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## E.R.

The FPS genre goes nuclear in the battle for supremacy

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**FREEDOM FIGHTERS** [PS2/XB/GC/PC]
**COLIN MCRAE RALLY 4** [PS2/XB]
**SOUL CALIBUR II** [PS2/XB/GC]
**F-ZERO GX** [GC]
**TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004** [PS2/XB/GC/PC/GBA]
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**132** PAGES OF INTERGALACTIC GAMING

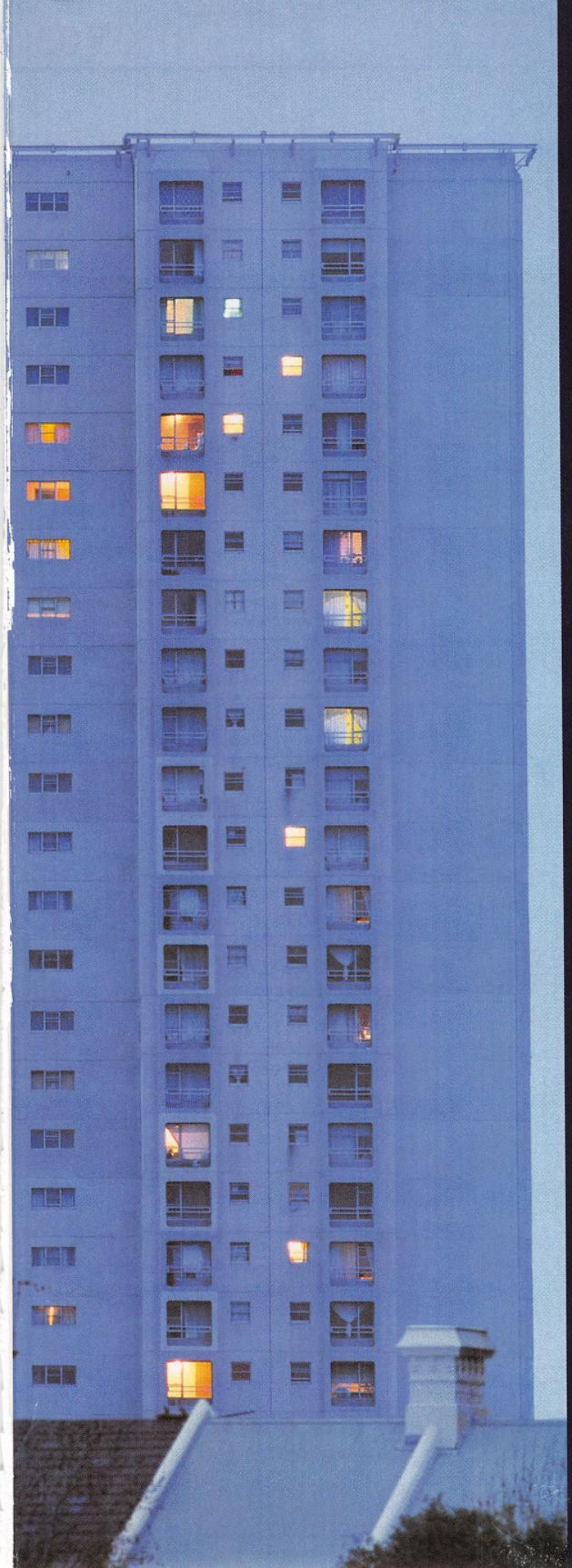
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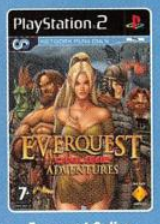
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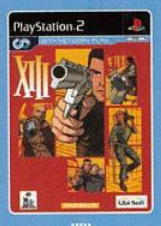
Hardware Online Arena



Gran Turismo 4



Destruction Derby Arenas



XIII



Medal of Honor Rising Sun



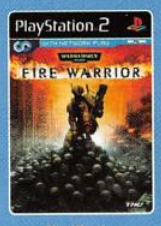
Syphon Filter The Omega Strain



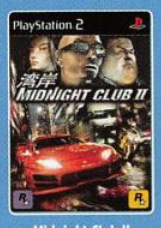
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Fire Warrior



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PlayStation®2
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# 16 SONY STYLE

**It doesn't seem like so long ago that the PlayStation stood gaming on its head. Now a new age is dawning and Sony is, once again, getting ready to change the way we play games.**



As children, I think it's safe to say we all enjoyed stories about brave heroes performing mighty deeds and triumphing over evil, adversity and human frailty. As adults... well, as adults, some of us still enjoy stories about brave heroes performing mighty deeds etc.

That's one of the things that sets gamers apart from everyone else. We're not afraid to use our imaginations, to actively engage with our entertainment, rather than just sitting down and being spoon-fed.

Then there are those people who can't understand how or why a videogame can become so engrossing. For some games, it's a pure contest of skill – memorising tracks, levels and attack patterns, mastering complex stunts and combos and so on. For others, it's all (or at least some) of the above, plus something extra.

Whether I'm rescuing Yorda or battling Foxhound, if a game can draw me in to its story and make me care about its characters, it has achieved what only the best novels and films can do. 'Just' games? Yeah, right.

Michael

Michael Butler, Group Editor

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The Czech Republic might seem an unlikely base for a successful development house, but Illusion Softworks is proving otherwise.




# WE'RE BIGGER THAN YOU

## INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN RETAILERS CONTINUE TO SUFFER AS NINTENDO TIGHTENS ITS GRIP ON IMPORTERS

Popular independent UK retailer Another World has become the latest company to suffer under Nintendo Europe's strict anti-import campaign. Visiting Another World's website now shows only static images where its American and Japanese Nintendo titles once used to be.

Unfortunately, for legal reasons Another World was unable to comment.

While many firms are in a similar situation, Shaun Johnson of Gamesimporter.com is one importer who's not afraid to speak his mind. "I look at Nintendo as a bullying and arrogant company, what they are doing is criminal and illegal in my eyes," he says. "Dictating is not the way forward and neither is persecuting the very companies and people who have made Nintendo what it is today. The only thing that's hurting Nintendo's sales are its own faults, with delays and lack of equal support across regions being its main problems. If they do not want to address these problems, then that's their prerogative, not mine, and until they do, I will keep using my right as a consumer and my own freedom of choice to get the items I want at reasonable times and prices."

Although Nintendo has been looking into the import situation for some time, it's only recent releases like *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire* and *Advance Wars 2* (both for the Game Boy Advance) that have come under this close scrutiny. One importer (who, for legal reasons, cannot be named) is insistent that it's only *Pokémon*'s



**"DICTATING IS NOT THE WAY FORWARD AND NEITHER IS PERSECUTING THE VERY COMPANIES AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE MADE NINTENDO WHAT IT IS TODAY"**

SHAUN JOHNSON

popularity that has caused the recent interest. "Nintendo didn't bat an eyelid when we were selling the likes of *Metroid Prime* or *Wind Waker*," explains the businessman. "Then all of a sudden, when *Pokémon* sells phenomenally in Japan, it brings this ban in."

One reason why people import is because of the delays between NTSC and PAL releases and the lead times for translation and localisation. If you're a GBA owner you don't have it too bad – there was a four month delay between the Japanese and US launches but only a month between the US and Australian launches. But if you're a real fan you might decide that you don't want to wait four months (or even one month). And if you don't, why should you be prevented from purchasing the game from an importer?

If Nintendo is so insistent on stopping importing, we think it would make more sense for it to go after the bigger American and Japanese import dealers – after all, this is where the majority of stock is being sold.

However, many independent importers feel that the main reason Nintendo is staying away from the big guns is because it knows that if a court case ever arose it would face much stiffer resistance. Considering the likes of Datel actually make a device – the FreeLoader – to encourage gamers to import (along with Internet importers who provide Japanese switched machines) and are not facing similar problems, this may well be the case.

Another important aspect of import games is the early buzz that new import titles can create. We're all major import gamers ourselves and we'll continue to let you know which games are worth importing. It will be a sad day indeed if Nintendo does eventually manage to stop import gaming once and for all.

These matters are a concern for all gamers, not just Nintendo fans. It seems the hardware manufacturers have decided they can dictate how we'll use our machines. Funny, but we've always thought that once you buy something, it's yours to use as you please.

## PLEASE RELEASE ME...

**It just doesn't seem right that local gamers had to wait so long for great titles like:**

**Advance Wars 2**
We reviewed Intelligent Systems' fantastic sequel back in issue 3. We love the game and it was well worth importing if you decided not to wait for the local release – but why did we have to wait so long?




**Animal Crossing**
Happily, Nintendo has finally seen the light and has announced that the collect-'em-up game that has been wowing them overseas will be released here in October. But the PAL conversion is a straight port of the US game – so we'll get to celebrate Thanksgiving, Independence Day and other similar well-known Australian holidays.



# SONIC SHUFFLE

## SEGA FINALLY ANNOUNCES ITS SEVEN NEW STUDIOS

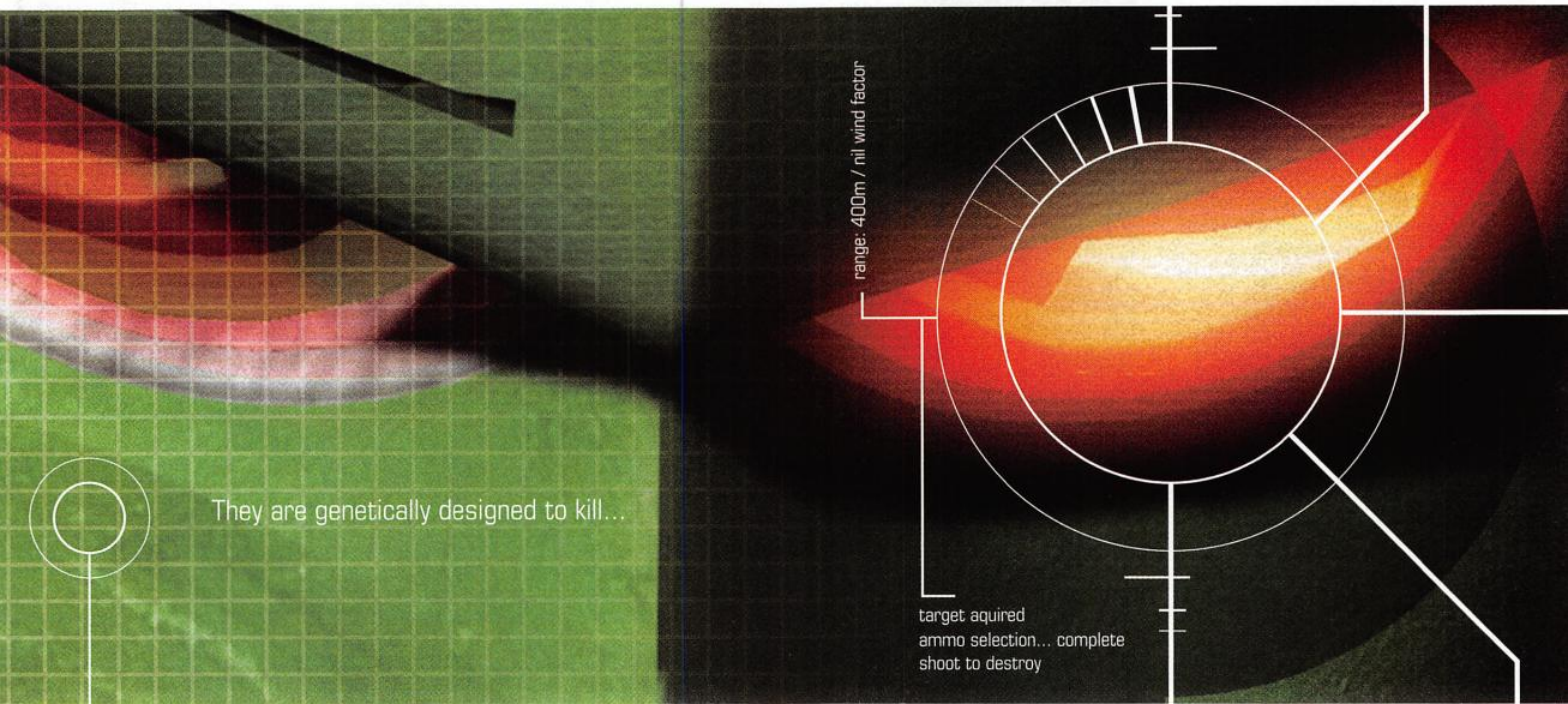


**Following on from its re-entry into the European software market as publishers, SEGA has now revealed its new studios and the markets on which each will focus.**

Sonic Team consists of Sonic Team and United Game Artists and will create games for 'casual' users. SEGA AM2 remains untouched and will develop games targeted at SEGA's core fan base, and the tentatively named Wow Works is made up of Overworks and WOW Entertainment and will be working on games for next-generation machines that are suitable for all audiences.

Smilebit and Amusement Vision retain their titles but have had a reshuffle between the two teams. As a result Smilebit will now focus on sports titles, while Amusement Vision will concentrate on titles involving movies. The final two studios will be Hitmaker (consisting of Hitmaker and SEGA Rosso) and Cinematic Online Games (Yu Suzuki's new studio, which will concentrate on blockbuster titles).

With many console-specific teams now being grouped together, we're fully expecting to see many more games appearing across multiple platforms. Just imagine playing *Super Monkey Ball 3* online via your PS2 or Xbox, or finally being able to play *Initial D* or the fantastic *Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution* on something other than a PS2. Sega for everyone? We hope so. One thing is certain: there are some exciting times ahead...

# Data stream

BITE-SIZED STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF GAMING



## BARGAIN AHOY

**Keen to get the dollars rolling in well before *Rogue Squadron III: Rebel Strike* gets anywhere near the shelves, LucasArts is tempting US Cube owners to part with their readies early by offering a special bonus disc with all pre-orders. Not only will this disc tease players with the Hoth level demo, but it also includes a complete GameCube port of the timeless 1983 *Star Wars* arcade game. We can only hope that LucasArts will offer the same incentive to Australian gamers, as we'd love to get our hands on Atari's retro masterpiece as part of the deal.**





## THE NEXT CONSOLE WILL BE OUT IN...

**Heavyweight developers like EA are set to receive the first clues as to when the next breed of consoles may be released. "We will know when we begin to get first-generation development systems, because typically we get our hands on those about two years before launch," predicts EA chief executive Larry Probst, who expects to begin work on titles for the new hardware within the next six months. It's likely that the first machine seen by developers could be favourite in the next console war.**






# LARA PACKS HER BAGS

## EIDOS TAKES TOMB RAIDER AWAY FROM CORE AND HANDS THE FRANCHISE OVER TO CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

**Core Design – the creator of Lara Croft – has lost its precious licence to another developer.** American-based Crystal Dynamics will be developing future instalments of the *Tomb Raider* franchise, as *Angel Of Darkness* is the first part of a proposed trilogy. An official statement from Eidos offers little comfort for Core's future with the company: "We will now be evaluating Core Design studio's ongoing direction and contribution as part of the group's overall development capabilities". With Core Design's recent non-Lara products failing to perform at retail, we feel that there could be some difficult times ahead for the Derby, UK-based studio.

Problems arose when the highly anticipated *Angel Of Darkness* launched nine months after its original release date. Troubles continued when the game received mixed reviews, and this was quickly followed by a furore in the UK when specialist retail chain GAME decided to sell the title several days before its official launch date.

Once *Angel Of Darkness* was released, Core's woes began in earnest. Jeremy Heath-Smith, Eidos' development director and Core Design's managing director, announced that he would be resigning from the boards of both companies with immediate effect. While no reason has been given, we suspect the fact that *Angel Of Darkness* missed the end of Eidos' financial year could be a critical factor behind his decision. Movie company Paramount is also blaming Core's tardiness for the fact that its latest film, *Tomb Raider: The Cradle Of Life*, has been a flop

Eidos' decision to hand the *Tomb Raider* licence over to Crystal Dynamics (creator of the *Legacy Of Kain* series) is a brave move and one that is gaining praise throughout the industry. "Whilst Core certainly did an excellent job creating such a global phenomenon, the secret of any ongoing success is always continued reinvention," says Doug Bone of Andromeda Entertainment Ltd. "Despite being a technically sound development team, Crystal Dynamics has never really had a franchise on the scale of *Tomb Raider*, so this is a shrewd move. I fully expect Miss Croft's next adventure to look, sound and play better than ever and hopefully re-enthuse the fan-base that has been let down by what is the most disappointing game of the year so far."

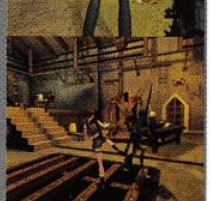
It's unclear how Core itself feels about recent events, as it has refused to comment.





Can Crystal Dynamics turn *Tomb Raider* around?





Tsk, naughty Lara, letting all your fans down.



Can a plasticine dog save the day for Acclaim?

# OUT OF THE FRYING PAN...

## ACCLAIM'S TROUBLES DEEPEN, BUT IT STILL TAKES BAM! UNDER ITS WING

**Acclaim faces further problems following the news that it has six months to ensure that its share price attains the $1.50 (USD 1.50) minimum price that will enable it to stay afloat.** This period is an official extension granted by NASDAQ to allow the company to raise funds. This is serious news for Acclaim as despite recently raising $20 million (USD 13 million), it seems that it has a long way to go if it wants to avoid the same fate as Rage and Crawfish.



In a bid to increase its poor performance, Acclaim has joined forces with BAM! Entertainment, itself a company with major financial troubles. The new deal will see Acclaim publishing several BAM! games in Europe, including *Wallace & Gromit: Project Zoo* and *Dexter's Laboratory*.

"We are pleased to have entered into this agreement with BAM!," said Acclaim CEO Rod Cousens. "Its line-up will enhance our growth in the international territories where the first release, *Wallace & Gromit*, is one of this year's most anticipated titles."

This venture may not be a wise move by Acclaim, but we can't wait to see the cheese-related promotions for *Wallace & Gromit*.

## games™ THE TOP FIVE

## POINTLESS CONSOLE ACCESSORIES




**No.5 SEGA DREAMCAST VMU**

A great idea that totally went to waste



**No.4 NINTENDO'S R.O.B.**

One robot, two games – virtually no fun




**No.3 SEGA MEGA 32X**

When you can't be arsed with a whole new console



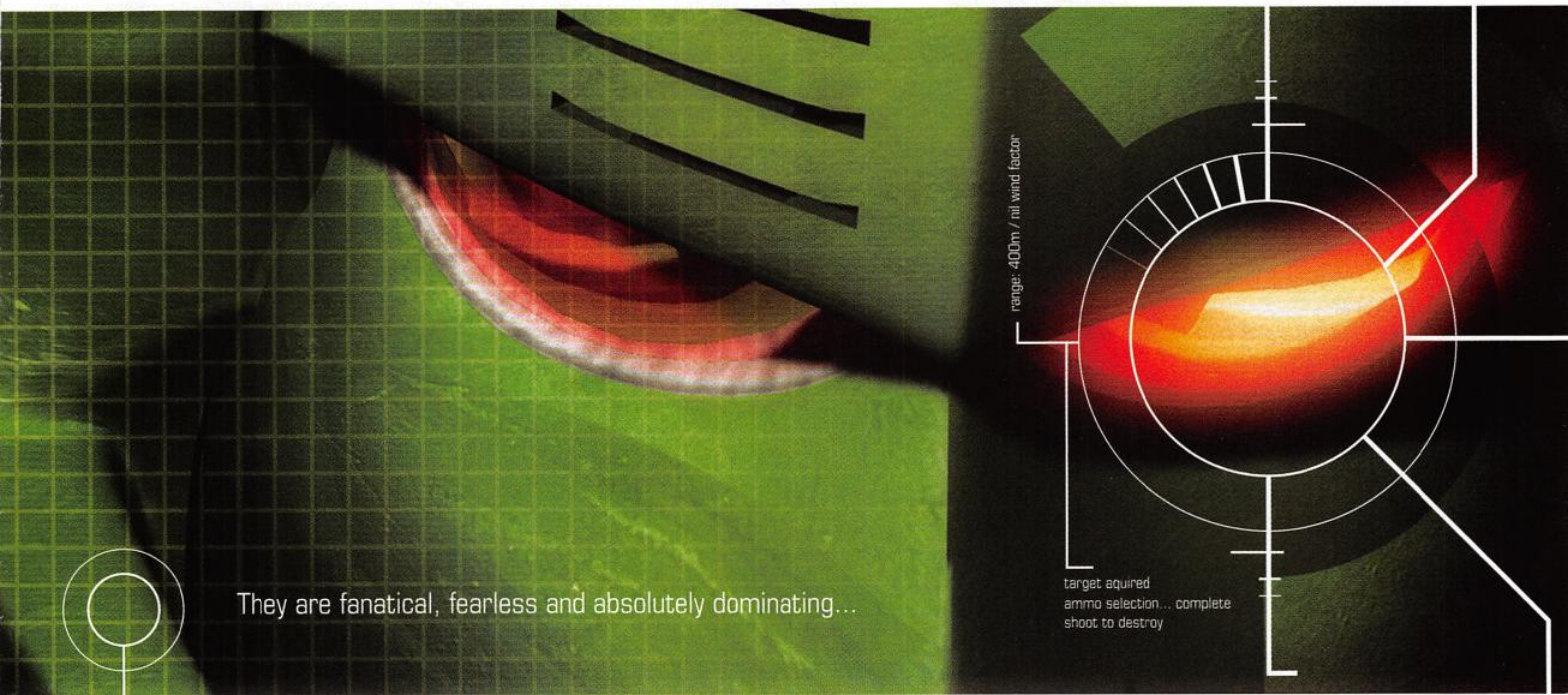
**No.2 ATARI JAGUAR CD**

Why release an add-on for a console no-one bought?




**No.1 NINTENDO POWER GLOVE**

The most useless peripheral ever. EVER




They are fanatical, fearless and absolutely dominating...

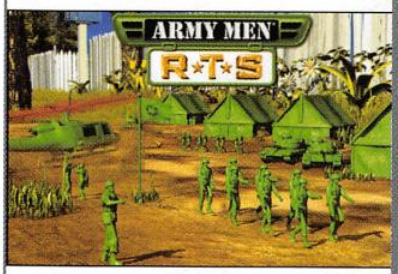
# Data stream

BITE-SIZED STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF GAMING



## WOULD YOU BUY IT FOR A DOLLAR?

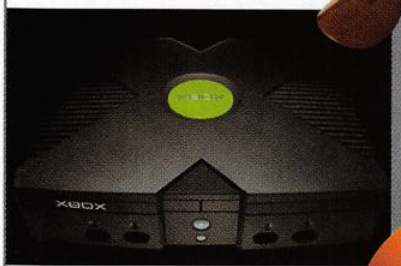
Now that 3DO is finally no more, numerous publishers are already chasing after some of the ill-fated company's more popular franchises. Ubi Soft is after the assets for *Heroes Of Might & Magic*, whilst the likes of Namco Hometek and JoWood are after *SRS Street Racing*. The most bizarre news, however, is that Eidos is after the dreaded *Army Man* franchise. We're not sure if this is to draw flack away from the ongoing poor quality of the *Tomb Raider* franchise, or if Eidos will be giving the series to Core Design as punishment for *The Angel Of Darkness*.






## MICROSOFT GOES IT ALONE

It may have kept a low profile at this year's Electronic Consumer Trade Show (ECTS) but the yearly X0 show will ensure that Microsoft remains on everyone's lips throughout September. Taking place between 16-17 September, X03 will be held in the south of France and should give Microsoft a chance to reveal upcoming software and hardware. Knowing how much it likes to spring surprises, we're expecting to possibly see early details of Xbox 2 and (fingers crossed) at least video footage of *Perfect Dark Zero*. Failing that, we'd be happy playing *Halo 2*, *Grabbed By The Ghoulies* and *Project Gotham Racing 2*.








To increase sales figures, a spot of channel stuffing...

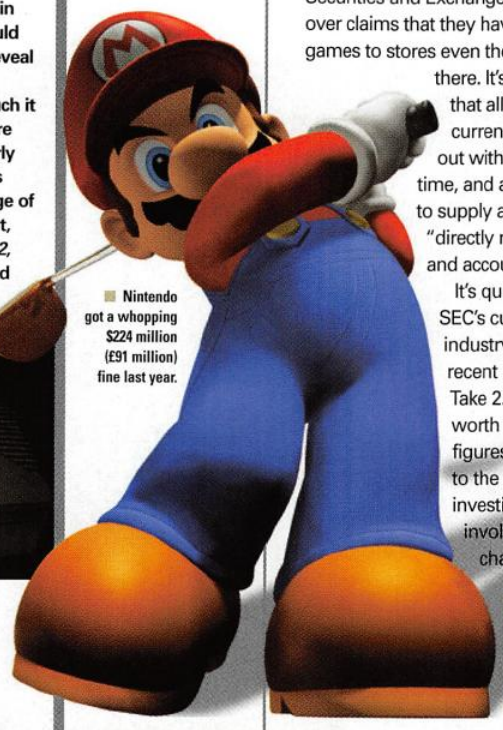




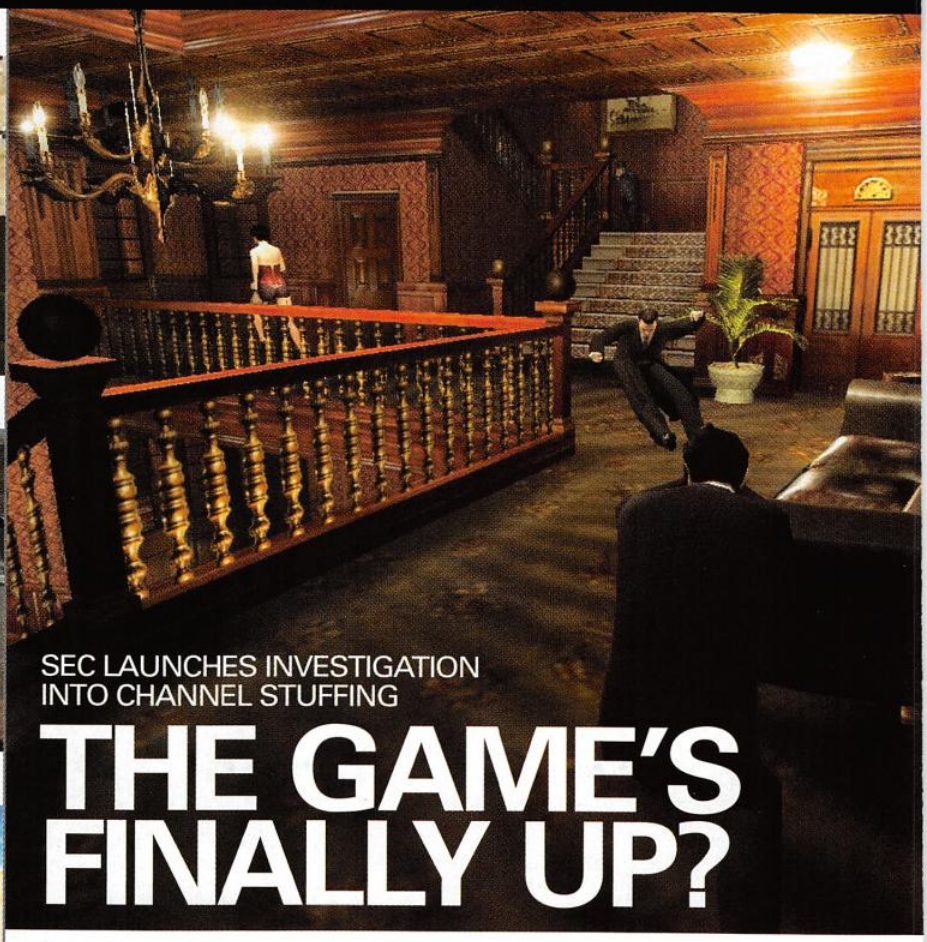
...can sort you out without selling anything.







Nintendo got a whopping $224 million (£91 million) fine last year.



SEC LAUNCHES INVESTIGATION INTO CHANNEL STUFFING

# THE GAME'S FINALLY UP?

**After Nintendo Europe got stung to the tune of $224 million (£91 million) for using channel stuffing techniques in an attempt to increase sales, you would have thought that the games industry would have learnt its lesson.**

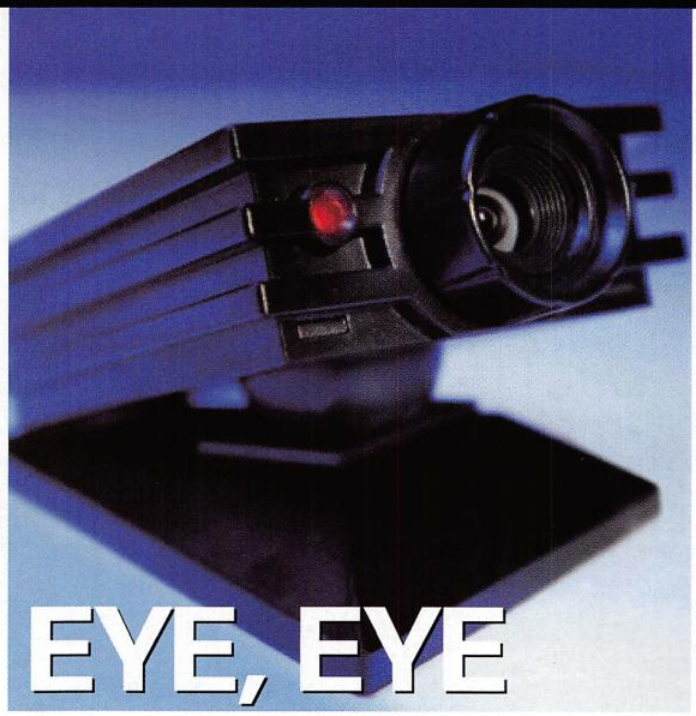
Now though, Acclaim, Activision and THQ are all currently being investigated by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) over claims that they have continued to ship games to stores even though the demand isn't there. It's important to note that all these companies are currently merely 'helping out with enquiries' at this time, and are only being asked to supply any information "directly related to accounts and accounting practices".

It's quite possible that the SEC's current interest in the industry has arisen from its recent investigation into Take 2. Nearly two year's worth of Take 2's financial figures were handed over to the Commission after an investigation was launched involving rumoured channel stuffing by the publisher and developer. Channel stuffing is the practice of offering dealers and distributors special incentives in an attempt to boost sales at the end of a fiscal year, only to have the products returned at a later date.

Unsurprisingly, none of the companies involved would state what the SEC are actually investigating, but it is expected that none will be facing any fines. It seems more likely that the SEC will instead use this opportunity to force publishers to base sales figures on the actual number of units sold, rather than on the number of games that have been simply shipped to stores. It's also worth noting that it is not only publishers that may come under the ongoing investigation.

The Nintendo case involved several high profile retailers (some of whom were also fined), so it would not be unreasonable for the SEC to approach this current problem from all possible angles. Nintendo's fine was the fourth largest ever to be handed out to a single company and became headline news when it was announced late last year.

With continued rumours that this is simply the beginning of an even wider probe into the whole software industry, we're sure it could be some time before the SEC reveals its results. But we'll let you know what, if anything, it manages to unearth.



# EYE, EYE

## SONY'S EYETOY BECOMES A HUGE SUCCESS

**Sony's new peripheral has exceeded expectations and become a huge success worldwide.** Thanks to some savvy marketing by Sony, *EyeToy: Play* has firmly ingrained itself in the public's consciousness, driving hardware sales of PlayStation 2 and claiming the number one spot on the all-format software charts.

"EyeToy has become a phenomenon overnight. We've sold through every piece of stock we can get," says Michael Ephraim, Managing Director of Sony Computer Entertainment Australia. "The fact that anyone can play without a controller should not be underestimated."

A second EyeToy product is currently in development and is expected to be released in November, and Ephraim is confident that we'll be seeing plenty more of the little black camera: "This kind of application is very important to Sony and will be used down the track."

The EyeToy is still in its infancy, and we're excited to see what developers will be able to do with it. Even more intriguing are the possibilities opened up when you combine EyeToy with online connectivity – or are we the only ones to have noticed the 'videoconferencing' menu option?



Throwing shapes to defeat evil is a popular pastime.





A second EyeToy product is expected in November.

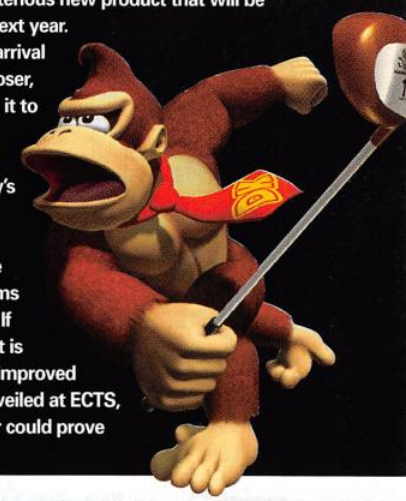



# WHAT'S ALL THIS THEN?

## NINTENDO HANDS OUT ANOTHER LICENCE AND ANNOUNCES A MYSTERIOUS NEW PRODUCT

**Nintendo seems to be unloading licences like there's no tomorrow. It now appears that Namco has been given the *Donkey Kong* licence and is currently hard at work on *Donkey Kongo*, a drum-based rhythm action title. While little is currently known about the new game, we're expecting it to be based on Namco's popular *Taikou No Tetsujin* (a title which has already sold nearly 700,000 units in Japan) and to appear on the GameCube as well as in selected arcades. Nintendo is handing out its franchises at an alarming rate, and whilst every product has been of a very high standard, we do wonder if the company is starting to run out of ideas.**

**Although a new *Wario Ware* game and *Zelda* title have been announced, we're more interested in Nintendo's mysterious new product that will be unveiled early next year. With the PSP's arrival drawing ever closer, we're expecting it to be a new handheld to counteract Sony's incoming machine (a successor to the GameCube seems highly unlikely). If the new product is indeed a vastly improved GBA and it's unveiled at ECTS, the coming year could prove very interesting.**





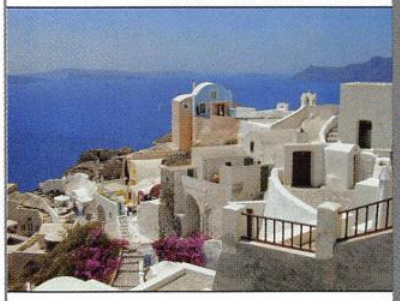
# Data stream

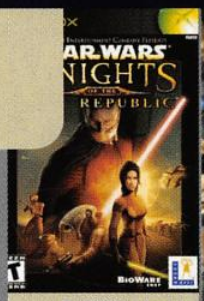
BITE-SIZED STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF GAMING



## EC TO CHALLENGE GAMING BAN

Greece is finally being confronted over its highly controversial gaming ban. Although the law was initially expected to only concern gambling-related games, it's since been revealed that it covers all forms of videogame entertainment – even those enjoyed in the privacy of Greek gamers' homes. The European Commission has at last decided to challenge the ban on the grounds that the new law was not fully explained in its draft stage and that it also jeopardises the EC's treaty on the free movement of goods and services within the EU.






*KOTOR* has been a runaway success...




...but *F-Zero GX* is struggling in Japan.




Somehow, *Kirby's Air Ride* has far outsold *F-Zero*.







# SELL, SELL, SELL...

## MICROSOFT AND NINTENDO'S LATEST BIG GAMES HAVE BEEN RELEASED, BUT THE FIGURES ARE RATHER ODD

July saw arguably two of the biggest game releases of this year in America and Japan, though the sales figures have raised a few eyebrows. Bioware's impressive *Star Wars: Knights Of The Old Republic* has been occupying Xbox owners in America, while Japanese gamers have witnessed the fast and frantic gameplay of *F-Zero GX*. *Knights Of The Old Republic* has been a phenomenal success throughout the US and has set a new record for Xbox sales – within the space of just four days, it shifted over 250,000 copies. There's no doubt that the pairing of one of the world's best RPG developers with one of the most popular franchises will ensure that *Knights* could well be the Xbox's system seller until the release of *Halo 2* in 2004.

Unfortunately, *F-Zero GX*, while an exceptional game in its own right, has not achieved anywhere near the same amount of success. Though the franchise has never been one of Nintendo's strongest, even we were surprised when it only managed to achieve fourth place in the Dengeki chart, with just 46,515 units sold. This is particularly galling when you realise that *Kirby's Air Ride* has sold 172,774 units over a three-week period.

Let's just hope that American and European gamers give this title the attention it deserves and maybe it can hang on in the top ten for a little longer.



# "say what you see"



**Meaningless waffle from the industry**

**THIS MONTH** – Ilkka Raiskinen, head of Nokia's Entertainment and Media sector, talks about the Game Box:



"It's for ten-year-olds – if you're 20 or 25, it's probably not a good idea to pull a Game Boy out of your pocket on a Friday night in a public place"

games™ says: Talk about alienating your entire market – why not say anyone with a Game Boy is a loser as well? That'll really help sales of the N-Gage...

**MORE FROM MR CHIPS NEXT MONTH!**

# XBOX LIVE: THE NEXT CHAPTER

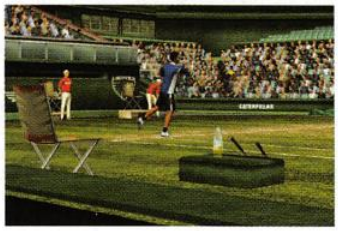
## LIVE DUE FOR ITS FIRST MAJOR UPDATE



**Fans of Xbox Live will be pleased to hear that Microsoft's new online service should become available from mid-September.** Xbox Live Now will include several enhancements such as the ability to chat to friends from the Xbox dashboard and an improved friends list, making it easier to start up online games. One of the most exciting aspects, however, will be the integration of Microsoft's new sports service.

"XSN Sports is a website powered by the same technology as the new Xbox Live website," explained a spokesperson for Microsoft. "It will enable Xbox Live subscribers to create leagues and tournaments for XSN Sports titles that will be arriving later this year."

While this is good news for Live players, it's important to remember that past updates have been constantly delayed, so don't be too surprised if this one arrives a little late...



In a far, grim future...

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# FIRE WARRIOR™

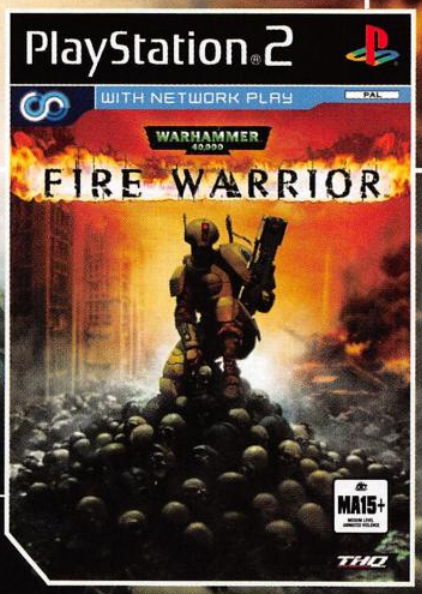
It is the 41st millenium, and there is only WAR....







combat camera uplink




- 16 Years in the making
- PS2 Online
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- Multiplayer Death Match and Co-Operative Play

scenario profiler

"...an early contender for the console first- personshooter of the year."
- Gamespy

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THQ

# Data stream

BITE-SIZED STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF GAMING

## I'M LEAVING

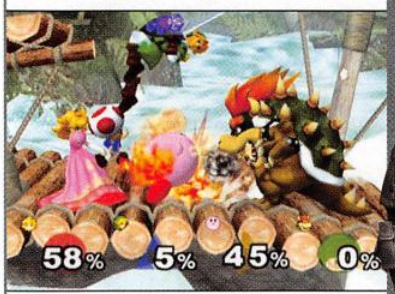
**Masahiro Sakurai, the creator of Kirby and director of *Super Smash Bros Melee*, has left HAL Labs after supposedly being unhappy with corporate politics. It's as yet unclear what Sakurai-san intends to do in the future. One option would be to join the 12-strong Okatuku development house that's been created by ex-Capcom producer Yoshiki Okamoto. Despite being offered a position as dean at one of Japan's biggest game development collages, Okamoto-san decided to continue developing games. Okatuku will develop new titles across all major formats.**



French developers can now cash in on creativity.



## FRENCH GOVERNMENT OFFERS GRANTS TO SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS











# TRÈS BIEN

**French software developers are being offered grants of up to $6.7 million (€4 million) in an attempt to develop new game ideas.** Grants will also be used to help smaller companies weather what has been a tough year. But before you send off your game proposals, the French Ministry of Culture has created guidelines to ensure that the funds will not be abused. Would-be recipients need to be French and all work on the future titles must be carried out in France. In addition, handouts won't be given to any violent or pornographic games.

"The French Government has recognised that the development of innovative IP [intellectual property] cannot be funded by publishers," said Roger Bennett, director general of the Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association (ELSPA). "It's simply too risky for them, illustrated by their scramble for licences in existing successful IP such as in film, sport and other media. Developers find the process equally risky."

Escalating costs for developing new titles are another problem that the French government is hoping to overcome through these grants. Mind you, this isn't the first time that France has offered an incentive to developers. Several years ago, a similar scheme saw the likes of Titus and Infogrames acquiring several companies in an attempt to secure extra funding. But when Titus realised it couldn't fund these acquisitions, it ran into financial difficulties. With this in mind, it'll be interesting to see if history repeats itself.

# JUST A PLAYTHING

**If you're interested in the future of interactive digital entertainment and are free over the October long weekend, you should definitely wander down to Sydney University and attend Plaything.**

**Plaything is the 2003 Future Screen event. First established in 1998, Future Screen is an annual event dedicated to exploring the future of digital media arts. It's especially devoted to exploring the influences of new media art practices and cultural theory**

**Plaything is an international event, featuring local and international game designers, theorists and artists. Its focus is current and future trends in video games and consists of a symposium, exhibition and catalogue intended to provoke discussion, critical discourse and play. The Plaything Symposium will be held at the University of Sydney on Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10–12 October 2003.**

# DESTINY AWAITS IN KOREA

**After two days of fierce competition at the annual World Cyber Games championship,** held at the Sydney Convention Centre on August 30 and 31, a team of eleven (six individuals and one team champion) players was selected to represent Australia at the 2003 World Cyber Games finals in Korea. The prize? A cool half-million in prize money.

Sponsored by Samsung Electronics and Intel, over 300 players have taken part in the Games (375 qualifiers and 76 finalists, to be precise). Seven games were played at the finals, with the team game (Counter Strike) decided in a nail-biting finale with Queensland's Function0 coming from behind to defeat Victoria's Extreme Revolution.

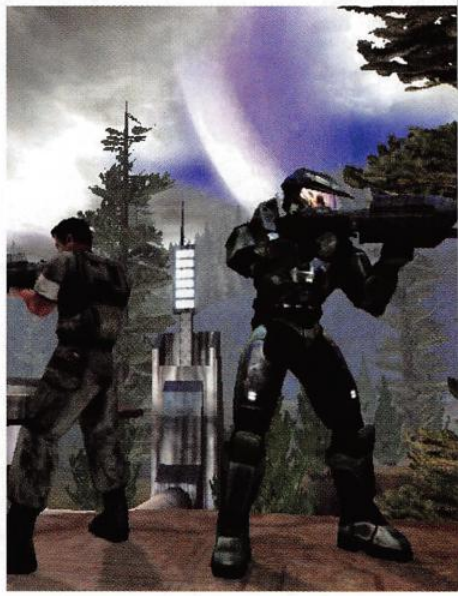
Jake Mitchell, the FIFA 2003 champion, attend the finals in Korea last year and is eagerly awaiting the chance to compete again.

"The vibe in Korea was amazing – I really enjoyed competing there. Since I've been back, I've concentrated on my gaming, as I was sure I wanted to go back again! Gaming is still relatively new here, but the WCG Finals on the weekend were huge – events such as these are great for building a profile for gaming."

The World Cyber gams have been held annually since 2000. The world's first game culture festival, designed to establish eSports, it has grown steadily since its launch and in 2002 45 countries participated in the finals. In 2003 over 600 participants from 55 countries are expected to participate.



The Australian champions are:
**Half Life: Counterstrike**
Team: Function0 (QLD)
Players: Andrew Gollner
Ben Farrell
David Kaye
Justin Evans
Matthew Farries
**FIFA 2003**
Jake Mitchell (NSW)
**Halo**
Chris Hamilton (QLD)
**Unreal Tournament**
Dominic Lewandowski (NSW)
**Starcraft**
Nick Hogan (VIC)
**Warcraft**
David Chen (VIC)
**Age of Mythology**
Peter Panagiotlaris (VIC)

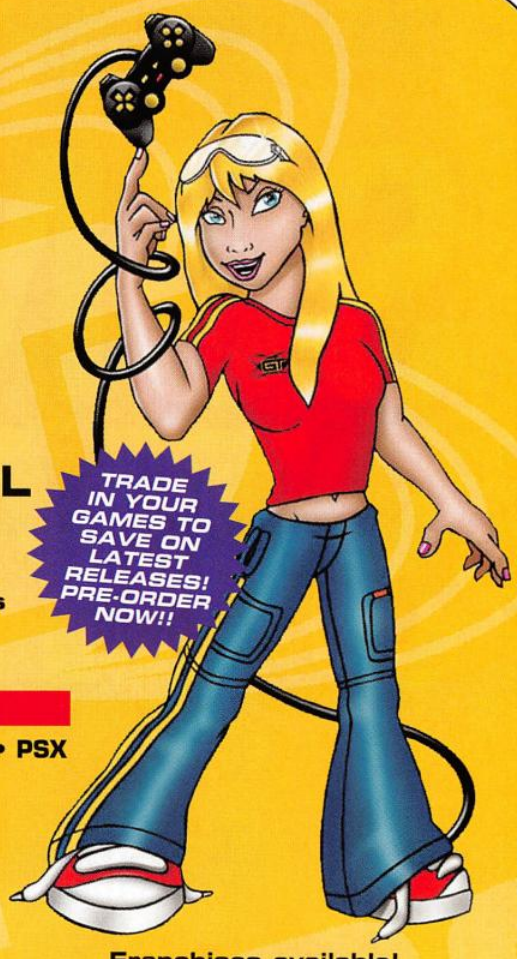


Meet FIFA 2003 champion Jake Mitchell (left) and Halo champion Chris Hamilton (right) and wish them well in Korea. Aussie Aussie Aussie, Oi Oi Oi and all that...


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**SONY ARE WASHED UP... THERE'S NO WAY TO COMPETE WITH XBOX LIVE... NO COMPANY HAS DOMINATED THREE GENERATIONS OF THE CONSOLE WAR... THEN AGAIN, THEY SAID NO COMPANY COULD DOMINATE TWO.**




# SONY STYLE

THERE'S A NEW ROUND OF CONSOLE WARS BREWING AND THE COMPETITION IS LOOKING SMARTER, MEANER AND MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER. BUT AS THE CHALLENGERS KNOW, SONY WON'T GO DOWN WITHOUT ONE HELL OF A FIGHT.

**Things are looking good for Sony right now, but are there dark clouds on the horizon? The dominance of PlayStation 2 is unassailable, with around 60 million units sold worldwide and unprecedented levels of developer support.** They said they couldn't do it in the first place, but they did. Sony jumped into a console market completely dominated by Sega and Nintendo and have triumphed over both.

## HISTORY IN THE MAKING

**The story of Sony developing a CD add-on for Nintendo and then deciding to use the technology for the basis of what became the PlayStation is well-known, but the key question why did Sony take the plunge into a market that was at that stage heavily dominated by the established players?**

**"I think it all rests with Ken Kutaragi, the president of SCE International and now Deputy President of Sony Corp," says Michael Ephraim, Managing Director of SCE Australia and New Zealand and Vice President of SCE Europe. "He clearly knew that videogaming was the entrance into the home that would have the fastest uptake and have the capability of unveiling other applications down the track.**

**"If you look back over the last 8 years, Ken has achieved exactly that. PlayStation started with just games and music; PlayStation 2 offered better quality games and music, DVD playback and soon, online gaming. And I think PlayStation has played an integral role in legitimising the whole video games category."**

**"The computer, at the end of the day, is a workstation, hence the name PlayStation. Video gaming has now impacted not just Sony's bottom line; it's impacted a lot of industries including the movie industry, the music industry, even the car industry, where car manufacturers want to get their prototype cars into Gran Turismo 4 on and on and on. So clearly videogaming has come a long way in the last 10 years and PlayStation has to be given a lot of kudos for where it is today."**

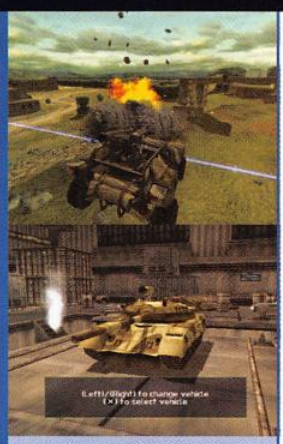
Sega now develops software for (among others) Sony and Nintendo have a lot of catching up to do if they want to be a serious challenger for market dominance.

Then they said Sony couldn't do it twice. Ironically, the very factors that saw the Saturn falter before the PlayStation were all present for the PlayStation 2. The software lineup at launch was weak and the machine itself tricky to work on. And Sega's Dreamcast was easy to work on and had a catalogue full of excellent, innovative games. But the PlayStation 2 just couldn't be stopped.

Now it's a console in complete command of the market. Its software library is extensive, with games to appeal to the broadest as well as the most sophisticated tastes.

Can the dominance continue? Whilst rivals plot and scheme, Sony continues to roll out software and to expand its vision for the future of entertainment.

Connectivity is the buzzword for Sony, whether that means connecting your home entertainment devices or connecting with other gamers online. Nobody quite knows where this will all lead (although lots of people have ideas), but one thing is certain: that we gamers will be the beneficiaries. Bring it on.

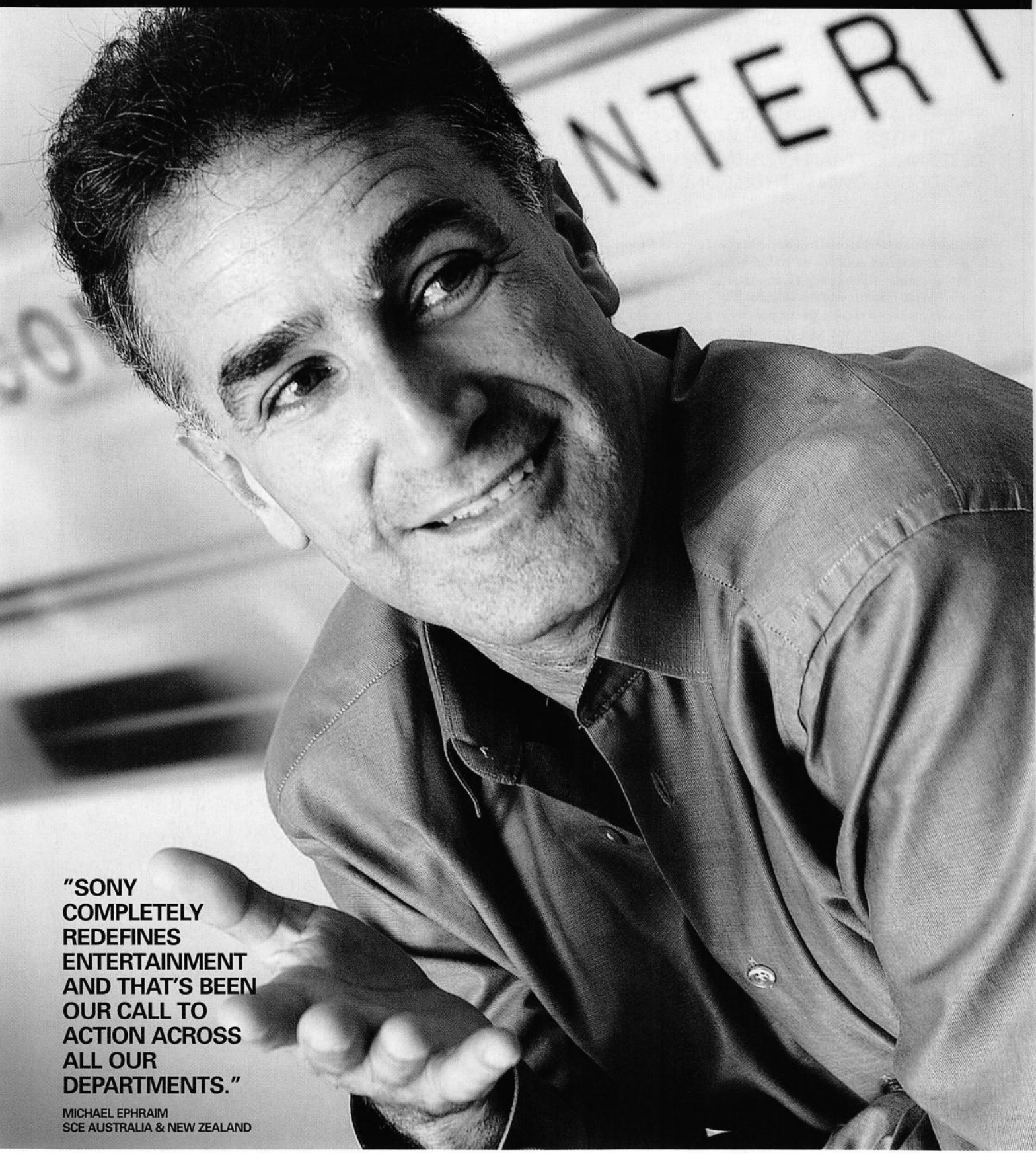


Hardware Arena offers online vehicular combat. It's certainly safer – not to mention cheaper – than trying it out in real life.






The PSP (PlayStation Portable) promises to be much, much more than just a portable games console. Movies, music and the Memory Stick help round out its capabilities.


"SONY COMPLETELY REDEFINES ENTERTAINMENT AND THAT'S BEEN OUR CALL TO ACTION ACROSS ALL OUR DEPARTMENTS."
MICHAEL EPHRAIM
SCE AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

MICHAEL EPHRAIM

# THE PLAYSTATION GENERATION

**GAMES™:** Let's get right down to business. We all know the PlayStation 2 has been a tremendous success; why do you think that is?

**ME:** Let me give you a current example. EyeToy has become a phenomenon overnight; we've sold through every piece of stock we can get. This is what Sony does: Sony completely redefines entertainment and that's been our call to action across all our departments, especially consumer electronics. So in the case of EyeToy, you'll see a lot more games and applications released in the near future. I think that gaming can at some point in time become a bit stagnant, in the sense that there's nothing new except the new generation and now Sony has come out with something that has revolutionised gameplay... the fact that anyone can play without a controller should not be underestimated. This kind of application is very important to Sony and will be used down the track.

**GAMES™:** We've noticed that on the Eye Toy's menu there's a videoconferencing option. Do you forsee a business use for the Eye Toy? Or is it for home use, communicating with family and friends, perhaps?

**ME:** PlayStation means home, it means entertainment. PlayStation 2 supports the Linux operating system, it probably can do a lot more than what it does to just entertain people in the home. But that's not where the main focus of PlayStation is. It's a 'play station'. It will expand in the sense that 'play' will mean any kind of digital entertainment down the track, but I don't think that there's any visions of PlayStation becoming anything more than a home device.

**GAMES™:** What's the logic behind the PSX? Clearly Sony believes that the TV and the console will be the hub of home entertainment, not the PC. You could even argue that Microsoft, with the release of Xbox, has come to the same conclusion. So where does the PSX fit into the picture?

**ME:** The PSX really shows what potential Sony has as a group. The two announcements we've made recently are very exciting. One is PSX and the other is PSP and you can almost, in general terms, talk about them in the same vein.

The fact is Sony will soon offer consumers two true multimedia devices, one portable and one not, that incorporate for the first time the Memory Stick - which is from the consumer electronics area. This is a technology which is at the centre of all Sony's devices including the Sony Ericsson P800 mobile phone, the Vaio, the Clié, the digital cameras and so on. They now bring the two areas of Sony, the two spearheads of Sony into the home market and connects them. Not just by putting a Memory Stick into your PSX or PSP but by actually creating a home network. So consumers are going to start seeing that the Sony offering now has tied in its two biggest device divisions, the electronics and the PlayStation products, and its a very exciting development.The PSX itself, with a 120 gig hard drive, recording capabilities and a broadband connection is really a state of the art device that again shows Sony is in the best position with its resources and capabilities across the consumer electonics division - and also with the professional and broadcasting industries - to deliver products that will consistently change the mindset of consumers of how consumer electronic devices will impact on their life.

**GAMES™:** Sony is providing, with the PSX, a digital video recorder. Does it have any digital rights management technology built-in? Are there concerns about piracy? How do those questions about piracy and copyright and digital rights play into the PSX technology and the decision to go ahead with it?

**ME:** Well I suppose PSX – as far as the PVR function you're talking about – is not the first device of its kind. I suppose there's always been this issue of the device manufacturers and the copyright holders. But that's part of the IT revolution isn't it, where the more sophisticated the devices are, the more digital rights management issues will pop up and have to be resolved, but I think at the end of the day the consumer demand for convengence, plug and play and simplicity in the home is going to drive the uptake and hopefully the digital rights issues will evolve along with the products.

**GAMES™:** With the PSP, you're once again taking on Nintendo in an area they dominate...

**ME:** (interrupts) First of all, we're not taking on Nintendo, because it is a completely different product. The Gameboy plays games. PSP will be the first true multi-entertainment portable device in the market place. Again, Sony has come up with a new product. PSP will be a games, movie, music wireless device with – potentially – Bluetooth capability and USB 2.0, so comparing GameBoy to PlayStation Portable is like comparing a pushbike to a Ferrari.

It will appeal to a whole different demographic. It will definitely be sought after by kids but it will also do what the PlayStation did for videogames. It will make the portable market much bigger, much more



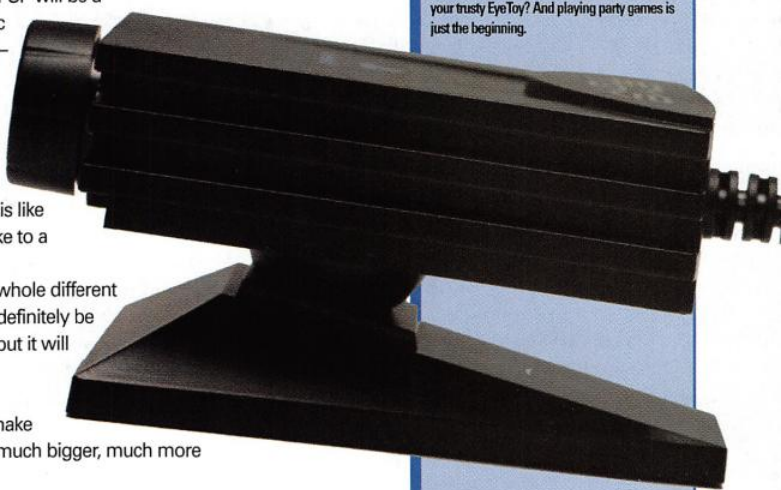
First there was FreQuency, now there is Amplitude. If you haven't played it yet, you really should. We can't wait to try it out online.



**"...COMPARING GAMEBOY TO PLAYSTATION PORTABLE IS LIKE COMPARING A PUSHBIKE TO A FERRARI."**

MICHAEL EPHRAIM
SCE AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

Who needs a joypad when you can plug in your trusty EyeToy? And playing party games is just the beginning.



# TEAM PROFILES

## TOM DEKKER



- **POSITION:** Director of Sales
- **RESPONSIBILITIES:** To ensure sales are maximised and that our products have the best possible profile and presence.
- **FAVOURITE PS2 GAME:** SOCOM Navy Seals
- **FAVOURITE NON-PS2 GAME:** Lemmings
- **QUOTE:** "Your greatest fear is not the task at hand but fear itself" – J Kitchener

## JOANNA WHITE



- **POSITION:** Director of Marketing
- **RESPONSIBILITIES:** To oversee the planning and execution of all consumer marketing activities for PlayStation in Australia
- **FAVOURITE PS2 GAME:** Definitely EyeToy... being hot and sweaty at the completion of the game is a whole new experience!
- **FAVOURITE NON-PS2 GAME:** My parents gave me the Galaxy Invader 1000 handheld console when I was 10 years old which I still have and play
- **QUOTE:** "Its good to have an end to journey towards but it is the journey that matters in the end" – Ursula Le Guin

## STEVE WHERRETT



- **POSITION:** Director of PR and Promotions
- **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Strategic management of all PR and publicity activities with both general & specialist media
- **FAVOURITE PS2 GAME:** Resident Evil Code Veronica
- **FAVOURITE NON-PS2 GAME:** Dome and Final Dome (PlayStation)
- **QUOTE:** "No PlayStation, No Life. Know PlayStation, Know Life!" (This is not mine but I think it's terrific!)

## NINO KALGEROPOULOS

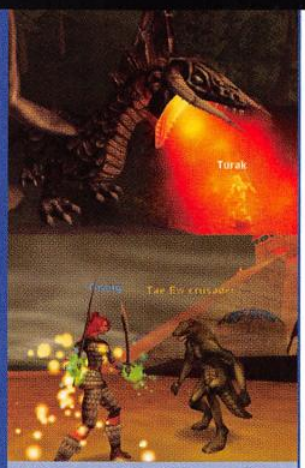


- **POSITION:** Spider Man (Webmaster... get it?... web... spider... doh...)
- **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Manage the Australian PlayStation website (www.playstation.com.au)
- **FAVOURITE PS2 GAME:** Gran Turismo 4
- **FAVOURITE NON-PS2 GAME:** Rogue Squadron (Gamecube)
- **QUOTE:** "Life is short!!"

## PATRICK LAGANA



- **POSITION:** Senior Product Manager
- **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Launching and marketing all PlayStation & PlayStation 2 hardware, peripherals, software and Network Gaming
- **FAVOURITE PS2 GAME:** ICO
- **FAVOURITE NON-PS2 GAME:** The Last Ninja (Commodore 64)
- **QUOTE:** "Ideas pull the trigger, but instinct loads the gun" – Don Marquis




Aaah, Everquest Online. It's what many of us have been waiting for – and without all that messing about on a PC.







**"I CHALLENGE ANYBODY TO GO TEST XBOX LIVE AGAINST SOCOM AND ANY OTHER GAMES WE HOST LOCALLY AND I GUARANTEE YOU THAT WE WILL COMPLETELY EXCEED THE EXPERIENCE ON XBOX LIVE."**

MICHAEL EPHRAIM
SCE AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

diverse in its demographics and do, really, what PlayStation did – legitimise the category. It'll do this by offering movies, music downloads, games and so on. So we just don't see it as a competitor to GameBoy when you compare apples to apples.

So if you look at PSP, PSX, PlayStation 2, you can start seeing that with USB 2.0 and Memory Stick, home networking is already starting to appear before our very eyes. There are definitely a few issues still to be worked out but when you look at these devices, starting with the PlayStation family and then looking at the full range of products from consumer electronics, we're very excited about Sony's future.

**GAMES™:** Online gaming is probably a crucial undertaking for the Xbox – Xbox Live is looking like a 'killer app' and the offering is pretty good – one point of entry to all their games, very simple interface etc. Sony clearly has an online strategy but from the outside it seems that it's at a disadvantage against Microsoft, just by its fragmented nature – there's no central architecture. What's your response to that? How is the Sony online experience going to be superior to the Microsoft one?

**ME:** Well if we're talking about Australia, I think the key point here is that Sony has announced that we'll spend over 2 million dollars on infrastructure for hosting games in Australia. If you look at SOCOM, there have been 1.4 million units sold in the US. In our Beta trials – that are occuring as we speak – the response has been amazing in the sense that – and there have been comparisons with Xbox Live – that the experience of online gaming on SOCOM is far superior than any other experience they've had on Xbox Live. Latency is a big issue... on my understanding, Xbox Live is hosting all its games out of the US. So in first-person shoot 'em ups like Halo 2, people are going to see and experience slowdown. And if you experience slowdown in a first-person shooter, you might as well not play.

So I challenge anybody to go test Xbox Live against SOCOM and any other games we host locally and I guarantee you that we will completely exceed the experience on Xbox Live. Because our basic idea is, the offering has got to be real time and youv'e got to be competitive. With servers hosted in the US, it's not a true online service. And we are commiteed to the Australian market, to deliver local hosting. It is a big capital investment and I think again as people trial the two systems they will see that PlayStation 2, for first-person shoot 'em ups, or anything that is latency-affected, will be a far, far better experience than Xbox Live hosted out of the US.

As for the one entrance into Xbox Live, that is a plus and it's also possibly a negative for consumers, because as you know EA in May at E3 announced they will not be supporting the Xbox Live online capabilities, they will only be supporting PlayStation 2. As John Ricatello (the CEO of EA) said, they feel that the terms Microsoft were putting forward were untenable.

And this leads to a much bigger issue. The fact that

## WHAT IS PSP?

**PSP is PlayStation Portable, a new PlayStation console announced at this year's E3. The foundation of the platform is UMD, the Universal Media Disc, a 60mm, 1.8 gig disc in a cartridge case, and a wide screen (480 x 272 pixel) backlit TFT display. 3D rendering and enhanced video quality, USB 2.0 connectivity and a Memory Stick slot will round out its capabilities.**

Microsoft wants to control the total environment might impact on what kind of content Xbox Live will be in a position to offer consumers. Whereas with Sony, we believe that content is king. We offer an open platform so publishers of not just game content, but possibly other content down the track, will, we feel, be more lured to the Sony business model than the Xbox Live business model. So there is a potential that we will have more and better offerings than the Xbox Live version.

**GAMES™:** That suggests two questions: firstly, are you saying that there will be downloadable non-game content? And secondly, when it comes to hosting, will publishers have a choice – to host my own offerings or to have Sony host them?

**ME:** Let's be very clear on this. Our business model is an open structure, so a pbulisher can decide where they host, what they host, whether they charge or don't charge and can still have a relationship directly with the consumer — unlike our competitor. With our competitor, publishers do not have those

## "THE FACT THAT MICROSOFT WANTS TO CONTROL THE TOTAL ENVIRONMENT MIGHT IMPACT ON WHAT KIND OF CONTENT XBOX LIVE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO OFFER CONSUMERS."

**MICHAEL EPHRAIM**
**SCE AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND**

benefits. We feel that publishers of content want to have ownership of their content throughout the whole process with the consumer. We offer them that. Now if a publisher in Australia wants us to asisst or host their game we're more than willing to discuss that. But if the publisher wants to host the game here or elsewhere it still works within the architecture that we have set up for online gaming.

So it gives small publishers and large publishers total control of their product. We feel that is a very, very important thing to give to copyright holders so they know what is happening to their product. We don't feel this is the case with Xbox Live because Xbox Live owns that relationship.

You know, the whole idea is convergence in the lounge room. Consoles will be the hub of digital entertaiment and the business model is going to be very important if you're going to start delivering music, moves and whatever else, TV shows streaming through... That's all in the future but the basic business model has to be sound to attract the content providers and business partners. And we feel we have a model that is much more commercially acceptable, that at the end of the day consumers should be aware of it because we feel they have to have some forward thinking in their choice. We believe our platform will be the one that at the end of the day really delivers content, as we have done on PlayStation 2 with all its exclusive games and the broad range of games.

**GAMES™:** That's a very bold statement.

**ME:** It's fact. You know, the latency and the hosting is key, as is the open format, but there's one other area that's important as well and that's customer service.

We have worked with all the major ISPs on customer service. With the hosting of games here the whole customer service process will be almost seamless. When games are hosted overseas it's more complex because of the time zones.

Our competitor has said its device is Internet-ready. We think it's Internet ready today but with only 8 gigs of hard drive, it's pretty limited. With the PlayStation 2 the bay can open up... there's a 40 gig hard drive ready to be launched at at date to be set. The US has announced the launch of the hard drive sometime in first quarter of 2004.

And you'll have 40 gig of hard drive so you're talking about a unit that has more potential to scale up. We think PlayStation 2 is a far superior machine to Xbox which is limited to 8 gigs and that's all it'll ever have, because it's built-in.

**GAMES™:** So let's think about the future. Next generation hardware, PlayStation PS3 rumours, cell technology... could the success of PlayStation 2 will count against it, in the sense that people won't want to move on from the PlayStation 2? Some developers have even said they don't really care about the next generation of consoles because the user base of PlayStation 2 is so huge it's not economical to divert resources away from it. Will that be an impediment to PlayStation 3?

**ME:** I think that PlayStation 3 will be a major paradigm shift in the idea of what a console is. So I don't think there'll be any delays in PlayStation 3 just to maximise the PlayStation 2 installed base. You know, PlayStation 1 is still selling. In smaller numbers now, but it sold quite well in the first year or two of PlayStation 2 when it was at a higher price.

This clearly proved two things; one, that we could dominate the games industry for two generations - which nobody said we could do – and two, that PlayStation 3's going to be such a different proposition to consumers that PlayStation 2 could easily exist in the marketplace at the same time and probably attract completely different markets.

In other words, I don't see us holding off PlayStation 3 just because PlayStation 2 is doing well commercially, because I really feel they'll both be able to co-exist.

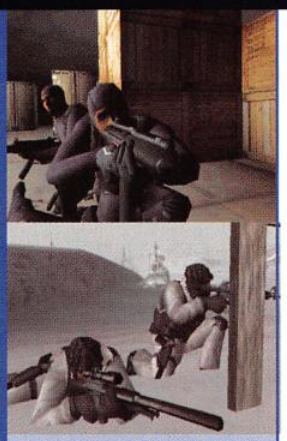
**GAMES™:** Will PlayStation 3 offer the same functionalities that the PSX does in terms of the hard drive and other functions?

**ME:** Well the thing is... the big news around PSX is that it's also a DVD and DVD-recordable unit, and PlayStation gameplay is almost secondary. Besides the fact that you've got a 120 gig hard drive, an analogue tuner, memory stuck compatible, USB and its other features.

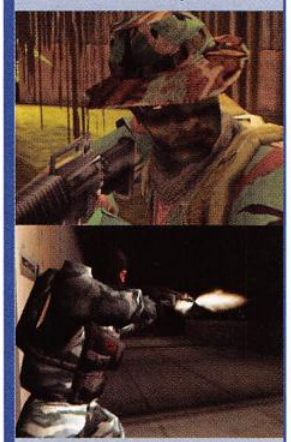
The main point is PlayStation 3 will play PlayStation 3 games, which will be a quantum leap, and PSX will appeal to a different market where maybe gaming may be secondary across all the other features. But with advancement in technology and possibily wireless and so on, that the other secondary functions of PlayStation 3 may be rather significant.

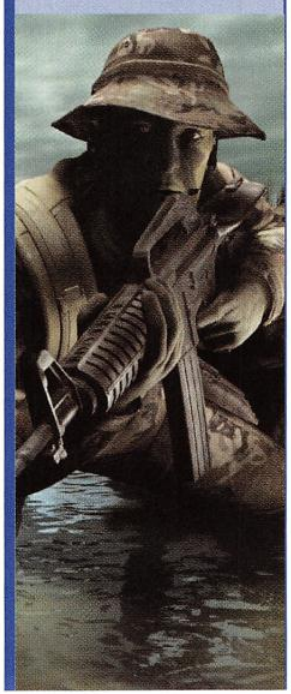
### WHAT IS PSX?

**PSX is a PlayStation 2 with a 120 gig hard drive and PVR (personal video recorder) capabilities. The platform will allow users to record programming onto the hard drive and is also a fully-functional games console that will play all PlayStation and PlayStation 2 games. It also features an analogue tuner, USB 2.0 connectivity and a Memory Stick slot to form the hub of a home entertainment network.**



SOCOM. Believe us, it's good. Really good. But is it better than anything you'll find on Xbox Live? That, dear reader, is for you to decide.





**"TO CREATE A GAME IS TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE – IT TAKES EXTREME IMAGINATION AND VISION TO MAKE A TRULY GREAT GAME"**

*DAVID HAYTER, ACTOR, WRITER, MEMBER OF FOXHOUND*

## DAVID HAYTER
# KONAMI

**Most of you have probably played Hideo Kojima's *Metal Gear Solid*. However, many of you may not know that the man behind the English voice for Solid Snake is a rather interesting individual.** From having a solid career in voice acting (for games and anime) to being a particularly accomplished scriptwriter for films such as the *X-Men* franchise, David Hayter is quite the renaissance man.

Born in Santa Monica, California, Hayter moved around during his early years, living in many parts of the US, Canada, Japan and Hong Kong. At the tender age of nine, he decided that he had to be involved in the movies. "I collected comics as a kid," he explains, "I studied martial arts and, when I was old enough, started riding motorcycles. Basically I wanted to become Batman when I grew up. Fortunately, it hasn't happened to me yet... growing up, that is."

Hayter's interest in comics paid off when he was asked to write the script for the first X-Men movie, which had been a long-held ambition. "I was an only child, who moved every year of my life," remembers Hayter, "and the X-Men – in their Chris Claremont days – were my closest friends. When I was 15, I used to dream about the X-Men movie, praying that they wouldn't screw it up. To have the chance to participate in the film and the retention of the integrity of the world was like a dream come true."

Though he may not have become Batman, David got pretty close when he played the lead role of Sean Barker (a pseudonym that David often uses in real life) in the 1994 film *Guyver: Dark Hero*. Based upon the acclaimed manga opus of Takaya Yoshiki, *Dark Hero* was the second live-action film in the series – the first starred Mark Hamill and was really, really bad. "I loved being the Guyver," says Hayter. "I did that movie when I was 23 and it really gave me the chance to star in a movie where I actually got to be the hero. I also met my future wife during filming so that worked out well. But my life has changed since then. I've now attained a certain amount of success behind the camera, and it's made me realise how much I don't want to be recognisably famous."

Of course, being the Guyver wasn't the only time David Hayter would play the hero – he also got to play the voice of everyone's favourite bad-ass Solid Snake (who's real name is also David, funnily enough) in *Metal Gear Solid* and then again in *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty*. Concerning the latter, however, many felt that Kojima lost his narrative focus and turned the finale of the second game into a (probably unintentional) post-modern satire. "I tend to agree," says Hayter," though I think people were expecting a game just like the last, and Kojima gave them something else. To create a game is to create an atmosphere, compelling characters and action, and an entire world to drop your players into. It takes extreme imagination and vision to make a truly great game and the process forces you to stretch your creative resources to the limit. The world we were dropped into in the second game was far more ethereal than the first, more dream-like. If it was a surprise to most gamers, well, that is what a ground-breaking artist like Kojima is supposed to do."

Unsurprisingly, David is also an avid gamer – as well as playing through both *Metal Gear Solid* games (obviously) he also likes to sample other gaming delights. "I try different games, just to give me an idea of what's out there," he says. "I try to look for games wherein the created world is fully fleshed out and immersive. I like games where you have the whole world laid out and you can explore it at your whim – like in *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*, you are a tourist from another world, able to dictate your own course. In something like *Enter The Matrix*, however, you're forced to follow a pre-determined path. This may feed into the fate/destiny elements of the films, but it also feels as if it limits the experience for me."

But what about plans for the future? "I'd like to start with world domination, and see where that takes me. Actually, I am pulling all of my varied experience together to put into my directorial debut with the movie *Watchmen*. I've also purchased the rights to various books in an effort to put other productions into the pipeline as a producer. In five years, I hope to create a mini-studio around my various efforts, then I can go back to acting. Or retire. Or take up fly-fishing. I also enjoy backgammon. And gaming. But for now, I've got plenty on my plate to execute to the fans' greatest satisfaction."

*Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* is due for release on PlayStation2 some time in 2004. *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* for GameCube will also be released next year.



**YOU MAY RECOGNISE HIM AS SOLID SNAKE, BUT TO ANYONE THAT KNOWS HIM PROPERLY THE VOICE OF FOXHOUND'S MOST DANGEROUS MEMBER IS ONE OF THE MOST MULTI-FACETED MEN IN THE INDUSTRY…**

# GAMING FOR GROWNUPS

The Nokia N-Gage™ mobile game deck was made for gamers. This lightweight, handheld machine pumps out 3D graphics that do your favorite games the justice they deserve. Whether you prefer to play solo or engage in multiplayer action over Bluetooth wireless technology or GPRS, the Nokia N-Gage game deck is ready and waiting, with a hi-res, 4096 colour backlit screen and ergonomic controls. And yes, the game pauses automatically when the phone rings.




# SHALL WE PLAY A GAME?

The Nokia N-Gage game deck's claim to fame is mobile multiplayer gaming with no cables or wires. Most of the games available for the game deck include multiplayer options for 2 and/or up to 4 players, either via Bluetooth wireless technology within distances of 10 meters or less or over GPRS, which offers the possibility for gaming over a wide-area network.

# MOBILE MEDIA PLAYER

Entertain yourself on the way from A to B with your own personal soundtrack. The Nokia N-Gage™ game deck includes a digital music player and a stereo FM radio, plus a hi-fi stereo headset, a built-in loudspeaker, integrated recorder and the PC software you need




# RING, RING

The Nokia N-Gage™ game deck is good for more than just gaming; it's packed to the max with fancy features like an MP3 player and a mobile Web browser. What's more, it's also a tri-band phone with support for email and multimedia messaging - that's a text message with an image and sound. And there are more extras than you can count, including polyphonic ringing tones, handsfree functionality, RealOne™ Player, and more.

games™ USA REPORT



# LETTER FROM AMERICA

WITH YOUR FRIENDLY CORRESPONDENT, THE SHAPE

## "THE WORD 'DISPOSABLE' HAS NEW MEANING; SOMETHING ONE IS ADVERTISED ON TV AND YOU'VE GOT ROOM FOR IT ON A



And to think some fool was going to chuck this lot away



**For the longest time, I was perplexed by the gargantuan piles of crap at the end of people's driveways.** Grand homes with well-manicured lawns, multiple cars and the requisite post-9/11 American flags; clean houses kept freshly painted yet oddly soiled by mountains of random flotsam out there on the pavement. Big items: fridges, sofas, weight benches, baby strollers, floor-standing speakers, bikes, computer chairs, televisions – all dumped on top of each other, left out in the rain. The same houses always have a pile, though the stuff changes. What they're doing, week after week, is throwing their gear out at a terrific rate, refreshing the contents of their homes to the beat of the seasons.

So much is available so cheaply that nothing old has any value any more. It's all left for the garbage truck; nothing donated to charity thrift stores, nothing sold used, nothing given to family or friends perhaps setting up their own places. After all, they can get their own new stuff. The word 'disposable' has new meaning – something is disposable the moment a better one is advertised on TV and you've got room for it on a credit card. It's an endless cycle. I own boots that have generously outlived the entire contents of some of these houses, from the carpet on the floor to the lights on the ceiling. This convention only has to work to your advantage once, of course, to turn from sickening excess to reasonable upkeep.

A friend of mine – I believe we are 'buddies', as this is how I am addressed during Team Capture-The-Bag on *TimeSplitters 2* – called up one bright 90-degree afternoon. "Watcha doin' right now?" he asked. I mentioned something about trying to convert quantities of raw ingredients into what Mrs Shape had promised would become French toast at the end. This, being iniquitously more complicated than instant noodles, had not gone well.

"Come on over here real quick," he said, "I just want to know if you want something." Ten minutes later, I was in his basement. Surrounded by dozens of big freshly-disturbed U-Haul boxes, he was smiling broadly. "I just ordered a new PC," he beamed. "It's the fastest one Dell makes – 3.6 gigahertz processor, two gig of RAM, 21-inch monitor. It's costing me nearly five thousand dollars! I wondered if you wanted all this stuff."

He indicated two large Rubbermaid hampers with a cardboard box on top. All three vessels were jammed full of Nintendo kit, everything from 1985 to 1996. The room seemed to get bright, and I realised I was feeling woozy, a growing metallic ringing in my ears. Two NES consoles with pads, Super Controller overlays, Zapper lightguns and a Zoomer wheel. Two Super Nintendos – one still boxed – with more guns, pads and cables. Two original chubby white Game Boys with, God bless it, *Tetris* amongst their cartridges. A very dusty N64 rounded out the set, as well as an entire storage bin full of games for all machines.

As I sorted through my spoils, sitting amongst boxes of toys and the sort of pap you always wonder who buys (like




IS DISPOSABLE THE MOMENT A BETTER CREDIT CARD. IT'S AN ENDLESS CYCLE"

decorative plates painted with Dalmatians in fire hats), I wondered: who could do without all this cool Nintendo gear? You could pick most of it up for pennies, yes, but there were gaming classics such as the *Mario*s that you can't ever replace with *Half-Life 2* on your whiz-bang new PC. You'd have to be mad, right? Then again, maybe I'm the crazy one for hoarding this plastic junk like gold. Just at this moment, my friend happened upon an old wallet down there amid the heaps of possessions being chucked out to make way for the new übercomputer. He withdrew a little photograph, holding it where I could see. "That's my ex-wife," he said before, without warning, stabbing the picture with a compass. "Bitch."

At that point, I decided against questioning the sanity of unloading a veritable Nintendo museum. Abruptly, I realised why there were two of everything: the legacy of a broken Nintendo family. Once, they must have sat laughing together, playing this grimy cart of the *Jeopardy* quiz show; now they're stabbing each others' photographs. Maybe I was meant to learn that every pile of trash tells a story. But I think what I really learned was that I enjoy not having to buy *Choplifter III*, *Mario All Stars* and *Ninja Gaiden*. Thanks, buddy.

**Many thanks** THE SHAPE

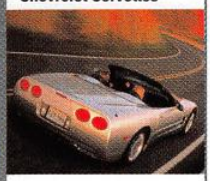
**MISS ABOUT BRITAIN...**

**Short summers**



**LOVE ABOUT AMERICA...**

**Chevrolet Corvettes**



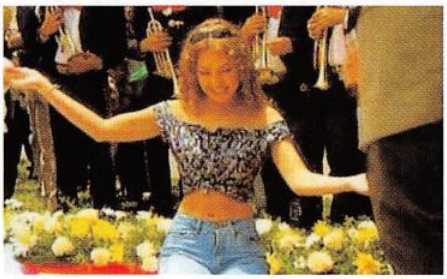
**WANT ANY QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY THE SHAPE? THEN DROP HIM A LINE AT: theshape@comcast.net ... HE MIGHT LISTEN, IF YOU'RE LUCKY**

# AMERIKAAN

PRODUCTS, PLACES, SERVICES AND EVENTS FROM THE LAND OF THE FREE

## SUPER SABADO SENSACIONAL

**Deliriously pleasing Saturday morning Spanish-language TV show. Three hours of spontaneous dances, *Fear Factor*-type challenges, singing and busty Latinos.**



## US MULTIFORMAT TOP TEN

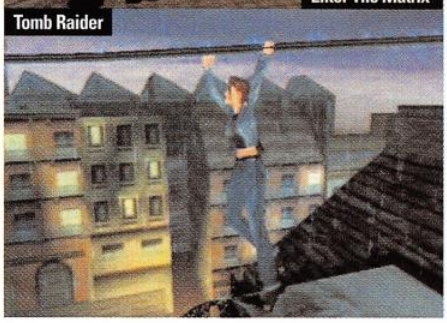
| | Title | Publisher | Format |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Enter The Matrix | Atari | Multi |
| 2 | Tomb Raider: Angel Of Darkness | Eidos | Multi |
| 3 | The Hulk | Vivendi | Multi |
| 4 | NBA Street Vol. 2 | EA Sports BIG | Multi |
| 5 | Brute Force | Microsoft | Xbox |
| 6 | Donkey Kong Country | Nintendo | GBA |
| 7 | Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire | Nintendo | GBA |
| 8 | Midnight Club II | Rockstar | Multi |
| 9 | Disney's Finding Nemo | THQ | Multi |
| 10 | Yu-Gi-Oh! Worldwide Edition | Konami | GBA |

(Updated 08/08/03)



Enter The Matrix

Tomb Raider



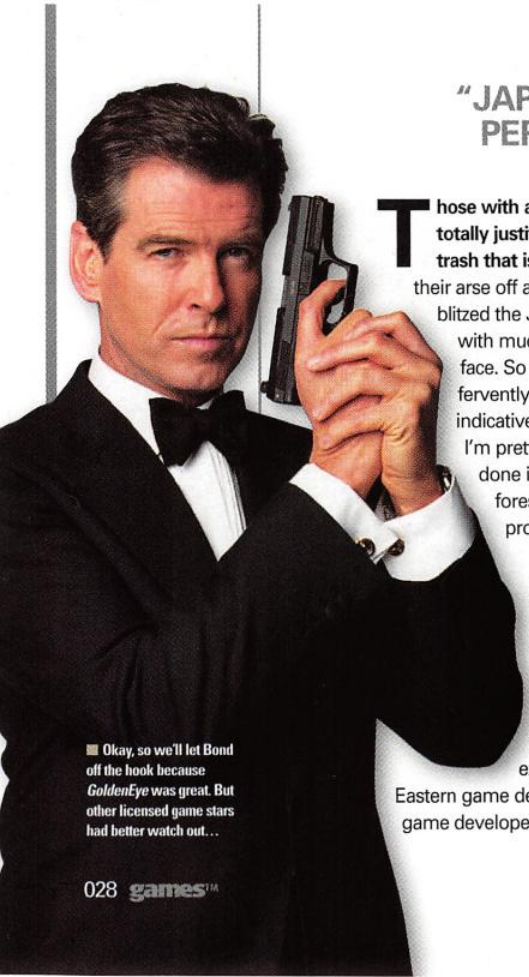
games™ JAPAN REPORT



# KONGETSU*

WITH JAPANESE CORRESPONDENT OLLIE BARDER

## "JAPANESE GAME TRENDS ARE ALMOST ALWAYS SHORT-LIVED, PERRY'S BRAIN FART AT OFF-PUTTINGLY LOW PRICES PROVES



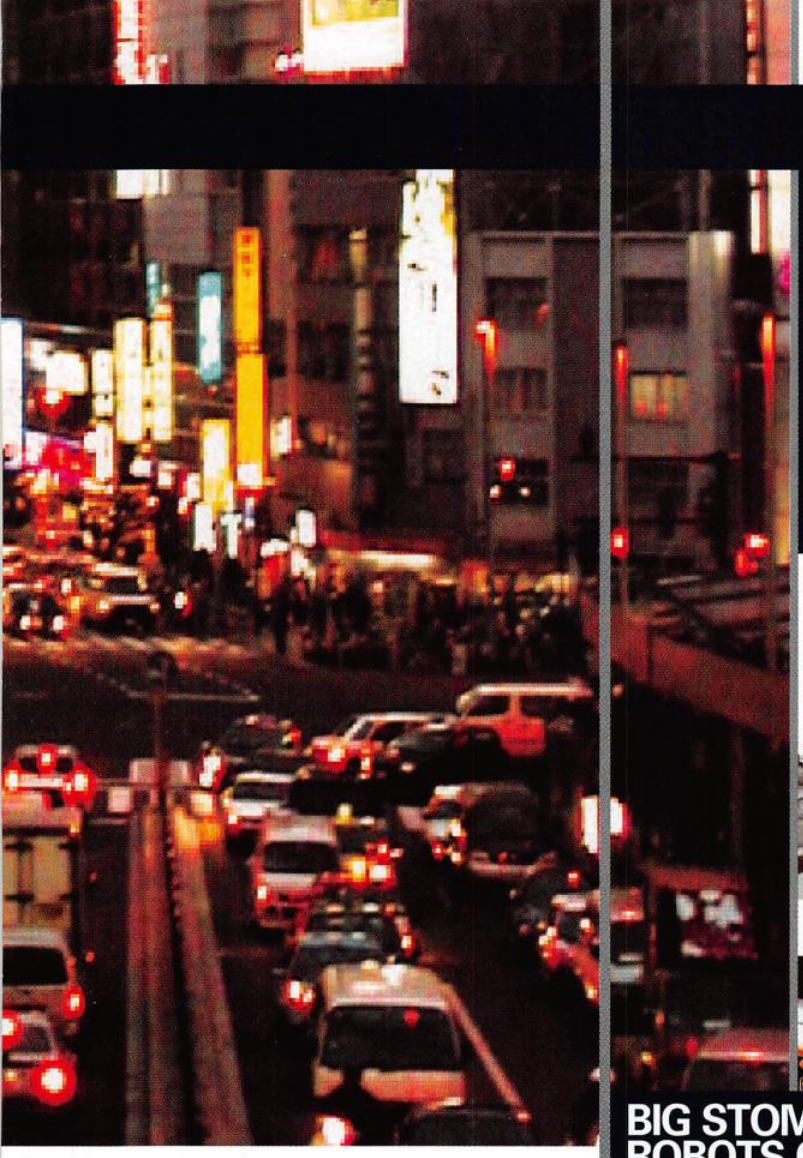
Okay, so we'll let Bond off the hook because *GoldenEye* was great. But other licensed game stars had better watch out...

**Those with any sense of continuity may remember my totally justified slamming of the banal piece of gaming trash that is *Enter The Matrix*.** Many may also laugh their arse off at the fact that the damn game has practically blitzed the Japanese charts. Obviously, this leaves me with much egg and nutty brown stuff all over my face. So I'll do the mandatory back peddling here and fervently explain that the Japanese charts aren't that indicative of gaming trends as they are elsewhere, but I'm pretty sure that the damage has already been done in any case. Regardless of my slight lack of foresight, we still have a very uncomfortable problem on our hands.

Firstly, we all agree that Shiny's *Enter The Matrix* is a pretty ordinary piece of software. Yes? Good. Secondly, it sold by the bucketload – this is not so good. But the question is: why did this happen? The fact is, movies that make it into game form sell. A lot. In Japan, the same can be said for anime (and manga too, but to a more limited extent). The difference between Western and Eastern game design philosophies is that most Western game developers simply can't be bothered to plough all their efforts into a mediocre and derivative game, due to the fact that some affluent film executive is calling the shots rather than their own bustling creativity. In Japan, they love it.

More accurately, the Japanese are discipline fetishists. They approach seemingly banal projects with mystifying zeal. Moreover, they care about anime and also do their damnedest to create a game worthy of the parent opus. Admittedly, they don't get it right all the time, but their track record is pretty solid. So I can only assume that with *Enter The Matrix* Japanese gamers expected the same level of quality – or at least for the game to be fairly solid.

Much like Squeenix's *The Bouncer* though, *Enter the Matrix* quickly became available in second-hand game stores; often a portent of morbid disaster for any game. The initial sales were admittedly bloody impressive, but they haven't been consistent, to the extent that many of the smaller retail outfits may take a loss due to Shiny's antics – my local game store pretty much confirmed this dire state of affairs, as indicated by their orders of mandatory hara-kiri for all non-essential staff so as to cut overheads. To be fair, this isn't all that suggestive of anything really; Japanese game trends are almost always very short-lived, but to see racks and racks of Dave Perry's brain fart at really very off-puttingly low prices proves that something just isn't right.



## BUT TO SEE RACKS OF DAVE SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT"

So, where does this leave us? Certainly bruised and a wee bit battered, but otherwise just a little wiser. Sadly, games of movies are a necessary evil for the infancy of this industry, maybe even a rite of passage. One thing, however, is certain – gaming must survive this onslaught of insidious vapidity and move onto its own creatively greener pastures.

We all know that games of movies aren't always dire – as the likes of Rare's superb *GoldenEye* attest – so it can be done. By now though, many a frustrated games designer will be sharpening their Dreamcast fishing rod so as to bring this particular columnist to a speedy and probably very bloody demise. Indeed, I am blissfully ignorant of the idiocies of management within the games industry. To that, I have no defence, but for the very creators to give up in the face of moronic management is a bit sad. The Japanese can and often do have to put up with the soul-crushing idiocy of their superiors, yet they come out okay… most of the time. Maybe it's time we finally bit the bullet and ultimately kicked arse?

**Kind regards**

Ollie Barder

# TEACH YOURSELF JAPANESE

## LESSON FIVE: JAPANESE AIRPORT CUSTOMS

| | |
|---|---|
| I have nothing to declare | Shinkoku surumonowa nanimo arimasen |
| They're just audio CDs | Korewa tadano ongakuno CD desu |
| You don't need to see my identification… | Mibun syomeisyo o minakutemoiindesuka |
| These aren't the copies of *Radiant Silvergun* that you're looking for… | Korewa anatagasagashiteru rediento *Radiant Silvergun* siruba gan no kopii jya arimasenyo… |



Did we mention how bad *ETM* is? Oh, we did. Okay…



## BIG STOMPY ROBOTS OF DEATH

While it doesn't happen very often, there's occasionally a glimmer of hope for anime fans and gamers like me. SEGA AM2 is currently nearing completion of *Chojikyu Yosai Macross*, a game that covers the events of the original 1982 TV series and 1984 movie. Moreover, it will most likely be the first 3D *Macross* game that doesn't utterly suck. Utilising AM2's AeroDancing engine, initial screenshots look very promising and show that both atmospheric and space combat have finally been properly implemented. Naturally, my current personal level of excitement for this is utter orgasmic joy – although after *Macross M3*, can you really blame me? So if you please, I'd appreciate it if you could raise your glass to Roy-sempai and get ready to listen to some eighties J-pop choons in the near future…



## JAPANESE MULTIFORMAT TOP TEN

| | Title | Publisher | Format |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mobile Suit Gundam Seed | Bandai | PS2 |
| 2 | Pokémon Pinball Ruby/Sapphire | Nintendo | GBA |
| 3 | Tales Of Phantasia | Namco | GBA |
| 4 | Jikkyou Powerful Pro Baseball 10 | Konami | PS2 |
| 5 | Guilty Gear XX Reload | Sammy | PS2 |
| 6 | Shutokou Battle 01 | Genki | PS2 |
| 7 | Super Mario Advance 4 | Nintendo | GBA |
| 8 | Kirby's Air Ride | Nintendo | GC |
| 9 | K-1 World Grand Prix | Konami | PS2 |
| 10 | F-Zero GX | Nintendo | GC |

(Dengeki Console Game Ranking Top 50, week ending 08/08/03)



# COMMUNITY

THIS MONTH, games™ CATCHES UP WITH THE NEW KID ON THE EASTERN BLOC, ILLUSION SOFTWORKS, AT ITS BUSY STUDIO



**GAMES™ HEADS OUT TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND FINDS A COMPANY FULL OF EASTERN (EUROPEAN) PROMISE, JUST WAITING TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD...**

# ILLUSION SOFTWORKS

Location, location, location – it's all that matters, or so we're told. Not surprisingly though, there's an exception to every rule, and in this case the exception proved to be an up-and-coming Czech software developer working out of his bedroom. But establishing a new development house in somewhere as unlikely as the Czech Republic, for example, does come with a few advantages – the distinct lack of competition in the area is something that proved particularly useful when Illusion Softworks was setting up shop. "There were no professional developers in the Czech Republic before Illusion Softworks," reveals Petr Vochozka, CEO of Illusion Softworks, "so we had the advantage of the best people in the Czech Republic joining us. In the beginning, we were shy to tell the world that we are from Eastern Europe, but now after the success of our games and that of other Eastern European developers such as Bohemia Interactive [responsible for *Operation Flashpoint*], I do not see any reason why we shouldn't shout about the fact that we are from the Czech Republic. I feel it's an advantage to come from here – sure, it's harder to break through when you not in the US or UK but, as we and others have proved, it's not impossible."

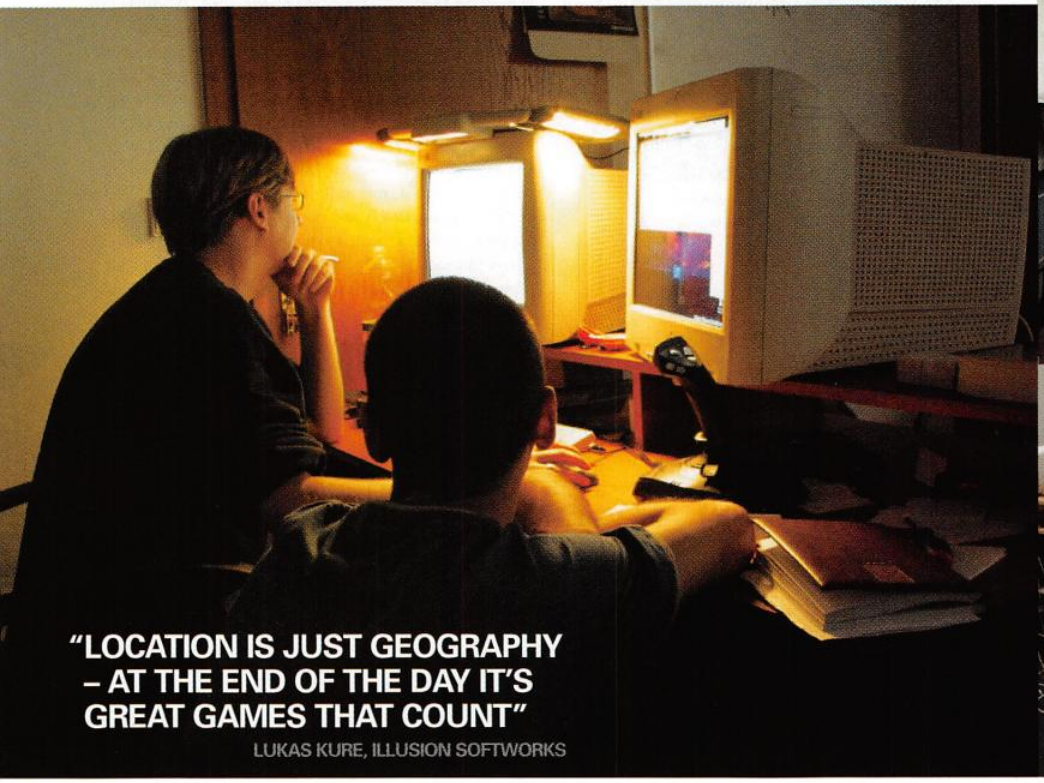
Low overheads have also benefited the company and, as producer Lukas Kure points out, the studio's independence is a

Illusion Softworks is an ever-growing developer based in the Czech Republic, signed exclusively to Take2 with the sole purpose of making 'really good, solid games'.

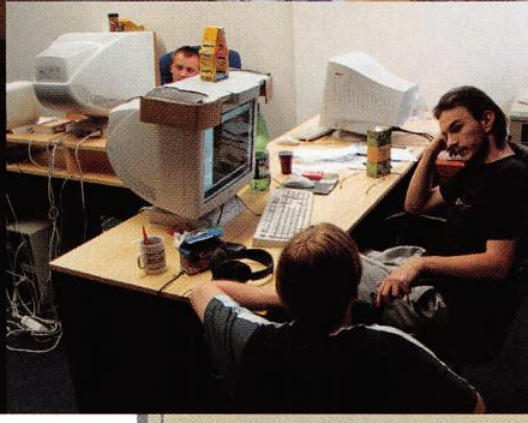




*Hidden And Dangerous 2* is the company's 'next big thing', with development due to end shortly before the end of the year. And if we don't want to wait that long...?







**"LOCATION IS JUST GEOGRAPHY – AT THE END OF THE DAY IT'S GREAT GAMES THAT COUNT"**

LUKAS KURE, ILLUSION SOFTWORKS

great boon. "The fact that we've been able to establish a number of top-quality game brands has kept us going while some smaller studios have suffered," he says. "As an independent developer, we're able to have a great deal more influence on the final game than many in-house teams. However, while some studios often feel that their end goal differs from that of the publisher, we're fortunate in that we have a close relationship with Take 2 [Illusion has been working with Take 2 for five years] and we've always been able to work well together to produce some very good PC games."

Illusion's growth since being founded in 1997 – through a combination of Vochozka's hard work and investment from venture capital investors the Cash Reform Group – is a testament to how untapped the Eastern European development industry really is. From humble beginnings in a small office (where Vochozka worked alone, making Amiga and PC titles with students or translating English games for the Czech market) to a team of four employees and finally to the 170-strong company it is today, Illusion was the undercurrent for what is proving to be a tidal wave of change throughout the development industry. "For a while, it was American, Japanese and British companies that dominated game development," admits Kure, "and some of the world's most famous developers are based in these territories. However, the world is a big place and as technology reaches all corners of the globe, so does its use and development. There are now development studios based all around the world from Africa and China to Iceland and Eastern Europe. You may have to fight a little harder to be heard in the first place if you're not on the doorstep of many publishers, but those in the know will spot a great team and a great game anyway. Location is just geography – at the end of the day, it's great games that count."

It's true that a good game is a good game, regardless of where it comes from, but it's still relatively impressive to see that one single company can produce such a mixture of well-received titles without stumbling. Of course, this could be attributed to the fact that many of Illusion's titles have been based on the concept of war, something that appears to be the current hot topic in both development circles and with the gaming public going on how many war-based titles we've seen either in development or actually on the shelves recently. But Vochozka believes that this is merely a passing trend. "The same thing happened four years ago with real-time strategy games," he says. "In one Christmas period alone, we had 50 new launches

**"3D GAMING IS WHERE OUR STRENGTHS LIE AND THIS IS WHERE WE INTEND OUR FOCUS TO STAY"**

PETR VOCHOZKA, ILLUSION SOFTWORKS



# THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE VIETNAMESE

Though Illusion Softworks is a fairly new company, it already has a number of highly regarded titles to its name.

## HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS [PC, 1999]

The game that put Illusion Softworks on the map as well as being one of the first to start the current trend of war games, thanks to its team-based gameplay pitting Allied troops against the Nazis. The sequel is currently in development.



## MAFIA: THE CITY OF LOST HEAVEN [PC, 2002]

Despite the constant setbacks that *Mafia* faced during development, the game still earned much critical acclaim. Currently in development for consoles, *Mafia* is a more mature *GTA*-style title – more serious, but with just as much bloodshed.



## VIETCONG [PC, 2003]

Developed with Pterodon, *Vietcong* ventured away from the third-person viewpoint and into the more traditional FPS style of most war-based titles. Rather than applying the usual WWII standards, the game places gamers in the heart of the south-east Asian jungle during the Vietnam war.



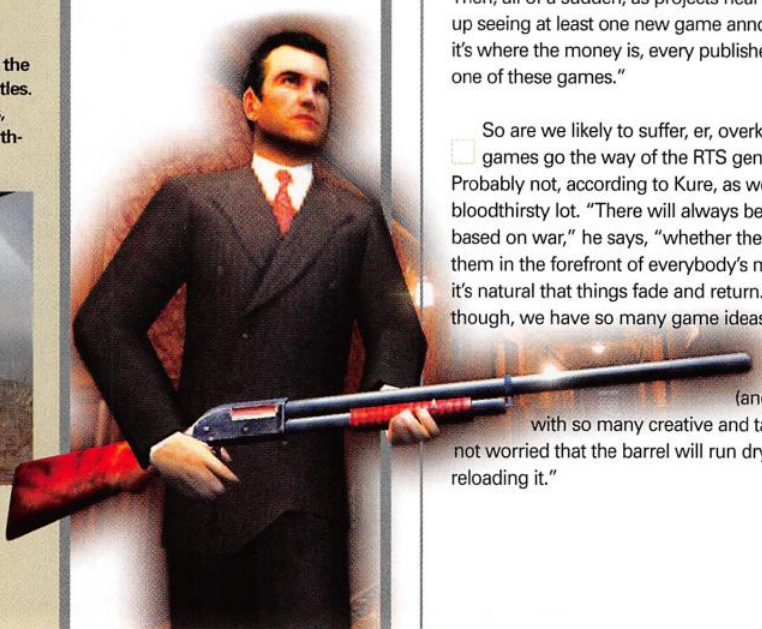


Mmm, technical. Obviously, you won't see any of this in the finished game. Honest.



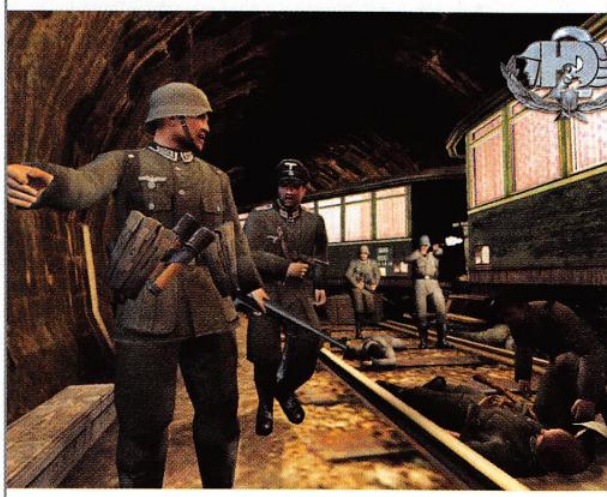
"WE'RE NOT WORRIED THAT THE IDEAS BARREL WILL RUN DRY – WE'RE TOO BUSY RELOADING IT"

LUKAS KURE, ILLUSION SOFTWORKS



## DANGEROUS LIAISON

Currently in development for release towards the end of the year, *Hidden And Dangerous 2* heralds a huge step forward for the series that put Illusion on the map in the first place. "Many things are improved," says Vochozka, clearly pleased with progress so far, "but the thing we are most proud of is the strategic map. It's not an external map any more – the camera goes up now, so you can still see every tree, bush and stone. You can issue commands in real-time and see the units moving, or you can pause the game and control everything carefully, set waypoints and signals, then unpause and see everything unfold. Or, of course, you can pick one guy and go for it from a first-person perspective. We are curious to see which will be the preferred route for players – whilst I think it will be compelling to finish the game just using one method, though, I believe most players will combine the various styles and use them together to get through successfully."



on the shelves, all of the same style of game. The wave begins with one massive success – for war games I guess this would have been *Commandos, Rainbow Six, Spec Ops* or maybe even *Hidden And Dangerous* – then nothing happens for two or three years while developers silently work away at their influenced titles, unaware of other competition. Then, all of a sudden, as projects near completion, you end up seeing at least one new game announced every week. If it's where the money is, every publisher wants to have at least one of these games."

So are we likely to suffer, er, overkill and see war games go the way of the RTS genre in the near future? Probably not, according to Kure, as we seem to be a bloodthirsty lot. "There will always be a desire for games based on war," he says, "whether the current trend puts them in the forefront of everybody's minds or not – I think it's natural that things fade and return. Here at Illusion though, we have so many game ideas it's untrue and it can be difficult at times. Still, that's the joy (and trouble) of working with so many creative and talented people. We're not worried that the barrel will run dry - we're too busy reloading it."

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A planet to be built...



...with 20 misfits colonising...



...and aliens to attack.




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GATHERING

01

02

SALIERI FAMILY

## MEN IN BEARDS

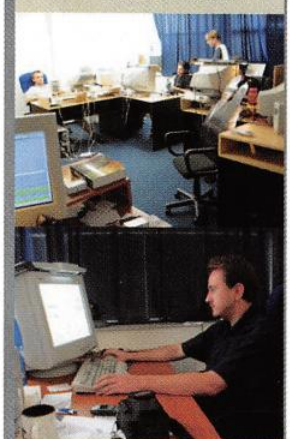
**Don't mess with developers from Eastern Europe – they're tough°.**

1 **PETR VOCHOZKA** – CEO, Illusion Softworks "All our effort is put into making the best games possible, and that's something I really enjoy doing"

2 **LUKAS KURE** – Producer, Illusion Softworks "I'm incredibly proud to be working at Illusion alongside some of the most creative and talented people in our industry"



Forget the stereotypes – computer programmers *do* exist outside the US, Japan and Western Europe



Illusion Softworks used to be one man and his machine, but now employs around 170 staff.

Of course, it's not just war that appears to be catching everyone's attention as of late – there are also the recent developments in the world of online gaming. Surprisingly, it's an area that the firm hasn't really explored up to now (with only *Vietcong* offering any kind of online support) but with consoles now moving into the online arena, there's little doubt that Illusion will step up to the challenge of using the technology available. "We would like to have online multiplayer support in some of our upcoming games for consoles," says Kure. "However, we will still develop games without multiplayer options as it doesn't always suit the genre or style of game. At present, we have no plans to create any purely online games like *Ultima* or *The Sims Online*. Personally, I still think there will be lots of people on consoles who will never try or play many games online. The most important thing for us with every new game is to decide the primary platform and the online content."

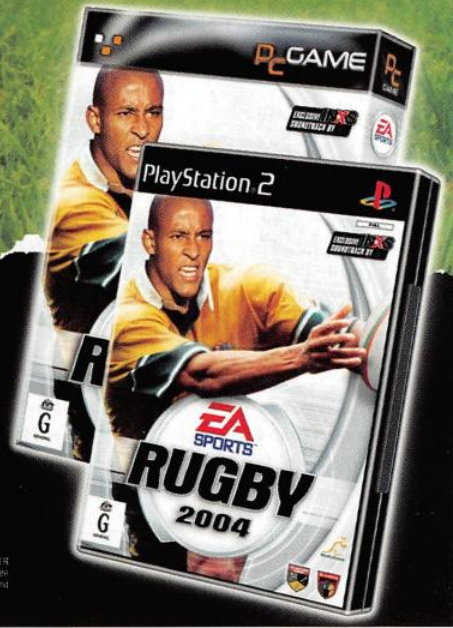
Despite having to fight something of an uphill battle to get itself recognised in the development industry, it's looking as though Illusion's dedication to its products and determination to get everything right is paying off. However, it might also have something to do with playing on the company's expertise – by focusing purely (for now) on genres with which Illusion has proven itself in the past, it can guarantee at least a modicum of success for the years to come. "3D gaming is where our strengths lie," says Vochozka adamantly, "and this is where we intend our focus to stay – it's highly unlikely that you'll ever see anything else from Illusion. We have the advantage that we create our own opportunities with the support of our publisher. However, if we were to present them with a nice cutesy children's game, for example, and they found it marketable, I do not see a reason why we shouldn't develop it."

A children's game? From the makers of *Vietcong*? Maybe one day, but what are Illusion's plans for now? "As a company, our mission is to develop action, strategy and simulation games," says Vochozka, "the majority of which are set in real-life situations such as historical or present-day settings, maybe with some small touches of mystery and sci-fi. It's possible that within a few years from now, we'll be working on something of this genre. We have currently eight teams busy working on eight different games (many of which are in at a very advanced stage, but not yet announced) and of these, I can say there will be one game that's more than a little surprising..." Could this mystery title be the 'nice cutesy children's game' mentioned earlier? Probably not, but we'll just have to wait and see.

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**"THE CONVERGENCE OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF CONTENT OPENS A NUMBER OF DOORS FOR US BECAUSE WE HAVE CINEMA, WE HAVE MUSIC, WE HAVE A NUMBER OF AREAS AND FORMS OF ENTERTAINMENT THAT WE CAN FUNNEL INTO AN INTERACTIVE FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT"**

*PASCAL BROCHIER, MANAGING DIRECTOR, VIVENDI UNIVERSAL GAMES AUSTRALIA*

## PASCAL BROCHIER
# VIVENDI

**Few publishers have a catalogue as diverse as Vivendi Universal. From Blizzard's strategy games to Sierra and Black Label, Vivendi handles some of the industry's biggest franchises including Crash Bandicoot, Counter Strike, Half-Life and the complete catalogue of Tolkien's books.** "I guess as an organisation globally, Vivendi has very exciting choices of content. Other sides of the company are in other forms of content so we're the only game publisher offering multi-platform games that has access to cinema content," says Pascal Brochier, Managing Director of Vivendi Universal Games Australia. "The convergence of different forms of content opens a number of doors for us because we have cinema, we have music, we have a number of areas and forms of entertainment that we can funnel into an interactive form of entertainment."

"They're actually very different forms of entertainment; one is very passive, you just go to the cinema and watch a film. The other is very active, you write the script, you're rewarded or penalised all the time, so the stimulus is very different. The dilemma we have as an industry is to figure out if, with similar sorts of content, can you achieve the same thing? What we're finding is that successful games are not necessarily hot movie licences – not necessarily. We try to capitalise on a licence so we go back and forth, trying to extend the scenario of the movie... we're always experimenting. We're in an industry that's experimenting a lot all the time."

The other great experiment in the gaming industry is online gaming. Vivendi's online posture is as diverse as its range of software. On the one hand, it has some of the most popular online PC games, such as Counter Strike and the Blizzard games, but on the other hand its console games all focus on the single-player mode. This is quite deliberate, as Pascal explains: "As we go forward there will be single player modes, because even though the multiplayer aspect is going to grow and will continue to be a growth driver for the whole interactive entertainment category, we will not in the foreseeable future see the vast majority of people playing online."

"Specifically, in Australia, if you look at any projection you want to see, broadband penetration is not going to be a mass product – as in over 50 percent penetration – anytime soon. So we're going to continue to develop and market single-player games. However, at the same time we are a key player in multiplayer gaming. There are probably two stages of multi-play. First, you have your smaller scale games – Counter Strike, Warcraft, Diablo – where you have 16 or 32 people in one game. Counter Strike is the most-played game online; I think it's actually played more than the next 10 games combined. And Battle.net, Blizzard's online community, has 11 million active users.

"We've got the experience and the technology of the level-matching capabilities of trying to make multi-play as simple but also as exciting as possible."

Multi-player gaming is clearly a prospect that looms large in Vivendi's corporate consciousness. When asked about the upside of the industry's surging popularity, Pascal zeroes in immediately: "Multi-play will expand this category. Just look at the most developed market in the world, which is Korea. When you combine very large broadband penetration with a very large infrastructure of Internet cafés you have a very social form of entertainment.

"If you're a 15 year-old kid in Korea and you want to go on a date you don't go to the movies, you go to a gaming room. It's a very different social experience. "What I think will happen is that people are getting more familiar and more comfortable with the single player element and the interactive nature of the entertainment, but once they're more familiar with it and they're comfy they'll start experimenting on the multiplayer level, which Hollywood never can."

But it seems that Vivendi's plans don't end there. For all the talk about licensed games, it's easy to forget that the licenses can flow in the other direction, from film to games.

"There has been some interest in our games properties. It's an interesting challenge, because visually you might have a very appealing game but a movie is not just visual. I'd like to see more movies driven by games because I think it helps the interactive entertainment industry.

"Another angle, and we see this again with online leading the charge, is that game playing is becoming a form of entertainment. Game channels, for example, where people look at people playing against one another and the moves and the world they're creating and the strategy behind the moves – a bit like you watch sports and this I guess is probably one of the most interesting aspect of game playing. You're creating a movie but you've got people following the game plays in this tournament and watching people playing games."



**FROM THE INCREDIBLE HULK TO TOLKIEN TO CRASH BANDICOOT AND COUNTER STRIKE, VIVENDI UNIVERSAL'S CATALOGUE OF GAMES HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. BUT RUNNING THE AUSTRALIAN ARM OF ONE OF THE INDUSTRY'S MOST DIVERSE PUBLISHING HOUSES MEANS YOU HAVE TO SPEND SOME TIME THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE...**

# THINK TANK

THE PEOPLE IN THE GAMES INDUSTRY TELL IT LIKE IT IS...

## GAME PLAYERS – IT'S TIME TO PHONE HOME



**It's happening whether you like it or not – more and more people are playing games on mobile phones.** With the ever-increasing complexity of handsets and the corresponding quality of games, will this new industry take over from traditional games?

'No' is the definitive answer. Of course a phone can never replace a console or PC, but there's no reason why they cannot exist in parallel. Increasingly, publishers are looking for new ways to extend the life cycle of their titles (read: make more money from them) and mobile gaming offers them this opportunity. Think about how the music world has embraced the ringtone market for promotional purposes (and extra revenue) and you get an idea of what's possible.

Why couldn't a new game character first be introduced as a screensaver for your phone? Or your game music made into a ringtone? Or screenshots from the game converted into an animation to play on your phone? And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

The real fun starts when you have full integration between mobile and console or PC games. Think about playing a bonus level of a game on your handset, which then provides links to your console via bluetooth, infra-red or USB and unlocks a new level, new track, new feature or whatever. We haven't even begun to look at the possibilities of location-based technology, bluetooth, 3G and so on.

The fun is just beginning with mobile games and they are set to make some serious revenues in the coming years. But their survival depends on their usefulness and how we develop applications for the devices. The message right now is don't be afraid of the future – embrace it now.

**Enda Caret**
Marketing Manager, iFONE

# FROM THE FRONT

THE SPECS FOR THE PSP ARE HERE, AND MICROSOFT 'BORROWS' THE CUBE'S GRAPHICS CHIP DESIGNER...



## VITAL STATISTICS

So what exactly can you expect to find inside one of these new-fangled PSPs?

**PSP CPU CORE**
MIPS R4000 32-bit Core
128-bit Bus
1 - 333MHz @ 1.2V
Main Memory: 8MB(eDRAM)
Bus Bandwidth: 2.6GB/sec
I-Cache, D-Cache
FPU, VFPU (Vector Unit) @ 2.6GFlops
3D-CG Extended Instructions

**PSP Media Engine**
MIPS R4000 32-bit Core
128-bit Bus
1 - 333MHz @ 1.2V
Sub Memory: 2MB(eDRAM) @ 2.6GB/sec
I-Cache, D-Cache
90nm CMOS

**PSP Graphics Core 1**
3D Curved Surfaces + 3D Polygons
Compressed Textures
Hardware Clipping, Morphing, Bone(8)
Hardware Tessellator Bezier, B-Spline(NURBS) ex. 4x4, 16x16, 64x64 sub-division

**PSP Graphics Core 2**
'Rendering Engine' & 'Surface Engine'
256-bit Bus, 1-166 MHz @ 1.2V
VRAM: 2MB(eDRAM)
Bus Bandwidth: 5.3GB/sec
Pixel Fill Rate: 664 Mpixels/sec
max 33M polygon /sec(T&L)
24-bit Full Color: RGBA

**PSP Sound Core: VME**
Reconfigurable DSPs
128-bit Bus
166MHz @1.2V
5 Giga Operations/sec
CODEC
3D Sound, Multi-Channel(7.1)
Synthesizer, Effects Machine, etc.

**AVC Decoder**
AVC(H.264) Decoder
Main Profile
Baseline Profile
@Level1, Level2, Level3
2Hours(High Quality) – DVD movie
4Hours(Standard Quality) – CS Digital

**I/O**
USB 2.0
Memory Stick
Extension Port(reserved)
Stereo Headphone Out

**Communication**
Wireless LAN(i802.11)
IrDA
USB 2.0

THOSE PSP SPECIFICATIONS IN FULL

## AT LONG LAST...

**Since this year's E3, Sony has been feeding us information about its incoming PSP on an extremely limited 'need to know' basis. Finally coming to its senses, however, the full specifications for its first handheld have at last been revealed.**

**The PSP's architecture is going to be powered by two MIPS R4000 CPU cores; one is being designated as a CPU core, whilst the other is known as the 'Media Engine'. It's unsure at this time if both cores will be accessible by game applications, although we feel this will be extremely unlikely. PSP's Graphic Core 2 is very similar to the PS2's Graphics Synthesizer although it only runs at around half the clock speed (166 MHz, as opposed to the PlayStation2's 300 MHz). Indeed, the PSP now appears to be more of a cut-down PlayStation2, than simply an enhanced PlayStation, which means that the porting of original PlayStation titles to the new handheld may not necessarily be as easy as first thought.**

**This could also explain why Sony has recently hired numerous emulation developers, although it could also point towards PS2 and PSX backwards compatibility for the Playstation3. It's quite possible that cut-down versions of early PS2 games such as *TimeSplitters* and *Ridge Racer 5* could even appear on the machine, which yet again shows how much Sony is prepared to distance itself from Nintendo's Game Boy Advance. "I don't think people will walk around with a PSP and treat it as roughly as you do with Game Boy," explained SCEE's president, Chris Deering, when the PSP was first announced, and with specifications like these, who could blame him?**

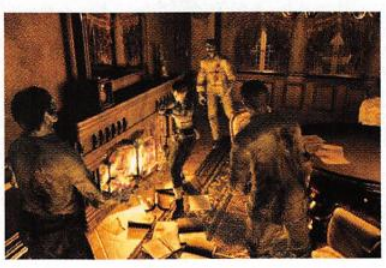
ATI WILL DEVELOP NEW HARDWARE FOR XBOX 2

## XBOX 2 COPIES GAMECUBE



**Microsoft has announced that ATI Technologies Inc will supply all future graphics technologies for Xbox products.** Although NVIDIA was expected to return to the Microsoft fold, a lawsuit over the price of Xbox chips and NVIDIA's production schedule has soured the partnership.

After this split, ATI, who designed the GameCube's graphics chip, became the next logical choice for Microsoft. "We selected ATI after reviewing the top graphics technologies in development and determining that ATI's technical vision fits perfectly with the future direction of Xbox," said Robbie Bach, senior vice president of Microsoft's home and entertainment division.



K.Y. Ho, chairman and CEO of ATI Technologies, is looking forward to the challenges that developing for Xbox 2 will bring. "Microsoft shares our passion for cutting-edge technology," he said. "Our success working with Microsoft in the past gives us great confidence"

It will be interesting to see if ATI will continue to work with Nintendo after making this deal, or sever all ties in favour of Microsoft's new machine...

FOR MORE INFO GO TO
WWW.ATARI.COM.AU

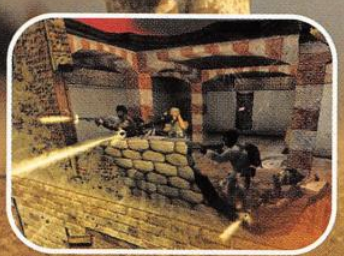
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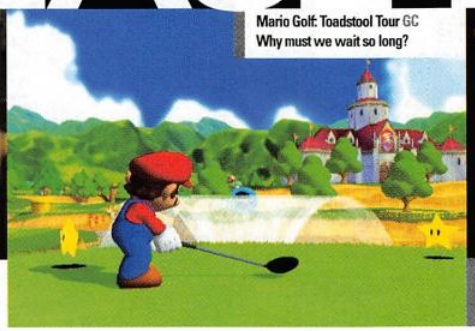
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PGD-0610-00-01

# RELEASE LISTS



**Manhunt** PS2
Another potentially massive game from Rockstar.



**Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour** GC
Why must we wait so long?



**Boktai: The Sun Is In Your Hands** GBA
Plenty of vampires in Hideo Kojima's latest, but no snakes.



## games™ MOST PLAYED

### POKÉMON RUBY/SAPPHIRE

**Format:** Game Boy Advance
**Publisher:** Nintendo

Seeing that the little blighters have just been released, it's the perfect excuse to once again pull out our SPs and participate in some serious duelling. Like *Yu-Gi-Oh* and *Advance Wars 2*, Nintendo's latest *Pokémon* adventure just gets better the more it's played. And it's definitely not one that's just for kids.




### KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

**Format:** Xbox
**Publisher:** EA

It's been a while but Bioware's RPG is finally here and is everything we were hoping for. An engaging storyline and some realistic and believable characters along with that *Star Wars* licence ensures that this should sell and sell. And just wait until your first big Lightsaber fight...



### F-ZERO GX

**Format:** GameCube
**Publisher:** Nintendo

We might have been blown away by the scorching arcade version, but the GameCube version is even better. Forget *Wipeout* and *XGRA* – if you want some blisteringly fast, gut-churning action, you need to pick yourself up a copy of this ASAP. When it comes to speed, F-Zero has always been the king.



## PLAYSTATION2

| Month | Title | Publisher | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OCTOBER** | | | |
| 9 October | Alias | Acclaim | |
| 9 October | Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance | Acclaim | |
| 10 October | Hardware Online Arena | Sony | |
| 10 October | Twisted Metal Black Online | Sony | |
| 17 October | Club Football | Atari | |
| 17 October | Jak II: Renegade | Sony | |
| 17 October | Naval Ops: Warship Gunner | THQ | Wanted |
| 17 October | SSX 3 | EA | |
| 24 October | Destruction Derby Arena | Sony | |
| 24 October | Dog's Life | Sony | |
| 24 October | FIFA 2004 | EA | |
| 30 October | Buffy the Vampire Slayer 2 | Vivendi | |
| 30 October | Hunter the Reckoning: Wayward | Vivendi | |
| 30 October | XIII | Ubi Soft | Wanted |
| 31 October | ESPN NFL Football | Atari | |
| 31 October | LOTR: Return of the King | EA | |
| 31 October | My Street | Sony | |
| tbc | Backyard Wrestling | Atari | |
| tbc | Celebrity Deathmatch | Take2 | |
| tbc | Judge Dredd | Vivendi | |
| tbc | Time Crisis 3 | Sony | |
| **NOVEMBER** | | | |
| 7 November | Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon | THQ | |
| 7 November | MOH: Rising Sun | EA | |
| 7 November | WWE Smackdown! | THQ | |
| 13 November | Beyond Good & Evil | Ubi Soft | |
| 13 November | NBA Jam 2004 | | |
| 14 November | Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends | THQ | |
| 14 November | Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown | THQ | |
| 14 November | Total Club Manager 2004 | EA | |
| 15 November | Secret Weapons Over Normandy | EA | |
| 17 November | Cricket 2004 | EA | |
| 20 November | Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon | Ubi Soft | |
| 20 November | Prince of Persia | Ubi Soft | Wanted |
| 21 November | Bond 3: Everything or Nothing | EA | |
| 21 November | Harry Potter Philosopher Stone | EA | |
| 21 November | Need For Speed: Underground | EA | |
| 27 November | Ghost Recon Jungle Storm | Ubi Soft | |
| 28 November | ESPN NBA Basketball | Atari | |
| Tbc | Battlestar Galactica | Vivendi | |
| Tbc | EyeToy: Groove | Sony | |
| Tbc | The Hobbit | Vivendi | |
| Tbc | Manhunt | Take2 | Wanted |
| tbc | Pro Evolution Soccer 3 | Atari | |
| Tbc | Ratchet & Clank 2 | Sony | |
| Tbc | Spyhunter 2 | Acclaim | |
| Tbc | WRC3 | Sony | |
| **DECEMBER** | | | |
| 5 December | Sonic Heroes | Atari | |
| 12 December | Mission Impossible: Operation Surma | Atari | |
| 12 December | The Sims: Bustin' Out | EA | |

## GAMECUBE

| Month | Title | Publisher | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OCTOBER** | | | |
| 2 October | Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter | Vivendi | |
| 7 October | SWRS 3: Rebel Strike | EA | Wanted |
| 10 October | NBA 2004 | EA | |
| 17 October | SSX 3 | EA | |
| 24 October | FIFA 2004 | EA | |
| 24 October | Harry Potter Quidditch World Cup | EA | |
| 30 October | Buffy the Vampire Slayer 2 | Vivendi | |
| 31 October | LOTR: Return of the King | EA | |
| 31 October | Viewtiful Joe | THQ | |
| 31 October | Worms 3D | Atari | |
| tbc | Animal Crossing | Nintendo | |
| tbc | Celebrity Deathmatch | Take2 | |
| tbc | F-Zero GX | Nintendo | Wanted |
| **NOVEMBER** | | | |
| 7 November | MOH: Rising Sun | EA | |
| 7 November | Hot Wheels: World Race | THQ | |
| 13 November | XIII | Ubi Soft | |
| 20 November | Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu | Ubi Soft | |
| 20 November | Harvest Moon | Ubi Soft | Wanted |
| 21 November | Bond 3: Everything or Nothing | EA | |
| 21 November | Harry Potter Philosopher Stone | EA | |
| 21 November | Need For Speed: Underground | EA | |
| 28 November | Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg | Atari | |
| 28 November | CDS 2: Back to Baghdad | Atari | |
| Tbc | The Hobbit | Vivendi | |
| Tbc | Judge Dredd | Vivendi | |
| Tbc | Mario Kart: Double Dash | Nintendo | Wanted |
| Tbc | NHL Hitz Pro | Acclaim | |
| Tbc | Pikmin 2 | Nintendo | |
| Tbc | Road Kill | Acclaim | |
| Tbc | Spyhunter 2 | Acclaim | |
| **DECEMBER** | | | |
| 12 December | The Sims: Bustin' Out | EA | |
| tbc | Mario Party 5 | Nintendo | |
| tbc | Metal Gear Solid 2: Twin Snakes | Atari | |

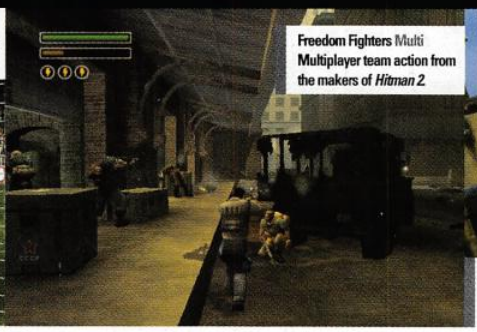
## XBOX

| Month | Title | Publisher |
|---|---|---|
| **OCTOBER** | | |
| 3 October | WWE Raw: Ruthless Aggression | THQ |
| 9 October | Alias | Acclaim |
| 10 October | NBA Live 2004 | EA |
| 17 October | Club Football | Atari |
| 17 October | SSX 3 | EA |
| 17 October | Voodoo Vince | Microsoft |
| 24 October | FIFA 2004 | EA |
| 24 October | NBA Inside Drive 2004 | Microsoft |
| 30 October | Buffy the Vampire Slayer 2 | Vivendi |
| 30 October | Ghostmaster | Vivendi |

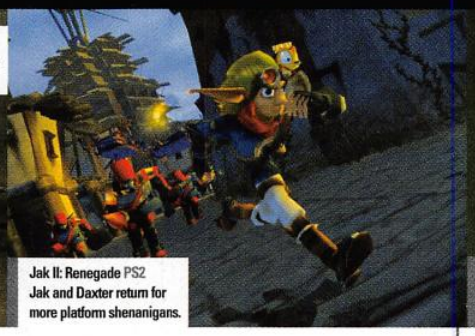
## CALM YOUR FEVERISH ANTICIPATION WITH OUR COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FORTHCOMING RELEASES



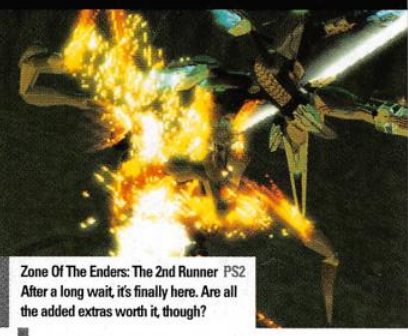
**Pro Evolution Soccer 3** PS2
Konami's continuing franchise gets ready for a new season.



**Freedom Fighters** Multi
Multiplayer team action from the makers of *Hitman 2*



**Jak II: Renegade** PS2
Jak and Daxter return for more platform shenanigans.



**Zone Of The Enders: The 2nd Runner** PS2
After a long wait, it's finally here. Are all the added extras worth it, though?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 30 October | Hunter the Reckoning 2: Redeemer | Vivendi | |
| 30 October | XIII | Ubi Soft | |
| 31 October | Crimson Skies | Microsoft | Wanted |
| 31 October | Dungeons and Dragons Heroes | Atari | |
| 31 October | Dynasty Warriors 4 | THQ | |
| 31 October | LOTR: Return of the King | EA | Wanted |
| 31 October | Rolling | Atari | |
| 31 October | Worms 3D | Atari | |
| Tbc | Backyard Wrestling | Atari | |
| tbc | Celebrity Deathmatch | Take2 | |
| Tbc | Judge Dredd | Vivendi | |
| Tbc | Phantasy Star Online | Atari | |
| **NOVEMBER** | | | |
| 7 November | Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon | THQ | |
| 7 November | MOH: Rising Sun | EA | |
| 7 November | Sega GT Online | Atari | |
| 7 November | Top Spin Tennis | Microsoft | |
| 13 November | NBA Jam 2004 | | |
| 13 November | Rainbow Six 3 | Ubi Soft | Wanted |
| 14 November | Amped 2 | Microsoft | |
| 14 November | Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines | Atari | |
| 15 November | Secret Weapons Over Normandy | EA | |
| 21 November | Bond 3: Everything or Nothing | EA | |
| 21 November | Grabbed by the Ghoulies | Microsoft | |
| 21 November | Sudeki | Microsoft | |
| 21 November | Need For Speed: Underground | EA | |
| 28 November | Project Gotham Racing 2 | Microsoft | |
| Tbc | Battlestar Galactica | Vivendi | |
| Tbc | The Hobbit | Vivendi | |
| **DECEMBER** | | | |
| 5 December | Fable | Microsoft | |
| 12 December | Mission Impossible: Operation Surma | Atari | |
| 12 December | The Sims: Bustin' Out | EA | |
| Tbc | LOTR: Treason of Isengard | Vivendi | Wanted |

| Month | Title | Publisher | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OCTOBER** | | | |
| 4 October | Lock On | Ubi Soft | |
| 7 October | Bionicle: The Game | EA | |
| 16 October | Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance | Acclaim | |
| 17 October | Commandos 3 | Atari | Wanted |
| 23 October | XIII | Ubi Soft | |
| 24 October | Deer Hunter 2004 | Atari | |
| 24 October | Power Rangers: Ninja Storm | THQ | |
| 24 October | Temple of Elemental Evil | Atari | |
| 24 October | Warhammer 40K: Fire Warrior | THQ | |
| 27 October | Harry Potter Quidditch World Cup | EA | |
| 28 October | FIFA 2004 | EA | |




| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 28 October | The Sims: Makin Magic | EA | Wanted |
| 31 October | Apocalyptica | EA | |
| 31 October | Civilisation 3: Gold | Atari | |
| tbc | Hidden & Dangerous | Take2 | |
| Tbc | Judge Dredd | Vivendi | |
| Tbc | Korea: Forgotten Conflict | Take2 | |
| Tbc | Railroad Tycoon | Take2 | |
| Tbc | UFO: Aftermath | Take2 | |
| Tbc | World Championship Snooker 2003 | Atari | |
| **NOVEMBER** | | | |
| 3 November | LOTR: Return of the King | EA | |
| 6 November | URU: Ages Beyond Myst | Ubi Soft | |
| 7 November | Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon | THQ | |
| 13 November | Beyond Good & Evil | Ubi Soft | |
| 14 November | Neverwinter Nights Gold | Atari | |
| 14 November | Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown | THQ | |
| 15 November | Secret Weapons Over Normandy | EA | Wanted |
| 17 November | Cricket 2004 | EA | |
| 20 November | Need For Speed: Underground | EA | |
| 20 November | Warlords 4 | Ubi Soft | Wanted |
| 21 November | MtG: The Battleground | Atari | |
| 21 November | Never Winter Nights: Hordes of the Underdark | Atari | |
| Tbc | LOTR: War of the Ring | Vivendi | |

| Month | Title | Publisher | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OCTOBER** | | | |
| 3 October | Kim Possible | THQ | |
| 10 October | Banjo Koozie | THQ | |
| 17 October | CT Special Forces | THQ | Wanted |
| 17 October | Megaman Zero 2 | THQ | |
| 17 October | Star Wars: Flight of the Falcon | THQ | |
| 17 October | Sonic Pinball | THQ | |
| 24 October | FIFA 2004 | EA | |
| 24 October | Power Rangers: Ninja Storm | THQ | |
| 24 October | Tiger PGA Tour 2004 | EA | Wanted |
| 24 October | Harry Potter Quidditch World Cup | EA | |




| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 31 October | Lion King | THQ | |
| 31 October | LOTR: Return of the King | EA | |
| 31 October | SSX 3 | EA | |
| **NOVEMBER** | | | |
| 7 November | Munch's Oddyssey | THQ | |
| 13 November | Prince of Persia | Ubi Soft | |
| 14 November | Medal of Honor: Infiltrator | EA | |
| 14 November | Onimusha Tactics | THQ | Wanted |
| 17 November | Looney Tunes: Back in Action | EA | |
| 20 November | Harvest Moon | Ubi Soft | Wanted |
| 21 November | Bond 3: Everything or Nothing | EA | |
| 21 November | Mission Impossible | Atari | |
| 21 November | Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines | Atari | |
| Tbc | Crash Nitro Kart | Vivendi | |
| Tbc | The Hobbit | Vivendi | |
| Tbc | Pro Evolution Soccer 3 | Atari | |
| **DECEMBER** | | | |
| 4 December | Baldur's Gate | Ubi Soft | Wanted |
| 9 December | Need For Speed: Underground | EA | |
| 12 December | The Sims: Bustin' Out | EA | |

**PLEASE NOTE:** While every effort has been made to ensure these dates are correct at the time of going to press, they are liable to change at short notice. It's not our fault, really it isn't. We've got notes from our mums to excuse us anyway.

## games™ ON THE HORIZON

### OUT RUN 2

**Format:** Arcade
**Publisher:** SEGA

Forget the rather tepid-looking ports of *Space Harrier* and *Golden Axe* that are on their way to the PS2, this is the classic arcade revival we're salivating over. If Yu Suzuki and the rest of SEGA can do the same justice to the gameplay that they're doing with the visuals, we're going to be in retro heaven. Can it be better than the original? Possibly...



### DEAD OR ALIVE ONLINE

**Format:** Xbox
**Publisher:** Microsoft

Whilst it can't match the depth or complexity of *Virtua Fighter 4*, there's no doubt that the prospect of taking Kasumi and co online is very enticing. Sadly, it seems that this brawler will not be out until sometime next year (Tecmo is rumoured to be adding *Dead Or Alive 3* to the collection as well).



### FATAL FRAME 2: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY

**Format:** PlayStation2
**Publisher:** Tecmo

We're huge fans of the original *Fatal Frame* (or *Project Zero* as it was known over here), so we can't wait for Tecmo's follow up. Taking control of two twins, *Crimson Butterfly* promises to be every bit as frightening as its fantastic predecessor. Don't have nightmares...



**The Greatest Story Ever Told...**

**Are complex storylines ruining the purity of videogames or are they adding an extra dimension to otherwise tired genres? If you've ever watched a cut-scene you need to read this...**

**It seems a fairly obvious distinction on paper: games are interactive entertainment while novels and films are not. Hollywood and the wider arts world has never seemed to understand this fundamental dichotomy but in recent years it seems as if the games industry has begun to get a little hazy on the subject as well.**

**But if videogames are just that – games, more akin to a sport than a novel – then why do they need a story at all? And if they do have to have a storyline how do we stop programmers from trying to execute them in a hodgepodge of clichés and badly translated Japanese? Perhaps the quality of a game's script isn't**


MICHAEL CRAWFORD
Parcel Arrived Safely Tied With String
CONNOR DUMBSTRUCK
A CULTURAL HISTORY OF VENTRILOQUISM
OXFORD
ON DIRECTING
CLARK THERE'S MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS
Drama for people with special needs
HITTING YOUR MARK
CARLSON
MARVIN CARLSON Performance
the singing and acting handbook
thomas de mallet burgess and nicholas skilbeck
CROSS MY HEART LARA CROFT
TIME CRISIS GAMES™
TALLULAH BANKHEAD | DAVID BRET
GOING FORWARD M. SIMPSON
ANNE BOGART
ANNE BOGART
legislative theatre augusto boal
The Rainbow of Desire augusto boal
GAMES FOR ACTORS AND NON-ACTORS AUGUSTO BOAL
GAMES FOR ACTORS AND NON-ACTORS AUGUSTO BOAL
HAMLET AND THE BAKER'S SON
MY LIFE IN THEATRE AND POLITICS
AUGUSTO BOAL
ALBERT BERMEL ARTAUD'S THEATRE OF CRUELTY
Steven Berkoff GRAFT TALES OF AN ACTOR
OBERON BOOKS
DK HAS LEFT THE BUILDING RARE
THEATRE GAMES
The Theory of the Modern Stage
Thinking Like a Director
Michael Bloom
THE CANN CANN HAVE A KNEES UP
BLACK
ABOUT ACTING PETER BARKWORTH
PLAYING SHAKESPEARE JOHN BARTON
Dramatic Events How to Run a Successful Workshop
Richard Hahlo and Peter Reynolds
Eugenio Barba
LIVENESS
BURNOUT HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS
ANTONIN ARTAUD
SELECTED WRITINGS
CALIFORNIA
Actor's Guide to Auditions and Interviews Margo Annett
The UK financial system
The Mystery of Capital HERNANDO DE SOTO
The Problem of Crime
Aplis & Lee
The Economics of the European Union
Second Edition
the NO-NONSENSE guide to INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
the NO-NONSENSE guide to INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
TROPICAL AFRICA TONY BINNS
Inflation Targeting
JACOBSEN The ECONOMICS of GENDER
LUKEMON GOTTA PLAY 'EM ALL
TWO GOLDEN ARCHES M.M.
BLOOD TYPES MORRIGAN
games
RESIDENT EVIL ZERO
The Economics of Commercial Property Markets
Studying Economics
BETTER POLICE ETHICS
Peter Villiers
Controlling Crime
THE POLITICS OF THE POLICE
Essentials of ECONOMETRICS
SAMIR AMIN Capitalism in the Age of Globalization
Latin America's Economy Cardoso and Helwege
Kirschman I Love a Cop
ECONOMIC CRISIS
Blinx
MICROECONOMICS
ECONOMIC THEORY
SUPER MARIO
FIRE!
Square/Enix
FAIRYTALES
Market, and the Law
14th edition
Dewatripont and Tirole
Market, and the Law
SEGA
3RD EDITION
THE CRAWFISH

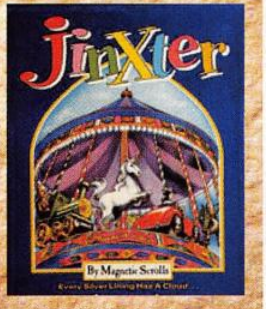
## ADVENTURES WITH A GLASS CEILING

**The one videogame genre where story truly was king is now but a distant memory. Portrayed and interacted with solely via text descriptions (and latterly the odd static image), titles such as Infocom's *Zork* and *Planetfall* or Magnetic Scrolls' *Jinxter* and *The Pawn* were telling real stories across multiple genres on 8-bit machines like the Commodore 64 and Apple II. Indeed, so well-crafted was Infocom's output that author Douglas Adams was convinced to write a couple (and his own efforts seemed only marginally better in comparison). Of course, entirely text-based games were never going to be anything but an evolutionary hiccup, but it's tragic how few modern games have learned from these ancient masters of interactive fiction.**










**TEXT HEAVY** Early text adventures relied solely on their plots to keep gamers interested.

even the real issue – nobody seems to have avoided buying *Resident Evil* because of the terrible dialogue. The real priority may simply be preventing a storyline from turning games players into games watchers.

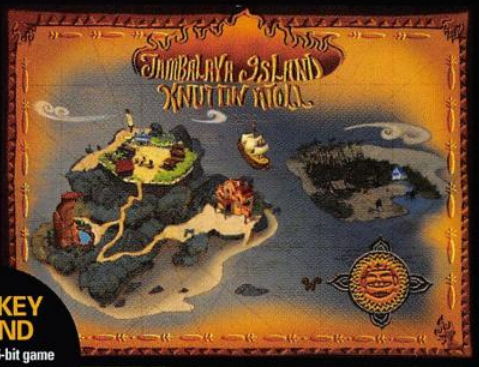


Have complex storylines become the norm simply just because everyone's using them, or are people enjoying them as much as the actual game? Has papering over lulls in gameplay with cut-scenes been so successful that gamers like the icing as much as the cake? After all, when people start complaining that the story in *Super Mario Sunshine* isn't elaborate enough it's clear that expectations have changed.

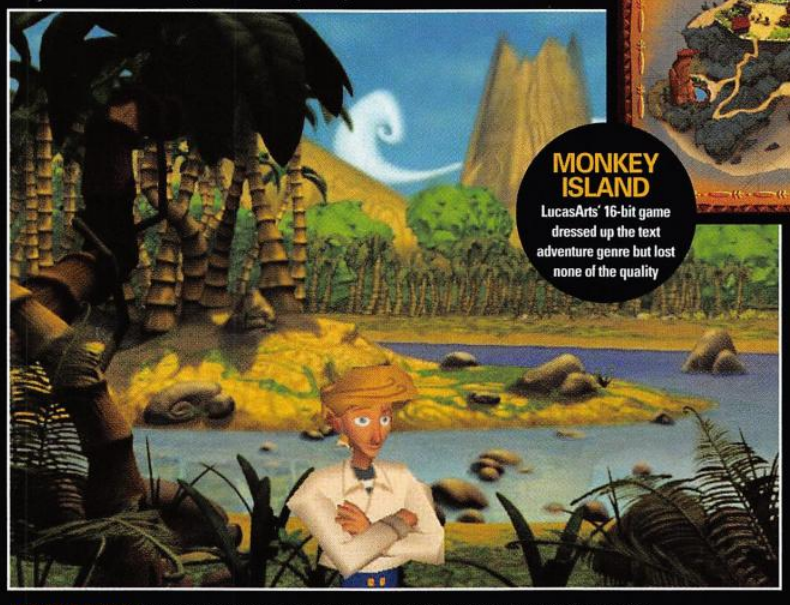


For most of the 8- and 16-bit era it's difficult to think of a major franchise that had a real story. From *Space Invaders* to *Pac-Man*, from *Mario* to *Sonic*, if a game actually bothered with a plot then it made sure it could be explained in a single sentence, and even then it bore little or no resemblance to anything that actually happened in the game. "A good storyline is completely inessential to your average non-RPG game," says Steven Poole, author of *Trigger Happy: The Inner Life of Videogames*. "The heart of any game is the depth and complexity of the interaction with the system." Few would disagree with this, but as Sean Clark, a project leader at LucasArts, points out: "Even the most minimalist shoot-'em-up implies a plot structure by explaining the mission goals. 'Destroy all the crates before Captain Nefarious can have them loaded on the transport' may be the only story you get for an entire level, but it's more compelling than 'Destroy all the crates'."

Even early role-playing games such as *Ultima* included the same old simplistic background stories, giving a perfunctory excuse for the in-game action to anyone nerdish enough to read the manual. This suggests that it's not the genre that determines whether developers think a story is necessary, it's the internal complexity of a particular title. And due to the technical limitations of the 8- and 16-bit machines the impetus was never really there. But now that the Pandora's box has been opened and every man and his beat-'em-up has got a plotline, developers have to



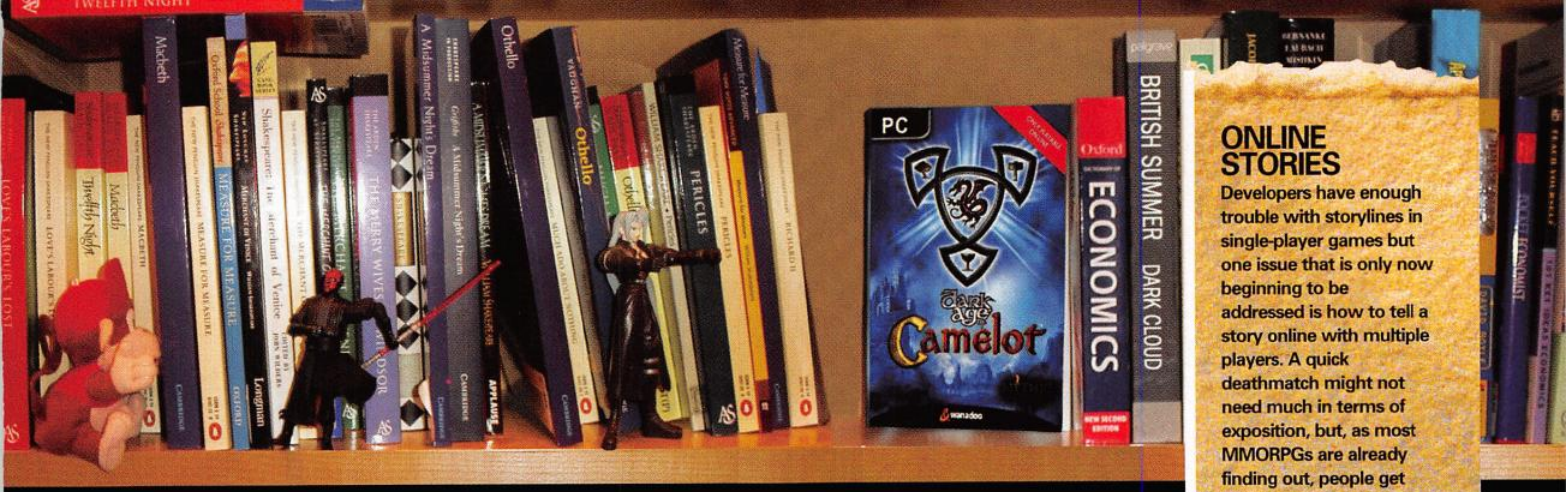

**MONKEY ISLAND**
LucasArts' 16-bit game dressed up the text adventure genre but lost none of the quality







**MONKEY BUSINESS** *The Secret Of Monkey Island* blended things to do, things to see and a logical storyline too.







**FINAL FANTASY**
A classic of the 32-bit era, *FF7* was let down by dodgy, badly translated dialogue






work out how to make them of sufficient quality to avoid lynch mobs of angry English teachers. Not that this was a problem in the old days...

## Speech Impediments

Although the text adventure was always doomed to a short life (see the Glass Ceiling boxout), its immediate offspring, the graphic adventure, has survived. Gaining a breakthrough with *The Secret Of Monkey Island* for 16-bit computers, LucasArts showed that the spirit of the text adventure could live on with moving graphics and even better dialogue. And this really was quality dialogue by any standard, not just in videogame terms. But how did Sean Clark and his peers manage to produce work that was so far above the competition, and who did they find was best suited to write a good game script: the developers themselves or professional script-writers? "Neither and both," is Clark's answer.

"This actually hits on a couple of my pet peeves," he says. "One is the would-be writer, usually a developer, who can't even be bothered to run the spell-checker much less acknowledge that there's an actual skill involved in the process. The other is the professional writer who won't make the effort to appreciate how telling a story in a game may be different from other forms of entertainment. Some of the best writing I've seen has come from two sources: developers that can actually write, and collaborations between developers and professional writers in which each party works closely with one another."

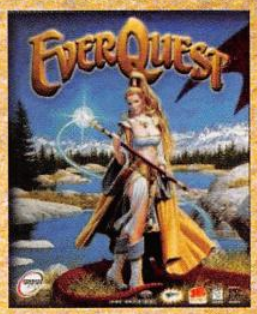
Even though he admits to not being a LucasArts fan, Paul Rose (a.k.a. Mr Biffo, videogame critic and industry commentator) seems to agree: "The big problem with game developers is that they've got all this technological power but the majority haven't come from a film background," he says. "They don't understand basic storytelling principles." Unfortunately, the adventure game exists in a bubble, almost totally removed from the rest of the gaming world. It's amazing how little influence they have had even on RPGs, particularly in the West, where for every *Fallout* and *Planescape: Torment*, there's a hundred identikit RPGs with fantasy plots so hackneyed they'd make J.R. Hartley turn in his grave, let alone J.R.R. Tolkien.



## ONLINE STORIES

Developers have enough trouble with storylines in single-player games but one issue that is only now beginning to be addressed is how to tell a story online with multiple players. A quick deathmatch might not need much in terms of exposition, but, as most MMORPGs are already finding out, people get bored pretty quickly unless there's not only an ongoing storyline but also, as *Dark Age Of Camelot* has been experimenting with, shorter, more obviously interactive sub-plots and quests. It could be that the problems of storytelling in video games are only just beginning...










**WEAVING WEB STORIES**
Massively Multiplayer Online RPGs need logical, in-depth stories to keep thousands of internet gamers happy. Will developers be able to provide and sustain them?




## MEET THE EXPERTS

Paul Rose is Mr Biffo – the anarchic former writer of the world-famous UK Digitiser Teletext pages. He is also an accomplished scriptwriter with regular contributions to UK soap operas *EastEnders* and *Crossroads*, as well as several new



comedy shows. Steven Poole writes for *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and the *Times Literary Supplement*, and has also worked as a composer for television and short film. He is the author of the widely acclaimed book *Trigger Happy: The Inner Life*



*Of Videogames*. Sean Clark started work at LucasArts as a programmer, before becoming project leader, writer and game designer on *Sam & Max Hit The Road*, *The Dig* and *Escape From Monkey Island*. He is currently working on

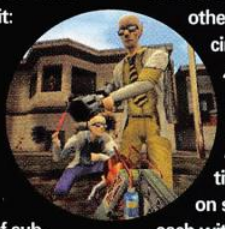


*Full Throttle II*.

**IN THE KNOW** Stories in games are becoming increasingly important, leading to developers working with scriptwriters such as Paul Rose to ensure the in-game dialogue isn't laughable.

Thankfully, by the 32-bit era, games were becoming profitable enough that developers could spend the money to get the job done properly – except they didn't. The three 32-bit games most (in)famous for their stories were *Resident Evil*, *Final Fantasy VII* and *Metal Gear Solid* – all written by the games' developers and all with enough Z-grade dialogue to make even Ed Wood blanch. As Rose puts it: "I'm yet to play a game where I haven't wanted to skip through the cut-scenes".

Solid Snake's capers in particular have been reviled for their overwrought and barely lucid rants on war and the Internet. And don't forget the 15-minute cut-scenes full of sub-TV movie quality dialogue. But Poole doesn't agree. "*MGS* and particularly *MGS2* evince the kind of playful generic reflexivity that is absent from your straight-to-video pot boiler," he says, "and if they still have cringeworthy moments of sentimentality, I can remember having watched many films of a far lower quality."



**LINK'S LIFE** Unlike many games, *Zelda*'s cut-scenes help progress the plot.



**ZELDA** The storylines in the legendary *Zelda* games aren't just for fun – they help to push the player along



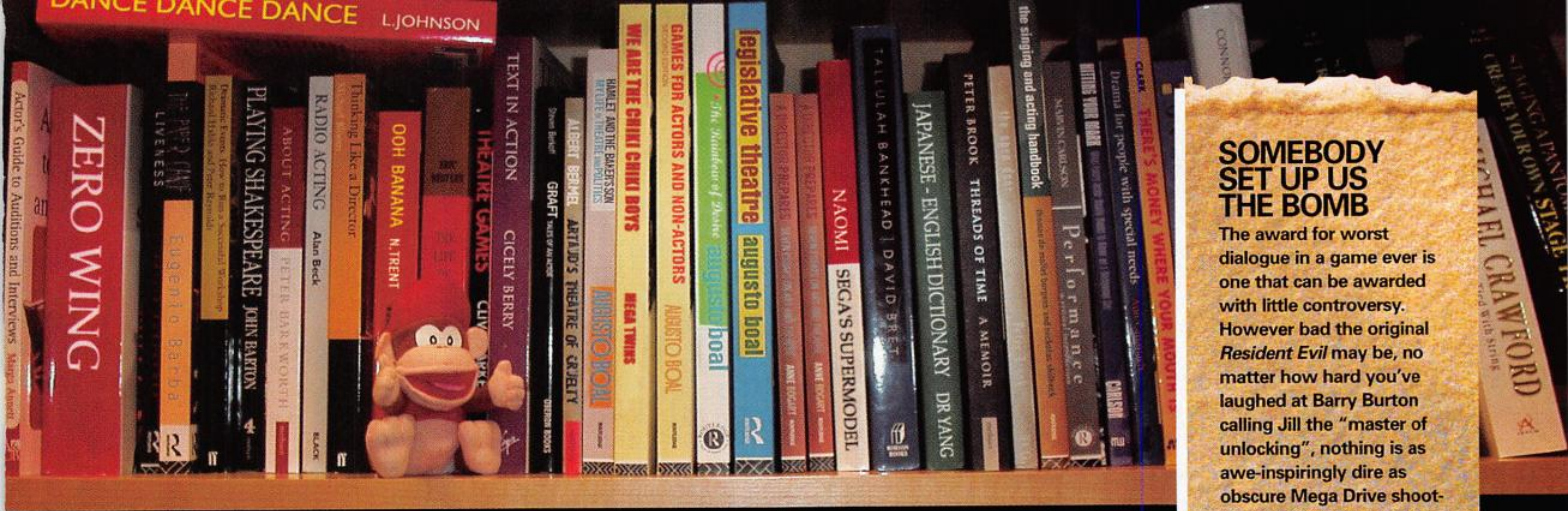


The PSone's holy trinity of plot-heavy classics are, of course, all Japanese in origin and so always have the excuse that much of their subtler prose was lost in translation. Indeed, translating from English to Japanese is usually done in two stages – a direct translation and then 'naturalisation' to ensure it makes sense. But this doesn't always happen when translating in the other direction, which, in extreme circumstances, can lead to the likes of *Zero Wing* (see right).

## Happy Ever After

As far as Western games go, the two titles that have had the greatest impact on storytelling are *Deus Ex* and *Half-Life*, each with a completely different approach. "*Half-Life* is one of my favourite ever games," says Paul Rose. "Even though the plot was really thin and there wasn't much characterisation, you really felt as if you were this guy in the game world and the little set-pieces were pushing you along." *Deus Ex*, by comparison, has a much denser storyline and real characters who develop according to your actions. In terms of an interactive storyline it's probably the most impressive effort yet made, but it wasn't nearly as successful *Half-Life*. The influence of *Half-Life* is much easier to plot, especially since it shares many ties with that other master of the understated storyline: *The Legend Of Zelda*.

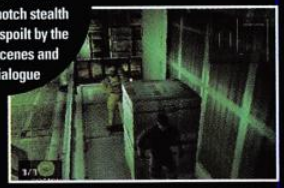





**KEEPING QUIET** For a super-sneaky kinda guy, Solid Snake didn't half go on – he spoke out at great length about war being A Bad Thing and the Internet being full of junk.









**METAL GEAR**
Many gamers felt that *MGS*'s top-notch stealth action was spoilt by the long cut-scenes and poor dialogue

Although *Half-Life* and *Zelda*'s plots seem wafer-thin on paper, they do work – not as entertainment in their own right, but as a catalyst for the player's actions. The mini cut-scenes also have specific gameplay functions: giving clues to puzzles, covering up changes in backdrops or abilities and pushing the player on with hints of further rewards. It is this amalgam of traditional story-telling techniques and gameplay mechanics that is perhaps the most palatable to the majority of gamers.

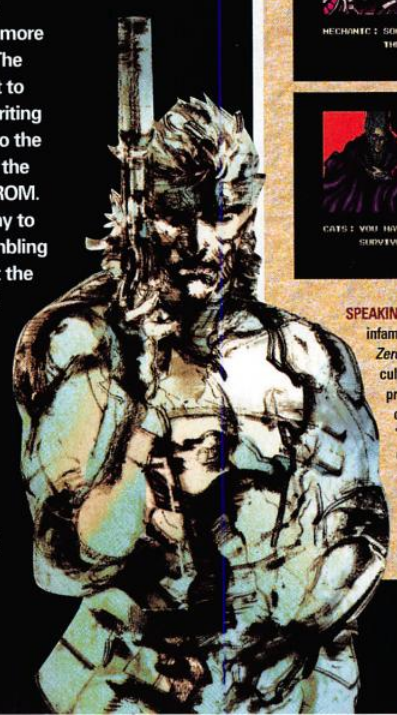


Looking to the future it's difficult to see many new titles that are really taking creative advantage of this renewed interest in storytelling. Zed Two's tactical RPG *Pillage*, which Paul Rose is scripting, is one of the brave few. Things didn't begin too well though: "When I started I wasn't happy with the work I was doing – it was all soundbites and clichés," admits Rose. "I was writing it like a videogame and I had to start again – give the story a beginning, a middle and an end; introduce character arcs and all the usual stuff I'm used to doing for TV scripts." The game looks intriguing with interesting, believable characters that develop through the game and, perhaps most importantly, are drawn with a minimum of cut-scenes.



But the experimentation of *Pillage* is an exception; most new games only tack on storylines because gamers expect them. But again, the question arises of why? Why now? It's not as if some amazing game has just been released that has an integrated storyline so good it's made all rivals look weak in comparison. The most likely conclusion is that gamers are responding to more complex games by demanding more complex plots to justify them. The games industry's task is not just to satisfy them with quality scriptwriting but also to ensure it doesn't slip into the mire of interactive movies that plagued the market on the introduction of the CD-ROM.

Or perhaps that's the wrong way to look at it. Maybe these first stumbling steps in interactive fiction point the way towards a new genre that is half game, half novel. Perhaps a new medium will emerge that will stop gamers grumbling at intrusive cut-scenes and the literati smirking at cheesy dialogue. Whatever happens, it seems likely that future justification for alien genocide will at least be put forward in a more erudite fashion. Lacklustre plots and dialogue? You have no chance to survive.



## SOMEBODY SET UP US THE BOMB

The award for worst dialogue in a game ever is one that can be awarded with little controversy. However bad the original *Resident Evil* may be, no matter how hard you've laughed at Barry Burton calling Jill the "master of unlocking", nothing is as awe-inspiringly dire as obscure Mega Drive shoot-'em-up *Zero Wing*. Solely responsible for the All Your Base geek phenomenon, the lack of skill that has gone into translating the intro's few short sentences is breathtaking. To remind yourself of the whole preposterous affair check out www.planettribes.com/allyourbase/



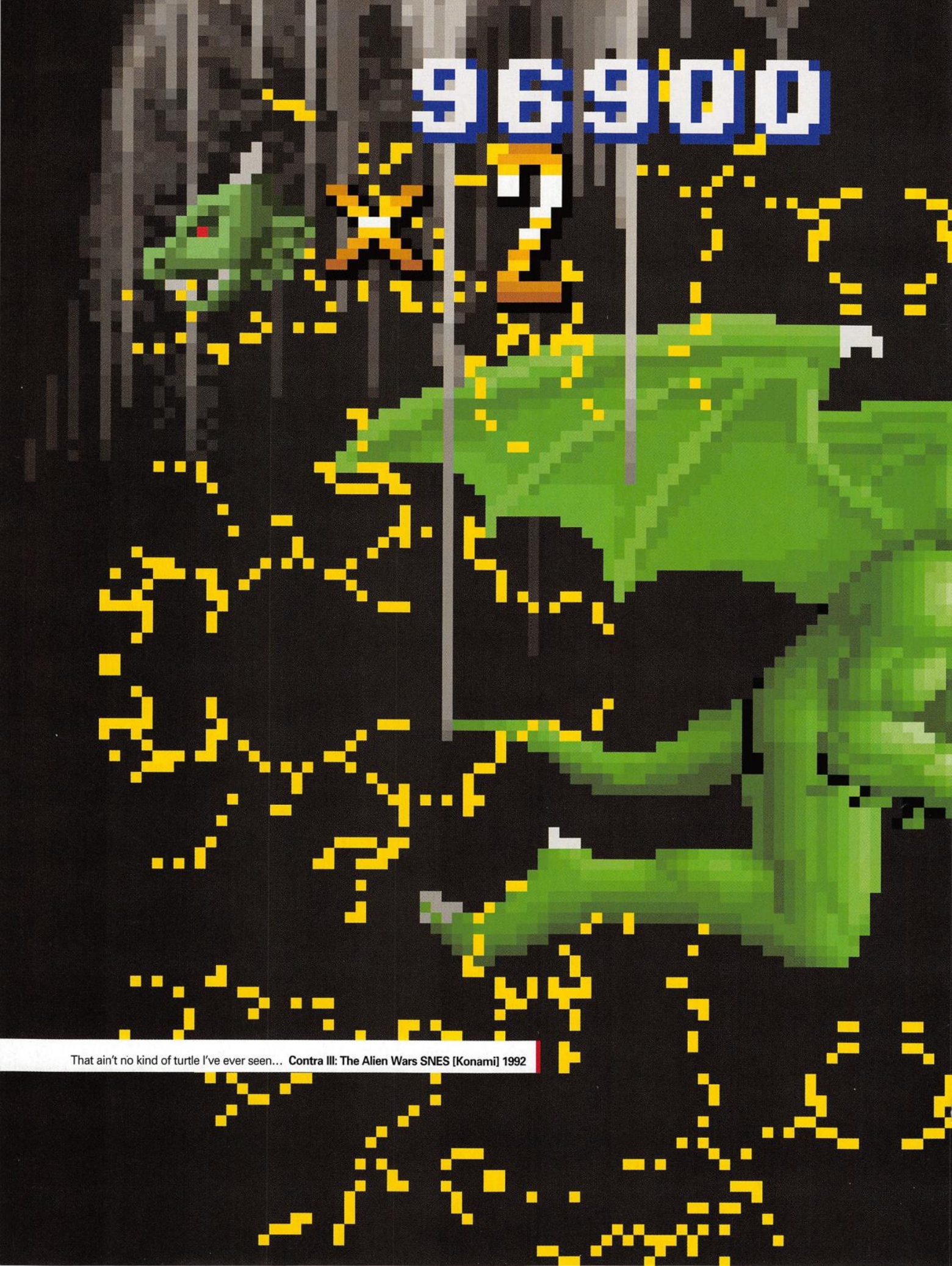




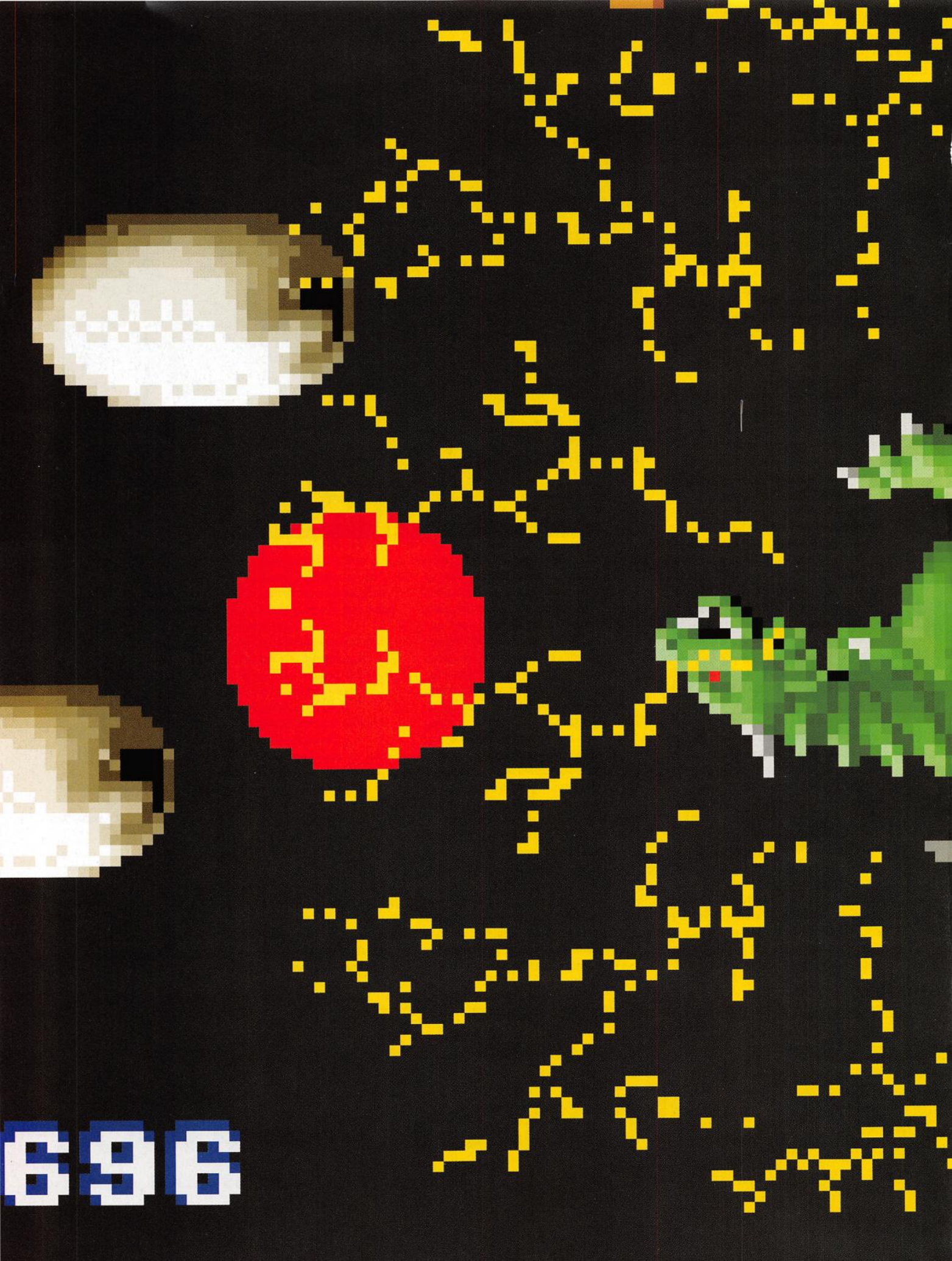




**SPEAKING IN TONGUES** The infamously bad dialogue in *Zero Wing* has gained a cult following, prompting an Internet craze for reporting 'sightings' of CATS' dire warnings in everyday Earth locations. Some people have too much free time...




That ain't no kind of turtle I've ever seen... **Contra III: The Alien Wars SNES [Konami] 1992**


696

# ROGUE SQUADRON III: REBEL STRIKE

## ITS PREDECESSOR SHIFTED GAMECUBES, BUT WILL REBEL STRIKE DO THE SAME THIS CHRISTMAS?

**DETAILS**
**FORMAT:** GameCube
**ORIGIN:** US
**PUBLISHER:** EA
**DEVELOPER:** Factor 5
**RELEASE:** November
**GENRE:** Shoot-'em-up
**PLAYERS:** 1-2

Focusing on many of the action sequences from George Lucas' *Star Wars* movie series, Factor 5 once again looks set to deliver the ultimate shoot-'em-up experience.

**The release of the GameCube was a little different from most Nintendo hardware launches.** Mario was nowhere to be seen, and not one of the other launch titles developed by Nintendo itself brought anything particularly new or exciting to the market. Instead, it was SEGA's *Monkey Ball* that led the way – proving that the technology was more than capable of competing in a cut-throat market, and that innovation in gaming was alive and well.

Of course, monkeys in balls aren't exactly the sort of thing that the majority of gamers look for from a new console, and without a mass-market killer-app Nintendo's robust little machine could easily have flopped from day one. Thankfully, Factor 5's *Rogue Leader* demonstrated a superb use both of the technology on offer and the *Star Wars* licence, and in doing so appealed to hard-core and casual gamers.

Despite its impressive visuals and broad appeal, though, *Rogue Leader* wasn't the perfect piece of software that some had made it out to be. Enjoyable as it was, the core gameplay consisted of little more than shooting down targets, while twitchy controls resulted in the vessels feeling more like plastic toys than weighty metal spaceships. To top it off, the otherwise polished graphics engine had a tendency to lose its silky 60 frames-per-second screen update whenever there was an explosion. The reasons for these glitches, however, were a strict completion deadline and the fact that much of the program code was built on unfinished workstations, rather than due to hardware limitations.

Well, it's been almost two years since *Rogue Leader* launched in America, and Factor 5 has been hard at work on the next instalment in its popular series – *Rogue Squadron III: Rebel Strike* – ever since. Work started just one month after *Rogue Leader* was completed, as Factor 5's CEO, Julian Eggebrecht, reveals. "We immediately started on prototypes of the forest sequences and Hoth, both of them huge technical undertakings," he says. And it's not difficult to see where all the hard work has gone – practically every battle is on a larger scale than before, and each of the landscapes is positively bursting at the seams with eye-popping texture and detail. Light sourcing and shadow-casting effects are also more impressive than before, and this is one area that Eggebrecht is particularly proud of. "The new atmospheric lighting engine simulates the distribution of light in a more or less physically correct way in real time," he points out.

Unfortunately, the fact that so many polygons, lighting effects and textures are being processed simultaneously has brought about memory issues that Factor 5 has had to address. "We maxed out the memory restrictions of the GameCube with *Rogue Leader* so it was essential to get a very aggressive streaming engine going for *Rebel Strike* to circumnavigate the small 24MB memory footprint," says Eggebrecht. "We ended up streaming everything constantly, so even as you approach buildings and landscape details, the textures are being fetched from the disc." From what we've seen so far it would appear that this works well, though there are slight irregularities in the frame rate in the preview code, perhaps due to the disc constantly being accessed for texture retrieval. Hopefully, this slight gripe will be rectified before release, though even in its current state *Rebel Strike* runs far more consistently than *Rogue Leader*.

Another aspect of the game that's been expanded significantly is the gameplay. It ▷



The forests of Endor are recreated in all their leafy glory, right down to the very last Ewok. Well, minus that one.

### TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

**Incredibly, *Rebel Strike* will include the full *Rogue Leader* as a two-player co-op game. Thanks to the new graphics engine, no detail will be lost from the game when running in split-screen. Other multiplayer games are also set to be featured across a range of *Star Wars* locations, the most promising being Speederbike racing through the forests of Endor. Sadly, Factor 5 has ruled out console link via LAN, saying: "We did consider it, but discarded it in the early stages of the design. If the *Rogue Squadron* series goes online it will be a massive undertaking, not something we could do justice to as a subset of *Rebel Strike*."**



## DEVELOPER PROFILE

Factor 5 CEO Julian Eggebrecht has been involved in the games industry since 1989 when he and some friends decided that their game ideas were good enough to be released. From his parents' home in Germany, Eggebrecht struck a publishing deal with LucasArts (then Lucasfilm Games).

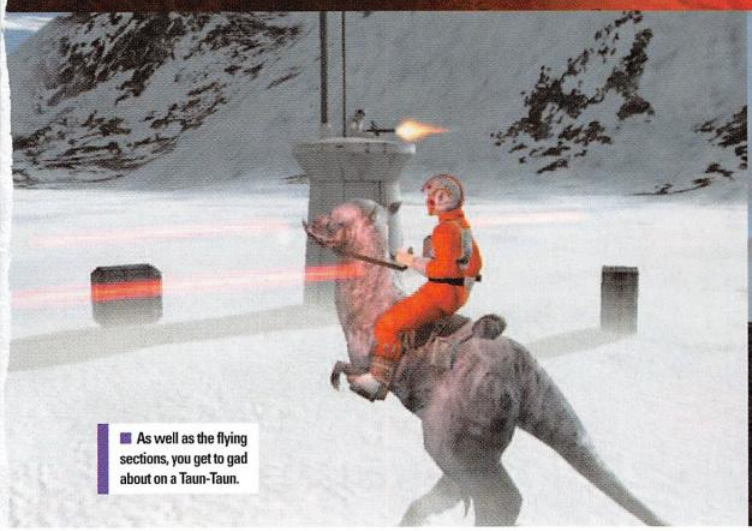
## HISTORY

- **STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER: RS II** 2002 [GC]
- **STAR WARS: EPISODE I BATTLE FOR NABOO** 2000 [N64]
- **TURRICAN** 1990 [Amiga]

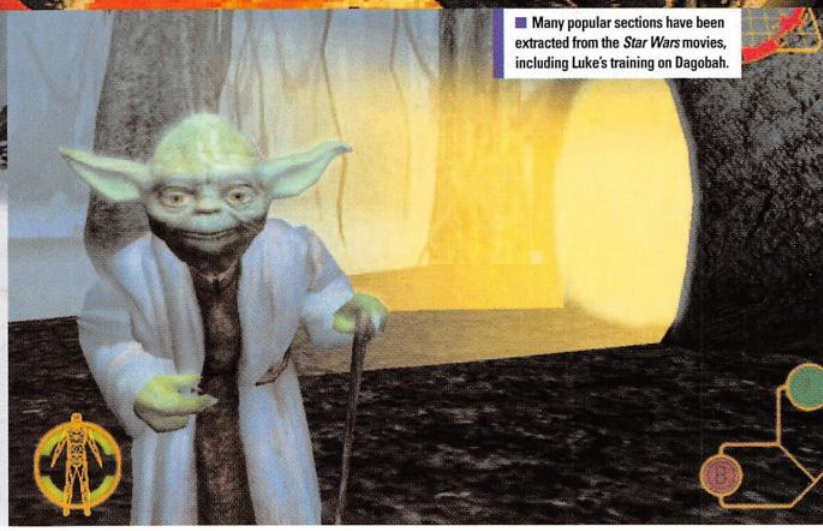
Gorgeous as *Rogue Leader* was, Factor 5 has managed to make *Rebel Strike* even more impressive to look at.

**"WITH REBEL STRIKE, LUCASARTS EXPANDS THE AWARD-WINNING FLIGHT ACTION FRANCHISE WITH MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT AND CHARACTER-BASED COMBAT"**
*MARCELLA CHURCHILL, LUCASARTS*





As well as the flying sections, you get to gad about on a Taun-Taun.



Many popular sections have been extracted from the *Star Wars* movies, including Luke's training on Dagobah.

# ROGUE SQUADRON III: REBEL STRIKE CONT.

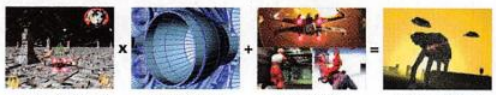





■ The range of locations on offer is as diverse as any *Star Wars* fan could wish for.

**VIDEOGAMES MATHS**

**SAME AS BEFORE, ONLY MUCH, MUCH MORE**




**"EACH OF THE LANDSCAPES IS POSITIVELY BURSTING AT THE SEAMS WITH EYE-POPPING TEXTURE AND DETAIL"**

■ Factor 5's new graphics engine allows for far more polygons to be processed.

## COMPANY PROFILE

■ Founded in 1987 in Germany, it didn't take long for Factor 5 to forge ties with Nintendo and LusasArts and move its offices to California. Best knows for its recent and impressive *Star Wars* titles, the firm's history stretches back to the 16-bit era.

## HISTORY

- **PILOTWINGS** 2004 [GameCube]
- **SWRSII ROGUE LEADER** 2002 [GameCube]
- **SW ROGUE SQUADRON 3D** 1998 [N64]

▷ appears that Factor 5 has been inspired by the likes of *Grand Theft Auto* and *Halo* as a range of vehicles are now accessible in many of the levels, bringing a little more variation and freedom to each segment of the game. Progression is still broken up into missions, as before, but through constant changes in pace and gameplay structure, the developer has been able to induce a far more exciting experience.

The perfect example of this new mission structure can be seen on the ice planet of Hoth, which is making a welcome return. Rather than simply flying around as before, the mission begins with the entire Snowspeeder crash landing sequence from *The Empire Strikes Back*, after which Luke, armed only with his Blaster, must run around on foot destroying Stormtroopers. From there on in, things become more interesting as the mission expands to include the destroying of AT-ATs with thermal detonators, riding around on a Taun-Taun, manning a laser-cannon, then taking to the skies once again in an X-Wing. Each segment is momentarily broken up with cleverly edited clips from the movies, demonstrating Factor 5's artistic and technical abilities in one jaw-dropping extravaganza. The final section is particularly impressive, with an epic battle that features no less than 50 incredibly authentic enemy ships on screen at once.

Sadly, some elements of this expanded gameplay are a little flawed in the preview version. The flying sections control in much the same way that they did before, with the ships still feeling a bit on the light side (no pun intended), but the real problems arise when it comes to controlling the characters on foot. As surprising as it may seem after so many years of creating games in three dimensions, these sections tend to have real problems with the camera. Much of the time it's either too close or too far away from the action, making it difficult to see exactly what's going on.

To make matters worse, the gameplay is generally too simplistic, as there's really little more to do than run around blasting at enemies with virtually no control over accuracy. Eggebrecht admits that this has been the most difficult part of the game to get right, saying: "It's tough to find a balance between frantic action and slipping into the deliberate tempo of a first-person shooter – something we want to avoid." However, he insists that the team will continue to make adjustments – "We will tweak these levels until the last minute," he says. Let's just hope that's long enough to get the game right.

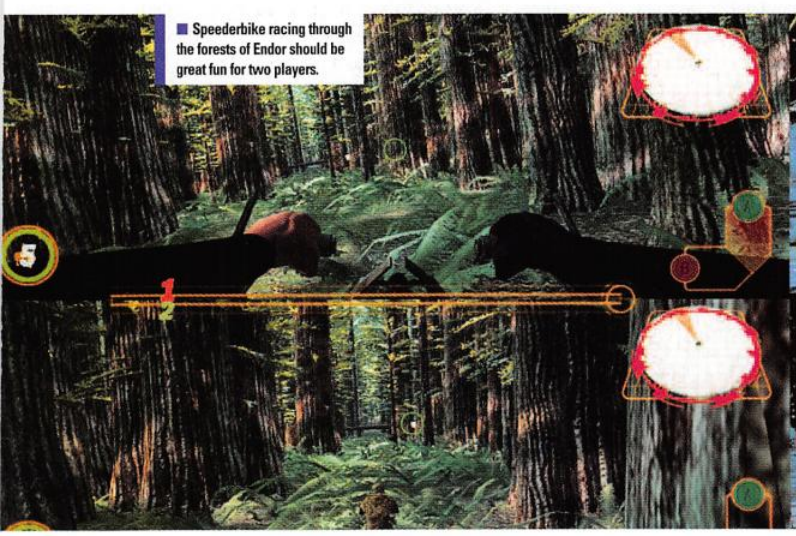
Regardless of whether these imperfections are rectified before launch, *Rebel Strike* is still shaping up to be one of the better *Star Wars* videogames around. After such atrocities as *Star Wars: Starfighter* and *Star Wars: Obi-Wan*, it's difficult not to be cautious whenever a new *Star Wars* game comes along, but if the preview code is anything to go by you can rest assured that *Rebel Strike* will be well worth a purchase.

The only downside for *Star Wars* fans is that this Christmas they're going to have to buy a GameCube for *Rebel Strike* and an Xbox for *Knights Of The Old Republic*...

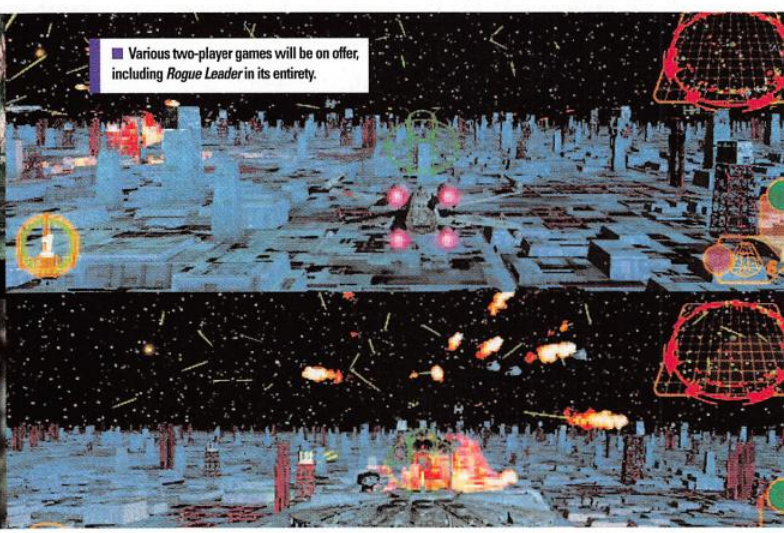
> **"REBEL STRIKE IS STILL SHAPING UP TO BE ONE OF THE BETTER STAR WARS VIDEOGAMES AROUND"**

## GRAND THEFT ALMOST

**Although *Rogue Leader* received nothing but praise when it was released, it didn't take long for the backlash to begin. No-one could dispute that the graphics engine was stunning for a launch title, but flashy visuals couldn't hide the somewhat shallow (and at times frustratingly difficult) gameplay. Factor 5 obviously took these criticisms on board, as *Rebel Strike* has been adjusted to include more gameplay variation and balance. Aside from the usual flying aspect, the game will also feature ground-based vehicles, including AT-STs and Speederbikes, to help spice things up. Unfortunately, these will not be accessible at any time (as in *Grand Theft Auto*) but will be introduced via FMV cut-scenes at specific points during the levels.**



■ Speederbike racing through the forests of Endor should be great fun for two players.



■ Various two-player games will be on offer, including *Rogue Leader* in its entirety.

# KIRBY'S AIR RIDE







■ It's hardly *F-Zero*, but the tracks are well designed and have plenty of variety to keep you interested.

**DETAILS**
**FORMAT:** GameCube
**ORIGIN:** Japan
**PUBLISHER:** Nintendo
**DEVELOPER:** HAL Laboratory
**RELEASE:** Q1 '04 (Japan: Out now)
**GENRE:** Racing
**PLAYERS:** 1-4

■ Nintendo's fat, pink furball hops on a star and competes against three other riders in this simple but cute racer.

## ONE-BUTTON KIRBY HOPES THAT SIMPLE CAN ALSO BE EFFECTIVE

**The idea of popular game characters taking to the racetrack is nothing new, as we've seen Mario, Crash Bandicoot and Sonic hit the road in their own racing games in the past.** However, where *Kirby Air Ride* takes a left turn instead of following the pack is that everything – and we mean everything – is controlled by one button.

Given that most modern racing games are multi-button behemoths, this comes as something of a surprise – however, once you start taking Kirby around the twisty tracks, this peculiar idea starts to make sense. Essentially, there's no accelerator as Kirby zips around on his own, meaning you have to use the A-button to brake. The same button also boosts Kirby when released depending on how long you hold it down, which means you need to develop a unique technique for turning corners. It's also this button that sucks up any nearby power-ups, ranging from Tornados to Electricity Blasts. And once you've got a power-up? Press the A-button to use it. It's a refreshingly simple system that makes the game easy to pick up and play without the need to wade through instructions or use trial and error to find out what the buttons do.

**"WITH ITS SINGLE-BUTTON GAMEPLAY, THIS IS A VERY ACCESSIBLE RACING GAME"**

It's not just the single-button innovation that sticks out either, because *Air Ride* drips with colour and charm, making the aesthetics equally notable. All the riders look typically vibrant and bubbly, and the music is lively without being intrusive. The courses are also impressive and well-designed, with multiple obstacles and short cuts to ensure they stay interesting – however, things are kept as simple and fun as possible, with Kirby bouncing back into play rather than falling off the track should a turn go wrong. Unfortunately, it makes this a little too easy to play, as it's just as easy to bounce from wall to wall to the finish line as it is to take corners properly.

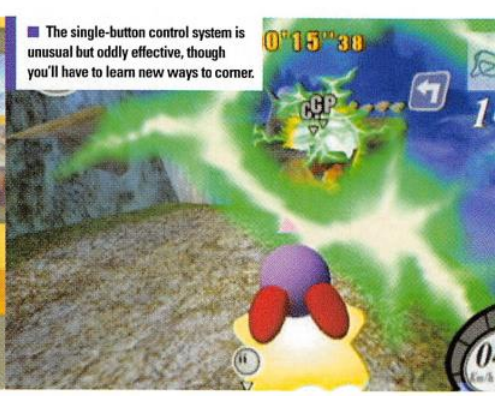
From what we've played, our main concern is that the 'pick up and play' ethos has been taken too far, sacrificing depth and control for accessibility. A plethora of unlockable extras are included, but the option to accelerate by ourselves would have been just as welcome. Will European gamers take to the simplified gameplay? We'll have a better idea nearer the game's release next year.



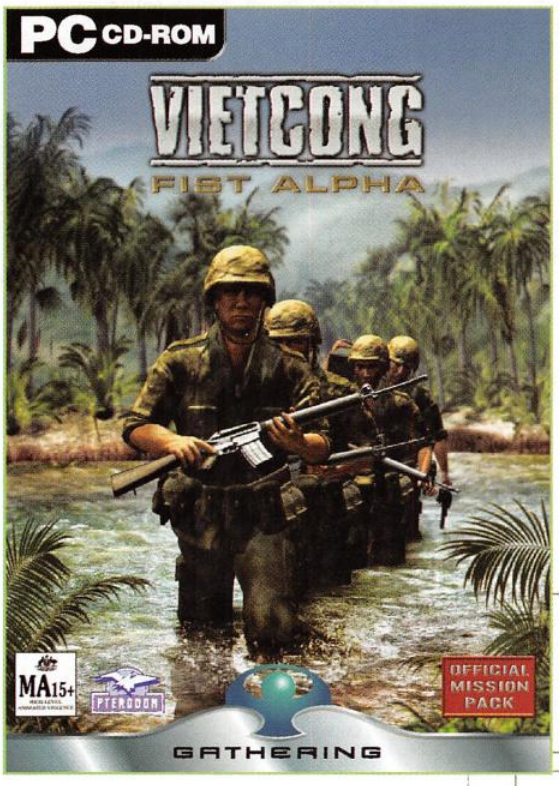




■ A cutesy *Kirby* game? It could never be anything but charming.




■ The single-button control system is unusual but oddly effective, though you'll have to learn new ways to corner.

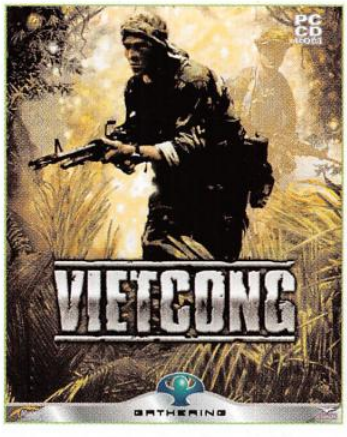



# Break out the bug juice, lock and load...

## Viet Cong: Fist Alpha
### Official Mission Pack!

Placing you in the highlands of Vietnam, Vietcong Fist Alpha brings 7 brand new single player missions as well as 8 new multi-player maps to expand that jungle experience of Vietnam in 1967.

With 6 new weapons as well as bayonets for weapons and machetes along with even more artillery raining shells down on both US and NVA alike, Vietcong Fist Alpha also brings the ubiquitous B52 Bomber and F-105 Thunderchief and F4 Phantom fighters into play.




Original VIET CONG Game
ALSO STILL AVAILABLE!





# VIETCONG

...and get ready for a world of pain.

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PTERODON illusion softworks GATHERING A TAKE-TWO COMPANY

# JEDI KNIGHT: JEDI ACADEMY

## CAN RAVEN STAY ON TARGET WITH THE JEDI KNIGHT SERIES?

**Since last year's *Jedi Outcast* proved to be a rare success story for the galaxy's most prestigious movie franchise, it's no surprise to see another addition to the Saber-swirling series, timed to hit the shelves alongside LucasArts' imminent influx of *Star Wars* titles.** The latest instalment, *Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy*, sees hero of previous outings Kyle Katarn handing over the reins to a gifted young apprentice, and looks to provide players with their most thrilling taste of Jedi life to date.

Fulfilling the childhood dream of millions worldwide, gamers are invited to enrol in Luke Skywalker's Jedi Academy to master the ways of the Force in the hope of taking their place among a new batch of Jedi Knights. As there are scarcely enough fully-fledged Jedi to maintain order around the galaxy, however, you can expect a rather hands-on approach to your training. Shortly after arriving at the Academy you'll be out on your first mission, and before long you'll be playing a vital role in uncovering the sinister intentions of an ancient Sith cult.

Before embarking on the action, you'll be able to fully customise your character's appearance (right down to the hilt on their Lightsaber, no less), and as the game progresses an RPG-style level-up system allows you to continuously shape their development. By learning different fighting styles, upgrading Sabers and choosing to acquire Dark or Light Force powers, you're extended a good amount of leeway as to how your character evolves.

Since the game takes place shortly after the events depicted in the original *Star Wars* trilogy, you can expect to come across some familiar faces, vehicles and locales from the saga's 'golden era'. Missions take place across a wider assortment of locations than before and feature enough task variation to keep the life of a budding Champion of the Force interesting. One scenario might place you at the helm of a Speeder Bike, whilst the next sees you stripped of your precious Lightsaber and forces you to battle through the mission purely as a first-person shoot-'em-up. Also, in a bid to prevent players quickly reaching a dead end this time around, you're now able to pick and choose from a selection of available missions and even skip over certain troublesome errands entirely.

Aside from all the new trimmings, the undisputed star of the show continues to be the Lightsaber. A good deal of polish has obviously gone into perfecting the Saber combat dynamics and has made the Jedi weapon of choice an absolute joy to wield. We could almost feel the Force flowing through us as we elegantly carved our way through the helpless legions of adversaries that foolishly stood in our path. Most notably, the ability to carry two Sabers in battle and the inclusion of the mighty twin-headed model throws a whole new repertoire of slick manoeuvres into the mix, allowing players to recreate the dazzling Jedi duels seen in the prequel movies.

Whether dodging and slicing our way through the obligatory complement of Stormtroopers and Bounty Hunters, or taking on fellow Saber-wielding Jedi in a battle of wits, the enhanced combat gameplay made the preview code a real struggle to put down. The Force is definitely strong with this one, and any wannabe Jedi should be in for a treat when LucasArts unleashes the finished version in the coming weeks.

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT:** PC, Xbox
**ORIGIN:** US
**PUBLISHER:** LucasArts/Activision
**DEVELOPER:** Raven Software
**RELEASE:** PC: Nov '03, Xbox: Dec '03
**GENRE:** Action Adventure
**PLAYERS:** 1 (1-16 online)

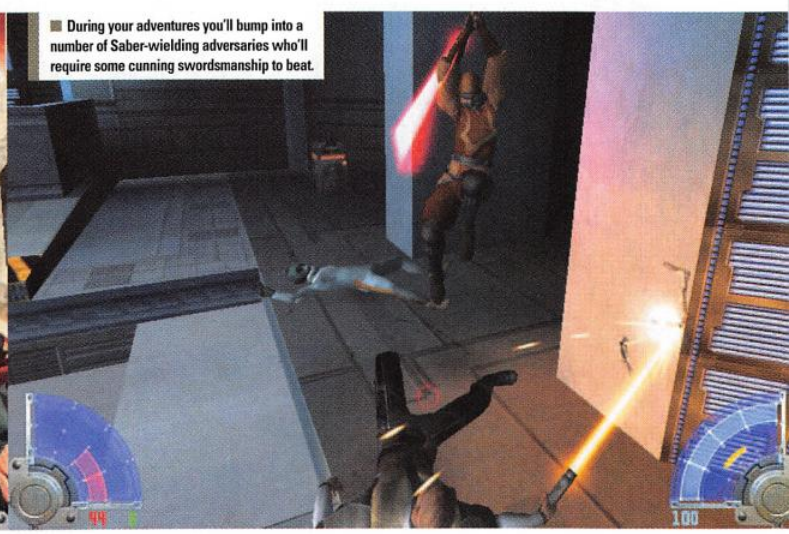
Enrol in Luke Skywalker's academy for budding Jedi and embark on another Saber-swinging adventure across the *Star Wars* universe.

### BEGUN THE WEB WAR HAS...

**Once again players are able to challenge fellow Jedi from across the gaming galaxy through a series of online multiplayer modes, and Xbox Live gamers will be pleased to hear that they're invited to the online party this time. You can create your own Jedi or select from a range of recognisable characters from the *Star Wars* universe, kitting them out with the Lightsaber of your choice. Six modes of play await – each with customisable rules for the use of Jedi powers – and vary from the standard 16-player Deathmatch to a two-on-one Power Duel inspired by those final confrontations from *Episodes I* and *II*.**

### "THE LIGHTSABER COMBAT DYNAMICS MAKE THE JEDI WEAPON A JOY TO WIELD"





During your adventures you'll bump into a number of Saber-wielding adversaries who'll require some cunning swordsmanship to beat.

# JEDI KNIGHT: JEDI ACADEMY

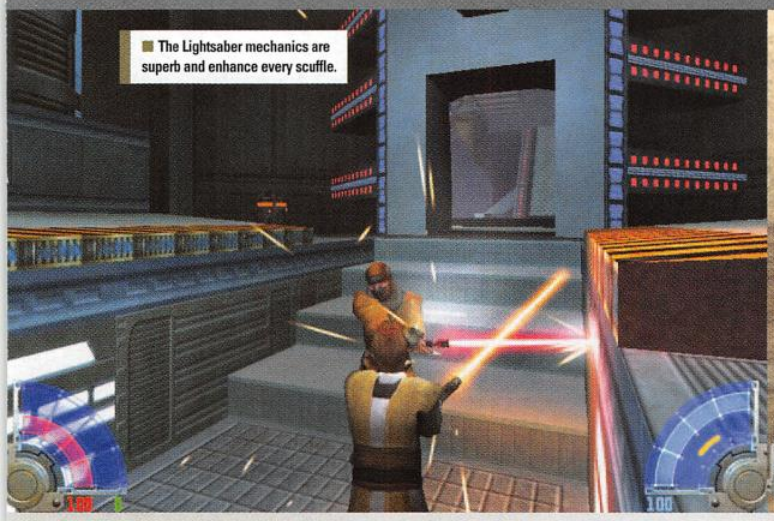
PC/MULTIFORMAT

## COMPANY PROFILE

Based in Madison, Wisconsin, Raven Software has been developing games since work began on the Amiga RPG *Black Crypt* back in 1988. Working closely with master FPS creator id, the team went on to enjoy huge success with the likes of *Heretic* and *Hexen* using the versatile *Doom* engine.

## HISTORY

- **JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST** 2002 [PC, Xbox]
- **SOLDIER OF FORTUNE** 2001 [PC]
- **HERETIC** 1994 [PC]



The Lightsaber mechanics are superb and enhance every scuffle.



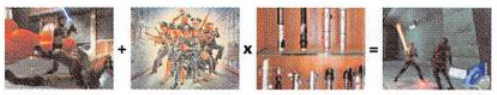
Some missions let you loose on a Speeder Bike.

**"RAVEN WILL BRING INNOVATIVE, DYNAMIC, AND CHALLENGING GAMEPLAY THAT HONOURS THE LEGACY OF THE SERIES"**

*SIMON JEFFERY, PRESIDENT, LUCASARTS*

### VIDEOGAMES MATHS

**BACK IN TRAINING**




JEDI OUTCAST + THE ACADEMY x NEW SABERS = JEDI ACADEMY

# HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS 2



■ Players who choose to exploit every inch of the game's strategic depth will indoubtedly find *H&D2* most rewarding.

## VENTURE BEHIND ENEMY LINES ARMED TO THE TEETH WITH STRATEGIC POSSIBILITIES...

**DETAILS**
**FORMAT:** PC
**ORIGIN:** Czech Republic
**PUBLISHER:** Gathering
**DEVELOPER:** Illusion Softworks
**RELEASE:** Q4 '03
**GENRE:** Action/Strategy
**PLAYERS:** 1 (Up to 32 online)

■ Take complete tactical control over your squad from any perspective you like in arguably the most captivating addition to the genre yet.

**There was certainly a lot to like about the original *Hidden And Dangerous*, but for many the title's technical instability and distinctly flawed AI crippled the gaming experience beyond repair.** Thankfully, Czech-based developer Illusion Softworks has spent the last four years ensuring the long-awaited sequel will not only address the problems that obscured much of the first game's undeniable quality, but should also take the squad-based genre to dizzy new heights.

A great deal of the fluid gameplay dynamics and impressive visuals can be attributed to an enhanced incarnation of the LS3D engine that helped earn gangster epic *Mafia* such deserved praise. The engine's versatility also allows for the ambitiously varied gameplay styles that look set to make *H&D2* a mouth-watering prospect for such a broad cross-section of gamers.

### ARE YOU TOUGH ENOUGH?

***Hidden And Dangerous 2* is a real stickler for detail, and the high levels of authenticity adorning every aspect of play put you firmly in the boots of an SAS commando. Although this realism can make your characters' lives more difficult in terms of damage severity and carrying capacity, for the most part it adds a great feeling of quality to the game. In the stealth sections, for instance, the razor-sharp AI demonstrates all the awareness found in the likes of *Hitman 2*, but simply stealing a dead soldier's uniform won't fool the enemy if it's riddled with bullet holes and soaked in claret, or if you've still got a British weapon in your hands.**

Whether you're a fan of real-time strategy wishing to orchestrate your troops around the battlefield from above, prefer the more traditional third-person role of squad commander, or are simply an FPS aficionado looking for anything from an all-action fix to a taxing stealth-based challenge – strangely enough this game is for you. Yet, unlike so many other titles that try to offer all things to everyone, each of the game's diverse elements is presented with consummate depth and quality. Even the obligatory vehicle driving sections don't see these high standards slip.

Illusion has attempted to make each of the 23 missions as varied as possible, starting with the variety of surroundings in which these take place. Staged in just about every imaginable World War II setting, players will find themselves operating in barren deserts, arctic tundra, lush jungles, scenic mountain ranges and ravaged city streets, as well as in a range of indoor locales. You'll mostly be leading a hand-picked group of four elite SAS commandos (although several missions will require just one operative) who can be controlled using any combination of the several interfaces on offer.

Perhaps the most useful of these is the Tactical mode, which freezes the action allowing you to pan out and fully assess the situation. Your squad members can then each be set a series of waypoints, complete with detailed instructions as to how they are to behave both en route and upon reaching these locations. Ideal for putting together a considered strategic approach and for allowing beginners to familiarise themselves with the commands, players can then set time running and either watch their bidding being carried out or jump back into the action as one of the team from either a first- or third-person perspective. Detailed commands can then be issued from this more hands-on viewpoint to all those in earshot of your character, ensuring every member of your squad is always behaving exactly as you intend.

The beauty of the game's immense strategic depth is that players can delve beneath the surface to whatever level they wish. After spending some quality time with the latest build we were blown away by *H&D2*'s phenomenal scope and potential breadth of appeal. Those willing to invest the time and fully explore the tactical possibilities look set to be heavily rewarded.

**"WE WERE BLOWN AWAY BY H&D2'S PHENOMENAL SCOPE AND POTENTIAL BREADTH OF APPEAL"**

# HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS 2

PC



## DEVELOPER PROFILE

Petr Vochozka began developing computer games for the Amiga and PC at the age of 16 and went on to found Illusion Softworks in 1997. The studio formed a close relationship with publisher Take 2 and enjoyed huge success with *Hidden And Dangerous* and *Mafia*.

## HISTORY

- **MAFIA** 2002 [PC]
- **FLYING HEROES** 2000 [PC]
- **HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS** 1999 [PC]

A souped-up version of the LS3D engine seen in *Mafia* allows for all kinds of vehicular action in the gameplay.

**"HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS 2 IS UNPRECEDENTED IN ITS LEVELS OF AMBITION, INNOVATION AND DETAIL"**

*HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS 2 PRESS RELEASE*

### VIDEOGAMES MATHS

**WHATEVER YOU WANT IT TO BE...**

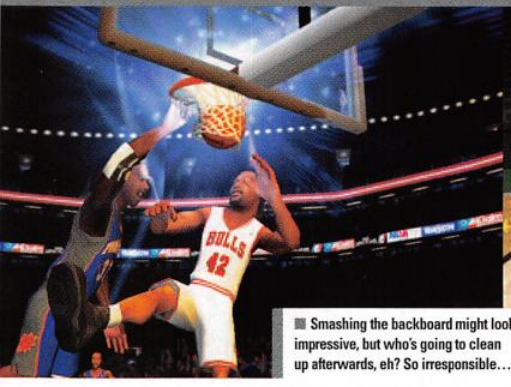



HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS | BUGS | POSSIBILITIES | H&D2

There's a great deal of variety in mission types – even the squad-based sections should encourage different styles of play.

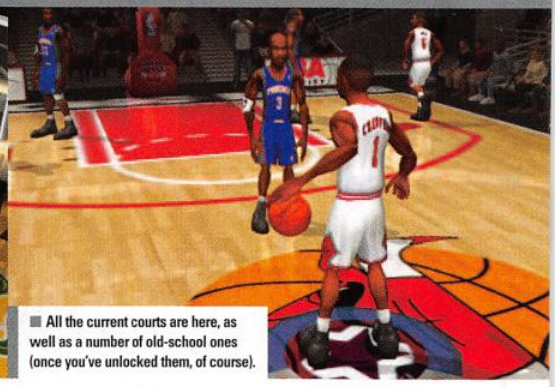
You can hand pick your squad from a pool of 30 skilled operatives, then kit them out yourself or let the computer do it.

# NBA JAM



■ Smashing the backboard might look impressive, but who's going to clean up afterwards, eh? So irresponsible…





■ All the current courts are here, as well as a number of old-school ones (once you've unlocked them, of course).

## OR WOULD YOU PREFER A GOOD CHUNKY MARMALADE INSTEAD?

**Ah, nostalgia – nothing beats looking back at your past and picking out the best bits.** In terms of sports games, we'd probably have to highlight playing *NBA Jam* on the SNES; for blistering basketball action with your mates (usually involving lots of shouting), it simply couldn't be beaten. Of course, the SNES games were basically ports of the Midway arcade titles, which were really rather good. But since Midway turned the licence over to Acclaim, the games have been on a slippery downward slope.

Thankfully, it looks like Acclaim has learnt a few lessons since the dog-awful *NBA Jam* titles on the Saturn, PSone and N64 – the latest game in the series goes back to its Midway roots and tries to reclaim the classic gameplay in the process. The results so far appear to be relatively successful and are certainly quite a lot of fun to play, at least in terms of recapturing the essence of what made the original so enjoyable.

In case you don't already know, *NBA Jam* falls slap in the middle of the arcade/realism divide – while it retains all the basketball aesthetics that games like *NBA Street 2* have shunned (like proper sports kit, real indoor arenas and a very small handful of rules), it still focuses on arcade-style action. Essentially, what this means is that it's a cut-down version of the sport with as much over-the-top action as Acclaim could squeeze into it; and with three players to a team, small courts and a massive range of excessive dunks, you're guaranteed a fast-paced game every time.

Not surprisingly, a return to the series' roots means that while the graphics have been suitably improved, everything is pretty much as it was in the original arcade games – from setting your players 'on fire' and shoving the opposition on its arse to having the same commentator. There are, however, some additions too, such as the Jam meter (which builds up to reveal your team's high-scoring 'sweet spot' on court) and a Legends tournament that allows you unlock the great ballers of old, plus the opportunity to create your own players.

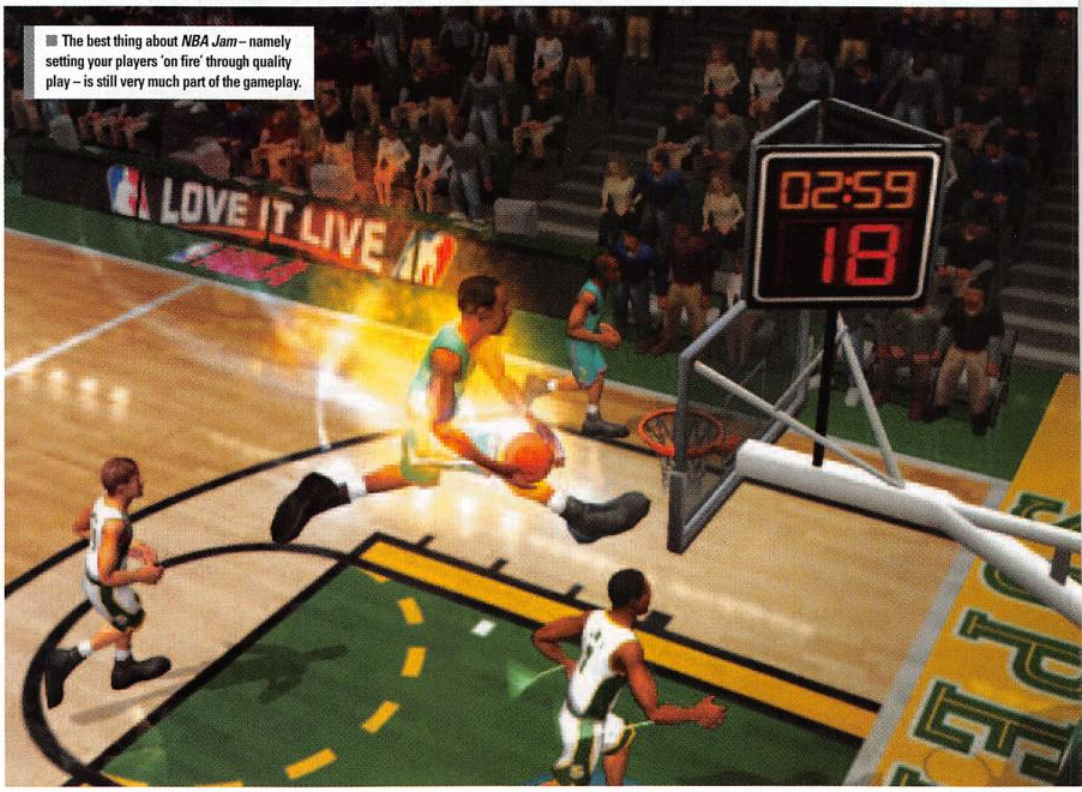
This kick in the pants is exactly what the series needed and we just hope that in a time where *NBA Street 2* rules the roost, it's not just going to be old-school gamers who'll be jammin'…

**"THIS IS ONE FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT THE FEEL OF BASKETBALL BUT DON'T CARE MUCH FOR THE RULES"**

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT:** PS2, Xbox, GameCube
**ORIGIN:** US
**PUBLISHER:** Acclaim
**DEVELOPER:** Acclaim Studios Austin
**RELEASE:** November '03
**GENRE:** Sports
**PLAYERS:** 1-4

■ Acclaim returns again with an update of the classic *NBA Jam* series, but can it still play with the big boys?

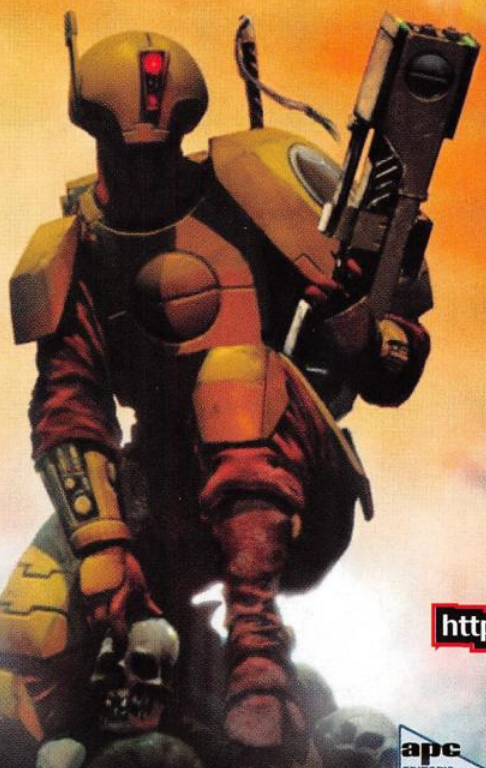



■ The best thing about *NBA Jam* – namely setting your players 'on fire' through quality play – is still very much part of the gameplay.

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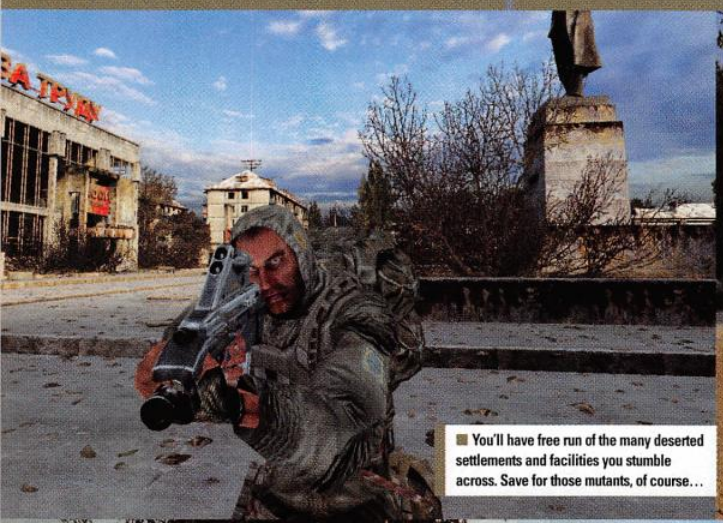
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# S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: OBLIVION LOST



You'll have free run of the many deserted settlements and facilities you stumble across. Save for those mutants, of course…



The serene outdoor settings contrast starkly with the gritty industrial areas where the trouble first started.



It was a long and arduous battle but our gallant hero finally took down the mutated scaffold beast. Or something.

**"THE PLAYER WILL START AS A STALKER NEWBIE WHO BEGINS TO EXPLORE THE ZONE AND WILL DISCOVER ITS HIDDEN DANGERS"**

*THQ PRESS RELEASE*

**VIDEOGAMES MATHS**

**S.T.A.L.K.E.R. – THE SCARY SIDE OF SCIENCE**




EXTERMINATION | FALLOUT | NUCLEAR FREAKS | S.T.A.L.K.E.R.

## COMPANY PROFILE

■ Formed in 1995, it wasn't until two years later that Ukraine-based GSC Game World came around to its true calling. With a growing and respectable PC catalogue to its name, the firm is looking for a game to raise its profile and it could well have found it in *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.*

## HISTORY

- **COSSACKS: ART OF WAR** 2002 [PC]
- **CODENAME OUTBREAK** 2001 [PC]
- **COSSACKS: EUROPEAN WARS** 2001 [PC]

# NUCLEAR DISASTERS AREN'T ALL BAD, Y'KNOW...

**DETAILS**
**FORMAT:** PC
**ORIGIN:** Ukraine
**PUBLISHER:** THQ
**DEVELOPER:** GSC Game World
**RELEASE:** Q1 '04
**GENRE:** FPS
**PLAYERS:** 1-TBC

■ A first-person shooter from a relatively unknown source isn't usually cause for celebration, but this free-roaming post-nuclear effort certainly stands out from the crowd. And no, it's not just mutated...

**Despite being mostly lethal, radiation has something of a reputation for making the impossible, well, possible.** From countless Hollywood appearances to its birthing of half of the Marvel universe in one way or another, the media has glamorised the nuclear threat. And while most of us are in no direct danger from it, there are plenty out there who know the fear first-hand. As games like *Fallout* have proved, this fear both of the impending threat and aftermath can make for a great game setting as well as presenting true suspense and some unique enemies that are able to bend the rules a little.

Much of the literature regarding *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.* makes constant reference to an area called the Zone – this is the area surrounding the Chernobyl nuclear power plant where a large-scale accident has occurred six years prior to the start of the game. Naturally, this area is quickly cordoned off but the authorities are powerless to stop the adventurers determined to retrieve any items imbued with strange properties. You take the role of one such raider, overcoming the resistance of military and mutants alike to stake your claim on the unknown wealth that lies in the restricted area. Suffice to say that it's not only the inanimate things that have been changed by the fallout...

Using the X-Ray engine, GSC has managed to achieve a much more natural look than in many shooters, particularly with its external areas which employ realistic foliage and weather effects to spectacular effect. Trees and grass impress far more than the cardboard cut-outs and flat green textures we're all too used to from less ambitious titles, and the sheer fact that each of these actually serves a purpose as well as looking pretty (the game's wildlife makes its home just about anywhere) just makes it even more impressive. Although it probably won't come on that much further, we're really looking forward to seeing just how good the finished article will look on a monster PC.

The real ace up *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.*'s sleeve is its freedom – with 30 square kilometres of the nuclear aftermath rendered and given life (both natural and otherwise), you'll have your work cut out scouring the entire area. GSC is keen to push the benefits of the life simulation system too, so this huge expanse will be populated by countless animals as well as less natural creatures, all of which will have their own agendas and intelligence which can be plainly seen even at this early stage. None of it is just for show, either – if you fear that some of the little critters may be contaminated or you just plain don't like them, the many firearms you'll stumble across can be used to terminate the little (and not so little) guys.

The FPS genre is undeniably crowded and tough to break into, but we've been impressed with every aspect of *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.* so far. With its dreams of being the next big thing and a surprising amount of innovation and attention to detail, GSC is clearly going all out to give the PC market something to look forward to when the *Half-Life 2* frenzy has died down.

## FREE FOR ALL

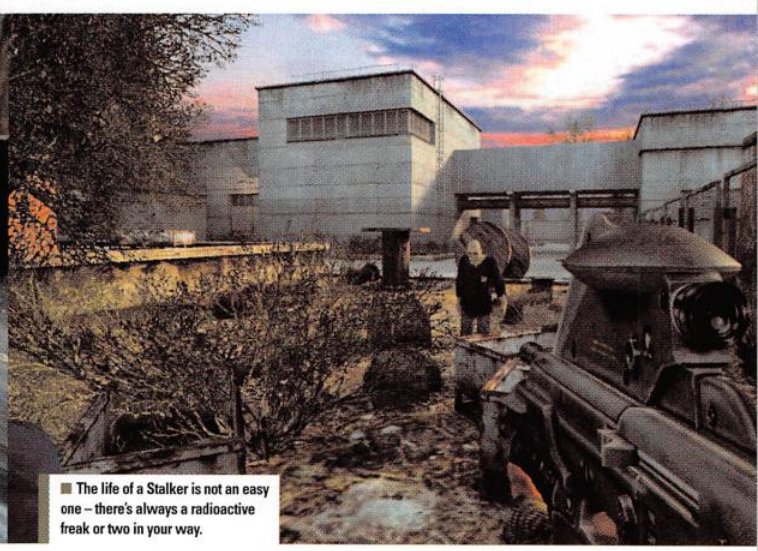
**Arguably *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.*'s biggest selling point is that the player is free to explore the surroundings of Chernobyl at their leisure. Even from these screens you can pick out areas where this freedom would come into its own. The promise also remains that all the while the game's story will be driven forward depending on the player's actions until you eventually end up with one of eight unique finales. We're particularly looking forward to the Toxic Crusader ending...**



**"GSC HAS MANAGED TO ACHIEVE A MUCH MORE NATURAL LOOK THAN IN MANY SHOOTERS"**



■ As is now customary, you'll be able to hijack any disused vehicles you find on your travels.

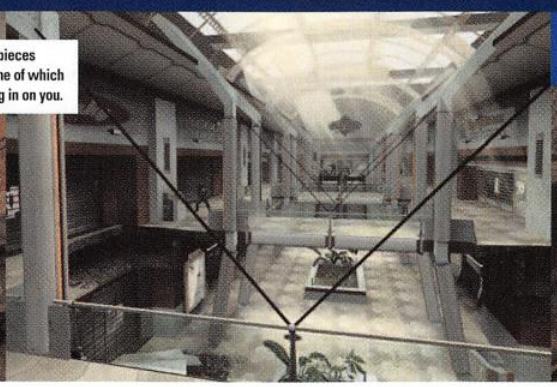


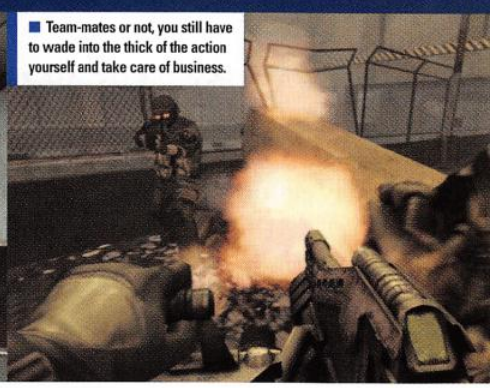
■ The life of a Stalker is not an easy one – there's always a radioactive freak or two in your way.

# KILLZONE



There are various set pieces throughout the game, some of which include enemies dropping in on you.





Team-mates or not, you still have to wade into the thick of the action yourself and take care of business.

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT:** PlayStation2
**ORIGIN:** Netherlands
**PUBLISHER:** Sony
**DEVELOPER:** Guerilla Studios
**RELEASE:** Q3 '04
**GENRE:** FPS
**PLAYERS:** 1 (Multiplayer TBA)

The trump card up Sony's sleeve relies on intense action, team-work and frantic gunplay to deliver the goods.

## HALO SCHMALO – SONY ATTEMPTS TO TAKE THINGS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

**It used to be known as *Kin*, Sony has touted it as a *Halo* beater and it's been kept under wraps away from prying eyes.** But finally, Guerilla Studios has relented and allowed the world a peek under the covers of its first ever project – a team FPS that's been in the works for nearly two years.

Essentially a story of interplanetary war, you play four soldiers trying to protect Earth from the militaristic Helghast forces after a bomb attack on a human colony. Control is restricted to one member of the squad while the remainder of the team is AI-driven, retreating from fire if they take heavy damage but battling alongside you whenever possible. The soldiers all have different attributes with one being skilled at stealth and sniping, one being a commando type that can handle heavy weaponry and so on. You'll face different challenges and experiences depending on which character you pick, so the incentive is there to play through the game again.

The plot may sound more camp sci-fi than all-out war, but plasma guns and aliens are nowhere to be seen. Guerilla has eschewed a futuristic theme and turned instead to real-life conflicts such as the battle of the Somme and Vietnam, keeping *Killzone* gritty and realistic. The in-game artillery reinforces this view, with 21 weapons available including grenades, rocket launchers and mini-guns. Set pieces such as collapsing bridges and enemies dropping in from helicopters are strewn throughout the game, so it feels as though you've been thrown into the middle of a chaotic war. What this all adds up to is a game that's high on action but requires some tactical thought, as well as using your team-mates to full advantage. Not surprisingly, *Killzone* will also ship with an online mode, though Sony's currently keeping quiet over what this might feature.

Obviously, it's still too early to say if *Killzone* will live up to its lofty ambitions – there are still some issues to sort out, such as the fogging and a sludgy frame rate, plus we're too jaded from overly-hyped titles in the past to believe anything until we've actually sat down and played it more thoroughly. Regardless though, Sony has high hopes for this game, so you can no doubt expect to be hearing a lot more about *Killzone* before it hits the shelves next year.



The jungle settings are reminiscent of Vietnam, except the war is now between the Earth-loyal ISA and the Helghast.

**"KILLZONE IS USING EVERY TRICK FROM SET PIECES TO CLEVER TEAM AI TO RECREATE SEAT-OF-YOUR-PANTS SKIRMISHES"**

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| Nokia 7210: | 1060 |
| Nokia 7250i: | 1070 |
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22000


22003



22001



22006



22004



22002



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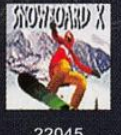
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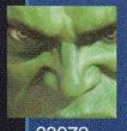
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### RAP/HIP-HOP/RnB

| | |
|---|---|
| Without Me - **Eminem** | 15019 |
| Bonnie and Clyde - **Jay-Z & Beyonce** | 15024 |
| Lose Yourself - **Eminem** | 15012 |
| Ice Ice Baby - **Vanilla Ice** | 15102 |
| California Love - **2Pac** | 15043 |
| 8 Mile Road - **Eminem** | 15065 |
| Dilemma - **Nelly ft. Kelly Rowland** | 15084 |
| Sing for the Moment - **Eminem** | 15067 |
| Murder Was The Case - **Snoop Dogg** | 15405 |
| Get Busy - **Sean Paul** | 15401 |
| Remix to Ignition - **R Kelly** | 15397 |
| Mundian to bach - **Punjabi MC** | 15396 |

### ROCK/ALTERNATIVE

| | |
|---|---|
| No One Knows - **QOTSA** | 15138 |
| She Hates Me - **Puddle of Mudd** | 15137 |
| Scar Tissue - **RedHotChiliPeppers** | 15153 |
| Praise You - **Fat Boy Slim** | 15152 |
| In The End - **Linkin Park** | 15033 |
| Beautiful People - **Marilyn Manson** | 15081 |
| Enter Sandman - **Metallica** | 15022 |
| Bittersweet Symphony - **The Verve** | 15027 |
| Unwell - **Matchbox 20** | 15381 |
| Sanitarium - **Metallica** | 15384 |
| Sunday Bloody Sunday - **U2** | 15416 |

### POP/DANCE

| | |
|---|---|
| Jenny from the Block - **Jennifer Lopez** | 15125 |
| Just a Little - **Liberty X** | 15128 |
| One More Time - **Daft Punk** | 15116 |
| Sweetest Thing - **U2** | 15036 |
| 1000 Miles - **Vanessa Carlton** | 15101 |
| Big Yellow Taxi - **Counting Crows** | 15017 |
| The Ketchup Song - **Las Ketchup** | 15080 |
| Can't Get U Out of My Head - **Kylie** | 15034 |
| All the Things She Said - **t.A.T.u** | 15013 |
| Cry Me A River - **Justin Timberlake** | 15014 |
| The Logical Song - **Scooter** | 15093 |
| Sandstorm - **Darude** | 15062 |
| Shiny Disco Balls - **Who Da Funk** | 15030 |
| Children - **Robert Miles** | 15139 |
| Boom Boom - **Venga Boys** | 15418 |
| Sing It Back - **Moloko** | 15387 |
| Stuck In The UK - **Planet Funk** | 15393 |

### TV/FILM THEMES

| | |
|---|---|
| Mission Impossible - **Theme** | 15021 |
| Simpsons - **Theme** | 15015 |
| Beverly Hills Cop - **Theme** | 15026 |
| Rocky - **Theme [Survivor]** | 15037 |
| Sex & the City - **Theme** | 15010 |
| The Muppets - **Theme** | 15035 |
| X-Files - **Theme** | 15109 |
| Hawaii 5-0 - **Theme** | 15020 |
| Mission Impossible - **Theme** | 15016 |
| Topgun - **Theme** | 15042 |
| You're The 1 That I Want - **Grease** | 15074 |
| Deep Space 9 - **Star Trek** | 15406 |
| Terminator 3 - **Theme** | 15411 |
| Superman - **Theme** | 15409 |

### 80's/RETRO

| | |
|---|---|
| Sweet Home Alabama - **Lynyrd Skynyrd** | 15041 |
| Billie Jean - **Michael Jackson** | 15082 |
| Brown-Eyed Girl - **Van Morrison** | 15039 |
| Tainted Love - **Soft Cell** | 15096 |
| Sweet Child o Mine - **Guns n' Roses** | 15038 |
| 'm Too Sexy - **Right Said Fred** | 15091 |
| I Will Survive - **Gloria Gaynor** | 15072 |
| Tubular Bells - **Mike Oldfield** | 15135 |
| Superstition - **Stevie Wonder** | 15156 |
| Love Me Two Times - **The Doors** | 15412 |
| Golden Brown - **Stranglers** | 15407 |
| Call Me Al - **Paul Simon** | 15390 |
| Bad - **Michael Jackson** | 15385 |
| Like A Virgin - **Madonna** | 15379 |
| We Are Family - **Sister Sledge** | 15403 |

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In Da Club - **50 Cent** .....15011


Bring Me 2 Life - **Evanescence**..15212



Eye of the Tiger - Theme, Rocky 3 **Survivor**.....15212


Beyonce - **Crazy in Love**..15430



Black Eyed Peas - **Where is the Love?**.15444

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# JAK II: RENEGADE

## JAK'S GONE ALL TOMMY VERCETTI ON US...

**DETAILS**
**FORMAT:** PlayStation2
**ORIGIN:** US
**PUBLISHER:** Sony
**DEVELOPER:** Naughty Dog
**RELEASE:** Q4 '03
**GENRE:** Platform/Adventure
**PLAYERS:** 1

■ Top-notch platform action meets the epic *Vice City* framework in Jak and Daxter's new genre-blurring adventure.

**After enjoying Naughty Dog's first Jak and Daxter game, we've been waiting for a sequel. And as details have begun to leak, we've been left intrigued as to how the multitude of promised new features would come together in the finished game.** Well, having got hold of a preview version of *Jak II: Renegade* and given it a spin, we now have a much better idea of just how impressive the duo's latest adventure is shaping up to be.

The game makes an excellent first impression thanks to the stunning quality of the visuals, tightly knitted together with some delightfully smooth animation. Character models are noticeably cleaner than before, but the real attractions are the stunningly detailed environments that become gorgeously drenched with sophisticated lighting effects as the dynamic day-to-night cycle ticks by.

Yet while the elaborate graphical revamp helps to set *Jak II: Renegade* apart from the crowd, a host of unorthodox gameplay elements and distinctly darker themes defy the genre's traditions even further. In fact, although we were quick to draw parallels between several of the game's new features and the *Grand Theft Auto* series, we weren't prepared for just how much inspiration Naughty Dog has obviously taken from the likes of *Vice City*.

While Jak's all-new ability to hijack any passing vehicle that takes his fancy or go on unprovoked killing sprees around the bustling city streets brings to mind the exploits of Tommy Vercetti, the resemblance doesn't stop there. As with Rockstar's crime epic you'll constantly find yourself taking care not to arouse any unwanted interest from the patrolling police while roaming the sprawling city streets (between taking missions from your various contacts, admiring the shifting weather conditions and even wielding a devastating arsenal of firearms).

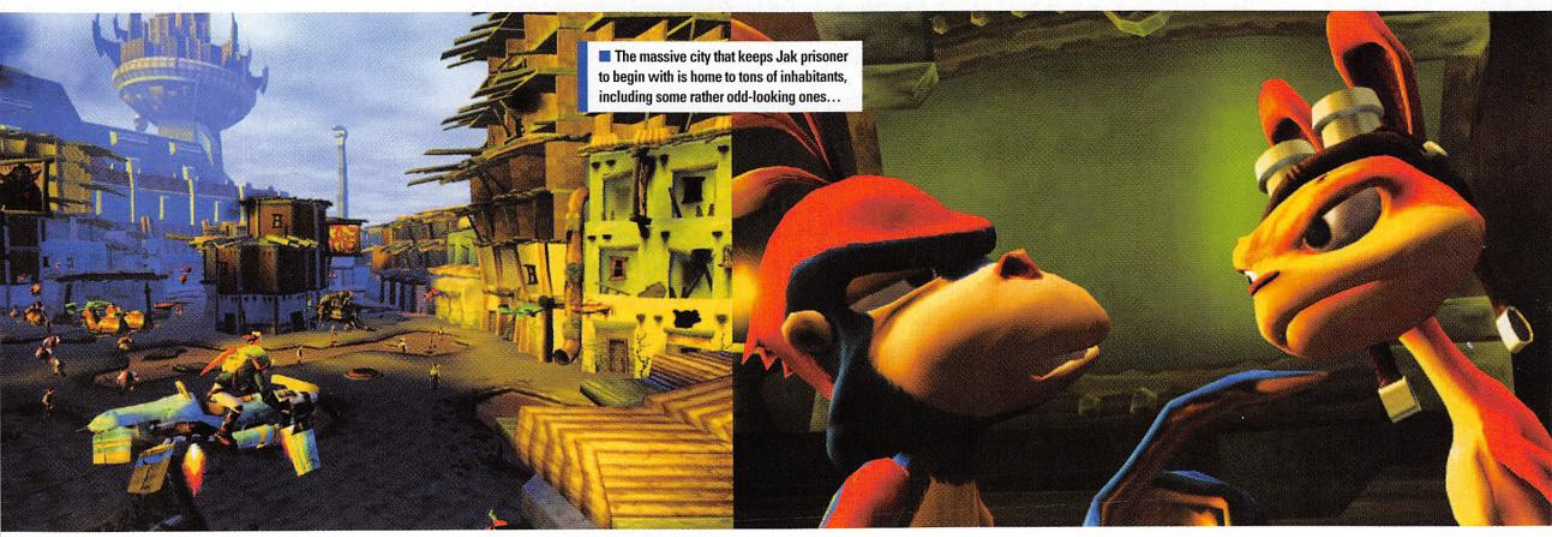
Fans of the original outing will undoubtedly be left wondering how such a radical departure from the conventional sugar-coated platform recipe came about. The opening cut-scene holds all the answers as we see Jak being separated from his furry orange companion and escorted to a secret military research facility. Here he remains imprisoned for the next two years undergoing all manner of experiments until Daxter finally catches up with his old pal and stages a daring rescue. Unfortunately, Jak has been pumped so full of the mysterious Dark Eco that his personality is virtually unrecognisable. Exacting a bloody vengeance on his captors is all he seems to care about, hence the far grittier edge to his actions and his complete lack of respect for the laws of the land.

It might seem like a strange marriage of concepts, but mixing the quality platform action of the first game with the ambitious framework of *Vice City* actually builds on the basics rather effectively. The various gameplay styles Naughty Dog likes to combine in its platform titles are gelled together into a more wholesome and continuous adventure by the seamless *GTA*-style context. Purist platform gamers may argue that the game ventures too far outside the genre's boundaries, but since each element is served with such panache and attention to detail the overall package just might have enough quality to make *Jak II* a deserved mainstream hit.

### ALTERED BEAST

**All that Dark Eco has turned the Jak we know and love into a different man altogether. He's visibly meaner than before and, much like The Hulk, can accumulate enough rage to transform into a more destructive alter ego. The inclusion of guns also adds a whole new dimension to the traditional gameplay, while our hero's new attitude makes controlling him a rather different experience. Thankfully, Daxter returns as his usual hyperactive self and helps keep humour levels up amidst the bleaker context by playing the wisecracking clown to Jak's deeply troubled straight man.**

**"A HOST OF UNORTHODOX GAMEPLAY ELEMENTS AND DISTINCTLY DARKER THEMES DEFY THE GENRE'S TRADITIONS"**



■ The massive city that keeps Jak prisoner to begin with is home to tons of inhabitants, including some rather odd-looking ones...



## COMPANY PROFILE

■ Despite developing games since the mid Eighties, Naughty Dog had to wait a decade before hitting the big time with Sony's flagship PSone platformer, *Crash Bandicoot*. Naughty Dog's first PS2 outing, *Jak And Daxter*, also proved a huge hit and paved the way for an ambitious sequel.

## HISTORY

- **JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY** 2001 [PS2]
- **CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED** 2001 [PSone]
- **CRASH BANDICOOT** 1996 [PSone]

**"JAK II: RENEGADE PROVIDES FAR MORE FREEDOM AND IMMERSION THAN GAMERS HAVE EXPERIENCED BEFORE"**

*JASON RUBIN, PRESIDENT, NAUGHTY DOG*

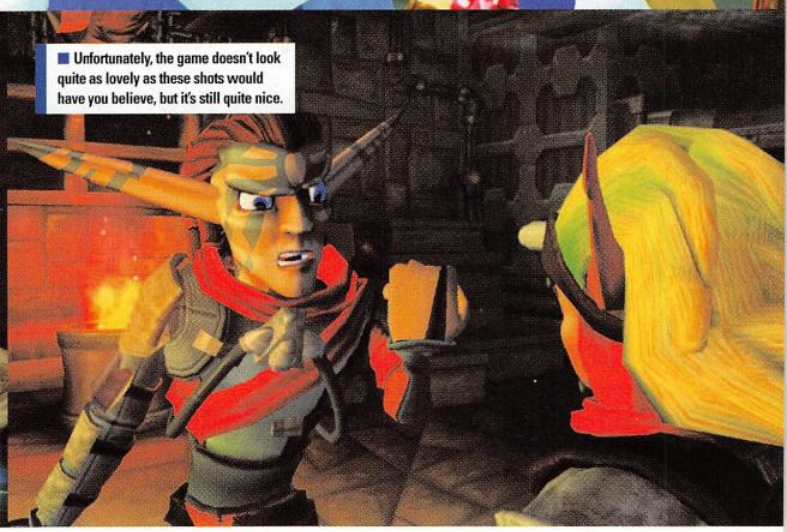
### VIDEOGAMES MATHS

**NAUGHTY BY NAME...**



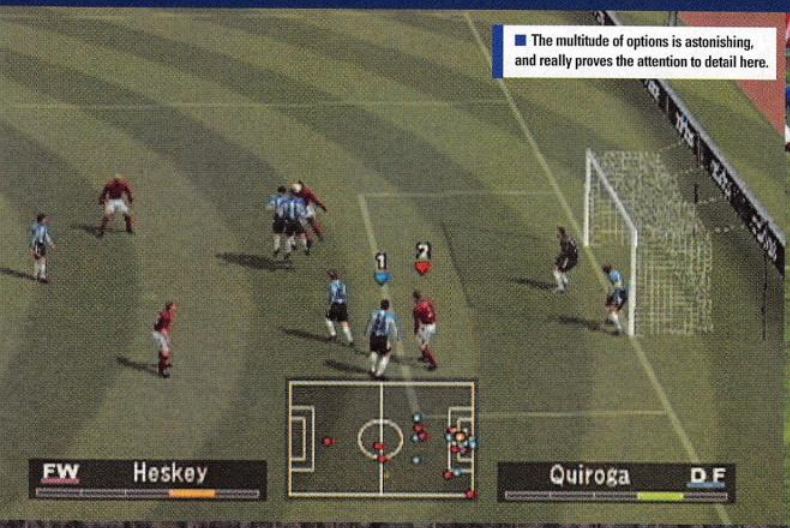

JAK | BAD ATTITUDE | VICE CITY | JAK II: RENEGADE



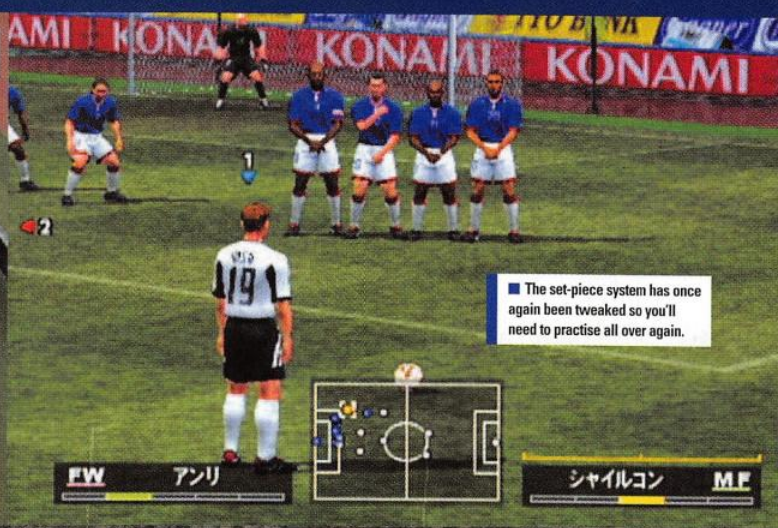


■ Unfortunately, the game doesn't look quite as lovely as these shots would have you believe, but it's still quite nice.

# PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3




The multitude of options is astonishing, and really proves the attention to detail here.




The set-piece system has once again been tweaked so you'll need to practise all over again.




**VIDEOGAMES MATHS**

**CONTINUING TO EVOLVE THE PES SERIES**



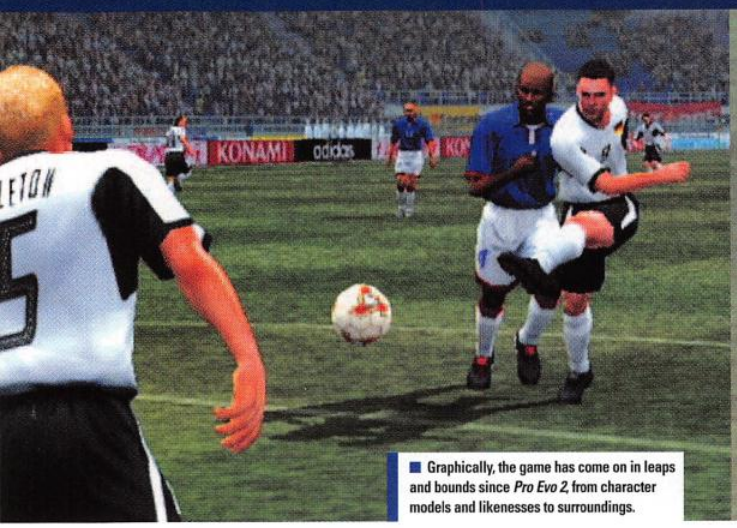

**"PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 REPRESENTS A MAMMOTH STEP FORWARD FOR THE SERIES, WITH EVERY ASPECT REWORKED"**

*KONAMI PRESS RELEASE*

# PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3
PLAYSTATION2

## COMPANY PROFILE
■ Konami's catalogue is enough to shame many developers and publishers, featuring numerous genre-defining titles and some of the most popular current series. Founded way back in 1973, Konami's experience within the industry has become increasingly apparent over recent years and continues to make it a key player.

## HISTORY
- **DANCING STAGE MEGAMIX** 2003 [PS2]
- **AZURE DREAMS** 1997 [PSone]
- **GRADIUS** 1998 [NES]



■ Graphically, the game has come on in leaps and bounds since *Pro Evo 2*, from character models and likenesses to surroundings.


■ Not something you see every day, but now you can adjust referee leniency. Perhaps one day, maybe...

HOW MUCH MORE EVOLUTION CAN THERE BE? NOT THAT WE'RE ARGUING...

**With every instalment in Konami's consistently impressive *Pro Evolution* series – from its humble *ISS* origins to recent *Winning Eleven* glories – we've seen an experience rapidly approaching realism both visually and in terms of accuracy.** The series' PS2 exclusivity in the PAL territories has been the bane of many a single console owner's gaming life, and while we'd kill (no, we would) for an Xbox Live version, its spiritual home will always be the PS2. Somehow the series has managed to escape the 'same game, different name' branding of many similar titles and there's only one reason for this – Konami puts so much into this series that each game stands up perfectly well as a unique title.

Unsurprisingly, we've had *Winning Eleven 7* (*Pro Evolution*'s Eastern sister series) since it was unleashed upon Japan and it just seems to improve with every match – showcasing a level of fluidity and style that places it in a league of its own, this will probably be the closest the two franchises have been yet. From initial impressions, many of the issues with *PES2* and *WE6* have been sorted out and the addition of advantage and handball rules, as well as some improvements to the existing rulebook, has made for a much more lifelike re-creation. Even more impressively, the oft-forgotten PAL territories are getting a special treat with *Pro Evo 3* – Konami has said that it won't suffer from the occasional slowdown and stuttering of the Japanese version. Potentially, we could see the *Pro Evolution* series outdo its Eastern counterpart for the first time, something we'd never expected but would like to see all the same.

Despite the fact that this is a series that gets regularly updated, Konami still manages to add enough new features and playability to each follow-up to keep them surprisingly fresh. This time around, a more complex and managerial Master League is one of the best features, but better still is the number of smaller improvements. The ability to play club teams versus nationals, optional manual goalkeeping, fixed player assignment (which helps prevent large multiplayer sessions from getting too scrappy) and some properly licensed teams and kits all add to the already impressive package but, sadly, online play which was hinted at by several Japanese previews of the game has failed to emerge – a horrible string of misunderstandings had us longing for something we were never to receive.

To the untrained eye, *Pro Evo 3* may seem an awful lot like more of the same but, as we've said, you'll really need to devote a lot of time and effort to this if you're to learn the full extent of its augmentation. Fears that the tricks and skills would result a turn for the worse in terms of gameplay have proved unfounded – most of the new moves are simply new animations for receiving or playing the ball that give the game that much more flair and class. This is clearly not a game cursed by vanity either, and to say that its gameplay matches its appearance would be a drastic understatement.

Of course, most of our experience so far has been with the Japanese version of the game but our taste of an early PAL version has confirmed one thing – this is looking like the kind of game that will sell consoles.

**DETAILS**
**FORMAT:** PlayStation2
**ORIGIN:** Japan
**PUBLISHER:** Atari
**DEVELOPER:** Konami
**RELEASE:** November '03
**GENRE:** Sport
**PLAYERS:** 1-8

■ Konami takes football one step further as the *PES* series evolves.

## SHOPPING AROUND
**One of the most obvious new additions to the *Pro Evolution/ Winning Eleven* series is the inclusion of the Shop – a wonderful place where your hard-earned currency can be put to good use buying extra kits, players and even teams to make the game that much sweeter. Now you'll need to play through those cups and leagues more than just once if you want access to every unlockable. These extras range from the expected (additional teams and Master League players) to some slightly more bizarre new features – ball trails, Edit mode parts and new transfer options all lie in wait for the persistent player.**

**"PES3 SHOWCASES A LEVEL OF FLUIDITY AND STYLE THAT PLACES IT IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN"**

# TIME CRISIS 3




■ Facing a large crowd of enemies can prove tough, unless you're smart enough to pick out the one piece of scenery that'll explode when shot.

## DON'T THROW AWAY THAT LIGHTGUN JUST YET...

**DETAILS**
**FORMAT:** PlayStation2
**ORIGIN:** Japan
**PUBLISHER:** Sony
**DEVELOPER:** Namco
**RELEASE:** October '03
**GENRE:** Shoot-'em-up
**PLAYERS:** 1-2

■ *Time Crisis 3* gets a home console makeover, complete with all-new modes that add much-needed longevity to the game.

**"DESPITE BEING ALMOST IDENTICAL TO THE LAST GAME, TIME CRISIS 3 LOOKS LIKE IT'LL DO WELL WHEN IT HITS THE SHELVES"**

**It had to happen, didn't it?** Having seen *Time Crisis 3* perform fairly well in arcades, it doesn't come as much of a surprise that the game is set to land on the PS2 come the end of the year. If you've got a G-Con 2 then this should come as good news – you can at least be glad there's something else to play now besides dodgy *Resident Evil* blasters (*Dead Aim* excepted, that is).

Of course, there's one pitfall that plagues all gun games: they're great in the arcades, where you just want to drop your coins and start shooting, but as a hundred-dollar home console game, they're a different proposition. With a PS2 release now a reality, we stick by our opinion that as the arcade game stands, we'd be loath to pay full price for it. Still, Namco is doing its best to ensure that there is enough replay value in the package to command more than five minutes of your precious playing time.

So, what extras will you get for the equivalent of 50 credits in your local arcade? Quite a lot actually, though you'll have to work hard to get your hands on any of it. With only five credits available from the outset and even the easiest difficulty proving a challenge, finishing the game isn't going to be easy – but it's the only way to unlock any of the extra modes (though no doubt Namco has ramped up the difficulty as another way of increasing the longevity).

Should you manage to complete the game, you'll find the return of the Crisis Missions from *Time Crisis 2* – specific objectives that have to be completed within a strict time limit – as well as a new mode entitled Rescue Mission. It's here that Namco has gone out on a limb to introduce a new concept to the *Time Crisis* mix, in the form of sniper rifle gameplay; think *Silent Scope* but with *Time Crisis* elements and you'll get the gist.

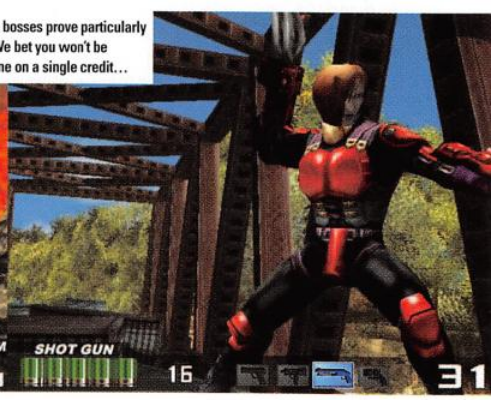
While we're not entirely convinced that the *Time Crisis* series has evolved enough since last time, there's no denying that the PS2 needs a good gun game – and *Time Crisis 3* is at least fun to play. Let's hope G-Con 2 owners feel the same way when the game comes out.

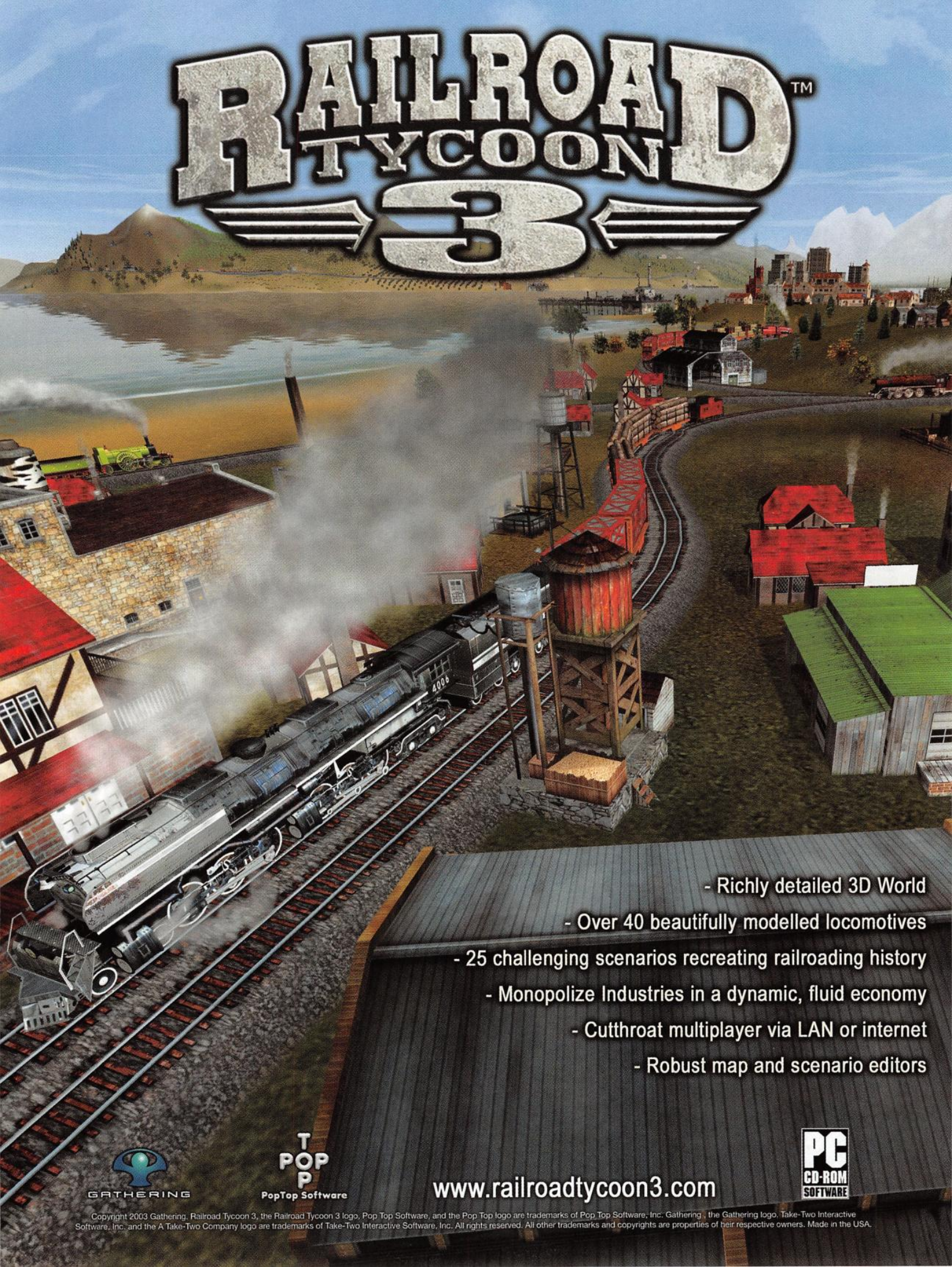



■ From this range, you can hardly miss – one well-placed shotgun blast and you'll take out everyone on screen.



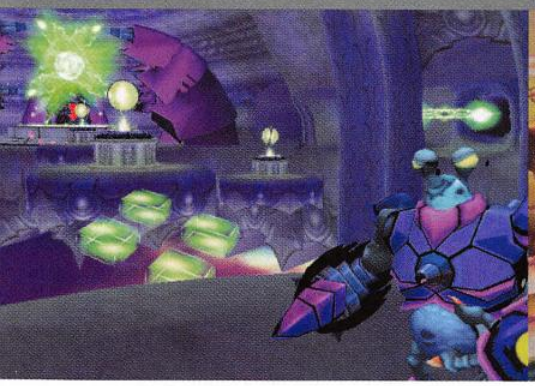

■ Some of the bosses prove particularly troublesome. We bet you won't be finishing this one on a single credit...

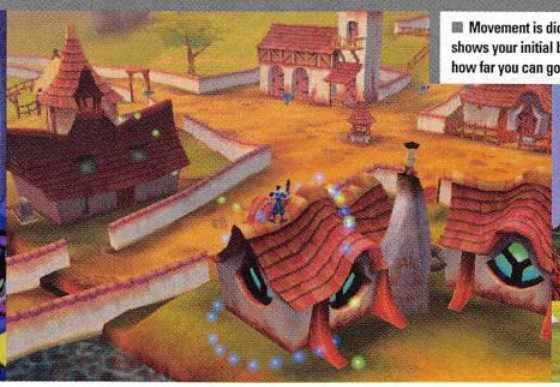





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# PILLAGE







Movement is dictated by the glowing circles – green shows your initial boundaries, while blue indicates how far you can go after you've fired your weapon.

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT:** PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PC
**ORIGIN:** UK
**PUBLISHER:** TBA
**DEVELOPER:** Zed Two
**RELEASE:** TBA
**GENRE:** Arcade/Strategy
**PLAYERS:** 1-4

■ Strategy action with a unique twist – *Pillage* is a game that sounds slightly odd but plays really well. Now if only someone would consider releasing it...

## WANTED: PUBLISHER FOR STRATEGY ACTION GAME. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

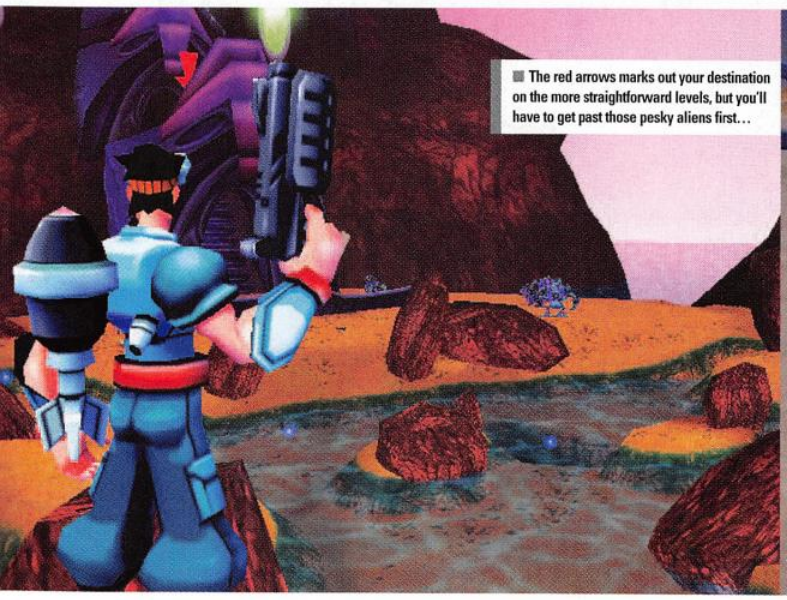
**Game development is a fickle business.** With games fanatics constantly complaining about the lack of original titles being released, and game publishers unwilling to take a risk on something even slightly different for fear of it flopping and losing them money, a smaller but more adventurous developer like Zed Two is left in a bit of a bind. Despite coming up with some great ideas for a game, the lack of a publisher leaves it floundering before the finish line and, unfortunately, that's exactly the situation in which *Pillage* finds itself.

While you might not be able to tell from the screenshots, *Pillage* has a number of similarities with Konami's cult classic RPG *Vandal Hearts* and, to a lesser extent, Team 17's *Worms* series. Yes, it's a strange combination but one that's totally justified; with plenty of RPG stylings when it comes to enhancing the abilities of your team, and a strong focus on turn-based character movement and combat, *Pillage* has several strings to its bow. The problem is, it's the kind of game that most people would ignore if told about it – it's only once you sit down and play it that you stand any chance of the penny actually dropping.

The story of the game – mysterious monsters with a strange regenerative power descend on an innocent land, and only you can stop them – serves only as a precursor to the turn-based action. As hero Low, it's your job to lead a team of two to five people across 19 different stages, although your objectives change depending on the situation; you might have to reach a certain location within a stage, defend a stronghold from invading armies or destroy all the monsters before the time limit runs out. How you do it, though, remains a constant – you can perform a combination of moves and attacks with each of your team-mates in any one turn, before leaving them in one of three states (Heal, Defend or Neutral) and watching the enemy retaliate.

Like we said, it's a lot like *Worms* – only with a point to it. It's also great fun, which is exactly what you want from a game. Of course, whether you'll actually get to try it for yourself all depends on a plucky publisher stepping forward. Let's hope someone's feeling brave.

**"PILLAGE SOUNDS A BIT ODD, BUT PLAY IT AND YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO PUT IT DOWN"**



■ The red arrows marks out your destination on the more straightforward levels, but you'll have to get past those pesky aliens first...



# BOKTAI: THE SUN IS IN YOUR HAND



As in the *Metal Gear* series, you can tap on walls to distract enemies.

## THE SUN ALWAYS SHINES ON GBA

**DETAILS**
**FORMAT:** GBA
**ORIGIN:** Japan
**PUBLISHER:** Atari
**DEVELOPER:** Konami
**RELEASE:** April '04 (Japan/US: Out Now)
**GENRE:** RPG
**PLAYERS:** 1

Konami plays its innovation card once more, this time with a GBA adventure that uses sunlight to fight off the undead.

**"INNOVATION ASIDE, BOKTAI IS STILL A VERY INTERESTING AND ENJOYABLE ADVENTURE"**

**For years, gamers have been portrayed as pale-skinned, sun-shy recluses who spend much of their time staring into a screen.** Obviously, some of us do fall into this category, but as mobile gaming continues to grow in popularity, gamers the world over can be seen to whip out Game Boys or kick back with phone games absolutely anywhere. In a stroke of genius, Konami is capitalising on this mobility by releasing the first GBA title to have a solar cell built into the cartridge. *Boktai* uses the cell to absorb sunlight to power the guns in a game that's filled with creatures of the night – the sun proves to be a powerful ally against these shady foes.

Even from the early stages of the game, there are plenty of nods to another Konami series – the one that made Solid Snake a household name, no less. Stealth proves as useful a tool as light and the main character has a few moves that make sneaking around much easier. It makes sense to play evasively when the cartridge isn't exposed to light, but even when solar power is on your side certain situations can be tackled better by simply sneaking past them.

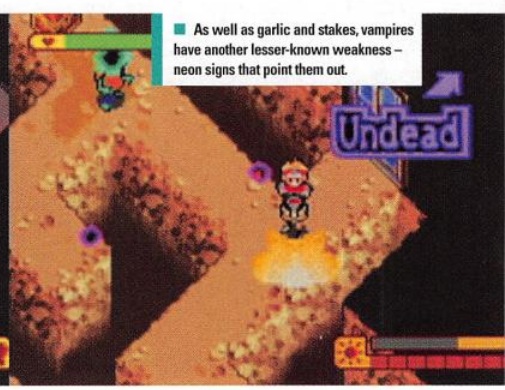
The way in which the system works is simple – the more the cartridge is exposed to natural light, the quicker your ammunition recharges. When fully illuminated, you're able to fire to your heart's content, but as soon as you lose your light source you need to start thinking more about conservation.

From what we've seen so far, *Boktai* showcases great style and a good blend of action alongside a unique feature which seems to work really quite well. The RPG-lite system means you'll be able to equip your character as you see fit and the only real concern we have is that of SP compatibility. Where the cartridge was clearly designed with the original GBA in mind, the sensor has more trouble working when sticking towards the player than when facing away. The game itself seems solid enough – there's little like it on the GBA and with the right marketing (the great publicity short shown at E3 got a lot of people talking), *Boktai* should do very well indeed.



These trap rooms aren't unlocked until you've dealt with all the inhabitants, in this case bats.






As well as garlic and stakes, vampires have another lesser-known weakness – neon signs that point them out.

# TOP SPIN

## BETTER THAN VIRTUA TENNIS? YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS...

**It's over 30 years since *Pong* first made us realise that tennis made for an immensely entertaining videogame concept.** And from what we've played of Microsoft's forthcoming addition to the genre it's a sport that can still deliver some of the most addictive gaming around. Developer Power And Magic has got plenty of tricks up its sleeve to help it dislodge reigning champ *Virtua Tennis* from the top spot in the rankings.

"We really wanted to shoot at total realism in terms of the visuals," explains *Top Spin*'s production director, Stephane Dupas. "We invested a lot of time developing the technology to ensure we had enough textural effects to make hair look different to skin, and enough polygons to have a fully motion-captured 3D crowd – it was important to us that everything looked just like the real thing."

Motion capture sessions with the likes of Lleyton Hewitt, and many gruelling hours studying photos of Anna Kournikova have made *Top Spin* an incredible visual spectacle, but don't expect such unrivalled realism to carry over into the gameplay. "Despite the fact it's so visually realistic, we never wanted to do a complex simulation of tennis," says Dupas. "Our game was always meant to be accessible to an audience larger than just tennis fans, so we tried to find a balance between simulation visuals and arcade-style gameplay."

In fact, the core gameplay dynamics are among the most instantly accessible we've ever witnessed, with a clear focus on delivering exciting rallies rather than replicating the inherent difficulty of the sport. Yet Dupas emphasises *Top Spin*'s efforts to pull off such an arcade style without producing an overly shallow affair. "We felt a lot of frustration with the recent tennis games," he says. "*Virtua Tennis*, for example, is a brilliant game – very easy to pick up, tremendous gameplay, gorgeous graphics and nice animation – but after five hours we got really, really bored of it. Firstly, the actions you can perform are far too limited – tennis is all about surprising your opponent by performing a shot that's not expected, and with only the D-pad and one button it's very difficult to create all of the situations we wanted. With *Top Spin* all the buttons of the pad are used".

While beginners can instantly enjoy some exhilarating rallies and leave feeling like experts in no time, a couple of embarrassing whitewashes at the hands of Dupas himself painfully illustrates the amount of potential gameplay depth to be mastered. For instance, an important feature of more advanced contests is the intriguing 'In The Zone' meter – a product of the in-depth consultations with coaches and professional players who emphasised the psychological nature of the sport. "Basically, the better you play, the *better* you'll play," says Dupas. "Winning points, especially when using risky shots, will eventually put your player 'in the zone'. Tennis is very much a psychological game, so when you're focussed and on top of your game more things seem to fall for you."

While Microsoft is quite rightly touting the massive potential for *Top Spin* to become an online phenomenon, a detailed Career mode ensures players who can't go Live certainly won't be short-changed. It might only be 75 per cent complete, but this is already shaping up to be one of the all-time tennis greats.

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT:** Xbox
**ORIGIN:** France
**PUBLISHER:** Microsoft
**DEVELOPER:** Power And Magic
**RELEASE:** November '03
**GENRE:** Sports
**PLAYERS:** 1-4 (Live compatible)

■ Total visual realism meets thrilling arcade gameplay as the age-old tennis genre gets updated.

### 'SIM NOSE JOB'

**There's a rather odd selection of 16 meticulously modelled pros to choose from along with 16 fictional players, and a further 200 characters from the game's Career mode can be accessed via a random selector. Yet in a bid to give everyone a unique identity for their on- and offline career, the Player Creator interface allows for an incredible degree of customisation. Almost a plastic surgery mini-game in itself, every imaginable contour of the face can be manipulated to your requirements. The level of detail may seem like overkill, but more than 60 close-up animations can be performed to express emotions between points, further shaping your player's image as a whiner or someone who likes to rub their opponent's nose in defeat.**

**"TOP SPIN IS ALREADY SHAPING UP TO BE ONE OF THE ALL-TIME TENNIS GREATS"**






■ Players can expect a constant 60fps whether taking on the computer or competing in a tournament online.



## CONTRIBUTOR PROFILE

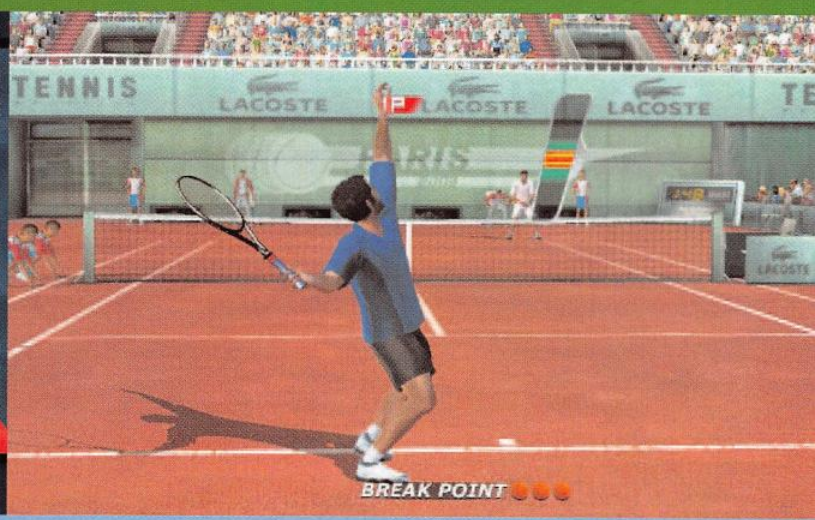
Though still only 22, Lleyton already has 19 major titles under his belt. The former world number one gladly contributed to the *Top Spin* motion capture sessions to ensure his videogame character came complete with his unique playing style and trademark backhand. But will we see 'the snake'?

## HISTORY

- **WIMBLEDON** 2002 [Winner]
- **US OPEN** 2001 [Winner]
- **ADELAIDE** 1998 [Winner]




The in-depth Career mode lets you create a unique-looking player and train them up to suit your style of play.




She may not be such a hot-shot on court, but sticking Miss Kournikova on the box cover should arouse plenty of interest from non-tennis purists.

"OUR GAME WAS ALWAYS MEANT TO BE ACCESSIBLE TO AN AUDIENCE LARGER THAN JUST TENNIS FANS"

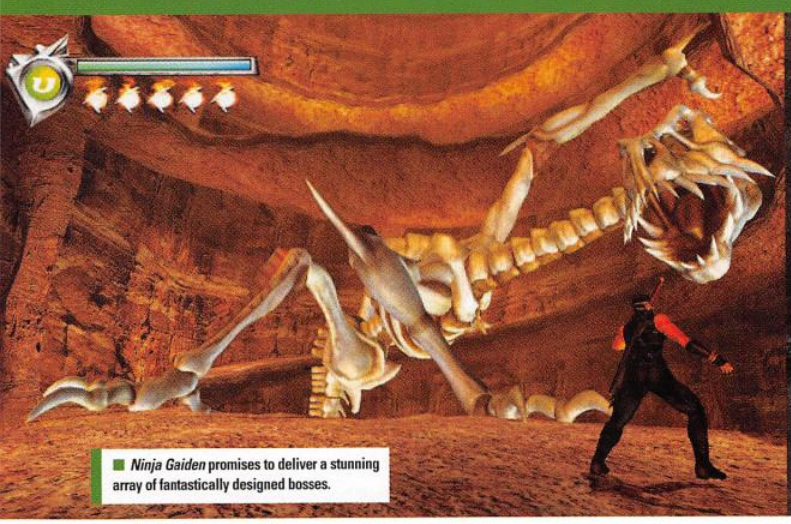
*STEPHANE DUPAS, PRODUCTION DIRECTOR, POWER AND MAGIC*



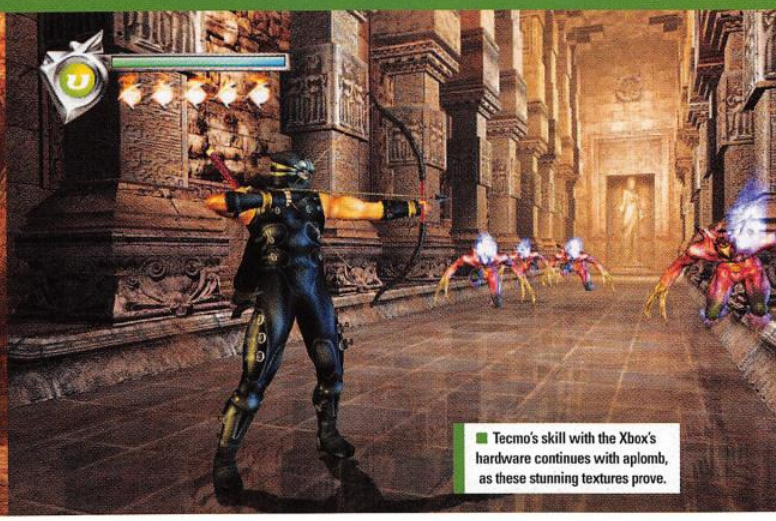

### VIDEOGAMES MATHS

**A NEW WORLD CHAMP?**

# NINJA GAIDEN



■ *Ninja Gaiden* promises to deliver a stunning array of fantastically designed bosses.



■ Tecmo's skill with the Xbox's hardware continues with aplomb, as these stunning textures prove.

## TEAM NINJA RESURRECTS AN OLD CLASSIC, AND THERE'S NOT A VOLLEYBALL IN SIGHT

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT:** Xbox
**ORIGIN:** Japan
**PUBLISHER:** Microsoft
**DEVELOPER:** Team Ninja
**RELEASE:** Q1 '04 (US: November)
**GENRE:** Action Adventure
**PLAYERS:** 1

■ Team Ninja's third Xbox release sees the return of Ryo Hayabusa, who's now in glorious 3D.

**Though the job of a games journalist is a rewarding one, we'd gladly trade it all for the chance to become a ninja.** Let's face it, throwing shurikens with deadly precision, running up walls and sneaking around to your heart's content is just plain cool. It's little wonder then that so many games feature these silent and deadly assassins. Whether they're in a supporting role in games such as *Metal Gear Solid* or appearing centre stage in titles like *Tenchu* or *Shinobi*, it's not hard to see their appeal. So *Ninja Gaiden* should be right up our alley.

Whilst it may share the same name as its 1988 predecessor, the two games couldn't be more different. Like Capcom's *Maximo*, *Ninja Gaiden* is more of a homage than a strict remake and thus gives Team Ninja a great deal of creative freedom in order to produce something that's already looking very impressive.

There are only a few details about *Ninja Gaiden*'s plot, though we do know that it takes place two years before the first Dead Or Alive tournament and features a 14-year-old Ayane (the purple-haired ninja from *Dead Or Alive 2*). Ayane will only be a supporting character (so it's unlikely that she'll be playable), instead the main female focus rests on a girl known only as Rachael. Needless to say, it takes an evil empire and the destruction of his clan (not to mention the theft of his sacred sword) before main man Hayabusa embarks on a quest for bloody revenge.

Though the original *Ninja Gaiden* trilogy might not initially lend itself to a potentially plot-heavy remake, Team Ninja has remembered that the core of the series has always been intense action. As a result, levels throughout *Ninja Gaiden* consist of sprawling environments that range from dark, dusty catacombs to heavily guarded military bases. Hayabusa treats each stage as an interactive playground, allowing him to show off an amazingly athletic array of moves in order to overcome his many opponents. Double jumps, running along walls and a whole host of other acrobatic moves are all in a day's work for the master ninja and Hayabusa manages to pull them all off with breathless ease.

The one aspect of the game that we're most looking forward to is the incredibly frantic combat. Initially armed with his trusty Katana, Hayabusa is a daunting figure as he hacks, slashes and slices his way through a menagerie of disgusting creatures and terrifying bosses. A number of other weapons will become available throughout the game and range from shurikens and bows (complete with seamless first-person interaction), to nunchakus, flaming swords and a healthy dose of ninja magic. All of this hectic action is held together by some of the most impressive visuals seen on the Xbox.

It's clear that updating the *Dead Or Alive 3* engine has resulted in some truly spectacular effects. Hayabusa displays a fluidity and athleticism that hasn't been seen since *Devil May Cry*'s Dante, and every environment has been textured and bump-mapped to perfection. *Gaiden*'s enemies have received just as much care and attention as the master ninja and range from evil ninjas to immense skeletal dragons. The game's most impressive achievement, however, is the free-roaming 3D camera; Team Ninja clearly has great expertise when it comes to fast-moving 3D and *Gaiden*'s camera swoops and pans with aplomb. With a sequel already confirmed, *Ninja Gaiden* is shaping up to be a potential must-have title.

### YOU WANT EXTRAS DO YOU?

**The *Dead Or Alive* series has always featured plenty of unlockable extras, so it's hardly surprising to find that *Ninja Gaiden* will contain its own selection of hidden treats. Whilst concrete details have not been confirmed, Tomonobu Itagaki (head of Team Ninja) has revealed that he has been playing a lot of the original games, which could mean that at least one of the titles could be found as a playable extra. We're also expecting to see new costumes for Hayabusa. Most intriguingly, it's been reported that not only will *Ninja Gaiden* feature Xbox Live compatibility but that it will also include online elements that have never been seen in an action game before. Unsurprisingly, Itagaki-san is giving nothing away, but if it comes anywhere near the standard of the visuals and gameplay it could turn out to be something very special indeed.**

**"TEAM NINJA BREATHES FANTASTIC NEW LIFE INTO ONE OF ITS BEST-LOVED SERIES"**

# NINJA GAIDEN
XBOX

## COMPANY PROFILE
Formed in 1991, Team Ninja found fame with its side-scrolling beat-'em-up *Ninja Gaiden* (known as *Shadow Warriors* in Europe). Headed by Tomonobu Itagaki, it's now best known for its *Dead Or Alive* series, which features an array of voluptuous women and devastating counter attacks.

## HISTORY
- **DOA XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL** 2003 [Xbox]
- **DEAD OR ALIVE** 1998 [PlayStation]
- **SHADOW WARRIORS** 1991 [NES]



Missile combat is a welcome alternative from the hectic melee combat – use it wisely.



Superb lighting and razor-sharp visuals are just a few of *Ninja Gaiden*'s graphical highlights.



**"WITH ITS INCREDIBLE VISUAL EFFECTS AND REALISTIC COMBAT SYSTEM, NINJA GAIDEN WILL TAKE PLAYERS TO A WHOLE NEW DIMENSION"**

*JOHN INADA, DIRECTOR OF SALES AND MARKETING, TECMO*

### VIDEOGAMES MATHS
**IT'S NINJA HEAVEN**




SHADOW WARRIORS + DEAD OR ALIVE 3 x SHINOBI = NINJA GAIDEN

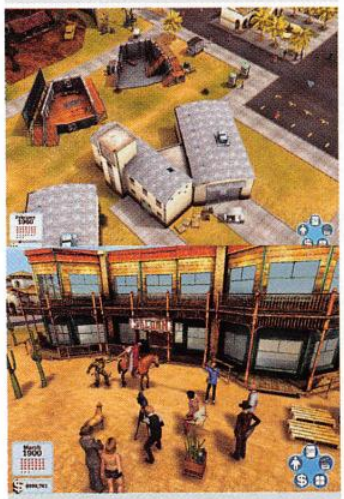
# SHOWCASE

MORE THINGS TO WATCH FOR ON THE GAMING HORIZON

## THE MOVIES

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Format: PC/Xbox/PS2/GameCube
Origin: UK
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Lionhead Studios
Release: TBC '04
Genre: Life Sim
Players: 1



**It should come as no surprise to hear that the latest project in the pipeline over at Peter Molyneux's Lionhead Studios looks set to be just about as ambitious and epic as they come.** Furnishing players with nothing more than a dirt lot at the dawn of the 20th Century, your goal over the next hundred years or so will be to develop a thriving Hollywood studio. Placing you in control of everything from hand picking your stars to designing the sets, *The Movies* tasks you with creating the box office smashes that will drive your studio forward. You'll be able to download new content and, best of all, post your mini movies online for the whole world to see.

## ROME: TOTAL WAR

IT SURE WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY...

Format: PC
Origin: UK
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Creative Assembly
Release: Q3 '04
Genre: Strategy
Players: 1 (Multiplayer online)

**The *Total War* series is hard to beat for epic battlefield action and, from what we've seen of the awesome *Rome: Total War* thus far, the next instalment promises to eclipse anything the genre has seen before.** Immense armies of up to 10,000 motion-captured troops can be led into battle, and huge cities (complete with citizens) may be constructed as your empire expands. When a conflict erupts around these towns, the city streets will be meticulously recreated in all their glory to host the action. It might not be scheduled for release until the end of next year, but the brief demonstrations of its stunning 3D visuals have already sent enough pulses racing to put the hype machine in motion.

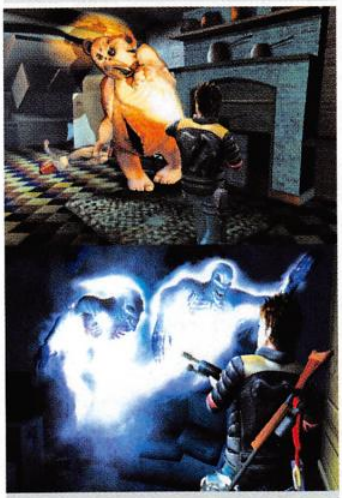




## GHOSTHUNTER

WE AIN'T AFRAID OF NO GHOST

Format: PlayStation2
Origin: UK
Publisher: Sony
Developer: In-House
Release: November '03
Genre: Survival Horror
Players: 1



**There hasn't been a new addition to the survival horror genre for at least a couple of weeks now, but budding Egon Spengler should fear not as Sony is promising to have its very own scarefest – *Ghosthunter* – on the shelves before the year is out.** Based on an enhanced version of the *Primal* engine, the latest offering from Studio Cambridge is hoping to present a serious challenge to the abundance of superb Japanese horror titles. Although there's a distinct lack of in-game screenshots to back up the sublime quality of the renders that have been released, we're expecting to see the PS2's graphical capabilities pushed to the limit in bringing the legions of disturbing nasties to 'life'.

## SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM

LOOK MA – NO HANDS

Format: PlayStation2/Xbox
Origin: UK
Publisher: Vivendi Universal
Developer: Argonaut Games
Release: Q4 '03
Genre: FPS
Players: 1-2

**Whether we're watching the footy or participating in some Uri Geller experiment, television is a one-way medium and we can't influence events no matter how loudly we shout at the screen.** Until now, that is. A nifty piece of voice recognition software has been built into the control interface of this team-based shooter that lets you use the microphone headset to bark orders to your AI squad-mates. There's also the ability to vocally apprehend suspects while your team cuffs them. We've had some 'interesting' experiences with VR software in the past, and only hope the interface is suitably accent-proof to avoid discrepancies between what you say and what the AI hears.





## DELAYED – CASTLEVANIA (PS2)

■ As if to enhance our concerns that *Castlevania: Lament Of Innocence* is going to be a disappointment, Konami has ordered the game to be delayed until January '04 in Japan, with a PAL release set for February.



## UNCANNED – RED DEAD REVOLVER (PS2)

■ Now here's a turn-up for the books – having disappeared without trace last month, rumour has it that this western shoot-'em-up is back on the cards (albeit minus Capcom's backing). Is Rockstar behind it all? We'll wait and see.

# BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II

THEY'VE ADDED A 'II' AND MORE BESIDES

Format: PlayStation2/Xbox
Origin: US
Publisher: Vivendi Universal
Developer: Black Isle Studios
Release: Q4 '03
Genre: Action RPG
Players: 1-2





**Extending the *Baldur's Gate* series beyond its traditional PC home proved to be an incredibly lucrative exercise, selling more than a million units on PS2, Xbox and GameCube.** Now Interplay's RPG division, Black Isle Studios, has taken over development for the hotly anticipated console follow-up and thrown in a generous helping of new content. As far as the visuals and gameplay are concerned, Black Isle seems to have adopted the 'if it ain't broke' approach and stuck to the winning formula of *Dark Alliance*. Players can expect to see a couple more playable characters and tons of new locations, but otherwise it looks like business as usual for adventure fans.

# BATTLEFIELD VIETNAM

SMELLS LIKE VICTORY?

Format: PC
Origin: Canada
Publisher: EA
Developer: Digital Illusions
Release: Q2 '04
Genre: FPS
Players: 1 (up to 64 online)

**With the latest *Secret Weapons Of World War II* expansion pack out now, EA has already turned its attentions to touting the long-awaited full sequel to the superb PC war sim *Battlefield 1942*.** Though development is still in its early stages, *Battlefield Vietnam* is already shaping up to surpass its predecessor in every way. Moving its all-action portrayal of war into the Vietnamese theatre of conflict, players can use a range of new weaponry and vehicles. Varied terrain maps, a stunning new graphics engine and an authentic Sixties soundtrack should create a truly cinematic experience, while the multiplayer online battles look set to take centre stage.





# CLUB FOOTBALL

THIS SEASON'S SURPRISE PACKAGE

Format: PlayStation2/Xbox
Origin: UK
Publisher: Atari
Developer: Codemasters
Release: Oct '03
Genre: Sports
Players: 1-4





**New football titles come along all the time but tend to fade from memory rather quickly as we return to *Pro Evolution*'s unbeatable gameplay or the ever-popular *FIFA* franchise.** The latest challenge to the league leaders comes in the shape of *Club Football*, with 17 separate versions dedicated to the fans of certain clubs. The featured English Premiership teams are Arsenal, Villa, Chelsea, Man Utd, Liverpool and Leeds, but if your loyalties lie outside this selection you're unlikely to appreciate the host of club-specific features intended to set this title apart from the crowd. That said, if the gameplay is anything like the visuals, Codemasters could have a serious contender on its hands.

# MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE

WELCOME BACK TO A WORLD OF PAYNE...

Format: PC/Xbox/PlayStation2
Origin: Finland
Publisher: Take2
Developer: Rockstar
Release: Q1 '04
Genre: Action
Players: 1

**Max Payne wrote his name in videogame history back in 2001 by introducing us to the cinematic joys of bullet-time.** Since then, countless games have followed in his footsteps and incorporated a similar slow-mo effect to give the action a dramatic edge. But now that his party trick has become a little old hat, will the man with nothing to lose have enough up his sleeve to enjoy the same level of success again? Rockstar is keeping its cards close to its chest in terms of details but major enhancements to the graphics engine, bullet-time effects and inclusion of a Havok 2 physics system will ensure Max Payne's second outing is very easy on the eye.








**Too often dismissed as unimportant and childish, games have actually been covertly changing the world around us. games™ looks at how videogames are getting their teeth stuck into the wider world…**

**The games industry imploded under the weight of the useless games with which it had choked players back in 1983, causing many observers to say that games were merely a fad. Videogames, they argued, were a passing fashion, just another pony on the endless merry-go-round of children's fickle interests. How wrong they were.**

Fast forward to the present and games are bigger than ever. Yet while they are increasingly accepted as part of everyday life, their influence on the wider world is often overlooked. From the films we watch to the sports we play, videogames have spent the past 20 years making their presence felt well beyond the confines of a TV or computer monitor.

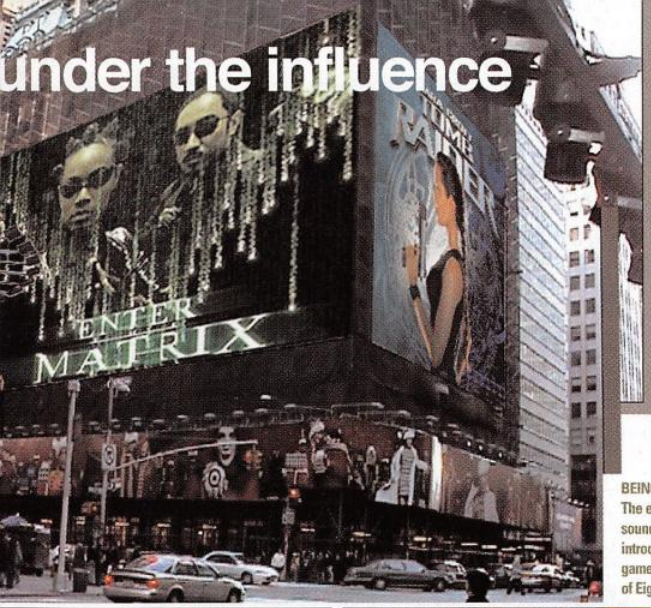
The most obvious place where the impact of videogames can be felt is in the movie industry. Since the arrival of Disney's *Tron* in 1982, the film and game industries have been feeding off each other's ▷

# under the i


SONY
SONY THEATRES
Hello Broadway...
sim city
GET READY TO RIDE

# nfluence

# under the influence










BEING THERE: The eight *GTA:VC* soundtracks have introduced today's gamers to the joy of Eighties music.

## Final Fantasy demonstrates that the boundaries between cinema and games are collapsing

ideas. The most obvious examples of this symbiosis can be found in games like *Metal Gear Solid* and the succession of movies based on videogames such as *Pokémon*, *Tomb Raider* and *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*.

However, the links go deeper than that and Hollywood is increasingly recreating the look and feel of videogames in films like *The Matrix* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. These and many other action films exaggerate reality (particularly in fighting scenes) in the same way that videogames offer players an over-the-top version of the real world. While unrealistic events have always been present in action movies, the influence of games on how that unrealism is presented is growing fast.

Videogame academic Matteo Bittanti believes that this influence is set to grow: "Videogames are not only becoming the subject of many films but, perhaps more interestingly, they are increasingly influencing contemporary cinema," he says. "See, for instance, the frantic pace and the multi-directional plotting of *Run Lola Run* or the ongoing fascination with the slippery border between reality and digital illusions in such films as *The Matrix*. But also think about Spike Jonze's use of the role-playing metaphor in *Being John Malkovich* or the puzzle-solving structure of *Memento*.

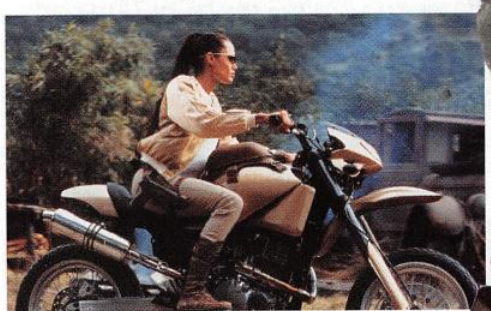
"Also, more and more films are depicting the game player as a new pop cultural icon, think about French comedy *Gamer*," he continues. "Aesthetically, films like *Final Fantasy* demonstrate that the boundaries between cinema and games are collapsing. And this is just the beginning."

The rise of DVD has strengthened the bond between games and films, and the extra features of DVD movies have opened the doors for game-like interactivity. "DVD allows the user to control the presentation of audio and visual sequences and has refined the act of watching a movie, transforming it from a passive experience to an interactive one," argues Bittanti. However, gaming's influence on that other bastion of pop culture, music, has been markedly less impressive. Aside from records like *Pac-Man Fever* (a US top ten hit, no less) and Kernkraft 400's *Zombie Nation* (which was based on the music to Commodore 64 game *Lazy Jones*) the impact of games on music has been near invisible.

Game soundtrack albums, however, are starting to appear more regularly, with the likes of *Jet Set Radio Future*, *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* and *Smuggler's Run* all spawning music CDs. It is certainly an area that game publishers are looking at closely as the recent formation of the game soundtrack record label Couch Sounds demonstrates.

Sergio Pimental, creative director at Couch Sounds (whose first release was the soundtrack to Infogrames's *Furious Karting*), believes that game soundtracks haven't been successful because people haven't been exposed to them in the right way.

"The soundtrack albums to *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* were definitely a step in the right direction," Pimental says, "but putting it across seven CDs was probably a bit much. You have to wonder whether the gamers of today would be





into what is really a branded Eighties music collection." In the longer term, Pimental believes game soundtracks could become a strong platform for music labels to launch new artists.

"This is already happening," he claims, "and I have heard that one band who were on the verge of being dropped by their record label had their fortunes turned around by having a song on a hit game.

"We are not that far away from games becoming a useful tool for record labels in reaching a bigger audience. Also, having a song on a game soundtrack can also help unsigned bands get taken seriously by record labels."

Whether game music would scale the heights it has in Japan (where songs from games like *Pikmin* become hits) remains to be seen, but the experience of the extreme sports world suggests that games really do have the potential to create stars. The most obvious example is skateboarding legend Tony Hawk who is probably more famous in Australia for the games he puts his name to than his skateboarding skills. The man himself thinks this might be the case in most parts of the world.

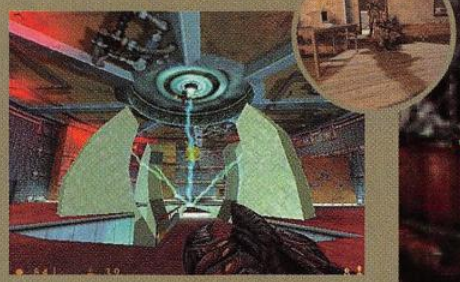
"The games have been very important in making me famous outside of the gaming scene," Hawk says. "In fact, some people that have the game thought I was only a character, rather than a real person."

The popularity of extreme sports games (in particular, Activision's *O2* games) is also boosting the appeal of the sports themselves, which in turn means that professionals like Tony Hawk have become household names.

"People seem to recognise my name more than they recognise my face because of the game," he says, "but then skateboarding has come a long way recently, so who knows? I'd like to think I made it this far because of my skating skills and not just from the videogames. The games have helped skating get recognised by a much bigger audience, but my passion is still to just get out there and ride, otherwise I wouldn't feel justified having all this success."

## Army Moves

Games have also got their claws into the military and for years generals the world over have been experimenting (usually with limited success) with turning games into a good way of teaching people to kill. Hit games like *Half-Life*, *Creatures* and *Battlezone* have tried out life in the military, and flight simulations from the likes of Digital Image Design and Digital Integration have proved useful in the RAF. And, as if to top it off, the US Army is now trying to entice new recruits with *America's Army*, a free PC game and shameless piece of propaganda.



As well as sparking interest in extreme sports, games have also helped generate an interest in Japan and blazed the trail for other strands of Japanese culture to reach the West.

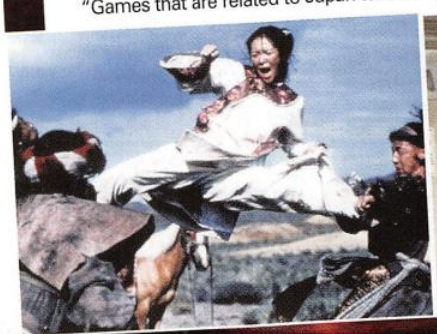
Prior to the rise of Japan as the world leaders in videogame industry, only a smattering of Japanese culture managed to cross over to the West – *Godzilla* and *Battle Of The Planets* (which was based on a Japanese cartoon) being the most high-profile examples. However, as Japanese games become more and more popular a wider interest in Japan has emerged.

**Most games do play up old stereotypes about samurai, cars or technology...**

Dr Christopher Hood, director of Cardiff Business School's Japanese Studies Centre, agrees that games may have helped to open the door for other aspects of Japanese life to make their presence felt in the West.

"Although the games people play don't always reflect life in Japan – since many use non-country specific fantasy worlds – games have potentially helped bring Japanese culture to the west," says Hood.

"Games that are related to Japan tend to ▷





PICTURE THIS: *Crouching Tiger...* and *Being John Malkovich* have been influenced by games.

## Stars In Their Eyes

Games have managed to propel more than just their developers to stardom. We look at the people and products that games have made famous.

### • Captain Planet



This eco-friendly cartoon series had a profile on a par with, er, something insignificant until Mindscape teamed up with Tony Crowther to create an iffy platformer that gave the sharing, caring cartoon a (very) brief taste of fame.

### • Elvira



Part buxom goth, part TV presenter Elvira failed to make a mark outside the US until one game publisher hit on the idea of releasing a series of games based on her vamping antics. Soon afterwards, her show hit the UK in the form of a late night slot on Channel 4. Can't win them all, then.

### • Mötley Crüe

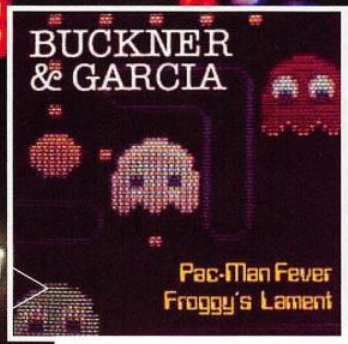


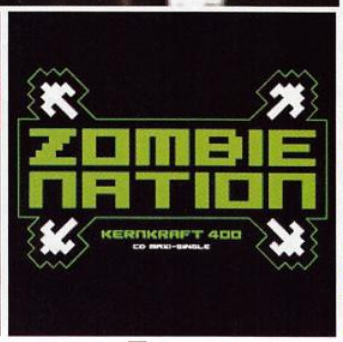
Who would have thought that in 2003 millions of people would be listening to the rock-tastic sound of hairspray metallers Mötley Crüe? Surely proof that *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* is the insult to taste and decency that knee-jerk politicians believe it is.

### • Tony Hawk, Mat Hoffman & Kelly Slater



Big names in skateboarding, BMX and surfing these guys may be, but until their games arrived knowledge of their extreme skills was little known outside of their respective sporting circles. Of course, that's all changed now and Hawk in particular has risen to the edge of mainstream stardom.






ELECTRONICA: Tracks based on music from games have achieved varying degrees of chart success.

focus on very specific parts of modern Japan or elements of Japanese history such as samurai, and amongst my students some have developed an interest in Japan from playing such games."

Games have certainly helped bring manga and animé over to the west and historically accurate games like *Kessen* have introduced many to Japan's history.

However, notes Hood, Japanese music has failed miserably to make the leap: "It is surprising that there has been no musical invasion by Japanese musicians, given the popularity of games you would have expected at least one or two songs to enter the charts," he says.

Although games have managed to bring a slice of Japanese life to the West, the tendency of the game industry to home in on the more bizarre aspects of Japanese gaming culture like cosplay – where people dress up as their favourite videogame characters – doesn't provide a true picture of Japan.

"Most games do play up to old stereotypes about samurai, cars or technology," says Hood, "but in reality Japan is not like it seems in these games or on *Tarrant On TV*. The Japanese are just like us and in fact they are much more like us than Americans are. For whatever reason, we tend to pick up on the odd bits of Japanese culture and they do likewise with us picking out things like *The Royle Family* and *Mr Bean* which are hardly indicative of everyday Britain."

However, while the accuracy of the view of Japan we get from games is questionable, there is no doubt that it has certainly improved our knowledge of the country and, if current government plans come to anything, games may be improving our understanding in other areas too.

At present, academics around the world are investigating the possibilities offered by hi-tech classrooms in a bid to revolutionise schooling, and one area in which these space age classrooms could really make a difference is in making games part of the regular curriculum.

In fact, some bodies overseas have already begun to advocate the use of games like *Age Of Empires* and *Sim City* as teaching aids in schools and have even gone so far as to drawn up a framework so that teachers can identify which games may be of use.

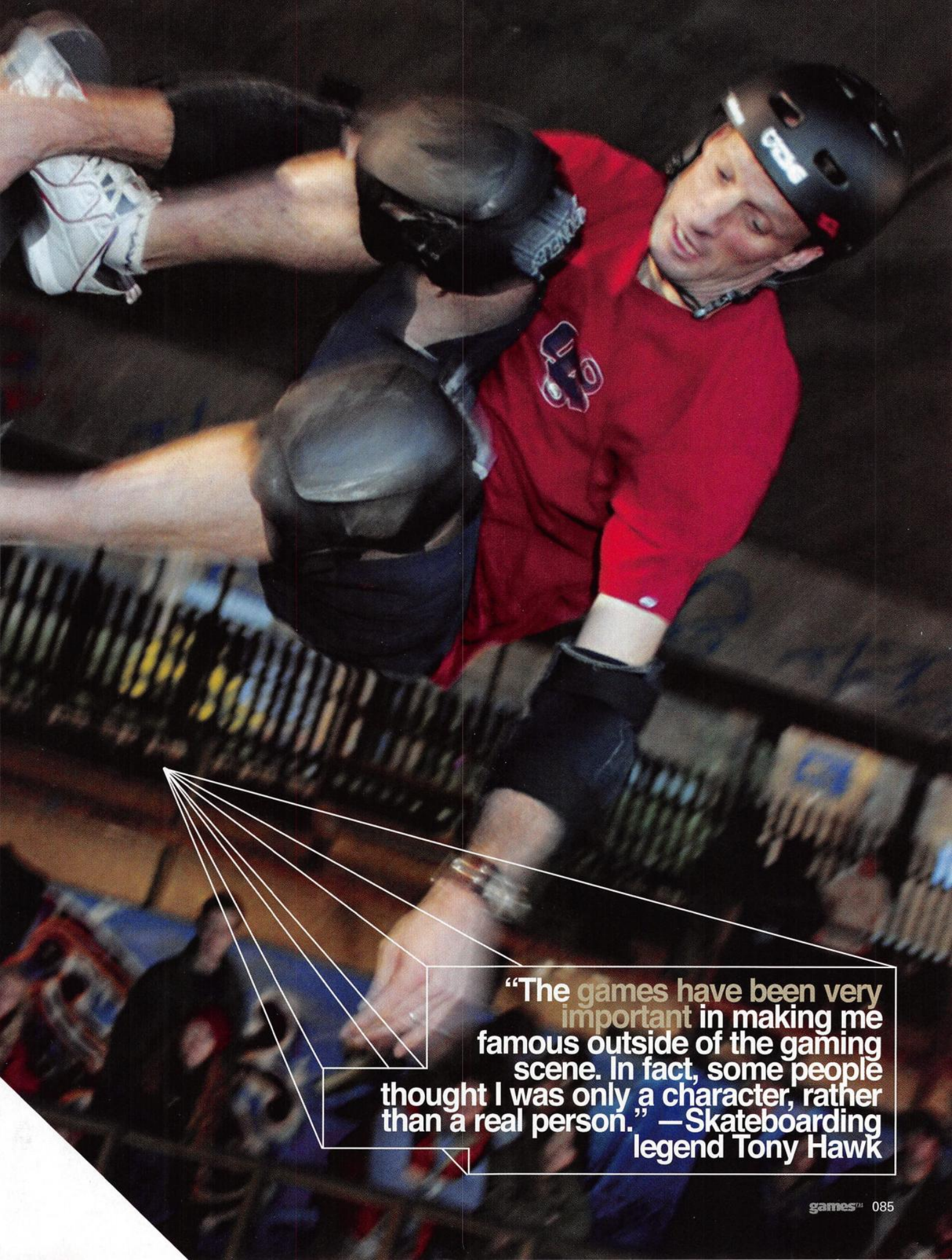
Computerised training consultancy Fastrak Consulting believes that there's a huge potential for using games in schools. "Games have a big role to play in education," notes Clive Shepherd, Fastrak's managing director. "Games can cover an awful amount of what kids have to learn and are very good at enabling children to explore various concepts."

So it seems that the extent to which games have changed the world so far is little more than the warm-up before they really make their mark.

## Machinima

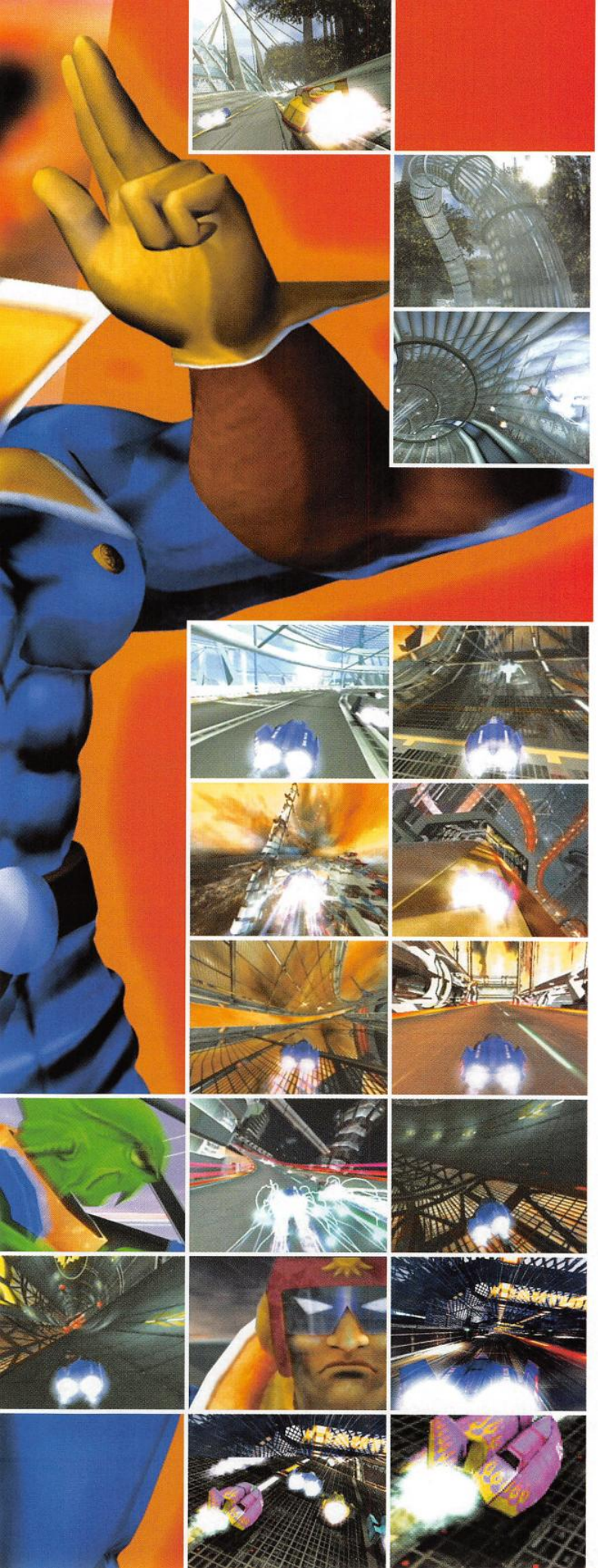
As well as transforming movie making, games have also spawned the underground machinima form of film. Machinima film makers use videogames to create a film by acting out the plot by playing the game. The number of machinima films is growing rapidly thanks to the low cost involved, and everything from comedies and dramas to action flicks have been created using the approach. In fact, the movement has now reached the stage where there is a machinima film festival. "The implications of this technology should not be underestimated," reckons videogame academic Matteo Bittanti. "Machinima transforms videogame users into film directors and allows them to make a low-cost feature-length film. The virtual nature of machinima means film makers can set their films anywhere they like, featuring anything or anyone they like, without limits on their storyline." You can visit www.machinima.com to find out more.





"The games have been very important in making me famous outside of the gaming scene. In fact, some people thought I was only a character, rather than a real person." —Skateboarding legend Tony Hawk


GALAXY
BLUE FALCON



# REVIEWS


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Zone Of The Enders: The 2nd Runner** | 88 | *PlayStation2* |
| **Colin McRae Rally 04** | 90 | *Multiformat* |
| **The Great Escape** | 92 | *Multiformat* |
| **Freestyle MetalX** | 93 | *Multiformat* |
| **Freedom Fighters** | 94 | *Multiformat* |
| **F-Zero GX** | 96 | *GameCube* |
| **Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004** | 98 | *Multiformat* |
| **Splashdown 2: Rides Gone Wild** | 99 | *PlayStation2* |
| **Conflict: Desert Storm II** | 100 | *Multiformat* |
| **Otogi: Myth Of Demons** | 101 | *Xbox* |
| **Soul Calibur II** | 102 | *Multiformat* |
| **Age Of Wonders: Shadow Magic** | 104 | *PC* |


# THE AVERAGE

Despite representing an industry in which high scores mean everything, **games™** is not a magazine that marks with the majority. A lot of people think that anything below seven (7.0, 70%, whatever) is a bad score – we don't. Going on a scale of one to ten, five is the average – average being a game that does what it sets out to do without attempting to do it better than anyone else. If a game gets five, you'll get some enjoyment out of it but nothing more, simple as that. What's more, we won't be swayed by PR people telling us what a game's like – we only decide once we've played each game to death and, in the majority of cases, to completion. If a game's bad, we'll make sure you know; if it's great, we'll sing its praises. At the end of the day, we're just here to help you decide what's worth your hard-earned cash. After all, if it wasn't for you, we'd be out of a job.




THE SAME GAME, ONLY BETTER... AND YET NOT. THAT'S THE KONAMI WAY

# ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
PlayStation2

**ORIGIN**
Japan

**PUBLISHER**
Atari

**DEVELOPER**
Konami

**PRICE**
$99.95

**RELEASE**
26 September

**PLAYERS**
1-2







**Good things come to those who wait – although, as gamers, we have to wait more than most.** Even then, it doesn't necessarily guarantee quality, as many long-term gamers or those who've had the joy of playing *Angel Of Darkness* will attest. However, when a company admits to deliberately holding back a game in order to address the problems in versions released in other territories, there's at least a chance that things can only get better. Or so we'd like to think, anyway.

Of course, those of you who've already considered turning the page out of fear of all the giant robots in the screenshots should take comfort in the fact that *Zone Of The Enders: The 2nd Runner* isn't a 'proper' mecha game as such. While it is packed with flying robots and other mecha-related things, it certainly isn't as complicated as something like the *Armored Core* series. In fact, the two games are hardly comparable – going on the complex story, frantic action and mission structure in *ZOE2*, it's closer to Capcom's *Devil May Cry* (albeit with a giant robotic suit in the place of Dante). Still, you couldn't really expect anything less from a game with Hideo Kojima's name on it; despite only being a producer on this project, his influence is visible from the off.

There's also some good news if you missed out on the last *ZOE* outing; no prior knowledge is needed to enjoy this sequel. Essentially, the core gameplay is pretty similar to last time – taking control of the much-desired Orbital Frame codenamed Jehuty, it's your job to wipe out pretty much anything that moves in an effort to bring down the tyrannical forces of BAHRAM and generally save the day. The difference from last time, though, is the range of mission objectives; whereas previously almost every mission was the

**ZONE OF THE ENDERS**



**BETTER THAN**

**WORSE THAN**

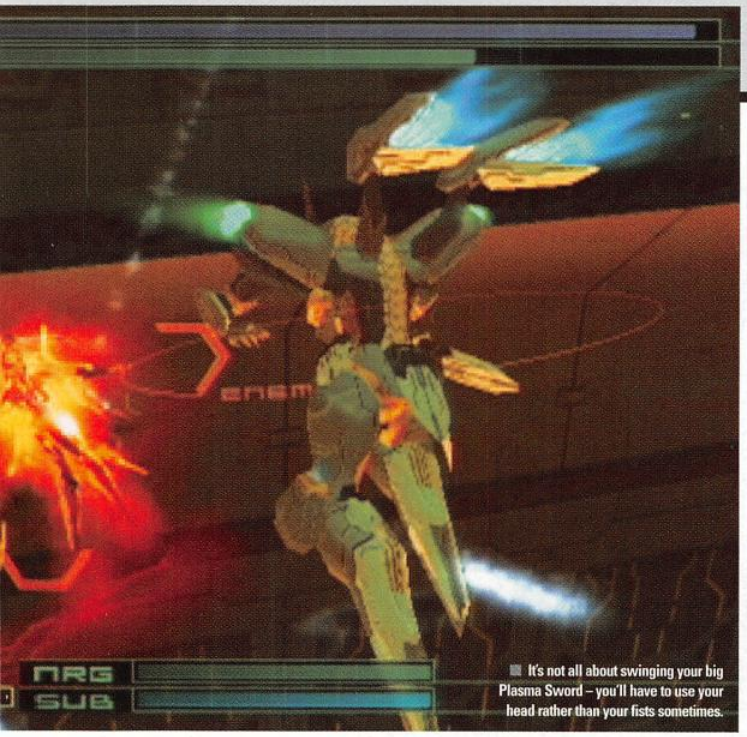


**DEVIL MAY CRY**

Enemies that like to block a lot can be a real pain until you get the Gauntlet upgrade – or you just grab them and hurl them into a wall...






It's not all about swinging your big Plasma Sword – you'll have to use your head rather than your fists sometimes.

Along with these familiar view-screen sections, *ZOE2* also has full-on anime cut-scenes that really help get the story across.



Control of the target appears to be in the hands of a stand-alone battle A.I.

## FULLY UPGRADEABLE

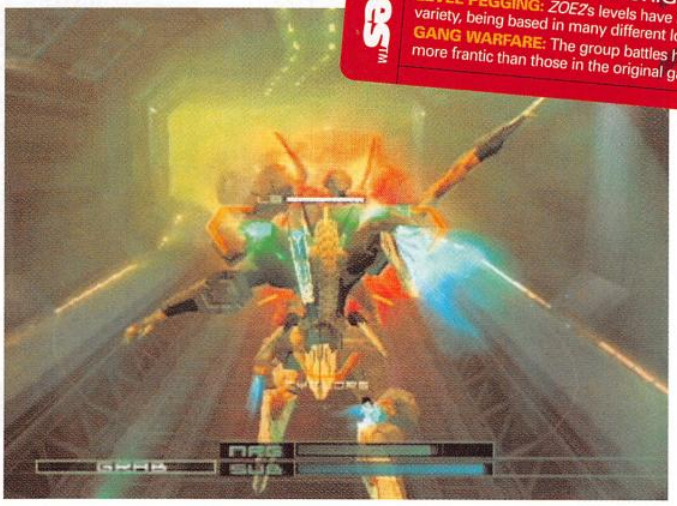
**If you want to have any hope of surviving some of the later battles that *ZOE2* offers, you'll have to master all of the upgrades that the Jehuty suit receives throughout the game. Although you'll only have the option to grab your enemies and use them as a weapon or shield against other robots to begin with, various enhancements will gradually be added to the suit to give you additional abilities. From paralysing your foes for a brief period (leaving them open to attack) and creating duplicates of yourself to create a distraction, to an unstoppable beam of energy that wipes out anything in its path, there's a wide variety of abilities on offer – it's just a case of knowing which one to use at the right time. Thankfully, it's all pretty straightforward (unlike most other advanced mecha games we could mention).**

games™ ENHANCED

IMPROVING ON THE ORIGINAL

**LEVEL PEGGING:** *ZOE2*'s levels have loads of variety, being based in many different locations.

**GANG WARFARE:** The group battles here seem more frantic than those in the original game.




Some stages require the quick destruction of many enemies, such as this part which sees you chasing a runaway train.

same (destroy enemies, protect buildings and stay alive), now there's some variety, from saving a fellow robot and destroying key installations to taking down an entire armada of ships. This also means there's greater variety in the locations to visit, which is a big step up from the endless fields of blue we saw last time.

Indeed, it appears that many of the good things in *ZOE2* revolve around lessons learnt from the previous game – clearly, someone high up listened to the complaints and tried to do something about them. As well as having more areas to explore and some rather awe-inspiring levels further into the game, for example, the Jehuty suit has received some new skills; most notably, the ability to grab enemies and use them as a melee weapon against others, or as a shield to deflect oncoming attacks. Things have also been stepped up a notch visually so that *ZOE2* really is a beautiful game. With its unique mixture of clean-cut robot models, cel-shaded smoke, particle effects and manga FMV cut-scenes, the whole thing just oozes style in a way that most other games just can't approach.

With that in mind, it's a shame that some small (but rather important) elements let the game down. Despite having a wide variety of missions, for instance, the core concept of attacking enemies is one that gets rather samey far too quickly – most enemies, bar the bosses, can be dealt with in the same way, leading to lengthy bouts of pressing the same button over and over. With so much repetition, it's doubtful that you'd want to play through the game again once you've finished it; however, that's exactly what you have to do in order to unlock most of the game's secrets. Sadly, the story is also flawed thanks to some dodgy translation, meaning the narrative ends up being incredibly confusing at times – a very bad thing for a game that relies so heavily on the plot. Add a badly implemented Versus mode and extra missions that are just reworked stages from the main game, and it's all a bit of a mixed bag really.

Still, this isn't to say that *ZOE2* is a bad game; as long as you're not looking for something too deep and meaningful, it'll certainly keep you going for a while. If, on the other hand, you're hoping for a massive leap forward from the last game, it looks like you're just going to have to keep waiting...

**VERDICT 6/10**

**OVERLY REPETITIVE AND CONFUSING, BUT STILL FUN**

### FAQs

**Q. WHAT'S NEW?**
Over the original Japanese *ZOE2*, the PAL version now has three new levels, two 'reworked' ones and a host of new polygon models, as well as new difficulty modes and graphical demos.

**Q. DON'T LIKE MECHA?**
Although there are certainly plenty of robots on show, this isn't really a 'proper' mecha game – that's what games like *Armored Core 3* are for.

**Q. A LITTLE UNFAIR?**
In places, yes. Some of the more intense battles become more luck than judgement to get through, but not as many as you might expect. However, it's not exactly the easiest of games.

## ENHANCED

**IMPROVING ON THE ORIGINAL**

**PRECISE:** Mr McRae's latest improves on its predecessor in terms of solidity and vehicle handling.

**SPLIT:** In an attempt to silence critics, *Colin* now has a split-screen multiplayer mode.

Several of the rallies end in lap-based Super Special Stages, making you go head to head against a rival.




The driver view, particularly in the rain or snow, can make for some of the most atmospheric driving to date.







**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
Xbox

**OTHER FORMATS**
PlayStation2

**ORIGIN**
UK

**PUBLISHER**
Atari

**DEVELOPER**
Codemasters

**PRICE**
$99.95

**RELEASE**
19 September

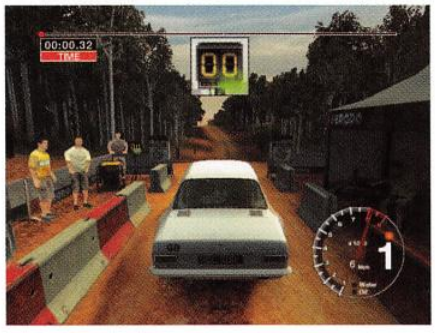
**PLAYERS**
1-4

REINFORCING THE WINNING COMBINATION OF RACING AND DIRT

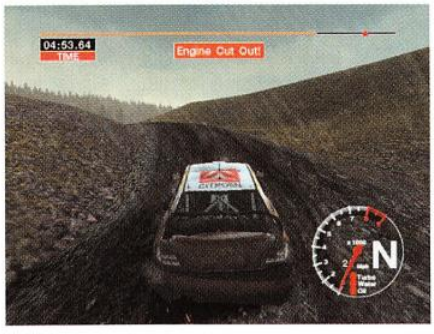
# COLIN MCRAE RALLY 04

**Creating a franchise in today's fickle market can be hard enough for a strong character-based title, which is why an established series of racing games is a rare occurrence.** With little more to rely on than the actual quality of the games, very few racers have the consistency and drive (no pun intended) to develop into a successful series without a licensing deal. The *Colin McRae* series is a fine example of this – but far from relying on the big name to shift units, Codemasters creates a genuinely enjoyable rallying experience with each title, and, following the groundwork laid by the third game, we're very interested in this update.

Visually, there's clearly been no holding back, and while the game may only look marginally better than its forerunner, the pop-up that blighted the third title is all but non-existent. Car models do slightly outclass the surroundings but, given the speed at which you'll be tearing past them, this is something you'll more than likely not even notice while the game is in full flow, least of all when it has you ensnared. One setback is the fact that you're never sure what impact your surroundings will have on your car – walls and fences obviously stay more or less where they are but posts, signs and shrubs can cause a little more confusion. While this may be a semi-realistic feature, we've




Race well enough and you'll open up some rather varied new cars – the old-school Escort is a beauty.




**COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3**



**BETTER THAN**

**WORSE THAN**



**SEGA RALLY**



Between stages, you get to spend time fixing your car – you'll need to both manage and race well to keep in good shape.




Tuning the car's performance is important for anyone looking to shave seconds off their times, though we prefer just going hell for leather.

## FRAME-RATE BLUES

**While we applaud the addition of a split-screen multiplayer mode (an element curiously lacking from *Colin McRae 3*), the sad truth is that the mode is a little below par. With two or more players racing at once, the otherwise smooth frame-rate can be thrown into turmoil, and with the severity varying from course to course the splitscreen action can seem somewhat redundant. This ushers you into the game's clearly favoured alternating multiplayer modes, which wouldn't usually be a problem, but when the rest of the game is so clean and polished it just further accentuates the weaker areas.**



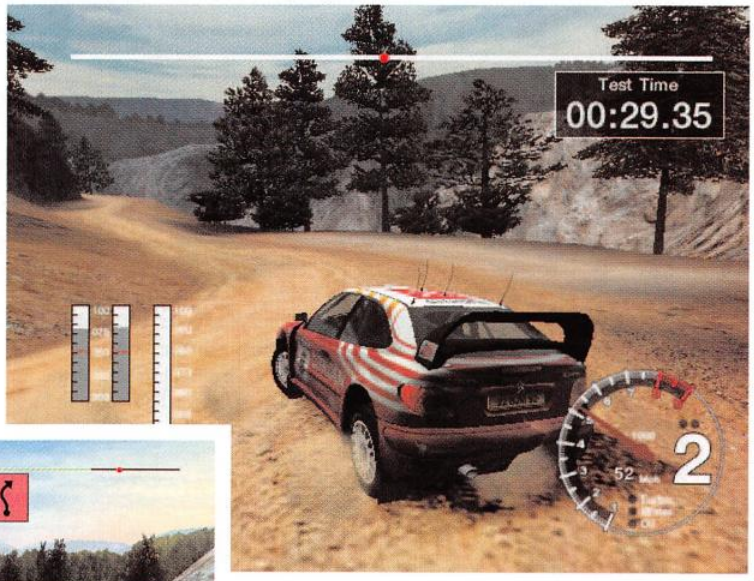

Tearing through the fields of the more rural tracks, it can sometimes be tricky to differentiate between rally track and tractor tracks.

### FAQs

**Q. ONLY COLIN?**
Nope. Unlike last year, you get to race as yourself in the vehicle of your choice.

**Q. HOW MANY TRACKS?**
Eight national rallies at six or seven tracks each. In total, there's upwards of 50 courses.

**Q. NASTY POP-UP?**
Far better than before – all you'll get is a little fade-in on the more complex courses but even that's barely noticeable.




The gauges on the left show how hard you're pushing your car parts in these tests, in this case the tyres. For once, skidding is a good thing…

had one too many victories snatched from us by tiny wooden stumps despite laying waste to countless metal road signs.

Still, among our grievances are some truly great features. What is perhaps the best element of this latest update – the in-car view – has obviously been a focus of attention and the benefits are obvious. Speeding between trees on a gravel trail can be exhilarating enough with the default chase camera, but zoom down to the driver's viewpoint and things get that much more intense – engine roar and exterior noise are much louder and you get a far greater sense of speed and immersion. For the ultimate rallying experience, you're also able to switch off all on-screen displays, making your new navigator that much more important. It's this attention to detail and feeling of involvement that sets Colin apart from his rivals – although the sense of speed may not thrill in places, few games can hold a torch to the *McRae* experience.

It would be easy enough to write off *04* as just another rally game if it weren't for some of the excellent new features over last year's offering – co-operative Championships where you pair up with a friend to bring glory to your team, and unique upgrade tests that force you to test new parts to their limits if you want to use them in future rallies. But though the game does improve on many of the lesser areas of its predecessor, at same time it manages to create new grievances. Handling and pop-up have been pretty much fixed, but in exchange we're greeted with a problematic multiplayer mode, some annoying graphical glitches and several other elements that perhaps wouldn't grate so much if *Colin McRae 3* hadn't




Well that's not going to help us catch up with Mr McRae now, is it?

already tested the next-generation water. For newcomers, this fourth game is the best place to see what the series is all about, surpassing the previous game in practically every area, though perhaps not as impressive as the PSone titles were in their heyday.

Make no mistake – we have no qualms about declaring this the Xbox's finest rally racer but the pressure is really on for Codemasters to excel itself with the follow-up. Ultimately, the story is the same this year as it was with the last game, and as accomplished and involved as Colin's latest is, we can't help but feel mildly disappointed – if only because we recognise the potential for this series to produce a genre-defining racer.

**VERDICT 7/10**
**INVOLVING AND ENJOYABLE; MCRAE EVOLVES AGAIN**



If you thought the dust trails and other environmental effects look good in action, wait until you see the replays – they're really rather special.

**PS2 £39.99 19 SEPT**



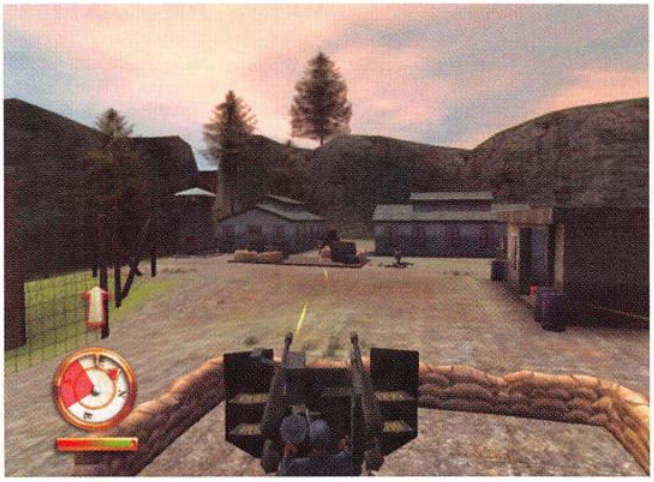
Pretty much a by-the-book PS2-to-Xbox conversion – expect slightly less impressive visuals to be among the only noticeable differences. All credit to Codemasters, though, as the drop in quality is not so noticeable as with many other recent multiformat titles.

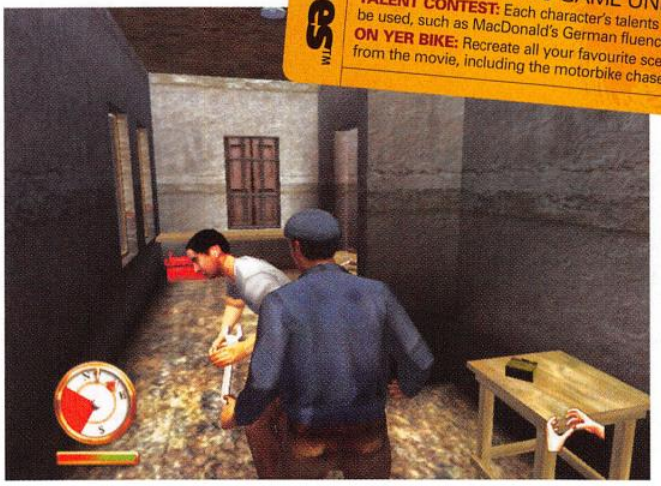
games™ FINGERPRINT

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME UNIQUE

**TALENT CONTEST:** Each character's talents will be used, such as MacDonald's German fluency.

**ON YER BIKE:** Recreate all your favourite scenes from the movie, including the motorbike chase.





WILL THE GAMEPLAY PROVE AS ADDICTIVE AS THE THEME TUNE?

# THE GREAT ESCAPE

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
Xbox

**OTHER FORMATS**
PlayStation2, PC

**ORIGIN**
UK

**PUBLISHER**
Atari

**DEVELOPER**
SCi

**PRICE**
$99.95 (PC: $89.95)

**RELEASE**
Out Now

**PLAYERS**
1

**Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without it, the theme tune is a classic and now SCi is giving us the chance to indulge in a videogame re-enactment of classic Sixties flick *The Great Escape*.** Players control lead characters MacDonald, Sedgewick, Hendley and 'Cooler King' Virgil Hilts through some of the film's most memorable scenes during the daring attempt to escape maximum security POW camp Stalag Luft III. Before embarking on the most ambitious breakout in history, however, you'll get the chance to master the art of escapology in a series of missions cataloguing the events leading up to each character's incarceration.

As you'd imagine, there's plenty of stealth-based gameplay as you're frequently tasked with sneaking between prison huts without arousing the suspicions of your watchful captors. However, unlike last year's WWII escape sim *Prisoner Of War*, a good helping of action has been thrown in to produce a much more varied experience. The action opens with a dogfight sequence that sees the laughably camp MacDonald battling in vain to protect his squadron of Lancaster Bombers against a swarm of German fighters. A host of other vehicles must also be commandeered as the game progresses, culminating in the famous motorcycle chase as Hilts makes his spirited dash for the border.

Sadly, this promising variety of stealth, third-person shooter and vehicle-based gameplay sees each element being delivered half baked. A distinct vein of average runs throughout the game, from the lacklustre visuals to each mission's overly linear string of objectives. Rather than feeling like a mastermind escapologist, your actual role resembles that of an errand boy collecting the pieces of a pre-scripted plan. Yet while nothing here really shines, the overall package is solid enough to counter our gripes. The AI pulls off the stealth sections nicely, progress can be saved at any point to avoid the frustration of entire level restarts, and the diverse gameplay sections keep the interest level up. It all makes for a fairly entertaining affair, but is unlikely to enjoy as many replays as its movie counterpart.

**VERDICT 5/10**

**DISTINCTLY AVERAGE IN EVERY DEPARTMENT**

**PS2/PC** £29/39.99



The rather basic visual style doesn't suffer too much on translation to PS2, whilst the PC version is predictably the slickest of the bunch with intuitive mouse/keyboard controls to boot.

**PRISONER OF WAR**



**BETTER THAN**

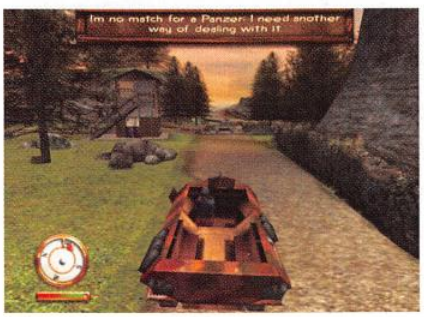
**WORSE THAN**



**007: NIGHTFIRE**



There are some sections where stealth just won't cut it.




You'll get to drive a range of vehicles including, surprise, a motorbike.



The guards maintain perfect posture, even while sleeping on the job...

TRUST US, IT'S NOT AS BAD AS IT SOUNDS

# FREESTYLE METALX

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
PlayStation2

**OTHER FORMATS**
Xbox, GameCube

**ORIGIN**
US

**PUBLISHER**
THQ

**DEVELOPER**
Deibus Studios

**PRICE**
$99.95

**RELEASE**
September

**PLAYERS**
1-2

**Having witnessed the evolution of the *Tony Hawk* series from limited trickery to huge freeform objectives, we can see the direction in which the genre is shifting and it's certainly a turn for the better.** Strangely, a lot of the new twists in extreme sports games are taking them closer to adventure games and, odder still, MMORPGs – it's not unthinkable that the next generation of titles will offer huge lifelike recreations of real world locations on a level of freedom surpassing even the likes of *Vice City*. Still, it's great to see titles in the current generation attempting such freedom, and while we have come to expect great things of Neversoft and Z-Axis, it's even more pleasing to see similar ambition from less expected sources. Enter *Freestyle MetalX*.

At a first glance, you'd be forgiven for mistaking *FMX* for any number of similar titles – the 'devil horns' presentation is nothing new although it does suit the style of the game. The gritty front end is carried over into in-game presentation, showing off some decent character models and environments (albeit with limited draw distance) and the expected rock soundtrack which expands as you complete key events. Arguably, *MetalX*'s strongest area is its sheer variety – on top of basic *Tony Hawk's*-style objectives, you're required to compete in Big Air contests, races, stunt shows and more in order to earn enough cash to see the later levels. The levels are impressive in scale and, better still, become interconnected as you unlock them, meaning once you unlock them all, you can ride freely around the entire game world. If nothing else, the intent to get one up on Mr Hawk is clear.




■ We're no experts but that really doesn't look safe – here's hoping for a happy landing. Or a miracle, of course.

Unfortunately, this determination to produce massive and free environments is also part of the game's downfall. As impressive as they can be, the game engine simply cannot keep up at times, resulting in slowdown, pop-up and some glitching which annoy more than ruin the game but still taint the quality of the overall product. So while the glitches and some of the less impressive collision detection frustrate more as the game goes on, there's still an underlying enjoyment that these flaws can't extinguish completely. Between the variety, the playability and the great feeling of accomplishment that comes from completing one of the many tasks, *FMX* is really quite good fun – while far from perfect, it just manages to overcome its weak spots, making for yet another extreme sports 'almost'.

**VERDICT 6/10**
OVERLY AMBITIOUS BUT FUN NONETHELESS

**games™ FINGERPRINT**

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME UNIQUE
**STUNTMAN:** As well as fulfilling objectives, you can parade your circus skills in the Stunt Arena.
**SPRAWLING:** Each level you unlock links to the rest, ultimately making for a huge play area.

**SX SUPERSTAR**

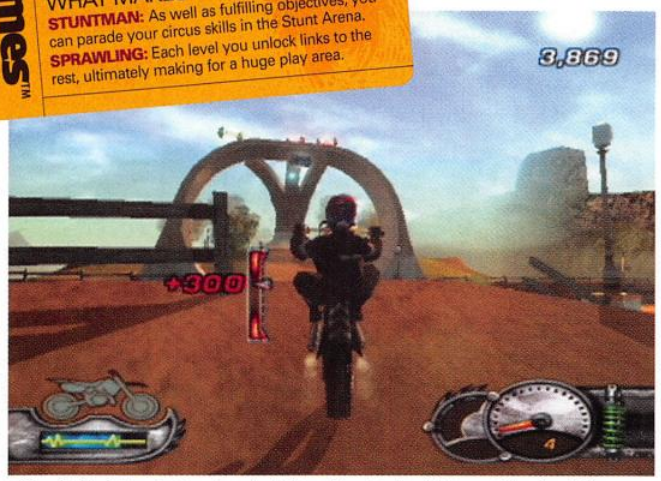


**BETTER THAN**

**WORSE THAN**



**MAT HOFFMAN PRO BMX 2**

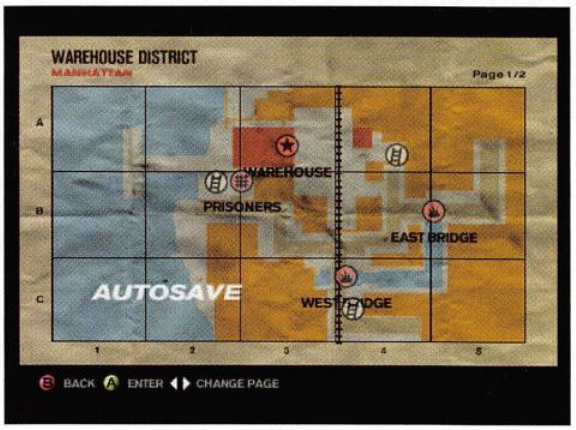


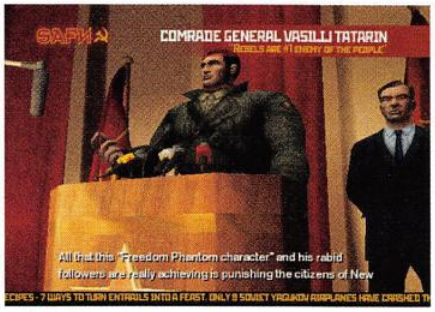

■ Since the Special bar depletes extremely quickly, you'll need to wheelie between tricks to keep it lit.




■ The Stunt Arena is one of the best parts of the game, especially in the great multiplayer modes.




These *Robocop*-style news reports pop up between levels, helping to cement the story together in a very tongue-in-cheek way.

THE RUSSIANS CAME IN TWO BY TWO – HURRAH, HURRAH...

# FREEDOM FIGHTERS

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
Xbox

**OTHER FORMATS**
PS2, GameCube, PC

**ORIGIN**
Denmark

**PUBLISHER**
EA

**DEVELOPER**
Io Interactive

**PRICE**
$99.95

**RELEASE**
19 September

**PLAYERS**
1–4

**BRUTE FORCE**



**BETTER THAN**

**AS GOOD AS**



**CONFLICT: DESERT STORM**

**Pop quiz, hotshot – there's a legion of heavily-armed Russians at your door, your brother's been kidnapped and the entire country's in the grip of a heartless dictator.** What do you do? While we're not too sure that grabbing the nearest rifle and joining the local rebel contingent would be our first choice in real life, it's certainly the order of the day in *Freedom Fighters*, EA's interesting take on the squad-based strategy genre. However, *Rainbow Six*, this ain't – if you're looking for a methodical game that requires planning and efficient use of troops then you're in the wrong place, soldier.

Placing the emphasis firmly on brawn rather than brain (although some thought is required) this is a tactical squad-based shoot-'em-up with a distinctly arcade flavour – and it shows, thanks to the simplicity of the gameplay. Commanding your troops is done with a combination of three buttons – one for attacking, one for defending and a third to make them follow you around. Tapping the button causes a single rebel to react to your command, while holding it down sends all your men out to do your bidding; you just face the direction in which you want them to go and they'll do it. Even better, you can use the over-the-shoulder gun sight to pinpoint exact locations for your men to head for, which makes maintaining control much easier. But before you can order people around, you've got to recruit them, and for that you need Charisma...

The circles in the top-left corner of the screen represent how many rebels you can take under




This talkative kid pops up to offer some sage advice every so often.




Once under your command, rebels will do anything you tell them.

**FAQs**

**Q. HOW MANY MEN?**
If you manage to complete all the sub-missions and find most of the hidden casualties, you'll be able to earn enough respect to command up to 12 rebels at once.

**Q. HOW MUCH FREEDOM?**
You can choose the order in which you complete the areas within each stage as you see fit. However, you'll have to partially explore areas and then go elsewhere if you want to set up any chain reactions to help you out...

**Q. CHAIN REACTIONS?**
Doing certain tasks in particular areas will help you out – for instance, collecting the C4 in one area will allow you to blow up enemy installations in another, stemming the flow of soldiers in the third. See?

## FRIENDLY FIRE

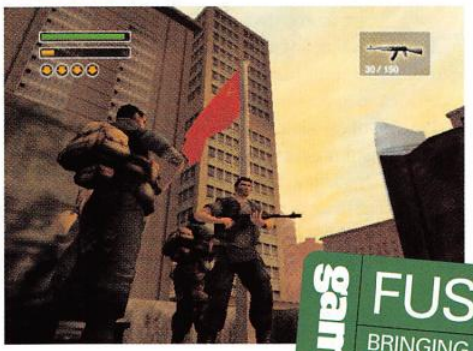
**As well as the solid (and lengthy) single-player story, *Freedom Fighters* also has a multiplayer mode that up to four people can enjoy. Well, we say 'enjoy' – sadly, while it has the same basic concept as the main game, it's actually not much fun to play. Once you've chosen your side (Soviet or American), the idea is to set out and capture bunkers and the main flag checkpoint for your team; doing so creates soldiers for you to recruit, meaning you can defend your turf to the hilt. It sounds good in theory, but it turns out to be boring and frustrating, which is a real shame. What we can't understand is why Io didn't include a two-player Co-op mode for the main story, allowing friends to team up against the Russians. Now that would have been fun.**







■ Without a rocket launcher, helicopters are virtually indestructible.



■ The main rebel base is where you plan your attacks. It fills up with weapons as you successfully complete each raid.

■ The main objective of each stage is to raise the American flag. Yeah, that'll really stop those pesky Russians in their caterpillar tracks...

your wing at any one time; when you fill up your Charisma meter, you'll be rewarded with another circle. Main objectives will obviously contribute to your meter, but you can also boost your Charisma by completing secondary missions and healing wounded civilians found around each level – something that becomes vital the further you get through the game. This healing ability also applies to your own men; should they get hit you'll have a short amount of time to track them down and revive them. Losing men damages your Charisma and reduces your chances of success, so you'll want to keep as many of them alive as possible.

While all this might sound a little complicated for an arcade-style game, it really isn't in practice. Ultimately, you can use your men in many different ways – from creating a distraction and laying down covering fire to manning machine-guns, defending positions and even acting as a human shield should things go horribly wrong. It's far less intricate than a regular squad-based game, yet it retains all the elements that make them fun – as opposed to a title like *Brute Force*, which had none of them. With some massive levels and a decent amount of planning required to get through each scenario (though not too much to put action fans off their dinners), it should keep most people happy.

But that isn't to say that the game is flawless. For example, the AI suffers slightly in places – particularly in the case of the Russians who, for an overwhelming invading force, seem to be rather stupid at times, allowing you to take out an entire platoon of men single-handed. Thankfully, this doesn't happen all the time and more often than not, you'll see enemies diving for cover away from your gunfire, returning fire as they retreat and even setting up ambushes a little further down the road.

Even when you take into account some other minor gripes on top of the AI (such as the messy multiplayer mode and some occasional graphical glitches), there's still no denying that *Freedom Fighters* is a very impressive effort and a damn fun game to boot. With a little bit more polish in the multiplayer mode and maybe even some online support, we'd have been inclined to knock the score up even further – as it is, the promise of a great single-player experience should be more than enough to have you 'russian' out for this little gem (sorry).

**VERDICT 8/10**
**A FINE DISPLAY OF IO'S CREATIVE TALENT**

### games™ FUSED

**BRINGING GENRES TOGETHER**

**NO I IN TEAM:** Squad-based strategies let you plan your attack and use your men effectively.

**SHOOT FIRST:** The emphasis is on action here – there's rarely a moment when the gunfire stops.

**PC** $89.95 26 SEPT



While the PC version doesn't require a monster machine to run, it's the keyboard/mouse controls that may put people off. Of course, it still looks lovely when run properly.

**PS2** $99.95 19 SEPT



The PS2 version doesn't look that different from the Xbox one. However, you will need a multitap if you even want to think about using those multiplayer modes.








**ENHANCED**

IMPROVING ON THE ORIGINAL

**SILKY SMOOTH:** Running smoothly and looking great are two of the many things *F-Zero* does well.

**CHOICES:** The shop, Story mode and amount of customisation make this the most varied *F-Zero* yet.

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
GameCube

**ORIGIN**
Japan

**PUBLISHER**
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER**
Amusement Vision

**PRICE**
$99.95

**RELEASE**
October '03
(Japan/US: Out Now)

**PLAYERS**
1-4

HOW CAN A GAME TRAVELLING AT OVER 1,000 KM/H TAKE SO LONG TO REACH US?

# F-ZERO GX

**As gamers, we're all too used to home versions of games paling in comparison to their arcade counterparts.** We've been subjected to sluggish ports, huge borders and even censorship and alteration so often that it's almost expected of certain companies to release substandard products – even more so with the PAL market. Thankfully, as Namco continues to prove with its excellent home console titles, the art of conversion is not a dead one, just one that requires a lot more work with today's more complex games. *F-Zero GX* is an odd case (given that it isn't really a direct port so much as a sister title), but how often is it that you can say a home game is every bit as good as – if not marginally better than – its coin-op counterpart? Exactly…

Stunning is the only word that can come close to describing just how beautiful *GX* really is. From the looping rollercoaster tracks to the lovingly crafted backdrops and superb ships, you can really see the attention to detail that makes AV the perfect heir to the *F-Zero* throne. At times, the frantic action does bear strange similarities to *Super Monkey Ball*, or, more specifically, the Monkey Race mini-game – the two couldn't be much more different, yet the flying sparks and twisting planes occasionally reminded us of Amusement Vision's simian masterpiece. It's not even as though *GX* is just a pretty face, either; showcasing some truly awesome course design and flinging around graphical effects that put most titles to shame, this is one game that might well have you reaching for a sick bag. In a good way, naturally. In the same manner, the music takes those familiar tunes you've sped along to in the past and gives them the 21st Century treatment – the pseudo-dynamic soundtrack perfectly complements the high-speed action.

Despite being related to an arcade game, you're not left wanting in terms of options and modes – each of the nine blocks on the title screen leads to an equally enjoyable or functional mode. These include the token multiplayer options that,

**FAQs**

**Q. HOW MANY SHIPS?**
Four from the off, with plenty more to buy in the F-Zero Shop, several secrets and the ability to make your own – upwards of 40 in total.

**Q. STORY MODE?**
Yep, nine levels worth. But contrary to early reports, you can only play as Captain Falcon.

**Q. TOO FAST?**
While the excessive speed has had its critics in Japan, we found it to be more or less spot on.



The cockpit view is a one-way ticket to sick city, and while it's not easy to play, the experience is second to none.



Story mode gives you some wonderfully varied tasks – racing Goroh down a boulder-filled canyon is a highlight.




Boosting triggers a huge electrical pulse to spew forth from your machine as it careers towards light speed.

even without LAN play or a full pack of cars, make for some of the best four-player frivolity on the GameCube. There are even detailed character backgrounds (right down to all of the racers having their own theme songs) as well as the full complement of Cups, Practice and Time Attack options we've come to expect. One sorely missed feature from the N64 era is Death Race mode, and while a similar event in Story mode almost makes up for it, there's just something special about the high-speed destruction derby that has made us dust off our N64s. As if there wasn't already enough to keep you occupied, tickets won in events can be used to upgrade your created craft and unlock plenty of new ships in the F-Zero Shop, though getting them all will take a fair few Championship victories.

One of the major criticisms that has been levelled at *GX* by the Japanese has been that it is just too fast – however, we beg to differ. While the excessive speeds on some courses can approach eye-melting territory, this only becomes a problem on a couple of tracks, and even then it only encourages better course knowledge and use of boosts. As with a few recent Japanese titles though, *F-Zero* does quickly reach an insane level of difficulty and while you'll probably breeze through Novice and see off Standard quickly enough, Expert level and above will have you tearing your hair out for months to come. Story mode is much the same – each chapter has three levels of difficulty and let's just say that if you want to complete your garage, you'd better get practising. And practising. And practising...




As import-friendly as the Japanese version is, by the time you read this *F-Zero GX* will be gracing American shelves and less than a month away from its Australian release. Falling somewhere between the original and the N64 update (albeit slightly closer to the latter), we're sure there will be those who claim this new *F-Zero* pales in comparison to its SNES grandfather, but while we will freely admit that it's somewhat removed, it's far from inferior. A deceptively deep title with a level of variety seldom seen in the genre, we can safely say that titles of this strength are a rarity, and as both a continuation of a well-loved series and a standalone racer, *F-Zero GX* is everything we hoped it would be.

**VERDICT 9/10**
RAPIDLY APPROACHING RACING PERFECTION

## NO PREVIOUS OWNERS

On top of the already impressive garage that can be accumulated by spending a little cash in the game's shop, one of the finest features of *F-Zero GX* is the ability to build your own craft from a wide selection of parts. Components can be unlocked through Story mode, and by the time you've made good progress through Falcon's events you should be able to create quite the mean machine. However, it's not all about statistics – you're also able to decorate your ride with paint schemes, decals and patterns to your liking. Billy was certainly a fan of the leopard-skin behemoth we built for him...




Detail is slightly reduced in multiplayer (more so in three- and four-player) but speed and frame-rate don't suffer at all.










Track splits like this are common on later courses, making your racing life a little more complex.

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
Xbox

**OTHER FORMATS**
PS2, GC, PC, GBA

**ORIGIN**
US

**PUBLISHER**
EA

**DEVELOPER**
EA Redwood Shores

**PRICE**
$99.95

**RELEASE**
19 September

**PLAYERS**
1-4

**OUTLAW GOLF**



**BETTER THAN**

**JUST LIKE**



TIGER WOODS 2003

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY, YOU WON'T FIND ANY BIG SURPRISES

# TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004

**Over the years, Electronic Arts has earned itself a reputation for releasing updates of games with very little in the way of progression or change.** Admittedly, it has started to make more of an effort but, unfortunately, the team behind *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004* must have missed the memo as this latest release is yet another annual update with minimal changes. While there's nothing inherently wrong with *Tiger Woods 2004*, the series has boxed itself into a corner.

Golf doesn't translate into the most complex of videogames and EA has recreated the controls to a, er, tee. Imitating a swing with the analogue stick is still as satisfying as ever, and the balance between control and room for error is nigh-on perfect. Even better, the multiplayer is excellent, inducing the right amount of swearing, agony and punching the air in triumph. However, the controls are almost exactly the same as before and it would have been nice to see a few more changes to keep the experience fresh.

Speaking of changes, the big new addition is that you can now create a golfer for use in Career mode, teeing off against rivals and racking up the cash. You can then spend your winnings on attributes for your character or trivial things like celebrations and clothes – it's even possible to attract the attention of sponsors such as Adidas, who'll pay you to wear their sports gear. Throw in matches against real pros and it does feel like you're actually out on a professional golf circuit. Other than that though, the improvements are pretty much as you'd expect – just some new courses, new characters and so on.

While there's no doubt that it's a solid golf game that's engrossing and fun, *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004* just doesn't feel like a true sequel. Anyone who wants a golf game will have probably already played one of the previous iterations in the series – if you haven't, then now is the perfect time for your introduction to *Tiger Woods*. But if you're already a lucky owner of the last instalment, you should think carefully before parting with your cash.

**VERDICT 7/10**
**SOLID, BUT TOO SIMILAR TO LAST YEAR'S EFFORT**

**PS2 $99.95 19 SEPT**

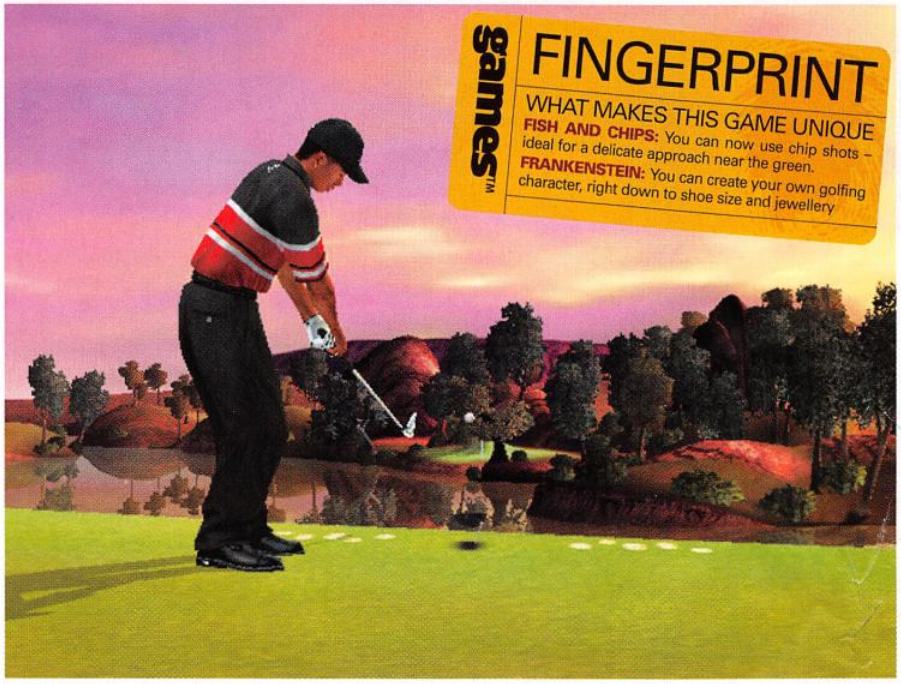


EA has lavished the PS2 version with online options including leaderboards, weekly tournaments and private tournaments open to only the best players. This makes for the best version and, arguably, the only one that feels like a true sequel.

**GC $99.95 19 SEPT**



The GameCube and Game Boy Advance versions link up with each other so you can transfer winnings and unlock extra tournaments. It's a nice addition but, as with the Xbox version, still not really enough to justify putting '2004' in the title.




Tiger's here, along with a load of other real-life PGA pro golfers, so those of you who like things more realistic are in for a treat. However, you can also create your own golfer and then show the professionals how it's done – although you shouldn't expect the same results in the real world.




Practice makes perfect – but if it's big money you want, you'll need to best these unique indoor training courses.



Yes, it still all looks rather lovely. Unfortunately, there's not much more you can do with grass and sand when it already looks this nice.

**games™ ENHANCED**

IMPROVING ON THE ORIGINAL

**STUNT-A-LICIOUS:** *Splashdown 2* has over 75 stunts – more than twice as many as in the original.

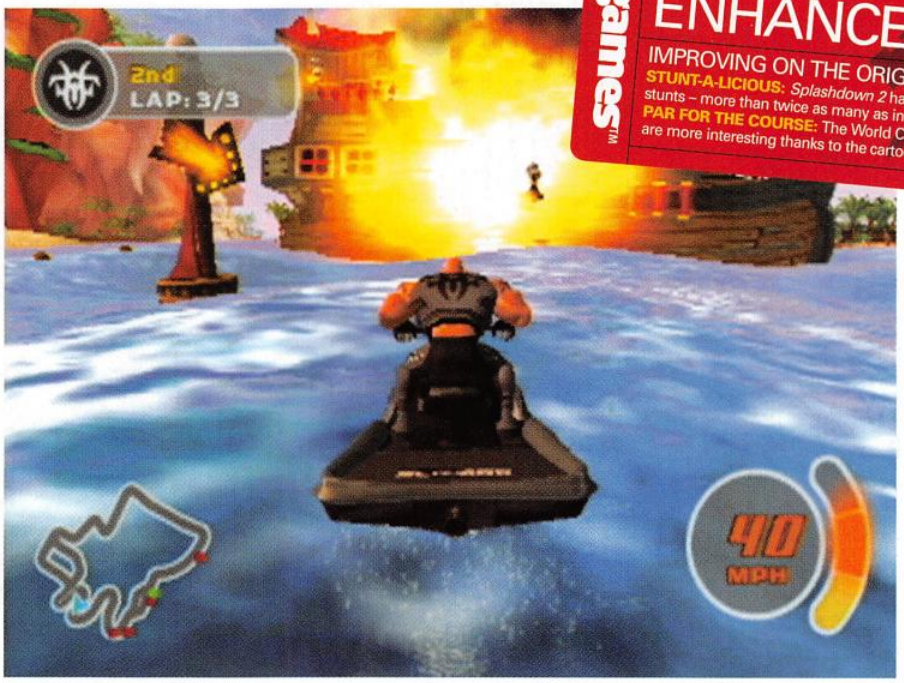
**PAR FOR THE COURSE:** The World Circuit courses are more interesting thanks to the cartoon stylings.




Basic stunts are all very well, but if it's big points you're after then you'll have to go for the more daring tricks after grabbing some air.




Stereotypical levels abound – such as this rather obvious ice track.




The tracks change mid-race – this ship explodes, for example, allowing you to race straight through a hole in the middle instead of having to go round.

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
PlayStation2

**ORIGIN**
US

**PUBLISHER**
THQ

**DEVELOPER**
Rainbow Studios

**PRICE**
£39.99

**RELEASE**
Out Now

**PLAYERS**
1-2

# SPLASHDOWN 2: RIDES GONE WILD

## HOW MANY STEREOTYPES CAN YOU POSSIBLY FIT INTO ONE GAME?

**Much like ice cream, videogame sequels come in several flavours – in particular, the always-popular Rehashed Original (mmm, tasty) or the exquisite Brand New Concept, which, sadly, is often too sweet for some developers' tastes.** Of course, you can't always guess which you're going to get when you're dealing with titles that only did reasonably well first time out. Take *Splashdown*, for example: originally, the emphasis was on realism – not just of the water, but also the vehicle physics and course design. But with THQ taking the reins from Atari for the sequel, all realism has been thrown out of the window in favour of 'scenes of fantasy' (as the disclaimer at the start of the game warns). What we now have is a distinctly arcadey racer packed with a selection of 'wacky' characters from the original, 'fantastic' courses and 'thrilling' stunts. 'Great'.

To be fair, the game's not actually that bad. Sure, it's packed with virtually every videogame stereotype (from cookie-cutter characters – token American, Brit, Irishman and so on – to obvious track settings such as ice, jungle and even a haunted castle) and doesn't do much over most other water-based race games, but for what it is, that's no bad thing. What you're getting is a fast and relatively action-packed water-based arcade racer that's more wacky than something like *Wave Race: Blue Storm* and has stupidly over-the-top stunts but still enough realism in terms of the physics to make it worth a look over other 'normal' racing titles. There are also plenty of unlockable secrets (from new tracks, vehicles and modes to a plethora of secret, even kookier characters) to keep you busy for ages, which again isn't bad, especially since opening them means mastering all the different track styles and difficulties in order to earn enough points.

Unfortunately, while all this may look good on paper (especially when compared to the original), the fact remains that *Splashdown* is just above middle-of-the-road when it comes to the gameplay. It's fun but not groundbreaking, and enjoyable but not absorbing enough to keep you playing for more than a few hours at a time. Three words? It's a renter – simple as that.

**VERDICT 6/10**

RATHER BY-THE-NUMBERS, BUT STILL A LAUGH

JET SKI RIDERS

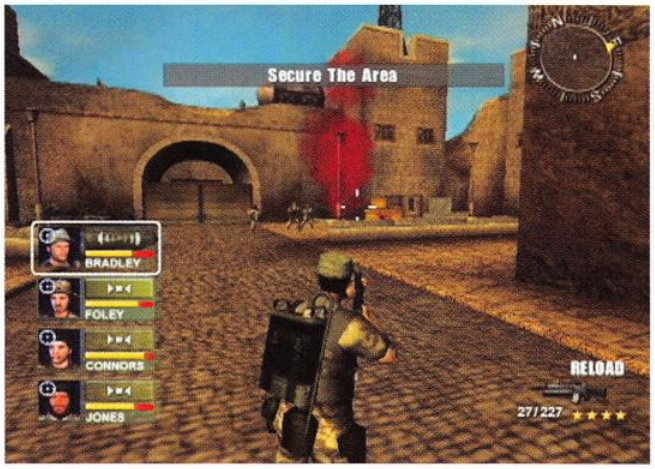


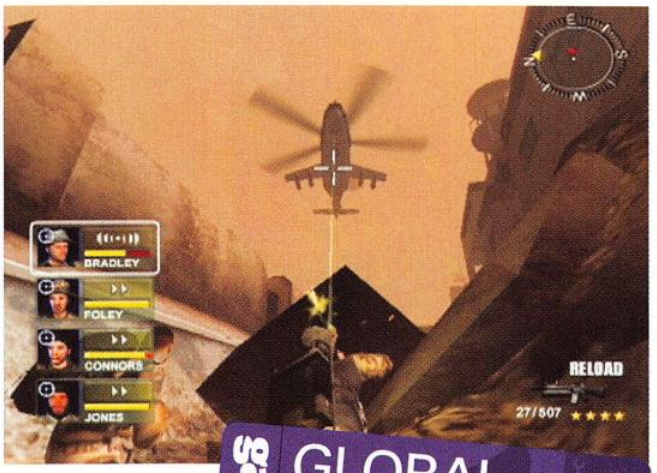
BETTER THAN

WORSE THAN



HYDRO THUNDER




games™ GLOBAL

TAKING GAMING ONLINE

**NO SHOW:** Sadly, while games like *SOCOM* offer action against players the world over, *Conflict* is confined to a single console. Pivotal is working on online functionality, but we want it now, dammit.

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
PlayStation2

**OTHER FORMATS**
Xbox, GameCube, PC

**ORIGIN**
UK

**PUBLISHER**
Atari

**DEVELOPER**
SCi

**PRICE**
$99.95

**RELEASE**
September '03
(GC: November '03)

**PLAYERS**
1-2

PIVOTAL KEEPS THE CONFLICT COMING

# CONFLICT: DESERT STORM II

**We're sure we're not alone when we say that for a war-based title to be at all interesting in today's saturated market, it has to be something really quite special.** The industry has seen so many generic 'man/squad with gun(s)' games that even heavily hyped releases like *Brute Force* can easily turn out to be woefully average or worse. As a result, though, franchises can often fare better – Joe Public is far more likely to pick up a game with a recognised title and, as such, *Conflict II* is set in good stead by its accomplished predecessor. How ironic, then, that familiarity is both its major selling point and its biggest letdown.

While we're normally keen to highlight the key differences that set a sequel apart from its predecessor, Pivotal has made this easy for us in that this is nigh-on identical to the first game. This isn't an entirely bad thing – the original was a good solid title and by improving AI, tweaking visuals and throwing in new weapons and effects, we're presented with an enjoyable experience that suffers from little more than familiarity. Sadly, the first game did have a tendency to get slightly repetitive so previous players may find some of this sequel's missions somewhat similar, though newcomers to the growing *Conflict* series should find it an impressive and absorbing experience despite a few technical problems.




It may not look like much, but the sandstorm effects look really rather lovely in motion.

As expected, *Conflict II* looks and sounds the part – for a PS2 title it throws around some great effects (even if these can knock down the frame-rate with annoyingly frequency). Settings have been made more varied to try to combat the repetition in the first game, and while you are theoretically given the freedom to tackle tasks in different ways, much of the more corridor-based level design doesn't allow this. Still, *Conflict II* has a few aces to play by way of co-operative play (among other things) which makes for some of the best moments of the game.

Ultimately, this offers little over the first *Desert Storm* other than a new campaign and several engine tweaks but given the game's setting, there's precious little more you could ask of it. Nothing groundbreaking, but if it's fun with guns you're after then few current squad-based titles provide it better than this.

**VERDICT 7/10**
MORE OF THE SAME BUT STILL GOOD FUN

**BRUTE FORCE**



**BETTER THAN**

**AS GOOD AS**



**CONFLICT DESERT STORM**

**GC** $99.95 NOV '03



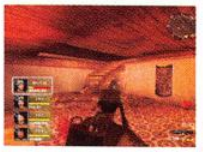
A little way off yet but if this is anything like the last game, the GameCube version could outshine all others. We'll have to wait and see but our fingers remain crossed...

**XB** $99.95 SEPT '03



Offering slightly improved visuals and four-player co-operative potential, the Xbox version would be our version of choice if the game hadn't so clearly been designed with the PS2 pad in mind.

**PC** $89.95 SEPT '03



The trade-off for the obviously classy visuals is that there's no form of multiplayer whatsoever – a real shame considering this is one of *Conflict*'s biggest strengths

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
Xbox

**ORIGIN**
Japan

**PUBLISHER**
Atari

**DEVELOPER**
SEGA

**PRICE**
$99.95

**RELEASE**
Out Now

**PLAYERS**
1

# OTOGI: MYTH OF DEMONS

## GHOST STORIES AND ANCIENT MYTHS COME TO LIFE...

**It's easy to accuse developers of reaching for the DVD shelf when trying to find inspiration for their latest videogame.** However, with bullet-time and convoluted storylines around every digital corner, it's so hard not to. For that reason alone then, we're thankful that slash-'em-up *Otogi: Myth Of Demons* shuns Hollywood in favour of a far richer and more interesting resource pool closer home – the world of the Japanese spook story.

*Otogi*'s roots are evident through the game, which explores ancient ghost fables by taking you from misty shipwrecks to floating islands. Eastern folklore also serves as the inspiration for the army of supernatural demons and ghouls throughout, all fastidiously designed and bringing the settings to life. The sound is unusually quiet, consisting mostly of ghostly bell chimes, only coming to life when battle begins. It's wonderfully atmospheric and gives *Otogi* a distinct, mystical feel that's almost as important as the gameplay.

Even better, your character, Raikoh, is also somewhat ethereal – he can double jump, air dash and float to the ground, which can be combined with sword slashes for a simple-but-satisfying combat system. It's fortunate that the basics of fighting are easy to grasp, as Raikoh will often find himself outnumbered – add plenty of destructible scenery and all the ingredients are there for mayhem and carnage. Despite being based around ghost stories, this certainly isn't a survival horror game, as you'll realise when you smash yet another apparition through a wall.

Unfortunately, the main problem is that *Otogi* tends to repeat itself. There are some attempts to keep the objectives diverse (keeping a ship afloat, destroying a water tower and so on) but the core gameplay remains the same – hack and slash until you win. Even with the options to buy new weapons and level up between stages, it doesn't provide the depth that's needed. But *Otogi* should be applauded for trying something different. Anyone looking for a new gaming experience won't be too disappointed.

**VERDICT 6/10**
A MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE, HAMPERED BY REPETITION

**CHAOS LEGION**



**BETTER THAN**

**WORSE THAN**



**DYNASTY WARRIORS 4**




Learning how to dash in the air and stay there is a key part of mastering the more stylish and effective combos.



Fighting on the ground is every bit as effective as aerial combat, although it doesn't feel quite as rewarding.



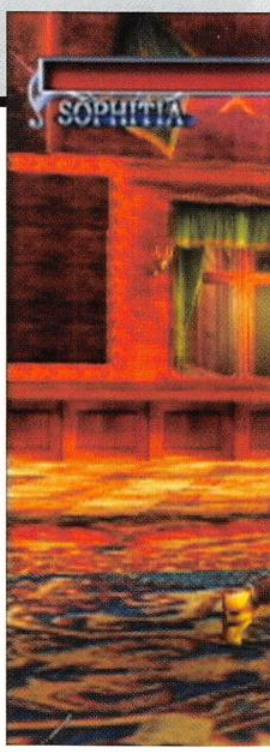

Most things in the game be destroyed; for example, that ship won't be able to withstand an enemy smacked into its side...

**games™ FINGERPRINT**

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME UNIQUE

**HANGTIME:** Raikoh can fight in the air, opening up some impressive aerial hand-to-hand combos

**APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION:** Nearly all the peripheral scenery can be destroyed.










OKAY, WE'RE CONFUSED – HOW CAN YOU MAKE A SIMPLE CONVERSION WORSE?

# SOUL CALIBUR II

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
PlayStation2

**OTHER FORMATS**
Xbox, GameCube

**ORIGIN**
Japan

**PUBLISHER**
Electronic Arts (PS2/Xb), Nintendo (GC)

**DEVELOPER**
Namco

**PRICE**
$99.95

**RELEASE**
19 September

**PLAYERS**
1-2

**Six months is a long time in gaming – enough time for publishers to announce a whole new range of games or developers to polish an average game into a diamond.** Sadly, a six-month wait is also agony for gamers, particularly when the game you want is already out in Japan and you have to sit around like a lemon waiting for the PAL release. But at least you can be assured that eventually you'll get the same quality title – unless something happens to mess up the PAL release, of course. But that would never happen… would it?

Don't get us wrong, we haven't suddenly decided that *Soul Calibur II* isn't all it's cracked up to be although, obviously, you could argue that point if you're willing to be petty enough and have a unhealthy passion for the earlier games in the series. However, we have to say that we're slightly concerned about a number of really annoying little things that stand out as being inferior to the Japanese release; things that are noticeable even if you're a *Soul Calibur II* virgin. Even worse, these are things that could have been fixed relatively easily – particularly since Namco has had six months to sort them out.

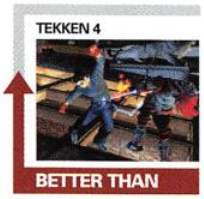
But first, the good news. Just as the hype suggests, *Soul Calibur II* is a weapon-based beat-'em-up which has no equal on any of the current consoles. Although there are certainly enough similarities to say that it's more of an upgrade of the Dreamcast original rather than a full-blown sequel, that doesn't stop it from offering everything a good 3D beat-'em-up should have – plenty of moves, loads of flashy effects and more weapons than you can shake a pointy stick at. Namco has played it very cagily by improving on




■ Ivy and her extendable Whip-Blade are back, although this time she appears to have earned herself a whole new streak of viciousness – some of her moves are just plain nasty.




■ The new backgrounds are nice, but some (like the Windmill stage) are a bit too complex for their own good and end up providing nothing but extra slowdown to the proceedings.




**FAQs**

**Q. SOUL CALIBUR 1.5?**
Pretty much, although that's not exactly terrible. The original game was great (although not as good as *Soul Blade*), so having just more of the same isn't all that bad. Well, sort of.

**Q. CHEAP AS CHIPS?**
If you're talking about the enemy AI, then yes; in comparison to the 'harsh but fair' difficulty of the import version, the PAL opponents fight as dirty as the day is long.

**Q. SPRECHEN SIE ENGLISCH?**
Unfortunately so, and the English voices are as uninspiring as you would expect – though, thankfully, you do have the option of putting them back to the original Japanese.




Despite having her lookalike Cassandra available for selection, we still prefer to have Sophitia fight our battles for us any day of the week.

One of the few original new characters, Raphael, is fast and fancy – his rapier might not dish out that much damage, but he's got the moves to run circles around most of the other characters combined.







every single element of the original (from backgrounds and characters, through to the improved Weapon Master mode) rather than trying anything drastically new that could deter the fans. This, as you might expect, is mostly a good thing, although we can't help but think that some decent original characters rather than rehashes of old ones (and the awful Necrid) wouldn't have gone amiss.

However, the PAL version of *Soul Calibur II* has its own share of problems to add to the ones that afflicted the import version. But unlike the very minor import issues such as slight clipping on the characters or some slowdown, these make more of a difference to the experience the game offers. This is mainly because they feature in other areas that have supposedly been 'improved' for the PAL release, but instead they just smack of laziness. The big sticking point for us has to be your opponents' AI – after complaints that the game was too easy for Japanese gamers, Namco has clearly done its best to enhance the difficulty. The result is, to be frank, a mess – computer opponents now just use a combination of constant blocking, impossible side-steps, unbalanced power attacks and unblockable ground strikes to dominate each fight, which makes playing alone far less enjoyable than it should be.

## games™ FINGERPRINT

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME UNIQUE

**THREE'S A CROWD:** You'll have to decide which of the three unique version characters you like best.

**UP IN ARMS:** The *Soul Calibur* series is still one of the few weapons-based beat-'em-ups around today.

Add to that the obviously last-minute decision to include three previously unavailable characters (minus much-needed and easily-put-together moves lists, that is) and it all makes for some poor choices on Namco's part. Even something as obvious as the character voices gives us cause for concern – not only are the English voices pretty average throughout, but many of the speech samples end up cutting each other off during particularly intense battles, making the whole thing seem rather scrappy. There is, however, the option to restore the original Japanese voices (at last, something to be thankful for).

Of course, being practically uncontested in its field means that *Soul Calibur II* automatically becomes the leader of the pack and, to be fair, it's still a very enjoyable game when played against friends. However, it's because of those extra flaws that we feel compelled to bring the score down a notch. Considering this should have been a simple conversion, it's just not acceptable from a developer as experienced as this.



**VERDICT 7/10**

STILL ENJOYABLE, BUT WHY ALL THE EXTRA FLAWS?

## AN OLDIE, BUT A BADDIE

**As you work your way through the Weapon Master mode, you'll meet up with some enemies that might appear strangely familiar to anyone who's played the first *Soul Calibur*. It certainly takes a genius to pick Lizardman out of a crowd, and only the more observant amongst you will spot that Berserker and Assassin were also characters in the original, albeit it in the guises of Rock and Hwang respectively. When we first played the import version, we were slightly gutted that these three couldn't be unlocked as playable characters, so you can imagine our surprise when that suddenly changed for the PAL release. Of course, you can also imagine our dismay when we discovered that none of them had move lists – a real pain when, in order to learn how to play as someone, you need to know what they can do.**

**XBOX** $99.95 19 SEPT



The Xbox version shines with some nice visual effects. Control is also solid, although there's no denying that Spawn is probably the worst of the three unique characters on offer.

**GAMECUBE** $99.95 26 SEPT



Possibly the best of the three when it comes to combining unique character choice, graphics and control – we'd take Link over Spawn or Heihachi any day of the week.



Battles aren't the spectacle they could be, but the vast array of combat moves provides enough tactical choices to keep things interesting.



Thanks to the tutorial, newcomers shouldn't be intimidated.




Cities can be used to train units, as well as provide a base for your wizard.

games™ ENHANCED

IMPROVING ON THE ORIGINAL

**ENDLESS SCOPE:** Design your own scenarios with the map generator and challenge your mates online.

**NEW RECRUITS:** Three new playable races take the tally to 15, along with 50 new units and fresh heroes.

**DETAILS**

**FORMAT REVIEWED**
PC

**ORIGIN**
Netherlands

**PUBLISHER**
Take2

**DEVELOPER**
Triumph Studios

**PRICE**
$89.95

**RELEASE**
Out Now

**PLAYERS**
1 (1-8 online)

**MINIMUM SPEC**
450MHz processor, 128MB RAM, 900MB HDD space, 16MB 3D graphics card

# AGE OF WONDERS: SHADOW MAGIC

## YOU'LL NEVER NEED THAT 20-SIDED DICE AGAIN...

**Not to be confused with Ensemble Studios' hugely successful *Age Of...* real-time strategy titles, Triumph's turn-based *Age Of Wonders* series has provided fans of epic fantasy battles with a couple of must-have additions to their PC collection.** Yet outside hard-core circles of dice-rolling strategists, the genre itself generally struggles to set too many pulses racing among the gaming community as a whole. *Shadow Magic* looks to shed some of the 'newcomers need not apply' mentality, however, by including a comprehensive tutorial and packaging what might otherwise have been a regular expansion pack as a reasonably priced standalone game.

The basic premise involves accumulating a formidable collection of heroes and mythical creatures to follow your mighty wizard in a variety of quests against the dark forces that threaten to engulf the land. Friendly cities can be fortified against attack while you develop them into thriving bases that provide your cause with the resources and well-trained combat units you'll need to overcome the armies of your foes. As you tactically manoeuvre your various parties of warriors around the map, you may choose to play out the battles you'll encounter in all their glory or let the computer generate the result of more tedious conflicts for you to save time. The battles themselves are filled with an intriguing number of strategic possibilities thanks to a fabulous variation of character races, unit types, combat abilities, skills and, of course, magical spells. This is certainly where the game excels as every conceivable breed of combatant from Yetis to Dragons bring their unique talents to the fray in the epic battlefield clashes.

The in-game graphics are as primitive as ever – simply doing their job of representing the positions of your various units around the map – and the basic turn-based concept won't be every gamer's cup of tea. But with more variety and strategic depth than any of the previous *AOW* titles, there are plenty of reasons for fans and beginners alike to immerse themselves in *Shadow Magic*'s world of adventure.

**VERDICT 5/10**
SOLID ADDITION TO A DECENT SERIES

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC 4



BETTER THAN

WORSE THAN



WARCRAFT 3

A PARAGON PUBLICATION
NO.5 OCTOBER 2003

00c

# RETRO

MICRO GAMES ACTION

## THE GREATEST RETRO GAME EVER MADE!

*Anyone fancy a game of Pong?*



INSIDE!



**WHY DON'T THEY REMAKE... NiGHTS**

The classic SEGA Saturn game that proved that originality was alive and well... even if it was only in our dreams!

**THIS ISSUE:**

**THIS MONTH IN 1983** Coleco makes a move into the computer industry

**MORTAL KOMBAT** Was this game really worthy of all the hype it generated?

**RHYTHM ACTION GAMES** From Parappa the Rapper to Amplitude

**PLUS! 3DO – A CONSOLE BEFORE ITS TIME!**

# RETRO NEWS

## FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE HERE AND NOW OF RETRO GAMING...

**Apparently the Dreamcast is dead.** Hardware production was halted a while back and no new games are being released (though it isn't difficult to find second-hand machines).

However, over in Japan it's quite a different story; production of the hardware may have ceased there too, but games are still released on a regular basis – some of which make it into the multiformat charts.

Of course, gaming culture in Japan is a little different from Australia and New Zealand in that it's been part of everyday life there for much longer. Being that bit more mature, it seems that Japan's industry is far more forgiving of poor console sales, providing that the system itself offers the developer a decent working environment. Just look at the GameCube – shops in Japan are awaiting a tidal wave of quality titles.

With that in mind, then, it perhaps isn't too surprising that a handful of new Japanese titles have just been announced for both the Dreamcast and SNK's 12-year-old Neo-Geo home system...

Keith Edwards, Retro Editor

## CHAOS COMES HOME

### SNK Playmore confirms console translations of its new fighter

**With SNK Playmore's latest creation, *SNK Vs. Capcom Chaos*, running on the Neo-Geo MVS arcade board, it was always a possibility that a conversion would find its way to the Neo-Geo home system.** Aside from one or two memory issues, the porting process would be relatively painless seeing as the architecture is nigh-on identical, though it was thought that such a move simply might not be financially viable.

Well, amazingly, the company has confirmed that an AES conversion will arrive at the beginning of October, priced at ¥39,800 (approximately $530). No additional features have been confirmed at the time of writing, and judging by the enormous amount of memory required for the main game, it's unlikely that too much more will be added on top of the standard arcade code.

However, for anyone who can't afford to shell out upwards of $500 for the game, SNK Playmore has also confirmed that PS2 and Xbox versions are in the works and will be released in the New Year.

Hopefully, these will include bonus features for the fans.





▲ Still hanging onto that trusty Neo-Geo home system? Don't let go yet because you'll be getting a dose of *SNK Vs. Capcom Chaos* in the near future. You'll need to take out a loan first, though...



## DREAM ON

**Although the Dreamcast is still receiving new software titles in Japan, hard-core gamers have been particularly excited by the recent announcement of *Border Down* – and old-school shoot-'em-up from G-Rev. Similar to Treasure's *Ikaruga*, the game was initially released on the SEGA Naomi arcade board last year and features a blend of polygons and 2D parallax scrolling backgrounds to create a pseudo 3D look.**

**Launching on 25 September in Japan, lucky gamers will have the opportunity to pick up a limited number of *Border Down* mousemats and soundtrack CDs when they buy the Dreamcast version of the game. Expect to be seeing copies of *Border Down*, along with the limited edition merchandise, appearing on eBay at hugely inflated prices very soon.**



▲ Expect Japanese Dreamcast owners to snap up *Border Down* – it's like *Ikaruga* only sideways...

## High Spirits

### Samurai Shodown rises from the grave

No sooner has *SVC Chaos* hit Japanese arcades and SNK Playmore has already confirmed its next project – *Samurai Spirits Zero* (*Samurai Shodown Zero* in the West). Again running on the Neo-Geo MVS arcade board, this latest instalment in the *Samurai Spirits* series is set to include 24 fighters, as well as a completely revamped control system.

This time around, Hard Slash is activated by pressing Weak and Medium Slash simultaneously, freeing up a button for a new action called Meditation. Using this in conjunction with other moves enables brand new abilities such as Enlightenment – a mode in which move combinations are carried out in slow motion. *Samurai Spirits Zero* is expected to hit Japanese arcades this autumn.



▲ *Samurai Spirits Zero* will have new fighters.

# This Month In 1983




***Ah, 1983 – the year when the Jedi returned, Mario Bros made its debut in arcades and Bonnie Tyler went to number one with Total Eclipse Of The Heart. Twenty years on, Star Wars and Mario are still going strong, but where's our Bonnie?***

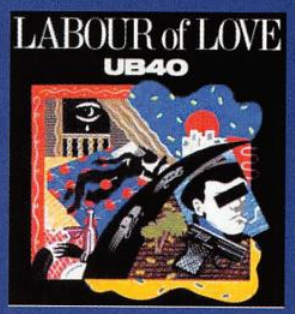
## GREAT MOVIES IN 1983 (AMERICA)

1. **Star Wars: Return Of The Jedi**
   Grossed $309,125,409
2. **Flashdance**
   Grossed $94,900,000
3. **Octopussy**
   Grossed $67,900,000
4. **Superman III**
   Grossed $60,000,000
5. **Never Say Never Again**
   Grossed $55,500,000
6. **The Dead Zone**
   Grossed $20,766,000
7. **Monty Python's The Meaning Of Life**
   Grossed $12,565,000
8. **The Man With Two Brains**
   Grossed $10,100,000
9. **Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence**
   Grossed N/A
10. **Krull**
    Grossed N/A



## MUSIC CHARTS FOR SEPT 1983

1. **Red Red Wine**
   UB40
2. **Wings Of A Dove**
   Madness
3. **Tonight I Celebrate My Love**
   Peabo Bryson & Roberta Flack
4. **What Am I Gonna Do**
   Rod Stewart
5. **Mama**
   Genesis
6. **Walking In The Rain**
   Modern Romance
7. **Give It Up**
   KC & The Sunshine Band
8. **The Sun Goes Down (Living It Up)**
   Level 42
9. **Karma Chameleon**
   Culture Club
10. **Gold**
    Spandau Ballet

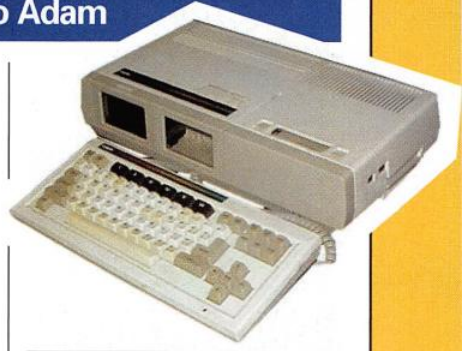



## GAMING NEWS SEPT 83

### The FCC says okay to Adam

**It was this month in 1983 that the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) gave Coleco the go ahead to start producing its Z80-based home computer, the Adam.** Coleco had released a popular games console called the Colecovision just over a year previously, and saw the Adam as the next step in its business plan. While consoles were certainly popular with children, it was thought that parents would more readily spend money on a computer that could also be used for schoolwork. Unfortunately, things wouldn't run as smoothly as planned.

The system had been unveiled at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in June 1983 and was expected to launch that August for USD 600 ($900). Unfortunately, a number of unforeseen problems with production meant that the manufacturing costs were slowly rising, while the industry was becoming disheartened by the delays. By September, however, the press, along with a handful of financial advisers, were invited to the Coleco headquarters to witness the hardware coming off the production line. The event itself was successful enough, though further problems meant that the launch was delayed until October, when just 400,000 of the planned 500,000 units were ready.



▶ Good for games *and* schoolwork. Yeah, right...

Eventually going on sale at USD 700 ($1100), the Adam launched in the third week of October and came packaged with a tape drive, keyboard and daisywheel printer. Interestingly, the system was compatible with existing Colecovision game tapes and cartridges, though it was its built-in word processing software that attracted consumers. Unfortunately, the market was in a poor state during 1983, and by the end of the year just 100,000 units had been sold.

Coleco continued to support the Adam throughout 1984, though sales remained unspectacular. This, combined with a huge number of faulty machines, saw the company making a loss of USD 80 million $125 million), and by the end of 1984, on the verge of bankruptcy, Coleco pulled out of the industry altogether.

## WORLD NEWS

### *MASSIVE MAZE BREAK OUT*

**On 25 September 1983, 38 prisoners escaped from the Maze high-security jail near Lisburn, Northern Ireland.** Led by Dermot Finucane, the inmates used smuggled knives and guns against staff before driving to the main gate in a stolen food lorry. One prison officer was killed during the break out, while another was hospitalised with a gunshot wound to the head.

A massive police search was initiated immediately and 19 of the escapees were recaptured within a few days of the incident. Another eight were located over the next nine years (three of whom were killed in ambushes), but the remaining 11 have never been found. The Maze was closed in September 2000 and the remaining prisoners were transferred to other jails.



▶ The infamous Maze prison has now been closed.

## THIS MONTH'S FAVOURITES

**Just a few of the classic retro titles that have been blistering our thumbs this month...**

***ECCO THE DOLPHIN***

With Appaloosa unveiling its new shark game, *Sole Predator*, this month, we thought we'd revisit the original *Ecco* game. And it's still looking good aft er all these years.



***CASTLE OF ILLUSION***

Although it's far too short and easy, playing *Castle Of Illusion* this month reminded us of just how pure and inoffensive videogames could be.



***OUT RUN***

Yu Suzuki and his team are going to have to work hard if they want *Out Run 2* to better the original arcade game – it's damn fast and silky smooth.

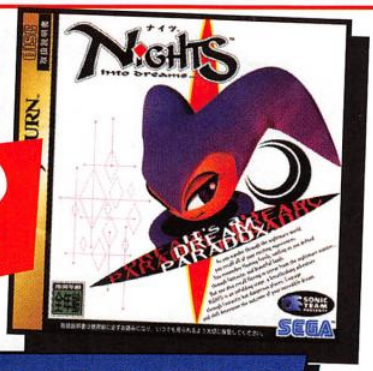


***BUST-A-MOVE***

This is one game that spawned far too many pointless sequels. As a standalone title though, there are few puzzle games that can match it.



# Why Don't They Remake?




## N·I·G·H·T·S I·N·T·O D·R·E·A·M·S







Released: **1996**
Publisher: **SEGA**
Developer: **Sonic Team**
Format: **Saturn**

**One title that we'd love to see remade is *NiGHTS Into Dreams*, Sonic Team's bizarre Saturn action adventure game.** The game takes place in the surreal realm of Nightopia, in which the laws of physics don't apply. Playing as either Elliot or Claris (two human children who possess the spiritual essence of courage), your Ideyas (coloured orbs representing hope, purity, courage and so on) are taken by Nightmarians. Luckily, by entering the Ideya Palace it's possible to transform into Nights – jester-like creatures that can fly. Once in this guise, your aim is simply to collect 20 blue chips from around the level then take them to the Ideya Capture to destroy it within the time limit. Confused? Despite the somewhat complex background story, *NiGHTS* is actually a lot of fun.

The problem with *NiGHTS*, of course, was that as a SEGA Saturn game it was largely ignored by most of the Western gaming community – a factor that almost certainly affected SEGA's decision not to make a follow-up. Why spend time and money developing a game that could well be ignored twice? And yet a *NiGHTS* remake has been rumoured for months now, though so far SEGA won't confirm or deny this. With the company currently undergoing an internal restructure, the chances are that such a project could well be announced in the coming months.

Reports from Japan suggest that part of this restructure will see Sonic Team merging with UGA, the team behind the psychedelic rhythm-based shoot-'em-up *Rez*. If this does go ahead, we could see the rise of one of the most creative development studios around – surely the perfect team to create a new *NiGHTS* game?

### SNOW LAUGHING MATTER

*SONIC TEAM'S LIMITED EDITION CHRISTMAS SPECIAL*

**Although SEGA has had to tighten its belt recently, there was a time when it would release all sorts of quirky merchandise for its Japanese fans. In November 1996, Sonic Team launched *Christmas NiGHTS* – a shorter, graphically rearranged version of the main game that rewarded players with bonus prizes for finishing it. As only a few discs were released, *Christmas NiGHTS* is now quite sought-after.**




## ...next best thing

### PHANTASY STAR ONLINE: EPISODE I & II

**Although it wasn't a complete game, a Game Boy Advance version of *NiGHTS Into Dreams* was available to download from the GameCube version of *Phantasy Star Online*.**

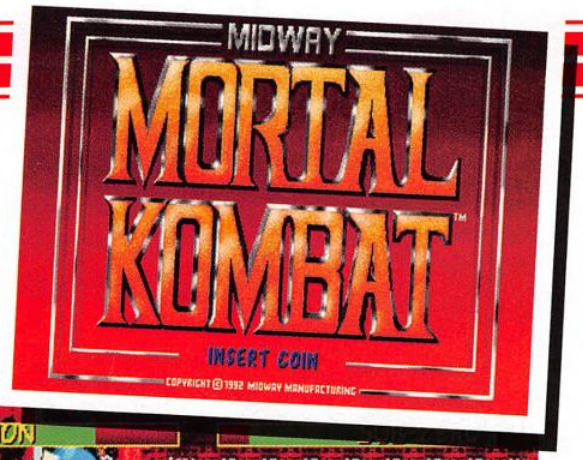
**Replacing all the polygons with sprites and 2D side-scrolling layers, GBA *NiGHTS* mimicked the Saturn game extremely closely, hinting that a handheld version of the game may have been in the pipeline.**

**Sadly, although GC *Phantasy Star Online* launched in America almost a year ago, SEGA still hasn't confirmed whether a full-length portable version of *NiGHTS* will ever be released.**




▲ Even better than the real thing? Not quite, but we'd love to see a handheld version of *NiGHTS*.

# LOOK BACK IN ANGER



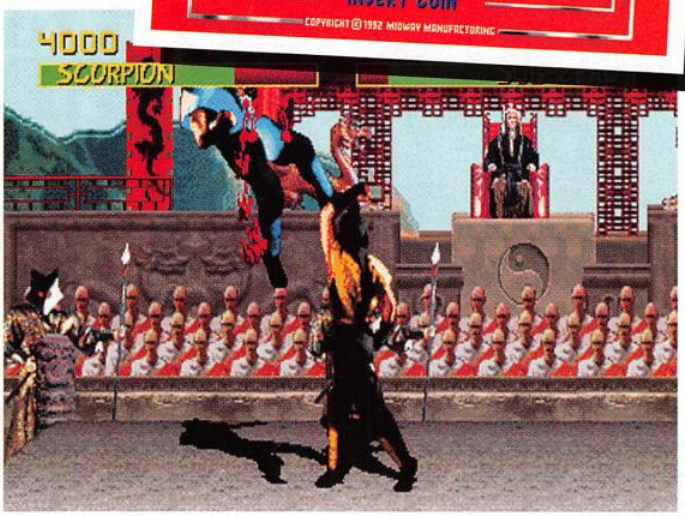

***A complementary title to Capcom's Street Fighter series? Or merely an overly violent gore-fest aimed at 13 year olds?***

**Although most hard-core gamers continue to argue that *Street Fighter II* is the all-time king of beat-'em-ups, Midway's *Mortal Kombat* games have certainly received plenty of praise over the years.** Launching in the arcades in 1991, it wasn't difficult to see why the original game provoked so much attention. From a visual standpoint it was certainly one of the more creative titles around – rather than hand-drawn sprites, the game featured digitised actors and martial arts experts, giving it a far more realistic look than other similar titles. Of course, this wasn't the first time such imagery had been used in a videogame – *Pit Fighter*, for example, which had launched two years previously, featured similarly styled visuals, though the overall effect was a little less refined.

Aside from its graphics though, there was another thing for which *Mortal Kombat* became well-known – its shocking level of violence. Huge drops of crimson liquid would spurt from the characters whenever moves connected, while the infamous 'Death Moves' would see heads ripped off with the spines still attached and pumping hearts torn out of chests. Then, of course, there was the pit full of spikes in which unlucky losers would often find themselves impaled amongst decapitated heads and rotting corpses. Unsurprisingly, such levels of graphic violence resulted in *Mortal Kombat* getting more than its fair share of column inches in the tabloid press, and the game soon became a household name.




▲ Take out the blood and the game's even worse.




▲ "A pint? That's nearly an armful" etc...

But underneath all the gore and showiness it's debatable whether or not Midway's creation offered a gaming experience to match its closest rival, *Street Fighter II*. While Capcom's game featured a range of balanced fighters, each with a selection of skill-based special moves and combos, *Mortal Kombat* relied far more heavily on quick jabs and cheesy leg sweeps. Of course, each of the characters had their own list of moves, though they tended to range from being far too powerful to utterly pointless.

A further blow came in the form of the SNES version, in which all the blood and most of the gore had been removed to appease Nintendo (at the time the company was still very family orientated). Without its token violence, it was blatantly obvious just how shallow *Mortal Kombat* really was; next to the sublime console conversion of *Street Fighter II Turbo* there really didn't seem to be an awful lot to master. Still, that didn't stop Midway from creating more than half a dozen sequels and spin-offs.




▲ Ooh, controversial. Yet oddly unsatisfying.




▲ You want blood? You got it. Buckets of the stuff.




## LAST MONTH'S AMSTRAD CPC SCREENSHOTS

*Too young to remember the Amstrad CPC 464? Don't worry, at least you'll know what last month's games were...*

**FIRST ROW**
Daley Thompson's Decathlon
Double Dragon
Rampage
Bad Dudes Vs Dragon Ninja
Little Computer People
Hammer Boy
Harvey Headbanger
Fernandez Must Die
Dan Dare 3: The Escape
Dungeons, Amethysts, Alchemists 'n' Everythin'

**SECOND ROW**
Beyond The Ice Palace
Renegade
BMX Simulator
Spy Vs Spy II: The Island Caper
Solomon's Key
Head Over Heels
Krystal Kingdom Dizzy
Run The Gauntlet
Mickey Mouse
Power Drift

**THIRD ROW**
Operation Wolf
Extreme
Killerball
Shockway Rider
Off Shore Warrior
Commando
Gauntlet
Feud
Robocop
Nebulus

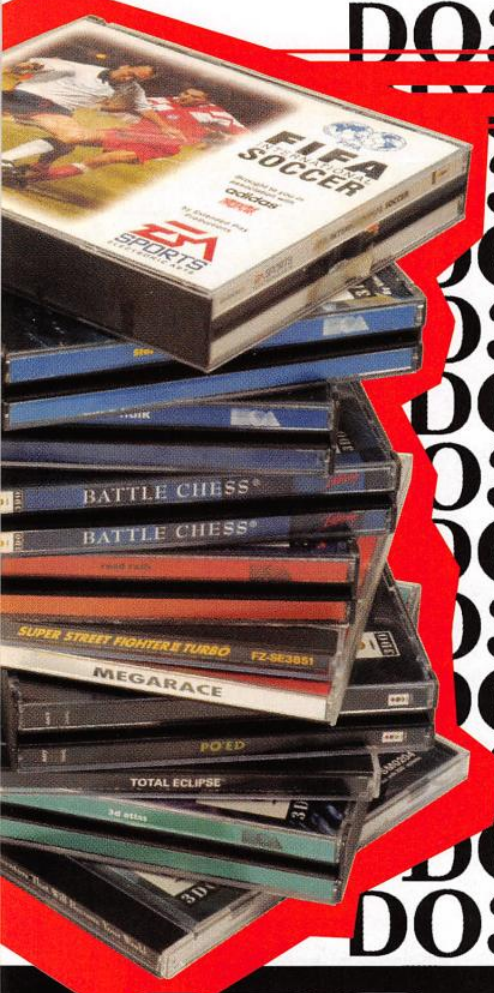
**FOURTH ROW**
Bobo
Cybernoid
Cauldron
P-47: The Freedom Fighter
The Eidolon
Jack The Nipper
Exolon
Trantor
Batman
Roland On The Ropes

**FIFTH ROW**
By Fair Means Or By Foul
Ikari Warriors
Ball Bearing
Ninja Scooter Simulator
North And South
Golden Axe
Thundercats
The Sacred Armour Of Antiriad
Platoon
Spindizzy

**SIXTH ROW**
Everyone's A Wally
Castle Master
Oh Mummy
APB
SAS Combat Simulator
First Past The Post
Dominator
Eliminator
Rick Dangerous
Fruit Machine Simulator

**SEVENTH ROW**
After The War
Fantastic Voyage
Arkanoid: Revenge Of Doh
Wonderboy
Prince Of Persia
Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles
Chase HQ
The Trap Door
Space Harrier
Klax

**EIGHTH ROW**
Solomon's Key
Afterburner
Rainbow Islands
Auf Wiedersehen Monty
Chicken Chase
Savage
The Sentinel
Garfield: Big Fat Hairy Deal
Obliterator
Escape From Singe's Castle




Classic Machine

# 3DO INTERACTIVE MULTIPLAYER

***DESCRIBED BY ITS CREATOR AS "MORE STIMULATING TO THE HUMAN MIND THAN ANY NEW TECHNOLOGY SINCE PRINTING", THE 3DO LOOKED SET TO BE THE NEXT BIG THING. SO WHAT WENT WRONG?***

## SPECIFICATIONS

CPU: ARM60 32-bit RISC CPU
CPU Speed: 12.5Mhz
Memory: DRAM – 2MB
VRAM – 1MB
Resolution: 640x480
GPU: 2 x graphics animation co-processors
GPU Speed: 25Mhz
GPU Capabilities: 20,000 polygons per second
Texture mapping
Transparency
Sprite scaling effects (enlargement, rotation etc.)
Sound: Custom 16-bit digital signal processor (25Mhz)
32 channels
44.1Khz sampling rate
Input/Output Composite video, S-Video RF
Other: Double-speed CD-Rom drive
32KB battery back-up memory for game saves
Singular controller port
Audio CD & CD-G compatible
Photo-CD compatible

Launched in the US in October 1993, the 3DO Interactive Multiplayer looked set to be a sure-fire hit. The machine was the collaborative work of seven respectable electronics companies including Matsushita (aka Panasonic), and with EA founder William 'Trip' Hawkins at the helm, it seemed the system couldn't fail. However, it soon became clear that there were several major factors that would prevent the 3DO from ever achieving the sort of success of which it was theoretically capable.

The USD 700 ($1100) price tag immediately deterred most potential buyers, irrespective of what games were on the machine and how many extra functions were available. Two further problems came in the form of SEGA and Sony, which were both in the process of developing more powerful consoles for release a year later. This had a knock-on effect with regards to third-party software developers, many of whom steered clear of the 3DO in favour of the two forthcoming Japanese systems. Of course, you could hardly blame them for being cautious – the machine was launched at a time when developers around the world were struggling to stay afloat.

Despite facing such difficulties, the 3DO still played an important role in gaming history. Not only did it bridge the gap between the demise of 2D and the introduction of 3D, but it was also a fairly accurate indication of where the console industry would go in the future. Although it seemed misguided at the time, the creation of a multi-function entertainment system (that was not only compatible with games but also with audio, photo and video CDs) is like the consoles of today featuring DVD movie playback and network gaming.

### "WHY I LOVE THE 3DO"

Selling my American SNES (with 40 classic games) in order to buy an imported 3DO seemed like a good idea at the time, but we all make mistakes. Disappointed as I was though, spending Christmas day 1994 playing *The Need For Speed* and *Road Rash* is now a treasured memory that I'd be without had I not been such a mindless fool.

***Keith Edwards***

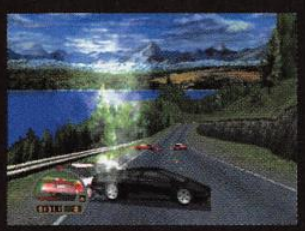
# Six Of The Best

***The machine may not have been the greatest success in the world, but it did have a few good games to its name***

## THE NEED FOR SPEED

Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
Year: **1994**

Although additional 3D processing power has given racing games a boost in recent years, there are few titles that blend realism and fun as well as *The Need For Speed* did back in 1994. Competing against a single rival, the game wasn't particularly smooth or fast, but featured winding country roads, an astonishing draw distance and some of the most impressive car crashes seen in a videogame to date. Unfortunately, none of the follow-ups have been anywhere near as impressive.





## ROAD RASH

Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
Year: **1994**

By using a mix of sprites and polygons, EA was able to keep 3DO *Road Rash* running fast and smoothly. Although the concept hadn't changed a great deal from the earlier Mega Drive games, this incarnation featured lengthier tracks as well as graphics that many described as 'photo realistic'. The game also featured licensed tracks by Soundgarden and Swervedriver, though hardware limitations meant that the machine couldn't play them during the races.



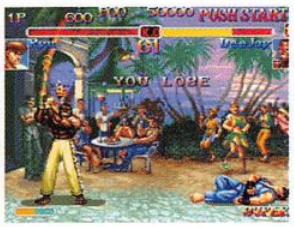




## SUPER STREET FIGHTER II TURBO

Publisher: **Capcom**
Year: **1994**

Looking far more authentic than the SNES incarnation of *Super Street Fighter II*, 3DO *SSFII Turbo* featured practically all the animation frames from the original arcade game. It also boasted Qsound and remixed music tracks that people seemed to love or hate in equal numbers. Sadly, a lack of processor power meant that many of the parallax layers had been removed from the scrolling backgrounds, giving the game a flatter look than the coin-op version.




▲ Well, it's better than the SNES conversion, but it *is* on the 3DO. Can't have everything, eh?

## SAMURAI SHODOWN

Publisher: **BMG**
Year: **1994**

Like Capcom's *Super Street Fighter II Turbo*, 3DO *Samurai Shodown* looked closer to the original arcade game than any of the other console conversions. Unfortunately, the 3DO hardware wasn't well-suited to running complex 2D routines, and because all the scaling effects had been included along with all the animation the program didn't move things as smoothly as the Neo-Geo version. Thankfully, these drawbacks didn't affect the gameplay to any great extent.



▲ For an apparently all-powerful machine, the 3DO struggled with some visual effects.

## RETURN FIRE

Publisher: **3DO**
Year: **1994**

Based around a simple 'capture the flag' theme, *Return Fire* was one of the few 3DO games that helped the format to attract a wider audience. Played from a bird's-eye point of view, a range of vehicles were on offer, including tanks and helicopters, each bringing a slightly different flavour to the experience. Best of all, the game featured a sublime two-player split-screen battle mode, which instantly gave *Return Fire* a longevity far beyond that of most similar titles.



▲ You fancy capturing some flags? You'll be wanting a play of *Return Fire* then...

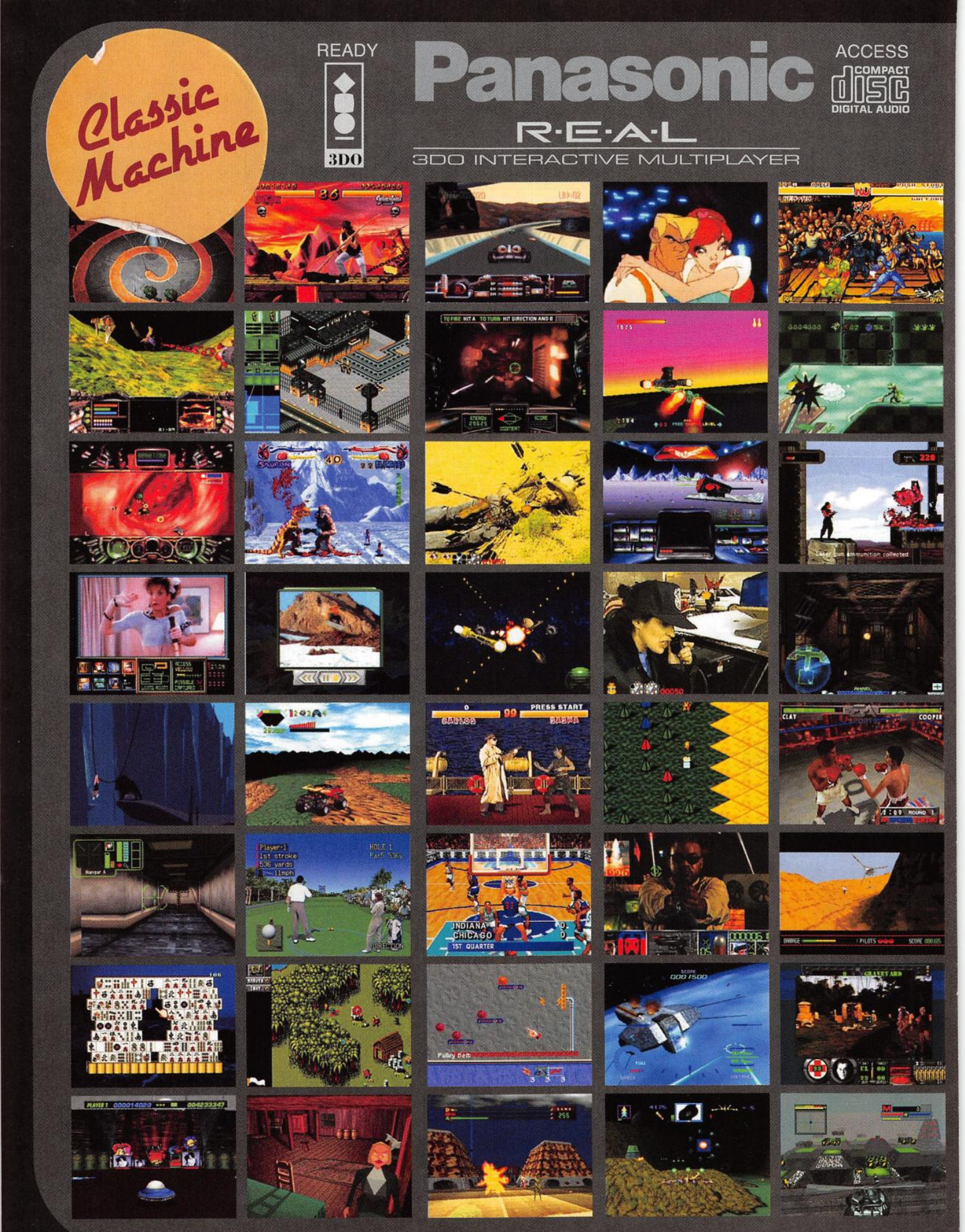
## CRASH 'N BURN

Publisher: **Crystal Dynamics**
Year: **1994**

Comparable to *Wipeout* on the PlayStation, *Crash 'N Burn* was a high-speed futuristic racer for the 3DO. Developed by Crystal Dynamics, the game suffered from short, uninspired tracks and iffy controls, though the slickness of the graphics engine was more than enough to generate public interest. For a while, *Crash 'N Burn* was packaged with the 3DO in America and the revenue generated gave Crystal Dynamics part of the funding to create its *Legacy Of Kain* adventure series.



▲ This was a fairly impressive racer but the tracks were nothing special.


Classic Machine
READY
3DO
Panasonic
ACCESS
COMPACT disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
R·E·A·L
3DO INTERACTIVE MULTIPLAYER
PRESS START
Player-1
1st stroke
536 yards
11mph
HOLE 1
Par5 536y
INDIANA
CHICAGO
1ST QUARTER
Laser gun ammunition collected
Pulley Belt


GAMESTM gains 6 points



tsunami
turbo







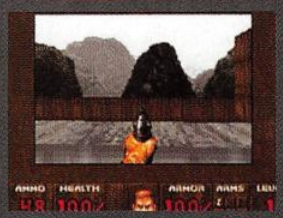



1P 71000
PUSH START



SCH



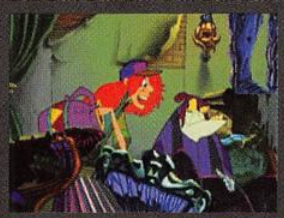


AMMO HEALTH ARMOR ARMS





PLAYER 1
ARKANA

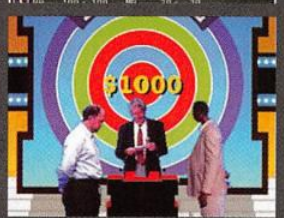

Player1
98
6
018
Axle

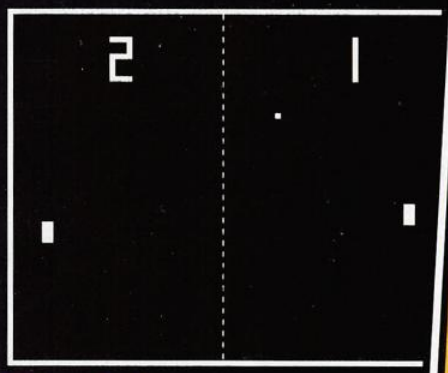





Pumpkin
Knight
Mv. 0/ 4

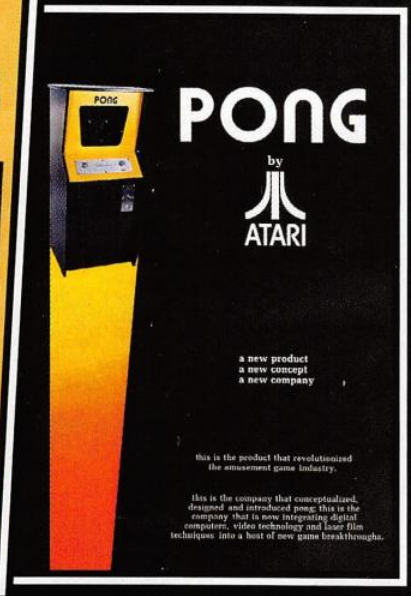

AROUND THE WORLD
Stevens is part of what continent?
Asia
Europe
South America



$1000







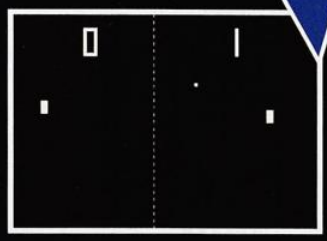



***Though it may seem an obvious choice, Pong could be the greatest retro game of all time for the most unlikely reasons...***

# P·O·N·G

Greatest RETRO Game Ever

Format: **Arcade, Atari 2600, GBC, Macintosh, PC, PSone**
Publisher: **Atari**
Developer: **In-House**
Price: **Varies**
Release date: **1972**




▶ Looks aren't everything, particularly if you're *Pong*. Or a lonely ugly person.

**Released in November 1972, *Pong* truly was one of the first mass-market computer games, thanks to its simplistic yet thoroughly enjoyable gameplay.** As perhaps the most famous coin-op of all time, you're probably aware that the aim was simply to keep a ball in play, much like tennis. This was achieved by moving a small deflector up and down your side of the screen by twisting a dial known as a paddle.

Contrary to popular belief though, *Pong* wasn't actually the first game to do this. Computer engineers had been creating basic interactive programs since the early Fifties, but the enormous manufacturing costs, combined with the unreliability of such early technology, had meant that general release simply wasn't an option. As the years passed, however, the technology gradually became more stable, and in 1958 an employee of the Brookhaven National Laboratories, Willy Higginbotham, created *Tennis For Two*. Practically identical to *Pong*, *Tennis For Two* was a simplistic and really rather abstract representation of a tennis match, designed to be played by two people. Enjoyable as it was, the system was only up and running for two years before it was dismantled and the parts reused for other projects.

It would be more than a decade before the technological advancements made during the Fifties would be used to create a general release amusement product, the first being *Computer Space*. Designed by Nolan Bushnell (who would later go on to produce *Pong*), the gameplay consisted of little more than blowing up UFOs in a rocket ship – a task which, for some reason, was a little too complicated for early gamers. The machine was a flop.

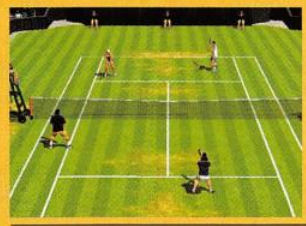
It was also during 1971 that Magnavox signed an agreement to manufacture the first home videogame console, the Odyssey. Developed during the Sixties under the name of Brown Box, the Odyssey was designed by 'the father of videogames', Ralph Baer, who pioneered gaming throughout the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies. The system eventually went on sale the same year that *Pong* was launched at a whopping USD 100 (approximately $150) and came packaged with six games, one of which was a simple tennis game. Interestingly, Bushnell had played the game at one of the preview showings of the Odyssey and was clearly influenced by it.

So why suggest that *Pong* could be the 'greatest retro game ever' if it merely copied other games that had gone before it? Well, the answer is purely down to the inordinate level of success that the coin-op enjoyed compared to other similar projects, and compared to Magnavox's virtually forgotten Odyssey game. Numerous stories report how *Pong* machines would regularly break down due to being overloaded with quarters, and that punters would queue up outside bars just to have a go on it.

As games go then, *Pong* pretty much single-handedly proved that electronic gaming was a credible form of entertainment, and one that could, in fact, generate an enormous profit. Perhaps if it hadn't done so well, fewer companies would have begun creating videogames, and many great titles may never have existed.

## Pong and on and on...

Okay, so things have moved on since *Pong* was released in 1972, but have they really progressed that far? While new technology allows for all kinds of impressive new graphical capabilities, many games still rely on the winning formula of reflex-testing target hitting (even things like Air Hockey). And when you look at something like *Virtua Tennis*, you have to wonder if that's what Willy Higginbotham *meant* to make, but lacked the technology...





▶ Okay, they *look* different, but they're essentially *Pong* tarted up a bit. Kind of.

# Whatever happened to?

## The M2 Accelerator

**First it was an add-on, then a standalone console and an arcade machine. Then it was cancelled. So what happened to the 64-bit machine that would "change the way people play, learn and interact"?**

**Although the 3DO Interactive Multiplayer failed to become the multimedia family entertainment system that Trip Hawkins hoped, he wasn't going to back down after one failed attempt.** In August 1994, less than four months before the Japanese launch of the PSone, 3DO announced that it was in the process of developing a 64-bit add-on for the 3DO console. The M2 Accelerator promised to deliver substantial polygon-pushing power beyond that of the original machine and the new SEGA and Sony consoles. The problem was that while a million polygons per second, high-resolution imagery and filtered textures sounded great, the poor sales of the 3DO meant few third-party developers were interested.

Despite this, 3DO soldiered on with its new technology, though just over a year later Matsushita (aka Panasonic) bought the rights to the M2 project for USD 100 million ($150 million). By that time a few titles were nearing completion, including Warp's promising survival horror *D2* (see page 148). Sadly, Matsushita felt that the limited amount of software that was ready would be detrimental to the success of the machine and decided to postpone the launch until the following year.

By July of 1996, however, it was clear that an add-on for the 3DO simply wasn't going to sell. But rather than cancelling the project, Matsushita continued preparing the machine for release as a standalone console. Amazingly, even at this late stage, the hardware specifications still weren't complete, purely because the designers were trying to keep the technology as current as possible. This situation continued into 1997, by which time an M2-compatible arcade board had been announced, along with a handful of new games.




It seemed as though things were finally falling into place, but by June rumours that the machine had been cancelled were starting to circulate. In July, Matsushita announced that the M2 technology would never be released as a games console. Even so, work on the chipset continued and talk was widespread that the machine would be used for education, karaoke or even for training purposes in the armed forces.

The last we heard was that M2 technology was being used in kitchen appliances such as microwaves and dishwashers, though quite how a million textured polygons could help to heat a bowl of soup is beyond us.









▲ All this console goodness is now powering the insides of your dishwasher. No, really.

## Game for a laugh

**Despite the lengthy development period of the M2, hardly any games were ever unveiled, probably because most third-party developers were wary after poor sales of the 3DO. Even so, a few promising titles were revealed, including Warp's *D2* (which looked completely different from the Dreamcast version on page 148), 3DO's own *IMSA Racing*, and the British-developed RPG *Power Crystal*. Sadly, the companies that did support the M2 never saw a return on their time or money.**





▲ What were they thinking? Making games for the M2? Ha!

GAMES THAT NEVER QUITE MADE IT...

# D2 FROM WARP

GAMES THAT NEVER QUITE MADE IT...



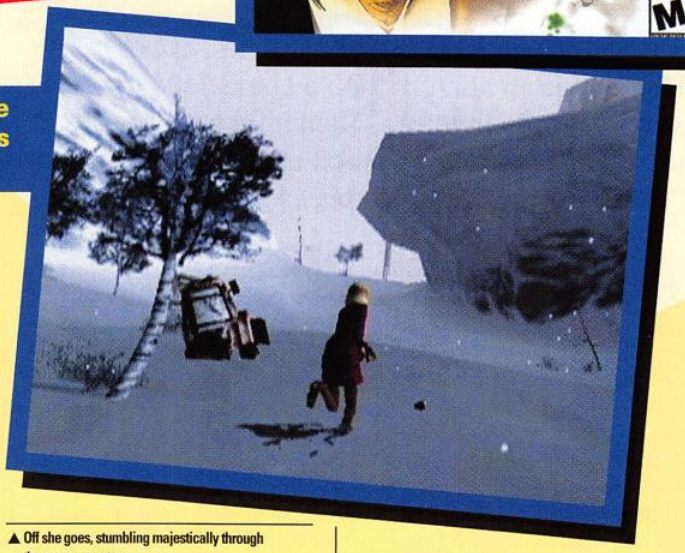

**Some games are in development for years but never come out. Others, however, do get released but never make it as far as Australia. D2 is one of those games.**

Title: **D2**
Developer: **Warp**
Format: **Dreamcast**
Release date: **1999**

**When SEGA unveiled the Dreamcast in 1998, one of the most prominent titles on show was *D2* from Warp.** Following on from the FMV-based *D* (which had been released on the PSone and Saturn in 1996), this promising-looking title was clearly one of the most complete Dreamcast launch titles, featuring some impressive snowy landscapes. Screenshots also showed the return of Scully-like heroine, Laura Parton.

As time went by, more screenshots were made available, each cementing the fact that *D2* really was going to be something special. Although almost every image looked nigh-on identical to those shown at the unveiling, the ability to cross wide stretches of land on a snow speeder and the option to use a shotgun from a first-person point of view had gamers salivating in anticipation.

However, things took a turn for the worse when the game was shown in playable form. Warp's eccentric CEO, Kenji Eno, not only oversaw complete development of the game, but also composed all the music. At a classy event at which guests were offered Eno-san's home-made curry, the audience was treated to a live performance of *D2*'s music played on violin and piano, before the early Dreamcast console was powered up. With Eno-san at the controls, Laura momentarily hobbled around in the snow looking a little like Cilla Black with a broken ankle, before dropping through the floor and disappearing.



▲ Off she goes, stumbling majestically through the snowy wastes...

Embarrassed by the obviously unfinished state of the code, Eno-san hurried over to console and flicked off the power.

Of course, this was all prior to the release of the Dreamcast hardware, yet despite Warp's best efforts, *D2* was nowhere near ready for the launch – it eventually arrived in Japan on 23 December 1999, over a year after the console came out. The huge amount of game data required four Dreamcast GD-Roms, which was particularly surprising considering that most of the adventure took place in the same snowy landscapes that had been unveiled all those months earlier.

*D2* launched in America in 2000, though it wasn't very well-received (funnily enough). The lacklustre launch had little to do with the quality of the game, though – the problem was that *D2* was already looking horribly dated compared to many other Dreamcast games. Capcom's *Resident Evil* was giving survival horror fans everything they needed, while similarly themed titles, such as *The House Of The Dead 2*, were clearly better looking.

Things were worse elsewhere. The Dreamcast was struggling to stay afloat and, after disappointing sales of *D2* in the States, the game was dropped from release schedules. Apparently, Warp has since gone into liquidation and Kenji Eno has left the games industry.





▲ Oh, bless, bunnies. But all the rabbits in the world can't make up for a shoddy game.



▲ What a terrifying sight. Just look at those crude graphics and the dated animation...

PREPARE TO FLY.




COMING AUGUST

ONLY ON

SEGA SATURN



NiGHTS Into Dreams (Saturn) SEGA, 1996 – American advertisement

PERIPHERALS

FEET

OTHER GAMES

CREATE YOUR OWN

## PARAPPA THE RAPPER



1996 ■ PSone
With its memorable characters and catchy tunes, this may not have been the first rhythm action game (the mini-games in *Toejam & Earl II* were earlier), but it was the one that sparked interest in the genre. A follow-up came out on PS2, but didn't do too well.

## POP 'N MUSIC (SERIES)



1997
Arcade/Multi
Featuring a control pad with huge colour co-ordinated buttons, this had parallels with older arcade machines like *Mole Patrol*. *Pop 'N Music*'s simple concept has inspired a host of rhythm action games, including *Dance Dance Revolution*.

## DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION (SERIES)



1998
Arcade/Multi
*DDR* (aka *Dancing Stage*) has been a runaway success all around the world. Played by pressing floor buttons with your feet, Konami's popular series has influenced the development of other similar titles, such as *Jungle Book Groove Party*.

## BEATMANIA (SERIES)



1998
Arcade/Multi
Popular with DJ wannabes, *Beatmania* is played using a small keyboard and a plastic turntable. Like many other rhythm action games, the series features licensed music tracks, as well as some of Konami's own wonderful compositions.

## BUST-A-GROOVE



1998
Arcade/PSone
Development of *Bust-A-Groove* was almost certainly due to the success of *Parappa The Rapper* in 1996. With a more funky edge, the game features plenty of flares and afros, though its popularity has now been eclipsed by the likes of *DDR*.

## MARIO PARTY (SERIES)



1998 ■ N64
Each of the *Mario Party* games has featured a selection of mini-games, including some that revolve around rhythm and action. Similar titles, such as *Wario Ware, Inc.: Mega Microgames*, also include elements of rhythm action amongst a selection of other genres.

## GUITAR FREAKS (SERIES)



1999
Arcade/Multi
Continuing Konami's trend for including mammoth peripherals with its arcade rhythm action games, *Guitar Freaks* offers would-be rockers the chance to thrash some metal, even if they have no musical ability at all. This game is extremely popular in Japan.

## SHENMUE



1999 ■ DC/Xbox
Like *Mario Party*, the *Shenmue* games incorporate rhythm action elements (among many others). Entitled QTEs (Quick Time Events) a percentage of the fights and interactive cut-scenes require timed button presses as indicated by on-screen pointers.

## VIB RIBBON



1999 ■ PSone
Compatible with any music CD, *Vib Ribbon* converts beats and rhythms into simplistic interactive real-time landscapes. A novel idea, the system works well for the most part, but has a tendency to create impossible rhythms based upon vocal and harmony lines.

## UM JAMMA LAMMY



1999 ■ PSone
Developed by the creators of *Parappa The Rapper*, *Um Jamma Lammy* utilised an almost identical control system and interface. Musically, however, it was completely different, replacing the rap and hip hop with a selection of rock tracks.

## SPACE CHANNEL 5



1999 ■ Dreamcast
Following on from where *Bust-A-Groove* left off, SEGA's *Space Channel 5* takes the player on a magical adventure around the galaxy. Styled with a wonderfully garish Seventies colour palette, the game stars a sassy central character, aptly named Ulala.

# RHYTHM ACTION FAMILY TREE

Over the past six years, the rhythm action genre has become increasingly popular, with titles like *Dance Dance Revolution* (aka *Dancing Stage*) topping charts around the world. Of course, all videogames have always required a certain amount of rhythm and action from the player, and there were arcade machines such as *Mole Patrol* that asked you to do something a little more strenuous than just press buttons. Now, of course, high-quality music tracks can be combined with the action, and many games feature licensed tracks by well-known performers, adding to the genre's popularity.

VOICE

ONLINE

LICENCES

### PARA PARA PARADISE (SERIES)



2000 ■ Arcade/PS2
■ Similar to *Dance Dance Revolution*, *Para Para Paradise* requires the player to use more than just their feet. Based on popular Japanese dance routines, the game features moves for upper body and probably influenced the development of Sony's Eye Toy.

### DRUMMANIA (SERIES)




2000 ■ Arcade/PS2
■ Seeing as it's the most primitive form of music, it's surprising that it took four years of rhythm action games before Konami released one featuring drums. Not the most innovative game in the family tree, *Drummania* revolves around hitting drum pads in time with music.

### KEYBOARDMANIA (SERIES)



2000 ■ Arcade/PS2
■ Like Drummania, *Keyboardmania* is merely another play on the *Beatmania* (or Bemani) theme. Popular in Japanese arcades, neither this nor *Drummania* has been as successful in the home due to the amount of space taken up by the huge peripherals.

### SAMBA DE AMIGO



2000 ■ Arcade/DC
■ The release of this novel rhythm action game saw maracas being used in homes and arcades for the first time (for most gamers, anyway). Featuring upbeat Latin American music tracks and a frenzied monkey, the game is still popular, despite costing a fortune.

### DOG OF BAY



2000 ■ PS2
■ Not many gamers ever got to sample this strange little game, as it has never been released outside Japan. Featuring a gang of humanoid dogs, the game is heavily stylised and is also one of the first next-generation titles to use cel-shading on its characters.

### FREQUENCY



2001 ■ PS2
■ Although, at first, *FreQuency* doesn't look like anything new, it doesn't take long to discover that it offers hard-core rhythm action fans something decent to get their teeth into. Breaking down licensed tracks, the player actually has to control all the instruments.

### REZ



2001 ■ DC/PS2
■ An unusual name for an unusual game, *Rez* takes the themes of life and evolution and works them into a bizarre cyber world where rhythm and timing is of the essence. Played in a similar way to *Panzer Dragoon*, firing weapons in time with the beat scores points.

### GUITAROO MAN



2001 ■ PS2
■ Taking things back to the simplicity of *Parappa The Rapper*, *Guitaroo Man* features a bunch of Japanese characters and a simplistic story. Using just about every button on the PS2 control pad, this mimics guitar effects by cleverly using analogue control.

### MAD MAESTRO



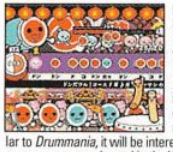
2001 ■ PS2
■ Like *Guitaroo Man*, *Mad Maestro* utilises the PS2's analogue control, only this time to control the stylings of an orchestra. Not the most intuitive game in the world, this has still been popular enough to warrant two Japanese-only special editions.

### *NSYNC GET TO THE SHOW




2001
■ Game Boy Color
■ Featuring a huge selection of, er, four mini-games, **Nsync Get To The Show* has very little to do with the actual group, other than the picture on the box. Though this is hardly the best use of a licence, the final mission does feature *Nsync songs.

### DRUM MASTER



2002 ■ Arcade/PS2
■ Not content to let Konami have all the fun, Namco's *Drum Master* (or *Taiko no Tatsujin* as it's called in Japan) has been growing in popularity recently. Not dissimilar to *Drummania*, it will be interesting to see if the game ever gets released in the West.

### SHAKKA TO TAMBOURINE



2002
■ Arcade/PSone
■ As the follow-up to *Samba De Amigo*, SEGA's *Shakka To Tambourine* used an almost identical control mechanism but replaced the maracas with a tambourine. Released on PSone in 2002, the game has never been released outside Japan.

### BRITNEY'S DANCE BEAT



2002 ■ PS2/GBA
■ What with Justin Timberlake starring in **Nsync Get To The Show*, it wasn't really surprising when a game starring Britney Spears was released in 2002. Although decent enough, this didn't really offer anything particularly new or innovative.

### KARAOKE REVOLUTION



2003 ■ PS2
■ It was inevitable that someone would make a karaoke game at some point, so it was no great shock when Konami and Harmonix revealed *Karaoke Revolution*. Using the PS2 USB headset, the game tracks vocal patterns and grades the player accordingly.

### AMPLITUDE

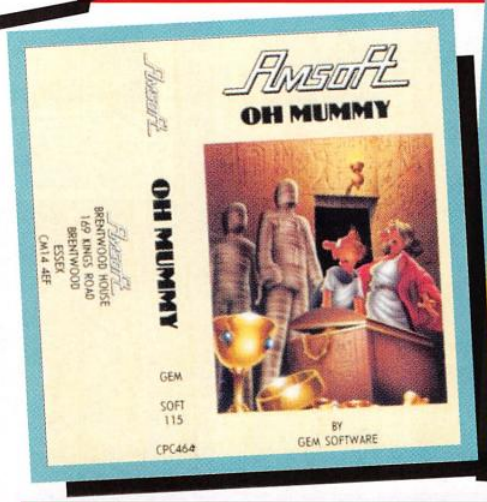


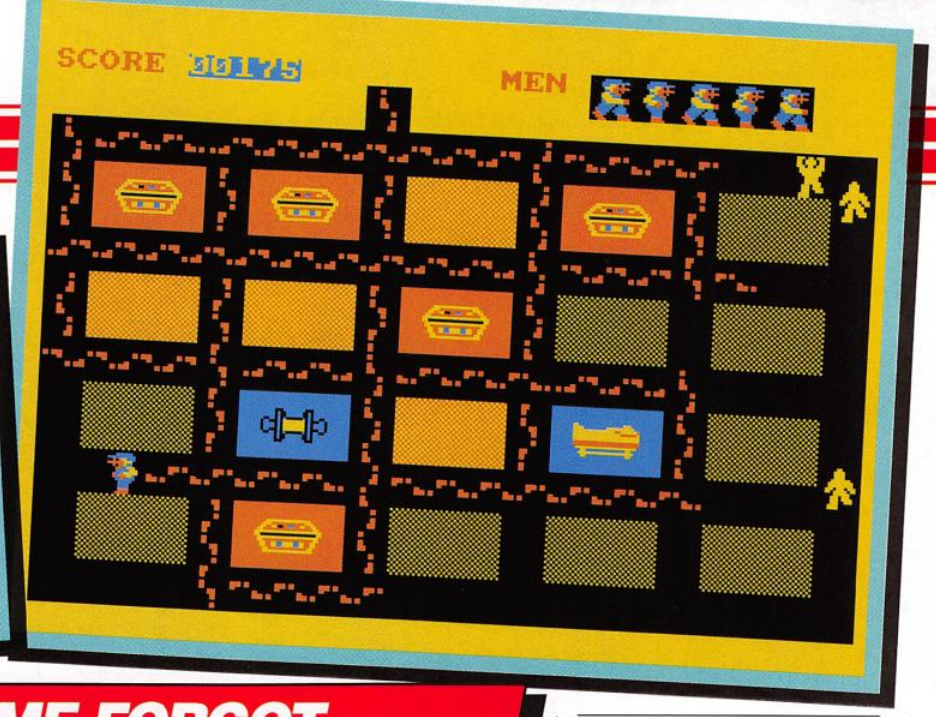
2003 ■ PS2
■ Although this doesn't look hugely different from *FreQuency*, released in 2001, Harmonix's second attempt at the rhythm action game improves on the original in a number of ways, the most obvious being the inclusion of a four-player online network mode.

### POP IDOL



2003 ■ PC/PS2
■ Featuring a number of music-based mini-games, *Pop Idol* allows players to decide on the look of their character before going up in front of the judges. By plugging in a dance mat, players are able to dance their way to the top (or not, as the case may be).




# GAMES THAT TIME FORGOT...

## OH MUMMY

**Had you been lucky enough to own an Amstrad CPC 464, you'd have received a number of free games with which to start your collection.** Hidden amongst the cheap and nasty rubbish that consisted of *Roland On The Ropes*, *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral* and *Roland In The Caves* was Gem Software's superb *Oh Mummy*, a fantastic (though extremely derivative) *Amidar* clone.

As with many 8-bit games, *Oh Mummy*'s gameplay was extremely simple in concept but incredibly addictive to play. Taking on the role of an archaeologist, you had to make your way into old tombs and empty them of treasure. This would be a simple task if it weren't for the numerous mummies that would insist on chasing you around the various passageways.

Each tomb consisted of a screen containing 20 blocks; running around the blocks would highlight them and release any Egyptian treasure that was hidden away inside. Once all the treasure had been successfully collected, you could progress onto the next level. While slow and simple to begin with, each tomb would get progressively tougher and faster (as well as containing even more mummies) as time went on.

It may have been an incredibly easy game to play, but therein lay *Oh Mummy*'s appeal; here was a game that could even persuade mums and dads to put aside whatever they were doing and try to beat that elusive high score. The fact that this classic was actually given away for free with the machine was also an added bonus. Forget Lara Croft, this was the original Tomb Raider.

▲ It may not look like much, but this was compelling gameplay at its finest.

| | |
|---|---|
| Presentation | 80% |
| Graphics | 85% |
| Playability | 95% |
| Longevity | 90% |
| OVERALL | 90% |

# YOU'RE BUGGING ME

**There's nothing more satisfying than finally completing a title and getting that magical one hundred per cent completion screen.** Unfortunately, no matter how good a game may be, there's always the odd little glitch that can spoil it

Take *Gran Turismo 2*, for example – here was a racing game that featured an amazing array of features, added rally driving to the mix and made Polyphony Digital the racing sim kings. Despite these extra bells and whistles, *Gran Turismo 2* had one glaring problem – it was impossible to get a full hundred per cent finishing score. The reason for this oversight was because the highly anticipated drag racing tracks had been taken out at the eleventh hour (although a selection of cars still made the cut), meaning that the game could never be completed.







▲ *Gran Turismo 2* was a fantastic game but, try as you might, you just couldn't finish the damn thing.

DMA's *Space Station Silicon Valley* was another game that suffered from not being able to achieve that coveted complete score. Each level had a gold statue that needed to be collected in order to achieve your hundred per cent goal. Fat Bear Mountain, however, contained a bug that caused your character to glitch through the statue instead of collecting it. When questioned about this bizarre occurrence, DMA typically laughed it off and stated that it had been included as a joke (though no-one else saw the funny side). Both of these pale in comparison to the blunder that was Elite's *Airwolf* – the penultimate level contained a series of rocks that needed to be safely negotiated to achieve completion. Unfortunately, they were practically impossible to clear and the few times anyone did manage it, the game immediately crashed. The rumour behind this fiasco was that the development team were so pushed for time that they never actually completed the game and as a result the rock level was made impossible to bypass. Whether this is true or not is hard to say, but we've still never managed to complete the bloody thing.




▲ Did you finish this? No, we still can't either.







A Great RETRO Gaming Moment

# R·O·L·L·I·N·G T·H·U·N·D·E·R

Format(s): **Arcade (first), Commodore 64, Mega Drive, Lynx, NES**
Publisher: **Atari (arcade), US Gold (home systems)**
Developer: **Namco**
Release date: **1986 (Arcade)**

Well, there's a surprise – Leila has been kidnapped by crime organisation Geldra, so it's up to the tragically named Albatross of the Rolling Thunder secret agency to rescue his fellow agent. A tired plot maybe, but it was the premise behind a Namco shooter that first appeared in arcades in 1986. That shooter was *Rolling Thunder*, and although its two sequels improved the gameplay, they never reached the level of infamy that the original title did, thanks to its harsh difficulty level.

The game followed Albatross as he took on Geldra's henchmen in narrow levels that ranged from warehouses to the great outdoors and allowed little room for error. The restricted bullet supply and Albatross' ability to leap up onto balconies lent the game a tactical nuance that similar shooters such as *Contra* lacked. The garishly dressed secret agent would have to use his surroundings in order to survive, ducking behind crates to dodge bullets or moving up or down levels when the action got too intense.

It's fortunate that Albatross had these abilities though, as it took much more than quick reactions and a bucketful of change to complete this side-scrolling shooter. Each level stacked the odds against you thanks to guards (known as Maskers) that would relentlessly charge from all directions. Some would burst out of the doors littered throughout the levels and attack with guns and grenades, while others leapt off balconies and tried to fight close-up. Albatross wasn't the strongest of heroes either and would keel over after taking just one shot. Throw in a time limit and some clunky jumping and it's easy to see why gamers in arcades were turning the air blue.







▲ The Maskers had caught Leila, so it was up to you and your little red shoes to get her back.



▲ Pick up that machine gun and suddenly you were king of the world. Although your outfit was still crap.

Yet just as it seemed the difficulty curve was insurmountable, you'd discover the doors. Entering a door would reward you with more time or a respite from the frantic gunplay, while doors marked 'BULLETS' would top up the ammo for your pistol. Best of all were the doors marked 'ARMS' that would reward you with a machine gun – the perfect way to even up the odds. Mowing down swathes of guards was extremely satisfying and, while the game remained rock hard, for a brief moment the machine gun made you believe that you could complete the game. Sadly, it would soon run out of bullets, leaving you back with the default pistol and cowering behind crates once more.

It's this brief moment of elation and invulnerability that the machine gun offered that will remain the stand-out moment from Namco's classic shooter. Any gaming moment that makes you feel like you genuinely can take on the world is worthy of note and, in that respect, *Rolling Thunder* made you feel like a true hero.



# ESSENTIALS

**TOO MANY GAMES, NOT ENOUGH MONEY. THANKFULLY, NOT ALL OF THEM ARE WORTH SPENDING YOUR HARD-EARNED CASH ON. IF YOU WANT TO TASTE THE CREAM OF THE CROP, YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE...**

## PLAYSTATION2

**DETAILS**

**MANUFACTURER**
Sony

**LAUNCH DATE**
24 November 2000

**MEDIA**
4.75-inch DVD Disc

**CURRENT PRICE**
$329.95

The oldest of the next-generation consoles, having had well over a year's head start over both the GameCube and Xbox. With support across the board from third-party developers, a built-in DVD player and backward compatibility with older PSone games, it's the most popular videogame console available today.




### TOP TWENTY MUST-HAVE PLAYSTATION2 GAMES

| No. | Title | | Publisher | Developer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ico | | SCEE | In-House |
| 2 | Grand Theft Auto: Vice City | | Take2 | Rockstar North |
| 3 | TimeSplitters 2 | | Atari | Free Radical |
| 4 | Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 | | Activision | Neversoft |
| 5 | Pro Evolution Soccer 2 | | Atari | In-House |
| 6 | Burnout 2: Point Of Impact | | Acclaim | Criterion |
| 7 | Dark Chronicle | IMPORT | Sony | In-House |
| 8 | Rez | | SEGA | UGA |
| 9 | Amplitude | | Sony | Harmonix |
| 10 | Devil May Cry | | THQ | Capcom |
| 11 | Suikoden III | IMPORT | Atari | Konami |
| 12 | Metal Slug 3 | IMPORT | Playmore | In-House |
| 13 | NBA Street 2 | | Electronic Arts | EA Sports BIG |
| 14 | Colin McRae Rally 3 | | Atari | Codemasters |
| 15 | Project Zero | | Wanadoo | Tecmo |
| 16 | Ape Escape 2 | | Sony | In-House |
| 17 | Hitman 2: Silent Assassin | | Atari | Io Interactive |
| 18 | XGRA | | Acclaim | In-House |
| 19 | Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution | | SEGA | AM2 |
| 20 | Wakeboarding Unleashed | | Activision | Shaba Games |

VIEWPOINT
**XGRA**
Faster than a speeding bullet, Acclaim's latest effort is also one its better titles to date – oh, how surprised we were. Many may argue that *Wipeout* still holds the crown but with no new game in sight, we reckon *XGRA* is only a fraction of a second behind.



VIEWPOINT
**DARK CHRONICLE**
Oh Sony, thank you. At long last, in September, we'll all be able to enjoy the loveliness of *Dark Cloud 2* (as it'll be known over here). This is truly an epic RPG and we think we just might have to play though it again. You know... because once isn't enough.



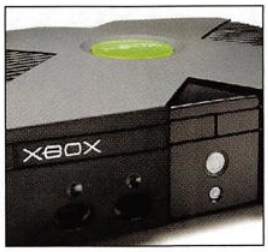
VIEWPOINT
**R-TYPE FINAL**
Yes, it's the end of an era – although the more hard-core shoot-'em-up fans won't think that Irem's swan song has done the series justice. Plus those with any sense already have the original on emulator (not that we're promoting illegal activity. Really).

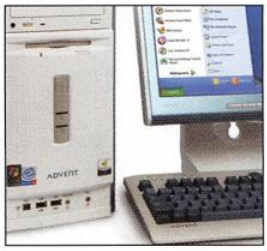



VIEWPOINT
**ICO**
Quite frankly, we're both shocked and appalled – during the course of reading our mail here at **games™** HQ we discovered at least two individuals who hadn't even heard of *Ico*. Disgraceful. Still, we're sure you're not like these ill-informed fools... are you?





# GAMECUBE

**DETAILS**

**MANUFACTURER**
Nintendo

**LAUNCH DATE**
17 May 2002

**MEDIA**
3-inch Optical Disc

**CURRENT PRICE**
$285.00

Though the GameCube seems destined to struggle, Nintendo's box of delights is still worth a look. Admittedly, third-party support is rapidly dwindling, but you only have to look at the first-party releases to appreciate the quality gaming on offer – Nintendo still makes some of the finest games you'll ever play and missing out on them isn't an option.

## TOP TWENTY MUST-HAVE GAMECUBE GAMES

| No. | Title | | Publisher | Developer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Metroid Prime | | Nintendo | In-House |
| 2 | The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker | | Nintendo | In-House |
| 3 | F-Zero GX | | Nintendo | Amusement Vision |
| 4 | Winning Eleven 6: Final Evolution | IMPORT | Atari | Konami |
| 5 | Super Monkey Ball 2 | | SEGA | Amusement Vision |
| 6 | TimeSplitters 2 | | Atari | Free Radical |
| 7 | Burnout 2: Point Of Impact | | Acclaim | In-House |
| 8 | Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 | | Activision | Neversoft |
| 9 | Ikaruga | IMPORT | Treasure | In-House |
| 10 | Super Mario Sunshine | | Nintendo | In-House |
| 11 | Eternal Darkness | | Nintendo | Silicon Knights |
| 12 | Soul Calibur II | | Nintendo | Namco |
| 13 | Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour | IMPORT | Nintendo | Camelot |
| 14 | Resident Evil | | THQ | Capcom |
| 15 | Resident Evil Zero | | THQ | Capcom |
| 16 | Mario Party 4 | | Nintendo | Hudson |
| 17 | Viewtiful Joe | | THQ | Capcom |
| 18 | Skies Of Arcadia Legends | | SEGA | Overworks |
| 19 | Star Wars: Rogue Leader | | EA | LucasArts |
| 20 | Animal Crossing | | Nintendo | In-House |



VIEWPOINT
**SOUL CALIBUR II**
Oh, you lucky, lucky people you. Waiting might be painful, but at least the (eventual) arrival of a spendid game such as *Soul Calibur II* is worth the anguish. Of course, we've been practising for much longer than you – so don't go challenging us at it, all right?



VIEWPOINT
**ULTIMATE MUSCLE**
Okay, so we'll admit it – this is a wrestling game. But wait – before you run screaming for the hills, you should know that it looks great (cel-shading – is there nothing it can't do?) and is damn good fun to play. What more could you ask for in a game, eh?



VIEWPOINT
**VIEWTIFUL JOE**
Having seen a number of Capcom's titles come a cropper in terms of capturing our imaginations (specifically on PS2), we're pleased to see at least one of its 'big' titles make us smile. That said, we're still having trouble with that bloody shark monster...



VIEWPOINT
**LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER**
We've said it before and we'll say it again – this is a game worth buying a GameCube for. Yes, it really is that good and yes, you really should play it. If you think it's a kid's game, you've got a lot to learn, grasshopper...



# ESSENTIALS

**TOO MANY GAMES, NOT ENOUGH MONEY. THANKFULLY, NOT ALL OF THEM ARE WORTH SPENDING YOUR HARD-EARNED CASH ON. IF YOU WANT TO TASTE THE CREAM OF THE CROP, YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE...**

## XBOX

**DETAILS**

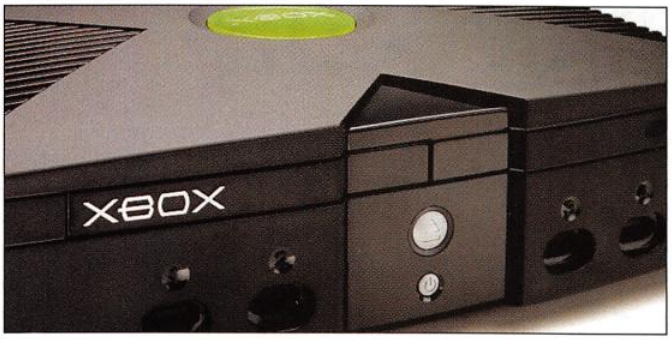
**MANUFACTURER**
Microsoft

**LAUNCH DATE**
14 March 2002

**MEDIA**
4.75-inch DVD Disc

**CURRENT PRICE**
$329.00

Despite a slow start, the Xbox is swiftly becoming one of the major players in today's console market. Suggestions that the machine is only 'a PC in a box' are founded upon the built-in hard drive, broadband support and DVD player. However, the Xbox is far more accessible to the casual gamer than most PCs.




### TOP TWENTY MUST-HAVE XBOX GAMES

| No. | Title | Publisher | Developer |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Halo | Microsoft | Bungie |
| 2 | Panzer Dragoon Orta | Atari | Smilebit |
| 3 | Jet Set Radio Future | Atari | Smilebit |
| 4 | TimeSplitters 2 | Atari | Free Radical |
| 5 | Splinter Cell | Ubi Soft | In-House |
| 6 | Knights Of The Old Republic | EA | BioWare |
| 7 | Project Gotham Racing | Microsoft | Bizarre Creations |
| 8 | Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 | Activision | Neversoft |
| 9 | Project Zero | Microsoft | Tecmo |
| 10 | Burnout 2: Point Of Impact | Acclaim | Criterion Studios |
| 11 | Dead Or Alive 3 | Microsoft | Tecmo |
| 12 | Soul Calibur II | EA | Namco |
| 13 | XGRA | Acclaim | In-House |
| 14 | Moto GP | THQ | Climax |
| 15 | Hitman 2: Silent Assassin | Atari | Io Interactive |
| 16 | Aggressive Inline | Acclaim | Z-Axis |
| 17 | Freedom Fighters | EA | Io Interactive |
| 18 | Colin McRae Rally 3 | Atari | CodeMasters |
| 19 | Wakeboarding Unleashed | Activision | Shaba Games |
| 20 | Tiger Woods 2004 | EA | In-House |

VIEWPOINT
**MIDTOWN MADNESS 3**
With both *Burnout 2* and *Midnight Club II* taking up a lot of our racing time, we overlooked the single-player game in *Midtown Madness 3*. However, with the online mode proving popular on Xbox Live, it's worth a mention just the same. But only just.



VIEWPOINT
**TIMESPLITTERS 2**
The game's practically identical on all three formats, but this is one of the year's best multiplayer games and it stands out most on the Xbox thanks to the hard drive storage – our collection of multiplayer maps is growing larger every month.



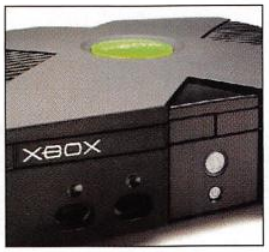
VIEWPOINT
**PROJECT GOTHAM RACING**
We loved *Project Gotham Racing* but we're blown away by the upcoming sequel – it's hard to go back to the original without wincing. That's why we suggest getting all your playing time in on it now, before it's too late.

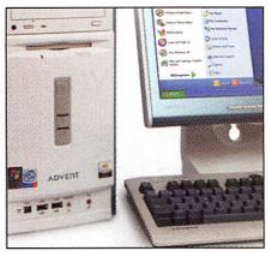


VIEWPOINT
**BRUTE FORCE**
It shot straight to the top of the chart in the US – but why? We have to admit, *Brute Force*'s success has us well and truly stumped, if only because we thought it was a completely uneventful piece of software. Must be the multiplayer mode...





# GBA

**DETAILS**

**MANUFACTURER**
Nintendo

**LAUNCH DATE**
22 June 2001

**MEDIA**
Flash Cartridge

**CURRENT PRICE**
$199.95



Ideal for gaming on the move, the GBA is a cheap and effective way of getting games to those who don't have time to sit down and play. The leaps in handheld technology mean that GBA games are now more accomplished and can even be compared favourably to their console-based cousins. The lovely new SP model is available now.

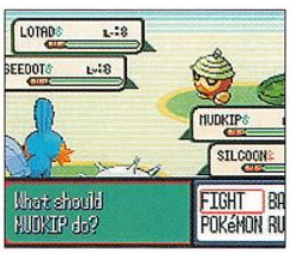
**TOP TEN MUST-HAVE GAME BOY ADVANCE GAMES**

| No. | Title | Publisher | Developer |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Advance Wars 2 | Nintendo | In-House |
| 2 | Zelda: A Link To The Past/Four Swords | Nintendo | In-House |
| 3 | Super Mario Advance 3: Yoshi's Island | Nintendo | In-House |
| 4 | Golden Sun: The Lost Age | Nintendo | Camelot |
| 5 | Metroid Fusion | Nintendo | In-House |
| 6 | Street Fighter Alpha 3 | Ubi Soft | Crawfish |
| 7 | Castlevania: Aria Of Sorrow | Konami | In-House |
| 8 | Pokémon Ruby / Sapphire | Nintendo | In-House |
| 9 | Splinter Cell | Ubi Soft | In-House |
| 10 | Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe | Wanadoo | Crawfish |

VIEWPOINT
**SONIC PINBALL PARTY**
Lots of *Sonic* fun, but not enough tables – though we liked it just the same. If only it was as good as Ubi Soft's classic *Pinball Challenge Deluxe* though...




VIEWPOINT
**POKÉMON RUBY AND SAPPHIRE**
Out now and already covering the land in an almost plague-like wash of blue and red – that's the power of the Pokémon for you.




# PC

**DETAILS**

**MANUFACTURER**
N/A

**UK LAUNCH DATE**
N/A

**MEDIA**
4.75-inch CD/DVD Disc

**CURRENT PRICE**
£variable



While primarily bought as a work platform, the PC has swiftly become the haven of the more 'mature' gamer. With its natural ability for online and LAN play, it's perfectly tailored for the FPS, strategy and MMORPG genres. However, it can cost a fortune to keep a PC up to date and running fast enough to support flashy graphics.

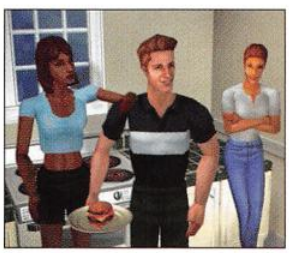
**TOP TEN MUST-HAVE PC GAMES**

| No. | Title | Publisher | Developer |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Grand Theft Auto: Vice City | Take2 | Rockstar North |
| 2 | Championship Manager 4 | Atari | Sports Interactive |
| 3 | Operation Flashpoint | Atari | CodeMasters |
| 4 | Rise Of Nations | Microsoft | Big Huge Games |
| 5 | Freelancer | Microsoft | Digital Anvil |
| 6 | Half-Life | Vivendi | Valve Software |
| 7 | The Sims | EA | Maxis |
| 8 | Age Of Mythology | Microsoft | Ensemble Studios |
| 9 | Day Of Defeat | Activision | Valve Software |
| 10 | Sam & Max Hit The Road | Activision | LucasArts |

VIEWPOINT
**REPUBLIC**
It might not have been the killer PC title that Eidos was claiming, but there's no denying that Elixir Studios has come up with something special here.



VIEWPOINT
**THE SIMS**
Millions of PC owners can't be wrong – even if EA has milked the series dry. With the sequel imminent, though, this is your last chance to enjoy the original.



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Whether we're looking back at handhelds and 2D gaming, or looking forward at the social and technological trends that drive our hobby and the industry behind it, it seems that you've got some thoughts of your own on our favourite pastime...




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☐ **WHILE I THOROUGHLY** enjoy reading **games™** (finally, an Aussie gamers mag for grown-ups!) your 'History of the Handheld' feature [issue 3, pp. 68-73] seemed rather incomplete (unless your intention was to entirely revolve around Nintendo & the GameBoy).

Obviously, including every handheld ever made would be impossible, but Nintendo inventing the handheld market through Game & Watches? They made the market explode, sure. But the accolade of being first belongs to Mattel with their early '70s football and auto race LED-based games. And surely Milton Bradley's Microvision from the late '70s deserves a mention as being the first handheld that allowed interchangable cartridges?
**Mike Roberts**

**games™:** We take your point about the earlier consoles that we could have talked about, but we had to start somewhere and Nintendo were the real pioneers in making handheld gaming accessible and popular. It's a fine line between 'portable' and 'handheld' and some of the early systems you mention are kind of borderline. Still, you could probably argue that the distinction is meaningless and we wouldn't have too much to come back at you with...

As for the mag itself, all of us on the **games™** team love playing video games. But our interest goes further than that: we want to exploring them as a form of media/ entertainment every bit as valid, vital and interesting as cinema, literature and other art forms. The possibilities are vast and it's an exciting time to be involved with video games, so we hope you'll stay with us.

☐ **I AM WRITING** to congratulate you on your feature regarding the demise of 2D gaming in issue 8 of **games™**. As a seasoned games player who has experienced pretty much every generation of gaming, I am saddened to see that the industry seems to have no respect for its past. It seems to be so blinded by technological advances that, in its ceaseless pursuit of 3D perfection, photo-realistic imagery and the creation of worlds where "wood looks and acts just like real wood" it has abandoned a whole gaming genre.

Two-dimensional gaming should have evolved just like 3D gaming. With today's hardware, 2D games could have (and should have) been amazing. Emphasis could have been placed upon fantastic animation of sprites and backdrops, shoot-'em-ups with almost unlimited enemies on screen at once with huge end-of-level bosses and mind-blowing weapons. Platformers would still be games of skill and timing. I'm sick of playing games where I have to learn how to rotate the camera or go through a training level because there are so many damn buttons and controls to remember. I want to pick up and play.

Skill is timing that pixel-perfect jump or remembering the shoot-'em-up attack pattern. Just have a quick blast of *Ikaruga* and you'll see where I'm coming from. Three-dimensional gaming has its place, of course, but in the absence of 2D there is a huge void left in the market. Our 2D gaming heritage is something to be proud of and deserves to be properly represented alongside its 3D counterparts. Until this balance is redressed I'm afraid that for me there will always be something lacking in modern gaming.

## "OUR 2D GAMING HERITAGE IS SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF AND DESERVES TO BE PROPERLY REPRESENTED ALONGSIDE ITS 3D COUNTERPARTS"

One day we're going to switch on our PlayStation3 or Xbox 2, and we will see totally perfect photo-realistic 3D imagery, we'll be enveloped in wonderfully accurate 5.1 surround sound and the world on screen will seem just as real as the one we live in. And on that day, a lot of people are going to switch their console back off and just go outside...
**Steve Erickson**

games™: The demise of 2D gaming is a sad loss to the games industry. But, of course, it's about delivering gaming experiences that the masses want, and though *Ikaruga* offers a lovely slice of retro gameplay, most prefer a raft of sequels and more modern-styled games. At least you're old enough to remember 2D gaming in its heyday, and whilst we wait for a true revival there's always the GBA or the emulation scene to keep us warm.

☐ **BEN THOMAS WROTE** an interesting and intelligent letter on the subject of games being 'dumbed down' (Contact, issue 4) and said that developers ought to be making games that could change society. I agree that, on the whole, videogames don't require much thought (*Resident Evil*, anyone?) and there have been books and films that have changed the way people think. However, go to your local cinema and what do you see? *Matrix Reloaded*, *Terminator 3*, *Bruce Almighty*, *The Hulk* and so on.

At the end of the day, people read books, watch films and play videogames to be entertained. More importantly, games publishers go to where the money is and are more likely to release another movie/sport/character tie-in than produce a game which the majority won't buy. The result? More *Sims* expansion packs and less *Deus Ex*.

Don't get me wrong, I agree that games could do more, but my argument is based upon the real world. In reality these things are either not going to happen or they already have happened and you haven't realised it. *GoldenEye* made me realise that FPSs with no thinking required bored me to tears and that I'd rather play a game that forced you to think about what you were doing and the consequences of your actions.

Videogames *have* changed the way I view things. The difference is that the majority of society sees videogames as a juvenile form of entertainment. Me? I'm happy to play my games and gain whatever I wish from them.
**Andy Henderson**

games™: Sure, mainstream games, films and even music tend to cater to more, shall we say, 'simple' tastes in just the same way Saturday evening TV programmes do, but the laudable point that Ben was trying to make was that occasionally games could (and perhaps should) try to make us think about the world differently. Of course, very few actually do, which is a shame because the inaccurate labels attached to videogames and the people that enjoy them are based upon other people's understanding that games are violent, trashy and a waste of time. Though looking at some titles, you can understand why – *GTA:Vice City* will never win over the people who produce or consume the *Daily Telegraph* or the radio shock jocks. But then do we really want it to?

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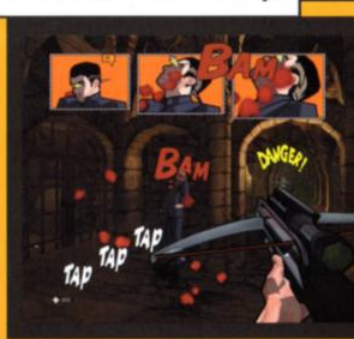
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Red Storm

* Xbox Gamer UK April 2003

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XBOX

Ubi Soft

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