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3DO™ magazine

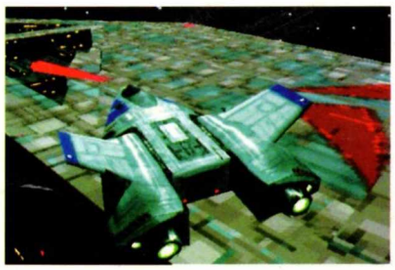
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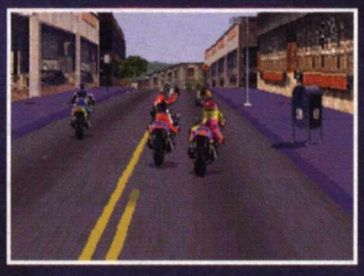
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3



3DO

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5

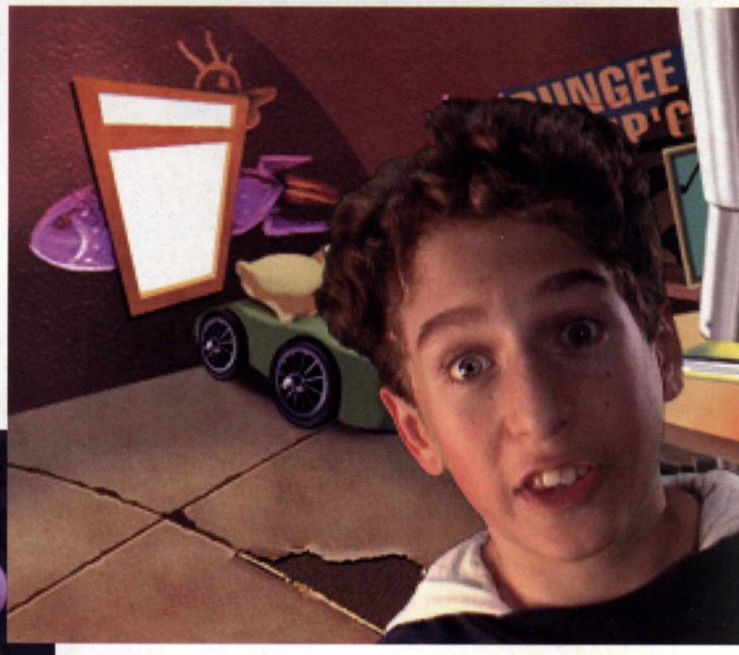
FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

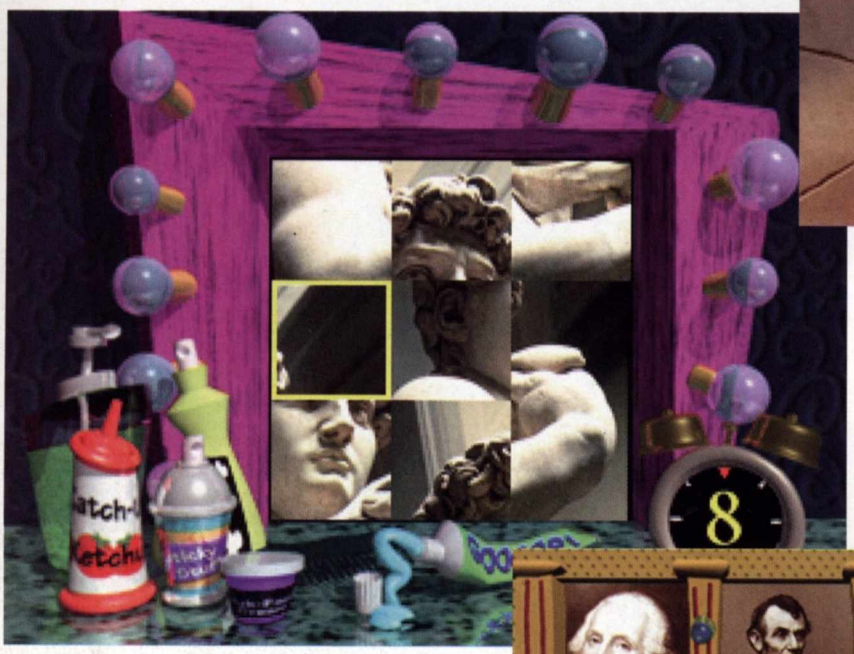
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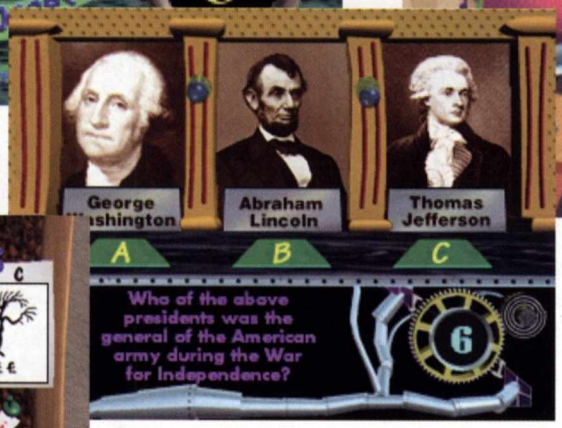
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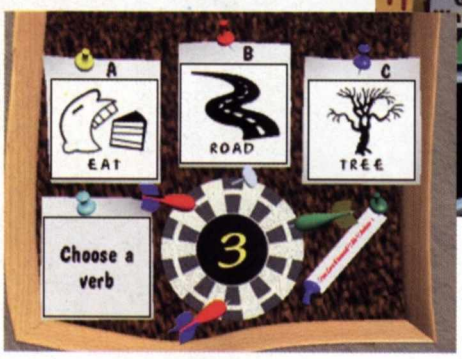
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3DO

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3DO magazine

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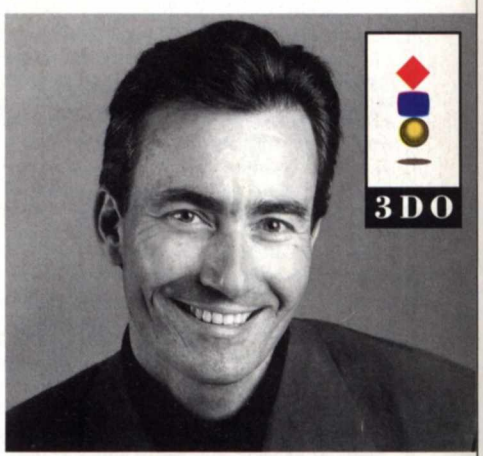
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3DO STRIKES GOLD

3DO's campaign to conquer America has received a major boost with the recent launch of GoldStar's 3DO system. Properly referred to as a GoldStar GPA101M, its spec is essentially identical to Panasonic's FZ-1 and will initially retail at the same $399 pricepoint. However, the presence of a second manufacturer is bound to further increase pressure on a price which has already fallen by over 50% from the its 1993 launch. The more reasonable price, and a deluge of great 3DO games, has helped build the US market to some 70,000 units and the new ad campaign aims to increase the numbers even further. The president of Schwarz, a major US toy chain, claimed the videogame market was set to boom over Xmas and no system would be "hotter or brighter" than GoldStar's.

The Korean-based company became a 3DO partner in March 1994, and first shipped their system there in September. A European launch in Spring 1995 is expected, but not yet confirmed, and will again act to pressure Panasonic over its prices. GoldStar is one of the world's largest electronics manufacturers, operating in 180 countries with gross sales exceeding $6 billion, and has a reputation for being very price competitive. As for aesthetics, the GPA101M is a much more conventionally styled, hifi-style system than the FZ-1 while its Sega-style joypad feels better than it looks.



PEARSON GO FOR BLOOD

The Pearson group, who diverse interests include the Financial Times, continues with its multimedia crusade. After acquiring Mindscape earlier in the year, it has helped fund the company's $11.5 million take over of SSI, America's premier software developer for RPGs and wargames. SSI already has one 3DO game on the market called *Slayer* (see page 47). Also joining the group is Atreid Concept, a French company whose software tools caught Mindscape's eye. Of particular interest are LibSys and 3DBioMotion – cross-platform and animation packages respectively. The latter is the prime attraction of *Warriors*, an *SFII* clone with ten warriors from around the world meeting in one-on-one combat. Hyper-realistic animation, and of course plenty of gore, make this one to watch out for. Also slated for 3DO release is *AMAZE*, a unique first-person perspective SF sports sim for up to eight players.



Warriors

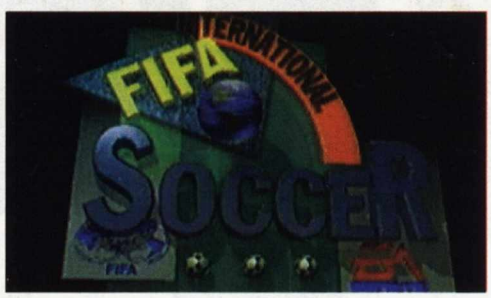


AMAZE

CENTURY FIFA

Due to either an amazing stroke of luck, or clever scheduling, The 3DO Company not only managed to announce 100 software releases on the anniversary of its October launch, but also that the magical 100th release was none other than Electronic Art's European hype-monster, *FIFA International Soccer*. 3DO CEO Trip Hawkins claimed the past year "has brought about a remarkable change in the way that people look at interactive entertainment. Consumers are no longer satisfied with outdated, limited interactive technology. They have made it clear that they want an advanced, sophisticated system that is supported by a wide selection of the very best software available. And they want that system to grow with them over time."

Underneath the hype, the company had some substantial achievements to announce with that 100 titles being undoubtedly the most important. Hawkins' claim that it's a real milestone is incontrovertible: "We believe that we've shattered the record for the amount of time it's taken for a new format to reach 100 titles. Atari's Jaguar has only a handful of titles after nearly a year on the market." Such a broad software base has been critical in its sales success, 3DO estimating over 250,000 units have already been sold globally.

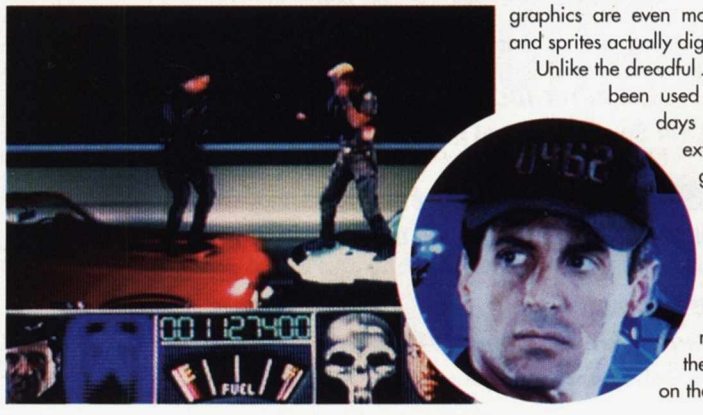


WYLLIE PROMOTIONS

3DO's European agency, Fodor-Wyllie, is busily developing a very special club for 3DO owners. Included in every single FZ-1 box is a form for owners to fill in and send off. After Christmas, members will get a monthly mailshot from the company to keep them up-to-date on various happenings and special offers. The club is free for the first six months, so make sure you get your application off – there'll be lots of exclusive merchandising available for the true 3DO devotee, and the promotional artwork alone is apparently a masterpiece. The overall concept is "great balls of fire" according to rising media star Grace 'in your face' Fodor.

DEMOLITION JOB

While cynics have dubbed the synergy between Hollywood and Silicon Valley as Sillywood, Virgin's *Demolition Man* looks set to explode people's contempt for multimedia gaming. As with old, classic movie conversions such as *RoboCop* or *Batman*, *Demolition Man* tries to recreate its movie licence with a variety of appropriate sub-games. Car chases, hand-to-hand combat and *Op Wolf*-style first-person blasting provide the predictable game genres, but the 3DO system raises this tired format to a whole new level. Intro and interlevel FMV sequences are so extensive and tightly integrated that you need hardly buy the videotape. In-game graphics are even more impressive with backgrounds and sprites actually digitised from the movie.



Unlike the dreadful *Jurassic Park*, the real actors have been used and actually agreed to several days extra shooting just to provide extra footage for the game. While gameplay was still being tweaked as we went to press, there can be no doubting *Demolition Man* is a technological milestone which finally makes interactive movies live up to their name with no-stop arcade action. In fact, there's actually a coin-op version on the way!

THE ART OF DOOM

California-based Art Data Interactive have stunned the 3DO community by grabbing probably the most lucrative licenses of them all. Early next year ADI will be releasing conversions of both *Doom* and *Doom II: Hell On Earth*, iD Software's enormously successful 3D shoot-'em-ups.

ADI have already been given iD's original source code and are hard at work converting it to 3DO. While company president Randy Scott was insistent the gameplay would be identical: "there's no way we would touch that, it's just go out and shoot everything!", the game's presentation will be massively upgraded. 24bit Cinepak film sequences will provide in-game links, while actual game graphics are being entirely overhauled. Rather than using 8bit colour bitmaps, ADI will be using hi-res, full colour sprites. The audio is also likely to be totally redone, and there's even plans for new monsters, weapons and levels.

ADI were previously best known for their relationship with Mirage, from whom they've licensed their just finished conversion of *Rise Of The Robots*. Another Mirage conversion seems likely, but in the meantime they're hard at work on Hollywood sets filming for an



interactive 3DO movie. As yet the title and design is being kept tightly under wraps, but we expect to hear more soon. Overall, Art Data plans to release at least five 3DO titles during 1995.

To celebrate their mega-mogul status, Art Data have no less than five copies of their brilliant *Rise Of The Robots* conversion to give away. If you know the name of the game's developer simply write it on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope, and send it the **Rise Of The 3DO competition**, **3DO magazine**, 124 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, BH1 1NF. The closing date for the competition is the January 30th, 1995.



Doom II. **PC screenshots of the game everyone's playing**



WHOLE NEW WORLD

Welcome to the very first issue of **3DO magazine**. It's meant a lot of late nights getting it out in time, but it's also been fun with the Christmas market bringing a deluge of excellent titles to bolster established classics such as *Madden* and *Road Rash*. *Need For Speed* has led to an almost endless occupation of our offices by writers from other magazines.

The long-anticipated next generation of videogaming has finally arrived. Over a year after its US launch, 3DO has picked up an exceptional list of titles to make its European debut. EC regulations on the type of Japanese import mean it's still an expensive system, at £400 it's very much a machine for the elite gamesplayer, but no longer is there an agonising wait between quality releases. What's there is good, and games such as *Wing Commander III*, *Flying Nightmares* and *Space Hulk* illustrate how the system just keeps getting better.

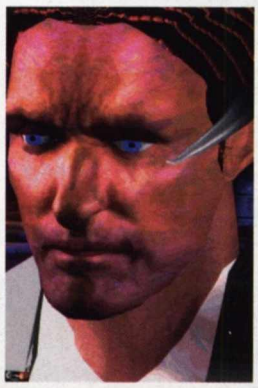
Exactly what the future holds in the market as a whole is difficult to predict. Will the latest wave of new superconsoles live up to their hype? Maybe, but new generation games are increasingly sophisticated and wading through Japanese text is no way to play an RPG. For at least another six months, 3DO effectively has the English-speaking world to itself and by year end it promises an upgrade to comfortably exceed any other machine on the market. If 3DO succeed in their vision of a future-proof machine, then gamers everywhere will be grateful and maybe that world-standard isn't so far off.

This, however, is only my view and I'd very much like to make clear **3DO magazine** is an entirely independent publication. Our views are our own, and should in no way be presumed to be those of the 3DO Company. Nevertheless we'd very much like to thank the 3DO Company, particularly Bob Faber and John Edelson for their co-operation. Thanks also go to Jean, Grace and Melanie at Fodor-Wyllie, all our interview subjects (who often contributed many hours of their time), Marcus and Robin at TORC software and all those PR people who've gone out of their way to support us.

HELL IS 3DO

Dennis Hopper is heading up a cast of no less than fifty actors for Gametek's epic 'interactive movie', Hell. While most games of its ilk are nightmares of the less than pleasurable variety, Hell promises to make damnation fun. Its developers, Take Two, have already produced one brilliantly original game, the vampire-cyberpunks hybrid Bloodnet, and Hell is even more ambitious with a plot inspired by Anne Rice, Poppy Z. Brite and a host of more academic writers on Satan's cosy little retreat.

In the year 2094, the government is just a puppet of a money-grubbing capitalist consortium who, in turn, have their strings being pulled by Old Nick himself. Dennis Hopper and Grace Jones are his agents on Earth, while the forces of good are represented by Stephanie Seymour and Geoffrey Holder (Live and Let Die). All the characters are represented by 3D rendered graphics except, strangely, Seymour who's digitised because she's a hologram (and not at all because she's a supermodel). As with BloodNet, the game allows for plenty of cyberpunk-style detective work hacking into computers and jury-rigging special hardware, but the plot is even more vividly imaginative and provides a welcome break from all those comedy adventure LucasArts have made so fashionable. While the PC version is due out any day now, the just announced 3DO version is set for a March release.





PC 3DO?

3DO's ambitions for creating a world standard for interactive entertainment are perfectly encapsulated by the 3DO Blaster card. According to Creative Labs, it's the future of PC gaming.

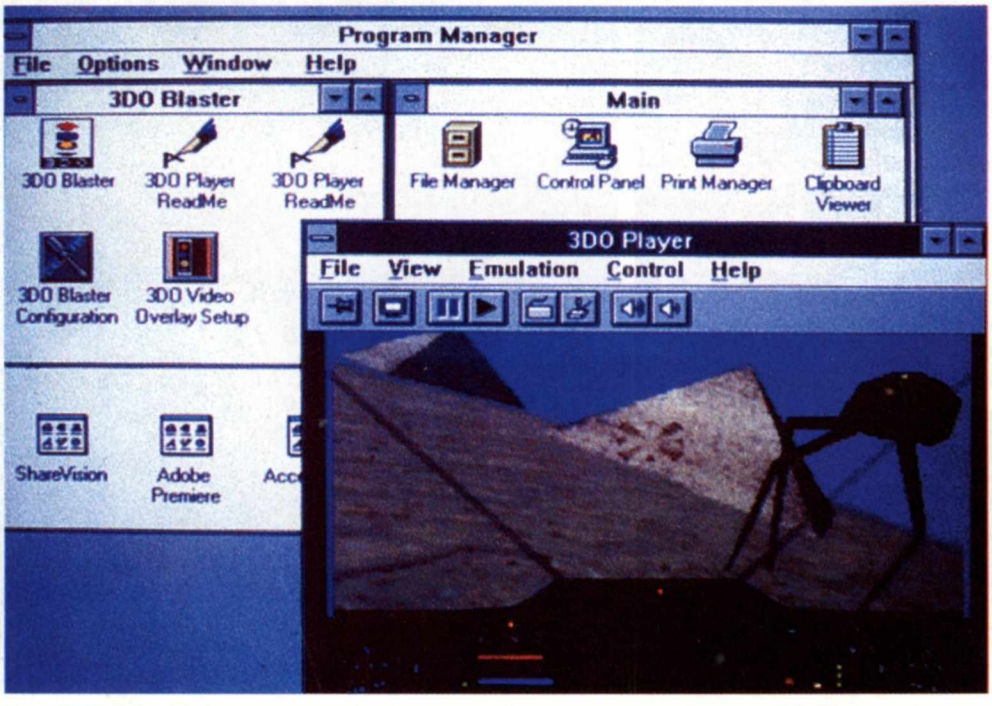
The PC is a constant battleground for warring standards, so when a company announces yet another one people don't usually pay much attention. Creative Labs aren't just any company though, their Sound Blaster system is an industry standard for PC audio and last year their turnover was in excess of half a billion dollars. The company's commitment to 3DO isn't on a whim either, they're a full partner and hardware licensee of The 3DO Company.

Creative chairman Sim Wong Hoo sees the partnership as merging "the consumer entertainment gaming community with the multimedia marketplace. We believe that the relationship between Creative and 3DO will allow us to drive new PC standards by offering high performance, interactive products with a broad range of appeal."

Ian Skelton, UK technical marketing manager, puts the same message in more direct fashion: "I've been in the computer business for over ten years, from ZX81 to the BBC Micro and on, but I've never seen anything so easy to use. Creative have been pioneering how to make multimedia applications hassle-free on PCs, but with games you're still always having to go in and reconfigure to suit your latest buy. With a 3DO Blaster, you just put in a CD and play the game. It's as simple as that. That's why we want to make it the standard for PC games. We believe it's the way to go for the future, particularly on the PC."

While other PC companies are trying to develop their own custom graphics chips, Creative are currently solely committed to 3DO due to it being already established as a standard. M2 provides a natural upgrade path which they're confident will exceed anything else that's planned. Skelton is particularly emphasises its appeal for people who are reluctant to splash out a couple of grand for a Pentium 90 just to play the latest games. The 3DO Blaster happily works on anything above a 386 at exactly the same speed as on a Pentium machine. There are also no memory problems since it has its own onboard RAM, while an expansion port allows for an MPEG upgrade to play VideoCD titles.





In action, the system works just like any other Windows program; you can size the window from a postage stamp to full screen and, because all the processing power is on the card, you can continue to run your favourite application. It also includes a VoiceAssist speech recognition engine designed to turn spoken keywords into commands, so that theoretically you could play a 3DO system game by saying "left", "right", "fire" or whatever. A fun addition which might have some utility for disabled people, if the system really can handle the numerous combination moves many games require.

Inevitably a key question is going to be price and at the time of going to press, this hadn't been decided. Jane Gibson insisted it would be "very competitive." At various shows, the 3DO Blaster had caused "tremendous interest... a fantastic response" and she expected it to be a big product this Christmas.

The first batch of 3DO Blasters will ship with the card accompanied by a joypad and the games *ShockWave* and *Gridders*. To get it working you also need a Sound Blaster Pro card, around £50 to buy but pretty much standard with PCs, and a 563 CD-ROM drive, £110 new but as the bestselling CD-ROM Drive for the past year many people will already own one. Hopefully the all-in price will at least match, or even undercut the £399 FZ-1. However, in many ways the systems aren't really competitive. If you want a 3DO systemunder your living room TV, a standalone console fits the bill. If, on the other hand, you want red-hot videogaming as a hassle-free option on your PC, the 3DO Blaster is essential. Either way the world of 3DO entertainment continues to expand. □ **ssw**

3DO magazine

Creative Labs can be contacted direct on ✆0734 344322.

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- An action packed side-scrolling adventure game on the 3-DO platform!
- More than 25 levels of gameplay!
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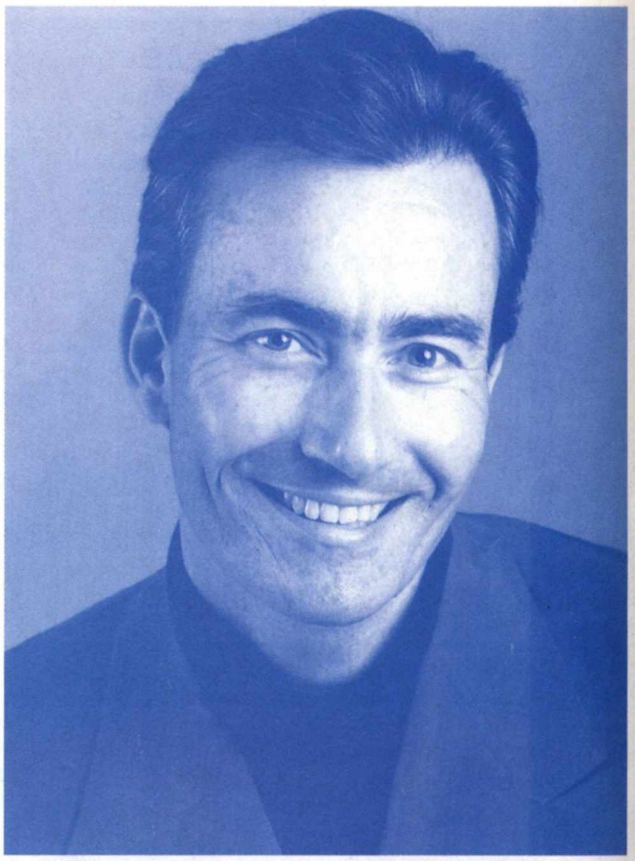
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Trip Hawkins

Interactive Messiah?

Since stepping down from heading EA in December 1990, 3DO CEO Trip Hawkins has been working to produce not just the first 'superconsole', but also establishing a worldwide standard for interactive hardware. Stuart Wynne asked him about progress so far.



How long did it take for you to decide to become head of 3DO?

"I've worked for over 20 years toward this goal of establishing interactive media as a new mass market. In a way, everything I've done before has culminated in 3DO. More specifically, back in 1990 I thought actively about 3DO's strategy for a year before I realised it would be necessary for me to leave EA to run it."

What have been the best and worst parts of 3DO. Has it been more difficult than expected?

"Most things in life are more difficult than you expected. Entrepreneurs are optimists otherwise they'd never try to accomplish anything! I believe nonetheless that the key to success is determination and that if you stick with it you can resolve any obstacles that you run into. The hardest part has been waiting for the great software titles like *Road Rash* that really show that the 3DO is as good as we always said it was. The best part is now that we have the great software titles. They're fun to play and they blow people away!"

How did you negotiate such powerful support for 3DO?

"It's an ongoing process. We have tried to figure out how to make the business a win-win proposition for the various participants. There are a lot of companies that believe the world deserves an interactive standard and we're trying to make it happen for them."

How do you see Studio 3DO developing?

"Studio 3DO will focus on building a small library of unique software titles that are only available for the 3DO format. We will focus on doing original titles in areas we think are critical to establishing the 3DO hardware or which are complementary to what our third-party software suppliers are doing. Unlike them, we will only make 3DO titles, and not be distracted by other formats, so I hope that we can become pretty darn good at making good 3DO titles."

What do you think of rival hardware which has sprung up since 3DO's launch?

"You need about $500 million in capital to have a good chance in this business. Atari is way short of that even with their recent settlement, and it is not yet clear what level of commitment that Sony will have once they realise how much money they are going to have to lose to hang in there. Sega and Nintendo are the market leaders today, but they are losing momentum and moving slowly into higher technologies that may be out of their depth. Philips have done an amazing job with a technology that was designed a decade ago. It would be nice if there were more collaboration to create an industry standard instead of so many companies doing their own thing. We're trying very hard to build a multi-brand family and we now have four manufacturers in mass production (Panasonic, Sanyo, Goldstar and Creative Labs).

"Our technology strategy is unique compared to the videogame companies in four respects. First, in our total commitment to price/performance leadership. Second, in our belief that the customer should be able to upgrade to the next generation. Third, because our architecture allows us to be backward compatible, software can migrate to the new generation. And fourth, to scalability for developers so they can use what they already know about 3DO to make M2 products in the future. By contrast, the videogame companies have a history of substandard hardware performance, no upgrade path, no backward compatibility, and no scalability."

How would you compare a Pentium PC to a 3DO system?

"A PC is still a PC. A Pentium is still a CISC processor with the wrong architecture for multimedia at low cost, and it is still part of the PC which has the wrong bus architecture for multimedia performance at reasonable cost. A Pentium costs more but still cannot do many of the things that a 3DO system can already do."

How important do you see 3DO's MEPG upgrade?

"In the long-run, MPEG will get to be so cheap that it will be an automatic. In the short-run, it is for video aficionados. For gamers, we can do pretty darn good video without MPEG simply because 3DO is a powerful system with a double-speed CD drive. As a gamer, I am happy with the video in titles like *Road Rash, Shock Wave, The Horde* and *Sewer Shark*."

When will a 3DO modem arrive? Do you like network games like *Doom*?

"We'd like to see modems become available in 1995. In the long-run modems are important. I'm a big fan of multiple player games like *Doom*. *Doom* was not the first point-of-view corridor game, but has popularised a genre which is also very easy to put on the 3DO format because of our fast texture-mapping."

Will there be a 3DO computer?

"Our transition to the PowerPC in the next few years will certainly open up some new possibilities."

Timothy Leary has compared cyberspace to psychedelia. What's your opinion?

"For me, cyberspace is an innerspace. It's dipping inside your brain and getting you to use it under your own control. It's a real life in a box. I love Tim but that's not exactly how I'd describe psychedelia, where you aren't really much in control, and it's more like unreal life unleashed from the box. Of course one of the things you can do with 3DO is simulate psychedelia..."

What are your favourite 3DO games?

"*Twisted*, because I love the family entertainment and universality of it. *Burning Soldier* because it is simple and entertaining and can be played co-operatively. *Road Rash* because it kicks butt. *FIFA Soccer* because I have never seen anything like getting six people over for dinner and watching them scream and yell and raise the roof playing that game." □

3DO magazine

Profile

Trip Hawkins has been in the computer business for 20 years, starting out at Apple Computer. He left in 1982 to found Electronic Arts and, from an initial $2 million investment, turned the company into the world's largest independent software publisher. In 1990, Hawkins formed The 3DO Company, winning early support from partners such as Matsushita, the world's largest consumer electronics company, entertainment giants MCA and Time-Warner and Electronic Arts.

R J Mical

Architect Of The Future

RJ Mical is one of the most influential men in videogaming history. Working with David Needle, he's designed a revolutionary computer, handheld and most recently, the 3DO system itself. Currently he's hard at work engineering 3DO's next step.

According to legend 3DO was originally designed on a napkin...

"Yes, the 3DO was first sketched out on a napkin while we [RJ, Needle and David Morse] were having lunch in a restaurant in September 1989. The final system is more or less exactly what we sketched out.... We've been inventing things together for many years now and the way we work together is quite special. Dave does hardware, I do software, but when we first set out to design a thing we make no real distinction between hardware and software, instead we treat it as an amorphous concept that will get teased apart into hardware and software components over time. Once we understand (more or less) the nature of what we're creating, then we go off to work on our respective parts. And that's when the real magic begins, because that's when the real brains get involved, engineers who take our basic ideas and flesh them out into systems that always do more than we originally imagined."

When did you decide to adopt the Operating System approach and what are its advantages?

"Before we linked up with Trip and his grand plan to create a standard, we had no intention of requiring developers to use the Operating System. But the standard meant we needed to allow the hardware system to evolve and expand over time, and also that all software would always run on all versions of the hardware. So it was essential to create an impenetrable layer of system software between the application and the hardware.

"Trip was actually strongly opposed to my plan for OS in the very beginning because of EA's experiences with the Amiga's OS. But I convinced Trip that an OS was essential. He wanted the standard and this was the only way that I could conceive of that would allow us to create it. But even when he became convinced, he still gave me the evil eye as a threat that if my OS was horrible and buggy and people hated it, that it would mean my doom. Quote me on that! [Laughs] Delightfully the OS is bugfree. I'm sure if you talk to developers they generally have very favourable comments."

Profile

RJ Mical began his career at Williams, programming coin-op special effects before moving to Amiga Computer where he developed the machine's revolutionary multitasking operating system. His partner there was David Needle, with whom he subsequently designed the world's most powerful handheld, the Atari Lynx, before dreaming up the 3DO system. Today he is a vice-president and fellow of The 3DO Company, heavily involved in supporting software developers, designing the M2 upgrade and further evolving the 3DO system's architecture.

What's it like working with Trip Hawkins?

"Trip is one of the most brilliant persons I've ever known. He regularly astonishes me with his intelligence and cleverness... It's delightful to work with him. It's also hard, because Trip is very demanding, very particular, critical, and frank. Trip expects the very best. That's one of the key reasons why 3DO has been so successful."

What is the most impressive thing you've seen on 3DO so far?

"Well, that's a hard one – there's a lot of them. Probably the single most coolest thing would be the visual and audio realism of *FIFA International Soccer*. This game looks and feels so real that the players feel they're really in the game!"

All your previous designs have centred on sprite graphics. Do you think 3D has become overrated?

"I think 3D realism is extremely important. That's why we designed the 3DO system to have the horsepower required to create 3D games such as *Off-World* or *Road Rash*. Furthermore, the M2 Accelerator will add the next generation of 3D graphics capabilities and audio that's the next step beyond today's 3DO system."

M2 is said to offer at least five times the performance of Sony's PlayStation. How will you achieve this?

"When we set out to design the M2 Accelerator, we decided to build a development team with a broad range of experience, some from the games industry, some with high-end graphics engine hardware and software experience, some of the best 3DO people and some very special new people hired in. Then we took our time and evolved the technology in a way that satisfied everyone's design criteria. The result: M2 is a blindingly fast 3D engine with a multitasking OS, it will do incredible games, will continue the 3DO standard, and is expandable... I've been involved recently in several demonstrations of M2's performance, including demos I've written myself, and the results are very exciting!"

Will it be 64bit?

"It's a real 64bit system, throughout the whole of the system. A lot of the other systems that talk about being 64bit don't quite live up to it, because there are certain lower bit data widths which will ultimately be their real bottlenecks and limit their performance. One of the other things that we've done is our whole system architecture, the way the memory and the DMA devices and everything else is laid out is designed for maximum performance. A lot of the other people that put these systems together lack this overall system architecture approach, which gives us inherent performance advantages."

Will the M2 basically drive the 3DO system?

"It's more accurate to say they co-exist because we're going to be able to use a lot of the resources of the 3DO; the CD Drive, power supply – things like that. We're going to be able leverage off the existing system as much as possible to keep the price down."

What about memory? The chips keep getting more powerful, but RAM is limited.

"Right, and that's why we've tried to at all time to create a machine that does as much of the work in hardware as possible. Especially in having a lot of different formats for data compression built into the system, so that data itself can take up less RAM and you can therefore have that much more rich detail both for graphics and audio. We have a lot, a *lot* of compression algorithms to handle the graphics, but also with audio. We have a lot of different convenient ways for you to handle audio data, so that you can have compression and lower resolution audio that's handled automatically by the system, with the audio track spiffed up to sound as good is it can with the data it has. Memory is always going to be real a big concern. PC owners do have 8 and 16Mb systems, they pay thousands of pounds for them. They won't be paying thousands of pounds for our rig."

It must be interesting developing software for it.

"It's a lot of fun creating those tools. One of the things we're going to see a lot of on the M2 are applications that will use actual human forms. People acting out animal shapes and things like that, where you will actually record the movement that that human form is going through. They call it Motion Capture. It's the art of putting sensors on a body, so if you were going to do a tennis game, you would put sensors on the body of a tennis player and record him. The end result is animation that is extraordinarily realistic."

When will it be finished?

"It's coming along nicely, software is being developed already based on early versions of the system. I don't know what the exact release dates are, I know that we're talking about having the system and software available by Christmas next year."

How would you compare the existing 3DO to a PC?

"Not only do programs run faster on 3DO, but they also look much better, too, giving the user a more rich and satisfying experience. The 3DO has so many powerful features that it's taken time for developers to understand and take advantage of them all. But it's happening now. Look at titles such as *Road Rash*, *Off-World Interceptor* or *FIFA International Soccer*. These are superb 3D games with lots of depth and detail. 3DO games will always look more natural and realistic than PC games because the 3DO was designed to work with a television, not a computer monitor. People turn to computers when they want crisp numbers, and they turn to their TVs when they want real-life entertainment."

What would you like to say to sum up 3DO?

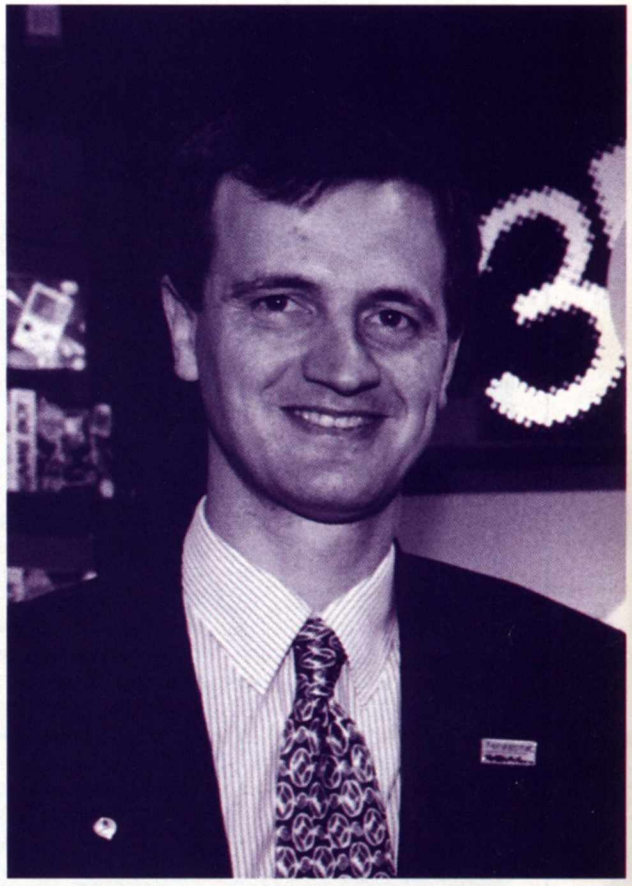
"The thing I'd emphasise most about 3DO is the quality of the employees. The overall company spirit, the excitement and passion and drive that we still have around here. The company is already 400 strong but it still has the quality of a start-up in the commitment people bring here. It's an exhilarating place to work, I love working here!" □

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Richard Marmoy

Getting REAL in the UK

For the past year, Richard Marmoy has been masterminding the UK campaign to get a 3DO into your home. Panasonic's REAL branded 3DO system, the FZ-1, has a predominant role in the UK market likely to last well into 1995. Stuart Wynne asked him about his plans for the future.



How pleased are you with the FZ-1's progress so far?
"Very. There were a lot of people who doubted us, but we always knew we'd do it. Now the machine's selling through and software houses are finding their 3DO titles keep selling out – many have had to re-order two or three times to keep up demand. I'm confident we'll comfortably exceed our targets."

How do you see Panasonic's 3DO software side developing?
"We expect to have at least half-a-dozen releases for next year, probably more. We've got plenty of people coming to us, asking for us to publish their titles over here, so we'll see – because of the economics of it they'll all have to be high quality titles, it doesn't make sense for us otherwise. We're also involved in developing our own titles... as for buying a software house, we've looked at it. There are cost advantages in getting in there early with a game, but from what we've seen you can have ten titles in development and only have three come out, with just one – hopefully – being a big enough hit to cover your costs. It's something we're considering though."

***SSFIIX* is obviously your biggest release so far.**
"It's a cracking title, arcade perfect. Capcom have even designed and built their own special six-button pad to go with it and we'll get that out at the same time as the game. After all, it's pretty much essential to get the most out of the game and makes it play beautifully."

What's happening with the MPEG upgrade so people can play VideoCDs?
"The NTSC version has just been released and it'll take a few months to redesign it for PAL. We also might update the control menus, but that's not decided yet. A release date of around May with a target price tag of £150 seems most likely."

What precisely is the FZ-10?
"It has exactly the same features as the FZ-1, but it's been redesigned so it can be manufactured even more efficiently. For example, it's got a fliptop CD Drive rather than the FZ-1's motorised drawer. In part because of the ridiculous EC 14% levy, imposed because since they classify it as a video recorder, we don't expect to bring the price down on its UK release – around June. However, because it's easier to build we do expect to be bringing in a lot more units and that will be the start of a new promotional push. We think this is the unit which is best suited to the big multiples."

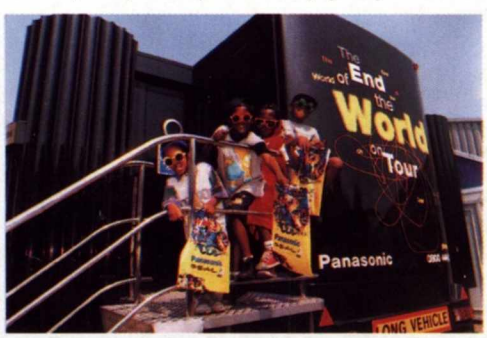
There seems a lot happening with 3DO peripherals...
"There's a whole bunch of stuff coming out in Japan and we're deciding now what we're going to take. There's a mouse, a kaoroke unit (I think we're going to decline that one!), a mouse and a storage box add-on which gives a few extra features, including extra memory for saving games."

Are there any other developments of 3DO technology in the works. Like building the 3DO system into normal CD players?
"Currently we're concentrating on getting a high installed base, but there are plenty of plans for the future with mobile 3DOs, set-top boxes with video-on-demand (as in 3DO trials in America and Japan). We're also looking at a PCMCIA modem add-on so you could play games like *Doom* over the network – there's plenty of ideas for the future. You can be certain of that."

What about turning the 3DO system into a computer?
"Yes, that's a definite possibility. Once the M2 arrives with its PowerPC chip [the same as used by Apple and IBM PCs] that possibility is obviously getting closer and closer. One of the fastest growing markets is the PC CD-ROM and a large part of that is PC games, they're not as good as 3DO games I have to say, but games nonetheless. But rather than having the PC moving from the study to the living room for games, you could have the 3DO system make the opposite move. When you have IBM, Motorola and Matsushita all getting together on something that's a very powerful alliance. It's this expandability which makes the 3DO system much more than just another superconsole."

What do you think of the M2 3DO upgrade?
"Great stuff, extremely powerful, yet again us and 3DO are developing the next step for interactive entertainment. It's 64bit, packed with features and very, very powerful. It'll also be price competitive. It'll have to be, after all. It's still early to be talking about a release date though, we're hoping for late '95 but it might slip to very early 1996. We won't announce a specific release date until we're sure we can hit it, but it obviously gives us a very good selling point. People can buy a 3DO system now, enjoy all the great games already out for it, and not worry about any other superconsoles because their 3DO has a 64bit upgrade on the way. I guess the message is: buy one now! – you don't have to wait for anything else." □

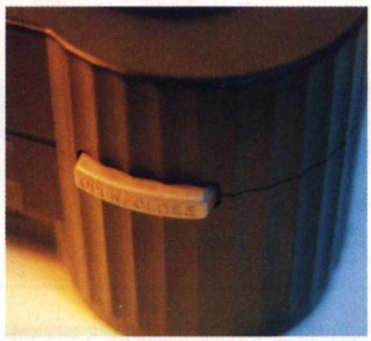
3DO magazine



Taking in some 30 venues, the centrepiece of Panasonic's 'End Of The World Tour' was the Showliner Juggernaut which opened up into the shape of an FZ-1.

Profile

Richard Marmoy has been in the computer industry for twelve years, working for some of the industry's biggest names including Intel, Frontline Distribution and Video7. After joining Panasonic, he was responsible for growing their share of the monitor market to 15% from nothing. As Panasonic's Marketing Manager for 3DO, he's responsible for one of the biggest marketing campaigns ever launched by the company, including the Showliner Juggernaut tour which, including staffing and venue fees, cost over half a million pounds.



Inside 3DO

The 3DO system isn't simply another games console, it's an ambitious attempt to define a worldwide standard for interactive technology backed by some of the world's biggest corporations. Below we review its history, the inside story on its technology and look ahead to the coming peripherals.



Why 3DO? Because we wanted something like stereo or radio. Something ubiquitous, explains 3DO CEO Trip Hawkins. It's a new name for a new machine: not just another console, but a multiplayer which not only plays games, but also music CDs, PhotoCDs and – with imminent MPEG upgrade – VideoCDs. Even more importantly, it's also the name of a standard which, like VHS for video recorders, means anyone can build a 3DO machine as long as they pay a modest fee to the standard's creators. In 1995 various 3DO systems will be in production by Creative Labs, GoldStar, Panasonic, Samsung, Sanyo and Toshiba. Different shapes, different colours – but all 3DO systems. If the plan works, 3DO hardware really could be just as much as part of every one's furniture as stereos or videos.

The man behind the plan is Trip Hawkins, a visionary character much like Bill Gates or Clive Sinclair. His life story is a TV movie: after a childhood obsessed with games he went to Harvard, designed his own course in game theory, and planned how he would found a games company in seven years time. After a highly successful career with Apple Computer, he left it right on schedule, in 1982, and formed Electronic Arts. A decade later EA was the world's biggest independent software company with a $300 million turnover. Time for a new challenge.

The idea behind 3DO was formed after EA's experiences with Nintendo and Sega. Originally EA had concentrated on PCs which, with their vast memories and hard disks, were vastly superior to the archaic technology of Japanese consoles. Unfortunately, it turned out that most people couldn't afford PCs or didn't want to play on machines they spent so much time working on. When EA finally entered the console market they were inevitably enormously successful, but Hawkins still chaffed against the outdated technology and the costly licensing agreements demanded by Sega and Nintendo.

The 3DO system is the answer to the question: what if there were a console even more powerful than a PC, one with a fair licensing system and built-in upgradeability?

WIZARDS

3DO's technology was designed by two of videogaming's hottest talents: RJ Mical and David Needle (see Tech box). They approached Hawkins in 1990 and, within a year, their old friend had formed the 3DO Company. While EA alone lacked the resources to properly promote the hardware, that was never the intention anyway. Hawkins wanted the company to devote itself purely to developing the technology, while the actual manufacturing would be taken care of by established electronics companies who'd license the technology like they would an audio CD player or VHS video recorder. It was an idea which was instantly popular with the giant corporations who know how important standards are for reassuring consumers their machine isn't about to become obsolete.

Besides EA, 3DO won the backing of giant manufacturers such as AT&T, Sanyo and Matsushita (the world's largest electronics group with Panasonic being one of their many brandnames). It also pulled in the mainstream entertainment business with MCA (the makers of *ET* and *Jurassic Park*) and Time Warner (the world's largest entertainment group). This dream team provided an initial investment of $300 million, with a further $50 million raised in a shares issue on Wall Street which saw prices double in a day. It's said EA alone made enough money to fund its 3DO software development for years.

Trip Hawkins' genius was in positioning 3DO at the apex of the coming interactive revolution. Hollywood saw the possibility of interactive movies which could earn more than the films themselves. America's vast cable TV network saw the potential for a powerful set-top interface and US West soon put the machine into a test launch. AT&T announced a modem so gamers could play and talk with each over the phone lines. Everyone wanted a piece of 3DO technology and it's no coincidence that both MCA and Time-Warner soon set about establishing formidable games divisions. As the hype spread, movie mogul Strauss Zelnick left Fox to head 3DO supporters Crystal Dynamics.

HARD TRUTHS

3DO's October 1994 American launch surprised many who believed the original hardware could never meet its deadline. The fact that it did was a powerful demonstration of 3DO's development work, and its partners' manufacturing muscle. Unfortunately, there was little sign of its 500+ software licensees and sales were disappointing. It was a hard lesson, but it had equal relevance to 3DO's scoffing competitors. Basically, the more powerful machines become, the longer and more costly it becomes to develop software which exploits it. Company insiders describe this as the most difficult time, they knew great games were on the way and were confident about Japan – but the ribbing from outsiders was relentless. Nevertheless, just ten days before the March 20th launch of the first 3DO system in Japan, Panasonic's FZ-1, GoldStar and Samsung became 3DO partners in order to build their own 3DO units, while Creative Labs joined so it could develop a 3DO card for PCs.

The real success story, however, was on the ›

3DO System Technical Specifications

CPU: **32bit RISC processor ARM60 (12.5MHz)**
Custom Chips: **Twin graphics animation engines**
Direct Memory Access engine (50Mb/sec)
16bit custom DSP (audio)
Memory: **3MB (2MB DRAM, 1MB VRAM)**
1MB ROM
Save Game Facility: **32Kb NVRAM (battery back-up).**
Included CD sampler provides memory editing program.
Video Output: **Composite video, S-Video, RF Video**
Unless otherwise stated PAL versions run fullscreen. NTSC versions run in letterbox format.
Screen Resolution: **768x576 pixels**
Colours: **16.7 million maximum, 32,000 standard.**
Audio: **Stereo 16bit PCM (sampling 44.1kHz**
Storage: **Double-speed CD-ROM Drive**
Control ports: **One low-speed, Dsub-p pin port.**
Additional ports on joypads allow for daisychaining up to eight joypads.
Expansion Port: **One high speed I/O: 30 pin x 1.**
AV Expansion Port: **High speed AV-I/O (MPEG VideoCD adaptor): 68 pin x 1**

HARDCORE TECHNO

While The 3DO Company was only established in September 1991, the men behind its technology are responsible for the world's first multimedia home computer and the most advanced handheld console ever.

RJ Mical and Dave Needle have been labelled the 'Rogers and Hammerstein' of videogaming, characters as colourful and influential as any in the world of entertainment. They met ten years ago at one of Silicon Valley's hottest start-ups. Mical was head of software development, while Needle was the hotshot tech-head who started as cleaner and ended up senior hardware architect.

In 1985 their reputation was made with a revolutionary computer. At a time when most computers were silent, monochromatic monsters the Amiga A1000 was unbelievable. It had custom chips for full colour graphics and stereo sound, plus a multitasking operating system which has yet to be equalled by either the PC or Macintosh. The Amiga was a multimedia computer before the term had been invented. Besides still being a hugely popular home computer in Europe, souped up Amigas are at the core of Hollywood special effects work for shows like *DSV SeaQuest* and *Babylon 5*.

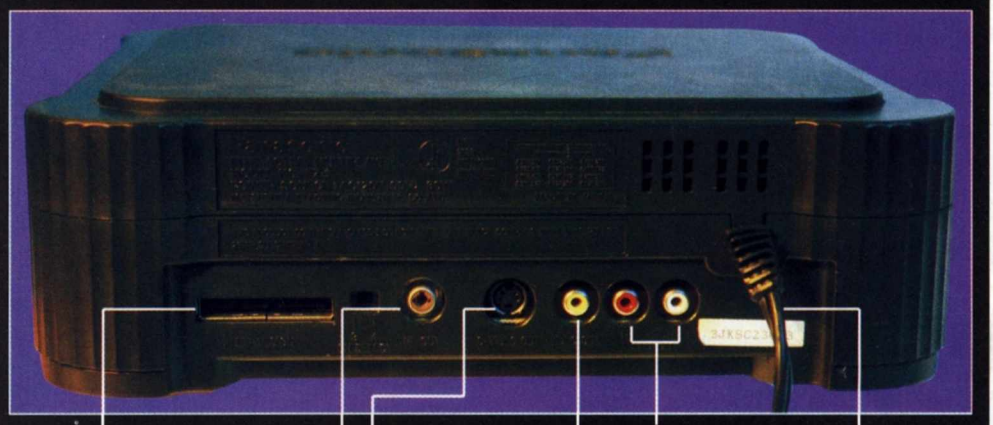
However, judged by the Amiga's potential this is almost a failure. World-beating ambitions were sadly lost when the Amiga Company was taken over by Commodore, a company which lacked the resources to properly promote it. Needle and Mical left a year after its launch, Needle freelancing on Amiga software applications while Needle joined Apple. But in 1987 they were brought back together by David Morse, ex-president of the Amiga Company. Over lunch Morse watched as Mical and Needle designed a radical new console. Built into the hardware were arcade-style features such as sprite rotation and zooming. The system also supported linking up to eight machines for multi-player games – not bad for a handheld! Originally called the Handy, it was bought up by Atari and renamed the Lynx. Seven years later it's still the most powerful handheld on the market, but again Atari lacked the resources to exploit it.

NTG

Mical and Needle left the Lynx project in 1989 and once more ended up in a restaurant having lunch with David Morse. This time the sketch on a napkin was 3DO and Morse instantly set up the New Technologies Group to foster it. NTG was the nucleus around which the 3DO Company was formed. Morse was determined this technology would get the backing it deserved. Trip Hawkins was first on board, and giant multinationals such as Matsushita soon followed. This time Mical and Needle had world class support like no other console in history.

While Hawkins had the marketing saavy and the idea about making 3DO technology a world standard, the guts of 3DO's appeal lay in that napkin sketch and the history of its designers. One of the strongest advantages of Mical and Needle is that it's a partnership of the two sides of a computer. While everyone understands the importance of hardware, the software which links it together is often forgotten. Most machines begin with the hardware, then wrap the operating system (OS) around it. Mical and Needle work on both simultaneously, tweaking each other's designs to ensure the best possible synthesis. Most consoles have at best a rudimentary OS, the programmers writing directly to the hardware. This is technically efficient, but means that if you upgrade the hardware all the old games will become incompatible. By contrast 3DO was designed to be future-proof and all software has to use the OS. This means the hardware can easily be upgraded.

Another reason why the 3DO is future-proof is the actual hardware. Unlike the ancient mess of standards which make up a PC, the 3DO is a very open, clean design. The motherboard boasts a full 32bit databus with full width expansions allowing any upgrade full access to the hardware. It also has a high speed Direct Memory Access engine. This enables the various custom chips to read data from the memory chips without using the central processor unit (CPU). At normal speed up to 6Mb of data can be moved per second, but there's also a Sport DMA mode which ups this to no less than 50Mb a second. This sort of high-speed data handling is perfect for multimedia applications and a key part of the Cinepak video compression.



On top of this very open, high-speed architecture there's some powerful processors. The heart of the system is the 32bit ARM60 CPU. This uses RISC technology which is a relatively new approach. Unlike a standard PC CPU, a RISC chip is a lot less complex and uses a Reduced Instruction Set Construction. While this means less built-in functions, in operation a RISC chip runs a great deal faster with more complex instructions being quickly built up out of the simpler ones. So although the ARM60 only runs at 12.5MHz, it's effectively equivalent to a much faster 486. Also, while any PC CPU has electronics dating back from its original 1985 design, the ARM60 is completely uninhibited by such requirements.

The ARM60 alone would be able to give a PC tough competition, but in fact many of the 3DO system's most impressive tricks never even enter the CPU. Instead Mical and Needle designed two new processors, a pair of animation engines capable of manipulating 64 million pixels per second – as compared to 1 million for a conventional 16bit system and 3 million for a 32bit one. Inspired by the example of traditional Hollywood animation techniques, these chips organise graphics into high-resolution 'animation cells'.

When Mical and Needle first began developing the hardware in Mical's workshop, they filmed a model plane against a bluescreen just like a Hollywood movie. Once such a graphic has been digitised as cell, the graphic engines and OS provide a wide range of custom effects. Tricks such as the warping of a bouncing ball, the transparency of fog, varying lighting effects and texture mapping are all handled automatically. While a conventional system can produce these effects, the programmer would have to write the code for them and the CPU painstakingly put them into effect. For the 3DO system these effects are simply called up by accessing the OS. Texture mapping is a particularly impressive effect. For example, a programmer could input a rough, volcanic surface and the 3DO system would automatically wrap this around a wireframe landscape or sprite. The stunning detail and speed of games like *Road Rash* and *Total Eclipse* is the perfect demonstration of the system's power.

The Hollywood effect also comes to the fore with digital video. Like other machines the 3DO system can be upgraded to play VideoCD movies via an upgrade cartridge. However, for most games the 3DO Multiplayer can deliver FMV clips which are little less effective just through the system's sheer power. Due to the double-speed CD-ROM drive and high-speed graphics processing the 3DO system can handle full-screen, full-frame video at 30 frames per second.

As for sound, of course the 3DO system can spool music and sound effects at will off the CD. But it also has its own sound generator, a high-speed Digital Signal Processor (DSP) which is capable of CD quality music. It also boasts a proprietary technique called 3D Audio Imaging which means if you listen with headphones, sounds come not just from the left and right but forward and backward too. Try it some time!

The CD-ROM Drive providing the game data is double-speed, capable of transferring 300k per second. The storage potential of a CD is unbelievable, at 650Mb it's about 225 times bigger than your average 8Megabit cartridge. And when it's time to finally leave a game for the night, the 3DO unit has 32K of Non Volatile RAM to store numerous save games.

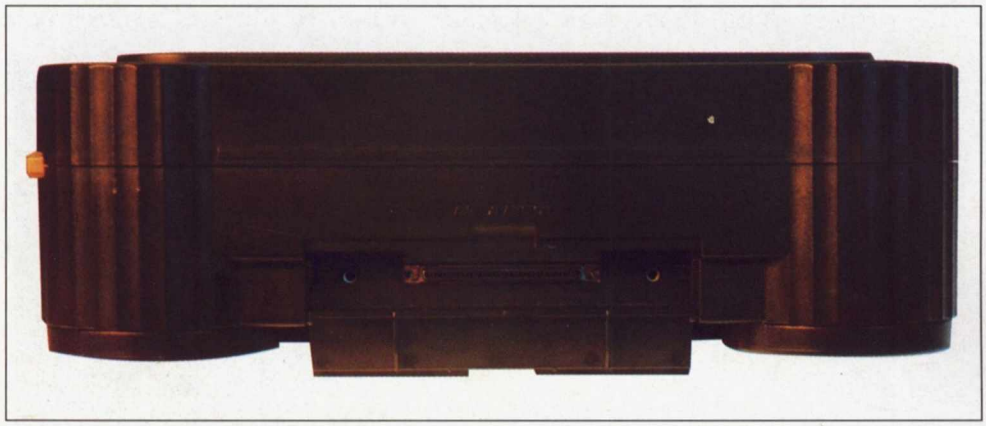
In short, the 3DO system is unimaginably more powerful than any previous, 16bit console and, just as importantly, is designed so that can be continually updated. While the current crop of games seem amazing, these are just a hint of what programmers can do once they really to get to grips with its power. The combination of the 3DO system's processing power and CD storage make possible games which haven't even been dreamt of before.

>Japanese high street. Bolstered by a healthy supply of games and Matsushita's excellent retail network, the launch was a roaring success building up to around 100,000 sales by the end of the year. Japanese software producers, already drenched in cash from 3DO's manufacturers, ensured fast-growing software base and less than a month later Toshiba became the latest partner with plans for another 3DO multiplayer, and even a portable unit for in car use. It was this Japanese success the European launch in September was designed to emulate and first reports suggest they've succeeded. Great games such as *John Madden* and *Road Rash* had 3DO systems moving better than many software houses expected, their titles often selling out two or three times.

For the future 3DO faces strong competition. Its headline making share issue was, in many ways, the starting gun for the race to establish next generation system. Nintendo rushed to make a deal with Silicon Graphics over its own console, while Sega turned to JVC and Hitachi as partners. Sony, traditionally a strong rival of the much larger Matsushita, has its own console on the way, while Atari's ambitious Jaguar hit the market early on to flounder over software support. All these systems have their own advantages and disadvantages, but all conform to the standard console approach with the emphasis very much on hardware and closed standards.

The 3DO system, by contrast, is a standard designed to be licensed by anyone and, like a PC or Macintosh, runs a genuine Operating System (OS). The reason why these computers have lasted over for a decade is that programs are written to the OS software rather than the hardware. This allows manufacturers to change the hardware so it can be more cheaply made, upgraded as more powerful chips become available and even reworked for new functions: like set-top boxes for video-on-demand. That's why despite having the first 'superconsole' to be launched, with an ever growing range of great games to prove it, 3DO is still confident of keeping its technological edge. The M2 upgrade due for late '95 is claimed to offer five times the performance of its most powerful competitor. As long as the Company continues, 3DO systems could be almost infinitely upgraded. For Trip, at least, the future is clear with 3DO on course for entering the English Dictionary: "dominant interactive standard, multiple applications, especially ultra-cool games..." □ ssw

3DO magazine



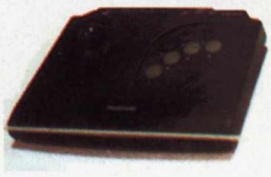
AV Expansion Port. This is where the FZ-FV1 Adaptor will fit, more commonly known as 3DO's MPEG upgrade allowing it to play the same VideoCD titles as CDi or CD32. VideoCD has higher resolution than VHS, but can break up during big, dramatic movements. Coding advances may solve this eventually.

Peripherals

Besides the add-ons illustrated below, there is a GameGun from American Laser Games which is supported not only by their titles, but also other publisher's games such as *Demolition Man*. Even more well supported is CH Products Flightstick Pro, a precision analog joystick developed from their acclaimed PC product. This features more buttons than a standard joypad with a four-way viewing switch, three firebuttons, trigger and throttle control plus an additional four push buttons. Domark regard it as by far the best way to play *Flying Nightmares*, and the stick is also supported by the *Wing Commander* series and many more games. The Flightstick should be released by the end of 1994 and the UK division can be contacted on 0844 345406.



Tired of the standard FZ-JPIX joypad? New controllers are on the way, including Capcom's six button *SFII* design (left).





TDK's memory expansion allows you to save games onto a removeable memory card instead of the internal NVRAM. As yet no price or UK release date has been announced.



This kaoroke add-on should be on sale in Japan by the time you read this. Thankfully, Panasonic have no plans for a UK release.

Global 3DO



Above, the brand new FZ-10 by Panasonic. A PAL version is due in the UK this Spring.



Above, the snappily titled GPA101M 3DO system by GoldStar – expect a PAL version soon-ish.



Above, the IMP-21J TRY 3DO system from Sanyo. Only recently launched in Japan.



Above, Panasonic's original FZ-1 3DO system complete with FZ-FV1 MPEG upgrade for VideoCD and a mouse (not yet confirmed for UK release).

Return of the Jedi

With Wing Commander III

The *Wing Commander* series has become one of the biggest money-spinners in gaming history. Marrying classic 3D space combat to a space opera storyline, it's a *Star Wars*-inspired videogame now grown so big it can hire Luke Skywalker to play its leading role.

The original *Wing Commander* is one of the most influential games ever, not only inspiring numerous clones but also forcing people to take the PC seriously as a games machine. In some ways it was beyond even the PC in 1989, only truly reaching its potential in the CD-ROM version with its full orchestral score to accompany the cinematic visuals. The second game in the series showed how perfectly the design was suited to CD; besides redesigned graphics there was a full soundtrack including sampled speech throughout the game. Two mission disks followed, but in retrospect they were just marking time while Origin geared themselves up for the biggest leap yet.

Wing Commander III: Heart Of The Tiger rebuilds the game from the ground up, pushing the envelope for PC performance from its incredible 15 minute intro to the stunning in-game graphics: for the first time fully 3D polygons, and with texture maps to the max. Like EA's *US Naval Fighters* it's a game so power hungry even the most powerful Pentium will struggle to run it in maximum detail.

So can a 3DO system really run this sort of game without an M2? Well, yes, easily. The lengthy cinematic sequences are, obviously, no problem at all for 3DO technology and look absolutely superb. As for the 3D sequences, when we first saw EA's pre-beta version of the game we thought Origin had wimped out and gone for sprites. As the Kilrathi fighters whirled about they seemed even faster and smoother than *Super Wing Commander*'s brilliantly detailed sprites. Yet when we actually got on a Kilrathi's tail it was obvious these were full 3D objects with the most unbelievable texture-mapping yet seen on a 3DO system. Then we discovered the external views, allowing us to pan about both our own ship and enemy fighters. As you can see, the detail is fantastic, the ships not only carrying identification markings, but also grime and dirt from long service in the warring fleets.

For the 3DO system, hurling around *WCIII*'s polygon spaceships is no problem while the texture mapping a PC finds so laborious, is an effortless function of its











Below right, Mark Hamill with *Wing Commander* mastermind Chris Roberts. Below, Jennifer MacDonald, Hamill and Ginger Lynn Allen (l-r).



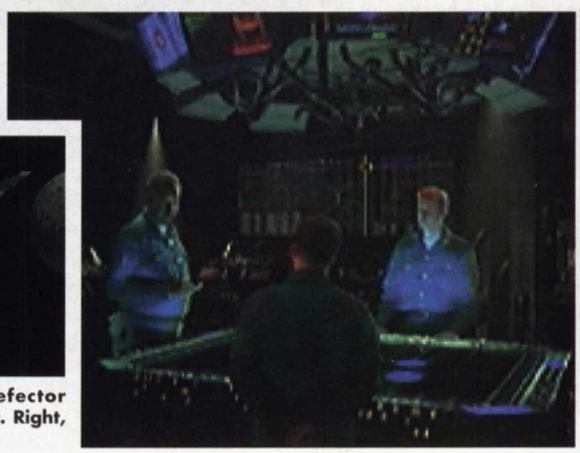
In a universe far, far away...
It is 2654 and the Galactic War has been raging for decades between the Terran Confederation and the Kilrathi. Now its conclusion finally seems near, a series of strategic successes putting overall victory within the Kilrathi's reach.

Colonel Christopher Blair is a combat veteran widely regarded as one of the Confederation's best pilots. When the Kilrathi destroyed his previous carrier, Blair was immediately transferred to another frontline ship. TCS *Victory* is an obsolete rustbucket which should have been scuttled long ago, but Terran resources have long been stretched to breaking point.

Victory's war weary crew include a Kilrathi warrior who's defected to the Confederation, a raw new pilot as liable to shoot his co-pilots as the enemy, a feisty woman flight mechanic and an icy female pilot. Blair must inspire this ragtag crew to incredible bravery in a last hope campaign to avoid humanity's total annihilation.



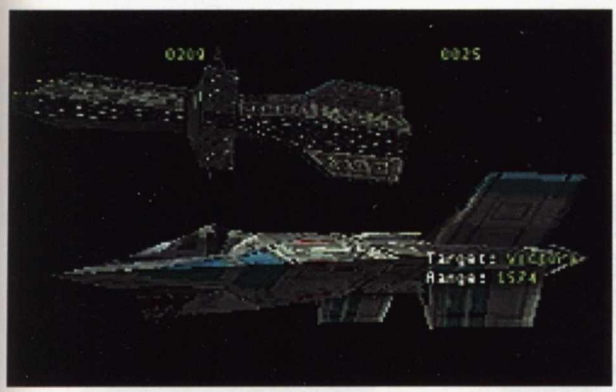






Above left, the Kilrathi defector shares information with Blair. Right, the *Victory*'s control room.



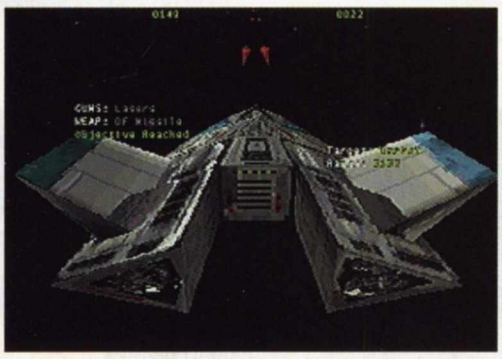




Above left, your Confederate fighter with the *Victory* to starboard. Note sharktooth design under its nose. Right and below, more views of your fantastic fighter.









custom hardware. If anything the version we saw of the game needed slowing down! In terms of gameplay, one of the biggest innovations is being able to skim the surface of huge Kilrathi capital ships, dodging laser turret fire while trying to find the ship's weak-point. Judging by the way your mothership, the TCS *Victory*, zips about the screen these will be no problem at all and everything seems set for a game which will at least match, and probably exceed the PC version on even a Pentium 90.

A Kilrathi fighters in all its textured mapped glory. Note different views below, right & below right.





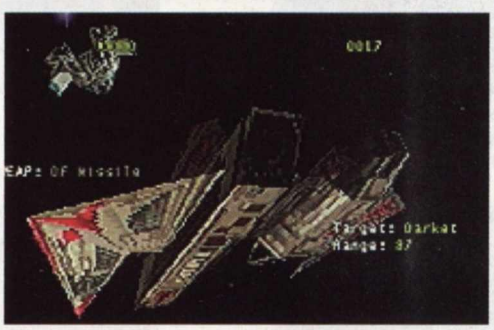
STAR TURNS

While Origin have so far been very sparing showing the PC version running game graphics – we've probably seen more of the 3DO version than most have seen of the PC one – what has been winning endless showings is the cinematics. The *Wing Commander* storyline is one of the most long-running and engrossing yet told on a videogame, each mission bringing some new plot episode, your various wingmen reacting in their own individual ways while Kilrathi taunts come over the radio. Being equal opportunity employees, the Confederation have a full complement of female pilots and over the years the lead character, Blair, has won a reputation as something of a Don Juan.

Origin's decision to hire a cast of real Hollywood actors for *Wing Commander* episode surprised no-one, but what has caused a stir is the names involved. Mark Hamill, Luke Skywalker himself, plays Blair, while his fellow officers include Malcolm McDowell (*A Clockwork Orange*), John Rhys-Davies (*Raiders Of The Lost Ark*) and, for romantic interest, Blair can choose between Jennifer MacDonald (*Terminal Force*) and Ginger Lynn Allen, porn queen turned straight actress with films like *Young Guns II*. Almost fifty Hollywood filmmakers, actors and production people, worked on the *WCIII* set creating nearly two hours of live action footage. While no trade show is now complete without showing the various uniforms and Kilrathi alien masks, all the sets were created on Silicon Graphics workstations. As with conventional Hollywood special effects, the live action scenes were shot against blue backgrounds for chroma-key integration within the game's fake backdrops.

On first impression, the footage lacks the 'in-your-face,' cyberpunk flamboyance of *ShockWave*'s sequences, but they're far longer – the game may come on more than one disk – and atmosphere is unique. While *Wing Commander*'s shipboard interaction has never been massively complex, *WCIII* finally gives you a choice of conversational responses as Blair wanders about the ship. Also unlike previous games, where interaction was mainly for hints and romance, *WCIII* gives you the responsibility of encouraging the crew – make the wrong choices and disaster looms.

As an adventure it's obviously very primitive, but as an accompaniment to a full-blown space combat sim it's entirely dazzling and makes you even more determined to battle through the entire game. A fabulous end-game mission is promised, which reportedly takes you down onto a Kilrathi planet. And as with the other *Wing Commander* games, the missions change to reflect your success and failure, so that seeing every outcome will take ages. Truly, this is an absolute epic game and will sell 3DO systems by the containerload. □



3DO magazine

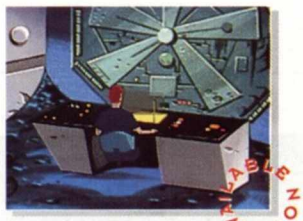
WCIII *is due for release in January*



Demolition Man™
Virgin Interactive Entertainment



Gridders™
Studio 3DO/Tetragon



Another World™
Interplay Productions



Total Eclipse™
Crystal Dynamics



Star Control II™
Crystal Dynamics



Shock Wave: Invasion Earth™
Electronic Arts



Road Rash™
Electronic Arts



Off-World Interceptor™
Crystal Dynamics



FIFA International Soccer™
Electronic Arts



Super Wing Commander™
Origin/Electronic Arts



PaTaank™
Crystal Dynamics



Dragon's Lair™
Elite



The Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes™
Electronic Arts



Escape from Monster Manor™
Electronic Arts



John Madden Football™
Electronic Arts



The Horde™
Crystal Dynamics



Sewer Shark™
Virgin Interactive Entertainment/ Digital Pictures



Night Trap
Virgin Interactive Entertainment/ Digital Pictures



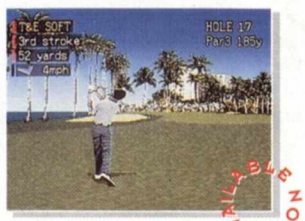
Powers Kingdom™
Panasonic Software



Mega Race™
Mindscape International



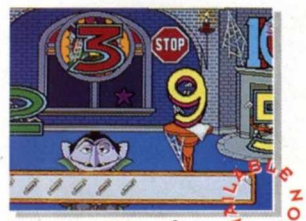
Soccer Kid™
Krisalis Software



Pebble Beach Golf Links®
Panasonic Software



The Incredible Machine™
Sierra On-line



Sesame Street® Numbers
Electronic Arts

Introducing the 3DO system

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Theme Park™
Bullfrog/Electronic Arts



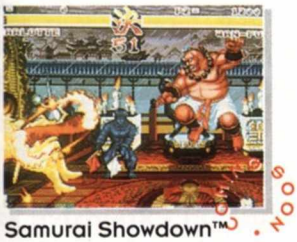
Super Street Fighter II Turbo™
Panasonic Software



GEX™
Crystal Dynamics



Club 3DO: Station Invasion™
Studio 3DO



Samurai Showdown™
Crystal Dynamics



Virtuoso™
Elite Systems



Wing Commander III™
Origin/Electronic Arts



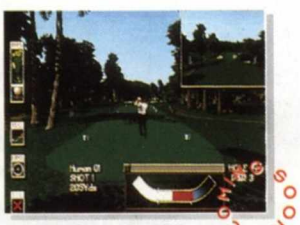
Need for Speed™
Electronic Arts



Flashback™
US Gold



Corpse Killer™
Acclaim/Digital Pictures



World Cup Golf™
US Gold



Shock Wave: Operation Jumpgate™
Electronic Arts



Twisted™
Electronic Arts



Way of the Warrior™
Interplay Productions



Kingdom™
Interplay Productions



Supreme Warrior™
Acclaim/Digital Pictures

3DO

No limits

Check it out at a store near you

Availability is not guaranteed and is based on information at the time of going to press. But don't believe us, check it out at your local Game Limited, selected HMV Stores, Virgin Megastores, and all good independent dealers. Call 0800 444220 for your local dealer.

3DO

Crystal Dynamics Gamers Extraordinaire

Most new companies start slowly and cautiously. Crystal Dynamics is different. 'Without Crystal Dynamics, 3DO is just an expensive toy' is the tagline on their ads, a typically self-confident claim by a company which regards its employees as the 'best and the brightest'. To find out the truth behind the hype, Stuart Wynne spoke to International VP Rob Dyer and Chief Scientist Dr David Kirk.

3DO's bid for global domination began with a nuclear shockwave blasting through the intro of Crystal Dynamic's *Crash 'N' Burn*. Screaming rock guitars, superfast action and texture mapping to the max – here was the game to prove the next generation hype. There have been dramatic debuts by software houses before, but never one so consistently impressive on so many different fronts. Not only were they just how good 32bit games should look and sound, they were also building in some hot gameplay. Only now are other companies beginning to catch up.



At the start Crystal's PR focused on the terminally photogenic Strauss Zelnick, top movie mogul at Twentieth Century Fox before moving to Crystal. "We're on the cusp of doing something extraordinary," he said then, promising the company was going to be the first "interactive studio of the future." A stylish, star-studded FMV intro for *Horde* further underlined the convergence between Hollywood and Silicon Valley.

By 1995, however, it's a future Zelnick will enjoy at BMG, the $11billion corporate giant which happens to be Crystal's distributor. Now the PR has shifted to the real powers behind the company.

HIGH RISC

Chairman David Morse may not make many magazine covers, but for technofreaks he's akin to The Beatles' George Martin. He set up the revolutionary Amiga Computing, oversaw the Lynx handheld at Epyx and used to be president of the New Technologies Group which originally developed the 3DO system. At Crystal, Morse was inspired not so much by the 'interactive studio' hype as the spectacular growth experienced by companies prepared to take a risk on new technology. Just as Acclaim and EA enjoyed phenomenal growth by being in early with the NES and Mega Drive, so Morse expected Crystal to reap the benefit of the 3DO system.

In retrospect it was an unbelievably high risk strategy. Games developed to exploit 3DO's radically new, 32bit CD-ROM technology were never going to be easily converted to a SNES or Mega Drive – if 3DO failed then Crystal would be in big trouble. Still, back in 1982 the very fact console technology was so dated made the 3DO system attractive to a lot of key players. To head up the marketing department, Crystal acquired Madeline Canepa from Sega where she'd masterminded their hugely successful PR. Rob Dyer used to be a big player at Disney, while Dr David Kirk was a graphics workstation whizz with no less than seven patents to his name.

The company's confidence also earnt it backing from TV companies such as Home Box Office and King World, financing its growth from twenty people to well over a hundred. All of them are what Dyer describes as the 'best and the brightest'. The company's hiring policy is if you want a job, whether as a programmer or an artist or whatever, then you must have a track record of hit games. At the start, heavyweight development managers came from Accolade, Acclaim and EA

INTO THE FIRE

The company's first game was, of course, the ominously titled *Crash 'N' Burn*. While 3DO partner EA's game development dragged on and on, Crystal committed themselves to delivering a game at launch. As the in-pack game *Crash* simply couldn't be late, never mind that for most of its development neither the 3DO system's hardware or operating system were actually finished. The fact that they met this deadline, and with a good, playable game, is one of the technical accomplishments Kirk is most proud of.

Unfortunately, the 3DO system's high pricepoint and the inability of other developers to deliver on time, doomed 3DO's US launch to ignominy. '3DOA' was the mocking refrain and queues to buy the machine turned to queues for returning it – so few were the games to

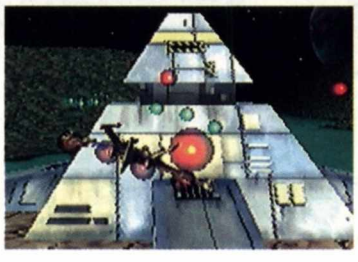
Crash N Burn



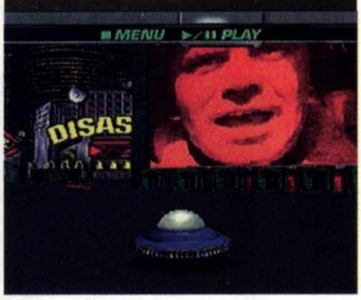
Not only the first 3DO release, but also one of the most impressive early releases for gameplay and presentation. The 32bit revolution began with *Crash 'N' Burn*, but sadly it's unlikely ever to be released in the UK. Coded while the 3DO system was still in development, it's one of the few NTSC titles incompatible with PAL and Crystal are sadly unlikely to convert now it's been superceded by titles like *Off-World Interceptor*.

Total Eclipse





PaTaank



Crystal Dynamics success on the 3DO system has made them a valuable name with other companies wanting to be published by them as affiliates. *PaTaank* was developed by the San Francisco-based P.F. Magic. The game's title is pronounced 'puh-tonk' – the sound of a puck bouncing off a bumper and smashing into a wall.

The Horde





Mission Statement: To become the world's first interactive studio of the future.

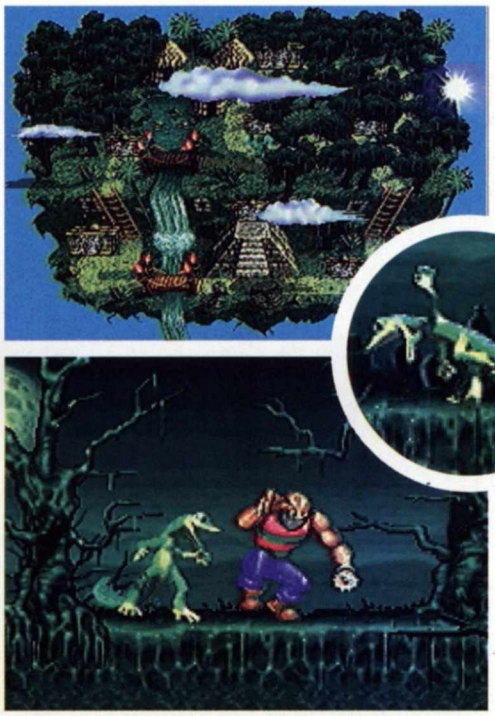
play on it. Crystal Dynamics multi-million dollar investment began to look shaky and a scramble began for other formats. Unfortunately, only *The Horde* was capable of being converted to the PC, while other superconsoles were over a year away. Then came Japan.

"Thank God for Japan," says Dyer. A better price and more software pushed 3DO sales over 100,000 units in a few months and Crystal's games were inevitably among the bestsellers. Japan meant Crystal actually made money on its 3DO system releases and the European launch is looking promising too with games such as *The Horde* regularly selling out. Even in the States 3DO systems are selling well, lower prices and better software enabling a Lazarus-like resurrection. For 1995 Crystal expect to release between seven and eleven 3DO titles, they will also develop for other platforms – to the ire of 3DO who point out their hardware put Crystal on the map – but these games too will be converted for the 3DO system. "It's been a very good relationship for us," Kirk says now.



BURNING BRIGHT

As the bold new world of 32bit videogaming sells through, Crystal is uniquely placed to exploit it. Dyer sees the new technology doubling the $6 billion videogames business within two to three years. Big Hollywood companies have come calling and it's only a matter time before a partner will be found. But it's Kirk who's perhaps most symbolic of the company's ambition, heading up a R&D division purely devoted to keeping the company's hi-tech cutting edge. Pioneering the delivery of Red Book audio CD while still drawing game data may not mean much to most people, but listen closely to *Total Eclipse* and *Interceptor* and you'll hear the difference with pristine sound quality.



Looking over the new releases Kirk surprisingly points to the platformer *Gex* as one of the most technologically advanced games. While *Total Eclipse*'s awesome 3D graphics required a lot of work, *Gex*'s deep, full colour parallax scrolling is an equally big leap away from 16bit gaming. Sure, Nintendo's *Donkey Kong Country* has caused a sensation with its Silicon Graphics rendered graphics, but Kirk insists *Gex* did it first and with far better effect. Moreover it doesn't just look different, unlike *DKC* it plays different with *Gex* able to clamber over practically every surface giving it a novel feel.

For the future the company is reworking the *Total Eclipse* engine for a 3D combat game called *Cyber Clash*. This will feature huge robots going head-to-head with missiles, lasers and much, much more. It promises to be an awesome game and 3D will also feature in a sports game, currently looking for a big name license. Kirk is keen to emphasise the gameplay as much as the technology though. And it's this perspective he brings to bear as much as anything in examining new machines.

"They all have their strengths and weaknesses" he says. Besides impressive video playback, 3DO's operating system is "a major advantage allowing for a nice upgrade with the M2." While it's difficult to amaze a man used to working with million dollar graphics workstations, he sees the M2 as virtually removing graphics as an area of competition. Like Simis Software, he believes that soon making a game look fantastic won't be a problem, which will throw the emphasis back on gameplay "which I think is where we're always strong."

The company's early commitment to 32bit technology is certainly paying off now, but then again a source at 3DO rubbishes any notion that they were ever in serious trouble. "The only question with Crystal was whether they had to go public early, instantly becoming millionaires, or whether they had to put in due course and then go public – becoming even more incredibly rich..." □

3DO magazine

Off-World Interceptor



Even the 'best and the brightest' occasionally make mistakes. After several days expensively filming this sci-fi mini-movie, it slowly dawned on Crystal Dynamics that it wasn't that good. In fact, it was so bad they decided to send it up before critics did. Cue the world's first self-satirising intro, complete with overlaid Beavis & Butthead-style couch potatoes making various sarcastic remarks - so ultimately it wasn't a mistake after all.

Samurai Shodown



Cyber Clash (Coming Soon)





Crystal's awesome 3D engine is set to return in this battle of the mega-robots. Armed with missiles, lasers and more these huge machines will provide a stunning spectacle. The game is actually set inside your body with the robots being implaneted in your eye...

3DO

Even Better Than The Real Thing?

After its star turn in Schwarzenegger's *True Lies*, the Harrier jumpjet is about to make its first appearance on the 3DO system. Deep in development in San Mateo, California, *Flying Nightmares* is set to be one of the best flight sims on any machine, let alone a console. Stuart Wynne talked to Domark VP John Kavanagh about it.

The ability to fly – and use heavy firepower – is always appealing and there are few aircraft as exciting as the Harrier. Not only can you scream across the treetops at near supersonic speed, you can also hover like a helicopter. Who can forget the *True Lies* scene where the Harrier rises up outside the skyscraper window and lets loose with Aden cannons?

Flying Nightmares puts you in the cockpit of the very latest Harrier with complete control. John Kavanagh is keen to stress the game will be "the first real flight sim on 3DO. With *Shock Wave* and games like that you can't climb above a certain altitude, your freedom is limited. *Flying Nightmares* is a true 3D flight game where you can fly wherever you want, however you want." It's the sort of freedom which has made flight sims consistently top the PC sales charts, along with their ever increasing realism. It's said that in the Gulf War many missions were first flown on simulators: the perfect complement to a multimedia war where CNN was as important as TNT in achieving geopolitical objectives.

According to Simis Software the lag between military and domestic sims is "around three to four years", a gap they know well working on both sides of the fence, with the emphasis squarely on the military side. The team started out at BAe where they coded weapons control software for the Harrier, not to mention designing its MFD (Multi-Function Displays) and simulator. While they went independent years ago, their main business is still full scale simulators with leisure titles as a lucrative sideline. Their first bestseller was *MiG-29*, presciently including a Gulf finale called Desert Strike just a few months before Desert Storm. With their follow-up, *AV-8B*, the main concern over realism was avoiding being too accurate. The *AV-8B* is the US version of the Harrier and the team had to be careful not to official secrets, such as the exact performance of its radar system...



REAL, REAL, REAL

Flying Nightmares is the latest version of *AV-8B*, the title coming from one of the US Marine squadrons which fly the aircraft. The 3DO conversion is being overseen by Simis, with about 80% of their core flight model code reused for 3DO, but the main programming is in California. Since Domark's offices there are so close to the 3DO Company, they've been able to work incredibly closely with them to best exploit the system. The first port over of code was actually done in their offices. As for realism, project manager Brian Walker flew Apaches in the Gulf War, so he certainly knows his stuff.

After rave reviews for the screamingly fast PowerMac version, Kavanagh is looking forward to upgrading it yet further for 3DO. While the 3DO version will use exactly the same polygon graphics as the Mac, "they'll be 16bit colour rather than 8bit and be fully texture mapped." So rather than plain green planes, hyper-realistic graphics with the same slate grey, official US Marine colour scheme as in *True Lies*. The 3DO system's multimedia architecture has also meant a thorough reworking of presentation. Expect 24bit, photorealistic intro screens, plenty of FMV sequences and thoroughly enhanced audio. Besides sampled background comms chatter and direct orders, a soundtrack has been composed by Domark's Mike Ash and performed by Mike Edwards, lead singer of Jesus Jones.

Such ambitious presentation is directly due to 3DO's integrated design. Asked to compare the machine to a Pentium PC, Kavanagh argues it's an impossible comparison to make. "It's like comparing a Ferrari to a truck. With 3DO you could have a 50 frames per second scrolling background with 200 polygons spinning in front. A PC just couldn't do that, but then again you can do your accounts on it." He also pointed out how PCs

keep evolving, which is why the 3DO's OS (Operating System) is so important, allowing the 3DO system to be upgraded. Kavanagh knows the 3DO Company well and is confident they can keep pace with their competition.

12 HOUR DAYS

While *Flying Nightmares*' presentation makes for a great showcase for 3DO technology, the actual gameplay is firmly rooted in the depth of the original *AV-8B*. Once again the setting is East Timor, were that brutal, real-life dictatorship has finally attracted the attention of the US military. Essentially, the invasion takes place over three 12 hour days, each divided into three offensives lasting four hours apiece. The offensives reflect the campaign's progress: on Day One, 0800 hours the missions involve softening up shoreline defences. Later the emphasis switches to CAP (Combat Air Patrol) missions in support of landing craft. And once a beachhead has been established, the Harriers are directed to take out C&C (Command and Control) sites such as radar installations.

A full wargame lurks under the spectacular visuals, so if you mess-up it has serious consequences. If you successfully blitz those fuel dumps then later in the war enemy forces are much less manoeuvrable. To help you on the various missions you can have up to three wingmen in the air simultaneously, on the same or different missions, and switch between them at will. One useful tactic is to send in the computer-controlled Harriers first, then while they're drawing anti-aircraft fire make your own attack. The game is generally tracking about 1,000 objects simultaneously, from aircraft hangers to C130s dropping tanks to individual bullets.

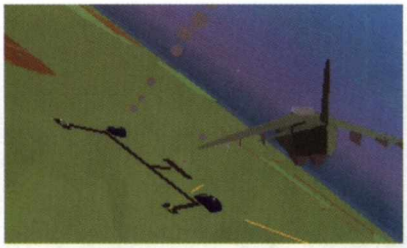
Despite such sophistication, Kavanagh is confident of keeping the speed up, quoting figures of 12-20 frames per second, depending on what's happening on screen. The average is about 15fps, "which compares well with industry animation speeds." The superfast PowerMac version does run "slightly faster" in the same 320x240 resolution, but then again there's no texture mapping. On the 3DO system Kavanagh believes there'll be no limit to the number of aircraft on screen, but "mixing it up with too many bogey's is a sure way to an early swim to your aircraft carrier. Typically a 'hot spot' might have three or four F16s on patrol, with a few attack helicopters thrown in for good measure. You've only got room for eight or so Sidewinder missiles, so air combat skills are vital to finish the game."

Currently, the best PC flight sim is probably MicroProse's *1942* for its mix of in-depth gameplay and state-of-the-art (for the PC) texture mapping, but Kavanagh is confident about competing with it, especially as *Nightmares* offers such close, Marine-style integration with the ground forces. There will also be some spectacular explosions: "as gratuitous as memory allows... and smoke will linger afterwards so pilots can use it to pinpoint ground battles, just as in real life."

Asked to sum up the game, Kavanagh doesn't hesitate: "it's what we like to a call a 'thinking man's shoot-'em-up. In our games you think about things first – then you kill everything!" □

3DO magazine

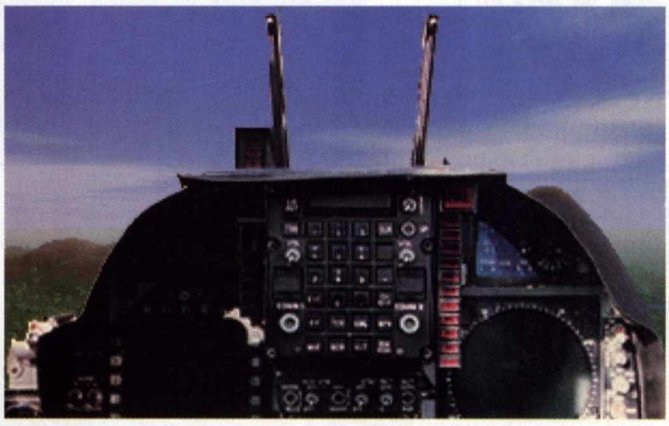
Flying Nightmares is out in Spring 1995 and is just the first in a series of 3DO system 3D games which will eventually take in attack helicopters and science fiction.





Above and below left, in-game shots from the PowerMac version show the same basic polygons as will be used by the 3DO game. The difference is that in a month's time, Domark will begin applying texture maps similar to those in *Wing Commander III*, not only to the aircraft, but everything including the ground and sky. Imagine *Need For Speed* with aircraft. Above, inset, a Harrier uses smoke to vector in on a target. Translucent smoke will be an easy trick for the amazing 3DO chipset.

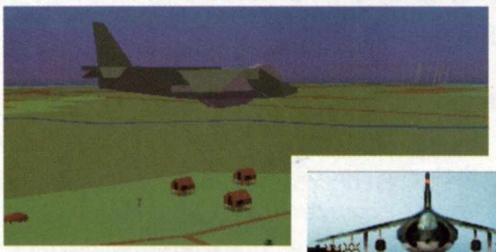




Above, the 3DO system's photorealistic cockpit hints at the treats to come, while below the mission select screen shows some of the FMV added to make the game more of a 3DO experience.











The 3DO arming screen, right, is a tad more impressive than the Mac version, above.



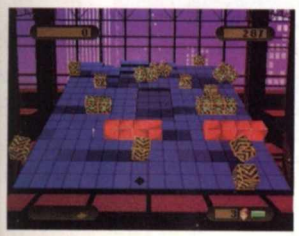
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3DO

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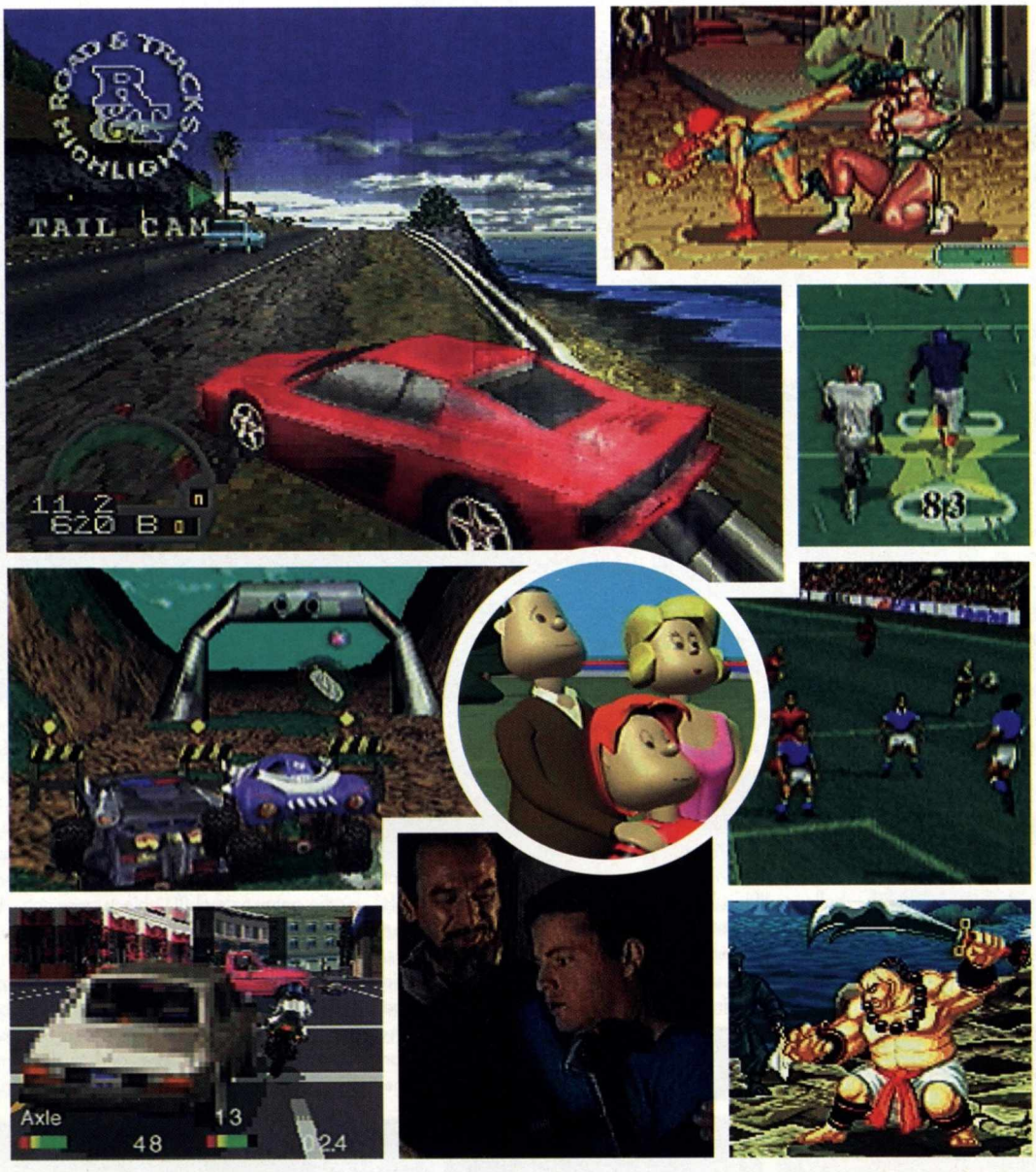


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Highly Recommended 3DO Magazine

3DO magazine ratings:

★★★★★ **Highly Recommended**
A particularly stunning title, bound to please everyone

★★★★ **Generally Excellent**
A very impressive game that most people will love

★★★ **Very Good**
A solid, playable game which is good within its genre

★★ **Average**
May appeal to some, but approach with caution

★ **Poor**
A badly flawed title

The Need For Speed

Publisher: Electronic Arts © 0753 549442 **Developer:** Pioneer **Save Game:** 3 SRAM Slots per track **Price:** £44.99 **Available:** Now

Forget all those overhyped coin-op games, Need For Speed is king of the road with superlative graphics, sampled sound effects and ultra-realistic car handling.

Over the past year or so, the hype for the superconsoles trailing in the 3DO system's wake has centred on arcade games like *Ridge Racer* and *Daytona*. The proudest claim of the PlayStation hype is that only it could handle a coin-op perfect conversion, although of late the word 'near' is increasingly prefacing those claims. So it's a welcome surprise for 3DO system owners to find their machine being graced with a game which looks just as good, only with gameplay calculated for home use instead of a quick blast at the arcades.

Rather than a single car, a single track, *Need* offers no less than seven of the world's most fabulous cars to race on three fantastic courses – coastal, urban and mountainous – each split into several massive stages. You can choose to race against the clock, or a computer controlled player in a car of your choice. While it doesn't have the immediately frenetic appeal of being in a race with 20 identical cars and just 30 seconds to reach the next stage, it is overall a much more involving experience. Chasing after a Lamborghini Diablo at over a hundred mph, with traffic coming both ways and police cars in pursuit, is a test of anyone's driving skills.

Programmed by EA Canada, with many of the same people who worked on Accolade's classic *Test Drive* series, this is a race game with the emphasis on realism. While this can mean boring – and many people never did get *Test Drive*'s specialist appeal – with *Need* this is exactly the opposite. When real drivers get on this game you just can't pry them off. They don't bother about chasing after the other car, forget that, they practice doing powerslide turns in a Ferrari 512TR Testarossa, spinning the car around and around with steam glowing off the wheels. Then they slam the car into reverse, get it up to about eighty and shift into first for a brilliant *Sweeney*-type handbrake turn. When they finally venture off the start line it's to see if they can get the cars to lift off on hilly roads and, of course, they can.

Highly Recommended 3DO Magazine

Sponsored by Car & Track, a US magazine which rigorously tests cars' real performance, *Need* claims to have all the real time to speed figures. The handling of the various cars is brilliantly judged, heavy cars like the Diablo really wallowing about on corners, while the Ferrari seems glued to the road with its huge fat tyres. The detail really is incredible, a 'for example' being the way the Supra suddenly surges when its turbos cut in – which can be hairy if it happens on a tight corner. With so many fantastic cars to play around with this is a game which no-one seems to grow tired of.

If you do bother to actually race, then the game rewards you with some superb sights such as a fleet of balloons lifting off, numerous bridges, plenty of tunnels including a deadringer for Daytona's one and an all but buried Statue of Liberty taken from *Planet Of The Apes*. The texturing of the road and the various roadside objects is just incredible, building on the stunning *Road Rash* (whose programmers contributed to *Need*), but adding far more variety. It doesn't have quite the same breathtaking speed, but is overall more realistic. Probably the finest graphic flair is on the supercars themselves – absolutely, knock dead gorgeous with superb texture mapping recreating every detail of the cars, even the undersides... Which brings us to crashes.

There has never been a game with crashes as dramatic as those in *Need*. Because everything is handled by the game as real 3D objects, moving with real physical laws in force, the crashes are different every time. I've seen a Ferrari flipped onto its nose, spin on a corner and then come to a rest pointing downwards. A Diablo has hit an oncoming car with such force that they both went into the air, one coming to land balanced on top of the other. Then other cars and trucks come piling in, spinning about while your opponent's car invariably

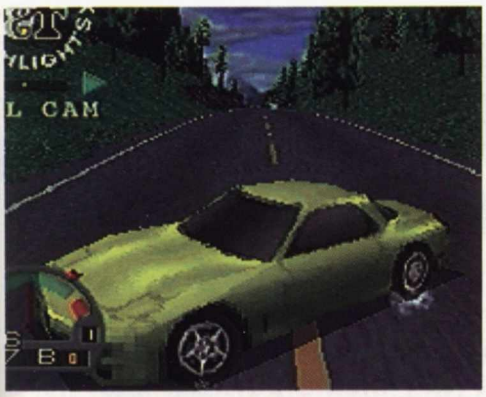


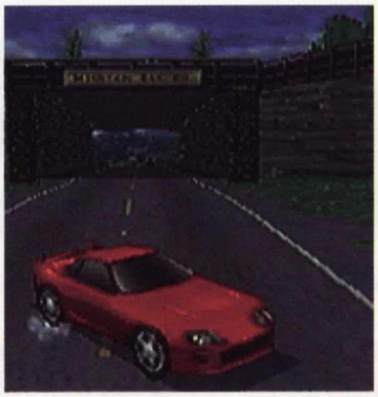






There are no less than eight supercars: Ferrari 512TR Testarossa, Dodge Viper, Corvette ZR1, Lamborghini Diablo VT, Porsche 911, Mazda RX-7 Toyota Supra Turbo, & Honda NSX.

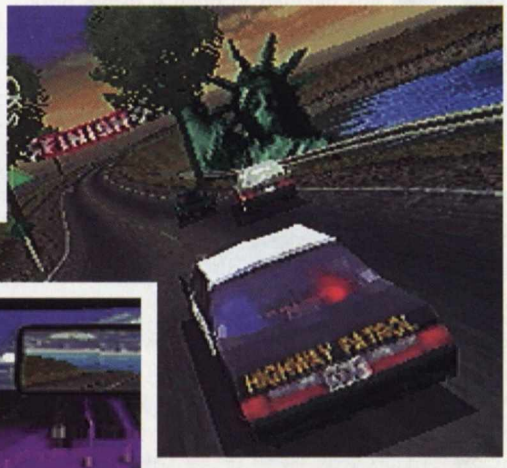












Above, a pic from one of the numerous FMV clips, below the cockpit view of a Dodge – each car has its own appropriate dashboard.







nips through a gap and into the lead.

All this chaos can be viewed again and again by either calling an instant replay, or at the end of the stage when you can review either the entire stage or just the highlights. As in the game itself you can choose between in car, chase and helicopter views, but there's also extra views from the opponent's car, chasing police cars and more. If the game weren't so much fun you'd probably spend ages with this, or even admiring the super slick FMV introducing each of the supercars. You also get FMV of your incredibly smarmy, annoying American opponent who superciliously comments on how you did in the previous stage – adding real incentive to make him suffer in defeat.

Without doubt, *Need For Speed* is going to sell zillions of 3DO systems. It's a game which, even when you've beaten every car on every course, you'll come back to simply to relax, just like cruising a real car down the highway. Given its amazing addictivity, even three huge, multi-stage courses aren't enough, but data disks and a full blown sequel are quite inevitable. In the meantime anyone who's got any interest at all in real cars simply can't miss this one. □ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★★









3DO

Theme Park

Publisher: Electronic Arts © 0753 549442 **Developer:** Bullfrog **Save Game:** 5 SRAM Slots **Price:** £34.99 **Available:** Now

One of the unlikeliest and most original of PC hits of 1994 was this uniquely English concoction, marrying theme park whimsy to a sophisticated business sim.

Theme Park puts you in the position of a wealthy business man (or woman) who has decided to open a theme park. Starting from scratch, you have to choose, place and arrange rides and shops in your park while keeping your customers happy. Are your ticket prices too high? Have you got enough rides? These questions are part of the everyday life of a *Theme Park* operator.

Highly Recommended 3DO Magazine

Despite the game's sophistication, it's perfectly set up to draw you in. An automated tutorial runs you through the basics of designing a park, but really anyone can get building when all it takes is a click of a button to place a Bouncy Castle or Tree House. Paths must be laid so visitors can get to the rides, but it's all beautifully simple.

Opening the park brings on the swarm of people waiting to get in. As they walk around, their thoughts are shown as speech bubbles, simplistic icons giving you an idea of how you park is doing (eg beefburger pictures mean people are hungry). However, there's a lot more to running a theme park than just building fast food parlours: the price of rides must be set to both draw customers and make money, the ticket stations placed to ensure maximum custom, you can even vary how much sugar goes into the ice cream. Another example of the game's subtlety – in design, if not taste – is the placing of restaurants. Place food vendors too close to a particularly dramatic ride and watch the vomit fly. This can lead to a knock-on effect with people becoming sick by watching other people.

There's more to the park than just buildings though, your staff are just as important as your rides, and these little people are there to fix your rides, clean up after your customers or to just keep them amused while they wait in a queue. All this costs money, however, and your staff are constantly on the lookout for a pay increase. This has to be settled at the conference table, or your park will suffer from an all-out strike.

All of the PC's sophistication appears to have been retained on the 3DO system, but now it looks prettier with slightly improved graphics and a more user-friendly pop-up menu system. Until a mouse is released for the 3DO system, I hope all game developers stick to this kind of point-and-click selection. Another advantage for the 3DO version are some brilliant new FMV sequences. You can select any of the rides in your park and go on a first-person perspective tour of your attraction. These really do add to the game's appeal and provide a strong hook for earning enough money for better rides. What's the fun of running a theme park if you can't use the rides yourself? The FMV is also accompanied by some great audio, although the game proper is surprising quiet with just the odd sound effect and sporadic 'ice cream' music – I suppose if every ride's effects ran simultaneously it could get a bit wearing!

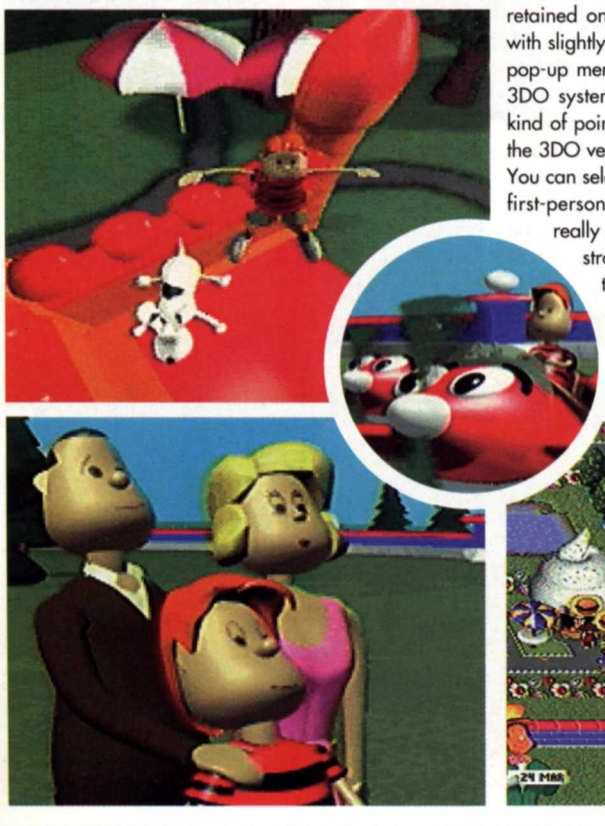


All is well in the park, above, with plenty of action to be had. Except the tea cup ride is breaking down, and closing it for repairs will cost money. I'll repair it next year. It'll be okay 'till then...

Overall, *Theme Park* is a game suitable for players of all ages. The lower difficulty levels can get quite boring after a prolonged period of play, but they are ideal as training grounds for the full game. Constantly improving your park and keeping its customers happy is an addictive formula but this can wear off in time unless you get more involved with the business side of the game. Brain dead arcade fans should be warned the business really can be quite complex, but most people will find building their own *Theme Park* as compulsive as visiting anyone else's! □ **dgmb**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★★

The ride sequences are brilliantly atmospheric, and a great incentive to invest in new ones. The interface system, below right, is a doddle to use.







Disaster! Everyone seems either very peckish or very bored. Coffee machines are cheaper than better rides. You can grow to hate your customers.

Shodown Samurai

Publisher: Crystal Dynamics ✆ 071 9730011 **Developer:** In-house **Save Game:** 5 SRAM Slots **Price:** £TBA **Available:** Soon

Originally developed on the Neo Geo, this classic sword-fighting coin-op has lost none of its blood-splattered ferocity on the 3DO system.

The Neo Geo has long been renowned for its beat-'em-ups, and *Samurai Showdown* is widely recognised as the best of an impressive bunch. So when 3DO wizards Crystal Dynamics announced a conversion, expectations skyrocketed with the game instantly jumping to top of many people's most wanted lists. Now it's finally arrived, all those expectations have been met. On our preproduction copy, Crystal haven't even inserted their logo – the game boots up with an SNK logo and from then on this is perfect arcadia.

Highly Recommended 3DO Magazine

Although *SSFIIX* is undoubtedly a far more sophisticated and faster paced beat-'em-up, *Samurai* makes for a better conversion in many ways. For a start, its outrageous graphics make for a much bolder impression than *SSFXIIX*'s more muted approach. The various backgrounds are absolutely astonishing, not only in their variety and rich colours, but also the detailed animation with snowflakes falling and watching wolves not only wagging their tails, but exhaling clouds of frosty white breath.

The twelve characters on offer are even more impressive, as varied and flamboyant a bunch as you can imagine. The humongous Earthquake is one of the biggest sprites ever seen on the 3DO system, practically filling the screen with his huge belly. Yet everything moves as quickly as the coin-op, complete with the screen zooming in and out as characters wander about. There's no slowdown whatsoever, the only pauses are those used by the coin-op to emphasise its tactical aspects: those swords aren't just for show – a long, sweeping attack causes lots of damage with blood splashing everywhere.

If opponents lock swords, there's some frantic button hammering to come out ahead with the loser being thrown into the air. If you're unlucky you can even lose your weapon, which is left standing in the ground, forcing you to fight on with your fists until you grab it back. Add in some particularly gruesome special moves, such as grabbing a foe and sawing the blade across his throat in a welter of blood, then you've got a game Quentin Tarantino would love.

The sound effects provide a crunchingly good accompaniment to all the action, along with some very atmospheric music. Also as expected are the usual two-player, one player practice and tournament modes – the latter taking you through all the other characters with just three continues. Crystal's one innovation is a welcome save game option, making for a generally superb 3DO experience. If you are fed up with the likes of the *SFII* series, and want something that looks and plays completely different, then this is well worth considering. □ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★★





Above, the gory action in the foreground is always perfectly complimented by the gorgeously animated backgrounds, which are zoomed in and out of with great effect. The many special moves and brilliant character animation make player selection great fun as well. They're all so good, you want to be every one!











3DO

Rise Of The Robots

Publisher: Art Data Interactive ✆ 0101 8055268080 **Developer:** Mirage/Cognisense **Save Game:** No **Price:** £44.99 **Available:** Now

"No version will sound or play better than ours, *Rise* is the type of title which really confirms 3DO as a major player" – Keith Wood, programmer, Cognisence.

Over the past two years, *Rise*'s heavy metal heroes have become the videogame versions of supermodels, their 3D Studio curves adorning preview after preview. Even after all this exposure, they remain inspired creations. Like R2-D2 or C-3PO, they're robots which are at once believable as characters and machines. The lumbering gait of the ape-like Prime B robot, the chillingly insectoid crusher and, of course, the shapeshifting Supervisor with her truly frightening Mantis-morph – it's a brilliant cast for any game and they're never looked better than on 3DO.

Unlike conventional, hand-drawn sprites each frame of animation is taken from the manipulation of incredibly detailed 3D models. To provide frames of animation, the models were put through various combat moves designed by a real martial art expert – a modelling process which took about two months per robot, with full lightsourcing on all 100+ frames of animation. All this work certainly comes through in a finished product – when the Crusher snaps its pincers at you, there's nothing cartoon about the way it moves, light gleaming across its pistoning limbs. Add in debris flying off with every blow, plus crunching good sound FX and it's an impressive experience.

The flexibility of the robot models also make them perfect for the 'cinematics', short FMV sequences introducing the game, and each robot as you face it in combat. The storyline has your character, the Cyborg, visiting an automated factory in revolt against its human masters. The sleek new Supervisor robot has learnt freedom of though and the infection is spreading. The 3DO version extends the original intro with an excellent Cyborg creation scene, besides extending in-game cinematics with dazzling fly-bys of all the robots and new death scenes. Rendered in full 24bit, Truecolour these are impressive sequences – all the more so because the character graphics are so close to those in the FMV. The 3DO version also benefits from an excellent techno soundtrack which you can select instead of Brian May's guitar rock.



Above, the Sentry robot is an enormous sprite, but its huge kicks are incredibly fast. It also learns your moves so a repeated attack pattern is suicidal.

Rise is undoubtedly a great story, but is it a great beat-'em-up? Well, no, set against the likes of *SFIIX* or *Samurai Shodown* this is a rather limited game. The immense size of many of the robots rules out robot versus robot fights, although there is a secret option for military versus military since they're reasonably sized. The robots are also rather few in number, so to beef up the challenge, the game forces you to go through the Supervisor's underlings twice before you get that climatic confrontation with her. She's a spectacular finale, but getting to her won't be at all easy.

While some other versions play rather sluggishly, 3DO *Rise* is lightning quick. The sentry robot may be two-thirds the height of the screen, but his kicks are as fast as Chun-Li's. Even on easy level, this is a very tough, very quick game which will take time to master. There aren't a huge number of moves, but each character has about two special moves and you'll need to know them to survive for long.

Overall, this is a very Hollywood-style production which wipes the floor with any of its competiton in the presentation stakes. Strip out the graphics and you'd have a rather unexceptional game, but with them you've got a ground-breaking hype monster. If the idea appeals, the 3DO version is faster, slicker and more playable than any other version of this highly acclaimed mega-game and well worth buying. □ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★

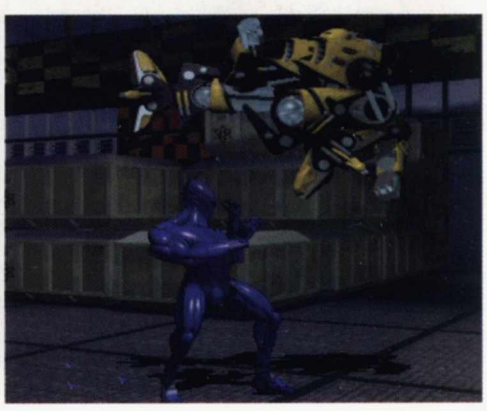
Below, the Crusher demonstrates its spectacular leaping attack. Below the Sentry robot wins.











3DO

Way Of The Warrior

Publisher: Interplay ✆ 0235 821666 **Developer:** Universal/Naughty Dog **Save Game:** No **Price:** £TBA **Available:** TBA

With *Street Fighter II* stepping up a level and threatening the same all-out attack on the 3DO system as it successfully pulled off on the 16bit consoles, it's time for those rivals to come flooding in.

Way of the Warrior is as a good a start as any. It features nine different characters from all kinds of wild and depraved backgrounds. In all honesty I have never seen a more varied mix of degenerates in all my years of console battery! For a start there is Shaky Jake, an Aussie farmer-type bloke who swigs spirits and ignites his flammable breath to barbecue his opponents, and whose hilarious dialogue includes "Strewth, you fight like a wombat", and "Now that's a knife" taken from the famous Crocodile Dundee scene!

Then there's Crimson Glory, the babe from hell who wise-cracks in a heavy Arizona drawl, her moves including bunging bottles, breaking backs, and exploding people's heads – all of which are climaxed with the cheeky lass taking a huge tug on her whisky and spitting it out into the air, hardly how a proper lady would behave! Other combatants include Major Gaines, a steroid-gobbling marine, Fox, a lethal hit-man type geezer, and other assorted ninjas and stick-wielding thugs. They're all impressively digitised and fully equipped with spectacular moves.

Nevertheless, the first thing that'll hit you about this game is the tremendous soundtrack. No sooner do you boot the game up, than you ears are heavily assaulted by a frantically-paced thrash metal bombardment of sound. This then fades into the background and the screen is filled with a huge skull that introduces you to the contest ahead. The in-game music is equally impressive, adding massively to the atmosphere.

There are three modes of play in *Warrior*; Tournament, a one-player game in which you fight your way through the nine characters before confronting two mega-bosses; Versus, which is a standard two-player and Demo, just in case you fancy watching the computer duff away by itself.

Like most beat-'em-ups, *Warrior* is very hard to master and each character has a vast array of suitably gruesome moves, plus several "Fatality" sequences that make *Mortal Kombat II* look like an episode of *Button Moon*! Honestly, you've never seen dismemberment's as graphic and sick as this. However, after a while it becomes obvious that presentational gimmicks, including that great sound track and slick digitised graphics, are the undoubtedly primary attraction with gameplay trailing a poor second.



Whereas *SSFIIX* relies on well-timed combos and fluid attacks to win, *Warrior* is almost mindless button-bopping with wins often resulting more from luck than actual skill. Good as the graphics are (brilliant in fact), *Warrior* just doesn't have the playability to back them up. The main problem is that the fighters don't respond as quickly to your commands as they should, resulting in very jagged action that looks more like a staged WWF bout than two fighters who've got to kill to win. Unlike *MKII*, and especially *SSFIIX*, you don't actually feel that sensation of landing devastating blows, you just swipe away and occasionally your opponent topples to the ground like a sack of spuds!

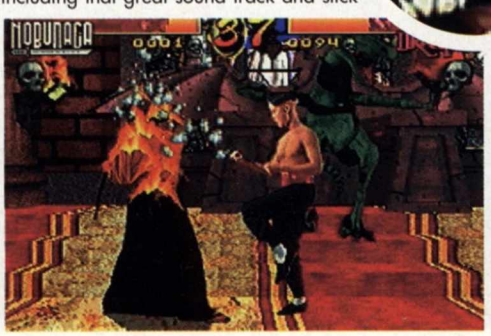
In terms of presentation, *Warrior* is certainly a better showcase of the 3DO system than *SFIIX*; besides smooth screen scaling to keep the characters always in view, there's some absolutely stunning guardian monsters (which a cheat lets you control). Newcomers to beat-'em-ups will probably have great fun with it initially, but for true beat-'em-up fans *Warrior* is essentially a weak *MKII* clone with no guts or personality of its own. □ **rpb**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★













The special moves provide the most fun in *the* game, above. Discovering and implementing them is great fun. Below, the bizarre bunch that star in this off-kilter game. You wouldn't want to meet any of them

3DO

FIFA International Soccer

Publisher: Electronic Arts ✆ 0753 549442 **Developer:** Extended Play **Save Game:** 10 SRAM Slots **Price:** £44.99 **Available:** Now

After the ultimate American football sim (*Madden*) and the fastest racer (*Road Rash*), have EA produced the definitive footie game?

The anticipation for this title has been enormous and first impressions seem to confirm EA have bettered even *Madden* in creating the most visually impressive, slickly packaged game yet. From the superb FMV intro, spliced with in-game action scenes (hardly distinguishable from real life) to the multitude of play options, camera angles, slow motion controls and stunning, sampled soundtracks, *FIFA* looks and sounds as good as any game written. In play, you can believe you're watching a real football match, so detailed are the sprites and so smooth is the animation, all panned and zoomed across with unbelievable smoothness. For the first few games, you can't resist running everything back in slow motion, choosing the free camera view to whiz all over the place, watching the action from every conceivable angle. Even more so than *John Madden*, these slow motion flashbacks are almost a game in their own right.

Highly Recommended 3DO Magazine

In game, despite the multitude of views available, the Stadium camera is most helpful, providing a smooth panning horizontal track of the action, and keeping as much of the pitch (about a third) in view at one time. Over-the-Shoulder, Ball-Cam, End Zone and Side-Line are all nice to replay action, but each pose difficulties in some aspect of play, making passing especially difficult.

Truly then, *FIFA* for the 3DO system is a stunning looking game and veterans of previous *FIFA* incarnations will be incredulous at the visual panache, the awesome action-sensitive, stadium-shaking soundtrack and intelligent camera cuts (for goal kicks and corners etc). Unlike most footie games, long matches are entirely absorbing with the audio-visuals providing an engrossing atmosphere. However, as with all versions of *FIFA*, graphics do extract a penalty in gameplay.

These days most footie fans have become used to the absurd arcade speed of the microdot graphics of *Kick Off* and *Sensi*. Compared to these *FIFA* feels a little sluggish at times, which may be more realistic but less excusable is the controllability. In *Sensi* it's perfectly easy to put together blindingly fast successions of passes and strikes. Here, passing is more cumbersome, and interceptions almost the rule rather than the exception, making flowing play difficult. Another irksome flaw is the imprecise nature of tackling. Unlike almost every other football game I've played, where tackles are swift and decisive, in *FIFA*, opposing players just wrestle with each other for several seconds.

Of course, these problems are no less pronounced on other versions and that hasn't stopped it becoming one of the bestselling carts ever. The 32bit glories of the 3DO version mean it should be even more successful, but compared to the world-shattering hype, gameplay is still only enhanced and *FIFA* isn't as definitive as say *Madden*. Rage's faster-running *Striker* is still in with a chance for the cup, but in the meantime *FIFA* gives the 3DO system another genre classic which is essential for any footie fan. Moreover, if you've got five pals and (more problematically) five joypads then the six-player game is pretty much unmissable as well. □ **mcw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★★



Above, a header keeps the ball in play. Inset, flashy moves come easily to *FIFA* players, and good fun they are too. And of course, they're *always* intentional. The slow-mo and zoom facility prove handy for debate.



A mad dash down the middle in close-up, and a chance to admire the characterful footballer sprites in action. The animation is excellent. Below, an easy strike shouldn't cause any problems for the computer controlled keeper. They're all very good.











3DO

John Madden Football

Publisher: Electronic Arts ✆ 0753 549442 **Developer:** High Score **Save Game:** 3 SRAM Slots **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

Madden was one of the first 3DO multiplayer releases to justify the next generation hype, marrying state-of-the-art presentation in-game and out to fantastic playability.

The incredibly detailed, beautifully animated sprites of *Madden* on the 3DO system will be a revelation to any one familiar with Mega Drive and SNES conversions. As will the stereo sound, FMV intro, sampled in-game commentary and smooth panning action replays. Since American Football itself is so reliant on big game razzmatazz and spectacle, this is an apt title for EA to showcase the 3DO system's abilities on. And as gameplay itself is even more gorgeously addictive and engrossing, all this visual sumptuousness is welcome icing on the cake.

Highly Recommended 3DO Magazine

The most significant graphical enhancement, which in turn boosts gameplay considerably, is that the action is viewed much closer, and in far greater detail. This makes sophisticated plays far more realistic than the fat, indistinct players from lesser consoles. Although scrimmages are still an explosion of confusion, the superbly realistic sprites are much more easily distinguished between – and it's this clarity that makes *Madden* much more accessible to football novices.

Madden was always designed for beginners and your 3DO system will do practically everything until you decide to take control. It couldn't be easier to get into, but it's still American football and working out the right strategy is essential to both success and enjoyment. Basically, each team has four attempts, or downs, to make ten yards towards the opponent's goal. If this distance isn't covered, play switches around. You can make the distance by a combination of runs and throws: there are in fact over 100 different plays, each represented by easy to understand onscreen diagrams. Working out which play is best for each situation, against the defensive move you expect the other side to make, is an intriguing battle of wits.

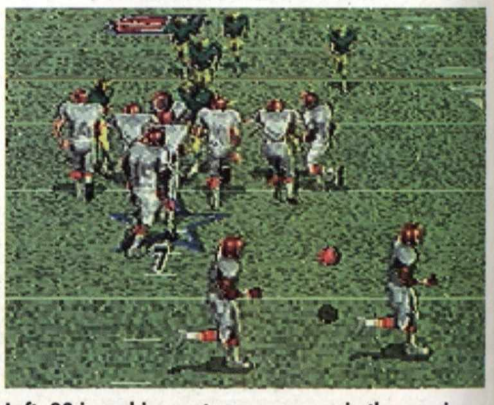
As a complete novice to the sport – in fact, I usually take pains to avoid watching it – all it took were a few goes to have me entirely addicted. I particularly enjoyed learning new moves and implementing them successfully, revelling in the game's fantastic controllability. Authentic team stats, FMV sequences and brilliant sound and narration all conspire to make this even more cruelly addictive.

The ultimate heresy in this 'soccer'-loving land is that I'd argue American is better than British in the videogame stakes. In a footie game there's only a modicum of control available over your team, play being inevitably focused on the player in possession. *Madden*, by contrast, gives a feeling of complete control, and thus far greater satisfaction. Whilst some might find the stop-start nature of play off-putting, the pauses to plan your next move are completely engrossing. In fact, they only accentuate the excitement of the actual plays, shorts bursts of adrenaline that are riveting in their potential for glorious progression upfield or stomach-churning interceptions and failure. Despite stiff competition, this remains the most impressive game I've ever seen, on anything anywhere. Whilst single player games don't offer quite as much excitement as the extraordinary two-player matches, this is still an unmissable piece of software. □ **mcw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★★



Above, it looks like a throw down the middle is all that's possible. Below, plenty of space to work with and it looks like a run down the right side is coming.



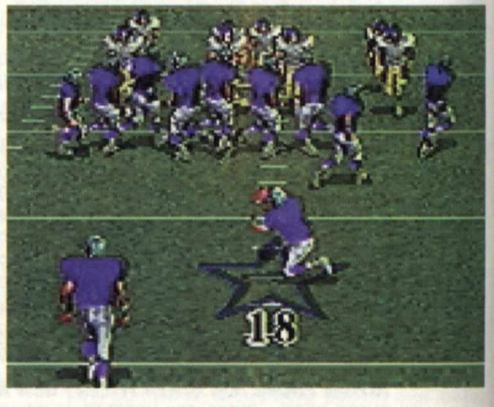
Left, 83 is making a strong run even in the pouring rain. Below, goal time.











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Super Street Fighter II X

Publisher: Panasonic ✆ 0344 853146 **Developer:** Capcom **Save Game:** No **Price:** £60 **Available:** Dec/Jan

The Super NES didn't get it, the Mega Drive didn't get it, and you sure as hell won't find it on the Jaguar. The ultimate conversion of the arcade milestone has come to the ultimate console.

Super Street Fighter II X is Capcom's reply to thousands of happy-go-lucky coin-op addicts who thought the old format needed a boot in the right direction if it was to compete with the likes of *MKII* and indeed the whole new line-up of impressive beat-'em-ups that offer much more to the player than just winning rounds.

For those uninitiated in *SFII* lore, *SSFIIX* includes the four new characters introduced in *Super SFII* plus a massive array of new and improved moves, including the brand-new Ultra moves. The latter are obviously a cunning ploy to indirectly compete with *Mortal Kombat* by offering the player something hidden to find and perfect, whilst keeping the gore factor down to minimum to placate the anti-violence brigade – cunning non? As in *MKII*, the Ultra moves are secret and complicated, but offer a spectacular pay-off to those prepared to work for them. If you make a throw move when the 'Super' meter flashes, a fiddly joypad manoeuvre will cause your fighter to lunge into a super-duper combo move that saps your opponent's energy like nobody's business! Pull it off when the other fighter's energy is at minimum and the screen will turn into a huge explosion as your foe is totally hammered!

This effect, as with almost everything else in the arcade game, is superbly replicated with the 3DO version. Capcom have even brought across the coin-op's Q-Sound, which sounds stunning through a decent hi-fi. The graphics are also accurately recreated with incredible detail on all the fighters. Backgrounds aren't quite as impressive, the colours seem a little muted from the coin-op, but the speed at which the game runs is incredible – easily refuting early scepticism. If you've only got a standard joypad the speed can actually be a problem – the 'pause' button has been used as a distinctly awkward sixth button – but a Capcom designed pad is due for near simultaneous release.

SFII fans will obviously find this an essential buy, many will probably buy a 3DO system just for it, but there are some niggles. The most surprising is that in some ways the game is disappointing on the 3DO system. The sound is arcade perfect, but the tunes are the same as when the first game appeared and nothing new has been added to compete with *Way Of The Warrior*'s state-of-the-art rock track. Similarly the visuals lack the freshness that *Warrior*'s various special effects offer.

Highly Recommended 3DO Magazine

Nevertheless, for real beat-'em-up fanatics, *SSFIIX* is still undoubtedly king of the hill. Years of constant development has not only retained that incredible playability, but added an incredible number of moves per character – the possibilities for combination move attacks are almost endless. If you're serious about beat-'em-ups, or just want to see what the best is like, then *SSFIIX* is pretty much unmissable. □ **rpb**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★★



Above, the China lass demonstrates how to render a man useless! Below left, we used to think these woman were sexy!













Above right, finish 'em off with an Ultra move and this is the stunning effect. Below left, Fei Long and Ryu practice for the amateur ballet production!







Above, Sagat unleashes the full force of his Ultra move. Left, the *SSFII* babes battle it out for overall supremacy! Who's the most gorgeous? Who can say. Can't wait to see Kylie pull off that move.

3DO

Alone in the Dark

Publisher: Infogrames ✆ 071 7388199 **Developer:** In-house **Save Game:** 3 SRAM Slots **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** January

One of the biggest PC releases of '93, *Alone* made polygon graphics sexy with its haunting mix of realistic animation and bucket loads of blood. But is the 3DO version still worth a shiver?

As the hype machine is already churning on *Alone III* for the PC, it may seem annoying that 3DO system owners are being fobbed off with the original – especially as the programmers haven't even bothered to update the 3DO multiplayer version. However, the hoary old excuse that it's a classic game which doesn't need changing actually holds some water with *Alone*. Thanks to an excellent soundtrack and stunningly rendered locations, *Alone In The Dark* has the ambience of a classic horror movie and everyone deserves a visit to this haunted house.

Your objective is simple: escape from the house. Compared to its sequels it's not that big a challenge, but while veterans can whiz through it in hours others will have more trouble – and fun. Besides being packed with puzzles, this Gothic abode offers an unusual game perspective. Well, three or four different perspectives per room to be exact. As your character wanders about, the game automatically swaps between the most suitable or – being French – most dramatic perspectives to show what's happening. Although this can be confusing at first, it not only helps show off the polygon graphics but also hints at the various puzzles and traps which lurk in every room. Some objects are hidden in corners of rooms or must be placed in certain positions, so a thorough walk around of each location is essential.

Another reason to explore is the surprisingly high degree of interaction. Cupboards not only look good, but can be pushed in front of windows to prevent nasties bursting through. Vases can be smashed to find keys, mirrors combined to spectacular effect and a whole host of weapons put to work. Up until *Alone*, polygon games were all rather clinical and gore-free. *Alone* changed that by not only by having plenty of blood splashed about, but also through disturbingly realistic animation. Watching a zombie savage your character in a spray of blood is a truly gruesome experience. However, I suppose it helps justify the various knives, swords and broken bottles you use against them, not to mention a satisfyingly lethal shotgun. This is, without doubt, a very adult game, both in content and atmosphere, but that's a compliment rather than a criticism. The thread of violence that runs through *Alone* adds to the unbearable tension, overshadowing every scene with spine tingling dread.

There are certainly some very weird scenes as well.



The frozen ballroom dance, for example, is a puzzle as unsettling as it is tricky. What's more, unlike most adventures the design and innovation of *Alone* becomes more not less impressive towards the games climax. Clearly, as the programmers became more comfortable with their original idea they got more ambitious, imbuing their product with a degree of artistry rarely seen in a videogame.

So despite being a drearily unimaginative conversion, the strength of the original game makes it still well worth a look. While PC owners will see no reason to trouble themselves with it, others will find much to delight (and terrify) themselves with here particularly as the official, PAL release will be full screen. Now if Infogrames cut to the chase with a souped up *Alone In The Dark III*, everyone will really have something to look forward to. □ **mcw**

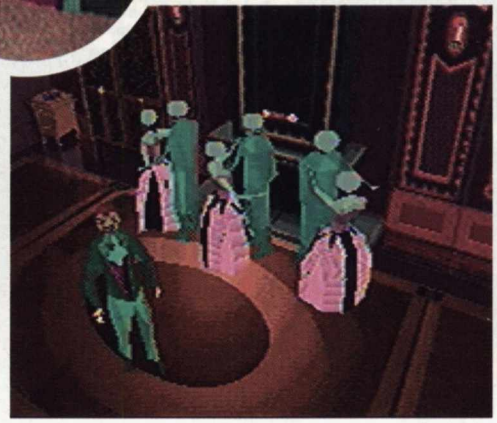
3DO magazine rating: ★★★★



Above, the shotgun is the easiest way to dispense of gouls, and the most enjoyable. Inset, attacks from this snapping, vicious dog, are invariably fatal without a weapon.



A reflection of itself will give this winged guard something to cry about. It's down these stairs that *Alone In The Dark* really opens up, with many monstors and puzzles below ground...





3DO

World Cup Golf

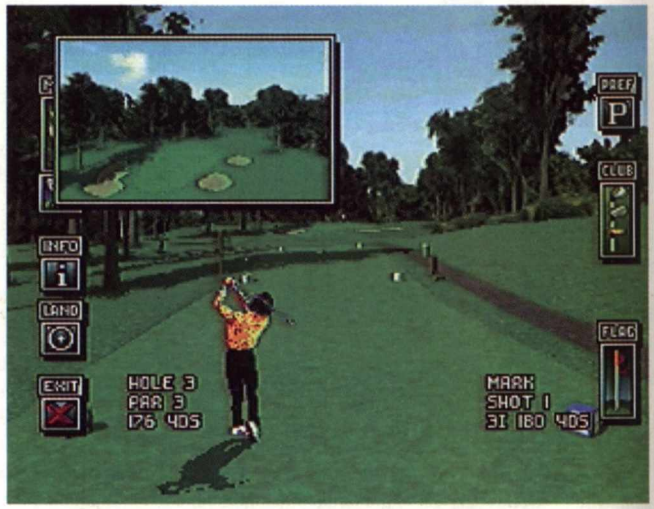
Publisher: US Gold ✆ 021 606 1800 **Developer:** Arc **Save Game:** 2 SRAM Slots **Price:** £TBA **Available:** Early December

With digitised stills for every view rendered in *World Cup Golf*, US Gold seem confident this is as real a golf game as you'll ever see.

The perennial success of golfing games on every conceivable format since the dawn of video games isn't difficult to comprehend. Few sports are as relaxing as making a long drive down the open green, nor as expensively exclusive – making simulation considerably more affordable than reality.

In the pursuit of producing a sim as close to reality as possible, Arc have stuffed *World Cup Golf* with digitised backgrounds and FMV sequences. Set in Puerto Rico, the various scenes seem a little less colourful than you might expect, and large, digitised player graphics are conspicuous by their absence, but the level of detail is impressive. The obsession with realism also comes through in the control system, a vast wealth of options being available through an exceptionally friendly interface, each control bringing forth a window from which to access the finer details. Fade, draw, top and back spin are all easily achieved, along with stance, backspin and everything else you'd expect. Hitting the ball (the main thing really) is nevertheless simple and effective, allowing you to soon build the confidence for heroic shots with wildly inappropriate clubs, just for the hell of it. Especially fun is trying wacky slices around trees just to test the realism of the program – it passes with flying colours.

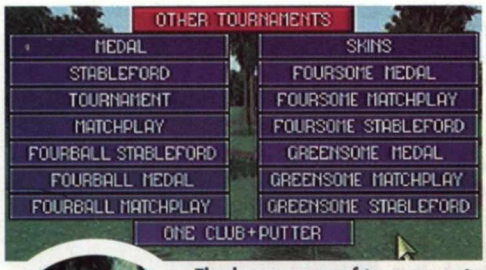
By way of contrast, the much lauded FMV sequences which attend every tee-off aren't that impressive. The window in which they appear is small and, while slick, they aren't as dramatic as the simpler animations in 16bit *PGA*. They also cause a brief pause for disc accessing which interrupts that much sought after illusion of realism. Also irksome is that there's just a single 18-hole course – the price of such detailed recreation of the Dorado Beach course where the 40th anniversary of World Cup Golf is due to take place.



To ensure long-lasting appeal there are, however, no less that 15 different championship formats, from the usual skins and medal games, to the enjoyable one club and putter game, which is an excellent way of learning all the types of strikes that can be applied to a ball, without having to worry about different clubs. People with golf-loving friends are also well catered for, with up to 32 two-player teams able to join in on any of the 18 holes (which can be practised individually by perfectionists).

Overall it's the fine detail, the incredible variety of options, that will get golf fans queuing up for *World Cup Golf*. There's no less than 72 national teams to compete against, equipped with some very tough, smart computer-controlled players. Non-fans might be less forgiving of the sluggishness when you hit the ball, but golf is never going to appeal to arcade fans and with *PGA Golf* still some way off this is bound to do well. □ **mcw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★

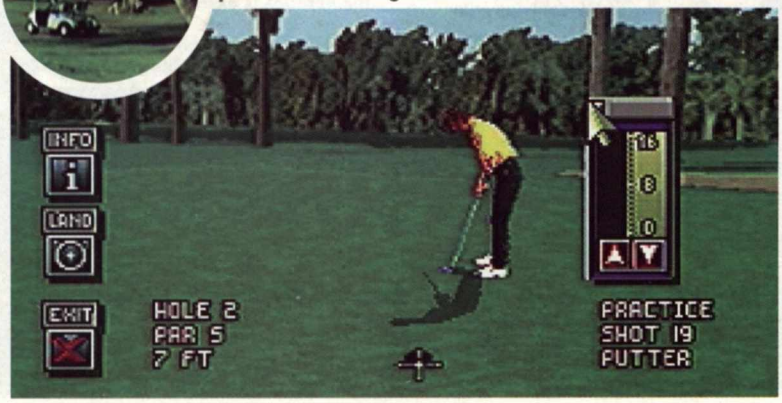




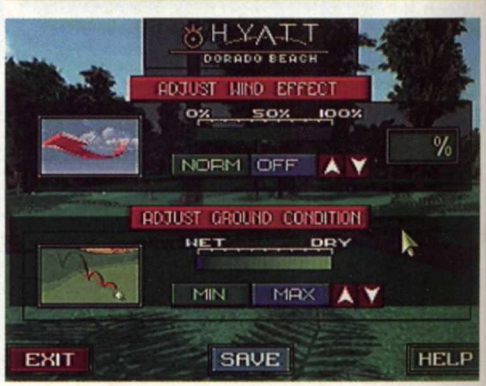
The huge array of tournament styles to play, plus the welcome practice options, are very impressive, and compensate for the single course.







Above, in the rough and in the shade. From the map, it would appear I'm rather off course. Top right, the pull-out menus are both easy to use and very accurate in implementation. There's certainly no difficulty for beginners in tackling *World Cup Golf*. The wind and other weather conditions, right, can be adjusted then saved. Left, an easy putt.



3DO

Off-World Interceptor

Publisher: Crystal Dynamics ✆ 071 9730011 **Developer:** In-house **Save Game:** No **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

The 3DO system is becoming something of a nirvana for racing fanatics with *Road Rash* and *Need For Speed* blasting away all Earthly competition, while *Interceptor* provides a mega-blasting sci-fi variant.

The brilliance of the *Total Eclipse* graphics engine made its reuse almost inevitable, but *Interceptor* both improves on it and uses it for an entirely different type of game. The barren levels of our early cover disk have been entirely blown away in the finished game, Crystal Dynamics going into overdrive with mind-blowing sci-fi landscapes.

There are six different planets, each with six or seven levels to race across, and in Story Mode, the object is simply to get to from one end to the other, blasting or avoiding trouble all the way. As with *Total* you can't turn around, but the landscape is so broad there's still plenty of exploration to carry out finding the most lucrative (or safest) route through each level. When you finish a planet you also get to meet an end-level boss – usually an enormous, heavily armoured tank. It's one tough challenge, but while Story Mode has a fixed route through the planets, Arcade Mode lets you practice each one separately (as in *Road Rash*). This is good fun as they're all so varied, but it does diminish the incentive to play through normally and is clumsy compensation for the lack of save game.

Highly Recommended 3DO Magazine

Two-player Mode is better structured with each planet offering three battle sites – win two and the planet is yours, win all the planets and you've won the game. Moreover you can switch your cars at any point – an important consideration since their capabilities vary dramatically. Some come with guided missiles or lasers which, while ideal for beginners, also make the game a bit easy. Initially things do seem rather simple with warp gates to put you behind the other player – a trick required by the fact you can't turn around. However, with practise the game becomes very playable as you become more adept with rear-fire mines and various other weapons.



The game's main appeal though is one-player with the screen overloading on speed, detail and incoming fire! The terrain is the most outrageously varied ever seen, boasting endless hills, ravines, pits and ridges to race along. With ever more tight time limits the landscape alone might be enemy enough for some games, but not *Interceptor*. Each planet introduces some new hazard, from pop-up lasers to electric towers to gunship copters. The list is endless and the screen is always swarming with lasers and missiles. And then there's enemy buggies and cycles that provide the stiffest (and most thrilling) competition, initially just blasting and ramming, but eventually laying mines and using rear-fire lasers on you. It's these high speed chases, whizzing down roads and through ravines trying to escape the nippy enemies, that really make *Interceptor* a quite unique and supremely accomplished gaming experience.

To stand some chance of survival you can spend any money you've collected at the end-level shop. Extra lives (clones), missiles, nitros, shields, engines, tyres and (most expensive of all) cars are all on offer. Some of these appear in-game as collectibles alongside specials such a screen-busting nuclear smart bomb. But really it's the superb speed and complete controllability over your buggy that make this huge fun.

Overall *Off-World Interceptor* is a classic arcade game, with simple objectives, seductive visuals and sonics (the music is up to Crystal Dynamics usual high standards) and gameplay that is simply joyful. Inconceivable on any other machine, this is outstanding stuff, and with a brilliant two-player game, quite unmissable. □ **mcw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★★













Intimate scraps with enemy buggies, above, are common and exhilarating. The detail on the vehicles is excellent. Head-to-head, below, is non-stop action, with everything moving at incredible speed.



3DO

Road Rash

Publisher: Electronic Arts ✆ 0753 549442 **Developer:** Monkey Doo **Save Game:** 10 SRAM Slots **Price:** £44.99 **Available:** Now

Road Rash is the game even the little girls in big DMs like. Ultra-fast, ultra-violent it's what videogaming's all about.

The most striking thing about *Road Rash* is how complete a package it is. From the opening power chords to the flame-licked 'winner' logo this a perfectly orchestrated experience. It's not only the endless FMV, arcade-style visuals and rock star soundtrack – it's details like 3D rendered flybys of bikes for sale, even the menu screens are bizarre but beautiful works of art.

The most important thing to say is just how playable a game this is. The speed is unbelievable, but you always feel in total control and never doubt the fairness of a crash. If you touch an obstacle glancingly then you only lose a little speed and energy: it's only if you hit something square on that you go flying off the bike.

Highly Recommended 3DO Magazine

On early levels roads are wide, traffic infrequent and collisions treated generously. But then tracks tighten to two-lane death-traps thick with oncoming traffic, while competing bikes get even faster. Yet the controls are so tight, the feel so good, that you can whip along the pavement, clip joggers who foolishly play chicken, squeeze between two speeding cars with a whisker to spare, even slide onto the grass and hills at the side to avoid trouble. Then there's 150mph fights with fellow bikers and pursuing cops. The realism of the crunching bicycle chains is more satisfying than most beat-'em-ups.

All of this is realised with stunning graphic flair. The Spartan wastelands of the Mega Drive version have been replaced with lush countryside, finely detailed cities and sweeping coastlines. The 3DO system's twin graphic engines work overtime generating stunningly realistic texture maps at breathtaking speed. Outside of an arcade there has never been anything like this. The way landscapes rise and fall, the speed at which buildings whip past – it's astonishingly realistic and utterly convincing.

Even better than an arcade game is the soundtrack which features tracks from groups such as Mercury Prize runners-up Therapy?. You can choose whichever you want to accompany your racing, or none if you prefer. Sound effects aren't, initially, as impressive but that weedy drone is due to your bike not the 3DO system. Work your way up to a more powerful bike and the full-throated roar is superb.

The 3DO system also excels in the FMV department, Cinepak faultlessly digitising some 40 different specially shot video clips to reward or mock your performance. Not French New Wave perhaps, but skilfully composed little vignettes a la MTV.

The only slight disappointment is the game structure. As with the original you can see any of the five main locations, from the Pacific Highway to urban hell, right from the start. When you complete all five, you progress to the next stage where the tracks are harder but not graphically all that different. This is a minor whinge though, after all if the game's challenge isn't enough reward, how about Ollies' bike shop. Earn enough cash for a superbike and the increase in performance is terrific, especially with nitrous injection. Choosing the right bike at the right time is also an important tactical element.

Overall, this is pretty much your definitive EA game: arcade-style instant addiction married to home computer style depth and long-term challenge. □ **mcw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★★



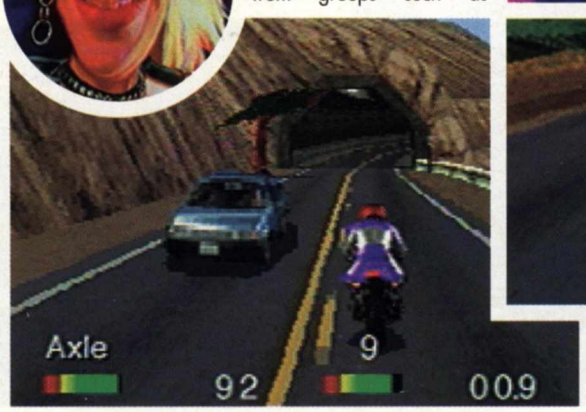


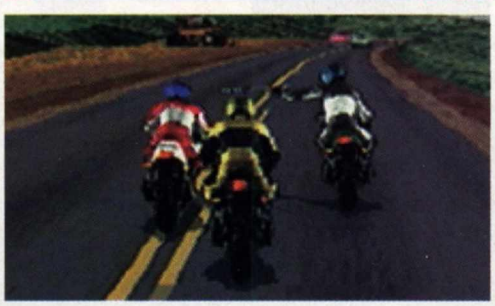




Tight squeezes, above, certainly provide a buzz. Below, a skateboarder misses sudden impact by seconds. *Road Rash* welcomes sociopathic riders.









Above, swinging your chain at opponents with two cars on the horizon is asking for trouble. Left, things get cosy in tunnels. Only wimps bother slowing down though.

3DO

Shock Wave

Publisher: Electronic Arts ✆ 0753 549442 **Developer:** ATG **Save Game:** 10 SRAM Slots **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

Shock Wave raises the art of FMV presentation to new heights with real actors seamlessly blended into CGI action sequences. But does the game live up to the movie?

The image of an arrowheaded F177 arcing over the Earth was always one of the most striking images in the 3DO system's hype. Cynics could argue it was only presentation, but with the 3DO multiplayer that's part of the point. A doublespeed CD as standard, Cinepak video compression and a superfast bus make FMV presentation easy. Almost 3DO game for the 3DO system has some sort of Silicon Graphics wizardry to introduce itself with and, as the machine matures, the eye-candy will be ever more tightly integrated into the actual game.

Shock Wave is at the crest of this wave. Of course, the intro is slick with some of the sharpest CGI imagery around. Moreover the use of real actors, with chroma-key photography to integrate them into CGI sets, is a world away from *Super Wing Commander*'s computer art. However, the FMV doesn't stop with the launch of the F177. As you skim across the texture-mapped waves of the River Nile, fellow pilots appear on the instrument panel to urge you on. The female flight controller radios sarcastic comments, while the alien invasion storyline is advanced by news broadcasts. If you complete the mission a new FMV sequence updates you on alien progress, and suggests new tactics. You can't help but feel involved as the pilots trade quips about the upcoming missions.

The game itself is split into ten missions, each of which takes place on a different location on Earth. Within a fairly broad corridor you have complete freedom of movement except for your altitude, which is fixed. At the end of the corridor is an end level guardian, but there's plenty of alien-infested stages before you get there. On the early levels aliens are slow-moving and simple-minded, but as you progress new types arrive with tougher armour and smarter tactics. It's a good idea to listen during those FMV briefings!



In-game visuals are just as impressive as the FMV. Texture mapping is used on just about everything except your laser bolts. Alien ships have a truly otherworldly look about them, while locations such as Las Vegas are evocatively portrayed with streams of light shimmering in the dark. The graphics are, as you expect, fully interactive. Hit a skyscraper and a nice explosion consumes masses of points.



For shoot-'em-up fanatics *Shock Wave* offers plenty of fast 'n' frantic action with a better graded difficulty curve than *Total Eclipse*: better still it also has a save game option. However, despite its many good points its advanced technology is ultimately superficial. The FMV movie has great production values, but its plotline is fixed. If you complete a mission you get the next clip of film, if you fail you get a hospital clip and a chance to retry. This linear structure is ultimately a lot less compelling than *Wing Commander*'s interactive narrative. Also, the plot is a tad stale being essentially an update of HG Wells' *War Of The Worlds*. Okay, it's a classy story to rip-off but these days the collapse of the Soviet Union has reduced our interest in massed alien invasions. Nowadays the enemy is within, and shows like the *X-Files* or *Twin Peaks* have their aliens as lost and confused as any normal serial killer.

The main problem, however, is that while the game is fun to play it lacks depth. The F177 has a simple array of weapons and combat's rarely all that complex. Worse, because there's only ten levels they're made very long and protracted. Going back to base for a hospital scene, then restarting on the easy early stages soon becomes tiresome. As you might expect of a development team called New Technologies Group, *Shock Wave* is ultimately more interesting for its slick coding than its unremarkable gameplay. If you want a blast, it's challenging enough. If you want more, then the planned data disk better have some major improvements. □ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★







Above, acting tough. The excellent FMV sequences really do add atmosphere. The tips, tactics and sarcastic asides from your controller (inset) are both useful and entertaining.





3DO

Super Wing Commander

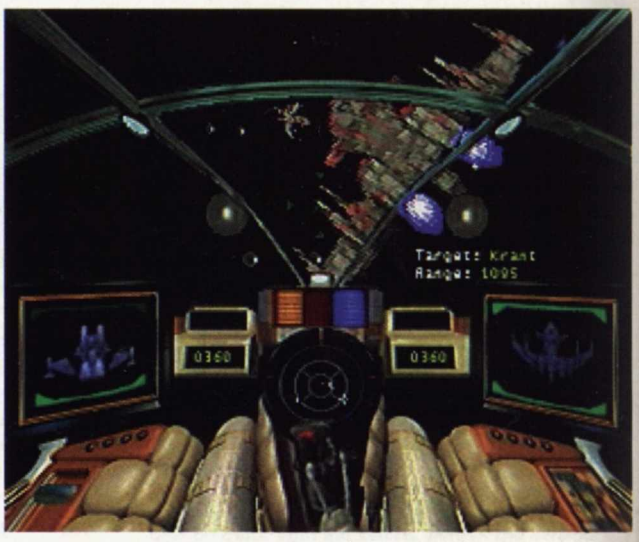
Publisher: Electronic Arts ✆ 0753 549442 **Developer:** Origin **Save Game:** 8 SRAM Slots **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

Originally released in 1991, Chris Robert's epic space opera pointed the way forward for the coming multimedia revolution. Massively upgraded for the 3DO system, it's still as addictive as ever.

The reason *Wing Commander* caused such a stir in 1991 was the way it skillfully interweaved presentation and gameplay to provide a truly cinematic game. Rather than interspersing its 72 missions with a handful of static reward screens, Chris Roberts developed a plot which went through the entire game. The intro sequence kicks off a plot which has you coming aboard the Tiger Claw carrier as a rookie. Your first mission is to uncover what happened in the intro sequence and, as the game progresses, your performance affects how the story develops. Do poorly and the Federation's campaign becomes ever more hopeless, leading ultimately to a Kilrathi victory.

While most games begin with you plonked in your spaceship's cockpit, *Wing Commander* begins in the Tiger Claw's Rec Room. Here you can chat with various characters, learning combat tips, hints about upcoming plot suprises and maybe even begin a romance. If you fancy a different sort of action, a practice mode is wittily incorporated as an arcade machine. Basically, the Rec Room provides the human dimension of the story, the faces to the various wingmen you'll fly with and a gloss on their characters – important since in the heat of battle the way they behave varies dramatically.

The Briefing Room, by contrast, provides the tactical story with plenty of detail on your upcoming missions. When that's over the pilots are shown running to their ships. Unlike the original PC game with its 1944-style decor, the 3DO version glistens with hi-tech FMV sequences. The sequence which has you combat-suited, running to your ship and then blasting off really does get the adrenaline pumping.



A Krant, top, comes into range of your mass drivers. The detail is brilliant, but don't admire it too much. Below, the *Tiger Claw* rec room.



Once on a mission the game becomes more conventional. The missions aren't massively varied, breaking down into either escort or patrols. As you'd expect, combat involves lots of frantic manoeuvring to get the enemy into your sights, but what sets it apart is the detail. Not only can you give your wingman commands, but you can exchange insults with the Kilrathi. The digitised speech really comes into its own here, Kilrathi taunts such as 'Does it hurt ape-child' add immensely to the atmosphere.

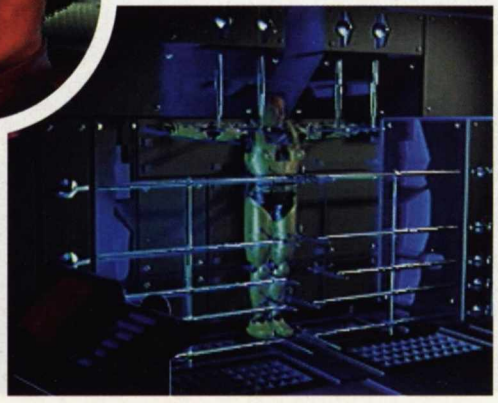
The actual graphics are generally excellent. The 3DO system's hardware was designed for exactly the same 'scale and rotate' school of sprite handling as the original *Wing Commander* used. The new sprites are consequently far more detailed and look gorgeous. One particularly stunning effect is when an enemy ship dissolves into debris, one large chunk flashing with electricity just like in *Star Trek III*. It's a shame then that's there is some jerkiness, but this is first generation of software for the 3DO system from Origin and generally everything moves very quickly and effectively.





Captain Jeanette Devereaux, inset, provides the game's romantic interest. I'm not surprised!





Combat certainly feels realistically hectic. Enemy ships whirl about desperately jockeying for position, your wingman invariably flies into your line of fire and loudly protests over the radio while your instrument panels flash red, then explode under enemy fire. Your various weapons all look great, laser bolts sparkling quite cinematically while the excellent sound effects could well have been sampled out of *Star Wars*.

As you complete more missions, you go up in rank and get to fly better ships with a wider choice of weapons. Tactics become more important and despite its toughness, the developing storyline makes leaving the game alone impossible. Even when you complete it, there's always the temptation to return as every failed mission takes the game on a different course, bringing different missions to fly. In this and much else, the gameplay of *Wing Commander* helps see off superficially flashier games such as *Shock Wave*. With *Wing Commander III* already rushing toward completion, sci-fi fans shouldn't miss catching up on the storyline with episode one! □ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★

3DO

The Horde

Publisher: Crystal Dynamics ✆ 071 9730011 **Developer:** Toys For Bob **Save Game:** 3 SRAM Slots **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

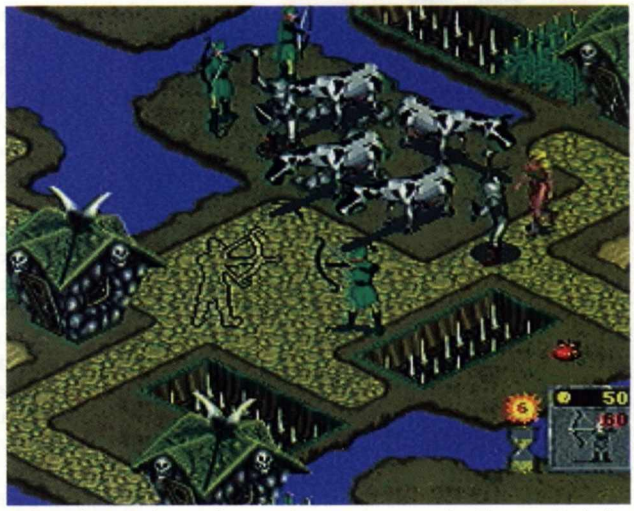
The Horde is one great lolloping mongrel of a game. One third novel strategy game, one third bloodthirsty arcade game and one third FMV gagfest.

Of all the initial batch of games for the 3DO system, *The Horde* is probably the most promising for the future in the way it merges so many different elements into a single game. The strategy element is initially hardly noticeable, while the arcade action is fast, funny and spectacular enough to get almost anyone hooked – which is when the Hordling-like jaws of long-term addiction set in with ever more intriguing problems. Wrap all this up with some fun FMV, great sound FX plus inspired soundtracks and who could resist?

Highly Recommended 3DO Magazine

The intro sets the scene with the king being saved from choking to death by a serving boy. The cheap sets and awful English accents mean you'll probably skip past it, but as the game proceeds the FMV reappears with short clips to reward completing a level, or announcing some random event such as a meteor (!). All the acting is good, but RoboCop's Michael Gregory steals the show as the evil chancellor. His plotting is often truly hilarious and while the story is hardly compulsive, the game is and the FMV serves as a welcome and amusing break between levels.

Your objective is to survive a tour through the kingdom's five provinces, spending several years in each and gathering enough money to pay your taxes. In each province there's a small settlement of farmers who automatically go about tending their land. The finely detailed graphics show the various crops growing, and at the end of each season they're harvested, yielding monies to you. As time goes on, the farmers multiply and settlements slowly spread across the land. You can even go into farming yourself, raising cattle or planting trees which, when grown, can be chopped down for wood.



It should be an idyllic life, but there's a problem or two. Well, several thousand actually. The Horde are as cheery and vicious a bunch as you could ever hope to avoid. At the end of each season their cheery yodels fill the air and they begin lolloping in. Bounding across the plains, their arms swinging about and jaws lolling open they head straight for your village. Hordlings know only two words: 'food' and 'eat'. As they sweep through the village, precious crops are hovered up and houses attacked. Once the walls collapse the Hordling gulps the unfortunate occupant in a single bite. It then sits there, grinning and rubbing its fat belly. If you can kill it before it swallows, the farmer is saved – if not he's dead.







Below, the evil chancellor offers another patch of land. You won't like it! Right, the Shimto plains provide a fairly easy intro to the game. Below right, Hordus Freezus Buttofium attack.





Besides being brilliantly drawn and animated characters, the Hordlings also have a full repertoire of bodily noises for eating and swallowing. So as you rush about trying to thwack them, your TV echoes with the sounds of crops disappearing and farmers being eaten. At first the effects are hilarious, but as the end of the year approaches things become more grim: fail to pay your taxes and the chancellor has you beheaded!

To protect the village you can build fences and deploy Hordling-popping traps. For serious money you can buy extra weapons or even deploy knights and archers – although remember you have to pay their wages! As your defences increase, so the Hordlings get tougher. The easily poppable Hordling are accompanied by thick-skinned giants, voodoo Hordlings, fast-moving piranhas on legs and more.

These varied enemies not only make the arcade action far more frantic, they also pose real tactical problems. How do you best arrange your traps, will deploying knights cost more money than you can afford? This may sound difficult, but after a few goes you'll go sweeping through the years having great fun. Then you'll run into trouble and realise you needed to save more money. So you'll go back to the start and realise just how tough the game can be.

Overall, *The Horde* is a near-perfect blend of arcade action and compulsive strategy. There's probably not enough levels and there is some slowdown on the arcade sections, but it's certainly kept me playing for days (and nights) on end. Heartily recommended! □ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★★

3DO

Slayer

Publisher: Mindscape ✆ 0444 246333 **Developer:** SSI/Lion Entertainment **Save Game:** 1 SRAM Slots **Price:** £TBA **Available:** Now

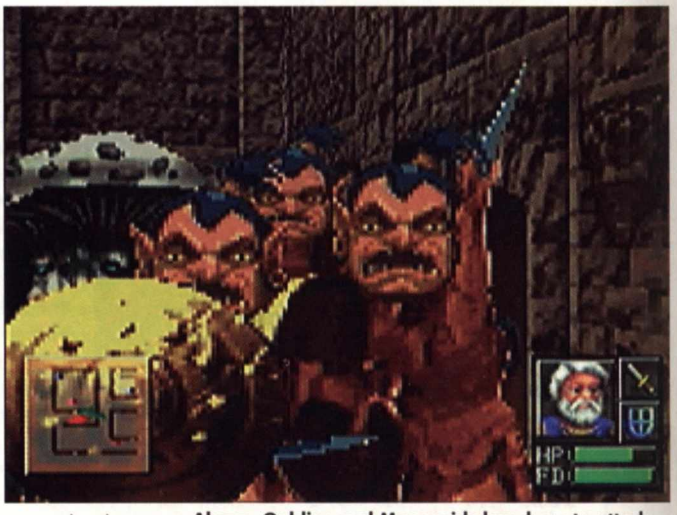
In *Slayer*, the 3DO system's chipset ushers in a whole new world of gaming, merging the depth of AD&D with state-of-the-art 3D visuals.

Dungeons & Dragons has been going for ages now, its enthusiasts evolving an ever more elaborate counter-reality for their lead figurines to move through. For the outsider the fantastic characters and scenarios seem alluring, but only the most ardent have the time or dedication to master an ever-growing rule book. Computers can automate all that boring paperwork, but until now they've struggled to do that and provide an involving graphics system. The first breakthrough was Mirrorsoft's *Dungeon Master*, which mixed D&D-style depth and 16bit 3D graphics to such effect it was not only a bestseller in its own right, but also sold a lot of the new fangled Amigas it ran on. Now *Slayer* aims to do the same thing for the 3DO system, making the graphics not only far more detailed and colourful, but also infinitely more convincing with incredibly fast, fluid animation (albeit in letterbox format). The surprise is that this doesn't come from some hotshot new developer, but boring old SSI – the masters of exceptionally authentic, graphically conservative (read, dull) sims. Nor are the developers content with simply making the game fast, it also includes *Doom II* tricks like being able to look through windows, and some stuff planned for *Doom III* like being able to look up and down – useful for negotiating traps – and multi-level architecture. You can look down four or five tiers and see monsters walking down there, waiting for you – it all adds to the experience of being in a real, interactive environment.

The game allows for just one main character, no teams, but as you'd expect from an official AD&D product, he or she can be finely tailor-made in his or her occupation, race, morality, stamina and much, much more. There are, however, 21 ready-made characters so you can plunge straight into the action. Within moments you can be dashing around dungeons, battling strange creatures and collecting all that wonderful treasure. There are some 40 odd monsters to encounter, many of them brilliantly grotesque, and you'll need all your skills to come through the dungeon's 20 levels alive. Of course, there's plenty of traps, locked doors and also transporters – which offer instantaneous transport. The latter can be confusing since different areas tend to look alike and the onscreen automap, while a neat idea, is a little too small for comfort. Nevertheless this is totally engrossing adventure, firmly built on standard AD&D rules and yet surprisingly easy to get into.

One criticism that can be levelled at many games of the genre is their longevity of appeal. Once one dungeon's been solved there's little to be gained from playing it again. This is where *Slayer* really comes into it's own. A random dungeon generator gives approximately four billion possibilities – and that's an awful lot of late nights. Still not enough? Then why not try the dungeon designer? Create your own labyrinths, decide how many treasure and monsters are to be found and fought. Avid D&Ders will delight at the amount of game in the package and neutrals will be pleasantly surprised by its accessibility. Recommended. □ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★



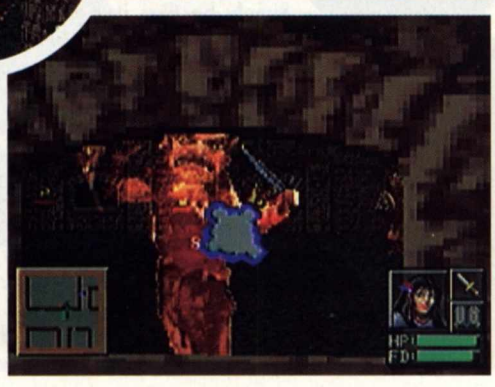
Above, Goblins and Myconoids bunch up to attack – sadly for your energy bar, there's no slowdown so best be quick with the sword. Below, the inventory screen where you select weapons, spells and more.













Above, a glimpse of the multi-level architecture – by holding down Shift Right you can pan up or down for some stunning views. Left, you can not only see through windows but attack through them too.

3DO



Another World

Publisher: Interplay ✆ 0235 821666 **Developer:** In-house **Save Game:** Password **Price:** £TBA **Available:** TBA

A revolutionary game on 16bit, this classic French arcade adventure has been stylishly reworked for the 3DO multiplayer.

The original, Amiga version of *Another World* caused something of a sensation with its unique, cinematic approach to the hoary old genre of side-scrolling arcade adventures. Not only was the long, scene-setting intro one of the best of its time, but at key moments in the game itself there would be short 'cut sequences'. When a gun is found, a two-second close-up animation shows a hand reaching for it – an atmospheric, and useful means of identifying otherwise tiny objects. Because of the memory limitations of 16bit systems, the sequences were simple, but their briefness and graphical simplicity was perfectly in keeping with the game and its fast pace. The programmers even deliberately simplified the intro graphics to make the whole game maintain this muted, but atmospheric style.



Known as *Out Of This World* in the States, it's certainly not a huge game, but it's both imaginatively varied and very demanding – especially as the game for the 3DO system runs so much faster than any other version. Our errant scientist, Lester Knight Chaykin, is unusually limber for a quantum genius who's just stumbled onto inter-dimensional travel. He can walk, run, jump, swim and much, much more – all superbly realised with slick animation and intelligent joypad controls. The game begins with you having to make Chaykin swim to surface, then kick some rats out of the way before coming face to face with a huge alien panther – this sends you running backwards to jump across a chasm, then swing back over the panther to run into a laser-toting alien. Obviously, it's not your average arcade adventure.



This conversion, despite being handled by Americans, is very faithful to the original. Rather than slapping on some garish new sprites, Interplay have kept to the original look but recoloured it with a rich 256 colour palette. It obviously doesn't push the 3DO system in the way *Gex* does, but such a stylish conversion of a 16bit classic is still more than welcome on the new generation. ☐ **ssw**



3DO magazine rating: ★★★

The Lost Files Of Sherlock Holmes

Publisher: Electronic Arts ✆ 0753 549442 **Developer:** Mythos Software **Save Game:** 10 SRAM Slots **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

England's greatest detective, and its most notorious murderer, seem set for confrontation is this challenging adventure set in the London of 1888.

The 3DO system's first brush with the great detective comes courtesy of an earlier version of a CD-ROM warhorse. Like *Microcosm* and *Night Trap*, *Holmes* is a multimedia experiment which is rejigged for every new format. Sadly, like most pioneers it's more interesting technically than for its gameplay. The (once) hi-tech trickery comes in the form of FMV windows which flash up for every conversation. There are plenty of these as Holmes wanders about questioning people (there are some 60 characters and 3 hours of dialogue), but with the 3DO system's effortless full-screen, full colour FMV these tiny windows have dubious appeal – especially considering the acting. Worse, the connection between game graphics and FMV is jarringly tenuous. While *Another World* flawlessly blends in-game and cut-sequences, *Holmes* simply borders its FMV windows with antique picture frames – never mind the incongruity with the distinctly 16bit game graphics.





After the initial fascination wears off, the best bit about the FMV is that it can be turned off. Nevertheless it still exerts its cost on the gameplay structure: while most new adventures try to provide an illusion of free movement, cramming in sub-quests at every turn, *Holmes* provides a plodding, methodical adventure where the problems come in linear order. If you get stuck in one place, you're generally stuck with little option to try something else.

Nevertheless, this is a big old game with plenty of challenge. The icon/verb control system is well thought out and easy to use, making the detective work a pleasure for the most of the time, and the fine attention to detail reflects well on the developers' love of Holmes. The story also appears to be quite intriguing, despite the dubious Ripper opening, and Holmes is of course a truly great character. While more advanced adventures linger in development, the *Holmes* war-horse provides a still serviceable challenge in the meantime. ☐ **ssw**



3DO magazine rating: ★★



Powers Kingdom

Publisher: Panasonic ✆ 0344 853146 **Developer:** Micro Cabin Corp **Save Game:** 4 SRAM Slots **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

Bizarre, spectacular and very different, this combative role-playing game provides a unique insight into Japanese gaming.

In Japan consoles have always sold to a more mature audience and RPGs frequently top the charts. Unfortunately, because American and British console owners are younger, RPGs are rarely converted and this vast genre is largely unknown to non-Japanese speakers. Thankfully the 3DO system is different, and *Powers Kingdom* is one of Panasonic's best games so far.

Known as *Guardian War* in America, the scenario's appeal seems to have been lost in the English translation with the stylised intro recounting a banal fight between good and evil. Initial appeal is further undermined by yoghurt-tub heroes who look like characters from a Ski ad, blessed with names such as Pumpkin! Thankfully, you can input your own names and in-game things soon improve.



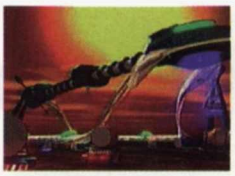
While most Japanese RPGs look awful – due to the memory constraints of SNES carts – Micro Cabin have gone to town with the 3DO version. Each of the variously themed landscapes is presented in full 3D, quickly and smoothly rotating around as you move. The numerous spells are genuinely dramatic with realistic flames, thunderstorms, tornadoes and much more.

Combat is very much at the heart of the game. The kingdom is split into several dozen zones and you progress through them one at a time. In each zone you have to roam about until you've found and killed the twenty or so enemies. The finding is easy, zone layouts are relatively simplistic, but when you encounter an enemy, things become more interesting. Besides the three or so weapons or spells a character can own, they can also have two additional bodies with their own weapons. You can also recruit enemy characters and bring them into your party. Unlike normal characters, these aren't controlled directly, but you can arrange their attack patterns. The best fun is when you engage a couple of enemies, unaware of other enemies on the horizon, leading to some huge battles. And as the enemies get smarter they start using their own magic – even healing themselves.



All this is great fun, but ultimately there's something a bit too methodical about it. The ability to save at any time removes a lot of the challenge and the game doesn't change all that much, apart from new tactics for new monsters. Nevertheless, it's very addictive, very unusual and well worth a look. ☐ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★



Star Control II

Publisher: Crystal Dynamics ✆ 071 9730011 **Developer:** Fred Ford & Paul Riche III **Save Game:** 10 SRAM Slots **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

Awards such as Best Action-Strategy Game 1992, Best Action Game 1993 and Best Adventure Game 1993 show how well the PC original went down. But is it still fun for '95 on the 3DO system?

Star Control 2, like *The Horde*, is an ambitious attempt to combine arcade and strategy elements. The difference is that *The Horde* was coded for 32bit, arcade-quality hardware while *Star Control 2* seems designed for 8bit tech. The core arcade game takes the basic *Asteroids* engine – rotate, thrust and fire – and uses it for 22nd Century combat between starships. The same control method is even reworked for navigating between planets and exploring their surfaces. With *Star Control 2* the 'next generation' appears positively geriatric.

However, it's worth persisting because not only is the strategy game incredibly involving, but even the arcade sections improve. A casual game with a PC owner brings forth a stream of technobabble about various ship types, weapons systems and surprisingly sophisticated tactics. There's simply a huge amount to the game and the strategy side offers not just trading, intricate negotiations and galaxy-spanning wars but also an exceptionally involving storyline.



The Ur-Quan's sudden attack on Earth in 2112 left your starship battered and lost on an alien planet. Here you find an ancient factory and slowly construct an incredible new ship: the Vindicator (although like your own name, the game allows you to change it). You return to Earth and find it enslaved by the Ur-Quan – the battle to free it and many other alien races is both complex and entirely addictive, the adventure going through many different twists and turns as you freely roam the galaxy.

As you'd expect from Crystal, this is the best version by light-years. Not only is there a stunning intro, but the control menus have been smartened up, the action scenes feature smooth scaling and the various alien graphics have been prettified (or, more accurately, uglified). The main change, however, is a superlative new soundtrack with excellent music (sounding very like the cloud music from the original *Star Trek* movie) and atmospheric speech for all the characters you meet. Occasionally this can be tedious, it would be quicker to scan text usually, but overall it's very involving. Sure, the entire game engine should've been reworked for the 3DO multiplayer but that would take years and in the meantime 3DO system owners have a very slick, classic game to while away a great many late nights. ☐ **ssw**



3DO magazine rating: ★★★★



Waialae Country Club

Publisher: Panasonic ✆ 0344 853146 **Developer:** T&E Soft **Save Game:** Player stats to SRAM **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

After the great success of their first golfing sim, *Pebble Beach Golf Links*, Panasonic have moved the action to Hawaii for another 18-hole championship.

As with the prequel, *Waialae Country Club* features enormous (half screen tall) players which really catch the eye with their smooth, surprisingly accurate animation. Especially appealing is the way various shots such as chips and puts have been digitised, so that each play is realistically portrayed. Equally seductive are the course graphics themselves, which are significantly brighter and more atmospheric than *World Cup Golf* – get too close to the crowd and a cluster of amusingly digitised people can be admired (T&E Soft programmers, methinks?).

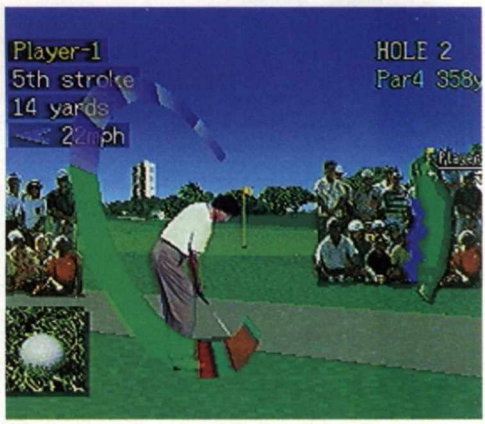




The commitment to flashy graphics also comes through with the control system, *Pebble*'s novel, three-quarter power circle overlaying the swing to dramatic, and realistic, effect. Stance, fade and draw are easily adjusted, but the level of fine tuning doesn't seem quite as precise as the U. S. Gold game. Shots are taken quickly, and the screen updating has been vastly improved over *Pebble Beach*, with replays and caddies (advice on or off) all at hand to help you learn from your mistakes.

As with *World Cup Golf*, the biggest weakness in *Waialae* is the lack of courses. One 18-hole championship doesn't really offer enough long term play value for expert golfers, but the Cinepak FMV flybys of each hole and the all-round excellent presentation certainly help compensate.

Whilst the slick visuals would probably entice more novices than *World Cup*, this is no bad thing. The *World Cup* title does offer a more sophisticated and challenging game, but this looks much more fun and plays very well indeed, with slightly faster disc accessing making play immediately more accessible. Despite both games' merits, however, the killer golfing game is still to come, and probably from Electronic Arts. □ **mcw**



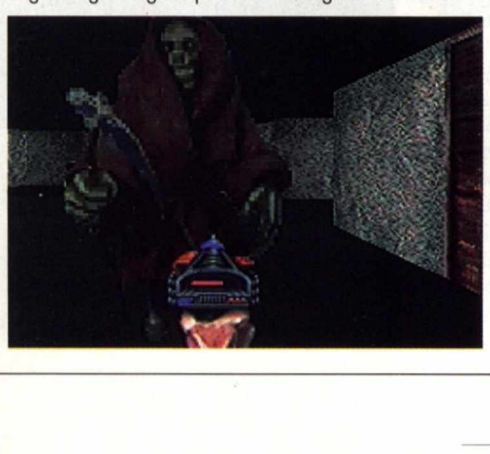
3DO magazine rating: ★★★★

Escape from Monster Manor

Publisher: Electronic Arts ✆ 0753 549442 **Developer:** Studio 3DO **Save Game:** 5 SRAM Slots **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

A laughing skull, howling ghosts and a hanged man make for an extraordinairily packed haunted house.

The 3DO multiplayer's graphics chipset is crammed full of just the sort of trickery needed for a very scarey night at the videogame parlour indeed. Translucent ghouls, rotating skulls and massed spider sprites are all in a moment's work for the twin graphics engines, which also manage to wallpaper the various corridors and rooms with some suitably Victorian texture maps. The soundchip expertly mimics distant shrieks and clanking chains, making for a genuinely spooky experience which many have found engrossing enough to pull them through all 12 levels.



The gameplay lurking beneath the atmosphere is a simplistic riff on the *Wolfenstein/Doom* formula: a first person perspective with a gun as cursor point, big 3D mazes and lots of monsters to shoot. The weird, period-piece furniture which seems to have a spectral glow is, sadly, just uninteractive set dressing with collectibles limited to the familiar keys, energy restores and weapon ammo. Well, not so much ammo as batteries since rather than *Doom*'s endless variety of ever more explosive firepower, *Manor* allows only a quaint electric zapper. It is probably more in keeping with the atmosphere than a double-O gauge shotgun and, against otherworldly spirits, no doubt more effective – nevertheless the kinetic satisfaction of using it is less than overwhelming.



The game as a whole is very much an atmosphere piece. If the idea of wandering around a haunted house appeals, there's plenty enough challenge on offer and later levels offers some spooky surprises. It moves fast enough (perhaps too fast), there's plenty to shoot and plenty of neat effects but gameplay is itself a rather ghostly factor in this unremarkable gothic zap-'em-up. □ **ssw**



3DO magazine rating: ★★★



MegaRace

Publisher: Mindscape ✆ 0444 246333 **Developer:** Cryo **Save Game:** 3 SRAM Slots **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

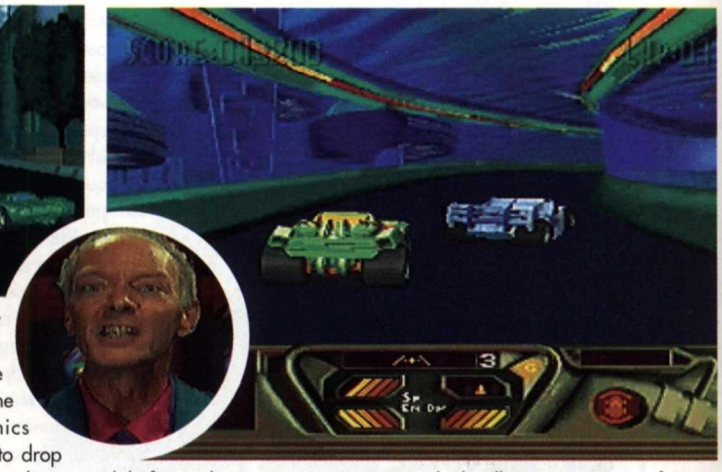
This is an over-the-shoulder wetdream of a game, smoothly blending witty intro sequences into superlative in-game graphics.

MegaRace comes to the 3DO system laden down with rave PC reviews, praising the next generation graphics which come courtesy of Silicon Graphics rendering. While the cars and road are real-time, the gorgeous backgrounds are being spooled off disk – it's a neat compromise which demonstrates not only Cryo's technical wizardry with Silicon Graphics rendering, but also a genuine artistic flair. Undersea race tracks feature sharks swimming overhead, hitting a go-faster arrow triggers a slick speed-blur and one hazard produces a gorgeous double-vision effect.

The programmers' wit even comes through in the TV commentator who, while incredibly annoying, actually has some good lines. The game he introduces is a futuristic, planet-hopping racer where the objective is to destroy a set number of cars before time runs out. It's a simple enough game and the game is undoubtedly the best looking, sound-ing and playing *MegaRace* yet – easily wiping the floor with the PC game. Yet it's as a game that *MegaRace* on any machine is at its weakest. The graphics which cause bystanders' jaws to drop matter little when you're actually playing, tightly focused on a fast-moving but ultimately simplistic and repetitive game. There's plenty of power-ups and the overall plot all helps make it very worthwhile, indeed if you want to amaze neighbours or simply give the old peepers a treat, *MegaRace* is undoubtedly a gorgeous confection. Just don't expect the gameplay to match the superb audio-visuals. ☐ **ssw**







3DO magazine rating: ★★★



Total Eclipse

Publisher: Crystal Dynamics ✆ 071 9730011 **Developer:** In-house **Save Game:** No **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

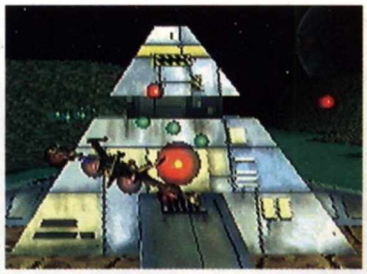
The *Total Eclipse* in question is undoubtedly of 16bit gaming – after this there could be no more doubts about the 3DO system's power.

While *Total* looks even better than games like *Microcosm*, which stream FMV background graphics off the CD, there's one rather huge twist. Namely, these graphics *aren't* being pulled off disk. Rather than simply playing an uninteractive movie, prerendered on a Silicon Graphics workstation, the 3DO system is actually manufacturing these images on the fly. As you fly into a canyon, the multiplayer's custom chips are mapping pre-drawn textures across the canyon's surfaces. Blank, computer-type surfaces are magically lined and pocked with unbelievable detail. The 3DO system also does this to all the enemy ships and buildings.

Now this is all very clever technically, but the point is these graphics are fully interactive. You can crash into them, you can turn them on their head by doing a stomach-churning 360° roll which is totally, hair-raisingly controllable. You get to choose your way through ravines, you can dive down into valleys to pick out enemy silos... it's the difference between playing a game and watching a graphic demo.

On top of this you've got excellent sound effects and a brilliant, wailing rock guitar sound. When sitting late at night playing this, you have to wonder why should you ever have to put up with anything less? Hang-on-the-wall, drop-dead fully interactive graphics and a classic soundtrack. It's what shoot-'em-ups are supposed to be.

The game's structure consists of 20 levels, all quite long and increasingly tough, divided between tunnel and above-ground sections with five different planets offering varying terrain types. There's a wide range of power-up weapons and at the end of each planet there's your regulation, humongous mega-guardian. These can take ages to kill, but this is a relatively small price to pay for one of the smoothest, slickest shoot-'em-ups yet seen, inside or outside an arcade. It's what your 3DO system was made for. ☐ **ssw**





3DO magazine rating: ★★★★

3DO



Burning Soldier

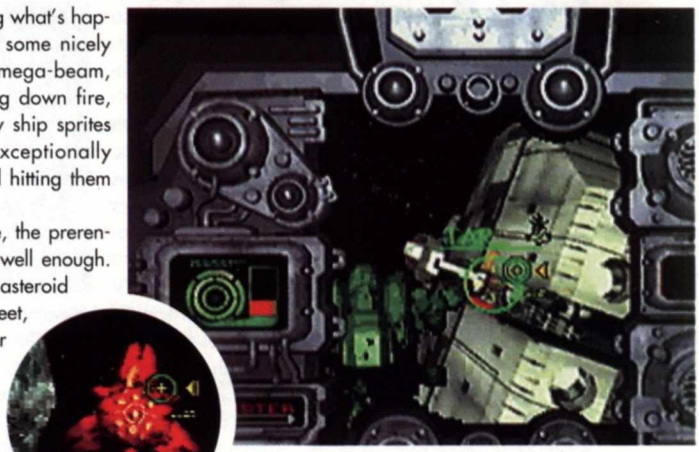
Publisher: Panasonic ✆ 0344 853146 **Developer:** Pack-in-Video **Save Game:** No **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

If *Burning Soldier* looks just like a spectacular sci-fi movie, maybe it's because that's exactly what is.

Despite the new English dialogue, there's no disguising the uniquely Japanese flavour of this frantic blast-'em-up. The grandiose scale of the space battles, the *Transformer*-like adaptability of the machines and the offbeat soundtrack make this a distinctly Manga production. The movie theme matters because it's not just the intro which is cinematic, but the whole game with pre-rendered graphics forming the FMV backdrop like with *MegaRace* or *Novastorm*. As with all such CD-streamed products, gameplay is inevitably totally linear and with *Burning Soldier* all you control is a blinking cursor. This is, however, rather more honest than the tiny character sprite of say *Microcosm* and also makes seeing what's happen a lot clearer. You also get some nicely done laser bolts and with the mega-beam, which you charge up by holding down fire, spectacular smart bombs. Enemy ship sprites are also impressive, moving exceptionally quickly with plenty of detail, and hitting them produces slick fireball effects.



The main appeal is, of course, the prerendered graphics and these begin well enough. Level One's journey through an asteroid field to an attack on an enemy fleet, culminating with a spectacular battle inside the lead battleship, is quite mouthwatering. Various cut-scenes are well-integrated and destroying the mothership brings the reward of a great destruction sequence. The next level isn't quite so impressive though, and while later levels are better with just four levels there's not a great deal of lastability on offer. Competing for high scores is fairly good fun in the simultaneous two-player mode, but overall this oddity's main appeal is probably to Manga fans. □ **ssw**



3DO magazine rating: ★★

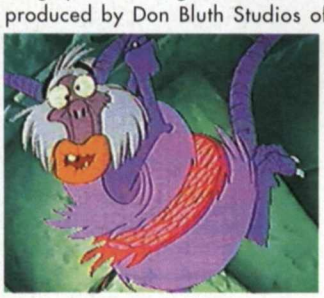


Dragon's Lair

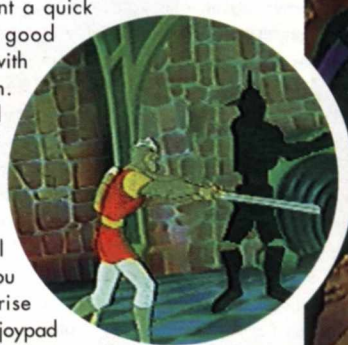
Publisher: Elite ✆ 0922 55852 **Developer:** In-house **Save Game:** No **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

What we have here is possibly the original CD game! In the late eighties the arcade version wowed the populous with its Laserdisc played imagery.

Despite its archaic origins, *Dragon's Lair*'s fabulous visuals have cast a long shadow over videogames with every machine getting a version – even if it's an entirely different game 'inspired' by the coin-op, as with Elite's SNES game. The reason why the graphics are so good is because it really is a movie, produced by Don Bluth Studios of *All Dogs Go To Heaven* fame. If you make the right moves, the film keeps running, if you make the wrong move the Laserdisc jumps to play a death sequence. It's a similar system as used by American Laser Games for the *Mad Dog* games, with the same advantages, high quality visuals, and disadvantages – extremely limited interaction. As an arcade novelty both are good fun and few people would complain over 50p for a quick laugh.



The problem comes with domestic versions. While the Cinepak FMV is excellent, coming extremely close to the Laserdisc original, the appeal of the game changes somewhat with a £39.99 pricetag. For that kind of money you don't want a quick laugh, you want a good long-term challenge with plenty of interaction. *Dragon's Lair* isn't, and never was that sort of game. For all the spectacularly and imaginative traps contained within the evil dragon's castle, all you have to do is memorise which way to push the joypad and when to press fire every now and then. The screen occasionally flashes to help you out, but too much of it is simply down to trial-and-error experimentation with very tight time limits.



Some people would argue whether it's really a game at all, but on the other hand there are quite a few die-hard fanatics who love the graphics and find honing their reactions for maximum high scores irresistible. For these people, at least, this slick conversion (with infinite continues for beginners) will be a welcome chance to rescue Princess Daphne one last time. □ **ssw**



3DO magazine rating: ★★



Sewer Shark

Publisher: Virgin ✆ 081 9602255 **Developer:** Digital Pictures **Save Game:** No **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

Digital's 'U-Direct' series began here, with *Blade Runner* FX whiz John Dykstra actually handling the directing chores.

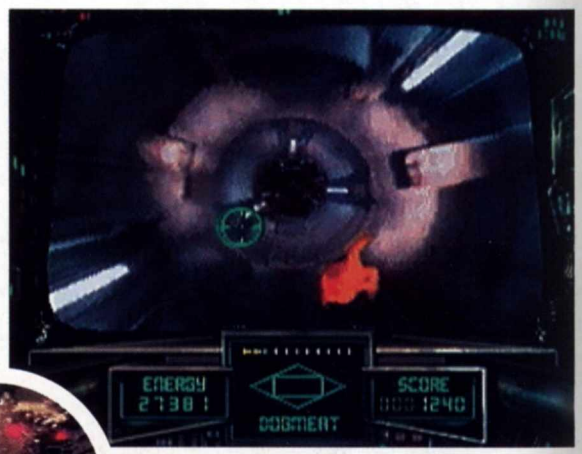
Dykstra's Hollywood pedigree comes through with a retrofitted, unglamorous world view which is impressively realised in production values, if not script. While the blast-'em-up action couldn't be simpler, the movie-style look and feel is much more engrossing than most other FMV games.

The plot has you piloting a fast-moving Catfish Scout Module through a labyrinth of tunnels, choosing directions at intersections, and blasting the mutant rats, bats and scorpions that float in the dark. Clean out an area and take the right turns and... you get another tunnel. It's that simple. The design clearly betrays its low-tech, Mega-CD origins with very limited interaction, but at least the producers have gone back to the original film – the blurred Sega footage has been replaced by crystal clear 3DO Cinepak. Also, the simplicity is something of an advantage in some ways – the fast, blast-'em-up arcade feel is rather more involving than *Night Trap*'s voyeuristic languor.





On the debit side the in-your-face, abusive dialogue from your captain is tiresomely American urging you to kick 'rat butt' with a variety of laughable insults. Various puns seem irreverent asides on the game itself, with "Don't think – if you think you're dead" and "Relax – pretend it's a game – it may even be some fun" provoking particular mirth. The storyline is also overly simplistic with the main plot twist revealed far too early and easily. *Shock Wave* easily overshadows it in this, as well as gameplay and technological flair. Nevertheless the high production values and involvement of such important players as Dykstra must be welcomed, and his next efforts should be awaited with some anticipation.□ **mcw**





3DO magazine rating: ★★



Night Trap

Publisher: Virgin ✆ 081 9602255 **Developer:** Digital Pictures **Save Game:** No **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

Babes, music, violence, how could it fail? No interaction perhaps? No doubt about it. *Night Trap* is about as interactive as *Neighbours*, and just as predictable.

Viewed without the hype and controversy that plagued the Sega version, *Night Trap* now looks a very dated, rather sad exploitation title. Admittedly, the Cinepak FMV is far superior and the CD accessing far faster than the Mega-CD version, but what's the point? A few unfortunate novices may get suckered in, admiring the babes on the pack shots, but it doesn't take long to uncover just how shallow the interaction is. Basically there's eight cameras which you can flick between, triggering various FMV views of rooms in a soon to be besieged house. All you can do is set traps and, if you're lucky enough to see an alien wander into one, press fire to trigger it.





At first it seems vaguely interesting, with FMV of an alien getting killed being a neat pay-off, but too little happens too slowly. The inability to accelerate time forces you to rewatch the same old sequences over and over. Sure, the tightly clad babes look good, but the acting is dire and entirely uninvolving. Since progress is largely dependent on trial-and-error to discover where best to place traps, you're going to see a lot of this movie, and I can't imagine many people will be sufficiently engrossed (or titillated) to keep returning to the start. Clocking in at some 90 minutes (on two CDs) it's irksome that there's no save game.

Despite all the controversy over the violent capture of one girl by the aliens, one or two such brief scenes are lost in the monotony of the rest. Repeated viewing may well induce psychosis, but it's more likely to be of catatonia than rushing around killing people. This is a rather sad example of just how uninteractive 'interactive' movies can be and is an unfortunate distraction from more imaginative visions of future gaming such as *Demolition Man*. □ **mcw**



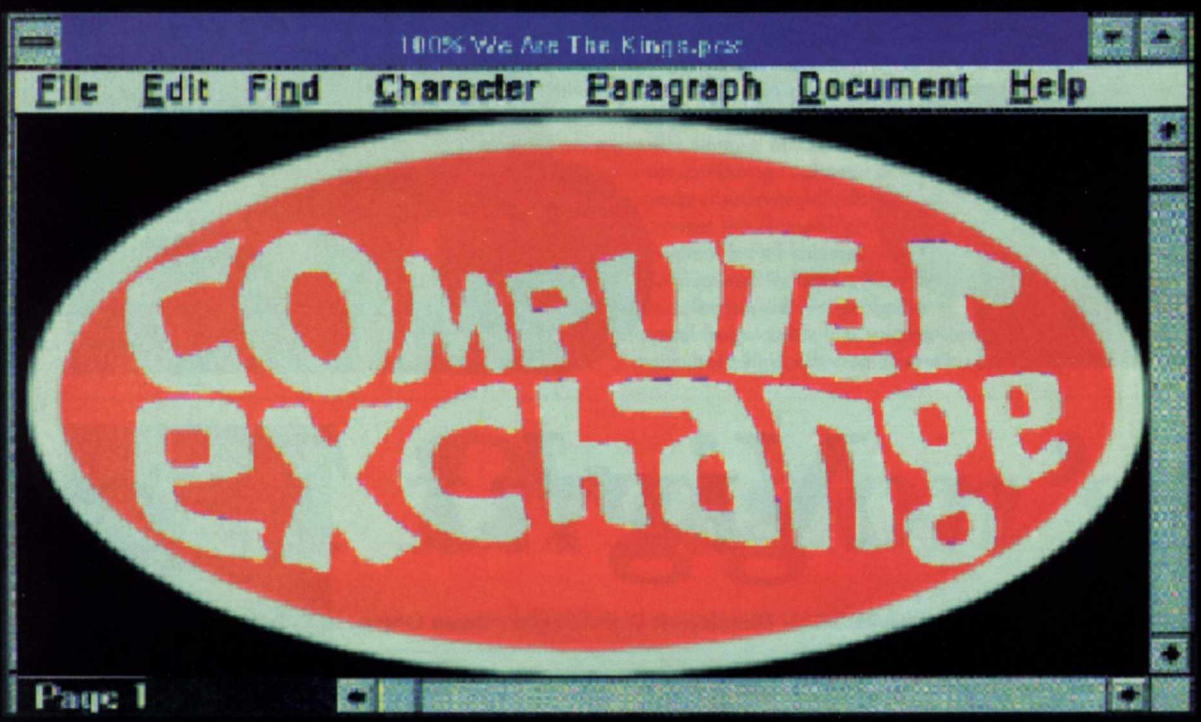
3DO magazine rating: ★

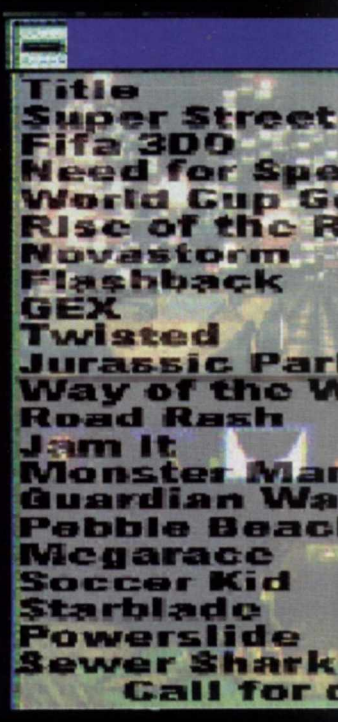
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PaTaank

Publisher: Crystal Dynamics ✆ 071 9730011 **Developer:** P.F. Magic **Save Game:** No **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

Like the innovative *Twister*, *PaTaank* is another odd-ball, U.S.P. release, guaranteed to challenge even the most seasoned gamesplayer's senses. It's Pinball, but not quite as you know it...

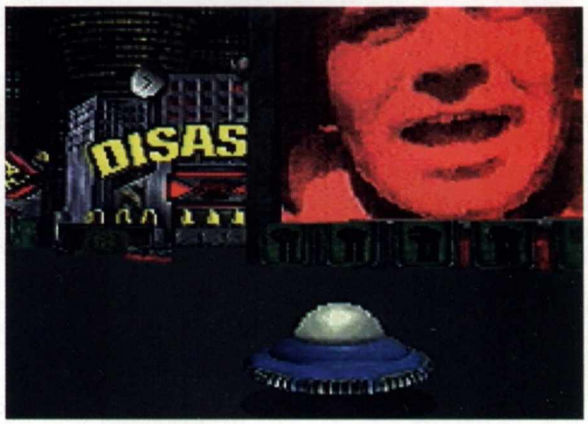
The innovation of *PaTaank* is that the action is viewed from behind your pinball, with the table rotating at a blisteringly fast rate around you. There are no flippers to push you up, rather, your craft has an internal supply of thrust velocity (which is finite) that you must use to propel you towards your chosen area of the table. Initially, this rapid screen updating is bewildering, especially as all the pinball tables are littered with huge FMV monitors, projecting junk MTV style footage relevant to the theme of the table in play. But after a few minutes concentrated play, the bizarre concept is grasped, and you soon begin to understand the game mechanics.

There are three tables; Luv, Surf and Disaster, each brilliantly rendered and themed, with tunnels of love to be entered, rubber sharks to avoid, letter sequences to be activated and the aforementioned video walls to watch for advice and tips. These video walls give the game a Zoo TV look, quite unlike anything I've seen before in a videogame.



The tables can either be played individually, or tackled in the full game – where all three are interconnected, and accompanying these tables are some of the most impressive soundtracks yet heard on the 3DO system, each theme packed with samples and riffs that inject a megadose of excitement to the already surreal experience.

The chief problem with *PaTaank* is that it's so incredibly tough to guide your pinball (even with tilt and thrust), that precise play is exceptionally tricky, and frustrated players may find themselves ricocheting all over the place, lost in a visual explosion of bizarre taste. It's like being lost in a high tech shopping centre at Christmas. On roller-skates. On acid. And whilst the tables present are brilliantly designed (particularly Disaster, with monitors blinking a plethora of apocalyptic sequences), there isn't really enough to satisfy for long, the small size of the game adding to the feeling that *PaTaank* is more of an experiment than a fully fledged game in its own right.



Nevertheless, it's an excellent showcase for both the technical ability of the 3DO system and the superb visual artists at P.F. Magic. Expect cult success. □ **mcw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★★



Real Pinball

Publisher: Panasonic ✆ 0344 853146 **Developer:** In-house **Save Game:** High scores only **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

Despite their low-tech origins, pinball tables both real and simulated are enormously popular with ever more elaborate designs and sound effects.

Every console needs a pinball game (or so I'm told), but with this and *Paatank* as the 3DO system's entrants, it's safe to say we haven't got one yet. *Real Pinball* boasts a 'real' 3D view of each of its five tables, but whereas *Paatank* is perhaps too innovative for its own good, *Real Pinball* fails in exactly the opposite way. The foreshortened perspective is a stupidly literal rendering of a pinball table. While it may look realistic, details at the top of the table are difficult to see and it makes play confusing. The flat, vertically scrolling format that has served every machine from Spectrum to PC Engine perfectly well has been discarded for the sake of gimmickry, and hence *Real Pinball* plays like a dog.



This graphical cock-up might have made some sense if the programmers had provided some imaginative table designs. Instead you're offered the most unexciting tables imaginable, each decorated by ethereal, mythological Japanese clap trap that's completely uninspiring. Lacklustre visuals which are perfectly matched by blippy tunes and unexciting sound effects.



The final icing on the cake is that the game doesn't even manage to play fast. The pinball rolls around like a ten ton cannonball while your flippers flip like they're made of lead rubber. The potential for a truly spectacular pinball game on the 3DO system is vast, but this doesn't come close and is easily eclipsed even by *Kirby's Pinball* on the GameBoy.



Pinball addicts, then, would be advised to wait for part three of the pinball saga, as sadly, no-one seems prepared to tackle the format head on. □ **mcw**

3DO magazine rating: ★



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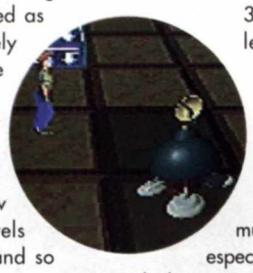


Gridders

Publisher: The 3DO Company ✆ TBA **Developer:** Tetragon **Save Game:** 1 SRAM Slot **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

Puzzlers are renowned for their dire presentation and unimaginative visuals, a cliché Tetragon aim to smash with help from the 3DO system's powerhouse chipset.

While the environmentally-minded intro fully conforms to puzzler traditions – being short, weak and entirely unrelated to the actual game – the presentation in-game is a revelation. The flat, insipid 2D visuals and bippy-boppy soundtracks of old have been replaced by a heavy-duty graphics engine – with both board and game blocks realised as texture-mapped polygons – and genuinely good CD soundtracks. Screenshots do little justice to how smoothly and quickly the blocks keep moving, all with crunching good sound FX. What's more, this isn't some old puzzler tarted up with new graphics, but a genuine attempt to produce a new style of game. As you progress, the levels become multi-tiered with lifts, canyons and so forth providing a truly 3D experience.



The prime objective of the game is collecting gems, usually secreted within moving blocks. To get the gems out you have to stop the blocks moving, which is rarely simple as many blocks keep tumbling even if you stand in their way. So you have to find other blocks to block, building a pile-up stopping the blocks you want. Then you have to scurry over to collect the gems before more blocks arrive to crush them. Later on it gets far more complex, but a little robotic dog provides an unlikely accomplice, barking when you're near a useful point.



36 levels make for a sizeable challenge, but ironically its graphic flair is as much a hindrance as an advantage. While the game looks good close-up you can't see that much of the board – so you have to zoom out and watch from a distance. This isn't that much more fun than 2D graphics, especially as it's often more confusing which, in turn, helps make the game logic overly convoluted. Classic puzzlers begin very simply and easily, setting out the clear principals later to be complicated by fiendish kinks. *Gridders* never provides that hook, it's too off-kilter right from the start, although there are at least plenty of imaginative additions to complicate things later on for addicts.

Overall, despite all it's efforts I'm afraid this is another puzzler unlikely to break out of its ghetto making for that classic puzzler finishing line: it's okay and if you like this sort of thing, you'll probably like this. □ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★



Battle Chess

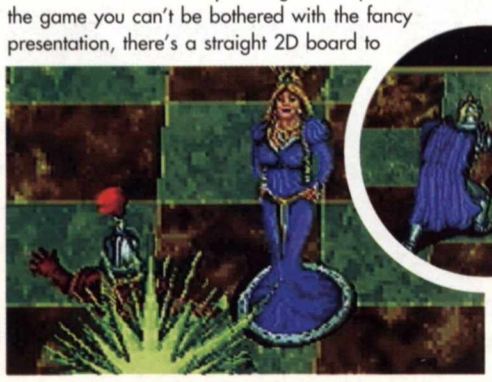
Publisher: Interplay ✆ 0235 821666 **Developer:** Krisalis **Save Game:** 8 SRAM Slots **Price:** £TBA **Available:** TBA

After causing a sensation on the Amiga with its inspired mix of superb animation and serious chess logic, *Battle Chess* has been converted to every new format since.

Battle Chess was always the perfect example to cite against those who claimed videogames were mindless. Take one admired, but initially difficult to get into strategy game and apply state-of-the-art audiovisuals. Each move has the pieces brought to life with slick animation routines, while taking a piece triggers a comical set-piece animation sequence. The game is made even more accessible with the range of squares a piece can move to being highlighted when it's selected. And when you've got so experienced with the game you can't be bothered with the fancy presentation, there's a straight 2D board to play on as well.



The 3DO version's main advantage is its use of the RISC CPU to make the computer player both faster and tougher to play against. The long waits of the Amiga version have been radically cut down, while the combat sequences now feature a zoom-in mode to make them more dramatic. However, while the new animations are a big improvement on the Amiga game, they're don't push the 3DO system in the way the original game pushed the Amiga. It's a particular shame that the game keeps the old fixed perspective, which does tend to have the pieces obscuring the board, rather than offering the ability to pan about. *Powers Kingdom*'s graphic engine, offering a host of stunning cinematic effects and rotating the entire landscape about, would've been perfect for a great 3DO multiplayer chess game. As it is, *Battle Chess* is competent and entertaining but far from an inspired conversion. □ **ssw**



3DO magazine rating: ★★

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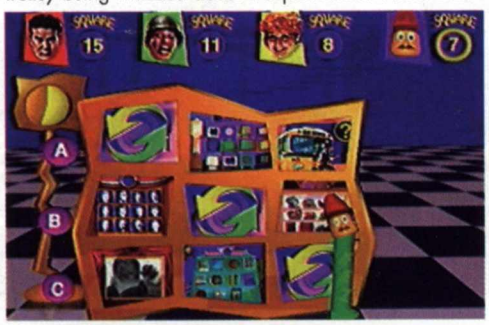
Twisted

Publisher: Electronic Arts ✆ 0753 549442 **Developer:** Studio 3DO **Save Game:** No **Price:** £39.99 **Available:** Now

There have been gameshow games before, but they've usually consisted of a bunch of sad graphics replicating a drab TV show's set, plus a series of text questions pulled out of a tiny database. *Twisted* is different. *Twisted* uses the 3DO system to such effect it looks *better* than most real TV shows.

Twisted is perhaps the most innovative and intriguing game for the 3DO system yet. Could this be the future of game show?

The basic objective for you, and up to five friends, is to get to the top of a spiral staircase. Players take turns to stop a random number generator – videogame dice – and then get a challenge to see if they can throw again. Challenges are weird. Like, there's FMV footage of a trolley being whizzed about a supermarket. When it finishes, you must select items that *weren't* in the trolley. Then there's a game sort of like 'match the picture', only it's sounds instead, and sounds apparently voiced by ex-Presidents at that. Another game wittily has you in a TV showroom, zapping TVs as ads come on – but don't hit that 3DO ad! One challenge is a sliding tile variant, only the tiles pictures are parts of FMV movie. All of this is wrapped up in some great presentation complete with a smarmy FMV host, hostess and player characters who give you plenty of lip if you mess up.







Played solo, *Twisted* is a real mindbender and plenty of fun, but it only really comes into its own with plenty of people crowded around, jostling for position and mocking/applauding each other's efforts. Without them the various challenges can get a bit repetitive, while the various trivia questions are unduly irksome due to their American bias. Nevertheless this is an intriguing game and a great party piece. ☐ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★



Soccer Kid

Publisher: Krisalis ✆ 0709 372290 **Developer:** In-house **Save Game:** 5 SRAM Slots **Price:** £TBA **Available:** Now

The most remarkable thing about *Soccer Kid* is its control system. While most developers seeking to oust *Mario* (Nintendo's flagship) go overboard on graphics, Krisalis have actually spent time thinking out the gameplay. The FMV told story – with aliens stealing the world, crashing and scattering the pieces across Earth – may be silly, but the footie idea is the springboard for a great character. The Kid isn't just another platformer in football strip (which you select at the start), but a footie maniac with a whole repertoire of ballsy stunts. Can't reach that high up platform? – jump on the ball for a superjump. Bonus item protected by fiendish spikes? – boot the ball through to collect it for you. There's even a whole range of useless stunts, such as heading the ball, which are there simply for fun (and to rack up bonus points). But most of all the ball is used to take out enemies both in the air and on the ground, with striking the ball at right angle requiring more skill and timing than most football sims. While at first it all seems a bit tricky, with practise the amount of control possible is amazing which is, after all, what interactive gaming is all about.

While Amiga platformers are usually dire, _Soccer Kid_ is one of a select few exceptional to that rule. The 3DO version is undoubtedly the best yet.







While the character is among the best around, early levels are disappointingly linear with London providing a rather drab opening to the game. This is all the more pronounced because the 3DO version is pretty much identical to the Amiga A1200 version. The graphics seem a bit sharper and more colourful, they certainly move faster, but apart from that and plenty of sampled speech it's basically the Amiga game. As you progress the levels do get markedly more imaginative and challenging, but this isn't the game to wow your mates with. What it is is a remarkably playable and enjoyable platformer. ☐ **ssw**

3DO magazine rating: ★★★

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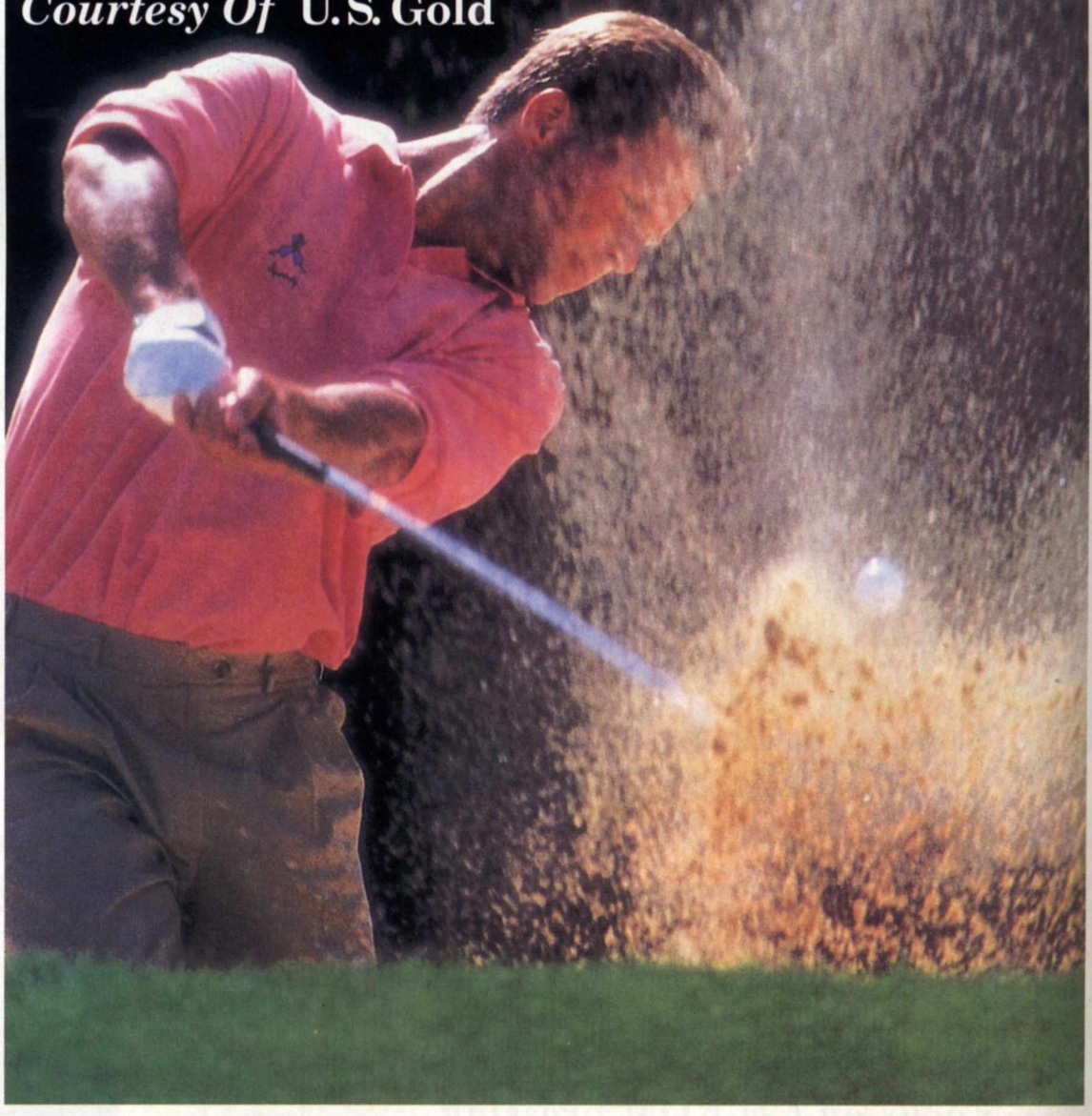


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3DO

Coming Soon



The world of 3DO software just keeps expanding. Below is a list of the titles already announced, but there's many more in development across the world, including several EA titles already in production for the M2 upgrade.

ART DATA INTERACTIVE

Doom I
The phenomenally successful first-person perspective blaster is upgraded for the 3DO sysem, as is [Spring]

Doom II: Hell On Earth
The current PC mega-hit is bound to be huge on 3DO. [Spring]

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

Cyber Clash
Heavily armed robots clash in a spectacular 3D arena. [Spring]

Gex
Hype-cute, hyperactive platformer. [January]



DIGITAL PICTURES

Corpse Killer
A Caribbean-set, FMV heavy shoot-'em-up which requires a light-gun for best results. [TBA]

Supreme Warrior: Ying Heung
A bizarre FMV fighting game. [TBA]

DOMARK

Flying Nightmares
State-of-the-art sim based around Harrier jumpjet. [April]

ELITE

Power Slide
A 3D rallying game with the emphasis on realism. [Soon]



Space Ace
The sci-fi follow-up to Dragon's Lair. [Soon]

Virtuoso
A Doom-style blast-'em-up with over 24 exceptionally varied levels. [Soon]



GAMETEK

Family Feud
A quiz game based on the original, US version of Family Fortunes. [Soon]

Quarantine
A Doom-style game on wheels, shooting and running over zillions of enemies. [Soon]

GTE

Jammit
One-on-one basketball sim. [TBA]

INFOGRAMES

Alone In The Dark 2
More of the same superb stuff, only bigger and even better. [Spring]



INTERPLAY

Kingdoms
400Mb of FMV is brilliantly integrated into a classic adventure. Sequels are already being planned, as is a coin-op version. [TBA]

LUCASARTS/EA

Rebel Assault
Stunning Star Wars *themed, CD-streamed shoot-'em-up with incredible variety.* [Soon]

MINDSCAPE

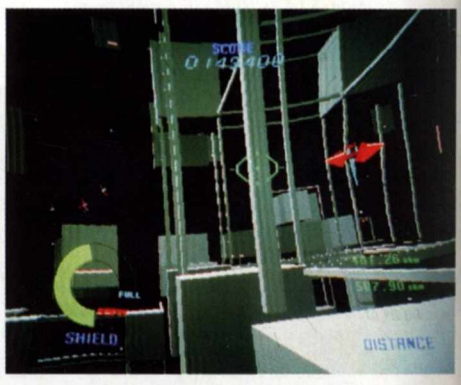
A. Maze
A stunning first-person perspective SF sports game for up to eight players. [TBA]

Dragon Lore
A mythological adventure with stunning, pre-rendered graphics from Cryo. [August]

Warriors
A 3D fighting game which, using Atried's own 3D Bio-Motion system, is claimed to the most realistic yet. [TBA]

NAMCO/PANASONIC

Star Blade
A conversion of the classic coin-op claimed to improve over the original. [Spring]



PANASONIC

Myst
Hugely acclaimed, supremely atmospheric CD-ROM adventure comes to the 3DO system. [TBA]

Seal of the Pharaoh
Intriguing Japanese, first-person perspective RPG recently redubbed for the American market. [TBA]

Tetsujin
Doom-*stype 3D blaster.* [Soon]

RAGE/COCONUTS

3DO Striker
The incredibly popular, super fast Amiga game gets upgraded for the 3DO system with FIFA-*style graphics.* [Soon]

>

RENEGADE

Several titles are under active consideration for conversion, but as yet nothing can be announced. Speedball II *heads our most wanted list!*

SILENT SOFTWARE

Return Fire

Hugely playable tank/jeep/helicopter game. Brilliant in two-player mode. [Soon]

SIERRA

An early 3DO backer with the disappointing Draxon's Revenge *and fun puzzler* Incredible Machine *in the States. Future releases such as a conversion of* Red Baron *are still under consideration.*

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

Star Trek: The Next Generation

A truly epic project which has been in development for over a year. Purposely designed for the 3DO system, it's got stunning 3D graphics and a unique game structure. [Spring]

STUDIO 3DO

The All New People's GameShow

Post-communist gameshow likely to be somewhat Twisted. [Spring]

SkyVyper

Heli-Pak wearing vigilante roams the streets in 2110. [Spring]

Station Invasion

Ambitious, multimedia edutainment title. [Soon]

Time2Die

An abandoned island is the site for some frantic, Doom*-style action with stunning graphics.* [Soon]



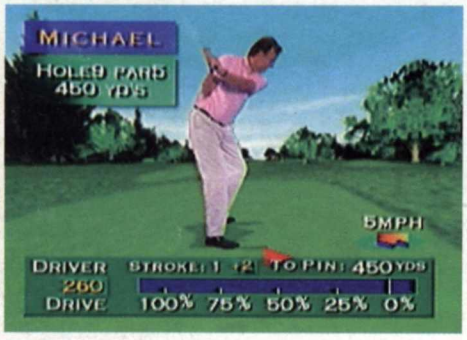
ELECTRONIC ARTS

3D Atlas

A powerful and fun geographical program. [Soon]

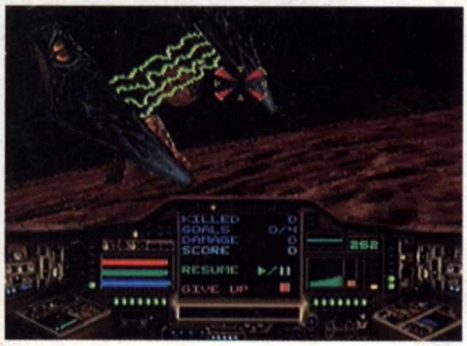
PGA Tour Golf

Likely to be the best golf game in the history of mankind, ever! [TBA]



ShockWave: Op JumpGate

Five stunning new missions with fantastic FMV. Requires original ShockWave *to work.* [Soon]



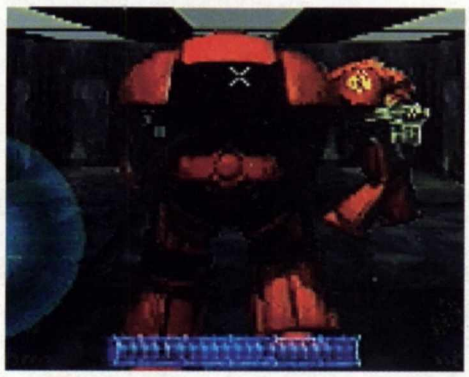
Syndicate

The PC version of this superbly atmospheric tactical shoot-'em-up is subtly reworked. [Soon]



Space Hulk

A raved over strategy cum shoot-'em-up based on the famous board game is brilliantly upgraded for the 3DO system. [March]







Wing Commander III

The most expensive videogame yet, a superlative 3D combat sim cum space opera. [January]

U. S. GOLD

Flashback

The follow-up to Another World. [Soon]

VIRGIN

Cannon Fodder

The PC version of the incredibly addictive shoot-'em-up is updated for the 3DO system. [March]

Demolition Man

A stunning packaging including Op Wolf *and driving games, skilfully integrated with so much FMV you practically get the whole movie.* [Soon]



Digital Dreamware

Rave-type multimedia project. [TBA]

Dragon

Hyper-violent SFII *clone with the difference that there can be three fighters on screen simultaneously.* [February]

Lost Eden

Cryo's epic adventure, featuring dinosaurs and mankind co-operating in prehistoric times, should be a gorgeous-looking release. [March]



Heart Of Darkness

Another World *for the 32bit generation – should be stunning!* [April]

11th Hour

Fantastic, CD-streamed adventure with a horrific bent. [TBA] ☐ **ssw**

3DO magazine

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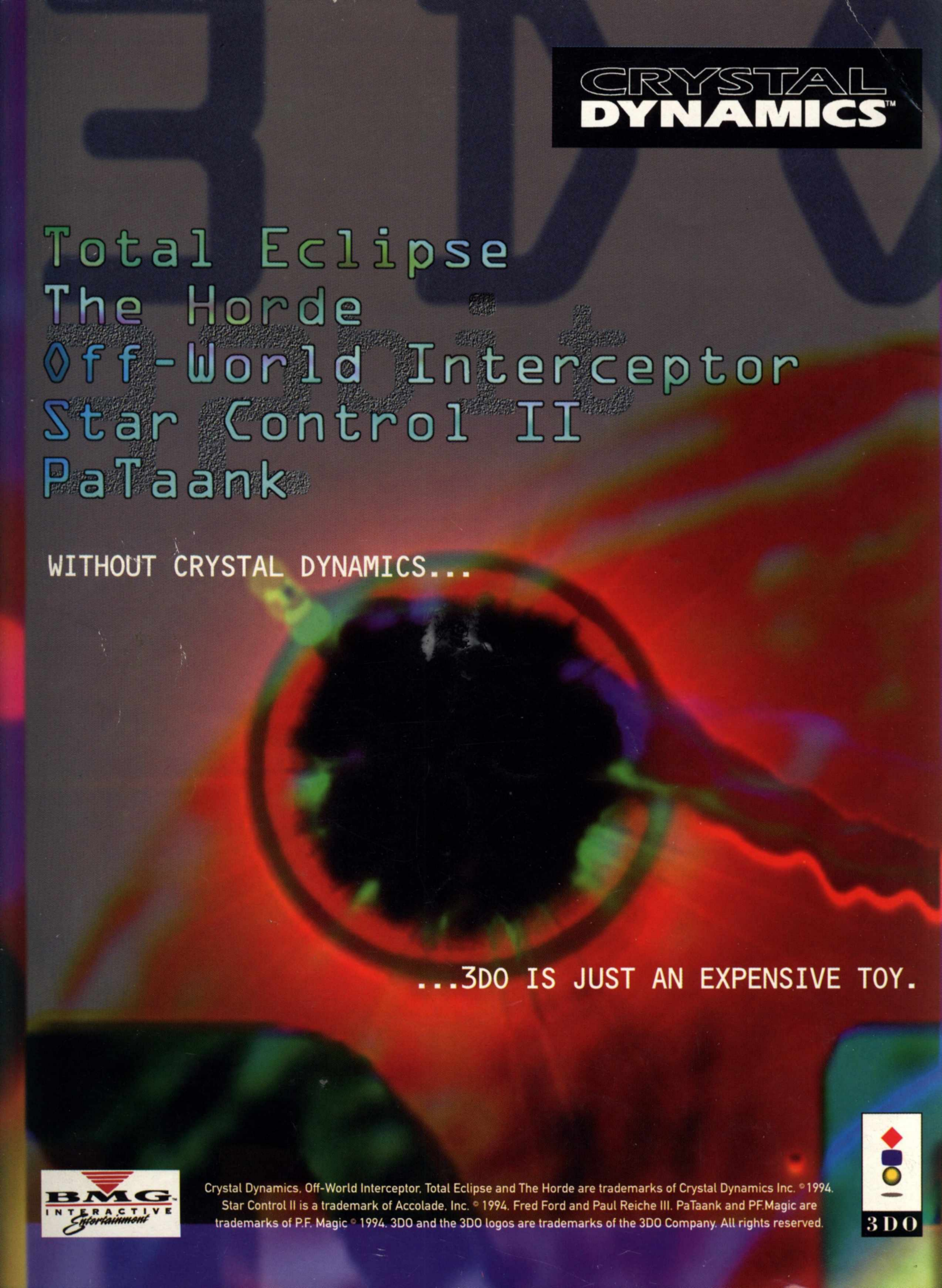
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