need to flick a switch and hang around in this not-so-friendly fire area to make it off this level.

(Left) This corpulent new demon has a plasma gun in place of each forearm – another *Doom* adversary to avoid methinks...



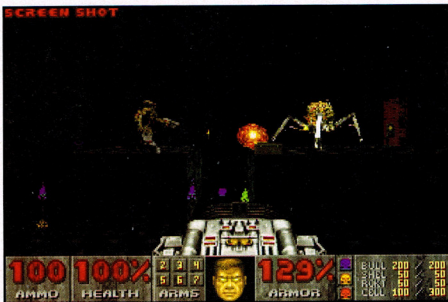
(Above) One of the new villains in *Doom II: Hell On Earth* is a junior version of the original *Doom*'s final bad guy – the Spiderdemon. This miniature is only twice as big as you and should be easy to take out... so long as you have a rocket launcher.

(Left) A brief glimpse of part (or should that be parts) of the new chaingun-bearing Sergeant. The castle-top battlements and cancellations are also visible and very attractive they are too.

scaled-down version of the original Spiderdemon (as if it's going to be any easier) and chaingun-toting Sergeant who looks very spectacular when you blow him away. Another new enemy is a demon that has plasma guns instead of arms – just like the 'little' Spiderdemon, this is one enemy not to be messed with.

Doom 2 also promises new-look backgrounds and wall textures including a new brick surface and some classy wood, used to good effect in a fort-like building that you can just see beyond the sergeant. From what we can see the levels in general look much more imposing and far 'taller' than the ones in *Doom*.

Doom 2 will be released on Dooomsday – that's Monday 10 October for those who haven't already put it in their diary. No price details yet.





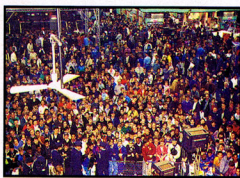
(Left) Two new Cacodemons get a bead on you – in the final version they'll fire the screaming 'Lost Souls' heads at you instead of fireballs. In the background you can just make out another new enemy derived from Doom's Baron Of Hell.



(Above) New wall textures and new background graphics will help distinguish *Doom II: Hell on Earth* from its predecessor.

(Right) A delicate new brick texture is accentuated by a subtle light on the wall giving this shot the quality of an early Rembrandt or a Caravaggio (Oh shut up! – Ed.).

Go to the Show!



(Above) Whether you want to play the latest game releases, track down a bargain or meet the PC Gamer team the Future Entertainment Show is for you.

The date for the third Future Entertainment Show is fast approaching and it will showcase the best of the PC world – games, graphics, hardware, home office – it'll all be there. There will also be a special, dedicated PC Theatre manned by the assembled might of Future Publishing's PC magazines, *PC Answers*, *PC Format* and, of course, *PC Gamer*.

Among the events that will be going on at the PC Theatre are... a Developer's Question and Answer session where you can quiz the likes of Jon Hare (*Sensible*), Peter Molyneux (*Bullfrog*) and Fergus McGovern (*Probe*) about their latest productions or about game design in general... a Juke Box Jury where software developers and games

The Future Entertainment Show

Earls Court 2
26th – 30th October 1994

CD-Rom • Amiga • Mac • PC • CD-i • Consoles

journalists judge whether a game will be a hit or miss... debates on issues such as censorship and sex and violence in games... how to upgrade from a 486 to a Pentium... freebies from leading companies like Virgin, MicroProse and Electronic Arts...

Elsewhere in the games arena you can check out all the latest PC, Amiga and console releases and in the productivity area you can try a huge range of graphics packages, printers and other peripherals and then pick them up at bargain prices.

The Future Entertainment Show kicks off on Wednesday, 26 October and runs for five days at London's Earls Court 2 exhibition centre. Tickets cost £6 in advance (£7 on the door) and can be ordered by calling the Hotline on 0703 694 4235.



(Above) The Future Entertainment Show is once again the venue for the National Gamesplayers Championship. The prize is £10,000 and if you want to enter you can get details from your nearest Future Zone store about when and where your local heat is.

Threesome of Sims

SimCity 2000 creators, Maxis, are to release a compilation of three of their ground-breaking games. Called *Collection 1: Sim Classics*, the limited edition bundle will feature *SimCity Classic*, *SimLife* and *SimAnt*.



SimCity Classic

deserves its place in the pantheon of great games and is still just as playable and just as absorbing. And, included only on this compilation, is the previously unreleased *SimCity Graphics Set*. *SimLife* takes the model manipulation of *SimCity* and applies it to environmental ecosystems as you control all land forms, climates, times and laws of physics. It's the most heavy-going Sim that Maxis have produced (even more dour than *SimEarth*) and is not an easy play. Finally, *SimAnt* is just what you'd think it is – a god game that lets you run an ant colony and attempt to drive humans from their house and garden. It's fun and, hey, it's educational too. The price for all three? A reasonable £34.99.

Saturday Night Live

The show that gave us the Blues Brothers, the Coneheads and Wayne's World is coming to the PC CD-ROM this October.

The CD will include video footage and sound clips from the show, a scrapbook of photos, script passages, the 'famous' musical parodies and other performances. An icon-based interface will take you around the Saturday Night Live TV studio but whether there'll be any more interaction than, say, pressing play on a video recorder, is another thing. Still, at least it'll be funnier than *Gagtag* or *Room 101*. With any luck.

The Mighty Brian

Having cornered the market in cricket games endorsed by balding, mustachioed ex-Captains of England with *Graham Gooch's World Class Cricket*, Audiogenic has turned to the as yet untapped market for cricket games endorsed by modest, world record-breaking West Indian batsmen with *Brian Lara's Cricket*. The game will be sold exclusively through Future Zone stores and, although details are unclear at the moment, it should be out by the time you read this. We'll have more next month.

"We shall fight them on the beaches..."

The latest game to get the 'it's even better now it's on CD' treatment is Empire's mammoth World War II wargame, *Campaign*. The enhanced CD-ROM Edition



of *Campaign* has digitized photos of over 250 vehicle types - Russian, German, American and British tanks, artillery, support vehicles, aircraft and ships. There are also some 15 audio clips of momentous radio broadcasts by the political leaders of the time including Chamberlain's "...this nation is now at war with Germany" speech, rally speeches by Adolf Hitler, a few bon mots from Mussolini and Eisenhower's D-Day orders of the day. This is multimedia at its most multi, and media-ish too. The *Campaign* CD, priced at \$39.99, will be released by Empire in September. Never in the field of human conquest has so much information been contained on one disk.



There's nothing particularly creepy about this bus... except it does remind us of a film called *Race with the Devil* which we saw on *Moviedrome* the other week.

Well, look what developer Take 2 Interactive got last Christmas - a copy of *3D Studio* and a big PC to run it on. Its two new titles, *Hell* and *Bureau 13*, are both fully loaded with rendered 3D graphics and dark, brooding, sci-fi storylines.

Hell is a cyberpunk thriller which transports you to Washington DC in the year 2094. You play an ex-Government investigator who's been accused of "sins against the state". The Hand of God is in power and, to clear your name, you have to venture into the underworld. Gameplay details are scant at the moment but it will star Dennis Hopper - easily the hippest movie star to grace any game yet.

Bureau 13 is an adventure about a top secret government team that investigates supernatural phenomena. As the new leader of the team, you control a group of different characters and have to solve the dozens of puzzles that the game throws at you. Again, details are thin on the ground as we go to press but watch this space and other journalistic clichés. *Hell* and *Bureau 13* will be released in November and January respectively on both floppy disk and CD.

Take two games



(Above) In *Bureau 13*, you are asked to investigate supernatural phenomenon. Can you spot this one? Yes, it's that floating pen again, folks.



(Left) The door to *Bureau 13*. Enter if you dare, Whoosh!

3D Ant Attack



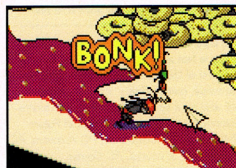
Games are usually very easy to describe - either they're clones of current hits or developments of existing games. However, Dynamix's *Battle Bugs* is a genuine oddity, a strange composite of *Lemmings*, *Cannon Fodder* and a dozen tactical strategy games. You control an army of insects and your objective is to fight and win a campaign of 56 battles against armies of rival insects. There

are 22 different types of insect in your army ranging from moths and mosquitoes to grasshoppers, spiders and rhinoceros beetles. Each insect has its own special abilities and mastering these is the key to success on the battlefield.

As strategy games go, this is one of the oddest we've seen - the sharp SVGA graphics for the tabletop territories are good



(Left and above) *Battle Bugs* comprises no fewer than 56 pitched battles against 22 different types of creepy crawly from mosquitoes to spiders and beetles.



(Above) Tabletop titans slog it out. It's frightening.

yet the whole thing looks more like a bizarre arcade game than a tactical wargame. *Battle Bugs*, in all its weirdness, is due for release by Sierra in September. The price has yet to be announced.



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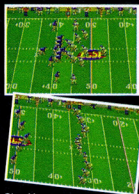
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Calling all deaf, dumb and blind kids.

21st Century Entertainment, the grandly-titled producer of the *Pinball Dreams* series, is now turning its attention to another round and silvery thing – the compact disc. Yes, it's climbed on board the 'Bundle your Old Stuff on One CD and Knock It Off a Bit Cheap' bandwagon with the release of *Pinball Dreams Deluxe*. The *Deluxe* bit refers to the fact that you get the original *Pinball Dreams* and the recent *Pinball Dreams 2* add-on together on one CD. That gives you no fewer than eight tables to play on. Look out for *Neptune* which is a real toughy and *Safari* which is easily the best and has a great soundtrack. Although we found the features a little repetitive by the eighth table, *Pinball Dreams Deluxe* is a bargain.

The Man In The Hat is back

No, not Indiana Jones but one Mr Tom Landry. Never heard of him? Well, he is to American Football. Headcoaching what Bill



Shankly is to Association Football management. Landry was the long-time head coach of the Dallas Cowboys. He was at the helm for the best part of the seventies and eighties when the all-conquering Cowboys were dubbed 'America's Team'. Now, Dallas-based Merit Software is releasing *Tom Landry's Strategy Football Deluxe Edition* – a head coaching game that lets you pick the team, call the plays and try to survive a season. Get a winning record and who knows – you could build a football dynasty. The game will be in the shops in time for the new season and we'll have a review in our very next issue.

Brave new worlds



After years in hibernation, you wake up in the Beta Caeli system (above), 55 light years from Earth... don't you just hate it when that happens?

Fly across the surface of planets surveying all you see, remembering to keep an eye out for your missing sister ship.



Earth is at war with the alien civilisation of Alpha Centauri. You are the captain of the Odessa class seed ship, Calypso, sent out to establish new footholds for mankind in other worlds. This is the setting for *Alien Legacy*, Sierra's new space epic.

After years in hibernation you awake in the Beta Caeli system, 55 light years from Earth. Your mission is to explore planets and moons and set up new human colonies. The

'running a colony' part of the game takes the form of the now-standard *Sim City/Dune 2* style game so that you get a top down, scrolling view of some buildings, each with different functions for the running of a colony.

In addition to founding and running colonies, you have to find out what has happened to your sister ship, the Tantalus, which was scheduled to arrive 21 years before

you. Alarming, there is no trace of either the Tantalus or its colonies. Throughout the game you remain on the Calypso, lording it over your colonists and the ship's crew. Each member has his or her own special skills which you can call on at a *Star Trek*. *Alien Legacy* is due for release this month.

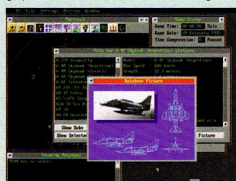
PC GAMER Recommends

The best releases of the last two months...



TIE Fighter

LucasArts proves that it can make sequels as well as LucasFilm. A great storyline, sexy graphics and a brilliant *Star Wars* setting.



Harpoon II

A monster simulation and a hard-core strategy game that would be equally at home on a desk in the Pentagon as on a PC.



Sensible Soccer

The *International* edition of Sensible's opus gives the PC the soccer game it deserves. Fast, fluid and intuitive – this is the one.



Overlord

The PC flight sim reaches new heights in Rowan/Virgin's cracking *D-Day* game. The graphics are brilliant and the game is superb.



D-Day

Impressions' timely *Overlord* wargame is a triumph to rival the original operation. One of the most comprehensive wargames yet.



Syndicate Plus^{co}

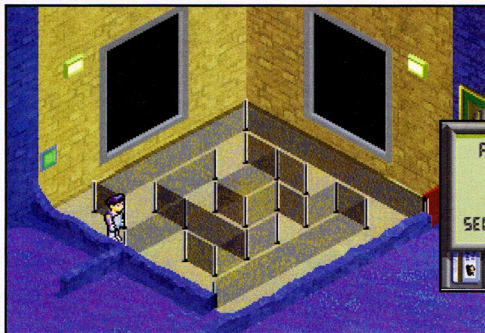
The original *Syndicate* and the American *Revolt* add-on scenarios packaged together on one CD and still as good as ever.



(Left) Remember *Knight Lore*, *Alien 8*, *Gunright*, *Nightshade* and *Pentagram*? The guys behind this game certainly do remember *Ultima*'s 8-bit hits.

Could it be that the favourite game genre of the mid-eighties – the isometric arcade adventure – is making a comeback? *Ultima VIII* used them, *Mystic Towers* (on this month's coverdisk) is in this time-honoured style and now there's *Space Academy* from Mindscape.

It's a puzzle-based arcade adventure (no surprises) and you play a young chap trying to graduate from the eponymous Academy. You're sent out for a pizza and return to find the place taken over by aliens. I dunno, you turn your back



(Left) This room has a strange little maze in it. It's strange because you can't really get lost when you can see the whole thing.

(Below) Access to certain levels of the Academy is controlled by a card system.

for five minutes... What you don't realise is that this is the final test that you must pass in order to graduate.

Space Academy will be released in October on both floppy and CD formats but, alas, a price has yet to be fixed.

(Below) A door-intensive location in *Space Academy*. Have you got the access code?



The Ultimate in flattery



Strategic naval simulations can be much of a muchness but Intelligent Games' forthcoming *Ticonderoga* promises a new approach. It's played from a first person viewpoint with you as the Captain of a Ticonderoga class American cruiser on



patrol in the world's hotspots. The game has been designed to offer a mix of "strategy, action and interactive role-playing" but, beneath the swish SVGA visuals and friendly first person interface, beats the heart of a naval simulation.

Missions include the defence of US bases against an unnamed South American dictator, recapturing a hijacked oil tanker and various operations around North Korea.

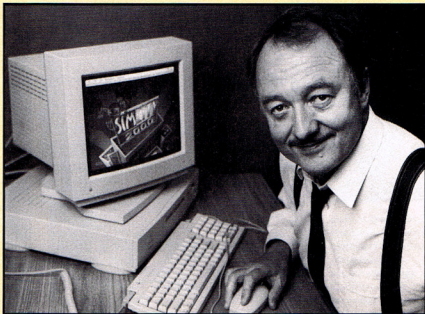
Ticonderoga will be released at the end of this year on CD-ROM by Mindscape. There are no price details yet.

Behind this friendly, first person interface is a no-nonsense naval simulation.

The PC Gamer Caption Compo

Another month, another chortlesome PR shot featuring a grinning celeb and a games-related product. Here, Ken Livingstone MP revisits his past and tries to run a city again. We're not sure if Ken's version of *Sim City 2000* has the Disaster option, 'Closed by Tory Government led by Demented Right Wing Chemist', but lightning can't strike twice, can it?

If you can think of a suitably rib-tickling caption for this pic, then send it in to: The PC Gamer Caption Compo, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. As usual, the most hilarious inducing example will win £50 worth of PC software.



King of the Road

MicroProse's *Railroad Tycoon* was one of the first 'business' games to achieve popular success, and deservedly so. Designed by the renowned Sid Meier it was a compelling simulation and very enjoyable game. Well, MicroProse has returned to the world of mass transit with *Transport Tycoon* but this time it's not just railways you have to manage, there's road, sea and air transport too.

The game is placed in a randomly generated isometric landscape of hills, forests, lakes, seas, towns and cities – each community is made of tiny little houses, offices, stadiums and, of course, rail depots, stations, ports and airports. *Transport Tycoon* takes place over a 100-year time span, from the age of steam to the near future. You have to serve the needs of the cities and your transport



(Above, right, below) *Transport Tycoon* is played on an isometric game world – a cutesy version of *Sim City 2000*. You can keep a track on your transport system by following an individual bus, train, ship or plane in a pop-up window.

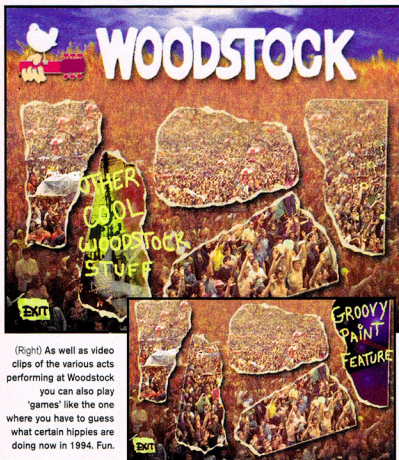
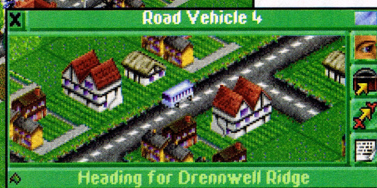
networks can stimulate the growth of each city and create more demand for your services. As the cities, and the trade between them, grows so your networks of roads, tracks, ports and airports have to.

There's more than a shade of *Sim City 2000* about the pretty isometric graphics and the complex relationships between the individual buildings, the

networks and the evolving game world. Add to that the heritage of the original *Railroad Tycoon* and the game looks to be a sure winner.

- *Transport Tycoon* is scheduled for

release by MicroProse in November. The price will be announced soon.



(Right) As well as video clips of the various acts performing at Woodstock you can also play 'games' like the one where you have to guess what certain hippies are doing now in 1994. Fun.

And it's one, two, three...

Three days of music and peace, actually. Woodstock – the crowning symbol of sixties counterculture – is now available as video, director's cut video, two CDs, a best of CD, a Hendrix at Woodstock CD and... an interactive CD-ROM. The package includes clips of acts performing at Woodstock, information on the various bands and never before seen footage from the Woodstock movie (which,

incidentally, was partly edited by one Martin Scorsese). Baby boomers and short term nostalgia junkies should love it. Music lovers may well want to get the music CDs instead. Funny that.

- The Woodstock 25th Anniversary CD-ROM is available now for £29.99.



(Left) Janis Joplin, The Who, Jefferson Airplane, Country Joe And The Fish, Sly And The Family Stone... they're all here.

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Sierra's birthday presents

Did you know that Sierra On-Line are celebrating their 15th anniversary? That's a ripe old age for a software company and to commemorate the occasion they're releasing two special CD compilations. The *Space Quest Collection* has both the original text input *Space Quest I* and the icon-based VGA 1990 version, *Space Quest II* and *III*, the multimedia version of *Space Quest IV* and the English, French and German versions of *Space Quest V*. And there's also a hypertext history of the *Space Quest* games, a short pseudo-TV



show of the Sierra Space Quest team and a selection of mini-arcade games culled from the *Space Quest* series. Phew.

Similarly, *The King's Quest Collection* has *King's Quest I* to *VI*, including the 1990 version of *KQ IV* and the German version of *KQ VI*. Other treats on this package include a hypertext *King's Quest* history, a slide-show of production sketches, background and game art, reprints of magazine articles on the *KQ* series, an interview with series creator Roberta Williams, a *KQ* trivia quiz and more.

Nice to see Sierra taking an original approach to compilations – reviews next month.

B...b... Bad

Television's least-lauded but most watched computer show, *Bad Influence*, returns for a third series this September. Of course, it isn't all bad in a badbaassess sort of way, it is, in fact, the *Blue Peter* of computer and video games. Expect the usual mix of worthy *Watchdog*-style consumer journalism, games reviews and jobbing actors pretending to be 'wacky' and 'crazy' characters in small and unfunny sketches (and after all that training at *RADA* or *Central Speech*, what a waste, eh?). The series will run for 15 weeks from Thursday 8 September.

I have a dream...



Dark, dystopian science-fiction has been a staple of computer games since the year dot and *Dreamweb* is set in a typically nightmarish future. Creative Reality, *Dreamweb*'s developers, make no apologies for their broody sci-fi role-playing adventure and even cite *Blade Runner* as a major influence on the graphics.

In the story, evil has taken over the

(Left) Move your character, Ryan, around by simply pointing to where you want to go and clicking.

(Below) Another dingy location.



Dreamweb (which affects people's dreams and nightmares) and your character, Ryan, has been charged by the mysterious Keepers with restoring balance to the *Dreamweb*. To do you must assassinate the seven earthly hosts of the

(Left) There are many thousands of frames of animation in *Dreamweb* for the various outcomes to all the individual scenes in the game.

Dreamweb – one of whom is a rock star who you interrupt 'playing Mummies and Daddies' with one of his groupies. Yes, sex, violence and even bad language all feature in *Dreamweb*, surely destined to become a favourite in the *Tory Party* PC.

The game is played from a slightly unusual overhead view, and your character has over 30 locations with a total of 200 rooms to explore. The game uses an intuitive, icon-driven interface and a real-time magnifier helps the player to find and select small objects on screen.

● *Dreamweb* will be released by Empire in October on floppy and CD. There are no price details yet.

Winter gaming

French developers Microdis are just putting the finishing touches to the UK version of their latest skiing game, *Superski Pro*. Skiing's obviously a big pull in France as this is Microdis' third game based on the sport (Eddie Edwards' *Superski* and *Superski 2* were the first two). This new game follows pretty much the same format as the first couple, giving you a choice of six different snow-bound events – four skiing disciplines, snowboarding and ski jumping – and letting you play with up to four players at once. The graphics have been brought up to date and the events tweaked to play better, but the game's essentials have hardly changed.

Superski Pro will be released by Mindscape in November on floppy and CD versions. The price has not been decided.



(Above) Setting off on the downhill – keep to the left of the red banners and you'll be alright.

(Left) Don't lose it in the air or you'll end up in the snow.



Five Aces?

Sierra are to release a CD compilation of Dynamix's flight sims, the entire Great War Planes series (although we had no idea these games had such a grand handle). *Red Baron* and *The Red Baron Mission Builder* take up a fair chunk of the CD and if there's a flight sim that's constantly underrated, it's *Red Baron*. A hugely enjoyable and atmospheric WWI flight sim, it's a great favourite of PC Gamer's. *Aces Of The Pacific* isn't too shabby either, although



1942: *The Pacific Air War* has stolen a lot of its thunder. In *World War II 1946* you can fight in an imaginary US invasion of Japan and fly prototype jet fighters. *Aces Over Europe* makes up the set and covers the push from D-Day to the battle for Berlin. You get to patrol front lines, attack supply depots and take out V1 sites. The compilation, entitled *The Aces Saga* will be available from September.

The PC Gamer Who's Who

No.4 Manchester United FC

Age: 116
Appearance: Red, white and black.

Occupation: Shirt, scarf and poster retailer.

Why is it in PC Gamer?

Krisalis's *Manchester United Premier League Champions* game has just been released.

What's it famous for?

Consistently having the worst haircuts in football.

Like who? Well, there's Bobby Charlton and his comb-over spesh, George Best's shaggy seventies stud look, the Sammy McIlroy basin cut, Bryan Robson's perm, Mark Hughes' perm, Ryan Giggs' manky cocker spaniel look...

Still they won the double didn't they? And don't we know it.

Most likely to say: "Glory, glory, Man U-Night-Ted."

Least

likely to say:

"He's French, he's shit, he's never on the pitch..."



Going Down

Everybody wants to have a game that's as successful as *Doom*, but sadly all of the clones we've seen thus far have been sorry affairs and not a patch on the PC Gamer office favourite. But the times they are a changing. *Dark Forces*, *Quarantine* and now Interplay's *Descent* all show that developers are realising what it takes to make a classy 3D, first-person perspective action game.



(Above) You can record your missions and watch them later.



Descent takes place in claustrophobic networks of air ducts, ventilation shafts and maintenance tunnels around nuclear reactors. You fly a highly manoeuvrable ship through the tunnels which can hover or fly in any direction. Your goal is to destroy the reactor at the heart of every level but on the way there are robots to take out, power ups to collect and

stranded workers to rescue. The game moves well, the graphics are suitably dark and confining and all in all, *Descent* looks to be a very promising game. Soon.

● *Descent* will be released by Interplay this Autumn, but there are no price details as yet.



(Top) Your aim on every level is to destroy the nuclear reactor at the heart of the tortuous tunnel complex.

(Above) By carefully aiming your lasers you can shoot enemy robots before they get a sight of you at all.

(Left) Your versatile ship can hover anywhere, fly in any direction and spin 360 degrees about any axis.

AD&D Again



(Above/left) *Menzoberranzan* will use an expanded version of the same engine that drove DreamForge's last SSI AD&D game, *Ravenloft*. The game promises many new features including levitation, which could come in handy.

The latest in SSI's ongoing Advanced Dungeons & Dragons games is the fearsomely-titled *Menzoberranzan*. Set in the Forgotten Realms game world it puts you in control of a party of characters exploring the malevolent city Menzoberranzan in the realm of Underdark (all these realms are getting very confusing).

The game's been designed by DreamForge Interim, who were responsible for the last SSI AD&D game, the atmospheric yet unconvincing *Ravenloft*. *Menzoberranzan* uses the same 3D engine and game system as *Ravenloft* so veterans of that should have a fair idea of what to expect. Let's hope it plays slightly better, though.

● *Menzoberranzan* will be released on floppy and CD in October but price details have yet to be confirmed.

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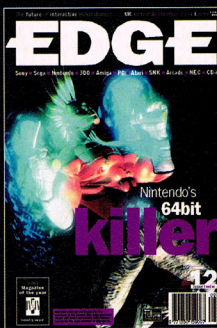
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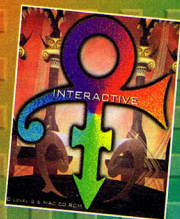
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Charts

Up Down Non mover New entry

You may have noticed that the charts look a bit odd this month. Gallup are reorganizing their information gathering system to include more stores (they now take in sales from 70% of the nations computer game stores and chains) and so these charts predate the appearance on the shelves of the mighty *TIE Fighter*.

If the performance of *X-Wing* is anything to go by then expect to see *TIE Fighter* hovering at the upper regions of the charts at the end of 1995! Sierra's CD-only *Outpost* has gone straight to the top in the States and has done in so in the recent weekly PC CD charts over here. We'll see if it's there next month. Electronic Arts' playable demo of *Theme Park* is the best-selling budget title this month, echoing the success of the *SimCity 2000* demo – is this the way we'll all get game demos shortly? *Theme Park* has also gone straight in at number one in the CD charts and number six in the Full Price. Any bets on it taking the top slot next month?



(Above) *SimCity 2000* is approaching its sixth month at the top.

(Left) *Bullfrog's Theme Park* has got looks, charm, gameplay and deserved big sales.

American Top 10

1	Outpost	Sierra
2	X-Com	MicroProse
3	MYST	Electronic Arts
4	Harpoon II	Electronic Arts
5	SimCity 2000	Maxis
6	Master Of Orion	MicroProse
7	Rebel Assault	LucasArts
8	X-Wing	LucasArts
9	The 7th Guest	Virgin
10	Privateer	Electronic Arts

This Time Last Year Top 10

1	Syndicate	Electronic Arts
2	X-Wing: Imperial Pursuit	US Gold
3	Sensible Soccer '92/'93	Renegade
4	Fields Of Glory	MicroProse
5	X-Wing	US Gold
6	Day Of The Tentacle	US Gold
7	Flashback	US Gold
8	Tornado	Digital Integration
9	Premier Manager	Grenlin
10	Betrayal At Krondor	Sierra

Full Price Top 30

1	SimCity 2000	94%	Maxis	£39.99
2	1942: The Pacific Air War	93%	MicroProse	£44.99
3	Cannon Fodder	93%	Virgin	£34.99
4	The Settlers	91%	Blue Byte	£39.99
5	Premier Manager 2	79%	Grenlin	£34.99
6	Theme Park	95%	Electronic Arts	£44.99
7	International Sensible Soccer	92%	Renegade	£19.99
8	X-Wing	N/A%	US Gold	£45.99
9	Frontier: Elite 2	90%	Gametek/Konami	£39.99
10	Graham Gooch World Class Cricket	77%	Audiogenic	£34.99
11	World Cup USA '94	84%	US Gold	£32.99
12	Pagan: Ultima VIII	93%	Electronic Arts/Origin	£49.99
13	Flight Simulator v5.0	N/A%	Microsoft	£39.99
14	Corridor 7	43%	Gametek	£19.99
15	TFX	89%	Ocean	£44.99
16	Hexx - Heresy Of The Wizard	N/A%	Pygnosis	£34.99
17	Battle Isle 2	93%	Blue Byte	£39.99
18	Lemmings/Lemmings 2	N/A%	Pygnosis	£34.99
19	Links - Mauna Kea	N/A%	US Gold	£22.99
20	D-Day: Beginning Of The End	85%	Impressions	£39.99
21	IndyCar Racing	93%	Virgin	£44.99
22	Pacific Strike	93%	Electronic Arts/Origin	£49.99
23	F14 Fleet Defender	88%	MicroProse	£44.99
24	Jurassic Park	70%	Ocean	£34.99
25	UFO: Enemy Unknown	91%	MicroProse	£44.99
26	Beneath A Steel Sky	91%	Virgin	£34.99
27	Sensible Soccer '92/'93	82%	Renegade	£32.99
28	World Cup Year '94	N/A%	Empire	£34.99
29	Links 386 Pro	N/A%	US Gold	£45.99
30	Legend	N/A%	Mindscape	£19.99

Budget Top 20

1	Theme Park Demo Disk	95%	Electronic Arts	£2.99
2	Doom (Shareware)	N/A%	Titanium Seal	£4.99
3	SimCity Classic	88%	The Hit Squad	£16.99
4	Dune	78%	The Hit Squad	£14.99
5	The Secret Of Monkey Island	N/A%	Kix XL	£16.99
6	Eye Of The Beholder 2	N/A%	Kix XL	£16.99
7	Harpoon	79%	Action Sixteen	£14.99
8	Battle Of Britain	73%	Kix XL	£16.99
9	Jimmy White's Snooker	85%	The Hit Squad	£14.99
10	Super All Stars	N/A%	Codemasters	£14.99
11	Rorke's Drift	65%	Tactix	£9.99
12	Doom (Shareware)	N/A%	Micro Star	£6.99
13	Wing Commander	82%	The Hit Squad	£14.99
14	Populous & The Promised Lands	N/A%	The Hit Squad	£14.99
15	Eye Of The Beholder	79%	Kix XL	£16.99
16	Archer Maclean's Pool	75%	The Hit Squad	£14.99
17	Links - The Challenge Of Golf	62%	Kix XL	£16.99
18	Diet Expert	N/A%	Software Printers	£14.99
19	Magic Land Dizzy	N/A%	Codemasters	£9.99
20	Crazy Cars 3	N/A%	Fox Hits	£7.99

CD-ROM Top 10

1	Theme Park	95%	Electronic Arts	£44.99
2	The 7th Guest/Dune	N/A%	Telstar	£49.99
3	Rebel Assault	64%	LucasArts/US Gold	£45.99
4	Sam & Max Hit The Road	93%	LucasArts/US Gold	£45.99
5	Animals	N/A%	Action Sixteen	£16.99
6	Mega Race	80%	Mindscape	£39.99
7	Jack Nicklaus CD Compendium	N/A%	Accolade	£19.99
8	UFO: Enemy Unknown	91%	MicroProse	£44.99
9	Space Shuttle	N/A%	Action Sixteen	£16.99
10	Oceans Below	33%	Action Sixteen	£16.99

Cables

Write to the Editor at:
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A response to gaming violence with a truly global bent; how about your thoughts on bent software? Tell us.

Ray's Airfix fix

Dear Sir,

I bought the July issue of PC Gamer to have a look at Overlord. I'm no games aficionado, so I can't say how it compares to other games, but even I could tell that there's one glaring deficiency in the depiction of the aircraft. No plane, either Allied or Axis, ever displayed the camouflage shown here. I'm not commenting on the inaccurate colours, no doubt due to the deficiencies in my 16-colour display (and PC Gamer's publishers?). No, it's the symmetry that's at fault. Every aircraft had precise rules governing the painting of their aircraft. Colours, blends and shapes were meticulously defined – the port wing never mirrored the starboard wing, for instance.

I'm old enough to remember the originals, as well as having seriously mispent my youth making models of just about every WW II aircraft that managed to stagger into the air (as well as some that didn't!). So no marks to Virgin on that point.

Yours sincerely,

Raymond Jones,
Morecambe

We got in touch with Overlord's designers and programmers Rowan Software about your symmetrical wing dilemma and they, too, remembered painting Airfix models of planes with different camouflage patterns for each wing. The reason for this omission? Quite simply, there wasn't enough memory. The PC would have had twice as much work to do calculating the two different wing patterns. Although, as Rowan pointed out, the black and white invasion markings on each wing pretty much negated any effect the camouflage may have had anyway. Still, full marks for observation, Ray.

Take a few RISCs

Dear PC Gamer,

After reading your article in issue 8 about Intel's Pentium chip it occurred to me that the PC industry is progressing down the wrong path. I was particularly concerned about Intel's argument that, "PC

"I think the way forward is to use the RISC-based architecture you get in Macs"

architecture has to develop and that's only possible via a structure along the lines of a Pentium-based machine." I personally think this is wrong. PCs that house an Intel processor use CISC-based architecture – however I think the way forward is to use the RISC-based architecture you get in Macs and Archimedes machines. For raw processing power, the RISC-based machines are far more efficient than their CISC-based alternatives.

And the industry insists on increasing the clock speeds of its processors at an exponential rate, too.

Letter Of The Month!

Pent-up frustration

Dear PC Gamer,

I have just read your article A Five Star Future? in issue 8 and would like to ask a question. Doesn't the software industry realise that all 486DXs have a nifty little thing in them called the maths co-processor? Why don't people like Origin, who write programs with large specifications, use it? System Shock, a 3D-mapped game which is very maths

intensive and needs a DX2-66 to run properly, would benefit from the co-pro.

In the past critics might have argued that writing such software would have restricted the available market, but then



this is still the case when games need DX-66 or Pentiums. Come on, sofies, get your act together.

Cheers,

Jonathan Elkin,
Lisburn, County Antrim

It's another case of developers being careful to ensure maximum downward compatibility. Some of the latest games may only run at a decent speed in their most detailed graphics mode on a DX2-66 or a Pentium, but if you lower the detail you can still run them on a 486SX or a 386. If a game used the maths co-pro they'd be limiting themselves immediately to an exclusive and small market of PC owners.

What next? A 200, 300 – hell, why not go for a 1,000 MHz – clock speed machine? At the moment, the heat generated by a Pentium processor equals that of a lightbulb – the thing needs a fan just to keep it below melting point! To my mind, the Power PC, which was launched recently, is the way forward – but only if the market can use it.

But what can the industry do? At the moment, a large proportion of the computer world uses the Intel chips and this literally means millions upon millions of CISC-based machines. To convert from CISC to RISC is a huge – perhaps impossible – step.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Slinger,
Blackburn

RISC-based machines certainly do have many advantages over the PC, but then again the PC does have a massive user base that the other machines simply can't match. The Power PC is RISC-based, true enough, but to maintain downward compatibility it has to emulate Windows, so any gain in speed is lost. You're right though – unless the Power PC takes off, CISC-based machines will remain the future of the PC.

In the club

Dear PC Gamer,

Hi to everyone reading this. Have you got Stunt Island? If so, then you'll know it's one of the best games available on the PC today. I run The Stunt Island Club and I'm going to tell you a bit about it. Each member receives a bi-monthly magazine featuring news, previews, reviews and tips on all of the hottest games around, plus the best tips and techniques for Stunt Island, a section for the members to place their own advertisements and also film competitions.

If you are interested in joining the club or would

like to buy a copy of the game please send an SAE to us for more details. The address is: The Stunt Island Club, Enquiries, 27 Llys Nercwys, Mold, Clwyd, CH17 1HR.

Yours faithfully,

Mark McDermott,
Clywd

You little tea leafs

Dear PC Gamer,

It's been said before, but I'd like to reiterate: there's no justification for software theft. However, and there's always a however, how many of these poor, ripped-off programmers, publishers and software house investors own cassettes which have been recorded from someone else's LP/MC/CD? In the car, in the home, in the Walkman – pirates have been ripping off musicians for years. How many of the cassettes in PC Gamer's possession are pirate copies, for instance?

That's the gripe, now the query. Do programmers get royalties? If not, then who receives the revenue from registered software? Could it possibly be the shareholders of Imagesoft, Ocean et al? The people who have nothing to do with the talent and perspiration involved? Now, I'm not saying that they shouldn't be rewarded for their investment, but in the music business, company and artist share the royalties. I'd like to think this was the case in the software business too. Please advise.

Yours unapologetically,

Steve Bebob,
Edinburgh

Of course, you're right. Software theft is just as bad as music theft, but, as you imply, copyright theft isn't a grey area of the law. It's just that many people have the same attitude to it as they do to a broken indicator or low tyre

pressure in a car. All these things are illegal and we can't condone them, but they still go on.

Whether a programmer gets royalty payments depends on their individual contract, although the system doesn't really compare with the record biz. Many games are now created by programmers, designers and artists who've struck out on their own and run/own their own development companies. They then sign marketing and distribution deals with other companies who handle the release of the game. Then again, some agencies, such as Ocean or US Gold, have their own in-house programming teams, while others simply buy up independent developers (as with Electronic Arts' buy-out of Origin).

Going dutch

Hello gamers,

With great interest I read the March issue of your magazine, especially the reviews section in which you rated the multi-user games Evasive Action and Masters Of The World 1: Merchant Prince. It's my firm belief that multi-player games are going to be the games format of the future. Playing against humans is more fun than playing against silicon! Being too busy to go shopping all day and find the best multi-player games, I wondered if you know of some good ones I could buy? I love playing Doom over our network, for instance.

Regards,

Bram Schot,
Groningen, The Netherlands

Well, Bram, Doom and Evasive Action (PCG 4: 90%) are two of the best two/multi-player games around. Others you might like to try are the old but good Star Control II (see Re-Issues on page 75), IndyCar Racing (PCG 1: 92%) and Dynablast. There are plenty of other excellent two-player sports games on the PC, though, including Unnecessary Roughness (PCG 4: 85%), Sensible Soccer and NHL Hockey. Strategically, you might want to go for Blue Byte's Battle Isle 2 (PCG 5: 93%) which supports up to seven players at once, or the ageing Laser Squad.

An Australian writes... (Well, sort of)

Hello Gary,

A message to PC programmers - get your act together and stop making such crap, crap, crap, CRAP! (Oops! I said the 'C' word. You'll get letters.) PC programmers, especially for the CD ROM, are making all this digitised rubbish and are ruining the reputation of CD. There are, of course, some good developers (LucasArts and Origin to name two) but the rest could design better games if their heads were

*"There are some good developers
but the rest could design better if
their heads were stuck in a
dunny and their limbs removed"*

stuck in a dunny and their limbs removed (ho, ho, what a humorous thought).

I have a brilliant idea for a games designing team.

1. Make six button joysticks, just like the arcade machines.
2. Convert all the top games in the arcades to the PC. Simple. I for one am waiting for decent arcade games to bestow themselves on the PC, as I'm sure are others. This is why console owners are getting all the attention while PC users sit back and wait to get noticed. And don't try telling me that 'decent' conversions of games such as *Super Street Fighter II* and *NBA Jam* on the PC wouldn't sell like something that sells really fast.

Yours most sincerely,

Ryan 'the best' Begley,
Bunbury, Western Australia

We don't know what the scene is like in Australia right now, but in Europe the console market has died a death since Christmas. In fact, the PC market is the only one showing signs of growth recently, with every other hardware and software format (including the Amiga) suffering badly. As for the PC's arcade potential, we're only seen the tip of the iceberg. Mortal Kombat was an excellent conversion of the original and used code from the arcade machine, but so far even the best arcade games on the PC haven't sold as well as the PC's more traditional fare - sims, strategy, adventures and sports.

Outpost outpourings

Dear PC Gamer,

I have just read the August edition of your magazine and found it a thoroughly good read. I agreed totally with the reviewer's comments on Harpoon II and found the Theme Park tips very handy.

The reason I am writing is Sierra's latest space epic *Outpost*. I have not seen any reviews of it yet and personally cannot make up my mind if it is any good. The reason for the indecision is the manual provided. It's crap! It has to be one of the worst bits of game documentation I have ever come across. Major aspects of the game are missing, and how they could omit some kind of beginner's tutorial is beyond me.

*"It has to be one of the worst bits
of game documentation I have
ever come across. Major aspects
of the game are missing"*

I rang Sierra and was sent an additional help sheet (obviously I was not the first caller). No-one at Sierra could actually help me as 'No-one's played it here yet!' The additional help sheet was some use but is still woefully short of complete. Has anyone at PC Gamer played the game? Can you help? Is *Outpost* really a good game or is it graphically impressive rubbish hidden by a lack of documentation? I have managed to last 164 days before everyone deserted my colony. Is this a record?

Hope you can help,

J Matthews,
Kingswood, Bristol.

Sierra have had trouble with Outpost and freely admit that not everything promised in the manual is in the first release of the game. The reason? There wasn't enough time to get everything in before the game was shipped, and it was already delayed. This is no consolation for anyone who's bought the game and feels

Cables

Wrong, wrong, bad, bad

Dear PC Gamer,

In countering John Harper's letter about increasing violence, you make two fundamental errors. First, you argue that people are too intelligent to be moved to violence by violent images. Given, for example that as a race we view extinction of perhaps half this planet's species within a few decades without concern - and that we do little to prevent the pollution that causes asthma in up to 15% of our young people - would an extra-terrestrial visitor see people as intelligent or stupid? Second, you imply that members of the Commons are experts. Not a few are paid retainers by big-business, and if you listen to their debates you'll hear many who are less than logical - and many who put party before principle.

What I think John was referring to when he said that "even the experts agree" about the connection between 'nasties' and violent acts was the explanation by a group of psychologists that initially they felt it was not politically correct to assert the connection they observed.

If we are to be ruled by dogma, greed and political correctness, keep the violence. For myself, I prefer a saner and safer world. For those who lust after violence, try it at first hand: try single-handed sailing in rough weather.

Yours faithfully,

David Pollard,
Oxford

Wait a minute, from whether or not Doom is an amorally violent game we've skipped to ecological catastrophe, the credentials of our elected representatives (and, no, we wouldn't want to imply they were intelligent either) and the merits of single-handed sailing - not a pursuit within the reach of many people, unlike computer games.

It is easy to pick holes in our brief response to John's letter, but as we said at the time, we didn't intend to get into a big debate about violence in the media and society. Although, as the letters we've received show, petty slanging matches, nit-picking pedantry and patronising moralising is what this thorny subject could well do without.

disappointed but there's an updated version in the shops now. It will have all the features detailed in the manual and an upgrade is available free from Sierra. This upgrade will be sent out automatically to anyone who returned the registration form included in the Outpost box and you can also find it on Sierra's bulletin board.

As you'll have noticed we haven't yet reviewed Outpost in PC Gamer yet but we will have a full review next issue (of the upgraded version) so you'll be able to find out what we think of it then.

PCG

The address, as usual, is: Cables, PC Gamer, Future Publishing Ltd., 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW. And we want to hear what you have to say about the mag too!

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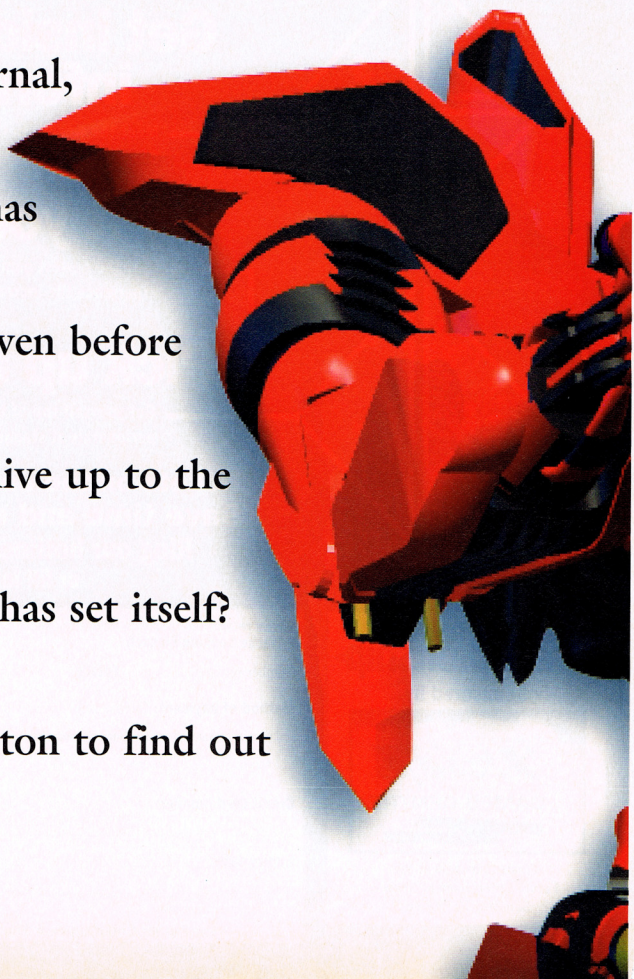
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Of The Robots has
media adulation, even before
can any game live up to the
standards that *Rise* has set itself?
to darkest Congleton to find out



BY ROBOTS



and Mirage's futuristic beat'em-up *Rise*

received more than its fair share of

its release. But

almost impossibly high

Gary Penn travelled

if the wait will be worth it...



(Above) The cybernetic Supervisor does some, erm, supervising during *Rise*'s cinematic intro sequence.

"It's not intended to be a *Street Fighter II* or *Mortal Kombat II* beater. *Rise Of The Robots* is just an impressive game in its own right. It's certainly the best looking beat-'em-up on the PC"
Sean Griffiths, designer

(Right) Sean Griffiths enjoying the fruits of his labours. "It's pretty much what's been done before," he says. "If it was too original, people wouldn't be so interested."

GameBoy through to 3DO, and even an arcade machine from Bell Fruit. But the truth is, *Rise Of The Robots* seems little more than a combat simulation – with detailed, pre-rendered ray-traced (or 3D Visual Contoured if you prefer someone else's idea of jargon) characters. It's a matter of style, that's all. Instead of oils or watercolours, development team Instinct Design has chosen to use an airbrush.

Rise also features a soundtrack

composed by Brian May (erstwhile lead guitarist for Queen and writer of Ford television advertisement music) which has been translated by veteran soundsmith, Richard Joseph. May's involvement came about simply because *Mirage*'s Director Andy Wood asked him, showed him a demonstration and received a nod of approval. Instinct are using a mix of tunes from his latest album and a handful of specially written pieces, including an

There's been a lot of talk about *Rise Of The Robots*. Too much, perhaps. It's been called excellent, stunning, revolutionary, groundbreaking, better than *Mortal Kombat* or *Street Fighter II* – even a complete movie experience. "Graphics to die for," said sister magazine *Edge*. *Rise Of The Robots* has yet to be hailed as The Second Coming, but I suppose that's probably only a matter of time.

Incredibly, these songs of praise continue to be sung, despite the fact that *Rise Of The Robots* is only now reaching completion (it's due out in October). But the media has only been doing what comes naturally: over-exaggerating a million-fold, partly because they want it to be true, but mainly because they want you to want it to be true, too. In this burgeoning business, any difference, no matter how small, is seen as The Biggest Thing Since The Last Biggest Thing. But from where I'm sitting, in front of a 66 MHz 486 DX2 in *Mirage*'s offices, watching two smooth-moving ray-traced robots whirring, clanking and thudding as they beat the crap out of each other, the sparks literally flying, on a screen resolution of 640 by 400 pixels and 256 colours, I'm not really too sure what all the fuss is about.

There are 20 different versions of *Rise Of The Robots* in production, from



intense guitar attack for a title track which may yet find its way onto a single.

Rise Of The Robots' designer and producer Sean Griffiths admits that, "it's pretty much what's been done before," but he's comfortable with that. "If it was too original, people wouldn't be so interested. They need to be able to understand what's going on. There were lots of ideas for a different fighting game – for example, fighters wouldn't really crouch and it'd be a lot more defensive – but with all the work that's gone into understanding the rendering, we needed some formula, some path to follow."

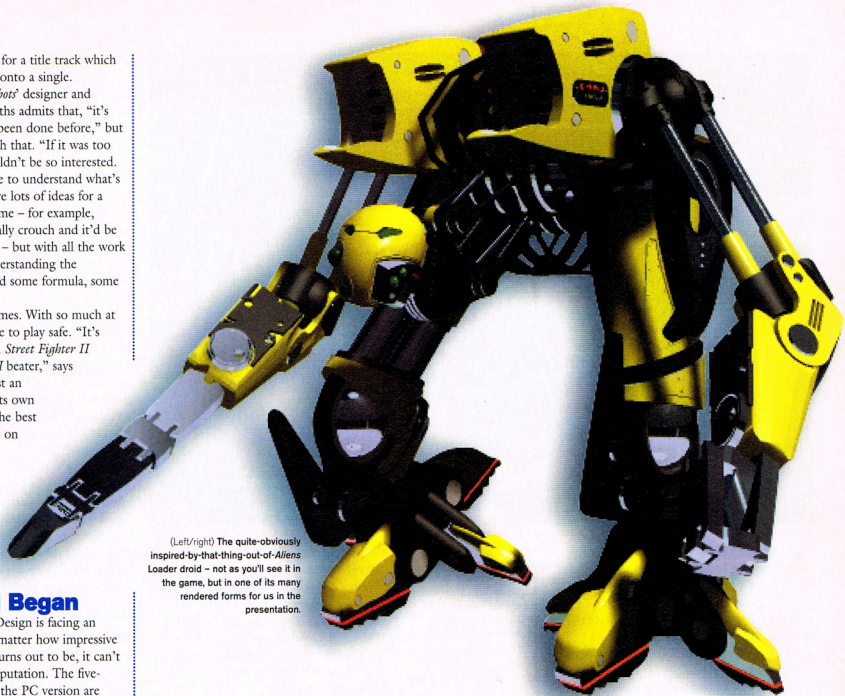
A sign of the times. With so much at stake, the team chose to play safe. "It's not intended to be a *Street Fighter II* or *Mortal Kombat II* beater," says Griffiths. "*Rise* is just an impressive game in its own right. It's certainly the best looking beat-'em-up on the PC."

How It All Began

Inevitably, Instinct Design is facing an uphill struggle. No matter how impressive *Rise Of The Robots* turns out to be, it can't possibly match its reputation. The five-strong band behind the PC version are aware of what they have to live up to, but they're taking it all in their stride. It's only Sean Griffiths who has much to say. Everyone else appears to be content to toe the line and get the job done.

So why tread along this well-worn path? "I was in an arcade about the time *Street Fighter II* had come out. It looked good and at the time no-one was doing anything like it on the Amiga; the consoles weren't really around then," Griffiths

(Left/right) The quite-obviously inspired-by-that-thing-out-of-Aliens Loader droid – not as you'll see it in the game, but in one of its many rendered forms for us in the presentation.



(Below) The Supervisor and the big Japanese robot battle it out in their increasingly familiar 'we're rendered in 3D, but actually fight in 2D' style.



explains. "That was the seed. I wanted to do a really good beat-'em-up on the Amiga – the last one was probably *Barbarian* – and I felt it was about time someone did a decent version. The idea was to use robots, for a new angle, and good artificial intelligence. The characters would look as though they knew what they were doing, with factors like aggression, motivation and

intelligence." The idea gripped Griffiths and he couldn't get it out of his mind while programming the Amiga version of *Magic Pockets* for the Bitmap Brothers.

"Then I saw this article on 3D Studio and it looked impressive. I was thinking that if it could be used in a game somehow it'd be a major breakthrough. I was aware that within a couple of years the resolution and colours would be much greater, but pixel art is very labour intensive – I mean, it'd take forever to fill a CD with it. For us, something like the 3D Studio package had to be the way ahead.

"Psygnosis started doing rendered intros – Origin also – but after the flash intro there was just a normal-looking game. My idea was to take the rendered technology and use it in a sprite game. It wasn't being done at the time, but I figured there shouldn't be any technical restrictions. The idea for a robot beat-'em-up and a rendered game seemed to fit together nicely."

Looking at the screenshots on these pages, it may come as a surprise to learn that *Rise Of The Robots* was rejected by most software publishers in the country, much to Griffiths' dismay. "I mentioned it to the Bitmaps, but they weren't interested. So after I'd finished *Magic Pockets*, I said to the Bitmaps that I'd be trying to sell the *Rise Of The Robots* idea, and if it didn't work I'd come back if that was all right." As is turned out, it wasn't. "I was convinced it would work and saw loads of publishers, but no-one was interested. They



said it wouldn't work. There wasn't a position for me back at the Bitmap Brothers, so I had to make it work. *Mirage* was a relatively new company at the time and, to be honest, they were at the bottom of my list. But I left the design with them and Peter Jones phoned to tell me that he thought it was brilliant."

Mirage's Director was impressed enough to invest in a copy of 3D Studio for Griffiths to start putting his theories to the test. "I put together a design document to outline the technique and how I thought it would work, then checked out 3D Studio to see if it could do what I thought it could do – and it could. I built a robot, based on a Japanese toy I had, and that took a couple of months to get it up and running. This was November '92, which is when Andy turned up and figured out how to get the rendered robots working in a game."

Bringing Robots To Life

Andy Clark is the programmer behind the Amiga version and, more importantly, the Artificial Intelligence and reams of variables used to drive the program and make it more transferrable to other formats, like the PC. This, his interactive entertainment debut, is a far cry from his dogsbody origins at the Humber-side County Council – when he wasn't gaining valuable programming experience in his bedroom. Creating robots with a credible sense of self-preservation requires a lot of thought, especially when the interaction has to be taken into account. "They have to fight with some ounce of intelligence," Clark explains. "There's a lot of information to think about, to teach the robots to behave in certain situations depending on what the player's up to."

The AI is effectively a series of IF... THEN... conditions. The program assesses the situation and, depending on three

(Above) *Rise Of The Robots* programmer Andy Clarke. "The robots have to fight with some ounce of intelligence. There's a lot of information to think about, to teach the robots to behave in certain situations..."

"It's pretty much what's been done before. If it was too original, people wouldn't be so interested. They need to be able to understand what's going on"

Sean Griffiths, designer

(Left) More robotic rucking in progress, demonstrating that the robots are more articulate than their cumbersome design suggests. Hot sparks a-flying...

factors – Intelligence, Motivation and Strength – reacts accordingly, deciding whether or not the robot should attack or defend, and how. If the robot's too smart, aggressive and strong, you don't stand a chance. The hours he spends playtesting enables him to constantly re-jig the balance of elements which contribute to that elusive ideal: playability.

With Clark on board, the project picked up pace. "It was all going to plan," Griffiths continues. "I did a load of 256-colour animation on the PC and put together some punches and kicks for the robot. Then a big American company took an interest in it, and their technical people agreed it could be done, which proved we were heading in the right direction." At this stage it was clear that Instinct Design would need more than an Amiga version to make it all worthwhile. The console boom could not be ignored, and nor could the

PC – but only with a programmer.

The effectiveness of collision detection and the response to player movements are but two key elements converted from the Amiga to the PC by fresh-faced Gary Leach. This newcomer to the business developed his programming skills at university, but *Rise* is the first game he's written. "He said in his interview that he didn't think he was up to it," Griffiths reveals, "but we've found that he is."

My arrival today seems to have put Mr Leach on his guard; something to do with him being hailed as a martial arts expert, a tag he's not at all comfortable with and is quick to remove: "I have an interest in martial arts, I did some before university and a little bit while I was there, but I've forgotten about it since then. I had nothing to do with the moves in *Rise*." Modesty aside, he feels that *Rise* represents "a realistic combat environment." Gary's a mechanic. He's told what to do and he does it, as efficiently as possible. "It's a soulless task," he admits, "but it works. We've tried to make *Rise* as table-driven as possible, so it's a matter of plugging the information into specific shells for the other formats. It's so finely-tuned that it makes more sense to do it this way."

It certainly does when you have to rewrite the same game three times. The two main versions are VGA-compatible (320 by 200 pixels and 256 colours) and SVGA-compatible (640 by 400 pixels and 256 colours). The difference is, predictably, quite striking, but Gary's eager to ensure that there's little appreciable variation in playability. He's proud of his work though – apart from the SVGA, the only discernible aspect of *Rise Of The Robots* that hasn't been converted from the Amiga version is the shadows.

"They were originally part of the robot, but I made these myself – they look better," he says, modestly. "It's certainly one of the first SVGA action games on the PC. There's no real comparison, which is a problem because there's no-one to ask about how it should be done." I sympathise, but how fast a machine do you



need to run *Rise Of The Robots* effectively in SVGA? "The limiting factor is the speed of your video card," Gary replies, "There are a LOT of graphics to move around. Why? What have you got?" When I tell him, actually it's a Diamond Stealth, he laughs – for too long. "Well, it's good for Windows," he smirks.

More Personnel Please

Griffiths' dream was fast becoming a reality when, all of a sudden, the project hit a snag. Much of his work had to be trashed because there could have been legal problems with his robots looking too similar to the Japanese action figure he used as an inspirational model. That put him almost right back on the starting line, but not for long.

"Sean Naden turned up, fresh from art college," says Griffiths, reliving the relief. "His portfolio was full of technical illustrations, including robots, and it was along the lines of what we were looking for so we took him on. I gave him some ideas for different styles of robot and he got down and drew them."

Naden had no computer experience prior to *Rise Of The Robots* – "Fortunately for us, he lied in his interview," says Griffiths – but he took to 3D Studio with consummate ease. The reason why is clear: "It's more fun building models with 3D Studio than drawing," Naden enthuses. "The rendering's been brilliant, except when we had the slower machines. It'd take all day just to render half a pint" – he points to an animation currently filling his screen showing the Cyborg sipping a pint of beer and taking a long hard drag on a cigarette. It raises a smile, but it's not enough to break the ice. The consequent conversation leads to a dead end when I find that the reticent Mr Naden has no specific inspiration for his work on *Rise*, other than a Japanese artist whose name he can't pronounce.

The basic technique of using rendered robots and scenery is simple (and predictable) enough. Instead of hand-drawing animated characters, Naden constructs and moves the robots in 3D Studio, saves them as pictures, cuts them out, then brings them to life on top of the pre-rendered backdrops. In play, the viewpoint remains the same, there's no scrolling from side-to-side (although, arguably, it's actually not necessary in a one-on-one combat simulation) and (as in *Street Fighter II*, *Mortal Kombat* and their precursors) the combatants in *Rise Of The Robots* fight along a fixed line, so even though the effect is three-dimensional, the action is decidedly two-dimensional. And as far as creating an overall effect is concerned, the approach appears to work. There's something fittingly "computer" about ray-traced images which gives them a more solid and believable edge.

"Each character takes up around 20 Mb before it's even rendered," Griffiths bemoans. "We've got four machines with 64 Mb of RAM now, but even so the RAM's easily eaten up." The smallest SVGA robot is some 300 pixels high –



(Above) Ooh, now you wouldn't want to meet this chap down a dark alley – or anywhere for that matter. He's the Terminator droid, pictured here in (another) non-game presentation pose.

"It's certainly one of the first SVGA action games on the PC. There's no real comparison, which is a problem because there's no-one to ask about how it should be done"
Gary Leach,
artist

almost the height of a VGA screen – and one of the largest, The Crusher, is around 500 pixels wide. The Supervisor – a blatant homage to Terminator 2's T-1000 ("We wanted to go from old technology to new, and at the time T2 was big and the metal morphing robot seemed to fit the bill," says Griffiths) – represents over 140 frames of flexible female form (now there's a novelty), while the Cyborg features something like 110 frames, with the rest of

the robots weighing in at around the 80 mark. A lot of graphics then...

"We had to redo much of the animation," Griffiths explains. "The theory was that it should be easy enough, but to make an effective beat-'em-up you need more human-ish robots. We found we were getting a lot of silly walks. We tried rotoscoping, but that was too cumbersome. Looks like through practice we've got it right though."



(Left) Graphic artist Gary Leach at *Rise's* development HQ, the coin-op version running in the background. "The limiting factor is the speed of your video card. There are a LOT of graphics to move around."



Between finding someone to make the robots and getting the animation right, Griffiths also had to root around for a designer to build the backgrounds. "We were desperate," he says candidly. "We were receiving a lot of crap at the time—then Kwan came along." Kwan Lee, believe it or not, was a commercial interior designer. "I almost ignored him," Griffiths says with a grin, "but his portfolio turned out to be fantastic, so we gave him time to get used to 3D Studio and build rooms. He has a unique vision of future design."

It didn't take Kwan long to discover that he'd have to discipline that unique vision if it was to work effectively: "I had to make sure that the meshes weren't too big and try not to repeat textures too often... It was very difficult to play around with the number of lights available. I basically built rooms, found nice spots and expanded on them."

Why Robots Rule Okay

There's a storyline, about a highly intelligent and self-aware robot called The Supervisor running the Electrocrap robot manufacturing plant and eventually overrunning it with a robot revolution. An Ego Virus is to blame, so a Cyborg with the brain of a crack commando is sent in to deal with the problem. The rest you can guess. A pre-rendered introductory sequence sets the scene. It takes up over 70 Mb—obviously not for floppy consumption, then? "No, it's for the CD version," Griffiths explains, but they will be cutting it down for the floppy title, currently running at ten disks for the VGA and 14 disks for the SVGA version. Much

(Above) Graphic artist and robot designer Sean Naden. "It's more fun building models with 3D Studio than drawing. The rendering's been brilliant, except when we had the slower machines. It'd take all day just to render half a pint..."

"We wanted to have some more robotic type moves, like big drills coming out and so on, but it never happened..."
Shaun Naden, artist

to my surprise, this introductory sequence is more coherent than most but, as I mention to Griffiths, it's not something I see as essential. Once you've seen it, subsequent viewing is often for someone else's benefit, so why bother?

"Why not?" he replies. "We had an interior designer building a city for us anyway, so why not use it for an impressive intro sequence?" Griffiths is not alone in thinking that people almost expect an impressive introductory sequence nowadays, "but with *Rise* they get an impressive game as well. We wanted everything to be rendered throughout, to create some consistency."

(Right) A sight already familiar to many, is this imposing shot of the Supervisor, a blatant homage to James Cameron's T-1000 Terminator. "We wanted to go from old technology to new, and at the time T2 was big—the metal morphing robot seemed to fit the bill!" explains designer Sean Griffiths.





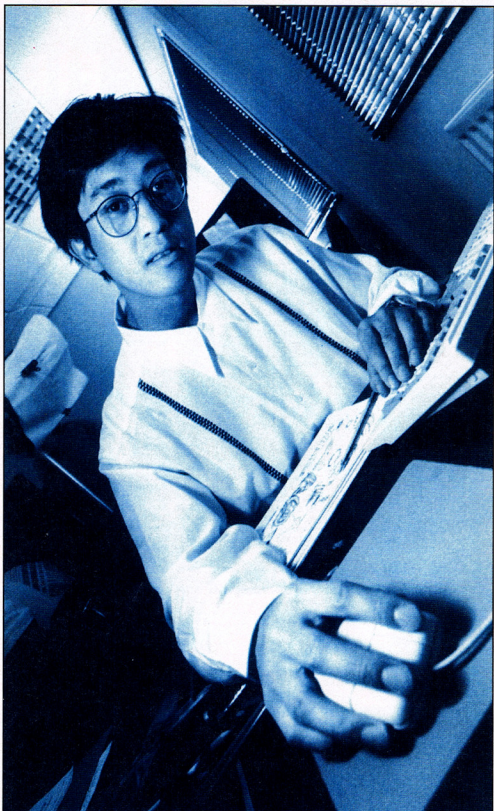
Using a common light source between them, it was Kwan and Sean Naden who came up with most of the combat moves, suggested, as they were, by the job function of each robot in the factory. The basic movements are adapted to suit each robot's distinctive shape. "We started with a punch, a kick and a jump and then added special moves," Griffiths explains. "The characters are interesting, they really do have unique abilities. Some of the moves are quite unusual." They sure sound unusual: Turbo Head-Butt, Double Fork Slash, Bomber Jump, Pincer Mincer, Cyber Slash, Catapult Spin, Flying Jet Kick, Mutation, Melting... The Special Moves unique to each robot are complemented only in two-player mode by four common Super Special Moves: temporary invisibility and invincibility, plus reversal and disabling of the opponent's controls. All forms of Special Move are executed in a familiar fashion – by combining joystick moves and button presses.

"We wanted to have some more robotic type moves, like big drills coming out and so on, but it never happened," says Naden, eyes glinting at the thought of the opportunities a sequel could provide. Given the time and money invested in utilising this technique, it wouldn't be unreasonable to expect to see it cropping up again in future releases, initially in a follow-up.

"It's been a lot of work, but we've got there in the end," says Griffiths. "Now

(Left/right) Kwan Lee's experience as an interior designer has helped him create backdrops as eye-catching as the robots themselves.

(Right) Kwan Lee, graphic artist and former interior designer. "It was very difficult to play around with the number of lights available. I basically built rooms, found nice spots and expanded on them."



(Below) The Supervisor (gets around, doesn't she?) faces off against the Builder – a case of brain against brawn. "The characters are interesting," says Griffiths, "they really do have unique abilities. Some of the moves are quite unusual."

we're fine-tuning the different movements." Once the VGA and SVGA versions are out of the way, Gary Leach has to put together a straightforward extension for the CD version, then it's full steam ahead to finish the software for the arcade machine which, fortunately for all

concerned, has a form of PC at its heart.

It's time to leave. And just when it seems as though the inevitable question has been avoided, it comes: "So what do you think, then?"

Well, *Rise Of The Robots* may well turn out to be more playable than its contemporaries – particularly on the PC, where your current choice is limited to a clumsy conversion of *Street Fighter II*, a good-ish interpretation of *Mortal Kombat*, and Apogee's quite reasonable *One Must Fall* (which has is, in fact, similar to *Rise Of The Robots* in some ways). Judgement day for Sean Griffiths and his team comes in November, when *Rise Of The Robots* is unleashed on an eagerly-awaiting world. By creating the kind of software that the media loves to love (you know, lots of flashy graphics, hi-tech buzzwords and the like), Mirage has generated pre-release momentum of gigantic proportions – but simultaneously set itself up for an almighty fall from grace should things not go according to plan. The question is whether the game can hope to match the standards set by the graphics, and at the moment, even after a day of seeing the thing in development and playing it, it's still too damn difficult to tell...

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The **PC** GAMER Review Directory

September 1994

The Final Frontier

Go to the edge of the galaxy and beyond in Microsoft's incredible Space Simulator—over the page.

Full-Price Reviews

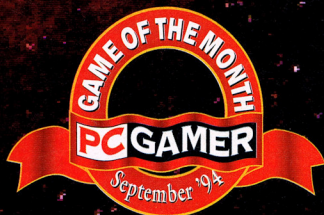
All the month's new releases reviewed and rated, starting over the page...

CD-ROM Reviews

The fun starts on page 66...

Re-Issues

All the stuff you couldn't be bothered to buy at full price the first time round, basically. Page 74...



Space Simulator

That PC Gamer Review Policy In Full

How we rate and review our games...

I We undertake to review every new, finished game we can get our hands on, be it full-price, budget, re-release or add-on module. We won't ignore a game simply because it's deemed unfashionable or "not worth reviewing." We don't discriminate against particular genres, either, such as arcade titles or strategy games.

2 We use the best reviewers in the business. By the best, we mean eminently experienced PC gamers whose opinions you can trust because they know what they're talking about.

3 We don't believe in massive, vacuous reviews that ramble on for page after page before telling you if the game is any good or not — sharp and to the point are the watchwords here. It's thus very rare for a PC Gamer review to run for more than two pages, except in the case of the Game Of The Month, which deserves that bit extra.

...and, of course, bow we mark them.

Our marking system is easy to get the hang of. We have to be tough, because we're all well aware, as you are, how expensive PC games are these days. However, we're not afraid to award software high marks when we feel it deserves it. Here's roughly how our ratings stack up...

100%-90%

A classic game — unreservedly recommended to anyone with an interest in PC gaming.

89%-80%

An excellent game. Well worthy of attention, but perhaps not the best of its breed. Also, some benchmark games of decidedly specialist taste.

79%-70%

A good game which we'd have no hesitation in recommending to fans of the type. However, there are bound to be superior examples of the genre.

69%-60%

A reasonable game that is above average. It may be worth playing and, perhaps, buying, but is flawed in significant respects.

59%-50%

Very average. By no means an embarrassment, but hardly the best way to spend your cash.

49%-40%

Poor quality. There may be something slightly more interesting about it than games which fall into the abyss of the last category, however.

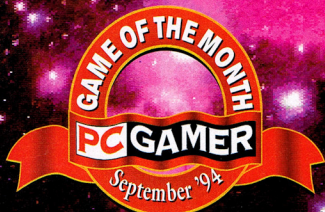
39% or below

Dreadful rubbish. Avoid at all costs.

Finally, those awards...

Our coveted Game Of The Month award goes to the most impressive piece of software we review, while Recommended merits are awarded to all those titles that we believe are deserving of your cash. We don't give either accolade lightly...

Space Simulator



Space, as Douglas Adams said, is big. But then so is Microsoft's equally expansive simulation...



It's easy to see space as the logical progression for Microsoft's *Flight Simulator* team — having conquered the Earth, where else to go but beyond? Of course, no-one in their right minds would imagine that recreating our entire galaxy (and several others) with the same level of authenticity as the *Flight Sims* would be easy, but Microsoft's effort is an admirable one all the same — even though you get the distinct impression they've bitten off far more than they could get in their mouth here, let alone chew.

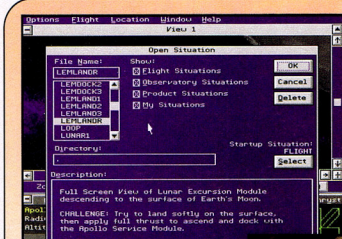
The whole thing kicks off with a cockpit view from your ship, a space-going cruiser, as the Earth

Publisher	Microsoft
Developer	Bruce Artwick, In-house
Price	£39.99
Minimum System	386, SX25 2 Mb
Recommended	486SVGA
Sound Support	OPL 2, Adlib compatible
Release Date	September

The view from your cockpit

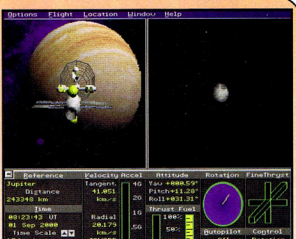
wide variety of situations on offer, ranging from the scientific (like mapping the surface of the moon, chasing Halley's Comet or generally throwing your weight around in weightless conditions) to fictional exploits such as hot-dogging aerobatics through the struts of a spacestation or fighting off interstellar pirates.

The question of how to set about manoeuvring a number of spaceships with a common interface must have boggled the minds of Microsoft's designers, but



One of the best features in *Space Simulator*

is the ability to work through preset 'situations' (not 'missions,' you notice). On some of these you get to do some cool things like orbit Jupiter, something which it seems everybody wants to do since the comet hit the largest planet in the solar system a couple of months ago. Some of the situations are real, some fictional, but all mean you can mix and match vehicles, or even take the same mission to a different location.



(Above) You can enter into a variety of situations in the simulator, just to give you an idea of how things work. All you do is click on the selection and you're there.

(Right) In orbit around Jupiter – pre-Schumacher-Levy, it seems, because there are no signs of disturbance. You can zoom in using the viewport's magnifying lens, but all that happens is you get to see less Jupiter and more bitmap.



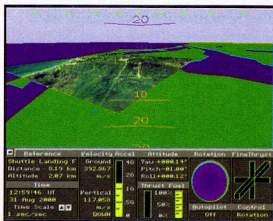
(Above) A fast orbit around Jupiter, following in the footsteps of the Voyager spacecraft. Notice the Jovian moon out of the other viewport and how it gets closer as we pass through Jupiter's shadow.

smic

Shuttle Shots

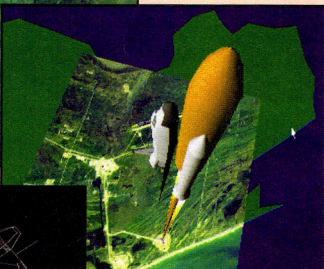
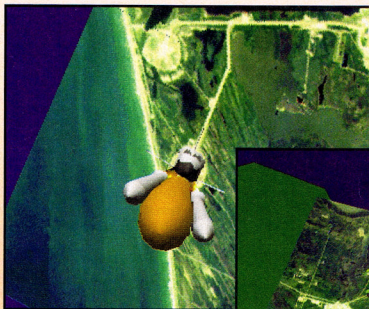
One of the spaceships you get to fly is, of course, the Space Shuttle, although you don't really fly a Shuttle simulator. What is simulated is the situations you can take the shuttle into, like future spacestations and distant world scenarios.

Although the controls are different from those in a real shuttle, the mechanics of space travel are very much the same. You're a weightless object which operates on rotation and thrust. If you want to stop moving, you simply thrust in the opposite direction.

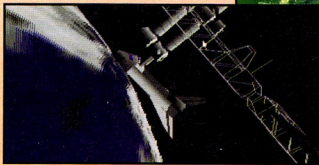


(Above) Bringing the space shuttle in to land at the Cape. Not exactly *Flight Simulator 5*, but still quite interesting.

(Left/Below) You can launch the shuttle and view it from any angle, although you have no control until it's in orbit – just like the real Shuttle, in fact!



Here the shuttle is attached to a spacestation, one of many you can visit on your trips across the galaxy.



in the end they settled for a simple up/down/left/right/in/out 3D thrust model, complete with in-built rotational facility. This imitates the action of the little retro jets you see on the nose

"You get the distinct impression Microsoft have bitten off far more than they could get in their mouth here, let alone chew"

of the shuttle, or those star-shaped clusters of directional jets on the Lunar Module and Command Module from the Apollo missions.

Each ship you fly (although since you're not actually flying I should say USE or OPERATE) uses this control system, and you also have tracking

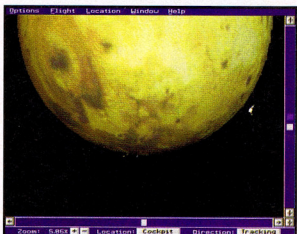
controls and an auto-pilot computer which can be pre-set to perform certain tasks. You can set a target, like Uranus, and send your craft off to go into orbit around it – even land on it – or simply hang about in space above the surface. You can alter the view to look out of any of the windows (it seems all the ships have windows forward, backward and on either side), and you can even hover over a planet and look up at your own ship. Usually, this is a just a tiny white speck as the sun catches it, but in a simulator features are everything, even if they're fairly silly (the fact that you can't actually stand on the surface of Jupiter didn't seem to bother anyone at Microsoft, for instance).

There's even more on offer if all you want to do is look at all the wonderful rendered planets. You can pick a location on Earth and then gaze at the stars and planets with a huge telescope, for example, zooming in faster than a speeding bullet to look closely at the way the bitmap wrapped around the moon ends at the dark side (which, of course, hasn't



Chasing halley's comet.

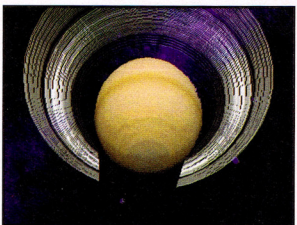
Moving in close to Io, one of Jupiter's moons



been quite as well mapped as the side we always see), or zoom in on a portion of the night sky and see a distant galaxy flying towards you.

This is one of the major drawbacks of the system. You may see some noticeably square digitised pictures pasted onto the *Space Simulator* landscape in some of the screens on this page. Obviously, it was a good idea to integrate bitmap images with the main 3D engine, and the scaling techniques are undoubtedly state-of-the-art, but, well, it does look kind of tacky. When the real world ends only to be replaced by a solid block of green and blue jaggy lines, your suspension of disbelief comes to an abrupt halt. Only certain portions of the Earth have the satellite picture embossed on them, and only certain galaxies have the relevant bitmaps attached.

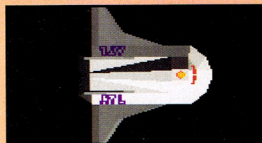
But quibbles aside, there are a few masterstrokes. If you go to a distant star, for example, you're treated to a view of it, with solar prominences and a suitably coloured orb if it's a yellow, red or blue type body. Press a key, though, and you're whisked off to the first planet in that solar system – a new world, which nobody has seen before. Press it again and you go to the moons of that planet, and the next planet, and so forth throughout the alien solar system. Who knows, one day you might find a planet capable of supporting life? This is a rather nice



In an unusual orbit around Saturn-via the poles

Spaceships For Hire

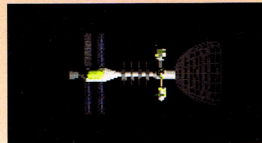
There's a selection of space vehicles, both factual and fictional, for you to choose from. Not only can you fly the preset missions, but you can also transplant ships into different scenarios.



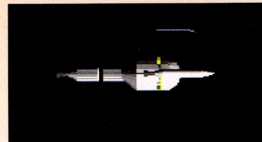
All Terrain Lander Sort of wedge-shaped SR-71 clone, which takes off and lands on big feet like a Lunar Module. It can cruise along or take off vertically like a Harrier.



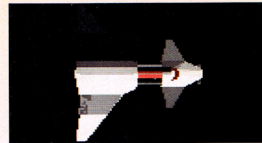
Apollo Service Module Also known as the Command Module from the Apollo missions. Surely the time is ripe for an Apollo mission simulator?



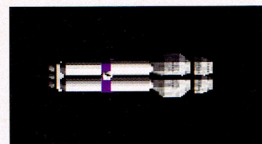
Bussard Ram-Jet A nice fast ship which can zoom through the galaxy, taking pictures for the album, collecting soil souvenirs and mailing postcards from distant nebulae.



Callisto A space fighter from a distant galaxy obviously made by some space-faring aliens long ago... No wait, it's Thunderbird 3!



F-79 Galactic Fighter Not bad, and a bit better than some of the other attempts at high-tech space fighter aircraft, but still not in the same league as other fictional vessels.



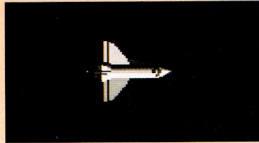
Galactic Explorer Oh please. I suppose it is a bit more realistic than a TIE fighter or an X-Wing, but surely Microsoft could have come up with something a bit more inspiring?



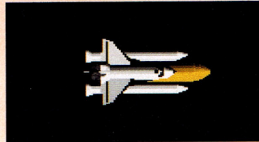
Lunar Excursion Module (LEM) Ah, yes - July 1969 - there I was on the sofa, watching a fuzzy picture of a fuzzy LEM and Neil Armstrong's fuzzy boot taking a giant leap...



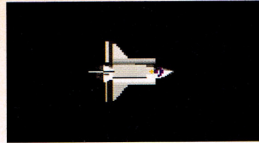
Manned Manoeuvring Unit (MMU) The old jetpack, used for spacewalking and carrying its own fuel pack. Be economical though, or you'll burn out and get stranded.



Space Shuttle (Lander)



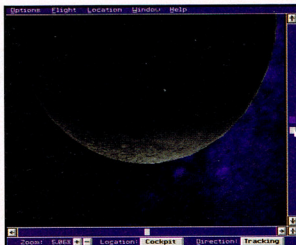
Space Shuttle (Launch)



Space Shuttle (Orbiter) Not being a particularly flexible simulation of the jolly old shuttle, Space Simulator has to have three different versions for various modes of flight.



Zander Freighter A big space freighter with great cargo containers attached - a bit like the Eagle ships they flew in Space 1999. Only about 1,000 times bigger.



Our own moon at sunrise.

touch and I spent hours tinkering around with just this one feature. The variety of worlds being generated randomly is quite breathtaking, and some of them look really alien. This is a magical experience, and totally unexpected from an otherwise quite dry simulation. A further nice touch is the ability to record videos of your exploits, and even take stills of particularly beautiful displays, which you can play back when you've hung up your helmet for the day.

Although heavy on simulation and cleverly done, *Space Simulator* does have its drawbacks. In space nobody can hear you because you've just added a little too much thrust and gone flying past the docking bay and into outer space. You have a fuel supply, you see, so if you exhaust that you're dead in the water; when you're the only ship for 400 light years you've no chance of rescue.

It would've been nice, though, to have had more historic missions to play about with - like Gemini, more Apollo stuff, a lunar rover over a rocky fractal terrain... In fact, it would have been nice to spend a bit more time on the spaceships in general. If you're going to write science fiction (which is what the fictional ships amount to), at least hire a decent futurist.

Having said all that, *Space Simulator* is quite absorbing from an educational point of view, and after a while of planet-hopping you really begin to get a

Doing The Impossible

The whole point about *Space Simulator* is that it enables you to visit places and do things you wouldn't normally be able to do, even if you are in NASA. Not only can you go to uncharted places in the galaxy, you can even strike out to undiscovered worlds, and all in the same flexible 3D environment.



Docking at the Ring Station.

The All Terrain Lander takes off from the moon as the Earth rises in the sky.



feel for what space travel and exploration is all about. It takes a long time to get used to the controls and you have to work quite hard to familiarise yourself with the way even the simplest of vehicles operates in zero gravity, but then this is a simulation.

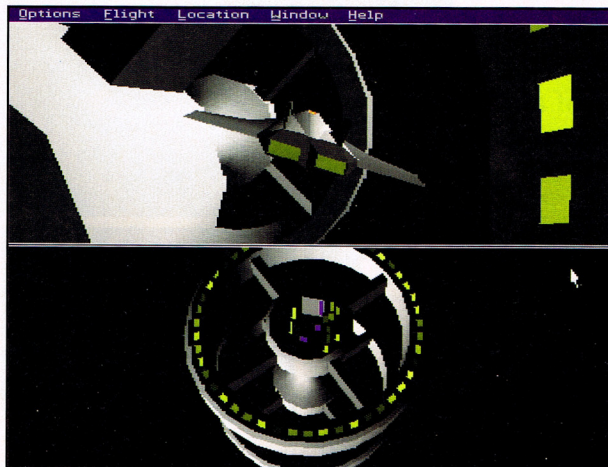
As a sim it's pretty accurate too, but what you've got to bear in mind is that space work is fairly labour intensive and usually quite dull. Real simulation players won't mind, of course, because they're already used to sitting in a simulated Cessna chugging all the way across America in real time for days on end. But in space the distances to travel are much further, and if you want to take a trip anywhere in real time it's going to take weeks. You can speed up time, but this doesn't affect the point that being an astronaut can be

mindnumbingly boring. This is something the program manages to convey pretty strongly – once you've been to Jupiter a few times you just want to get the job done and return home.

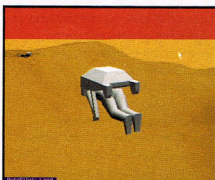
So rather than being an easy intro into the universe of space simulators, *Space Simulator* is, in fact, far too accurate for its own good. It somehow lacks the balance to be a "game" as such, and the easy accessibility of information to be really educational.

What it doesn't lack, however, is clever visuals and difficult problems to solve, and in that respect it's successful, absorbing and a dream come true for anyone with more than a passing interest in man's final frontier.

PHIL SOUTH



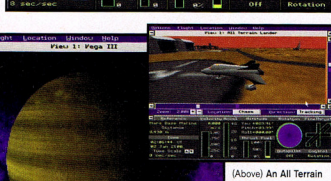
Hot dogging-flying through the struts of a space station, most irregular



(Above) Hovering above the surface of Mars in a Manned Manoeuvring Orbiter or MMU.



(Above) Looking at The Pleiades, 400 light years away.



(Above) An All Terrain Lander parked on Mars.

(Right) A fictional planet in orbit around the star Vega.



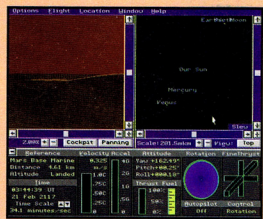
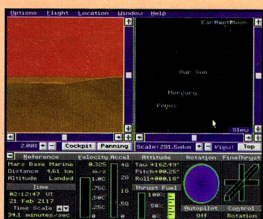
You can immediately jump in time and space to view any deep sky object or constellation.

Star Maps

Using the time-lapse feature you can speed up the motions of the universe and take a trip into the future.



Watch the planets dance!



Look in awe as the sun rises and sets over Mars, while keeping track of the other planets.

PCG Rating

86%

The Verdict

Highs

Amazing planets, both factual and fictional, and lovely lighting.

Lows

Poor spaceships – they're just too blocky and basic.

A gargantuan task, and successful attempt all the same.

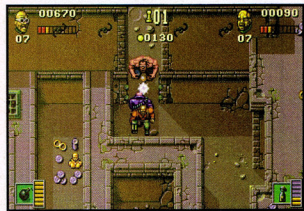
Inextricable

The Chaos Engine

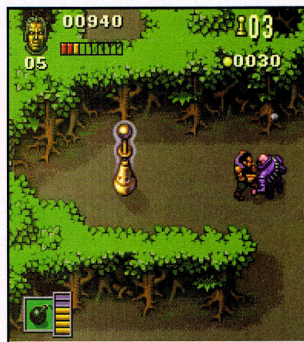
There aren't many decent shoot-'em-ups on the PC – enter the Bitmap Brothers, masters of all matters pyrotechnical...

Why is it that some PC gamers (the press included) are such elitist tossers? "Why would I want to play something as puerile as an arcade game on my superior computer," they mince, "when I could buy one of those cheap consoles?"

Why would you want to buy such an expensive piece of kit as a PC solely for the purpose of playing games anyway? Sure, it's the only machine currently running the likes of *Theme Park* and *SimCity 2000* – and all those interactive movies – but splashing out, on average, a grand just for the privilege? Come on...



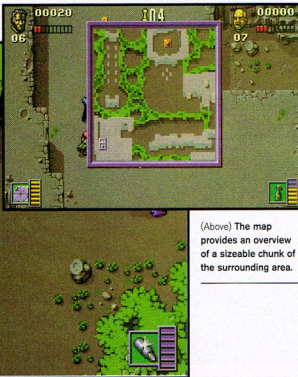
(Below) The big lamp-post type things are the "nodes" you need to find and activate before the exit gate can be opened.



The fact remains that arcade action is poorly represented on the PC. Finery aside, *Doom* and *TIE Fighter* lean heavily that way, but that's about it as far as anything approaching a decent level of quality goes. *The Chaos Engine* is obviously meant to help fill the void, but, more's the pity, the intention transcends the result.

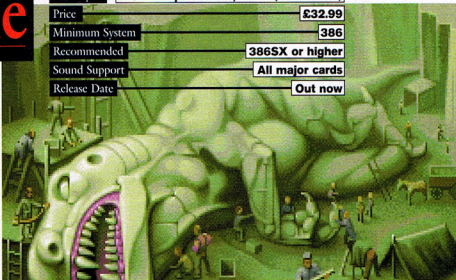
The Chaos Engine comes on a single disk, which is usually enough to inspire the ignorant to be dismissive, but that's not the reason why there's room for improvement. Some of *The Chaos Engine*'s faults seem insignificant, but they contribute to the overall effect nonetheless – and when you're paying 30 quid upwards for entertainment, I really do expect nothing less than a well-rounded, well-crafted piece of software. I certainly don't expect to see the word **LOADING** appearing on-screen as an unnecessary

"The computer-controlled companion is functional, but there's no substitute for playing alongside a human being"



(Above) The map provides an overview of a sizeable chunk of the surrounding area.

Publisher	Renegade
Developer	The Bitmap Brothers, AVME (conversion)
Price	£32.99
Minimum System	386
Recommended	386SX or higher
Sound Support	All major cards
Release Date	Out now



(Above) The effects of the eponymous Chaos engine are hinted at in a brief introductory sequence.

(Below) Choose your character – and a companion.

reminder of the PC's presence.

And so to the action proper... Run around 16 maze-like environments (split into four worlds) with a partner in tow (controlled either by the computer or another player, depending on your popularity), blasting monsters, collecting treasure and power-ups, seeking out keys and activating nodes to open exits – in preparation for your ultimate objective of destroying *The Chaos Engine* itself.

The computer-controlled companion is functional, but there's no substitute for the rapport you get from playing alongside a human being. Not being able to move while shooting takes a little getting used to too, and the feedback from the firing lacks 'oomph' (mainly due to the monster deaths). Still, it's bearable. A throbbing soundtrack suits the pace of play, but the sound effects aren't as punchy (geddit?) as I'd have liked.

Interacting with the environment triggers events in the gameworld – some bad, some good (pick up treasure or keys and a bridge could appear... Or some more monsters, for example). It's here – at the core of things – that *The Chaos Engine* falls down. First, there's the inconsistency (one minute, walking over an area or shooting monsters or specific pieces of scenery from a certain angle triggers an event, the next it doesn't). Then there's the uncertainty (you don't know what will happen until you do it). Finally, there's the ambiguity (events frequently occur out of sight, so you have to look for them – and they aren't always obvious anyway).

There are a few secret areas and shortcuts to later levels scattered about, which provide some

le

(Below) It's the mercenary - a nasty piece of work if ever there was one. Like the jacket, and shades combo though.



incentive to replay the early stages. That said, the structure of the levels is adequate (there are a few irritating What Now? situations, especially when the mazes become more complex - but at least there's a map available). The scrolling is smooth enough during play, but character movement isn't quite so fluid - especially when a handful of monsters and bullets are on-screen (cue *Six Million Dollar Man* slow motion effect).

So why would I recommend *The Chaos Engine*? Well, on a grand scale it's nothing special, but as far as the PC is concerned it's a commendable conversion of its Amiga counterpart and one of the more playable blasters available. Team 17's *Alien Breed* is a more atmospheric alternative, but *The Chaos Engine* has the



(Above) Asilee, look out for the big disembodied crawly hand things! The baddies aren't all quite as silly as this, fortunately.

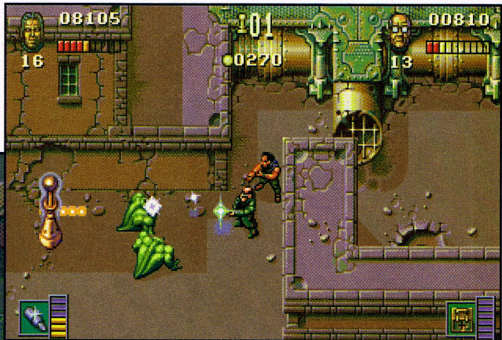
"The scrolling is smooth enough during play, but character movement isn't quite so fluid - especially when a handful of monsters and bullets are on-screen (cue Six Million Dollar Man slow motion effect)"

more entertaining edge.

For all its foibles, *The Chaos Engine* is playable enough to make it a suitable time-killer between the latest simulator, RPG or interactive movie - and, frankly, a lot more fun than most examples of those over-worked genres.

GARY PENN

(Below) Your computer-controlled buddy is intelligent enough to keep you covered when the going gets tough.



(Above and left) Dan Malone's stylish graphics convey the retro-future "steampunk" mood well - it's just a shame the soundtrack isn't quite as meaty as on some of the other versions.

PCG Rating

79%

The Verdict

Highs

More enjoyable than most arcade action around.

Lows

Many minor misdemeanours, but nothing to really moan about.

We've hard pushed to find better on the PC, but what's that saying?

Manchester United Premier League

Devilish

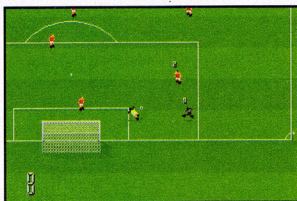


Publisher	Krisalis
Developer	In-house
Price	£29.99
Minimum System	386, 4 Mb, mouse
Recommended	486
Sound Support	Soundblaster compatible
Release Date	Out Now

As Fergie's boys continue to dominate the top-flight, Krisalis cashes in yet again with another of its lucrative licences.

So Manchester United win the Premier League again. And the FA Cup. Ho hum. Getting a bit boring, isn't it? Particularly if you spend much of your working day surrounded by boorish Man U fans singing their tedious "glory glory" songs. But no matter how much the rest of us may quibble about their style of play and Cantona's cheating, you can't deny them their success. And you certainly won't see Krisalis complaining – they picked up the Manchester United licence a couple of seasons ago, only to see the team claim league, cup and European glory by the bucketload. Did they know something we didn't?

Strangely, this latest incarnation of the team licence seems a little out of date now – the game was released on the Amiga to celebrate United's inaugural Premier League victory, but in the time it's taken the game to reach the PC, United have won the title again and claimed the FA Cup into the bargain. Krisalis' 'Dream Double' celebration game is no doubt already in the pipeline, but in the meantime Red



Devils fans will be more than happy with this.

The nice thing about *Manchester United Premier League Champions* is that you don't have to be a raving United fan to enjoy it – the game includes all of England's professional teams across the various divisions (Premier, 1, 2, 3 and the GM Vauxhall Conference), along with a healthy smattering of non-league sides – you'd have to support a very obscure side indeed not to be catered for here. The Manchester United bias is there, of course – it's the only team to feature digitised pics of the players, and their skill stats are pumped up sky high to near-

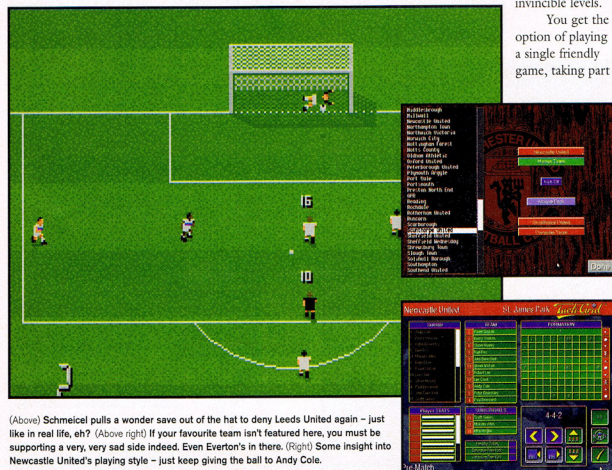
invincible levels. You get the option of playing a single friendly game, taking part



(Left/right) Manchester United have their work cut out for them against Keegan's ever-improving Toot Army. Time for Cantona to lose his rag and start going in studs first, perhaps?

in a realistic reconstruction of the domestic season, or designing a custom league to suit your taste. It's all user-friendly and thoughtful, but there's nothing much here you won't have seen before. Once on the pitch, the game reveals its unashamedly *Sensible Soccer*-inspired origins, with the developers opting for small, characteristic sprites and a large, smooth-moving

"The major innovation is Tacti-Grid, an especially thorough pre-match formation design system that provides you with much more control over how your computer-controlled team-mates behave"



(Above) Schmeichel pulls a wonder save out of the hat to deny Leeds United again – just like in real life, eh? (Above right) If your favourite team isn't featured here, you must be supporting a very, very sad side indeed. Even Everton's in there. (Right) Some insight into Newcastle United's playing style – just keep giving the ball to Andy Cole.

bird's-eye pitch display. This month's coverdisk demo (see page 8 for more details) will give you an idea of how it feels to play, but *Sensible* devotees will recognise this as a slightly slower, less flowing version of that classic. The control is similar, but less intelligent – whereas in *Sensi* your pass would almost always find a fellow player, here you've got your work cut out to keep possession, particularly against tougher sides. Aftertouch, slow-motion replays, substitutions, injuries – everything you'd expect to see is present and correct.

MUPLC's major innovation is Tacti-Grid, an especially thorough pre-match formation design system that provides you with much more control over how your computer-controlled team-mates

Champions

James Park *Tacti-Grid*

SQUAD	TEAM
1. Andy Cole	1. Pavel Snick
2. Barry Venison	2. Barry Venison
3. Peter Beardsley	6. Steve Hawley
4. Rael Fox	5. Paul Fox
5. Malcolm Allen	8. John Beresford
7. Robert Lee	19. Steve Watson
1. Pavel Snick	7. Robert Lee
10. Lee Clark	10. Lee Clark
6. Steve Hawley	9. Andy Cole
4. Paul Bracewell	8. Peter Beardsley
3. John Beresford	4. Paul Bracewell
11. Scott Sellers	

Player STATS

Pre-Match

SUBSTITUTES
11. Scott Sellers
21. Malcolm Allen
30. Mike Hooper
Penalty Taker
Defensive Free Kick
Attacking Free Kick

FORMATION
2 3 19 6
7 5 10 4
8 8



(Left) The Tacti-Grid screen, from where all your top-level managerial decisions are made. Statistical information on all squad members can be accessed from here and, more importantly, you can customise tactical formation and playing style to your heart's content. And it all looks jolly spiffing too.

(Below) There's a wide variety of pitch conditions, including muddy (pictured), frosty and a suitably murky fog scenario. As you'd expect, the weather has minor effects on gameplay – a slightly slower pace on the soggy mud pitch and so on.



"You don't seem to be able to kick the ball very hard – even the mighty Peter Schmeichel struggles to reach the halfway line with one of his goal kicks"

behave. Aside from the many pre-set formations, you can also jiggle individual players around to create your own tactical set-ups. It's always difficult to determine just how much of an effect these fancy tactical scenes really have on the pitch, but in MUPLC there are some welcome realistic touches. If the opposition team is playing all-out attack, for example, it's possible to catch them 'on the break' with a nifty tackle, rush down the pitch through their non-existent defence and score. The same, of course, can happen to you if your players aren't zoned properly, and as in the real game the midfield is the most crucial area of the pitch – lose that battle and you can kiss the game goodbye. And you can forget about trying to knock the ball out of the keeper's hands by sliding into him after he's dived for the ball – here, as in reality, play like that can

(Left) A quick tactical hint – don't leave this chap out of the side...

(Left) It's theseeell Tottenham are left looking like a bunch of mugs as the boys in blue (we forget who they are) knock in a super-soft goal. What do you expect against a team with no back four?



earn you an instant red card.

Unfortunately, there are some weak spots. For a start, there's no offside rule. True, in computer football it can be a restricting rule, but surely Krisalis could have at least included it as an option? More importantly, you don't seem to be able to kick the ball very hard – even the mighty Peter Schmeichel struggles to reach the halfway line with one of his goal kicks.



Player: Andy Cole
Position: Striker
Total Points: 11
Longest Kick: 10
Shortest Kick: 10
Speed: 10
Stamina: 10
Aggression: 10
Shot Power: 10
Shot Accuracy: 10
Ball Control: 10
Passing: 10
Tackling: 10
Intelligence: 10
Fitness: 10
Morale: 10

Midfield
Speed
Stamina
Aggression
Shot Power
Shot Accuracy
Ball Control
Passing
Tackling
Intelligence
Fitness
Morale

This exacerbates the game's biggest flaw – the fact that it's very difficult to score. The computer goals are all like Billy The Fish, and scorers are often depressingly low. Of course, it's all the more satisfying when you do score, but that's not really the point, is it? Add this to the fact that there actually seems to be very little skill-wise between the teams (I played Manchester United and, in two successive games, drew with Bath City and lost 1-0 to Workson Town – surely some mistake?) and you've got a football game with almost as many negative as positive features.

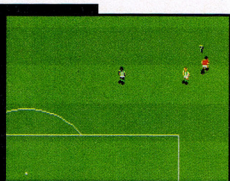
Actually, I'm probably being a little too picky. Yes, it's hard to score, yes, there are some odd (as in peculiar) touches – but MUPLC kept me glued to the screen, and will probably keep me coming back for some time to come yet.

For all its faults, it plays a good, solid game of football and, in two-player mode at least, it's up there with the best. *Sensible Soccer* still rules the roost internationally, naturally, but, like the team it's based on, MUPLC is the finest exponent of the domestic game around at the moment.

GARY WHITTA



Manchester United



(Above) Cantona gets the red card – art imitates life once again.

(Left) An all-too-familiar sight these days...

PCG Rating

82%

The Verdict

Highs

All the home teams are in there, and Tacti-Grid is a bit good.

Lows

Various niggling faults will aggravate the impatient player.

"Come on you reds!"

(And so on).

Complex

Dark Legions



Is it a wargame? Is it a beat 'em-up with a strange viewing angle? Is it a board game? Most importantly, is US Gold's latest release any good?

Publisher	US Gold
Developer	SSI
Price	£35.99
Minimum System	386, 4 Mb RAM
Recommended	486
Sound Support	Soundblaster
Release Date	Out now

armies, made up from various character types, duke it out over a grid-based map. One character on each side is an Orb Holder, and the army that kills the opposing Orb Holder wins. The game is played in turns, with each side moving their army using either a top-down strategic map or the smaller scale isometric view.

Moving onto an enemy character's square with one of your own starts the combat mode – this is the arcadey beat 'em-up part of the game. The view switches to a top-down, zoomed-in perspective of the square and the two characters fight to the death. Simple.

Well, not quite.

As with all good strategy games, *Dark Legions* is based on a simple idea but the game itself is varied enough to allow for complex strategies and tactics.

This is achieved in several ways – through the characters, the maps and the setup options.

Dark Legion's characters – there are 12 types in all, ranging from the lowly Orc to the well 'ard

“Dark Legion's characters – there are 12 types in all, ranging from the lowly Orc to the well 'ard Demon – are the key to the game”

Demon – are the key to the game. As well as different attributes, such as how far they can move, how much damage they can take and so on, each has different types of attack and special powers. The Berserker, for example, has three different sword strikes, whereas the Fire Elemental can throw fireballs (unsurprisingly) or expand into a mini explosion. Even more varied, though, are the special powers. Some are less than earth-shattering, such as the Water Elemental's ability to cross water (shock, horror), but others can win or lose the game. The Conjurer can summon temporary reinforcements, the Vampire turns its victims into zombies that join your army, and so on.

Understanding each character, how best to use them and how they work together is critical.

Dark Legions also offers a wide variety of battlegrounds in the form of the maps on which the game is played. There are over 20 of these, of all sizes from huge down to tiny, and the combinations of terrain and features on each provides a different

The simple answer is yes – to all the questions. *Dark Legions* is a wargame. It's also an arcadey beat 'em-up and a board game. But most remarkably of all, instead of being a confused mish-mash of ideas, it's actually playable and fun.

Although there's the usual irrelevant plot that seems to have become obligatory for any fantasy game, the basis of *Dark Legions* is very simple. Two



(Above and left) Two shots of the combat mode, where the Demon reigns supreme. The poor Orc has just cashed his chips after a couple of swipes of the red guy's claws, whereas the Troll is in the process of having his already small brain cooked through. Only Fire Elementals and other Demons really stand a chance in these clashes.





(Above) One of the computer's key weaknesses is its apparent inability to deal with obstacles – this Elemental will happily waste it's stamina and time blasting the tree, whilst the zombie just waits.

(Right) Your stalwart horde prepares itself for the coming battle.

challenge, some requiring unique and carefully thought out plans to succeed. When starting a game you can either choose from one of several preset battles, or set up your own. In doing this you choose a map and a number of 'credits', with which you can select your army and any extra stuff like magical rings or traps. The more credits you choose, the bigger the armies, and the longer the game lasts for.

Just how SSI have managed to get this bizarre mixture of chess, *Star Control 2*, *Archon Ultra*, arcade beat 'em-up and traditional wargame to work is something of a mystery, but work it does, and well. The presentation is slick and flawless throughout, both in terms of the superbly animated graphics and the atmospheric sound, which does help to tie the game together. Beyond that, though, it seems to be just down to some very clever (or very lucky) programming that manages to balance the various elements.

Unfortunately, while *Dark Legions* is a good game, it's prevented from being a great one by some annoying problems and oversights, some more important than others. The animations on the isometric view are superbly drawn and very smooth, but they're just too slow for comfort and you tend to end up skipping them, which is a shame. Likewise, the



"Just how SSI have managed to get this bizarre mixture of chess, Star Control 2, Archon Ultra, arcade beat 'em-up and traditional wargame to work is something of a mystery"

viewing area on this perspective is very limited, and a centring command would have helped a great deal.

However, nearly all of the big problems are to do with the one-player mode. The main drawback is the computer opponent's artificial intelligence, or rather its lack of one. Both on the strategic map and in the combat mode, the computer opponent

consistently makes stupid mistakes and errors. Even at the hardest difficulty level, where the computer has twice as many credits to spend as you, it insists on giving its orb to a weak character and then leaving him in the open, negating its force advantage. The problem is only exacerbated by the 'one off' nature of each battle – there's no



(Left/right) At any time during the game you can pull up a character's statistics, giving you an accurate read out of their current health and a pretty picture.



Sneaky Gits

The Shapechanger is one of the most handy characters, able to become anything, any time.



campaign option or any way to link a series of battles, something which might have added to the game's long term appeal.

None of these problems apply to *Dark Legions* when you play it against another person, and it's here that the game really comes into its own, especially when played via linked machines (modem and null modem connections are supported). If you can play *Dark Legions* in this form, then this is one of the best two-player strategy games available and comes highly recommended. As a one player game, though, the computer opponent just isn't quite good enough for this to be rated as a classic. Despite this, it's still an enjoyable, fun game and the kind of thing you'll find yourself coming back to for an hour or two again and again.

ANDY BUTCHER

PCG Rating

83%

The Verdict

Highs

Superbly presented combination of ideas that works very well.

Lows

Average computer opponent limits one-player appeal.

Unique, absorbing, highly playable strategy game; not quite brilliant.

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IndyCar Circuits Expansion Pack

Publisher	Virgin
Developer	Papyrus Design Group
Price	£17.99
Recommended	486DX, joystick
Release Date	Out Now

IF THERE WAS A PROBLEM with the superb *IndyCar Racing* (PCG 1: 93%), it was with the circuits – or rather the lack of them. The game only contains a measly eight tracks, which rather limits the appeal of the Championship option, let alone the game's long-term appeal. Now, in the run up to the release of its

new game *NASCAR Racing* (see page 14 for our exclusive preview), Papyrus is releasing the first of two expansion packs. Happily, it's a whole bundle of new circuits – seven in all, bringing the game's total up to a more respectable 15. For your trouble, you get the chance to drive at insane speeds around Cleveland, Phoenix, Mid Ohio, Australia, Detroit, Elkhart Lake and Vancouver. Only Phoenix is an oval – the rest are either dedicated tracks or road circuits.

In addition, the pack automatically updates your copy of *IndyCar* to the

latest version (v 1.05) and includes a couple of small utilities for *IndyCar* freaks. One enables you to edit saved replays, so now you can cut out one particular section and save it without the rest of the race – which is great for when you just want to watch the same pile-up over and over again. The second translates the settings



(Above) There can be little doubt that *IndyCar* is still one of the best-looking race games available. It's just a shame you have to pay extra for tracks that should have been included in the first place.

of a saved car set-up into a readable text form, thus making it much easier to swap set-ups between players.

When it comes down to it, the *IndyCar Circuits Expansion Pack* is identical to nearly all game expansion packs – if you're a big fan of the original it's a good thing, but if you're not you're unlikely to have read even this far. The numerous little utilities are neat and the automatic update is a great idea, but only serious *IndyCar* players need apply. ANDY BUTCHER



(Above) Elkhart Lake – full of right angle corners and blind turns at the top of hills – is one of the most enjoyable of the new tracks.

PCG Rating	Highs
79%	Em, loads more tracks for <i>IndyCar</i> racing.
	Lows
	Em, loads more tracks for <i>IndyCar</i> racing.
The Verdict	Em, loads more tracks for <i>IndyCar</i> racing.

Publisher	Rasputin
Developer	In-house
Price	£19.99
Recommended	386
Release Date	Out Now

PUZZLE GAMES MAY NOT be at the vanguard of 'interactive entertainment,' but the best of the genre can still exert an influence every bit as wowsome as the latest Pentium-troubling CD wonder. Take *Clockwiser*, for example. Penny plain, Amiga-derived graphics, a few rudimentary rules and not much else – and yet it's still got that certain something. A quick run-through of the basics should give you the gist of the gameplay, although, as with most puzzlers, it all sounds a lot more complex than it really is.

The screen's divided into two halves and you have to re-arrange the elements on the left to match the ones on the right. The elements include



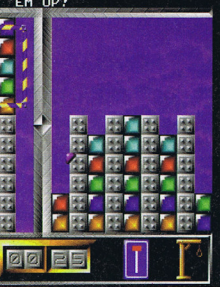
different coloured gravity blocks, brick walls, bombs, diamonds and de-gravitisers and transporters. Each element behaves in a set way. The gravity blocks fall if not supported, diamonds multiply if dropped, bombs destroy things (and so on).

The first few levels introduce you to the elements and teach you how to use them with each other. To move things about, you simply draw an elastic rectangle over what you want to move and then press either the clockwise or anti-clockwise icon at the bottom of the screen. Whatever elements you've enclosed will then move around your defined rectangle in the direction you've selected.

Now that must all sound horribly convoluted but, believe me, if I'd

explained *Tetris* it would have seemed just as impenetrable. When you get down to it,

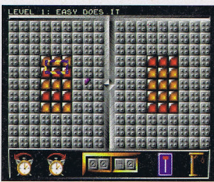
Clockwiser is a delightfully simple and satisfying puzzle game. The round-the-clock movement is novel and the levels are cunningly designed. With a time limit on each level, you not only have to think quick but be quite adept with the mouse to get everything done too. Unfortunately, it does suffer from a common puzzle fault – there's only a finite amount of levels (albeit a large 110) and either you'll finish them or get stuck (so it lacks the replayability of, say, *Tetris* or *Shanghai*). I enjoyed it all the same though. CHRIS BUXTON



(Above) To make the blocks fall into the places shown on the left, move the shapes clockwise around the blue and yellow-edged rectangle.

(Top-left) Often the most daunting looking puzzles are the easiest of the batch to solve.

PCG Rating	Highs
78%	Simple puzzle engine with plenty of levels.
	Lows
	Not the most replayable of puzzle games.
The Verdict	A neat little puzzler – not amazing but satisfying nonetheless.



(Above) This is the first level – and it's dead easy.



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Pedestrian

Heimdall 2

Publisher	Core Design
Developer	The 8th Day
Price	£34.99
Minimum System	386, VGA, 640K RAM
Recommended	486
Sound Support	All major cards
Release Date	Out Now

"Loki here!" I cried, making an incredibly bad Norse god pun as Mr Whitta handed me this game to review. I was quite excited by the prospect of reviewing it, you see, because, God knows how, I thought the original title had been something of a classic. How wrong I was... Only the next day I was unfortunate enough to stumble across the game on another system and wondered where I'd got the idea from – it all seemed rather dull. Anyway, that was the old title, it wasn't running on the PC and, what's more, the manual said *Heimdall 2* was a landmark, so it has to be good.

As before, the plot involves some Norse heroes, two this time, called Heimdall and Ursha, one male, the other female, and both equally strong. The god of mischief, Loki, has been up to his old whoopee cushionlike pranks again and needs to be stopped. That's where you – or, more accurately, your two characters – come in, toddling off to pastures new to recover four pieces of a lost amulet which can destroy him. Okay, the plot's not bad, and the graphics are nice too, although I can't really say they're pushing back the boundaries of PC visuals in any way. In fact, they're very reminiscent of *Heimdall* and, strangely enough, *Little Devil*. The characters are cartoony and humorous, while the scenery is beautiful and really quite weird in places. However, the game's roots in Commodore Amiga land are obvious and it seems the programmers have done little to utilise the ever increasing power of the PC.



(Left) During the game you have to ask advice from the locals, which means you get to hang out in bars.

(Below) The god of mischief, Loki, has been up to his old tricks again.

Should a sequel offer more of the same or considerable changes? Core Design opt for the former and don't quite come up trumps...

The game plays quite well, but only quite well. It's an adventure in the point-and-click mould, but has aspirations to be an arcade action-style action game too. So while you can move your character around using the joystick, he/she carries on walking

"The problem with Heimdall 2 is that it gets bogged down in its own adventure heritage"

in one direction until you make him/her turn around or do something else. This can quickly get frustrating, so it's far better to choose mouse control from the options screen and treat this as purely a point-and-click adventure.

While we're on the subject of control, let's take a look at the icon

system. As I've said, the game tries to be an action title in places and incorporate combat scenes which have you hammering away at the "attack" button as you lay into hideous creatures with your short sword. The idea is sound enough – there have been some great adventures and great action games in the past, so why not have both together? Well, the problem with *Heimdall 2* is that it gets too bogged down in its own adventure heritage. A seemingly finicky example being that if you want to fire an arrow, you have to enter the backpack screen, drag the bow icon out of its box and over the firing character, do the same with the arrows, then go back out of the screen before you can fire away. Relatively simple, admittedly, but still annoyingly fiddly when you consider you might be in the middle of a great battle.

However, enough criticism. The point that's being made is that *Heimdall 2* is just a bit awkward to play, doesn't quite succeed in being either an action or an adventure game and, ultimately, offers a slightly frustrating and pedestrian pace. But on the plus side, it does look nice and, to be honest, there's a pretty big challenge here. There are lots of levels to explore – and some pretty excruciating puzzles, too. Don't be put off by the negative aspects – just bear in mind that if you buy it you'll simply be getting a slightly flawed but fairly decent Amiga conversion and not a major Norse to be reckoned with... Oops. ANDY DYER

PCG Rating

66%

The Verdict

Highs

A decent adventure with challenging puzzles.

Lows

Plays slowly and suffers from a cumbersome control system.

Engrossing for a while – but lack of pace, and flaws lessen impact.



(Left) The graphics are nice, lush landscapes from the days of yore.

(Above) Hammer hideous beasts with your short sword.

Royal

Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	Scenario Software
Price	\$39.99
Minimum System	386, 33 Mhz, 4 Mb, Windows 3.1
Recommended	486, 8 Mb
Sound Support	Windows
Release Date	Out Now



PowerPOKER

The most popular card game in the world finally comes to the PC. But does it have the power to turn you into Brett Maverick overnight?

AS A POKER PLAYER who's regularly stung for sizeable amounts of cash, I received Electronic Arts' *PowerPOKER* with some enthusiasm – one of its major selling points is as a tutorial aid, and anything that might help improve my game (and, accordingly, my financial situation) I'll welcome with open arms. However, *PowerPOKER* does prompt the question: why hasn't this been done before? There are more than enough solitaire and bridge simulators on the PC, so why hasn't the world's most widely played card game been converted until now?

Perhaps because poker is primarily a betting game, and it's a pointless exercise unless played for money or some other stakes. Actually, strip poker sims have always been popular among sadder sections of the PC playing community, where instead of a fiscal

reward you're treated to a few seedy pictures showing your glamour model 'opponents' getting their kit off. But in these cases the poker has always played second fiddle to the cheap porno thrills, so it's only with the arrival of *PowerPOKER* – after seven years in development – that the game gets the computerised treatment it deserves.

A compact and well thought-out Windows program, *PowerPOKER* is nothing if not comprehensive – the game caters for dozens of poker variations, from basic five-card draw to some very fiendish and bizarre variants, like *Baseball*, *Anaconda*, *Black Maria* and *Pistol Stud*. Whatever kind of poker you're after, *PowerPOKER* will support it – and even if it doesn't, the customise game option will enable you to design it for yourself.

PowerPOKER is also a solo experience, with the player meeting up to nine computer opponents at the

(Above) Standard Five Card Draw is the easiest form of poker to play – especially when you get dealt useful hands like this pair of Jacks.

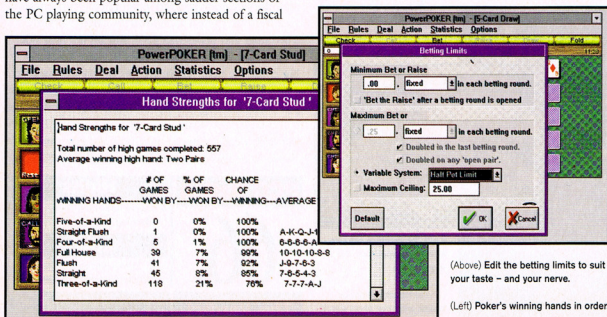
(Top-left) The stakes can get perilously high in Seven Card Stud...



table, all armed with a mountain of chips. Whatever game you opt for, it's up to you to decide the stakes, betting and raising limits, chip denominations and house customs – should every player 'ante up' or just the dealer, for example? Poker rules change from table to table, so the program caters for all tastes.

Of course, as a game of poker it's not exactly riveting – there's nothing to win or lose, after all, and

"The game caters for dozens of poker variations, from basic five-card draw to some very fiendish and bizarre variants, like Baseball, Anaconda, Black Maria and Pistol Stud"

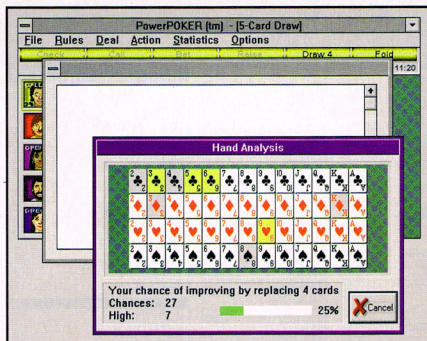


(Above) Edit the betting limits to suit your taste – and your nerve.

(Left) Poker's winning hands in order.

therefore no real tension, no matter how high the stakes. No, *PowerPOKER*'s strength is as a practice and tutorial aid – there are some genuinely useful tools, such as the hand analysis screen, which calculates your chances of winning and improving your current hand, a hand strength graph, and a hand and a standings chart which depicts how well each player's doing. There are several other helpful options, such as automatic assistance in choosing cards to change in draw poker and the optional ability to peek at people's hands. You can't actually cheat, but you can glance at the computer players' cards after you've folded, to see how they play. You can even alter the chip colours and card colours to suit your tastes.

Unsurprisingly, there are pointless bells and whistles too. The sampled speech is occasionally



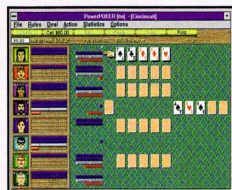
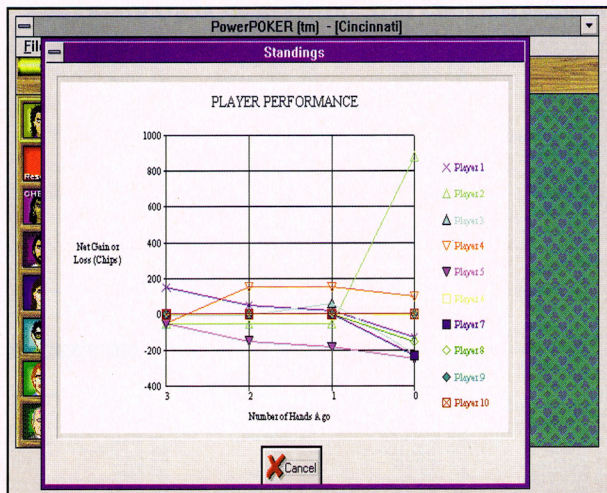
(Above) The hand analysis window is a handy tool which can compute your chances of winning with your current hand, or tell you how to improve your luck by changing certain cards. In more complex games, it can take a while to work the permutations out...

"Despite the fact that you can't actually win or lose anything, PowerPOKER remains an entertaining diversion – it's almost as satisfying as the real thing when you manage to clean out all the other players"

useful, but sounds like a Speak & Spell machine and soon starts to grate. The deck shuffling and dealing animations are pleasant, but often irritatingly slow, even on a 486SX – there's nothing more annoying than a slow dealer, so it probably won't be long before you're clicking on the 'no animation' box. Most useless of all, though, are the mini video sequences of 'real poker players,' which you can view instead of the simpler cartoon faces. They're slow, too

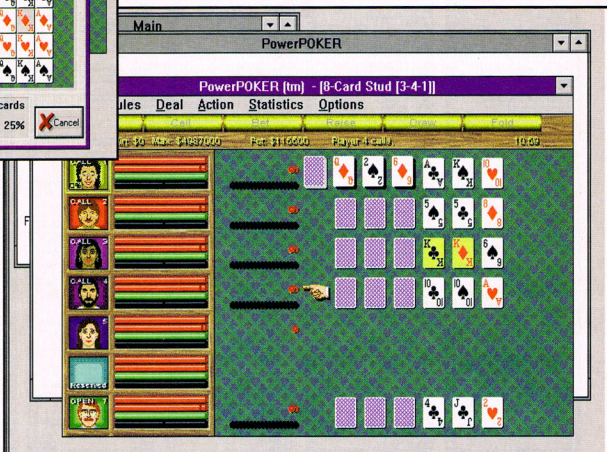
small to be impressive, and ultimately add nothing to the gameplay. Fortunately, the installation program is kind enough to give you the option not to have them (they take up practically all of the third disk).

There's no doubt that *PowerPOKER* is an exhaustive, accurate and – yes – extremely powerful simulation. And despite the fact that you can't actually win or lose anything – which effectively makes it little more thrilling than, say, a computer fruit machine



(Left) Cincinnati-style games are some of the most complex. An extra "widow" hand is dealt face up and each player has to select cards from that hand to make up their best five. It can get very nasty...

(Below) The more cards you get dealt, the greater chance of a high hand – but since everyone gets the same, it's that much harder to win. In games like this, anything less than a straight is unlikely to take the pot.



simulation – it remains an entertaining diversion. Like those *Solitaire For Windows* games, it's ideal to pick up and play when you've got half an hour to kill, and it's almost as satisfying as the real thing when you manage to clean out all the other players. There are some anomalies – the computer AI is occasionally stupid, sometimes betting big on what turn out to be crap hands (it may have been bluffing, but it's rarely a tactic that works), and when playing for large stakes it sometimes loses count of exactly how much everyone's got. The simple solution, given that a five dollar chip is effectively worth as much as a \$1,000 chip in a computer game, is not to get carried away and play with sensible stakes.

As a tutorial aid, *PowerPOKER* could be very useful indeed. Like any card game simulation, it won't excite someone who isn't already interested in the real thing, but for the casual player – and even the serious semi-professional – there's something to learn from here. The plethora of rule variations alone make it a worthwhile and comprehensive guide, and the computerised hand/play analysis and tutorial tools will, in time, help to improve your game. Mine has yet to get any better, but then *PokerPOKER* never said it could work miracles...

GARY WHITTA

(Left) The player performance graph shows how well each player is faring at the table, based on the amount of money won and lost throughout the course of the game.

PCG Rating 80% The Verdict	Highs Packed with features that will set a poker player's heart a-flutter.
	Lows It's hard to get much excitement out of no-stakes poker...
	A comprehensive and educational sim, and an exciting time-waster.

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Intense

Soccer Kid

Eh? How can this be? A fast action platform game on the PC? Some mistake, surely?

Publisher	Krisallis
Developer	In-house
Price	£29.99
Minimum System	386
Recommended	486, 25 Mhz
Sound Support	Soundblaster and compatibles
Release Date	Out Now



(Above) Soccer Kid displays his amazing skills... Controlling the ball is a two-stage process, first you tap a key to start 'keeple-uppies' - then you use directional control to launch your spherical weapon at the enemy or obstacle.

SOCCKER KID IS GETTING ON A bit, isn't he? He's been out on the Amiga for well over a year - and even the consoles have had their own versions for quite a while. Perhaps the programmers have been slaving over hot PCs all this time, trying desperately to produce the most incredible experience in the history of computer gaming? Well, if that's the case then they've failed. *Soccer Kid* is a laugh, but it's hardly award-winning stuff.

What *Soccer Kid* does offer, though, is some rather sharp and frenetic platform action. As you know, the PC is hardly spoiled for choice in this department - the machine that can do *Doom* in its sleep would have a fit if asked to produce a single level of *Sonic The Hedgehog* - but at least *Soccer Kid*, cosmetically speaking, does a competent job. The graphics - particularly the sprites - are colourful and attractive, if not that well animated, and the game

definitely sports a pseudo-Japanese feel, highlighted by the ocular extravagance of the characters. Big eyes and inflated heads are the order of the day here.

Soccer Kid himself is an annoying child with a rather convoluted soccer-related quest. Fortunately for

"The game definitely sports a pseudo-Japanese feel, highlighted by the ocular extravagance of the characters"

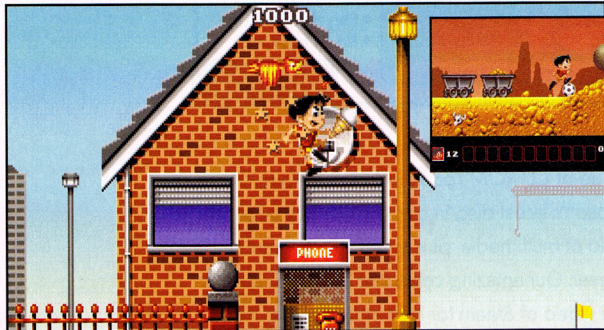
the sake of the free world, he's been armed with a regenerating football, which, no matter how far you kick the thing, invariably returns to haunt you. The point of all this is that you can use this ball as a weapon to obliterate your foes (some need to be hit more than once too) as you negotiate the levels

packed with baddies. Actually, these baddies can be infuriating in the extreme. They pop on-screen at regular intervals, often far too quickly too, so you can't take evasive action. Basically, the only way to progress is to memorise the exact layout, sprite entrances and all, of every level. This is a tad annoying. Platform games should be fluid and intuitive, not memory tests.

The other problem is the layout of the levels. Although there are platforms and obstacles, most of the action happens on the ground and on a straight, left to right path. There are usually two routes through a given level: one avoids most of the bad guys by making you bounce across the higher ground; the other, more dangerous, route tends to plough through the lower regions, packed with more baddies and obstacles. It comes as a surprise, then, to learn that the real objective of *Soccer Kid* is to simply reach the end of a level without being killed. Er, great...

The music warbles on in the background, the sound effects are adequate, sometimes good, and everything looks and feels nice. Sadly, though, there's nothing really enthralling here. What you get is a jolly, bouncy and accurate conversion of a somewhat limited platform game. Hardly a recipe for seat-of-your-pants excitement, but then it isn't a complete loss either. If nothing else, it's proof yet again that the PC can handle smooth-moving sprite-based action games as well as any dedicated system - all we

need now are some games that make proper use of that new-found power. FRANK O'CONNOR



(Above) Our hero gets hold of his first soccer trading card. This is just one of the many collectible bonus items you can find throughout the game. As you can see from the status bar (inset) everything gets a lot, lot harder on later levels. Mind the bould - ooof!

PCG Rating

65%

The Verdict

Highs

Good graphics, sound, gameplay and lastability.

Lows

Everything is good, but nothing is excellent.

Solid platform fare.

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Blighted

Burntime

After a nuclear accident, only those with cunning strategies and the lust for absolute power will survive.

Of those with well-equipped bunkers under their lawns. But forget them. The unthinkable has happened. A computer has got confused and launched the benign old USA's massive arsenal of nuclear weapons at, well, everyone actually.

So, the world is crisped. Survivors crawl out from under the makeshift shelters they hastily constructed from unsold copies of *Twelve Red Herrings*. And life goes on.

You play a character who must not only stay alive, but must also compete with other computer-controlled people for control of the blasted badlands-type territory where the game is set. This is done by wandering around the principal map, visiting each settlement in turn and trying to recruit the people you find there.

Settlements range from a few scabby tents to the remains of glorious cities. The scavenging, aimlessly meandering populations of these places consist of technicians, fighters, doctors and mutants. By giving them food, water or other useful items you can win their loyalty and thus control them. So after playing for a while, you can easily end up with a fair-sized ragged army. Stationing one or more of your crew in each settlement gives you control of it. Control all the settlements and you win. Or

(Right) As the Pied Piper of these blasted badlands, it is your task to accrue as many settlements as you can station troops in.

(Below) You've got to be a caring, sharing kind of person, constantly seeking food and water for your loyal troops before moving on.



alternatively, you can get your motley bunch to kill all the other characters in the game. This seems unsporting, though, given that they've just successfully lived through a thermonuclear holocaust.

The strategy element is heightened by the need to use your technicians for setting up fresh water supplies as well as distributing food for your ever growing regiment of followers. This means continually flashing around the map, checking on everyone. Which is very tedious.

Burntime is a good idea. It's like Stephen King's novel *The Stand*. But in the execution, it gets bogged down with a multitude of annoying mouse clicks and fiddly details. And the whole thing should really be simplified and made bigger. Graphically, you don't get much for your money. If you compare it to the vaguely similar-looking *Dune 2*, it does come off worse, in gameplay as well as visuals.

An important element which could have had more made of it to make the game more exciting is the fighting. This is handled in a very basic manner; all you have to do is select the fight option, make sure your characters are armed with knives, axes or guns and wait while the little characters wander pointlessly around, occasionally sparking white circles (to indicate hits) off each other.



Publisher	Kompakt
Developer	Max Design
Price	£39.99
Minimum System	386, 25MHz VGA
Recommended	486
Sound Support	All major soundcards
Release Date	Out now

Another annoyance is the turn system. Initially it seems rather a good idea. Five minutes is allotted to each of your turns, and in those five minutes, you must do everything you can. But if you're doing well at the game, and have accrued a healthy-sized rabble, you'll start to get flustered as you realise that many of your team members are slowly starving and you just haven't got the time to look after them properly. The adventure-style exploration of the wasteland is also a fairly numbing experience. Once you've found one empty water bottle, axe, leg of meat and protective overall, you've got little to look forward to until the next turn where, gosh! There could be a snake to eat. Or maybe a dead rat.

But enough negativity. *Burntime*'s coders deserve praise for being brave and having a go at a totally original game which so nearly makes it. If the emphasis had been placed more on the warring strategies of the tribes and less on simply keeping your troops fed and watered, it could have been much more engrossing. As it is, you can have fun, and, whilst the game is still new, you are drawn into the bleak radiation-filled atmosphere which pervades throughout. But you won't want to stay out there too long.

JAMES LEACH

PCG Rating	Highs
67%	Lots of strategy and a useable interface.
The Verdict	Lows
	Not enough action and fun.
	Nice try which nearly comes off. Take a look if you like <i>The Stand</i> .



(Above) Good place for a fight - if you can work the gameplay up to some action, that is.



Creepy

Shadow Of The Comet CD

The CD version of the now crusty *Shadow of the Comet* arrives. The question is, does it add anything worthwhile?

H.P. Lovecraft was one of the twentieth century's best fantasy and horror writers. There have been better writers, but none have managed to convey the same eerie atmosphere in a novel. Now, of course, he's dead, and probably creepier than when he was alive. *Shadow of the Comet* is a tribute to that creepiness, but made into the rather unassuming form of a point and click adventure game.

The game is based loosely on the style of H.P. Lovecraft, rather than any specific story, but incorporates a lot of Lovecraftian names and scenarios. As a matter of fact, Lovecraft is largely responsible for the almost complete lack of vowels in the language of modern fantasy; hence names like "Krydath" and "Gorgwylm" all of which force the reader to adopt a deep and brutish voice. This brutish tone is admirably reflected in the game.

If you can keep a straight face as the plot unfolds, you'll end up heavily involved in the whole, unearthy



Publisher	Infogrames
Developer	Chaosium Inc.
Price	\$39.99
Minimum System	386/2 Mb Ram VGA
Recommended	486SX, 25 Mhz
Sound Support	Soundblaster & Compatible
Release Date	Out Now

business. In a nutshell, you play the part of John Parker, a young British astronomer, visiting America to witness the arrival of Halley's Comet. Your predecessor, Lord Boleskine, went bonkers and died after witnessing the comet from Illsmouth, the same village you now find yourself in.

Your mission (should you decide to accept it) is to find out what phenomenon sent Lord Boleskine off his trolley and out to lunch, and hopefully destroy some kind of evil, or something. However, all your high-falutin' ambitions may be thwarted by the somewhat clunky interface. It's not difficult to use, just slightly illogical. For example, the "look" icon actually picks things up, opens doors and all manner

of other actions. Once you get used to this, you then have the rather cumbersome process of conversation to deal with. All conversations are spoken by (remarkably good) actors from a

(Left) Your mission in the village of Illsmouth is to find out what sent Lord Boleskine off his trolley. Watch out for the clunky interface, which could thwart your plans as much as any obstructive local.



(Above) Move around the room at a careful pace, making sure you don't miss anything; not an obvious choice of icon is the "look" icon, which does more than it suggests. Useful for picking things up, opening doors, anything you like really.

(Above, left) As John Parker, you'll have to overcome the suspicious natures of the villagers in their dealings with you.

soundtrack on the CD. The voices match the character cameos very well and this turns what could have been a pretty scheszy B movie into something a little classier.

The plot unfolds well, but there are some awfully quiet periods. Exploration can be tedious, but it's entirely necessary, just something you'll have to put up with. The graphics have changed not a jot from the original disk version, but sadly, the same goes for the music. It's still a warbling dirge, squeezed with some difficulty from the Soundblaster card. Pity they didn't use the CD to beef up the music.

Graphically, this is all very pedestrian. Cartoon style representations of the scenery are interspersed with slightly more realistic close-ups of the people you encounter, but nothing really exciting. The gameplay though is fluid, lucid and enjoyable. What really makes this fun to play is not the addition of CD based speech or the nice but completely pointless Lovecraft museum CD extra (a new level that you just walk around looking at exhibits). No, it's the nasty, unsettling and truly creepy atmosphere that the proceedings generate which, of course, was in the floppy version anyway.

FRANK O'CONNOR

PCG Rating

80%

The Verdict

Highs

Excellent speech, a nice plot and that old chestnut, good gameplay.

Lows

Hmm. Terrible music, annoying controls, but nothing too tragic.

A nice, clean and ultimately satisfying adventure game.



This is me outside my hotel room. The place was a right old dive, frankly.

Tatty

Wrath Of The Gods

A rare chance to experience the wonders of Ancient Greece is a godsend – unless, of course, you have to do it via some scrappy third rate historical soap opera.

I'M SORRY, BUT – DEPRESSING AS IT may sound – the more CD-ROM titles I play the more I begin to think that nothing good is ever going to come out of this medium. Yes, I know I'm being a little over-dramatic, but I've just played *Wrath Of The Gods* and I'm depressed. The problem seems to be that developers either lack the imagination to produce a decent game engine, or they can't quite cope with producing full

motion video of a high enough quality... Or both. In the case of *Wrath Of The Gods*, it's a case of 'nice idea, shame it was written by a load of monkeys.'

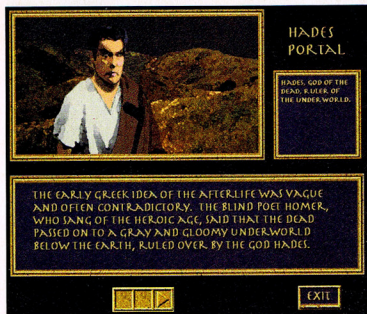
It's not really the gameplay that's at fault here. You play the part of a young Greek fellow who was abandoned at birth and has to perform a whole heap of heroic deeds in order to reclaim his lands. He's not based on any real Greek hero, but in fact his actions and deeds are directly taken from many of the more famous Greek myths (culminating in a face-off with

Publisher	Maxis
Developer	Luminaria
Price	£44.95
Minimum System	386, 25 Mhz, VGA, 4 Mb, RAM, CD-ROM
Recommended	486, 8 Mb RAM
Sound Support	Soundblaster, Pro Audio Spectrum
Release Date	Out Now

the dreaded Minotaur). The touched up digitised locations, which are of a fairly high quality, are pleasant enough, and there's certainly nothing wrong with the size of the game.

As to the difficulty level, well, you choose that for yourself. The puzzles range from obvious to pretty bloody obscure, but they're all logical and the great thing is you can either play it straight and struggle, or you can use the built-in Oracle – a woman who gives you clues whenever you want. If you ask for help, it costs you five points, and to complete the game properly you need all of your points, so you do have to pay for your cheating. The thing is, if you keep clicking on the Oracle you'll keep getting more and more obvious clues for the location you're in until she finally and explicitly gives you the answer. I found this 'cheat as much as you like' system very useful indeed,

"If this game is meant to be funny, it's not. And if it's not meant to be funny, it's laughable, so it fails either way"



(Above) The info screen, where you can learn all about Greek mythology.

(Right) This is one quarter of the map showing the locations in Wrath Of The Gods.



not because I need to cheat (hmpht!), but because it caters for all abilities.

Another bonus aspect is the detail of the Greek mythology thing. Not only do the hero's actions emulate many of the real Greek myths, but you can, at any time, click on an info icon which gives you accurate historical information and pictures on Greek mythology. Who says edutainment is boring? (*We do - Everyone*)

Sounds rather lovely, doesn't it? And you're probably glancing over at the final rating and wondering what's going on. Well, let's go right back to the start. I've installed the game, nice and easy. The title screen comes up, all carved in stone, and there's thunder and lightning. Scary stuff. Now I've clicked on the start button and I'm stood atop an incredibly Greek-looking hill with grasshoppers-a-chirping and birds-a-tweeting and, stood next to me, a centaur who's telling me that I'm on the hero's path. Wow, like, a *real* centaur, all digitised and everything. You could almost be



"The major stumbling block is the appalling full motion video – for some reason the characters' bodies and heads have been filmed (it would appear) independently of each other"

there. And this is the most annoying thing – you could almost be there, but you're, er, not. Not quite.

Greek myths, you'd have to agree, are pretty exciting – they've survived for thousands of years and spawned plenty of Hollywood movies, after all, so they must have something going for them. And for all the reasons explained already, the gameplay seems to run along the correct lines, so there must be a stumbling block somewhere in between these two areas. And that stumbling block is the appalling full motion video. The backdrops are fine, but for some reason the characters' bodies and heads have been filmed (it would appear) independently of each other and the scenery.

Normally, characters are superimposed, but why the heads? Why not just dress up one person as the character in the game? It makes the whole thing look so tacky. It wouldn't be so bad if it had been done with tongue firmly in cheek, but it hasn't. The most amusing parts are the unintentional mistakes. In fact,

if this game is meant to be funny, it's not. And if it's not meant to be funny, it's laughable, so it fails either way.

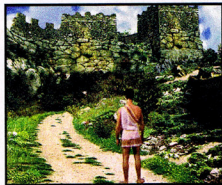
In case you need convincing about this 'superimposed head' business, at one point during play a disembodied hand appears on an old woman's neck while the character's hands are down by her sides. Obviously, the actress got carried away and put her hand up while filming the part – and the editors just didn't bother taking it out for the final scene. Basically, it looks like a third hand is creeping up out of her tunic. Very sloppy. And to rub salt into the wound, all this visual horror is interrupted by slow access times and pauses between decisions.

Structurally and content-wise, I can't really justify this nit-picking. There's a large adventure to be had and I've played far worse. And Maxis seems to have put a lot of effort into making it as factually entertaining and accurate as possible. Sadly, the game is hideously let down by the low production values. Had Luminaria gone for a more straightforward *Monkey Island*-style approach rather than this over-the-top FMV stuff, this could have been an adventure worth having. As it is, it's just another example of a CD-ROM developer with a poor grip on the medium. ANDY DYER



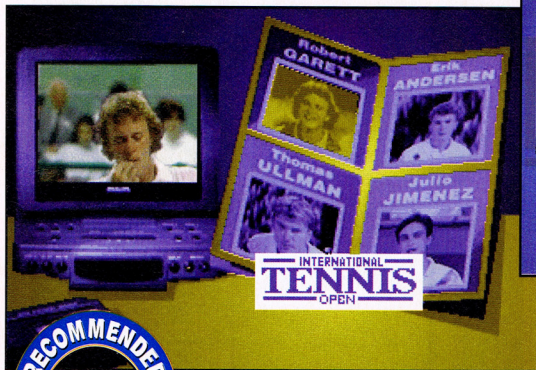
(Above) This is a picture of my dear old mum. Vile old hag, isn't she?

(Top) Speak to the Oracle and she'll solve clues for you.



(Left) "Hello, I'm a hero, and I tend to wander around old castles, killing monsters and having to put up with some atrocious full motion video effects [sigh]."

PCG Rating	Highs
61%	A big game, crammed with facts about Greek myths.
The Verdict	Lows
	Atrocious full motion video.
	Great idea, but the programming really stinks.



(Above) Here's the info screen, which is accompanied by some dreadful speech.

(Left) Should you wish to hear the tedious player details, this is where to look.



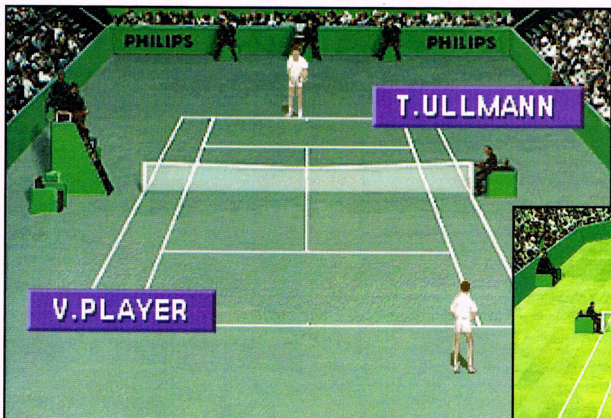
International Tennis Open

Oh my word,
it's a good
tennis game
on the PC!

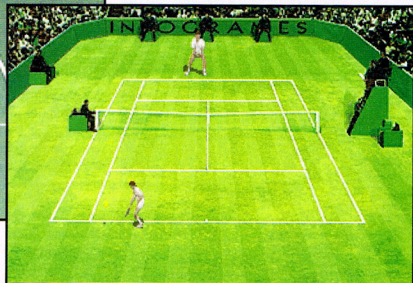


(Above) These shots are all taken from the intro sequence. Fancy stuff, true enough, but ultimately a complete waste of time. If only all this presentation stuff was done as well as the gameplay. Still, I suppose it's okay for people who get off on seeing badly digitised pics of complete strangers making fools of themselves.

Smashing

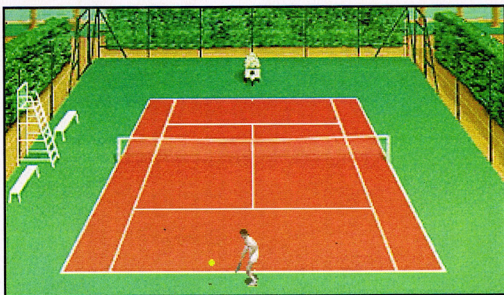


Publisher	Philips/Pathe Interactive
Developer	Infogrames
Price	£44.99
Minimum System	386SX (540K RAM)
Recommended	33 Mhz or higher
Sound Support	Soundblaster 2.0 or higher
Release Date	Out Now



(Above) As you can see, our human competitor, Victor Player, is all set for a nail-biting and probably titanic struggle against the indefatigable Tracy Ullman. Yes, it's an obvious joke but it had to be made really, didn't it?

(Right) It's quite a struggle writing captions for pictures like these. I mean, take a look at this - it's a tennis game.



(Above) I have no friends and, as a result, I am forced to play against Trevor The Tennis Robot.

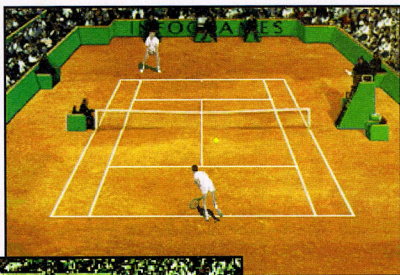
(Right) Another one of those dull in-game shots, but this time with the score displayed on it.

PHILIPS CDi – A potted history. Big electronics manufacturer attempts to change the world of home entertainment forever with an interactive CD Multimedia player – games, movies, music, the lot. Machine comes out, isn't all that powerful, and does average business. World is not exactly set on fire. Philips puts the machine through several revisions (sexier casing, lower price etc.), but still nobody seems that interested. Today, CDi hovers on the verge of the next generation of technology, more of a niche novelty than a Multimedia phenomenon. Sad, eh? Well, yes, really, because although the machine hasn't been much of a success some of the software has actually been quite good.

So what to do? Well, if the hardware's stalled but the software's got something going for it, why not simply port the titles onto a successful format – say, for example, the PC? Well, that's exactly what Philips has done here, with *International Tennis Open* being just one of several superior CDi portovers that aim to get the ball rolling on the new format.

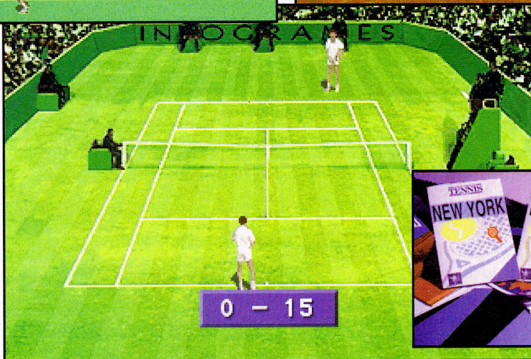
But while, as a tennis game, it works well, as a CD-ROM title it's decidedly feeble. So if you're a sad person who might feel ripped off by a game that delivers great gameplay but isn't stuffed full of rendered and completely non-interactive filler scenes, leave the page now. (*We're still here.* – Ed)

International Tennis Open isn't a licensed game, so the first thing to mention is that at no point do you get to play against the likes of Pete Sampras or Martina Navratilova. Instead, you get to be Victor Player as you try to hone your skills and work your



(Above) Wahay, yet more tennis related humum, this time on a clay court. It's a brilliant game, but the screenshots are never going to be that exciting, are they?

(Below) Where would you like to play? The choice is yours...



"I've seen a number of tennis sims over the years, and this one stacks up well in the fun stakes, but there is a big question mark hanging over the need to put it on CD"

way through increasingly more skilful sets of opponents. You can play a one-off match against a player of your choice, or enter a full tournament in a variety of countries. Then there's the practice mode which enables you to play against a tennis machine or simply sharpen your service skills.

Whether you play using a joystick or the keyboard, the control system is ultra-friendly – and while it takes some time to achieve proficiency, you can still get instantly involved in some seriously exciting rallies. I've seen a number of tennis sims over the years, and this one stacks up well in the fun stakes. But there is a big question mark hanging over the

need to put this game on CD. It was designed to show off the capabilities of the CDi, and I'm sure a lot of people will find the digitised characters and the crisp commentary quite a novelty, but after a while, the visuals merely become adequate, while the rest becomes positively annoying. And although the players are digitised – you're forever being reminded that you're taking part in a Multimedia experience – the animation is a bit on the shabby side. The presentation screens, complete with photographs of the players, are unconvincing too.

But the worst of the CD enhancements is the commentary. There are two crimes being committed here. First, there's an info icon. Click on it and some dreadfully nasal American with less dynamism than Mr Bean wibbles some facts and figures at you. This is bad enough, but when you get into the game itself, an astoundingly irritating and over-exicted (yet strangely ignorant) character talks crap every few seconds. At one point he says something like "You won't see Mr X without his hat very often" and "Some say he can't do it! But can he? We'll find out! I don't know!" It's atrocious. Luckily, there's an option to switch the entire shoddy affair off.

The point here is that you don't need pounds of padding to make a game good. *International Tennis Open* is the best of its kind on the PC by a mile, but not because of any fancy extras – it's the gameplay that shines through. My advice is this: ignore the decidedly average sprites, switch off those dreadful commentaries – and enjoy.

ANDY DYER

PCG Rating

85%

The Verdict

Highs

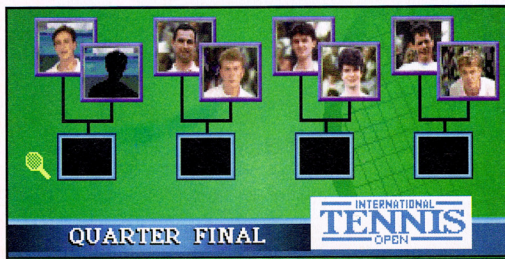
Straightforward front end; incredibly friendly gameplay.

Lows

Digitised goons and a wibbling gif do not a CD spectacle make.

A top-notch tennis sim, padded to the gills with unnecessary extras.

(Right) This is the tournament tree. For those of you without any brain tissue whatsoever, though, the people pictured here play each other, the four winners go on to play another round and then the two winners of that round play each other to find out who's the ultimate champion. Fendishly simply, yet immensely enjoyable.



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RE-ISSUES

The CD-ROM is at last making its presence felt in the world of budget games – and this month we see a smattering of excellent compilations that, while not making full use of the medium's potential, sure as hell give good value for money.

RECOMMENDED **88%**

Star Control & Star Control II

This CD is worth buying for *Star Control II* alone – in particular the two-player SuperMelee mode. You and your opponent have a limited budget with which to buy a selection of alien ships, but then get to fly around a giant wedge of space blasting each other to bits in what is effectively a two-player version of *Asteroids* with lots of different ships. Each ship has its own unique weapon systems, varying rates of speed/turn and other special abilities. All this makes for a two-player contest that's simple to play, great fun and endlessly replayable. And when you consider that you get the entertaining one-player game of *Star Control II* plus the original *Star Control* for your £20... Well, you'd have to be stupid to pass this one up. The one-player options in both titles add adventure and strategy elements to the proceedings, so they're more grand campaigns of galactic exploration and conflict than just a string of meaningless battles. Let's hope the creators of the

Star Control games, Paul Reiche III and Fred Ford, have a *Star Control III* in the works.
£19.99 ACCOLADE

(Below) Buy your ships; each has different weapons and capabilities.



With your alien ships you get to explore the galaxies and blast each other to bits.



Dated it might be looking, but with a choice of choppers and tours of duty this is still a game to beat.

Old ones are the best

MicroProse weighs in with no less than three CD compilations, all packaged with the

original, high-quality manuals – unlike the photocopied efforts that come with many other compilations. We've recommended two of these, but the third **MicroProse CD Chopper Pack (MicroProse £29.99)** is still a very tasty package – a bundle of *Gunship 2000* and the *Islands and Ice Scenario* pack. You can fly many different modern US attack helicopters, including the Apache, the Longbow Apache, the Super Cobra, the Comanche, the Blackhawk and the Defender. Originally released in 1991, this game can be seen as a fitting coda to MicroProse's previous flight sims and has all the company's recognisable traits – several tours of duty, primary and secondary goals, plus a miniature picture of the target in the control console. It's a good chopper combat game, despite looking dated. 77%

Not quite so hot

The fifth compilation unleashed on the PC gaming public this month is **CD3 (£29.99, Gremlin)**. The three on this CD are *Zoo*, *Nigel Mansell's World Championship* and *Lotus. Trouble is*, none of them really stand out as a 'must buy'. *Zoo* was, if you ask most arcade gamers, a lot of fuss about nothing. If anything, the Amiga original proved that platform games were in such a bad way at the time (and on the PC, to be honest) that all you had to do to get a hit was inject some fast scrolling and a smattering of gameplay into an otherwise average title and you had a hit on your hands. Where are

the nuances of the best platformers? Not here, although the sequel (PCG 9: 70%) has gone some way to make amends for that.

Some like it hot, but this is not. The three games on this compilation are – in our humble opinion – a bit of a much ado about nothing.



RECOMMENDED 85%

MicroProse Sports CD Edition

It's almost three years since *Formula One Grand Prix* appeared and yet it's still the most enjoyable racing game around. Papyrus' *IndyCar Racing* may have overshadowed it in technical terms, but it's American and when push comes to shove I'd rather race in *Formula One* than the oval-crazy *IndyCar* anyday. With fast polygon graphics (if you've got a fast PC, of course) and detailed, accurate recreations of all 16 Grand Prix circuits, this is one of the most meticulous yet playable simulations around. If you're daunted by the details you can let the computer control braking, gear changes, acceleration and even steering until you learn how to handle each track for yourself. For anyone wanting to immerse themselves in the world of Formula One and 'be' a Grand Prix driver, there's no better game. Author Geoff Crammond (who wrote *Revs* on the Commodore 64 and *Stunt Car Racer* on the Amiga) created the definitive race game here. The sequel, due out later this year, should be even better.

David Leadbetter's *Golf* isn't in the same league, but it's still a golf sim to be reckoned with. There are six original courses in all, plus multiple viewpoints that cut from the traditional behind-the-stroke shot, follow the ball flying through the air and finish with a panning shot of the ball landing. At the heart of the game, though, you'll find the same three-button push swingometer and two-push power putt bar that dominate the golfing genre. On a par (Aaaaagh!) with Jack Nicklaus *Signature Edition* and *PGA Tour* for enjoyment, it's by no means a filler here and should give you many hours of play.

£29.99 MICROPROSE

For an in-car sim, *Formula One* is the one to beat. You'll sweat as much as Hill does when Schumacher's breathing down his neck after a few laps in this.



Nigel Mansell's *World Championship* is similarly lacking – its simplistic Pole Position gameplay can't match up to the likes of *Formula One Grand Prix* and *IndyCar Racing*. It's yet another game that's too old-fashioned to be of much interest. As *Out Run* inspired racers go, *Lotus* is competent but not exactly overloaded with thrills – in the graphics or gameplay departments. So *CD3* – a cheapish bundle of lacklustre arcade games that weren't all that good in their original Amiga incarnations. Not worth it. 57%

And to finish off

Lastly, there's *High Command* (£17.99, Action Sixteen), a strategic level wargame depicting World War II in Europe. It's an unreconstructed hex-map based game and is showing its age a little. There's some scope for strategic planning, but the economic and political systems in *High Command* are limited considering the depth of the air, land and sea combat. Nevertheless, it's a solid performer, if a little uninspiring. 61%



For all those who dream of getting their commission, this is the game to play to practise being in high command...

RECOMMENDED 90%

MicroProse Sid Meier CD Edition

A pair of classic games from one of the few 'auteur' programmers around (if you don't mind me getting all pretentious). Sid Meier (co-founder of MicroProse and creator of such titles as *F-15 Strike Eagle* and *Pirate*) here gets his two finest games – *Railroad Tycoon* and *Civilization* – crammed onto one CD. The original *Railroad Tycoon* is four years old now, but the gameplay's hardly dated and this pack has the 1993 Deluxe edition included as well. The challenge is to build a railway network stretching across the USA, Europe, South America or Africa by laying out tracks, building stations, buying trains and deciding where and what services to run – slow freight, fast freight, passenger, mail or bulk. These choices are influenced by the geography of the area, the location of different cities and

industries, and the activities of your rival railroad tycoons. The game's beautifully designed, easy to learn and offers enough scope for many, many games.



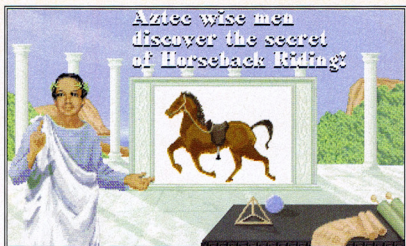
Learn the thrills and spills of big business – buyouts, loans, business planning – with *Railroad Tycoon*.

The same could be said about *Civilization*... Only more so.

An epic title that places you in control of the destiny of a tribe in 4000 BC, *Civilization* is strategy on a grand scale. You can develop your civilisation any way you like – by building up military and economic strength, keeping your people under dictatorial rule or giving them democracy and making scientific discoveries which will (eventually) lead to space exploration. You start off with no knowledge of the world or other tribes, but as you venture out, creating new cities and waging war, you'll quickly discover that *Civilization* is quite simply the best strategy game around.

Two 'classic' games at a bargain price – and both come with their original weighty and comprehensive manuals, too.

£29.99 MICROPROSE



You can play at being God with this game; the lives and destinies of countless millions are yours to shape and command – or not, as the case may be.

Shareware PLAYING with the big boys

Although a huge amount of Shareware available through bulletin boards or PD libraries is produced by small companies or individuals, there are a few larger publishers – the Shareware equivalents of Electronic Arts or Virgin – you should keep an eye out for too. Through a combination of good programming and cunning business sense, these people have gained a (it must be said, fully justified) reputation for excellence that'll have you eagerly awaiting their next releases.

Epic Megagames is one such company, and by sheer coincidence has several new games on the way (you knew all this talk of big and small fishes had to lead somewhere...). Not content with finishing off the most eagerly awaited Shareware games of the year – the robot beat-'em-up *One Must Fall* – the company has just 'done a deal' with Safari Software, with whom it'll be releasing a special game, and has a couple of other releases planned as well...

Jazz Jack Rabbit

Just about every genre imaginable (by relatively well adjusted and sane people, anyway) is available as Shareware – however, by far the most common is the arcade game, with platformers and shoot-'em-ups proving the most popular. And as far as platformers go, you can't do much better than *Jazz Jack Rabbit*. From the slick, cutesy graphics of the intro and main menu to the furious speed and smoothness of the game itself, *Jazz* simply oozes professionalism and style –



(Above, right) Those rebel scum have no respect for a uniform. Witness this ambush...

(Below right) TD 2192 proudly boasts of 50,000 story lines. We don't think so; at any rate, they're dead dull.

this is a top quality game by any standards.

What makes this even more remarkable is its complete lack of anything remotely resembling originality. The 'plot' (the word is used in its loosest sense) is totally irrelevant. The gameplay is a somewhat bizarre mixture of *Sonic The Hedgehog*, *Mario* and *Zoo* – run and jump around, pick up bonuses and shoot baddies. Even *Jazz* himself bears more than a passing resemblance to cartoon character Bucky O'Hare.

When it comes down to it, though, it's all irrelevant because *Jazz Jack Rabbit* plays like a dream. The levels are huge, varied and packed with secret rooms and areas, and the controls are responsive and easy-to-use. It's one of those games where everything just adds up to make an addictive and enjoyable whole. The 3D into-the-screen bonus levels are just the icing on an already tasty cake. At last, a platform game that's taken the best that consoles have to offer and shown that the PC is more than up to the job.

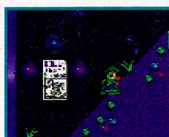
SELECT DIFFICULTY

EASY
MEDIUM
HARD
TURBO



SELECT DIFFICULTY

EASY
MEDIUM
HARD
TURBO



(Above) Did no-one tell Jazz what would happen if he kept taking those steroids?

(Left) Jazz is slick, smooth, professional; what a rabbit...

In the world of Shareware, as with commercial software, there are big players and there are small players. The trick is knowing who's who before you start downloading the software...



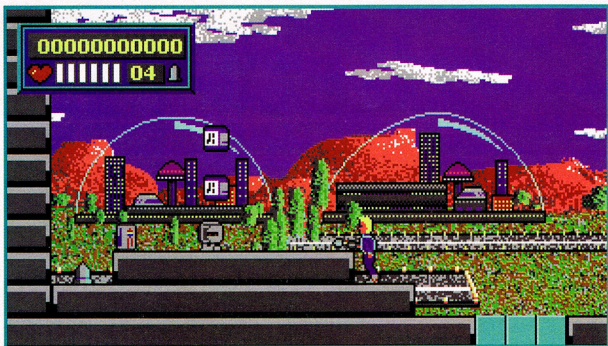
TD 2192

One of the first fruits of Epic's affiliation with Safari Software, *TD 2192* is an example of that other great Shareware standby, the shoot-'em-up. Unfortunately, it's not quite such a great example.

As a member of a well hard futuristic police force, you get to patrol the streets of a city on various top-down missions, battling against the usual array of scruffy criminals and wild rebels in several kinds of ship. It's pleasant enough, but on balance is let down by some average graphics, a slightly awkward control system and a non-interactive story. The game proudly boasts 'over 50,000 lines' of story, but it soon becomes very boring indeed, and adds nothing whatsoever to the gameplay.

(Below) Okay, Velasquez. This could turn out to be quite some mission. Either you keep calm, and don't rise to the bait, or you go ahead and rip his face off!





Jason Storm

A somewhat disappointing platformer, *Jason Storm* is the third and final Epic game we examined this month. Although it's far from being dire, the whole thing is dated and bears far more resemblance to the Shareware of two or three years ago than today's post-*Doom* offerings. The graphics are slow and primitive, the sound is annoying at best, the controls unresponsive and the gameplay is nothing if not predictable. It's not that *Jason Storm* is particularly bad – it's just not very good, and with the likes of *Jazz Jack Rabbit* available, it really does look a bit past its sell-by date.

Mystic Towers 3D

Apart from Epic, the other big player in the Shareware world is Apogee. *Mystic Towers* is their latest, and if you're the kind of person who rips the covers off the mag and installs them immediately, you'll probably have a pretty good idea about this neat isometric arcade adventure already – the full Shareware version is on our second disk this month – see page 10 (how's that for an interactive review experience?). If you've yet to have a play, do so now – it'll save us having to write any more. (We think it's great, by the way.)

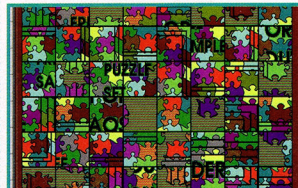
Order Out Of Chaos

Just to balance the scales somewhat, here's a game from one of the more typically sized Shareware publishers. *Order Out Of Chaos* is a slightly bizarre puzzle game for Windows, that's kind of like those old sliding square puzzles. The difference here is that instead of moving the sections around to make the

(Above) Oh dear. Looks like Jason just can't get on to the next platform. Not a bad game, just exceptionally dated in terms of graphics, control and sound.

picture, the sections swap themselves randomly and you have to click on them when they're in the right place or one square away, or whatever.

Although it's somewhat awkward to get the hang of, it does manage to capture the strangely compulsive quality that distinguishes good puzzle games from their inferior counterparts, and we can think of several ways which are worse to spend an hour or two.



(Above) This game looks like the screen equivalent of Rubik's Cube, or the puzzle where you've got to colour in a map with four colours...



(Above) Er, yes, well. This is *Mystic Towers*, from Apogee, and it's on the cover disk this month.

(Right) Another level, same tower... same game. Anyway, it's jolly good fun to play, so they say.



Those Contacts

Most of the games featured in this month's Shareware section are currently available from good Public Domain libraries or bulletin boards – you can try After Hours BBS on ☎ (0785) 228214; Man Over Baud BBS on ☎ (0621) 893320, and The 021 Connection BBS on ☎ (021) 520 7615.

Epic Megagames UK telephone number is ☎ (0767) 260903.

You can contact Pinnacle Software via CompuServe at 70154.1577 or via the Internet at 70154.1577@compuserve.com.

You can contact Transend (who distribute Apogee's material over here) via its BBS on 0422 824949, or via phone on ☎ (0274) 622228.

Have A Look At My .WAD

In the face of the seemingly endless stream of new *Doom* levels, graphics and sounds filling up the various boards (and our mailbox) – enough to fill ten Shareware sections every issue – this mini-section will cover the single best *Doom* related program we see each month. *PC Gamer*'s first choice is...

Aliens Doom

One of the most impressive *Doom* add-ons we've seen, *Aliens Doom* is a complete package offering new graphics, sounds and an entire new episode (eight levels in total). The levels themselves are well designed, logical and remarkably glitch free. Even after several hours of dedicated play – for review purposes, of course – we failed to find a single 'disappearing wall,' 'one way mirror' or any of the other *Doom* .WAD problems. The new samples are excellent. In fact, the only thing that lets the whole thing down somewhat is the graphics. Although some aspects, such as the new title screen, are really impressive, the aliens themselves aren't quite up to scratch.

Despite this, *Aliens Doom* is a superb add-on and sets a high standard for others to follow. Highly recommended. (*Aliens Doom* should be available as two .ZIP files on most good BBSs. Be warned that some of the new samples contain bad language).



As an add-on for the game-to-beat *Doom*, *Aliens Doom* is pretty much tops. Only slight downer: the rather naff graphics.

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Welcome to *PC Gamer's* new adventure column. Every month I'll be talking about adventure games, RPGs... In fact, any game where you have to toddle about, find something, bring it back to some guy or other – only to discover that you now have to see his friend up on the level you just came from – and save the world. And just like those Orbis publications, it builds up month by month into a large and unwieldy pile of magazines which you can use to prop up your monitor. As a hardened adventurer who keeps his or her *PC Gamer* lovingly encased in the finest hand-tooled binders

software houses aren't stupid. At least they do something to the game to make it different, so you'll stomp up the dosh again or take the plunge if there wasn't enough incentive for you to shell out in the first place.

The latest ruse involves replacing text with digitised speech (for which there's bags of room on the CD). We've seen it recently with *Lands Of Lore*, *Beneath A Steel Sky*, *Simon The Sorcerer* and *Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary* – and it's been fairly successful, too. With the *Star Trek* title, the developers even persuaded the original *Star Trek* cast to

Even better than the real thing?

In the first of his regular adventure columns, Phil South looks at the trend for real actors to voice characters in games, and previews a couple of new releases.

money can buy, it's probably just what you've been waiting for.

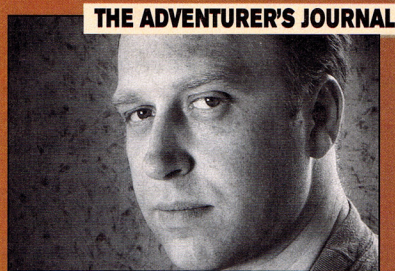
However, I won't often be reviewing games – instead I'll be sifting through the month's adventure news, ruminating on the future of adventure gaming and generally letting off steam about things which get my blood boiling etc. I'll also be shooting my mouth off about what I think this whole genre is and should be about. Stick around.

Once More, With Feeling

CD-ROM, eh? Love it or loathe it – you can't ignore it. Trouble is, most of the time you buy a game and a couple of months later an enhanced CD-ROM edition comes out. But why would you want to buy the same thing twice? Well,

provide the appropriate character voices, which transformed a pretty routine game into a *Star Trek* event no Trekkie could afford to miss. Those same Trekkies could also get their jollies buying the *Lands Of Lore* CD just to get the current *Star Trek* captain, Patrick Stewart, doing the voiceover honours.

The question is: are these games better or worse than the originals? Obviously, this depends to a large extent on whether having real voices adds to the quality of the gameplay – or is simply a gimmick. In all the cases above, the titles were originally quite strong, so the added voices only beefed up the experience. But I've seen titles which prove that adding speech enhancements to a flimsy game is like pouring perfume



THE ADVENTURER'S JOURNAL

Graphic Adventures and Role Playing Games

Phil South

The CD version of *Lands Of Lore* looking good but does it sound any good? Do we really need Patrick Stewart and his RADA-trained, round tones? Well, only if the original game was any good.



on a rotten apple. A good rule of thumb is this: if the original game got indifferent reviews, added voices are unlikely to make it that much better. Be vigilant, adventurers...

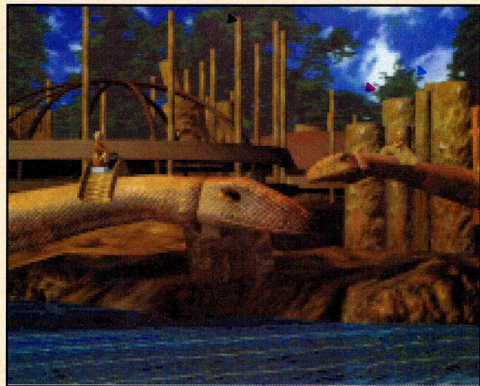
LucasArts – They're Great

"A good rule of thumb when looking at CD-ROM adventure upgrades is this: if the original game got indifferent reviews, the added voices version is unlikely to be that much better"

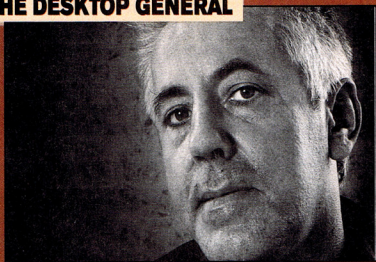
Phwoar, *The Dig*, eh? Although I didn't get the chance to pop over to the Chicago CES (where the game was previewing), those who did came back with jaws aching and bandy legs. (*Eh? – Ed*) You can't deny that the pedigree of this one is something of a bit special, utilising the talents of George Lucas' Industrial Light & Magic and, of course, the biggest movie director in the world. You know who I mean. Actually, it's unclear at the moment just how involved Spielberg is with production – in the movie world all he has to do these days is give a project the nod and visit the set a couple of times in order to have "Steven Spielberg Presents" plastered all over the credits, such is his pulling power. *PC Gamer* has a special location report on *The Dig* coming up soon, but until then all we can do is wait and put our trust in the bespectacled one.

In the meantime, those affable French fellows over at Cryo (makers of *KGB/Conspiracy* and *Dune CD*) will be serving up the rather excellent-looking *Lost Eden*, a high-spec virtual reality dinosaur odyssey set on a lush prehistoric planet. Shame Spielberg didn't have a hand in that one. And a double shame that he didn't direct *The Jurassic Park Game*, but you can't have everything...

● Phil South is an adventure addict – he even wrote one once for *Magnetic Scrolls* where you had to type in your commands. Those were the days, eh?



Riding on the back of the recent dinosaur mania comes this rather tasty offering from Cryo. *Lost Eden* paints the scene of a lush, steaming planet that's prehistoric to boot.



The Strategy and Wargames Column

Brian Walker

Hi-res, lo-gameplay?

Wargaming news and developments, tactical advice and opinion – all this and more in *PC Gamer's* new column devoted to matters at the core of successful warmongering.

One of the things that this new section intends to look at is add-on disks for strategy games. Often these get overlooked in the reviews section because new software rightfully takes priority. So where better to start, then, than with the *Scenario Builder* for SSG's fantasy strategy epic *Warlords 2*. Not only is this game worthy of coverage in its own right, but it also gives us a chance to plug the original title (which didn't get much publicity first time out).

Despite being published by a small Australian company, *Warlords 2* compares favourably with the best strategy games on the market – and not just in terms of gameplay either; the SVGA graphics and digitised sound should be sufficient to satisfy all but the most ardent technophile. The new *Scenario Builder* is just as satisfying, too. You can create new scenarios, customise city graphics – even edit the signpost. As if this wasn't enough, there are also 24 new scenarios provided. So what if you don't have the master program? Buy it – you won't be disappointed.

Not so Perfect

QQP's *The Perfect General* got something of a mixed reaction upon its release. The game system was superb, but the computer opponent left a lot to be desired. As a multi-player moderm

game it was excellent, but that's not really top of the list for most players looking for a decent strategy game. The impending release of *The Perfect General 2*, however, could put things right. The programmers have completely overhauled the AI, and there'll also be new units, like planes and ships. It'll support moderm play, too. Look out for this in October.

While reviewing *The Grandest Fleet* last month, I noticed a couple of bugs in the sound and modem departments. The UK distributor Mirage has since contacted me and offered solutions. The Soundblaster 16 driver is faulty. You can either switch to standard Soundblaster or contact the company ☎ (0260 299909) for the new driver. The modem, meanwhile, needs to be on the next available COM port to work. If your mouse is on COM1, COM2 is empty and your modem is on COM3, then you need to switch your modem to COM2. Hope that helps.

And, at last, companies are starting to use SVGA graphics. This is something I have long been advocating for strategy games. What sense does it make to have 256 colour maps, on which you can barely read the symbols, at the expense of high resolution graphics? *Battle Isle 2* is a good example. It's a great game – the 3D rendered vehicles are up there

In a game of warmongering strategy, something to make outwitting your opponents more satisfying would be a high-res add-on disk. Well, now you can get 'em for *Warlord 2*.

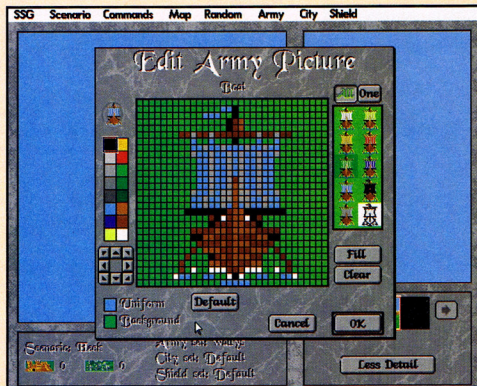


with the best – but the 256 colour low-res map is crudsville. Then again, along comes *Outpost* offering high resolution animation in 256 colours. So you can have your cake and eat it...

Fans of the *V For Victory* series will be pleased to hear that the line has not been discontinued, but renamed. The developers of the series, *Atomic Games*, fell out with their publisher *Third Sixty Pacific* and moved on to Avalon Hill. The first game under the new moniker will be *Operation Crusader* and will feature the North African campaign. I've played the Mac version and can tell you it looks and plays the same as its predecessors. That's the good news. The bad news is that Avalon Hill doesn't have a UK distributor – and doesn't seem too fussed about it. A shame really because the company which produced so many wonderful boardgames finally seemed to be getting its computer act together, with conversions of its own *Blackbeard*, *Flat Top*, *Advanced Civilization* and *1830* all in the pipeline. The latter, by the way, is being developed by Simtek, the team behind *MicroProse's Master Of Orion*.

All writers like feedback and I'm no exception, so please let me know what kind of column you want. I'd especially like to hear of any history or game-altering tips. The most useful hints will be published – but please keep 'em brief. *Empire Deluxe Masters Edition* (reviewed on page 67) on CD-ROM pre-empts this proposal somewhat by including a strategy guide. As this was written by a rival hack it's tempting to be cheeky and say it's crap. Unfortunately, it isn't.

"What sense does it make to have 256 colour maps, on which you can barely read the symbols, at the expense of high resolution graphics? Battle Isle 2 is a good example. It's a great game – the 3D rendered vehicles are up there with the best – but the 256 colour low-res map is crudsville"



Companies are making good use of the 16, and 256, colour SVGA graphics, bringing brighter, sharper colours and symbols to your screen. *Warlord 2* should satisfy all but the most ardent technophile.

● Brian Walker is the former editor of *Strategy Plus* magazine.



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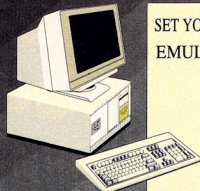
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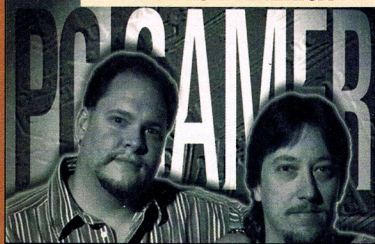
You're probably wondering just who these two semi-bearded guys are and why they've suddenly popped up in the middle of your favourite PC gaming magazine. Well, we're Matt Firme and Steve Poole, Editors of the US edition of *PC Gamer*, and we'll be here every month to give you an idea of what's going on in the American PC gaming industry.

This first time out, we thought it might be helpful if we gave you a general overview of the American PC gaming market – how the publishers operate, what sorts of games are most popular,

more and more players over here are getting fed up with the constant postponement of ship dates. If a game is only two months late, for instance, no-one gives it a second thought. There have been titles in the past, for instance, that have been over a year-and-a-half late, and right now there are a couple that are getting close to the two year mark. Yep, that's two years past the so-called launch date.

Some of the blame for those delays relates to the different expectations of the US gaming market. While you guys were still dicking around

LETTER FROM AMERICA



Matt Firme & Steve Poole

Do they mean US?

In the first of a regular column, the Editors of *PC Gamer's* American edition lend their views on what it's like to be a PC gamer on the other side of the Atlantic...

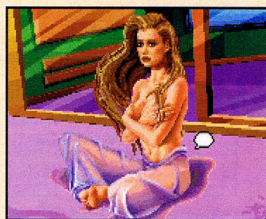
the type of machines most gamers are using, and so on and so forth.

For starters, you have to keep in mind how much bigger the US is compared to the UK – this means it's always a lot harder for software houses to get their games swiftly cruising through the market channels and into your hands. UK gamers could pick up a copy of *TIE Fighter* at least a week before it was generally available over here, for example. For a monthly magazine that week can translate into a month's delay in getting a definitive review out the door. And with people spreading the word on CompuServe and the Internet, a game's fate can sometimes all too easily be sealed in a short space of time. Unfair? That's just the way it is.

If you're new to PC gaming, you're probably already learning what we in the US have known for a long time: few companies ever stick to their release schedules. We don't know how big a problem or an issue it is in the UK, but

with Amigas and Atari STs, PC gaming was already firmly established here in the colonies. And let's face it – the PC is still a fairly new gaming platform in the UK. In the States, on the other hand, people here have been buying PCs as dedicated game machines for at least six years. So PC gamers over here are generally more particular – and won't hesitate to return a game if it's slightly bugged or doesn't run smoothly on their system. So it's quite possible for companies to release a game in the UK, but not ship it to America until it's been thoroughly re-tested and de-bugged by an American publisher. You were playing Ocean's *TFX* several months before us, for example, but it took six bug patches (three each for the floppy and CD-ROM versions) to bring the UK version up to version 2.01, the equivalent of the original US release.

So does this explain why games like *Cannon Fodder*, *Beneath A Steel Sky*, and *Battle Isle II* have been available in



Perhaps the biggest difference between PC gaming in the US and the UK lies in the sense of humour, or its failure where *Leisure Suit Larry's* concerned.

the UK for months, and we've only seen a few measly screenshots? It's hard to say, but the bottom line is that right now it looks as if you're getting to see a lot of games before we do.

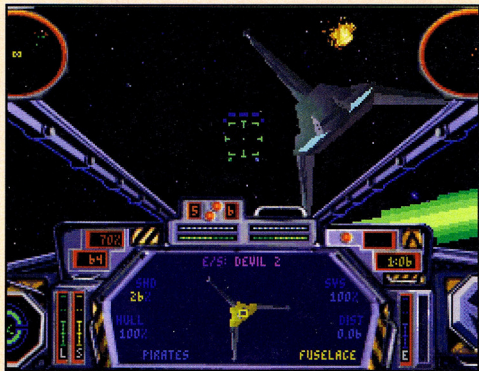
Another difference is in the types of games we play. In looking at the UK *PC Gamer's* Top 50 list (April 1994), it seems you're just as likely to enjoy arcade-style games as games designed specifically for the PC. While we included a couple of arcade titles in our Top 40 list, we'd never dream of counting *Wizkid*, *Fury Of The Furries* or *Micro Machines* among our top faves. They're probably a lot of fun, but arcade-style games just aren't a major attraction on the US market. Right now, developers are designing games mainly for veteran players, and those folks tend to turn their nose up at anything remotely non-PC.

Then there are titles that just never make it over here. We've been told that Jimmy White's *Whirlwind Snooker* is a really great game, for instance. We wouldn't have known, though – we've never seen it. The same goes for *Bubble Dizzy*, *Troddlers*, *Sriker*, *Cosmic Spacehead*, *Magic Boy*, *Oscar*, *Yo! Joe...* The list goes on and on.

Perhaps the biggest difference between us and you, though, is that you apparently hate *Leisure Suit Larry*. Now, we admit that the games aren't funny from start to finish – and we don't claim to be the biggest fans in the world – but how can a country that burdened the world with *Benny Hill*, *Yes, Minister*, and *Are You Being Served?* complain?

So there. Sorry if we offended, but we can't help it. After all, we're just a couple of ugly Americans who love PC games. See you next month.

"Leisure Suit Larry games aren't hilarious from start to finish but how can a country that burdened the world with Benny Hill, Yes, Minister, and Are You Being Served? complain that something's not funny?"



Apparently, there can be a real problem with game distribution and availability on the other side of the Big Pond. Crazy but true: *TIE Fighter* was obtainable over here for about a week before.

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G0002 - DOOM (2 disk). 3D virtual reality shoot 'em up from ID.	E0005 - MATHS MASTER. A maths tutorial for beginners.	H0042 - SKYMAP for Windows. Excellent Windows astronomy program.
G0004 - BLAKE STONE APOGEE 3D game using the Wolf engine.	E0007 - SHOW 'N SPELL. A fun way for children to increase their spelling skills.	H0043 - ASTRO. Produces detailed astrological charts. Windows.
G0005 - HALLOWEEN HARRY. Apogee beat platform game to date.	E0009 - TALKING TEACHER. Teach children the alphabet, spelling etc with real speech, requires Soundblaster or compatible.	H0044 - ASTROCULT. Windows top up horoscope program.
G0007 - ANDROID PINBALL. From Epic. Excellent smooth scrolling pinball sim.	E0011 - EARLY SPANISH. Language tutor which actually speaks if you have a Soundblaster or compatible.	H0045 - ASTRO. DOS based astronomical charting and analysis program.
G0010 - ZONE 66. 360 degree scrolling shoot 'em up from Epic.	E0014 - ULTIMATE FRENCH. Teach yourself French.	H0046 - ASTRO WORLD for Windows. Produces horoscopes and written evolution.
G0013 - SANGUO FIGHTER. Street Fighter 2 style beat 'em up, for one or two players.	E0015 - ULTIMATE SPANISH. Teach yourself Spanish.	H0047 - PHOEBE. Windows based program which provides astronomical and astrological information for any given date.
G0014 - KING ARTHUR. A strategy game set in dark age England.	E0019 - MASTERMIND. Windows based logic puzzle box top.	DOOM ADDONS Please note that all Doom addons are compatible with the registered version of Doom only. G0003 DOOM - Map Editor G0020 DOOM - Levels 1 G0001 DOOM - Levels 2 G0022 DOOM - Utilities 1 Doom Master and Random G0023 DOOM - Addon 1 : New sounds for Doom G0093 DOOM - Levels 3 G00102 DOOM - Levels 4 G0104 DOOM - Levels 6 G0105 DOOM - Levels 7 G0106 DOOM - Levels 8 G0107 DOOM - Levels 9 G0108 Alerts Doom with new graphics and sound effects G0109 DOOM - Utilities 2 G0110 DOOM - Addon 2: Waffenstein, 3D000 Photo and Pannos graphics for Doom G0111 - Doom Levela graphics
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The PC has amazing graphics potential – and yet games developers, almost without exception, continue to write games on the PC for a subset of the VGA standard, which gives only half the resolution of even a normal text mode screen. 320 by 200 pixels is your lot most of the time – most machines sold today are quite capable of 800 by 600.

The reasons for this are largely hysterical – sorry, historical. Back in the days of VGA-only screens, the normal resolution was 640 by 480 pixels, but in only 16 colours. While this was still four times the palette of old CGA games,

denominator. The graphics may not be as zingy, but if you write to the MCGA standard, you can guarantee your game will run on almost any VGA-screened PC. This means a higher degree of compatibility, and larger potential sales. Also, fewer technical support hotline calls will be required. Fewer calls, fewer replacement disks, fewer refunds – it all makes sense if you have an accountant biting at your heels and you want to concentrate on writing that next game.

The other advantage of writing at low resolution is speed. A little arithmetic shows that an MCGA screen

So you say you want some resolution

Chances are your PC can produce stunning SVGA graphics – so why do so few of the games in our collections make use of them?

software houses remained dissatisfied, not unreasonably preferring extra colours to higher resolution.

What is unreasonable is that we still have to suffer these jagged, low-resolution pictures in our games today. Almost all machines capable of running the latest leisure megaliths can display SVGA – that's Super VGA – and do so most of their working lives under Windows. Any machines with 1 Mb of video memory, and even some with half a Meg, can display 800 by 600 pixels and a palette of 256 colours. This is the kind of display we should be seeing in our games, but those that actually use it, like *SimCity 2000*, remain few and far between.

So why aren't there more? Well, mainly because software developers are still writing to the lowest common

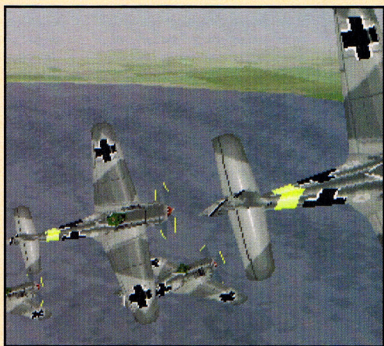
has a maximum pixel count of 320 by 200 by 8 to make 512,000 bits or 64,000 bytes of memory, whereas an SVGA screen needs 800 by 600 by 8 to make 3,840,000 bits or 480,000 bytes of memory. Manipulating half a Meg of video memory needs faster routines than if you're just trying to shift under 64K's worth. Why make life more difficult?

Because games in this higher resolution can look amazing, that's why. Text looks as if it has been drawn with a pen rather than carved out with a chainsaw, and figures, ships, vehicles, buildings etc. start to look real. If ever proof was needed of this, just look at Rowan Software's *Overlord*, which looks absolutely stunning in its Super VGA mode – and still runs at a respectable speed. Remember, most photographic images under Windows are shown at this



Hardware • Peripherals • Technologies

Simon Williams



(Above) With SVGA you really can shoot when you see the whites of their eyes...

(Right) Just feel the tension as the chaps wait for the all-clear on chocks away.



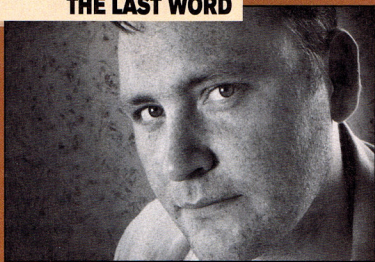
"Any machines with 1 Mb of video memory, and some with half a Meg, can display 800 by 600 pixels and a palette of 256 colours. This is the kind of display we should be seeing in our games, but those that actually use it, like SimCity 2000, are still few and far between"

SimCity 2000 is one of the few, very few, games that use Super VGA. Since the vast majority of machines are more than capable of coping, we should be hitting the streets to campaign for higher-res pics.

resolution and palette size and look great. Although 24-bit TrueColour adds extra depth for still images, once you start moving them around, you rarely notice the difference between TrueColour and 256 colours.

So now is the time to start campaigning for your graphic rights. Everybody who can display 800 by 600 in 256 colours contact the suppliers of new games who don't support it. Ask if there's an SVGA version, ask whether upcoming games will support it, ask what their policy is on graphics resolution. Show how many of you there are out there and suggest that you won't continue to pay good money on new games which don't make the best use of your hardware. Or, put another way, "Life is a lemming and I want my money back."

● Simon Williams is PC Gamer's technical correspondent.



Gary Penn

What is it about interactive movies that makes them so intriguing? Ignore the promise suggested by their looks. As games they're undoubtedly limited to play, despite being pleasantly tacky in their own little way. It's expensive cheap entertainment. How ironic that the likes of Origin's *Wing Commander III* and Access' *Under A Killing Moon* cost the most to make and yet remain the least enduring of PC titles around. How often do you watch the same short bursts of your favourite movies in the space of a week? How often do you bother to sit through the scene-setting sequences?

Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis is at best two-dimensional. It's clearly different to, say, *Alone In The Dark 2*, but both use the same limited exploration and puzzle-solving mechanisms, and rely on storylines and presentation to set them apart. Players derive a similar short-term sensation from playing *Dragon's Lair*, only instead of discovering objects and a use for them, it's a case of figuring out the appropriate movements at the right time.

To be honest, the formula is wearing thin. The problem I find is that the more detailed the environment is to look at, the more detailed I want, expect, it to be on a physical, interactive level. I find it annoying, for example, that I can move one object because the

programmer has defined it so, but not another because it's only decoration. I'd prefer to play within a closed circuit, an environment which functions as fully as possible within its confines (without even considering the game mechanics). Using linear footage is not the way forward in creating detailed interactive environments – all you end up with is more branches and twigs, hidden behind the overall shape of a tree.

Take this example: a room with a handful of objects: a chair, a table, a box, a can of petrol and a lighter. The interface could be the traditional icon-mouse-pointer system; the walls, floor, ceiling and everything else simply digitised or rendered images. Now, I can only do what the author allows me to do. Taking into account the finite number of preset filmed sequences at his/her disposal, I may be allowed to walk in and push the chair or table, but



Okay. So what have we got here? Ah yes, a room with objects in it – and not much else. So why can't I move things around? Everyone likes to decorate a room in their own way, don't they?



"The problem I find is that the more detailed the environment is to look at, the more detailed I want it to be on a physical, interactive level – even more so with so-called interactive movies"



Mark Hamill is the star of *Wing Commander III* – one of the most expensive interactive movies made to date. But just what will he think of it in, say, 50 years' time?

Rendered Dull and Devoid

Just how interactive are interactive movies? Is there hope for the genre? Is Mark Hamill the father of a new age or, erm, not? All is revealed...

only from one viewpoint. I might be able to pick up the petrol and the lighter and put them in the box but only if the author has catered for those actions.

But if the whole room were built from polygons and the control system were made more 'physical'... I could view the room from any angle, move anywhere, position objects wherever I wanted – I could even pour petrol over something – anything – and set light to it, the flames then spreading realistically outward.

Yes, the visual detail would be lacking, and, sure, there'd still need to be direction, but the level of interaction is much higher. With a suitable array of objects, I could invent my own solutions and not have to follow some tedious, often illogical, preset path.

Interaction with people, on the other hand, is a more complex affair. How much does it take to convince you that something is 'living' inside your computer? A detailed, digitised and animated actor can be great to look at and listen to, sure, but to interact with in a simulated physical way? Most of the characters in interactive movies aren't developed to any extent, anyway.

Yes, there's appeal as it stands, but the restricted interaction is unrewarding and unimaginative. This medium isn't comparable to the formative years of something as simple as film. If *Wing Commander III*'s star, Mark Hamill, is alive in 50 years' time and reminisces about his interactive movie work, he won't be looking at the beginning of a new phenomenon, but rather at something along the lines of movies which are more dependent on technology and special effects than story and character.

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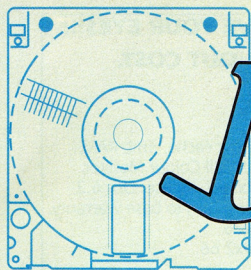
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From Rookie To Ace In One Easy Lesson

The latest spectacular from LucasArts (PCG 9: 94%, £49.99) proves once and for all that baddies really do have more fun. There's just one small problem – those Rebel scum can be pretty tricky to deal with at first. Luckily, our exclusive guide to the ins and outs of the Imperial Navy will soon have them cowering...

This guide is split into two main sections. The first deals with general hints, tips and techniques that apply to any situation you'll find yourself in. The second, on the other hand, takes a detailed look at the strengths and weaknesses of each of the six craft you get to fly and what you'll be flying against.

In The Beginning

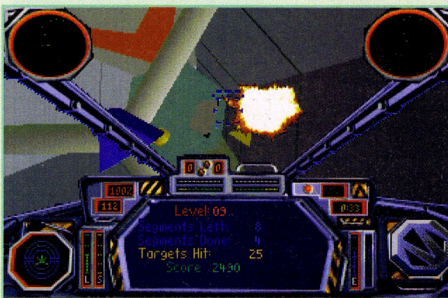
Although *TIE Fighter* enables you to jump straight into a battle and start crushing the rebellion immediately, it's well worth taking time out to train and qualify on each craft beforehand. Not only do you get a promotion and some nice certificates and medals, but you also learn a lot that's useful later on.

The Training Simulator This relatively simple obstacle course is good for sussing out *TIE Fighter*'s basic controls, and demonstrates the main differences between the various craft – their speed and weaponry.

To qualify on a ship you must finish level 8. Bear in mind that the course is essentially passive – nothing shoots at you, and hitting things doesn't damage your ship – so when flying a fighter with shields, turn the recharge rate down to minimum to gain speed. Likewise, keep the laser recharge rate at normal until your lasers are



The best the Rebels can throw at you is little threat to the awesome TIE Defender. The first Combat Chamber mission for this ship is an excellent demonstration of its ridiculous hardness.

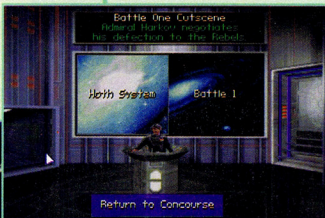


By turning its shield recharge rate down to minimum even the Assault Gunboat can pick up a decent bit of speed. You'll probably still have to shoot the odd target to make it, though.

running low, and then increase it for a while.

The TIE Advanced and Defender pose a unique problem in the Training Simulator – they're both too fast! If you turn the shield recharge to minimum you'll find yourself smacking into things all the time on the later levels, so put the laser recharge up to maximum to compensate, and be prepared to lower your speed even further if necessary.

The Combat Chamber Whereas the Training Simulator gives you a good idea of how the ships fly, the Combat Chamber introduces you to the kind of situations you'll find in actual battles. For each craft there are four progressively more difficult and more 'realistic' (i.e. more like actual events) missions. Even if you skip the Training Simulator, you really should fly all these missions because they enable you to experiment and gain experience without putting your pilot at risk, as well as introduce most of the objectives you'll face later on – from identifying neutral craft to taking out minefields or attacking capital ships. Other than the instructions given on-screen in the earlier missions, there is little that refers specifically to these missions – treat them as battles and use the rest of this guide to help you out.



Although it's possible to skip to another battle if you get stuck on a mission, perseverance should be enough to get you through...

The Battles *TIE Fighter*'s campaign is split into seven battles, each consisting of five or six linked missions. Although you are

free to skip between the first four whenever you want, it's best to complete them in numerical order – not only do they get more difficult, but it helps maintain the game's storyline. The rest of this guide is aimed at these missions.

Take Control

It might sound obvious, but it's important to learn and understand the controls if you're going to do well. Outside of the basic movement, firing and targeting controls, the majority of *TIE Fighter*'s key commands are designed to make life easier for you. Read the manual and play around in the Combat Chamber until you've mastered them. You'll not only be better at playing, you'll have more fun too.

A flash way of saying 'knowing what's going on,' situational awareness is the key to success in *TIE Fighter*. You might be the best pilot in the Empire's history and a master of your starfighter's controls, but if you're not in the right place, attacking the right thing at the right time, you'll fail miserably. Luckily, *TIE Fighter* contains a whole range of features designed to help you keep track of what's going on, estimate what's going to happen in the near future and then do something about it.

As soon as the mission starts, go to the Goals screen. This gives you the specific mission objectives, and often a hint as to what ships may be appearing later on. Exit the Goals screen and go to the Map, taking a close look at what's about and where they are. Now decide on your first target – and go for it.

Throughout the mission, keep an eye on the Goals, Map and Log screens. The best way to do this is to check them immediately after each combat engagement (i.e. after blowing up or disabling a ship). By doing this, you'll know what's going on, be able to spot dangers and problems early on and have time to deal with them. This is of great importance in missions which involve defence – spotting attacking groups before they can do you harm is vital.



The game's many and varied cut scenes not only continue the plot but act as your main rewards for finishing Battles, so enjoy them.

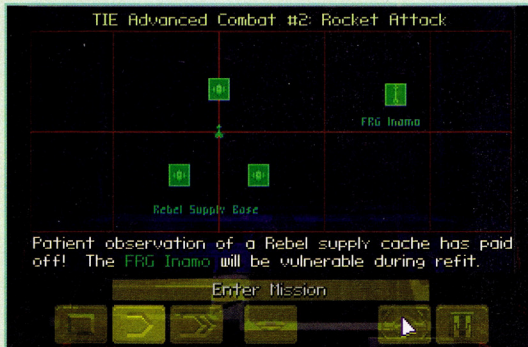
However, awareness of your starfighter's condition and current performance is just as important as an awareness of the overall situation. What this really comes down to is ensuring that you use the ELS (Engine, Laser, Shield) settings effectively and to your advantage.

What makes this more complicated, though, is the fact that each fighter you fly behaves slightly differently. The TIE

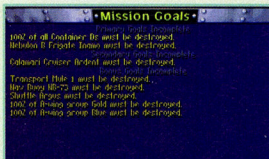
Interceptor's maximum laser recharge rate, for example, is phenomenal – it can actually charge up while firing at maximum rate. Nevertheless, there are some general points that apply across the board.

- Lasers always recharge faster than shields. This means it's more efficient to transfer energy away from shields than to top up the shield recharge rate.
- ELS management in unshielded ships is remarkably easy. In normal conditions just leave the laser recharge at normal. For extra speed drop it down – and when in combat put it up. It's that simple.
- Your first priority on starting a mission should be to fully charge the shields (if you've got them). Immediately transfer all laser energy to your shields, put shields and laser recharge rates up to maximum, and keep transferring energy across from lasers until they're fully charged. At this point, drop the recharge rates down to normal until combat starts.
- To get the most speed – and yet still be able to fight effectively – drop shield recharge down to minimum and put the laser recharge up to increased or maximum, then keep transferring energy across to the shields, a little at a time.

Always keep an eye on your laser and shield levels during a mission, and get used



It's vital to pay attention during every part of the briefing, whether it's a real battle or a Combat Chamber simulation, as here – it gives you a good idea of what to expect and the relative positions of most of the craft.



The Combat Chamber missions inform you of any bonus goals on their missions – in a real battle you have to work them out for yourself by trial and error.

Heavy Rockets are by far the best weapon to use against Capitol ships in *TIE Fighter*. Remember to launch them from outside laser range (about 2.5km), at maximum speed and aimed at any turrets.



to playing around with the recharge rates and transferring energy around until it becomes second nature. Also get into the habit of spreading your shield evenly between fore and aft by hitting the shield key (S) three times whenever you've taken some damage.

Weapons in *TIE Fighter* are basically divided into warheads and beams. While all craft have lasers, the other types of weapon are only available on certain fighters or in certain missions.

Warheads There are six types of warhead in *TIE Fighter*, each with different characteristics. The common link between them is that all require a lock-on if they're to hit the target with any degree of accuracy – which means flying straight towards the object for some time. The most important thing to remember is to pull away once you've fired, otherwise the target will fire once you get in range. However, by moving away from the warhead you can easily divert the target's attention – and the weapon is then unlikely to get hit by any stray laser blasts. Also remember that your speed is added to the weapon's when you launch it.

Concussion Missiles: Only effective against enemy fighters and small craft, and best used while at a distance of about two kilometres. It's a good idea to save these for A-Wings and similar nasties – most of which need a couple of hits, so launch in pairs.

Proton Torpedoes: A good multipurpose weapon, effective against the slower fighters as well as moderate sized ships. Not so good against the real capital ships – they lack the required punch – but better than nothing.

Heavy Rockets: The best weapon for dealing with large ships, combining a significant bang with a good range.

Space Bombs: Unpowered and thus very short ranged, but the most powerful weapon available. It's best to release these as close as possible to the target and pull away quickly.

Advanced Missiles and Torpedoes: Improved versions of the basic missile and torpedo – always use them when the opportunity arises.

Beams Lasers: The most versatile weapon in the game, your trusty lasers will never let you down, provided you keep them nicely charged up. For more on the best configurations to use, see the run-down on the individual fighters over the page.

Ion Cannons: Ion cannons don't damage craft as such but scramble a ship's controls and electronics, effectively disabling the craft and putting it into a helpless, immobile state. Only use ion cannons when the situation specifically demands it.

The Tractor Beam This weapon system, only available in the final stage of the game, slows down enemy craft and makes them easier to hit. To be honest, for the amount of energy it requires it's not that effective, so you're probably better off reducing its recharge rate to minimum and making use of the extra speed it provides instead.





Be thankful that the Z-95 is so pathetic – the Rebels have enough of them.

Z-95 Headhunter (Z-95)

Know Your Enemy

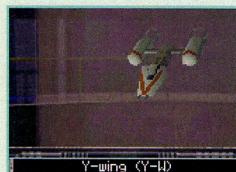
During the course of *TIE Fighter*, you'll come up against a whole host of different ships, some more dangerous than others. While it's worth spending a few minutes comparing their statistics in the Tech Room, the numbers alone don't tell the whole story...

Rebel Craft 295 Headhunter: This obsolete fighter is dead common, especially in the earlier battles, with its pathetic shields and unimpressive speed and manoeuvrability.

Dangerous only in large numbers.

Y-Wing: Although its shielding and armour are quite strong, the Y-Wing suffers from lack of speed. They pose the biggest threat during dogfighting when there's a risk you'll run into the back of them. Their ion cannons and torpedoes can also threaten large ships.

X-Wing: A good all-rounder, the X-Wing is well armed, fairly well protected and capable of decent speed. In the hands of a skilled pilot they can be very dangerous in a dogfight, and the



The sluggish Y-Wing is easy meat for anyone.

torpedoes pose a moderate threat to larger ships.

A-Wing: Not particularly tough and quite lightly armed, the A-Wing is nevertheless one of the hardest ships to deal with because it's so amazingly fast. They're best dealt with by concussion missiles from a distance, but beware – the A-Wing may have the same idea. Once you get up close, your best bet is to maximise your speed and hope to get in a couple of good shots – A-Wings slow down noticeably once damaged.

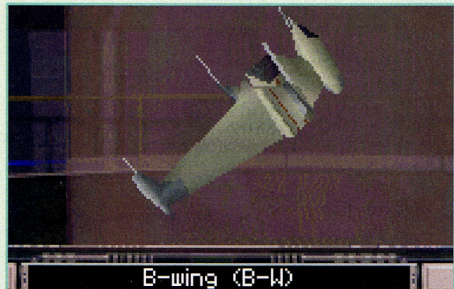


The X-Wing can be more problematic, but only in the slower, unshielded craft – TIE/a and TIE/d pilots have nothing to fear.

B-Wing: Something of a super-charged Y-Wing, the B-Wing is heavily armed, incredibly tough, but only moderately agile. The biggest problem is that it can soak up such a vast amount of damage and still be very dangerous to large ships.

General Craft

Shuttle: These are slow, unwieldy and make nice big targets. Beware of flying head-on into them, though, because their



The B-Wing is the heaviest fighter in the game and can soak up enough damage to kill three ships.



The dreaded Escort Shuttle, complete with deadly TurboLaser turret that makes it so nasty.

lasers can do a lot of damage given the chance. And be careful when matching speeds – flying along slowly behind an unmanoeuvrable shuttle makes you an excellent target for enemy fighters.

Transport: Virtually identical to shuttles (see above), except they're a slightly smaller target and, when armed with

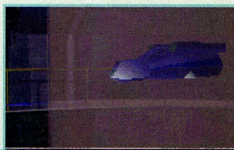
torpedoes, can pose a threat to large craft.

Escort Shuttle: Unless you've got a lot of missiles or torpedoes, you'd be taking a big risk attacking these in an unshielded ship. They've got some serious guns up front and the rear turret (which can also fire sideways) is a nightmare. In a shielded craft, divert all energy to forward shields and make repeated attack runs, equalising shields as you go past – don't match speeds and sit behind an Escort Shuttle under any circumstances.

Miscellaneous Craft

This covers all the various freighters, transporters, cargo craft and containers.

As a rule, these are big, slow or non-moving targets that pose little or no threat and take a lot of pounding to destroy. However, occasionally some of the larger craft are armed with the odd



Transports are little threat, and remember that Corvettes can't shoot something coming in from the side or rear on the same plane.



turbolaser turret or two, so don't go blazing in immediately. Make a fast fly-by and see what happens to prevent any nasty surprises.

Capital Ships

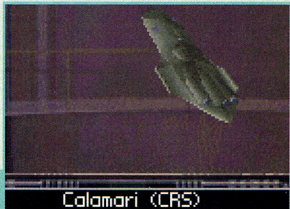
These are the big ships – Frigates, Calamari Cruisers, Star Destroyers and so on (including Space Platforms – which don't move). The first thing to remember is that attacking these ships in a TIE Fighter or Interceptor is suicide. A TIE Bomber's only chance depends on launching a large supply of torpedoes, rockets or bombs from outside laser range. Capital ships, with their profusion of turrets and lasers, rarely always do some damage to an attacking fighter, so shielded craft are a must.

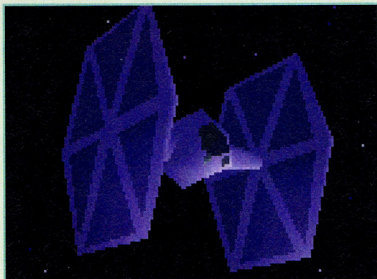
The second thing to bear in mind is that you can attack and destroy various parts of the larger ships separately. By experimenting in the Combat Chamber with invulnerability turned on or by recording a mission and using the camera controls you should easily be able to pinpoint any weakly defended areas – the Calamari Light Cruiser's underside, for example. Once you've destroyed all the weapons in that area you'll be able to pummel the ship mercilessly without fear of retribution. So, to take out a large craft...

- Destroy any fighters protecting the ship (some will continue to launch fighters as you attack – it's best to deal with these as they're released, rather than them build up to dangerous numbers).
- Make sure your lasers and shields are fully charged.
- Get into a position from where you can attack a weakly defended area.
- Soften up the target with any heavy weapons you have, while outside laser range if possible. Remember you can target specific locations with torpedoes and rockets, so try taking out as many weapons as you can at this point.
- Get in close enough to use your lasers and make repeated strafing attacks against any remaining defences, taking time to fully recharge your shields between runs.
- Blast away to your heart's content and blow the target to bits (this might take some time with the real biggies, so be patient).

Although not technically capital ships, Assault Transports and Corvettes should be treated in much the same way. A skilful pilot should still be able to deal with them in a TIE Interceptor or even a basic Fighter though.

Attacking Calamari Cruisers from below gives the best chances.





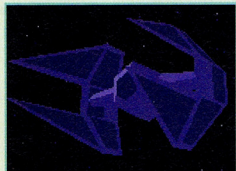
The Lowly TIE Fighter isn't much good for anything. Luckily you only fly it at the start of the game.

TIE Fighter

The TIE Fighter is the most basic ship you can fly – and, in many respects, the weakest. It can only take two laser hits before it's destroyed, and even one is normally enough to blow its sensors and make it virtually useless. This means it's vital you keep a careful eye on the three threat indicators above the laser sight, and pull away sharply if one lights up.

On the plus side, the TIE Fighter is moderately fast and very manoeuvrable. In addition, you only fly this ship at the start of your career, where you normally only encounter the older and less dangerous enemy ships and have a strong numerical superiority. Make sure you use your wingmen well – strength in numbers is the TIE Fighter's main advantage.

As its lasers are right next to each other, always use dual fire – if one beam hits, the other will too.



With its heavier weapons load and turn of speed the TIE Interceptor is a good dogfighter.

TIE Interceptor

A souped-up TIE Fighter, the Interceptor is faster, better armed and can take three or four hits. Despite this, it's still a fragile craft and you should be just as careful with it. The craft's main feature is the speed of its laser recharge – at maximum rate you can fire continuously and still build up charge! This means you'll normally only have to put it up to increased rate to maintain a full charge, which frees up more energy for your engines. Although not quite as critical as for the TIE Fighter, wingmen are still

important and you should take care to assign them specific targets.

Due to the distance between its four lasers, configuring your weapons is more difficult. Dual fire is a good compromise for most situations, combining a good rate of fire with a higher chance of hitting, but single fire is best against defenceless targets such as containers.



The TIE Bomber is a specialised craft, and should be treated as such – avoid enemy fighters.

TIE Bomber

The Bomber is the slowest of the unshielded craft, but also the toughest and most heavily armed. You can afford to soak up a good two or three hits before you're in any danger, and it can take up to six to destroy. It's just as well, though, because the sluggish responses combined with the need to fly straight at enemies acquiring locks makes the Bomber a prime target.

Luckily, Bomber missions are normally supported by Fighter and/or Interceptor squadrons and a significant

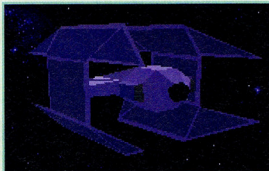
number of wingmen who you should use to make group attacks on your objectives.

In a couple of missions you'll be required to dogfight in this craft. You should selectively use missiles against the fastest enemies – but beyond that it's just a matter of keeping your laser recharge rate down to normal for as long as possible in order to maintain speed while fighting. Dual fire is normally best in these situations, with single fire against non-threatening targets.

Assault Gunboat

The slowest and most unwieldy of the shielded craft, the Gunboat is also the one you'll be flying most of the time. Because of its hypervise, the Gunboat is ideal for surprise raids, and with its ion cannons it's perfect for when something needs capturing.

To get the most out of the Gunboat, make maximum use of its shields and play



The TIE Advanced is the match of nearly anything you meet.



around with the ELS settings as necessary. For dogfighting, it's best to drop the shield recharge

to minimum and put the laser recharge up to maximum, then transfer energy across when the shields start to disperse. Luckily, the Gunboat can carry a very heavy warhead load – 12 missiles in total – which you should use to take out A-Wings and the like while you finish off Y-Wings and so on with your lasers. Like the TIE Fighter, these are right next to each other in the nose, so set them to dual fire at all times.

TIE Advanced

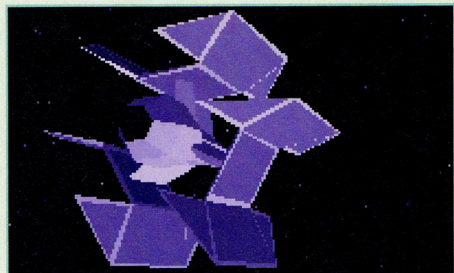
The TIE Advanced is a joy to fly and suitable for almost any type of mission. Even A-Wings pose little problem for its high speed and agility, strong shields and four laser cannons. It really is very impressive indeed.

Unfortunately, you only gain access to it later on in the game, and it's only used in the toughest

of missions (in some you're flying against Imperial traitors). It's when you have to fight enemy TIE Advanceds that you really begin to appreciate what a tough ship it is. As well as being a great fighter, the TIE Advanced is also ideal for attacking large ships. Its high speed means you can put shield and laser recharge rates up to maximum and still be going more than fast enough to attack other craft. It's normally best to use dual fire against fighters and single fire against large targets.



The Assault Gunboat needs attention to perform at its best, but get used to it – there are lots of missions using it.



It even looks ridiculously hard. The TIE Defender laughs in the face of any other ship in the game. Loudly.

TIE Defender

The TIE Defender is, quite simply, the most ridiculously powerful ship of them all. It's insanely fast, loaded down with guns and has shields that are twice the strength of any other fighter. Even TIE Advanceds pale into insignificance next to this baby. As such, it's actually quite hard to give any useful advice about flying it – if you're good enough to have reached the last few missions (where this ship appears), then you shouldn't have many problems. To be honest, there's very little you can do wrong with a ship like this.

It's best to keep the lasers set to dual fire when dogfighting, and turn the tractor beam down to minimum recharge, unless you find it more useful than we did.

For a real challenge, try completing the first Combat Chamber mission after you've shot every container (thus triggering all the enemy ships to arrive at once). Have fun.

TIE Fighter

LucasArts' *TIE Fighter* was our Game Of The Month in the August issue of *PC Gamer*, where it scored 94%. It costs £49.99.

PCG



Pagan: Ultima VIII

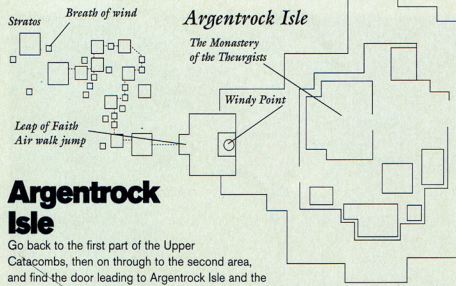
The Complete Solution Part 3

The third and final part of PC Gamer's in-depth guide to the latest in Origin's Ultima series takes you to the last of the Titans, teaches you the final few spells and transports you to the Ethereal Plane for a climactic confrontation.

A Bit Of A Coup

By now the guards at the eastern entrance to Tenebrae should have told you of Bentico's execution and Devon's arrest. If not, go to the east entrance and speak to them. Now go back inside the palace. Head to the western side and go down the steps. You'll find yourself in the cellars. Go to the northernmost edge and use the switch to open the big iron door to the dungeons – Devon is in one of the cells. Talk to him and tell him you will find out what's going on. At this point, you should find Salkind (the weaselly advisor bloke) – he'll be in the palace or at home (see the map of Tenebrae in Part 1) and will tell you that he keeps his logbooks in the house. Sneak in there, read them and you'll find mention of 'forbidden research'. Go back to the cellars. To the east of the entrance to the dungeons you'll see a small room, apparently with no doors. Stand in the corridor facing it and use one of Myhran's scrolls to reveal the hidden entrance. Now go in and read the book on the stand.

At this point some guards will appear and arrest you (whether or not you put up a fight is up to you – it won't make any difference). After a while, you'll find yourself being trooped along the dock, where Devon is about to be executed. When you get a chance, tell everyone that Devon is the rightful heir and stick to your story, saying that you have proof. Watch the resulting duel.



Argentrock Isle

Go back to the first part of the Upper Catacombs, then on through to the second area, and find the door leading to Argentrock Isle and the Theurgists. Use the Scion key to unlock it, then go through and cross the bridge to the isle. Find the teleporter to the northwest, then make your way to the Theurgists' compound and find a guy wearing dark blue clothes and carrying a sword. Talk to him. His name is Xavier and after some conversation you should ask him for enlightenment.

The First Test The first test involves answering a series of questions in the correct manner. The actual questions asked vary, but you should always answer by using one of the following responses...

- Tell the truth about the battle.
- Comfort children.
- Welcome your child.
- Enjoy breezy evenings on the porch.
- Tend the injured.
- Sacrifice your sight to heal the sick.
- Look for honesty in companions.
- Say that weapons destroy but wit builds.
- Don't brag.
- Always give truthful testimony.



Stellos is the eldest of the Theurgists.



The end is nigh. With this final installment Diagnostics cracks Pagan once and for all. There's no need to rush, though – it's much better to savour the moments as they occur...

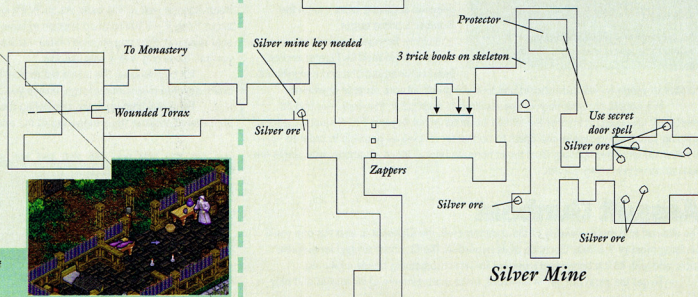
The Test Of Centerness Once this is done, ask to take the second test and Xavier will tell you to go to Windy Point, to the west. The Centerness Test takes place on the tall platform engraved with the symbol of air. Climb up onto it and the test will begin. Just walk against the gusts of wind to stay on the platform. Once you've passed the test, go back to Xavier and he will send you to Stellos (who wears white robes).

The Third Test Talk to Stellos – he'll tell you to prepare your foci. Take the key he gives you, go into the monastery, head to the back (west) and go down the stairs to the silver mine. Open the door and take eight pieces of silver ore, teleport back to Tenebrae and ask the blacksmith to make foci for you (you have to ask for one at a time). Teleport back to Argentrock Isle, enter the monastery and place the foci on the altar one at a time to activate them. Go back to Stellos and he will set you another test.

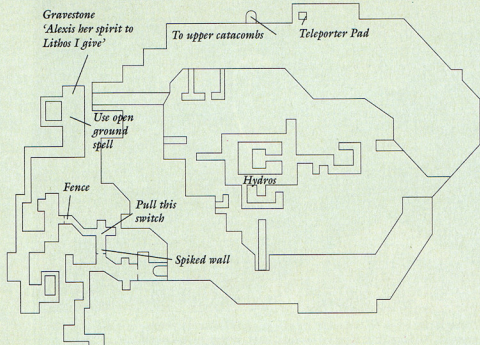
Return to the caverns beneath the monastery and head west. When you see the wounded Torax, cast Aerial Servant to move it closer to you, then Healing Touch to heal it.

The Lost Focus Go back to Stellos again. He will now tell you of Xavier's missing focus. Talk to Xavier – he'll tell you about Torwin's research. Talk to Stellos again, saying that you have met both Torwin and Xavier. Go and talk to Cyrus, casting Hear Truth on him to learn that Torwin is heading to Windy Point to perform his experiment.

Go and find Torwin (he's just to the north of the point). He'll attempt the leap... Afterwards, retrieve the



Carthax Lake



focus of healing. Go back to Stellos and tell him you have retrieved the focus, then return it to Xavier.

The Leap Of Faith Return to Stellos and he will tell you to take the leap of faith. Go back to Windy Point, stand between the pillars right at the edge of the cliff – and jump as far as you can. Make your way up the floating stones to the largest one, then walk to the north. Stratos will appear and pick you up. Talk to him and you will receive the Air Walk focus and learn about the Blackrock fragment called the Breath Of Wind. It's best not to get this just yet, because if you do you won't be able to cast any more Theurgy spells.



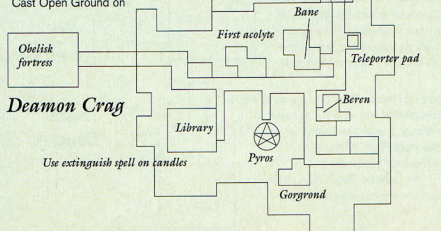
No matter what you say, you can't save Torwin. So don't worry too much.

Carthax Lake

Go back to the second part of the Upper Catacombs and go to Carthax Lake. Find the teleporter pad to the east of the entrance, then make your way to the plateau that's at the centre of the lake, via the bridges. Once there, walk onto the white platform and Hydros will appear. Talk to her and she'll tell you that she's trapped. Agree to help her and she'll tell you that you must cast Open Ground on the grave of her captor.

Freeing Hydros

Make your way through the tunnels to the west of the lake. Climb over the spiky wall in the clear section and flick the left switch on the first gate – the second gate should now just open when you walk up to it. Cast Open Ground on



You don't need a running jump, but it's best to save your game...

the tombstone inscribed with "Alexis her spirit to Lithos I give". Return to Hydros. She'll now do the dirty on you and threaten Devon.

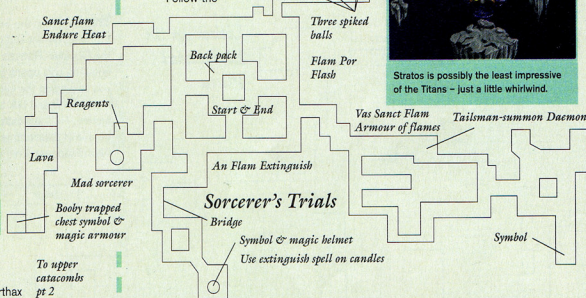
Devon Go to the palace in Tenebrae and talk to Devon, who has assumed his role as Tempest and ruler of the city. Agree to sort out the storms and seek out the sorcerers.

Daemon's Crag

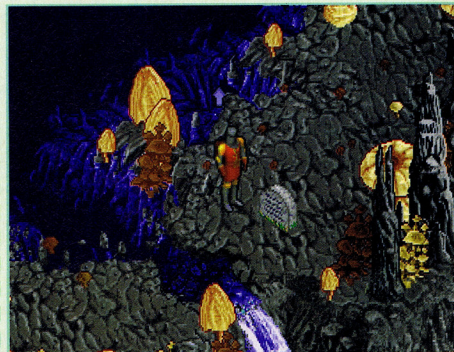
Journey back to the second part of the Upper Catacombs and go to the double-door at the entrance to Daemon's Crag. Pull the lever so that the first door is down and the one just behind it up.

Now stand on the first door, cast Ariel Servant to pull the lever and go through the open door. Follow the tunnels and walk to the western edge of the lava. Beren should be on the other side. Talk to him and then use Air Walk to traverse the lava.

Follow the



map south to enter the Crag proper. Activate the teleporter pad and go to the first house on the left. Talk to Bane, reveal your name to him and ask all the questions about sorcerers and so on, agreeing to any task. Find Vardion, talk to him and reveal your name.



Make sure you don't stand right in front of the gravestone when you cast Open Ground, or you'll be washed away by the sudden flood of water that frees Hydros from her imprisonment.



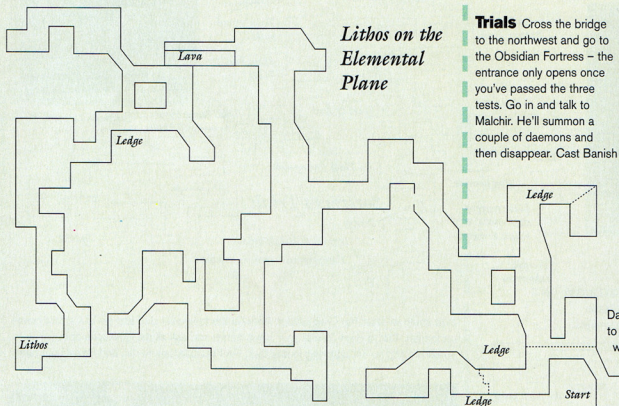
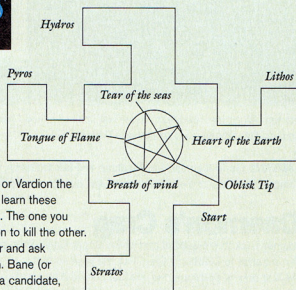
Now say that you go where you will – and then apologise. Ask him about everything and agree to any task.

Creating An Opening

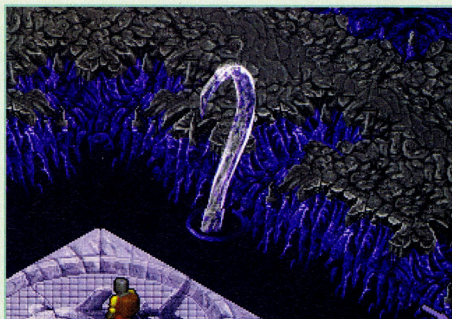
Tell either Bane or Vardion the other's true name (you should learn these from the conversations above). The one you tell will then summon a daemon to kill the other. Afterwards, Malchir will appear and ask who will fill the vacant position. Bane (or Vardion) will now offer you as a candidate, and you should accept the position, agreeing to take the test after studying in the library. Get the key from the surviving sorcerer.

Prepare Yourself Go to the library (it's the big place with the double-doors and barred windows) and read all the books etc. This will enable you to learn about all the spells, the Ritual Of Flame, and the Blackrock fragment and its effect on Titans. Grab all the wands, symbols, rods and stuff, including three candles of each colour, and as many

Main Area



The entrance to Daemon's Crag requires the Ariel Servant spell to pass, so make sure you haven't nabbed the breath of wind just yet (once you do so, you lose your Theurgist powers).



Hydros will betray you no matter what you do – it's part of the game's plot, and can't be helped. Be sure to go and warn Devon about her escape, though, or things can get complicated.

of the reagents as you can manage. Go and talk to the First Acolyte and agree to take the test.

Testing, Testing Create: Endure Heat, Flame Bolt and Flash – remember that while taking the test all the reagents, foci and other stuff in the First Acolyte's house are yours for the taking. Now learn the Ritual Of Flame. You have to have all the reagents with you when you take the test, because leaving halfway through casting means you'll only have to restart. It's also a good idea to create some spells in the Library now – you'll need Extinguish, Ignite, Flash, Flame Bolt, Endure Heat, Armour Of Flames, Explosion, Summon Daemon and Banish Daemon.

Trials Cross the bridge to the northwest and go to the Obsidian Fortress – the entrance only opens once you've passed the three tests. Go in and talk to Malchir. He'll summon a couple of daemons and then disappear. Cast Banish



Devon will be in Mordas's old chambers, but don't worry – he hasn't got nearly as bad a temper. While you're in Tenebris, try taking the ring that Torwin dropped back to his mother at the Jewelry Shop in the eastern section of town.

Daemon on them – or run past – and then go down the steps to the lair of Arcadion. Talk to this daemon and tell him that you want to see Malchir. Now walk to the alcove opposite and you'll be transported to the trials, where you must collect four blue symbols.

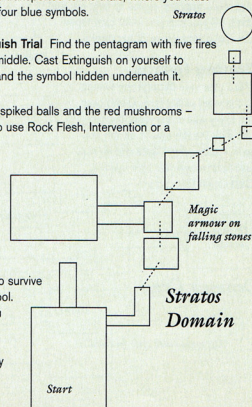
Extinguish Trial Find the pentagram with five fires around it and the magic helmet in the middle. Cast Extinguish on yourself to make the fires go out. Get the helmet and the symbol hidden underneath it.

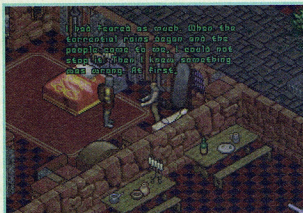
Flash Trial Cast Flash to get past the spiked balls and the red mushrooms – and then grab the symbol (you can also use Rock Flesh, Intervention or a Purple Potion).

Endure Heat Trial Cast Endure Heat and then walk across the lava to reach the symbol. Remember that you can only walk on the red and orange lava – you'll still sink into the yellow stuff.

Armour Of Flames Trial Use a spell to survive the fireballs that surround the last symbol. Alternatively, as with the Flash Trial, you can use Rock Flesh, Intervention or a Purple Potion if you prefer.

The Daemon Shield lying nearby will also protect you against fire of any kind.





There's nothing like a bit of a storm for atmosphere towards the end of the game - it's got lightning and everything.

Flame Bolt, Explosion and Summon Daemon at him (in that order), then banish the daemon he summons. He'll then teleport you to the Great Pentacle. Here you should follow his instructions to perform the Ritual Of Flame. After the abortive summoning, talk to Beren or Gorgond.

Deal With Malchir Go back to the Obsidian Fortress and walk to the alcove opposite the stairs. Have a bit of a fight with Malchir, then get The Destruction Of The Temple from his inventory and read it. There may also be a scroll explaining that the Tongue Of Flame only gives you power when carried over the Great Pentacle, so take the Tongue from his inventory and walk over the Great Pentacle with it in your inventory. Now go back to the Catacombs and teleport to Mythran - you can't use the teleporter device while in Daemon's Crag or the Obsidian Fortress.

It might be a good idea to make up a couple of Endure Heat and Flash spells before leaving, because they'll be useful later on...

Summon Pyros

Go back to where you started the trials and you should be teleported back to Arcadon, who will send you to Malchir via the teleporter at the back of his chamber. Prepare an Ignite spell (if you use any of the four symbols as a focus, you will get an infinite number of charges) and take a red candle. Talk to Malchir, cast

Pyros on the Elemental Plane

10 Spheres
Flame sting
danger floor breaks

Stones sink after you jump

Place 10 spheres here

Magical shield
Daemon

Start

Air walk jump



The Tear Of The Seas

Teleport to Tenebrae and speak to Devon, asking him for help. Take the key to the chest in his study and grab the Tear Of The Seas (the chest is in the southwest corner of the Palace).

Pack Your Bags

Zip back to Mythran and buy the Ethereal Travel spell from him for 250 coins (you may need to buy some other spells beforehand) and cast it.

The Grand Finale

You will appear on a platform floating in space. The Plane Of Water lies north, the Plane Of Earth to the east, the Plane Of Air south, and the Plane Of Fire to the west. At this point, you must travel through each plane to find the Titans again, and use the relevant Blackrock fragment on them by double-clicking on it and then the Titan - the fragment should glow if you've done this properly.

The planes of Water and Air are straightforward, but the other two are a bit trickier...

Hydros Domain

The Beginning Of The End

Have a chat to Mythran and he'll tell you about the Blackrock fragments and so on. Now it's time to get the last two fragments.

The Breath Of Wind

Go back to Argentroot Isle via the teleport item, and use Air Walk to cross to Stratos. Have a chat with him. While there, cast Reveal to uncover The Breath Of Wind, and use an Ariel Servant to get it for you.

Magic Helmet

The Plane Of Fire

There is a chest near the small shrine which contains grey spheres. Go to the star with glowing squares at each point and put a sphere on each square. They should now turn red and disappear - a platform will now rise out of the lava.

The Plane Of Earth

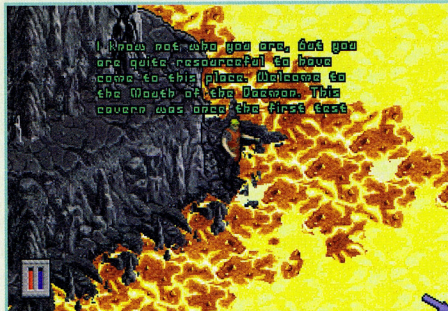
There is an invisible walkway over the lava. You can find this by throwing rocks around and seeing where they don't sink. Alternatively, cast Endure Heat and walk around the edge...

The Real End

Once you've energised all the Blackrock fragments, arrange them around the large grey Pentagram, energise the Obelisk Tip (by using it on yourself) and then put it down last.

Now walk into the Black Gate that appears and watch the spectacular end sequence.

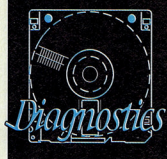
And that, as they say, is that. Not bad, eh?



Daemons Crag is the toughest of the four magical areas, but by the time you get there you should be able to deal with all the problems and dangers easily. Well, quite easily.

Pagan: Ultima VIII

Origin's Pagan: Ultima VIII was reviewed in the May issue of PC Gamer, scored 93% and earned itself one of our special recommended awards, which we only bestow on games of particular merit. It costs £44.99.



The Secret Of Monkey Island

The Complete Solution



The three pirate captains are wasted in their current career – they'd be far more successful as stand-up comedians or gameshow hosts, especially with their amazing talent for synchronised laughter...

The second instalment of our new series, which is dedicated to spoiling all the classic games available for the PC, deals with the now classic title that put LucasArts on the map as the premier graphic adventure developers in the world...

The Trials Of Piratehood

Go into the Scumm bar and talk to all the pirates. Now go through the curtain to the east. Talk to the three pirate captains and ask them about the three trials and grog. Wait for the cook to leave the kitchen, then go in and get the slab of meat and the pot of boiling stuf. Walk east to the dock and take the fish. If the bird is eating it, go to the far right – the lower part of the dock – and press Return. This tosses the bird into the air. Now run across and grab the fish.

Leave the village by heading east at Look Out Point. At the fork due north of the Point, you'll find a clearing to the east. Head for the light emerging from the circus and speak with the Fettucini Brothers. Allow yourself to be shot from the cannon, then show them the pot. Go back to the village, take the money and walk into the store. Buy a shovel and a sword. At the intersection, buy a treasure map from the citizen, then go and get a chicken from the voodoo shop.

Head for the men of low moral fibre, tell them that you like rats, then speak about the circus. Agree to take a copy of the PTA minutes for two pieces of eight. Now it's time to start learning how to handle your sword, so go east (out of the village) and past Look Out Point. Here you'll find a house (it's in the southeast section of the island). Give the fish to the troll. Use Captain Smirk to start training with the sword. Once you feel confident enough, exit and head back to the intersection west of the fork.

If you wait here, some wandering pirates will take the opportunity to challenge you (see Fighting Talk on the facing page). You must wait for an insult to be heard before you can use the comeback, and before challenging the swordmaster you must master all four major insults and comebacks, plus the other 16 minor ones – they are added to your inventory as you hear them. Once you've got them all, head for the store and let the storekeeper know that you want to meet the swordmaster. When the storekeeper leaves, follow him to the forest north of the fork, near Look Out Point. Here you'll meet the swordmaster, who you can overcome by using the minor comebacks. Once you've defeated him, go back to the three pirate captains and show them the prize she gives you.

Recruiting Your Crew

Head for the fork in the road and go into the forest. Pick up the petal from the yellow flowers, use the petal on the meat and head for the Governor's house. Give the spiked meat to the dogs, enter the house and use the right door. You will see a cut scene showing you getting some anti-gopher spray. Go to the storekeeper, talk to him and buy some mints. Go over to the jail and speak with Otis. Give him the mints, talk to him again and then give him the anti-gopher spray. Now take the cake and open it to get the file.

Head over to the house again. If the dogs are awake you'll have to get some more meat from the kitchen and petals from the forest, as before. Head through the hole in the wall and watch what happens next. When Fester throws you in the ocean by the pier, pick up the idol and the sword, go to the ladder and climb up. Return to the Scumm bar and show the idol to the captains. Look at the map you bought earlier – the dancing steps are actually directions through the forest (from the fork to the treasure). After entering the forest, take the back pathway. Now when you get to the next screen, go left, right, left, right, back (as in 'into' the screen, away from you), right, left, back and right. You should find the treasure marked with an X. Start digging and read the signs (both on the plaques and on the monuments). Afterwards, go back to where you normally find the captains and you'll discover that they've left. It's time to get your crew together.

Go to Stan's used ships and speak with him about credit – you need the large blue ship at the end of the dock. Go to the shopkeeper and ask for credit. Exit – then go back in and reply that you have a good job. Note the combination of the safe (count the clicks in either direction). Tell the shopkeeper that you want to speak with the swordmaster. When he leaves, open the safe and get the letter of credit. Go back to Stan's used ships, ask about extras and then put in an offer. Tell him that they are junk and not wanted, implying that you're going to leave, but then return. Start at about 1,000 and bid up very slowly – you should get the blue ship for about 4,000. Now raise a crew of Meat Hook, Otis and (of course) the swordmaster.

The swordmaster will only join your crew if you say that the Governor has been abducted. To recruit Otis, first get all five clay mugs from the Scumm Bar. Now enter the kitchen and use one



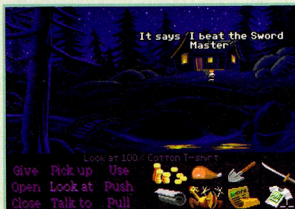
There's nothing like a pleasant little tropical island to provide the budding swashbuckler with hours of entertainment.



Learning all the insults/replics can take time. Remember that these guys use different insults to the swordmaster, but give the same replies.



The storekeeper is one of the central characters in the early stages of the game, and even leads you to the swordmaster – his shop is through the archway from the central village location, on the left.



clay mug on the keg of booze with the spout (the one with a skull and crossbones insignia). The mug will melt, so quickly transfer the liquid from mug to mug as you move to the jail. At the jail, use the grog on the lock to free Otis (he'll escape and join you later).

To get Meat Hook, go to the far northeast corner of the island (don't forget to take the chicken and the pulley from the shop – to the left of the citizen – beforehand). Climb up the platform by the shore and use the chicken on the cable to reach the island. Now tell Meat Hook that the Governor has been abducted. To make a good impression, open the door for him and hassle the parrot. Now head back to the dock where Stan and the rest of the crew will meet you.

All Aboard

When you set sail, examine the ship carefully and take everything you find. Enter the captain's cabin, look in the desk drawer and get the log. Go to the galley and look for a key hidden in a box of cereal inside the cupboard (looking at the prize turns it into a key). Go back to the captain's cabin and use the key on the cabinet. Remove the chest and open it. Afterwards, look inside it and get the cinnamon sticks and the recipe.

Return to the galley and put the following in the large pot – breath mints, cereal, chicken, cinnamon, gun powder, ink, the jolly roger (from the mast), rubber and wine. You'll now fall asleep and wake up at Monkey Island. Go to the galley and get the small pot (this makes a good helmet). Now get the rope from the hold to provide you with a fuse. Save the game, then get the gunpowder from the hold, plus the feather from the captain's cabin. Use the rope on the back of the cannon and the gunpowder on the front. Light the feather, stand close to the muzzle and use the pot.

On Monkey Island, get the banana and make a note of the boat you see. Walk northwest to the beach, take the note and look at it, then go to the fort, north of the volcano. Take the rope and the spy glass, pull the cannon, and get the cannonball and gunpowder. Go to the fork in the river to the east and pick up the memo and the rock. Examine both of these, get the flint, cross over the bridge and go east to the footholds. Go up, pull the old native art to the furthest left position, then push three times to the right (in the direction of the banana tree). Head back to the footholds and go up again. Use the spy glass, push the rock, then read the memo and cross the bridge. Use the gunpowder on the dam, use the flint on the cannonball and head to the pond.

Get the rope and read the memo, go to the crack and use the rope on the tree. At this point, go over to the stump and use the rope on it. Head over to the wall and take everything. Now go back to the first beach and take two bananas. Climb into the boat

(Left) To say that LucasArts' sense of humour is slightly warped would be a teeny-weensy understatement...

(Below) Look Out Point, complete with the old gear from the intro – not a critical location...



and row east to the beach. Examine the bottle with the message and explore the clearing. Afterwards, go east, then north in the boat to find another beach. Read the note and head for the village. Once there, go to the stone head, take another two bananas from the fruit bowl, and go east. Take the skull from the guest hut, prise open the loose board and take the banana picker. Head to the hole.

Go back to the boat and row to the beach with the banana tree. Enter the jungle, walk to the monkey and give all your bananas to him. Look at the monkey, then head for the clearing. Go east to the fence, pull the nose on the left totem pole and back away. Go over to the opening in the fence and head east, then take the pathetic looking idol and return to the boat. Row back to the cannibals' village and let them know you'll give them anything they want. Give them the idol. Enter the guest hut and take the banana picker.

When you try to leave, Toothrot will show up. Give him the banana picker and he will give you the monkey head key. Exit the village and then re-enter. Speak with the cannibals until 'head' comes up in conversation. Now give the cannibals the leaflet and in return you'll get the head of the navigator. Go back to the monkey head, use the key on its ear, enter the mouth and use the head. When you pause at the junction, look at the head – it will spin around and gaze in the direction you should take. When you get to the ledge above the ghostship, speak to the head and ask for the necklace. Continue saying please until you get it. Use it, go to the ship, west through the door and use the compass on the key. Head down the hatch, walk east and take the ghost feather. Now go west and use the feather twice on the crewmen that are asleep. Take the bottle of booze and use the key on the hatch. Go over to the hatch and use the grog in the dish. Take the cooking grease, then go back up on deck. Use the grease on the big door, open the door, enter the brig and take the ghost tools. Go back to the hold, use the tools on the grate and then take the voodoo root. Leave the ship, head back to the village and give them the voodoo root. In return you will gain the seltzer bottle. Leave the village.

When you see the ghost appear back on the island of Melee, use the seltzer bottle on him. Now go to the church – say the words 'stop wedding' and use the bottle (yet again). During the course of taking on LeChuck, you'll find yourself back at Stan's Place. Grab the root beer bottle lying on the ground (it's fallen from the grog machine) and when the time is right, use it on LeChuck to win the game.

Fighting Talk

To save you time, here's a rundown of all the insults and comebacks you'll come up against during those crucial swordfights.

Insult

- Every word you say to me is stupid.
- If your brother's like you, better to marry a pig.
- I usually see people like you passed out on tavern floors.
- I've got a long sharp lesson for you to learn today.
- I've got the courage and skill of a master swordsman.
- I will milk every drop of blood from your body.
- My last fight ended with my hands covered with blood.
- My name is feared in every dirty corner of the island.
- My tongue is sharper than any sword.
- My wisest enemies run away at the first sight of me.
- Now I know what flint and stupidity really are.
- No-one will ever catch me fighting as badly as you do.
- There are no clever moves that can help you now.
- You are a pain in the backside, sir.

Reply

I wanted to make sure you felt comfortable with me. You may be think someone already has. Even before they smell your breath? And I've got a little tip for you, get the point? I'd be in real trouble if you ever used them. How appropriate – you fight like a cow. I hope you have learned to stop picking you nose. So you got that job as a janitor after all. First you'd better stop waving it like a feather duster. Even before they smell your breath? I'm glad that you attended your family reunion. You run that fast? Yes there are. You just never learned them. Your haemorrhoids are flaring up again, eh?

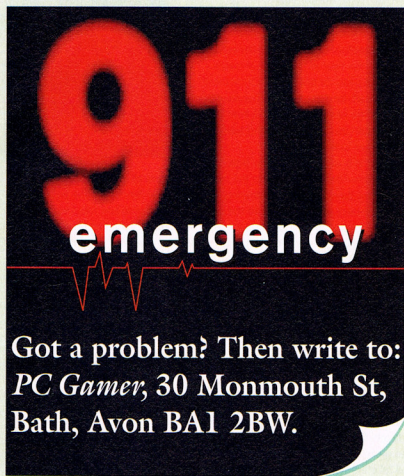


The main map of the island makes moving from one location to another simple and easy, but don't stop near to the wandering pirates unless you're in the mood for a casual scrap or two.

The Secret Of Monkey Island

US Gold's *The Secret Of Monkey Island* was originally released in October 1990 and rated Number 35 in our Top 50 PC Games Of All Time, back in issue 5. It's now available on the Kixx XL budget label for only £16.99.

PGC



Got a problem? Then write to:
PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth St,
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Your gameplay queries answered by the experts

Doom



Q Doom is driving me crazy! I can't get the plasma rifle or the BFG 9000. I have already completed the game hundreds of times (even on the new

Nightmare level), but I still can't find them. When I use the cheat 'IDKFA', the readout at the bottom of the screen says that weapons 6 and 7 are there, but when I try to bring them up, nothing happens. I'm wondering if it's because I only have the Shareware version. Could you tell me if either of these weapons can be found in Knee-Deep In The Dead?

Rory O'Reilly, Dublin

A You're right, Rory – neither the plasma gun or the BFG 9000 exist in the Shareware version of *Doom*. You'll find the plasma gun in *The Shores Of Hell*, while the BFG 9000 only arrives on *Inferno*. If you want them you'll have to pay the £35 or so for the full version – but it's more than worth it.

Cannon Fodder



Q I am having real problems on Mission 19. I can't get anywhere or blow up any of the enemy buildings. Please tell me what to do.

Chris Youl, Godalming

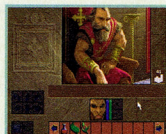
A The first thing to remember is that you need three men to finish this mission, so if any get killed, it's best to press *Escape* and try again. From the starting point, head straight up to the building at the top, positioning your troops on the right-hand side. Split off two men and head right to the pile of junk. A jeep will start shooting at you. Run towards the junk, job

a grenade over to the other side and then run away quickly before the jeep shoots or jumps over the junk and runs you over.

Lead your two guys down to the wall jutting out from the right side of the map (avoiding the grenades being dropped by the chopper). After a while, it'll get bored of trying to kill you and fly down the map a short distance to land. Hug the extreme right side (again) to avoid the turret – and rocket the helicopter to bits – then go back up to the wall and stand on the white pad in front of the door.

Switch to the other blokes, split one off and leave him on the other white pad, then go to the wall at the bottom left, via the building in the middle of the map. You'll have to avoid fire from the turrets, but when you stand on the final white pad it'll glow red and a helicopter will fly over to you. Get in it. Now kill everyone. Simple.

Lands Of Lore: The Throne Of Chaos



Q I'm stuck in the early stages of this one. After returning from the Southlands to find king Richard poisoned by that exceptionally nasty Scotia, I've accompanied Baccata

to the Daracle's Cave in the hope that the Daracle will provide an antidote. After rescuing Lora from the Pod Room on level two of the caves, I found the only apparent exit leads back up to level one again. As the Daracle is not to be found in levels one and two, there must be a concealed exit to further levels – but where?

Mrs S M Murray, Twickenham

A The tricky part about this is that you do actually have to go back up to level one before you can return and find level three. From the Pod Room, head south and search for the ladder that leads to a taproom to level one. Go up and make your way to the northeast room (where you found the emerald eye and the cracked wall). Crumble the wall with a blunt

instrument, such as a sledgehammer. Now follow the corridor to find another cracked wall – and smash this one down too. Here you should find a secret switch that enables you to descend to level two.

On level two, search for a treasure chest containing a sapphire eye. With the sapphire eye and the emerald eye in your inventory, locate the dragon carvings and place the gems in the eye sockets. Before descending to level three, make sure you have either a silver goblet or a jewelled dagger (such as the one found on level two).

DragonSphere



Q How do you get by the green shifting monster in Sliathan Ni Patan? I have looked at, talked to and moved everything I can think of, but I'm well and truly stuck. Please help.

Craig Glover, Gourock

A We assume you're talking about the pool monster, in which case it's a simple matter of obtaining the shieldstone from the council table in the castle and throwing it at the creature. Take the tentacle fragments that appear, then walk east down the path to the bearded shifter sitting on the rock.

Emergency 911 is dedicated to solving your PC-related gaming problems. It doesn't matter how petty you think your query, send it in – we might be able to help!

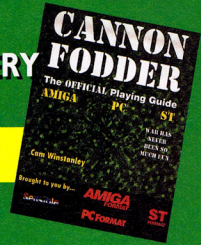
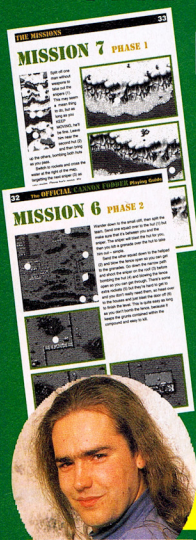
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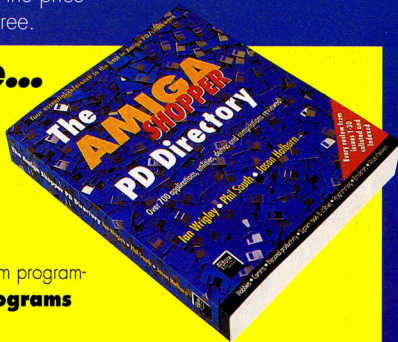
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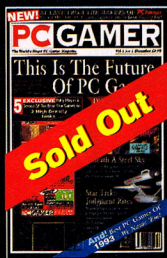
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December 1994 Volume 1, Number 1
CODE: PGM BOO1

COVERDISK: *Beneath A Steel Sky*, *Micro Machines*, *SubWar 2050*, *Krusty's Super Fandango*...
REVIEWED: *IndyCar Racing*, *Kasparov's Gambit*, *Star Trek: Judgment Rites*, *Elite II*...
TIPS: *Tornado* playing guide.



January 1994 Volume 1, Number 2
CODE: PGM BOO2

COVERDISK: *Superb The Terminator: Rampage* demo.
REVIEWED: *Sam & Max*, *SubWar 2050*, *Blondie*, *Rebel Assault*, *Flight Sim Toolkit*, *The Labyrinth Of Time*...
TIPS: *Shadowcaster* solution.



February 1994 Volume 1, Number 3
CODE: PGM BOO3

COVERDISK: *Fascinating NFL Coaches Club Football* demo.
REVIEWED: *Along In The Dark 2*, *Pinball Fantasies*...
TIPS: *Sam & Max Hit The Road* solution (part 1), special guide to *Frontier: Elite II*.



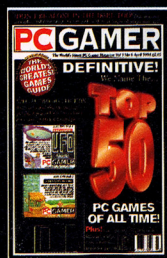
March 1994 Volume 1, Number 4
CODE: PGM BOO4

COVERDISK: *Great Sid & Al's Incredible Twins* playable demo.
REVIEWED: *SimCity 2000*, *Evasive Action*, *Quantum Gate*...
TIPS: *Star Trek: Judgment Rites* solution (part 1), *Sam & Max* solution (part 2), *TEF* guide.

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April 1994 Volume 1, Number 5
CODE: PGM BOO5

COVERDISKS: *UFO: Enemy Unknown* and *DragonSphere*.
REVIEWED: *Cannon Fodder*, *UFO: Starlord*, *DragonSphere*...
TIPS: *Along In The Dark 2* (part 1), *Judgment Rites* (part 2).



May 1994 Volume 1, Nos. 6
CODE: PGM BOO6

COVERDISKS: *Club Football: The Manager*, *Good To Firm*...
REVIEWED: *Pacific Strike*, *Ultima VIII*, *Fleet Defender*...
TIPS: *Along In The Dark 2* (part 2), *Star Trek* (part 3)...



June 1994 Volume 1, Number 7
CODE: PGM BOO7

COVERDISKS: *Theme Park* demo, plus much more...
REVIEWED: *Theme Park*, *1942: The Pacific Air War*, *Settlers*...
TIPS: *Ultima VIII*, *UFO*, *Gabriel Knight* (part 2) & others.



July 1994 Volume 1, Number 8
CODE: PGM BOO8

COVERDISKS: *Overlord* and *World Cup 94 Challenge* demos.
REVIEWED: *Overlord*, *Delta V*, *The Horde*, *Pinball Dreams 2*...
TIPS: *Ultima VIII* (part 1), *UFO* (part 2) & others...



August 1994 Volume 1, Number 9
CODE: PGM BOO9

COVERDISKS: *Hocus Pocus*, *Heccegon* and *Electronoid* demos.
REVIEWED: *TIE Fighter*, *D-Day*, *Harpoon II*, *Zool 2*...
TIPS: *Theme Park*, *Ultima VIII* (part 2), *SimCity 2000* (part 1)...



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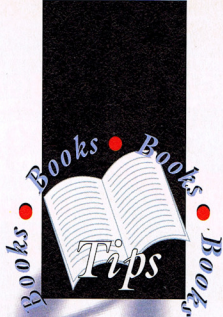
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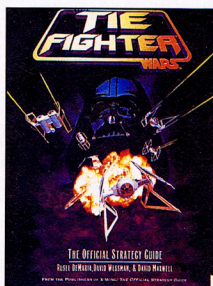
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Read All About It



In the continuing story of publishers getting in on the act of supplying books on tips, tactics and computerised tic-tac-toe, our tips *supremo*, Andy Butcher, continues to cast a beady and informed eye over the latest offerings to hit the shelves...



TIE Fighter: The Official Strategy Guide

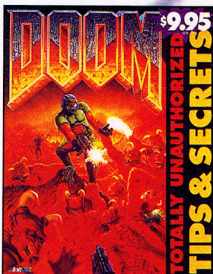
Rusel DeMaria, David Wessman
& David Maxwell
£18.49

A marked improvement over the *X-Wing* book reviewed last issue, the TIE Fighter Official Strategy Guide still suffers from some irrelevant 'story' sections – and the mission walkthroughs are written in the first person too. Nevertheless, the book contains a lot of information about the game, how it works and how to play it. It's also actually helpful in some areas

(the secret Bonus Goals for each mission are described, for example). *X-Wing* veterans might find it less than essential, but everyone else will find it useful.

Readability ★★
Comprehensiveness ★★
Helpfulness ★★

Overall ★★



Doom: Totally Unauthorized Tips & Secrets

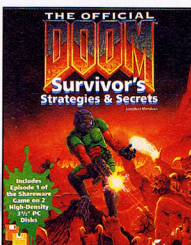
Robert E. Waring
£9.00

The second of this month's *Doom* books may be totally unauthorised, but to be blunt, it's also totally awful. For a start, nearly all of the text is printed over pale red screenshots taken from the game, which makes it nearly impossible to read. Not that that's much of a loss, to be honest. There's little information of any use here anyway, and the maps and walkthroughs are incomplete, missing

out some of the secret areas and hidden bonuses. It's a wonder that anyone agreed to publish this in the first place. Don't buy it.

Readability ★
Comprehensiveness ★★
Helpfulness ★

Overall ★



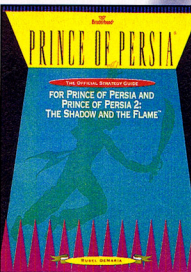
The Official Doom Survivor's Strategies & Secrets

Jonathan Mendoza
£17.99

The first in an inevitable spate of *Doom* tips books is somewhat problematic. The difficulty really lies with the game itself – *Doom* is so wonderfully simple to play that a tips book is in some ways irrelevant. Although this attempt is comprehensive enough and gives detailed walkthroughs for every level, complete with accurate, detailed maps, there's little here that you couldn't find out for yourself quite easily by playing the game for yourself and making use of the cheat codes. Bundling the Shareware version in with the book is also strange – surely if you're buying the tips book, you'll already have at least this, if not the registered version anyway?

Readability ★★
Comprehensiveness ★★
Helpfulness ★★

Overall ★★



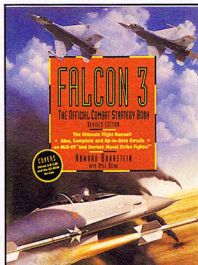
Prince Of Persia: The Official Strategy Guide

Rusel DeMaria
£18.45

Covering both the original *Prince Of Persia* and its sequel, *The Shadow And The Flame*, this guide takes you step-by-step through every level of both games, complete with numerous screenshots to illustrate important points. Unfortunately, the text is written as a first-person account and in a vaguely 'Arabian Nights' style. Although all the information is here, you have to wade through too much irrelevant padding before you get to what you're really after. If the book had been laid out in a clear, step-by-step style it would have been excellent. As it is, be prepared for some frustrating reading.

Readability ★★
Comprehensiveness ★★
Helpfulness ★★

Overall ★★



Falcon 3: The Official Combat Strategy Book, Revised Edition

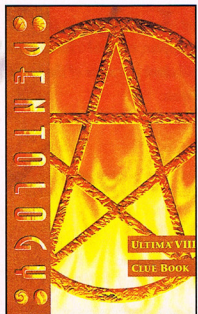
Howard Bornstein (with Kyle Brink)
£18.49

Falcon is one of those games that's managed to create a cult following for itself, in much the same way as Microsoft's *Flight Simulator*. As such, it's quite difficult to give an objective verdict about this book. While it's undoubtedly a comprehensive and well written guide, there is a lot of stuff repeated from the impressively in-depth manual, and

hardened Falcon fans are unlikely to dig out anything of much novelty here. Newcomers to the game may find it easier to digest than the game manual, but it's interest for Falcon players is limited.

Readability ★★★★★
Comprehensiveness ★★★★★
Helpfulness ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★



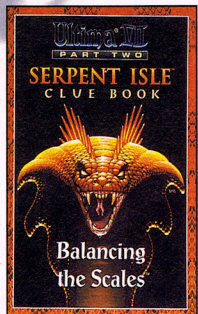
Ultima VIII Clue Book: Pentology

Melissa Mead
£8.99

After ploughing through huge 400-page guides full of irrelevant information and fictionalised accounts of someone playing the game in question, Origin's clue books are a welcome relief. All are short and to the point, with little or no wasted space. This one breaks down *Ultima VIII* in a logical fashion, first explaining the simple game system and all six varieties of magic available, and then providing a hint section and a separate walkthrough. Apart from some slightly unclear maps, it's an excellent little book for all Pagan players.

Readability ★★★★★
Comprehensiveness ★★★★★
Helpfulness ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★



Ultima VII, Part Two Clue Book: Balancing The Scales

Sheri Graner Hobbs & Andrew P Morris
£8.99

Although similar in concept to Part One, this edition does it even better in that it provides a more comprehensive and useful walkthrough, along with complete maps of all the important locations (as before). The breakdown of spells, items and equipment is also more clearly presented, enabling you to kit yourself out quickly and effectively, as well as actually understand the capabilities of your splendid, magical gear. In all it's a useful little book, and comes highly recommended.

Readability ★★★★★
Comprehensiveness ★★★★★
Helpfulness ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★



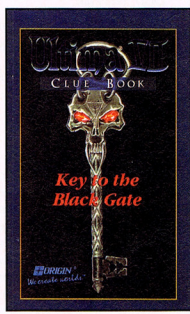
Betrayal At Krondor: The Official Strategy Guide

Bernard Yee
£18.49

Perhaps unsurprisingly for a game designed with the help of a writer's fevered imagination and thus intended to play like a fantasy novel, this guide to *Betrayal At Krondor* is heavily padded out with fictionalised accounts of the game. Luckily for those of a more practical frame of mind, there's some useful advice included in a walkthrough section at the end of each 'chapter', which is clearly written and logically laid out, detailing not only the major objectives but also the 'side quests' that litter the game. It's not a bad book, but it'd be much better without the distraction of the unnecessary story.

Readability ★★
Comprehensiveness ★★★★★
Helpfulness ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★



Ultima VII Clue Book: Key To The Black Gate

Andrew P Morris
£8.99

Providing complete maps and overviews of all the towns and other major locations, followed by lists of the various equipment, supplies, spells and weapons, together with where to get them, this really is a useful little book. Its only drawback is the lack of a concise walkthrough - instead you get questions, each with a 'hint' answer and a complete solution to the problem. Ironically, *Ultima VII* is one of the few games that actually deserves a more complete treatment. Still, this is a handy guide to the basics and well worth getting hold of.

Readability ★★★★★
Comprehensiveness ★★★★★
Helpfulness ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

Getting Hold Of 'Em

Most of these tips books should be available from the larger branches of shops that sell PC games - Virgin, HMV and Future Zone, for example.

The Ultima Clue Books are also available from Electronic Arts on ☎ (0753) 549442. No postage is charged.

You can order the rest of the books direct from Computer Manuals, the UK suppliers, on ☎ (021) 706 6000. Credit card orders are delivered within 24 hours, and no postage is charged if you order four or more books at once.

Computer Manuals stock literally thousands of tips books, plus a large selection of more technical titles, so give them a call.

SHARP CARDS

Or Card Sharps?

If you want to speed up graphics on your PC there are some great new video adapters around. We test three of the best and explain why Windows performance is so important.

BY SIMON WILLIAMS

Dear Ruth,

I have one of the biggest PCs in our neighbourhood, with the latest Pentium processor and lots – and I mean lots – of memory, but little Jimmy Dean's 486 just down the road still pulls all the girls and I'm so frustrated. Is there something wrong with my PC or is it the acne?

Worried, East Cheam

Dear Worried,

I know it can be troubling to have spent thousands of pounds on top equipment only to find that somebody else gets the best breaks. Have you considered your video adapter, though? This can make a lot of difference to the graphic performance of your PC – you should check out some of the latest cards. I'm sending you a complimentary tube of Clearasil for the spots.

Ruth

Yes, it's true, the right video adapter can make the difference between smooth visuals and the jerky unresponsive graphics that used to plague PCs. But while it's unlikely to have any significant effect on your love-life, graphics accelerators are definitely a good investment when it comes to improving your set-up. You've probably got better things to do, so why don't I run a few benchmark tests and tell you which of the following three cards is going to give you the best results?

Orchid Kelvin 64

Orchid ☎ (0256) 64222

1 Mb £149 (excluding VAT)

2 Mb £199 (excluding VAT)

This is a much less expensive card, based around the 5434 chipset from Cirrus Logic. It also uses DRAM

rather than VRAM, which is inherently slower. Put simply, with DRAM you have to get data out of the same port you put it in. With VRAM, you have dual ports, which enables you to store data in one place while at the same time fetching it from another – much quicker. The card reviewed here had 2 Mb of memory on board, but you can also pay £50 less for a 1 Mb version.

Installation isn't as straightforward as with the Diamond card. Although you still have no jumpers to worry about and the card simply plugs into an ISA, VL-Bus or PCI slot – depending on the card version you buy – the software set-up for Windows is more fiddly. You first have to set your machine back to a default VGA screen in the Windows set-up program, then run the KINSTALL utility to copy the Kelvin files, and then run a configuration utility from Windows Control Panel.

Once set up, though, you have many of the functions of the Stealth 64 card at your disposal, such as a virtual screen which enables you to scroll the display around as if you had a much bigger monitor, as well as controls to power down green monitors.

"Installation isn't as straightforward as with the Diamond card... Once set up, though, you have many of the functions of the Stealth 64 card..."

The benchmark tests didn't show the same kind of performance as the Diamond Stealth, but then the price of the card is a lot lower. The Wintach benchmark gave around half the index that the Diamond card gave, with the highest index coming in at the 800 by 600 pixel SVGA resolution. This was higher than the top-whack 1,024 by 768, because the colour palette has to be reduced from the 16.7 million shades of TrueColour to the still spectacular 64K colours of HighColour. It takes



more video processor power to shift more colours, you see.

The DOS VGA benchmark provided quite a surprise, because it managed to give 50 frames per second, which was very close to the Stealth result. Video chip designers can gear their processors to specific tasks, which are different for Windows and DOS. The Cirrus Logic chip is aimed at both and its DOS performance is therefore relatively better than its Windows counterpart. If your main desire is to run DOS based games – remember Windows 4 glinting out the corner of your eye – then the Orchid Kelvin 64 is good value.

Diamond Stealth 64

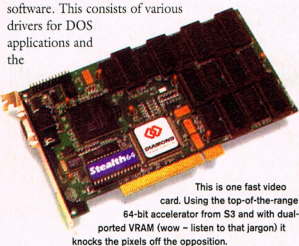
Panrix ☎ (0532) 444958
£275 (excluding VAT)

This is a hunky, two-thirds length card which is largely taken up with large V-RAM chips and spare sockets. 2 Mb of memory is supplied as standard, with sockets for a second two Megs should you want to display Photo-CD images at a resolution of 1,024 by 768

"The publicity blurb for the card claims you can switch resolutions from Windows without having to restart it every time"

pixels. It's available for VL-Bus and PCI, but the ISA bus isn't fast enough to warrant a version. The video chip – a Vision964 – comes from S3, a renowned manufacturer of fast video accelerators.

Installation is dead simple – you simply remove your old card from any VL-Bus or PCI slot and plug in the Diamond card. There are no jumpers to set, because all the configuring is done through the software. This consists of various drivers for DOS applications and the



This is one fast video card. Using the top-of-the-range 64-bit accelerator from S3 and with dual-ported VRAM (wow – listen to that jargon!) it knocks the pixels off the opposition.

Nigel Mansell wins through

You'll never get the best out of a high performance graphics card unless you've got a decent driver. It's no good having the fastest video processor, Megabytes of low-slung V-RAM and 32-bit data paths increasing the down pressure on the rear wheels if the man at the wheel can't even keep Windows on the road. The three cards tested here came with good drivers, but they may not be the last ones you'll ever need, particularly if you make the switch to Windows 4 at the end of the year. Keep in touch with your supplier or locate the manufacturer's forums on CompuServe or the Internet to keep up-to-date with the latest developments.

The Spea card offers the best software, including this neat set-up utility, complete with full-colour animation and sound clip. SPEAview enables you to switch modes and capture screens from within Windows too.

InControl utility which you use with Windows. If you need them, drivers are also supplied for Windows NT and OS/2.

The InControl utility is quick, easy to get to grips with, offers colour control and enables you to change the size and resolution of the screen. If your monitor supports it, you can also control screen-blanking from here and save yourself several pence per year by running your PC as a true green machine.

The publicity blurb for the card claims you can switch resolutions from Windows without having to restart it every time. This would be quite handy, but doesn't quite work in the way you might think. The card supports the three standard SVGA resolutions of 640 by 480, 800 by 600 and 1024 by 768 pixels, but can also show a portion of an enlarged virtual screen – an imaginary screen several times larger than the physical size of your monitor. By selecting the right view option, you can indeed switch screen resolution, but your Windows applications don't always recognise the new dimensions and you end up viewing just part of a larger screen. Windows 4 should remove the need for this kind of skulduggery.

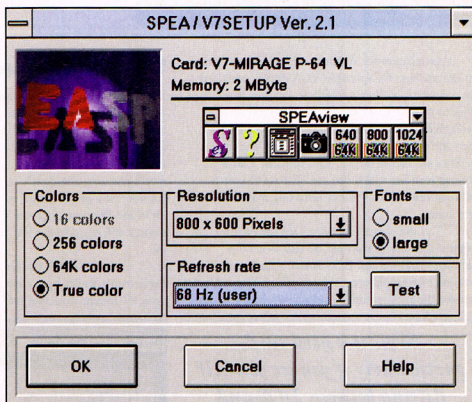
The VGA performance under DOS was very good, with the neat, if dated, little PC in the SuperScape benchmark fairly flipping round at over 50 frames a second. Games we tried, although governed by the timings built into them, moved smoothly and

with no visible interruptions. It's not always easy to design a video adapter which performs well under Windows and DOS, but Diamond seems to have pitched it right with the Stealth 64 card. Although not the cheapest of the trio, this is a very good buy.

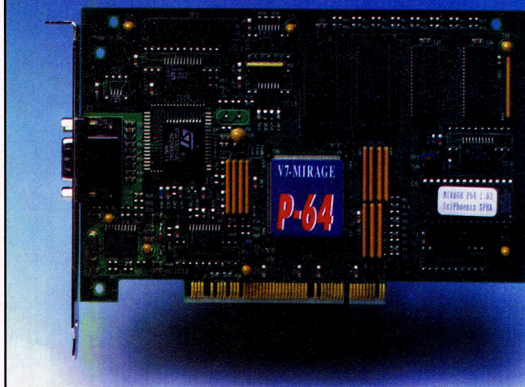
Spea Mirage V7

Spea ☎ (0844) 261886
£95-£185 (including VAT)

You may already have a Spea video adapter in your PC without knowing it because the company sells most of its cards directly to PC manufacturers. The Mirage V7 is available as a standalone card in VL-Bus and PCI, and there are several good reasons why you might want to upgrade to one. The device is based around an S3 chip, like the Diamond, although in this case it's the Vision 864 which is a lower spec device. The card reviewed here had 2 Mb of DRAM, but you can buy a 1 Mb card if finances are tight and upgrade later.



A halfway house in most respects, except perhaps the price, the Spea V7 Mirage is another S3-powered card which shows up well under Windows and DOS.



Installation for Windows again involves setting up the machine for a straight VGA display, installing the software and then configuring the card from Windows itself. This configuration is run from a handy little screen which includes an animated Spea logo and sound effects – all very stylish. The display facilities are also attractive; Spea provides a little floating icon bar which you can click on to switch between resolutions without restarting from DOS – very neat.

You can also set up offsets for the picture position and size in software, so that switching between Windows and DOS doesn't throw out the position of your picture on the monitor. This helps prevent the knob-twiddling twitch which afflicts those

Who's The Winner?

It's worth buying a 2 Mb graphics card these days because more and more games are starting to use 24-bit TrueColour or can handle images that use it. How long before we see the first TrueColour game? Well, probably not for a while yet, actually, but isn't it worth planning ahead? It's certainly worth considering a graphics card which performs well under DOS and Windows, because Windows 4 will really make a difference to the way you play games on your PC.

At under £200, the Orchid Kelvin gives good performance under both environments, whereas the Spea V7 Mirage does that bit better, particularly at

high resolutions. However, the Diamond Stealth 64 is clearly THE accelerator card to buy of the three.

You Probably Don't Know This But...

1 You have to pay an import levy on 4 Mb graphic cards. It therefore actually works out around £15 cheaper to buy a 2 Mb card – and then pay for a 2 Mb upgrade afterwards. Strange but true.
2 Check you get the right format of card for your machine. Remember there are three different expansion buses: ISA, VL and PCI. An ISA card will plug into a VL-Bus slot, but all other combinations are mutually exclusive.

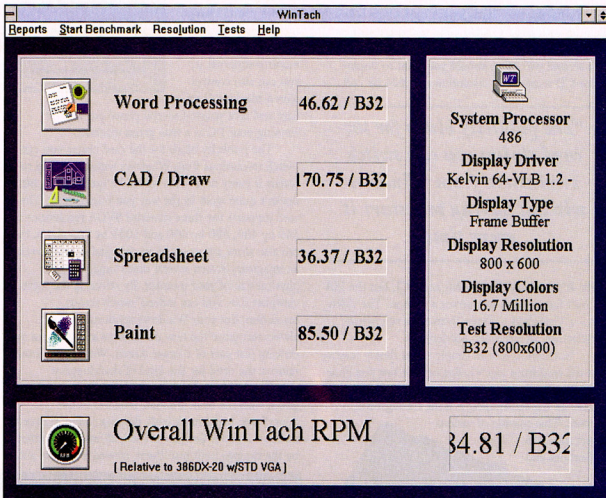
"This is a good card, particularly if you see yourself flitting between DOS and Windows for the next year or so"

who regularly switch from one environment to the other.

The card performed similarly to the Orchid Kelvin at the lower two Windows resolutions, scoring in the 80s for both. At 1,024 by 768, however, it streaks ahead with an index of over 105. While not as good as the Diamond Stealth, it's over 25 percent better than the Orchid card. Under DOS, too, the Mirage does well, returning a frame rate identical to that of the Stealth.

This is a good card, particularly if you see your mix of computing as one of flitting between DOS and Windows for the next year or so. It gives good performance in both environments and comes with the best Windows software of the three.

Unfortunately, its asking price isn't that much lower than the Diamond Stealth and it loses out to that card on overall Windows speed and on the maximum memory it can take – 2 Mb is the limit on this one. It has a particularly good high-resolution Windows performance, though, so if you have a large screen monitor it does make good sense to consider this adapter.



Texas Instruments wrote Wintach to show how good their Targa video card was. Virtually everything beats it these days, however.

How They Shape Up

The Wintach/Superscape tests work out a relative index for each particular graphics card by running four simulated applications – moving text, graphics,

CAD images and applying spreadsheet routines – and then correlating the results. As a general rule, the faster the card, the higher the index (although bear in mind that a card may still sport a high index, even if it's running slightly slower, by virtue of the fact that it's manipulating more colours).

	Wintach 640 x 480 x 16.7 million colours	Wintach 800 x 600 x 16.7 million colours	Wintach 024 x 768 x 64K (64,000 colours)	Superscape 640 x 480 x 16 colours
Diamond Stealth 64	127.90	156.90	131.45	52.6
Orchid Kelvin 64	84.96	85.97	74.26	50.0
Spea V7-Mirage	81.38	80.01	106.49	52.6

Abort, Retry, Fail?

Technical problems? Pab! A mere trifle for our resident experts. Let us take the load off...

Scuppering SCSI

Q: Cyo, Virgin and Infocom CD games have a problem that their publishers don't seem to want to acknowledge. You cannot run the install procedure on a system with SCSI drives. If you try to do so, you pop the irritating message, "A serious error has occurred while writing to drive C:." Two games have failed so far: *Dune* and *Return To Zork*. My machine has a SCSI hard drive. Could this be the problem?

**Yours hopefully,
Ed McAllister, Essex**

A: You have indeed discovered a conflict between certain installation routines and machines equipped with a SCSI pronounced scuzzy interface (we don't mean the normal SCSI interfaces on soundcards, though, only those on expensive, separate cards). However, your set-up is far from common for a games machine, and we reckon the software developers can be forgiven for overlooking this configuration when writing the program (although now it's been discovered this oversight should be rectified immediately).

We gave Virgin a bell, and they were kind enough to come up with this workaround for you. Install the game to a floppy drive and then, when you're returned to the DOS prompt, copy the files from the floppy to the hard drive. You may have to leave the floppy in, but the game will still run. All is not rosy, though, because this neat trick won't work for *Return To Zork*. The installation program doesn't give you the option to install to a floppy drive. Activision has promised to get back to us with a solution and when they do we'll pass it on.

Who needs SVGA?

Q: I bought *SimCity 2000* under the impression that it only needed a VGA card – all the magazines I read said it would be fine on my system. To my dismay, it won't run at all. Do I need a Super VGA card like it says on the box?

**Yours confusedly,
Oliver Walker, Stoke-on-Trent**



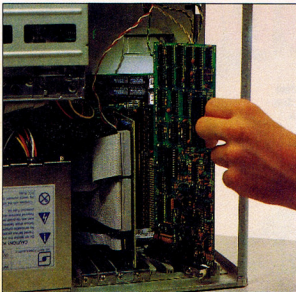
Whatever anyone else may say, you do need SVGA to run *SimCity 2000*; imagine the frustration of not being able to play this fab game because of confusion over an 's'.

A: Hey, what's an S or two between friends? Well, quite a lot in this case, I'm afraid, because *SimCity 2000* will only run with an SVGA card. All is not lost if you are still wallowing in the depths of VGA, though, because upgrading your machine need not break the bank. First, check that your monitor can take the higher resolutions and that your PC doesn't have the video card built into the motherboard (if you're unsure about this give the supplier a ring). If you're okay on both counts, you're sorted. Whip the lid off (check those warranty details first), gently remove the offending card and replace it with a spanking new SVGA card. Bargain cards include the Super VGA Card at £44 or, if you're a Windows user, go for the Tseng Lab 1 Mb Windows accelerator for a paltry £89. Both of these are available from Watford Electronics on ☎ (0582) 745555.

On the Buses

Q: Last week I bought a local bus, Windows accelerator graphics card so that I could get *Doom* running faster. When I came to fit it, though, the slots in my computer weren't in the right places for the card, even though my machine is local bus. Where have I gone wrong?

**Yours unhappy,
David Gilkes, London**



Aching to play *Doom*, this hand still exhibits the careful precision of a trained PC mechanic.

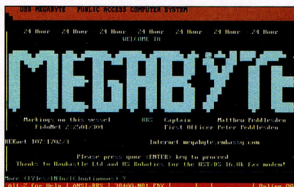
A: It sounds as if the local bus system used by your machine doesn't match the one used by your card, David. The most common standards are VESA VL and Intel PCI, but as ever when dealing with the PC there are other types available so double-check: VL bus is the most common at the moment. If your computer doesn't fit, take it back with your computer manual and the shop will probably exchange it, unless of course you've damaged the thing while trying to fit it. One point worth mentioning is that upgrading to a local bus graphics card will improve the speed of *Doom* to a degree

(approximately 20%), but the Windows accelerator facility will only improve Windows' running speed, hence the name (simple, eh?). To dramatically improve the performance of *Doom* using a card like this you're going to have to wait for Windows 4.0.

Netted

Q: Having read your article about comms in the April issue, I've gone out, bought a modem and managed to call a few bulletin boards. However, when I log onto some, the screens are all corrupted and I can't make out the text from the garbage.

**Yours,
April Samson, Southampton**



If you haven't edited your config.sys file, you might find the screen scrambled when you try to log on to a bulletin board.

A: Your problem lies in the lack of an old but often crucial line in your config.sys file which you'll need to change to avoid corruption. Edit the file using the Edlin or Edit (DOS 5.0 and above) programs and add the following line: c:\dos\ansi.sys.

Reboot your computer and Bob's your uncle. He's not? Oh well, then alternatively, you could answer "No" to the "Would you like Ansi graphics?" question you're asked by most BBSs when you join.

ABORT, RETRY, FAIL? is a new Q & A section aimed at alleviating those all-too-common technical hitches and incompatibility headaches. If you've got a problem, write to us at Abort Retry Fail, PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW. If you need an urgent fix, E-mail us at: pcgamer@cix.compulink.co.uk and we'll try to reply with an answer within a couple of days (beat that!).

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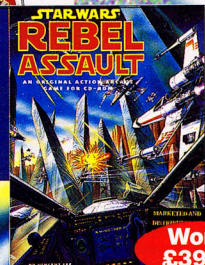


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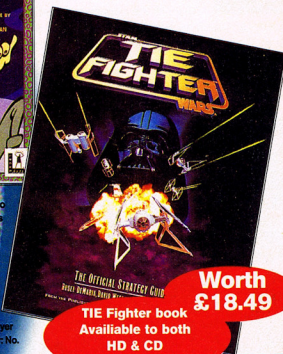
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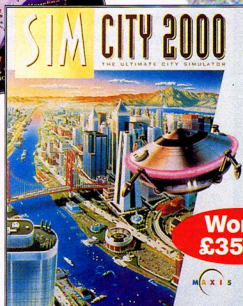
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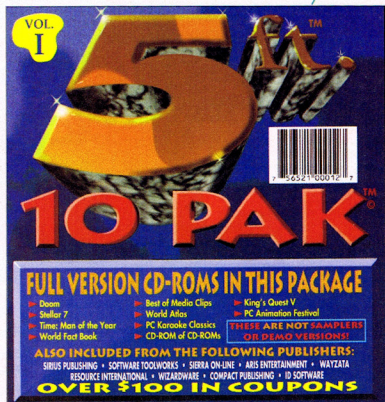
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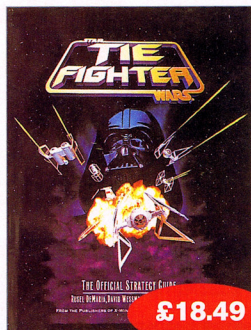
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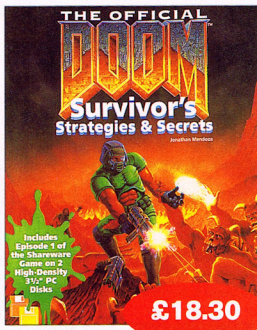
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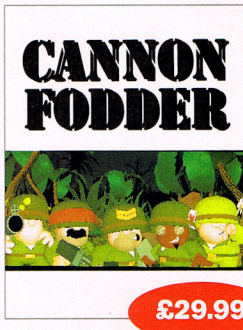


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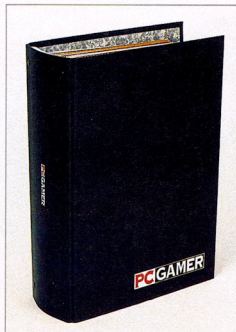
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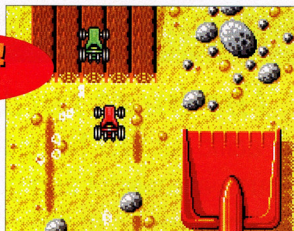
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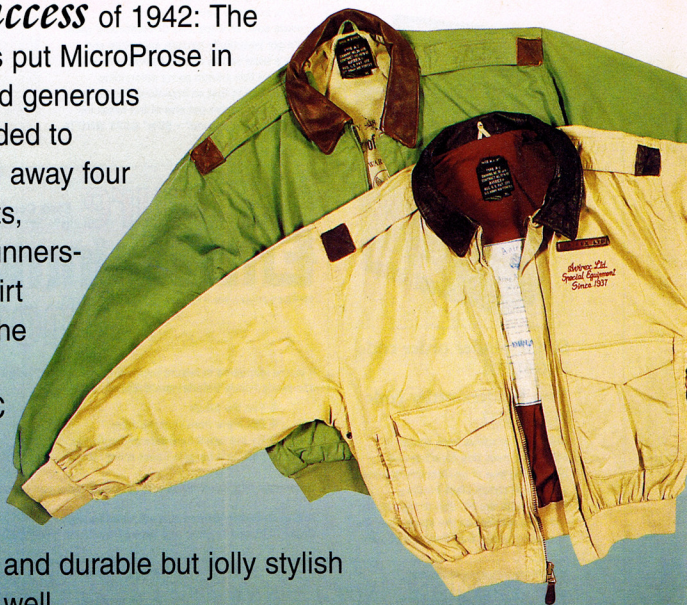
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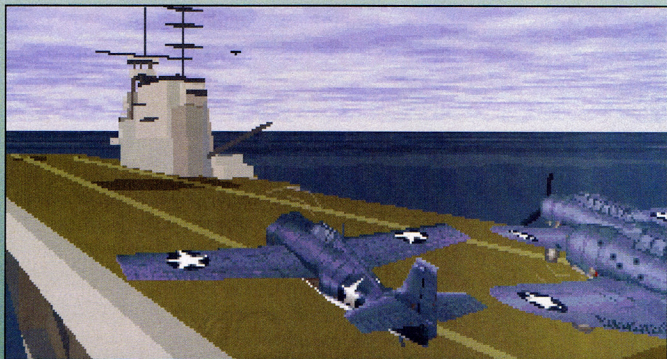
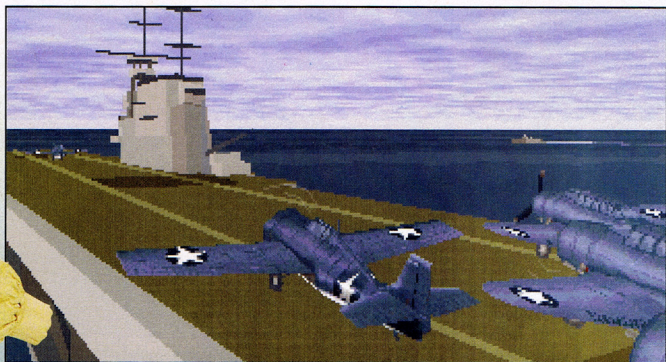
The 'Situational Awareness' Quiz

Everybody knows that pilots need good eyesight, but just as important is their ability to analyse and understand what they see. Okay, so it's a weak excuse, but we fancied doing a 'spot the difference' competition. Just look at the pictures opposite and tell us how many differences there are between the two. Write the answer on the back of a postcard and send it to: PC Gamer Quiz 10, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath Avon BA1 2BW. The closing date is Friday 30 September.

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1. Only one entry per household will be accepted.
2. Employees of MicroProse and Future Publishing Ltd. aren't allowed to enter, so tough.
3. The winners will be decided by a random draw made by our esteemed Editor.
4. Said Editor's decisions are final, and no correspondence will be entered into.
5. So there.

PC Gamer Quiz 8

Congratulations to James Keddy of Swanage in Dorset, who managed to get his entry pulled out from the thousands we received and wins the horribly expensive Dell Pentium PC. The correct answers went like this:

1. Running, Fencing, Swimming, Pistol Shooting and Horse Riding
2. Pentecost
3. Arlington, Virginia
4. Steve McQueen, James Coburn, Charles Bronson, Robert Vaughan, Horst Bucholz, Brad Dexter
5. The Five, The Kushka or The Mighty Handful.

The Answers

See that shiny disc thing? That's the future, that is. People have been asking when the speculation will end and the PC CD-ROM explosion will finally begin. Well, *PC Gamer* can categorically state that the revolution will officially begin on Thursday 22nd September, when the October issue of PCG hits the streets.

Sitting next to the regular issues will be an **all-new CD-ROM edition**. Every month PCG's covermounted CD will be bringing you more than floppy disks ever could – megabyte upon megabyte of brand new playable demos, the latest shareware, add-ons and extras the like of which you've never seen before.

And to help get the ball rolling, the October issue also comes complete with a [free 16-page supplement](#) that will guide you through the perilous jungle of CD-ROM gaming. The whole kit and kaboodle will be very snugly contained within a high quality plastic bag (which will come in especially useful if it's raining on the way home from the newsagents).

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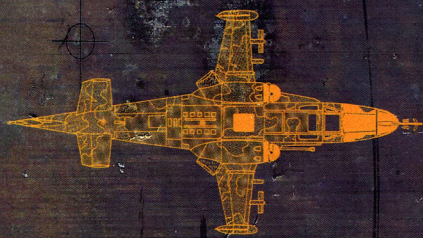
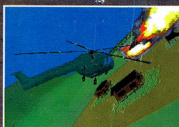
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