

RETURN FIRE REVIEWED! Tank-trundling fun across a network

CD-ROM EDITION

PC GAMER

The World's Finest PC Games Magazine

Scoop first look!

X-WING vs TIE FIGHTER

The Rebels and the Empire go head-to-head, with new graphics and multi-player missions.

MULTI-PLAYER GAMING

Everyone's doing it these days... PCG explains how...

THE BEST BUNCH OF DEMOS!

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ATF

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SETTLERS 2 Sample one of our favourite strategy games

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Issue 32 July 1996

ON THE CD

The Settlers II

QAD

Zork Nemesis

Return Fire

ATF

Megarace 2

The Gene Machine
and more!

Plus!
Details of Jedi Knight:
Dark Forces 2!



SPACE HULK 2

Reviewed!
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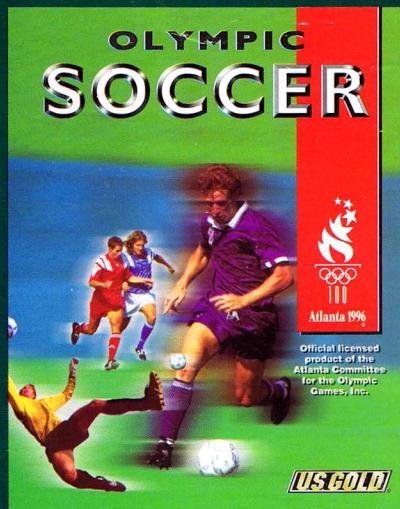
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live the spirit

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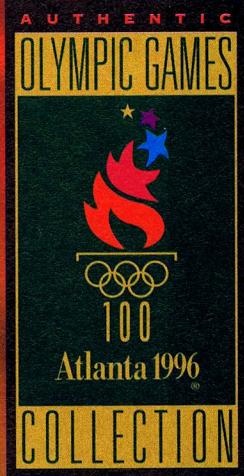
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In time you will call me Master

NOW, YOUNG READER, IT IS time for you to pay the price for your lack of vision. Feel the power of *PC Gamer*'s LucasArts Star Wars feature. Your feeble skills are no match for its dark message. If you will not turn to it, you will be destroyed!

Actually it's okay, readers. It's me, Jonathan, the editor.

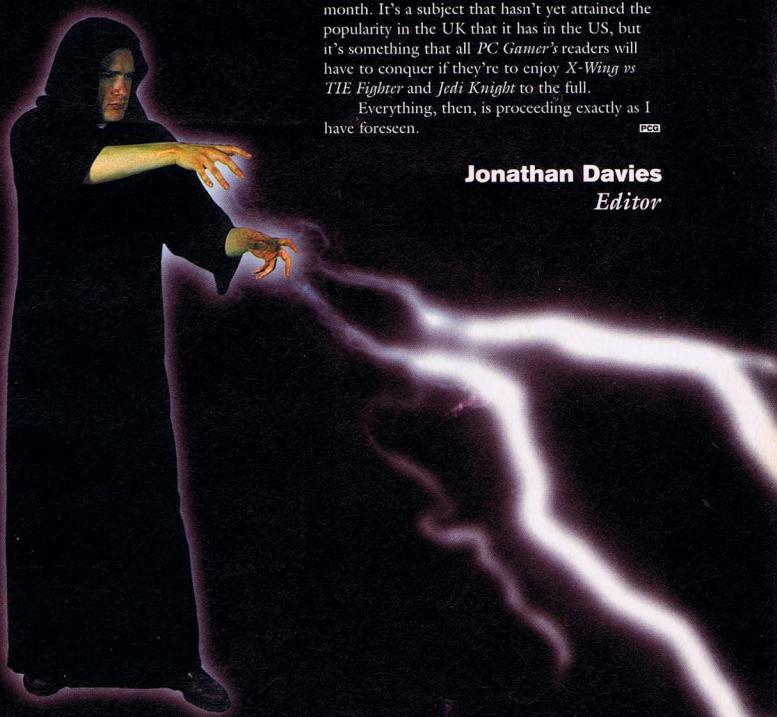
We have, I admit, been rather caught up in the imagery of Star Wars this month, after James returned from America exploding with news of

X-Wing vs TIE Fighter and *Jedi Knight*. Steve has been wearing uncharacteristically sober clothing for fear that he might otherwise stand out against the sands of Tatooine. Mark has been making himself a C-3PO outfit from Caramac inner wrappers, which has so far reached up to his right shoulder. Andy has used the occasion as an excuse to play more of his music from the 1970s. Little James, too young to remember the films, has borrowed my pristine set of videos. And Ashley looks something like an Ewok. We hope you enjoy our coverage of the games, which comes with the proviso that neither will be released until the end of this year at the earliest.

We also explore network gaming this month. It's a subject that hasn't yet attained the popularity in the UK that it has in the US, but it's something that all *PC Gamer*'s readers will have to conquer if they're to enjoy *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter* and *Jedi Knight* to the full.

Everything, then, is proceeding exactly as I have foreseen.

Jonathan Davies
Editor



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WOOLWORTHS



All items subject to availability

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If you're going to get the most out of *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter*, though, you'll need to get hitched up to a network. Here's how...



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And be thankful unto
Gremlin and Vauxhall.



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3D monsters more frightening than any PC gamers have yet witnessed blight this top-notch sequel.



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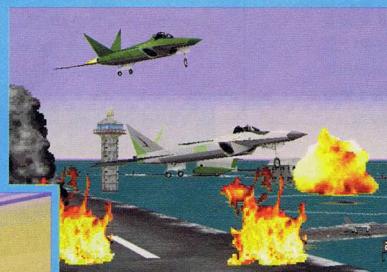
Whatever happened to...?



Pregnant with demos, this month's CD edition of *PC Gamer* will give birth to hours of games-related information and entertainment.

Jane's Advanced Tactical Fighters

ATF was developed by Origin systems for Electronic Arts and features a super-fast SVGA graphics engine and a network option which can support up to eight players. This demo version contains a single mission in which you get dropped in the middle of an air battle a few thousand feet above a coastal runway and you must shoot



down as many enemy aircraft as possible before you run out of time. The detail of the graphics can be adjusted to suit the speed of your PC, and all the keyboard commands for the flight controls can be found in a 'readme' file in the directory to which you install the game. To start the game type 'DEMO'.

Battle Arena Toshinden

Although we have included a demo of *Toshinden* before, this new version boasts a graphics engine which is reputedly 30% faster and will be enhanced even more if you have a Diamond Edge or Creative Labs 3D Blaster graphics card in your PC. The demo allows for single-player action against the computer or a two-player option so you can slice and dice your dearest friend. The keyboard commands are located in the 'readme' file and you must type 'SETUP' to configure your soundcard, once it is installed, followed by 'TSD' to start fighting.



The Settlers 2

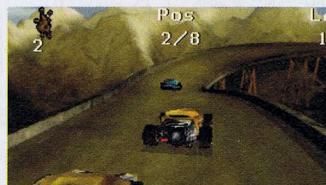
Set in the time of the Roman Empire, *The Settlers 2* is played on an isometric 3D landscape similar to *Civilization 2*'s (but more attractive), and you must build your colony while trying to explore your new home. The game can seem complicated, so take time to go through the training option, which will bring you quickly up to speed. The installation requires 60Mb of hard disk space and you will need a minimum of 7Mb of XMS memory free and a VESA graphics driver to play the game. If you experience graphics problems, try using the

display doctor program, located on the Windows menu of CD Gamer. To begin playing type the command 'START' or if you have memory problems try typing 'NOSOUND'.



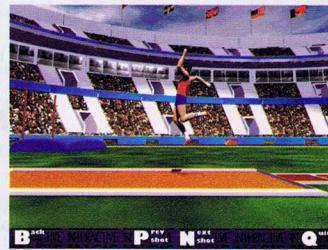
Mega Race 2

This sequel marks the return of one of the most annoying computer characters of all time, Lance Boyle. The CD Gamer DOS menu will run the demo straight off the CD with no sound. However, there's an installation program in the 'MEGARACE' directory, but be warned – it will try to copy around 90Mb to your hard disk and the installation program seems a little unreliable on 8Mb PCs.



Daley Thompson's World Class Decathlon

This preview runs from our Windows menu and gives you a quick look at this new track-and-field game from Interactive Magic. You should set your Windows display to small fonts or the demonstration won't function correctly.



The Gene Machine

You are Piers Featherstone Haugh, a true stiff-upper-lip Englishman, who is approached by a cat who requires your detective services. This demo gives you the chance to play the first few beautifully drawn and animated locations. Once installation is complete, change to the directory and enter the word 'GENE' at the prompt.



Zork Nemesis

This is one of our favourite games at the moment. The demonstration runs in Windows 95 only and requires the installation of Microsoft's DirectX drivers. It's difficult to explain *Zork Nemesis*, so just sit back, dim the lights and enjoy the wonderful graphics and mind-stretching gameplay.



I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream

A giant super computer called AM, built to control America's nuclear arsenal, goes bonkers and devastates the world, killing all but five human beings. You take on the role of these five survivors in a quest to escape the evil clutches of AM, who is putting them through their own private hell. Type 'SCREAM' in the installation directory to start the game or 'SCREAM VESA' if you experience any graphical difficulties.

Return Fire

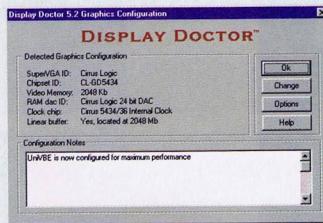
Another Windows 95 only demo, *Return Fire* puts you in the driving seat of various military vehicles, sent out to annihilate opposing forces with various classical music extracts playing in the background. The demo copies one file called 'RFIRE.BIN' to your WINDOWS\TEMP directory, and this must be manually deleted each time you play the game. Annoying, but worth it.



SHAREWARE GAMES

Display Doctor

You've probably used this program under its previous name many times before. *Display Doctor* is the new name for UniVBE, the universal VESA graphics driver. It now boasts a Windows interface for 95 and 3.x, and compatibility for a wider range of graphics cards.



Gem Storm

Gem Storm is a variation on the *Tetris* type game for Windows 3.x and 95.

Winbrick 96

As they say, the old ones are always the best. Have a go at some fast knock-the-brick-out-of-the-wall action in this Windows 95 shareware game.

WAD Files

This month we've hunted down a selection of the very best levels for *Doom 2* and *Hexen*. For those of you still struggling to use these extra levels, we will give you the instructions for loading a *Doom 2* file called 'TEST.WAD' located in a directory called C:\GAMES\DOOM2\WADS. The following command should be typed in the directory in which *Doom 2* resides on your hard disk:

DOOM2 -FILE
C:\GAMES\DOOM2\WADS\TEST.WAD

A similar set of commands can also be used

Comet Busters

Another golden oldie, this time an *Asteroids* clone. Again for Windows 95 users only.



Apocalypse Cow

This two-player-only game sees you catapulting cows at your opponent's targets, with the highest number of hits winning the bout. Type 'SNDSETUP' after installation to select your sound hardware followed by 'COW' to start.



Duke Nukem 3D Screen Saver

You've played the game and worn the T-shirt, now watch Duke doing what he does best on your Windows desktop. Lots of blood, guts and disgusting sound effects.



for *Hexen* WAD files. Next month we'll include some more WADs sent in by you, the readers of *PC Gamer*.

Patches

We've included a few patch upgrades to recent games this month. The full list is on our DOS menu, and includes such titles as *Civilization II*, *Warcraft II* and *Conquest Of The New World*.

Add-ons

There are a few cheats and trainers on the CD this month as well. You can find them all at the end of the DOS menu list.

Before You Start

We strongly recommend that you free up as much expanded memory as possible. You can do this by editing the config.sys file yourself.

Type EDITCONFIG.SYS <ENTER> from the C:\ prompt, and a screen will appear. Look for the line which has the words emm386.exe in it. Replace the text which appears after emm386.exe with the word RAM. The line should now look something like this: device=c:\dos\emm386.exe RAM

Alternatively, one easy route to more memory is to use the memmaker program. This should be undergone carefully, especially if you use a boot menu or a joint DOS/Win/Win 95 set-up.

Please note that we have come across compatibility problems with PCs using CD-ROM cache programs other than MSCDEX, which is supplied with MS-DOS. The most up-to-date version is included on CD Gamer.

The DOS Menu

Put the CD into your CD-ROM drive and select it by entering MS-DOS, and typing D:<ENTER> or whichever letter you use for the CD.

Start the menu by typing go:<ENTER>. If you are running Win95, we recommend that you start your PC in Command Prompt Only mode and follow these same steps. If you run the DOS menu from a DOS box, it is not recommended that you run it in a window or ALT-TAB away from it.

The Windows 3.1 Menu

To start the Windows 3.1 menu select Run from the File menu. Enter the letter of your CD-ROM drive followed by \INSTALL.EXE. A new program icon will appear on your desktop. Double click the PC Gamer icon to launch the menu. This menu includes only the Windows 3.1 games. You need to use the DOS menu to get at all the DOS games.

The Windows 95 Menu

Insert the CD-ROM and a menu will appear, giving you the options of running the menu, exploring the CD-ROM, or returning to Windows. Select the Run menu to see this month's games. This menu includes both the Win95 and Windows 3.1 games. You need to use the DOS menu to get at the DOS games.

Got A Problem?

If your CD is defective, please return it to the address below. Please make sure you have followed our installation procedures correctly to ensure that there is a physical problem. Please send the CD along with a description of the fault plus a self-addressed envelope. Return postage will be paid.

PC Gamer CD Returns

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Bourton-on-the-Water

Gloucestershire GL54 2HQ

A CD should only need replacing if the CD itself cannot be read. If, instead, you are experiencing problems with an individual demo or application, phone our technical support line. This is open between 9.30 am and 6 pm from Monday to Friday.

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Fax 01225 732279

e-mail: support@futurenet.co.uk

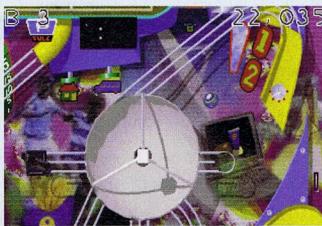
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Pinball Prelude

Another month, another coverdisk, another pinball game. The popularity of pinball games is still increasing and there seems to be a never-ending list of new versions being released. This is one of the better ones and is only available to our floppy disk users this month. It's time limited, so move those silver balls quickly.



Cyber Sphere

This great breakout game is coded in 100% machine code and is lightning fast. You get lots of power-ups, including guns, holds and multiple balls on screen. Type 'SETUP' the first time you run it, and then 'CYBDEMO' for each time you play the game after that.



If you're reading this month's *PC Gamer* in sepia-toned Floppy-o-vision, you won't find quite as much to occupy you. But the amount we've squeezed onto our pair of HDs is nevertheless remarkable.



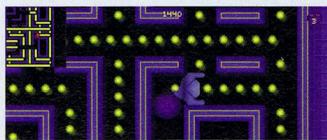
F2000

F2000 is a nice little overhead scrolling race game. It's tricky to win in this one, and it's a little worrying that your only controls are accelerate and steer (obviously brakes are for sissies!). Type 'F2000' to start the game.

Chomper

Pacman is brilliant and this is about the best rendition of it we have seen on the PC. The difference this time is that the map is larger than the screen and it scrolls so smoothly that you have to be quick to react to the ghosts. The installation will unzip the files to a temporary directory and you must type 'INSTALL' from there.

- The above three shareware games are included on both the floppy and CD-ROM versions of this issue of *PC Gamer*.



Before You Start

We recommend that you check you have got enough conventional memory to run the *PC Gamer* Coverdisk demos. (The first 640k of the Memory Map.)

Even if you have a PC with 4Mb of RAM, that doesn't mean you'll automatically have enough conventional memory to run the Coverdisk programs. Check how much RAM you have free by typing: MEM <ENTER>. If the figure beside the line 'largest executable program size' is less than around 550K, your system probably isn't set up properly. To free up more memory read the 'Before You Start' boxout on the previous page.

Got A Problem?

If, after following the above steps, you're still having trouble, or if the game simply won't install at all, it's just possible that you have a defective disk. If you're convinced that a disk is dodgy, return it to the address below and a new, working version should be returned to you within 28 days.

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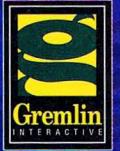
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ENGLAND	1	1	0	SCOTLAND	1	0	1
WALES	0	0	0	IRELAND	0	0	0
SCOTLAND	0	0	0	WALES	0	0	0
IRELAND	0	0	0	SCOTLAND	0	0	0
WALES	0	0	0	IRELAND	0	0	0
SCOTLAND	0	0	0	WALES	0	0	0

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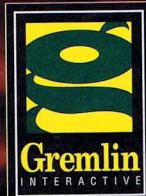
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THIS MONTH

Most of this month's Eyewitness comes direct from the flabbergastingly huge E3 show in Los Angeles, where the world's game publishers meet once a year and attempt to out-deafen each other with their sound systems.

PC Gamer infiltrated the whole place, and returns with news of Sega's new games, *Falcon 4.0*, *Ecstatica 2*, *Discworld 2*, the latest in 3D graphics and... well, just look at the list below. We hope you enjoy digesting it all.

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Space opera

Travel the galaxy, encounter beautiful new alien lifeforms, and murder them. By MARK DONALD

THE ENIGMA THAT IS *STAR Control 3*, Accolade's long-awaited sequel to cult hit *Star Control 2*, is beginning to unravel, and fortunately *PC Gamer* is on hand to stitch the pieces together. It's shaping up to be a sprawling sci-fi epic of an action adventure game that combines three elements in one, a bit like a Kinder Surprise egg but with less chocolate.

The three elements of this adventure cocktail are: one part exploration and colonisation to one part negotiation to one part combat.

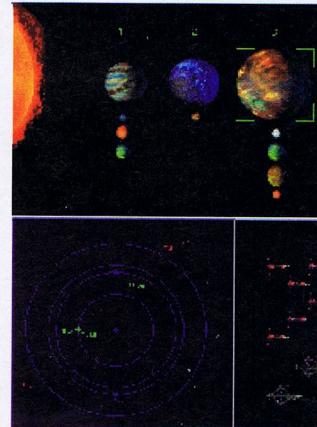
The occasion? Some careless fool has ripped a hole in the fabric of hyperspace, the galaxy is falling about your ears and interstellar civilisation is threatened with extinction. The only hope is the mustering of a massive star fleet to explore the mysteries of the uncharted Kessari Quadrant. Here the knowledge of a lost race must be uncovered and some ugly aliens

destroyed. Upon you, as commander of the fleet, does the survival of life in the cosmos depend, but don't worry, because if you fail no-one's going to be left to write about it.

Intergalactic combat

From the looks of things, *Star Control 3* has immense scope with hundreds of planets to satisfy the wanderlust of the most restless explorer. Outposts and bases may be established on conquered worlds which may then be used as staging posts for further galactic expansion.

Of course, expansion means stepping on other people's toes, so confrontation is inevitable. Combat takes place between opposing star fleets that are bought with a limited



budget from a range of 24 alien craft all modelled in 3D. Each ship has a varying combination of weapon systems, thrust power and other special capabilities, so you must customise your fleet to gain the most fiendish balance of weaponry and combat enhancements. Combat is most enjoyable between two or more players as the custom feature means engagements are endlessly replayable as a strategic battle of wits, as well as a comfortably mindless blastfest.



(Above) Hyper Melee combat is a bit like a two-player version of *Asteroids*, but with loads of ships.

(Left) 15 of the 24 available ships.

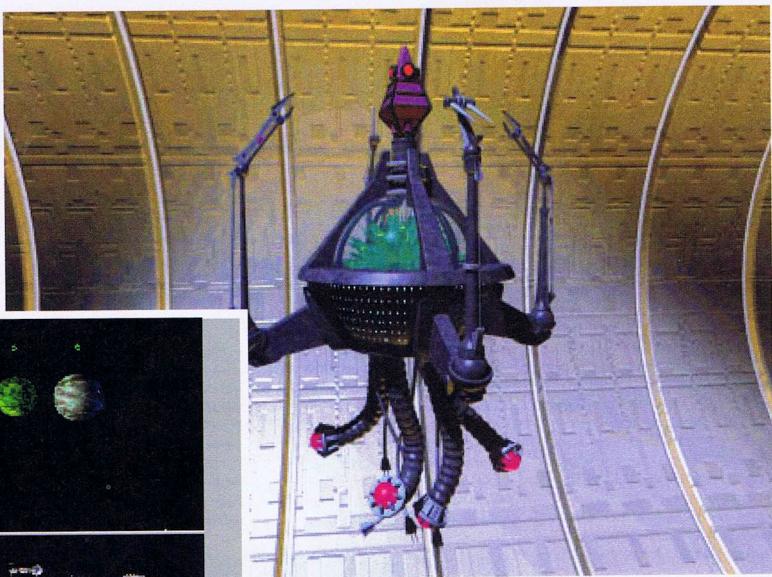
A tale to be told

However, it'll take more than gunboat diplomacy to make progress in *Star Control 3* as you become embroiled in the grand campaign. Accolade place much emphasis on the storyline, which is narrated through rendered cinematic

WHY *STAR CONTROL 3* SHOULD BE GREAT

- Arcade combat with customisable fleets.
- Big, roomy galaxy ripe for conquest.
- Interactive negotiation screens hold the key to the game.
- Irreverent aliens with a sense of humour.
- It's got a big budget.





(Above) "What is it? I've never seen anything like it in my life. Quickly, blow it away!" (Left) From the planetary system screens you can plot your crusade of conquest. You may make all those 'we come in peace' protestations, but look at the size of that fleet.



sequences. As you explore the galaxy you will encounter a myriad of bizarre alien races each with their own motivations and dark secrets. The quirky and offbeat nature of face-to-face alien communication was one of the delights of the *Star Control 2*, so for once negotiation is preferable to just killing everything. Considerable effort has gone into this section of the game with top Hollywood special effects artists having been drafted in to sculpt 24 unique aliens as animatronics. The aliens and an array of custom-built

sci-fi sets were then filmed and digitised to create photo realistic animations. Professional voice actors provide the characterisation finishing touches to scenes which Accolade claim are as seamlessly realistic as possible.

For fans of the previous episodes in the series, *Star Control 3* should be particularly thrilling as its



(Above) The stage is set by the impressive cinematic sequences. (Left) Spirited negotiations with space weirdos are a regular occurrence.

developers, Legend Entertainment, have concentrated on improving the most entertaining bits of its predecessors. For instance, the head-to-head hyper melee combat has now been expanded to incorporate network and modem multi-player options. There is also a range of views including the padlock view which locks you on to a foe. Additionally, over a dozen of the aliens are completely new and many of the plotlines unsolved in the earlier games reach their climax here.

● *Star Control 3* should be in the shops in September.

Put the gun down

Attention, helicopter fans! While gunships like the Apache are all very well, the delights of unarmed helicopters like the Huey and Chinook tend to be overlooked. These machines were the heroes of the Vietnam war, braving small-arms fire to touch down in minute clearings and pick up crashed pilots and retreating soldiers. And they're to be celebrated, at last, in a game called *MIA* that's being developed by Simis and published by Time Warner, and that's due out in the autumn. We'll tell you more about it next month.

Hi, girls!

Teenage girls among *PC Gamer's* readership will doubtless have been delighted by *McKenzie & Co* (PCG 28, 40%), the game of dating, shopping and make-up that came with a free lipstick. Well, the good news is that Her Interactive have plenty more lined up for next year, including *The Vampire Diaries*, *Sweet Valley High*, *Thoroughbred* and a *Nancy Drew* game. And, while we might scoff, a survey by Her reveals that the top six elements most girls would like to see in computer games are "cute guys, dating, shopping, telephone conversations, a prom and music".



Ugh

Undoubtedly the most terrifying press release we picked up at the E3 show contained details of a pair of virtual reality glasses produced by the StereoGraphics Corporation of



San Rafael, California. Although their glasses are being fully supported by Novalogic, and would appear to be a great deal lighter and more compact than the headsets we have previously had to burden ourselves with, StereoGraphics have named their product "SimulEyes". We dropped the sheet of paper and fled out into the street.



Sega

Sega, the world's premier arcade developer, had a few surprises in store for PC owners at the E3 show in Los Angeles.

SEGA HAVE ANNOUNCED that they are dramatically expanding their presence within the PC market. During the remainder of the year nearly all their top arcade games will be converted to run directly on the PC. In a move guaranteed to infuriate owners of Diamond Edge 3D accelerator boards, and equally sure to excite the rest of us, they will run unaided on any Pentium-based PC.

Sega entered the PC tussle earlier this year with the spectacular *Virtua Fighter*. We reviewed it in issue 26 and, although it required a £200 3D accelerator to run, we gave it 90% for being far and away the best beat-'em-up ever to appear on the platform. If you thought *FX Fighter* looked cool, enjoyed the gore in *Mortal Kombat 3* or were wowed by our *Toshinden* demo a few months back, forget them all

because this is the champion.

Sega have now decided to commit totally to the PC market and have formed a new company to maximise their presence as fast as possible. Sega Entertainment Inc. have wangled a way round the exclusive agreement with Diamond Multimedia that said their games must only appear on Edge-board

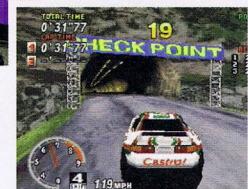
equipped PCs, and can now move ahead as planned. They are due to release *Virtua Fighter Remix* and the state-of-the-art Model 2 arcade hits *Daytona USA*, *Sega Rally*, *Manx TT Superbike* and *Virtua City PD* (called *Virtua Cop* on other formats) in the coming months.

Each of the titles will still be released first on the Edge card, but within a month or two they will also appear on standard PCs.

The most surprising fact about all the titles is just how classy they look. On a P100 the characters in *Virtua*



(Above) The PC version of *Daytona* is the best outside the arcade. It may render all other arcade racing games obsolete.



(Left) *Sega Rally* is currently Sega's flagship title, soon to appear on the PC.

PC GAMER RECOMMENDS

Need a game now, this minute? These are the best ones currently available.

Duke Nukem 3D



It's finally appeared in the shops, and although on further playing we find ourselves bitterly disappointed by its multi-player action (levels too

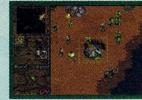
big, death too easy), without any doubt, any at all, it is one of the best single-player games you could play. Still surprisingly playable this many months on.

Quake test



But on the other hand, if you are able to connect yourself to various other humans, ditch *Duke* immediately and fire up this incomplete but still fantastically well-designed little imp instead. Never have so many hours disappeared so swiftly, even when the pubs are open.

Warcraft II



Although this was within inches of hard drive oblivion, the welcome data disk has brought this superb strategy game out from the realms of "Far too easy" into the darker world of "Oh dear, I can't even get past the first level". Frustrating, but still eminently playable.

Civilization



Buildin', civilisin' and conquerin' still seem to be the order of the day for the PC hermit; the Nigel no-mates who prefers to play involved games into

the early hours of the morning rather than have a quick blast of *Super Stardust* before clearing off to the pub with his chums.

Fate Of Atlantis



Released on budget, some three years after it first appeared to widespread acclaim from Steve, this is still one of the most serious yet compelling adventures from LucasArts. Sensible (rather than obscure) puzzles and three different routes through the game, bless 'em.

EF2000



There've been several very good flight sims recently, but a conspicuous lack of excellent ones. While we patiently wait for *Falcon 4.0* (engage the afterburners, MicroProse) *EF2000* has been dusted off and re-installed for some aerial action.

step up

Fighter are at least as good as those the Saturn console can produce, and in higher resolution. One of the reasons that Sega have not released these games sooner is because they have been refining their 3D engine for the PC, and it's a sobering thought for the other companies that a newcomer to the machine has managed to leap in there with one of the best engines immediately. Admittedly, Sega's engineers have one of the largest R&D budgets in the world, but it's still quite an achievement.

Daytona is currently the most advanced title after *Virtua Fighter*. Considering it runs fully textured in

high resolution, the speed the engine attains rivals that of even GP2. With decent steering wheels common on the PC it looks as if playing Sega's flagship title will be more fun on the PC than it is on their own Saturn. The other titles are also progressing well, and although *Sega Rally* isn't yet running without the board, Sega promise that it'll be as fast as the others.

Sega are in a most enviable position. They have some of the finest games ever made with which to make their entrance onto the PC. The competition, which has never really come to terms with the arcade market, had better watch out.



Quake latest

id obviously have the game sussed, but disturbing rumours were being whispered.

QUAKE FEVER ABATED slightly at E3 with the appearance of so many competing titles, but it was still on most people's lips at some point. Jay Wilbur and Mike Wilson (see last month's feature) were prowling around GT's area showing off a version which looked much tighter than the version that was running at ECTS. There is now a strong feeling of coherency to the levels and many of them are packed with a selection of new beasts, traps, power-ups and keys in seemingly the right proportions. The proper weapon appearances have also been added, so the grenade launcher no longer

resembles a pointy stick but instead a rather threatening pole.

The constant release date guessing was made trickier by conflicting signals emanating from various places. The version on the stand, which looked like being suspiciously close to a final shareware version, now contains all the ordering information, but id were keeping quiet. We had a chat with a couple of people who were as close to knowing a date for the full version as anyone, and the answer was... next February. Apparently the Internet – the one area id are hoping to make their own with multi-player Quake – is causing the problems. We'll see.

We are amused

It's a game set in Victorian times – but in the year 2025. Allow us to explain...

A FASHION CURRENTLY popular in the world of role-playing games concerns 'steampunk', which is to the 1990s what cyberpunk was to the previous decade. A steampunk world is one in which electricity and the internal combustion engine were never discovered, and technology has proceeded using steam power. Elastic-powered aeroplanes and steam-cars are presented in a sort of coppery Jules Verne style, and there are clouds of condensed water vapour everywhere.

Dreadnought will be one of the first steampunk PC games, and is being developed by Tribe, a new team set up in Manchester by Ocean. It further elaborates on current steampunk thinking by deciding that, although it is the year 2025, Queen Victoria is still on the throne, having been kept alive by steam technology. Furthermore the British Empire has expanded to colonise the solar system using fleets of steam-driven spaceships inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's drawings. But there's trouble on Mars, the India of the future, and your forces have been



sent to straighten things out.

It's an intriguing scenario, and it seems that Tribe are producing a game worthy of it. All we've seen so far are screenshots, some of which we reproduce here, but they look splendid, with detailed aircraft flying around true-colour skies amongst delicate clouds. We're promised 10 different vehicles and 30 missions, although, worryingly, Ocean's documentation compares *Dreadnought* to the *Wing Commander* series.

Tribe are also working on a couple of other games – *Dawn Of Darkness*, a 3D Quake rival with some lovely looking scenery, and *Zoiks*, which features Scooby Doo and Fred Flintstone. We're planning a furtive visit up to Manchester next month, so we'll report back with more news.

● *Dreadnought* is currently scheduled to hiss into sight at the end of July, but then you know how reliable PC game release dates are.



(Above) No, no, it could have happened. Steam is a very powerful, um, thing.

(Right) Steamy Mad Max? It's enough to make your heart go a-flutter.



If the finished game can move around and look like this, we're in for a real treat.

EYEWITNESS

In the air

Papa Tango (01582 454974) have spent two years developing the *FSX* upgrade pack, a *Flight Simulator 5* add-on. Most of the *FS5* extras simply add new scenery, but *FSFX* actually changes the graphics engine, providing more detail and an increase in speed. Mountains are topped with snow, skyscrapers stretch into city skylines, and sevens



new aircraft proudly display their genuine paint jobs. Of course, you'll need to have an original copy of Microsoft's *Flight Simulator 5*, and own various scenery discs to get the full benefit, but you'll never see Paris, Japan, New York or the Caribbean look this good without spending another £35 to £40 on the *FSFX* upgrade.

Grand Slam

In this country baseball is one of those games that you either follow or totally ignore - a bit like cricket. Apart from a few Japanese creations on the Neo-Geo console, no baseball game has ever done much in the UK, and while *Grand Slam '96* may not change this it looks a very fine game regardless. Virgin, who have signed a deal with the Players' Association to use their names, has digitised the players for the game. There will be simulation and arcade modes, and the whole stadium is displayed in fully customisable 3D. If it's your scene you'll be able to play in August.



Pai Gow

There's something perverse about spending £40 on some gambling software when you could go down to the bookies and put it on the horses. But if cards are more your thing then Virgin's *Golden Nugget* (of Vegas casino fame) offers you the opportunity to play 14 rendered card games including 7 card stud, 5 card Texas hold 'em, blackjack, craps and Pai Gow poker. Poor old Pai Gow.

Ace!

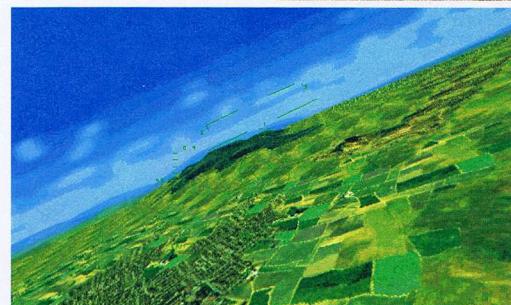
The fourth incarnation of Spectrum Holobyte's all-conquering series of flight sims is on the horizon, and, well, just look at it. By JAMES FLYNN

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT the first *Falcon* game was released way back in 1987, and it's just as difficult to cope with when you realise that, nine years on, it still has one of the best flight models of any game.

The all-new *Falcon 4.0* looks radically different to its predecessors and immediately communicates the five years of work that have passed since *Falcon 3.0* was released. The ground detail that's present makes it look more like a £100,000 military simulator than a game for a £2,000 PC. Next to every other flight simulator, including MicroProse's 1943 *European Air War*, it's visually way ahead. Instead of flat boring landscapes (although they were something quite special at the time) the game's visuals now exceed every other flight sim including even the lovely *EF2000*. All the landscapes have been digitised from aerial photographs in a similar fashion to *Flight Unlimited* and the air bases, planes and supplementary objects have all been modelled on their real counterparts.

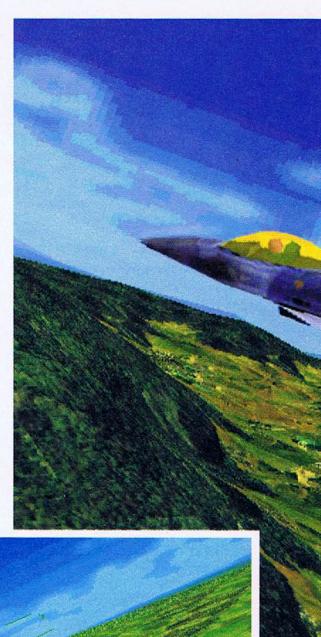
The plane detail is similarly crisp, with real-time lighting playing across the fuselage and lens flare

blinding your view as you head for the sun. Spectrum Holobyte have wisely decided to sacrifice some sky detail to achieve all the other technological perks. The PC requirements are high for this level of realism, but not as ludicrous as *EF2000s* when that was released.



It looks so realistic that you can smell the sick bag used by the man in the next seat.

Also, for a game that will be played as long into the future as *Falcon 4.0*, it's worth alienating a few users with lower-end PCs now, so that you can bring them all on board later and let them play over the next year.



No matter how realistic and detailed all the scenery and objects look, people are ultimately going to play *Falcon 4.0* because of its predecessors' heritage. *Falcons* 1.0 and 2.0 were heralded as superb

Meaning of life

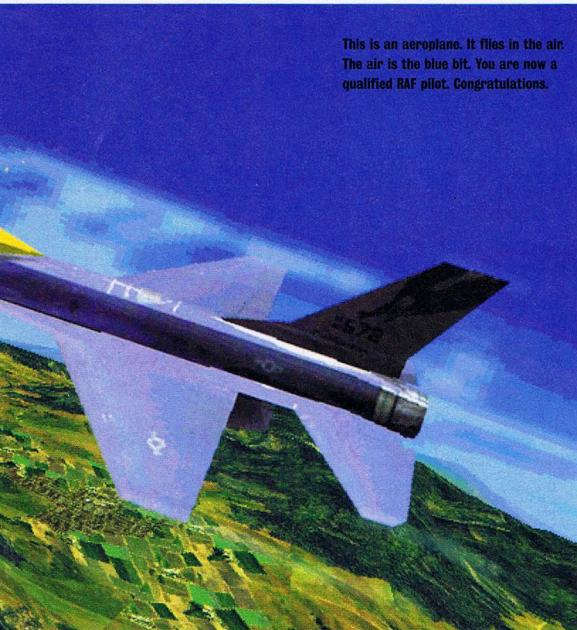
Genetic engineering, digital DNA, biochemistry. Only scientists would go to this much trouble to create a game.



IFE IS THE NAME OF THE game, as Bruce Forsyth is wont to sing. He's wrong though, as 'Creatures' is the name of the game. But it is all about life. Perhaps you remember Activision's *Little Computer People* on the Commodore 64 many fond years ago, where you had your own little desktop pet to watch and influence as he went about his business. *Creatures* is the natural '90s follow-on, due from Time Warner, and incorporates (apparently) 20 years of scientific research to create the ultimate in artificial life.

The power of the PC is used to simulate thousands of brain waves as your creature hatches, matures, ages, and, sadly but inevitably, dies. Life expectancy is 40 hours, but if you don't teach your pet to eat within the first formative minutes by

This is an aeroplane. It flies in the air. The air is the blue bit. You are now a qualified RAF pilot. Congratulations.



flight sims in their time, but it's *Falcon 3.0* that has established the series' reputation for offering unparalleled realism in their flight models. The plane you fly is an F-16C, and Spectrum Holobyte have been refining the feel of the plane for several years so that it will surely be the most accurate simulation of its kind on the market when released.

While all that is guaranteed to cause trigger fingers to twitch with excitement, the element that's causing fans to let loose with all they've got is the Campaign Manager (formerly called the Virtual Base). What the Campaign

Manager adds that no other sim has is that, even when you have returned from a mission and are waiting to fly again, it is still fighting a war in your absence. Enemy attacks succeed and fail and your own forces push forwards and take losses. By the time you return to the skies the battlefield beneath could be completely different. If you don't play for a few days, then the broad campaign progresses without you (assuming you leave your PC on), obviously creating a much more immersive environment.

• *Falcon 4.0* will be screaming across your screen in December.



selective use of tickles and smacks then expect much less. Each creature has an in-built desire to play, learn and breed.

"We once caught two creatures playing throw and catch

together," says lead programmer Stephen Grand. "It was quite spooky, because we didn't program this action; they worked it out."

• *Creatures* is out in September.

Gates's games

Microsoft finally commit themselves to the games market with the announcement of a range of new titles.

MICROSOFT MAY RECKON that global domination is inevitable, but one market they've found it difficult to enter up to now is the ever competitive games arena. Tentative steps with the likes of *Flight Simulator* and *Golf* have paid off (*Flight Simulator* is the biggest selling leisure title of all time), and even *Fury*³ has its fans. But, Microsoft are desperate to prove that Windows 95 is a serious gaming platform, despite a relatively slow uptake by developers. To enforce this idea, Microsoft have announced 11 new Windows 95-only games to be released in the second half of this year.

Our spies shugged their way through an early version of *NBA Full Court Press* demonstrated at E3, confused by the game's "new level in ease of use," claim. The PC is yet to enjoy a really good basketball game, and when this title is released in the autumn, this may still be the case. Multi-player options are becoming essential these days, and *NBA Full Court Press* promises to accept up to four people over a modem or network.

Microsoft are also working on their own motion captured football game, emphasising strategy rather than donkey kicks. It's not going to make the European Championships by any means, and with the predictable nomenclature of *Microsoft Soccer*, it could be aimed more at the burgeoning American market than football's home.

Other titles span all the popular genres, developed by a range of out-of-house teams. *Hellbender* is a 3D shoot-'em-up with a professionally created



storyline narrated by X-Files temptress Gillian Anderson. *GEX*, translated from the side-scrolling console title, parodies a selection of TV and movie themes, including such amusing characters as (snigger) The Flatulator. Relive the glorious D-Day battles this July in *Close Combat*, or charge around an underwater 3D world this October in *Deadly Tide*, using graphics designed by some of the people behind *SeaQuest* (ugh) and *Star Trek: TNG*.

Definitely the most exciting of the new projects, though, is *Age of Empires* due this time next year. It resembles a cross between *Civ II* and *Warcraft II*, with a multi-player option, and involves you building a small Ice Age tribe into a mighty race.

Microsoft are currently acting in the role of publisher rather than developer, commissioning and funding a range of games that are being developed by out-of-house teams. Conversely, the majority of their other software is programmed in-house. Whether Microsoft perhaps had a go at programming their own games, but were disappointed by the results, is a matter of pure conjecture.



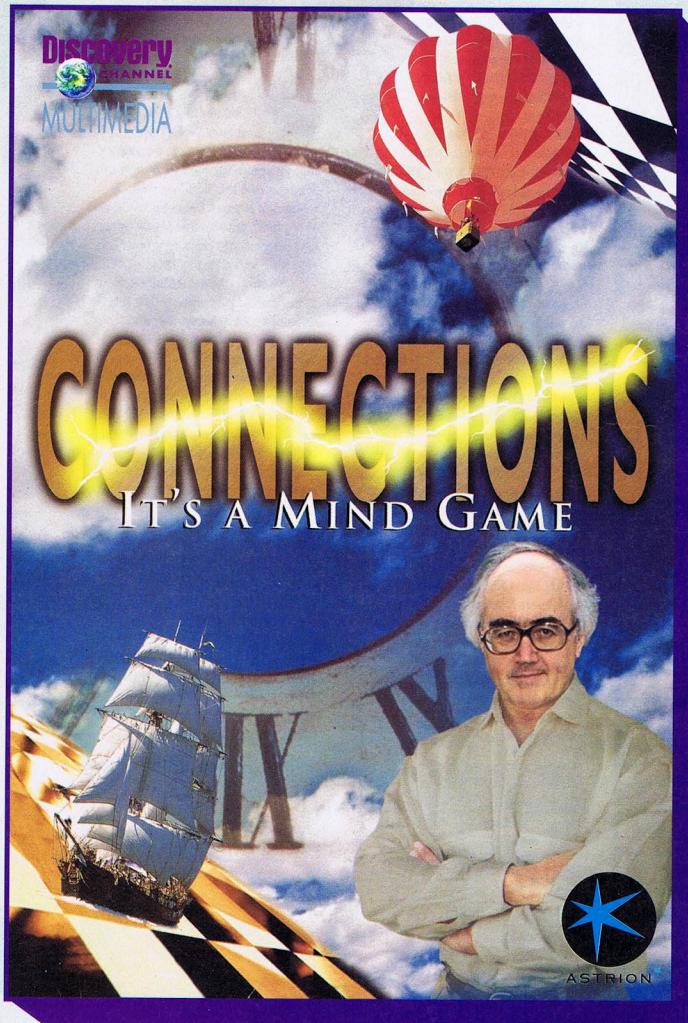
Don't be fooled by these impressive static shots. It's not that good.



Microsoft turn their Midas hand to the lucrative soccer... um, football market.

'There is always a connection but, if the link has never been made before, nobody knows it's there' James Burke

Based on the award winning work of James Burke, Connections is the ultimate adventure game for the quizzical mind. Travel from one environment to the next, looking for the clues that will explain how you entered this world - and how you escape. This double disc set contains around 65 hours of gameplay . . . see if you can make the Connections.



'Connections is fun, thought provoking and stimulating, crossing the bridge between reference and fun. 4/5' CD ROM TODAY

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Blizzard's big chances

Blizzard hit the big time with *Warcraft II*. Their second wave of titles can confirm their place as one of USA's leading developers. By JAMES FLYNN

FOllowing an unashamed period of network *Quake* playing, the old favourites are beginning to return to the PCs across *PC Gamer* and its neighbouring magazines. Like a dainty swallow returning from a short migration, it is *Warcraft II* that retakes its place as champion.

Blizzard's game has caused quite a storm on both sides of the Atlantic, so it's no surprise that a spin-off is on its way. *Starcraft* is, quite frankly, *Warcraft II* in space. Imagine the water being replaced by open space and the land being turned various shades of purple, and you get the basic idea. All the graphics have been enhanced and replaced with astrally themed spaceships, crystal fortresses and gas clouds. You can play as one of three alien races and fight through

40 single-player scenarios linked in a campaign which sees three storylines running concurrently, so your performance affects how easy a path you have to the end. There are also multi-player network and modem modes plus a new Internet method of play via Blizzard's new, free *battle.net* service.

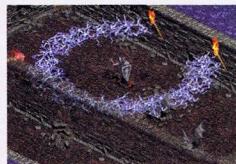
In a complementary fantasy vein is *Diablo*, an isometric 3D dungeon RPG. Initially it looks like a combination of *Dungeon Master* and *Ultima VII*, but even a quick play uncovers more action than either game. *Diablo* is focused on a single character who has the usual set of physical and mental stats which improve as you progress through the game. A traditional character inventory makes a welcome return, and the limited equipment he carries along with his attributes govern his



Starcraft is Blizzard's first foray into a futuristic galactic war.

ability to fight and cast the spectacular spells that are found throughout the game.

Diablo's most advanced feature is its random level and campaign generation. This system lays down individual corridors, rooms, traps, treasure and monsters for you to play through. These consist of a labyrinth and, above it, a town which you use as both a base for your adventuring and a trove for the loot you collect.



(Above) One of the many spells that's best not to get in the way of.

(Left) Mr Diablo visits his neighbours to complain about the noise they're making.



The action elements to *Diablo* look quite superb, and, if the puzzle elements are as well thought-out and balanced, then we could be in for as much of a treat as Blizzard's accountants.

● *Starcraft* will be winging your way in September, and *Diablo* should be here in August.

Bill's pad

One of the best joysticks available for the PC is, we grudgingly admit, Microsoft's Sidewinder, which includes all the features you could hope for and solid construction at a fairly reasonable price. Joypads, though, are a little trickier, so it's perhaps as well that Microsoft are attacking that area next. The Microsoft Gamepad, as their device is to be called, is due out at the end of this year. It's got six buttons on the right, along with two shoulder buttons and three buttons in the middle like the SNES pad's Start and Select ones. And its other advantage is that you can chain four of them together using a port on the back, like 3DO pads. Our Micro-pals aren't yet committing themselves to a price.



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(PCG32)

Rings piece

US Gold pop two new Olympic-related games into the pipeline, point it in our direction and blow very hard.

By STEVE OWEN

POOR OLD WIMBLEDON. Hosting the world's most famous tennis tournament is normally a feather the size of a hippopotamus in the London borough's cap. But having just such a feather-adorned hat is only a good thing when the hat isn't obscured by other headgear sporting feathers the size of Greater Manchester. If you've got lost in this simile, allow us to spell it out a little more clearly.

Wimbledon, normally very popular, is this year overshadowed by Euro 96 and the Olympic Games. Most unfortunate. Each event (um, except Wimbledon) is traditionally celebrated by a rush of tie-in releases, and this year's five-ringed event is adequately covered by two new US Gold products, *Olympic Games* and *Olympic Soccer*.

US Gold haven't recently enjoyed quite the success they had back in the mid-'80s, when they could boast ownership of *Summer Games I* and *II* on the Commodore

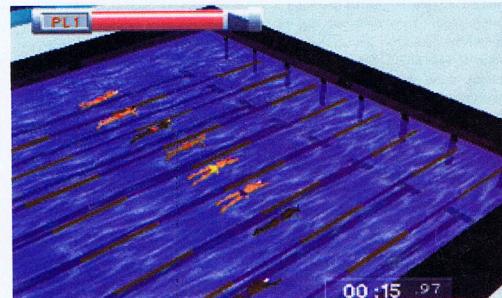
64. "It's time to make amends," was what they were bound to say. Not wishing to be accused of gerrymandering, what should appear (before too long, anyway) but the event-packed *Olympic Games*. 'Event-packed' equates to 15 different sports, from track and field types, through the swimming pool, with a quick visit to the archery field via speedy weight lifting, pistol and fencing sessions, ending up blasting at skeet with your twelve bore.

Now, this could all be very stale if it weren't for the full 3D polygonal views offered by US Gold's latest. You'll notice from the screenshots that it isn't the most detailed and life-like 3D you've ever seen, but 486 fun-seekers are going to be able to buy their first game since *Worms*.

The second Olympic tie-in may have been better placed in the former Euro 96 event, but with Gremlin's official licence and the many unofficial attendees, tickets were limited. As with *Olympic*



Games, US Gold's football title isn't going to make your jaw drop as far as *Actua*'s motion-captured and textured teams do, but with the dodgy play outlined in the review on



00:15 97



(Top) That's *Olympic Soccer*, there. Not as flashy as *Actua*, but maybe quicker.

(All the other pics) It looks exhausting, all this 'sport'. We don't know why they bother. The millions of pounds, perhaps.

page 82 we're all holding our breath in the hope that US Gold could just be the ones to get it right. Having said that, we notice that one of their screenshots shows a player leaping well over seven feet in the air before making an overhead kick. Perhaps we'll hold off the 'decent looking' tag until we get our hands on a finished version.

● *Olympic Games* and *Olympic Soccer* are both due for release towards the end of June.

Colour blind

Sierra's top flying tip for the end of the year is *Red Baron 2*, ingeniously named after and sounding spookily similar to *Red Baron*, a big hit at the start of the decade. It's the same old 1914-18 air-based dogfighting war story, with Aces, Zeppelins and no Coronation Street to deal with, but it's the graphics engine that has changed most. Gone are the 386 days of flat polygons. Hark, instead, the Pentium-obsessed textured landscapes and thoughtfully accurate representations of classic biplanes of the era. It's now heading for a November release.

The streets of San Francisco

Pretend to be part of a classic '70s cop drama thanks to MicroProse's forthcoming driving game.

BY THE TIME YOU READ this, you should finally be able to play *Grand Prix 2*. At last, MicroProse (or rather Spectrum Holobyte) can also let it go and concentrate on their latest racer, called, somewhat confusingly and sloppily, *Vette: San Francisco Thrills*. Michael Douglas and that bloke with the puffy nose aren't to be found in this game, but that's not to say that, as you scream your way

past the Golden Gate bridge and Fisherman's Wharf, you won't find yourself spotted by other cops as you run over innocent pedestrians and take dangerous short cuts.

Although the idea is to race harder than your opponent (be that a PC or a networked chum), there are no fixed courses. Instead, you drive one of seven swish American cars around a genuine 3D world. Could be good, could be bad.



Errrrrrk... Screeech... Wacka-wacka.

We'll reserve our judgement until we know more.

● *Vette: San Francisco Thrills* is due out towards the end of the year.

Afterlife delay

Following *PC Gamer*'s appraisal of *Afterlife* (PCG 30, 84%) a couple of months ago, perfectionists LucasArts have decided to hold the game for a while to have a look at some of the points raised in the review. Quite how their play-testers missed them we're not sure, but at least they're planning on correcting a few errors and adding a few features. While this is hugely irritating for us (because the game was supposedly finished when we looked at it) it should be good news for you when it's finally released on 30th June.

Who? What?

DirectX? MMX? 3Dfx? There's little in the world of PC games more confusing than the current state of 3D graphics technology. The E3 show provided at least some clarification. By JAMES FLYNN

WHEN MICROSOFT proclaimed that DOS was dead last October, most people were sceptical about how quickly the 14-year-old operating system would roll belly-up. This year's E3 show in the US provided ample proof (if any were needed) of quite how frustrated developers had become with DOS. Although many games at the show that had been in development for two years still ran through DOS, it was clear that Windows 95 is quickly becoming the PC's sole development platform.

In bed with Microsoft

The reason for the change is Microsoft's DirectX set of APIs (see PCG 30), which, in conjunction with Windows 95, allow programmers to create games faster and with less attention to hardware foibles. The performance of DirectX combined with the promise of lower development and technical support costs have led many large companies into Microsoft's bed. Activision are now releasing all their games solely under Win95 to begin with, and to court Microsoft's favour may not bother with DOS versions at all.

Credit must be given to Microsoft's technology evangelists and their efforts in promoting

Windows 95 as a games platform. The rewards have been particularly impressive in Japan, which has until now dismissed the PC as we know it and stuck firmly with NEC's strange PC. This move into the Far East not only opens up a vast new market for Western software firms, but, more importantly, makes it viable for the Japanese firms to port many of their console games to the PC. Predictably, Sega and Sony are leading the pack, but Capcom are porting *Resident Evil* (again see May) and SquareSoft are said to have set their US office to work porting the *Final Fantasy* series of games to the PC. If you're not familiar with the Super Nintendo, this won't mean a great deal to you, but each of these games has sold around five million units, making them easily bigger than any PC title.

Battle of the 3D cards

Another effect of this move to Windows 95, and the large market that's developing, will be the accelerated introduction of the new 3D cards that are being released



This is the sort of image that the 3Dfx can produce at 30fps. Both the characters look constipated but just look at those reflections...

over the coming months. Because all cards will be DirectX compatible it is certain that they will work with Windows 95. But, while we won't see compatibility and support nightmares as raged with soundcards for years, there will still be a huge battle to become the

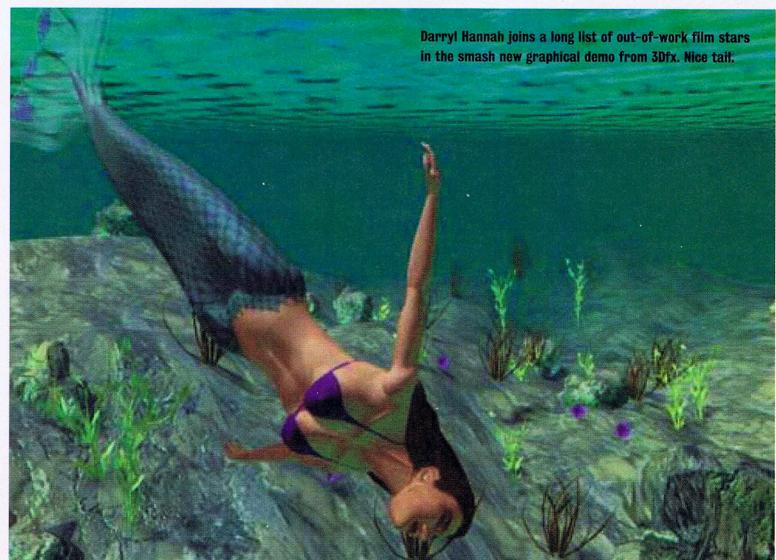
dominant manufacturer. The current favourites to achieve this vastly profitable goal include Rendition, 3Dfx Interactive, S3 and Videologic.

All four currently have their strengths and weaknesses. Rendition's Verité card has been chosen as Microsoft's 3D card



Old man

Arthur C Clarke, science fiction author and Ernst Blofeld lookalike, has lent his Rama range of novels to Sierra to create a new 3D first-person adventure, called *Rama*. Unfamiliar with the story? A giant cylindrical spaceship has been found at the edge of the solar system, and naturally needs exploring. 3,000 rendered backgrounds and 4,000 square kilometres of playing area sounds great, but you'll have to wait until November before donning your vacuum-sealed pith helmet.



Darryl Hannah joins a long list of out-of-work film stars in the smash new graphical demo from 3Dfx. Nice tail.

Eh?

Compact Discworld

There's something funny going on in this Pratchett-approved adventure from Psygnosis. By MARK DONALD

reference platform, and they also have the support of id, who are producing *Quake* on their card.

3Dfx Interactive's Voodoo chip set has the backing of Fujitsu and is probably the most powerful card available at the moment. The development kits have been out in the community for a while now and some game demos look superb, running in high colour SVGA at a constant 30fps. It is also the most expensive of the bunch – a finished board will weigh in at around £300.

S3 have an advantage over the rest not in performance but in bulk and OEM leverage. If any company can persuade large PC manufacturers to adopt the Virge card as standard, then S3 can. The silicon isn't up to the same standard as much of the competition, but this will be reflected in the price.

Videologic's PowerVR could well be the winner if one clear one ever emerges. The NEC-produced card uses revolutionary z-buffering technology to process commands, and the results place the chips up there with any recent arcade board.



VideoLogic have also, crucially, signed an agreement with the giant PC firm Compaq to ship PCs with their card. There are also other cards which will be dealt with soon in a separate feature.

No sooner is the picture becoming relatively clear than it fog up again. Intel announced the MMX architecture (see last month's news feature) in March to no great applause. Even by early June this situation is changing. Some extremely limited supplies are available in the software community now and the talk is 100% favourable, with programmers and managers alike saying that the performance and colour-depth differences the new processors make are astonishing. Intel's solution comes on the CPU, perhaps making a custom 3D card unnecessary, and will be integrated into all chips manufactured by them from the end of this year, with bulk shipping next year.

● *PC Gamer* will be taking a closer look at the 3D situation next month.

TERRY PRATCHETT'S *Discworld* series has a cult following devoted to the books' subtle humour and gentle parodying of the fantasy genre. With *Discworld 2*, developed by Perfect Entertainment, Psygnosis hope to lead these Discworld disciples into paradise, immersing them in a huge graphic adventure that's as close as anyone can get to living on the planet of the great ATuin without suffering from paranoid schizophrenia.

If you're unacquainted with the books or the first game, prepare for

the kind of bizarre storylines that befit a pizza-shaped world shouldered on the back of four elephants standing astride the carapace of a giant turtle that swims amongst the stars.

The city of Ankh Morpork has been thrown into administrative chaos by the disappearance of Death. The Grim Reaper has handed on his scythe and gone AWOL, to take part in some Swedish chess tournament or something, leaving the Discworld clogged with punters just dying to cash in their chips. The authorities

panic and bring you in as the inept wizard Rincewind, Lord of bungling, to take his place. Whereupon, you must point and click your way through the causality-defying puzzles that befall a trainee Harvester of Souls.

Psygnosis say they're going to great lengths to produce an adventure that fully captures the colour and humorous flavour of the original books without retreading their storylines. And certainly, the lavish cartoon screenshots we've seen so far are drolly evocative of the slightly skewiff Pratchett style. They are the work of the Hanna Barbera team, and the final game will be animated by over 20,000 hand-drawn cells.

Of course, Pratchett devotees are rather possessive of the Discworld, so Psygnosis had to be particularly careful in their handling of characterisation. To this end they've brought in the much respected Eric Idle, Nigel Planer and Spitting Image 'talker' Kate Robbins to breathe comic life into the animations.

The first *Discworld* adventure was well received and achieved a commendable 89% in PCG 16. As with any sequel, *Discworld 2* benefits from the lessons learnt from its predecessor and so Psygnosis have added dozens of new characters and full-screen movement in place of the original's linear environmental interaction.

● *Discworld 2* is expected to arrive via turtle express sometime in the winter.



Where are they now?

The last of the promised 1995 Christmas releases are just starting to look like disappearing from our list. Games generally fare poorly in summer, which accounts for the bundle of autumn release dates.

<i>Creation</i> (Bullfrog)	January
<i>Command & Conquer: Red Alert</i> (Westwood)	October
<i>Deathtrap Dungeon</i> (Domark)	September
<i>Diablo</i> (Blizzard)	Late July
<i>Dungeon Keeper</i> (Bullfrog)	15th July
<i>Ecstatica 2</i> (Psygnosis)	October
<i>Grand Prix 2</i> (MicroProse)	End of June
<i>Gene Wars</i> (Bullfrog)	18th October
<i>Heart Of Darkness</i> (Virgin)	October
<i>Into The Shadows</i> (Scavenger)	December
<i>Little Big Adventure 2</i> (EA)	December
<i>Magic The Gathering</i> (MicroProse)	September
<i>MDK</i> (Interplay)	November
<i>Quake</i> (id)	July
<i>Syndicate Wars</i> (Bullfrog)	1st September
<i>Terminus</i> (Scavenger)	December
<i>Time Commando</i> (EA)	July
<i>Unreal</i> (Epic)	August (with MMX)
<i>Warhammer 40K</i> (Mindscape)	September
<i>X-COM: Apocalypse</i> (MicroProse)	September

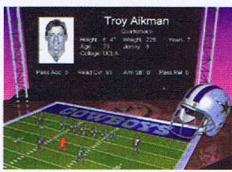
Destruction 2?

Destruction Derby was naturally great fun for a little while, but this Christmas should see a revamped version including all the bits that were lamentably missing in the first one. The dull range of tracks is being replaced with some longer, wider, and bumpier ones, with hills and banked corners. Cars break up a little more convincingly, flipping and cartwheeling as appropriate. And a stunt construction kit should keep you playing it for a bit longer than the original.



Overtime

New outfit Overtime Sports are working on a range of sports games sponsored, conveniently, by their mega-TV parent company ABC. *Monday Night Football* will be the first to appear on 2nd September; but we remain, as ever, utterly sceptical. Our spies at E3 reckoned that it looked awful. Their second game, due in the autumn, is called *Sports College Football*. That's also an American Football game.



Floppy

Warner Interactive have handed us the European Championship edition of the phenomenally good *Sensible World of Soccer* ready for review next month. The new version includes all the teams and players for the competition and some new management facilities. Hoorah. We all expect to be trading Gremlin's motion-captured players for *Sensible's* top notch fun, and can't wait to get this issue finished so that we can give it a go. Best of all, you can buy a floppy disk version for just £25.

Wirebored

Despite our being on the telephone to Wireplay's technical support line for over two weeks (on and off, rather than continuously), we still haven't been able to get BT's new multi-player games system going. The latest suggestion is that it may not work through our Mercury phone system, even though our fax modems and CompuServe work fine. With any luck we'll have it going next month, but in the meantime turn to page 50.

Total syndication

TANTALISINGLY, EIDOS (WHO have recently consumed Domark, Core and US Gold) gave us their new game, *Total Mania*, just that little bit too late to be squeezed into this month's reviews. In between a lot of very hard work indeed, we had a quick look at what's best described as a modern-day *Syndicate* with puzzles.

It's the familiar isometric view again, but from a lower camera angle than you might be used to. Whereas in *Syndicate* it was possible to completely lose track of your agents as they wandered behind and into buildings (imagine what a nightmare taking children to the supermarket would be if everything in life was isometric), in *Total Mania* the tops of the buildings black out to reveal helmeted heads poking above the still visible ground floor. Many different solutions to this 'hidden' problem have been tried, and, to be honest, all failed so far. *Syndicate*, despite its brilliance, could be very frustrating. *Deadline*, reviewed a couple of months ago, just looked silly, as entire walls and roofs turned into wireframes. Domark, though, seem very proud of their system, but we're going to remain sceptical until we've had a jolly good play ourselves.

Are you sitting comfortably? Set in what game developers expect to be a busy 22nd century, *Total Mania* introduces the entirely original concept of mega-corporation (cough) syndicates holding humanity under their vicious and iron-like grip of terror. Battles rage between the factions as increasingly efficient war machines are built. A rogue bug in the mechaoids programming leads them to destroy both the enemy syndicates and their creators. Oh, why do we bother? You've heard it

Domark's Total Mania turned up just in time to miss this month's reviews. Have a sneaky peek at what could be next month's stunner. By STEVE OWEN



We're all thoroughly looking forward to destroying buildings aplenty in Eidos' latest game. Oh, and killing a few baddies should be good too.



all before. Suffice to say, it's time to fight back, and, as a cyborg soldier, you must lead a team in various destructive sorties, recovering as much technology as possible to advance your rebellion, while blowing up mechaoids and buildings in increasingly fiery ways.

We won't be surprising anyone by revealing that *Total Mania* does indeed look like a blatant *Syndicate* rip-off, but that can't be a bad thing. This could be the ideal strategic



death and destruction game to keep you going until mid-September's release of Bullfrog's *Syndicate Wars*.

● *Total Mania* is due out the first week in July, and we'll have a full review next issue.



What *Syndicate* didn't have, and *Total Mania* boasts, is a range of different territories. Desert, jungle and water wait to be obliterated by your happy trigger.

Over the moon

Ellipsoid graphics come around again.



In 1995 PSYGNOSIS provided us with a sumptuous visual feast called *Ecstatica*.

Come early 1997 we'll all be gorging upon second helpings with the dishy *Ecstatica 2*, with plenty of ellipsoid trimmings.

It's an action adventure which spurns the point-and-click baggage of other games in favour of a more interactive, *Alone In The Dark* style of exploration that uses over 2,000 camera angles to draw you into the game environment.

Your homeland has fallen under the thrall of a demonic sorcerer whose vile minions roam the streets disorientating the populace with abrupt changes in perspective. The sensible course of action would be

to gaze at your shoes and pretend not to notice, but you've got something more heroic in mind. Brandishing your cutlass you step bravely into a vast and perilous world of graveyards, dungeons, castles, haunted forests and magic. Here you must evade traps, solve puzzles and do battle with a host of animated characters such as vampires, goblins and ghosts.

These characters all benefit from Psygnosis' ellipsoid techniques, which give things a more natural curvy look instead of a polygonal carved wooden book-end appearance, and the results are nothing if not impressive.

● *Ecstatica 2* should be out and about early next year.

DUNGEON KEEPER



Being bad's never been so good.
Unleashed on PC CD.

BULLFROG

<http://www.ea.com/bullfrog.html>
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THE LATEST ON...

Heart Of Darkness

Could it possibly nearly be finished?

AT LAST YEAR'S SPRING ECTS show in London there was one game that stole the show so completely that all the other titles were left on the shelf. Unfortunately, however, *Heart Of Darkness*, which was started in 1992, has still not been released.

Assuming there are still some of you out there who can remember it ever existed, the good news is that *Heart Of Darkness* is looking even better than before. Nothing fundamental has been changed since *PC Gamer* took a look at it back in May 1995, but the already near-perfect presentation has been honed further, with even more neat little touches now included thanks to the extra



time. The pre-rendered image quality, which was then the best ever created using 3D Studio, still is (although it must be said that the competition has caught up slightly). The playback is still up there with the best the PC can offer, and has benefited greatly from the speeding up of CD drives and processors, and therefore the amount of data that may be decoded in a given time.

It is the imagination and attention to detail that is evident in every single scene which ensures *Heart Of Darkness* is still worth looking forward to. Eric Chahi and Frédéric Savoir have completed all the characters and all the animations are in place, and it's now purely a question of tidying up any loose ends and adding the smallest of touches — a lengthy task, unfortunately, for two of the most fastidious and talented game designers you'll ever meet.

● Amazing Studio's *Heart Of Darkness* will finally enter the spotlight in October.



As stunning as ever, but let's hope there's enough of it to keep you playing.

Charts

① Up ② Down ● Non-mover ○ New entry ↗ Re-entry

Upheaval and turmoil grip this month's chart in the wake of the toppling of *Civilization 2*, from its seemingly entrenched position of primacy, by the full-blooded version of *Duke Nukem 3D*. The repercussions of this coup d'état have sent nearly everyone else plunging down with the exception of a band of vigorous Electronic Arts budget titles intent on colonising the top 10 while nobody's looking.

Top 20 CD-ROM

			US Gold
1	○	Duke Nukem 3D	MicroProse
2	○	Civilization 2	Electronic Arts
3	↗	Theme Park	Virgin
4	○	Command & Conquer	Electronic Arts
5	↗	Little Big Adventure	Ocean
6	○	Worms Reinforcements	Ocean
7	○	Worms	Domark
8	○	Championship Manager 2	Virgin
9	○	C&C: Covert Operations	Electronic Arts
10	↗	FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts
11	↗	Magic Carpet Plus	Virgin
12	○	Screamer	Interplay
13	○	Virtual Snooker	Gremlin
14	○	Actua Soccer	One Stop
15	○	White Wolf 10 Pack	White Label
16	○	The 7th Guest	Blizzard
17	○	Warcraft II	Viacom
18	○	DS9: Harbinger	US Gold
19	○	Duke Nukem 3D (shareware)	Microsoft
20	○	Flight Simulator 5.1	

Your Most Wanted

1	●	Quake
2	○	Syndicate Wars
3	○	Grand Prix 2
4	○	C&C: Red Alert
5	○	LBA 2
6	○	Dungeone Keeper
7	○	Time Commando
8	○	Into The Shadows
9	○	Unreal
10	○	Warhammer 40,000

The disparate mass that is the *PC Gamer* readership speaks with one mighty voice through the mouthpiece of the 'Your Most Wanted' chart. Bending the ear of the games industry, they issue forth one imperative command: 'Bring us *Quake*. Now.' There were very few

Most Wanted entries this month that didn't include a demand for *Quake*, confirming its position as the most eagerly awaited game of the year. In a similarly bloody vein, popular demand dictates that *Syndicate Wars* is installed straight into the number two position, confirming the allure of carnage.

Steven Clark of Luton will receive a copy of *Quake*, his own number one choice, as soon as it's released.

Send your five most-wanted games on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope to: My Most Wanted, *PC Gamer*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.



Quake is unsurprisingly the Most Wanted, but when's it being released?



After an endless wait, *Duke Nukem 3D* proves its worth and hits No. 1.

Official Gallup UK Charts

Guaranteed to melt away
the miseries of
mediocre games...
FAST!



"more challenging, more interesting and more feature filled than its illustrious predecessor" PC ZONE, April 1996.

"a must for fans of the original and gamers who like God sims" PC Power, April 1996.

"Corking product" Gamepro, May 1996.

"Guaranteed to keep you locked away for hours" CD Powerplay, April 1996.

"a sequel that is set to take the world by storm" PC Home, April 1996.

The greatest s

SPECIAL REPORT

A company's success depends on more than its ability to produce good products. Just as vital to a prosperous software firm are the political alliances it makes, the deals it strikes and its reputation within the industry as a whole. E3 is where it all happens.

By JAMES FLYNN

THE 1996 ELECTRONIC Entertainment Expo (E3) took place in the Los Angeles Convention Centre between 16th and 18th May. It was the largest show the industry has ever seen, with around 200 exhibitors, 85,000 guests from 40 countries, and more free drunken parties than you could stagger between.

The reason for the fuss was the maturation of the 32-bit age of computing. A year ago the 32-bit consoles were only available in Japan, the Nintendo 64 was a distant dream, and the industry was still recovering from the slump caused by the death of the SNES and Mega Drive. This year the situation couldn't have been more different as hundreds of titles jostled for attention and left a heady feeling of optimism in the air. But while hardware manufacturers like Nintendo made the biggest splash with their \$4 million village, the unsung hero of the show was the PC. The once ridiculed beast

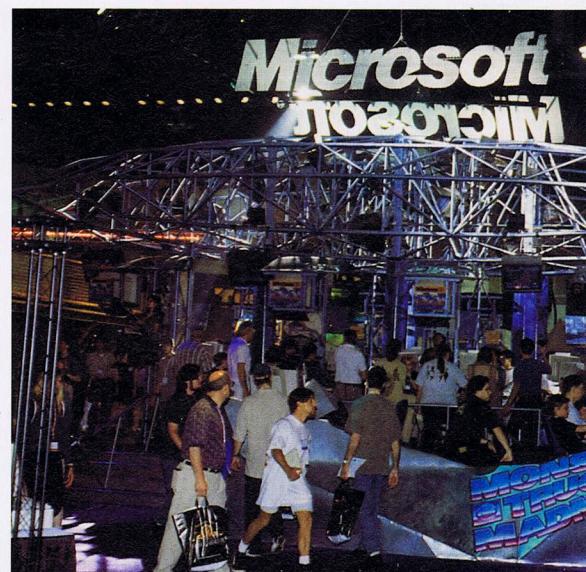
appeared in the release schedule of virtually every game and was listed as the lead platform for many firms.

The best of the show has been dissected over the previous Eyewitness pages, and it's a fair bet that if it's not in there it's because it's not worth playing. Or we're possibly saving it for next month.

The good

Virgin and their affiliates boasted one of the most sure-fire-hit line-ups of all the exhibitors. The newly created Burst internal development studio revealed *Toonstruck* – at around \$6 million one of the most expensive games ever made and looking like it's worth every cent. Westwood's *Red Alert* attracted crowds and the private separate LucasArts box was one of the talking points of the show. Amazing Studio's long-delayed *Heart Of Darkness* made its traditional appearance and its graphics had people foaming at the mouth.

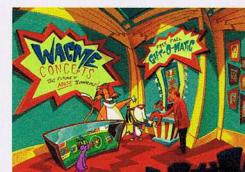
GT's massive signing-up binge



bore its first public rewards at E3. id, Scavenger, Williams and Mirage were all touting their latest efforts and confirmed the firm's membership of the Big Boys Club. Scavenger's bizarre spider stand ringed to the sound of techno music and trapped 14 interesting-looking titles within it along with a

boundlessly enthusiastic MD, Daniel Small. A quick play gave the impression of a very clued-up outfit. Williams' new coin-ops will surely grace the PC at some point but will *Robotron-X* be on the list?

Blizzard, one of the surprise development successes of last year thanks to *Warcraft II*, showed the new gory *Diablo* adjacent to a bunch of children's edutainment titles. Their selection of goodies stimulated more interest than many of the huge multinationals, and the Californian firm is looking over-ripe to join a dedicated games publisher. *Diablo* was what *Ultima 8* should have been, and the new batch of 2D games clearly contained the skill that made *Warcraft II* so excellent.



(Above) *Toonstruck* is currently one of the most expensive games ever made.

(Left) Virgin's stand had some of the strongest titles at the show on it.

how on Earth

EYEWITNESS



The bad

Microsoft unveiled their debut product line-up with the slogan, 'Microsoft Knows Games', and a rather misguided request to the UK press to help them become better publishers. The stand featured 11 games ranging from the acceptable to the laughably primitive and did little to inspire confidence in the corporation's finished products. Although the C&C/Cir clone *Age Of Empires* looked interesting and *Flight Simulator* will sell forever, *Microsoft Soccer* looked rooted in the *Match Day* age and was more representative of the crop. Stand supervisors cajoled victims, er, sorry visitors, into chairs, strapped them in and then raised them six feet into the air. Funnily enough there was a conspicuous lack of people volunteering to be trapped in front of a screen showing *NBA Full Court*



EA's *Multima* was the most innovative and promising game on their stand.



(Above) *Daggerfall* was Bethesda's top title and is now due out in August.

(Left) Microsoft tried to make a big splash but belly-flopped in an amusing fat-corporation sort of way.

Press while some American spouted sycophantic and insincere nonsense from below.

EA's stand was huge and crammed with games but did little to alter the widely felt opinion that the firm has lost its way over the last few years. Lord British's Internet *Ultima* (now dubbed *Multima*) looked promising, and there was the excellent PC version of *Road Rash*, but the tiresome 1997 sports title updates were indicative of a line-up that is going to struggle to establish new brands to complement the once-strong *Wing Commander* and *Ultima* money-spinners. However, with a firm as large and talented as this one, it's impossible to be that pessimistic about EA's fortunes over the next year.

Bethesda were there but it could have been last year's demonstration. While *10th Planet* looked very pretty, there was nothing really special about the technology when placed next to Scavenger's stand and of course it faces stiff competition from id's game.



Daggerfall was progressing well, however, and looks like it could be Bethesda's strongest game yet. We'll be taking a deeper look at

Bethesda's efforts to combat the new threats next month.

And the parties

Sega's effort kicked off the festivities on Wednesday night with a bash at Dan Ackroyd's House Of Blues. Nobody remembers

that much about it, although there's a pervasive belief that the nibbles were very good first time round.

Eidos threw a big one to tell people who they were. The UK video-compression technology firm have recently bought Domark, US Gold, Core and distributors Centregold to become one of the largest players in the market. The number of people who turned up would suggest that it worked in theory, although most people left early with symptoms ranging from heat exhaustion to plinky-plonky jazz overdose.

Scavenger tried a fresh approach to solving the problem of



catering for all tastes at a single event - stage it in such a dive that no suits will turn up. The Sunset Boulevard Whisky A-Go-Go club (birthplace of The Doors) had a *Defender* coin-op, a table football machine, vibrated to hard-techno until two in the morning and was inhabited solely by free-loading UK journalists. The downside was, as ever in this beer-taste-beer-deficient country, the warm Lite Beers for \$6.50 a mouthful. Bargain.

And that, as they say, is that. A year after the new consoles were released, the PC has fended off the challenges and still has the greatest diversity and number of quality games of any platform. The new 3D graphics cards (see page 24) will soon exceed the performance of the PlayStation, and most importantly of all it's the only machine that's capable of delivering widespread multi-player gaming to the masses. Roll on next year.

PGC



Despite the PCs overwhelming presence the main attractions at the show were definitely sexier: Nintendo's stand (left) and a buxom Playboy wench.

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PLUS ten EXTRA games FREE

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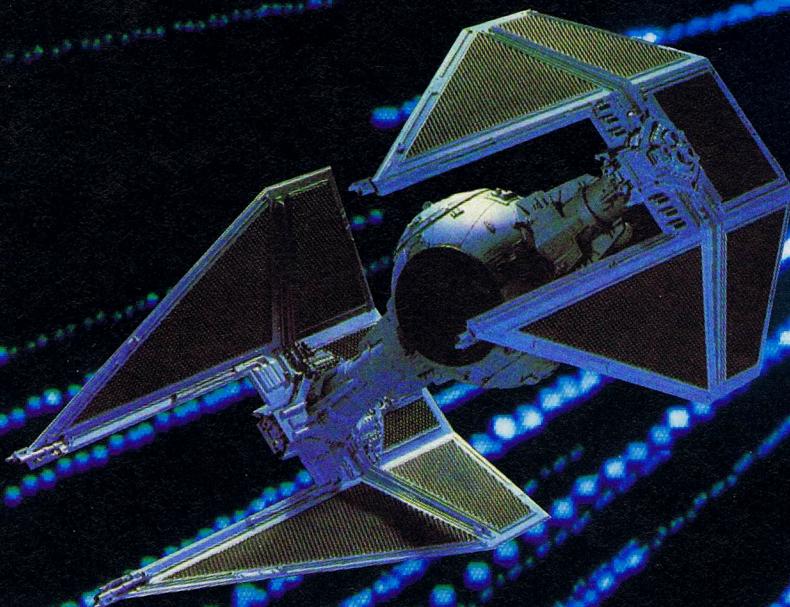
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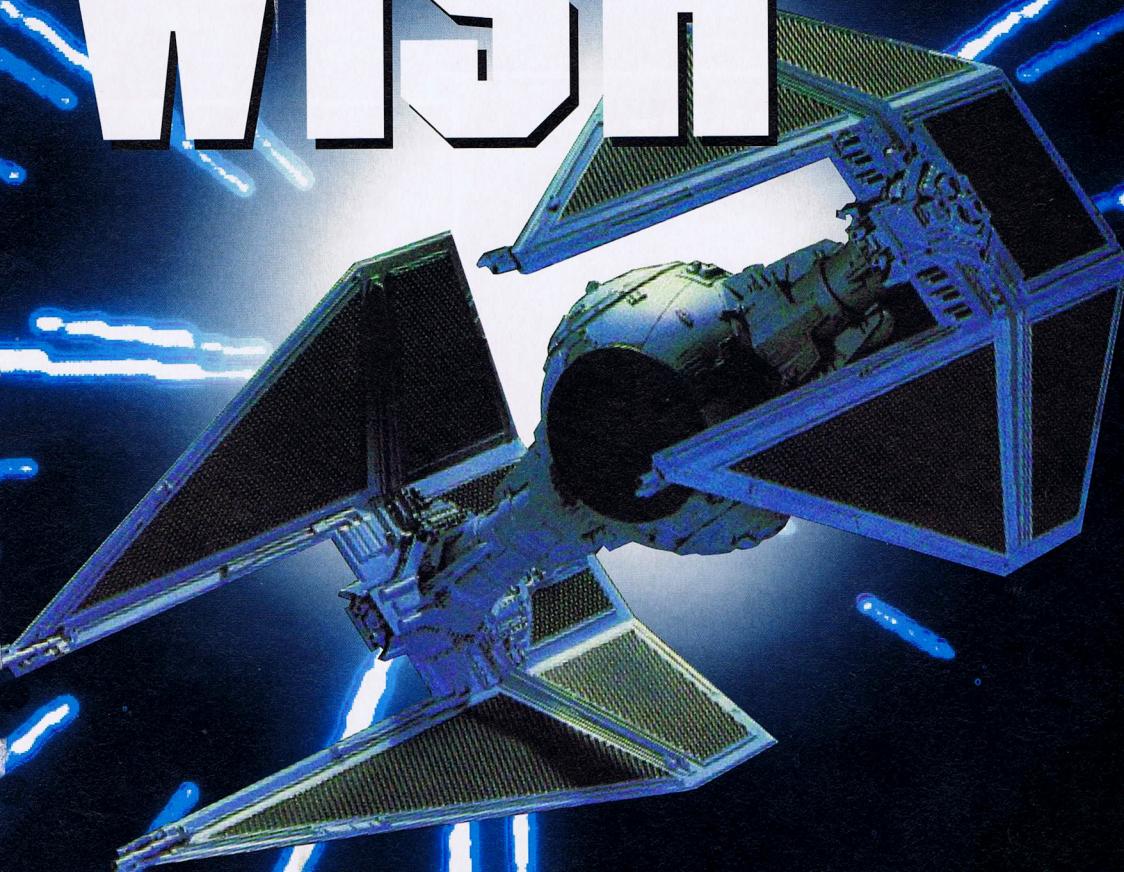
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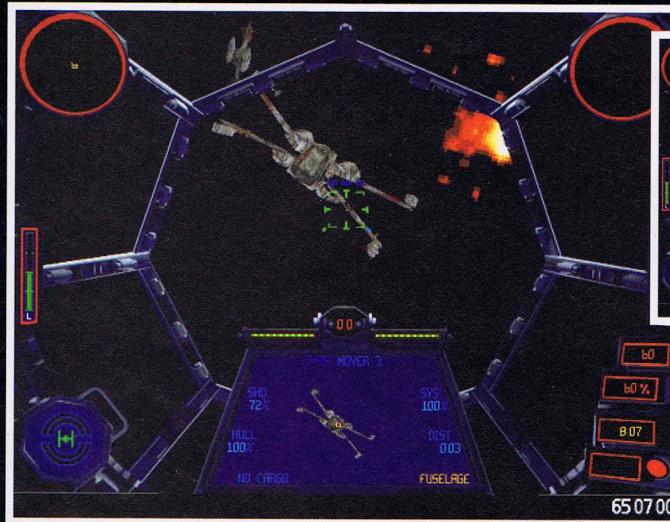
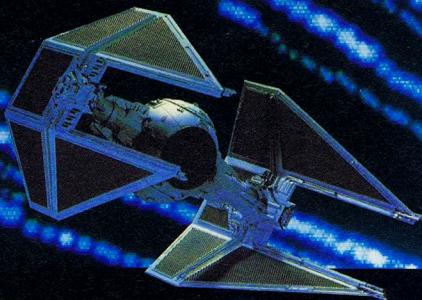
**X-Wing vs TIE Fighter
looks like being every PC
gamer's dream**



WISH



Imagine the best game you can possibly think of. Chances are it's got Star Wars in it, yes? Probably a combination of X-Wing and TIE Fighter but with better graphics. And networking. Well, that's exactly what LucasArts have planned for the end of the year. By JAMES FLYNN



(Above) A space platform passes beneath as you pursue an X-Wing. The multi-player missions are what people are clamouring to play, but there will be single-player tasks to excite those without a modem.

(Left) The traditional and exceptionally functional cockpit has been retained to provide an easy transition for players. Looks slightly like sitting inside a large football here.

Three years on

Few gaming events are as sobering as looking back at graphics you once thought were wonderful. *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* still hold their own, but looking at the 1996 models it's going to be a case of out with the old and in with the new.

Although *X-Wing*'s polygons looked lovely at the time it's clear that flat, slab-like surfaces (near right) wouldn't attract many converts today.

TIE Fighter (middle) added the then incredible luxury of Gouraud shading. This is a technique by which lighting differences may be applied to an object to give it a more realistic look. All the explosions are still VGA bitmaps thrown into the scene.

Today's ships (far-right) naturally make the others look pretty dated. The resolution has been doubled, every ship has had full texturing applied to it and the lighting routines are more sophisticated. The explosions have benefited particularly from the improvements and now consume objects in a fiery style as opposed to a blocky one. Best of all, though, these improvements have not resulted in any speed loss.



ANYONE WHO HAS followed CompuServe groups over the last few years will be aware of two facts. First, *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* are two of the most frequently mentioned titles of all, with a presence certainly close to that of *Doom* and *Quake*. Second, once the fuss had died down about just how good both the games were, the single most craved-for addition was some kind of multi-player facility. LucasArts, who were fully aware of this all along, are now granting the wishes of millions with *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter*. It's the first ever chance for PC gamers to fight with other humans in a Star Wars universe, and will surely

set a new benchmark for multi-player gaming.

When *X-Wing* was released in 1993 it was heralded as one of the most complete products ever. What made it so fantastic was the combination of the graphics, the ships' handling, the sound and the background story. And *TIE Fighter* then improved on all four aspects of its saintly brother. So will the melding of both these be greater than the sum of the two? It certainly looks like it.

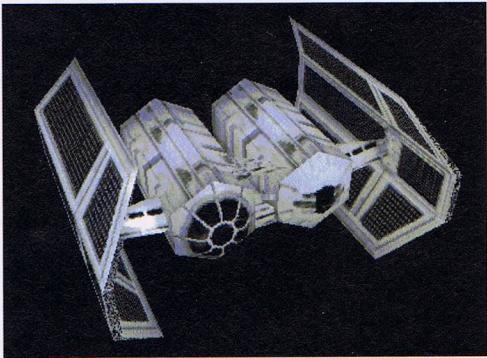
Larry Holland has managed both *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* projects for LucasArts: "We started off with LucasArts back in 1988 with [the WWII flight sim] *Battlehawks 1942*. What we learnt about the basic routines and ideas behind dogfights of that period we used to come up with some

flight principles for *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter*. We're all hard-core gamers here and thought that if the dynamics weren't correct all the effort would be for nothing."

For once this claim amounts to more than the usual PR spiel. The team deliberately ignored some of the more advanced types of technology available at the time to concentrate on the feel of the game. Although some 1993 PC games did feature more lavish-looking graphics, *X-Wing*'s flat shaded polygons were perfectly smooth no matter how many ships were on screen at once, even on basic PCs. When *TIE Fighter* arrived in 1994 the Gouraud shading it contained wowed the audiences, but never sacrificed a single frame per second in terms of playability. LucasArts were one of the few firms to appreciate the joint absolute essentials of speed and accessibility to the masses.

"One of our core philosophies has been that speed with smoothness is more important than lots of colours or polygon or textures. You can only play the game if it's smooth," says Holland. "We're constantly refining our flight engine and it's going through a really cool evolution. We're

"It's the first ever chance for PC gamers to fight with other humans in a Star Wars universe, and will surely set a new benchmark for multi-player gaming."





already working with hi-res texture maps and really awesome lighting effects through the whole game." Looking at the game moving at the E3 show in Los Angeles late last month, the difference these improvements make is incredible.

Although the old un-textured ships were perfectly functional, the atmosphere that is added by using what is effectively the quality of the original models is surprising. Chasing an enemy Y-Wing through space, loosing off a missile shot and watching the engines tumble away has never felt so good. Although *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter* has the advantage over land-based sims because it has no ground to texture, there is still no slowdown on a decent PC even when almost the entire screen is filled with a ship. Also, the textures have been cleverly designed so that no matter how close you get to the smaller ships, pixellation does not become a problem. Although this increases the memory requirements, the reward in terms of

"Although co-operative play has generally never been as popular as deathmatch sessions in multi-player games, LucasArts are hoping to alter this with their range of new scenario types."

rendering quality is well worth it.

These improvements are obvious, but there's another level of subtlety beyond the immediately apparent SVGA ships. In the bottom window the currently targeted ship is mirrored exactly, with all your explosions appearing in here so you can tell if missiles have impacted at a distance. The engine is also powerful enough to include real-time lighting. Laser bolts illuminate ships' hulls as they streak over them, and when you're hit yourself the cockpit flashes with light. The addition of the light-sourcing, shading and texturing, all in SVGA without slowdown, is a credit to LucasArts' engine.

Ewok Tennis

Despite all the graphical enhancements to the games, it is undoubtedly the new multi-player elements that are causing the most excitement. The rest may be good, but it's just flashy padding when compared with the thought of blasting away an opponent on the other side of the room.

But, as we've seen over the last few years, although multi-player titles are generally more fun than their single-player counterparts, they frequently fail to capitalise fully on the potential of playing humans. Also, way too many games have fallen into the trap of

It's not just X-Wing

Although LucasArts truly came of age in 1990 with the release of *Loom* and *The Secret Of Monkey Island*, the company's pedigree had already been established during the preceding eight years. George Lucas founded LucasArts in 1982 to create some complementary technology to his film interests. They now employ 240 people, with about 70 of these directly involved in development.

The early years of LucasArts (1982-1986) saw the release of *PHM Pegasus*, *Koroni Rift*, *Labyrinth*, *Ballblazer*, *Rescue On Fractus* and *Strike Fleet* through other companies, but the titles are still remembered with fondness by many, and *Ballblazer* is being re-coded for the PlayStation today.

Maniac Mansion (1987) was the first ever point-and-click adventure and debuted LucasArts' now legendary SCUMM engine. SCUMM stands for Script Creation Utility for *Maniac Mansion* and has been refined to run successive generations of LucasArts' adventure games. *Maniac Mansion* was also the first title that Lucasfilm, the sister

company of LucasArts, took on board and turned into a TV series.

Zak McKraken And The Alien Mindbenders was a title that most people there would probably rather forget, but 1988 also saw the famous *Battlehawks 1942* released, the game that would ultimately provide the flight model experience necessary to develop *X-Wing*.

The 1989 hit *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* became the first LucasArts game to be based directly on a film, and that year also saw the sequel to *Battlehawks*, *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain*, as well as *Pipe Dream*, which was the nearest LucasArts had come

Maniac Mansion was later used by Lucasfilm. *Monkey Island 2* is arguably the greatest adventure ever.

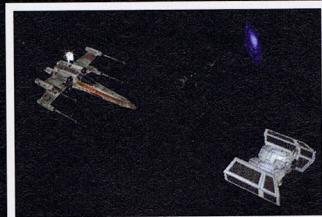


updating the graphics engine but failing to take account of the problems that converting a game can pose.

Larry Holland explains one of the first problems they encountered: "In the single-player games a craft's turning circle was unrelated to its speed, so it was actually quite a good tactic to back yourself up against a container and stay still while swivelling around and shooting. Obviously you don't want every human player to be edging around and stopping all the time – you want fast dogfights – so we've had to change this. Now the faster you're travelling the faster you turn."

This is just one of the minor changes that the developers are being forced to make, but they're not losing touch with their original goals by tweaking things too much. "Our core audience will be *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* players, so we don't want to alienate these people. The basic systems will remain the same."

Another of the original games' strengths was the excellent mission design, and for a game as deep as *X-Wing* vs *TIE Fighter* the missions are as important as the play mechanics themselves. The system of primary, secondary



Dean never managed to get this close to me in our marathon and completely inconclusive dogfight.

and bonus goals worked perfectly, and these will certainly be carried over into the multi-player game. However, the single-player game's strengths revolved around being out there on your own (or at least with one wingman) and blasting away at the opposition en masse. To retain the interest of many humans it is also necessary to have a wide variety of play options.

The simplest of these will be a head to head or, if more players are fighting, a general scrap with each man for himself. Although cooperative play has generally never been as

popular as deathmatch sessions in multi-player games so far, LucasArts are hoping to alter this with their range of new scenario types.

The simplest and easiest to implement and play will involve several people acting as each others' wingmen, and will have a single goal to attain, such as the destruction of a medical frigate. Although this would no doubt be fun, LucasArts are trying to place the emphasis on a more regimented, target-based structure rather than simply launching four ships and leaving them be. This type of mission, which hasn't been seen before, would sub-divide the objective and allocate one to each of the players.

Holland again: "In the single-player games we've already seen lots of missions where your task is to protect a single shuttle, but there are other ships fighting in the area which must also succeed in their tasks to complete the mission. Basically, it's more than just a case of killing every enemy ship at your leisure. What we're aiming to do is replace these computer-controlled ships with humans so that... Let me give you an example. One player in an A-Wing may have to locate a particular enemy storage container while

to a strategy game until last month's *Afterlife*.

Loom and *The Secret of Monkey Island* were complemented in 1990 by *Night Shift* and 1991 saw the consolidation of the reputation these products created. *Secret Weapons Of The Luftwaffe* was the third in the fighting planes trilogy. *Monkey Island 2: Le Chuck's Revenge* saw the contextual patented sound technology iMUSE (Interactive Music and Sound Effects) introduced. This year also saw LucasArts branch out onto the consoles with JVC and their first self published title for the NES, *Star Wars*.

Typically ahead of the trend, 1992 was the year when LucasArts ventured into the CD-ROM market with some re-pressing of older titles and a complete talkie version of *Loom*. In addition to more Star Wars console products it also release *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis*. The next year was a huge one for the company, with *X-Wing*, *Day Of The Tentacle*, *Rebel Assault* and *Sam & Max Hit The Road*. For some reason it is *Rebel Assault* from this bunch which immediately became the biggest selling CD-ROM ever.

TIE Fighter was the inevitable 1994 sequel to *X-Wing*.

and true fans could play even more missions with the mission disks released for both games. The console licences continued to grow in strength with JVC.

Last year's most popular PC title was *Dark Forces*, but *Full Throttle* was immense fun (while it lasted) and *Rebel Assault II* wasn't. *The Dig* regrettably failed to cause the stir it had always promised and the *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* Collector's CDs kept the missions coming. LucasArts' only 1996 game so far is *Afterlife*.

Not too shabby a collection of games, really.

Day Of The Tentacle and *Afterlife* are best played while under the influence of strong ("Fizzy drinks" – Ed).





another player clears some mines in an Y-Wing so a freighter can collect the container and a final ship must defend the group. While all this is going on the opposing force will have their own missions to prevent this happening."

As has already been exploited perfectly in the original games, the Star Wars mythos offers an unparalleled opportunity to develop a strong plot to bind the individual missions. When they have the added interest of intra-human spite they will assume a new level of importance. But despite the obvious facilities available to the firm with the close Lucasfilm relationships, LucasArts are adamant that they will not be following the *Wing Commander* path full of lavish movie-type cut scenes to flesh out the storyline. "It's just not the path we feel we should take. Every team has certain strengths and resources and we're sure that we're going to apply them to the in-game combat areas rather than use them for video," says Holland.

Yoda Archery

A crucial element of the mission construction that worked so well was the excellent tactical

map which could be called up at any time to take stock of the situation. Its implementation in *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter* is another example of an already perfect game element that has had to be altered to accommodate more than one human. Because it paused the game when it was accessed, it was clear that frequent interruptions would completely disrupt the flow and ruin the game for everyone. The map has therefore had to be integrated with the main display. If you need to call upon strategic positional or mission objective information

now it all appears as graphics in your cockpit. The SVGA display has made it feasible to fit all the information into a smaller space and the tension of having to navigate while fighting will probably add to the game in both single and multi-player mode.

One of the hardest decisions the designers have had to take concerns which ships to include in the game. As those who completed *TIE Fighter* will know, the ships you flew near the end were more than a match for anything the Rebel Alliance possessed. The missile gunboat could easily take out corvettes and frigates and the TIE Defender ate X-Wings for breakfast without noticing. Giving the Empire players access to these ships would basically ensure their victory, so they are going to be left out for now, possibly to appear in a sequel. The TIE Advanced will probably make an appearance, though, as the development team feels that it can be balanced out with judicious use of the Alliance's exceptionally nippy A-Wings.

The more difficult problem of how to cope with the feeble basic TIE Fighters is still being worked on. Virtually every video game, sport and life itself gives you the chance to



You'd be hard pressed to distinguish the polygon ships from the actual models used in the films.

The Virgin side of the Force

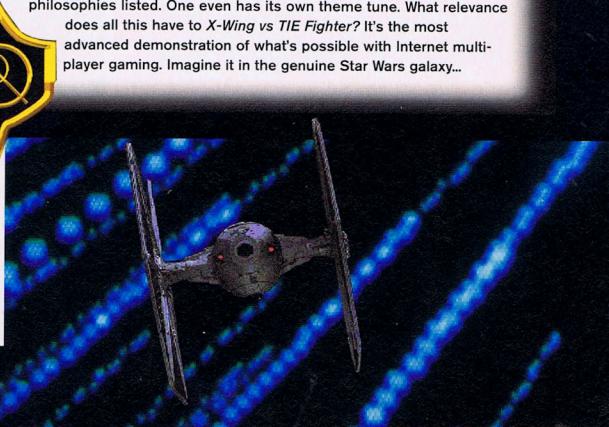
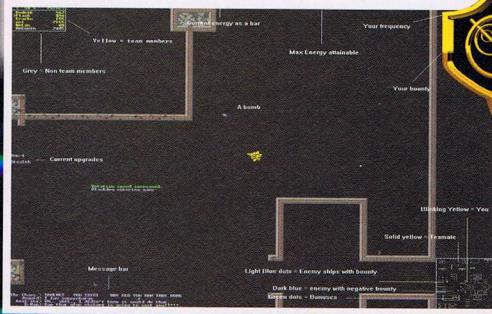
Believe it or not, this is the start of something big. It's a screenshot of the technology test version of Virgin's new multi-player space combat shooter – something that has been loosely described as their competition to the LucasArts *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter*. It's called *SubSpace* and was released onto the Internet a couple of months ago to see how the internal game logic performed with tens of players participating at once. The situation has spiralled out of control since then.

SubSpace is a cousin of *Oids*, an old Amiga game that is still regularly played by many people in its other platform incarnations. The plan was to experiment briefly and then remove it, but within a couple of days it was clear that this would have been unwise. "We had no idea how popular it would be," says the programmer, Rod Humble. "It started off with a few players internally and quickly expanded

outside. Yesterday we had our first 100-player game – that's 100 people on the same map moving, shooting and firing at each other simultaneously – and the system has the capacity to go up to 250 before spawning a new map automatically."

SubSpace is based around many small ships racing about collecting power-ups, hiding in rotating space stations, repairing and setting off again. Cloaking devices can be picked up, two ships can join together with one becoming a turret, and messages can be sent to people of your choice to form alliances or taunt. The next version (which is a 1Mb file that is downloaded and installed automatically when anybody connects) will feature *Elite*-style trading, moving scenery and the ability to customise ships.

The popularity of *SubSpace* extends beyond actually playing it. Teams have been spontaneously formed for pre-arranged co-operative play, with many having home pages, membership requirements and philosophies listed. One even has its own theme tune. What relevance does all this have to *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter*? It's the most advanced demonstration of what's possible with Internet multi-player gaming. Imagine it in the genuine Star Wars galaxy...



recover from mistakes, but piloting this hunk of cheap and plentiful garbage the Empire calls a spaceship doesn't offer this security. Playing against good human opponents in X-Wings, one missile hit or a few laser blasts from the rear in quick succession will mean space curtains for you. Not much fun when the rest of the mission rages on for an hour, leaving Joe short straw in the debriefing room. Holland says one way of evening out the field that's being tried is to include comparably awful or ancient Rebel ships like the Z-95 Headhunter, the R-41 Starchaser and the T-Wing. *TIE Fighter* players will remember these as ideal cannon fodder, but there's always going to be one weakest ship, and by adding these the performance disparities become even wider.

"This whole situation is one of the greatest changes we've been trying to cope with for the game," muses Holland. "People want to survive when they're flying and don't want to die a few seconds after they hyperspace into an area. People want to destroy lots of other ships but we can't make players' ships vulnerable to a single shot or that's no fun for them." The balancing situation was one of the most obvious deficiencies of the version playable at E3. The story goes thus.

I challenged Dean 'Jabba' Evans to a quick head to head in my TIE Bomber and generously gave him an X-Wing to play with. The two started off head to head so I slunk off downwards after a couple of seconds so I could re-appear behind him and dispatch him with a couple of torpedoes. He had a similar idea and a slight but could-be-serious flaw in the game soon became evident.

When two reasonably good players of a similar standard take each other on, it's impossible to get them in front of you for more than half a second, and so you can never get any lock on the swine. The result, we found, is that you end up diving about the void randomly and frantically thrashing away like

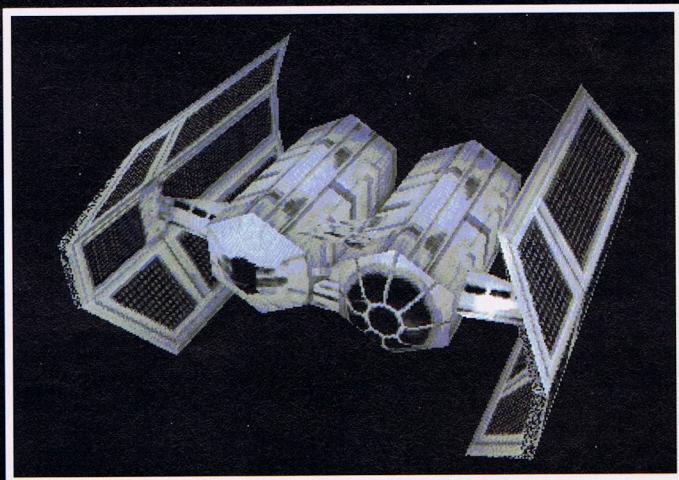
"Obviously you don't want every human player to be edging around and stopping all the time – you want fast dogfights. Now the faster you're travelling the faster you turn." – Larry Holland

Tom Cruise in a flat spin on the joystick.

This comedy continued for literally five minutes (winning became a matter of pride after 30 seconds) before some other ship that neither of us had previously noticed destroyed Dean. We laughed, slapped each other on the back in Californian fashion, made jokes about Mark Hamill and trotted off to play with a shooting snail in *Mortimer And The Riddle of The Medallion*.

This snag aside, *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter*

already looks to be proceeding perfectly. It looks amazing, and all the skill and experience that have evolved during the past few years and the last few games would seem to make *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter* one of the few games currently in production that can be described as a sure-fire hit. The potential for one of the finest games ever is there already, and it's just a question of steering the project successfully through the uncharted minefield of multi-player gaming to arrive fulfil all expectations.



Construct your own TIE Bomber at home with a couple of egg cartons and some stiff cardboard.





Jedi Knight

To complement the return of X-Wings and TIE Fighters, LucasArts are also working on *Jedi Knight* – the sequel to *Dark Forces*. As was revealed in last month's *PC Gamer*, the game will use a true 3D engine and will place you in the shoes of Kyle Katarn as he trains to become a Jedi Knight. What last month's piece failed to say was how fantastic it is already looking.

During E3, *PC Gamer* had the chance to have a good play of a very early version of *Jedi Knight*. Running on a Rendition 3D accelerator board, the immersion in the world was easily on a par with that seen in any other 3D game. The entire world can be investigated freely, and huge rooms with towers, arches, pits and overhanging walls have already been designed and slotted together. One area had a lift shaft where you could climb on in and travel up and down on top of the lift inside, peering out into the darkness to see what was left in the corridors you had just been in. The Rendition board with its hardware filtering eliminated all pixelation in the titles and drew perfectly smoothly in high colour at 640x480 resolution to the horizon. LucasArts says that their engine also reduces pixelation slightly with a similar technique in software.

The most noticeable change since *Dark Forces* is the technological handling of the Storm Troopers and other characters within the game. The entire world is now comprised of polygons and the difference this makes to the believability throughout the game is amazing. Just as *Doom* and *Quake* are a world apart, so are *Dark Forces* and its sequel. *Jedi Knight*'s use of polygons makes it



A large dog preys on some even larger dog. LucasArts have not released any in-game shots yet but this pre-rendered one gives you an idea of the scale of some of the locations in the game already.

possible to walk around the stormtroopers and see their backs as they march down a passage, rather than just have bitmap turned your way wherever you move. There were also Scout Walkers (as seen in the Forests at the end of *Return Of The Jedi*) that moved around the insides of the buildings, turning and stomping towards you every now and again.

The polygons also allow the use of full real-time lighting effects – a feature that adds as much to the feel of the game as the true 3D. Shoot off a laser into a dark room and it briefly illuminates the walls as it streaks toward the victim.

And speaking of weapons, there is, of

course, the Jedi's weapon – the light sabre. The finished game will, when Kyle has completed his training, include a lightsabre and all the associated chopping fun. It's not in there yet, but the developers were smiling when quizzed about how it would look. Incidentally, there's also a new range of Star Wars toys in the works, including a new plastic lightsabre. Unlike those rather awful ones you got in the early '80s, these '90s models feature motion sensors and loudspeakers so that they make that cool whaaaaaww-zhrooooom-whaar noises as they're swept about. Plus of course they look a lot better and luminous.

"The entire world is now comprised of polygons, and the difference this makes to the believability throughout the game is amazing. Just as *Doom* and *Quake* are a world apart, so are *Dark Forces* and its sequel."





Wouldn't it be great if you could play *Jedi Knight* and then get in your TIE Fighter and fight an X-Wing?

Jedi Knight's plot deals with Kyle and his attempt to thwart a group of seven Dark Jedi from raiding a Jedi Burial ground. The posse is lead by a chap called Jerec and his cronies includes Boc, who can wield two lightsabers simultaneously and Gorc and Pic who, despite being huge eight-feet and four-feet tall respectively, are twins.

One of the other additions to the game will revolve around the skills you acquire as you train. Rather than just have your weapons inflict more damage, or be able to run faster, you'll have a choice of special abilities to learn and use to help you through trickier passages. LucasArts were being a little cagey about what these will be, but it's a fair bet to say they'll include levitation, stealth and perhaps even powers of suggestion. The abilities will presumably vary depending on whether you're following the Light or Dark side of the Force - a choice that you have to make at some point in the game. The team promises that there'll not be a right or a wrong decision, and there will be different endings and tasks to complete within the same campaign framework.

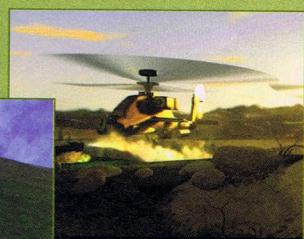
Jedi Knight is destined to ship near the start of next year.



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ELECTRONIC ARTS®



THIS MONTH WE HAVE finished the first version of the new flight model. I'll be taking it to the test pilot for the first official flight next week. The new model is much more aerobatic than our old one, and during development I've been testing the model by attempting to snap roll. This manoeuvre is achieved by first flying straight and level at about 90 mph. The pilot then pulls back briskly on the stick and applies full rudder. To snap roll to the left, i.e. in an anti-clockwise fashion when viewed from the pilot seat, the pilot applies left rudder.

During a snap roll, the roll rate is much higher than normal. This is achieved by stalling one wing. In the case of a left snap roll, the left wing is stalled. The lift generated by the left wing is greatly reduced but the right wing is still generating normal lift. The result of this imbalance is a very fast roll.

The set of rudder pedals I've been using lately has a fault. Whenever I apply full right rudder the pedal sticks. Naturally, then, I tested the model by doing left snap rolls, and after putting in the basic flight model the aircraft could be persuaded to do a respectable snap roll. Then I put in the torque and gyroscopic effects of the

Diary

Meanwhile, over at Rowan, Rod Hyde is fine-tuning his gyroscopic effects. It's *Flying Corps*.



Malcolm and Rod in 'Chloe', just before Rod's first flight.

Camel and found that the snap roll was no longer possible. In fact, instead of performing an adequate left roll, the aircraft swallowed into a right roll which degenerated into a spin.

"There are over 20 different bullet ricochets, and we have authentic sounds of Vickers, Spandau and Lewis machine guns."

I wasn't pleased about this. I was using the snap roll as a quick test of the model's integrity at each stage of development and it looked as if I had managed to knacker it. Then I remembered something that Andy Kemp told me. Andy, a



Strafing a German airfield on the Somme. The Hat in the Ring emblem was used by the 94th Pursuit Squadron.

member of the Cross & Cockade Society, is an expert on the Camel and whenever we have a conversation I take notes. I went back to my notes and there it was: "The Camel will not snap roll to the left. It will snap roll to the right, but not the left."

I went back to the model and tried the right snap roll. Perfect! That was a golden moment. They don't happen often but when they do it's perfect.

But there is always another problem. Now that the flight model is very sophisticated we have to build an autopilot that can cope with all the idiosyncrasies.

In the last week we have started to receive the sound effects for *Flying Corps*. We have commissioned Malcolm Laws and Nainita Desai of Interactive Sounds (0181 769 1223) to provide them, and they are producing an amazing array of effects. There are over 20 different bullet ricochets, and we have authentic sounds of Vickers, Spandau and Lewis machine guns. Malcolm and Nainita are also making a special effort to get a rich selection of engine sounds. We are having engine start-ups, normal running, droning, 'coughing' and diving sounds. Also, we hope to be able to hear the difference between an S5 and a Camel.

Malcolm is a pilot and instructor with over 20 years of flying experience. Last Sunday we spent a magnificent day in a field in Oxfordshire flying Malcolm's Thruster ultra-light aircraft called Chloe. I had not been in an open cockpit for a few years and so I took some time to get used to the sensation. There was nothing to hold onto except the stick!

Flying out of and into a field is a lot more fun than taking up a Cessna from a commercial airfield. It is much more like the experiences of a Royal Flying Corps pilot.

This month we have put together a running demo for the E3 show. The demo shows the 3D and includes an attack on a grass field near the Somme. The screenshot shows the attack in progress. Recently the animations have been going in. So now we have moving control surfaces on the aircraft; a flapping scarf for the pilot, though, at present, it doesn't show how much the aircraft is slipping sideways (Tsk. - Ed); and muzzle flash on the aircraft guns.

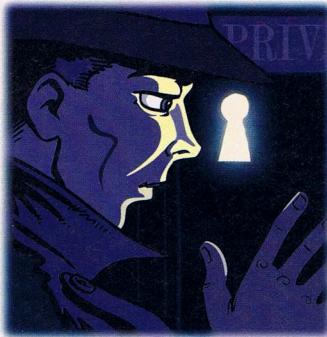
Many other animations are planned but it was important that we finished the explosions for the show. Mark wanted a big explosion to finish the demo and so he put in some 45-gallon oil drums. He wanted to outdo the standard 'A-Team' finale. Well, he got his explosions into the demo, and I'm left with the task of finding out whether they had 45-gallon oil drums in the First World War!

Rod Hyde
Rowan Software Ltd



‘THE MOST IMPORTANT PC GAME EVER’ 

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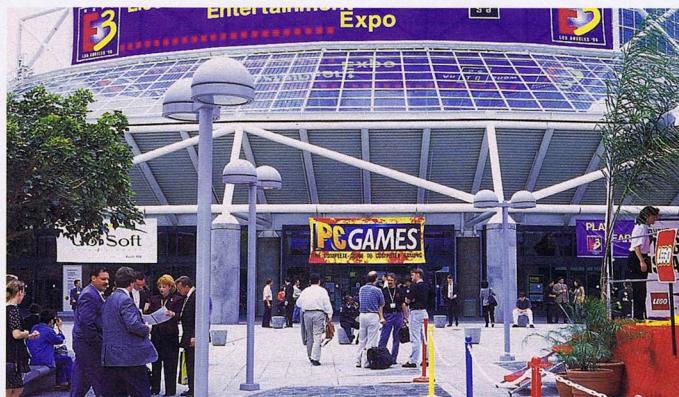


LOS ANGELES. JUST like I remember it. Too damned hot and packed with cab drivers who have no idea where they're going. I bought a street map and got the cab driver to drop me off at the Beverly Centre. My regulation black jump suit and rain coat were no good here, so I picked up a selection of the local attire. Dress up and no-one will suspect you.

So it was that, dressed in neon pink shorts and a shirt covered with floral eyeballs, I waited in line (I can speak like the locals too) for my press credentials. I used a fake business card to register. My badge read Hercule Putsch, Journalist, PC Uber. Badge round my neck I hopped in a cab and followed another cab (always the way to find the action) to a huge hotel – didn't bother taking the name. It was the establishment where Nintendo were holed up, something all the cabbies at least did know.

Sneaking into the launch of the N64, Nintendo's new 64-bit console, was child's play. I just hung around with a group of Japanese dignitaries and followed through on their coat tails.

Howard Lincoln was already on stage as I arrived, jaw-jawing about how Nintendo is best and PCs, Sony and Sega are no good. Playground tribalism lives on. But it was interesting to see a few Sega faces in the crowd.



The Spy

Our man in dark sunglasses and a raincoat went over to Los Angeles for E3. He kept the sunglasses, but threw out the mac.

Word is Sega have infiltrated the organisation at every level and know more about Nintendo than their UK distributors. Got to swap notes with an old undercover acquaintance who told me that his sources suggest that there's no way on God's Earth, ever no-never-never, that Nintendo are going to get the console out in time for Christmas this year in the UK. So, that would make Howard Lincoln a liar! Just as well for us in PC-land, though, as the games are looking very strong. Fact is, by the time the N64 actually comes out, PCs will have already evolved beyond it. And while Nintendo are planning to take the N64 into the next century, what do you think PCs will be like by then? Eh?

Spent the evening gate crashing the GT

"GT will be shipping Duke Nukem Forever, which will not, as everyone thought, be the big 3D sequel to Duke, but instead a 2D platform game."

party, where the massive US firm announced the worst-kept secret in the industry. In a glossy presentation, a man in a suit explained that Apogee, producers of the wonderful *Duke Nukem 3D*, have signed up with GT to distribute their games for the foreseeable future, thus ending US Gold's rocky relationship with the shareware supremo. *Duke* was months late in reaching the stores, but back home in the UK was already racing up the charts. Expect it to stay at the top for a long time.

Got talking to another man-in-a-suit who

told me that GT will be shipping *Duke Nukem Forever*, which will not, as everyone thought, be the big 3D sequel to *Duke*, but instead a 2D platform game. Not exactly back to basics for the Duke, but more a lusciously rendered affair with a look not dissimilar to the Super Nintendo game *Donkey Kong Country*. It's being developed by a team in New Zealand with direction from Apogee and should be ready in about a year. The man-in-a-suit also promised that the 'real' sequel to *Duke Nukem 3D* would come out in 1998 with an enhanced 3D engine.

I'm less patient than that, so plugged a PR guy (who hadn't heard of PC Uber, but liked my shirt anyway) for information about Apogee's next big 3D shooter. *Prey* is going through some major alterations and is already headed for a name change – the new name will be after the game's star, a Native American character. Unlike id with *Quake*, Apogee are tailoring the engine for more exciting environment effects and dynamic lighting. The American PR guy started to dribble as he explained how "literally anything could happen – a floor might cave in, ceilings might blow away, walls might close in, rooms might tilt 90 degrees to the right..." I cut him off and scampered away. Who knows what his dreams are like?

As ever at parties, the most interesting conversation was overheard from a couple of men arguing, faces close to each other, over a beer. One was saying, with *Duke Nukem 3D* only just out and the other two Build Engine games, *Shadow Warrior* and *Blood*, put back to later this year, that Capstone had "got one over" on Apogee. Capstone had spent hundreds of thousands of dollars licensing the 3D Realms graphics engine and then stuffed out the terribly unadventurous games *TekWar*, *Witchaven* and *Witchaven 2*. I agreed with part two of the beery debate, however, the fellow who maintained that the three Capstone releases were terribly rushed. All three titles met with pretty abysmal sales, so maybe Apogee had got it right by taking their time over *Duke Nukem 3D*.

For a split second I broke my cover to join the argument. My stock broker had heard a rumour that Capstone had to abort a public offering of their stock around February. I dropped this into the conversation and got a very rude look indeed from the got-one-over guy. Turned out Capstone had also been losing key personnel and there was a good chance some of them were at the party. I high-tailed it out of there. I had my report to write up, and it looked just too suspicious that a beach bum in neon pink was offering stock market information. Tomorrow I'd dress more subtly.



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Digital Integration



WITH THE feverish excitement of *Deathmatch Doom*, *Quake* and *Warcraft II* gripping the nation like a large and expensive strip of Velcro, it is natural that British Telecom should realise that there's still money burning a hole in the public's pocket. Don't play these games on an office network or over the Internet. Use your telephone to connect to other game players around the country.

Amidst the praise offered up to BT by the PC press, a small voice calls up to the telecommunications god. It is the voice of The Hot Spot, and we're not very happy.

British Telecom Wireplay: Good afternoon, Wireplay support.

PC Gamer: We're ringing to find out how the Wireplay test is going.

BT: We are in a test and it seems to be going according to plan. We've had a few bugs ironed out for the next version which are mainly to do with the Pace and the Multitech modems and the ATI video cards.

PCG: This is the problem where, if you had a Pace modem, you couldn't connect without changing some settings. Pace modems are quite popular, aren't they?

BT: They should be fixed in the next release.

PCG: When is the next release coming out?

BT: I haven't been told the exact date yet.

PCG: It's going according to plan...

BT: But it should be in the next couple of weeks.

PCG: Everyone on the test having fun at the moment, are they?

BT: We've got a couple of customers who seem to be disgruntled...

PCG: You must be rather used to that at British Telecom...

BT: On the whole, everyone seems to be quite happy. We've had some response from the general public who have heard about the service.

PCG: How much does it cost?

BT: The software is actually free. It's the connection you pay for while you are on-line.

PCG: And how much is that?

BT: I'll just check. [Very matter-of-fact.] I think it's 2.8 pence per minute off peak.

PCG: And...

BT: Um, and round about £6 per hour peak.

The Hot Spot

British Telecom want to swell their already obese coffers with Wireplay. Soon you'll be able to play *Deathmatch Doom* over the phone and pay for the privilege.



PCG: Ten pence per minute, then.

BT: Well, yes. I think it's about 9.8 pence.

PCG: Is that just the test price, or what will be charged when the full service is available?

BT: I haven't heard anything to the contrary.

PCG: We've just rung the operator to find out how much an 0894 number costs, and they said that it was 49 pence per minute.

BT: I can't say why they might think that.

I think for the Wireplay number itself, this is the amount set up for that number.

PCG: Will it go up to 49 pence per minute when Wireplay is released?

BT: Not as far as I know.

PCG: Most companies set up free beta test

“Most companies set up free beta test programmes. Corel are even considering paying people to test their products. But you are charging people to iron out your bugs.”

programmes, and the serious software company Corel are even considering paying people to test their products. But you're charging people to iron out your bugs.

BT: It's part of the routine, to see how much people will pay for it and what periods they use it. We just want to gauge the market reaction.

PCG: So you charge guinea pigs in order to



judge how much you can stitch them for when it goes live. A lot of other companies are offering a similar service to Wireplay through either the Internet or a BBS, often with a local call number.

BT: We hope to get some games manufacturers behind us so that games will run under our interface so that there is no unauthorised software - middleware, as it were.

PCG: Wireplay sets up a network using the null modem option in games, rather than simulating an IPX network, the method used in other multi-player systems. This means that you can only have two people playing at once.

BT: We're hoping to change all that. There are plans for multi-player games in time for launch.

PCG: We should hope so. At the moment it makes far more sense for a *Doom* player to ask for his opponent's telephone number and call him directly, bypassing Wireplay completely.

BT: That's right. But it's quite early stages.

PCG: When does the beta test finish?

BT: End of June or beginning of July.

PCG: How many testers have you got?

BT: Just under 2,000 at the moment.

PCG: How long do you expect each tester to be on Wireplay throughout the test period?

BT: We have no idea, no preconceptions on how much they are going to spend.

PCG: No feedback yet?

BT: Nothing in the form of solid reports.

PCG: One hour a week? Two, five?

BT: Personally, I don't know.

PCG: What if it's just two hours a week? Two-month test period, average of six pence per minute, 2,000 testers, that's [tap tap tap on calculator] well over one hundred thousand pounds during the last stages of the test program. Not bad going.

BT: [Silence.]

PCG: *Doom* is old hat now. When are you going to have *Quake* running?

BT: Not during the test program.

PCG: British Telecom Wireplay, thank you very much.

Within an hour of this conversation, we were contacted by the smoothly confident Wireplay PR, who provided us with all the right answers. But it was too late for The Hot Spot, who found out the real truth behind this new BT gold mine.

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HELLO, GOOD evening and welcome. Some of you harder readers may remember me as the previous editor of *PC Gamer*, having sat at this august tome's helm for the best part of two years before that young upstart Davies and his malodorous cronies came along. Now I'm editor-in-chief of *PC Gamer*'s American cousin (or, more accurately, its bastard son, launched as it was by *PCG*'s original ed Matt Bielby just a few months after the UK original) based in sunny San Francisco, California. Funny how life turns out, isn't it? Well, not really but there you go.

Like *PC Gamer* in the UK, the American

"The multi-player culture has become so advanced that a game is deemed to be hardly worth getting out of the box unless it comes armed with an array of network options."

A different world

Most PC games come, of course, from across the Atlantic. But just who are these 'Americans'?



PCG is unrivalled as the number one choice of gameplayers – indeed, it's the biggest-selling PC games mag on the planet, selling a cool quarter of a million copies a month – honest injun. So Johnny (*Never use that word again. – Ed*) and I put our heads together and decided that it would be no small amount of larks if we were to bring back the old 'Letter From America' column that the mag used to have back when I was editing it. And lo, it has come to pass. And here I am.

Any old how, you probably want me to tell you that America is populated by loudmouth yanks who drive around in Ferraris eating hot dogs and shooting each other. Unfortunately this is not the case, apart from the bit about the shooting, which is quite often true across the street from where I live. I could tell you about how American PC gaming tastes are so fascinatingly different from the conservative stiff-upper-lip trends prevalent in the UK. But alas, this is also a non-starter because aside from a slight leaning towards those super-dull historical wargames that send

You may complain that *PC Gamer* harps on about how great network gaming is too much. But in America, everyone does it. It's like shooting mooses.



most of us Brits to sleep, these crazy colonials are pretty much into the same stuff we are – at the moment it's all *Warcraft II*, *Duke Nukem 3D* and multi-player *Quake*.

So, erm, maybe this USA column wasn't such a good idea after all. No, hold on. There is one BIG difference between the UK and US scene right now, and that's the massive move towards network gaming over here. Everyone knows that it's much more fun to pull the trousers down around the ankles of a human opponent than a computer when it comes to games like *Doom* and *Command & Conquer*, but in the States right now the multi-player culture has become so advanced that a game is deemed to be hardly worth getting out of the box unless it comes armed with an array of network options capable of supporting up to 16 players in whatever team configuration the combatants see fit.

And software companies are falling over each other to bow to this inexorable trend – Accolade recently announced that ALL their new games would be multi-player compatible, and LucasArts have finally answered gamers' prayers by making their new super-sexy SVGA *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter* networkable. This is, of course, A Good Thing, and given that US gaming trends tend to filter through to the UK sooner rather than later, you've got some cool stuff to look forward to between now and Christmas. The bottom line is that multi-play is quickly establishing itself as the future of PC gaming (not that anyone who's ever played network *Doom* needs any convincing of that) and for those of us with like-minded friends, at least, that's probably the best news you'll hear all year. Until next month's earth-shattering revelation, of course... PCG



Gary Whitta is editor-in-chief of the American edition of *PC Gamer*. He lives on a rather dodgy street somewhere in San Francisco.

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Viable, if not superior

After reading Jonathan Aubrey's question on PC joypads (PCG 30, May 96) I was surprised you didn't mention keyboard emulators as viable, if not superior, alternatives to joypads. One such is the Rockfile Silver Shuttle emulator, which is a fully programmable joypad with four modes. It simply plugs into the keyboard socket and the keyboard piggy-backs off it with no ill effects. It can be configured to play any game you can throw at it, notably *Descent*. I obtained mine from Express Micro Ltd.

Matthew Muston, Guernsey



Matthew speaks the truth. We tested one such joypad, the Gamestar (pictured above), in The Money Pit in PCG 30. It's good, if you're prepared to pay the necessary premium.

Keeper if his Most

Why on earth are you sending Nick Ainley (PCG 31) a copy of *Dungeon Keeper* if his Most Wanted was *Quake*?

Dovber Baram, Sheffield

Ab, no, you see. We're now getting so many Most Wanted entries that it makes more sense to compile a definitive chart from all of them, something we started doing last month. So, although Nick's Most Wanted was *Dungeon Keeper*, the overall weight of opinion favoured *Quake*. See? We apologise for any confusion.

A message to all

This is a message to all those worried readers out there that are fearful about the demise of

Cables

We expected last month's All-Time Top 100 to provoke some response, but were scarcely prepared for the murderous tirade we have received.

the 3.5-inch disk. Just remember what Guy Simmons said in PCG 30: "PAAARP. THERE IT GOES." Adam Roper, Loughborough

Somewhat miffed

I don't have a problem with your *Battleground Ardennes* coverdisk as such, I'm sure it's jolly good, but when I attempt to run the game, a message telling me what I already know, that I do not have Video For Windows, appears. As there is no mention of needing said device on the disk requirements I feel somewhat miffed.

Paul Foulweather, via e-mail

We should indeed have mentioned that Video For Windows was required, and apologise. The necessary software comes with Windows 3.1.1 onwards, but not the ageing 3.1, a fact we overlooked.



333,333,333.3

In answer to Henry Kenneth's (or was it the other way around?) letter in PCG 30, you claimed that you get several billion telephone calls a day asking about GP2. I have done some calculations, and the results are staggering.

First, I must point out that I take 'several' billion to be around eight billion. I also take eight billion to be eight thousand million (8,000,000,000) and the average phone call to be two minutes long.

There are 24 hours in a day, so that makes 333,333,333.3 phone calls an hour...

(Snip. - Ed)

...therefore, I calculate that you would need in excess of 11 million telephones and telephone operators at any one time during the day. I feel that you may have exaggerated the total somewhat, and would be pleased if you could inform me of the correct figure.

Adam Roper, Loughborough

We've checked our records, and it's definitely billions.

Obviously

I agree with Adam Roper of Loughborough. John Cogman is obviously a gorilla.

Alex Whitley, Loughborough



Top 100

Millions of readers

I feel I must complain about your Top 100 games of all time. For starters you tell us readers numerous times that so much work has gone into it, and give the impression that it's taken loads of man-hours to compile. It doesn't give me that impression. It says on the cover: "Our experts reveal the greatest PC games of all time" when it should read "Our experts forgot some of the best games ever made". I can hear the crowd roar when I say "Where the hell is Worms? Mortal Kombat 3? FIFA 96? Star Trek: A Final Unity?" All these are better than Speedball 2 in 99th place, and I'm sure millions of other readers agree with me.

And another thing. Where is *Rebel Assault*, the game that sold the CD-ROM drive? Surely this should be in the Top 100. And before you say it, I have sent in my coupon with my Top 10 on it.

It is a shame that what's normally an excellent magazine should put together a really disappointing feature. Also, putting a game that isn't finished in second place is just not professional. Your Readers Top 100 is what you should have done from the start. At least it will reflect what the games-buying public considers to be the Top 100.

Christopher Pick, Leicester

Worms? We can't see the appeal. We realise lots of people love it, but it's our Top 100. Mortal Kombat 3? A fine game, certainly, but not one we tend to play much these days. FIFA 96? We'd rather play Sensible Soccer. Star Trek: A Final Unity? Voted out, unfortunately. And, er, Rebel Assault? It may have sold CD-ROM drives but isn't, sadly, much fun. Thank you for the suggestions, though. Our Readers Top 100, which we'll be printing next month, is already looking tremendously interesting.

Proceed to tear

Do you remember the game *Warlords* which you included in your Top 100 feature in the June issue of *PC Gamer*? Well, firstly, I'm going to love you all forever for that. Secondly, just a couple of points. *Warlords* was developed by the Strategic Studies Group (SSG) which has now, I believe, been incorporated into SSI under Mindscape. In a Virgin Megastore I recently saw a strategy games compilation released by Mindscape (20 games in 1) which includes *Warlords*.

My personal favourite, however, is its successor, called, aptly enough, *Warlords II*. There are probably only two people in the world who have a copy of *Warlords II*, me

The backlash

and a friend in Wales, so you can all now proceed to tear your hair out in frustration.

Oh, and I noticed an advert in *PC Gamer* that lists *Warlords II Deluxe*. I wonder... **Firus Mazlam, via e-mail**

Mandscape do indeed publish such a compilation. For those who're interested in investigating the Warlords legend, the pack costs £19.99. We're not sure what Warlords II Deluxe might be, though.

A complete rip-off

I just thought I'd write to congratulate you on the innovative and original idea of having a Top 100 games. Which isn't, for example, a complete rip-off of the *Amiga Power* All-Time Top 100 games list, and *Amiga Power* not being a magazine that you wrote for over 50 issues, or anything like that. No.

Brett Davids, Leicester

And it's not as if, for instance, Amiga Power borrowed the idea from every other magazine about anything that there's ever been. Or that, let's say, we spent many late nights flogging our guts out to make sure the PC Gamer Top 100 was the best one ever created in the hope that you'd at least glean some enjoyment from it and perhaps display just a glimmer of appreciation. Certainly not.

Total idiocy

Well, the controversial stuff has had an effect. I'm thoroughly pissed off and disappointed in you.

First, not everyone has access to a network link or anything vaguely similar. Second, if a game is not a finished product, then it could be totally crap. We've seen it enough times before (although I realise that it's unlikely in this case).

The total idiocy of putting a test copy of a game as the second best thing of all time is, to be quite frank, farcical.

Still you are obviously gullible, so I will expect you to forward me, shall we say, £500,000 as an advance on a new game I've just thought up. I could do with the backing of the joint-best

PC mag. I don't have a plot, storyline, any characters or even a name for it yet, but I'm sure that it will be brilliant, so please revise your chart and make it number 12. (I'm not so vain as to expect an unfinished work to be in the top 10.)

Love the mag all the same.

Jez Scott, Towcester

But Quake Test patently isn't crap, as the tens of thousands of people who play it all over the world will confirm. It is, in fact, our second favourite PC game of all time, and we'd have been lying if we'd said otherwise. True, id could foul up horribly and the finished version could be awful. But that's not going to affect the Test version, which we can carry on playing instead. If you'd like to make publicly available an unfinished version of your game, we'll gladly try it out and consider it for inclusion in our next chart.

This is a disgrace!

Quake? Number 2? For all YOU know, by the time it comes out, it could be a completely different game! You don't even know that it will be released this year yet! You're usually sensible and don't conclude your opinion of a game until you've played the finished product, but this is a disgrace!

Alan Tunney, via e-mail

Or, of course, as seems more likely, the finished version of Quake will be even better than the Test version, and will supersede it in next year's Top 100.

A complete mess

Who's STUPID idea was it to put 'access restricted' stickers on the new *PC Gamer*, the stickers didn't come off properly and my copy of the magazine is now ripped and stuck together, and in a complete mess. Don't do it again, it was a dumb idea.

G Hall, via e-mail

Stick them

What did you use to stick them? Araldite? **Paul Jennings, via e-mail**

They were a bit sticky, weren't they? We slit ours open neatly with a scalpel, however.

PCG

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WITH A LITTLE HELP

If we died and went to heaven, we wouldn't be surprised to find God playing *Quake* over a network with his son and a few of the archangels. Read on to discover the divine power of almighty multi-player games. By RICHARD LONGHURST



MULTI-PLAYER GAMES THE PC GAMER WAY

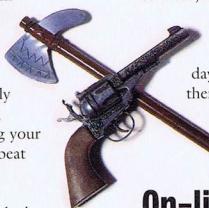
An exclusive chance for you to experience a second childhood, without any of that messy returning-to-the-womb business. Your mum'll thank you for it.

ALL YOUR LIFE YOU HAVE played games with your friends. Marbles, footie, tag, British bulldog, doctors and nurses... The list, if not endless, certainly goes on a bit. The games were simple, required little in the way of fancy props and were hugely enjoyable simply because you were playing with and against your friends. There was simply nothing better than running, jumping, shouting and trying your best because you wanted to beat your friends, and, in an ideal world, make them cry.

But then, as if you'd kicked your ball over a neighbour's fence just as it started to rain, the PC came along and changed the way you played. All of a sudden there was little else to do but go inside and play on your Jack Jones. Sit there. One person, one keyboard, one

joystick. You. On your own. With a game. Where's the fun in that?

But now that winter of rainy gameplay discontent is over. The clouds have parted, the light of your multi-player, mate-filled life is back. Thanks to better game design, local area networks, modems which you can actually get to work, and (inevitably) the Internet, you can once again run with your pals through the sun. As if intent on recreating those halcyon childhood days, game developers are falling over themselves (and each other) to pack their games with multi-player capabilities. But it's been a long time coming to the PC.



On-line gaming

Back in the Wilderness Years, well, the late '80s and early '90s, just about the only multi-player fare on offer was On-line's *Air Warrior*, a scratchy flight sim with even scratchier graphics, a game which the creators claimed "is really good fun if only you 'try it", comparing

"Even if you're lucky enough to work at an office with a PC network, you have to be unconscionably lucky to have a systems administrator benevolent enough to let you play games over it."

Then: Scalextric

Racing against a friend provided (and still does provide, for that matter) immeasurable excitement, even on the smallest back-bedroom figure-of-eight track. The lonely could, with a small piece of plastic, a short length of Sellotape and a little ingenuity, doctor one controller so a car lapped the track repeatedly at the same monotonous pace, offering as much challenge and excitement as the vast majority of computer-controlled cars in PC racing sims.

Single-player fun: 1/10
Multi-player fun: 8/10
Max players: 2 (4 if Deluxe Edition)

Now: *Fatal Racing*

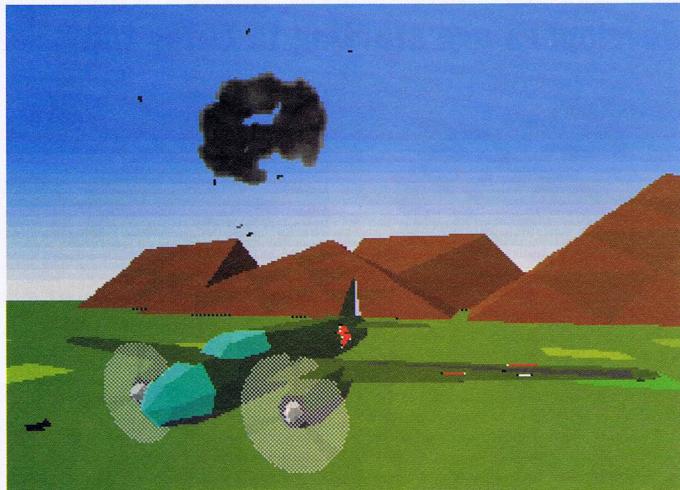
Gremlin

An okay race game in single-player mode, *Fatal Racing* is elevated to new heights of enjoyment when you're racing against your friends over a local area network. There's some satisfaction in being able to cruise past your PC opponents, but it's nothing compared with making human drivers eat dust as you take them on the inside of a particularly tight bend. Not a patch on *F1GP2* for a single player, but worth seriously considering if you have access to a network.

Single-player fun: 7/10
Multi-player fun: 8.5/10
Max players: 8



FROM YOUR FRIENDS



This, then, is the visual splendour of the game they are inclined to call *Air Warrior*. You can almost feel the flak.

the ecstasy of multi-player dogfight to snogging, and the loneliness of single-player sims to, well, you can probably guess. But they were, in a not particularly literal way, pushing water up hill. BT's hill, in fact.

Thanks in part to phone costs, and the expense and hassle of buying a modem, *Air*



Soon, all your friends will be robots and you'll be able to blow them up for real. Until that day, *Earthsiege*...



Racing fatally into a wall is so much more enjoyable when you're hooked up over a network. We think.

Warrior never took off in a big way. On-line looked to the success of The Sierra Network in the US, over which tens of thousands of people played *Red Baron* and *Battletech*, but the Americans had it cheap – with free local phone calls they could play all night and not have to pay a penny for the privilege. Actually that's not quite true – they had to pay the service a fee for each and every minute they were logged on – but then On-line had those charges too, so that was another reason for people not to take part.

The only way past the double-headed beast of phone call charges and recalcitrant modems was to avoid using the phone line altogether. This you could do in a number of ways. First up, get people to crowd round the computer, just like playing *Pong* on the Atari 2600 console. The only drawback with this approach on the PC is that it wasn't designed to be used by more than one person at a

Then: Tag

With no equipment and very few rules, tag was one of the first games we all learned how to play. It provided countless hours of playground enjoyment, with the controversial 'kiss tag' variant doubling up as a way of getting to know girls. The only requirement was an area large enough to run around in – constantly tripping over skipping ropes and slipping on marbles threatened not only to ruin the game, but also to draw your antics to the attention of the dinner lady (and the back of her hand). *Single-player fun: 0/10*

Multi-player fun: 7/10
Max players: Unlimited



Now: *Dynablast*

UBI Soft/Hudson Soft

The nearest thing to tag on the PC is Hudson Soft's outrageously enjoyable bomb-dropping maze game. Instead of tapping an opponent with your hand, you have to drop bombs which ideally detonate just as a luckless player is in the vicinity. With up to five players crowding round the PC (a dongle supplied with the game enables you to plug in two digital joysticks, along with two on the keyboard and an analogue joystick) the scope for riotous gaming is immense. *Single-player fun: 6/10*
Multi-player fun: 10/10
Max players: 5

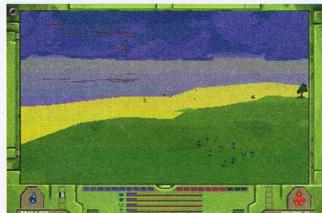
time – sharing a keyboard is far from ideal and you're lucky if you can get a machine to recognise a single joystick let alone two.

Play any beat-'em-up on the PC and you're in for a totally different experience than playing it on a console or in an arcade, a fact largely due to how you have to physically position yourself to play. Being cramped around a keyboard or sitting upright at a desk somehow detracts from your enjoyment. Even split-screen games like the arcade-style racer *Lotus: The Ultimate Challenge* feel different and ultimately unsatisfying. The irritating exception that proves this rule is the bomb-fest *Dynablaster*, which is at its best when five players are crammed in ridiculous postures round a single screen.

Serial links

The next multi-player option is to link two PCs with a serial cable – great because it only costs about £15 and you don't need a phone line. The big drawback here is that you have to lug your PC round to your mate's house. It has historically been one of the most popular multi-player game features, even though not many people actually use it. In the dim and distant past, *Populous* enabled you to play with a friend over a serial link, while more recently the *Battle Isle* series, *Doom*, *Warcraft II*, *Command & Conquer*, *Conquest Of The New World* and *Descent 2* secured themselves extra gameplay points with a two-player serial link option.

If two people can have so much more fun than one, just imagine what a riot you'd have if eight of you could get together in one game, which is exactly what a local area network (LAN) enables you to do. Once entirely the domain of dull business programs,



(Above) *Battle Isle 3* misguidedly attempts to recreate the opening scene from *Fantasy Island*. (Right) *Conquest Of The New World* is tedious beyond belief in single-player mode, but is better with two.

Then: Raps

Whacking your mates over the knuckles with a tightly gripped deck of cards was a strange way to spend your lunch break, but for many a sadistic schoolboy, the chance of hurting a friend is worth the risk that they'll be hurt themselves. To be quite honest, we can't remember which card game was actually played as a precursor to the loser's punishment, but we can remember knuckles being flattened by weeks of abuse. Not a game you'd have an awful lot of fun playing on your own.

Single-player fun: 0
Multi-player fun: 5/10
Max players: 8



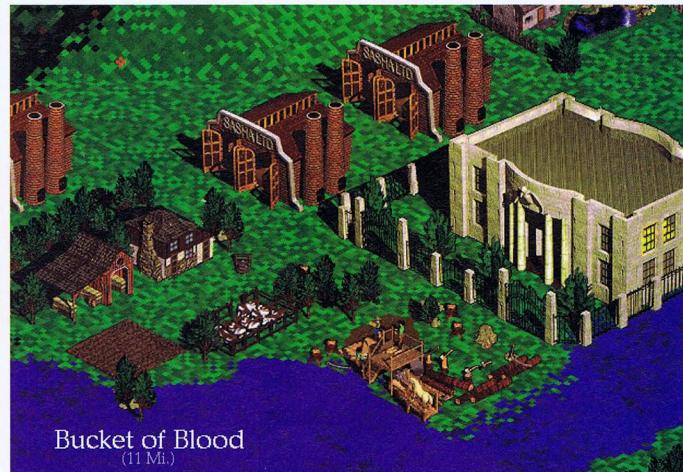
"In the last year, the rise and rise of the Internet has sent PC owners scurrying to buy modems, creating a massive market for multi-player games which developers are starting to cater for."



Command & Conquer owes much of its popularity to its multi-player options. It does around here at least.

file sharing and so on, the LAN came of age when developers like Bullfrog found that it was rather a wheeze to have an eight-player game of *Syndicate*. Ever since, the LAN option has become almost as common as the serial link, popping up in games such as *Doom 2*, *Warcraft II* (again) and *Fatal Racing*. The biggest drawback with LAN gaming is that you probably don't have access to such a

network. Even if you're lucky enough to work at an office with a PC network, you have to be unconscionably lucky to have a systems administrator benevolent enough to let you play games over it.



Bucket of Blood
(11 Mi.)

Now: Any beat-'em-up

Up up up down towards away fire. It is with combinations like these that the beat-'em-up expert makes his mark, yet defeating a computer-controlled boss with a crushing dragon punch or karate kick offers little in the way of lasting gratification. Against a friend, though, the game takes on a whole new meaning as you picture your foot smashing into your chum's face, breaking the bridge of his nose causing blood to flood down the front of his Daz-

white T-shirt. Remember: it's only a game.
Single-player fun: 4/10
Multi-player fun: 7/10
Max players: 2



Mooooooooortaaaaaaaaal Kombaaaaaaaaat, three. Rest of the World, nil. Smarting knuckles ahoy.



(Left) KALI (<http://www.kali.net/>) is an essential stop-off point for all you wired PC gamers.

(Below) As is DWANGO, an on-line gaming system which is currently over there, but which is destined to come over here. Soon.

The Internet

Until recently, things did not look good for mass-market multi-player games on the PC, but there was a glimmer of hope in the form of the Internet. Computer-savvy students who had access to the Net through university soon found it was possible to use it to chat in real time to others on the system. The next step was the creation of multi-user dungeons (MUDs), text-based role-playing games which were created dynamically by dungeon masters and explored in real time by all and sundry. Even though MUDs provide intense gaming experiences, they are impenetrable to all but the most computer literate, offering neither the visual appeal or sophistication of commercially released games.

In the last year, the rise and rise of the Internet has sent PC owners scurrying to buy modems, creating a massive market for multi-player games which developers are starting to cater for. There are several ways of playing games over a modem. The most basic works on the same principle as the serial link option, except you dial your friend's computer over the phone line instead of plugging them straight into each other. Alternatively, you can dial into the Internet using your regular account and



play a World Wide Web-based game such as the *SimCity*-style *Neropolis* (accessible at <http://www.delphi.com/>). Or you can use special software which lets you run network games like *Warcraft II* over a modem (take a look at <http://www.kali.net/>). Or you can buy a game that has been specially tailored for the Internet, like MicroProse's *CyberNet*.

A lot of options. A lot of faff. A lot of hassle setting the damn things up. Wouldn't it be great if there was one service which you could just dial into with your modem and then select a game from a menu? People could be just waiting there to play with you and everything. And it wouldn't cost much more than £1.50 an hour to play. You could play *Descent* or *Doom 2* or basically any game that



has multi-player features. We've even thought of a name for it - Wireplay. And we've decided that BT would be a good company to do it.

But it wouldn't be fair if BT did it on their own. Oh no. It would be better if an American company had a similar system, called something like DWANGO (<http://www.dwango.com/>). Same thing, except it's only available in the States at the moment. But it's coming over here. Soon. And what would make it really interesting if DWANGO was actually better than Wireplay which, to be honest, trials have shown to be a cludgy, slow bit of DOS4GW code.

Future developments

And what else of the future of multi-player games? It's bright to say the least. Microsoft, for example, have announced a new set of Windows 95 programming technologies for on-line games and service providers. The DirectPlay Internet Gaming Architecture is based on the Big M's DirectX software development technology, and is already supported by the likes of LucasArts, Mindscape and SegaSoft.

In 1995, it was estimated by Datamonitor that 12% of UK households have PCs, of which 21% have modems. By 1997, 18% will have PCs, of which 31% will be equipped with a modem. Internet-based gaming was believed to have generated sales of £6.5 million in 1995 and is estimated to earn £16.5 million in 1996. Some analysts believe that by the year 2000, the UK Internet gaming market will be worth £50 million of a £750 million global industry.

More modems in more computers. Competition in the telecoms industry means cheaper phone calls. Developers specifically writing multi-player games. *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter*. High-res SVGA with texture-mapped ships. *Quake*. Say no more. *Unreal* from Epic. Gremlin's *Euro 96* 16-player football action. The new *Ultima*. Ooh.



A TIE Bomber explodes in one of LucasArts' great new multi-player games. Expect to see more of this. You can play with 19 friends in *Euro 96*, apparently.

Then: Cowboys and Indians

Hide behind a tree, flatten your palm, make your mouth into the shape of an 'O', say 'Awwwwwwww' and repeatedly hit yourself in the mouth. You are now an Indian. Cowboy: run about madly, fingers in the shape of a gun, shouting 'Pee-owwwwwww'. Even the greatest games sound daft when you try to explain them on paper, but Cowboys and Indians was incredible fun - just split into two teams, add imagination and set about killing each other with gay abandon.

Single-player fun: 1/10
Multi-player fun: 7/10
Max players: Unlimited



Now: Quake Test

id/GT Interactive
You can split into as many teams as you like with *Quake* - eight teams of one seems to be a popular choice around here, but ganging up on unfortunate victims is also a popular pastime. Essentially, *Quake Test* on a local area network is Quaarr on the PC, except it's a lot more fun because you get better weapons and don't get incredibly sweaty while you're playing.
Single-player fun: 1/10
Multi-player fun: 10/10
Max players: 8



All the guns in *Quake* are big, especially this rocket launcher, which is especially big.

EVERYBODY'S DOING IT - WHY DON'T YOU?

There are loads of different ways to engage in multi-player PC gaming fun, and you don't need to be a complete beard to work out how to do it. These, then, are the options...

1. Gather round

You will need: One PC, up to four friends, up to two analogue joysticks, up to two digital joysticks.

Technical knowledge required: None.

Cost: £0 (assuming you've already got the joysticks).

How to do it:

1. Select your software – say, *Dynablaster* or that new *Asteroids* game.
2. Install it and plug in your joysticks.
3. Run the game, configure the controllers for each player using the set-up screen.
4. Enjoy yourselves.

What can go wrong: Nothing really, except

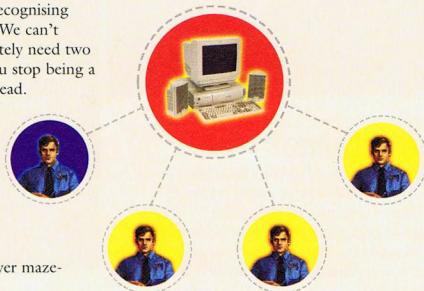
your PC might have difficulty recognising two analogue joysticks at once. We can't think of any games that desperately need two analogue joysticks, so one of you stop being a pansy and use the keyboard instead.

Info: Digital joysticks (best for games like *Dynablaster* and *Sensible Soccer*) cost around £10-£15 and are available from any mail order outfit or computer shop you care to mention.

Make sure you play:

DynaBlaster (UBI Soft) – 5-player maze-bombing madness.

Rampart (Hit Squad) – 3-player castle-bombing madness.



2. Serial link

You will need: Two PCs, one friend, a serial cable (the longer the better), a joystick each (depending on the game).

Technical knowledge required: Minimal.

Cost: Around £15 for the serial cable.

How to do it:

1. Put both computers in the same room.
2. Look at the back of them. There will be two serial ports – a 9-pin one called COM1 and a 25-pin one called COM2. Chances are, your mouse is plugged into COM1, so rush out and buy a 25-pin to 25-pin female-to-female serial cable. Plug one



end of it into each computer – if you've got a modem, that's probably already plugged into COM2, so take it out first.

3. Select your software.
4. Install the game on both computers.



With some games you need to own two copies to play in two-player mode, but we like *Warcraft II* because you only need one copy of it to have a two-player game.

5. Go to the appropriate set-up screen and tell the game you're serial linking over COM2.

6. Play on.

What can go wrong: It might not work. Try using COM1 instead of COM2 – you can buy a 9-pin-to-9-pin cable or get some of those funny little connector widgets that enable you to plug a 25-pin doobrey into a 9-pin wotsit. One probably came with your mouse to enable you to plug it into a 25-pin socket (which you'll need to do if your serial cable is going into COM1). Failing that, try another cable.

Info: You can get a serial cable in Tandy or Dixon's. Otherwise try Evesham Micros (01386 765500) or Silica (0181 309 1111).

Make sure you play:

Command & Conquer – 2-player high-tech death-and-destruction madness.

Descent 2 (Interplay) – 2-player shoot-'em-up 3D madness.

Then: Football

"Coming for a kickabout in the park?" It was with these immortal words that many a child was lured away from a couple of hours in front of *Grange Hill* and the early evening news to a game of footie down the rec and some sneaky experiments with fags. The boy who owned the ball would always get arsey and/or beaten up before it got dark, running home to blub to mother, who would return with a broom stick to 'get' the others. Small boys. Jumpers for goalposts. Indeed.

Single-player fun: 1/10 (2 if you've got a wall)

Multi-player fun: 8/10

Max players: 22



Now: *Actua Soccer/Euro 96*

Gremlin

Humiliation, that's the name of the game. Thumping five into the back of the net before half time is an infinitely more attractive proposition when you're sitting next to the poor blighter who's on the receiving end. Computers feel no pain and offer no emotional challenge to your superiority. It's not just about sportsmanship, it's about gamesmanship.

Single-player fun: 6/10

Multi-player fun: 8/10

Max players: 2-20



Good to see that they cut the grass like that. Ready for a game of chess after the match, probably.



3. Modem

You will need: Two PCs, one friend, a modem each, access to two phone lines, a joystick each (depending on the game).

Technical knowledge required: Minimal to low.

Cost: £100 for an ordinary 14,400bps modem, £150 for a fast (and infinitely preferable) 28,800bps model. And some spare change to pay your phone bill.

How to do it:

1. Position both computers close to the phone sockets in their respective rooms (each needs to be a different line).

2. Buy a modem each. Check the modem comes with all the cables. If it doesn't, ask what cables are required and buy them, too.

3. Install the modems – plug the phone jack into the phone line and the cable into your serial port – COM2 is most likely



because nearly all modems come with a 25-pin cable.

4. Select your software (we like *Warcraft II*) and buy two copies of it if necessary.

5. Go to the appropriate set-up screen and tell it you're playing over a modem (you usually need to tell the game which make and what speed it is) connected to COM2. One player has to set his game to make the call (he'll be footing the phone bill) while the other has to set his ready to answer.

6. The calling player hits the dial button and listens to his modem squawk. The answering player watches in amazement as messages appear on his screen as if by magic.

7. Play on (and make sure you send each other lots of puerile insults). Oh yes, and don't pick up your phone because it'll make a horrible noise and might make the game crash.

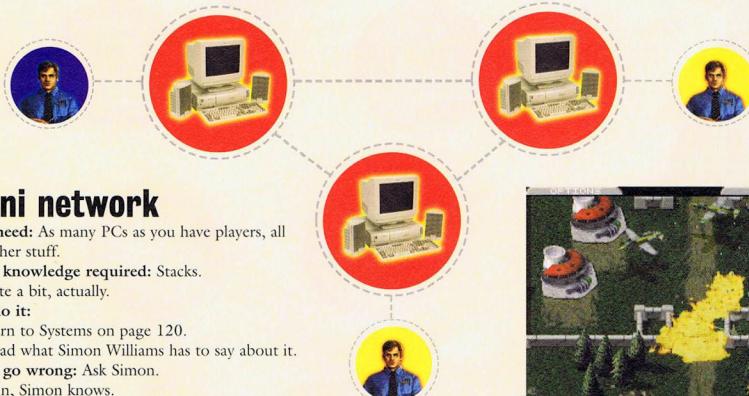
What can go wrong: Lots with modems, unfortunately. If the modem makes no noise at all, check that you've entered its details into the game correctly and that you've chosen the right COM port – if there isn't an option the exactly matches your modem, choose either 'Hayes compatible' or 'use factory settings'. If the modem tries to make a connection and fails, the game might not have the right set-up commands for your modem – check the manual and the README file because these often contain special instructions for modem users.

Info: When choosing a modem, it's best to go for a popular make such as the US Robotics Sportster (£175 is the street price for a 28,800 model – 0800 225252) or the Hayes Internet Kit (£175 for the 28,800 version – 01252 775577).

Make sure you play:

Warcraft II (Zabla) – 2-player Orc-killing city-building medieval madness.

Doom (id) – 2-player monster-killing 3D madness.



4. Mini network

You will need: As many PCs as you have players, all sorts of other stuff.

Technical knowledge required: Stacks.

Cost: Quite a bit, actually.

How to do it:

1. Turn to Systems on page 120.

2. Read what Simon Williams has to say about it.

What can go wrong: Ask Simon.

Info: Again, Simon knows.

Make sure you play: Simon can tell you.



Then: Monopoly

In the days before Trivial Pursuit, why did your parents only ever want to play Monopoly? Settling down to play you knew only three things: dad would always get the car, mum would pretend not to notice when you landed on her hotels, and each game would last about three hours. And things didn't get much better when you were playing with an imaginary friend and you conspired to rob the bank.

Single-player fun: 0/10

Multi-player fun: 1/10

Max players: 6



Now: Monopoly

Westwood Studios

A faithful recreation of the board-game, Westwood's version not only enables you to huddle round your PC with your friends, but you can log on to the Monopoly Web site

(<http://www.monopoly.com/>)

and get bored by playing against fellow masochists anywhere in the world.

Quite why you'd want to is another matter entirely.

Single-player fun: 1/10

Multi-player fun: 2/10

Max players: 6



Did you know they do a European Community Monopoly now? With Ecus and everything. Stuart told me that.

5. Local area network

You will need: A job in an office with a PC-based LAN (preferably at a magazine like *PC Gamer* or a PC games developer), some friends who don't mind staying after work, a systems manager who doesn't mind you playing games (if such a beast exists).

Technical knowledge required: Minimal (to get the right job). Stacks (to build a LAN for yourself).

Cost: £0 (they pay you to do the job). More than you could imagine otherwise.

How to do it:

1. Assuming you have a local area network already set up and have secured the relevant permission from whomsoever is in charge of it, first you need to select and install the game (we rather like *Quake Test*).

2. Download the installation program and install the game.

3. Read the README file.

4. Set up a server on one PC by typing `quake -listen -map test1` at the DOS prompt.

5. The other players run *Quake* and type 'connect' from the command line within the game. That's about it.

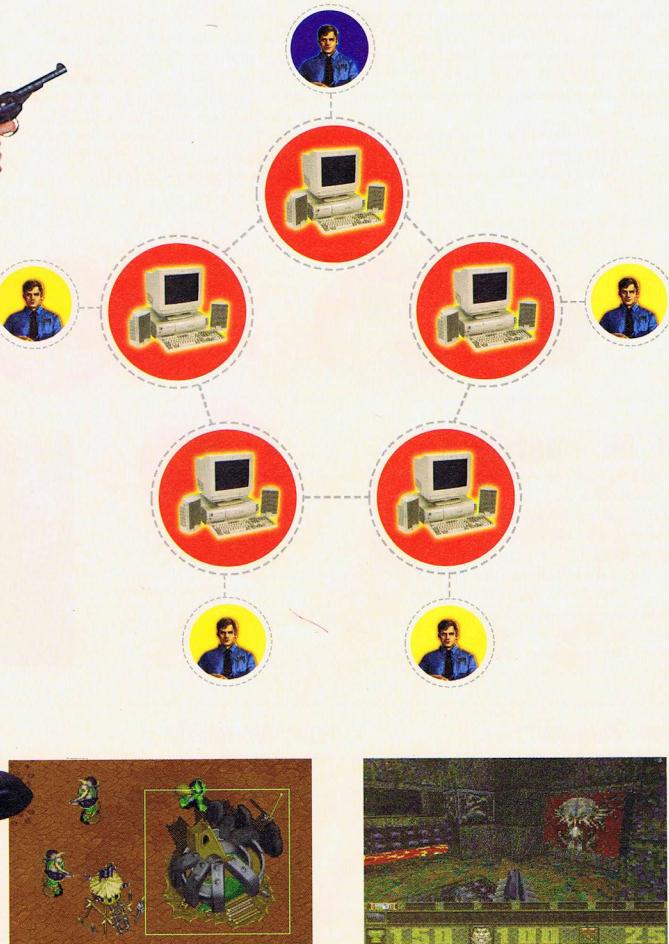
What can go wrong: You can get found out. Providing your network is established, individual PCs might crash occasionally, but you won't have any major problems.

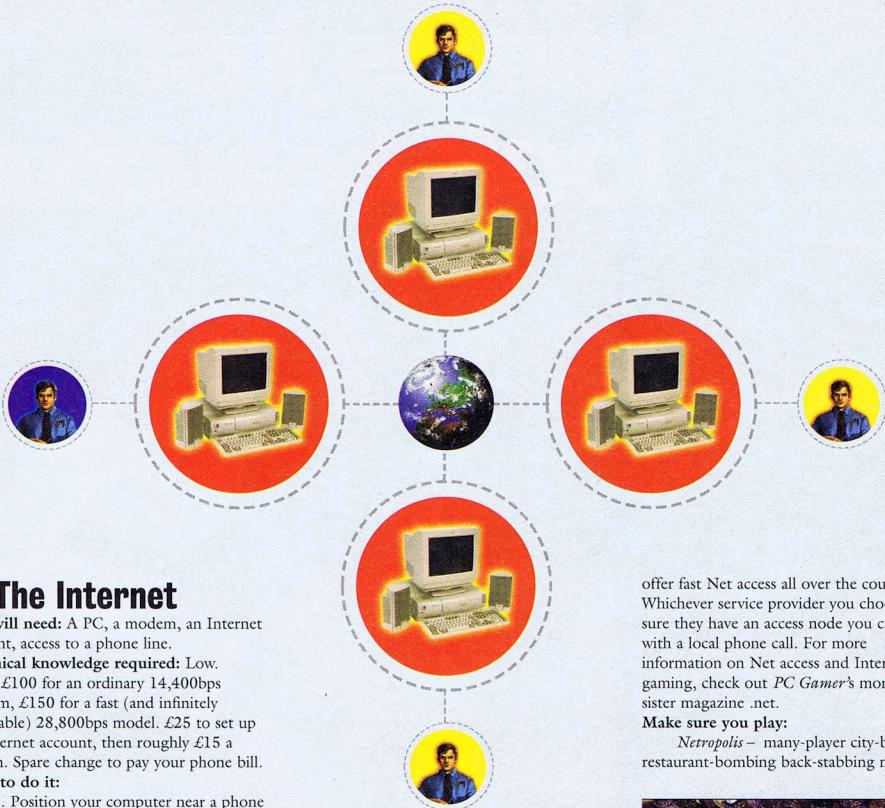
Info: *Quake Test* can be downloaded from *PC Gamer*'s home page at <http://www.futurenet.co.uk/>. Future Publishing's personnel manager is Nichole Hunt and she's at 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW (should you want a job here).

Make sure you play:

Quake Test (id) – 8-player deathmatch mega-gun madness.

Warcraft II (ZablaC) – 8-player orc-killing city-building medieval madness.





6. The Internet

You will need: A PC, a modem, an Internet account, access to a phone line.

Technical knowledge required: Low.

Cost: £100 for an ordinary 14,400bps modem, £150 for a fast (and infinitely preferable) 28,800bps model. £25 to set up an Internet account, then roughly £15 a month. Spare change to pay your phone bill.

How to do it:

1. Position your computer near a phone socket, buy a modem and set-up an Internet account.

2. Select the game you want to play. We recommend *Netropolis* because it's one of the few decent Internet-only games.

3. Log on to the Net, access the *Netropolis* Web site (<http://www.delphi.com/>), download the game installer and install the game.

4. Enjoy yourself.

What can go wrong: Not much. Provided you get your modem working with your Internet service provider's software (a decreasingly difficult task as time goes on), there aren't any hassles to be had at all.

Info: For modem contacts see (3) above. Pipex (0500 474739), Demon (0181 371 1000), Planet Internet (0500 345400) and the Microsoft Network (0345 002000) all

offer fast Net access all over the country. Whichever service provider you choose, make sure they have an access node you can dial with a local phone call. For more information on Net access and Internet gaming, check out *PC Gamer*'s monthly sister magazine .net.

Make sure you play:

Netropolis – many-player city-building restaurant-bombing back-stabbing madness.



check out *PC Gamer* issue 24 (see page 119 for back issues) or call Wireplay on 0345 577577. The system is expected to go live at the end of the summer.

Make sure you play: Something else until they make it cheaper and faster.

7. Wireplay

You will need: A PC, a modem, access to a phone line.

Technical knowledge required: Low.

Cost: £100 for an ordinary 14,400bps modem, £150 for a fast (and infinitely preferable) 28,800bps model. Final prices for Wireplay have yet to be decided – a usage charge of 10p a minute during the day has been imposed on the 1,500 householders unlucky enough to be part of the trial.

How to do it:

1. Get yourself on the Wireplay trial program, which you can't do now because it's already started. If you were on it, you'd get a CD, and some easy-to-follow instructions, which essentially tell you to do this...

2. Install the software, enter your user profile, tell it what sort of modem you're using and which COM port it's connected, and which games you have installed on your machine – *Descent* (1 or 2), *Virtual Pool*, *Command & Conquer*, *Doom* and *Warcraft II* are supported for the time being.

3. Dial the special flat-rate 0894 number.

4. Use the on-line menus to join or challenge someone to a game, or propose a new game.

5. Get a little bit frustrated because it's all a bit slow and clunky.

What can go wrong: The usual modem problems. Wireplay offers help at support@wireplay.com or you can call the help desk on 0345 577577.

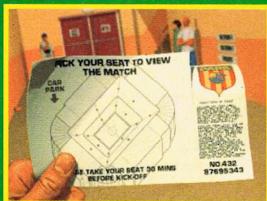
Info: For more information on Wireplay,

SET UP YOUR OWN NETWORK NOW!

If you're positively bursting to set yourself up with a local area network, turn directly to *Systems* on page 120 to find out how to do it. We have gone to no considerable expense to arrange for the UK's foremost networking guru to furnish you with the appropriate information.

PC

Some soccer games just look beautiful...



**PC CD-ROM
&
PLAYSTATION**

PlayStation® and "PlayStation" are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.



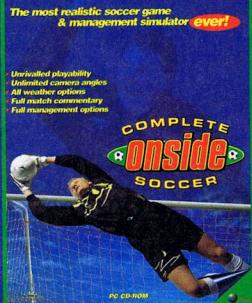
A photograph of three women in soccer uniforms posing together. They are wearing blue, maroon, and white jerseys with "ST" and "FIFA" logos, and black shorts. They are standing on a blue background.

**"The most realistic soccer game
& management simulator" ever!**

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Release Dates

June - PC CD-ROM

July - PLAYSTATION

Available from all good stores.

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Walton-On-Thames, Surrey KT12 1AP
Tel: 01932 222 232 Fax: 01932 252 702
Email: 100622.3702@compuserve.com
web site: www.telstar.co.uk

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**...only one
really lets you
play!**

Space Hulk 2

Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	Key Game
Format	CD-ROM
Price	\$45
Minimum System	486/66, 8MB RAM, x2 CD-ROM, Windows 95, SVGA
Recommended	Pentium 90, x4 CD-ROM
Sound Support	SoundBlaster
Release Date	June 25th

Fed up with those *Doom* clones? Add a bit of strategy to your blasting...

THE IMAGE OF A man being shredded by an inhuman fanged monstrosity is a difficult one to forget. That's why the bug hunt scene in the film *Aliens* has had such a dramatic impact upon our disturbed imaginations ever since 1985, when a squad of gung-ho marines set out to "kick bug-eyed monster ass". Jauntily they descended into the bowels of a labyrinthine hellscape, only to be promptly chewed up and spat out by lethal alien predators. Of course, we all know how we would react in similar



(Above) The squad pose for a final team photo prior to the inevitable slaughter awaiting them.

(Above-right) Sergio is about to call in sick.

(Right) There's only one language these genestealers understand, and it comes from the barrel of a gun.



Mons

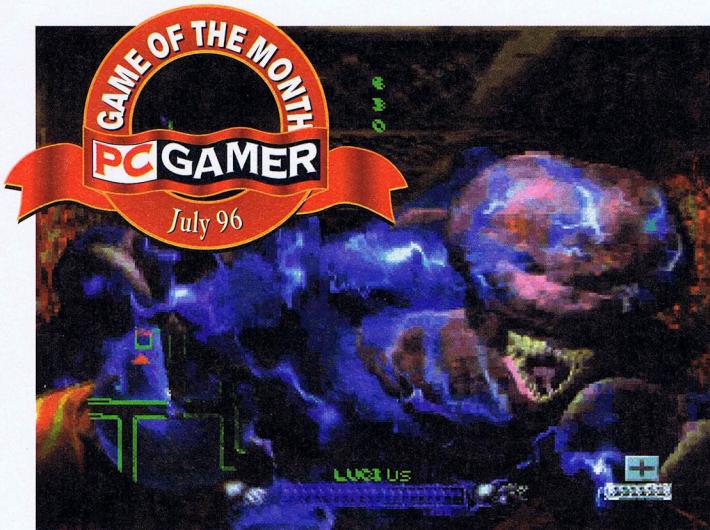
circumstances – with blind panic and an urgent request for mummy – and *Space Hulk 2* captures this adrenaline-pumping atmosphere brilliantly, using a compelling blend of strategy and first-person-perspective blasting mayhem.

In the *Space Hulk* universe, the ecological niche of Quintessential Alien Horror is occupied by the 'genestealers', who infest derelict wrecks known as space hulks. They must be exterminated with extreme prejudice, and in order to do just that, you take charge of

"In the Space Hulk universe, the ecological niche of Quintessential Alien Horror is occupied by the 'genestealers'."

a squad of terminator space marines, humanity's finest pest control experts. Armed and armoured to the teeth, these chaps are





July 96

ter

mustard keen to purge alien abominations, even though they'll almost certainly be torn to bits in the bloody process.

The action in *Space Hulk 2* comes in two distinct flavours: first-person perspective and strategic overview. It's the first-person mode that really gives the game its atmosphere. Here, you control one of your squad members via his head-up display, primed to blow the

"Terminated 'stealers explode messily, littering the place with limbs, but inevitably they close in, and then you're dogfood."

head off whatever lurks in the enveloping gloom as you manoeuvre through the claustrophobic labyrinth. The tension escalates as you hear distant clangs echoing eerily around the corridors and an increasingly urgent pinging sound as your radar registers contact. You scope about the corridors trying to gauge the direction of the attack from the bestial growls of the 'stealers, then it's time to back off into a corner panic-firing as your scanner is filled with hordes of incoming aliens. In combat, the action is fast and desperate as waves of 'stealers attack and you drill them with satisfyingly cacophonous blasts from your bolter. Terminated 'stealers explode messily, littering the place with limbs, but inevitably they close in, and then you're dogfood as a

Frying tonight: In this scenario, your only chance is to electrocute the genestealers with your power glove.

razor-sharp claw punches through your helmet.

This is where the strategic option comes in handy, as you take the role of co-ordinating commander directing up to ten terminators. Thus you can formulate a vague plan to ensure that your men support each other and don't get picked off one by one. In this mode, you view the entire level on the mother scanner, which shows the positions of all your troops, as well as enemy concentrations. By means of a slick system of icons, you cycle through your terminators and give them a series of orders, which they follow automatically. You can then watch events unfold from the planning screen or switch back to a squad member, knowing that the rest of the team aren't just standing back applauding the heroics.

The best way to play *Space Hulk 2* is to constantly switch back and forth between these modes using 'freeze-time'. This is basically a time-out which enables you to pause the game for a limited period, switch to the strategic view and re-issue commands to repel the coming onslaught. Freeze-time adds dramatically to the tension. It runs out rapidly, pressuring you to think fast – if you dither, the game recommences before you've instructed your men and 'stealers will be at their throats while you watch helplessly.



You control between one and ten terminators at once.

Duel and Duality

These are the two control modes on offer in *Space Hulk*. The first-person perspective is the most exciting, but the cunning commander will switch rapidly between the two, speed-chess style.



On the planning screen you can check the progress of the entire squad. Although sometimes it's best if you don't know everything.



In your face: You personally control a single terminator in this view. Which means the kiss of death for the unfortunate Azrael.



Genestealers are deadly in hand-to-hand combat, so keeping them at a distance is essential. Oh dear.

However, pitching back into first-person mode for a while enables you to replenish freeze-time and gain another strategic respite.

It's this clever interplay between strategy and shoot-'em-up action which gives *Space Hulk 2* an extra dimension compared to *Doom*-style affairs. Sure, the action isn't as fast or as smooth, but that's partly due to the nature of the beast – having terminators bounding about at the speed of pumas would have destroyed the sense of claustrophobia. In any case, with lightning-fast 'stealers swarming in from all directions, the whole experience is disorientating enough already.

Graphically, *Space Hulk 2* is good rather

Once more into the breach...

So, should hardened *Space Hulk* veterans come back for another dose? Not half! *Space Hulk* has been totally overhauled since the original was released in 1993. The concept is the same but the execution is much better.

Graphically, it now looks believable, with loads of tastefully drawn hulk interiors and slickly animated 'stealers. You now also have complete freedom of movement – a vast improvement over the abrupt frame-by-frame animation of the original.

The new version has 38 missions, many of which are completely new. But the most important change is the radical advance in the AI routines for the 'stealers. No longer are they meatheads who blunder straight into your fire; instead, they display a malign cunning by lurking around corners waiting until there's enough of them to risk an attack. Cowards.

This development is all the more worrying when you discover that in some missions your arms have suddenly been rendered obsolete by the appearance of chaos space marines and genestealer hybrids who shoot back.

If you loved the original, there's no reason why you can't fall in love all over again, especially when you consider the network deathmatch options. If not, perhaps now is the time to give *Space Hulk* a second chance.



than awesome, but you become so engrossed in keeping the 'stealers at bay that you just don't notice the occasional pixelation. There are also lots of nice touches: for example, every time you plug a genestealer, its brains redecorate the walls, and after a while you find yourself wading through corridors knee deep in alien corpses.

On the atmosphere front, however, speech is where *Space Hulk* 2 really scores. As your men advance, they keep up a constant nervous chatter on the com-net. Sometimes, when



you're in the thick of it, their battle cries and death rattles are the only way you can gauge how well things are going. Even better, these messages often save your life, as nearby comrades in arms warn you of the direction from which an impending attack is coming.

The scope of *Space Hulk* 2 is vast. There are plenty of missions to play through, each one offering fresh objectives and putting new forces at your disposal. Particularly well done are the linked missions, which form an entire cleansing campaign. In these campaigns, your surviving terminators gain experience, so as you progress you can send the most combat-hardened terminators into the thickest fighting.

Yet it is my solemn duty to inform you

"Don't expect to just slip comfortably behind the keyboard and master everything immediately."

that *Space Hulk* 2 suffers from two flaws which may mar your enjoyment somewhat. The first is that, initially, the game seems overwhelmingly hard. The control system is rather complex and your foe implacable, so don't expect to just slip comfortably behind



(Above) This genestealer doesn't fancy his chances in a fair fight and is off to get his mates.
(Left) Shoot first, ask questions later...



the keyboard and master everything immediately. Prepare to persevere.

The game's other problem is that it can seem repetitive. The missions are often formulaic, feeling like a race in which cunning tactics are redundant and it's simply a question of managing to dash terminators to the objective before they're all minced. Moreover, scything down endless hordes of 'stealers can feel like mowing the grass after a while. There are other foes in the game, but there should be more variation and they should appear more frequently to provide a steady stream of fresh challenges to the player. The various weapons, too, are all a little bland, without enough imagination to enable the player to become fully immersed in the *Space Hulk* experience.

But my bug-hunting pleasure was undiminished by these quibbles. *Space Hulk* 2 is a fine game with stomach-knotting tension and blasting kicks aplenty. It forces you to identify with your terminators, and the fear is palpable as your carefully conceived tactics unravel and you watch, frozen, while all your men meet gruesome ends. A refreshing change from all the recent *Doom* clones. MARK DONALD

PC GAMER – THE VERDICT

Flawed but highly atmospheric blast, with a welcome mix of strategy and visceral gunplay.

86%

INTERACTIVE MAGIC PRESENTS

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

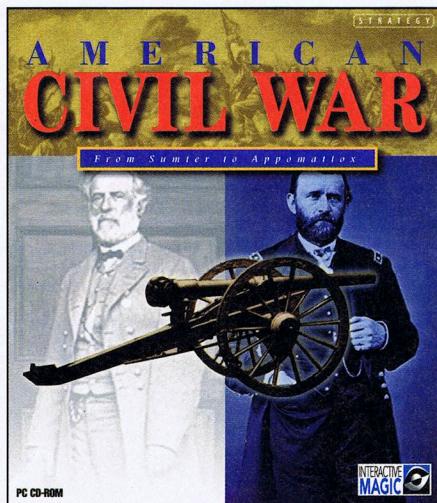
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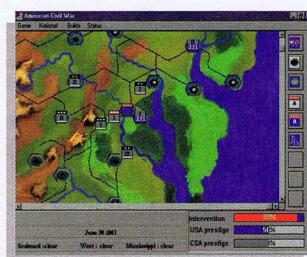
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Return Fire



Publisher	Time Warner
Developer	Silent
Format	CD-ROM
Price	\$40
Minimum System	486/66, 8Mb RAM, Win 95
Recommended	Pentium, 16Mb RAM
Sound Support	Windows-compatible soundcards
Release Date	Out now

What if you want to play against a pal, but haven't got a network? May we recommend this.

CONFOUND you, Nash!" I have brought Jonathan's forces to their knees. His defences lie in ruins, all his gun turrets destroyed, his headquarters crushed, and the bulk of his tanks, helicopters and rocket launchers long since expended. All that remains is for me to capture his flag and carry it back triumphantly to my base.

"PC Gamer's readers deserve better than to have blocky, crudely coloured pixels kicked in their faces."

But still he will not yield. With one of his few surviving jeeps he has taken his flag and is racing with it toward the opposite corner of the map. I watch as he speeds out of range of my lumbering tank, darting between exploding shells



Helicopter meets tank beside the sea. But they're not here to make a sand-castle. Or, indeed, to eat ice-cream.

Escal

from my automatic gun turrets and swerving around rocks, the prize slipping from my grip.

Return Fire was originally released on the Amiga about five years ago, explaining its feebly primitive graphics.

Actually, not explaining its feebly primitive graphics at all. What is your excuse, Time Warner? *PC Gamer's* readers deserve better than to have blocky, crudely coloured pixels kicked in their faces. They have played *Command & Conquer* and *Warcraft II*, and expect more from their action/strategy games. The zooming-in whenever a vehicle comes to a halt is some compensation, but the lazy Windows interface

serves only to disguise *Return Fire* as some sort of spreadsheet or something.

But *Return Fire* is still tremendously enjoyable. Given a limited supply of tanks, rocket launchers, helicopters and jeeps, each with their own played-off-the-CD orchestral theme tune, and taking control of one vehicle at a time, you must battle through your opponent's defences, destroy all his headquarters buildings and steal his flag, which you'll find in the last headquarters you demolish. (Although there is a one-player training mode, *Return Fire* is primarily a two-player game.) Meanwhile he's trying to do the same to you, so you must strike a balance.

TANK

Theme tune: Mars from The Planets
Armaments: Gun
Strengths: Climbs over rocks and bushes. Swivelling turret. Good all-rounder.
Weaknesses: Not overly powerful weapons.
Star sign: Sagittarius



ROCKET LAUNCHER

Theme tune: The Mountain King
Armaments: Rockets, mines
Strengths: Heavily armoured. Powerful rockets – three destroy a gun turret.
Weaknesses: Slow. Poor in combat with a tank.
Star sign: Pisces



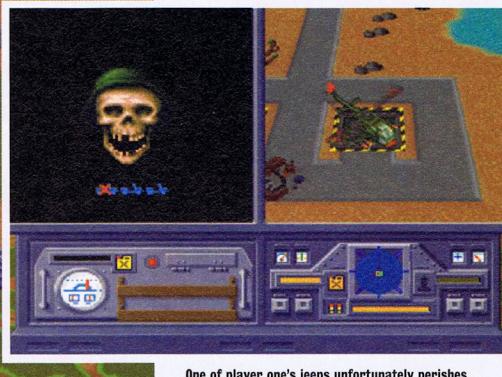
HELICOPTER

Theme tune: Ride Of The Valkyries
Armaments: Gun and rockets
Strengths: Flies, and therefore unimpeded by sea or other obstacles. Fast.
Weaknesses: Weedy weapons. Uses fuel quickly.
Star sign: Scorpio





One-player mode allows a panoramic view of your surroundings. Things are a little 'cosier' with two players.



One of player one's jeeps unfortunately perishes. Player two, meanwhile, produces a fully-working helicopter from his underground base.

ative

between trying to stop him and trying to achieve your own objective. You're assisted by computer-controlled gun turrets, helicopters and submarines which will fire upon passing enemy vehicles. But, alas, so is he.

Nash's jeep is bumping across a narrow bridge linking the mainland to a small island where he believes his flag will be safe.

"Aieee!"

A rocket explodes in front of him, fired by one of my automated attack helicopters. His jeep lurches to the left, and then to the right, and then plunges off the bridge into the sea below. It is swiftly swallowed up by the turbulent water,

its final resting place marked by a widening circle of ripples.

A widening circle of ripples... and the flag. But how may it be reached? Neither of us has boats. A tragic oversight by the programmers?

But wait! I now have a jeep of my own racing to the scene...

Return Fire succeeds because, although it is simple, every game proceeds in an entirely different manner. You can play defensively, taking time to lay mines around your headquarters, but while you're doing that your enemy could be gaining ground. You can attack gradually, taking care to destroy every



A furtive view of player two's underground bunker, where he keeps his equipment. Over on the left, player one squashes some tents with small people in.

vehicles, so the whole game isn't brought to its knees when an essential bridge is destroyed? (Instead, a no-mines-on-bridges gentlemen's agreement must be enforced.)

My jeep splashes into the shallow water beside the bridge. Cleverly, I stab the '+' key and my tyres inflate, providing buoyancy. But how slowly my jeep now moves!

Ride Of The Valkyries issues from the speakers, signalling that Nash has launched his last helicopter. I watch as it thunderbirds slowly from its underground bunker. Its rotors unfold and begin to spin. It lifts off, its nose tilts down, and it turns towards my position.

My jeep reaches the flag at last. I seize it, turn and begin to inch back toward the shore. But Nash's helicopter is upon me. Rockets smash into the water. I cannot manoeuvre to avoid them, and pray that I will not be hit. Twenty blocky pixels to go. Ten pixels... I swiftly deflate my tyres and hurl the jeep up the beach. Nash turns and more rockets roar down upon me. But I drive superbly, and am victorious.

JONATHAN DAVIES

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

Scarcely state-of-the-art, but uniquely entertaining, and a networkless alternative to two-player Warcraft II.

79%

JEEP

Theme tune: Flight Of The Bumble Bee

Armaments: Grenades

Strengths: Fast. Floats. Carries the flag.

Weaknesses: One hit kills it. Grenades are near-useless. Tricky to steer.

Star sign: Pisces



"Ride Of The Valkyries issues from the speakers, signalling that Nash has launched his last helicopter."

gun turret, or you can attack the headquarters directly with your helicopter and then send a jeep in, hoping for the best.

There are wasted opportunities, though, beside the graphics. How hard would it have been to implement the game over a network, so that both players could play full-screen? Although there are dozens of levels to choose from, what about giving each player a limited time to design and build his own base, as in Rampart? What about including bridge repair



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Warcraft II: Beyond The Dark Portal

Publisher	Zabiac
Developer	Blizzard
Format	CD-ROM
Price	£20
Minimum System	486DX, 4Mb RAM, Warcraft II
Recommended	486DX2, 8Mb RAM
Sound Support	All major cards
Release Date	Out now

Feudal overlords are restless types, never happy unless they're out a-conquering. So the dutiful Blizzard bring you *Beyond The Dark Portal*, where there's a spanking new continent to plunder.

BEYOND THE DARK Portal has arrived just in the nick of time. I was engaged in a to-the-death struggle with the *Tides Of Darkness* and reaching the end of my megalomaniacal tether. I needed more.

More units, more buildings and more lands to ravage. But are these expansion disk campaigns rich enough pickings to provoke another *Warcraft II* power trip?

The latest breakdown in human/orc relations is revealed through two new storylines which partition the campaign into 12 scenarios for each belligerent. Of course, the story is told in the same gloriously excessive narrative style as *TOD* and is illustrated by a new series of rendered animations.

One of the few criticisms levelled at *TOD* was that the computer-controlled forces were a bit passive and rather easily quelled. This state of affairs has been addressed with a vengeance as the enemy in *BDTP* is made of sterner stuff, attacking relentlessly and with overwhelming strength. If this sounds reminiscent of the usual expansion disk fare – escalating the difficulty level without doing much original to



Teron Gorefiend exits stage right. He's a malevolent Death Knight hero and his soul is blacker than his kettle.

Swamped

the game – then that's because it is. However, Blizzard have done it more subtly than most.

These scenarios are challenging and daunting without being impossibly frustrating. They're more varied than the originals, often combining several elements, such as finding some allies and then finding a suitable place to establish your kingdom, in one episode. They're also less straightforward as you can't take anything for granted. It may take several tough battles before you can even reach a gold mine. Indeed, in the first four scenarios as the orcs, you're embroiled in a bitter civil war as orcish factions lay into each other while

"Challenging and daunting without being impossibly frustrating."



A trio of alliance heroes parley in safety. Don't let them out alone though, because if they die you lose.

delivered. In their place are the hero characters – five orcish and five alliance ones. These are basically rock hard versions of existing units, such as knights or mages, capable of single-handedly defeating a regiment's worth of the enemy but in all other respects the same. They introduce some intriguing tactical possibilities but they don't advance the game's appeal like a new unit type would.

Nevertheless, *Warcraft II* is a brilliant game and these new scenarios make it even better. *Warcraft* does, however, stimulate the expansionist urge which this disk doesn't go far enough to satisfy.

MARK DONALD

PC GAMER – THE VERDICT

It's more *Warcraft II* – resistance is useless. But, more features would have made it far more captivating.

81%



Beyond the dark portal lie the orcish swamplands. Note the mushroom flora and the critter fauna.

waiting for the humies to turn up.

However, the other additions are little more than cosmetic, don't expand the game's scope, and consequently are a bit disappointing. The swamplands terrain, for instance, is attractively drawn but forgotten about after half an hour. The same goes for the new unit speech – a nice touch, but it hardly keeps you playing. The 50 extra multi-player scenarios are also very welcome, considering the sheer despotic joy of humbling human opponents in *Warcraft*, but again to the majority they won't make any difference.

No, what was needed – a liberal helping of new buildings and units – has not been

Gearheads

Publisher	Phillips
Developer	In-house
Format	CD-ROM
Price	£30
Minimum System	486/33, 8MB RAM, Win 3.1/95
Recommended	486/66
Sound Support	Windows-compatible soundcards
Release Date	Out now

Does a wrestler dressed as Santa Claus beat a walking timebomb? Do you care?

EVEN IF YOU'VE SENT MIA1 Battle Tanks rolling across the desert to clash with antiquated T-72s, commanded a Ticonderoga-class frigate in the Gulf or fought a squadron of TIE Fighters in a fragile A-Wing, nothing quite prepares you for the clash of plastic skulls, bulldozers and large, inflatable poultry that makes up a game of *Gearheads*.

This strange puzzler from Philips is a game of battling wind-up toys where the first person to move 21 playthings from their side of the board to the other wins the game. Depending on the level you play, you can pick a number of different 'toys' from the toybox to use as ammunition. There are 12 toys to choose from and each has a different weight, speed and style of movement. UFOs, for example, are weak but nippy, while huge, lumbering robots like the impressively named Disasteroid, are extremely powerful but slow-moving.

Whatever quirky toys you select, the idea is to wind them up one by one (courtesy of the small red dial at the bottom of the screen) and drop them anywhere on your side of the board. You have an unlimited supply of toys, and once a toy is released, it will automatically head for the other side to score a point. However, as you release toys onto the board, so does your opponent and soon *Gearheads* becomes an elaborate game of 'scissors, paper, stone' as toys of different sizes, strengths and speeds clash head-on in the centre.

It may look shallow and simplistic, but



On the later levels, obstacles such as teleports liven up the dull monotony of the toy wars. But not by much.

Childish

Gearheads is fairly tricky to play. It's a subtle game and to win you've got to rack up the points faster than your opponent. To achieve this, you could send out fast toys, like the UFO, but although they can be wound up quickly, they won't be able to get past some of the bigger robots. Likewise you could send out huge robots, but these are slow and take longer to wind up. The ideal strategy is to strike an uneasy balance between the quick,

"Nothing quite prepares you for the clash of plastic skulls, bulldozers and large, inflatable poultry."

point-scoring toys and the larger ones that have the power to stop or delay your opponent's advance. For example, just as 'paper wraps stone', the Disasteroid will stomp all over the boxing kangaroo. But equally, as 'scissors cut paper', it be turned around by the wrestler dressed as Santa Claus.

It would be nice to say that, despite the simple, childish nature of *Gearheads*, there's a cool, unexplainable addictiveness that draws you back to *Gearheads* time and time again. But there isn't. The SVGA graphics are pretty, it's Windows 95-compatible and there are options



Overwhelm your opponents with boxing kangaroos and bright orange chickens that look like space hoppers...

to play a single-player game or against a human opponent. The one glaring problem is that *Gearheads* just isn't sufficiently interesting. On later levels the boards feature obstacles and teleports, but it's like trying to light a fire with a box of damp matches. It's fun to play for a while, but then so is *Minesweeper*. You wouldn't pay £30 for it though... DEAN EVANS

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

An elaborate game of 'scissors, paper, stone' in SVGA. But ultimately dull and overpriced.

60%



The Santa Claus wrestlers are strong, but they're too slow to stop a Handy on a quick point-scoring run.

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Shellshock

Publisher	Core
Developer	In-house
Format	CD-ROM
Price	£30
Minimum System	486, 8Mb RAM, x2 CD-ROM, SVGA
Recommended	486DX/66
Sound Support	All major cards
Release Date	Out now

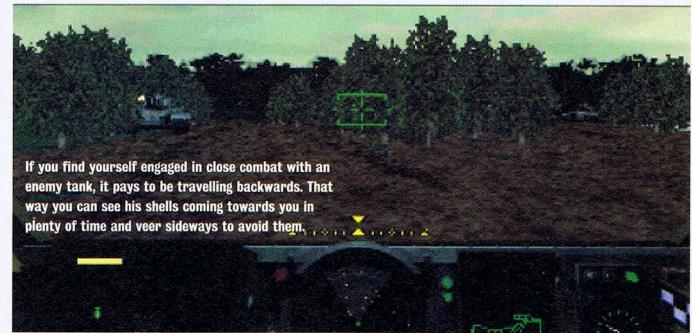
Here's a 3D alternative to *Return Fire*, sort of. Is it better? Or a case of (nng) 'No tanks'?

THE LAST CORE GAME we reviewed in *PC Gamer* was *Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2*, which got 76% in *PCG 27*. I did it, in fact, and found it to be reassuringly enjoyable, if rather superficial. And the suddenly-appearing battleships were, of course, ridiculous. Now here's *Shellshock*, which is basically *Thunderhawk 2* again – but in a tank. And with rap music.

Although *Shellshock* would appear to use the same graphics engine as *Thunderhawk 2*, suddenly-appearing battleships have ceased to trouble us. When you're in a tank you're at



We shall spare you the 'street language' in which these characters are speaking by swiftly pressing Escape.



If you find yourself engaged in close combat with an enemy tank, it pays to be travelling backwards. That way you can see his shells coming towards you in plenty of time and veer sideways to avoid them.

Backtr

ground level, and rather more interested in what's going on in the immediate vicinity than on the distant horizon. So it doesn't really matter that buildings and guard towers materialise abruptly a hundred yards away. And battleships are rarely employed in land battles. The only snag now is that, because you're looking at everything in close-up, the old-

"*Shellshock* is undemandingly amusing, in much the same way that *Thunderhawk 2* was."

fashioned bit-mapped objects look even chunkier, and trees spin around disconcertingly as you drive past them.

Shellshock is structured as a series of 25 missions, which, again, are much the same as those in *Thunderhawk 2* – blow some stuff up, escort some trucks, blow some more stuff up. The tactics required are much the same too –



If you don't like rap music, the soundtrack to *Shellshock* is unlikely to appeal to you.

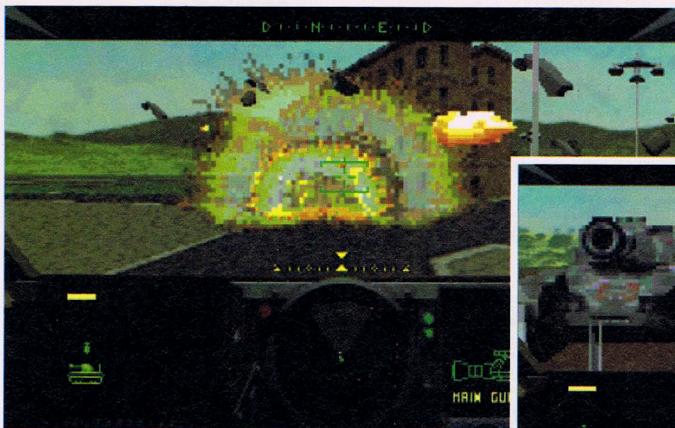
approach the target area cautiously, picking off one baddy at a time as they come into range, rather than ploughing into the middle of it all; out-of-range baddies ignore you rather than moving in to attack. But you're in a tank rather than a helicopter which, although good, isn't quite so much fun somehow. It's upgradable, though, so you can use money earned by completing missions to add guided missiles, extra armour, a more powerful engine, etc.

So off you trundle, watching the radar screen for little red dots, and then trying to shoot them before they shoot you. Machine gun turrets occasionally open up and send streams of bullets towards you, which is both exciting and annoying because you can't do much except drive towards them, dying, until you're close enough to machine gun them back. And fences and walls crumble beneath your tracks, although tree stumps frequently pose a problem for some reason. *Shellshock* is undemandingly amusing, in much the same way that *Thunderhawk 2* was.

But, as I said, there's rap music. This can be turned off, luckily, but the accompanying



And if you do like rap music, you're likely to have a collection of much better records already. Tch, eh?



An enemy is destroyed, but still its explosive shell closes upon us. If we'd been travelling backwards, though, you see, we could have avoided it. Instead we may die.



This could easily have been a scene from a network game of *Shellshock*, but isn't. But it could have been.

acking

characters can't. The idea is that law and order has disintegrated, etcetera, and all that prevents the world from collapsing into anarchy is your heavily armed police force. So before each mission you're compelled to listen to rendered rap-singer-like characters chatting, Tarantino-style, about trivial every-day matters before going out and killing hundreds of people. They're neatly done, but have no connection with the action and rapidly become annoying. And if you skip them you skip the briefing too, although luckily your instrument panel points you in the right direction and tells you what to shoot. You can't, however, skip the in-game

comments from your crew-mates, so missions are accompanied by the phrases "Go left, man, go left!", "Yo! Way to go!" and "What you doing, Jack?" repeated until you sweep the loudspeakers off your desk and play in silence.

Examine Return Fire to discover how multi-player tank games are best approached.

The network game? It's *Assault Rigs* all over again. Rather than being able to dart down corridors, duck into doorways and creep up stealthily behind your opponent, you're in a tank. Matches therefore proceed as follows:

- (1) Players A and B trundle around for a while until they meet.
- (2) Both press fire as quickly as possible until either Player A or Player B dies.
- (3) The survivor picks up all the loser's power-ups which, combined with his own, make him virtually invincible.
- (4) Repeat from (1).

The only occasional moments of excitement are provided when, during (2), both players die simultaneously, whereupon there's a race back to the battlefield in search of all the power-ups. Then it's back to (1).

Examine Return Fire to discover how multi-player tank games are best approached.

Basically, then: Generally good fun, in a *Battlezone*-brought-up-to-date sort of way. Graphically dated. Superficially multi-player game. Ill-conceived rap music setting. Only 25 missions, but they should take ages to get through. A couple of knuckle-gnawing flaws. (Occasionally you'll spontaneously die; I eventually discovered that if you stop on top of a puddle for more than a few moments, the game decides that you're stuck in it, and aborts the mission. And helicopters shoot at you from behind trees, where your self-aiming machine gun won't lock onto them although they seem perfectly capable of tracking you.) Probably, on balance, fractionally less entertaining than *Thunderhawk 2*, even though, ironically, there's more to it. Cheaper than most PC games. JONATHAN DAVIES

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

Good, old-fashioned fun for not too many pounds.

Tank game of the month, however, is *Return Fire*.



Your tank can be upgraded between missions, as in a driving game, which you'll agree is a decidedly good thing.

69%

Euro 96

Publisher	Gremlin
Developer	In-house
Format	CD-ROM
Price	\$45
Minimum System	486/66, 8Mb RAM
Recommended	Pentium
Sound Support	All major soundcards
Release Date	Out now

England's most important sporting event since the World Cup of '66 is represented by the follow-up to *Actua Soccer*. International celebration or overweight, out-of-shape Sunday pub league?

AS YOU READ THIS you are almost certainly being bombarded by hour after hour of football. Even seemingly innocuous television programs will mysteriously inherit soccer-related aspects. Blue Peter will endeavour to make its own Wembley stadium from cardboard and sticky-backed plastic. The Bill will be required to police matches, and Wildlife On One will investigate a referee's natural habitat. If you don't like football, or you've had your fill by now, please stop reading. I'm afraid that this is a football game, and I just can't avoid talking soccer for the next two pages. There's a driving game on page 85. Read that instead.

With the less committed stragglers gone, it's time to begin coverage. Betting shops are offering evens on *Euro 96*, the subtly altered follow-up to *Actua Soccer*, being the best soccer game available for the PC. After all, big brother was highly regarded, usually achieving marks in the 80s or 90s. Somehow, though, *Euro 96* has



The defender, taunted by calls of 'Donkey!', controls the ball for a slow clearance. Attacker steals ball and scores. Doh!

Leath

shaved a chunk off this mark to get the one given at the end of this review. Could Gremlin really have taken *Actua* and made it worse? Let the inevitably heated debate begin.

If ever a criticism was made of *Actua*, it was that it sacrificed some enjoyment, speed and downright fun in order to make a football game that looked just like a football game. *Euro 96* achieves even more than this. Motion-captured players animate realistically and beautifully. A few more moves have been digitised to increase the capabilities of the players, and each of the seven competition stadia have been designed to at least resemble the real thing. Start spinning the cameras

around the ground and the game looks fantastic. But this is where it all ends.

Well, to be fair, Barry Davies' commentary has its moments, particularly when you play in the championships and he explains the background to each of the teams. But as with *FIFA* before it, the script comes around very quickly, and is, at times, wholly inappropriate. "All in all a pretty poor performance from Spain" after they'd scored two goals in five minutes, and "Clearly the movement off the ball isn't good" during a penalty shoot out.

A new addition to the Gremlin engine is the 'one touch' feature. As the ball is passed to a player, his highlight changes to a flashing star.



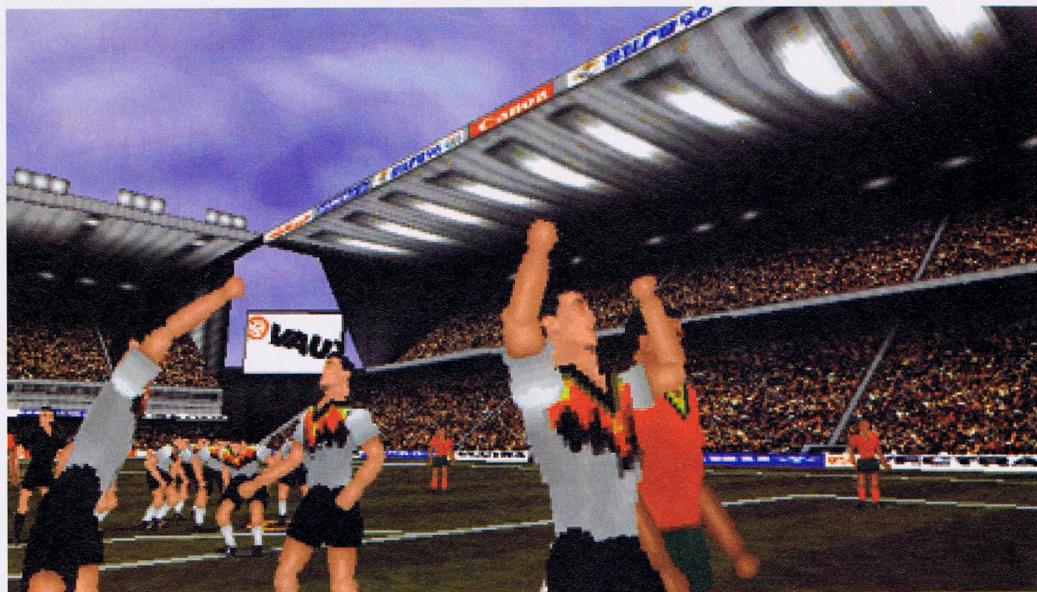
"Ere, son, on the 'ead." Another set piece is bound to land at the feet of the opposition.



An interesting range of formations are yours for the selecting. But where's the popular 8-1-1 arrangement?

"Could Gremlin really have taken Actua and made it worse?"

Various joystick combinations result in traps, shots or passes, which helps to keep the game flowing smoothly, and discourages the standard trick of running your defender all the way up the field. Naturally the teams have changed, or, rather, shrunk. Only 16 are available, and, according to Gremlin, Cantona and Ginola



The Germans celebrate another superb goal by warming their thighs in the cold and unforgiving English summer. Try to spot the subtle use of product placement.

ery

have been selected for the French squad. You heard it here first.

Let's tot up here: graphically impressive, middling commentary, innovative one-touch system, genuine Euro '96 competition. And atrocious team mates. It has to be said that in a sport where it takes 11 players to be successful, there's nothing more annoying than having one good player and ten blind mice, as Ryan Giggs and Wales will testify. *Euro '96* is frustration on a CD. You don't notice it at first, but as soon as you get the hang of the game, it becomes increasingly obvious that the rest of your team would definitely have been picked last at school. The goalie rolls the ball out to opposing attackers rather than your full back. Using the one touch system, players endlessly run alongside a ball without ever collecting it. When the goalie kicks the ball to midfield, the midfielders don't live up to their descriptions, and your attackers continually intercept the ball when you shoot. Conversely, the very same PC controls his team exceptionally, winning every challenge, controlling every ball and making every pass count. His goalie is even capable of

snatching the ball from your feet despite being about two metres away. It smacks of lazy programming, when Gremlin settle for OCC (obvious computer cheating) rather than developing a decent level of intelligence. This is even used to add a 'challenge' to the final. Play Portugal in the first round and beat them comfortably, but meet them in the final and they've suddenly had some exceptional training over the last three weeks, nipping effortlessly past all of your players.

If you just can't stand playing against that cheating PC, get a few friends together and beat them instead. Definitely a feather in *Euro '96*'s cap is its range of multi-player options.

"There's nothing more annoying than having one good player and ten blind mice, as Ryan Giggs and Wales will testify."

Up to 16 people can play on one computer using a combination of keyboard, joysticks and a mouse, but only five people can play on the PC at the same time. The network option allows you to have up to 20 players, but only one player per machine. Two foxy fans can also have a kick around over modem or serial link.

It sounds good, but, predictably, it isn't. The network, modem and serial games have fixed options. Go ahead, select your teams, but you're stuck



Football league

We're worried that there might be some confusion in choosing the definitive PC footy game. After getting *Euro '96*, we played through all the old classics again to establish the official football league.

1. *Sensible World of Soccer* – more of an arcade game than a football simulation, but superbly playable fun.
2. *Euro '96* – flawed, but atmospheric.
3. *Actua Soccer* – to be found in bargain bins everywhere.
4. *FIFA '96* – dreadfully over-rated, but some people seem to like it.

And coming soon...

Telstar's *Complete Onside Soccer*, *Olympic Soccer* from US Gold, there's even a whisper of a new version of *Kick Off 3*, and we'll review the new European Championship version of *Sensible World Of Soccer* next month.

with the default referee, pitch and match time of five minutes, and only a friendly game rather than the full event.

These problems make no sense. I just don't understand it. *Actua* was similarly criticised, but Gremlin have done nothing to address these problems. It's also bitterly disappointing, because I can't help but think of what could have been. I'm going to watch Blue Peter.

STEVE OWEN

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

The PC's most realistic-looking football game, and fun because of it. But so many mark-sapping flaws...

70%

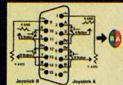
AlfaTwin

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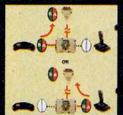
**Utility
model**



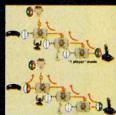
Due to the design of the game port, the IBM PC supports two joysticks (A & B) each with two firebuttons only. Four button joysticks, and joysticks which have throttle and rudder control or cockpit caps, make use of the second joystick (B) controls.



At "two players mode", both joysticks can be activated at the same time for two-player games. However the advanced functions of the joysticks are not supported.



At "one player mode" the AlfaTwin allows you to switch between two joysticks, with all the functions supported, by simply pressing the fire button of the joystick you wish to use.



You can cascade up to three AlfaTwins with four different joysticks for your free selection. Moreover, the six feet long cable brings the AlfaTwin round to the front of your desk, freeing you from the hassle of plugging/unplugging your joystick from the back of the computer.



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World Rally Fever

Publisher	Ocean
Developer	Team 17
Format	CD-ROM
Price	Around £25
Minimum System	486SX/25, 4MB RAM
Recommended	486DX2/66, 4MB RAM
Sound Support	Gravis Ultrasound, SoundBlaster 2
Release Date	Out now

A fever is a condition of heightened emotional activity and agitated excitement. Unfortunately, *World Rally* turns out to be a hypochondria case.

WORLD RALLY *Fever* is an arcade style 3D racing game. Not exactly virgin territory in the PC world. "So,"

you're possibly thinking, "Team 17 must have grabbed this outmoded, dilapidated genre by the scruff of the bumpers and souped it up beyond all recognition with some flashy spoilers, extra wide wheels and other luxury add-ons." Well, no actually. They haven't even added any furry dice.

At the beginning of the game you choose which of the four competitions to take part in and which of the eight anime style characters most suits your driving abilities. Each competition takes place over four stages in different locations around the globe, from Scotland to the Himalayas. Your dune buggy must finish in the top three to qualify for the next race. If you fail to qualify, then you start again from the beginning or use up a credit in true arcade fashion to repeat the course.

Each location has its own characteristic feature to truly give you that travelogue feel. For instance, in Tokyo, huge trucks appear at junctions and blatantly jump the lights in a bid to crush you; while in France sheep mill about the rural lanes, in clear violation of the green cross code, and bleat amusingly when



(Above) There's no one or two-stop race strategies to worry about in this game. Depending on how many times you intend to plough into the crash barriers that is. (Below) Tenpin bowling French style. Take one dune buggy and aim it at some sheep. Oh joy.

Mild

you hit-and-run. There are also weapons such as bombs and crates which can be collected by jumping at passing blimps.

To be fair, *World Rally Fever* is reasonably fun for a while. The graphics are big, bright and cartoony and I felt a mild desire to progress so I could see the next stage. But, unfortunately, my interest was all too fleeting. This game just

"They haven't even added any furry dice."

doesn't hold the attention. It's too basic.

The graphics pixelate atrociously, with opposing buggies looking like a pile of play bricks until the last moment, while the jaggedy are a constant nuisance. The parallax scrolling is highly amusing as, for example in New York, if you turn quickly, you can make two Statues of Liberty appear in the background at once.



(Above) This is Tokyo and you're eighth. That means last. Still, coming from behind to win is more dramatic.

(Left) At last a beach for your buggy. Although the tide has gone out awfully far.



The animation, too, is a bit heavy handed, while buggy speed is reduced to a less-than-exhilarating hair dryer harry chugabout. This is probably for the best as your buggy steers like a cow, which is particularly annoying as you watch the rest of the field slalom through chicanes with the greatest of ease.

Mainly, though, there's just no imagination or variety. The tracks all drive the same whether the prevailing conditions are desert or snow, the varying abilities of the characters make only a marginal difference to handling, and the weapons are dull. What's the point of dropping a crate behind you when you can't see your rivals pile into it? Just being able to soup up your car at the end of a race would have benefitted the game enormously.

Coupled with the lack of any multi-player options, all this makes for an uninspiring game whose brief appeal is soon replaced by a nothing-new-there-then kind of dissatisfaction.

MARK DONALD

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

A rather 'pedestrian' racing game that is redeemed only by its light demands upon the PC and the player.

57%

The Muppets CD-ROM

Publisher	Ocean
Developer	Starwave
Format	CD-ROM
Price	£40
Minimum System	486/66, 8Mb RAM, Windows 95
Recommended	16MB RAM
Sound Support	Any 16-bit soundcard
Release Date	June

It's time to play the music. It's time to light the lights. It's time to meet the Muppets on the Muppet Show tonight.

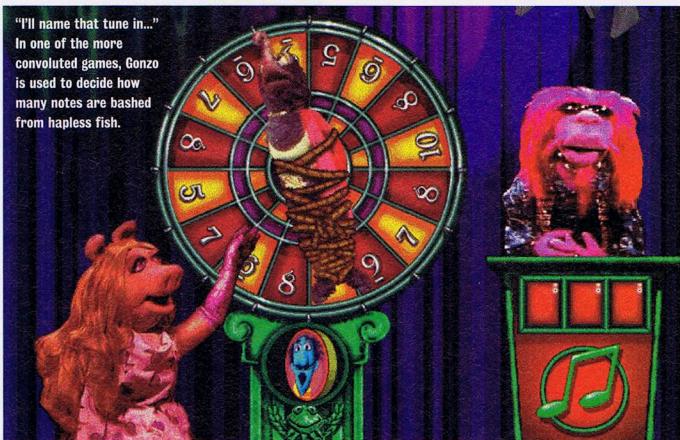
WHO WOULD have thought that if you stuck your hand in some cardboard covered in your mum's old coat one day, that the next, Kermit the Frog would be a household name wherever a television could be turned on? There's no denying that the Muppets are an institution, a growing-up memory you never grow out of. But when *PC Gamer* was sent *The Muppets CD-ROM*, a few puzzled looks were exchanged across desks so messy you could easily lose your train of... um, well, whatever. Questions were asked. Is this a

"Professional, entertaining, different, impressive."

game? Isn't it just for kids? Did I leave the iron on? Has anyone seen my train of... oh, what do you call it?

Warily removing the vacuum-sealed shrink wrap, tentatively placing the CD in the drive and nervously drumming my fingers on the table, I was pleasantly surprised when the game started first time. The Windows 95 desktop shuddered into a lower resolution as Fozzy and Kermit parted the screen to introduce themselves and the excuse for a storyline.

Believably the game pretends to have crashed your PC, utterly destroying your



Handy

hard drive. Rather than curse in the most uncouth manner, chuckle knowingly to yourself as you realise that it is all part of the ludicrous plot. To recover your hard drive you must travel around the circuits of your PC, fixing damaged files by completing pastiches of famous games. Protect Fozzy from flung food, *Missile Command* style; run the Swedish Chef around the Kitchens of Doom, whisking vicious vegetables into various desserts; and reassemble Beaker's memories in Dr Bunsen's lab. There's seven games in all, none of them ever impressive, but they're usually fun.

Your electronic adventures are interspersed and indeed combined with a large selection of video and animation, much of which has been recorded especially for the CD. This is a welcome touch, because the game would have hummed of rip-off if it was just old scenes from the show cobbled together.

Basically, very basically, the *Muppet CD-ROM* is great: amusing, professional,



Beaker relives his human milking machine trauma in this *Mastermind* rip-off, "Me me me."

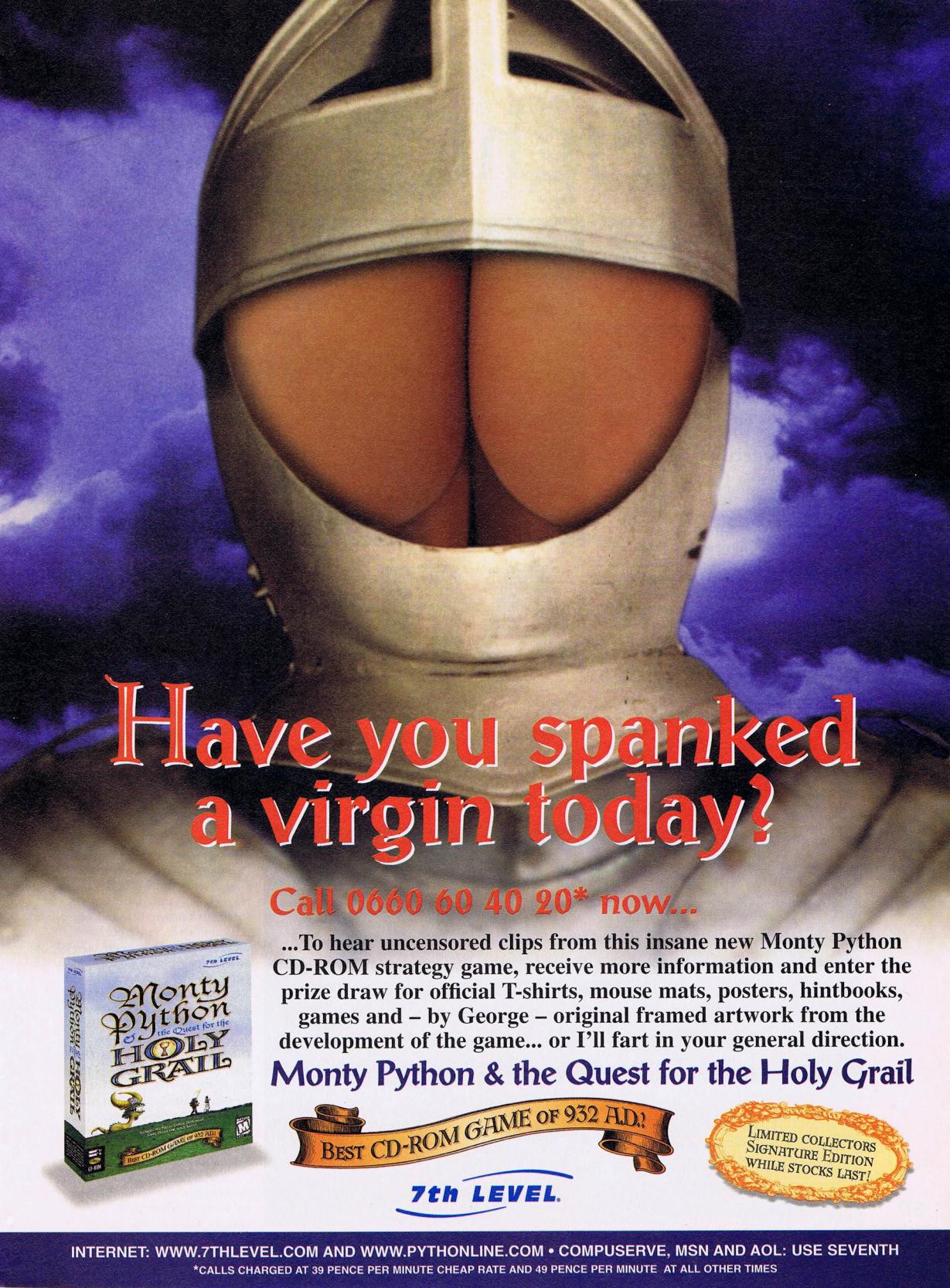
entertaining, different, impressive. In fact, kids are likely to enjoy it, and adults will show it off to other adults. It all gets tiresome fairly rapidly though. After only half an hour you are playing through all the same games simply to watch a bit more video or get closer to completing your goal. It's the equivalent of a coffee table book - one for visitors to flick through while you make the coffee, but definitely not for the hardened games master. STEVE OWEN

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

Like Beaker, it looks great, it makes you laugh and there's loads you can do to it, but it won't last long.

70%



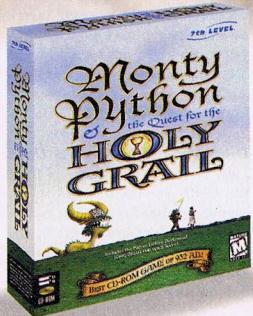


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Fire Fight

Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	Epic MegaGames
Format	CD-ROM
Price	Around \$40
Minimum System	P60, 8Mb RAM, x2 CD-ROM, Win 95
Recommended	P90, 16Mb RAM, x4 CD-ROM
Sound Support	All Windows 95 cards
Release Date	Out now

Hankering to start a forest fire? *Fire Fight* provides both the trees and the source of ignition.

THE SIMILARITIES between *Fire Fight* and *Desert Strike* make themselves apparent within picoseconds of the ugly Windows 95 front-end being penetrated. Both games use an isometric 3D perspective. Both send you on a series of missions, blowing things up and picking up little people. Both tell a story as they go along. Both have you grappling with left and right rotational controls along with backwards, forwards and numerous other keys. And both are generally gripping, luring you onwards with promises of new scenery and exciting new baddies to blow up.

But in *Fire Fight* you're in a sort of *Wipeout*-style hover car spaceship thing, rather than a helicopter. And you'll notice that when you change weapons, your ship 'morphs',



88

Aflame

"Even on PC Gamer's SkyNet-rivalling P133 it's far from smooth."

growing a gun turret or whatever. Rather like *Fire Fight* itself, in fact, which began life called New Order and has since gradually acquired its current name, like one of those puzzles where you've got to turn LOVE into TEAR only changing one letter at a time.

Fire Fight is also set in the future (obviously – they haven't invented hover cars yet), and sees you fighting on behalf of the sinister Phantom Council, taking orders from an angry-looking bald man. He pops up in the corner of the screen from time to time and lets you know what's going on. Listen, because if you miss anything there's no way to recap. Occasionally you'll also hear from a girl with red hair. She seems to be some sort of intelligence officer, and I prefer her to the angry man.

The main departure from *Desert Strike*, though, is that *Fire Fight* looks like a PC game of the late 1990s. It's not true 3D or anything, instead occupying your processor's clock-cycles with hi-res SVGA backgrounds and sprites that draw gasps from all who lay eyes on them.

Trees, first of all, look exactly like trees that've been miniaturised and secreted into your PC. They work on several levels, thanks to





(Above) Owing to the awfulness of the PC, we have had to take these grabs from the Internet rather than creating our own. This one shows our ship, surrounded by its scanner ring, pursuing an enemy.

(Above-left) And this one is a chilly ice planet erupting into flame before our powerful laser-based weaponry.

some cunning parallax, so you can fly over some and under others. James, to my right, finds this annoying, because your ship is often hidden from view, while Steve, to my left, considers it to be a marvel of the information age. I can take it or leave it.

Then, lurking within the trees are buildings which are so detailed as to be a delight to blow up. They explode satisfactorily, belching forth flames and sending minuscule fragments spinning across the screen. As do trees, in fact, much to Jimmer's delight. The price you pay for this visual splendour is jerky

and relying on their spiky armour to destroy you. And they're backed up by gun turrets on the ground, many of which are virtually impossible to approach without a hail of laser fire. Luckily you're provided with a number of weapons to combat them. There are Swarmers,



which are clusters of missiles that home in on anything they fancy, grenades and a plasma gun, along with five others including my personal favourite the cannon, which is slow to reload but just, sort of, shoots things. You can't even see the bullets. And then you can pick up things like mines, shield-restorers and cloaking devices to use at your leisure.

As with Origin's *Crusader: No Remorse* before it, *Fire Fight* is elevated from a so-so kind of a game to a thoroughly enjoyable one by the carnage you can wreak everywhere you go. Strip

away the big explosions and it'd be fairly ordinary, without the resource-juggling that turns *Desert Strike* into more than just a shoot-'em-up. It does seem a little uneven difficulty-wise, though. Level 1 is a doddle, while Level 2 held me up for some time as I grappled with the somewhat-fiddly controls. Having mastered them, however ('strafe' being the sticking point), I proceeded to romp through levels 3, 4 and 5, and am currently well on my way to the end of Level 15, the last one.

We played it in network mode too, of course, where you get arenas around which to chase your opponents, but no computer-controlled baddies to worry about. Matches are very much a race to see who can accrue the most power-ups, with not a great deal of room for cunning tactics and nifty manoeuvres. Once again the cannon is my weapon of choice here, taking most challengers entirely by surprise. Network games are blighted, however, by some terrible stops and starts, even when only two are playing. The 'Readme' file suggests turning down the detail to cure this, but it seems a shame.

While not being swept off my feet by *Fire Fight*, I was greatly amused by it, and would be surprised to find anyone whom it disappointed.

JONATHAN DAVIES

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

A old-fashioned shoot-'em-up with some of the most attractive graphics the PC has yet witnessed.

76%

"Fire Fight is elevated from a so-so kind of a game to a thoroughly enjoyable one by the carnage you can wreak everywhere you go."

scrolling – even on PC Gamer's SkyNet-rivalling P133 it's far from smooth, and it would seem that, even with all Windows 95's promises, scrolling is an area the PC has yet to master.

And there are, of course, baddies to shoot. These are hover cars like you, but employ varying tactics including standing back and shooting at you and ploughing towards you

Official UK

PlayStation

Magazine

No. 8



TRAPPED...in a
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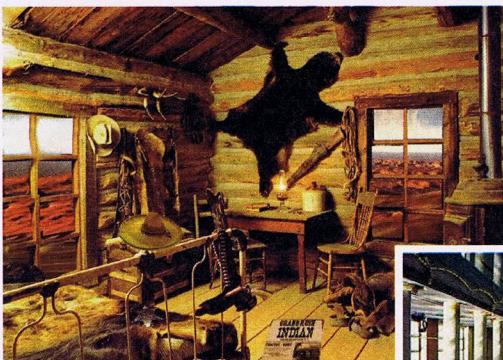
Fiendish!
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Astounding!
FIRST UK REVIEW

RESIDENT EVIL and SHELLSHOCK and ADIDAS POWER SOCCER and DESCENT

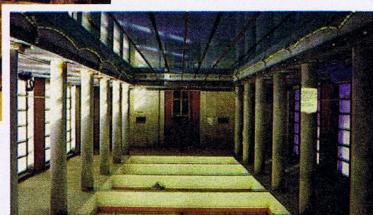
UNIQUE DEMO CD

JULY ISSUE OUT NOW



(Left) Weirdly, this hut interior functions rather like a page from one of those Living Books for kids; click on an object and it'll perform some ludicrous animation.

(Below) Here we appear to be hanging upside-down from the rafters of a public swimming pool.



this is without doubt the very worst of all.

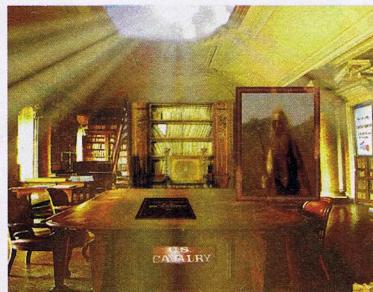
Nothing in it makes sense on any level at all: there's no structure, context or meaning to anything that happens. Occasionally you may reveal a nonsensical video clip, with an apparently Wild Western setting; elsewhere, you might come across a painfully awful piece of writing purporting to be from a journal. At no time do you ever care.

Gameplay is an anathema to the over-financed, under-talented children responsible for this debacle. Click in one unmarked area of the screen and you'll die, without explanation; click in another unmarked area and you'll 'discover' a vital object. Nonsense, all of it.

There is one nice thing I could say about *Mirage*, to do with its use of Quicktime VR, but the overwhelming terribleness of the whole thing is such

that, frankly, it doesn't deserve any kind of praise at all. Made with a complete lack of taste, style or imagination, it's the Plan 9 From Outer Space of CD-ROM. And I don't mean that in a good way.

JON SMITH



(Right) As you've probably guessed, that small frame on the right contains a short clip of baffling video.



The large face on the wall could be the villain of the piece. Or not. Surrounded by so much nonsense, it's impossible to tell.



Unfortunately, state-of-the-art rendering programs have been put in the hands of half-wits.

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

Worse than you could ever imagine. Worse than you could ever imagine imagining, for that matter.

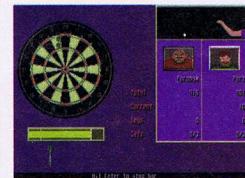
8%
30.

New Era Darts

New Era Software £20

The fundamental appeal of computer games lies in wish fulfilment, in the thrill we get actually being that fearless fighter pilot or the supreme deity we could have been if only we'd got the breaks. This factor puts a darts game at an immediate disadvantage; unless, of course, it's always been your dream to be a poly-chinned bloater whose belly enters the boozier five minutes before he does. Nevertheless, if you are inspired by the thought of recreating the titanic clashes of the great Weeble warriors of the darts world, then read on.

New Era Darts offers darts in all its manifold forms: 501, 301, Round the Clock and 'Cricket', along with tournament, friendly and practice options. Chucking your flighted missile works thus: Position a cross on the board to designate your target. Press enter and a yellow bar moves between two white bars. Hit the enter key twice more to stop the yellow bar



as close as possible to the white ones thus establishing your dart's horizontal/vertical deviation. And that's it.

But it's time to really lay it on the oche to *New Era Darts*. For the vast majority of the time your only role is to repeatedly press the enter key, a job so mind-numbingly monotonous that it feels like working on a production line. For a while I tried experimenting with tactical positioning of the cursor to compensate for my constant left hook, but then, I realised, what's the point? The only thing you're liable to get from this game is repetitive strain injury. There's no hysterical Sid Waddel commentary, no beer swilling and, in short, no atmosphere. It's so basically executed that it even fails to live up to the dubious delights of the old C64 darts effort One Hundred and Eighty, never mind just nipping down your local for a swift one and a couple of legs.

MARK DONALD

Chaos Overlords

US Gold/New World Computing £40

As proved by *SimCity 2000* from Maxis, building and running a city can be a tough job. But what if you just leave all the boring stuff to the Mayor, and concentrate on controlling the less legal aspects? *Chaos Overlords* gives you the chance to find out.

Cast as a sort of cyberpunk 'Godfather', your goal is to use your loyal gangs of street thugs to dominate a futuristic city. Unfortunately, as well as having to deal with the natural resistance of the law-abiding citizens and police, you're not the only gang boss with an eye to expanding your empire. Up to five other



bosses are also intent on taking over the seedier side of business.

In *Chaos Overlords* the city is divided into sectors, or 'neighbourhoods', and your basic task is to bring these areas under your control with your gangs. Once a sector is in your hands you can gain benefit from any special buildings located there (hospitals, casinos, and so on), and raise money from your protection racket. You also have to defend it from any interlopers.

Chaos Overlords is a well-presented, easy-to-get-into



strategy game that's fun to play and doesn't require you to read a huge manual. Unfortunately, there's not quite enough variety on offer to keep you coming back for more. Although there's an impressive number of gangs and equipment to acquire, there isn't enough flexibility in the design, and it doesn't take long to work out the best way to play, after which things can get a bit dull. Good for a few hours of distraction very now and then, but not even a remote challenge to the likes of *Civilization II*.

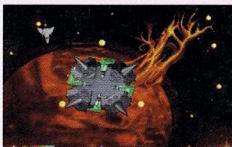
ANDY BUTCHER

62

Piranha

OTM £20

Spinning rocks in space, often described as asteroids, can be shot at in a classic arcade game, called *Asteroids*. Spinning, textured and enormous rocks in space, occasionally called star dust, can be shot at in a recent and compelling arcade game, definitely called *Super Stardust*. *Piranha* on the other hand doesn't involve shooting spinning, textured and enormous



fish in space, but rocks.

Start *Piranha* up and an immediate thought crosses your mind: "GameTek are going to have OTM's balls for this." *Piranha* looks identical to *Super Stardust*. Play it, though, and you soon realise that there are enough differences to warrant two strangely similar games. *Piranha* is more of a shoot-'em-up *Asteroids* than a '90s *Asteroids*.

Admittedly, the game involves the essential elements of the classic, but after a dirty one-night stand with side-scroller *Nemesis*, a mongrel that is this power-up infested shoot-'em-up is spawned.

Asteroids with a difference, then. As the levels progress, the rocks change to metal jacks, pulsating strawberries (sort of), glass chunks and picnic blankets. And they're tough. Each boulder takes many more hits than you'll be used to, but yields a wealth of coins, energy, extra lives and smart bombs. Trade the coins for upgraded weaponry every three levels and feel as hard as nails. But then die very quickly anyway, as this is an incredibly difficult game, even when up to three players play at once. You play co-operatively,



but stealing the best power-ups from under your friend's nose soon strains relations. There're no 3D tunnels and your ship lacks the short-term shield that keeps you alive in *Asteroids*, but there's definitely some budget-priced fun to be had here.

STEVE OWEN

72

NFL Quarterback Club 96

Acclaim £45

Quarterback Club 96 is one of those games which leaves you feeling like the kid who's always picked last for playground football. You huff about the pitch, feebly waving your arm for attention while everyone else ignores you and gets on with the game. If you're not at least offensive co-ordinator material, then *QBC96* will almost certainly leave you floundering, brushing against the play but certainly not dictating it.

This is particularly irritating as the range of options available should make for a great game. Players are capable of, amongst other things, pump faking, stiff arming and hurdling, and, as the coach, you have access to a



bewilderingly comprehensive playbook. Over 800 plays are possible, including ploys unique to each NFL team, plus hurry-up offense and substitution options. Best of all is the audible play feature which enables you to improvise moves on the line at the last second should an unexpected opposition formation threaten to stuff you.

But, unfortunately, the manual is useless and games are muddled affairs that leave you wondering what's going on. A practice option would have helped immeasurably to unravel the complex play diagrams as an alternative to just snatching glimpses of them in the full game.

As it is, the hours of mucking around on the pitch are less than rewarding. The graphics are nothing out of the ordinary, the control system is awkward and the in-play sequences are lethargic with the players apparently favouring leaden boots.

MARK DONALD

59

HOW THE SCORES WORK

We think carefully about the marks we award to games. If a game really isn't up there with the best, we aren't afraid to give it an appropriately low score. And when we award 80s and 90s, it's because the games genuinely deserve it – not because we've netted an 'exclusive', or because we've got a mate who works for the software company, or to win favour with 'the industry'.

Here's how it works:

90%+

An absolute classic, a benchmark, a game that will be talked about for years to come. Each month there'll probably be one or two of these at the most.

85%-89%

A superb game which can proudly bear the 'PC Gamer Recommended' logo in shops across the nation.

70%-85%

A good, enjoyable, value-for-money game. Four stars, if you like.

50%-69%

Nothing special. But if you were sitting alone at home, and there was nothing on telly, and it was raining, playing this game would be better than nothing.

30%-49%

Oh dear. Either through a lack of inspiration, a fatal oversight, or general crapness, this is a game that ought to be steered clear of.

0%-29%

A crime.

PCG REVIEWERS

Steve Owen has a 'sub-woofer' under his desk which is only audible to whales.

James Flynn brought back from E3 some chocolates shaped like American tourist attractions. For example, Mount Rushmore.

Jonathan Davies is the editor.

Mark Donald does a remarkable impersonation of Hunter from *The Gladiators*.

Andy Butcher resides on *Arcane* magazine, another fine product from FutureCorp. He will exchange a potion of invisibility for up to ten gold pieces.

Dean Evans, meanwhile, is the deputy editor of *PC Guide*. At the time of reviewing *Gearheads* he was severely sunburnt, resembling some raspberry ripple ice-cream.

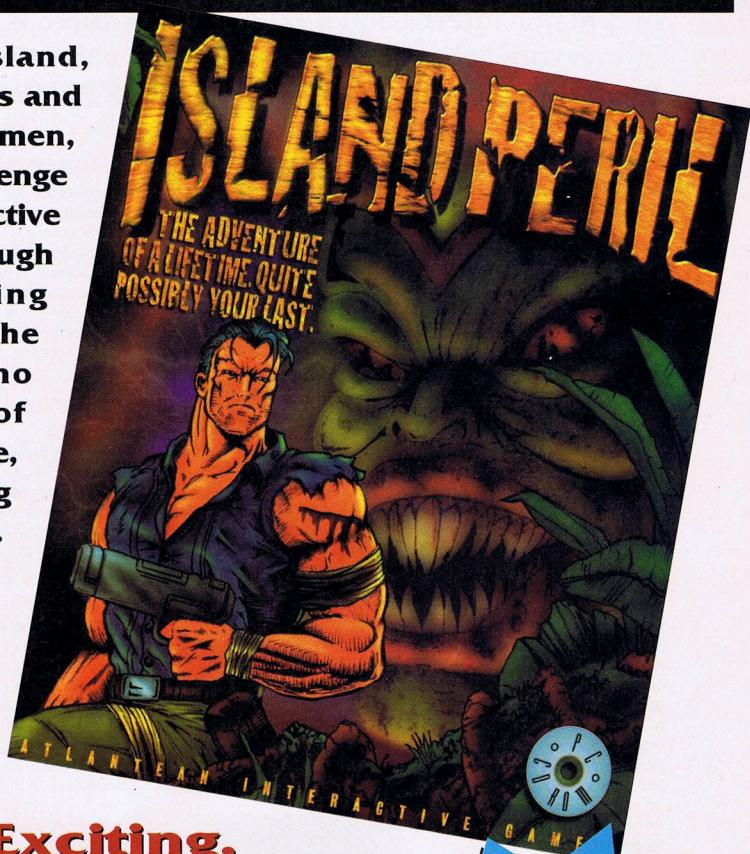
Jon Smith is currently holidaying in a bed-and-breakfast in Devon, but was able to compile a review of *Mirage* for us before leaving.

Trevor Howard died in 1988.

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They're back

They may not have quite the credibility or following of a major international religion, but there is a place in everyone's hearts for this month's collection of Second Comings. By STEVE OWEN

1. FATE OF ATLANTIS

Kixx £13

Is this really better than *Sam & Max*? I think so. It doesn't have the humour, but the puzzles are more logical, the atmosphere is more intense, there's the opportunity to play as different characters, and it's the best use of a licence in the world. **91**



2. SAM & MAX

Kixx £13

One of the best and funniest of LucasArts' classic graphic adventures, following canine and leporine private detectives as they try to uncover the mysterious disappearance of a Bigfoot. Unless you hate adventures, you have to own this. **90**



3. EARTH SIEGE

Sierra £10

After the intensely enjoyable full price release of its sequel, it seems only fitting that the original should be released for such a piddling amount. All things considered, there's not an awful lot different. So if you can't afford the sequel, buy this. **89**



4. DUNE

Regenerator £5

It looks absolutely nothing like *Dune 2*, which may upset the *C&C/Warcraft II* posse, but this is still an intriguing strategy game, fun to play once or twice, but offering little after that. Looks and sounds great, as you'd expect from the French. **82**



5. FLASHBACK

Kixx £10

An exceptionally well animated, if frustrating, graphic adventure from those Gallic guys responsible for *Another World* and *Fade To Black*. The puzzling element is far from satisfying, but it still shows *Bermuda Syndrome* where to find its coat. **76**



6. SINK OR SWIM

Regenerator £5

Intriguing Lemmings-style platform puzzler where it is imperative that you rescue your band of blithering idiots before they drown, burn, explode, etc. It looks so old now that it's grown a beard the size of Manchester, but it's still an entertaining game. **65**



7. FREDDY PHARKAS FRONTIER PHARMACIST

Sierra £10

A reasonable indicate-and-tap Wild West adventure, with some suggestive gags and some clever ones, but far too many obvious, trans-Atlantic and exceedingly unfunny jibes. The Americans just don't understand irony. **62**



8. TORNADO

Action Sixteen £5

Likened to either a long motorway drive or an old-fashioned version of *Su-27 Flanker*, *Tornado* boasts realistic flight models but little in the way of action. Also, the manual is on the CD, which doesn't help you to get into it. **61**



9. MEGA PAK

Action Sixteen £5

A decrepit combination of *Megaforce*, a bonus mission disk and a mission editor, *Mega Pak* offers early '90s flight simulating at a budget price. Nearly everything available these days is better, but *Mega Pak* still represents good value. **43**



10. LEISURE SUIT LARRY 5

Sierra £10

Atrrociously painful and utterly insulting sexist graphic 'adventure' that's enough to embarrass a Sport reader. The derisory puzzles and day-glo backgrounds should be avoided, even if your life does depend on it. **16**



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Netware

All things to every man? Well not really. All kinds of rubbish for every man more like. But there *is* useful stuff out there on the Internet – it's just a matter of finding it. Let Steve Faragher be your guide to the most exciting innovation in communication since the radio. Probably.

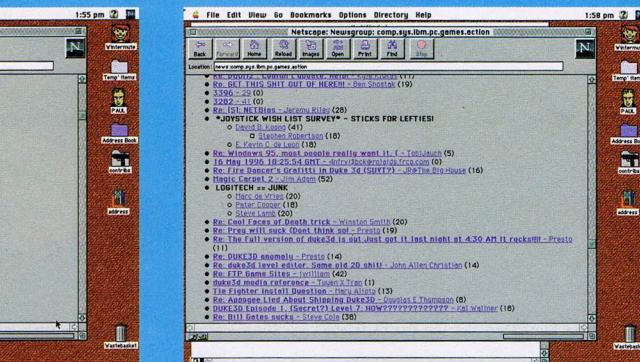
Newsgroups



Something that we've tended to ignore at PC Gamer in the past has been the Internet newsgroups. It's not that we're snobby about them or anything, it's just that for some bizarre reason we can't actually get access to them from our office. Questioning why this sorry state of affairs exists only brings a visit from our Israeli ex-tank-commander systems manager (*All this is true – Ed*) and a lot of indecipherable waffle about 'nodes', 'system overload' and 'unnecessary overheads'. Just the sort of thing we try to avoid where possible, being rather more interested in playing games and producing the magazine.

However, after some commando-like raids on other magazines in our sinister organisation who *do* have access to newsgroups, we can report the following: newsgroups are essential for any self-respecting, Internet-aware gamesplayer, being stuffed with priceless information about every game ever. Not only that, but if you can't find what you want just by reading some of the already existing postings, you can put one up yourself and you'll soon get a response.

You should be able to access the newsgroups from within the software you're already using (Netscape, for example, has a Go To Newsgroup option under its Directory command) and if that doesn't work, you just need to get in touch with your service provider, who'll be only too happy to tell you how to spend even more time on-line.



One word of advice, though: unlike us, newsgroup users do tend to be rather snobby types and so it's well worth spending some time reading the groups before posting anything. This way you'll get a feel of what's considered good and bad form.

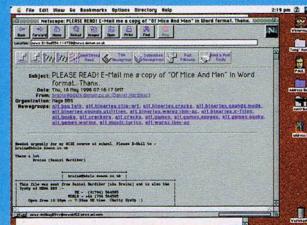
So here are a few newsgroups to try, just to give you an idea of the sort of topic that's covered. A good way of finding other newsgroups is to check out which other newsgroups people posting messages belong to – and try some of them out.

alt.games

A general forum for all PC games.

comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.strategic

Everything you wanted to know about all the latest wargames, god games and, well, anything else strategy oriented.



comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.action

All the new shoot-'em-ups and *Doom* clones are discussed here, in alarming detail.

comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.flight-sim

I suspect you're getting the idea by now.

comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.adventure

Point 'n' clickers paradise.

comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.marketplace

Buy and sell games.

comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.sports

Another bleeding obvious one.

comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.rpg

For the polyhedral among us.

comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.misc

A pot-pourri of everything.

news:alt.games.apogee

Everything that Apogee do.

alt.games.quake

Go on – guess.

alt.games.worms

Team 17's finest moment glorified forever.

alt.games.warcraft

Essential hints for the *Warcraft* player.

New PC Gamer on-line editor

We're not quite sure how we lost the last one (carelessness may have come into it), but what we do know for sure is that *PC Gamer*'s web pages are about to get a new on-line editor. His name is Neil Slateford and before being lured

to Futurenet by the promise of a steady living he was one half of musical duo DNA, that you may recall was responsible for the dance version of Suzanne Vega's song, *Tom's Diner*. We'll try not to hold it against him. If you have

any queries or suggestions for the man, you can e-mail him at nslateford@futurenet.co.uk. We'll make him introduce himself properly next month. Visit our Web pages at <http://www.futurenet.co.uk/>



Stereo's Duke Nukem 3D homepage

<http://www.servtech.com/public/duke3d/>

Browsing through the newsgroups, I came across a reference to this excellent site, just going to show how useful they are. It's the essential site for the *Duke Nukem 3D* fan. There's a complete FAQ file with every bit of

information you could possibly want to know about *DN3D*, there's a whole list of excellent cheats for the devious and callow among you and there's also a whole bunch of stuff to download, including lots of new levels (especially



Act of decency

The hottest issue on the Internet at the moment is undoubtedly the Communications Decency Act, a telecommunications bill which Bill Clinton signed in February. Basically the act intends to halt, for the first time, the unlimited freedom that the Internet has provided until now by censoring some parts of it. For a fair and enlightening introduction to the issues, visit Yahoo's web pages devoted to the subject at <http://mirrors.yahoo.com/eff/speech.html>

A prime spot

Considerable apologies to the Forest BBS, and to anyone who tried to contact them after reading last month's *Netware*. The number we printed was utterly incorrect, and should have been 0161 950 9600. To recap, Forest are a prime spot for modem owners to meet and team up for multi-player bouts of games like *Doom*, *Descent* and *Hexen*. Lurking behind the unusually accessible welcome screen you'll also find a selection of BBS-only games. And if you need further convincing, a modem call to Forest's number will equip you with two weeks free of connection charges.

One month's free Internet

Those of you who haven't actually got yourself on-line yet may like to know that one of Future's other magazines, *.net*, has teamed up with Compuserve, the country's largest on-line services provider, to offer one month's free Internet access. To qualify for the offer you'll

have to pick up the *.net* guide to compuserve, which is available from your local newsagent now, priced £4.99. It comes with all the software you'll need on CD or floppy. Why not give it a go? Visit *.net*'s homepage at <http://www.futurenet.co.uk/>

Mission of the month

Fans of Spectrum Holobyte's *Top Gun: Fire At Will* should be delighted to hear that Spectrum Holobyte are posting a brand new Mission of the Month, every month, to their web site at <http://www.holobyte.com/>. Just download it

and be prepared to get some extended fun from your game. It would be nice if software publishers did this for all games. While you're at the site you may also like to download the *Civilization 2* patch that's there as well.

E-mail addresses

Why not get in touch with us? Being the Dodge-u-Like Master Chefs that we are, we're all on the Internet. So e-mail us. And particularly e-mail me with any useful and interesting stuff you might come across which we could include on

this page. I'll be your friend. Steve Faragher – sfaragher@futurenet.co.uk Neil Slateford, on-line editor – nslateford@futurenet.co.uk PC Gamer – pcgamer@futurenet.co.uk

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You have a choice. You can either continue buying your copy of PC Gamer from the news-stand every month and run the risk of them selling out before you get there, or you can **subscribe**, get up to **two free issues**, get your copy **delivered free** to your door (if you live in the UK) and get a **free game**. We know which we'd go for!

● Descent 2 (PCG 29, 87%)

The similarly super sequel to everyone's favourite 3D shoot-'em-up can be yours for nothing. If you haven't played *Descent* yet, its vertiginous 3D world must be visited without delay.

FREE*Interplay*

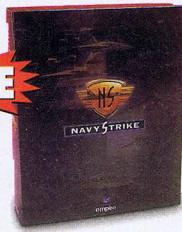
● Actua Soccer Euro '96 (Not yet reviewed in PC Gamer)

It's the Euro 96 version of the acclaimed 3D football game, complete with all the European teams and a few enhancements. And it's in 3D.

FREE

● Navy Strike (PCG 24, 86%)

In the navy, they have large numbers of planes based on carriers. *Navy Strike* lets you command the whole carrier, as well as fly the planes in traditional flight sim fashion.

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● Battleground Ardennes (PCG 27, 83%)

3D or 2D? The choice is yours with the new *Battleground* wargaming system, which not only looks attractive but comes up with some fiendish strategies too.

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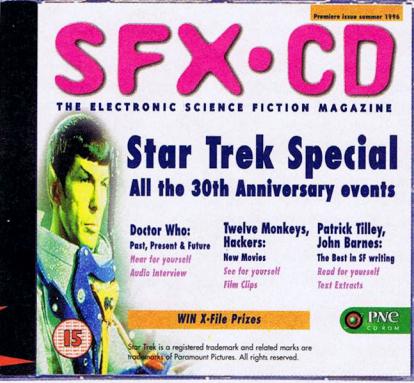
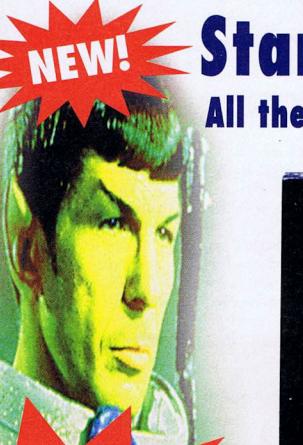
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Terra Nova

Strategy Guide

Don't let the Hegemony get you down – spend a few moments with Jon Smith's expert advice and you'll soon send those evil clones scarpering home with their cloned tails between their cloned legs.

Chuck a grenade at an onrushing cluster of besuited adversaries and watching them explode ballistically across your field of view; launching yourself a hundred feet in the air then glancing down to hail laser death at a hapless guard who only has time to look up and murmur "What the...?" before you end his dreary life; setting charges on the wall of an enemy installation then running away, turning back momentarily to enjoy the sight of said building detonating spectacularly... Ah yes, *Terra Nova* has many, many pleasures to offer the discerning gamer.

It's been carefully designed to allow you to complete most missions using a number of different approaches – a stealthy sneak here, a heavily-armed assault there – and as a result, you need only master a few basic techniques and get used to the control system, and you should find your way through the game fairly easily.

But there are a few missions where things get a bit complicated, and many people can get stuck. To prevent you suffering a similarly humiliating fate, examine the illustrated solutions to these tricky six missions on the second and third pages of this guide. First, though, arm yourself with some indispensable basic instruction...

General strategy

The golden rule is to engage the enemy on your own terms. If they're standing still, locate them (preferably using a long-distance EM scan), then jump in, all guns blazing, and surprise them. If they're moving towards you, pull back, preferably behind a hill, then ready yourself, switch to your heavy weapons, and hit as they



If you can master the art of circling around your prey while firing, you'll be well on the way to mastering *Terra Nova*.

crest the ridge. Never, ever, let them get in the first shot.

Keep moving, as this obviously makes you a harder target. And the sooner you can perfect a circling motion, running backwards while turning right and sliding left to keep a target in your sights as you move around it continuously, the sooner you'll win the game.

There are a number of missions where you need to take a specialist with you in order to destroy an installation, or perform some other critical task, and you'll often find yourself cursing when they take a few hits, panic, and evac, effectively aborting the mission. To avoid this, simply order mission-critical personnel to remain at the dropsite until you've cleared the way for them. This may give you a few more bad guys to engage yourself, but you'll avoid the frustration of having a demolitions expert persistently run out on you after ten hard-fought minutes.



Here at the very last mission, I've lost many of my top weapons experts, and have to make do with an electronics specialist.

Be prepared

A mission can be won or lost, even before it's begun, at the team and equipment selection screen. Sometimes you'll be forced to make some predefined choices; more usually, you'll have a free hand.

You'll find team selection significantly easier if you can keep all your personnel unharmed in every mission. Don't worry too much if you can't manage it – essential team members will always return to duty as soon as they're required to complete a particular mission – but the more people you do lose the more you'll find yourself picking demolitions specialists when you wanted

The tools of the trade

WEAPON	DAMAGE	ARM SLOTS	RANGE	COMMENT
Laser	Low	1	72m	Basic.
Multipulsar	Low	1	126m	Still basic, but goes a bit further.
Smoke Grenade	None	1	96m	Needlessly defensive.
EM Emitter	EM	1	180m	Scans for enemies. Occasionally vital.
Grenade Launcher	Medium	1	96m	Bombs away!
Railgun	Low	1	150m	Destroys armour, leaves personnel intact.
Particle Beam	Medium	1	180m	Solid long-range performance.
Thermal Disruptor	Low	1	102m	Destroys personnel, leaves armour intact.
Missile Launcher	High	2	180m	The first of the really great weapons.
Ionic Fusion Rifle	High	1	60m	Don't underestimate this short-range player – it can be devastating.
SIR Mark IV	High	2	30m	Creates electrical storms. A bit dangerous.
M-B Cannon	Very High	2	270m	Magnificent explosive launcher.
M-B Accelerator	Very High	2	360m	Shoots further, faster, and carries twice as many shells. Marvellous.

weapons experts, and losing team members as a result of the collective's decreased accuracy. It's a vicious circle that should be avoided wherever possible – after all, it usually only takes a few minutes to re-play a mission once you've cracked it, and complete it without loss the second time around.

Equipment choices are a matter of taste, but if you're in doubt then pick the heavy suit – it's much harder to make mistakes inside one of these damage-absorbing exoskeletons. Similarly, pack damage prevention ASFs – first the Dynamo, then the Personal Shield – if you reckon you're going to have any trouble. All the other devices may look slightly cooler, but you don't get points for style – just survival.

When picking weapons, choose a short-range weapon, a long-range weapon and a projectile weapon then, if you've got a spare slot, fit an EM Emitter. The 'Tools of the trade' table above should remind you of each weapon's capabilities, but I'd strongly recommend you fit a Particle Beam, wherever possible, in all your suits, as its long range makes it invaluable for knocking out turrets from a distance. The Laser and Fusion Rifle are best for close-quarter combat – obviously – but should also be used for taking down drones, since the other weapons' fire rates make them too slow to pick off the speeding robots effectively.

Mission 17 Operation Conductor

Here's one of *Terra Nova*'s earliest attempts to wrongfoot you – and it usually works. The briefing states that you're to meet with a guarded convoy, but when you turn up there's nothing but a few blackened patches of grass, and no convoy for miles. Less capable squad leaders have been known to wander the landscape for days, but all you need to do is follow the road south, take the right-hand fork (as indicated by the smoking patch of grass),



Here are the blighters responsible. Hand back those trucks, you pilfering swine!

then carry on down the south-western path. Don't get put off by the fact that the road doesn't show up on the map after a while; persevere, and you'll eventually reach a rocky area, where you'll have to engage some Swooper drones. Continue down the road and, right at the end, you'll find the missing convoy, now heavily guarded by Heg troops. Go easy on the grenades as you assault the position, or you'll torch the trucks. Oh, and watch out for an ambush on the return journey – scout ahead to pick off the marauding patrols before they hit the procession.



The convoy ain't where it's supposed to be. Someone's nicked it.



Sweet salvation! That dropship might just get you out of this awful mess.

way around it. All you can do is concentrate on getting yourself out – just run for the pickup point at full speed. Don't even try to help your mates until you've reached the dropship, when you can turn around and pick off some drones with your Particle Beam if you like, while you're waiting for the surviving pair to catch up.

Mission 19 Operation Goblin

Oh, this is a big upset. It works best as a surprise, of course, so if you haven't got this far yet I strongly advise you not to read the rest of this paragraph. The bad news for those still reading is that there's no way to save Schuyler. His death's worked into the plot and there's no



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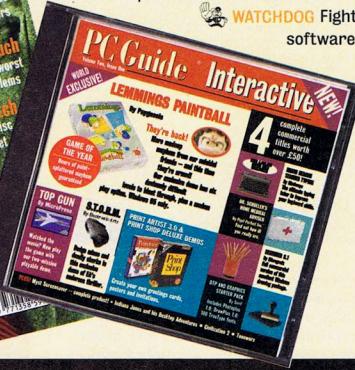
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Difficulty levels

Terra Nova has been very carefully balanced to provide a good mixture of action and strategy, and to reward good play with speedy progression through the story. There is a selection of difficulty levels in the options panel, but they only alter firing and armour strengths. As a result, any difficulty level switch instantly unbalances the entire feel of the game. The easy settings make everything insultingly straightforward, and the harder settings bog you down in protracted firefights without actually giving the sense that you're achieving anything more. Don't play the easy settings under any circumstances – you'll zip through the game and won't enjoy it. But if you've completed *Terra Nova* on the normal setting, a stint on "Hazardous Duty" provides an interesting change of pace, and is certainly recommended in preference to "World War", which quickly becomes grindingly tiresome.

Mission 26

Operation Cold War

Slightly annoyingly, there's only one way to complete this mission; a little bit more flexibility to experiment with the pirate PBA would've been fun, but if you don't follow this prescribed plan of attack, you're finished. Head west, ignoring the frolicking pirates, then drop down onto the base and stand by the relay station. Activate the scanning device and wait a few moments; you should see a couple of guards patrolling in front of you. The second the transmission's intercepted, run straight forward, ignoring both the towers and the guards. If you try to shoot anything, you'll quickly be overwhelmed. Instead, run off the ledge and into the ravine, then run along the river, on the left-hand bank, until you're next to the dropship. There should be a small cleared area to give you a little manoeuvring space; turn left and use it to lift yourself out of the ravine and up to the ship. Made it!



Lurk by the relay post as you attempt to transmit the communications data...



...then run forwards and head straight for your ship, dodging the green bolts of death that so narrowly miss you.

Mission 29

Operation Sparkplug

This is probably the toughest mission of all – it's certainly the most frustrating. There are many ways to try and tackle it, but after a few hundred attempts I can tell you that the strategy with the highest chance of success is as follows. First, kit out your team with Personal Shield ASFs, Heavy Suits, Ionic Fusion Rifles, Grenade Launchers and Missile Launchers. While



Jumpjet to get a lock on the tank, then let rip with your missiles.



Once you've managed to polish off the escort, head back to the base and sort out the second attack wave.

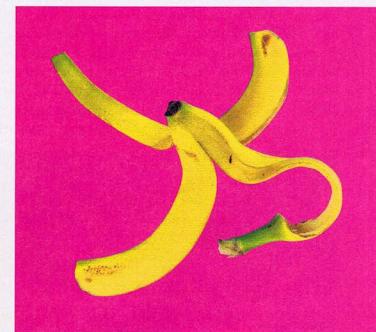
you're still in the air from the drop, select the entire squad and order them to move to the southern edge of the shuttle base. Turn yourself north, and run down the road towards the convoy. Half-way down, order each team member, individually, to activate their ASF, then switch to your Missile Launcher and activate your own Personal Shield. Ignore the drones – they'll only slow you down – then bear right and you'll soon catch sight of the Heg tank which has come to destroy the convoy. Lock onto it and blast it with missiles, then switch to grenades, continue to head towards the accompanying infantry, and bomb them too. Pick off the survivors with Ionic fire, then turn around and help the rest of your squad to protect the shuttles. Get the drones if you can, but make the Heg troops your priority. The faster you get there, the more of your team will survive.

Mission 30

Operation Cadmium

Again, you've got to split your squad here. Immediately on landing, despatch the entire squad east to the bridge, then order your demolitions expert to place a charge on it. While you're doing this, move north, then skirt the rockslide, keeping on the mountainside to the south, and engage the Heg ambush. There are three groups of three troops, so you'll have to keep your wits about you and move quickly. Miss any, and they'll get the speedily arriving convoy. In the midst of the firefight, your demolitions man will probably finish laying his charges, while the other two team members cover him from the attacking drones. Immediately order him to detonate the explosives, and command the squad to follow you. Forge ahead on the Eastern road towards the base, and you should come across a fairly obvious ambush site – a high ravine. Neutralise the

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clones that are lying in wait for the convoy, and take out the Heg mechs on the south side of the bridge while you're waiting for the convoy to reach the base.



You'll have to be on the ball to deal with this Heg ambush on your own.



There's a twist at the end of this level – a towering ravine hiding an ambush.

Mission 37

Operation Absolute Zero

The long-range capacity of the Particle Beam is the key to successful completion of this notoriously tricky final mission. First, order your brother to stand and wait, then lead your two remaining squad members towards the station and pick off the initial few clones who come out to meet you. Now destroy the two westerly heavy guard towers by running towards them firing your Particle Beam. Keep moving and the missiles will fall behind you, while your weapon's long range gives you enough time to take out the structures before you run into the perimeter wall.

If you stand in the opening of the western wall, you should just be able to pick off another gun turret, too. You'll probably attract a few clones, but just retreat and take them down in the open space. Next, head around the wall



Destroy as much heavy ordnance as you can from as far away as possible.

Might as well jump

Knowing your enemy's location before they know yours is the first step towards getting the upper hand in any combat situation. And an excellent way to scan the surrounding area in *Terra Nova* is to launch yourself high into the air and shoot off four EM grenades, turning 360° as you descend and aiming each grenade at a different point of the compass. The launcher's range is vastly increased by the jump, and this manoeuvre should instantly alert you to any nearby forces.



It all looks so peaceful from up here... a high-altitude scan in action.

until you're facing the south side of the complex. Again, approach the gap in the wall and destroy a turret. Clones will attempt to counter-attack, but so long as you don't allow yourself to go too far into the station you'll always be able to pull out quickly and pick them off as they stroll through the gap in the wall.

Destroy the south-easterly heavy guard tower, and at least one of the heavy turrets in the centre of the complex. Use your M-B Accelerator wherever possible to gain invaluable extra range. You'll probably be attracting quite a lot of attention by now, and may have lost at least one of your companions, but don't worry. Keep activating your personal shield whenever you enter the station, and stay cool. When you've done as much damage as you think you can – in other words, when your front shield's depleted and your two companions have evacuated – make one last sortie, lead as many clones as you can away to the south, then tell your brother to set the charges. Depending on how well you managed to deplete the forces inside the station, he'll probably manage to set the explosives, although it's by no means certain he'll make it out. That doesn't matter – just run for the pickup point, press enter when you reach the dropship and marvel at the satisfying but all-too-brief end sequence.

PCG



Lure any counter-attacking clones well into the open, where you can dance around them to your heart's content.

Terra Nova

Developed by Looking Glass and published by Virgin, *Terra Nova* was reviewed in the April issue of *PC Gamer*, where it was awarded an almighty 91%. It was also placed at number 16 in last month's Top 100.

Deep Space 9: Harbinger

Complete Solution

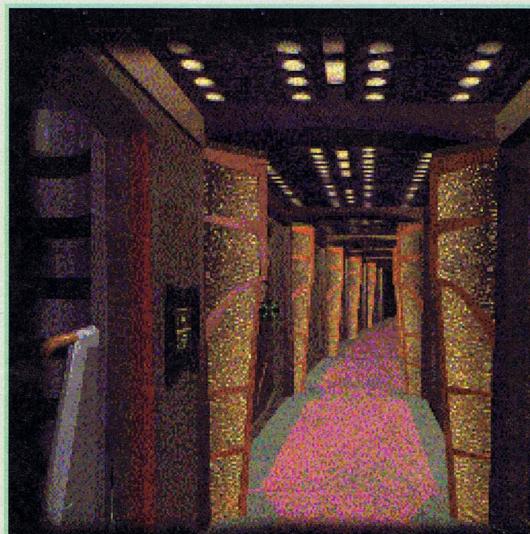
Deep Space 9, as it turns out, isn't so deep – at least, if Viacom's game of it is to be believed. Nevertheless, it is possible to get stuck in it. So Mark Donald has written a guide to it, which he reveals here.

The broken computer puzzle

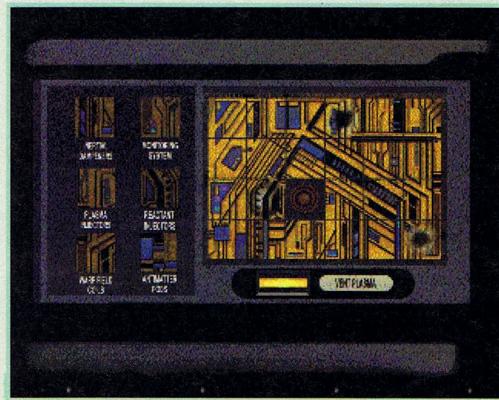
To shut down the main propulsion unit on the Orinoco first vent the plasma, lest you be consumed in an almighty conflagration. Then replace all the charred chips on the circuit board. Do this by clicking on a replacement chip which will then appear, as if by magic, on the puzzle board. Manoeuvre the replacement chip around the board until it matches with its shattered counterpart. By keeping your hand one space behind the chip you can nudge it into place. Replace all three broken chips and then return to charming Odo, the security chief, so that you may be whisked to the DS9 ops room.

How to find Karrig

Once you've got through Sisko's debriefing take a jaunt to Ambassador Karrig's room. Take a turbolift to the lower promenade deck. Stepping out from the lift, turn left and hurry to the end of the passage. On your left will be a bar (of the good time variety) and on your right an airlock. Skip merrily through the series of airlocks and you'll find yourself in the habitat ring. Karrig's gaff is on the left of the habitat corridor just after a turbolift. If you become lost you can check your location via the 'you are here' wall computers. Once outside Karrig's quarters ring his bell by clicking the door icon. Then, nip back to the lower promenade and find the security office just after the airlock on the left-hand side of the corridor. Wring the door over-ride code from the ever-jocular Odo, dash back to Karrig's and use the code to open the door. On entering be careful not to slip in the green goo on the floor, or else Karrig's autopsy will have to be conducted from the sole of your boot.



This corridor is all that's accessible of the habitat ring, a typically bustling DS9 thoroughfare.



Press the button at the bottom right of this screen to prevent disaster.

Investigation

After some light banter with the waggish Odo it's back to ops for a conflagration with Sisko and Dax. Once here you'll find yourself at a bit of a loose end waiting for Karrig's logs to be reconstructed, so to usher the plot along, dash back to the habitat ring as soon as possible. Go to the end of the habitat corridor and on the right will be a red door. Enter the cargo bay through this door and wind your way to the left, where you'll find another door which accesses the docking ring. Mosey on through some more airlocks and eventually you'll happen upon Ensign Farrow, who'll introduce you to the Scythians. After this illuminating conversation Dax will recall you to ops, where you may now analyse Karrig's logs.



"Ha! I shall defeat this simple 'Simon' game with ease."

Karrig's log puzzle

You'll find the monitor on the console to the left of Dax. Each colour bar represents a word. You must arrange the bars so that they form a specific sentence. The sentence is: "Peace is many voices arguing." Click on each colour bar's icon and then click on the lower panel to hear the translation. The correct colour sequence is: purple, green, yellow, red and blue. Now you may probe Karrig's logs for their darkest secrets.

Delving into Karrig's logs

Karrig was a bit of an old gas-bag and thus his library is chock full of logs. Fortunately, only 'Clarity' is relevant to game progress. So, to minimise mucking about, proceed straight to the standard logs and access 'Clarity'. If you don't listen to this log you won't be able to talk to the Scythians again. Inform Dax of your findings and then it's off to see the taciturn aliens again.

Shoot-out

Just before entering the cargo bay save the game; a spot of unseemly violence is about to occur and it's always wise to take out some insurance for these situations. Resist the temptation to let Odo be fried and target the blue Lykotians with the cursor immediately. The moment the cursor turns into a sight let them have it. You only have a limited time to zap foes; if you freeze they'll nail you. The second Lykotian is round the corner to the right a bit.

The hunt for the red Lykotians

Although the doomed Yarrow greases one Lykotian, five are still at large in the station. First, save the game. Next click on the prostrate Lykotian's wrist and whip off his 'refraction mantle' device. The Lykotians are invisible until you blast them, so this device acts as a detector. Listen for the clicking sound which speeds up as you close in on your quarry.

Whack out the Lykotians in the following order. First the one in Karrig's quarters, then the one in front of the Bajoran temple on the lower promenade, across from Quark's bar. Next the one in the upper bar, then the one back in the habitat ring and finally, the last of the fugitives is in the second airlock section between the cargo bay and the docking ring. Again you have limited time before you are killed, so don't hang about. Stay alert as the detector clicks rapidly, then, as soon as the cursor becomes the phaser icon blast everything at about chest height.



Red Lykotians are easily recognisable as they are the invisible ones.

Oh no! We're all gonna crash

Now that you've quite finished swatting drones, crash landing and generally wallowing in melodrama, it's time to find a way out of this mess. The situation is obviously desperate as you want to talk to that crazy funster Constable Odo. He'll work out the game plan that will save Kira. To communicate with Odo you'll need to enter the drone factory via a rupture in the runabout's hull underneath a control panel. Save the game at this point and then at frequent intervals in the drone-infested factory maze. Once in the factory you need to restore the power.



The malingering Kira wimped out, leaving you to take all the glory for saving DS9.

Tooling up

If you find yourself in the maze unarmed, then it's time to hoof it back to the crashed runabout. Look carefully around the interior of the shuttle and you'll find a wall panel containing a phaser. Grab this, and then swagger back to the maze to show those drones what you're made of.

How to restore power

In the maze you must find the two reactors and bring them on-line. One is situated just to the right of the maze entrance, while the other is located opposite the first on the far side. Once both reactors are on you should go to the power room at the top of the maze accessed by the lift on the third tier. This room contains a large square console with lots of icons on each side.

The power room puzzle

Proceed by matching the four colour pairs blue, yellow, green and pink. Achieve this by clicking on a colour's icon, and then finding its partner and clicking on it. If all goes according to plan, electricity will flow upward in the corresponding colour. Once all the combinations are activated there should be four electric colour beams flowing upward. Don't activate the red beam as this only causes more drones to attack you in the maze.



The power console. Remember, don't turn on the red beams or there'll be trouble.

How to communicate with Odo

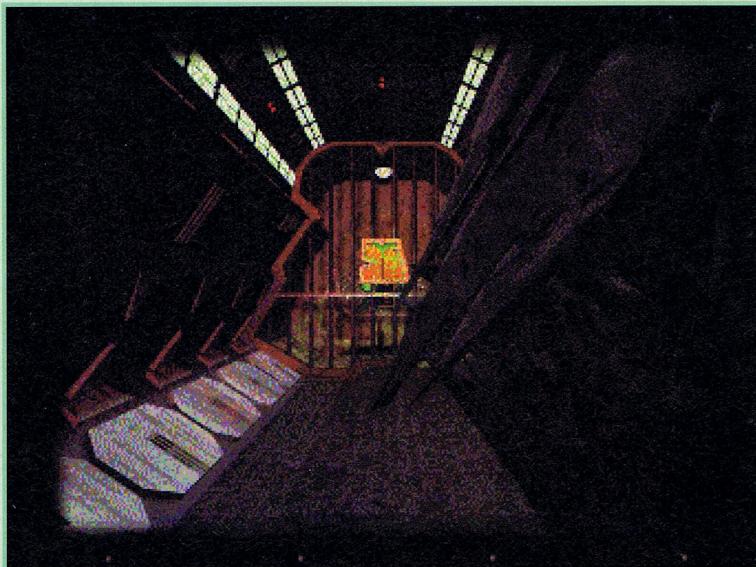
With the power on you must find your way to the communications room. This is located on the far side of the maze opposite the entrance. Here you'll find a static-ridden screen with Odo's voice coming through. Odo will direct you back to the runabout, where you must solve the power conduit puzzle. This may be accessed via a black panel on your left.

The tube puzzle

You have to route the colours from the top to the bottom. Turn the arrows to set the directions you want the flow to follow. All three colours you are



This monstrous carbuncle has its home in the communications room. From here you can engage the fun-at-heart Odo in yet more dazzling repartee.



Outwitting gates? Whatever next? Basic training never prepared you for this.

routing must go through the centre point. Use only the good tubes for routing the colours and be careful not to route colours to an occupied space. Click the colour node on top to start the flow. Now Odo will be able to beam Kira out and you can continue with the mission.

Save the day

To destroy the drone factory you must exit the runabout and approach the gate you're facing. Lift the gate by solving the control puzzle and enter the large room beyond. Quark will be waiting to talk to you in the room to your right, but he'll keep silent until you have gone through the door opposite the entrance and seen the unextended bridge and the bridge controls. Once you have witnessed this the eccentric Quark will spur you on.

The gate puzzle

The gate puzzle is divided into four quadrants. You must light up the right combination to lift the gate. Click the upper left quadrant until the shard second from the left is lit. Click the lower left quadrant so the middle shard is lit. Click the lower right quadrant so the shard second from the left is lit.



Defeat Havik or there'll be no more DS9 series. He must be stopped. Or must he?

After the invisible bridge

If you aren't accosted by passing drones, you will arrive in a large room containing a central console. Hidden from view behind this console is a flight of stairs. Dashing up the stairs you will come to a landing and more stairs. Taking these in your stride will bring you into contact with the Scythian Holoprogram, Keel, for the first time. Chat to Keel and glean as much information as you can. You must figure out the words of access to interact with the other two holoprogams. Then pull on your clever clogs and work out a plan to deal with one of the holoprogams that has been wreaking havoc in the factory.

A link between Syr and the Scythians

It's time to head to the communications room and find the link up. After you've talked to Syr, and he's demanded proof of the Scythian existence, go to the



Use your skill and judgement to spot the bridge. The wind is blowing from the NW.

communications room for a tête-à-tête with Odo. Beneath the view screen there will be a puzzle. To complete the link up, click on the bottom middle shard so it is the only one lit.

Havik's comeuppance

To destroy Havik you must first purge him from the system. Invoke the tactical holoprogram with the refraction mantle set on reflect. Befuddled old Havik will now think you are Havik and will quite happily stand by as you purge him. Once this is done you must find his home bank and wreck it. It's located in the room where Quark has been hiding. Steam into the room and turn left. Your phaser icon will register. Train it onto the home bank and fire. Then, with the villain vanquished, you'll just have to suffer as accolades and advances for your autobiography are heaped upon you.

PCG

Deep Space 9

Deep Space 9: Harbinger was reviewed in the June issue of PC Gamer, where it received a rather poor 45%.

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We're talkin' GAMING HEAVEN!

Directions. Fill in the Mystery Word Grid with words going across that spell out the Mystery Word down the side. Hint: use the Mystery Word Clue.

In the future. There will be four more puzzles at £2.00 each and one tie-breaker at £1.00 which will be sent to you by mail. You will have 3 weeks to solve each puzzle. We don't know how many will play but typically 55% will have the highest score possible to Phase I, 43% to Phase II, 36% to Phase III, and 32% to Phase IV. The tie-breaker determines the winner. If players are still tied they will split the value of the grand prize they are playing for.

Mystery Word Grid

H						M	Y	S	E	R	T
	E										
P	I	N	C	H		W		W		W	
	R										
S											

WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

PINCHW	PRESSK	BLASTA	WRECKD
BREAKZ	PUNCHS	SPRAYC	TURBOV
STOMPT	STANDR	PRESSE	DREAMO
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CLIP AND MAIL



Normality

Complete Solution

The Norms must be destroyed, and in one fell swoop we show you how to do it. None of this waiting around until next month nonsense. Here's the whole game, busted in one go.

The apartment

In your mess of an apartment, examine the sofa to find the money and the gadget. Then pick up the cushion to reveal a remote control. Now you need to look at the floor and pick up a flyer by the door. If you examine the note that you are carrying and use it in conjunction with the flyer and the TV, you'll be able to figure out how to get into the factory. If you can't figure it out, don't worry, because we're here to help you.

Go into the kitchen and pick up the can of cat food. While you're at it, pick up the nodding bird and the jar of white paint as well. Then go into the bathroom and pick up the sharkpoon from the bath, and on your way out pick up the T-shirt from the cabinet made from fruit rinds. Go back to the main room and use the nodding bird with the remote control. An object will appear on the floor that will keep the TV turned on while you're away. Move to the window and use it. When it opens, use it again to climb out.

Dai's window-cleaner cradle

Talk to Dai. He needs a cup of coffee, but you'll have to use the "Can you take me down?" option to get it. Use the window to climb back into your apartment. Use the kettle to make the drink. Then use it on the cup and examine it. Use the white paint you collected earlier to make the coffee milky. Examine the cup again and pick it up. Use the window to climb out again.

Talk to Dai and give him the coffee. He'll then take you down to the ground level.



Break dancing makes a comeback, but the only thing you're likely to break here is your neck.



Heather

After a short cut scene, you will meet Heather. She'll give you a couple of tasks to complete before you can join her gang. The first is to get the tape of Brian's broadcast. Go to the TV station and talk to the security guard to discover his aversion to rats. Go to the mall and pick up the toy rat from the Thrifty Fifty shop.

Use this on the security guard and talk to him again. Make sure you have the towel from the bathroom and go to the mall. Get the block of frozen food and wrap it up in the towel. Make your way back to the apartment and use the food on the washing machine door to break it.

Pick up the box that's on top of the microwave and put the rat in it. Now head back to the security guard and use the rat on him. Voilà. You can now enter the building. Cross to the office door and



Now listen boys, I want a good clean fight. No kicking, no biting and no running off crying to your mummies, okay? Get on with it and the loser gets to fight Tyson.

Plush factory reception

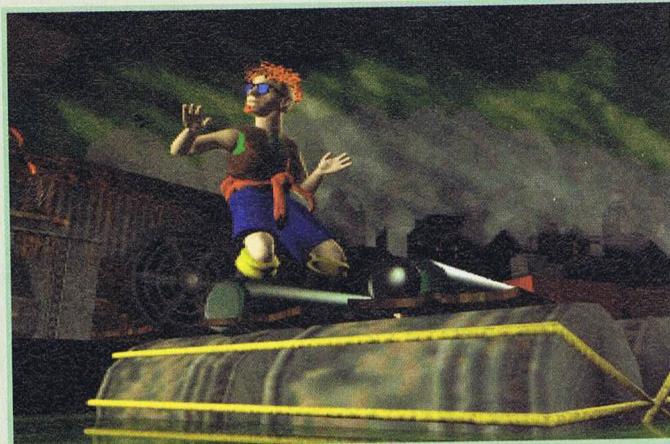
Use the doors and they will open for you. Put the T-shirt on by using it with the picture of Kent. This will get you past Pru. Now walk to the woman in the middle of the hall and talk to her. She'll allow you to go through the door at the end of the hall. Turn right and go to the hospitality suite – use the doors again to enter the suite. Get a cup from the machine by using it. Then use the bizarre sculpture to get a small cup of coffee.

Pick up the cup. After you trash the room, the boss will walk in and talk to you. After the short cut scene, you have to talk to Tiddler about everything possible, as this is the only way of finding out all you need to know. Now go to the toilet cubicle and stand on the armitage, then use the grille in the ceiling. In this maze you'll fine the debris and the belt. Pick them up and retrace your route to the toilet.

Once back in the factory put the debris in the bed next to the striking tester. A waste engineer will appear and take it to the grinder room. Go to Tiddler's office to get the current sender and the receiver. Use the sender with the battery and the receiver with the bare wire. This will make the bed work.

Now you have to use the debris with the bed again. When the engineer comes out again, you will be able to get into the grinder room. Use the power box to turn off the grinders. Then use one of the grinders to go up the conveyor belt to the dumpster.

Heather



The factory compound. Get on top of these containers to find those cogs you've been looking for the last hour. You have been looking for them, haven't you?

enter. Talk to the receptionist on the left, who will then let you talk to Mr Johnson. Talk to him and you will get an access card.

Now walk down to the security doors. Use the card on the door to get to the control room. Use the video on tape machine B to put the tape in. Listen to the presenters and watch the codes to figure out which runs which VCR. Go out to the other offices to talk to an electronic engineer who is trying to fix a computer. To get the password from this guy you have to first go back to your apartment.

Use the access card on the bean splat to get a scraping. Now return and use the gunky card on the engineer. He'll throw a fit and give you his shirt. Examine it and you'll see his middle name on it – this is the password for the control computer (Holen). Go to the machine and enter the RUN VT B control line. The tape plays and your task is done.

Painting the sculpture

Go to the Mint Mall and talk to Norm to find out what emergencies will make him leave his post. Talk to the blind man and you'll get a few clues. Now go to the factory and pick up the paperback books from the unlocked locker. Go to the grinder room and use the belt on the weird extinguisher. Pick up the half-filled extinguisher.

Go to the rear of the factory near the river and find the barrel of paint. Use the extinguisher with the paint to fill it. Now go back to the Mint Mall and use the books on the blind man. He'll give you a box of matches and another book. Now go to the Thrifty Fifty shop and use the fruit croppers on the bargain bin and the large glider sign.

Now use the yappy puppies twice with the small gliders and then, after a cut scene, pick up the fruit croppers. Go to the cave of comestibles. Look at the food and talk to Ray Twill until he breaks down and begins thumping the desk. Do it until the lights go off. Use the fruit croppers on the plum-shaped speakers. Pick them up and go to the Disco LA LA store.

Get the Clap CD and use it on the stereo.

Use the speakers on the stereo. All of the dogs will start to go mad. Deepa the dog will appear barking like a hurricane. Norm 2782 will run from his post near the sculpture, allowing you to go there.

Go to the sculpture and use the matches with the book. Then look at the fire. Norm will appear and use the extinguisher that he took from you in an attempt to put out the fire. Not a bright idea. After the events have unfolded use the matches with the photograph of Kent to light the dark room. When you're ready, go and talk to the group.

The Ordinary Outpost

You now have to go to the Ordinary Outpost dressed in Norm's uniform to free Saul. Easy when you know how. Talk to the receptionist and then go to the research floor. The code is 1572, so use this on the lift. Talk to the scientist and then release the prisoner by cutting his straps with the pair of scissors.



A fire extinguisher filled with paint? A box of matches? A stupid security guard? Time to leave.

Get the snotty glass fragment and the spanner. Use the broken window to gain access to the lab. There are some fingerprints on the extinguisher. Use the glass to lift them off the surface. The only place to get rid of the evidence is in the grinder (you don't have to do this, but the plot will branch out if you don't).

Use the broken window to get to the scaffold and pick up the ladder. Then use the pulley to get out of the Ordinary Outpost. Now go to the haulage container in the factory compound. Pick up the large cog lying in the puddle next to it. Use your recently acquired ladder with the container to climb on top of it. Then pick up the small cog from the broken machine. Time to travel. Go back to the Ordinary Outpost and use both the cogs with the side panel of the grinder. The grinder can dispose of just about anything, especially all the evidence against Kent.

Back at the Ordinary Outpost

Get rid of the prisoner by getting to grips with the zoomtoob. Put the prisoner in a capsule. 'Down' calls the capsule; 'red' opens the door; 'put' prisoner in capsule; 'up' sends capsule away. The scientist will now ask you to go up to the processing floor to get a new object for him, so go back to the lobby via the lift. Talk to your friend the receptionist and then turn on the fountain by treading on the suspect slab behind the pillar. Talk to the receptionist again



And what's your opinion on this piece of expensive modern art? Hmm, much the same as ours, then.

from the slab and the receptionist will suddenly have to go to the loo. Examine the code on the desk (it'll be 1312) and use it on the other lift.

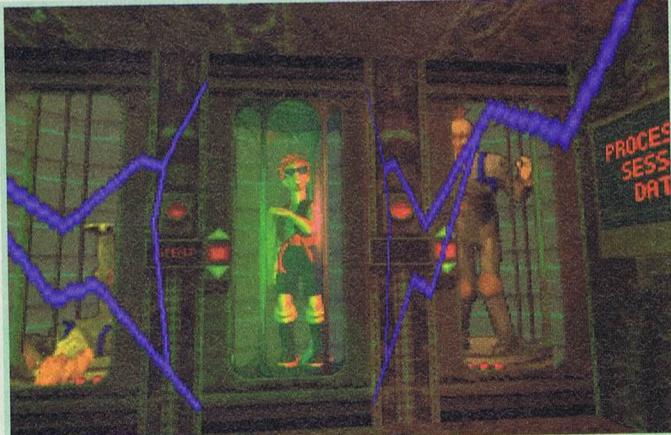
You are now on the processing floor. Talk to Norm and persuade him to leave. Press the red button and a secret door will open. Look around in this mood filter

chamber and examine a few things. The door should now seal behind you. Examine Saul and he'll disappear. Examine the screen and they reappear. Weird. Now examine Saul to get the door open. Paul and some of his henchmen should appear and give you a lecture. This is where the plot branches depending on what you did before.

If the evidence is destroyed

If you destroyed the evidence against you, Paul will be gobsmacked by your incompetence. He will sentence you to a stint in the cells. Use the bench in the first cell to get hold of a transmitter. While you're there pick up the splint. You should now be sucked into the mood filter. Examine the sign that Saul is holding and wait until you are sucked into the next cell. Break the bench here and get the piece of 2x4. Now pick up the scrap of cloth from the gap in the floor.

Use the eating utensils in the food mat to prise the transmitter from the bench. Now wait until you are sucked into the mood filter again. Examine the sign and you will be sucked into a final cell. Break this bench as well, using the 2x4, and the transmitter will get broken. You'll need to find another one later. Use the gravy for ink and write a note to Saul on the cloth. Now you



The mood filter: kind of like a coffee filter but without the coffee. Um, actually it's your way of travelling between the cells, but if we told you that, it'd be easy.



You won't win the boat race in this, but it'll get you across the water. Don't be a thug and steal the traffic cone though, or you'll end up wearing it on your head.

can either use the splint with the note to pass it to Saul or show it to him in the mood filter. Go into the mood filter again and Saul will show you that the transmitter is in the toilet (where else?).

Go to the third cell and sabotage the faulty food mat in the third cell with the broken wall bracket (found in a previous cell). The room will now flood and the guard will come to your rescue. He will clean you up and allow you to go to the toilet cubicle. When you are here open the lid of the cistern and get the third transmitter. Go back to your cell and go into the mood filter. You'll now be shown a cut scene and then you'll end up back at the group HQ.

If the evidence is not destroyed

Paul will sentence you to a long stint in the corridors of the blue pens. There is a man here who is making a documentary about Norm 2782 and his stint in captivity at the mercy of the 'Revolutionaries'. He has bugged some of the key parts of this location in order to observe Norm as he goes about his duties. You must get rid of these bugs if you are to progress. Get everything from the noticeboard in the staff room and make sure you get the paper from the bureau and the one in the bin. These hold the codes which are used in the next room.

The letters refer to the positions of the pedals set into the floor. The number refers to the position of the lever at the bottom of the console. The large red button should be pressed to activate each code. Before each code can be entered you must find one of the bugs hidden around the room. The bugs can be found on the sign, behind one of the lights in the corner and in the shadow under the control console. Use all of the codes on the console. The one that you found in the bin will zap you and you can find the last part of the code beneath the console. Enter this code to begin the emergency evacuation. Now just go to the lift.

Destroying the sub-station

Go into the TV shop and try to get the Micro TV. Talk to the assistant and ask him for the remote. When he leaves rush around the counter and get his keys. Use them on the back door to lock him in and then use the box to get into the loft. Behind the loft crate is a mallet, so make sure you pick it up. Use it on the slats and go through them and walk along until you fall down the hole into the power station.

Pick up the hanging teddy and it will fall to the floor. Don't worry about that, because it was the hanging wire that you were really after anyway. Pick up the teddy again and you will get his eyes. Now go down the steps and pick up



Out of the shower and on with the deodorant, but aren't there more important matters to attend to?

the little pink wire. Put the coins or the teddy eyes into the slot, then go back up the stairs. Press the button marked 'start' on the wall. Now go back down the stairs and get the glowing light bulb. Use the long wire on the bulb pins exposed in the light bulb socket. Time to go back upstairs again and this time open the control box. Use the circuit board and use the pink puzzle to solve the wiring puzzle. Type '123' and enter into the keypad screen. Open the box again and use the long wire on the circuit board to complete the power connection.

Freeing Dai

Go to the mall. Pick up the two rubber pipes there. Now go back to the street. Attach one of the pipes to the smelly grille and the other end to the grille on the truck. Take the other tube to the bathroom. Attach one end to the hole in the bath and the other to the extractor fan above the bath. The Norms will now activate the emergency door opener, and you can now rescue Dai from the rear of the van.

Pollutotron

Saul and Heather have decided that the sub-station mission was not acceptable enough. The Pollutotron must be blown up if the group have any hope of succeeding in making a difference to the future of the city. Talk to Heather, who will tell you that she wants a few components in order to make a missile. Go to the mall and pick up the broken wood. Then get the single fire cracker and the rope from around the waffle. Go to the container in the factory compound. Open this by either lighting the fumes at the top or attempting to get the acetylene canister.

Use the canister with some matches (there are some spare ones at the mall if you have none left). The doors should now blow off. Use the wood with the barrels and then the rope with the wood and barrels. Use this new raft with the river. Use the toxic canisters on the raft. Climb onto the raft and use it. You will now turn up at the docks. Watch the launch of the rocket.

The stadium

Go to the stadium. Talk to Saul and Heather so that you know what you have to do. Then get the goggles from the packing crates in the main area. Turn off the light near the sewer head to enable you to get past the Norm troopers. Use the gap in the wall to get up to the grating, and get the batteries lying there. Use them with the goggles and then smash down the grating with the guitar. Break down any suspect walls (there should be three). Take the roof brace down from behind one of the walls. This will cause a collapse and reveal a crate.

Now use the brace on the sign near a wall that won't break or on the loose tile around the corner. A false wall will open and either of these objects will keep it open. Go down into the labs and get the poster on the wall. Use the hole to go through it and pick up the fire-axe lying in the rubble. Go back outside to the fallen crate and smash it into bits with the axe. Get the suit that was inside. Go back to the room where you got the axe and open the microwave. Use the new suit with the brain and then go to the sewers again. Pick up the roof brace from where you left it and then use the brace on the elevator door to open it. Use the elevator and, voilà, you've completed the game.

PCG

Normality

Normality was the Game Of The Month in the May issue of PC Gamer. It's an accomplished adventure game which scored a healthy PCG rating of 87%.

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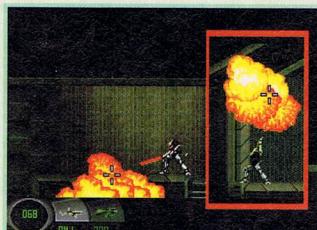
Foul play

Referee! Cheats and tips for the greatest games.

With the European Championships at the forefront of media attention, it seems strangely appropriate that you can foul like a good 'un with this month's collection of hideous cheats. Excuse us while we unconvincingly dive into the penalty area.

Abuse

If you didn't get enough Abuse last month, here's a bit more you're welcome to. There is a built-in god mode, thank God, provided you have the full version. Hold your horses, though – don't load it up straightaway. Instead, from your antiquated DOS prompt, type: **abuse -edit**. When you start your game, make sure that your cursor is somewhere towards the middle of the screen and then press Shift-Z. Then, a Tab is all you need for God-like action.



Fury³

Fury³ or *Terminal Velocity*, it's all the same to us. In fact, as far as we could tell, the only difference between them is that the following cheats work on the former and not the latter. So fly, fly around in your beautiful 3D craft, working under Windows 95 but still disappointingly slow despite all Microsoft's promises about it being the games operating system of choice.

If it's all getting a little too hard for you, there's a veritable plethora of cheats for the underhanded soccer star. Simply type in these codes once the



game begins and enjoy the consequences:

GIVITUP	Get all the weapons
JUMPNIT	Jump to next level
PACKIN1	Gives you the Servo Laser
PACKIN2	Isokinetic Gun
PACKIN3	Rapid Laser
PACKIN4	DOM
PACKIN5	Viper
PACKIN6	Baryon
PACKIN7	Superbomb
TRYMEON	That ever-popular God mode
URDUSTD	'Turbo' mode, if your PC is up to it
WORMIT	Follow this with a number and you warp to that level

Destruction Derby

We don't know if it is the same in professional football, but the traditional story about boxing is that there must be no sex before a fight. Presumably this is to keep you tense, angry, frustrated and unpopular with your partner. If you are to succeed in the inescapably violent world of *Destruction Derby* from Psysnogis, it might be appropriate to suffer the same preparation. If,



however, your libido refuses to co-operate in such tactical training, we don't mind letting you into a little secret. When you race in any championship mode, instead of massaging your ego by entering your name, pretend to be called '**!damage!**' instead. Watch as no matter how much you ram into other drivers, your car suffers no ill effects.

TekWar

It may be less convincing as a *Doom* alternative than



William Shatner's rug is as a full head of hair, but it may be possible to salvage some enjoyment with this selection of cheats. Alternatively, these may be just what you need to ruin any fun that may have been there. The choice, as they so rightly say, is yours.

The following work on the demo and the full game:
NUM LOCK You are invulnerable

The following are used as command line switches when you run the game. That is to say that to get rid of the enemies you would run the game by typing: **TEKD1 NOENEMIES**.

NOENEMIES	Removes everyone but you
NOGUARD	Removes the guards
NOCHASE	Removes any shooting enemies
NOSTROL	Removes innocent bystanders

If you have the full version, you can use the following as well:

ALT+SHIFT+G	Invulnerability
ALT+SHIFT+W	All weapons, lots of ammo, and all the keycards
ALT+SHIFT+J	All the matrix symbols normally collected by killing the bosses

MechWarrior 2: Ghost Bear Legacy

There's even some bonus codes for this expansion pack. Don't ever say that we don't help.

Hold down Ctrl, Alt and Shift and then type:
CLARK for x-ray vision
KENT for invulnerability



Mon-Fri 9am-7pm Sat&Sun 10am-4pm. Please note: Some titles may not be released at the time of going to press. Most titles are despatched same day but can take up to 28 days. VAT is included EOE

PINBALL PRELUDE IS available from HMV, Electronic Boutique, Game, Virgin, Guildhall, Game-Zone, Gordon Harwood, Five Star and many more

or telephone the Effigy Hotline : 01526-833362

Describe in no more than 500 words typed, WP or Block Capitals what you believe to be happening on Prelude's FUTURE table.

COMPETITION RULES

These rules are binding and entry into the competition is taken as acceptance.

No Effigy employees or their families may enter.

The judges decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Illegible, damaged or incomplete entries will be disqualified. The winner will be notified by week commencing 14 October 1996.

HOW TO ENTER:
Cut out the voucher from the booklet in your game box **no photocopies**

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Finally: Send your VOUCHER and your ENTRY, including your name and address and daytime telephone number to:
PINBALL PRELUDE FUTURE COMPETITION, Effigy Software, Station Yard, Station Road,

Q&A

You're as stuck as a stick insect on a sticky bun. You're desperately in need of some gaming advice to make your life complete again. Fear not then, for Q&A is here to lift the gloom and bring those gaming troubles to an end.

By GRANT RENCOURT

Sim Tower

Q Help! I'm totally stuck on *Sim Tower*. My tenants move out, and I go bankrupt and am therefore unable to get any star ratings. So can you give me some help, please?

Andrew Fairbairn, Rochdale

A Okay Andrew, try out the following cheats. When starting a new tower, click in the lowest left-hand corner to double your starting money. Also, try the following cheat edit, which will get you a five-star rating and plenty of money:

```
C:\SIMTOWER>debug anytower.tdt
-e 102 5
-e 106 ff
-w
-q
```



Most publishers offer their own games support service, so if you're stuck on one of their titles, it's always worth giving them a ring directly.

Customer Help-Lines

Acclaim	0171 344 5000	MicroProse	0891 555111
Domark	0181 780 2224	Ocean	0161 839 0999
EA and Origin	01753 546465	Psygnosis	0151 282 3333
Empire	0181 343 9143	Sierra	0891 660660
GameTek	01753 531831	US Gold	0121 606 1800
Infogrames	0891 244444	Virgin	0171 368 2255
Interplay	01628 423723	Warner Int	0171 391 4300

Hell

Q I have been working on *Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller* for a little while now and have just got stuck. Could you please tell me the password I need to be able to access Dolph Van Ittey's computer? And also, how do you free the woman from the hell music room?

Edward Smith, Trowbridge

A No problem. The code for Dolph Van Ittey's computer is BLOODNET. To free Alice Renton, the woman in the music room, you'll need to find all the silent letters in the verse:

Murder the dumb
Torture the meek
With the scent of death
And the gnashing of teeth

The answer is: B E C A G. Left-click on the corresponding white squares.



Alone In The Dark 3

Q Please can you help me on *Alone In The Dark 3*? I'm stuck on the jail roof. I have reached the mechanism, but it says there's a gear missing, so I put the sheriff's badge in and it starts clicking, but nothing happens. Can you help me, as this is driving me mad?

Colin Knott, Northumberland



A You should have picked up a whip after climbing the rope ladder and you need it to solve your dilemma. After putting the sheriff's badge in, stand near the mechanism and use the whip on it to start it working.

Labyrinth Of Time

Q I've been playing *Labyrinth Of Time* and have come to a standstill. I wonder if you can please answer some questions for me. 1) In the Mage centre, how do you kill the Minotaur? I have the sword, and the pot of paint only blocks one mirror. 2) How do you open the door in the Cretan palace? 3) What is the number for the door in the hotel facing east next to the room where the newspaper and clean shirt is put? And finally, 4) Where is the key to the door of the tram car facing west and the map that's buried with Mac Dog Maddigan. I would be most grateful if you could answer some or all of these questions.

Janet Alcock, Chester

A Your first two questions are connected so I'll answer them both together. You need to get into the Cretan palace to kill the Minotaur. To do this, you need to drop the clean shirt you found in the laundry chute. Then go down to the laundry and read the journal. It mentions that Cornelius found a



Over To You...

It's that time where we ask you, the readers, to act as kind souls and help out fellow gamers in their hours of need. So take a glance at the list below and, if you can provide assistance, write in to the usual address, marking your envelope 'Over to You'.

A Here's a cheat for **Warhammer**. If you hold down CTRL and press on the spell button, then the amount of available mana will increase every second. You will also be able to fire your fireball every second.

Ben Neffendorf, Surrey

A I write with regard to **Susan Chaney's problem on Betrayal At Krondor**. To find the Roric's seal, go to Questor's view and kill the men there, then search them to find the Roric's seal. It should be on one of the bodies. Hope that helps.

Carl Wheeler, Kirkby-in-Ashfield

Q Since Christmas, we have been stuck on **The Lion King** (with Simba) in the Elephant's graveyard. We've roasted the vultures, and the hyenas are dog meat, but how do we get to the next level?

C Aylott, Ripponden

burial site and sealed it with a red door. To open it you need the Minoan artefact found in Minos' sarcophagus, which is in the tomb behind the combination lock in the servant's room. Once in the palace, move the throne and take the can of fresco paint. Now, go across the bridge and kill the Minotaur by painting over the two mirrors using a can of paint for each mirror.

As for your third question, read the sign above the fireplace in the servant's room. You'll discover that the newspaper and laundry are for Room 14 - Professor Garrett's room. What he wants is a newspaper from Revolver Spring's and a lucky shirt.

And finally, you can't open the door of the tram car facing west (it's not necessary), and neither can you recover the map, as far as I know.

Buried In Time

Q I'm stuck on **Buried In Time**. I've used the preserved heart on the pool of blood, and I've opened the mayan puzzle box, but how the hell can I open the door? Arthur says something about a spare heart. Is there one lying around somewhere? Please help.

David A Leahy, Peterborough



A The spare heart that Arthur is referring to, you've already used on the pool of blood. As to your problem of opening the door, well, you don't specify which door you're stuck at. If you mean the door in the pyramid, then you need to use the blocks you recovered from the three temples. Drag each block to the mouth of the pyramid, and when the third is inserted the door will open. If, however, you're stuck at the section with the puzzle box, then you don't need to open any door to get back as you've already uncovered the temporal anomaly. Simply use the Jump chip! Recall function to return to your apartment.

Under A Killing Moon

Q Please help me. I'm really stuck on **Under A Killing Moon**. Please can you tell me how to get the balloon on Day 3?

Leszek Szczepanski, Gdynia, Poland

Q I've recently bought **Premier Manager 3** on CD-ROM. As the season starts, I find it hard to win any of the matches and fall into debt quite easily. Are there any cheats that will change this and win me promotion?

Peter Anderson, Bradford

Q Please could anyone help me on Sierra's **Lost Secret Of The Rainforest**? I am stuck in the cibola camp and need some help to get out.

Suhail Qazi, London

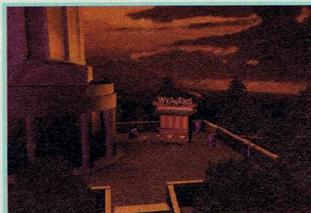
Q Please help me as I seem to be totally useless at

Bullfrog's Theme Park. Even on the easiest level I seem to go bankrupt really quickly and all my customers seem to find my park really boring. Does anyone have any cheats or hints they could give me for this good but very frustrating game?

Lee Russell, Gloucester

Q I need your help. I have been desperately trying to finish **Jungle Strike**, but I can't complete the Snow Fortress level. Is there anyone there who could please tell me the cheats or the codes for the next levels?

Reuben Chircop, Malta



A I assume that your problem is not simply getting the balloon but inflating it. So, go to Rusty's fun house and look at the helium nozzle in the clown's mouth on the wall, then use the balloon on the helium nozzle. There you go - problem solved.

Shannara

Q I'm stuck on **Shannara**. After getting the elfstones I meet Telsek and Panamon Creel. I helped them to fight the monsters, and then we went to a place where there's an arch. I break the arch, but when I go through the monsters keep coming out and I can't kill them all. Please help!

Ronnie Yuen, Australia

A Have Telsek pick up the boulder in front and toss it at the arch. Fight the monsters. (Order Davio to use the elfstones on the leader; otherwise you will have an endless succession of monsters to fight and you'll find it impossible to win.) Order everyone to follow your lead, and then attack and finish off the monsters.

PC



If you're in a jam, or able to help those who are, then write to us now! Mark your envelope clearly with either Q&A or Over To You and send it to: PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

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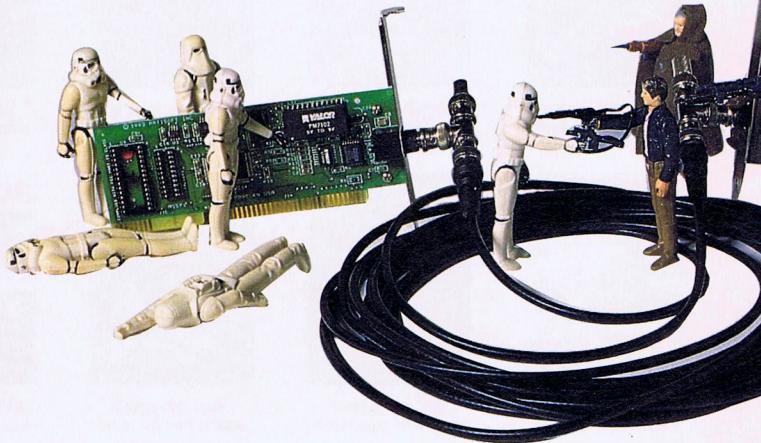
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If a game is fun for one, the fun increases exponentially for two, three or more. Simon Williams shows how to wire up a multi-player network at around £30 per machine.

Shared se



YOU HAVEN'T played *Doom*, *Warcraft II* or *Terminal Velocity* until you've played against a human opponent. Richard Longhurst's article on the various ways of getting connected (see page 60) should have tempted you to make the Big Connection, so I thought it might be handy if I detailed the steps needed to network two machines together under Windows 95, which is both the easiest and cheapest vehicle for networking, as it's normally on your PC already. What? You haven't upgraded yet? Well, read Systems in the July 1995 *PC Gamer* for details of connecting with Novell Personal Network.

Why shouldn't you just connect a cable



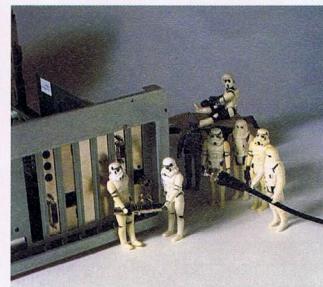
1. Switch both machines off and remove their cases, so you can see the expansion slots into which the expansion cards are plugged. These may be mounted vertically or horizontally, depending on the design of the PC. Find an empty slot in each machine and remove the blanking plate behind it by undoing the single screw at the top of the plate.

Office networks

If you're thinking of running your games on a network in your office, you could get into 'serious problems' with your network administrator if you bang *Doom* up in a lunch hour and start to blast. Apart from the strict rules many companies have about introducing 'unapproved' software onto a network (because of problems with viruses and piracy), any game will put extra load on the network itself.

A network operating system is designed to

between serial ports? This is certainly the cheapest route to linking two PCs back to back, but there are two good reasons for going for a network instead. First, you get all the benefits of networking, like sharing files and printers, which you don't with a serial link.

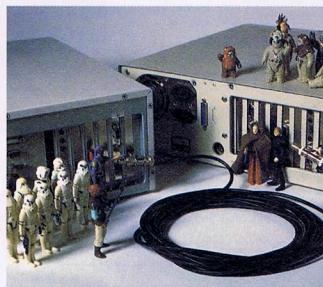


2. Fit a network card into each machine by plugging it into the vacant slots and secure them with the screws from the backplates you just removed. Fit a 'T' piece to the plug on the back of each card by lining up the slots on the stem of the 'T' piece with the lugs on the plug, pushing in the 'T' and twisting. Fit a terminator to one bar of each 'T' in the same way.

send packets of data along the networking cables and keep track of who's sent the data and its destination. It also checks that the data received is the same as the data that was sent, and all this administration has to be handled by the computers on the network. In a peer-to-peer network, which is the type Windows 95 provides, this work is shared among all the processors connected to it.

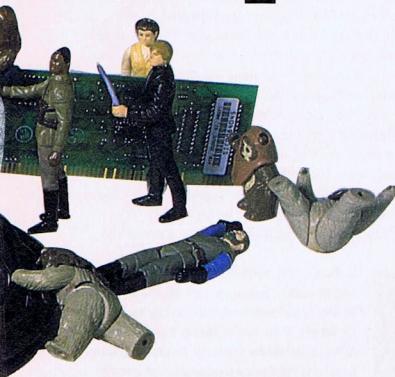
Although well-written games will try to keep all this net traffic to a minimum, they can't help

Second, you can connect more than two PCs together with a network, and it's no more difficult to latch in extra machines than fitting up the first two. Think of half a dozen camps of orcs and humans in *Warcraft* all trying to claim territory – the same territory!



3. Take the length of network cable and lock the sockets on each end of it onto the spare bars of each 'T' piece. Replace the case top to each PC and switch them on. Windows 95 should detect the extra network cards and automatically install the necessary drivers for them. Follow the steps in the software walkthrough on page 122 to complete the installation.

t-ups



generating data packets of their own which the networking software has to pass from player to player. Your best way of keeping on the good side of the guy who has to keep the network running – a thankless task – is to approach him (or her) and ask a) if multi-player games are allowed on the company's network and b) if there are times when traffic is consistently light – like out of office hours – when it would be okay to run them.

What you will need

You need only five things to network Windows 95 PCs together:

- An NE2000-compatible Ethernet network card for each machine you want to network.
- A length of 'thin Ethernet' cable long enough to connect between each pair of computers.
- Connectors, in the form of 'T' pieces and terminators for the cable.
- Windows 95 installed on each machine.
- A cross-head screwdriver.

Network cards have dropped in price like very heavy things pushed out of an aeroplane without parachutes. The ones I've used in this feature are snappily named GE2000PnP, are from Technomatic (0181 205 9558) and cost £22.33 each. Network cable with sockets on each end costs around £2.50 per metre and the 'T' pieces and terminators are £3.35 and £1.47 each, all from LAN Warehouse on 0800 248 000. So, for two machines, linked by a 3m cable, it's going to cost around £60.

The principle

What you'll need to do is fit a network card to a spare ISA slot in each PC – if you don't

Opinion

Some thoughts on recent technical developments...

The Panrix Micron Plus 200 goes like it's on fire, though at £3,989 it could quickly burn a hole in your pocket, too.



Out of the flying Panrix

They're out there. The 200MHz Pentium processors are in production and one of the first I've yet seen is from Panrix (01132 444958). This is one quick machine, which completed all my normal tests faster than anything I've yet seen, including a 200MHz Pentium Pro from Hewlett Packard. It produced a Wintach index at high resolution of over 300, a result I've seen only once before.

Not all this breakneck speed is down to the processor, though. Panrix have put a large, fast 2Gb hard drive into this machine alongside an eight-speed CD-ROM drive. There are also 32Mb of RAM and 256K of secondary cache. There's a 28.8K/s modem for pulling down a lot of information fast and a 16-bit SoundBlaster card complete with a pair of Yamaha speakers for playing it loud.

Video is handled by a 17-inch Iiyama monitor, with a beautifully flat screen and good on-screen controls. There's a quality Fujitsu keyboard and a Microsoft mouse, but – oh, dear – no joystick. Where's the games potential in that?

All this lot comes together as Panrix's Micron Plus 200, which has a price tag of a whopping £3,989. It's not the most expensive PC I've yet seen, though. That honour goes to the Hewlett Packard Vectra XU 6/200, which with twin Pentium Pro 200s is a mere snap at £8,450.

Don't call me floppy

I've been following a story for the last 18 months which finally looks as if it'll turn into a product. I first heard of a new magnetic coating that had been developed by Fuji for video tapes. Fuji had the idea that the coating could be used to produce high-capacity floppy disks, but didn't have the facilities to produce the disks, or the

drives to take them, themselves.

They therefore sought out 3M, who make a huge number of disks, Matsushita (also known as Panasonic), who make a huge number of floppy drives, and Compaq, who make a huge number of PCs to put drives and disks in. Now the whole thing has come together. Compaq have announced a 120Mb floppy drive which works at around the speed of a quad-speed CD-ROM drive and will be available built into some of their PCs, and as an option on others.

Compaq will be charging around \$220 for the upgrade in the States, so you might expect a UK price of around £150, though these prices don't include VAT. Although the drive is not as fast as Iomega's ZIP drive – a 100Mb external drive which takes special high-density disk cartridges – it has other advantages. The Compaq/Panasonic drive is a direct replacement for a standard 3.5-inch floppy drive, has a slightly higher capacity and can read and write 720K and 1.44Mb floppies, too.

The bad news is that Compaq will be taking all Matsushita's output of these drives for the next year or two, so to get the new drive – ideal for back-ups of games or other data – you'll have to buy a Compaq PC.

More power to PowerVR

It may not be too much of a hardship to buy a Compaq machine in the next few months, actually, as the company have also announced that they'll be using VideoLogic's PowerVR 3D accelerator chips in their new Presarios. This will be extremely good news for VideoLogic and NEC, who will be manufacturing the PowerVR chips.

With a name like Compaq behind the technology, games companies will be encouraged to write for it. That, in turn,

will encourage more companies to buy PowerVR add-on cards to install in their machines or to buy the chips to build into their system boards. Diamond are also said to be looking hard at the technology, which looks more and more as if it's the way things will go.

VideoLogic have announced their



The smart money is on PowerVR to take the lion's share of the 3D video market by the end of the year. I'll keep you posted.

own PowerVR add-on cards at very attractive prices, like \$95 for the 1Mb version. Unfortunately, to buy them at that price you do have to take 10,000, but an end-user product will be available later this summer - I've been promised one of the first for review.

Whole lotta sound

There are some things that are still magic in this wonderful world of technology, like the clever little boxes that enhance the stereo image from your PC speakers. The first I looked at, or rather listened to, was the Spatializer from Labtec (see the January issue of *PC Gamer*). That little cream box spread the sounds out way beyond the two speakers that were making them. This new black box from NuReality, called VIVID 3D Plus, uses the SRS system to do the same thing, only more so, and costs £49.95. It can also synthesise stereo from a mono input, which is a neat trick.

The positions of the sounds seemed to swim a little more than with the Spatializer, though this might have been the pint and a half of Man o' War I had at lunchtime and the fact I was using Led Zeppelin's Whole Lotta Love as the test track. There's certainly more control on the VIVID 3D Plus, with centre and space knobs as well as volume, on/off and a selector switch. There's no indicator light to show when it's on, though. Ring 0171 795 6977 for more details.



Lots of switches and knobs on the NuReality VIVID 3D Plus and a well-defined effect in a neat box.

have a spare slot left, you'll have to remove an existing card or stay isolated. You then connect a 'T' piece to the co-axial socket on the back of each card, a terminator to one bar of each 'T' piece and one end of the network cable to the other bar, linking the two machines together. That's the hardware installation.

To set up the software, you turn each PC on and let Windows 95 spot that you have new hardware (the network card) and automatically install the appropriate software for it. With a couple of manual settings you should have both Windows and DOS sessions running with access to the drives and printers attached to either computer.

If you want to add further machines, undo the existing connection to one of the PCs in the network and connect the cable to the new PC instead. Take an extra length of cable to

connect from the new machine to the one you disconnected from. Then install Windows 95 networking, as I describe further on.

Network niceties

Once you have the network set up, it's really easy to establish temporary or permanent links between PCs. On one machine you enable sharing and share the particular drive or folder you want the other to be able to use. On the second machine you map the first machine's drive or folder as an extra letter, such as E:.

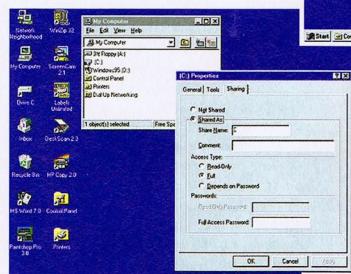
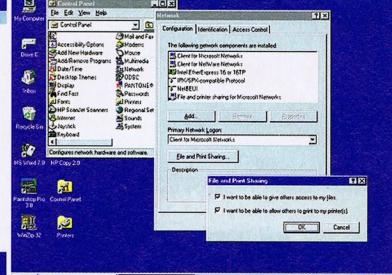
From then on, you can view, copy or move any files simply by viewing them in My Computer or Explorer and dealing with them just as if they were located on your own PC.

Sharing printers works just as easily. Open the Printers dialogue from within My Computer and right click on the icon of the



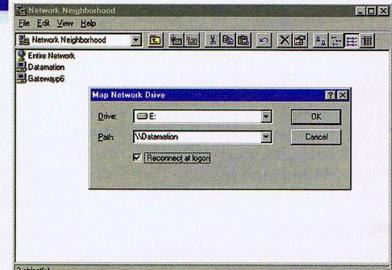
1. When you've installed your network cards and the cable, switch on your PC and Windows 95 should automatically pick up the new hardware. If for any reason it doesn't, select Add New Hardware from My Computer/Control Panel and let Windows automatically search for New Hardware.

2. Depending on your network card type, you may be asked to insert your original Windows 95 CD or disks to copy the relevant driver and at the end of this you'll be asked to restart Windows. Once this is finished, go to Network dialogue Control Panel, click on File and Print Sharing and tick both check boxes to permit the sharing on your PC.



3. Open My Computer; highlight drive C on your PC and select the Sharing option from the File menu. Click on the Shared As and Full radio buttons, which will give full access to your hard drive. If you want to restrict access to certain folders only, highlight that folder before setting the Sharing options.

4. Once you've enabled sharing on one PC, you have to map the drive or folder on the other machine. You do this from the Network Neighborhood viewer on the other machine. Click on the Map Network Drive icon in the toolbar; select the drive and decide whether you want the connection re-established each time you start up. Check the box if you do.



printer you want to share. Select Properties and then Sharing and click on the options you want for your shared printer. Once the printer is shared on one machine, you have to set-up a printer on the other machine by clicking on New Printer in the Printers dialogue.

Select network printer and browse until you can see the name of the printer you just shared on the first machine. The new printer driver will be copied from the first machine and you will then be able to print files from the remote machine onto the one attached to the printer.

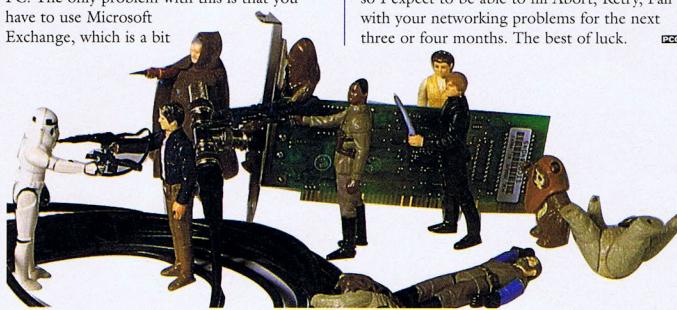
If your networked PCs are going to remain linked together, you can use Windows 95's mail system, to send messages from PC to PC. The only problem with this is that you have to use Microsoft Exchange, which is a bit

clunky and slow, and like all the other Windows 95 stuff, comes with very little documentation – you have to wade through the system's on-line help, which is like taking an explanation from Red Dwarf's Cat.

Getting the games up

Each game has its own set-up for running in a multi-player mode. Different types of game need different kinds of set-up. *Warcraft II*, for example, gives you options to use a pre-set environment or one you create yourself and to include a computer force in your game as well as the human players. You can have up to eight players networked at once.

And that, as they say, is all there is to it, so I expect to be able to fill Abort, Retry, Fail with your networking problems for the next three or four months. The best of luck. PCG



Abort, Retry, Fail?

Q: \>

I often purchase your brother magazine *PC Plus*, just to see what latest hardware is frequenting the catwalk this season. Next, my mind starts ticking over and before long I'm juggling prices around, wondering (as we all do) "How much will it cost to upgrade my system?"

Then, in the next 70th nanosecond, I've sold my PC, in search of newer and faster Pentiums with more memory than Norris McWhirter. I finally narrow it down to the sticky toffee pudding of all PCs, only to find out later that I shouldn't have sprinkled raisins on my dessert, but chocolate chips. Blast!

Please put my inquisitive mind to rest and grace myself and all our fellow PC Dreamers with what system you would blow your lottery winnings on. **Chris, Redcar**

A: \>

Sure, and that's a way with words you have there, Chris. So let's indulge ourselves on a money-no-object spree. I'll start with what I wouldn't do. I wouldn't buy a Pentium Pro, as although it gives plenty of performance with Windows NT, I wouldn't want to run Windows NT and it would do very little for my gaming. So I'd like a Pentium 200, please. These machines are just beginning to come on the market and are currently the fastest PCs available. In a month or so, I might think about a Cyrix 6x86-200+ instead, which are said (by Cyrix) to be faster than the Pentium 200, though they only clock at 166MHz.

I'd like 64Mb of EDO memory, please and 512K of pipeline, burst-mode secondary cache. That should be enough for the next couple of years. As a video card, I'd still have a fully equipped 4Mb Matrox Millenium. Although there are faster 3D cards around, I'll wait for VideoLogic's PowerVR add-on, which I believe will knock everything else out of the water.

I'd like a large hard drive – 2Gb should be enough and an eight-speed CD-ROM, preferably Panasonic's newly announced EIDE device, which looks very quick on paper, though I haven't tested it yet. I'd also like a removable form of secondary storage – I'd look at both the PD drive, again from Panasonic, or one of Compaq's high capacity 100Mb floppy drives.

I'd have keyboard and mouse from Microsoft, an AWE 32 SoundBlaster and a set of JPV Powered Monitor hi-fi computer speakers (01752 607000), which recently won a PC Plus Gold award. Finally, I'd like a 21-inch monitor from Iiyama or ADI, a big, strong desk and installation by two men with sound backs. No, wait, I believe you can now get 21-inch full colour flat-screen panels at horrendous prices. Since I've won the lottery, I'll have one of those please. There you go – now tell me which bits I've got wrong.

Q: \>

I have a year old 486DX4/100 and would like some advice on a few things...

1. Do you think I should upgrade my

Network power

"What kind of PCs do you have to have to run a network?" I hear you ask. Yes I do. The simple answer is that if your machine is capable of running Windows 95 and the games you're interested in, it'll be able to run its share of a network, too. Remember that terminals used on big networks are usually very basic machines. Although peer-to-peer networks require more processing power from each computer, the network operating system itself is still not that much of a handicap.

A good base machine would be a 486DX4/100 with at least 8Mb of memory. In networking terms, extra memory is more important than raw processor power and hard disk speed is also important, as data is often cached before transmitting or receiving.

If you have two or more PCs in any fixed location – home, office, school, yacht dirigible – there's very little reason for not networking them together. Apart from the joys of network gaming, you have all the advantages of file and printer sharing and running an e-mail system. E-mail is where people send each other inane messages from one desk to the next, rather than leaning across and speaking.

PC's processor to Pentium speed? If so, what speed should I upgrade to?

2. At the moment I have 8Mb of RAM and a 428Mb hard disk. I would like to upgrade to about 12Mb or 24Mb and my hard disk to 850Mb, 1Gb or 1.6Gb. Where will I get the best bargain?

3. If I were to upgrade my processor, would the Cyrix 6x86 or the Intel OverDrive 75/125 chips be worthwhile investments?

Mark Gilbert, London

A: \>

Three pieces of advice...
1. Generally, you should get as fast a processor as you can afford. You can go faster in the current system you have, but to add a true Pentium, you'll have to change the board, too.

2. There's quite a difference between 12Mb and 24Mb – around £200 at current prices – and what's wrong with 16Mb? Remember, if you upgrade to a Pentium or a 6x86 you must install memory in equal capacity pairs of SIMMs (two 4Mb, two 8Mb etc). For memory, try Simply Computers (0181 498 2100) and for hard drives there's SMC (01753 550999) or Simply again.

3. The 6x86 isn't an upgrade processor – it needs a Pentium system board. The fastest Intel OverDrive for 486 systems won't run much faster than your DX4/100. The Cyrix 6x86/133, available in an OverDrive-style module from a US company called Evergreen (ring Technomatic on 0181 205 9558) costs around £200 and will give you close to 100MHz Pentium performance.

Send your technical problems to: Abort, Retry, Fail?, PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Or e-mail them to: pcgamer@futurenet.co.uk

The Money Pit

Your disposable income disposed of.

Duke Nukem sounding more like a damp squib than 3D? This month we make a meal out of reviewing seven of the latest and more unusual speaker systems.

By STEVE OWEN



1

1. Yamaha YST-MSW10 sub-woofer

01908 366700 - £116

This is a single thumping beast of a woofer that can give real life to even the cheapest speakers. Place it on the floor under your desk, use it as a footrest, and feel the vibrations wobble up your legs. Although this sub-woofer can be turned up very loud, you'll need to place it somewhere other than the carpet to stop the floor playing along too. It's a rich chocolate sponge laden with hot fudge sauce and whipped cream, and a perfect accompaniment to any meal.

81%



2

2. Sony SRS-PC41

01932 816000 - £69

These small, attractively styled speakers sound a bit rough when you first turn them on, but the quickest way to alleviate your initial disappointment is to switch on the bass boost. These little boxes instantly sound more palatable, throwing out a clear and powerful noise, despite being rated at only six watts. The treble is just a little too tinny - a tone dial would have helped to get rid of this. I can taste a delicate snack of the crunchiest lettuce and cucumber, with a satisfying if not remarkable salad dressing.

76%



3

3. Labtec LCS-800

01252 890585 - £41

The bargain chipmunks of this round-up, seriously under-performing compared to most of this group. The front panel bass boost button is desperately needed, but the speakers still don't have enough presence to impress. If you don't have the best soundcard and aren't fussed about how audio CDs sound, these will do, but are only to be bought if you really can't stretch to anything better. Sainsbury's own label salt 'n' vinegar crisps are filling but can't compare to Golden Wonder.

54%

4

4. Labtec LCS-2412

01252 890585 - £129

Oh, I do like this little set-up. The monitor bracket that holds the two gorgeous satellite speakers, and the sub-woofer housing volume and tone controls have remained on my desk since I unpacked them, and if I'm nice enough to Labtec they'll hopefully stay here. This whole combination sounds fantastic. Subtly understated but natural at all volumes, and the kind of sleek design that makes you go all googly. It's the most astounding of cordon bleu dishes, too orangey for crows and too good to eat.

93%



5. Logic 3 ScreenBeat Sub 50
0181 900 0024 - £70

There's nothing wrong with aiming to produce budget goods that do a reasonable job, but up against some of this competition, the ScreenBeat just isn't convincing. The bass sounds fluffy, muffled and lacks any range or dynamism. Not an enormous amount of power, and I'm not convinced that it would support a monitor any heavier than a 14" model. Three pounds spent at a well known burger bar if you ask me. Less expensive than a pub meal, but you know that the ingredients are cheap. **65%**

6. Zydec Zy-Fi 2 Pro
01386 769400 - £70

Big, and I have to say, unattractive speakers with plenty of power but slightly too little bass. Stick them with the Yamaha sub-woofer, though, and you'll be a proud bunny, even if you are several square feet of desk space worse off. But then you've spent nearly two hundred pounds, and might as well get one of the Labtec sets. Volume and tone controls, but not quite good enough for the money, although there are less powerful models available. A large aubergine bake, I think, accompanied by a slightly stale baker's loaf. **68%**

7. Labtec LCS-3210
01252 890585 - £141

These ultra slimline desktop units manage perfectly without a sub-woofer, pumping out a satisfyingly natural but positive bass. The built-in 3D spatialiser does a very satisfactory job of throwing the stereo image out wider than physically possible with natural stereo, which has the effect of filling a small room with sound. Pricey, and probably not *quite* as satisfying as the cheaper LCS-2412, but still a gaming godsend. Sixteen ounces of solid steak, chunky chips and juicy peas, and an exceptional barbecue sauce. **90%**

SPEAKERS CORNER

Inevitably your soundcard or PC was bundled with the very cheapest speakers you could buy. What you might fail to realise is that with the sound quality emanated from today's best games, one of the best-value PC upgrades is a good set of speakers. If it's possible, hook your soundcard up to a decent hi-fi. Failing that, spend as much as you can afford on a pair of these powered speakers. Listen to how the treble is as clear as a referee's whistle, the bass strong and sustained, but complementary rather than overbearing. Most of all, hear how the speaker cones effortlessly pump out even the loudest effects and music, without the tell-tale raspberry of a cheap, overworked speaker.

But most of all, don't bother spending over £250, because you could buy a good amplifier and set of hi-fi speakers for that.

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What, you may be wondering, does a gleaming new Vauxhall Corsa have to do with PC games? Let us explain.

- The boot is large enough to fit a PC into, along with several CD-ROMs.
- Find a quiet road and you can use it to practise your racing technique, to improve your performance in, for example, Gremlin's *Fatal Racing*.
- The words 'Corsa Premier' can be abbreviated to CP, which is PC backwards.
- Vauxhall are sponsoring the Euro 96 football championship, of which Gremlin have written a PC game called *Euro 96*.

All in all, then, a fitting prize for readers of this July issue of *PC Gamer*, and that's before you consider the car's sunroof, tinted windows, special wheel trims, CD player, rev counter, capacious 1.2 litre engine and attractive Euro 96 badges. But that's not all! There's a second prize of an official England Umbro kit, signed by TV's Barry Davies. And!

Additionally there's a third prize – in fact, 50 third prizes, of copies of Gremlin's *Euro 96*. This we review this month – it's a beefed up Europeanised version of the immensely popular *Actua Soccer*, with all the teams that're competing in the championship and up to 20 players at once over a network. And finally, 150 runners-up will receive a copy of *Normality*, *Fatal Racing* or *Slipstream* at Gremlin's discretion. (That's £16,750-worth of prizes altogether, price-totters.)

We're running this competition in conjunction with *PC Guide*, *PC Review*, *Edge* and *Total Football*, in case you're wondering how we're able to be giving away free cars.



The "Car" Contest

What with the prize being a car and everything, and other magazines being involved, we're going to have to be slightly more sensible than usual in the task that we set potential prize winners. So what we ask is that you answer the questions on the coupon on the right, fill in your name and address, and then cut out the coupon and send it to: **Euro 96 Competition, PO Box 700, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 1CL**, to arrive by August 15th 1996. Alternatively, you can telephone our **Competition Hotline on 0891 155576**. (All calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p per minute at all other times.)



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England**A car? I shall answer your questions:**

1) Q. Who are the current holders of the European Championship?
 A. Germany B. Denmark C. Faroe Island

2) Q. Which member of the English squad was named scottish player of the year?
 A. Alan Rough B. Brian Laudrup C. Paul Gasgoigne

3) Q. Which team, from the list below, went unbeaten in qualifying for Euro 96.
 A. Spain B. Derby County C. Holland

4) Q. What is England's highest ever placing in the European championships?
 A. First Round B. 2nd place C. 3rd place

5) Q. Which team won the first championship in 1960?
 A. Bulgaria B. Russia (USSR) C. France

Rules:

1) Competition entries should arrive no later than August 15th 1996. 2) Winners, from all participating magazines (PC Gamer, PC Guide, PC Review, Edge and Total Football) will be selected at random after this date. 3) Winners will be drawn in descending order, beginning with the 1st prize of a Special Edition Vauxhall Corsa Premier. 4) The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 5) The competition is open to all UK residents except employees of Future Publishing, Vauxhall, Gremlin, Umbro and their families. 6) No alternative cash prize will be offered.

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Surname

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Date of Birth

Sex: Male Female

6) Which of the following do you own/intend to own?

Machine	Own	Intend to own
PC CD-ROM	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	8. <input type="checkbox"/>
PlayStation	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	9. <input type="checkbox"/>
Sega Saturn	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	10. <input type="checkbox"/>
Amiga	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	11. <input type="checkbox"/>
SNES	5. <input type="checkbox"/>	12. <input type="checkbox"/>
Mega Drive	6. <input type="checkbox"/>	13. <input type="checkbox"/>
Other	7. <input type="checkbox"/>	14. <input type="checkbox"/>

7) Do you already subscribe to PC Gamer? 1. Yes 2. No 8) Do you have an Internet connection? 1. Yes 2. No

9) Which of the following do you enjoy on a regular basis?

1. Football Pools 5. Football Matches
 2. Computer Game 6. Films/videos
 3. Mountain biking 7. Rugby
 4. Science Fiction 8. Comedy

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Contest 29 The winner of Contest 29 can be revealed to be Andrew Waugh of Worthing, who'll be receiving a Pentium in the post shortly, courtesy of Interplay's *Conquest Of The New World*. The answers, we decided, were: 1e, 2f, 3c, 4h, 5g, 6a, 7b and 8d.

Why is she called Little Red Riding Hood when she clearly walks everywhere?
Why is the square root of two so important mathematically? And, prey tell...

WHAT ON EARTH *happened to...?*

What On Earth Happened To...?

A feature idea that has run its course

Dear *PC Gamer*,
I was sitting reading the excellent *PC Gamer* last month when I suddenly wondered why, when it seemed so good six months ago, What On Earth Happened To...? has degenerated into a predictable transformation of inanimate game into lively conversation. Do you know what has become of it? *Frances Cook, Drotwich*

"Yes? [Cough.] What is it?"

What On Earth doesn't sound too well or too pleased to be bothered by the telephone, a fact we draw to its attention.

"I'm not as young as I used to be, but at least I'm not dead yet."

Sadly, the Feature Police have given it less than a month to live.

"All right, I confess," confesses the final page. "I've got something terminal and I'm unlikely to last the month out."

We cross our legs in a fatherly fashion, and lean forward on a wooden stool to such an extent that only a ring pad separates us from the typical image of a psychiatrist.

"I was considered an overnight success not so long ago, part of a new open, humorous and sideways look at the PC games industry. On my advice, games were given a personality and an opportunity to have their say against both criticism and praise from the media and public. I also offered *PC Gamer* an opportunity to hark back to childhood gaming memories, a warm and fluffy look at a

leisure industry that used to make you hand your homework in late."

We ask the aged What On Earth where it thinks it went wrong.

"Tortoises may live for over 100 years and elephants into their 70s, and dogs aim for retirement at 12. Dragonflies, however, last less than a week. As a new breed of back page article, it was impossible to predict when I might begin to show my age."

when I might begin to show my age. Scientists have now proved that it is six months. It hurts to admit it, but my day is over. Like James Dean, Carla Lane and Bros, I had my moments, but it is time to step aside, bow out gracefully, and offer my crown to a new graduate. Whatever it may be, I wish my heir all the best of luck. Success is great while it lasts, but I know I'll enjoy visiting the supermarket without being troubled for an autograph."

Bullfrog have promised once again that we shall be reviewing *Dungeon Keeper* next month. Can it be true? Either way, the next PC Game of the Month will be...

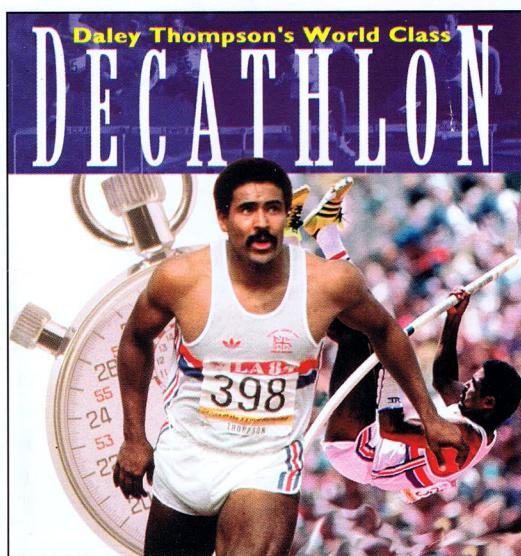
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