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360zine

Issue 44 | July 2010

Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*

NAVIGATE →



BULLETSTORM

Making the FPS fun again

EXCLUSIVE!

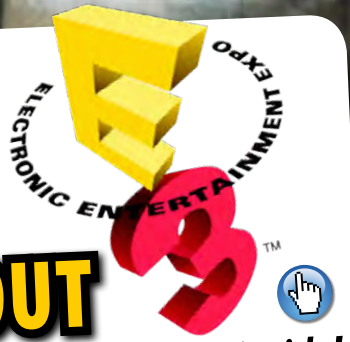
DRIVER

SAN FRANCISCO

Exclusive preview
and interview

E3 BLOWOUT

All the show's biggest games inside!



PLUS!



FIRST LOOK!
ROCK BAND 3



PREVIEWED!
EA SPORT MMA



PREVIEWED!
FABLE III

CONTROL →





Welcome to 360Zine



Another year, another E3 blasts its way through the senses like a hurricane, and 360Zine is here to pick up all the pieces and deliver them to you in handy PDF-sized chunks.

And what an E3 it was. The shooters dominated of course, but there was more than enough time for Microsoft to show off its new wares: the redesigned 360 and, of course, the long-awaited (and now officially named) Microsoft Kinect.

2010 is going to be quite a year for the big MS. Kinect is still awaiting its official price point, but to really appeal to the Wii's family market, it's going to have to be affordable. And with that tech behind it, that's going to be a logistical effort from Microsoft.

Still, we're happy to lay down our dignity and jump around the living room. Are you?

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

360Zine FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of the new issue

MEET THE TEAM

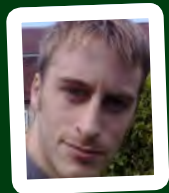
Probably the best games writers on the planet



Jon Denton
Jon is getting Kinected... whatever the price.



David Scammell
David has a tale to tell with Fable III.



Andy Griffiths
Excited about the return of Tanner? Andy is.

Don't miss! This month's top highlights

Bulletstorm
FULL PREVIEW INSIDE

EA Sports MMA
King of the ring?

Driver: San Francisco
First hands-on

Fable III
First Look inside

Ghost Recon Future Soldier
Game of the year?

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Rock Band 3 | Ghost Recon |
| Kinect | Future Soldier |
| Adventures | EA Sports MMA |
| Dead Rising 2 | Driver: San Francisco |
| Mortal Kombat | Blur |
| Dance Central | Rock Band |
| Bulletstorm | Green Day |
| Fable III | |

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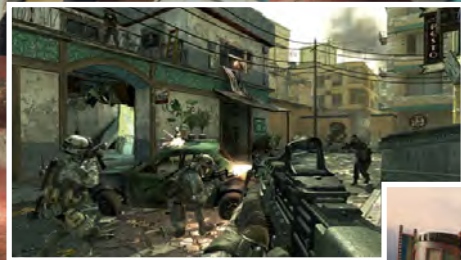
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If you are reading this, then you didn't choose "Play" when Adobe Reader asked you about multimedia when you opened the magazine.

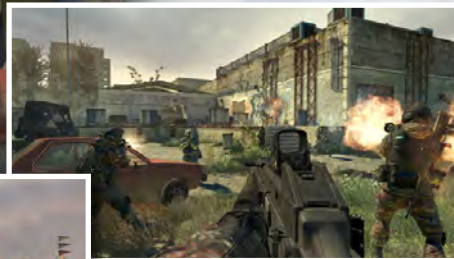
Without the multimedia playing, the magazine will look correct, but you will be missing out on all of the extra content built into each issue, like videos, animated screenshots, annotations, quizzes, competitions and more.

We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.

CALL OF DUTY MODERN WARFARE 2 RESURGENCE PACK



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PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

XBOX LIVE

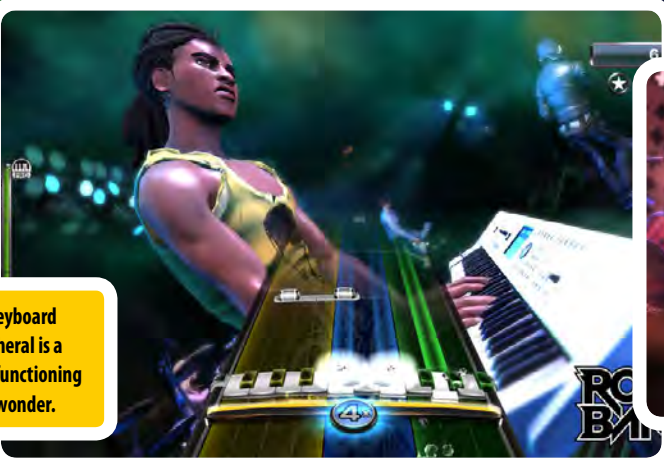
XBOX 360

ROCKBAND 3

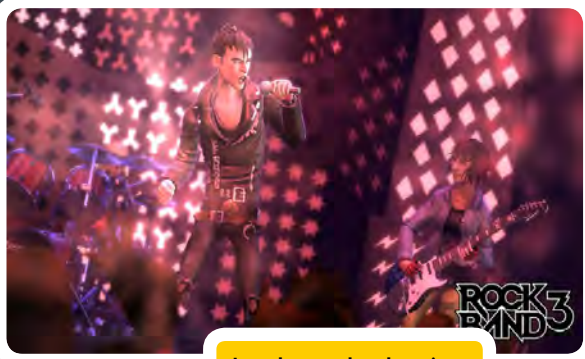
Publisher: EA
 Developer: Harmonix
 Heritage: Guitar Hero
 Link: www.rockband.com
 ETA: Autumn



There's now support for seven instruments – guitar, bass, drums, keyboard and three singers.



The keyboard peripheral is a fully functioning MIDI wonder.



Just when you thought music games were dead, Harmonix takes it to the next natural level. These guys really are the masters and the innovators.



"Rock Band 3 promises to be the most realistic music-gaming experience ever"

FIRST LOOK

Rock Band 3

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Rock Band 3

Don't stop believing

What's the story?

Just when you thought music gaming was dying, Harmonix is back to inject a vital dose of life. Rock Band 3 promises to be the most realistic music-gaming experience ever, with all the innovations seen in Rock Band Beatles joining a new instrument and a new Pro mode.

What do we know?

Everyone's talking about the new keyboard instrument, and rightly so. It's a fully-functioning MIDI machine, with two-octave range, divided into four coloured sections. As you progress through the difficulties, more 'actual' notes come into play, and by the time you're at Expert, it's note-for-note. Much like the new Pro mode, which makes use of the new six-stringed guitar controllers to create something quite special indeed. Actual note-for-note guitar tracks, drumming with three new cymbals and three-part vocal harmonies. It's a legitimate way to learn music. And with tunes from The Doors and even Bohemian Rhapsody to test your digits out with, it could be the finest Rock Band song line-up ever.

When do we get more?

Harmonix has been demoing the game at the recent E3 game show in Los Angeles, but it'll be later in the year before we get wind of the full track listing and the extent of the musical awesomeness. Until then though, we'd strongly recommend hanging up your plastic guitars and drum sticks until the end of the year. You're really not going to need them.

Anything else to declare?

Rock Band 3 will be compatible with all your previous downloadable content, as well as all the songs from Rock Band and Rock Band 2, meaning there's a potential 2,000 tunes you can be rocking out to. That's a ridiculous number. Harmonix has once again proven that it's the master of the music game, and we're happy to be able to tell you that there's real innovation happening in this year's update.

CRACKDOWN 2



▶ PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

OUT 9TH JULY

Vigilantes and night-crawling mutants are tearing Pacific City apart. It's up to you and your friends to bring justice by any means necessary. Unique multiplayer action leaps to explosive new heights in Crackdown™ 2, with support for four-player cooperative campaigns and up to 16-player competitive action.

For exclusive videos, go to xbox.com/crackdown2

Xbox LIVE® Gold membership required for online multiplayer.



XBOX LIVE

Jump in.

XBOX 360





Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Good Science
Heritage: Forza, Fable II
Link: www.xbox.com
ETA: Autumn



Ducking and jumping and collecting things... It's not Fallout, is it?

FIRST LOOK

Kinect Adventures

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Kinect Adventures

You'll need to limber up for this one

What's the story?

You're on an adventure. A Kinect adventure. What does that mean? Well, it's an adventure where you stand in front of your TV, jumping and ducking and swaying, because it's an adventure you play with Microsoft's new motion-sensing camera device, the recently renamed Kinect.

What do we know?

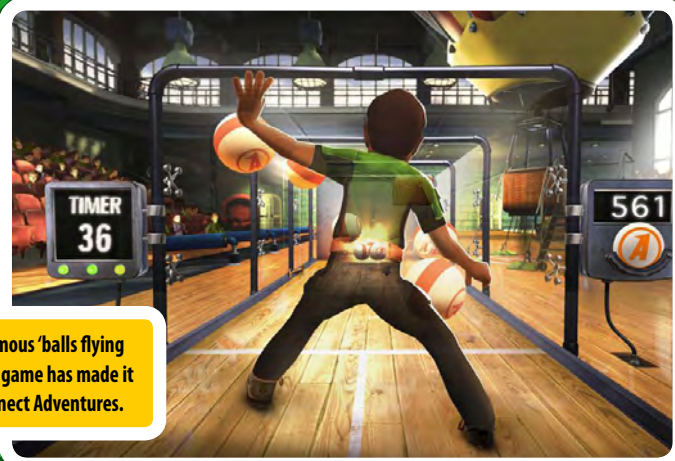
Well, first of all, this isn't a game for us lot to spend hours perfecting and mastering and whoring achievements. It's something to drag out when the family are recovering from turkey poisoning on Christmas afternoon (which feels torturous to mention in the height of summer), and to laugh along to with. There are various similarly themed games to 'adventure' through, most of which involve manipulating something large, red and rubbery, and collecting a bunch of things on the way. It's not exactly a cerebral experience. Still, the Kinect picks up motion very well and there's an odd satisfaction to moving an on-screen character with your whole body – or indeed bodies, as it supports two players at once.

When do we get more?

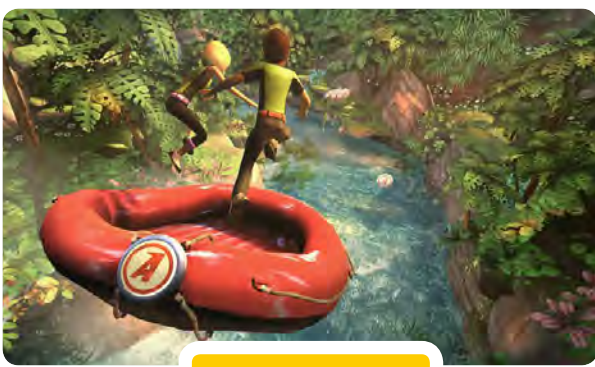
Microsoft will be rolling out more Kinect 'hands-on' time for the press in the near future, so we're expecting to get back into the red rubber saddle soon.

Anything else to declare?

Kinect Adventures features 20 adventures, and a nifty feature that takes amusing snapshots of you mucking about in your living room, then shows them back to you. Like Burnout Paradise with more energy.



The famous 'balls flying at you' game has made it into Kinect Adventures.



Jumping over large cliffs in a dinghy is pretty enjoyable stuff. It's a game for Christmas afternoon with the family, not for 3am hardcore sessions.

"Most of the adventures involve manipulating something big, red and rubbery"



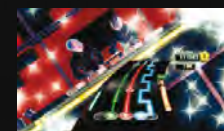


▶ **PLAYBACK OPTIONS:**

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PlayStation 2



Wii



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INCOMING

A fistful of top new titles coming to 360...



Dead Rising 2

Publisher: Capcom | **ETA:** September

Blue Castle's shambling sequel is getting nearer by the day, and E3 demos show that the ambition is being realised. There are so many more zombies on screen than before, so many ways to kill them and so many weapons to combo together. This is looking like the best collaboration between Capcom and 'The West'.



Mortal Kombat

Publisher: Warner Bros | **ETA:** 2011

In an effort to restore faith to the flagging Mortal Kombat franchise, Warner Bros has turned everything back to the second dimension. Inspired by Street Fighter IV, Mortal Kombat now has EX style moves, Ultra style 'XRay' combos and far more technical proficiency than the more recent 3D iterations. Could be very interesting indeed, but can it climb back to the top of the battling heap?

Dance Central

Publisher: Harmonix | **ETA:** November

At first glance, this 'dance around your living room' effort looks like a living nightmare, until you realise who's behind it. Harmonix, the kings of videogame musicality, have created a beast of a dancing game that completely eliminates the need for dance mats or Wii Remotes. It can pick up individual joint movements, meaning you can discern your Running Man from your Poker Face. Huge.



Assassin's Creed Brotherhood

Publisher: Ubisoft | **ETA:** October

It's only been a year, but Ubisoft Montreal has managed to knock out an entire Assassin's Creed adventure in 12 months. It's still telling the ongoing story of Ezio, but now the action has been transposed to Roma, complete with all its incredible architecture. Also, the Brotherhood in the title refers to the new multiplayer modes, which have the potential to offer something really interesting to spend your Xbox Live time with. A credit to the skilled guys and girls up in Montreal.



Kinectimals

Publisher: Microsoft | **ETA:** November

This is one to get the girlfriends and daughters involved in. Kinectimals is a fairly cynical piece of tech, but it's so gosh-darn cute that no one will care. You get to pet your fluffy little friendly tiger through the Kinect camera, talk to it and generally use it as a replacement for a real friend, or an absent father. Just what the Kinect needs.



Marvel Vs Capcom 3

Publisher: Capcom | **ETA:** 2011

If Super Street Fighter IV is a game of chess, then this is a food fight. Marvel Vs Capcom has always been relentlessly quick and insanely hectic, and the gorgeous-looking third edition is no different. Expect huge air combos, triple-tag super moves and more characters than you could ever fathom. Awesome stuff.

UPCOMING

JULY

- Crackdown 2
- Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11

AUGUST

- Madden 11
- Kane and Lynch 2: Dog Days

SEPTEMBER

- Dead Rising 2
- Halo Reach

OCTOBER

- Medal of Honor
- Ghost Recon Future Soldier

SINGULARITY™

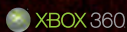
RELEASED 25/06/10

www.singularity-game.com



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

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BULLETSTORM

Publisher: EA
 Developer: People Can Fly
 Heritage: Painkiller
 Link: www.bulletstorm.com
 ETA: February 22nd, 2011

DEMOED

Bulletstorm

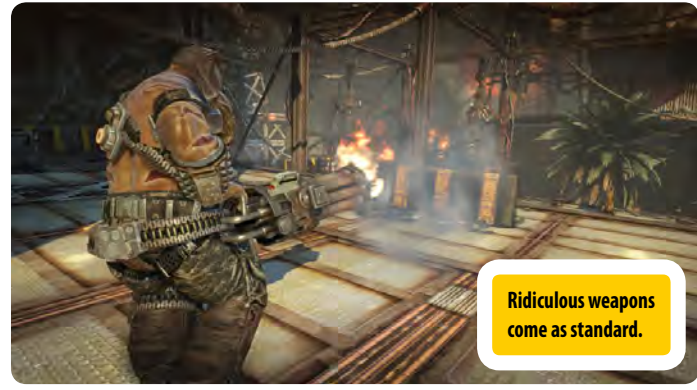
Don't just murder – kill with skill!

Another shooter? Really? You can't walk through 360 land without stepping on a Halo, Modern Warfare or Gears of War wannabe, but hold on a second, as this game seems different. Firstly it's being promoted from Epic's favourite agent of hyperbole, Cliffy 'B' Blizinski, and secondly, the aim of the game isn't to dispatch foes in quick succession, but instead reward players for killing cannon fodder in the most dramatic way possible, earning point accumulators – a la Tony Hawk Pro Skater – along the way.

Bulletstorm is set in the far future, where mankind has reached into the furthest reaches of the galaxy. The player character is a loveable pirate named Grayson Hunt, who happens to find himself marooned on a deserted paradise planet with his robotic crew mate Ishi Sato in tow, after being pursued by his former employers Dead Echo, a mercenary force who is now hunting them down. However, all is not how it seems as Grayson not only has to survive the attacks by his



Wait a few seconds for the ka-boom.



Ridiculous weapons come as standard.



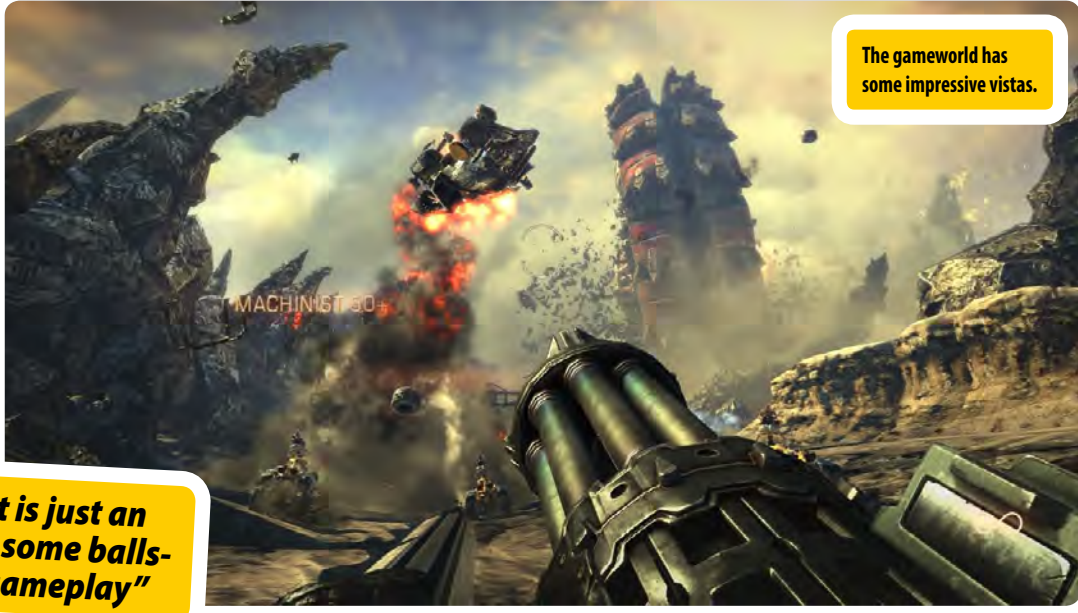
Zoom down the sight to spot the freaky looking plant things.



BULLETSTORM



Friend or foe?



The gameworld has some impressive vistas.

"The plot is just an excuse for some balls-out FPS gameplay"

Bad time to lose your head.



weapons. Characters are emotive, colourful and slightly eccentric, with the protagonist constantly spewing expletives and ridiculous one-liners which we couldn't help but immediately fall in love with.

Everything is so ridiculous and over-the-top, yet strangely endearing, all at the same time.

It says a lot about the gameplay that headshots are ordained to be the least-stylish way to kill. Instead, gamers can utilise the powerful laser-like arm, which has the capability to throw enemies up into the air while suspending them in time for a short while, allowing a swift shotgun slug to the face or, more imaginatively, fire off the grenade chain, which has two pineapples linked together, allowing the explosive ordnance to wrap around an enemy before blowing him, her or it

to smithereens. Combat is constantly on a loop, so the more elaborate deaths you can chain together the better. Grayson also has another strange ability – he can slide around on his knees to get from one area to another for multiple seconds at a time. It all seems very strange as we witnessed the main protagonist sliding



> **Bulletstorm** continued

would-be killers, but also the domestic plant life and mutated humans which also reside there.

Sci-fi shenanigans aside, the plot is really just an excuse for some balls-out

first-person shooter gameplay, with imaginative weapons, varied enemies, fluid combat and visuals which just scream 'Go on! Have some fun!'

The gritty greyness common in modern games is shirked aside for colourful locations and elaborate



BULLETSTORM



This would be a nice planet, if it wasn't for all the death.

"Propelling enemies into the air and callously kicking them into electrical fences soon becomes second nature"



Aim for the hole!

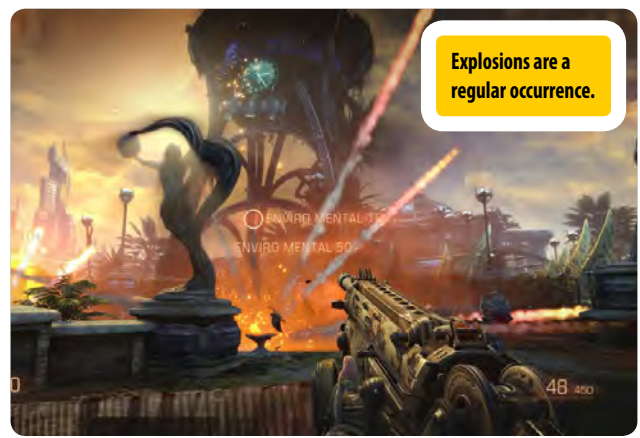
> Bulletstorm continued

around a boss in a sleek circle, but this dynamic does serve to increase the speed of combat. The likeable pirate can also kick enemies, propelling them into the air for some time-lapse showboating – if you do so wish.

Comparison test

If we were to compare Bulletstorm with other shooters, it's most natural bedfellow would be Duke Nukem or Serious Sam, as the action is all aimed at empowering the player. As you impale enemies on cacti, shoot armed soldiers in the crown jewels or turn them into glowing skeletons, catchy taglines will pop-up on the screen along with a score bonus. These points in turn can be used to buy upgrades, abilities and unlock new weapons via stations throughout the game's levels. The 'Skillshot' system is one RPG fans will be very familiar with, and after a while, propelling enemies into the air and callously kicking them into electrical fences soon becomes second nature.

Despite being early in development, everything seemed very polished and smooth. Only a few levels were shown off during E3, but they each gave a clear idea of the game's structure, with



Explosions are a regular occurrence.

the campaign constantly being reinforced by dramatic set-pieces and huge boss encounters.

The only aspect which has yet to mentioned is multiplayer, and seeing as Bulletstorm is being overseen by the makers of Unreal Tournament and Gears of War, surely there has to be some kind of competitive multiplayer component, or even co-operative play in there somewhere? We'll be investigating further and hope to be able to report back with more news soon. Kicking your best mate into the air before exploding their corpse for a points multiplier, could be the best thing in online gaming since chainsaws arrived in Doom.

Only time will tell, but from what we've seen so far, this could be the game to put the Polish studio on the map. Expect to hear more about Bulletstorm before its release next year. ●

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Bulletstorm



HOW COMPLETE?	FIRST IMPRESSIONS
60%	80%
Stylish, atmospheric and completely off the wall	



Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Lionhead Studios
Heritage: The Fable series
Link: <http://lionhead.com/Fable/FableIII>
ETA: Autumn

PREVIEW

Fable III

If I could be king for just one day...

Peter Molyneux is an ideas man. We've known that for ever, but his spark and fire haven't dulled in the 20 years he's been passionately addressing the media. What has changed though, is his 'off switch'. The pie-in-the-sky Molyneux that promised the earth and delivered the moon has been replaced by a more measured, considered chap, and we think his games are all the better for it.

Still, for Fable III, that creative mind is still beaver away, and the big ideas here are Touch, Sanctuary and one that doesn't have its own name, leadership. You're the son or daughter of a Monarch, and you will inherit the



throne. Not that Fable III is turning into a God sim straight away, as there's still plenty of adventuring to be done.

Quests and battles and triumphs and dismays are all played out in a strikingly similar way to Fable II, with its simple button configuration, 'can't really die' deaths and, of course, the dog. Here though, the HUD has been completely stripped back, leaving only your brave adventurer, with nothing else cluttering up the screen.

This brings us on to The Sanctuary, which is Fable III's pause menu. It's not often we'll talk up a pause screen, but Mr. Molyneux is excited about it, and when he gets excited, the rest of the world does too. Hitting the Start button on the controller brings up The Sanctuary, a room that you can move around in three dimensions, complete with a wardrobe, armoury, lovely 3D map and your very own butler.

Not just any old butler, either. No, it's John Cleese, with – according to Molyneux – hundreds of thousands of lines of dialogue (although you'd be wise to take that with a fairly hefty pinch of salt). Needless to say, he's a

Visually, Fable III hasn't taken huge steps forward, but it didn't need to. Art design beats polygons counts.



"Quests and battles and triumphs and dismays are all played out in a strikingly similar way to Fable II"



The dog is still a very important part of the Fable experience, as it should be.



FABLE III

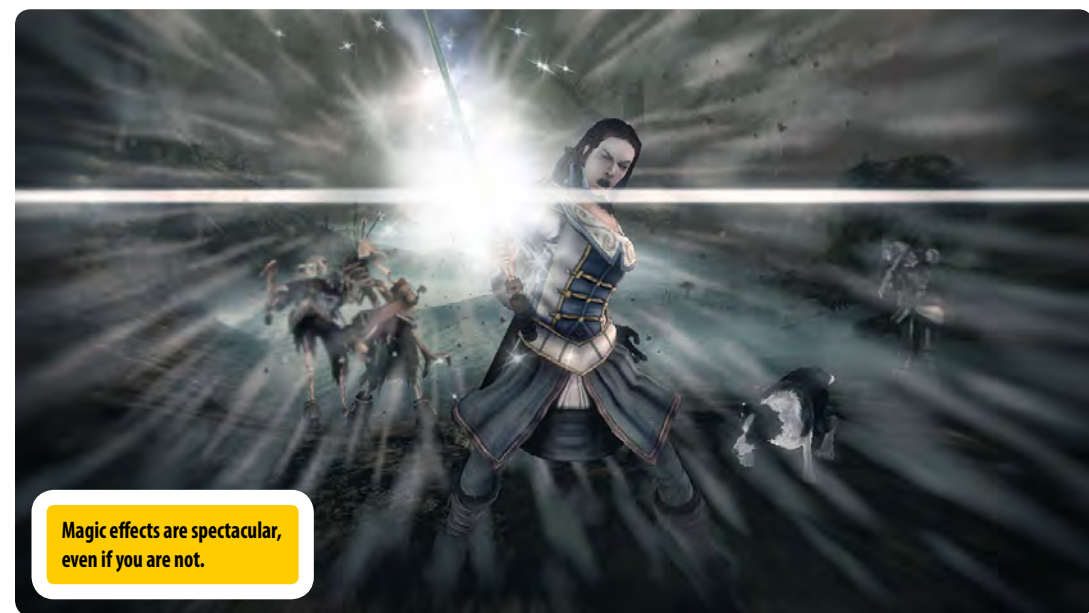
> **Fable III** continued

fantastically funny addition to the Fable III story, though, always reacting to your latest endeavours and adding levity when it's needed.

The other major innovation that has Molyneux's knickers in a twist is Touch, which is as simple as it sounds. You can grab, press, hold hands and generally interact with other people in the world, which in itself is a minor feature, but Molyneux and the Lionhead team are designing specific emotional responses around players' abilities to physically involve themselves with the inhabitants of Albion. For example, holding hands while you walk across the bridge in Bowerstone, or actually hurling a

ne'er-do-well into a jail cell. It's all very interesting stuff indeed.

There are other customisation options that go beyond what we had in Fable II, too. Weapons now change depending on how you use them, so they will evolve and mutate to suit your personality. You can even trade weapons online, as the effects are not only cosmetic but actually change the statistical values of the weapons. In fact, the online modes have been ramped up considerably. The co-operative play that was so vaunted in the last game will actually work this time, allowing players to properly inhabit the worlds of other players, and cause irreparable damage therein – if you do so wish to. Again, Fable acts like



Magic effects are spectacular, even if you are not.

a role-playing game, but hides it behind its curtain of customisation and lightweight British humour.

That really is the appeal of Fable, too, beyond the solidity of its mechanics and the relative simplicity of its controls. The Harry Potter-cum-Monty Python humour and warmth that glows from every inch of Fable III's gloriously Anglican universe is what sucks people in. With the cream-of-the-crop of British development and acting talent working in tandem once again,

Fable III is shaping up to deliver another slice of loveable madcap role-playing. In a game full of big ideas, it's only one that really matters: fun. ●



PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Fable III

360Zine **HOW COMPLETE?** **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

FABLE III **90%** **90%**

Another strong story to get lost in

Ubisoft
GHOST RECON
 FUTURE SOLDIER

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft Paris
Heritage: Red Steel II, XII
Link: www.ghostrecon.com
ETA: TBA

PREVIEW

Ghost Recon Future Soldier

The Ghost with the most

Tired of shooting things yet? You'd better not be. More so than any time in videogaming history, high budgets mean high-calibre weapons, and the differences between the major games on the major systems are diminishing all the time. With Ghost Recon Future Soldier, Ubisoft is trying to differentiate its game from the pack. So just how successful has it been?

First look, and it's all a bit Killzone. Scarred beaches, dust and rubble and grey everywhere... It's all very sombre,

all very serious and all a bit too familiar. Until, that is, you turn invisible. Then everything totally changes.

The 'Future Soldier' in the title is the real giveaway here. Unlike a Modern Warfare, Ghost Recon is taking things a little bit further, handing you the opportunity to play with the technology that's on the horizon but is not quite here yet, and optical camouflage is just one of them.

At any point, the Ghosts can switch to a Predator-style near-invisibility, using their special reflective nanosuits (we don't know how it works). This renders them almost impossible to see, and opens up plenty of options on the battlefield. Sending in one man in camo to flank your enemies while your team-mates take up strong cover positions is one obvious way of taking advantage of your new-found tech. The E3 demo, for example, saw one particularly brave Ghost stroll right into an enemy base and take down foes

It's all very grey and futurey, but you wouldn't want bright colours and blue skies really. Gritty, we'll call it.

"At any point, the Ghosts can switch to a Predator-style near-invisibility"

The Ghost Recon games have always looked spectacular, and this is no different.





> Ghost Recon FS continued

with slick stealth kills. It's going to make for some seriously tense combat scenarios – as Ubisoft likes to call them – because if you get rumbled then you're going down.

Ubi has confirmed four-player co-op for the first time in the series, meaning that you and three real-life buddies will be able to charge through this future war together. Unlike a Gears or a Halo, success in Ghost Recon only comes from tight, tactical awareness. Rushing in headfirst into the enemy isn't going to work, so you're going to have to rely on communication, battle planning and careful use of the returning cross-com cameras in order to succeed. Probably

not one to play with randoms, then, if Left 4 Dead and every other game ever is anything to go by.

Even on your own, though, Ghost Recon has always provided team-mate AI that's robust and compliant enough. Playing on your own can sometimes make for a richer experience, simply because you can be the skipper without annoying your mates with your constant order-barking. The cross-com tech allows you to see what your buddies are doing at all times, so you can plan co-ordinated assaults and flanking manoeuvres with relative ease.

More so than any previous Ghost Recon, though, Ubisoft is allowing players to go 'all-action' if they wish and just take the fight to the opposition.

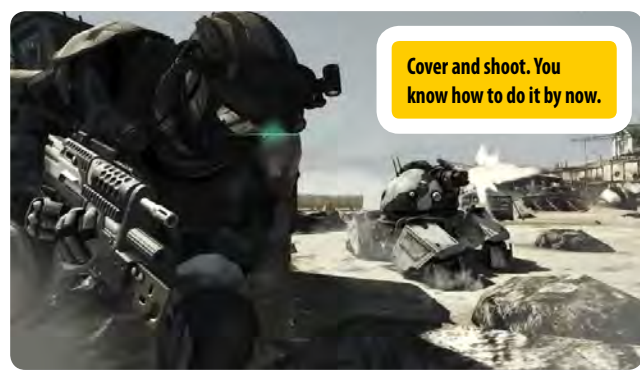


Having invisible legs will be crucial in future wars.

Spurred on by the current crop of mega-shooters, Ghost Recon Future Soldier's slick cover mechanic and hi-tech weaponry will be ample for players to just dive in and blast the hell out of everything. It'll be far less satisfying, of course, but the option's there, much like it was in Splinter Cell Conviction.

There's no doubt about it, this is Ubisoft's big game of the winter, and it's attempting to gain a foothold in the market that's dominated by Call of Duty, Killzone and even Halo. Future Soldier is

different enough and ambitious enough to make the Ghosts stand out from the pack. Quite a mean feat, considering no one can actually see them. ●



Cover and shoot. You know how to do it by now.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Ghost Recon Future Soldier





HANDS ON

EA Sports MMA

Publisher: EA
Developer: EA Chicago
Heritage: Fight Night Round 3
Link: www.eamma.com
ETA: October

Rage in the cage

It's a rare situation that sees a video game go hand-in-hand with an upcoming sports promotion, but that's what is happening with the functionally titled EA Sports MMA. MMA company and UFC competitor Strikeforce has spent the past 12 months drenching its every advertising inch in EA logos, and to the ill-informed, this could look like the official Strikeforce videogame.

It's not, though. It might be filled with Strikeforce's commentators, cages

and fighters, but EA MMA is an international affair. The Career mode will see your photoface-created fighter travelling the globe in search of mixed martial arts supremacy.

In order to do so, you'll have to get a grasp of every aspect of this multifaceted sport. Striking owes a debt of gratitude to EA Chicago's most famous son, Fight Night, with analogue sweeps and stabs letting off jabs, hooks and crosses. Instead of Total Punch Control, EA is calling it Total Strike Control, in reference to MMA's eight points of contact: fists, elbows, feet and knees. The stand-up game, as it is known, has a looseness to it that is absent from UFC Undisputed, but only extended hands-on time will reveal its true depth. There's punch slipping, counter strikes and heavy-handed knockout blows, but some repeated animations and a lack of impact are slightly concerning at this stage.



Fedor 'The Last Emperor' Emelianenko. He might not look it, but he's the hardest man in the world.



"Striking owes a debt of gratitude to EA Chicago's most famous son, the Fight Night franchise"





> EA Sports MMA cont.

Much more confident is EA Sports MMA's grappling, which is the closest we've come to digitally recreating the subtleties and strength of ground and clinch fighting. Closing distance and grabbing hold of your opponent is a more viable and visually pleasing tactic than in UFC 2010, and takedowns look organic and suitably painful.

EA has chosen to utilise the buttons for ground transitions, opting for a cat-and-mouse style mind game, coupled with brutal ground and pound of course. As for submissions, they operate through their own little minigames, involving button matching or tweaking the right stick. Its

preferable to UFC's 'shine' system which leaves holes in hands and controllers in tatters. How it performs in the most crucial arena, online, will be the ultimate test.

Talking of which, surely the most interesting thing happening in EA Sports MMA's development is 'Live Broadcast', an unprecedented online mode that sees fights between top players broadcast over Xbox Live, with commentary from real, live play-by-play guys. It's an amazing development.

Fighters who are chosen for a 'Live Broadcast' fight will first make 'hype videos' to talk up their chances – the equivalent of a pro-wrestling 'promo' – before taking on their opponent over Live, with thousands watching. Quite



This would definitely happen if Randy Couture stepped into the cage with Fedor.

how the selection process is decided is still unknown, as are the logistics of such a complicated and potentially problematic system, but in terms of ambition, it's huge.

EA has already said that Live Broadcast could appear in future sports titles across their portfolio, and given the company's tendency to roll ideas out across everything, it wouldn't be a surprise to see Live Broadcasts of Madden and FIFA in the near future. This year, though, it's all about the cage. Or indeed ring, as EA Sports MMA truly

is an international Mixed Martial Arts endeavour. Will it be enough to usurp the mighty UFC Undisputed? Only one way to find out... FIGHT! ●



PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
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SHIFTING GEARS

Reflections' Creative Director **Martin Edmondson** talks us through the details of *Driver: San Francisco*



So what was it that prompted Driver's return?

It's really a collision of a few different things. First of all, Ubisoft bought the franchise and the studio from Infogrames Atari and wanted to reinvigorate it, and asked me to come back and help to do that. Also there hadn't been a Driver game on the current generation of hardware, and because the essence of driver has always been this realistic Hollywood car chase thing, the possibilities on the current generation of hardware are just that much more powerful compared to the previous ones that it just allows us to realise that more closely to the real experience.

How did the Shift feature come about?

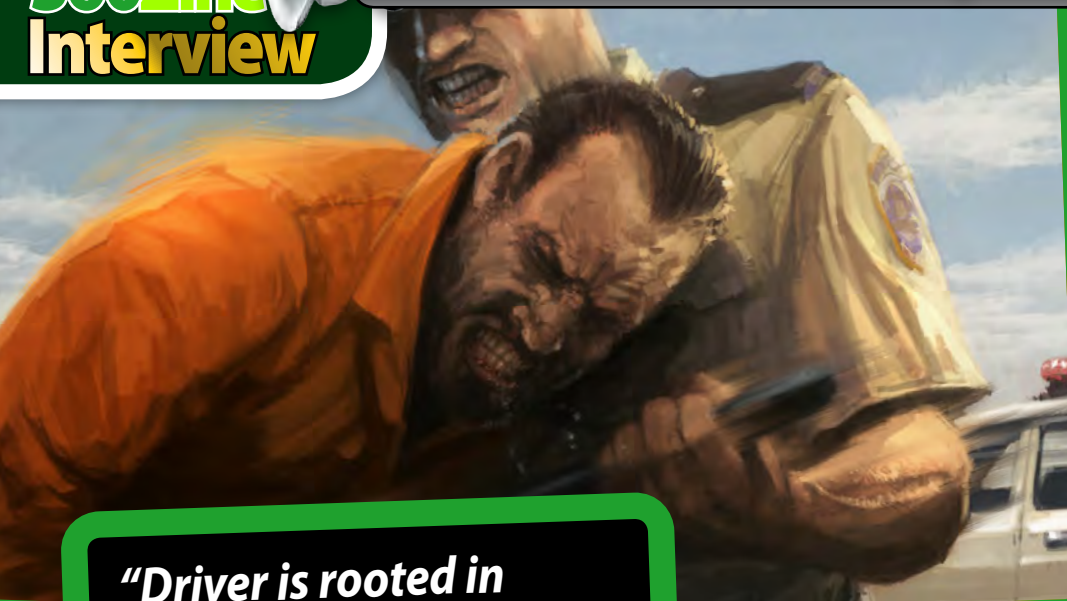
The Shift feature itself is very unique for driving games, but

we wanted something that was not just a feature for feature's sake, but one that was deeply integrated into the story.

Tanner is involved in an accident early on in the story, and goes into a coma, and the game is really about Tanner dealing with that and ultimately trying to get out of that coma – *can* he get out of that coma? So the player knows this, and in Tanner's head all this crazy stuff is happening – and it gets much crazier as well. First of all he's frightened by this ability, and you see that through the whole of the story. He's shouting at his sidekick saying 'what's going on? What's going on with me? I just had this weird experience', so it's about living with those weird experiences of Tanner and trying to see him through it at the other end.

What came first, the mechanic or the idea within the story?





"Driver is rooted in reality. Always has been and always will be"



> Interview continued

The mechanics of the system came first because we wanted to have a strong game that had a feature like this that enabled us to do something different with the mechanics, but what we didn't want to do is just so that we could have this bizarre unexplained mechanic, so we were working almost in parallel actually.

We wanted a gameplay mechanic that allows us to swap between people's lives; how do you justify that? Well there are all sorts of sci-fi things you can do; all sorts of supernatural things that we clearly didn't want because Driver is rooted in reality. Always has been and always will be. So it needed to be something that was very much a believable possibility. You can actually imagine yourself having a dream about that and dreaming that you could do that. There's nothing surreal or supernatural about it. That's why we explain it to the player, as we don't have the player in this sort of 'what's going on?' type of world.

So is this actually happening, or is it all in Tanner's head?

You'll have to play through and find out! We obviously don't want to give too much away at this stage. That's for the game to be played through and worked out.

And what prompted the decision to eliminate on-foot gameplay?

Driver is about driving, and it should really be about driving not running around. We had got a bit distracted

with some of the previous games, but also Shift, as it almost replaces running around.

Instead of having on-foot missions where you're walking around and doing stuff which we didn't want, the Shift allows what we could do with that in a much better and more reactive way. You wouldn't be able to do the thing where I grabbed that big truck [which Martin showed us during a demonstration of the game and its Shift mechanic]. You simply wouldn't be able to do that.

And has the increase in quality of the competition – with games like GTA IV – encouraged the team to go back to its roots?

That was definitely part of it. It is a huge amount of work to get the on-foot stuff working – it's massive. And with Driver... all of our games have been innovative, if you look at Shadow of the Beast, Destruction Derby, Driver and Stuntman, then they all have something a bit unique; something new to them, and I was conscious that we wanted to maintain that with the game, but remain absolutely core to the driving experience. ●



Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Reflections
Heritage: Stuntman, Destruction Derby, Driver
Link: N/A
ETA: Autumn



Driver: San Francisco's Creative Director, Martin Edmondson





Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Reflections
Heritage: Destruction Derby, Stuntman
Link: N/A
ETA: Autumn

HANDS ON

Driver: San Francisco

Bullitt in the head

A lot has happened in the open-world of sandbox gaming since Driver was last relevant. Driv3r damaged the brand's reputation, Parallel Lines appeared and disappeared with little impact, and the series appeared destined for the scrapyard, especially when it was faced up to the likes of Grand Theft Auto IV and Burnout Paradise.

So it was with a degree of trepidation that a group of journalists voyaged up to gloomy Newcastle to get a first

hands-on with the newly-named Driver: San Francisco. No-one knew what to expect, beyond a solid handling model and a 70's cinematic sensibility, and that's exactly what we got. So far, so Driver then. Well, kind of...

Just as we're settling into that familiar Driver rhythm, as muscle cars hurl themselves around slightly ugly San Fran corners with reckless abandon, something strange happens. The camera pulls back, jumps into the sky and then launches back into another car's windshield, straight into the brain of another driver. And we're still motoring. What just happened? Shift is what just happened.

Ubisoft Reflections has done away with any notion of wandering San Francisco's hilly streets, and instead any vehicular transference takes place telepathically. The explanation in-game is a little tenuous and very Life on Mars – undercover cop supremo John Tanner is in a coma after an accident that

Could this be the game to revitalise the Driver franchise? Quite possibly.



"Ubisoft has done away with any wandering around, and instead any vehicular transference is done telepathically"



The cockpit cam really is the only way to play Driver: San Francisco.





> Driver: SF continued

takes place at the beginning of the game. From this coma, he then somehow gains the ability to jump astrally between the brains of drivers and control any car in the city.

What this means in-game, is a genuinely unique style of car chase. If you're tailing a 'perp' and you spot a faster car up ahead, you can Shift straight into it and catch up to your enemy much quicker. Another example that came up during out time with the game was altogether more violent. Spotting an articulated lorry driving on the opposite side of the road lets Tanner unleash his vicious side, as he Shifts into the driver's seat, grabs the wheel and

ploughs headlong into the enemy. Nasty stuff indeed.

It's a very interesting mechanic, and it will take time to balance. Our demo allowed for infinite Shift, but it'll be limited in the final game – like all the best in-game powers, you'll have to earn it through skill. Then it will become a case of timing a Shift to maximise its potential rather than just leaping from car to car whenever you want to – although that is rather good fun.

Driver: San Francisco definitely still needs work. In its current state, it doesn't match-up visually to what's expected of a current-gen open-world game, and while it moves at a clean 60 FPS, another layer of spit and polish is crucial to regain faith among a cynical consumer base.



Cut-scenes are sure to be handled in a stylish way.

And of course the Shift mechanic, as mentioned, needs to be perfect, or it could break the game.

Still, the handling is as heavy and satisfying as ever, harking back to the days of the original game's then-revolutionary car chases, and the scope for Shift is huge. Side missions are activated by literally jumping out to a birds-eye view of the city – locating a cop for example – and diving straight into their life, and straight into a cop chase. Interesting stuff indeed.

Another major release for Ubisoft this winter then, and one that has potential. In terms of expectation, you can't ask for much more than that. ●



PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Driver: San Francisco



There are over 100 licensed cars in the game.

360Zine **DRIVER**

HOW COMPLETE?	FIRST IMPRESSIONS
70%	70%
Some interesting ideas, which could make it a winner	



Blur

Total WipEout

Better late than never. Blur arrived late for the review process, but such is the quality of Bizarre Creations' electric new racer that it would be a crime not to give it the credit it so richly deserves. And do you know what? It appears that the Liverpool lads have done good.

It shouldn't come as a surprise, really. Bizarre have been the masters of a specific brand of arcade racing for years, and with Blur they've taken this experience and melded it with the studio's other landmark effort, Geometry Wars.

Yes, it may seem trite, but Blur is heady mix of Project Gotham and everyone's favourite twin-sticked shape-based shooter. For every apex you have to hit perfectly there's a sparkly neon power-up as some sort of karmic balance. Friends' high scores taunt you from the menus, techno thuds from the speakers and the engines growl and purr with raw automotive aggression.

Blur might be a kart racer in snazzy clothes, but it has so much more depth than its brightly coloured brethren. In an unusual move for an arcade racer,



"Engines growl and purr with raw automotive aggression"



All the cars are real-world models, and handle like real vehicles.



the handling is almost as tricky as PGR's. Hammering around the track, bashing into walls and ignoring the brake will result in last place more often than not, and in 20-car races, that's a pretty humiliating feeling. You have to work the racing line properly, and when you do, you can actually feel the drag as you pull away from the apex. Amazing stuff.

Don't be misled, though; it's no Forza, and even those typically put off by any notion of caution in a racer need not worry, as getting to grips with Blur's huge selection of racers is not a tricky business. In fact, more time will be spent figuring out the best use for the finely balanced power-ups that hover tantalisingly throughout every meticulously well-designed track.

Unlike other power-up racers, there's no mega-weapon here. Almost all of the power-ups can be countered with another, so an incoming Shunt missile can be stopped with a Shield, a backwards-fired Mine, Bolt or even a

POWER PLAY

What makes Far Cry 2 such a forceful FPS?



Powered up



Nitro juice



Seek and destroy



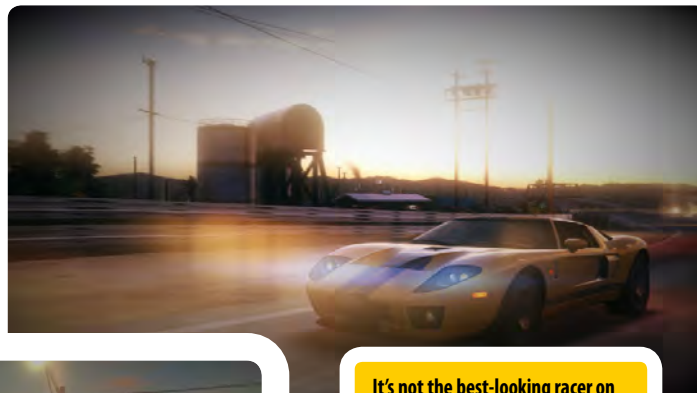
Powered up

Blur might feature power-ups, but it's not another unbalanced Mario Kart clone. Almost every power can be countered with another, meaning it's possible to go a whole race without being hit. Difficult, but possible.





Hitting an opponent with a Barge is immensely satisfying. Especially at the finish line.



It's not the best-looking racer on the planet, but when 20 cars are firing power-ups at each other, it more than does the job.



> Blur continued

well-timed Barge. 20-car races are so intense, as just trying to hang on to 14th place can be a titanic struggle. Flying out into the lead changes everything; you have to become a Jedi-levelled defensive master. Win, and it's a sheer, unadulterated triumph.

Offline, Blur's career structure is familiar but solid. Races are backed up by checkpoint challenges and destruction battles, but it's the lure of beating your buddies' scores that'll keep you in the hunt.

Long term Blur-ing, though, will be had online. Bizarre has taken the ideas of Modern Warfare (levelling, perks) and incorporated them into a racer so intense, fair and often hilarious that it's surely the best in its class. Lag's barely an issue, races are divided into classes so no one is left trailing at the back with an unpowered motor, and the raw eye-popping rush that comes from battling for any position on the grid is

"Blur is a hugely complete, confident and cathartic racing experience"

pure online bliss. Blur deserves to garner a massive community, as it really is that good online.

So, really don't be put off by its moderately sparse visuals or any concerns of an emo-Mario Kart. This is truly breathtaking stuff, a hugely complete, confident and cathartic racing experience, and it's also one like no other.

If the goal of modern videogames is to make us 'feel' them, then few do it as successfully as Blur. Bizarre Creations, we salute you. ●



Roll over screen for annotations



**360Zine
Verdict**

One of the finest arcade racers ever, and an absolute beast online

- Fast and powerful
- Brilliant connectivity
- Could be prettier

93%



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Publisher: EA
Developer: Harmonix
Heritage: Guitar Hero, Rock Band
Link: www.rockband.com
OUT NOW

Green Day Rock Band

American idiots?

It's a good job that Rock Band 3 and its new keyboard peripheral has been announced, because the music genre was in serious danger of petering out completely. Just spend a few hours with Green Day Rock Band and you'll see why.

Unlike last year's Beatles love-in, Green Day have been given a fairly basic digital makeover, with performance capture from three famous concerts making up

the background to 47 tunes. Good tunes too for the most part, too.

Drumming, as expected, is excellent and fiercely difficult on Expert level, with off-beat kicks all over the place and rarely a repeated bar. Sadly, the same cannot be said for the guitar parts, which suffer greatly from the three-chord structure of pop-punk music. Even on the hardest difficulty setting, most songs just repeat the same patterns until the very basic



Billy Joe Armstrong, a man who will never age.

"Green Day have been given a fairly basic digital makeover"

solos appear. To do it justice, you should really sing at the same time, and if a buddy is up for it, Green Day Rock Band supports vocal harmonies just like The Fab Four's game did.

There are highlights, of course. Playing through all nine minutes of Jesus of Suburbia in a full band is pretty euphoric, and there's a lonely satisfaction to sitting cross-legged and strumming through Good Riddance (Time of your Life).

Ultimately though, Rock Band just needs an injection of adrenaline to keep its heart beating, and that doesn't come from the spiky punk stylings of Green Day. The presentation is basic throughout and nowhere near as lavish and reverential as Rock Band The Beatles, or even Guitar Hero Metallica, and the career structure – opening sets within the same concerts – doesn't really make sense. A rags-to-riches story might have been better, although the decision to

only include three albums worth of content – with a sprinkling of non Dookie, American Idiot or 21st Century Breakdown songs throughout – halts any notion of living the Green Day life.

The well-worn cliché is to speak about 'fans of the music will enjoy it', and that's true to an extent, but even those who wear eye liner and skinny red ties will probably grow weary of hammering through the same Rock Band patterns that have been testing our dexterity for the past five years.

So bring on the keyboards, bring on the six-stringed guitars and bring on the drums. It's time to move on. ●

360Zine Verdict

Occasionally thrilling, but the format is getting a bit stale

- Good drumming
- Basic presentation
- Format is now dull

74%

In 360Zine
Issue 45



TRUE CRIME

ACTIVISION'S BIG HOPE PREVIEWED

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CHILD OF EDEN ASSASSIN'S CREED BROTHERHOOD
HALO REACH FALLOUT NEW VEGAS MAFIA 2

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