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- MALKARI**

© TINY COMPO: TA KINGDOMS uses the same engine as which best-selling real-time strategy game? First out of the hat wins a mystery prize - full details on page 5

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MICRO PROSE



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TOP 10
PC GAMES
SEE THE PC ZONE CHARTS
PAGE 24



48 CARMAGEDDON: THE DEATH RACE 2000
First look at the killer sequel.



40 SYSTEM SHOCK 2 The sequel to one of the greatest games of all time is coming your way soon. Read our exclusive preview.

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

26 UK GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS Joysticks at the ready, no jumping the gun, on your marks... get set... GO!



98 SUPERTEST Football management games come under the microscope.



46 DIABLO II Bigger, bloodier and better, we think.

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“As befits a game with *Total Annihilation* in its moniker, the interface of *Kingdoms* is a true work of art”

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TOTAL ANNIHILATION KINGDOMS
SPECIAL READERS' OFFER
PAGE 25

70 TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS. Making a sequel to the best real-time strategy game on PC was never going to be easy. Cavedog prove they are more than up to task with spectacular style.

ON THE CD



FULL DETAILS PAGE 140 ➔

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...

- STARSIEGE UNIVERSE
- BREAKNECK
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- RAILROAD TYCOON 2
- MECHWARRIOR 3
- HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

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Patches for *Close Combat III*, *Gruntz*, *Fighter Squadron* and lots more
Lots of useful games utilities and...
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The most extensive and comprehensive tips section in town

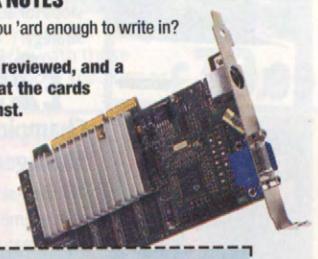
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WIN! **THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS** Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (78), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.** The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The Ed's decision is final. Closing date: Thursday 17 June. The winner of our June (#77) cover compo was Tobias Kreuter from Stockholm, Sweden, who wins something from the *ZONE* prizes cupboard for correctly answering that Xatrix is the development team behind *Kingpin*. It's on its way, Guy.

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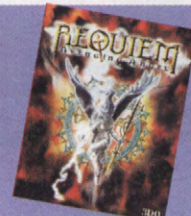
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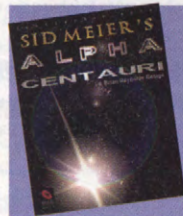
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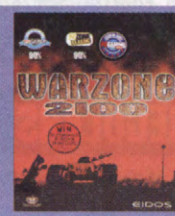
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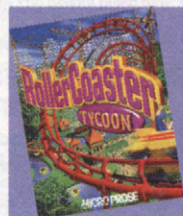
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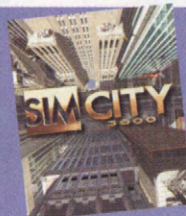
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PC WORLD

THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

A GREAT YEAR FOR PC GAMES

The biggest computer gaming event of the year, E3, has finally come to a close. This is the show that the big players in the videogame industry use as a platform to showcase their big titles for the rest of the year.

Traditionally, the show plays host to a number of major PC titles that we already knew about, with few surprises and fewer reasons to get particularly excited. This year has been markedly different. The number of innovative and genuinely impressive titles has been staggering. Richie, Mallo and Steve have come back from LA (the venue for this year's show) positively gushing with enthusiasm for the huge array of incredible PC games on display, most of which will be released by the end of the year.

Worthy of particular mention are *Freelancer*, Digital Anvil's epic space

combat sim which apparently has to be seen to be believed; *Ultima Ascension*, which is a little out of date graphically, but promises to be one of the most rewarding game experiences of the year; and *Deus Ex*, which looks as though it could set new standards for the increasingly popular RPG genre.

There were many other titles on display that show great promise, but they all seem to have one thing in common: a firm emphasis on gameplay over visual content. It seems that developers have at last lost their fixation with lens flare, huge explosions and all the other hallmarks of games typically released during the comparatively new era of 3D acceleration. What this means to you is that you'll see an increasing number of new titles that deliver the goods both aesthetically, and with gameplay that has real depth and a genuine challenge.

Conspicuous by its absence, however, was the mythical *Duke Nukem Forever*, the game we were all getting excited about last year thanks to a very impressive rolling demo which went on general release. *Duke* developers 3D Realms have now increased expectations for the game to such a degree that only an absolute masterpiece will be enough to appease eager games journos who are chomping at the bit for a piece of Duke-related action. And given 3D Realms' track record in this dept, we have every reason to believe that a masterpiece is precisely what we'll get.

So, the future has never looked better for PC games players. As always, *PC ZONE* will be at hand to bring you the latest news and reviews on these titles as they come in. Enjoy the issue. See you 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

The hit of 1999 will be...

Ultima Ascension. Oh, alright, it probably won't be, but only because there's no justice in the world.



PAUL MALLINSON

System Shock 2. It already blows away everything I've seen, and it's not even finished yet.



RICHIE SHOEMAKER

C&C: Tiberian Sun and *Quake III Arena*.



MARK HILL

Kubrick's swansong *Eyes Wide Shut*, followed closely by *The Spy Who Shagged Me*. And maybe some sci-fi film or other.



STEVE HILL

Kingpin. The game rocks bells, and I'll be amazed if it doesn't take the gaming world by storm.



CHARLIE BROOKER

System Shock 2, because it's the most fantastic thing ever invented.

The anticlimax of 1999 will be...

Games on DVD. Expect interactive movies and the return of 'Edutainment'. A nation weeps.

Endless sequels. Developers: try harder.

C&C: Tiberian Sun and *Quake III Arena*.

When we discover that all those nutters in cults are right and the world ends in the middle of the big party.

Tiberian Sun, because it doesn't look any different.

The millennium, because New Year's Eve is always a pain in the arse anyway.



PAUL PRESLEY

The hit of 1999 will be...

Star Wars: The Phantom Menace (film).



KEITH PULLIN

Quake III - definitely. I just hope it's slightly more playable than the last tired offering.



ADAM PHILLIPS

Driver, with any luck. It may not have a twisted and subversive edge like *GTA* or *Carmageddon*, but it still looks blinding.



DAVID MCCANDLESS

Team Fortress II. Oh, and *Quake III*. Oh, and *Bleem*.



WARREN CHRISTMAS

Quake III, *FIFA 2000*, *Tomb Raider IV* or some other sequel. Depressing, ain't it?



PHIL WAND

Total Annihilation: Kingdoms, closely followed by Valve's drop-dead gorgeous *Team Fortress 2*, and the VW Beetle.

The anticlimax of 1999 will be...

Star Wars: The Phantom Menace (film).

Any game involving *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, or anything with 'Star' in it, basically.

Well let's hope it ain't *Tiberian Sun*.

Who cares? We're all going to go up in flames. It's the end of the world, I tell ya.

New Year's Eve.

Tiberian Sun, because it's so late, and *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* because we're all expecting far too much of it.

PCZONE

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19 BOLSOVER STREET
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Origination Elements 0171 323 0022
Printed in England by ET Heron
Distribution Seymour Distribution

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WIN! What is the full name of E3, which has just taken place in Los Angeles? Send entries on the back of a postcard to: I've read the small print, *PC ZONE* (78), 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ by Thursday 20 May. Winner and prize announced same place next issue. Michael Watson from Cardiff wins the *ZONE* grab bag of goodies from last month's compo for correctly answering that Studio 3's design team goes by the name The Consiglieres. Well done, Michael.

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NEXT ISSUE: *PCZ* #79 (August)
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NO REST FOR THE WICKED.

There is a place in this world for both the PS2 and the Xbox. The advantages of each platform were apparent.

Sorry, I had to get it off my chest. And I like the new price point.

● We're not having a pop at the PlayStation, or the PS2 for that matter. Our question as to whether or not the PS2 will kill off the PC as a games machine was

entirely foreign in check. We all know this will never happen.

FAIR ENOUGH
Why do so many people say way from computer fans?

you would like to see me to write in and tell you all about it. Well, listen to anyone who's been playing a box of gaming goodies by the way. Well done.

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A female reader is threatened with murder, another female reader is threatening us with murder and an older reader doesn't want to kill anybody at all. Which is nice.



ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

CONTACT INFO

If your letter is selected as Editor of the Month we'll send you some promotional goodies. A game and maybe even some

Want to reach us? PC Zone, 1000

MIR ANORY

Reading the May issue of PC Zone while contemplating the universe, I became intrigued by the increased about the

appear.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

WHAT A NICE MAN

Having read several issues of your magazine, I thought you might appreciate the views of one of your

older readers. My first impressions were mainly influenced by some of the

independent comment, which was a bit of a let down. While these have no effect on me, I can understand that others may want the type of presentation.

However, first impressions are often misleading, and as I delved deeper I found much to interest, inform and amuse me. Being someone of limited computer ability, I particularly like the general help and information features in their reasonably easy to understand format which improve my experience and help me up to date with important details. Also, while I have not played a single computer game, there are several which find fascinating and



GOODIES
WHEEL



PC Zone
"Amazing" says Bill
"That's the out way"

● You've hit the nail right on the head there, Bill. We can't

MAILBOX



A female reader is threatened with murder, another female reader is threatening us with murder, and an older reader doesn't want to kill anybody at all. Which is nice

ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

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If your letter is selected as Letter of the Month we'll send you some promotional goodies, a game and maybe even some hardware!

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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.pczzone.co.uk for further info.

MR ANGRY

Reading the May issue of PC ZONE while contemplating the universe, I became rather incensed about the apparent attack on the PlayStation and the forthcoming PS2. There is a place in this world for both the PSX and the PC, and I would have thought that the advantages of each platform were apparent.

One of your major criticisms seems to be that all recent PSX titles are all crap.

I have to disagree. Have you played *Siphon Filter*? The graphics might not be brilliant but the gameplay is (it's currently available as an import, but should have a UK release this summer). *Silent Hill* was good (if a little easy), and there are numerous other titles. Yes, a lot of the games released are crap, but this is just as true for the PC. How many poor punters bought *South Park*, for example?

Another thing that the PSX owner doesn't have to worry

about is checking the minimum spec on the side of the box. They choose the game they like and it will work - first time every time. I don't know what the average spec for a PC owner is, but most will have to check very carefully to see if the title they want will run on their machine. The alternative is upgrading, which doesn't come cheap,

and for a novice is an absolute nightmare. How does it go - Plug 'N' Play? Plug it in and try to get it working for a week seems more appropriate!

As for the PlayStation 2, it will not destroy gaming on the PC, as you asked your team (Meet The Team) - it

“There is a place in this world for both the PSX and the PC, and I would have thought that the advantages of each platform were apparent”

MIKE KEELEY KEEPS THE PEACE

Sorry, I had to get it off my chest. And I like the new price point.

Mike Keeley

★ We're not having a pop at the PlayStation, or the PS2 for that matter. Our question as to whether or not the PS2 will kill off the PC as a games machine was

“If you want cheap RAM, you can't beat a computer fair for price”

LAM DUONG POINTS THE WAY TO BARGAIN PRICES FOR PC GOODIES

couldn't possibly. For one thing, Gates and crew wouldn't allow it to happen, and I hate trying to play an RTS - or *Quake*, for that matter - with a gamepad.

I humbly suggest that many, if not most, of your readers have both systems, and oldies like myself don't want another 'my Spectrum's better than your Commodore' slugging match through the industry.

strictly tongue in cheek. We all know this will never happen.

As for the 'whose machine is better than whose?' argument, PC gamers are more mature than their console-owning counterparts in this sense, and as such tend not to get involved in this kind of petty argument. Although the PC is much better for games than any other platform, obviously.



➡ The PC: by far the best gaming platform the world has ever seen.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

WHAT A NICE MAN

Having read several issues of your magazine, I thought you might appreciate the views of one of your older readers. My first impressions were mainly influenced by some of the juvenile comments, slang, swearing and the like, but while these have no appeal for me, I can understand that others may want this type of presentation.

However, first impressions are often misleading, and as I delved deeper I found much to interest, inform and amuse me. Being someone of limited computer ability, I particularly like the general help and information features in their reasonably easy to understand format, which improve my expertise and keep me up to date with important developments. Also, while I have no interest in many popular games, there are others which I find fascinating and

really enjoy. Your games reviews, strategy guides, tips, walkthrough features etc are a pleasure to read and very helpful. Then there's the cover CD, which has introduced me to new games and information; again, some content I ignore, others I look at briefly, and the rest I find very interesting.

In summary, there is much in your magazine that I don't like and therefore ignore, but I'm not suggesting changes because what I dislike probably provides the main interest and enjoyment for others. On the other hand, there is much I do enjoy and find very helpful, so perhaps the balance is reasonable and there is always something to please most of us.

Bill Shaw

★ You've hit the nail right on the head there, Bill. We can't

please everyone all the time with everything we do, which is why each issue of PC ZONE is packed with all kinds of spectacular things for the avid PC games enthusiast to get his/her teeth/dentures into. As always, we're constantly looking at ways to improve the mag, so if there's something you don't like about PC ZONE, or there are areas we don't cover in as much detail as you would like, feel free

to write in and tell us all about it. We'll listen to anyone, literally. You've just won yourself a bag of gaming goodies by the way. Well done.

➡ PC ZONE: "fascinating," says Bill Shaw. He's not wrong.



DUNGEON KEEPER 2



HORNY AND THE MISTRESS

HAVE RETURNED IN DUNGEON KEEPER 2.

DISCOVER YOUR DARK SIDE AS YOU BUILD THEM

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BULLFROG



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If you're thinking there's a catch, well there isn't. You can always ask for a receipt, which will have the name, address and phone number of the company that supplied the part. Although some fairs are dodgy – selling copied games, for example – mine are honest, and are trying to please us punters. So there you have it. Why do so many people keep away from these veritable goldmines?

Keep up the good work on this great magazine.

Lam Duong

★ Yes, you're right, computer fairs are a great way to get hardware on the cheap. But we would advise readers (particularly those who are not technically-minded) to get a valid receipt for any purchases they make, and to make sure they have a point of contact if things go wrong and they need a refund.

MY HUSBAND WANTS TO KILL ME

Firstly, I am a girl, I buy your magazine, and play games to the point where my husband wishes to kill me for dominating our computer. I've never written to a magazine before – this letter was prompted by your editorial in issue 77.

I think that we're approaching the *Kingpin* issue from the wrong angle. I took a look at your demo and thought it looked like jolly good fun, and personally I'm looking forward to beating the shit out of various thugs in the full product, as I consider this to be one of the purest forms of stress relief available.

However, I am 28 years old and can easily shut off this computer violence from my rather more mundane real life. But can the same be said of young children? For example, I have a friend who teaches nine-year-olds, and after asking her class how they spend their spare time, many of the little rotters admit they've seen and played games such as *Carmageddon*, as well as watched such things as *South Park* and the movie *Scream*.

Surely it would be more difficult for moral evangelists

to object to these games if they didn't find their way into the hands of young children, but I often enter certain games shops that seem to have no qualms whatsoever about selling these games to anyone willing to hand over the dosh.

I feel that the industry would have less of a bad reputation if such shops were a little more vigilant in who they sell games to. After all, if kids weren't able to buy these games, then how can they play them.

I am totally opposed to censorship, and feel that if adults showed a little more sense in what they allowed children access to, games such as *Kingpin* wouldn't cause as much fuss. If the authorities issued heavy fines to shops they knew were selling 18-rated games to young kids – and were proactive in enforcing these laws – the censors would have a much weaker case for banning products.

I also feel that a law which made parents ultimately responsible for allowing their children access to obviously unsuitable material would not be amiss, again with heavy fines for offenders (after all, what sort of idiot

at home playing these games.

I hope developers continue to make quality games on whatever subject matter they feel is entertaining – why should they worry about who's playing their games? That's the responsibility of retailers and parents.

Jahn Dutton

PS. My name is spelt right, it's just that my parents have a bizarre sense of humour and thought this was a suitable name for a girl

★ While we would never suggest that parents follow their young ones around all day to see what the little terrors are up to, we agree with the sentiment that a little parental control can often save a lot of grief. And we would support a crack-down on retailers selling 18-rated games to minors too. Blimey, Jahn, you were completely right. Twice!

LIFE OUTSIDE GAMES CLAIM

I read your May issue (#77) and was disgusted by the How To Get Your Girlfriend Interested In Games article.

Yes, admittedly we wonderful sophisticated women may not be thrilled by running around as fantasy

“If we want to play games, we will – and without your crappy steps”

MARY CLARKE SAYS WOMEN CAN GET INTO GAMES WITHOUT MEN'S HELP

would feel happy about their kids playing these games?). I'd imagine that parents would be up in arms at this, as they say they can't control what their kids do, but my answer to this would be “yes you can, you're a parent and that is your job!”

It's an easy way out for certain middle-class daily papers to blame games developers instead of (God forbid) their readership for allowing their children to sit

characters and killing everything in sight, but that is *not* a bad thing. And the 12 steps in your feature are soooooo patronising – as if we intelligent souls would be enticed into doing something that we didn't want to by those infantile steps. You underestimate the power of a good woman, my dears. The fact that *PC ZONE* is completely run by men demonstrates the bias in your magazine.



PC ZONE is sexist, claims Mary Clarke. We are not, we retort.

Maybe

Paula (one of the girls in the article) had the right notion when she stated that playing computer games was “a typically mindless male pursuit”. The fact that the writer couldn't even complete six reasons to get your girlfriend into games proves the mindlessness of it all.

If we want to play games, we will – and without your crappy steps.

I enjoy playing computer games and reading and learning about them but, yes, there is life outside games. (*Where? Ed.*)

Perhaps you should write an article called How To Get Computer Magazine Writers To Employ Female Workers And Reduce The Sexism And Patronising.

Mary Clarke

★ Mary, you're clearly upset, of that there is no doubt. The feature wasn't written to help girls like you who are already au fait with the delightful world of virtual reality videogames, but rather was meant as a handy guide for beleaguered boyfriends trying to persuade their 'better halves' that videogames are in fact a wonderful thing. The objective was to get aforementioned females addicted to computer games so that they wouldn't notice when their partners slipped down to the pub for a couple of pints. We're

amazed you

didn't spot that. And we'd love to have some female writers on our books. In fact, why not have a go yourself? Send us a review on the game of your choice (no more than 300 words) and we'll see what we can do about getting it printed. No promises, mind.

BEN THE BRAVE

Upgrades, such as RAM and 3D cards, are becoming essential to keep up with the pace of the computer games industry. However, until recently I wouldn't have dared to touch the hallowed innards of my PC for fear of terminal damage (to me or my hardware).

When I purchased a Voodoo2 card, I was planning to have it installed in the shop, but a friend said that he would do it for free. I was amazed to see him whip off the cover and slot the card in snugly with one swift motion. I'd almost paid 20y quid for someone to do that!

My point is, armed with a little advice and a screwdriver, you can save yourself plenty of money for a relatively simple job.

Ben Hamilton

★ Upgrading can be a cinch for seasoned hardware pros, but we would never recommend to our readers that they should go messing about with the 'inside bits' of their PC if they don't know what they're doing. Which is why we'll be running a series of features on this very subject, starting in the August issue (on sale Thursday 1 July) in which we'll be talking you through the ins and outs of upgrading your processor, together with pictures showing you exactly how to do it. Because we're good like that. ☑

A similar fate awaits Jahn Dutton if she doesn't stop playing games, apparently.



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TOP STORY



Now that's some first-rate slumping, f'sure.

SOMEWHERE, OVER THE RAINBOW, LIES...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Red Storm Entertainment

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE TBA

IN SUMMARY

Sequel to *Rainbow Six* that aims to fix the problems of the first game.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Improved AI will stop your team-mates behaving like lobotomised chimps, while new weapons, movement and weather effects add to the atmosphere.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Somehow reads like more of an update than a sequel: the tagline is "Play as if 5.7 billion lives depended on it... again!"

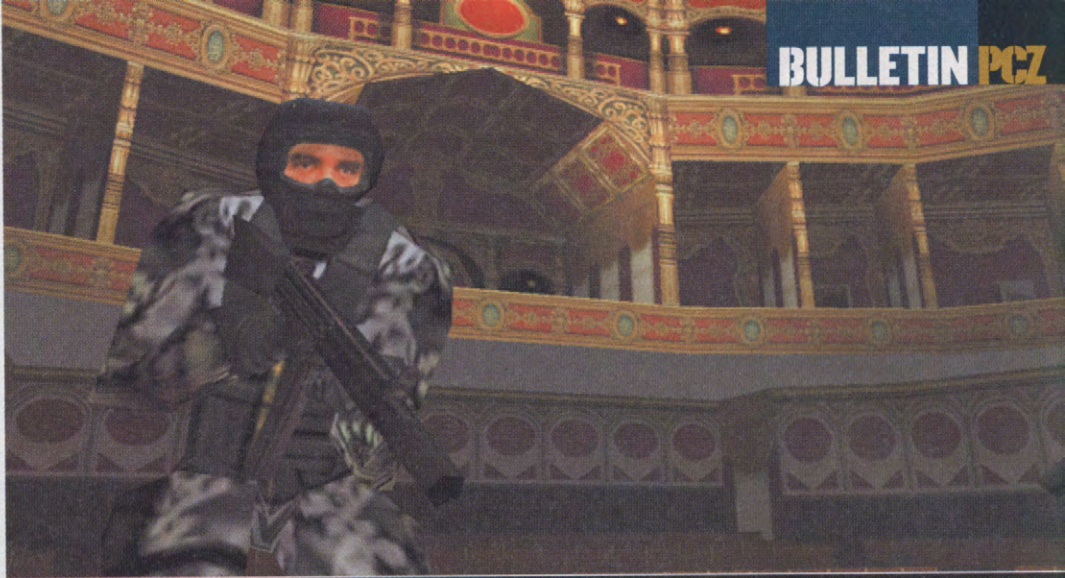
ROGUE SPEAR

Inveterate warmonger Tom Clancy returns with a sequel to last year's 'intelligent' first-person shooter *Rainbow Six*

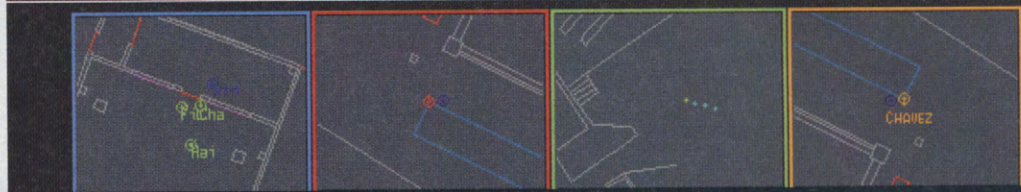
★ FOLLOWING ORDERS Paul Presley



Leaning around corners adds to the game's stealthy nature.



These guys will stop at nothing to get free theatre seats.



The interface is more flexible this time, letting you see all four teams at once.



The game still looks a little angular, but there's a long way to go yet...



...There is more detail in some areas though.

Richie seemed to be impressed. "I like the way the dead bodies are slumping," he said while looking at the *Rogue Spear* screenshots. "I wish there was some blood trickling out though."

Red Storm are obviously a blood-thirsty lot. Among the new features listed on the supplied press release are the words "Fantastic new wound effects". That'll get the hacks at the *Daily God-Botherer* on their side.

But then the injury effects in *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six* (PCZ #69, 89%) weren't particularly bad anyway. I seem to remember that dead hostages and fellow team members did a pretty good job of collapsing to the floor after being shot through the head at close range by a government-issue 9mm pistol, and the pools of blood that seeped out from beneath their corpses were very Tarantino-esque.

Yes, the Rainbow squad is back in action for yet more wacky adventures

in the world of international counter-terrorism task forces. While the thought of George, Zippy, Bungle et al running around armed to the teeth working for the US government on covert ops behind enemy lines does sound like fun, this is in fact the Rainbow counter-terrorism squad from *Rainbow Six* - last year's 'excellent concept, flawed execution' first-person shooter.

The most important change in *Rogue Spear* is the improved AI. Which is a good thing. Players of the previous game were often at a loss as to why their carefully planned raids were abandoned once 'in country', in favour of the lesser-known stealth tactic of running around in circles within the confines of a small room or staring point-blank at the wall for half

“Improvements include better movement controls and the ability to lean around corners Thief/System Shock 2-style”

an hour until the enemy casually picks you off. At times it was like being on a mission with a pack of slack-jawed five year-olds.

Other improvements include better movement controls (at last you can duck and move at the same time), and the ability to lean around corners *Thief/System Shock 2*-style. Plenty of new weapons and gadgets are on offer, as is a brand new sniper section of the game - lessons have been learned from *Team Fortress*, obviously. And the inclusion of weather effects such as snow and rain indicate a greater emphasis on outdoor missions.

There's no news as yet on what's been done about some of the original game's other bothersome features. Will windows still be opaque? Will the graphics still have that flat, cardboard cut-out feel? Will there be any real kind of training level to ease you into things? Red Storm aren't saying, but we'll bring you more news as we get it. **PCZ**



Cover me, I'm taking a slash.



Go on, give us a smile. I'll let you assimilate me.

MAKE IT SO

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Raven Software

PUBLISHER Activision

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Early 2000

IN SUMMARY

Star Trek: Voyager (the least popular of the *Trek* franchises) finally gets a game to call its own.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Most importantly *Star Trek: Voyager - Elite Force* uses the shiny new *Quake III Arena* engine. It also builds on the first-person shooters of old by including tactical elements found in games like *Rainbow Six*.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Star Trek games, especially action games, have always suffered from having a weak arsenal of weapons. And have you ever seen blood and guts flying in any of the TV shows? Exactly. *Voyager* may well be too sterile for most FPS fans.

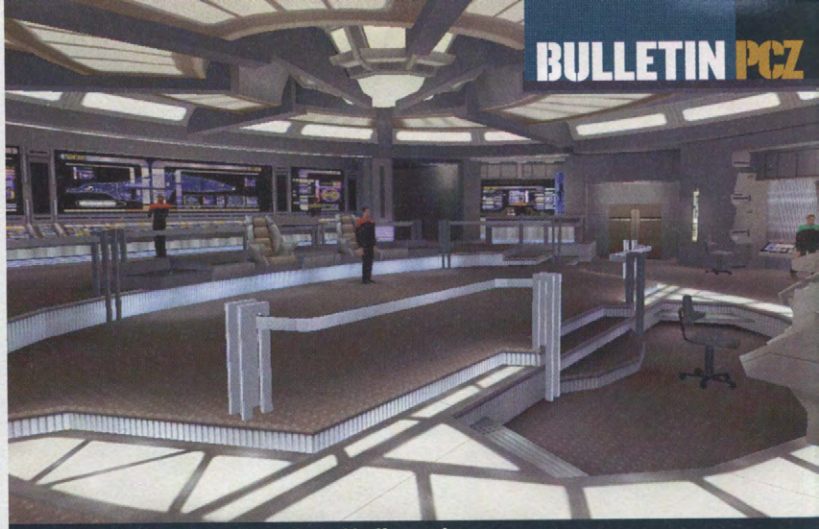
STAR TREK: VOYAGER - ELITE FORCE

Paramount's cashcow keeps on mooing with the latest Trekkie love-in

★ BEAMING OFF Paul Presley



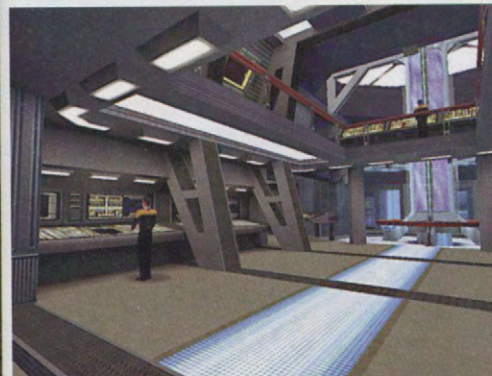
An emotional Lt Tuvok loses his rag.



The Voyager bridge – looking slightly too big, if you ask us.



Tuvok going off on one again. The man's a menace.



Voyager's engineering deck.



All the Voyager workstations can be accessed.



The Borg display their carefree attitude towards pastel colour schemes.

In many senses, a game based upon *Star Trek: Voyager* was inevitable. Having had the audacity to green-light such god-awful rubbish as *DS9: Harbinger* and *Star Trek: Borg*, allowing a game to be set in the world of the only *Trek* franchise yet to be committed to CD-ROM, the only surprise is that it hasn't happened sooner. Maybe we can put it down to Activision, having just acquired the *Star Trek* licence, and developers Raven (*Heretic II*) being lifelong *Trek* nutters. Who better to make a *Star Trek* game than a team who go to work in *Star Trek* uniforms (allegedly)?

First impressions of the game are of a sort of *Spec Ops/Rainbow Six* affair in space. You're a lowly private in the Voyager's security department – the modern equivalent of the Kirk-era red shirts – sent on various 'exciting' missions by the crew as they encounter strange alien life forms. Trying to avoid being mere cannon

fodder, you eventually find yourself embroiled in a major alien plot to take over Voyager and destroy the universe...

Anyway, you didn't come here to listen to stories. The real interest lies in the fact that it's a team-based action game using the *Quake III* engine. Even before id's biggest gamble ever has hit our screens, they're already cashing in with the third-party licences. What this means for the game is that you can run

“Voyager should appeal to fans of the series thanks to its unwavering authenticity, and to casual gamers thanks to the intriguing-sounding gameplay”

around as part of a team, issuing orders (providing you've progressed far enough up the ranks), utilising more advanced tactics than simply 'kill 'em all', and engaging enemies that have pretty advanced AI (if the amount of ducking, hiding and taking

cover shown by the aliens in the demo is anything to go by).

Locations range from the familiar confines of the Voyager ship (familiar, that is, unless you're actually down the pub on Sunday nights like most sane people) to all manner of weird futuro-alien craft. Everyone's favourite cuddle-bunnies the Borg are included, and one of the missions involves infiltrating a Borg cube (like a Rubik's cube but with fewer colours), avoiding assimilation and

pretending to be scared. Some of the effects, like phaser fire 'bouncing' off Borg shields look quite lovely (just like the series/film). The characters are all on hand as well, from the comedy holographic doctor, to the comely Borg chick Seven Of Nine and

even the eternally mind-grating Captain Janeway. (And, thanks to Paramount allowing the real actors to provide the voices, you can hear her nasal whine.)

The bottom line here is that *ST:V-EF* (perhaps the most unwieldy acronym since time began) should appeal to fans of the series thanks to its unwavering authenticity, and to casual gamers thanks to the admittedly intriguing-sounding gameplay. Of course, by the time it gets released early in 2000 we should have a whole new barrage of first-person shooters to mess around with (*Quake III Arena*, *Daikatana*, *Team Fortress II* etc), so non-Trekkies can afford to be more choosy. If you are a *Trek* fan however, *Voyager – Elite Force* may well end up being the best *Star Trek* game yet, which let's be honest, isn't difficult. [E]



"Nice body, but I think you should see a chiroprapist."

I LOVE TO GO A-WANDERING IN OMIKRON: THE NOMAD SOUL

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Quantic Dream

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Winter

IN SUMMARY

Tomb Raider meets *Half-Life* meets *Tekken* meets some kind of weird RPG meets *The Fifth Element*. Did we mention it was French?

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Lots of clever new graphics technology (such as facial motion-capturing) mixed with interesting gaming concepts such as afterlife possession. Plus David Bowie provides the music.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Lots of adult themes guaranteed to upset the middle classes and bring down Western civilisation as we know it. Oh, and the possession bit sounds like *Messiah*. And David Bowie provides the music.

Nipples, the inhabitation of living souls by the dead and David Bowie. Yes, it's a French computer game!

★ **SOUL-SEARCHING** Paul Presley



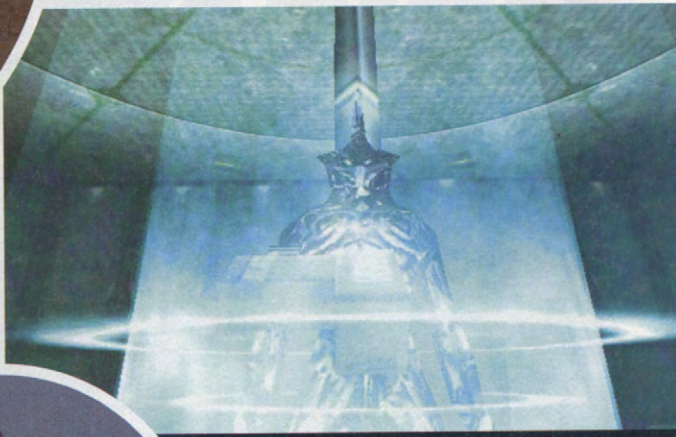
Look - nipples. Well one, anyway.



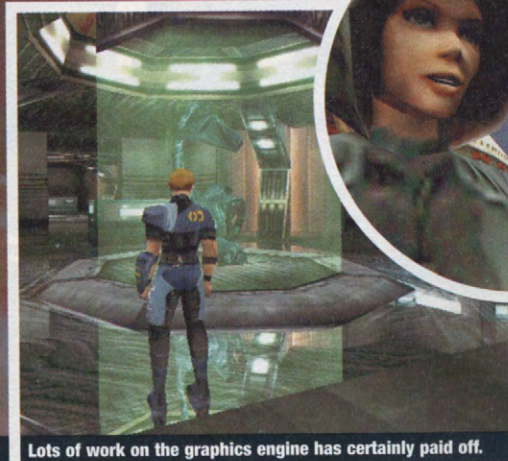
More nipples. It's disgraceful. (It's a man - Ed.)



It's not all inner-city hell.



Even Martin Keown gets a look in.



Lots of work on the graphics engine has certainly paid off.



Faces have all been motion-captured for added realism.



Entire cities can be explored at will with no limitations on where you can go.



ON THE CD

There's an awful lot of nippleage in *Omikron*. Sitting through the several hundred screenshots supplied by Eidos, the oppressively 'adult' nature of the game is actually quite surprising. That's 'adult' in the sense of 'mature', you understand, not 'adult' in the sense of lots of gratuitous swearing and blood-letting. There are sexual themes though.

Despite the high nipple count, the female characters are actually fairly realistically proportioned; there are no Lara Croft rivals here. Instead the women have the sort of figures you've come to expect from European porn - waifs, barely legal teens, not a silicone implant in sight.

See - realistically-sized breasts. Rather unique for a computer game.



Being French, you'd probably be expecting *Omikron* to contain some rather creative ideas about gameplay - and you'd be right.

Apart from taking place in a series of huge, fully explorable game worlds that are constantly alive and moving, *Omikron's* real hook is that the NPCs all have independent lives and can be interacted with even after death. For in the world of *Omikron* it seems you cannot die. Or rather your spirit can't die. If your body snuffs it you simply have to wait until someone touches your corpse to transfer your soul into theirs. Consequently the game doesn't stop until you reach the very end. Visually it's reminiscent of

the film version of *The Fifth Element* - lots of flying cars, nightmarish future scenarios, and that distinctly un-American feel. The gameplay appears to combine elements from console beat 'em ups, *Half-Life*-style first-person shooters, *Tomb Raider*-style exploration games, and the storytelling style of Japanese RPGs. How this will work from a control

The other hook that Eidos are relying on is the arrival of legendary pop albino David Bowie who, naturally enough, provides the music. Which is either a good or bad thing depending on whether your musical tastes died in the mid-eighties. If that wasn't enough, Bowie's wife, Iman, has also threatened to put in an appearance. Run, run while you can.

“Combining gaming styles is a risk, certainly, and the adult nature of the storyline will no doubt raise a few eyebrows”

perspective is anyone's guess, but we expect a lot of keys to be involved. Movement has all been motion-captured, right down to facial expressions. Some of the shots we saw tended to look a little blocky and pixelated, at least at lower resolutions, but the game is being developed concurrently with the PlayStation version, so you have to allow some leeway here and there.

Omikron isn't going to be an easy game to quantify when it's released this winter. Combining gaming styles is a risk and the adult nature of the storyline will no doubt raise a few eyebrows. But we're looking forward to it, if only because it at least sounds as though the developers are trying something different, and that's always to be applauded in this day and age. Even if they are French. [E]

ONLY IN AMERICA

NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



E3, the biggest show of games in the world – and thank God the whole thing is over. In the

space of just three days I must've walked hundreds of miles, seen thousands of games and barged through millions of people. An exaggeration, perhaps, but as I sit here, sore of foot, red of eye and 30,000 feet above Los Angeles, winging my way back to Blighty, I know I can't be too far off.

This year, with violent games being blamed for almost every murder committed, many games were on show behind closed doors. *Soldier Of Fortune* – with intestines flopping out of open wounds – was hidden away, *GTA 2* was seen only by a select few, and *Kingpin*, rumoured to have been pulled at the last minute, was seen cowering in the corner of Interplay's darkened press room.

It really is a sad state of affairs. Virtually every morning on some news channel, a new lawsuit came to light, blaming the likes of *Doom* for the death of someone's son at the hands of a crazed killer. Thanks to the political weight of the American gun lobby, the inaccuracy of TV reporting and the short-sightedness of public opinion, it appears that it's not guns that kill people, it's the influence of games. Utter nonsense. Here's the real scoop (and you may have twigged this already): guns kill people.

Next year, when we return for E3 2000, LA will have millions of cars contributing to the smog, each one also housing a gun in the glove box. Conversely, sitting in your bedroom, smoking a fag and enjoying a harmless game of *Kingpin* will probably be illegal. I bet there'll also be some serial killer waiting for a \$100 million payout from Sierra ("Gordon Freeman made me do it!"). It could only happen in America. I hope.

THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P.24



UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS

Come and show us what you're made of

P.26



Force Commander: put this on your wish-list now.

A NEW HOPE

Star Wars mania has hit the States, big time. Advance tickets for *The Phantom Menace* went on sale the day before E3 and every cinema, it seems, was competing for the longest queue. At E3 itself, LucasArts distanced themselves from the melee (as always) and quietly announced the inevitable – a sequel to what is still the best *Star Wars* game so far, *Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight*.

Like its two predecessors, *Star Wars: Obi-Wan* will be a first-person action game, and will include all manner of Force powers and weapons, including both the 'vanilla' lightsaber favoured by Jedis everywhere, and Darth Maul's customised double-blade effort. Details on the game are rather sketchy, but the plan is to follow the growing trend of including intelligent allies and allowing you to direct other characters around the levels. Hopefully there will also be the option to pilot some of the vehicles from the new film, although knowing LucasArts that reality will probably be left for another game.

And if you were wondering what happened to *Force Commander*, the 3D real-time strategy game based on the 'old' trilogy, LucasArts and Ronin Entertainment are now throwing themselves into the project. The game has already set a few pulses racing and could well spawn a sequel based on *The Phantom Menace* after it's released this autumn.

CIV III, IV & V

Sid Meier and the core team behind the original *Civilization* are getting back together for *Civilization III*. Still turn-based, the game will form the first part of an epoch-spanning trilogy called *Sweep Of Time*. You will be able to carry completed save games from one game to the next, enabling decisions made in one game to affect how you begin and progress later on. While we're going to have to wait for at least a year for *Civ III* (or *Sweep Of Time I*), the second part is already available as Sid Meier's *Alpha Centauri* (PCZ #74, 92%). When *Civ III* does arrive, *Alpha Centauri* will either be patched up, or – more likely – remixed and repackaged.

Development on *Sweep Of Time III* (confused yet?) is still early, to the point of non-existent. Our guess is that as *Alpha Centauri* ended with you becoming one with the stars, the aim will be to sit around with other ethereal beings and ponder the meaning of life, maybe even indulging in a spot of creation to break up the monotony of immortality.



Sid Meier's Sweep Of Time II: Alpha Centauri.

TECH-HEAD

PCs get a make-over; and Sir Clive Sinclair attempts a comeback

P:28



MAN WHO KNOWS

The very latest industry gossip

P:34



CONSOLE ZONE

Hand-held games come to the PC

P:35



HOTSHOTS

A sneak preview of up-and-coming game releases

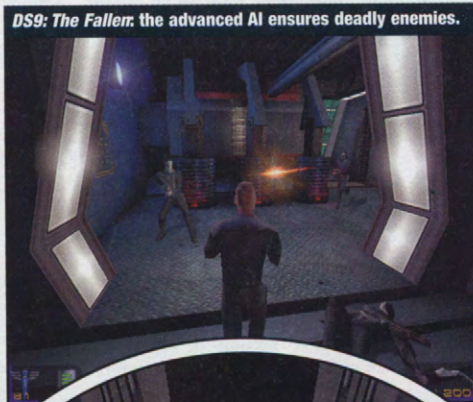
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STAR TREK INVASION



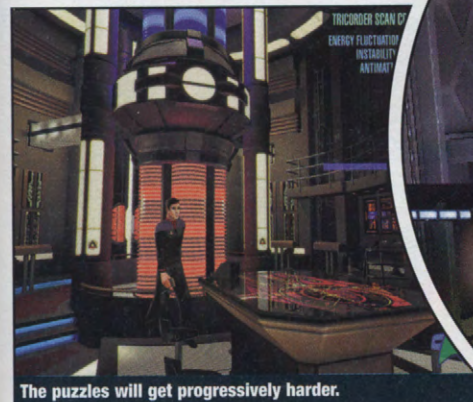
Star Trek: Insurrection: just take a look at that sky.



DS9: The Fallen: the advanced AI ensures deadly enemies.



Armada: play as the Borg in this space RTS.



The puzzles will get progressively harder.



There are over ten weapons from different alien races.



Your resources are officers, crew and dilithium.

With four new *Trek* games on the way, *Star Trek* fans have never had it so good

No matter which series (if any) you prefer, or what type of game you're into, chances are at least one of the forthcoming deluge of *Star Trek* titles will cater for your taste. And for once quantity hasn't got in the way of quality, as everything we saw at E3 was good enough to put Trekkie games on the map for good.

One of the titles is *Star Trek: Insurrection*, but the good news is that it doesn't follow the film's tired storyline and is looking extremely good. Set nine months after the film, it's an action adventure in which you play a human ensign raised by Vulcans. You follow Captain Picard's orders as you wander around pre-rendered backgrounds, solving puzzles, fighting and even using the Vulcan Nerve Pinch. There's little chance of getting lost, as all the action is mission-based. Unlike the film, this is something genuinely worth getting excited about.

Developed by The Collective (whether human or Borg is still unclear), *Deep Space Nine: The Fallen* uses the *Unreal Tournament* engine, enhanced to work in a third-person perspective. Taking the role of Sisko, Worf or Kira you're involved in a race for three ancient Orbs that hold the power to destroy

“Armada's trump card is in offering you the chance to control the Borg themselves”

the Alpha Quadrant. Each character takes on uniquely different paths, but you'll always need a combination of aggression and stealth to succeed. The varied gameplay takes place not only on the DS9 station, but also on the *Defiant*, in Cardassian facilities and Jem'Hadar internment camps, among

others. It's looking very healthy indeed, although it's a shame that Odo's shape-shifting abilities won't be put to use.

Finally, for the more strategy-minded among you, *Star Trek Armada* is a space-based RTS game. The story concerns yet another Borg invasion threatening life in all known space. You control Federation, Romulan and Klingon fleets over 26 missions, adapting your strategy to spatial anomalies such as wormholes, nebulae and asteroid fields. *Armada's* trump card, however, is in giving you the chance to control the Borg themselves.

The Fallen, from Simon & Schuster Interactive, is expected to beam down towards the end of the year, with the rest following through Activision early next year.

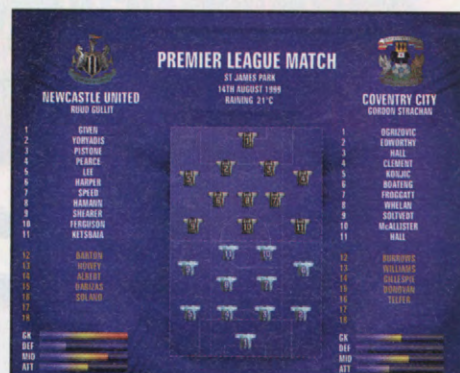
Turn to our Top Story on page 16 for news on *Star Trek: Voyager - Elite Team*.



FIFA 2000, looking better than ever.



Even more stadium building options for FA Manager.



By the time it arrives FAPLFM2000 will be bang up to date

MILLENNIUM FEVER

EA Sports go year 2000 mad, not least in the football department

EA Sports recently announced a number of sports titles, all sequels of well established brands – FIFA, FA Premier League Football Manager, NBA Live, NHL, Superbike, Tiger Woods, Madden NHL and NASCAR – and all of which have '2000' after the name. That doesn't include the two new licences, Supercross 2000 and Formula 1 Championship 2000.

However, it's the football we're more interested

in here, and FIFA 2000 is, as expected, looking better than ever. Forty national and club teams are included in this version, with an updated season mode that enables Cup and league matches to be played, along with fifteen up-to-date leagues. There's also more physical contact, special skill moves, animations with players rolling around the pitch, and greater facial expressions for those frustrating moments.

FA Premier League Football Manager 2000 is the official football management game, with a new 3D engine and obligatory updated season tactics. Hopefully some of the AI will be updated, along with some of the more bizarre transfer decisions that tarnished the original game.

Manager 2000 will appear in September, with FIFA hitting the pitch in November – just in time to take the Christmas Number One spot.

EXTENDED HALF-LIFE

Opposing Force, out this autumn, is the first official mission pack for Half-Life.

Instead of you taking the role of Gordon Freeman, developers Gearbox have instead cast you as one of the soldiers. Which is a good thing, as you now have some more intelligent people on your side, but disappointing if you thought fighting them was more fun than killing aliens.

Part of the extended arsenal includes a wrench and a grappling device – actually a grappling alien (those barnacle things that hang from the ceiling). Set in new areas back in the Black Mesa base, the game will include a greater variety of scientists and security guards, including one who obviously eats too many doughnuts. A new alien race will also be introduced to the game.



More weapons will have dual-fire modes, including the wrench.

GTA2 is a lot darker than the first game, but it won't look like this concept artwork.



IF IT AIN'T BROKE...

Grand Theft Auto 2 will not be in 3D. Cars won't roll. And the streets will be just as straight as in the original. In fact, GTA2 looks so similar to the first game that it makes Quake II look ground-breaking. However, with nearly 50 vehicles and 200 pedestrians on screen at any one time, a few moments with the game will show that a lot more has been crammed in to ensure that it runs just as well on the same specs as its predecessor.

Instead of taking missions from a

faceless employer, there are now three gangs vying for control of the city, which you can either balance your missions between, or go out to annoy one or all of them. Some citizens will even make up mini-gangs – the Hari Krishnas, for one – and with a lot more variation in missions, and even the FBI and National Guard driving around, GTA2 certainly promises more than any screenshots suggest. Perhaps that's why Take 2, who will be publishing the game in October, didn't give us any.

IRON MAIDEN

ED HUNTER

Out Now Stunning PC-CD Rom Game A Monster Experience!!!

"The exceptional quality of the 3D rendered environments and the animation of the characters has to be seen to be believed" - Ultimate PC

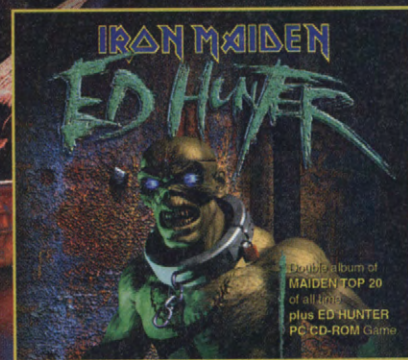
"An action packed shoot-'em up - Bargain!" - Metal Hammer-

"The animation and graphics are spectacular" - Kerrang!

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*as voted for on the Maiden website

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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



Starsiege: big robots and pretty explosions are always popular.

CHART COMMENT

It's no shock that *Championship Manager 3* is clinging on to the number one spot, being as it is the UK's fastest-selling PC game of all time. Then again, everyone who's going to buy it has probably done so already, so we'll be surprised if it's still occupying the top position next month.

Elsewhere, *Starsiege* is this month's strongest entry, proving that big robots are always a success, especially when they're bundled with a game like *Tribes*; and *Call To Power* proves that the *Civilization* moniker is as much of a pull as the Sid Meier name. *X-Wing Alliance* continues to fly strongly, and no doubt we'll be seeing more *Star Wars* games in the charts in the coming months.

Mark Hill

THE MEGASTORES TOP 10

MAY JUN	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REVIEW SCORE
1 1	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
- 2	STARSIEGE UNIVERSE	SIERRA	SIERRA	88%
- 3	BALDUR'S GATE: TALES OF THE SWORD COAST	INTERPLAY	INTERPLAY	83%
2 4	CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	89%
3 5	X-WING: ALLIANCE	LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	88%
4 6	GTA LONDON 1969	ROCKSTAR	TAKE 2	70%
8 7	JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL	VIRGIN	VIRGIN	89%
- 8	COMMANDOS: BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY	PYRO	EIDOS	70%
5 9	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON	MICROPROSE	HASBRO	87%
10 10	SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI	FIRAXIS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	92%

THE TOP 10

APR MAY	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REVIEW SCORE
1 1	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
5 2	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON	MICROPROSE	HASBRO	87%
4 3	X-WING: ALLIANCE	LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	88%
2 4	CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	89%
- 5	JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL	VIRGIN	VIRGIN	89%
3 6	TOCA 2 TOURING CARS	CODEMASTERS	CODEMASTERS	93%
9 7	HALF-LIFE	SIERRA	HAVAS	95%
8 8	GRAND THEFT AUTO	TAKE 2	TAKE 2	92%
10 9	SIMCITY 3000	MAXIS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	92%
- 10	SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMP'SHIP	EA SPORTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	82%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 1999)

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"No surprises about number one, really. *CM3* is clearly the most popular choice of all kinds of games players – prop heads and fragmeisters alike. Quite simply, it's a classic. But I have to confess that I bottled it after ten straight defeats for my chosen team. Doh!"

Spielman, Leeds

"*Superbike* should be way higher than that. It's a superb game and shits all over *TOCA 2*. It's this dull fixation with four wheels. Any fart can go fast on four wheels; it takes real skill to do it on two, and *Superbike* has got it spot on."

Robert Edwards, South Wales

"*CM 3!* A weekend in Bermuda with Julian Clary would be more appealing."

JS Clayden, St. Albans

"Amazing – a chart where I'd buy any game on it, apart from *CM3*. But only because I detest football. In fact I'm having trouble deciding between *X-Wing: Alliance*, *TOCA2* and *Superbike*, which is all academic because my PC's not fast enough to run any of them. Oh well."

Paul Graham, Glenariffe

"The current chart is an example of where the PC market excels. You couldn't have any of these games (bar *TOCA 2*) working well on a console. As long as the PC games market sticks to the games that are more suited to it, it will never die. But if more of this console shit (*Croc*, *Abe's Exodius*) starts appearing, then no right-minded PC gamer will buy it"

Frew, Middlesbrough

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: What is the name of the Transformers' leader?

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?

Send your answers on a postcard to: **PC ZONE Chart Compo (78), 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Closing date: Thursday 17 June**

★ 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. Capiche?

RETRO CHARTS

- 1 **Ultimate Soccer Manager 98** (Sierra/Cendant)
- 2 **Star Wars: Supremacy** (LucasArts/Virgin)
- 3 **Tomb Raider II** (Core/Eidos)
- 4 **StarCraft** (Blizzard/Cendant)
- 5 **Grand Theft Auto** (DMA Design/BMG)

2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 **Theme Hospital** (Bullfrog/EA)
- 2 **CM96/97** (Eidos)
- 3 **C&C: Red Alert** (Westwood/Virgin)
- 4 **Premier Manager 97** (Gremlin)
- 5 **Tomb Raider** (Core/Eidos)

5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 **Sam And Max Hit The Road** (LucasArts/US Gold)
- 2 **The 7th Guest** (Telstar)
- 3 **Rebel Assault** (LucasArts/US Gold)
- 4 **Mega Race** (Mindscape)
- 5 **Star Trek: 25th Anniversary** (Interplay)

FLYING FORTRESS

Not another WWII flight sim? Ah, but this one is different

Dogfighting is one thing, carpet bombing is quite another, and something we've seen little of in recent times. Thankfully, Wayward Design are filling the gap with *B-17 Flying Fortress 2: The Mighty 8th*, a WWII combat flight sim due to be released through Hasbro later this year.

While flight sims generally tend to be about as innovative as custard, *B-17 FF2* brags a whole heap of new features that could well set it apart from the mass of WWII sims.

With a fully dynamic campaign structure which enables you to select missions depending on the experience and morale of your squadron, it's a game that brings a much-needed human resource management element to a genre that's rapidly losing its shine. Gunners, pilots and navigators can also gain in experience as the war drags on, and if you think you can do better, you can always take over any position within the aircraft. In multiplayer games you can even have friends manning each station. Did we mention that you can fly escort in fighters, or fly for the Germans? Well we have now.

What's most impressive is that a lot of emphasis is being placed on creating a believable atmosphere where the entire crew feels as real as possible. For example, you can turn around to see others at work in 3D, and maybe even see the gunner behind you get drilled by enemy gunfire. We'll bring you a full preview as soon as possible.



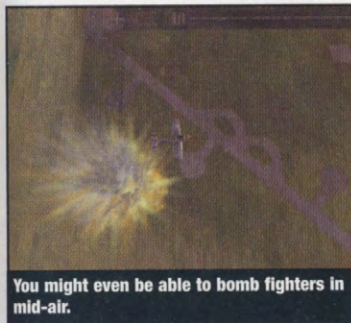
Seven different fighters can be controlled, even German jets.



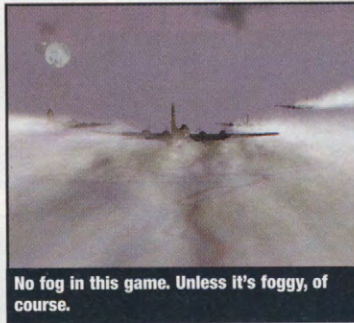
That'll be the control panel then.



Flak and tracer effects are claimed to be unrivalled.



You might even be able to bomb fighters in mid-air.



No fog in this game. Unless it's foggy, of course.



You can turn around to see what other crew members are up to.

£10 OFF*

TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS

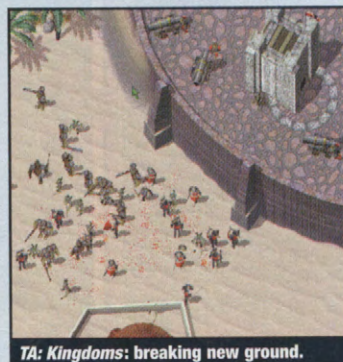


* Recommended retail price

As the sequel to the best strategy game on the planet, *Total Annihilation: Kingdoms* is one of this year's most highly anticipated releases, and its innovative gameplay represents a major leap forward for the genre. You'll already have seen *TA: Kingdoms* adorning this month's front cover, and if you're in any doubt as to which real-time strategy game you should buy this year you can shoot along to page 70 and read our exclusive review. Convinced? Read on...

Together with mail order games specialists Gameplay, we can exclusively offer you this massive game for the special price of £24.99 including postage and packing. All you need to do to qualify for this discount is either phone Gameplay's sales hotline on 0113 234 0444, or email Gameplay direct at gameplayuk@aol.com, quoting PCZ244 as the reference number.

Come back next month, when hopefully we'll be running a complete walkthrough.



TA: Kingdoms: breaking new ground.

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UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

The preliminary heats of the UK's most prestigious gaming event are about to begin. We'll have a full report on how everyone fared in next month's *ZONE*, but in the meantime we take a closer look at the people behind the scenes working round the clock to make it all happen

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CHECK OUT THE OFFICIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS WEBSITE

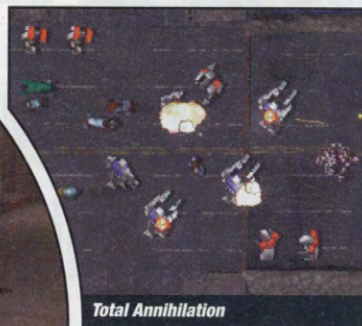
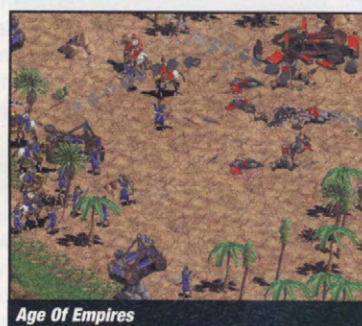
Get online, get the info, then get on down

Fire up the Internet and make your way to www.ukpcgc.com where you can find all the latest news on the Championships. Find out which teams are leading the pack. Go straight to the MSN Gaming Zone (www.zone.msn.co.uk) to practice *Age Of Empires*, *Motocross Madness*, *Total Annihilation* and *Quake II*. Learn more about the celebrities who'll be making special appearances in the final. And find out how to win fabulous gaming goodies. It's all at www.ukpcgc.com.

Scheduled events, prizes, practice areas... You can find all this and more at the official Championships site - www.ukpcgc.com.

THE LINE-UP

These are the games our contestants will be playing over the next couple of months as they strive to become the best of the best on the UK PC gaming scene. The titles listed here may change at the Finals, to ensure that contestants are playing the latest games in each category. More news on this as and when it happens.



JIMMY JOINS IN

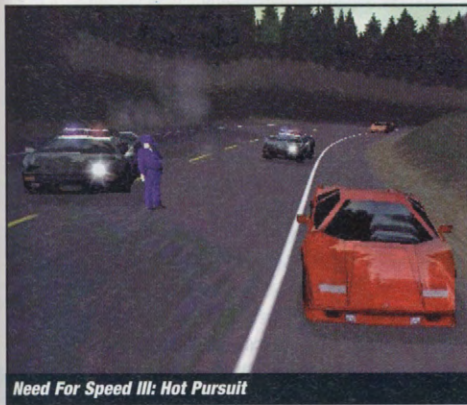
Whirlwind to breeze into the Grand Final

Jimmy White, one of snooker's most famous characters, will be making a special appearance at the UK Championships Grand Final. So if very large sums of money and spectacular game prizes aren't enough to get you down to our Grand Final, perhaps the chance of shaking the Whirlwind's hand will make all the difference. Also putting in an appearance will be Dominik Diamond, ex-presenter of *Gamesmaster* and recognised games industry critic.

Finally, news reaches us that very few teams have entered so far for the Birmingham qualifiers, proving that there's so much to do in this beautiful city that no one has time for games. Fortunately, the rest of the country is extremely dull, so the rest of the UK will be represented in force. Come on, gamers of Birmingham, it's not too late – show us the power of your joystick.



Motocross Madness



Need For Speed III: Hot Pursuit



Actua Soccer 3

AMD 3DNOW!

AMD's powerful new processor gives the Championships' PCs an extra push

All the PCs used in the Championships have an AMD-K6®-III processor at their core. These processors use 3DNow! technology which significantly enhances floating point-intensive 3D graphics and multimedia performance on the PC. AMD describe their technology as providing leading-edge 3D performance (ultra-fast frame rates to you and me), more realistic and lifelike 3D imaging and graphics (3D games look more realistic with 3DNow!

technology), and big-screen sound and video. So you may as well throw that expensive 3D card you just bought in the bin and start again, right? Of course not, that would be silly.

3DNow! is designed to work alongside your existing 3D card, sending graphics data to the card at an accelerated rate (some CPUs can't keep up with the latest 3D cards), thus speeding up the whole process. The end result is a combined CPU/3D card set-up that can cope with anything that

even the most demanding of 3D games can throw at them, which can only be a good thing.

Industry support for the chip is widespread too, with several big-name publishers jumping on the 3DNow! bandwagon as we speak. And 3Dfx have tailored their new Voodoo3 cards to take advantage of the new processors too, so early adopters will reap the benefits of 3DNow! with the next wave of big game releases.

For more info, check out www.3dnow.de gaming_uk2/

AMD - 3DNow!(TM) Technology - Netscape

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Bookmarks Netsite: <http://www.amd.com/products/cpg/3dnow/index.html>

AMD 3DNow!™ Technology

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3DNOW!™

3DNow!™ technology is a Superscalar SIMD (single instruction multiple data) instruction set for improving 3D graphics, sound and or imaging within your PC. 3DNow! technology enables new levels of realism on your PC with lifelike visuals, big-screen sound, and more realistic 3D imaging.

INFORMATION

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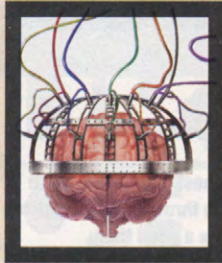
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AMD's dedicated 3DNow! Web page tells you everything you want to know about their revolutionary technology, and provides an updated list of games that support it.



TECH HEAD

Graded tech specs for games? PCs on the catwalk? A comeback for Sinclair? Blimey!

★ WORDSMITH Warren Christmas

BOXING CLEVER

Microsoft aim to stamp their mark on PC games?

Microsoft are leading an initiative to standardise the PC CD-ROM logo used on games packaging and advertisements in order to promote the PC as a branded games platform.

The move is seen by many as a reaction to disappointing software sales. Many industry analysts believe that the PC is heavily underachieving as a games platform compared to the rapidly expanding console market, with consumer confusion cited as a major factor.

The logo idea, led by Microsoft in the UK, is currently being put to European games publishers. Should it get the necessary support, the standardised logo – which could incorporate the Windows logo in some way – is expected to appear on games packaging and also in advertisements and related marketing materials before the end of the year.

An option thought to be under consideration is a grading system where games are rated according to the hardware specifications required to run them. A

similar system, the Multimedia Personal Computer (MPC) standard, was developed in the early '90s by the now defunct MPC Marketing Council (which included Microsoft and Creative Labs, among others).

However, the MPC standard gained relatively little industry support, primarily because software publishers and hardware manufacturers had to pay a hefty licensing fee to use the logo on packaging. Any new grading system is likely to be open and more widely adopted.

Meanwhile, in a separate move, high street chain WH Smith have asked publishers to standardise the size of PC games packaging (to 'Sierra'-size boxes). Again, this is an attempt to reduce customer confusion at retail. The request has apparently been welcomed by other leading chains.

★ The last attempt at standardisation was MPC2: a 486DX2/66, 8Mb RAM, 16-bit sound card and two-speed CD-ROM drive.



FACTCANNON

★ National Semiconductor, producers of the Cyrix range of processors, have decided to pull out of the PC processor market owing to stiff competition from Intel and AMD. The company plan to focus more on providing chips for set-top boxes and other Web devices

★ A Federal District Court judge has finally granted Sony a preliminary injunction against Connectix for alleged copyright violations preventing the company from using the PlayStation BIOS in its Mac-based PlayStation emulator, the Virtual Game Station. Bleem!, the PC-based emulator (see www.bleem.com), is unaffected by the ruling. We hope to bring you a full review next issue.

★ Buddy brilliant? Eurotech (www.euro-tech.co.uk) have launched an ISA interface card which, with sockets for a second keyboard, monitor and mouse, enables two users to use a single PC simultaneously. The Buddy B-200 costs around £130. Call 0118 981 0011 or visit www.austin.com.sg for details.

★ Zero-Knowledge Systems have found a way to make the 'hidden' serial number of an Intel Pentium III processor visible without the knowledge of the PC's owner. The small Canadian software company have placed a program on the Net (at www.zeroknowledge.com) to demonstrate the vulnerability. Intel have reacted by persuading Symantec (makers of Norton Antivirus) to classify the program as malicious.

★ 3D chip designers S3 (www.s3.com) have announced that more than 50 game developers will be supporting S3TC, the texture compression feature of the company's Savage4 technology which enables the use of higher resolution textures. Supporters include iD (*Quake III: Arena*), Epic (*Unreal: Tournament*) and ION Storm (*Anachronox*, *Deus Ex*).

★ Intel (www.intel.com) have launched the 810 (formerly know as Whitney), a low-cost chip which integrates 3D AGP graphics and enables software-based audio, modem and DVD capabilities. Several major motherboard manufacturers, including Tyan Computer and Supermicro, will be utilising the chipset. PC system prices could drop by as much as £100.

★ Samsung (www.samsung.com) have launched the world's smallest MP3 player in Korea. The size of a business card and just 17mm thick, the Yepp holds up to 40Mb of audio and includes an FM radio as well as voice recording capabilities. Sadly there's no news as yet on a European launch.

★ Meanwhile, the SDMI (Secure Digital Music Initiative) is expected to make recommendations regarding the MP3 format and the delivery of digital music worldwide on 30 June. More on this in a future issue.

GIVE US A TWIRL

More good-looking models strut their stuff beyond your reach

Intel recently held the "first PC fashion show" to unveil a series of concept PCs and peripherals from industrial design specialists and manufacturers. As reported in our January issue (PCZ #72), several PC manufacturers are working on designing attractive-looking machines as a result of Apple's success with the iMac range.



Not a beige machine in sight at PC fashion show.

All the PCs on show were 'legacy free' – that is, free from the restraints of old technologies such as the ISA bus and parallel, serial and game ports – and instead based entirely around more recent advancements. None of the items on show were beige.

★ Intel: www.intel.com

SINCLAIR TO TAKE ON GATES?

Will the new millennium bring a new machine from Sir Clive?

Sir Clive Sinclair, the man behind the world's first practical pocket calculator, the first affordable digital watch, the ZX81, the Spectrum, the C5 electric 'car' (ahem) and a load of other things, could be about to make a return to the computer market, according to *The Daily Express*.

The newspaper reported that Clive may launch a new computer bundled with Linux – the open-standard operating system originally created by Finnish inventor Linus Torvalds – rather than Microsoft Windows. According to the report, Sinclair is not yet fully committed to a launch

but says it is "a strong possibility".

However, it's worth pointing out that *The Express* also reported that the Sinclair Spectrum "flopped disastrously", "arrived months after the due date" and was "shoddily made". For the benefit of our younger readers, that's wrong, wrong and wrong.

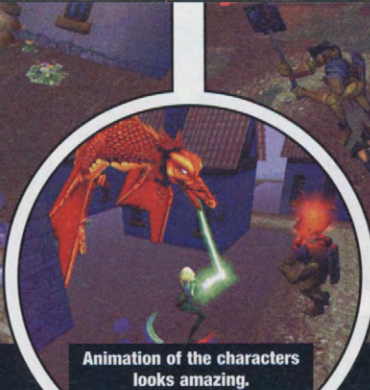


Sir Clive and his X1 Button Radio – £10, if you're interested.

★ The Express: www.lineone.net/express



Combat should be even more spectacular than in *Final Fantasy VII*.



Animation of the characters looks amazing.



The setting may be quite unique, but the monsters, for the most part, are straight out of a Tolkien novel.

FURTHER FANTASY

Counting the days until the arrival of *Final Fantasy VIII*? Why wait?

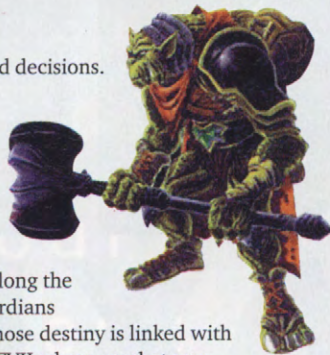
Ronin Entertainment look set to beat Squaresoft at their own game with *Legend Of The Blademasters*, a 3D action-RPG that could blunt anticipation for the eagerly awaited *Final Fantasy VIII*, not least because it will beat it to the shops – this autumn, in fact.

Comparisons with Squaresoft are inevitable, with a heavy influence from Japanese Animé art evident in the screenshots. However, Ronin have a patchy track record. Although much of the team worked on many of LucasArts' earlier *Star Wars* games, their most recent offering as a team was the lacklustre 3D real-time strategy game *Armor Command* (PCZ #64, 68%).

Using its own 3D engine, *Legend* is a game that, if nothing else, will at least provide cutting-edge visuals. When visuals were rather dull prior to the RPG genre, *FFVII* (PCZ #66, 93%) was the exception to the rule. *Legend* will take them that step further, as well as providing enhanced AI, with characters able to fend for themselves as the game engine calculates decisions on the fly,

rather than having pre-scripted decisions.

The story centres on Erik Valdemar, who finds a mysterious sword while on the run, which he soon discovers has magical and dark powers. His quest, along with a bunch of other characters he hooks up with along the way, is to destroy the five Guardians who are ravaging the land, whose destiny is linked with the legendary blade. Unlike *FFVII* where combat was rather simplified, *Legend* will include a host of tactics that take advantage of positioning, stats and equipment. Weapons will range from swords, warhammers, crossbows and guns, as well as a host of magical spells, the effects of which will no doubt send eyeballs reeling. Sounds pretty good to us.



SHORTS

DELTA FORCE SEQUEL

NovaLogic have announced *Delta Force 2*, the sequel to the best-selling first-person action game. One new feature will be the addition of Voice-Over-Net technology, whereby players can communicate with each other in real-time in multiplayer games. From our experience of real-time voice comms, it can enhance the gameplay experience no end. *Delta Force 2* is due for release in the autumn.

REAL LIFE LARA

Following on from Leeds lass Nell McAndrew is the new face of *Tomb Raider*, Lara Weller. Previously a lingerie and swimwear model, she was



recently showing off her curves at E3 to promote the announcement of the fourth in the *Tomb Raider* series.

BLOOD PACK

In development from Tequila Software is *Blood II: Revelations*, the second expansion disc for Monolith's 3D shooter. Featuring new weapons ranging from a throwing knife to a harpoon gun, and new enemies including preachers, missionaries and a new bad guy called Cain, the aim is to capture the feel of the original *Blood*. New spells are also promised, along with new features such as walls caving in and less scripted AI. No details of a publisher as yet, but let's hope it fixes *Blood II*'s bugged multiplayer game.

The first *Blood II* mission disc, *The Nightmare Levels*, is reviewed on page 90.



Shiny have been kept informed on *MDK 2*'s development.

MDK 2

With development of *MDK 2* having changed hands from Shiny to Bioware (of *Baldur's Gate* fame), the game promises the same blend of third-person arcade action that made the original so much fun.

Returning, of course, is the hero Kurt, although you will also be able to control Max the dog and his creator Dr Hawkins, each a specialist in either stealth, firepower or puzzle-solving. There'll be nine huge levels, each with a unique organic feel, over 20 new enemies standing in your way as well as a few similar weapons and objects, and Bioware also promise a few new surprises.

“The ability to generate true-to-life audio experiences with Environmental Audio adds a higher degree of intensity to Unreal”

MARK REIN, VP EPIC MEGAGAMES



It may be the fastest, but is it safe? Not at these speeds.



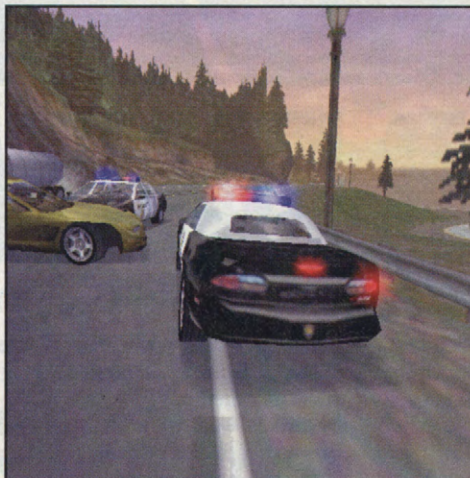
Who ever said the police had to drive carefully?



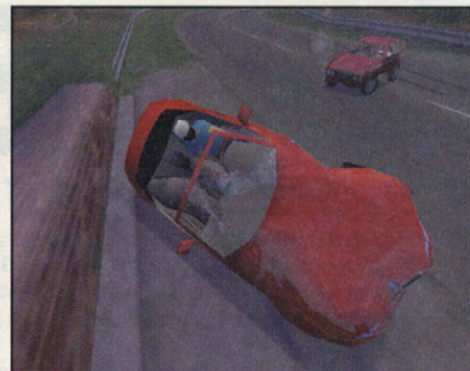
3D card owners are in for a treat. Again.



Police forces, other than American, could be on the cards.



Get out of that one, then.



The cars may crumple, but sadly the bodies won't.

MAX DAMAGE

A need for realism in *Need For Speed*

Previously, putting real-world cars in games and demolishing them has been a no-go area. Forthcoming games such as *Driver* and *Midtown Madness* have sought official licences from car manufacturers, but were turned away as the companies concerned were unwilling to see their top-of-the-range cars being crushed against a wall.

However, that's all set to change. Realistic car damage is back in *Midtown Madness*, with EA having managed to

talk Porsche, BMW, Ferrari, Jaguar, Lamborghini, Pontiac and McLaren into having their cars smashed to bits on the small screen. At last.

Need For Speed: Road Challenge, previously subtitled *High Stakes*, is the fourth in the long-running racing series. A total of 18 cars and ten new tracks are included, with game modes including the regular series of tournaments and single races. The *Hot Pursuit* mode is enhanced with the chance to drive a police car, while a new career mode

gives you the opportunity to use money from races to repair and customise your car, and eventually buy better and faster vehicles; a multiplayer mode enables two people to bet their cars against each other.

However, polygonal car damage is the most welcome feature, so expect to see smashed windows and dented panels. The vehicles also have proper 3D cockpits and far more polygons to ensure an even better looking game. *Need For Speed: Road Challenge* is released this month.

FREESPACE 2 TAKES OFF

Volition, developers of the original *Freespace*, were out in force at E3, showing off the latest version of their space combat sim *Freespace 2*. And mighty fine it looks too. Which isn't surprising considering how visually stunning the first game was.

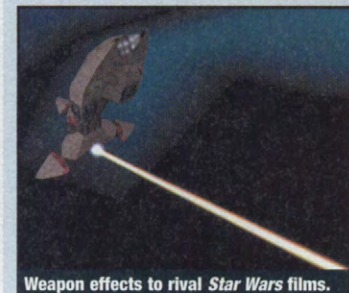
The 3D engine remains largely the same, but as the code is highly customisable a ton of new effects have already made it into the sequel. The interface is also being tweaked, but it's the greater variety of ships and missions that are getting most people excited. More medium-sized craft are on the wish list, alongside some unarmed vessels. And as well as the usual array



of seek-and-destroy missions, we can expect far greater depth than in the original thanks to a tighter storyline.

After some initial glitches, *Freespace* is now widely regarded as a multiplayer game on a par with the *X-Wing* series, an aspect which should be even better this time round as the sequel will take some of the processing strain away from game servers.

With *Freespace 2* set for release by the end of the year, work will commence on a third game soon after, and Volition are hinting that the franchise could even make the crossover into other genres.



Weapon effects to rival *Star Wars* films.




Get up close for a sense of the scale.



Phew, that was close...



Looks even better than the first game.



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SHORTS

CRICHTON DOES GAMES

Best-selling author Michael 'Congo' Crichton has set up his own development team called Timeline Studios. "As a gamer for 20 years," he says "I've noticed that a lot of 3D games have featured large environments - big worlds, a few monsters, some puzzles - but limited interaction. Timeline is going to change this standard through fast-paced gameplay in a tight, complex and highly interactive world."

Considering the background of Crichton's team, our best guess is that Timeline's first game could well be a 3D shooter with lots of words.



A BIT LIKE...

Star Nations - a bit like *Imperium Galactica*, *Master of Orion 2* and *Star Control* - from Aussie developers Megamedia is a turn-based and real-time mixture of resource management, 3D space combat, diplomacy and colonisation as you lead your race to intergalactic domination. Able to run on a lowly 486, the game is nearing completion, although no UK publisher has yet been announced.



MID-PRICE GT

GT Interactive have launched a range of mid-price games costing £14.99, two of which are *D-Day* and *Respect Inc.* An expanded version of *Duke Nukem 3D* will also be included later this year, along with the pinball spin-off *Balls Of Steel*. Because of the success of the *Sold Out* £4.99 range, GT plan to fight back by releasing older games such as *Doom* for considerably less than a fiver (either £1.99 or £2.99). And you thought all the money was in full-price games.



ONE MAN AND HIS DOG

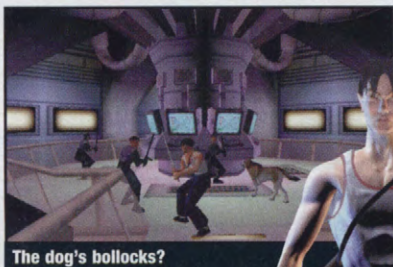
...versus the world, in *Saboteur*

Against all the rules, Eidos could have a hit on their hands with *Saboteur*, a game we first uncovered late last year. A PlayStation release which is largely beat 'em up in nature is usually enough to send PC gamers running for the hills. However, with many adventure

elements thrown in, as well as the promise of sophisticated AI, *Saboteur* could well break the myth that PC versions of PSX games are largely shallow affairs.

Saboteur puts you in the shoes of Shin Tenaga, a young ninja out to avenge the death of his grandfather. Alongside you is

Shiro, your faithful hound, who can be used to fight or retrieve objects throughout the 20 levels. Over 30 characters will make it into the game, with full-3D fighting sequences, tons of special moves, weapons and magical powers. *Saboteur* is set for a pre-Christmas release.



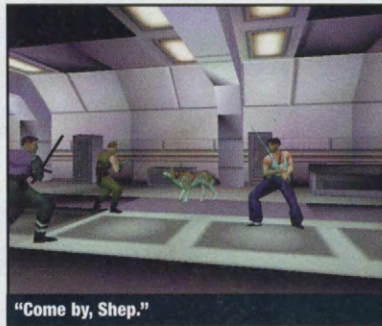
The dog's bollocks?



Shin has a dig (guffaw).



Apart from the clothes, *Saboteur* looks typically sci-fi.



"Come by, Shep."



"Can't we just talk about this?"

GLIDE INTO 3Dfx

Creative unwrap 3Dfx 'wrapper'

Creative Labs have released a public beta version of a controversial software driver which enables owners of nVidia TNT-based 3D accelerators to run Glide-only titles - that is to say, games intended for 3Dfx owners.

The driver, dubbed 'Unified', is a top-level software 'wrapper' which translates 3Dfx's proprietary Windows Glide API calls into Microsoft's Direct3D. In theory, the drivers should enable any Direct3D-compatible board to run Glide titles, although authors Creative are restricting use to its own 3D Blaster Riva TNT boards, with support for the 3D Blaster Savage4 and 3D Blaster Riva TNT2 Ultra likely to follow this summer.

The beta drivers are currently only available to North American-based owners of the TNT cards (you must supply a serial number to get the software). However, European users shouldn't feel too left out. Given that most 3D games support Direct3D and/or OpenGL as well as 3Dfx's Glide, it's debatable how much genuine benefit it offers TNT owners. Also, the list of Glide games that currently *don't* work with Unified (including *NBA Live '98*, *Test Drive 4* and *Pro Pilot 99*) is almost as long as the list of those that do (for example *Starsiege: Tribes* and *Myth: The Fallen Lords*).

Nevertheless, 3Dfx are said to be far from happy over the release, and have already taken measures to clamp down on developers (including emulator programmers) writing wrappers, claiming breach of copyright and misuse of the Glide software development kit.

We'll be watching the situation closely over the coming months. In the meantime, you can find more info on Unified at www.soundblaster.com/hotgraphics/unified/.



If you go down to the woods today... you're sure to get your head ripped off.



Nox will join C&C: Tiberian Sun on Westwood's online game service.

WESTWOOD RECEIVE NOX

Based in the fantasy world of the same name, *Nox* is the latest addition to Westwood's growing portfolio of RPG titles. Taking a top-down view similar to *Baldur's Gate*, *Nox* focuses more on action and strategy as you travel through three realms, each of which boasts true line of sight and proper real-world physics.

Three castes of magic with over 100 spells and weapons should placate the bearded-weirdy brigade, and with multiplayer games including teamplay, capture the flag and king of the hill, it should give *Diablo II* a run for its gold pieces when it's released in the autumn, priced £34.99.



true line of sight has now been handled better.



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The Man who KNOWS

WE'RE ALL DOOMED

The usual areas of the media have been made scapegoats in the fallout from the **Colorado** high school massacre. Violent films and extreme music have come in for flak, with pantomime goths **Marilyn Manson** anxious to distance themselves from the actions of **Eric Harris** and **Dylan Klebold** of the so-called **Trenchcoat Mafia**.

Games have come under fire after the revelation that the teenage murderers hosted **Doom DeathMatches** over the Internet, and even read the **Doom** novels, prompting some embarrassingly ill-informed outpourings.

News digest **The Week** reported that Harris and Klebold "became obsessed with grisly computer games (including one, **Doom**, in which contestants earn points for the severity with which they kill children, whose bodies hang from the ceiling of a concentration camp)". The author of the piece, **Jemima Lewis**, later admitted she had never played the game and claimed to have read the description elsewhere, deciding to trust her "journalistic instinct". Unfortunately, her journalistic skills didn't extend as far as picking up the phone to talk to **PC ZONE**, which is published by the same company.

Even **Bill Clinton** mentioned **Doom** in a radio address. He said: "A former lieutenant colonel and psychologist, **Professor David Grossman**, has said these games teach young people to kill with all the precision of a military training programme, but with none of the character training that goes along with it. For children who get the right training at home and who have the ability to distinguish between real and unreal consequences, they're still games. But for children who are especially vulnerable to the lure of violence, they can be far more."

Rolling Stone magazine's online service leapt on the bandwagon, claiming: "It's as if these kids were playing a game of **Doom**, going from room to room, shooting people up, using multiple weapons."

Harsh words, but curiously all directed at a relatively primitive game that is essentially a battle between good and evil in a stylised version of hell. The fact that this pair of dysfunctional aberrations played and read about **Doom** proves little more than that they were five years out of date and had appalling taste in literature. However, their actions have thrown the games industry into turmoil, and at the recent **E3** show in **Los Angeles** a number of particularly violent games were withdrawn from view.

Wearing a horse coat, listening to so-called 'alternative' music and playing computer games does not automatically make you a mass murderer. If that were the case, every university in Britain would be a bloodbath. Those seeking simplistic solutions would do better to look at America's oppressive educational system and ludicrously liberal gun laws.

Stop the madness.



Fantasy meets future in *The Longest Journey*.

Rummaging through litter bins for clues.

REBIRTH OF A GENRE

While the adventure game genre moves in on 3D territory, most recently with LucasArts' *Grim Fandango*, news of two side-on adventures in development shows that the traditional point-and-click outing is still alive and well.

The Longest Journey, from Scandinavian developers Funcom, is probably the most up-to-date in

terms of technology, with smooth 3D characters moving across animated 2D backgrounds. Typical of the genre, the game will feature an inventory full of characters, dialogue and puzzles, combining state-of-the-art 3D graphics and coloured lighting with good old-fashioned storytelling. You control April Ryan as she shifts between the worlds of Stark and Arcadia - two opposing realities, one of which is technological, the other fantasy - to investigate

the disappearance of the Guardian of Balance.

The other point-and-clicker, *Curly's Adventure*, comes from New York developers Sylum. With its cartoon graphics and promised humour, *Curly's Adventure* is reminiscent of LucasArts' ageing classic *The Day Of The Tentacle*. Whether it'll be quite as humorous remains to be seen. On the evidence of the 20Mb trailer (from www.sylum.com), *Curly's Adventure* at least sounds promising.

TICKERTAPE

STARTS++ *Rogue Spear*, the first add-on pack for *Rainbow Six*, has already been announced (see Top Story on page 16). Developed by Aztech New Media, it should be out before Christmas **++STOP++** Cyberlife will be releasing *Creatures 3* in November through Mindscape. Prepare to meddle in genetics once again **++STOP++** Pants game of the year so far - *Test Drive 4x4* (PCZ #73 19%) - is about to spawn a sequel in the guise of *Test Drive Off-Road 3*. We can't wait **++STOP++** The entire *Warbirds* team, who walked out last month from Interactive Magic's online studios in Texas rather than be relocated, have formed a new company called Playnet. Hoping to buy up the rights to both *Warbirds* and *Dawn Of Aces*, Playnet plan to continue development on both games **++ENDS**



Curly's Adventure? Looks like Sam & Max to us...

YOUR MOST WANTED

A look at the games you're most looking forward to over the next few months, and when they're expected to arrive

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1 <i>Quake III Arena</i> (ID/Activision) | Aug |
| 2 <i>Driver</i> (Reflections/gt) | Aug |
| 3 <i>Kingpin</i> (Xatrix/Interplay) | June |
| 4 <i>C&C: Tiberian Sun</i> (Westwood/EA) | July |
| 5 <i>Duke Nukem Forever</i> (3D Realms/GT) | Oct/Nov |
| 6 <i>Dungeon Keeper 2</i> (Bullfrog/ea) | July |
| 7 <i>Age Of Empires II</i> (Ensemble/Microsoft) | Sept |
| 8 <i>Grand Theft Auto 2</i> (DMA/Take 2) | Nov |
| 9 <i>Team Fortress II: Redemption</i> (Valve/Sierra) | Autumn |
| 10 <i>Diablo 2</i> (Blizzard/Sierra) | Autumn |

WIN! Submit your vote and go into the hat for a mystery prize draw. Email us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject line 'Most Wanted', or write to the usual address.



Wireplay

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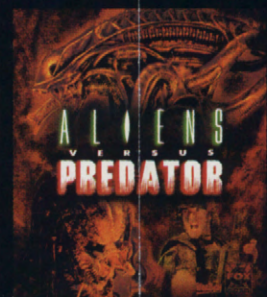
SMELL FEAR ►



Hidden in the pipes of the ceiling a lightning-fast Alien stalks with razor teeth and claws. Even deeper in the dim corridor a Marine searches, armed with flares and pulse rifle. And somewhere an invisible Predator tracks with primed shoulder cannon.

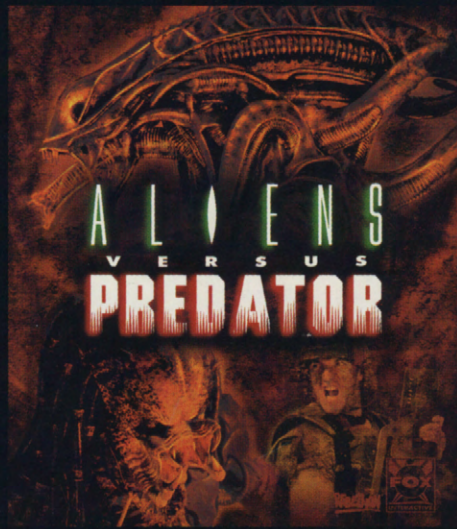
Whichever hunter you choose to be, you'll learn the stench of terror.

OR IS IT THE SCENT OF VICTORY?



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CONSOLE ZONE

Mobile discos. Mobile phones. Mobile video games consoles? They'll never catch on

HAND-HELD Matthew Burgess

The most popular and accessible games console in the world is ten years old and still going strong. Available for around £50 with the best video game ever (*Tetris*), the Gameboy is Nintendo's last remaining commercial success. It has already shrugged off the challenge of several pretenders, including Sega's battery-devouring Game Gear and the under-supported Atari Lynx. However, the Japanese love new gadgets, and the Gameboy's seemingly unassailable position has failed to prevent the release of another slew of hand-helds in the last few months.

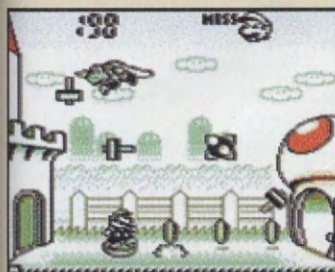
Sony's PocketStation is more a PlayStation accessory than a genuine hand-held console, and works in much the same way as Dreamcast's VMS. Tiny and sleek, it fits into the memory card slot and enables you to download 'subgames' from the PSX titles that support it, such as *Streetfighter Alpha 3* and *Ridge Racer Type 4*. It's a great toy, but not really a competitor to the Gameboy.

Two more direct contenders are SNK's Neo Geo Pocket and Bandai's catchily

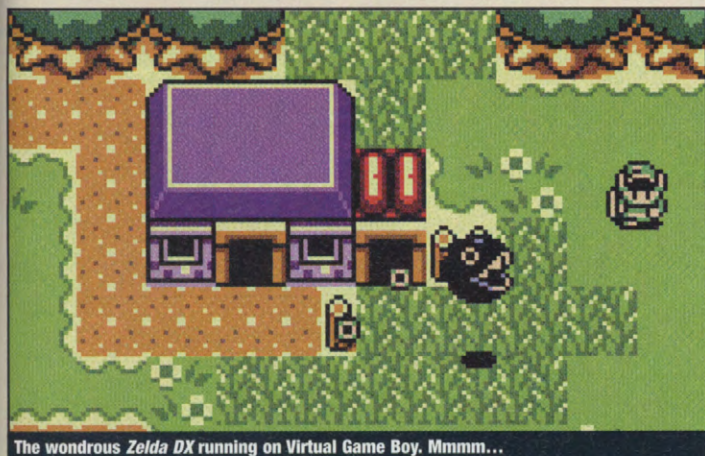
named WonderSwan. Of the two, the WonderSwan is proving the top seller, helped by the licensing of *Final Fantasy* spin-off *Chocobo Mysterious Dungeons*. Like the sadly neglected – and ultra-hip – PC Engine GT, both consoles will probably never make it to the UK; however, it shouldn't be too long before a group of palm-pleasure enthusiasts get an emulator going.

There's a popular school of thought that deems the emulation of a hand-held game on a decidedly non-hand-held PC to be totally pointless. But not everyone shares the same opinion – the chaps behind Virtual Game Boy (www.komkon.org/fms/VGB) have devoted their time to doing just that. To give them their dues, they have produced a pretty good product, though of course there are no nasty ROM images available on the site.

The Gameboy is becoming a retrogaming platform itself. Colour GB releases include the ancient Atari skate 'em up *720degrees* (not as much fun as you'd remember), and old-skool icons *Defender* and *Joust* (on one cartridge – a bargain). There's even *Game And Watch Gallery 2*, which lets you transform your cute new Gameboy Colour into one of those single-screen games that were all the rage with the rich kids at school. If you want to use your PC for that particular purpose, however, then – you've guessed it – they've been emulated too. Head on over to www.emuunlim.com/handheld if you feel that the lack of such toys ruined your childhood, although if you did actually own one you probably won't want to bother. Those Tomytronic goggle games were far cooler anyway. [E]



Game And Watch Gallery 2 includes hand-held 'classics' *Ball and Helmet*.



The wondrous *Zelda DX* running on Virtual Game Boy. Mmmm...



Collect 'aeromiles' to upgrade your car.

TEAM TAMIYA

From Worms to wheels

Team 17's first post-*Worms* game is to be a radio-controlled car racing game. *Stunt Grand Prix*, set to be released through MicroProse in December, will feature 25 tracks that include all manner of loops, ramps, corkscrews and spirals as well as a few straight bits. Playing against human or computer-controlled drivers, you can use prize money to procure a number of upgrades for your vehicle. From the screenshots, it looks like *Stunt Grand Prix* will be more *Rollcage* than *Micro Machines*, hopefully with a tad more depth than both.



Ninja ropes are unlikely, sorry.



Hopefully you can customise your livery.

WORLD WIDE WIREPLAY

Regular Wireplayers will have already noticed a few changes to the regular Wireplay online games service, with the addition of a new server that enables players from around the globe to join in multiplayer games. Now split into two areas, Open Play is the worldwide server and Power Play for UK users who want a boost of speed. The Premium call rate for Wireplay users has now been scrapped, and online play is entirely free for subscribers to one of BT's Internet services. Check out www.wireplay.co.uk for more info.

Of course, you could get around the local call rates altogether by subscribing to Tempo's free new online service (www.screaming.net) which, if you switch your allegiance from BT to LocalTel, gives you free online phone calls at weekends and evenings. If other companies follow their lead, a free Internet will finally be a reality in the UK at long last.



Wireplay: worldwide linking.



Screaming: don't sign on the dotted line...

HOTSHOTS

Before diving head first into our comprehensive Previews section, why not feast your eyes on the visual delights of *Giants*, *Shogun: Total War* and *Urban Chaos*



GIANTS

★ Interplay • Out autumn

It would be easy to label *Giants* as just another *Tomb Raider* clone. However, after a brief playtest it became obvious to us that this is not the case at all. *Giants* (from the core of the MDK design team) is a strange hybrid of fast-paced arcade action and strategy.

Choosing to control either the slow and powerful Kabuto (the giant), the magical Sea Reapers (naked bird) or the technological Mecharyns, you must learn how to make use of the indigenous life forms that populate the world to help you defeat the other races. Think of the action of *MDK* combined with elements of *Quake* and *Populous*, and you might be close to imagining how *Giants* will finally turn out. Visually, at least, it's superior to any of those titles.



SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

★ Electronic Arts • Out August

Looking much like last year's *Warhammer: Dark Omen*, *Shogun: Total War* is a 3D real-time strategy game that combines sixteenth-century warmongering with in-depth resource management. Spy on your enemies, research new technologies (the Japs were good at that, remember) and train your armies as you fight to unite or conquer the feudal states of Japan.

What was immediately impressive at the recent showing at E3 were the thousands of troops that can be shown on screen at any one time. Success doesn't depend on who has the largest army though – using spies and assassins to undermine your enemies is just as important. And when European traders begin to arrive on your shores, you can even start thinking about purchasing firearms and pursuing Christianity. Treachery and religion are central to war, as we all know only too well.



URBAN CHAOS

Eidos Interactive • Out autumn

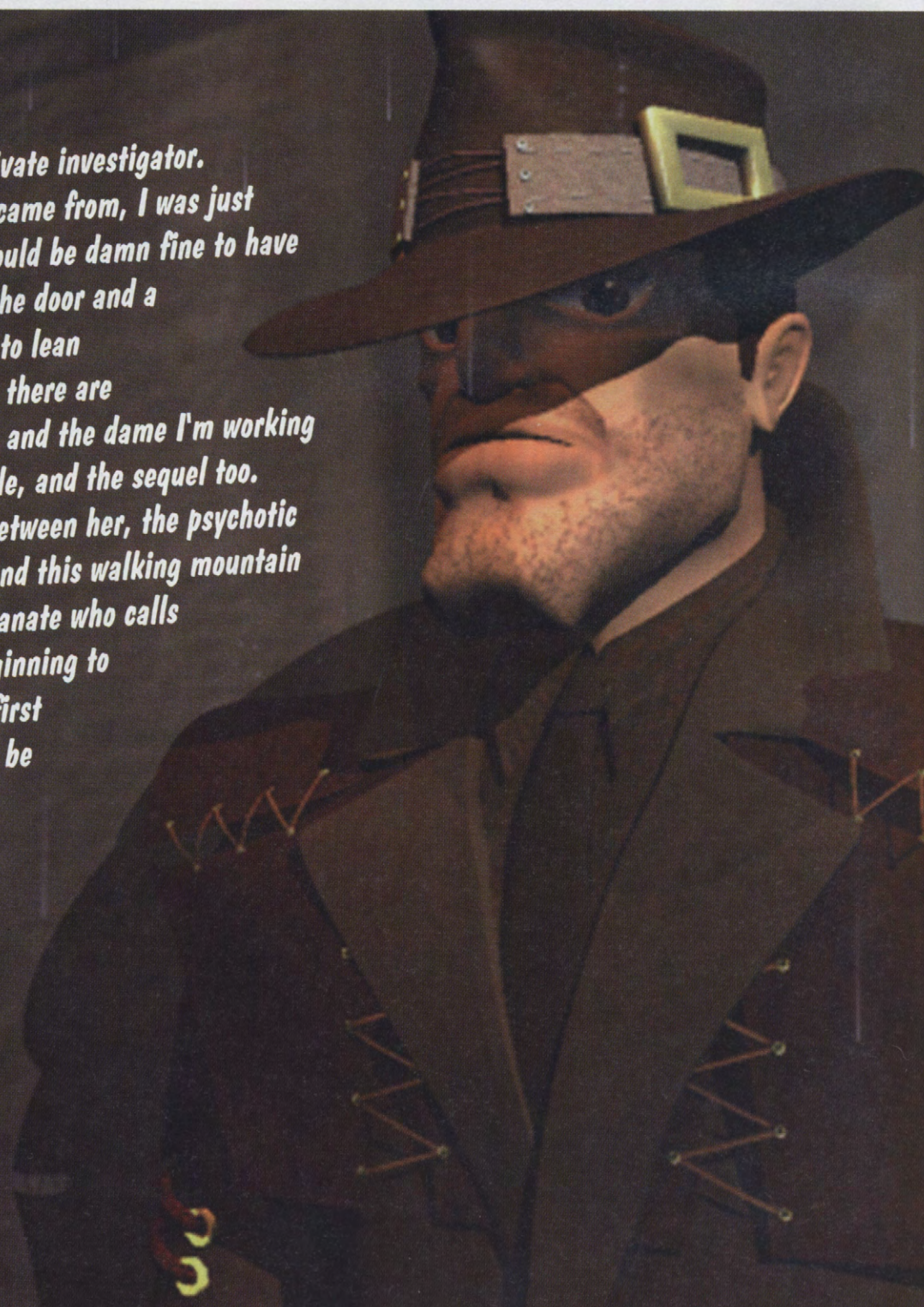
Urban Chaos is a genre-busting game in the truest sense. Not only do you have to run, shoot and fight, but you also get the opportunity to drive various vehicles and interact with a number of characters to progress through the linear levels. Developers Mucky Foot popped by recently to show off the game, and we have to admit that we found it very hard to categorise: '3D action adventure beat 'em up with driving bits' was the best we could come up with.

What impressed us most were the effects – fiery steel drums and pouring rain, as well as shadows that hugged every surface accurately. If the gameplay lives up to the graphics, we could be in for an early Christmas treat.



INTO THE MEAN STREETS OF ANKH-MORPORK ONE MAN MUST GO...

The name's Lewton. I'm a private investigator. I don't know where the idea came from, I was just thinking one night that it would be damn fine to have an office with my name on the door and a sturdy desk for sexy broads to lean across. Trouble is, wherever there are sexy broads there's trouble, and the dame I'm working for wrote the book on trouble, and the sequel too. Her name's Carlotta, and between her, the psychotic dwarf who's following me and this walking mountain with the brain of a pomegranate who calls himself Malachite, I'm beginning to wonder if the Discworld's first private investigator might be about to become the Discworld's last private investigator too.



**PC
CD
ROM**

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DISCWORLD NOIR

**WHERE DEATH STANDS
ON EVERY CORNER,
ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS**



GF

PERFECT
ENTERTAINMENT

Bigger than the millennium bug...

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Looking Glass Studios
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
WEBSITE www.lglass.com
OUT August

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ✦ It's the sequel to the PC ZONE Classic *System Shock*
- ✦ Role-playing with a proper 3D engine
- ✦ Unbelievable attention to detail
- ✦ It's not far from finished

It's been a long time coming, and it's almost here. *Paul Mallinson* gets a hands-on playtest of an almost complete version of *System Shock 2*

First released in 1994, the original *System Shock* (PCZ #20, 95%) is still considered by many to be a classic of its type. Using advanced 3D technology carried over from developer Looking Glass Studios' successful *Ultima Underworld* series of games, *System Shock* mixed hard-core role-playing, serious sci-fi and the best 3D graphics money could buy to great effect. It had depth, a strong storyline, hacking, technology, puzzles, weapons and... *ohmygod*, 'those' graphics.

Five years on, it seems things are about to come full circle. Having achieved considerable success with *Thief: The Dark Project* (PCZ #72, 90%), Looking Glass are using the same engine to power *System Shock 2*. The game will combine hard-core role-

playing, serious sci-fi and the best 3D graphics money can buy to great effect – *again* – only this time in a richer, more detailed fashion than most role-playing gamers are currently accustomed to.

In the past, RPG fans have had to put up with an array of banal fantasy

let graphics slip. We see no reason why a role-playing game can't be technologically competitive. Because we've got a strong engine and a great graphics team, we didn't really feel we had to let the art slip."

So *System Shock 2* is as 'hard-core' as they come, then?

“In the past, RPG fans have had to put up with an array of banal fantasy titles with less-than-convincing visuals. But not any longer, it seems”

titles with less-than-convincing visuals (*Lands Of Lore III* and *Return To Krondor* spring to mind). But not any longer, it seems. *System Shock 2* utilises Looking Glass' tried-and-tested Dark engine, albeit vastly enhanced, and the results are already looking very impressive indeed. So hard-core RPG fans will no longer have to endure crap graphics.

ANOTHER DIMENSION

PC ZONE recently got the chance to talk to Ken Levine, lead designer on *System Shock 2*. We asked him why he thought so many previous RPGs had managed to get away with such appalling graphics.

"The 'harder-core' a game appears to be," explains Ken, "the more people feel they can

"Yes, very much so," says Ken. "What *System Shock 2* is doing is bringing the hard-core RPG to a level of technology that most RPGs don't have. The *Might & Magics* and *Fallouts* of this world look good, but they're not up to the quality of *System Shock 2*."

And Ken is right – we've borne witness to that with our own eyes. *System Shock 2* is not far from completion, as the beta version we have in our very hands so effectively demonstrates. Graphically, the RPG is about to enter another dimension...

IN-GAME CHARACTER GENERATION

But it's not just the graphics that set *System Shock 2* apart from its competitors. It's also the detail in the design that makes it such a hot

System Shock 2 has its own camp robots.

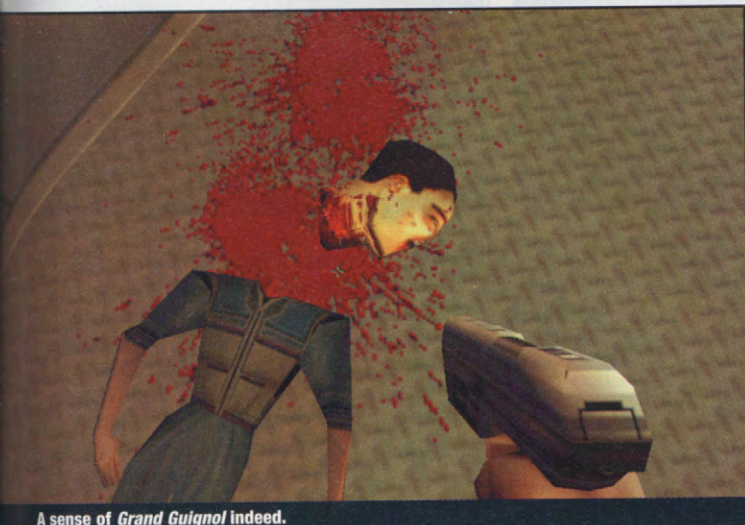
Spend all your 'cyber upgrade units' on your weapons skills.



“We were very influenced by an old paper game called *Traveller*”

KEN LEVINE, LEAD DESIGNER ON *SYSTEM SHOCK 2*

The mood and atmosphere of *System Shock 2* is dark and brooding. Subtle lighting effects contribute greatly.



A sense of *Grand Guignol* indeed.



Looks like someone's preparing for a minor war.

prospect for those of us bored by the relentless deluge of 3D action games. *System Shock 2* is not just a first-person shoot 'em up, as Ken explains.

“In *System Shock 1*, you could turn the combat up or down, or switch the puzzle aspects on or off at the start of the game. We've expanded that. You have to approach the situations in the game differently, depending on the character you are. If you're playing a weapons-oriented character, you tend to approach problems with all guns blazing; if you want to play a more technical role, you could avoid combat and hack your way through a

situation. If you're very good technically, you can modify items to make them more useful, and so on. Every character has its own strengths and weaknesses.”

In *System Shock 2*, it will be up to you to control how your character develops and the skills they acquire as the story unfolds. How you create that initial character, incidentally, is one of the game's most original features.

Starting off four years before the

game begins proper, *System Shock 2* features 'in-game character generation', which basically means that you get to go through a series of training missions within the context of the game itself, rather than selecting how much facial hair you want from a pre-defined selection of portraits. You start off wandering the city streets, then end up inside a military recruitment office with a choice of



← Have a banana, mate.

careers. Joining the Marines puts you through an intensive course in weapons training, while plumbing for the Navy results in heavy-duty technical schooling. If you're the kind of person who likes to dabble with 'magic' in these kinds of games, then joining the OSA (secret service) will be the right career choice, as the OSA specialise in the use of psionic (mind-based) abilities – as seen in Stephen King's *Carrie*.

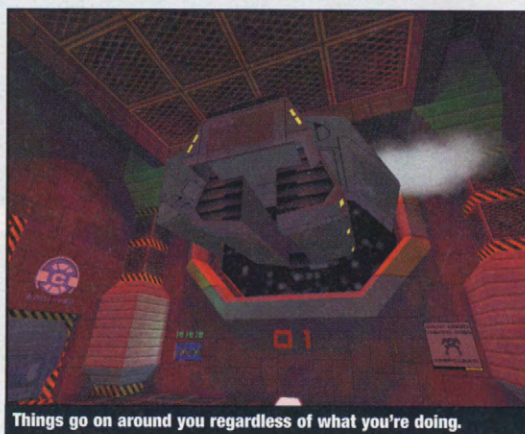
Each of the three disciplines has its own set of training criteria and, once completed, furnishes your character with a full complement →

“There are currently 25 people working on *System Shock 2*, which is not surprising when you have a look ‘under the bonnet’”

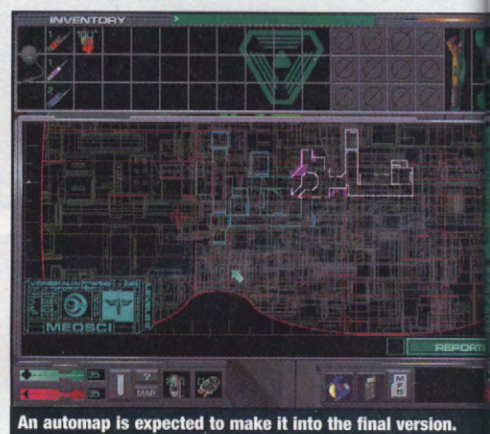
This cybernetically enhanced version of the woman out of *Swing Out Sister* is susceptible to armour-piercing bullets, it seems.



Lots of steam – that’s what this game needs...



Things go on around you regardless of what you’re doing.



An automap is expected to make it into the final version.



LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS

A development studio with a number of quality games behind them. Here are the landmarks...

1991 *Ultima Underworld: The Stygian Abyss*. One of the best role-playing games ever made. Great graphics and fabulous interaction.

1992 *Ultima Underworld: Labyrinth Of Worlds*. Another all-time classic role-playing game, with even better graphics and an arguably better storyline.

1994 *System Shock (PCZ #20, 95%)*. The prequel to the game previewed here. ‘Nuff said.

1996 *Terra Nova (PCZ #39, 90%)*. Classic team combat action game. A precursor to ‘bot’-style deathmatching?

1998 *Thief: The Dark Project (PCZ #72, 90%)*. An exciting but subtle fantasy action game with a very tense atmosphere.

of special abilities and fully prepares them for the (monumentally) huge task ahead.

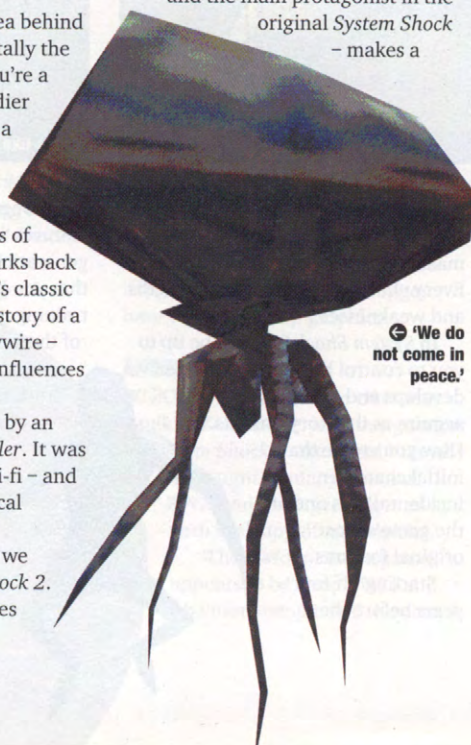
SERIOUS SCI-FI

In terms of gameplay, the idea behind *System Shock 2* is fundamentally the same as in the first game. You’re a cybernetically enhanced soldier of the future, trapped inside a vast, deep space-bound vessel overrun by a powerful central computer system with deadly delusions of grandeur. It’s an idea that harks back to 1968 and Stanley Kubrick’s classic *2001: A Space Odyssey* – the story of a powerful computer gone haywire – although Levine cites other influences as being more significant.

“We were very influenced by an old paper game called *Traveller*. It was serious sci-fi – not fantasy sci-fi – and we embraced the technological aspects of this scenario wholeheartedly. That’s what we wanted to do with *System Shock 2*. Of course, there are references

to movies, but then most science fiction games have that sort of thing.”

The mysterious SHODAN – a female version of *2001*’s HAL 9000, and the main protagonist in the original *System Shock* – makes a



“We do not come in peace.”

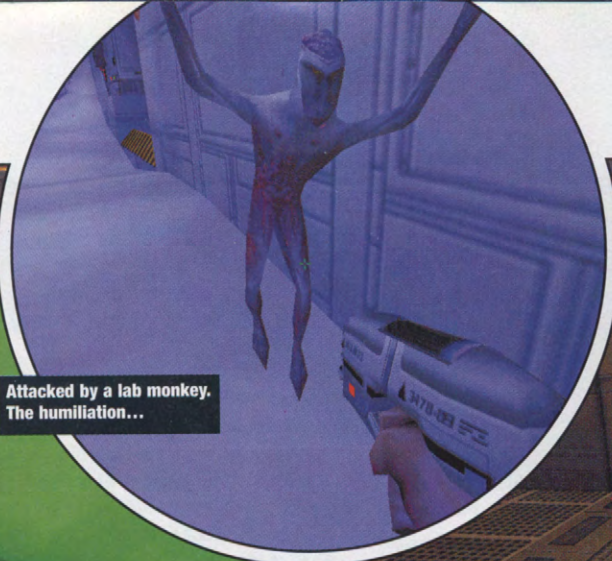
return in *System Shock 2*, although her presence is initially not your main concern. “Not only are you up against the forces of SHODAN, but another enemy has come into the picture – a collective called The Many,” explains Ken.

Like the Borg from *Star Trek*? “No, they are strictly organic. These worm-like creatures use humans as hosts, turning them into hybrid zombies. Over time, they can morph into a number of different states, some of which are truly disgusting.”

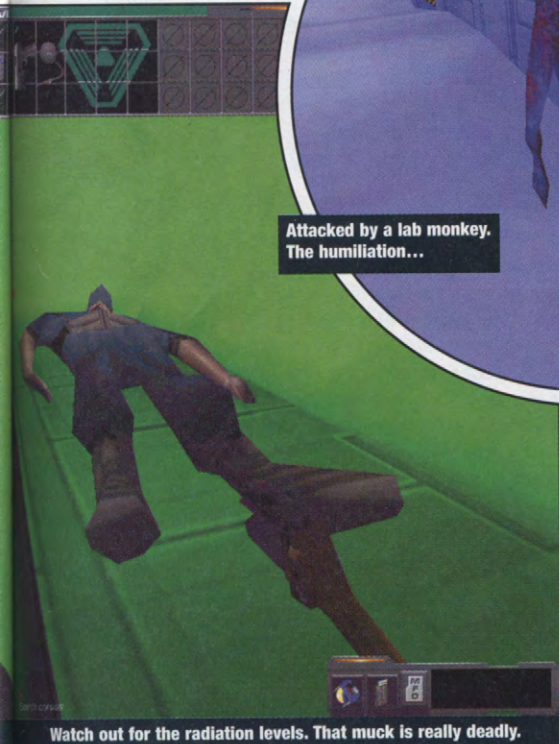
Was Ken going for big scares in *System Shock 2*? “Oh yes.” And gore? “Well, you certainly need a sense of *Grand Guignol* in these things, but we’re going at it in a fairly restricted manner. We’re going more for a feeling of suspense and terror than actual gross-out gore horror.”

LEVEL OF DETAIL

There are currently 25 people working on *System Shock 2*, which is not surprising when you have a look ‘under the bonnet’. The game is



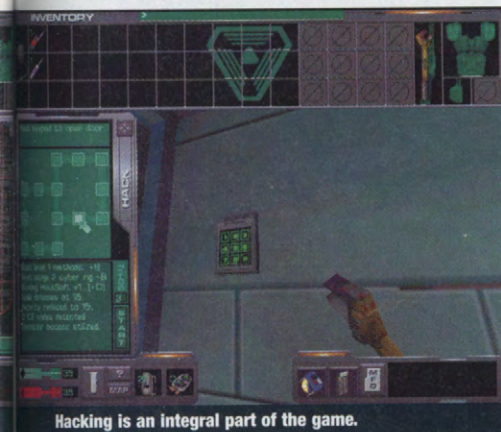
Attacked by a lab monkey. The humiliation...



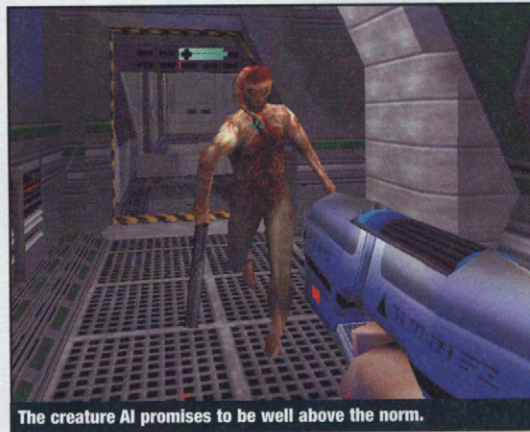
Watch out for the radiation levels. That muck is really deadly.



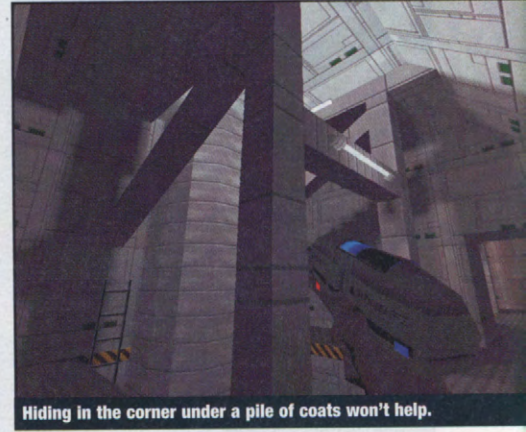
Go on, plug yourself in and really show those bloody aliens what psionics are all about.



Hacking is an integral part of the game.



The creature AI promises to be well above the norm.



Hiding in the corner under a pile of coats won't help.

already packed with detail – hacking (of course), weapons modification, maintenance, research, reams of statistics... tons of stuff – even though there's still more to go in.

As in any good RPG, *System Shock 2* will inundate you with useful items and objects, and half the fun will be working out what goes where and what can be done to what to increase your chances of survival. As any RPG fan knows, the developers will have to spend time making sure the interface is unobtrusive for this kind of approach to work properly and – happily – we can report that *System Shock 2* already feels more than well catered for in this particular area. Rather than have you leave the action to check your stats or inventory, Ken and his team have gone for the 'head up display' approach with regard to the presentation of information, with pop-up windows overlaying the main view area while you continue to move around freely. This means you can organise your inventory while on the run from particularly scary



THAT'S IRRATIONAL, CAP'N

Irrational Games are working on *System Shock 2* for Looking Glass Studios with Electronic Arts as publisher. Confused yet?

Irrational Games were founded in May 1997 by three former Looking Glass employees – Ken Levine, Rob Fermier and Jon Chey – who between them had worked on the original *System Shock*, *Thief* and a number of other in-house projects. For their first outing, Irrational were approached by Looking Glass with a view to producing a game using their proprietary 3D engine.

"The reason I came back to Looking Glass," says Ken Levine, lead designer on *System Shock 2*, "was because I loved *System Shock* so much. Looking Glass came to us and said: 'How would you like to work on a game for us using the *Thief* engine?' And the first thing we said was: 'Why not try and do *System Shock 2*!'"

Looking Glass agreed and the project was green-lighted. Irrational then took up residence in a corner of Looking Glass' Cambridge, Massachusetts, office – effectively returning to their previous place of employment to work on their first game. Says Ken: "The idea to do a sequel had been around for such a long time that it seemed crazy not to do it now."

Q&A

KEN LEVINE



The *System Shock 2* project leader does his stint in the PC ZONE question booth

PCZ What's the first game you ever played?

KEN *Star Trek* on the TRS 80.

PCZ What's your favourite game ever?

KEN *UFO: Enemy Unknown*. I absolutely adore it.

PCZ What's the last game you paid good money for?

KEN *Civilization: Call To Power*.

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

KEN I was this dorky kid at school, and there was this other dorky kid, and we were kind of put up by all the cool kids to have a fight. I punched him once in the face, then I felt really bad about it...

PCZ And you became best of friends?

KEN That was it, yeah.

PCZ It happens to the best of us.



Four years before the game begins, you find yourself wandering the streets of some god-forsaken one-horse town.

THE PSIONIC MAN

Ken Levine talks about *System Shock 2*'s revolutionary 'psionic' system

"Initial fan feedback expressed worries that we were just throwing a magic system into the game, which would not feel like *System Shock*. We tried very hard to stay true to the original *System Shock*, which was very hard-core, so our psionics system reflects that.

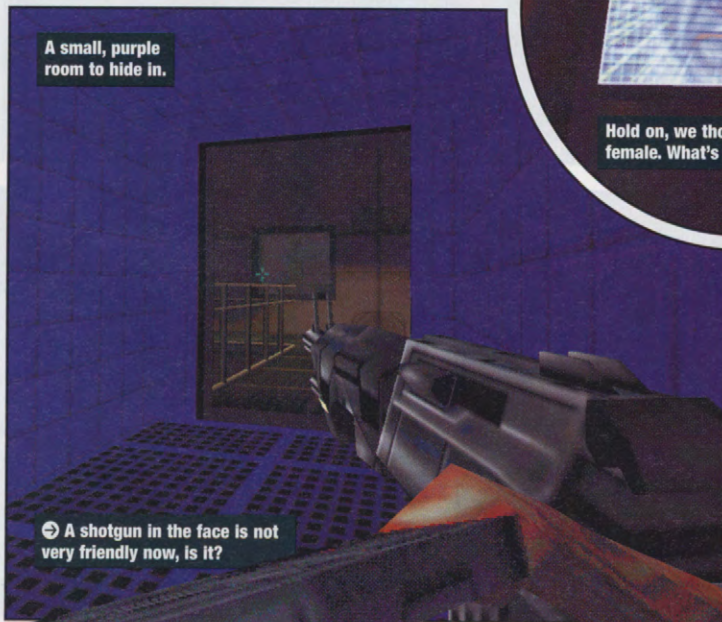
Most of the powers are utilitarian, dark and hard-core. We did some research and dug up details of real experiments with paranormal powers – with para-psychiatry and telekinesis – instead of making 'wall of fire' or 'summon dragon'."



You can bet this guy uses psionics...

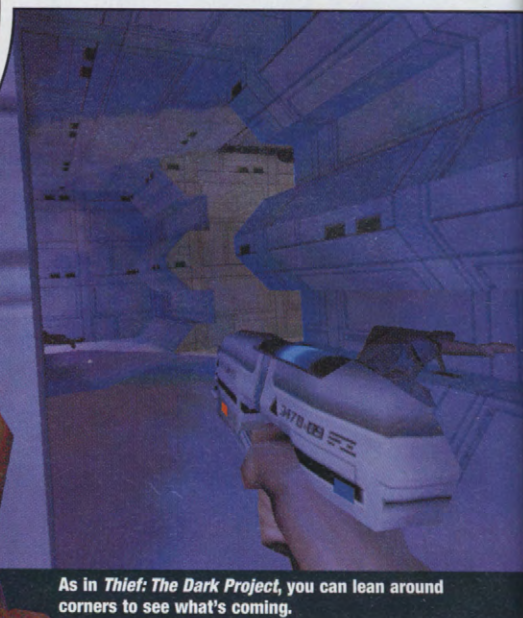


Hold on, we thought SHODAN was female. What's going on here, then?



A small, purple room to hide in.

A shotgun in the face is not very friendly now, is it?



As in *Thief: The Dark Project*, you can lean around corners to see what's coming.

“What we want to do with *System Shock 2* is expand and adapt the single-player experience to a multiplayer environment”

KEN LEVINE, LEAD DESIGNER ON *SYSTEM SHOCK 2*

monsters, which is very handy. Delving into these menus reveals a wealth of information – such as stats, tech skills, combat skills, psionic abilities, maps, research updates, logs, notes and emails – so you may be forced occasionally to find a quiet corner and pore over them.

THE NATURE OF ROLE-PLAYING

This detail also extends into the game's weapons system. Looking Glass claim that *System Shock 2* will have “the most detailed weapons simulation in any first-person game”. We asked Ken Levine how much more sophisticated these weapons systems could get.

“We have 14 different weapons. Each of them has two different

settings – except for the wrench, which is simply used to hit people over the head – and between two and five different types of ammunition, all of which are effective against different targets. Armour piercing is more effective against robots, EMP rounds are only effective against robots and not at all effective against organic targets.”

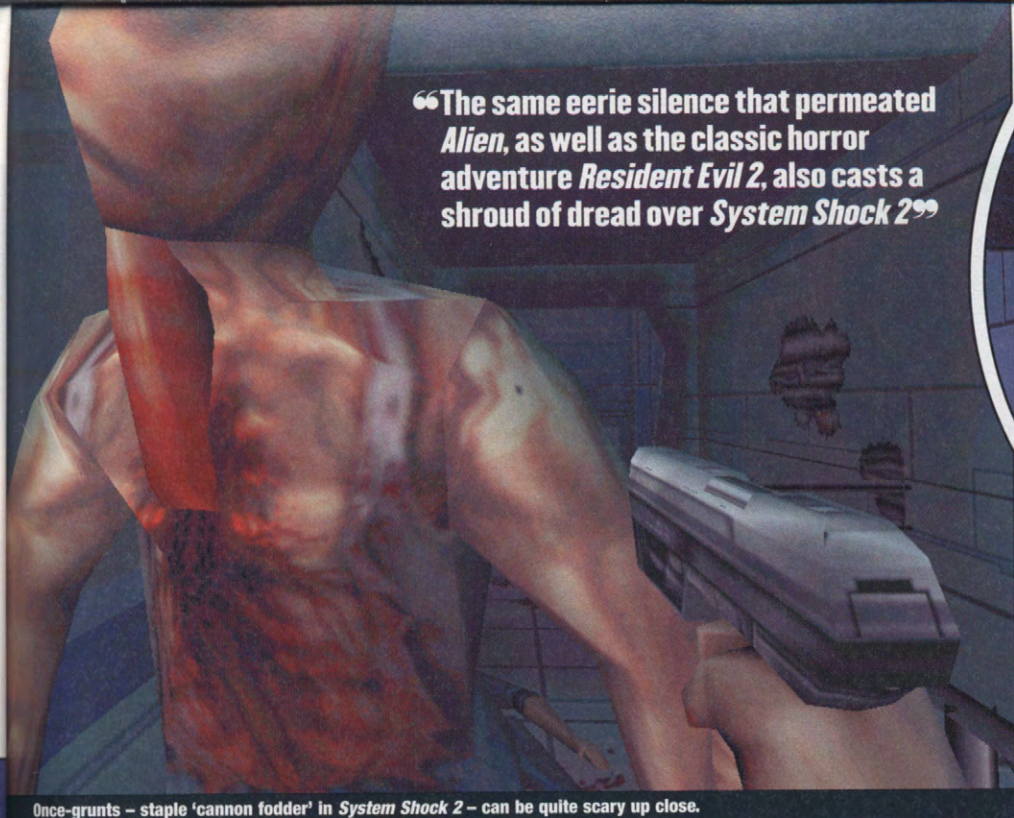
Playing the beta version of *System Shock 2* confirms this – you really have to think about what you're aiming at before opening up. And it does seem to add a whopping great dollop of tension to the atmosphere.

“Also,” continues Levine, “each weapon has a modify path and you can upgrade them over time. For instance, you can modify the assault

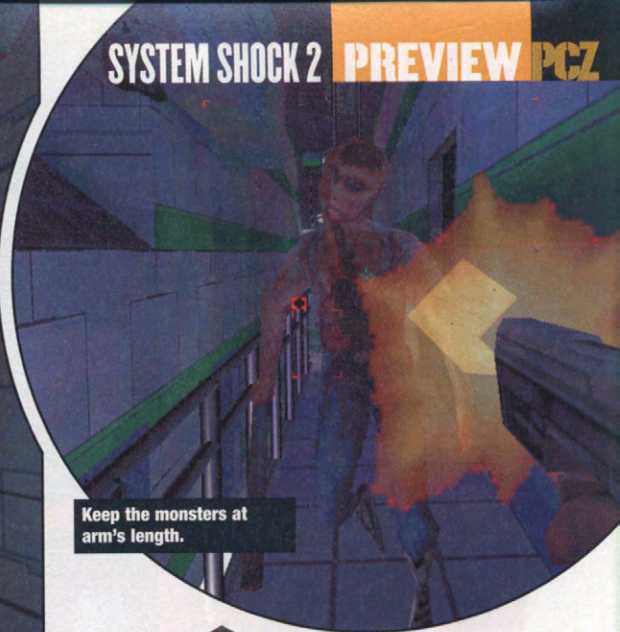
rifle to hold more rounds of ammunition, or fire at a faster rate, or do more damage. It's a technical skill you acquire in the game.” This procedure is not without its risks, though. “If you fail critically, you'll break that weapon,” says Ken matter-of-factly.

Balancing technical skills will play a significant part in the proceedings, and the process of upgrading and refining them is not only fairly logical, it also contributes greatly to the game's role-playing sensibilities. Being a living cybernetic human, you have a hole in the side of your head that you can plug stuff into. And plug stuff into it you do – particularly hardware upgrades that enable you to hack or research things. Once this hardware is in place, your skills can be developed by trading 'cyber upgrade units' (*That's experience points to you and me – Ed*) in return for a boost. So as you get better at the game, you get better at performing particular tasks, and the

“The same eerie silence that permeated *Alien*, as well as the classic horror adventure *Resident Evil 2*, also casts a shroud of dread over *System Shock 2*”



Once-grunts – staple ‘cannon fodder’ in *System Shock 2* – can be quite scary up close.

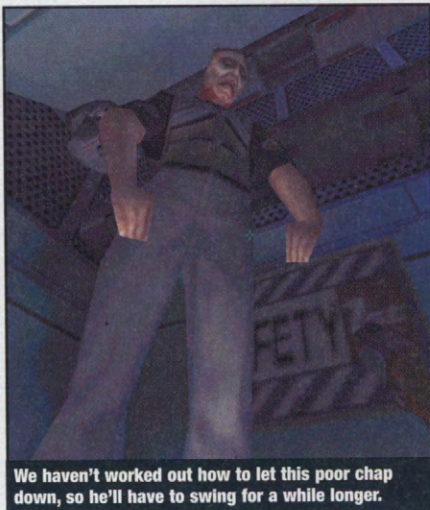


Keep the monsters at arm's length.

⊕ A twisted cyberchick.
⊖ At the concept stage.



Research throws up all kinds of interesting information and is well worth investing time in.



We haven't worked out how to let this poor chap down, so he'll have to swing for a while longer.

make-up of your character is formed as a result. But these cyber upgrade units will be quite hard to come by and some soul-searching may be needed before ‘spending’ them. Such is the nature of the role-playing game.

DON'T DO DEATHMATCH

One original feature of *System Shock 2*, unheard of in a role-playing game until now, will be in the use of its multiplayer facilities. Rather than tack on a few deathmatch levels at the end of development, the designers decided a multiplayer co-op version of the single-player game would be more interesting. So that's what they set to work on.

“There are a lot of games that do deathmatch extremely well,” reasons Ken, “and if you wanna play deathmatch then those are the right games to play. What we want to do with *System Shock 2* is expand and adapt the single-player experience to

a multiplayer environment. We're supporting four-person multiplayer team play, which takes you through a modified version of the single-player storyline. This way you can really develop a party of differently styled characters and let them support each other's skills.”

It's an idea that has been bandied around by a number of developers recently – playing your way through a single-player game with a party of human cohorts – and Looking Glass could be the first to get it right. How the logistics of putting together a multiplayer experience of this kind are handled, we don't know. “The game will be rebalanced to incorporate more people, obviously,” says Ken. Hopefully they'll get it right.

GENERAL VIBE

From what we've seen so far, Ken Levine and his team seem to be getting pretty much everything else

right. There was something about the original *System Shock* – the fact that although it was quite obviously all a work of fantasy, you were drawn into this pseudo-realistic high-tech world of gadgets and computers, and bought the lot of it. It felt intense and realistic, even though the game dealt with the kind of subject matter *2000AD* would have been proud of.

“The general vibe of the game is one of realism,” Ken explains. “This is a very rough situation you're in. Did you see the movie *Alien*?”

The characters in that weren't heroes, they were victims. That's the kind of feeling we've tried to capture in *System Shock 2*.”

The same eerie silence that permeated *Alien*, as well as the classic horror adventure *Resident Evil 2*, also casts a shroud of dread over *System Shock 2*, and this mixture of realism and atmosphere should certainly conspire to give us all heart attacks. Luckily, as with *Thief: The Dark Project*, you can lean around corners

to see what's out there, and hear monsters scratching away in the distance before they get to you. However, neither of those abilities are any guarantee that you'll make it out of *System Shock 2* alive. [E]

GLASGOW TAN

The most amazing thing about *System Shock 2* is that it's almost finished

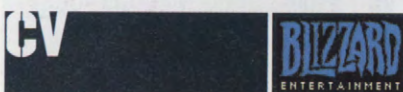
As we mentioned before, a playable beta version of *System Shock 2* has been knocking around the office for some time, and our first-hand experience of it leads us to believe that this game could well end up being one of the best PC role-playing games ever released. And it's due out in August! The downside is that if you like the look of the game, you're not going to see much sun this summer. Looks like ‘Glasgow tans’ all round.

Speak of the Devil, it's...

DIABLO II



Diablo II: not full 3D, but it does have accelerator support for coloured lighting and other real-time effects.



BLIZZARD

A potted history of the Irvine, California-based software company

- 1994 *WarCraft: Orcs And Humans* (PCZ #22, 75%). Blizzard's first game.
- 1995 *WarCraft II: Tides Of Darkness* (PCZ #36, 82%). Classic real-time strategy.
- 1996 *WarCraft II: Beyond The Dark Portal*. Add-on for the best-selling *WarCraft II*.
- 1997 *Diablo* (PCZ #48, 88%). Role-playing action game debuts at number one.
- 1998 *StarCraft* (PCZ #64, 88%). Real-time strategy, sci-fi style.
- 1998 *StarCraft: Brood Wars* (PCZ #76, 89%). Excellent add-on for *StarCraft*.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Blizzard
PUBLISHER Sierra/Havas Interactive
WEBSITE www.blizzard.com
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's the sequel to the critically acclaimed *Diablo*
- ★ Five all-new character classes
- ★ Four fully populated towns
- ★ Expanded game world

Paul Mallinson takes a first-hand look at the new *Diablo* sequel

The upsurge in popularity of the role-playing game (RPG) seems to have prompted something of a renaissance within the development community. Almost every major software house is either working on one or considering dipping its toe into the once-murky-but-now-quite-commercial RPG market. Chances are we'll be spoilt for choice come next Christmas, with (deep breath) *System Shock 2* (see preview on page 40), *Deus Ex*, *Anachronox*, *Amen: The Awakening*, *Planescape Torment*, *Soulbringer*, *Ultima Ascension* and *Wheel Of Time* on their way before the end of the year. On top of that, one of the biggest, best-established names in RPG history is also about to make its reappearance courtesy of legendary US outfit Blizzard, and could end up nonchalantly sweeping the competition to one side in the process.

Until recently, not a lot had been seen or heard of *Diablo II*, Blizzard's follow-up to 1997's best-selling

Diablo (PCZ #48, 88%). But recent press demonstrations have shown that development of this much-anticipated hack-and-slash 'em up is well under way, and that existing *Diablo* fans should be more than happy with the way the game is currently shaping up.

Although Blizzard are utilising 3Dfx (Glide) support in *Diablo II*, they've chosen not to go for the 'spinnny rotatey' full 3D (or first-person) approach adopted by many of its competitors, and are sticking to their guns with an enhanced version of their existing 2D isometric graphics engine instead. "We didn't want to alienate our existing fan base," explained Blizzard head honcho Bill Roper when asked why this was the case.

Diablo critics will no doubt cite this as a good enough reason to give the follow-up a wide berth but, as most sane and rational people will concur, the 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' approach is often better in the crazy world of games development.

LAURELS

That said, Blizzard have not been content to rest on their laurels as far as the rest of the game is concerned, and are overhauling virtually every other aspect of the



PLAY FAIR – STOP THIS CHEATING MADNESS!

As you'll know if you played it, multiplayer *Diablo* was sadly plagued by cheats

The online gaming community was beside itself with joy when the original *Diablo* was launched in '97. Not only did it have superb multiplayer facilities built in, but Blizzard also went so far as to provide their own multiplayer gaming service, Battle.net, for free. Unsurprisingly, *Diablo* multiplayer went on to become one of the biggest online games of all time.

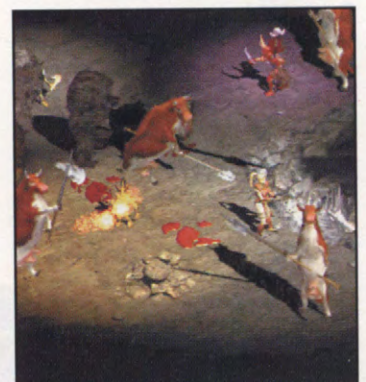
Unfortunately though, after only a short while the service was swamped with people who'd 'hacked' (ie souped-up) their characters using unauthorised game editors (or 'trainers', as they are sometimes called), in effect spoiling the experience for those who wanted to play *Diablo* fairly. *Diablo* 'clans' are now split into two main camps: one for gamers who don't mind cheating, and the other for those who take great exception to it.

"We realise that cheating was a serious problem when playing *Diablo* on Battle.net," said Blizzard recently, "and eliminating cheating in *Diablo II* is one of our highest priorities."

In order to combat the problem, Blizzard are incorporating a number of undisclosed countermeasures into the *Diablo II* software, none of which they are prepared to tell us about at this moment in time. And considering the security problems they had with *Diablo I*, who can blame them?

DON'T HAVE A COW, MAN

This recent *Diablo II* screenshot, released through Blizzard's website, was in fact nothing more than an elaborate April Fool. Plenty of people fell for it though. Guffaw indeed.



The background graphics are intricately detailed, as you can see from this screenshot.

Burn, baby, burn!

The barbarian likes to spill some blood – on the walls, floor, ceiling...

U&A BILL ROPER



We ask Bill Roper, head honcho at Blizzard, if he's ever been in a fight, among other things

PCZ What's the first game you ever played?

BILL The first game I have a memory of playing was cribbage, which my mother taught to me so well that I learnt how to add up at a really early age.

The first video game I ever played was *Pong*. I can still remember unwrapping the box at Christmas, plugging in the converter and being amazed as that white blip went back and forth across my television screen. I was hooked!

PCZ What's your favourite game in the whole wide world?

BILL I've always loved cards, and must admit to really loving poker. Although it's simple to learn, it's extremely difficult to master. Not

only are there many variations past the standard five-card draw to explore, but also, in that it's a multiplayer game by definition, the strategies involved in reading other players and covering when you're bluffing makes it a supreme challenge.

PCZ What's the last game you paid hard cash for?

BILL I bought copies of the board games *History Of The World* and *Settlers Of Catan* just last week. The last computer game I paid for, however, was *Final Fantasy VII*.

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

BILL The last time I was in a fist fight was in high school. I was 16 years old and, as I recall, it was over the attentions of a rather cute girl. Although we both ended up with bloody noses and some bruises, neither of us ended up with her. I think the ending to that story may say quite a bit about getting into fights.

Diablo franchise in an effort to give the role-playing fraternity exactly what it wants.

For starters, *Diablo II* will be heaps bigger than its predecessor. You may recall that in *Diablo* you were rather frustratingly confined to the relatively tiny town of Tristram, but in this sequel there are four completely unique, fully populated towns to explore, each with its own set of non-player characters, monsters, quests and sub-quests. And because of the size of the adventure, *Diablo II*'s storyline is to be divided up into four separate 'acts', each one coming on its own CD.

FIENDS

Diablo fiends can choose from one of five different characters this time around – amazon, paladin, necromancer, barbarian and sorceress. And not only will each one have its own attributes and abilities which affect how you approach the

game, but also the development of their many and varied skills will revolve around a simplified 'tech tree' – a device often seen in hard-core strategy games (such as *Alpha Centauri*) that restricts access to higher level abilities until certain requirements have been met. For example, reaching level three projectile skill and level five fire spell might unlock access to a powerful fireball spell. And so on. You (hopefully) get the idea.

Unfortunately, because of this new system, you're not able to load the characters you created in *Diablo* into *Diablo II*. Which is a shame, but hardly worth crying over.

EXPECTATIONS

Non-player characters (NPCs) will be in abundance, although the beta code we saw seemed eerily unpopulated. Incidental *Diablo II* residents furnish you with plot leads, sub-quests, unique items (if you're lucky) and,

from time to time, the chance to die an untimely death.

In terms of gameplay, you shouldn't expect anything too different from the original – *Diablo II* will remain relatively action-oriented, and there'll be plenty of hideous monsters to hack to pieces along the way. *Diablo II*'s use of light and sound (both supported by 3D hardware) should also ensure that there are enough pant-filling moments to keep you on the edge of your seat throughout.

As *Diablo II* is still some way off, there's plenty of time for Blizzard to make sure that it lives up to expectations, although from what we've seen so far it looks as though *Diablo* fans won't be disappointed. Whether *Diablo II* has the power to attract a whole new generation of games players is another question entirely – the answer to which only time will tell.

Look out for an update soon. [PCZ]

Do those windows look a bit small, or is it just us?

Now that's train/car entertainment.

DEJA VU

Hasn't the *Carmageddon* theme been seen in a game before?

During all the whooping, screaming and goggle-eyed condemnation of the first two *Carmageddon* games, one fact was largely ignored: it wasn't the first game in which you had to murder innocent pedestrians. In 1976, the year *Death Race 2000* made it into cinemas, a company called Exidy released an arcade game called – wait for it – *Death Race* (aka *Pedestrian*), a monochrome racing game in which you had to squish panicking stickmen for points. After a little bit of public outcry, the following year saw the release of a sequel, *Super Death Race*, in which the human peds were replaced by ghosts and walking skeletons. Which made the game alright.

For more information check out www.emuunlim.com/doteaters/play2sta1.htm.

Once, twice, three times an abomination...

CARMAGEDDON: THE DEATH RACE 2000

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Torus
PUBLISHER SCI
WEBSITE www.sci.co.uk
OUT Winter

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's the third *Carmageddon* game
- SCI are making a big noise about the game's online capabilities
- 'Aggressive' zombie pedestrians

It was bound to happen, and it was bound to happen sooner rather than later. SCI have announced *Carmageddon III*, the 'threequel' to – duh – the original vanilla *Carmageddon I*, the notorious pedestrian-squishing driving game in which human life is treated with absolutely

It's goodbye to the British School of Murdering and hello to the Australian Way of Slaughter, as the third *Carmageddon* game suddenly swerves into view. Munching the gear stick: **Charlie Brooker**

none of the respect it deserves.

Carmageddon III is different from the previous games for several reasons. For one thing, it isn't actually called *Carmageddon III* at all; its official title is *Carmageddon: The Death Race 2000*, and it seems explicitly tied in (as far as the title goes, at any rate) with the movie that inspired the whole damn thing in the first place (see The Film Of The Game panel on opposite page). Furthermore, it's being developed by an entirely different team. The first two *Carmageddon* games came from Stainless Software on the Isle of Wight, *Carmageddon: TDR2000* is

being assembled down under by people with comedy accents and corks dangling from their hats – you know, Australians. The company's

“Expect overwhelming hordes of slaving zombies relentlessly attacking your car and trying to chew off your limbs and suck out your guts”

called Torus, and they've previously been responsible for a sort of sheep-shearing game. Apparently.

As you can see from the pretty pictures smeared across this attractive spread, the game looks better than ever before, and in motion it should

look better still; it's laden with all the high-falutin' lens-flaring, shadow-casting, coloured lighting hoo-hah you could wish for, and reflective

metallic paint on some of the cars. What's more, SCI claim the thing will cruise along at twice the frame rate of *Carmageddon II* using the same hardware. We're also promised a new 'revolutionary physics engine', although it's hard to see how they're

THE FILM OF THE GAME

As any faintly disturbed cult movie aficionado will tell you, the *Carmageddon* games were originally inspired by Paul Bartel's 1975 splatterfest, *Death Race 2000*

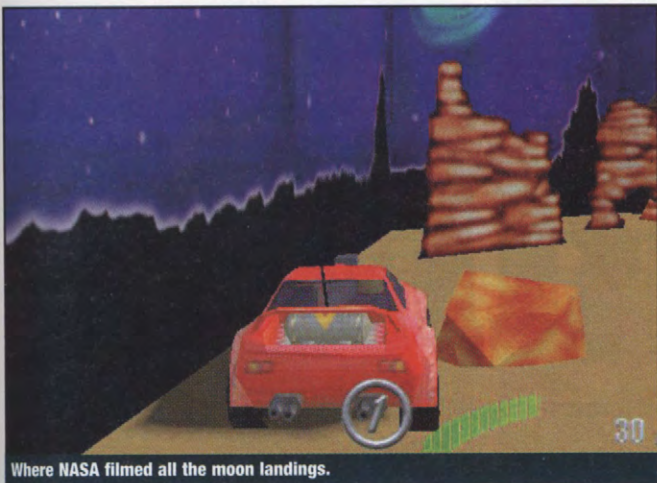
Until now the association has been implicit rather than incorporated into the game's title. Thing is, there's a very good chance you've never seen it, since although *Death Race 2000* has been available to buy on video for about 2p for the last few years, to our knowledge it's never been broadcast on television (except maybe, juuust maybe, in the *Moviedrome* slot on BBC2). Why? Because it's sick and wrong, that's why.

Produced by B-movie godfather Roger Corman, starring a young Sly Stallone and a not-so-young David Carradine, the film is a black comedy set in a futuristic, fascist America (well it seemed futuristic in 1975, at any rate) in which the most popular sporting event is the Trans-Continental Road Race, a coast-to-coast, no-holds-barred cannonball run. The competitors – Nero The Hero, Machine Gun Joe et al – wouldn't seem out of place in an episode of *Wacky Races*, were it not for the fact that their vehicles are liberally studded with things to kill people with: blades, horns,

bonnet-mounted machine-guns... you name it, it's in there somewhere.

Because, of course, the aim of the race is to score points by killing pedestrians. And it's here the film even manages to out-sick *Carmageddon*. "Women are still worth 10 points more than men in all age brackets," explains a poker-faced TV commentator, "but teenagers now rack up 40 points, and children under the age of 12 now rate a big 70 points. The big score: anyone, any sex, over 75 years old, has been upped to 100 points."

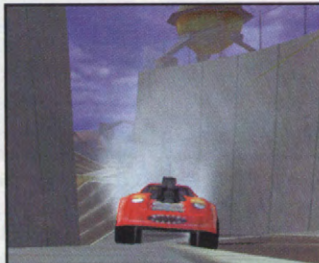
Cue plenty of gruesome slapstick and comedy carnage. Of course, the film wimps out a bit. It has to. No kids get run over (although one does come close), and there's a happy ending too. Still, it's hard to imagine anyone green-lighting a film of this nature in this day and age. If you're a fan of *Carmageddon* (like Dave in our Obsessed feature on page 62), the film *Death Race 2000* should be right up your street. But don't say we didn't warn you.



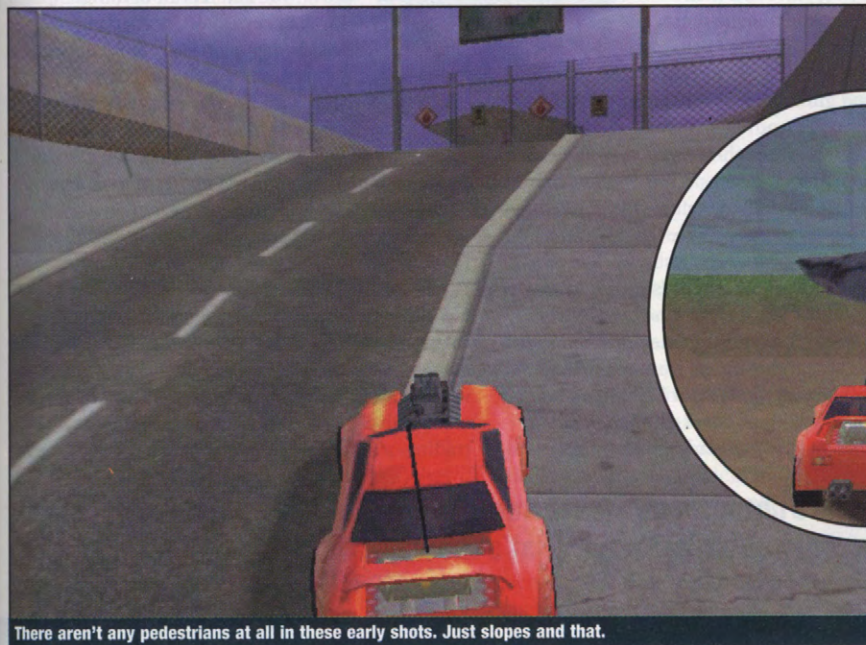
Where NASA filmed all the moon landings.



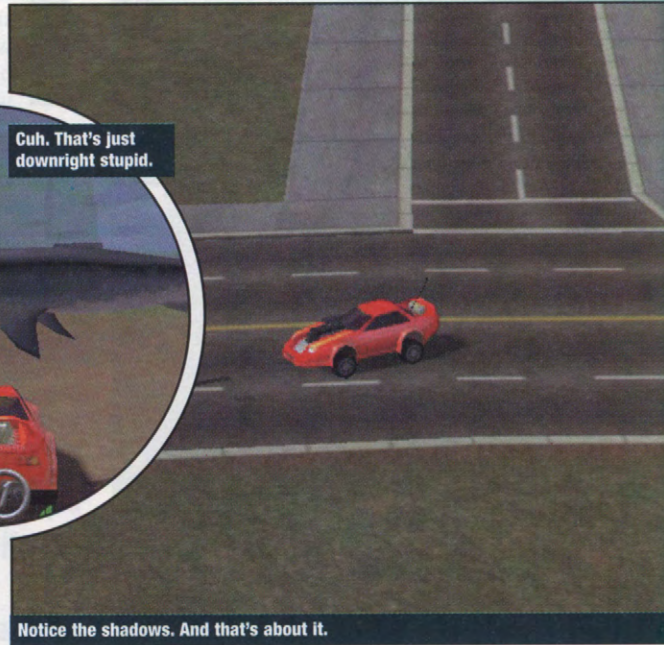
The tracks include lots of interactive scenery – such as this working bridge.



Look at that. A car with teeth. It's a world gone mad, I tell you.



There aren't any pedestrians at all in these early shots. Just slopes and that.



Cuh. That's just downright stupid.

Notice the shadows. And that's about it.

going to improve on Stainless' mightily impressive original.

ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS

Gorehounds might be a tad alarmed that so far there's no sign of human pedestrians; instead there's much talk of censor-pleasing zombies. Intelligent zombies, mind. Whereas in *Carma I and II* the hapless bystanders were little more than brainless bumper fodder who spent their time milling aimlessly around and occasionally running away, this time around we're promised 'proper' behaviour – crossing the road and moving in packs, in other words.

They'll also be more aggressive – and anyone who's ever watched a George Romero zombie movie knows what that means: overwhelming hordes of slaving zombies relentlessly attacking your car and trying to chew off your limbs and suck out your guts. The cheeky monkeys.

Other, less violent, enhancements include the ability to design your own car at the start of the race, as well as the opportunity to build a pedestrian resembling your least favourite person in the world (bonus points to be awarded to whoever sends ZONE the first Vanessa Feltz – assuming the engine can handle the immense

polygon count required to replicate her great big shuddering flanks).

What else? Oooh, 45 races across 15 different settings (and more confined, race track-oriented stages at that), a proper in-car view (with a mirror and a windscreen wiper and everything), animated trackside objects (like cranes and, er, larger cranes), booby traps, and more Internet play options than you can shake a big computer stick at.

The only worry is that those maniacs

➔ A roller skate from the year 2525.

from the Isle of Wight aren't involved anymore. Presumably they're hard at work on something even sicker (*I shudder to think – Ed*). Still, with any luck the Aussie team can look at the game with a fresh critical eye and make changes in all the right places. And if there are any changes you want, you can tell them – just visit <http://cfc.allgames.com> and take part in the survey.

The split second we get a full review copy, we'll play it to death and let you know what it's like. [PCZ]



Shiver me timbers, it's...

CUTTHROATS

Armed with nought but a tattered map and a catapult, *Mark Hill* unearths buried treasure



There she blows!



The customary burning of the town church.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Hothouse
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
WEBSITE www.eidos.com
OUT July

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's a realistic interpretation of pirate life
- ★ It's a real-time strategy game with depth
- ★ Varied gameplay
- ★ Completely open-ended

It's common knowledge that all pirates have an annoying parrot on their shoulder and at least one wooden leg. We know that, at pirate school, they learn to speak in loud guffaws peppered with unintelligible 'oohs' and 'aarrhs', how to carry large knives clenched between their teeth, and the best way to make people walk the plank. At least, that's the misguided image that adventure films and other forms of light entertainment have fed us. And it's one Hothouse director Rob Davies is quick to dispel.

"Hollywood's notion of pirates is weird. In real life, they were more like a well-honed, well-drilled army. That's the way we portray them in *Cutthroats*. We researched what these guys were really like, moving away from all those Peter Pan ideas like walking the plank. Pirates never did that, it's just something that Hollywood made up."

"Hollywood's notion of pirates is weird. In real life, they were more like a well-honed, well-drilled army. That's the way we portray them"

ROB DAVIES, DIRECTOR, HOTHOUSE

MERCILESS PLUNDERING

Cutthroats is set in the 17th century Caribbean, the natural habitat of these often-misrepresented hard men of the sea. It's the age of the Spanish doubloon, newly-founded colonies, merciless plundering of the natives' resources and power struggles.

As Rob says: "It's such a good time to set a game in because there are all these different nations at war - the English, the French, the Dutch and the Spanish. The pirates were professional mercenaries stuck in the middle, switching allegiances to suit their needs. So you might be fighting on behalf of the English at one point, then switch to supporting the Dutch. It's a ready-made world that's really good fun to play around with."

From what we've seen so far, *Cutthroats* couldn't be more varied - further dissolving the popular image of pirates as one-dimensional caricatures. Besides sea battles, boarding other ships, pillaging

towns and other activities normally associated with buccaneers, you also get the chance to trade and explore. Whether you want to play as Captain Pugwash or Blackbeard is entirely up to you. "There are a lot of people who like playing very open-ended strategy games, such as *Civilization* or *Elite*, and *Cutthroats* delivers that. And there's a big element of real-time combat in true C&C style, but there's also a lot of thinking involved."



IN THE ELITE VEIN

You start with a small ship, a skeleton crew and a reputation waiting to be carved out. As you move on in the world, you can recruit better men, each with their own skills, buy or capture frigates and galleons and build up your weapons arsenal. But what about your goals? "Well, you have various missions that people give you," explains Rob, "which are the sub-plots. There's no actual win condition - it's more a case of getting a high score. These guys used to capture ships and treasure and then blow it all in a weekend of drinking and whoring. They weren't after long-term gains." Drinking and whoring? Now there's a game waiting to be made...

Cutthroats certainly seems to offer more depth than most RTS games, giving you the opportunity to develop a whole career - very much in the *Elite* vein, as previously mentioned. And since that was essentially a space pirate game, with the choice of trading or just blowing everything up, it seems an

"Is the ceiling getting lower, or am I really pissed?"



CV

HOTHOUSE

Hothouse are a very young company, which is probably why they enjoy 'dressing up' as gangsters and pirates

1998 *Gangsters: Organised Crime* (PCZ #71, 58%). An excellent idea that showed promise but didn't quite work. In our opinion.



Isn't civilisation a wonderful thing?



Navigation depends on wind.



Saving Private Ryan - pirate style.



Villagers will defend themselves as well as they can.

obvious point of reference. According to Rob, "There's never been another game that has really captured the feel of being one guy in a big, big universe, with your own ship and no one telling you where to go. That's the sort of feeling we tried to capture with *Cutthroats*. Freedom of choice is essential to both games."

DONE THEIR HOMEWORK

So which part of the game is more important - the ship battles, the town raids, the trading, or are they all equally essential? "We tried to make it so that you have to do all of them to be successful, there's a balance you have to achieve. The key to success is deciding whose side you're fighting on, and the overall strategy you pursue, rather than the things you do in each individual section," says Rob.

Hothouse have clearly done their homework, but exactly how 'real' is the *Cutthroats* world? "There are about 75 towns in the game, all of which existed in real life. During the game, they'll get founded - and disappear - at the time they did historically. The population and the commodities (such as tobacco, sugar and coffee - plus another ten) are representative of what they were really like at the time as well. As far as we could, we gave all the governors in the towns their real names. I really hope that you can play the game, go off and read a

book about pirates and come back and play the game better - that would be a good test as to whether you've captured the flavour of the world."

And from the evidence we've seen so far, the combination of spice, rum and typhoid seems to have been captured very well indeed. You can almost taste the atmosphere.

THE GOVERNOR

Each town, nationality and governor treats you differently, so the sense of moving about in a real world that reacts to your actions is tangible. "If a governor gives you licence to fight on behalf of the Spanish, for example, you'll go and fight whoever they're at war with and come back to the Spanish port to be treated as a hero," says Rob. "Especially if you take enemy ships back with you. But also, if you do things for a particular governor, he'll tell you when he hears reports like 'There's a heavily laden treasure galleon off the coast of Havana', plus other hints and prods in the right direction."

With so many things going on in single-player, there are currently no plans to include a multiplayer facility: "The real problem is that there are different timescales involved. You could be crossing a map, sat watching your ship for five minutes, but three months will have passed in actual game time. Yet someone else might have a battle in those same five minutes." However, he does hint that a multiplayer element is a possibility for a future add-on.

With many real-time strategy games going 3D, we wondered if Rob was worried that the traditional 'three-quarters' view will be ignored by gamers? Apparently not... "When I actually see a good 3D strategy game I'll worry about it. If a developer is more worried about what game he's going to bolt on to his fantastic 3D engine, he might as well do the whole thing as full-motion video. Going full 3D doesn't necessarily make for good gaming - some of the best gaming experiences I've ever played have been in 2D. If you asked the average gamer what their top ten titles are, you wouldn't find that many 3D games."

We're not about to disagree. The world is crying out for a decent pirate game, and if *Cutthroats* isn't worth its weight in gold, we'll cut our own throats (*What's this 'we' business? - Ed*). **PCZ**



ROB DAVIES

The director of *Hothouse* gets personal about gaming after considerable quaffing of rum

PCZ What's the first game you ever played?

ROB I can tell you the first game I ever finished - it was *Bubble Bobble* on the C64. I remember completing it and thinking: "This is my ultimate gaming achievement."

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

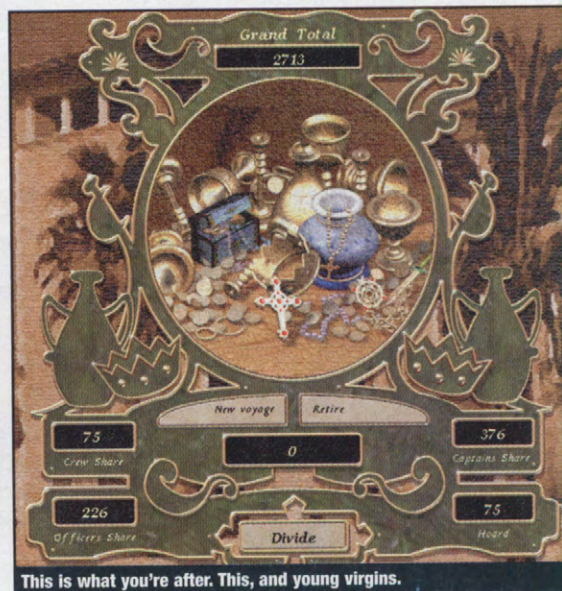
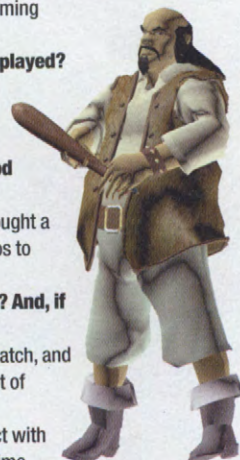
ROB The one I've played the most is *Championship Manager* - in all its guises. Either that or *X-COM*.

PCZ And the last one you paid good money for?

ROB *CM3*. I actually went out and bought a copy because I couldn't wait for Eidos to send me one.

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

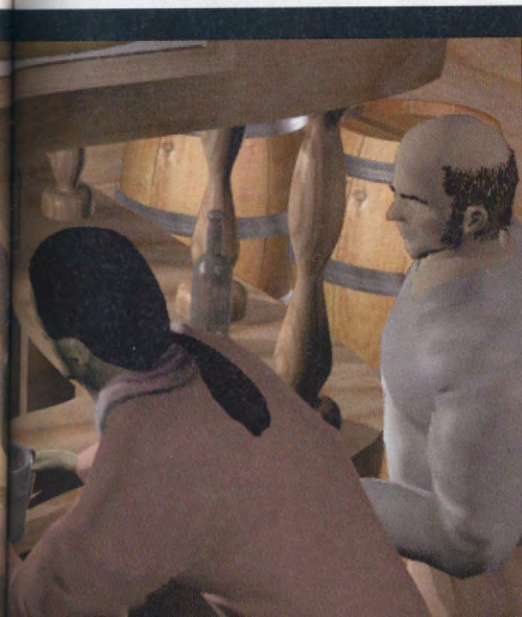
ROB The only time was in a footie match, and that was all handbags and stuff. A lot of shouting and swearing, but I can't remember flesh ever making contact with flesh. It felt quite dangerous at the time.



This is what you're after. This, and young virgins.



A sunny day at the local pond.



ROWZ TAKE COVER



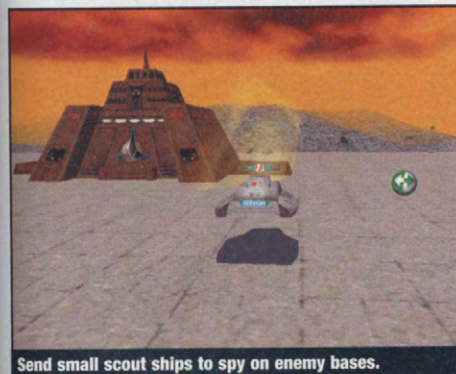
The only official computer game of the Cricket World Cup 1999.



Romulans celebrate the New Year in style.



New Worlds goes the *Dark Reign II* route with full 3D.



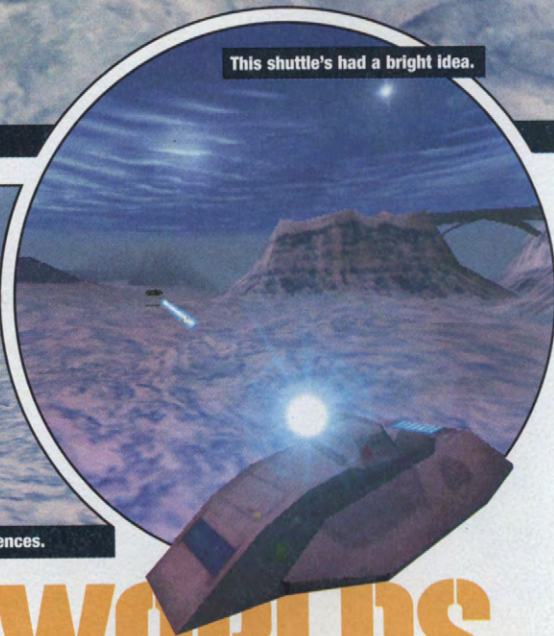
Send small scout ships to spy on enemy bases.



Make sure you don't lose any key characters during battle.



You won't last very long if you don't set up adequate base defences.



This shuttle's had a bright idea.

STAR TREK: NEW WORLDS

Recalibrate your sensor arrays. *Mark Hill* is stranded on an uncharted planet

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Binary Asylum
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.interplay.com
OUT September

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's a *Star Trek* RTS in full 3D
- ★ Choose between Romulans, Klingons and Federation
- ★ Both familiar and never before seen vehicles
- ★ Your crew evolves and grows with every experience

Someone obviously forgot to tell *Star Trek* that this is 'official *Star Wars* year', with no less than three bold Trekkie games lined up for release over the coming months. Yep, *Star Trek* is a massive name in its own right, with a huge following and a lengthy back catalogue of PC games to its credit. Unfortunately none of these games have truly fulfilled their licence potential or managed to capture the atmosphere and feel of the series in the same way that most *Star Wars* games have.

In contrast to the other two *Star Trek* releases this year, *Birth Of The Federation* (see review on page 84) and *Starfleet Command* (due out in July), which are graphically tame by comparison, *New Worlds* is an ambitious real-time strategy game in full 3D. Although the action is mission-based, an elaborate storyline holds the whole thing together.

“There are enough details here to send any die-hard Trekkie into convulsions of ecstasy”

The story concerns a cocked-up Romulan experiment that has caused a spatial anomaly which has let through a host of new worlds from another universe. Over the course of 25 missions you control either the Federation, the Romulans or the Klingons in their race to take advantage of these planets and whatever resources and technologies they may contain. Choose the Klingons and you have to follow a strict code of honour that basically involves as much looting and

pillaging as possible; playing as the Romulans features lots of dirty backstabbing, deception and boxy, grey pyjamas; if, on the other hand, you go for the Federation, expect to employ big, shiny-white-teeth smiles and Westernised diplomacy (like proclaiming yourself Benevolent Universal Peace Supervisor, while at the same time making sure you're

always top dog). Stepping out of character could even result in penalties from your superiors, so don't even think of building an ecologically sound Klingon base expansion.

Because every race is affected differently by the developing storyline, playing each one should be even more of a unique experience. And if you want to see the plot to its full completion, you have to finish the game as all three.

There are enough details here to

FIRST ENCOUNTER

send any die-hard Trekkie into convulsions of ecstasy. Besides the familiar ships (Klingon Bird of Prey and so on), the developers have designed new races and units which have not only been approved by Paramount, but have also been sanctioned for use in future episodes and films. There's also plenty of other stuff to look forward to – the 3D worlds that brim with secrets; interaction with other alien races; the chance to collaborate in both single and multiplayer mode; characters that develop and play a crucial role in your missions; a close-up view of every unit; a slick and easy-to-use interface – so even if the sound of the Captain's Log sends you reaching for a sick bag, you might be pleasantly surprised by *Star Trek: New Worlds*. We're happy to report that we are. [E]

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A Spurs player diving? Surely not.



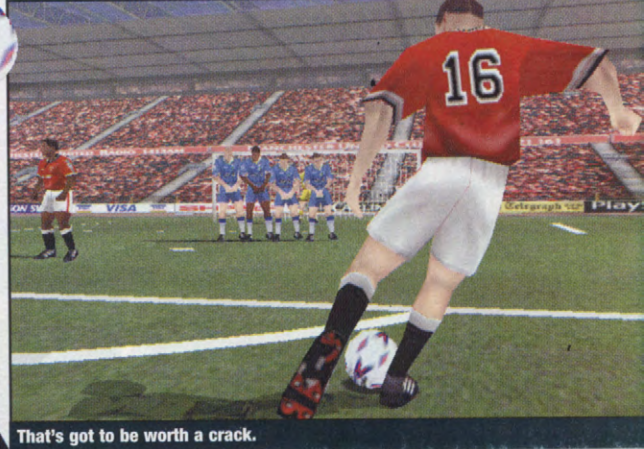
The home of Wimbledon. Not many stars there.



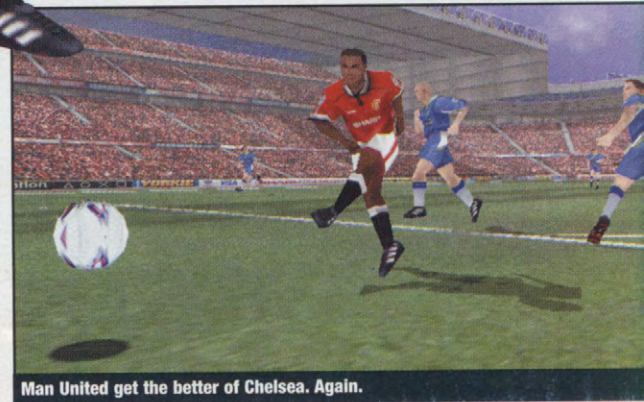
"You've got shit on your shoe."



Oof! Get your swede on that.



That's got to be worth a crack.



Man United get the better of Chelsea. Again.

FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS

FIRST ENCOUNTER

EA have got a Premier League licence and they're gonna use it, writes *Steve Hill*

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER EA Sports
PUBLISHER EA Sports
WEBSITE www.easports.com
OUT August

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Premier League licence
- "Revolutionary new" STARS concept
- Accurately rendered stadiums
- Commentary from Sky Sports team

We're constantly being told that it's the best league in the world, and while Charlton versus Forest on a wet Wednesday evening may not be the stuff of dreams, EA certainly rate the Premier League highly. So much so that they spent a vulgar amount of money securing the licence, the deal initially spawning the irksomely titled

— and distinctly average — *FA Premier League Football Manager '99* (PCZ #70, 72%). Never slow to capitalise on a brand, that will be followed up in the summer by *The FA Premier League STARS*, which promises to be a different bag altogether.

Initial reports suggested some kind of FIFA-style hybrid but with role-playing elements, a description that had us picturing a league comprised of Orc City, Dragons United, Goblin Albion and AFC Beard.

Thankfully this isn't the case; the role-playing simply refers to a pseudo-management feature whereby performance-related stars are awarded to successful teams. In that sense it's a bit like working in McDonald's. However, rather than advertising your status in the cut-and-thrust world of fast food, the stars can be used to continuously

customise your team and players — not by adding go-faster stripes, but by improving skill ratings in key areas such as shooting, tackling, passing, drinking, gambling and so forth. The so-called STARS can also be used to buy players, a method of payment that would hold little water in today's grossly inflated transfer market.

Spookily enough, the subject of a management game where you can control your team manually was

the management options in *STARS* will be, and the game's producer Danny Isaac would only reveal that "the game will combine the high excitement of the Premier League with a brand new gaming concept to break the mould set by more traditional football games".

What is certain is who's providing the commentary in the game, EA's big pocket having secured the services of the Sky Sports team, namely the

"The game will combine the high excitement of the Premier League with a brand new gaming concept"

FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS PRODUCER DANNY ISAAC

brought up in this month's *Supertest* (see page 98), as this hasn't been attempted properly since the peerless *Sensible World Of Soccer 96/97* (PCZ #64, 70%). It's not clear how deep

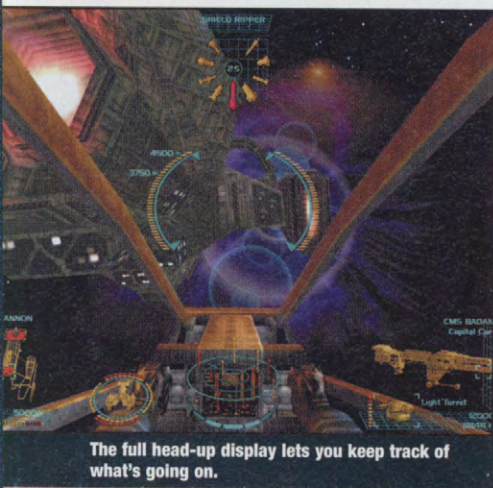
hairy-handed Richard Keys, Martin 'Zombie' Tyler and the effervescent Andy Gray. And if Gray's got anything to do with it, the game should be "absolutely fantastic!" **PCZ**



A bright explosion, of which there are many.



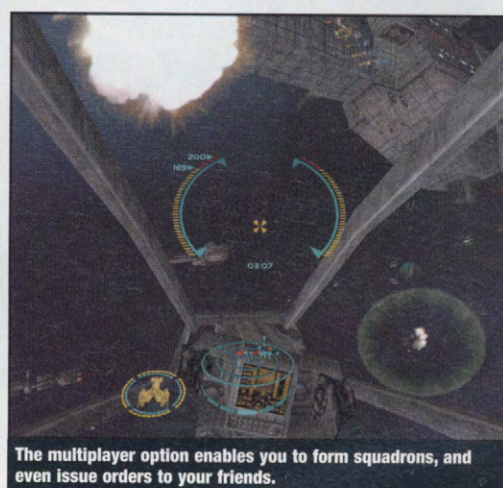
Your bunkroom, where you can listen to CDs or even feed the fish.



The full head-up display lets you keep track of what's going on.



This is your Capital Ship, which must be protected at all costs.



The multiplayer option enables you to form squadrons, and even issue orders to your friends.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

STARLANCER

It's the pseudo-prequel to *Freelancer*. Which is what Steve Hill is

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Digital Anvil Inc (with Warthog)

PUBLISHER Microsoft

WEBSITE www.microsoft.com

OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Done by Chris 'Wing Commander' Roberts' brother
- ★ Immersive storyline
- ★ Dynamic mission structure
- ★ Living universe

One hundred years into the future, and nothing much has changed. Bloody conflict still rages, albeit with bigger weapons and a bigger playing field – namely our very own solar system.

Space combat is the order of the day, and *Starlancer's* heritage is certainly not in question, the game being developed by Digital Anvil. The Texas-based company is home to the Roberts brothers, Chris and Erin, who

between them are responsible for a quartet of *Wing Commanders* and a brace of *Privateers*. Lured by the Microsoft dollar, they are now working on a *Lancer* apiece, Erin producing and directing *Starlancer*, while Chris concentrates on *Freelancer* (and faces up to the universal panning given to his recent *Wing Commander* movie).

Starlancer will be the first of the two games to see the light of day, and is a space saga in a similar mould to the *Wing Commander* series. Despite the futuristic setting, some of the protagonists remain familiar, with a Western Alliance loosely based on the Nato countries, and a Middle Eastern coalition comprising the likes of Russia and China.

The game begins following a Pearl Harbour-style attack by the East on the West, which wipes out the Italian and French fleets as well as destroying the Alliance high

command. Depleted, the Alliance retreats to Uranus (something that caused a degree of Beavis-style sniggering in recent press demonstrations) and stages a call to arms.

You play the part of a pilot in the newly formed 45th Volunteer Squadron, effectively a Dad's Army comprising commercial aviators, retired pilots, and young kids straight out of school. Due to the various

different weapons including nova cannons, pulse lasers, collapser guns and jackhammer missiles, whatever they are.

Starlancer will feature 30 missions spread over six chapters, and though they're essentially linear, events in one can have repercussions in another. For instance, failing to destroy a weapons depot in one mission can leave you in a World Of Shit in a later mission.

“You play the part of a pilot in the newly formed 45th Volunteer Squadron, effectively a Dad's Army of commercial aviators, retired pilots, and young kids”

nations involved, 12 tenuously themed ships are available, all loosely based on modern-day designs associated with particular countries. The ships you are allowed to fly depend on rank, and they can be loaded up with more than 20

Twenty-five minutes of full-motion video will intersperse the gameplay. And though it's not a deal clincher, it was put together by the same digital effects team that did the movie *Wing Commander*. What they wouldn't have given for a *Star Wars* licence. [E]

single^{and} multiplayer next generation killer



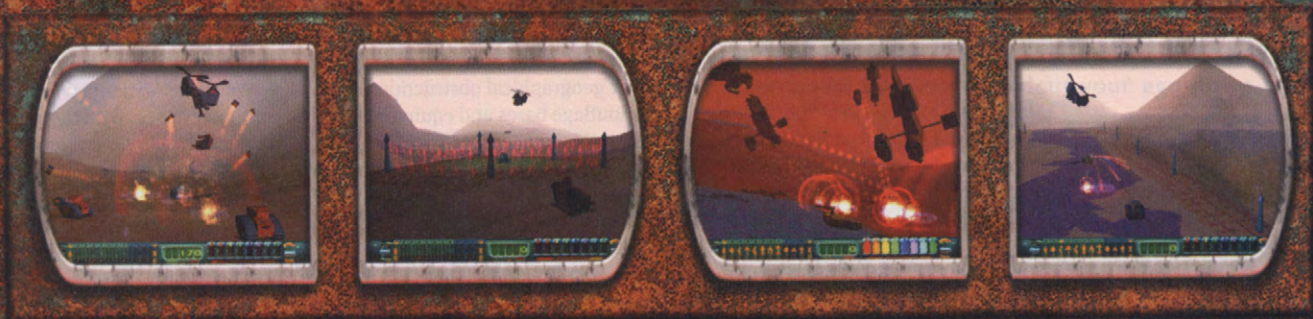
4/5 - ARCADE. **9/10 - GAMESPOT.**
9/10 - GAME ON LINE. **85% ULTIMATE PC.**
85% - PC FORMAT.

"If this doesn't become a multi-player classic, we'll eat our own faces".

DIGITIZER; CHANNEL 4

"It's manic, it's skillful, and it's as addictive as a Quake deathmatch".

PC FORMAT



WHERE THE BIG GAME IS

PC CD-ROM

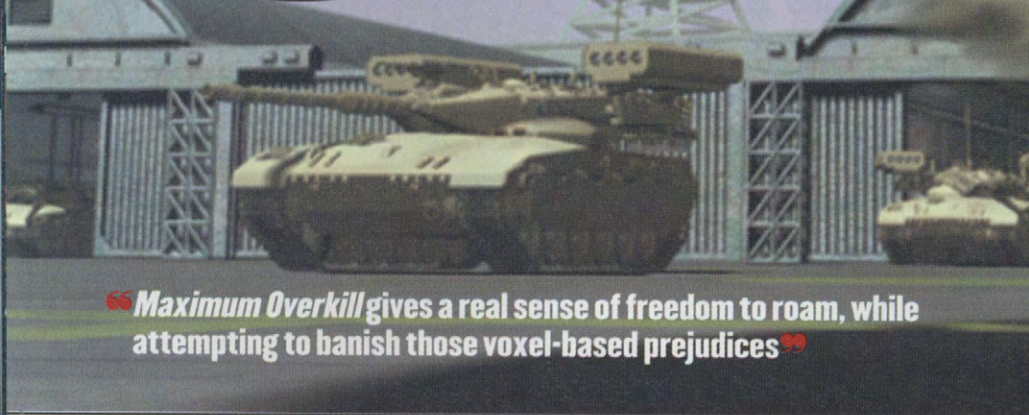
Download the demo from: www.wildmetalcountry.co.uk

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Armed to the teeth and hard as nails.



“Maximum Overkill gives a real sense of freedom to roam, while attempting to banish those voxel-based prejudices”



A birds-eye view of your base concealed in a valley.



“No, it must be a radar malfunction – I can’t see the enemy helicopter.”



Thanks to the voxels, the scenery stretches as far as the eye can see.

MAXIMUM OVERKILL

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Is NovaLogic’s continued use of ‘voxels’ as futile an exercise as war itself? **Craig Vaughan** ponders the question

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER NovaLogic
PUBLISHER NovaLogic
WEBSITE www.NovaLogic.com
OUT July

WHAT’S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ The scenery is absolutely gorgeous
- ★ It seamlessly meshes action and strategy
- ★ The clever multiplayer options will widen its appeal
- ★ Verbally abusing the enemy will add some spice

While NovaLogic have had the good sense to set their latest war game some 50 years into the future (with a European war under way, a modern-day setting could have proven politically incorrect), there might be those who question their unflinching reliance on voxel-based graphics to power their games. Their previous offering, *Delta Force* (PCZ #74, 66%), showed that

the technology does have merits in terms of providing low-spec gamers with lush-looking real-world environments, but it also highlighted the pixelated shambles that resulted when viewing objects close up.

Undeterred, NovaLogic have greatly enhanced their ‘voxel space’ routines and put them back to work here in *Maximum Overkill*. In terms of gameplay, comparisons with *Wargasm* (PCZ #72, 95%) are as inevitable as they are accurate. We’re promised a fast-paced first-person action game, with lashings of battle strategy and command tactics thrown in for good measure. With ten futuristic weapons of war at your disposal (varying from lumbering but powerful tanks to lightweight attack helicopters), there’s a careful line to be drawn between reckless all-out attack and the more reasoned long-term approach of protecting your resources in order to consolidate and then strengthen your position.

Escaping from the indoor claustrophobia which restricts most first-person shooters, *Maximum Overkill* gives a real sense of freedom to roam, while attempting to banish

those voxel-based prejudices. What’s difficult to appreciate from the static screenshots above is the sheer open-ended vastness of the play area, and the beautiful way that voxels depict the war-torn landscapes. Cleverly, it’s not just artillery and infrastructure that are destructible – natural environs deteriorate through the ravages of war too, because you find yourself blasting away hillsides and other geographical obstructions that camouflage bases and equipment. There should be plenty to occupy the single player across the 40 land and air-based missions.

NovaLogic are also pushing the multiplayer side of things. Via Novaworld, their own large-scale online gaming service, up to 32 players can fight private little wars of their own, either solo against all the other factions, or allied with other gamers for a more evenly balanced fracas. The multiplayer modes will include traditional ‘last man standing’ deathmatches, plus the more cerebral challenge of ‘capture the flag’ and ‘king of the hill’ scenarios

where acceptable losses have to be weighed against strategic gains.

The game also offers the intriguing prospect of ‘generals’ being able to verbally abuse each other online and in real time (providing you’ve got the necessary microphone), which means war heroes can literally add insult to in-game injury by shouting obscenities as they slaughter the opposition.

Work on *Maximum Overkill* continues apace, with the game currently heading for a July release. This still gives NovaLogic time to wave the white flag and add 3D card support (which is being considered), without which blinkered voxel haters may decide it’s a war that may not be worth fighting. **EW**

☛ One of the weapons of war at your disposal.






Guillemot

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Big
Knight
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OBSESSED
WITH

CARMA

He's spent hundreds of hours driving recklessly and running over innocent pedestrians with a maniacal grin plastered across his face. And he hasn't even got a driving licence...

WORDS Adam Phillips

CASE HISTORY

PHOTOS Simon Clay



#14 THE CARMAGEDDON CONVERT

NAME Crimson Tide, aka David Holt

AGE 18

LOCATION Billericay, Essex

OCCUPATION Student

OBSESSION The all-conquering crash 'em up, *Carmageddon*

CONDITION BEGAN When he bought a kick-ass PC to play the game back in '97.

HISTORY OF CONDITION What began as a harmless violence-fest on his PC has developed into a patch-programming, skin-making, website-creating obsession.

OUTLOOK While A Levels may have cramped his *Carma* style recently, we've already got a fair idea what he'll be doing this summer – and it's the colour of stainless steel with a V12 engine, a rocket launcher and a matching set of his 'n' her scalps hanging from the front bumper...

They're easy targets. *Max Power* readers (formerly known as Boy Racers™) are the subject of daily public ridicule on our highways (and in our car parks). They're a curious tribe, spending every last penny of their earnings on the latest gear for their archaic and clapped-out Nova SRIs. No stereo, big-bore exhaust or shiny alloy is too expensive for these fellas. The only trouble is that the cars normally have 200k plus on the clock and fall to pieces after

without ending up with a long stay in prison or having to spend three grand for that 'scorchin' Vauxhall Turd on alloys.

The man to convert them is probably David Holt. If there's one fella who knows about drivin', speedin' and maimin', it's Dave. He may only be 18, studying for his A Levels and yet to own a driving licence, but he talks like a car nut –

“Carmageddon places you in a dark world where there are no limits. No other game can boast that”

DAVID HOLT

one 'doughnut' in the local Sainsburys carpark. Maybe somebody should tell them about *Carmageddon* – they could indulge themselves to the point of oblivion with some of the most kick-ass motors out there and get to run over the police at the same time

a *Carmageddon* car nut, which is a damn sight more interesting than discussing the finer points of subwoofers on the back shelf of a urine-coloured Mini Metro Turbo with fat-as-Feltz side skirts.

Considering that Dave has spent hundreds of hours scraping punters

off sidewalks and into his pixellated motor's air scoop over the last couple of years, why has his grisly lust for 'car-nage' blossomed into such a long-term affair?

"*Carmageddon* places you in a dark world where there are no limits," he explains. "No other game can boast that – it's unique. The peds scattering as you scream past at 200mph in a rusty wreck makes you feel so powerful. You can jump off buildings, land on people and just drive away. It's laughably sick."

So does Dave hold truck with the moral majority that the game goes too far? That we should all be forced to watch *The Young Ones* for

CARMAGEDDON



a more conservative taste of 'anarchy'? Apparently not. "With real driving, everyone jokes that grannies are worth five points if you knock them down. So what if they are worth 200 credits and 20 seconds instead? It's the same concept and it's still funny."

Yeah, but you get to see it all in its gory detail - the ripping flesh,

the sound of screaming...

"When I mentioned *Carmageddon* to someone at school, he told me he'd been



Carmageddon II: Carpalypse Now

Skins / Mods

Pedestrian Skins

Loadscreens

New Cars

Tracks

Files, Hacks & Patches

So this is what you call revising for your A levels, is it?

Blue Lightning

EAGLE 3

BUICK RIVIERA

ALFA 52

BMW Z3

CADILLAC

VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE

PLYMOUTH CUDA

THIRD REICH RACE SPECIAL

Dave's obsession has inspired him to create a number of new skins to fuel his pedestrian-crunching fantasies. Here are a few examples he prepared earlier.

CRASH 'N' BURN, BABE

A visit to Dave's *Carmageddon*-devoted website confirms that he's one sick bunny...

For further evidence of Dave's 'mad-for-it' attitude about all things *Carmageddon*, his website, *Crash 'N' Burn* (www.crimson.force9.co.uk), is enough to have him certified. Boasting news, stacks of skins, new tracks, cars and more, die-hard fans of both games who feel the urge for something new will find all they need here.

Dave spends most of his time creating skins for various pre-existing cars (as shown) but is intending to leap into 3D modelling once those pesky A levels are out of the way. He has also drummed up several patches, include the *Splat Patch*. According to Dave the

original version didn't work, so he remade it to enable you to combine the *Splat Pack* data disc with the original *Carmageddon*. He's also created a car add-on patch which adds the 11 *Splat Pack* cars released in the demos to *Carmageddon*.

The most controversial patch he's had a hand in is the *Third Reich Race* patch, a total race conversion of the network Maim Street track where you race round a war-time Berlin controlled by the Nazis trying to slaughter Adolf Hitler. Ahh, a true sicko *Carmageddon* fanatic - he's got our vote.

By Coffeycup and Crimson

Third Reich

A total race conversion of the network Maim Street Track. Race your way through a war-time Berlin controlled by the Nazis. Search hard and you could find Hitler making his broadcast, but be warned, his location is classified - Code Red.

Features included in the patch:

- New Race Texture and Signs
- New Race F11
- New Race Map
- New and Old Car Skins:

Staff Car, Dictator, Team NAZ

Take on Hitler in the streets of war-torn Berlin.

← waiting at a pedestrian crossing recently and some old biddy was taking her time to cross. *Carmageddon* crossed his mind, which he found quite alarming."

Not that it bothers Dave. In fact, he's not just a mere player gushing about his penchant for front bumper butchery - he's gone the whole hog over the last 18 months. He created a Herbie VW skin back in January '98 and has since gone on to make 12 more, as well as three for *Carmageddon II*. He has

also played a key role in creating a series of handy patches and new tracks for the original game (see *Crash 'N' Burn, Babe* panel).

If that wasn't enough, he's also created a website - *Crash 'N' Burn* - to put them all on, which has been up and running for over a year now.

While doing his A levels has restricted the amount of time he can spend fiddling with the site, he still updates it about every three days - each session usually snatching two hours away from his punishing revision schedule (and girlfriend). And that doesn't include the time spent replying to inquisitive emails sent in by fellow fans.

The only glaring omission from an otherwise impeccable gaming résumé is his lack of self-generated material for *Carmageddon II*. As well as his PC's low (ish) spec and mounting exam pressures hindering major progress, he doesn't find the sequel as compelling as the original: "*Carmageddon II* took the whole thing further and refined it, but I prefer the atmosphere in *Carmageddon* - it's much darker and more evil, so what I'm doing feels more right. *Carmageddon II* looks more realistic, which means it doesn't have the same atmosphere."

While you can probably hear our own Charlie Brooker howling in dissent from his padded cell buried deep beneath *PC ZONE* Towers, from the purist's point of view, Dave has a point. While we can take the mick out of boy racers for their ravings about

One of his mates is dead against his obsession but, as Dave rightly points out, the fella in question is obsessed with Linux.

"I call him sad.linux.com. He calls me sad.bus.crash.com."

Perhaps Dave's biggest critic is his

"Carmageddon II looks more realistic, which means it doesn't have the same atmosphere"

all things VW Golf GTi 16v ("Has to be a MkII, mate"), how do Dave's rantings about *Carmageddon* go down with his school chums?

"Most of them just think it's sad. Those who have played the game can understand why I like it, but they think what I do is over the top."

girlfriend. Never an easy obstacle to overcome for any game addict, she's his Achilles heel when it comes to anything to do with computers.

"She hates it all. She keeps calling my PC 'my other girlfriend', which I hate. She doesn't like it when I go round her house and her dad gets me

TOP GEAR

DESIGNED BY Stainless

DESIGNED BY Coffeycup

DESIGNED BY Shoetoppa

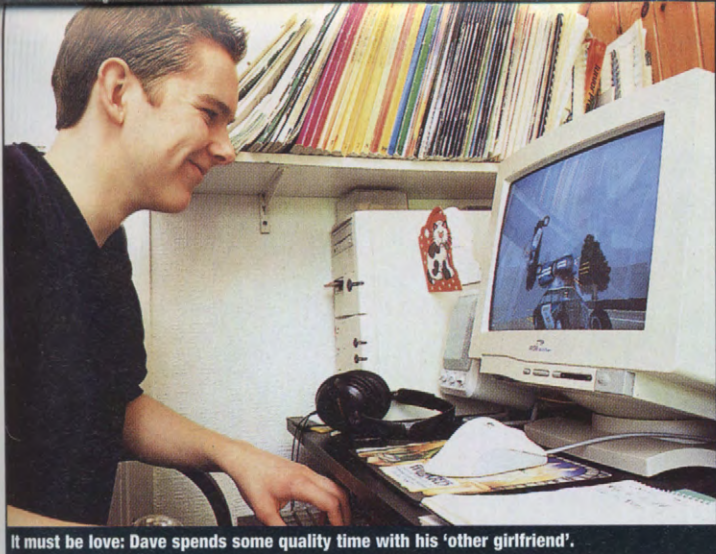
DESIGNED BY CWR

DESIGNED BY Ben Beard

DESIGNED BY Ben Beard

There are shedloads of new cars for both *Carmageddon* and *Carmageddon II* just begging to be downloaded from sites like Dave's. From the *Hong Kong Phooey* car to the speed bike from *Return Of The Jedi*, even the most eccentric car nut will find something to suit their taste. Even mod-mad *Max Power* readers will find what they want if they look hard enough. Anyone for an Escort MkII? Check out Dave's site...





It must be love: Dave spends some quality time with his 'other girlfriend'.

on the computer. Admittedly, though, when I installed *Carmageddon II* for one of her friends, she did find it quite amusing."

But despite such pressure from 'er indoors, Dave remains undeterred – in fact, he's planning to head off to university to study computer engineering. While he's still not sure whether he'll be specialising in programming, he already has his eye on a career in the games industry. And who knows? He could end up working on the likes of *Carmageddon VI*, should it ever go that far – if he can bear the idea of relocating to the Isle Of Wight instead of Silicon Valley, that is.

And he already has plenty of ideas for what would make the ideal *Carmageddon* game: "A cross between

Carmageddon II, *Midtown Madness*, *Driver* and *GTA*. Imagine *Carmageddon* in a *Midtown Madness* setting, a fully working city where you can run over peds à la *Carmageddon II*, all mixed in with missions and car chases like those in *Driver* and *GTA*. Now that would be some game.

"You could also have more interactive environments, like recreating the shopping mall scene from *The Blues Brothers*. And..."

And there we leave him, wondering if maybe those boy racers aren't so bad after all. [EW]

CAR KARMA ONLINE

If Dave's offerings still aren't enough to crush your *Carma* cravings under wheel, these homepages should be more than enough to satisfy your bloodlust

CARMAGEDDON FAN CLUB

<http://cfc.allgames.com>



The Viper GTS-R for *Carmageddon II*: a superb example of the quality that some punters are producing online.

Another feisty range of cars to add more power to your driving – some of the modelling work by the site's maintainer, Juha Mäkinen, also, is stunning. There are also some handy tutorials on texturing and a look at *Plaything*, the ultimate mod package for *Carmageddon*. On a final note, Juha is currently working on an Ally McBeal pedestrian. Should prove to be very popular...



The reason why the chicken decided not to cross the road.

DIY DESTRUCTION DERBY

Want to unleash your own infernal creations? Start here

Fancy a go at building your own tracks and cars in *Carmageddon II*? The package to dabble with is *Plaything 2*, allegedly the prog that helped Stainless Software put together most of the cars and tracks in *Carmageddon II*. You can find *Plaything 2* and other highly useful editing tools lurking on Dave's page in the section dedicated to files for the game.

Unfortunately, it's hard to get hold of a decent set of instructions for *Plaything 2*, but you may want to drop in on Toxic Ragers (www.carmageddon2.co.uk/toxic) to check out their useful tutorial, plus details on what kind of 3D packages you'll need.

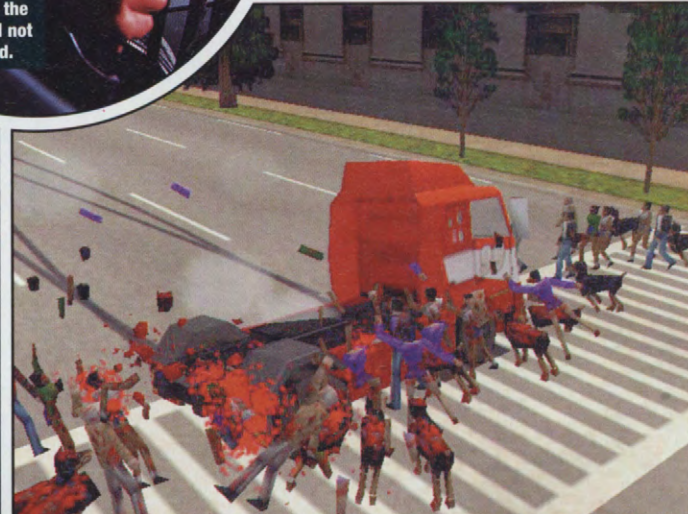
Also, while Mac Carpocalypse (<http://mac.carpocalypse.com/framed.html>) is aimed at people with Apple Macs, it has some useful hints and tips on the basics of skins, track creating and so forth that should prove useful to PC owners.

Carmageddon 2 Files

For the Full Game:

- Blood Fix** - If you have the blood patch and your ped-to-tyre smear marks are still green, download this.
By Rat
- Blood Text** - Something the blood patch forgot to do - changes the in game text from zombie to people.
- Blood Patch** - Change the Zombies to people. Thanx to Pedestrian Precinct for the link. 13Mb
- CarEd v1.1** - A rival for *Plaything2* and much more stable at that. Design your own car from scratch and run over peds with it in C2III. Also requires Java Run-time files (13mb in total), see the readme for the links.
by Ben Beard
- CarEdit** - A program to make skinning the Eagle3 much easier.
by Buko (Toxic Ragers) and Fruitloaf (UK Carmageddon)
- Carma2 CD Crack** - You no longer need the CD in to play - listen to your own music. Disclaimer - do not use for warez purposes.
[Click if you are missing files2.dll or 3m.a452.dll](#)
- Carma2 Tools** - A DOS based TWT extractor and 3D model dumper (DAT -> 3DS or ACS)
by SamJ

Useful editing progs are available by the carload at Dave's site.



Send in screen grabs dedicated to the art of ploughing through human shields.

HALL OF MAIM

www.hallofmaim.freemove.co.uk

Updated weekly, this is a list of the top ten screenshots sent into the site. If you've managed to screen grab a particularly gruesome road kill and want to put it on display, these are the fellas to send it to.

PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT

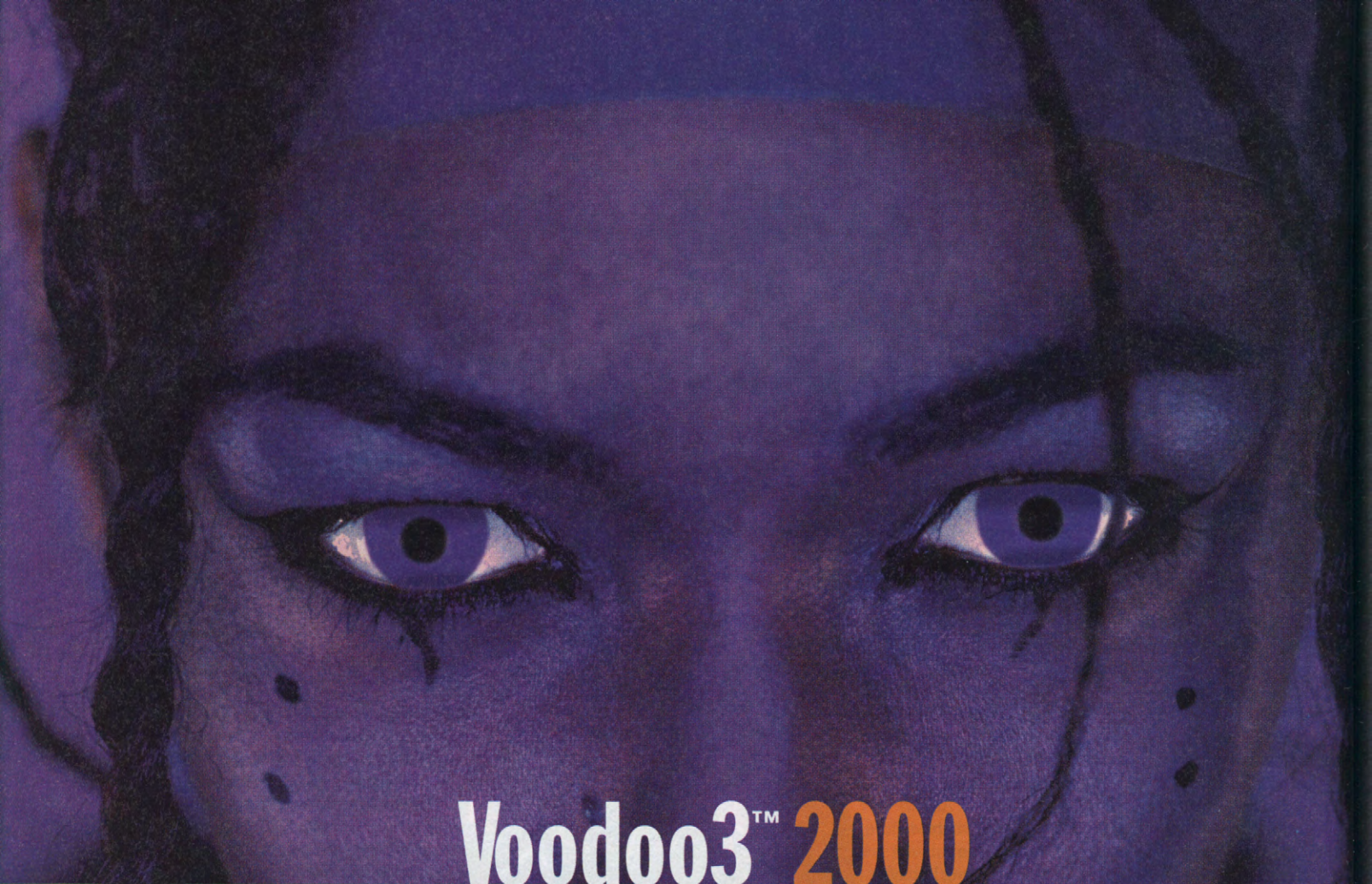
www.carpocalypse.com

More in-depth shenanigans for *Carmageddon II* fans with news, files, adds-ons, patches and more.

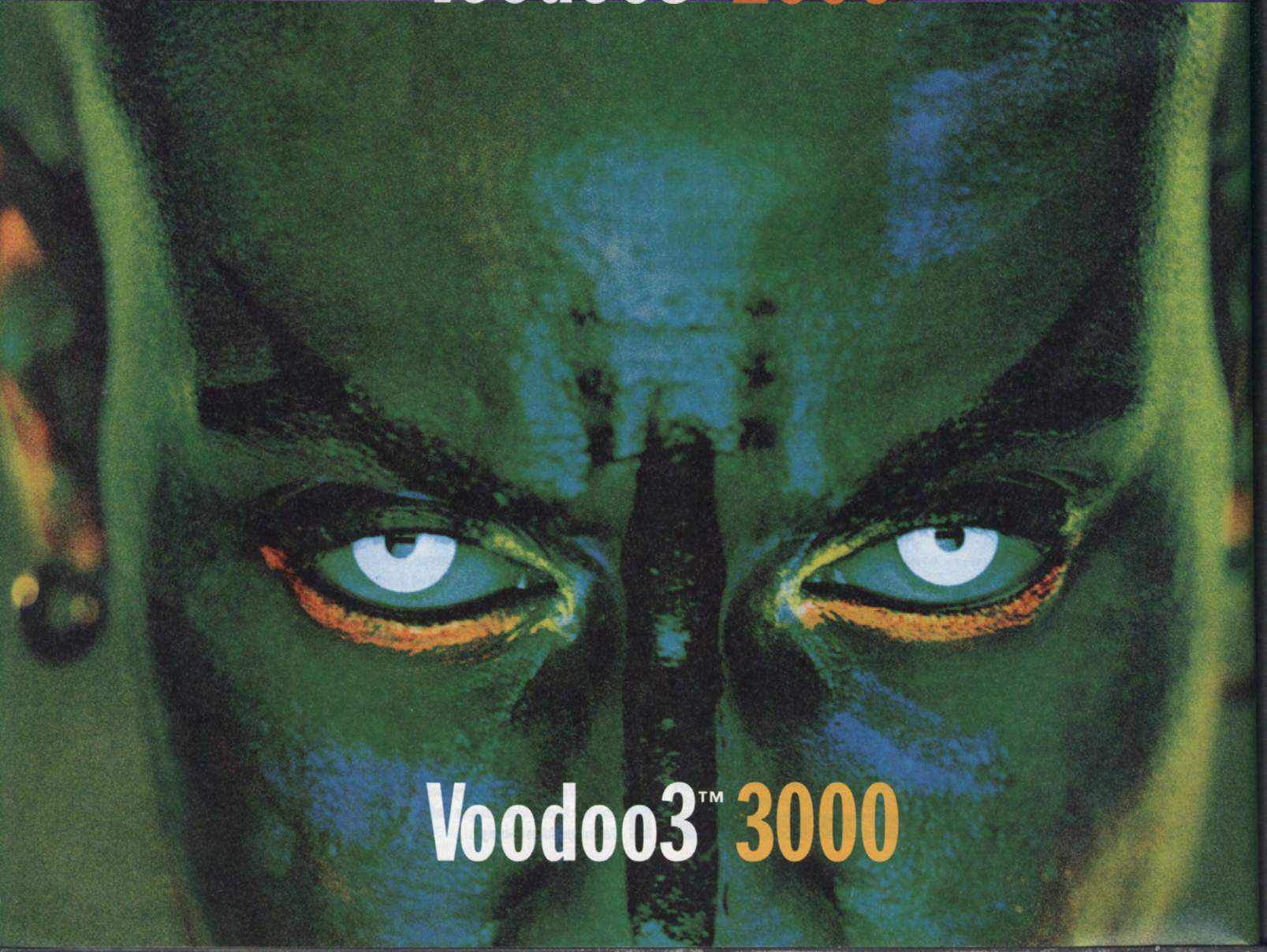
CARMAGEDDON CUSTOM CORNER

<http://ccc.carpocalypse.com>

One for those wanting to dabble in body and skin modelling. Sorry, it's *Carmageddon II*-only.



Voodoo3™ 2000



Voodoo3™ 3000

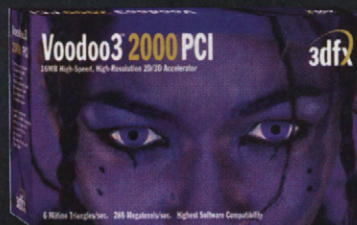
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WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

PC ZONE hits the streets to find out what you're playing, and get your views on which games are making the news

★ WORDS/PHOTOS Craig Vaughan LOCATION Dudley, West Midlands



NICK LAILEY
29, telesales manager
What's on your hard drive?
"Baldur's Gate, Civilization II, CM3, Alpha Centauri and some other god sims."
Do I detect a hint of the megalomaniac?
"Who, me? Nah, I just like to control vast armies. I enjoy domineering and conquering those that are worthy. Those that are not worthy, I annihilate. Nothing megalomaniacal about that. Looking forward to *Quake III* – just for a change of pace though."



AMANDA LAILEY
22, computer widow
What's on your hard drive?
"My bloody husband. Every bloody night for hours on end. I'm a bit partial to *Baldur's Gate*, *Championship Manager 3* and *Resident Evil 2*. But every night?"
Not very happy with the situation, then?
"Oh no, it's great. That's why I got married in the first place, so that I could spend more quality time with the damn cat! Now please go away, you're encouraging him."



CLAIRE McRITCHIE
28, actress
What's on your hard drive?
"You Don't Know Jack, Resident Evil 2, Duke Nukem 3D, Civilization: Call To Power."
Duke Nukem?
"Yeah, he's a bit phwoar and reminds me of one of the hunks from *Sunset Beach*. Except Duke's acting style has a little more range and he has a better scriptwriter. And more believable plots and..."
Yeah, we get the picture.



TONY WILSON
33, civil servant
What's on your hard drive?
"Carmageddon II, TOCA 2, Rollcage, Need For Speed III, Resident Evil 2 and X-Wing Alliance."
Motoring enthusiast?
"Got the steering wheel, pedals, the works. Nothing like it for letting off a bit of steam. The PC still beats the consoles hands down for this sort of thing. *TOCA 2* is the business, but *Carmageddon II* was a bit of a disappointment – even with a 3D card."



MARTIN RAWSTHORNE
36, prison officer
What's on your hard drive?
"X-Wing Alliance, Alpha Centauri, Turok 2, Rebellion, Rogue Squadron, Shadows Of The Empire, X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter..."
Oh, god, a Star Wars fan?
"Oh yes. My entire life is currently calculated in relation to the release of *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*."
When was the last time you saw daylight?
"Christ knows. What month is it?"



HEIDI WOOD
19, student
What's on your hard drive?
"FIFA 99, Premiership 99, Tomb Raider, X-Wing Alliance, Resident Evil 2 and Championship Manager 3."
You're a student, so I suppose you spend all day playing games?
"Yeah, it's a wonderful life. What with all the cheap booze, student discounts and ample down-time, it's one long party, seven days a week. I might just have to fail my finals so I can stay on an extra year!"



MARITA LANDUCCI
32, staff nurse
What's on your hard drive?
"Tomb Raider III, Resident Evil 2, RollerCoaster Tycoon and TOCA 2. I'm not buying another game until they release *Metal Gear Solid* for the PC though."
Action adventure girl?
"Yeah, I stay the course. I like to see how a game ends, instead of doing three quarters of the thing and then drifting off to play something else. Waste of money, if you ask me."



SIMON MATHER
23, deputy manager
What's on your hard drive?
"TOCA 2, NASCAR Racing and Rogue Squadron."
Another car enthusiast. What do you drive?
"An Escort. And before you ask, no it isn't a Cosworth, no it isn't a 4x4, no I don't have lots of knobby stickers, and no I don't spend my weekends with the boy racers. Do I look like a sad prat?"



MEENA LALLI
20, technical advisor
What's on your hard drive?
"Rogue Squadron, South Park and Tomb Raider III."
Which one of the South Park gang do you have the hots for?
"Kenny. He lives in the ghetto and I feel sorry for the poor kid. They keep killing him, the bastards."
"Rogue Squadron isn't mine, by the way – *Star Wars* sucks. Er, you won't print that, will you?"
Of course not.



RACHEL SHERMER
25, teacher
What's on your hard drive?
"Lula The Sexy Empire, Leisure Suit Larry, Tomb Raider III and South Park."
Lula and Larry? Are you yanking my chain?
"I love tacky and tasteless, and they don't get much better than that. And you can get that expression off your face – I have a boyfriend, thank you very much."
Don't mind us.

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

- Activision 01895 456 7000
- Blue Byte 01604 232200
- BMG Interactive 0171 973 0011
- Core Design 01332 297797
- Cryo 01926 315559
- Crystal Dynamics/Ubi Soft 0181 944 9000
- Eidos Interactive 0181 636 3000
- Electronic Arts 01753 549442
- Empire Interactive 0181 343 7337
- Funsoft 01322 292513
- Gremlin Interactive 0114 273 8601
- GT Interactive 0171 258 3791
- Infogrames 0161 827 8000
- Interactive Magic 01344 409399
- LiveMedia 01865 247714
- MicroProse 01454 893893
- Microsoft 0345 002000
- Mindscape 01444 246333
- NovaLogic 0171 405 1777
- Ocean 0161 832 6633
- Sierra 0118 920 9100
- Sold Out 0171 721 8767
- Take 2 Interactive 01753 854444
- Telstar 01932 22232
- Virgin 0171 368 2255
- ZABLAC 01626 332233

THE HALL OF SHAME

★ These are the games that we still haven't been sent for review. This means they're either completely crap and the publishers are scared we'll pan them, or their PR machine isn't quite up to full speed. This month's offenders (some of them have been in our Hall of Shame for some time, eh Maxis?) are...

- LULA VIRTUAL BABE Take 2
- STREETS OF SIMCITY Maxis/EA
- CENTIPEDE Hasbro
- MEGAMAN X-4 Virgin
- V-RALLY Infogrames

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.



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.



70 TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS



76 TANKTICS



78 MECHWARRIOR 3



80 BREAKNECK



84 STAR WARS: BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION



83 CRICKET WORLD CUP 99

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TOTAL ANNIHILATION:

★ £39.99 • Cavedog • Out June 25

A fantasy land of trolls, dragons, catapults and castles. Who better to assess Cavedog's magical marvel than someone called Phil Wand?

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** TCP/IP, IPX, modem **WE SAY** PII 333, 64Mb RAM and an accelerated 3D card recommended

PCZONE CLASSIC

ALSO CONSIDER

MAGIC & MAYHEM (Virgin Interactive, £34.99) Yet another real-time strategy classic from the Gollop brothers at Mythos games. If you remember *Chaos* on the Spectrum, you'll understand why *Magic & Mayhem* has been widely acclaimed for its serious, solid, addictive gameplay. **PCZ #70, 92%**

TOTAL ANNIHILATION (Replay, £12.99) Since *Kingdoms* doesn't borrow anything from the old classic, we thought we'd proffer it as an alternative. There's no magic and trolls, but it's still heaps of real-time fun. The only criticism now is zero support for 3D cards, and line of sight that plainly doesn't work. **PCZ #56, 92%**

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC III (Ubi Soft, £44.99) Quantum leap for the *Heroes* series of strategy games, but still not quite making the grade. Worth a look for its rich graphical play areas. **PCZ #76, 78%**

WARCRAFT II (Blizzard Originals, £19.99) Yes, it's old. Yes, it's Tonka-toy chunky. But *WarCraft II* still has the creatures and settings that people still crave. The fact that science fiction author Terry Pratchett sells more books every three seconds than *ZONE* sells copies in a year is proof of fantasy's huge and enduring popularity. **PCZ #36, 82%**

Picture a nobleman. A mature, robust-looking chap: broad shoulders, steely gaze and *Falcon's Crest* hairdo.

Now imagine him stomping through thick undergrowth, his eyes probing for an open space in which to cast a spell.

A hawk squawks noisily high above, making him jump. He cranes his neck to look up. Either the bird is about to crap on his new tunic, or someone's trying to keep an eye on him. He mumbles something. Greek? Latin? Something strange – and a violent tremor pulses across the landscape like ripples on a pond. Bugger, wrong spell. Before he can fry the airborne interloper with a carefully aimed lightning bolt, the creature ducks into the swirling mists and is gone.

At the edge of the wood is a large clearing of sand, just big

Rescuing my brave chaps from a spit just as the undead discover their presence. It's the Normandy beaches all over again.



“As befits a game with *Total Annihilation* in its moniker, the interface of *Kingdoms* is a true work of art”

enough for a barracks. He stops, raises his arms, and pictures the building in his mind. Suddenly the space around him becomes a maelstrom of yellow light, the very air itself sparkling and surging with an intense energy. He can feel the mana – the sum and substance of all magic – pouring from just behind his knuckles. It feels... hot.

Distracted for a second, he concentrates once more and can

make out the soft outline of a barracks deep in the eerie glow: roof and windows, then doors, bricks, even the flag bearing his insignia that flutters proudly atop the tower.

In what seems like an instant, the stone and mortar are real, and he commands four swordsmen to step forward. The doors swing open, and the mighty knights emerge from within, swinging at the air to test the weight of their

blades. They stop. “Is that bird shit on your cloak, sire?”

ONCE UPON A TIME *TA Kingdoms* is entrancing. It's a masterpiece of storytelling, where you get to play central characters from different cultures as they fight for domination of an imaginary realm. But there aren't separate campaigns for each side as in *Red Alert*, or episodic diversions as in *StarCraft*; →

KING



DOMS

Faded, illegible text from the reverse side of the page, appearing as bleed-through.

everything has been skilfully woven into one long yarn, with each new chapter presenting the possibility of playing a new faction from a contrary viewpoint and a different setting.

And what settings await. From the moment you click on the icon in your Start menu, you're immersed in a fairy-tale world of witches, dragons, kraken, lodestones, kings, princes and armies of undead. Huge stone towers, thundering cannons, catapults and trebuchets. Forts and temples. Yachts and balloons. Evil-doing and treachery. Where *Total Annihilation* (PCZ #56, 92%) lacked a cohesive plot and variation, Cavedog have really gone to town, constructing a new 3D universe that looks set to make *Kingdoms* one of the most engrossing single-player experiences of all time.

The novel which unfolds around you is set in the fantasy land of Darien, a province ruled by an immortal king who has since done a bunk for reasons unknown. But before his disappearance, he Balkanised the land between his four children, telling them to be good, look after their mum and never build a castle on a swamp.

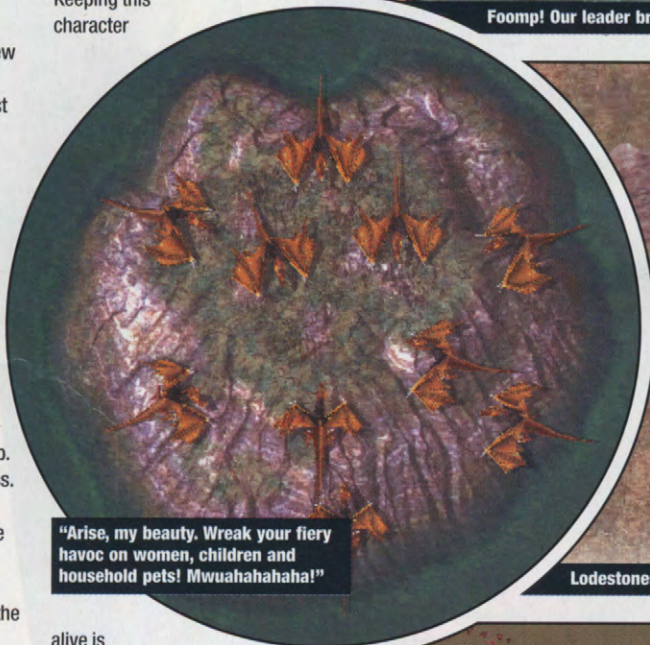
Many hundreds of years pass. The four siblings – yes, they're immortal like their father – have gradually become one with the elements, and have started to squabble. And as you step into the storyline, Aramon and Veruna (earth and water) have come together to fight the malevolence of Zhon and Taros (air and fire).

Your progression through the *Kingdoms* 'book' involves innumerable cut-sequences and interludes that make it feel more like a docudrama than a real-time strategy game. Sure, these sequences appear to be on the crude side, comprised almost entirely of static images and narration, but the effect is spot-on. Fine tapestries, chronicles of the 48 chapters – each one looking like a section from the famous wall-hangings in Bayeux Cathedral – are used to illustrate your passage.

Ancient runes and paintings are shown to further enhance the feeling of authenticity, as if the depicted legends are somehow real, and each scene is accompanied by the sort of matter-of-fact voiceover that you get on *National Geographic* documentaries. With each transition, you feel more and more convinced that perhaps it is real. Well, almost.

NOW THAT'S MAGIC

Gameplay in *Kingdoms* will be familiar to anyone who's ever played real-time strategy, and second nature to every *Total Annihilation* fan on the planet. In most chapters (and in every skirmish game), you take control of a principal character who's able to construct buildings and prepare a raft of armies through the use of spells and incantations. He (or she – the Veruna and Zhon are ruled by priestesses) is also one of your most powerful units, able to repel enemy attacks, repair structures and heal the wounded with potent magic. Keeping this character



"Arise, my beauty. Wreak your fiery havoc on women, children and household pets! Mwuahahaha!"

alive is absolutely key to your survival in the game.

To create – or, more correctly, summon – a new building, you simply click on the relevant icon (now much crisper than before, thanks to the all-singing, all-dancing 16-bit colour interface) in the toolbar and drop it on the map. *Total Annihilation* aficionados will spot straight away that each pending structure is 'ghosted' on the



Foomp! Our leader brushes up on his low-order spells by vaporising an enemy horseman.



Lodestones replenish your mana, the essence of magic and the single resource.



Pressing the Tab key fills your screen with a huge map of the area, from which you can direct battles.



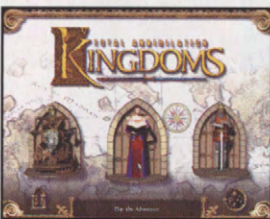
Machine play, where you skirmish against the computer, is the screen you see most often.

WALKTHROUGH

KING FOR A DAY

Some of the screens you'll come across in *Kingdoms*

Choose your options and monitor your progress, and hopefully you'll live to tell a tale of heroics, conquests and, ultimately, success.



1 THE OPENING SCREEN
The rotating contraption on the left is for machine play (ie skirmishing, you against computer-controlled players), the elegant novelist in the middle for story-based play, and the Black Knight on the right for multiplayer.



2 PICK A CHARACTER
Step forward, Sir Philster of ZONE. The selection screen enables you to pick an existing hero or play the game under different identities. By looking in the chapter column you can easily see how far into the story each character has progressed.



3 CHAPTER OVERVIEW
Each chapter has its own name, overview and objectives. Here we're starting off near the town of Abiad, right at the beginning of the game. Difficulty increases progressively, although a couple of early levels are a little too punishing for novices.

UNIT SHOWCASE

Here are just a few of the units you can expect to find in each game of *Kingdoms*. All in all there are more than 160 available, so this really is just a small selection

ARAMON FACTION (Earth, Good)



TAROS FACTION (Fire, Evil)



VERUNA FACTION (Water, Good)



ZHON FACTION (Air, Evil)



END



It's not all rescuing damsels and destroying the undead. Here you're sacking a peaceful town with dragons.

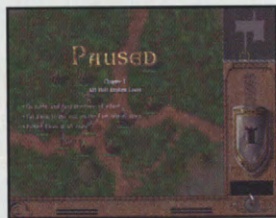
Fire spouts are big beetles with dragon breath. Watching their thorax contract to propel the flames is rather captivating.



"Listen, lad. I built this kingdom up from nothing. When I started here, there was only swamp. Other kings said I was daft to build a castle on a swamp, but I built it all the same, just to show 'em. It sank into the swamp, so I built a second one. That sank into the swamp too, so I built a third one. That burned down, fell over, then sank into the swamp. But the fourth one stayed up! And it's the strongest castle in these islands."



4 **SETTING THE SCENE**
The game now paints a picture of your coming task. *Kingdoms* never wows you with gobsmacking cut-scenes or pre-rendered eye candy; instead the story develops in a series of static images that mimic ancient murals, tapestries and parchments.



5 **GET CRACKING**
Once a story has loaded, you see a list of all your objectives. Press the Pause button on the keyboard to get going and, on this particular outing, escort a messenger into the town of Abiad.



6 **THE TOWN OF ABIAD**
When you arrive, the townsfolk are cowering as undead creatures run amok. Get your swordsmen to move in and get fighting. "Feel my blade, skeleton!" "Laugh that off, anorexic evildoer!" And so on.



7 **VICTORY**
You've saved the townspeople, delivered the messenger, and generally looked hard and cool in the process. Hurrah! And there was much rejoicing. Count your losses, lick your wounds, and get ready for the next instalment.



8 **CONFIRMATION**
An overview of the chapter. Typically for Cavedog, presentation is everything – what would normally be a humdrum data screen in any other game is suddenly something you want to cut out, frame in Cuban mahogany and hang above the mantelpiece.



The Zhon, masters of the air, can't build structures, so instead summon their units directly. Note the kraken in the body of water to the north.

← screen, enabling you to see exactly what's on the way. While this may be a slicker, more aesthetically pleasing way of doing things, we must confess a preference for the more precise bounding boxes of *TA*. This is because the game's smaller units (such as wall sections and mortars) are now rather difficult to place accurately if overshadowed by larger structures.

Generally speaking, the larger and more mighty the structure you envision, the larger and longer the drain on your powers. So before creating a whole new town, look for sacred sites on which to construct your lodestones. These rocks are the glowing crystals that sit on holy areas and unlock the game's single resource, mana, which you need to control in order to replenish your magic and win the

game. Allow the enemy to force you away from these hallowed regions and you'll soon lose power, yield the upper hand and be overrun.

Like *Total Annihilation* before it (but unlike *Command & Conquer: Red Alert*), *Kingdoms* hides everything beyond your range of vision whether you've been there or not. You can still make out the basic features of the landscape, such as trees, rocks and the granite monoliths that encircle each holy area, but you can't tell what's hiding near them. You could, for example, spot a strategic place for your watch tower, only to walk over and discover that the place lies behind castle gates and is swarming with enemy troops.

Unlike *TA*, the transition between clear and obscured areas of the map is now done with a gently swirling fog that

wafts and billows at the limits of your vision. When enemy units appear, they don't just step forward from nothing, they appear gradually through hazy mists. The only penalty for this is the fact that it demands processor power – even our Pentium II 266, with a whopping 256Mb of memory and an AGP Voodoo Banshee, was made to sweat by *Kingdoms*.

THE UNITS

One of the few criticisms of *TA* was that both sides had the same weaponry but different wardrobes. Indeed, the game's widely praised play balance was largely attributable to the fact that everyone was using the same basic units. *Kingdoms* is way ahead of that, and comes bundled with a far larger assortment of goodies. We counted somewhere between 20 and 30 unique units per faction, with specialised



TA: with *Kingdoms*, everything has got a whole lot better.

PLAYED TA? READ THIS

We're not asking you to bin your favourite game, rather to enjoy *Kingdoms* and the treats it offers

So, you've played *Total Annihilation*. We guarantee that the first thing you'll do when you play *Kingdoms* is bitch and whine. "It's just a fantasy *TA*," you'll say, wrinkling your nose. "And fantasy's for squares and geeks."

Actually, it's not. For starters, the new graphical interface is simply gorgeous: 16-bit colour brings the game alive. It also has a cohesive story; proper experience points and veteran troops; real line of sight; a realistic trajectory and physics model; DIY castles and forts; pre-built multiplayer bases. In fact, name an aspect of *Total Annihilation*, and Cavedog have injected it with performance-enhancing drugs.

So be patient, sit back, and spend some time with each of the four factions – their disparate nature, unique weapons, special tactics and cute animations are well in advance of the units that came shrink-wrapped with *TA*. And remember, of course, that both Cavedog and the gaming community will be releasing new troops, new structures and new maps from now until Doomsday. You'll end up a *Kingdoms* convert. We promise.

troops for battles on land, at sea and in the air. The Aramon, with whom the story starts, are principally knights and bowmen, and have the upper hand when on solid earth. Zhon, masters of the air, are better when swooping down to attack from above. Veruna, at home when organising naughty-bubbles competitions on the bottom of the ocean, have a distinct advantage at sea. And

finally Taros, the sinister fire faction, really know their magic.

There are also some welcome 'oddball' units – caged demons and ghost ships to name but two – that stretch both your imagination and the game's variation still further. What's more, there's the welcome addition of experience. Sure, *TA* made allowances for veteran soldiers (ie those who'd notched up a

KINGDOMS OVERVIEW

Check out the numbered areas of the screenshot and find out what they represent

- 1 Each faction has its own barracks, where infantry units are trained.
- 2 The star indicates where the units appear.
- 3 The list of creatures and structures available to your principal character.
- 4 Shows that the new abyss you're summoning is around 20 per cent complete.
- 5 The status of any other units involved – in this case a Dark Mason.
- 6 Your lodestone, generally the first structure enemy units head for.
- 7 The intangible mass of the incomplete abyss. Note the hammer icon showing that you're helping to build it.
- 8 The radar, giving you an overview of the entire region.
- 9 Your actions. Clockwise, from top left: move, patrol, attack, guard, repair, clean.
- 10 Your spells, unique to each principal character in each faction.



particular number of kills, supposedly making them more of a challenge in battle), but like line of sight it was one of those 'back of the box' features that didn't actually seem to do anything. Now, all that changes, with skilled units noticeably better and more accurate when fighting alongside novices. Top-scoring troops change their name and even their appearance to reflect higher levels of expertise.

But that doesn't mean you can swamp your enemy under a deluge of all-conquering bastards. Particularly powerful units, such as the gliding, swooping, fire-barking dragons, have restrictions placed upon their numbers. In the case of the Golden Dragon, the Acolyte (a more resourceful version of Terry Pratchett's indolent wizard Rincewind) is only able to summon one. Rather than being unnecessarily restrictive, this actually lends each game a healthy dose of longevity, discouraging stockpiling and rush victories – the two curses of real-time strategy. There's also a noticeable slant towards the defensive, meaning there's little to be gained by trekking across the map right at the start for an instant win.

To add style, each unit is now animated like nothing else you've ever seen. Horses gallop, archers reload before firing, and the cannoneer covers his ears each time the gun goes off. Flying creatures and dirigibles paddle the air with wings, banking and diving as they soar over the landscape. Even the immobile Mortar and massive Stronghold (a minaret with a medieval howitzer poking out halfway up) has two little chaps on the top – one to control gun elevation, the other

to work away at levers that rotate the tower. It's all nicely eccentric.

THE INTERFACE

As befits a game with *Total Annihilation* in its moniker, the interface of *Kingdoms* is a true work of art. But before we go exploring its many enhancements (and yes, Cavedog *have* managed to find room for improvement), for those of you unfamiliar with the way *TA* works we'd better explain what all the fuss is about.

First off, it's a doddle to do anything in *TA*. Select your leader (or any other troop capable of creating new units), click what you want him or her to summon, then place it on the map. If you want more than one, hold down the shift key; each subsequent click of the mouse adds a new action to the build list. Creating a long list of instructions has never been easier.

It's also intuitive. If one of your builders is building something, you can have others lend a helping hand and get the job done in half the time. You can also issue specific commands, such as patrol an area, guard another unit, repair a damaged structure, and so on. And if you need to break off in the middle of a task to do something else, your helpers finish the job you started before tagging along.

Kingdoms is even better, giving you all the above and more. Getting into a game is now much simpler, requiring less hopping between screens and button pressing. And little trinkets lie in wait after you start playing. For example, you can now *insert* new orders into the build queue without scrapping all the old ones and starting over. This means you can break off from one task, toddle off to begin another and



Kirena, the water monarch, changes into a mermaid the moment she enters the water. Here she's casting



"Listen up, chaps, you've seen the radar. And yes, truth is we're really screwed."



Planned structures appear in ghost form, allowing you to see what's due to be built and where.

then, once completed, return to what you were doing. Wonderful. Not only that, but you can also enjoy 'augmented' line of sight and height advantages. What this means is that you can now climb a bluff or a peak and see the map open up beneath you. And using the same theories of elevation, airborne units can see for miles,

cyberspace to find some decent competition, as *Kingdoms* retains both the skirmish mode from *TA* and its flexible LAN set-up.

Skirmishing gives you the chance to challenge robot players, and after you've completed the 48 missions it'll be the game section you come back to most often. Network play enables you and your friends to battle each other, the computer, or an assortment of both. As with *TA*, you can define 'mixed' teams – you and a chum versus the computer, or perhaps you and the computer versus your chum. It's fully configurable to suit any number of players from two upwards, so you don't need a huge LAN to enjoy yourself.

Artificial opponents are seriously smart, too – it isn't like shooting rats in a bucket, as was the case in *Red Alert*. In fact you'll probably end up dead. Intelligence routines have now been improved beyond all recognition, with units now moving around obstacles on the map with stealth and purpose and retreating back to base when overpowered.

And there you have it. Sure, it's *Total Annihilation* in that it borrows elements of *TA*'s interface, but then that's like saying a semi-detached bungalow is Blenheim Palace because it's got windows and a front door. While *Kingdoms* is a 'real-time strategy game', it's actually a whole lot more than that. The best advice is for you to try it and see what we mean. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Sounds, music, decor, textures, plot, ambience, craftsmanship, absolutely everything
- Intelligent opponents • Big, realistic battles • True line of sight • Strategic elements to die for • Ability to build and hide behind your own forts
- DOWNERS Some of the early missions are too difficult • Your processor will hate you • Chapters slow to load

94 Fantastic in every sense of the word

“Each unit is animated like nothing else you've ever seen. Archers reload before firing, and the cannoneer covers his ears each time the gun goes off”

which, as you might imagine, has a significant impact on strategy.

ALTOGETHER NOW

Kingdoms comes bundled with full Boneyards capability – ie access to Cavedog's online games server – enabling you to get hooked up quickly and easily with opponents from all over the planet. Then again, you don't really need to venture into

As is typical of bad dudes, the Taros have the coolest outfits and the meanest looking base.



TANKTICS

★ £29.99 • Gremlin Interactive • Out June

A game that's an anagram of Cat Stink? Steve Hill (Sh*t Level) takes a break from watching Countdown

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb **WE SAY** No 3D card required!

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

ALSO CONSIDER

COMMAND & CONQUER (Virgin, £9.99) The game that really started the ball rolling. The long-awaited latest sequel has yet to see the light of day. **PCZ #28, 95%**

TOTAL ANNIHILATION (GT, £14.99) Considered by many to be the king of strategy games, it has now been followed by a goblinised version. **PCZ #70, 93%**

DARK REIGN (Activision, £9.99) Another quality addition to the genre, and one which is due a sequel some time soon. **PCZ #73, 86%**

➔ **Enemy tanks will do anything to destroy your Part-o-Matic.**



Every tank in the game is modular, with tracks, engine blocks, weapons and radar control dishes fitted together in different configurations.



Never mind Tetris with tanks, how about Teletubbies with tanks?



As a last resort, sheep can be recycled. Those crazy guys.



Destroying receivers prevents enemy tanks from beaming in.



Big boxes of resources can be collected three at a time and taken back to the Part-o-Matic. Easier said than done.

Oh dear. After everything we've said about realism, here's a game in which you have to save the world by travelling back in time in order to defeat the Evil Black Tanks. Why do we bother? If anyone proposed a film with a similar premise, they'd be laughed out of the door, but as it's a game it doesn't seem to matter. Make up any old rubbish, throw in some exclamation marks and put it on the box.

Also on that box will be the letters DMA – the Scottish developers still held in great esteem within the industry, largely based on an eight-year-old puzzle game (*Lemmings*) and a morally bankrupt 2D driving game (*Grand Theft Auto*). Despite some nice touches, their recent *Wild Metal Country* (PCZ #77, 79%) didn't rock particularly big bells, and the tank-based onus now

falls on *Tanktics*, the name being an inspired combination of the words 'tank' and 'tactics', both of which (surprise, surprise) feature heavily. Previews of the game have thus far made a big deal of describing exactly what kind of game it is,

building it up as some kind of genre-breaking innovation, with misleading soundbites such as 'Tetris with tanks' glibly banded about. With the covers off, it's now plain to see that *Tanktics* is actually a unique take on the real-time strategy game, with a large helping of zaniness and a quirky interface. And some tanks. Two million of them, in fact. You what? Yes, *Tanktics* does indeed boast over two million different tanks. The only catch is that you have to

make them yourself. How? By using a thing called the Part-o-Matic, of course.

TANKS FOR THE MEMORY

Let's start again. The so-called Evil Black Tanks have done something bad and must be destroyed. To do this, you travel back to the Stone Age, where you do battle with Medieval tanks. Once they're defeated, you assume control of those same Medieval tanks and wage war against the Modern tanks, which you then pit against Future tanks, and then finally you use these against the Evil Black Tanks.

It doesn't matter. There are six missions in each of the four time periods, although the basics are essentially the same. At the heart of the game is the Part-o-Matic, a made-up machine that generates tank parts which can then be stuck together in a variety of combinations, hence the theoretical two million tanks. The parts comprise tracks, engines and weapons, and can be stacked ten deep, topped off with a radar to make things work. Horses for courses is the order of the day, and the trick is in designing tanks with a specific task in mind. For example, only a particular type of track can traverse sand, and certain weapons have different ranges and uses. The Part-o-Matic must be defended at all costs and kept supplied with resources, with almost everything proving recyclable, including the ubiquitous sheep.

TANK YOU VERY MUCH

Is that clear? Good. Except we forgot to tell you how to make the tanks. Interaction with the scenery is via an airborne crane fitted with a magical magnet capable of picking up pretty much anything, including boulders and sheep, the latter of which can be placed on the treadmill of the Part-o-Matic to make it work faster. This is indicative of the comedy aspect of *Tanktics*, which is largely of the sort practised by men in brightly coloured shirts with exuberant eyewear: "There's some sheep! And they're all called Flossy! HA HA HA! HA! HA HA!"

There's not enough space here to fully explain how the interface



Only a certain type of track is able to traverse snow. Use wisely.

works. It just does, okay? It certainly takes some getting used to, but a series of comprehensive training missions ease you into the action. And action is the key word, as once it gets going, *Tanktics* is a frantic affair and could loosely be described as something akin to 'arcade strategy' – whatever that means.

Mastering the crane is crucial, and success hinges as much on manual dexterity as it does on strategy, with crucial seconds lost through unnecessary cack-handedness. In fact, there are a number of timed missions to help

to do, such as scanning the landscape for evil black sheep and dropping a boulder on them before they poison your herd by spitting at them. Obviously.

To a casual observer, *Tanktics* may look like utter nonsense, but once you're familiar with the inherent concept it's very hard to put down. Every action has a cause and effect – mud slows tanks down, gravity comes into play – and simply as an experiment in maths and physics it's an impressive feat.

As a game, it's a compulsive little bleeder, and one that's more

“Even when you think everything's under control, there's always something to do, such as scanning the landscape for evil black sheep”

bring you up to speed and which, if you haven't got time for a whole campaign, are an addictive diversion in themselves.

TANK HEAVENS

The real deal is where the value is to be had, though, and the devilish campaign missions are more than capable of sucking you in. It's an allegory that has been used before, but *Tanktics* is the modern-day equivalent of the old cabaret act of spinning plates.

You're constantly tending various aspects of the game, whether it's sending tanks out on offensive sorties, blocking the enemy's route to your Part-o-Matic with boulders, triggering switches to release force fields or, of course, building more tanks. Enemy tanks arrive in regular waves and you have to be prepared. Even when you think everything's under control, there's always something

than capable of destroying sleeping patterns. Before you know it, you've missed your team's goals on *Nationwide League Extra* and are scraping the arse end of *Transworld Sport* as a natural source of light becomes apparent. And as a further litmus test, check the temperature of the cup of tea you made before being sucked in. See – it's stone cold. [PCZ]

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS A unique take on the strategy genre • Extremely addictive • Takes ages to complete
- DOWNERS Quirky interface • Initially bewildering • Overly zany

82 Tank you very much, tank you very, very, very much

PERIOD PIECE

Tanktics features four distinctive eras to battle through, none of which have any particular advantage over another



STONE AGE

The Stone Age features huge, chunky granite constructions. They may move slowly, but their weapons have plenty of purchase. A pterodactyl serves as the crane.



MODERN

The tanks are no-nonsense, Cold War chunks of metal. If anyone cares at this stage, this era is the only one with a vestige of realism. A helicopter does the crane thing.



MEDIEVAL

Pseudo-heraldic trimmings mask some genuinely vicious weaponry from these medieval monstrosities. Crane duties are generously provided by a green dragon.



FUTURE

Future tanks have options such as hover bases and long-range weapons, and they also move like greased lightning. A B-movie-style flying saucer acts as the crane.



Black sheep can only be killed by dropping a boulder on them. Obviously.

MECHWARRIOR 3

★ £39.99 • MicroProse • Out now



The training missions have a bug where the commanding officer falls off a ledge and runs around like a headless chicken. Entertaining, but hardly educational.

ALSO CONSIDER

STARSIEGE (Sierra, £39.99)
Heaps of atmosphere, heady action/strategy blend and a monster draw distance make *Starsiege* the one to beat. **PCZ #76, 88%**

MECHCOMMANDER (MicroProse, £39.99) Strategic interpretation of the BattleTech world, with a top-down control similar to *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines*. **PCZ #66, 85%**

HEAVY GEAR (Activision, £39.99)
Gears are lesser Mechs, and *Heavy Gear* is a lesser game entirely. **PCZ #59, 70%**



VISION ON

Some of the on-screen information presented in *MechWarrior 3*

- 1 Radar
- 2 Heading
- 3 Weapons inventory
- 4 Throttle readout
- 5 Player damage display
- 6 Current target
- 7 Target damage display
- 8 Heat gauge



The Smoke Jaguar are back. And they're a bit upset with the way things are going. Can *Phil Wand* and his big metal stalking thing win through?

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** TCP/IP, IPX, modem, direct cable, Microsoft IGZ Multiplayer **WE SAY** PII 266, 64Mb RAM and an accelerated 3D card recommended

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

several multiplayer add-on packs for eager punters later in the year.

A MECH OF AN IMPROVEMENT

When MicroProse announced the sequel to *MechWarrior 2* (PCZ #45, 88%), they must have been in the same sort of dilemma that Ford were when they replaced the Escort. In other words, what do you do when you already have a best-selling, universally popular product, but one that's showing obvious signs of age and is in desperate need of a major overhaul?

You can't just drop it and concentrate on something else, because people are badgering you for another version. You can't go adding extra features in the hope of wringing out a few more sales, because you'll lose ground to the competition. And you can't go heading off in a different direction with a new idea, because you'll alienate existing users. It's a tricky one.

Zipper Interactive, the development team hired by MicroProse to oversee *MechWarrior 3*, were told to start with a clean sheet. They used their own proprietary 3D engine to render the big Mechs, worked closely with FASA to ensure BattleTech authenticity, and are now involved in developing

The new game is better than its predecessor in almost every aspect, from super-sharp artificial intelligence to deformable terrain. Let's give you an example: imagine that you and your robot conveyance are sniping at a bad guy from behind the girders of a metal bridge. "Hardy har!" you mumble to yourself as his SRM6 rockets dig craters into the ground next to you. "He can't target me." True enough, but that doesn't mean you're safe. The enemy are now smart enough to look for 'related' objectives, and while you stand wondering why your adversary has switched to firing at the bridge supports, the superstructure lets out a metallic groan and collapses on top of your head...

Mech components can now be individually targeted, meaning, for example, that if an enemy is laying into you with his auto cannon, you can actually target the arm carrying it and render it useless. To do this, you use the zoom function which, unlike before, magnifies just a small portion of the screen, making it much easier to see what you're sniping at. And after you've polished him off, you can stomp over and salvage anything that's left behind.

There's been a four-year gap between *MW2* and *MW3*, and the visual improvements are nothing short of dazzling. The game now encompasses indoor and outdoor environments, from narrow cliff ledges running above hauntingly empty mesas, to the cramped interior of enemy outposts with numerous objects and corners to lurk behind.

Weaponry is now more gratifying than before, with top animation accompanied by great sound effects. Hop outside your Mech to the third-person view and, with a suitably beefy 3D card, you can see your missiles streaking across the landscape to their target. Smoke trails behind them, and an eruption of light and metal fragments shows they've done their job. Ammunition rounds glow and lasers fizz. Enemy Mechs shake and flinch under heavy bombardment, and tumble into an exhausted heap when defeated. If they still have the power, electric motors whir noisily as they scramble to get to their feet again – it's sometimes hard to finish them off; but of course you do.

As before, the top half of your Mech twists independently from the torso, enabling you to swivel round and face your foe while legging it in a different direction. Choice of weaponry is important, as the heavier the gun, the slower your reactions. If you do end up taking damage, a mobile field base enables you to repair your armour and pump up supplies in the heat of battle.

THE STORY IS THIS...

The Inner Sphere (ie you) are still fighting Clan Smoke Jaguar and, as usual, neither side is particularly willing to call it a draw. While the battle rages, a Smoke Jaguar Star Colonel is back on his home world of

Developers Zipper were obviously out to impress from the off, and so the first mission starts with your Mech on the edge of a lake, the water texture ruffling gently below you. Engage forward drive and the steady thump, thump, thump of your robot legs disturbs a flock of gulls nesting on a nearby jetty. Thump, thump, thump and you've smashed a boat out of your way; crushed the roof of a fisherman's cottage; stomped on his wife. Thump, thump, thump...

THIS COULD BE FUN

Only something's not *quite* right here. The game lacks the immersive, strategic feel of *Starsiege* (PCZ #76, 88%) – with its bulletin boards, news feed and crew roster – ranking outward appearance over ambience. Additionally, the startlingly realistic Mechs make the surrounding terrain look decidedly bland – especially in comparison to the mysterious, far-reaching dunes of *Starsiege*. And the multiplayer aspects are surprisingly low-key, and don't feature the same sort of effortless connectivity as found in *Starsiege* and *Tribes*.

Finally, the main attraction of *MechWarrior 2* – and also of titles like *Battlezone* (PCZ #62, 81%) – was its choice blend of arcade and strategy. It appealed to a wide range of people, whether they 'dug' Mech games or not. The trouble with *MechWarrior 3* is

“Enemy Mechs shake and flinch under heavy bombardment, and tumble into an exhausted heap when defeated”

Tranquil (he tried living on the neighbouring planet of Rather Unpleasant, but the people there were just too nice), preparing a crack battalion of OmniMechs with the sole aim of microwaving your innards.

Your mission is to take part in a commando-style raid on Tranquil and destroy everything with a military purpose. The only trouble is that the Smoke Jaguars know they're beaten, and are likely to rip off both your arms before coming quietly. Luckily you have the assistance of other Inner Sphere Mechs and their pilots. You can issue them orders, for example, to defend your target, or get them to move into position elsewhere on the battlefield ready for an ambush. Missions, while rather linear and predictable, regularly allow you to take advantage of this.

that the balance isn't quite right. Maybe the promised multiplayer add-ons will give the game a kick, but until then *Starsiege* remains the one to beat. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Amazing graphics • Great sounds • Deformable terrain and buildings • Localised damage models • Rousing backing music • Weapons you want to fire all the time • Instant action options

DOWNERS Too tough in places • *Starsiege* has better ambience and is more involving • Baffling array of keyboard controls • Cut-scenes about twice as long as necessary

85 A great sequel, but not quite as good as *Starsiege*

IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING...

A few answers to a few questions that may have crossed your mind

WHAT IS MECHWARRIOR?

MechWarrior is a series of software titles set in the futuristic world BattleTech, a 'pen & paper' RPG devised and published by a company called FASA Corporation. These FASA people also have their own internal software division called FASA Interactive, and hold the licence for all BattleTech-derived products.

WHAT IS BATTLETECH?

The BattleTech universe centres around massive military robots that stomp around getting angry with one another. These formidable BattleMechs (or just plain Mechs for short) are piloted by humans who have banded together in various clans throughout the galaxy.

WHAT ABOUT ACTIVISION?

Although *MechWarrior 2* (PCZ #45, 88%) was a superb game, rumour has it that FASA were unhappy with Activision's interpretation of the unique BattleTech environment. The licence then passed to MicroProse, who soon after gave us *MechCommander* (PCZ #66, 85%).

WHAT ABOUT MECHWARRIOR 4?

FASA Interactive began work on the sequel to *MechWarrior 2*, but were beset with technical difficulties. While the boffins at FASA wrestled with insane lines of machine code, MicroProse asked Zipper Interactive to develop *MechWarrior 3*, and rescheduled FASA's efforts to be released as *MechWarrior 4* some time early next year.

WHAT ABOUT MICROSOFT?

They went and bought FASA Interactive early this year for an undisclosed sum. This means that *MechWarrior 4* is likely to be boxed as a Microsoft product.



There's no doubt that some maps are there to wow you.



There do seem to be a lot of red dots on the radar.



The zoom feature is fab, enabling you to magnify portions of enemy units for supremely accurate targeting.

WALKTHROUGH

INSTANT ACTION

MechWarrior 3 features a great Instant Action option, enabling you to get straight into battle without much farting around. Here's our step by step guide



1 Choose what you want to be, where you want to go and who's going to be with you.



2 Here we're starting off next to a burning wreck. Ominous stuff.



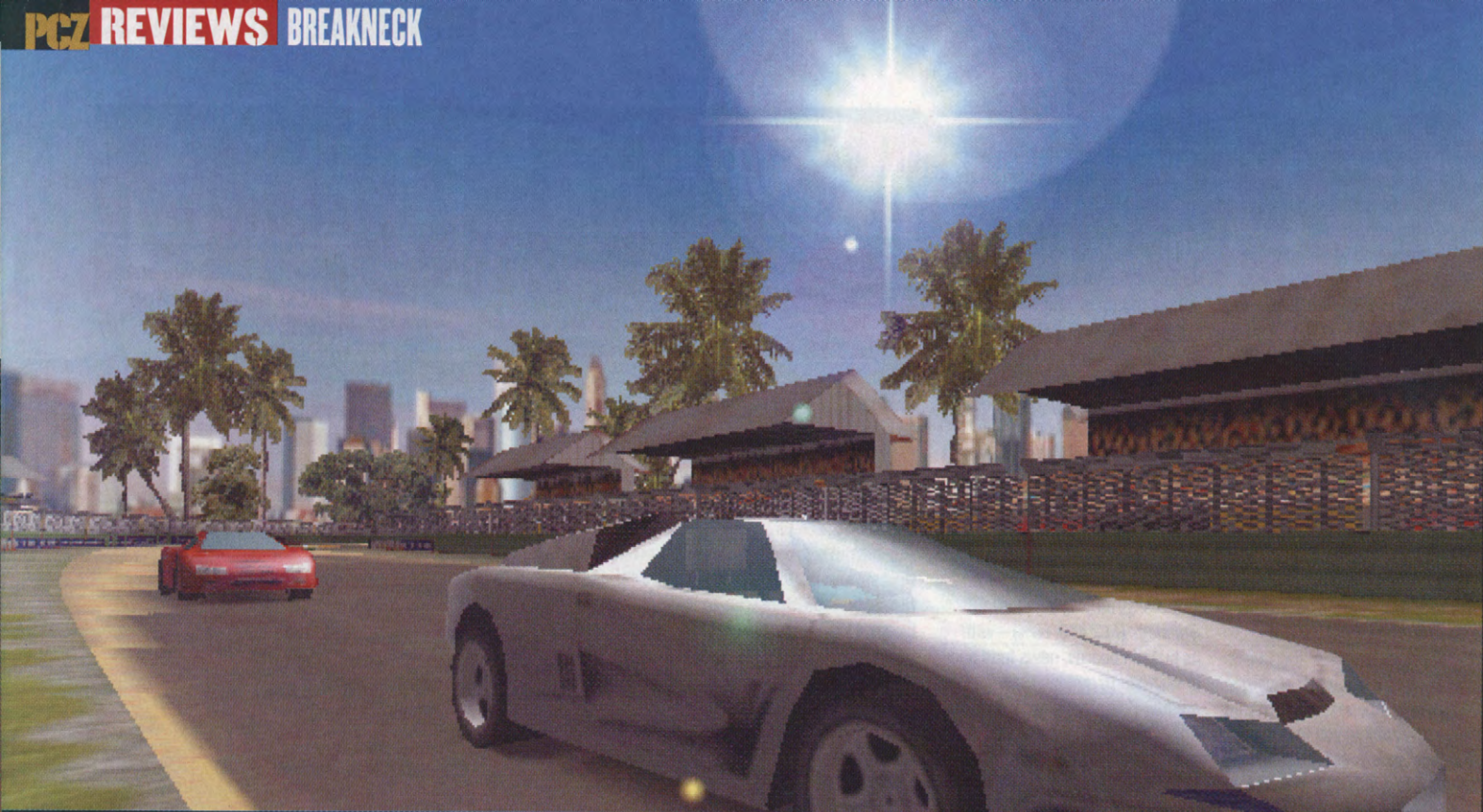
3 My chums have spotted something I haven't. I'd better turn around and have a look.



4 Oh dear, I seem to have fallen over.



5 Well that didn't last long.



No racing game would be complete without a token amount of lens flare.



Loads of locations are featured. Here's Arizona, apparently.



There's no cockpit view, but bonnet view suffices.



The gravity setting can be changed manually.

ALSO CONSIDER

NEED FOR SPEED III (Electronic Arts, £29.99) The latest instalment of the well-established series offers a few new twists, including a cops 'n' robbers option. Which is nice.

PCZ #69, 91%

MOTORHEAD (Gremlin Interactive, £14.99) Nothing to do with the grizzled rockers lead by rent-a-wart Lemmy, this nevertheless rocks bells.

PCZ #63, 90%

ULTIMATE RACE PRO (MicroProse, £12.99) The office favourite for a good couple of weeks, this was lucky to arrive during a period of unanimous depression.

PCZ #62, 88%

ROLLCAGE (Psygnosis, £39.99) Perhaps more suited to the PlayStation, this enables you to make like Lionel Richie – ooh, what a feeling, when you're driving on the ceiling.

PCZ #75, 88%

BREAKNECK

★ £29.99 • THQ • Out June

A game with 35 different vehicles, none of which Steve Hill can drive

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** With a decent 3D card you can probably get away with slightly less



The humble driving game has been a mainstay of the crazy, mixed-up world of interactive entertainment for as long as anyone can remember.

Ever since the advent of 'telly games', people have wanted to drive fast cars, regardless of whether they were old enough,

sober enough or qualified to do so. The appeal is obvious. In games, you can drive like a madman, breaching every law there is, while showing little regard for either fellow road users or your personal safety. Of course, were you to adopt a similar approach in the real world (wherever that is), you would at best be heavily castigated, at worst decapitated in horrendous circumstances. No such worries in a game, though. A violent spill simply results in the loss of a few seconds while a magical invisible hand puts your car back on the road. What a great idea...

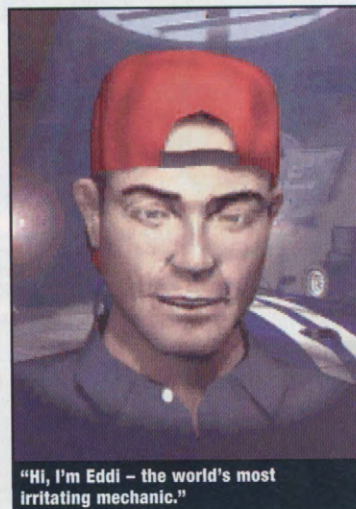
The point? The point is that games developers are fully aware of this and have been churning out racing games on an almost daily basis for the past 20 years. It is believed that there are currently some ten million driving games in existence, which is roughly one for every number in London. Enter game number ten million and one, *Breakneck* – the apt title referring to the snapping of the upper spinal column that can occur during a high-speed collision.

So what does it do differently? For starters, compared to any game more than three or four

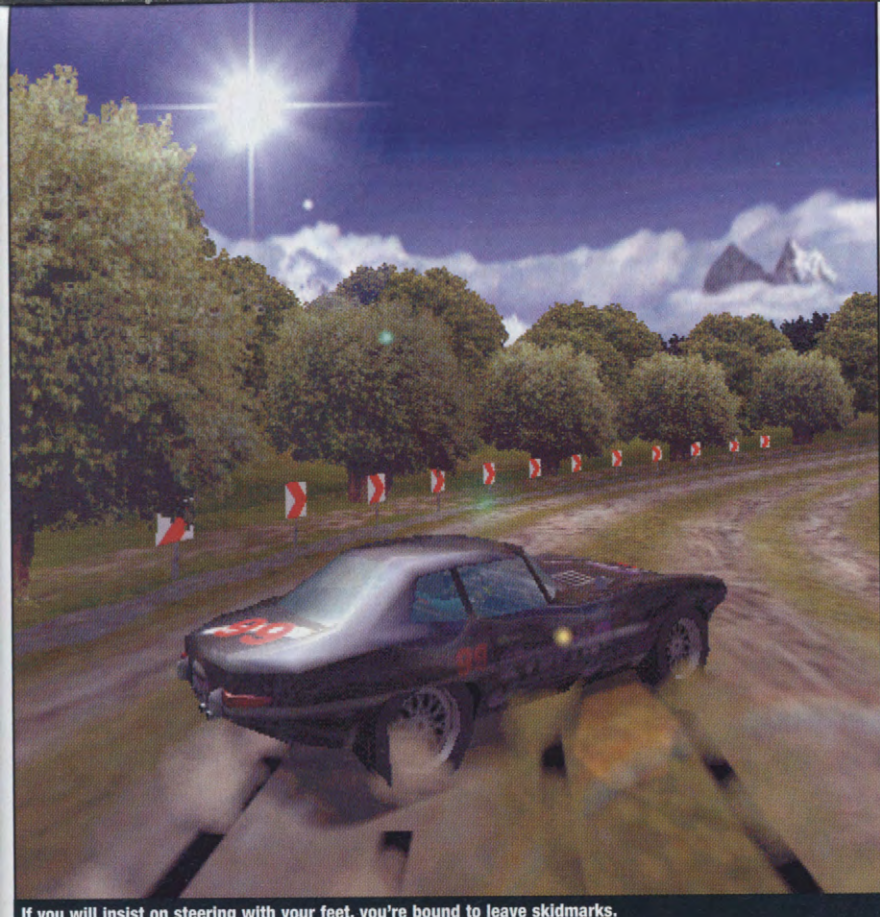
NICE GUY EDDI

Your helpful, 'humorous' mechanic

Comedy in games has hitherto been a fairly hit-and-miss affair, and the attempts of German developers Synetics in *Breakneck* fall firmly into the latter category. The 'laughs' come by way of a peripheral character called Eddi, who is supposed to be your mechanic. Between races, and even in-game via the radio, if desired, he is to be found offering unwanted advice in a sarcastic manner, including such mirth-inducing lines as: "Are you using the wrong tyres or do you always drive like shit?" How we laughed. Fortunately, there's an option to switch him off if he's annoying you (their words). In our experience, this represents a victory for common sense.



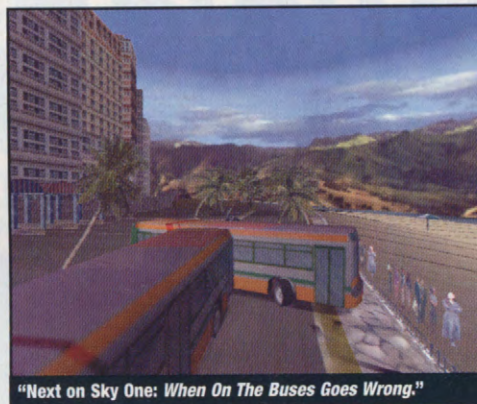
"Hi, I'm Eddi - the world's most irritating mechanic."



If you will insist on steering with your feet, you're bound to leave skidmarks.



"Hey! Check me out!"



"Next on Sky One: When On The Buses Goes Wrong."



No need to buy *Monster Truck Madness* now.

years old, it looks sensational. The advent of 3D accelerator cards has a lot to do with it, but some time in the past few years, games went and got good.

LOOK AT ME

A quick look at *Breakneck* appears to confirm this. Put simply, it looks like a car driving down a road. Other than incorporating video, it's hard to see how the graphics could be improved.

In the glorified amusement arcade that is the PC ZONE office, there is constantly some game or other being put through its paces, most of which elicit little more than an uninterested shrug from any passers-by. But while *Breakneck* has been on heavy rotation in the white-hot crucible of technology known as the PC ZONE test laboratory (in reality a darkened room near the kitchen), an abnormal number of people have simply had to stop and

stare, often emitting some kind of vaguely orgasmic sound, with the more technically-minded muttering about frame rates. The graphics are genuinely a sensation and *Breakneck* must rank as one of the best-looking racing games we've seen.

The PC may have come in for a lot of criticism as a games machine but graphically, at least, it is untouchable, and *Breakneck* is head and shoulders above the

“Compared to any game more than three or four years old, it looks sensational... *Breakneck* must rank as one of the best-looking racing games we've seen”

likes of *Gran Turismo*. We kid you not. *Breakneck* is as smooth as silk, waxed with Vaseline, in a jacuzzi, smoking a cigar.

Obviously, you're going to need a fairly hefty set-up to get the best out of it - there's no point in trying to run it on your

dad's word processor - but it's certainly worth the investment.

DREAMWORLD

Okay, so *Breakneck* looks like a dream (in the clichéd sense, as opposed to when you're in your back garden, except it's not really your back garden, and you've lost your shoes, and your teeth have come loose, and Anna Friel arrives just as you wake up). However, cynics will rightly point

out that if you want to look at cars, you might as well sit by a dual carriageway. The elusive gameplay is all and, as other, less imaginative magazines are wont to exclaim, *Breakneck* has it in spades. Talking of spades (and clichés), the game moves like shit

off a shovel, which provoked debate in the office about how fast shit would actually fly off a shovel. The general consensus was that it would depend on the consistency of the shit in question, not to mention the texture of the shovel (*More importantly, the acceleration and linear and angular velocity of the shovel, the surrounding air density, the adhesive quotient of the shit/shovel interface, etc - Science Ed*).

If you've been reading this with your hands over the pictures, you might have assumed that *Breakneck* is simply a car game. No way, José. Try trucks, superkarts, monster trucks, Grand Prix cars, even buses, for Gawd's sake.

Essentially, what the developers have done is to make a really good racing game and then cram it with as much nifty stuff as is physically possible. There's a host of different modes,

including a violent weapons-orientated option and a complicated career mode. As the nitwits in the *TV Times* advert used to exclaim: "I never knew there was so much in it."

On top of this, it's extremely flexible, and almost everything can be tweaked to suit your preferences. So, do we like it? Yeah, it's all right. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Sensational graphics
 - Huge variety of vehicles • 24 different tracks, with 192 variations
 - Extremely flexible options
 - Very affordable
- DOWNERS** Waspish engine sounds
 - Career menu appalling • Almost too fast • Eddi will drive you nuts

89 A speed freak's dream



JUST SHOOT THE FOKKERS DOWN

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RELEASE: END OF JUNE 1999



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Acclaim

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Project Two Interactive, B.V. - P.O. Box 6190 - 2001 HD Haarlem - The Netherlands - Tel: +31 (0)23 5341559 - Fax: +31 (0)23 5322327 - <http://www.project2.com>

MALKARI

★ £34.99 • Interactive Magic • Out now

Malkari is the name, space combat and strategy is the game, as space combat strategist Andrew Wright discovers

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** P166 with 32Mb RAM recommended

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

ALSO CONSIDER

STARS! (Empire Interactive, £24.99) Released back in 1997, *Stars!* was one of the first in-depth space exploration and conquest games with full multiplayer support. Complicated but original.

PCZ #50, 82%

STAR WARS: SUPREMACY (Lucas Arts, £34.99) A feeble attempt at strategy gaming set in the ever-popular *Star Wars* universe. Good multiplayer support though.

PCZ #64, 68%

Part resource management, part strategy and part wargame, *Malkari* is set in a randomly created solar system consisting of 100 or more asteroids.

Starting in control of one of the asteroids, your mission is to take charge of as many of the others as you can, exploiting them for minerals and power and defending them with fleets of spaceships or ground vehicles. Wiping out anyone else in the game is obviously an option too.

To spice things up a bit, there are five different 'guilds', each representing a different philosophy, technology and culture, and each of which is in turn made up of eight different 'chapters' – hence the support for up to 40 players in multiplayer mode either across the Internet or a network. The chapters in each guild are allied at first, although things can change depending on the final victory conditions set by the host player.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

You play the leader of one particular chapter, starting with a space station and a scout ship orbiting a home asteroid which has a number of ground vehicles already mining the surface for four different minerals (silicates, metals, exotic and reactive materials), and is producing organics and power.

Quite why things are the way they are is covered in the game's comprehensive 150-page manual, so suffice to say your first task is to scout the nearby asteroids and build a transport to colonise it with ground vehicles.

Next you need armed spaceships to defend yourself, more transports, more scouts to explore further afield, and a fleet of heavily armed destroyers, cruisers and ultra-powerful battleships to take out rival guilds and protect your transport convoys. And so it goes...

“If you're after intense gameplay, in-depth strategy and entertaining presentation, Malkari is well worth aiming at”

TIME AND SPACE

In case you're thinking that this all sounds a bit tedious, *Malkari* does have at least one or two things going for it. The solar system is three-dimensional, and you can use one of four different camera views and multiple levels of zoom to navigate your way around. However, each asteroid has a different orbital speed and path, so two asteroids that are close together at the start might be at opposite ends of the galaxy a few turns later. To get to grips with this you can switch to future view and track the movement of each asteroid – not just in space, but also in time – using simple video-style controls. This opens up all kinds

of new strategies in which you colonise rapidly moving asteroids and let them take attacking fleets and space stations deep into enemy territory.

Malkari is a vast, complicated game in which you can spend hours customising your spaceships, trading minerals and other resources, or maximising extraction from each asteroid, but at its simplest it's about combat, combat and more combat. However, the main problem is that despite the complex rules, battles are played out at the end of a turn and you don't really get to find out what happened. Watching a transport blow up with a 3D explosion and wonderful sound effects doesn't tell you what you did wrong or how you can improve the life expectancy of its replacement. The graphical summary is hopelessly inadequate, and is the only thing that lets the game down.

In terms of its interface, *Malkari* is excellent. The 'go to' bar along the top of the main screen is a neat idea that makes it easy to switch between your various ships and asteroid bases, while the filter buttons and the navigation grid make it easy to see what's going on and where.

You need all the help you can get, as the game very quickly becomes fast and furious.

If you're after intense gameplay, in-depth strategy and entertaining presentation, *Malkari* is worth aiming at. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Neat graphics • Flexible interface and zoom levels • Solid and addictive gameplay
- DOWNERS** Confusing at first • Non-existent combat feedback

83 High on detail, and lovely to look at



A pretty map of the solar system.



DIY spaceships are all the rage. Choose a hull and add construction, computer, damage control, defence, power, propulsion, scout, stealth, tracking, transport, and weapon modules.



You don't have much control over combat.



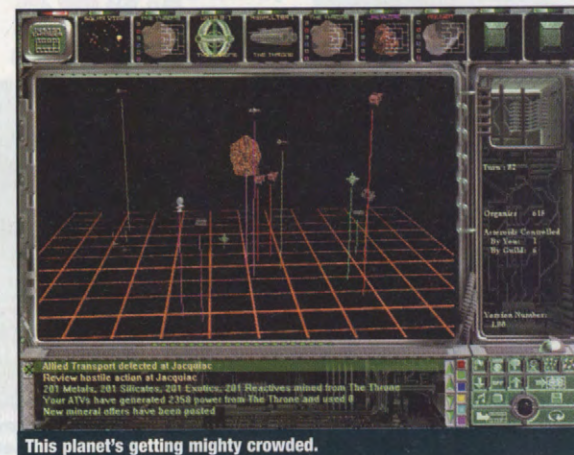
Everything in the game can be changed.



Orbital view: three spaceships and the movement/combat grid.



A two-dimensional grid represents the asteroid surface.



This planet's getting mighty crowded.

STAR TREK: BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION

★ £34.99 • MicroProse • Out now

A star is born. Mark Hill assists with the delivery...

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards **WE SAY** At least a P166 with 32Mb RAM



As a fleet of *Star Trek* games prepare for battle with *The Force* of a certain blockbuster, the galaxy breathes a sigh of relief that none of them are based on the atrocious *ST: Insurrection* film.

Birth Of The Federation, if you hadn't already guessed from the screenshots, is a turn-based strategy game in space, with more than a passing reference to the classic *Master Of Orion 2* (PCZ #45, 92%). Although it's based on the *Next Generation* series, *BOTF* doesn't follow any preset storyline or include any of the characters from the TV programmes.

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

If you're put off by the words 'turn-based' and '*Star Trek TNG*', you shouldn't be. Real-time strategy doesn't have the same scope for depth and complexity as turn-based gameplay, which is why real-time games are either action-orientated or include the option to slow down time (not very effective for suspension of disbelief). If you want a truly immersive and thoughtful gaming experience, you should learn to accept turn-based

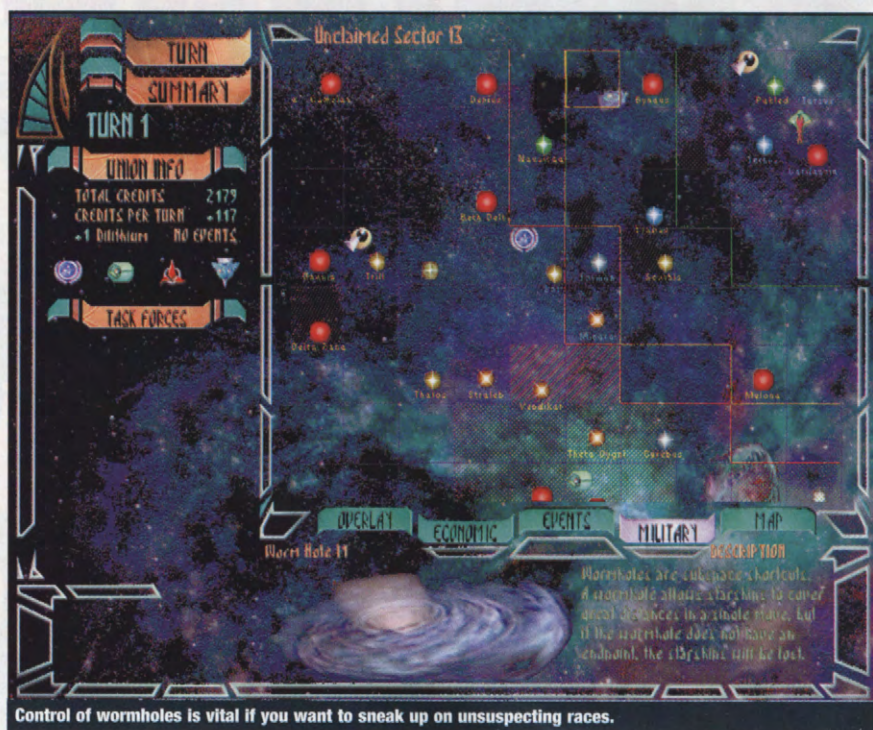
strategy. In the meantime, the *Next Gen* setting provides a recognisable background and a set of well-defined, rounded aliens without any of the series' bad jokes and overwrought sentimentality. You get the feeling that there is a real universe out there, populated with distinct races – an environment in which you are completely free to act as you wish.

NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL

Choosing to lead one of five races (the human Federation, Klingons, Romulans, Ferengi and Cardassians), you can customise your game from the size and shape of the universe to the technological level at which each race begins. Whatever level they start at, each culture can only speculate about the possibility of life on other planets until they go exploring. The maps are randomly generated, so whoever you choose, you never know who your neighbours are going to be.

How you play the game, and how other races react to you, largely depend on who you choose to be. If you play as the Ferengi, the emphasis is on trading. Playing as the Klingons involves kicking arse, rather than using diplomacy – as a result, other races fear you and are unwelcoming towards you. You get the idea.

Even if you don't know anything about the *Star Trek*



Control of wormholes is vital if you want to sneak up on unsuspecting races.

universe, every time you meet a new species you're given a diplomatic report explaining their main traits and ambitions, although this report is inevitably tainted by your race's own views.

research before you encounter other cultures, while playing on a smaller map means almost instant conflict.

One of the game's biggest triumphs is the diplomatic aspect,

You need to form friendly relations before you can trade with another system, which then provides you with a much-needed economic boost. The more credits you have, the faster you can build ships and structures and the more you can win over other races.

Through the Research screen, you can decide which areas to concentrate on, as well as investigate the comprehensive tech and object database. This section is a real hard-core Trekkie encyclopedia and, in its own right, will no doubt keep fans occupied for hours on end.

If you've always wanted to know how antimatter fusion works, or fancy impressing your mates by knowing what the hell quantum epitaxy means, then the encyclopedia is the place to look.

“BOTF is not only the game *Star Trek* fans have been praying for, but also an essential purchase for hard-core strategy nuts”

JUGGLING PLANETS

Birth Of The Federation combines a mixture of war, diplomacy, spying, resource management and research. How much time you spend on each is up to you, but you won't get anywhere unless you strike a successful balance. Obviously, if you play on a large map, you have time to concentrate on

where impressive use of artificial intelligence ensures a realistic response to all your actions and requests. From the Diplomacy screen you can access information on all the races you've met, along with their current attitude towards you (from enraged to worshipful), as well as information about alliances and wars declared.



Blast those hoo-mans to hell. A few bars of Klingon opera should do the trick.

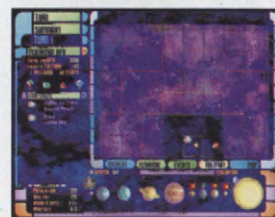


Choose your allies carefully – Romulans have a nasty habit of stabbing you in the back.

WALKTHROUGH

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

If you want to expand quickly, you have to convince the little guys to join you



First, send your scout ship exploring until you meet a minor race.

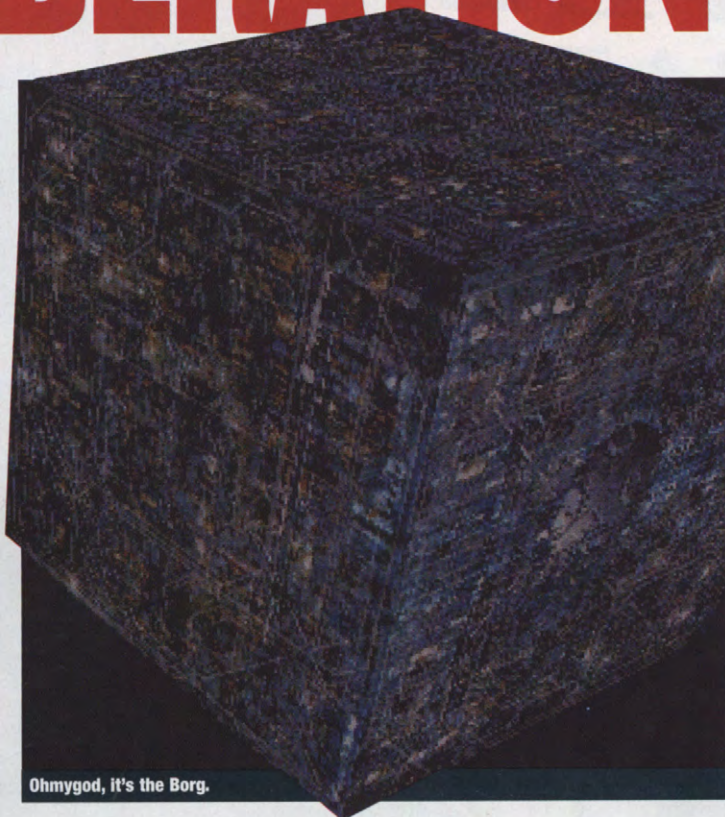
THE FEDERATION



Things get complicated later on.



Minor races are the key to the game.



Ohmygod, it's the Borg.

BATTLE STATIONS

As *BOTF* is a turn-based strategy game, it's no surprise that its battle sequences are somewhat lacking. These are also turn-based and, while it's good to see your ships in 3D (you can zoom in and rotate around them to your heart's content), the clashes aren't that spectacular and are over far too quickly. It's often a case of whoever has the meanest ship wins, so even if you can issue commands every turn, there's little tactical thinking to do.

But there's so much more to *Birth Of The Federation* that we can forgive this misdemeanour. We've been playing the game solidly for a week now and we're still finding surprises. We won't spoil them for you, though, because a key to the addictive

nature of the gameplay is the discovery of these little secrets. From the start, you're absorbed by the number of things to see and do – such as going from system to system, terraforming planets and making them habitable, or finding a wormhole leading to the other side of the galaxy and seizing the advantage of having a far-flung outpost as part of your jurisdiction (we could almost see the look of bewilderment on the Cardassians' faces when our Romulan fleet decloaked in the middle of their territory).

Then there are all the surprise messages that keep cropping up (natural disasters destroying structures, wealthy citizens dying and leaving you their fortune, spatial anomalies and all that), not

to mention the appearance of the dreaded Borg. And, of course, there are all those lovely ships and structures that become available after you've researched them. And handy new special abilities brought into play by recruiting new members to your empire... The amount of detail is astounding.

BIRTH CONTROL

If you think *BOTF* looks rather confusing, we have to concur that it is – at least for the first couple of hours. But the whole thing clicks into place after some practice. The interface is well thought-out and essential menus are only a click or two away.

At the end of the day, *BOTF* is not only the game *Star Trek* fans have been praying for, but also an

essential purchase for hard-core strategy nuts. While there may not be any proper *Star Trek* characters to control and send on missions, in terms of depth, presentation, playability, immersion and sheer wonder, *Star Trek: Birth Of The Federation* is light years ahead. **LW**

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS** Incredible depth • Will appeal to non-Trekkie strategy fans
 - Excellent AI • Loads of surprises
- DOWNERS** Lame battle sequences
 - No *Star Trek* characters

89 The best *Star Trek* game yet

ALSO CONSIDER

MASTER OF ORION 2 (MicroProse, £9.99) Despite its age, it's still one of the most absorbing deep space strategy games available.

PCZ #45, 92%

SUPREMACY (LucasArts, £34.99) This disappointing *Star Wars* attempt at strategy offered a false sense of depth, but it did have all the film characters.

PCZ #64, 68%

SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI (EA, £39.99) A futuristic take on *Civilization* that offers immense depth, with Mr Meier's seal of approval.

PCZ #74, 92%

I SPY...

Set your intelligence forces to work

Once you've met some of the other major races, you need to set up an intelligence network so you can spy on them and maybe enact sabotage, while at the same time saving enough resources for internal security. You even get opportunities to implicate enemies in acts of sabotage by leaving false evidence, perhaps even causing rifts in treaties and alliances. What better way to get rid of your opponents than to have them fight each other?



Decide who you want to bug.



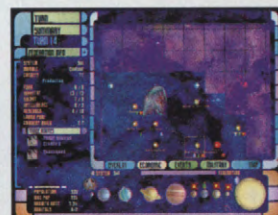
Coups or cock-ups are reported.



2 When you find one, study the diplomatic report carefully. They'll need to have a neutral disposition towards you, and abilities worth exploiting.



3 Shower them with gifts, like X-rated holo-suites, and ashtrays with your logo, and they'll become receptive.



4 Once you've established a friendship, set up a trade route and lull them into a false sense of security.



5 Affiliation is next. Wait until they think you're the greatest thing since replicated bread, then offer them membership.



6 Now watch your range and power expand. You can start building warships, burger chains and large cinema multiplexes on your newly acquired world.

END

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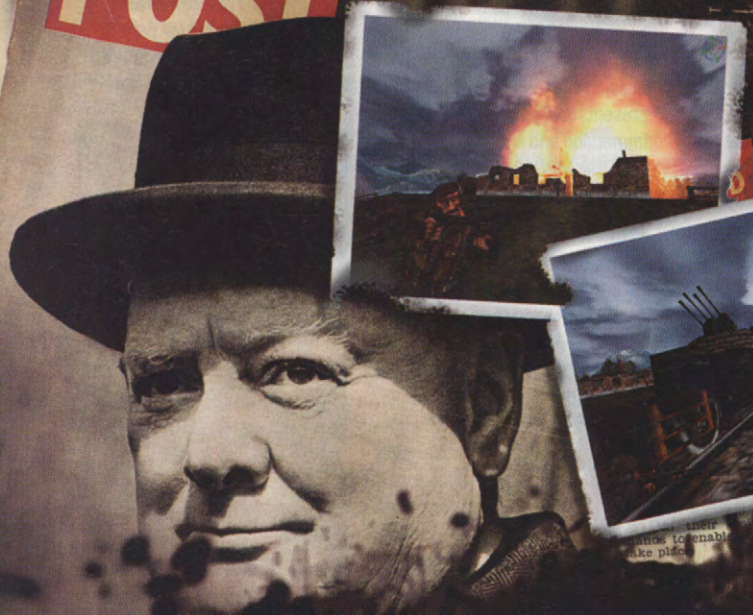
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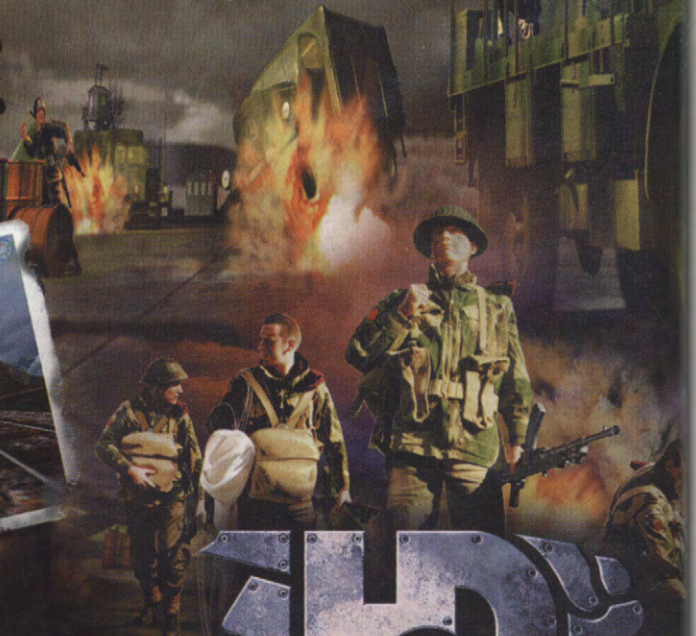
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norway germany *deep engrossing*



HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

unparalleled war authenticity

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- Force feedback support through Windows 95/98.
- 4 Player co-operative action over LAN-co-ordinate your strikes!



CRICKET WORLD CUP 99

★ £34.99 • EA Sports • Out now

It's the World Cup. Not the real one, obviously. Craig Vaughan steps up to defend England's honour

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** DirectX 6 **SUPPORTS** 3D accelerators **WE SAY** Just about right – cricket isn't a fast and frantic game, so don't fret if you haven't got a 3D card



The lack of decent cricket games on the PC is as criminal as Geoffrey Boycott's infamous fisticuffs in a certain French hotel. Until now, willow-heads have been stuck with Empire's *International Cricket Captain* (PCZ #66, 68%), a creaky management simulation, and Codemasters' action game *Brian Lara Cricket* (PCZ #75, 85%). Clearly the sport is seriously under-represented on the PC, possibly as a result of its staid and boring reputation (let's face it, we all played cricket at school and it was only ever fun if you were batting, or snogging that girl from 5E in the outfield).

Undeterred, EA have stepped in with the official game of this year's World Cup which they've presented with Sky Sports-like production values. Although *Cricket World Cup 99* offers less diverse cricketing opportunities than Codemasters' effort (*CWC 99* is restricted to representing the World Cup), EA have included the full-blown tournament, a genuinely useful training mode and a One Day Match option. Regardless of which you opt for, the game engine animates the players in spookily lifelike fashion courtesy of the Holloake brothers, who allowed themselves to be

motion-captured – but there are a few rough edges. These include the infamous Voodoo 'flat crowd graphics'™, bowlers who face the wrong way but still catch the ball, and fielders who perform heroically with their backs to the action.

BACK TO SCHOOL

All praise though to the ball physics – they're a beauty to behold. It's supremely gratifying experimenting with the varying degrees of spin and pace you can apply (although England fans will

“Although Cricket World Cup 99 is fun and instantly accessible, only those who can endure the sustained lack of pace will really appreciate the depth on offer”

bemoan the lack of a 'rub grit into the ball' option). Taking wickets involves clicking the left mouse button to set pace and run-up parameters, while holding the right button and dragging the mouse to apply spin, cut and seam. If all that sounds ham-fisted, then think again, because after ten overs on the training ground you'll be blasting those stumps out of the ground.

Batting is even more fun. Again, the mouse controls your player's movement at the crease, and a circle in the grass gives an indication of where the ball is likely to pitch – a simple mouse click sends bat after ball. Timing is crucial though: play a stroke prematurely, or too late, and you could end up cutting the shot or, worse still, edging it to the slips. Thankfully you can also opt to play a defensive shot or back off entirely (practising that desperate 'I never touched it' expression employed by successive England openers over the last decade). Fielding can be either manual or automated, and is handled in similarly sensible fashion.

TOUGH AS OLD BOOTS

The joy of this game is that perseverance brings tangible progress, and with it genuine satisfaction. It's so challenging that you *will* remember your first six, your first outfield catch and your first century – because you'll have earned them. As a result, this isn't a game for 'hit and hope' heroes, although undeniably they'll have a limited degree of success against the poorer teams such as Kenya (and England), who can be slapped around the grounds like Boycott's aforementioned ex. Rather, it's the plodding David Gower style of play (reflected in his contemplative commentary) that pays dividends and wins matches. Which means that although *Cricket World Cup 99* is fun and instantly accessible, only those who can endure the sustained lack of pace will really appreciate the depth on offer. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

- ⬆️ **UPPERS** It looks and plays beautifully
 - The strategy options complement the action game
 - It's infinitely tweakable
 - The atmosphere is totally absorbing
 - The online support is top-notch
- ⬇️ **DOWNERS** It's cricket • It needs patience and concentration • It takes forever to play properly • You can only play in the World Cup

80 Tough, engaging and supremely rewarding



England's smallest bowler steps up (it's the stump cam, actually).

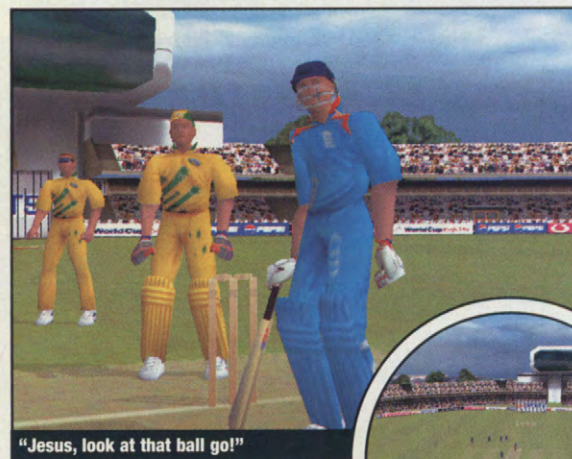
ALSO CONSIDER

EA CRICKET 97 (EA Sports, £34.99). This is about the only sports title that EA don't update every six months. A good all-rounder in its day, but showing its age now. **PCZ #49, 80%**

BRIAN LARA CRICKET (Codemasters, £34.99). Graphically inferior to the game under review here, but highly playable nonetheless. **PCZ #75, 85%**



“Don't shoot. You can have your ball back.”



“Jesus, look at that ball go!”



One of the many diverse camera angles: passing seagull cam.

It must be the first over (the England openers are still at the crease).

STAT WILL DO NICELY

Cricket anoraks will be bowled over by the wealth of team and player stats on offer. You're supplied with all the latest official data, which is updatable online via EA's website. The teams and players play true to form too.



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Having explored the darkest regions of the Amazon jungle (via the Internet), Colin decided, for reasons only known to himself, that he wanted to join the Ungowa tribe. Their initiation ceremony involved dangling by the nipples for three days. Unfortunately his attempt was unsuccessful - soon after the photograph was taken, Colin's ceiling fell in and left him in casualty for eight hours.

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BLOOD II: THE NIGHTMARE LEVELS

★ £19.99 • GT Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 (P233 without hardware acceleration) Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3D acceleration through Direct3D **WE SAY** If *Blood II* runs okay, you can run this

Following on from the events in *Blood II*, *The Nightmare Levels* sees the four Chosen wandering through the wasteland on their way back from defeating the Cabal. Setting up camp for the night, they roast hot dogs by the fire and tell horror stories. Then, as if by magic, they're warped away to face their nemesis once more. Gideon, the vanquished Cabal leader, narrates the proceedings in ethereal form, no doubt to give the slapdash missions some sort of grounding. In actual fact he's more of an annoyance, especially as you can't skip through his lengthy monologues.

The highlight of the new additions is the Flayer, a magical new weapon that shoots hooks into its victim's skin and tears limbs off in spectacular and bloody fashion. There's also the auto-shotgun, which does exactly what you'd expect it to. Both are decent

weapons, but it's hardly worth buying this mission pack for those alone.

'How do we make a great game even better?' That's the question designers should be asking themselves when they set out to create mission packs, rather than 'How many new weapons and monsters can we fit in.' In developers Monolith's case, it seems they didn't even ask themselves that.

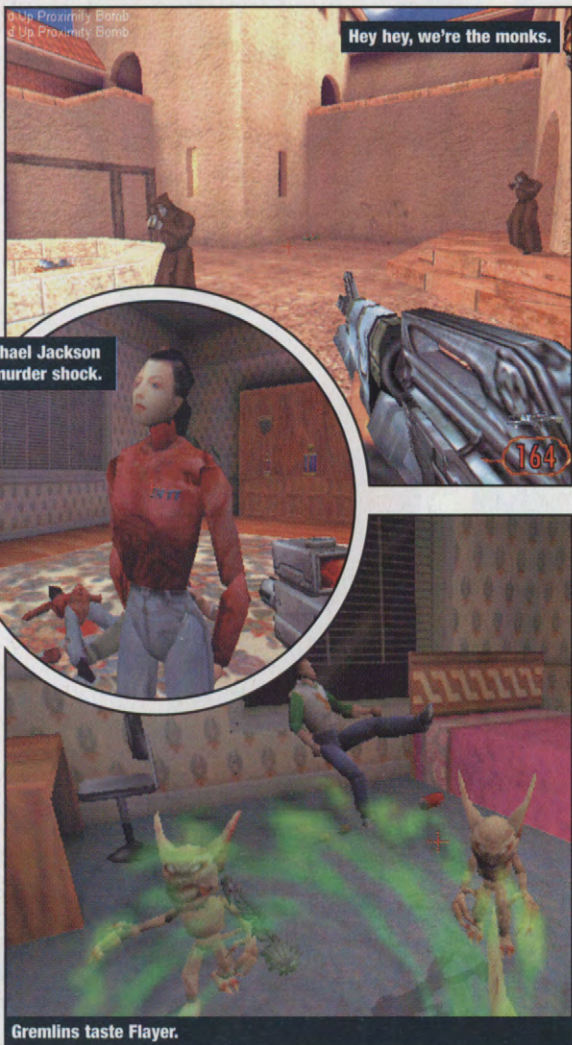
Six new levels, two weapons and three enemies (one old, two new) are nothing to shout about, especially when all six levels are so poorly designed that they can be completed in just a few short hours. Although the hooded monks from the original *Blood* make a welcome return in two of the levels, there is little else that lifts *Blood II: The Nightmare Levels* above the ordinary.

Basically, it feels as though Monolith have bundled together all their leftover ideas before starting work on *Blood III*. That being the case, we suggest you avoid this and hope that the next instalment brings something fresh to the story.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZVERDICT

51%



JACK NICKLAUS 6: GOLDEN BEAR CHALLENGE

★ £29.99 • Activision • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P200 with a bit more memory recommended for smooth play



Prepare to enter the scary world of M&S sweaters, silk socks and chameleonic trousers, with Jack Nicklaus's sixth outing on the PC. Despite the fact that there's an ever-increasing abundance of them, golf games are difficult to get excited about. On the other hand, good golf games can be incredibly relaxing and moreish. And *Jack Nicklaus 6* definitely falls into that category.

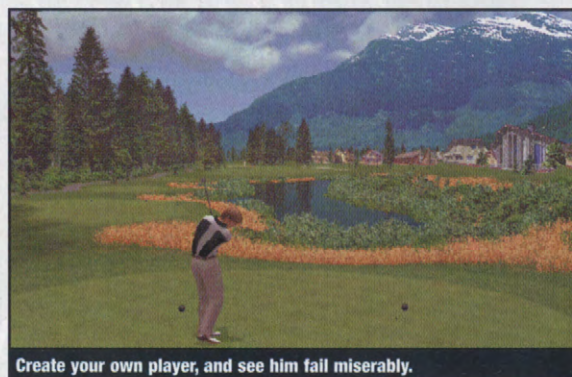
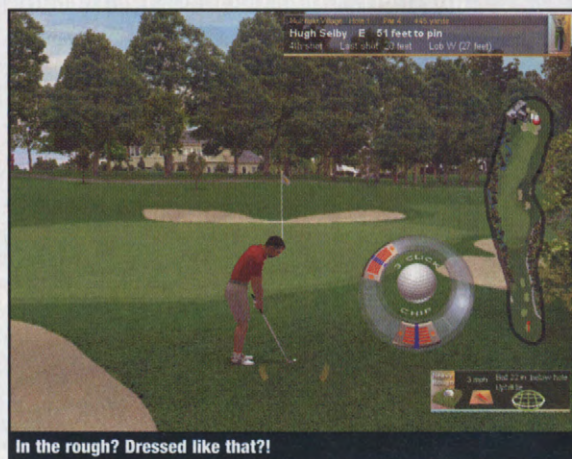
In terms of graphics it's a big improvement on its predecessor – the players no longer look as if they're in the middle of a bowel movement when they swing, and the animation is incredibly smooth. But what really matters is that it's so easy to play and get into that you can start playing competitive games from

the off. Luckily, while you do occasionally send your ball into bunkers, trees and lakes, you feel completely in control of your clubs. As with most golf games these days, you can choose between a three or two-click swing, and the infamous 'mouse swing'.

On the down side, the commentary is dull and repetitive, although you do get some useful tips from the Golden Bear himself. No other real players have been included, but you can create your own in an almost RPG character-building fashion. This means that you can change the speed of the swing controller in exchange for higher or lower skills in other areas. You can also build your own courses when you get bored with the six provided; the course designer includes loads of options and details that can be tweaked, but it's actually quite easy to use.

Overall, *Jack Nicklaus 6* is a viable alternative to *Tiger Woods* (PCZ #69, 93%), even if it doesn't quite match EA's faultless presentation.

Mark Hill



PCZVERDICT

84%



Nice postcards don't make good games.



Hitting the belfry isn't easy. Now if they supplied a rocket launcher...

PRO 18: WORLD TOUR GOLF

★ £39.99 • Psygnosis • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb **WE SAY** A heftier machine will cut down loading times

Let's face it, golf games are never going to set the world alight. There are some games, however, that *should* be set alight, and in our opinion *Pro 18* is one of them. The players look like they've been cut out of a magazine and stuck on a poorly scanned photograph, while the spectators look so stupid they could be advertising John Smith's. None of this would matter so much if there was a playable and enjoyable game beneath the shoddy exterior, but there isn't. Instead there's a confusing and messy interface and less than convincing physics. Gameplay isn't particularly intuitive, and is less fun than it should be. Add to this the fact that loading times are frustratingly long, and that most of the time you can hardly make out the ball, and what you end up with is a bit of duffer.

Mark Hill

PCZVERDICT

46%



"'Ere, 'as tha sin that *Tunguska*?" as they'll be saying all over Yorkshire.

TUNGUSKA: LEGEND OF FAITH

★ £39.99 • Project Two Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb **WE SAY** That's fine

When we first saw this ecclesiastical combat adventure about a year ago, we told the developers to go away and make it better, even offering some specific suggestions. So have they taken a blind bit of notice? Yes they have, and incorporated a number of our ideas, most notably getting the lead character to put his shirt back on.

However, this isn't enough to save *Tunguska* from mediocrity. The concept is rotten from the start, and they might have been better off considering our initial advice to forget the entire thing. *Tunguska* might have raised an eyebrow in 1993, but at best it's a poor man's *Ecstatica*. At worst it's *Cadfael* with nunchukas.

Steve Hill

PCZVERDICT

40%



When you die in *Fireteam*, you can roam around in ghost form.



Fireteam's game lobby is a cinch to get to grips with.



Not so much *Team Fortress Classic* as *Team Fortress Retro*.

FIRETEAM

★ £34.99 • Cryo • Out June

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 28.8Kbps modem **WE SAY** No problems with that set-up

ONLINE ONLY

Fireteam is an isometric squad-based action game, a kind of futuristic *Diablo*. And because it's online-only, there are no 'real' missions to choose from – just three characters and a ton of levels.

Apart from the fact that *Fireteam* is very stable and rarely dogged by connection problems, what sets it apart from most online games is the built-in voice communications software. Coming with a pair of headphones and one of those mics that makes you look like someone from Apollo 18 Mission Control, *Fireteam* enables you to talk to your team-mates in real time. This lends the game unrivalled co-operative play, as the more skilled player can tutor the rest without having to type in commands letter by letter.

The graphics are crisp and clear, the levels many and varied, and the sound about as realistic as it gets. Sadly though, the gameplay is so simplistic it's

practically nonexistent. With only three characters to choose from (scout, commando, gunner), each with only one main weapon, the game feels seriously underweight compared to *Half-Life's Team Fortress Classic*. And because it's all in 2D, *Fireteam* is – by design – lacking that extra dimension in more ways than one. Characters seem to move faster diagonally than they do vertically or horizontally, and with only a few extra items to pick up the game very quickly becomes monotonous. As an exercise in team play, it's only with the headset that it becomes worth playing.

And it's overpriced. Even though it's free to play (except for local calls), the only difference between the UK version and the US version we reviewed is the orange box that it comes in. Which must mean that ours is a limited edition. Anyway, we don't really want it. In fact, the first reader to email us with the exact number of words in this review can have it. We'll keep the headset though, if that's okay?

In summary, *Fireteam* is unexciting: easy to learn, easy to master, easy to tire of.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZVERDICT

40%

LOVE

THE INTERNET

HATE

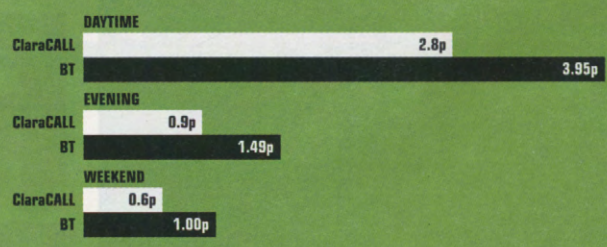
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Sports Car: the 3Dfx version has some wonderful special effects.

SPORTS CAR GT

★ £39.95 • Electronic Arts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166

Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Microsoft Steering Wheel, 3Dfx and Direct3D **WE SAY** It 'buzzes' on a P266. With 32Mb. And a steering wheel. And a 3D card...

They say that successful comedy relies on good timing. And the same argument holds true for software releases. Chasing the exhaust of Codemasters' outstanding *TOCA 2* (PCZ #76, 93%), this racer is stuck in second gear by comparison (which explains the lack of pre-release fanfare). Although it's pitched as a simulation, it's superbly controllable from the off – if you've got a steering wheel, that is; strangely, using a joystick is fraught with problems, as even minor deviations from steering 'dead ahead' send you spinning out like a duck on ice.

It looks beautiful – despite heavy doses of 'pop-up' – with all the European hot-rods handling in subtly different fashion, and although there are only eight championship tracks on offer the opposition poses a mammoth challenge, racing almost faultlessly and with real aggression. Unsurprisingly, without a 3D card the game starts to fall apart – losing many of the special effects and the convincing sensation of speed – meaning that only GT fans with all the necessary hardware (and racing skills to match) will get any mileage out of it. Casual gamers would do well to steer clear.

Craig Vaughan

PCZVERDICT 70%



One of us has totally lost the plot. And it's not me. Probably.



In *Liath* you have a range of spells at your disposal.

LIATH

★ £39.99 • Project 2 Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133

Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Another 16Mb RAM definitely helps

Adventure games stand or fall on the quality of their interface, and *Liath* limps along way behind the intuitive LucasArts titles that are a benchmark for the genre.

Although the control method is pretty standard point-and-click, you often end up pointing and clicking away on scenery that doesn't seem to offer much in the way of interaction. Everything is icon-driven, but rather than being informative the icons tend to be a bit confusing, which makes the first half hour of play frustrating as you try to figure out exactly what you're supposed to do. The manual is of little help, offering some of the most incomprehensible blurb this side of Bill Clinton's defence. Though this approach may have been designed to encourage exploration, the only thing it really achieves is to provoke your annoyance.

After getting used to the somewhat minimal control system, *Liath* is soon revealed to be a fairly standard adventure game with nothing to really make it worth an outlay of 40 quid. Fans of the genre will have seen it all before, and beginners will just get bored.

However, if you've got something of a fetish for prog rock album cover art and don't want to be bothered with any interaction, then it's perfect.

Matthew Burgess

PCZVERDICT 39%



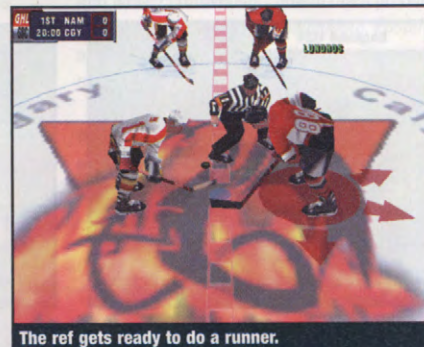
You can interact with the sailors down the docks. Whatever next?



Puck in the middle with you.



Brought to you live in wonderful Jerk-0-Vision.



The ref gets ready to do a runner.

ACTUA ICE HOCKEY 2

★ £29.99 • Gremlin Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** Direct3D **WE SAY** PII and 32Mb RAM at least

There's only one case in which messing about on skates isn't intensely annoying and dull, and that's when you're waving a dangerously curved stick, carving ice with razor-sharp blades and performing a violent waltz in pursuit of a puck. Of course, there's the argument that ice hockey is a pointlessly boring sport, but the people that think that have obviously never been to a real game. While there may be minority interest in ice hockey in this country, there's no denying that *NHL '99* (PCZ #70, 92%) was a great game. Unfortunately, *Actua Ice Hockey 2* glides along somewhat less gracefully.

Although the players look more realistic, their movement is less fluid and controlling them is less intuitive than in EA's effort. *Actua's* gameplay is faster and more hectic than *NHL's*, so you can't build up play with passing, and tactical thinking is out of the question. It's more a case of pressing the buttons

frantically and finding out what happens.

Less attention has been paid to your surroundings than in *NHL*. For example, the ice has none of those nifty reflections and you don't leave skate marks as you whiz around. The ice rink also feels a lot smaller than those in *NHL*. And while *Actua's* commentating and overall presentation is by no means poor, it falls short of EA's standards.

Special mention must go to some of the bugs we found in the version sent in for review, such as the impossibly fast goals the CPU scores from face-offs, and how the goalie seems to totally freeze at times.

If you're a 'proper' ice hockey fan and follow the NHL, you'll probably scoff at the lack of real-life team monikers and players' names. The rest of us are left to rue the lack of British teams, which might have proved more of an attraction than the *TFI Friday* adverts seen during matches.

As with many other above-average sport games, *Actua Ice Hockey 2* is fun for a while but is knocked out of play by superior competition.

Mark Hill

PCZVERDICT

70%

BUDGET ZONE

You don't have to dig too deep into your pocket to purchase some quality PC entertainment. Our recent expedition downtown has revealed some exceptional deals. Read on...

★ IN THE CHEAP SEATS Keith Pullin

Attacking Midfielder/Forward (Right/Left/Centre)
Age 25 yrs. France (no caps).

Aggression	6	Pace	10
Creativity	18	Passing	16
Determination	18	Positioning	10
Dribbling	6	Set pieces	12
Flair	17	Shooting	13
Heading	3	Stamina	15
Influence	15	Strength	10
Injury proneness	10	Tackling	4
Intelligence	14	Technique	17
Marking	1	Morale	Ok
Off the ball	12	Physical condition	86%

Stats this season

	Apps	Goals	Assists	MkM	Yel	Red	Dsp	AvR
Domestic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
European	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CM2's reams of stats are easy to navigate with a single mouse-click.

England U21

Stas, wonderful stats.

Serie B

Top Goalscorers

Giovanni Pisano	15
Andrea Carnevale	14
Massimo Ciocca	14
Abdel Pele	14
Franco Lerda	13
Marco Vioripesa	13
Jonas Axelsson	13
Fabrizio Pizzol	12
Antonio Pizzolo	11
David Dionigi	11
Miguel Guerrero	11
Massimo Agostini	11

CM2 for £5? Yes please.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A faster processor is recommended



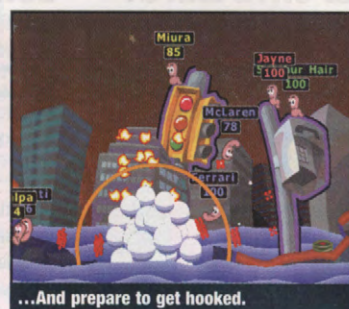
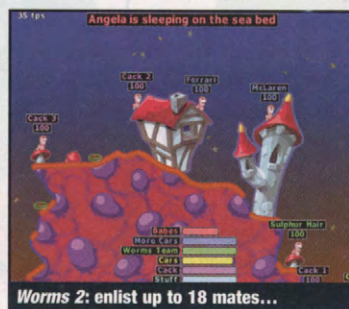
For those who don't know, *CM2* is one of the greatest football management games ever made. It boasts a highly intuitive interface capable of accessing most of the heavily stat-orientated screens with a single mouse-click, and features the most sensible AI you're ever likely to experience (with title-chasing Everton being the only oddity in an otherwise realistic seeding system). To top it off there's a comprehensive array of Cups and tournaments, including all four English divisions and the GM Vauxhall Conference.

Graphically, there's no denying that *CM2* is pitiful, with matches portrayed as a series of bar graphs with text commentary. But we don't care about that. *CM2* is not about shallow, meaningless aesthetics – it's about wage structures, loan deals, immense transfer markets and tactical formations.

With this season's players and teams also available from our very own cover CD (or the Internet), *CM2* competes with – and surpasses – most contemporary full-price competition. If I were you, I'd get down the shops and grab a copy before somebody realises they're being too generous. At just five quid, *CM2* is an absolute steal.

PCZVERDICT

92%



WORMS 2

★ CD case £9.99 / Boxed £12.99 • Hasbro/Classic Games • Out now

TECH SPECS:

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P75 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A faster processor alleviates occasional slow-down



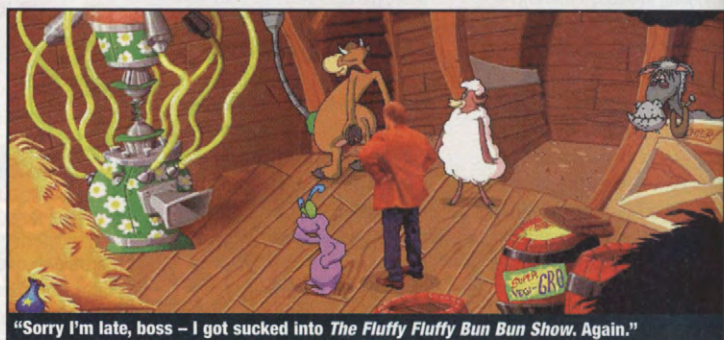
Years from now, when you're chatting with your grandson about the most addictive games of all time, *Worms 2* will feature alongside *Tetris* on the Gameboy. Who would have thought this basic 2D strategy game, featuring little pink maggots in a fight to the death with machine-guns, flame-throwers and other deadly weapons, could be so much fun?

But it's not all roses. As a single-player game *Worms 2* is poor. The computer opponent's intelligence ranges from dunce to demon, but you soon learn their tactics. Human opponents, however, are far less predictable, and it's in this mode (with a staggering 18 people able to take part) that *Worms 2* boasts unrivalled playability.

If you've got a lifetime to spare, buy it now.

PCZVERDICT

90%



TOONSTRUCK

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS:

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486/66 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** A high-speed CD-ROM helps the speech flow



Drew Blanc is animator of *The Fluffy Fluffy Bun Bun Show* and has been somehow sucked into the cartoon world he created. What ensues is a highly entertaining graphical adventure spread over three bizarre lands.

Toonstruck falls short of the standards set by *Monkey Island Trilogy*, but to its credit still manages to hold your attention with imaginative puzzles, fascinating locations and strong characters. The cutesy atmosphere and general simplicity of the problems at hand may alienate embittered adventure fans, but for novices and younger audiences *Toonstruck* is a perfect introduction to the traditional adventure genre – especially at just £4.99.

PCZVERDICT

86%

SCREAMER RALLY

★ £9.99 • White Label • Out now



Screamer Rally: terrifying speed and nifty 3Dfx graphics, to boot.



A car, screaming along, yesterday.

TECH SPECS:

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** 3Dfx card recommended

PCZONE CLASSIC

We tend to get quite a few racing games coming through this Budget section, as one would expect when technological advances suddenly reduce classic racers to old news. Thankfully, *Screamer Rally* still manages to look as fresh as the day it rolled off the forecourt.

There are seven tracks to blast your way through, five

computer opponents to test your patience and five different cars to try out. The speed is terrifying and the 3Dfx graphics in the various locations are pleasantly reminiscent of the places they're meant to represent.

As adrenaline-pumping racers go, this is no slouch. In fact it's bloody good. If you can find better for ten quid then let us know. Until then, we say: buy it.

PCZVERDICT

90%



"Come back here, you despicable Hun."

RED BARON II

★ £9.99 • Sierra Originals • Out now

TECH SPECS:

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P166 should make things a little smoother

World War I pilots were real men, unlike modern-day flyboys, who sit there squirming in their seats as yet another laser-guided bomb skews catastrophically off-course.

Forget all that modern gadgetry. *Red Baron II* returns to the roots of air combat, and with some aplomb. The real-time campaign should keep you enthralled for weeks and the smattering of standalone missions offers a welcome refuge from the smoky realism of the front line.

The only real disappointment is the lack of a multiplayer game, and highbrow gamers will no doubt resent the bog-standard SVGA graphics.

That aside, *Red Baron II* is an atmospheric and unpretentious attempt at recreating the terror of WWI dogfights, and for a tenner you'd do well to take a look.

PCZVERDICT

76%



Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness offers really meaty battles.

WARCRAFT II: TIDES OF DARKNESS

★ £9.99 • Sierra Originals • Out now

TECH SPECS:

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486/33 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** A Pentium should help things along

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness was released to huge acclaim two years ago and it's easy to see why. It's got stacks of monsters, loads of magic spells, excellent technologies (such as boats and flying machines), and when it comes to the crunch the battles always seem to escalate into epic proportions. With a six-way multiplayer option to boot, *Warcraft II's* longevity is unquestionable.

The most surprising thing about *Warcraft II*, though, is the way it infiltrates the ultra-nerdy realms of wargaming and fantasy role-playing and makes them more enjoyable than you'd dare to admit to your dice-throwing friends. Still, if you can own up to your addiction and encourage a few mates to join in, the ensuing scraps will be well worth the paltry tenner you're being asked to shell out.

PCZVERDICT

81%



Postal: in a word, pathetic.

POSTAL

★ £9.99 • GT Interactive/Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS:

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Nothing else needed

PCZONE PANTS

If anybody tries to convince you that this is a worthwhile investment, punch him or her very hard in the face. Repeatedly. It's not that *Postal* nurtures violent tendencies or anything, it's just that as a shoot 'em up, it's complete drivel. The obnoxious 3D isometric graphics look like toys that have melted in the sun, the gruesome sound makes you want to vomit and all 16 levels are so repetitively frustrating that you find yourself falling asleep, no matter how many innocent mothers you gun down.

This is a pathetic excuse for entertainment. And while controversial content often produces inspired results (*GTA*, *Carmageddon*), *Postal* is a turn-off simply because it's so poorly executed.

Charging 10p for this abomination would be a rip-off; at £10 it's a plain insult.

PCZVERDICT

10%

GRAND PRIX MANAGER 2

★ CD case £9.99 / Boxed £12.99
• Hasbro/Classic Games • Out now

TECH SPECS:

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** That'll do nicely

Spend Sunday afternoons glued to ITV watching pointy cars, do you? If so, you'll find this superficial excursion into F1 racing more intriguing than most – but don't expect much.

Recruit a couple of drivers, get some decent engineers, build a car and plan your race strategy around all 16 World Championship circuits. The actual race is experienced via short animated bursts, with Stirling Moss commentating (where's Murray?), but it's not too long before repetition creeps in and you start wondering where all the crashes are.

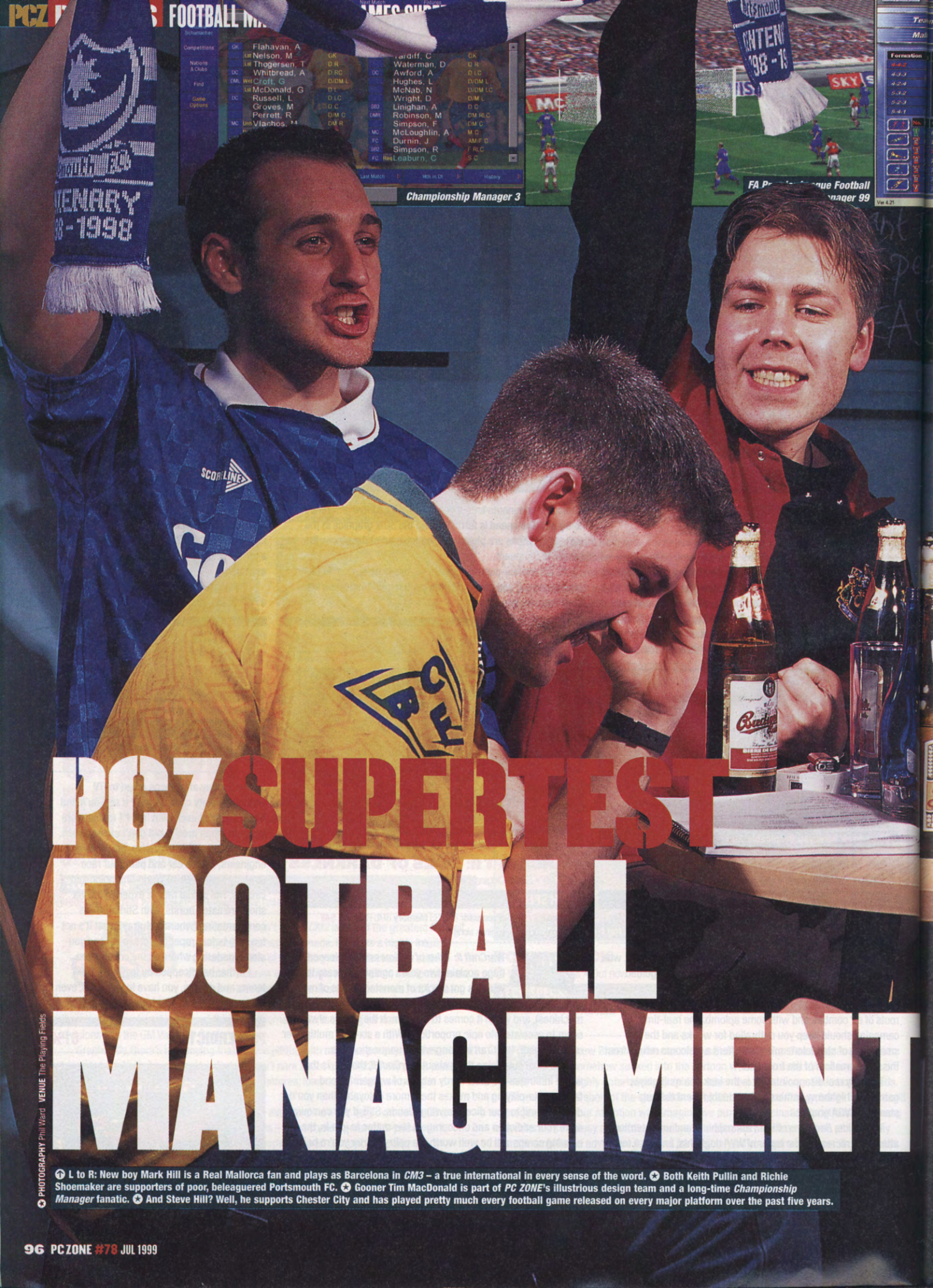
Further handicapped by featuring 1996 teams and drivers, you have to wonder if, even at ten quid, it's just a bit too expensive.

PCZVERDICT

61%



Grand Prix Manager 2: not enough crashes.



FOOTBALL M... PCZ SUPERTEST

Competitions	OK Flahavan, A	OK	Waterman, D	OK
Nations & Clubs	OK Nelson, M	OK	Awford, A	OK
Find	OK Thøgersen, T	OK	Hughes, L	OK
Game Options	OK Whitbread, A	OK	McNab, N	OK
	OK Croft, G	OK	Wright, D	OK
	OK McDonald, G	OK	Linighan, A	OK
	OK Russell, L	OK	Robinson, M	OK
	OK Groves, M	OK	Simpson, F	OK
	OK Petrett, R	OK	McLoughlin, A	OK
	OK Vlachos, M	OK	Durnin, J	OK
		OK	Simpson, R	OK
		OK	Leaburn, C	OK

Championship Manager 3

FA Premier League Football Manager 99

Formation

4-3-3

4-2-2

5-2-2

5-2-1

5-4-1

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PCZ SUPERTEST

FOOTBALL

MANAGEMENT

PHOTOGRAPHY Phil Ward VENUE The Playing Fields

Ⓛ L to R: New boy Mark Hill is a Real Mallorca fan and plays as Barcelona in CM3 – a true international in every sense of the word. Ⓜ Both Keith Pullin and Richie Shoemaker are supporters of poor, beleaguered Portsmouth FC. Ⓝ Gooner Tim MacDonald is part of PC ZONE's illustrious design team and a long-time Championship Manager fanatic. Ⓟ And Steve Hill? Well, he supports Chester City and has played pretty much every football game released on every major platform over the past five years.

No.	Ta.	Pa.	Sh.	Ht.	Ps.	St.	Fl.	En.
1	85	88	71	172	22	88	65	88
2	80	51	40	162	78	88	88	88
3	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
4	77	60	45	164	76	88	88	88
5	88	72	48	168	76	72	88	88
6	84	70	68	168	74	81	72	87
7	87	70	65	165	74	74	74	88

Premier Manager Ninety Nine

Sensible World Of Soccer 96/97



GAMES

Jumpers for goalposts, playing in the park... **Richie Shoemaker** referees the latest Supertest championship

If ever the time was right to put football management games head-to-head, then surely it's now. After all, weeks after its release, *Championship Manager 3* is still flying off the shelves all over Europe. Still heading the UK PC games chart, it has only recently

dropped into second place in the all-formats chart. For a PC-only game, any position in this hallowed top 20 is a good one. The thing is, like the disdain football fans hold for southern-based Manchester United supporters, many armchair managers can't seem to stand

◀ **CM3.** It's not the realism that people have a problem with, it's the graphics – or lack of them – and statistics that would confuse even the most patient accountant. And if you're after a good-looking football management game, *CM3* is not the one to buy.

Recently, with the release of games like *Premier Manager Ninety Nine*, developers finally seem to have got their act together and included decent 3D graphics. It's these titles that have supporters who remain just as loyal as *CM3*'s fans.

Who better to highlight this point than designer Tim MacDonald, a rabid Arsenal fan who seems to have played only two games in his life, *Quake II* and *Championship Manager*? It would have been easier to get him into a Spurs shirt than to force him to play the likes of *Football World Manager*. We practically had to tie him to a chair to get him to look at alternatives to *CM3*.

For the rest of us, football fans one and all, the task was much

easier. We spent a solid week in training, trying out all the games mentioned here and a few more besides. With eyes stung by thousands of stats and hundreds of goals played out, we finally sat down for some serious punditry. As you will find out, it does go right to the wire...

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

Keith: The fastest-selling game in the UK ever, and it deserves to be. *CM3* is one of the most involving and realistic games you are ever likely to play. In terms of the amount of options you have, and the size of the database, no other football game comes close. One of the problems – in all versions of *Championship Manager* – is that the action isn't that graphical. People get pissed off with that for some reason, but if you're a football statistician then you're gonna love it. *CM4* will be even better. The Collyers are geniuses. I said Ron Gilbert (*Creator of Monkey Island – Ed*) was the Paul Gascoigne of the

adventure gaming world a couple of issues ago. Well, the Collyers are the same in the football world.

Steve: Jon Hare (*The man behind Sensible Soccer – Ed*) is the Paul Gascoigne of the football world, but then Paul Gascoigne is washed up... Sorry, Jon.

Richie: Don't you think that *CM3* is a little too anal, that there is too much in there?

Keith: At first it is a little overwhelming, but – like any other game – in time you find that there's not really enough in there.

Richie: How far have you got?

Keith: I've just got to the end of my first season. Due to my heavy workload, I've not had enough time to play it, unlike Tim...

Tim: I Kanu believe how good it is...

Richie: You've been rehearsing that line for months, haven't you?

Tim: I'm about to enter my fourth season with Arsenal but I haven't won anything yet cos Manchester United are far too good.

Steve: Everton's success is still far too unrealistic...

Tim: Yeah, but if you listen to the crowd noise, it actually says "sack the board" when Everton are playing. But why, when they're so good in the game? There doesn't seem to be any reason for it.



"I Kanu believe how good it is..."

TIM ON CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

Richie: There is still a bias.

Tim: Obviously. It detracts from the game, but otherwise it's spot-on.

Keith: It is ultra-realistic, though. I started playing as Portsmouth and within three months the club had gone into receivership. That was brilliant. I just plummeted down the first division...

Richie: I wouldn't call that brilliant.

Mark: I like the fact that the players change from the start of the season. Take Steve

McManaman at Liverpool. You can't keep him because he's signed for Real Madrid at the end of the season.

Steve: But if they waited another week before releasing the game, it would have been a lot more accurate. The week *CM3* came out, 100 transfers went through that were missed.

Keith: But that's a minor thing... **Steve:** But *CM3* is about minor things, especially for me. I support a shit team. Chester had three loan signings in that week that weren't in there. Jorg Smeets signed from Wigan – is he in there? No. Forget it.

Richie: But most football management games cater for the Premiership. Don't you think that *CM3* is the best one if you support a shit team like Chester?

Steve: Oh yeah, definitely. I was playing again as Chester last night and it started off with a pre-season tour of Scotland, which is what they actually did.

Mark: It's also the best game if you want to play as an overseas team.

Richie: Like who?

Mark: Barcelona – I like teams with money.

Keith: It is actually more fun if you choose to play as a team you know nothing about. The trouble with playing as a Premiership



History
Paul Gascoigne
BORN MAY 27 1967

One of the world's most talked about footballers, Gascoigne is undoubtedly the most gifted player to emerge from England since the great Bobby Charlton. Nicknamed "Gazza", he plays under the pressure of an obsessive scrutiny from the world's media who have come to expect genius each time he steps onto a football field.

Born in Gateshead, the rather portly Gascoigne's name attracted to writing

Check out the history of clubs, players and countries in CM3's database.

V. Sundramoorthy (Woodlands)
Born 15.9.69 (Age 28), Singapore

Apps	Goals	Com	Pass	Ass	Tr	Red	Mis	Ag R
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Striker (Centre)

The best transfer system of the lot.

Jorg Smeets (Wigan)
Born 5.11.70 (Age 27), Dutch

Apps	Goals	Com	Pass	Ass	Tr	Red	Mis	Ag R
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.50

Attacking Midfielder/Forward (Left)

The infamous Jorg Smeets – at Wigan, of all places.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

With the option to run ten world leagues at the same time, *CM3* is a huge step up from previous versions. With 25,000 active players and nearly 50 stats for each, some call it the most realistic management game ever. However, with its reams of numbers and minimal graphics, to others it remains too tedious to contemplate.

SCORE PCZ #73, 93%

DEVELOPER Sports Interactive

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive

PRICE £39.99

Coaches

Name	Team	Form	Stat	Stat	Stat	Stat	Stat	Stat
John Flory	Chelsea	Good	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Hire and fire coaches to take on training.

team is that there are no surprises whatsoever. You know what's going to happen. You know who the tough teams are and you can adjust your tactics accordingly. If you go into a South American league there are a lot more surprises and it tests your skills to the full.

Richie: But most people want to manage *their* team. As a game, it may be a challenge to take the reins at River Plate, but people want to see if they can emulate the success of the team they support. Aside from that, what about the fact that many people see *CM3* as nothing more than a glorified spreadsheet? There are no 3D graphics, no commentary...

Mark: I prefer the background photographs. They make everything feel more realistic.

Steve: The difference is akin to watching football on TV or listening to it on the radio. On the radio football can be quite exciting, and *CM3* captures that. On telly you sometimes realise just how f**king dull it can be.

Mark: With games like *Premier Manager*, with their cartoon graphics, you can't believe for one moment that you're managing real players.

Tim: Like a *Beano* version of football.

Steve: On the radio, you don't know what the hell is going on, you just get snippets. When you see it on TV, it's nothing like you imagined it on the radio.

Tim: The commentary in *CM3* paints a picture in your head. The 3D games just destroy that.

Richie: I take it you prefer Radio 5 Live to going to the pub to watch games on TV?

Tim: Er, no. The fact is that 3D graphics haven't yet got to the stage where they surpass the written word. Take films and novels – movies don't always capture the atmosphere generated by books.

Richie: What about those people who loved *CM2* but hated *CM3*? *CM3* runs like a snail, even on a P266. Mind you, I've never really had a problem with that. It gives you time to consider your moves.

Steve: Eidos said it would run on a P133. He (*Eidos PR bloke who shall remain nameless – Ed*) swore it. Liar!

Richie: I've never heard of half the people in the game. It's too deep – too detailed.

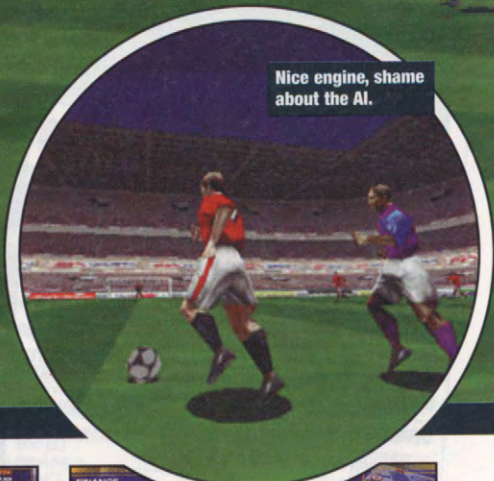
Keith: If you want an easier approach to football management, something like *Premier Manager Ninety Nine*



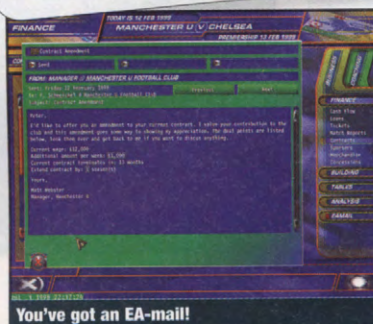
FA PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL MANAGER 99

As with everything from EA Sports, this has 'official' stamped all over it. With FIFA-style graphics, it's certainly the most attractive game here. With commentary from the legendary John Motson and a wealth of financial and training options, it's a 'jack of all trades' game, rather than 'master of none'.

SCORE	PCZ #70, 72%
DEVELOPER	EA Sports
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
PRICE	£39.99



Well, at least it's 'official'.



You've got an EA-mail!



As stadium designers go, it's the best.



Man Utd shirts at £19? What a rip-off.

might be better. *CM3* is definitely for the hard-core fan.

Mark: I wasn't really into football before playing *CM2*. I didn't give a damn about results in the real world. But as soon as I started playing it, I found myself reading the papers to keep up with the game.

Steve: There are too many stats, though. I just go by the names and sign players I know. I can't be arsed to sit down and compare two players with 20 different numbers.

Keith: Most of it doesn't make a great deal of difference. For each position you only really need to look at five stats.

Mark: I like looking at all the stats.

Tim: I like looking at naked ladies.

Steve: I just find myself mimicking real life – signing players that Chester have signed – which isn't actually going to lead to success when you're seventeenth in the third division.

Richie: Do you think the stats are correct, though?

Tim: Everyone has their own opinion. They're about as accurate as you'll get, but there are players you've never heard of with a rating of 20 in almost every

skill area. I wouldn't buy someone like that – it would be considered cheating. It's those non-league players that the Collyers have decided will be superstars of the future that devalue the game. Take Seth Johnson, who plays for Crewe, I think. You can buy him for 2p but he ends up being worth £15 million two months later.

Mark: In *CM97/98* a lot of players had stats at zero, which were put up randomly when you started a new game.

Tim: They've just picked out certain players who they've



decided will turn out really good. For clubs like Chester you can buy them to give you a better chance, but I see that as cheating.

Steve: Why do you think they've done that?

Tim: To help people who support teams like you.

Richie: So, do you think they should have included an editor like in *CM97/98*?

Tim: My brother's got a *CM3* editor. I don't think they're official yet, though.

Mark: Editors take something away from the game. They allow you to cheat by giving your players inflated stats, and that isn't realistic. On the other hand, it allows you to update transfers and suchlike.

Richie: It seems to me that we started loving *CM3* and slowly dug out a few faults...

“It was all a bit off – not as accurate or as in-place as I would have liked”

KEITH ON FA PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL MANAGER 99

Steve: The main problem is the Everton bias – it's stupid.

Tim: I can't believe they did it again.

Steve: It's the best-selling game ever and that's just childish. Just grow up.

Tim: Yeah, but if they had grown up, they wouldn't have made the game in the first place.

Steve: True.

FA PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL MANAGER 99

Steve: What a ridiculously long name.

Richie: I was impressed with the 3D match sequences. Okay, so EA Sports have recycled the *FIFA* engine, but it looks bloody good. There are still a few AI problems – players seem to do ridiculously stupid things – but for all-round presentation it's probably the best game here. The interface is smooth, the match sequences look good...

Mind you, most people don't want to see them. **Steve:** I want to. I like to see the game played out in front of me. I'm quite happy sitting back watching for five minutes and I don't see a problem with that.

Tim: But it's not realistic, is it, watching five minutes of highlights?

Steve: It gives you time to have a cigarette.

Richie: You could get through a pack of 20 while waiting around in *CM3*.

Tim: True.

Steve: When I pick a team, I like to see my players play, and I can't see why that's considered odd. You like to see how your latest signing is getting on. Obviously, no games are perfectly accurate



FOOTBALL WORLD MANAGER
 In trying to combine *Championship Manager's* complexity with whizz-bang graphic sequences, *Football World Manager* was a brave stab at doing something new. But it was marred by a hideous interface and inconsistencies with real-world data. The *Daily Telegraph*, however, said it was "blessed with a superbly friendly interface".

SCORE PCZ #72, 60%
 DEVELOPER Caffeine Studios
 PUBLISHER Ubi Soft
 PRICE £34.99



Too much going on off the pitch.



Funky dreadster, that Mr Kinkladze.



Sick as a parrot!!!



Team selections are a mess.



You can tell your players off but, sadly, not the developers.

← yet, but at least you get an idea.
Tim: Earlier, you were all for *CM3's* 'radio' commentary...

Steve: I'm not 'all for it', I just understand why people like it. I prefer 3D graphics in games. It's the same with adventures. What do you prefer – *Grim Fandango* or *The Hobbit*? I rest my case.

Mark: Oh, come on! That's not a fair comparison.

Richie: Did you think *FAPLM99* had good 3D sequences compared to *Premier Manager Ninety Nine*?

Steve: I didn't think they were that special, no. The players seemed confused and didn't follow the flow of play at all well. To use a technical term, 'the AI was a bit knackered'.

Keith: I thought it was too slow – really jerky. Players would run with the ball seemingly stuck to their heels. It was all a bit off – not as accurate or as in-place as I'd have liked. To be fair, it was a good effort at producing visually stimulating and exciting highlights.

Steve: Better than *Premier Manager*?

Keith: No. *Premier Manager* looks far better than *FA Manager*.

Steve: I agree. The EA one isn't as good as the Gremlin one, basically.

Mark: Or as up to date.

Steve: Remember all those emails... sorry, EA-mails?

Mark: It was more an 'email simulator' than a footie game.

Steve: It was ridiculous. You had 23 emails a day saying Brighton's reserve keeper had turned a hoof. Forget it – there were far too many options you didn't need.

Keith: But there were a lot of options you could turn off, like training and coaching.

Steve: Don't start me off about training! I don't know what anyone else feels about it...

Keith: Sometimes I get a real thrill from training a player.

Steve: You think that's exciting? For God's sake, employ a trainer, which is what most managers do anyway.

Keith: But doesn't it give you a

“Who playtested it? They probably grabbed some chimp off the streets”

STEVE ON FOOTBALL WORLD MANAGER



thrill, taking a YTS trainee and bringing them up through the ranks?

Steve: Not to the degree that it so obviously gets you going.

Tim: What about when you have to buy cones for training and put your players at desks to learn stuff? Who wants to do that?

Richie: So if you take away the official licence and the FIFA graphics, is there any comparison to *CM3* underneath?

Steve: Not really. The bizarre transfer prices are way out. Mind

you, as a Chester fan, that's probably why I don't enjoy *CM3* – it's just misery and despair. I haven't even scored a goal yet.

Keith: But I found that with *FA Manager*. No one was interested in coming to Portsmouth and I can't understand why.

Tim: I think you can put the blame squarely on Portsmouth for that one.

Richie: What about the financial features in these games, where

you set the price for shirts and fizzy pop?

Steve: It's pathetic. Who cares if it's £1 for a pie? Going to the pie shop and putting 20p on a steak and kidney pie? Forget it.

Mark: But people like that, and it's good that you get the option, so long as you don't have to do it.

Steve: *Theme Football*. That's all it is.

Richie: But if you support a team with no money, like Portsmouth, you can use your business

knowledge to bring in more money, and from there you can eventually buy better players. If I asked you if *Premier Manager* and *FA Manager* did this side of things well, what would you say?

Steve: I don't care. It's a bad idea. I think pie shops and scarves should be another game entirely.

Tim: But a lot of people worry about that sort of thing – merchandising and so on...

Steve: *Premier Manager* brags about having more extended menus in the catering bar, but who cares?

Tim: I thought I wasn't interested in pies and stuff because I was from London. I didn't realise the feeling was universal. Pies and football obviously don't mix – not in computer games, anyway.

Steve: No place for pies – it's not the manager's job.

FOOTBALL WORLD MANAGER

Richie: I reviewed this, then wiped it from my memory.

Steve: It just goes to show how desperate people were for *CM3* that this sold so many copies. It came out just before Christmas and shot into the top ten. Having big fat Ron on the cover didn't add to it at all. *Football World Manager* has a really bad Windows menu, some terrible music and this pathetic little action screen.

Tim: Action? What action? I didn't

see any action at all.

Richie: During the game, you could pat your players on the back if they were playing well, or tell them off if they weren't. You could confuse them by doing both...

Keith: What an innovation!

Steve: It's skid. I'm amazed anyone bought it.

Richie: The interface was bloody awful to begin with, but I did get used to it eventually.

Keith: It was all over the place. I couldn't make head nor tail of it.

Mark: Just finding your squad screen... I didn't know where to start.

Tim: There were too many screens to go through to marry tactics with players. There were shortcuts, but it took ages to work them out.

Keith: With this type of game, you really have to pay attention to the details. We all know Georgiou Kinkladze isn't a black man with dreads, but according to *World Football* he is.

Richie: I remember when they came and showed the game to us and told us about all the stats. "On a par with *CM97/98*" was their claim. Rubbish. Mind you, those stats must be in there – it's almost as slow as *CM3*. Something must be happening under the bonnet. Do you reckon there is some number crunching going on, or built-in slowdown

make us all think there is?

Steve: There's probably a little man in there working it all out on an abacus.

Keith: The same guy who played R2-D2 in *Star Wars*.

Tim: There's a lot more to learn – you have to play for a while before you work out what tactic to use. You have to vary your play a lot more, whereas before you could have a set way of playing and be successful.

Richie: Hold on, are you still on about *CM3*?

Tim: Of course. What's the point in talking about anything else? In these other games, you're never in control of anything. You watch the same animated sequences over and over again, like watching that Geoff Thomas miss for England, repeatedly. You know what's coming before it happens.

Steve: It's like *Football Manager* on the Spectrum. As soon as the screen starts, you know where the ball's going to end up. In *FWM* the set sequences are rubbish.

Richie: The matches are pretty terrible. I was told there would be 400 set sequences – I've seen about ten. They probably timed that figure with the number of team colours.

Keith: You can always tell which games have been written by football fans. *Football World Manager* was clearly written by people who have no interest in the game whatsoever.

Steve: I met one of the developers. He was a Hull fan.

Keith: There you go. The Kinkladze

incident shows there's no effort gone into the game at all.

Steve: Who playtested it? They probably grabbed some chimp off the streets.

Tim: If football fans wanted all the detail with tactics, 3D sequences and merchandising, the Collyers would have put them into *Championship Manager*.

Richie: They could have, but it would have taken them another



two years to finish it. Anyway, there's no merchandising in *Football World Manager*.

Steve: Whoopee bloody do.

Keith: People just want to see something that is real. They play this type of game because they want to emulate the glories of their team. In order to do that properly, everything has to be in place. Attention to detail must be high and the engine must be sound. Games that show no effort will never be decent football sims. Everything you need is in *CM3*.

Steve: People who buy *CM3* don't buy any other games – that's why it's done so well. These are people who use their PCs for

spreadsheets.

Tim: You offend me greatly!

Steve: That's rich...

Tim: A lot of these other games are aimed at kids, but I think people are a lot more sophisticated than they used to be. They won't be palmed off with this sort of stuff. We've gone past the cartoon graphics stage. The only way to get any sort of realism is not to include set sequences.

“I won my first ten games without paying any attention to tactics or training”

RICHE ON PREMIER MANAGER NINETY NINE

Sure, graphics are getting better all the time but, until the AI becomes perfect, people should steer well clear of them.

Richie: So we're all agreed: *Football World Manager* is crap.

Steve: *Football World Manager* blows chunks.

PREMIER MANAGER NINETY NINE

Richie: Steve, why did the previous version score in the 60s, while this latest version shot into the 80s when you reviewed it?

Steve: The last one was just a shit add-on.

Okay, it's still the same game, but the 3D sequences are all new and are pretty good. *Premier Manager Ninety Nine* is quite simplistic – it takes the *Theme Park* approach to football management – but you can see your players playing football quite intelligently, which is what these games should be about, as opposed to random words flashing across the screen in something like *CM3*.

Richie: But what about the commentary? I was playing it and thought it was awful. Balls rolled over the goal line and the commentators went mad, screaming something about 'the best goal of all time'.

Steve: The commentary is a mess. Gremlin just raided their Barry Davies archives.

Keith: It's very exciting if you can't see the screen, though. Steve and I were having a conversation while I was putting my washing out on my radiator the other night. I heard commentary coming from the lounge and thought it was a real football match, until I remembered that I was a bit pissed and that it was *Premier Manager Ninety Nine* playing away to itself...

Richie: I have to admit that I did enjoy the 3D sequences. They're great to watch, apart from players occasionally running into each other. I've also got the previous

version on the PlayStation, which I can't stand.

Steve: The PlayStation version of *PMNN* has about 100 set goals and is incredibly realistic. I was fooled for a couple of days until I realised they were starting to repeat. But the PC version does play the games out for real, so the commentary's always going to be more random.

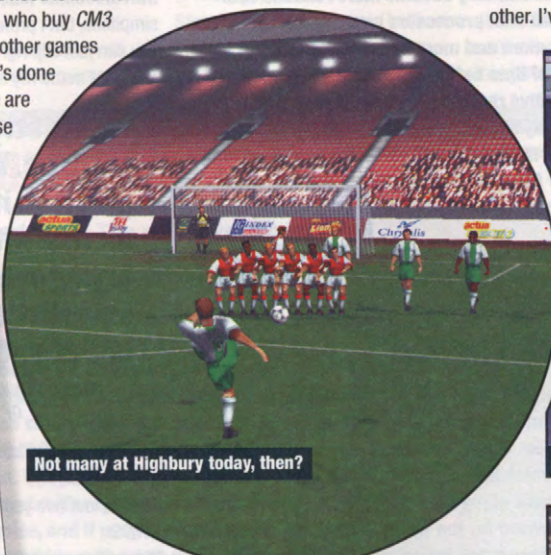
Richie: But do you think this is the second-best game here, as we've suggested in past reviews? I think the interface in EA's game is much better.

Keith: *Premier Manager* has never quite got that aspect quite right. It's not the worst interface in the world, but it takes some getting used to. What I like about it, though, is that you can switch from having traditional stats to just having a general star rating for each player. I much prefer that. Michael Owen has five, Jorg Smeets one. Simple.

Everyone: (Belly laughs).

Richie: What about the fact that the game was rushed out to steal some of *CM3*'s thunder? Steve, you mentioned something about that in your review.

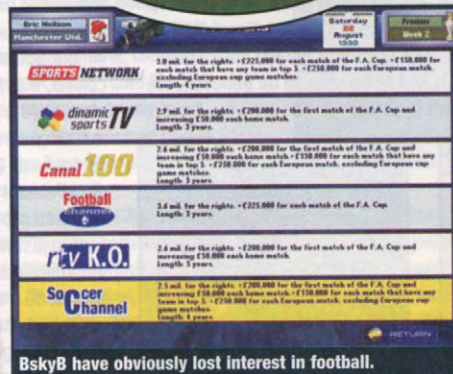
Steve: The commentary certainly wasn't finished. If you play in the third division it's only players whose names begin with 'A' who have their names checked, which does suggest that they just wanted to cash in on *CM3*.



Not many at Highbury today, then?



Fish 'n' chips at two quid a throw.



BskyB have obviously lost interest in football.



Premier Manager has the best 3D graphics of the bunch.

PREMIER MANAGER NINETY NINE

If *CM3* is the Man U of football management games, *Premier Manager Ninety Nine* is the Arsenal snapping at its heels. With the best-yet 3D sequences in a game of its kind and the most in-game options, it's a shame other problems hold it back. If you want to manage shops as well as the team, this is the game for you.

SCORE	PCZ #76, 81%
DEVELOPER	Dimanic Multimedia
PUBLISHER	Gremlin
PRICE	£39.99



If CM3 is Excel, *Player Manager 98-99* is PowerPoint.



PM98-99: good menu system, but buggy match sequences.



USM98 had pie shops galore.

DROPPED FROM THE SQUAD

Mid-table games that could have played better

Although *Player Manager Season 98-99* (PCZ #72, 66%) managed to do what most other established brands seem to miss out on – namely, that it looked completely different to the last effort – it ended up being so full of annoying bugs that it warranted only a mid-table placing. The tactics, training and player search facilities were well handled, but the 3D matches led to problems – they crashed the computer almost every time we tried to watch them. The patch that eventually turned up was, unfortunately, too little, too late.

Ultimate Soccer Manager '98 (PCZ #64, 60%) is another missed opportunity. Like EA and Gremlin's efforts, it includes full financial control and enables you to watch your players kick the ball about while you fashion herbal cigarettes. Initially it wasn't too bad but, as the season progressed, its many faults began to surface. Bad presentation didn't help matters and both games, from high expectations, failed to make it anywhere near the trophy cabinet.



Ultimate Soccer Manager '98: match sequences weren't very good.

NEXT SEASON

What does the future hold for football management games?

Although opinion is split as to the best football management game of current times, it seems our panel of experts are united in what the game of the future should be.

"CM3 with a perfect 3D graphics engine," says Steve. "With guns."

That, of course, is unlikely to ever happen. While an update for next season is pretty much a certainty, CM4 is, at best, a long way off. Rumours suggest that the next *Championship Manager* game will be practically identical in style to the previous version. 3D graphics and

financial options are unlikely to appear, with the only new aspect being online multiplayer games.

Of the other games, the sky's the limit. 3D graphics can only become more realistic over time, and with processors increasingly able to crunch more and more numbers, it's only a matter of time before CM3 has a truly competitive rival on its hands. It may still be some way off, but there could come a time when *Premier Manager 2005* steals the crown so long held by *Championship Manager* and the illustrious Collyer brothers.

RELEGATED

Here are some games that couldn't even manage an own goal

Ironically, Steve Hill, being a lifelong Chester City supporter, seems to have reviewed two of the world's worst football management games: *Jack Charlton's Soccer Nation* (PCZ #67, 10%) and *On The Ball 2* (PCZ #65, 31%).

"I can't even bring myself to talk about *Soccer Nation*," he says. "It had some highfalutin' idea of having online leagues, which never took off. It was just shocking."

And *On The Ball 2*? If you think financial management in football is sacrilege, think again.

"That had some ridiculous features, such as bribing and hiring thugs to beat up the opposition. Some Germans came over to show it to me, which is bad enough, but it was the most boring hour of my life. I was sweating boredom."

The award for the worst football management game ever – if not the worst game ever, full stop – has to go to 21st Century's *It's A Funny Old Game*, which none of us had played until Steve insisted that it had to be seen to be believed. We wish we hadn't bothered.



On The Ball 2: don't bother.



Why hello, Jack.



It's a crappy old game.

Richie: The game was far too easy as well. I won my first ten games without paying any attention to tactics or training.

Steve: It's not so much easy as simplistic, but I like that. If you want stats, you know where to go – see ya. Me? I want to see my players lose, rather than read about it. There are some bizarre things, though. At Chester I was getting goalkeepers on loan from Juventus, no questions asked.

You can abuse the loan system, and their transfer system is knackered.

Keith: I was sacked after three friendly games at Portsmouth. The directors said that I hadn't bought in enough players, which I couldn't do anyway because we were completely skint.

Richie: That's the same with all the games – Portsmouth are useless. Which is why I always take control of Spurs.

Tim: But Spurs are useless!

Richie: At least they've got something new and shiny in the trophy cabinet.

Tim: You mean the 'Mickey Mouse' cup

Mark: Ladies, please. Now isn't the time for team rivalry.

Tim: Apart from the 3D, then, *Premiership Manager Ninety Nine* is just a poor man's CM3.

Steve: *Premier Manager* is simplistic, but I prefer it to CM3. You can just slip right in there. CM3 just made my head hurt.

It would detract from the games, I suppose.

Tim: That first *Player Manager* game was really good, but it took years for the second game to come out. And it was shit anyway.

Keith: Steve Screech, the guy who created *Kick Off* and *Player Manager* with Dino Dini (*Legendary Amiga coder – Retro Ed*), has really let himself go. He's living off a legend. *Player Manager 99* is absolutely shocking.

Richie: Personally, I think the same of *Sensi 2000*, but I never really enjoyed *SWOS* that much either. It was too simplistic as a management game. I preferred the first *Sensi* – the pure arcade version.

Steve: As an arcade management game, *SWOS* is still untouchable. You may laugh at the graphics, but they still have an unequalled charm. Anyone who says any different can just sod right off.

Keith: *SWOS* was so simple and yet you could 'Stan Collymore' from a mile off. He cried...

Steve: You could always tell who your good players were.

Nowadays, the graphics are great but it's hard to tell if someone's got slightly better control than anyone else. I lost my job through playing *Sensible Soccer*. I might even go back to the office and play it again after this. I'll take anyone on...

Mark: What I liked about *SWOS*

"It didn't try to be too realistic. You could play it on its own merits, without crying over unrealistic and out-of-date stats"

MARK ON *SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER 96/97*



SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER 96/97

Keith: I lost two years of my life to *SWOS*.

Steve: I've played it more than any other game ever made. It's a simple, addictive game with great control, with just a handful of stats. CM3 is just a bank of meaningless statistics in comparison. Even if you choose not to control your players, it's still very watchable. I played an entire season just watching the game from the sidelines.

Richie: So if this kind of game works, why haven't EA done a version using the FIFA engine?

Steve: It's a marketing decision.

was that it didn't try to be too realistic. You could play it on its own merits, without crying over unrealistic and out-of-date stats. In that respect, it's the last of its kind.

Steve: You could even become the England manager, which was admittedly a bit dull. I did a Kevin Keegan – I was years ahead of my time.

Richie: Considering *SWOS* is a tenner, and CM2 can be bought for a fiver, which would you choose? *SWOS* or CM2 and a Portsmouth scarf?

Tim: I preferred the original *Sensible Soccer*. I don't like the idea of managing a team and

CRYSTAL PALACE A (ENGLAND)

1	C. DAY	G	EIM	
2	M. EDWORTHY	RTSH	ESOK	
3	D. TUTTLE	D	HTS	ESOK
4	A. ROBERTS	D	HTV	ESOK
5	K. MUSCAT	LBSTP	ESOK	
6	R. HOUGHTON	RHSPT	ESOK	
7	E. DYER	M	TPC	ESOK
8	D. HOPKIN	M	PTV	ESOK
9	L. ANDERSEN	LWFW	ESOK	
10	D. FREEDMAN	A	FHV	ESOK
11	G. NDAH	A	SVC	ESOK
12	D. BOXALL	D	HTC	ESOK
13	J. HARRIS	M	FCP	ESOK
	C. NASH	G	ESOK	

COACH: GORDON POOLE

MANCHESTER UTD V NOTT'M FOREST

PETER SCHMEICHEL	MARK CROSSLEY
GARY NEVILLE	DES LYTTLE
RONNY JOHNSEN	NIKOLA JERKAN
GARY PALLISTER	COLIN COOPER
DENIS IRWIN	STUART PEARCE
KAREL POBORSKY	DAVID PHILLIPS
ROY KEANE	CHRIS BART-WILLIAMS
DAVID BECKHAM	STEVE STONE
RYAN GIGGS	IAN WOAN
ERIC CANTONA	BRYAN ROY
TUNNAR SOLSKJAER	DEAN SAUNDERS
AND VAN DER GOON	ALAN FETTIS
PHILIP NEVILLE	STEVE CHETTLER
MORDI CRUYFF	ALF INGE HALAN



SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER 96/97

If CM3 is for serious football fans, Sensible World of Soccer is aimed squarely at games enthusiasts. Old, outdated and ugly it may be, but it's insanely addictive. It's still an office favourite after all these years. If you want to play and manage, this is the only game to consider. "Football is our love" – most definitely.

SCORE	PCZ #46, 80%
DEVELOPER	Sensible Software
PUBLISHER	Replay
PRICE	£9.99

As well as European clubs, SWOS included a few less sensible ones – Old Dear's Menu, anyone?



Runs like a gazelle with a lion on its arse, even on a 486.

PLAYERS ON FOREIGN MARKET

BANK £417,000

CRITERIA

TYPE	ANY	SKILLS
MORE		
1	FABIAN LECLERCO	(LILLE) RB TSH (FRA) £250K
2	FRANCO BARESI	(AC MILAN) D HTS (ITA) £250K
3	HARISTO STOICHKOV	(BARCELONA) A FCP (BUL) £3M
4	JESS THORUP	(OB) A HFV (DEN) £450K
5	MIKHAIL SAGIN	(ROSTSELNASH) M PTV (RUS) £75K
6	JUAN SABRAS	(BETIS) A FHV (ESP) £750K
7	OLEG PASHININ	(LOKOMOTIV MOSCOW) D HTV (RUS) £200K
8	C. LAGRANGE	(SAINT-ETIENNE) A VFS (FRA) £450K
9	LEON HUTTEN	(RKC) RB TSP (HOL) £500K
10	G. FILIMONOV	(TORPEDO MOSCOW) RB STH (RUS) £250K

VIEW SQUAD

EXIT

A sensible transfer system at work.

LEGANES 0 - 0 MALLORCA

Mark Hill takes the reins at Real Mallorca.

Steve: It's one of the most wholesome games ever made – it's more wholesome than Hovis.

Richie: I get the feeling this is your favourite game ever, Steve.

Steve: SWOS is my favourite game of all time, easily.

Keith: It's my second favourite game ever.

Steve: After what?

Keith: Sex Olympics – on the Spectrum. It was a joystick-wagging game, obviously. [LW]

playing yourself at the same time. It takes something away from the experience. I couldn't see myself playing in the Arsenal midfield.

Steve: It's a combination of management acumen and your skill as a player. Buying other players is going to help you, but you still need to be good with a

gamepad if you want to make any progress.

Tim: But you could have a team of average players and still do well if you were good with a pad – it doesn't test your skill as a manager.

Steve: Even the best player will still struggle unless he buys good

players. Some are ten times better than others – you won't even get near the ball unless you go into the transfer market.

Tim: I think you should either play or manage, but not both.

Steve: No way. You can do both. Look at Kenny Dalglish. You can tell how good your players are

because you are controlling them, with your thumb, using your eyes and your brain and a wire...

Keith: Both sections – playing and managing – are done equally well. There's no half-heartedness about either – they compliment each other very well and are integrated perfectly.

WHO ARE THE CHAMPIONS?

Into injury time. The crowd are on their feet. The ref looks at his watch and blows his whistle...

There was much debate as to whether we should actually hold a football management Supertest in the first place, the consensus being that perhaps *Championship Manager* would run away with the honours without even breaking into a sweat. There's no doubt that it has a very loyal fan base – mirrored by the number of people who waited patiently for number three to arrive – but is it the game to buy?

Looking at the other games we've played, nothing comes close in terms of realism and ease of use. But even Tim admitted *Premiership Manager Ninety Nine* was at least worth looking at if it was graphics you wanted. That didn't stop him lavishing praise on CM3, though. "There's no question – it's the best football management game you can buy," he said.

"I agree," said quiet new boy Mark Hill, finally getting a word in edgeways.

"You're all wrong," was Steve's conclusion. "For me it's SWOS, hands down. It's a bit of a rogue, because you actually play with your hand, rather than sitting looking at numbers. For pure management I guess CM3 has to win. I've played it but I did give up. *Premier Manager* is my personal choice, and if people want a bit of everything with some decent 3D graphics, I'd tell them to buy that."

"For best game ever, though, you can't discount CM2," said Tim. "It dominated for years. In my mind, CM2 comes a close second and is definitely the best cheap option here. CM3 wins by miles."

"I'm torn between CM3 and SWOS," said Keith. "They're both superbly produced. CM3 is football management perfection. Arcade-wise, SWOS has never been bettered. Budget buy of the decade, I say."

However, with the clock almost

OVERALL WINNER

Champ. Man. 3 **3** **Premier Man. 99** **2**

Match Overview | Match Stats | Action Zones | Match Report

Full Time

Wednesday 21st April 1999

MacDonaldo	4	Schumacher	48
Pullin	23	Hillfiger	90
Llabres Hill	57	Hillfiger sent off	90

Last 5 Mins: 62% vs 38%

Referee: Beer & Fags | Attendance: 5 | Weather: Posing Down 20°C

CM3 Stats | Pundit Ratings | Beer Prices | PM 99 Stats

The Playing Fields, London

CM3, winner of the PC ZONE football management Supertest.

showing full time, even a late goal from PM99 against the run of play isn't enough to secure the three points. Could it really have been any different? No, not really. *Championship Manager* has done it again, but certainly not by a mile. And if you're short of money

and want to see what all the fuss is about, buy its ageing predecessor, available now for a paltry £4.99. The budget winner has to be SWOS, though, for obvious reasons. Perhaps we'll never see a game like it again? Some of us certainly hope not...

FEEDBACK

If you don't agree with our reviews, tell us why. **Keith Pullin** is all ears

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.

"I use it as a personal football encyclopedia for finding out about teams and players that I'm just about to watch on TV. It's not just a game, it's a multimedia miracle!"

FANNON'S OBVIOUSLY A CM3 FAN

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

REVIEWED Issue 73, February
SCORE 93%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "The fact that CM3 boasts the biggest (and arguably the most accurate) player database ever assembled in a game of this sort goes a long way towards making it the best football management game available today."

What you think

★ "The new match engine is very nice, but overall the game still feels a little incomplete and is in fact still severely flawed.

"I have reached a stage where something totally ludicrous has happened. Having played for five seasons with Arsenal, winning the Premiership, the Champions League and the FA Cup, I thought I was doing pretty well. I then started a new season with two wins and a draw, won the Charity Shield, the European Super Cup and the manager of the month award, and was then sacked by the board! This is ridiculous. The Collyer brothers should have held the game back even further to correct these flaws. As it stands, CM2 97/98 is still the more complete and addictive game."

K Khong

★ "Incredible game. I use it as a personal football encyclopedia for finding out about teams and players that I'm just about to watch on TV. It's not just a game, it's a multimedia miracle!"

Fannon Derbyshire

★ "Having just bought the long-awaited CM3, I am bitterly disappointed to say the least. Apart from the fact that it has a tendency to crash and is laboriously slow, it's also too easy. In my first season I won the double with Arsenal, and now I'm scaling the dizzy heights of the Premiership with Wimbledon! Is it an overrated game, or am I just too damn good?"

Seamus Hayes

Comment

There's a distinct difference of opinion forming with CM3. Most of you love it, the rest of you reckon it stinks. All we can say is that we haven't experienced the crashing that Seamus speaks of, but if you do have problems of that kind check out www.cm3.com for updates and patches. Regarding the difficulty, try taking on a lower division club, or a foreign team such as River Plate of Brazil. That'll put you in your place - guaranteed.

WARZONE 2100

REVIEWED Issue 75, April
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "Warzone 2100 is a superb real-time strategy game with a wondrous interface, impressive 3D graphics, and a number of features that put it on a par with 7A."

What you think

★ "I bought Warzone 2100 after playing the demo and reading your review, and what an amazing game! If you're into real-time strategy games, don't miss it. And online it plays like a dream. Also, other developers, publishers (or whatever) take note: the Pumpkin website had a release date of March 26 up for some time, and guess what? It was released on time (gasp!). And so far no major bugs have been found. This is how all games should be designed, coded and released. Well done, Pumpkin."

Bagpuss

Comment

We couldn't agree more. Warzone 2100 is a fine game indeed.



Alpha Centauri: prepare to be amazed, says James Campbell.

DUNE 2000

REVIEWED Issue 70, December
SCORE 62%

What we thought

"It's obvious that at best Dune 2000 is a stop-gap before Tiberian Sun appears; at worst it's an excuse to print money."

★ "Why the hell did Dune 2000 only get 62 per cent? Not only is the AI good, it's miles harder than just about everything else, and the units are some of the best and most original I've seen in ages. Basically, it craps all over Total Annihilation."

Joe Bartlett

Comment

Come on, this is a rehashed version of Dune 2, and you know it.

ALPHA CENTAURI

REVIEWED Issue 74, March
SCORE 92%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "For Civ fans, Alpha Centauri offers more of the same terrific gameplay, but this time there are so many bells, whistles and new ways of thinking that you'll wonder what hit you."

What you think

★ "This is my first contact with the outside world for a week. I've become hopelessly addicted to the wonder that is Alpha Centauri. I'll admit that most strategy games engage me for a little while, but this one blows everything else out of the water. The depth, variety and pure

playability make this an all-round brilliant piece of software. My advice is: forget Call To Power, stick with Sid Meier and prepare to be amazed."

James Campbell

★ "I expected more. Like most sci-fi strategy games I found myself becoming bored by the repetitive and pointless nature of the gameplay. Sid Meier knows how to make one kind of game only, and the sooner he stops inflicting these egotistical piles of regurgitated tedium on us the better."

Paul Edwards

Comment

You're a lone, faint voice, Paul, and no one's hearing you.

X-WING ALLIANCE

REVIEWED Issue 77, June
SCORE 88%

What we thought

PCZONE RECOMMENDED "No matter what fat, chunky ships the new film gives us, our hearts will always belong to the Millennium Falcon."

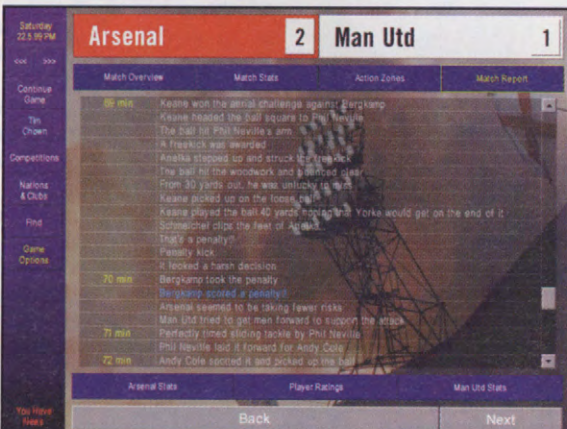
What you think

★ "I've just bought X-Wing Alliance, and it's the greatest thing ever to grace my monitor. The depth of the storyline, the sound, the graphics, and the immaculate attention to detail are just fantastic! Truly a game that everyone must own, no matter what."

David Mayhew

Comment

No guttural sounds of dissent from us.



Championship Manager 3: Seamus Hayes reckons it's overrated, while K Khong thinks CM2 97/98 is "the more complete and addictive game".

ASGHAN: THE DRAGON SLAYER

REVIEWED Issue 75, April
SCORE 50%

What we thought

"The awkward control system, lack of real character development and dialogue, and the at times obtrusive floating camera make *Asghan* an altogether frustrating and uninspiring affair."

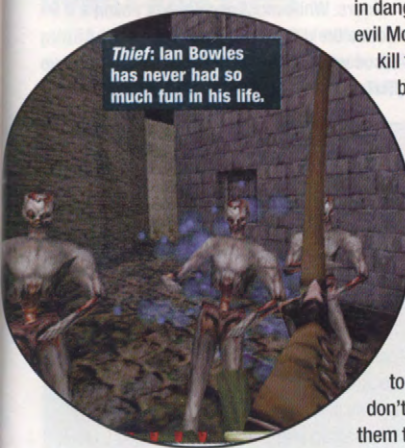
What you think

★ "Okay, this game is not flawless. The controls are a little clumsy, the camera could be better, and the scripting and voice acting are terrible. But overall it's an atmospheric, playable and highly enjoyable third-person adventure. I can only assume the reviewer either isn't a fan of the genre, or only scratched the surface of the game before forming an opinion. To give it a lower mark than the abysmal *Deathtrap Dungeon*, with its jerk-o-vision and random button-thumping combat is a travesty of justice. Sure, *Asghari's* not a classic, but it's worth far more than the piddling 50 per cent you gave it."

David Lees

Comment

We definitely disagree with you on this one, David. Most of us here felt the control system was more than just a little clumsy – it was unmanageable. If you can overcome that, then more power to you. Most gamers, however, don't have the patience to wrestle with a clearly sub-standard interface when there are better games around.



Thief: Ian Bowles has never had so much fun in his life.

game, it almost crosses boundaries, at times becoming more adventure game than action."

What you think

★ "Whether you are silently raiding mansions or fleeing from armed guards, *Thief* is truly immersive. I only have two problems with it. Firstly, there are too many undead. Secondly, where's the multiplayer?"

Jonathan Dickinson

★ "I sacrificed a week of my life in dimly lit solitude playing *Thief* to the bitter end. I've never had so much fun in my life. But where oh where is the multiplayer? I expect more from geniuses like Looking Glass."

Ian Bowles

Comment

There's considerable debate over the lack of a multiplayer element in *Thief*, but consider this: how on earth do you devise a truly worthwhile multiplayer option for a game that basically revolves around avoiding people?

TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL

REVIEWED Issue 75, April
SCORE 85%

What we thought

PCZONE RECOMMENDED "For the most part, *Turok 2* is a compelling mix of action and exploration, but there are some glaring problems."

What you think

★ "I played *Turok 2* on the N64 at a friend's house and was rather unimpressed. It showed the classic N64-type plot: the world is in danger, you have to defeat the evil McBastard, save the princess, kill the dinosaurs, and blah, blah, blah... I thought the PC version would be better. Surprise: it isn't. If anyone out there wants a decent first-person shoot 'em up, don't waste your money on this game."

David Thompson

★ "Dull, dull, dull. Seen it all before. PCs are not here to house N64 refugees. We don't want them, so stop giving them to us."

Phil Williams

Comment

It's not that bad, is it? Sure, *Turok 2* has its limitations, but it's easy to get into and damn good fun to play. In Mr Thompson's case, why were you so surprised when you'd already seen it on the N64? What did you expect, *Half-Life*?

NHL 99

REVIEWED Issue 70, December
SCORE 92%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "The most polished, playable and robust representation of ice hockey on the PC. To miss out on it would be nigh on criminal."

What you think

★ "Your review of *NHL 99* was spot on. What a brilliant game! It has to be one of the best – if not the best – sports games around. The graphics are stunning, there are options galore, the violence is right-on brutal, and the gameplay? Wow! I'd recommend this game to all sports fans. Even *FIFA 99* is no match for it."

Andrew Croxall

Comment

No it isn't.

TOCA 2

REVIEWED Issue 76, May
SCORE 93%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "Put magazine down. Go to shop. Buy game."

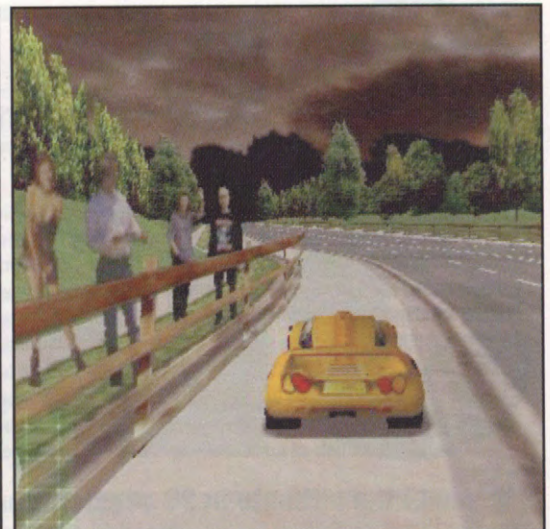
What you think

★ "I love the way you can bludgeon your way past cars. It's not *Grand Prix Legends* in terms of realism, and it's not *Ultimate Race Pro* for wayward driving, but it does combine the two somewhere – and it looks fantastic. Although saying that, my Voodoo3 does crash it out. Has anybody else experienced this?"

Daryl Williams

Comment

A man (or woman) of good taste. Haven't heard of any similar Voodoo3 problems though.



Test Drive 5: the *Half-Life* of driving games, roars Mighty Jimbo.

TEST DRIVE 5

REVIEWED Issue 73, February
SCORE 50%

What we thought

"*Test Drive 5* offers 28 supercars but leaves you wanting to take the bus – partly because the line-up is a bit clichéd, and partly because their wobbly 3Dfx interpretations look a bit suspect, but mostly because the programmers have again failed to capture the authentic 'feel' of a car."

What you think

★ "Who reviewed this? Your mum's dad while sat in front of a flickering real fire with the dog shagging his leg? Come on. It has 28 cars, 18 tracks, network options and superb effects and graphics. This game does for driving games what *Half-Life* does for shoot 'em ups. Get rid of the old man and his dog and review the game again."

Mighty Jimbo

Comment

We dread to think what driving games you've been playing to arrive at the frightening conclusion that *Test Drive 5* is the *Half-Life* of the racing genre. And no, we're not going to review the game again. Phil Wand, the reviewer of *Test Drive 5*, really knows his race games (and his race cars, having recently bought his third Skyline GT-R), and we trust his judgement one hundred per cent.



TOCA 2: combines *Grand Prix Legends* and *Ultimate Race Pro* and looks fantastic, enthuses Daryl Williams.

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

REVIEWED Issue 72, January
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "Because of the slower pace and less combat-oriented nature of the

3D GRAPHICS CARDS

UPDATE

Is Voodoo3 the ultimate in 3D acceleration, or are you better off waiting for superior alternatives? James Gorbald investigates

TECH SPECS

❖ **Voodoo3 2000** £99 • PCI or AGP 2D/3D graphics card • Requires P133 and 16Mb RAM

❖ **Voodoo3 3000** £149 • AGP 2D/3D graphics card with S-Video TV output • Requires P133 and 16Mb RAM

3DFX VOODOO3

❖ 3Dfx • 01753 212600 • www.3dfx.com

The American company 3Dfx have made their fortune by producing super-fast graphics cards specially designed with games in mind. Their flagship Voodoo and Voodoo2 cards made games run faster and helped create more realistic graphics using advanced rendering techniques. Up until now they have had the market cornered.

However, over the last two years the competition – notably nVIDIA Riva and ATI – have caught up with them and are now making comparable alternatives. But 3Dfx have not been caught with their pants down, and their next-generation card, the Voodoo3 (currently available in two configurations), is now on general release.

Unlike previous 3Dfx cards, the Voodoo3 doesn't sit next to your existing graphics card and connect via a pass-through cable at the rear. This time it's a full standalone card that's capable of both 2D (Windows) and 3D graphics performance. So you no longer have to have two graphics cards installed, and a big wiry mess at the back of your PC.

Voodoo3 is currently available in two different models, the 2000 and 3000. Both are fitted

with 16Mb of video memory to support the large textures used in the latest games, but run at different speeds (143MHz and 166MHz respectively). There's also a £50 price difference between the two. What's also important is that only the 2000 is available in both PCI and AGP models, while the 3000 has only an AGP model.

To test the performance of the Voodoo3

2000 and 3000, we ran each card through the Time Demo test built into *Quake II*, on a system built around a 400MHz Pentium II. What this did was play back a pre-recorded demo from the game, as quickly as it possibly could, and then output the result as a score in terms of frames per second (FPS). Using a resolution of 800x600 (the most common setting for a 15-inch monitor and the maximum resolution of a standalone Voodoo2 card), the Voodoo3 2000 scored 70.8fps, and the 3000 came in at 78.2fps. 3Dfx's fastest competitor, the ATI Rage Fury, measured 61.9fps in the same test, so performance-wise you can see how big a difference Voodoo3 makes.

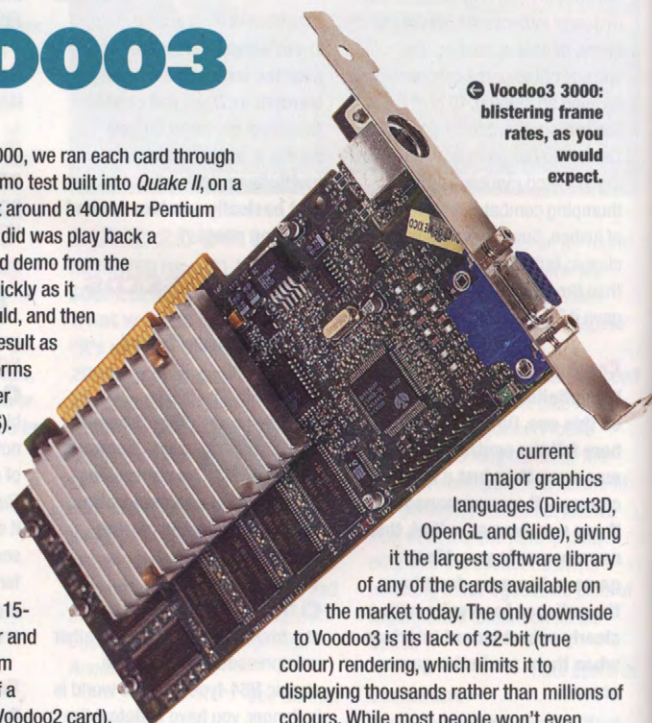
HI-RES VOODOO AT LAST

Increased resolutions are also supported, and if you're lucky enough to own a 19 or 21-inch monitor you can run games such as *Quake II* at a ludicrously high resolution of 1600x1200, and at decent frame rates.

Voodoo3 also compares very favourably with its predecessor. In the same *Quake II* Time Demo tests, two Voodoo2s were slightly faster than a Voodoo3 2000, with a score of 72fps at a resolution of 800x600. This means that if you already have two Voodoo2s in an SLI configuration, you're better off replacing them with a single Voodoo3 3000.

It seems that Voodoo3 is everything we expected it to be and more, with most current games proving more than happy to run on the system using any or all of the

❖ **Voodoo3 3000:** blistering frame rates, as you would expect.



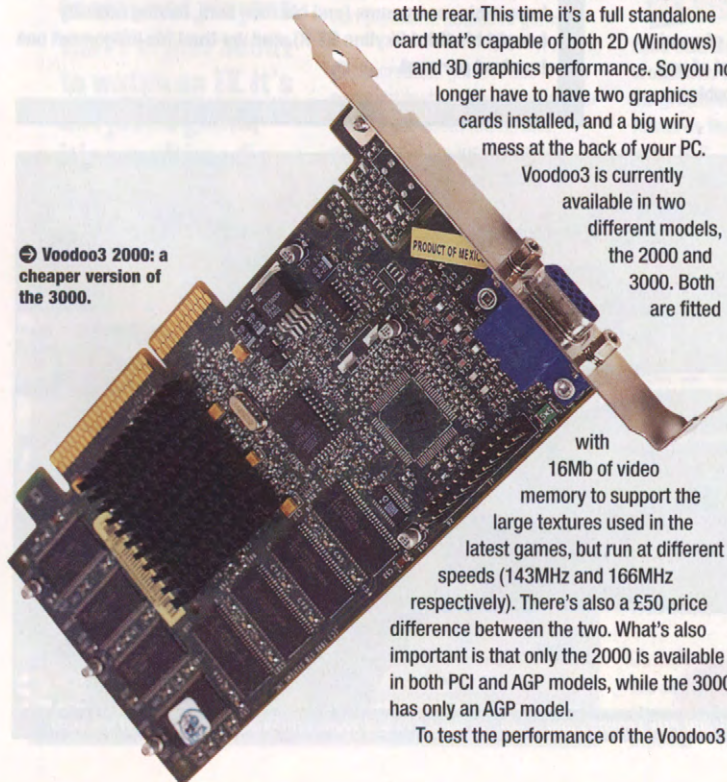
current major graphics languages (Direct3D, OpenGL and Glide), giving it the largest software library of any of the cards available on the market today. The only downside to Voodoo3 is its lack of 32-bit (true colour) rendering, which limits it to displaying thousands rather than millions of colours. While most people won't even notice the difference, purists may take issue when they compare Voodoo3 with a TNT card.

So why have 3Dfx produced two versions of the Voodoo3 card? The reasoning behind it, according to 3Dfx themselves, is that they want to try to cater for as many new users as possible. The 2000 is a relatively cheap (£99) performance booster for those who want to keep their older card installed, and the 3000 is best for those who want the whole caboodle. The 3000 comes with a TV output socket built in (for big-screen gaming), and simply leaves all other graphics cards bobbing up and down in its wake. At £149 it represents excellent value for money. The only things holding back the V3 are its lack of support for 32-bit colour, and no attempt to incorporate next-gen features such as bump mapping or texture compression.

Apart from that, the 3000 is superb, and the 2000 is a decent budget buy.

**PCZONE
RECOMMENDED**

“Voodoo3 is everything we expected it to be, and more”



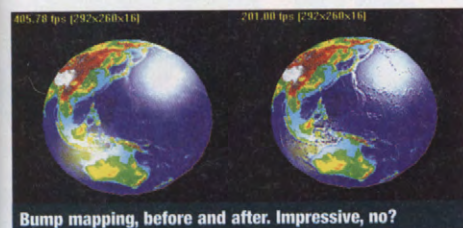
❖ **Voodoo3 2000:** a cheaper version of the 3000.

PCZVERDICT

89%

NEXT-GEN CARDS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Should you rush out and buy the Voodoo3 now, or wait for something better to come along? With serious opposition to the Voodoo3 around the corner, you'd be wise to wait for next month's *ZONE* before making a decision. There are cards waiting to take on V3 as we speak...



MATROX G400

Canadian-based Matrox are best known for their super-fast business-oriented graphics cards such as those in the Millennium series. However, with the forthcoming and much talked about G400 chip, Matrox are gunning firmly for the games market.

So what will make the G400 stand out from the crowd? At sneak peek, an early prototype showed off great performance in 2D and 3D, but the G400 also promises some pretty unique features of its own - such as support for hardware 'bump mapping', a technique that makes textured objects (such as walls) look much more realistic. Bump mapping also takes less time to calculate than simply

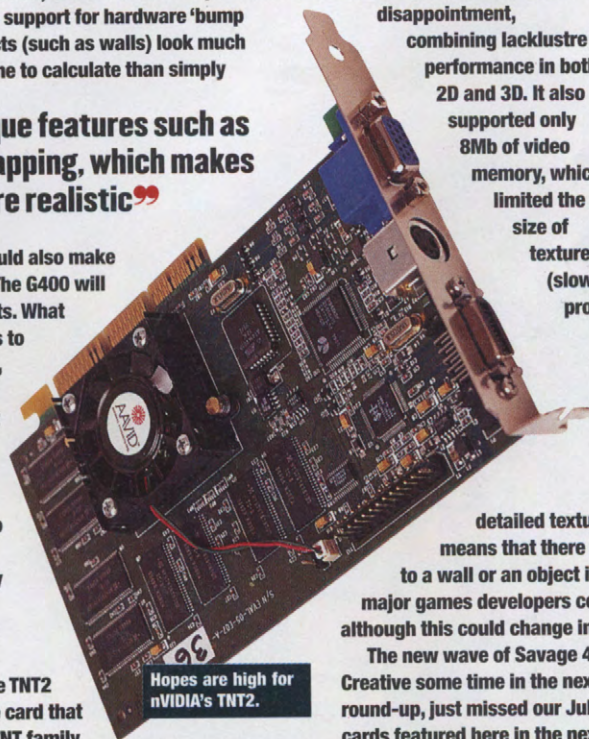
“The G400 has some pretty unique features such as support for hardware bump mapping, which makes texture objects look much more realistic”

adding more detail into the game itself, so it should also make games that support this feature run faster still. The G400 will also have support for two separate D-Sub outputs. What this means is that you can hook up two monitors to your PC - have one game running on one screen, while your Internet browser runs on the other. This will be particularly interesting if you've just bought a new monitor and are wondering what to do with that knackered old 14-incher sitting in the corner gathering dust.

Though pricing and specifications have yet to be finalised, you should expect to see various G400-based graphics cards on sale around early June.

NVIDIA RIVA TNT2

nVIDIA have been making a lot of noise about the TNT2 ever since the original TNT was launched. As the card that took on the budget 3Dfx Banshee and won, the TNT family



has a lot to live up to. nVIDIA are claiming that the TNT2 will bury 3Dfx once and for all - in particular Voodoo3 - although you'll have to wait at least another month to see whether these claims can be substantiated, because it isn't yet finished. However, after benchmarking a reference board from nVIDIA, we have to say that we were sorely disappointed. Our test showed that the performance of the TNT2 doesn't even rival that of the Voodoo3 2000 board, let alone the stupidly fast 3000, and it's also pretty touchy about the machines it will work in.

From this early glimpse we conclude that nVIDIA still have a lot of work to do on the TNT2, its only real advantage over Voodoo3 at the moment being support for 32-bit colour rendering. We'll bring you a full update and an in-depth review soon.

S3 SAVAGE 4

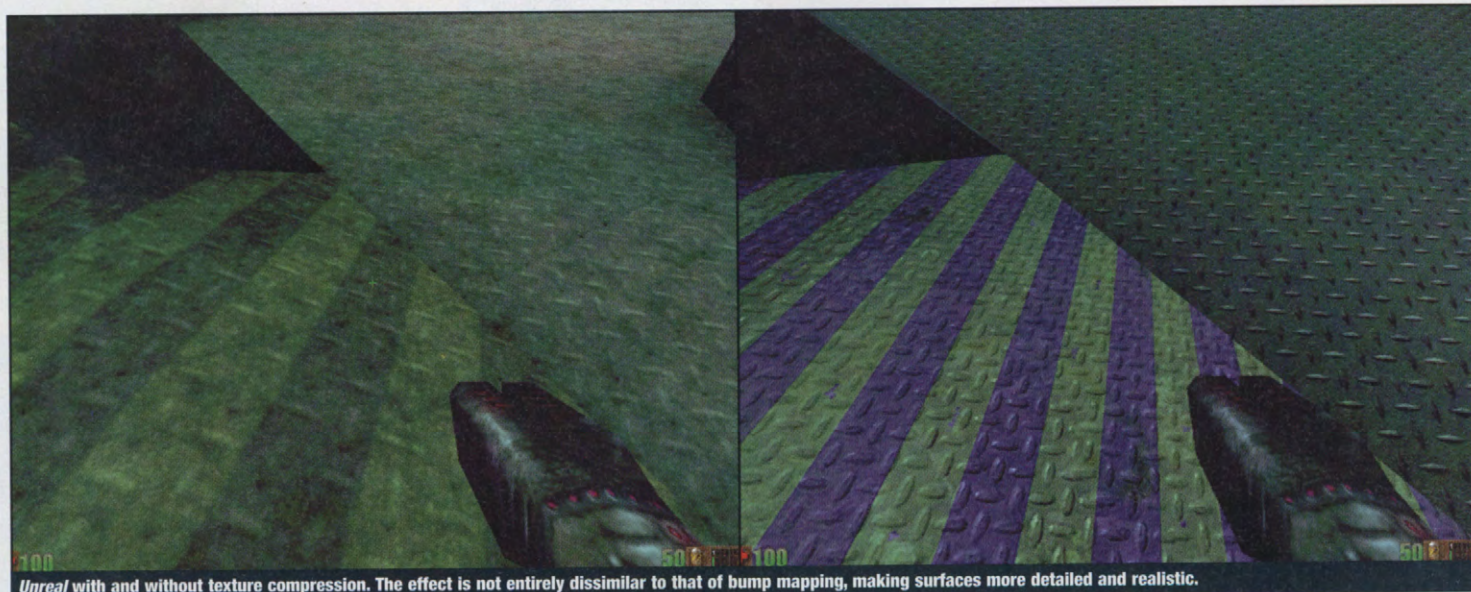
The Savage 4 from S3 is a dark horse in this month's graphics card update. Its predecessor, the Savage 3D, was a bitter disappointment, combining lacklustre performance in both 2D and 3D. It also supported only 8Mb of video memory, which limited the size of textures



(slowing everything down as a result) and also caused problems at high resolutions.

However, it does look as if S3 have learnt their lesson, and have resolved many of these problems with the Savage 4. First up is support for more onboard memory - a crucial feature for fast gaming performance. More importantly, S3 have also been working on their unique texture compression technology which enables huge detailed textures to be displayed even on lower spec machines. This means that there should be no more unfocused blur when you get close to a wall or an object in a game. Unfortunately, at this point there are no major games developers committed to writing in support of the technology, although this could change in the near future.

The new wave of Savage 4 cards should be released through both ELSA and Creative some time in the next few months. In fact the S4, like the other cards in this round-up, just missed our July issue deadline. So we hope to be reviewing all the cards featured here in the next issue of *PC ZONE*. Stay tuned. [E]



Unreal with and without texture compression. The effect is not entirely dissimilar to that of bump mapping, making surfaces more detailed and realistic.

No Guts No Glory



Featuring

- ✦ ROWAN'S NEW, ADVANCED ENGINE
- ✦ STUNNING 3D TERRAIN, FEATURING OCEANS, MOUNTAINS, VALLEYS AND LUSH FORESTATION OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA
- ✦ SCALABLE INVOLVEMENT - FLY IN DOGFIGHTS OR MANAGE THE ENTIRE UN OFFENSIVE
- ✦ 16 DIFFERENT AUTHENTIC AIRCRAFT. OVER 100 IN THE SKIES AT ANY ONE TIME
- ✦ WEATHER GENERATION AND VARYING ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS
- ✦ INCREDIBLY COMPLEX ENEMY AI ROUTINES
- ✦ 8 PLAYER HEAD-TO-HEAD NETWORK PLAY
- ✦ INFORMATIVE RADIO CHATTER
- ✦ REALISTIC DAMAGE TO AIRCRAFT IS VISUALLY DISPLAYED
- ✦ INTERACTIVE FORWARD AIR CONTROL
- ✦ GUN CAMERA REPLAY
- ✦ AUTHENTIC FLIGHT DYNAMICS INCLUDING THE IDIOSYNCRATIC BEHAVIOUR OF '50S JETS
- ✦ REAL DYNAMIC CAMPAIGNING - YOUR ACTIONS DIRECTLY INFLUENCE THE UN GROUND WAR
- ✦ CUSTOMISE YOUR OWN AIRCRAFT NOSE ART IN THE PAINT SHOP
- ✦ UNDERCARRIAGE TYRE AND LEG SUSPENSION RESPOND REALISTICALLY TO TERRAIN GEOMETRY

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With blistering closing attack speeds of up to 1,000 mph and without the luxury of modern radar-guided missiles, get up close to the enemy and wait until you see the whites of his eyes before blasting him away.

Take control of FIVE totally authentic 1950's fighters and bombers, from the agile Russian MiG 15, to the awesome American F86 Sabre. Fly quick missions or command full dynamic campaigns. And remember, *no guts no glory!*

actual screenshots!



Mig Alley

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FIGHTING FANTASY

WARNING!

"It is the year 2325 and you are Ryan Gunmetal, Intergalactic Mercenary..." No you're not. And nor are any of your friends. Brace yourselves, as *Charlie Brooker* and *Steve Hill* explain why it's high time science fiction and fantasy games were put out to grass

WARNING!

Before we go any further, a brief word of caution

What follows is an unapologetically one-sided argument in which sci-fi and fantasy get a slugging. If you're the type of person who thinks Klingons are real, or habitually dresses like an archmage, please try to remain calm. Don't get upset. Don't threaten to beam down and slay us with a magic sword. We're not having a go at *you*, we're just arguing for more diversity in game design.

Picture the scene. It's Saturday night and you fancy watching a motion picture. You call a couple of friends and arrange to meet outside the local cinema. It's a multiplex.

It's owned by a corporation of bewildering proportions. It's got six colossal screens showcasing the week's new releases. On screen one you can see *Star Wars: Episode One*; on screen two: *Conan The Barbarian*; screen three: *Moon Cops*; screen four: *Wizard Attack!*; Screen five: *Space Arse*; and on screen six, a documentary about snooker.

Okay, it's a simple choice. You'd watch *Star Wars*. But what if you'd already seen it? What if you were in the mood for something different? Look at the line-up again: no

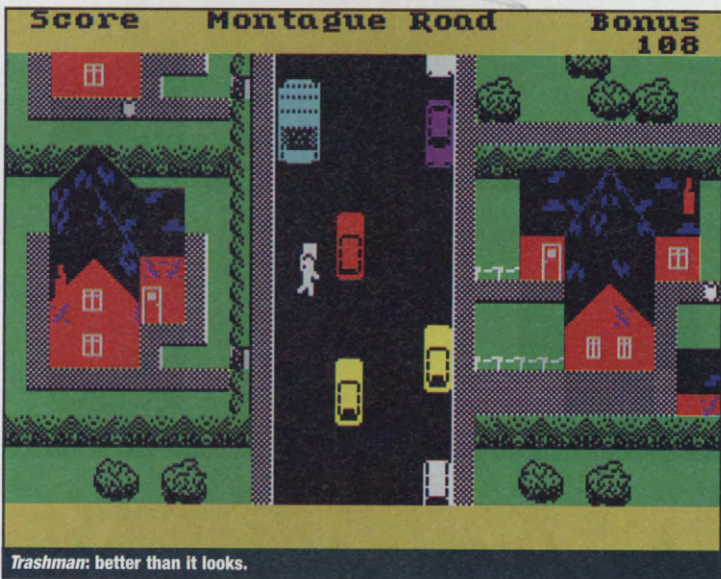
comedies, no slice-of-life dramas, no crime capers, no character-driven epics, no gritty urban realism – and no real choice. Just sci-fi, fantasy or sport. That's your lot. Imagine that happening *every week*, all year round, forever and ever, amen: sci-fi, fantasy, sport; sci-fi, fantasy, sport; sci-fi, fantasy, sport... Would you stand for that? Of course not. You'd go mad. You'd knock your brains out right there on the pavement.

Well, culture boy, take a look at the shelves of your local computer games shop, and... uh-oh! That's precisely what's been happening for years – a depressing landscape of looming planets, laser beams, swords, chain mail, and grimacing orcs. Sure, there's the odd historical epic to spruce things up, →

FREAK EXPERIMENTS

The real world has intruded into the gaming world before

Reality-oriented games aren't really anything new – the early days of gaming are notable for several bold forays into the scintillating world of mundane reality. Check out the following and ask yourself this: just how boring would they have been if the programmers had decided to set them on Mars? Answer: very. The only mystery is that despite being excellent, none of the following games managed to kick-start a 'real-life' trend of their own...



Trashman: better than it looks.

TRASHMAN (New Generation, ZX Spectrum)

A fine example of humdrum suburbia providing the basis for a fantastic game. You play a dustman who has to collect bins, avoid dogs and earn gigantic tips from your 'customers'. Charming, funny, and extremely playable even today.



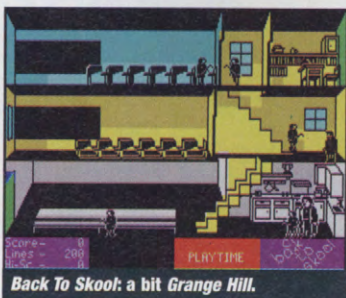
Tapper: you're a barman. That's it.

HAMPSTEAD (Melbourne House, Spectrum, C64)

Pre-dating *The Hobbit*, this was a satirical text adventure in which you had to climb London's social ladder rung by sorry rung. The ultimate goal? To own your own pad in swanky Hampstead, of course.

ALTER EGO (Activision, C64)

The ultimate in real-life simulation. Another text-only game, but this time an open-ended exercise in 'what if...' fun rather than rabid social climbing. You could play as a man or a woman, too.



Back To Skool: a bit Grange Hill.

TAPPER (Midway, Arcade)

You're a bloke, serving drinks at a bar. That's it.



Hampstead: social climbing.

BACK TO SKOOL (Microsphere, Spectrum)

The gaming world's first romantic comedy? Maybe. *Back To Skool* was a sequel to the classic *Skool Daze*, the gaming world's direct equivalent of *Grange Hill*. You played a naughty boy attempting to play truant and win the heart of a girl from the neighbouring school.

but if you're looking for something set in the present day, forget it – unless, of course, you like sports games. Well we've had enough.

We're constantly being told that games are more popular than ever, that gaming is finally considered an acceptable pastime. To which we say: yeah, right. Stop someone in the street and ask them to describe the average game and they'll mention 'geeks shooting at aliens' or 'loners chasing goblins' within the first minute. If games want mass-market acceptance, they've got to buck up their ideas and lose the obsession with chain mail and rocketships.

Listen, the most popular programme on British television isn't *Babylon 5* or *Star Trek* or *Xena*:

Warrior Princess, it's *Coronation Street*, a droll tale of Northern folk drinking beer and buying bread. This is closely followed by the exploits of a

“Take a look at the shelves of your local computer games shop. A depressing landscape of looming planets, laser beams, swords, chain mail and orcs”

bunch of depressed cockneys intermittently killing each other in an East End square. The rest of the schedules are stuffed with fly-on-the-

REAL HORROR SHOW

You don't need violence in order to create a good game

A cry for realism is all very well, but there's a very good reason why so many games are based in imaginary environments: the violence. *Carmageddon II* ran into immense problems because it was too near the knuckle for many – even though blood and gore have been a gaming staple since the dawn of *Mortal Kombat*. *Kingpin* is likely to suffer a similar fate. And you have to admit that the complainants have a point: a line has to be drawn somewhere.

Martin Edmondson, managing director of Reflections, thinks he knows where. His company's forthcoming *Driver* is a racing game set firmly in the real world. It has real streets, real cars... and pedestrians. But you can't kill them.

“Games are starting to get very realistic now,” he says. “*GTA* had a cartoony look, and the fuss over that was ridiculous, but *Carmageddon* was gratuitous. I don't like the idea of mowing down old ladies. You've got to be responsible because it's photo-realistic.

“We could make people die in *Driver*, but I don't think it would be funny. I think the idea of driving down a pavement with a load of people sat drinking, suddenly jumping out of the way and all the tables and chairs smashing is quite amusing, but seeing people splat over the bonnet is too much. Nobody needs to die to make a game funny or spectacular.”

That last sentence is an incredibly important point. We seem to have lost the art of the non-violent game in recent years. It hasn't always been so: check out the Freak Experiments panel, left, and you'll see that we used to make excellent non-violent and realistic games.

It's a point that isn't lost on Demis Hassabis, baby-faced head honcho of nouveau British games company Elixir. “I think it's narrow-minded to assume games have to contain violence,” he says. “That small minority of people who play games, 16 to 30-year-old males, don't care about violence, but if you want to appeal to the mainstream it's not a good thing. There's so many games you could create with today's technology that wouldn't need violence – or at least explicit violence – in them at all. *Theme Park* had no violence in it, *Sim City* had no violence... There are several successful games that are totally non-violent. And in some ways they're harder to do. A game in which the player walks around shooting is quite an easy game to design. You don't have to think much about how you're going to engage the player; he's just supposed to go into a blood frenzy.

“There are definitely other ways of doing it. In fact our first game is going to be set in reality, in today's world. But I can't tell you any more about it. In fact I've already said too much.”



Forthcoming racing game *Driver* is based in recognisable versions of New York, Miami, San Francisco and LA.



wall docu-soaps and 'reality-based' entertainment shows with titles like *Britain's Scariest Murderers* and *When Animals Defecate On Your Face*. People want to see things they can relate to. Fantasy is out; reality is as 'now' as it gets, *dah-ling*.

"Most games are set in either a fantasy or a science fiction world, but most normal people don't connect with those kind of things," argues Demis Hassabis, MD of start-up UK games developers Elixir. "They don't connect with Tolkien and Dungeons & Dragons, they don't connect with *Star Trek* - they think those are for sad, geeky people."

Yup. The general public thinks games are sad because they're inexorably linked with the worlds of sci-fi and fantasy - which really are sad. Honest. Take a long, hard look. Exhale deeply and concentrate. Once you get past the life-affirming blockbusters and the occasional intelligent novel, you're left with a morass of inept pantomime claptrap aimed at the inadequate, the lonely, the easily pleased and the deeply insecure. Sorry, but games can do better than this.

FUTURE LIFE IS RUBBISH

To understand why we've been lumbered with such paucity of choice, it pays to examine how games have evolved. Starting at the beginning.

By today's standards, the earliest videogames were primitive; animated cave paintings featuring little or no colour and a resolution on a par with the average Lego model. 3D graphics were virtually unheard of; most games consisted of a collection of tiny sprites jiggling around against a flat black background. Crude, uncomplicated images which didn't resemble anything in particular - except maybe random objects floating in deep space. And that was just the graphics. The sound effects were limited too: little more than a series of



The Hobbit: dwarves and gold.

REALLY GREAT

Some recent examples of excellent 'realistic' games

HALF-LIFE (Valve)

Sci-fi that works. What are we trying to do, disprove our own theories? No. Think. The single best thing about *Half-Life* (PCZ #71, 95%) is the sense of total immersion, and it achieves this because you *become* the main character. The game opens with you travelling to work. It spends *ages* making you familiar with the humdrum science facility - toilets, lockers, vending machines and all. When all hell breaks loose, it's all the more shocking and unexpected because it seems to be happening *in your world*. The best bit? Battling those human marines. The worst bit? When you're transported to the freakish alien planet it gets a bit boring - *because you can't relate to it any more*.

RAINBOW SIX (Take 2)

A realistic first-person shooter. Take a crack team of paid psychopaths and sort out all kinds of tricky and believable situations. Precise planning is required: storm in, demonstrating the kind of devil-may-care bravado that works well in *Quake* and you're worm food. (PCZ #69, 89%)

Coming REAL soon...

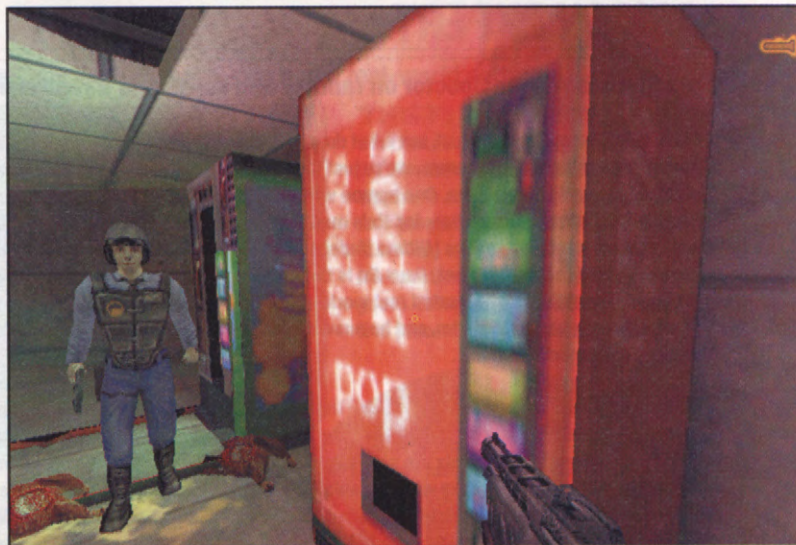
KINGPIN (Xatrix)

Shocking, violent, and crammed with the kind of language you rarely hear in party political broadcasts, *Kingpin* (PCZ #77, 92%) is an outstanding example of a game set in a down-to-earth, ouch-that's-gritty environment. Well, do you know anyone who *doesn't* want to play it?

DEUS EX (Ion Storm)

Assuming Ion Storm don't completely implode, we can look forward to enjoying Warren 'Ultima Underworld' Spector's *Deus Ex*, an RPG that looks like a first-person shooter but isn't. It's set in a painstakingly constructed 'real world', and it looks fantastic. See the Ask An Expert section on page 114 for Spector's stance on the realism debate.

Deus Ex: set in the 'real world', and it looks fantastic.



Half-Life: gives a sense of total immersion because you *become* the main character.



Rainbow Six: just like the news.



Shenmue: see it and weep.

SHENMUE (Sega)

What? We've included a Dreamcast game? Why? Because, dumbo, *Shenmue* could prove to be the perfect example of what we've been banging on about.

Set in 1980s Hong Kong, it's got stunning photo-



Rainbow Six: just like the SAS.

realistic graphics and attention to detail that can only be described as petrifying.

Rest assured, you'll be hearing a lot more about it in the very near future.



Kingpin: grim reality, and more than a little brutality.

ASK AN EXPERT

Ion Storm's Warren Spector on fantasy and sci-fi, and if real-world settings are the way forward



Warren Spector: getting real.

Okay, so you know how *we* feel, but what do *we* know? We don't make the games, we're just the chimps who write about them. One person who does know is Ion Storm's Warren Spector. He's made loads, a lot of them involving goblins (*Ultima Underworld*, anyone?), but his latest project, *Deus Ex*, is notable for its use of meticulously created real world spaces. We shot some questions at him, and he answered with voracious enthusiasm...

★ **Why do you think games have traditionally been set in clearly fictitious fantasy worlds?**

First of all, our expressive tools are woefully inadequate. Only recently have we been able to create worlds that even remotely resemble the real world. And we're still a long way from being able to do real places and people *well*.

Go back to the days of *Ultima VI* or *Underworld* and it was plain impossible. We couldn't generate the kind of architectural complexity needed, and we sure couldn't create believable human figures. All we could do was highly iconic worlds filled with fantasy beasts. If we'd tried to create believable settings and worlds populated by real people back in the late '80s we would have been laughed into bankruptcy court. It just couldn't be done.

★ **So what about now?**

Today we have technology of sufficient power to mean it's time to start trying, and maybe failing, to create more believable worlds. We have a *chance* of succeeding. At the very least, I think we can break free of the 'Warehouse World' model (weirdly shaped rooms filled with immovable, indestructible crates) and begin creating places that are conventionally recognisable – "Oh, I'm in a bathroom... Now I'm in an office... Here I am in a kitchen..." That enables players to exercise some real-world common sense to how the room might function, what you might find there, how the people you encounter might respond to certain kinds of stimuli.

★ **Are you bored with fantasy worlds?**

I certainly was when I started putting a team together to make *Deus Ex*. The game we're working on now is a direct reaction to years of goofy fantasy settings. I was bored to *death* making fantasy and far-future games. For years I've had it in my head that we could tell cooler stories and reach a larger audience if we stopped focusing on those niche genres.

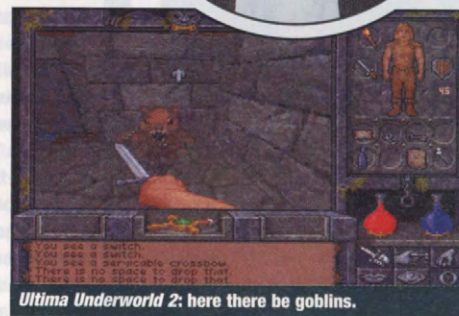
When I started thinking about *Deus Ex*, I wanted to make a game my father might 'get'. The way to make that happen seemed to be the creation of settings and characters normal human beings were familiar with. Not just the 'real' real world, but the world of Willis, Schwarzenegger, Van Damme and the other action film heroes. They act out fantasies people could identify with. As popular as fantasy and SF are, if you factor out *Star Wars* and maybe some *Trek* stuff, they're really kind of cultish backwaters. I wanted to break out of that.

"The game we're working on now is a direct reaction to years of goofy fantasy settings. I was bored to death"

ION STORM'S WARREN SPECTOR

★ **Do you think more contemporary games will attract players who would ordinarily dismiss games as glorified *Dungeons & Dragons*?**

Absolutely. Like I said, a few anomalies aside, fantasy and SF are geek-oriented in the extreme – and I say that as an unapologetic geek myself. The problem is that there aren't enough of us geeks to support the kinds of development budgets necessary to make a hit game these days. We *need* to be reaching out to the unwashed masses. Look at what's selling in the US – *Barbie*, hunting games and *SimCity*. Yes, *Baldur's Gate* hit the top of the charts, but still we



Ultima Underworld 2: here there be goblins.

need to be broadening our market and creating games that don't require people to embarrass themselves by donning Armour of Finest Dragon Scale.

★ **What do you say to the argument that if games become just like real life they'll be boring?**

Is realism boring? It can be, but that doesn't mean it *has* to be. I mean, we're not making *Telemarketer's Adventure*. We're still operating in a fantastic, stylised realm here. We're not recreating boring office buildings, but interesting real-world locations. How many people haven't fantasised about slipping away from the White House tour and opening up some doors they don't want you to open? We can let players do that.

★ **What about the future?**

The technology available to us, good as it is, isn't enough to build anything but a distant approximation of the real world. My fear is that we can get *just* close enough to allow people to nitpick us to death – something they'd never do with a game about orcs or spaceships. The closer we get to recreating reality, the higher player expectations go. That means we have a tougher time convincing people that what they're seeing and doing is believable. The human figures in *Deus Ex* look and behave more like real people than in any game I've ever worked on, but they don't look *real*. I'm already anticipating people saying stuff like, "How come the lips aren't in perfect sync?"

When you walk into an office and there's a phone on the desk, the people ask: "Can I make a phone call?" If they see a stapler they'll say: "Can I use it to staple paper together?" That's a whole class of questions and criticisms that would never be an issue in a fantasy game.

★ **And finally?**

The whole point of gaming, as I see it, is to allow players to live out fantasies they couldn't live out any other way. Even a real-world game has to appeal to someone's fantasy. It may be 'I've always wanted to be James Bond' or 'I've always wanted to be a city planner', but there always has to be that core of fantasy appeal. Real-world spaces, when used appropriately, can enhance our ability to suck people in, to make them forget they're just pushing pixels around on the screen. As a developer, if players forget they're playing a game, you win. It's the ultimate.



Ion Storm's *Deus Ex*: notable for its use of meticulously created real-world spaces.

beeps, crackles and fuzzy 'zap' noises. And we're talking late '70s and early '80s here; the days of *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *ET* and *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*.

It was all one big happy coincidence: the public was hungry for interstellar combat, which just happened to be the only thing the early arcade machines could emulate without looking foolish. *Space Invaders*, *Asteroids*, *Galaxian*, *Defender*... all massive successes, and all of them (literally) out of this world. Good job we weren't in the middle of a costume drama craze.

GOBLINS SUCK

Meanwhile, on scary university mainframes and coal-driven home computers, text-based adventure games began to appear. The first was called, simply, *Adventure*, also known as *Colossal Caves*. And then there was *Zork*, also known as *Dungeon*. The first adventure game to include colour graphics (hey, it was a big deal back then) was Sierra's *The Wizard And The Princess*. Then in 1983 Melbourne House released *The Hobbit* and it all went ballistic. See the pattern? No? Then take a closer look.

They were all inspired, in one way or another, by *Dungeons And Dragons*. Why? Two reasons. First of all, *D&D* was the only other form of interactive storytelling around. Secondly, and more significantly, it was massively popular with geeky hobbyist types – and to own or operate a computer in those pre-GUI days, you had to be a geeky hobbyist-type. The marriage of these two separate obsessions became inevitable.

BAD HABITS DIE HARD

For years the science fiction and fantasy genres served programmers well. They covered the gaps. When sprites gave way to 3D polygon models, countless deep-space, cockpit-based shoot 'em ups appeared. Why? *Because they were easy*. Set your game in space and you don't have to

IF ONLY...

A couple of games which would have been far better if they'd had a real-world setting



Expendable: you're better off with *Commando* or *Ikari*.

EXPENDABLE (Rage)

Commando? Ikari Warriors? Fantastic arcade war 'em ups, the pair of 'em. Expendable? Well, it's similar, but the far-flung science fiction setting actually makes it feel less exciting than its predecessors. (PCZ #76, 79%)

worry about, say, the effect of gravity. Or providing a landscape. Best of all, most of the gaming environment is filled with empty space – and nobody's going to complain.

A similar thing happened to

dealing with made-up objects in a made-up world, they know the players can't and won't whinge about accuracy. Does that space station look right? Would a real goblin have teeth that big? How the hell do you know?

“Why are we still letting people get away with with the same old lazy-arse sci-fi nonsense? Why does every RPG have to star a twat with a beard?”

adventure games. Claustrophobic and box-like by design, the traditional underground *D&D* dungeon was relatively simple to portray using a primitive 3D engine. If anyone says it's repetitive, then hey! It's a *dungeon*, remember? It's supposed to be repetitive. Not to mention convenient. When a programmer is

THIS IS THE DAY, THIS IS THE HOUR History lesson over. Back to the present day. And *woah!* The technical situation's changed. We've got faster processors, acres of memory, highfalutin 3D accelerators, DVD drives, force feedback joysticks, you name it. Anyone who doubts whether it's now possible to deliver a

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT (Looking Glass)

We like the tension, we like the emphasis on sneaking around, and we love burgling mansions. Why Looking Glass had to defile everything by giving the cast beards and swords is anyone's guess. Bring out a patch that transports it to present-day Gateshead, say we. (PCZ #72, 90%)



convincing approximation of the real world in an action game should look at *Kingpin* or forthcoming Dreamcast game *Shenmue*, and dribble. So why are we still letting people get away with the same old lazy-arse sci-fi fantasy nonsense? Why are there so many games about giant robots? Why bother with C&C-style wargames set on the undiscovered moons of Jupiter? Why does every RPG have to star a twat with a beard?

Don't get us wrong. We thought *Half-Life* rocked bells. And we're not asking for *Nil By Mouth: The Computer Game*. We wouldn't recommend a ban on anything that doesn't demonstrably exist in the real world. We crave excitement as much as the next downtrodden civilian. We'd just like to see a little more reality creeping into existing genres – and loads more games with totally contemporary settings. We want RPGs set in present-day America. First-person Metropolitan Police games. Updates of classics like *Trashman* and *Skool Daze*.

Well, which would you rather play – a game set in, say, a contemporary market town, in which you skate around committing minor acts of vandalism and trying to evade capture, or yet another epic in which you guide a 'mech' around a desert moon, fighting other mechs?

Don't bother answering that. Right now you don't have any choice. And until the situation changes, games will continue to be perceived as sad. Go figure. [KZ]

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO WEIRDNESS?

Darwinian evolutionary theory as applied to the extinction of yesteryear's 'out-there' oddball games

There were lots of old-skool games which didn't have a sci-fi theme – think of the abstract weirdness of *Pac Man* or *Q-Bert*, for instance. So what happened to them? Well, we reckon they slowly mutated into the sports games of today.

“Whaaat?” you scream. “So *FIFA 99* and *Pac Man* are related? Bollocks!”

No, really – think about it. Ignore the sporting aspect and look at the gameplay: both have rigid rule systems, simple controls, a clear objective, and are set within a very confined space.

Truly out-there 'weird' games, as opposed to sci-fi or fantasy games, appear to have gone the way of the silent movie. Weird in itself, that.



Pac-Man: not a documentary.



Q-Bert: sheer fantasy.

any 4 for £10



10 pin bowling fever



legend of the ancient dragon



arsenal



board games compendium



b.u.g.s.



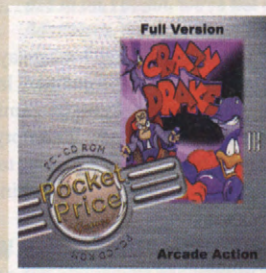
casino madness



chess champ



dark corona



crazy drake



dracula



football masters



fortune cookie



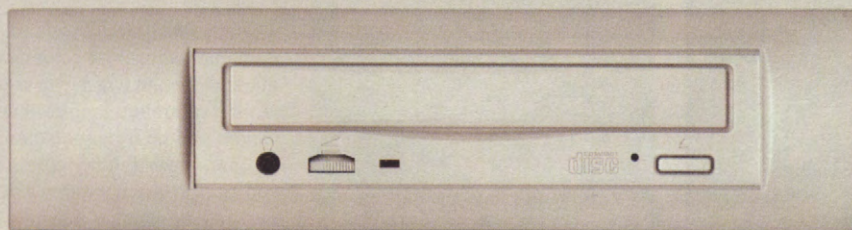
global defender



grand prix racing '98



arcade horse racing



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my friend koo



polaris rebellion



pro cycling



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snooker 147



snowboard racer



speed haste



sports superbike



super kid



thunder off shore



vanguard ace



world wide rally



MEGASTORES

Stuck on a game? Feel like you're wheel-spinning in the gravel trap while the rest of the field goes flashing past? Well don't take your helmet off just yet, here comes the **PC ZONE** pit crew to haul you out of the mess and get you back on the racing line

CHEAT MASTER

Right, you can stop your fretting – **PC ZONE's** everlasting supply of hot hints and cheeky cheats are sure to put a wry smile back on your face

★ **CHEATMEISTER** Keith Pullin

ON THE CD



ON THE CD

We've got over 1200 games tips and solutions squeezed on to this month's CD. 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.

ALPHA CENTAURI

Electronic Arts

While playing a game, press **Ctrl** and **K** to access the map editor. Now press the key combinations you want from this fine little list:

- Shift + F5** Change year
- Shift + F1** Create unit
- Shift + F2** Discovery technology
- Shift + F4** Edit energy credits
- Shift + F9** Edit faction diplomacy
- Shift + F6** Kill opponent
- Shift + F3** Switch sides & reset view
- Shift + F8** View FMV sequences
- Shift + F7** View replay
- Y** Full map

TOCA 2

Codemasters

Getting roughed up in **TOCA 2**? Try entering your name as the following:

- SKATES** Double speed, brake and grip
- TOPDOWN** Overhead view
- HANGOVER** Fog effect
- REPEL** Strange, indeterminable effect
- DOUBLE** Access all tracks
- CARTASTIC** Unlock all cars
- OUCH** Battle mode

- HIGHJUMP** Low gravity
- SKINNY** Wheels-only view
- GIRDLE** Raise walls and narrow the road
- TIMEOUT** Full Championship race distances
- RUBBER** Bouncy crashes
- MOVIE** Silly crashes

GRAND THEFT AUTO LONDON 1969

Take 2 Interactive

Get your own back on those damn tourists by typing in any of the following codes during the game:

- 6661970** Infinite lives
- tourettes** Infinite lives; press '*' key for all weapons
- flashmotor** All levels
- travelcard** All levels and infinite lives
- iamgod** 10x score multiplier, infinite lives; press '*' for all weapons
- averyrichman** 999999999 points
- psychedelic** 999999999 points, all weapons if you press '*', and all items
- rommel** Debug mode

HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC 3

Ubi Soft
If you're struggling to make the grade as a hero, press **Tab** during the game and type in the following magic codes:

- Nwonlyamodel** Build all buildings in your castle
- Nwctrojanrabbit** Instant victory
- Nwccavertingoureyes** Hero gains extra 35 archangel
- Nwccantioch** Hero gains tent, ballista, ammo
- Nwccigotbetter** Hero goes up a level
- Nwccastleanthrax** Hero gains highest luck
- Nwccoconuts** Hero has unlimited move points

- Nwcmuchrejoicing** Hero gains top morale
- Nwccalreadygotone** Reveal all secret items on map
- Nwccgeneraldirection** See the whole map
- Nwccshrubbery** All sources increased
- Nwccntim** Hero gains all magic and 999 spell points
- Nwccsirrobin** Immediate failure

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

Hasbro Interactive

Here's a quickie – after all, we have just printed a strategy guide (**PCZ #78**). Anyway, for a little bit of fun, try renaming one/some of your guests to:

- Chris Sawyer** Guest becomes a photographer
- Simon Foster** Guest becomes a painter

Apparently there are others, so feel free to experiment.

SOUTH PARK

Acclaim
No doubt there are a few of you feeling short-changed when it comes to this comic caper, so try pumping a bit of excitement into the gameplay with these cheats. To activate, first press **Esc** during the game, select **Options**, then click in the lower-left corner of the screen and enter one/some of the following codes:

- EGOTRIP** Enormous bounce mode
- BEEFCAKE** Invincibility
- SWEET** All weapons/unlimited ammo
- FRAMERATE** Display frame rate

BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD DO U

GT Interactive
If you fancy exploring some alternative options, type

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

118 CHEATMASTER

If at first you don't succeed... cheat. Allow Keith Pullin to show you how it's done.

119 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.

120 HOW TO...

Join the online gaming party. Having got you connected last month, in Part 2 Phil Wand turns his attention to servers, and getting the best out of your system

126 CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER

Andrew 'Scaffolding' Wright shows you how to build a civilisation from the ground up.

130 DEAR WAZZA

Need a hand with a technical query that's bugging you? Our tech-head Wazza is here to help.

132 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



Andrew Wright

'gosanta' and then start a new game. While playing, press F2 to open up the Cheat Menu.

You can also get the game to play itself. Select the 'Exit to Debug Mode' option in the Cheat Menu, select Tests, then use the Game Walkthrough option to watch the B&B go through their paces.

TRIPLE PLAY 2000

EA Sports
Could this be the best PC baseball game of all time? Who knows, but it's now the easiest with the help of these hacks.

To smash a 'homer' with the Gravis Gamepad Pro:

1. Hold down the four back buttons: 5, 6, 7 and 8.
2. Press buttons 4, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1 in that order, then left on the pad, and then right. You should hear a sound confirming that the cheat is working.

To edit the camera view:
Hold down keys 1, 2, 3, 4 (not on numberpad), and press right, left, up, down, right, left (cursors) to toggle cheat on/off. To adjust the camera view, use the cursors to move left, right, forward and back. If you combine the cursor keys while holding 1, 2, 3, 4, you can pivot the camera too.

To strikeout every time:
To strikeout any batter in one pitch, simply hold the top four joyypad buttons and press 4,1,4,3,2,1, up, down on the keyboard. Now throw the ball anywhere except at the batter

VIGILANCE

Segasoft
During the game, press Enter and type one of these case-sensitive codes (including the asterisk):

- *cheat God mode with unlimited ammo

- *state Show current action of player
- *fps Show fps
- *maxfps Show max fps
- *suicide Commit suicide
- *coords Show current co-ordinates
- *other Enables you to control enemy
- *ghost Walk through walls
- *freeze Freeze hit points
- *jzk Shows an amusing message
- *HoneyBunny Shows another message
- *thunderdome Show credits

ABE'S EXODUS

GT Interactive
It's about time something came along to make this impenetrable game a bit easier, so here we go - just press the following key combinations: If you want a level skip, press and hold Shift, then press down, right, left, right, left,

right, left and up while playing. To see the next movie, press and hold Shift, then press up, left, right, left, right, left, right on the options menu. To skip ahead to next path, press and hold Shift, then press left, right, up, down, left, right while playing.

GANGSTERS: ORGANISED CRIME

Eidos Interactive
You need to explore a few game folders for this one, but it's worth it. Go to Run in the Start Menu and type 'regedit'. Now navigate through the following directories: \hkey_local_machine\Software\Hothouse\Gangsters\ At Default Money, change 2710 to 207101FF for unlimited cash. At Default Hoods, change A to FF to start with loads of hoods. [E]

CALL OUR TIPS LINE
0171 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 it's dawn and you're still hunched over your PC wondering where it all went wrong, it's time to drop *Keith Pullin* a line

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Q I am struggling to do anything in *Starsiege Universe*. I keep getting in close and blasting the enemies but I just seem to be too weak. Can you give me an idea on how to get started?

Paul York, Northampton

A You really need to engage the enemy from a distance - the further the better. Oh, and remember to order your squad to do the same, as they're usually even more accurate than you. Generally speaking, the enemy tend not to attack until you're quite close. Make use of this and you should gain the upper hand.

MASK OF RAGE

Q The bloody ridiculous *Mask Of Eternity* is giving me palpitations. I've come to a tower with glyphs of Lord Azrie on the side of it, climbed to the top and found the Commander Skeleton, but the bony bastard gets me every time - I just can't seem to kill him. What do I do?

Brian Jacobs, Canterbury

A How much time have you wasted on that, then? You can't actually kill the Commander Skeleton, you dunce, you have to force him over the edge. Wait until he ambles up quite close to you, then run around behind him and give him a shove. When you're done, climb down and collect the chain mail outfit.

MILITARY NUISANCE

Q Can you tell me where the Sierra army depot is in *Fallout*? I've searched all over the map and have no

idea where it is or which town it's near. Any help for a poor deflated Scotsman?

Stuart McArthur, Edinburgh

A Aye, I guess so. You need to go to the boneyard and have Smitty upgrade your plasma rifle to a turbo plasma rifle. Once that's done, head off to Vault 13 and have a chat with the Vault Overseer. He tells you to attack the base. Head up to the north-western corner of the map, search around there and you should find it.

JUST WILLIAM

Q I've reached the final showdown in *Resident Evil 2* and find myself face to face with a revolting creature that was once William. Having got so far, I'm surprised at myself for failing here. As much as I try, I can't seem to find a place of safety where I can shoot and successfully avoid those deadly teeth and tentacle attacks. I hate to ask, but would you be so kind as to give me a hint or two to send me on my way?

Richard Clemence, Sittingbourne

A Okay, try this: When you regain control of Leon, fire your final rocket launcher shot at him, then follow up with your Magnum, and then the shotgun if necessary. When it comes to finding the right position, about four feet away should do. If you're too close, his alien-like mouth will bite you, but if you're too far away he'll swat you with his tentacles. However, if you're just the right distance away he'll do nothing but advance towards you, meaning you only have to back up twice in

the whole killing process. Give that a go and you'll be on your way.

A HELPING HAND

Q Apparently in *Championship Manager 3* you can mess around with your team and stuff while the calculations are taking place, but I can't. The instruction booklet says that you have to hold the left mouse button down, but when I do nothing happens. Is this yet another bug, or am I simple?

Dermot Page, Castleford

A The problem here is that you can only reactivate team selection when the pointer is in the shape of a hand. So watch for the change, and then hold the button.

A TALL STORY

Q I'm playing the excellent *Goosebumps: Escape From Horrorland*, but I can't get into Gizmo's door because it hasn't got a handle. Where can I find the handle?

Mrs F Collins, Windermere

A First of all you have to trap the Count's Lady by dropping the wall bed on her. Exit the bedroom and watch Lizzy dance with Jeff Goldblum. As they're dancing, keep clicking on the glowing parts of his coat until you get the gold handle. There you have it.

SERIOUSLY DERANGED

Q I bought *Return To Krondor* a few weeks ago because the original *Betrayal At Krondor* was one of the best games ever. I'm now on Chapter 6 and have to kill Bear. I kill all his

companions, but I can't harm him because of his magical abilities. How do I defeat him?

Chris Mackay

A *Betrayal At Krondor* one of the best games ever? You're living in a dream world - the same dream world you're currently residing in while playing *RTK*, because I'm afraid you simply cannot kill Bear at this point. The only thing to do is let the story carry you along and ultimately deposit you in the river.

SIMPLETON

Q I can't get my airports to build properly in *SimCity 3000*. Why is this happening to me?

Luke Carpenter, Bristol

A It's either because you're not building them big enough, or because you're not connecting them to rail, road or water supplies. Also, make sure there are no skyscrapers nearby, as this is a sure way to scare off pilots. Think harder - I bet you work for the council, right?

HIGHS AND LOWS

Q I'm using your *Hardwar* guide and it's served me pretty well so far, but I can't seem to get into the *Lazarus Hightower*. My ship keeps stalling as I get to the docking bay, and then plummets straight downwards. What do you suggest?

Ian Walker, Slough

A Basically, your engine is knackered. Get a new one. Or, better still, buy a new ship and all your problems will disappear.

HOW TO...

PLAY GAMES ONLINE

PART TWO

Last month we got you connected. This month we're going to get you playing the hottest games the Internet has to offer

★ YOUR GUIDE Phil Wand

It's strange, but a lot of people don't associate the Internet with games. To them, the online world is all about email, web pages, FTP servers and newsgroups. Yes, perhaps the odd chat with someone on IRC, or a game of cribbage, but a 'proper' game like *Quake?* *Total Annihilation?* *StarCraft?* Nah, don't be daft. Even on those rare occasions when they do play, surveys suggest that these people opt for word and trivia games.

start afresh. Before you start your game or connect to your ISP, close down all applications, including open folders. This decreases your chances of something going wrong. And it may sound obvious, but NEVER leave your email client, chat program or ICQ open while playing online – the connection will regularly 'lag out' and destroy all your fun.

If your Windows Taskbar looks anything like the one illustrated below, your CPU is

“We know the top use for a household PC is playing games, closely followed by the Internet. So why not combine the two?”

Please. Please. It's estimated that the online games market will be worth \$1 billion (£620 million) by this time next year, and developers are making it easier than ever to get hooked up and play. We know the top use for a household PC is playing games, closely followed by the Internet. So why not combine the two? Once you've got yourself signed up with an ISP (see last month's issue), it's really rather simple – and we'll show you how.

wasting effort keeping too many applications fed with power. Add to this by running an intensive game like *Kingpin* and you'll be sharing processor time with programs you're not using. So shut it all down. If you want to get rid of stuff in the Windows System Tray (far right), you can do this either by right-clicking on the icon and selecting Exit from the pop-up menu, or by double-clicking to open the main program and then quitting normally.

1 FIRST THINGS FIRST

If you're about to go online for a long sesh, restart your PC. Windows is notorious for running slow after hard use, so it's best to

If you use Microsoft *Task Scheduler* or *Schedule Agent*, disable it. You don't want your machine to start defragging your hard drive just as you take aim with a crossbow. And if you close down your virus checker,



The very latest version of *Total Annihilation*, released within the past six weeks, supports Boneyards – Cavedog's brand new Internet game arena. It's free to sign up, free to play, and well worth the effort. If you're a *T4* fan, Boneyards is unmissable. See the special upgrade patch on next month's cover disc.

make a mental note to fire it back up again when you've finished.

2 GET READY

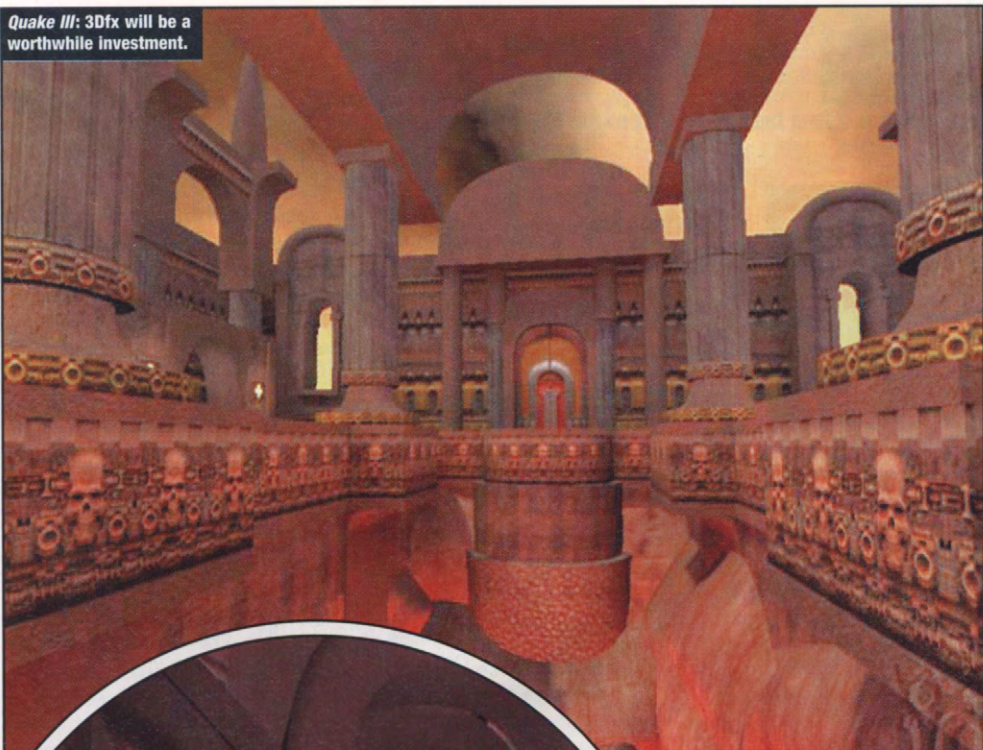
If you're playing a blaster like *Quake* or *Half-Life*, there's a surprising amount you can do to dramatically improve the speed of

play. Check our helpful and informative Example Configuration panel on the opposite page for full details. If you're playing a game like *StarCraft* or *Total Annihilation*, check our Dedicated Servers panel on page 125 for information on where to go and what to do.



Make sure you're not wasting processing power on unnecessary applications before you go online.

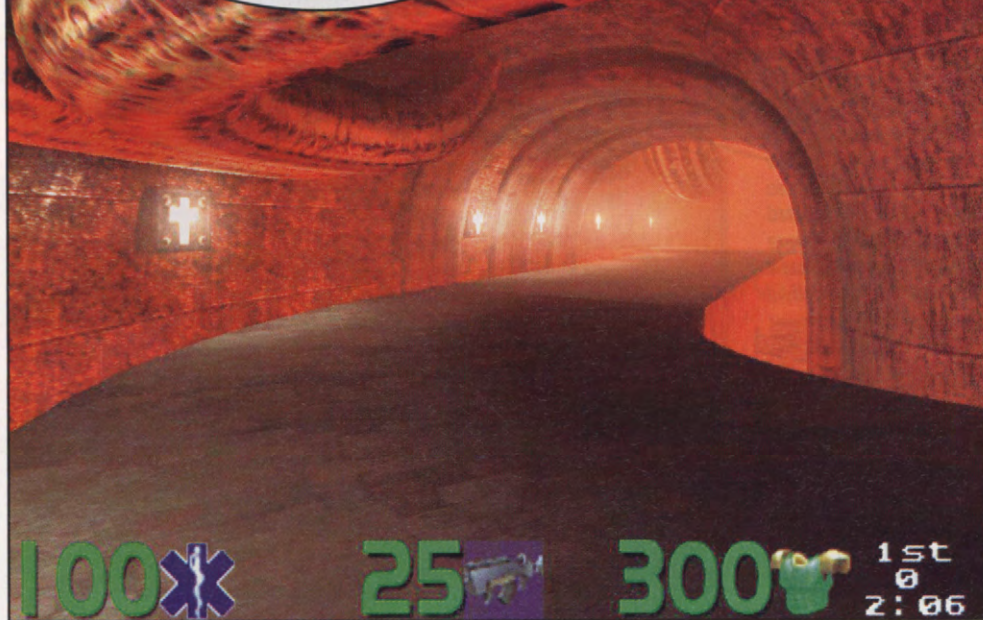
Quake III: 3Dfx will be a worthwhile investment.



Ah, a double-barrelled shotgun. I feel at home already.

“If you’re about to go online, restart your PC. Windows is notorious for running slow after hard use, so it’s best to start afresh. Before you connect to your ISP, close down all applications, including open folders”

No, you *do* see right. It’s not a photograph.



EXAMPLE CONFIGURATION

Let’s get straight to the point. If your ping is higher than 500, you’re going to get wiped. Half a second is an eternity in a fast-paced action game. You need to either reduce it or minimise its effects. And guess what? Both are possible

Here, we look specifically at speeding up *Half-Life*. Those of you who are fed up with its multiplayer behaviour over the Internet (ie most of you), prepare to be amazed. Use the following settings and you should be able to play smoothly, even with a poor connection. We tried a US server with a ping of 600 – usually a total waste of time – and were able to get a good game in. The lag is still there, of course – it’s just less obvious.

WHAT TO DO

Create a text file called `autoexec.cfg` file in your `Half-Life/Valve` directory (note that it may already exist). Add the following lines of code to it:

SOUND SETTINGS

`s_a3d 0` Disable A3D support

`s_eax 0` Disable EAX support

`bgmvolume 0` Disable background CD audio. You don’t need it!

`hisound 0` Disables 22KHz high-quality sound and reduces CPU load

`loadas8bit 1` Uses 8-bit samples in preference to 16-bit

CONTROL SETTINGS

`m_filter 0` Disable mouse filtering. Again, cuts down processing

`sv_aim 0` Disable aim assist. Only really useful if you’re on a LAN

NETWORK SETTINGS

`cl_download_ingame 0` Disable in-game downloads

`r_decals 0` Disable decals and blast marks

`cl_nodelta 0` Enable delta compression

`cl_nopred 0` Enable client-side prediction

`cl_predict_players 1` Enable client-side prediction of other players

`rate 4000` Between 1000 and 5000 for modem, 4000 to 8000 for ISDN

`fps_modem 30` Sets max frame rate for Internet play. No more than 30!

`pushlatency -110` Use the negative of between half and three quarters of your ping

VIDEO SETTINGS

`gl_ztrick 1` May cause flickering

`r_shadows 0` Disables shadows and speeds up video big-time

`gl_round_down 3` OpenGL settings, 3 is fastest

`r_drawviewmodel 0` Disables drawing the gun in your hand. Big improvement!

`r_traceglow 0` Keep set to 0

Many of these commands also work in *Quake* and *Quake II* – our only advice is to try them out or seek help from the Web. You can always bring down the console (usually the ~ key) and type the command direct. It works just the same.

3 FIND THE FASTEST SERVER

The server list you see in games like *Half-Life* and *Starsiege: Tribes* is a neat idea but not really worth the effort. The information it provides is often misleading and, in our experience, hopelessly inaccurate. We recommend you use a third-party utility like *GameSpy*, *QTracker* or *PingTool*. These programs are excellent at locating all online games – not just the ones the publishers want you to find. They rummage around the Internet, knock on all the relevant doors and build a large database of the active game servers they find. They then display the results in a long list for you to browse through. See our special Server Location Tools panel opposite for more information.



The three top server search tools are *GameSpy* (on the cover CD), *QTracker* (<http://qtracker.stomped.com>) and *PingTool* (www.pingtool.com). Each have their ups and downs, but *GameSpy* is the clear winner in the popularity stakes.

4 PREPARE FOR ACTION

Go to the toilet. Wash your hands. Make a cup of coffee. Crack your knuckles. Scratch and/or adjust your scrotum. Wonder if it's normal to fancy Dawn French. Remember to fix the leak on your flat roof. Whatever.

5 PLAY THE GAME

Once you're up and running, there are a few things to consider. First and foremost, you need to know what you're doing. If you've just plucked your new game from its shrink-wrapping, you're going to annoy people if you keep asking questions that could easily be answered by reading the manual. So read the manual.

Second, if you're hosting a game (that is, if you elected to be the server), don't quit without warning everyone else. Their game will stop the moment you drop out. A big no-no.

Third, don't go insulting people or making a nuisance of yourself. You'd be surprised how easy it is to track your IP address. Swearing depends on who else is playing – you be the judge. Last, don't take



Starsiege: Tribes: Some bastard turns your HERC into kit form. Don't get angry, get even!



Nice hat. Doesn't the teapot want its cosy back?



Hooked on *Team Fortress Classic*? You ain't seen nothin' yet.

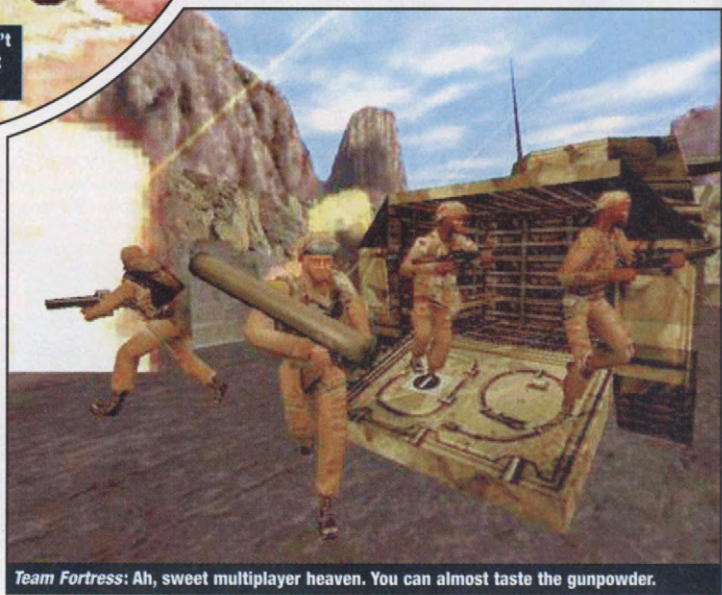
you'll soon realise that there's no alternative. Multiplayer *is* the way forward. Take a look at our screenshots of multiplayer squad games *Team Fortress II* (not to be confused with kick-arse *Half-Life*

“Playing against real people who laugh when you die and belittle you when you win is seriously stressful. The whole idea is to make you blow your top”

it too seriously. It's a fact that playing against real people who laugh when you die and belittle you when you win is seriously stressful. The whole idea is to make you blow your top.

Once you've played online a few times,

add-on *Team Fortress Classic*) and *Quake III* and you'll know it's true. And with more than 10 per cent Internet penetration, the UK represents the largest ready-made market for games in Europe. So keep paying that phone bill, eh? PCZ



Team Fortress: Ah, sweet multiplayer heaven. You can almost taste the gunpowder.

SERVER LOCATION TOOLS

If you pick up the right tools on the Internet, they'll make it easy to find just the game servers you're looking for. Here's how to get started with GameSpy

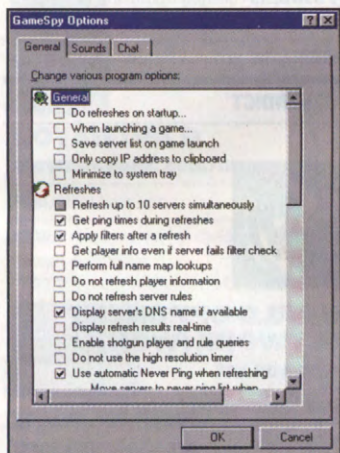
There are a few tools available on the Net that help you track down game servers, find the fastest one and then connect up. The one that everyone talks about is GameSpy, so let's talk you through your first session.

1 Install GameSpy

Bit obvious, this one. Check this month's cover CD for the install file, and double-click to get started.

2 Open the software

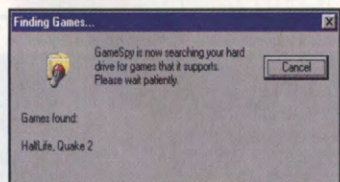
Find the GameSpy folder in your Start Menu and click on the GameSpy icon. You'll now be presented with a list of options that relate to how the product behaves. For now, click the OK button at the bottom of the screen (you can always come back and change things later).



1 The GameSpy Options screen.

3 Locating your games

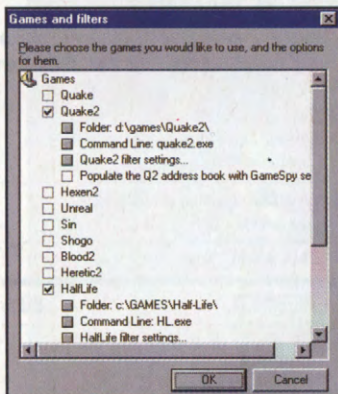
Now GameSpy rattles your hard drive as it searches for compatible games. At the moment, supported titles include *Quake*, *Quake II*, *Hexen II*, *Unreal*, *SIN*, *Shogo*, *Blood II*, *Heretic II*, *Half-Life*, *Turok 2*, *South Park*, *Baldur's Gate*, *Descent 3*, *Dark Vengeance*, *Redline* and *Starsiege: Tribes*.



2 GameSpy hunts around for compatible games on your hard drive.

4 Games and filters

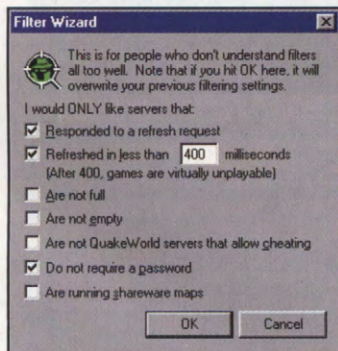
GameSpy is usually pretty successful at finding all the games you have installed. If you need to add some manually, use the Games and Filters screen to do so. Put a check in the box next to the title you wish to install, then supply a valid pathname to the main executable file.



3 Customise your game settings.

5 More about filters

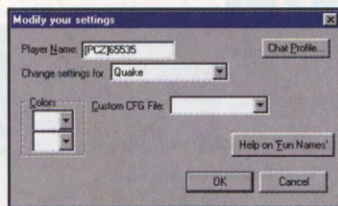
Once you're satisfied that GameSpy has a complete list of games on your machine, click the Filter button under each game, followed by the Filter Wizard button. This screen enables you to change how the filters are selected – the most commonly selected options are shown in the picture below. Stick with these and you should be fine.



4 Narrow down the kind of games you want to join.

6 Your settings

The settings screen enables you to associate different configuration (.cfg) files with different games and players. For now, enter your player name in the relevant box and press the OK button.



5 Type your player name and press OK.

7 Initial screen

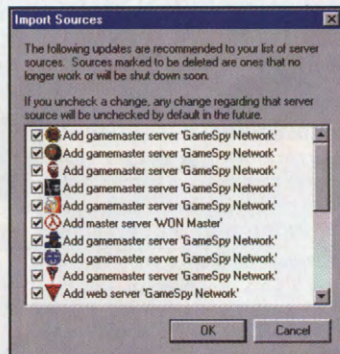
GameSpy's initial screen enables you to select different players or personalities, if you have them set up. All this means is that you can set up different profiles for different games. Press the OK button to advance to the main screen.



6 For now, just press the OK button to continue.

8 Import sources

Once the main screen has displayed (and you've heard the cheesy audio file play), open the Tools menu and choose GameSpy Updates. Click the Update Master Server List and wait for the software to beetle off and access the main database. At the next screen press OK to confirm. You now have a list of servers installed – time to access them and see what they're doing!



7 GameSpy automates its master server list.

9 The server list

Let's go get a list of *Half-Life* and *Team Fortress Classic* servers. Simply make sure the *Half-Life* master servers are highlighted in the left-hand side of the screen (WON Master will be one of them), then press **Ctrl+M** to update the selected sources. GameSpy will now interrogate all the game servers and report back with a long list (this could take up to ten minutes or more, depending on the speed of your connection). Now click the Ping column to redraw the list in order of speed – the one at the top being your best bet. Double-click and you're away!



8 Finally, what you've all been waiting for – the servers!

THE GAME LINGO

Now you're an online gamer, you need to understand the language of the Internet a little better. Use the terms judiciously and you'll sound like the seasoned pro you aren't, but don't talk like this to your mates!

Most are simple abbreviations (nobody wants to bash out a long speech in the middle of *Quake* deathmatch) and are pretty obvious. Others are a bit on the cryptic side. And once you've witnessed one or two team conversations, you'll begin to realise why adolescent males can't spell, can't write and only speak in grunts. You may feel a little strange using these linguistic 'shortcuts' at first, but trust us, before long you'll wonder how you ever got by without them.

- afk** Away from keyboard
- brb** Be right back!
- btw** By the way...
- cya** See you later
- eg** Evil grin. Best used when you've tossed a nail grenade into the flag room, wiping out half the enemy team in the process
- ffs** For f**k's sake!
- gg** Good game. Used to show sportsmanship, but more likely just to break the uneasy silence that occurs while the server loads the next level
- gl** Good luck (they'll probably need it)
- irl** In real life, as opposed to online
- j/k** Just kidding
- k** Okay. Acknowledges the last message or command
- lol** Laughs out loud. Normally seen following some hugely violent and ironic death scene
- natch** Naturally
- ne1** Anyone?
- np** No problem!
- oic** Oh, I see
- omg** Oh my gosh
- prolly** Probably
- rofl** Rolls on floor laughing. In other words, ha ha...
- rsn** Real soon now
- stfu** Shut the f**k up (you won't make any friends with this one)
- thx** Thank you very much for saving my arse. Again
- wtf** What the f**k? Usually used in total bemusement after a sniper drops you from way across the battlefield
- wtg** Way to go! Usually used to congratulate a flag capture or major points win



GAME SERVER AUTOPSY

A game server is a place where you can meet up with like-minded people and go head to head with them in your favourite games. Essentially, these places play host to the top games. Popular titles that always have someone ready for a challenge somewhere on the Internet include *Quake*, *Half-Life*, *Unreal*, *Starsiege: Tribes*, *C&C: Red Alert* and *StarCraft*

What we at ZONE want from a game server is simple: good performance, a wide range of games and enough subscribers to make it easy to find an opponent. So we've looked at the top names, cut them open and spread their guts on the table so you can have a good look. Check the Dedicated Servers panel opposite for game servers run by publishers.



GAMESTORM
www.gamestorm.com

EMAIL help@gamestorm.com

PRICING US\$9.95 (£6) monthly, first month free

REQUIRES Existing Internet connection

PERFORMANCE US open system, average

CLIENT SOFTWARE 422Kb free download

TYPICAL GAME LINE-UP *Air Warrior*, *Aliens Online*, *Godzilla Online*, *Starship Troopers: Battlespace*, *Jack Nicklaus Online Golf Tour*, *Harpoon Online*, *Legends Of Kesmai*, *MultiPlayer BattleTech*, *Stellar Emperor*, *Casino Poker*, *CatchWord*

OVERVIEW As well as a veritable treasure trove of home-grown games, GameStorm also offers many classic board and card games. *Air Warrior* is a true classic. Free registration permits limited access to free game area

UPPERS Unique game titles • Neat client

DOWNERS Free games awful

OVERALL Nothing much to see here

PCZVERDICT **68%**



HEATNET
www.heat.net

EMAIL tekhelp@heat.net

PRICING Free. Premium Membership US\$5.95 (£3.75) monthly

REQUIRES Existing Internet connection

PERFORMANCE US open system, average

CLIENT SOFTWARE: 5Mb free download

TYPICAL GAME LINE-UP *Age Of Empires*, *Quake*, *Quake II*, *Baldur's Gate*, *Warcraft II: Tide Of Darkness*, *Command & Conquer: Red Alert*, *Wargasm*, *Warlords III*, *Battlezone*, *Dungeon Keeper*, *Test Drive 5*, *Unreal*, *Total Annihilation*

OVERVIEW Owned and run by SegaSoft, HEAT enables you to play all the games you currently own over the Internet with real people. Other titles, such as *Net Fighter* and *Alien Race*, are supplied as free downloads. Top games dominated by real-time strategy (*Command & Conquer: Red Alert*, *Warcraft*) and the ever-popular *Quake*

UPPERS Good games • Free membership all you need

DOWNERS Premium Membership a nonsense

OVERALL Suck it and see

PCZVERDICT **79%**



KALI
www.kali.net

EMAIL info@kali.net

PRICING US\$20 (£12) registration fee

REQUIRES Existing Internet connection

PERFORMANCE Global open system, good

CLIENT SOFTWARE 2.7Mb free download

TYPICAL GAME LINE-UP *Age Of Empires*, *Atomic Bomberman*, *Baldur's Gate*, *Battlezone*, *Carmageddon*, *C&C: Red Alert*, *Dark Reign*, *Half-Life*, *Hexen*, *Magic: The Gathering*, *MechWarrior II*, *Need For Speed 3*, *Quake*, *Rainbow Six*, *StarCraft*, *Total Annihilation*, *Warcraft*, *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*

OVERVIEW Kali works by enabling two or more people running the same game to talk to one another across the Internet. It tricks your machine into thinking that a guy in Florida is in fact sitting on your local network, hence you can challenge him to a game. It's the way it should be, really, and it's getting better all the time. Support for MacOS, Linux and OS/2 enables a greater range of opponents. Long list of supported games

UPPERS Truly worldwide • Try before you buy • Support • One-off cost and free upgrades

DOWNERS Software not quite as idiot-proof as it could be

OVERALL Let the games begin

PCZVERDICT **87%**



MPLAYER UK (AKA EIDOSNET)
www.eidosnet.co.uk

EMAIL support@eidosnet.co.uk

PRICING Free

REQUIRES Existing Internet connection

PERFORMANCE UK open system, excellent

CLIENT SOFTWARE 1Mb free download

TYPICAL GAME LINE-UP *Quake*, *QuakeWorld*, *Quake II*, *Daiikatana* (demo), *Command & Conquer*, *Warzone 2100*, *Warcraft*, *Warlords III*, *MechWarrior II*, *Diablo*, *Links LS '99*

OVERVIEW Hugely popular over in the States, and now over here in the UK in the form of Eidosnet. Full, free Internet access provided as part of the sign-up. Like HEAT, you play the retail games you already own, plus there's good support for demos such as *SIN*, *Settlers III* and *Daiikatana*. Good game, chat and pager interface. User base totals more than 2,500,000

UPPERS V90 support • Wide spread of games • Connectivity • Monster user base

DOWNERS Confusing website • Bit of an unknown quantity

OVERALL Definitely worth a try

PCZVERDICT **80%**



TOTAL ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK (TEN)
www.ten.net

EMAIL customersupport@ten.net

PRICING Free. Premium membership from US\$1.35 (90p) hourly

REQUIRES Existing Internet connection

PERFORMANCE US open system, poor

CLIENT SOFTWARE 7.2Mb free download

TYPICAL GAME LINE-UP *C&C: Red Alert*, *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Magic: The Gathering*, *Master Of Orion II*, *NASCAR Racing*, *Quake*, *Shadow Warrior*, *Total Annihilation*, *Twilight Lands*, *Warheads*, *WizWar*, *Wulfram*

OVERVIEW Looks good and well-organised until you hit the confusing price page. As well as the free rate plan there are a further four or five premium rate plans, most requiring that you use TEN's own Internet dial-up. Support area not available outside the US and Canada. Claims to be the fastest service on the Net, but isn't

UPPERS Good game line-up

DOWNERS Huge client • Slow • Confusing price structure • Patchy tech support

OVERALL Must do better

PCZVERDICT **60%**



WIREPLAY
www.wireplay.co.uk

EMAIL support@wireplay.com

PRICING Free

REQUIRES Modem or existing Internet connection

PERFORMANCE UK open system, excellent

CLIENT SOFTWARE 4.2Mb free download

TYPICAL GAME LINE-UP *Quake*, *Blood*, *Age Of Empires*, *Actua Soccer*, *Armoured Fist*, *Big Red Racing*, *Baldur's Gate*, *Colin McRae Rally*, *Duke*

Nukem 3D, *Forsaken*, *Flight Sim 98*, *Grand Theft Auto*, *Jedi Knight*, *NASCAR Racing*, *Populous*, *C&C: Red Alert*, *SIN*, *Total Annihilation*, *Unreal*, *Warcraft*, *Wargasm*

OVERVIEW Just as we were about to get bitchy about Wireplay's extravagant charges (BT milked you for a subscription and for the cost of the phone call), they've changed everything. The system is now 100 per cent Internet-ready, meaning anyone with an existing connection can connect to their system and take part for free. They've also retained the 'closed' network (now called Powerplay), which you connect to directly over an 0845 number – also for free

UPPERS Openplay free • Powerplay free and fast • Good game line-up

DOWNERS Powerplay requires that your phone line supports CLID. Ugh!

OVERALL Was good, now the best

PCZVERDICT **88%**



WORLD OPPONENT NETWORK (WON)
www.won.net

EMAIL support@won.net

PRICING Free

REQUIRES Existing Internet connection

PERFORMANCE US open system, okay

CLIENT SOFTWARE Supplied with retail games

TYPICAL GAME LINE-UP *Half-Life*, *Unreal*, *Quake II*, *Starsiege*, *Starsiege: Tribes*, *Lords Of The Realm II*, *Lords Of Magic*, *Outpost 2*

OVERVIEW The bane of every *Half-Life* player's online existence, WON is an increasingly popular proprietary service included as part of a retail game's multiplayer capability. Look for the WON button on the main menu. Multiplayer hook-up with other players, including creating your own games, is straightforward thereafter

UPPERS Already supported by top games • Casino • Reasonable performance

DOWNERS No European servers

OVERALL The All-American Opponent Network

PCZVERDICT **75%**

Other services you might want to try include:

MSN's Gaming Zone (www.zone.com), PlayLink (www.playlink.com), I-Magic Games (www.imagicgames.com), Thrustworld (www.thrustworld.co.uk) and the nice people at Barrysworld (www.barrysworld.com)

DEDICATED SERVERS

Many publishers are now administering their own game servers. This is good news because they're universally free and easily accessible. Here's a quick look at the top sites – pay a visit to get the low-down



BATTLE.NET
www.battle.net

PUBLISHER Blizzard Entertainment

GAMES StarCraft, Brood War, Diablo, Diablo II, Warcraft II



WESTWOOD ONLINE
www.westwood.com

PUBLISHER Westwood Studios, Inc

GAMES Red Alert, Red Alert: Aftermath, Dune 2000, C&C Gold, C&C: Sole Survivor



NOVAWORLD
www.novalogic.com/novaworld

PUBLISHER NovaLogic

GAMES Comanche Gold, Delta Force, F-16 MRF, MIG-29 Fulcrum, F-22 Raptor



BONEYARDS
www.cavedog.com

PUBLISHER Cavedog

GAMES Total Annihilation

✦ Also check out the following FAQ repositories for specific game information... Games Domain FAQ List (www.gamesdomain.com/games.html) or UGR's Walkthrough and FAQ Directory (www.ugr.net/walkthru/walkthru.htm)



Diablo: One of the first games to really take off online, it's still hugely popular now.



Dune 2000: Take on the world in Westwood's classic remake.



WELCOME TO THE LAND

WIREPLAY

WHAT IS SO DIFFERENT ABOUT WIREPLAY NOW?

CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER

STRATEGY GUIDE



Your longest-running and most frustrating battles will be internal ones against that well-known enemy, unhappiness and revolt.

Feel like giving up and starting all over again? **Andrew Wright** shows you how to build a civilisation from the ground up

★ REVIEWED PCZ#75 SCORE 89%

There are only three ways to win at *Civilization: Call To Power*: you can conquer the entire world using your military genius, lead the first civilisation in the race to synthesise an alien life form, or play out the full 7000 years of the game and go for the highest score. However, you don't have to decide which route to take right away, as the strategies and tactics employed are broadly the same in each case.

You kick off with a settler, nine squares of visible terrain and a big black curtain covering the rest of the planet surface. Before you even touch anything, look at your 'radar' map in the lower-left

corner. If you specified an earth-type world in the starting options, you can expect ice in the polar regions, so if you happen to be sited close to the top or bottom of the map, head the other way for the more fertile land.

Look at the square you're already in – will it make a reasonable city? If it's a food-producing square such as grassland and, even better, on a river, then build straight away. Ideally, you want two mountain squares and two forest or jungle squares inside the city radius. If you haven't got those, move two or three squares in a diagonal direction (or up or down the river if there is one) and see if things improve. Don't dally long though,

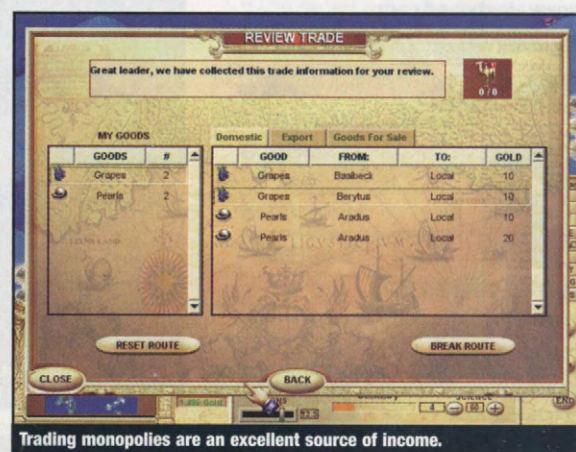
even on a big and apparently empty map. If you slip behind your opponents in technology or growth, the next 7000 years or 350 turns will be a real struggle.



It's not ideal, but you can't spend more than three turns exploring or you risk falling behind.

DEFENCE COUNSEL

With your first city's foundations laid, the next step is a defensive unit, either a warrior or a phalanx,



Trading monopolies are an excellent source of income.

fortified in the city square. Next comes a unit for exploring – either a cheap and cheerful warrior or a horse archer. The latter are handy if the terrain is flat and open, but a complete waste of time in mountainous areas. Look around your continent methodically, moving diagonally where possible, because that way you uncover five squares a turn as opposed to three. Investigating ancient ruins close to your city is a bit risky unless your city is defended, but it can be worthwhile, especially if you grab a new advance.

If all is clear so far, aim for a second city. From now on, your moves are going to depend on what happens around you. If there's no sign of the opposition, start churning out more settlers. Aim to have about six to ten strong cities rather than 30-40 weakish ones. It's not wise to build them too close together – if they overlap, one of them will have fewer resources to harvest. On the other hand, if you're setting up one or two cities as specialist centres (see Combat Crisis? panel opposite) then it's not important. Keep them in a group so they're not too far from

the capital. If you have to build on a less than ideal spot to achieve 'shape', don't worry. As you grow, try to keep your empire as rounded as possible – if you allow it to string out too far, you'll suffer from added unhappiness and awkward communications problems, at least until you acquire a railroad.

ECONOMY MODEL

With building and exploration under way, the next 2000 years should ideally be devoted to growth, and to do that you've got to get to grips with your economy.

The first problem is whether or not to invest in public works (PW). Most cities will happily reach double-figure populations without any tile improvements at all. Farms and nets don't add a lot, frankly, but mines are useful in mountains as they increase gold as well as production, and pay for themselves quickly. Two essential city improvements are the granary and the city wall, although the latter may be unnecessary if your city is well defended by military units or built on a mountain.

With two cities, switch PW to 10-20 per cent, purely to build



Research and development is the only way to win in *Call To Power*.

TEN TOP TIPS

- 1 Don't forget that you need to be able to see other civilisations' cities before you can trade with them, so use the 'exchange maps' option as often as you can. This in itself can be a diplomatic challenge, as civilisations that don't like you won't do the swap.
- 2 Don't switch production of units or improvements unless you really need to – you'll incur at least a 25 per cent penalty.
- 3 Keep an eye on what the other players are building. If a message appears to say someone has almost completed the wonder that you're still building – and you can't afford to rush-build it – switch production immediately or you'll lose the lot.
- 4 There's no harm in selling off some improvements to raise cash. Cathedrals should be sold off under Communism, for example, as they're expensive to maintain.
- 5 Don't forget to use the 'expel' attack against special units like slavers, abolitionists or eco-terrorists, rather than killing them, as you'll suffer no diplomatic penalty.
- 6 Force enemy workers to leave the most productive tiles around their cities by stationing your units there.
- 7 Veterans (extra 50 per cent attack and defence) are very important, so don't disband them even if they're obsolete. A veteran legion attacks and defends like pikemen.
- 8 Build diplomats and other special units like spies to keep an eye on your friends and enemies and defend against special attacks.
- 9 Build clerics and spies to constantly try to weaken the enemy before you attack by destroying improvements and instigating revolt. They might get angry, but your reputation won't suffer.
- 10 When you're at war in the early part of the game, include a slaver in each combat stack. If you win, he'll grab some slaves from the defeated troops.

COMBAT CRISIS?

To get to grips with *Call To Power* you must understand the combat system. The trouble is, the more you learn, the less you like it

In a stand-up fight between two units, each takes it in turn to 'hit' the other. The 'hit chance' is a unit's assault rating divided by the sum of its assault rating and the defender's defence rating. Let's say a knight with an assault rating of 3 attacks a phalanx with defence 2 without any terrain modifiers. The knight has a $3/(3+2)$, or 60 per cent, chance of hitting the phalanx. If it succeeds it does 1 hit point of damage; if it fails it takes 1 hit point of damage. The phalanx then strikes back with a $1/(1+2)$, or 33 per cent, chance of a hit. Again, if it succeeds it does a hit point of damage, or loses one if it fails. The process is repeated until one unit is destroyed.

In the original game's mechanics, as with *Civilization II*, the amount of damage done depended on a variable known as 'firepower', but here this appears to have been bypassed, and all units, no matter how powerful, do 1 point of damage per hit. Likewise, all units have just 10 hit points, for some equally obscure reason. It may be a 'feature' of the game or it may be fixed in the next patch. If you really can't wait, there's a text file on your hard disc in the *Call To Power* \ctp_data\default\gamedata\ folder. You can edit UNITS.TXT with Wordpad and alter the hit point values – just remember to make a back-up copy first!

While our hypothetical knight will beat the phalanx most of the time, it should be made clear that if you add another phalanx or a defensive bonus, the task won't be anything like as easy. But what happens when a modern tank attacks a phalanx? In earlier versions of *Civ* the tank would win hands down; in *Call To Power* it could easily lose, especially against two phalanxes.

Any scrap in *CTP* is potentially dangerous to the attacker – modern interceptors can be brought down by a pair of phalanxes, and a fusion tank wiped out by a combination of pikemen and archers. In fact any defending ranged unit – such as a humble archer – can damage almost any other unit. Against two medieval cannons and a musketeer fortified in a city, you need to use at least six tanks or

comparable infantry units to win.

This has two main effects on gameplay. Firstly, war is doubly expensive, as you need numerical as well as qualitative superiority. Secondly, civilisations that have fallen behind in technology can still defend themselves.

The key to attacking in *CTP* is bombardment. In true Nato style, you should pound enemy cities and strong points before you attack on the ground. Cannons and ships of the line are your first bombardment weapons, and should arrive in the renaissance era. If the enemy is still too strong, move into the modern age and go flat out to develop steel to give you battleships against coastal cities, and oil refining and explosives to give you artillery. No city can stand bombardment for long. Once you've ground down the defences, move in with your land forces.



Never underestimate the value of fortifications and terrain. Either side could win this one.



Not only can these ships of the line transport the musketeers, they can also bombard the target.

player@wireplay.com

player@talk21.com

player@talk21.com

player@btinternet.com

player@wireplay.com

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WELCOME TO THE LAND

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WHAT IS WIREPLAY DOING TO BRING THOUSANDS MORE GAMERS ONLINE?



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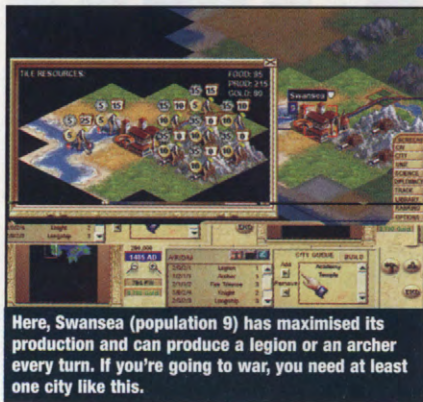
WWW.WIREPLAY.CO.UK/FREE

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

One strategy that worked well in earlier versions of *Civilization*, and which appears to work just as well in *Call To Power*, is the specialist city

If a city has more than its fair share of high-production squares like mountains and forests, it can be turned over entirely to production or gold. Grow the city in the normal way until it gets to 8 or 9 population, and then use the Max tab to maximise production, science or gold.

Next, build city and tile improvements that boost your output even further. In the case of production cities, this means things like a factory, mill, nuclear plant and oil refinery, each of which will 'up' production by 50 per cent or more. Science cities should add an academy, publishing house, university or computer centre.



Here, Swansea (population 9) has maximised its production and can produce a legion or an archer every turn. If you're going to war, you need at least one city like this.



The same city producing maximum science. If you want to catch up or overtake your opponents, or go all out for a key advance like gunpowder, this is the way to do it.

roads to connect the cities later on. Roads reduce unhappiness and speed up reinforcements in the case of attack. However, if the general terrain is poor, consider increasing PW a little earlier.

Trade is essential. It's easy to underestimate its value but it does bring in significant gold, which can always be converted to production or science if needed. Aim to get at least one trade monopoly early in the game – this should ensure you don't run out of readies.

One of your biggest problems will be unhappiness, and the best way to combat it is through research. You'll also find that city

improvements like temples, theatres and coliseums, plus wonders like Confucius Academy, all ease the situation. You can also take direct action in an emergency – if you're producing lots of gold, an increase in wages is a cheap way to cheer up the masses.



❖ You should spend a lot of time looking at this screen – it's gives you a complete picture of your economy.



❖ Some units cost a lot to maintain, especially at full readiness.

WARRING UP SESSION

Starting a big war in the early stages of the game will only cause you grief. While you turn production over to the military, other civilisations will be researching themselves daft and



Creating and saving building queues can save time and effort, especially if you find yourself changing them a lot.

accumulating cash. Not only that, but also any aggression is remembered by other civilisations, making it harder to deal with them later.

If you must wade in for whatever reason, try to get the enemy to declare war first by goading them and making excessive demands. That way your own reputation is untarnished. Also, try to fight a Nato-style war with limited objectives and stop when you've achieved them. If you're offered

Don't be fooled by the apparent power of knights – musketeers and cannon are far superior. They make a powerful combination, especially when used with cavalry to pin down the enemy.

Air units are good for bombardment and recon but shouldn't get involved with ground troops as they will take damage, especially against multiple units. Naval power can be crucial, especially on a waterlogged map. While you can eventually colonise the sea bed,

“The same principles of war that work in the real world work in *Call To Power*. In order to win, you need to concentrate overwhelming firepower at a single point”

peace, take it – unless the civilisation in question is clearly going down the pan.

Only the advent of gunpowder gives you units that are really good enough to strike hard and defend themselves in return.

the necessary technology comes very late in the game.

Strategic surprise is essential, whether you're playing against a human or an AI, because it takes up to ten turns to switch from peace to a war footing, and



Information is vital – you need to know what you're getting into so use your spies.



Use every source of info you can – diplomacy can make or break a game.

hopefully you can catch the enemy's units at half strength. Tactical surprise is also worth a try – if you land your forces from ships, a computer player doesn't react until they disembark.

The same principles of war that work in the real world work in *Call To Power*. In order to win, you need to concentrate overwhelming firepower at a single point. But before you do that, do anything you can to get the odds in your favour: weaken cities by surrounding them and preventing reinforcement; remove improvements like city walls if possible; or incite riots. Then bombard the city with as many units as you can muster – cannons, ships of the line, tanks, artillery. Keep the bombarding units in their own stacks with a couple of other units to defend them. Spend no more than one or two turns in bombardment, or the enemy will build extra defences. Finally, attack with five close-combat units and four ranged units and hope for the best. [12]



Scouts cut off an enemy city while the main force prepares its assault.



Overwhelming force is the only way to guarantee success in combat.



Later in the game, attacks like this can cause major problems.

BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT!

The *Call To Power* wall chart included with the game shows the relative strengths of each of the 12 forms of government, but this table shows three important modifiers used in internal calculations. Maximum science is the most gold that can be converted to scientific research each turn. The knowledge coefficient is applied to your total science production from scientists, gold, wonders etc. The production coefficient is applied to total production from all sources before deductions for support, crime etc.

Once it has been researched, Monarchy is invariably the first change-over, although Theocracy, which comes along shortly afterwards, is handy if you plan to use clerics or need to fight them off. Next comes the Republic, followed by Democracy, Communism and Fascism. To maximise growth and prepare for war, Communism works well, especially for large, spread-out empires. Fascism is similar but causes less discontent. If you're aiming for a peaceful win you need a high-end government, but playing at lower difficulty levels you should be able to win any game with a combination of Communism and Monarchy/Theocracy.

Government	Maximum science	Knowledge	Production
Anarchy	0	10	100
Tyranny	50	100	100
Monarchy	50	125	125
Theocracy	60	125	125
Republic	60	150	125
Democracy	70	200	125
Communism	60	200	175
Fascism	70	200	150
Ecotopia	80	250	100
Corporate Republic	60	200	150
Technocracy	80	200	200
Virtual Democracy	100	350	100



To fend off an amphibious invasion, you need all your units, obsolete or not.



Undersea cities are extremely productive, especially if you're ahead and your enemy can't reach you.



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DEAR WAZZA

Foxed, flummoxed or fazed by a techie problem? Don't bury your head in the silica, drop Wazza a line and let him sort it out for you (possibly)

★ ANSWERS Warren Christmas

YOU ALRIGHT, MATE?

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're offering a cool £50 to the reader who sends in the most interesting query or toppest tip. No, really. Send as much relevant information as you can.

WRITE TO Dear Wazza, PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL Address your letters to us at letters.pczzone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Dear Wazza'.

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.

TURBO MOUSE

Q Just a note on Gareth Heath's question in your May issue (PCZ #76) about whether a USB mouse is better than a serial one. Well, it isn't, as you said, but for people who are really concerned about the tiny differences, the best is a PS/2 mouse. Why? Well, there's a neat little program called ps2rate.exe which obsessive players, particularly of *Doom*, *Quake*, *Quake II*, use to 'overclock' the mouse. It works only on PS/2 mice and increases the sampling rate from a default of 80Hz to 200Hz. This results in noticeably smoother motion, which does help with aiming... a little. Not really a major issue though!

Adam Williamson

A Er, yeah. Thanks, Adam. You realise you're going to start a PS/2 versus USB mouse advocacy war now, don't you? Anyway, owners of PS/2 mice looking for that little extra performance can find ps2rate at [ftp://ftp.cdrom.com/pub/bluesnews/misc/ps2rate.zip](http://ftp.cdrom.com/pub/bluesnews/misc/ps2rate.zip) or www.students.tut.fi/~zibbo/other/ps2rate/ps2rate.zip.

And, hey, for that little extra edge, why not select Keyboard from Control Panels and adjust the keyboard repeat rate and delay times?

8+12=16!

Q There was some talk in the May issue (PCZ #76) of people having varying results using Voodoo2 boards from

tweaked or hacked the 3Dfx reference drivers is Andrei Osnovich, who works for MetaByte 3D. These drivers also enable you to link any two different Voodoo2s no matter what the manufacturer or memory configuration. I had a Diamond 12Mb and a Creative 8Mb Voodoo2 working with no problems in SLI mode at one point. The only downer to SLI'ing boards with different memory sizes is that if you mix 12Mb and 8Mb models, both are treated as though they have 8Mb on board.

Dead Mode

A There are better 3D accelerators available now, including 3Dfx's own Voodoo3 range, but adding a second Voodoo2 board in an SLI configuration to improve maximum resolution and frame rates has become increasingly popular over the past few months as the prices of boards have come down. Ask any official source and they'll tell you that mixing and matching different sized Voodoo2 boards from different manufacturers isn't possible. Thanks for clearing that up, Mr Mode.

DISK ERROR

Q I've recently been having problems with my computer's 3.2Gb hard disk. When I reach about 1.5 to 1.7Gb of space left, it sometimes makes a buzzing sound when I load a program. When I shut my machine down it starts ScanDisk, which tells me that there might be bad sectors on the disk. When I scan the surface of the disk, ScanDisk finds no problems, even though it has problems reading the areas with the buzzing noise! It's still under guarantee, so should I have it replaced, or upgrade to something bigger?

Tim Hutton

A We were going to suggest reformatting the drive, which would find physical problems and isolate any bad areas. In our experience, however, any hard disk that begins to screw up isn't worth persevering with - it's just not



Chasing shadows for *Half-Life*? Mark Mailer knows how to catch them.

“There is a way of registering with Freeserve which only requires a Web browser and a modem”

RICHARD BUSH HAS A TIP FOR THOSE WITH A SOFTWARE PHOBIA

different manufacturers in an SLI configuration. In one reply you said it probably wasn't a good idea mixing the memory sizes etc. Well, SLI'ing 8Mb and 12Mb Voodoo2 boards is possible - you just need some special drivers which are available from <http://home.earthlink.net/~aosnovich/>. The man who

worth the risk. More to the point in this case, if it's under guarantee you should definitely take it back. Should you upgrade to something bigger? Of course - if the supplier will let you.

r_shadows 1 (the same thing can be done for *Quake II*, but instead type set gl_shadows "1"). Alternatively, add the line in the config.cfg file in the \baseq2 directory.

Mark Mailer

SHADOW-CASTER

Q With reference to David Taylor's letter in Feedback in your May issue (PCZ #76) regarding the fact that there are no shadows in *Half-Life*. This can be changed by bringing down the console (start the game with hl.exe -console) and typing

A You are indeed correct. The Dear Wazza department has informed the Feedback department.

SPACE MAN

Q I have Windows 98 but only a 2Gb hard drive (*Ouch!* - Ed). Every time I try to execute a program I get dumped back to the

desktop with a message saying I should run Disk Cleanup. When I tried the *Championship Manager* demo, I just could not start or save a game. Is there a way I can kill off Disk Cleanup? I can't even do it on Windows set-up in the Add/Remove Programs applications. I tried using Cybermedia Uninstaller but I still get messages, which causes programs to crash!

John Zhu

button. Select Settings then uncheck the box. Click on OK and you're done.

SWAPSIES

Q I hate to be blunt, but what the hell is the win386.swp file? It's so bloody huge and keeps growing, leaving me little space for gaming on my PC. It's really strange. When I'm using my computer for a while the file grows, but then when I re-boot it

“What the hell is the win386.swp file? It's really strange. When I'm using my computer for a while the file grows, but when I re-boot it gets smaller again!”

DAVID OAKES IS ONE OF MANY PEOPLE CONFUSED BY THE 'SWAP FILE'

A Are we missing something really obvious here? (*Hey, it's happened before - Ed.*) It seems to us that Windows is struggling to operate because you've run out of - or are running low on - hard disk space. The solution is to delete some software and then empty the recycle bin. Or buy a bigger hard disk. If you really must disable Disk Cleanup, open My Computer, right-click on your hard disk, select Properties and then hit the Disk Cleanup

gets smaller again! Please help, it's really pissing me off.

David Oakes

A We get loads of letters about this! win386.swp (or the 'swap file') is a file on your hard disk which Windows uses to simulate extra memory (or 'virtual memory') when the operating system runs low on physical memory (RAM). As you've discovered, David, the swap file usually changes size dynamically. It's not advisable, but you can predetermine the

size (for details how, select Help in Windows and enter swap file or virtual memory). It is *not* safe to delete the file; in fact you won't be able to do so from within Windows anyway.

VOODOU

Q I have a P166 MMX with 32Mb RAM which I am about to upgrade to an AMDK6-2 400 with 64Mb, as 200MHz now seems to be the minimum requirement for new games such as *X-Wing Alliance*, which I want to buy. I already have a 3DBlaster Voodoo2 (12Mb version), and I'm thinking of buying another to run in SLI mode (seeing as they're available for a bargain £79). What I need to know is: if I get the new Voodoo3 3000 2D/3D card to replace my existing 2D card, will it be compatible with my existing 3D card(s)? Am I just being greedy for extra power?

Chris Carter

A You're thinking of buying and installing a second Voodoo2 board and a Voodoo3 board? We're not going to say it's impossible (someone is bound to write in and prove otherwise), but we imagine that you'd have major driver problems. Regardless, it would be completely pointless. If your

Single Woman

Grand Prix Legends

"I am an artist, the track is my canvas, and the car is my brush."

- Graham Hill



The year is 1967. The cars are monstrously powerful, extremely light, and the tires are so hard that a single set will often last three race weekends!

Brakes are terrible, forty gallons of volatile gasoline surrounds the driver - contained by nothing more than a thin skin of fragile aluminum - and there are no seatbelts.

The circuits are breathtakingly beautiful, supremely challenging, and brutally, lethally dangerous. Almost forty percent of the drivers on the grid today will eventually die at the wheel of a racing car.

It is the Golden Age of motor racing, and you are at the wheel.

GPL opened to rave reviews on [pcg.autosimulators](#) and in the [electronic media](#). My [online](#) racing with GPL enthusiasts has elicited numerous comments to the effect of "Isn't this fantastic!" and "This is incredible!"

One of the original GPL beta team members remarked:

You are the 2271265 winner since 5/27/98

Grand Prix Legends: Steve Peake points fans to a useful website.

current 2D board isn't up to much, then ditch it along with your Voodoo2 card and install a Voodoo3.

FRAME ON

Q Regarding Alex Hall's letter about *Grand Prix Legends* and frame rates in your April issue (PCZ #75). In this game frame rate is everything. When I first got it I had a P233 with Voodoo1 which gave about 25fps with five AI cars and detail turned down a bit.

The human eye is not supposed to detect much difference at higher frame rates, but I found it difficult to keep the car in a straight line because I was constantly over-correcting,

which resulted in the car fishtailing more and more violently until it spun.

You need to get as near to 36fps (the max shown by the game) to get stability. I solved it by upgrading to a 350MHz Pentium II and Voodoo2. This is explained in detail in the hardware FAQ on [www.nh.ultranet.com/~alison/gpl/index.htm](#) where there is an absolute mine of information on *Grand Prix Legends*.

Steve Peake

A Many thanks for the info, Steve. Players of Papyrus' damn fine racing game should definitely check out the above website. **FW**

ARE YOU BEING FREESERVED?

Q Freeserve is a good Internet service, but some people are put off by the thought of having to install their versions of software which can screw up existing configurations. There is, however, a way of registering with Freeserve without their CD - you just need a modem and a Web browser. Here's how to do it...

Firstly, double-click on My Computer, then open Dial-up Networking. Select Make New Connection and follow the instructions. The phone number you need to specify is 0845 0796699. Name it something like 'Freeserve'.

Now go back into Dial-up Networking, right-click on the new connection and select Properties. Review the phone number and modem details, then click on the Server Types tab. Make sure that the Type of Dial-up Server is PPP: Internet, Windows NT Server, Windows 98, then uncheck all the boxes except for TCP/IP which is under Allowed Network Protocols.

Click on the button to the right of this (TCP/IP Settings), and leave everything, but uncheck the Use IP Header Compression box. Now click OK until you get back to the Dial-up Networking window, and double-click on your new connection.

Enter your username as 'freeservesignup' and your password as 'signup'. Click Connect, and a temporary connection is made so you can start the sign-up process. Open a Web browser and enter the address as <https://signup.freeserve.net/> (make sure you enter <https://> and not just <http://>, as the process must use a secure connection which this signifies).

When your browser loads up the page, click on the link to Create New Account, and follow the self-explanatory instructions. You need to choose an account username (and a password). Since Freeserve is very popular, your first choice will no doubt be taken but you'll be given suggestions (the important part is the bit after the '@' sign, as this can't be changed). Once you've completed the set-up process, click on the Finished button (*Or not!* See reply - Ed) and disconnect.

To use your new account, double-click on the connection you made earlier in Dial-up Networking, but enter your username as XXX.freeserve.co.uk (where XXX is the account username you chose) and enter the password used in the sign-up process. Check the Save Password box, hit Connect and you have a fully working Internet connection, free of charge!

When setting-up an email program, you need to know that the Incoming email (POP3) server is pop.freeserve.net and the outgoing (SMTP) server is smtp.freeserve.net. The news server, meanwhile, is news.freeserve.net.

Richard Bush, Henley-on-Thames

A Nice work, Richard - £50 is on its way. I'm not sure the Dixons Group will thank us for passing on this information, but it's available on the Net itself so what the heck?

We should point out, however, that readers not familiar with configuring software are better off picking up a free disc from a Dixons, PC World, Currys, The Link or @jakarta store (call 0990 500049 for nearest branch) and following the standard set-up procedure. Also, a few things for those who are going to use Richard's advice. Firstly, we couldn't get the process to work until someone suggested manually entering DNS (Domain Name Servers) numbers when setting up the new connection. The figures we used were: 194.152.64.35, 194.152.64.34 and 194.152.64.68.

Also, when signing up we could log on to <https://signup.freeserve.net/> with Microsoft's Internet Explorer, but not with Netscape Navigator. This may have been a coincidence, but we suspect that you can only use the former.

Finally, once the account has been set up (see screenshot, left) there's no need to hit the Finished button - you can just disconnect. Note: If you do hit Finished, you download a file called *install.ins* which alters your Explorer settings.

More info on Freeserve at www.freeserve.net; technical support on 0839 517517 for 'just' 50p a minute!



Freeserve You have completed your sign-up process!

Please make a note of your account details:

Your new e-mail address is: wam90@freeserve.co.uk
 Your new Freeserve user name is: www.freeserve.co.uk

You can now automatically update your computer with all the information you need to connect to the internet by clicking the 'Finished' button below.

Important: If you are using an Apple Macintosh click the 'Finished' button with the Apple icon.

PC users:

- Whenever you want to connect to the internet, click on the Freeserve internet icon on your PC Desktop.
- Click on the Outlook Express icon to use your e-mail.

Mac users:

- When you want to connect, click on the 'Browse the Internet' icon.
- Click on the Mail icon when you want to use your e-mail.

Online support is available from the Freeserve homepage:
www.freeserve.net/support

Buttons: Help, Cancel, Finished, Finished

Freeserve: sign up without installing the software.

WATCHDOG

Got a bone to pick with someone in the industry but can't get them to step into the ring? Let **PC ZONE** fight your corner for you

★ ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

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 130).

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

EMAIL us at letters.pczzone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

“It's hard to believe how many basic problems there are with this game”

STEVE LOFTUS IS NOT HAPPY WITH CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

BLUE BITE

Q I am sending you a copy of a letter that I have repeatedly sent to Blue Byte software. They are totally ignoring it, and I hope that you can get a response from them. I am sick of companies who are all too keen to supply software but have appalling after-sales service. Here's the letter:

“This is the third time I've sent this email (I have also sent a letter). I am hoping for some acknowledgment that this has reached you. I have enjoyed Blue Byte's products since the days when the Amiga was very popular, and I recently purchased *Incubation* for my PC.

Instead of buying the £9.99 standalone version of *Incubation*, I thought I'd get better value if I purchased it together with the *Hidden Worlds* disc for £23.99.

Having finished *Incubation*, I loaded the *Hidden Worlds* levels and discovered that all I had for the extra £14 were three extra missions and some stuff that can

be downloaded free from the Web. I feel very let down and cheated by the *Hidden Worlds* disc. It's such a shame after the main program was so good. I shall be less trusting in future.

Gina Skinner

A Blue Byte kicked off by apologising for the lack of response from their end – they should have been in touch with you by now to find out where you were sending your emails and why you failed to get any feedback from them.

On the issue of your disappointment with the actual package, their PR bod Marcus Beer offered the following: “I can understand your dismay at spending £14 on a product that was actually meant to be a free bonus for purchasers of *Incubation*. *Hidden Worlds* was released in March '98 as a free ‘thank you’ to all the consumers who purchased the original *Incubation* – registered users would then get a copy of

Name	Friendly Comp		
Type	League	Cup	
Points For A Win	2	3	
Level Points	Goal Diff.	Goals For	Games Won
Extra Time	None	30 Minutes	Golden Goal
Deciders	None	Penalties	Shootouts
Number Of Teams	3	4	
Back		Next	

CM3: in need of some treatment with the magic sponge?

SWEDISH FURY

Q I have a complaint about Diamond's European Support Service. Over the last six months I've sent them five emails – two concerning my old Viper V330, and three concerning the V550. My problem is that my computer always locks up if I play DirectX-based 2D games unless I lower the graphics acceleration two notches; 3D games run just fine. I also had a question about the latest drivers. None of these emails were answered.

Once I even made an international call to the UK, and the technician promised to get back to me but never did.

Sven Östlinger

A A phone call to the people at Diamond elicited the following: “We were disappointed to hear of Mr Östlinger's predicament. Diamond Multimedia's European customer support manager contacted Mr Östlinger as soon as the

TIME BOMB

Thanks to Watchdog, one reader's problematic TIME PC gets a free overhaul from TIME even though the warranty has expired

Q I am writing to you to tell you about the problems I'm having with the TIME PC I purchased in March '98.

I rang TIME technical support in September when my modem went pear-shaped, and they told me to try several different modem configurations. None of them worked. I then rang my ISP and they said it was a hardware fault. I dropped the subject for a week, until another fault occurred after installing DirectX 6. Until then, all gaming applications had been running fine, as you'd expect using a PII 300MMX. But after installing *Populous: The Beginning* along with the DirectX drivers, everything ran like a constipated tortoise – in fact, nothing ran at all.

I contacted TIME again, and they told me bugger all. On my own initiative, and despite being told I would need technical confirmation to send my PC back first, I had the PC delivered to them with the warranty still intact. TIME replaced my modem, and wrote on the invoice that all DirectX 6 drivers were fine. So I tried a PC ZONE coverdisc and... it wouldn't run. The modem was fine though.

The only way forward now was to use option 7 provided with the system. To novice PC users, this means that everything apart from the base computer memory is wiped and set to the original factory settings. While it solved most problems, games produced after September '98 didn't work. And with the likes of *Half-Life*, *Unreal* and *Baldur's Gate* having come out over the past few months, this became infuriating.

I tried numerous things, including downloading the latest DirectX 6.1 and ATI drivers for the ATI Rage Pro 2, but they all failed. In my opinion, I have tried and tested all possible means of correcting my system's retardness.

Due to these tests I have used option 7 around six times, and now it seems that the mainframe of my system is being affected, with older games such as *Quake II* refusing to work even with DirectX 5.

My warranty has now expired and I feel as though there's nothing else I can do.

Andrew Wallen

A A tough time, by the sound of it, and the sort of scenario that any PC owner dreads.

We sent your letter to the people at TIME to get their view on the situation, and Philip Bekx, their legal services advisor, offered the following: “It is unfortunate that [Andrew] has not contacted us since 12 January 1999, and assumes that because the warranty expired in March 1999 we are no longer willing to assist him.”

TIME went on to tell Watchdog that they have carefully read over the times you contacted their office, and have an overall view of the events since your purchase: “[The situation] has been fully investigated by our evaluations department,” offered Bekx, “and we conclude that the difficulties that Andrew is experiencing are software or user-related.”

Bekx went on to say that most of the games you've listed have various patches and bug fixes at their respective websites to resolve the problems you've had, and “the difficulties that Andrew experienced are all related to third-party games”. He added: “Andrew's last contact with our office was on 12 January when he sought advice on connecting to the Internet. We advised him to use Hyperterm, and if that was unsuccessful to contact us again. As we received no further contact, it is not unreasonable to assume that our advice resolved the difficulties.”

As for resolving any problems you're still wrestling with, TIME suggest that you contact them and they'll give you the necessary advice over the phone. “Should this not resolve his difficulties,” continued Bekx, “we are more than willing to collect his goods, preferably with the third-party games, and carry out a full inspection and resolve all outstanding issues.”

TIME did point out that they are under no obligation to support you on third-party software-related issues, and that their offer is a goodwill gesture. “The carriage cost and any work that is deemed necessary if the PC is returned to our service centre will be carried out free of charge on this occasion, as if the goods were still covered by the manufacturer's warranty.”

Finally, they asked Watchdog to convey their apologies for the difficulties you've experienced.

complaint was flagged to us. We, of course, hope that this regrettable incident proves to be a one-off."

Diamond went on to profile the set-up of their Customer Support Service, and provided contact details for any other punters wanting their queries answered.

For the Diamond Multimedia European Customer Support, call +44 (0) 118 9444444, visit their website on www.diamondmm.co.uk, or send an email to techsupt.euro@diamondmm.com.

EXCESS CHARGE

I'm writing to you to raise the topic of free Internet access

providers. I joined BT's ClickFree service a few weeks ago and was initially very pleased with it.

I also decided to use the free email service, talk21, provided in conjunction with ClickFree, because it had a POP3 address which I could use to download my emails into Microsoft Outlook. However, one week later I found that I wasn't able to do this any more as the POP3 address had suddenly 'disappeared'. I checked the help section of talk21, only to find that it didn't offer the POP3 address any more because it was "a totally different kind of email software"!

I believe that the real reason behind this is to ensure that people have to stay connected to

the Internet longer to read their emails online, therefore raising a nice amount of money for BT. I will also probably ditch ClickFree as a result of this.

Adam Hart

A short response from the bods at BT said that they were sorry you'd had a "bad experience", and that they are in fact expanding POP3 access to talk21, rather than cutting it back. "We have tens of thousands of successful POP3 accesses to talk21 with BT ClickFree every day," they told Watchdog. They said that new users should check out the instructions for setting up POP3 access in their FAQ on talk21. [E2]

PENALTY!

Watchdog has received numerous complaints about *CM3*. These are best summed up by the following letter sent to us by Steve Loftus

CM3 was originally supposed to be released in February, and was constantly put back until it was finally released on 19/3/99 (UK). So it was with great anticipation that I finally handed over my £30 for a game that you would expect to be bug-free after it had been held back for 'testing' for so long. Well, it's not bug-free; in fact it's hard to believe how many basic problems there are with this game. So far, Eidos or Sports Interactive have not replied to any of my emails.

Steve's complaint

Problem 1. Many people are getting error messages saying their drive cannot detect the CD. (Watchdog note: we've also received complaints about a similar problem with DVD drives.)

Problem 2. Some people cannot run the game from the .exe file that is installed, and have to use the one on the CD instead.

Eidos/Sports Interactive's response

"Most of the problems people are experiencing with *CM3* are due to the copy protection system implemented by Eidos after we had given them the final CD. These include failure to recognise the CD when inserted into certain DVD and CD drives, the program crashing when performing the CD check, and crashing back to the Windows desktop at random points during play."

Oliver Collyer, Sports Interactive

"We use copy protection systems to safeguard our products in order to ensure the continued quality of our titles. Unfortunately, due to the stringency of these systems, we do experience occasional compatibility issues with some CD and DVD drives. It must be pointed out that DVD still does not conform to a specific standard, and so tends to generate a higher than normal rate of failure. We are constantly monitoring the performance of these systems and are currently responding to the DVD/Windows NT issue with an update which is available on our website - www.eidos.co.uk."

Andy Farquhar, Eidos Interactive

Steve's complaint

Problem 3. The game doesn't seem to work on AMD and Cyrix processors (about 20 per cent of the PCs in the UK).

Eidos/Sports Interactive's response

"The game was tested and found to work perfectly on Intel, AMD and Cyrix processors. As far as we are aware there are no problems here, although we know that the copy protection problem is more likely to occur on faster AMDs (eg 350MHz-plus)."

Steve's complaint

Problem 4. The game is very slow on anything less than a PII 300 if you have more than four leagues selected.

Eidos/Sports Interactive's response

"We optimised the code as much as possible, but in order to create a game which is far more complex and involving than its predecessors there is inevitably going to be a processing and memory usage overhead. We get emails from people running the game on a P75 who love the game; equally we get emails from people who find it too slow on a P450. We have tried to make the game as customisable as we can to enable it to run on as wide a range of machines as possible. Had we opted instead to provide just a few enhancements to *CM 97/8*, I feel we would have been criticised for not doing enough."

Eidos/Sports Interactive's conclusion

"We feel sorry for the people who are having these problems, and we are currently finalising a free enhancement update for the game which will resolve the copy protection issues and also give the user an updated database containing all the transfer deadline day moves, plus multi-language support and some other gameplay improvements. This will be available for download from www.champman.net and www.cm3.com by the time you read this, and we also hope to distribute it via magazine covers."

Oliver Collyer, Sports Interactive

PC ZONE

COMING NEXT ISSUE DUNGEON KEEPER 2

WORLD FIRST REVIEW



We've seen it running, and it's shaping up to be rather special. In next month's issue of *PC ZONE* our very own Charlie Brooker will be putting the finished version of *Dungeon Keeper 2* through its paces, and telling us exactly what he thinks of it. Will he marvel at the enhanced 3D graphics? Will he balk at the sadistic nature of the gameplay? All will be revealed in our exclusive review.

THE FINEST COVER CD DEMOS

TA: Kingdoms: you've read the review, so you know it's the best real-time strategy game ever - and next month you'll get to play it for yourself with our exclusive demo. We'll also have an exclusive demo of *Shadow Company*, and lots more playable demonstrations of the latest games to get your teeth into.

HONEST REVIEWS

Descent 3 didn't make it into this issue, so we're hoping to have a full review of the game next month. We'll also be dragging our expert review team out of bed to give you the low-down on Jane's *Fleet Command*, the long-awaited *Braveheart* from Eidos, Microsoft's *Midtown Madness* and Activision's *Heavy Gear II*. Plus loads of other games that will be coming your way soon.

TIPS, CHEATS AND WALKTHROUGHS

A number of you have written in complaining that *Lands Of Lore III* is a bit too difficult, so look out for an extensive guide to the game in next month's *ZONE*. We'll also have *Quake III Arena* test cheats, a bunch of cool *Requiem* cheats, and tips for Fox's classic *Aliens Versus Predator*.

INSIGHTFUL PREVIEWS

We'll be taking an in-depth look at a broad selection of forthcoming hits shown recently at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, such as *Ultima Ascension*, *Age Of Empires II*, *The Sims*, *Half-Life: Opposing Force*, *Theme Park World*, *Deep Fighter* and *Nox* - among many others. Keep it real, and keep it with us. Booyakkasha!

ON SALE THURSDAY 1 JULY

* Note: this is a guide only, content may change due to circumstances beyond our control

TOP 100

Welcome to the **PC ZONE** Top 100. Here you'll find the games 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%

★ Arriving a whole year late but definitely worth the wait, this has to be the 3D shooter of the year thanks to a superb single-player game. We'll have to wait and see whether it will beat Quake II in the deathmatch arena.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209100



BUDGET

PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING

PCZ #44 • 94%

★ The ultimate mix of space combat, Elite-style trading and FMV action, Privateer 2 was the first big budget release from Origin which used live action in a positive way. Absolutely packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



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%

NEW ENTRY 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



SIN

PCZ #70 • 91%

★ Until Duke 4Ever appears, Sin is the closest in feel to its ageing classic predecessor. Based on the Quake II engine, Sin offers a superb single-player game thanks to some ingenious level design. Highly recommended.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



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 disk 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

ALSO CONSIDER

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT Eidos Interactive • PCZ #72 • 90%

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX Take 2 • PCZ #69 • 89%

UNREAL GT Interactive • PCZ #65 • 93%

QUAKE Activision • PCZ #43 • 96% **BUDGET**

ALIENS VS PREDATOR Fox Interactive • PCZ #77 • 89%

REQUIEM: AVENGING ANGEL Ubi Soft • PCZ #50 • 90%

STARSLIEGE UNIVERSE Sierra • PCZ #76 • 88%

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



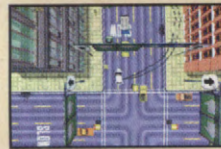
TOCA 2 **PCZ #76 • 93%**
 ★ Predictably, Codemasters have done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrol heads. Graphically it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 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. Soon 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



MOTORHEAD **PCZ #63 • 90%**
 ★ With drop-dead graphics and a blistering frame rate, this is a ridiculously fast, fab-looking, intense racing experience. Add a great LAN-based option (Local Area Network) and *Motorhead* is the ace of arcade racers.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



GRAND PRIX LEGENDS **PCZ #69 • 90%**
 ★ Papyrus, the makers of *NASCAR* and *IndyCar*, have put the danger back into Formula 1. If you fancy a challenge and the chance to go back to the teams and drivers of 1967, then buy this. You'll need a steering wheel though.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

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 football 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

- FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2** MicroProse • PCZ #36 • 95%
- SCREAMER 2** Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% **BUDGET**
- DESTRUCTION DERBY 2** Psygnosis • PCZ #46 • 86% **BUDGET**
- INTERSTATE 76: NITRO RIDERS** Activision • PCZ #63 • 87%
- TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP** Europress • PCZ #59 • 86% **BUDGET**
- ULTIMATE RACE PRO** MicroProse • PCZ #62 • 88% **BUDGET**

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



BUDGET

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



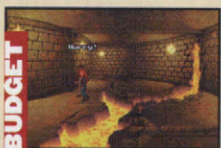
BUDGET

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



BUDGET

DISC WORLD II **PCZ #44 • 93%**
 ✪ Perfect Entertainment's immaculate sequel to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld II* is a universally appealing adventure game.
PUBLISHER Psygnosis • 0151 282 3000



BUDGET

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



BUDGET

LBA 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY **PCZ #54 • 93%**
 ✪ Twinsen is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmerians 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



BUDGET

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



BUDGET

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



BUDGET

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



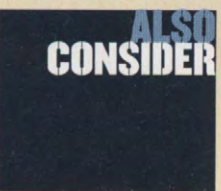
BUDGET

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



BUDGET

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



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**

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES



BUDGET

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS **PCZ #1 • 94%**
 ✪ This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



BUDGET

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



BUDGET

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



BUDGET

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



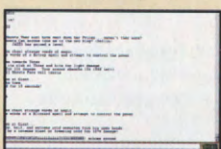
BUDGET

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



BUDGET

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 Zabalac/Blizzard • 01626 332233



BUDGET

TERRIS **PCZ #44 • 88%**
 ✪ A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but it's so addictive that we're still playing it. The various quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness'.
PUBLISHER AOL • 0800 279 7444



BUDGET

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



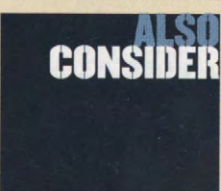
BUDGET

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



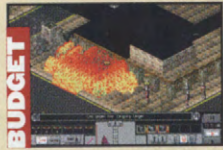
BUDGET

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS **PRE-PC ZONE**
 ✪ This took role-playing games away from first-person tile-based RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any game in history.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



✪ These are the cream of the crop, largely because RPGs have taken a back seat to other game types over the last couple of years. However, also bear in mind...
DIABLO: HELLFIRE Cendant • PCZ #59 • 82%
ULTIMA COLLECTION Electronic Arts • PCZ #62 • 90%
RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET Mindscape • PCZ #25 • 78%

STRATEGY GAMES



X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE **PCZ #52 • 95%**
 ✪ A revamped engine and a healthy helping of real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive *X-COM* series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy *X-COM 3* immediately. It'll keep you busy for weeks.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893



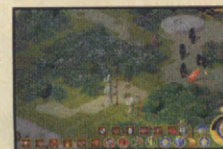
AGE OF EMPIRES **PCZ #54 • 94%**
 ✪ Imagine *Civilization II*'s great empire-building gameplay improved with some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



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



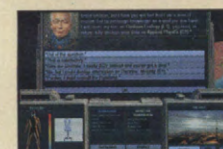
MAGIC & MAYHEM **PCZ #70 • 92%**
 ✪ Based on the old Spectrum game *Chaos*, *X-COM* creators Mythos deliver a diverse and original fantasy strategy game. A strong single-player element and a manic multiplayer game make this a well-deserving classic.
PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255



TOTAL ANNIHILATION **PCZ #56 • 92%**
 ✪ With a ridiculous number of units and its fast-paced action, *Total Annihilation* is without doubt one of the best real-time strategy games ever. The polygon units are smooth, and multiplayer games are awesome. Pisses on *Red Alert*.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



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



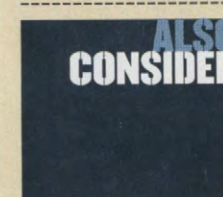
SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI **PCZ #74 • 92%**
 ✪ *Civilization II* was, and still is, one of the greatest strategy games ever made, and *Alpha Centauri* is everything a true sequel should be. Rather than create another remake, Sid Meier has created the game *Civ* fans have been crying out for for years.
PUBLISHER Firaxis/EA • 01753 549442



WARZONE 2100 **PCZ #75 • 90%**
 ✪ Both Westwood and Cavedog have dismissed full 3D in strategy games on the grounds that AI would suffer as a result of incorporating it. *Warzone* proves them both wrong, looks gorgeous and plays as good as *Total Annihilation*.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 0181 636 3000



CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER **PCZ #75 • 89%**
 ✪ Replacing *Civ II* in this list with this remake was a difficult decision. *Call To Power* may do more than *Civ II*, but it takes too long to get into the guts of the game. You'll still love it, but if you're skint get *Civ II* on budget.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 4567000



WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING Broderbund • PCZ #67 • 90%
ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON Hasbro • PCZ #75 • 87%
COMMANDOS Eidos Interactive • PCZ #66 • 87%
DUNGEON KEEPER Electronic Arts • PCZ #53 • 96% **BUDGET**
MASTER OF ORION 2 MicroProse • PCZ #45 • 92% **BUDGET**
COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT EA • PCZ #47 • 94%
CAESAR III Sierra • PCZ #70 • 92%
M1 TANK PLATOON II MicroProse • PCZ #63 • 90% **BUDGET**

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



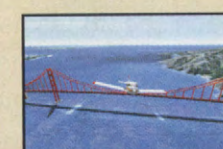
FLYING CORPS GOLD **PCZ #59 • 92%**
 ✪ Action-packed WWI flight simulation with neat graphics. Some of you may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WWI flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WWI sim currently available.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



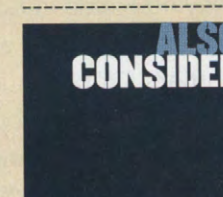
A-10 CUBA! **PCZ #59 • 90%**
 ✪ Functional graphics for a game that really does capture the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Although it's slightly limited due to a lack of a fully-fledged campaign it's still great fun, as well as being pretty speedy on a modest Pentium.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 4567000



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



FLIGHT UNLIMITED II **PCZ #60 • 84%**
 ✪ It can't really compete with the behemoth that is *Flight Sim 98*, and as a result is somewhat limited and claustrophobic. However, it does score highly for being more detailed in its smaller area, and much more fun.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



✪ If a flight sim is good, you can bet it'll stay on the shelves for a long time – hence our recommendation for *Jetfighter III*. Some of the more recent releases worth considering include...
AIR WARRIOR III Interactive Magic • PCZ #62 • 80%
F-16 AGGRESSOR Virgin • PCZ #70 • 92%
COMANCHE GOLD NovaLogic • PCZ #65 • 87%
F/A-18 KOREA Empire Interactive • PCZ #61 • 90%

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

OVER £50,000 WORTH OF PRIZES UP FOR GRABS IN TOTAL!

DO YOU RECKON YOU AND YOUR MATES HAVE WHAT IT TAKES to put together a team that can beat all-comers to become the UK PC Games Champions 1999? Dennis Publishing and The Playing Fields have joined forces with AMD and Microsoft to launch the search for the cream of computer games players – and it could be your team that carries off the £10,000 cash prize, not to mention a top-flight gaming PC each... See opposite for the full low-down on the prizes on offer, or visit the Official UK Games Championships website at www.ukpcgc.com.

The event is designed to test the PC game-playing skills of teams of between two and four players who will compete using the latest PC technology, powered by AMD's K6®-III Processors with 3DNow!(™) Technology and Microsoft's award-winning gaming hardware.



Teams will also be able to make use of Microsoft's MSN Gaming Zone UK to practice their skills online, find team partners and follow the event itself. Visit AMD at www.3dnow.de/gaming_uk2/ and MSN at zone.msn.co.uk/competition for further details.

Five Regional Qualifiers (London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Cardiff and Manchester) will be held between June and August 1999 (run by The Playing Fields), each of which will see 36 teams compete for the right to progress to the Grand Final in London on September 18. The Grand Final will be held at The Playing Fields in London's West End, where there will also be an all-comers Drop-in qualifier during July and August. See opposite for details on the Regional and Drop-in Qualifiers, or visit the official website at www.ukpcgc.com.

THE GAMES

Teams will have to compete in four different gaming genres, playing eight games in all – two from each genre. The teams will designate players to play each of the eight games as they choose.

The Gaming Categories

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

Unreal, Quake II



REAL-TIME STRATEGY

Age Of Empires, Total Annihilation



DRIVING GAMES

Motocross Madness, Need For Speed III: Hot Pursuit



SPORTS GAMES

Actua Soccer 3, Jimmy White's 2: Cueball



PRESENTED BY:

PCZONE



COMPUTER SHOPPER

WIN £10,000 CASH

THE QUALIFIERS

Check the list below to find the Regional Qualifier closest to your location.

WHAT IS THE DROP-IN QUALIFIER?

The Drop-in qualifier is intended to allow teams who are unable to enter a Regional Qualifier the opportunity to participate in the Championships. Teams can turn up at The Playing Fields to compete on the same basis as the other Qualifiers. The Drop-in qualifier runs from 5th July to 29th August and is available during The Playing Fields, opening hours (Monday to Saturday, 12 noon to 11pm). Teams wishing to compete must arrive before 6.30pm to allow enough time. The Drop-in costs £20 to enter, and unlike the other Qualifiers, we are unable to refund this entry fee.

HOW TO ENTER

Send the coupon (or a photocopy) with a cheque for £20 (refunded on arrival at your Qualifier, except the Drop-in Qualifier, for which no refunds will be given) and you're in the running - on a first come, first served basis, with preference given to teams of four as entries are limited. Your cheque will not be cashed until your entry is accepted and a rule pack sent to you. All team members must be UK residents aged 15 or above. Employees of, or freelancers associated with, Dennis Publishing, The Playing Fields, Microsoft or AMD are ineligible for entry. Entrants accepted will be sent a full rule pack. If you wish to read these before entering, send an SAE to The Playing Fields (address below) or log on to the website (www.ukpcgc.com).

THE PRIZES

£1500 cash prize to each of the six winning Qualifier teams. Plus, the highest scorers in each of the eight individual games at each of the Qualifiers around the country will win a prize from the game's publisher worth at least £100. The highest scorers from the entire Championships in each of the eight games will each be presented with a prize from the game's publisher worth at least £2500! Third place in the final: a top-of-the-range 2D/3D graphics card. Second place: £1000 cash for the team and a top-quality monitor for each team member. The winners will walk away with the £10,000 cash prize and a top-spec PC for each member (worth around £2000 at current prices).

The Regional Qualifiers

DATE OF QUALIFIER	LOCATION	CLOSING DATE
5 - 6 Jun 1999	London, The Playing Fields	28 May 1999
12 - 13 Jun 1999	Birmingham, Forte Posthouse	4 June 1999
3 - 4 Jul 1999	Cardiff, Welsh Institute of Sport	25 June 1999
10 - 11 Jul 1999	Glasgow, Marriott Hotel	2 July 1999
7 - 8 Aug 1999	Manchester, Renaissance Hotel	30 July 1999
5 Jul - 29 Aug 1999	Drop-In Qualifier at The Playing Fields	N/A

- Teams unable to attend any other Regional Qualifier can 'drop in' to The Playing Fields in London between the indicated dates and compete on the spot. No refunds of the £20 entry fee are applicable in this case.
- All teams entering must be able to provide at least two of its members to attend the Grand Final, which will take place at The Playing Fields in London on 18 September 1999.

SPONSORED BY

3DNOW!TM
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www.zone.msn.co.uk

UKPCGAMESCHAMPIONSHIPS1999

Team name	Team Captain's name and age
Other team members' names and ages	
Captain's address	Postcode
Captain's daytime phone	Captain's email address
The Regional Qualifier we will like to attend is	

At least two team members would be able to attend the Grand Final in London on 18 September 1999. If any team members are 15, permission is required from parent/guardian. Please enclose a letter from each parent/guardian indicating permission to enter has been granted.

I enclose a cheque/PO for £20 payable to The Playing Fields. Your cheque will not be cashed until your entry is accepted and your rule pack sent to you.

UKPCGC is a joint project between The Playing Fields Limited (Reg No. 3343837) and Dennis Publishing Limited (Reg No. 1138891). Registered office: 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Tel: 0171 631 1433; Fax: 0171 636 5668. UKPCGC reserves the right to change the rules, prize structure and/or format of the Championships as circumstances dictate without prior notice.

UKPCGC

The Playing Fields
139 - 143 Whitfield Street,
London W1P 5RY

PCZ 01

ON THE CD

This month's CD is packed with great demos, including the tyre-squealing *Breakneck*, and *Starsiege Universe*

★ WORDS Mark Hill 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 to the phone when you call.
- ★ If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM etc – plus the nature of the fault.
- ★ Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call 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**

POSITION 7/8
LAPTIME 00:04:58
BEST LAP 00:00:00
DIST. FRONT (GARY) 00:00:07
DIST. BACK (LUIGI) 00:00:32

Mmm, a couple of rather nice paint jobs.

Strap yourself in for an exhilarating drive.

It's road rage time.

BREAKNECK

THQ

Strap yourself to a chair with some hefty restraining material or a customised seat belt for this one, because *Breakneck's* speed is obscene. If you want to see some of the scenery rather than just an indistinct blur of trees and rock as they rush past you, then you should opt for the third-person perspective; the first-person camera is like an off-the-rails roller coaster.

Of course, seeing your car on the track will show off its sparkling new paint job and is ideal for shooting other racers to the great scrapyard in the sky. Yes, that's right, if you get tired of just going round in circles, you can take out your road rage on the other drivers.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Controls: Keyboard/joystick | H Horn |
| ARROWS Steer left/right | Z Handbrake |
| accelerate/brake | R Place car back on the track |
| SHIFT Gear up | F1 Switch camera views |
| CTRL Gear down | F2 Toggle track map on/off |
| SPACEBAR Use weapon | F3 Rear-view mirror |
| 1-8 Weapon selection | |

POSITION 8/8
LAPTIME 00:22:92
BEST LAP 01:55:92
DIST. FRONT (LUIGI) 00:00:09

LAP 2/5

MPH 3
118

MPH 3
100

If you want to see some of the scenery, go for the third-person perspective.



Any minute now, there's gonna be shrapnel flying everywhere.



Big, bad, and dangerous to know. Unless it's on your side, that is.

STARSIEGE UNIVERSE

Sierra

Fans of gigantic robot blasters are in for a treat this month. First up, *Starsiege Universe* has you sitting in the head of one of these metal beasts, completing a series of missions in a bid to stop an evil Emperor. If you haven't played any of the *Earthsiege* or *MechWarrior* games before, take some time to play through the tutorials and you'll soon be skipping around with all the grace of a monstrous ostrich. These keys are just some of the basic controls – we recommend that you print out the `keyboard.bmp` file that will be installed to your *Starsiege* folder for full details. You'll need a 3D card if you've got anything less than a P200.

Controls: Mouse/joystick/keyboard
ARROWS Left/right/faster/slower
NUMPAD 0 Reverse throttle
BACKSPACE Stop
MOUSE Targeting
 crosshair/fire
CTRL+O or V Orbit camera
CTRL+C Cockpit camera
Z Zoom
1-9 Weapons
T Target closest enemy
F Target closest friendly

☛ If you're a fan of big robots, you'll love this. But you need a 3D card if you've got anything less than a P200.



I guess that's what you'd call a hit.



SLAVE ZERO
Accolade

More robots, this time of the muscle-bound variety and from a third-person perspective. Set in a futuristic

city of vast skyscrapers, this demo lets you stomp your way past tiny cars, choppers and other robots. *Slave Zero* is more of an arcade blastathon, with wonderful graphics, colourful explosions and plenty of power-ups – but only if you have a 3D card.

- Controls: Mouse/keyboard
MOUSE Targeting crosshair/fire
SPACEBAR Jump
A/D Strafe
S Back



CORSAIRS
Microids

Prepare to be plundered, the pirates are coming. *Corsairs* is just one of many games signalling a pirate revival on

the PC. Trade with towns, fire cannonballs on the port side, vomit over the starboard side, and never ever wash. Make sure you explore the whole map and listen carefully to the tutorial messages.

- Controls: Mouse/keyboard
A Select all ships on screen
B Select ship by ship
C Centre on the corsair's ship
M Map
W/X Fire cannonballs left/right

Soccer games than their *FIFA* counterparts, we're sure that a number of you will prefer this to *NHL '99*. Pick up your hockey stick, strap on your ice blades and... look a complete fool. It's only a computer game, after all. 3D card required. (See game review on page 91.)

- Controls: Gamepad/keyboard
ARROWS Move player
 , Shoot
 . Pass/select closest player
 / Speed burst
F1 Replay
F2 Camera menu

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

Take 2/Talonsoft

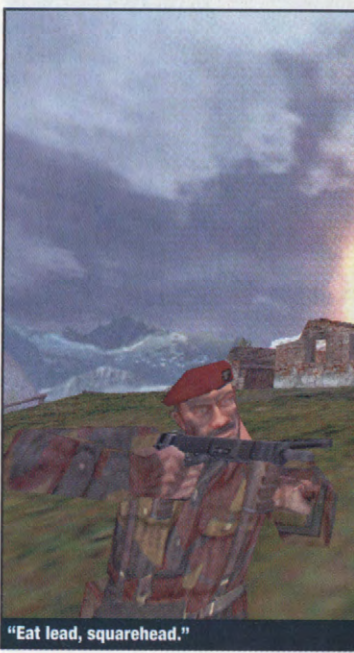
Mindless shooting won't get you anywhere in this demo. *Hidden & Dangerous*, in the vein of *Rainbow 6*, requires a bit of tactical thinking, and these two missions – introduced by the soft tones of your WWII English commander – are as tough as it gets. In the first one you have to sneak past German soldiers guarding a bridge while coping with the vision-impairing rain. The second isn't any easier, as you face gun turrets and harder mission objectives. 3D card required.

Mindless shooting won't get you anywhere.



"Dum de dum de dum de dum..."

- Controls: Mouse/keyboard
MOUSE Look/turn/fire
TAB Select soldier
ARROWS Strafe left/right move forwards/back
SHIFT+UP ARROW Run
ALT+UP ARROW Silent move
R Reload magazine
X Jump
W Lie down/kneel/stand
U Use/pick up
[/] Change inventory
ENTER Select item
 = Toggle first/third-person



"Eat lead, squarehead."



TOMB RAIDER II GOLD: THE GOLDEN MASK
Eidos Interactive

Lara Croft meets *Jaws* in this watery demo – what could be cooler?

Okay, so *TRIII* has been out a for a while, but gamers on a budget have a right to pixelated curves too. Some people can't get enough of her, others can't stand the sight of her. If you belong to the latter group, seeing her arse bitten off by a Great White shark should be some consolation.

- Controls: Keyboard/gamepad
SHIFT Walk
ALT Jump
CTRL Action
SPACEBAR Draw weapon / Flare
NUMPAD 0 Look
END Roll
ESC Inventory



HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC III
3D0

Orcs, hydras, trolls and even angels make a return in the third instalment of this fantasy strategy. Hardly a slice of real life, but it's jolly good fun. Build up your army and explore the map, but don't forget that there are other mighty heroes wandering around.

Controls: Mouse



RAILROAD TYCOON II: THE SECOND CENTURY

Take 2 Interactive

Anyone who likes playing with train sets will love this expansion pack demo. There are three standalone scenarios with the usual objectives of expanding your company, building stations, buying trains and trading. If you've played the original *Railroad Tycoon II* you'll notice plenty of extra features. The graphics are gorgeous, but you need a monitor capable of 1024x768 resolution and a video card to play it.

Controls: Mouse



ACTUA ICE HOCKEY 2

Gremlin Interactive

Just as there are many who are more partial to the *Actua*



"Do I aim for the head, or just take his nuts off?"

MECHWARRIOR 3

Hasbro Interactive

Yet another big robot-bashing demo, this time with a pedigree name. The *MechWarrior* series has a long history and a large fan base, although it's up against stiff competition from *Starsiege Universe*. Play both demos and make up your own mind (see game review on page 78).

Controls: Mouse/keyboard	E Target next enemy
ARROWS Turn left/right/ forward/reverse	CTRL+E Select nearest enemy
-/+ Pitch torso up/ down	1-0 Throttle commands
SPACEBAR Fire weapon	J Jump jets
ENTER Cycle weapons	R Radar display
C Crouch/stand	D Damage display
	X External tracking camera toggle



Bet it's getting a bit warm inside there.



EXTENDED PLAY

Get more out of the games you already own (also see Extended Play on page 144)

Championship Manager 3

Here are several editors for the ultimate footie management game, including a team and player editor that surpasses the one included on *CM 97/98*. You can also alter the climate in different regions of the game, leagues and stadiums.

Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines

This is your chance to prove just how tough you are. As if the original game wasn't hard enough,

these mods make your missions even more complicated.

Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri

We've got a load of new maps and factions for Sid Meier's instant classic. Fancy playing against the Borg, or on a European map? These are just a taster of the many enhancements available on the disc, so there's absolutely no excuse to get bored with this strategic extravaganza.



PATCHES

Don't miss out on all the new patches that have been released. See our CD browser for explanations of what they do

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3 3.03B

GANGSTERS UPDATE #3

GREAT BATTLES COLLECTOR'S EDITION 1.1

GRUNTZ (level editor)

HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC 1.1

IMPERIALISM II V 1.02

LINKS LS 99 1.21

MYTH: THE FALLEN LORDS 1.3

NASCAR REVOLUTION 1.01

NORTH VS SOUTH 1.2

QUEST FOR GLORY V 1.2

REAL POOL 1.01

REDLINE PATCH

RESIDENT EVIL 2 1.04

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOR DIVISION 2.2

SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI 3.0 (UK release)

STARSLIEGE: TRIBES V 1.4

UNREAL 2.24

US NAVY FIGHTER 97 1.4

WEST FRONT 1.03 (UK release)



EDITORIAL

We couldn't fit this stuff anywhere else, so we've put it here

Tips and Solutions *PC ZONE's* massive hints and cheats database continues to grow.

audio and video. You'll also need it to view this month's Hot Shots MPEG movie.

Windows Media Player Play the Web's coolest

Hot Shots First look at the stunning *Omikron*.



ADDED EXTRAS

Check out this month's selection of tools and utilities

DirectX 6.1

Microsoft's latest drivers for most Windows 95/98 games.

EZDe21sk 1.8

Saves the position of your Windows 95/98 desktop shortcuts and folders.

FileView v2.1

Hex/ASCII viewer for binary files.

Hypersnap-DX Pro v3.20.00

Screen capture utility that can cope with DirectX/Direct3D and 3Dfx modes.

Scitech Display Doctor v6.53

The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.

Winzip 7.0

The ultimate zip utility for Windows.

ClaraNET

Sign up files for ClaraNET. Requires IE4.

Ameol v2.50

Brand new software for the excellent online service that is CIX.

Kali95 1.63

Latest version of the client software for playing games over the Internet.

CompuServe 2.6a

Try this free for a month and get flying on the Net.

TimeOnline v1.10e

Simple and effective way to track your Net time.

GetRight 3.3.3

Salvage broken downloads. New version.

ICQ 99a beta Build #1700

Client software for the best online chat service in the world.

GameSpy 2.08

Find all the latest servers playing your favourite games.

AOLpress

Website-building utility that's simple to use and very powerful.

Voodoo drivers

Make sure all the latest games work with your 3Dfx card.

QuickTime 3

The standard in digital video.

Wireplay client

The software that connects you to Wireplay, plus *Air Attack*, *Legal Crime*, *Rumble In The Void* and *Settlers III* to play with.

Demon Internet

Log on and try Demon Internet.

Decode Shell Extension v 4.1

Decode your 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.

Power DUN 1.07

Dial-Up Networking extender for Windows 95 and NT4.

NearSite build 556

Download a whole website and browse it locally.

Roger Wilco

A virtual walkie-talkie app that runs alongside your favourite multiplayer online games.

EXTENDED PLAY



A collection of maps and factions for *Alpha Centauri*, updated (and hideously difficult) missions for *Commandos*, plus some little treats for all you *Championship Manager 3* fans

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 140.

ALPHA CENTAURI

New maps, factions and tools for Meier's masterpiece



It's effectively *Civilization in Space*, but Activision own the Civ moniker.



Graphics are top-notch, the gameplay is supremely addictive.



ON THE CD

Alpha Centauri is big. If it were a car, it would be a 1966 stretched Lincoln Continental with fins and chrome and shiny brass knobs and flashing lights and a jacuzzi and two cocktail bars. And because it has the brains of Sid Meier behind it (he of *Civilization* fame), it's smart and fab as well. In fact it was widely heralded as the best turn-based strategy game you could lay your hands on, which is really quite something. If you haven't tried it, maybe you should. If you liked *Civilization*, *Alpha Centauri* will give you a tingle in your dongle.

Anyway, we've been busy collecting new factions and maps for you to tinker with, and even a few tools to help you create your own. So go on – give 'em a whirl.

Maps And Factions

AMERICAN & CHIRON UNITY (*americanchiron.zip*) Soon after the Unity took off from Earth, another ship followed carrying representatives of every American state. The plan is to unite everyone under their rule.

AQUARIUM 2 (*aquarium2.zip*) After arriving at Chiron, Unity probes discover that it's a world of water. All you and your crewmates have is your initiative and a few dog-eared manuals on seafaring. Recommended.

ARRAKIS (*arrakis.zip*) A map of the sand planet from Frank Herbert's desperately boring *Dune*. Terraforming is vital here, as the landscape is almost entirely silt.

BRITAIN (*britain.zip*) Sir Winston Churchill's DNA has been revived in clone form as Britain's ambassador to the Unity. He sits about smoking Havana cigars and re-establishing the British Empire on Planet.

BUDDHISM (*buddhism.zip*) Based on tales of Old Earth Buddhists, this map explores the idea of them wishing to move to the Chironian biosphere and to make a clean start.

BUSTER (*buster.zip*) Over the past few centuries, the Southern Continent has fallen victim to countless Buster missiles – hence the rather 'rugged' terrain. Be careful if you start out from the small islands.

CANADIAN FACTION V4 (*canadians.zip*) Updated specifically for Canadians (new phrases include "Sure – at least you're not American"), this is a text file faction patch only. But we like it.

CANNABIS (*cannabis.zip*) The newly formed Cannabis League has bonus nutrients, minerals

and energy from fungus. Planting fungus late in the game can give you a big advantage.

BORG (*cborg_v2-1.zip*) "Stardate 2367.04. We have engaged the Borg. Activate sphincter clamps."

EARTH (*earth.zip*) A map of dear old planet Earth. Very well rendered, and thus a recommended download. Although we couldn't find the Isle of Wight.

EUROPEAN CONQUEST (*europe_conquest.zip*) Become one of six European countries trying to suppress the French. Armed with garlic missiles, inflected pronouns and lethal arrogance, the Frogs prove a tough challenge.

SOUTHERN EUROPE (*europe_s.zip*) Shockingly enough, a map of Southern Europe. Includes all the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and Iberian Peninsula.

FORCES OF EVIL (*evil.zip*) An extremely odd scenario. Stars Dr Evil ("I didn't go through 12 years of Evil Medical School to be

"Alpha Centauri was widely heralded as the best turn-based strategy game you could lay your hands on, which is really quite something"

called Mister") from *Austin Powers*.

UNITED FEDERATION OF PLANETS (*federation.zip*) Replacement factions from the *Star Trek* universe.

THE FOURTH REICH (*FOURTH_REICH.ZIP*) Hitler is back, and looking to take over the entire universe. Ich ging zu einer netten Kirche in Deutschland. Es hatte ein großes organ.

NEW BRITISH EMPIRE (*imperial.zip*) A faction based on the British Empire, now creating an empire twice as big as before. As the documentation says: "Submit or be annihilated!" Recommended.

NAZI PARTY (*nazi.zip*)

NET ADDRESSES

OFFICIAL ALPHA CENTAURI SITE www.alphacentauri.com

APOLYTON CIVILIZATION <http://civilization.gamestats.com>

ACEDIT HOME PAGE www.sidgames.com/acedit

OFFICIAL COMMANDOS SITE www.eidos.co.uk/commandos

MII COMMANDOS <http://commandos.onlineexpress.net>

OFFICIAL CHAMP MANAGER 3 SITE www.eidos.co.uk/cm3

CM PORTAL www.come.to/cmportal

Welcome to the new Nazi Party, though why anyone would want to take control of this lot is a mystery to us.

NEAR PERFECT PLANET (*nearperfect.zip*) The goal here is to reach transcendence – make research your top priority. Stick to building aircraft to patrol and defend your territory.

PLANET PRODUCTIONS (*planet_productions.zip*) One of the first new factions that appeared soon after *ACEDIT*. Inspired by Hollywood and the American film industry.

PLANET XXL (*planet_xxl.zip*) Large continents, enabling parliamentary groups to define a

rounds. That's 2,300 dollars versus 27 cents. So be a cheapshot.

SYNDIC (*syndic.zip*) A new faction based on *The Syndic*, the 1953 novel by CM Kornbluth. This particular faction has an ethos of self-interest and keen freedom of choice.

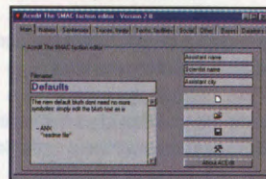
UNITED KINGDOM (*united_kingdom.zip*) A map of the UK. Recommended.

UTOPIA FACTION (*utopia.zip*) Aimed at *Alpha Centauri* beginners, Utopia encompasses a low starting tech, low costs, extra research and extra terraform rate.

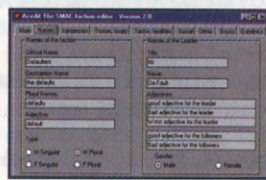
WORLD WRESTLING (*wrestler.zip*) Round off your evening by surrounding yourself with the likes of Ric Flair, Rock Mavia, Hulk Hogan, and Stone Cold Steve Austin. Potty.

Tools

ACEDIT (*ACEDIT20.zip*) This little treat enables you to create and edit your own faction files for use with *Alpha Centauri*.



Main screen: edit the overview and do all your loading and saving.



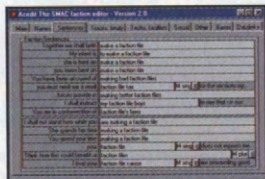
Names screen: supply names for the faction and its leaders.

continent as their starting point. No early contacts enable pretty even development.

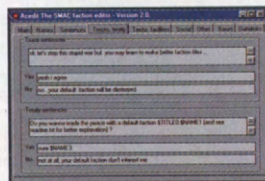
PROMISED LANDS (*promised.zip*) A medium-sized planet with small islands and a single huge continent. Only the western coast of it is habitable (the rest is a monster desert).

SHINRA (*shinra.zip*) The Shinra nation's pursuit of greed has led to the creation of a dictatorial organisation with no regard for human life. You may well remember Shinra from *Final Fantasy VII*.

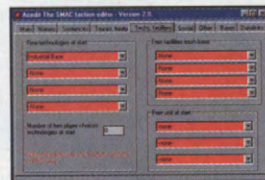
SNIPERS (*snipers.zip*) In Vietnam, the average number of M-16 rounds expended per kill was 50,000; for snipers it was 1.3



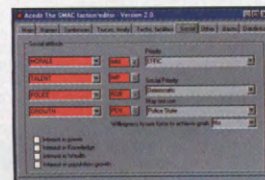
☛ Sentences screen: characterise your new faction with short sentences.



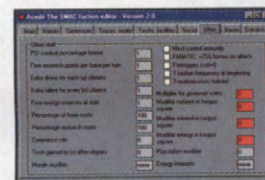
☛ Diplomacy screen: supply tactical answers for your leader.



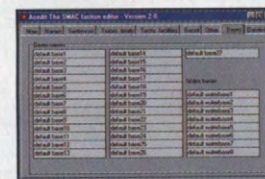
☛ Technologies & Facilities: provides the 'core' details of your faction.



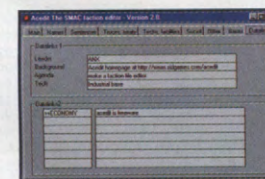
☛ Social screen: enables you to tweak the faction's social skills.



☛ Other screen: miscellaneous settings and switches.



☛ Bases screen: give names to all your bases.



☛ Datalink screen: provides a space for you to enter author details.

★ **RESEARCH ASSISTANT** (*research-assst.zip*) Enables you to select a technology, unit or weapon, and shows you exactly what you need to research in order to get that item. Simple but dead useful.

★ **TECH TREE EXTRACTOR** (*tech_tree-extractor.zip*) A small tool that enables you to extract

the technology tree information from the *Alpha Centauri* system text file.

★ **TECH TREE DATABASE** (*techtree_dbase.zip*) A rather dandy Access database file containing the game's complete technology tree. Includes predefined forms and interface.

COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES

★ More missions than you can shake a dead German at



☛ Big boat, small willy.



A hard-core version of toy soldiers, *Commandos* (PCZ #66, 87%) appeals to strategy wargamers with too much time on their hands. Most of the supplied missions are astoundingly difficult, making them feel more like a chore than a pleasant way to while away your spare time. Anyone seeking instant gratification should thus steer well clear. For those of you with multi-sided dice, dalek sweatshirts and odour-enhanced spot cream, heaven awaits.

Almost all the missions listed here are in a similar vein to the originals and will prove to be a colossal challenge. Generally, the ones we rate the highest are those that have balanced play, don't force us to restart every 19 seconds, and make us feel warm and fluffy at the end.

However, unless you're really in the mood for this sort of thing (being millimetre-perfect with the mouse, biting your nails, shrieking at the monitor) keep well away or you'll only end up breaking something in a psychopathic rage.

Mission 1
Baptism Of Fire
★ **AVALANCHE'S MOD** (*BFAvalanche.zip*)
Rating: ★★★



Commandos: A couple of big Fokkers waiting to drop their load on Blighty.

- ★ **CALISTO'S MOD** (*BFCalisto.zip*)
Rating: ★★★
- ★ **CROSSBOW'S MOD** (*BFCrossbow.zip*)
Rating: ★★★
- ★ **KROGELL'S MOD** (*BFKrogell.zip*)
Rating: ★★★★★
- ★ **LIQUID'S MOD** (*BFLiquid.zip*)
Rating: ★★★
- ★ **LIQUID'S WEIRDSVILLE MOD** (*BFLiquid2.zip*)
Rating: ★★★★★
- ★ **LUCIFER'S MOD** (*BFLucifer11.zip*)
Rating: ★★
- ★ **LORD WILLIAM'S MOD** (*BFLW.zip*)
Rating: ★★★
- ★ **SZELAG'S MOD** (*BFSzelag.zip*)
Rating: ★★★

Mission 2
A Quiet Blow Up
★ **LIQUID'S MOD** (*AQBURliquid.zip*)
Rating: ★★★
- ★ **ROMAN G'S MOD** (*AQBURg.zip*)
Rating: ★★★★★
- ★ **RHINO'S MOD** (*QBURrhino.zip*)
Rating: ★★★★★

Mission 3
Reverse Engineering
★ **CRIPP'S MOD** (*RECRipp.zip*)
Rating: ★★★★★
- ★ **CRIPP'S MOD** (*RECRipp.zip*)
Rating: ★★★★★
- ★ **LIQUID'S MOD** (*RELiquid.zip*)
Rating: ★★★★★
- ★ **ROMAN G'S MOD** (*RERG.zip*)
Rating: ★★★★★

Mission 6
Menace Of The Leopard
★ **RHINO'S MOD** (*MOTLRhino.zip*)
Rating: ★★★

Mission 8
Pyrotechnics
★ **TREX'S MOD** (*PyroTrex.zip*)
Rating: ★★★

Mission 13
David And Goliath
★ **RHINO'S MOD** (*DAGRhino.zip*)
Rating: ★★★

Mission 15:
End Of The Butcher
★ **CRIPP'S MOD** (*EOTBCripp.zip*)
Rating: ★★★



Chimp Manager 3: because apes are more intelligent than footballers.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

★ **Utilities for all you Terry Venables wannabes**
Now officially the fastest-selling PC game of all time, *Championship Manager 3* (PCZ #73, 93%) sold twice the number of units as the previous record holder, *C&C: Red Alert*. That's a remarkable feat, and just goes to show how much of a hold football has on some people's lives. There are those who tend to point and laugh at 'saddos' who buy games like *Baldur's Gate* or stay up late to play *Quake*, but the fact is that there's a far larger number of twonks who sit hunched over football management sims like trainspotters over last year's timetable. What a dull, numbing, adrenalin-free existence that must be.

To make sure they're kept off the streets and in their bedrooms, we've compiled a small collection of the best *CM3* tools and utilities. Should keep 'em busy for days - time enough to get the divorce proceedings moving.

- ★ **CLI-MAX CLIMATE EDITOR** (*climax_v103.zip*) John Drinkwater's *Cli-Max* enables you to change the weather in any of *CM3*'s different regions of the world. Ensure you make a back-up of your existing weather.cfg file before saving any of the changes.
- ★ **CM3 NT PATCH** (*cm3_nt.zip*) Contains an updated set of dynamic link libraries to enable 100 per cent compatibility with Microsoft Windows NT4 SP3. Which, we're sure you'll agree, is nice.
- ★ **CM3 EDITOR** (*cm3editor.zip*) Edits pretty much all *CM3* players, staffs, and club pre-data. Features a player/staff transfer system, as well as the ability to change player histories ("Vincent Jones went to Eton, where he excelled at backgammon").
- ★ **CM3 EURO EDITOR** (*cm3euroed.zip*) A small tool that enables you to edit the euro.cfg configuration file. In other words, it lets you seed individual teams for the European Cups.
- ★ **CLUB EDITOR** (*cmbel_pre.zip*) The Club Editor enables you to change the game's original club names, club colours and stadiums. You can also edit nations and leagues.
- ★ **TEAM PICKER** (*cmpick.zip*) Create your own division with teams of up to 16 players. Comes with 57 predefined leagues.
- ★ **SAVE GAME EDITOR** (*cmxrt.zip*) Enables you to open up your Save Games and fart around with the bank balance (the oldest tweak in the book - anyone remember a similar trick for Kevin Toms' *Football Manager* on the Spectrum?) and with the stadium's capacity.
- ★ **JATTOMCAT'S CM3 EDITOR** (*jattedit.zip*) A fully-featured *CM3* editor, with its own player transfer system, player search, history editor and more. Slightly dodgy interface.
- ★ **STADIUM EDITOR** (*stadedit.exe*) Edit *Championship Manager 3*'s stadiums - their names, capacity, number of drunken rabbles and so on.



Even trainee footballers get £2,000 per week plus expenses. Mad.



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THE WORLD ACCORDING TO...

BRUCE SHELLEY

Being God, being a hero, crossing the gender boundaries, and pies made of people. Paul Presley talks to the man behind *Age Of Empires* and its imminent sequel

Even a games guru can have his humbling moments. The night before I'm scheduled to meet Bruce Shelley, Microsoft are throwing an *Age Of Empires II* party at a medieval-style pub in London's Fleet Street. A big-screen presentation draws to an end, and the PR guy announces that Shelley will now be on hand to demonstrate the game and answer any questions the assembled journalists may have. Oh, and the food is now being served in the next room. I didn't know journalists could move that fast. Despite the rapidly emptying room, he takes it in his stride. And as I sit down with him the next morning he seems as enthusiastic as ever...

You worked on *Civilization*, *Railroad Tycoon*, *Age Of Empires*... Is there some kind of 'god' complex at work here?

I like games that make me think, not games where you have to 'twitch'. Strategy games just have the most interest for me. They're the games I play and the games I'm most comfortable designing. Luckily there's a big enough market of people out there who agree with us.

Don't you ever get the urge to stretch a little - design a *Half-Life* or something?

I work with 40 people at Ensemble Studios, and there are guys there who want to do a game like that, but right now we're committed to doing real-time strategy games. We would like to get a second team up and running doing a game that wasn't real-time strategy, and we've talked about what that might be, but there haven't been any decisions yet. *Half-Life* is a very interesting game though. It's

definitely a cool game, and it's changed the way first-person shooters are going to be approached in the near future.

How do you see first-person shooters progressing?

I think people want more contact. More story. Not just unlimited killing. That's fun on a multiplayer level, but for someone sitting alone at home it's more interesting to have a story, to be more of a hero. Non-stop killing... I know that appeals to some people and that it's been successful, but I'd rather play a game where I was a hero, I was making a difference, I had a significant overriding goal that made sense. I think that *Half-Life* did that. It had a lot of contact in it.

How about the 'god' game - where do you think that's heading?

I want to do more stuff like *Age Of Empires*. I think that as long as we can provide people with an interesting environment there'll be a market for it. One of the things we might see in those games is more interesting things for non-combat oriented players to do. That might be the next breakthrough - a game that has no combat but has a lot more building of an empire, the god thing you talked about. I think there's a real potential for that kind of game. We're not going to be doing that any time in the near future though.

Why not?

Well I know we can sell games like *Age Of Empires*, so we'll do more things like that until we have lots of money in the bag and can afford to take more

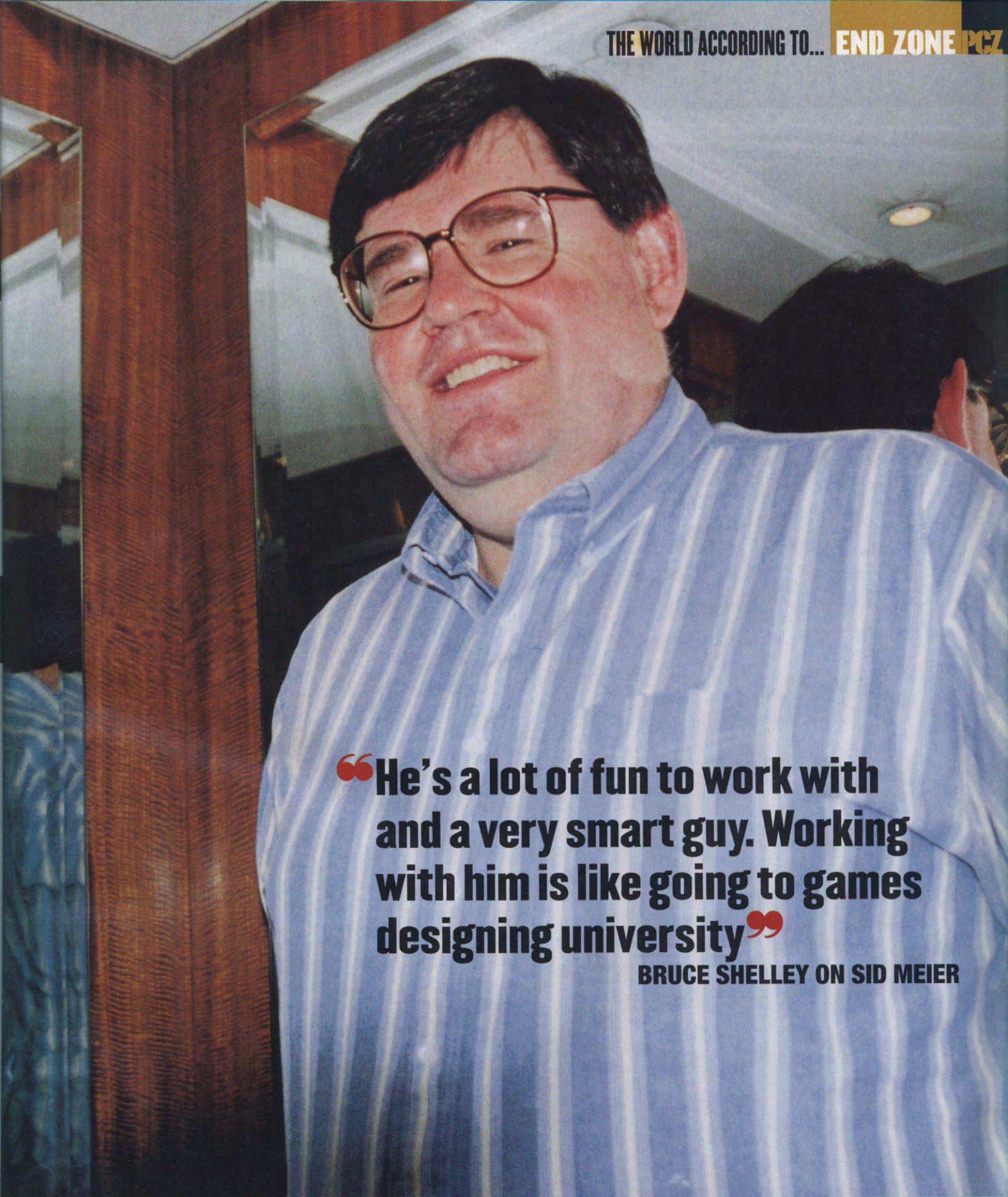
risks. In the near-term we have to be more prudent businessmen about what we decide to do, and I think we're going to stay within parameters that we think have a really good chance of being successful.

At some point we'd like to try things that are a little more experimental, and I think that a more peaceful-orientated real-time game has a chance of appealing to a much larger audience. *AOE* demonstrated that a game that reaches a lot of different types of people has a lot of potential, and we got a lot of feedback on that. Sid Meier's son enjoyed playing it, the lady who writes reviews for the *New York Post* enjoyed it, as did my wife's colleagues at work, a couple of ladies who play with their husbands and children. I'm excited and thrilled that our game could touch all these people and be fun for them in different ways. I think that games that reach out more to the people who aren't necessarily part of the hard-core gaming market have a great chance of being really, really successful, and that's something we're thinking about doing in the future at some point.

WAR AND PEACE

This is an interesting point Bruce has raised - that of the hard-core gamer. With PC game sales declining, it may well be the case that to compete against the next generation of consoles, PC games are going to have to stretch out beyond the *Half-Life* crowd and attract new people to the market - even, gulp, women.

You mentioned a lot of women there. Why is it that your game designs tend to cross the gender boundary more than other people's games? *AOE* did a great job of creating a world that was



“He’s a lot of fun to work with and a very smart guy. Working with him is like going to games designing university”

BRUCE SHELLEY ON SID MEIER

attractive to different types of people. The hardcore players tend to go right by the whole building phase; their whole goal in life is to get through that part as fast as they can. For another audience that’s the part they like the best. They crank up the game and see gazelles hopping around, birds chirping away, all those effects. I don’t discount the fact that

the sun always shines in *AOE*, whereas in most of our competition it’s always dark and gloomy and post-apocalyptic – very negative kinds of worlds. *Age Of Empires* has a very positive world – things look great and it looks like a real nice place to be in. It’s been described to me as a digital terrarium. People want more of that. It’s a friendly, attractive

place where a larger audience feels comfortable. A green place. A safe place. A happy place.

Until the War Elephants arrive.

Sure, a lot of mayhem goes on at some point, but it doesn’t have to. You can play so that it doesn’t go along that route. That’s one of the reasons *AOE* is





Age Of Empires: having an old-time-style ruck.



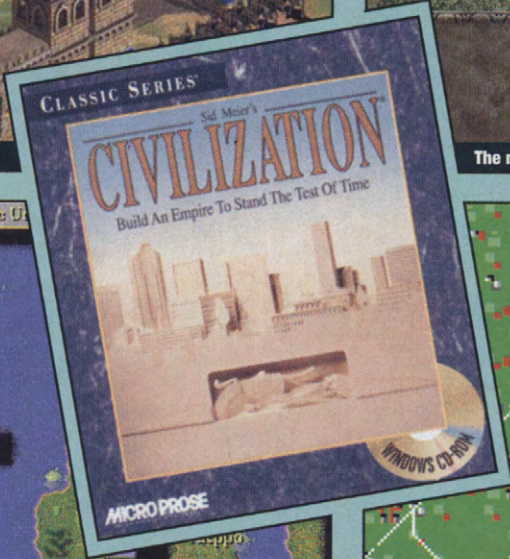
The empire building aspect of AOE attracted a lot of the non-hard-core games players.



Age Of Kings takes you to the medieval era.



The medieval theme may appeal more to European gamers than American ones.



Civilization combined the talents of both Shelley and the legendary Sid Meier.



The graphics may not have been much, but Railroad Tycoon was one of the all-time greats.



The theme of expansionism runs through almost all Shelley's games.

← successful, because it's an attractive place. We minimised the gore. When you start maximising gore and villainy and darkness, you'll appeal to a certain part of the market and you'll strengthen your attraction there, but you'll drop off an awful lot of the audience as well. I like to talk in terms of the 'market pie'.

The market pie?

You sit down and decide that you're going to do a computer software entertainment product. You have a large pie of people who might be potential customers. When you start making decisions about what that game will include you have to start giving up pieces of that pie. When you decide that it's going to be gory and dark and ominous, you've thrown away a lot of pieces of the pie – certain people are just not going to be interested in your product. If it's combat-only, you're throwing away a lot of people who like the building aspect.

When we started planning *AOE* three or four years ago, our aim was to hang on to as many pieces of that pie as we could. The decisions we made about the way the artwork looked and the build-up phase at the start of the game all worked out well, and we held on to a significant part of the pie. I think it explains why we've managed to ship over three million copies of the game around the world.

Is there a potential game that might be able to capture the whole, er, pie?

I don't think that's possible, no. You can't be everything to everyone. We were lucky. We did a good job and had a good plan and it worked out. We were really thrilled that it appealed to such a broad audience. That was one of the critical things that made *AOE* so successful.

I don't think it's possible to appeal to everyone, but it's important to understand that the PC games market is expanding rapidly, especially in Europe. The installed base of PCs is increasing hugely. Microsoft are telling us that we shipped more copies of *AOE* overseas than we did in the United States. Throughout my career that has never been the case. We never sold more overseas. We always targeted our games at the United States because that's where we could sell them. Now we're selling more overseas than we do at home.

What do you think that says about the US audience?

I'm not sure it says anything about them. I think it says something about the European audience though. For one it says that there are more PCs over here. Also, and this is just my own theory, *Age Of Empires'* historical content was especially appealing to the Europeans. Maybe the average PC owner in Europe is better educated than the average PC owner in America. That's possible. They're more historically based, more historically educated. The history aspect was perhaps more appealing to the European PC marketplace. We're certainly hoping that's true, because *AOE II* is a medieval game. 'Ancient' *AOE* sold well in Europe; how about 'Medieval' *AOE* with castles and knights? We're hoping that it's just what the European audience will love.

So it's official: Europeans are smarter than Americans.

Other than making me hungry, all this talk of market pies does hammer a certain point home: how much more seriously American developers take the whole games industry. In my experience, European designers (with a few exceptions) still tend to treat it all as little



Bruce Shelley: always after another piece of the pie.

more than a 'game'. Consequently the games industry is viewed that way by the mass media. Conversely, because American designers realise this is a serious business and treat it with the respect it deserves, so too does the outside world. They still have fun, but they also have respect.

GODS AND MEN

Shelley's early career saw him working alongside Sid Meier, one of the most famous names in the business, and you can certainly see a lot of Meier's influence in Shelley's first solo game, *Age Of Empires*. Now that the sequel is upon us, how much of his own individuality has Shelley been able to stamp on things?

“At some point we'd like to try things that are a bit more experimental, and I think that a more peaceful-oriented real-time game has a chance of appealing to a much larger audience”

BRUCE LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

What's the one thing about the sequel that you're most pleased with?

We have what we call AI scripts, that enable the computer to react to what's happening at any time, to respond to game events and change plans accordingly. An example I like to use is that the computer has decided that the way it's going to win the game is to build a Wonder and defend it. But before it gets started, you begin building a Wonder. The computer will recognise the fact that yours will be up before his, so it cancels its plans to build the Wonder and uses those resources to build units to go after yours. It'll change plans mid-stream and start using a different set of scripts.

These will also be available to the player. You'll be able to change the parameters and rewrite the rules and build your own scripts. You'll be able to name them and save them, and perhaps play them against someone else's scripts.

Did you get any surprising results while you were testing your scripts?

Usually they're unpleasant surprises – it does something really silly and you then have to go in and fix it. But it's amazing when you watch your little guys at work. You'll play on an isle, and all of a sudden you see that they've built a transport, and the next thing you know you see ten units marching across the map and loading up. Then they go across the water, unload and begin to attack someone else's building. You feel a real sense of pride, you know? It's like, "Hey, my guys! They're so cool. I'm so proud. They built a boat and went and kicked butt." It's really fun to see guys taking pride in their scripts.

It's that god complex again. Talking of which, what was it like working with Sid Meier?

He's great. A lot of fun to work with and a very smart guy. A real impish sense of humour. We had a ball. One of the goals in his life is to have fun, and he has this radical idea that designing games should be a fun job. Also, working with him is like going to games designing university.

I've played games all my life and have what I think are good instincts about games – something that every designer really needs. But Sid went way beyond that. He'd sit and talk about the philosophy of game design. He'd underline the principles that drive good games. His real strength over the years has been great gameplay, games that are fun to play. He's worked hard and thought about that, and I learnt a lot over the years. He used to give lectures, and I've still got audio tapes of him talking about game design. I still look back and review that kind of information.

What sort of things did you learn from him?

Always pick a big topic. I mean, you don't get a bigger topic than ancient history. We've learnt that when you get a big topic like that, there'll be something in there that appeals to almost everyone. We've got 13 civilisations in *AOE II*, so if you just want to play Brits and go and beat the French you've got the opportunity, and there'll be a Frenchman somewhere who's looking forward to beating the Brits.

I think you just sold the game to the entire British Isles there.

(Laughs) Well, big topics mean you have a big audience. Another of Sid's axioms was that the player should have the fun; not the designers, not the programmers, not the artists, not even the computer. There are some games out there where the computer seems to be having all the fun.

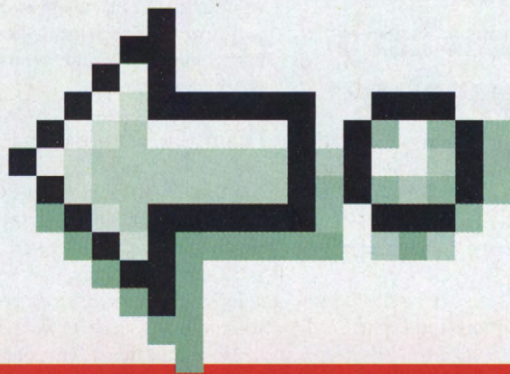
He taught me all sorts of things like that, and it was a pleasure to work on games that were so well received. It was one of the real highlights of my career.

Do you sometimes wish you and he were still designing together?

We joke about doing something together again one of these days, maybe when we're both retired.

Which, presumably, is still a long way off. Shelley's company, Ensemble Studios, seems to have formed a good working relationship with Microsoft, and it's unlikely that Bill Gates would want one of his strongest teams to desert him just as his presence in the games world is getting stronger than ever before. Which presumably means *Age Of Empires III* at some point.

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THE LIONHEAD DIARIES



Continuing our insider's view of the making of *Black & White*, the first game from new developers Lionhead

✦ WORDS Steve Jackson

Peter Molyneux presents *Black & White* to a packed house at BAFTA.

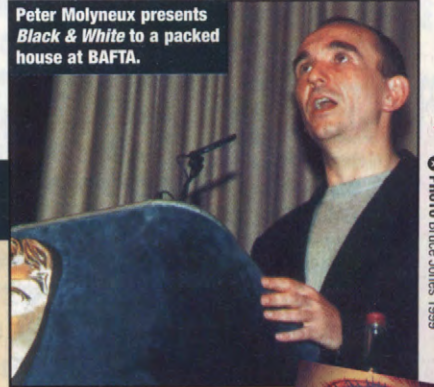


PHOTO Bruce Jones 1999

BLACK & WHITE GOES ON SHOW AT E3

April 1999 was undoubtedly the most frantic period in Lionhead's two-year history. By the time you read this we will have showcased *Black & White* to the world's press at the Electronic Entertainment Exposition (E³), the single most important event on the games calendar, in Los Angeles.

E³ is a trade-only show, so for developers like Lionhead it's a serious business. A good response to in-development projects is essential in giving publishers confidence that these games will be successful releases; a lukewarm reception can lead to projects being mercilessly canned.

All this means that the entire Lionhead team have been working all hours to make sure our E³ version of the game is packed with as many features as possible. Smooth 3D navigation, landscape details (such as waterfalls), creatures' facial expressions, AI routines and special features like our Object-Specific Audio are all being fine-tuned in the hope that the version of *Black & White* we take to Los Angeles will stun everyone.

We got our first chance to see how the E³ build would stand up to a public demo in mid-April, when Peter Molyneux presented *Black & White* to a packed hall at BAFTA's Princess Anne Theatre. BAFTA (the British Academy of Film and Television Arts) is a prestigious organisation that awards the British equivalent of Oscars to movies and TV shows. Last year it set up a new category of award for Interactive Entertainment, with Peter as a member of the selection board.

And so it was that we all trooped off to the BAFTA office in Central London to watch Peter's one-man show. With fingers crossed, we waited as *B&W* booted up, projected onto a huge film screen. At this stage in its development, a crash at some point during the demo was inevitable. We were aware of this - unlike many of the 270 journalists, film makers and TV producers in the audience who were not from the games industry, and were accustomed to everything going smoothly at such events. Peter started his run-through of the basics of the game.

“With fingers crossed, we waited as *B&W* was booted up, projected onto a huge film screen”

BLACK AND WHITE GETS ITS FIRST SHOWING TO BAFTA

“Here is a world in perfect harmony with itself. Villages are populated with little people going about their daily business. Look, there's someone going off to fish. And someone else gathering food. Everything is harmonious, until something happens which will change their world forever - *you* arrive.”

He demonstrated Jean-Claude and Scawen's 3D engine, zooming smoothly out from an apple in a barrel to a point way above the clouds in the upper atmosphere. No crash. He then showed how you can persuade villagers to worship you, thus providing you with magic spells. He rewarded his villagers with a gift, dropping a white ball onto a nearby field for them to play with. He then went on to describe the creatures.

“In *Black & White* you can take any living creature from the world, drop it into a creature pen, and it will begin to grow...” Calling up an editor, an ape expanded it to the size of King Kong. The first thing it did was stomp over to the village, pick up a villager and eat it. “Ah!” exclaimed Peter. “Now you need to teach your creature that eating villagers is not good. Just like a real pet - or even a child - you do this by reward and punishment.”

The ape was then sent away from the village. It passed the field where the ball had been dropped earlier. A small crowd of villagers had found the ball and were kicking it about - they had ‘discovered’ football.

The last part of the presentation demonstrated a few spells being cast: a lightning bolt, a fireball, a protective dome forming over a village and - the coup de grâce - an earth spirit creating a forest.

Applause rippled through the audience as Peter wound up the demo and moved on to take questions from the floor. The timing was perfect - no one noticed that the creature had just become locked into an endless loop of trying to walk around a building while avoiding a tree. The game had finally crashed, but at least the demo had lasted for 35 minutes without a hitch. And it looked fantastic. Not a pixel block in sight.

The other thing we'll be showing at E³ is the box *Black & White* will ship in. A team of package designers from Electronic Arts came up with 15 possible concepts for the cover which, as you can imagine, sparked all sorts of arguments in the office. Some of the designs were simple and elegant, others were more ‘in yer face’. Here are some of the ones we liked, but I won't reveal which design we chose as our favourite. You'll have to wait and see. [E3]

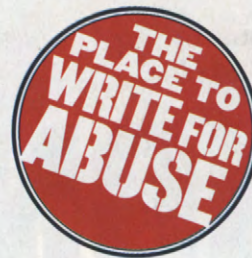
✦ As well as being a director of start-up games developer Lionhead, Steve Jackson is co-founder of Games Workshop, author of *Fighting Fantasy* Gamebooks, and a columnist for *The Daily Telegraph*.
 ✦ The next instalment follows in our September issue, on sale Thursday 29 July.



Latest screenshot from *Black & White*.

↑ A selection of the box designs presented by Electronic Arts.

SICKNOTES



Worst Town in Britain reaches its cataclysmic finale with a richly deserving winner, plus sex with Frank Butcher and a French donkey. Not at the same time, mind

ILLUMINATIONS CHARLIE BROOKER

SICK NOTES WANTS YOUR LETTERS

Sick Notes wants your letters! But no more nominations for the biggest shithole town in the country – we've selected a lucky winner.

WRITE TO Sick Notes, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczzone@dennis.co.uk
With the subject heading 'Sick Notes'

BRITAIN - WHERE TO AVOID

We're calling an end to our search for the Worst Town in Britain – and we have a clear winner. But first, the runners up...

PORTISHEAD

Worst town in Britain? Portishead. Hiding behind Bristol like a haemorrhoid sits this godforsaken dormitory suburb, where thousands of corporate whores go home every night to their mock-Tudor rabbit hutches in the shadow of the greatest concentration of decrepit nuclear reactors in Europe. Where legions of senior citizens are abandoned in 'coastal' retirement homes to spend their last days watching the gales howl across the salt-marshes, or the mud flats stinking in the summer smog. Where sirens blare, alerting locals to "stay indoors and listen to the radio for instructions" because there's been another "industrial incident" at the chemical works, docks or power plant. The town about which people say "Portishead? As in the band? Cool".

It's in Somerset, too.

Alex Woodland

WOKING

The worst town in Britain is Woking. Surrey is meant to be the best part of England, where posh people live and

everything is lovely. Then you get to Woking. You need a knife to get from one side to the other alive. And we're not talking little knives – we mean big f***-off machetes. Gang territories are marked with the blood of victims, skinned dogs and burning oil drums. If you so much as look at someone the wrong way you'll be hung, drawn and quartered.

You probably think I'm exaggerating. Believe me, I'm listing the best points. If I listed the worst, you'd think I'd confused Woking with Hell. Which is easily done.

Graham Kett

A convincing argument, but another town was the clear winner... **Blackpool.** I lost count of how many people wrote in to slag it off. It's so dismal, people regularly fall to their knees while out shopping and start bashing their heads against the pavement in a crazed, impromptu suicide attempt. We called the Tourist Office to see what they had to say, but all we got was a recorded message. We couldn't be arsed to try again. If they want to write in, we'd love to hear their side of things. For now, here are edited highlights of the last Blackpool-bashing entry we received...

BLACKPOOL

From the shite-encrusted beach to the tacky promenade, the whole place has as much style as a drag queen's boudoir... so-called "Golden Mile"... nothing more than a minefield of dog turds and used condoms... swimming there is like washing in a toilet... etc, etc.

Vikki Walker

So there you have it. **Blackpool: AVOID.** Now tell us the worst town you've ever visited **ABROAD.** Oh, and brainless racists will be disqualified.

MAN PRETENDING TO BE A WOMAN WRITES IN AGAIN

I called the PC ZONE office today to prove I'm female. I'm sure whoever took the call will verify it. She might also mention I'm American – sorry.

How could I get a tattoo on my forehead? That space is reserved for my name, written backwards (of course) so that when I look in the mirror, I can remember who I am.

Kitten'

You first wrote in asking whether you should get a tattoo of a BFG on your 'butt', right? Well, how about an HGV instead? It's probably big enough. Right?

EASTENDERS ORGY LATEST

We asked you to choose the EastEnders character you'd least like to sleep with...

Frank Butcher. His false teeth would be expelled violently from his gums. His groans of ecstasy would resemble the sound of a blind elephant seal barking at the wind. His head, at best purple and distended with high blood pressure, would explode, splattering its contents far and wide. No one could offer me enough money to contemplate such horror.

Helen Larkin, email

Tell you who'd be by far the worst EastEnder to sleep with: Tiffany. Because she's dead.

'Monkey Spank'

Still more appealing than Robbie though... [K]

LOSER OF THE MONTH

You can be a loser and also a winner – of £50!

DEATH BY DONKEY SEX

Charlie, you disgusting pervert. Why the hell do you read filth like *The Encyclopedia Of Unusual Sex Practices* (see Sick Notes, PCZ #76, May 1999)? Do you sit at home all night reading dirty mags?

Ben Halls

It's the funniest book ever. It's sold in the 'erotica' section in railway station branches of Smiths, next to horrid little masturbatory 'novels' with titles like *Nadine In Chains* and *Damp Nurse*, which serious-faced businessmen can often be spotted thumbing through with the patient deliberation of a schedule-one offender as they wait for the Guildford train.

It's full of interesting facts such as this: did you know that in 18th century France, when someone was caught having sex with an animal, both the perpetrator and the unfortunate beast were executed? Then, when a guy called Jacques Ferron was hanged for having sex with a donkey, several respectable witnesses spoke out in defence of the donkey, arguing that 'it had always behaved virtuously' and 'must have been raped'. The donkey was granted a reprieve.

Fascinating, eh? It's a good ice-breaker at dinner parties, too. Well, some dinner parties.

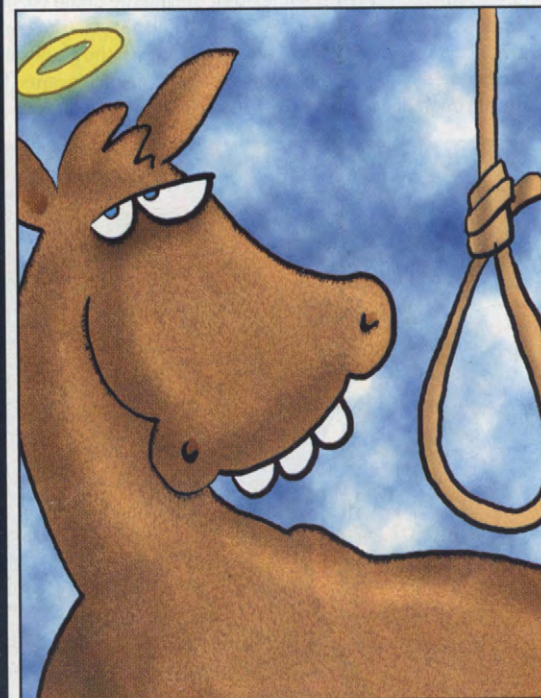


ILLUSTRATION Charlie Brooker

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STARSIEGE

UNIVERSE

STARSIEGE

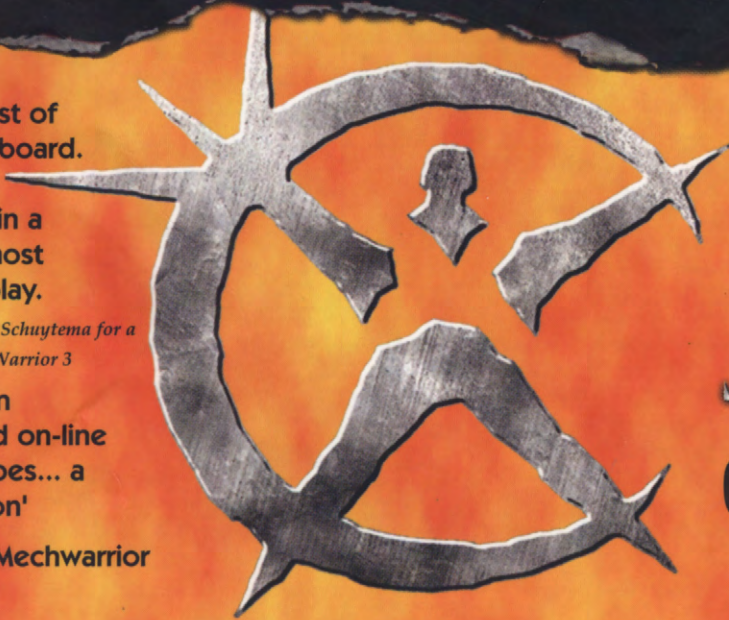
This game is easily the best of the lot, across the whole board. It's beautiful, engrossing, exciting, full of rich story in a sweeping universe, and most important, it's a blast to play.

Gamecenter ★★★★★ *Paul Schuytema for a while, served as lead designer for MechWarrior 3*

'Frantic armoured action in Starsiege and unparalleled on-line multiplayer gaming via Tribes... a truly explosive combination'

'Starsiege could give the Mechwarrior universe a big headache'

PCGW



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STARSIEGE

TRIBES

...One of the most popular internet games in existence.

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93% - *Gamerush*

'Tribes is a strong contender for multiplayer game of the year'

PCGW

Quite simply; Starsiege: Tribes has revitalised the on-line gaming community. It has set new standards for forthcoming releases, as it has now been proved that you can have huge levels, involved gameplay, and dare I say it, fun.

....- if there is one game you should buy in 1999 - it should be Starsiege:Tribes.

Planet Tribes

★★★★★ "A multiplayer masterpiece".

Next Generation



SIERRA

www.sierra-online.co.uk
www.starsiege.com

Starsiege minimum req's: P133 with graphics accelerator or P166 without graphics accelerator.
Tribes minimum req's: P166 32MB ram with graphics accelerator or P200 32MB ram without graphics accelerator, Lan card or minimum 28.8 kps modem, Network support Internet, TCP / IP, IPX.



Wireplay