

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL

One of these games will emerge as *PC ZONE's* choice as the most influential game of all time. Prepare yourself for one of the most heated debates in the history of the *ZONE* Supertest. *Chris Anderson* attempts to keep the peace

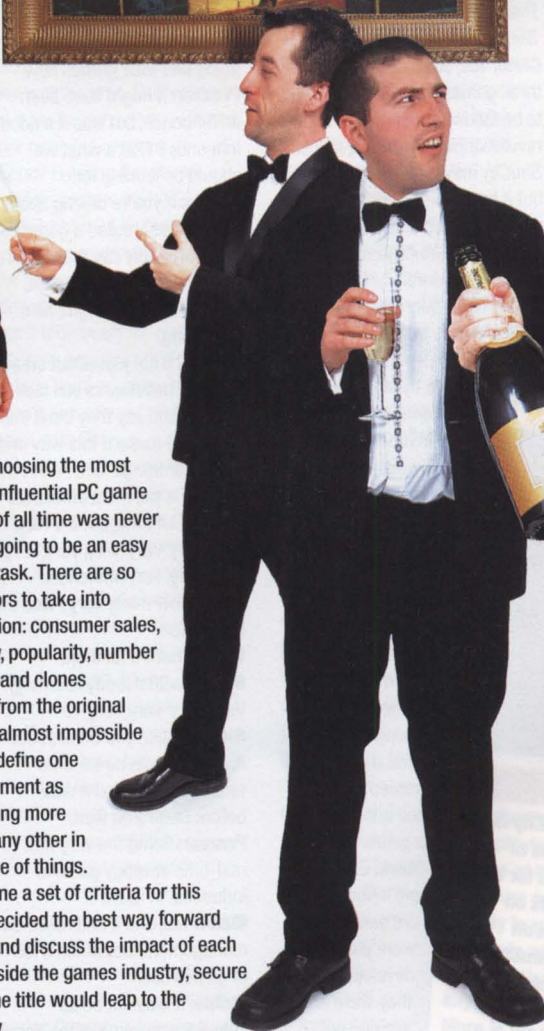
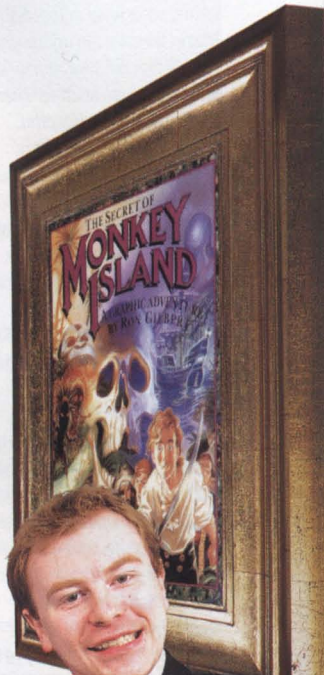
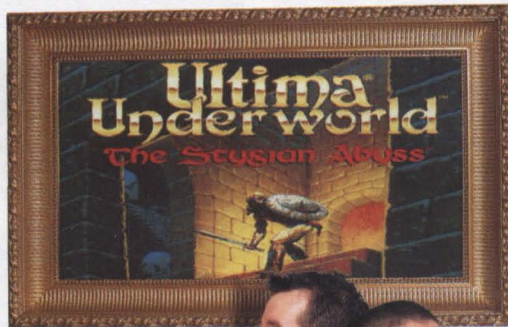
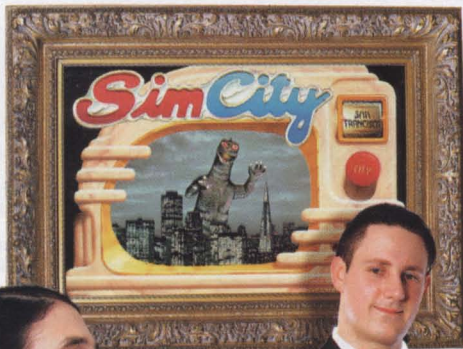


⌚ The protagonists from Left to Right: Steve (I'm not interested unless it's *Champ Manager*) Hill ⚡ Chris (Goblin Fancier) Anderson ⚡ Dave (Boss Man) Woods ⚡ Richie (Deputy Boss Man) Shoemaker ⚡ Rhianna (New Girl) Pratchett ⚡ Martin (Bone Scraper) Korda ⚡ Paul (Champagne Charlie) Mallinson ⚡ Mark (News Hound) Hill ⚡ Paul (I Am The King) Presley

PHOTOGRAPHY Simon Clay STYLING Victoria Barnes

PC GAMES

OF ALL TIME



Choosing the most influential PC game of all time was never going to be an easy task. There are so many factors to take into consideration: consumer sales, technology, popularity, number of sequels and clones emerging from the original title... it's almost impossible to define one element as being more

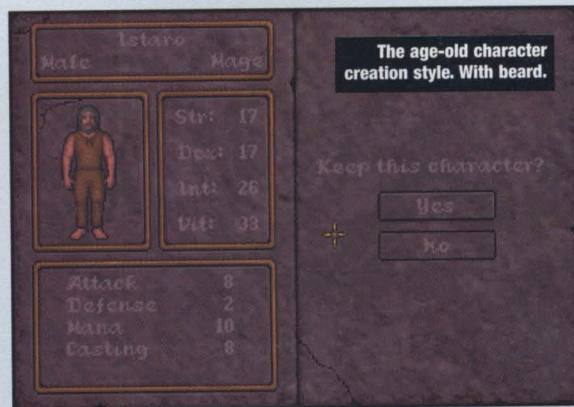
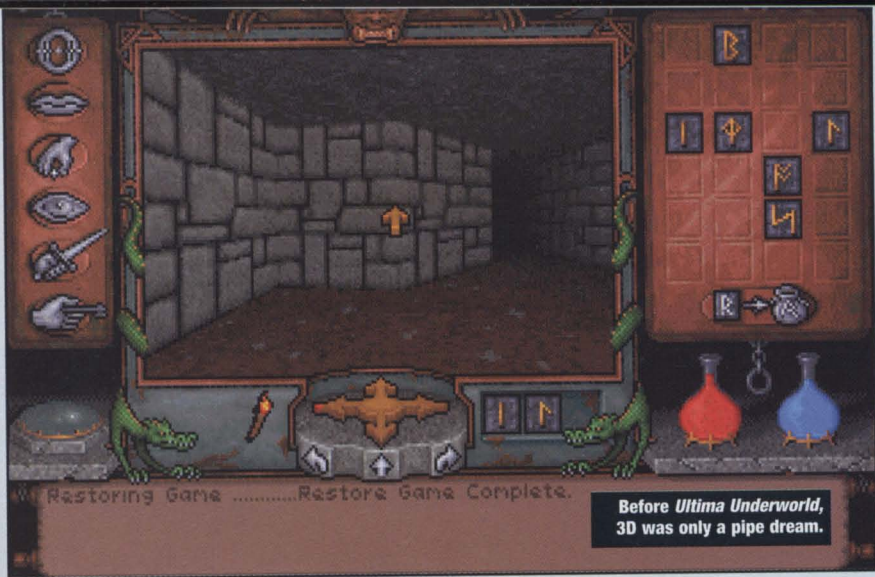
important than any other in the great scheme of things.

Rather than define a set of criteria for this Supertest, we decided the best way forward was to simply sit down and discuss the impact of each title, both within and outside the games industry, secure in the knowledge that one title would leap to the fore under close scrutiny.

The seven titles on test here today all had a deep impact on the gaming industry in different ways. Each one of them is a classic in its own right, and will be immediately recognisable to anyone with a reasonable grip on the PC gaming scene.

Bear in mind that we are not looking for the *best* PC game of all time, we are searching for the one that played the biggest part in shaping the PC games industry as we know it today. The scene is set.





ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

Mallo: This was incredible when it first came out. With the 3D engine you could look up and down, tilt left and right, lean backwards and forwards, you could swim, you could jump... it was the first game to introduce all these things in 3D in one game.

Chris: It wasn't just *Ultima Underworld's* 3D engine that was impressive. It had a great story line, and was one of the first games where it was actually worth talking to characters. You even had to learn new languages to talk to some of them. It was a work of art.

Mallo: You could also say that some of it was influenced by the SCUMM interface in *Monkey Island*, with the same multiple-choice conversation system.

Prezzer: But *Ultima Underworld* had everything. The engine, the conversation system, you had to learn how to read various runes, too – it was all part of the *Ultima* universe.

Mallo: Steve, I can see you

Ultima Underworld was the first game to make a technological breakthrough for RPGs. In that respect, it had a huge influence on its genre.

Mallo: Despite the low-resolution graphics it's still hugely playable. I played it a few months ago and it's still excellent. The gameplay is still there. And Warren Spector learned a lot making *Ultima Underworld*, which is why *Deus Ex* is so good.

Prezzer: But *Ultima Underworld* didn't influence any games, except Warren Spector games.

Richie: I disagree. It's influenced all RPGs, but it hasn't had influence outside its genre. If you look at *Soldier Of Fortune* or *Rogue Spear* or whatever, they all use a 3D engine but they're more influenced by *Doom* than by *Ultima Underworld*.

Prezzer: But the people making 3D games would say *System Shock* was more influential because more people have played that than *Ultima Underworld*.

was the game the whole world was talking about, not just people who played role-playing games. It even had a speech pack, which was impressive for the time. You can't tell me would-be developers were not influenced by such a landmark title.

Mallo: I remember reading all the reviews at the time. Every mag gave it really high scores, all over 90 per cent, but in terms of influence I reckon it suffered the same problem as *Half-Life*. Nobody has taken on board what it's done and improved on it. The same is true for *Ultima Underworld* with RPGs.

Dave: It took years for *Half-Life* to break new ground in first-person shooters. We'll probably have to wait longer for the same thing to happen with RPGs.

Richie: *Ultima Underworld* had a different kind of influence than most of the games here. *SimCity* wasn't notable in a technological way, whereas *Underworld* could be said to have influenced some of the other games in this Supertest, *SimCity* can't.

Mallo: It showed other programmers what could be done. They probably never dreamed of doing any of that stuff before they saw this game.

Chris: The point is there's so many things you could do in *Underworld* that you couldn't do in any other game. That's influence, and it goes way beyond that. Technology is probably more an influence on what developers do than anything else.

Prezzer: I'm not disagreeing with that, I'm just saying that even nine years after *Underworld* came out there's still no game like it, so it can't have been much of an influence.

Dave: You're missing the point.

The technology and game design influenced games in many genres. Just because people didn't make an RPG after seeing *Underworld* doesn't mean they weren't heavily influenced by it.

Martin: It definitely hasn't had an influence on RPGs. Most of the big ones like *Baldur's Gate* have gone for the isometric viewpoint. The thing to ask is, did it have an impact on other genres, on games such as *Doom* and *Quake*, for example?

Richie: If you're going to talk about things from a technological point of view, *Ultima Underworld* is by far the most influential game in this Supertest. Technology-wise, definitely, but in terms of popularity, probably not.

Mallo: But that could just be a symptom of the genre. RPGs are just not as popular as first-person shoot 'em ups, but they've got their attractions. Haven't they, Steve?

Steve: Yes.

Everyone: (laughs)

Prezzer: People don't look at *Ultima Underworld* if they're going to make a first-person shoot 'em up – they look instead at *Doom*.

Dave: That's not true. The *Ultima Underworld* engine was much more advanced than the one in *Doom*. And the gameplay was really diverse. It showed people you could

make a game that wasn't just about shooting people in the head. You could use that technology for any kind of game. You can't say that about *Doom*.

Mark: But you can't use technology as the sole basis to decide how influential a game has been. There are so many other things that go into making a game, not just the engine.

Chris: That's the whole point. *Ultima Underworld* was revolutionary both in terms of technology and its diverse gameplay. It had it all. People would not have noticed the technology much if the game hadn't been so good.

Mallo: Agreed.

Chris: Good. Let's move on. →



“Even nine years after *Underworld* came out there's still no game like it”

PREZ ON ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

Chris: That's not true. It was hugely influential. It broke barriers before *System Shock* even happened. It was a typical Origin game of the time in the sense that it made huge technological breakthroughs and you needed a really good system to play it.

Mallo: 486DX2 with 8Mb of RAM, I think it was, which was a lot at the time, but it was worth it.

Chris: When it first came out it

shaking your head in despair.

Everyone: (laughs)

Martin: Before *Ultima Underworld* came along you had games like *Eye Of The Beholder*, which were basically flick-screen affairs. In *Eye Of The Beholder* you couldn't swim or jump or look around. All you could really do was jerk right and left a bit or whatever.



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

A technological masterpiece and an unrivalled role-playing game, *Ultima Underworld* is hailed as one of the best games of all time by many hardcore gamers. Its influence can be seen clearly in games such as *Deus Ex* and, more subtly, in a myriad other titles. Regardless, the old paradigm 'they don't make them like this anymore' certainly rings true for this game. More is the pity.

ORIGINAL SCORE	Not reviewed
DEVELOPER	Looking Glass
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts



Open Walk to Use hunk of meat
 Close Pick up Look at pot
 Push Talk to Turn on chicken
 Pull Give Turn off

The dialogue isn't acted, but it's still the funniest.

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Chris: Can I just say that I think we should be talking about *King's Quest* rather than *Monkey Island*.

← **Rhianna:** I agree, *King's Quest* was much more influential.

Richie: No way.

Chris: *Monkey Island* is easily the best adventure game ever, but *King's Quest* is the game that kick-started the whole genre.

Richie: In that case, you may as well say we should be doing *Wolfenstein 3D* instead of *Doom*.

Prezzer: Even though *King's Quest* started the genre, every adventure game wanted to be *Monkey Island*. It doesn't matter what came first.

Chris: *King's Quest* brought the

whole PC adventure genre to the fore. Without *King's Quest*, there would be no *Monkey Island*. And regarding *Wolfenstein* and *Doom*, *Doom* was the first really big first-person shooter. *King's Quest* was huge before *Monkey Island* even came out.

Prezzer: Ever since *Monkey Island* came out it was the funniest, the most accomplished adventure game. Nobody has come near it since.

Chris: You're talking about the best game then, not the most influential. I'm not arguing about the quality of *Monkey Island*, I'm just saying it wasn't the game that

invented the graphic adventure on PC and paved the way for all the adventure games that have come since. *King's Quest* was.

Martin: But when people talk about adventure games they talk about *Monkey Island*.

King's Quest had nowhere near as much impact.

Steve: Jesus, calm down.

Mallo: Let's stick with *Monkey Island*. **Chris:** You're all wrong, but *Monkey Island* it is then. Go on then, Mallo, we're all ears.

Mallo: *Monkey Island* had everything – the great story line, the humour, the

point-and-click interface, the SCUMM system which everyone copied later. It made me laugh out loud.

Chris: That's what I remember most about it – the humour. I've never played an adventure game since *Monkey Island 1* and *2* that really made me laugh, and it was a very clever game too, with really good puzzles. Even the puzzles were comical.

Richie: It was the first game with a superb story line, and the first game that was truly hilarious.

Steve: It had me in stitches. You can't say that about many games.

Chris: If we had a funniest-game-of-all-time Supertest, *Monkey Island* would win.

Mark: Any game where you go around solving puzzles has been influenced by *Monkey Island*.

Mallo: Did the genre die from the lack of another classic adventure? Would there have been a *Tomb Raider* without *Monkey Island*? I've forgotten what I was going to say now. Richie, you looked like you were about to say something.

Richie: I just wanted to get back to the point about *SimCity* which, strictly speaking, only influenced *Sim*-type games. It could be said that *Monkey Island* only influenced adventure games, so maybe isn't as much an influence over games in general.

Prezzer: No, every game that's come along since uses a story line that has looked up to *Monkey Island* because of its great story and gripping gameplay.

Mallo: It can't have been that much of an influence, the genre's been dying ever since *Monkey Island*. Two years ago people were writing features asking if

the adventure game was dead.

Richie: It's still a big influence. When people think of first-person shooters they think of *Half-Life*.

When they think of adventures they think of *Monkey Island*.

Martin: One of the reasons it worked so well was you only ever got things you needed, instead of loads of stuff that you didn't know what to do with.

Chris: I think that's one of the

games being complicated? Use your imagination. Do you really want everything laid out for you?

Martin: No, but the last thing I want to do is wander round for ages trying to figure out what to do with the hundreds of things in my inventory. It's about balance.

Rhianna: I didn't enjoy *Discworld Noir*, but I liked the first *Discworld* game. They had the same sort of humour as *Monkey Island*.

“It had a great story line and the much-copied SCUMM interface. It made me laugh out loud”

MALLO ON MONKEY ISLAND



reasons the genre died. Too many games came out that gave you packed inventories with tons of stuff that you had no clue about. You can see why *Tomb Raider* would appeal to some people because of its simplicity.

Prezzer: *Discworld* was like that. It was a nightmare.

Mark: Even with a walkthrough *Discworld* made no sense. It was like they deliberately went out of their way to be obscure. What's the fun in that?

Mallo: Do you think that was *Monkey Island* being a bad influence on the genre? They tried to use the SCUMM system and over-complicated it.

Mark: No. In *Monkey Island* you can play all the way through without stopping once. You can't blame LucasArts for how other people design their games.

Rhianna: What's wrong with

Steve: *Monkey Island* might have been too good too soon. It was a lot for future games to live up to.

Rhianna: The later *King's Quest* games were excellent. They had really strong story lines, just as good as *Monkey Island*. Just because they didn't have the same sort of humour it doesn't mean they weren't as good.

Richie: The thing about *Monkey Island* is it had an influence outside its own genre.

Chris: I agree. Even *Planescape: Torment* reminds me a lot of the humour in *Monkey Island*, warped and irreverent.

Dave: The whole world knew how to make a proper adventure game after *Monkey Island* was made.

Mallo: It was also the first game to give you multiple-choice answers to characters.

Chris: We're all agreed then. It was a huge influence on its own and other genres. Next up is...



THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Renowned as the funniest game on the PC, *Monkey Island's* SCUMM interface and engrossing storyline made it as accomplished as it was humorous. Many have tried unsuccessfully to follow its lead, and if the genre had been blessed with one title of this calibre in the last couple of years, it would surely have survived the onslaught of *Tomb Raider* and its modern-day 3D counterparts.

ORIGINAL SCORE

Not reviewed

DEVELOPER

LucasArts

PUBLISHER

Activision

Lara makes a mummy dance like a baboon. Cruel girl.



TOMB RAIDER

Mallo: *Tomb Raider* is probably the most influential of all the games under discussion here, at least in terms of taking games to the mass market.

Chris: But mostly on PlayStation, not on PC.

Prezzer: But you have to think of the relevance it has for the whole games industry. More people have developed new games because of games such as *Doom* than they have because of *Tomb Raider*.

Mark: We're talking about PC games here. What influence has *Tomb Raider* had on PC games?

Steve: You mean apart from giving the kiss of death to point-and-click adventures...

Chris: If it had any influence at all, it had a bad one. The only *Tomb Raider*-type game that I can think of that isn't rubbish is the 3D *Indy* game. *Tomb Raider* was good



technologically when it came out, but the game was nothing to talk about, and the *TR* clones have all followed suit from what I've seen. **Dave:** *Tomb Raider* has to be considered influential. We've just been talking about *Monkey Island* and *Tomb Raider* killing off the

point-and-click adventure. The next big *Indy* adventure that came along was a *Tomb Raider* clone. It still had the puzzles in there, but was a 3D adventure rather than point-and-click.

Prezzer: So it's been influential in a bad way.

Richie: You're only saying that because you're a sad old bag and you love point-and-click.

Dave: What's going to happen is right at the end Prezzer's going to say the most influential PC game of all time is in fact *David Leadbetter's Golf*.

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: *Tomb Raider* is an advance of technology rather than an advance of a genre.

Prezzer: OK, tell me then, what has *Tomb Raider* influenced?

Mark: *Tunguska!*

Everyone: (laughs)

Chris: You can compare it to

without a first-person shooter? The third-person shooter just takes the first-person shooter and puts it behind the character – you're still running around, you're still shooting things and you're still solving basic puzzles.

Richie: *Tomb Raider* wasn't about being a third-person shooter, it was about being an adventure.

Martin: So what influenced the third-person shooter? It was the first-person shooter.

Richie: *Tomb Raider* isn't a third-person shooter, it's an adventure. It's a simplistic adventure game, not a third-person shooter.

Martin: Would there be *Tomb Raider* without an adventure game or a first-person shooter?

Richie: If you're going to say would there be a third-person shooter without a first-person shooter, would there be this game without that game, if you're going to take everything right back again, we might as well just sit here for two hours talking about *Pong*. *Tomb Raider* not only had a lead female character, but it was mass market, it sold millions and spawned cute little games like *Redguard* and the *Indy 3D* game.

Dave: The first *Tomb Raider* game was superb. The fact that we're all bored of it now because it's gone on to *Tomb Raider 76* or whatever doesn't really matter. When *Tomb Raider* first came out it blew people away, and it was influential in the sense it affected the whole adventure genre.

Prezzer: It's been influential in its way but I don't think it was influential in a positive way at all.

Chris: Do you think this game has been influential, Steve?

Steve: What was it again?

Chris: *Tomb Raider*.

Steve: It's good that it killed the point-and-click adventure, if you ask me. Who wants to be pointing and clicking on a computer screen when you can see a big-breasted woman bouncing up and down and jumping about?

Mallo: That's a positive thing, not a negative thing.

Chris: If you're talking about influence, it's been more influential on console than on PC.

Richie: Taking gaming in general, this is probably the most popular game in the Supertest.

Steve: It's been influential on society. It hasn't influenced games greatly, but it's influenced the way games are perceived.

Dave: In terms of influence, *Tomb Raider* has gone way past games and gone into the mainstream, even making its way into films.

Prezzer: Are we talking about influence on gaming or whether games make their way into

awful films like *Wing Commander*?

Mallo: There's no reason we can't talk about the influence a game has on the general public. *Tomb Raider* is responsible for gaming becoming acceptable by the masses more than any other game.

Prezzer: More than *Doom*?

Mallo: Yes, more than *Doom*. If anything, *Doom* is the game responsible for people saying: oh my God, gaming's evil.

Steve: There are people who only buy one game a year, like *Championship Manager*. *Tomb Raider* appeals to the mass market, so has wider influence. The same people who buy *Tomb Raider* probably buy *FIFA* and any other crap they can get their hands on. It reaches the masses.

Dave: We've been talking about games for hours now and it's taken this long for Steve Hill to mention *Championship Manager*. That's quite amazing really.

Rhianna: I think *Tomb Raider* built on what *Doom* and *Doom 2* had already established and what it added was more atmosphere – even though there aren't a lot of things to shoot you think there's going to be. Even though I knew from various sources there was going to be a T-Rex pursuing me, when it happened it was definitely brown trouser time.

Dave: I actually got off my chair and backed off at that point.

Mallo: Also it was the first game with true environment modelling.

Steve: Really? Hold me back.

Everyone: (laughs)



TOMB RAIDER

Tomb Raider was more noted for its technology than its gameplay when it was first released. But it was later to become hugely influential with the emergence of gaming's first real female heroine, and has since made its way into the lifestyle press. The series may have lost its impact with the appearance of numerous sequels, but this game has done more than any other in bringing gaming to the masses.

ORIGINAL SCORE	95%
DEVELOPER	Core Design
PUBLISHER	Eidos

ULTIMA ONLINE



Glorified chatroom or an isometric marketplace?

← **Prezzer:** Right, so who's going to start this one off?
Steve: It's got goblins, so it's got to be Chris.
Chris: Goblins or not, *Ultima Online* is the first in a long line of games that will be the future of PC games entertainment. It's the first game that's got people around the world playing against each other and with each other. All genres will go online at some point or other. *Ultima Online* did it first. If you want to talk about how purely influential any of these games are, this is probably the most influential game in the Supertest. All other developers have either already begun to follow Origin's lead, or are in the process of doing so.
Mallo: It was influential in other ways, too. It's the first game that lets you have a career.
Martin: It's the first game with a living, breathing universe that you can interact in.

Mallo: Breathing?
Martin: Yeah, breathing. There's life in there, everything.
Mallo: Imagine what it would be like if they brought proper smells into it, too.
Martin: Well, they wouldn't let you in there for a start.
Everyone: (laughs)
Martin: This is the first game where you can go in and completely immerse yourself in another world and be someone you can't be on the outside. You can do almost anything you want to do. There's never been a game like that before.
Chris: The other thing it's done is brought females to PC game playing. About half the *UO* population is female. No other game has managed to do that. It's the same with *EverQuest*, which only exists because *UO* paved the way first. Women like it because you play with real people and can talk to them and it's not all fighting. Presumably, they'll also play other types of games now if they are online.

their characters for real money?
Steve: *Diablo 2* had problems, too. Some hacker went in and killed a load of characters.
Martin: The thing I like about *UO* is the mortality of your character. You can go in and it's just as risky as real life. You have a lot to lose when you die.
Prezzer: Again we're talking about the quality of a game instead of arguing about whether it's been influential.
Chris: The design of a game has as much of an influence on how new developers make their games as anything else. It's a workable game universe, which is minutely detailed and totally unique. It's made people realise how shallow many single-player games are. It's difficult to go back to single-players after you've played an online multiplayer. You can't argue the impact *UO* has had on the future of PC gaming.
Mallo: What do you think, Steve?
Steve: I don't know, I'm reading the *Mirror*. *King's Quest* is great.
Everyone: (laughs)
Richie: Well, if you talk about how influential it is, the only thing *UO* has brought to game playing is the online side of things, which was bound to happen sooner or later anyway. That's only relevant to online RPGs.
Mallo: That's not completely true. The career system is like no other. The whole layout and design of the game is like nothing that's come before it.
Dave: And taking *UO* as the base, the foundation, look at the

complex games that are promised in the next couple of years.
Richie: We're talking about the most influential games of all time here. If you look at the other games in this Supertest, such as *Doom* or *Dune 2* or whatever, you can easily see the influence they've had on other games. *Ultima Online* might be unique and it has influenced a few games in the short term like *EverQuest*, but we'll have to wait for five years to see what real influence it has on PC games.
Mark: But you can already see the influence it has on all the other online games that are coming out. For example, in the *Star Wars Galaxy* game, you can have people who are just punters standing around, but they're real players. It all

adventure game to talk about was that even though *King's Quest* came first and started the genre, *Monkey Island* was the best and had more impact because of that. Look at *Ultima Online* then, it's the first and the best. Nothing comes near it. In years to come you'll look back on it and compare it to *Doom* or *SimCity* or whatever.
Richie: What we're trying to do is find the most influential game at this point in time, and *Ultima Online* can't be counted in that category because we don't know how online games are going to evolve. It's also one of those contentious games which people either like or don't like, so we don't know how influential it will be.
Mallo: But it kick-started the whole multiplayer genre single-handedly. You can't ignore that.



ULTIMA ONLINE

This is Origin's most ambitious project and most financially rewarding project to date, with hundreds of thousands of people paying a monthly rate to go online and indulge their role-playing fantasies with like-minded people all over the world. This is the first multiplayer online game, but it will by no means be the last. Where Origin leads, others will follow - *Ultima Online* signifies the start of a revolution.

ORIGINAL SCORE	92%
DEVELOPER	Origin
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts

Mallo: So there's all these bored housewives on the social, playing *Ultima Online* instead of going out and earning a decent wage?
Everyone: (laughs)
Chris: Yes. When they should be ironing and Hoovering and messing about in the kitchen they're chasing goblins round the place instead.
Mallo: It's all so corrupt. Wasn't there something about people in the game selling



“You can already see the influence it has on all the other online games”

MARK ON ULTIMA ONLINE

comes from *Ultima Online*.
Dave: More than 300,000 people paying to play it every month has to tell you something.
Richie: But you're saying that *UO* has influenced online gaming. It's too early to say that yet.
Chris: The argument that *Monkey Island* should have been the big

Chris: Whether you like the game or not, it's started an online revolution. You have to wonder how many software companies would be putting money into making online games if Origin hadn't done it first with *Ultima Online*. Steve, are you still awake?
Steve: No. Let's talk about another one.
Chris: *Dune 2* it is then.

DUNE 2

Dave: At the moment, real-time strategy games are one of the most popular genres around in terms of sales and in terms of what's planned to come out in the next year. For that reason you have to take notice of the game that started it all and consider it as a serious contender for Supertest winner.

Steve: There's another reason for that. Real-time strategy games and first-person shoot 'em ups are what the PC's good at, they're all it can do. You can't play games like that on PlayStation, that's why they're so popular on PC, not necessarily because they're amazing games in themselves.

Richie: Having influence on the genre is all about keeping a platform alive and other developers following your lead, and real-time strategy games do just that.

Martin: The reason real-time strategy is more important than first-person shooters is because

complex than another one.

Richie: It's been influential because the same mechanics of the game that worked then, still work now. You build a building, which allows you to make more buildings and make troops, etc – it all still works the same way. That's why it's influential.

Mallo: If you dig deep you'll probably find it all started somewhere before *Dune 2*. There must have been other games like that around.

Richie: Yes, like *Utopia*. That was the same sort of thing and I think that came before *Dune 2*. But *Dune 2* was the one that got everyone playing real-time strategy games and made developers want to cash in on their popularity.

Mallo: I remember playing *Dune 2* on my Megadrive. I played it day and night and I remember thinking: wow, this game is going to go far.

Prezzer: Yes, but you could say it

“It's been influential because the same mechanics of the game that worked then still work now”

RICHIE ON DUNE 2



the genre has evolved more. Look at *Shogun*, *Ground Control*, *Earth 2150* – everything's 3D with fully pannable environments. First-person shooters haven't evolved.

Richie: Really. Look at *Wolfenstein* and *Counter-Strike*. So there's no evolution there?

Chris: Maybe it's just me, but I fail to see what bearing the stage of technology each genre is at has on whether *Dune 2* was influential or not. Martin, what are you on about?

Martin: I'm talking about the gap between *Dune 2* and *Shogun* and the gap between *Doom* and *Half-Life*. There's no difference between *Doom* and *Half-Life*. RTS has moved on and become more complex. That's why *Dune 2* has been so influential.

Chris: And your point is what? We're talking about whether the game is influential or not, not whether the genre it's in is more

didn't really take off until *Command & Conquer*, that was the big one.

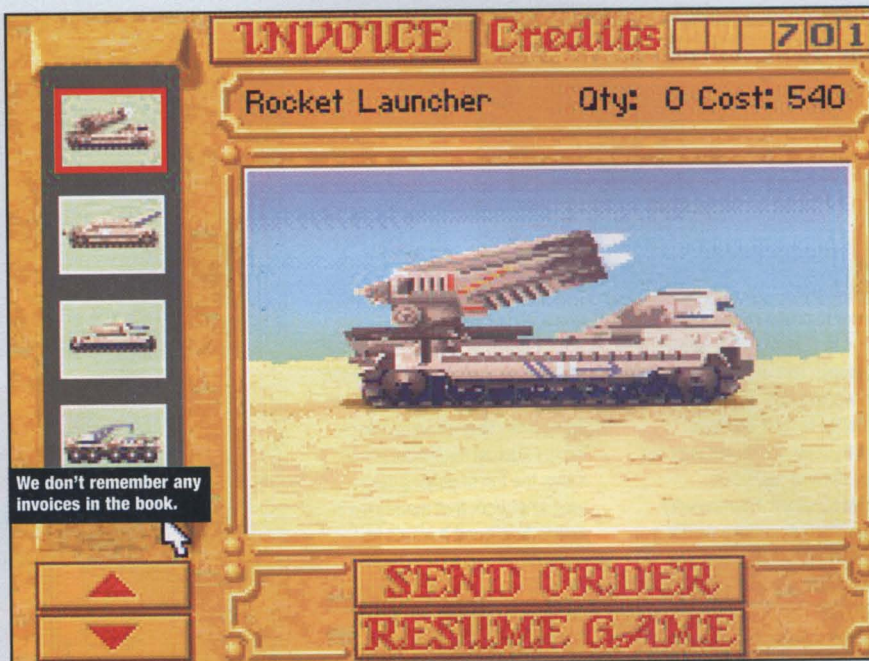
Dave: It was definitely *Dune 2* that started it all. As Richie has already pointed out, the mechanics of the game haven't changed at all. *Dune 2* has an everlasting effect on the gameplay in titles such as *Earth 2150* and *Red Alert*. There is nothing new in the technology, which is a testament to its influence in itself.

Prezzer: But the genre didn't actually become big until *Command & Conquer*.

Chris: We may as well change it to the most famous game of all time then. Same argument again. Are we talking about most influential, or biggest and best?

Mallo: Well, we have to argue about it otherwise we'd have nothing to talk about.

Martin: *Dune 2* influenced *Command & Conquer*, which then influenced the genre and people



We don't remember any invoices in the book.

went out and started buying real-time strategy games. Look at *Ground Control*, it's still real-time but has done away with the resource management. It shows again how the genre has evolved.

Chris: I can tell he's not going to shut up about that.

Richie: I'm not sure, but I think Martin's point is *Dune 2* made all these new games happen that are still evolving. Adventure games are dead now so *Dune 2* is more influential than *Monkey Island* in that respect.

Mallo: The other way to look at it is if the genre hadn't started with *Dune 2* we wouldn't have all that mining to do, which is bloody boring.

Chris: There's no arguing that the real-time strategy genre is absolutely massive, but you forget to take into account the online side of things. If you really want to judge how influential a game is, look to the future. And what do you see? You see first-person shoot 'em ups being played by millions online, not real-time strategy games.

Steve: People play real-time strategy games online, too.

Chris: Yes, but not to the same extent. Look at the online games servers and you'll see more people are playing shooters than any other genre. This also has to be taken into account when deciding how influential any of these games are. You have to look at how much the genre the game has created is going to affect the future of games. Real-time strategy is right up there, but it's not the biggest. When the online thing finally takes off, there will be more people playing first-person shooters than real-

time strategy games.

Prezzer: How do you know?

Chris: Because real-time strategy games are more anal by their very nature. People sit there for hours in their little corner, building armies and plotting how they're going to beat the computer.

First-person shooters are more fun against other people. Look at *Quake* – it's one of the most boring games of all time if you play it on your own. Play it against a human opponent and suddenly it comes to life. And that's the future of gaming, playing against other people.

Mallo: I don't know. I much prefer playing first-person shooters on my own rather than against other people.

Prezzer: But that's because you hate people.

Martin: Are you saying *Doom* is more influential because it's easier to pick up? Does that make it more influential?

Chris: No. You said that, not me. OK, let's look at it this way then. All these games created a genre. If you want to judge how big an influence they've had on the PC games industry in global terms, look at how big the genre is going to be in years to come. I can't see real-time strategy outliving

other genres online.

Rhianna: I'm not really a big fan of either genre, but first-person shooters are bound to be more influential because that's what people are playing now. You've got the big *Quake* tournaments and there are more tournaments and leagues being set up around the world all the time. It's even being recognised as a sport. You can't play real-time strategy games as a sport.

Note: At this point the conversation sort of merged into a major discussion on which game was the most influential. *Dune 2*, or, of course...



DUNE 2

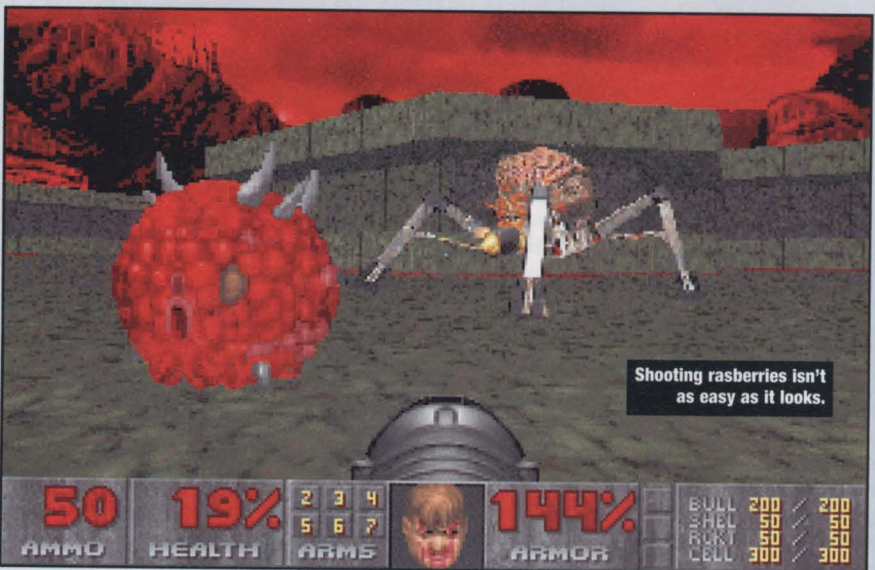
The game that spawned *Command & Conquer*, which in turn spawned a million other clones, *Dune 2* was single-handedly responsible for creating the real-time strategy genre. While the series is still going strong in the form of *Red Alert 2*, its influence is evident in the form of the countless clones that still continue to appear on a monthly basis. A hugely important and influential title for PC.

ORIGINAL SCORE	89%
DEVELOPER	Westwood
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts

DOOM



Still thought of by many as the scariest game ever.



Shooting raspberries isn't as easy as it looks.

Dave: How influential can a game be? Look at the move from casual gamer to professional – that's all down to *Doom*.

Rhianna: There are plans to build the world's first cyber stadium in Dallas to host a league competition. It's all got very big over the last few years.

Mallo: That's the wrong way to go. They should be working on the technology to provide mass spectator on people's PCs at home.

Chris: Is spectator a word?

Mallo: I wouldn't mind logging online to have a look at one of these tournaments, but I'm not paying ten quid to go to a stadium to watch it.

Dave: Yeah, but we don't pay for anything, do we...

Richie: Getting back to *Doom* and how games influence things, in real-time strategy games you still press control F1 to group, and in shooters you still press the number keys to choose your weapons – they still use the same keys after all this time. How much more influential can that be?

Dave: When I finished single-player *Doom* I ended up playing it again for a year, one-on-one across a modem. No other

game before then had made me do that. It worked on so many levels, it had atmosphere, excitement, the lot.

Richie: Getting back to the online thing again, *Doom* was one of the first games to encourage people to play against each other online. It was the fun of playing *Doom* over a network that made people realise how good it would be online, so it had a lot to do with starting the whole online gaming scene as we now know it.

Chris: Yes, and first-person shooters are bigger online now than they've ever been. None of this would have happened if it wasn't for network *Doom*. It's been a massive influence.

Mallo: Another reason *Doom* was so big was the technology needed to play it was within everyone's reach. Hardly anyone could play *Ultima Underworld* because they just didn't have a machine good enough to play it. Everyone could play *Doom*, and the same with *Doom 2* and *Quake*. It proves if you want something to really take off you have to make it available to everyone.

Mark: I think *Doom* was also the first game to get mass media attention because it was so controversial.

Steve: Only in the tabloids, which is hardly a lot to shout about.

Chris: If you want to quantify which game is bigger than which, just look at the anticipation for the genre's biggest titles. Take, for example, *Age Of Empires 2* in the left corner, and *Quake III* in the right corner. Who's going to win the title as 'biggest' release of the year? Let's face it, there's no competition. That's true influence. When the gaming public just can't wait to get their hands on the hottest game in a genre, you know that genre

is big. *Quake III* wasn't even proper single-player and people were still going nuts trying to get their hands on it.

Mallo: *Doom*'s name is still taken in vain even now by media types making reference to it trying to look cool.

Steve: The tabloids still blame everything that's going wrong in the world on *Doom*, which is an eight-year-old game.

Chris: What would you rather have on the front cover of *PC ZONE*? *Age Of Empires 3* or *Quake IV*? You don't even need to think about it. And that's disregarding how much more popular first-person shooters are online.

Martin: You're talking about the difference between ease of play and evolution. Which is more important? If it's evolution, then it has to be real-time strategy.

Mallo: We're talking about which one is the most influential, not which one has evolved the most.

Martin: No, hang on, Mallo. Just let me finish...

Mallo: OK, let Martin talk.

Chris: No, you should never let Martin talk. It's always a bad idea.

Everyone: (laughs)

Martin: More people want to play first-person shooters just because they're easier to pick up.

Mallo: You get an adrenaline rush from playing them.

Richie: Basically, when you play a game you want to be right in there. You want to be part of the game. In *Doom*, you're in there, you're part of the game. In *Dune 2* you're not. It's still the same with real-time strategy games as it ever was. You're not in there, you're still above it all like God is in the clouds.

Rhianna: Personally, I wouldn't have played *Doom* if I hadn't played *Wolfenstein* first. *Wolfenstein* was the one that got me into it.

Mallo: Are you sure about that? You really wouldn't have played

first-person shoot 'em ups, more will say *Doom* than will say *Wolfenstein*. A lot of them won't even know what *Wolfenstein* is.

Prezzer: That's because people just think like that.

Mallo: It doesn't matter what the reason is, the point is it's recognised as the game that started the whole genre off.

Mark: But surely the game that people play most becomes the most influential game.

Chris: If that was the case, we'd be talking about *Half-Life* not *Doom*. We're talking about the game that kicked off the genre



DOOM

Doom holds fond memories for many of the *PC ZONE* team. Extended multiplayer shootouts in the office over a network gave us all a taste for what was to become the most popular multiplayer genre online. *Quake III* and *Half-Life* both have so many multiplayer add-ons you can easily see the huge influence *Doom* has had on the gaming scene with the most cursory of glances.

ORIGINAL SCORE	96%
DEVELOPER	id Software
PUBLISHER	Activision



“The tabloids still blame everything wrong in the world on *Doom*, an eight-year-old game”

STEVE ON DOOM

Doom? It was *the* game the whole world was talking about.

Dave: That doesn't make any sense. *Wolfenstein* had the right idea, but *Doom* was the game that made the whole first-person thing really take off.

Mallo: If you asked your average PC gamer which game started

and had most effect on the industry as a whole.

Steve: *Doom* got more people into playing PC games than any other game I've played.

Chris: OK, on that bombshell, let's take a break and when we come back we can finally try to decide what *PC ZONE* considers to be the most influential PC game of all time. The tension is bearable.

LEST WE FORGET

The titles in this Supertest are not the only ones to have shaped the gaming scene as we know it today. Also worthy of note are the following...

POPULOUS

Bullfrog's intriguing and involving God game is fondly remembered by many veteran gamers. It has prompted its fair share of clones, although ultimately, the influence of this game on the development community was somewhat overshadowed by the huge influx of real-time strategy games that came in its wake.

KING'S QUEST

This was the game that created the adventure genre on PC. *Monkey Island* may have been more of an influence on future adventures, but there is no denying the sheer quality of the *King's Quest* series and its masterful storytelling was a very clear indicator to adventure game developers as to how the genre should progress.

ELITE

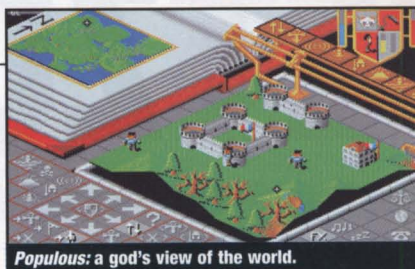
The game that launched a million space combat sims. While this genre is not the most popular on PC, it still has a large following and *Elite* was the game that showed all the others how it should be done. Even today, many modern space combat sims lack the complexity of *Elite*, favouring graphics over huge gameworlds.

CIVILIZATION

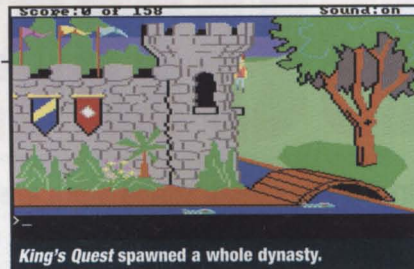
An extraordinary game with the kind of depth developers of real-time strategy games can only dream about. This would have been a serious contender were it not for the fact that the turn-based genre is losing ground to real-time strategy at an alarming rate. Every turn-based game you play – every single one of them – will remind you of *Civilization*.

WOLFENSTEIN 3D

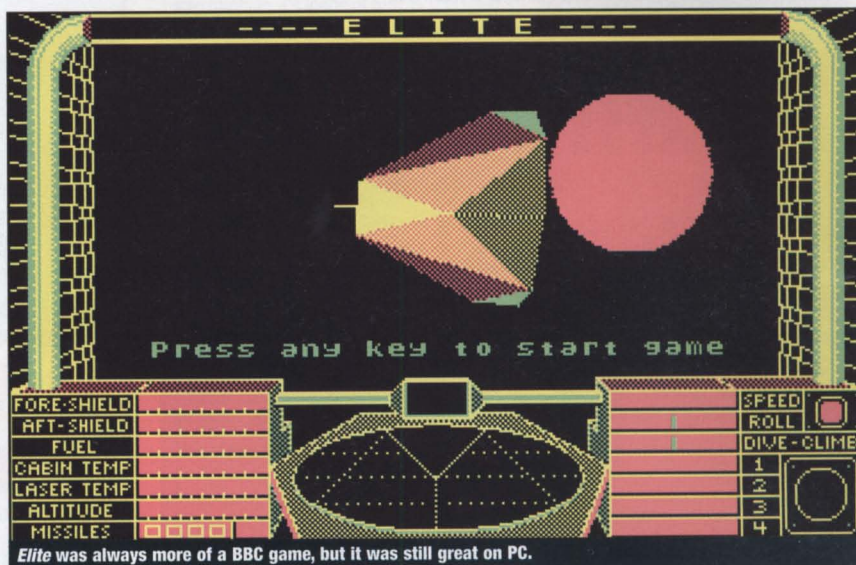
As controversial as it was revolutionary, *Wolfenstein 3D* was the first 'real' first-person shoot 'em up on PC. It didn't have the polish and style of *Doom*, and it certainly didn't have as much impact, but it had the distinction of being 'first'. And it had Adolf Hitler. And you could shoot him. Which was nice.



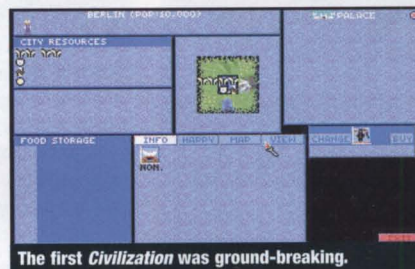
Populous: a god's view of the world.



King's Quest spawned a whole dynasty.



Elite was always more of a BBC game, but it was still great on PC.



The first *Civilization* was ground-breaking.



Wolfenstein 3D: the game that started it all.

AND THE WINNER IS...

The game that brought multiplayer to the masses

What seemed to be a difficult choice at the outset turned out to be fairly obvious at the end of the day. It was largely agreed that *Tomb Raider* had more impact on consoles than PC, and while it has undoubtedly 'cleaned up' the games scene in the eyes of the masses, its contribution to creative development is minimal. *SimCity* is undoubtedly original, but was seen to contribute to the overall gaming scene in part only, rather than as an entity in itself. *Ultima Underworld* was a technological masterpiece, but for all its creativity it never really encouraged developers to match depth with technology, and *Ultima Online* has kick-started the online gaming scene but its influence will not appear obvious till the genre has stabilised a year or two down the road. *Monkey*

Island defined a genre that was unfortunately doomed for extinction years later. Perhaps if *Monkey Island 3* had been as funny and engrossing as 1 and 2 this may never have happened. We will never know.

At the end of the discussion we had a clear battle for supremacy between two titles: *Dune 2* and *Doom*. It was agreed by all that while *Dune 2* fulfilled much of the criteria for most influential game of all time, *Doom* fulfilled all the criteria. Its huge influence on today's online gaming scene did much to tip the balance in its favour, and we see online gaming as the future of PC games entertainment, so in this respect we expect *Doom's* influence to remain long after real-time strategy games have fallen by the wayside.



OVERALL WINNER

78%	2 3 4	BUL SHE ROK CELL
HEALTH	5 6 7	
178%	ARMOR	

Prepare to meet thy *Doom*!