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PC ZONE

#83 DEC 1999

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EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

THE NOMAD SOUL

Bowie takes the lead in an adventure of truly epic proportions

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

Lara goes back to her roots for her fourth adventure

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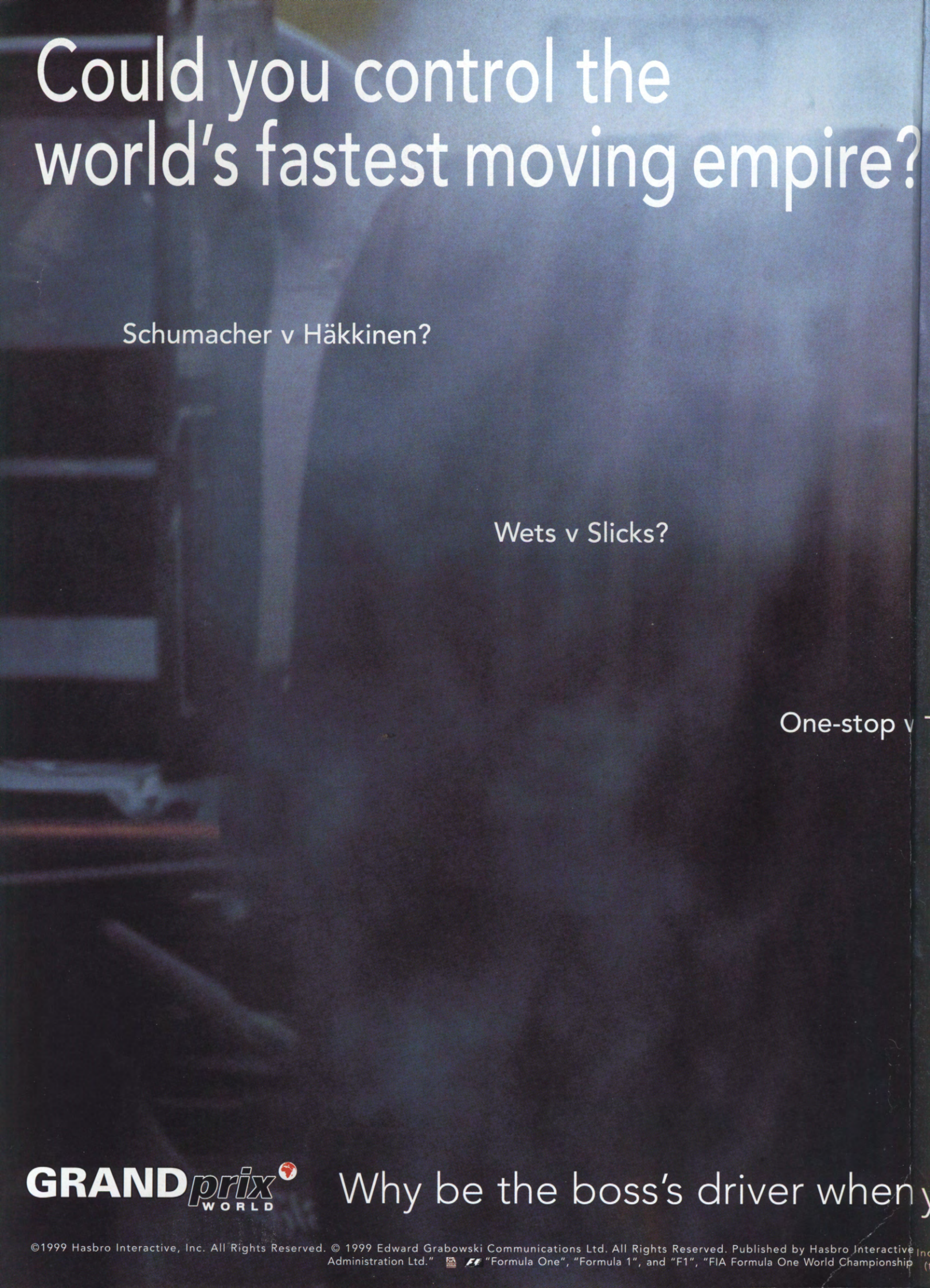

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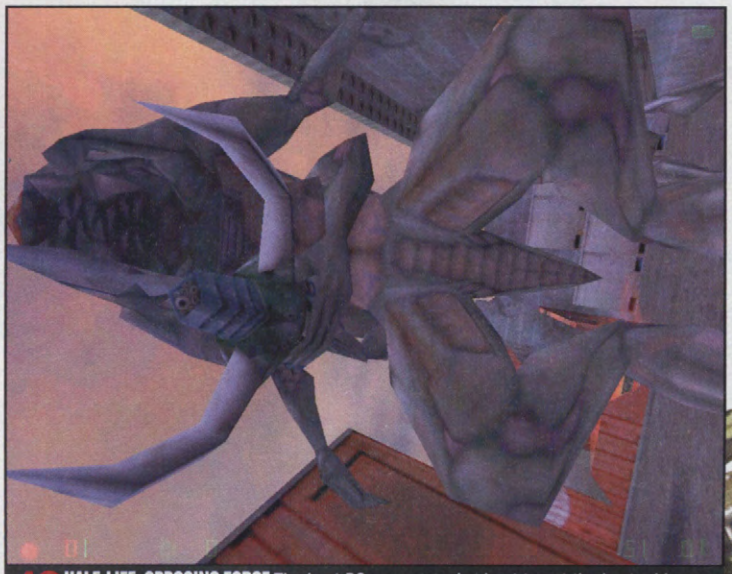
91 **PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D** Sheik it baby, yeah.



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"The outrageous acrobatics advance one part of the narrative to the next"

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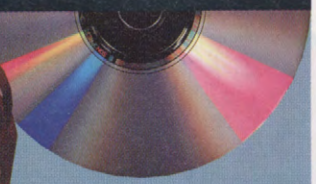
SEE P.26

ON THE CD



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That silvery thing on the cover is loaded with great demos, patches and helpful files guaranteed to ensure you get more out of your PC

DON'T MISS DEMOS OF...

THE NOMAD SOUL
SEGA RALLY 2
STARSIEGE: TRIBES
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PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D
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Handy games utilities and more...

74 THE NOMAD SOUL Strange people, the French: they boycott British beef, then they make a game with David Bowie in it. Mad.

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Quite literally the most definitive games news section in the universe

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Logitech's new Wingman force feedback mouse, p30.

WIN! THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (83), *PC ZONE*, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.** The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The Ed's decision is final. Closing date: Friday 19 November 1999. The winner of our November (#82) cover compo was Mark Tyzack from Sunderland, who wins something from the *ZONE* prizes cupboard for sending in the correct answer (Relic) to last month's little teaser.

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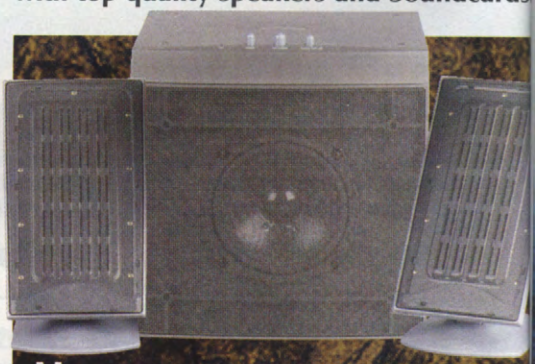

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A CLASSIC EXAMPLE

We get many, many letters every month commenting on our review scores, and it's always the games that receive *PC ZONE* Classic awards that come up for discussion. Some of you complain when certain games receive the coveted *ZONE* Classic award (or even when they don't, *Outcast* being a case in point), while others are happy to put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard if you're emailing your words of wisdom), to tell us how totally 'spot on' we were with one of our lead reviews.

I guess it all comes down to your definition of the word 'classic'. In a perfect world, a classic PC game would be totally original and represent a major leap forward for its genre. Well let's be honest here, how likely is that to happen? It could be argued that the first *real* leap forward for the first-person shoot 'em up genre since *Doom* was *Half-Life*. "What about *Quake*?", I hear you squawk. Sorry, but for me *Quake II* is basically *Doom* with an advanced engine. Nobody stood in amazement in front of their monitors when *Quake* was first unveiled to an eager audience, but they most certainly did when *Half-Life* came on the scene. The whole office came to a standstill when the *intro* to *Half-Life* was shown for the first time. This game was clearly something very special indeed.

The same can be said for real-time strategy games. The winner of our recent RTS Supertest was *Tiberian Sun*. Well what's that if not *Command & Conquer*? (Or *Dune 2* if you want to be *really* cynical.) Hardly a major leap forward for the genre, but it didn't stop *Tiberian Sun* from getting a *PC ZONE* Classic award.

Put simply, a classic game is a game that's so good, so damned *addictive* that you just can't stop playing it. It doesn't have to be ground-breaking or strikingly original; if it's an excellent example of an existing genre – or a very good attempt at creating a new one (*The Nomad Soul* almost falls into this category) – it's making its way into *PC ZONE* Classic territory. Of course, your idea of a classic and ours may not always be the same, but we have said time and again that we can only voice our own opinions and give you the ammunition to make informed buying decisions based on what we say. Enjoy the issue, see you again next month.

Chris Anderson, Editor

MEET THE ZONE TEAM

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

CHRIS ANDERSON

What's your favourite David Bowie song and why?

Heroes, because it's classic Bowie. Come to think of it, it's a classic, full stop.

What games are you playing at the moment?

EverQuest, *The Nomad Soul* and *System Shock 2*.

PAUL MALLINSON

Probably *Queen Bitch* because the guitar bit at the beginning is awesome.

Driver (it's a good game, but could have been better), *Tib Sun* and a bit of *Carmageddon II*.

RICHIE SHOEMAKER

Agadoo.

X – Beyond The Frontier, *Aliens Vs Predator* (online).

MARK HILL

Ziggy Stardust, *Modern Love*, *The Man Who Sold the World*... there are too many to choose just one.

System Shock 2, *Hidden & Dangerous* and *Caesar III*.

STEVE HILL

Ashes To Ashes was the last good one. It's all been downhill since then.

I am mainly playing *CM3*.

CHARLIE BROOKER

Ashes To Ashes, because he was dressed as a clown in the video.

Tony Hawk's Skateboarding on the PlayStation.

PAUL PRESLEY

What's your favourite David Bowie song and why?

Not really a fan.

What games are you playing at the moment?

Homeworld and *Hidden & Dangerous*.

KEITH PULLIN

I don't like David Bowie.

Tib Sun and *CM3*.

ADAM PHILLIPS

Didn't he used to be really popular back in the Seventies? I'll get me coat.

Half-Life, and I have revisited *Red Alert* after indulging in *Tiberian Sun*.

DAVID MCCANDLESS

Suffragette City, because I like it.

Unreal Tournament and some *Half-Life* online.

WARREN CHRISMAS

Under Pressure (with Queen). Just a great song.

Hide The Sausage. And *Driver*.

PHIL WAND

Ashes To Ashes, because it's one of the greatest tracks ever.

The truly spesh *Team Fortress Classic*, the slightly lame *Tiberian Sun*, and the habit-forming *Marble Crazy*.

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WIN! Complete this album title: *Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From ...*? Send entries on the back of a postcard to: I've read the small print, *PC ZONE* (83), 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ by Friday 5 November. Winner and prize announced same place next issue. Dave Ellis from Hants wins the *ZONE* grab bag of goodies from last month's compo for correctly answering that David Bowie features in *The Nomad Soul*. Well done, Dave.

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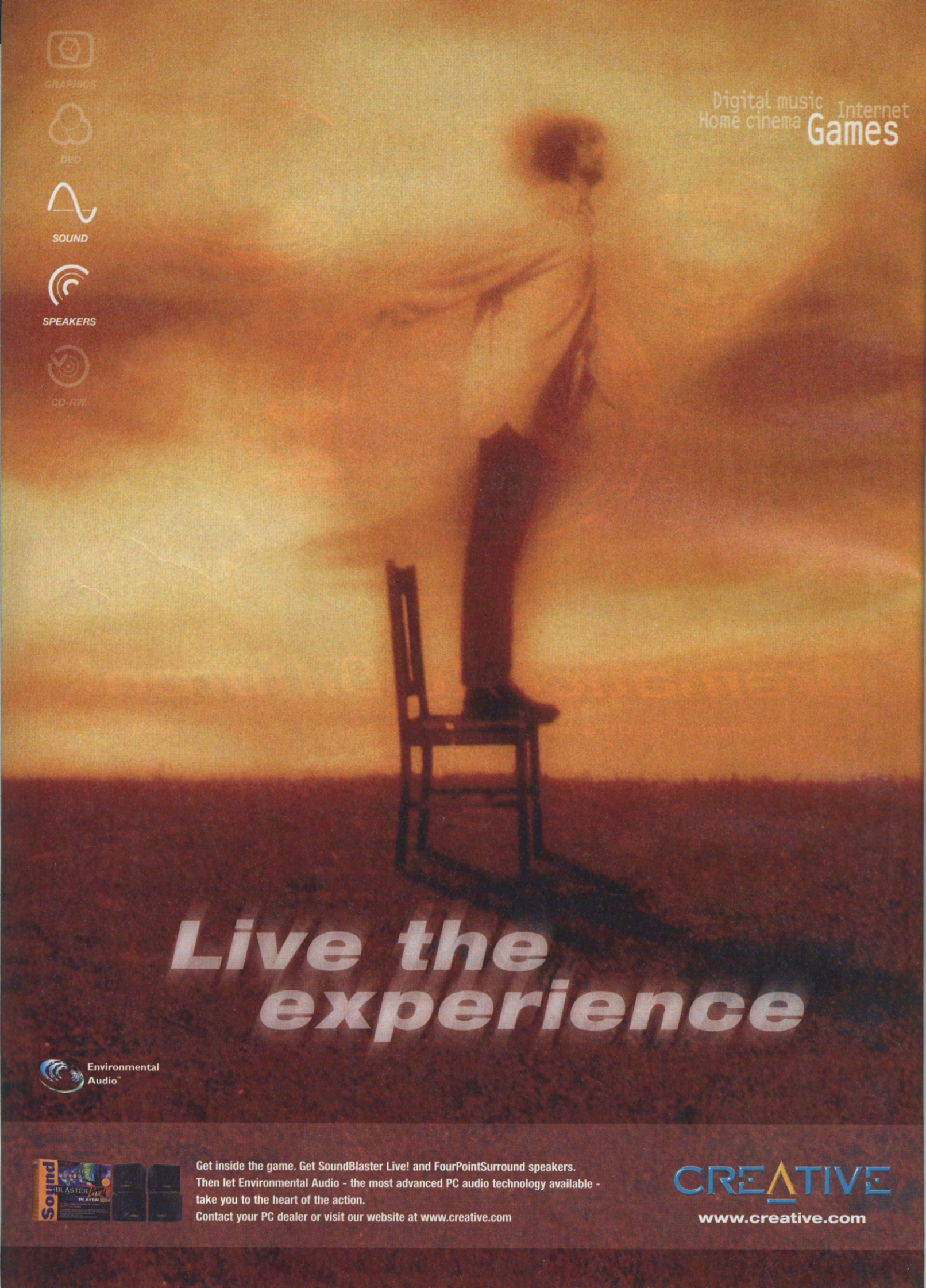
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MAILBOX

Send your views on all things game-related to *PC ZONE* and we'll do our best to pretend we're interested in what you have to say. This month, Internet access, the patch debacle and the *ZONE* scoring system are up for discussion

ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

CONTACT INFO

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

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

MR CONFUSED WRITES...

Ever since games started including multiplayer options, I feel like I'm only enjoying half the game. You pay £35 for it but if, like me, you haven't got Internet access, you're not really getting your money's worth. I don't want to play against a group of complete strangers I can't see and haven't even met. Me and my friends want to get together and join all our PCs for some serious fun, but we haven't got any idea how to do it. Any advice?

Nathan, Wolverhampton

You're complaining you can't play Internet games, and then admitting in the same breath that you don't want to play them anyway? You are very strange.

Nonetheless, if you want to play network games at home with your friends, you've come to the right place. Check out our 'How To...' feature on setting up a local area network (LAN) in next month's *ZONE*. It will tell you everything you ever wanted to know about setting up a games network, and probably a whole lot more.

SORT IT OUT

For the last two years, I have worked as a sales assistant for a major UK computer games retailer. Something which has bothered my workmates and myself recently is the number of people buying PCs. This is no bad thing – it's great that people are making the step up from consoles and that the PC market is growing, but there is a downside. People don't know what they are buying. For example:

Customer: Will this game work on my PC?

Sales assistant: Well, what kind of PC do you have?

C: Uh, it's brand new. I got it last week.

SA: That doesn't really tell me anything about your PC. What kind of processor does it have?

Not everyone can play *Quake II* over the Internet, claims Nathan.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

GOODIES WINNER!

PATCH PROBLEMS

I buy *PC ZONE* every month and find it extremely funny, informative and great value for money (in Ireland, it costs £4.07, while all the other magazines cost £7.05).

But what really struck me about the cover-mounted CD with the last issue was the big black circle displaying the words "OVER 20 PATCHES". This makes it sound as though patches are the best thing since the dawn of computers, but it also got me thinking.

Console users don't have to contend with patches. Once a game is released on a console, it has to be perfect. There are no patches for the PlayStation or Nintendo and their games are not bugged.

But because we are PC owners, we are expected to log on to a games site and download a patch to fix problems that shouldn't be there in the first place.

Companies say they have to patch games because PC games are so complex! Crap! A lot of PC games come out on the PlayStation and N64 (and now the Dreamcast) and they're not bugged. We are expected to spend £35 on a game and then more money downloading a patch. And people who don't have Internet access have to rely on PC magazines like *ZONE* to help them. Until I became an Internet user a few weeks ago, I had to rely on magazines to patch my games and it was very frustrating.

Many issues ago, you said you planned to do an article about patches and would let games companies have their say. Well, where is it? Please do it soon. If games on a 750Mb CD-ROM need to be patched so much, I dread to think what it will be like when they come out on a 17Gb DVD. It's time the PC was treated with the same respect as consoles.

There is no point in a company rushing a game to get it out in time for Christmas if it doesn't work.

Paul Boland

Your caring, sharing *PC ZONE* is the place to come for patches if you don't have access to the Internet.

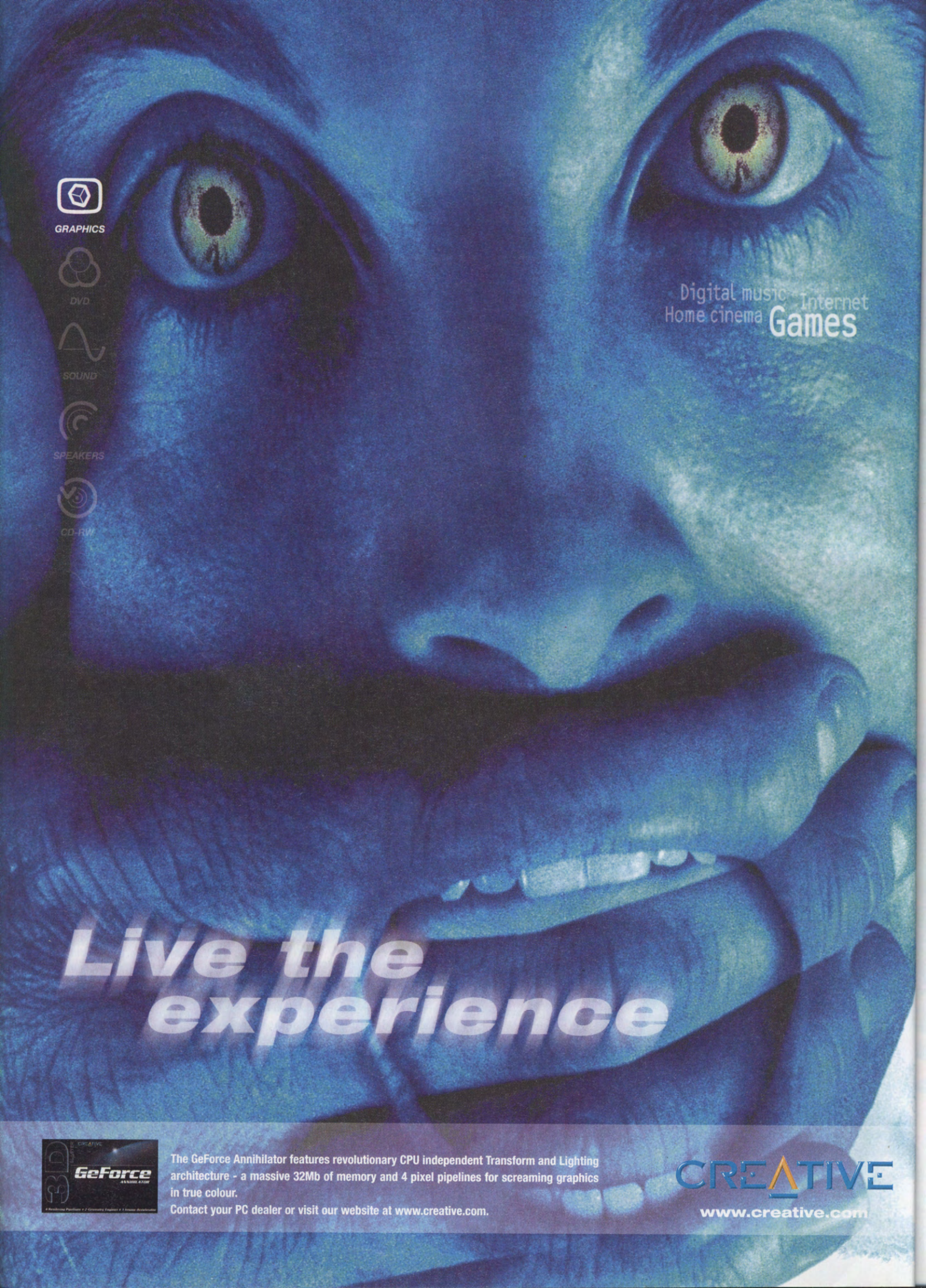
Funny you should say that. Steve Hill is working on that very feature as we speak (it will appear in the Christmas or January issue). He'll be interviewing publishers and developers and asking them exactly what their policy is on releasing games they know will probably need serious patching after release. Any blatant lies will be hotly contested. Watch this space.

By the way, many people have raised this issue, but this one wins letter of the month (and the goodies bag) because Paul makes his points clearly and rationally instead of just whining on endlessly about the unfairness of it all. Well done, Sir.

SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON

For the next three issues of *PC ZONE*, we will be giving away a Microsoft IntelliMouse to everyone who gets a letter printed in Mailbox. These digital rodents are perfect for 3D shooters and games that require a quick and precise response from your pointing device, and you can even use them with Windows 98 if you really want to. So get your writing skates on and send us your literary masterpieces. We promise not to be rude when we reply to them. Well, not much.

You too can own a Microsoft IntelliMouse. Simply send a vaguely intelligent/interesting letter to Mailbox and, if it gets printed, we'll send you one.


GRAPHICS
DVD
SOUND
SPEAKERS
CD-RW
Digital music
Internet
Home cinema
Games
Live the experience
CREATIVE
GeForce
The GeForce Annihilator features revolutionary CPU independent Transform and Lighting architecture - a massive 32Mb of memory and 4 pixel pipelines for screaming graphics in true colour.
Contact your PC dealer or visit our website at www.creative.com.
CREATIVE
www.creative.com

C: Dunno.
SA: How much memory?
C: Dunno.
SA: What make of graphics card?
C: Dunno.
SA: (Sighs)

It's getting to the stage where I do this every day with at least one customer. Of course I explain the situation to them, but I still wonder why I have to do this day in, day out.

The fact is people are spending the best part of a grand on machines they know nothing about. They can't tell if it's working properly or not, or whether they have even got what they paid for, half of them aren't set up correctly, no-one seems to have heard of Dos and they get very upset to hear that their Cyrix is merely a braindead Pentium.

I know most *ZONE* readers probably already have a PC, but to those who haven't shelled out yet – please, please, please, know what you are buying BEFORE you buy it! I would like to see a few less disappointed faces leaving the store next week.

Scot Reid

So there, you've been told.

HE'S SCARED

I'm scared. If Microsoft are indeed developing a games console to rival Sony's new PlayStation, what does this mean for us PC players? Will the console be able to run PC games straight from their oversized boxes (nice comment, Charlie – keep it up)? Will we be able to open it up and upgrade it? How much will it be and, finally, will it kill off the PC as the best games machine money can buy? I'm just worried that in a year I'll be buying *PCX ZONE* instead of *PC ZONE*. Please assure me otherwise

Alan McDonald

No, it will not kill off the PC as a games machine. Details of the Microsoft console are scant at present, but you can rest assured that it *will* be a console. So chill.

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

Even though I couldn't get a team together to compete, I've been following your coverage of the games Championships with interest. America has the PGL and many other such competitions so why shouldn't us Brits? I hope it's not too long until every country in the world can boast its own games premiership, with 'cup' competitions, team games and big money prizes. Who knows? Teams may even end up making transfer bids for big name players. Imagine.

Anyway, well done on getting the whole ball rolling. I look forward to seeing the event next year, and maybe even taking part in it myself.

Neil Harper

The UK PC Gaming Championships were a great success.

The Championships have been a great success (see our report on page 40), and we expect the event to be even bigger and better next year. We are hoping that now people are aware the Championships exist, we will have a lot more applicants, which means we will be spending even more money on stupidly expensive prizes. So get practising, ya hear?

"If Microsoft are indeed developing a games console to rival Sony's new PlayStation, what does this mean for us PC players?"

ALAN MCDONALD

IN DEFENCE OF MODERN GAMES

I have been a subscriber to your magazine for about a year and a half, and I thoroughly enjoy reading it – so much so, in fact, that my wife is unable to rouse me for anything else for a couple of days after it arrives.

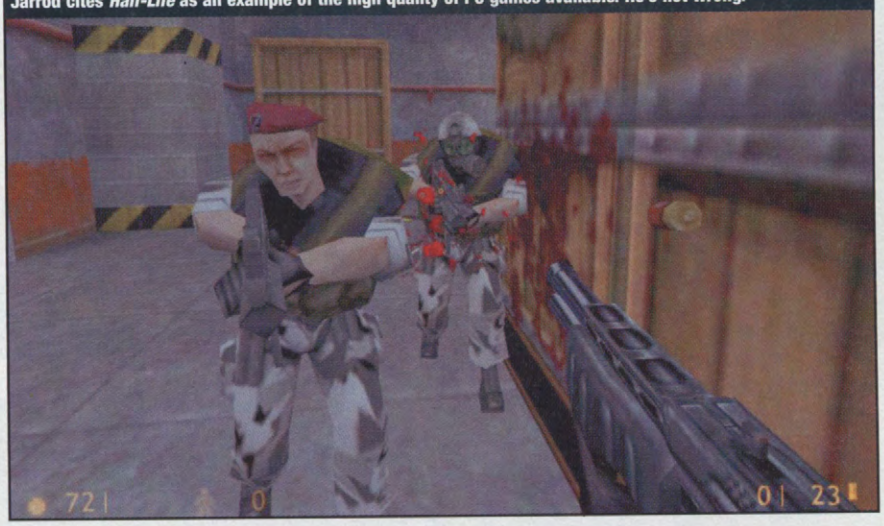
There is one thing that I've read repeatedly – letters from people complaining about the lack of originality in games and claiming developers are only interested in producing glorious technicolor extravaganzas, trying to blind us with brilliant graphics so we won't notice that there is no gameplay.

I don't agree that modern games are unoriginal. Look at what's come out in the last year: *Thief*, *RollerCoaster Tycoon*, *Midtown Madness*, *Aliens Vs Predator*, *Driver*, *Dungeon Keeper 2*, *System Shock 2* and so on – all great titles, bursting with original moments. Granted, the last two are sequels, but they are both outstanding games that would stand up on their own merits. And I haven't even mentioned *Half-Life*.

So, people, stop complaining and enjoy the variety of entertainment that's out there. In my memory, we've never had it so good...

Jarrod McElhinney

Jarrod cites *Half-Life* as an example of the high quality of PC games available. He's not wrong.



SETTLING THE SCORE

I'd just like to say that everyone's obsession with scores is ridiculous. I read *Empire* and *Q* and can't imagine anything like this happening with film and music reviews. Someone might think that this film is boring as hell or that some new album is absolutely fantastic – it doesn't mean they're necessarily right or wrong, it's just an opinion. Another critic could say, and probably has said somewhere else, the complete opposite.

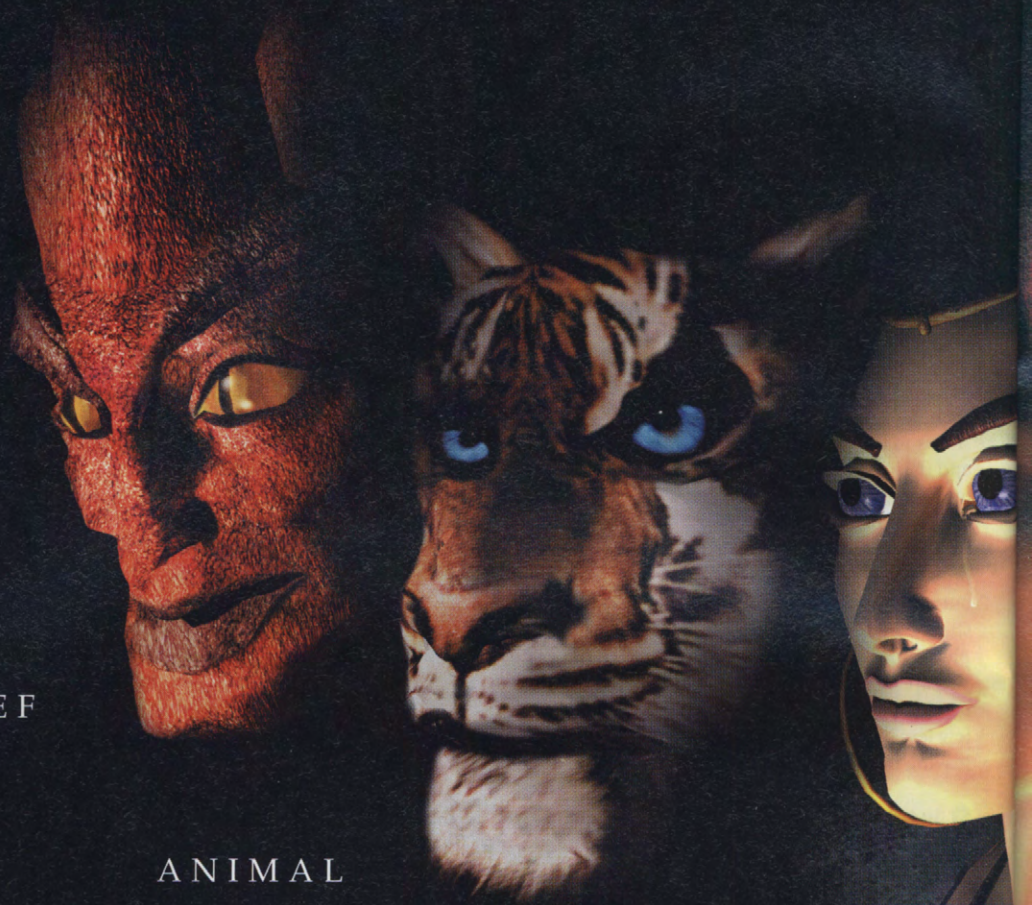
I think your readers should read the reviews, make up their minds on whether they like the sound of it and use the scores (which are too high anyway) as a guideline, rather than squabbling over small percentages.

Scott Miller, Leicester

We try to give as much information in games reviews as possible so that readers can form their own opinion and base their buying decisions on that. Unfortunately, for many people, the two numbers standing beside each other at the end of the review appear to be more important than the review itself.

So we will say to you all again, *read* our reviews – they are there to help you decide whether the game under review will be to your taste or not. Review scores are simply a statement of how much the reviewer liked the game, not whether he liked it or not (hence, a score of 70+ does *not* mean the game is crap, it means it's good but not brilliant). We're never going to explain that again. Ever. You can't make us. PCZ

IT'S



THIEF

ANIMAL

PRISONER

Prin
Pers
3

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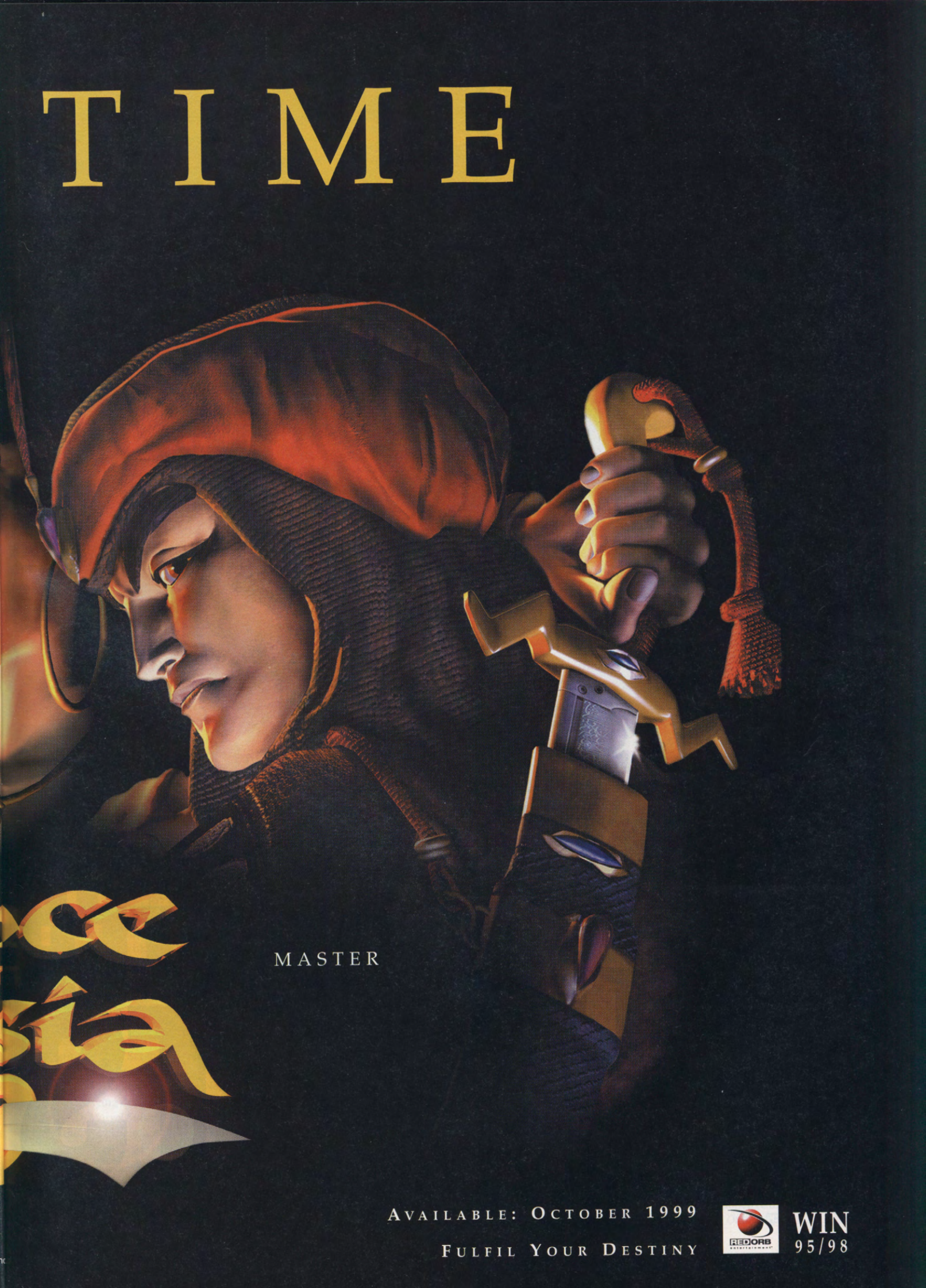
TIME



MASTER

AVAILABLE: OCTOBER 1999

FULFIL YOUR DESTINY

REDORB

WIN
95/98

TOP STORY

Poor dress sense and no trousers: signs of the true warrior.

"It's behiiiiind yoooou!"

ORCS A LORDY, IT'S NEVERWINTER NIGHTS

Hang out the bunting as *Dungeons & Dragons* comes of age

GETTING INTO CHARACTER Phil Wand

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Bioware
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.neverwinternights.com
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Early 2000

IN SUMMARY

An online, multiplayer mirror of the pen and paper-based *Dungeons & Dragons*. The game has its foundations in the big momma of role-playing rule sets, *AD&D 3rd Edition*.

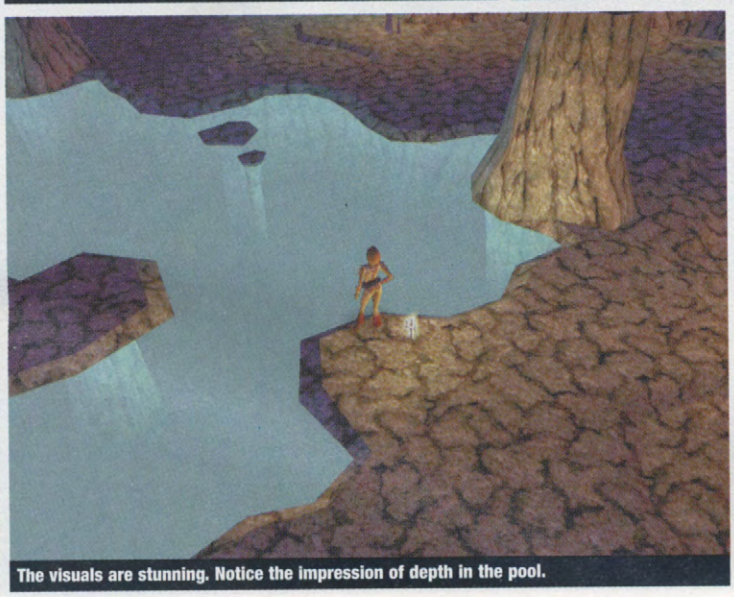
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Become Dungeon Master to create and control your own worlds and stories. Alter the plot, possess characters and manage combat from behind the scenes – all in real time.

The game uses the Omen graphics engine, developed for *MDK2*.

Bioware will bundle *Solstice Toolset* with the game.

"Eat my purple glowing thing, turquoise shuffling thing!"



The visuals are stunning. Notice the impression of depth in the pool.

"Oi, are you staring at my girth, reindeer-head?"

"No, I'm looking at your ridiculous weapon, troll face."

Role-playing games have always been frowned upon. When Gary Gygax created *Dungeons & Dragons* way back in 1973, people actually believed the game to be blasphemous because it mentioned words like witchcraft, resurrection, deity, demon and hell. Fundamentalist Christians accused the game of teaching demonology, voodoo, murder, rape, suicide, assassination, insanity, sexual perversion, homosexuality, prostitution and Satan worship.

Things finally came to a head when people called Martin and Neil started playing derivatives such as *2300AD*, *Marvel Super Heroes* and *Call Of Cthulhu* in the school library. You may recall the scene: they'd scurry across to the far table, dig around in each other's satchels for Tupperware pots of odd-sided dice, then whisper excitedly over packed lunches of Bovril sandwiches and ready salted crisps. From that point on, every name of every role-playing game in the world was mud.

Around ten years ago, things started to look up. When the world's largest Internet Service Provider began hosting a multiplayer fantasy game based around a pen and paper RPG called *Forgotten Realms*, the role-playing image had a buff and a polish. Called *Neverwinter Nights*, the game concept was developed by TSR (who, incidentally, were the same people responsible for *Dungeons & Dragons*). Five years later, and presumably because of people like Martin and Neil, AOL shut the whole thing down.

Earlier this year, developers Bioware, best known for *Baldur's Gate* (*PCZ* #73, 85%), revived the *Neverwinter Nights* name with a grand plan for an online multiplayer environment. Not only would it capture all the magic of pen and paper role-playing, it would also cater for the 'must be like *Half-Life* or I won't play it' crowd with superb 3D graphics and a single-player mode. The game's major attraction would be the ability to go behind the scenes as Dungeon Master (DM) and control all manner of events. As DM, you'd be able to possess any creature you liked including dragons, wildlife and non-player characters.

"The game's major attraction is the ability to go behind the scenes as Dungeon Master and control events"

And it's almost here. Set in and around the northernmost reaches of the *Forgotten Realms* game world, *Neverwinter Nights* has its foundations in TSR's new *3rd Edition Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* rule set, meaning it's a 'real' RPG first and foremost. A bundled editing suite enables you to create and populate whole new worlds in which any number of other players can go adventuring, just like *D&D*. These 'modules' can also be wrapped around different play styles, including co-operative and deathmatch. All players are able to choose their own clothing and colours, select a portrait either from the included library or digital camera images, and even personalise the character with custom sounds. You can even import your existing profiles from *Baldur's Gate*.

The game allows you to play any combination of 7 races and 12 classes, including the powerful new half-orc as well as sorcerer, barbarian, monk and assassin classes. Other *D&D 3rd Edition* enhancements include second weapon combat skills and special abilities, such as the capacity to parry attacks, make called shots and disarm your attackers.

All in all, *Neverwinter Nights* looks like a contender for the online RPG crown. Coupled with no monthly bills, *AD&D* rules and a graphics engine to die for, it could even challenge the dominance of *Ultima Online*. PCZ

TOP STORY

That's the ring of *Halo* rising in the distance. It's pre-rendered as the world is just too big to be rendered in real time.

GET YOUR RING AROUND HALO

Bungie's latest action game could be the biggest of next year. It's certainly shaping up to be the most attractive. And original? You betcha.

GOING LOOPY Richie Shoemaker

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

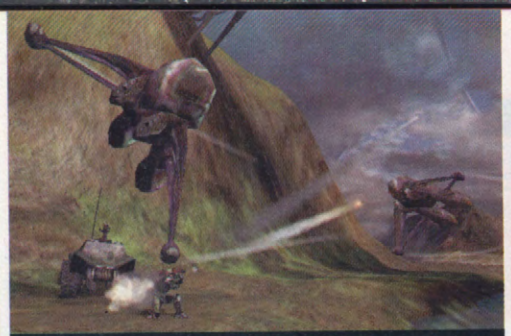
DEVELOPER Bungie
PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Mid-to-late 2000
WEBSITE http://halo.bungie.com

IN SUMMARY

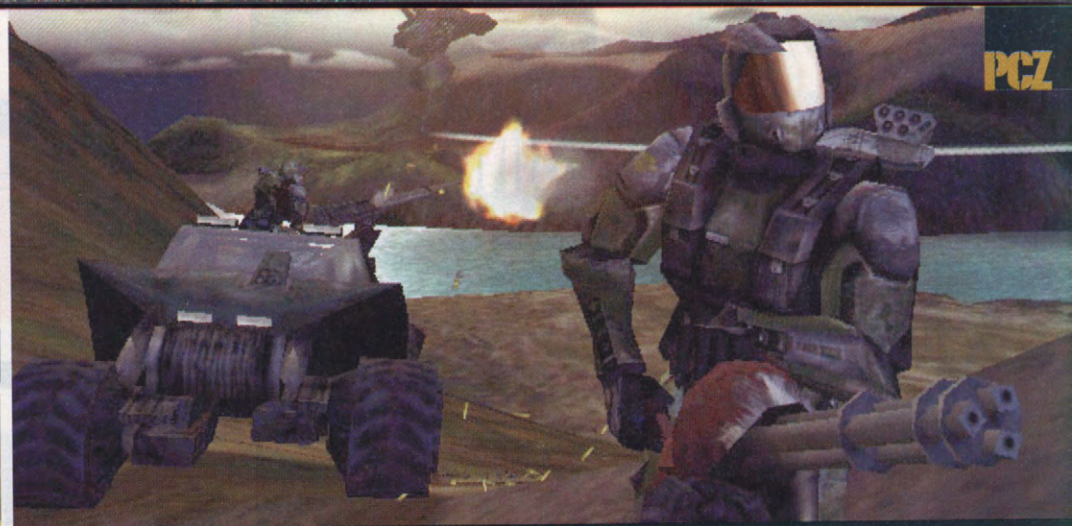
Halo is a third-person action game set on a hula-hoop shaped world where you play a cyborg out to kill the alien enemy with an assorted array of weaponry in a ton of different vehicles. There, simple.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Practically everything about it – graphically it should set new standards. Some commentators have said it makes even PlayStation 2 games look dated. In terms of gameplay, the seamless play area, air, sea and land vehicles and dynamic enemy AI make *Halo* a game to watch.

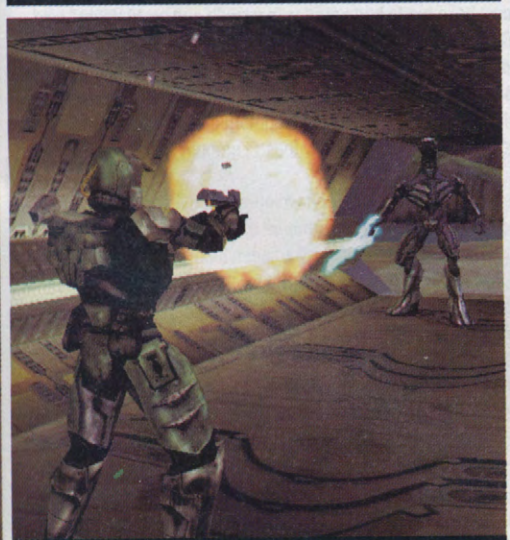


Halo is fought over between two races. There's a mysterious third who have built the world that's being fought over.



We were beginning to think sci-fi games were starting to look tired. Not any more.

In multiplayer games one person can drive, while others shoot from the back.



Indoor areas will be integrated seamlessly into outdoor, and you'll see dozens of characters on screen at any one time.

Caption to go here, Caption to go here, Caption to go here,

The alien race – The Covenant – use energy-based weapons and ride about in sleek hover vehicles.

One day Bungie are going to have a major hit on their hands and they won't know what hit them. Responsible for a trilogy of *Marathon* games (popular *Doom* clones for beleaguered Mac owners) and two *Myth* titles, the Bungie boys haven't been afraid to follow their own path. Starting out developing games for the Apple Mac – hardly the most lucrative market – Bungie are relative newcomers to the PC. Their first PC game *Abuse* barely shook the world back in 1996, although since then *Myth: The Fallen Lords* and *Myth II: Soulblighter* have increased their standing among PC gamers, but still, compared to the likes of iD and Westwood they're still small fry.

However, all that is about to change with *Halo* – they've picked up the game developers rule book, ripped out the chapter on level design and thrown it away. *Halo* has not one level but a big 'ringworld' on which players are free to roam, whether on foot, in ground-based vehicles, in the air or under water. There will be missions, of course, but we're promised a game whereby the enemy will work on a dynamic level, defending where you choose to attack and probably catching you out in the process.

As a multiplayer game, *Halo* will be reminiscent and no doubt better than *Starsiege Tribes*, offering two very different sides, an impossible array of vehicles and weapons, gun emplacements and seamless indoor and outdoor areas. In fact the multiplayer game will be so big that players will have to specialise in various roles to achieve maximum effectiveness. Whether you choose to be a straight ground-based grunt, a pilot, or any number of roles is up to you. Unlike *Team Fortress*, where you choose a role beforehand, everyone starts off the same.

Slack-jawed silence – that's the response of most people who have seen *Halo* in action. We talk of course about the graphics. Curves? Pah! You may think *Quake III Arena* is the best engine money can license but you'd almost certainly be wrong. Bungie have moved beyond today's standard of real-time shadowing and intrusive lens flare. In *Halo* not only will you find skeletal animation, scaleable mesh technology and reflective surfaces, but multiplayer texture mapping, true deformable terrain and inverse kinetics *(You've lost me now – Ed)*. In other words you'll see realistic body movement, explosions leaving craters, buildings slowly crumbling and warped images of yourself in the reflection of a jeep's wheel arch. The physics too: spent casings thrown into the air and rolling down slopes; wheels moving independently across a number of surfaces and the spray of gravel (each particle texture-mapped) as your wheels struggle for purchase.

"In *Halo* not only will you find skeletal animation, scaleable mesh technology and reflective surfaces, but multiplayer texture mapping and inverse kinetics"

Just one of the little things to look out for will be the interface – something Bungie's previous games are hardly noted for. One aspect is giving team commands: you don't have to go through three sub-menus to get your troops to do anything. There won't even be a button for 'Look out!', you'll just point to the incoming threat and your comrades will spring into action.

Have we told you enough? No? Well, we shall leave the rest for a future issue. More than any other game, *Halo*'s in-game screenshots speak for themselves. Which is why we've made them big. Just for you. PCZ

SINGLE LIFE

NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker

I received an email recently from the PR contact at Hasbro Interactive. Emails from PR people usually offer one of two things: screenshots of a game we've already had access to for weeks, or an avi file of dubious origin. But this email was a challenge – to a game of *Battleships*. I accepted.

Email games are nothing new, of course, offering a cheaper form of multiplayer gaming for turn-based games. They've been around as long as email itself and are popular with hardcore chess players and hex-based bores like Dan Emery. But it made me wonder why it has taken so long for email games to make the leap from draughts and poker to more 'exciting' games like the forthcoming *Email X-COM*. I'm sure they could achieve much more. Why isn't there an email *Civilization*, for instance? There's a multiplayer version, but it takes too much time and money to complete online.

Anyway, I lost at *Battleships*.

Email-only titles are starting to emerge as part of the boom in online, multiplayer-only games. The days when you'd pick up a game that included 30 single-player missions and a handful of deathmatch levels are almost over. Developers are writing games like *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III Arena* primarily for online play. Sierra's *SWAT 3* will be single-play only, with an online version to follow soon after. Within a couple of years, every new game will be single-player only. For your deathmatch fix, you'll probably either have to pay for a patch or a full game and download it.

You can blame the likes of *Ultima Online* and *EverQuest* for this; the developers are raking in so much money on them that nearly every penny you pay over the counter is going into profit. If this trend worries you, it probably means you've yet to experience the thrill of playing against human opposition. But whether you like it or not, it's going to happen.

Email Quake? Now there's an idea...

THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P.27

ChartTrack

TECH-HEAD

nVIDIA, S3 and 3Dfx show off new products at ECTS

P.30

SIERRA REGROUP AGAIN

Following severe cuts earlier this year, Sierra have announced further cutbacks, with a number of jobs and key games being axed.

Earlier in the year it was Yosemite and Dynamix who bore the brunt of the downsizing, with 130 staff laid off and the promising *Navy SEALS* trashed. Yosemite have, of course, since disbanded, leaving several other studios to face major cuts this time around. Dynamix's *Pro Pilot 2000*, WWII flight sim *Desert Fighters*, space sim *Babylon 5* and Berkeley System's *Orcs: Revenge Of The Ancient* have all been canned – apparently because they are sub-standard – putting another 105 people out of work.

"Over the past year, Sierra have made huge strides in growth and profitability," said company president Dave Grenewetzki. "These changes will create an even better environment for the development of great titles."

What seems to be causing anguish among gamers is the fact that while promising games such as *Babylon 5* have been terminated, development on *Professional Bull Rider* and *Trophy Bass Fishing* continues. In our view, this doesn't amount to "development of great titles".

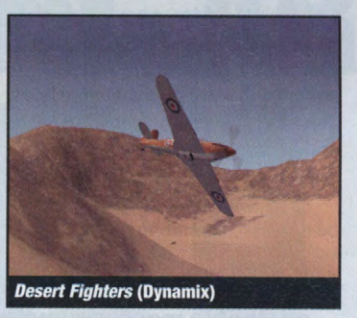
"Sierra took a very close look at all titles under development," said Kathy Gilmore Miller, PR contact for Sierra US. "We looked at the amount of time the titles were in development, how far they had come, the costs that had been incurred to date and the sales forecasts. Those titles that were not going to be profitable in the end were cancelled."

Although third-party developed games like *Team Fortress 2* (Valve), *Half-Life: Opposing Force* (Gearbox) and *Homeworld* (Relic) are unaffected, there is concern that there may be an exodus of staff pre-empting another cull.

Gilmore Miller added: "Sierra has gone through many changes in recent months due to our acquisition [Havas's acquisition of Sierra]. We don't anticipate any other changes moving forward; however, we will always look at the profitability of our company."

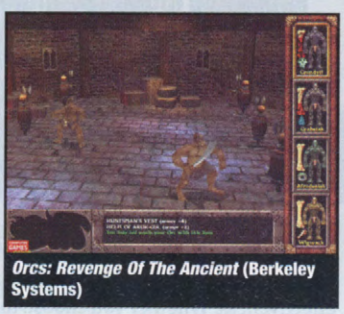
Babylon 5, at least, may have been thrown a lifeline – several publishers have expressed an interest in the game and Sierra have said: "We are open to discussing the sale of our code with any developer who may be interested in pursuing the development of the cancelled games. There are no such deals in place as of yet."

Dan Foy, a programmer working on *Babylon 5*, remains hopeful. "I believe Sierra will not be renewing their exclusive licence with Warner. It is set to expire soon, so it will be available," he said.



Desert Fighters **(Dynamix)**

Pro Pilot 2000 **(Dynamix)**



Orcs: Revenge Of The Ancient **(Berkeley Systems)**

Babylon 5: Space Combat Simulator **(Sierra Studios)**

MAN WHO KNOWS
The very latest industry gossip
P.34

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO....?
Three games that should've been here by now
P.35

HOTSHOTS
A sneak preview of up-and-coming game releases
P.36

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS
We reveal the lucky winners of the Grand Final
P.40

GRAND PRIX 3

Formula 1 sim maestro Geoff Crammond revs up again

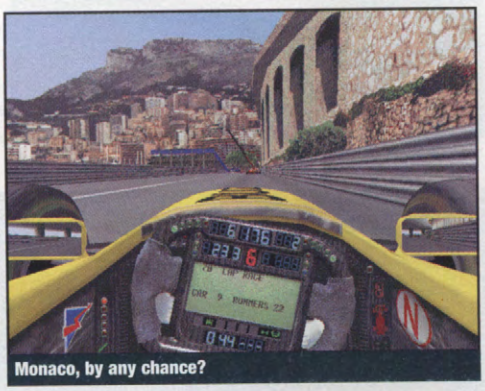
You get the feeling that even though the game is months away from release, Geoff Crammond's third F1 sim, *Grand Prix 3*, has won the race before it has even begun.

Winning game of the show at ECTS last month, the game drew a sizeable crowd throughout the three days. Some who saw it were nonplussed, commenting: "It's just another Formula 1 game." Others retorted: "But it's *Geoff Crammond*'s F1 game!" It was obvious to all, however, that the game *looked* good.

Most important in a racing game, of course, is the feel of the cars – how well they react to keyboard prods and joystick pulls. *F1 GP3*, compared to the best F1 sim currently available (*Monaco Grand Prix 2*, probably), feels like it's almost there. Apart from the odd crash (due to bugs, not driver error), the cars moved fluidly, jostled for position and generally took textbook routes around the tracks. The physics was spot-on. All this was in an automatic rookie car. For the hardcore player, we can expect a total of five levels of difficulty, eight driving aids and your usual clutch of racing modes, from Quick Race to a full-on Championship Season.

All this would be lost, of course, were it not for the official tag from FOA. All the teams, drivers, tracks and sponsors from the 1998 season will be in the game, all looking as realistic as your 3D card will allow. And if you're unfortunate enough to be stuck in the pre-3Dfx era, the game still looks stunning. All these shots are from the software version.

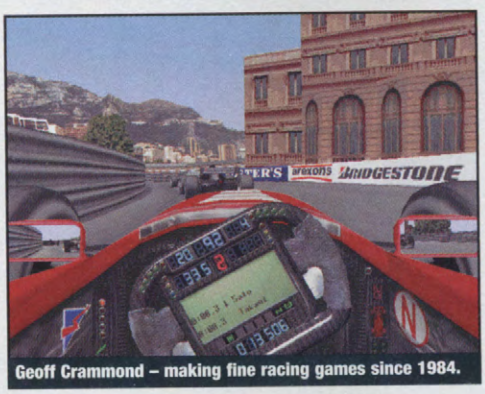
***F1 Grand Prix 3* is out next spring.**



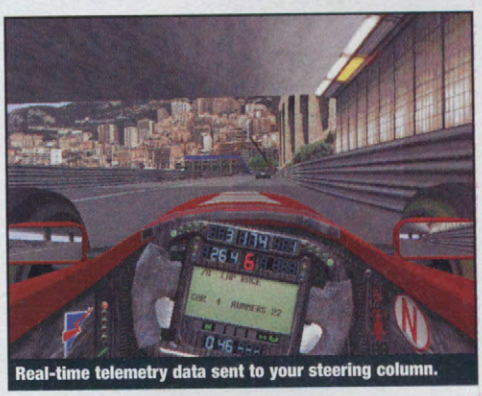
Monaco, by any chance?

Plenty of TV-style replays – but no Murray Walker.

Pitstop fans will get the option to tinker away happily.



Geoff Crammond – making fine racing games since 1984.



Real-time telemetry data sent to your steering column.

NO STOPPING GTA

Having snapped up DMA Design from publishers Infogrames, Take 2 have big plans for the Scottish developer, with ambitions to extend the *Grand Theft Auto* series with two more titles. *GTA 3D* will be the obvious next step, setting the crime 'em up in 3D cities, with players able to walk about, *Quake*-style, and carjack various vehicles in a range of cities.

Grand Theft Auto: Online Crime World is a different matter, with worldwide servers letting you drive with and against other players in local cities. Whether this means only US players will be able to drive about in US cities remains to be seen, and we don't yet know whether *Crime World* will be 3D or top-down. At a guess, a 2D view seems more feasible at this stage. We'll keep you posted on release dates for both games.

***GTA Online* could look something like this.**

BATTLE ISLE IV

Shock Troops – as it was then.

So that's what's gone and happened to *Shock Troops*...

A few months ago there was a fairly promising 3D real-time strategy on the horizon from Slovakian developers Cauldron. Going by the name of *Shock Troops*, development on the game was halted just as we were about to report on it. In fact what had happened was that Cauldron took their game to publishers Blue Byte, who in turn thought that while *Shock Troops* was a good game, the engine was perfectly suited for another in the long-running *Battle Isle* series. So Cauldron came away with more than they bargained for.

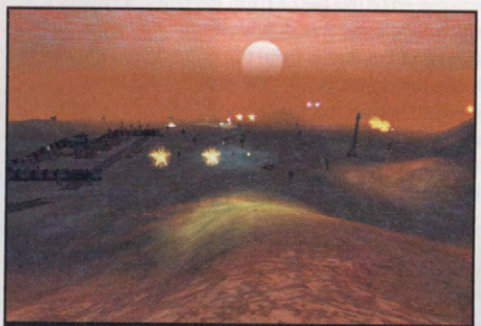
Released way back in 1991, the original *Battle Isle* was one of the few hex-based strategy games that people weren't ashamed to own. It had plenty of units, a great storyline and fantastic cut-scenes. *Battle Isle II* brought in 3D for the first time, and *Shadow Of The Emperor* (*Battle Isle 3*) brought it all bang up to date. It's four years since the last episode (discounting *Incubation*) and the big question on everyone's lips is whether *Blue Byte* can do it again.

Rather than 2D maps and 3D cut-scenes, *Battle Isle IV: Children Of Haris* will be entirely in spinny 3D, with traditional turn-based play and switching to real time in the heat of battle.

Although Blue Byte were pretty cagey about gameplay specifics, the 3D engine seems more than capable. Especially impressive were the lighting and shadow effects, with full day/night cycles and seasonal weather effects.

The projected release date of *Battle Isle IV* is Autumn next year, nearly a decade on from when the original first arrived. Let's just hope it lives up to the name.

***Battle Isle* goes full 3D for the first time.**


At ECTS Blue Byte kept going on about the lighting effects.

The original *Battle Isle* team has moved on to other things.

SHORTS

BIG SCREEN RAMPAGE

Sony have snapped up the rights to produce a movie based on Xatrix's *Redneck Rampage*, the ageing comedy 3D shooter featuring southern inbreds and invading aliens.

The film will be a comedy rather than a violent action flick, especially given the recent Stateside shootings.

Xatrix are of course responsible for the more recent *Kingpin*, and talk of a *Redneck Rampage* film may point to a PC sequel.

DUMB ALIENS

Ubi Soft are developing *Stupid Invaders*, a cartoon adventure featuring five alien visitors who have arrived on Earth for a picnic. Developed by Gaumont Multimedia – the games arm of the film company behind films *Leon* and *The Fifth Element*, *Stupid Invaders* has been setting eyeballs reeling. Keep 'em peeled for some screenshots in *PC ZONE* soon.

Gaming against the clock at its very best.

OH NO! LEMMINGS AGAIN

After two great games, a disappointing 3D sequel and *Lemmings Paintball* (which is best forgotten), the floppy green-haired ones are set to make another comeback in *Lemmings Revolution*.

Although now unavailable, a demo appeared in early September, released in part to show off a new 3D engine that wraps seamlessly around the 2D levels of old – and all without getting in the way of the all-important gameplay. Developers Psygnosis are hoping for plenty of feedback, so the game is sure to go through a few changes before release. However, the gameplay will remain the same – to save the lives of the suicidal critters. We were tearing our hair out for a while playing it, which is as good a recommendation as you can get. Hopefully we'll have a full head of hair in time for its release, some time next year.

LEGION

7 Studio's Eric Yeo and Lewis Peterson – the ex-Westwood duo who hit the headlines earlier this year for leaving before *Tiberian Sun*'s completion – have announced their first game, *Legion*, an action strategy game set in the time of Arthurian Britain.

The game, a mix of 3D action and squad-level strategy, puts you in control of the legendary king and four other knights, each in command of troops of their own. The game will be mission-based, with RPG elements allowing you to beef up the fighting abilities of each of the units.

Although being developed on the PC, more effort seems to be going into the PlayStation 2 version, which is slated for release sometime in 2001.

Yet more improbable figures about to burst onto the screen.

7 Studios are only just past the artwork stage.

YOUR TEAM HAS BEEN DROPPED DEEP BEHIND ENEMY LINES
ON A MERCENARY CONTRACT JOB...YOU'VE SUFFERED
HORRENDOUS LOSSES...YOU'VE RETREATED TO THE PICK-UP POINT...
BUT THERE'S NO CHOPPER, AND A MESSAGE STATING -
"YOUR UNIT HAS BEEN DEFUNDED". YOU'RE IN TROUBLE...

...IT'S PAYBACK TIME!

Shadow Company

LEFT FOR DEAD

UNLEASHED SEPTEMBER 1999

- Take control of **up to twelve mercs at a time**, each with their own weapon preferences and **detailed skills**, but also personality and background.
- **Intuitive gameplay** allows to easily perform **spectacular feats**: creep up behind guards unnoticed, ambush patrols and generally wreak unseen havoc upon your enemies.

PC CD

SINISTER GAMES

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Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT

Beats hanging around Clapham Junction.

"Sorry, trains delayed. There's a cactus spike on the tracks."

We need the Fat Controller here.

This be injun country.

Choose your route across the USA.

FRONTIERLAND

Calling at all stations across the wild wild West

Building a railroad to connect East and West Coast America – that's the aim of *Frontierland*, a 3D real-time strategy game on its way next March via German publisher JoWood.

Similar to Take 2's recent *Railroad Tycoon 2*, the game is less of a straight-laced business simulation in that it allows more control of day-to-day operations. Lumberjacks, engineers and sheriffs all need to be recruited, raw materials bought and researched and settlements along the planned route assembled. Throughout the missions, players will have to deal with competitors, bandits, Indians and the small matter of a civil war. For the bloodthirsty, a battle mode is also promised.

Pulling the game along is an impressive graphics engine, featuring day and night cycles, special effects aplenty and a host of camera angles. Over 90 different buildings and nearly 40 characters will be on offer, all in 3D. Let's hope it gets here on time.

BOARDROOM BLITZ

If the phrase 'fourth quarter marketing spend' doesn't immediately send you to sleep, Ubi Soft's *Corporate Machine* could be the game of your dreams. Maybe your boss will even let you play it in the office.

Released this November (sorry, Q4 99), the aim of the game is simple – to take over the world and make stacks of cash (sorry, maximise profitability). Choose your industry from the likes of computing and transport, budget for R&D, marketing and distribution, and build stores, offices and staff amenities. To get ahead new territories have to be broken into, each with their own product needs and resources, and if you care to dabble in corporate espionage or political lobbying, the choice will be there. However, you'll have to provide your own grey suit.

More risky than *Risk*?

Build your own business park.

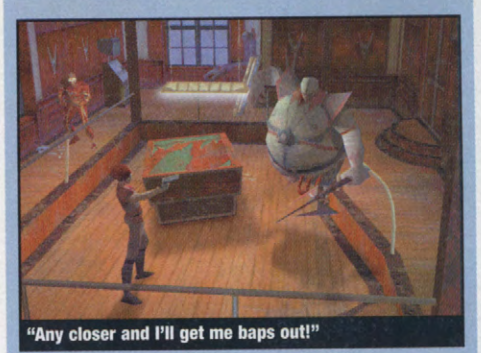
DEVIL IN THE DARK

Hubert Chardot, author of the *Alone In The Dark* trilogy, has put his pen to *Devil Inside*, a 3D action adventure set to be released by Cryo in November.

Offering a mix of first and third-person cinematic views, the game offers 100 locations to explore and over 40 different undead creatures to dispatch using over 20 weapons. Curiously the hero, Dave, ex-cop turned journalist, has the enviable ability to turn into a woman at will. How he ever gets out of bed in the morning, we'll never know.

The game itself is a promising mixture of *Resident Evil* and *Shadow Man* and the graphics, while not quite as detailed as you would expect, are suitably disturbing and well animated even at this early stage (especially Dave's hair). Maybe Cryo have a decent game on their hands at last – it certainly looks that way.

Dave does his Nik Kershaw impression.


"Any closer and I'll get me baps out!"

SHORTS

HORNY EXTRAS

Bullfrog have just released a new unit for *Dungeon Keeper 2* called the Maiden, a woman's body with arachnid legs. Later on we can expect an expansion disc and almost certainly another full sequel. Bullfrog have promised an online diary very soon, following development on their next project. Check out dk2.ea-europe.com for more details.

PLAY MYSTY FOR ME

Project 2's *Schizm* is so huge that it will fill up not one but two DVD discs. Weighing in at over 10 gigabytes, the game will feature hundreds of pre-rendered locations and puzzles, with the aim being to escape the planet on which you are marooned. The game, due for release next autumn, carries on in the tradition of *Myst* and *Riven* with 360-degree and first-person views. Not quite our cup of tea perhaps, but sure to be a winner with *Daily Mail* readers.

KING KEY

When we first heard that Stephen King was working with Presto Studios (of *The Journeyman Project* fame) on a PC game we were intrigued. But when we heard it was called *F13* we become confused: the master of horror writing a flight sim? Surely not? Of course after hearing more about it, all became clear. *F13* in fact refers to a non-existent function key, one that if pressed scares the living shit out of you.

Rather than a full horror adventure, *F13* is in fact billed as an "interactive time-waster and bone-chilling desktop companion". It will include a novella that screams at you, a bunch of screensavers and a few simple games. All will be revealed in December.

motocross accident...
...attempting "The Superman" stunt...
multiple break right tibia.

"should've played Extreme Biker instead"...

Ride Motocross, Supercross and Freestyle.

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If all rock stars decided it would be a good thing to get involved in games, we'd be eagerly awaiting the latest interactive adventures of Radiohead and Half-Man Half-Biscuit. Thankfully, no such titles are on the horizon – although *Killing People Is Easy* would make an interesting title. Ever scratching at the door of opportunity, however, is one Mr David Bowie, who, at the request of publishers Eidos, has penned a few tunes and had his faced painted in pixels for their latest action adventure, *The Nomad Soul*. You can't fail to have noticed the Thin Grey Duke on the cover this month, no doubt thinking the man has made a shrewd move. Perhaps he has – he's certainly got himself involved in a great game. *The Nomad Soul* has something for everyone and, along with the ever-expanding mail-order specialists Gameplay, there's even more reason to see how his latest project – with more than a little help from coders Quantic Dream – has turned out.

After you've read the review starting on page 74, digested the finely crafted words and come away suitably impressed, why not pull out your underused credit card and give Gameplay a call? At £10 less than your local games store – £24.99 – *The Nomad Soul* is fantastic value for money. So what are you waiting for? Call the sales hotline on 0870 444 0888 and don't forget to have your copy of *PC ZONE* to hand just in case they ask you a question related to it. All together now: *'Take your protein pills and put your helmet on...'*

"It's my Blue Period, you know."

Dame Bowie has always been an avid patron of the arse. Sorry, arts.

Sadly, Bryan Ferry didn't age so well...

System Shock 2 easily deserves a higher placing.

CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what *you* think

THE Virgin MEGASTORES TOP 10

SEP	OCT	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	REV SCORE
-	1	**C&C: TIBERIAN SUN**	WESTWOOD	EA	90%
NE	2	SYSTEM SHOCK 2	LOOKING GLASS	EA	95%
2	3	KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME	XATRIX	INTERPLAY	92%
RE	4	DELTA FORCE	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	66%
3	5	HIDDEN & DANGEROUS	ILLUSION SOFTWORKS	TAKE 2	91%
NE	6	CUTTHROATS	HOT HOUSE	EIDOS	68%
5	7	ALIENS VS PREDATOR	REBELLION	FOX INTERACTIVE	91%
4	8	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
NE	9	DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME	PSYGNOSIS	GT INTERACTIVE	79%
RE	10	HALF-LIFE	VALVE	SIERRA	95%

THE ChartTrack TOP10 ELSPA

SEP	OCT	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
1	1	C&C: TIBERIAN SUN	WESTWOOD	EA	90%
NE	2	SYSTEM SHOCK 2	LOOKING GLASS	EA	95%
2	3	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
NE	4	ENCARTA 2000	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	N/A
6	5	KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME	XATRIX	INTERPLAY	92%
4	6	HIDDEN & DANGEROUS	ILLUSION SOFTWORKS	TAKE 2	91%
NE	7	CUTTHROATS	HOT HOUSE	EIDOS	68%
3	8	STAR WARS: THE PHANTOM MENACE	BIG APE/LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	78%
9	9	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON	CHRIS SAWYER	HASBRO	87%
8	10	ALIENS VS PREDATOR	REBELLION	FOX INTERACTIVE	91%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 1999)

COMPETITION

WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

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

Question: *System Shock 2* uses an enhanced version of the graphics engine from which first-person game?

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

- *Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18*
- *Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies*
- *Are you a current subscriber to* PC ZONE*?*

Answers on a postcard to: *PC ZONE* Chart Compo (CPCZ912A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ Closing date: Friday 19 Nov

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

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"What – no *Homeworld*? *(It wasn't out in time – Ed.) Tiberian Sun* is good, but *Homeworld* is far better. Good to see *AvP* still in there, but what's *Encarta 2000* doing at number 4? I'd rather see something else in its place."
Jon Herman, The Netherlands

"Six months on and *Champ Man* is still hanging on. You can blame it on the new football season if you like, but for me it's still the best management game out there, always will be."
Eddy Francis, Edgware

"*Tiberian Sun* rightly rises above the clouds of predictability and puts all the other contenders in its shadow. It will be a long while before this game's final sunset. Strange mix of game genres this month but *AvP* is hanging on. *Rollercoaster Tycoon* is a surprise – I thought it would have disappeared without trace."
Gary Roe, Wrexham

"I guess there's no real surprises in store this month… er, hang on, *Cutthroats*? Are you pulling my wooden leg? I pity those landlubbers who haven't got a clue about decent PC games any more. It's desperation. We NEED *Unreal Tournament, Quake III Arena, The Nomad Soul* and *Soldier Of Fortune*. Now. Bring 'em on!"
Marc Spillman, Leeds

"What is it with me and buggy games? I bought *Cutthroats* and *Prince Of Persia* the other day and took them back the next. Maybe I should give in and buy *Tiberian Sun*. Stick to what you know, eh?"
Jason Storr, London

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

Still commanding the top spot, *C&C: Tiberian Sun* marches on in its quest to become the PC's best-selling game. But what's this? *System Shock 2*! At number 2! I'm sure the original *System Shock*, great though it was, never managed such a high chart placing. Great to see such a class game, with such depth and requiring half a brain to complete, piercing the upper echelons of the chart. Let's hope we won't have to wait five years for another sequel.

Talking of sequels, next month will see new entries *Unreal Tournament* (maybe), *Rogue Spear* and *GTA2* make their assault on the charts. Whether any of them will be enough to dislodge the mighty Westwood remains to be seen, but it's certainly about time something did.

Richie Shoemaker

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

1 Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines *(Eidos)*
2 Premier Manager '98 *(Gremlin)*
3 Titanic: Adventure Out Of Time *(Europress)*
4 World Cup '98 *(EA Sports)*
5 X-Files: The Game *(Fox Interactive)*

2 YEARS AGO...

1 Hexen II *(Bullfrog)*
2 Constructor *(Acclaim)*
3 Dungeon Keeper *(Bullfrog)*
4 Dark Colony *(Take 2)*
5 C&C: Red Alert *(Westwood/Virgin)*

5 YEARS AGO...

1 Theme Park *(EA)*
2 Rebel Assault *(US Gold)*
3 Frontier: Elite II *(Gametek)*
4 The Journeyman Project *(Gametek)*
5 TFX *(Ocean)*

LINKS AWAKENS

Just released in the States is *Link LS 2000*, the latest in the long-running (and arguably the best) golf sim series. Developed again by Access Software, now under the watchful eye of Microsoft, *Links 2000* features six courses, three of which are at St Andrews in Scotland, with a possible 25 that can be added at a later date. Four new golfers are included, along with five new modes of play and improved graphics. A new 'power stroke' swing system has been incorporated, as well as a new beginners' feature called Links Lessons.

Six courses, pre-rendered of course. Just for you.

We'll have a review of *Links 2000* in the next issue.

FLUFFY BALLS

Furballs, Acclaim's third-person action game, may look cute, but beneath those cartoon graphics lie the mechanics of a more adult game. Basically a shoot 'em up with puzzles, the game features six different characters to control and 24 levels across six different worlds. Sarcastic comments from the characters and plenty of slapstick adult humour promise *Furballs* should appeal to a wide range of gamers. Developed by Bizarre Creations, responsible for *F1 97*, Acclaim should be coughing it up in the middle of next year.

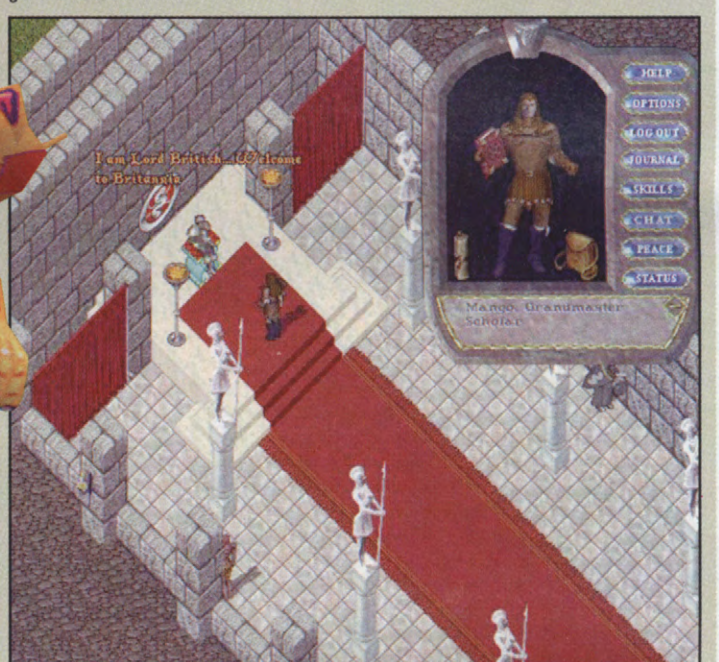
A cartoon game for grown-ups. Apparently.

ULTIMA SEQUEL

Pulling in hundreds of thousands of dollars a month, it was no surprise to hear Origin announce a full sequel to *Ultima Online*, their isometric online RPG.

Significantly, Origin have hailed *Ultima Online*'s third age as a full-3D affair, following the lead set by *EverQuest* and Microsoft's forthcoming *Asheron's Call*. There are no details on the graphics engine itself, although Origin have said their own *Ascension* engine will not be a part of the game. The plot thickens.

Unlike *The Second Age*, the updated version of *Ultima Online* that was released only a few months back, *UO2* will not allow players to transfer their characters over to the new game. In fact, *UO2* will be a different game entirely, with three races to choose from – including humans – and an extended set of character professions and skills. The server structure will differ entirely from the previous game, theoretically allowing more players online at any one time in one big, seamless world. Other features set to make it into the sequel are secure house transfers, lower downtime, skill management options, monster AI enhancements and tutorial modes for first-time players. Rest assured many more details (real-time voice communication, perhaps) will come to light before the game's release next autumn.



Development on *Ultima Online* will continue, but expect a slowdown when *UO2* appears.

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Available at all good software retailers

SMART MOVES FOR BATTLECRUISER SEQUELS

Battlecruiser 3020AD, a space-combat sim on a humungous scale, will take over your life

The *Battlecruiser* series has had a long and chequered history. Ten years in the making, Gametek (now Take 2) released *Battlecruiser 3000AD* to a universal slagging-off in 1996. The game was not only over-ambitious (nothing wrong with that, of course), but Gametek released an unfinished game that had bugs tumbling out of every orifice – and a poor manual. Developer Derek Smart maintains it was Gametek's fault, not his. Whatever, a war of words has existed ever since, with Smart hitting back at anyone, many of whom had never even played the game, who had the nerve to take a swipe at his creation.

Over 12 different stations will be in the game.

Over 100 ships, many of them the size of cities.

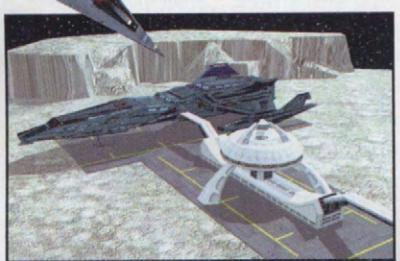
More recently, *Battlecruiser 3000AD v2* was released – a bug-free version that previously only gamers in the States had access to. Just out over here through GT Interactive's Replay label, we can now look forward to Smart's even more ambitious sequel, *Battlecruiser 3020AD*.

Trying to sum up the game would require an entire magazine, but at its heart *BC3020* is a space-combat sim, with the emphasis on simulation. You are the commander of a massive interstellar ship. You can take the helm of the mothership, its fighters, terrain vehicles and even individual soldiers. You can trade, mine, spy, engage in petty politics, research new technologies and even manage your crew (training, pay, pension plans and so on). There are elements of role-playing, real-time strategy, high-end simulation and first-person action. It's one big mutha of a game and, as fans of the series will readily testify, it will take over your life.

A *Strike Pak* expansion which was in development will now make it into another sequel, *Battlecruiser 3030AD*, but there will be elements of first-person action, not only onboard ships, but also on planet surfaces. If those two sequels aren't enough, *Battlecruiser Online* is also well into development, stepping up the multiplayer game that will also make up a sizeable component of *Battlecruiser 3020*.

Whether any of these games will be any good is difficult to predict. You can be sure of this, though: *Battlecruiser 3020AD* is sure to be better than its predecessor, plenty of people will slag off Derek Smart regardless and he in turn will vent his anger right back at 'em.

***Battlecruiser*'s first-person mode will allow players to board and assault other ships.**



You'll be able to land your battlecruiser on planet surfaces.

There should be something for everyone in the next version of *Battlecruiser*.

SHORTS

DELTA FORCED

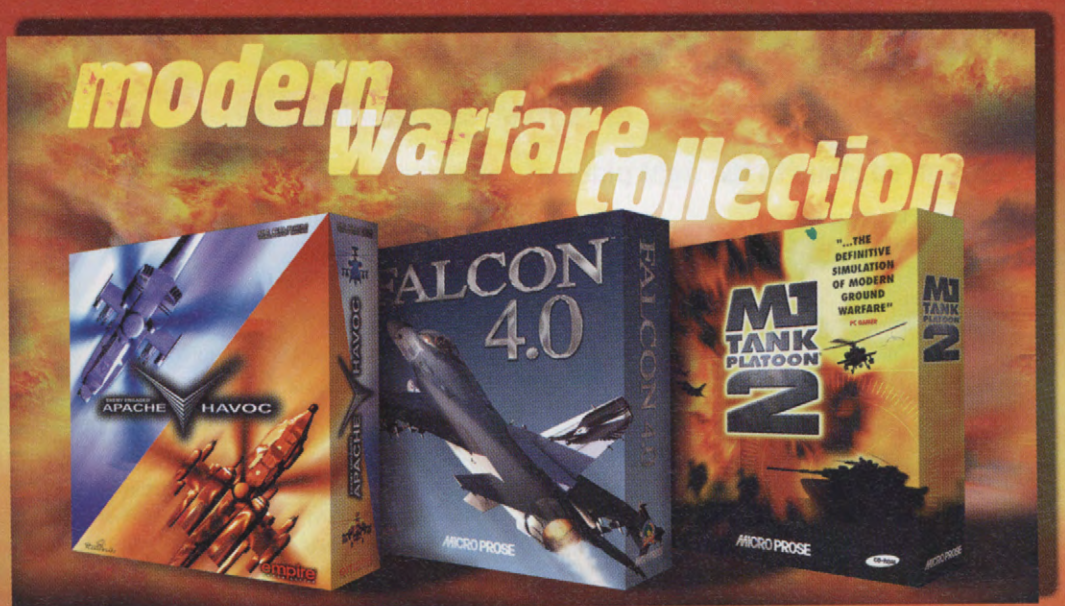
NovaLogic have given in to demand and announced that 3D-acceleration, through Direct3D, will make it into *Delta Force 2* after all. Graphics hardware will handle the polygon side of the game – buildings, trees and soldiers – while VoxelSpace will handle terrain. What this means is the game should both look and play superbly, with soldiers still able to hide behind clumps of grass. Anticipation in the *ZONE* office has gone up a notch.

BUGS' LIFE

Hold the front page! *Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time* will be reviewed next issue. The crazy carrot-cruncher stars in his first PC outing, in a 3D platform adventure, featuring five time zones and more loveable Warner Bros characters than you can shake an animated stick at, including Elmer Fudd, Yosemite Sam and Marvin the Martian. The game should be out now.

MORE TEARS FOR MORTYR

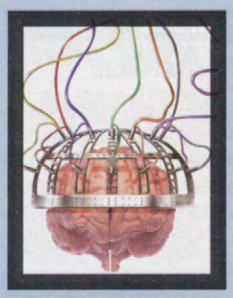
Last month we said Ubi Soft were looking for a publisher for WWII shooter *Mortyr*. Well, they found one – Dutch boys HD Interactive. So, after contacting them we managed to get our hands on 'reviewable' code, which, as it turns out, was incomplete. Now *Mortyr* has gone to a fourth publisher, PBH, who promise a finished version of the game next month. We might have a review in the next issue. But don't hold your breath.



94% PC Zone 95% PC Gamer 90% PC Zone

HASBRO Interactive

the collection



TECHHEAD ECTS 99 SPECIAL

Although the graphics gurus stole the show, plenty of other big names were out in force with peripherals and hardware

BACK IN BUSINESS Carlos Ruiz

THE FAST LIGHT SHOW

3dfx, S3 and nVIDIA show off exciting new products at this year's European Computer Trade Show

Judging by the amount of video card information covered on this page lately, you might think that it had turned into some kind of 3D acceleration fest. Well, that's not far from the truth – the fourth generation of video cards are almost ready for release. Pre-release hype and speculation are abundant, and the fast-paced nature of such developments means that this news deserves the headlines yet again. Also, there is another wild card in the pack – the Savage2000, from S3.

Computer Artworks' *Evolva* running on nVIDIA's powerful GeForce 256.

FEEL THE GEFORCE

nVIDIA (www.nvidia.com) have finalised the name of their new-born. Originally named the 'NV10', it will be called the GeForce 256, and the big deal is the on-board Transform & Lighting (T&L).

The GPU (Graphics Processing Unit) performs T&L acceleration in hardware. Basically, it can handle intensive 3D geometry that is typically reserved for your CPU (Central Processing Unit). The less work the CPU needs to do in that department, the more it can concentrate on the likes of artificial intelligence and physics calculations. With the GPU working in tandem with the CPU, we can expect games to be much more detailed, with improved AI and physics engines – making for a much better gaming experience.

Current games are lucky to hit a polygon count total of 20,000, whereas nVIDIA are pushing developers to design games with 75,000-plus. This kind of increase would result in much more sophisticated environments and objects – which was evident in the demos nVIDIA showed us.

There's one slight catch: games need to be developed specifically for this purpose, with DirectX 7 or above. This is a shame, because many of these games won't see the light of day for a while, by which time the next barrage of 3D cards will probably be available. Current DirectX 6 games on the market won't be affected at all by the GPU, and their OpenGL counter-parts won't fare much better. However, the GeForce 256 is very capable technically, with a 256-bit rendering engine, superior AGP4x support, a four-pixel/clock architecture and support for DirectX 6 texture compression. It also fully supports OpenGL and DirectX 7 features, such as cube environment mapping and a host of other nice stuff.

The first 32Mb cards will almost certainly have arrived by the time you read this – but we'd advise you wait for faster versions, with more RAM.

SAVAGE ARENA

S3's (www.s3.com) foray into the hard-core 3D card market is being led by their exciting new Savage2000 chipset. The company has expanded

MOUSE IN THE HOUSE

If you're bored with your rodent, you've come to the right place

As predicted, there was no shortage of hot new peripherals and controllers at ECTS. There was plenty of innovation in the mouse department – just look at what will be available soon.

The base unit may put people off.

Logitech's (www.logitech.com) Wingman Force Feedback Mouse is a very exciting prospect. There are three buttons, a thumb grip on the side, a USB connection and full force feedback compatibility. It can emulate a joystick or steering wheel, therefore instantly gaining access to a big library of force feedback games – although *Solitaire* isn't one of them.

If you don't happen to want the force feedback feature, Logitech offer the same mouse without it – the Gaming Mouse, which will retail at around £30. The mouse design is exactly the same, and has been optimised for gamers.

Alternatively, Microsoft (www.microsoft.com) have a stonker of a mouse in the new IntelliMouse Explorer, with its IntelliEye technology. It doesn't even need a smooth surface to operate on, the digital infra-red sensor allowing the tracking of movement on almost *any* non-reflective area.

It connects via USB or PS/2, and has four easily accessible and programmable buttons, together with the trademark scrolling wheel. It provides a new level of speed, accuracy, style and durability (plus a five-year warranty) in mice, and is sure to be a hit with PC owners.

Saitek (www.saitek.com) are plugging their Action Pad and Game Mouse combo, which together are intended to eliminate the need to use a keyboard in simpler games (which rules out *Falcon 4.0*). There are several buttons, hat-switches and scrolling wheels – with full programming functions, of course. The USB connection and intelligent design certainly make this one to look out for.

Increased comfort and reaction times in your games. Maybe...

their workforce significantly by their recent acquisition of Diamond Multimedia – and it seems they're now ready to target high-end users.

The Savage3D and Savage4 series were budget material, and their performance wasn't helped by sub-standard drivers. Thanks to the added expertise of Diamond, this should no longer be a problem – especially as the Savage2000 looks to be a killer chipset in more ways than one.

S3's demo of Savage2000 texture compression capabilities. Recognise the location?

Savage2000 cards will include a T&L engine (called S3TL) on-board, just like the GeForce 256. It will probably be slightly less powerful, and we should be looking at around 10-15 million triangles/sec compared to the GeForce's 15 million. The difference will be fairly negligible though – especially when you consider that the Savage2000 has a fill rate of 700+ Megatexels/sec – much higher than the GeForce's 480.

This would give the Savage2000 a much more balanced standpoint. It should be able to cope with standard titles better than the GeForce, especially when running at higher resolutions and colour depths – while still looking to the future with the T&L implementation.

The S3TC texture compression is still present, and S3 are working hard to synchronise this feature with the T&L for "the most realistic gameplay ever seen on the PC platform". They are also encouraging the development of high-polygon games to support S3TL and S3TC.

Texture compression is a method of compressing textures down to a much smaller capacity, typically allowing much more detailed textures and environments with the game still running at a very reasonable speed. Since nVIDIA and 3dfx have now caught up with S3 in this arena, support is starting to filter through from major developers (look out for *Quake III Arena*, and *Unreal Tournament*).

You can expect Savage2000 cards to be released late this year – if you can, opt for a 64Mb Savage2000+, as this is the top-end solution with higher clock speeds and better performance.

3DFX BUFFS UP

It is important to understand that 3dfx's (www.3dfx.com) T-Buffer is only one part of the final chipset – the part that provides you with plenty of eye candy, among other things. The technology as a whole is now being touted as 'Napalm', but we've yet to hear whether 3dfx will succumb to the almost inevitable 'Voodoo4' moniker.

3dfx previewed the previously announced T-Buffer special effects at ECTS, all of which seem to enhance the visual experience significantly. Motion blur is a feature that can be put to excellent effect if developers find the right ways to use it. Depth of field allows the focus to be shifted in real time, on a 3D scene, dictating where your vision is directed (close range, or in the distance). However, we got the general impression that it would only serve a useful purpose in cut-scenes, and other sequences in which the player has no control.

The full scene spatial anti-aliasing works very well, though. It makes for more of an 'arcade' type display, by significantly reducing the appearance of jagged edges commonly found on polygons. This not only smoothes out the general picture, but also refines the detail of objects far in the distance.

Games do not even have to support this (it's software-based, and 'switches on' via the supplied drivers). It instantly spruces up all your 3D games, which can only be good news. The T-Buffer also enables blurred reflections and soft shadows, both of which provide added touches of realism in the appropriate types of environment (*Thief* would have been an excellent candidate for the latter).

3dfx also announced another feature of the T-Buffer: 'FXT1' texture compression, a proprietary form of texture compression that can be used cross-platform, through Glide, OpenGL and DirectX. Not only is it flexible in that respect, but 3dfx claim that it produces better quality texture reproduction.

Although no other details have been revealed as yet, 3dfx have hinted that the fill rates of the 'Voodoo4' will be very high (possibly around 1,000 Megatexels/sec). If this is true, 3dfx will surely have the fastest card for the current generation of games – they've made it clear that T&L is not something they think we'll be needing in the next six months.

New 'Napalm' cards from 3dfx should be available early next year, when more will be known about the technology. Tune into *PC ZONE* next month for more info on this and the other chipsets.

FACTCANNON

Guillemot (www.guillemot.com) have a new sound card, the Maxi Sound Fortissimo, based on Yamaha's new chipset. It boasts top performance through the PCI bus, a four-speaker output, and support for EAX, A3D 1.0, DirectMusic, and more, plus an optical digital output, ideal for recording MP3s and CD audio from PC to MiniDisc.

If you destroy CDs in no time at all, why not give CDfender a whirl? Optidisc's new optical-quality CD-shaped film peels off and sticks to the underside of any CD, shielding it from dirt and scratches, while still allowing the laser to read through it. Protect your loved ones by paying www.cdfender.com a visit.

It's predicted that the earthquakes in Taiwan could cost the industry up to $300million, with hardware and memory manufacturers suffering complete power loss and the aftershock destabilising sensitive calibration equipment. This could lead to higher prices and shortages for the consumer – which is nothing compared to the thousands who lost their lives. Hopefully we'll have a clearer picture next month.

Intel (www.intel.com) have confirmed the release of their new 'Camino' i820 motherboards in October, along with the Pentium III 650MHz/700MHz Coppermine processors that take advantage of its 133MHz Front Side Bus. You'll also need some new 133MHz RAM as well – and preferably a nice AGP4x video card. Expect staggering performance, and prices to match.

There's some exciting MP3 hardware on the way from Creative Labs (www.creative.com). The Nomad 64 portable MP3 player (www.nomadworld.com) has 64Mb on-board memory (which can hold an hour of CD-quality music), a digital FM radio tuner, and can record four hours of voice. It includes a cradle bay for recording and recharging.

Creative Labs also have two new sound cards on the way. The SB Live! MP3+ is the perfect complement to a Nomad, turning your PC into a "digital MP3 jukebox" – enabling the encoding, decoding, playing and archiving of MP3 files through the Digital Audio Centre Software. The SB Live! X-Gamer comes with a good bundle of games and EAX 2.0 support. Both have improved digital design, and include the latest software at a price point of around £100 – check out www.soundblaster.com.

steal

ONLINE DIARY

Games that make you think – prepare to be addicted

SILVER SURFER Phil Wand

BRAIN TEASERS

"Say what you see," says Roy. "A bungalow in a tweed jacket," says us

Trivial Pursuit was born 30 years ago when Canadian journos Chris Haney and Scott Abbott got together for a quick game of *Scrabble*. The rest, as they say, is history – everyone now has the big blue box stashed away on top of their wardrobe. Since the arrival of '*Triv*', brain games such as *Articulate*, *Taboo* and *Pictionary* have been popular and lucrative for the inventors. *Trivial Pursuit* alone has netted over $1 billion in sales all across the globe.

But with the dominance of the home PC and the arrival of the Web, board game manufacturers have been quaking in their boots. Would people still get worked up about triple word scores and hotels on Park Lane when a multiplayer game of *Unreal Tournament* was a local call away?

Funnily enough, yes. Sales of classic titles have never fallen. If anything, the computer entertainment market boom has had a knock-on effect, and now a whole fleet of board games are migrating to the Web. They're ideally suited: you can play them out of the box after dinner or on a computer in your lunchbreak. Even TV titles, such as *Catchphrase* and *Spellbound*, have worthy versions in cyberspace.

JAMBA

Jamba hosts some of the best Web games. Their version of *Catchphrase*, played out through a jazzy Java applet with all the real sights and sounds, is so good you'll be back again and again to try to get your name on top of the charts. Other games include *Carry On Bingo*, with a Kenneth Williams impersonator reading out the numbers, and casino games where people play each other for hard cash. The library is growing and most tastes are catered for, from word game buffs to pub quiz bores.
www.jamba.co.uk

So what if it's hosted by a second-rate TV network? Jamba will keep you amused for days.

UPROAR

With some delicious graphics sitting atop 3D rendered backgrounds, *Uproar* looks more like a TV show. All games are multiplayer, ranging from *Bingo* to *Trivia*. The Mental State area is full of mind-bending puzzles, and the GameScene section contains really snazzy Shockwave blasts. The Centre For The Easily Amused helps fill those bored moments with pointless games, pranks and jokes, including the famous online *Humour Quotient* (HQ) test – which turned out to be American-orientated and rather crap.
www.uproar.com

ALL MIXED UP

Loading in seconds, the All Mixed Up site lacks the visual finery of rivals but offers the same level of entertainment. Old classics such as *Othello*, *Connect 4* and *Hangman* are ideal for filling in time when you're bored waiting for that *Quake III* demo to finish downloading. Other attractions, such as *Paint* and *Merlin*, are rather lame but, for whatever reason, you'll end up playing them nonetheless.
www.allmixedup.com

BILL'S GAMES

We remember the Bill's Games website from many years ago, when the only game on offer was a rather naff version of *Pontoon*. But its advantage was that it didn't use any browser-specific features and didn't rely on Java, JavaScript or any other jiggery-pokery to achieve its goals. Today, it has grown into something much, much larger, with a great collection of classic games available free of charge.
www.billsgames.com

WHAT'S ON AT WIREPLAY

UNREAL TOURNAMENT If you've got around to downloading the monster-size demo of *Unreal Tournament*, the chances are you'd like to give it a good, solid thrashing over the Internet with some like-minded people.

Wireplay are giving you that chance with a new Internet server supporting the game. As good as *Half-Life*? Better than *Team Fortress Classic*? You decide.

NEW MODEM LINES Busy lines driving you crazy? A whole rack of expensive new modems has recently arrived on the Wireplay factory floor, which means the engaged tone should become just a distant, unpleasant memory. You don't even have to do anything to take advantage – just dial on in.

CLANS The free Clan Web Space offer is still running. If you've been thinking about getting it together with a bunch of fellow gamers, check out the Wireplay site for details of where to strut your scores.

All at **www.wireplay.co.uk**

Wireplay
The games network

Online Diary is sponsored by BT Wireplay

GO HERE NOW

Unreal Tournament UK

Unreal Tournament **is upon us, and a number of community sites are emerging. The most comprehensive of these by far is this UK-based site, with all manner of news, views, reviews and message boards. Their game guide is a must, providing a detailed overview of everything from the diverse weaponry to how to write a mod. They also provide hosting for *UT* Clans, as well as links to upcoming events.**
www.unrealtournament.co.uk

Planet Rainbow Six

A thorough site covering *Rainbow Six*, *Rainbow Six: Eagle Watch* and *Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear*. FAQs for each game are invaluable, as are the cheats and weapons lists. Breakdowns of the missions help make life easier for anyone stuck on what are basically the three toughest strategy games around.
www.planetrainbow6.com

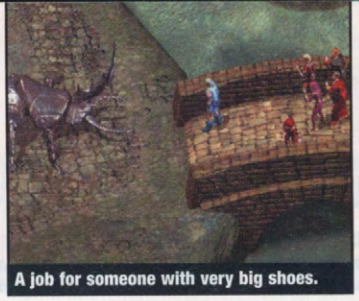
Gamelists.net

Links to the most popular gaming sites on the Net. As *ZONE* went to press, the *C&C: Tiberian Sun* category boasted the most hits, closely followed by *Unreal* (helped, no doubt, by the arrival of *Unreal Tournament*) and *Half-Life*. Each category has further links to the individual community sites. Without doubt a recommended bookmark.
www.gamelists.net

Aliens Vs Predator

Lovingly designed in pastel shades, the *AvP* site is a lot more welcoming than the game itself. Tricks and tips help you conquer the most gruelling first-person shooter out there. Downloads range from game patches to Winamp skins. The site also plays host to a number of other places of interest, including Aliens Central at www.avpnews.com/ac**, ranked among the top 25 *AvP* sites and also appearing high up on the Gamelists.net standings.**
www.avpnews.com

Some of the new monsters are *huge*.


A job for someone with very big shoes.

ICEWIND DALE

Next stop from *Baldur's Gate*

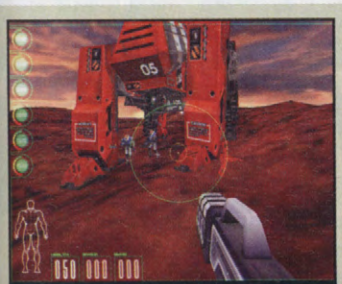
With *Planescape Torment* itchingly close to release (expect a review next issue), Black Isle Studios have again decided to use the isometric graphics engine from *Baldur's Gate* for their next RPG, *Icewind Dale*.

Again set in AD&D's Forgotten Realms, *Icewind Dale* will be a more compact RPG than its predecessor, set almost entirely in dungeons and caverns – among the Spine of the World mountains, if that means anything to you. With an enhanced, more streamlined interface, *Icewind Dale* offers a leaning towards more party-based role-playing than its predecessor. Instead of creating just one main character, you'll have half a dozen to assign skills to before entering the game.

Combat is said to be much improved.

Well over 50 dungeon levels are promised, with shedloads of new spells, weapons and items. All the characters will be 3D accelerated for the first time, which has allowed Black Isle to create some huge, lumbering beasts, all of which are wonderfully animated.

If you don't believe us, check out www.interplay.com/icewind/hall.html to see some of the characters going through the motions. *Icewind Dale* is set for release in the first half of next year. We'll have a preview soon.


Pilot mechs or spacecraft.

Rock – stupid name, clever game.

ROCK ON A ROLL

'Seamless interaction' seems to be the buzzword at the moment. Following on from *Halo* (see Top Story, p18) comes *Rock*, a game that promises far more than its title would have us believe.

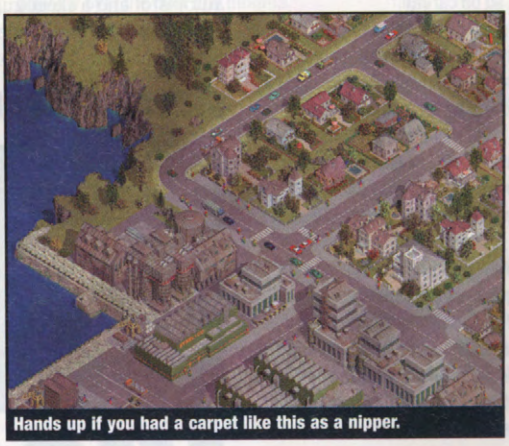
Due for release through GT Interactive next autumn and developed by the chaps behind *Outwars* (*PCZ* #64, 86%), *Rock* combines first-person action with space combat, with players able to dogfight their way through space, land on planet surfaces, jump into *Mech*-like robots and run around on foot – all in the same level.

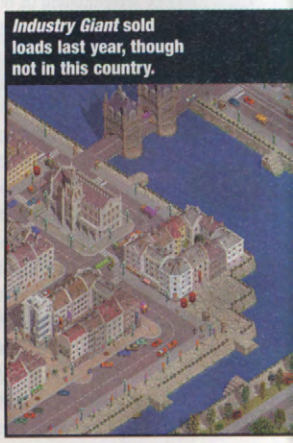
Rock will ship with three campaigns of ten missions, each depending on which discipline you want to specialise in. Choose from the Grunj Alliance (soldier), Imperial Directorate (Mech-U-like RAVe pilot) or DarkShyne Technocracy (pilot). Of course, choosing a soldier won't mean you'll be stuck on the ground all the time, but most of it, certainly. And true to the current trend of having AI-assisted teammates, *Rock* will allow up to eight of the buggers, all with various skills, as well as a pool of 19 vehicles.

HEAVY ON THE TRAFFIC

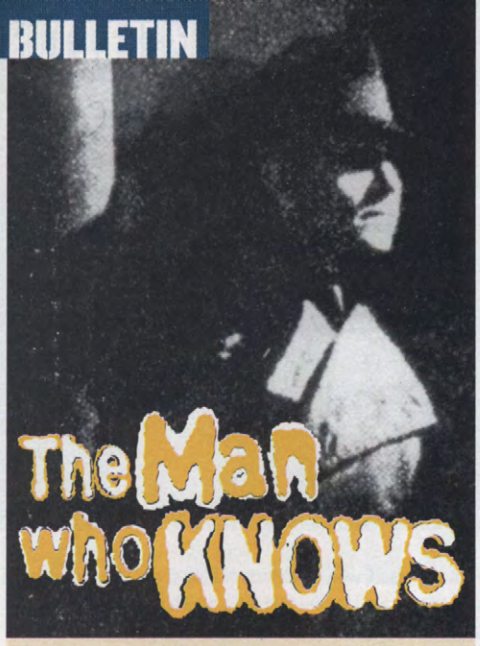
From the makers of last year's *Industry Giant* comes *Traffic Giant*, an updated tribute to the classic *Transport Tycoon*.

Choosing the role of either a businessman out to pollute and profit, or the local government at the mercy of local residents, the game offers would-be city planners the chance to build roads, railway stations and airports, as well as bicycle lanes, subways and smog-spewing motorways. Five hundred different buildings can be produced, including factories, towerblocks and shops. Out in November, the game will be followed up with an expansion early next year.


Hands up if you had a carpet like this as a nipper.


Industry Giant sold loads last year, though not in this country.

this



ION STORM BACK

Ion Storm have again made the news – and not for their usual haemorrhaging of employees and blatant lying about release dates. The latest story is at least original, if not totally convincing. It is alleged that **Warren Spector**'s forthcoming sci-spy RPG, ***Deus Ex***, has attracted the attention of the **FBI**. Recent visitors to the official site were greeted with the message: "This site has been restricted. Your IP and host information have been documented and your ISP has been notified. Any further attempt to access this site will be monitored and logged."

Ion Storm's **Bob White** claimed US Government intervention was to blame: "It seems in our enthusiasm to create this game we may have stumbled on to something that now has us being monitored. It seems one of the agencies we thought we had made up might be real. Logging on to our website may cause certain information from your system to be downloaded to a government site. They are watching us now, so be careful."

But days later, Warren Spector himself beamed: "The feeds are gone, the machines are up and humming and the *Deus Ex* website is ready for business. Cool!"

With *Deus Ex* overshadowed by the recent *System Shock 2*, this free publicity couldn't have come at a better time. Genuine story or shameless PR stunt? You decide.

Meanwhile, Ion Storm's almost forgotten ***Daikatana*** has been given a December release date, and this time they sound like they mean it. Development began in spring '97 and has run into several delays. But it now looks as though there is light at the end of the world's longest tunnel, and Ion's VP of marketing and business development, **Mike Breslin**, said: "We at Ion Storm are excited to confirm that *Daikatana* will be released in time for Christmas 1999. In the New Year, we will be anxiously awaiting *Daikatana*'s Gameboy Color version, as well as the PC releases of *Anachronox* and *Deus Ex*." Yeah, right.

Further Ion Storm rumour-mongering involves one of their employees, the so-called **Killcreek** of some DeathMatch repute. One of the few females in the development community, she has apparently agreed to confirm this status by posing for a girlie mag. I'm sure there'll be plenty of copies available.

The ***Redneck Rampage*** movie, mentioned elsewhere, isn't the only first-person shoot 'em up film in the offing. **ADVFilms'** ***Sin*** Animé feature is out in the US at the end of the year and has a few twists of its own compared to the original game. Blade, having been gunned down as an innocent bystander years ago, is now half man, half machine, whereas Alexis has a sapphic sidekick and JC is a girl. Whether it ever makes it to these shores is debatable but, again, I expect there will be plenty of tickets available. Despair.

A predator finds pineapples aren't to his taste.

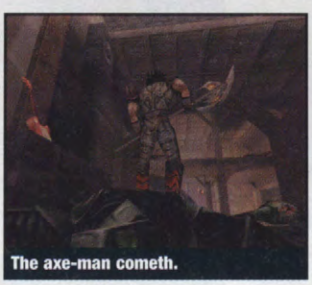
The skeet gun in all its destructive glory.

The cast of *AvP* get together for a group hug.

PREDATOR 2 VS ALIEN

A quick chat with Chris Kingsley of Rebellion yielded details of major amendments to *Aliens Vs Predator*. Unfortunately, we've yet to hear whether December will see the release of an expansion pack (standalone or otherwise) or a special edition of the game incorporating the new features.

The as-yet untitled 'project' will feature a number of new levels, many of which take inspiration from the first *Alien* film (on LV426) and the LA subway system from *Predator 2*. New weapons will include pistols, an autopistol and a skeet gun, with hints that the Predator's arsenal is also ready for upgrade. Finally, *AvP*'s multiplayer game is undergoing a radical overhaul, with Rebellion promising a wealth of new online features, all of which should run with or without the need for a 3D card.


The axe-man cometh.

Roll up, roll up, the circus is coming.

The soundtrack is sure to be dodgy.

KISS OF DEATH

When we heard last January that Ion Storm fugitives Third Law were developing a first-person shoot 'em up based on has-been rockers Kiss, we thought the ex-*Daikatana* team had taken leave of their senses. Thankfully, after playing the LithTech-powered game at ECTS, it looks as though it might just work.

KISS: Psycho Circus – The Nightmare Child, as the game is now known, actually has more to do with the cult comic book of the same name than the band. It's a pretty traditional level-based shooter with a clutch of weapons and a horde of nightmare creations to dispatch with extreme prejudice.

If you're a Kiss fan, you're sure to love it. If not, all is not lost. Thanks to some tweaking of Monolith's underrated engine (last seen in *Blood 2*), *Psycho Circus* allows up to 100 enemies on screen at any one time. Not only that, but the action is fast and the puzzles quite a notch above the usual find-the-red-key-for-the-red-door affair we usually have to endure.

With release set for early next year, there's still hope for a name change yet, but don't count on it.

Looks more like The Prodigy's Keith Flint to us.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

After last year's *War Of The Worlds*, another of HG Wells' novels – *The Time Machine* – is being adapted for the small screen. Thrown 800,000 years into the future, Herbert Wells finds himself in a world ravaged by temporal storms that he seems to be the cause of.

Puzzle-based adventure is the order of the day in this 3D adventure, featuring an unlikely hero who ages (unlike the locals) as he tries to rid the world of timequakes and find the mythical Khronos. Coo.

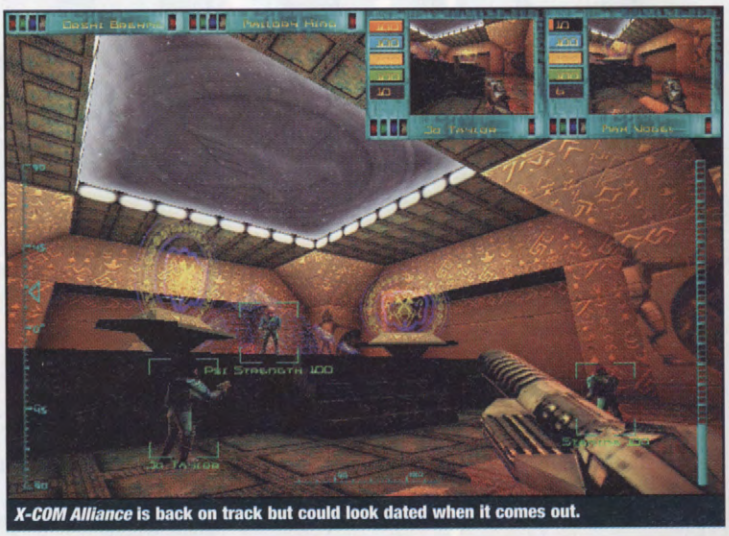
Don't be surprised if next year sees more Wellsian adventures. How about the creeping insanity of *The Invisible Man*?

You have to talk to very strange aliens.

3D acceleration has yet to be added.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

Let us cast our minds back to November '98, when two games in particular looked promising. They still do...



X-COM Alliance is back on track but could look dated when it comes out.

X-COM ALLIANCE (Hasbro)

LAST SEEN: *PCZ* #69

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: Spring '99

After spending its early life in Blighty, development on the *Unreal*-powered first-person *X-COM* game soon switched over to the States. Apparently, things weren't going to plan for the ambitious title, and only after seeing the game again at ECTS did we ask ourselves what had happened to it.

Thankfully, things are back on track. The engine, though now getting on a bit, has been tweaked beyond recognition. What seems to have been keeping development back is the mix of first-person action, squad-level tactics and between-level research. We will be going over to see how things are getting along very soon, so expect an updated preview over the next few months.

NOW OUT Mid/late 2000

Let's hope the final cars are fitted with round wheels.

INTERSTATE '82 (Activision)

LAST SEEN *PCZ* #69

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: November '98

Driver may be out and racing up the charts, but it owes its success to this game's predecessor – *Interstate '76*. Mixing up Seventies cars, a heap of missions and a funky little soundtrack, it had easily the best storyline ever seen in a driving game.

The sequel, however, takes things a little further – into the Eighties. And like *GTA*, you can exit your vehicle and find yourself another.

When we saw the game at E^3, we were a little disappointed with the graphics, but then *I76* was hardly ground-breaking. Now, months later, *I82* is shaping up to be a contender once again and, unlike *Driver*, we can look forward to a full multiplayer mode, with pedestrians firing guns, ambulances launching rockets and the musical offerings of (gulp) Devo. Come back, Harold Faltermeyer, all is forgiven.

NOW OUT November 1999

OUR MOST WANTED

Until we put a system in place to enable you to vote online for the games you're most looking forward to, we've decided to tell you what we think are the ten games you should be looking out for in the run-up to Christmas. This is based on games we've actually seen, rather than on the basis of a few screenshots and a hastily-written press release

1. **Ultima Ascension** (EA) _ November
2. **Half-Life: Opposing Force** (Sierra) _____ November
3. **Quake III Arena** (Activision) _____ November
4. **Indiana Jones & The Infernal Machine** (Activision) __ November
5. **Nocturne** (Take 2) _____ October
6. **The Sims** (EA) _____ November
7. **Messiah** (Interplay) ___ December
8. **Age Of Empires II: The Age Of Kings** (Microsoft) _____ November
9. **Theme Park World** (EA) _ November
10. **FIFA 2000** (EA) _____ December

TICKERTAPE

STARTS++ Infogrames have admitted that a sequel to the recent 3D adventure *Outcast* is in development **++STOP++** For the last time, we're told, *Jazz Jackrabbit* will be returning for more 2D platforming antics this November in *The Christmas Chronicles* – priced £15 **++STOP++** *Mercenary* is the name of the first mission pack for *Descent 3*. Release is set for Christmas. Expect the usual mix of new ships, weapons and levels – some of which will be user created **++STOP++** The team behind *Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation 2* are hitting the dirt with *World Rally Simulation*, which should be out next year. More details and screenshots next issue **++STOP++** *Wanted! The Wild West* mission pack for *Quake II* is being adapted for *Half-Life* **++STOP++** Sierra have announced *Arcanum*, an RPG from the developers of *Fallout* and *Fallout 2*, due for release next summer **++ENDS**

game

GTA2

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HOTSHOTS

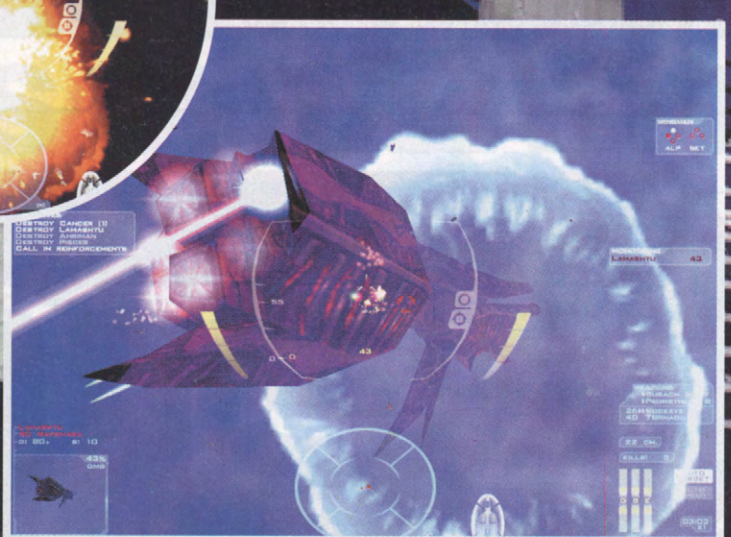
After a year devoid of space combat sims, a whole squadron seem to be edging ever closer to release. Here we take a look at the most imminent: *Freespace 2*, *Starlancer* and Team 17's *Phoenix*

FREESPACE 2

Interplay • Out November

Where most sequels seem to be the same game all over again with a shiny new graphics engine, *Freespace* developers Volition have gone the opposite route. This isn't surprising when you consider how truly groundbreaking the original's graphics were. Even now, no space combat game can touch the scale of the ships that flew throughout its missions and the sheer spectacle of the bellowing explosions.

Of course, Volition have enhanced the graphics by quite a degree: the number of ships in the game has doubled, the size of some of them even more so. New, too, are some fantastic nebula effects, with ships sinking into astral clouds, resulting in weird anomalies and ship malfunctions. Perhaps the one major criticism of the original game was that it was over a bit too quickly. Not so with *Freespace 2*, say Volition. The 30 missions are even more varied and are each replayable to a high degree. Happily, we won't have long to wait.

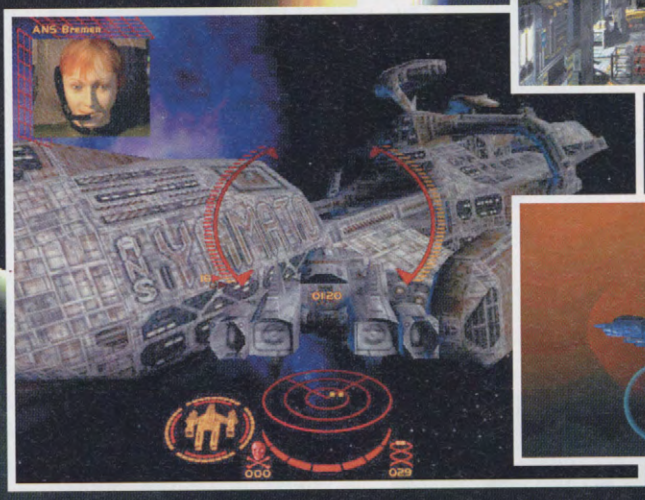


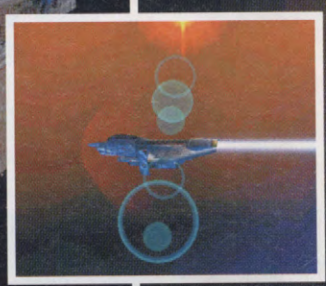
STARLANCER

Microsoft • Out March

After four *Wing Commander* games and as many spin-offs – not to mention a full-blown movie – Digital Anvil's Chris Roberts has made himself the Godfather of the space action game. His team's next project, led by his brother Erin, is *Starlancer*, which looks set to kick off a whole new series and should be followed up by the awesome looking *Freelancer* late next year.

Set in our own solar system, *Starlancer* is a dynamic mission-based game with a story based around the discordant space navies of Earth. Over 80 ships and 20 weapons systems are promised, along with a unique 3D 'walkabout' feature, allowing you to walk about your ship.

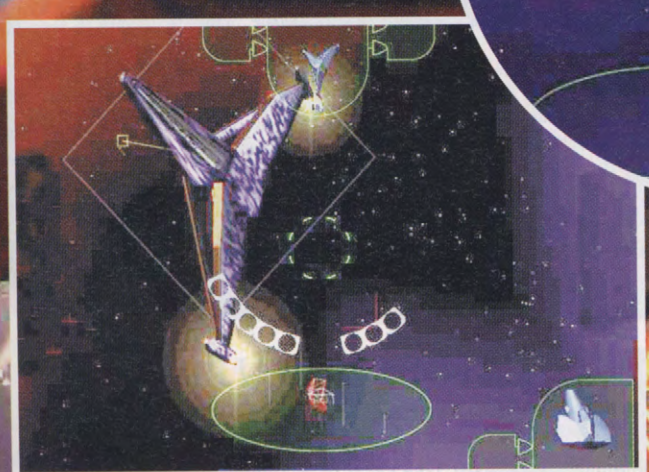




PHOENIX

Hasbro • Out November

When we heard *Worms* developers Team 17 were taking on a space combat sim, we were, quite frankly, swinging from our ninja ropes with glee. Unfortunately, we've been promised reviewable code for the past two months, but it has yet to materialise. We've been told – again – that next month will be the one. Looking at the game at ECTS, however, we did see a marked graphical improvement over previous versions. This, together with a rich, twisty-turny plot and a massive 70 missions, should ensure *Phoenix* a place in the space combat hall of fame. We'll know next month. Maybe.



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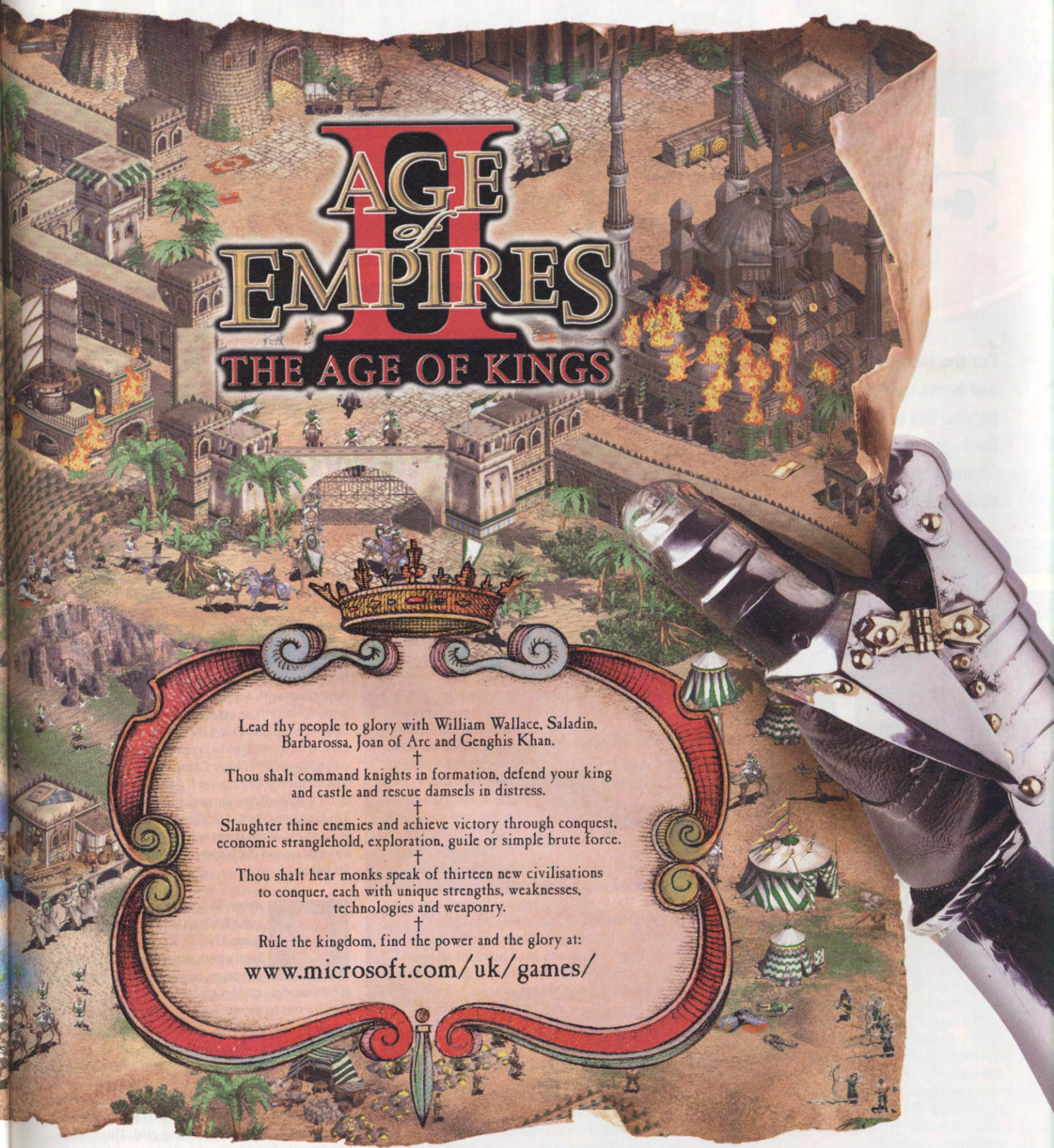

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THE GRAND FINAL

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

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For the first time in world history, the *PC ZONE* top brass decided to leave their credit card behind the bar at London's Playing Fields for the inaugural Grand Final of the UK PC Games Championships. *Richie Shoemaker* was there, making the most of it

At a time when most sane people were tucked up in bed making the most of a few hours' extra kip, the elite of UK games players were up and ready, practising their art for a day long to be remembered in gaming history – the Grand Final of the UK's first games championship. It was sure to be the first of many and the start of a long road which will end, according to *ZONE*'s Tim Ponting, with PC gaming achieving 'Olympic' status.

Considering what was at stake – £10,000 for the winning team and a mighty PC for each team member – it was no surprise that the finalists remained sober throughout. Starting at 9am, the day was packed with a mammoth 13 hours of gameplay – and by midnight the matter was to be settled once and for all.

"Each team appointed a specialist for the four genres of sport, real-time strategy, driving and first-person action"

Six teams had been whittled down from the 78 that originally entered, each one the champion of their respective region: London, Wales, Scotland, Birmingham, Manchester and the winners of the Drop-in Qualifier – again in London.

Of course, the qualifying sessions had been single-player affairs, with each gamer playing against computer opponents. The Grand Final was different, with each team competing against each other and appointing a specialist for the four genres of sport, real-time strategy, driving and first-person action. It promised to be an epic occasion, and no one was disappointed.

SPORTING CHANCES

Jimmy White's Cueball 2 was the first game to cue off (along with *Age Of Empires II*), with a finale of an exhibition frame against the game's writer, Archer MacLean (he lost). The teams played five matches against the top snooker player among their opponents. Team **Unlucky** lived up to their name, losing four of their five matches and coming away with only two points from a maximum of ten. Similarly, Cardiff's two-man team the **Blue Boodas** could only manage a single win – against **Unlucky**. However, Glasgow's **Happy Campers** cleaned up, collecting a maximum ten points, while Manchester's **Special Ops** also did well with eight important points. Overall Championship favourites **Inept** (from the Drop-in Qualifiers) came away with joint-third position – but their best was yet to come.

Unfortunately for the footballers, *Actua Soccer 3* did little to extend the gap between any of the six teams. The damn thing refused to work across the busy network of 12 PCs, giving the *Actua* specialists little to do and maximum points to each team – which was good news for all but **Inept**, who were firm favourites to give the other teams a damn good hiding.

Name: MAD KEZ (aka Kes Baird)
Team: HAPPY CAMPERS (Glasgow)

Kez not only potted all his opponents at *Jimmy White's Cueball 2*, he helped keep the team in the running by fighting hard in both *Quake III Arena* rounds.

STAR PLAYER

WINNING STRATEGY

The real-time strategy games were staggered throughout the day, and with the teams taking each other on one-on-one, the RTS specialists had little time to rest.

It was the first time *Age Of Empires II* had been seen in public, so most players were very defensive in their overall strategy, having only received their copies a couple of days before the Final. **Dodgy Spider** and **Special Ops** only managed one win from five, while Daishi from **Inept** swept away all opposition with a maximum ten points. Daishi proved himself the man to beat playing *TA: Kingdoms*, again taking maximum points. The closest anyone came to breaking **Inept**'s dominance were Glasgow's **Happy Campers**. Iron Fist won four of his *Age Of Empires II* games, while fellow team member Meandy took three wins from *TA: Kingdoms*, as did **Dodgy Spider**'s Chappy. Regardless, team **Inept** were starting to look dangerous and the **Happy Campers** weren't too far behind.

Name: DAISHI (aka Andrew West)
Team: INEPT

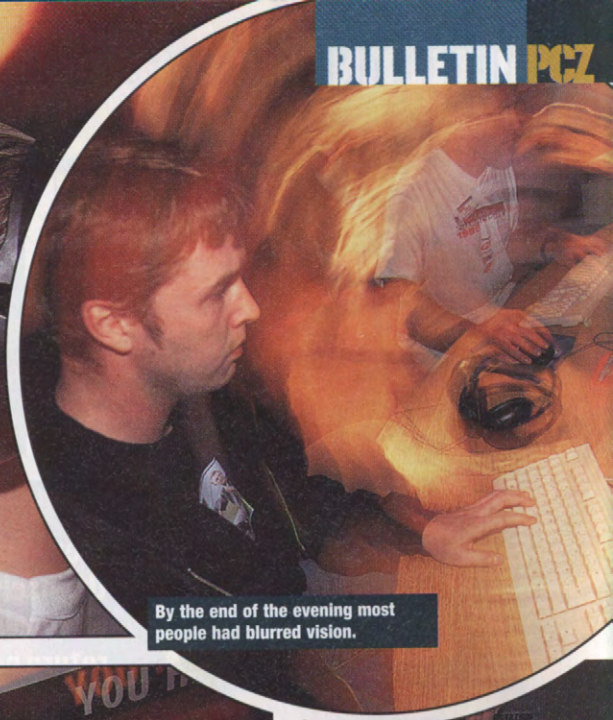
Inept's team leader was certainly their star player, proving himself unbeatable at both real-time strategy games. The 20 points he earned for his team were crucial.

STAR PLAYER

RACING FOR HOME

As midday arrived, and while the real-timers were still tilling the battlefields, the *Need For Speed* cars were being led on to the starting grid. Three teams consistently fought over the placings, with **Inept**'s Ramah managing second place in both races, helping his team extend their lead in the Championship overall. Garr from the **Blue Boodas** took the chequered flag in race one, but followed his victory with a poor fourth place in the second

Special Ops' Smile (aka Chris Jones) at the wheel.


By the end of the evening most people had blurred vision.

race. **Special Ops**, who were looking strong after *Jimmy White's Cueball 2*, increased their threat by taking third and first respectively. Conversely, **Dodgy Spider**'s Chappy, after a respectable showing in both *TA: Kingdoms* and *Cueball*, failed to make a mark – coming last twice. **Dodgy Spider** were losing the thread.

By the time the dust settled on *Midtown Madness*, **Inept**'s lead was growing, with Ramah taking second and then first place on the winner's podium. **Special Ops** managed another racing win, while **Blue Booda** Garr seemed to be suffering from game fatigue, being half of the only two-man team in the Finals. Unfortunately, the **Happy Camper** driving duo of Tyco and Mad Kez found themselves out-driven, with a best placing of third in all four races. **Inept** were pulling even further ahead...

Name: RAMAH (aka Andrew Males)
Team: INEPT
He may have only seen the chequered flag once, but three second places showed consistency, while his knowledge of the tracks was enough to keep him ahead for most of the races.

STAR PLAYER

ACTION-PACKED FINALE

With UK Quakeadelica champion Billox among their ranks, **Inept** looked to have won the day even before the first match of *Unreal Tournament* kicked into life. At first it looked like Tasan from the **Blue Boodas** might sneak it but, as the match wore on, Billox proved his mastery with a clever use of power-ups and weaponry. In the dying seconds, Jon from **Unlucky** took a clutch of kills to steal second place from a weary Tasan. The second round was no different, with **Inept** and **Unlucky** taking first and second again. After a dismal showing at sports and a below-average strategy score, **Unlucky** certainly needed the points.

The first *Quake III* session preceded many of the final games of the Championship and was undoubtedly the tensest game of the lot. At the time, **Inept**'s lead was far from secure and apart from **Dodgy Spider**, all the other teams were still capable of winning the day. Halfway into the game, the leading three were separated by just two frags, with **Inept**'s Billox in fifth. In an impressive fight back, Billox crept up to second. Eventually, though, **Unlucky**'s Jon found his way through, but it was very close.

By the second *Quake* session, the last round of a long day, **Inept** were untouchable and it was clear

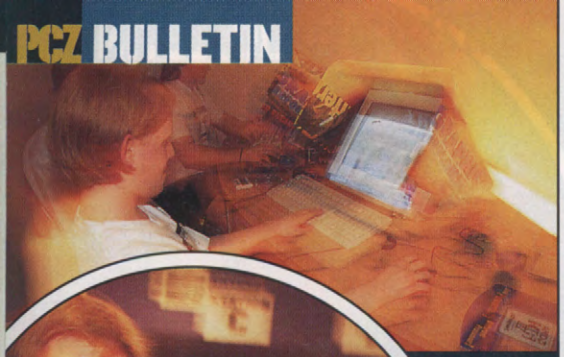
Driving from Birmingham, Dodgy Spider's Chappy.

Archer MacLean gets whooped at *Cueball 2*.

The mad mad world of Kez Baird.

In the way... again.

Jordan shows off her driving skills.

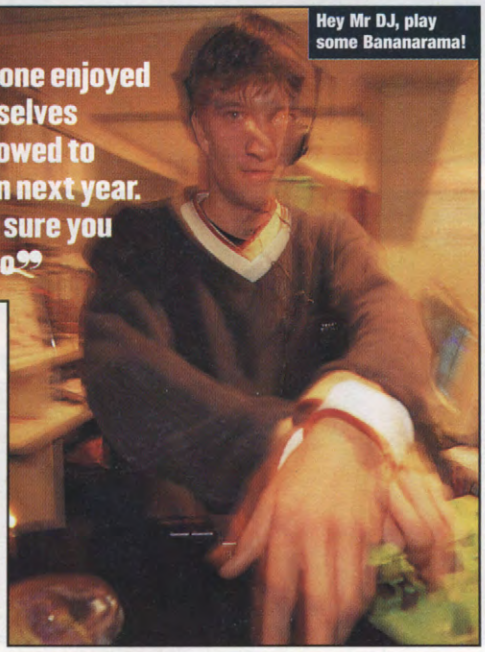


Way to go! A very Happy Camper.

The dog's Billox at 3D shooters.

Richie reaquaints himself with *Unreal Tournament*.

Favourites Inept win the day.



Hey Mr DJ, play some Bananarama!

"Everyone enjoyed themselves and vowed to return next year. Make sure you do, too"

IT'S JUST NOT CRICKET

Among the beer-drinking laggers at the Grand Final was one Sheila Morrow from the British Sports Council, there to see at first-hand whether computer gaming could indeed be classified as a sport

You may remember that a few months ago The Playing Fields requested an application to get PC gaming recognised as a competitive sport, a request that was flatly denied. As a consequence, the Sports Council found themselves coming under heavy fire, not only from The Playing Fields, but from the mainstream media as well. Having left Sheila Morrow to soak up the atmosphere for a couple of hours, we cornered her just as she was about to head for the door.

PCZ So what did you think of the event?

SHEILA I thought it was tremendous – super, in fact. Obviously a lot of work has gone into the organisation of the whole thing. Everyone seemed to be having a great time and that's what taking part in any activity is about.

PCZ But is it a sport?

SHEILA I think people are confused about this issue. The Sports Council does not decide what is and what isn't a sport. It has a recognition process so that it can decide which activities are most likely to help us to achieve our objectives set out by royal charter – more people, more places and more medals. We're about physical activities, so we have to judge whether these activities have a place in the furtherance of our objectives. That's nothing to do with whether it's seen as a sport by the wider world.

PCZ But computer gaming is just as physically demanding as darts or snooker – after all, you can hardly call darts players athletic...

SHEILA Darts has only been recognised very recently, two or three months ago. We judged it against our criteria and it went through. We will do the same with computer gaming if and when an application comes in. Things like billiards and snooker have been traditionally recognised for many years and we're not about to do a retrospective on whether they meet the criteria now.

PCZ So what do we have to do to get PC gaming recognised as a sport?

SHEILA PC gaming can call itself a sport – that's not a problem. Whether or not it's an activity that the Sports Council will recognise is another issue. I think what they should be doing is letting more people know that there are great events like this that people can take part in, and establish a credibility that gaming is a worthwhile activity for people to be involved in.

PCZ Having seen the event, how seriously will you now consider The Playing Fields' application to get gaming recognised by your organisation?

SHEILA In the same way as we advise other potential applicants, I can only say that on the surface of it, gaming probably won't meet the physical skill, effort and the essential purpose of being a sporting activity. We don't want to waste people's time on an application that we think would be unsuccessful, but they wanted us to have a look, so I came down. We'll welcome an application from them and we will take it very seriously.

PCZ Thanks. You can go now.

that the big cheque already had their name on it. The fight was now for second place and, apart from **Dodgy Spider**, the £1,000 runner-up prize could have been anyone's, with just a few points separating the other four teams. Again, it was a tense match, but in the end **Blue Booda** Tasan won the day, beating Billox into second place. Unfortunately for the **Blue Boodas**, it wasn't enough; the **Happy Campers**' fourth place earned them second place overall, proving themselves to be a strong all-round team.

Name: BILLOX (aka James Page)
Team: INEPT

Quakeadelica champ Billox was an awesome sight playing *Unreal Tournament* – undoubtedly the most competitive games in the championship. He wasn't too shabby at *Quake III*, either.

STAR PLAYER

CHEQUE MATES

After the dust had settled and the teams had retired to the bar for a well-earned shandy, it was time to hand out the cheques. **Inept** earned new PCs for each team member and £10,000 by conquering all-comers at real-time strategy, by proving almost unstoppable in the first-person action games and driving a hard race in both driving titles. In second place, Manchester lads the **Happy Campers** were the dominant sports champions and certainly the second best real-timers at the Finals. Perhaps with some extra driving lessons and more target practice they could have closed down the 20-point deficit. However, they certainly went away happy, clutching £1,000 and a monitor each.

Close behind overall were London's **Unlucky**, who, after a bad start at *Cueball*, came back well in both *Quake III Arena* and *Unreal Tournament*, but a TNT2 card kept them happy. Looking at the score card, tied fourth place teams **Special Ops** and **Blue Booda** equipped themselves well and came very close to third place. Birmingham's **Dodgy Spider**, in last place by quite a margin, were strangely content with their lot but, more importantly, they enjoyed themselves – as did everyone who was there – and vowed to return next year, as we're sure will all the teams who took part. Make sure you do, too. PCZ

Despite speculation, Jordan and Big Boy Barry left in separate cars.

FINAL SCORES

Unlucky may not have been lucky, but Inept were adept

PLACE	TEAM	Jimmy White's Cueball 2	Actua Soccer 3	Age Of Empires II	TA: Kingdoms	Need For Speed 3	Midtown Madness	Unreal Tournament	Quake III Arena	TOTAL
1ST	Inept	4	10	10	10	8	9	10	6.5	67.5
2ND	Happy Campers	10	10	8	6	5	1	4	2.5	46.5
3RD	Unlucky	2	10	4	4	2	6	8	8	44
4TH	Special Ops	8	10	2	-	8	7	3.5	5	42.5
4TH	Blue Boodas	2	10	4	4	7	2	4.5	8	42.5
5TH	Dodgy Spider	4	10	2	6	-	5	-	-	27

UK PC Games Champions 1999, team Inept show us the money.

Runners-up, Happy Campers.

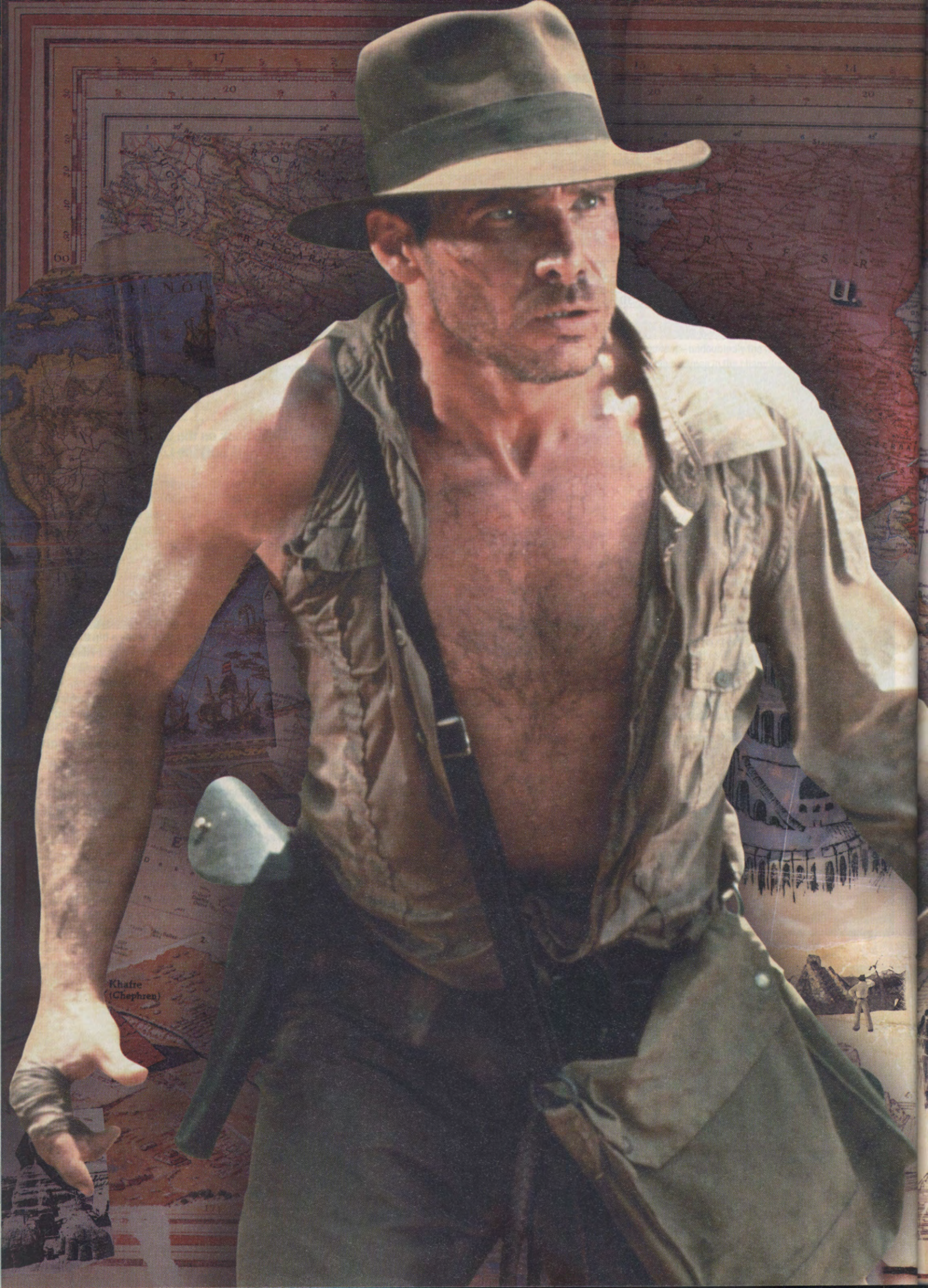
Unlucky, but happy with third place.

THANK YOU, GOODNIGHT

***Tim Ponting* looks back on the Championships and thanks (everyone but) the Lord**

The dust has finally settled on the first ever UK PC Games Championships, and what an amazing experience it has been. The cream of UK gamers have slugged it out and four blokes from the South East can now say they are the best players in the UK. Good news – we're bringing the UK PC Games Championships to you next year, bigger and better than ever. So keep your eyes peeled for announcements soon.

The Championships wouldn't have been possible without the support of a number of people, and it's time to say a big thank you to everyone involved. To co-organisers The Playing Fields, without whose tireless dedication and expertise the whole shebang would never have been a success; to our sponsors, AMD and MSN Gaming Zone, who supported the Championships financially; to AMD in particular for a seemingly endless stream of fantastic processors, and MSN for promoting the Championships to the online audience; to the suppliers who helped us create the best gaming PCs money can buy – Guillemot for graphics cards, CDs and DVDs, Microsoft for peripherals and OSes, VideoLogic for sound cards and speakers, Maxtor for hard drives, Philips for monitors and headphones, Quantex for memory, cases and so on... To all the PR agencies who worked hard to get the message out there – Pierre Braude Associates, Berkeley PR and August One; to the software companies who supported the Championships with software and prizes – Microsoft, Activision, Virgin, Electronic Arts, Infogrames and GT Interactive; and finally to all the gamers out there who competed. You made it happen – make sure it's bigger next year by telling everyone you know to enter!


Khafre
(Chephren)

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Straighten up lads and pay attention to

HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE

Once there was *Half-Life*. Next will be *Team Fortress 2*. In between is *Opposing Force*, mission pack par excellence and *David McCandless'* current bed partner

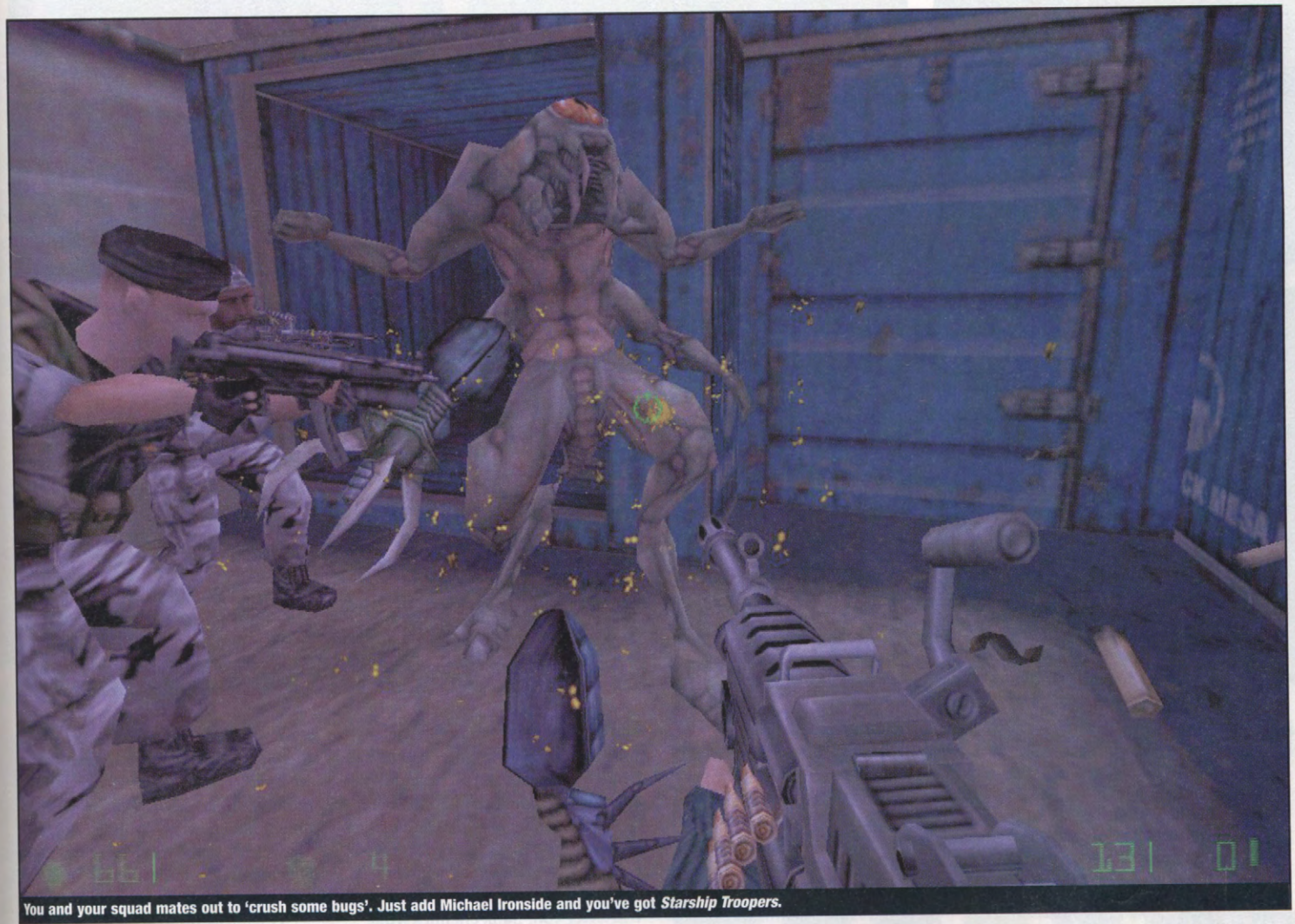
You got out but that's not the whole story. There's a whole other side yet to be told. You escaped the Black Mesa facility and found out part of the truth. But while you were gambolling around in air-conditioning vents and blood-splattered labs, a whole world of shit was erupting on the other side of the complex.

A separate bunch of aliens – Race X – clocked the rifts in inter-dimensional space caused by Freeman and the rest of his identikit scientist crowd. While you were bouncing around Xen, stamping on mushrooms, being chased by bulbous spiders, these opportunistic space gypsies took the opportunity – and infiltrated Earth.

Opposing Force tells this other story. You play a soldier, Corporal Adrian Shephard, one of the force sent in to deal with the Freeman mess. But before you can decide where your allegiances lie and what the hell is going on, you get cannonballed into a whole new world of adventure and intrigue.

Randy Pitchford, founder and chief designer at Gearbox, takes up the tale: "In addition to the return of the G-Man [thin mysterious besuited indestructible bad guy from *Half-Life*], the military perspective will allow players to learn more about what the soldier and Black Ops assassins were really up to at Black Mesa."

There's a lot to tell. *Opposing Force* is big. You'll need *Half-Life* to play it but it's more of a sequel than an add-on. Less a mission pack, more a 'game expansion pack'. Six chapters. Forty levels. About half the length of



You and your squad mates out to 'crush some bugs'. Just add Michael Ironside and you've got *Starship Troopers*.

the first game. In the first third of *Opposing Force*, Shephard and Freeman plotlines run alongside.

"There are times when Freeman and Shephard are in the place simultaneously," says Pitchford. "Their paths will cross in some very cool ways. You'll be aware of Freeman doing things you did when you played as him in the original game. You'll come across places where Gordon did something and you'll remember that Gordon went through places where Shephard had done something."

"We wanted to create a new game that would give players everything they loved about the original, and expand the narrative"

But do you get to take a pop at Freeman? Or better still, can you kill Freeman and throw the whole of the *Half-Life* universe into disarray, opening a hole in the space time continuum, and erasing all the saved games on your hard disk because you were never able to make them in the first place?

"No, we aren't going to be allowing any paradoxical problems to be presented," says Pitchford. "But we have included several unique and memorable moments when Shephard and Freeman are directly or indirectly aware of each other."

Hold on though. How are we supposed to deal with playing as a soldier? Those ambushy little bastards, crouching behind their sandbags, regrouping around their corners, lobbing their sneaky little grenades, picking you off from miles away with their poxy automatic rifles. Honourable *Half-Lifers* should do the decent thing – install *Opposing Force* and then kill themselves with a grenade in protest.

Oh no, but sympathy is maintained by neat plot twists, according to Pitchford.

"The powers that be in the *Half-Life* universe are trying to cover up the whole mess. So after the soldiers fail, a group of Black Ops are sent in to clean everything with extreme prejudice, including soldiers."

Ah. The whole double-triple-twist ploy. Good.

SOUP UP

The first and only thing any self-respecting add-on pack developer need do, of course, is add stuff. Bang bang bang. New weapons, monsters, levels. Fin. Not this mission pack though. Oh no.

"We designed this thing very differently from most add-on packs. The goal was deeper than just cashing in on a quick add-on to a successful title," says Pitchford. "We wanted to create a new game that would give players everything they loved about the original and expand the narrative. The only reason it's in add-on form is because it's cheaper – we don't have to ship the expensive engine with the title."

Their first task was to address a few of *Half-Life*'s niggles. Top of the list? The rather tiny gene pool of white-coated scientists. Let's see – there's the black one, the bald one, and the white Santa Claus one, right, plus 'Barney', the reincarnating security guard. Thankfully, Gearbox have added a wealth of new non-player characters:

CV gearbox

GEARBOX SOFTWARE

Reformed rebels who like to rock the boat

1999 Before *Opposing Force* – Gearbox's first project – the core of the team were better known as Rebel Boat Rockers, and their labour of love *Prax War* was canned. Not so with *Opposing Force*.

THE DETAILS

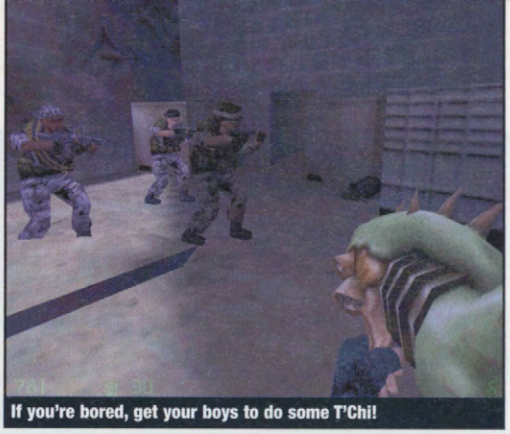
DEVELOPER Gearbox
PUBLISHER Sierra
WEBSITE www.gearbox.com/www.contaminated.net
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

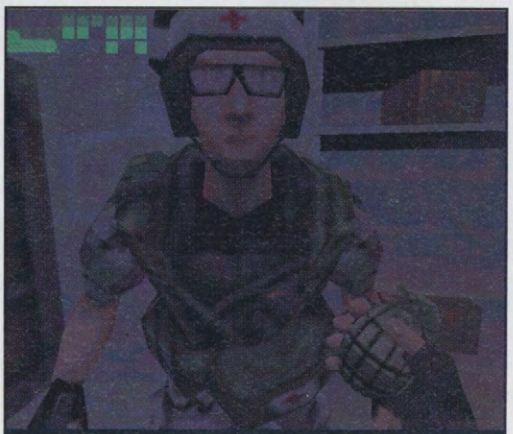
- Er hello? *Half-Life* mission pack? Like, dur
- You play a soldier in another part of the Black Mesa facility
- Seven great new weapons
- New monsters, new AI and 40 new levels
- Storyline overlapping the original game. Get to take pot shots at Gordon Freeman
- Very little alien planet Xen in it
- 12 new deathmatch levels

Engage in fire fights down tunnels!

Shoot people as they jump off lorries!


If you're bored, get your boys to do some T'Chi!

Kill those alien scum with the new machine gun!


Be healed by your waif-like medic!

Take no prisoners! Ask no questions! Kill everything!

Q&A

RANDY PITCHFORD

Founder and chief designer on Opposing Force, *Pitchford worked at 3D Realms on* Duke Nukem, Shadow Warrior *and* Prey *before starting Gearbox with Brian Martel (also ex-3D Realms)*

PCZ What's the first game you ever played?
RANDY *Collossal Cave Adventure* – I truly loved and respected that game as it was the first game I played on a computer.
PCZ What's the best game you've ever played?
RANDY Most played? Probably *Hack*. Most passionate about? *Doom*.
PCZ Have you ever been in a fight?
RANDY Heh. I used to be on the WCW pro-circuit until that Ventura wrestler guy got a seat in congress. Then I just lost respect for the sport.
PCZ We notice that you and the team are keen deathmatchers from the *Doom* days. If you're ever in London, we will take you down on *Doom II*!
RANDY I'd be happy to humble you if we ever meet... heh. I haven't trash talked in years :)
PCZ *(Losing it)* You freaking come down to London! I'll take you out!
RANDY Yeah, maybe we'll get a chance to play some time whenever you're in Dallas...
PCZ Yeah? YEAH? *(Fades into incoherent mumbling)*

loads of different soldiers in different support roles. There are torch engineers to cut through doors, medics to give urgent medical attention, and plenty of grunts to take the flak. Plus a fat new doughnut of a security guard named Otis. And some new scientists, right? *Please?*

"Oh yeah," says Pitchford. "Even more than in the original. There are new scientists wearing cleansuits and new variations of the zombie creatures. Head crabs can now zombify any human instead of just the scientists. The goal is that no two NPCs will look alike in *Opposing Force* and we're pretty close to that goal."

"The AI has been substantially improved. Monsters get scared, work in groups, and force smaller beasties into battle while they wait at the back to mop up later"

At the same time, the AI has been substantially improved. Monsters get scared, work in groups, and force other, lesser, smaller beasties into battle while they wait at the back to mop up later. Soldier intelligence has been reworked so, if you're skilful, you can have a whole squad on the boil.

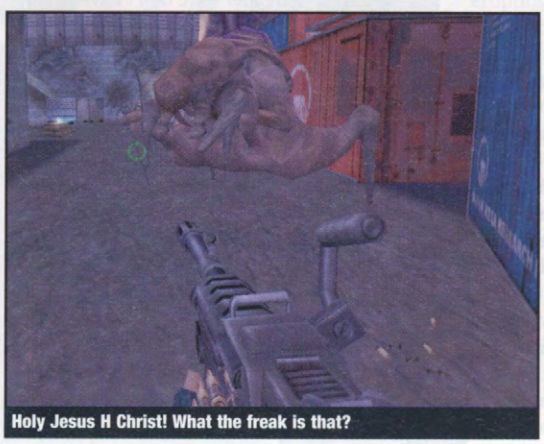
"You can now get up to half a dozen soldier NPCs with you – if you can keep them alive," says Pitchford. "The squad works as a team and will cover you, flank enemies while you lay down fire, and all kinds of other cool stuff. There are several moments which involve heavy squad skirmishing with hordes of enemies. Each time we play these sections it comes out differently."

To get to grips with all these new skills, Gearbox have added a whole new training area. Gone is the Hazard Course. Now it's 'Boot Camp', presided over by a barking Full Metal Jacket drill sergeant (voiced by the actor who did the voice of Duke Nukem, trivia fans). In it you learn weapons skills and how to use your radio to call for reinforcements. You're taught how to use your new soldier mates such as the torch engineer and how to apply your new environmental talents like rope climbing.

"Obviously there are a lot of things we are going to do with rope climbing," explains Pitchford. "First we're going to make sure players know how to climb a rope, then we're going to give them the opportunity to swing from rope to rope, increasing the challenge, and, of course, the reward of succeeding. It's fun to swing across a chasm, especially when beneath you in that chasm is a rocket engine bellowing fire and getting ready to launch."

COMING SOON

Frankly, we're excited by this mission pack. It looks cool, it's got a nice narrative twist, the weapons rule, the new monsters dominate, and


Holy Jesus H Christ! What the freak is that?

No use shooting the breastplate – aim for exposed flesh.

The scientists don't always assume you're on their side.

If you can't save him, use this fat, doughnut-eating lunk as cover.

there's a fat guy in it. But we're not the only ones. Gearbox are excited too. The huge *Half-Life* Internet fraternity are throbbing like a big spot in anticipation. Valve Software themselves are foaming at the mouth. And they've been in on it right from the start.

But is this like working on a *Star Trek* game? Do Valve get prickly if your plot has Gordon Freeman breaking a nail on a crate or doing something morally questionable with the body of zombie?

"Since we designed the game, plot and everything up-front jointly with Valve, there's never really been a question of what we're allowed and not allowed to do with it," says Pitchford.

Good then, you can get rid of Xèn then, can't you? That poxy platform planet must die.

"We understand the problems gamers had with the Xen part of *Half-Life* and have addressed that," says Pitchford diplomatically. "Corporal Shephard will briefly visit Xen but his role there isn't as important."

Hurrah.

More good news comes in the proximity of this add-on pack to release. Pitchford uses a phrase not often heard in the games development world: "We're actually ahead of schedule."

Start relearning your *Half-Life* skills, boys. *Opposing Force* should be almost ready by the time you read this. PCZ

MULTIPLAYER

The boys at Gearbox reckon themselves. They think that their long experience of deathmatching and network play since the *Doom* days and the presence of Mike Wardell, tournament director of The Cyber Athletes Professional Gaming League, on their team makes them a big deal in multiplayer circles. Well... good

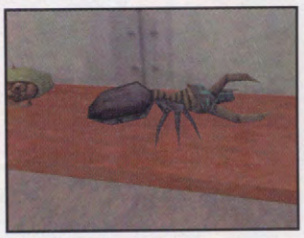
Randy Pitchford is making a big deal of the fact that *Opposing Force* contains 12 all new, "all-star" deathmatch levels, commissioned to a bunch of the best and most renowned level designers on the planet. These industry professionals "have collectively contributed to just about every important first-person action title of the era". Apart from our old friend Levelord (*Duke Nukem, Quake: Scourge Of Armagon, SiN*), we haven't a clue who the others are – but they might mean something to you: Eric Reuter, David 'Kevlar' Kelvin, Rich 'Zdim' Carlson, Marin 'Kndyman' Gazzari. Aside from that, all the old *Half-Life* deathmatch levels have been repopulated with the new weapons and "we've converted nearly every character model in the game to be selectable as a deathmatch model". All *Half-Life*'s guns will be available in deathmatch, giving you new ways to develop RSI while new weapons will have their own DM nuances. The displacer, for example, will transport an oncoming opponent to a random respawn point while the barnacle will act as a neat grappling hook. Cool.

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Here are a few of the newbies populating the *Opposing Force* half of Black Mesa. Two are missing. They're being kept "secret"

PIT DRONE

These squat little peckers are like Dobermans. Spikes in their foreheads can be fired at high velocity. If those fail, blade-like arms come a-chopping like a combine harvester.



SHOCK ROACH

A weapon-size bug thing which spits bolts of electricity. Actually a parasite, it needs a host to survive so usually comes attached to a large alien mutha. But if you get one, you can use it too.

SHOCK TROOPER

Four-armed Giant Haystacks-sized nasties. Their huge single fisheye makes them hard to sneak up on and their explosive grenade-like spores and shock roaches make them less than ideal house guests.

VOLTIGORE

Ferocious four-legged electrical beast. Powerful frontal claws and huge forks of electricity. If you kill one, it becomes unbalanced and discharges a violent explosion.

EXTRA WEAPONS

Roll up, roll up. Come get your nice juicy extra weapons. As well as most of the weapons from the first game (except 'found' stuff like the Gluon and the Gauss gun) *Opposing Force* features these little humdingers

PIPE WRENCH

A decent swap for the crowbar. More damage, heavier on the downswing, but a bit slower on the uptake. In alt fire mode, you can wind it up for a huge swing to smash crates/skulls/eggs.

.357 DESERT EAGLE

Military firearm with a laser sight in alt mode. Very accurate in 'Sarah Konnor' mode but fires slower to simulate taking aim.

BARNACLE

Those hungry little stalagtites featured heavily in the first game but now they can be carried and used as a biological grappling hook.

M-249 SAW

Light machine gun akin to the M-60. "Very fast, very deadly and a lot of fun to grind up aliens with."

DISPLACER

Prototype portable teleportation machine. Anything struck by its fiery ball will be instantly transported to Xen (and forced, no doubt, to leap from airborne platform to airborne platform in a very long and boring way). Can be used on yourself.

SPORE LAUNCHER

Another in the patented *Half-Life* biological armoury, this works like a rocket launcher, propelling explosive spores into the fray. Can also be refuelled by finding a 'spore plant'.

Well, whip me with a riding crop if it isn't INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

Everybody's favourite fedora-toting, square-jawed archaeologist is coming to a PC near you soon. Chief Whip: *Charlie Brooker*

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER LucasArts
PUBLISHER Activision
WEBSITE www.lucasarts.com
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's an *Indiana Jones* game!
- Okay, so it's a bit *Tomb Raider*, but hey – it's *Indiana Jones*!
- It's from the same guys as *Fate Of Atlantis*
- Indiana Jones is in it! *(Say that once more and I'll whip you – Ed)*

Indiana Jones. Stupid name, really. Still, could've been worse. He could've been called Wyoming Smith. Or Utah Sidebottom. Would you go to see a film called *Utah Sidebottom And The Temple Of Doom*? Of course you wouldn't.

Still, the combination of an unlikely first name and a common-as-muck surname has served this particular fictional hero well – the original triumvirate of Indiana Jones adventures figure highly in Hollywood's all-time Top 20, and rumours of a forthcoming fourth instalment are flying around the Internet. And now there's this: *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine*, a gorgeous-looking computer game from LucasArts, the software house with a track record most developers would kill for.

UPDATE

Of course, the bestubbled derring-do boy has made it on to the PC before, in *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis*, an acclaimed *Monkey Island*-style graphic adventure which I once got horribly stuck in and never finished. This time around, in place of point-and-click storytelling quirkery, LucasArts are offering real-time 3D action adventure.

Of course, it's all quite reminiscent of a certain popular 3D platform game. Fair dues, really, when you consider how much *Tomb Raider* 'borrowed' from the Indy movies. But this is no pedestrian rehash of *that* game – it's a different kettle of whips altogether. LucasArts are promising better puzzles, graphics, action and yams. No, not yams. But almost everything else. This could be something very good indeed.

As with Lara's epic polygonal quests, you'll spend a lot of time staring at a rear view of the main protagonist. Perhaps they should've called it *Indiana Jones And The Look At My Arse* instead. That would've been funny. Anyway, you spend a lot of time eyeballing Indy's rump because he's trotting around the globe on a quest to prevent the 'infernal machine' from falling into the hands of those pesky Russians.

Hang on... Russians? Yes, because *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine* is set in a later time period than the movies – it all takes place after World War II, in fact. Hence the non-appearance of any Nazis (unless there's a Nuremberg Trials sub-game, which we doubt).

INDIANA JONES AND THE TRADITIONAL STORYLINE

The plot keeps firmly in line with the fine *Indiana Jones* movie tradition. The story runs something like this... The 'infernal machine' of the title is a device which unlocks the gateway between dimensions, thereby unleashing a terrible force – and the Russians are trying to get their hands on it. Are they stupid or something? Didn't they see what happened to the Nazis at the end of *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*? That was like an extended public information film designed to warn people of the dangers of opening mysterious relics. It'll kill you all, you fools!

Anyway, said 'infernal machine' is also missing several vital components, which are scattered around the globe. The race to find them is on and guess where the bits are scattered? That's right: in a series of geographically exotic locations, like the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the mountains of Kazakstan. Not some dusty museum in Shitcake, Illinois, or a manky bric-a-brac shop in Clapham. Oh no. Presumably, the missing parts were strewn about the globe by early tourists. And why? In an attempt to prevent future scoundrels from reassembling this incredibly dangerous device. Question: why didn't they simply smash the bits up with a hammer and hurl them into the sea? Answer: because that would have made for a boring game.

Of course, someone's got to find the pieces before the Soviets get their commie mitts on 'em. The CIA have chosen Indiana Jones for the job – he is the only man who can save mankind.

Now if this was all really happening, I'd be saying: "You mean the fate of the world rests with one man? Then why the hell is he allowed to run around on his own? If my life depends on Indiana Jones staying alive, I want an army of CIA bodyguards following him around. And I don't want him to have to find weapons en route as he goes about his adventures, I want him armed to the teeth from the moment he gets out of bed. I want him going to the bathroom in a tank. Wrap him in cotton wool! Pay women and children to leap in front of him whenever the Russians open fire! The man shouldn't be taking any risks at all – not even shaving." But nobody listens to me, and besides, if all that *was* the case, it wouldn't be an exciting game. Which it looks like it will be.

Speaking of which, what of the game itself? Well, we've seen it in action, and it looks damn good, *actually*. The visuals are slick and impressive, with huge environments to explore and truckloads

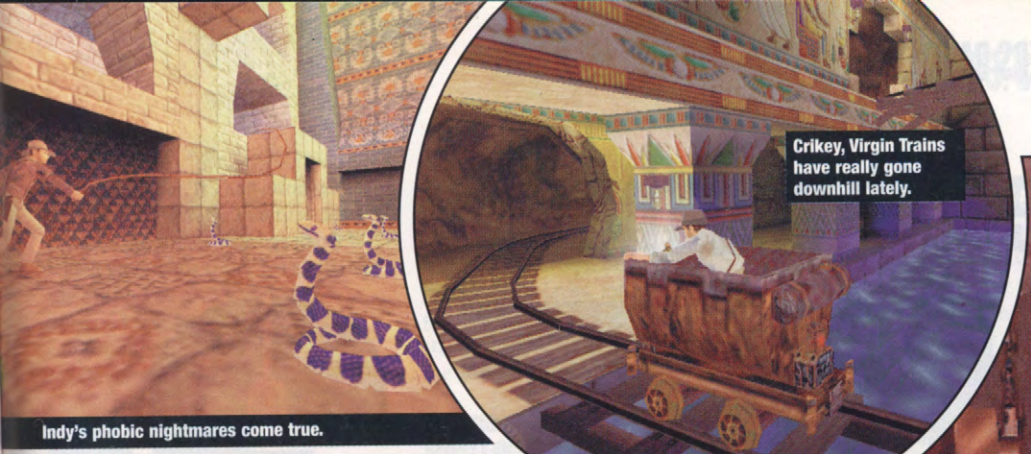
CV

LUCASARTS

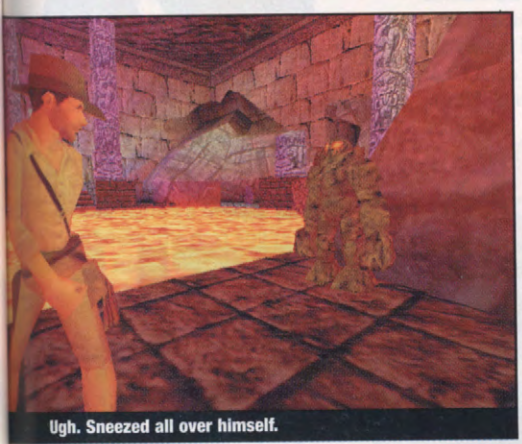
They've made Indy Jones cavort around on our computer screens before, you know...

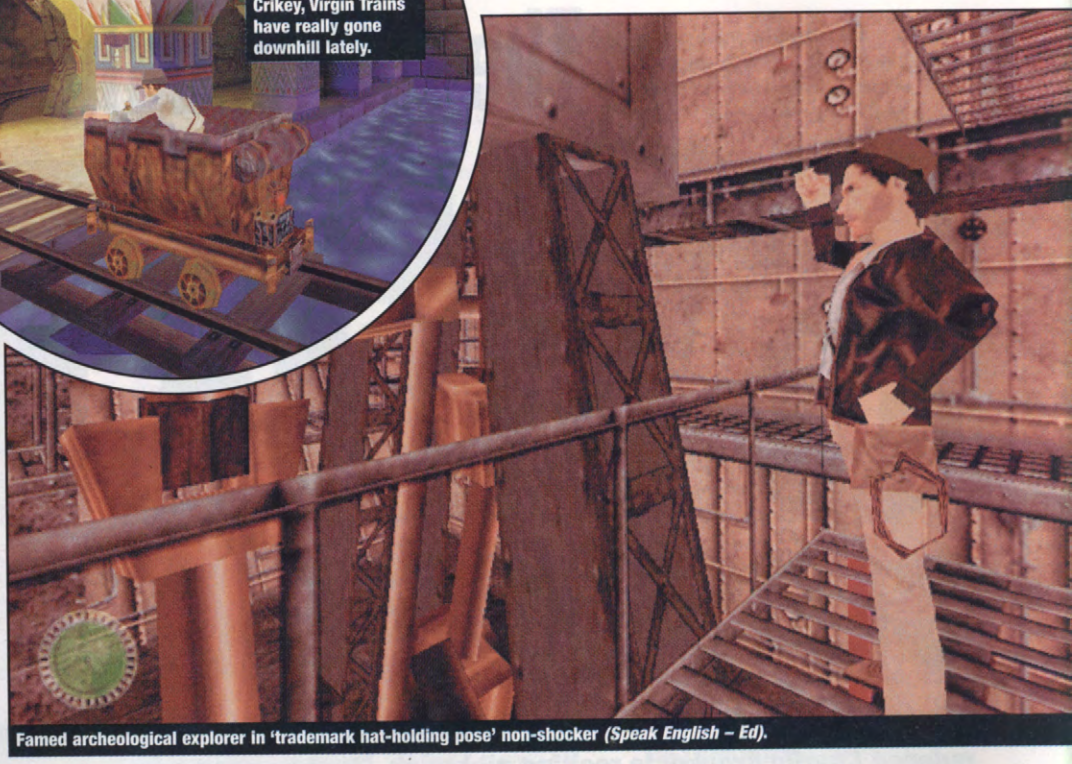
1995 *Indiana Jones And The Fate of Atlantis* (*PCZ* #37, 90%) is released, the point-and-click adventure containing all the trademark excitement and humour of the movie trilogy. Critics collapse in paroxysms of ecstacy. Charlie Brooker gets stuck on the bit with the archeological dig.

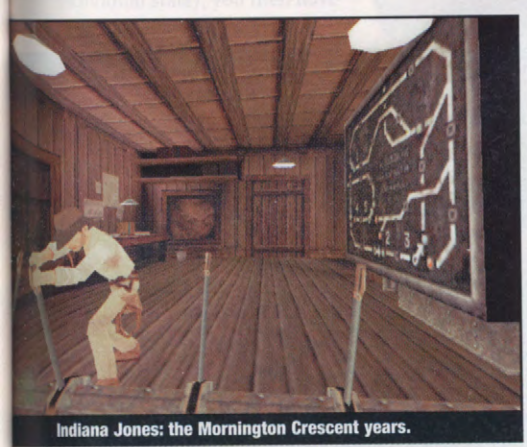
1996 *Indiana Jones And His Desktop Adventures* (*PCZ* #41, 80%) limps on to the world stage. It's not entirely dissimilar to *Yoda Stories* (*PCZ* #51, 79%), in that it's small, simple and about as diverting as typing random letters into Windows Notepad while whistling a silly tune to yourself.


Indy's phobic nightmares come true.

Crikey, Virgin Trains have really gone downhill lately.

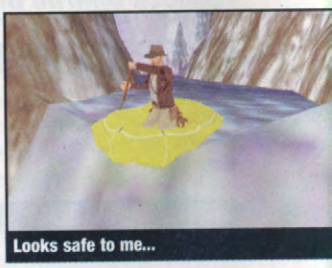

Ugh. Sneezed all over himself.

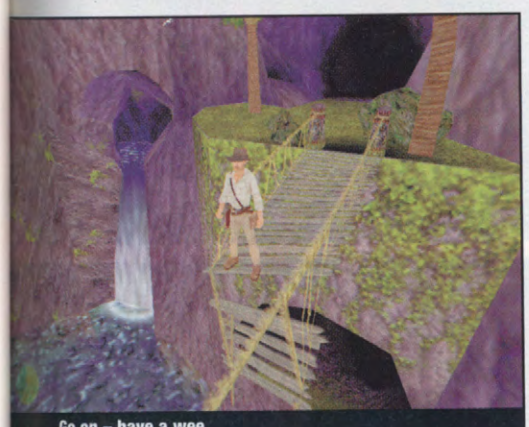

Famed archeological explorer in 'trademark hat-holding pose' non-shocker *(Speak English – Ed)*.


Indiana Jones: the Mornington Crescent years.

Bungie jumping without a rope. Doh!

Indy in 3D for the first time.


Looks safe to me...


Go on – have a wee.

Well, that's really interesting, Indy.

of enemies bussed in from 'Formidable Opponents-R-Us'. Just like Lara, Indy gets to kill *loads* of violently disposed animals, as well as a fair number of human aggressors. To this end, there's a full complement of weapons on hand throughout the game (everything from a lowly pistol to a look-out-he's-mad bazooka, natch), and pleasingly, the trademark whip is integral to the action, rather than being just a bit of digital window-dressing. Indy uses it to grab hold of otherwise unreachable branches, and for swinging across ravines, and that kind of thing.

Of course, he's super-manoeuvrable on his own: he can run, jump, swim, crawl, side-step and climb with the best of 'em. In addition, LucasArts are alluding to an additional mysterious power Indy will gain at some point in the game, following an encounter with an ancient magical artefact.

"A high-speed, rollercoaster-licious, underground mine car racing sequence makes the one in *Temple Of Doom* look tame by comparison"

The graphics look smooth and fairly detailed, with impressive animation all round, especially when it comes to the main characters (although Indy has less of a wiggle to his hips than Lara). There's loads of puzzles to solve en route, although hopefully none will be as tricky as the one that prevented me from finishing *Fate Of Atlantis* – speaking of which, it's a damn good sign that Hal Barwood, project leader on that game, is project leader on this game as well.

INDIANA JONES AND THE LOW-FAT SPREAD

The biggest technical bugbear of any 3D platformer seems to have been solved, too: the camera perpetually swoops to find the most descriptive angle, and should Indy get so close his body starts to block our view, he sort of 'fades out', like the Invisible Man, permitting clear, unfettered vision. Doesn't sound like much on paper, but when you're up to your neck in the 700th minute of gameplay, it makes all the difference.

And, of course, there's the sheer Indiana Jonesiness of the whole thing. From the familiar 'rousing' score to the cinematic cut-scenes, the whole thing bleeds Hollywood quality. And in true Indy tradition, there are huge set pieces, such as a white water rapid ride, and a high-speed, rollercoaster-licious, underground mine car racing sequence that makes the one in *The Temple Of Doom* look tame by comparison.

There are other neat touches, too. You know the 'progress bar' you see when a game's loading in the next sequence? And you know those interludes in the Indy movies, where he's flying from one place to another and they show a red line cutting a path across a map of the world? Well, they're one and the same in this. Cute.

The only thing that did disappoint when we were treated to a recent sneak peek was the use of an actor other than Harrison Ford for the voice of Dr Jones himself. We're still shuddering.

So, then. That's it for now. We'll be reviewing the game exclusively next month, so start flexing your joypad fingers in preparation. PCZ

The filth and the fury

SWAT 3: CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE

Whoop whoop! That's tha sound of tha police! Whoop whoop! That's the sound of tha beast! Seems *SWAT 3* has reduced *Charlie Brooker* to reciting gibberish. Must be good then...

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Sierra
PUBLISHER Sierra
WEBSITE www.sierra.com
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Ultra-realistic SWAT team action
- Fantastic graphics and blistering AI
- Just read the damn preview

In the world of work there are jobs you'd love to do – managing director of a 24-hour sex and drugs factory, that kind of thing – and jobs you wouldn't undertake in a million years, like wiping bottoms in a mortuary. With your forearm.

And then there are the jobs which hang awkwardly between these two extremes, the jobs that'd be *completely skill* if it wasn't for one or two niggling details that louse the whole thing up. Being a member of the LAPD Special Weapons and Tactics division is a prime example. Whereas most jobs are an endless journey through a featureless valley of boredom, as part of a SWAT team you can bank on experiencing several hours of gut-gargling excitement and dick-wrinkling tension each and every month. Getting sent in to sort out bank robbers, flushing out armed hostage-takers, machine-gunning cats out of trees... the SWAT operative's career is hardly dull.

Pity about the ever-present threat of violent death, then. Because that's the flipside: one little cock-up and the next thing you know, you've been gunned in the face by a stereotypical 'street punk' straight out of *RoboCop*. Bad day at the office dear? *Bad day?* My *head's* off!

Still, wouldn't it be fantastic if someone could come up with a way of letting you experience all the thrills and spills of modern armed policing tactics without putting you in any danger? Mmm? *Mmmm?*

Well, stop going *mmm*, because it looks like they have. *SWAT 3* from Sierra is shaping up to be the kind of game that makes grown men kiss their monitors with joy. If looks, company statements and pre-release whisperings are to be believed, this is going to turn heads like a motorised screwdriver.

C-C-C-ALL THE C-C-OPS!

UPDATE

SWAT 3 is the latest entry in Sierra's popular canon of pig 'em ups, which began with *Police Quest* many years ago. The *Police Quest* games (and the original *SWAT*, now we come to think of it) were point-and-click adventures whose main selling point was their authenticity (although, of course, they weren't *that* authentic – you couldn't chomp donuts, harass attractive female motorists or lob suspects down the stairs on the way to the cells, to name but three popular stormtrooper pastimes).

SWAT 3 is a different kettle of Uzi

Awww... Look at his eyes. His heart just isn't in all this carnage. Should've been a violinist.

A still from the forthcoming Channel 5 sitcom *SWAT About The House.*

clips altogether. It's an action game, or, more accurately, it's a first-person perspective action-strategy game in which your tactics, combat skills, *and* the orders you give your CPU-operated gun-buddies are of the utmost importance. Y'know – *Quake* for cleverclogs; more *Hidden & Dangerous* than *Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot*.

Set in a super-realistic environment (Los Angeles, although they've cheated a little by saying it's the year 2005), the game casts you as a SWAT team leader presented with a series of sticky situations. They're as varied and unpredictable as genuine police encounters tend to be – one minute there's a siege in a luxury penthouse, the next you're tracking a lone suspect hiding in the city sewer – and you're in charge of sorting each one out, Sunshine.

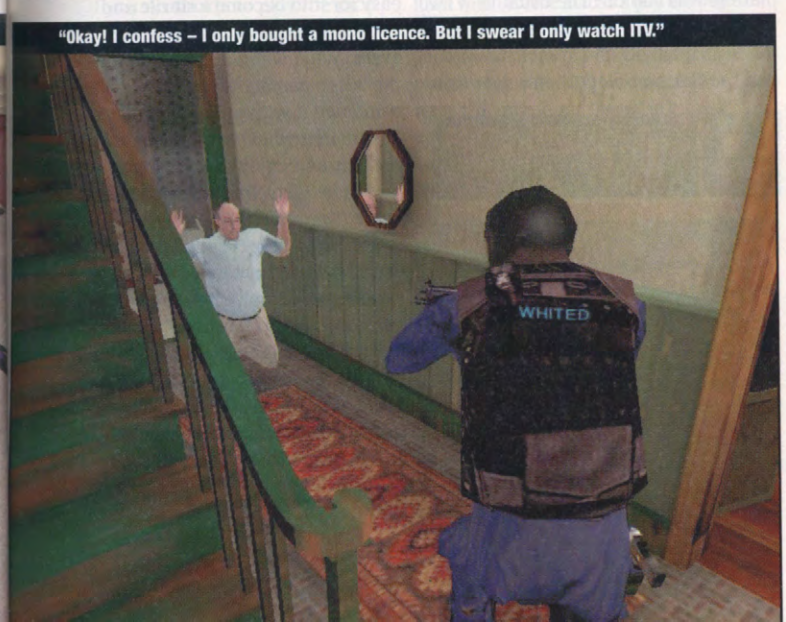
Having selected your team of four from the roll-call of uniformed psychopaths available (each of whom has individual stats), you then have to get them tooled up (which means choosing carefully from the pick 'n' mix arsenal back at base) and suitably equipped for the task at hand (wire-cutters, bulletproof jackets, balaclavas, torches... the list goes on), before planning your strategy for the level. Then you enter the game proper.

AMERICA'S SCARIEST POLICE SHOOT-OUTS

Ultra-realistic visuals are what you're looking at here, although you don't need us to tell you that. You're not stupid. You know what reality looks like, and you know how much fun it'd be to play a game like this set within a world like your own – so you're probably already itching to crawl all over *SWAT 3*'s office carpets, corridors and stairwells. Just like us.

The graphics put every game of its kind to shame.

"Hello, we're from your neighbourhood SWAT unit. May we shoot you in the head?"



"Okay! I confess – I only bought a mono licence. But I swear I only watch ITV."

"The men behave realistically – no clawing mindlessly at walls or running on the spot like imbeciles. Instead, their efficiency is spooky"

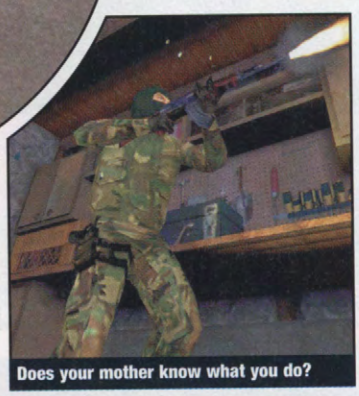
The ultra-realism extends to all aspects of the game. Sierra are claiming – well, sort of claiming – that the AI is so ludicrously advanced, you may as well not bother meeting real people after playing this because they'll seem downright stupid by comparison. Giving orders to your team members is a simple process of hitting their appropriate 'number' (button 1 for Joe Bloggs, button 2 for Jim Ploggs, etc), at which point up pops a lickle menu of available options – actions such as 'try door', or 'cover me' – for you to choose from. The men behave realistically – no clawing mindlessly at walls or running on the spot like imbeciles. Instead, their efficiency is spooky. They even lean round corners to avoid getting shot in the bollocks. And, of course, the enemy is equally cunning.

That's not all. The commitment to realism also means – wahey! – breakable scenery, and the introduction of the kind of unpredictable phenomena you don't often see in computer games, such as bullets that can ricochet and kill you. Making it out alive is going to feel like a genuine achievement.

THEY KNOW WHAT SWAT

Finally, as if it needs saying, this is coming from *Sierra*, who published *Half-Life* – so they know a good game when they see it. The only dark cloud at the moment is the question of multiplayer support. We've been told it will be single-player only, with a multiplayer version arriving a couple of months later (boo).

Whatever happens, *SWAT 3* is going to be worth investigating. Read our verdict in a forthcoming issue or we'll lob tear gas canisters through your window, kick down the front door and machine-gun you in the face. Ha ha! Not really. PCZ



Does your mother know what you do?

CV

SIERRA

SIERRA STUDIOS

As a publisher, Sierra have produced such marvels as *Half-Life* and *Caesar III*. And they've not done too badly at developing games, either

1987-97 *Leisure Suit Larry 1-7*: slimy Larry is responsible for bringing filth to our PCs. And for that we will always be grateful.

1984-98 *King's Quest I-VIII*: after the success of *Space Quest*, the brilliant adventures moved to medieval times.

1987-93 *Police Quest I-IV*: then they made it into an adventure with cops.

1995 *Police Quest SWAT*: the fourth *Police Quest* made the move to SWAT but still retained its adventure elements.

1998 *Police Quest SWAT 2*: this time the game was a full-blown strategy game with loads of stats. Not great, but it paved the way for the masterpiece that will be *SWAT 3*.

Q&A

ROD FUNG

SWAT 3's producer, gives us access to some classified information. He may h ave to kill you later...

PCZ What's the first game you ever played?

ROD As a kid I was an avid wargame fan, so I'd probably have to say *Blitzkrieg* by Avalon Hill. As for the first computer game, it would probably have to be *Star Trek* played on the mainframes in college in 1981.

PCZ What is, in your opinion, the best game you've ever played?

ROD 'Best' is hard to define. The following are four games that I have enjoyed the most: *Monkey Island 1*, *Red Baron*, *Civilization* and *Steel Panthers 1*.

PCZ And the last one you bought with your own money?

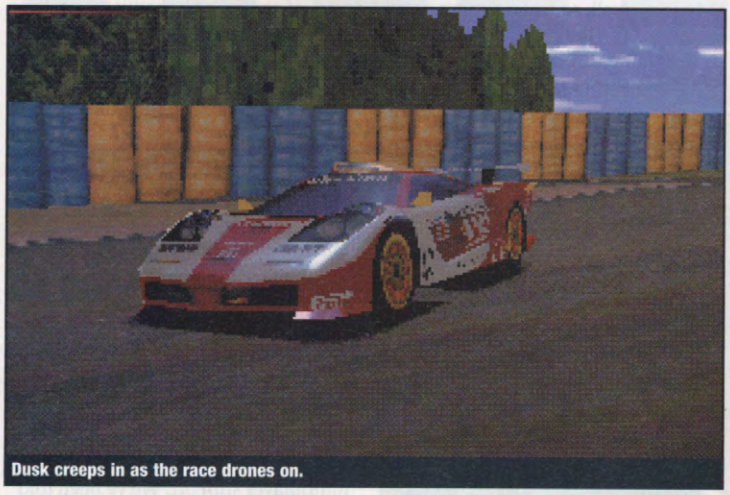
ROD *Close Combat 3*.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight? If so, what happened?

ROD Using SWAT terminology, that information is classified and on a 'need to know' basis.

Gentlemen, start your engines...

LE MANS 24



Dusk creeps in as the race drones on.

The Circuit International du Mans has been faithfully reproduced.

"Get out of the way!"

On the grid, buffing his helmet: *Steve Hill*

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Eutechnyx
PUBLISHER Infogrames
WEBSITE www.eutechnyx.com
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- First game based on the famous race
- Features the actual track
- 24-hour mode
- Real cars and that

Considering the vast amount of racing games on the PC, it comes as some surprise to learn that a Le Mans title has yet to see the light of day. That's not to say that it hasn't been attempted, and there's actually an apocryphal tale attached. Back in 1996, Electronic Arts announced their Le Mans game, and to celebrate the occasion decided to take 30 or so journalists to the actual event, at not inconsiderable expense. A plane was chartered, a hotel was booked, a private box overlooking the pits was hired, and a selection of cold drinks and meat platters was laid on. The usual press trip routine ensued, whereby the Brits moaned, the French smoked, and the Germans kept themselves to themselves. However, Electronic Arts later re-evaluated the game and swiftly volleyed it into the bin marked 'CANCELLED DUE TO LACK OF INTEREST'.

KEV'S SURE

So, three years on and the Le Mans baton has been taken up by Infogrames. Worried? Kev Shaw of developers Eutechnyx is adamant that their game won't go the same way: "I find that surprising. From the amount of emails, phone calls, letters and postings on our site, it's pretty obvious that there's a huge amount of interest in the Le Mans 24 Hours and this game. The real race is an incredibly popular event, yet it doesn't receive a great deal of recognition in this country – which is rather surprising, considering around 50% of the attendees are British!"

So how will such a huge race as Le Mans translate to a video game without losing some of the authenticity?

"The problem you encounter when creating a game based on a real-life race or sport is that it's very easy for it to become a sterile and unexciting representation of the event. What we've done is taken all the best elements of the real race and combined it with great gameplay to ensure that what we have is both realistic and enjoyable. The guys who race at Le Mans spend years racing before they reach the level of skill required to compete and few gamers would be able to match that level of excellence, so we've had to ensure the game is first and foremost playable and enjoyable. The realism is an added bonus. Our producer has actually raced at Le Mans himself and comes from a long line of racing drivers, and this balance was something he has worked with us on to ensure we captured the essence of Le Mans and

"It's got a good pick up and play quality for the casual gamer, but for players willing to put in the time there's an incredible amount of depth too"

CV

Click to enter EUTECHNYX On-line

EUTECHNYX

Formerly known as Merit Software (formerly known as Zeppelin Games), they have been responsible for some 300 games. Here are the most recent and the forthcoming ones

1997 *Total Drivin* (PlayStation)

1998 *Max Power Racing* (PlayStation)

1999 *Le Mans 24 Hours* (PlayStation and PC)

HOURS

also produced a good game."

Features will include 24 real-life teams including BMW, Panoz and more, with up to 48 cars competing simultaneously in each race. Having selected your team, you can then compete in one of three different classes, progressing from GT2 to the ultra-powerful GT1 or the cutting-edge cars from the Prototype class.

There will be ample opportunity for tinkering under the bonnet before taking the wheel and tearing round the famous circuit. Every inch of the track has been photographed, and the game takes into account comparative height, road camber, track width, building locations and run-off areas. As a testament to its authenticity, Bruno Vandestick of the event's organisers had a quick spin round the virtual track and emerged beaming like a child.

24-HOUR GARAGE PEOPLE

Frighteningly, *Le Mans 24 Hours* actually has an option whereby the race is recreated in its entirety in real time. Is anyone really going to spend 24 hours of their life playing out one race? Kev?

"Well, the 24-hour option is precisely that – an option. When you play the Le Mans mode, it's always in 24 hours of game time, but that can be as little as 12 minutes in real time. Even if you do decide to play the race in real time, save and load options are included."

So what's the best thing about the game?

"It's very easy to get so caught up in the 'real-life' stuff that you forget that first and foremost it's a game, but with *Le Mans 24 Hours* we've created something that's both realistic and enjoyable. It's got a good 'pick up and play' quality for the casual gamer, but for players willing to put in the time planning their careers, adjusting the car set-ups and so on, there's an incredible amount of depth, too."

We'll be the judges of that, so look out for our review in which we'll let you know if it's a 24-hour party or a 24-hour garage. PCZ

Q&A

KEV SHAW

Kev from Eutechnyx tells us some stuff

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

KEV Tennis on one of those orange Binatone consoles, I think.

PCZ What's the best game you've ever played?

KEV Being a sad techno nerd, I've got a LAN at home, so I'd say *Half-Life* multiplayer is one of my favourites, just because I'm so good at it. Going back some, *Manic Miner* on the Spectrum managed to eat up a large portion of my life for a while. I recently played an emulated version of the game and even now, it strikes you that the gameplay is just so precisely balanced. *Zelda 64* also ranks as one of my favourites, simply because it's so well crafted, and the addictive qualities of *Civilization* have caused the odd sleepless night or two…

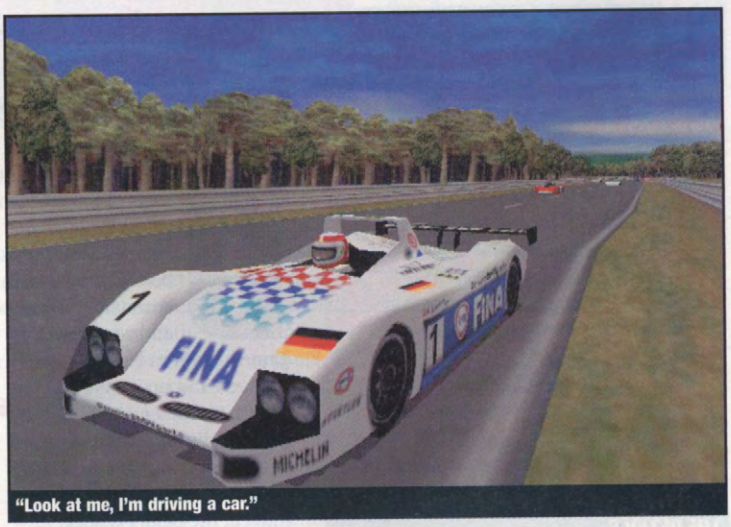
PCZ What was the last game you paid good money for?

KEV Don't laugh: *WWF Attitude* on the N64.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight, and if so what happened?

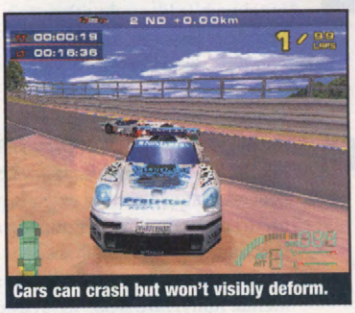
KEV I haven't had a proper fight since I was a kid, but last year I came pretty close. I was walking home after a night on the town when I came across a guy beating seven shades out of a girl. I told him to pack it in at which point he replied, "It's okay, it's my wife…(!)" I told him that wasn't an excuse and moved to break it up. At this point, the girl hurled a load of verbal abuse at me, linked arms with the guy and walked off…

Overtaking and all sorts.

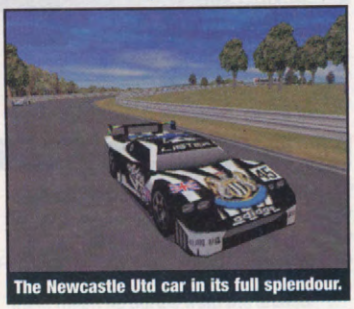


"Look at me, I'm driving a car."

Different views and that.



Cars can crash but won't visibly deform.



The Newcastle Utd car in its full splendour.

Racing in the driving rain (no doubt based in England).

Cast your dreams aside, it's...

SEGA RALLY 2

CV SEGA

SEGA PC

Not content with dominating the console and arcade scenes, Sega have made inroads into the PC scene too

- **1996** *Virtua Fighter* (PCZ #42, 79%)
- **1997** *Virtua Cop* (PCZ #46, 78%)
- **1997** *Daytona USA Deluxe* (PCZ #58, 42%)
- **1997** *Sega World Wide Soccer* (PCZ #55, 50%)
- **1998** *House Of The Dead* (PCZ #66, 77%)
- **1998** *Last Bronx* (PCZ #62, 87%)

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Sega
PUBLISHER Empire Sports
WEBSITE www.segarally.com
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's a spot-on conversion of the arcade original
- Loads of added extras thrown in
- Superb split-screen and online racing options
- Should show the Dreamcast brigade how racers are done

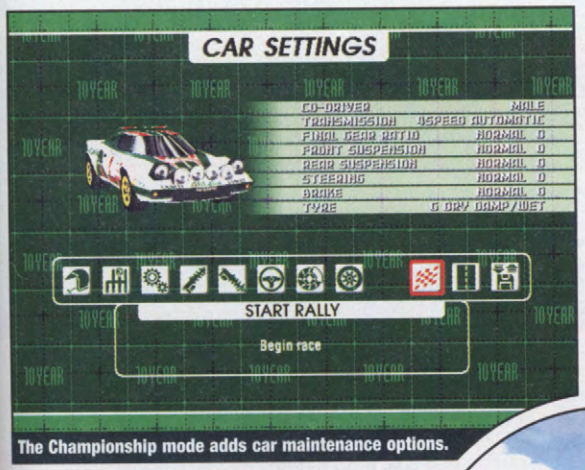
Years ago *Sega Rally 2* drew crowds of kids into the arcades and was a major cause of empty piggy banks and pleas for extra pocket money. *Craig Vaughan* is looking forward to recreating the era on the PC

Drop into any decent arcade and among the rows of linked-up hydraulic racers you should still be able to find a *Sega Rally 2* cabinet. Not immediately apparent, it'll be obscured by a large group of excitable adrenalin junkies because, despite its age and comparatively dated graphics, the game has yet to be surpassed in terms of the sensation of speed and powersliding fun that it recreates. Historically, of course, arcade games never fare too well when converted to the PC. Indeed, the Sega PC back catalogue is littered with arcade classics that couldn't compete once their inherent lack of variety and longevity was laid bare in the home arena. *Virtua Cop* (*PCZ* #46, 78%), *Virtua Fighter* (*PCZ* #42, 79%) and *Daytona USA* (*PCZ* #58, 42%) all proved that something extra is required if coin guzzlers are to make any impact outside of the arcades. Add to this the fact that the PC scene is already awash with racing games covering both the simulation (*Colin McRae Rally*, *PCZ* #68, 93%) and arcade (*Screamer Rally 2*, *PCZ* #45, 93%) aspects of the sport and it might seem that Sega are serving up too little too late.

DREAMING OF BETTER THINGS

Cynics would argue that they've already realised this, hence their decision to abandon publishing PC games in favour of backing the imminent European launch of the Dreamcast console. Speaking of the Dreamcast, PC purists will be interested to hear that *Sega Rally 2* is the first game to be simultaneously developed for the PC and Sega's new baby, and the results should speak volumes as to the relative merits of each format. In fact, the two systems are so close in terms of their operating systems that the PC version is actually a port of the Dreamcast game – and that's where the good news starts. Those unfamiliar with Sega's flagship racer won't know that a pocketful of loose change and a couple of spare hours was enough to see off the arcade original, suffering as it did from a mere four – admittedly diverse – courses (desert, mountain, snow and Riviera). Arcade *Sega Rally 2*

"PC purists will be interested to hear that *Sega Rally 2* is the first game to be simultaneously developed for the PC and Sega's new baby [Dreamcast] and the results should speak volumes as to the relative merits of each format"



The Championship mode adds car maintenance options.

The helicopter records the action, producing superb replays.

Unfortunately the local wildlife often strays onto the course.

The weather effects add to the atmosphere.

The draw distance is superb, and 'pop-up' infrequent.

The in-car view will definitely make you puke.

You'll need to be aggressive when overtaking.

abandoned the type of realistic physics model that a simulation would have demanded, in favour of exaggerated powersliding and invulnerable cars, the aim being to beat the clock to the next checkpoint while shaving split seconds off championship winning times. The cars – Escorts, Peugeots, Lancias and Toyotas – all handled in subtly different manners and the scenery was a joy to behold.

ADDING TO PERFECTION

Retaining all the best features of the original, Sega aim to boost the long-term appeal of the PC version by adding an inspired ten-year Championship mode which offers the incentive of bonus cars and extra stages for those up to the challenge. They've also included a host of variable weather conditions and the ability to tweak gears, suspension, brakes, tyre and transmission settings. The 19 computer-controlled opponents now provide ample challenge and demonstrate advanced AI, powersliding with controlled aggression and blocking your progress at every opportunity. They can't, however, beat the sheer competitiveness of the split-screen two-player mode, which maintains a blistering frame rate while sacrificing little of the graphical flair. Sega have even included the ability to race online against fellow competitors (something we suspect our European Dreamcast rivals won't be able to do for some time).

STOP THE CLOCK

But ultimately it's the clock that provides the real challenge, as a tour of the official Japanese website reveals (the oriental release of the PC version occurred some months ago to coincide with the Dreamcast launch). Shaving hundredths of a second off lap times has become something of an obsession for our sushi-loving friends. They've clearly warmed to the visual splendour of the game too – the term 'arcade perfect' has never been more appropriately used. The accelerated 3D visuals show off a plethora of special effects including wild animals encroaching onto the course and manic spectators taking snapshots as you fly by. Fans will be delighted to hear that the 'pick up and play' appeal of the arcade game has translated perfectly, along with the devilish course design. This, coupled with the handling seen in the seminal Saturn version, should ensure the game wins a legion of new fans, especially considering that the usual minor glitches and bugs associated with any new PC release have already been ironed out following the game's Japanese debut. So, just weeks away from the starting grid, it looks like Sega may finally deliver a game worthy of both its arcade heritage and any racing fan's attention.

Q&A

SHOZO HIRANO

Shozo Hirano is the man tasked with bringing Sega Rally 2 *to our desktops*

PCZ Previous Sega PC games haven't enjoyed critical success, so why should *Sega Rally 2* be any different?

SHOZO Most Sega PC software was developed targeting relatively low-spec hardware, as our aim is to appeal to as many consumers as possible who would like to play our products. However, *Sega Rally 2* is the first title optimised for high-spec hardware (using Direct3D) from the beginning.

PCZ In what ways will the game differ from the Dreamcast version?

PERSON We've added additional features (extra options), including a hi-res mode of 800x600 and enhanced gameplay. There is also a comprehensive help file, including strategy guide, car profile, etc.

PCZ The released Japanese version suffered from 'pop-up' and dodgy physics. Has this been put right for the UK Dreamcast version, and if so will these enhancements be reflected in the PC version?

SHOZO Empire Interactive are currently testing and enhancing the US version, which already addresses these problems.

PCZ The arcade version of *Sega Rally 2* is still a crowd puller, but how do Sega intend to add to the longevity of the title for the home market?

SHOZO Extra cars, new tracks and longer races, additional play modes – what more can you ask for!

PCZ Do Sega plan an arcade sequel, and if so, will it make it to the PC?

SHOZO We are sorry, but we cannot reveal the name of the titles as yet, but we do have plans for new PC titles and some of them might be ported from the arcade.

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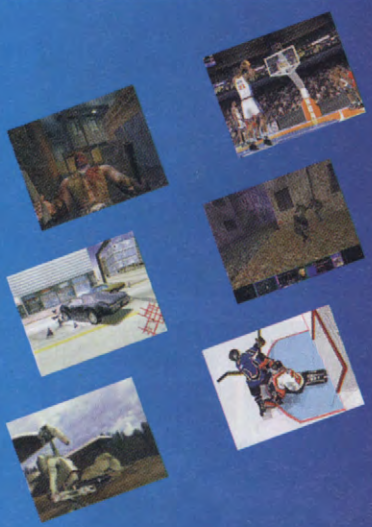
PC Games



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Sega Dreamcast

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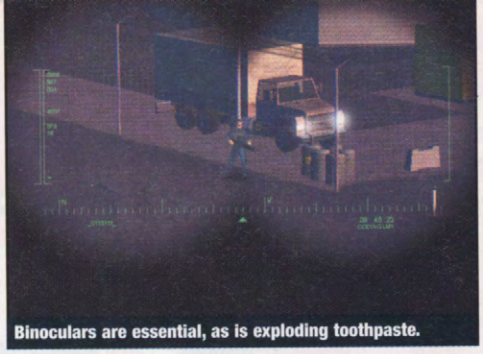
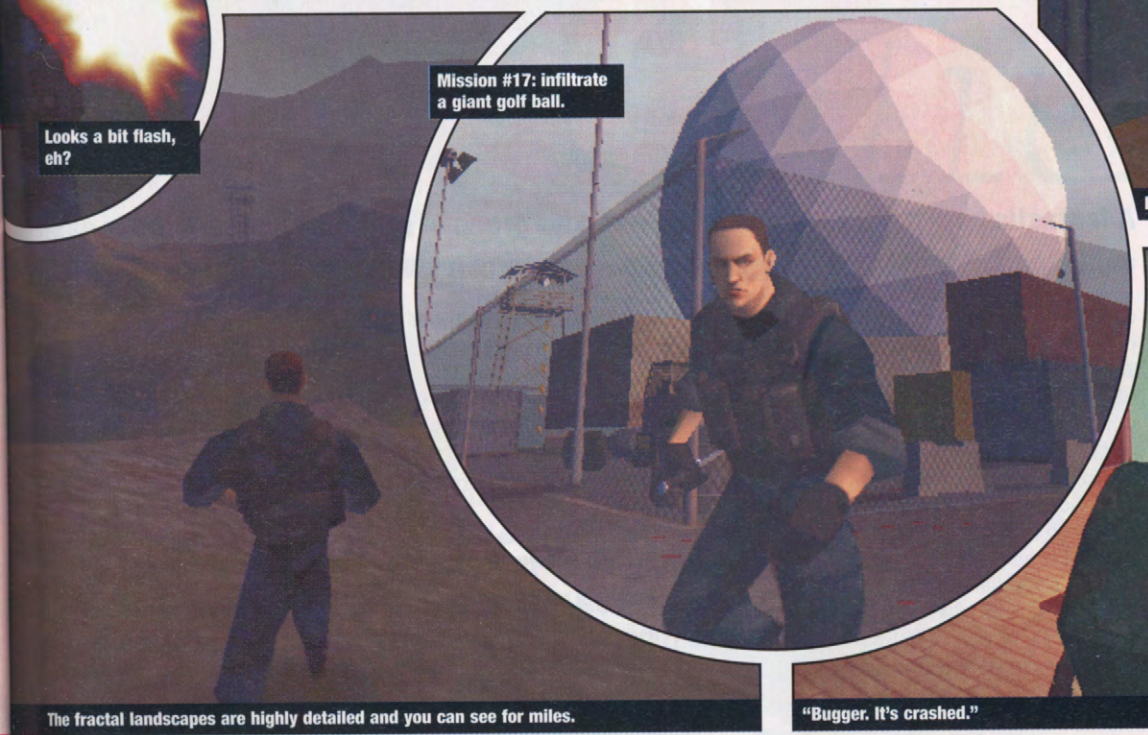
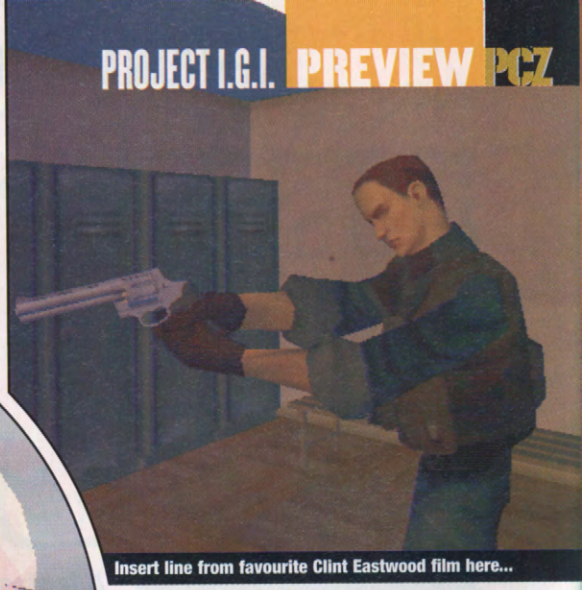
Wirecutters might be a better idea.

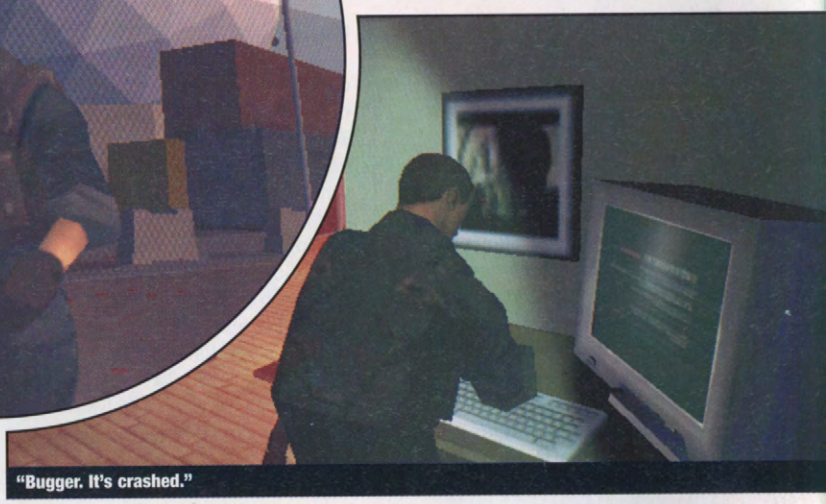

Binoculars are essential, as is exploding toothpaste.

Looks a bit flash, eh?


Mission #17: infiltrate a giant golf ball.

The fractal landscapes are highly detailed and you can see for miles.


Insert line from favourite Clint Eastwood film here...


"Bugger. It's crashed."

PROJECT I.G.I.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

GoldenEye-style action makes it to the PC. _Presley, Paul Presley_ is expected to die

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Innerloop Studio
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
WEBSITE www.eidos.com
OUT: Mid-2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Don't be fooled. Someone at Innerloop's got an N64
- Intricate mix of storyline and first-person action
- Massive indoor and outdoor environments mix seamlessly
- Realistically modelled weapons and vehicles

There wasn't much to recommend at this year's ECTS, but one of the few games that did stand out was *Project I.G.I.* When the Nintendo 64 muscled its way on to the gaming scene a couple of years ago, it brought with it the surprisingly effective *GoldenEye 007*. There can't be anyone reading this who hasn't played Rare's early hit, and who hasn't wondered if it would ever appear on the PC.

While that particular scenario never seemed likely, first-person shooters (on the PC in particular) underwent a transformation in the following years, with the likes of *Half-Life*, *Rainbow Six* and *Hidden & Dangerous*. Intricate, story-driven missions have replaced the mindless killathons of *Quake* as the way forward. Witness the emphasis on the multiplayer aspects of *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament* – they're not even trying to compete in the solo arena anymore.

Of all the *GoldenEye*-inspired titles either out there or on the way, *Project I.G.I.* owes the most to the N64 original. The story puts you in the combat trousers of 'Jones', ex-SAS veteran, now special undercover operative for the British government.

The Bond-esque plot sees you freeing a military prisoner from a foreign power, who tells you of an international arms dealer threatening to destroy the US with an evil biological warfare device. There's also a spot of Harry Palmer-style intrigue as you become embroiled in the political side of events, having to choose between personal loyalty and national interests (at least from what we've seen so far – it probably just means your boss is the final bad guy).

When you first look at the game in action, you'd be forgiven for thinking it's similar to *Delta Force*, mainly because of the vastness of the exterior landscapes. The graphics are far more polished than NovaLogic's efforts, though, as was amply demonstrated when the chap presenting the game to us used a pair of sniper's binoculars to zoom from a distance of a couple of kilometres out, right up to the bridge of an enemy guard's nose. The skin texturing and behavioural patterns of the guard looked pretty damn realistic, too.

"As well as the usual sneaking, sniping and shooting shenanigans, *Project I.G.I.* includes plenty of typical Bond-style action sequences for you to play through"

As well as the usual sneaking, sniping and shooting shenanigans, *Project I.G.I.* includes plenty of typical Bond-style action sequences for you to play through. The classic 'running along the roof of a moving train', the always-popular 'hanging from a cable car', the never-tiresome 'stealing a jet fighter from an enemy base' and plenty of other vehicular high-jinks are on offer. The weapons are also as you'd expect – all the latest in modern military hardware, realistically modelled on real-world ballistic data.

Admittedly, by the time we get to see *Project I.G.I.* in all its glory, we'll have been bombarded by not only a dozen or so 'counter-terrorism' shooters, but also the officially licensed *Tomorrow Never Dies* game. However, things look promising at this early stage, and if Innerloop can get the balance of story, gameplay and control just right, they could be on to a winner and Eidos could be on to a whole new gaming series. Hell, it might even make for a good film. PCZ

FIRST ENCOUNTER

KA-52 TEAM ALLIGATOR

A fantastic new helicopter sim or a close-knit group of reptiles? As *Mark Hill* is easily confused, he spent three weeks in a South American swamp to find out

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Simis
PUBLISHER GT Interactive
WEBSITE www.gtgames.com
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's from the makers of the excellent *Team Apache*
- Combines incredible realism with accessible gameplay
- Command up to 16 other choppers and co-ordinate with ground units
- Amazing new 3D engine

For flight sim fans whose main priority is playability rather than encyclopaedic manuals and excruciating detail, Simis' chopper simulation *Team Apache* (*PCZ* #65, 93%) was really heaven-sent. A combination of gorgeous graphics and a control method that didn't require three years of full study, it still managed to convey the experience of piloting a state-of-the-art gunship through a violent conflict.

Now Simis are putting the finishing touches to *Ka-52 Team Alligator*, which gives you command of the most advanced Russian chopper in the middle of two major offensives: the Belarusian war and the Tajikistan conflict. The mission-based gameplay promises to deliver the same exciting mix of balanced realism and accessibility as its predecessor, putting you in the lead of attack formations of up to 16 helicopters. You'll also be able to interact with land forces and plan an elaborate strategy beforehand. While Simis have carved themselves a reputation for ease of play, they will also be including variable levels of complexity to cater for both newbies (and plain crap players) and the more hard-core audience.

Each mission has four stages: preparation, assault, counterattack and resolution, ensuring that you can change your plans midway and adapt to the enemy's moves. As you progress through the campaigns so will your team, which gains experience and promotions. At the start of each mission you can hand-pick your crew to suit the task ahead, keeping in mind that your people will burn out if you use them too often.

"Boasting an all-new graphics engine, *Team Alligator* can handle a vast amount of objects on screen at any one time, allowing a far more realistic landscape"

Boasting an all-new graphics engine, *Team Alligator* is capable of handling a vast amount of objects on screen at any one time, allowing a far more realistic landscape populated with villages, farms, forests and power stations, as well as all the ground-based artillery. Issuing commands to these land forces is vital for providing cover against enemy forces, which should ensure plenty of fun and frolics in multiplayer. Multiplayer will incorporate both co-operative and deathmatch modes, adding a Siberian setting for even greater variety. Reports of rolling in mud competitions and swamp exploration may be unfounded, but we're still gnashing our teeth in excitement. *Team Alligator* looks a dead cert to be the best helicopter sim available on the market. PCZ

The new graphics engine not only allows a heavily-populated landscape, the choppers look fabulous too.

It would seem choppers and sunsets go hand in hand. Not literally, of course, that wouldn't be physically possible.

"Where the hell is Tajikistan anyway?" Sergeant MacDonald was having second thoughts about his new pilot.

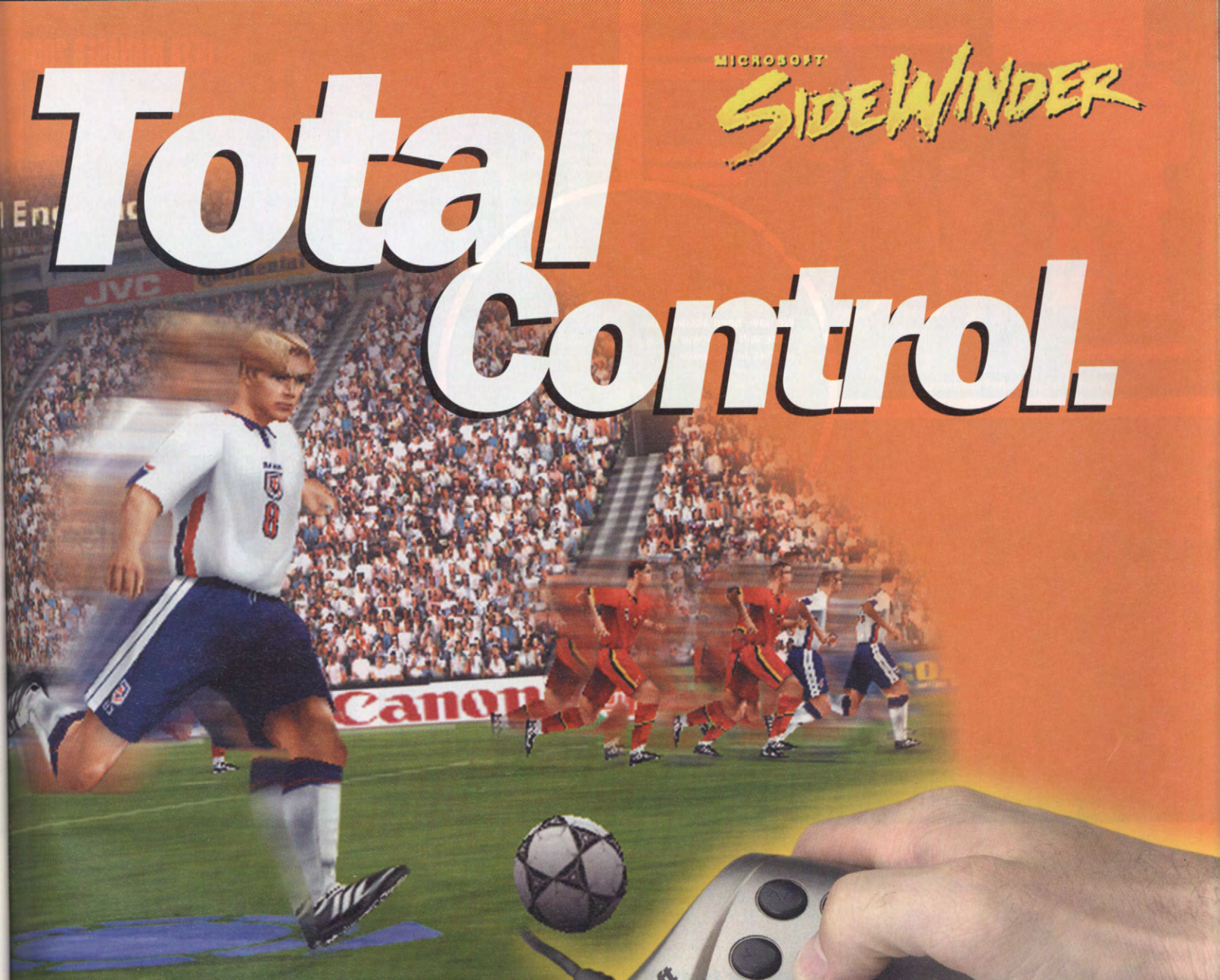
Look out! A crashing helicopter heads for collision with an innocent village. Run, you fools.

While you won't directly control tanks like these, they'll play an important part in your strategy.

After a hard day's work, the boys like to head home for a cup of Ovaltine and an episode of *Corrie*.

Total Control.

MICROSOFT SIDEWINDER



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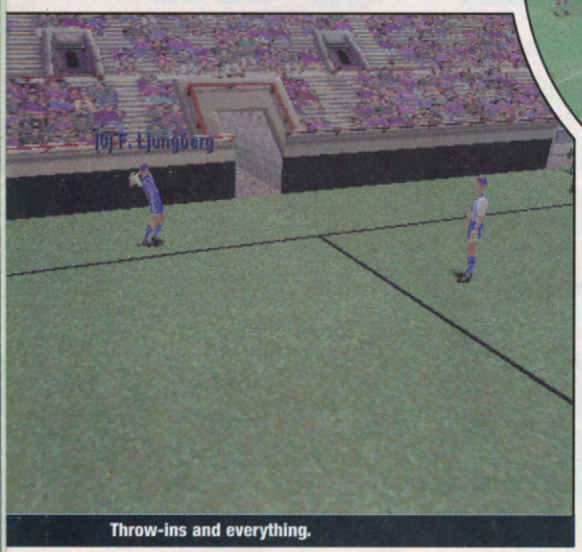
The dreaded issue of shirt sponsorship.

The all-important team selection, with tactical options available.



Throw-ins and everything.

Ground development and that.

Pretend newspaper reports have been done before.

UEFA MANAGER 2000

The year 2000 is on the way. So is another football management game, as *Steve Hill* explains

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Bubball Systems Ltd
PUBLISHER Infogrames
WEBSITE www.infogrames.co.uk
OUT December

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- UEFA licence
- Real-time graphics
- Extensive on-pitch tactics
- Nine unique scenarios

If there's one thing the PC isn't shy of, it's football management games. There's an absolute mountain of them available, and it continues to grow at an exponential rate. A lot of them are utter muck, some are OK for a few days, but the only one of any lasting value is of course the peerless *Championship Manager 3* – aka *Spreadsheet Manager* – a game with no licence and no graphics (not to mention no end).

So what are Infogrames planning to bring to the party? Well, for starters they have a sizeable licence in the shape of Europe's governing body, UEFA. Apart from being able to use the acronym in the game's title, the licence enables the game to authentically recreate all UEFA competitions. Naturally this includes the prestigious UEFA Champions League and indeed the qualification for it, a feat in itself, considering the complexities of this season's competition.

Domestic action is of course the bread and butter of management, and *UEFA Manager 2000* will initially feature all four English divisions plus the Conference, along with the top two leagues of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Scotland, Spain and Portugal. And while it's not a deal clincher, we are promised that this will be followed by data for the Scandinavian countries next year.

So they've gone for the licence, and they've also gone for the graphics, with a full 3D representation of the match action utilising the latest in hardware acceleration, with a software option thrown in for paupers. The matches can be viewed in either a small window or full-screen, and are actually played out in real time as opposed to pre-recorded highlights. And for the ultimate in obsessive behaviour, you can actually watch an entire 90-minute match, although thankfully an abridged highlights option is on offer.

As well as the traditional career mode, some interesting scenarios are to be included, whereby the budding manager is given a set of circumstances and challenged to achieve some objectives. For instance, Sinking Ship involves taking the helm of a team on the verge of relegation and attempting to turn things round with a small cash injection, whereas Crumbling Ground involves sorting the stadium out before making a push for relegation in order to foot the bill. Other self-explanatory scenarios include Domestic Double, Wake the Sleeping Giant, and UEFA Glory, and this should certainly add some variety.

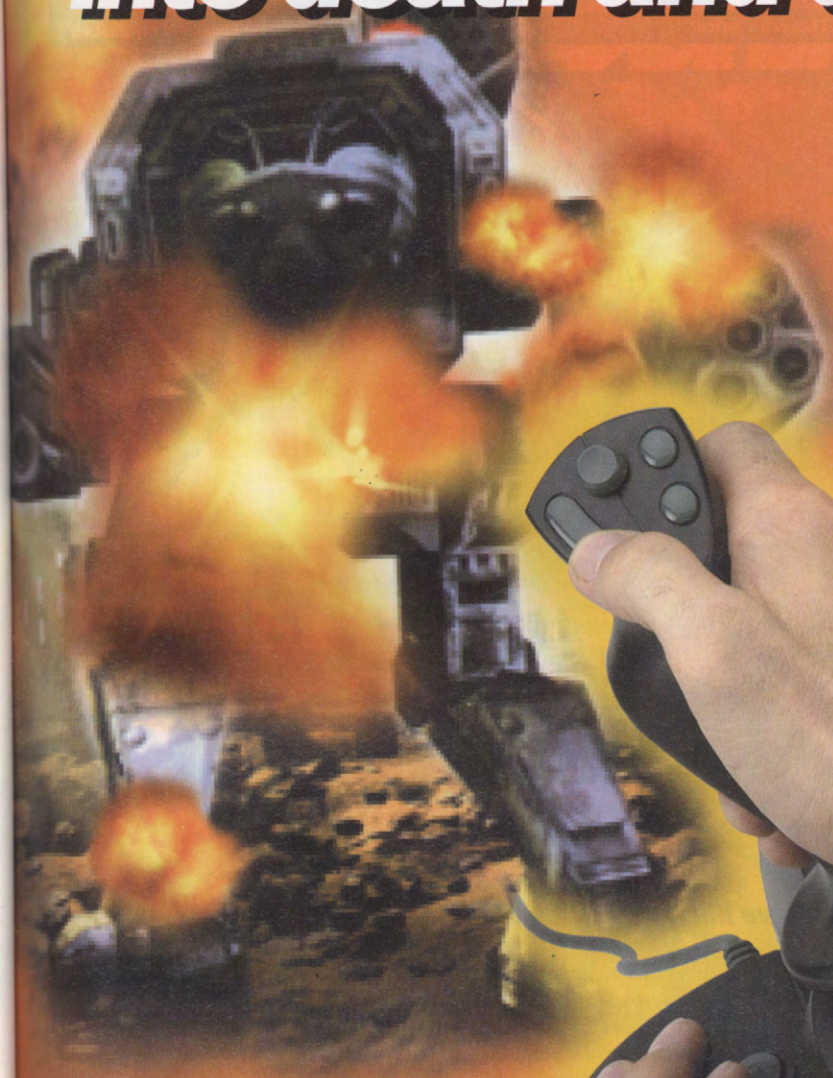
"And for the ultimate in obsessive behaviour, you can actually watch an entire 90-minute match, although thankfully an abridged highlights option is on offer"

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Getting the basic game right is the priority though, and at the moment it looks like a hybrid of some of the main titles, with in-game graphics comparable to *Premier Manager '99*, an email system straight out of *FA Premier League Football Manager*, and even a bit of *Ultimate Soccer Manager* thrown in for good measure. *UEFA Manager 2000* is the debut title from Bubbal Systems, and if it comes anywhere near the depth, accuracy and uncanny realism of *CM3*, it will be a major achievement. Chances? PCZ

MICROSOFT SIDEWINDER

Putting the feel good factor back into death and destruction.



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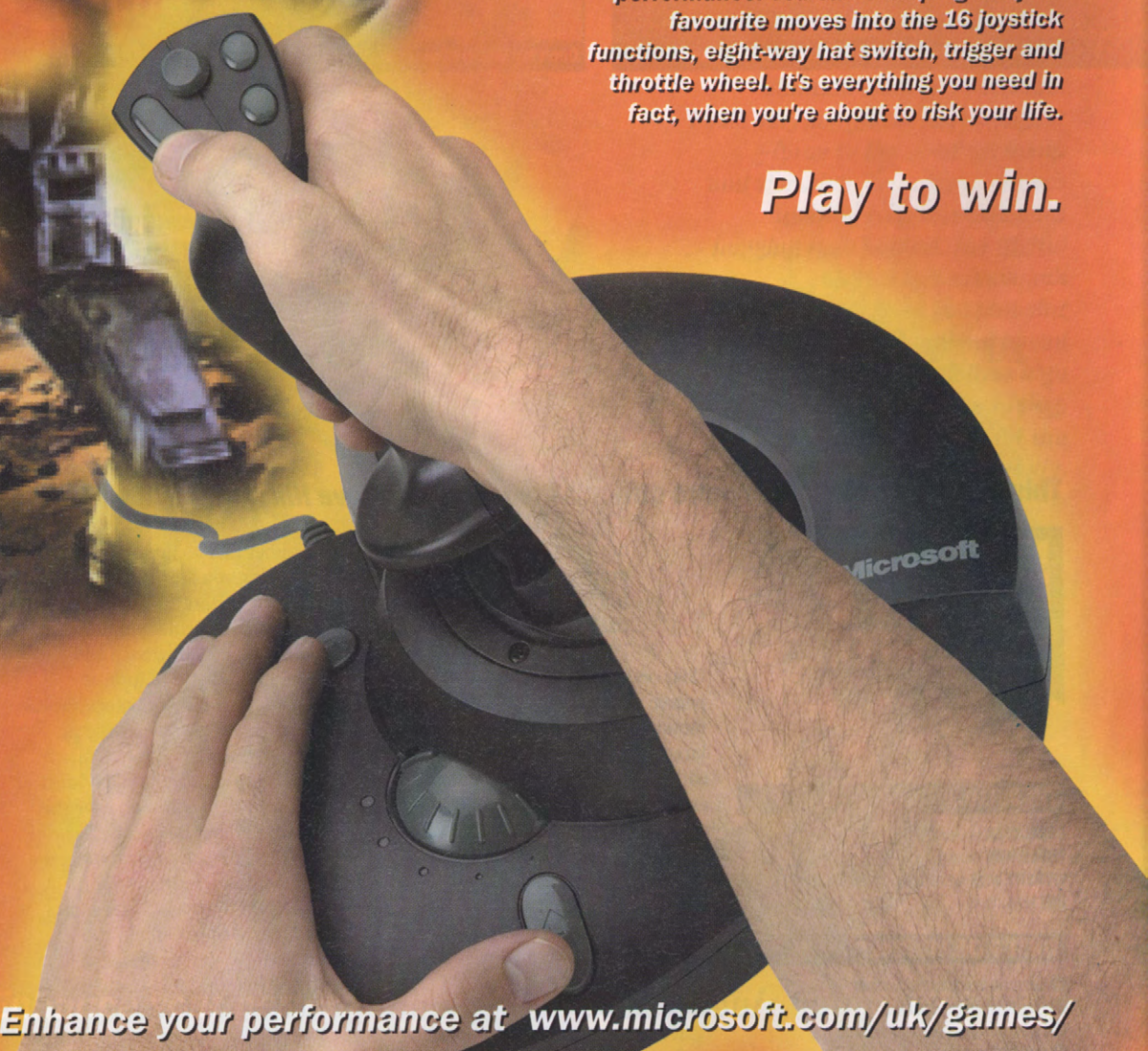
Play to win.



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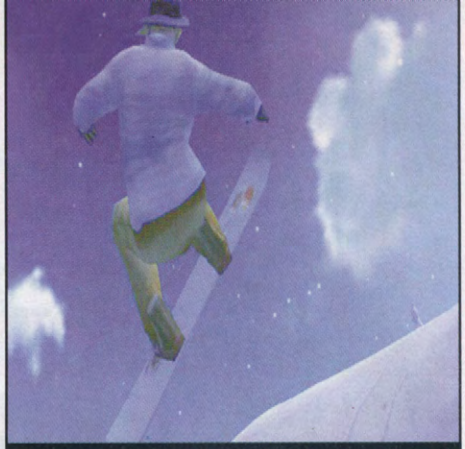
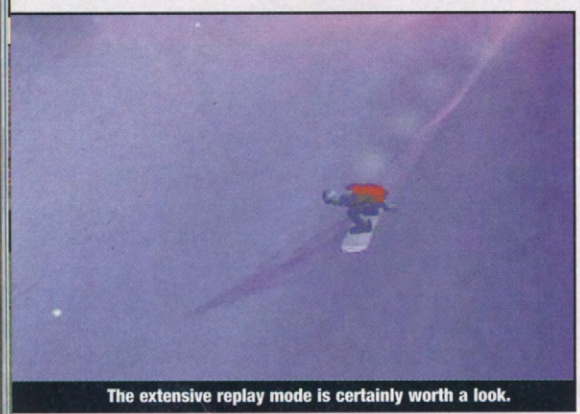
Orange bobble hats are mandatory in this sport.

"Hold on, I know a shortcut."


"Check out my phat air!"


The extensive replay mode is certainly worth a look.

Don't try this at home.

Night racing makes for some particularly dramatic scenery.

SUPREME SNOWBOARDING

This snowboarding lark is more difficult than it looks. *Steve Hill* struggles to keep his balance

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Housemarque Inc
PUBLISHER Infogrames
WEBSITE www.supremesnowboarding.com
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Extensive freedom of movement
- Five different game modes
- Highly realistic character modelling
- Over 100 tricks

Snowboarding indeed, you're probably thinking, while frantically flicking through the mag for news on the latest goblin extravaganza. Chances are, you're the kind of person who thinks sliding down a mountain on a piece of wood is largely the preserve of drug fiends with a limited vocabulary and experimental facial hair. And you'd be absolutely right. However, as hobbies go, sitting in the dark living your life through the actions of a one-inch character on a monitor could also be construed as unorthodox, and is certainly neither cool nor awesome, to use the parlance of the snowboarding community.

It's easy to dismiss snowboarding as the pastime of simpletons, until you actually try it. At which point you'll either flail about hopelessly like the weakling you are, or you'll get the hang of it and start to whoop like a child. The rush of cold mountain air, the sensation of riding crisp white powder and the exhilaration of hurtling downhill at breakneck speeds all make for a genuinely awesome experience, even more fun than pretending to cast spells in a wizard game. PC owners will soon have the chance to find out for themselves, thanks to *Supreme Snowboarding*, the first in a series of Extreme Sports titles from Infogrames. The game is being developed in Finland by Housemarque, the result of a merger between two developing houses, Terramarque and Bloodhouse.

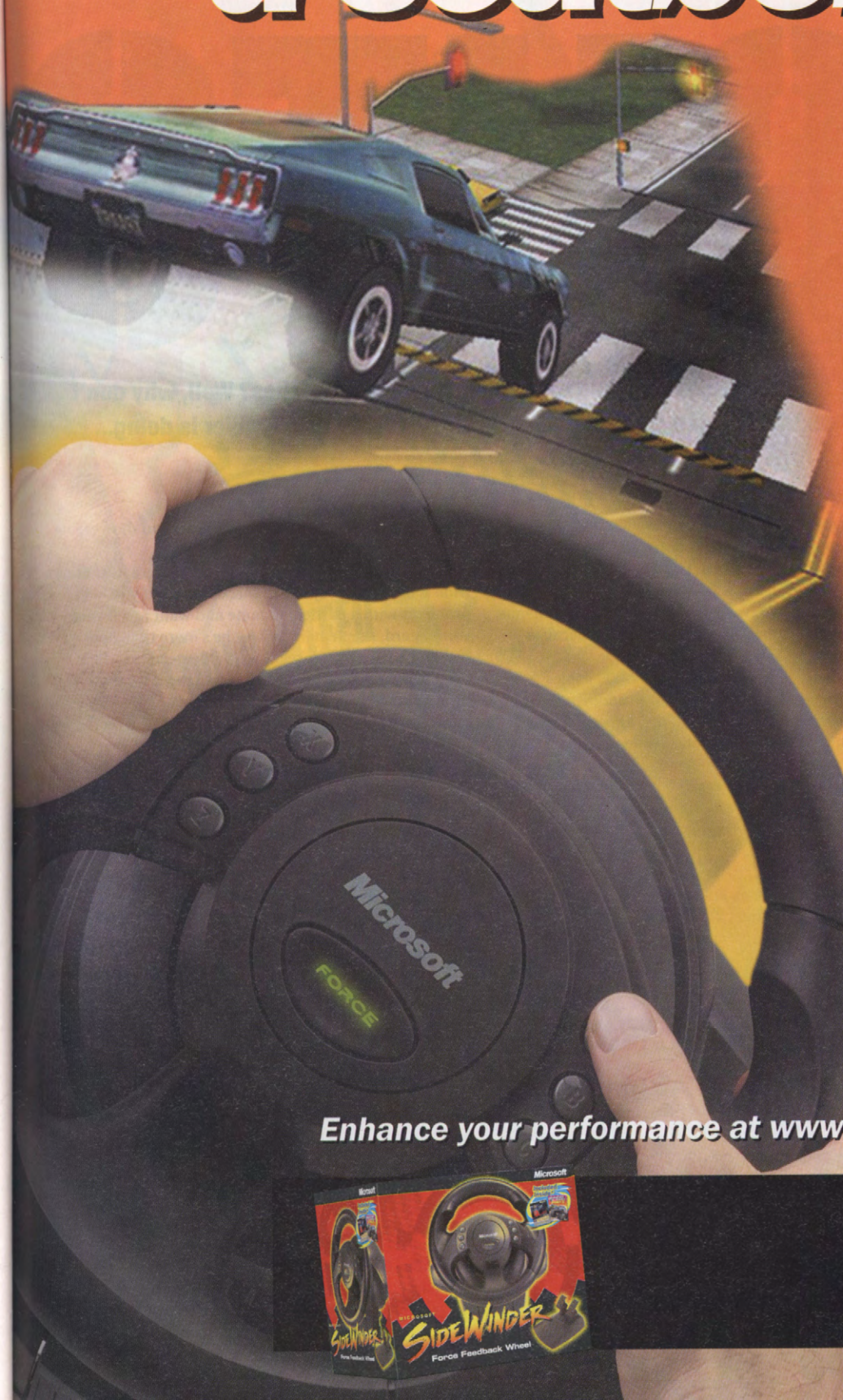
When it comes to snowboarding games, the best yet is widely regarded to be *1080° Snowboarding* on the Nintendo 64. Consequently, there's a mentality that suggests that this kind of game should be confined to consoles, and indeed both Dreamcast and Gameboy versions are pending. However, only the PC has the power to enable such a game to realise its full potential, and it would be a crying shame not to use it. The graphics in *Supreme Snowboarding* automatically adapt themselves to suit your PC, and on a high-end machine are truly tremendous. A further advantage it has over its console counterparts is the eight-player network option. We've had the privilege of playing it, and it's a thing of grace and beauty. The nine tracks span Forest, Alpine and Village, and each is approximately two square miles, with multiple paths to select, making it a case of getting to the bottom of the mountain by any means necessary. Naturally, all manner of tricks are available, either during a race or on a specially made half-pipe.

Supreme Snowboarding is shaping up to be a wonderful thing, and it's coming out this Winter. So you'll soon be able to try the sport without the risk of freezing your knackers, snapping your wrists or bruising your coccyx. Nice. PCZ

"A further advantage it has over its console counterparts is the eight-player network option. We've played it and it's a thing of grace and beauty"

MICROSOFT SIDEWINDER

You might want to buy a seatbelt too.



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Bored of bugged games? Hacked off with downloading patches? Well, why don't you do something about it? That's what *PC ZONE* reader Gavin Miller is doing...

WORDS Adam Phillips

PHOTOS Simon Clay **ILLUSTRATION** Phil Clark

CASE HISTORY

#18 THE 'ANNE ROBINSON' OF GAMERS

NAME Gavin Miller

AGE 30

LOCATION Eastbourne

OCCUPATION Between jobs

OBSESSION Fighting for his (and others) consumer rights

CONDITION BEGAN When he bought a terminally bugged copy of *Gunship 2000* for his PlayStation

HISTORY OF CONDITION After falling foul of other ropey games, Gavin decided to create his own site dedicated to highlighting software titles that aren't up to scratch

OUTLOOK Judging from his obvious passion for consumer rights, we're hoping his obsession will continue to flourish. Keep up the good work, fella

It's easy to imagine how it can happen. Picture the scene: Devoid Of Ideas Software is about to release its new blockbuster game – *Another Quake Clone, Don't You Know 2* – which has been 'in development' for two years, ie they bought someone else's graphics engine at the last minute because their own effort was, frankly, crap.

Two days before launch and with 200,000 copies of the game sitting in a warehouse on a rundown industrial estate somewhere in Whitby, a spotty teenager transforms himself from an inconspicuous gamester into the voice of financial Armageddon by sending an innocuous email to the 'powers that be': "There is a bug in the game that makes it almost unplayable on certain machines," states the email.

ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE.

With a mountain of money poured into marketing and advertising, ze men in suits know that the 'finished' product *must* hit the shelves *now,* or they fear losing money and kudos – in their minds, they see their BMWs morph into Nissans as they imagine 200,000 units being pulped. Shock! Horror! And then some bright spark with his eye on a tasty new company Audi says: "What the hell, let's just release it anyway and we'll patch the sucker later!"

Sighs of relief from the men in suits. Then on launch day we, the humble consumer, release gasps of horror as we boot up the game, realising that there's about as much chance of getting it to work as there is of getting Saddam Hussein, Charles Manson and Mohammed Al Fayed UK passports.

The bottom line, though, is that if everyone was like Gavin Miller the software companies would never get away with it. Our Gav's so hacked off with patches, trite programming and the other common bug bears of modern gameplaying that he's started a one-man crusade by setting up a website dedicated to showcasing the latest bugged games.

While his site may not have the world's greatest design *(And is in dire need of a spell checker – Ed)*, if you have problems with a particular game and want to get your voice heard, then email Gavin – he's more than happy to dish out advice for those punters who need it and has been known to pass on complaints to the relevant developers as well. He's also forwarded some complaints to our very own Watchdog and frequently gets on the blower to *PC ZONE* once every couple of weeks, to rant and rave about which games are driving both him and site visitors nuts.

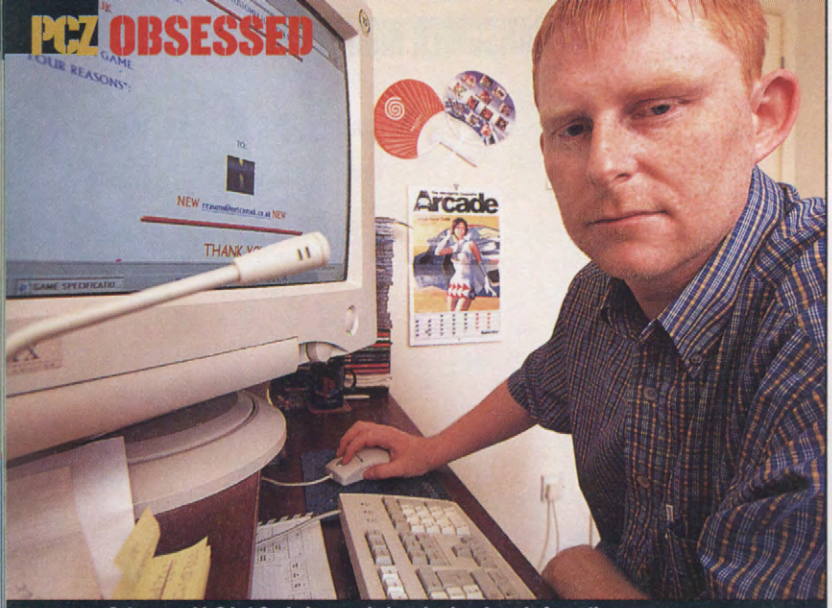
We've all got to that point of frustration in the past, so what set off Gavin in the first place and made him go the extra distance? "I guess it all goes back to when I bought *Gunship 2000* on the PSX," recalls Gavin. "I had been playing it for two days solid when it just crashed. I phoned the games developer and spoke to a chap there. He said: 'Well, it seems that you have found a bug that we must have missed.' Wow, pretty cool! But it made the game impossible to finish. When I asked him what I could do about this, he admitted that nothing could be done because the game had already been available for over six months and they could not recall all copies of the game. So I had a game I could not finish!"

Harsh treatment indeed and after suffering at the hands of *Blood*'s bugs on the PC, Gavin finally decided he'd had enough: "I was at a mate's house and his father and I were talking about the amount of problems in PC games. Then the subject switched to web space and my mate's father suggested that I should do a page on games and their problems."

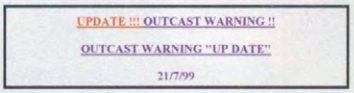
Thus his site was born, and while it has only attracted a modest 800 hits since it was launched six months ago, Gavin is adamant that it has an important role to play: "I've had people say 'You may as well give up' and 'You'll

"I'm not out to change the world, I just want to make some people aware of the pitfalls out there. While I love games, it's a shame that some developers tend to rush games out"

GAVIN MILLER



Got a grumble? Let Gavin know – he's poised and ready for action.



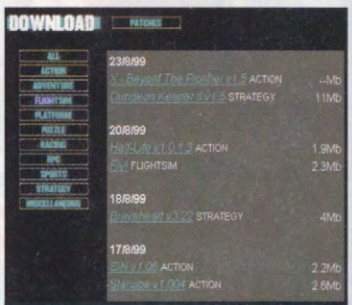
Gavin's website may look decidedly unflashy but it does the job, so what are you waiting for? Send all your raves, rants and whinges to him.

Outcast, *Sin*, *Blood* and *Championship Manager 3* are all games whose bugs have raised the heckles of some punters, including Gavin's.

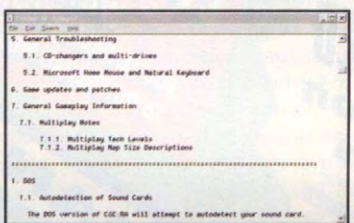
ADVICE FOR THE AGGRAVATED

You poor bastard, you actually bought *Another Quake Clone, Don't You Know 2* from Devoid Of Ideas Software and, surprise, surprise, the damn thing won't work. If so, it's time to use the following checklist to try to get the ruddy game working:

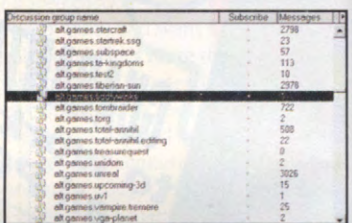
✪ Make sure that you've read all the readme.txt files on the game CD. Companies often slap together a text file detailing last-minute changes to the title.
✪ If that fails, check out their official website to see if any patches have become available that may rectify your problem. Also, be sure to drop in on newsgroups related to the game – if something is universally wrong with a certain title, you can be sure that other punters are already ranting about it online and they may have come up with a solution.
✪ Check our cover CDs. We already feature many of the latest patches for games in need of an 'update'. And so does our website.
✪ Phone the game's support department and email them as well. Have your PC's exact specs at hand to help them out. As Gavin points out, if you're paying for the call it'll cost you less because you're prepared.
✪ While you may want to reach down the phone and throttle the support bod on the other end, there's little point in getting angry with them or, worse still, swearing at them. All they have to do is hang up or ignore your mails…
✪ Be sure to keep an exact record of the times you tried to contact the company, so if you do decide to get in touch with the likes of Gavin or *PC ZONE*'s Watchdog, we will have all your information at hand to wave under the noses of software companies.
✪ If you really want to avoid all possible pitfalls, our Gavin recommends that you wait for a month after the game's launch before buying. By then, any potential problems should have been ironed out. It may delay playing that latest and greatest title, but it could save you frustration and anger in the long run…
✪ If all else fails, drop Gavin or Watchdog a line. See the 'World O' Hurt' panel on the next page for more details.



Check out our own extensive list of patches on *PC ZONE*'s website.



Be sure to check over the game's Readme.txt file.



Drop in on game-related newsgroups to see how other punters are getting on.

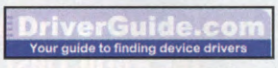
TROUBLESHOOTING

If you're armed with an Internet connection, you won't need to worry for too long if your latest purchase is causing you grief, as there are shedloads of official and unofficial sites to plunder to get that game working. Remember to check out the newsgroups as well. Oh, and our rather spiffy site which boasts a patch section (www.pczone.co.uk)

THE PATCHES

www.inf.tu-dresden.de/~mr2/index3.html

A comprehensive site boasting some 2,350 patches. If you're unfortunate enough to own an Amiga or Mac, these guys have got a library of patches for them as well.



DRIVER GUIDE

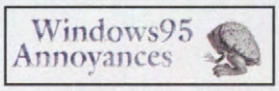
www.driverguide.com/

Need a driver for your graphics card? Your monitor? Printer? CD-ROM? With an easy-to-use and searchable database, if you're having problems locating that pesky driver, you're can be 99% sure that you'll be able to locate it here.

FRESH 3D

www.f3d.net/index.pl/html/404.html

Another good site for drivers, Fresh 3D also features hardware reviews from Pentium chips through to the latest graphic cards.



WINDOWS 95 ANNOYANCES

www.annoyances.org/win95/

Give Wazza a break and use W95 Annoyances to find answers to those most common (and not so common) Windows problems…

3DFX

www.3dfx.com

The official corporate pages of the most acclaimed graphics card range money can buy. Drivers, company buff and more make this the top site for all your 3dfx needs. 'Nuff said.

ALL CHANGE

It's all too easy for someone to launch himself on a crusade and criticise something endlessly. To show your true colours, you've got to come up with some practical solutions to the problems. We put Gavin to the test: how would he like to see the software industry changed for the benefit of consumers?

NO.1 GAME SPECIFICATIONS ON THE BOX

Problem:

"With enough effort and support from other games players, I hope to change the specifications lists on game boxes. Sometimes they are just not as accurate as they should be."

Solution:

✪ Get developers to realise what is really required to run a game efficiently.

✪ Read *PC ZONE*'s specification list. You'll find our 'real world' opinions nestled at the top of every review. The differences between what the manufacturers say and what we've found sometimes borders on the ridiculous.

NO. 2 SCREENSHOTS ON THE BOX

Problem:

"All the game boxes ever show are the graphics from a maximum specification machine. So, if the minimum is a P166, the graphics may look nothing like they do on the box."

Solution:

✪ "Include at least *one* screenshot from a lower specification machine, so people will be aware of exactly what they're getting."

NO. 3 GAME LICENCES

Problem:

"As I understand it, when we purchase a game, we are not actually purchasing it outright – we are purchasing a licence to play the game. All we own is the actual CD-ROM that the game is on, but *not* the game. The licence presented in that little grey box flashes past as we install the game and includes both our rights and the developer's. It will also get you to *agree* (by clicking 'Yes' or 'Next') to all of the developer's rights, etc. One of those rights will be *all* about the game in its current form and the fact that the developers have the right to make any changes to the game that they feel are needed. As I see it, if you click 'Yes', then in theory you'll find it hard to take any developer to Trading Standards."

Solution:

✪ Ensure that the licence is clearly visible and readable, so that punters can see what they are actually agreeing to in plain English. A long shot we know...

NO.4 PATCHES

Problem:

"There is nothing more annoying than buying a game, installing it and checking the developer's website, only to find that you need to download a massive 20Mb patch! What about people who aren't on the Internet? Get a friend to download it for you? Not very practical. Ring the technical support department and wait maybe two days for the patch to arrive by post? Having to wait two days to play a new purchase is unacceptable in my opinion. There was one poor guy who had purchased a number of games in a single month. It turned out that all of the games required particularly large patches – it amounted to over 45Mb of downloads!"

Solution:

✪ "If developers have any large patches for their games, they should make them available to *all* the PC magazines so they can be included on their cover CDs *(They usually do – Ed)*. This will give the non-Internet players a chance to get up to date."

✪ "While it's not the developer's responsibility ultimately, include drivers for some of the PC's most popular hardware on the game's CD."

✪ "Send any large updates/patches to retailers. This would enable the shopkeeper to advise the customer or even provide patches for those without a modem."

Games that were bugged on release, like *Outcast*, can now be rectified by visiting the game's official homepage and downloading patches...

never change anything', but I have to try. I'm not out to change the world, I just want to try to make some people aware of the pitfalls out there. While I love games, it's a shame that some developers tend to rush games out. I hope at least one person will gain some help from my site. It's all about awareness."

And our Gavin is rabid on the subject of awareness. Ask him what people need to be made aware of and he'll happily shoot off a long list of complaints aimed squarely at developers: the over-abundance of patches, inaccurate screenshots on the boxes, way-off-target minimum specs listed on the side of boxes and even those inconspicuous contractual licences that pop up during the installation stage of most games (see 'All Change' panel above for more details).

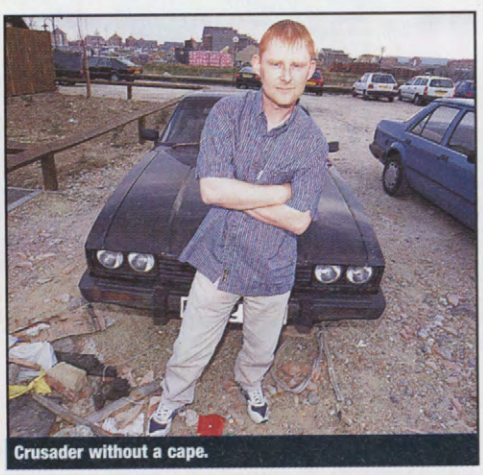
In the meantime, he reckons punters could also be doing more to help themselves. "Provided you take the time to read reviews of the games and pay close attention to all the requirements needed for the game to work, everything should be fine," offers Gavin. "People also need to take a little time to get to know their PCs as well – there are plenty of magazines out there to help you."

While we can all educate ourselves a little more on the delights of the dreadful DirectX, it's still clear in Gav's mind that it's the developers who should be helping out more. His list of targets over the last few months have included *Championship Manager 3* (as featured on TV's *Watchdog*), *Sin* ("the most bugged game I have ever seen") and most recently, *Outcast* – all of which he has been happy to 'promote' on his site.

In fact, Gavin is so obsessed with bugged games that he wants to make them his career: "I have done a couple of days games testing here and there in the past and enjoyed it. I hope to gain employment in that field in the future. After all, games are all I really know!"

Indeed, such is our Gav's drive to wipe out bugs from gaming that perhaps a sassy software company should throw him a job just to try and muzzle his consumer fangs. Then again, if punters like Gavin stop fighting, where would we be? PCZ

Well, at least he's better looking than Anne Robinson...



Crusader without a cape.

WORLD O' HURT

If you've got problems, don't fret because help is but an email away...

If you want to get in touch with Gavin, then drop in on his website at www.netcomuk.co.uk/~onge/index.html. Alternatively, remember that *PC ZONE* also has Watchdog which can be found sniffing over reader letters and company hyperbole on page 132.

WRITE TO Watchdog, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL Alternatively, email us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

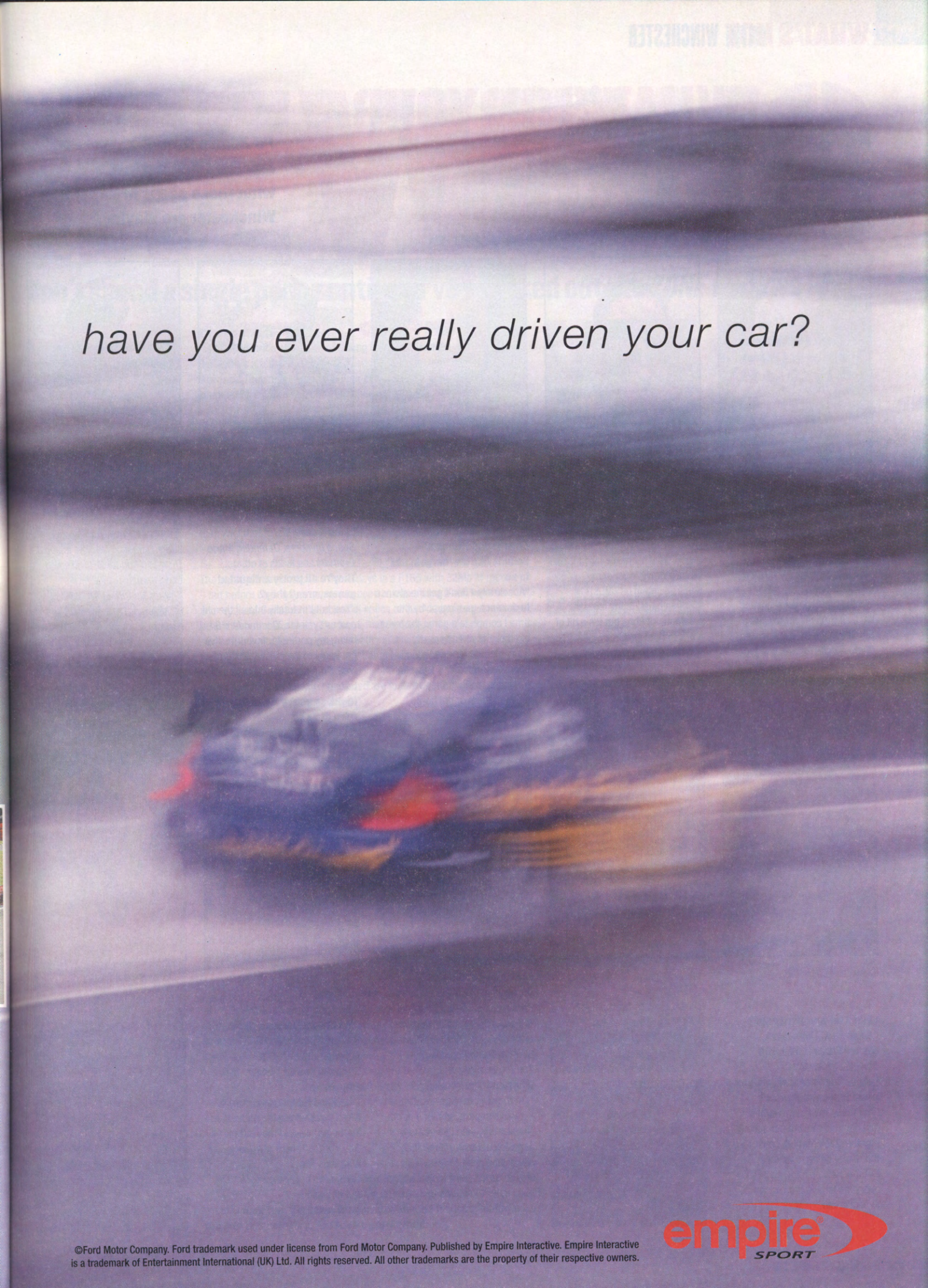
Ford RACING

It's time to stop worrying about increased insurance premiums, stone chips and your less interesting Sunday morning rituals...

- Hi-res textures
- Rigid body dynamics
- Advanced AI
- Instant replays
- Multiple camera views
- 3 Championship styles

Extensive range of models available

PC CD-ROM



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empire SPORT

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

***PC ZONE*'s roving reporters find out just what those peeps in Winchester are playing**

WORDS Craig Vaughan and Heidi Wood **PHOTOS** Heidi Wood **LOCATION** Winchester, Hampshire

JANE SNEDDON
19, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"*Quake II*, *Hidden & Dangerous*, *System Shock 2* demo, *Micro Machines 3*, *TOCA 2*."

You play on your PC quite a bit then?
"All the time, especially when I'm broke; all my mates come round and we have PC parties. *Micro Machines* after one too many is particularly amusing. We used to have PlayStation parties, but we're alright now."

JACK HASTINGS
24, Accountant

What's on your hard drive?
"*Civilization 2*, *Links LS*, *Brian Lara Cricket*, *Myst* and *Worms*."

Anything a bit more up to date?
"To be honest most of my money is going on DVDs. I'm trying to build up my back catalogue of films but it's a bit of a pricey business."

Anything in particular demand?
"I'm after *Natural Born Killers*. I'm trying to import it from the US at the moment as I've just been given a hack for foreign discs."

MARK GAINEY
25, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"*Quake*, *FIFA 98*, *Hardball 6*, *Outlaws* and *Worms 2*."

Sounds like the 'bargain box' to us.
"Absolutely. I don't get the chance to do much gaming, so by the time I complete a game the 'next big thing' is already pretty old. It saves me a fortune though, because friends give me a lot of their games when they've finished them or got bored."

DAVE MAYNE
22, Bar assistant

What's on your hard drive?
"*Atari Arcade Hits*, *Pacman*, *Space Invaders*, *Defender*, *Mario Brothers* and loads of others."

They're all pretty antiquated games, aren't they?
"Yes, but I'm totally into all the old games systems, *Commodore 64* being my particular favourite. I've got loads of the old handhelds as well, but I run most of my games through emulators now."

Right, so you're a bit of a retro dude?
"100%. Let's face it – it's cheap."

HELEN PRITCHARD
25, Doctor

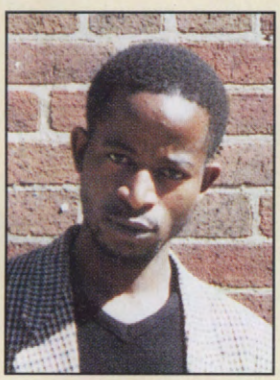
What's on your hard drive?
"*Zork Nemesis*, *Monkey Island 3*, *Dungeon Keeper 2*, *Civilization* and *Theme Hospital*."

***Theme Hospital*? We'd have thought you would want to escape from the NHS at home.**
"Definitely, but there's something very satisfying about the game in a macabre kind of way. I find it's an excellent way of relieving stress and it's better to vent your frustration on a game rather than on actual patients."

CATHERINE MORRISON
23, Teacher

What's on your hard drive?
"*South Park*, *Theme Park*, *System Shock 2*, *Microsoft Money*, *Stockwatch*."

Lots of financial stuff, are you a budding entrepreneur?
"Not really, my boyfriend has just plunged most of our savings into the stock market, convinced that we're going to make a fortune. He's an idiot, given that everyone knows there's about to be a crash."



MICHAEL MUMISA
27, Engineer

What's on your hard drive?
"*Rogue Squadron*, *X-Wing Alliance*, *System Shock 2*, *Baldur's Gate* and *SimCity 3000*."

Any particular favourites?
"No, I'm into everything. I'm partial to flight simulators and 'theme' games, but generally I'll give anything a try as long as it's got nothing to do with *South Park*, which I detest."

IAN PRIDEAUX
29, Police officer

What's on your hard drive?
RollerCoaster Tycoon, *System Shock 2* demo, *Jagged Alliance*, *Golf Pro 2 and Populous: The Beginning*."

What's on your wish list?
"I'm gagging for *System Shock 2* – it looks superb, so much depth and strategy. And I've heard that Sega are releasing *Sega Rally 2* which was one of my favourite arcade racers, so it looks like the build up to Christmas will be excellent for gamers."

HEIDI WOOD
19, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"*The Sentinel Returns*, *Alpha Centuri*, *Cricket Captain 2*, *Rollcage* and *Half-Life*."

Hang on, you've been on this page before...
"Yes, I had a 'blonde moment' when I was taking the photos for the article, and they didn't come out..."

Why was that?
"I forgot to put a film in the camera."

ANN SHARRAD
23, Librarian

What's on your hard drive?
"*Rollcage*, *Civilization: Call To Power*, *Worms Armageddon*, *TOCA 2* and *Populous 3*."

So, what Christmas games are you looking forward to?
"I'm desperate for *Quake III*. I just love the online features of *Quake II* – there's nothing like fragging people all over the world. I've met hundreds of strangers and blown their heads off – it's quite liberating."

Yes, but not very endearing.

PCZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the *ZONE* reviews first

WHERE TO CALL

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

Acclaim	0171 344 5000
Activision	01895 456700
Anco	01322 292513
Blue Byte	01604 232200
Codemasters	01926 814132
Cryo	01926 315550
Eidos Interactive	0181 636 3000
Electronic Arts	01753 549442
Empire Interactive	0208 343 7337
Europress	01625 855000
Gremlin Interactive	0114 263 9900
GT Interactive	0208 222 9700
Hasbro Interactive	0181 569 1234
Infogrames	0161 827 8000
Interplay	0171 551 4222
Microids	(France) 00 33 146 01 54 01
Microsoft	0181 242 1000
Mindscape	01444 246333
NovaLogic	0171 405 1777
Rage Software	0151 237 2200
Take 2 Interactive	01753 722900
THQ	01483 767656
Ubi Soft	0181 944 9300
Zablac	01626 332233

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at *ZONE* pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre and they won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we've got our Feedback section on page 100. This is where you get the opportunity to get your point of view into *PC ZONE*. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.

ALL THE LATEST GAMES REVIEWED & RATED

DON'T BELIEVE THE JARGON

The standard spec machine these days is a P166 with 32Mb of memory – but before buying any game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the technical specs on packaging can sometimes be a little optimistic to say the least, make sure you check out the 'We say' bit in our tech specs box at the start of reviews. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, then we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

PCZONE CLASSIC 90-100% Here at *ZONE* we score every game out of 100. If a game receives a score of 90 or above, it is awarded the *PC ZONE* Classic award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not a fan of the genre.

PCZONE RECOMMENDED 80-89% If a game scores 80-89% it's awarded a *PC ZONE* Recommended award. Games that fall into this category are excellent examples of their type, and if you're a fan of the genre they're well worth buying.

70-79% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-69% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre or you see it at a reduced price.

PCZONE PANTS 0-19% Games that score under 20% should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating, and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.

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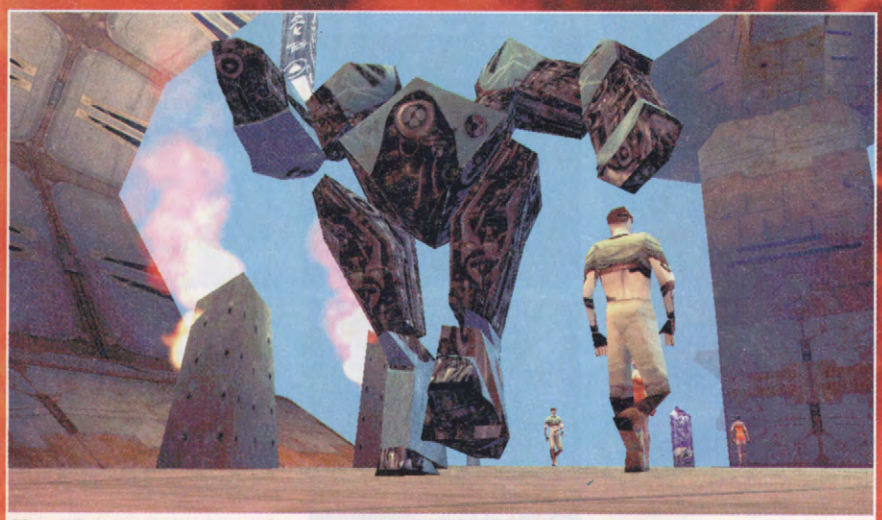
THE NOMAD

£TBC • Eidos Interactive • Out November



It's not that easy to riverdance when you're a hulking piece of metal.

Reincarnation? Lap-dancers? *David Bowie*? When these three meet within one game, 'tis a sign of impending apocalypse. Still, *Charlie Brooker* isn't scared. For once...

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 300 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D accelerator card **WE SAY** Don't bother with less than the recommended specs

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Now, as game titles go, *The Nomad Soul* sounds like it should be pronounced in a 'scary ghost voice'. Like a restless spirit in an old horror movie going "*Woooo! Woooo! Avennnge my deeeeaaaath!*"

It's a ridiculous title. Not since *Tunguska* have we chanced upon such a millstone of a name. It sounds like the name of a particularly dull Sting album (even though choosing 'a particularly dull Sting album' would be an impossibly oxymoronic task on a par with pointing out the deadest corpse in a morgue). And if Sting *did* write a song called *The Nomad Soul*, you can bet your nomad arse it'd have crapbag auto-pilot lyrics, no discernible tune, and a $500,000 video in which he'd wander through the desert clad in traditional Bedouin robes looking deep and mystical.

ASHES TO ASHES, FUNK TO FUNKY

Speaking of ageing cerebral musos, none other than David Bowie himself appears in *The Nomad Soul*. They were going to call it *Omikron*, but changed their minds at the last minute. Actually, Omikron is the name of the city in which *The Nomad Soul* is set. And before we go any further, it's worth pointing out that while some aspects sorely deserve being treated with derision, overall *The Nomad Soul* is A Good Thing. It's an insanely ambitious game, and while it can't possibly fulfil everything it sets out to do, it's good enough and different enough to warrant your attention. K? K.

WE KNOW MAJOR TOM'S A JUNKIE

So what sort of game is this? Well, it's an adventure game with several twists. Twist number one comes right at the start, when a futuristic police officer pops up and addresses you directly, begging for help. "I've just been killed," he says. "Use your computer to take control of my body." So you do. The idea behind *The Nomad Soul* is that you're still *yourself*, see – it's just that 'you' happen to be controlling the body of a policeman in another dimension via what *appears* to be a computer game but is actually a gateway to an alternate universe. Y'know, just like in the movie *Tron*. Do you see? Good.

Twist number two expands upon this initial conceit. When you die, the game doesn't stop. Furthermore, you're not really dead – because although the body you've been controlling might be splattered across the floor like an upturned bucket of pig's offal, you yourself (ie the player) are still very much alive back in the real world, gawping into the world of Omikron via your computer screen. So, rather than spend the rest of the game lying on the ground trapped inside a stiff, you get reincarnated, in the guise of whichever poor sap touches the corpse first. You don't have to wait until you cop it before swapping bodies either – once you've got your hands on the appropriate spell, you can skip from one body to another should you run into someone you take a shine to. It's kind of like a game of existential 'tag'.

Of course, those of you who are paying any attention at all will realise that all this means that the '*Nomad Soul*' of the title is – gasp – *you*. Later on, this theme is expanded upon in a rather clumsy attempt to make you feel as if your own spiritual existence is somehow at stake, but it doesn't really work. Still, it's different.

PUT ON YOUR RED SHOES AND DANCE THE BLUES

Yes yes yes, but twists aside, what sort of game is it? Well, it's actually a surprisingly old-skool adventure game, complete with character stats, an inventory, and choose-your-next-response interactive conversations – y'know, like the ones in old LucasArts adventures. The bulk of the action takes place in a 3D, third-person, *Tomb Raider*-meets-*Resident Evil*-meets-*Blade Runner* environment, with your character (whoever you happen

"It's a surprisingly old-skool adventure game, complete with character stats, an inventory, and choose-your-next-response interactive conversations"

SOUL

THE FIGHTING BITS

Every now and again, usually at a pivotal point in the narrative, an enemy pops up and the game temporarily transforms into a beat 'em up. First things first: *Tekken* this ain't. There's a full complement of 'special moves', and you can improve your character's skills – and learn more moves – by fighting against a trainer or defeating a large number of opponents, but it's hard to imagine a bunch of surly and threatening teenage boys crowding round *this* in an arcade. Having said that, *The Nomad Soul*'s fighting sequences are at least competent, something which can't be said for most of the full-price beat 'em ups to have appeared on the PC.

While we're on the subject, if there are any decent developers reading this, could someone *please* write a fighting game with visuals and controls on a par with *Tekken 3*, but with LAN and Internet play options bunged in on top? Please? Huh? *Please?*

A fight, yesterday. You get more special moves as your skill increases.

THE SHOOTING BITS

To further underline its intention to be all things to everyone, *The Nomad Soul* tries to encroach on *Quake* territory by turning into a 3D shooter every now and then. Now, if Eidos were to remove these bits, staple them together, then release the lot as a standalone game, we'd probably give it a rating of 30% and use lots of unpleasant words. As a collection of action-oriented interludes in a whopping great adventure game, however, they serve their purpose... just. An early sequence in which you take control of an *ED-209*-style police bot is an effective diversion, but sometimes other stages are simply an annoyance (a particularly infuriating rooftop level being a case in point). Bottom line: they're not necessary, just a bit of showing-off that's misfired slightly.

Bowie auditions for a role in the *King & I*.

Look! Amputee porn! What will they think of next?

"Arrrrgh! Make it go away! It's horrible! And I don't like it!"

No idea what those two do for a living. Probably in marketing.

Whatever you do, don't step on the grey squares.

This season girls, if there's one key look on the catwalk it's horned hats.

Look, see? A spot of *Tomb Raider*-style jumping action.

Yikes, even Arnie's cloned himself into this game.

Hope her driving's better than her aim. Unlikely, eh?

Hmm, we're about to suffer a bout of tunnel vision.

FEMALE OBJECTIFICATION MASTERCLASS: LESSON 7,999

If you get aroused by this, there's something wrong with you. *It isn't real.*

Was *The Nomad Soul* code written by a roomful of men with above average testosterone levels? Just wondering, because it looks a bit like it was. Okay, so the development team is French, and we all know that *anything* French automatically qualifies as 'erotica' (if you're watching anything, anything at all, even a documentary on coathangers, and it's *French*, there'll be a shot of some naked tits in it at one point) – but really, *The Nomad Soul* is the most gratuitously sexist game we've seen this side of *Leisure Suit Larry's Unfunny Sex Fantasy IV*. Aside from apparently endless encounters with lap-dancers, strippers and sex-shop assistants, the designers seem to have bent over backwards to lob a bit of titillation in as often as possible. There are endless forays into lap-dancing clubs and sex shops. Every woman you meet is apparently there to be gawped at in the most blatantly predatory manner possible. You even get to screw someone else's girlfriend in the first five minutes of play – *for no reason at all.*

Without wanting to sound prudish, it's just a bit unnecessary. If we want to see porn and naked ladies on our PCs, we'll get on the Internet and search for "bosoms" like everybody else. So there.

to 'be') scampering around the futuristic city of Omikron in search of clues, conversation, cut-scenes, and the odd splash of action. Remember *Bioforge*? It's a bit – a *bit* – like that.

Unlike, say, *Outcast* (another recent 3D adventure with a gigantic playing area), *The Nomad Soul* doesn't hit you over the head with confusing references to this strange new world you're running about in, and instead works you in gradually, by giving you a strong, intriguing task to complete: finding out more about the policeman you've 'taken over' and discovering why he and his partner died. But there's more to it than that: you might start out as a cop, but before long you'll find yourself questioning the sanctity of your adopted profession. Your uniformed colleagues are shifty and sleazy, and the chief of police is openly sinister. And someone in the department is trying to get you killed. Worst of all, the general populace outside the precinct is miserable and oppressed, with much talk of government-approved thought control and a hunt for a band of dissidents.

WE CAN BE HEROES, JUST FOR ONE DAY

Once you've solved the 'mystery of the murdered partner' – and it's by no means an easy task – the game's scope suddenly expands beyond expectations, turning what started out as an apparently routine police quest into an epic, pan-dimensional struggle of good versus evil. Coo.

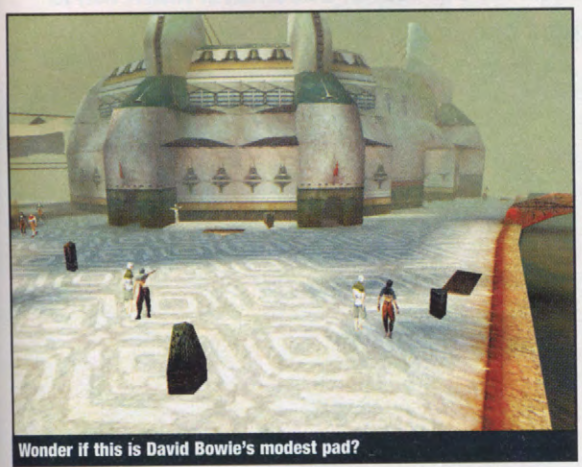
Despite *The Nomad Soul*'s apparent free-form, I-can-go-anywhere structure, the underlying story is rigidly linear, skilfully bumping you from one scenario to the next, lobbing a tricky problem in every so often. Annoyingly, a few of the puzzles themselves suffer from the dreaded 'adventure logic' that you only ever encounter in computer games, so it's sometimes hard to work out exactly what you're supposed to be doing... but then that's adventures for you.

More worryingly, progress can sometimes grind to a halt completely because you've failed to discover an essential object – an easy mistake to make in an environment of this size, especially when (as happens here) the game expects you to be standing practically on top of things in order to be able to activate or grab them. Our advice: pay close attention to each and every location, and fiddle with everything you see. Be nosey.

As for the city itself, it's impressively realised – huge urban areas to explore, hundreds of polygonal citizens wandering hither and thither, thousands of objects to pick up and tinker with – although most of the stuff on show doesn't actually *do* anything (the huge number of pedestrians being a case in point – yes, you can go up and speak to them, but only when they're standing still, and even then there's a sorely limited range of responses). But it's more than mere window-dressing; it adds to

Here's one of the people you can 'be' – a lithe female cat-burglar.

"*The Nomad Soul* displays a psychotic level of ambition by also trying to be a *Virtua Fighter*-style combat game, a *Quake*-style shooter... *and* a 3D platform game"



Wonder if this is David Bowie's modest pad?

the atmosphere, makes your environment that more convincing. There's no doubting the developer's technical achievements – they've created a seriously comprehensive alternate universe here, and they've made it *work* – an incredibly difficult trick to pull off.

It's not all adventures and problem-solving, though. *The Nomad Soul* displays a downright psychotic level of ambition by also trying to be a *Virtua Fighter*-style combat game *and* a *Quake*-style shooter... *and* a 3D platform game. Can it possibly pull it off? Of course it can't. But it doesn't exactly fail, either. See the accompanying panels for further discussion on the shooting and fighting elements – as for the platforming bits, they're clearly inspired by *Tomb Raider*, and they're fairly basic, really – just the odd bit of climbing here, and jumping there. It's a bit disjointed really – most of the time you can't climb walls, for instance, until suddenly you'll arrive at one section where you *can* – and indeed have to, in order to get any further in the game whatsoever.

Still, these 'action' sequences are sparingly used – for the most part it's effective interactive storytelling, plain and simple.

UNDER THE MOONLIGHT, THE SERIOUS MOONLIGHT

So what else do you need to know? Well, for one thing, don't get too excited by the whole 'virtual reincarnation' thing – it's fun changing bodies now and again, but it doesn't make that much difference to the overall feel of the game (for example, on several occasions bartenders still referred to me as 'dude' even though I'd been transformed into a woman). Furthermore, you can't just 'teleport' inside *anybody*, only a select few characters. Oh, and according to Eidos' press release, "You simply cannot load an old game if you die, and must continue the adventure within a new body", which is cobblers, because you can.

The adventure itself is huge and compelling, and as for the fighting and shooting bits – they're not really all that great, but it's nice to have them there. But it's the size, the sense of other-worldliness and the sheer amount of variety that are *The Nomad Soul*'s greatest achievements, and that's why it's ultimately worth paying money for. "It's a flawed epic," you might conclude. And you'd be right. PM

ALSO CONSIDER

BIOFORGE Very old 3D action-adventure thingamybob which rocked big bells a few years back. The promised sequel never arrived. No longer available but well worth tracking down second-hand.
PCZ #25, 95%

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 2 (Electronic Arts, £19.99) Another example of a sprawling French action-adventure game – although *LBA2* is quirkier, more focused and has absolutely no David Bowie in it at all.
PCZ #33, 93%

OUTCAST (Infogrames, £34.99) Okay, okaaaay, so we didn't like it, but loads of you did. Similarly ambitious, but too talky and pretentious for its own good.
PCZ #70, 62%

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Huge, intricate world • Engrossing storyline • Fighting, shooting *and* adventuring • Great visuals and sound • David Bowie

DOWNERS Pretentious and bloated • Shooting stages can be annoying • David Bowie • Outrageous sexism

87 Immense, engrossing but also pretentious and over-ambitious

WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO LAP-DANCE FOR YOU?

"Ashes to ashes..."

"...funk to funky..."

"...see me dance like..."

"...a funky monkey..."

If you were a multi-million-selling rock star about to appear in a computer game, you'd want to at least look *cool* in it, wouldn't you? Well unfortunately for David Bowie, the designers clearly decided the best way to make him look cool was to dress him in a futuristic thong-and-codpiece ensemble, make him dance in a bizarre, damaged-marionette fashion, and set his inaugural performance in a sleazy bar in Omikron's red light district. Result? David Bowie, one of the world's most respected musicians, re-enacting the stomach-churning, 'lap-dancing' dream sequences from *I'm Alan Partridge*. Don't believe us? Check out these 'concert photos'...

THERE'S A STARMAN WAITING IN THE GAME...

David Bowie is probably a very nice man. He's also a highly successful artist responsible for some of the most memorable and influential moments in pop history.

That's the disclaimer done. Now, let's face it, David Bowie's been rubbish ever since he tried to relaunch himself by forming an unlistenable industrial rock group, Tin Machine, in 1988. Once that 'project' had gone tits-up in 1992 (hardly surprising, since listening to one of their albums was as much fun as seriously hurting yourself with a pair of pliers), Bowie went bonkers, bringing out first a dance album, then a dark concept album, then a drum 'n' bass album – the overall impression being one of a confused artist grabbing hold of passing bandwagons with the fevered desperation of a drowning man clutching at bits of driftwood. Over the last year he's launched his own ISP (BowieNet), released an album on ver Internet, and – hey! – appeared in a computer game. This one.

Now, as far as Eidos are concerned, Bowie's involvement in the game is clearly A Good Thing. Not because it'll make people rush out and buy it (it won't), but because it's already generated lots of column inches in the mainstream press for a game which would be ignored outside spod journals such as the one you're reading now.

So what does Unky Dave actually *do* in the game? Well, he plays a character called Boz – one slip of the alphabet away from Bod (which would've been *awesome)* – and he has several cameos. In the game, he's the lead singer with a band called The Dreamers, who can often be found performing in seedy bars. Pick up a flyer, go to the venue listed, and bingo – you get to watch a polygonal concert-in-miniature, as Bowie and co bash out one of the eight songs he's written for the game.

Thing is, you don't have any *choice* but to watch – you can't skip the songs, which is a shame since they're largely forgettable dirges. Still, you can always entertain yourself by watching Dave's ridiculous dancing.

Oh, and whisper it quietly, but one of the tracks is... *shhh*... is actually *quite good.*

TOMB RAI
THE LAST REVE

£34.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out late November

The lovely Lara Croft is back for her fourth adventure. *Mark Hill* is the man with the gratuitous one-liners

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM PROCESSOR P266 **MEMORY** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** More memory and a 3D card to get those curves right

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

Unless you're a big Lara fan, the kind that buys the special edition Lucozades, beer mats, watches, beach towels and other endless merchandise, the kind that trembles with uncontained anticipation over every new release and would happily play the first three from dusk till dawn, you have by now stifled a yawn and thought to yourself: "A new *Tomb Raider*? Well big friggin' deal." You see, besides being a huge seller starring one of the most marketable characters in popular culture, the series has earned itself a reputation for rehashing its original success and not adding anything new bar a couple of wetsuits and vehicles here and there. The consensus is that, while the first game was an innovative masterpiece of its time, the series has stood still, oblivious to the exciting new developments going on around it.

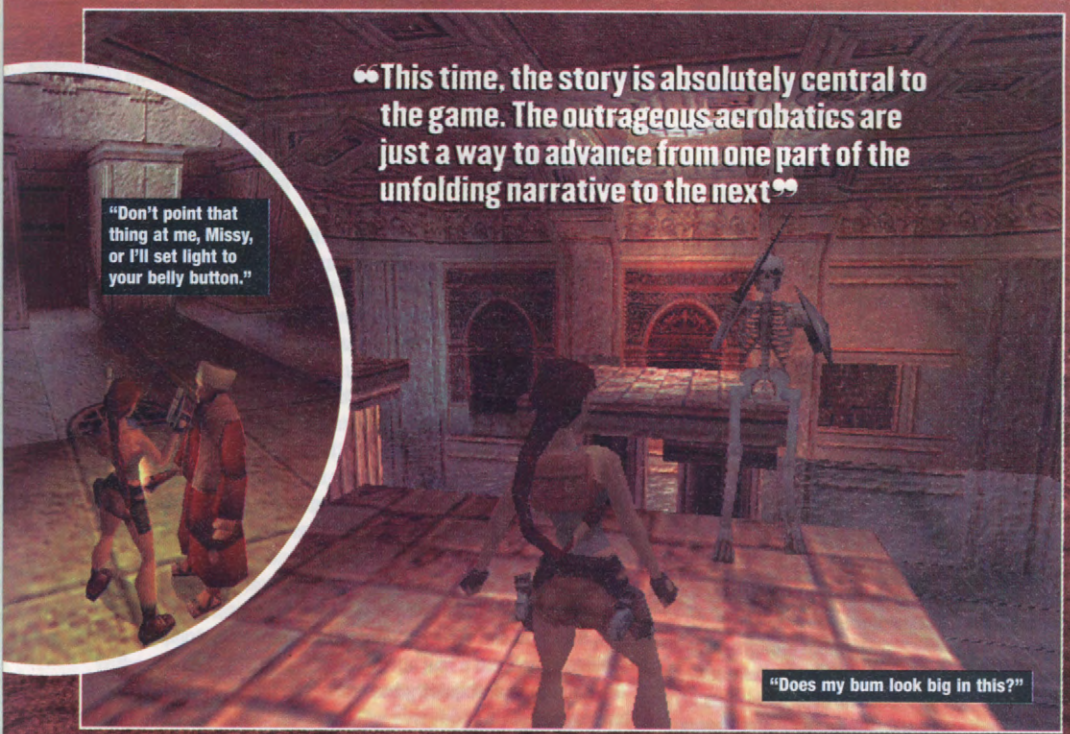
Well, butter my buttocks and eat me for breakfast if Lara hasn't got tired of staring at her own arse, taken a long hard look at where games are heading, straightened her boobs and said: "I can do that." For once there *have* been some major changes. And nobody could be more surprised than us. So put your scepticism to one side and we'll tell you all about it.

"WE'RE GOING BACK TO OUR ROOTS, MAN"

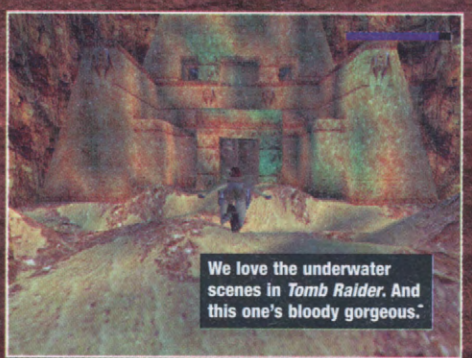
The Last Revelation is being sold as a "getting back to roots" for the series, a recreation of the feel people had playing the first game. Before you start whinging about how all they've been doing so far is recreating *Tomb Raider I* anyway, let us say that *TLR* is most definitely a step forward. Not a gigantic unholstering-pistols-midair-and-shooting-every-other-game-in-the-head double somersault forward, but a move in the right direction, nevertheless.

In a recent Supertest, we mentioned that the way for the series to progress was to "take it down the *Half-Life* route. Not go first-person, but use the engine and the dynamics more. More NPCs that are interesting to talk to. More story elements". And, to a certain extent, that is exactly what Core have done.

Traditionally, the plot has been an excuse for Lara to travel halfway round the globe, kill some endangered species and hang on



Not content with teaching us about Egyptian culture, this puzzle is all about astronomy.


We love the underwater scenes in *Tomb Raider*. And this one's bloody gorgeous.

DER: LATION

The Greek god Poseidon makes a brief appearance in Alexandria. He clearly has his own fantasies about what he'd like to do with Lara.

to some ledges.

This time, the story is absolutely central to the game. For once, the outrageous acrobatics are just a way to advance from one part of the unfolding narrative to the next and, as a result, it is less a collection of independent levels and more a continuously flowing tale. You could say that Lara has moved on from commercials to full-length films.

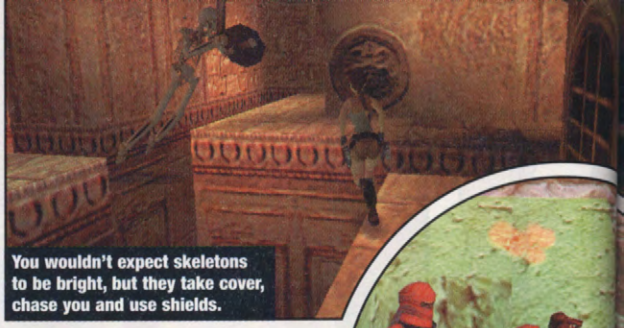
RAIDERS OF THE LOST TOMB

The comparison to movies isn't gratuitous. If it hasn't already gone unnoticed how *Tomb Raider* has sipped from the *Indiana Jones*' stream of inspiration, this time it sinks its teeth in and sucks the very life out of the unshaven, whip-toting big screen adventurer. Consider the following storyline: The action begins in a 1984 flashback in Cambodia, where a young Lara Croft is being taught the adventuring trade by eminent Austrian archaeologist Werner Von Croy. At the end of this training level you're forced to flee for your life, leaving Von Croy for dead. Cut to the present day, swapping Asian jungle for Egyptian desert and flat chest for pyramidal voluptuosity. Lara, hired by an unknown source and helped by a guide, searches for a tomb, takes an amulet and unwittingly releases the spirit of the evil Egyptian god Seth. It transpires that Von Croy didn't die, that he's intent on getting the amulet and, to top it all, hates Lara's flat and muscular guts for what happened all those years ago.

She learns from another archaeologist, the fat and friendly Jean-Yves, how she can banish Seth from this world and sets out on a quest through Egypt, fighting Von Croy's minions and Seth's dark forces.

The flabbergasting thing is that this isn't the point where you start playing the game, it isn't a background that's been explained to you through a painstakingly long FMV. *You* have lived through the flashback and trained with

This crocodile personifies thousands of teenagers' fantasies the world over.



You wouldn't expect skeletons to be bright, but they take cover, chase you and use shields.

Enemies will gang up on you if you let them. So don't.

At least this time you don't have to kill as many animals, like beautiful Bengal tigers and cute monkeys.

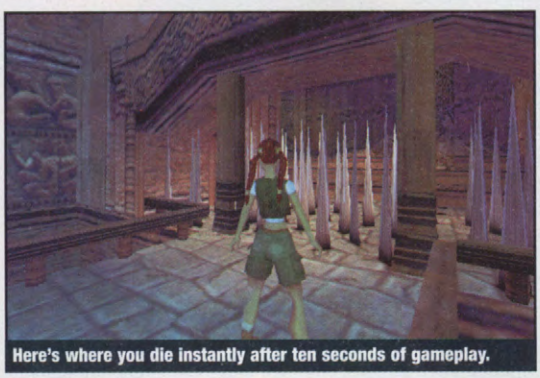
SWEET LITTLE SIXTEEN

Girl, you'll be a woman soon... In the meantime, everyone grins inanely

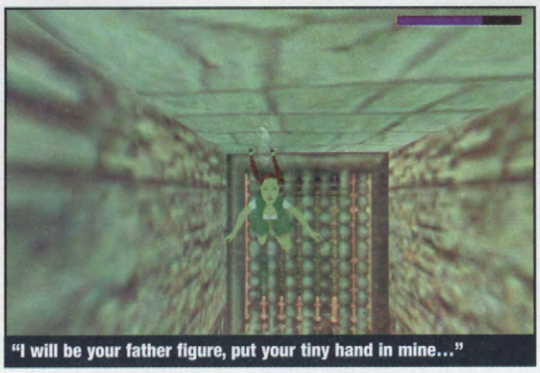
With no boring mansion, no aseptic gym and no horny octogenarian butler, *The Last Revelation*'s training level is an integral part of the game. Set in Cambodia, Lara is guided by Von Croy, who teaches you all the moves (including new ones like shimmying round corners and swinging from ropes). A 16-year-old Lara must then prove her worth by beating him in a race through an ancient obstacle course. A timer gives the more competitive among you the chance to brag to friends about how fast you made it to the end.

More interestingly, though, apart from the obvious kinkiness of seeing the artificial sex icon as a young girl, we learn about Lara's background and history, adding a surprising depth to such a two-dimensional character (in terms of personality). Not to mention setting up the story extremely well.

A little maths tells us that if Lara was 16 in 1984, she must be 31 by now, which is almost old enough to be the mother of some of her greatest fans. The Freudian possibilities are startling. And we intend to explore them soon.



Here's where you die instantly after ten seconds of gameplay.



"I will be your father figure, put your tiny hand in mine..."

Von Croy. *You* have found your way into Seth's tomb and foolishly freed him, *you* have spoken to Jean-Yves and solved some basic puzzles on his advice. It's like playing through your very own Indiana Jones flick. Mythical objects, supernatural happenings, puzzles involving ancient texts, artefacts and tricks of light, Tuareg enemies, they're all eerily familiar and enjoyable. All that's missing are the fat Nazis and snogging a beautiful but squeamish blonde (now *that*'s a *Tomb Raider* game people *would* pay good money for.)

CLEVER DICKS

Let's not get carried away. This is still a *Tomb Raider* title, it's still a platform game at heart and it isn't about to revolutionise the industry. But we'll discuss its shortcomings later, right after we've pointed our stubby little fingers at all the things that made us go: "Cor, golly and bleedin' hell!" (Which doesn't mean Lara "reveals" anything in *The Last Revelation* not seen outside unauthorised over-18s' websites).

As you'd expect, the lady in khaki shorts has been given yet another facelift and general make-over, and so have the settings and the enemies. The latter fall into three categories: animals (scorpions, crocodiles), humans (turban-masked henchmen, SAS soldiers) and supernatural beings (skeletons, animated statues, Egyptian gods). All have been given such an AI boost, they'll be challenging you to a game of chess with one hand and beating you over the head with a large stick with the other.

The skeletons take cover if you start shooting at them from above, crocodiles chase you in and out of the water, armed soldiers shoot you from a distance, then unsheathe their swords and get closer. What's more, they can monkey swing, somersault and generally do anything you do, so there's no escaping them. The clever bit, though, is how you can manipulate some of the enemies to your advantage. You have to entice the indestructible Sphinx to smash through doors you otherwise can't open, use the no-brain undead templars to the same effect, and even set up creatures that have a dislike for each other to cancel one another out (like the fire and ice wraiths).

Put your hand in a crack or shatter a vase hoping to find something useful and you could end up with a screen full of beetles. We're talking thousands of the disgusting little buggers, moving in a wave of crawling black legs and fluttering antennas, intent on smothering you unless you have a burning torch handy. Get stung by a scorpion and the screen undulates, making jumping around difficult and mildly nauseating.

"The game has an incredibly cinematic feel ...But you don't feel personally involved"

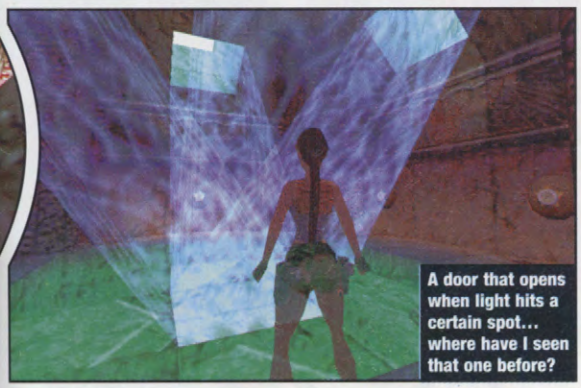
I SPHINX, THEREFORE I AM

There is a much stronger puzzle element in *The Last Revelation* than ever before, to the point where a couple of levels almost play like a 3D adventure. You have to read scrolls, figure out riddles and solve genuinely abstract problems, not just get the green key from over there and stick it in the green door over here, but the kind of thing you're more likely to find in a puzzle book or, damn it, the much missed point-and-click adventures. The problem here is that, while there is more interaction with other characters than ever before, there's not nearly enough. You meet people who send you in the right direction, but you don't actively interact with them. The puzzles themselves are easy enough and amply hinted at, so the average punter will be able to crack them without making their brains hurt too much, but those wanting more of a challenge should remind themselves that they're lucky to get any sort of mental contest at all. At least there is some imagination at work. Where else would you get the chance to play an ancient Egyptian board game against a god on a board the size of a room?

The new inventory system casts another twist in favour of the more complex, thoughtful approach to leaping from one platform to another. Most of the items and weapons you collect now have a Combine option – so, for example, you can stick the lasersight to your revolver for some sniping,

Use the lasersight to shatter its shield into tiny pieces.

Why go for the shield when there's a perfectly good cranium for you to pulverise?


A door that opens when light hits a certain spot... where have I seen that one before?

This ugly god thinks nothing of unleashing a plague of locusts on you.

the flashlight to your binoculars for peeking into dark recesses of the tombs or try mixing objects to solve puzzles. Some weapons have different types of ammo, and you need to figure out which to use in every given situation.

Sniping works both ways, once the Egyptian army gets involved, adding an element of stealth to the action as you move in the shadows, picking off snipers hidden in alcoves. And if that isn't enough, you can use a crossbow in first-person mode.

TOMB-LIFE

Which brings us back to that Supertest comment about taking things down the *Half-Life* route. There are plenty of scripted moments that carry the action through, like when the camera swings away from you to focus on an oncoming jeep full of none-too-neighbourly soldiers or an enormous snake-like monster coming out of the ground to vomit a plague of locusts on you. Or how you walk into a room just in time to witness a guard being taken into the jaws of a six-foot scorpion, which you have to kill without harming the guy in order to get a key. And the influence of action-packed films doesn't stop at *Indy*. You'll probably notice *Stargate*, *The Fifth Element*, *The Mummy*, *James Bond* and Disney's *Aladdin* creeping in at the back of your mind. There's even a small recreation of the warehouse in *Reservoir Dogs*, complete with moribund cop (well, SAS soldier actually).

The FMVs, camera angles, the quickfire cut-scenes, scripted elements, the way friendly characters and enemies act and the familiar archaeological puzzle-solving all give the game an incredibly cinematic feel. But, of course, that's the problem: it's a film you're watching, not acting in. A film you participate in, but which stars mega celebrity Lara Croft. You don't feel personally involved and you're not the main character. In spite of all the efforts to give Lara a history, we've all seen her die so many times, so matter-of-factly, that her fate isn't all that important to us.

WHAT ARE THE SCORES, LARA JONES?

Like we've already said, despite all the improvements, *The Last Revelation* is still a platform game. You may not die as annoyingly often as in the past few efforts, but it's still a case of move Lara over here, hop to that ledge up there and backflip into an underground stream. There's a lot more to it than that, but you can't escape the essence of the game. It is still constrained by the limitations of having to develop a PlayStation game alongside a PC one (even if the PC version looks much better, has bump mapping, more cockroaches and a couple of extra features).

When you're used to the freedom of playing action games with a mouse, having to resort to a gamepad or keyboard feels incredibly limiting. Besides, Core can only go so far before having to bow to the pressures of the mass market and avoiding many drastic changes.

So, if *The Last Revelation* is the best title in the series, why does it get the lowest score?

The original *Tomb Raider* was ground-breaking enough to warrant a massive Classic score, but I would argue that, in retrospect, neither *TRII* nor *III* deserve that status. It's not that they're bad games, it's just that they don't provide the amazing experience a Classic award warrants. And, frankly, neither does *The Last Revelation*. It would have to go far beyond a platform adventure and become something that defied categories; it would have to draw us into the story to the point where we'd forget we were playing a game. By its very nature, *Tomb Raider* can't do either of those things. If you enjoyed any of the other titles, *The Last Revelation* will blow your socks clean off. Just don't expect any miraculous changes if you never liked it in the first place. PCZ

ALSO CONSIDER

TOMB RAIDER I (Eidos Interactive, £9.99) These are the roots *TLR* is getting back to. It's got blocky graphics and lots of running around lost, but it still beats both sequels hands down. *PCZ #45, 95%*

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D (Mindscape, £34.99) The classic PC platformer gets the 3D treatment, which means it falls flat on its face from a variety of angles. Had the potential to beat Lara at her own game. But it hasn't.
SEE REVIEW ON PAGE 91

DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME (GT Interactive, £34.99) A very interesting idea that doesn't quite come off but is still fun. Not only do you get to control a gorgeous polygonal count, you can fight with swords, axes, magic and even ride a dragon. *PCZ #82, 79%*

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Camera angles don't get in the way • Not nearly as much dying • The engine is 90% new • More adventure elements than ever before

DOWNERS It's still a platform game • Not enough interaction with other characters • Lara appeal wearing thin

85 *Indy 3D* will have to be one hell of a game to beat this

NO WAY TO TREAT A LADY

This is just a small selection of Lara's foes. Who are only slightly more interesting than Lara's toes

SKELETONS

These bony fellas are equipped with a sword and a shield. A well-aimed shot to the head soon sees them off.

MUMMIES

You can't have a proper adventure in Egypt without them. They're slow, but they'll keep getting up, no matter how many times you shoot them.

TEMPLARS

These crusaders are as fanatical in their dead form as they were in real life, if a little slower. They don't half swing a mean sword.

SCORPIONS

There are plenty of the small ones and a few of these man-sized ones, too. As you can imagine, you don't want that stinger sticking into you.

SPHINXES

Indestructible and very tough, these bull-like creatures are ideal for smashing through doors.

TUAREGS

Once they've run out of ammo, they turn from cowboys to ninjas. A deadly combination.

TROOPER

These guys not only show their faces, they carry machine guns. Nasty.

SAS SOLDIER

Highly trained soldiers who like nothing better than to snipe Lara's pretty face off.

NHL 2000

£34.99 • EA Sports • Out now

The ice man cometh. *Steve Hill* dons his padding and gets ready to wield a big stick

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P200 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P333 with Voodoo2 gives you maximum detail

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Although inexplicably popular in such bleak northern outposts as Durham and Crewe, ice hockey has generally struggled to capture the imagination of the sporting public in this country. This comes as no surprise. As a rule of thumb, any sport that utilises an expanse of water in any of its compound forms is usually a waste of time and effort. Okay, so it's not a universal truth, but it does at least provide the seeds of a theory. Frozen water is in abundance here, and if ice hockey is your bag, *NHL 2000* should rock your world. The series is without doubt the definitive representation of the sport, and this millennial version maintains the impeccably high standards.

In these 3D accelerated times it's easy to be blasé about graphics, but *NHL 2000* really does look the business, from the reflections in the ice to the faces of the players, who can clearly be seen laughing, spitting, throwing tantrums and mouthing obscenities. Unlike EA's football games, the NHL licence enables player likenesses to be used, and their faces have been faithfully recreated, as was the case in their NBA basketball game. Clearly, we wouldn't recognise an ice hockey player if he walked in here and started putting monitors with his stick, but they seem to have made a reasonable effort and photographs of the actual players are included as a reference point. One of the main human aspects that computers can't yet accurately reproduce is hair, a hazard conveniently sidestepped by the fact that ice hockey players permanently don helmets. Basically, they look great and we only hope the same technique will one day be incorporated into a *FIFA* game. The visual splendour doesn't end there – and it is a testament to the quality of the graphics that replays and cut-scenes are actually a joy to watch, featuring some emphatic attention to detail.

The one-legged Olympics reaches its climax.

RINKY-DINK-DINK

The action is where it's at though, and it's excellent stuff, opting for straight simulation over cartoon gimmickry. No flaming pucks or bricked-up nets here, just solid gameplay and thumb-numbing thrills. To the uninitiated, the sport of ice hockey would appear to involve grown men on skates knocking the shit out of each other and occasionally flicking a biscuit past the mad bloke out of *Friday The 13th*. Admittedly, this is pretty much the case, although – perhaps surprisingly – there are a number of rules that must be adhered to. Naturally, no right-minded person has any idea as to what they are, nor any interest whatsoever in learning them. Having shelled out 35 quid for a game, the last thing you want to be doing is clarifying the intricacies of the offside law.

This is where *NHL 2000*'s arcade mode comes in to play, offering entry level for the ice hockey virgin. Further help is provided by a comprehensive glossary of ice hockey terms, and it really does lead you by the hand, while of course offering hardcore options for those who know what they're doing, ie Americans. It really is easy to get to grips with, and within minutes it's possible to be pirouetting like Torville or Dean and hitting a small disc with a big stick in a fairly convincing fashion. The control system is manageable enough and the manoeuvrability of the players is spot-on, conveying a real sense of momentum. A rudimentary pass and shoot game can be employed almost immediately, with further tricks mastered in time, including a speed burst, skating backwards, and throwing a dummy, or 'deke' in ice hockey parlance. Tackling, as such, involves barging into the man on the puck, and if done properly you can actually put him through the glass, which shatters convincingly. Other dirty tricks involve hooking and elbowing, and essentially it's a question of what you can get away with

"Keepers!"

ALSO CONSIDER

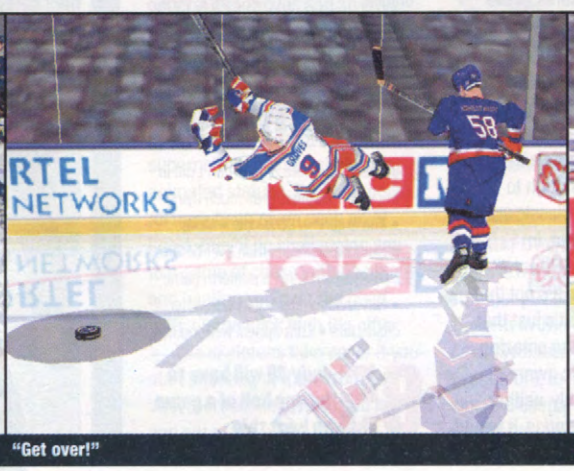
ACTUA ICE HOCKEY 2 (Gremlin Interactive, £39.99) This homespun effort tries its best but doesn't come near the majesty of *NHL*.

PCZ #78, 70%

NHL POWERPLAY 98 (Virgin, £9.99) Unofficial and unmemorable stab at the genre. We wouldn't bother, neither should you.

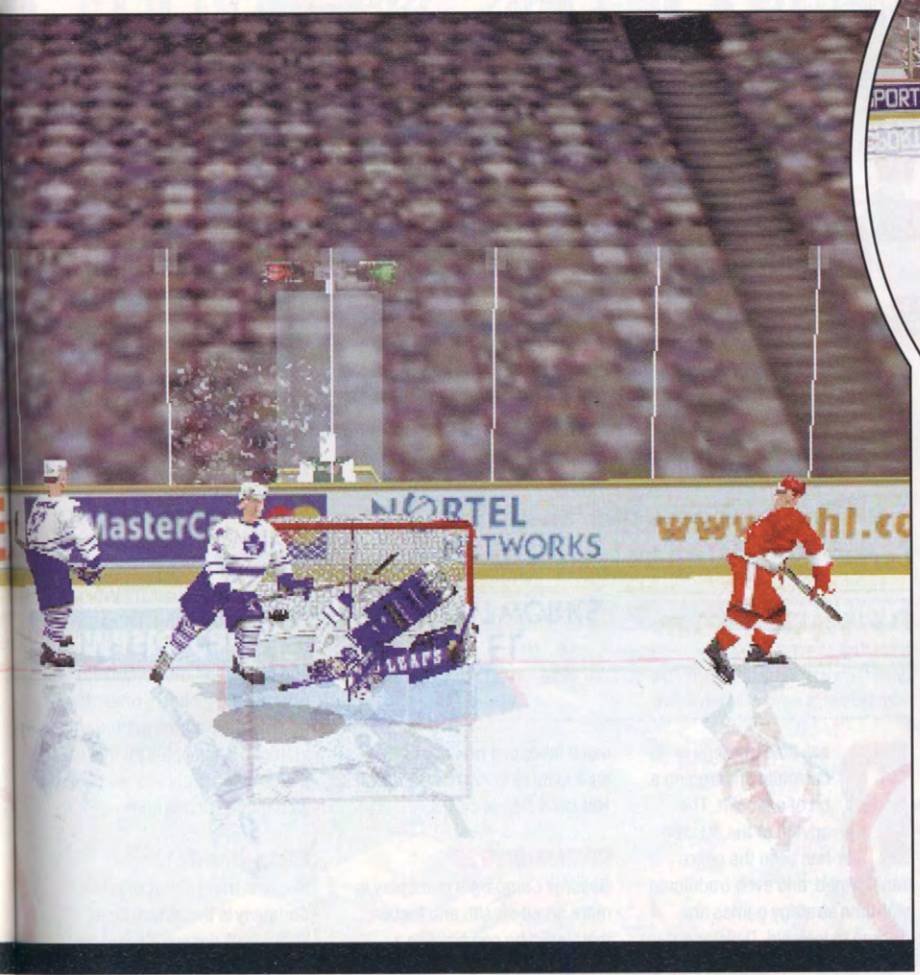
PCZ #66, 82%

That's a deke, or dummy in plain English.



"Get over!"

Check out the spray from the ice. Now that's detail.



Someone annoying you? No sweat – whack him with your shoulder.

FIGHT NIGHT

There are few finer sights than grown men of limited intelligence punching each other hard in the face with their fists, particularly in the name of sport. Violent skirmishes are commonplace in ice hockey, hence the old gag about "I went to a fight and an ice hockey game broke out". This is something that's reflected in *NHL 2000* and when a player snaps, the game briefly transforms into a rudimentary beat 'em up. The joypad can be used to trade blows until one player falls to the ice in a bloodied, dazed state, whereby they are both ordered to the sin bin. Of course, it's all been done before, but it's still highly amusing.

without being consigned to the sin bin.

PURCHASE

As for shooting, no pun intended, but it's often a hit and miss affair. Due to the small target, the aiming is minimal and it usually comes down to trying either a little flick, a slapshot, a cheeky one-two, or giving it some purchase with a power shot. Whether the puck goes in or not probably depends on the relative qualities of the striker and the keeper, combined with a large dose of randomness. Ultimately, like many sports, it comes down to percentages: the more shots attempted, the more goals scored. Obviously, when you do score, it's easy to convince yourself that it was as a result of your consummate skill, although a random flurry of button-pressing can occasionally yield the same result.

As we've come to expect from EA Sports, the presentation is immaculate throughout, with a seamless commentary giving it the full American sports flavour. A host of options are available, the game offering exhibitions, tournaments, play-offs or entire seasons, not to mention a vast amount of statistical tomfoolery.

"The presentation is immaculate, with a seamless commentary giving it the full American sports flavour"

EA Sports might let the occasional ropey football game slip through the net, but when it comes to American sports they generally know their onions.

Whether you're an ice hockey aficionado or not, this is clearly a winner. We can't keep giving it a higher score every year, but rest assured that *NHL 2000* is The Greatest Of All Time. PZ

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Superb graphics • Total authenticity • No knowledge required

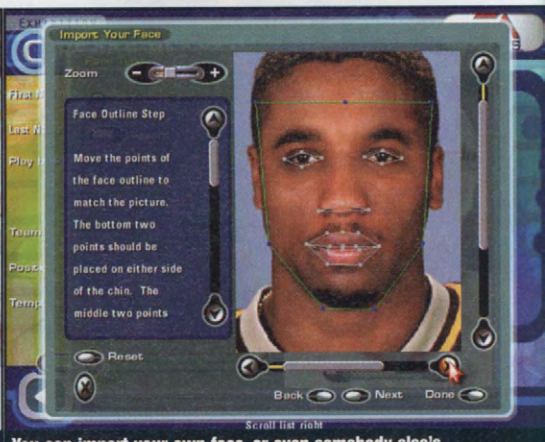
DOWNERS Occasionally gets congested • Bewildering statistics • It's not football

87 Nice ice baby

Ice hockey is by no means a non-contact sport.

A comprehensive replay mode lets you show off.

The puck is distinguished by a shadow, which can be switched off.

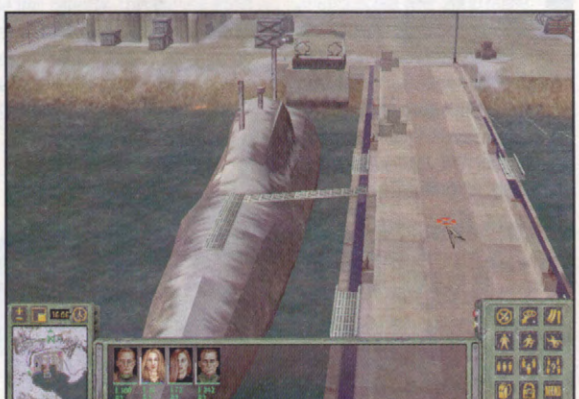


You can import your own face, or even somebody else's.

SHADOW COMPANY: LEFT FOR DEAD

★ £34.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

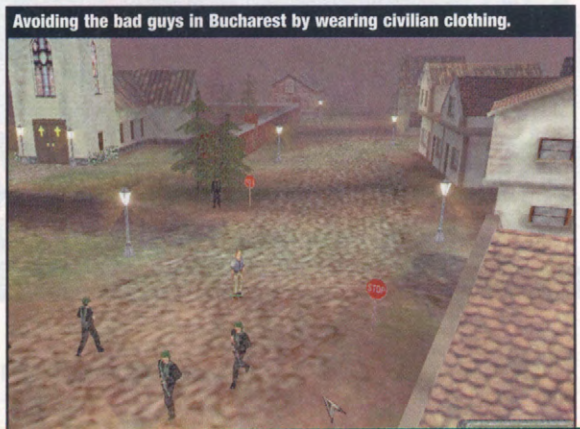
Acquiring a tank does add to the fun, but acquiring two...



All aboard! Oh, doesn't seem to be anyone around...

His Mum'll never forgive me.

Planning can take hours.



Avoiding the bad guys in Bucharest by wearing civilian clothing.

***Paul Mallinson* calls this 'Shadder' Company, but then he is from Doncaster**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P233 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards and 3D cards **WE SAY** Runs like a dog on the minimum spec – get yourself more memory to improve the way it plays

Real-time strategy is currently undergoing a bit of a facelift. The advent of the 3D card has seen the genre transformed, and even traditional real-time strategy games are starting to look old. Developers are ditching dull, flat bitmaps in favour of virtual 3D worlds, and – for most people at least – this seems like the obvious way to go. Eidos' *Warzone 2100* (*PCZ* #75, 90%) has already set a standard for the trend, and now *Shadow Company*, from Ubi Soft, arrives to (you would hope) follow suit.

Commanding a small group of multi-talented mercenaries over a large, wonderfully rendered 3D landscape, the basic aim of the game is to sneak into various enemy locations, complete numerous military objectives while at the same time losing as few of your team as possible. Before every mission there's a thorough briefing and a chance to hire and fire, as well as the usual laborious process of equipping (à la *Abomination* and *Hidden & Dangerous*).

COMMANDOS 3D

Shadow Company's gameplay is more about stealth and tactics than gung-ho combat – in a way like a three-dimensional *Commandos* (*PCZ* #66, 87%) – and is just as hard as Eidos' chart-topper. The first mission begins with three of your men trapped behind enemy lines in Angola, dazed and confused after a particularly nasty ambush and extremely low on resources. Using a combination of mouse and keys the idea is to sneak into an enemy camp, slit the throats of the guards and nick their weapons before moving on to take out a nearby SAM site. Job done, it's back to base to check the bank balance (remember: you're a mercenary so you get paid for killing people), re-equip and hire some more muscle for the next mission.

"With a half-decent 3D card the fogging and lighting effects are jaw-droppingly good"

If that sounds easy, it's because it is. Subsequent missions, though, are as hard as nails and replaying missions due to cack-handedness (or bugs) sometimes becomes tiresome. The game gets more involving as you progress – vehicles come into play quite early on and you soon discover that it's a lot of fun churning up an enemy base with a tank, despite the fact that the view often goes completely whappy when you try to track whatever you're driving. The AI – often the yardstick by which all RTS games are measured – is good in places (such as the enemy soldiers that can be seen dragging their dead and injured off the battlefield), but poor overall (soldiers often don't react to their mates getting shot in front of them, plus all the usual path-finding problems associated with games of this sort).

FALLS SHORT

The best thing about *Shadow Company* is the atmosphere. With a half-decent 3D card the fogging and lighting effects are jaw-droppingly good: shadows fall correctly, water ripples convincingly, and smoke and fire are a joy to behold. The sound effects are excellent too.

It seems a pity, then, that *Shadow Company* falls short of the classic we were hoping for. Silly bugs (like the cursor going out of calibration mid-mission, or the stubborn Equip screen that makes kitting out your men more difficult than it should be, plus the ones already mentioned) ruin what potentially could have been a superb RTS game. Patches will probably appear at some point in the near future and they will undoubtedly result in a game worth recommending, but as *Shadow Company* stands at the moment, it's too unforgiving and unrewarding an experience to appeal to everyone bar RTS gaming masochists. PCZ

ALSO CONSIDER

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS (Talonsoft, £34.99) Okay, so this was bugged when it came out as well, but it's such a good game that it didn't phase us at all. *PCZ* #79, 91%

C&C: TIBERIAN SUN (Electronic Arts, £34.99) Real-time strategy games don't have to be 3D to be any good, as Westwood's latest shows. *PCZ* #81, 90%

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Great graphics/atmosphere • Varied missions • Tense gameplay

DOWNERS Bugs • Very hard • Camera often has a mind of its own

77 Unforgivably unforgiving

PHARAOH

2,000 years in development

From 2900BC to 700BC the Ancient Kingdom of Egypt grew to become the most powerful civilisation the world had ever known. For 2,000 years a series of living Gods - the Pharaohs - governed this fertile land creating monuments to their greater glory and founding ruling dynasties that established their total control. Pharaoh, from the makers of the highly successful Caesar III, lets you enter a beautifully detailed reconstruction of the Nile Kingdom to shape your own destiny - and that of your people.

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CITY BUILDING SERIES
IMPRESSIONS

F/A-18E SUPER HORNET

£34.99 • Titus Software • Out TBC

When we heard that Titus' new flight sim involved being fired off a deck over a freezing sea in a storm, we immediately 'volunteered' *Simon Bradley* for the job

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P200 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card
WE SAY A P400 with a Voodoo2

Landing is an art. This is how it looks just before it all goes horribly wrong.

One thing you will never be short of is missiles. Unless you fire them all, that is. In which case you're in a world of trouble. For a short time, anyway.

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Issue #6 of this hallowed publication featured a review of *Tornado* by Digital Integration, in which the reviewer raved about the game's state-of-the-art graphics and claimed that it was the most complex flight sim ever seen. Well, Digital Integration haven't stood still in the intervening years. Taking advantage of today's processor power, they've sharpened up the graphics and wound up the detail levels a few more notches for *F/A-18E Super Hornet*, their latest offering. So, if you like your flight simulators in the 'kick the tyres and light the fires' mould, this probably won't appeal – it majors on realism with a capital 'R'.

The F/A-18E Hornet has been in US service for quite a while. It's a pretty good aeroplane but getting a bit long in the tooth, hence the US Navy's decision to upgrade and the 'Super' tag. Scheduled to go into service in 2001, it's got lots of pointy things to hang off the bottom and sides, a better radar to help you find things to shoot at sooner and improved aerodynamics to enable you to stay in the air long enough for your missile to arrive at its destination. All of which is good news, but in addition to that the controls have been simplified as much as possible. Which means that you, sitting at home in front of your computer, have around 100 switches and knobs to learn as opposed to nearly double the amount in the old aircraft. Oh, and there are a few extra radar modes as well, all of which makes things a little bit easier.

All the usual viewing modes are on offer, and it's particularly good to see that the padlock view from *Falcon 3* has been included. In other words, it works nicely and lets you follow the baddie without always crashing into the deck. Another nice touch is that you can see your aeroplane from inside the cockpit, stores and all, and when you look back your view is spoiled by the fuselage behind you. It may not sound a big deal, but it's the little things that matter.

DI have gone down the same road as a number of other developers by making all the cockpit controls clickable. Sure, you can have shortcuts as well, but isn't it so much more fun to search around a bewildering array of buttons and knobs trying to find the ECM while someone is firing missiles at you? Who said "No?"

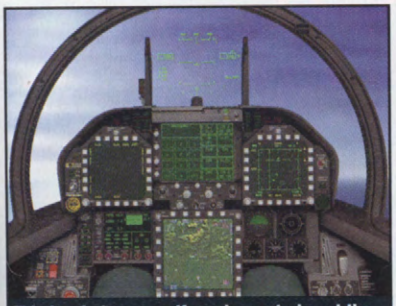
And the graphics aren't bad, either. DI have steered away from the photo-realistic landscapes with stuck-on objects favoured by other flight sims, choosing to stick with polygons and vectors. The end result, although hardly cutting-edge technology, is a smooth ground with variations as you might expect but with objects that look as though they belong – which, when you bear in mind that the F/A-18E is a groundpounder, is a good thing. The downside of this is that while *F/A-18E Super Hornet* looks pretty good, it won't have you ringing your mates to come and have a look. However, the models in the sim are superb. They look great and are animated, which makes it far more satisfying when you shoot them down. Or even when you fail to.

> **"The models in the sim are superb – they look great and are animated, which makes it far more satisfying when you shoot them down"**

IS IT HARD, THEN?

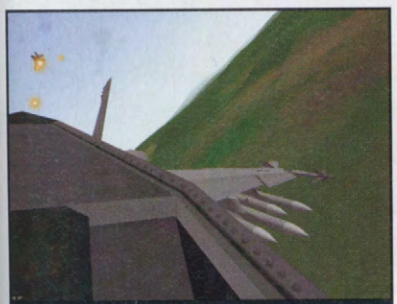
The enemy AI appears to be frighteningly good. Certainly in training, where the pilots of the aircraft you're up against know all the tricks and use them against you. It most certainly isn't a cakewalk, although it's also good to see that the enemy are fallible as well – on one training sortie they managed to score two blue-on-blue kills. Then again, as they're supposed to be American it could be just more accurate modelling.

But all this would be a complete waste of time if your aircraft didn't actually handle like an F/A-18E. Happily, this isn't the case, as the flight model appears to be very well done – as we've come to expect from DI – and the hard-core flight sim fan will find the overall levels of realism excellent. And there's the first small problem. Despite their protestations to the contrary, DI have made it possible to fly this in two ways: realistically or arcade. There's no real middle ground – you turn options on or off in the preferences screen but they're all fairly fundamental; in other words you can't specify no ground collisions or unlimited ammo, for example. As far as the avionics are concerned, which are probably the hardest part to learn, you get roughly no help whatsoever, although we're assured that the manual that ships with the game will be more helpful than the one supplied with our review copy.



This is what you see if you keep staring at the cockpit. Until you get shot down.

There are many, many ways of shooting down enemy aeroplanes. Here's one we made earlier. We call it Sidewinder.



The dynamic cockpit means that you can see everything you could possibly want.

This is the mission planner. Comprehensive it most certainly is. Intuitive, it is not. At least, not at first.

This is where you get to decide what you're going to "service the target" with. This bit, at least, is easy. If it won't fit, you can't carry it.

Now if only they'd made the sea look this good in-game as well...

Flying without gloves on? Good lord, whatever next?

A large aircraft carrier looks tiny at this stage of an approach.

WHERE SHALL WE GO TODAY?

There's currently a choice of two scenarios – Russia or India – and the usual 'renegade troops are causing trouble, go sort them out' type of briefing. But although there are a number of missions linked together, there's no dynamic campaign as yet. The missions will always be assigned no matter what, and damage you cause to enemy assets doesn't get carried over – so don't bother killing that SAM because it'll be there when you fly here tomorrow. This is a major omission, but one which DI are intending to fix when they release a Gold edition later on. They say that it will not be a full-price add-on for existing customers, but that there will be some form of loyalty discount. The party line for why the campaign isn't included already is that they didn't want to rush it and ship bugged code. Sounds fair enough, but we'll see.

ALSO CONSIDER

FALCON 4 (MicroProse, £34.99) The daddy of 'em all, but still not fully sorted even after ten patches. *PCZ* #72, 95%

TOTAL AIR WAR (Infogrames, £24.99) Still the best. *PCZ* #31, 97%

F-22: LIGHTNING 3 (NovaLogic, £34.99) Strong graphics and gameplay, but not as immersive as *F/A-18E Super Hornet*. *PCZ* #80, 70%

BUT IS IT ANY GOOD?

So, to sum up, *F/A-18E Super Hornet* is a flight simulator par excellence, right up there with *Falcon 4*. It really is most impressive, and our review copy appeared to be entirely bug-free. The US Navy must agree with us, because they've adopted it for promotional work and some ground-based familiarity training. Apparently they'll also be endorsing the product when it ships. The graphics may be nothing to write home about but they're more than adequate, the flight model is superb and the way that the cockpit has been made clickable, even in 3D mode, is really quite something.

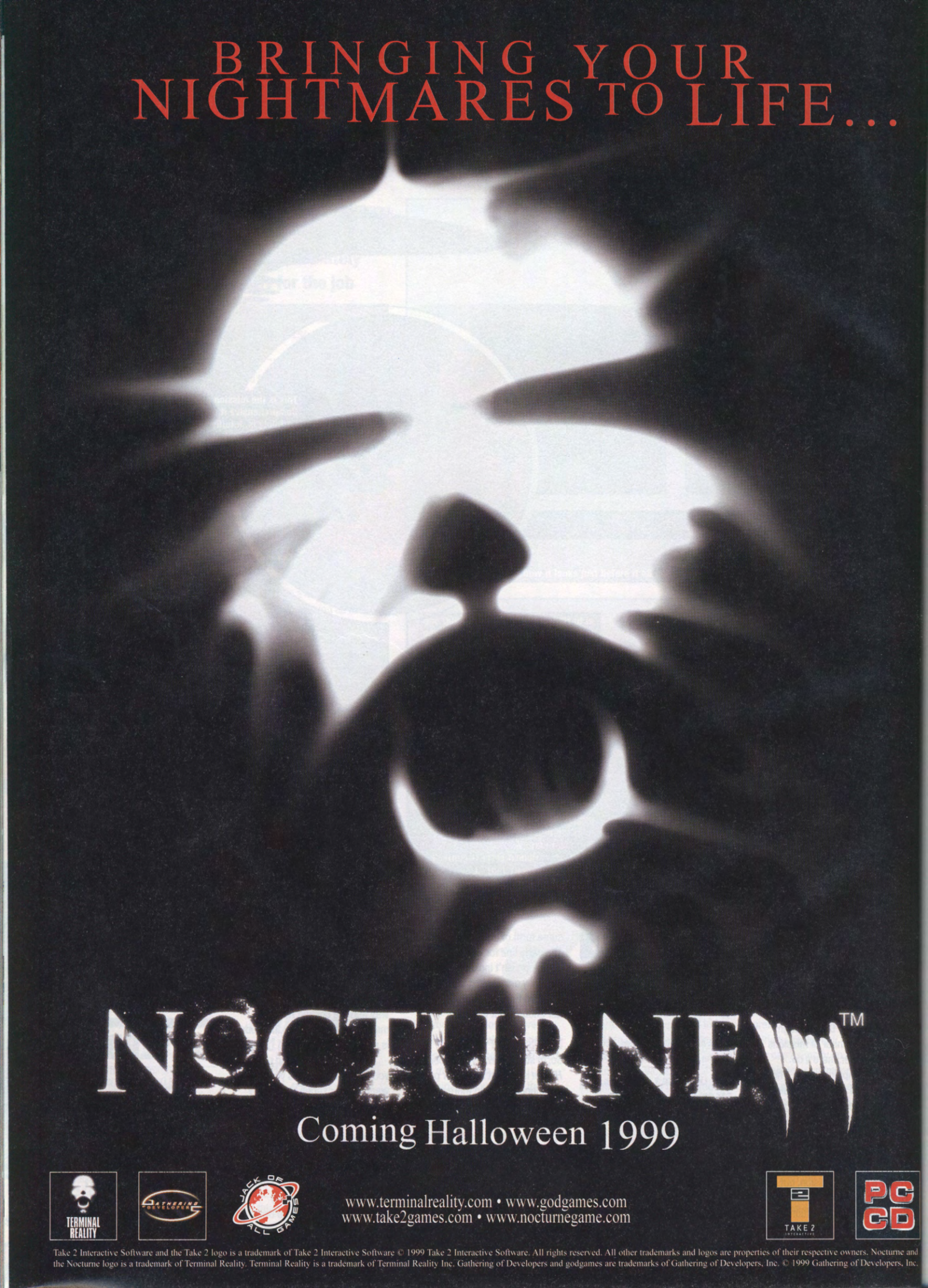
We're impressed, and reckon you will be too. Unless you don't want to spend ages learning how to turn the radar on, and even longer trying to start the engines (you have to start the APU, then spool up the engines before anything else will happen). In which case you'll hate this. Can't help wondering why they didn't stick with the Brits and try something like a decent Harrier sim. Or even better, Sea Harrier. Combine the best of both worlds. Hmm... now there's an idea... PZ

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Detail • Flight model • Technical accuracy

DOWNERS Cliff-like learning curve • No dynamic campaign • Slightly dated visuals

88 Hard work, but worth the effort



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There are over 45 different ports to visit.

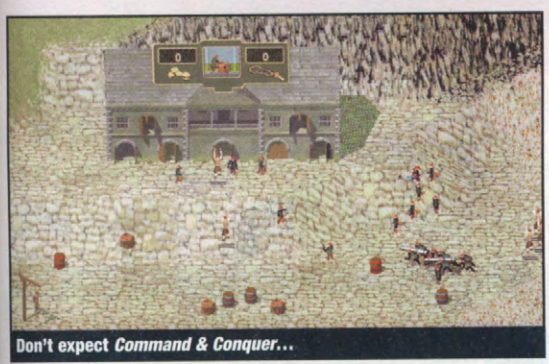
This is what it's all about: nicking other people's money.

Cutthroats could have been sooo good...

The Crow's Nest view: a scene of much frustration.

The in-game icons are quite indiscernible.

Dealing with the wear and tear of battle.


Don't expect *Command & Conquer*...

CUTTHROATS

£34.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards and 3D cards **WE SAY** Plays much better on a P233 with 64Mb+ RAM

The game world is populated by over 1,000 AI-controlled non-player ships.

Paul Mallinson sails the high seas in search of buried treasure

Cutthroats is a strategic game of piracy and high-seas domination set in the Caribbean during the 17th century. Terror, violence, robbery and extortion are the order of the day in this historically accurate real-time 'loot 'em up' – the aim of the game being to make as much money as possible from the misfortune of others by generally being a bad boy with a skull and crossbones.

The game starts off in 1625 when piracy as a 'profession' was in its relative infancy. You begin with a single ship, a few guns, a skeleton crew and a hold full of supplies, and are forced to prey on innocent merchant ships, destroying their vessels and stealing their consignments to better your fleet, as well as your own personal bank account.

IT'S BOOTY TIME

The game is pretty much a menu-driven affair. Starting off with an overview of the entire Caribbean, you plot an initial course and set sail. After a short while you come across other fleets, and are prompted to enter the crow's nest screen which offers a more intimate view of the surrounding seas. From here you can assess other fleets and determine whether they're worth attacking. Spot one lone ship and it's odds on you'll have no problem battering it into submission; take on three or more battleships and you'll realise you've made a hideous mistake.

"Frantic clicking ensues as you attempt to take out enemy ships. Triumph, and their booty is yours. Fail, and you sleep with the fishes"

Once a decision to attack has been made, the view changes yet again to a pseudo 3D perspective and the cannonballs start to fly. Much frantic clicking ensues as you attempt to take out enemy ships, while fighting the direction of the wind at the same time. Triumph, and their booty is yours. Fail, and you sleep with the fishes.

TOO MANY PROBLEMS

Of course there's far more to *Cutthroats* than boats shooting at each other at sea. Land battles can be initiated, new ships can be bought and old ones sold, port Governors can be bribed or intimidated to meet your needs (although this more often than not results in an early demise), treasure can even be buried and dug up when the time is right. But despite this apparent originality, depth and detail, *Cutthroats* is quite a dull and painful game.

The main problems lie with the repetitive nature of the gameplay, the slowness of the combat (especially on land), and the long-winded menu system. Having to constantly chop and change from map view to crow's nest view, combined with the laborious and convoluted process of re-supply, soon makes *Cutthroats* a tiresome and tedious experience. On top of that there are numerous other annoying features that prevent this game being what it should have been – such as the pointless and drawn-out chases when trying to follow enemy ships into the wind (or the hopeless standstills when there's no wind at all), and the grating call of the lookout who insists on stopping the proceedings to tell you about ships you've just conversed with/attacked and left in your wake.

Despite these faults, *Cutthroats* is not a complete failure and is fairly well presented (albeit in a not entirely convincing, old-skool 'Amiga' kind of way), with good music and decent atmosphere. Big-time pirate fanatics and budding historians cum real-time strategy nuts may find something of worth here, but your average PC gamer will undoubtedly lack the patience to get their money's worth out of *Cutthroats*. PCZ

ALSO CONSIDER

CORSAIRS (Microids, £24.99)
Another failed pirate game. If you have to have one or the other, buy *Cutthroats* instead of this.
PCZ #81, 59%

REDGUARD (Virgin, £29.99)
Not a strategy game, but a 3D pirate adventure with excellent graphics and good atmosphere.
PCZ #75, 89%

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Original RTS slant • Huge amount of depth

DOWNERS Long-winded menu system • Too many gameplay niggles • Passé graphics •

68 Sailing steadily into the wind

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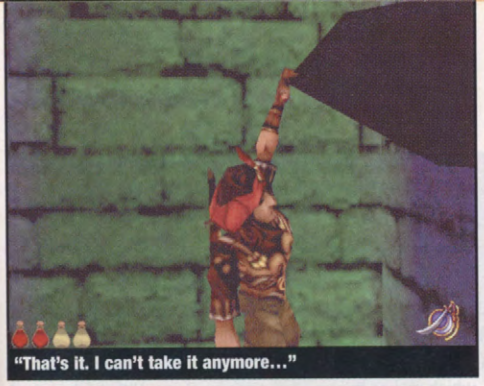
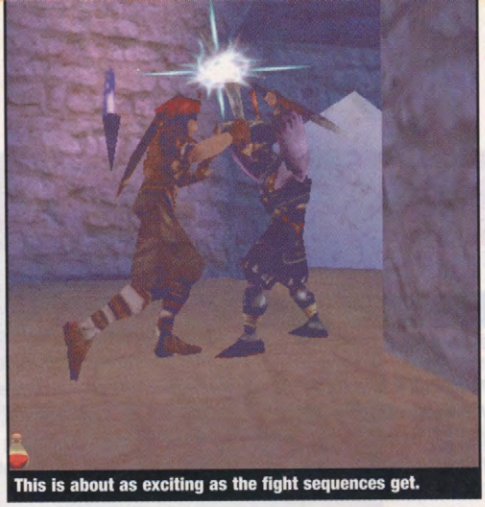
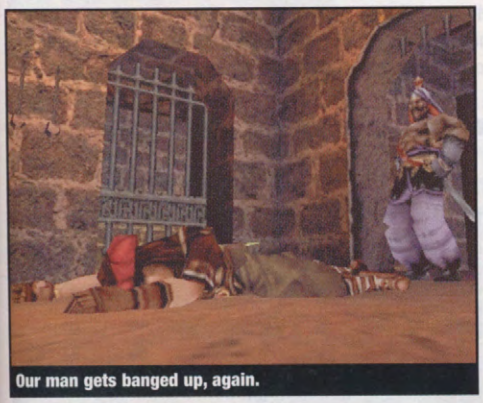
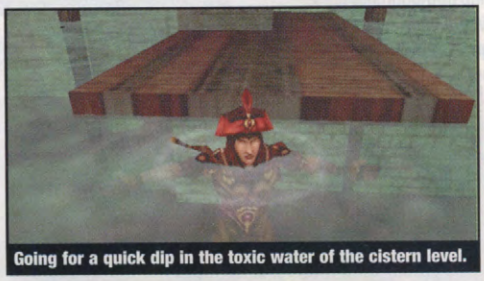
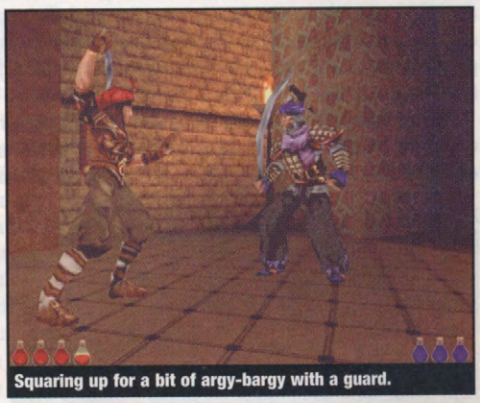

"That's it. I can't take it anymore..."


This is about as exciting as the fight sequences get.

The Prince's deft agility has made him a legend. Not.


Our man gets banged up, again.


Going for a quick dip in the toxic water of the cistern level.


Squaring up for a bit of argy-bargy with a guard.

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D

£34.99 • Mindscape/The Learning Company • Out now

***Keith Pullin* witnesses the demise of royalty**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P233 **Memory** 64Mb **WE SAY** P300 takes away some of the pain

Ten years ago, Yale University geek Jordan Mechner created the perfect platform game *Prince Of Persia*. Boasting revolutionary rotoscoped animation, brilliant gameplay and uniquely intelligent enemies, it was a colossal hit on virtually every computer and console of the time. It sold over two million copies and stood as a benchmark in animation technology. Indeed, to some it was the game of the decade. No surprises then that a remake has finally pulled itself onto the PC in the guise of a Lara-esque third-person perspective action/adventure.

Prince Of Persia 3D tries desperately to cling to its roots with bountiful running, swinging and climbing shenanigans, numerous spiked pit traps, magic potions and a corny 'rescue the Princess' plot. In that respect it succeeds. Unfortunately, what was revolutionary in the Eighties is Nineties' bread and butter.

Nowadays smooth animation is a prerequisite, and if the main character doesn't possess ape-like agility, interest is minimal. However, what really makes action-packed swashbuckling jaunts such as this live or die is the control interface.

OUT OF CONTROL

Prince Of Persia 3D doesn't so much fall short in this department as collapse despairingly on its knees begging for mercy. Guiding the Prince through this bland land is one of the most painful processes you're ever likely to experience. He's slow, forever getting caught up on pieces of scenery, and handicapped by the most ludicrous third-person viewpoint ever devised.

The floating camera buzzes around your head like an annoying fly, undecided as to where it should stop. When it eventually settles down, it doesn't even point in the direction you're facing. Blindly stumbling along a passageway, hoping you don't fall over a ledge, or worse, suddenly having your head fall off because you couldn't see a blade trap is not most gamers' idea of fair play. Then there are the glitches and the jerks – it's as if the poor guy is stricken with epilepsy.

Oh, and we can't forget the sound effects: they're not even in time with the action. You dive into a pool of water and a couple of seconds later there's a splash. Likewise, take a swipe at somebody... a brief pause... and eventually you'll hear the dull squelch of metal through flesh.

FIGHTING TALK

The original game had great sword fights – you actually had to time your stabs carefully, look for that opening and... Bam! Not any more. Intelligence on these automated thugs is non-existent – two or three lazy swipes with your scimitar and they're dead. It's impossible to remember a game with worse AI. In short, the fighting sequences are about as much fun as a case of syphilis.

Most games, no matter how flawed, usually have at least one saving grace. *Prince Of Persia 3D* shatters that rule by having absolutely no redeeming features whatsoever. The whole thing just seems empty and unfinished. There's nothing to do, no imaginative puzzles, no gruesome monsters, no sparkling waterfalls or murky forests, nothing. Just level after level of drab, repetitive running, jumping and climbing.

There's more atmosphere on Pluto than in this poor excuse for entertainment. Lara has absolutely nothing to worry about – *Prince Of Persia* 3D is utter trash. PCZ

"It's impossible to remember a game with worse AI. The fighting sequences are about as much fun as a case of syphilis"

ALSO CONSIDER

TOMB RAIDER III (Eidos Interactive, £34.99) Action and adventure spread over numerous real-life locations. Pleasing on the eye and very, very playable. *PCZ* #72, 91%

DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME (GT Interactive, £34.99) Great fight sequences on the ground, but let down by poor dragon fighting in the sky. *PCZ* #82, 79%

HERETIC 2 (Activision, £34.99) *Tomb Raider* with fireballs, lightning and other magic paraphernalia. Which is nice. *PCZ* #72 83%

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS The main baddie smokes a bong in the introduction

DOWNERS Appalling control system • Infuriating floating camera • Dull level design • Simplistic fighting • Unimaginative graphics • Badly programmed

31 A royal dog's breakfast

HERE'S WHAT ALL THE FUSS WAS ABOUT BACK IN THE EIGHTIES...

The first *Prince Of Persia* in all its graphical glory...

...and the second outing, looking much like the first.

WARHAMMER 40000: RITES OF WAR

£34.99 • SSi • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card

Using the engine of the best-selling (in Germany, at least) *Panzer General II*, *Rites Of War* is another hex turn-based strategy title set in the futuristic fantasy universe of Warhammer 40k. Thousands of games workshops scattered all over the country tell us that a lot of people like this sort of thing and, if you haven't got a table big enough to stage immense battles with your little figures, this is the next best thing.

The gameplay is nicely moved along by an interesting storyline (although not quite interesting enough to recap here) and consists of 24 missions with a wide range of victory conditions (like "hold a certain area of the map" or "sit on a large sword and behave like a real warrior"). As you watch your extremely colourful troops stomping from one hex to another, you can't help seeing R2-D2 failing to let Chewbacca win at this chess-like strategy. Fortunately, you can customise your army and upgrade your units, thanks to the level-based experience system, which makes things a tad more involving. Ultimately, though, *Rites Of War* is made with a very particular kind of gamer in mind. If you usually spend your Sundays painting the tiny boots of Devastator Squads or making those laser-shooting Seraphim wings look extra fluffy, this is where it's at.

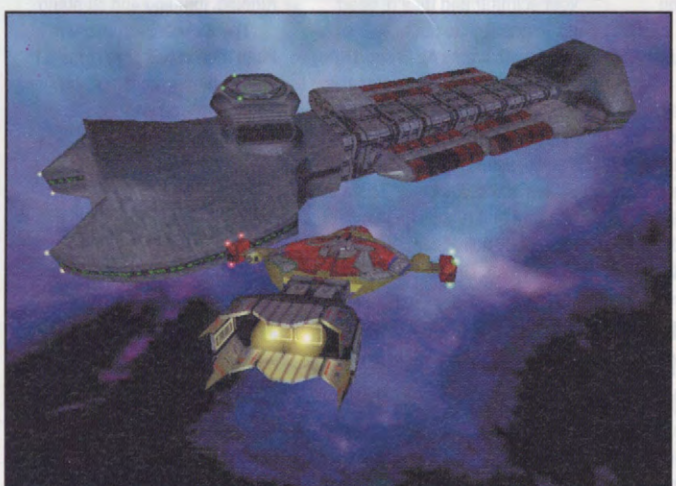
Ben Compson

PCZ VERDICT **70%**

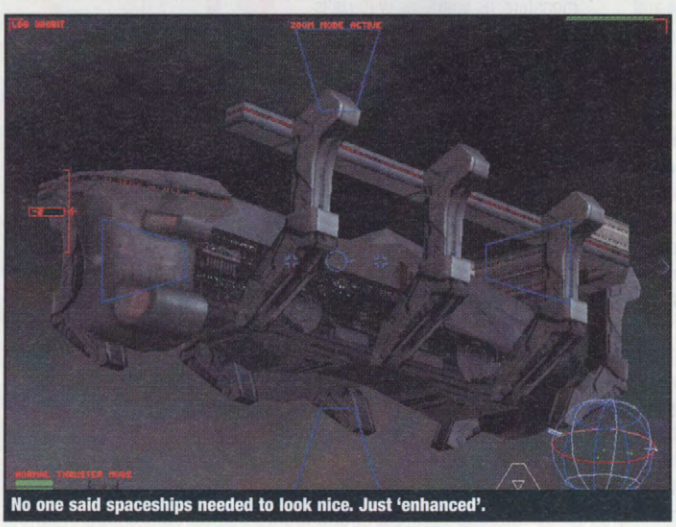
If you haven't got a table big enough to stage immense battles with your little figures, this is the next best thing.

***Rites Of War* won't win any prizes for its graphics, but the gameplay is sound enough.**

If you get bored with the missions, you can edit your own. If you have far too much time on your hands.



"Come in Number 9, your time is up."



No one said spaceships needed to look nice. Just 'enhanced'.

INDEPENDENCE WAR DEFIANCE

£17.99 • Infogrames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Listen up, deadheads, this is the enhanced 3Dfx version, so some kind of 3Dfx card would be appropriate. We expect

I know we've been asking for old games to be remade in today's 3D clothing, but we meant ones older than this. We were talking about *Skool Daze*, *Jet Set Willy* and *Chuckie Egg*. Not *I-War*. It only came out about a year ago and had all sorts of fancy non-accelerated graphics effects anyway. It doesn't need enhancing. It's fine as it is. Tell that to Infogrames, though.

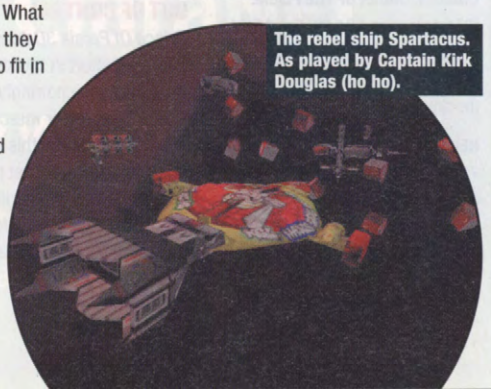
So *I-War Special Edition* is basically the original game with 3Dfx enhancements (which could really have been done as a downloadable patch when you think about it) and a new campaign of 18 missions. What Infogrames haven't done – and what they should have – is updated the game to fit in with our more refined needs.

There's a clumsy interface at work – a screen that's often cluttered with pointless and distracting information. The way the game is presented also feels rather basic – very 1997. When you stack it up next to games like *X – Beyond The Frontier*, *Freespace 2* and *X-Wing Alliance*, its primitive feel is all the more apparent.

It isn't a bad game, by any stretch. The mission structures are quite nice, as it goes, even if there is a little too much dependency on the fly-shoot-fly-shoot-fly-home model. The new campaign isn't bad, either – a nice parallel storyline played from the opposite side. And it looks a treat. It's just that the dated feel of the gameplay lets it down and you constantly wish you were playing something more modern. Still, it's cheap, so that's something.

Paul Presley

PCZ VERDICT **65%**



The rebel ship Spartacus. As played by Captain Kirk Douglas (ho ho).

Aahh, the beauty of brotherly love.

MADDEN 2000

£34.99 • EA Sports • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 50Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P266 with 64Mb RAM and a 3D card

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Christmas comes but once a year and, so it would appear, do *Madden NFL* games. As with previous titles in the series, you take control of a team of giants who make Jonah Lomu look like an extra in a midget movie, and attempt to steer them to Super Bowl stardom. Attempt is the operative word here, because to get that far, you're going to need to know your Dime formations from your Nickel ones.

For those of you who don't know, American football is a game of strategy – a bit like chess with violence. Every move the opposition makes must be countered by guile, knowledge of plays and a liberal dose of brutality. On these points, *M2000* stands up very well, accurately recreating the feel and strategy of the real thing. Watch proudly as your defence crush an opposing attack (the tackles sound really crunching), and bask in the praise of the highly competent and varied commentary provided by Madden and co. Either that or stare in disbelief as your team is brushed aside, while the opposition saunter in to score a touchdown. Then watch as the replay reveals not only your shortcomings, but that of the graphics and animation – which, like you, fail to score any real points.

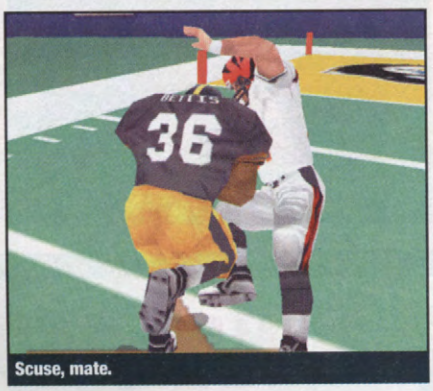
Contrary to the belief that NFL games need a multitude of keys to make them playable, *Madden 2000* can be controlled almost solely by the mouse. This makes it a great deal more accessible for those put off by this often daunting feature. The artificial intelligence is excellent, and your players will back each other up – but, best of all, there is an option to create your own plays.

The simplified arcade mode is a good introduction to the complex world of the NFL, but it's a shame that there's no real tutorial to take you through things step by step. *M2000* is an excellent game – far more accessible than most – but to really enjoy it, you're going to need to know your stuff or be prepared to learn. If not, don't even go there.

Martin Korda

PCZ VERDICT **80%**

Stop prancing around, you pansy.


Scuse, mate.

EXPERT POOL

£29.99 • GT Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** It's almost unplayable without a 3D card

Pool and snooker games have come a long way on the PC, considering the limitations inherent in an activity where all you need is a table, a stick and some hard balls. For pool enthusiasts there's *Virtual Pool 2* (*PCZ* #58, 90%), as enjoyable, smooth and hi-res a conversion as you could hope for, while those with a penchant for larger tables and deeper gameplay have *Jimmy White's 2: Cueball* (*PCZ* #68, 88%). So what, you may ask, does *Expert Pool* offer that we haven't already got?

For one thing, *Expert Pool* has 3D players moving around the table, more modes of play than you could shake a cue at (including trick shots) and 13 different venues. In every other respect, however, *Expert Pool* represents a step backward. *Pool Shark* (*PCZ* #71, 70%) also featured 3D players, but all they seem to do is get in the way and slow down play. The physics are far from spot-on, and hitting the balls very hard usually results in at least one going in – usually the white one. The commentary is dire and the graphics are very ropey. Perhaps they should have spent more time on what happens on the table than what goes on around it.

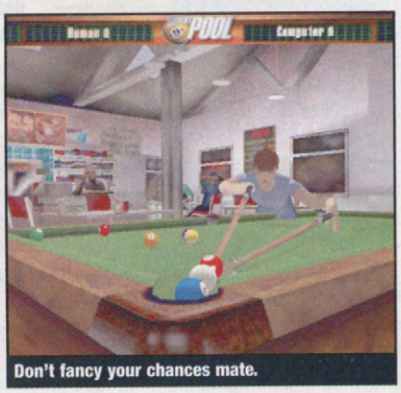
Ben Compson

PCZ VERDICT **58%**

Nice environments, shame about the game.

Sadly it's all been done so much better before.

I wouldn't bend down like that in front of him...



Don't fancy your chances mate.

MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000

£29.99 • Microsoft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P133 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P200 with 32Mb RAM and a 3D card

We haven't checked, but our guess is that *World Cup Cricket* and *International Cricket Manager 2* aren't among the top selling games in the US of A. Similarly, baseball is no big deal over here. The difference is, we've made our throwaball-hititwithastick-runlikehell game stuffy, prim and tedious. The yanks, on the other hand, have made theirs cool, fast and spectacular. Compare Ian Botham to Joe DiMaggio. Can you imagine Ian Botham marrying Marilyn Monroe? Exactly.

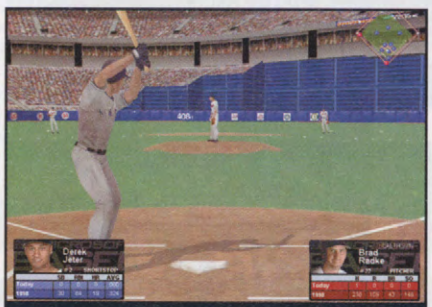
Microsoft Baseball 2000 continues the giant company's expansion into the sports games territory normally dominated by EA. And while it doesn't quite surpass EA's *Triple Play Baseball 2000* (*PCZ* #80, 80%) it doesn't completely throw away the high standard set by *NBA Inside Drive* and *International Football 2000*.

Instead of swinging your bat blindly and hoping it hits that damn leather sphere, there is a box in the strike area where you have to quickly match your cursor with the position of the ball. The more accurate the match, the more accurate the batting. The same thing happens when you're pitching, ensuring that you always feel in control of the action. On the other hand, because of the almost turn-based nature of the gameplay, there isn't that much action to be in control of. For enthusiasts only.

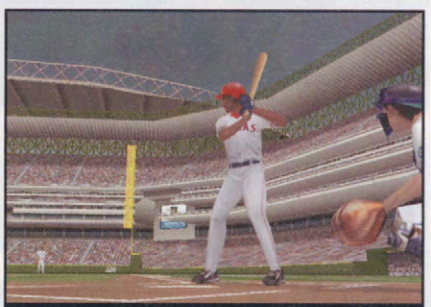
Mark Hill

PCZ VERDICT 73%

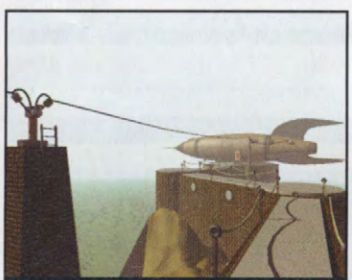
Baseball games come out by the bucketload in America. Unsurprisingly, they don't all make it over here.



Gee whiz, it sure is great to bat someone's brains in, don't ya think?



We recommend watching *Major League*, the Charlie Sheen film, before playing. Wild thing.



If I could get on that ledge, I could swing down to the ship. Or use the bridge...

Time passes pretty slowly when you're playing *Myst Masterpiece Edition*.

MYST MASTERPIECE EDITION

£19.99 • Red Orb • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P75 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P166 with 32Mb RAM

Several years ago, there was a pretty-looking game in which you walked around beautifully drawn backdrops solving puzzles. It may not have been to everybody's taste, but it did contain some nice brainteasers and a clever, if little over-surreal, storyline. It also sold seven million copies worldwide. That game was *Myst*.

If you're one of the few who didn't buy it then, this Masterpiece Edition will let you discover what all the fuss was about. Or at least provide some insight into the kind of minds that might enjoy this drivel. All Red Orb have done here is update the graphics from 8 to 24-bit colours, add some minor tweaks and left it to die an embarrassing death. Compared to anything released in the past couple of years, this looks terrible.

At times, it's an entertaining puzzle game, but that doesn't hide the fact that this is a blatant attempt to cash in on a once average but aesthetically pleasing product. There is nothing new here, and certainly nothing ingenious enough for this game to warrant having the word 'Masterpiece' in its title. Only approach if you suffer from incurable nostalgia.

Martin Korda

PCZ VERDICT 34%

NAPOLEON

£34.99 • Empire Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** PII or higher with 64Mb RAM

A combination of hardcore strategy fan and amateur historian is quite scary, but that's exactly the type of person likely to get excited by this uninspiring title. Set after Napoleon's defeat at the hands of the Russians, you can play the game as either the French or the Eastern Europeans, making its appeal to most of us limited.

The main strategy interface is a rather dull drag and drop system. All the units are represented by the same icon, so it's hard to keep track of who's who on the map. Fortunately, the game does have one redeeming feature, and that is the actual battles. These are done in a very *Gettysburg* (*PCZ* #75, 77%) style – a sort of pseudo-RTS. However, the game is so slow and the setting so narrow that it's hardly going to set many hearts racing.

Daniel Emery

PCZ VERDICT 45%

Did you know that Napoleon had extremely small genitalia? Explains an awful lot.

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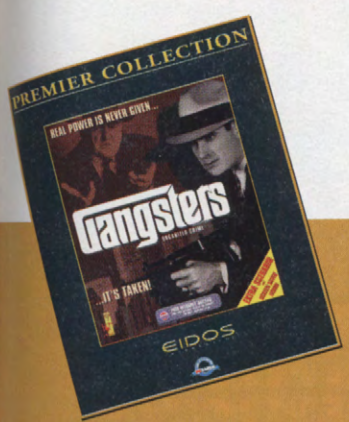

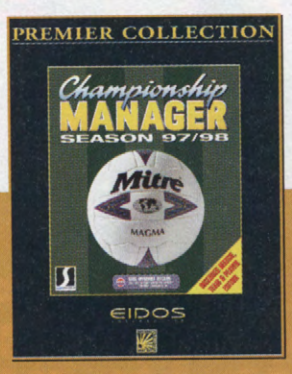

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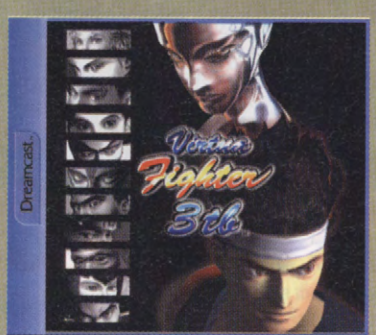
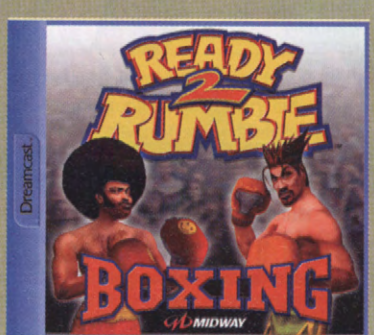


Virtua Fighter 3tb
From Sega



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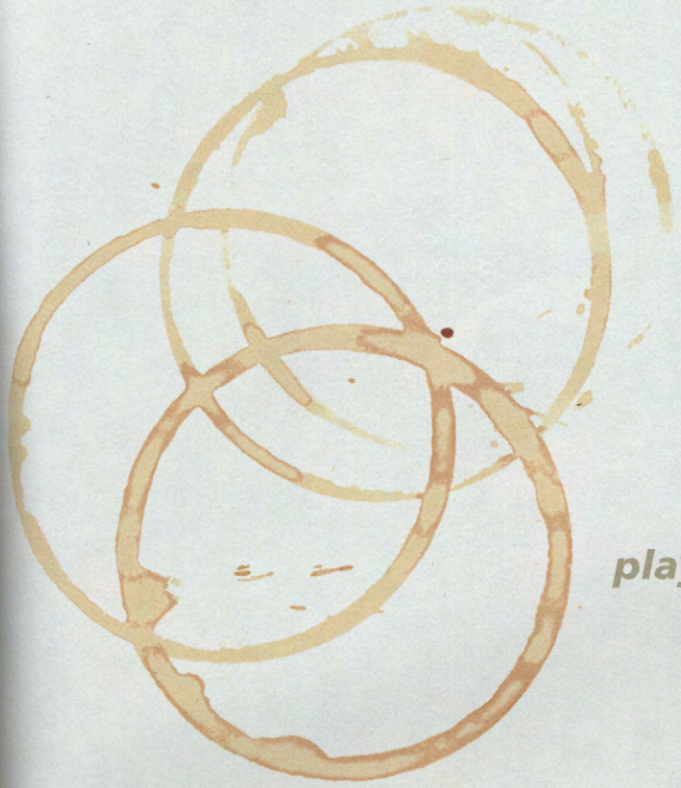

player 1

player 2

player 3

player 4

It's going to be a *long night.*

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HOMEWORLD

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WARZONE 2100

GAMES

The arrival of *Tiberian Sun* prompts new questions about the real-time strategy genre. Is it really the best RTS game ever? The *PC ZONE* team argue it out. Writing it up: *Paul Mallinson*

Now here's an overcrowded genre for you: real-time strategy (RTS) games. Ever since Westwood Studios released the original *Dune II* way back in 1992 (the pivotal point in RTS gaming history), we've seen a veritable flood of similar titles hitting the PC.

Real-time strategy games usually mix frenetic point-and-click-style action with basic colony building. The premise is a simple one: you 'mine' resources, use them to build a base and then build an army of soldiers and vehicles in order to expand and crush the enemy. Individual units can be manipulated, put into groups and sent out to fight, all within the context of real time. This usually makes for a less than sedate style of gameplay, and those worried about their health may be better suited to turn-based strategy gaming. But *that* is another Supertest entirely…

Over the past few years RTS games have simply got better and better and a number of important genre issues, such as dodgy artificial intelligence (more than capable of making or breaking any RTS game) and flat, boring 2D graphics, are now being addressed. It seems a new dawn of RTS gaming is upon us.

But before we are swept away by this new wave of high-tech clickery-pokery, the *PC ZONE* team thought it high time to level the land in this hugely contested genre by selecting one game as the outright best. As is traditional now, we sat five experts in front of six short-listed games and taped the entire conversation. Here's what was said…

AGE OF EMPIRES

Steve: Does anyone still care about *Age Of Empires*?
Richie: It's a great game.
Steve: Here we go…
Mallo: Why is it so good Richie?
Richie: Because the balance of the units is probably still the best out of any of the games here. It's a crap single-player game, but the multiplayer version and the 'skirmish' game were brilliant.
Dan: Yeah, multiplayer was good. Single-player was alright. The actual time frame that the game is set in was a bit too short. It would have been better if it had gone on a bit longer.
Richie: So ten thousand years is not enough?
Dan: Well, yeah, but it goes from 'man with a club' to 'man with a bow and arrow' – which is not as far as I'd have liked it to go.
Steve: What, like into science fiction, or something?

L to R: Steve Hill ✪ Daniel 'Hot Lips' Emery ✪ Richie Shoemaker ✪ Paul Presley ✪ Paul Mallinson.

Dan: No – poison gas, tanks…
Mallo: But when does it stop? How far do you go?
Dan:…World War II aircraft.
Steve: Jesus!
Mallo: What about that *Age Of Empires* add-on, *Rise Of Rome*?
Prez: That doesn't take it any further than *Age Of Empires* did – it just gives you more maps.
Steve: It just takes things sideways.
Prez: Every couple of months I'll get an urge to play *Age Of Empires*, play it for about an hour, then get bored.
Mallo: The single-player game?
Prez: I play the skirmish game against the computer, but I want to build things instead of fight, so eventually I give up because the game is not about building.
Mallo: It was one of the first games with a skirmish option, wasn't it?
Richie: *Red Alert* was the first. But *Age Of Empires* had really big maps in skirmish mode, which gave the player much more options than in *Red Alert*.
Mallo: *Age Of Empires* is definitely more of a *C&C* than a *SimCity*. What about the resource management aspects of it?
Steve: You get wood.
Prez: Pardon?!
Steve: Wood. The major resource of *Age Of Empires*.
Dan: Wood, stone and gold…
Steve: And food.
Dan: You can kill crocodiles.
Steve: And deer. Thing is, your blokes sometimes forget what they're doing and stand around doing bugger all. They forget and go and stand in a tree for an hour.
Richie: No, they'll go hunting – kill the deer and take it back…
Steve: But surely they can think to hunt some more? I played it last night and my bloke stood in a bush. For an hour. You have to tell everyone to do everything.
Mallo: That tends to happen in a lot of real-time strategy games.
Prez: Nah, they'll look around for prey, but if it gets too far beyond them they'll stop. If there's a whole bunch of bushes they'll still do the lot.
Dan: And the bushes don't grow back again!
Steve: And when you kill someone you end up chasing them around the screen with a club, Benny Hill-style.

AGE OF EMPIRES

Microsoft's new *Age Of Empires Gold* package is well worth snapping up if you've never played the game before. For those that don't know, *AOE* is an isometric RTS game that takes you from the Iron Age of clubs and spears, to ancient Egypt and catapults and war elephants. The add-on, *Rise Of Rome* (included in the *Gold* pack), continues the series further.

Score	*PCZ* #69, 90%
Developer	Ensemble
Publisher	Microsoft
Price	£34.99

Paul Presley has urges to play *AOE* every so often. We'd rather not discuss his other urges.

Mallo: The combat is farcical.
Dan: You get big, proper battles when you're storming a city and then it's sort of *Ben Hur* meets *Saving Private Ryan*…
Mallo: Do the units get in each other's way?
Dan: Yeah, they do.
Prez: If I've got lots of buildings packed together and a lot of people milling around they get sort of stuck. Sometimes you have to actually destroy buildings to get them out!
Richie: Ah, but that was addressed in the add-on pack.

Mallo: Did they make it so that units can walk through each other?
Richie: Not through each other, but they don't get stuck.
Prez: The biggest problem I've got with *Age Of Empires* is the 50 unit limit. You can't build more than that, which is stupid. You can't get really big armies going, or anything.
Richie: But it makes you balance your army.
Prez: I don't want to balance, I want to expand.
Mallo: Yeah, I want big, f**k off armies of serfs with swords – thousands of them – just like in *Braveheart*.
Dan: The unit capping must be something to do with keeping the game running smoothly. The developers are just covering their arses – the first thing anyone would have done without some sort of unit cap on the game would have been to build a huge army, then complain to the developers that their game is shit because it moves too slowly on their brand new, high-end PC. Having said that, they should have done something in the add-on, or maybe a later patch, which gave you more units.

"It's sort of *Ben Hur* meets *Saving Private Ryan*"
DAN SUMS UP *AGE OF EMPIRES*

Prez: It shows its age in certain places – like if you've got 20-odd soldiers you can't put them into formation, or tell them to guard anything.
Richie: The formations are supposed to be brilliant in the sequel.
Prez: *Age Of Empires* one point five…
Everyone: *(Silence)*
Mallo: So, *Age Of Empires* then?
Steve: I think it's had its day. The setting is great, 'cos it's not year twenty-five twenty-five… It's something you've seen on the telly. You can relate to it. I don't know anything about history, but *Age Of Empires* is almost educational.
Everyone: *(Laughs)*

If you want to build Rome play *Caesar III*, if you want to fight for it...

Steve: Well, it could inspire you to watch some Charlton Heston films.
Everyone: *(More laughter)*
Richie: The graphics in *Age Of Empires* are still really good – the animation of the units is brilliant.
Steve: I noticed that the men walk properly when they animate, which is rare.
Richie: Graphically, *Age Of Empires* is still far better than *Tiberian Sun*.
Mallo: You reckon?
Dan: It is! I agree.
Prez: You can run the game at a high resolution on a modern PC and it looks and moves fantastically well.
Dan: Yeah, it's still quite cutting-edge stuff.

HOMEWORLD

Steve: Another bleedin' sci-fi game! Does anyone give a shit about the story?
Prez: The storyline merges so well with the gameplay simply because each mission unfurls even more of the plot. The first mission sees you testing out your hyperdrive engine, then your home planet is destroyed and you begin the defence of your mothership. It's all actually part of the storyline.
Dan: I haven't played the full game yet but I've played the demo loads. And I keep on playing again and again and again. It's great. The thing is, *Homeworld* is a relatively new game and the newer games are better remembered in meetings like these. It also goes to show how good *Age Of Empires* is, because of how old it is and how much we still like it. *Homeworld* – I'm still not sure how long it will last. Prezzer's review was spot on – *Homeworld* is very addictive – but whether it will last for years to come is another thing.
Prez: What Richie was talking about earlier – about balance of units – well in *Homeworld* they've got it *so* spot on. All the units combine in different ways. You can actually develop strategies for different units. If I've got five ion cannons and five assault frigates, then it does become a

war of attrition. It depends how you manoeuvre them, the formations you put them in… everything works, it's just so well balanced.

Dan: Do you think you'll be playing it in six months' time?

Prez: I do. In fact, I wish I was playing it now instead of talking to you lot.

Everyone: Oooh.

Steve: Keep it light!

Richie: It is very well balanced. Apart from looking different, the two sides are practically identical. Apart from a couple of extras on each side they've all got the same ships – they just look different. There are exceptions, but *possibly* not enough.

Mallo: Is there a limit to the amount of units you can build?

Richie: I don't think so. Sometimes you've got so much going on on-screen… I played the multiplayer game the other day against Prezzer and I had *hundreds* of ships flying around and it all worked really well.

Dan: But what about the research tree?

Prez: That was one of the few criticisms I had – the research tree isn't particularly great. It's very bog standard – like every other research tree in every other game recently.

Dan: No one's ever put any real imagination into the research…

Prez: Actually, *Warzone 2100* has an excellent research tree.

Dan: The last game I saw that had a really good research tree – and this is going back years – was an old US Gold game called… aw shit, what was it called?

Everyone: *(Blank looks)*

Dan: But anyway, most of these research trees tell you what you're about to research before you do it – you know, 'research a Sherman tank'. But hang on, I already know what it is! This game had a little triangle with a slider that you'd move to concentrate research in a particular area.

Mallo: *Sim Ant* had something like that!

Dan: No, no…

Steve: No one's interested.

Prez: We'll talk about it later, but *Warzone 2100*'s research tree got you to make your own vehicles by building different wheels, different bodies, different turrets, and you could actually combine them and design your own units.

Steve: Sounds like a glorified *Tanktics*…

Dan: What I was trying to say about the research tree was that it's much better to have an unexpected element than have the game tell you beforehand what you're going to discover. The designers shouldn't be so literal.

Richie: Going down one side of a research tree should close off the other side.

Prez: Rather than waiting for a new unit to become available. That's what *Homeworld* does – it's just rationing out the units in measured time chunks.

Mallo: *Homeworld*'s research tree is good enough.

Prez: It's just standard. It's simply a case of waiting around until you get the new units. It's one of the few faults of the game.

Mallo: Forget all that advanced stuff – what about *Homeworld* for beginners?

Steve: I can't think in 3D.

Everyone: *(Laughs)*

Mallo: Sit through the tutorial – it's brilliant. When I first saw Richie playing it I thought: 'Blimey, this is gonna take some getting used to, controlling the views and stuff', but the tutorial is one of the best I've ever seen. In reality the interface is a piece of piss to use.

Prez: And controlling hundreds of individual units is easy too. If you've got, say, ten fighters and they're in a formation, just click on one of them and it'll select the whole lot. Click on the same unit again and it'll select just that unit.

Mallo: And there's a list of all the ships in that formation at the top-right of the screen, which you can click on to select individuals.

Prez: And there are loads of good shortcut keys – there's one which selects everything you've currently got on-screen.

Mallo: What about selecting units of the same type within a formation? Is it possible to split them up quickly?

Prez: Double-click on one unit in a formation to select all units of that type.

Mallo: Wow – I'm impressed. In a lot of these games I find that some units incapacitate other units if they're grouped together – for example, if you've got archers and swordsmen together in *TA: Kingdoms* and run over to kill a bloke who's got a sword, the archers will get there first and be hacked to pieces. It drove me mad. So you *need* to be able to split them up.

Dan: Yeah, some units do move faster than others.

Richie: But in *Homeworld* everything moves at the same speed.

Prez: Or at the speed of the slowest unit in the formation.

Dan: That makes sense.

Richie: The other good thing is fuel consumption, and having to take that into consideration. You could feasibly send all your fighters to attack the other person's mothership, but they'll run out of fuel eventually.

Mallo: What bloody use is that?!

Richie: Well, you need to build some sort of support frigate which will re-fuel them.

Mallo: Is there a 'return before you pass the point of no return' command?

Prez: I don't think so. You'll get audio saying "We're low on fuel".

Mallo: If they run out of fuel are your units still able to fight back?

Richie: I haven't got to that point yet, but I imagine they just stop dead in space.

Prez: No, you can still rotate 'round and see the battle.

Dan: Then the game turns into a 3D version of *Asteroids*.

Prez: *Homeworld* is such a f**king absorbing game!

Richie: The ships are brilliant – they look superb. Really well designed.

Mallo: It is beautifully drawn.

Steve: I didn't understand what I was looking at – I just saw purple trails.

> **"I wish I was playing it now instead of talking to you lot"**
>
> **DOES PREZZER LIKE *HOMEWORLD* A BIT TOO MUCH?**

Mallo: A familiar story… But there's still something about it that puts me off. It looks a bit empty. What about huge asteroids? Landing on planets?

Richie: Be nice to have a Death Star to take on…

Mallo: It'd be a fantastic reward if – halfway through the game – you got to do this *Starship Troopers*-style planet assault.

Prez: Yeah, but I doubt we'd have seen the game this side of 2001. Maybe in the sequel?

Dan: And why does every space game have pirates in it? In every bloody space game it's 'be careful of pirates'…

Steve: Because they're made by prats.

Everyone: *(Laughs)*

STARCRAFT

Dan: At the time, *StarCraft* was f**king excellent.

Mallo: I loved the graphics – great colour…

Dan: I loved the whole game. I played it from start to finish – to the end – without cheating. Loved it! I reviewed the expansion pack as well, and it was pants.

Mallo: *StarCraft* was very slick – the interface was perfect, although Blizzard did borrow the best bits from Westwood's *C&C*. Their waypoint system was better than Westwood's though.

Prez: I couldn't understand the alien races.

Dan: Once you'd played through the single-player game there wasn't much incentive to play through it again. The skirmish option kept the game alive for some people though.

Not everyone can think in three dimensions. Thickos.

The first real achievement in 3D strategy.

HOMEWORLD

If you saw the last issue of *PC ZONE* you'll no doubt have realised that we liked Relic's deep space strategy war game quite a lot. Its splendid 3D graphics, involving plot, piss-easy control system and stunning skirmish mode made it a winner with virtually everyone who clapped eyes on it.

Score	PCZ #82, 94%
Developer	Relic
Publisher	Sierra
Price	£34.99

Richie: I had the same problem as Prezzer – I didn't like the races. I played as the humans, but after that it's just like 'Ohhh…'
Dan: You have to play them all in a completely different way, which I thought was a really nice touch. In most of these games once you've played one race you've played them all, near enough, whereas in *StarCraft* if you play as the different races you have to completely re-think the way you play the game.
Prez: But I couldn't understand them.
Mallo: I admit to not giving much of a shit about the alien races. I didn't care for any of them – except the humans, of course.
Dan: You didn't care for them?! What were you expecting – cute, fluffy aliens?
Mallo: Imagine if they took the *StarCraft* engine and, instead of alien races, made it so that Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham get to fight it out in real-time strategy terms!
Everyone: *(Nervous laughter)*
Mallo: They should do that – we can relate to it! The Zerg and The Protoss – I mean, bloody hell!
Steve: Have you *seen* an alien? It's such sci-fi crap!
Dan: What would you put in a game like this?
Steve: I wouldn't make a game with aliens in it.
Mallo: What if they'd used *Star Wars* units? Would you have played it then?
Steve: That'd be slightly more acceptable.
Dan: So you're telling me that *Star Wars* isn't sci-fi crap as well?
Prez: Of the highest order…
Dan: It's very popular sci-fi crap.
Richie: You can relate to it more than you can the aliens in *StarCraft*.
Steve: No one cares about the f**king Protoss! Jesus Christ. This game reminds me of *Lexx* on Channel 5 – it's the *StarCraft* of TV programmes.

> **"The single-player missions are good, but they're probably a bit too heavily scripted"**
> RICHIE ON *STARCRAFT*

Mallo: Or that bloody awful sci-fi kids' programme *Return To Jupiter*...
Steve: Well, I'd rather watch *Naked Elvis*.
Everyone: *(Laughs)*
Mallo: Steve, you can't discount *StarCraft* because it's sci-fi. *Tib Sun*, which you gave 90 per cent, is also sci-fi.
Richie: But that's got humans in it.
Dan: Oh yeah, and we can relate to those – so has *StarCraft*!
Mallo: It's six of one, half a dozen of the other…
Richie: *StarCraft* is a very good game to play through once. The single-player missions are good, but they're probably a bit too heavily scripted.
Mallo: What do you mean heavily scripted?
Dan: I know what he means – this bloke falls in love with this woman and she turns into an alien, but she's not an alien… It's all a bit twee.
Steve: *What*?!
Dan: The storyline is shit. Well it's not shit – it's really good, but it's kind of… this black geezer fancies this brunette who turns into an alien…
Steve: What *are* you talking about?!

Dan: Yeah, and she's like the commando unit in *Red Alert* – a one-woman army, half human half alien. At the end, though, you do end up thinking 'What's the f**king point?'
Richie: What I meant by heavily scripted was that you know where the enemy are going to come from when you've played through it once – you need something more dynamic. Something that changes every time.
Prez: I played *StarCraft* ages ago and got *so* fed up with it being exactly the same thing every time – the same with *Age Of Empires*.
Mallo: But some of these games are really, really good because they do what they do really well. There's no reason why a select few of these games, like our selection for this Supertest, cannot be held up as supreme examples of the genre without being criticised for lack of originality. Westwood practically invented the genre with *Dune II* years ago – why should they abandon all their hard work to develop something completely different? Why not continue working on their technology, improving it as the series progresses?
Prez: But if they're all gonna play like *Command & Conquer*, why shouldn't I just go and play *Command & Conquer*?
Mallo: Why not play *Tib Sun* – the updated version of *Command & Conquer*? Why go back to 320x200 graphics and a less refined interface?
Prez: But if it plays the same I'm not that bothered about the graphics.
Mallo: That's a ridiculous thing to say. You'd rather play *C&C* than *Tib Sun*?
Everyone: *(Uproar)*
Prez: The point I'm making is…
Steve: That's like saying you'd rather watch a black-and-white TV than go to the cinema!
Prez: The point I'm making is that the route to success in a lot of these games is exactly the same. There's very little variation – it's always: 'build the factory, mine the resources, and make as big an army as possible'. There's no real strategy going on in many of these games.
Dan: This feels like one of those late-night discussion programmes.
Steve: Is Ollie Reed gonna come and join in?
Mallo: Hold on, Prez – which of these games do have this strategic element you say is missing from the majority?
Prez: Well, *Homeworld* for starters. It's one of the best strategy games I've ever played. It knocked me away for that – this *is* supposed to be about strategy gaming isn't it?
Mallo: I thought *Myth* and *Myth II* had real – *proper* – strategy elements to them.
Prez: Yeah, because it was more about combat and strategy than accountancy and resource management. How come *Myth II* isn't in this Supertest?
Mallo: *Myth II*, and *Close Combat III*, were both good examples of RTS for purists, but they were held back by other things, like strict viewpoints and extraordinarily tough, unforgiving gameplay.
Prez: Well, I'm fed up with RTS games that are more about building than about combat – I want strategy in my strategy games! I want an army, I want to form my own tactics…
Dan: A lot of turn-based strategy games have those elements, but the fact is they're turn-based and are therefore a completely different experience to play. *StarCraft* was very much *Command & Conquer* meets the sci-fi spod. It was a very good game. It was very playable – and had very few bugs in it. The AI was excellent. But as Richie said, if you've played it through once and put it back in the box, it's doubtful you'll take it out again.
Steve: Unless you're addicted to playing it over the Internet. Which would make you a tit.
Everyone: *(Laughs)*

The sci-fi robot units in *StarCraft* are still to be bettered.

STARCRAFT

Currently available as a boxed set (bundled with a couple of Prima strategy guides and entitled the *StarCraft Battle Chest*), a triple pack (with *WarCraft II* and *Diablo*), and due out soon on budget, this seminal sci-fi RTS game features futuristic combat between three different races over three different campaigns.

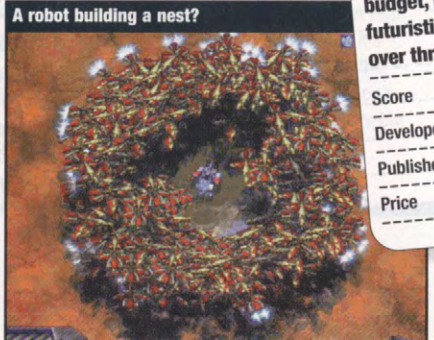
Score	PCZ #64, 88%
Developer	Blizzard
Publisher	Sierra
Price	£34.99 (Battle Chest) £60 (Triple pack)

TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS

Richie: I think the original *Total Annihilation* should be in here. It's much, much better than *TA: Kingdoms* – the pace of the game is unbeatable. And it's out on budget!
Dan: In that case *Dark Reign* should be in here – that's a superb RTS game, and it's out on budget too. It was underrated at the time.
Everyone: *(General dissent)*
Mallo: *(Shouting)* Hold on! *Kingdoms* is the latest full-price *TA* game available here. It's completely different to *Total Annihilation*, but is arguably a lesser game than its predecessor. The original *TA* still ranks as one of the best RTS games of all time. Maybe

Great, while it lasts.

A robot building a nest?



Perhaps not entirely fantastic in every sense of the word.

we should dump *TA: Kingdoms* and replace it with *TA*?
Dan: And some people will say dump *TA* completely and include *Dark Reign* instead.
Steve: *TA: Kingdoms* has dragons in it… I say dump it now.
Mallo: This could go on forever – no, *TA: Kingdoms* stays because it's an influential new game in a highly-respected series. It won't appeal to everyone though, as Steve so readily illustrates.
Richie: *Total Annihilation* was a very frenetic experience, but that's all been lost in *TA: Kingdoms* – the game is *so* slow. It's slower-paced because of the nature of the units. The range of units is nice and the four available races work quite well, but it doesn't look as good as *TA*…
Prez: It's not as engaging.
Richie: It doesn't play as well as *TA*. It's a sideways move rather than a forward one. As a single-player game it's shit; the storyline is crap. For me, there are also too many units, and getting the hang of using them properly takes up far too much time.
Dan: Well, so far we've said nothing good about it at all.
Steve: Where's Phil Wand when you need him?
Mallo: Phil couldn't make it.
Steve: That figures.
Prez: Was the original *TA* in spinny rotatey 3D?
Richie: No, the units were 3D, but the backgrounds were flat drawn. To be honest though, most units were very triangular in appearance and tended to look very similar.
Mallo: And Cavedog have released so many extra units via their website too…
Richie: About 300 units.
Mallo: 300?!
Richie: Officially, although there are a lot more than that. There are people doing *Star Wars TA* – which they had to 'can' because of copyright reasons, but you could download snow-speeders and AT-ATs.
Mallo: Back to *TA Kingdoms*: for the moment. Having played it for some time myself I do think that we overrated it a bit in the review.
Richie: Not by much though.
Mallo: No, I'd still recommend it, but I wouldn't award it a Classic. It's too slow.
Dan: Well, it's definitely a Recommended…
Steve: I'd give it 67 per cent…
Mallo: The idea of *TA: Kingdoms* appealed to me greatly, but after hours of play I was disillusioned by the fiddly control and the slowness of the whole thing – even on a ninja PC – plus numerous bugs and gameplay niggles. It was just a strain to play. Even simple stuff, like clicking on an enemy to attack it, was made difficult by the unresponsive cursor and speed of their movement – I lost a lot of time, and units, moving them by accident because I missed when I went to click on an enemy. And keeping my units organised was a complete nightmare.
Prez: I'd feel in control for a while, then send some men off to attack some dragons and all hell would break loose. Then I'd feel like I'd lost control of it.
Richie: *Magic & Mayhem* from Virgin was better than *TA: Kingdoms* – you know, the Mythos game. It was similar in that you had to build 'lode stones' and use mana to create things.
Mallo: *Magic & Mayhem* also narrowly avoided inclusion in this Supertest.
Steve: It looks like you've chosen all the shit games…
Mallo: Well, no – there are so many real-time strategy games to choose from that we had to make some sort of a decision as to the shortlist. We can't include everything.
Dan: *Magic & Mayhem* is a good game, but it's hardly being talked about now.

"I was disillusioned by the fiddly control and the slowness of the whole thing"
MALLO THINKS *TA: KINGDOMS* COULD HAVE BEEN MUCH BETTER

Mallo: Exactly. *TA: Kingdoms* is new and everyone's talking about it, whether they like it or not.
Richie: It's because everyone's expecting big things from it. People are expecting it to be *TA* with swords and arrows.
Mallo: But it is though, isn't it?
Prez: Swords and arrows don't quite work as well as tanks and flame-throwers…
Richie: It doesn't have the pace of *TA* – that's where *Kingdoms* fails. The scale is slightly off as well – you've got this gigantic wizard walking around and these tiny little barracks. It looks silly.
Mallo: Steve?
Steve: I think *TA: Kingdoms* is pathetic. You might as well sit in your bedroom reading *Lord Of The Rings*. It's the same thing.
Everyone: *(Gasps and scoffs)*
Steve: Okay then: apart from having dragons and flying bloody Spy Hawks *(everyone laughs)*, it's great. Will that do?

TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS

The classic *Total Annihilation* was recently superseded by *TA: Kingdoms*, and received a mixed response from the worldwide gaming community. Although the game has four races to play, a new, streamlined interface and whizzy 3D graphics, the fantasy setting is still too much for some people to take, it seems.

Score	PCZ #78, 94%
Developer	Cavedog
Publisher	GT Interactive
Price	£39.99

COMMAND & CONQUER: TIBERIAN SUN

Dan: More of the same.
Richie: Good, not great.
Steve: But that's what people want! It's the best version yet.
Mallo: It *is* the best version.
Dan: Well, Steve's got a point, but it's Catch 22 – "Oh God, it's more of the same"…
Steve: What do you want – a f**king platform game with clowns in it?!
Everyone: *(Riotous laughter)*
Mallo: I read the review and had to agree with it. Why do people moan about this being *Command & Conquer* all over again? That's exactly what people want.
Steve: It's the biggest-selling game ever.
Mallo: Despite the fact that it's got ridiculous cartoon graphics with titchy little men running around and terrible animation, it is *still* a truly class game. Come on – look at the animation of the men. It's so bad it's funny.
Steve: Animation sucks.
Mallo: But the scale is right – the scale is spot on.
Steve: You can see what's going on.
Mallo: Yeah, the 'Fog of War' is a pain in the arse, but you can turn it off. The interface is just what we're used to – it's a piece of piss to get into.
Steve: Plus, there aren't too many units and each one does something different. *Warzone 2100* has 22,000 units, or something.
Richie: Yeah, but you can't build them all – it's not like *TA* where it's 'build every single unit'.
Steve: In *Tib Sun* you actually use your units to do specific things.
Prez: If you've already got *Command & Conquer* do you really need to buy *Tib Sun*?
Steve: F**king yeah!
Dan: Well, it's not that much different…
Mallo: No, but it's that much *better*. Why have cotton when you can have silk?
Everyone: *(Laughs)*
Mallo: The production values are out of this world.
Dan: If you went out with a fat slapper with saggy tits when you were a lad, would you go out with an older, fatter slapper with saggier tits when you were older?
Mallo: No, you'd pay for a boob job.
Dan: Okay then, this a boob job – it's a boob job on *Command & Conquer*, but it's a firm one…
Mallo: I agree, it's a fantastic boob job.
Dan: This is the 32DD of the RTS gaming world.
Mallo: *C&C: Silicone Sun*. It's a face lift, a boob job…
Steve: You'd still tear through it.
Richie: It does look a bit outdated in places. When they launched it I went along and played some multiplayer. I told their PR rep that I thought it looked shit and they said: "Yeah, but it'll sell loads."
Everyone: *(Laughs)*
Mallo: The acting is a bit crap. I skipped through pretty much every video and cut-scene, but still enjoyed playing it. The two-disc single-player game is pretty much unbeatable.
Richie: Westwood do make a good single-player game.
Mallo: Who here's gonna play through both discs, to the end?
Dan: Me. I'm working on NOD at the moment.
Steve: I'm saving it. I've added it to the pile of shrink-wrapped games that I'm gonna take with me when I get sent down. When they finally catch up with me it'll be that and *CM3*…
Mallo: You reckon they'll let you have a PC in your cell? I can just imagine it: "4737 Hill, Sir!" They check your pockets and what have you got: some coppers, a set of keys, 20 shrink-wrapped games and a PC…
Everyone: *(Laughs)*
Mallo: I think *Tib Sun* is probably the best game here.
Steve: I don't think the graphics matter at all.
Mallo: I hate the pre-rendered cut-scenes.
Dan: I liked them.
Mallo: I'll tell you what I couldn't get my head around – the waypoints. You could set them up easily enough, but they weren't that easy to link together,

THE NEW WAVE

A three-dimensional future for RTS games?

Almost all the new RTS games in development are being made to take full advantage of the current 3D card revolution, so therefore look quite different to virtually everything that's passed before them. Whether this is a good or bad thing is debatable, but one thing's for sure: RTS games will never look the same again... unless you count Microsoft's imminent *Age Of Empires 2*, which will use an obligatory 2D isometric viewpoint. Activision's forthcoming *Dark Reign II* and EA's *Shogun* are due out this year and are already looking mightily impressive, by any genre's standards. Blizzard's newly-announced *WarCraft III* (due towards the end of 2000) also looks like breaking the mould. Plus we can't rule out the prospect of *Myth III* from Bungie. The future's so bright, we gotta buy a new 3D card...

Age Of Empires 2, coming soon.

Dark Reign 2 is looking delish.

WarCraft III stole ECTS.

Tib Sun: stop complaining about the graphics and play the damn thing.

Great units, great missions, great skirmish.

RTS OVERLOAD!

If you've played all the games on our shortlist, why not try a few of these alternatives?

This particular Supertest could have been 20 or more pages in size, when you consider how many RTS games have been released over the past five years, but we had to be practical and whittle down a shortlist. The following games, unfortunately, were not selected, but all have various things going for them.

Blood & Magic **(1997, Interplay);** ***Braveheart*** **(1999, Eidos);** ***C&C: Red Alert*** **(1996, Virgin);** ***Close Combat III*** **(1998, Microsoft);** ***Commandos*** **(1998, Eidos);** ***Dark Colony*** **(1997, Gametek);** ***Dark Reign*** **(1997, Activision);** ***KKND Krossfire*** **(1998, EA);** ***Machines*** **(1999, Acclaim);** ***Magic & Mayhem*** **(1998, Virgin);** ***MAX 2*** **(1998, Interplay);** ***MechCommander*** **(1998, MicroProse);** ***Myth II*** **(1998, GT);** ***Shadow Company*** **(see review on page 84, Ubi Soft);** ***Tanktics*** **(1999, Gremlin);** ***Uprising 2*** **(1998, Ubi Soft);** ***War Of The Worlds*** **(1998, GT);** ***Wargames*** **(1998, MGM);** ***Warhammer Dark Omen*** **(1997, Mindscape);** ***War Breeds*** **(1997, Red Orb); and** ***War Wind*** **(1997, SSI). Phew!**

If you've got money to burn and an unnatural interest in real-time strategy gaming you could do a lot worse than try any of the games listed above – they all have their strengths and weaknesses.

Commandos

Dark Reign

Myth II: Soulblighter

AVOID

Or be prepared to be disappointed...

What a steaming pile of horse dung Ubi Soft's *Army Men 2* was, and it could have been so good. Plastic soldiers fighting on a tabletop may have seemed like a good idea at the time, but in practice it did nothing but insult our intelligence. As did Westwood's *Dune 2000* – a re-hashed version of *Dune II* that did little to enhance their otherwise flawless reputation as developers. And who could forget the pitiful *Cave Wars* from Eidos? Us, and them – that's who. Eidos also missed the point with *Cutthroats* and *Gangsters*, both – incidentally – from the same development studio. SCi's *Gender Wars* was also poor (despite being a good idea – men versus women), as were Ion Storm's *Dominion* (shame!) and I-Magic's *Fallen Haven*. But the less said about those, the better.

When you get such an...

...overpopulated genre...

...there's bound to be a lot of...

...boring shit. Like this.

C&C: TIBERIAN SUN

Command & Conquer **returns in this third outing from US development outfit Westwood Studios, and – by crikey – it's the best version yet. NOD and GDI forces lock horns in a race to mine that all-essential resource Tiberium once again, while knocking seven bells out of each other at the same time.**

Score	*PCZ* #81, 90%
Developer	Westwood Studios
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Price	£34.99

or use in any particularly constructive manner.

Steve: There is a way to do it – read the damn manual!

Mallo: I read the manual and tried, but it didn't work. Is it just me? Is it a bug?

Steve: It can be done – I've done it myself.

Dan: The waypoint system is very good for the harvesters – it stops them being stupid. One of the biggest problems with previous *C&C* games was that harvesters would trundle through enemy bases in search of resources. That really pissed me off. But you don't get that in *Tib Sun*.

Mallo: There's still some dodgy path-finding AI in *Tib Sun* – not as bad as in *TA: Kingdoms* though. You still get troops taking the long way round, mainly because there's more relief on the battleground.

Prez: I liked the 'random map' feature in skirmish, and the fact that you could make these *huge* Tiberium fields by fiddling around with a percentage slider.

Steve: Yeah, you can build up your forces straightaway and get all the units without poncing about.

Richie: It bugs me that infantry move slower than those robot suit things. The robots go running off and...

Steve: But a man can't run as quick as a huge robot, can it?!

Prez: I never thought I'd hear Steve defending robots...

Richie: Yeah, but when you have men, tanks and robots as a group they should stick together, rather than splitting up when the shit hits the fan.

Mallo: There should definitely be an option like 'all units move at the same speed', or something. It *is* a problem, but it doesn't ruin the game because you can split them up easily.

Richie: The units are nicely balanced too.

Mallo: There is something *Tib Sun* hasn't got, which something like

Abomination has: when you want to go to one group of units, if you've assigned them a key, you press that key and they highlight. In *Abomination* you press that key again and it centres them in view – *Tib Sun* doesn't have that. It would certainly benefit from it.

Steve: You can press 'N' to go to the next unit.

Mallo: Yeah, but the next unit might not be in the group I want. Why not have both? Do you get what I'm talking about?

Prez: At the end of the day, does *Tib Sun* put you in a tactical frame of mind when you're playing?

Steve: It does.

Prez: It's not simply a war of attrition?

Steve: No, you can take bridges out, or send out bombers before sending your troops in.

Mallo: It works well when you start using your units properly, instead of grouping loads together and sending them in willy nilly.

Steve: And the height advantage works too. You can send some sharpshooters up a cliff to take pot shots.

Prez: Sounds alright. Maybe I'll give it more time.

> **"It's what people want – it's the best version yet"**
>
> STEVE ON *TIBERIAN SUN*

Steve: You should. It's truly a beautiful thing.

WARZONE 2100

Richie: The fact that *Warzone 2100* is full 3D is bound to put people off.

Mallo: I read some research once about girls having trouble thinking in 3D.

Steve: They can't park either… Says me – who can't drive…

Everyone: *(Laughs)*

Prez: I never had any problem with it.

Mallo: The viewpoint was never a problem for me either. I suppose if you're cack-handed and can't work out which way is 'up'…

Steve: I kept *Warzone* in the same view all the time. Instead of twirling the screen about I chose a quasi-overhead view and stuck with it. Which defeats the object…

Mallo: It's really easy to use – to move things around and keep track of them. I don't see what your problem is.

Steve: You don't need to twirl things around.

Prez: You're being unfair Steve.

Steve: You just need to know where things are – north, south, east and west.

Mallo: Have you never heard of progress?

Steve: It's not progress, it's just for the sake of it. Change for the sake of change.

Mallo: What about *WarCraft III* and *Dark Reign II*? Both of which promise to take 3D RTS games to 'the next level', whatever that is.

Steve: They shouldn't bother. They should maybe have an option to choose between the two. I'd rather play it flat, top-down.

Mallo: But then you're gonna get people slagging the games off because they're not in full 3D.

Steve: They're just doing it because they *can* – not because they *should*.

Richie: *Shogun: Total War* looks like being one of the best 3D RTS games coming out in the near future because it has such a massive view of the battlefield and has thousands of troops.

Steve: Is that the one with the Chinks in it?

Everyone: *(Laughs)*

WARZONE 2100

A surprise hit from UK-based Pumpkin Studios, *Warzone 2100* actually breathes new life into the genre with some cool (if slightly 'generic') 3D graphics, a snazzy research tree and big bangs for the bucks. *Warzone* features effortlessly engaging gameplay over three separate campaigns. And it's very, very good. Believe us.

Score	PCZ #75, 90%
Developer	Pumpkin Studios
Publisher	Eidos Interactive
Price	£39.99

The first real attempt to make a 3D RTS. If not the best.

It's probably best to play it from a more traditional angle.

Prez: One good thing about *Warzone* is that you can get your factories to build whatever you want and then assign it to a general in the field, so as soon as it's built it'll trundle off to reinforce the front lines.

Mallo: I'm impressed! That's what I want from RTS games. I didn't get that from *TA: Kingdoms* – it just sort of threw the units right at you and you'd immediately get them all mixed up.

Dan: You suddenly go back to your base and find it swarming with troops that you've built…

Mallo: Yeah – it made organising and planning very difficult.

Prez: You don't get that with *Warzone* – it's a very good game.

Richie: It doesn't have the appeal of something like *Homeworld* though.

Prez: That's true.

Steve: I was expecting you to say that. I need the loo, can we go now please?

Mallo: I suppose so. PCZ

AND THE WINNER IS...

Homeworld or *Tib Sun*? Shall we toss a coin?

Although it wasn't officially included on our shortlist, our panel decreed that the original *Total Annihilation* still had plenty of life left in it. With new maps and units released daily, a thriving online community and a paltry price-tag of ten quid, *TA* on budget is a *must buy* if you're into these games. As for its full-priced rivals, choosing an overall winner proved difficult.

The *PC ZONE* team deliberated *Tib Sun* and *Homeworld* for a number of hours, and clashed violently (albeit verbally) over the final decision. As far as *Homeworld* was concerned the enormity of space was simply too much for Steve to take in, who commented: "It feels like my head'll explode if I play it." Prezzer and Richie, on the other hand, loved it to pieces and demanded that it win because it is so original compared to all the others. Sense finally prevailed though, and it was *Tiberian Sun* that eventually came out on top. "Because *Tib Sun* is the juggernaut that it is, everything that had a vague chance of taking the genre forward has been knocked out of the picture," Prezzer said begrudgingly. "Just accept that it is a good game in its own right and forget about previous versions," retorted Steve. Richie eventually agreed: "If you want to keep it simple, go for *Tib Sun*." Dan and Mallo both chose *Tib Sun* from the outset, so the dreaded Chinese Burn wasn't needed to change their minds… So, if you want the best RTS game out there, buy *Tiberian Sun* – it's as simple as that.

Total Annihilation: **nice and cheap.**

Tib Sun: **a great game in its own right.**

It was a time for heroes...

CODENAME EAGLE

...The early 1900s. A parallel timeline. The Tsar's son Peter has launched a furious attack on his neighbours in a quest to expand the borders of the old Russian Empire. His savage war machine has already overthrown Europe and he is now poised on the brink of world domination. Enter Shadow Command, a Secret Service formed by the members of the Alliance. As Agent Red, you are about to enter a world consumed by war.

YOUR MISSION:	YOUR ORDERS:	YOUR CODENAME:
Destroy the Russian war machine	Use whatever means necessary	Eagle

infinite loop

PC CD

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BUDGET ZONE

Almost every game seems great the first time round. But the true mark of quality is whether it's still a great game 12 months down the line...

SETTLING THE SCORES Mark Hill

"Hab SoSII' Quch!" which translates as "Your mother had a smooth forehead!" Harsh stuff.

KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD

£14.99 • Hasbro Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P200 with a Voodoo card

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

When *KHG* first came out it was acclaimed for its amazing use of the *Unreal* engine and some truly awesome graphics. Since then, however, a little game called *Half-Life* has come along, making attempts such as these seem a bit lifeless. Being a fan of the series (which I am) doesn't necessarily enhance the experience either.

Apart from some poorly drawn chunky foreheads, familiar weapons and an attempt at a storyline, there's not much here to remind us of the Trekkie universe. The mighty warriors are so slender they resemble freakish ballerinas and neither the battles nor the level design are likely to make you roar for some blood wine.

Although it's still an enjoyable 3D shoot 'em up, it hasn't stood the test of time. Fans should wait until the far superior *Voyager: Elite Force* arrives early next year.

PCZVERDICT 83%

The designer of these Klingons was obviously a closet cubist.

There are four characters to choose from, but Caleb is definitely the best choice.

BLOOD II: THE CHOSEN

£14.99 • GT Interactive/Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P133 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P200 with a 3D card helps no end

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

As with the original, it's fair to say that *Blood II* wasn't the most successful of 3D shoot 'em ups ever, but that doesn't mean it isn't any good.

Taking an extremely gory cartoon approach, the game is closer to a horror version of the science-fictiony *Duke Nukem* than *Quake* or *Half-Life*. As you would expect from such over-the-top action, the weapons are excellent (they include voodoo dolls and napalm launchers) and multiplayer is suitably frantic.

As long as you don't take it too seriously, *Blood II* is certainly worth a look. It may not take over your life, but it will give you plenty of hours of fun. Not to mention carnage.

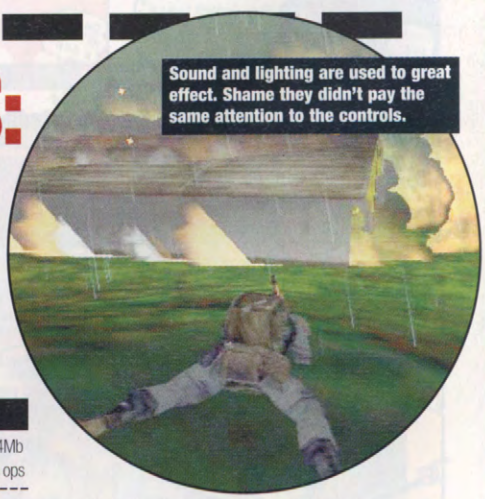
PCZVERDICT 82%

SPEC OPS: RANGERS ASSAULT

£9.99 • Sold Out Extreme • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P200 **Memory** 24Mb RAM **WE SAY** Stick in a 3D card for some real specs ops



Sound and lighting are used to great effect. Shame they didn't pay the same attention to the controls.

Here's another game that hasn't been treated kindly by time. Playing *Spec Ops* now, you're struck by how awkward the control system is, how clunky the graphics are and how limiting the gameplay is. The thing is, without it there would have been no *Rainbow Six* (*PCZ* #81, 84%), no *Hidden & Dangerous* (*PCZ* #79, 91%) and the world of PC games would have been infinitely poorer. So why play it now?

Well, there are some great sound effects and an intense atmosphere. And it only costs a tenner, for chrissakes. Those of you who haven't got the PC power to handle the newer titles or the brain power to handle more than a two-man team, check it out.

PCZVERDICT 79%

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"Position your legs likewise, keep your wrist straight and swing. Now try and do it without looking a complete twat."

THE GOLF PRO

£9.99 • Empire • Out now

TECH SPECS

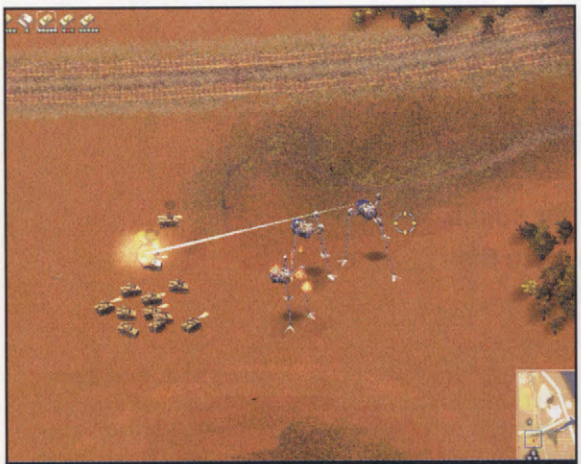
MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P133 at least

You can just see it, can't you? An executive manager (the microphone of a handless mobile phone jabbing into his cheek, a pile of golfing magazines scattered over his desk, a cappuccino stain on his yellow Lacoste polo shirt) sitting in front of his company PC, with PowerPoint running in the background, and straining with concentration as he follows the expert tuition of the on-screen Gary Player on how to swing his mouse more efficiently.

There's no question as to who *The Golf Pro* is aimed at. And, while the graphics look quite nice and the courses are incredibly accurate, there's no excuse for not including an alternative to the MouseDrive. It may mimic the movement of a golf club, but it makes you look like a twat and handles like a bastard when you're trying to putt. The instruction videos will probably get the suits sweaty with excitement, but if you want a real taste of armchair golf, try *Links* or *Tiger Woods*.

PCZ VERDICT 69%

You're managing to perfect your swing, but your outfit's a bit dull.



Unfortunately, the chances of a decent real-time strategy title coming to earth are slightly better than a million to one.

JEFF WAYNE'S WAR OF THE WORLDS

£14.99 • GT Interactive/Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

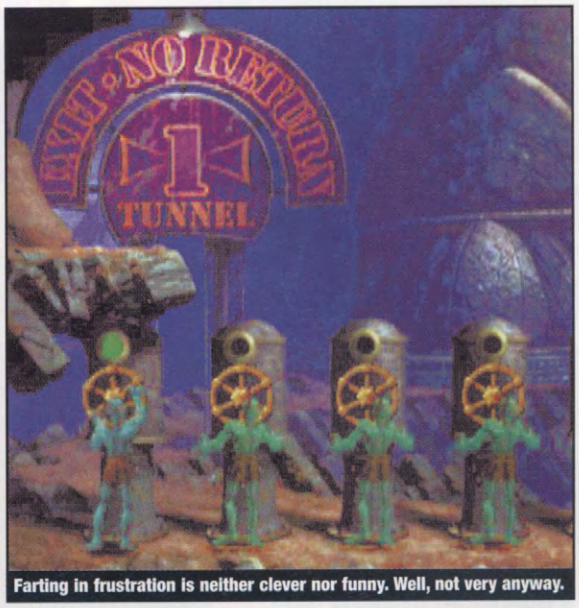
MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P200 with 32Mb RAM and a 3D card

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Ten years ago, Jeff Wayne's excellent/dreadful (delete as appropriate) album based on HG Wells' seminal sci-fi novel would probably have been turned into a point-and-click adventure or an interactive movie. Of course, then came *Command & Conquer*, which spawned hundreds of imitators.

This is one of the most original and overlooked games in its genre, if not the best. In terms of presentation and setting, it blows all the *C&C* wannabes of this world away. The gameplay is non-linear and doesn't involve any of the usual base building and resource mining of RTS, opting instead for a main map of Britain from which to launch your overall strategy, unit research and management. The battles aren't particularly inspiring, but the British countryside and city background provide a refreshing change and the Martian units are way cool.

PCZ VERDICT 81%



Farting in frustration is neither clever nor funny. Well, not very anyway.

ABE'S EXODDUS

£14.99 • GT Interactive/Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P166 speeds things up nicely

2D platform games on the PC are about as common as a condom in the Vatican, which means that when the occasional contender does come along it has the whole market to itself. Of course, there is a reason for their scantness – nobody wants to play them, especially when they're as bloody hard as this one.

There are many things to applaud in *Abe's Exoddus*: its bravery, its oddness, the original communication and farting system, even the animation. Sadly, they don't make up for the suicidal tendencies and pathological teeth-grinding induced by the gameplay. After a few hours of frustrating deaths and samey puzzles you'll want to beat cute little Abe to a shapeless pulp. At least when Lara dies you've got her three-dimensional buttocks to stare at.

PCZ VERDICT 67%

X-COM: INTERCEPTOR

£14.99 • Hasbro Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** You need at least 32Mb RAM

It seemed such an exciting prospect: being able to man one of the ships that bring down the UFOs in the *X-COM* series. The game mixes the strategy and research of the original titles with the space simulation of the *X-Wing* series. Sadly, as so often happens when you try to combine two completely different genres, *Interceptor* is decidedly average on both counts.

The research is simple and straightforward, so there's no room for complex chains to figure out in order to succeed. The space combat is flat and suffers from a none-too-helpful interface. The quality usually found oozing out of anything with an *X-COM* tag doesn't quite ooze, the gripping atmosphere doesn't quite grip and the addictive gameplay doesn't quite addict. It's a brave and by no means rubbish attempt, it's just that it needed to be so much better.

PCZ VERDICT 70%

A disappointing transition to 3D for the *X-COM* series. And still we wait for *X-COM: Genesis* and *Alliance* to make things right.

FEEDBACK

Tiberian Sun* and *System Shock 2* battle it out for space, as you make your opinions known to the world. Keeping them in line: *Mark Hill

"I am sure I am not alone in thinking that *Kingpin* is rubbish. I have never disagreed with your reviews, but you got this one very, very wrong"
ANDREW HART, ER... DISAGREEING

IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in *PC ZONE* over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL Alternatively, email them to us at **letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk** with **'Feedback'** in the subject line.

"Phil Wand is obviously the worst lunatic to pollute your magazine, after giving *Driver* only 83%"
DAVID MORRIS, OUTRAGED AT THE WAY WE RATED *DRIVER*

C&C: TIBERIAN SUN

REVIEWED Issue 81, October
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC **"A game of extraordinary depth and playability. *Tiberian Sun* is the definitive version of the game."**

What you think

✪ "The best and smartest game I have bought in a long while and I think that no-one could compare it to any thing else because it's in a league of its own. All the animation is crystal clear, the cut-scenes are perfect and all of the new units are well thought-out."
Karl Hope, Ipswich

✪ "*Red Alert* without the cool units like commandos and naval forces. In fact the units on show are considerably crapper than the ones found in the original, which is years older!"
RickyRoo

✪ "It's a superb game, with great units, great missions and improved graphics (although I wish it was full 3D). Go and buy it NOW."
Boliath

✪ "*Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun* is pure genius. The game plays like a dream. The units are also brilliantly balanced to provide maximum enjoyment, and haven't gone the *TA* route of giving you the same unit with different colours. You actually have to change tactics depending on what units you come up against. Westwood haven't fallen flat on their faces pissing money up the wall, they've genuinely worked hard to produce an enjoyable game."
Ric Burns

✪ "What Westwood have been doing for three years is anyone's guess, they certainly haven't been spending it programming anything new into *Tib Sun*. The graphics are diabolical for this day and age and, if anything, worse than in *Red Alert*. I've also got *Dune 2000* and the graphics for *TS* have obviously been ported from that game. To give *TS* 90% is an insult to the other great games out there that reach that figure."
John Muir

Comment

This proves that you can't please all of the people all of the time. Some can see past the dated looks and appreciate the immersing gameplay, some can't. Fortunately for the game's sales, most of you can. I mean, you'd seen the screenshots beforehand, you knew what it looked like, so there's no excuse for whining about that now. Personally, if I see another pissy little harvester scuttling around an Eighties' graphics revival, I'll shave my eyes off with a rusty potato-peeler. Proving that you can't please all of the...

***C&C: Tiberian Sun*: another friggin' base-building exercise. Enough to make you go for a Nod.**

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

REVIEWED Issue 81, October
SCORE 95%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC **"It's a game you will complete, then play through again: it's nothing short of a classic of its time. Go out and buy it now."**

What you think

✪ "Your claim that *System Shock 2* may be the best RPG ever could well be true. The original *System Shock* was a classic game and the graphics and atmosphere in *System Shock 2* make *Half-Life* look dated."
Neil Compton

✪ "Amazing graphics, incredible storyline, unbelievable sound and one of the best control systems around make this the game of the year, without question. And it'll scare you senseless too. Forget *Quake II*, *Quake III* or *Half-Life*, this is the new benchmark. Did I say it was good? Well it bloody well is! Deserves more than 95 per cent methinks."
Andrew McMullan

✪ "I wouldn't have given this game 80%. Hacking a security device didn't feel at all satisfying. The security cameras are a good addition, but at no point did you feel you had to look out for them. The combat is slow and boring. Most of the weapons are poor. Whoever said it was hugely atmospheric obviously hasn't bothered to play *Thief*, because the atmosphere in that game was much greater than this pile of steaming poo."
Kirk Wagstaff

✪ "Just as your review states, a brilliant, truly immersive game. I would class it as a first-person action adventure, as the only RPG element is the skill system which doesn't grow with experience but with the nodules you find. Also, there aren't any characters to interact with, the most important element of a RPG in the classic sense."
Andreas Beck, Cambridge

✪ "This game is simply stunning. Amazing graphics, sound and atmosphere, but for once the real plus is the gameplay. Simple to start playing. Difficult to stop. It's a joy to play from beginning to end. The multiplayer aspect is fantastic and it's nice to see that the developers stuck to their guns and went for the co-op version and not some pissy deathmatch. In short, why are you reading this when you could be playing the game?"
Geoff

✪ "This game is everything a gamer wants – it's a classic. There's so much you can do, and you can be what you want to be. The sound and the setting gives the game that eerie feeling that games like *Quake* just don't have. The dead bodies, the alien taunts, the dark corridors, the exploding computers all make me take every step with caution. If you want a game with action, brains and scenes that fill your pants, buy this one."
Olly Azen

Comment

Kirk, you're either deranged, ignorant or don't know what you're talking about (not that we don't treat all our readers' opinions with the utmost respect). *Thief* is a great game, but *System Shock 2* belongs to the holy triumvirate with *Half-Life* and *Hidden & Dangerous*. Great graphics, engrossing playability, atmosphere, sound... it can all be individually good or bad, but it's the way it all blends together that matters. *SS2* transcends its parts with the sheer quality of the whole, creating an experience that anybody who plays games should share. 'Nuff said.

KINGPIN

REVIEWED Issue 77, June
SCORE 92%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC **"Xatrix have managed to take the 3D action game in a different, more adult-oriented direction."**

What you think

✪ "As for it supposedly bringing PC games onto a new, more mature level – well, if you think Chubby Brown is mature and adult for the sole reason that every second word is blue, then I suppose so. Having said that, not a bad first-person shooter/RPG, but ultimately no more than a *Quake II* total conversion with nipples."

Alan Bourke

✪ "I am sure that I am not alone in thinking that *Kingpin* is complete rubbish. The graphics are OK, but nothing special. The levels are so unoriginal, I feel I have played the game before. I buy about two games a month and have never disagreed with any one of your reviews in the last three years, but you got this one very, very wrong guys."

Andrew Hart

✪ "I think *Kingpin* has to be one of my most played first-person shooters. The single-player mode is excellent, and the multiplayer's cool. The review was spot on. Xatrix know their games."

Cesur

Comment

After playing it all the way through, I have to say *Kingpin* isn't the most involving or innovative game ever. However, the man Brooker has done the same and strongly disagrees. So who's right? Neither, of course, it's a matter of opinion. And his is wrong. Which is why it's got rave reviews from all the other mags, gone to the top of the charts and made children in playgrounds everywhere spend days calling each other motherf***s.**

***Kingpin*: okay, so it isn't mature, but it's definitely adult. Whether it's a good game still seems to be open to debate.**

***Driver*: just not enough depth to make it a classic PC game.**

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

REVIEWED Issue 76, May
SCORE 91%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC **"It's tense, challenging, frightening and, above all, different."**

What you think

✪ "To say this game is a little scary is a huge understatement. I have been playing games for eight years now and have never felt so terrified before. First your motion tracker starts bleeping so you inch forward slowly until it reads 0 metres. You stop looking about and just catch a glimpse of the beast as it falls from a vent, removing your head in the process. Brilliant."

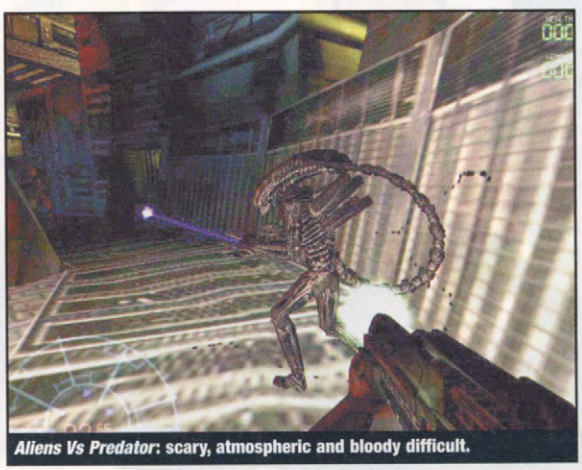
James Larham

✪ "This could have been a really good worthwhile investment if it hadn't been bugged to hell. I think it's the most annoying game I've played for years. Round every corner I heard the annoying sound of an alien approaching. Almost instantly I was getting ripped apart. I ran for cover, only to fall down a big hole and die. The flame-thrower is okay against the Predator, but against the Aliens it's more harm then good. Its small range means you'll get hit at least once when trying to ignite the annoying bastards. I kept setting fire to myself when I used it."

Taffer

Comment

Sorry Taffer, but that's the nature of the game. I get ripped apart after a few minutes play too, but I put it down to my gross incompetence rather than the game's lack of quality. And I think you'll find the sound of an alien approaching round the corner is supposed to instil whoops of terror, not frowns of annoyance. *AvP* is not without its flaws, but it's one of the scariest first-person shooters ever.



***Aliens Vs Predator*: scary, atmospheric and bloody difficult.**

DRIVER

REVIEWED Issue 82, November
SCORE 83%

What we thought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED **"Play a few missions and they soon become a little too linear and repetitive."**

What you think

✪ "Phil Wand is obviously the worst lunatic to pollute your magazine, after giving *Driver* only 83%. What the hell? "The cops are too aggressive," he says. That's real life – they're hardly gonna let you get away with it, are they? Of course they're gonna get annoyed if you are escorting known criminals. No multiplayer, fair enough. I know 83% isn't a bad score, but surely an original game which livens up this pretty boring genre deserves better."

David Morris

Comment

Like you say, 83% isn't a bad score at all. And we expected more from it, hence the score.

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

REVIEWED Issue 79, August
SCORE 91%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC **"It all gels to make a genuinely rewarding gaming experience."**

What you think

✪ "Not since *Thief* have I been so obsessed with a game. Painfully difficult, but exceptionally rewarding. The attention to detail is staggering and the atmosphere is unparalleled. All other soldier sims pale into insignificance. The sniper rifle is brilliantly realised and the indoors sections are as good as any in *Half-life*. I love this game and hope a sequel will be released soon."

Dominic Watson

Comment

And, from what we hear, it will be top. But we can look forward to the expansion pack first.

FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS

REVIEWED Issue 81, October
SCORE 73%

What we thought:

"The action is a curiously stunted affair, lacking the immediacy of *FIFA* or the intricacy of *Actua*."

What you think

✪ "What's EA doing? They have taken a step backwards. What happened to the free flowing, one-touch football of *FIFA 99*? Your review was spot on. Get the ball, run round the whole team, tap it in – 10-0. And what are these power bars about? Please EA, don't put the 'FIFA' name to it."

Josh Moreton, London

✪ "This game is great, the best football game since *SWOS*. The STARS system really adds greatness to it. Your comments on the first touch are unfounded, I thought it was realistic. I've kept *FIFA 99* on my hard drive as it is a different game. Start rating games on their own merits, not comparing them to *FIFA* or *Half-Life*."

Shaun Hasney

Comment

***Stars* is a footie game from EA, so it's inevitably going to be compared to *FIFA 99*. And, on its own merits, it's nowhere near as good.** PCZ

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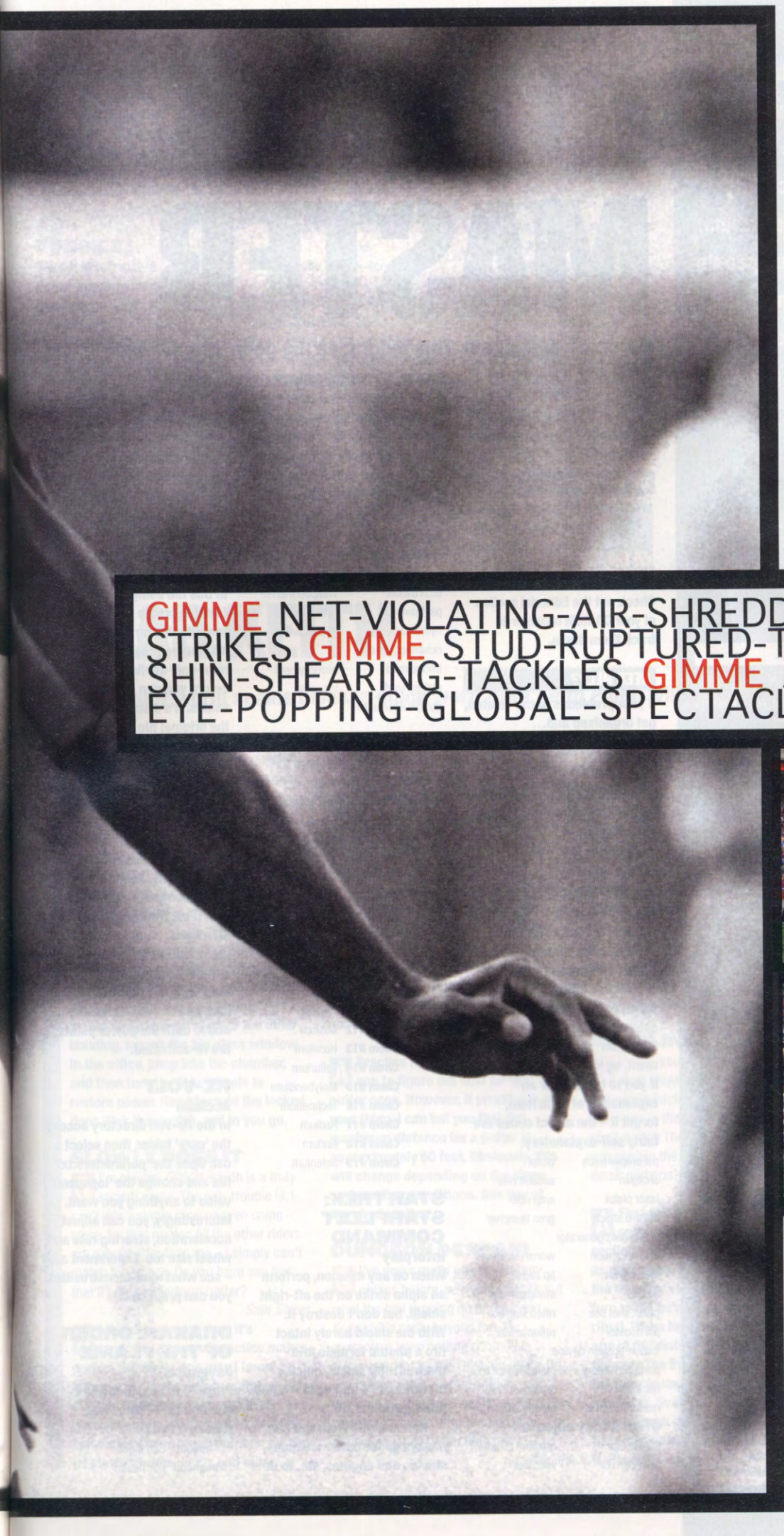


EA SPORTS FIFA 2000

GIMME NET-VIOLATING-AIR-SHREDDING-LIGHTNING STRIKES GIMME STUD-RUPTURED-TURF-CHURNING SHIN-SHEARING-TACKLES GIMME A-WIDE-AWAKE EYE-POPPING-GLOBAL-SPECTACLE GIMME FIFA

EA SPORTS
easports.com
it's in the game.

TROUBLESHOOTER

You've tried and tried but you just can't do without more mana, more ammo – and a bit of invincibility wouldn't go amiss either... Being the generous people we are, here's some cheats and solutions for all your favourite games

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

114 CHEATMASTER
If at first you don't succeed... cheat. Allow Keith Pullin to show you how it's done.

115 DEAR KEITH
We know how frustrating it is to get stuck on a game. Which is why Keith Pullin's here to provide some answers.

116 HOW TO...
Playing games all day for a living sounds like a dream come true, but you *can* make a career of it. Adam Phillips points you in the right direction.

124 SYSTEM SHOCK 2
It's scary and can give you nightmares, but we can help you get through it with our comprehensive players guide. Part two next issue...

130 KINGPIN
Now there's no excuse to swear as much as the characters in *Kingpin*, thanks to our handy walkthrough.

134 DEAR WAZZA
Need a hand with a technical query that's bugging you? Our tech-head Wazza is here to help.

136 WATCHDOG
Not satisfied with the service you've received? Pissed off with being fobbed off? Allow *PC ZONE*'s Ann Robinson, Adam Phillips, to take up your case and twist some corporate knickers.

YOUR HOSTS

Warren Chrismas

Keith Pullin

Adam Phillips

Phil Wand

Mark Hill

Paul Mallinson

CHEAT MASTER

It's cheat time again. This month we dig deep into *System Shock 2*, *Starfleet Command* and many more besides

CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

ON THE CD

We've got more than 1,200 games tips and solutions squeezed on to this month's free cover CD for you. Check out the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser to track them down.

NEED HELP?

If your problem's game-related, get organised and...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/CheatMaster, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with **'Dear Keith'** or **'CheatMaster'** in the subject line.

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

Electronic Arts

With the walkthrough on page 124 and these cheats there's no excuse for system shutdown... While playing the game, press Shift and ';' (semi-colon) together, then type 'summon_obj' and the item you want, eg 'summon_obj pistol'. If you're looking for an explanation of each item, forget it – the object codes are fairly self-explanatory:

psi ampwrench	pistol
shotgun	assault rifle
laser pistol	emp rifle
electro shock	gren launcher
stasis field generator	
fusion cannon	worm launcher
medical kit	ap clip
he clip	standard clip
pellet shot box	rifled slug box
psi booster	reflec armor
french-epstein device	
portable battery	maintenance tool
hack soft v3	repair soft v3
research soft v3	modify soft v3

Other handy objects

light armor	medium armor
heavy armor	vacc suit
worm skin	med card
science card	crew card
r and d card	rec crew key
med annex key	cryo card
crew 2 card	molec. analyzer
r 1 nanite	stats trainer
tech trainer	weapon trainer
psi trainer	hydro card a
hydro card b	hydro card d
rickenbacker card	
bridge card	security card
radkey card	id cards
shuttle access key	

If you need specific chemicals, type 'summon_obj chem #1' or whichever number corresponds to what's here...

Chem #1	Fermium
Chem #2	Vanadium
Chem #3	Gallium
Chem #4	Antimony
Chem #5	Yttrium
Chem #6	Copper
Chem #7	Californium
Chem #8	Sodium
Chem #9	Osmium
Chem #10	Iridium
Chem #11	Arsenic
Chem #12	Cesium
Chem #13	Hassium
Chem #14	Tellurium
Chem #15	Molybendium
Chem #16	Technetium
Chem #17	Radium
Chem #18	Barium
Chem #19	Selenium

STAR TREK: STARFLEET COMMAND

Interplay

When on any mission, perform an alpha strike on the aft-right shield, but don't destroy it. With the shield barely intact fire a photon torpedo into the front-left shield, quickly hit Ctrl and F4 and voilà – 4,000 prestige points.

Not enough? Well, you can always go for better weapons, shields and engines, etc. To do this you need to access a text file called 'sfbspc13.txt' located in 'assets\specs\sfbspc13.txt' in the main directory of the game. Try modifying the many fields in this file using Microsoft Excel to create some formidable starships.

NB: You need to remove the read-only attribute of the file before you can alter any values. It's also worth keeping the original file somewhere safe – just in case.

C&C: TIBERIAN SUN

Electronic Arts

Here's a handy tip for those of you who are getting toasted a bit too easily. Select 'firestorm wall', charge it up and then turn it on. Now sell, or switch off all your power plants before the firestorm wall runs out of power. The message 'On Hold' appears in the icon slot, and the wall now stays active until the power plants are re-activated.

RE-VOLT

Acclaim

In the *Re-Volt* directory access the 'cars' folder, then select a car. Open the 'parameters.txt' file and change the 'topspeed' value to anything you want. Interestingly, you can adjust acceleration, steering rate and wheel size too. Experiment a bit – see what mini-monstrosities you can produce...

DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME

Psygnosis

Press '\' to talk, then key in one or both of these two sneaky cheats:

iamgod	God mode
smeghead	Full health

NOCTURNE
Take 2 Interactive

So far there's only one cheat for Take 2's horror adventure, but rest assured, we'll deliver more soon...

Giveallammo 100 ammo for selected weapon

FORCE 21
Take 2 Interactive

Force some enjoyment out of this limp combat simulation by hitting the '`~' (tilde) key, followed by any of these codes:

gameoverman Instant victory
killenemy Kill all enemies
ispy Remove fog of war
polytheism Everyone's invincible
amazon Remove trees
london Remove clouds
hasselhoff Instant loss
avatar Place yellow boxes around vehicles and buildings
grid Display grid
chessmatch 100% radar
commanders Disable commanders
stratperspective Change view
novictory Disable victory results
hurt Inflict damage on first vehicle in present platoon
chillout Locks vehicle in position
seattle Disable horizon

DRIVER (DEMO)
GT Interactive

Tired of the same old demo car? Then try this. Access your *Driver* demo directory, go into the 'scripts/missions/' folder, and open the 'Mission661.dms' file with any editor. Replace the '0' on the line 'PlayerCarType 0' to something else and away you go with your brand new set of wheels.

0 Original car
1 Pickup
2 Pimpmobile
3 Sports car
4 Camaro
5 Toronado
6 Nova
7 Cadillac Sedan
8 Bonneville
9 Chevelle
10 LAPD Cruiser (horn activates lights and siren)
11 Cadillac Coupé
12 Firebird
13 Taxi
14 Cadillac Sedan
16 Jaguar
17 '55 Thunderbird

DARKSTONE
Take 2 Interactive

Want free money? Of course you do. Start a new game and transfer all the money from one character to the other. Start a new game again, this time using the character with all the gold, but give him a new partner. Move the 1,500 gold starting money from this new character back to the other one who should be still loaded up with the rest of the gold. Follow that? Good. Repeat the process until you have as much money as you need.

On a lighter note, when playing as the thief try robbing the chickens. Also, toss some coins in the bard's tray for a cute bonus.

FINAL FANTASY VII
Eidos Interactive

And finally, here's a quickie just to polish things off nicely this issue. You might not have heard about this handy little tip for Squaresoft's seminal role-playing game. Simply hold 'Page Down' and whatever your target key is to slowly restore energy.

CALL OUR TIPS LINE
0207 917 7698
THURS 1.30PM–5.30PM

Richard Crook here will answer any question you have. Possibly

Email us for a quick response: Tipszone@hotmail.com

DEAR KEITH

When your world seems bleak, a quick word from *Keith Pullin* will make everything rosy

LIGHTS OUT MARINE

Q I've just read your strategy guide for *Aliens Vs Predator* but I've still got a bit of a problem on the second marine level. I just cannot get into the large north gate to finish the mission. I know it's something about turning the power on, but I'm not sure how to. Please help – I'm losing faith in myself, especially as I can't save the game either.

Warren Lord

A Firstly, you can save – just skip along to our website or issue 81's coverdisc to obtain the patch. As for your main problem... at a guess I would say you need to enter the other building, smash the big glass window in the office, jump into the chamber, and then turn the four wheels to restore power. Head back to the locked door, flick the switch, and in you go.

SLOWLY DOES IT

Q I'm playing *GP500*, which is a truly superb game. The only trouble is, I can't win a single race, or even come close, for that matter. All the other riders are miles better than me – I simply can't match their pace. Do you have any tips that'll help me perform better?

Sam Street

A Like all racing games, it's basically a case of practice makes perfect. However, one way I found to improve my times was to watch a rider such as Doohan through the first-person camera view and look at what speeds he does around corners, where he starts to slow down, and other useful things like that. Don't just stop watching after one lap though – give it a good four or five laps, and even consider writing down the speeds for each corner. Try it now – I guarantee you'll be faster.

PUTTY IN MY HAND

Q How on earth do I know how far to putt on *PGA Championship Golf*? There is absolutely no indication of how far the putter goes, and subsequently my putts are either going miles past, or nowhere at all. This really is ruining my enjoyment of what is otherwise a great golf simulation.

Roger Watson

A Practice is what ultimately allows you to figure out how far the putter goes. However, if practice is not your thing, I can tell you that the maximum distance for a putter is approximately 60 feet. Obviously, this will change depending on the slope and weather conditions. See you at the nineteenth...

DUNGEON DESPAIR

Q I've never really played strategy games before, so trying to work out what the hell is going on in *Dungeon Keeper 2* is sadly beyond me. My characters keep getting confused, hungry and lost – a bit like me really. Do you have any hints or tips or just anything so I can get past level three? I bought this game after reading your review, so you'd better help me.

Barry Gould

A Well, when you put it like that... Your confused character syndrome is down to poor room design. What you need to do is build your three main rooms ensemble. In other words build a 2x2 hatchery, around that build a treasury, and finally surrounding the treasury build a lair. You now have everything your monsters need in one 6x6 megaroom. You can try this approach with other types of rooms as well, ie a lair surrounded by a workshop, or a lair surrounded by a library. Try it – you'll be surprised at the difference.

BUNGLING BURGLAR

Q I know you covered *Thief: The Dark Project* in a walkthrough a little while back, but I'm still having problems at the very end of it – I just can't switch The Eye for the fake. Could you explain the process in a bit more detail perhaps?

Jez Williams

A First things first – make sure you save the game just before this section so you can try it as many times as necessary. Now you'll notice that the trickster visits each pedestal in turn while he's preparing for the final ritual. When he starts walking towards one of the distant ones, quickly edge towards The Eye using moss arrows on the floor to cover the sound of your footsteps. Switch The Eye and then quickly back out of the cave and watch the end sequence. That's all there is to it. Hope it helps.

MONKEYING AROUND

Q I followed your adventure Supertest recommendation and bought the *Monkey Island Collection*. Currently I am stuck on the first *Monkey Island* because I can't get the voodoo 'root' thing (from Le Chuck's ghost ship?) for the cannibals so I can kill Le Chuck. I have already obtained the ghost feather and grog, but what should I do now? Your help will be deeply appreciated.

Yumin Wang

A Give the jug 'o grog to the rat on the ship to get some grease. Go back to the deck, put a splodge of grease on the squeaky door and then go through into the next room. Pick up the tools you find here and then return to the farm with the ghost animals. You should be all right from there.

LEAKY DEFENCE

Q I have a bizarre problem on *Championship Manager 3* – all my goalkeepers are crap. I try and buy keepers with good handling and all the usual attributes associated with them, but still they let in goals left, right and centre. Why is this happening? This is really starting to do my head in.

Richard Cross

A Sounds like your problem lies not with your goalkeeper, but the defence in front of him. Concentrate on buying defenders with good tackling ability, heading, speed and all that kind of stuff, and I'm sure the hole will soon be plugged. PCZ

HOW TO...

PLAY GAMES FOR A LIVING

Tired of walking into work with about as much enthusiasm as a brain-eating zombie looking at a vegetarian menu? Wanna make your passion for gaming your salary spinner instead? It can be done... and our own Charlie Brooker is one of many shining examples

EXPLORING THE OPTIONS Adam Phillips

When you hear the unique phrase "I love my job", it makes you stop dead in your tracks: either you're talking to a brainwashed Disney employee or you've stumbled across that rarest of breeds – the person who is utterly happy with their vocation.

Loving thy job, never mind thy neighbour, is what we all strive for. That extra spring in the step in the morning; the energy for tasks you only get when you're passionate about something; and not casting a furtive glance at the clock wondering when your next fag break is, never mind if it's 'going home time' yet.

For many of us, the workplace is not that black and white. We like some aspects of it: a routine which is as constant and solid as your bowel movements, working with people in a team, and the cash and security. But then there are parts of it that we dislike: the bone-achingly repetitive nature of said work routine, working with a person in a team who you can't stand, and the cash, which is never enough. As for security, well, let's just hope the department isn't downsized next month by some corporate head honcho.

"Write a sample review of a game and send it in. Cover the facts, but for God's sake keep the poor sod entertained. Check your spelling and grammar. And don't use the word 'ct'. Unless it's your surname"**

CHARLIE BROOKER, GAMES JOURNALIST

But ultimately it's a means to pay off the mortgage/car/credit cards/kids, so it's understandable that we'll put up with almost anything. But there are those who enjoy the best of both worlds. And if you're reading this humble mag, you must be mad for games. Perhaps there's part of you that wants to turn that nightly obsession with the latest and greatest gaming titles into a daily career. "There must be a way," you ponder. Perhaps, just perhaps mind you, there is...

1. BECOME A GAMES TESTER

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Picture the scene: you're paid to play games all day. That's right – play games all day! The only downside? You have to play the same game every day for at least a year. However, the world of games testing is the most common route for punters wanting to get their foot in the door of the games industry.

While some of you may be wondering if any games actually have testers in these days of multiple bugs and 20 meg patches, in reality the games tester is one of the most vital parts of any game production. It can be a gruelling job – constantly analysing different versions of the game as it grows during its development cycle, harassing programmers with lists of bugs, and then when it's released, knowing that your neck is on the line if a bad bug is found. But there are benefits – being part of one of the most exciting industries out there, having a hand in the development of a potential future classic and, more importantly, getting drunk and falling over at the launch party.

"I DID IT!"

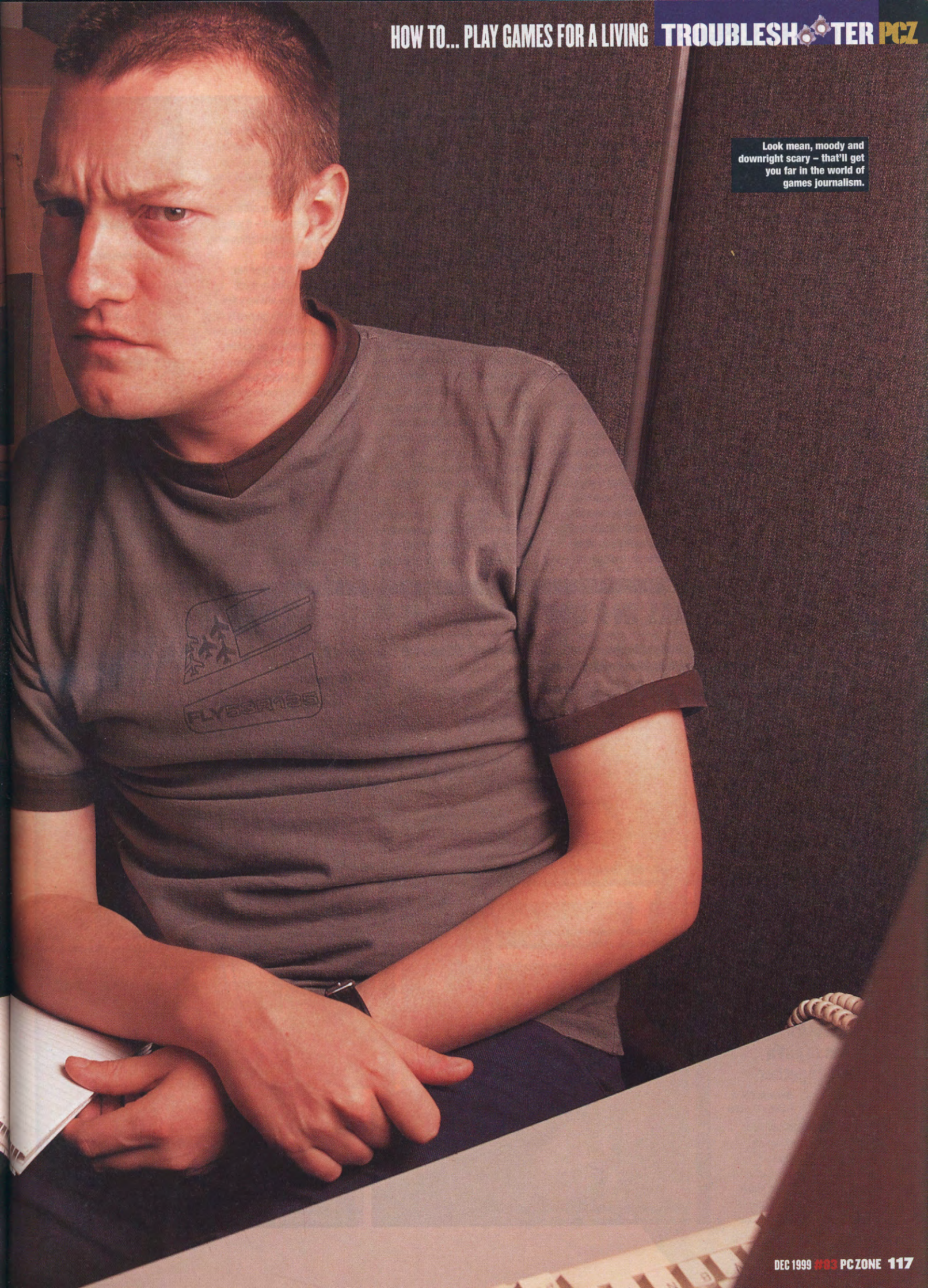
He used to be an apprentice footballer. He then worked in the building trade for eight years. But by night, Andy Robson was an obsessive gamesplayer – even to the point that when a new game was released, he'd buy it and skive off days at a time so he could play it with his unemployed mates. Then one day, it dawned on him what he wanted to do with the rest of his life...

PCZ: How did you get started?

ANDY: Well, I always wished I could be paid to play games and then someone told me that there was a place in Guildford where you could test them. So I got the Yellow Pages and phoned up the company, which happened to be Bullfrog – I didn't even know who they were at the time! I went for work experience for two weeks and once I got there, I knew I'd never want to leave.

PCZ: How did things develop from there?

ANDY: I joined in '92 as a work experience bod,



Look mean, moody and downright scary – that'll get you far in the world of games journalism.

subsequently got a bit of temping and then they took me on full-time. The first game I worked on was *Syndicate* for the 3DO, then *Magic Carpet*, *Theme Park* for the PlayStation, *Gene Wars*, *Syndicate Wars*, *Dungeon Keeper* and *Magic Carpet 2* – it gave me quite a lot of experience. I then moved to Lionhead and started on *Black & White*.

PCZ: What does your job entail?

ANDY: We don't just test for bugs, we look at everything: the gameplay, level design, the tutorials, the help system and so on. A lot of testers in other companies don't get that kind of input. It's a shame because they're the people who play the game every day and know all about it.

PCZ: What skills do you need to be a good games tester?

ANDY: You have to have a passion for games. Secondly, you need communication skills – you must be able to work in a team and talk to people. You also need to be creative and come up with ideas that help solve a particular problem. A knowledge of PCs is helpful, and being able to write is vital because you need to describe stuff like bugs or a particular idea.

PCZ: How does being a top games tester operate on a day-to-day basis?

ANDY: They call me Gestapo Robbo because of the love/hate relationship I have with the programmers. But you have to be like that with people in this line of work, especially to get things done. You have to force people to get features in and stuff, or you'd never get anywhere.

PCZ: How do people get a job as a games tester?

> **"At first a lot of my mates thought my job must be easy, but one of them came to work with me at Bullfrog and realised how much work it takes to put a game together"**
>
> **ANDY ROBSON, GAMES TESTER**

ANDY: At Lionhead, potential contractors who come for an interview have to undertake a rigorous test. We sit them down in front of a game which we know has bugs and we see how many they can spot within a two-hour period. There's a huge difference between playing games and testing them!

PCZ: How about work experience?

ANDY: We let people come in for one to two weeks to do games testing. They come from all over the world – America, Australia, Germany, Switzerland, everywhere. They provide us with a fresh pair of eyes on the game every week. We use them for their ideas as well and let them have their input at the end of their session. We've been using work experience bods for the last year and we reckon we can get about 14,000 hours of testing in before launch.

PCZ: How should a prospective games tester look for a job?

ANDY: Get a list of all the companies in the country and get their contact numbers. Ask them if they do beta testing – some companies actually have beta test versions on their websites. Do phone them and ask if they're interested in taking you on as work experience, but bear in mind that not many companies are – we're one of the main people who do but we're booked up until September 2000!

PCZ: What kind of salary should someone starting out as a games tester expect?

ANDY: 12-14k to start off. If they're good, that can climb to 18-20k.

PCZ: Is games testing an easy life, as some people imagine?

ANDY: They'll have a shock if they come in and do some testing – at first a lot of my mates thought my job must be easy, but one of them came to work with me at Bullfrog and realised how much work it takes to put together a game. There's a lot of testing and it's down to you, your communication skills and your personality.

PCZ: What are the perks?

ANDY: What's good is that you get paid for your hobby and do a job you love. Plus the gaming, the parties, and going out on the town with your work mates. The bonuses and pay rises are good as well. The best 'perk' though is that final CD – what amazes me is all that work created over two-and-a-half years by some 22 people is put on a single disc.

"WHAT SHOULD I DO?"

- Check out the websites of software companies – they may have ads up for games testers.
- Check out the computer press for job opportunities.
- Remember that qualifications aren't that important – it's down to you, your communication skills and your personality.
- If you're of the fairer sex, go for it. According to some companies, there are very few women working as games testers and they are needed to offer their female perspective on games.
- According to Tony Bourne, QA Manager at Eidos, being a games tester can open doors for you: "Around 50 per cent of the testers working for me at US Gold (my first company) are now producers at Sony. Testers generally move into producing, game design and PR."

"WHERE SHOULD I GO?"

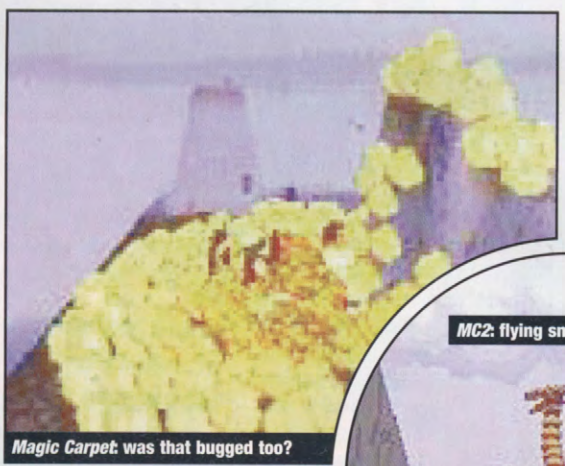
Check out the following sites for more info:

Betazine
www.betazine.com
An impressive site which lists all up-and-coming beta versions of games. If you want to cut your teeth on games testing, you should drop in here.

Beta Bites
www.betabites.com
Another homepage dedicated to listing all the beta games out there. Between this and Betazine, you should have no problem finding a game-testing gig to show off your bug-nailing skills to a potential employer.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK...

Andy's tested some of the greatest titles ever to grace a PC – *Magic Carpet*, *MC2*, *Syndicate Wars*, *Gene Wars* and *Theme Park*

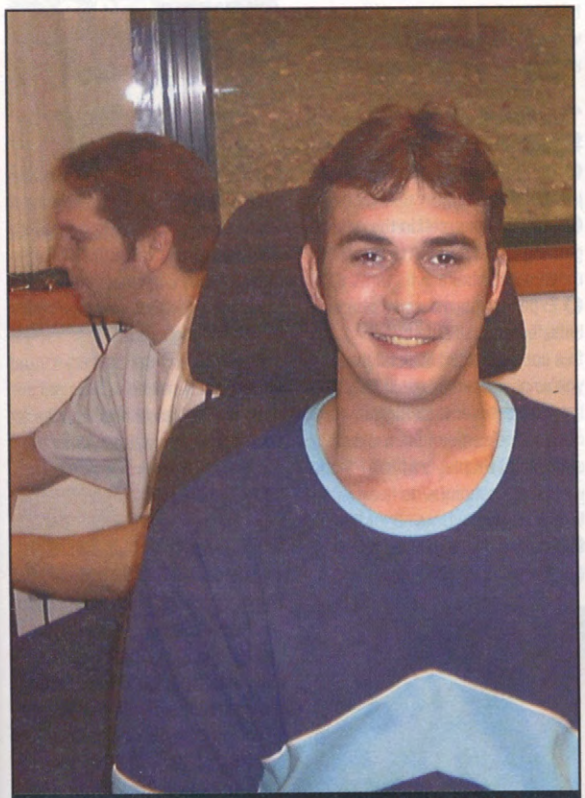

***Magic Carpet*: was that bugged too?**

***Syndicate Wars*: waging war against bugs.**

***MC2*: flying smoothly.**

***Gene Wars*: an almost forgotten classic.**

***Theme Park*: it can't have been hard to play this nonstop for months.**



The brickie turned top games tester – Andy "Gestapo Robbo" Robson.

2. BECOME A PRO GAMER

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

It's the dream job – kick ass at a game and get paid a fortune. While it may have been the stuff of pipe dreams back in the early Nineties, times are rapidly a-changing. The pro gamer scene kicked off in the States back in the mid-Nineties with the *Doom*-based Deathmatch '95 tournament. At stake was a $12,000 computer, a joystick and a shedload of games. And for the loser? Well, just the joystick. The ultimate winner Thresh (see interview) wiped out his opponent, Merlock, a rather emotional youngster who ended up in tears.

Apart from the display of public humiliation, the event was far more significant because it helped launch the pro gaming scene where punters can now enter tournaments and battle it out over a variety of games. Indeed, the scene has spawned the Professional Gamer's League in the States – for a paltry $9.95, some 2,000 bods put themselves forward in the hope of thrashing all opponents over four seasons and getting their hands on prizes which can add up to $250,000 in a single year.

Thankfully, the UK has begun to wake up to the potential of pro gaming with the arrival of the UK PC Games Championships, a tournament where teams of between two and four players compete at regional qualifiers around the country. The teams have to play eight games from four genres – strategy, shoot 'em up, sport and driving – and the best team from each qualifier goes through to a Grand Final.

The UKPCGC has over £50,000 worth of prizes to give away, thanks to its sponsors AMD and MSN. The winning team gets its hands on nearly £20,000 worth of prizes – £1,500 cash for winning the regional qualifier, £10,000 for winning the Grand Final. Oh, and a top-spec machine for each team member as well.

Not bad, eh? But for those of you considering jacking in your day job, Charles Allen, one of the organisers of the competition, offers these words of wisdom: "Over time, computer games will become just like any other sport, and the best people at that sport will become household names and will earn a living. This won't happen overnight though – I think that we will see true professional gamers in the UK in the next three to five years."

Indeed, in the States, even such gaming luminaries as Thresh are still a tad cautious…

"I DID IT!"

Thresh, aka Dennis Fong, is a god. In the eyes of his fans at least. Not only did he whip young Merlock's butt at *Doom* but he's also won several major competitions in the States, including John 'iD Software' Carmack's Ferrari in a *Quake* compo. Fong's sponsorship deals

TESTING TESTING 1 2 3...

Andy's now working at Lionhead on the eagerly anticipated *Black & White*. You know who to complain to if you come across a bug when the game's finally released…

***Black & White*: one of the most exciting prospects in PC gaming.**

THRESH IT OUT!

The classic *Doom* and its many spin-offs: it may have entertained us for hours on end but it helped Thresh earn a bleedin' fortune

↑ ***Doom*: the game that spawned everything that matters.**

←↓ **How do you win a Ferrari? Simple – follow Thresh's lead and become the world's best *Quake* player.**

and personal appearances are rumoured to have generated some $150,000 a year for the pro. Not bad for a mere gamer…

PCZ: What advice would you give to someone who wants to go pro gaming full-time?

DENNIS: It's still a little premature to quit school and become a full-time professional gamer. The scene is still really new, even with the regular tournaments – they don't have really big cash prizes yet, certainly not enough to live on. If you really have a passion for gaming, keep doing it but don't bet all your marbles on it – stay in school and get an education.

PCZ: Can you personally live on your gamesplaying?

DENNIS: Yes, I could. It obviously varies on how often I play – if I played in every single tournament, then yes, but I don't. It would be really stressful to have to play in a tournament every week. I do know some guys who are doing it full-time but I think they're living with their parents. You can win five grand here and there but it isn't really enough. I'm sponsored by several companies so I can live on what I earn from them and the prize money, but I do other stuff that's related to gaming. You *can* make money being a full-time gamer if you do other things – for example, testing games or trying your hand at journalism.

PCZ: For those who want to be pro gamers, how many hours should they be putting in a day?

DENNIS: I know people who play eight hours a day consistently – they wake up, get a certain number of frags and eat lunch then carry on. It's pretty crazy, I don't see a need for that. I think in the future when there's a lot of money at stake – let's say $100,000 as a prize and sponsorships – then it might be worthwhile putting in a lot of time. The most practical advice I can give is to make sure that you get adequate rest between games because you could end up with something like carpal tunnel syndrome. Oh, and remember to exercise!

PCZ: What are the key elements to becoming a great pro gamer?

DENNIS: Attitude plays a big role in your success – it alters how you play and look at the game. For me, and I've always said this, the only reason I continue playing is because I still think it's fun. It makes you nervous if you always go into a compo worrying about how good your opponent is, what kind of moves he's going to do on you and stuff like that. These games require a lot of precision with the mouse and keyboard, and quick thinking and clear judgement – once you get nervous, it clouds all of that.

PCZ: So how do you approach a game?

DENNIS: As long as I play the best I can, then I don't worry about what my opponent's doing. That's not to say I think I can beat everybody, but I am confident enough in myself that if I play well, even if he beats me, I know I gave it my best shot. A lot of people say I'm ice cold and that I don't have much emotion, but it's just that I'm concentrating so hard on what I'm doing and that's all that really matters to me. I think about what the other person is doing strategically or what he is thinking but I don't worry about it. The good thing is I keep control.

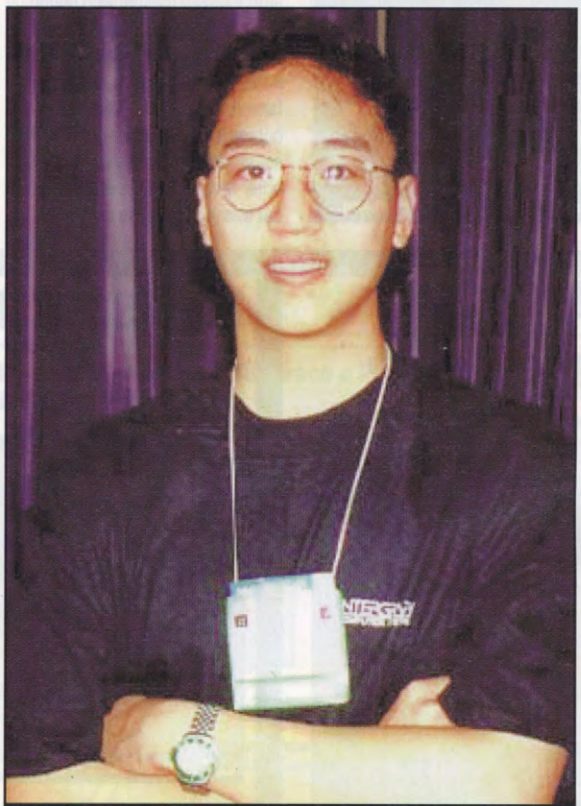
PCZ: What do UK gamers need to improve their game?

DENNIS: UK players are a little disadvantaged. They don't have regular phone lines and have to pay money for local calls. They also don't usually have the chance to play on a decent connection, and you need a lot of money to play games online or just surf the Web. That's not to say there aren't any decent players, because there are. Until the telecoms industry in the UK wakes up though, UK players are always going to suffer slightly.

> **"Attitude plays a big role in your success – it alters how you play and look at the game. For me, the only reason I continue playing is because I still think it's fun"**
>
> THRESH, PROFESSIONAL GAMER

"WHAT SHOULD I DO?"

- Don't give up your day job just yet.
- Immerse yourself in the online gaming world and get to know the movers and shakers.
- Expect to pay massive phone bills. If you're still at school this could be a tad difficult, but if you're at university, see if they'll let you play over their high-speed networks – some of the most successful UK players have used this 'technique' to hone their skills.
- You could always emigrate to the States…



In years to come, Thresh will be remembered as the first pro gamer.

"WHERE SHOULD I GO?"

Check out the following sites for more info:

The Playing Fields
www.theplayingfields.co.uk
The group behind the UKPCGC, The Playing Fields is a gaming café in London. They run various events throughout the year and are carving themselves a respectable niche in the multiplaying world. Well worth checking out next time you're in the Big Smoke.

The Professional Gamers League
www.pgl.com
The homepage of the US gaming elite, this features all the details on how the league works. They've even produced a set of collectable cards featuring the league's top players. Ahh, bless…

The UK PC Games Championships
www.ukpcgc.com
While the competition has closed for this year, fret not! It'll be returning bigger and better than ever next year. Shoot along to the site and check out the details on how it all works.

Wireplay
www.wireplay.co.uk
The bods at BT have also got in on the multiplaying competition lark by holding the Quakeadelica event last year. The compo's winner, Billox, was subsequently thrashed by Thresh – 57-0 to be precise. Ouch.

Firing Squad
www.firingsquad.com
Oh, and don't forget to check out Thresh's homepage for more details on the world's greatest games player.

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS

Want to show off your gaming prowess and win prizes? Then this may be right up your street...

UKPCGC organiser Charles Allen: " I think that we will see true professional gamers in the UK in the next three to five years."

Another UK player tries to snare the odd prize or three in a nail-biting UK PC Games Championships qualifier.

Okay, so it may not be a bright shiny sports car but the UKPCGC's prizes aren't half bad…

3. BECOME A GAMES JOURNALIST

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

It doesn't matter how much you try and compliment us in your letters to *PC ZONE*, we know what you really think of us: you reckon that we sit around all day playing games and getting drunk at launch parties. We wish! In reality the life of a games journalist can be a hectic and stressful one.

If you fancy giving it a whirl, a good way to start is by doing the odd bit of freelancing – submitting a good idea to the wealth of games mags out there. Indeed, *PC ZONE* is always happy to hear from anyone who can string a sentence or two together.

For those considering going full-time as a freelancer, it's a tough job – there's no guaranteed wage at the end of each month, little security, and endless daytime telly to suck the creative soul dry. But if you're still tempted, we asked *PC ZONE*'s most infamous freelance hack to impart a few choice words of wisdom.

"I DID IT!"

He's the games industry's answer to Jeremy Clarkson. But with a relatively trendy haircut and sicker humour. You all know him and you all love/hate him. It's Mr Charlie Brooker. Under the spotlight. Again.

PCZ: How did you get started?

CHARLIE: I got into games reviews by accident – my first experience of magazine work involved drawing comic strips for children's comics. After leaving polytechnic, I began drawing cartoon adverts for the Computer Exchange and was invited to come up with something for *PC ZONE*. I drew a few spot illustrations and then Macca *(Another* PC ZONE *writer – Ed)* suggested I try submitting some written work. I did. It got accepted. And I became a freelance writer.

PCZ: What advice would you give to someone trying to launch their career in computer games journalism?

CHARLIE: Read the mags, pick a favourite, carefully study the style, write a sample review (but keep it short – 300 words, tops) of a game you know inside-out, and send it in. Cover the facts, but for God's sake keep the poor sod reading it entertained. Check your spelling and use of grammar. And don't use the word "c**t". Unless it's your surname. Oh, and include some screenshots – ones you've taken yourself – plus witty captions, if you're using 'snail mail' and want to impress.

PCZ: Are there any common pitfalls people should keep an eye out for?

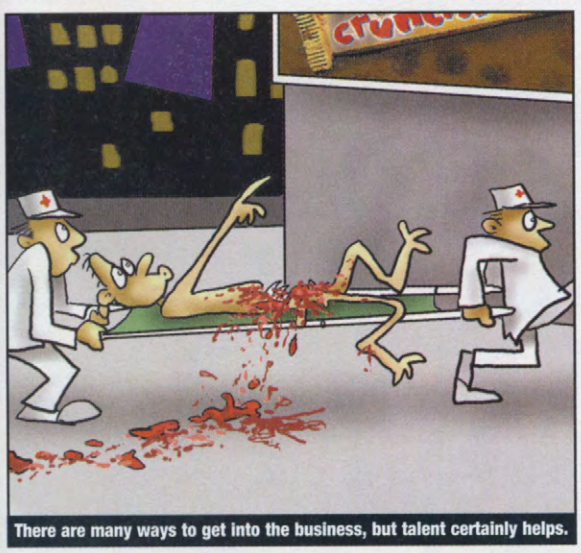
CHARLIE: Don't send in 15 pages of densely written garbage – it'll go straight in the bin. Don't be over-eager to impress with your knowledge of every PC game on the planet: the standard of your writing should be the primary concern. Stay within the style of the magazine you're submitting work to, but don't slavishly ape the style of an established writer. Especially if that writer is me, and you turn out to be much better. No, definitely don't do that.

PCZ: How should budding journos handle editors?

CHARLIE: Handling editors? Never worked that one out myself. Don't piss them off and expect them to offer you work again, but stand up for yourself if you think you've been badly treated or disagree with a cut or change to your copy.

PCZ: Finally, what do you say to folk who reckon being a games journalist is a lark and all you have to do is play games all day?

CHARLIE: Compared to being a nurse in a medium-secure unit where the patients are continually trying to stab you in the eyes with tiny sharpened spoons, it *is* a lark. But it's a lot of hard work too, especially when you're as disorganised as me. If you're a freelancer, and you're lazy (ie normal), you'll find the work piles up and you end up spending your free time trying to bang out copy before the deadline arrives. It's like constantly having to worry about homework. Plus, whenever you go to a big press launch and have to tell a member of the 'established' press who you write for, they begin to treat you like a very simple monkey. Which, after all, is only fair.



There are many ways to get into the business, but talent certainly helps.

In some countries they keep freelance journos in zoos. Here they work for games mags.

"WHAT SHOULD I DO?"

✪ If you can, ease yourself into freelancing. Churn out copy in the evenings while supplementing your writing with a full-time job. It'll mean spending shedloads more time working but you've got to try and establish yourself before taking the plunge.

✪ Meet your deadlines – they're just as important as good writing. Miss one too many as a newbie and the mag will think twice about using you again.

✪ Contact the editor with an introductory phone call first and then send off your writing samples (and CV). Try to include a couple of good feature ideas to show them you've got an active imagination as well as good writing skills.

✪ Be patient – building up a successful writing career doesn't happen overnight.

"WHERE SHOULD I GO?"

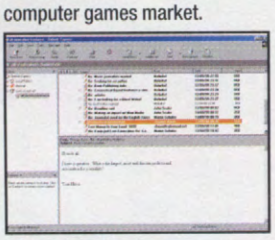
Check out the following sites for more info:

National Union Of Journalists
www.gn.apc.org/media/nuj.html

Unions may be a dirty word to some publishers but the bottom line is that the NUJ can offer the freelancer all sorts of advice, from dealing with legal shenanigans such as dodgy contracts through to travel insurance and what kind of money you should expect for that 1,000 word magnus opus.

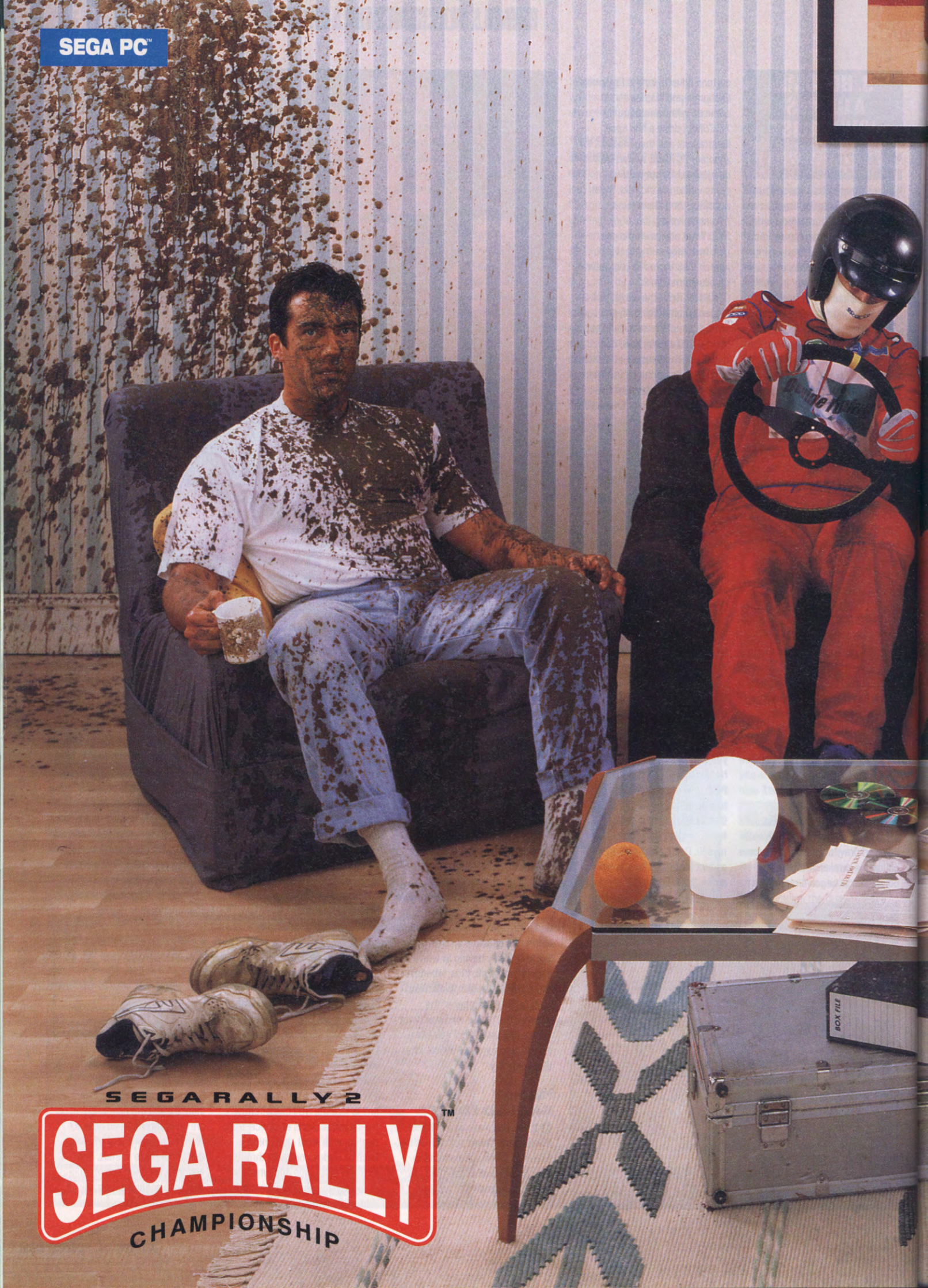
Journalism UK
www.journalismuk.co.uk

A rather handy list of categorised links to all manner of publications. There's also details on journalistic training and more. Well worth a look if you want to stretch your journalistic wings outside the computer games market.



alt.journalism
alt.journalism.freelance

Newsgroups offer visitors the bottom line view on any industry and the journalism bods are no different. Need advice? Want to 'network', baby? Well, this is the place to start. And editors have been known to post job vacancies here as well. Hmm… PCZ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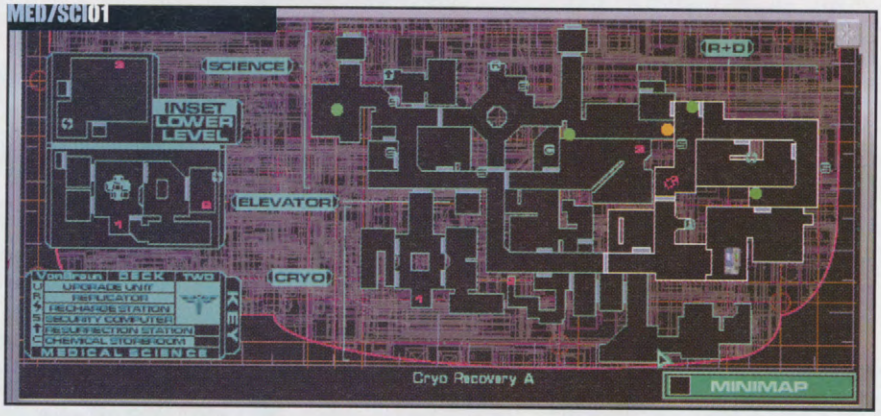
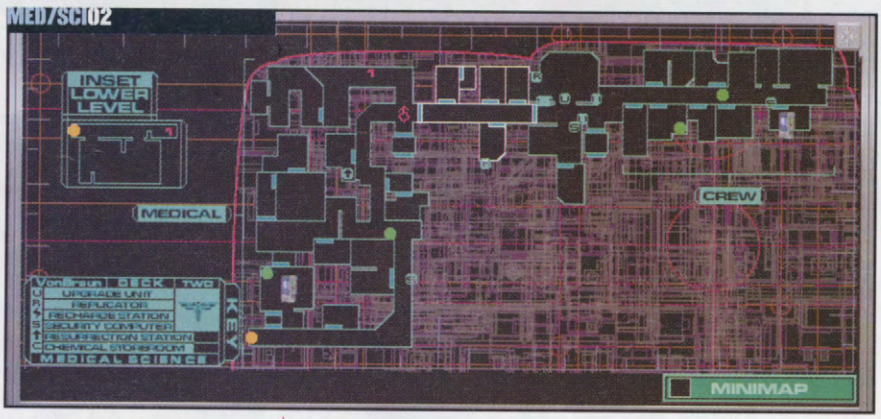
SYSTEM SHOCK 2

PLAYERS GUIDE: PART 1

Paul Mallinson **is here to help you through your deepest, darkest *System Shock 2* nightmares**

REVIEWED *PCZ* #80 **SCORE** 95%





There's no doubt in our minds that *System Shock 2* is one of the greatest games ever – it's certainly one of the most atmospheric and downright scary. In fact, you're likely to become so immersed in it, you won't be able to stop until you've completed it. To avoid any unnecessary frustrations, here is the first part of our thorough guide to getting to the end. Keep in mind that you create your own character and develop him as you progress through the game. Choose your skills wisely and read on.

MAPS

Here's how to fathom those sly little maps

Our maps show cameras (green dots), turrets (orange dots), key cards and other important items/locations. They don't show everything, however – so make sure you search every available nook and cranny for ammo and useful objects.

MED/SCI

As you wake up you receive an email from Dr Janice Polito. The message explains your partial amnesia, warns you that something has gone drastically wrong with the ship and instructs you to meet her on the operations deck (deck 4). The elevators have no power; in order to restore it, go to the engineering deck through the maintenance access shaft. The shaft is locked, so get the code from Dr Watts in the crew sector. The crew sector is also locked, but you can get an access card from Grassi in the medical sector. Unfortunately, the door to the medical sector has lost power as well, but it can be reopened with a power cell. There's one by the door, but it's not charged, so you have to find a recharger.

Just down the hall from the door to the medical sector you find a room with a quantum bio-reconstruction machine. Once this machine is activated, your body is automatically reconstructed inside the machine whenever you 'die'. The machines have a limited range, so try to find and activate them whenever you enter a new sub-level.

You can find a recharger under the pump station, but watch out for the nearby turrets. Recharge the power cell and proceed to the medical sector.

Grassi is in the lower level of the biopsy lab in this sector. Get his access card, go to the crew sector and find Dr Watts' quarters (they're clearly labelled). He's not there, but he has left a spare access card to the R&D sector in his desk, so try his office there. You find him when you get there,

and he gives you the code to the maintenance access shaft.

Enemies on this deck include: *pipe hybrids, shotgun hybrids, slug turrets and blue monkeys. There's also a single maintenance robot by the access shaft.*

ENGINEERING

To restore main power and get the elevators working you need to get into the engine core. However, the seals on the core have been automatically locked due to a radiation leak in the coolant tunnels. The leaks are pretty bad, so you need plenty of anti-radiation hypos while travelling through this area. You could purge the radiation from engineering control, but Sanger has recoded the door lock. Sanger is hiding in cargo bay 2, which is also locked. You can find the access card for cargo bay 2 in cargo bay 1 (though you might want to stop in at command control first, where there's a quantum bio-reconstruction machine). Sanger is in cargo bay 2B, all the way back, on the top level; you can get the code to engineering control from her.

When you get there you find that Xerxes has locked out the controls. Luckily, a log left here by Delacroix tells you how to perform a manual override. First, you need to get part 45m/dEx from a storage room in the coolant tunnels.

Bring this part to the command control centre at the far end of engineering and install it in the system's monitoring unit. Return to engineering control and purge the radiation.

You are now able to enter the engine core and restore main power. You need to reset both nacelles on the lower level of the engine core, then reset the master power computer on the upper level.

Once power is restored, you can (optionally) use a lift from the engine core down to a tunnel in the lower level of engineering. This is a shorter route back to the elevator than going through the coolant tunnels, but there are a lot of monsters down there, so you might prefer to take the long way around.

New enemies on this deck include: *maintenance robots, protocol droids, laser turrets and a single cyborg midwife (in the under-tunnel at the end).*

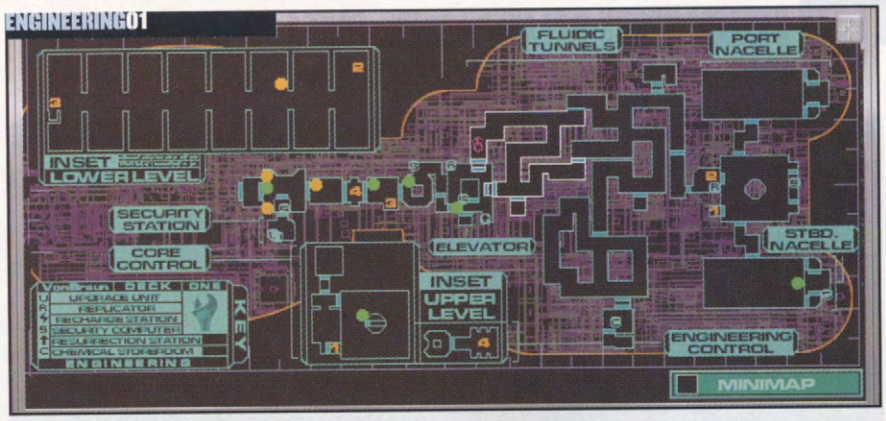
HYDROPONICS

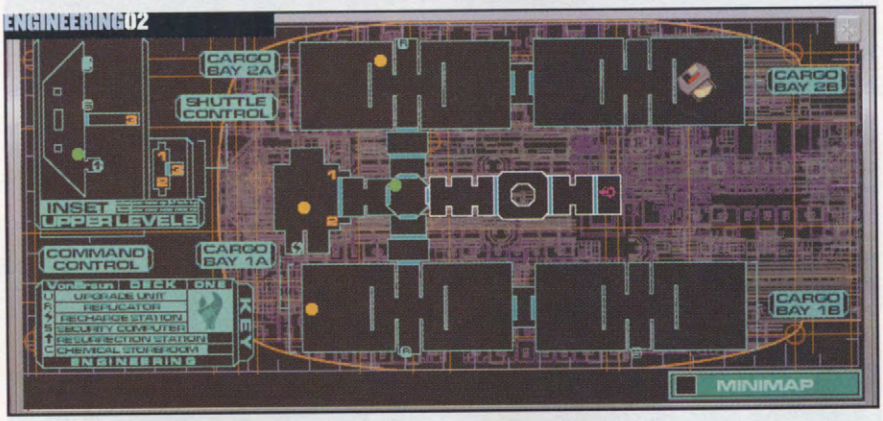
When you try to take the elevator to the ops deck you find that the elevator can't get higher than the hydroponics deck. The aliens are using the hydroponics deck as a breeding chamber, and some of their biomatter is clogging the elevator shaft. To clear the biomatter you need to find (and research) an experimental substance called Toxin-A,

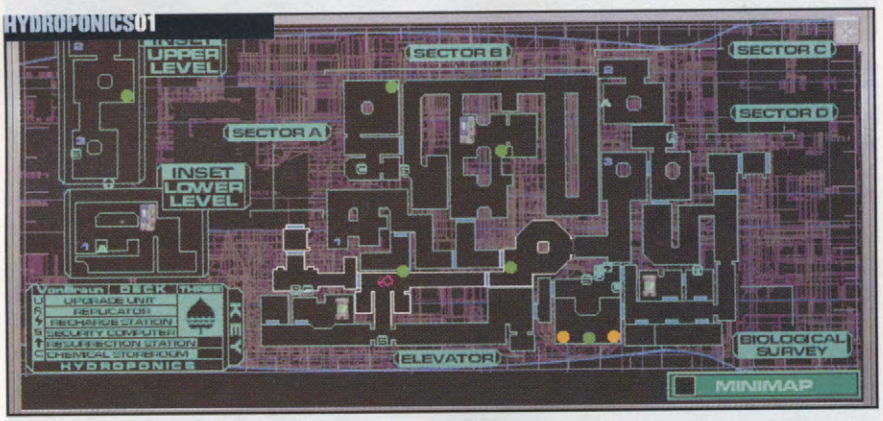
and place some of it in each of the four environmental regulators on this deck. There are five vials of Toxin-A (though you only need four of them): one is in the administrative offices of sector C, two are inside a locked office (you need to break a window to get in) in the biological survey area of sector C, one is in the chemical storeroom in sector B, and the last one is on a corpse just inside sector A. If you don't want to buy the research skill, you can research the Toxin-A with the help of a lab assistant implant, although even with this you still need two units of antimony and one of vanadium; these can be found in the chemical storeroom in sector B, or by going back to the chemical storeroom on the engineering deck.

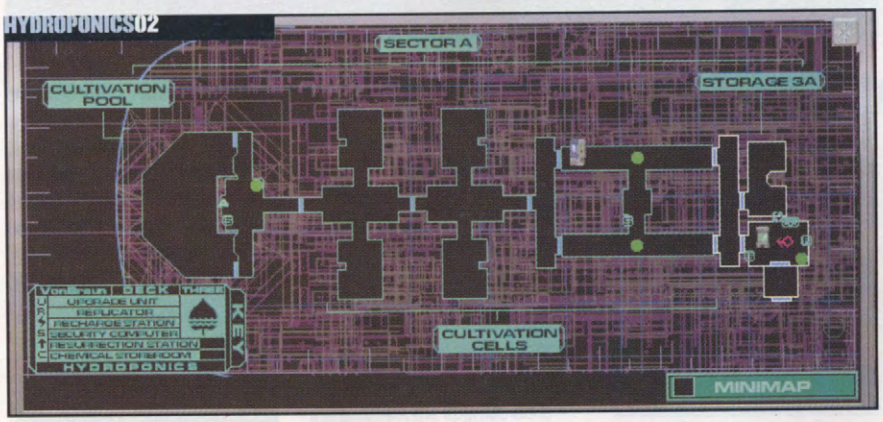
There is one environmental regulator in each of the four sectors, marked on your automap with an 'A'. The elevator lets you out into sector C, but the other sectors are all locked. You can get into sector B by breaking some windows that overlook it, either near the administrative offices or near the experimental office. A body in the biological survey labs has the access card for sector B, so you can get in and out without having to jump through windows. Another body in sector B maintenance has the access card for sector A.

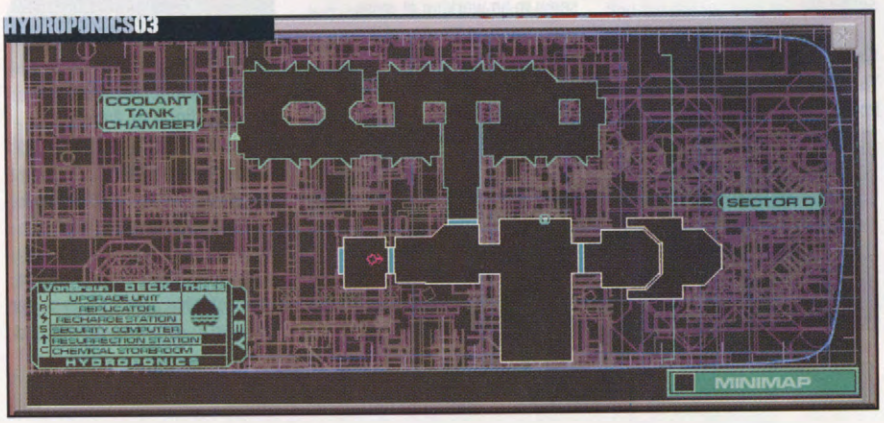
Once you're in sector A, you need to find the access card for sector D, which is on a body near an assault rifle. Place Toxin-A in each of the environmental regulators.











GENERAL GAMEPLAY TIPS

EXPERT HINTS

Be sure to conserve ammo wherever possible!

Choose your bullets carefully – some rounds are ineffective against some monsters and you don't want to waste ammo.

Check everywhere – you never know what you might find hidden about the ship. Search every waste bin – they sometimes contain hidden CUUs or other goodies.

Listen out for monsters and prepare the correct ammo before jumping into battle.

Auto-repair units are handy when you're incapable of repairing something yourself.

Avoid stepping on 'worm piles' because they're poisonous. Use an anti-toxin hypo if affected.

If you can't find an energy recharge station, use a portable battery to recharge your implant/armour/whatever.

Wherever possible use a hazard suit to protect yourself against radiation.

Residual psychic emanations (ghosts) often give clues as to what's coming up.

Keep your eyes peeled for O/S upgrade units. They are light blue in appearance and award you useful one-off gifts.

HEALING

Wherever possible use medical beds to heal yourself. If you are carrying an activation key, choose carefully where you use it because they are quite rare.

Use bio-quantum reconstruction units – they bring you back to life with your previous inventory intact, which is handy.

Use the worm blood implant if you have it. Simply right-click on worm piles to increase your health.

WEAPONS

Pistol Requires a Standard skill level of 1 (Mod 1 = increase clip size, Mod 2 = decrease reload time). **Shotgun** Requires a Standard skill level of 3 (Mod 1 = decrease reload time, Mod 2 = decrease kickback).

Grenade launcher Requires a Heavy skill of 1 (Mod 1 = increase clip size, Mod 2 = increase speed of grenades and reload time).

Argon suspension laser pistol Requires an Energy skill of 1 (Mod 1 = increase energy capacity, Mod 2 = decrease energy consumption. Both mods increase damage).

Laser rapier Requires an Agility skill of 3 and an Energy skill of 4.

Assault rifle Requires a Standard skill of 6 (Mod 1 = decrease reload time, Mod 2 = increase clip size).

EMP rifle Requires an Energy skill of 6 (Mod 1 = increase energy capacity, Mod 2 = increase speed of shot and decrease energy consumption. Both mods increase damage).

Annelid shard Requires an Exotic skill of 1.

Stasis field generator Requires a Strength skill of 3 and a Heavy skill of 3 (Mod 1 = increase shot speed by 50%, Mod 2 = decrease ammo consumption).

Viral proliferator Requires an Exotic skill of 4 (Mod 1 = increase clip size, Mod 2 = decrease ammo consumption). Warning: never use the viral proliferator in human mode.

Fusion cannon Requires a Strength of 4 and a Heavy skill of 6 (Mod 1 = increase clip size, Mod 2 = decrease ammo consumption).

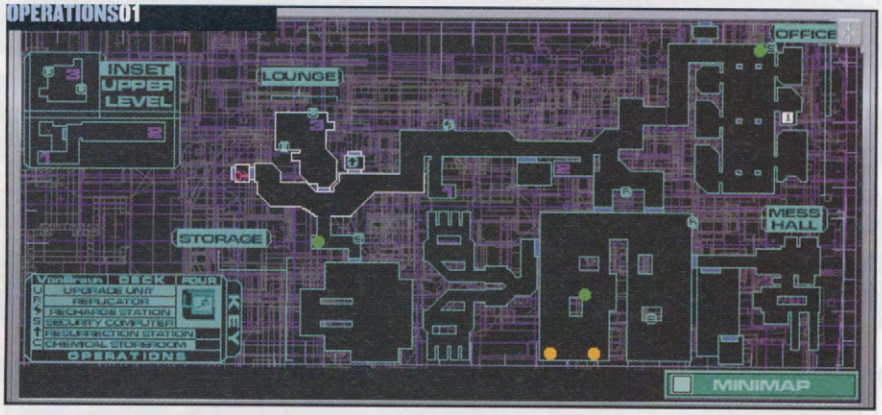
MAINTENANCE

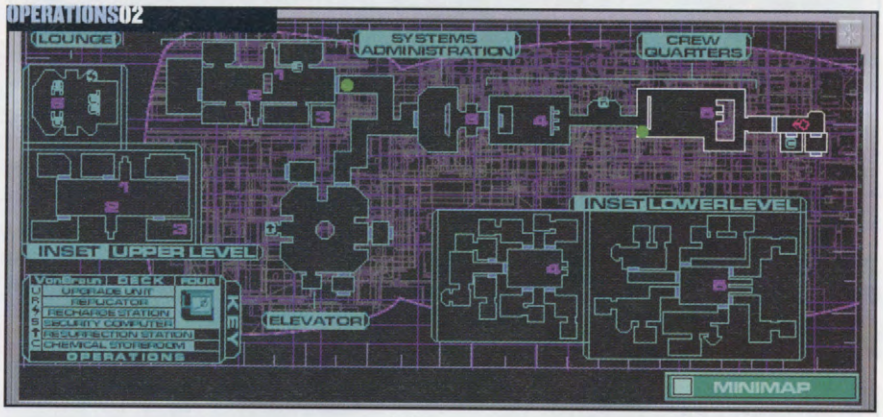
Make sure you keep an eye on the condition of your weapons – if they drop below a standard of 3 they can easily jam.

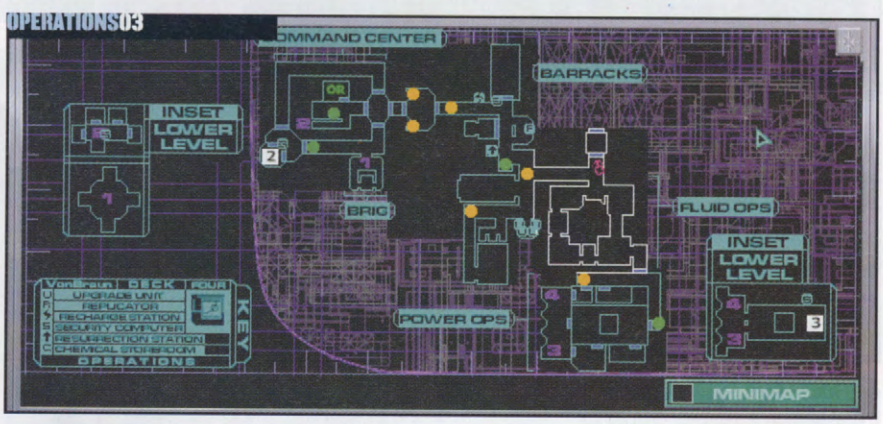
Use maintenance tools sparingly on the weapons you use the most.

Be careful when repairing weapons. If your repair fails you may destroy the weapon completely (and it will disappear from your inventory).

Store unused weapons in a (relatively) safe area. Don't waste inventory space carrying them around with you – you can always go back and use them later on.







New enemies on this deck include: *cyborg midwives, annelid eggs and annelid grubs. You also run into some baby annelid arachnids in sector D.*

OPERATIONS

Your first task is to go to Dr Polito's office in sector A.

Turn right out of the elevator, and go through the bulkhead on your right. She explains how a bizarre hive-mind (called 'The Many') evolved from the mutants SHODAN created back on Citadel Station. The Many have taken over some of the crew members of the Von Braun with their telepathic powers. Worse still, SHODAN herself has gained a foothold in the computer system. However, she and The Many seem to be working at cross-purposes, and The Many is the more immediate threat.

After this meeting you need to perform tasks on both the operations and recreation decks. You can go on to recreation now and go back to the tasks on this deck afterwards if you prefer.

The three simulation units on this deck have been co-opted by The Many to engineer a mutagen which will create a new kind of hunter-killer hybrid – you have to reprogram all three sim units to prevent this from happening. In order to do so you need to get three special chips (one for each sim unit) that are being carried by special red cyborg assassins.

These are tougher than the ordinary cyborg assassins (who are no pushovers!), and are programmed to try and avoid you whenever possible. Watch which way they run, track them down to their hiding places, and kill them. There is one red cyborg assassin in sector B (hiding in the systems administration area), one in sector C (hiding in the storage area), and

CAMERAS

If possible deactivate security at a nearby station (which turns all the cameras off), then shoot/smash them at your leisure.

Listen out for the whirring noise made by moving cameras and move around carefully to avoid being detected.

If you're detected by a camera, locate it and move out of view. Wait until you hear a short warbling noise (which indicates that the camera has returned to normal), then attempt to disable it.

If you set off the alarms, head to the nearest security station, right-click on it, then clear the area of any nearby monsters.

TURRETS

Use armour-piercing bullets or EMP grenades to destroy them.

Check destroyed gun turrets for hidden ammo and/or batteries.

Hack turrets so that they shoot your enemies (to do this hack a security PC to turn them off, then hack a turret when close up. You need a Hack skill of 4 to do this – and make sure you get it right first time).

HACKING

The idea is to link four ICE nodes in a connecting line.

If your hack is going badly wrong, don't risk failure – simply restart the hack and try again (although this will cost you money).

RESEARCH

Don't carry chemicals around with you unless you know that you're going to need them at that precise moment.

Check manifest reports for location of chemicals.

You can use the lab assistant implant to speed up research.

NANITES

Don't waste money – you need every single penny.

PSIONICS

Invest in psionics at your leisure. They seem superfluous to the task in hand initially, but later on in the game you soon realise that they are a good tool to have to hand in a psionic fire fight.

MONSTERS

Pipe hybrids Don't waste bullets on them. Kill them with your wrench, but don't get hit.

Shotgun hybrids Can do a fair bit of damage and, initially at least, take three or four hits to kill, so the best thing to do is shoot them quickly with either anti-personnel rounds or normal bullets.

Grenade hybrids Not to be taken on in enclosed spaces. Get your shot in first and make sure you kill them quickly.

Blue monkeys A couple of bullets will dispatch these critters. Strafing should help dodge their psionic attacks.

Cyborg midwives Resistant to incendiary and anti-personnel weaponry. Use armour-piercing rounds to kill them. Strafe to avoid their laser.

Protocol droids These robots will walk towards you and self-destruct, so try to pick them off with armour-piercing bullets from a distance.

Red monkeys Use anti-personnel rounds if available. Their psionic attacks are very dangerous. Remember not to stand still if under attack.

Annelid grubs Kill lone grubs with your wrench (the easiest way is to kneel down and you'll get the best shot). Avoid hand-to-hand combat against groups – if possible take them out with a well-aimed grenade.

Annelid swarm You can't hurt these, so run away if attacked. They can't fly over obstacles (such as tables), so are relatively easy to avoid.

Annelid arachnid The viral proliferator makes quick work of these creatures, although (unfortunately) little else is quite as effective. The shotgun, with rifled slugs, is a good alternative. Make sure you don't get bitten by them – always shoot from a distance.

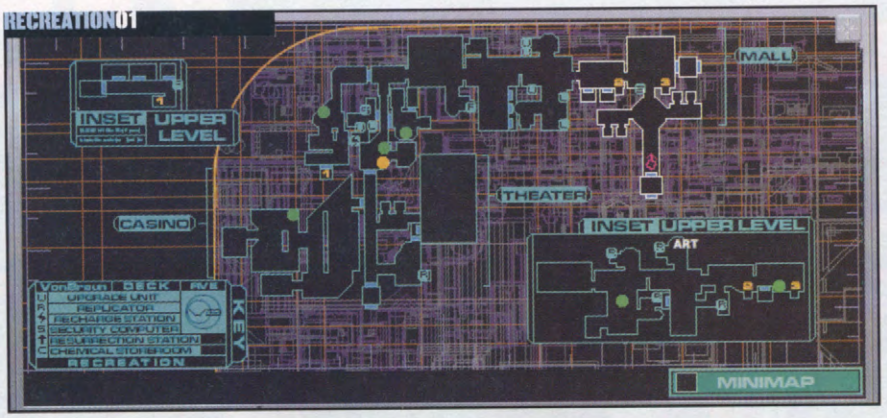
Maintenance robots Fire a small, slow-moving round that is easily avoided. Destroy with armour-piercing bullets.

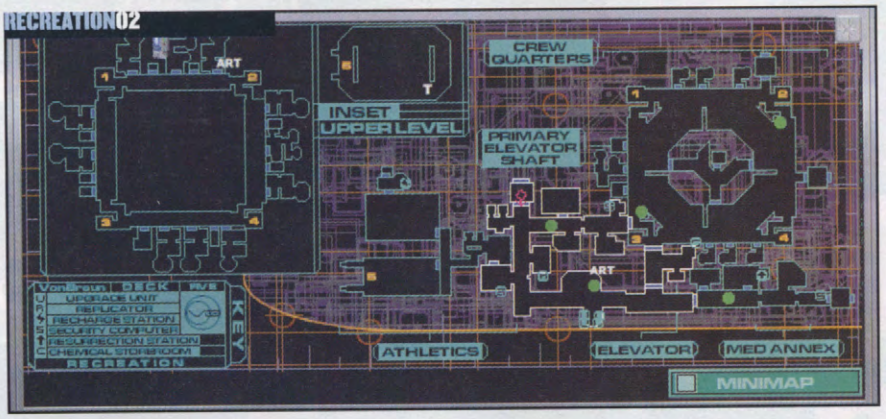
Security robots More dangerous than maintenance robots, but just as easily destroyed.

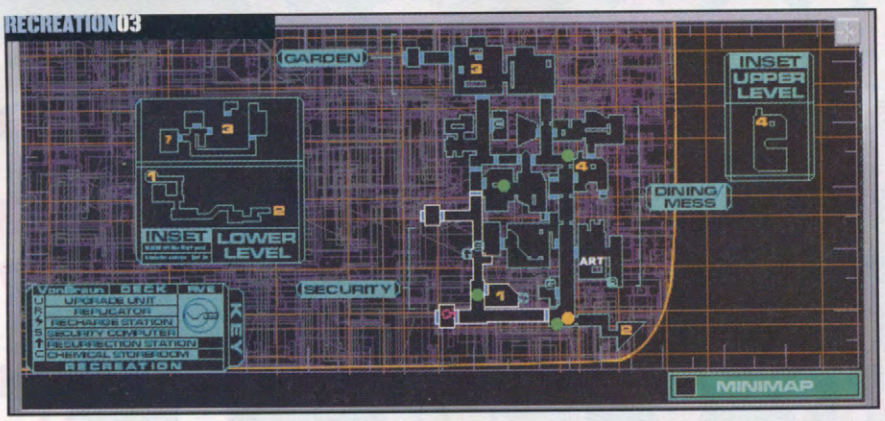
Assault robots These are very dangerous machines that fire a hugely destructive green ball of energy. Dispatch these robots quickly with a load of armour-piercing bullets or EMP grenades.

Cyborg assassins Kill with armour-piercing bullets or EMP grenades. Keep moving to avoid their cyber shuriken.

Rumblers Don't get too close because they can kill you with one swipe. Use the viral proliferator (set to annelid), or a sustained burst of anti-personnel rounds to kill them.





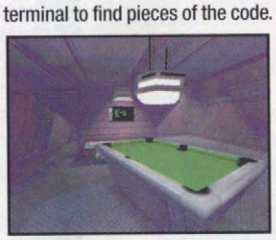


one in sector D (hiding in the command centre, not far from the brig). Take the chips from their bodies and place each one in the matching sim unit to reprogram them. One sim unit is in sector C in the power administration offices, one is in sector D in a security station near the brig, and the other in the lower level of power operations.

New enemies on this deck include: *grenade hybrids, red monkeys, annelid swarms, adult annelid arachnids, security robots and cyborg assassins.*

RECREATION

Some crew members on the recreation deck were building a transmitter to warn Earth. They were unable to complete the job, so you must find and activate the transmitter. The activation code is hidden in art terminals scattered around this deck, so cycle through all available pictures at each art terminal to find pieces of the code.



The locations are: sector A (across the hall from the upgrade units and upstairs in the crew sector); sector B (in the pool hall) and sector C (in the ArTechnology store in the mall).

The transmitter is in the athletics sector, which is locked. The access card for it is in the crew sector, which is also locked, so

find the access card for the crew sector in the maintenance tunnels under the garden in sector B.

New enemies on this deck are: *assault robots and a single rumbler guarding the athletics sector.* PCZ

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KINGPIN

WALKTHROUGH

***Kingpin* is the most fun you can have with a crowbar, but it can prove a tantalisingly tricky little game. So for those of you who have been foxed by it, here's *Mark Hill*'s step-by-step guide to becoming king of the pin**

REVIEWED *PCZ*#77 **SCORE** 92%

Apparently, there's nothing quite like a game where you can use a flame-thrower on someone and hear their screams as their flesh singes. I'm an advocate of the painless way myself. If you are too, read on to complete the game without getting hurt.

SKID ROW

Smash the fence boards, go down the steps and collect the pistol and ammo. Walk until you find Leroy and the woman beneath the first set of stairs, kill them, collect the cash and buy the crowbar from the fat guy. Go to the warehouse. Wait until the radio distracts the guards, then kill the guy by the safe, take the whisky, the flashlight and the money. Smash the box and vent, go through to storeroom A, kill the guard and move the crates until you can reach the upper vent.

SEWERS

Take the sewer to the right and keep walking until you find the storeroom. Kill everyone inside, take the goodies and move the crate to reach the shotgun on the shelf. Find your way through the sewers to the stairs leading up, and get out.

The sewers aren't big enough to get lost in, but watch out for the street access sign.

THE SUPER

Leave the sewer by the first-right exit, kill the man and his rabid dog and take his watch. Pay to get into the bar and talk to the fat bloke in the bathroom who gives you a key in exchange for the watch. Leave the bar and head for the tall building (you can find it by going straight ahead at the beginning of the map). Go through the roof access door and climb to level four, then walk across the plank to the other roof. Use the key to get into a small storeroom, climb the boxes and smash the vent to get through to the three thugs you saw arguing in the earlier cut-scene. Kill them and turn right down the corridor to find some money in a fridge in one of the rooms. Head towards the exit sign at the end of the corridor, smash the boards and open the door.

MEAN STREETS

Jump down the broken staircase, go through the only door that opens and enter the other building further down the alley. Inside, take the door to the left at the end of the corridor, climb the stairs, go through the window on the right-hand side and walk round the ledge to the other window. Activate the switch in the room, jump back out, re-enter the building and go through the door the switch has just unlocked. Walk down until you kill a dog, smash the boards on the window and jump through. Enter the door in the fence, walk into the wooden house and through the door.

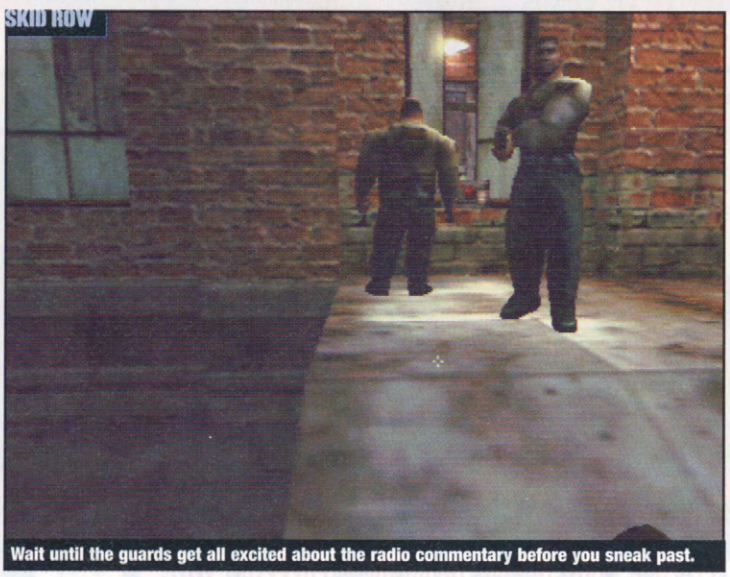
Walk across the ledge and into the gap in the wall. Watch out for the dog ahead.

THE JESUS

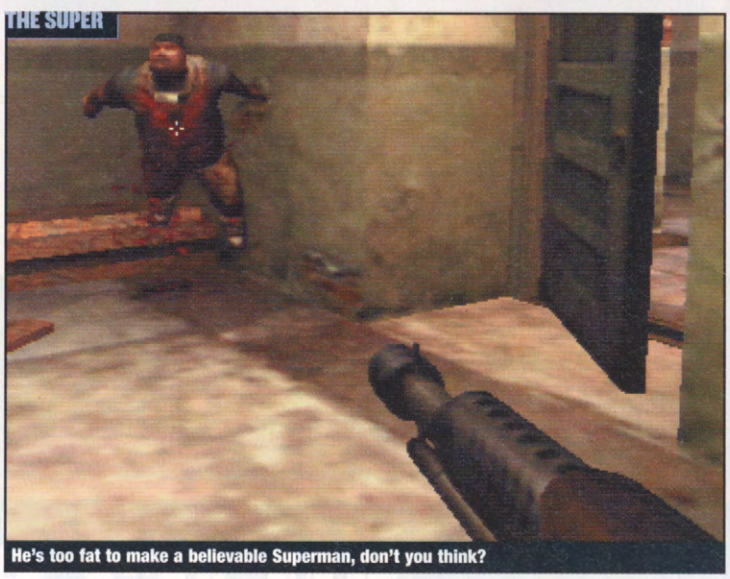
Shoot every poor canine in sight until you come to an open junkyard full of stacked cars. Jump to the top of the last pile on the right to find a battery. Now make your way back to the garage next to the bar, shifting a healthy number of overweight goodfellas while you're at it. Jump onto the motorbike and watch yourself do a cool wheelie.

POISONVILLE

Get into Club Swank round the back and talk to Louie (the fat bloke upstairs). Choose one of the safe-crackers (Fingers is the sneaky one while Buster is the demolitions expert) and go to the safe. You need to go up in the lift, through a courtyard, past a power generator and up and down the stairs till you find it. It's important to look after your safe-cracker: the best thing to do is tell him to wait in a safe place, go ahead and kill everyone and come back for him. Find the key to the power generator in the safe room. Tell



Wait until the guards get all excited about the radio commentary before you sneak past.



He's too fat to make a believable Superman, don't you think?

your henchman to wait there while you go to the electric room (close to the power generator) and turn off the switch to deactivate the electric fence around the safe. Back in the safe room, press 'Q' on the cracker and then 'F' on the safe. Once your safe-cracker has done his bit, collect the papers and return them to Louie in the bar. Get the key from him, hire some more people if you want, and make your way to the production facility round the back of the bar.

BLANCO INDUSTRIES

Smash through the first air vent you see to take you to the small storeroom where you find two fuses. Make your way round the level until you find a big pump, and insert the fuses in the two panels by its side. The acid will be drained from where you started the level. Down there you find the corpse who had been sleeping with the fishes (acid-resistant fishes, of course) and take the key. This opens the door next to the newly acid-filled vault. Press the switch inside for a bridge which takes you across the acid. Press a small red switch to go up another lift. Press another switch, go down to the pool of acid and jump to the other side. Make your way to the end of the level, where a flame-throwing boss awaits.

Stick the fuses in the slots and try not to take an acid bath. It's not good for your complexion.

LIZZIE'S PROBLEM

Jump in the water to find a stiff wearing the proverbial concrete footwear and hit him with the crowbar until you get the key. Climb up the ladders following the signs to the bar and use the key to get into the building opposite. In the bar, go to the bathroom and get a key from one of Willie's thugs. He then follows you to find Lizzie, who's in the warehouse at the start of the level. Use the key to get in and take her head. Show it to Willie in the toilet, who gives you another key and joins your party. Use this key to open the door near the ladders.

Who says that thugs don't appreciate art? Just take a look at this perfect Drowned Fat Bloke statue underwater.

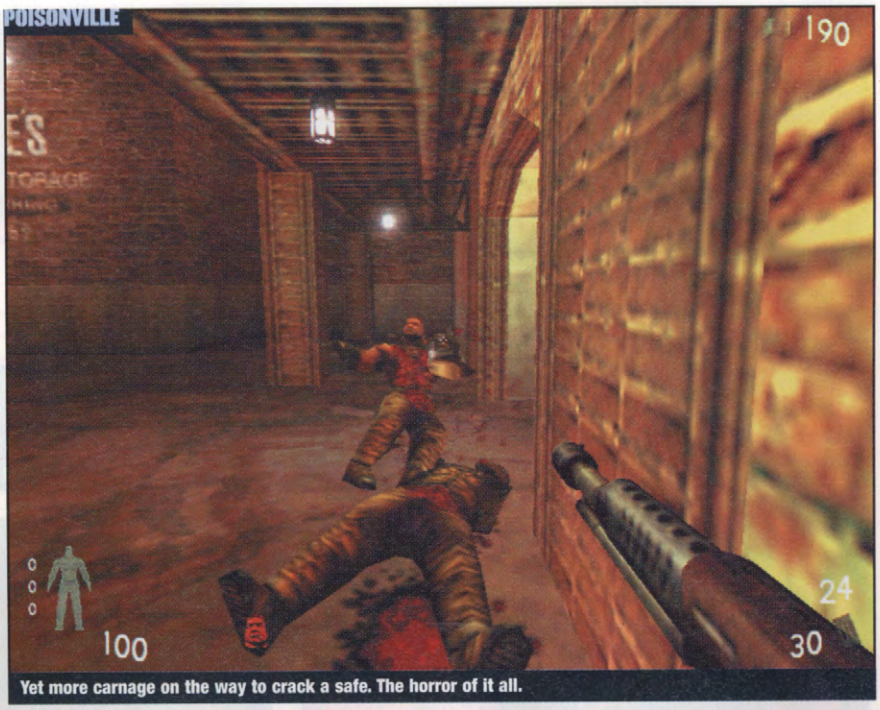
PIER PRESSURE

Couldn't be simpler. Keep going past the truck, through the doors and up the stairs until you reach a big ship (Das Boot). Kill everyone in sight, and a door opens. You know what to do with it.

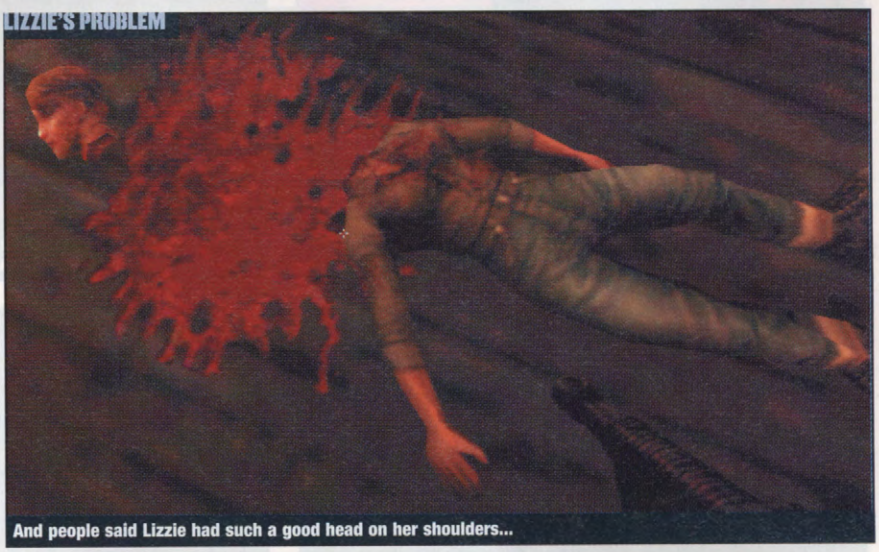
DAS BOOT

Another simple one, if you're tough enough. Get into the engine room by using the oil can from the storage room on the door. If you're wondering why there's so much armour lying about,

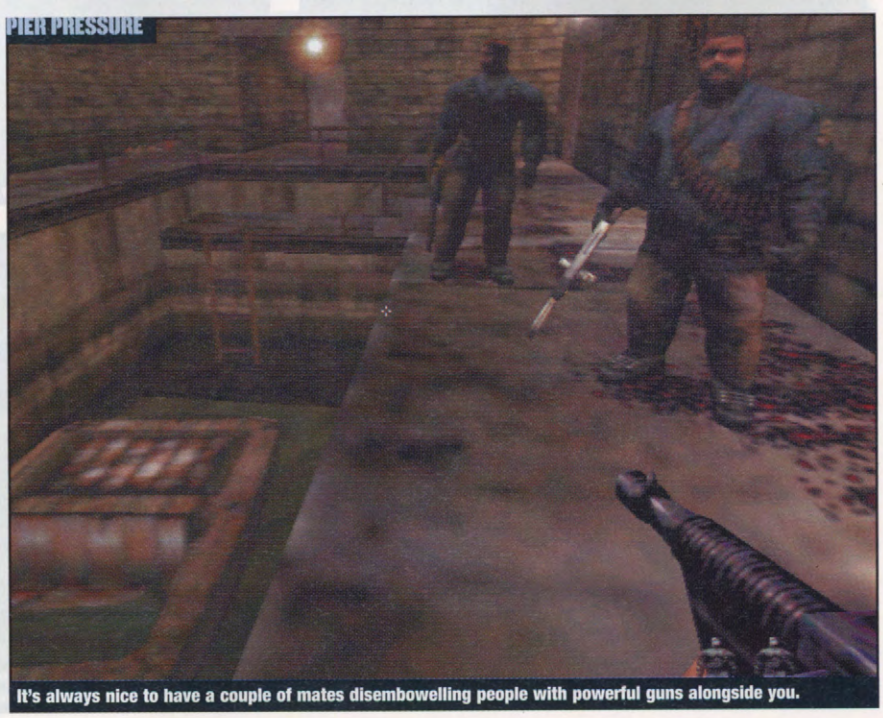
You'll find the battery in the boot of this car. Stick it in the bike and you're off.



Yet more carnage on the way to crack a safe. The horror of it all.



And people said Lizzie had such a good head on her shoulders...



It's always nice to have a couple of mates disembowelling people with powerful guns alongside you.

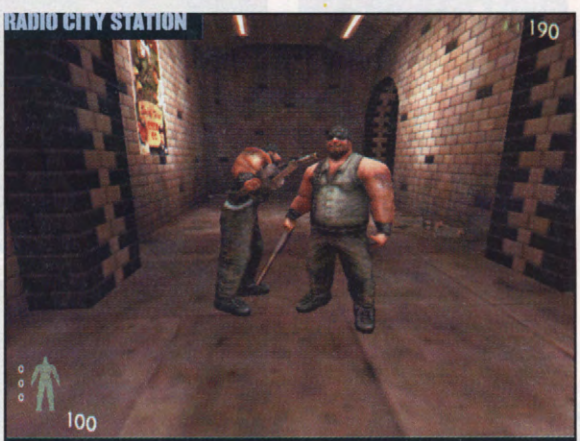
This rather vacant-eyed, thick-necked moron is the bloke you need to find. When you do catch up with him, you can kill him if you so desire.

Why are bosses always so nasty? Using rocket launchers on employees is just not on. Why can't they just be satisfied with being paid more?

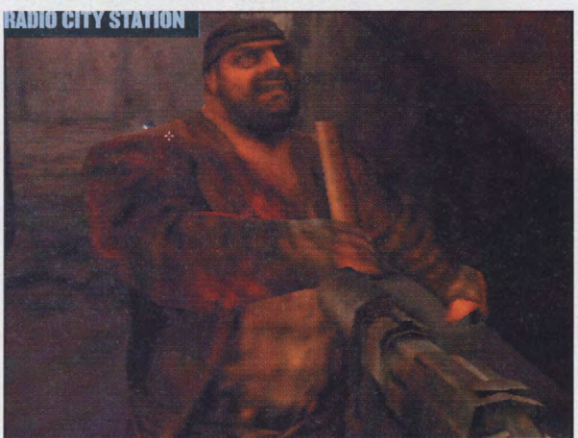
If you don't know what to do in this part of the game – this is where you can stick your extra wheel to get past the East D51 sewer.

At least British Rail doesn't try to run over its customers. Just drives them to suicide – after they've sampled their delicious sandwiches.

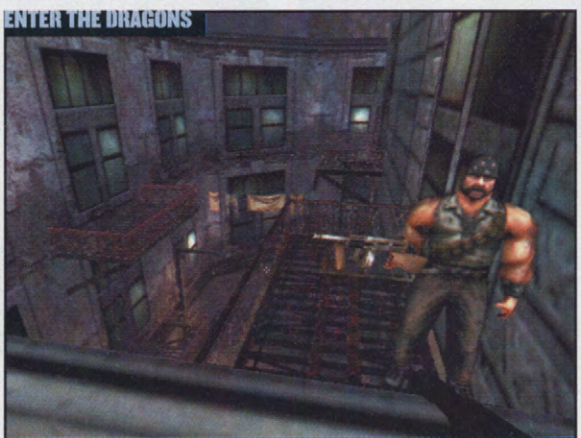
Climb onto the train and jump to the other side. Yawn.



Join in a farting competition with *Kingpin*'s Terence and Phillip.



Getting bored with using that same old crowbar? Well, you can use a pistol with a silencer – if you happen to have one, that is.



If there's anybody left to follow you, you can have a helluva party on the rooftops. Trouble is your friends look none too savoury.

it's because you'll need it. Another boss awaits at the end. Which is nice.

Be sure to pick up this oil can. For some bizarre reason it opens a door for you.

STEEL TOWN

Talk to the bartender in the boiler room, who then sends you on a mission to get her kidnapped brother. Go out and keep walking until you can open a door (marked 'Moker's Steel'). Keep going until you reach a vat of lava, which you need to raise by pressing the red switch next to it. It's the usual massacre until you come to David, an unarmed bloke in a small room. Go back to the bar (it doesn't matter whether he lives or dies) and get the key from the barmaid. Use it to get into the office (another steel door marked 'Moker'). Go downstairs, blow up the barrels to smash down the walkway and jump over the lava vat.

MOKER SHIPPING

Just get in there and kill the boss. This one's armed with a rocket launcher, so don't stand still for a second.

DERAILED

This one actually has a puzzle element. Use the valve handle in between the last carriage and the one next to it. This detaches it, clearing the way down the tunnel. Go down it until you find a spare handle. Head back and go through the valve-activated doors through the sewers until you find a valve with no wheel on it. Use the one you found and go through the East D51 door below you.

This is where you turn the wheel to let the train car smash a way through.

DARK PASSAGE

Go down the tunnel and climb up the two sets of ladders. Go left across the bridge, run into a crevice if the train comes and jump out into the water at the other side. Climb up, move the

crate to climb up the ladders and make your way through by activating switches.

TRAIN YARDS

Go up to the train control booth and move the switch on the right to open a tunnel you can go through. Enter one of the doors on the left, climb up the ladder and activate the switch on the right. Go back out and through the doors directly ahead, which you can now open.

RADIO CITY STATION

Go up the escalator and talk to the two tough guys. They let you join their gang if you kill three idiots down in the sewers with nothing but your crowbar. Go left from the escalator and into a room. Press the little blue button to let you into the sewers. Be careful with the train. You can use a pistol with a silencer instead of a crowbar as it makes the same amount of noise. Once you've killed all three, make your way back to the gang who joins you. Go up the stairs to the right from the elevators.

ENTER THE DRAGONS

Walk round the street, keeping to the right until you come to a dead end with three fire escape ladders. Take the one furthest away, climb onto the railing at the top and then onto the roof of the building. Keep walking until you come to a fork. Go down the right until you see a switch on the wall and use it, then go back and head down the left along the catwalks. You can go through the door the switch has just opened. Walk to the end of the bridge, activate the switch, jump down to the street and go through the newly opened door.

STREETS OF FIRE

Watch out for the guy shooting from above. Take everyone out and walk to the end of the street past Hopper's Café Bar. Go through the door, climb upstairs to the roof and go up the billboard ladder. Jump to the higher roof and then across onto the balcony on the other side of the street, through the bit where the railing is missing. Go to the left until you come to a water tower. Jump down to a platform with a switch on it and activate it. Cross the bridge that comes down and carry on to the left until you find an elevator.

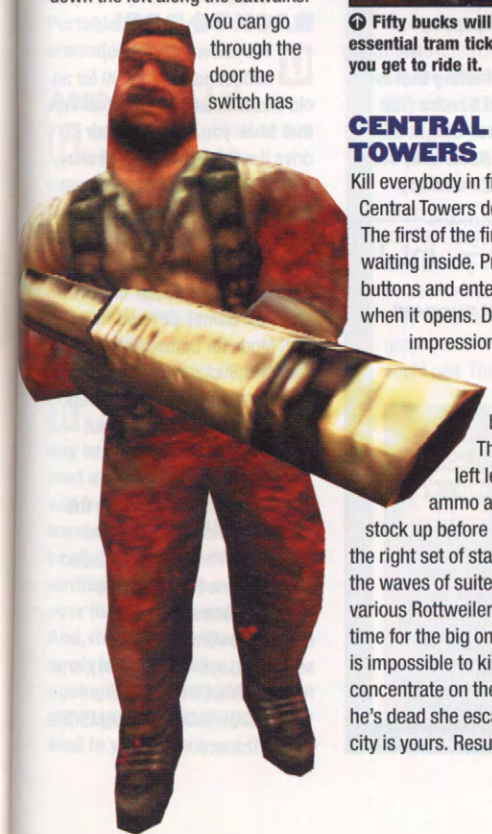
SKYTRAM STATION

Go down the tunnel to your right and climb the first stairs you come to. Keep going until you come to the Typhoon Bar. At the back of the bar there's a bloke selling tram tickets for $50. Buy one and head back out. Go past the phone booth (answering the phone brings a nasty surprise). Use the ticket to get past the door, jump onto the railing and from there into the tunnel.

Fifty bucks will get you an essential tram ticket. Not that you get to ride it.

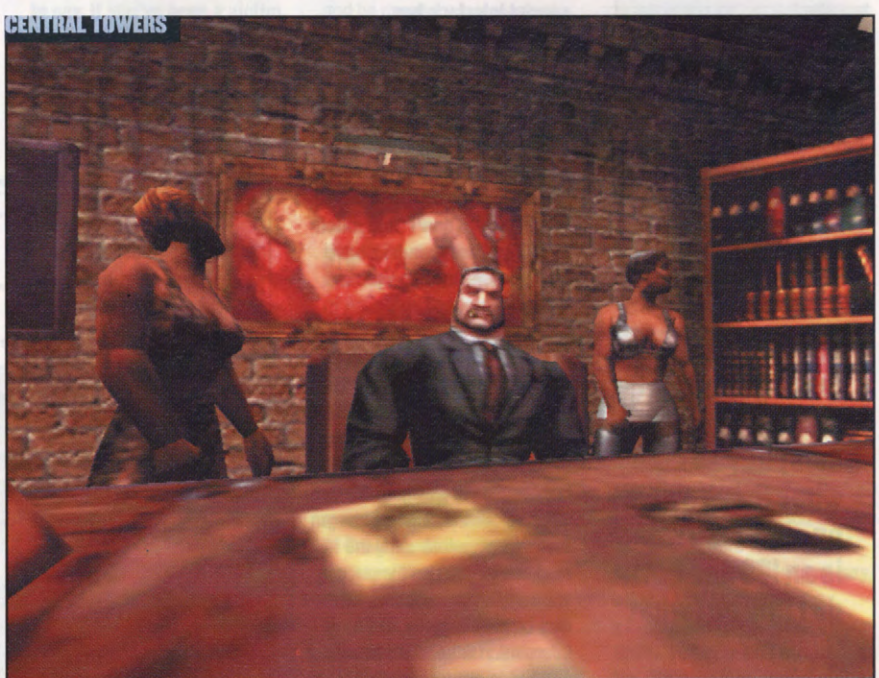
CENTRAL TOWERS

Kill everybody in front of the Central Towers doors to get in. The first of the final bosses is waiting inside. Press the lift buttons and enter the right one when it opens. Do the Rambo impression again and enter the left lift. Kill the dog behind the bars. The stairs on the left lead to loads of ammo and armour, so stock up before going down the right set of stairs. Mow down the waves of suited thugs and various Rottweilers. Now it's time for the big one. The woman is impossible to kill, so just concentrate on the Kingpin. Once he's dead she escapes and the city is yours. Result! PCZ



"Still got full health and $190? You're not cheating by any chance, boy?"

It's Marcellus and Mia Wallace. He'll be a dead man soon. And soon, you'll be The Man.



Here you are. The reward for all your efforts. An uncomfortable suit, two babes and a painting.

DEAR WAZZA R.I.P

This issue our resident techie, Wazza Chrismas, bids his beloved *PC ZONE* readers adieu as he leaves for pastures new. But while we weep for 'Dear Wazza', let's not forget to rejoice at the prospect of next month's 'Dear Wandy'

IN THE SURGERY Dr Warren Chrismas

COME IN, SIT DOWN

Send us a query or a top tip and you could pocket £50.

Share your techie or gaming-related problems with us, and we, in turn, may well share it with thousands of readers via these very pages in a big communal love-in type of thing. And as an extra incentive, every single month we offer a cool £50 to the reader who sends in the most interesting query or toppest tip. No, really. As there's no obvious £50 winner this month, next month there'll be £100 up for grabs. So pull your collective fingers out and send in as much relevant information as you can.

WRITE TO **Dear Wandy, *PC ZONE*, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.**

EMAIL Address your letters to us at **letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk** with the subject heading **'Dear Wandy'**.

Please note: while we can assure you that we read *every* techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

GET A GRIP

Q Since upgrading to Windows 98 I have had problems with my Gravis GrIP system. There is now a new, small (less visually impressive) system which is basically a lead. Does this mean I have to fork out more money, after already spending £50 on the old system, just because Gravis couldn't be bothered to make it 100% efficient with Windows 98?

The installation discs no longer work and I have to calibrate the game pads from the control panel every time I start Windows. I believe more games should be compatible with the Gravis system as they are a very basic but enjoyable control method.

Martin Edwards

A **We assume you're referring to the Gravis Multiport system? We were quite big fans of it when it came out a few years ago, as it was the first system to support the use of several multi-buttoned pads simultaneously under DOS or Windows. The technology was soon superseded (by Microsoft and Gravis themselves, among others), with simpler, daisy-chainable digital pads which don't need a special interface box.**

In truth, we haven't seen a Multiport setup for quite some time so we really can't comment on its compatibility with Windows 98. Given what you say, and the fact that the 'latest' drivers on the Net are years old, we don't hold much hope, but if any readers have any extra information please do write in.

MODEM-TO-MODEM

Q I own two computers which both have a modem and are connected to the same phone line. Is it possible to play games (such as *StarCraft* and *Quake*) between the two computers using the modems? If you don't know, can you suggest any websites where I may be able to get more information or special software or patches to allow me to do it? I am sure that if you can find a way or an acceptable solution it would be helpful to many people.

John Atkinson

A **Other readers will correct us if we're wrong, but we don't think this is possible without extra hardware. We haven't tested it, but Diamond Multimedia's Homefree wireless network system looks a good bet (details at www.diamondmm.co.uk/eng/products/network/hfree.htm). Pricing varies on configuration, but a two-machine setup will cost around £150.**

YOU SEEK ICQ

Q I have recently started to play games online and it's brilliant, but I see people talking about ICQ numbers and I don't have a clue what they're on about. What is an ICQ number and how do I find out what mine is?

Stuart Ayling

A **We've had several letters asking this. ICQ (I Seek You) is an Internet tool that enables you to find other users online and then chat to them in real time, send messages, directly transfer files and so on. You'll find all the info you need at www.icq.net/.**

WE LOVE SANDRA

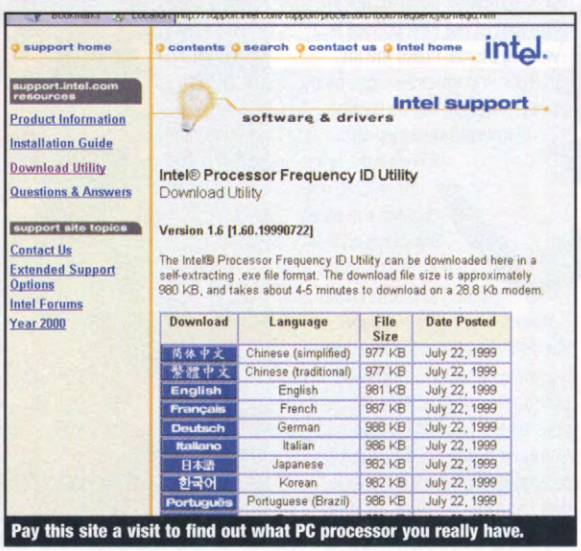
Q After looking through a few of your excellent magazines, especially the 'Dear Wazza' section, I found that quite a number of users need to find out which components are inside their PC. Apart from using the System in Control Panel, using Sisoft Sandra – which can be found at www.sisoftware.demon.co.uk/sandra/ or any other good shareware site – will probably be a lot easier. Just install the program and go to System Summary, then watch the information that pops up!

Will Young

A **I've got a feeling that we mentioned Sandra (the System ANalyser, Diagnostic and Reporting Assistant) some time ago, but it's a handy little program so we're happy to plug it again.**

Phil Shannon, meanwhile, recommends Intel's Processor Frequency ID utility (support.intel.com/support/processors/tools/frequencyid/freqid.htm), to find out what processor you *really* have in your PC, and what speed it's running at.

Games like *Full Throttle* may refuse to go at all under Windows 98.



Pay this site a visit to find out what PC processor you really have.

BACK TO DOS!

Q You know those cheap budget games? £4.99 for an old classic... and 50% probability that when you bung it in your CD drive it will fail totally? Well okay, maybe not. There *is* a way to get the games running, in Windows 98 at least.

In the Windows directory, there are two .pif files called "MS-DOS Mode for Games.pif" and "MS-DOS Mode for Games with EMS and XMS Support.pif". Both of these drop to DOS with different memory settings, but without your CD-ROM drive enabled.

To get your CD drive working, you'll need to copy the relevant device line from your config.sys file into the Advanced section of the PIF properties (it should look something like device=C:\windows\something.sys /D:MSCD001), and fire up MSCDEX with the line "C:\WINDOWS\COMMAND\MSCDEX.EXE /D:mscd001".

"I see people talking about ICQ numbers and I don't have a clue what they're going on about. So what is an ICQ and how do I find out what mine is?"

STUART AYLING, UNAFRAID TO SHOW HIS ICQ IGNORANCE

For games that refuse to work under Win98 and don't find enough memory in "Exit to MS-DOS" mode (as *Full Throttle* did on my system), this is invaluable.

Aquarion

A Yep, sound advice alright. Hands up all those who miss tinkering with autoexec.bat and config.sys files all day? Oh, okay then.

MP FREE

Q I am an avid reader of your magazine and buy it every week from the local shop *(Every week! – Ed)*. I have been collecting MP3s from the Internet (mainly bootlegs of The Beatles).

I know that you can transfer the files onto CD-ROM using a CD writer, but I was wondering if there was any way of transferring them so that they can be played on a normal CD audio player or, indeed, if the sound can be transferred onto tape. I would prefer this to going out and buying a portable MP3 player. How much are they, by the way?

David Whiteford

A To play MP3s on a standard CD player you'll need to convert the files into stereo, 44.1KHz WAV files, using a decoder (see www.mp3.com/software/), and then have the WAV files burnt onto a disc using a standard CD writer and software (note: this process won't give poorly encoded MP3s CD-quality sound!).

To 'transfer' MP3s onto audio cassette, simply record them onto tape via the audio output of your sound card. Portable MP3 players cost around £150-200.

AND FINALLY...

Q deer BCzoon,,, I haff ad this probelm wiff my uther compooter. It wonet come onn. I tried kicking it and hitting the fing wiff a stik, but it will nott gow on. I brawt it the uther daye and staired at it daw aeges, but nuffink appened. How do I mendify it?

Lottz of luv,

The Lesbian Dog-Monger

A This (genuine!) letter seems as good a way as any to finish this month. From next month your techie letters will be passed into the capable hands of Phil Wand. Thanks to all the readers who have written in with tips and advice over the last year and a half. And, thanks to all those who wrote in with queries, with apologies to all those who didn't get published. All the best to ya.

READER REPLIES

Hacking, problems with Creative drives and PaintShop Pro proprietary formats

CRACKING HACKING

Q In reply to 'Matt's' letter in your October issue (*PCZ* #81), you said that computer hacking isn't a widespread problem. Well, with programs like Back Orifice, Netbus, Bladerunner and many more, it is a very BIG problem.

The main breeding ground seems to be on chat servers, and with the UK having more and more interest in these, and many companies introducing their own UK servers, the problem is on the increase.

Until a month ago, I used to moderate one of these chat servers (I won't mention the company, but they are one of the UK's big ISPs) and the amount of people having their computers hacked into was amazing. I have had it done to me on two occasions (although being a moderator made me a bigger target).

The scary thing is, unless you know what to look for, you could be online and never know that people have access to every single file on your computer.

There are programs available from many sites that can bind two programs together, so you can join a copy of the Back Orifice server to, for instance, a demo from a coverdisc, send it to someone via ICQ, or in a chat room, then when they run it, their system is wide open to anyone who has the knowledge to connect to them.

When these programs first started to appear, they were very complicated, and you had to learn lots of commands to type in. Nowadays though (and I'm only talking a matter of two or three months down the line), they have nice and easy graphical interfaces that anyone could use. They have commands to reboot, delete, hide, open/close CD drawers, listen via the mic, watch you if you have a web cam, take screen shots of your desktop, and even capture any passwords you enter.

This *is* a big issue, it's happening now, and people should be made aware of it.

This isn't to say it's unsafe to go online, of course. All you have to do is make sure you don't accept files from anyone. Only download files from reputable sources, and don't believe all the silly little messages via email or ICQ that if you don't download this or that, something bad will happen, or your computer will delete its hard drive or something similar. All it takes is a little common sense, and you will be OK.

Alan Colson

A As I'm sure you can appreciate we can only report on our own experiences and what we hear from our readers and other sources. We know of very few people that have been targeted which is why we commented that, as far as we're aware, it's not a widespread problem.

However, since printing the original letter a couple of months ago, we've had a few letters trickle in on the subject of 'hacking' (an inappropriate word, really, as it makes it all sound so glamorous). Suffice to say, if you've been a victim, we'd very much like to hear from you.

SPIN DOCTORS

Q Referring to "Putting a Spin on Things" in your October issue (*PCZ* #81), I think I may be able to help Chris with his CD-ROM dilemma. I once had a similar drive (a Creative 24x CD-ROM) which had the same problem. Although I had had it for only a few months, it began buzzing like a demented whirring thing.

I began by hitting it to make it stop, but my second approach to mending it enjoyed some success. I took the noisy bastard apart (no longer under warranty) and with the mechanism exposed I placed a CD into the drive. The spinning mechanism came up nicely through the hole in the middle when pushed in. However, the mechanism was not meeting up with a housing above the CD, which stops it from shaking around when spinning.

I am not certain what caused the thing to move, but it could have been the crappy, springy tray the CD rests on, when it is pushed, that came out of place (I think there is a similar system in Chris's CD-ROM model), causing the whole thing to bugger up inside. I moved the housing around so it fitted and tightened all the screws I could find, but the whole construction looked a bit flimsy to me. It was fixed for the time being.

A week later it started buzzing again. Realising I couldn't keep taking it apart every week, I brought a new 32x CD-ROM (*not* a Creative one I hasten to add), which has worked fine for over a year. My friend had a similar mechanical failure on a Creative CD-ROM and he needed a replacement. I hope Chris's CD-ROM is not another casualty of Creative's faulty design and that my story helps your problem. No complaints about Creative's sound or graphics cards though – they whip ass.

Matt Ault

A We've had a few letters in response to Chris's tale of woe. One reader, Andrew McMullan, wrote in to say: "I had the same problem with my 32x Creative CD-ROM Drive – it's buggered! Tell him to buy a new one..." Helpful advice, I'm sure you'll agree.

While many have questioned the build quality of Creative drives, it would perhaps be a little unfair to draw too many conclusions from just six or so letters out of a total of 70,000 readers.

Matt wasn't the only one to suggest opening up the drive and, yes, it's worth a go providing the unit isn't under warranty (if it is, you should just take it back anyway of course). However, judging from this and other letters we've received, do-it-yourself repair would appear to offer only a short-term fix.

PROPRIETARY PAINTSHOP

Q In your October issue (*PCZ* #81), you answered a question about Paint Shop Pro, but I think you have missed Paul's point. PaintShop Pro 5 does have a proprietary format for saving files (.psp).

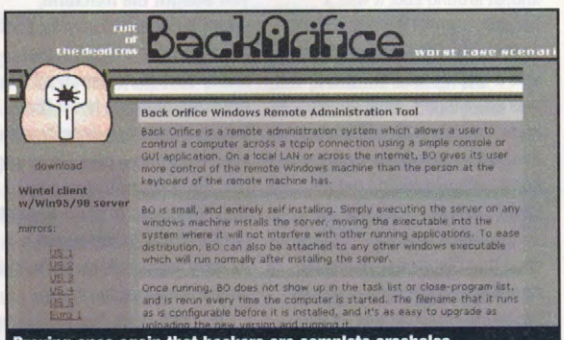
Also, I find that the easiest way to change a file association is to hold Shift down and right-click on the file, then Open With..., select the appropriate program, and select Always Use This To Open These File Types. Oh, and thanks for printing my letter about the Intellimouse problems.

Noel Money

A Oops, I got the wrong end of the stick and, rest assured, I'm now being beaten over the head with it! PaintShop Pro version 5 (note: not version 4 which I use!) does indeed have an option for saving in a proprietary file format (yeah, like the world really needed yet another one).

Anyone using the trial version would be well advised *not* to save files in the .psp format (unless you intend buying the full package). Otherwise, as Paul found out, you won't be able to open the files. A couple of readers suggested workarounds but the simplest solution, it seems, is to try re-installing the trial version or open the files using someone else's copy of the program, and then change the files to a standard format (PaintShop Pro has a good Batch Conversion facility).

Incidentally Noel, that's a top short-cut regarding the changing of file associations. The secret here is the use of Shift button which, as you say, allows you to change the association (by selecting Open With...) as opposed to opening the file with a previously associated program. PCZ



Proving once again that hackers are complete arseholes.

WATCHDOG

Dixons comes in for some flak, *Ultima* goes offline for one hapless fan and *Braveheart* warriors seem to do a very un-brave bunk off the battlefield

ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

Ultima Online: let the gametime buyer beware.

LIVING IN A WORLD OF HURT?

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you've got a techie problem, write to Dear Wazza (page 134).

WRITE TO Watchdog, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

SCREAMING OVER ULTIMA

Q I decided to buy *Ultima Online: The Second Age* after changing to Screaming.net for the free calls. It's an excellent game and I am totally hooked. The only problem is paying for your account – you can only pay by credit card or by buying gametime from EA. As I don't own a credit card, I tried to get gametime vouchers and asked around the shops in my area, which told me to phone EA. I got in touch with them and was told that you could only get gametime from the US and I should check their website for more details.

So I did and found out that in order to buy gametime, you had to make an international call and buy a money order for just under $50. So if you don't have a credit card or don't want the hassle of buying gametime, don't buy *Ultima Online* until you can buy gametime in the UK. Looks like I'll be suffering from withdrawal symptoms for the next few months…

Steven Nunley

WHERE IN THE WORLD, INDEED...

Two readers bought PCs from the Dixons retail group and later found they hadn't got everything they'd hoped for. But in some cases the retailer isn't to blame – do you *really* know what you're buying?

DIG AT DIXONS #1

Q I bought an Advent 8450 PC from Currys in October '98. Around last February, I was planning to upgrade it but I didn't know what motherboard was in the machine as this was the only manual I didn't get with the package.

After spending two hours searching the Net for a simple email address where I could write to request the manual, I still couldn't find it. So I wrote to PC World to see if they could help as they are in the same retail group as Currys.

They said they couldn't help and that I should ask at the shop where I bought the PC. I was told that a copy of the manual couldn't be obtained, both at the shop and when I eventually found the technical support email address. I don't suppose you could find out where I could get the manual from, or at least, find out which model of motherboard is in my PC – I've opened up the case, but there is no marking on it anywhere.

James Thompson

A **For those who don't know, both PC World and Currys are part of the Dixons Group. We passed on your complaint to Dixons and, after waiting bleedin' ages for a response, they came back with the following statement: "We are waiting for a response from Advent PC on the issue of the manual. However, if Mr Thompson phones his nearest PC World store, a technician will be able to advise him on what motherboard is in his computer – the store finder number is 0990 500049."**

In the meantime, Watchdog will pass on any info to you about the availability of the manual when Dixons hear back from Advent PC.

DIG AT DIXONS #2

Q After finally persuading my parents to purchase a PC, we decided to shop around to find the best deal possible. At the time we were new to the world of PCs and we didn't have a clue about most of the jargon involved. We opted to go for a family system from Dixons (a Packard Bell machine). At the time, it was great: a Celeron 333, a 6.4Gb hard drive and 64Mb RAM, which seemed more than adequate until I bought an AGP Voodoo3 2000 on holiday in France.

The card was fine as the guy in the shop told me they were compatible all over the world and, at around £80, it was a bargain… until I got home. After opening the PC, I realised there was a major problem – there was no AGP port. Most people know that all newish PCs have this port so you can imagine my horror when I couldn't put my new card in.

I was told by a specialist shop that Dixons had basically ripped me off. The guy couldn't believe it. I realised that I was stuck with a perfectly fine graphics card, but how could I get rid of it if the box was in French? The guy said I could either buy a new motherboard for £90 or he would take the V3 and give me a 12Mb Voodoo2 for £30. This seemed my only hope as Dixons could not change the machine – there's technically nothing wrong with it.

The other frustrating thing is that the motherboard has two PCI slots and the sound and video card are built in as well. How are people in the same situation going to upgrade their machine? The PC has four months' warranty left but if I change the motherboard, all the other stuff will have to go with it. That's if I'm lucky.

All Dixons have done is abuse the fact that more and more people are jumping on the PC bandwagon and cheating them out of their hard-earned cash. Is there anything I do?

James Marsden

A **Ho hum, James. While Watchdog appreciates the fact that you weren't particularly PC literate when you bought the machine, when it comes to buying such an expensive bit of kit, you really should research all the possible options, learn the jargon and know exactly what you're buying – pick up a mag like *Computer Shopper* and they'll tell you in plain English (without salesman-speak) exactly what to look for to suit your future needs.**

As for buying the card, you should have checked exactly what your system could or couldn't use beforehand and then checked this with the French retailer. It's hard advice on hindsight but if you arm yourself with the right information beforehand, it can make a world of difference in the long term.

In the meantime, we contacted Dixons to get their point of view: "Although we appreciate the dilemma Mr Marsden is in, the computer he bought met his specification at that time," stated a Dixons spokesperson. "We believe he was given accurate descriptions of the product and that he was advised correctly. The computer Mr Marsden purchased, a Packard Bell, has two PCI ports that enable him to upgrade his unit. Mr Marsden can action the upgrades by disabling the built-in video and sound cards. This can be done through the operating Windows system installed on his PC. Alternatively, he can take the unit to a local PC World and they will be happy to carry out an upgrade for him. If Mr Marsden is experiencing a hardware problem with his unit, he should contact PC Service on 0870 9013000. If he requires any further information on how to upgrade his PC, we suggest that he looks on the Packard Bell website (www.packardbell-europe.com)."

"After opening the PC, I realised there was a major problem – there was no AGP port. You can imagine my horror when I couldn't put my new card in"

JAMES MARSDEN

A Sounds like a bummer – a matter made worse by the fact that *Ultima Online* is one of the greatest games ever created. EA confirmed that gametime vouchers aren't available at retail in the UK but, yes, they can be bought from the US via the www.ea.com website. However, they did say that they are expecting to sell gametime vouchers via EA's European site soon – keep an eye on http://shop.ea-europe.com.

In the meantime, we reckon that those enterprising bods at EA should sort out some kind of deal with the likes of GAME to make the wretched vouchers more accessible to the everyday punter. How about it, EA?

FREEDOM!

Q Am I the only person who has found that *Braveheart* just doesn't work? Here is a copy of my third email to Eidos's technical support team, dated 30 July:

"The 3D battles do not work. I have been defeated several times in battle and every time it has been in the same way: I move my men forward, they get stuck in an open bit of terrain, the unit rosters cycle down to 0 and I'm then told my army has been destroyed. Inevitably, as the scene fades, all my troops are still visible, hacking away at thin air without ever meeting the enemy.

"I have the latest drivers for my Matrox G200 Millennium graphics card and have been playing the game using D3D. I am still having problems saving the game on occasion as well – I am told that there is "an error while loading the game". This message is then repeated every time I click on the 'save game' button. Oh, and sometimes the game kicks me out and returns me to the Windows desktop. Very reassuring. I am exceptionally disappointed with the quality of this product.

"While their team has replied to my previous emails by addressing minor points, the main ones still remain unanswered. Can you get any sense out of them?"

Adam Wright

A Sounds frustrating, and Watchdog wondered if Eidos were simply avoiding the issue because they didn't have a solution to your *Braveheart* woes. We talked to one of their marketing bods to get their spin on a seemingly unacceptable situation. He told us: "We have experienced no consistent problems with the 3D battles. However, the symptoms experienced indicate that the customer's troops have actually retreated from the battlefield, either through proximity to the map edge or possibly due to overwhelming opposition."

As for your loading probs, they offered the following advice: "The 'error loading the game' problem could either signify that the game has not saved correctly or that the customer is attempting to use different executable versions (eg software and Direct3D) or alternatively the later .exe version found in the patch and saves from the retail version."

As for the game crashing and returning to Windows, Eidos admit that the game ("like all others") will do so occasionally. "However, this is again something found to be very rare during the testing phase," the company offered. "This could also be related to the savegame problem if the files are not saving correctly or becoming corrupted."

Eidos said that to be able to help further, they would need more information on your system spec, exactly where the crashes occur, free disk and swap-file space, and the usual techie stuff. They also recommended downloading the latest patch for the game, which is available on the *PC ZONE* website or directly from Eidos. We'll pass your details on, Adam – let us know how you get on.

Adam tried to run *Braveheart*'s 3D battles 'til he was blue in the face.

SCREAMING.NET FOLLOW-UP

Customer service problems are not our concern, says British Telecom

Last month, Watchdog printed two of many letters that we'd received complaining about Localtel's Screaming.net service. As part of their reply, Localtel apportioned some of the blame to British Telecom and, as promised, here's what BT had to say about the problems:

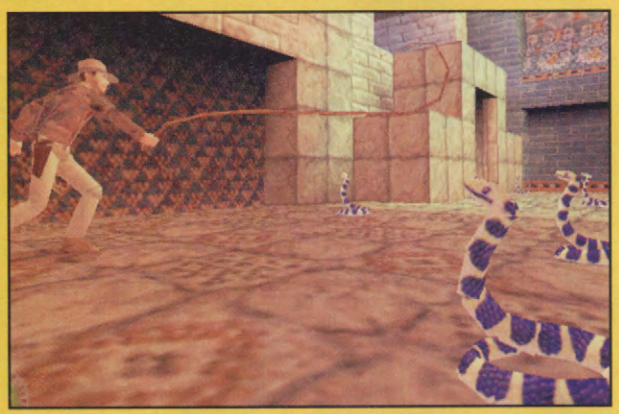
"It would not be right to answer all the detailed allegations made, particularly given Oftel's recent moves. Indeed, many of the points – disconnecting after two hours, busy phone lines, etc – are customer service issues and do not involve BT.

"In general terms, however, BT has been working very closely with the service providers since before the launch of this service, including providing staff on their premises to help. We admit there have been some difficulties following the launch, but believe that many of these have already been resolved satisfactorily and any outstanding problems should be overcome shortly."

Perhaps Localtel would like to reply to this in next month's Watchdog. Let us know...

COMING NEXT ISSUE

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE



In his first 3D adventure, Indiana Jones finds himself up against the Russians in a quest to find the fabled Tower of Babel. Whether he'll face up to arch rival archaeologist Lara Croft is another matter. Tune in next month as we pull out our trusty reviewers whip and put Dr Jones through his paces.

THE FINEST COVER CD DEMOS

The multiplayer test version of *Quake III Arena* has been on the Net for some months, but as yet no one knows how the single-player game is shaping up – until now. Next month we'll have the first proper demo of the first-person shooter everyone has been waiting for. *Half-Life* fans can look forward to a ten-level mission pack called *Redemption*, and maybe even a demo of *Opposing Force* as well. *Planescape Torment*, the next RPG from the creators of *Baldur's Gate* will also be on next month's CD. That won't be all, either.

HONEST REVIEWS

As we gear up for Christmas, a whole deluge of top quality games will be appearing in next month's issue: *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine*, *Half-Life: Opposing Force*, *Planescape Torment*, *Sega Rally 2*, *Nocturne*, *Imperium Galactica II*, *Rogue Spear*, *Freespace 2*, *Pharaoh*, *Age Of Empires II*, *Theme Park World* and *Battlezone II* – and that's just a few.

TIPS, CHEATS AND WALKTHROUGHS

We extend our Troubleshooter section next month to bring you full solutions to *C&C: Tiberian Sun* and Sierra's classic *Homeworld*, as well as the second part of our *System Shock 2* walkthrough. Keith will be providing all the latest cheats, and our 'How To...' next month will show you how to set up your own high-speed network.

INSIGHTFUL PREVIEWS

The angelic *Messiah* will be heading our preview section next month. From Shiny, it's a third-person action adventure where you play a cherub able to possess over 40 different characters. We'll also be looking at Hasbro's line-up for 2000 and we'll have an interview with the *Vampire* boys, Nihilistic.

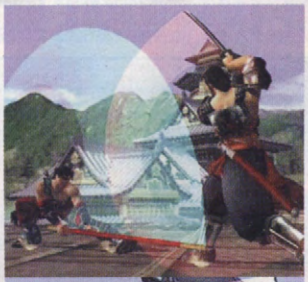
ON SALE THURSDAY 18 NOV

* Note: this is a guide only, content may change due to circumstances beyond our control

THE **OFFICIAL** DREAMCAST MAGAZINE

Dreamcast

Dreamcast



BEAT THIS!

Namco's awesome *Soul Calibur* has hit the Sega Dreamcast! Find out why it's the most spectacular beat 'em up of all time in our massive eight-page review of the UK release. PLUS! See it for yourself with our exclusive cover-mounted demo disc.

THE FUTURE IS NOW

It's the most powerful games console money can buy, but what do developers have in store for Dreamcast in the future? We ask the game creators and discover how they plan to use the machine's online capabilities and revolutionary Visual Memory technology.

EXCLUSIVE COVER DISC

Official Dreamcast Magazine is the only magazine to deliver a free GD-ROM each and every month. This issue: see *F1 World Grand Prix, NFL Blitz 2000* and *Soul Calibur* in action; plus exclusive playable demos of *Buggy Heat* and *Dynamite Cop*.

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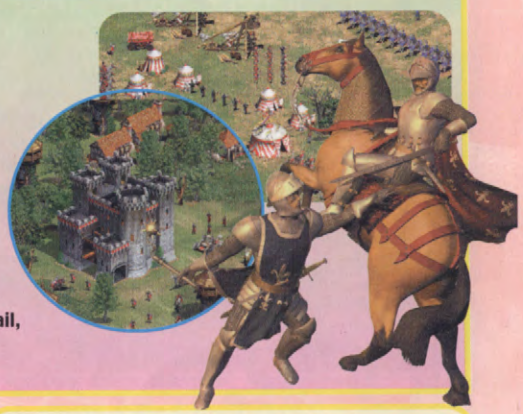

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Set 40 years after the first game. The world was close to destruction as a result of a computer virus, the virus is back and more deadly. The atmosphere the game creates is one of extreme fear and tension. The intricate story has many subquests to occupy your attention, this allows for return visits to see what you missed the first time.

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SCI-FI 3D STRATEGY

Battlezone 2 follows on from the original, with the USA and the USSR having joined forces to protect Pluto from an invading alien force. Keeping the brilliant gameplay from the original, the sequel adds increased 3D support, allowing for stunning terrain, with tunnels, bridges and more. New units are now at your command, and you can pilot any one of them, or travel on foot. With full strategy elements allowing you to create your base and units, and the immersive feeling of the 3D combat giving you total freedom to go wherever you want, Battlezone 2 is a classic in the making.

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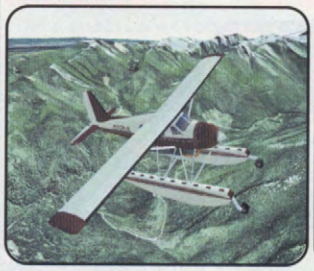

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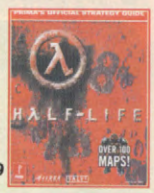

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CHAT
Your technical questions answered

PC ZONE TOP 100

Welcome to the *PC ZONE* Top 100. Here you'll find the titles that, in our expert opinion, are the current top PC games in their field, as well as a few extras you might like to consider if you're a big fan of the genre

ACTION GAMES

QUAKE II — PCZ #59 • 97%

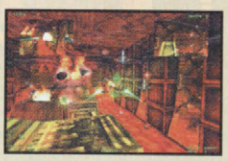
The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Despite the odd bit of slowdown, single-player and deathmatch games are in a league of their own. As Macca concluded in his review: "*Quake II* is pretty much perfect." Buy it now.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

HALF-LIFE — PCZ #71 • 95%

Regarded by many as the best game to grace any platform, *Half-Life* set a new standard by which all games are judged. The story development, atmosphere and player involvement have yet to be improved. If you buy one game from this Top 100, buy this one.

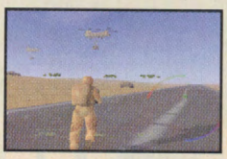
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209100



FORSAKEN — PCZ #63 • 94%

Descent is dead and *Forsaken* is now king of the tunnel-based shoot 'em ups. With huge, varied levels, heaps of graphical effects, weapons and a fantastic multiplayer LAN-based game, it's up there with the best of 'em.

PUBLISHER Acclaim • 0171 344 5000



WARGASM — PCZ #71 • 93%

Famed for their flight sims, DID finally deliver an action game only they could produce. With helicopters, APCs, and hapless infantry running about, this is as fast-paced as a tank game could be – and it's even better to share.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION — PCZ #71 • 92%

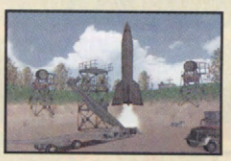
Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this 3D action game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. With great graphical effects and an involving storyline, it's perhaps just a bit too easy for the *Quake* hard-core.

PUBLISHER Microids • 00331 4601 5401

KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME — PCZ #77 • 92%

This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. And the multiplayer aspect should prove fiery opposition to any other game out there.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



HIDDEN & DANGEROUS — PCZ #79 • 91%

Strategic shoot 'em ups don't get any harder, or more compelling, than this. Command a troop of men through WWII missions and avoid getting killed. If you're after the next step in *Rainbow Six*-style gaming, this is it.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

TOMB RAIDER III — PCZ #72 • 91%

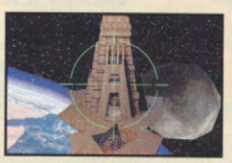
There's a good chance that in 20 years' time the *Tomb Raider* 'thingy' will be looked upon with as much fondness as *Star Wars* is today. This third outing may not be as ground-breaking as its predecessor, but it's the best so far.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

JEDI KNIGHT / MYSTERIES OF THE SITH — PCZ #74 • 90%

As a double pack, this ageing 3D shooter and its expansion disc represents outstanding value for money. Dated graphics, but the level design is superb and the missions are some of the best ever made.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01895 4567000



UNREAL TOURNAMENT — PCZ #81 • 90%

Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake II*'s multiplayer, with a combination of well designed maps and diverse gameplay. There may be no missions, but there's plenty to sink your teeth into.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

ALSO CONSIDER

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT Eidos Interactive • PCZ #72 • 90%
TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX Take 2 • PCZ #69 • 89%
PRIVATEER 2 Origin/EA • PCZ #44 • 94% BUDGET
QUAKE Activision • PCZ #43 • 96% BUDGET
ALIENS VS PREDATOR Fox Interactive • PCZ #77 • 91%
REQUIEM: AVENGING ANGEL Ubi Soft • PCZ #50 • 89%
STARSIEGE UNIVERSE Sierra • PCZ #76 • 88%
SiN Eidos Interactive • PCZ #70 • 91%

RACING GAMES

CARMAGEDDON II — PCZ #69 • 95%

✪ It's *that* game again, this time with full 3D pedestrians. More blood, more cars, more tracks – and now with added missions. If you liked the first one, you'll love this one. If you don't, you can just bog off.

PUBLISHER SCI • 0171 585 3308

TOCA 2 — PCZ #76 • 93%

✪ Predictably, Codemasters have done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrol heads. Graphically it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

COLIN MCRAE RALLY — PCZ #68 • 93%

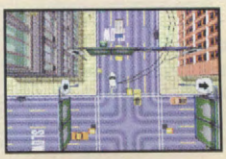
✪ Sporting an updated *TOCA* engine, *Colin McRae* has become the new benchmark in rally simulations. With car customisability and a heap of multiplayer accessibility, this game should be top of everyone's rally games heap.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MONACO GRAND PRIX — PCZ #69 • 92%

✪ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. It looks beautiful, plays even better, and the AI is second to none. You need a hefty machine to have it looking its best though.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 081 944 9000



GRAND THEFT AUTO — PCZ #58 • 92%

✪ This is the game that took over from *Carmageddon* as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. *Micro Machines* on acid.

PUBLISHER BMG • 0171 973 0011

NEED FOR SPEED III — PCZ #69 • 91%

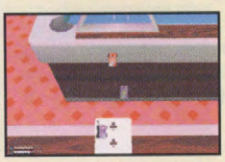
✪ Some arcade racing games are fun, but if you like a bit more than just just racing around a few tracks then you should seriously consider *Need For Speed III*. Why? Because if avoiding the law isn't fun, what is?

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MOTOCROSS MADNESS — PCZ #67 • 91%

✪ An astoundingly addictive game. Loads of game and race options and tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. Available with the pad for around 50 quid. A must-buy.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



MICRO MACHINES 3 — PCZ #64 • 90%

✪ The manic miniature racing game gets the 3D treatment and loses nothing along the way. The new power-ups might not please the purist, but *Micro Machines 3* is still one of the finest two-player games around.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MIDTOWN MADNESS — PCZ #79 • 90%

✪ Drive around Chicago participating in races, annoying the police, or just cruising around. Not quite *Grand Theft Auto 3D*, but just as much fun, this should pull you through until *Driver* is ported from the PlayStation to the PC.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

BREAKNECK — PCZ #78 • 89%

✪ Not only is this the fastest driving game out there, it also has enough options, tracks and vehicles to keep even occasional racers enthralled. Add to this the superb graphics, and you can see why *Breakneck* is a winner.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656

ALSO CONSIDER

FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 MicroProse • PCZ #36 • 95%
SCREAMER 2 Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% BUDGET
DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 Psygnosis • PCZ #46 • 86% BUDGET
MOTORHEAD Gremlin Interactive • PCZ #63 • 90%
TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP Europress • PCZ #59 • 86% BUDGET
GRAND PRIX LEGENDS Sierra • PCZ #69 • 90%

SPORTS GAMES

LINKS LS — PCZ #43 • 94%

✪ The classic golf sim gets an update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, luscious graphics, a redesigned menu and a view selection system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF — PCZ #69 • 93%

✪ Beautifully presented, as always, and sporting a speedy enhanced graphics engine, this latest in the *PGA* series also gets star endorsement by young Tiger Woods. Without question, this is the best golf game yet.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

NHL 99 — PCZ #70 • 92%

✪ The problem with all ice hockey games is the confusion that ensues after each ruck. *NHL 99* is no different in that respect, but updated graphics, enhanced AI and spiffy presentation make this game a must for fans of the sport.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97 — PCZ #53 • 92%

✪ This game doesn't quite better *Super Tennis* on the SNES, but it's as close as you'll get on the PC. The simple control system means it's instantly playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up when they serve.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

FIFA 99 — PCZ #71 • 92%

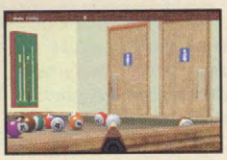
✪ Another biannual release from EA Sports that, as per usual, is better than the last. You'll have to think long and hard before shelling out another £40, but if you love footie it's well worth it for the best football game available for the PC.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

SENSIBLE SOCCER EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION — PCZ #69 • 90%

✪ It's still top-down, and it's still simple, fast and fun. *World Cup '98* may be prettier, but it can only dream of being as instantly playable as *Sensible Soccer European Club Edition*.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



VIRTUAL POOL 2 — PCZ #58 • 90%

✪ Okay, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3Dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

THE GOLF PRO — PCZ #62 • 90%

✪ If you're bored with either *PGA* or *Links*, then this is the best of the 'mouse-swing' bunch. Good course design and some excellent tuition means there's loads of gameplay, though the putting lets it down a tad.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

ACTUA SOCCER 3 — PCZ #72 • 89%

✪ Although better than last year's effort, *Actua 3* fails to snatch the title from EA this time around. Mind you, with a good range of options and a huge range of teams to play against, this certainly has a longer shelf life than *FIFA*.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

NBA LIVE 99 — PCZ #73 • 87%

✪ Being an EA Sports title, *NBA Live 99* is, unsurprisingly, the best game in its field. If you're a Sprite-drinking hoop fan, there's plenty here to justify shelling out for the annual upgrade. If you're not, you'll neither know nor care.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

ALSO CONSIDER

✪ **There's always a swell of different sports game types depending on the current sporting season. These are worth having a look at...**

JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL Virgin Interactive • PCZ #68 • 88%
MADDEN NFL 99 EA Sports • PCZ #71 • 87%
TRIPLE PLAY 99 Electronic Arts • PCZ #64 • 90%
BRIAN LARA CRICKET Codemasters • PCZ #75 • 85%

ADVENTURE GAMES

BIOFORGE — PCZ #25 • 95%

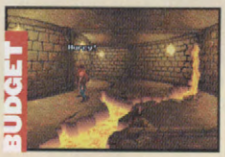
Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SYSTEM SHOCK — PCZ #20 • 95%

This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the genre. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is still invigorating.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS — PCZ #37 • 93%

Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255

LBA 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY — PCZ #54 • 93%

Twinsen is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmers in this sumptuous sequel. The huge play area in *LBA 2*, coupled with seamlessly linked puzzles, creates a great-looking and hugely atmospheric adventure. A must for adventure fans.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SAM & MAX — PCZ #11 • 93%

The hilarious dog/rabbit duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a point-and-click fan.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255

DISCWORLD NOIR — PCZ #79 • 90%

Although the adventure genre is almost dead, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive, throwing plot and gameplay surprises at you. Playing a washed-up private eye, you clear your name, find rare artifacts and get the girl.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

RESIDENT EVIL II — PCZ #75 • 90%

Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore make for top entertainment. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255

MONKEY ISLAND ADVENTURE PACK — PCZ #74 • 90%

Monkey Island 1 and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 4567000

GRIM FANDANGO — PCZ #71 • 90%

LucasArts not only do the best adventure games, but have also recently been doing the only adventure games worth buying. This latest has style written all over it, and hopefully signals a rosy future for fans of the genre.

PUBLISHER LucasArts • 0171 368 2255

KING'S QUEST VIII: MASK OF ETERNITY — PCZ #71 • 89%

To mark the genre's transition from point-and-click to a full 3D interface, Sierra's eighth *King's Quest* adventure proves an engaging stopgap, even if it is a little too Americanised. Good but not great.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

ALSO CONSIDER

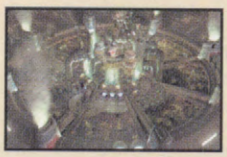
FULL THROTTLE Virgin • PCZ #27 • 92% BUDGET
THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE Virgin • PCZ #43 • 92%
REDGUARD Virgin • PCZ #75 • 89%
GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN Cendant • PCZ #36 • 88%
LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE Electronic Arts • PCZ #21 • 93% BUDGET
DISCWORLD II GT Psygnosis • PCZ #44 • 93%

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

SYSTEM SHOCK 2 — PCZ #80 • 95%

One of the most compelling gaming experiences to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* mixes heavy RPG and 3D action with adventure elements. In short, a title that's absolutely indispensable for any self-respecting gamer.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



FINAL FANTASY VII — PCZ #66 • 93%

Fearsomely addictive gem of a game of truly epic proportions. Great graphics, plenty of hidden surprises and massive levels will keep you totally absorbed if you forgive the risible dialogue and turn-based combat.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive •0181 636 3000

REALMS OF THE HAUNTING — PCZ #47 • 93%

Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93 per cent when he reviewed it back in issue 47. Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap, *ROTH* is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

ONLINE ONLY ULTIMA ONLINE — PCZ #80 • 92%

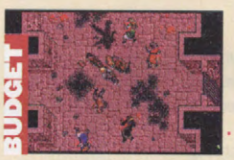
In many ways an old-school RPG, but with amazing freedom, depth and open-endedness. So addictive that *ZONE* editor Chris has sold his car, his house and his soul to finance a permanent Web connection.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

LANDS OF LORE III — PCZ #74 • 90%

Westwood know how to tell a good story, and this latest in the series is the best of the lot. Combine that with ease of use and some highly polished artwork, and you'll find *LOLIII* a great alternative to more traditional RPG efforts.

PUBLISHER Westwood/EA • 01753 549442



ULTIMA VII — PCZ #3 • 89%

Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia. The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Check out the *Ultima Collection* for a real treat.

PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442

DIABLO — PCZ #48 • 88%

Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game.

PUBLISHER Zablac/Blizzard • 01626 332233

FALLOUT 2 — PCZ #71 • 86%

Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you like the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

BALDUR'S GATE — PCZ #73 • 85%

With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

ONLINE ONLY EVERQUEST — PCZ #80 • 85%

If you find *Ultima Online* too vast, *EverQuest* may be the online RPG for you. It's far more combat-orientated than *Ultima*, with captivating monsters and loads of visual candy. Its graphics are 3D, but the gameplay is a bit linear.

PUBLISHER Sony (sold at Electronic Boutique only • 0171 637 7911)

ALSO CONSIDER

These are the cream of the crop, largely because RPGs have taken a back seat in the past couple of years. But there's also...

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS Origin/EA • PCZ #1 • 94%
TERRIS AOL • PCZ #44 • 88%
DIABLO: HELLFIRE Cendant • PCZ #59 • 82%
ULTIMA COLLECTION Electronic Arts • PCZ #62 • 90%
RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET Mindscape • PCZ #25 • 78%

STRATEGY GAMES

HOMEWORLD — PCZ #82 • 94%

NEW ENTRY *Homeworld* delivers the dream of millions of PC strategists the world over: a fully three-dimensional strategic experience. The vast expanse of space is the battleground, the hundreds of ships at your command the weapon, and the limits are those of your own imagination.

DUNGEON KEEPER 2 — PCZ #79 • 94%

✪ *Dungeon Keeper* was a great idea. *DK2* takes the essence of the original game, corrects all the mistakes, vastly improves the graphics, and doses the myriad of features with a wise hand. And it keeps us very happy indeed.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

TA: KINGDOMS — PCZ #78 • 94%

✪ *TA* puts on a pointy hat and grows a six-foot beard for this long-awaited sequel. Don't be put off by the fantasy setting, this is a real strategy masterpiece. From the gorgeous animation to the AI, *Kingdoms* exudes class.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

AGE OF EMPIRES — PCZ #54 • 94%

✪ Imagine *Civilization II*'s great empire-building gameplay improved with some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3 — PCZ #73 • 93%

✪ No fancy graphics, no sound and no online multiplayer options do nothing to hide the fact that *Champ Manager 3* is one of the most addictive games you'll ever play. Forty quid for a season ticket to nirvana? Bloody bargain, mate.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING — PCZ #70 • 92%

✪ The original *Populous* was the game that put Bullfrog into orbit and made Peter Molyneux one of the biggest names in the industry. Now Peterless, the new Bullfrog team show that they can do just as well without him.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MAGIC & MAYHEM — PCZ #70 • 92%

✪ Based on the old Spectrum game *Chaos*, *X-COM* creators Mythos deliver a diverse and original fantasy strategy game. A strong single-player element and a manic multiplayer game make this a well-deserving classic.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255

SIMCITY 3000 — PCZ #74 • 92%

✪ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442

SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI — PCZ #74 • 92%

✪ *Civilization II* was, and still is, one of the greatest strategy games ever made, and *Alpha Centauri* is everything a true sequel should be. Rather than create another remake, Sid Meier has created the game *Civ* fans have been crying out for for years.

PUBLISHER Firaxis/EA • 01753 549442

C&C: TIBERIAN SUN — PCZ #81 • 90%

Perhaps not as stunning as one might have hoped after a three-year wait, *Tiberian Sun* is nevertheless a truly great game. Pushing the *Command & Conquer* genre to its limits, it offers PC strategists immense depth, detail and variety.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

ALSO CONSIDER

WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING Broderbund • PCZ #67 • 90%
BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION MicroProse • PCZ #78 • 89%
COMMANDOS Eidos Interactive • PCZ #66 • 87%
WARZONE 2100 Eidos Interactive • PCZ #75 • 90%
X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE MicroProse • PCZ #52 • 95%
CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER Activision • PCZ #75 • 89%
CAESAR III Sierra • PCZ #70 • 92%
TOTAL ANNIHILATION GT Interactive • PCZ #56 • 92%

FLIGHT SIMULATION GAMES

FALCON 4.0 — PCZ #72 • 95%

✪ After waiting literally years for this, the wait was worth it. With 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure, *Falcon 4.0* can fly against the best of them – and win. One of the best flight sims ever seen.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR — PCZ #68 • 95%

✪ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece is perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this one.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633

FLIGHT SIM 98 — PCZ #55 • 94%

✪ Another year, and yet another flight sim to come from the mighty Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and hugely impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

APACHE HAVOC — PCZ #73 • 94%

✪ Of the three main chopper sims available, *Longbow 2* is the one if you're a hard-core sim head, *Team Apache* is the choice for fans whose preference swings the other way, and *Apache Havoc* straddles the gap. And the graphics are to die for.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

LONGBOW 2 — PCZ #59 • 92%

✪ "*Longbow 2* is challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up," we said in our review. If you don't have any extra graphics hardware, there's only one thing to do – think 'upgrade', 'upgrade' and 'upgrade'. It'll be worth the investment.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

JANE'S F-15 — PCZ #64 • 92%

✪ A hard-core propeller-head's sim that can stand alongside the awesome *Longbow 2* as one of the most realistic flight sims available. Newbies to the genre might find it a bit overwhelming, but it's worth persevering with.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLYING CORPS GOLD — PCZ #59 • 92%

✪ Action-packed WWI flight simulation with neato graphics. Some of you may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WW1 flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WW1 sim currently available.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

FLIGHT UNLIMITED III — PCZ #82 • 90%

NEW ENTRY For all those who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than an excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this is (along with the *Flight Sim* series) an object of worship and devotion. It deserves high praise.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

JANE'S WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS — PCZ #72 • 90%

✪ It's been a fierce dogfight to see who rules the WWII flight sim skies. *Jane's* combines realism with accessibility and ease, and although the game doesn't have a dynamic campaign feature its graphics make it a clear winner.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MIG ALLEY — PCZ #80 • 90%

✪ *MiG Alley* gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't be put off. If you're willing to put in the work, it will repay you with excellent in-flight graphics and brilliant mission planning elements.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

ALSO CONSIDER

✪ **If a flight sim is good, you can bet it'll stay on the shelves for a long time – *Total Air War* being a case in point. Some of the more recent releases worth considering include...**

FLIGHT UNLIMITED II Eidos Interactive • PCZ #60 • 84%
A-10 CUBA! Activision • PCZ #59 • 90%
F-16 AGGRESSOR Virgin • PCZ #70 • 92%
COMANCHE GOLD NovaLogic • PCZ #65 • 87%
F/A-18 KOREA Empire Interactive • PCZ #61 • 90%

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ON THE CD

Exclusive demos of *The Nomad Soul*, *Sega Rally 2* and *Starsiege: Tribes*, plus *Soul Reaver* and masses more

WORDS Keith Pullin DISKMEISTER Daniel Emery

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, **or email pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk**. Please do NOT phone the *PC ZONE* office. Thanks.

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points:

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

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- You need at least a Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are Windows 95, DOS and 3D accelerator only.

ON THE CD DEMOS + SHAREWARE

THE NOMAD SOUL

Eidos Interactive

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

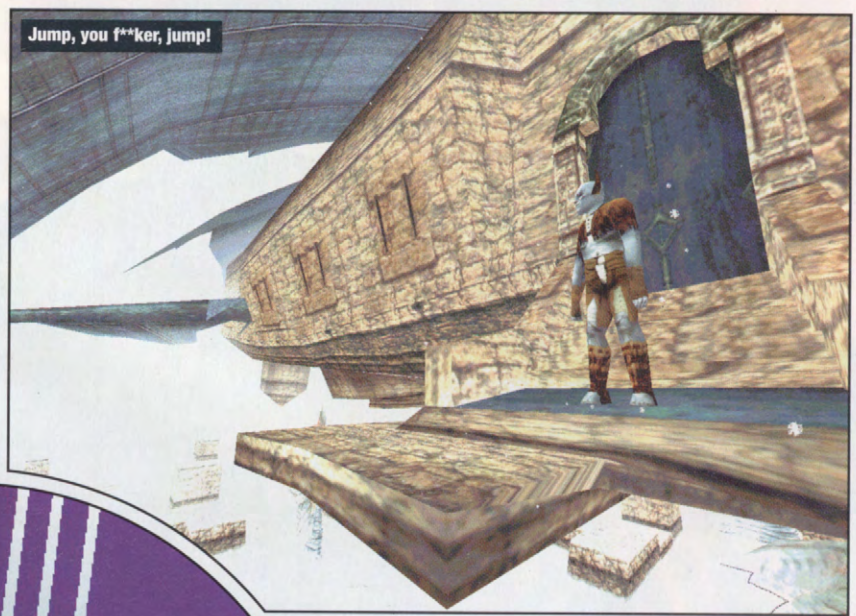
Eeeee, isn't that David Bowie? Yes, funnily enough, it is. Not content with singing into our ears for the past 30-odd years, he's now decided to explode in our faces, too (not literally, that would be hideous).

Welcome to the skewed sci-fi future world of *The Nomad Soul*, an accomplished 3D action adventure from Gallic developers Quantic Dream, which brings a thriving futuristic city to life right here on your computer.

The game opens with you taking control of Kay'l, a ginger-haired police officer (but don't hold that against him).

This demo represents a cut-down version of the full game, which we've reviewed in full on page 74 of this very issue.

Controls:	Joystick/mouse/keyboard
UP ARROW	Forwards
DOWN ARROW	Backwards
LEFT ARROW	Left!
RIGHT ARROW	Right!
SPACEBAR	Jump
RETURN	Do something
T	Jab fruitlessly
H	Hammer pointlessly
P	Poke meaninglessly
SHIFT	Run!
TAB	Pockets!
CTRL+ARROW	Sidestep



Jump, you f**ker, jump!

Hi, I'm David Bowie. You might remember me from *The Man Who Fell To Earth*.

"Let's DANCE!"

ALERT!

***The Nomad Soul*, being difficult and French, tries to install itself to your D: drive by default. Since that's often your CD drive, it may not be able to. Never mind – when you go to install, just type in a different location (say, c:\program files\nomad\) and all should be well.**

EXCLUSIVE

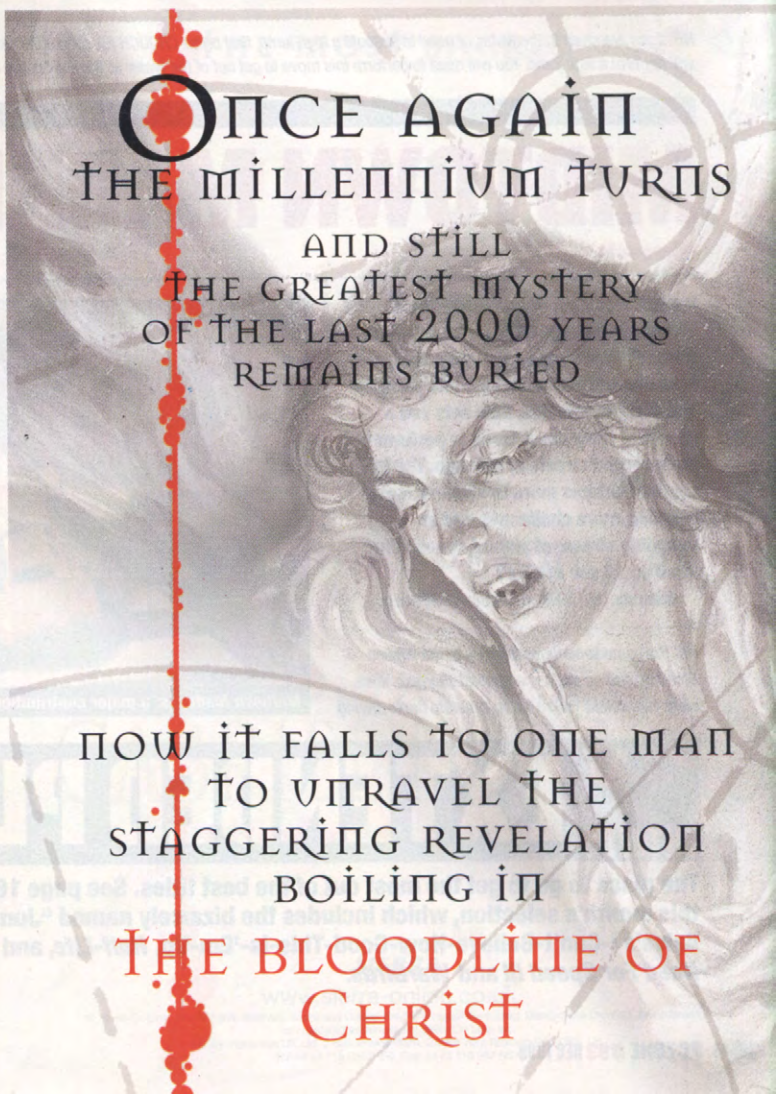
SEGA RALLY 2

Sega

Ha! Check this out: you don't have to splash out on a Dreamcast if you want to play Sega's top-notch arcade rallying sim, and we've got a demo to prove it. Insanely dangerous high-speed driving is the order of the day in this impressive conversion – which comes complete with an online multiplayer mode, unlike the Dreamcast version. Bwahahaha.

If you haven't played this in the arcades for fear of being stabbed in the face by a 13-year-old heroin addict as you walk in the door, success depends largely on your propensity for *power-sliding* – that is, skidding the car deliberately around corners like Jayne Torville on a rotating icerink. It takes a bit of getting used to, but it's dead satisfying once you've got the knack. Check out the README.TXT file following installation for more information.

Controls:	Keyboard/joypad/ steering wheel	**X**	Brrrm, brrrrrrm
LEFT ARROW	Jump to the left	**C**	Screeeeech!
RIGHT ARROW	Step to the right	**T**	Adjust testicles
DOWN ARROW	Shift up	**Z**	Wideboy's handbrake
UP ARROW	Shift down	**S**	Go "wheeee!"
		V	Change view



Soul Reaver: Legacy Of Kain: part platformer, part beat 'em up.

SOUL REAVER: LEGACY OF KAIN

Eidos Interactive

Ever wanted to 'be' a vampire? Well now's your 'chance', with this conversion of the best-selling PlayStation game. Part platformer, part beat 'em up, it's a nice little arcade interlude for those of you who spend your time playing spodarse flight sims and the like.

Controls:	Keyboard/gamepad	**A**	Action
ESC	Options menu	**D**	Suck
ENTER	Glyph menu	**T**	Swallow
UP ARROW	Move forward	**G**	Gargle and dribble down chin
DOWN ARROW	Move back	**Spacebar or X**	Jump/swim
LEFT ARROW	Move left	**F**	Aim/grapple
RIGHT ARROW	Move right	**C**	Crouch
NUMPAD 0	Rotate camera right	**S**	Sneak/face enemy
RCTRL	Rotate camera left	**LCTRL**	Zoom (camera control)

NB: If you are stuck in the water, or need to execute a high jump, first press CROUCH (C), then JUMP (space or X), and Raziel will perform a high jump. You will need to perform this move to get out of the water at the start of the demo, if you fall in.

MIDTOWN MADNESS

Microsoft

If you haven't yet experienced Microsoft's tyre-squealing apparent homage to *The Blues Brothers*, here's your chance. This here demonstration version lets you pick one of three vehicles, then sets you a couple of (very easy) tasks to perform in the crowded streets of Chicago. The full version features more landscape, more vehicles, more challenges and an unending stream of violent chaos. What more could you ask for?

Controls: Mouse/keyboard/joystick/wheel

NB: The game sometimes defaults to the 'Mouse Steering' setting. We'd change that sharpish, if we were you, unless you're out to simulate drink-driving.

Midtown Madness: a major contribution to road safety.

ON THE CD

EXTENDED PLAY

The place to go to get the most out of the best titles. See page 161 for more on this month's selection, which includes the bizarrely named "Jumbot" mod for Valve's I-Can't-Believe-How-Good-This-Is-'Em-Up, *Half-Life*, and nice things for *Need For Speed III* and *WarBirds*.

EXCLUSIVE

STARSIEGE: TRIBES

Sierra

If David Bowie, currently appearing in *The Nomad Soul*, were to sing a song about this month's CD, he might croon the following:

There's a Starsiege waiting in your drive
It's written by Sierra
And it's playable online...

We'll stop that right there and let you concentrate on this, the phenomenally popular gaming phenomenon that is *Starsiege: Tribes* – the multiplayer *Starsiege* offshoot that's a bit like *Unreal Tournament* with armoured suits and jet boosters, which has proved very popular on t'other side of the pond. If you've been plugging away at *Half-Life*, you'll pick up *Tribes* in seconds – so go on, what are you waiting for? Oh. You're on the bus. Sorry.

Note that you'll need an Internet connection to play this at all. And you'll find a full manual lurking webwards at www.tribesplayers.com/tribesplayers/manual.

Controls: Keyboard/mouse

You could write a poem about these snow-dappled hills. But that'd be soft.

AKUMA

Triggersoft

Relive those *Water Margin* memories with this heady excursion into the realm of poorly-translated Japanese RPG high-jinks. To be brutally honest with you, we're not sure quite what's going on in this one, but there's a big fat online manual lurking out there in the digital ether for you to mentally digest, should you feel the urge. For the most part, though, it's point 'n' click fun – you can drag the mouse to select more than one character at a time, and right-click to make 'em move. Banzai!

Controls: Mouse

Been to the dentist recently, Matey?

NHL 2000

Electronic Arts

Forget 'jolly hockey sticks', this is more about smashing the puck through your opponent's teeth than indulging in girlie comradeship. *NHL 2000* is the latest in EA's illustrious line of ice hockey arcade-style sims, and it's the best looking by, ooh, about a billion miles. The full version lets you pick from more than two teams (obviously), but more bizarrely, it also lets you import your own *face* to stick on to the player of your choosing. Ten quid to the first person to put together an entire team of Les Dennises.

Controls: Keyboard, joypad

NB: Define your own keys!

ON THE CD EDITORIAL

Like hip-hop, it don't stop. Here's a bunch of other things we've thrown on to the CD in an open attempt to charm you into bed

Championship Manager 3 update Update your copy of *CM3* to include the latest changes.

Tips and solutions Handy hints and top tips on all your fave games. Well, most of them.

ON THE CD TRAINERS

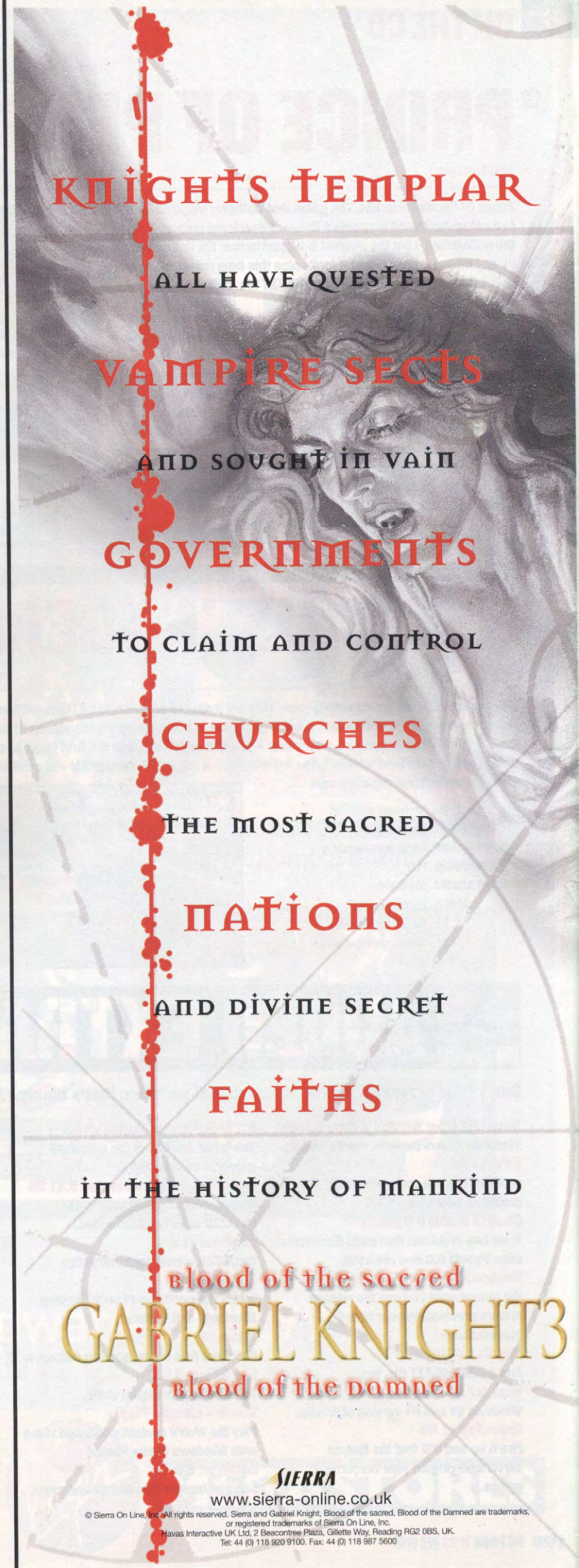
Here's this month's top ten countdown. These are all unofficial third-party programs and there's a chance they could mess up your games, your computer and your outlook on life in general. Always back up your savegames first and, if in doubt, run away screaming. You don't *have* to use them.

ALIENS VS PREDATOR
BATTLECRUISER 3000AD
CIVILIZATION: TEST OF TIME
DARKSTONE
JAZZ JACKRABBIT 2
SHADOWGATE
SPACE CHASE 2
STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON
STARCRAFT: BROOD WAR
WARGAMES

ON THE CD PATCHES

So you bought yerself a new game. And now you've discovered it's got more bugs than *The Oxford Enclyclopaedia Of More Bugs Than Is Necessary*. What to do? Simple: trawl through this bunch of patches, and apply where necessary. There's also a free, gratis, not-a-penny bonus pack for *Dungeon Keeper 2*. Check the CD browsin' program for full info.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3 V3.04E
CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER V1.2
DELTA FORCE
DUNGEON KEEPER 2 BONUS PACK #3
DUNGEON KEEPER 2 V1.51
FLY! V1.01.77
HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC VII V1.1
HEXEN II V1.11
HIDDEN & DANGEROUS V1.2
JAGGED ALLIANCE 2 V1.05
KINGPIN V1.2
MIG ALLEY V1.02
SCORCHED PLANET
SPEC OPS V1.3
SPEC OPS RANGER TEAM BRAVO PATCHES
STARFLEET COMMAND V1.01.00
SYSTEM SHOCK 2 MULTIPLAYER PATCH
WARBIRDS 2.7.3R4
WARZONE 2100 V1.07



PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D

Mindscape

***Ponce Of Persia*, more like. The game that probably inspired *Tomb Raider* in a not insignificant way gets a three-dimensional respray in time for the millennium. Like the original 8-bit platformer, it's not an *easy* game by any means – but at least it looks nice this time round. 'Save early, save often', recommends the README.TXT file. Quite.**

Controls:	Keyboard/gamepad
NUMPAD	Move Prince, run
SHIFT + NUMPAD	Walk, climb over object
CTRL	Action key, to use switches, objects, and to drink potions
ALT	Jump up, hold to grab
ALT + NUMPAD8	Jump forward
C	Crouch down
NUMPAD ENTER	Look around
SPACE	Draw, put away weapon
1	Select melée weapon
2	Select bow/arrow type
Q	Attack left
W	Attack overhead
E	Attack right
P	Sauté potatoes
S	Block
CTRL	Draw bow, release to fire
F1	Game controls and key commands
F6	Quicksave
F9	Quickload

***Prince Of Persia 3D*: caution – this game contains explicit swordplay.**

Not so much urban as turban warrior.

***Mortyr*: it's like *Saving Private Ryan*, but less funny.**

MORTYR

PBH

Forget *World War II In Colour* – how about *World War II In 3D And With Better Weapons*? That's precisely what *Mortyr* is offering. Think of it as *Wolfenstein* for the *Half-Life* generation. If you're a professional *Quake* player, you might want to change the default keyboard setup, which is rubbish. We certainly did. This demo is a truncated version of the game proper – which will get a full release later in ze year! Achtung!

Controls:	Keyboard/mouse
ARROW	Strafe left/right, Move forward/backward
Space bar	Jump
CTRL	Crouch
ESC	Menu
A/Z	Look up/down
S	Shout 'Take that, Fritz!'
Y	Shout 'Why?!' and collapse
1-0	Switch weapons
[ ]	Toggle inventory
ENTER	Use inventory item

HOT CHIX 'N' GEAR STIX

Fiendish Games

A Seventies-themed action racing game starring a cast of grinning Daisy Duke-a-likes in hotpants? Sounds like a case of 'cute concept, shit game'… but it isn't. This is a surprisingly good, robust little arcade game.

This demo version contains two tracks – you'll need to complete the first stage to unlock the second – and a choice of two cars (and 'chicks'). The full version – a mere $15, apparently – is available from the Fiendish Games website: www.fiendishgames.com.

Controls:	Keyboard/gamepad
UP ARROW	Burn rubber
DOWN ARROW	Cease burning rubber
LEFT ARROW	Port
RIGHT ARROW	Starboard
SPACE	Handbrake, innit
F2	Switch camera view
F11	Save screenshot to disk
Esc	Menu

***Hot Chix 'n' Gear Stix*: like *The Dukes Of Hazzard* starring ladies.**

ADDED EXTRAS

Dinky little programs for you to install and go: "Ooh, that's handy…"

DirectX 7.0 for Win9x (New version)
Essential drivers for most Win9x gaming.

DirectX 6.1
Included in case you experience problems with DirectX 7.0.

DirectX Media 6.0 patch
Fixes two problems that were discovered after DirectX 6.0 was released.

Voodoo3 Windows 9x drivers
We recommend you use the release drivers provided by your board manufacturer.

MiniGL 1.48 drivers
And a README.TXT file, too.

WinZip 7.0 SR-1
Windows 9x and NT version of WinZip.

GameSpy v2.08
Fire it up and it'll find the fastest servers playing all your favourite games.

SciTech Display Doctor v6.53
The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.

HyperSnap-DX Pro version 3.41.00
Screen-capture even in DirectX/ Direct3D or 3Dfx Glide modes.

FileView v2.1
Hex/ASCII viewer for binary files.

EzDesk 1.8
Saves the positions of your Desktop Shortcuts and folders.

Mplayer
Excellent free online gaming software.

QuickTime 3.0.2
The standard in digital video.

Windows Media Player
Play the Web's coolest audio and video with Windows Media Player.

GetRight 3.3.4
Salvage broken downloads and more.

Netscape Online
Free Internet access from THE Internet company.

HyperTerminal Private Edition 4.0
A more powerful version of Windows HyperTerminal.

TreeSize Professional v2.2
A powerful and flexible hard disk space manager.

DUN Manager 1.1f
Simplify and enhance Dial-Up Networking and Remote Access Services.

Ameol v2.50
Software for the excellent online service that is CIX.

Kali95 1.63
Useful client software for playing games over the Internet.

FTP Explorer 1.0010
Explorer-style FTP interface.

TimeOnline v1.10e
Simple and effective utility to track your Net time.

ICQ ver99a beta Build #1700
World's best Internet and online chat package.

AOLpress
One of the best programs we've seen to get your Web page up and running.

Decode Shell Extension Version 4.1
Decode email attachments simply by right-clicking on a saved message file.

NavEx 2.0.1
Converts Navigator bookmarks into Internet Explorer Favourites and vice versa.

Roger Wilco
A virtual walkie-talkie app that runs alongside your favourite multiplayer online games. PCZ

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- Shops On The Net

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...

Maxim Quiz

Think you know all about pop culture? Take the Maxim Culture Quiz and win a year's subscription to the magazine

EXTENDED PLAY

Feel empty after playing with yourself? Get yourself a Jumbot and you'll never shoot alone again. Also, some Key Help for *WarBirds* and a mighty fine *Need For Speed* track editor

WORDS Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF

ON THE CD

On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 154.

JUMBOT

Thought you were good at *Half-Life*? You ain't met a Jumbot

ON THE CD

Most of us have fond memories of our first all-night games sessions. The bleary eyes, the throbbing head, the funny dreams, the crescendo of the dawn chorus. *Doom* deathmatches that kicked off under a black sky and fizzled out under a pallid blue one. *Red Alert* battles that saw the four combatants sink beneath a pile of greasy pizza boxes, empty plastic bottles and garlic bread crusts as hard as concrete. And what about *Duke Nukem*? Fancy strapping on a jetpack and having a blast on the LA Rumble level *right now*? Sure you do. Multiplayer was something new, something brill, and we were all hopelessly addicted.

As time went on, though, so new titles had less of a kick. *Quake II*, *Total Annihilation*, *Half-Life*, *Age Of Empires*, *Magic & Mayhem* and *Carmageddon* – all milestones, but somehow not quite in the 'dusk to dawn' league. Okay, so maybe one or two of these had you sneaking back to bed, but did you do the same all over again the next evening? Games just don't seem to have the same magnetic powers any more.

Except for two. And they're both *Half-Life* mods. One is *Team Fortress Classic* (reviewed a few issues back, and now boasting more active Internet servers than *Quake*) and the other is *Jumbot*, an artificial opponent that'll have you scurrying around your favourite levels for whole days at a time. Those of you used to bots in *Quake* – *EraserBot*, *ReaperBot* and the like – are probably stifling a yawn right now. Well stop it. *Jumbot* for *Half-Life* has been a long time coming, and *everyone* wants it.

Jumbots aren't afraid to nab a Gluon gun and hose you down.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

Jumbot is an automated opponent – or, indeed, an automated ally. They think, react and shoot just the same as you would. They hunt down the best guns, top themselves up with armour, climb ladders, set trip mines, throw grenades, snipe and even insult you when you die. They are also entirely configurable, meaning you get to set everything from their player names and skin to how smart they are.

WHY WOULD I WANT IT?

You want *Jumbot* because it's hugely entertaining and allows you to play *Half-Life* deathmatch without pestering your mates or fiddling around with network cables or modems. Play one-on-one with a single bot, or two against two – you and a bot on one team versus two bots on the other. Get a group of friends together and go human against computer, or a mix of both. The *Jumbot* author even supplies tips on how to get the thing working in single-player mode. The possibilities are endless, and the word 'bot' is quite funny. Well, a bit.

OK, HOW DO I GET IT?

We've thoughtfully included all the files you need on the cover-disc, although you can of course always visit the *Jumbot* website, listed in our Bookmarks section. Download links are obvious, and it's less than 500Kb in size.

NOW WHAT?

Installation is straightforward. Simply unzip the ZIP archive you downloaded to your *Half-Life* directory, remembering to retain the directory structure when you do so. Believe it or not, you're now ready to play. Fire up *Half-Life* in the usual manner, choose Custom Game from the main menu, highlight *Jumbot* in the list of available mods (you'll probably have a few others listed in here, for example *Team Fortress Classic*) and then hit the Activate button. You're now ready to play!

STARTING YOUR FIRST JUMBOT GAME

Click the Multiplayer menu option, then go to Create a game. Don't worry about no maps showing up in the list on the right, we'll come to that. Press OK to create the game – you'll then be presented with a console view, where you should type **map <levelname>** where <levelname> is the name of the *Half-Life* map you'd like to start. We'll use Stalkyard as an example, as it's one the bots play well.

ADDING BOTS

To throw a *Jumbot* into the melee, bring down the console (usually the ¬ key in the top left-hand corner of the keyboard, directly below Escape) and type **addbot**. This adds a single bot – you should soon hear the sounds of another player picking up weapons and guzzling HEV batteries from the armour machine. To add more bots, simply use the same procedure and, as if by magic, they'll appear. To remove the last bot you added, simply type **removebot** in the console and he or she will disappear back into the ether. To add multiple bots, use **bot_num x**, where 'x' is the number of bots you wish to add.

EXTENDED PLAY BOOKMARKS

Half-Life Official Site www.gameoftheyear.com

Half-Life Jumbot www.telefragged.com/thefatal

Bot Epidemic www.botepidemic.com

WarBirds Official Site www.imagiconline.com/warbirds

WarBirds Community www.warbirds.org

Need For Speed Official Site www.needforspeed.com

NFS Cheats www.nfscheats.com

Unsurprisingly, computer players are better shots than you.

Not going to kill me? Ah, even robots have to reload.

That'll leave a mark in the morning.

WAYPOINT FILES

Waypoint files define the routes and movements of a Jumbot over a particular level. Without these files, your bots can get confused – especially if they need to use ladders or jumps to reach specific locations on a map. But not only do these files determine where the bots roam, they also highlight where they should crouch in order to reach certain objects, or where to lie low and snipe.

We've collected more than 30 different waypoint files from around the Web, covering most of the popular levels and the *Half-Life* originals. Simply copy them into the \wpfiles folder in your *Jumbot* directory and you're done.

THE NITTY-GRITTY

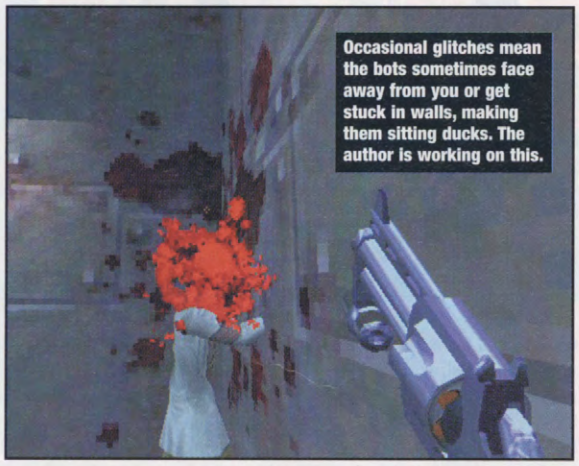
Chances are that your first encounter with a Jumbot will be a painful experience. Depending on the hardware you're using to run *Half-Life*, the bots will either be moving too rapidly or too slowly. Not only that, they'll all be on the same team, kicking your butt in unison. Time to venture into the configuration files and even up the odds a little.

bots.cfg

This data file defines the basic characteristics of each bot you add into your game.

Its line format is as follows: **<number> <name> <model> <shirt colour> <trouser colour>**

You can define any number of bots in this file. A typical line will look like: **bot1 Skidmark scientist 30 6**. This tells the server that the first bot, bot1, is to be called Skidmark and will belong to a team of Scientists. His shirt colour is 30 and his trouser colour is 6.



Occasional glitches mean the bots sometimes face away from you or get stuck in walls, making them sitting ducks. The author is working on this.

Your arm's off! (I've had worse.) You liar!

Two onto one really isn't fair.

A couple of automated lurkers get their comeuppance.

Jumbot.cfg

This data file sets behaviour options for all the bots. New switches and variables are added with each release of the *Jumbot* package, so make sure you check the Readme.txt file each time you download an updated version.

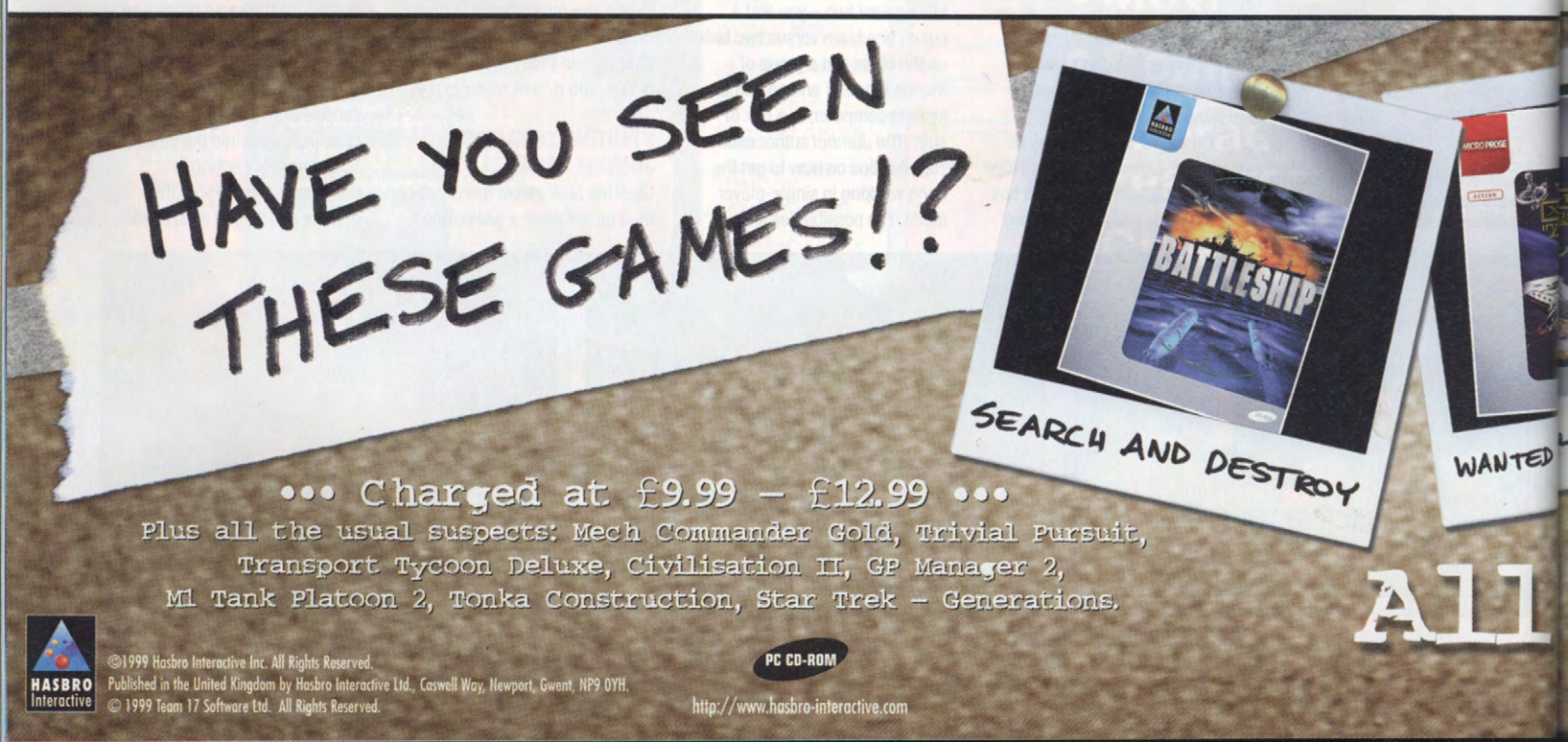
Here are the key fields you need to change and some suggested values:

bot_tripmines 1	Ensures that the bots set trip mines
bot_gauss 1	Bots will use the Gauss gun (Tau Cannon) to help them jump
botmsec 20	Sets the speed of the bots
bot_thinkspeed 0.3	Makes sure the bot isn't impossibly smart

There are also a group of variables towards the bottom of the Jumbot.cfg file that determine every bot's weapon preference. Assign a higher number to a weapon you want the bots to use, and a lower (even negative) number to ones you want them to avoid. Put a low priority on weapons such as the Glock (ie standard pistol) as you'll soon find the rapid bang, bang, banging of it drives you round the twist.

botchat.cfg

This last configuration file is where you'll spend most of your time thinking, twiddling and rewriting. It's the file that contains all the witty insults and retorts that your bots use when they've killed or when they've *been* killed. The top half of the file refers to the former situation; the bottom half to the latter. Have fun!



Are we there yet?

This chap will make it home safely, so long as I do my job...

WARBIRDS

New Key Help images for pilots

ON THE CD

With more than 50 World War II aircraft, players from over 70 different countries and trophies including Online Game of the Year, *WarBirds* is a massively popular online flight sim. Version 2.0 (the game is now on version 2.73) saw many improvements and new features, one of them being the ability to show Key Help windows. These tabbed windows overlay the main screen and allow you to refer to all manner of useful information about the game. The pictures shown in the windows are fully customisable by the pilot, meaning you can have a pop-up view of anything from the map to your wife and kids.

HOW TO USE THEM

1 Grab the relevant ZIP archives from this month's *PC ZONE* coverdisc.

2 Unzip the contents to a folder in the main *WarBirds* directory.

3 You should find nine .PCX picture files, each corresponding to the game's default Key Help file – AIRCRAFT.PCX, BOMBER.PCX, CUSTOM.PCX, ENGINE.PCX, GUNNER.PCX, MISC.PCX, RADIO.PCX, TRIM.PCX, VIEWS.PCX.

4 Rename one of your choosing with an .OLD file extension, for example MISC.OLD.

5 Copy across one of the new Key Help files from the new folder you created, and rename it. For example, to MISC.PCX.

6 Now when you use that particular Key Help window, you'll see the new picture. To preview the pictures before starting the game, you'll need an image editing program such as Photoshop or Paint Shop Pro.

The Key Help files here each contain snapshots of the map arena, showing airfield locations, orientations and any targets. You'll also find a file per airfield type (with airfield names and compass orientation) plus details of any other strategic target.

khawt.zip
WarBirds MA arena (Pacific).

khcombo.zip
Combination of files covering the AWT, ETO and MED arenas as well as each airfield type. These files come ready named and, as long as you have a back-up of your original files, can simply be dropped into the *WarBirds* folder.

kheto.zip
WarBirds ETO arena.

khmed.zip
WarBirds MA arena (Europe).

khngs.zip
WarBirds New Guinea arena.

khpac.zip
WarBirds Training/PAC arena.

NEED FOR SPEED III

Edit tracks and preview circuits with *T3ED H-1*

A variation of *T3ED*, *T3ED H-1* contains a Direct3D preview window.

ON THE CD

Many *Need For Speed III* owners will be familiar with Denis Auroux's track editor, *T3ED*. What they may not realise is that there's a modified version available, *T3ED H-1*, that uses a beefed-up version of the same source code. On top of all the regular functions, the *H-1* mongrel includes a magnificent Direct3D track window where you can preview your new creations. Documentation is on the skimpy side, but it's one of those tools that's best understood by just mucking about with it. We've included both the original and the hybrid code on this month's *PC ZONE* coverdisc for your delectation.

battle ground zero

command & conquer: tiberian sun

The third installment in the Command & Conquer saga. Set in the 21st Century GDI and NOD are pitted against each other once again. Whichever side you decide to ally with, you can take to the battlefield and fight the world across the Internet.

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Virgin MEGASTORES

FIM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

500 GP
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THE OFFICIAL FIM ROAD RACING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP GRAND PRIX RACE SIMULATOR

GP500

You'll need something between your ears...

...to handle what's between your legs.

Real Speed, Real Teams, Real Bikes... Can you handle the power of the fastest accelerating and braking machine in the world today? GP500 lets you race the main event: the 500cc World Championship. Can you take it to the limit under pressure from the best riders in the world? It's about technique, knowing the track, knowing your opponents, understanding your 500cc powerhouse. Race against a sophisticated AI that incorporates real riders' styles and performance! You can almost feel rival racers breathing down your neck for each corner and straight! Change all bike set-ups to suit you. Take on Quick Race, Single Race, Championship Season and Multiplayer with 8+ human players competing via Internet and LAN.

"This game gave me the biggest adrenaline rush I've ever had without hitting 180 mph on a real track." *Kenny Roberts Jr. Team Suzuki*

Cat Deeley purrs when she rides GP500 – look out for her soon!

HASBRO Interactive

MICROPROSE

Downloadable Demo
www.grandprix500.com

PC CD-ROM

Virgin MEGASTORES

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THE WORLD ACCORDING TO...

ALEX RODBERG

With the highly-fancied *Pharaoh* in the offing, what could be more fitting than for *Steve Hill* to build a pyramid of chat with none other than Impressions Brand Manager, Alex Rodberg

City building is what Impressions do best, and their most recent creation was the impeccable *Caesar III*, as detailed a simulation of Roman times as you're likely to come across this side of *The Life Of Brian*. The clever money was on a *Caesar IV* follow-up, but they surprised everyone with a shift of both continent and time frame by announcing *Pharaoh*, which uses the same engine but in an Egyptian stylee. Get it? Got it? Good.

Was the Egyptian setting the first thing you looked at, or did you have lots of different ideas?
When we started thinking about the new game we were all keen on the idea of Egypt – it was like, 'Hey pyramids would be cool'. We have a really good rapport with our fans and we asked them where the next city game should be based, and they came up with everything from Mayans and Aztec to Chinese and Japanese... but by far the most popular request was Egypt. So as we wanted to make it and people wanted to play it, we had the perfect match.

Have you taken artistic licence with the historical setting? Is it more Charlton Heston than *National Geographic*?
It's not Charlton Heston. In the Charlton Heston film and in *Prince Of Egypt* you have slaves building pyramids, which of course didn't happen in real life. The slaves did the menial chores of everyday life, all the crap jobs that no one else wanted to do. The pyramids were religious buildings and the slaves weren't allowed anywhere near them – only citizens could work on the monuments.

PHOTO Image Bank ILLO/COMP Phil Clark

How do you know?
When we set out to make *Pharaoh* the first thing we did was a ton of research, which is what we usually do when we start on our games. We have a bibliography of well over a hundred books and at Impressions every designer, programmer, artist, and music guy has all these different books about Egypt that they've scurried away from the Boston Public Library. They're going to have to return those. Part of the profits are going towards the late fees...

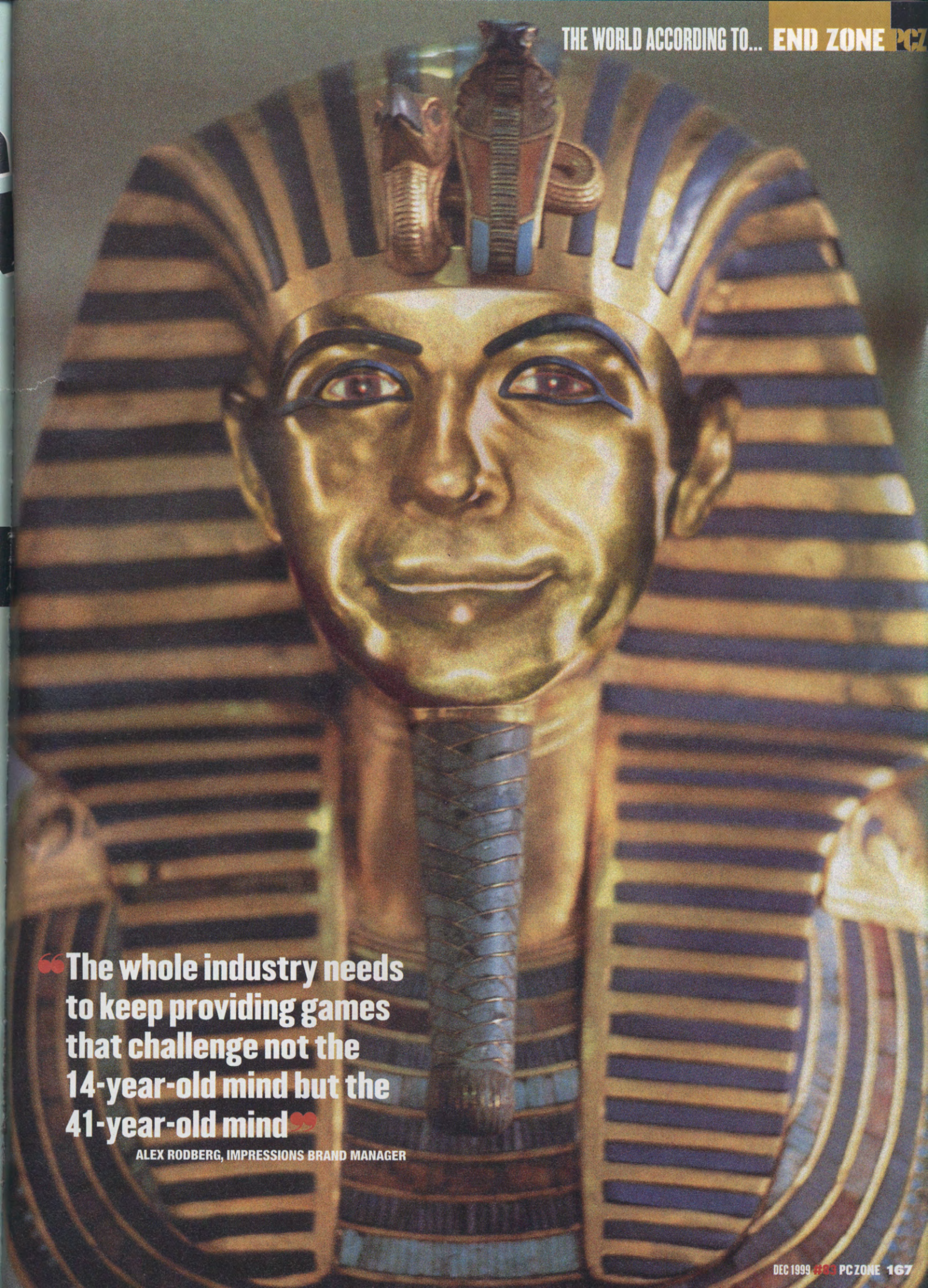
So you haven't just taken *Caesar III* and stuck in a few pyramids then?
As we were figuring out what needs to change from *Caesar III*, what needs to change to make it Egyptian rather than Roman, the first thing we realised we had to do was to model the flooding of the Nile. The Nile flooding was absolutely essential to the life of every Egyptian; if it didn't flood they wouldn't be able to eat, which of course would be a real problem.

Now just by doing this, just by creating a little element of the engine that makes the Nile overflow, we created a completely different food production model than the one in *Caesar III*. You get an annual harvest, and that has to feed your people for a full year. So the storage and distribution problem that you're gonna face right from the start is completely different from *Caesar III*.

Having built the flooding of the Nile and this exhaustible resource model, we said "OK, this is starting not to be *Caesar III* any more", but if you really want to talk about Egypt the thing that comes to everyone's mind is pyramids, the giant monuments. So how do we deal with those? You can't just go to a menu, select a pyramid and plop it down ready-made; that would just be so wrong, considering how much time it took to build them and the vast amount of labour and resources needed. You have to be able to build them gradually. It's the exact opposite of instant, it's a monumental – sorry, bad word – a huge, huge project to undertake.

So the research has paid off?
It's interesting to note that when you do your homework, and when you do a lot of research and you model things really accurately, it can lead you to some really wonderful discoveries. Sometimes you play the game and something happens and you *get* something, and that's the best feeling in the world. I was playing this game and farming the Nile and asking myself why on earth would a culture that's so primitive, has so few resources, has such a hard time living, why did they set out to build these gigantic monuments that we can't even replicate today? I mean, what possessed them? What kind of idiot said "Hey, let's go build a gigantic pyramid"? And then the Nile floods and I realise that my whole population of farmers is now unemployed for the next three to four months. What are you gonna do with all those people? You can't let them run round your city with nothing to do. They don't have to get up in the morning, they don't have any work. They certainly don't have any money now. I know, let's build a gigantic pyramid!

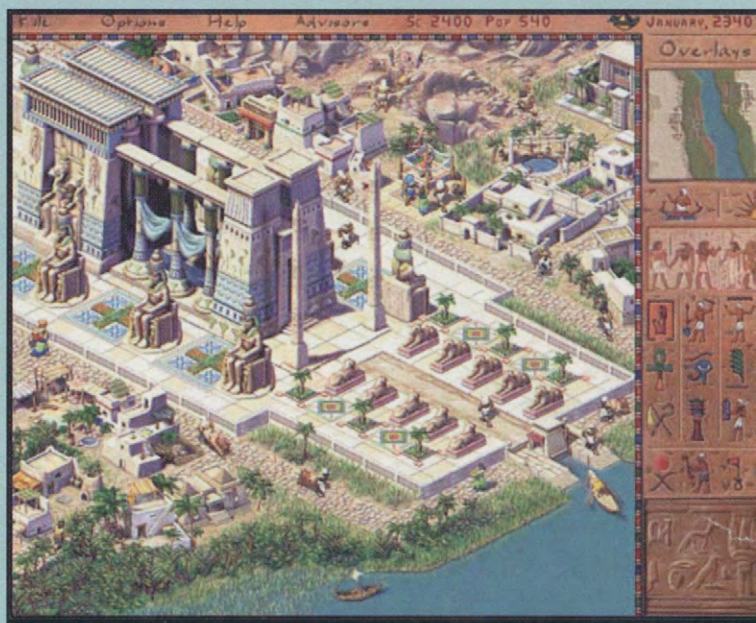
And so there was really a very practical reason for building these structures – you had to artificially create work. They were beautiful, artistic, an



"The whole industry needs to keep providing games that challenge not the 14-year-old mind but the 41-year-old mind"

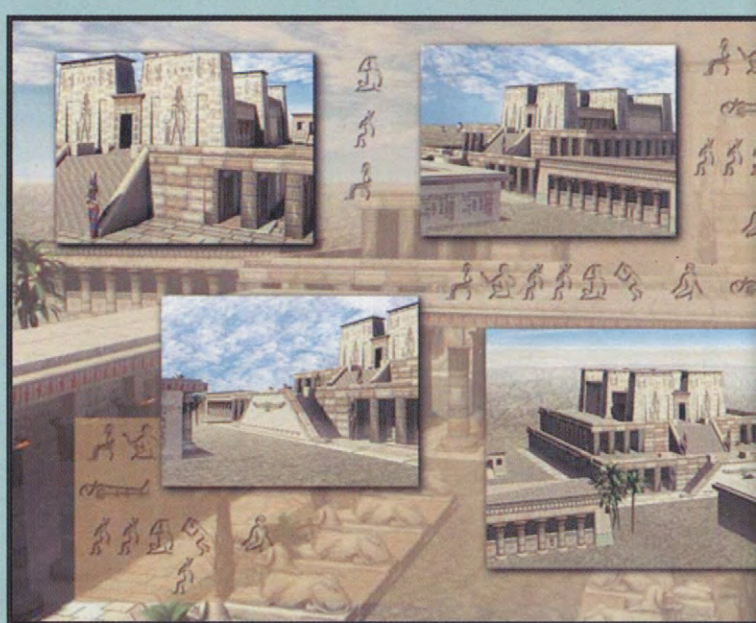
ALEX RODBERG, IMPRESSIONS BRAND MANAGER

No need to worry about the Nile in *Caesar III*.



Pharaoh: the name of the gods may be different, but you've still got to keep them happy.

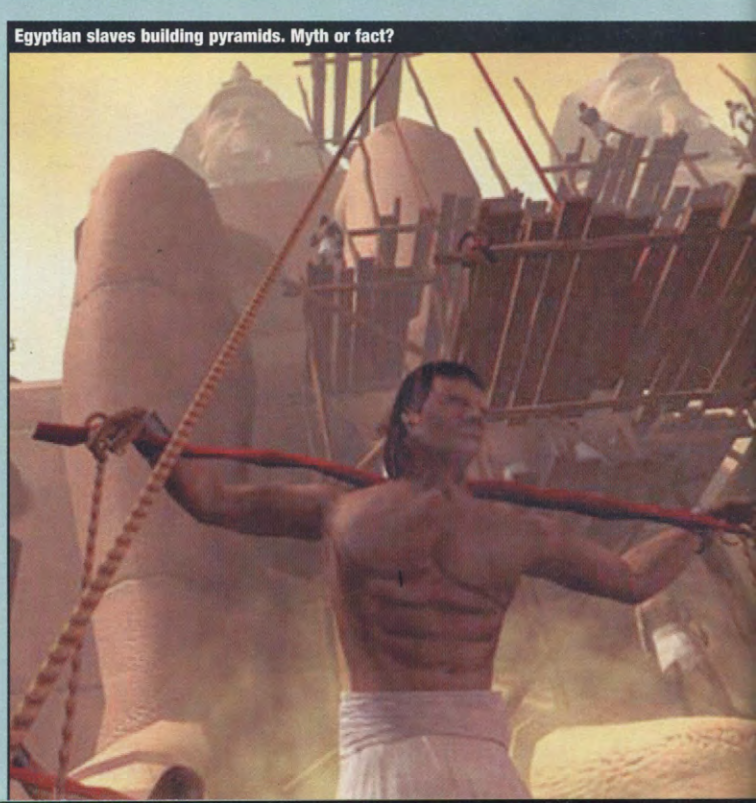
Caesar III is without doubt one of the most addictive games ever.



A lot of research has gone into *Pharaoh*, and it really shows.

Managing Rome is the perfect training for *Pharaoh*.

Egyptian slaves building pyramids. Myth or fact?



expression to your god, but underlying all that is really a very pragmatic reason for putting all these people to all this trouble: you had to keep them busy. And that of course is how it really was in Egypt, and I figured that out from the game rather than from some textbook. And then I went and looked it up and sure enough, it says that there was a practical reason underlying all this.

So the game is almost educational?
Almost. I would really, really be afraid if someone set out to learn Egyptian history from the game. On the other hand, if you knew just a little bit about it already, seeing it in action would put a lot of things together for you. *Caesar* did the same for Rome – there were a lot of things that became self-evident when you played that. It's the same here. And it's not like we sat there and thought up strategic puzzles to make the game challenging. If you model it accurately, if you really do your homework, then history will provide the challenge rather than some guy in an office. This is right out of the history books.

What do you think it is about this kind of game that makes you sit up playing it until four in the morning?
It's because you're trying to complete something creative. Most of the other games I play are destructive – *Tribes* is all about knocking the other team down, *Half-Life* is a matter of shooting and just going through the motions; you can always pause it and come back to the same exact spot. Here you're building a city and you're working towards completing a goal that is going to give you immense self-gratification. Just another hour and I can finish, just another couple of levels of the pyramid and then I can go to bed, and then of course the sun's coming up and your wife's really mad at you...

In the real world, when people talk about video games, they think of people being shot. A lot of people don't even know that a game like this exists. Do you think it's the antithesis of your *Carmageddons* and *Quakes*?
I love *Carmageddon*. And *Quake*. I don't necessarily think of it as the antithesis, other than maybe if I went to a party and was discussing *Pharaoh* or *Caesar III*, people might consider me well-educated and well-spoken. Whereas if I were discussing *Half-Life* and I said "I walked into a room and a facehugger jumped on my head and I started shooting him with my machine-gun and crossbow!", then people would look at me funny. I think that you enjoy different things at different ages. I feel that I've already shot all the aliens I want. And now I'm ready to do something a little more challenging.

Are you saying it's an old man's game?
No. But I think that old people – yeah, old people like 25 and over – will get more out of these types of game. I know my ten-year-old son chooses the military missions in *Caesar III* every time, while I always go for the peaceful ones. There's actually an interesting anecdote: *Caesar III* fans recently held a *Caesar III* Olympics and they wound up getting 56 entrants from 22 countries to participate in this match where they had self-created really, really incredibly difficult maps. And the winner was the Australian team led by an Australian PhD who was on maternity leave in LA. She'd just given birth, so

Alex will probably have his PC buried with him.

she was nursing a baby with one hand and becoming the world champion *Caesar III* player with the other. I think people would just balk at that idea. I mean, 'Not a 13-year-old on crack? A mother with a PhD?'

Do you think this type of game appeals more to women?
I think that they can relate to this a lot more than they can relate to *Quake II*. Personally, I think women tend to be more into creation than destruction – it makes sense to them.

> **"I think women can relate to games like *Caesar* a lot more than they can relate to *Quake II*. They tend to be more into creation than destruction"**
>
> **ALEX RODBERG, BRAND MANAGER**

Where do you see god games progressing?
I would think that god games are going to bring you closer and closer to your people. What started out as *SimCity*, which was about buildings, in our games is about the people. You click on any person, they'll talk to you, they'll tell you what they like and don't like about your city. You can sit down and have a conversation with them and that's where you really get all the feedback. So I think that as they progress you're going to get closer to who you're building your cities for rather than where they live.

Do you think this type of game is unique to the PC? You're not going to get it on a PlayStation.
I don't think it's hardware specific but of course the PlayStation – and the Dreamcast and Nintendo in particular – have a younger demographic, and they don't have the attention span to enjoy these kinds of games. I don't know if that's a universal truth or a perpetual one. I think that quite possibly in the future, as the console audience expands to the average person as opposed to just kids, that will change. And I think that really that's where the whole industry needs to go, to maintain the kids as they grow into adults and keep them playing games, keep providing games that challenge not the 14-year-old mind but the 41-year-old mind. The average consumer for *Caesar III* was a college-educated 43-year-old male with a way above average income, although women also made up 25 per cent of the consumer total.

We had a letter at the office from a guy who was about 60-odd saying: "I read the review, you're exactly right – I was up all night playing it."
We totally understand why people play games, it's just innate to us. But you go to someone who's a cabbie and doesn't own a computer and say, "Yeah I'm 60 years old and I love computer games" and you might as well have two heads.

A cabbie's a good example. How would you explain 'I'm going home to pretend to build an Egyptian city...' He wouldn't know what you were talking about.
You know, I did exactly that. I talked to the cabbie driving me from the airport. He asked what I was there for, so I told him that I was presenting a computer game. He was like: "My kid plays computer games, you look pretty old." I tried to explain: "No no no, this isn't a kid's game, you'd enjoy this more than your kid. You build an Egyptian city, farm the Nile, build pyramids and have people worship you as a god." He said "No shooting? No laser guns? No plasma rifles? Well, I might like to see that." So it's just a matter of having a game where the subject matter is going to be of some relevance.

Exactly, but they don't make the news do they? 'MAN BUILDS PYRAMID IN GAME' isn't much of a story. So what?
Maybe if someone played *Caesar III* and then went and shot someone or built a pyramid in the middle of a city illegally, maybe then we'd get some mass media coverage. But so far nothing bad has come as a result of our games, so we're unlikely to get covered.

So does *Pharaoh* signal the end for the *Caesar* series?
Absolutely not. If we had made *Caesar IV* I think we would have been squeezing out something that we weren't ready to. I think *Caesar IV* needs to be as much of an evolution as *Caesar III* was from *Caesar II*. This isn't a sequel, it's not an expansion pack. We've now split the series so we have two very robust cultures, and I wouldn't be surprised in the future to see a *Caesar IV* and a *Pharaoh II* and maybe an expansion pack for *Pharaoh*. Maybe there'll be another culture that we'll be fascinated with as much as this one.

Finally, do you remember the Bangles song *Walk Like An Egyptian*? Are you going to use it as a theme tune?
Well, er, actually... there aren't many Bangles fans at Impressions.

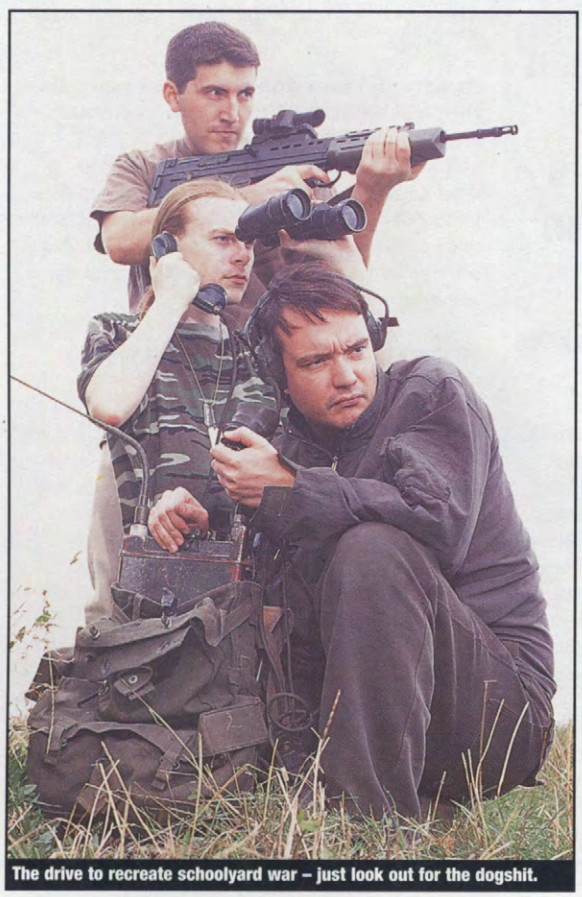
On that bombshell... PCZ

COMMENT

If someone used the phrase 'electronic battlefield' in your presence, you'd crack their skull on a nearby beer tap and then feed them their own arms. But this hateful term is the future of games

FIELD MARSHALL David McCandless

The Future Of War – loads of pasty blokes crouching in a field.



The drive to recreate schoolyard war – just look out for the dogshit.

MORE MORE WAR

Imagine this scenario: It is the future. Assume all graphics are photo-realistic and that everyone has a T1 connection to the Net.

You and four of your mates have arranged to log on to a master server somewhere in Belgium. Spooled down on the list are the hundreds of games currently raging. They have strange, historic-sounding names like *Barbarossa*, *Omaha Beach* and *Ardennes*. Some spods in Denmark appear to be running a server called Endor, while some German teenager is beta-testing a mod called *Spells Vs Tanks*. The description reads "A modern day combat/Tolkien crossover with nukes". Sounds good.

Choosing one at random, you end up in some foyer system designed like an army base camp. You offer yourselves to the general of the campaign as mercenaries. He views your CVs and, checking the validity of your medals on a world database, he decides you'd make a perfect squad for a special ops missions he has planned.

For him, this game is bird's-eye real-time strategy, *Command & Conquer* style. For you, it's a ground level first-person shoot 'em up. You get a briefing, are allocated a few call signs, choose your weapons and you're off.

Slowly you pick your way across the landscape like the team from *Bravo Two Zero*. In the distance, out of sight, you can hear the sounds of the battle theatre. Explosions echo off the hill. A squadron of flight sim buffs from Dorking roar over your head to provide a distant airstrike. Tanks rumble by unseen. If you strain your ears, you can just hear gunfire. And the screams of the gibbed.

This, to all intents and purpose, does appear to be the Holy Grail of war gaming – real-time, online, worldwide Internet warfare.

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

Of course, I don't use the term 'electronic battlefield'. Nor do I say 'digital battleground' or 'cyber war arena'. If I did, you would be fully within your rights to send your fist through my mouth.

Let's just call it 'War'. As in what you and your boyhood friends played in the trees at the end of the playing field. Because basically, that's what it is.

"You pick your way across the landscape... A squadron of flight sim buffs from Dorking roar over your head to provide an airstrike"

Ah, war. There is some elemental desire for boys, men, blokes to play war. You played war. I played war. Straw-poll every male you know. They all played war. Why? Holy Christ knows. All I know is that I spent every last second of my weekends and summer holidays pointing two fingers at other boys and saying "Nahnahnahnahnah". Better still, I would manage to nick the rich kid's plastic sub-automatic machine gun, which made a sound like someone farting down a rolled-up newspaper. So what?It sounded like an M16 to me.

Ah, the endless arguments about whether you had shot someone or not – whether that picocentimetre of their shoulder you could see behind the tree was enough to deliver a mortal wound. Ah, crawling around on your belly through dog shit, polluted streams, across rusty nails, through beds of nettles.

From *Tiberian Sun* to *Half-Life*, a whole strata of computer games has been powered by a desire to recreate the excitement and the wonder of playing war. The recent drift towards online network teamplaying games, such as *Unreal Tournament* and *Team Fortress Classic*, is bringing us closer to that goal.

Of course, since the *Doom* days, there has always been 'co-operative' play, but that has always been seen as the kind of 'co-operative' that goes on at slippery-floored saunas called 'Sailors'.

Before games got good, there was paintballing. Run by failed paramilitaries in forests, getting their kicks by lording it over soft-handed execs in camo-gear, it soon died. Early teamplay games such as Capture The Flag attempted to recreate the same kind of watered-down, stylised war in unrealistic environments. Only with the move towards realistic environments and proper guns is the vision of 'War' close to realisation. Now we have *Team Fortress Classic*, where each team member plays a different type of soldier (sniper, heavy guns operator, soldier, demolition man, spy and so on). Some time next year we'll see *Team Fortress II*, which will finally let you command a squad, commandeer tanks, and do a lorryload of other wartime activities.

This is the future. The synthesis of real-time strategy and first-person shooter is close at hand. Soon the age of hyper-stylised sci-fi network games made by people in Texas will pass. War is the future of games. You read it here first.

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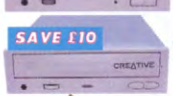

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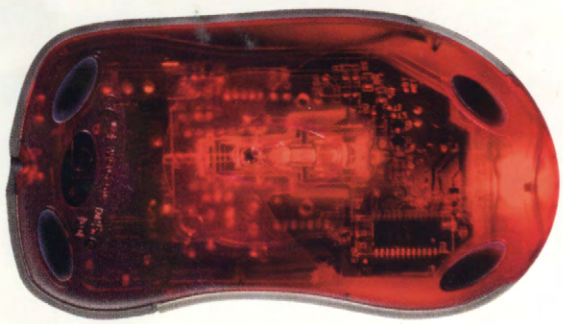

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