



PC GAMER

The World's Finest PC Games Magazine

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Inside:

- Geoff Crammond tips it
- Top Gear's Tiff Needell drives it

TIME COMMANDO



Adeline's delightful
time-travelling
adventure reviewed!



ON THE CD

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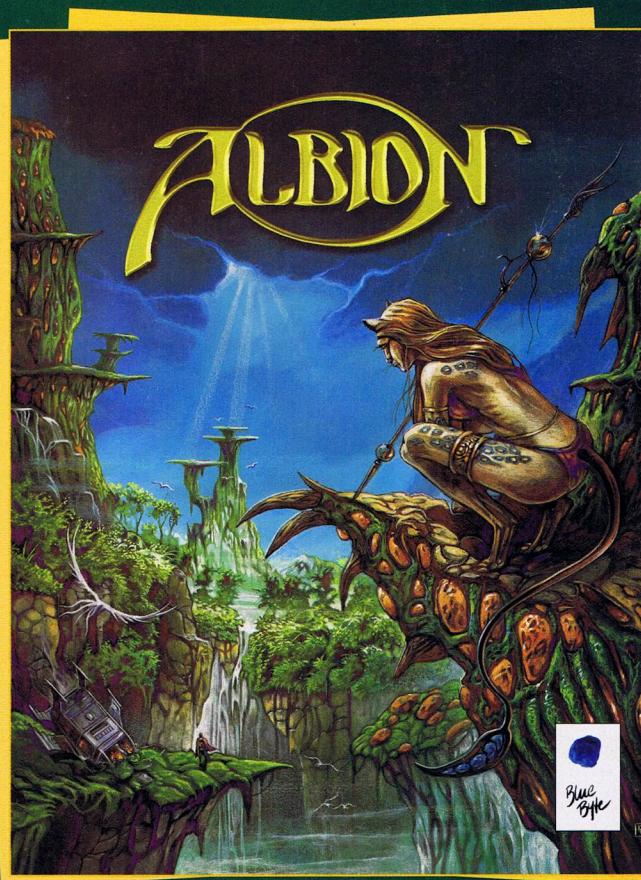
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EditorialFax: 01225 732275
e-mail: pcgamer@futurenet.co.uk**Editor** Jonathan Davies**Deputy Editor** Jim Flynn**Staff Writer** Steve Owen**Production Editor** Ashley Young**Editorial Assistant** Mark Donald**Art Editor** Andy Ounsted**Deputy Art Editor** James Blackwell**Contributing Writers**

Simon Williams Tim Cant

Danny Wallace Richard Longhurst

Grant Rencourt James Binns

Steve Faragher Jim McCauley

Tim Norris Plinky Patel

AdvertisingFax: 01225 732282
e-mail: jpgett@futurenet.co.uk**Ad Manager** Jo Pargett**Sales Executive** Judy Bailey**Future Publishing
Executive Staff****Publisher** Jim Douglas**Development Director** Richard Boggie**Circulation Director** Sue Hartley**Group Managing Director** Greg Ingham**Chairman** Nick Alexander**Operations Staff****Pre-Press Services Manager** Jon Moore**Scanning & Imagingset** Simon Windsor**Chris Stocker** Olly Gibbs**Jason Titley** Mark Gover**Production Manager** Fiona Milne**Production Coordinator** Rosemary Rudd**Paper Controller** Fiona Deane**Print Services Manager** Matthew Parker**Print Services Coordinator** Mark Constance**Production Administrator** Cathy Rowland**Group Production Manager** Judith Middleton**Circulation** Pete Walker**More Circulation** Jason Comber**Subscriptions And Customer Services**Future Publishing Ltd,
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Jonathan's hair this issue: floppy to amorous

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Ninety-fore?

THE WORLD OF PC GAMES IS never a predictable one, but September's Game Of The Month really did come as something of a surprise. Were a small wager at stake, most would have placed it upon either Adeline's *Time Commando* or the Bitmaps' *Z*. But no. While *Time Commando* is fun, it is not a truly great game; and *Z*, though well intentioned, really needed to come out a year ago to make a proper impact. So when Steve tapped nervously on my oaken door and requested that *PC Gamer*'s first 94% rating for quite some time be awarded to neither game, I was compelled to raise an eyebrow slightly.

What is this mystery game? I shall crudely keep you in suspense.

As it seems, will Intel, who refuse to discuss their plans for releasing MMX in the UK. MMX has become the latest reason not to buy a PC. "Should I buy a new PC now?" readers ask us. "Or should I wait until MMX ones appear?" "There is never a good time to buy a PC," we reply. MMX is certainly going to make a big difference to the quality of PC games, but it'll be phased in over many months. And then, of course, just as you're at the point of eventually buying a gleaming new MMX PC, details will emerge of some further development that's just over the horizon, and you'll return your funds to the bank and your weary gaze to your weary 486.

While Mrs Brown is in hospital, following her wrangle with a local ruffian (who, doctors report with surprise, emerged from the scuffle with rather more bruising than Mrs Brown), I

have been obliged to perform my office's weekly dusting myself. This has, however, given me occasion to examine more closely the books which line two of the walls from floor to ceiling, throwing up a number of forgotten treasures. A H Rollinger's 700-page treatise on the benefits of drinking seawater, for example, or the little-read 1788 Revised

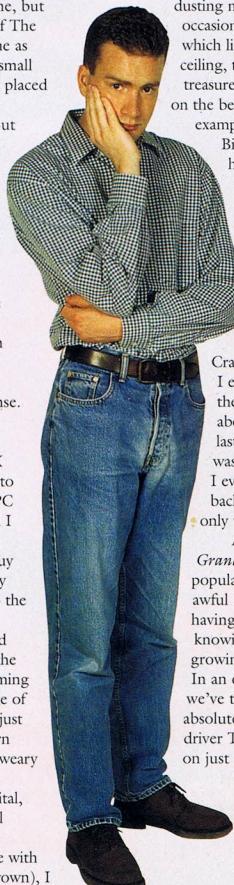
Bible, in which the Greek for 'virgin' has been erroneously translated throughout as 'vegetarian'. But the most interesting of all proved to be *The Collected Poems Of Ernst Elbowsucker* which, when I attempted to pull it from the shelf, caused the entire bookcase to rotate, throwing me into an alternative world where there is no pop music and Sir Geoffrey

Crammond was never born. Initially torn, I eventually decided to seek a return to the real world, where *Grand Prix 2* was about to be released at last. After a quest lasting many months, during which I was married twice and killed twenty men, I eventually stumbled, scarred and weary, back into my office to find that in fact only three minutes had passed.

And what a relief it is finally to see *Grand Prix 2* available to the general population. We've felt ourselves under an awful burden for the last six months, having played the game to pieces but knowing how frustrated our readers were growing at not being able to do the same. In an effort to lighten our consciences, we've this month presented the game, in its absolutely finished form, to famous racing driver Tiff Needell for a definitive opinion on just how accurate it is.

I cannot recommend cocktail sausages as an alternative to either olives or cherries.

Jonathan Davies
Editor



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MERCENARIES

THE ALL NEW, STAND ALONE
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YOU CONTROL THE MECHS
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Issue 34 September 1996



58 Grand Prix 2

It's here! You can play it at last! We thrust GP2 under the nose of Tiff Needell, and quiz Sir Geoffrey on it.



50 How hard can it be?

Why do games take so long to write? How hard can it honestly be? We find out by trying to write our own games – with, though we say so ourselves, not entirely displeasing results.

MMX BANDITS

32 MMX

At the end of this year, not only will a new year begin, but a whole new phase in PC gaming will as well. What use, though, is this 'MMX'?



128 Win a P150!

This, surely, is the most powerful prize ever given away in a PC Gamer competition. It's from Special Reserve.

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82 Links LS

Our surprise Game Of The Month, this splendid golf game makes PGA look like a brief round of croquet. Inhale the atmosphere, steady your feet and swing.



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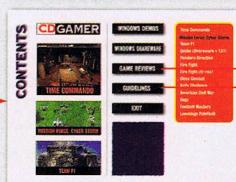
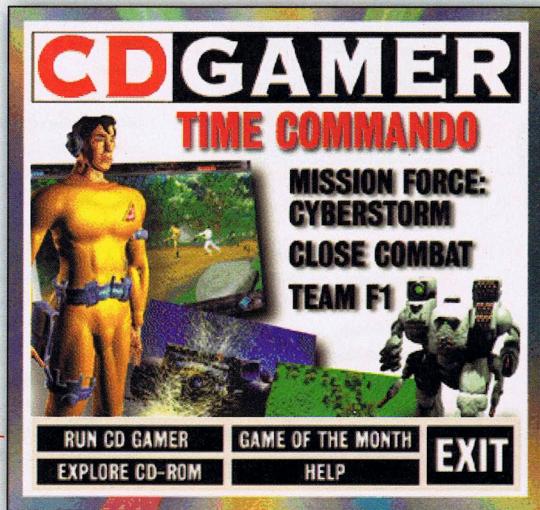
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Clinging to the front of *PC Gamer*'s CD edition, it's...

CD GAMER

CD Gamer the Windows way



Here's the main menu screen, from which you can install and play any of the demos and shareware games, and also access the reviews and tips libraries.

Once you've got CD Gamer running (full instructions appear on the back of the CD case), this screen will let you run the main demos, access the rest of the CD, 'explore' the disc or, heaven forbid, exit back to Windows.



The reviews library has details of every game we've reviewed in *PC Gamer*, including scores and some text. It's not fully up-to-date at the moment, but we're working on it.



The tips and solutions section contains masses of information to help you out of tricky spots. We'll be adding more stuff to these libraries each month, so it's worth having a look here every issue.

CD Gamer via DOS

CD Gamer from DOS looks a little rudimentary, but, hey, it's what's inside that counts - right, readers? From here you'll be able to access all the patches and WADS along with any DOS-only demos, though not Windows-only demos nor the reviews and tips.

CD Gamer has a beguiling new look if you're running it from Windows 3.1 or 95, along with many features denied to DOS users. You'll need to use the DOS version to access WADS and patches, though (we'll fix that for next month), and any DOS-only demos.

Playable demos

Quake (Shareware 1.01)

id Software

Requires: Pentium/486DX4, 8Mb (DOS) or 16 Mb (Windows 95).

We gave you the full shareware version of Quake last month, of course. Several patches and upgrades have been released since, though, so this month we bring you the most up-to-date version. Quake 1.01 offers many enhancements including joystick support and better network and modem facilities. You can install the new version from the CD Gamer DOS menu, but make sure that any previous version is deleted from your system first.



Time Commando

Electronic Arts

Requires: 486DX2, MS-DOS 5 or higher and 6Mb; or Pentium, Windows 95 and 8Mb.

From the people who brought you *Little Big Adventure* comes a futuristic adventure game with SVGA graphics and superb character animation. You view the action from a floating camera viewpoint, which keeps your main character in the



Please note that hot-line staff provide assistance with technical problems directly related to the PC Gamer cover CD and cannot provide extensive training on the software, or on PC hardware, DOS or Windows.

centre of the action at all times, and because there are several controls and options which we are unable to detail here we recommend that you read the help file before playing. There are two versions of *Time Commando* on this month's CD Gamer – one for DOS and the other for Windows 95 – and they're both installed from the Windows interface.

Football Masters

ESP Software

Requires: 486DX, MS-DOS, 8Mb.

Football Masters is a new management game that simulates the English football league divisions. With this playable demo you can experience a slice of the strategy and action that the full game delivers, and you can play with multiple players on one PC so that you can sort out your football rivalries with your friends. Installation is accessed through the DOS menu and we recommend that you have the DOS Smartdrive running due to the large number of files that have to be transferred to the hard disk.



Mission Force: Cyber Storm

Sierra

Requires: 486 DX2, Windows 95, 8Mb.

Mission Force is an overhead-viewed futuristic strategy wargame in the style of the *Battle Isle* games series. The demo on this month's CD Gamer features excellent graphics and sound and some very challenging gameplay for Windows 95 users only. You can launch the demo from the Windows menu, and we recommend a quick read of the help file because it can be a little complicated for the novice player.



Team F1

Ascaron Software

Requires: 486DX, MS-DOS, 8Mb.

Experience what it's like to manage a Formula One team, from selecting the drivers, engines and pit crew to the smoothing of prospective sponsors in the quest to reach the front of the grid and the top of the world championship. Unfortunately we did experience difficulties with this program running from either of the CD Gamer menus, so you'll have to copy the files and sub-directories from the F1 directory on the disc to your hard disk manually. Sorry about that, folks!



Close Combat

Microsoft

Requires: 486DX2 (P75 Pentium or higher recommended), Windows 95, 8Mb, 800x600 display.

Microsoft enter the real-time wargame market headed by *Command & Conquer* and *Warcraft 2* with *Close Combat*, which delivers slightly more strategy than these market leaders but still retains plenty of action. One useful addition here is the use of the Windows 800x600 resolution, which greatly enhances the visible detail of the playing area. *Close Combat* is installed from the CD Gamer Windows menu and is solely for Windows 95 users.



Fire Fight

Epic MegaGames

Requires: 486DX2, Windows 95, 8Mb (basic version); or Pentium, Windows 95, 8Mb (high-resolution version).

This latest release from the talented Epic MegaGames is a superb scrolling shoot-'em-up with a choice of VGA or SVGA graphics for Windows 95 only. You can install both versions from the Windows menu, but you must install the basic VGA version before selecting the high resolution graphics upgrade, which is only recommended for fast Pentium chips and speedy graphics cards.

American Civil War

Interactive Magic

Requires: 486DX, Windows 3.x or 95, 8Mb.

The atmosphere and horror of this infamous internal conflict is brought to your PC screen by software newcomer Interactive Magic. The fully playable demonstration version on this month's

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 EDIT\CONFIG.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/Win95/95 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 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 :\INSTALLEXE. 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

Diskxpress

Seven Willow Court

Bourton Industrial Park

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.

Tel 01225 442244

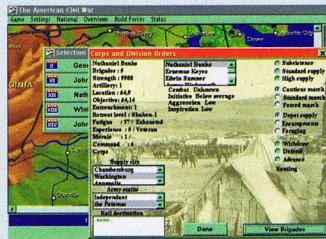
Fax 01225 732279

e-mail: support@futurenet.co.uk

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disc runs directly off the CD-ROM and is accessed from the Windows menu, although you may wish to copy it to your hard disk if you are running it on a double-speed drive, due to the poor data transfer rate.



Rally Challenge

Silver Lightning Software

Requires: 486DX2, MS-DOS, 8Mb, VESA compatible graphics.

This is an early version of a rally driving game being developed by Silver Lightning Software. The action is viewed from behind the car you control and you get the chance to drive around a dirt track course which is lined with trees. The game is far from finished, but this demo gives you an idea of the graphics and gameplay that the programming team are aiming for. Installation is from our DOS menu and we would recommend that you disable EMM386 before running the game and that you install the UNIVBE (Universal VESA driver) program if you experience any error messages.

Dogz

Mandscape

Requires: 486 DX, Windows 3.x or 95, 8Mb. Man's best friend can now be your PC's best friend with this fun program which offers you the chance to play with a puppy on your Windows desktop. The version on this month's CD and floppy disks allows you to select and play with your chosen pup and then you can phone Mandscape for a code that will enable you to keep him/her forever. Strictly for dog lovers, although the programmers are about to release a feline version for all you cat lovers out there.

Shareware

Time Slaughter

Time Slaughter is an excellent 2D beat-'em-up which features some strange looking characters, interesting special moves and a huge amount of split blood. Installed through the DOS menu, *Time Slaughter* supports multi- and single-player action with some unusual background and sound effects.

Gem Stones 3

Breakout games are still very common, and this is one of the better versions. Installed through the DOS menu, *Gem Stones 3* features some ingenious levels and frantic action.

H2O

This game reminds us of *Lemmings*, although, as the title suggests, you're expected to control the flow of water rather than the fluffy green creatures that occupy the popular commercial title. Controls and gameplay are quite complex to start with so make sure that you take time to read the instructions on the main menu thoroughly.

Rebel Runner

Check out the stunning character animation in this scrolling platform action game which puts many commercial games to shame. The installation, however, is quite complex, so you should read this first. The game must be unzipped from the CD Gamer DOS menu to the C:\DIGITAL directory (the game will not work if it is installed elsewhere) and then you should run the install.exe program located in this directory. Once this is complete you must copy the file DEMOINT.EXE manually from the DIGITAL directory to the directory in which you installed the game, which must differ from C:\DIGITAL. You can then run the DEMOINT program to start the playable version of the game and use F1 key to select the options menu.



Add-Ons

Here we feature a selection of levels for you to add to your games, including many designed by PCG readers. This month's contents include:

Doom, Doom 2 and Hexen WADs

This month's reader WADs have been grouped together into one compressed file, which can be unpacked onto your hard disk from the CD Gamer DOS menu. Once you have the files on your hard disk you should copy the required file (check the accompanying text files first to see which game the WAD is designed for) to the directory where the game resides and type the following (this example is for *Doom 2*): DOOM2 -FILE WADNAME.WAD

As ever, if you'd like to see your own WADs on CD Gamer, pop them onto a floppy disk and send them to: Look at my WAD, PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Duke Nukem 3D MAP files

We have an enormous collection of over 170 *Duke Nukem 3D* MAP files on this month's disk, which have been grouped together into nine collections. All are accessed through the CD Gamer DOS menu, and, although the default destination directory is the same for each, it's wise to use alternative directories for each collection in case any text or graphics files in different collections have matching file names. Once they're installed you should select a few map files and copy them to the directory where *Duke 3D* resides, and then run the set-up and use the 'Select User Level' option to launch the modified game.

Patches

The following patches also appear on CD Gamer: *The 11th Hour* (Upgrade to version 2.42) *Aliens* (Upgrade to version 1.03) *Virtual Snooker* (Upgrade to version 1.1 [UK only]) *Monopoly* (Upgrade to version 1.3) *Battleground Waterloo* (Upgrade to version 1.01) *Strife* (Upgrade to version 1.2) *Panthers In The Shadows* (Upgrade to version 1.17) *Jagged Alliance CD* (Upgrade to version 1.13) *Full Tilt* (Windows 95 upgrade patch)



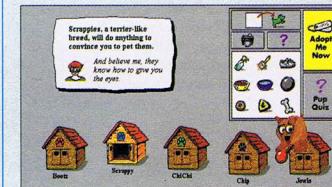
On the floppies

If you've bought the floppy disk edition of *PC Gamer*, here's what you'll find.

Dogz

Mandscape

Requires: 486DX, Windows 3.x or 95, 8Mb. *Dogz* creates a computerised canine chum who'll live on your PC, performing tricks and loving you as long as you remember to feed and water him. Not a game, then, exactly, but at least it fits onto a pair of floppy disks. Our *Dogz* demo allows you to select and play with your chosen pup, and when you become attached to him you can phone Mandscape for a code that'll enable you to keep him/her forever.



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 possible that you have a defective disk. If you're convinced that a disk is dodgy, return it to the address below, with two 26p stamps, and a new version should be returned to you within 28 days.

PC Gamer August Disk,
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TIB House
11 Edward Street
Bradford
BD4 7BH

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noise but no art,**

**has boom town but
no rats,**

**and runners but no
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MECHWARRIOR 2:



All the basics that were present in *MechWarrior 2* remain in *Mercenaries*, but they are being supplemented by a deeper story. The combat is what makes them such fine games and scenes like these will continue to thrill.

MERCENARIES

SCOOP

Stomp. Stomp. Blam.
MechWarrior 2 is back,
but with a difference.

MECHWARRIOR 2 IS currently one of the PC's most popular games, and is one of Activision's biggest ever earners. *MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries* would have been called *MechWarrior 3*, but the licence agreement with FASA (inventors of the US Mechs) forbids Activision to produce a stand alone '3' game. So, with a great deal of imagination and daring, Activision are producing a completely new game that just happens to require the original CD to run. But we'd imagine you won't mind because it'll be cheaper that way.

Anyway, *Mercenaries* is aiming to take the basics from the *MechWarrior* universe and

"You have a Mech, a map, a dropship, spaceports and a series of contracts that are up for grabs. The rest is up to you."

enhance them, to form a deeper and more self-contained playing area. If you're unfamiliar with the world of *MechWarrior*, it's set in the 25th century. Mankind has spread across the galaxy and is divided into various ideological sectors, who fluctuate between cold war and total war with each other. When you become involved in the politics (as it was possible to do in the FASA board-game upon which the PC translation is based), you begin to realise quite how engrossing the world is. *Mercenaries*' development has concentrated on atmosphere, to ensure that as much of the feeling of the board-game's world as possible is transmitted to the game.

Freedom of choice

This is being accomplished by placing you at the head of a small, inexperienced squad of mercenaries. You have a Mech, a map, a dropship, a series of spaceports and a series of contracts that are up for grabs. The rest is up to you.



It's reasonable to assume that *Mercenaries* will be fleshed out with Activision's usual flash pre-rendered scenes.

Activision's objective is to let you decide which path to follow, which risks to take and how to politically advance your career. Siding with House Kurita may well eliminate your chances of being offered jobs by forces at war with it, although, if you're particularly successful, you may find that the opposition is willing to pay extra to recruit you to their cause.

At the start of the game everything stretches before you, *Elite* style. Within each base you have



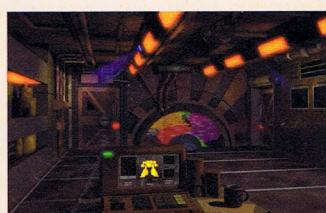
WHY MERCENARIES COULD WALK AWAY WITH IT

- More true 3D real-time fighting action that can only improve on what's already there.
- They've added depth to the game without slowing it down.
- Gathers in the special feeling of the *MechWarrior* universe and packages it up nicely.
- Will allow you to choose your own path through the game.
- Everybody loves robots, especially when they're this big.

Developer
UK Publisher

Activision
Activision

How Complete
Release Date
85%
October



Part of the base where you choose your missions, look at the map and repair your battered mechs.

DISCWORL



Now, as you'll know if you're Terry Pratchett or mad, all evil women must be brunettes. The lady in the above shot, then, is quite safe to talk to. Why not try?



Animators worked around the clock in conjunction with top illustrators to create thousands of sketches.

D 2

Welcome to a world where the world is a turtle. And where there's no death. Welcome to Discworld.

SO THEN, IT'S BACK. AND THIS time, with a development crew of over fifty people, it's looking even bigger, brasher, brighter and better than the first. *Discworld 2*, complete with star voice-overs from the likes of ex-Python Eric Idle and ex-Young One Nigel

Planer, sees the second in Terry Pratchett's Discworld series finally make it to the PC, with the dopey, doped-up wizard Rincewind picking up a Scythe and dancing the cocky swagger of The Grim Reaper. Death, you see, has gone missing...

Story lines apart, however, one major criticism many games players had of the original was the fact that it was an extremely, um, 'challenging' game. *Discworld 2* (though it remains every bit as tough) has been created with an overall feeling of friendliness very much in mind. More detailed responses to player mistakes have

been included, eliminating any of the 'that doesn't work' banality that flows so easily from the (quite necessary)

experimenting you'll find yourself indulging in. Just about anything you do to any object found in the game will elicit some form of sensible response, and should you be stumbling blindly towards success or failure, you'll be told. See? Nice.

Beautiful brunettes

The mood created by cheeky old Terry Pratchett remains just as important in the sequel, with Terry having been awarded final approval over all the niggly, seemingly throwaway details so vital in a game this size. According to the programmers, he even insisted that the Elven Queen had to be a brunette rather than a blond, because "beautiful, evil women must be brunettes". Oh yes. Any Discworld inconsistencies inadvertently slipped in

"They sent me the brief, which I found instantly intriguing – to write a song selling death."

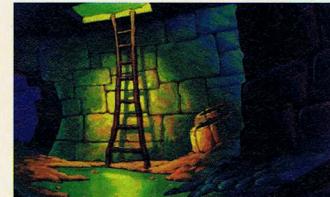
Eric Idle

by the game's writer, Greg Barnett, were also weeded out, so what finally reaches the gamer this winter should be a fairly accurate and pleasingly genuine follow-up to Rincewind's first achingly bizarre adventure.

The look of the game marries rather special film animation and yer average, run-of-the-mill game animation with added 3D cartoon sequences created on SGIs. Which is always nice. Hand-animated by fifty fully-trained animators (each of whom has a certificate),

WHAT MAKES *DISCWORLD 2* LOOK SO APPEALING

- Top quality, hand-drawn animation from the cheeky pencils of over 50 animators.
- Voice-overs by Eric Idle, Kate Robbins and Nigel Planer.
- Terry Pratchett-approved script, with a story line that twists and turns.
- Full digital sampled music, with high-class SFX synching to match.
- Over 30,000 original drawings and bits of artwork have been thrust into the game.
- It's a friendlier game than before, with polite and sensible messages.



Definitely cartoon quality, *Discworld 2* has its own distinctive look – but will it be an enjoyable game?

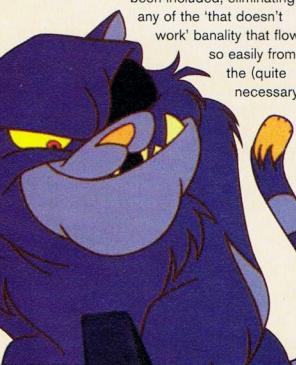
featuring 30,000 original drawings, and bathing happily in the glorious waters of Toonz technology, it's surprising to hear that the programmers stuck as close to conventional techniques as they could, using story-boarding and layout before they even contemplated any proper studio production.

Discworld 2 is also given that extra-added sheen by the full digital sampled music, a fistful of ambient 'n' atmospheric music, and – mmm – orchestrated music specially synched to the action to add that classic, feel good, Warner Bros gloss, Oh, and Q-Sound, too.

Great to be dead

Also crowbarred merrily into the game is an opportunity to listen to *yet another* Eric Idle song, which is doubtless the most cheerful thing you've ever heard. Again. This one, arranged by the same man who created the music for this year's Oscars (c'mon – you *must* remember it), is, we are informed, all about how great it is to be dead. Sadly, it'll take more than Eric Idle to convince us on that one. So why did he do it? "They asked me to," he says. "Simple as that. They sent me the brief, which I found instantly intriguing – to write a song selling death. The concept made me laugh and I wrote it fairly quickly, and we recorded it live to get that Vegas feel. I'm very pleased with it. I think we could actually get a gig in Vegas with that one..." Really? Vegas? "Nah... it... was a joke..." Mick Jagger once said you were just a funny wig and a regional accent. "I think there's a lot in that!" Yeah.

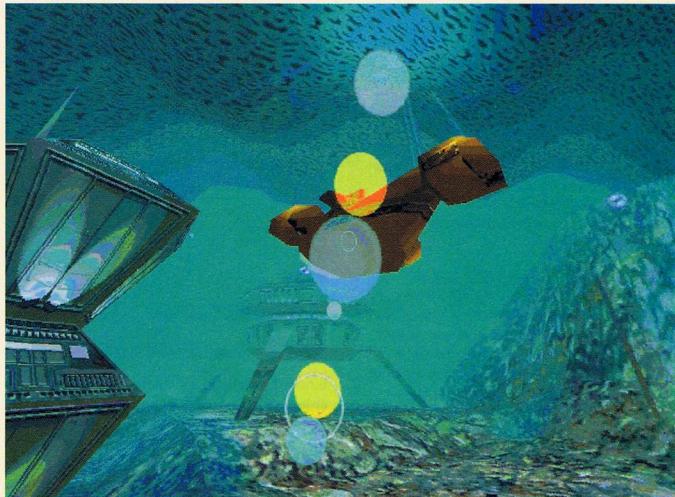
Anyway, thanks to a team which includes a character designer who used to work for Disney, *Discworld 2* is looking perky, preened and primed for its December release. As full-screen, window-driven, humour-packed adventures go, this one's shaping up to be very interesting indeed. We'll keep all twelve of our gaming eyes fixed incessantly upon it.



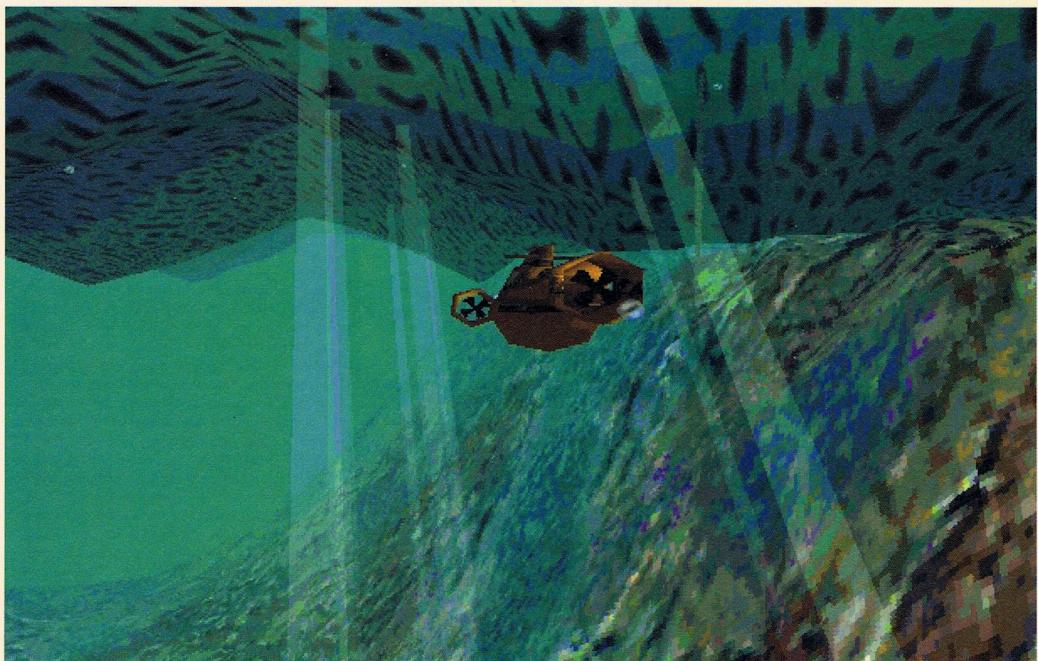
Developer	Perfect Entertainment	How Complete	93.05% (give or take)
UK Publisher	Psygnosis	Release Date	Winter 1996

SCOOP

SUB-CULT



Criterion are particularly pleased with both their special lighting effects, and the complex shapes of the caverns through which you'll be sailing your mini-sub.



URE

Take a deep breath and plunge into underwater game number two.

UNDERWATER IS A FINE place to be, as anyone who's ever had difficulty extracting themselves from their morning bath will confirm. This is primarily what prompted Criterion (also responsible for *Scorched Planet* and *AquaTak*) to set *Sub-Culture* beneath the ocean. That and the special watery lighting effects they were keen to try out.

Confusion is inevitable, however, between *Sub-Culture* and Bullfrog's *Creation*, especially as both games are being developed within a stone's throw of one another in peaceful rural Guildford.

"We're watching *Creation* with interest," admits Jonathan Small, *Sub-Culture*'s project manager, "but *Sub-Culture* is really a different game. *Creation* is set in the real world, while ours is in a fantasy environment, which I think is more interesting. And we'll have better special effects."

A very real threat

A fantasy environment, eh? Criterion's "fantasy" involves races of tiny people living on the ocean floor, to whom cod and crabs represent a very real threat. You are one such mini-bloke, and you've been caught in a war between two races of similarly itchy people. Driving around in a diminutive submarine, you're provided with a series of missions to fulfil. One, for example, has you ferrying a wounded patient from one place to another. A second sees you sent by one of the warring factions to rescue a downed submarine, to which you have to attach your magnetic tow-rope before pulling it along, in the manner of ancient 8-bit game *Thrust*, battling against everything Newton's laws can throw at you. It's



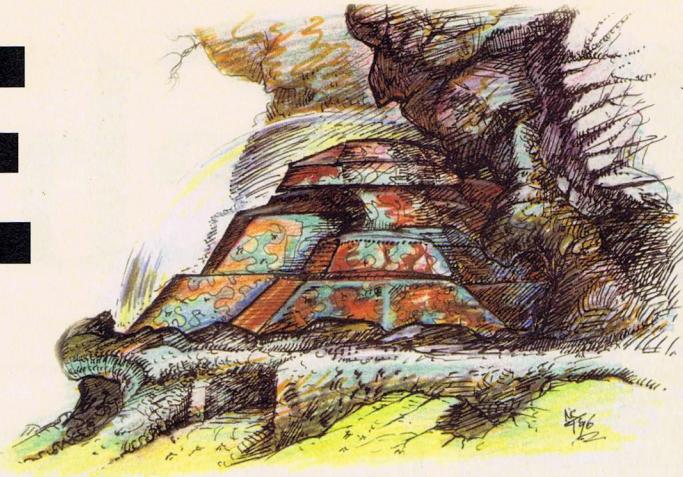
underwater physics model they've come up with. Other missions, for example, send you into water pipes created by the giant humans, where you've got to battle against currents. In some places you'll have to use your tow-rope to swing around corners – "A bit like in Batman," according to Jonathan.

Extremely convincing

Although *Sub-Culture*'s still a few months away from completion (autumn is its projected release date), it's already looking like an absorbing and well-rounded game. Curious as it may sound, an

REASONS TO ANTICIPATE *SUB-CULTURE* EAGERLY

- You're a miniature bloke in a submarine the size of a modestly proportioned fish.
- There's uncannily accurate underwater physics as you swim about.
- The authors are nicking bits out of good games from the past like *Elite* and *Thrust*.
- The missions join up into an intriguing story about miniature people warring.
- There's a bit where you grapple round corners like in *Batman*.



A late Monet? In fact, an early sketch of *Sub-Culture*. Build some rocks and buildings, then just add water.

accurate physics model can make a game considerably more fun to play (try *Thrust*, *Terra Nova* or *EF2000* for proof), and your little submarine does feel extremely convincing as it fights through the water. Imagine when you drop the soap and watch it floating towards the bottom

"*Creation* is set in the real world, while *Sub-Culture* is in a fantasy environment, which I think is more interesting." Jonathan Small

of the bath, or pull out the plug and see all the hair and black bits drawn slowly towards the plughole – it's a bit like that.

Jonathan adds, "There's a really strong story line with plenty of characters to meet – although I won't give too much away at the moment. It's quite a thoughtful game, though, without much shooting."

Indeed, the only significant shooting match is likely to be between *Sub-Culture* and its deadly rival, the more strategy-oriented *Creation*. With *Creation* not now due out until early next year, though, despite having been in development for about twice as long as *Sub-Culture*, it could be a case of the early, er, fish catching the... um... eel?

PCG



Work on *Sub-Culture* was proceeding apace until the toilet overflowed. A blockage was later discovered.

Developer
UK Publisher

Criterion
Virgin

How Complete
Release Date

75%
November

SCOOP

THIS MONTH

So what has happened to *Daggerfall*? That's just one of the many hundreds of questions this month's Eyewitness will answer for you. Also: What about *Gene Wars*? How does memory work? Is *Screamer 2* going to be any good? How can I play network *Quake* without a network? What's *Toonstruck* all about? And we were going to included a humorous, 'observational comedy' style question as well, but they are no longer amusing.

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Behind

Acid dribbling from their chops, our chitin-clad chums bound out of the darkness and scamper into your PC.

By DANNY WALLACE

ROD COUSENS, THE president of Acclaim Europe, was once heard to say: "The success of *Alien Trilogy* stems from the strength of the licence, the quality of the product developed by Probe Software, and the introduction of motion capture from the Acclaim Advanced Technologies Group." From behind a fine mist of happily enthusiastic spittle, he continued by saying: "This has been backed up with a marketing campaign which has delivered a product whose success is likely to remain unrivalled for quite some time." And, where the PlayStation was concerned, he was probably right.

But what of the soon-to-be PC version? Will it rush to the arms of

WHY ALIEN TRILOGY WILL BE LOVELY

- Insanely atmospheric, moody, murky levels.
- Satisfying alien-popping gameplay. With explosions.
- Acclaim's proprietary motion-capture cleverness.
- It's smoother and faster than ever before.
- Multi-player fun with a new network mode.

welcoming PC owners as it did to Sony lovers the length and breadth of this glorious nation? Will it, as with the PlayStation, make it to the number one chart position after a mere two days of sale? We don't know.

What we do know is this: that the game is based on (and features elements from) all three Alien films. This, as you can imagine, points to extra, extreme violence, in an old-fashioned, yer-mother-would-love-it, *Doom/Quake/Duke* type of style, with more gore and blood than you've ever seen before.

You know how when you reach down beneath your sofa to try and find the remote control which you dropped earlier, and you bring your

hand up and you realise it's covered in fluff and dust and bits of peanuts? I hate that.

Better, faster, meaner

Acclaim's proprietary motion-capture technology has been flexed as far as it'll go, providing the additional muscle needed to turn *Alien Trilogy* from a slick 'n' smart PlayStation romp into a truly superior PC adventure. The PC version will, after all, feature bigger, better, faster, meaner gameplay, eloquently combined with vastly improved audio and effects. We're told. And add to that a horseful of extra levels and the option of network gameplay, and surely the fairy of fun can't be more than a few short moments away.

Released at the very same time as a Saturn version, *Alien Trilogy* will also look a lot smoother, with more rounded, realistic enemies, and a quicker screen update. That's thanks to the technology that the programmers have employed, that is.

Network play

Although doubtless a very welcome addition indeed, the network play mode has, nevertheless, been



Right. You've got 22 grenades. Use 'em.



Nice. Two-handed double-strength industrially-competent faintly-attentive managerially-sound gun-grip, there. And you've still got 22 grenades. Please use 'em.



Ahem. Not many aliens about, are there? Use a grenade, anyway. Go on.

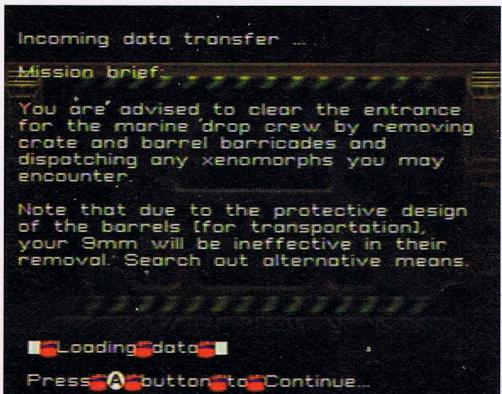
you!



Crikey! Now's the chance our little fella's been waiting for... use a grenade. He's still got 22 of them. If the cheeky little aliens ever invade again, we'll be ready for them.

causing more than a few problems lately, with programmers working sweatily around the clock in order to correct a few minor (but play-shattering) problems. Once in full working order, however, the network play looks set to do as it's always done in the past; to add an entirely new realm of multi-player game-playing possibilities to what would

once have remained a one- or two-player gun-based runaround. Lucky for us, then, that Acclaim have got so much riding on this one... When it was released, PlayStation *Alien Trilogy* soaked up almost 40% of all PlayStation sales, and, furthermore, outsold all other multi-format CD-ROM-based titles released on a variety of systems (the PC included).



Luckily, everything stated above is one hundred per cent true. The advice is good, and there's even a hint that you may have to try to find alternative weaponry...



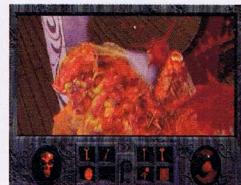
Alien Trilogy has an incredibly moody, atmospheric feel to it. And nice bangs.



Yeah... it may look like that other shot, but there's a world of difference.

It is, therefore, more than understandable that Acclaim are banking on you investing in this game. Whether you should or not, remains to be seen...

Ready to be unleashed upon this glittery old world in the middle of October, *Alien Trilogy* could well be the game to breathe yet more new life into a genre edging closer



Dreadful games

In a move that should extend to the rest of the software industry, Sierra have announced the imminent closure of their interactive movie division. *Phantasmagoria 2* will be the final video-based nail in the proverbial coffin that sealed the mixed metaphor fate of the genre. So hopefully that means no more dreadful games from Sierra. Send a letter of congratulations to everyone there today.

Alien race

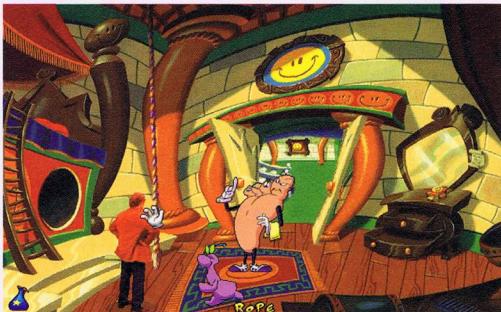
Orion Burger is finally on the way. Originally due for release earlier this year it was delayed due to technical and plot problems and should now appear in September. If you'll recall, it centres around an alien race arriving at Earth and judging humanity's worth by conducting experiments on you personally. If you pass, they go away; if you fail, then your reward is to turn the rest of the world's population into burgers. Looks like they're still experiencing plot difficulties.

to true, outright brilliance at every *Doom*-like release. Needless to say, *PC Gamer* will bring you as much information as is humanly possible within the next few months. Keep your eyes as wide as they'll go.

● *Alien Trilogy* won't burst out of Acclaim's corporate torso until mid-October.



Dunno about you, but that gun is starting to look a bit dull to me. Where's that big one that the butch girl off of one of the films runs around with? That good. Me like.



LucasArts' reign as the world's sole producers of exceptional graphical adventures may soon end with the arrival of Virgin's *Toonstruck*. By JAMES FLYNN

HERE'S BEEN A noticeable paucity of high-quality, innovative graphic adventure games recently, but it appears as if *Toonstruck* could change this. Virgin's internal development division, Burst, have been working on their largest and most expensive project for several years now, and the most immediately striking feature is the presentation and, dare I say it, the cast.

Toonstruck is a graphic adventure that uses a mixture of video composite footage and traditional

animations to depict the main characters, the plot and the gaming environment. You take on the part of Drew Blanc, the leading animator on the Fluffy Fluffy But Bun Show. Drew, who goes by the name of Christopher Lloyd in real life, has been charged with creating a new set of characters for a spin-off TV show, but the night before the deadline his muse has fled. In a bizarre plot-generating he is sucked into an alternate dimension where his own cartoon characters call the shots.

Homer Simpson fame

With him goes a bunny called Flux Wildly, who assumes the contortionist travelling companion role of your right-hand lucky foot. His voice is played by Dan Castellaneta, of Homer Simpson fame, although he apparently refused to say Doh! even during recordings. Keen Sam & Max

Doh-



Fish flushing - that well-known sport of toilet kings. Mini games are common.

fans will no doubt already have picked up on some similarities between the LucasArts game and *Toonstruck*. It should be stressed, however, that the two feel very different when playing.

Toonstruck's quality hand-



painted artwork and presentation make an immediate impact even before the cleverly designed puzzles and humorous dialogue take over.



PC GAMER RECOMMENDS

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

Quake Shareware



If you've only ever played *Quake* in its single-player form, you might not understand why the world is going so nutty over this. Blowing your enemy's

body into constituent smitherines is not only great therapy, but brings families closer together. Buy a modem, hook into the Internet, and enjoy.

Hind



There's always a million and one flight simulators to choose from, but so few can really be thought of as exceptional. *Hind* is the first to score in the

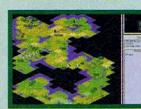
90s for, oh, too long to go back and check, and, being a helicopter sim, hovers better than most. Your bag? Then get it.

Grand Prix 2



Just when you thought it was safe to visit the computer store without buying a game, *Grand Prix 2* finally turns up. And it's superb. Stupendously fantastic, in fact. Harder than *F1GP*, *GP2* is a racing simulation rather than an arcade game. If you aren't frustrated, you'll be excited.

Civilization 2



There's just a chance that beach-based holidays could make it difficult to find three billion hours in which to play a proper game of *Civilization 2*. Nevertheless, if a French traffic control dispute finds you abandoned in a dingy airport with nothing but a laptop, this makes the hours fly by.

Virtua Fighter



A virtually perfect arcade conversion of Sega's classic game of martial arts combat. You'll need a PC with a processor so powerful that it could do *Jurassic Park*'s special effects single-handedly, but at least it shuts the console crowd up for a bit.

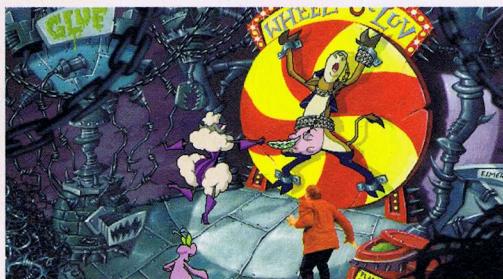
SWOSECE



The real test of how good this arcade footy game is came when Euro 96 ended. No other bandwagon-jumping title was touched when Germany held up the trophy, but a few beers were all that were needed to get SWOSECE played again into the small hours.

less!

A tasteful present (left) and a female cow in bondage gear (below). Christopher Lloyd is engaging in his own perversion.



The story (which deals with Drew trying to return to his real world) allows a multitude of characters to be introduced within the game's 100 or so locations, including Count Nefarious, who's voiced by Tim Curry and who is intent on preventing Drew's return.

Strong script

The script of LucasArts' classic adventures was their strongest asset, and so it could be with *Toonstruck*. Considering the alien nature of the game (think Roger Rabbit in reverse) the script seems very tight and

perfectly matched to the settings. *Burst* are making every effort to ensure the characters are well developed, individual and, most of all, fun. The Wacme Concept pair of misfits, who delight in maiming each other, are as sick as any characters that have graced the PC's screen.

The near-complete version of *Toonstruck* which we saw looked enormously encouraging – slick, funny and beautiful. Let's hope the final weeks are kind to it.

• Virgin are due to release *Toonstruck* in October.

Play Quake free

London's latest cybercafé lets *PC Gamer* readers play for free.

WE FEEL A BIT GUILTY about constantly harking on about how good network games are, considering so few of you have the facilities to follow our lead. So, after chatting with some London folks, we've decided to give you a chance to try out the world's most exciting gaming experience.

Take this coupon to Shoot 'n' Surf, 13 New Oxford Street, London (tel: 0171 419 1183) and they'll let you play a Quake Deathmatch frenzy on one of ten P100s for an hour. If you fancy another hour, either pay £5 or buy a second copy of *PC Gamer*.

As well as loads of multi-player games, Shoot 'n' Surf has facilities for rapidly trawling the Internet and even a damn nice cup of coffee. See what all the fuss is about.

THIS VOUCHER ENTITLES THE BEARER TO
**ONE *FREE* HOUR
OF QUAKE AT SHOOT 'N' SURF**

13 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1BA. 0171 419 1183
This voucher is valid until 30/9/96

Carry on Screamer

The creators of *Screamer* are now also the creators of *Screamer 2*. In the following touching and warm paragraphs, you can read all about it with your eyes...



The split-screen mode there, basking in gorgeous, multi-colour, multi-fun gameplay. And it's fast, too, which is always nice.



BOUNCING happily onto the games playing dance floor, the original *Screamer* still strikes its slick, stylish, vogue pose, amid a crowd of awkward, foot-shuffling (and technically inferior) racers. *Screamer*, you may remember, scored a massive-and-huge 90% when we reviewed it in issue 24, and never once did we doubt that the sequel would be equally special. And from what we've seen and played, success is quite definitely on course.

Six courses, ranging from pretty, picturesque England to the cold and harsh terrain of an evil Switzerland, make up your choice of tracks, with four teams from which to pick your car. Each car looks rather flash, and handles extremely differently, depending on whether it's two- or four-wheel drive. The four teams also have special hidden bonus cars that can only be obtained if you're either very good at racing, or just very good generally. We had to help some nuns get stray kittens out of trees while helping them cross the road and single-handedly halting the demolition of a local orphanage to get ours. (Eh? – Ed)

Multi-player multi-fun comes thanks to the old networking solution, but this time around, the designers have opted for an additional Battle mode, complete

with a console-like split-screen adding to the game's immortality. We would imagine. Also looking good is the presentation, with highly polished intros and outros, near-faultless rendering and a horse-load of shapely 3D to make your eyes dance with joy. Collision detection at this stage is... well... dodgy, but should be carefully ironed out before its winter release.

Programmers have been slaving away for the last nine months in order to fully satisfy themselves that they've achieved the perfect balance between arcade excitement and true racing simulation. Which, it must be said, they appear to have achieved. With as many options as it's possible to cram into a game (including tyre pressure, for God's sake) and the sheer arcade thrills 'n' spills of its predecessor, *Screamer 2* could well have the depth needed to break into the US market, while simultaneously keeping the achingly superficial speed-freaks of this glorious nation amply satisfied. And hurrah for that.

• We've been to Milan, we have, in order to see the programmers at work. Expect much on it in next month's issue.



Crikey, reader, looks awfully bright and speedy, doesn't it? My, just look at them go!

EYEWITNESS

Dimensional diversions

Israel, commonly known as the land of milk and honey, is currently flowing with PC games.

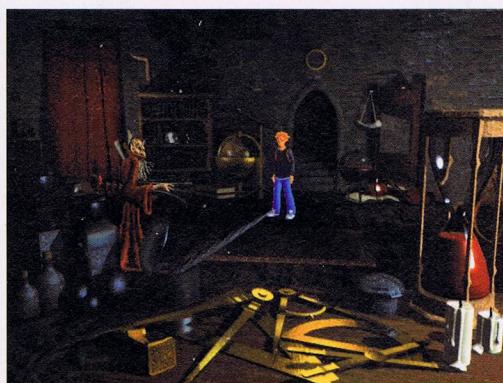
THE BRANCH OF THE EIDOS super entity that was once known as US Gold is fit to burst with new releases, the first of which is a pointin' and a clickin' adventure that you shall come to



(Above) Inadvertently, our hero sets the machine onto 'instant blow dry'.

know as *Masters Of Dimension*. It's been programmed by Israeli outfit Makh-Shevot, whose quirky humour has rubbed off on their creation, giving it a highly developed sense of the odd.

Lord knows how, but you've ended up with a machine that transports you, TARDIS-style,



Our all-American hero's spidey sense is tingling – there's a puzzle to be solved here somewhere, darn it. But where does the satanic pensioner with the long spikes fit in?

anywhere, anywhere in the universe. You've got to hop about through space/time to recover bits of Merlin the Wizard's staff, which he needs to save the Earth from the sinister-sounding 'catastrophic process'.

You can immerse yourself in

over 100 locations, including an alien soap opera, while smothering yourself in perplexing puzzles, lathered with loads of interaction.

● September is the declared month of release for *Masters Of Dimension*.

Where are they now?

The sun has got its hat on, but the programmers have taken off their skates for summer.

Alien Trilogy (Acclaim)	Mid September
Citizens (MicroProse)	March
Command & Conquer: Red Alert (Westwood)	October
Daggerfall (Bethesda)	August 30th
Deathtrap Dungeon (Eidos)	October
Diablo (Blizzard)	End September
Dungeon Keeper (Bullfrog)	October
Ecstatica 2 (Psychosis)	November
Gene Wars (Bullfrog)	September
Heart of Darkness (Virgin)	October
Into The Shadows (Scavenger)	December
Jedi Knights (LucasArts)	January
LBA2 (EA)	January
Magic The Gathering (MicroProse)	October
MDK (Interplay)	November
Quake (id)	Mid Sept (full version)
Star Control 3 (Warner)	October
Starcraft (Blizzard)	January
Syndicate Wars (Bullfrog)	September 18th
Time Commando (EA)	September
Unreal (Epic)	August (with MMX)
Warhammer 40K (Mindscape)	Canned
X-COM: Apocalypse (MicroProse)	October
X-Wing vs TIE Fighter (LucasArts)	December
Z (Bitmap Brothers)	August 30th



Sally Smith

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Good old-fashioned fun

It's back to the age of Amiga classics with the latest game in development at Bits.

LOOKING RATHER LIKE – depending on how charitable the observer's disposition – either a *Wing Commander* game with the video clips removed or a 3D version of *Gravity Force 2* (the finest Amiga game to have been created) is *Nihilist*, currently under development at the London headquarters of Bits.

With *Nihilist*, Bits are hoping to recapture some of the spirit of pioneering arcade games. "We wanted the feeling that it'd been written in someone's bedroom, and not mass-produced," its producer, Herman Foo, told *PC Gamer*. With this in mind you'll find yourself thrust into a sort of 'virtual arena' in space – the Flux – in a spaceship and provided with others to chase after and shoot. These may be computer-controlled or, ideally, piloted by networked opponents.

You can, in fact, choose from a selection of different ships, depending on how much money you've accumulated, all of which have different powers. For example, one's a stealth ship that can break



missile lock easily, one can teleport from place to place, and one looks like a wasp and can send a swarm of mechanised gnats after its quarry. The 'Fluxes' are similarly varied, with globe-shaped ones, tubular ones, a flat one, ones that change shape as you play, and even one populated by giant pool balls which you can pot into teleporters for bonuses.

We played *Nihilist* briefly and it seemed fun, running smoothly in high-detail mode on a P75. "We're incorporating a unique English sense of humour into it," added Herman. We were unable to discern precisely what this might mean, but will endeavour to do so.

• *Nihilist* will issue forth from Philips at the end of September.



Battles in *Nihilist* take place in large, wireframe arenas. You can't sneak out through the gaps in between the wires if you're losing, though, for technical reasons.



Pure genius

Can Bullfrog win back some favour with *Gene Wars*?

BULLFROG HAVE BEEN A little quiet of late as rumours circulate about whether the bubble has burst for one of Britain's finest development teams. After all, their last two games, *Hi-Octane* and *Magic Carpet 2*, are hardly groundbreaking projects, and the continual delays surrounding *Dungeon Keeper* make one wonder if EA is ever going to get its money's worth from the purportedly princely sum it paid for the company.

Returning to previously successful arenas seems to be the plan of action. *Gene Wars*, another game in the proverbial pipeline, harks back to the glory days of *Populous*.

As ever, there is an idea: a super intelligent race of travellers discovers a solar system ravaged by the war of four nations. Peered at the destruction, the goody-goodies get on their high horse and arrest each nation for being so wicked. Taking control of teams from one of the civilisations, you must build

cities, perform tasks and also mutate fluffy kittens into slavering monsters in a weaponless war on your enemies. Do well and your Bamber Gasgoyne IQed captors will reward you.

Using the *Magic Carpet* graphics engine but generating static isometric landscapes, it's the sound effects and humour that have really impressed us. Great 50s B-movie style Godzilla destruction swathes what could have been another *Civilization* take-off.

• *Gene Wars* is expected to arrive by the end of September, but we now take any release dates from Bullfrog with a tablespoon of salt.



Never was so much fun had at the seaside in the absence of a bucket, a spade and a flask of lukewarm tea.

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EYEWITNESS

THE LATEST ON...



The Elder Scrolls Chapter 2: Daggerfall

The ink is just drying on the latest chapter of *The Elder Scrolls*.

DAGGERFALL, Bethesda's sequel to their acclaimed character-builder *Arena*, promises to take the RPG genre closer than ever to its Holy Grail of a completely player-controlled plot.

The setting, once more the world of Tamriel, is huge – scaled up it would be the size of Turkey – and is replete with all the classic RPG ingredients. You can play one of eight races, from lizardpeople to wood elves, and choose from 18 career options following the way of the warrior or the wizard, etc.

Tamriel itself is populated by countless numbers of NPCs and features more interaction than a game of Twister, as the thread of the game's main quest is bound in a tight weave of subplots. How these events affect you is entirely determined by your reputation as you interact with the people of Tamriel.

Probing the populace, other than with the point of your sword, takes place via a nifty dialogue menu which enables you to choose the topic of conversation – news, locations, etc. – and your manner – polite, normal or blunt. Take a blunt tone with a nobleman and you'll

get short shrift, but it might encourage a particularly stubborn peasant to spill the beans. People remember how they've been treated, though, so lean on them too heavily and you may be short of friends at a crucial stage later in your quest. Thankfully, Bethesda have included a notebook feature which copies chunks of important quest info for you to refer back to as you become more entangled in the intrigue.

The scope of *Daggerfall* is incredible. You may join a guild to enhance your reputation with certain factions and start to build a power base within it, giving you access to contacts, equipment and more dangerous quests. You may trade, smuggle, own property such as houses, castles and ships and even obtain letters of credit from banks to finance your more extravagant purchases. The whole world doesn't solely revolve around you, either, as external events beyond your control such as plagues, wars and new rulers continually change the face of Tamriel and embroil you in their midst.

With *Arena*'s spellmaker system expanded into a DIY potion and magic item kit, and the X'ngine offering unrestricted viewing angles and some of the best RPG graphics to date, it looks as though *Daggerfall* could be the dream RPG.

● *Daggerfall* will arrive like a gaunt stranger at a tavern near you by the end of August.



It's nothing to do with this picture, but you can turn into a werewolf.

Charts

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

Duke Nukem 3D looks like it's settling down for a prolonged stay at the top as it enjoys its third peerless month in succession. With footballing fever fading like a misjudged penalty kick, *Duke*'s only worry now is the possibility of phenomenal British Olympic success inspiring a frenzy of tie-in keyboard athletics. So, it looks like it's all down to *Grand Prix 2* to provide a bit of competition then.

Top 20 CD-ROM

1	●	Duke Nukem 3D	US Gold
2	①	Theme Park	Electronic Arts
3	♦	The Settlers 2	Blue Byte
4	●	Championship Manager 2	Domark
5	①	Civilization 2	MicroProse
6	①	Wing Commander III	Electronic Arts
7	①	Euro 96 England	Gremlin
8	①	Worms	Ocean
9	①	Command & Conquer	Virgin
10	①	Little Big Adventure	Electronic Arts
11	①	Magic Carpet Plus	Electronic Arts
12	↗	Worms: Reinforcements	Ocean
13	①	FIFA Soccer 96	Electronic Arts
14	①	C&C: Covert Operations	Virgin
15	①	Warcraft 2	Zabla
16	①	FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts
17	①	The 7th Guest	The White Label
18	①	TFX: EF2000	Ocean
19	①	AH-64D Longbow	Electronic Arts
20	♦	Monty Python's The Holy Grail	7th Level

Your most wanted

1.	●	Quake
2.	●	C&C: Red Alert
3.	①	X-Wing vs Tie Fighter
4.	①	Jedi Knight
5.	①	Dungeon Keeper
6.	①	Syndicate Wars
7.	①	Heart Of Darkness
8.	↗	Into The Shadows
9.	①	X-COM Apocalypse
10.	♦	Diablo



Can *Duke Nukem* hang on to the number one spot next month?



Quake's at number one in the readers chart, so it's gratuitous picture time.

The chart that plugs its finger in the dyke of supply, lest it be torn apart by the raging torrent of demand, continues to make the same consistent cries of distress month after month as *Quake* and *Red Alert* are unmoved at the top of the chart. You certainly know what you want, but is anyone out there listening?

Fortunately, it seems that the mass hankering for *Warhammer 40,000* has abated, so the news that it's dropped like a stone from the chart and indeed from Mindscape's release schedules won't come as too hard a blow.

Ishmail D Amin of Manchester ensured *Diablo*'s first appearance in the top ten with his vote, just enough to push *LBA 2* into the backwaters of disregard. For

his services he shall receive a copy of *Diablo* when its time comes. Send your top five wish list to us, perhaps on the back of a postcard left over from your hols, at: My Most Wanted, PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

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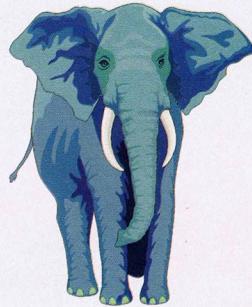
SPECIAL REPORT

With the recent plummet in the price of PC memory, there's never, ever been a better time to increase your PC's capacity for remembering things. But memory is a mind-boggling topic. Allow **PC Gamer** to un-boggle it slightly for you.

By JAMES FLYNN

IN ENGLISH, THE WORD 'shot' is generally considered to have more meanings than any other. In the more specific computer application sphere, 'memory' has just as many uses: DRAM, ROM, VRAM, EPROM, EDORAM, L_x cache RAM, SRAM, WRAM, hard disk, and, of course, the old favourites conventional, extended (XMS) and expanded (EMS).

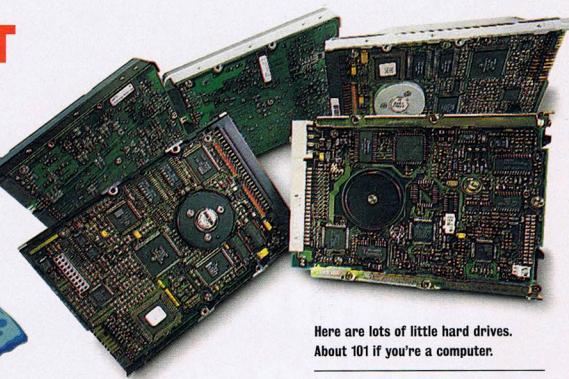
Memory is used to store information, and this action is always performed using the same method. All computers operate using 0s and 1s (true and false, on or off if you like) that form binary code, and execute programs by reading 0s and 1s out of memory and returning 0s and 1s to a different part of memory. A single 0 or 1 is called a bit; string eight bits together and they become a byte; line up 1024 bytes together for a kilobyte; and stack 1024 kilobytes to produce a megabyte, which, if you've been following, you'll realise



comprises rather sizeable 8,388,608 bits.

Write, read, right?

Confusion can arise from the many different types of memory that exist. All types of memory use the same principle to store the data, though.



Here are lots of little hard drives. About 101 if you're a computer.

Every 1-bit value is produced by altering a zero (0) state material with an outside force to create a new state that may be differentiated from the 0s. Imagine making pencil marks (the 1s) on a gridded white piece of paper (the 0s).

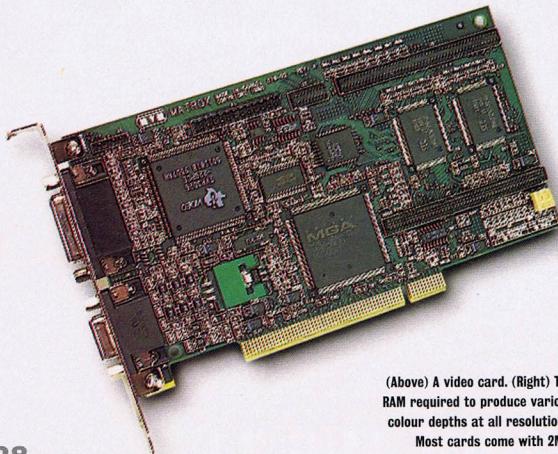
The physical medium may be sub-divided into two main classes – those that require constant power to operate and those that don't. It's a fair bet that if the letters RAM (Random Access Memory) appear in a memory acronym it requires constant power. RAM operates using minute semi-conductor capacitors and transistors – one transistor for each capacitor. A current is passed into the capacitor and it becomes charged, but due to the capacitors' small size this charge will swiftly leak away. Each capacitor must therefore be refreshed (topped-up) with charge every so often. DRAM (Dynamic RAM) is what most PCs around today use as their main memory banks, and it requires a new charge for each capacitor every 70 nanoseconds.

The other group of memory is the sort that doesn't require constant attention. The most

obvious example is your hard drive. Here, a permanent magnetic solution is used which prevents you from losing data from your hard drive if your PC crashes. Unfortunately this is not the case with RAM, which can be lost if it becomes necessary to turn the power off when you crash.

Speedy RAMgalez

The only advantage RAM offers over, say, a hard drive is speed. A PC works by reading permanent data off a hard drive, storing it in main RAM and accessing it from there. The trouble is that despite RAM's incredible access times, it is quickly being caught up by the speeds of CPUs like the Pentium. There is nothing worse than a fast CPU idling because it cannot (a) execute instructions or (b) obtain data with which to work fast enough. This is where cache RAM pops its head up. Cache RAM sits between the CPU and the main RAM and has refresh times of 15-20ns. This is used to store recently and frequently used data to help the processor work but is considerably pricier than ordinary DRAM. One of the Pentium Pro's significant advantages over the Pentium is that it contains an on-



(Above) A video card. (Right) The RAM required to produce various colour depths at all resolutions.

Most cards come with 2Mb.

PIXELS	LINES	256 COLOURS	64K COLOURS	16M COLOURS
1600	1200	2 Mbytes	4Mbytes	5Mbytes
1280	1024	2 Mbytes	3Mbytes	4Mbytes
1024	768	1 Mbyte	2Mbytes	3Mbytes
800	600	0.5 Mbytes	1Mbyte	2Mbytes
640	480	0.3 Mbytes	1Mbyte	1Mbyte

memory

chip Level 2 SRAM cache (i.e. one that's very fast and it works extremely closely with the CPU).

But that's not all

Main RAM and cache RAM work together to supply the processor with bits to feed on. The other repository for expensive components in your PC is the video card. To generalise, the difference between main RAM and video RAM (VRAM) is that the former can only be either read to or written to simultaneously, whereas it's possible to read from and write to the latter together. The advantages of this should be obvious – you don't have to wait for a write operation to be completed before you can extract more data. The difference is known as being single- or dual-ported, and all the fastest and therefore best RAM is dual-ported.

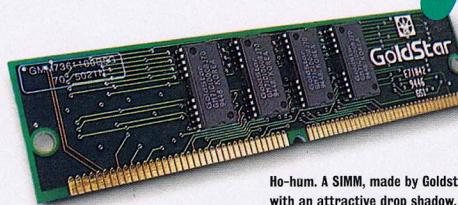
The reason why video memory has to be quicker is because it has to deal with vast amounts of data every frame. To display graphics it is necessary to have the entire screen's contents uncompressed in video memory at the same time. Even for a 640x480 screen in 16-bit colour, this requires 1Mb, or about £60. To operate at high colours and resolutions is expensive, and this is why most video cards only contain 2Mb VRAM and the cheapest systems still use DRAM. By the way, VRAM is just the basic type of video RAM – see the table opposite for the others.

The other bits

Yup, there's more. When your PC boots up it looks at a ROM (Read Only Memory) that stores all the information it needs to unravel the mysteries of your hard drive. This is the Basic Input/Output System, or BIOS. ROMs are useful for long-term storage because they are generally burnt in the factories and rarely need to be re-programmed by us. There are classes of ROM that use UV light and electricity to re-burn them time and time again, but they have specific uses. Chip ROMs are the beetle-like black and silver blocky beasts on your cards and the ultimate ROMs are those shiny silver things.

Shunting hell

Moving all this information to and from the CPU, soundcard, video card, CD-ROM drive hard disk and



Ho-hum. A SIMM, made by Goldstar and with an attractive drop shadow.

the rest is the work of the bus (and it generally seems that slow). The speed at which information can be shunted around the PC is called the bandwidth, and higher is better. It is effectively the ultimate limiting factor in the speed of your PC. The 'wider' the bandwidth, the more bits can be moved around together, and therefore the faster the job can be completed. This is particularly important in the case of graphics, which consist of masses of data, and this was the reason for the invention of VESA and PCI local buses (which cordon off the important graphics routes between CPU and card). Pentiums can theoretically move hundreds of Mb of data around internally per second, but this isn't necessarily enough to ensure that hi-res, hi-colour games will run smoothly. It's physically impossible for *Flight Unlimited* to

run smoothly in 1024x768 in 16-bit colour because information cannot be moved fast enough.

Isn't it all a tad complicated?

That's why your PC crashes so much. 99% of crashes are due to memory cock-ups caused by poor programming (bugs) and spiralling errors. If a program asks for a certain page frame and cannot find it, it generally abandons the attempt pretty fast and turns belly up.

You may wonder why it's necessary to have all a PC's memory scattered throughout its innards. So have Intel, and their current plans are to unify the memory within a machine and thereby (at least partially) simplify the entire mess. In conjunction with Windows 95 it should all be coming together over the next few years. PCG

That list in full

It seems fashionable at the moment to invent flash new types of RAM with this advantage or that or the other. Here's a list of the more commonly seen names to help you wade through the technology and marketing maze.

DRAM – Basic RAM that is used for the main memory and is the cheapest.

EDORAM – An evolution on DRAM. Its Extended Data Out helps access information about 40% faster than DRAM.

SRAM – Static RAM is fast RAM that uses transistors to greater effect than DRAM.

VRAM – Video RAM is dual-ported and is used on video cards.

WRAM – Windows RAM is Samsung's alternative to standard VRAM, and is also dual-ported.

RAMBUS – Operating at 500MHz is the fastest memory available today but requires highly precise manufacturing.

ROM – Read Only Memory. What you've got is what you're stuck with.

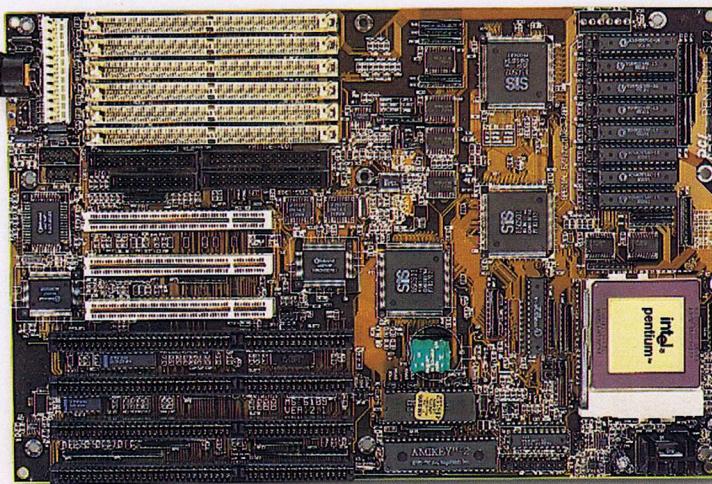
EPROM – Erasable Programmable ROM that allows re-programming using UV light.

EPPROM – Electrically Erasable Programmable ROM may also be re-programmed, but only a few thousand times.

FLASH RAM – Confusingly more like EPROM, but can be re-programmed using a standard voltage.

SIMMS – Single In-line Memory Modules. Today's standard RAM construction method.

DIMMS – Dual In-line Memory Modules. Offer greater density and therefore capacity and speed and are re-appearing gradually.





g 'The most important

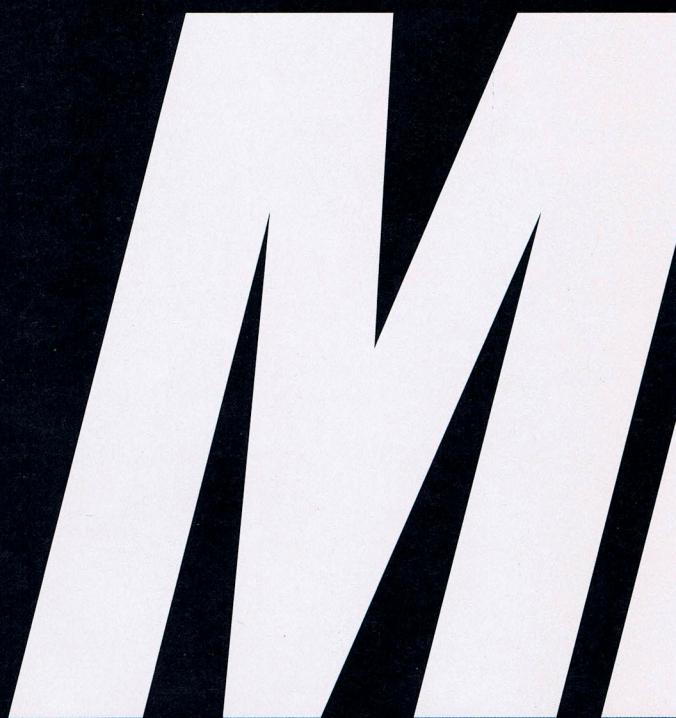
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Deep within the labyrinthine laboratories of Intel, the finishing touches are being put to MMX, a new development which in a few months' time will turn the Pentium processor into a multifarious multimedia multiplex. Or will it? *PC Gamer* answers your MMX-related questions, and speaks to the games developers who're, er, burgling MMX for all the power it's got.

By JONATHAN DAVIES

MMX BANDITS

LOOK, IF YOU'RE ABOUT to tell me I'm going to have to throw away my PC again... Such cynicism. Intel have promised to make MMX upgrade kits available, as they did with Pentium Overdrives.

Hmm. Carry on...

Although it has previously been the fashion to simplify CPUs for greater speed (RISC architecture), MMX actually adds 57 new assembly language instructions to the Pentium. These operate on eight new 64-bit registers in the Pentium (which, if the truth be told, are actually just the floating point registers in disguise), the twist being that all eight of them are operated on at once in a process Intel are calling Single Instruction Multiple Data (SIMD).

Er, sorry...

What this means is that where previously the Pentium, speedy though it is, could work on only one number at a time, now it can work on eight. Or 16, or 32, or 64, if they're small ones. And 'working on numbers' is what games are all about. For every second that you spend playing *Grand Prix 2*, millions upon millions of co-ordinates, colours, chunks of sound – numbers, basically – are crunched and pummelled to form the graphics you see and the sounds you hear. In the past, PCs have principally been speeded up by making the processors run faster, from 3 or 4MHz in the early days of the XT to 200 in the latest Pentiums. But they've always just done one thing at a time. Now they can do eight at a time, which is why Intel are calling MMX "the largest single extension to the Intel Architecture since the 386", and programmers

are saying things like "It will change the way we see data and algorithms."

So how much faster does MMX make things run?

It depends who you talk to. Intel claim increases of between 50 and 400 per cent, while the developers we've spoken to are of a rather more mixed opinion. Also, it depends on what you're doing with it. It's simple, repetitive tasks that MMX is good at – calculating polygons, mixing sound effects together, compressing data to pipe down a network, that sort of thing. So games that rely heavily on graphics and sound effects will benefit the most – an MMX version of *Quake* would be excellent – while games that spend most of their time pondering strategies – the *Cirs* and *Command & Conquer* – won't be boosted so much. Also, of course, it depends on the skill ➤

"Games that rely heavily on graphics and sound effects will benefit the most – an MMX version of *Quake* would be excellent."

WHY 'MMX'?

If, as Intel claim, MMX definitely doesn't stand for multimedia eXtension, then what does it stand for? Here are some theories.

MagiMix

It may originally have been developed to control the next generation of the popular range of food processors.

Make More X-rays

Intel might be trying to further encourage the use of this already popular method of flesh-penetrating photography.

2010

(In Roman numerals.) Perhaps MMX contains hidden code which, when your system clock reaches the year 2010, causes strange black rectangles to appear, and Jupiter to explode.

And we can't think of any others.

→ of the programmer – MMX is going to take a bit of getting used to and experimentation before the most can be got from it.

Does that mean that MMX won't automatically improve the games I've bought already?

Sadly not. MMX only kicks in when it's accessed by specially written code, code that won't be present in your existing games collection.

Ah. Then when will MMX games become available?

Many developers have had MMX systems for a few months now, and are incorporating MMX code into the games they'll be releasing in the autumn. It'll be some time, though, before games specifically written for MMX start to filter through, because MMX PCs are going to be in the minority to begin with.

Exactly how hard will it be for games developers to switch to MMX?

Most PC software is written in a language called C, which is then compiled into the machine code that the PC understands. Current C compilers don't generate MMX code, and it'll be a while before they're updated to do so. This won't be a problem for most games developers, though, as the speed-sensitive parts of games tend to be written directly in machine code anyway – it's faster than C. And, if, say, a 3D engine was being converted into MMX code, only a small

BUT WHAT DOES IT ACTUALLY DO?

Normally anything including the word 'multimedia' is best treated with scepticism, but there would actually seem to be something in Intel's claims that MMX specifically benefits multimedia...

Full-motion video

Getting smooth, detailed, full-screen video is all about rapid number-crunching, and it's previously been necessary to buy an MPEG card for optimum quality. Enter MMX, which

fraction of the code would need to be changed – in general, around 10% of a game's code occupies around 60% of your PC's processor time, and MMX has been specifically designed to streamline that 10% of the code.

Right. Well, it's all very well saying that MMX will make 'things' 'faster'. But what does it actually do?

An excellent question which we were hoping you'd ask. You are advised to read the box out entitled 'But what does it actually do?'. We also refer you to our conversation with Ubi Soft at the end.

When, then?

Pardon?

When'll they be in the shops?

MMX machines will start to become available from the end of this year, and in quantity at the beginning of 1997. That, at least, is the story in the US. It seems that here in Britain we're going to have to wait a little longer.

MMX IN ACTION



A mere three hours from London, via the Channel Tunnel and a suspiciously lengthy taxi ride through the suburbs of Paris, Ubi Soft are working on one of the first MMX games we'll see. It's called *POD*.

The talk at Ubi Soft is of the company's recent successful stock market flotation, in which most of the employees bought a few shares. E-mails ricochet around the offices with news of the latest prices, and programmers dream idly of how they will spend their profits. "On the first day the price went up 10%," reminisces Fabrice Valay, *POD*'s blue-eyed project manager. "On the second it was 8%. Today" – he sighs – "it is only 4% more."

He grasps my wrist and whisks me off on a tour of Ubi Soft's surprisingly large headquarters. I am shown the rendering studio, where *POD*'s intro and link sequences are being assembled, with MMX allowing ultra-smooth animation. I am shown the sound studio, where MMX is permitting dozens of sound channels to be mixed together for maximum realism. And I am shown *POD* itself, running, thanks to

MMX, in 24-bit colour. *POD*, then, is a racing game. It's a futuristic one, but to my relief the cars have proper wheels. "We're taking elements from all our favourite driving games," Fabrice concedes. "As well as straight racing there's the Time Attack mode from *Sega Rally* and the Ghost Mode from *Mario Kart* [where you race against a ghostly image of yourself on your previous lap]."

POD's rather mushy, rusty look is explained by the world in which it's set. Miners on a remote



eagerly decompresses video data from CD-ROM, and it is widely believed, may be fast enough to provide MPEG-quality video without the need for extra hardware. If you're worried that this is going to mean a resurgence in 'interactive movies', though, take heart in the news that Sierra are selling off their video studio and have promised that, after *Phantasmagoria 2*, they won't be doing any more interactive movies at all.

Sound

Sound is really just a stream of data, and the faster you can process it and send it to the soundcard, the better the quality you can get. Enter MMX. As well as higher quality, it can also mix together a virtually infinite

number of sound channels, where previously we were lucky to have about four, and is handy for doing 3D surround sound effects. It's also touted as being the technology that might finally give us speech recognition.

3D graphics

Calculating the shapes, positions and textures of the hundreds of polygons which make up the scenery in a game like *Quake* is a simple but enormously time-consuming task. Enter MMX, which has matrix multiplication commands built-in – exactly what's needed to generate polygon coordinates, which can then be passed on to the 3D graphics card that'll be present in all MMX PCs to be rendered on the screen.

MMX also provides 24-bit colour for not much more effort than it currently takes to do 8-bit colour.

Communications

An increasingly important aspect of PC gaming is multi-play, which relies on sending information about each player's status to the rest over some sort of network, be it a local area network, a modem line or the Internet. The problem at the moment is that a game can only spend so much time transmitting data before network delays start to slow things down. Enter MMX, which can be used to compress the data swiftly into small packets, meaning less time has to be spent transmitting it.

Gg, How long?

At the Los Angeles E3 Show in May, developers of MMX games were asked by Intel not to demonstrate them to European journalists. And, according to Intel, MMX is an 'unannounced product' over here, and they're not willing to discuss launch plans until August at the earliest. Tsk, ch!

Indeed. How much will it cost?

Difficult to say. It's believed that MMX-equipped Pentiums will cost about the same as

their MMX-free equivalents. But MMX will initially only be fitted to high-end Pentiums – 166s and 200s upwards. And MMX PCs will be high-spec ones, with at least 16MB of RAM, a 3D graphics accelerator and so on. So, although MMX won't be expensive in itself, the surrounding hardware probably will be.

And will I really be able to upgrade my current PC?

Well, technically, MMX-equipped Pentium chips will be available for you to slot into the

place of your existing one. But it's likely to be a bit more complicated than that. Because off-the-shelf MMX PCs will have high standard specs, any game running in MMX mode is likely to scoff haughtily at the average PC of today.

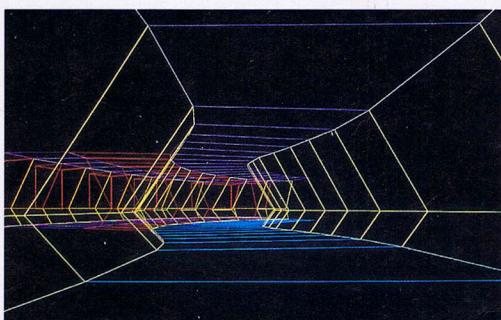
Bah. And presumably that won't be the end of it.

Certainly not. Those 'in the know' smile wryly and speak of the 'next generation' of MMX. No-one seems quite sure what this will entail, but we see no reason why Intel shouldn't supplant the eight hijacked floating point registers with goodness-knows-how-many further registers, with a corresponding additional speed increase. And, of course, Pentiums will carry on getting faster and faster, as they always have done, until the P6 takes over the baton and we are ushered into a smoother, 32-bit world.

Right.

Good.

"Because off-the-shelf MMX PCs will have high standard specs, any game running in MMX mode is likely to scoff haughtily at the average PC of today."



This wireframe shows the polygons making up the tunnel (below-left). If you played *POD* like this it would be incredibly fast, and just like the old days, but a bit confusing.

colony have accidentally disturbed a virus which had lain dormant beneath the ground. Having escaped, it has started to erode the

world, causing plants to die and buildings to crumble. Almost all the population have escaped, and only a few remain. But – tsk – there's only

one shuttle craft left, and too many people to fit onto it. So the survivors decide to battle for their lives by driving souped up cars around the empty and pot-holed streets, the victor claiming the ticket to freedom. No, really.

The upshot of this is that, as you race from level to level, the world decays more and more until it becomes difficult to see the road, and debris litters the course. "Do you recognise that?" Fabrice asks, parking next to a big pointy thing that's embedded in the track. Indeed I do. It is one of the hover-cars out of *Wipeout* – a Galactic jibe.

Ubi Soft are also eager to integrate *POD* with the Internet, and are bursting with ideas for doing so. For example, you'll be able to upload your Ghost Mode

performance to the Internet so others can challenge it, and download new cars and tracks as Ubi Soft make them available. Even more ambitious are the networking features, which will join together modems, local area networks and

the Internet completely invisibly, with MMX compressing data packets swiftly enough for them not to be a problem.

The Internet side of things is all to be handled by a Web site Ubi Soft are setting up, which, as well as providing a place to upload and download things to and from, will let you meet up with other players, rather like Dwango or Wireplay.

Fabrice attempted to illustrate his plans by way of a biroed diagram in which two circles ("PCs"),



BRING ON THE GAMES

Although MMX-based PCs aren't due to reach us until the end of the year at the earliest, Intel are keen for plenty of software to be available for the launch. They've therefore secreted early MMX systems into the offices of developers around the world, and many already have MMX games up and running. PC Gamer's agents contacted several of these developers and extracted their findings on the new technology.

Domark

"We're due to get some MMX chips any day now, and, although we won't be writing any MMX-specific games in the foreseeable future, we're hoping to get some MMX code into *Deathtrap Dungeon*. And, given that we won't really be seeing MMX machines in any quantity in this country until next spring, at the moment we're concentrating on supporting the 3D graphics cards that are due out in the autumn."

NovaLogic

"We're very excited about MMX, and we'll be among the first with MMX-compatible games – *F-22*, *Comanche 3* and *Armored Fist 2* will all use MMX. The difference MMX gives to something like *Armored Fist* isn't huge, because that's a game with a lot of AI in it. With *Comanche 3*, though, that's more graphics-intensive, we're getting an extra two or three frames a second. We're a breath away from 24-bit colour, and in the future we're hoping to be able to do a lot more with MMX. For example, we've currently got a voice-over system working for multi-player games, where you can plug in a microphone and speak to other players, but currently the processor really takes a hit from it."

Epic MegaGames

"We showed off the MMX version of *Unreal* at the MMX developers conference. It looks just incredible – 24-bit colour makes a hell of a

difference, and there's 44KHz sound too. It's awesome. We're doing a version of *Jazz Jackrabbit II* for MMX as well, and it'll probably have 16-bit colour. MMX is best for handling large amounts of data. It's awesome stuff when you're mixing sounds. We've been playing *Quake*, and it plays pretty well. The Ziggurat level is awesome. We're not sure it's 'changed the face of gaming', though. *Unreal* will be much prettier, with more puzzles and exploration."

Electronic Arts

"Intel sent us three machines about a month and a half ago, and we're currently trying to get our heads around what they can do. We've found that MMX doesn't actually make any difference unless you program for it natively, but then you can get a speed increase of two to four times. In the sports games, for example, you'll be able to get much more detail – shadows and things. The biggest improvement is getting 24-bit colour basically 'for free'."

Ocean

"Intel originally didn't seem sure about MMX's application for things like flight sims. But we've found that we can process geometry a lot faster with it – in general we're getting about a 20% speed increase, on top of putting everything into 24-bit colour."

Criterion Studios

"We've got two MMX machines here. The improvement you get really depends on what you're doing. For games running in 8-bit colour we're only getting about a 10% performance increase, but that goes up to about 40% when you're in 16-bit and 24-bit. The best we've got so far is 560% – that was drawing a Gouraud-shaded polygon in 16-bit colour. It was gigantic, though – MMX really flies when you're drawing big shapes, but the performance starts to tail off when you're drawing smaller polygons, which is what you tend to do in most games. You can include far more special effects, though – if you want to try a wacky lighting effect, you can do that. All the games we're working on use our Renderware engine, and we've put an MMX driver into it, so they'll all take advantage of MMX."

MMX VS THE 3D ACCELERATORS

Much has been promised by the new wave of 3D accelerator chips – the 3DFX, the Verite, the PowerVR and so on. Are they all going to be rendered obsolete by MMX? Not exactly. The plan is that MMX will speed up the calculation of polygon co-ordinates, and the 3D card will then render them on the screen. All MMX-equipped PCs will be fitted with a 3D accelerator card.

We interrogated a random selection of 3D card manufacturers:

VideoLogic

"MMX will speed up geometry processing in the CPU, which will improve PowerVR performance. MMX is great for low-res 3D, but you'll still really need an accelerator card for high-end stuff."

Orchid

"That MMX will do everything is far-fetched. It's unlikely to handle full-screen MPEG and proper 3D. There's life after Intel!"

Diamond Multimedia

"We're excited about MMX. It'll be a nice complement to 3D graphics technology. MMX will give low-end users a taste of the graphics acceleration that cards like ours can provide."

ATI

"Hardware 3D acceleration gives games a 10-20 times performance increase over software, and MMX won't approach that. We don't see MMX as a threat, and are happy to work with Intel."

Matrox

"This technology will not remove the need for dedicated high performance accelerators such as our Mystique."

– each with a line drawn through them ("two-player split screen") are connected together by a line ("a serial link"). The second is connected to a third by a dotted line ("the Internet"), which is in turn connected to a forth by a dashed line ("a modem"), and so on. All are playing the same game of *POD*. The other option is for all players to be connected to Ubi Soft's HQ over the phone.

I watched *POD* running on a number of different PCs. On a straight Pentium it looked okay, and

on an MMX-powered one the true-colour did make a considerable difference. But it was at its best, unsurprisingly, on an MMX machine with a 3D accelerator card – the sort of machine that'll be standard when MMX appears – on which it was unfeasibly fast.

But MMX is making a difference behind the scenes, too. "Because MMX makes the graphics so much faster," Fabrice explains, "we have more processor time to devote to the artificial intelligence. So we can make the computer-controlled cars more intelligent."

To demonstrate this, Fabrice shows me the program with which they instil skills into the computer cars. By clicking on buttons they can make each individual one aggressive or passive, deciding whether it'll tend to respond to your presence by ramming you, zig-



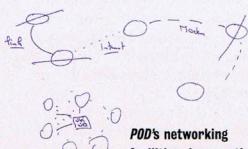
This car looks a bit like a fish. That's because it's in the future.

zagging about, slamming the brakes on in front of you or performing "une queue de poisson" (a fish-tail). This should make for more exciting and challenging races. "For example, in *Daytona*," Fabrice says, "on the track where you're on the bridge, if you get into the left-hand lane no-one will get in your way." There's apparently no danger of that happening in *POD* – cars will

learn the tracks as they zoom around them, and never drive the same way twice. Damage to your car, too, will be pretty sophisticated. You'll be able to choose between global damage, where every crash gives an even hit on all your car's systems, or the rather more interesting sector damage, where driving head-first into a wall will crumple your bonnet and knacker your engine, while getting rammed from behind will make the boot difficult to open.

If MMX isn't exactly heralding a new dawn of PC games the likes of which we've never seen before, then it's certainly going to make the PCs of tomorrow considerably more gamesworthy than today's.

● *POD* will be released by Ubi Soft to coincide with the launch of MMX at the end of the year.



POD's networking facilities. Apparently.

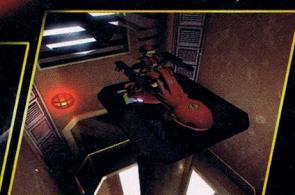
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Diary

So how's Rowan's Rod Hyde been getting along with *Flying Corps*? More specifically, how are his 45-gallon fuel drums shaping up? Let's ask him...

AT THE END OF THE LAST diary I was telling you about the 45-gallon fuel drums that Mark wanted on the airfield. These drums were used in our demo as the targets during an attack from the air. Compared with peppering the Officers Mess with gun-fire, hitting a fuel drum gives a much more satisfying and spectacular effect.

Anybody who has watched the A-Team will know that oil drums are a vital part of their finales and Mark couldn't see why he couldn't use the same tools of the trade. I wasn't so sure. Did they have big drums in the First World War? In fact they did, and we now have the photographic evidence. The drums do look a bit like beer barrels, but the effect of shooting them will be the same.

Researching into the fuelling up of WW1 aircraft did bring out some other interesting facts. For instance, although big drums and pumps were available, many aircraft were still filled manually using two-gallon fuel cans. Four of these cans were stored together in a wooden crate and the crates were stacked clear of the aircraft.

Incidentally, can anybody tell me the other link between *Flying Corps* and the A-Team? Send answers on a postcard to 67 High Street, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 1AH. I'll put the

"Compared with peppering the Officers Mess with gun-fire, hitting a fuel drum gives a much more satisfying and spectacular effect."

correct answers in a bag and send a copy of *Flying Corps* to the first name I pull out.

Last month I took the flight model to Andy Sephton, who is the test pilot for the Shuttleworth Collection of vintage aircraft. The collection is housed at the Old Warden Aerodrome in Bedfordshire and they hold flying days throughout the summer. They also have a museum which is open all through the year. However, it is much better to see these aircraft flying, so why not visit the airfield this summer? If you want details of their flying days, ring 01767 627288. Their Internet site is worth visiting as well.

Andy has flown a wide range of aircraft, so I was very keen that he tried our new model.



What is the link between *Flying Corps* and the A-Team? Probably something to do with gyroscopic effects.



A Sopwith Camel turning to the left. Which, of course, it doesn't do quite as fast as turning to the right.

Generally he was very happy with it, but he did point out a few areas for improvement. The two most significant ones were deceleration in a tight turn and spin characteristics. On the model he flew, the air speed only went down to

spin was degenerating into a spiral dive. It would be an understatement to say that this is proving to be more difficult to sort out.

Since the last diary the team has grown again. There are fourteen of us working on

70 mph in a tight turn. Andy reckoned it should be more like 50-55 mph. This was relatively easy to fix; part of the reason was that I had assumed a stall speed and best climb that was too high.

The problem with the spin was that the aircraft was travelling too fast. In fact, the



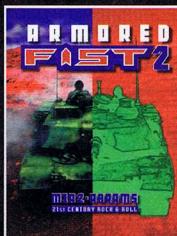
Flying Corps now. If you want a job at Rowan, it seems that your name must be 'Andy'. At one point last month, six of the fourteen were called Andy, four had the initials 'AM' and three are Andy Macs. We were running out of names that we could use to distinguish them all - one of them certainly wouldn't respond to the name that his sister suggested.

The team has grown because we needed more people to help with the landscape production. The process is now in full swing and is quite a management task. In the end we should have something approaching 10Gb of data and this must be compressed onto one CD for the game. Imagine one huge data set that is being accessed and edited by up to six different people simultaneously. Jim and Macca have done a good job in preparing a set of tools to make the problem manageable. However, we still have to be careful to avoid swamping our system.

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The Hot Spot

It's claims and counter-claims time, as Creative Labs prepare to release their new 3D graphics card onto a market that has already snubbed them once. Let war begin.

WHEN THE JUNE ISSUE of *PC Gamer* hit the shelves we were somewhat surprised to get a phone call from the suit-wearing marketing folk at Creative Labs, who seemed a little upset at what the Germans' funniest vice-president, Gerd Queisser from ATI, had to say about them. The last thing we want is for The Hot Spot to turn into a one-on-one slugging match, and with wars and football well and truly behind us, a technological scuffle seemed wholly inappropriate. However, when Gerd and Chris Boyce from Creative Labs threatened to fight on the beaches, on the landing grounds, in the fields and in the streets (not to mention hills and France) we felt obliged to give Chris his fair chance. Besides, we like a good argument.

PC Gamer: Why did you release that appalling

"Gerd accused us of being retail driven and I would plead guilty to that. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. We've had it on the shelves of PC World."

VLB 3D Blaster if it wasn't just to cash in on 3D hype?

Chris Boyce: Well... I guess... um... the bottom line with these things is that they're starting with 3D Blaster VLB. There became the opportunity to put 3D technology onto add-on cards, and over time these will get better and better and better and...

PCG: We understand.

CB: But the VLB 3D Blaster was our first attempt, and it wasn't so much to cash in on the hype as to provide extra functionality for people that owned VLB PCs.

PCG: Very charitable.

CB: We bundled four games in there, and it was met by fairly mixed reactions in the press.

PCG: We were all in agreement at Future Publishing.

CB: PC Format slated it, but we got marks in the 80s from other magazines. But the thing that I realise we made a really bad job of, certainly as far as Mr Queisser was concerned, was the assumption that there's complete incompatibility between the PCI and VLB cards.

PCG: So you're saying that the PCI bus version of the 3D Blaster card, due out in the next couple of months, isn't completely incompatible with the VLB card you released last summer, even though they use different 3D chips.

CB: They do indeed use different chips with different architectures from different manufacturers. Software sells hardware and we didn't want people being stuck with a board that



of the cards, Euro 96, then you'll find that it works on both cards.

PCG: ATI accused you of being retail driven, trying to make some money before any standards had been ratified. Of letting customers buy the 3D Blaster then going away and designing something new, without any compatibility between them. Even Gerd thought there was a lack of compatibility.

CB: And that's what ruffled me.

PCG: How many VLB cards did you sell... sorry, have you sold? We were talking as if it were dead then.

CB: Of the top of my head... not as many as we would have liked. I think we suffered from the lack of a free VLB slot, since the 3D Blaster was an add-in card and you weren't able to take out your existing graphics card. Less than we'd like, but we think we understand why.

PCG: Most mail order retailers don't stock your 3D Blaster, and a few didn't even know

they were never going to use again. All the games bundled with the 3D Blaster were programmed using our own interface, which means that they will run, occasionally with patches, on the PCI 3D Blaster and any 3D graphics cards we design in the future.

PCG: Will there be any other games designed for the VLB 3D Blaster?

CB: One of the problems we had with the VLB card was that we didn't get the game support we were hoping for. You see, game developers use the very latest super-duper Pentium machines, and so weren't designing games that ran on VLB

machines...

PCG: 486s?

CB: 486s.

PCG: Oops.

CB: With our move to the PCI version, this will of course all change, with developers either writing to the Direct3D Windows 95 API or our own under DOS. For instance, if you take one of the latest games written for many

what it was we were asking for.

CB: Gerd accused us of being retail driven and I would plead guilty to that. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. We've had it on the shelves of PC World.

PCG: It costs £270 above the cost of a graphics card.

CB: The number of VLB machines is decreasing all the time because nobody's making them. I would expect us to realign our pricing when we release the PCI.

PCG: Why has it taken so long for the PCI version to appear?

CB: We've been waiting for the Rendition chip, which the board is based on, to arrive, so it's taken us longer to develop than we thought. It means of course that Quake will be accelerated in hardware.

PCG: What games are you going to bundle with the new card? Everyone seems to be doing *MechWarrior 2*.

CB: That's a bit old, isn't it?

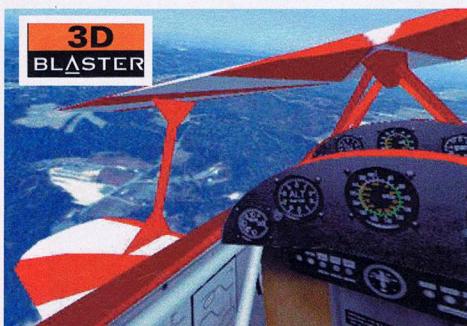
PCG: They're still doing it.

CB: We haven't decided yet. Watch this space.

PCG: What's next for Creative Labs? When will we see a Virtual Reality headset? Force feedback joystick?

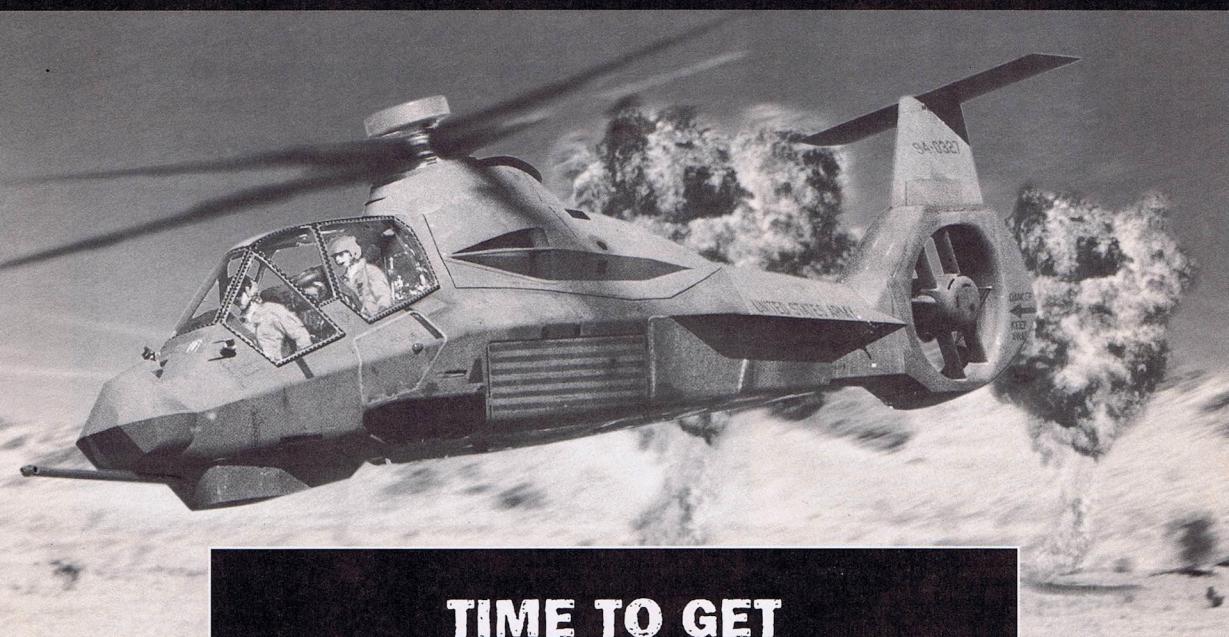
CB: We're at very early days with 3D technology. They'll continue to improve for another few years.

PCG: Chris Boyce, thank you very much.

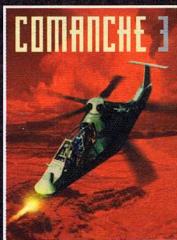


The 3D Blaster: Still suffering from the lack of a free VLB slot? Or worth a mark in the 80s?

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The Spy

"Don't spoil Christmas," warned The Spy's grandmother. She was right... though, funny enough, not a Quake fan.

THERE'S A JOKE ABOUT a small boy who ran all excited to see his parents, three days before Christmas." Control shifted in his absurd, ultramodern, leather upholstered armchair, the polished black surfaces squeaking expensively. Control's jokes are never very funny and he has an awful habit of dragging them out. "He runs to his parents and tells them that he won't be needing a mountain bike for Christmas this year." The corner of his mouth creased as he built for the punchline. "Because he's already found one behind the wardrobe in their bedroom."

I stifled a laugh. Chuckling isn't very secret agent... and the gag wasn't so funny anyway. Had I been called back from my assignment in the Caribbean because my controller was looking for a career on the stage? No. He tapped a button and a painting slid out of its frame on the wall with a reassuring snick. The screen behind played back a tape. A game I was already familiar with. Sure, who in the world isn't familiar with *Quake*?

Except something wasn't quite right. The lighting effects were pokier than I was used to. The level maps were new. A couple of bad guys I'd only ever seen in id's screenshots were



Have you played Quake prematurely? If so, you're likely to be left with an empty feeling inside your tummy.

Next up, a sniff around the Internet. All the best *Quake* sites were eerily quiet on the issue of the leaked beta. I couldn't find so much of a mention of it, let alone anywhere to download it from – turned out that the guys at id had managed a pretty comprehensive cover-up. It took a good deal of lurking around one of the newsgroups before anyone would explain to me what happened.

Apparently it was one of those social disease things. id's John Romero passed the

they're the band that designed the sound effects. id are still involved in legal wranglings with Nine Inch Nails to secure exclusive tracks for the game, so expect plenty of profane lyrics!

As for the story line, the shareware version's plot is likely to be abandoned. While the readme file mentioned a character called Quake, chances are you won't be seeing any such a chappie in the finished game. On the front end, expect a total revamp of the menus. The text-based console will stay, but there'll be

"Anyone downloading this version of Quake – codenamed Beta 3 – was certain to be disappointed. This simply wasn't a finished game."

appearing here and there. What had been going on while I'd been living it up in Haiti? Control took up the story. "Three days ago a game, claiming to be the full version of *Quake*, was posted on the Internet. Our chaps managed to download the game before it disappeared off into the ether. We want you to find out what happened. The source of the leak. The limitations of the game that was posted on-line. The whole works."

My first stop was the testing room, where I got to understand just what control meant by his attempt at humour. Anyone downloading this version of the game – codenamed Beta 3 – was certain to be disappointed. This simply wasn't a finished game. You could understand the motivation for loading up and running this early version. Impatient gamers just couldn't wait to try the other three episodes, extra weapons and new bad guys. The result? A generation of gamers who'd wasted the thrill of playing the action game of the year.

game on to a play-tester. The play-tester passed a copy onto a pal. Who passed a copy on to another pal. Who passed a copy on to... and so on until it landed in the slippery, warty hands of a software pirate who thought nothing of posting the game on-line.

So, what had people been playing – thinking they were all smart and getting the game before anyone else? The beta version was in fact three months old – by now make that five months. On the enemies side, players got to see new monsters, but their artificial intelligence wasn't nearly as hot as expected in the finished version. A better lighting model is being implemented for the finished game, which will change the way the characters are illuminated.

Another major change expected in the final version is redbook audio – that's to say real CD music which streams from disc while playing. The shareware version does this already, but what you really want is some Nine Inch Nails to really get into the spirit, seeing as

a much more intuitive method for running network games. Also, there will be an easier system for choosing player colour – expect to be able to change vest and pants colour with a mere tap of the left and right arrows.

All this just left the question why? Why bother rushing *Quake* and turning it into the PC games player equivalent of premature ejaculation? Sure, people were excited, but it's like sneaking a peek at your presents before Christmas... kind of detracts from the big day! You'll only get the sheer excitement of fighting through the single-player game for the first time once, so why squander it on uncompleted code? I knew what I had to do.

At 4am the following day I went against every rule in the book and broke into my own Department's offices. I initiated my very own scorched earth policy – wiping every hard drive of any remnants of Beta 3 and then searching out any writable CD-ROMs with the code on. Tonight there'd be a bonfire.

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AFTER YEARS OF THE PC gaming industry trying to 'go Hollywood' by producing interactive movies with little success, the tables have been turned, and Hollywood is starting to 'go PC' as a tinseletown production company unveils its first computer game.

But *The 10th Planet*, an ambitious space opera being co-produced with Bethesda Softworks, is not from just any old shabby B-movie outfit as we've seen in the past – this is the work of Centropolis Entertainment, the company that produced this summer's sci-fi blockbuster (and now officially the biggest movie earner of all time) *Independence Day*. Dean Devlin, the movie's co-writer and producer, has outlined the story and design for the game, and production designer Oliver Scholl, who created the look for the movie's phenomenal special effects, is leading the game's graphics team.

I recently bumped into Devlin at some top Hollywood bash or other, and he told me that Centropolis, after a series of science fiction movie hits like *Universal Soldier*, *Stargate* and

"I thought if we could get videogames to look a lot more like our feature films, it would be a much more exciting experience to play the game." – Dean Devlin, Centropolis Entertainment

now *Independence Day*, are keen to break out into the interactive field. "One of the things I don't like in videogames is that for the most part a lot of the designs look like comic books," he said over cocktails and cheesy footballs. "And I thought if we could get these things to look a lot more like they do in our feature films, it would be a much more exciting experience to play the game."

So *The 10th Planet* represents something of a benchmark in the games industry's Hollywood aspirations. This is the first time that a proven movie production company has thrown its entire weight behind a game project, even if the arrangement poses its fair share of problems – people wondering why the game has been so long in development (it has been shown at the last two E3 expos in Los Angeles) might be interested to know it's because the graphics side of the game had to be put on the back burner while the artists worked to finish the special effects for *Independence Day*. But, as Devlin says, "That was a few months ago, and now we've come up with a system where we can keep moving

Changing places

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, Gary Whitta has been eating sausages on sticks with the stars while everybody around him seems to be complaining about *Quake*.



With the interactive movie on its last legs, *The 10th Planet* represents the future of Hollywood/PC couplings.

forward because we didn't want to delay it any longer."

Certainly the prospects for *The 10th Planet* are good – Centropolis's talent should give the game a genuinely cinematic feel, and Bethesda have really been coming into their

American expression) it sucks.

The Internet newsgroups like alt.games.quake have been buzzing with reaction, an awful lot of it negative as disgruntled players claim it's "not as good as *Duke Nukem 3D*" or it's "too much like

own of late with some killer 3D routines emerging in the company's new Terminator licences. It's STILL not scheduled to appear until early 1997, but what's been seen so far indicates that the wait will be worth it.

Quake debate

Everyone's playing *Quake* at the moment, as you will probably have noticed. Unfortunately – and right-thinking people might find this very difficult to accept – a lot of punters over here DON'T LIKE IT. That's right. Some people think (to use a favourite

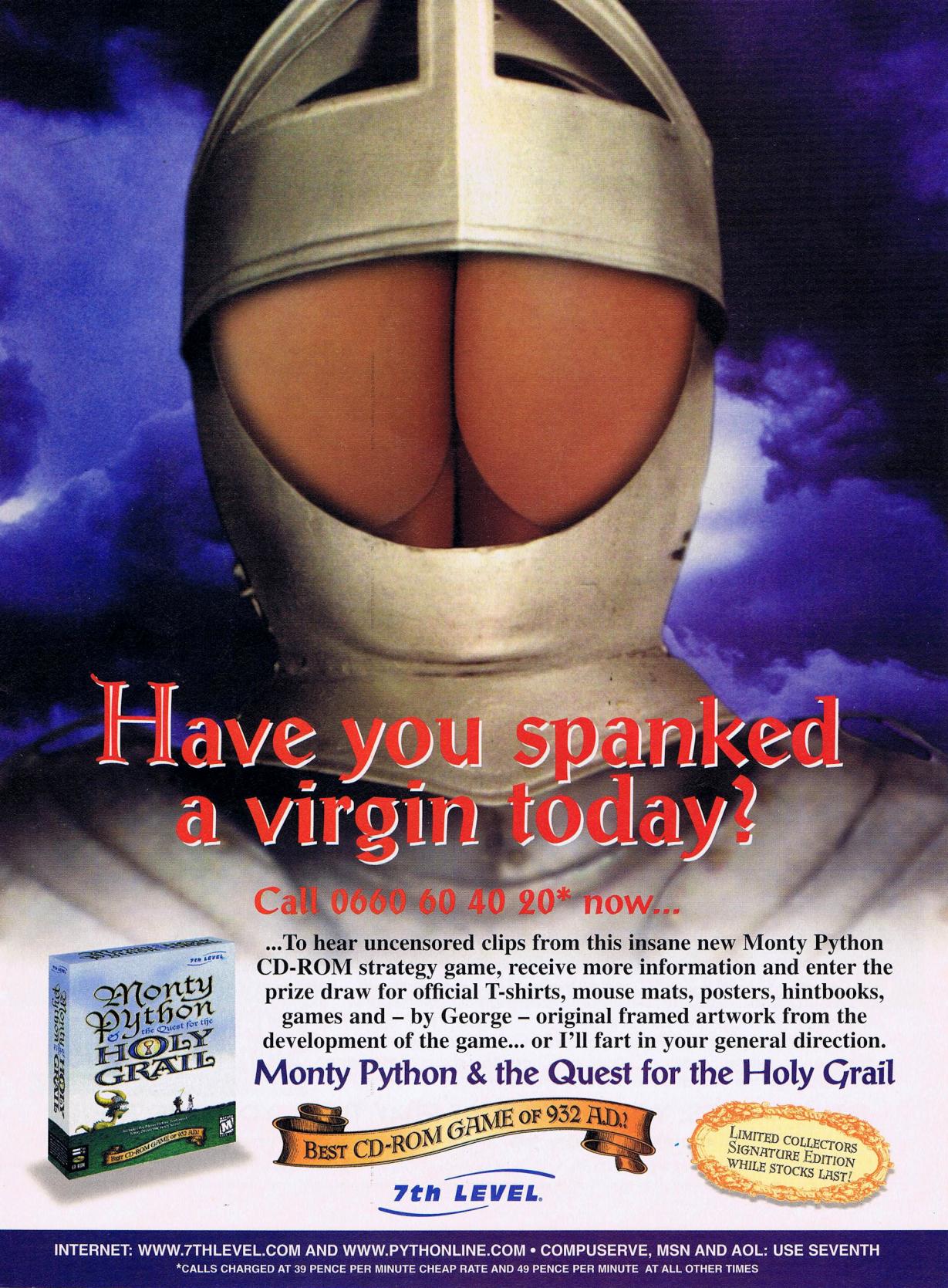


Quake: Is it any good? Or not. We say yes, but the Americans, it seems, are less easily satisfied.

Doom", etc. Of course these people are morons but it probably demonstrates just how difficult US games players are becoming to please, and how a game can be the victim of its own hype – no matter how good *Quake* turned out to be, it was never going to live up to the expectations that some people had built up in their minds.

The talk now is of what we can expect from the big *Quake* clones in development, like 3D Realms' *Prey* and Epic's *Unreal*. "We know our competitors are already working on *Quake*-like games, but we still have a competitive edge," id's Jay Wilbur told me recently. "We've got to be six to twelve months ahead of all those guys." They're as confident as ever, but nevertheless there are sceptics who will tell you that id have fumbled the 3D ball with *Quake*, and that there are bigger and better games on the horizon waiting to pick it up. It'll all come out in the wash come Christmas when those *Quake* challengers appear, mark my words.

Gary Whitta commands the American edition of *PC Gamer*.

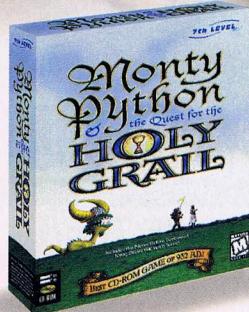


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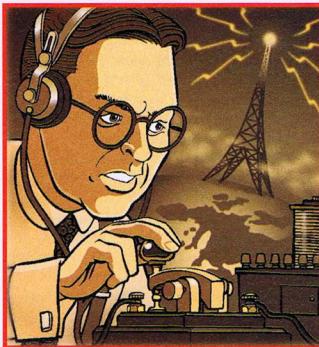
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Cables

Our editor, Jonathan, keeps an ivory-handled letter opener purely for the purpose of slitting open *PC Gamer* readers' envelopes. Here's what he found within this month.

I suspect you knew

Apart from answering all my questions on multi-player frolics, your mag had a demo of *Return Fire*, which I promptly bought on your sound advice. Thanks! Just one small thing, though: page 63 had a picture of a Rebel Blockade Runner escaping from a Star Destroyer. The caption under it said it was a TIE Bomber. But I suspect you knew this, being a top mag and all.

Christopher Newton, Grange Over Sands

Hmm. I'm encouraged that you too liked Return Fire, though.



My favourite parts

I have been getting *PC Gamer* for some time now and Cables has always been one of my favourite parts. Unfortunately this is no longer the case. It's mainly because of the morons like John Cogman and Adam Roper who sent pretty letters back and forth between each other like a couple of school girls using annoying 'CAPITALISATIONS' (quote: J.C. PCG 31). Okay, at first they were mildly amusing, funny in fact, and I found myself chuckling on a few occasions, like the time they found a double comma mistake in a letter - ooooh, funny. But they use *PC Gamer* as if it's their personal e-mail. I have counted the letters that these imbeciles have written (I use 'written' in its loosest possible sense), and they alone have had five letters published by you, not to mention the rubbish ones that others write.

Tom Hughes, High Wycombe

*You're right. From this *PC Gamer* forth, residents of Loughborough are barred from the pages of Cables.*

My mum bought a game

Ten years ago my mum bought a game for the Spectrum called *The Happiest Days Of Your Life*. She's been playing it ever since, trying to get to the end. Neither of us can work out how to finish it, so I've decided to write to see if any of your readers can help us. Does anyone out there know how to finish it? And if so, can they get in contact with us?

Richard Mitton, via e-mail

Rally to assist Richard's mum, readers. You can reach the Mitton family at e-mail address 100740.1271@compuserve.com. I also hold a copy of their postal address in the centre draw of my antique desk, and will forward any communication.

Wind of change

As an avid reader and subscriber I have noticed a recent wind of change in your reviews and opinion. It would now appear that you would consider any game unworthy of a clearly excellent review unless it passes the ruthless 'PC Gamer Multi-player Board of *Quake* Shareholders'.

The best example that springs to mind is the mind-numbingly brilliant *Duke Nukem 3D*. You marked it down because you felt that the multi-player option was not that great. Since I do regularly link up on a serial cable and smash my buddies C&C, I can confirm that this is the best way of playing games ever. However, 95% of my playing time is spent with just me and my faithful PC and I am willing to bet my cat, Eddie, that most gamers are the same.

Chairman Mao once said that when there is a wind of change the wiseman should build windmills not windbreaks (or something), but I won't be building my windmills just yet



because I think you have a case of 'premature speculation' by placing so much emphasis on multi-play.

Must go. Have to remove *Quake* from my hard drive.

Colonel Pork, St Albans

*My agents do indeed confirm that only a minority of *PC Gamer* readers regularly indulge in multi-player games. So fear not - *PC Gamer* would never mark down a great one-player game for not being much cop over a network. But we make no apologies for highlighting fine multi-player games when we encounter them, or for encouraging everyone to try out things like multi-player *Quake*, *Command & Conquer* and *Warcraft II* if they possibly can.*

And to Firus Mazlanm

Looks like this *Warlords* story is becoming a bit of a treasure hunt, doesn't it? Living in Denmark, I recently purchased a compilation of ten games called Megapak 5. It includes *Terminal Velocity*, *Flight Unlimited* (shareware), *Primal Rage*, *Pinball Fantasies Deluxe*, *Jagged Alliance*, *FX Fighter*, *Great Naval Battles 4*, *Pool Champion*, *Entomorph* AND *WARLORDS 2 DELUXE!* The retail price is about £30, and it is published by Megamedia.

The Deluxe edition of *Warlords 2* features



60 pre-made worlds, SVGA graphics and a scenario builder. It still offers modem and network play for up to eight players. You can e-mail Megamedia at megapak5@megamed.com, and their Web site's at <http://www.megamed.com>.

And to Firus Mazlanm: Make that three, including some bloke in Denmark.

Roger Dreessen, Brovst, Denmark

Thanks for fitting this further piece into the puzzle.

We can eat meat!

Do you have anything against me? I've sent you many e-mails and never seen any of them in your mag! Instead I see every issue one or two letters of Adam Roper from Loughborough. This guy probably don't have anything else to do so he write those stupid letters! OK! I'm Brazilian, we are much better than you in football but you are a rich country. But look here we can eat meat! There is no Creutzfelt Jakob (this is called something here like the 'crazy cow fever'). So please, when I open the August or the September issue of *PC Gamer* (which I pay here something around

£12-13) I want to see this letter! OK?
Pedro Souza, via Brazilian e-mail

Erm... OK!

Hammering I got

"If you'd bought a car, you wouldn't phone up Ford and demand they teach you how to drive, would you?" Harsh words? Possibly. Controversial? Almost certainly judging by Linda Rigby's letter in *PCG* 33. And true? Definitely.

Despite the hammering I got from Linda I don't take back what I wrote because it sums

up exactly how I feel. Game companies' technical support lines aren't here to teach people the basics of using their system. If someone needs help, then they'll get it, but if someone doesn't know what letter their CD-ROM drive is or what sort of soundcard they own, then how can we help them?

What's the solution? I don't know. Perhaps all computers should come with an instruction book which lists all the cards fitted and runs through the basic DOS commands, but expecting a games company to be able to supply you with these answers is like expecting your car stereo manufacturer to tell you how to put the car into first gear. Agent Orange

Quake special

Avid Satan worshippers

Is it true to say that *Quake* after all is just *Doom* 3 in disguise? The hype of a medieval style for *Quake*, with its single custom bludgeoning weapon, has been scrapped. The idea of an *Ultima*-style underworld with puzzle-solving has been scrapped.

Instead it went back to the shotgun, the old double-barrel, the rocket launcher etc. as well as troops strangely similar to the shotgun men in *Doom I & II*. On top of this an even worse story line has been formulated about some bloke called Quake coming to earth with his evil hordes of satanic foot troops to rid us of our planet. This all seems to remind me of another story line used once before about doing battle with the legions of Satan.

It seems that id, like bad writers, have moulded the story line around the title rather than the other way round, in a desperate attempt to give meaning to the title *Quake*. It seems odd that this supposedly new game is simply a continuation of a well-bred and highly successful theme. Don't get me wrong – the game itself is superb. I'm an avid and experienced *Doom* and now *Quake* player, but it does seem to be just more of the same thing with a few new bits added in as technology has advanced.

Perhaps id are, in fact, avid Satan worshippers and are in league with the devil, thus it shows in their work. Or possibly they



have rushed *Quake* under market pressure and gone back to the old stuff that has worked before in order to save some time.

Stuart Cooke, Kent

Huge, sweaty, drooling

Okay, I admit it. I thought it was weird too. *Quake* in 2nd place?

However, I've just put my hands on a hardware copy of the first episode... and it's so cool!

For the last 24 hours my life has existed of nothing but quadruple-barrelled nailguns, huge, sweaty, drooling monsters slashing at me with a chainsaw and the most astonishing graphics in a shoot-'em-up game ever! Raving sound effects by Nine Inch Nails, dead monsters in 3D and the most bitchin' end-of-level creature ever devised.

So, to all you unfortunate kindergarten students out there, fed up with NOT being able to play the game... Relax, your time will come (spring 97) and meanwhile, *PC Gamer* is oh-so very right when they place *Quake* as the second-best game of all time. (That's only my opinion, of course.)

And, to the Duke and all the Space Marines out there... Well, it's been nice knowing ya'. Perhaps we'll see each other again when I get tired of playing *Quake*.

(Yeah, right. Like that's gonna happen. Ha ha ha ha ha ha.)

Peter Christensen,
Copenhagen, Denmark

Ha ha ha indeed. Spring 97, though? Here at PC Gamer we will surely chew off each other's thumbs in frustration if we have to wait that long for the complete Quake, particularly as we didn't find that end-of-level baddy quite as, er, 'bitchin' as you appear to have.

Scabby Queen

Somebody at school (I am 13 years old) told me that id are not allowed to call their game *Quake* for reasons of copyright. He said he had read it in some magazine. (I can't remember which one.) Is this true? And if it is, what are they going to rename it? And what about this 'original' *Quake* game? If it's not true, then what would have given this magazine such an impression?

By the way, the "card game which was



actually played as a precursor to the loser's punishment" (*PCG* 32, p62) is called 'Scabby Queen'. I know because I, too, play it at school.

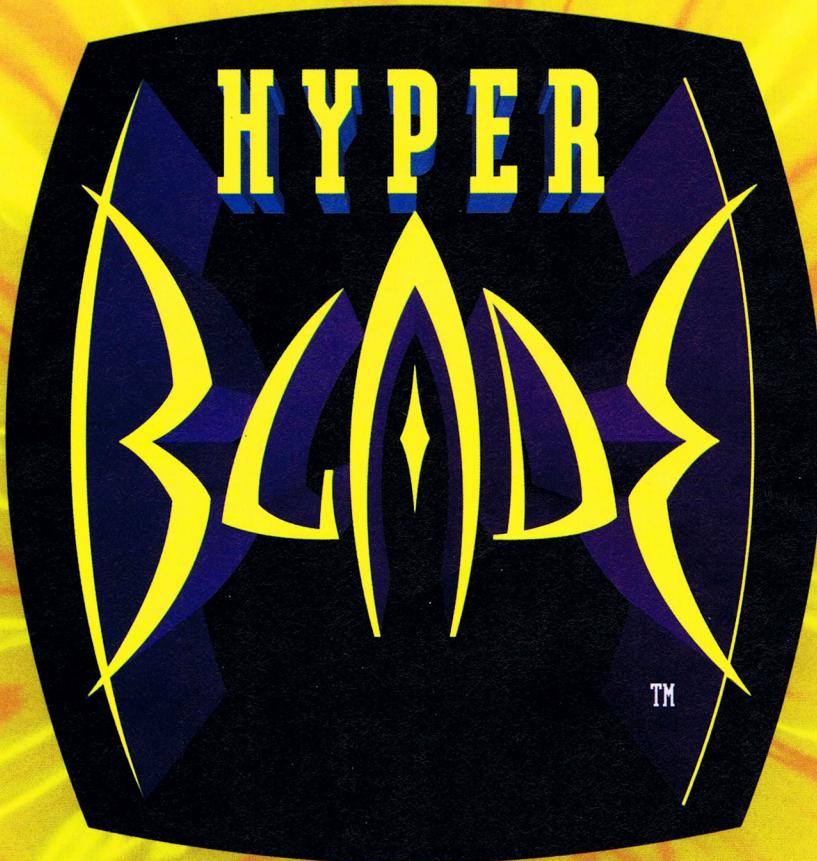
David Bean, Blairgowrie

Point me towards this 'somebody' and I will wait for him outside the school gates at half-past three. Having fed you with misinformation, he is now laughing at you behind your back, and possibly passing notes to other members of the class.



Jonathan would be delighted if you wrote to him at: Cables, *PC Gamer*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. The e-mail address is: pcgamer@futurenet.co.uk

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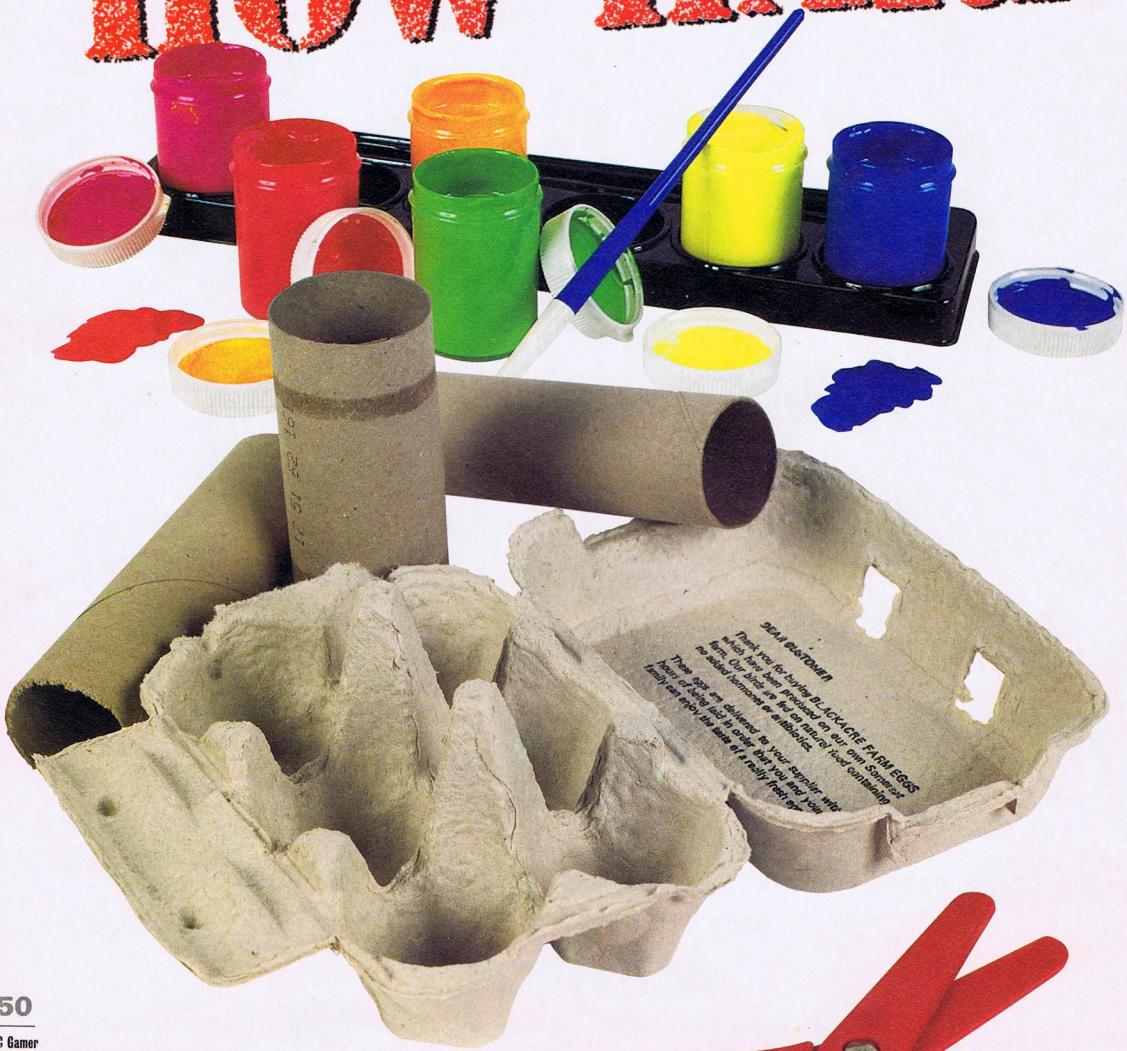
"Ten thousand man-hours."

"Three years in the making."

"Delayed until after Christmas for bug-testing."

All phrases commonly associated with the world of PC games. But, well, honestly. *PC Gamer* feels compelled to ask...

HOW HARD





CAN IT BE?

In which we intend to confirm our suspicions that writing PC games isn't as difficult as it's frequently made out to be – by writing five of them in 48 hours.

TAKE SYNDICATE WARS, for example. Bullfrog began work on it two years ago, and the project leader and lead programmer have been working 18-hour days for 7 days a week ever since, assisted by a team of support programmers for the last 12 months. Meanwhile, the 63 levels have taken another team of eight people 41 man-months to design. The music has taken two months to write, and the sound effects six months. Research and development on the game's technology has taken an estimated two man-years, and that wasn't even starting from scratch – the game's roots lie in the *Magic Carpet* engine. The intro sequence has taken one man three months to construct. Fifty different people have play-tested the game, logging 2,917 hours of testing.

And it's not even finished yet.

Syndicate Wars is about to reach the beta stage, whereupon it will undergo a further 40 hours of play-testing from start to finish. With any necessary modifications made, it will then be passed to Electronic Arts' quality assurance department for another two weeks of testing before finally being declared complete, with the total development bill coming to something like half-a-million pounds.

But honestly.

How hard can it be?

Convinced that writing a PC game really can't be all that difficult, we decided to stage a small contest. Five members of the *PC Gamer* team would each be given 48 hours to conceive, design, write and play-test a game. The results would then be subjected to *PC Gamer*'s famously exhaustive and honest

reviewing process. (Searching for an impartial reviewer, we eventually settled upon Danny Wallace, who is spending a month with *PC Gamer*. He would be kept ignorant of the contest, and told that the games were commercial 'products'.)

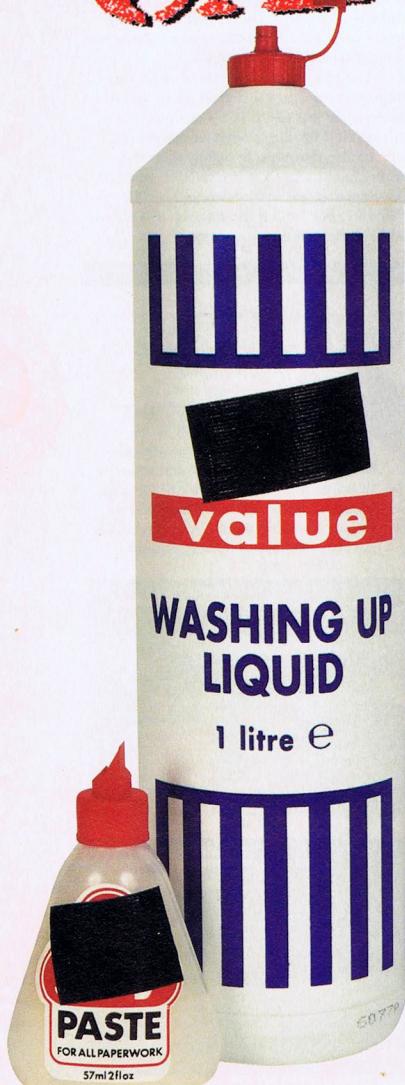
The competitors? James Flynn (worked at Leicester University for a year programming multimedia applications), Steve Owen (did a three-year course in programming, and then worked for a year writing financial software), Richard Longhurst (editor of *.net* magazine), Mark Donald (went to one meeting of his school computer club) and Jonathan Davies (washed cars for six months while saving up for his Spectrum, and wrote a game on it called *Cats* in which you had to douse a burning fence before the cats sitting on the top went up in flames).

The prize? A blue plastic Dimetrodon from a packet of Weetos.

Let battle commence...

THE RULES

1. Each competitor has 48 hours to produce their game, from conception to finished product.
2. No outside help may be employed – each competitor must work alone.
3. A 'reasonable' amount of equipment may be used. This includes software packages, but excludes Silicon Graphics workstations and motion-capture studios.
4. For the purposes of judging, each game will be assumed to have a retail price of £44.99.





DR WHAT SAVES THE EARTH

by Steve Owen

The plan: Constantly distraught that the only science fiction TV series to receive any coverage these days is Star Trek, I was compelled to write a game that, other than in any place where it might contravene copyright laws, is based on Doctor Who. Having dabbled slightly with *Klik & Play* (forgive the spelling) from EuroPress during my stint on *PC Guide*, and understanding that major retailers only accept software directly supported by Windows, I chose to revisit the land of games creation software so that I could concentrate 100% of my limited time on intense, original

gameplay, using whatever tools lay at my disposal to produce a game of class and unlimited playing life.

In practice: *Klik & Play* is as limited a game creation program as you could reasonably expect. Gone were thoughts of originality, replaced by a cunning combination of player's skill, luck, ability and dexterity, and superb, ground-breaking graphics as I tussled with *K&P's* awkward and unforgiving options and intense desire to crash at the same time as you think, "It's probably about time I saved."

What began as an idea to combine nine different game styles into a cunning mission structure soon degenerated into a couple of platform-game-style levels. This was not through any lack of imagination on my part, but rather that I'd spent 90% of my time figuring out the platform aspect (woefully 'explained' in the manual), and just didn't



Where do you want to save today?

have the development time and resources to try to figure out how to do any other type of generic style.

And so Plan B was brought from the steel vault, dusted down, opened, and presented to the programming team. Simple, but powerful in the extreme, the dossier contained one sheet of foolscap paper (whatever that is), bearing just a single line: "Rely on humour to hide the limited appeal of a platform game."

Naturally, there is plenty of room for improvement. I'm the first to admit it. Two players, the rest of the levels completed (thank God for the concept of shareware), some more monsters, hopefully the other techniques mastered, a bonus level. Some developers might call it Version 2, or Dr What 97, but I call it the Registered Version. Only twenty quid to you, mate.

Time taken: 14 hours 40 minutes



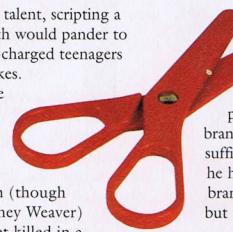
FOXY MUDLARK

by Richard Longhurst

The plan: Far be it for me to suggest interactive movies are formulaic, but let's just say that Einstein could have made dozens of the things with his eyes closed. All *Ripper*, *Wing Commander IV* and *Phantasmagoria* require are big budgets, budgets which are way beyond the modest means of *PC Gamer*. I soon realised that I would have to replace

money with ingenuity and talent, scripting a tightly formulaic plot which would pander to the whims of testosterone-charged teenagers and cash-rich business blokes.

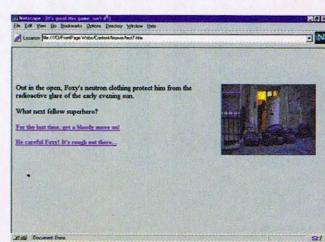
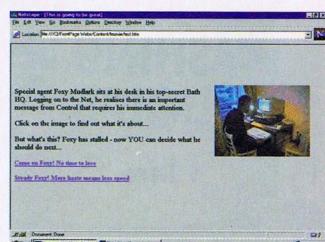
The story follows the tried-and-tested Aliens-style formula incorporating space, spaceships, aliens, big guns, scantily clad women (though ideally sexier than Sigourney Weaver) and lots of people who get killed in a variety of interesting ways. Basically it's a deep-space chase story, with you blackmailed into working for a sinister paymaster (who may or may not double-cross you at the end) who wants you to retrieve a secret item (it doesn't really matter what) which has been stolen on behalf of an intergalactic megavillain who has designs on destroying the universe (or at least an important part of it). You team up with a feisty babe (who bears a grudge against the thief because he killed her father/husband/lover/child/dog/cat/goldfish while stealing The Item) and chase him to a distant planet where you confront the megavillain (who may or



may not be in cahoots with your paymaster).

Seeing as it's an interactive movie, I didn't consider the gameplay to be

particularly important – occasional branches in the story line would easily be sufficient to fool the player into thinking he has 'control' over the action. Most branches would, inevitably, end in death, but the clever use of looping repeated



"It soon became apparent that deep-space chase sequences were going to prove difficult to create." – Richard



ECO-WARRIOR

by Mark Donald

Mark: Oh no, arch-masterfriend Jonathan Davies has revoked my *Quake* privileges until I come up with a PC game for his competition. I can't even make the things run half the time, never mind write one. I'm doomed.

(Meanwhile in a virtual dimension, beyond human comprehension...)

Captain Gamemaker: A cry for help... this sounds like a job for... Captain GAAAAAAAMEMAAA KERRR!

(Suddenly, in a flash of magenta...)

Captain GM: Never fear, puny earthling, I, Captain Gamemaker, and my potent game making tools are to the rescue.

Mark: Cor and blimey!

sequences would give the impression that the game was much longer than it actually is.

In practice: With a video camera, several friends and some ingeniously deployed tin foil and tomato ketchup, development costs were kept to a minimum, though it soon became apparent that deep-space chase sequences were going to prove difficult to create. Given my unsurprising inability to use 3D Studio or construct convincing spaceships out of Lego, the space scenes were scrapped in favour of strapping the camera to my Vauxhall Corsa, and the location of the film was switched from 23rd Century Alpha Centauri to late 20th Century Earth (Bath to be precise). Of course, this required hasty alterations to the screenplay to incorporate a sinister plot to assassinate Bath MP Don Foster in his Liberal Democrat headquarters, changing the film from a space horror to a political thriller in one fell swoop.

With all the footage in the can, it only remained to splice it all together with some modest programming trickery. In a flash of inspiration, I decided to invent the world's first on-line interactive movie and created a set of Web pages to link the video clips. This stroke of genius would also provide unlimited scope for gratuitous publicity and have wealthy venture capitalists scurrying to throw large amounts of money at me. Using the Internet in this way was also an ideal excuse to lower people's expectations of the game - interactivity on the Net is limited at best, making it the perfect medium for my movie.

Time taken: 46 hours 30 minutes



Capt GM: I'm easy for beginners and powerful for the advanced.

Mark: Ooooh.

Capt GM: You do not have to know about programming!

Mark: Aaaah.

Capt GM: So, hapless human, let's set to work on our award-winning arcade-style fighting game that will amaze your friends.

Mark: Right ho. I'd like it to be a 3D multi-player action strategy game please, chock-a-block with fast-moving polygons and wall-to-wall Phong shading, naturally. Obviously it must have real-time light sourcing or nobody'll give it a second look and let's have a thoroughly original cyber-tech-horror story line about nanobots or something.

Capt GM: Eh? What? Fast-moving



polygamy? Phoney-whatsit? Who's been putting all these fancy fashionable ideas into your head?

Mark: Well, that's what games are like these days.

Capt GM: No! I'm a set of integrated Computer Aided Design Tools intended for the games enthusiast and professional game designer. I do bold

games with mazes, where an intrepid ten-frame character jerks about picking up keys while colliding unconvincingly with monsters that look like squares with teeth.

Mark: So there's no place for original, genre-busting gameplay then?

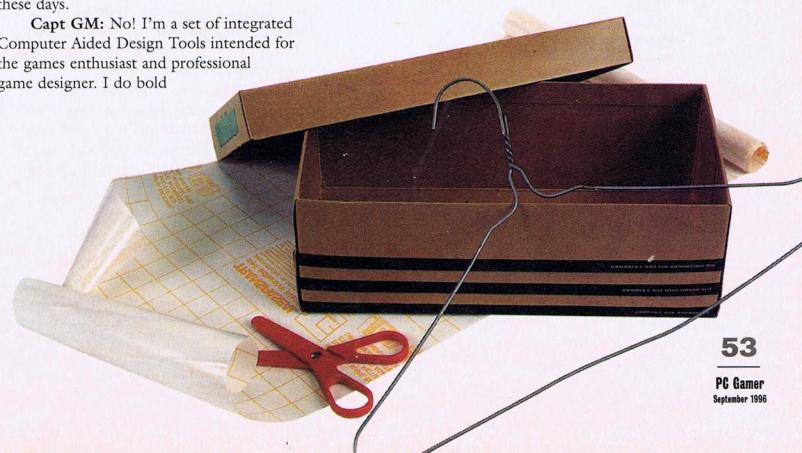
Capt GM: I hark from a gentler age, where the hero's name was always Horace and a boy's greatest passion in life was his stamp collection. Anyway, this way you've only got 4,000,000 pixels to paint before we define each one of up to 10,000 picture block attributes and the possible 200 monster animation sequences that will make your first level.

Mark: I want no part of it.

Capt GM: Well, you best stitch together all the pre-designed graphic blocks from my sample library of horrors then, and pray you end up with something that apes a game.

Mark: Oh humme. Welcome to *Eco-Warrior* then. Your task is to guide the bold and daring Tarquin through a concrete jungle maze using flower power to transform it into a Garden of Eden. Are you ready for the challenge of a lifetime? Riveting gameplay enables you to collect keys, evade ghouls and make continual beep noises. An arcade-style action exploration game - I guarantee you've never played anything quite like it. Thank you Captain Gamemaker.

Time taken: 47 hours 59 minutes





REAL-TIME SNAIL WARS

by Jonathan Davies

The plan: I have long believed that PCs are unnecessarily complicated. So, while others wrestled with complex programming languages and obtuse game creation utilities, I reached for Arnt Gulbrandsen's excellent Spectrum emulator. Instantly, my cumbersome PC was streamlined into a friendly and manageable home computer with 48K of memory and a convenient keyword input system.

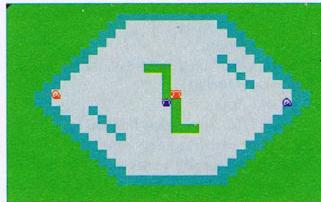
But what to write? I toyed with the idea of a sort of 3D *Terminal Velocity*-style game, but decided there were too many of those around already. The same applied to *Doom* clones. Something completely original was called for, I felt, in the pioneering spirit of the Spectrum.

In *Snail Wars*, then, you are a snail. So is your opponent. Moving alternately with your opponent, you must cross the screen in order to couple amorously with your opponent's

"You must cross the screen in order to couple amorously with your opponent's androgynous brother/sister." — Jonathan

androgynous brother/sister. But! Each snail leaves a trail behind it, which is impassable to all snails. You can therefore employ blocking tactics to prevent your opponent from reaching his goal.

In practice: Fourteen years ago an accomplished Spectrum programmer could, having mastered the unique command-at-a-keypress keyword input system, type in programs faster than the most efficient



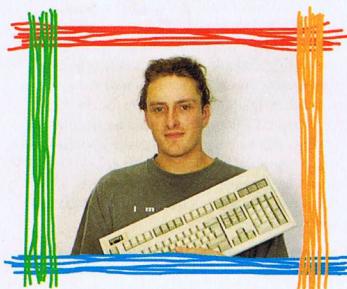
secretary. That, however, was with the words PAPER, RESTORE, SCREENS etcetera written clearly on each rubber key, in red for Symbol Shift, green for Extended Mode, er, red again for Shift-Extended-Mode, white for Command Mode and so on. The PC offers no

such assistance, so I floundered for many valuable minutes, question marks flashing. Eventually, with a photograph of a Spectrum sellotaped firmly to my monitor, I was able to proceed.

As my latent knowledge of Spectrum Basic began to resurface, I had a preliminary version of *Snail Wars* up and running within a couple of hours, including time spent designing some snail UDGs on squared paper and converting them into BIN numbers. (A couple of hours — see?)

However, play-testing revealed that, although it was, of course, great, *Snail Wars'* turn-based nature wasn't realising its full potential. I therefore abandoned it and created in its place *Real-Time Snail Wars*. This proved to be much more exciting, especially as the Spectrums INKEY\$ command only recognises one key at a time, so both players have to hammer frantically at the keyboard to inch their snails forwards. The addition of some water around the edge (the snails don't leave trails on it) eliminates disappointing stalemates, and a title screen completed what I consider to be a fine game, the equal of anything created by professional programmers.

Time taken: 4 hours 16 minutes



BLOODSHED

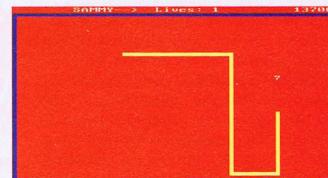
by James Flynn

There were two of them. One at nine o'clock, the other directly ahead. Their destruction and humiliation was assured and imminent. The

end was swift. The opposition was insignificant alongside my vision.

...rewind. I sat in the PCG offices gazing out of the window, rehearsing my speech to the UK software industry annual awards. They were sure to recognise the arrival of the Great New Hope of British programming. The future was bright. The future was *Bloodshed*. Soon the PC Gamer programming supremo chalice (the first of many accolades) would rest in my newly constructed trophy cabinet. Within weeks I would be lounging in the Bath sun, with a small harem of models buying me more lemon Calippos as I knew what to do with. Pete from Guildford had just left, beaten and in awe, and Louise and Jo were popping round for a three-player game later.

...play. The story of *Bloodshed*. A return to the traditional values of gaming. Simple and fast, yet deep and challenging. I could have been in PR too. Cut scenes were out but jet engines to dry the sweat from your tension-



racked mitts were in. C was my hit and all was in hand. I went home to think.

...fastforward. Twenty-four hours later my head hurts, my fingers are knackered and the phone's ringing. A good night by anyone's standards. Tea, Panadol and programming are in order. I set to it with time becoming short and rapidly realise I've forgotten how to write in C. Decision time, and it's back into work to surreptitiously grab a copy of QBASIC, just to remind me of some sub routine principles, you understand. Back off home, feeling terrible.

...play. Hours later, a slightly downgraded version of my original vision emerges on a floppy disk. It's not quite what I'd advertised, but, considering my state, I feel it's not too shabby an effort. Besides, there's always the sequel, and most originals have a couple of features missing. I return to work with minutes to spare and submit *Bloodshed* for review. Gulp.

Time taken: 47 hours 15 minutes

"Cut scenes were out but jet engines to dry the sweat from your tension-racked mitts were in." — James

THE VERDICT

our creations to the harsh light of day.

Time, then, is up.
Let us now expose



Real-Time Snail Wars

The programmer – not fettered by such inhibiting factors as quality – must surely be living in some sort of bizarre, twisted timewarp. Seemingly programmed in Basic, *Snail Wars* is a teetering, tottering, typically trashy example of the type of game you can only achieve through a careful combination of laziness and lack of any visible talent. Though strangely addictive for the first split-second, it remains, nevertheless, very poor indeed.

DANNY WALLACE

6%

Worst, the technically never-far-from-adequate *Dr What Saves The Earth* does at least manage to sum up a modicum of enthusiasm, and injects it forcefully into an otherwise flaccid run-jump-'n'-collect platform-based affair. Good manual, though.

DANNY WALLACE

8%



Dr What Saves The Earth

A prime example of schoolboy programming at its Great British

Eco-Warrior

If any game could ever be said to have – and I swear that this is true – the most petulant, nerve-janglingly annoying in-game sound effects ever created by man or beast, *Eco-Warrior* is doubtless in the running. Incessant, needless plink-plink-plinks combined with frustrating, unfair gameplay, it's best enjoyed with the sound

and visuals both set to 'off'.

DANNY WALLACE

4%

How can this be? Our combatants felt obliged to respond, as is customary, with irate facsimile messages.

From Jonathan Davies:

After reading your review of our game Real-Time Snail Wars in the September edition of PC Gamer, I feel I must draw your attention to a number of material inaccuracies.

- "The programmer... must surely be living in some sort of bizarre, twisted timewarp." Your reviewer should check his facts more carefully. The programmer actually lives in a small, top-floor flat. A simple telephone call would have confirmed this.

- "Seemingly programmed in Basic." Snail Wars is definitely programmed in Basic. There is no 'seemingly' about it.

- "Strangely addictive for the first split-second." This suggests that there is a second split-second. However, as a split-second is not a precisely defined quantity, two split-seconds added together simply make a split-second, so... (Snip. – Ed)

From Steve Owen:

You've really lost it this time, 8%? I honestly thought it read 8/10, a mark far closer to representing the quality of this humorous and

devastatingly addictive retro experience. Fortunately, I have every confidence that your readers will see through this cursory glance that claims to be a review. I expect to see an A4 insert apologising for the gross inaccuracies.

From Mark Donald:

We wish to protest in the strongest possible terms about your treatment of Eco-Warrior. Your narrow-minded back was plainly out of his depth when dealing with this unique product and we demand his immediate resignation. It is the nature of genius that it is never understood in its own time, but we feel compelled to advise you that without a retraction you can forget about an exclusive on Eco-Warrior 2.

From James Flynn:

Rome wasn't built in a day, Wallace. It takes time for a new company to establish itself and gain a reputation. I grudgingly admit that Bloodlust may have fallen a little short of expectations but you just wait and see. March 1998 will see the gaming world rupture with excitement as Bloodlust 2 arrives.

changed a bit. So why part with £45 just to play what you were fiddling about with free of charge when you were just a foetus? This man has misjudged the appeal of retro gaming to an astounding degree.

DANNY WALLACE

7%

Foxy Mudlark

Far too easy to complete on just the first play, is *Foxy Mudlark*, but the game does at least – and for the first time ever in an interactive movie – feature people who can actually act (witness the carelessly



Bloodlust

Okay... so it's entertaining, compulsive, addictive and fun. Thing is, though, without wanting to brand the programmer as the grubby little thief he most definitely is, *Bloodlust* is very much... 'inspired'... by Nibbles that you get free with DOS 5.0's QBasic, except with the colours



placed man who hides on the stairs in Act III, for example). With only a few possible routes to go through, and no feasible satisfaction even when finished, the entire game is usually over in five minutes no matter what options you choose to plump for, and so becomes, I'm afraid, painfully pointless tat. Stick that on yer box and sell it, Longhurst.

DANNY WALLACE

6%

From Richard Longhurst:

I must admit I was most dismayed to read the 'review' of Foxy Mudlark in the September edition of PC Gamer. Perhaps it escaped Danny Wallace's notice, but FM is the FIRST EVER on-line interactive movie, a game which has in one fell swoop created a whole new game genre. Wallace also claims to have played the game to completion, yet the screenshots accompanying his review show he got no further than the second act.

We have nothing further to add. Steve has accepted the Dimetrodon, but has proceeded to perforate its dorsal fin with a biro. James sits shaking his head, muttering "And I would have got away with it too..." over and over again. Jonathan is sketching on a bit of squared paper, wondering whether some proper water UDGs would make a difference. Richard has bought himself a director's chair and green visor, ready for his next production. And Mark has set fire to Captain Gamemaker, triggering the fire alarm and causing several neighbouring offices to be evacuated. Bah. **PCG**

• Click & Play is available from EuroPress on 01625 859333.

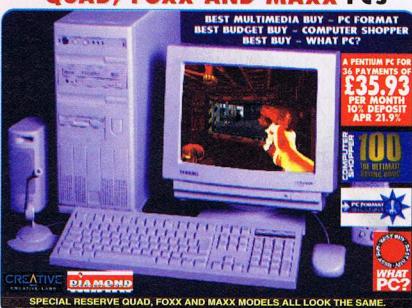
• Captain Gamemaker is available from Screen Multimedia, whose number we have mislaid.

• Arnt Gulbrandsen's JPP Spectrum Emulator is available from well-stocked shareware libraries.

• We'll be putting all our games onto next month's CD Gamer, apart from *Dr What*, which is on this month's.

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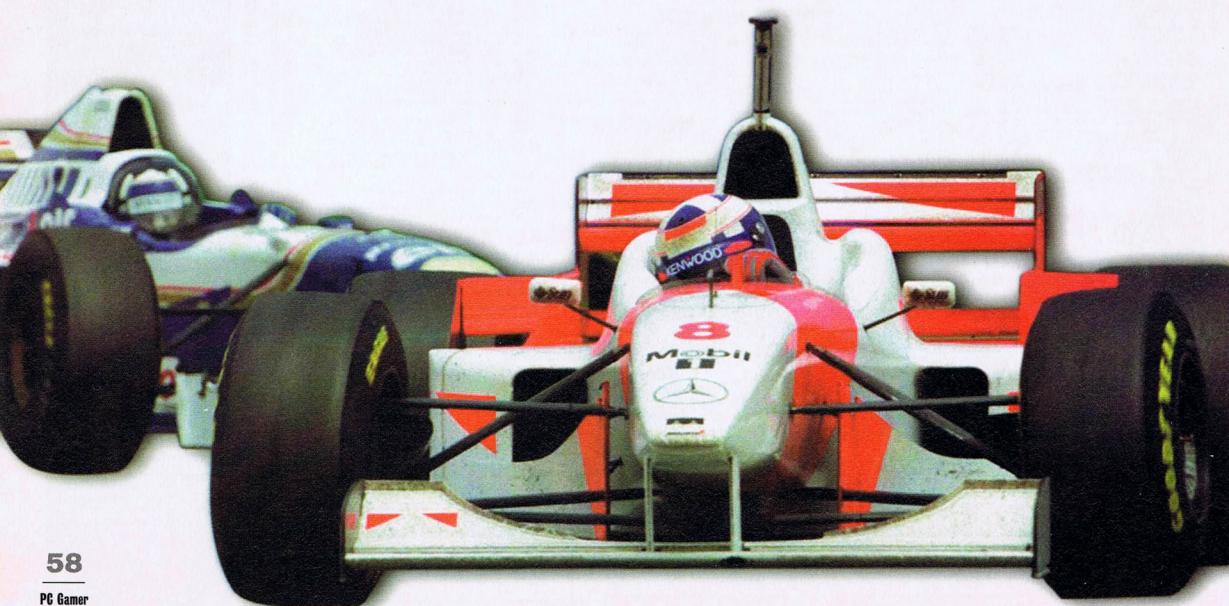
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BATTLEGROUNDS ARDENNES	29.99	£15	DUNGEON MASTER 2	31.99	£13	LEISURE SUIT LARRY 6 VERSIONS 1 TO 5	12.99	£16	SOCCER STARS 96	...23.99	£11
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BENEATH THE STEEL SKY	9.99	£16	DUNGEON MASTER 2	31.99	£13	LEISURE SUIT LARRY 6 VERSIONS 1 TO 5	12.99	£16	SOCCER STARS 96	...23.99	£11
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BIG RED RACING SV/8MB	27.99	£11	DUNGEON MASTER 2	31.99	£13	LEISURE SUIT LARRY 6 VERSIONS 1 TO 5	12.99	£16	SOCCER STARS 96	...23.99	£11
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GRAND PRIX 2 **THE RACE**

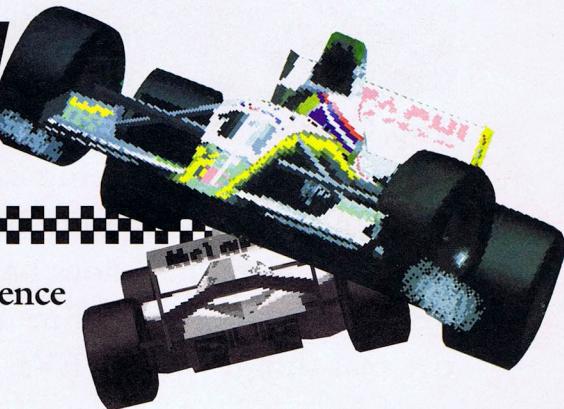


(Left) Wooo-arrghh! and (below) Gnnn-eek! No-one likes it when real cars crash, of course, but there's endless fun to be had with the turbulently realistic physics of *Grand Prix 2*.



(Above) The cars are all from the 1994 season, but they're every bit as speedy and grippy as their modern counterparts.

IS ONE



Grand Prix 2 graces us with its presence at last. As the world celebrates, *PC Gamer* enlists a professional racing driver to find out just how accurate *GP2* is, and grills Sir Geoffrey Crammond, its creator, on his plans for the future.

AS 1995 FLIPPED OVER into 1996, nothing in the history of PC gaming had been as eagerly anticipated as MicroProse's *Grand Prix 2*. CD drawers lay open in readiness. Hands gripped joysticks. Fingers quivered over mouse buttons. The world waited.

And waited.

And...

...er...

...waited.

Somebody coughed.

A telephone handset was lifted and a number dialed. So, um, where was it? "There's

a bit of final compatibility testing to be done. It'll be out in February, March at the latest."

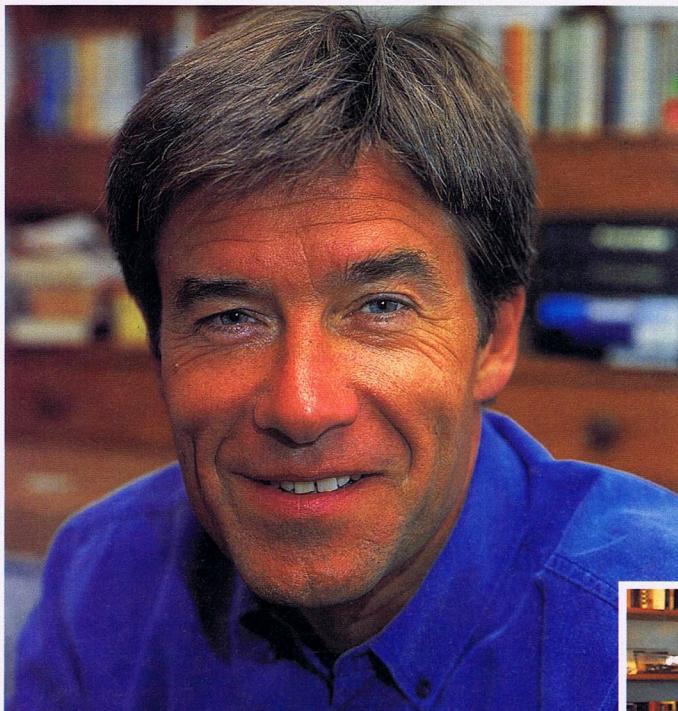
Slowly the winter ice began to melt away, and snowdrops peeped timidly from the ground. Bleary-eyed squirrels crawled out of hibernation. Daffodils unfurled, trees blossomed, lambs took their first unsteady steps.

"Ah, it's the Americans now, you see. They want bits to drop off the cars when they crash. May, though. Certainly no later than June."

Bees eased themselves from their hiding places and began to think about making honey. Lush foliage sprouted from the earth. Flowers bloomed, were pollinated, and scattered their seed. Swallows soared higher and higher in the cloudless sky.

And then, on July 19th, *Grand Prix 2* suddenly appeared in the shops. 350,000 copies of it, in fact – the largest first-day shipout of a PC game ever recorded.

And it's just as great as when we first played it at the beginning of January – certainly still worth the 95% we awarded it back in *PCG* 27. To celebrate its appearance at last, we've got Tiff Needell, from BBC2's *Top Gear* – a professional racing driver – to give us his views on the game, and impart some advice for getting around its trickier bends with the minimum of fuss. We also contacted Sir Geoffrey Crammond, *Grand Prix 2*'s father, just before he left for his first holiday in four years...



Top Gear's Tiff Needell probably knows more about racing cars than Mr Kipling knows about making cakes. So how close does he reckon driving *Grand Prix 2* is to driving the real thing? By STEVE OWEN

PERHAPS YOU'VE GOT THE idea by now that, to us, *Grand Prix 2* is a game of stellar proportions, an astounding, amazing slice of entertainment that makes race driving the thrilling, challenging and ultimately satisfying sport it always looked on the telly. But one thing we can't reliably comment on is exactly how realistic *GP2*'s car handling is, and how accurately car set-ups affect performance in successive laps. After all, you might ask Delia Smith how tasty your Baked Alaska is, but it's rather silly handing her *Civ 2* and demanding to know if this is the best game ever written.

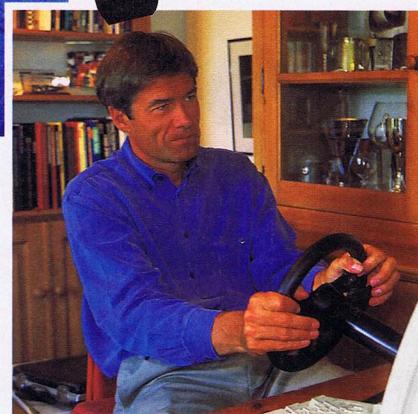
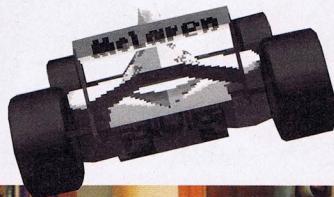
With this metaphor in mind, we decided to sit an experienced driving champion in a chair, place a top-notch Pentium within reach, fire up *Grand Prix 2* and get a real opinion.

Tiff Needell: performance car reviewer for BBC 2's *Top Gear* (not the guy who looks like

Doctor Who, or the one that sneers as he smiles – the other one), columnist for *Top Gear* magazine, television commentator and rather fast driver in Le Mans 24 Heures, World Endurance Sportscar, Formula Ford, Formula 3, my word, the LOT. He knows his courses, he knows his handling, and above all, he knows what it's like to actually scream around a corner at 140 mph. He also lives in a house, a very big house, in the country, with a desk that can be cleared to accommodate the digital equivalent of a Formula 1 cockpit. With a sunny Tuesday afternoon to hand, I jumped into a luxury, open topped BMW that FutureCorp arranged to be stolen from a car park the night before. Seriously over-revving in third gear and avoiding lines of slow-moving lorries and annoying caravans in true Italian Job style, I made the journey to Tiff's retreat faster than Schumacher's Ferrari can break down.

After a thoroughly acceptable cup of gourmet coffee, Tiff attempted to play *GP2*

GRAND PRIX 2 FROM DRIVE



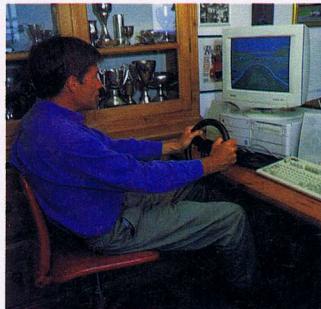
using the GP500 steering wheel and pedal unit reviewed in *PCG 29*, while the photographer stood in weird poses firing flash guns into everyone's face and I stroked the cat.

With several rolls of exposed film in his pocket, the photographer left us with burned retinas. I lifted off the cat that now had a bald streak down his back, brushed a gerbil's worth of hair to the floor and asked Tiff what he thought of *Grand Prix 2*.



An artist's impression of Tiff's car, when he raced.

THE R'S SEAT



"It gives an incredibly accurate impression of driving a real F1 car." Tiff Needell is an honest man.

"My computer game knowledge is a golf program for the GameBoy, so I might not be the best man to ask, but I was impressed. It gives an incredibly accurate impression of driving a real F1 car. I'm not sure I'll ever have the patience to run through the entire world championship season at full race distance, but I did enjoy the Quick races. And that I could go the wrong way around the tracks."

Do you get a sense of speed in the game?

"Well, not a sense of speed as such. A sense of how busy you are controlling the bloody thing. It does drive you mad because you can't see ahead. It loses its realism because of the lack of depth. When you first start circuit driving, you're taught to lift your eye line and look further ahead than you might be used to. I kept finding myself peering into the screen to plan my course. In the end, you can only react to what you see on the surface of the monitor. Can you get a 3D screen?"

Not yet, you can't. There's only Virtual Reality helmets.

"They're pathetic. They made a TV programme about them. I couldn't believe it. Big blocky squares walking around trying to kill each other."

"I think I just loved it because of the amount of work you have to do within one and a half minutes each lap. That's why it feels like the real thing." – Tiff Needell

How do you think a traditionally arcade-friendly public will react to the game?

"I think I just loved it because of the amount of work you have to do within one and a half minutes each lap. That's what the public won't believe and that's why it feels like the real thing. I was reading the instructions about what to do to get better cornering, and it's very good the way it's written. [Geoff Crammond] knows how a car works technically, because the advice he gives on handling is very correct."

Any other criticisms?

"Only with the GP500's pedals, which weren't sprung strongly enough. It's too easy to lock the brakes as you slam it down. Real brake pedals toughen the further you press them down. I imagine that's something that can easily be changed, so the computer's depth of field problem is the hardest to crack."

GP2 has been anxiously awaited by games players. As a racing driver rather than a games player, can you appreciate their anticipation?

"I'd love to have it in my home, but I'd be terrified of a divorce. The grass would be six-feet high. There'd be no decorating done. And I'd be bankrupt."

PG2

TIFF'S TIPS

"Until you're playing fully unaided," says Tiff, "sorting the car out is less important. Until you're a real expert, fine tuning the chassis is unnecessary." No-one can argue with experience, so just get used to qualifying further down the grid with all the settings that would embarrass your mother switched off.

As for succeeding on the tracks, Tiff has these sage comments:

INTERLAGOS, BRAZIL: "Do well on the first left/right ready for the long left hander at Curva Do Sol, a real neck hurter."

PACIFIC, AIDA: "Get in a good position for the long right hander before the pit lane and accelerate down the straight."

IMOLA, ITALY: "Imola used to be a race circuit and now it's follow your leader because of the chicanes. Quality well!"

MONACO, UM, MONACO: "Qualifying is everything, there's no overtaking. You could look for a good exit from Casino Square to fly past into Mirabeau."

BARCELONA, SPAIN: "A good track because of the long straight and fast bends, particularly going past the pit lane. That's where to overtake."

MONTREAL, CANADA: "Set your suspension a bit softer to ride this bumpy track."

MAGNY-COURS, FRANCE: "Awful place, because it's in France."

SILVERSTONE, BRITAIN: "Silverstone's a mess these days. You try to get around the outside at Becketts, but they just run you off."

HOCKENHEIM, GERMANY: "Get a tall top gear ratio so that you don't strain the engine."

HUNGARORING, HUNGARY: "Another qualifying special. Set your car up for the last corner on to the finishing straight."

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, BELGIUM: "The Eau Rouge is the key corner, to get a good speed up the hill to Raidillon."

MONZA, ITALY: "Again, set your car up for a good speed around the last corner and down the straight."

ESTORIL, PORTUGAL: "Once again, it's getting the car ready for the corner onto the main straight."

JEREZ, SPAIN: "A good, long, fast turn into one of the two main straights. Ideal for overtaking."

SUZUKA, JAPAN: "The only way you can do it is to try to barge past like Senna did to Prost. But Prost closed the door and they were both off!"

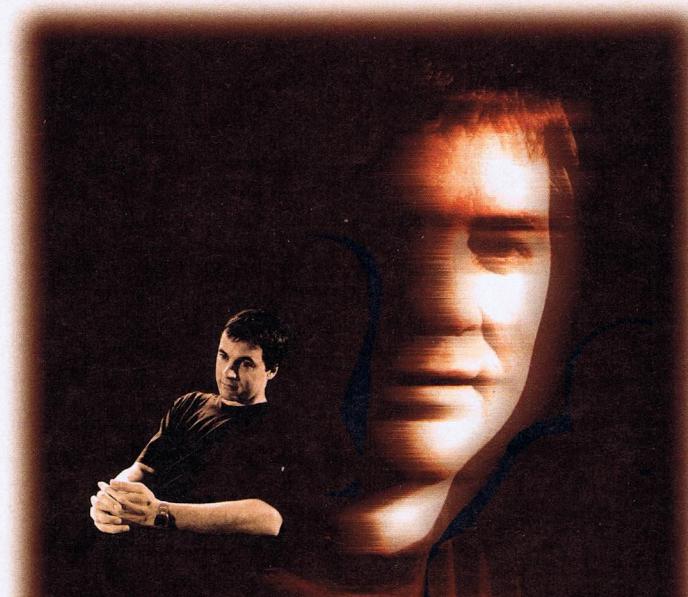
ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA: "Brabham is a nice long straight with easy out-breaking at the end of it."



GRAND PRIX 2 ITS M

So, er, Geoff, then. What's been going on these past six months? We speak with the exhausted Frank Williams of PC gaming.

By JAMES FLYNN



T WAS THE BEGINNING OF January when I sat down to play the 'finished' *Grand Prix 2* for review. Seven months and ten false starts later *GP2* is truly finished, and considerably improved over even the copy we awarded 95% back in the February issue of *PC Gamer*. It's been the cause of continual frustration for you, us and MicroProse, but most of all for Geoff Crammond. Now it's all over, with just the demo to complete (see next month's *CD Gamer* for the exclusive), it seemed only right to get the man himself's thoughts on what has gone on and where he stands now.

"I've been working seven days a week 9 am through 12.30 am only breaking for meals for well over a year now," says Geoff. "Finishing it was fantastic. The most recent push this year has seen us changing one to ten features of the game per day. The most obvious changes to the program since the review have been the addition of effects like smoke, dust, gravel, flames, sparks, crash debris and bits of car coming off - wheels, wings, sidepods and so on. I reckoned the player would expect *GP2* to have these features, so I really wanted them to go in. We've also made further improvements to the computer car AI, and their performance in terms of lap time and cornering speeds has been correctly set up. That took longer than expected."

Of course, one of the areas that always takes time with such a complicated game are the bug fixes. MicroProse's QA department has also been at work on it for months, and Geoff reckons that fixing, tweaking and generally sorting out technical problems has

probably taken up two-thirds of the time since Christmas.

It's surprising to hear Geoff say that, technically, there were no real stumbling blocks throughout development. "It was more that there was lots to clear before we considered the game ready for release. If there's any explanation - or excuse - for the trouble we've had predicting how long things were going to take on this project, then I would say that there's been a tendency to assume that, because the game was built on top of the original *FIGP*, many features were already more or less implemented and just needed updating or adding to. Practice has shown that

the original code usually had to be totally replaced or else it ended up inefficient, overly complicated and error prone. Now it's done, all I can say is that *GP2* is very special and I'm very satisfied with it. We're still looking into a number of future additions and the network option is just one of these."

As is the case with every game that has generated this level of anticipation (*and Quake* has arrived to back up this point), there are always people who'll be disappointed or just consider it fashionable to pick holes. *GP2* is not a game that flaunts its class - you just have to play it over and over to appreciate quite how refined it is. Okay, so it's still a racing



Be captivated by the trails of smoke pouring off the cars' tyres - one of Geoff's more recent and worthwhile additions.

ASTER'S VOICE



game, and in many ways it appears outwardly similar to the original, but that's deceptive.

"The core simulation of the F1 car is totally new in *GP2* and is very sophisticated," stresses Geoff. "The important car set-up features are now modelled about as accurately as you could wish for. The simulation now has vertical motion as well so that the car can roll, pitch and heave – in fact it can even become airborne [one of the most spectacular sights in the game]. Everything together means that the car just feels very realistic and does things correctly.

"Because of the scope of the simulator, the performance graphs are just like the real thing, so the player who wants to get into the set-up in a big way has the same type of

GP2 does, admittedly, look its best in SVGA, a mode in which you'll have to sacrifice some detail if you're not to reduce your PC to its knobby knees.



"Knowing there's that level of interest added quite a lot to the pressure of making sure *GP2* would satisfy people's expectations. Of course, it's also enormously encouraging, and it's a tremendous relief as well after spending so long on it to know that it's going to be the biggest PC game ship-out ever."

It's easy to forget that, although Geoff is the programmer, he receives help from a small team. Dave and Norman Surplus, who've been playing the game throughout its development, both believe the experience is greatly enhanced. "It's much more fun to drive than

is finished. However, I never take people's reactions for granted. People can have totally opposing preferences and I try to cater for a variety of tastes."

GP2 is such an exceptional game because it's possible to play it at exactly your level. But if you want to go the whole, simulator-blazing hog, just how real is it? "I've been told by an F1 engineer that if you gave the traces from the game on a piece of paper to an F1 engineer, he could believe them to be real data from another team. They have exactly the same characteristics as real traces and are derived in the same way. That is, they're measurements taken from various parts of the simulator just, as in real life, measuring devices would be attached to various parts of the car. Also, one former F1 driver was very complimentary about it, saying that the only difference between it and the real thing was that you didn't need to spend time in the gym strengthening your neck muscles."

So what's next for Sir Geoffrey. A new fast car? "Well, I've never actually been that interested in sports cars. I like a car to be highly practical. I might go for something with a bit more power, though. Perhaps a 2.5 litre V6 Mondeo. No, I think a holiday..." PCG

"One former F1 driver said that the only difference between it [*GP2*] and the real thing was that you didn't need to spend time in the gym strengthening your neck muscles."

information as real F1 teams. Having said that, you can still race without bothering to change set-ups." Looking at the technical readouts is truly awesome and makes even the dedicated F1 team simulators seem a little inadequate. "There are also now extra simulator features like refuelling and reliability problems, computer car AI improvements, and, of course, the digital sound, the ability to save and replay whole hot laps, hi-res menus and so on..." Knowing all the differences between the two games, I don't see people believing they're too similar as a problem. If it is, then there isn't much more I could have done."

Perhaps the most instantly obvious improvement (and this has moved on enormously since the review) is the driver intelligence. It's no longer easy to push them off the course, and they're much more aggressive, particularly on Pro level. "It was quite difficult really, but the more AI you do the more you get a feel for what works and what doesn't. It really comes down to trying to make them behave like humans would in given situations," says Geoff.

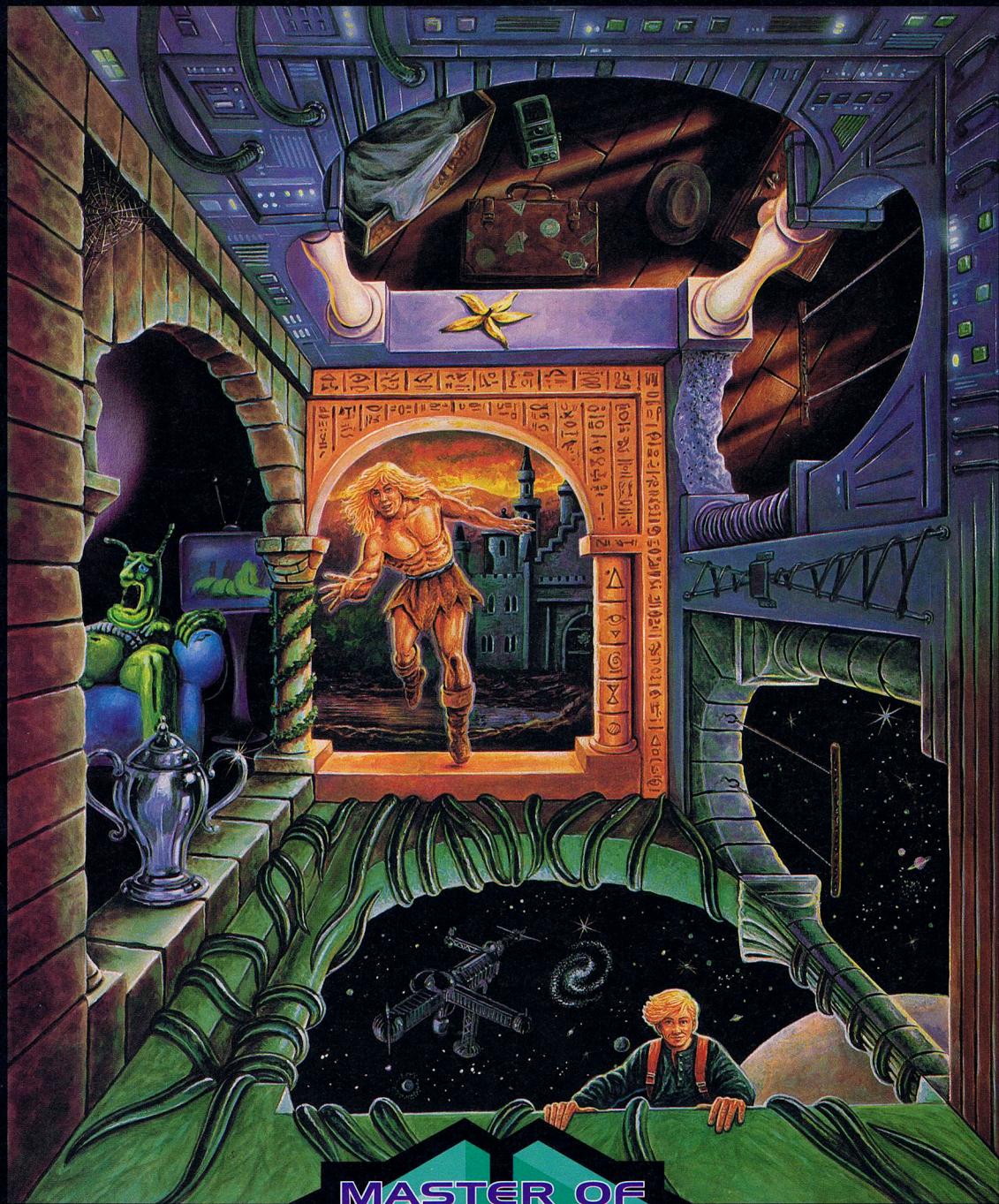
before," says Dave. "The computer AI gives you a far better race and you need more F1 driver skills to compete at the highest level." According to Geoff, Dave still plays it every day (and with a very high frame rate even if that means losing some graphics detail) although Norman, who worked extensively on the graphics, would unsurprisingly prefer the detail to be turned right up.

It's the nature of the industry to demand information about Geoff's next project the second he's finished the last one. "I'm not going to rush into anything," he says. "I need more time to recover from this project before being ready to plan the way ahead. I want to work normal hours in future, so I will need to explore the possibilities. It was never the intention to work these long hours. It's just that we found ourselves in a situation where it was necessary to achieve the objectives.

"I've always just tried to create something that in the first place impresses me, and that seems to have worked okay. Of course, I do get reaction from others during development, so I'm able to get some feedback before the game



Here's Mr Crammond signing one of ten copies of *Grand Prix 2* for you, the readers of PC Gamer. If you'd like one of them, send a postcard of an animal, with your name and address on it, to: Gimme GP2, PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW by 30th September, 1996, and we'll pick the ten winners out of a box.



MASTER OF DIMENSIONS



Once you've
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other games
seem flat



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Be warned, these are not conventional characters in a conventional game - appearances in Master of Dimensions can be extremely deceptive!

With twelve dimensions, over one hundred spectacular locations and amazing animation presented in a stunning mix of 2 and 3D graphics, Master of Dimensions puts the adventure game on a whole new plane.



Time Commando

Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	Adeline
Format	CD-ROM
Price	£40
Minimum System	486DX2/66, 8Mb RAM
Recommended	Pentium, 16Mb RAM
Sound Support	All major cards
Release Date	Late August

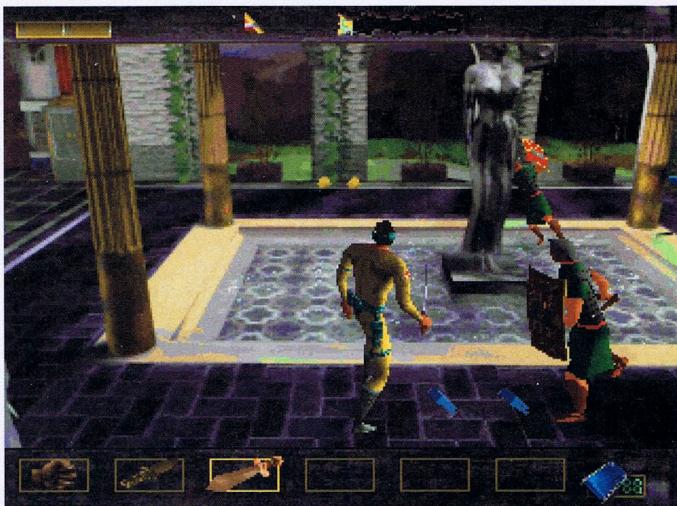
The latest release from the acclaimed developers of *Alone In The Dark* and *Little Big Adventure* is finally with us.

THE TROUBLE WITH success is the expectation it breeds. Once you've overcome the odds, been successful, been praised, in the lull after your first ticker tape parade the inevitable question is softly spoken: "So what's next then?"

If you're more than just a flash in the pan, maybe you can repeat your success a couple of times. The critics now start to compare your new work with your old and use a unique scale of criticism. The dread words "not quite as good as the first" and "is X losing it?" start to creep into your reviews. Work that fellow artisans would consider excellent becomes peppered with "relatively disappointing" comments. It's all your own fault. You were too good to start with.

Unless, of course, you're a member of

the German football team, popular expectation starts to weigh you down, innervating every area of your life with an unbearable tension. You start to drink heavily.



Dated

the German football team, popular expectation starts to weigh you down, innervating every area of your life with an unbearable tension. You start to drink heavily.

Eventually you are admitted to a private clinic suffering from 'exhaustion'. You emerge a year or so later to live out the rest of your life, an empty shell of a man, creatively broken.

"It's the fighting rather than the exploration or puzzle solving that provides the main thrust."



(Above) The stone-age, weapon-free beginning. (Left) The Romans tend to have horses, which scarcely seems fair. Maybe it's as well their empire collapsed.



The animation of Timey and his opponents is superb – better than the stuff in *Little Big Adventure*, even.

Daytime chat show appearances talking about the 'old days' are your media high points now, and you take up fretwork.

Time Commando is the latest eagerly anticipated game from Adeline, the authors of the phenomenally popular *Alone In The Dark* and *Little Big Adventure*. Back in issue 28 of *PC Gamer*, Frédéric Raynal (one half of the Adeline creative team) said that they wanted to do "a small action game". Although he also claimed that *Time Commando* had grown to be much more than that, "a small action game" does have a prophetically authentic ring to it.

The game is basically a pre-rendered



"Some of the enemies are brilliantly created, with realistic graphics and accurate animation."



Better collect those blue chips quick, before they irritatingly scroll off the screen and never come back.

platform beat-'em-up. Your character walks through eight themed levels (each with two sub-sections) killing anything that gets in the way. Although there are two or three secret rooms per level, it's the fighting rather than the exploration or puzzle solving that provides the main thrust.

The background story explains that each of the eight levels is actually a Virtual Reality

simulation used to train soldiers of the future. To ensure the training is as rigorous as possible, eight different ages (Prehistoric, Roman Empire, Medieval Japan, Medieval Europe, The New World, Wild West, 20th Century and Future) are simulated and their inhabitants have only one thing on their minds – aggression.

Your character starts each world with only his fists for protection. By defeating enemies during the level he can pick up increasingly more powerful weapons (for example, throwing rocks, clubs, spears and big clubs in the prehistoric world, or mace, sword and shield, crossbow and two-handed sword in medieval Europe). Weapon selection is particularly important, especially when fighting the end-of-level bosses, who can be



Although there are a few annoying sudden-death situations, these chaps hiding behind rocks should fool no-one.

practically immune to some attacks but quickly dispatched with others.

The game uses the same sort of polygon generated figures seen in *Alone In The Dark* but in place of the bland Gouraud shading comes full texture mapping and light effects. Some of the enemies (the sabre-toothed tiger, the bear, the angry monks, the robot terminators) are brilliantly created, with

"With the game set to 'easy', only the seriously dexterously challenged will fail to finish Time Commando in an evening."

realistic graphics and accurate animation. With this in mind, it's a pity that your character runs like a randy young John Inman. The game's backgrounds match this graphical prowess, showing exceptional detail albeit with relatively few points of interaction.



(Above) Ah, now, you didn't really want to do that.

(Left) The collision detection's a bit funny sometimes with stairs and things.

As fighting is the main point of the game, you'd expect the control system employed to be fairly complex. However, there are basically only four offensive moves and although the contact and reaction of the fighters is good enough to make spectators flinch, fighting can quite often degenerate into simple rapid bursts of punching or kicking. The problem with a reliance on simplistic fighting is that the game has to be huge to give the title any longevity (*Guardian Heroes* from Sega, for instance, has over 60 levels, multiple routes, an evolving story line and the option to play over 50 different characters). With the game set to 'easy', only the seriously dexterously challenged will fail to finish *Time Commando* in an evening. The levels are too short and too prescriptive; there aren't enough of them; you can't back track and there's precious little reason to replay the game when you've finished it.

This review has been largely negative: "The game's about a 75 percenter, well below

Fish for chips

Platform games wouldn't be platform games without something to collect.

Time Commando has shunned the usual diamonds, blue crystals, keys, golden bunnies or stars in favour of blue computer chips – a major advance. On each of the 16 stages there is a certain number of chips to collect to ensure that you can move safely on.

Although there are sometimes bonus chips hidden in secret rooms, collecting the required number is usually no more complicated than walking through the level. However, because the game uses a permanent left/right scroll (that is, once the camera has moved on, you can't walk back to the area you've just left), it's important to pick up the chips as soon as you see them even if it means taking some hits from an assailant. If, during a battle, you walk away from the chips to finish an opponent off or to dodge incoming fire, you won't be able to get back to pick them up.

This strategy also applies to the game's other pick-ups – health boosts, health refills, extra lives, weapons and ammunition. There's nothing more frustrating than getting killed by an enemy you know you could have tackled if only you hadn't walked past the appropriate weapon.



what we expect from Adeline." If *Time Commando* had been written by a new entrant to the PC market (or by a company unused to success) and received no pre-release hype, then the overall tone would have been something along the lines of, "A nice little game, flawed in places but well deserving of its 75 percent." There's no disparity here – *Time Commando* is a good little game. It deserves to be played by a lot of people for quite some time. However, it is not a brilliant game (which is what we'd hoped for) demanding to be played by everyone. I'm sure Adeline know this, though don't expect to see the booze and drugs headlines just yet.

JAMES ASHTON

PC GAMER – THE VERDICT

The graphics won't disappoint but the limited gameplay might. A nice but dim platform fighting game.

75%

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SWIV PC

Deadlock

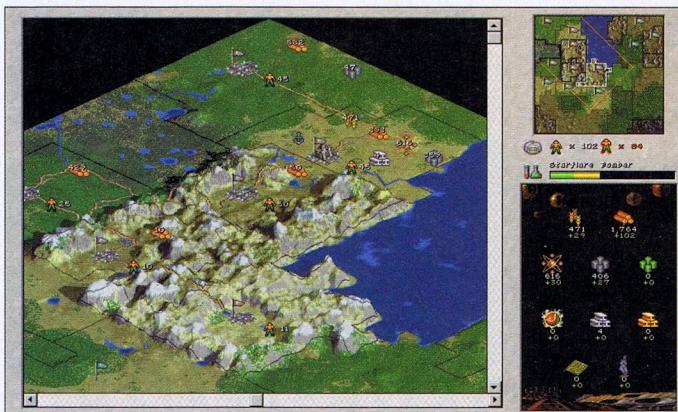
Publisher	Accolade
Developer	In-house
Format	CD-ROM
Price	£40
Minimum System	486DX2, 8Mb RAM, SVGA
Recommended	P75, 16Mb RAM
Sound Support	All major soundcards
Release Date	Out now

It's another futuristic *Civ*-type game but – no wait – this one's intriguingly inclined towards the Internet.

SHAKESPEARE – BEEN done to death hasn't it? Hamlet, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Richard III, Much Ado About Nothing... How many times are they going to regurgitate the tragedies or the comedies or the histories? How many times are they going to put the same old stories in all-new settings just to give some toofee-nosed, plumed-voiced actors something to do? Verily wethinks Shakespeare hath had his day.

And in much the same way, science fiction strategy games are getting pretty long in the old tooth as well. Developers seem to have an obsession with picking up where *Civilization* left off, with a bunch of nomad settlers arriving on a distant planet (it was Alpha Centauri in *Civ*, it's nowhere in particular in *Deadlock*) which they then have to colonise. *Utopia*, *Star*

"Well worth playing if only to log on to the Net and prove your mental prowess by roundly thrashing anyone in the world."



Rastafafa

Control, Outpost, Ascendancy and even *SimCity 2000* have all been there before in one spaced out way or another, so do we really need to go there again?

Yes.

Just as Sir Ian McKellan's Richard III was well worth watching (if only to see the "My kingdom for a horse" speech spouted from the seat of a jeep) Accolade's *Deadlock* is well worth playing if only to log on to the Net and prove your mental prowess by roundly thrashing anyone in the world. It provides an added, if not particularly innovative, slant on the tried-and-tested strategy formula, with you controlling one of six species who are trying to conquer a planet by fair means (economic and cultural domination like what the good old US of A has done) or foul (military oppression and meddling in foreign affairs like what the good old US of A has done).

Even a cursory glance through the manual reveals a game of frightening complexity, with resources to be produced, taxes raised,



Who's this foxy chick? This sassy babe? Some kind of tactical warrior, no doubt. She'll beat you up.

population controlled, armies recruited, research completed, buildings, er, built and enemies crushed. It comes as a relief then, and a blessed one at that, to find that *Deadlock* is equipped with one of the most instructive interactive tutorials to grace a game since, well, since *Civilization*. For once the multimedia nature of a game is actually of some tangible benefit as a delightfully well-spoken young lady guides you through your first few turns, hinting at good moves here, warning against bad moves there, and actually making it easy and enjoyable to learn how to play.

But the tutorial only scratches the surface of what is a deeply involving game, and the only way to find what secrets lie hidden beneath the game's shiny SVGA exterior is to peel back the layers by playing, experimenting and playing some more. And in this respect, playing *Deadlock* is rather like peeling an



Yep... strategy is all well and good, but - y'know - it's nice to get a bit of multi-player nonsense going, isn't it? And that, my friend, is where Deadlock excels.



A small, yet imperfectly formed section of a world, your new world as it happens. You'll notice it's divided into territories, each of which contains resources for you to plunder. See that little ship thing? That's a colonizer, which you use to capture new territories.



The university on the left is essential for researching new technologies, which in turn are essential for winning the game.

It all happens here



A handsome colony if ever there was one, complete with laser turrets for defence.



The men with red outlines are unhappy, possibly because they have eaten too much Ready Brek.

rian

onion, except it doesn't make you cry – at least it doesn't if you're successful.

Even though it isn't stacked with cute animated characters or endearing humorous touches, *Deadlock* still manages to make you care about your virtual colonies in a way that sterile games like *Outpost* didn't, which makes it all the more distressing when a colony starts

"Deadlock is rather like peeling an onion, except it doesn't make you cry – at least it doesn't if you're successful."

to fail or you come under attack. One of your first problems, for example, will almost inevitably be over-population, and your colonists will get ever more disgruntled as their houses become increasingly over-crowded. While you sit there wishing you could instruct your university scientists to research a

prophylactic sheath, people start getting seriously miffed and morale plummets causing no end of grief to your old grey matter.

The game's artificial intelligence is good enough to thrash just about anyone on the higher difficulty settings, but good though it is as a single-player game, it's as a multi-player strategy fest that *Deadlock* really shines. For once, you don't have to have access to a local area network to take advantage of its multi-player capabilities; you can either hook up for a modem head-to-head (though some fiddling with modem strings is necessary) or log on to the Internet for a full-blown seven-player battle. The main difficulty with Internet games is that it can be hard to find players who have a similar ability (or inability as the case may be) as yourself, but as with all the best multi-player games, it's very hard to stop playing once you've found some decent opponents.

Deadlock doesn't break any new ground as far as the basic gameplay is concerned, and nor does it provide much excitement in the way of star actors or fancy 3D trickery, but it is still an undeniably fine game. The marketing men in their cheap suits and loud ties will be keen to trumpet the SVGA visuals or the 32-track soundtrack (whatever that means) but we know better, we know that it's the mind-bending complexity of the strategy that will have you glued to your screen for countless hours. "If gameplay be the food of love," Shakespeare would have written had he had a copy of *Deadlock* to play on his quill pen, "play on." (We're not sure what he would have meant by that, but he definitely would have said it.)

RICHARD LONGHURST

PC GAMER – THE VERDICT

A good-looking game with great depth of gameplay and unlimited multi-player joy for all the futuristic family.

82%



Tactical wargames have never enjoyed a reputation for being particularly eye-pleasing games. *Deadlock*, while it still uses overhead styles like this, is at least a far prettier affair. Those tanks are particularly nice, I feel.

Z

Publisher	Warner Interactive Entertainment
Developer	The Bitmap Brothers
Format	CD-ROM
Price	\$45
Minimum System	486/66DX2, 8Mb RAM
Recommended	16Mb RAM
Sound Support	All major cards
Release Date	30th August

No, your eyes are not deceiving you. This is a review of *Z*. Meaning that the unthinkable has happened. **THEY HAVE FINISHED IT.**



Taking control of strategic narrows is vital in the later levels. Cranes can be brought in to repair bridges.



Exploding vehicles throw their debris sky high before coming down with a bump. Slowdown can occur.



Sending grunt infantry into combat elicits cries of protest and is invariably followed by their silence.



Z is an action wargame. Life's never dull – explosions constantly rip across the screen and it's rather good fun.

Sleepy

YOU'VE PERHAPS already peeked at the score over the page and spluttered into your drink: "Four years? That was hardly worth it, was it?" But you'd be wrong. *Z* is an excellent game.

It's just that... well, it is four years old, and it insists on reminding you of this as you play.

No game is an island, the game-developing grandson of John Donne once said. *Z* cannot escape comparisons with the huge range of similar titles that have been released since the Bitmaps started programming it all that time ago. It's also fair to say that with all the effort that's been lavished on *Z*, most people would expect it to emerge from its tussle with development snags as one of the fittest games ever. But *Z*'s interminable



One of *Z*'s most annoying features is a unit's insistence on blasting through rock to reach its objectives.



The bar across the bottom offers view filters. Z's sound is unusual as it is relatively context sensitive. As bases are threatened it becomes tenser and faster.

development hold-ups have left it as one of the most dated games to appear for some time.

This isn't to condemn Z, though. It's actually the finest game of its kind the PC has ever seen – a top-down, real-time wargame with the emphasis firmly on pure action, balancing time with quick reflexes, and deliberately staying clear of the resource

"Z's interminable development hold-ups have left it as one of the most dated games to appear for some time."

management and building construction that have crept into most 2D combat games of late. Z's simple aims simultaneously crucify it and resurrect it in part.

I, along with most of the people around me here at PC Gamer, play Warcraft II. If you're familiar with Blizzard's game, you'll know that it possesses that perfect and oh-so-hard to achieve balance between being easy to



Z's later levels introduce scenery that has a bearing on the way you play. The sense of destruction remains.

play yet hard to master. Most nights there's a game zipping round the network, and considering that the weather is a positively balmy 24°C outside and there's a pub garden opposite, this is no mean achievement.

Coming to Z hot on Warcraft II's heels is a sobering experience. When you first play a game, it's no fun to be constantly looking for more. In fact, I found it sodding annoying wanting to chop this or build that or maim the other and being unable to. And that's the last I'm going to say about any other similar game. Soon the frustration almost flows away as Z imposes its own rules and almost sates your expectations. Z exists in its own anachronistic

environment where the normal rules of gaming do not apply, Capt'n.

So within ten minutes you're taking Z for what it is – simple fun. The 20 levels stretch out before you, introduced and linked by some cheesy pre-rendered story that as usual bears no relationship to the game itself bar a few passing references. You enter the first map, normally a cinch in these games, and die.

This is the point at which it all becomes more interesting. Each map is sub-divided into various rectangular territories that can be captured by taking a flag. Within each territory there's an assortment of buildings, tanks or grenades that are yours to exploit if the area is under your control. The more of the map you hold the more units you can produce and the greater your military



strength - pretty standard stuff so far.

The difference comes from Z's time factor. Each unit takes a certain base amount of time to produce depending on its strength. This time is reduced for each area you control. It's an interesting approach and works well.

Progressing through the levels is hard. At around Level 15 they become easily as tough as some of the *C&C: Covert Ops* missions, but are much fairer. You're going to get your money's worth here and it's a good challenge. The difficulty is a credit to the artificial intelligence that the Bitmaps have incorporated into the game, and at times your opponent does seem frighteningly human. There are problems with it, though, particularly in defence. When driving forward the computer seems completely in control of the situation, but in retreat its logic is decidedly suspect sometimes, failing to retake territories when it has the opportunity.

Considering Z plays fairly it's only right that you should experience similar problems. The territorial system of building units makes it

"The control method takes a little getting used to, and even by Level 8 there are still some irritating features that should have been purged with all that play-testing."

much harder than usual to recover from a couple of quick defeats. Not only does the enemy then gain control of the resource, but it takes you longer to produce forces that can launch a counter-attack. The system effectively penalises you twice for every mistake, and frequently leads to rapid catastrophic collapses in your situation.

There are also other reasons why Z isn't as exciting as it could be. The control method takes a little getting used to, and even by Level 8 there are still some irritating features that

Z's missing letters

I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW

One of the huge advantages that computers offer over board-games is their ability to hide various parts of the map from either one player or another. The resulting 'log of war' helps to turn *C&C* and *Warcraft II* into the successes that they are. There are few experiences guaranteed to simultaneously depress and get your heart racing than the enemy's secret army appearing over the horizon and sweeping all before it. Z ignores this technological gift for absolutely no conceivable reason, and shows you the entire map all the time. Every top-down wargame has benefited from fogging, so why none in Z?



MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

This one's more subjective. The Bitmaps set out to produce a pure wargame and made the decision early on not to include any resource management - mining gold, chopping down trees, that sort of thing. This might be a change for people in 1996, but it'll nevertheless be a step in the wrong direction for most strategy gamers. The reasons for the decision are obvious - the maps can be more precisely designed and balanced if you give the player no control over their layout. But it's just not so much fun, somehow.



should have been purged with all that play-testing. Clicking on a unit centres the screen at that point, making it more difficult to set up the screen over a certain action area. This is particularly limiting if running the game in VGA, where your view of the playing area is more restricted. Also, after a unit has been given an order it is de-selected. This becomes more irksome in SVGA (when they're small and tricky to click on) but if you immediately change your mind about a unit's instructions, you have to re-select the unit before issuing

new instructions. They're far from crippling flaws, but after all this time they should have been ironed out.

The bottom line is that *Warcraft II* contains everything that Z does plus considerably more. As a real-time combat game, Z does work well. It offers innovative, fresh approaches, but unless you really can't be bothered with any real complexity Z just doesn't have the staying power that you'll find in some of its rivals. And after four years it should.

JAMES FLYNN



Gathering vast numbers of troops in one area and clicking 'Go to Enemy Base' does not often work. Excellent.

Were the delays worth it?

The principal reasons for Z's belated appearance were connected to network problems. Z supports four players simultaneously, but despite this small number the advantage of pre-determining the maps is clear. Each map is extremely well balanced and offers a long-term challenge, particularly with three players. It's also refreshingly different to have direct and aggressive campaigns that fire from the word go, rather than having a slow start.

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

Forget about the competition and Z is great. I just couldn't help comparing it to *Warcraft II*, though.

77%



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- ⊕ Challenging combat, an important component of the game, the player is advised to fight tactically to avoid being injured and wasting precious ammunition.
- ⊕ Crystal clear digitised sound effects: superbly realistic audio effects and a variety of atmospheric music tracks enhance the game experience.



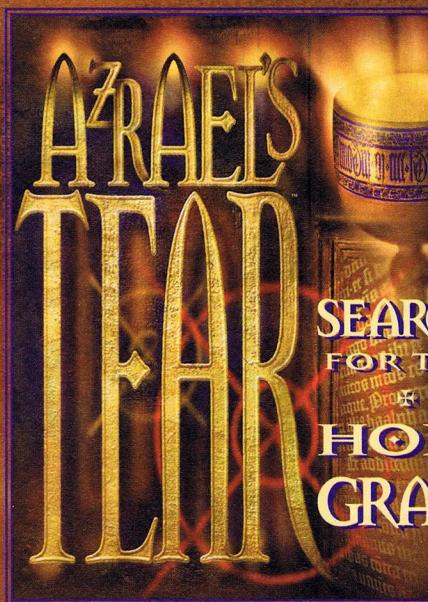
"If I were an MP I'd pass a law making this a required purchase."

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"It's pretty damned impressive Azrael's Tear looks like a winner, trust me." - PC Review

Azrael's Tear is a yardstick title, a game against which other adventures should be measured." - 90% PC Zone

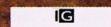
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INTELLIGENT GAMES

American Civil War

Publisher	Interactive Magic
Developer	Frank Hunter
Format	CD-ROM
Price	£35-£39
Minimum System	486/33, 8Mb, Win 3.1, SVGA, x2 CD
Recommended	DX66, 16Mb, Win 95, SVGA
Sound Support	All major cards
Release Date	Out now

This mother of all American Civil War games attempts to deliver it all, from the first fight picked to the last white hanky waved.

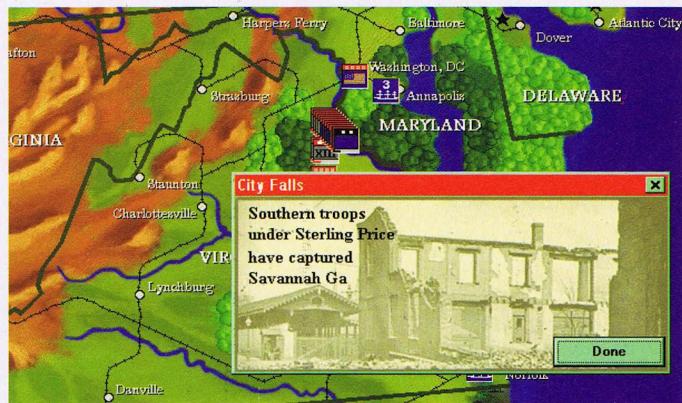
THE NORTH/SOUTH divide is a subject we rattle on a lot about in this country. But despite all our talk of southern softies and cloth caps, we've never actually had a war over

it. For that we have to look to our American cousins to see how it's really done.

American Civil War is a turn based wargame. A hex mesh covers the battlefield, which is rendered quite attractively in SVGA as a top-down map, and all the units appear as stacks of squares coloured in the favourite blue and grey hues of the combatants.

Artillery, infantry, cavalry and fleet units are yours to dispose of. They're controlled via a series of windows, although, no doubt as in real war, your orders are liable to be creatively interpreted depending on the personality flaws of your commanders. The unusual movement system emphasises this aspect of the game as you don't move units one by one. Instead, you give them an objective and then activate the execute command. The week's campaigning then unfolds before you as all units move at once and chaos claims your battleplan.

However, you're not just beset with military problems. *ACW* also deals with the economic, political and diplomatic aspects of the war. Thus players must maintain domestic



Fatiguing

support, supply their troops, manage their manufacturing base and curry favour with interventionist foreign powers.

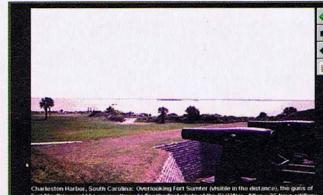
ACW also adds a whole new dimension to the usual fog-of-war conditions. Americans hadn't had much practice at war by the time hostilities broke out, so your armies' capabilities and supply requirements are

"Playing is by trial and error, which may bear historical scrutiny but isn't necessarily much fun."

unknown until they've gained experience of being annihilated in the field. This means playing by trial and error, which may bear historical scrutiny but isn't necessarily much fun. I had no idea where to start, unaided by a dense and waffling manual, and thus found it very difficult to become involved in the game.



Who do you think you are kidding Mr Lincoln, if you think old Dixie's done?



Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. Overrunning Fort Sumter created the catalyst for the Civil War. After a 36-hour artillery exchange, Union Commander Robert Anderson surrendered the isolated fort.

Presumably the free multimedia disk, 'Fateful Lightning', is meant to put you in the mood for all this, but its historical account of the war is overwhelming. It should have provided edited highlights, not a cannon ball by cannon ball commentary.

This is a pity, because watching multiple blue squares converging on grey ones isn't really enough. The actual battles consist simply of a report detailing the outcome, which left me cold. The command interface is long-winded, with windows and graphics not being used efficiently enough, so that controlling your forces is a chore rather than a breeze. For example, it's very easy to forget who's already been ordered. Units should at least turn a slightly different colour so that you know at a glance. The same window may also be needed several times, yet you need to call it up again after every use. Furthermore the windows take ages to redraw even on a 16Mb machine.

Although the multi-layered strategic approach of the game sounds great, I found it inaccessible, and ended up skipping most of it just to get things moving on the battlefield. Unless you're a hardcore wargamer prepared to experiment with and analyse *ACW* for hour upon hour, it's likely you're going to miss out on the subtleties of what is undoubtedly a complex and comprehensive Civil War game.

MARK DONALD

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

An exhaustively researched and intricate game marred by user hostility and a divorced approach to the action.

50%

DESTINY:

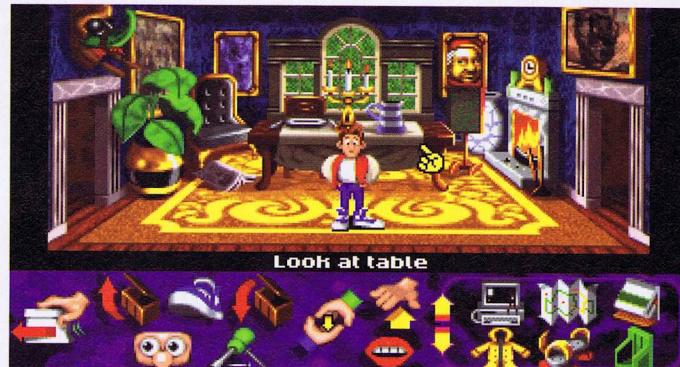
*n., pl. **+nies.*** **1.** the future ~ destined for a person or thing~ fate; fortune; lot. **2.** the predetermined or inevitable course of events. **3.** the ultimate power or agency that predetermines the course of events [: from Old French *destinée*, from *destiner* to DESTINE]

Bud Tucker In Double Trouble

Publisher	BMG
Developer	Merit Studios
Format	CD-ROM
Price	£40
Minimum System	486DX2/66, 8Mb RAM
Recommended	P90
Sound Support	All major soundcards
Release Date	August

So you're an American pizza-boy with a quiff, and your mad mate's been kidnapped. What do you do? You pick up a sawfish...

HERE COMES A TIME in any point-and-click adventure when you have to sit back and contemplate exactly what you're doing, and exactly how it's helping you in your quest. For me, while semi-immersed in *Bud Tucker In Double Trouble*, this point came as I edged closer to discovering exactly where the evil madman was keeping my kidnapped mad scientist friend, The Professor. How the devil did I manage to find him, you ask? Why, by simply picking up a sawfish I found at the docks, using it to saw a branch off a tree at the park, finding a piece of string at the museum, attaching it to the safety pin I picked up at the hotel, then attaching that to my newly-sawn branch to create an impromptu fishing rod, of course! This, combined with the membership to the Fisherman's Guild I'd managed to secure an hour earlier, earned me a much-coveted security pass, with which I was able to pass unnoticed into the lair of the terrifying megalomaniac so intent on stealing my crazed Germanic friend. Sounds obvious now I say it. And what's stranger is that, though it may sound as if I've given slightly too much away, I really haven't. The game, in the fine tradition of the point-and-click, is packed with nonsensical solutions to never-in-



Riling



a-million-years problems. Levels vary intensely from the brilliantly designed and well thought-out, to the overly frustrating, and what's more, Bud Tucker is – and I apologise for this – a cocky little American git.

It's heavily, heavily billed as a 'comedy' adventure, y'see. Bud Tucker is yer wise-cracking, sarcastic and loveable rogue, always

"The game is packed with nonsensical solutions to never-in-a-million-years problems."

ready with a cheeky wink and a knock-knock joke for all. The thing is, though, that Bud Tucker is not a funny puppy. He is, as I say, a cocky little American git. The point of point-and-clicks, it seems, is to try things out; to learn through failure. How you're supposed to manage this when there's some baseball-

jacketed, quiffed-up teenager ready to criticise your every move with an achingly witless, pointlessly sarcastic comment, is beyond me.

Underneath its obvious cosmetic 'difficulties', however, it's a likeable enough adventure, with more twisted clichés than you could shake a battered hattersly at. It's stylishly designed, with a range of well-drawn characters and backdrops to fiddle around with, but in the end, you've got to seriously consider whether you can possibly bear to spend money just to spend time with Bud bloody Tucker and his rent-a-quip stupidity. Guybrush Threepwood, however... such a nice young man. I think you know what I'm saying. DANNY WALLACE

PC GAMER – THE VERDICT

An otherwise capable point-and-click adventure let down by its own quirks. Sigh...

67%



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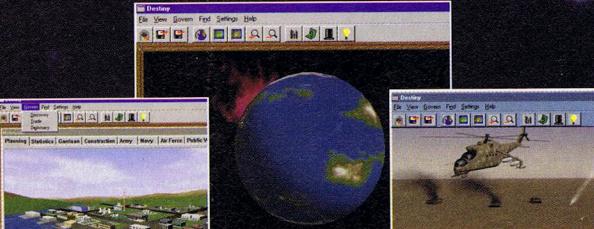


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Mission Force: Cyb

Publisher	Sierra
Developer	Dynamix
Format	CD-ROM
Price	\$40
Minimum System	486DX/66, 8Mb RAM, SVGA, Win 95
Recommended	Pentium, 16Mb RAM, x4 CD-ROM
Sound Support	Windows compatible soundcards
Release Date	August

EarthSiege as a strategy game? What a splendid idea!

FROM THE TEAM WHO brought you *EarthSiege* 2 comes *Mission Force: Cyber Storm*. A robotic exoskeleton spin-off game, it features titanic chrome monstrosities scrapping each other over the fate of the human race, as usual. This time, however, Sierra pluck you from the confines of the cockpit and charge you with the task of commanding and managing an entire squadron of Hercs. Considering that piloting a single Herc in *EarthSiege* 2 requires more digits than Pi has decimal places, it should come as no surprise that *Cyber Storm* brings a more considered, chin-rubbing approach to the robo-stomp genre, eschewing real-time in favour of turn sequences.

Cyber Storm is, then, a strategy wargame: its battles breaking out over handsomely drawn hex-terrained landscapes. Slick mouse and icon controls set your Hercs pounding about the place and the turn system generously allows you all the time you need to plot your tactics. However, the management of your force is just as important as the action. Before you and your jumped-up zimmer frames are allowed near a war zone you've got to weld your 'bot force together from the range of models and configurations available back at base.

As a Herc commander you're an employee of the Unitech mega-corporation. Serving as a kind of galactic sales rep, your chief duty is to demonstrate the brand superiority of Unitech products by liquidating the Cybrid competition



Robotic

"To say it's polished would be an understatement, it's more like it's received a personal buffing from Mr Sheen and his magic turtlewax."

in a variety of different missions. Your pay is strictly performance related, so the dosh you need to upgrade and expand your Herc enterprise can only be earned through glorious battlefield success. Job security depends on the number of Hercs you have to enforce it; so if you lose them all and go bankrupt, Unitech

paints concentric circles on your chest and posts you to a temporary position assisting on the Herc shooting range.

As this happens quite a lot, Unitech doesn't trust new recruits with any hardware more expensive than a 'speak your weight' machine. Thus you start the game on the lowest rung of the ladder, with a small business start-up loan and a couple of Hercs equipped for little more than traffic control. As such, it's best if you stick to mining missions at first to earn some easy cash. Later on, once you're conducting some heavier metal, you can pitch for a riskier 'seek and destroy' or 'secure installation' venture.

Image is everything, and no game demonstrates this aphorism more effectively

Shooting up

If you find yourself hopelessly outclassed mid-engagement, then you can always ensure a quick hit with a desperate measure of performance-enhancing stimulants. Injecting your biderms with 'jackup' will temporarily boost their shooting skills for a few turns, but also produces some rather nasty 'genetic instability' side effects.



(Left) This 'derm may be feeling in the pink, but rising toxin levels are the first sign of jackup abuse.



(Right) Our loaded 'derm's mood matches his complexion as he does cold turkey in the cockpit. Genetic hurnout is imminent.



(Right) Not looking his best, our 'derm is truly off his face now. On the positive side his toxin level is zero, on the negative side... he's dead. Just say no.

Cyber Storm

REVIEWS



(Above) The battle is in full swing and everyone seems to be having a lovely time.

(Right) Look at the rocket's splendid vapour trail.

than *Cyber Storm*. Its lustrous presentation suffuses the game with atmosphere; to say it's polished would be an understatement, it's more like it's received a personal buffing from Mr Sheen and his magic turtlewax. Ambient animations augment each segment of the game; the on-line manual is presented as a series of Unitech training vids and the story line updates actually create a cyber-laden, techno conspiracy plot that is gripping. Whether it's relevant to the game is another matter, but it might be, so take notice for once.

Every part of the game has been designed with great care. In your base, once you're flush, you can repair, upgrade and expand your fleet from a huge armoury of Hercs and other hardware. Rotating 3D wire-frame models accompany the Herc stats you choose from little Shadow Ghost scout efforts all the way up to the awesome Juggernaut death engines. Every element can be adjusted as you add ECM devices and anti-gravity units while upgrading peashooting autocannon to rapid saturation missile launchers. Searching for the optimum doomsday configurations will keep tinkerers happy for weeks or months, especially as you are only gradually granted access to the really potent equipment as you progress through the tougher missions.

Adding an even greater depth of cyber feeling to the game is the fact that your Hercs aren't robots at all. Technically speaking they're clones-in-chrome: metal suits piloted by genetically engineered organisms known as Bioderms. These Herc jockeys are dialled up



like a 'choose your own topping' DNA pizza from the Biovat, which is beautifully animated as a sinister lab complete with soupy fluids bubbling noxiously in tanks. Here you can

"The sheer customisable scope of Cyber Storm, along with the multi-player and single mission options, should ensure its longevity."



Oh no! This Herc's '70s nightclub camouflage is totally out of place on an ice world.

select the 'derms whose skills most suit the Hercs you have and upgrade their attributes specifically to deal with the missions you plan to undertake. Here you may also need to recycle 'derms who've reached the end of their useful lifespan or detoxify those you've combat drugged (see boxout).

The battles themselves are superbly handled, with the ease and speed of the control system combining with the fluidity of the animation to almost fool you into thinking you're playing in real time. You can actually see the missiles streak from their launchers and little plumes of smoke rise from the ground as explosions saturate the battlefield.

The turn system actually enhances combat as winning an engagement becomes rather more than just blundering in all guns blazing. With the time afforded, you can utilise the sophisticated on-board Herc systems to the full: distributing shield power, improvising battlefield repairs and performing precise terrain hugging manoeuvres.

Cyber Storm has its faults though. It would be more exciting if a time limit was imposed on turns, as in the multi-player version, pressurising you to act fast in combat. Also, the missions tend to be a bit samey, so the pleasure of junking Cybrids may quickly wear thin once you've battle-tested all the hardware available.

But the sheer customisable scope of *Cyber Storm*, along with the multi-player and single mission options, should ensure its longevity. It's superbly structured, tactically challenging, accessible and looks great. In any case, pounding big robots to scrap is fun.

MARK DONALD

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

A sleekly curved, finely engineered and tuned model of a game, with lovely bodywork.

85%

81

Links LS

Publisher	Eidos
Developer	Access
Format	CD-ROM
Price	£45
Minimum System	486DX2, 12Mb RAM
Recommended	Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Win95
Sound Support	All major cards
Release Date	Out now

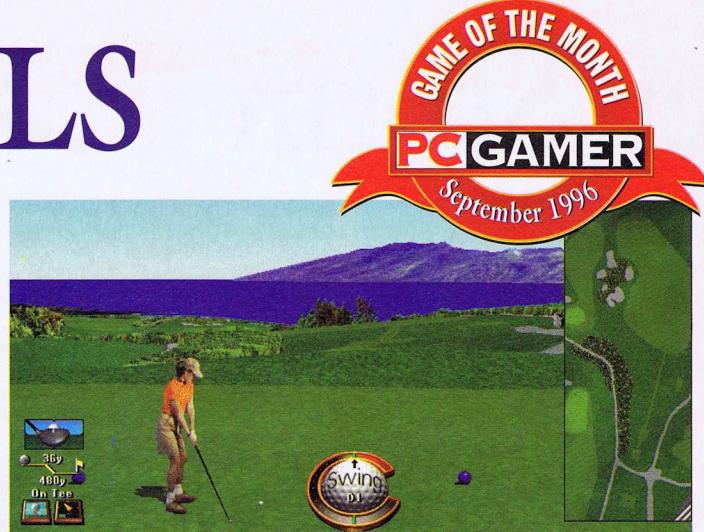
Mirroring television, the games scene is swamped with hours and hours of sport. It's a good thing.

ACCESSE ARE THE daddies of computer golf, creating the superb *Leaderboard* for the Commodore 64 during the last decade. Arguably their *Links* range has been just one step

behind Electronic Arts' *PGA* series on the PC, but this month this has all changed. I'm glad.

Just when you thought golf couldn't get any better than *PGA European* (PCG 29, 91%), Access, whose *Links* lads have been surprisingly quiet for the last few years, come up with what is undoubtedly the most phenomenal sports game since, oh, *Grand Prix 2*. Ignore *GP2* and *Links LS* is definitely the best sports game since... since... *FIGP*. Of course, you'll have to enjoy, or believe that

Links range has been just one step



Birdie

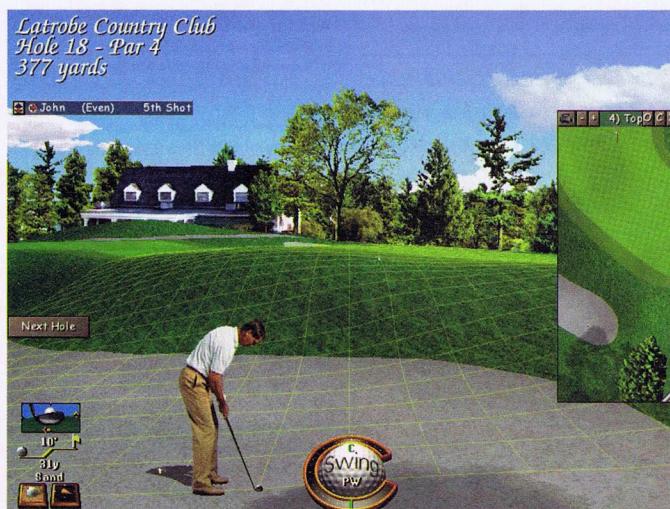
you can enjoy, playing golf on a PC, but if you've never rolicked in the green fairways of virtual golf before, save up the necessary £45 and blow the lot on this beauty.

You can see for yourself that the game looks absolutely fantastic. What these shots don't demonstrate is that if you own God's own computer, or expect to over the next few years, you'll appreciate that *Links LS* can

handle any graphics resolution at 16.7 million colours (1,600 x 1,200 tested, although Access claim that theoretically it could go higher). Naturally, you need an elephant's worth of RAM to get the very best graphics possible, but *Links*' beauty makes you feel warm inside. Where this game really wins over is in the extraordinary effort the programming team have made. So many options cascade from the main menu that it's easy to get lost, but only in the sense that you can get lost in somewhere as exciting and complete as London.

Each of the three wonderfully illustrated

"If you've never rolicked in the green fairways of virtual golf before, save up the necessary £45 and blow the lot on this beauty."



You can't expect every shot to go entirely according to plan. Particularly when Arnold sneezes, the cheat.

and well-chosen courses is awash with add-ons, such as video tours of the area, walk-throughs of the holes and even an almost pointless Virtual Reality wander of the clubhouse. Of course, after a certain amount of exploration, the urge will become intolerable and you will just have to take the clubs to the fairway. *Links* has suffered from a lack of play options in the past, but *LS* easily deflents this allegation, offering skins, match play, stroke and best ball, the subtleties of which are hardly appropriate at the moment. Provided you've opted for

Anyone not for golf?

You don't just have to play golf, you know. Here are some things you might like to do if you're very, very lazy.



Have a flyby run-down of how to play each hole. It's old millinery, but you'd be upset if it wasn't there.



Get the full tourist video treatment of the host resort. Go book that plane now.



Ask Arnold Palmer: "Exactly how do I design my own golf course?"



Take a gander around in Arnie's office in full Virtual Reality Doom style (nothing to shoot).



Add your own sound effects so that you can hear yourself swear when you cock up. No, really.



You can try to break a window at the 19th hole if you really want to. Vandal.



suitable detail, a fairly lengthy initial screen draw illustrates rolling greenery and large, immaculately animated characters (including inevitable game big name, old man

Arnold Palmer), and if you're really blessed with power, the most convincing clouds and shadows ever ever.

The screen looks so beautiful and uncluttered that one's loathed to move the mouse to the bottom and bring up the control panel. But do so and it's now that LS's subtleties take their hold. By all means, begin your golf career with straight whacks down the centre of the fairway, but as you watch the tough computer-controlled Arnold, or a pal (sitting next to you, at the end of a modem or elsewhere on a network), go for the risky hole-

winning swings, you'll be moving to the shot control buttons that are just as customisable as the wings on a GP2 car. Shift your feet, change the point of impact on the ball, over swing, deliberately hook or slice, and you'll soon

"As an alternative to the adrenaline rush of Quake, Links LS is a superb single-player or social game, with the very best graphics to ever be seen on a PC."

swerve the ball around the tree that frustratingly planted itself in front of your ball.

And how do you know the best way to hook this shot? Aha, that's where *Links LS*'s



At the end of each shot, you'll get a complete dissection, and the option to take a Mulligan if you aren't happy.



Move the cursor to the bottom of the screen and an HG Wells wooden console pops up for shot adjustments.

finest feature shows itself off. A range of special camera windows can be sized and positioned around the screen to show almost any area of the course, be it a representation of the ground between ball and pin, an actual side-on view of the hole, overhead representation, reverse view or custom position. Each of these screens is updated when you play the shot, showing the ball in its hopefully graceful and perfect flight or a reconstructed parabola in the case of the profile view. It means all when you play a good shot, and adds to the understanding when you (frequently) get it wrong. Of course, good shots can be viewed again, saved to disk and used to taunt golf-inadequate chums. It works so well.

Maybe it's golf games, or maybe I'm just not writing well today, but having read the review again I can't help thinking I haven't done this game justice. As an alternative to the adrenaline rush of *Quake*, *Links LS* is a superb single-player or social game, with the very best graphics to ever be seen on a PC, options that will have you customising longer than Windows ever did, and an installation routine that is actually polite to you rather than blasting up a series of inexcusable meaningless error messages. Access, you are gods.

STEVE OWEN

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

This is the game that modern technology should be creating. Shockingly good and eminently purchasable.

94%

Help!



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StarFighter 3000

Publisher	Telstar
Developer	Krisalis
Format	CD-ROM
Price	£40
Minimum System	486DX/33, 8Mb RAM
Recommended	P90
Sound Support	All major soundcards
Release Date	25th July

So. The future, then. All bright flashes and no substance? Let's take a peek, shall we?

BY THE TIME WE REACH the year 2000, the world will be an oh-so, ever-so different place. Although man will not have evolved a great deal, technology and lifestyles will have leapt great leaps and bounds. We will eat tablets, not food. All cars will have been destroyed in favour of a giant, supermultinational monorail; all cotton ditched and silver foil used instead. So much to look forward to in the next four years.

Such is my state of mind as I cheerfully shimmy my way into *StarFighter 3000*. Which is a mistake, really, because the mood immediately and forcefully created by highly polished cosmetic touches is the kind you get from waking up in a corrupt, warring 3037, ruled by an evil new regime, and realising you've just been 'persuaded' into testing experimental spacecraft. Remember: The Sinclair C5 was an experimental spacecraft, and, had we been involved in some sort of intergalactic conflict in the early 1980s, would doubtless have been employed as the front-line in Earth's attack. Just you think about that. Luckily, though, *StarFighter 3000* sees you equipped with nothing less than a Predator Mark IV Planetary Assault Vehicle, which is a fine model.

But rather than patronise you by following review protocol and Saving My Conclusion For



(Above) Dock with your mothership, and feel all nice and warm inside.

(Left) Trailblazing uniqueness, and the chance to destroy big buildings. Nice!

Wholesome

The End, here's my frank and touching lowdown on *StarFighter 3000*. It's solid. It's trustworthy. It's a whole, wholly satisfying game. Easy to play (but tricky to play *well*), it's a massive 60 missions long, each of which lets you clamber that inch further up the career ladder (from Cadet to Commander). And each mission can be deceptively hard, too. Even the Rookie levels seem to take most of your life to

"Even the Rookie levels seem to take most of your life to complete."



complete, but are, thankfully, generally and mindlessly entertaining. For a shoot-'em-up, *StarFighter 3000* is also fairly varied. Okay, so it's extremely flight-based, but depending on the kind of mood you're in, you can either play for fun or play to win. Explosions are gratuitously satisfying in both sound and vision (think *Thunderhawk 2*), the craft handles with extreme nimbleness, and – even when you get down to the complex business of instructing wingmen where to strike next on your behalf – you still feel completely, totally in control. Apart from the occasional on-screen slowdown in the thick of the battle, your ship also whistles along very nicely indeed, creating, in places, the sense of speed that gave *Terminal Velocity* its extra-special edge in the market.

It may not have the look of *TV* – in fact, in places, it's downright poor – but little tweaks and touches here and there show the sheer amount of thought that's gone into the game. Whereas with *Terminal Velocity* a mountain is as much of a deadly enemy as a rapidly approaching spaceship, *SF3000* gives you enough firepower to simply carve your way through. And add to that the almost tedious array of options and power-ups you're able to make use of, and you're laughing. Except war is never funny, and I want you to remember that always.

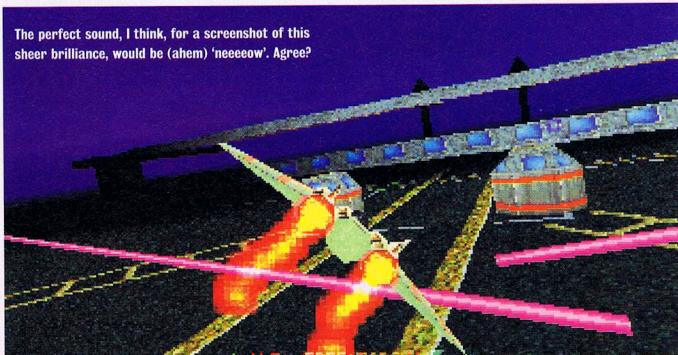
But generally? Well, *StarFighter 3000* is a good enough game. In fact, 'good' is probably the word that describes it best. Nothing inordinately brilliant, nothing that strikes you as particularly bad. Just a sturdy, wholesome, trustworthy game that, were you to introduce it to your mother, would no doubt please her immensely.

DANNY WALLACE

PC GAMER – THE VERDICT

A sprinkling of *Terminal Velocity*, a splattering of *Thunderhawk 2* and a heap of playability. Very capable.

80%

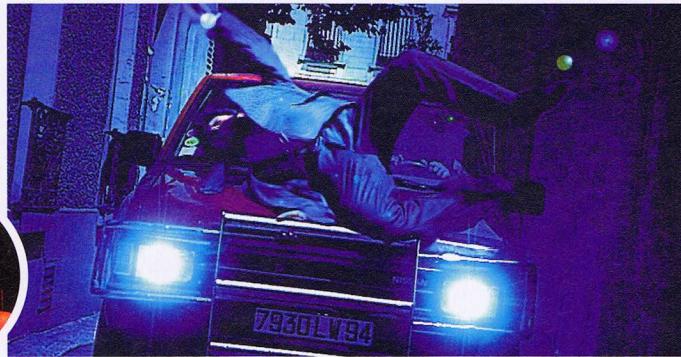


REVIEWS

Urban Runner

Publisher	Sierra
Developer	In-house
Format	CD-ROM
Price	\$45
Minimum System	486DX2/66, 8MB RAM, x4 CD-ROM
Recommended	P75, SVGA, mouse
Sound Support	SoundBlaster or compatible
Release Date	Out now

Thought the interactive movie was extinct? You're almost right.



ACCORDING TO THE box, *Urban Runner* is "the first 100% full-screen video adventure game". Except it isn't, having large grey borders at the top and bottom of the screen. It also boasts a "scenario that would make Hitchcock proud". Proud he didn't have anything to do with it? He's probably gyrating in his grave at this very moment.

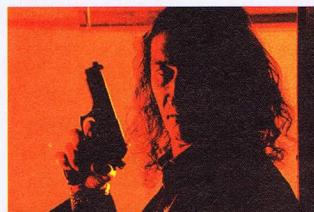
Hang on, though. Sierra's last adventure, *Gabriel Knight 2*, wasn't bad at all. Maybe this is the turning point. Maybe this game will be

"It's not as good as Gabriel Knight 2, and certainly nowhere near as enjoyable as seeing something like Seven."

the first 'interactive movie' to fulfil the promise of a cinematic experience where you are actually in control. Maybe this time it will actually be worth ten times the cost of going to see a proper film at the local multi-plex.

Of course it's not. It's dreadful, for reasons I shall now explain. First, as always with this sort of game, *Urban Runner* is incredibly linear, with no possible deviations from the rigid path the game has you follow. Second, the plot itself is very poor indeed – you're a reporter investigating drugs trafficking only all not it seems, etc. The gang's all here: stereotypical characters, clichéd lines, rampant sexism on the part of the writers (who funny enough aren't credited), huge gaps in the plot (Why doesn't the hero take the bodyguard's gun in the first scene when he has the chance? Why doesn't he leave the pumping station through the

Fetid

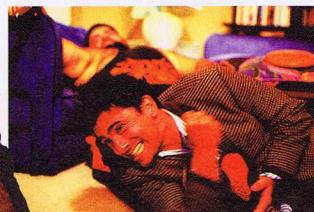


Crikey. What a cool bloke. A diamond geezer, and no mistake. And he's got a gun, too, which is always nice.



Aha! A beautiful, brilliant scientist, no doubt. Hard-headed, opinionated, ready to go to the ball.

exit which is labelled on the map, or through one of the open windows?... If this game really was a film it would be laughed at. There are also many trivial irritations, such as characters who've clearly had their voice-overs done by more than one actor, the ridiculously contrived puzzles in certain places, and the stupid time limits later on. There are some infuriating trial-and-error puzzles, but also some sections where you're completely lead by



This cheeky fella has just fallen over. His grazed knee is fully interactive. And that.

the nose. If you're at all experienced at point-and-click adventures and can stand to play it all the way through, you'll probably complete this within a few days of starting.

There are some good points: most of the actors aren't bad, and some of the scenes are quite entertaining. But it's not as good as *Gabriel Knight 2*, and certainly nowhere near as enjoyable as seeing something like *Seven*. I don't think I'd recommend this game to anybody, no matter how rich they were, as it just can't compete with an ordinary computer game or a regular movie. If certain developers cared less about using large amounts of video and concentrated more on the plot and how the game actually played, perhaps we wouldn't have to put up with stuff like this. TIM CANT

PC GAMER – THE VERDICT

The hero's young assistant is quite nice, but not nice enough to save the rest of it.

35%

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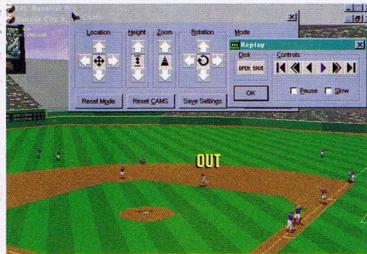
Baseball Pro '96

Sierra £34.99

A summer of tobacco chewing and curveballs beckons with the latest in the Front Page Sport series.

PLAY BY PLAY, INNING BY INNING, *Baseball Pro '96* captures the complete baseball experience and is the most realistic baseball game I've ever played. Of course, that's not to say that this is entirely a good thing because baseball, even for a fan like me, has the potential to be almost brain meltingly dull (this year's All-Star game, for instance, was so tedious that the American commentators spent five minutes talking about Frank Skinner, who was in the crowd). But it's quite an achievement nonetheless.

You manage the team or teams of your choice, making trades, picking line-ups and running the game. You may also, if you wish, take part in the action. You can let the computer take responsibility for some, all, or none of the work and in this regard it's leagues ahead of all the other baseball games. Computers are much better at playing computer games than people, and it really shows in baseball, where the computer never fumbles a catch or makes a throw to the wrong base because it's listening to the news or wondering what it's going to have for tea. If you leave the really complicated stuff to the



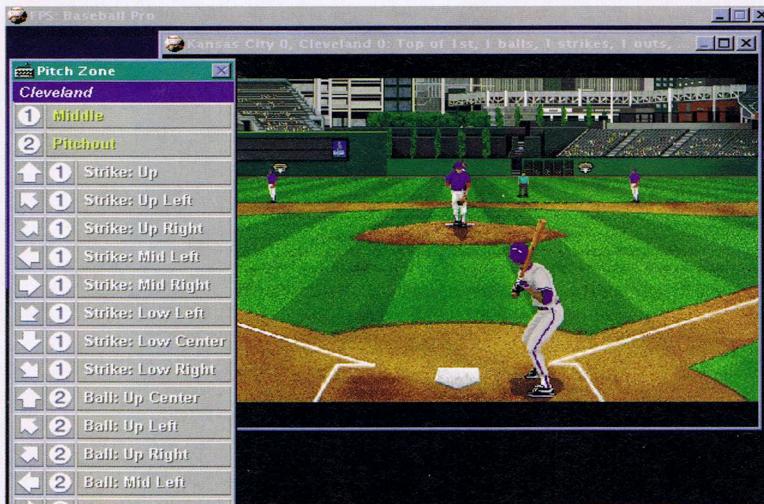
The CAMS system allows you to choose your view of the action once the ball is in play. You can use it in replays too. If you want.

computer, you can get much closer to realism.

The game is licensed by the Major League Baseball Players Association, which means that it includes all the 1996 players but not the official teams or their logos. However, the teams and the leagues can be edited so you may adjust the team names and uniforms to match the real thing.

The major downer is the system it requires. It runs under Windows and needs at least a 486DX2/66 but prefers a P90 or better. And, really, it needs it. On a DX4/100 it...was...a...bit...like play...ing...base...ball...in...v...at...of...tre...e...cl...e...

I loved it, despite its sloth, but it's no fun for arcade junkies. One for the fans, I think. TIM NORRIS



(Above) While the rest of the defence adjusts their trousers, you select the location of your next devastating pitch. (Left) Early on it's probably best to leave things to the computer

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

A dirt kickingly realistic baseball sim, which, like the sport, is best suited to stattos rather than those who favour energetic action.

82%

Final Doom

GT £30

I never, ever, ever thought I'd be saying this... but it looks as if *Doom* may have had its day. It's not that it's suddenly become a bad game, or that it's lost all possible games playing merit, or that it's in any way worse than it used to be. It's just that... things have moved on a bit.

Inevitably, *Final Doom* is starting to look both dated and tepid in comparison with other games of the genre. The gloriously structured level design remains - as ever - in its favour, it's just that as you sprint from wall to wall with only your shotgun and a few pellets to your name, you can't help but wish



you had the use of a *Quake* grenade launcher to help you out of whatever sticky situation you're about to land yourself in. That nailgun thing would come in handy from time to time, too.

The game - specially created for Windows 95 - does at least try one thing differently: the all-new levels (complete with fire balling skeletons, shotgun toting aliens and those rather portly blokes with the guns on their hands) have been created not by the programmers at id, but by freelance designers, all of whom were massive fans of the original. At least then, *Final Doom* has enthusiasm on its side.

Where the game fails, however, isn't in technical achievement or a lack polished touches. It fails simply because it hasn't moved with the times. It may be a new version, but what's really new about it? Why play this once you've sampled the rich, fruity juices of *Quake*, or inhaled the breathlessly entertaining gases of *Duke Nukem*? My conscience begs me not to say it, but *Final Doom* is a bit of a step back... 79%

DANNY WALLACE



Return Of Arcade

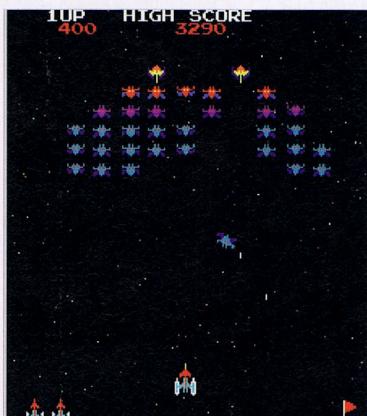


Microsoft £20

Relive the good old days when *Space Invaders* ruled the Earth.

THE DAYS OF GARNED, FLAT-CAPPED old men on rickety bicycles taking their Hovis sandwiches to work in well-thumbed leather satchels are, alas, long gone. And just as well, as they wouldn't have the first idea about playing any of the four games in this second retro pack from Microsoft. Having pillaged the Atari back-catalogue for their first release, Microsoft have gone for Namco's jugular this time and collected together *Galaxians*, *Pacman*, *Dig Dug* and *Pole Position*.

As before, all these conversions, of hit games from the early Eighties, are as close to the originals as possible. They all run directly under Windows 95 (and only Windows 95), in windows or full screen. All the over-colourful chunky graphics are there. So are the manically simple noises which first started caring grandparents, many in flat caps, campaigning against the evils of computer games.



Pacman is just as you remember it, except that the blue ghosts seem harder to catch and occasionally the collision detection bombs out. Still, that's in your favour. *Pole Position* was the first hit racing game, although, considering the difficulty of its three key controls, you wonder why. It's hard enough to stay on the track, let alone concentrate on qualifying.

There's more gameplay in *Dig Dug* than in any of the others. Strategy is needed to pump up the little red and green monsters, rather than the usual technique of mindlessly zapping them.

If it's mindless zapping you want, play *Galaxians*. A rewrite of *Space Invaders*, where the aliens have at last devised basic attack ploys, *Galaxians* is one of the most frustrating 'just one more game' hits of all time. In this version, though, you can use built-in cheats to increase your firing rate and total the little suckers. Of all the retro versions of original arcade games, Microsoft's are the most accurate. The *Return Of Arcade* offerings won't keep you playing for months, but you'll leave them on your Windows PC for the occasional blast.

SIMON WILLIAMS



Psychologists claim *Pacman* was the first game to attract girls because of its engulfing rather than shooting gameplay. You see those mountains on the horizon? They move left to right as you drive.

Commodore 64 15 Pack

Activision £15

Just as a seriously bad run of so-called 'interactive movies' has helped to slowly kill that genre in its current form, so this box, and the previous Atari offering from Activision, should finally put the "games were so much better in the old days" argument to death. I confess that I looked at the back of this box with tear-drenched eyes as I fondly recalled my school days (I was always on the American side of the Spectrum vs Commodore 64 debate, but let's not start that one up again).

Once you've decided which of these surprisingly memorable games to play first (I opted for *Park Patrol*, a game that was only ever released on budget in the UK), the first two things to strike you are, "Isn't the playing window small?" and "I never realised that 16-colour games looked so bad." Maximise the window to a huge 640x400 pixels and a Windows 95-only P100 proves itself to be slower than the C64 ever was.

It turns out that *Park Patrol* was a good start, because none of

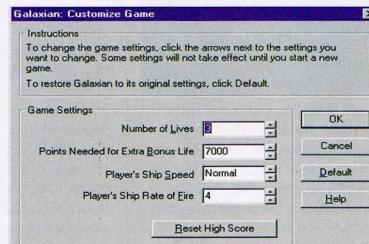


the others are as good as I remember. *Decathlon* is as awful as any *Track 'n Field*-a-like ever was; *Hacker* has *Spycraft*'s intrigue, but with more frustration and little chance of becoming a film; *Little Computer People* is the forerunner to *Dogz* / *Catz*, but very limited; and *Web Dimension* is just a trippy *Endorfunk* for the '80s. *Rock 'n' Bolt* has promise as a puzzle game, but the other nine usually miss by today's standards.

Activision say that great games never die. Perhaps it's time euthanasia was legalised.

STEVE OWEN

31



Up the fire rate from 1 to 4 on the cheat screen and you dramatically improve your chances of blasting the little insects.

PC GAMER - THE VERDICT

An entertaining window on the past, but one you'll only open occasionally to remind yourself how much better things are now.

63%



89

Football Masters 6

ESP Software £40

Let me begin by apologising to ESP for missing the first five versions of their football management game. I don't know how it happened, but such behaviour is utterly inexcusable. *Football Masters* (6) deserves a shot at the bigger prize. Five versions of non-league wallowing in the Atari Amiga Conference precedes a timely move to PC.



land, with years of feature ideas culminating in the version referred to as '6'. I racked my brains for more minutes than I had spare, but the only feature lacking was one to design your own strip. I subsequently dismissed the idea as irrelevant.

Sponsorship, finances, ticket prices and even the most minute tactical decisions, such as selecting the area of the pitch each player should concentrate on, can be fiddled with or forgotten. And when you come to (eventually) play the game, it's viewed as a strange form of wall chart, with static players but a goal clicking about the screen to reflect the state of play, bars representing how well each player is performing and an indication of each team's current success, both in terms of possession and goal count.

SWOSEC and *Outside Soccer* include some degree of management if the playing side of things is more your bag, but *FM6*'s almost encyclopaedic accuracy puts it up with the management big boys.

STEVE OWEN

74%



Timon & Pumbaa's Jungle Games

Disney Interactive £40



A little panel at the bottom of the *Jungle Games* box advises potential consumers that this game is suitable for ages 3 to 18+. Potential consumers be advised, you would receive little thanks if you intended this game for anyone over the age of 10.

Timon and Pumbaa, a pair of chirpy jungle VIPs from *The Lion King*, are your genial hosts in this light five-game compilation that is best described as tame. Together with all their other chums they've created a jungle-themed amusement arcade out of logs and mangoes and things and they show you round in some cute cartoon intro sequences.

The games themselves are harmless enough fun even if they tax you about as much as Switzerland. Cute cartoon graphics are the order of the day and they lack nothing in the big, bright and colourful departments.

Burper is a fruity rendition of *Space Invaders*, where you shoot down descending bugs with Pumbaa's potent warthog belch attack. Jungle Pinball gets quite frantic and even incorporates a tilt feature while Hippo Hop is *Frogger* without any cars. Or a



frog. Sling Shooter is a slightly unusual shooting gallery game, but my personal favourite is Bug Drop, a poor man's *Tetris* that has you fitting descending furballs into columns while matching their colours and shapes.

Jungle games will provide literally minutes of entertainment for anyone who's played a serious PC game, but it works well as a 'my first arcade game' pack, being simple, cheery and even amusing in places. However, even with this proviso, you're paying well over the odds for the Disney licence.

MARK DONALD

41%

Operation: Weather Disaster

Discovery Channel

"Apparently," said Mr Albert Einstein to the third of his three daughters, "Team Xtreme needs you. Team Xtreme, in case you wallow all too comfortably in a blissful abyss of ignorance," he continued, "is an elite disaster force, specialising in all the crazy problems so casually vomited up by nature." Pausing momentarily to study a small scratch on his otherwise flawless pipe, Einstein moved his gaze to the window. "Which, you have to admit, is surprising. Were it not for their specialist weather know-how, the evil Dr Rainwater would carry on in his terrifying quest... to create bad weather forever."

"But father!" cried Stuart,



youngest of the Einsteins, "How can this be? They seem to be mere children! Can they possibly take on the likes of an evil twit genius?"

Einstein looked away, and for the first time, Stuart detected a note of true concern in his father's eyes. "I... don't know. Puzzles, I suppose. They are helped, you see, by a robot called Millibar, who provides them with all the information they need to solve various weather-related problems. Like calculating conversions from celsius to degrees, for example." A pause. "Yes," said Einstein's dog, Stuart, who had never uttered a word before that moment, "but it all sounds so TEDIOUS!"

Unsatisfying, pseudo-intellectual pap with a patronising game-engine.

"Shock!" Can we not simply bear the bad weather and carry on as usual?"

The drawing room was

heavy with disbelief. And then

everyone started to jazz dance.

It was a happy day.

DANNY WALLACE

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 'Game of Distinction' 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 abandoned his orange jeans for the summer.

James Flynn, to our immense relief, now has short hair.

Jonathan Davies is the editor.

Mark Donald today accidentally ordered a 'dill and pickle sandwich'. We bought it for him anyway.

Richard Longhurst edits *.net* magazine with his nose.

Danny Wallace worked on *Comedy Review* until its publication unfortunately ceased. He adores PC games, though, so he's joined us for the month.

James Ashton plays beat-em-ups deftly, and more normally dwells in the office of *Sega Power*.

Tim Cant actually can.

Tim Norris has two small children who visit us most weeks.

Simon Williams' whisky features you will recognise from our Systems pages at the back.

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Star Team 11	11.99	Detroit	9.99	Lemmings 3D	30.99	Secrets Of Monkey Island	9.99	Warrior	15.99
Star Team 12	11.99	Detroit	9.99	Lemmings 3D	30.99	Secrets Of Monkey Island	9.99	Warrior	15.99
Star Team 13	11.99	Detroit	9.99	Lemmings 3D	30.99	Secrets Of Monkey Island	9.99	Warrior	15.99
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Star Team 35	11.99	Detroit	9.99	Lemmings 3D	30.99	Secrets Of Monkey Island	9.99	Warrior	15.99
Star Team 36	11.99	Detroit	9.99	Lemmings 3D	30.99	Secrets Of Monkey Island	9.99	Warrior	15.99
Star Team 37	11.99	Detroit	9.99	Lemmings 3D	30.99	Secrets Of Monkey Island	9.99	Warrior	15.99
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Star Team 62	11.99	Detroit	9.99	Lemmings 3D	30.99	Secrets Of Monkey Island	9.99	Warrior	15.99
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Star Team 66	11.99	Detroit	9.99	Lemmings 3D	30.99	Secrets Of Monkey Island	9.99	Warrior	15.99
Star Team 67	11.99	Detroit	9.99	Lemmings 3D	30.99	Secrets Of Monkey Island	9.99	Warrior	15.99
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Star Team 80	11.99								

They're back

A load of old games for a song? Another round-up of old skeletons released on budget gets a good stare from the critical eye.

By STEVE OWEN

1. SLIPSTREAM 5000

Gremlin £10

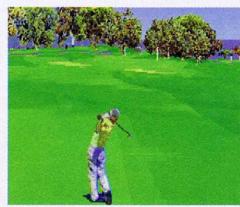
Ooh, a veritable bargain of a futuristic, shooting and racing game. Ten devious courses, plenty of weapons with which to blast things into smithereens, and the kind of speed on a modest PC that only a game written 12 months ago could manage. **91%**



2. LINKS

Kixx £10

Detailed courses that are compatible with *Links 386*, the new *Links LS* and *Microsoft Golf*, and the kind of technical gubbins you could really get in to if such things pleased. If you can't stretch to *Links LS*, this keeps the *Leaderboard* legacy ticking nicely, thank you. **87%**



3. SUPER TETRIS

5+1 Prism £6

If you haven't got a version of this classic puzzle game, then the chances are that you aren't the least bit interested in it. If, however, it's just one of those things that slipped your mind after a particularly hard week at the office, then spare a thought

for this old version, penned by the coders at Spectrum HoloByte. It's got everything you'd expect, unless you expect something out of the ordinary, including a network and modem option for ultimate two-player action. Five fairly average shareware games are also included free in this package. **82%**

4. F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

5+1 Prism £6

It was bitterly disappointing to see how much this classic had aged, despite knowing that it's eight years old. Some superb missions redeem very cranky looking graphics, but, if only for the sake of completeness, you are encouraged to add this to your collection. **80%**



5. QUEST FOR GLORY

Sierra £35

A collection of the four *Quest For Glory* adventures, the kind of point-and-click affairs that have made Sierra very rich over the years. It's nice to have the whole gang together, if only to realise that some of the puzzles are a bit offbeat and repetitive. **79%**



6. ZOOL

Regenerator £5

Zool was the first good platform game to appear on the PC, happily resembling the Mega Drive's *Sonic*. *Zool* hasn't aged significantly, but running, jumping and dying soon becomes tedious unless you have a particular penchant for ninja insects. **77%**



7. GRAND MASTER

CHESS TUTOR & CHALLENGE

Hit Squad £10

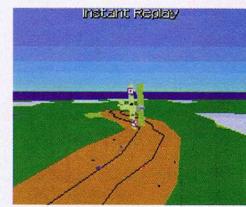
If you're so good at chess that none of your friends want to play against you, console yourself with the knowledge that this CD will provide the kind of challenge

that has so far been lacking in your life. On the other hand, if you've got no friends and think that chess might fill those long lonely hours, console yourself with the knowledge that this CD also has a complete tutorial to get you grand mastering before you can say "I could beat Nigel Short." **72%**

8. KNIGHTS OF THE SKY

5+1 Prism £6

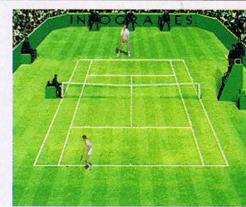
Three years ago this looked old fashioned, so just imagine the scene now. Reasonable fun can be gained from its pick-up-and-go style, with machine gun dogfights providing as much fun as ever. Five extra shareware games on the CD keep *Knights* company. **63%**



9. INT. TENNIS

Regenerator £5

With the unpredictable British summer delaying Wimbledon, you might suggest that they get all the stars to play the championships on a PC instead. Only they won't be very good, because *International Tennis* doesn't really play the same way. Reasonable fun. **61%**



10. INT. ATHLETICS

Regenerator £5

By bad budget game standards, *International Athletics* is well presented, but the events play almost identically. 100m sprint is also the hurdles, discus equals shot-put equals javelin. Its redeeming feature is the day-glo orange box it arrived in. **42%**



And the rest...

ISHAR 2

5+1 Prism £6

Extremely tired RPG adventure, yet it still spawned a sequel. **26%**

LOTUS 3

Regenerator £5

One- or two-player driving game.

It played 'music' at us through the PC speaker. We ran away. **22%**

CHAOS CROSSWORD

Regenerator £5

Literally millions of different, randomly generated crossword puzzles. Recreates the thrill of *The Times*. **18%**

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Netware

This month: news of Blizzard's new Battle.net; a site brimming with deathmatch advice; an easy way of getting 'wired'; and dozens of further items. By STEVE FARAGHER

Shape of things to come

<http://www.blizzard.com/bnet>
Blizzard, the kindly people who brought us *World of Warcraft* 2, have been thinking long and hard about how to marry gaming and the Internet successfully together. Their rather elegant solution is to include an Internet mode in all their future releases and set up a Web site called Battle.net. Providing you have Internet access, all you'll have to do is choose Internet mode when you start playing the game and it will automatically connect to the service. Before you know it you'll be competing with fellow 'surfers' in some of the most exciting head-to-head action you'll ever get.

In addition to this fine service, Battle.net also provides an arena for you to talk to your opponents with an on-line chat facility. The service will cost nothing on top of your existing provider's charges but you will need to have TCP/IP access (check with your server if you're not sure).

The first two Blizzard games to



battle.net

Blizzard Entertainment makes gaming on the Internet as simple as pressing a single button.

Battle.net provides an arena for Blizzard customers to chat, challenge opponents and initiate multiplayer games, as well as a cost to the user. Blizzard charges no hourly or monthly fees, and there is no startup charge. To access [battle.net](#), players simply select the Internet option from the game's main screen, and they are automatically connected to the service. Once logged on, users can compete head-to-head against players from around the world over the Internet. TCP/IP access to the Internet is required, and players are responsible for applicable online access fees that may be charged by their Internet Service Provider.

The [battle.net service](#) will be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Different channels allow players of varying skill levels to match wits with opponents of comparable abilities. [Diablo](#), due out later this fall, will be the first product to support [battle.net](#) with [Starcraft](#) following this Christmas.

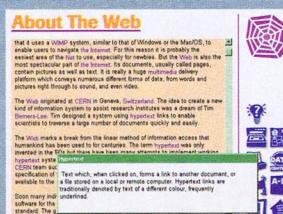
support all this will be *Diablo* and *Starcraft*, both due out in autumn this year. *Diablo* is an Advanced Dungeons & Dragons-style quest through deep, dank dungeons, which you'll be able to play in co-operation with other players, making it the closest thing yet to real role-playing. *Starcraft*, on the other hand, is a real-time strategy game of interstellar combat in which you play the military leader of one of three races vying for domination, and in which you must marshal your resources, send out your starfighters, that kind of thing.



The web site is up and running now if you want to go and have a look. See you all there before Christmas.

Get on-line for free

Team 17, whom you may be more used to thinking of in connection with games production, have stepped firmly into the Internet arena. They've just released *Access All Areas*, a very sensible CD-ROM guide to getting yourself on-line. The package comes complete with all the necessary software for a happy Internet existence as well as one month's free access with *Cityscape*, and so can justifiably claim that it's everything you need to get on-line. As someone who's been used to having everything laid on at work and has recently had to get on-line at home, I fully appreciate the usefulness of this splendid package. The



guide's remarkably well written and uses hypertext intelligently to explain all the buzz words and technical jargon you'll need to

understand before making it as a fully fledged nettie. So if you've been reading the rest of this page and wondering what the blithering hell I've been going on about, this is the very thing for you. The guide costs £29.99 and is available from all good shops. We've also got ten copies to give away to *Network* readers.

To win one of ten free copies of Access All Areas, simply write your name and address on a postcard and send it to Netware/Access All Areas, PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and make sure it gets here before 30th September 1996. All the usual competition rules apply.

Blue's 3D house of 3D carnage

<http://www.panix.com/~sheaslip/3d/>

An excellent site for fans of all things that are deathmatch related, whether for *Doom 2* or *Quake*, although there's a strange absence of *Duke Nukem 3D*. That's more than compensated for by the enormous quantity of WADs, editors and



FAQs that are available on this encyclopaedic site. The site is particularly recommended for the wide variety of strategy guides available, and is a serious must for anybody who wants to bone up on their 3D virtual combat technique. Get over here fast, before your mates do.

Let your browser do the walking

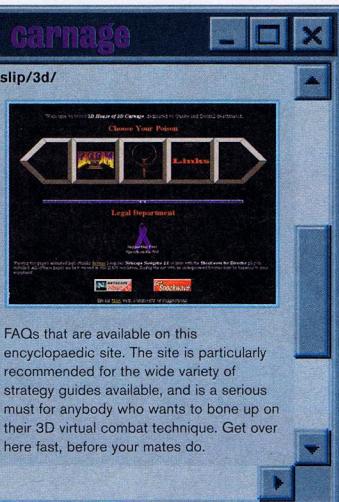
<http://www.gamepen.com/yellowpages/>

A site that's well worth visiting is this very comprehensive American listing of Web sites to do with gaming. From here you'll be able to locate information on almost any games-related subject you desire. It's definitely a site worth adding to your bookmarks.



Stupid Web word of the month

A new regular feature of Netware (and one that you're very welcome to contribute to) has me on the lookout for newly coined words that unwittingly demonstrate the pseudy nature of much of what goes on over the Internet. The winner of this month's award is Steve Bowbrick writing in the on-line magazine Websight (<http://websight.com/>). In an article which talks about net culture and refers to "cyber-crypto-libertarianism" he uses the word DIGERATI. What does that mean? People who play indigenous Australian instruments well? Any tosh like this that you send to me and I print will be rewarded with something special from the PC Gamer cupboard.



PCG's Web site

<http://www.futurenet.co.uk>

Neil, PC Gamer's on-line editor, was very excited when I phoned up to ask him if there was any news on the PCG Web site. "Tell them to look out for the brand new PC Hotlist – our downloading section," he yelped. "It's stuffed with a big collection of shareware and demos all carefully hand picked by the PCG staff. And don't forget to mention that our server's been upgraded too, making ours one of the fastest sites in Europe. And we've got the latest version of *Quake* (1.0). We were the first to have it," he added proudly. There's nothing more to add to that.



Firefly

<http://www.ffly.com/Tables/MainFrame.phtml>

Ever wanted to have your own Web site but couldn't afford the time and effort? Well, Firefly is one of a whole range of new places that cater for your needs. Members of Firefly get their own Web page within the 'virtual community' – you can write some introductory material about yourself, upload a picture or two and even have some animations as well as lots of info on what films and music you're into. It's free to become a member of Firefly, just follow the on-screen instructions and you'll soon have your very own Web site. You may even make some new friends. So you see, even on the Internet you can get out and enjoy yourself instead of spending all your spare time playing games.



E-mail us

If you've come across any useful or interesting stuff on the Internet which we could include on this page, please e-mail it to one of the following addresses:

Steve Faragher –
sfaragher@futurenet.co.uk
 Neil Slateford, on-line editor –
nslateford@futurenet.co.uk
 PC Gamer –
pcgamer@futurenet.co.uk

PCG Ex-site-ment

You must be getting a bit tired by now of me banging on about how wonderful Games Domain is but I can't help myself. This month I'm going to recommend that you check out their selection of patches and fixes for almost every currently available game. Given the enormous pressures on software houses to get their games out quickly these days it's inevitable (although lamentable) that some games go out with bugs. While this is annoying for the general populous, those of us with browsers can point them at <http://www.gamesdomain.co.uk/patches/> where they have an enormous collection of all the latest patches for us to download.

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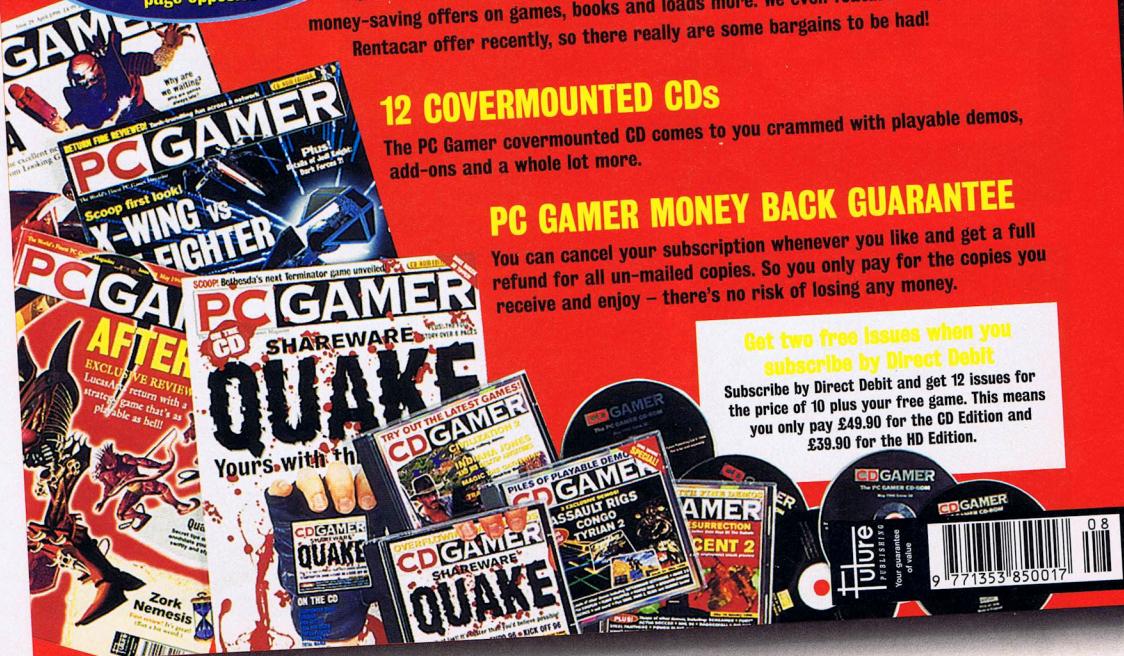
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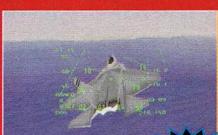
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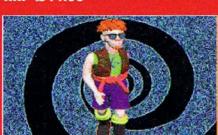
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Quake



(Shareware version) Playing Guide

Here at PC Gamer it's taken many weeks of intensive, gruelling and tough playing to discover every top secret, tactic and shortcut in the shareware version of Quake. But that's our job, and here James Flynn and Steve Owen spill the beans.



Quake, probably more than any other action-based PC game, requests and requires you to discover its hidden secrets. While it's possible to explore a fair way into the shareware game without collecting the Quad Damages, extra health and super nailgun ammo, your task will be a damn site easier if you do. Taking on two fiends with a shotgun may be gallant but is not an exercise that will cement relationships with your life insurance salesman.

The snag is that Quake's true-3D environment makes locating the entrances, switches and triggers to the booty substantially harder than, say, *Doom*. Rather than simply running along the walls belting the baddies, you'll spend a while looking up into the rafters, peering sometimes just standing still in the right place to find 'em.

All told, the shareware game contains a total of 24 secret areas. The lack of a map (grr) makes it much harder to pinpoint many of their positions. The

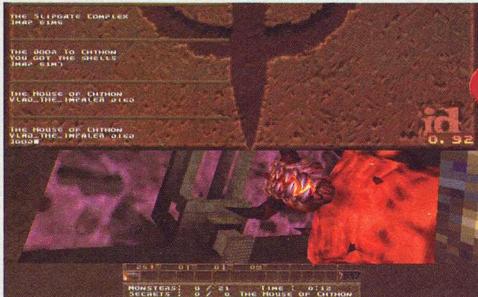
and have a look around for yourself. We've kindly marked them on their usefulness. The star rating is derived from two factors – the value of the hidden reward and the risk/time involved in obtaining it. For example, although there may be a brilliant 100 health bonus, if you have to leap over a deep lava pit in an exposed position it's not really worth the effort. Make sure you collect all the 3-stars at some point.

Level 1, Difficulty Select Level

The first level's a very clever idea that owes a lot to Raven's hub-based design that we saw in *Hexen*.

1) Finding the Nightmare Level of difficulty is not so important for the shareware version. But when the entire game arrives, playing on the hardest setting will be the only way to access all the maps in single-player mode. To discover it, move through any of the three entrance halls and proceed to the pool, which you can drop clean through. Walk into it slowly, and hold the move backwards key as you fall through. If you do it right, you'll land on a high narrow beam that leads off to the left. Follow it to reach the Nightmare Level.

2) Just before you enter the Nightmare difficulty slipgate, shoot the switch on the wall. This opens up a secret level later in the game.



Console yourself

Only wimps use *Quake*'s menus. The real hard nuts customise every last detail through the use of the console and its closely related config file. The console is accessed by pressing the ` key (top left of the keyboard) or selecting Console... from the menu (although, as we've already explained, menu use costs lives).

This text-based control system works by accepting a multitude of commands that express their gratitude in being employed by altering certain details and often giving you a distinctly unfair advantage over Quake beasts or multi-player enemies.

Extremely lazy consolites don't bother to even type these things more than once, including a list of commands in a config file, saving it

in the 'id1' sub-directory within the main *Quake* directory and running it by typing either 'exec filename.cfg' in the console, or running *Quake* by adding '+exec file.cfg' to the command line. We've included a sample config file on CD Gamer. To use some of the extra features, press:

'm' to fire a quick missile. No matter what weapon you have selected, a rocket will stream from your launcher, and then return you to your other weapon of choice.

'T' to zoom in on what you are staring at. A cool way of sniping your opponents. Press 'T' to zoom back out again.

'Q' to 'P' to select tracks 1 to 10 of your audio CD. Watch out for track one if you put a data CD in.

‘9’ to play the previous CD track.

'0' to play the next track. This assumes you have 16 tracks on the CD. If you have more, you won't be able to get at them, and if you have less, the extra tracks will be very quiet indeed.

The config file also sets up your name and some running speeds. Express your identity by altering the file in a chosen text editor or word processor.



You cheat

Here is a complete reminder of the cheats, all of which are typed at the console.

GOD – Invincibility, which can be toggled on or off.

FLY – Suddenly gravity doesn't seem quite so essential. Use whatever keys you defined to move up and down.

GIVE S x – Gives you x number of shells.

GIVE N x – And this does the same with the nails.

GIVE R x – Same again for the rockets.

GIVE C x – You must be getting the hang of it by now. Cells.

GIVE H x – This, though, gives you x health points.

GIVE x – And this is totally different. Gives you weapon number x.

IMPULSE 9 – Shortcut to getting all the weapons and loads of ammo.

IMPULSE 255 – Gives you the supremely marvellous Quad Damage.

NOCLIP – So that you can walk through walls.

Use with **FLY** to stop you dropping through.

NOTARGET – Stops the monsters from attacking you unless you start shooting at them.

REGISTERED 1 – Makes Quake

think you've got a registered copy. You'll be able to get past the barriers, but walking into the slippages crashes the game.

Level 1, Map 1 The Slippgate Complex

This level eases you into the action proper and shows what to look for as you tackle the later maps.

1) There are more secrets on this level than any other, and although they start easy it doesn't stay that way for long. Move forward and look at the flashing alcove. Shoot the small wall at its end to open up a small compartment. ★★



2) Jump over the right of the first bridge you arrive at. Proceed down the tunnel and walk up the steps to register the secret before carrying on down the tunnel and using the lift at the end. Not exactly hard but worth having. ★★

3) Past the bridge and through the door at the end. Turn right, move round the pillar and shoot the globe screen halfway up it. Hop on the

platform behind you, move around the ledge and shoot the second globe to reveal Quad Damage. You can shoot the next wall as well if you want. ★★

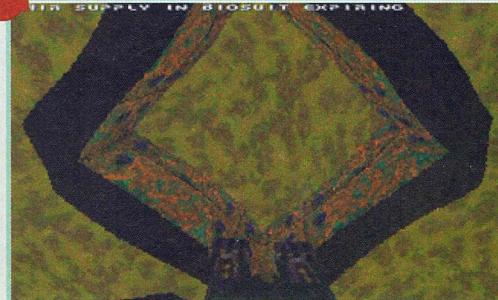


4) Return to the start of (3). Turn left this time, raise the platform over the slime and turn left. Shoot the red target in the wall to your left, turn around and collect the shotgun from the new alcove. ★★



ahead. Now move to the next, and then the area with the 100 health. ★

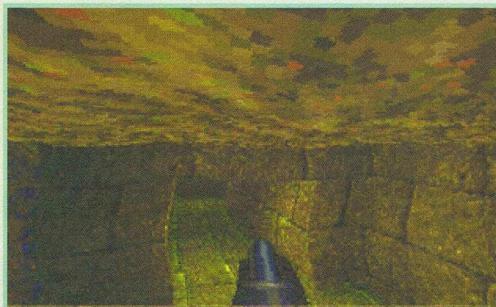
6) Your first swim. Grab the biosuit (for slime protection) from the door to the right of the bottom of the walkway behind the pillar. Jump into the muck and move forward through the opening and onwards. When the tunnel opens up, look upwards and pop through the hole in the roof. Collect the goodies and slippage out. ★★



Level 1, Map 2 Castle of the Damned

We've all voted this one as the best conventional Deathmatch arena. The combination of open areas, traps, water, weapons and turning-the-corner action makes it vee spesh.

1) Walk off the bridge past the stairs to the right. Shoot the greeny wall there, wait for it to open, enter and proceed until you reach the stairs. You can also arrive here by jumping off the bridge with the big red rune over it and climbing the ramp in the room through the arch. ★★



2) Find the bridge with the green armour to the right and the double-barrelled shotgun to the left. Jump off and move through the door under the shotgun. Take the first right and follow the platform that's above you all the way. When you reach the pool, shoot the symbol high up on the wall and move up the ramp. The symbol lowers some armour above you which you can collect later. Move through the slippgate and collect the armour. ★★



3) Turn right after crossing the bridge with the red symbol. Climb the stairs to the left and move behind the middle column that's on your left. Look down and push the block there. Collect the Quad Damage from the area to your right.



Ten useful suggestions

1) If you're playing Deathmatch Quake, keep moving at all times. No matter how safe you might feel, chances are that you can be seen and killed from somewhere else on the level.

2) If you collect the Quad Damage power-up, don't select the rocket or grenade launchers. Fire at someone from close quarters and

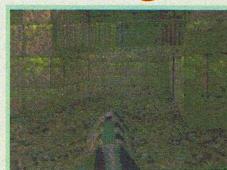


Level 1, Map 3 The Necropolis

The spoon feeding's over and the convoluted level design begins. Tough enemies too.

1) Let's take it from the top. Move forward, and kill the Ogre behind the bars (plus his mates of course). Split the Zombies with grenades. Move down the steps until you reach a bridge. Drop off to the left and turn left. Shoot the alcove and collect the rockets and health. ★★

2) Return to the bridge (1) but cross it, carry on and collect the gold key. At one o'clock there's a slightly grungier area of the wall. Walk up to it and stand still. If you're in the right place, you'll sink down and be able to move forward and collect the Ring of Shadows. ★★★ (Deathmatch)



3) From where the Ogre behind the bars is, take the door. Follow the passage, open the gold door, carry on, fall down the opening by the block trap and locate the up ramp in the tunnels beneath. Climb the wall using the small ledges to where the Ogre was. Hit the switch, jump off, go through the doors and kill the Ogres on the high platforms to release bars blocking the yellow armour. Enter the new slippgate. ★★



you'll do yourself four times the damage. If possible, select the double-barrelled shotgun or super nailgun, and only switch to the explosives when you know it's safe.

3) If you need to access a platform that's just out of jumping reach, employ this crafty tactic at the expense of some health. Face away from the platform, look down at the floor, and as you press the jump key, fire a rocket into the ground. The explosion gives you that little extra lift. If you fancy being really clever, write a console alias to do it all for you.

4) If you're low on ammo or just don't fancy your chances with a multitude of grisly beings, poke your head around the corner to attract their attention, and then run and hide, letting the civil war take place without you. Return within 30 seconds and, all being well, one half of the army will have wiped out the others in a friendly fire incident.



Level 1, Map 4 The Grisly Grotto

Another good level and the first to introduce the real possibility of drowning. Remember that some of the most satisfying kills can occur underwater.

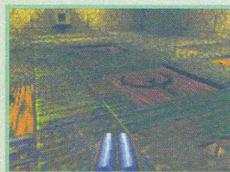
1) Hop through the hatch and shoot the symbols high on the wall above the spiral staircase to release the armour. You should have spotted these for yourself. ★★



2) Jump into the deep lake and locate the stash of rockets in the small passage halfway down the right-hand wall. Surprisingly irritating to find and takes you away from the action for too long. *



3) This one's well worth doing as it unlocks the brilliant secret level. Into the deep lake again. Swim under the pier lengthways, under the wall at the end and surface. There should be a big open area with doors. Enter and locate the mass of blue slime (not the puddle) with the bridge over it and the platform at the end. Rise up on the platform, step on the five plates. Enter both new doors (careful) and hit the switches in both new alcoves. A cave has opened up on the lake now. Return, find the bright opening and swim on in. Enter the slippgate to reach the Ziggurat Vertigo. ★★



5) Practise endlessly until you master the art of looking around while running. If you find yourself one finger short, enable the continuous run option or weigh the relevant key down with a book.

6) Annoy anyone with a grenade launcher by running around them and then legging it. They won't be able to follow without triggering their own ring of explosives.



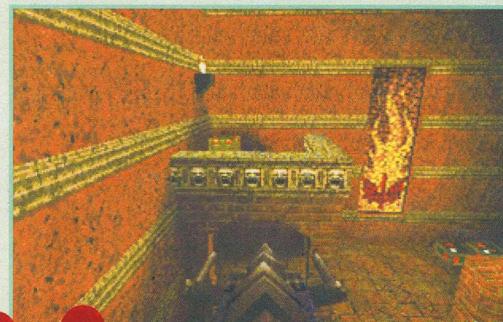
Level 1, Map 5 Gloom Keep

An experiment that no-one here seems particularly keen on. Loads of traps and secrets.

1) Hop right into the water and locate the upwards opening to the 100 health points. ★★



2) Cross the start bridge and take a right to the portcullis. Find the stained glass window and leap across to the wall to your left as you enter. Run and jump onto the far raised area to find the easiest 'secret' ever. ★★



7) If you use a teleporter in a particularly busy Deathmatch session, make sure you run away before someone follows you through and telefrags you. Similarly, follow your enemies through the teleport for the easiest kill ever.

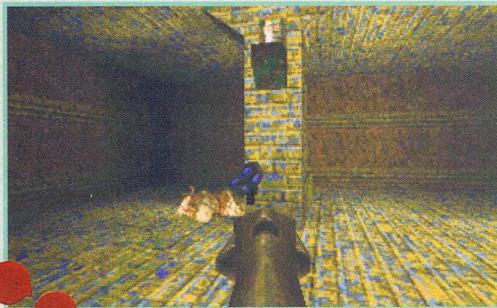


8) If you find that you keep killing yourself with your own rockets or grenades, turn on team mode from the Deathmatch menu. You'll still lose armour, but your health will never be reduced by your own hand.

9) If you are frustrated on a particular Deathmatch level, or are amazed that you're currently in the lead and don't expect it to last, rush towards the exit and ruin everyone else's game by moving onto the next one. This works particularly well if you have all the good weapons and your opponents don't.

10) Don't be one of those people who hides in dark corners and picks players off. No-one will like you, and you will achieve nothing but a hollow victory.

3) You're at the start. Straight on and through to the Y-shaped raised-floor room. Take the right fork, enter the large room you come across and move to the exposed column with a torch on it. Jump when under the torch and enter the alcove behind. ★★



4) Return to the large room (3), move forward and left, and go up the stairs. Up the next stairs to the room with a slippgate at the end. Enter it from behind and collect the Quad Damage from the far left of the area you are now on. ★★



5) There is a deep hole leading to the exit slippgate. Fall down it, turn around and shoot the wall. Collect the armour and enter the slippgate. ★★



Level 1, Map 6 The Door to Chthon

Life starts to become decidedly tricky here, both in terms of the creatures you face and the inaccessibility of the secrets.

1) Jump down from where you start and move down the corridor to your left to the pattern over the lava. Forward and to your right, enter the room and look up. Shoot the symbol



on the left wall, enter the new door ahead and clamber along the air conditioning units. If you look down, you can drop onto the ceiling of the room you were just in and collect the Quad Damage. ★★



2) Return to the lava under the floor and take a left. Push the Quake symbol plate, fall into the pit that's just opened, drop down the new stairs and walk to the end of the passage. Look at the spikes, enter, kill the Ogres and escape at the other end (bars will block your original entrance) as the spikes will now be moving toward you in a you're-gonna-be-mashed way. Return to the area, trigger the spikes again, step back (no bars this time), wait for the spikes to pass and step behind them to collect the gear. ★★

3) Once you have the silver key, the dark room below the start will be lit. Cross the pit and enter the passage. At the end turn left and locate the pillar with the switch in it. Hit the switch, move round the column and shoot the new red symbol. Turn round and you'll be able to use the new stairs to get some rockets. ★★



Weapons of destruction

Pick the right tool for the job, or waste ammo – the choice is yours.

Axe – Suitably Gothic, and there if you want a challenge. If you're running low on ammo, the axe kills the Rotweiler and Grunt in two swipes, but don't even think about using it on an Ogre, unless you enjoy being hacked by a chainsaw.

Shotgun – Far weedier than you might hope, the shotgun is hopelessly under-powered, particularly at long range. It's not as accurate (or forgiving) as it was in the test version, either.

Double-barrelled shotgun – More than twice the power of the shotgun at close range, this is arguably the most powerful weapon at close quarters, although slow reloading times keep you on your toes. Highly inaccurate at long range, this is the weapon to choose if you enjoy running at your opponent.



Nailgun – Satisfyingly rat-a-tat-tat, the nailgun is only useful until you find its big brother, or if you're running a bit low on flechettes. Great for strafing past a line of Ogres.

Super nailgun – A superbly versatile weapon and particularly useful against the fearsome Shambler, the super nailgun gets through your ammo in no time. Combine it with Quad Damage and you could count the bodies on the fingers of a lot of hands. Also useful for preventing Ogres lobbing grenades as they suffer from the recoil of 100 nails.

Grenade launcher – Certainly the most entertaining and flexible weapon, the grenade launcher is particularly useful in furious Deathmatches. Encourage someone to chase you down a corridor and then lob a

4) Stay where you were for (3) until the stairs rise again. Enter the slipgate down the new stairs and collect the health on the ledge near where you emerge.

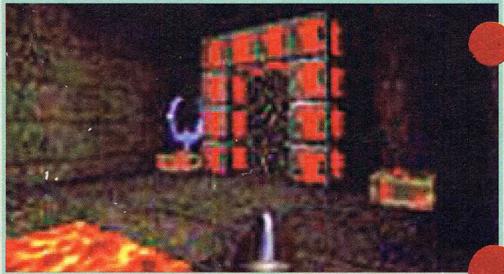
Level 1, Map 7 The House of Chthon

id Software clearly felt that Chthon himself provided enough excitement for this level. Use the floor switches to frazzle him in case you hadn't guessed. There are no secrets.

Level 1, Map 8 Ziggurat Vertigo

We could try to describe a 16-player Deathmatch in this low-gravity level, but you really have to be there. Fantastic idea and implementation.

1) Collect the Pentagram of Protection from in front of where you start and dive into the lava by the bridge. Swim beneath the bridge away from the ziggurat and you will emerge in a small room. Be grateful for invincibility and step back with a mission. ★★



grenade at the wall in front as you turn the corner. Laugh as your hunter runs straight into it. Also useful over holes and for clearing out monsters around corners, or destroying a task force of Zombies – see the first Quake entry.

Rocket launcher – Deathmatches frequently degenerate into a rocket blastathon. If you haven't had a good 16-player session in the Ziggurat Vertigo, witnessing players blown from one side of the room to the

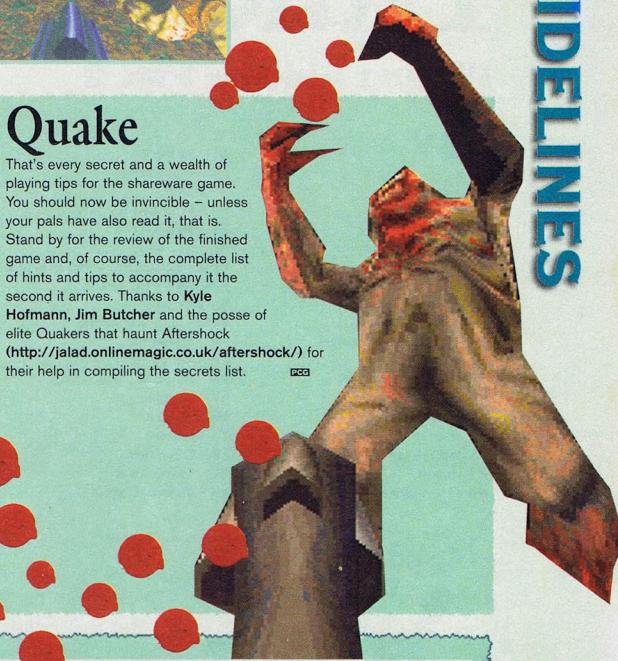


2) Behind the silver key door head forward and left and shoot the dark wall. If you've just been fighting, this may trigger it. Easy end. ★★

Quake

That's very secret and a wealth of playing tips for the shareware game. You should now be invincible – unless your pals have also read it, that is. Stand by for the review of the finished game and, of course, the complete list of hints and tips to accompany it the second it arrives. Thanks to **Kyle Hofmann**, **Jim Butcher** and the posse of elite Quakers that haunt *Aftershock* (<http://jala.onlinemagic.co.uk/aftershock/>) for their help in compiling the secrets list.

PCG



other, you haven't lived. Not so useful at close range, though, but extremely dangerous if you've got Quad Damage. Watch out for the Shambler, who barely notices a rocket in his face.

Thunderbolt – Only accessible in the shareware version if you use the IMPULSE 9 cheat, the thunderbolt is a powerful beam weapon that is capable of taking care of everything, including you if you decide to discharge it into the water, whereupon it acts as a smart bomb.

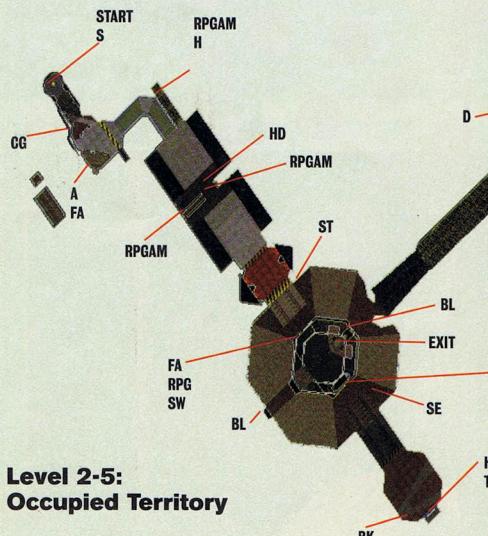
Duke Nukem 3D

Playing Guide – Part 2

KEY

AM – Ammo
 A – Armour
 B – Boots
 BK – Blue Keycard
 BL – Blue Lock
 CG – Chaingun
 CGAM – Chaingun Ammo
 CL – Combination Lock
 CS – Combination Switch
 D – Devastator
 DAM – Devastator Ammo
 FA – First Aid
 FS – Fault Sign
 FT – Freeze Thrower
 FTAM – Freeze Thrower Ammo
 H – Health
 HD – Holo Duke

JP – Jet Pack
 NV – Night Vision
 P – Pistol
 PB – Pipe Bomb
 RK – Red Keycard
 RL – Red Lock
 RPG – Rocket Propelled Grenade
 RPGAM – RPG Ammo
 S – Shotgun
 SAM – Shriner Ammo
 SE – Secret Exit
 SG – Scuba Gear
 SR – Shriner Raygun
 ST – Steroids
 SW – Switch
 T – Teleport
 TB – Trip Bombs
 YL – Yellow Lock
 YK – Yellow Keycard



**Level 2-5:
Occupied Territory**



Having problems with Levels 2 and 3?

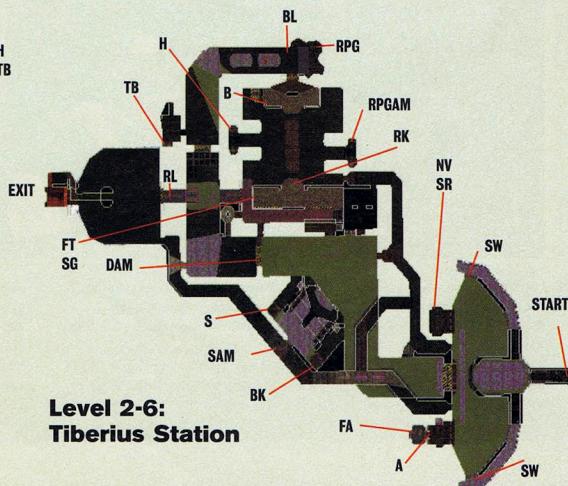
Well not for long, because we bring you the maps and the secrets to make your route through them less troublesome...

Level 2-5: Occupied Territory

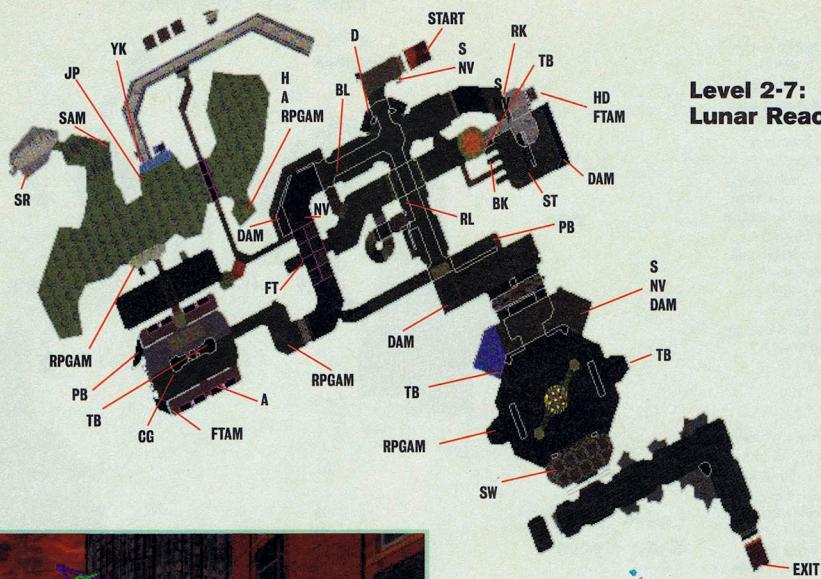
There are five secrets to find here. First, after opening the large gate near the emblem, crouch down and walk into the wall on the right-hand side of the gate. For the second, listen out for the sound of a door opening as you head down the moonlit corridor, then head back to the entrance to find it. Third, there are two vents opposite the holodule in the same corridor – check them out, then, in the room behind the red door, check the monitor on the lower right. Finally, to get to a secret level, shoot the switch high on the wall opposite the auto-destruct, then jump into the second exit below you on the left.

Level 2-6: Tiberius Station

Eight secrets here, so we'll have to be quick. The first is behind a small door opposite you in the armoury. Second, bomb the crack in the wall behind the Tiberius Station door. Third is in the corridor with two elevators, opposite the drinking fountain. Fourth is by the door marked Danger: Radioactive Material. Number five is hidden behind a wall on the left of the toxin pool, and number six is on the right. Seven, bomb out the cracked wall after the nearby elevator. Eight, kill the monster in the red key room, turn left into the vent, then run down to the far end of the vent and fly through the opened door.



**Level 2-6:
Tiberius Station**

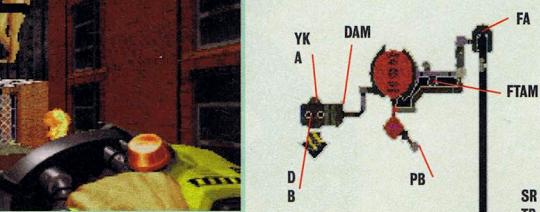


Level 2-7:
Lunar Reactor



Level 2-7:
Lunar Reactor

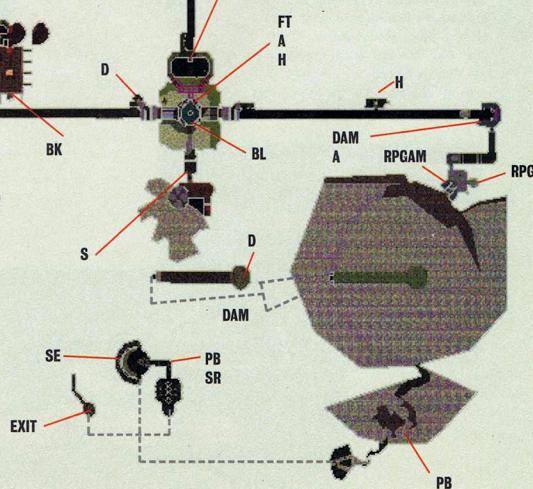
First, drop through the vent into the crew quarters, activate the switch and run to the alcove on the right, then find the secret room in a corner of the toxin pool. Second, in the area where you're being shot at by a turret, search the panel on the left (making sure to take out the turret first). Third, drop down into the cave below that same turret. The fourth is to the right of the hanging vent – shoot the vent and jump on top to get to it. The fifth is to the right of the red keycard, and secret places numbers six and seven are to the left and right of the reactor – just jump straight into them.



Level 2-8:
Darkside

Level 2-8:
Darkside

Seven secrets, not much space. Best to read these really quickly. First is in the room overlooking the Alpha and Beta signs – search the map. Second is behind a crack in the Alpha train waiting area. Third is through the door after the collapsing cave – search the wall on the right of the tubes. Fourth is behind the map on the train platform beyond the blue elevator. Fifth – enter the vent after the lift in Gamma, then follow the tunnel and blow out the crack high up in the room on the left. Sixth requires you to fly through the high vent on the Beta train platform. Finally, bomb the crack on your left after coming out of the monolith to get to the secret exit.



Level 2-9: Overlord

Only four secrets on this final level, but hey, you need to concentrate more on destroying that rotten boss beast. First, swim out of the entrance passage and up to the water surface – there's a secret room beyond a hidden door. Second, once the central lighting column comes down, jump onto it then run like the wind to the nearby column which has opened up. The third secret lies beyond a crack on one of the paths leading up to the waterfall section, while the fourth and final secret involves dodging that nasty boss and dashing into his control room, which causes a section of wall to open up. Easy or what?

Level 2-10: Spin Cycle

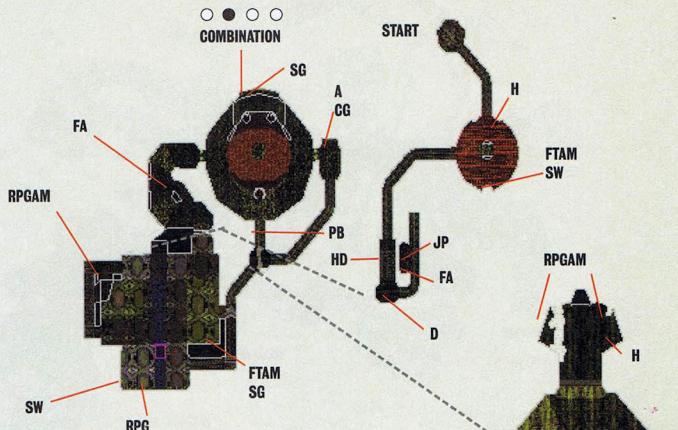
How secret do you want it? This is a secret level, and thus it is proven that there are no secret areas. QED, as Professor Heinz Wolf would say. Just follow the level round, opening up each area as it comes, and battle your way through. And while you're there, have a good old chuckle at the hapless monsters as they're carried helplessly round on what can only be described as Satan's record player. Well, why not?

Level 2-11: Lunatic Fringe

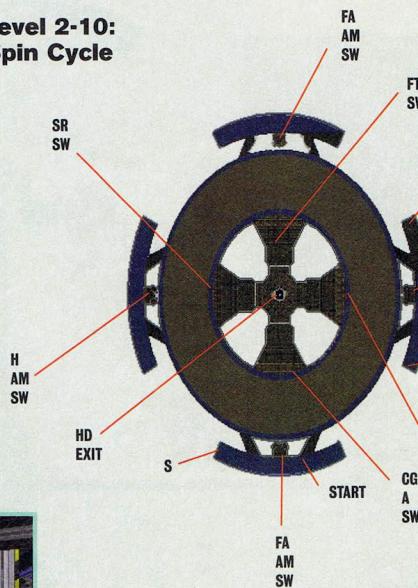
Er. What? Oh, the map looks sensible enough. But it bears little resemblance to the actual level. We're very confused. You go round the circle once and you end up somewhere else. Go round it again and you're back where you've started. It's like an enormous Möbius strip, except you can't see the twist. What on earth are those 3D Realm chaps on? Oh, by the way, no secrets here. It's frightening enough as it is.



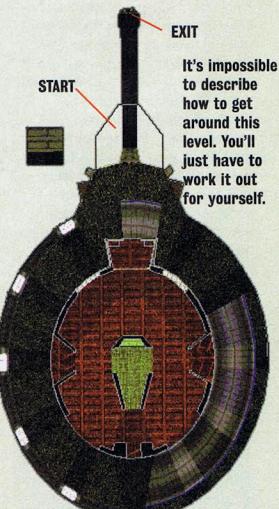
Level 2-9: Overlord



Level 2-10: Spin Cycle



Level 2-11: Lunatic Fringe

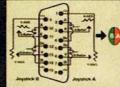
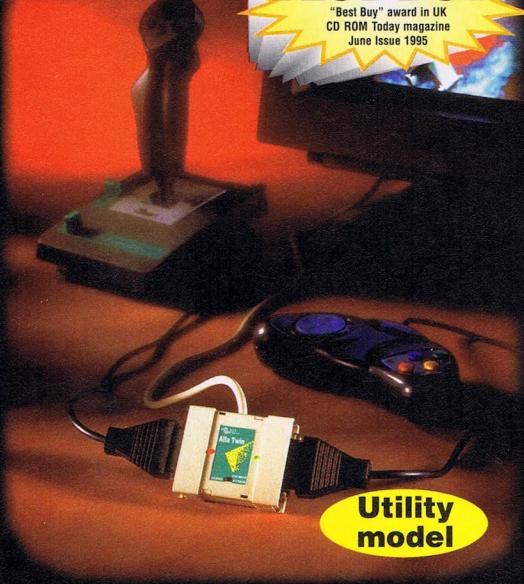


AlfaTwin

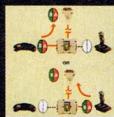
The auto-switch & two-player switch for IBM PC joysticks

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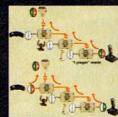


Due to the design of the game port, the IBM PC supports two joysticks (A & B). Each with two firebuttons only. Four button joysticks, and joysticks which have throttle and rudder control or coolie caps, make use of the second joystick (B) controls.



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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.



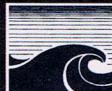
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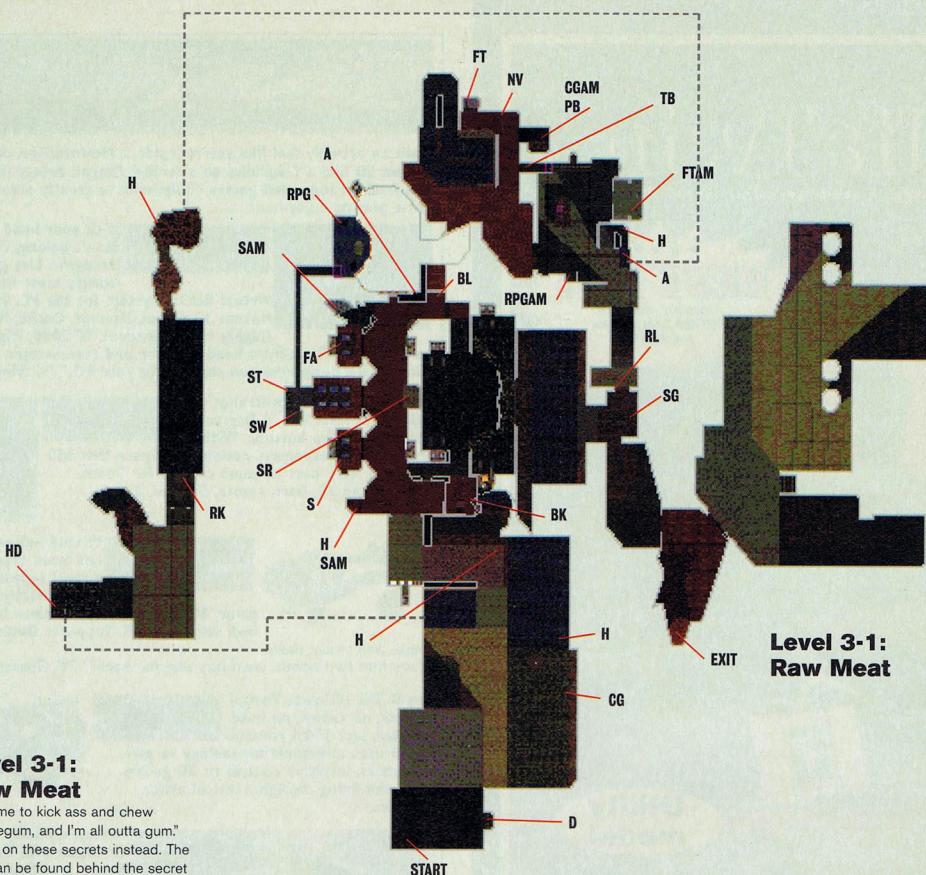
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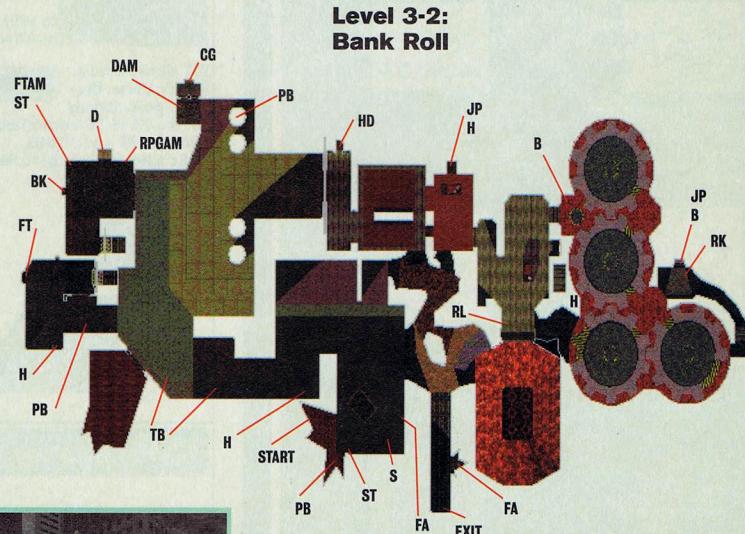


Level 3-1: Raw Meat

"It's time to kick ass and chew bubblegum, and I'm all outta gum." Chew on these secrets instead. The first can be found behind the secret wall by the first statue in the sushi restaurant. Second is opened by pressing the belly button of the girl in the poster. Third lurks behind a cracked wall in the last room down the corridor, and the fourth is opened by searching the price list to the left of the neon BAR sign. Fifth is revealed by pressing the bloody handprint in the sushi bar, and the sixth is in the nearby ground cupboard. Finally, the seventh is found by searching the cupboard by the kitchen door.

Level 3-2: Bank Roll

Only five secrets in this level, then you're back on your own until next month. The first is opened by searching the cash dispenser in front of the bank. For the second click the button behind the desk in the blue key room, and a painting in the room opens up for your benefit. The third is activated by shooting a high-up button on the right just as you enter the bank – look behind you for your secret place. Fourth, search the painting behind the desk outside the secured area. And fifth, blow up the red crack in the Gamma turbine. Now go until we choose to divulge the rest of Duke's secrets. Go! Now!



Duke Nukem 3D

Next month we'll be dissecting the remaining levels of Duke Nukem 3D, so if you can't finish the game on your own, join us then.

Rayman



Playing Guide – Part 2

In the second part of our Rayman solution, Mark Donald sees you safely through the three remaining worlds of this colourful platformer.

Picture City

Image Level 1 Before jumping on the pencils, knock down the yin yang and jump on it. Spring to the next platform and go right to find more tings and a cage. Retrace your steps. While on the first pencil after the photographer, jump up between the two pencils for a power-up. A platform will appear to the

right which will give you access to a cage later on. At the end of this level are eight yin yangs. Climb to the left to get the golden fist. A platform will appear. Jump on it and jump left to get the ting. A cage will appear on the other side of the eraser. Go back to the platform that will take you up to the level with the cage. Knock loose one of the eight yin yangs, push it behind the exit panel, jump on top, get the super helicopter liquid, fly up and get a free life.



Image Level 2 At the end of the level, knock the yin yangs and you can get access to a free life.



Image Level 3 Do not touch the first fairy you see. Go up to the yin yangs and punch away the pointed ones. Jump on the normal one and platforms will appear to take you to bonus power-ups. You will see another fairy, who will shrink you so you can get more bonuses below. Retrace your steps to the first fairy. Let her enlarge you to reach the next cage. There is a square bouncing eraser just past the jumping Antitool. Jump onto it and

then leap to the moving platform to the right. From this platform you can wind up and punch the yin yang to the left. Go back to the bouncing eraser, jump on top of the yin yang, and then punch the cage.

Do the second half of this level twice: once large to find the last high-up cage, and once lilliputian so you can leave. At the end of the level Rayman will be large. Grab the flying hook and touch the fairy to become small to exit.



Image Level 4 You cannot hit Space Mama when she protects herself with her rolling pin. Hit her while she is in the air.

Image Level 5 Once you've reached the second series of red pens, drop down between them and grab one of the hooks. Swing over to a rising platform, past the hunter (who you can't kill) and jump on to the bouncing erasers with the yin yang. You must knock the yin yang loose, push it over to the right slightly, jump on top, and with a slight

running start, jump across to the next platform. You can also push the yin yang into the gulf and use it to climb out on the other side. Once you've reached the flying hooks, swing across them to find the power-up. Once you grab it a cloud of flying hooks will appear to the right. Swing carefully on them to reach the exit.



Image Level 6 To get past the spikes pointing down, use the helicopter power to slow your bounce. Jump over the exit sign at the end of this level, but don't touch it. A cage will appear beneath you.



Image Level 7 The tings indicate the route to follow to the cage at the bottom of the bouncing erasers. After the photographer, in order to get past the two rows of pencils, let yourself fall down the oily hill and you should be

able to evade everything without having to jump or fly. There is a cage in this section though. Once you get the power-up at the end, platforms will appear to take you to the end.



Image Level 8 To get the cage trapped between the yin yangs with spikes, you have to swing off the flying hook, punch the yin yang while in the air, turn around quickly, and grab the hook once more. At the end of the level, jump over the exit panel and you'll see a



cage. There are two exits to this level; if you end up in the lower level exit, you will not be able to return and reach the upper level to find the cages. To find these cages, you will have to re-enter Space Mama's crater from the beginning.

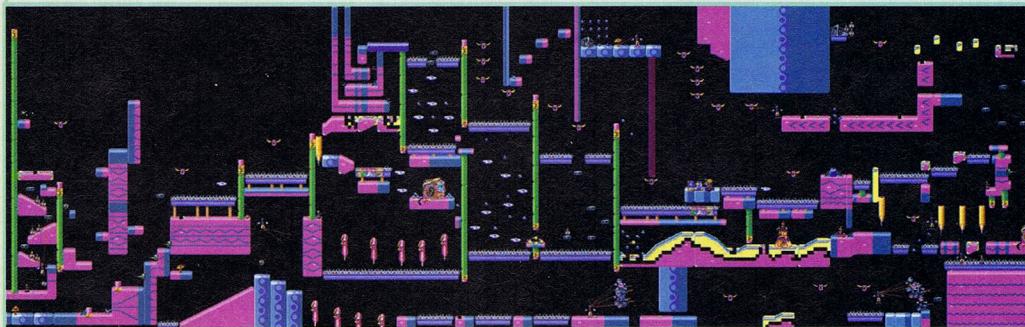


Image Level 9 By choosing the descending path, you'll eventually discover a magician. After the magician, hang right until you reach a dead end. A free life will appear on the other side that you can reach later via a long slide. Once you've got the life, go back up and then jump down into the next hole. You'll see a cage guarded by two hunters. After the

photographer, you will see a cage high up. To reach it, keep going and slide down a V-shaped hill. From the extreme right side, slide back to gain speed and then jump from the left edge to reach a higher level. Keep left and you'll reach the cage. To find the exit, follow the tings down the middle of the V-shaped hill.



Image Level 10 Try to move around on the platform and punch to avoid objects in your path. At the exit, jump over the sign and onto the can of paint. A platform will appear taking you up to a cage.



Image Level 11 Space Mama can be hit, except when she's pointing to shoot with her rolling pin laser and when she's protected by the washing machine. When she's behind the washing machine, try to avoid

the lasers and punch the machine. The vibrations from your punches will break the machine (you can see how many hits it takes by looking at the dial on the machine).

The Caves of Skops

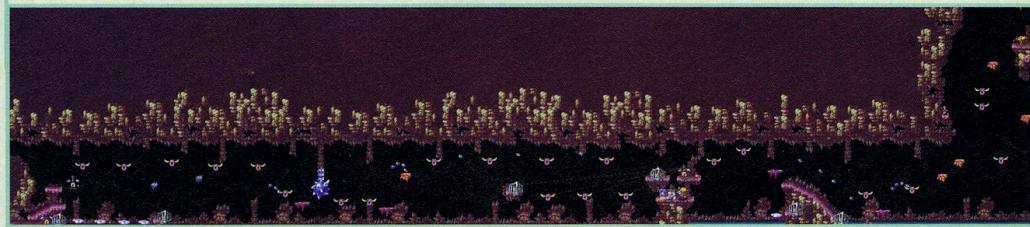
Make sure that you investigate the caverns beneath you on the first part of the level. They may be hiding a cage or two. Once you pass the blue steel ball, and then go up and start going left, try doing a running jump into the void. There will be a cage at the end. Once you free this cage, a cloud will appear taking you to the right side of the screen the way you came. Ride it but don't get off. Let it bring you back to the cage you just liberated. Another cloud will

appear taking you to yet another cage (remember to duck, though). To beat the Scorpion, keep jumping on the falling platforms while avoiding the Scorpion's claw until all of the platforms are gone.

As the last platform falls, jump and hang on the ledge on which the Scorpion is sitting. He will then move backwards. Jump up on the ground. He'll then advance a couple of times while throwing his claw. Each time he does so, jump and hang over the edge until the Scorpion retreats. After about three times, he'll retreat all the way to the right. You must move quickly to avoid the lava.

Cave Level 9 If you hang on the first platform (where the board is located) a cage will automatically appear. Follow the moving clouds and you will discover a second cage. Now you can use your grabbing fist. After the photographer, if you use the big power, you will see a new series of hooks low on the left of the platform where the photographer is located. If you go

there, and come back, you will find a cage. After the photographer, let yourself fall down after the first pink stalactite; it will bring you to a cage. Near the water, jump as precisely as you can to get the small platform you can see out of the water. If you succeed you will see a cage appear on the border of the water on the left.



Cave Level 10 When Mr Skops is attacking, walk to the end of the platform and hang on the border of the platform to avoid being killed. When the lava rises for the second time run to catch the hooks.



Cave Level 11 You can hurt Skops only when he shoots at you with fireballs.



Candy Chateau

Chateau Level 1 If you've lost your run-up, send your fist in the opposite direction to the way you wanted to go. Your run-up will miraculously return.

Chateau Level 2 You are being pursued by an evil Rayman. Follow the tings road and you will arrive in a pit. Run to the left, jump on the cloud on

the right and keep going until you reach a cliff of nougat. Move on via the chocolate way and jump down the cliff on the right. The exit door will appear.



Chateau Level 3 The first curse from Mr Dark reverses your left/right directions. This will last until halfway through the level. You will see the first photographer at the top of the cherries mountain. Let yourself fall down to

her and on the right you will find an extra life. Mr Dark is lurking in wait after the second photographer. Your arch-nemesis will hex you with a curse that forces you to run unless you avoid it by running back.



Chateau Level 4 Mr Dark has confiscated your grabbing fist! Hang around and your friends the Electoons will bring it back.

The first hybrid: half Skops, half stone is only vulnerable when he chuckles his claw at you. The second hybrid: two Space Mamas – easy meat.

The third hybrid: Moskito's head, Mam's body and Sax's feet will try to crush you when you're in midget mode. When he falls, jump down and hit his head.

With the three hybrids dead, the dastardly Mr Dark is vanquished and all the little Electoons can live happily ever after... or can they...? PCG

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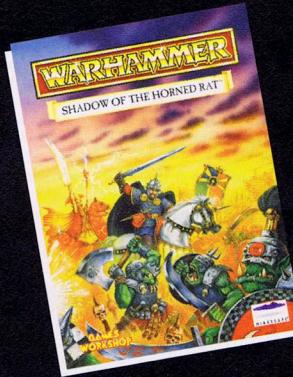
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Foul play

The place to come to if you're a cheat.

Oh dear, oh dear. You've come back for another taster, have you? Can't win by fair means, so you choose to settle for foul. Very well then, here's this month's selection of dirty rotten cheats.

By STEVE OWEN

Rise 2: Resurrection

Everyone knows that *Rise Of The Robots* typified the PC industry's ability to hype a game so far up its own rear that when it came out the other end it was covered in... well, you get the idea. (Sorry about this. - Ed)

What shocked us all, mind you, was that sequels are generally known for their ability to make the precursor seem top of the world in comparison. *Rise 2: Resurrection*, on the other hand, wasn't really that bad, and was, in fact, an incredible improvement over *Daddy Rise*.

As well as a choice of 18 robots available when you start the game, another ten are sitting around just waiting to be discovered, including Vitriol (a tougher Steppenwolf), Assault (a very hard Rook), the morphing Supervisor, the annoyingly named Anil-8 (Supervisor's right hand man) and the huge Mayhem. If you want to play as Vitriol, go to the robot select screen and press: **RIGHT, RIGHT, RIGHT, UP, UP, DOWN, LEFT, LEFT, DOWN, DOWN**.

Getting at the other characters relies on you playing the game a certain number of times. Stick at it and the others should appear before too long.



Worms

This wriggly update to the old classic 'Gorilla.bas' that came free with earlier versions of MS-DOS sold well, due in part to it actually running on a 486, unlike most games released these days. If you are faring badly against an Allolobophorus pal, fool him into thinking that he is about to be eaten



by a swooping sparrow. As he turns away in absolute panic for his life, type **BAABAAB** to turn the cheat mode on, thus equipping yourself with banana bombs and some sheep.

A second cheat is slightly more obvious, so you may need to knock your opponent senseless to get away with it. Since you're playing *Worms*, he'll be halfway there already. Fire any projectile with the cheat mode on, and during its parabolic course, turn the cheat mode off again by typing **AABAAB**. With any luck, and provided you don't hurt any of your annelids, you'll be awarded another turn.

Ripper

Interactive movies, huh? Don't you just love 'em? It's amazing that all of Hollywood's film making talent is willing to create professional-quality PC CD-ROMs, but software developers are still happy to let their next door neighbour and some second rate out-of-work actors put them together instead.

Ripper, of course, is the last title you would pigeon-hole in such a fashion. Burgess Meredith, Christopher Walken, that woman out of Cocoon, all highly respected actors. And *Ripper* has more puzzles and interaction than the average tit in the genre. It's also as tough as a three-day old Mcburger. But then you aren't reading this to be told that, are you? Some cheats, then.

At various points during your investigation, the game reverts to some almost arcade-type



sections, which can be automatically won by typing **ARCADE**. This includes the police robot in, ahem, 'cyberspace'. Some other sections, such as fighting the, oh dear, 'Bio Logic ICE', require the use of the word **CAFFEINE**. If you can't get either of these to work, try typing **ZZTOP** instead. You never know, it might help.

Witchaven 2

How does it feel to release a *Doom*-clone two years after *Doom* and still include little in the way of improvements? Make life easier on yourself and type some of these cheats during the game:

MARKETING: Gives you absolutely everything
EXPERIENCE: 10,000 experience points

KEYS: Guess
WEAPONS: All the weapons
ENCHANT: Just the magic weapons
ARMOR: 150 'armour' points
SHIELD: Midian shield
SHIELD2: Ciran shield
SPELLS: Nine of each spell
MAGICARROW: The, um, magic arrow
FIREBALL, FREEZE, NUKE, SCARE or
NIGHTVISION: Relevant enhancements
OPENDOOR: Opens every door
POTIONS: Nine of each potion
HEALTH, STRENGTH: Give you the obvious
CUREPOISON: An antidote
INVIS: Invisibility
RESISTFIRE: Fire resistance, strangely
SHOWMAP: Reveal your surroundings
LEVEL x: Jump to level x (between one and 15)



Actua Soccer

As lovely as *Actua* looks, it's sometimes a little difficult to scrape yourself from the bottom of the league or prevent yourself from being knocked out in the preliminary cup rounds. One way of making things slightly easier, other than accepting bribes in brown envelopes from Middle East businessmen at seedy service stations, is to start *Actua* by typing **SOCCER -01142475549**

Miraculously, a new team appears in the list, that of the Gremlin Showbiz XI. Naturally, such a team is immensely talented and should walk a victory in most matches. With this mode activated, it's also possible to edit any team's statistics, so that even Manchester City has a chance.

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Q&A

Take heart, weary adventurer. Allow Q&A to anoint your wounds with its healing advice, massage your aching limbs with handy hints, and raise a flagon of refreshing suggestions to your chapped lips. By GRANT RENCOURT

Descent 2

Q Please could you give me some assistance with *Descent 2*? Good game though it is, I seem to be a bit hopeless and can't get past the first few levels. Any tips/cheats you could pass my way would be greatly appreciated.

Andy Rimmer, Colchester

A We could fill up these Q&A pages with tips for *Descent 2*, Andy. Instead, why not try typing in these cheats to help you along your way: SPANIARD – toasts all bots in the mine. ALIFALAFEL – gives you accessories, e.g. headlight, afterburner, convertor and so on. LPNLIIZARD – Homing weapons. FREESPACE – Warp to level. ROCKRGRL – Full map. And that's enough to be going on with.



Alone In The Dark 3

Q First, thank you for answering my question on *Alone In The Dark 3* in the July issue of *PC Gamer* – you helped me get past the mechanism. Unfortunately I'm now stuck slightly further on. I walked through the door and picked up the flask of whisky and drunk it, and I walked across the plank and got the Winchester bullets. Then I thought I could walk across the plank to the window, but I just fall down. What do I do? Please help!

Colin Knott, Northumberland

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.

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A Well, Colin. You'll kick yourself, because it's quite simple. All you need to do is make sure you get a good running distance, then run across the plank to jump across to the building on the other side. It's as simple as that. Remember, you can make Carnby run by pressing the forward cursor key and then pressing it again quickly afterward. Release it to make him walk normally again.



Ultima VIII: Pagan

Q Please could you help me, as I need to find the Mountain King in order to become a Necromancer. I have already replaced the Queen with her brother and completed the test of the deceased Necromancers. Is there some hidden passage? If so, where is it, and how do I open it? Thank you.

Ernest Milton, Bradford

A Okay, after you've finished with the Necromancers, you need to re-enter the Catacombs via a cave, and then go immediately south until you find a door. This will lead you to the Mountain King. Work your way through the caves southward. You will know the entrance to the hall of the Mountain King because of its large double-doors. Open them by conjuring a Golem from the dirt. After that, you need to find some ruins. I'll let you work out the rest for yourself.

Little Big Adventure

Q I have rather a large problem on *Little Big Adventure*. I have followed the guide in an old issue of *PC Gamer* and I am now inside the temple and have just evaded the rolling log. I am now told to "follow the path and find the sacred Book of Bu". I could not find said book, so I rang up the helpline and they said that I must search for it. Very helpful indeed. Please help me to find the evil object, as I am stuck inside the stupid temple and cannot get out.

Kieran Spiers, Loughborough

A So you've evaded the rolling logs, have you Kieran? Have you killed all the creatures in the temple as well? No? Well, you need to do this, then, with a bit of luck and thorough searching, you should locate the Book of Bu, which gives you the power to read ancient runes and advances you to the second magic level (resulting in your ball of power turning to green). Trust me, it is there.



Over To You...

This month we will be rewarding Michael Sheehan of Ferndown in Dorset with a free game for coming to the aid of a fellow reader's plea for help with *Jungle Strike*. So, if you know the answer to any of the problems below or if you've got a choice tip to share with other readers, then write in marking your envelope 'Over To You' and, you never know, you might win a game.

Q If you're frustrated at England losing to Germany in the Euro 96 semi-finals, you could try this tip for **Actua Soccer** to relieve some of the agony of defeat. When you are attacking and the opposing goalie saves it, slide (button 1) near him and when you are in the path of his run-up, press the tackle button continuously (button 2). When he runs out he may trip up and give you the ball, or sometimes he just manages to kick the ball but you block it and it hovers at

waist level, waiting for you to dribble it over the goal line.

James Roberts, New Malden



A With regards to Reuben Chircop's plea for help with

Jungle Strike in

Issue 32, I have come to the rescue with the passwords for the next few levels. Level 7 = MCXNRCCMM. Level 8 = MCZ4QXMM. Level 9 = MCLLCLMM.

Also, when you start Level 7 go up to the top of the screen and fly right. Several stone objects will come into view, with two gatling-guns and four pyramids. Shoot the guns then shoot the pyramids. Each one contains an extra life. You'll no doubt find that flying in the Stealth fighter with more lives is easier.

Michael Sheehan, Dorest

A In answer to Carl Wheeler, who needs help with **Shannara** (PCG 29), he needs to get the scroll

that's hidden in the back of the magic book. This can be obtained from the locked cabinet in the library. It is necessary to cut the book to get this scroll. Once he has it he should read it – it turns out to be a pact between Stenmin and Brona which is signed with Stenmin's blood. The scroll can then be used to provide the blood necessary for the ritual of summoning.

Jonathan Bryden, Rutland

Q I am playing **Legend** and am very stuck. I am in the first level of Kishyai, in the puzzle room at the bottom left of the map where you get the crystal key, and I don't know how to get out. Please help me as I am desperate to continue. Also, do you have any cheats for **Cannon Fodder**, as it is getting unfeasibly hard?

Hamish Morgan, Aberdeen

Q Please help me! On **Space Hulk** I have trouble winning any missions at all. Are there any known built-in cheats or file editing cheats

that I could use to slow down the aliens' movements or stunt their respawning, or anything else really?

Aaron Campbell, via e-mail

Q Please could you help me with

Gabriel Knight: Sins Of The

Father? I am stuck on Day 2. I have been to the Gedde estate, using the police badge to gain entry, the museum residence, museum and drugstore. Where else do I need to go to finish Day 2? The items I have are: two photos, tweezers, magnifying glass, scrap book, snake scale skin, red brick and a copy of the mysterious symbols, one of which is from the church yard. I also have the cleric collar and jacket.

Joyce Kelsey, Cleveland

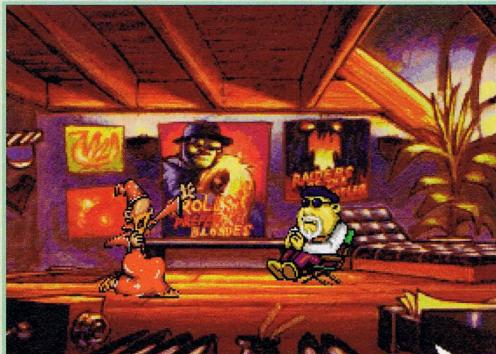
Q Please help me with **Ripper**. I have solved the three puzzles at Wooford Cottage but am now stuck in Catherine's apartment. What I want to know is how to open the book that is found in her apartment.

Simon Hughes, Norwich

Discworld

Q I am stuck in **Discworld**. I have given the Arch Chancellor the staff (from Windle Poons) and the frying pan (from the kitchen). I have met the sleazy guy in the library, who says that you can use L-space to time travel, and the library is packed with it. The golden banana will give me access to the L-space, but I don't know how to get it from the sleazy man. Please can you help me?

Andy Pymont, Wells



A If you've used the pick-pocket skills taught to you early on in the game, and robbed the barber, you should find yourself with some gold jingling around in your pocket. Go back to the sleazy guy in the library and offer to exchange gold for the golden banana. You will now be able to access the L-space.



Aliens

Q I'm really stuck on **Aliens: A Comic Book Adventure**. After getting the coordinates to land on B54C and giving them to Captain Williams and then landing, I don't know what to do next. I have been through the exit hatch which leads out to the cryo room, toilet, etc. I think I need to use the lift but it keeps saying "Access restricted to green passholders". Please help!

Chris Clayton, London

A To get the green pass, you need to talk to Lora and ask her the last question on the list, followed by the first question on the list. She will then give you the green pass key. Then go back to the lift and you should find that you can now gain access.

Normality

Q I have no idea what to do next in **Normality**. I'm at the Ordinary Outpost and I went up to the research lab and sent the prisoner in the capsule. I also went through the locked doors as soon as I came out of the elevator. The problem is, I don't know what to do next. I would be very grateful for your help.

Mohamad Naamani, Jeddah

A After sending the prisoner away, you should have got a message from the scientist asking you to go up to the processing floor to get a new subject. Go back down to the lobby in the lift. Talk to the receptionist. Turn the fountain on by treading on the suspect slab behind the pillar. Talk to the receptionist from the slab. The receptionist will then go to the loo. Examine the code he has left lying on his desk and use it on the other lift (the one you haven't used yet). When you get to the processing floor talk to Norm there and get him to leave. The rest is up to you...



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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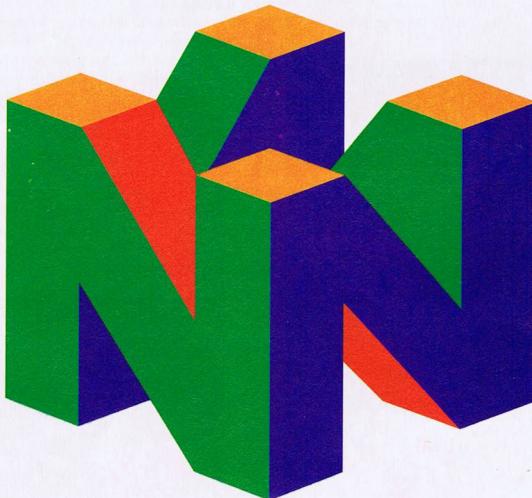
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IF FITTING A NEW processor to a PC is like giving a car a re-bore or a new carburettor, then the software utilities I'm looking at this month are like pouring a bottle of STP where the oil goes. There are ways of pumping up the power in a PC entirely through software and they could save you the cost of upgrading your whole machine. Which are the real performance boosters, though, and which are the fluffy dice and boot-lid spoilers? Here are four top utilities to squeeze the most out of your games PC.

Norton Utilities for Windows 95

£129 - 01628 592320

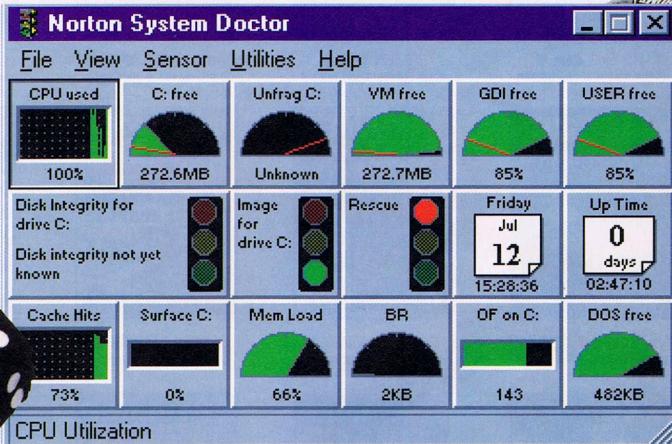
The oldest and still arguably the best general-purpose set of PC utilities is now available in a specific Windows 95 guise. Install this lot and you'll be able to see if any part of your system is running below maximum performance. You'll also, probably, be able to put it right.

Norton Utilities is a suite of different programs and you can install some or all of them, depending on the things you want to monitor and what you use your PC for. The full suite comprises Tune-Up, System Doctor, Space Wizard, Disk Doctor, Speed Disk, UnErase, System Information, Image (for back-ups) and even an emergency disk, in case your hard drive crashes.

If you use your PC just for playing games, the most useful parts of the suite are the System Doctor, Space Wizard and Speed Disk. System Doctor is a comprehensive set of sensors which monitor virtually all the functions of your PC.



Go fast stripes



A selection of the monitors you can view through the Norton System Doctor - useful if you can understand them.

Everything from virtual memory used, to hard drive space, to CPU utilisation.

You have to know enough about your PC to recognise what the different meters show, of course, but you can choose just the ones you feel comfortable with and gradually add others as you get familiar with what they do. The Norton Utilities manual gives some information, though it's not as detailed as it could be.

Space Wizard is like a cut-down version of CleanSweep. It goes looking for files that are sitting around not doing anything - often temporary files - and offers to delete them to make more room on your disk. Speed Disk is a disk de-fragger, rather more thorough than that supplied with Windows 95, though both are based on Symantec programming.

As an added bonus, if you're only now thinking of upgrading to Windows 95 (where have you been?), Norton Utilities can tune-up your system using older DOS-based utilities before helping with the Windows 95 installation. This, according to Symantec, is the best way to ensure a good, stable Windows 95 system. Given its price, Norton Utilities is not

a program you'd buy to improve gaming alone, but if your PC is multi-purpose, it could save you a lot of time and data.

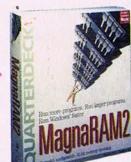
What you need: A 486SX/25 PC or better running Windows 95, 8Mb of memory, at least 16Mb of free disk space and a soundcard.

Norton Utilities for Windows 95 58%

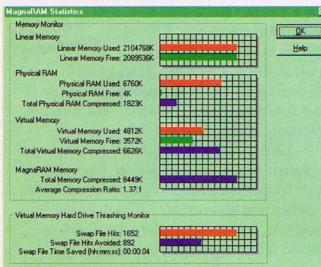
MagnaRAM 2

£41.11 - 01245 491190

Memory compression is a new idea which took a lot of knocks from the SoftRAM fiasco. Theoretically, compressing RAM enables you to get more into memory than you could before. It compresses data in memory like Stacker and DriveSpace, compress it on hard disk, though a RAM compressor has to do it a lot quicker, if it isn't to slow the PC down. The first such product, SoftRAM, didn't actually compress anything under Windows 95 and



ter



A useful stats screen shows you the kinds of increases MagnaRAM 2 makes – they should get better the more you use it.

shouldn't have displayed a 'Designed for Windows 95' logo, as it hadn't been through Microsoft's evaluation programme.

However, MagnaRAM 2 isn't connected with SoftRAM in any way and comes from Quarterdeck, perhaps the best-known memory utility creators and authors of the famous QEMM memory manager. MagnaRAM 2 installs painlessly onto any Windows 3 or Windows 95 PC and runs transparently, any time you run Windows. It compresses areas of memory which often enable you to run bigger programs, or more of them.

It can also speed up the running of programs, which you might think was impossible, as it's doing more work in compressing and expanding data than is needed simply to save and reload it. However, if MagnaRAM 2 compresses memory that would otherwise make up part of Windows' virtual memory, it can speed things up a lot.

Virtual memory is an area of your hard disk which Windows automatically uses for storing data, just as if it were using true memory. While this increases the available memory on your system, it's much slower

Opinion

Some thoughts on recent technical developments...



The ZIP drive is a very good alternative to the floppy for files of up to 100Mb in size.

All ZIPped up

Has it struck you as odd that hard drive capacities have risen from around 200Mb to 1,500Mb or more while floppies have stuck doggedly to 1.44Mb for the last five years or more? There are a couple of alternatives around, though, one already with us and the other due 'real soon now'.

The futureware solution comes from Compaq and 3M and comprises a 120Mb floppy disk, a drive which can also read and write the regular 1.44Mb and 720K 3.5-inch disks. This is due out this month, but only in selected Compaq models. If Compaq's test marketing shows there's a demand for the drive (are these guys serious?), it may be offered as a separate peripheral later on this year, at a price, I would guess, of around £180. If you can wait, this may prove to be the best bet.

For the rest of us, who need more removable storage now, there's Iomega's ZIP drive. Both Compaq's floppy and the ZIP disk, which uses 3.5-inch disks but of a design different from the traditional floppy, use the same high-density magnetic coating, which was originally developed by Fuji. It's this, and an improved tracking and positioning system, which gives the drives their much higher capacity.

Two versions of the ZIP drive have been around for some time, both external with one version linking through a SCSI connection and the other plugging into any parallel port. The parallel option is

A beat-'em-up where you lay into fluffy animals is the highlight of the E-on Net site's download area.

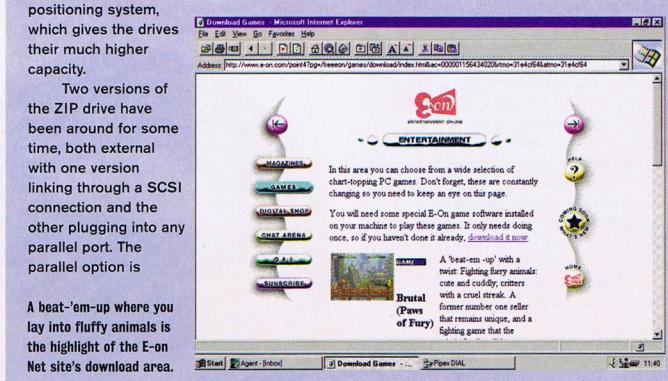
obviously the easiest to use, but the SCSI option is considerably faster when transferring data.

There's now a third, internal option, again connected through SCSI. Iomega also sell an optional SCSI controller card, the ZIP Zoom card, costing around £40, but you can connect to any existing SCSI controller, too. The new ZIP Insider costs the same as the external drives, and I've heard that all three types are being sold for as little as £130 – I've certainly seen them for £160.

I've been using a parallel ZIP drive for a couple of weeks now and am very impressed. The cartridges are robust and the transfer rate, while not like a hard disk, is a good deal quicker than a floppy. They're great for back-up and it's easy to copy a complete game folder onto a ZIP disk to make room for other stuff. At around £12 per 100Mb disk, they're also just about cheap enough to exchange with friends through the post.

A site for sore eyes

There are more and more game sites springing up on the Internet and one which has caught my eye recently, mainly since



SYSTEMS

most of its publicity is bright pink, is E-on (<http://www.e-on.com>).

Short for Entertainment OnLine, most of the site is available through subscription only, though if you connect through most approved service providers it'll only cost you £5.99 a month.

For that you get a chat forum, facilities for playing multi-player games and a game download area, with titles such as *Brutal (Paws Of Fury)*. There are more normal titles, like *Elite 2* and *Zool* on there too, and you can download direct once you've subscribed.

Multi-player games are fairly limited at the moment to old favourites like *Poker*, *Chess* and *Reversi*, but there's a tank commander game and others promised. At the moment quite a few sections of the site are limited, with the mooted book, music and video departments still under construction. The games on offer in the digital shop are also rather tired – are you really going to spend £40 on a copy of *Dark Forces*, even if it is fun to order it over the Internet? If it all comes together as E-on hopes, however, it should be a site to watch – and possibly to subscribe to.

Three up

Quarterdeck (01245 496699) have a new version of MagnaRAM (see review in the main feature) set for September. Coded as a full 32-bit application, MagnaRAM 3 promises to provide memory multiplication of up to three times, and offers a turbo-load feature which, according to Quarterdeck, provides near-instant loading of applications – I'll be interested to see this.

A revised interface will make the whole program easier to use, though I had little difficulty with MagnaRAM 2, and it'll also include a detailed tutorial on Memory Management in Windows, perhaps because people have difficulty in understanding how the program works.

Join the dots

Would you like a Cyrix P166+ PC with a 1.2Gb hard drive, quad-speed CD-ROM drive, 16Mb of memory and all the trimmings? If so, how much would you expect to pay for it? Dotlink (0181 902 5802) are offering such a machine for £999, which I reckon is a bargain. Okay, there are a few minor catches, like the 14-inch monitor, the lack of soundcard or speakers and the VAT you have to add to the price, but we're still talking a seriously inexpensive machine, here.

Dotlink have a good name for build quality and have produced some fast PCs in the past, so I'd expect this machine to be a good performer – I'll be able to confirm this next month, as I've asked the company to send one in post haste for review.



than using physical memory. It can be a lot quicker to compress and expand data in memory than to move it to and from disk.

This is what MagnaRAM 2 does, and under test on an 8Mb PC, it provided nearly 2Mb of extra memory right from the word go. As the program's intelligent and learns which memory to compress, the amount of extra RAM is likely to increase the more you use the program. Although it uses some physical memory as a compression buffer, it more than compensates for this with the extra room it provides.

What you need: A 486SX/25 PC or better running Windows 3, 3.11 or 95, 4Mb of memory (8Mb for Windows 95) and at least 2Mb of free disk space.

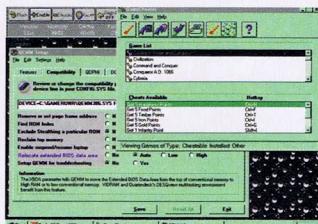
MagnaRAM 2

71%

GameRunner 3

£35.24 – 01245 491190

A couple of years ago Quarterdeck – for it is them again – came up with the idea of selling a cut-down version of their well-known memory manager, QEMM, to games players, and adding in some automated cheats. GameRunner 3 provides QEMM 8, with a few of the more esoteric facilities removed, but in a



The first challenge in any PC game is getting it to run, but GameRunner 3 helps you concentrate on the others.

form which on most systems will install and do its work completely transparently.

When you run the Optimise routine, your system is thoroughly checked for any spare memory that can be made available in the first 640K, the bit most games want as much of as possible. This analysis is much more thorough than MemMaker's and involves restarting the

PC anything up to a dozen times. At the end of all this, though, it will most likely free up extra memory.

In the old DX4/100 machine I tried it on, the core memory went up from 564K to 618K, a very useful increase of 54K. Part of this was due to Quarterdeck's Stealth technology, which enables different systems in your PC to think they're using the same area of high memory. It may give your PC a very low Radar profile, too.

The extra memory QEMM creates, which it can do in DOS, Windows 3 and Windows 95 isn't all GameRunner offers. There's Cache 86, for example, which caches your hard drive and claims to increase game speed on disk-intensive games. There was some difference in the games I ran, such as *Little Big Adventure*, but not that much.

The final part of the package is GameCheater, a utility which scans for the games on your system and can automatically install cheats for many of them. The hundred plus titles for which GameCheater has cheats range widely, and on my system it spotted *Fury 3*, *Warcraft II* and *Castles II*, among others. It also spotted *Populous 2* and *Railroad Tycoon*, however, which aren't installed, so the scan isn't infallible.

This is one of the best utility suites designed specifically for gamers. Coming as it does from Quarterdeck, who have had more experience with memory issues than any company, probably including Microsoft, you should find it thorough and helpful.

What you need: A 486SX/33 PC or better running DOS or Windows 95, 2Mb of memory (8Mb for Windows 95) and at least 5.5Mb of free disk space.

GameRunner 3

83%

SpeedyROM

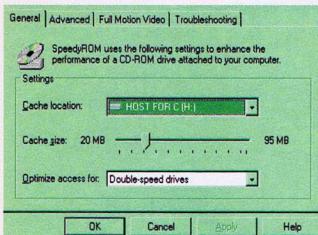
£35.24 – 01245 491190

There are a lot of people out there who have slow CD-ROM drives on their PCs and can't afford to replace them. SpeedyROM is a cache utility, but one which doesn't take over swathes of memory. Why not? Because it takes over swathes of hard disk space instead. Hard disks are normally between 5 and 30 times

faster than a quad-speed CD-ROM, so pulling frequently used data off hard disk is always going to be faster than taking it from CD.

Unlike a cache set up in memory, SpeedyROM leaves the data in its cache intact, so even between sessions anything in there will remain untouched. However, as with any cache, it does rely on the data being frequently accessed, if you're to see any benefit.

Running video sequences from CD-ROM through a cache may actually be slower than running



Not much to see in the SpeedyROM set-up routine, as it's all done for you – just set the size of cache.

straight from CD, since there's little repeating data and it all has to be taken from CD into cache and then out again for playback.

Games, however, normally have a lot of repeating data, so a cache should be very handy. So much for the theory. SpeedyROM needs Windows 95 to run and it will only do so if your CD-ROM drive uses a 32-bit driver, such as one of Microsoft's own. If it still runs with the old 16-bit driver you used with Windows 3, then you'll either have to get a driver upgrade or give SpeedyROM a miss.

Installing the program is a doddle, using an installation Wizard which does all the work for you. All you have to do is set the size of the cache using a simple slider. The default size of 20MB seems a good compromise between speed and disk resources.

The cache made an obvious difference to the speed of access of some games I tried. The most apparent was when I re-ran the same segments of video or animation from game cut scenes. The second running of these was noticeably less jerky. If you can't run to a new CD-ROM drive, SpeedyROM is your next best option.

What you need: A 486DX/33 PC or better running Windows 95, 4Mb of memory (8Mb recommended) and at least 2Mb of free disk space (20Mb recommended).

SpeedyROM

75%

In conclusion

You could spend a lot of money on utilities to improve the performance of your PC for games playing. Utilities which compress memory are looking increasingly expensive in comparison with memory itself. I've recently bought an 8Mb SIMM for under £55 and you really have to think twice before spending £55 on a memory compressor which, though good, won't give you the same kind of speed gains.

Similarly, with companies like Simply Computers (0181 498 2130) selling quad-speed CD-ROM drives for just over £40 and six-speed ones for just over £50, a CD-ROM cache looks pricey at £35. These utilities are very clever at what they do and do improve things, but not as much as new hardware will.

Abort, Retry, Fail?

Q: > I have had problems with my CD-ROM drive, when in MS-DOS mode, I get a message saying "Device Driver not found: 'IDECD001', No valid CDROM drivers selected." This means that when I want to switch to drive D (my CD-ROM drive), I get the message 'Invalid Drive Specification'.

My CD drive works perfectly in Windows mode, but because of this I can only run games that run under Windows 95 and not games like *FIFA 96* or *Crusader: No Remorse*.

Anthony Youd, Gateshead

A: > Windows 95 has built-in drivers for common CD-ROM drive types, which are inherited by DOS when running a DOS prompt. However, they're not available when you restart in MS-DOS mode, and you then need a separate driver for your CD-ROM. This is available from Compaq and when I rang their technical support line, the support guy offered to send a disk out to you. You should have received it by the time you read this. I hope everything is now okay.

Q: > My dad owns a weedy 486DX/50 with 8Mb of RAM and we want to upgrade it. I have *Hi-Octane* and *Screamer*, which I can run in low detail. We have about £175 to spend, so can you please help us decide what to do to make it run faster and smoother?

1. Should we upgrade our CPU? If so, should we go for a Pentium 82.5MHz OverDrive or a Cyrix 5x86 100?

2. Should we spend our money on an extra 8Mb of memory?

3. Should we buy a new graphics card? Will it accelerate all programs? Is Diamond Stealth a rip-off?

4. Or should we flog our dual-speed CD-ROM and get a state-of-the-art six-speed drive and use the rest of the money to subscribe to your wicked magazine? Richard Marsden Wrenbury, Cheshire

A: > Wicked magazine? I'll have you know, young fella-me-fad, that I've been writing for PC Gamer since well before the war. I've never so much as sneaked an extra Black Jack in three penneth of chews. Wicked indeed.

What you should do is 1, 2 and the best part of 4. Here's how. Buy a Cyrix 5x86/100 from Simply Computers (0181 498 2100) for £64.63, which will give you well over double the speed of your 486SX/50. Check with Simply that your system board will work with the chip, but there shouldn't be a problem. Add an extra 8Mb of memory, again from Simply or CompuTech (01923 224440) for £69.32. This leaves you £41.05, less than a tenner away from a PC Gamer subscription, if you pay through direct debit. One of the deals of 1996, I believe.

Q: > I seem to have a problem with my sound. Several of my games don't have sound, but do have music. A helpful technical support guy told me that IBM had changed the DMA controllers in all their Colossus machines 12 months ago – my computer is older than that.

What is a DMA controller? What does it do? Can I get a new one?

Sam Liddle, Cambridge

A: > What it is isn't that important, as you can't change it. The tech support guy was right in highlighting a clash between the IBM 'Blue Lightening' system boards and the SoundBlaster cards plugged into them. The Colossus machines which use them, actually made by the Granville Group, rather than IBM, have caused Granville a lot of anguish. Your best bet would be to go back to Granville and see if they will do anything for you. If not, the only way you're going to overcome the problem is to fit a new system board.

Q: > I have an Internet connection that will run out this December. I wish to use my modem to contact various multi-player BBSes. I have this dialling program called Trumpet Winsock, which logs into my POP server. I am getting really angry and practically punching the letters out on this poor keyboard. I log on to the BBS, but when asked to enter information, I find I cannot.

Ron, via Internet

A: > There's no need to shout – and give your keyboard a break. Trumpet Winsock is for connecting to the Internet, not for use with a BBS. Think of an Internet link as like using a network card and a BBS link as like connecting two machines with a serial lead. Different things – and they need different software. You need to get a comms program, like *Odyssey* or *Comlt*, for connecting to a BBS. Try any of the many shareware sites on the Internet, such as <http://www.shareware.com>, for this.

Q: > I am thinking of buying Windows 95 in the near future and I need boot disks for certain games. Can I use boot disks with Win95, or would I have to get more memory SIMMs?

Rupert Armstrong, Newbury

A: > SIMMs wouldn't help you, as it's the base 640K of memory that games are always bleeding about, not the total. However, you needn't worry as Windows 95 can indeed produce boot disks and even has a ready-made facility within it for preparing them.

Send your technical questions to: Abort, Retry, Fail?, PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Or e-mail them to: pcgamer@futurenet.co.uk



PCG

The Money Pit

Your disposable income disposed of.

When you have more cash than sense, it's worth remembering that money can't buy you anything useful to attach to your PC. What money can buy you is the items on these two pages.

This month: For your eyes only

1



2



3



1. Optique Vision Control Filter

01494 778866 - £46.94

So it looks a bit dull in comparison, but don't expect the other multi-coloured, crowd-pleasing, TV tie-in work station accessories to protect your eyes from harmful radiation. Actually, don't expect this thing to do much more to your eyes other than annoy them. The Optique just strikes us as a running jump onto a swiftly moving bandwagon of products that claim to protect yr peepers and make your working environment more comfortable. In fact, this resembles that thing that Spock stares into on the bridge of the Enterprise, channelling cathode rays into your retina. This extra screen curves from front to back, which reduces reflections, but turns everything blue and forces you to turn up the brightness. Oh, and it only fits a 14-inch monitor.

39%

2. The Flintstones Accessories

01454 855050 - £99.99 (components available separately)

If you're so loaded that you can blow £100 on such window-dressing, imagine the envy of your friends as you abstract this month's *CD Gamer* from a model of Fred's car, double-click on the Windows 95 CD icon surrounded by a moulded plastic scene from the cartoon using a turtle-shell mouse resting on a mat shaped and coloured to resemble Fred's tunic. Oh, and when requested to press a key, think how green they will turn as you select your option from a keyboard that looks like it's come from the Stone Age, meant in the nicest possible way. If this is your look, and you don't envisage being totally bored within minutes, and you have the kind of friends that will respect you all the more for dressing your PC in such a way, then it's all yours. We can't see it, though.

45%

3. Nickelodeon Accessories

01454 855050 - £99.99 (components available separately)

Nickelodeon is an American children's satellite channel responsible for a number of cartoons. With this in mind, the design of this collection incorporates more originality, colour and surrealism than the other sets, and certainly more than the Optique. The mouse is either a strange orange sticklebrick, or you can peel away the outer layer and experience a sort of transparent yellow beetle. The keyboard and mouse mat defy description, being nothing more than bright blobs of colour and the occasional logo. The floppy disk holder could be a brightly coloured instrument of torture or useful for gripping planks of wood in readiness for a spot of DIY, but the grip is fake. Brighten up a dull PC with this lot, even if the plastic monitor surround looks silly.

49%



3



4



4. Star Trek: Next Gen Accessories

01454 855050 - £99.99 (components available separately)

Perhaps there's a larger market for this collection, considering that as many students, young men and middle-aged types can get excited about the prospect of Star Trek add-ons as kids. The keyboard, although blessed with styling and colours suggesting a Star Trek link and featuring a space bar marked with the phrase "Space, the final frontier" (groan), has little else in common with the series. Some of the keys have been decorated in a different colour, but we were unable to discern why. Floppies dock with a shuttle-shaped box, the 'phaser' mouse rests on a Federation logo mat and the plastic monitor mould is topped with a portrait of the Enterprise. Mmm, tasteful. So it's different, original, perhaps even entertaining, but overall, expensive.

46%

What they ought to make

X-Files Accessories

In a collection similar to the other tie-ins, the keyboard would transmit everything you type directly to an FBI central computer, where it's scanned for occurrences of the words 'communist', 'abduction' and 'Hoover'. The mouse is in the shape of an alien heart and the mat spontaneously combusts when someone it doesn't like uses it. Finally, the monitor surround features images of aliens that mysteriously disappear when sceptics look at them.

QVC The Shopping Channel Accessories

The monitor surround depicts items of great value and desirability, all of which are available using a credit card and telephone. The mouse vibrates, helping to reduce the risk of RSI, and the mouse mat is inconceivably small, also reducing the risk of RSI since there isn't room to move the mouse anywhere. The keyboard is equipped with an LCD screen that flashes up messages warning you when your life is incomplete and in need of a new purchase.



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Win

Yes. It's true. This is the truth. Not only do we at PC Gamer endeavour to bring you (the reader) the very, very finest in videogames journalism each and every month of each and every year, but we also want to help you (the reader) enjoy the dandy world of PC ownership to the absolute max. Which is why – and you'll like this clever word play – we're going to be giving you the max. Along with our friends from Special Reserve, in fact, we're going to be giving one fortunate reader a Maxx 16/P150 Multimedia PC, worth a blistering £1,950.

Here's a little bit about the prize...

- It's got a 15-inch Samsung Syncmaster monitor!
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- It's got a Pentium PCI motherboard with a Pentium 150!
- And an eight-speed CD-ROM!
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So. A fine PC and a bundle of fine software is up for grabs. But how to clasp your clammy hands over it? Well, cast your eyes over to the right...





a Pentium 150!

From our pals at Special Reserve

The "Head-licking" Contest

Seeing as Special Reserve are without a shadow of a sniff of a doubt's distant cousin one of the world's finest mail order companies, we thought we'd go for a special anniversary celebratory mail-order-related competition question. So. Here goes. The Queen. We all know her, we've all licked the back of her head on stamps. But because this is 1996, and the monarchy has been reduced to one big, blubbering

ball of divorce and lies, we thought it was about time to use someone else's head and face and shoulders and hair on this once glorious nation's stamps. But who should it be? Who? Who? Who? Give us your suggestions, and whoever's ideas make us laugh loudest, longest and hardest will win the MAXX 16/P150 and be giddy all over until their time on this earth is at an end. Good luck.

Rules

1. Send your entry accompanied by our special coupon, or a photocopy, in a neatly written style, to: Contest 34, PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. And pray.
2. No entries from anyone who works for Special Reserve or Future Publishing.

3. The editor – who is Jonathan – has the final say on who wins the prize.
4. No multiple entries. We use a special chancing rabbit to sniff 'em out, and anyone found guilty of such a foul and heinous act will be hit with pain.

Contest 31 winners

In line for considerable televisual enjoyment, courtesy of Domark's Deathtrap Dungeon telly, is Teresa Staniewicz of Coventry. Jamie Turner of Lincoln, meanwhile, wins a Quake mug.

In the hope of winning Special Reserve's Maxx PC, I enclose my suggestion for the stamps of the future.

Name
.....

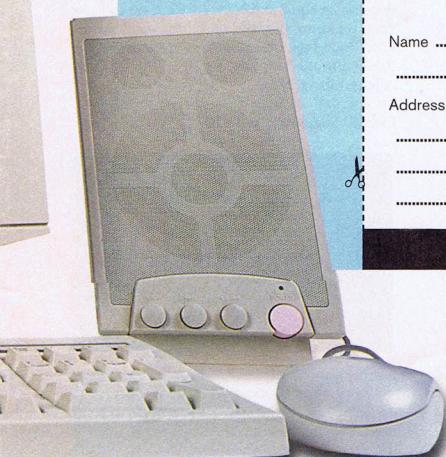
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My Most Wanted

This bit's optional, but we'd like you to let us know the five forthcoming PC games you're most looking forward to, to aid us in compiling our Readers Most Wanted chart on page 26.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Send this coupon with your entry to: Contest 34, PC Gamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW by 30th September.



Fish out of water



No. 2 THE CAR FROM SCREAMER

The finest car in the world? Or just some brightly coloured, fast-moving metal? We put it to the test...

Cars get rusty if you don't use them. That's a fact of life. So, caring as we do for every single aspect of PC gaming that there is, we couldn't help but worry about our little (so-far rust-free) friend, the car from *Screamer*. What, we were determined to find out, could it do to stay active in all the spare time it must have between one race and the next?

Using our usual gentle blend of advanced technological know-how and mind-enhancing chemicals, we transplanted our four-wheeled friend into a number of alien gaming environments, to see how it would fare.

BC RACERS

Initially fearing that our steel-skinned soul mate would be of little use in anything other than a racing capacity, we threw it into the rough, tough world of *BC Racers* in the hope that it might excel against the quite-literally stone age technology of the day. Its first performance showed little promise thanks to an uneven and pot-holed track. It wasn't until its cavemen rivals broke into two warring factions that things truly started to

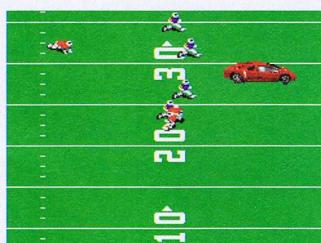


look up. One group was convinced that our 'silver-bellied panther' was to be worshipped, the other that our 'smoke-belching dragon-thing' was a beast to be destroyed with clubs and bits of mud. We distracted them by fashioning a modern letter-opener from three tiny twigs, and, while they carefully considered whether our gift was a thing worth worshipping or not, we fled...

Adaptability: 4/10

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL

Sticking with the sports theme, we decided that our carburettor-fed coadjutor should try its, um, 'hand' at *John Madden Football*. Naturally a tad cumbersome when it came to picking up the ball, our car only excelled once



the ball had been carefully placed on its passenger seat and the central locking fully applied. At 0-60 in under five seconds, and End Zone to End Zone in less, we discovered that even the most heavily padded of defenders found blocking our car an extremely tricky – if not impossible – task. Played in a domed stadium, the game was finally stopped at 3000-nil, when all officials, players and spectators had died of excessive lead-inhalation.

Adaptability: 9/10

VIRTUA FIGHTER

Having taken out so many of the opposing footie players in such a comprehensive and bloodthirsty manner, it seemed only natural that our carbon-monoxide-emitting companion should progress to full-on, out-and-out, on-screen blood-letting. But due to the restricted fighting area and our petrol-powered pal's none-too-small turning circle, all the unfortunate vehicle could do was run rings around its opponent. Quite literally. Jacky managed to get a couple of punches in, but



they did more damage to him than the car, and the fight lasted well into the night, with Jacky eventually simply sitting cross-legged in the centre of the screen while our internally combusting intimate ceaselessly circled him at 80 mph.

Adaptability: 3/10

TIE FIGHTER

Our air-conditioned accomplice failed, sadly, to impress any of us with its performance against the *X-Wings*. As the Rebels sped off into the distant outer reaches of a galaxy far, far away, the lack of oxygen rendered its spark plugs sparkless. We got out and pushed, but this merely instigated Newton's third law of motion ("When body A [PC Gamer] exerts a force on body B [our child-lock-equipped chum], body B exerts an equal and opposite force on A"). As far as we know, the stricken vehicle continues to float around the multi-coloured stretches of the universe to this very day.

Adaptability: 0/10

Overall adaptability: 4/10



NEXT MONTH IN PC GAMER

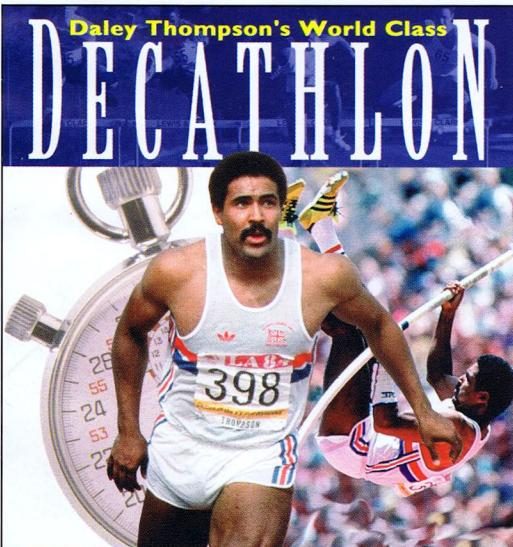
September's *PC Gamer* will spring onto newsagents' shelves on Thursday 8th August.

Bullfrog are confidently predicting that next month, without a shadow of a doubt, we will be reviewing *Dungeon Keeper*. We're also keeping our fingers crossed for *Magic: The Gathering*, and are writing a comprehensive guide to *Space Hulk*.

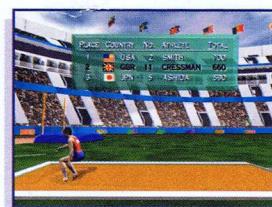
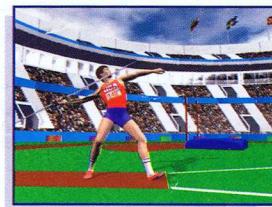
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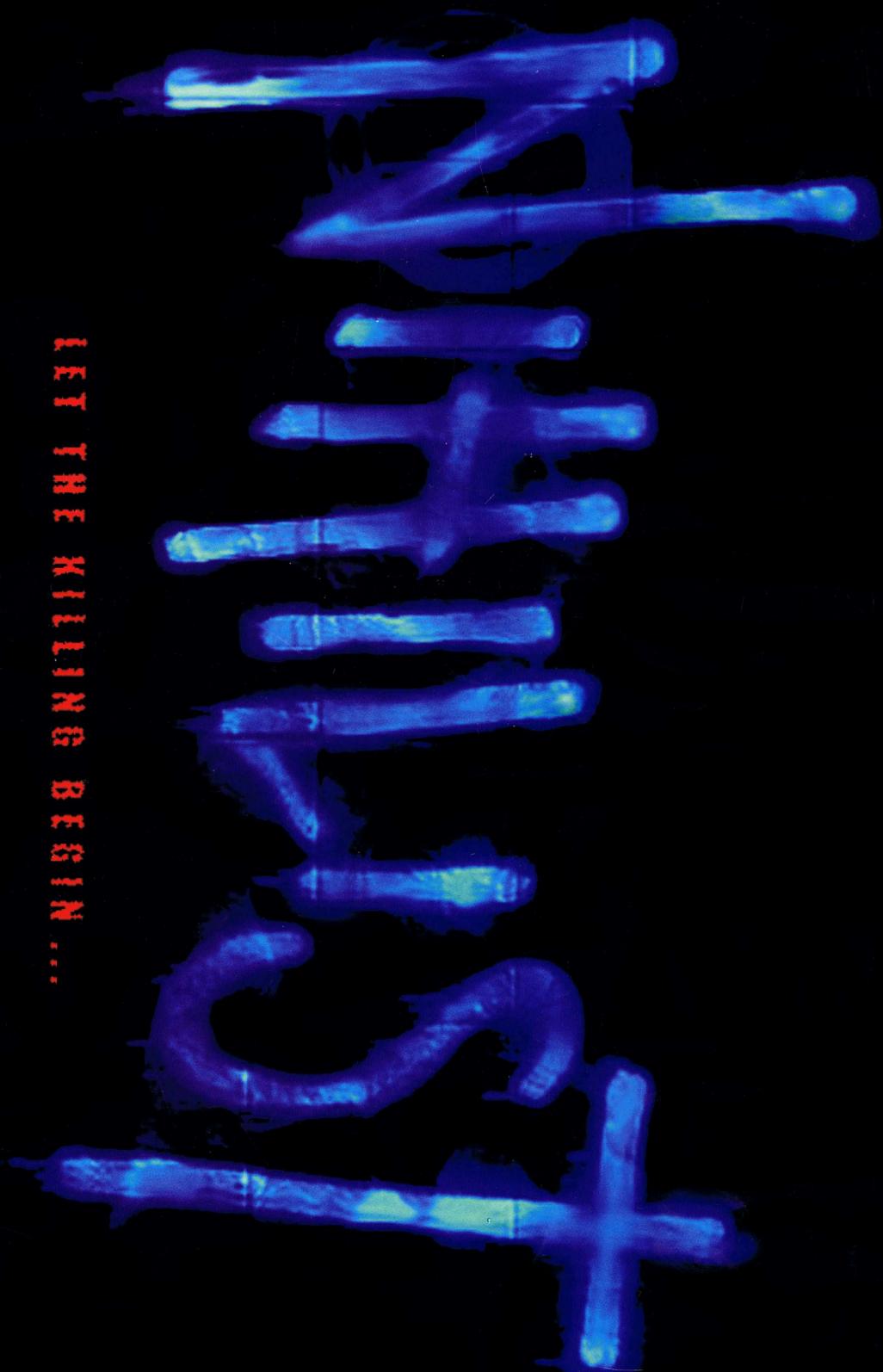
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LET THE KILLING BEGIN ...