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S O U T H A F R I C A

SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN PC AND PLAYSTATION GAMING MAGAZINE

— EPISODE I —
THE PHANTOM MENACE
STAR WARS
— EPISODE I —
RACER

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E Tribune
3 SPECIAL
INSERT

NAG's exclusive guide to upcoming 99/2000 releases

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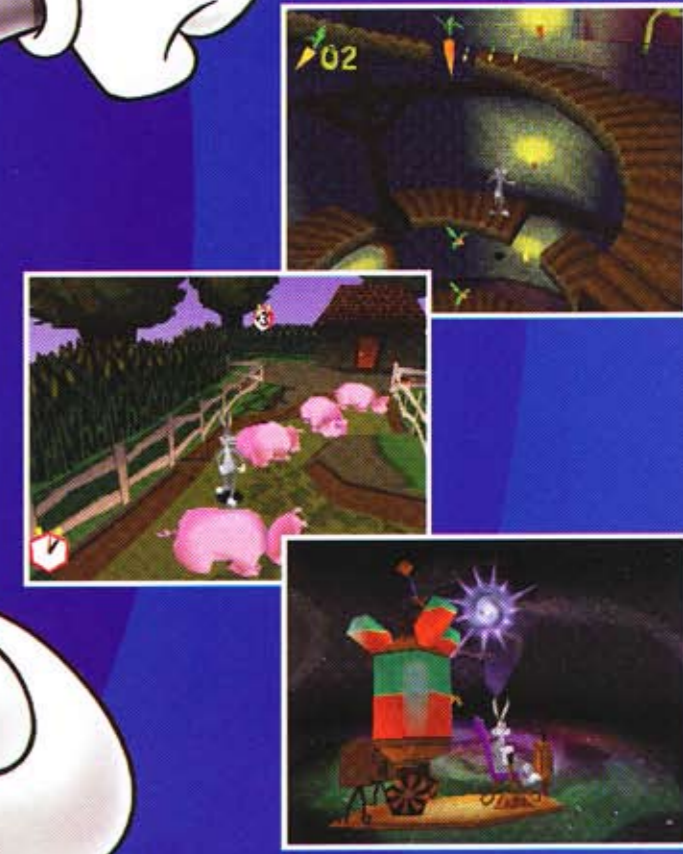
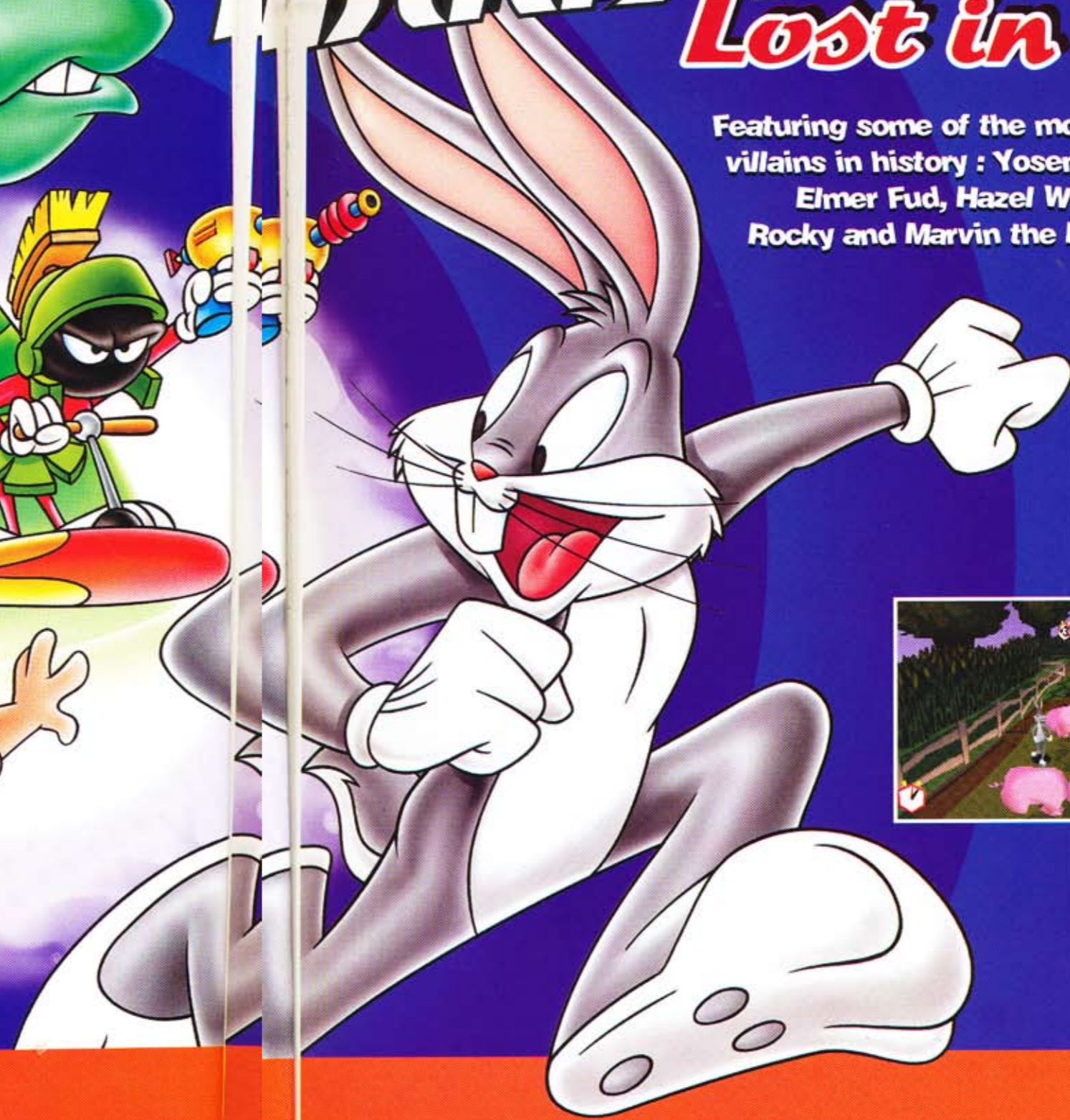
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ED's Note

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Flying overseas is fun, sitting on a plane for 11 hours, twice, isn't, seeing Hollywood is an unforgettable experience, walking on its pavements for hours isn't. My trip to E3 heralds a pinnacle in my life as an avid game player, you simply can't beat it. But nothing could have prepared me for what was to come. It's only when you're standing in the middle of a football stadium sized hall surrounded by thousands of gamers, basking in the glow of hundreds of computer screens do you realise just how big computer gaming has become. Be it Pentiums, consoles, monkeys from the future or Jedi Knights, if it could be played or tied into a game it was there and all this splendour smack bang in the middle of Hollywood, Los Angeles. You'll be surprised (unless you read the cover) to notice that we've thrown in an entire extra section on E3 and all the major games coming for the next year. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together, just remember to keep it for future reference - we're unofficially calling it the Gaming Bible for 1999.

This gaming thing is getting big - almost out of hand the prudent or protectors of culture might say. If you consider all the bad press games have received in the past few months over those high school killings, the number of PlayStation consoles sold world wide and the millions of people playing games you have to wonder were it's going. Did anyone think where it would all end one day while programming those first few tentative lines of code for space invaders? Not thinking of future consequences is how the millennium bug problem all started. There is little doubt that gaming has a big place in the future and this was well consolidated by keynote speaker Don Tapscott at the opening ceremony, who speculated on a number of interesting topics including the all-important 'play value' of a game. His speech was somewhat directed towards us journalists, highlighting our important role in bringing the news to our readers and telling them what represents good play value in a title. This is now where we find ourselves, at the brink of something bigger than anyone can imagine. Gaming magazines have an important role in the future, an educational role, a new service role and most importantly an entertainment role. What is the point of doing anything if you can't have a little fun in the process?

STATUE STATURE

Another surprising discovery at E3 was the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences. This organisation was established a while ago, and already has one successful awards ceremony under their belt. You'll notice the name bears a similar style to the Academy Awards. What are we saying here, will the Academy Awards of gaming ever reach the status of the movie stars? Don't laugh, E3 was held in Hollywood this year, and isn't going to move for the next five years. Where will it all end is a hard question to answer, all I can say is that if things move along at this pace, gaming might just start getting bigger than cultural staples like television. Interacting with something is always going to be better than observing it. Well there it is, the future - doesn't it look good?

Michael James, Editor

FOOTNOTE

As you might or might not have noticed by now, we've hired a new face. This face comes with a name and that name is Walter Pretorius, writing as Shryke within these hallowed pages. Walter will be doing large portions of the layout of the magazine as well as adding his numerous talents to our crack team of gaming experts. We really threw him into the deep end this issue and after a hectic initiation period he's still married and didn't sink, probably that air filled head of his. So, if you spot any strange colour combinations or errant lines you know who to blame, I can only control so much of my domain!

16 FREE PAGES!

In case you're wondering, our trip to E3 is also going to benefit you this month... How you might ask? Well if you rummage through your pile of NAG goodies this month you'll discover an entire separate insert on this auspicious event called the E3 Tribune. Enjoy it and remember to keep it, because you'll be seeing all those great games in up-coming issues.

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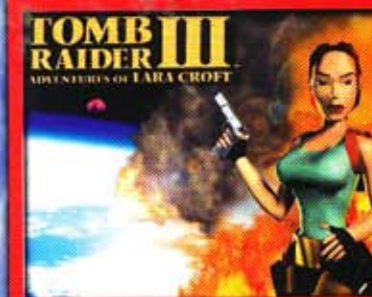
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BULLFROG ARE ABOUT TO UNLEASH THIS KILLER GAME AND WE BAGGED THE ROLLING HEAD...

HARDWARE

74 New Chips on the Block

SOUL ASSASSIN LAUNCHES AN IN-DEPTH INVESTIGATION INTO A BRAVE NEW GENERATION OF 3D ACCELERATION AND FINDS OUT THAT THE VOODOO ISN'T DEAD, WE RIP APART THE LATEST 3D ACCELERATORS AND TELL ALL.

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CD also includes demos of Need for Speed 4, Drakan, Breakneck, Hidden & Dangerous, International Cricket Captain 2, Links Extreme and also the Creative Labs Liveware 2 update for the SBLive! and other Creative Labs Drivers plus much more...

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- Links Extreme
- Need for Speed 4
- Official F1 Racing
- Star Wars: Episode 1 - The Phantom Menace
- Star Wars: Episode 1 - Racer
- SlaveZero Beta

PATCHES

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- Civilization CTP
- Expendable
- Gangsters
- Half-Life
- Jack Nicklaus 6
- Links LS '99
- Land of Lore 3
- Settlers 3
- Sports Car GT
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CHEATS

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MOVIES

- Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time
- Dungeon Keeper 2
- V-Rally 2

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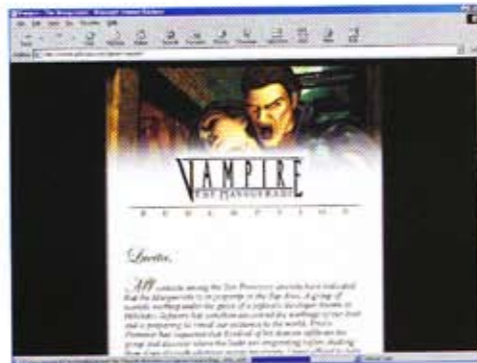
www4.activision.com/games/vampire

Those people that have played the role playing game first published by White Wolf Publishing almost a decade ago await the appearance of Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption on PC with bated breath. Recreating the rich and convoluted world of Vampires on the desktop will be impossible, many claim, but if the official site is anything to go by, developers Nihilistic have done a bang up job. Reaching this site is possible through Activision's official web site at www.activision.com and following the link in the game title drop down box.

Because this game is still in its virtual infancy, the site is rather small. It is made up of two letters, from one Vampire to another, detailing what is described as a "breach of the masquerade", in the form of a new computer game (the Masquerade, for those who are not familiar with Vampire: The Masquerade, is a code of conduct that keeps the Vampires living in human society hidden from prying mortal eyes - a breach would reveal them to the world, with disastrous consequences.) These correspondences

mainly deal with the most basic elements of the game and focus of Nihilistic and their work in building this complex game.

Little more is available on this site, save for early screen shots from what looks to be a stunning release, a list of awards that the game has already won, and several articles surrounding the game. And, of course, a download option that contains all the logos, fonts and data necessary to set up an "official" fan site. Unfortunately, many visitors to the site, who have not experienced the thrill of the non-PC role playing game, may feel a little lost with the terminology used within the two letters. Thankfully, a convenient link to



NAG's WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

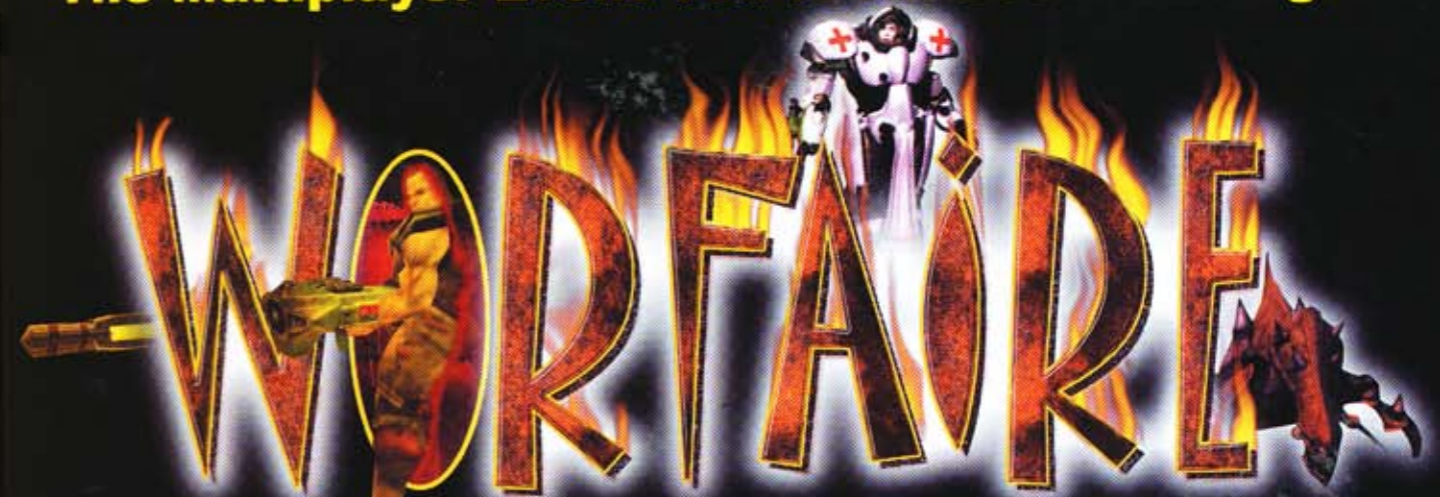
www.white-wolf.com, the home of White Wolf Publishing's official web site is available on this site. At the White Wolf site, visitors can research the Vampire: The Masquerade role playing game through a series of FAQs and articles, and may even download a set of "quick start" rules to experience the magic of the role playing game first hand. Not a bad idea, if you want to fully appreciate what promises to be one of the best PC releases for this year! Further research into the role playing game can be done at one of several fan sites. Vampire: The Masquerade can be found all over the World Wide Web. Simply running a search on Vampire: The Masquerade will reveal tons of possibilities for research, reading and information.

NAG

NAG's Favourite Websites of the Month

http://www.bullfrog.co.uk	http://www.wheeloftime.com	http://www.red-storm.com	http://www.planescape-torment.com	http://www.playstation.co.za
It seems that everyone has been waiting for Dungeon Keeper 2. As a result, Bullfrog EA have made sure that they beat the rush by having a dedicated section set up for Horny and his cronies on the official Bullfrog EA website. Just surf your way to www.bullfrog.co.uk , and follow the links. Be warned - you will need Macromedia Shockwave to view the site. As a site, this is something to behold. The use of Shockwave technology has resulted in a site full of life. Animations constantly change and materialise with unparalleled smoothness as you peruse the useful information contained on this web gem, with the odd game sound effect thrown in for good measure. A link from the initial page leads to the DK2 guided tour - complete with the irrepresible Horny as your tour guide. Said tour guides the visitor through the basic concept of the game, giving a rough overview of what Dungeon Keeper 2 is all about, along with some excellent in game screen shots. Further links from the main menu include visuals, game info, online play; downloads; support and other options. A veritable treasure trove for DK2 players!	Situated at www.wheeloftime.com , the official wheel of time website is a brilliant resource for players of this game. This attractive web site is still mainly dedicated to the development of this game based upon Robert Jordan's best selling fantasy novel series. However, it is one of the most complete development sites we have ever seen. Everything about this action strategy game can be found here, including several forums, information about the original novels, and details of the Unreal Engine, which is used by the game. Paying a visit to the Images section of the site will prove informative. A short but thorough discussion of graphic construction leads the link off, followed by a large number of screen shots of locations, characters and editors. This is one site that definitely enhances the game itself - the information held here will certainly thrill players of this 3D fantasy game.	Slated for release in September of this year, Rogue Spear expands on the 3rd person action game, Rainbow Six. This much-awaited sequel is well represented on the Internet, at the official website www.redstorm.com/rogue_spear/ . Here, fans of the game can see exactly what developers Red Storm have in store for them with this new work from spy thriller master, Tom Clancy. This site is a treasure trove of information concerning the game, including news, update diaries, weapon listings and screen shots. It would seem that some forethought has gone into the design of the site, too, with the inclusion of download and support buttons (neither of which work yet). For those who don't know Rainbow Six, a back story link has also been added, just to make sure that everyone visiting the site is up to speed with what's going on. An interesting section of the site is the Rogue Spear Retreat, where submissions from fans including mods, artwork and databases can be downloaded.	Advanced Dungeons and Dragons is the grand daddy of all role playing games, and Planescape is one of the most popular settings within it. Following on the success of Baldur's Gate, Black Isle Studios have once again teamed up with TSR, the creators of AD&D, to bring Planescape: Torment to the fore. This Shockwave developer site introduces gamers to this unusual and enthralling world. Players can learn about the various political factions that occur in the central, hub-like city of Sigil, or perhaps download screen shots and sound bytes taken from the game. Full developer diaries are available to the visitor, as are surveys, links to press and fan sites, and even a guide to the strange slang used in the Outer Planes. All this and more can be found at www.planescape-torment.com .	Our local Sony Playstation website is brimming with sound effects and Shockwave animations, and is visually quite an impressive site (or sight, if you prefer). Links on the page's site map will lead you to an interesting review of the Playstation 2 (in the news section), to the merchandise section, where you can purchase all the necessary Playstation gear and even an online purchasing page, where you can buy your Playstation titles electronically. Other links include cheat codes, product listings, top 10 lists and product previews. This site is a wonderful resource for Playstation gamers. It sets the world of Playstation at your fingertips, with a useful local slant that fills the visitor in on exactly what's going on with Playstation in South Africa. This is, of course, invaluable, as information regarding release dates and product availability are directly related to our market. Check it out at www.playstation.co.za .

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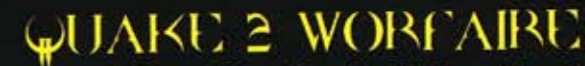
Four Player Clans playing on a knockout basis.

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Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th - Single Player Event

Single Player based on calculated knockout and 1 on 1's.

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3DFX SET TO ACQUIRE S3

According to a number of different sources, 3Dfx is set to acquire S3. All the money for this deal is said to be coming from a consortium interested in the S3 patents. If the deal does go down, all it reports are saying it will be a hostile bid. S3 is being wooed by Intel and last month received a \$42 million bonus from UMC for certain license agreements. Unfortunately 3Dfx and S3 would not



IN SPACE NO ONE CAN DOWNLOAD THE PATCH

The great save game debate raises its head again, regarding the issue of whether or not game players should be able to save their progress halfway through a level or not.



The game that sparked off this argument is the hot first person shooter, Alien vs. Predator, from publishers and developers Fox Interactive and Rebellion. After massive consumer input and pressure the developers have coded a patch that allows you to save your game at any point during the intense levels. The patch will be available for the PC on the Fox Interactive web site.

MICROSOFT LICENSES EAX FOR DIRECTX

In a recent licensing agreement with Creative Technology, Microsoft has acquired a number of recording studio quality sound effects found in Creative's Environmental Audio Extensions. This allows for developers to add



environmental sound effects to 3D games. Some of the licensed effects include flange, chorus, EQ and environmental reverbation. Microsoft plans to incorporate these EAX effects into their next version of the DirectX API. Creative already has the EAX API already supported by over 50 PC games.

10 MILLION JOINS

Game developer and publisher, NovaLogic has announced that NovaWorld, an on-line gaming service, has achieved more than 10 million game joins since the middle of December 1998. This total has been boosted by the companies latest air combat simulation F-22 Lightning 3 and its Voice-Over-Net technology. NovaWorld is a free service that lets gamers go head-to-head against or participate in co-operative missions with people around the world. The real time voice component lets players communicate with each other verbally and eliminates the need to type messages to other players. All of NovaLogic's new releases will feature NovaWorld support and Voice-Over-Net technology. The sad thing here is that with our limited bandwidth and poor Internet performance, these innovations from NovaLogic will go largely unnoticed in our country.



3DFX AND INTERACT ACCESSORIES IN BED

InterAct Accessories has announced plans to launch a series of co-branded peripherals for multimedia computers powered by graphics accelerators from 3Dfx. The first two products on offer are The Hammerhead FX and The FX Racing Wheel. The Hammerhead is the first range of products include a game pad and racing controller. The game pad, The Hammerhead FX is the first vibration game pad for the PC and features internal vibration motors, four-axis control, eight-way digital direction pad, ten programmable buttons and will be bundled with Interplay's Descent 3: Sol Ascent. The FX Racing Wheel is programmable, has a throttle control trigger and six buttons in a compact and sturdy design, it also features vibration effects. Both products will ship with InterAct's new Game Profiler, which enables players to save their favourite effects, button configurations and



DREAMCAST SETTING RECORDS

The Dreamcast will be available in more than 15 000 retail stores on its launch date with close to 1500 consumers lining up to place pre-orders on a daily basis. The Dreamcast might not see the light of day on our shores though but with figures like this you have to wonder if anyone will pick up the license here in South Africa. As this pace the Dreamcast is set for the biggest launch in the history of



video games. Sega's pre-order campaign has already over shadowed Sony's in 1995 with the PlayStation only reaching 100 000 pre-orders prior to their US launch. Customers wanting to try before they buy will have access to over 6000 interactive product stands at retail level. What is helping this massive demand is that you're getting a 56K modem and around four times the processing power of a Pentium II chip for your \$199. Another important thing to remember is that the Dreamcast will be the only new video game system on the market during the money mad Christmas period, which will guarantee massive sales. For the launch the system will have a total of 15 games available with the number growing to 30 by December and the on to 100 by the end of 2000. The console's 128-Bit architecture allows it to grow and change to match advances in technology, something the PC is well suited for. Besides everything the console features a revolutionary Visual Memory Unit that allows players to swap games with friends in the home, arcade or head-to-head using to of these units.

GTA EXPANDING

Owners of the digitally violent, Grand Theft Auto: London 1969 will be able to download a free upgrade for their game later this year. This expansion pack, GTA: London 1961 will feature new missions and content for this fun title. The developers, Rockstar Games have quickly realised how they can use the Internet to expand their game and offer a little more value for money months after the original purchase.



HALF-LIFE CHRONICLES

Radioactive Software will be releasing a new single player modification for Half-Life called Chronicles. The modification features a series of mini-solo missions downloadable over the Internet. The missions will consist of 3 to 15 small map files each and draw on alternate



scenarios to the games original universe. The first episode should be up on their site by the time you read this. Pull out your mouse and browse over to www.radioactivegames.com for more details.

PRINCE OF PERSIA TEST

SSI's Beta Test Central has posted an on-line beta testing application for its upcoming third person action adventure game, Prince of Persia



3D. According to Beta Test Central the beta testing is anticipated to begin in July. In this first 3D version of the classic series, the hero prince must set out on a perilous journey to rescue his bride and avenge the death of the Sultan. The game combines the fast-paced combat of a fighting game with the depth and challenge of an adventure title. You can have a look at tsunami.ssionline.com for more information.

SIMCITY 3000 HITS 1 MILLION

Electronic Arts has shipped more than one million copies of their highly successful city building and management title, SimCity 3000 world wide. The game is an instant success and has sold out more this year than any other title. In their continued service to their customers, Maxis, the developers have been putting various game add-ons and dedicated sections up on their web site. The



most recent addition is the City Exchange, a trading post where users can upload and download their favourite creations. Once uploaded, players can see if their cities rate among the best or worst in a number of areas including traffic, crime and pollution. Since the site went up over 2500 cities have been posted. There have also been numerous additions to the game's collection of historic structures, famous cities and maps. If you own this game and are connected to the Internet then <http://www.simcity.com> is the place to be.

HASBRO INTERACTIVE INTO SPORTS

Software published, Hasbro Interactive announced the formation of Hasbro Sports, allowing them to compete in this lucrative market. Hasbro already has an impressive portfolio and is one of the companies that has brought computer gaming to where it is today. "Hasbro Sports will develop games across all categories of the interactive business, including action, children's titles, family, strategy and simulation," said Hasbro Interactive president Tom Dusenberry. The first few titles should be in store soon with more following next year.



CREATIVE LABS AND CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY SUED BY 3DFX

With the kind of money the computer industry is generating it's little wonder that so many of these 'disagreements' end up in court. In this particular case 3Dfx had filed suit against Creative Labs and Creative Technology for the Northern District of California over copy infringement and breach of contract. By incorporating Glide source code into Unified, 3Dfx is saying that infringing a licensing agreement and infringing 3Dfx copyrights. Unified is a recently announced technology designed to run Glide-only software titles on Creative TNT and TNT2 based graphics accelerator cards. The license agreement in question prohibits the use and modification of any 3Dfx source code to operate with non-3Dfx technology. Besides the altered source there is also an unresolved issue of money, 3Dfx claims that Creative Technology owes them money. The Glide API was developed by 3Dfx Interactive to provide a simple and fast method for developers to write 3D game titles and software specifically to run on 3Dfx

UNREAL PERFORMANCE

Programmer for Epic Games, Tim Sweeney has reported that Unreal's Direct3D performance and stability have 'increased significantly' since the last version. This includes the RIVA TNT, TNT 2, Matrox G400 and ATI Rage 128. Although this is good news for owners of these cards, the news isn't too good for people who have the Riva 128, Rage Pro and Permedia 2. The programmer said he managed to find all the problems that led to sever hitching and pausing while playing the game using the Direct3D engine. Improvements include less memory usage, better optimisation for the game's texture usage patterns and new texture management code. There is already another patch on the way and it will be ready when it's done. This should breathe a little life back into Unreal.



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SETTLERS 3 QUEST FOR THE AMAZONS

Blue Byte is preparing to release an upcoming Settlers 3 add-on called Quest for the Amazons. The original game sold more than 500,000 copies around the world, with this total growing everyday. This exciting add-on will include the following improvements and enhancements:

- New video sequences
- 39 new buildings
- Several new landscapes
- 10 new single player maps
- Two new campaigns, each with 12 missions
- Eight new magic spells unique to the Amazon race
- A new thief unit can scout enemy territory and swipe the weapons and gold from foes
- 10 new multiple player maps
- A new level editor
- The Amazon labourers have their own special set of trades and duties

WINDOWS 98 SECOND EDITION

Sony Corporation and subsidiary Sony Computer Entertainment has developed a



laser device for the next generation PlayStation game machine that can read both Digital Video Discs and Compact Discs. This is revolutionary technology that allows a single laser receptor to produce two lasers at different wavelengths, one for each format. This new technology will reduce the overall number of components in CD and DVD drives improving their reliability.

DARK REIGN 2

A non-interactive demo for this new RTS title from Pandemic Studios should be available for download soon. This demo is a self-running



test featuring a set of four in-game movies. Pandemic is also setting up a special e-mail address where users can send through their comments on the game. The demo will weigh in at around 7 megabytes and will require a 3D hardware-accelerated system. So keep an eye on www.pandemicstudios.com/dr2/ for further updates on the demo for this exciting title.

TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS DEMO

After some speculation, rumours and denials Cavedog has confirmed that there will be a demo for their upcoming release, Total Annihilation: Kingdoms. The game has reportedly gone gold and is due for release later this month. The Real Time Strategy arena has a few top titles slated for release this year and after the success Total Annihilation had, the developers are looking forward to the sales figures next year.



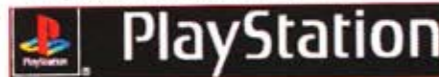
MP3 MUSIC RECORDERS APPROVED

The recording industry suffered a major defeat in a federal appeals court when the court ruled that a popular device used to download and store music from the Internet does not violate federal anti-piracy laws. The player in question was the Rio MP300, manufactured by Diamond Multimedia Systems, the court said it does not qualify as a digital audio recording device. The Recording Industry Association of America fears devices such as the Rio will eventually cause a rampant outbreak of piracy via the Internet. The MP3 format allows for rapid downloading of CD quality music off the Internet.



SONY'S NEW LASER

Sony Corporation and subsidiary Sony Computer Entertainment has developed a



laser device for the next generation PlayStation game machine that can read both Digital Video Discs and Compact Discs. This is revolutionary technology that allows a single laser receptor to produce two lasers at different wavelengths, one for each format. This new technology will reduce the overall number of components in CD and DVD drives improving their reliability.

REMOTE CONTROLLED FUN

Racing fans are in for a treat if they downloaded Acclaim's remote controlled racer,



Re-Volt - the company has put up an official competition ladder where players can race and post their scores on the site. Re-Volt is a remote controlled car racing game that is set in real life miniature locations. Don't be surprised when you find yourself racing under beds and through the kitchen. Re-Volt is looking good so go and try it out.

STARLANCER SCREENS

Digital Anvil is a company everyone should start keeping tabs on, primarily due to their stunning upcoming game Freelancer (also our

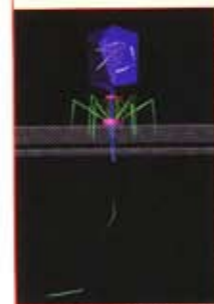


E3 game of the show.) Freelancer isn't due for at least another 18 months but they are working on another project called Starlancer, their most current game. Starlancer is an action space combat game that promises to better anything we've seen in the past. The game is due for release around the end of the year and is published by Microsoft.



VIRUS!

More virus trouble with the ExploreZip worm, computer security experts issued warnings against this potentially fatal virus. The virus is spread via e-mail and quickly covered the entire globe overnight, infecting and spreading as it went. The virus can erase files from a user's computer and is more dangerous than the Melissa virus. The ExploreZip is termed a worm, not a virus because it can't replicate itself. Viruses such as Melissa are written with the capability to reproduce through automation. The spread of this virus was



particularly alarming, with incidents doubling overnight and appearances of the virus in Germany, France and the United States. Computer experts speculate that the virus originated in Israel. This bug has a particularly smart way of infecting your machine. It operates under the guise of an e-mail that appears to be a response to one you sent earlier. You'll receive a mail with the message, "I received your e-mail, and I shall reply ASAP. Till then, take a look at the zipped documents." If you open and click on the attached file the virus enters your machine and destroys Microsoft Outlook, and other e-mail programs. In response all of the leading anti-virus software providers have updated their sites, offering protection for a quick download.

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Local PC Charts

Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	World Cup Cricket	New	New
2.	Civilization Call to Power	New	New
3.	Lands of Lore 3	New	New
4.	Myth 2 Soulblighter	New	New
5.	Starcraft Battlechest	4	6
6.	Age of Empires Gold Edition	Re-entry	Re-entry
7.	Sim City 3000	Re-entry	Re-entry
8.	Superbike World Champs	6	1
9.	Half life	Re-entry	Re-entry
10.	Sim City 2000 Classic Edition	9	1

International PC Charts

Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Alpha Centauri Firaxis	Electronic Arts
2.	Heroes of Might and Magic 3	New World/3DO
3.	Baldur's Gate	Bioware/Interplay
4.	Half-Life	Valve/Sierra
5.	Might and Magic 6	New World/3DO
6.	Starcraft/Add-on	Blizzard
7.	Railroad Tycoon 2	PopTop/G.O.D.
8.	Rollercoaster Tycoon	Microprose
9.	Unreal	Epic Megagames/GT
10.	Thief: The Dark Project	Looking Glass/Eidos

Local PlayStation Charts

Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	Brian Lara Cricket	6	4
2.	Abes Exodus	New	New
3.	Fifa '99	4	4
4.	Tekken III	1	4
5.	Heart of Darkness	Re-entry	Re-entry
6.	C&C Retaliation	New	New
7.	Metal Gear Solid	New	New
8.	Gran Turismo	10	6
9.	Crash Bandicoot 3	5	4
10.	Time Crisis Platinum	New	New

International PlayStation Charts

Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Metal Gear Solid	Konami
2.	Final Fantasy 8	Square
3.	Gran Turismo	Sony
4.	Syphon Filter	Eidetic/989 Studios
5.	Ridge Racer	NAMCO
6.	Ehrgeiz	Square
7.	Silent Hill	Konami
8.	Tomb Raider 3	Eidos
9.	Sports Car GT	Electronic Arts
10.	Need for Speed (High Stakes)	Electronic Arts

NEW AGE GAMING PRICE COMPARISON

Game Title	Incredible Connection	CNA Interactive	Toys R Us	Reggies
Pro 18 (PSX)	None	R 479.00	R 479.00	R 479.00
Civilization II (PSX)	None	R 499.00	R 499.00	R 499.00
Apocalypse (PSX)	R 289.00	R 429.00	None	None
R-Type (PSX)	None	None	R 429.00	R 429.00
Star Wars Racer (PC)	R 349.00	R 349.00	None	None
Star Wars Phantom Menace (PC)	R 349.00	R 349.00	None	None
Sports Car GT (PC)	R 299.00	R 299.00	None	None
Redguard (PC)	R 299.00	R 299.00	None	None

PC RELEASE LIST

JULY	AUGUST
01 - Sega Rally Championship - SEGA ENT	02 - Civilization: Test of Time - MICROPROSE
01 - Star Trek: Klingon Academy - INTERPLAY	02 - Outcast - INFOGRAMES
01 - Tonic Trouble - UBI SOFT	02 - Planescape: Torment - INTERPLAY
12 - Ultimate Collector for Sports Cards	02 - Messiah - SHINY
12 - Core Rules 2.0 Expansion	02 - Mortyr
12 - Dragon Magazine Archive	02 - Star Trek: Starfleet Command - INTERPLAY
13 - Lander - PSYGNOSIS	09 - Force 21 - REDSTORM ENTERTAINMENT
15 - Drakan - PSYGNOSIS	10 - Flight Unlimited 3 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
15 - Jagged Alliance 2 - TALONSOFT	10 - System Shock 2 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
15 - Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver - EIDOS INT	16 - Road to Moscow
26 - Darkstone - GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS	20 - Amen: The Awakening - CAVEDOG
26 - FLY! - GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS	20 - Shadow Man - ACCLAIM
26 - Slansky's Table Poker - INTERPLAY	24 - C&C 2: Tiberian Sun - WESTWOOD
26 - Warhammer Rites of War - MINDSCAPE	24 - Gabriel Knight III - SIERRA ON-LINE
29 - West Front Elite Edition - TALONSOFT	24 - Jane's A-10 Warthog - JAMES
29 - Hidden & Dangerous - TALONSOFT	27 - Operational Art War II - TALONSOFT
	30 - Seven Kingdoms II - UBI SOFT
	BR31 - Sinistar Unleashed - THQ

PLAYSTATION RELEASE LIST

JULY	AUGUST
01 - Atlantis - INFOGRAMES	02 - R Type Delta - AGETEC
01 - Dreams - INFOGRAMES	03 - Quake II - ACTIVISION
01 - Virus - INFOGRAMES	10 - Konami Arcade Classics - KONAMI
15 - All Star Tennis 99 - UBI SOFT	10 - NCAA GameBreaker 2000 - SCEA
15 - Echo Night - AGETEC	10 - Quake II - ACTIVISION
15 - Monaco GP - UBI SOFT	10 - Star Wars Ep 1: Phantom Menace - LUCASARTS
15 - Shanghai - ELECTROSOURCE	16 - Championship Motorcross - THQ
16 - Silhouette Mirage - WORKING DESIGNS	16 - Jet Moto 3 - SCEA
20 - NFL Xtreme 2 - SCEA	16 - LEGO Rock Raiders - LEGO
20 - Tarzan - SCEA	16 - Revolt - ACCLAIM
23 - Black Bass with Blue Marlin - HOT B USA	16 - Shadowman - ACCLAIM
28 - Jade Cocoon - CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT	16 - Shao Lin - THQ
	16 - South Park - ACCLAIM
	17 - Un Jammer Lammy - SCEA
	20 - 1000 Arms - ALTUS
	24 - NFL Blitz 2000 - MIDWAY
	24 - Soul of the Samurai - KONAMI
	31 - Tiny Tank - SCEA

NEW AGE GAMING TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY OF THIS INFORMATION. ANY OF THE RELEASE DATES MAY BE CHANGED IF THE DEVELOPER DEEMS IT NECESSARY. THE ONLY OFFICIAL SHIPPING DATE THAT MOST DEVELOPERS GIVE THESE DAYS IS, "WHEN IT'S DONE!"

JUST CHARTS

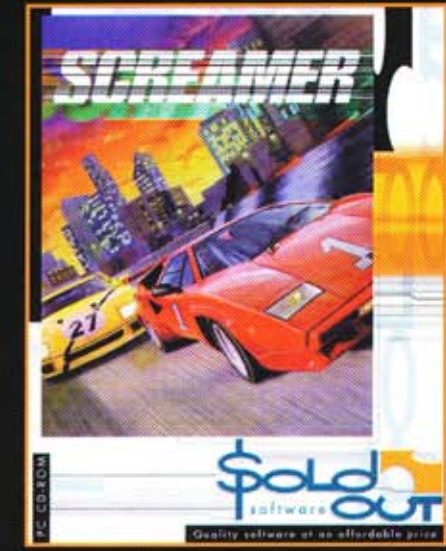
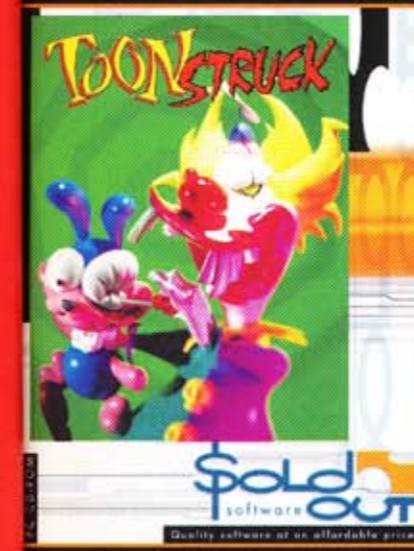
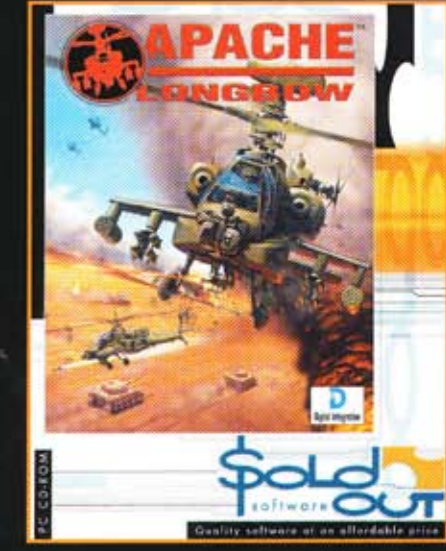
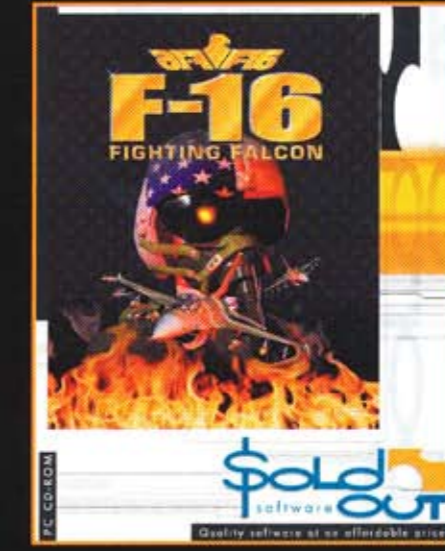
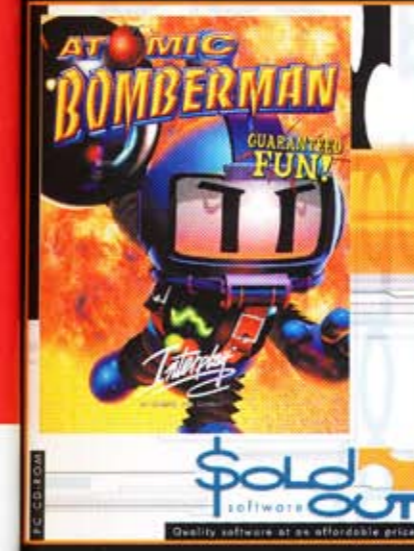
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Thank you to everyone who wrote in this month, unfortunately we cannot reply to all of the letters, but we do read them all. You can send your letters and e-mail to the addresses on the postcard. Please remember to include all your details when you write in or we can't send you your prize should you win. Don't ask us to change your prize or magically convert it into cash. As always, the Editors decision is final and that's that.

Well done to **Michael Dewar** who wins our editors choice this month - keep the questions coming. Until next month...

Backchat
PO Box 2749
Alberton
1449

letters@nag.co.za

Exactly half

Firstly I would like to say that you are doing a great job, keep it up. I have but one complaint though, when your magazine first came out your game reviews were about fifty percent PlayStation and fifty percent PC but in the last couple of issues you seem to be concentrating more and more on PC games. What has happened, where are the PlayStation reviews?

Mark

I have mentioned in the past that we have very little control over which games are released in this country, for the last few months there have just been more PC games released than PlayStation ones.

Ed

I can't remember if I sent this letter

The unmistakable voice of Cheat Codes, rivaling that of Satan himself commanding us into fulfilling it's will by preying on the weak, and those with enough money to continue spending R300 for five minutes of half hearted joy. To the vulnerable, the numbing urge to cheat "just on this one level" as "you've been on it for over five minutes" is so strong that you buy magazines just for the cheat codes included. To the weak willed the overwhelming temptation is so great you try to cheat in the opening movie. You cheat when you don't need to - you cheat when you don't want to. It becomes an obsession and before you know it you try to cheat in real life, typing "give all" and "god" on the Quake 2 console and running into a real military installation with an MS Natural Keyboard. Pressing the 9 key over and over until you realize that you must have pushed the 5 button as all you have is a machine gun, but that works just fine. The graphics are even better than a high end Pentium III with a Riva TrnT, the only downside being that the "god mode" cheat doesn't work and you seem to, um, die before getting past the second Strogg, err, guard. Seriously cheat codes are damning the gaming world. Take the game Commandos: BEL for example. It took me about a week

to get to the third level. I even missed VIP episodes to play it, and then the fourth level proved to be so difficult that I... cheated. At first nothing happened, maybe cheating ain't so bad I thought. Then the poison spread and affected me to such a state that I finished that level and the next in like five minutes. I immediately lost all interest in the game and had to settle for watching the Telly Tubbies as I had nothing else to do. Cheating takes away all the enjoyment from a game leaving you feeling unfulfilled and to a great extent disillusioned. You really have to wonder why programmers include cheat codes in a game. It increases it's longevity. I think not. To make us finish a game so quickly we're left with no choice but to fork out our hard earned (you really have to wonder about the hard earned bit as I have enough time to finish games without cheats) cash for a similar game. I think so. Then there's those who justify their sins with the retort that they resort to cheat codes if they loose their saved games and have to quickly skip levels to get to the same place they were before their incompetence resulted in deleted saved games. If they're so damn stupid that they loose their saved games then I suggest that they stick to Pong. Basically there's no excuse to use a cheat code in any game. If it's too hard, shame.

Daniel Avnon
E-mail

A number of people have been commenting on the few scant remarks we made about cheating in our previous issue, saying that if cheating is so bad then why do we have cheats in our magazine and plastered all over the CD. Well I think this letter sums up the point we were so desperately trying to make. Cheating is your own business, every one cheats at some point or the other which is why the clueless section is so popular. You have to agree though that cheating does limit how long you'll be playing a game and therefore is directly proportional to your perception of the value of a game, finishing it in less than an hour by cheating doesn't represent what the guys who made the game intended. Our mission is to

perhaps make you more aware of issues that people never really think about or until they end up like Daniel here, who's fantasy of taking over a military

base with a Microsoft keyboard could be considered a little 'too far gone'.
Ed

Spot the difference

Aren't sports simulations getting a bit over-the-top? It seems like all too many companies are just churning out updates of successful sports games. These games are dutifully heaped with praise, because they are still good, and little Jimmy games-player buys the next one. Isn't this entire cycle a bit cynical? Now, don't get me wrong, I like sport games, but what is the real difference between the one produced last year and the one that they're making this year? Better graphics, more realism, better AI and new special moves (particularly in soccer games). Sure, nothing wrong there, but still, compared to most game genres sport is just the same thing, over and over again, just a better engine each time. Let's look at first-person shooters nowadays. More and more feature revolutionary new ideas and styles of game play, as well as different, well-scripted plots. For example, the realistic action-planning game play of Rainbow Six, or the incredible engrossing quality of Half-life. Gaming genres around the world are making changes in concepts, not just game engines and AI. Obviously, it's a lot easier to change and manipulate a 3D shooter's concepts than a sports game, but still, programmers should be making some kind of effort to make each game different from it's forefathers. There's far too much sitting on the laurels in sports games. Anyone remember Speedball? That was a sports game, technologically inferior to today's sports games, but its concept is still excellent. If gaming genres around the world have managed to make quantum leaps in technology and creativity, surely makers of sports games can make some original games and concepts, rather than just reproducing FIFA 99 Gold or NBA super-turbo double-extra special. There's nothing wrong with these 'updated' spots titles of recent years, but surely we should expect more that just updated graphics, AI and a different year after the title? Perhaps gaming magazines should make some kind of comment against this relentless reproduction and put an end to these licenses-to-print-money titles that are the big sporting licenses.

Michael Dewar
Pinelands

You're are completely right in one sense but totally wrong in the other. I'm not a huge fan of sports titles but when I do sit down and install the latest cricket this or racing that, things certainly do look better since the previous outing of the line. Everything seems to have improved, the teams have been updated and just when you think they've captured every conceivable element in a game along with the very best graphics, sound and AI technology can offer, the next version beats the last one hands down. I suppose you can say it's a little like the relentless march of technology, somewhere someone wants to buy a soccer game and they'll buy the best one on the market, not being happy to settle for something five years old with old teams and now retired players. In addition competition between development companies also drives this cycle forward each year. It becomes something of an institution and no matter how many consumers complain, nothing will change. Now with regards to your second point there are more than a handful of games on the horizon that are prepared to try something different but sadly these forays into the unknown usually end badly. Savage Arena is one such title - reviewed in this issue. On the other hand Acclaim is putting the finishing touches on a game called TrickStyle, which is looking stumping (it's a futuristic urban snowboarding game, another example is Links Extreme, a golf game with a difference. Interestingly enough Speedball 2000 for the PlayStation is currently under development and if the Bitmap Brothers can pull off that special magic again it'll win original sports title of the year hands down (when it comes out). When reminiscing about the first Speedball game, the name Brutal Deluxe (a tough computer team in this old game) still strikes fear in my veins!
Ed

Big fans

My friend and I recently installed the Half-Life Uplink demo, and found that it was truly amazing, it's our favourite game, and the best game ever [fact]. Whilst reading your magazine, we always seem to find that you have a screenshot or two of Half-Life pasted in the letters section, and we actually find this quite entertaining. So, in accordance with the prophecy, we decided to mould and sculpt our very own NAG Half-Life screenshots from the raw code that separates the good and evil forces of this ethereal world. Included here are the images that my friend and I created from bare nothingness. I bestow upon you, the rights and permission to publicise our marvellous creations in your sacred magazine. You know... the one with the bound cover, spine and the silvery shining pages.

Lawrence Cawood and Richard Troon
Durban

The Half-Life legacy continues.
Ed

The clipping test dummy

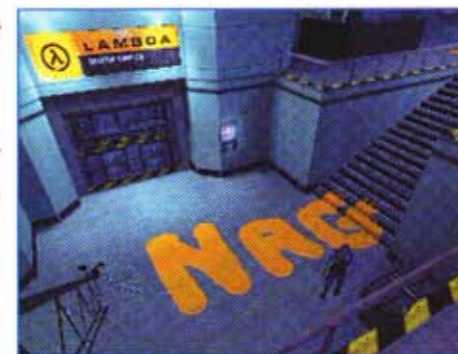
I'm sure you've heard it all a million times, but it really is great having such a good local publication. [You know what, it's great to bring it to you! Ed]. I've been gaming since the days of Atari and legends like Space Invaders and Moon Patrol and feel very privileged to have been able to grow up with the changes and innovations that have built our great industry. Honestly, I don't know what those poor people that don't game do with their lives. Where is it all going to end? Will it ever reach a peak? I think not and can only drool at the prospect of what will be thrown at us in the future. Total integration of body and mind into the game? A game where your nervous and endocrine systems are at the mercy of the developer? It makes the idea of playing Quake X a whole new ball game. They had better sort out the bugs beforehand though! You've got to feel sorry for the poor sods that test the alpha versions. Oops, better sort out that clipping problem - and a new test dummy, I mean gamer, nice gore though! All in all, we as gamers can be sure that the best is yet to come. I hope to be gaming with the latest and greatest until I'm too old to control my bodily functions when an alien drops out of it's hiding place in the semi-organic holographic ceiling. Hope they have the endocrine system working properly!

Dave
E-mail

It's great to have a true veteran, reading our magazine. We all come from the same place you do, that distant past where we used to pump millions of twenties into an arcade machine down at the local cafe and then rush back home to the trusty Commodore 64 and load up Uridium. The evolution gaming has undergone in this short time is quite remarkable if you think about it, remember how impressed we used to be with a home computer if it could display a whole 8 colours, and with some clever programming put 64 sprites on screen at the same time. The future you dream of in your letter isn't too far away though, and you can bet that one way or the other we'll be there, bravely testing that new cerebral infusion modulator, and loving every minute of it!
Ed

You decide

Who decides what games we get in South Africa? I refer to you a case in point: Heroes of Might and Magic III. This game is number 2 or 3 on the top 100 and was released in January this year overseas. Where is it? I have now given up on the South African suppliers and am sourcing it through an overseas friend. Magic and Mayhem: Where is it? Rollercoaster Tycoon: Where is it? Seems like all we get is Cricket this and Cricket that. So much for developing our strategic mind power. Next gripe. Who decides what demos you put on your CDs?



Banana boys Lawrence Cawood and Richard Troon are to blame for this!

Did I miss out on the 97MB HOMM III demo or 67MB Jagged Alliance 2 demo? Could you please try and squeeze on some decent strategy game demos?

Pete Ramsden
E-mail

I'm glad you asked... the gaming public actually decide what games we get in this country. Pregnant pause, yes, you really do, or to be more specific you decide on what we don't get. Largely due to piracy we unfortunately will never see many of the titles released overseas because it doesn't pay the South African distributors to bring in every single

game out there. If more people in the country actually spent money-buying games from legitimate vendors then we'd see more titles entering the country at cheaper prices. Electronic Arts has taken the first brave step everyone's been asking for by bringing prices down for their entire range of products and this will include monster games like Dungeon Keeper II, so support them and show them they aren't wasting their time. And for anyone out there who's recently bought a pirate copy of a game, thanks a million, moron. We brought Rollercoaster Tycoon in from overseas for review. Oh, and we decide what goes on the CD which is usually all the latest demos from around the world, we don't have any preference and if it's new it goes on, but we only have so much space.
Ed

Good, bad and ugly

Why do you review a game like South Park when you give it bad ratings?

Rogan
Durban

Um, so you don't waste your money on it.
Ed

Hopeful

My brother and I'd like to congratulate you on one of the best magazines of all time. We really enjoy your 'reviews under fire' and 'archives' sections and your rating system rules. It's easy to grasp but still covers a wide enough spectrum to be fair. I'm leaving school shortly, which means that I have to start thinking about what I want to do with the rest of my life. I'm seriously considering a career as an editor of an electronic entertainment magazine, as it combines the three things I love most in life: Games, Writing and Technology. Now here's what I want to know. Is there a demand for people in this line of work, what qualifications will I need and the million dollar question, how much money can I expect to earn? One last thing, here's a 'poetic masterpiece' my brother wrote in your honour: [Tell your 'brother', thanks, but our readers aren't ready, maybe next year. Ed]

Steve and Wil van der Walt
Centurion

So, you want to be an editor do you? Well I'm quite surprised anyone would actually want to do this for a living but if you really must know. Some things you'll have to know before embarking on this journey... here is a day in the life of a magazine

editor. If you wake up before noon it's expected that you come into work where you'll usually find a new game or two waiting on your desk. If the game sucks, you farm it out to one of your reviewers and if it's good you take it for yourself. Now you must check your diary for free lunches, if you're paying then cancel the appointment - if not make sure you're on time. This pattern continues with the odd overseas trip until you collect a fat paycheck at the end of the month. The rules of life are simple, if you're good at what you do, and you love doing it then make sure you can get paid for it and you'll live long and be happy and the most important thing to remember is that money isn't everything.
Ed

Bigger better more!

Excellent magazine, I read somewhere that DVD games are going to be the order of the day. Imagine what the quality of the games would look like with theatre quality picture and sound. I have a gripe, why do developers always develop good games for players with 3D cards? I am a poor I.T. student who finds the price of 3D cards a little bit exorbitant. It's also no use to go cheap and get absolute rubbish. I am an avid role-player and would appreciate it tremendously if you could publish some walkthroughs for games like this. Diablo, although dated by today's standards was absolutely excellent! Why can't more games give us this type of addictive game play instead of graphics that require those expensive 3D cards, delivering painful game play?

Ryan Bunting
Cape Town

The DVD revolution is as inevitable as the tide, there are a few games that have already been released on DVD but the gains they offer don't really justify the medium they're on at this point in time. Many of you might remember the first few CD-ROM titles that appeared on the scene, they were nasty full motion video affairs with limited game play. Developers might have learnt their lesson by now so we'll all be watching the first few titles that arrive and give you a full report. Also remember that DVD games don't necessarily equal better graphics and sound.
Ed

Please send all question and opinion related questions to **Backchat**
Please send all your technical and troubleshooting questions to **Backchat Technical**

Thanks for all the letters!

Last month we started an interesting journey back in time, looking at the historical development behind one of the worlds most underrated video game companies, Konami. For those who missed last months issue here is a small recap to bring you up to speed.

KONAMI - HISTORY IN THE MAKING

AtariBaby kidnapped all the directors of Konami and then forced them to talk, and this is what they said... (Part 2 of 3)

Up to 1984 Konami was probably best known for games like Time Pilot and the all time classic Hyper Olympics, with their biggest single success being Frogger. Although originally designed by Konami, Frogger ended up being distributed by SEGA in countries like the USA and Europe. The result was that the game became better known as a SEGA title with very little credit going to Konami. So Konami was left scraping the egg off their face. But not willing to be left out in the cold as far as the console market goes, they decided to sell the 3rd party development rights to their biggest titles.



two joysticks and no buttons for a single player to control, while Yie Ar used a joystick and two buttons (punch and kick). Karate Champ's 'fighters' consisted of you (a guy in a white karate outfit), your opponent (a guy in a red karate outfit), and a charging bull you would stop for a bonus. Yie Ar Kung Fu's fighters were entirely different people, 11 in all and

earlier in the year for the MSX2 Computer System, Vampire Killer). This Famicom title, Dracula, or Akumajo Dracula, was renamed Castlevania, beginning a legacy that has endured to this day.

Konami reached the pinnacle of its arcade success in 1989 with a single title that would burn brightly and bring the company untold riches for a couple of years. A little-known independent black-and-white teenage comic book named Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles had spawned a dreamlike scenario for its creators, with cartoons, full-colour kids comics, action figures, movie deals, and clothing lines. Konami took on Namco in a bidding race and won the rights to produce TMNT video games, and produce them they did. The first dedicated TMNT arcade game was a four-player simultaneous machine with a large monitor and loud stereo speakers. It attracted young players like ants to a picnic. Konami wisely chose a simple side-scrolling walk-and-punch format, filling the screen and speakers with backgrounds, enemies, voices, and music right out of the cartoons buttons (and filling the machines with money).



A TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE UNDER ATTACK

Coleco opted to port a pseudo 3-D Japanese arcade title by Konami, called Antarctic Adventure, to ColecoVision. This was the first game to feature the character Pentarou the Penguin, later to appear in Konami's smash arcade hit Pengo. Parker Brothers successfully released Konami's Gyruss for both the Atari 2600 and the ColecoVision, but after the collapse of the home game industry in 1984, they scuttled big plans for another Konami-related release, Frogger 2: Three deep, which credited Parker Brothers as developer and was released in small quantities. (Frogger 2 became one of the most prominent rare 2600 games in the wake of the crash and is worth a cool \$ 200 in the Atari collectors circles). As Konami's stake in the home game market had been limited to a handful of 2600 cartridges and a large variety of games that other companies had licensed from them and manufactured on their own budgets, it mostly reaped benefits from the licensing fees sold to 3rd party developers.

each armed with a different martial art or weapon. Karate Champ had 24 moves in total for its two characters. Yie Ar had 16 for its main character and many additional attacks for each of its bosses. It was also the first game to feature life bars as we would know them twelve years later.



YIE AR KUNG FU - CLASSIC FIGHTING GAME

By 1987 Nintendo emerged as the first company to tread the ice waters of the home console industry with NES. It was also in 1987 that Konami really started to back the NES in a big way, beginning a pattern of support that would establish the company as Nintendo's top third-party

developer. 1987 saw the home NES release of Hyper Olympics, The Goonies, and the company's first major movie-licensed property, Top Gun. Konami also offered American gamers a cartridge conversion of a little action title - the company's first Famicom Disk System release in Japan (a game with close relations to another Konami title released

the game - a figure unheard of since the days of Pong, Pac-Man, and Donkey Kong many years earlier. Kids now wanted to come to arcades to play a Turtles game, and of course, they wanted Turtles games for their Nintendo systems as well, hence the NES saw its single biggest seller since Mario Bros.

Next month I'll conclude my look at this diverse company and let you in on my next project. I've already started collecting data on a game that everyone should remember, your clue is... X marks the spot. If you have any questions or comments then mail me at will@radioalga.com

AtariBaby

With the big crash of 1984 bringing the home industry to its knees, the big arcade game companies like Namco and Konami had to shelf all the development ideas for the meantime. But the crash clearly didn't affect the arcade market, as 1985 proved to be the biggest year as far as new title releases went for both Namco and Konami.

Konami's biggest smash for 1985 had to be Yie Ar Kung Fu as it left a huge mark on game designers and fighting games that, even today, cannot be matched. Six months earlier, Data East had released Karate Champ, a game often cited as the earliest inspiration for Capcom's Street Fighter and the scores of clones that followed its sequel into arcades. If Karate Champ was the first inspiration, Yie Ar Kung Fu was the best. Karate Champ used



THE JOYSTICK EATER - HYPER OLYMPICS

GENCON GAMES & COMICS FAIR



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The Demo Scene

The new edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary points out that both optimist and optimise come from the same Latin root meaning best. This is appropriate - demo coders are by and large optimists. If you find yourself in the company of one or more of them, they may mutter incantations like "If I do this, then this code will run faster". Most of these poor souls may devote themselves to long and complicated technical manuals that explain how to get things to run faster.

The reason is simple: faster is the name of the game in demo programming. This principle has been forgotten over the last couple of years thanks mainly to two things: 1) games have caught up with demos in what they can achieve and 2) graphics accelerator hardware has progressed beyond all recognition. The two are related - most modern games support graphics acceleration in some form and games teams have had a steady supply of ex-demo programmers joining their ranks in recent years. Most of the demo tricks to do with old graphics hardware have also become rapidly obsolete, given that the bog-standard VGA card can now update the screen at quite a zippy rate.

But pure software graphics engines cannot approach anything like the quality or speed of dedicated silicon graphics. For an easy example compare software-only Quake (I or II -

OPTIMISATION 101

WHEN FAST ISN'T FAST ENOUGH

BY PAUL FURBER

HTTP://WWW.OVERLOAD.CO.ZA/SASCENE

E-MAIL: SADEMO@EGROUPS.COM

E-MAIL: MAVERICK@IS.CO.ZA



VAPRO

III is accelerated only) to its OpenGL equivalent running on the same CPU but with the addition of an accelerator card such as a RivaTNT.

So why bother to optimise? The reason is fairly simple - most demo competitions forbid the use of accelerated hardware only options. It's fine to support the hardware as an option, but a demo that requires a hardware accelerator to run won't get you past the qualifying round. Some feel that the demo scene should have moved with the times and kept up with trends but there are two good reasons why the majority of demos don't support accelerators. Firstly, not everyone has them and a wide audience is an advantage.

Secondly an accelerator is normally accessed through an API - such as OpenGL or Direct3D.

Watching a demo written purely for an accelerator may look impressive, but it tells the viewer very little about the capabilities of the programmer (except that they know an API or two) and everything about the capabilities of the graphics card. But the best reason of all to optimise is because a hardware accelerator won't do everything for you - it won't calculate any mathematical

stuff or mix your soundtrack or calculate any time functions or help you be creative.

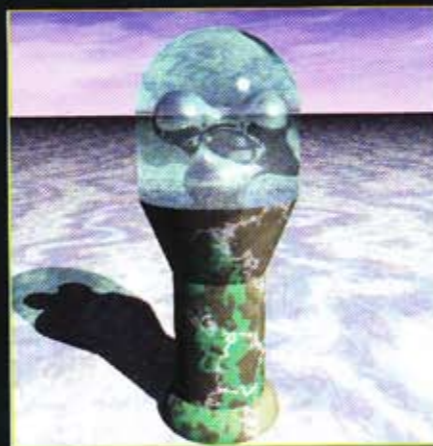
Making it faster if you're not going to throw hardware at it is a problem, the only way to make your program go faster is to, well, make it go faster. There are a number of ways to do this but before you jump in and start eliminating redundant code and looking for better ways to do things, remember the First Law: premature optimisation is the root of all programming evil. It is a waste of time to spend the first three weeks of a four week project tuning a routine which will only be run once at the beginning of the program - or worse, get thrown away after you've decided there is a better way.

So how do you find out which part of your code is running the slowest? Refer to the Second Law which states: use a profiling tool. Profilers examine running programs and will print statistical information about their components and how long they take to execute. Take note of the results. Once you've examined the profiler's output, you may decide to rewrite certain portions of the code to make them faster.

Which is the fastest implementation of all? To the back of the class everyone who put their hands up and said assembler. Wrong - the fastest routine in the world is not written in C or assembler or even silicon-based microcode. It's actually the one you don't have to write at all - because you found a better method. This brings us to Law 3: there is always a better way. Are you using the fastest search algorithm?

Can you precalculate certain values ahead of time? Can you eliminate any code altogether? Stay tuned for next month's column when I take a look at optimisation methods in some detail.

Paul Furber - 'Maverick'



PC CD ROM

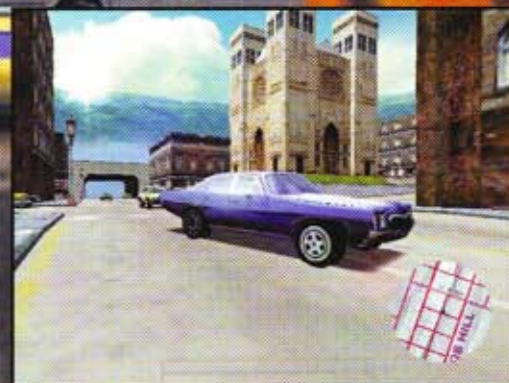
PC CD ROM

PlayStation

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YOU ARE THE WHEELMAN.

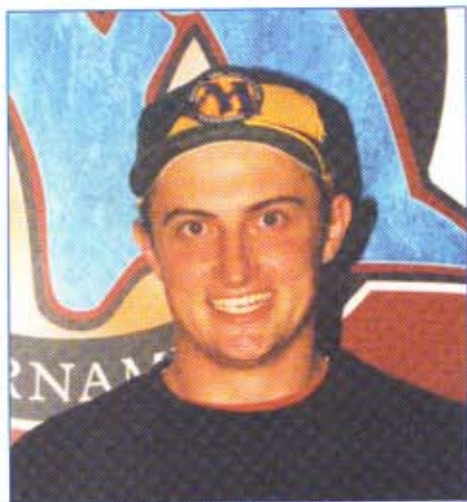


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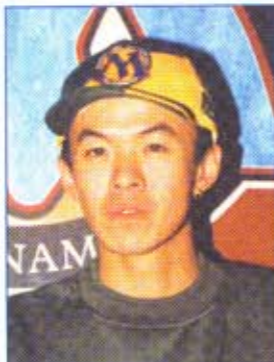
South Africa's New Magic Champ!



MICHAEL NURBE, CAPTAIN OF THE NATIONAL MITG TEAM

What began at 8.30am on a Saturday morning ended over 41 hours later with Gauteng's Michael Nurse taking the title of South African National Magic: The Gathering Champion. He heads a team of four players who will be taking on the best the world has to offer at the World Championships in Japan in August - a five day \$250 000 event. Michael played 16 grueling matches at Eastgate Shopping Centre just outside Johannesburg last month, his final match ending at 1.40am on Monday morning. Michael, a member of last year's National team and a player at the recent \$150 000 Pro Tour New York, proved too strong in his final match against

Johnathan Tsao (Johannesburg), who has to settle for third spot. Christiaan Du Plessis, a fifteen year old from Pietersburg who has been playing for only six months, stunned judges and veteran players alike when he stormed through the ranks to take second place. Christiaan decided to concede the final match so his friend (whose mother was waiting in the car park) could get back to Pietersburg in time for school. The fourth slot in the team was taken by Chris Gibbons (Johannesburg), a member of the 1997 SA team. "It was a marathon event", said Martin Frain, SA co-ordinator for organised Magic: The Gathering play (DCI). "The quality of play was high, and the judges were kept on their toes throughout the weekend - and beyond! Eastgate closes at midnight, so we had to take the final match to one of the judge's houses. It's not often you have the finals to the SA Nationals taking place on your kitchen table - thanks Dennis!" Players were either invited to take part in the Nationals due to their ranking (the top 25 were invited) or qualified at Regional Championships. On Day 1 competitors faced seven



JOHNATHAN TSAO PLACED THIRD



CHRISTIAAN DU PLESSIS, SURPRISE SECOND PLACE WINNER

rounds of Rochester Draft, where packs of cards are opened in front of the players who then take turns in choosing which cards to play. On Day 2 seven rounds of Standard Play, combined with the results of Day 1, qualified eight players to go into the knockouts. These were played best of five, with no time limits. Gavin Meek (Jhb), Russel Lund (CT), Daniel Messer (Jhb) and David Irvine (Jhb) were the other players in the Top Eight.



CHRIS GIBBONS RETURNS IN FOURTH PLACE

GENCON GAMES & COMICS FAIR



Pro Tour Qualifier to be held at GenCon

The Pro Tour Qualifier for London, open to all Magic players, will be held at the GenCon games fair at the Edenvale Community Centre on 17 and 18 July 1999. Two tickets to London go to the top players. Players start the event on Saturday with an Urza's Saga tournament deck (starter), and Urza's Legacy booster and an Urza's Destiny booster (R 100 entry fee). They build a deck of at least 40 cards from the cards they have been given, and then play throughout Saturday to get a pool of the top eight players. The Top Eight play a booster draft on Sunday, with a booster from each of the above expansions in the best of five single eliminations. The top two players win tickets to London to play in the \$150 000 Pro Tour in October this year. Other events over the weekend include a Standard event and an Extended event on Friday 16 July '99 and a Standard event on Sunday 18 July '99. Every player who takes part in the Sunday event will get a full set of eight Vanguard II cards to use in the event. For more details check out www.geon.co.za. Worfaire, Africa's biggest computer gaming event ever, will take place at GenCon over the course of the three days. The latest games and forthcoming releases will also be on show.

So, want to know where you can get Magic: The Gathering? Incredible Connection, Exclusive Books, Facts & Fiction and Van Schaik book stores stock the game, as do selected independent game and book shops. For more info on shops and where to play, go to www.geon.co.za.



Player Profile

Player Stats

Name: Michael Nurse	City: Johannesburg
Age: 22	Occupation: Student
DCI Comp Rank: 1733	SA Rank: Sixth

South African National Champion
Eats, breathes and sleeps magic which got him to New York with the national team last year!

-3 -2

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FOR IDIOTS

PART 3 - STORAGE DEVICES

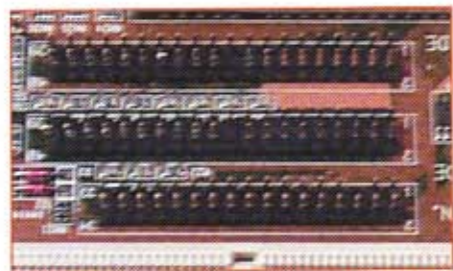


This month we will be looking at storage components ie. Hard drives, CD-ROM drives and DVD drives. I did say we would have a look at graphics cards but I think the graphics card article in Hardware Hype should answer most of your questions.

Storage devices come in all makes and forms and the important thing is that you know just how much you are willing to spend on storage devices. They can potentially be the most expensive components in a PC. You also need to know what interface you will be using to connect the storage peripherals to your motherboard.

IDE vs SCSI

The two standards currently in existence are IDE and SCSI (Small Computer System Interface). IDE is the most widely used since most motherboards that ship have this controller built in these days. IDE is also the less expensive and less confusing than SCSI and the devices that connect to IDE are also less expensive than SCSI devices. You can identify the IDE controller on your motherboard by two black slots with two rows of pins inside them. You also get the ribbon cables, which are used to connect devices to the controller on your motherboard.



MOST MOTHERBOARDS COME STANDARD WITH ON-BOARD IDE CONTROLLERS

The reason that IDE is less expensive is that it is limited to four devices, two per channel, which can be connected to your PC. IDE is also limited to one instruction that can be executed on a channel at any given time. This is the reason people usually put their hard drives on one channel and their CD-ROM and DVD drives on the other. This way you can access your hard drive and CD-ROM at full speed, otherwise if you have both on one channel you can either read and write on your hard drive or read from the CD-ROM at any given time, not both. IDE is also limited in transfer rate. Maximum transfer speed on IDE is 33MB/s and most of the time it doesn't achieve this speed. The speed is fine for most applications and games don't have a problem with it. Applications that can use more bandwidth are typically graphics and video applications, which need to access the drives at higher speeds. An IDE controller doesn't have a dedicated processor to handle all the data transfers and uses your system's CPU to the task, which means that it costs you processing time.

This is where SCSI steps in and fills the gap. Firstly you are not limited to 4 devices and most SCSI cards typically support up to 15 devices per channel and it can execute

multiple commands at the same time giving you full bandwidth to all devices. SCSI transfer speeds range from 10MB/s for the old SCSI-1 controllers right up to 80MB/s for the new SCSI-3 controllers. SCSI controllers, at least the decent ones, have their own processor to handle transfers lessening the

strain on your systems CPU. The only drawbacks are that SCSI requires some technical knowledge to set up and costs a fortune when compared to IDE. The controllers ship with their own BIOS and incorrect settings can seriously damage your storage devices. SCSI controllers come in a variety of different versions and this makes choosing the correct controller a tricky business as well.



THE IDE HARD DRIVE IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST SELLING PERIPHERALS OF THE PC

SCSI is also not available on most motherboards and requires that you purchase a SCSI controller, which will set you back a minimum of R1000.00 for a fairly decent one. The drives are also more expensive costing four times or more the price of a comparable IDE drive. Expensive to say the least, but if you can afford it rest assured that SCSI-3 controllers are the fastest currently in production for PCs. Another advantage of SCSI is that you can connect external peripherals to your controller such as scanners, tape drives, external CD-ROMs, cameras etc. As you can see SCSI is quite a versatile controller and has benefits that IDE doesn't offer. Generally I wouldn't recommend SCSI to people just starting out on computers due to all the mistakes that can be made, it is just here to inform you that it does exist and there is something faster than IDE. Explaining all the intricacies of SCSI is beyond the scope of this article and I would suggest that if you were interested in SCSI that you do some research on the Internet before committing yourself. Of course you also get RAID controllers but they are VERY expensive and generally only for use in high-end servers.

Storage Device Bottlenecks

Even with SCSI in a machine with the fastest hard drives, storage devices are still the biggest speed bottleneck in a system. Memory, the CPU and other peripherals operate on a nanosecond respond basis while drives respond in milliseconds making it 10 times slower than the rest of your machine. This is why choosing the correct hard drives and other storage mediums can significantly improve your machines speed.

Hard Drives

Probably the most important storage component of any PC since this is what your operating system runs off of. It is also important to remember that hard drives are one of the few components that you can

move to a new machine when you upgrade again, so you want a decent size and speed hard drive.

The important aspects to look for when choosing a hard drive is size, access time, transfer rate, warranty, manufacturer, and of course price. Nowadays you can get a 5GB IDE hard drive for under R1000.00 and every extra GB costs about R100.00 extra on average. For today's games and applications you shouldn't even consider anything under 5GB, take Baldur's Gate for instance. It can do a maximum installation of 2.5GB - half of the drive - and the games are just getting bigger and bigger.

The most important aspects to look for are the access time and transfer rate. The lower your access speed the less you have to wait for your computer to access data, these days most hard drives support an access time of 5 milliseconds or less. The transfer rate refers to the amount of data in MBs your hard drive can read and transfer in one second. The higher the transfer the faster your applications and games load. There are many hard drive manufacturers in the market ranging from the well-known Seagate to the lesser-known Fujitsu. I suggest that you buy a drive from a well-known manufacturer, or as I would say the mature companies since they have been developing drives for a very long time. We prefer Seagate since most of us here at NAG have used their drives since we started using computers, but Maxtor, IBM, Western Digital and Quantum also make dependable hard drives that give the least amount of trouble. Most people stick to a manufacturer once they have bought a drive from them. The only drive that we have had problems with thus far is Fujitsu, although it was just a defective drive, which the supplier was willing to swap out for a new one.

You will find that if a drive were giving problems right after you bought it that most suppliers would be willing to swap it out for a new one. This brings us to warranty periods, which can be very important, since you want to keep your hard drive for as long as possible. Look for a hard drive that has a warranty period of 3 years or longer. They are available and never even consider ones that come with a 12-month warranty. It's always better to be safe than sorry. One thing to remember when you buy a hard drive is to ask the retailer or supplier that sells it to you to supply the installation leaflet that usually accompanies it. They seem to forget that you need this information for the dip switches on the drive and to configure it correctly in your BIOS. Most of the drives should auto-detect on installation although there are those that require manual settings.



THE TRUSTY CD-ROMS ARE RAPIDLY PROGRESSING AT A PHENOMENAL RATE

CD-ROMS & DVD Drives

The new portable storage mediums. I can still remember when floppy disks were used and installing a program took the manual insertion of 20 or more floppies. Luckily CD-ROMs came about to alleviate the disk changing and we are now again entering a stage where programs are starting to ship on more than one CD-ROM disc. In the last two years we have seen yet another drive emerge, the PC-DVD drive, which ultimately will replace the CD-ROM. This makes the PC-DVD drives currently an excellent option for upgrading since it is backward compatible with CD-ROM discs and can read the newer PC-DVD discs as well. Although DVD is not yet widely used for distribution of applications and games, the time is coming when it will replace CD-ROM drives.

For now you can use it to watch DVD movies on your computer while we wait for it to become the de facto standard for distributing programs. I would suggest when deciding on a CD-ROM or PC-DVD drive that you seriously consider buying a PC-DVD drive. It costs more, but will require less of an upgrade when you need to upgrade again, just simply transfer the drive into your new machine.



THE FORGOTTEN HERO OF THE 80'S, THE AGING STIFFY DRIVE

problem with the first generation PC-DVD drives, they had problems reading CD-R discs but that was sorted out with the second generation. For this reason make sure you buy a second generation or later PC-DVD drive. When deciding on a CD-ROM or DVD look



out for the following - make, access time, speed and manufacturer. Make is important and try to buy a drive that is branded. There are too many "Made in Taiwan" models, or as they are better known - no-name brand drives. Stick to your major manufacturers for DVD or CD-ROM drives, them being Creative, Plextor, Diamond Multimedia, Sony, Samsung, Acer etc. You pay more but you get better quality equipment that will last longer and give fewer problems. Once again access time and transfer speed has to be taken into consideration. CD-ROM drives typically have an access time of 180 milliseconds and the lower this number the faster you can access your data. Transfer speed is very easy to figure out with CD-ROM and DVD drives. The speed is designated by an "X" symbol with a number in front of it. 40X would mean it is a 40-speed drive. For CD-ROM drives you multiply this with 150 and you get the amount of KBs per second the drive can transfer in other words a 40 speed can transfer 6000 KB per second or 6 MB per second. You can do the same with DVD just multiply by 1500 and you get the KB/s the drive can transfer. Warranty is important but less so with CD-ROM and PC-DVD drives since they generally ship with a 12 month warranty due to the mechanical nature of the parts and that the drive collects dust when it is opened and closed.

Stiffy Drives

I know you are asking why stiffy drives? The reason is because most machines still have them and from time to time you need to access the odd stiffy. It doesn't matter too much who makes it or access speed or transfer rate since most of them are the same. It is just important that you need one. There are the newer 2MB stiffies and even a 120MB one but they are rarely used and you don't need those unless you are required to access those types of disks.

Other Drives....

There are other drives as well such as tape drives, CD-ROM writers, Zip, Jazz etc. but covering all these are beyond the scope of this article. I only covered what you need to know about the drives that you will find in all machines. These other drives are usually used for specific purposes and the home users will rarely have to buy one of these.

I hope that my small synopsis on the storage devices such as hard drives and CD-ROM drives has helped you understand what to look for when making a purchasing decision.

Next month I will cover monitors, till then.



PLANE SCAPE TORMENT

Coming from Black Isle Studios, who have produced many games for Interplay, a new stunning RPG game. Torment is a violent, isometric, scrolling top-down view with dynamic real-time lighting and weather effects, 3D height maps allowing for realistic topography in the terrain. This irreverent and breathtakingly beautiful RPG is set at the crossroads of the multiverse. Black Isle intends to create an amusingly eccentric, mind-spinning, cliché-breaking power fantasy splashed with visceral moments of breathtaking violence.

Derek dela Fuente



Scene Setter

Set in the TSR world of Planescape, Torment will be using the BioWare Forgotten Realms CRPG engine as a base for the game, and Interplay artists and designers will supply the Planescape ambience. The basic goal of the game is to solve puzzles, find keys and interact. You wake up from the dead with amnesia. The point of the

game is to find out where you are, who you are, how you died, and what the future has in store for you. If it means killing then so be it. At its core, Torment is a mystery, with the character as the enigma. Throughout the game, curiosity, greed, fear, a need to escape, survival, self-defence and revenge will all take turns driving the character toward the grand finale, but ultimately all of these motivations revolve around finding the answers to the following questions: Who am I? Who keeps trying to kill

me? Why am I immortal? Learning the answers to these questions can give the player character tremendous power over his destiny. It may also mean dying a lot. But fate is a fickle mistress... Torment is an epic story of an immortal character that suffers from amnesia and must search for his own past, identity and destiny. At



EVIL MINIONS WITH TOO MUCH TIME ON THEIR HANDS



THEY DON'T COME ANY NASTIER THAN THIS!



A RARE SHOT OF OUR HERO INSIDE BIG BEN



STUNNING GRAPHICS AROUND EVERY SPOOKY CORNER

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its core, Torment is a mystery with the player's character as the central enigma. Someone or something is stalking the player's character and the main plot element is to figure out who, and more importantly what, keeps killing him.

The Player

The player quickly discovers it is almost impossible for him to die. He regenerates from traumatic damage, shrugs off stab wounds, and becomes a close friend of fast-developing scabs and blisters that harden and fall off within minutes. The problem is that every time the player dies, he 'forgets' everything his previous incarnation knew. Or thought it knew. This is extremely frustrating. Combining the character's amnesia with his ability to rise from the dead, a whole bunch of questions come to mind. What has he done in previous incarnations that affect the present? What pleasant or unpleasant events have occurred in Sigil and the outer planes that he is responsible for? And the most important question: What led him to this state? How did this happen? (Many other people are also interested in this question). As the player will discover, many have been touched by his actions in the past, in the present and the future. What the player has forgotten, they have not. You define yourself through your actions, not through pushing a set of numbers around on the character generation screen. Your actions in the game flesh out the character. You decide how strong you get, which career path to follow, the skills you wish to learn, what abilities you develop and what spells you wish to study. The entire game is the character generation screen



THIS IS YOUR CHARACTER GENERATOR

expansive and highly detailed game environment and some stunning weather effects are on hand. It will also feature huge background animations and even larger spell effects. Point and click A simplified 2 click interface is on hand with over twenty quality spells and spell effects, accommodation for a party of up to five characters that the player picks and chooses, and artificial intelligence scripting for NPCs, (the githzerai in your



WHOM SHALL WE PUT IN THE COOKING POT TONIGHT?

"WE WANT YOU TO PLAY THE GAME, NOT MICRO-MANAGE IT. THIS ISN'T A FLIGHT SIMULATOR. BECAUSE YOU'RE EFFECTIVELY IMMORTAL, YOU DON'T NEED TO EAT, SLEEP, EXCRETE, NOR DO YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT DYING THROUGH ANY CONVENTIONAL MEANS. THERE'S NO THIRST OR HUNGER METERS, ENCUMBRANCE, MORALITY POINTS OR MICRO-MANAGEMENT THAT GETS IN THE WAY OF YOU BEATING AN OPPONENT TO DEATH WITH HIS OWN SEVERED ARM OR CASTING A SPELL THAT TELEPORTS AN OPPONENT'S SCROTUM INTO HIS STOMACH TO GET DIGESTED."

and allows you to build your character to suit your gaming style.

Technologically Speaking
A lot of focus has been placed on the game engine, which presents the game in fine detail. Each map is 16-bit colour, pre-rendered and unique. Characters can step into pools of light and shadow and be illuminated appropriately. It has global lighting that allows the world to fluctuate from dawn to noon to dusk to night and back again. The backdrops are forever changing and this is down to the engine that can use special techniques to present the backdrops. No more repetitious dungeon tiles used to construct generic dungeons where you've

party will foam at the mouth and go berserk on the mind flayer as soon as he sees him, your cowardly thief may skip the scene as soon as first blood is drawn, the fickle traitors in your party may wait till you are at 25% hit points and everybody else has fallen unconscious before stabbing you in the back) all help round out the engine. One aspect of the game that the team are really proud of is the fact that lots of weapons have full effect on what you do so you



THIS LOVELY WORLD IS YOURS TO EXPLORE

architecture, the people, the creatures...everything has an edge to it. Belief, emotions, faith and other abstracts actually make their presence felt on reality...in Planescape, belief has the power to reshape worlds, kill and resurrect powers (gods) and change the laws of physics.



JUST HOPE IT'S A FOREST FIRE!

DEREK DELA FUENTE

DUNGEON KEEPER 2

NO REST FOR THE WICKED.

The first multiple-award winning 'Dungeon Keeper' released in July 1997, has now sold over 700,000 units, and was followed by an add-on level pack, 'Deeper Dungeons', at the end of last year. Now Bullfrog, the developers of the original, are putting the final touches to the sequel which is eagerly anticipated, to say the least!

I caught up with producer Nick Goldsworthy who had plenty to say about the game. "Looking back on Dungeon Keeper we have had lots of feedback regarding the game. It is strange the way the game was perceived. Billed as a Simulation come management game where we turn the roles around - taking the bad guys, who the player controls, and pitting them against the good guys. The actual game went down really well but a lot of users saw it as an RPG game with strategy and lots of other elements and we believe the success may have been bigger if the game genre had been clear. Dungeon Keeper II with a more up front marketing campaign will ensure that it will have broader appeal. DK2 offers more spells, more traps, more creatures - 10 more to make it around 30 - more of everything!"

The Setting

For those not familiar with the game, the background and basic story is that there are 20 gems hidden within the dungeons, each of which forms part of a special ring. (The game offers 70 levels - including 20 multiplayer, 20 campaign levels with five secret levels, 20 skirmish levels, along with 'My Pet Dungeon levels'). You, as the Dungeon Keeper, who has an alliance with the reaper, the only creature powerful enough to collect the gems, have to go through the levels of the game to collect these gems and, once they're all in place, a door will open to the outside world allowing you to escape the dungeon. As the gems are collected the reaper becomes more powerful and over time you see him getting bigger and more powerful. You have to get your imps to bring back the gems to the central

dungeon 'heart' before moving on to the next level. A whole new story has been created by Bullfrog. This may sound easy but it isn't a simple case of running around and picking them up. Nick explained that they have tried to open up the game and make it more interesting. "Purely on a story level we have brought in a scriptwriter to ensure the game flows nicely and has a strong pull on the player

for this was one area that was lacking in the original game. We do not go too deep but we



YOU'LL NEED TO WATCH OUT FOR THIEVES HERE!

have to ensure the player understands the many plots, like the fact you have an enemy rival keeper who is on the quest for the gems as well.

At the start of each of the missions we will display a 3D map where you will see a battle in the distance - other heroes and keepers fighting amongst themselves and this 3D is pictorial - so the plot of the game is presented in graphical form as well as text and FMV, all of which have been created by the professional script writer. "DK2 offers a lot of the original ideas but we have built and improved on every area and added lots more to the game. There are stealth missions where you have to hide creatures in the shadows and get them to steal things, or others that will see you intercepting a

convoy and getting the jewel. We've concentrated a lot more on the actual creatures this time around; their abilities, their resistance to other effects and so on. It has become the standard phrase to use when writing a sequel to say it is bigger and better but we are talking about over 50

people involved in this project which is the largest team assembled at Bullfrog. It is the emotions of creatures that have been really

focused on and this has been done via the Artificial Intelligence. We have written a new 3D engine and none of the original code has been used. We have 'really' started from scratch on this."

With many game sequels, some of the original team aren't usually involved in them, as they're no longer around, so was this the case with DK II? "It isn't the same team. One of the lead programmers is still there, as are a couple of others, but we looked at the product and decided that we could make a better game if we started afresh. We started this in September last year and the size of the team, together with obvious advances in technology, have allowed us to have a turnaround of about

14 months. It's far more structured now."

Improved interface

One fundamental change from 'Dungeon Keeper' is in the combat position of creatures. In the first game the strategy element was fairly basic; you could pick up lots of creatures, put them on a square and they would fight. 'Dungeon Keeper II' is going for a more strategic feel to it - put the creatures down and they'll move to an adjacent square. You can't place a creature on top of another, which leads to a game with more involvement in strategy. Another much needed improvement is that it will be far easier to dig out rooms; you can drag and select this time instead of the laborious method of single square selection.

As a part of the ever-evolving process the interface has also been a central feature that has really been improved on. Apart from being able to drag they have ensured the player fully understands not only how to use the interface, which is more intuitive, but also present it in a differing way. On the early levels the required icons grow and shrink so for the first level where there are only three icons they have been sized up. All are now divided into four tabs - creatures, rooms, spells and items that are constructed in your workshop. Icons are introduced as you progress through the game so at the end of each level where you have collected a gem the new icons for the next level spin out and land on your interface so you know what items you are going to get for the next stage. Nick was animated in conveying the interface and elaborated this point. Many man-hours have been spent on the interface, and to this end the first three levels are mainly tutorials where this interface is introduced to the player. "We didn't want the player to be confronted with 20 icons as soon as they start the game", explains

by
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DUNGEON KEEPER 2 (CONTINUED)

GENRE: DUNGEON MANAGEMENT
DEVELOPER: BULLFROG
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
SUPPLIER: EA AFRICA TELE: (011) 803-1212 EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: JULY 99
INTERNET: WWW.BULLFROG.CO.UK

them. I love it when you can summon skeletons out of the ground. Each creature has their own attack move and each has around 30 statistics but this is not an RPG game so it does not go into depth! DK2 is all about battling - a crosshair will be added onscreen when you are in sniper mode. Another aspect not to be overlooked is that in first person mode you can get other creatures to follow you, you have a strong ability in attack and a lot of the creatures have special skills in this mode which you don't have in third person!"

Moorish

Not only are there more characters and creatures, but the traps have been expanded and improved significantly.

There's a smart sentry trap, similar to a gun turret, that can track creatures within a certain range; a new fear trap that looks like a gargoyles (all creatures have a fear of threat system) which makes creatures run off into other traps; a boulder trap that works in a way similar to that in the first

Indiana Jones film; hidden spike traps that flip over if anything comes into contact with them. There's also a trigger trap, which allows you to link traps to be triggered together if something touches the main trigger trap. Plenty of wacky combinations there then! The number of

available traps comes down to how much resource you put into your workshops. In the past this would have cost you gold, but Bullfrog has implemented a new manna system that is used for the majority of spells and traps. The size of your rooms and the number of creatures in them, along with their total experience, generate this manna.

Casino

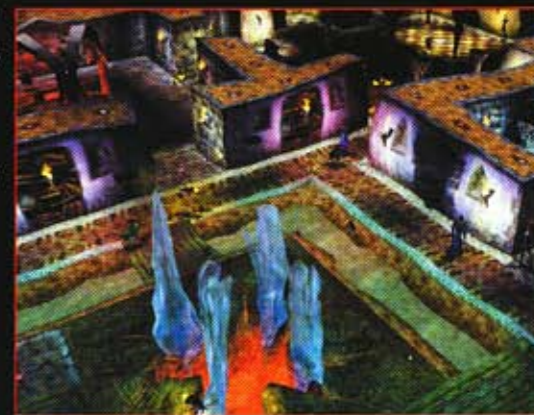
Both gold and manna are used within the game. The more land you own the more manna you have to replenish your traps. Gold is used to build up rooms, to training creatures. It is the rooms that are really the most interesting features on the game and DK2 offers so much. For instance, the Casino room, not disco as some people

NAG CONT... >

room but move on to the combat pit and the creatures are trained at a higher level. The new combat pit is more like an advanced training arena." I asked

Nick if there are any new characters in the game. "Yes, there's a

Dark Knight, who has red eyes and anti-Paladin armour; a Thief, who acts like a stealth commando, and is useful in multiplayer; and a Dark Angel, who can turn corpses into fighting skeletons. There's a lot more too." A really nice touch implemented is that if you move into one of the characters like the vampire a special filter will give a differing look and for the vampire a misty red tinge will appear on the screen. For the knight you will see a view through his helmet, for the firefly you will see hexagons. "There are so many new characters, spells and rooms that I want people to be surprised by some of the



THE PORTAL THROUGH WHICH EVIL COMES

Nick. "We're going to shrink and grade each icon depending on its ability. On the first level you only have to dig, create a treasury and a couple of creatures so those icons will be large. We're also planning to have a favourites bar, so the icons you use the most can be placed there for easy access." Extra narrative has been added as feedback from the consumers showed they wanted to know why certain characters were getting angry. Now a dark and sinister voice will explain in detail some of the background events so the player will know exactly what is going on and can gauge the moods of the differing creatures. Above the head of the creatures are also indicators, which inform the player of their mood and what their job is. If you slap one of the characters for instance you will see the red circle around the indicator drop.

Training

"In the last game, players found that they could keep training their creatures to make them powerful. Now, although that will still happen to a certain degree, they'll find that they also need combat experience. This is gained by throwing creatures into a combat pit to fight each other. (Depending on the creature's mass, you'll find that they are stunned for a period and this gives more variety over what happened in the first game). Everyone else gathers round to watch this spectacle, and the last one standing gains valuable combat experience. In the early stages of training this is done in the training



THE HORNED REAPER, A TERRIFYING SIGHT... ANYTIME. MAKE SURE YOU BRING A BIG SWORD WITH YOU INTO THIS DUNGEON OR YOU'LL BE LEAVING IN A PINE BOX!



would assume, enter and music will play and some real disco tracks will be added and seeing the creatures dancing is really humorous. The serious side is that each creature has their own amount of money and they can spend it on the roulette table or drink. Drink too much and creatures become drunk, reducing their fighting ability. A good play if you see a creature walking off with some big winnings is if you slap it you can actually get the gold for yourself but you must ensure the others do not see you otherwise they will become angry and annoyed with you!



FAIRIES IN THE LIBRARY? SOON YOU'LL END UP WITH TICKS AND FLEAS IN YOUR BEDROOM

movement." "Another feature we are using is direct play for Internet use. There's TCP/IP, IPX, Modem, Serial and also a dedicated Bullfrog server. 'DK II' will have special multiplayer maps, a skirmish option and about 50 changeable options. We're looking at a maximum of 16 players at the moment". "We've also developed our game editor, but we haven't decided what to do with it yet. We want to do some things with data discs later on, but we may decide to release the editor on later versions of the game. What we will probably do is

release downloads from the web site every few weeks, a new creature, a new trap, a new level, etc., to keep the momentum going for a few months after the game ships."

Slap Your Chick

A friend of mine was eager to know whether it would still be possible to slap the chickens in 'DK II' - and he'll be pleased to hear that it is! "The chickens are no longer limited in numbers, so if you build a hatchery that's too small, they'll start to wander off and get picked up by other creatures.

The Horned Reaper will simply stamp on them though. This results in a rather nice line in floating feathers."

Letters from Animal Welfare groups are probably already in the post. Asked about the technology Nick explained, "There are some projects we're doing that are technology led, but we have released games where the playability has suffered because of too much technology. Our stance is that gameplay comes first, but we are advised by our R&D department that new graphic cards, etc., are being released and we do look at them, but it really is all about gameplay. That said we believe that the look of DK2 is a cut above any other game you will see. We now see the technology side as the standard feature. Bullfrog lead the field because it is standard

practice for all the team to ensure they are ahead of everyone else but this is not a competitive thing, it is to ensure that the game's gameplay is the best and so you must have the technology in place. The game is 3D hardware driven as well as software driven. All the creatures are all polygons now and they range from 40 to 80 polygons each. These were kept low so we can have up to 30 creatures on screen in battle without things slowing down. We also have special shadowing and these shadows change brightness depending how light the area is."

Designing

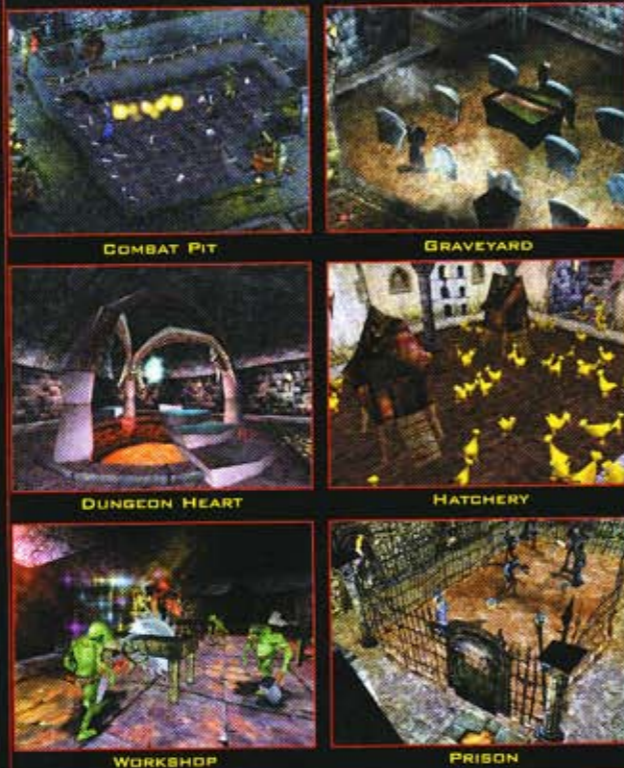
Did the game design document for DK2 reach completion before you started coding? Nick said, "The old Bullfrog way was a single page concept made, two years later, into a game if we were lucky. It was a try it out and see if it works mentality, which produced some good games. Now we produce more game documents simply because we have to. We have a game day every six months, where everyone has an opportunity to offer his or her ideas for a new game or to improve an existing one. Now we're part of EA, there could be instances of projects being shelved, for whatever reason, because they (EA) have the financial muscle to do that. Other companies have to release everything because they can't afford to simply bin it."

New Bits

"The most innovative feature is the combat system. In the first offering it was merely a battle of numbers, now there is more strategy involved and this is where the combat system really takes off. This involves all the creature statistics, all the balancing of the game, which is the biggest issue we have worked on to get right. The new fear threat system (this is where creatures give out an amount of fear to other creatures and others then become scared), how creatures rap other creatures, the

moods and the stunning of creatures when dropped. The new spells that appear as creatures move up through the ranks have also been well designed. DK2 is a deep game but on the surface you do not have to go in that deep! There are so many features either improved or added it is really a whole new game," Nick Goldsworthy, producer.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE ROOMS YOU'LL FIND IN DUNGEON KEEPER 2



Creature Comforts

Nick Goldsworthy continues, "We will also have new creature spells and new doors in addition to the new traps, along with a few new rooms, such as the Casino and the Pit. The use of the creature spells depends on what level that creature is at; the vampire can create five skeletons at his highest level. Most of the rooms from Dungeon Keeper have been kept in simply because they worked well, but they do look different this time around. We're playing about with some more for possible inclusion, but we thought the best thing to do was to introduce more creatures and characters. We've spent more time and effort on creature traits, so if they're feeling a bit miserable you can cheer them up with a visit to the Casino. You might lose some gold, but you'll certainly boost their morale."

Cutting Edge

As for game features, Bullfrog seem rather pleased with the graphical effects and one in particular. It is when Creatures enter a dungeon through a portal that uses a ripple effect, similar to that in the film Stargate, whilst this same effect is a product of running through water. Torches on walls create multiple shadows (like football floodlight systems) that will be cast over other creatures. "That's the first time we've done anything like that", said Goldsworthy. "If you pass a torch, your draught will cause it to flicker and follow your

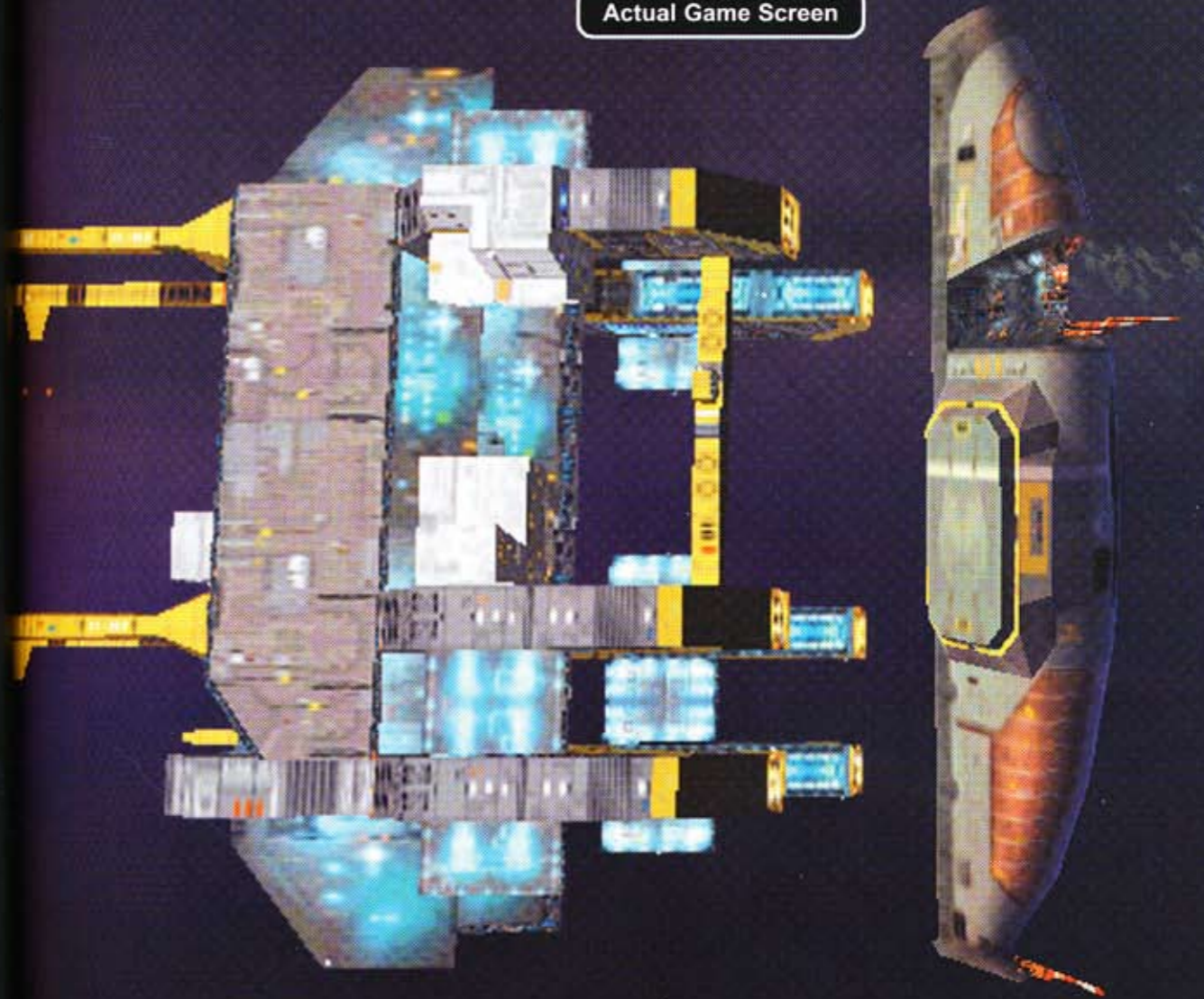


DEREK DELA FUENTE

NO HYPE ALL GAME

Game of the Show E3 1998 - CGW

Actual Game Screen



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I usually write features on a number of topics, specialising in product previews and first look exclusives. Every so often an impressive title comes along and then I do a feature called 'In The Studio', which highlights a game that should be given a lot of respect. Vampire: The Masquerade is one such product that has a lot going for it. - Derek dela Fuente

VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE

The game is based on quite a compelling story line based on the White Wolf role playing books, which are second only to the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons series. The story line is diverse, interesting and not your normal RPG game because the development team, Nihilistic, has mixed action with RPG along with adventure ingredients to give it an almost unique genre placing. Speaking to the associate product manager, Nick Segger, he believes that most RPGs tend to be very focused and people know what to expect but by adding almost cinematic qualities, along with action and the familiar ingredients you get from most RPG games, it will not alienate the avid RPG gamers but bring in a wider audience that likes a compelling plot along with blood and some quite splendid action! Add a team that have been at Lucas Arts and have produced many games that have topped the charts, mix them with some of the most experienced programmers and artists who have had hit after hit and you bring together Nihilistic's list of games like Dark Forces, Grim Fandango, Descent, Quake, etc. and you know that something special is in the making. The CEO of the company who is also the lead programmer,

Ray Gresko, explained, "We are out to create a game to excite and with the 3D engine we have written we are able to work on the code earlier than most programming teams." Although the game is not even half way into development this special 3D engine, that offers the unusual special effects plus a lot more, allowed the graphics artists to place characters, animation and some superb texturing into the engine after only four weeks and present a viewable code in the form of a demo. This allows them to see the game 'live' and continually view and work on the product!

Nick, "The nearest comparison I see to the game is that it's a bit like Diablo." This really is an understatement for the game is not a menu run, top down RPG but a third person move, seek,

interact and also fight game. The third person cameras are there to give you a wider view of what is going on so you can look around and not miss any action on part of the screen that could be essential. The views are high on

cinematic offering real polish and a first person view, which is converse to the third person where you can look in detail at anything and become more focused and because this view is limited this is activated by pressing down certain keys. Giving a dominant 3rd

person view was a decision that was thought about for a lot of time and we believe that seeing people moving around and seeing all the other interaction gives a better immersive feel and you can actually take more in."

YOU ARE
You assume the role of Christof, who is a 12th Century Knight. He is employed by the church to rid Prague of Vampires but early in the game he himself becomes a

GENRE: ROLE PLAYING
DEVELOPER: NIHILISTIC
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
SUPPLIER: MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE
TEL: (011) 315-1000
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 99
INTERNET: WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

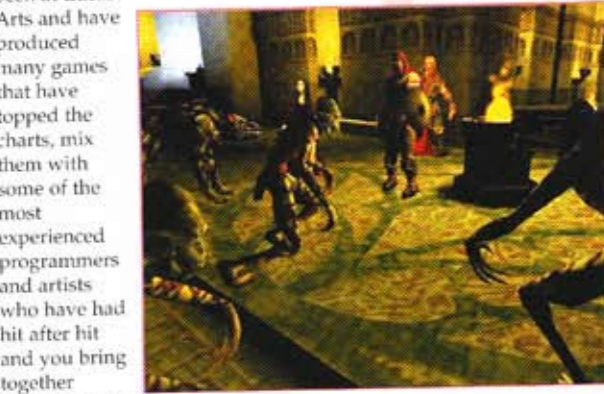
vampire but he also takes the form of a human as well. Christof has many goals, he can get three other characters to join him and they are there to protect Christof so if he dies, the other

characters can summon up special powers and spells to bring Christof back. Nick, "Being able to control four characters - and you know which one you can take control of via a red light shining on him - or alternatively controlling one

of the other three and sending them off to achieve certain tasks, is the main essence of the game. When you are in control of Christof the other players will automatically follow if you do not give them tasks. Interaction between the party is essential and you will find that each has



ISN'T FIRE SUPPOSED TO KEEP MONSTERS AWAY?



CHRISTOF, THE KNIGHT AND HIS SIDEKICK, THE BEARDED BOY.

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THIS GAME ISN'T FOR THE WEAK HEARTED

their own attributes to be sent off to achieve an objective. The game itself is massive and it is all about exploring, finding out and learning special disciplines. You have to complete tasks and missions to continue on and although there is a linear line running through the game there are many paths it will lead you along depending on your actions."

STATISTICS
The overriding objective is to move through the game that will take you to the 20th Century in the quest to avenge the leader of the vampire clan. As a standard RPG you have all the elements that go into managing your character and those of the team and this is adeptly achieved via the ingenious menu system that allows you to look at your health and generally assure you are in good stead. Underneath the top menu system lays the micro management systems that is more complex and breaks down your health, fighting capabilities, blood pool metre resources and all the normal qualities you would expect but this is done in an intuitive way without endless statistics and complex

menu flipping. Nihilistic has managed to still have a strong and interesting RPG statistics interface but this has blended into the game so you are not blinded by endless facts and figures however you will still need to watch how things are going.

THE EMBRACE
Nick was eager to explain the blood lust element of the game. "The embrace is one of the most compelling acts within the game and this is where Christof will go into an embrace with one of his victims to take blood to keep his health high. If blood is not obtained at regular periods he will go into a frenzy and

become hard to control but by the same token you cannot go around seeking out your prey and taking blood at will for the story is where the game really kicks into place and pulls up many surprises!"

"Because of the diverse nature of the story line cut scenes have been added to the narrative that comes in the form of text and speech so the players always



IF YOU ARE PLAYING THE GAME AGAINST THE CLOCK, MOVING STRAIGHT THROUGH THE LEVELS IT WILL TAKE THE AVERAGE PLAYER 200 HOURS, BUT IF YOU EXPLORE AND FIND ALL THE ELEMENTS IT WILL TAKE A LOT LONGER.

know what they have to do. With endless interaction with characters these beautifully rendered cut scenes are not there to make the game look pretty but to give it more impact."

Everything seems too good to be true and there are occasions where you can have too much of a good thing. An initial reservation was that although based on the hugely popular White Dwarf series, when you find that the game is cut into two time periods and the way you achieve your task, the tools you work with, the environments and locations being so different, you wonder if you have not got two games. But if you think of the Dracula series (which this is not based on) then the fact that they reappear hundreds of years later has worked before, so the added value is in the fact that the story is told within the location of London, New York in modern times, as well as 12th Century Prague. It

is also interesting to note - another impressive feature - that although it could be valued as cosmetic but in truth adds real ambience, the landmarks, specially from Prague, have been recreated using archive material so the buildings and locations are as real to life as could possibly be achieved!

NAG CONT... →



THERE WILL BE PLENTY OF ACTION IN THE GAME AGAINST MANY EVIL CREATURES



THE FACTS

DRAG AND DROP

Nick explains: "The interface is simple point and press, so all the inventory is done via point, drag and drop. Move into a shop, buy some weapons and simply drag them to your inventory. The same thing applies to the one central chore in the game 'the disciplines'. There are sixty disciplines in each part of the game, which is split into two making 120 in total, which are 12th Century locations and 20th Century. These disciplines are essential to progress for they are the spells, the magic and the action that will see you able to summon up the right spell, power or action to defeat the enemy".

THE LOOK

Vampire has a realistic look and feel to it because it was modelled on the real maps, drawings and pictures that were researched. Landmarks around the three locations can be spotted and recognised from London's Big Ben, Tower Bridge to New York's sky scrapers.

THE EMBRACE

"What we're trying to do," says Ray Gresko, Redemption's project leader and CEO of Nihilistic, "is let the players feel what it's like to go through the traumatic experience of the Embrace [the experience of being bitten and reborn as a vampire], losing your life as you know it and entering a world of intrigue, where you're just another pawn in a giant power struggle."

THE WHITE WOLF

The White Wolf story of vampires begins at the dawn of time, explaining that Cain was the first vampire, doomed to eternal life for the murder of his brother. Isolation and despair led him to create three more vampires, which, in turn made thirteen. After a period of strife and discord within the vampire circle, these thirteen broke off, leading to the formation of thirteen clans. In the White Wolf RPG, each clan possesses various talents and abilities, and abides by differing social rules and ethics, which often leads to conflicts amongst them. With the dark gifts given to these angels of death, one can see how dangerous clan wars can become. Overall, the flavour and folklore is akin to Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles, painting a dark, sensuous, more humanistic picture of vampires in general.

THE SOURCE

The essence of the White Wolf books is about interaction and group playing and this has been implemented well in the game and broadened to give mass market appeal. White Wolf fans will not feel the essence has been diluted in the computer game and a lot of gamers not familiar with the books will find the game a captivating experience.



THE ESSENCE IS ABOUT EXPLORING, UTILISING AND FINDING DISCIPLINES, FINDING MAPS, AVENGING AND KILLING PEOPLE.



LIVING WORLDS

Nick explained a bit more about the plot. "With three main locations the plot is truly devious. For instance, if you are in New York modern day the player will have to use cell phones, computers and all number of high tech

objects to weave together the plot line. You will get information from all number of people and sources and at the same time you have to obtain blood by finding victims. You will not necessarily kill your prey for you may draw blood and get them on your side. You can play the game as subtly as you want from either an action stance or a RPG but of course the blend is best using the two. If you go on a mad killing spree you will find that the New York Police Department will find bodies and wonder what is going on and seek you out, which you will not want, so you must keep a low profile. The locations are vibrant with action and mini story lines. Vagrants will walk around the street, gangsters can be spotted doing their dastardly deeds, even rats scuttling around." Buying weapons to improve in shops is another aspect of the game. Once bought they move into Christof's inventory to be used when required. The whole story revolves around Christof but keeping him alive is straightforward by protecting him well or finding spells to bring him back to life.

"Vampire is a massive game with so many sub plots, cinematic cuts and varying ways to play that all told this is a massive project, one of the biggest we have undertaken". With the look, along with special effects, it is quite stunning. The interaction via dialogue and clever use of the interface with the mouse changing to a claw is very elaborate. The game is quite gruesome with lots of blood and sound effects and a musical score to give film-like quality. As the game has been scripted by a professional an authentic feel runs through the ever-changing backdrop. Actors have been brought in not only to be used for the dialogue but for motion capturing. The essence of the White Wolf books is in the characters sound and the way they look and so attention has been focused in ensuring all fans of the books will not be disappointed and from this early demo the game already looks pretty impressive.

DEREK DELA FUENTE



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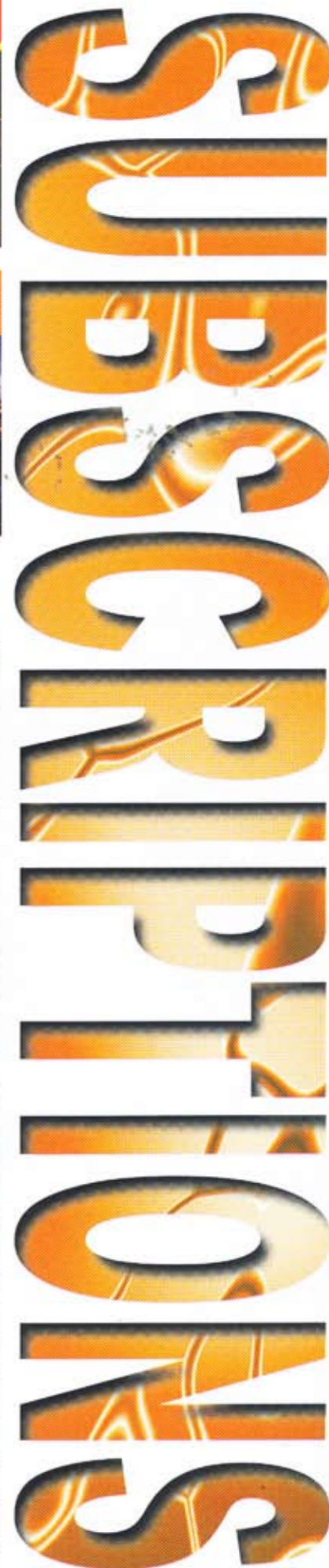
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After the phenomenal success of Metal Gear Solid it was only a matter of time before the inevitable deluge of clones began descending on the PlayStation market. Syphon Filter is another stalk and sniper game that takes all the best ingredients of Metal Gear and cooks up the next big lone covert agent against the terrorist bad guy extravaganza. It's going to be big, so pay attention and don't say we didn't warn you.

What's in a name
To say that Syphon Filter bears more than a passing resemblance to Metal Gear Solid is somewhat of an understatement, but that's a good thing for any gamers who perhaps found Konami's thrilling terrorist hunt a little too tame for their liking. Syphon Filter is a third person action adventure that tells the story of international terrorist, Erich Rhoemer and his skilled team of unpleasant bad guy villains - they plan to unleash the deadly Syphon Filter virus on the unsuspecting United States. To this end the terrorists have planted explosive traps, taken over buildings, captured hostages and hidden viral bombs all over the place, seriously threatening the peace and quite. Enter the predictably named covert operative, Gabriel

Logan and his partner Lian Xing, naturally Gabriel is a qualified biochemist as well as a highly trained Special Forces veteran, the question is how do you go from nerdy white lab coat to muscle bound combat fatigues all in one changing room? Gabriel must now go up against hundreds of well-armed bad guys, burning subway trains, adverse weather conditions and cracks in the pavement in his terrorist-squashing quest, squeezing out one-liners as he goes. Lian Xing plays a supporting role to Gabriel in the game, acting as his link to the outside world, updating his objectives and generally overseeing his progress, offering help and outlining new objectives in well crafted scripted sequences. Initial feelings on the story that holds the action together are mixed, how many times do we have to listen to this saving the world drivel and whatever happened to pure and simple imagination? Although the story is a little shaky the superb introduction movie, excellent voice acting and multiple objective mission structure holds everything together well and comes across convincingly, which is a good thing considering the titles late stage of development.

GENRE: ACTION STRATEGY
DEVELOPER: TAKE 2 / RED STORM
PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY
SUPPLIER: MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE
TELEPHONE: (011) 315-1000
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 99
INTERNET: WWW.INTERPLAY.COM

Syphon Filter

Going places, quietly
The first few missions available in the preview



ONE OF THE 'REAL LIFE' LOCATIONS

copy proved exhausting to play, even though there are so many different objectives during each mission, the game play did feel somewhat linear but then again, don't they all. The important thing to remember is that you've got terrorists to take down and a world to save, so get on with it. A typical game scenario starts with you outside, the setting: urban hell, cars are burning, you can hear someone shouting orders over the radio and then the unmistakable crack of gunfire. Your job here is to take out any terrorists and watch out who you shoot, as friendly fire will end your game. After clearing

the rooftops and streets you head underground, your partner radios in explaining that you must disable the power generator before you can enter the subway station. Your mission objective screen is updated, you select your assault rifle and check the map. High above the generator two terrorists stand guard and moving back

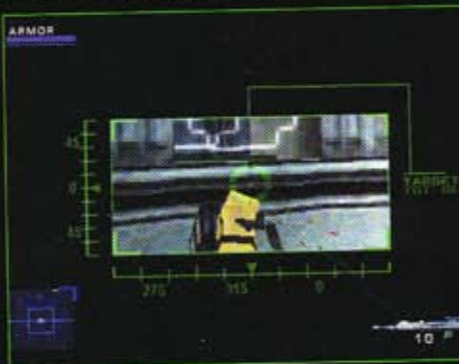


EVIL MINIONS WITH TOO MUCH TIME ON THEIR HANDS

everything is in place, Syphon Filter is going to arrive on our shores within the next few months. We'll have to wait and see if it can dethrone Metal Gear Solid from its position at number one.

slowly, you select your sniper rifle. Zooming in and taking careful aim, you pull off two quick head shots and make your way to the generator. After powering down the generator Lian Xing calls you again to tell you she's detected an explosive device. The word exhausting comes to mind here mainly due to the fact that the above little mission involves checking your mission objective log, changing weapons, sniping, dodging bullets while running, aiming and firing (a similar system to Tomb Raider) and making sure you didn't get shot. It's fast paced action all the way and the control system is a pleasure to work with.

Real deal
Syphon Filter looks superb and at first glance you're immediately thinking that it looks very



similar to Metal Gear Solid, although the hero in this game sports an unusually bandy gait when strafing and running. The environments you play in look and behaves realistically right down to the very last breakable beer bottle, almost everything can be shot at and will react emerging you further into the game world. Graphically it's not better than Metal Gear Solid, but could never be called ugly. Bullet holes in the walls, shattering glass and gunshot effects only add to the experience, drawing you further into the game. You'll have to stalk and fight your way through twenty levels as you discover the seriousness of the viral threat. To help you through the game you'll have access to around seventeen different weapons that range from grenade launchers to pistols not forgetting the heart pounding excitement of the sniper rifle. The scene is set and

RED TIDE

Black Moon Chronicles

Dark omens manifest ... New and terrifying evils are spawned and stalk the land ... The Black Moon has appeared, and the heroes of Light and Justice rise to meet the challenge. We take an early look at Cryo's upcoming release.

Raven
Your task? Very simple - wander the land in an effort to raise a mighty army, then take it and defeat the forces of darkness. This title follows the pattern of a genre that has not, as yet, proven exceptionally popular, but which, nonetheless, has much merit. Some may recall



an old game by the name of Fantasy Empires, and most of us have at least heard of Lords of Magic and Rage of Mages. The Chronicle of Blackmoon adopts an approach that can best be described as a blend of all of the above, and Shadow of a Horned Rat as well.

The interface is comprised of two parts - an overland map view for cross-country campaign travel, which takes place in turns representing days, and a zoomed in, "real-time strategy" type of interface for dealing with encounters. A small element of role-play has also been incorporated, and not all encounters are necessarily combat engagements. However, don't expect a challenging role-play

GENRE: REAL TIME STRATEGY (PC)
DEVELOPER: CRYO INTERACTIVE
PUBLISHER: CRYO INTERACTIVE
SUPPLIER: MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE
TELEPHONE: (011) 315-1000
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 99
INTERNET: WWW.CRYO-INTERACTIVE.CO.FR

experience, as this is not the main focus of this game. Rather, recruiting an army and keeping it alive, while growing it from one mission to the next are central to completing this set of campaigns.

A critical factor in this game is advancing all your units, heroes and armymen alike. Veteran units gain experience, and experience results in enhanced combat effectiveness. The selection of available units, as it stands at the moment, includes cavalry, infantry, pikemen, archers, wizards, priests and various fantastical creatures. The repertoire of opponents is even more diverse, with numerous and diverse monsters to pit your skills against.

Combat does not revolve around building bases, but rather on completing missions and reaping their benefits. Some successfully completed battles result in rewards of gold, others have men joining your ranks. On the battlefield itself, deploying and managing your forces intelligently will win you the game, not building units and throwing them at the enemy. Thus,



IMPRESSIVE GRAPHICS ENHANCE GAME PLAY

Black Moon emphasizes tactical play, and getting the most effect out of every unit is paramount. Should you fail a mission, the game does not end. Rather, you progress to the following mission, but without any reward or benefit you may have garnered from victory. This may well decide the outcome of a subsequent battle, or even make it impossible. Unfortunately, the flow of the campaign is totally linear, and thus it may even be impossible to win the game without a perfect record of victories. Hopefully, this situation will be rectified, and a more diversified mission tree implemented.

From a graphical point of view, Black Moon promises to be nothing short of delightful. The landscapes and units are rendered in painstaking detail, and the animations are spectacular. In particular, spell graphics impart the feeling of titanic forces being tossed around the battlefield. The variety of spells is impressive, and each spellcasting class has its own repertoire, from healing and protection-based clerical incantations to squad-shattering

wizardry magic. Black Moon also features a very long and beautifully rendered introduction video sequence, which sets the scene and explains the beginning of the story.

I was awed by the soundtrack - no other word describes it better. The music is very atmospheric indeed, with a slightly haunting feel to it. The sound effects are not groundbreaking marvels in any respect, but adequate enough. This being an early beta, these may well be upgraded by the time Black Moon is released.



LONG DISTANCES ARE COVERED BY THE OVERLAND MAP

The version we had a look at did not, as yet, support multiplayer, but it did incorporate a "skirmish" mode, which allows a player to choose a map and a force, and pit his wits against the computer. It seems likely that network support will be added, to enable head-to-head or multiplayer gaming. The pre-release version is already packed with four campaigns, over a dozen skirmish maps and numerous "special missions" - challenging scenarios that are definitely not for the faint of heart. At this point, even the beginner campaigns are anything but easy, and it seems that Black Moon will be a very challenging, if not difficult game.

As it stands at the moment, Black Moon is set to shine as a single-player game, with the potential to be a very engrossing multiplayer game too, should networkability be implemented in the release version. The concept is sound, and game-play addictive, once one has accustomed oneself to the somewhat unusual interface.

RAVEN



Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX ROGUE SPEAR

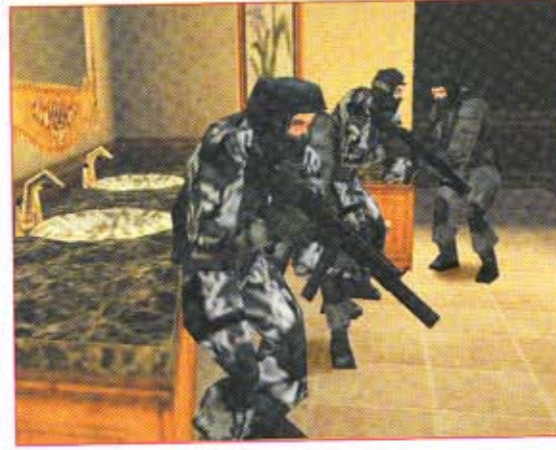
Red Storm, the games division that is instrumental in creating action games from the books of Tom Clancy is already working on the sequel, namely Rogue Spear. Information at present is scant about what the new exciting action come strategy game will entail but rumour has it that the plot line to the game will be heavily influenced by the Russian Mafia and the oil crisis! - **Derek dela Fuente**

BIGGER The game itself in pure size will be a lot bigger than the original game with around 400 new motion capture sequences, as opposed to the original 150 giving a stronger ambience to the game along with the plot line coming across in a more concise way. It does appear that every element of the game from storyline, to animation to AI have been worked on. The animation alone will show lots more human behaviour and small traits like yawning, sleeping and slyly looking around doors will be implemented to create a world of true realism.



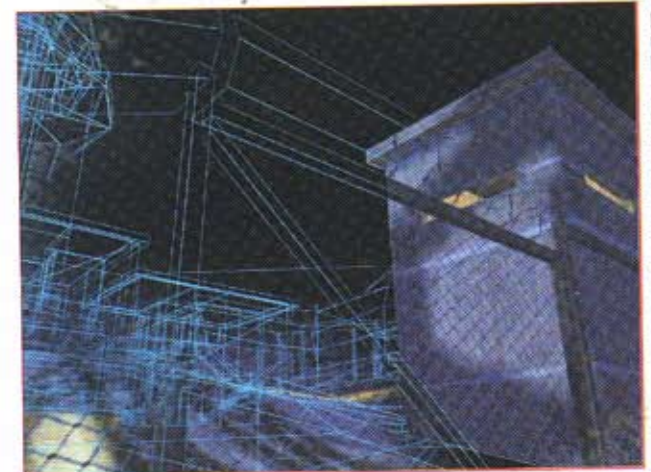
PLANNING IS VERY IMPORTANT

to a surprise attack. It is these such nuisances that will be added to ensure that Rogue Spear presents a scenario that is true to life right down to the trajectory of a bullet, the distance it can move and its force have been researched to the nth degree! With the AI improved it will have a more dramatic effect in that a lot of the game revolves around conflict and shooting. With so much explosive action, bullets etc you will even be able to adjust the amount of bullets holes that can be



AI The artificial intelligence, the central engine of the game, has had a complete makeover so all the cast responds will have a more authentic feel and a fresh new experience will be conveyed to the player. It has been chronicled that the first game was bug infested but to be honest some games players must have been looking for them for it played like a dream. Nevertheless this sequel has been completely redone; all the AI was reprogrammed for the sequel, which means a totally new and fresh experience as well as none of those AI bugs that plagued the first. The recreation of new AI will manifest itself in the way the enemy will defend and attack and all the players' senses will be tested to the full. For instance, in the first game you could be waiting for something to happen and be fairly alert all the time but now as in real-life after a certain period the attention span of the player will gradually start to lower making them prone

displayed and even go as far as selecting the type of ammo you wish to use. For instance you can choose between regular full-metal jacket rounds, or hollow point rounds. The difference you ask? Well regular rounds have a longer range, but hollow points have a shattering impact and are very effective for taking out targets in CQB. Also, Rogue Squadron will incorporate 747 mission and incorporated into the 747 Takedown mission! In multiplayer, players will sport nametags and arm bands, and servers can put restrictions on equipment to allow certain types of gameplay. It will also be possible to bind messages to certain keys so that commands that are generally repeated often can be set with one keystroke.



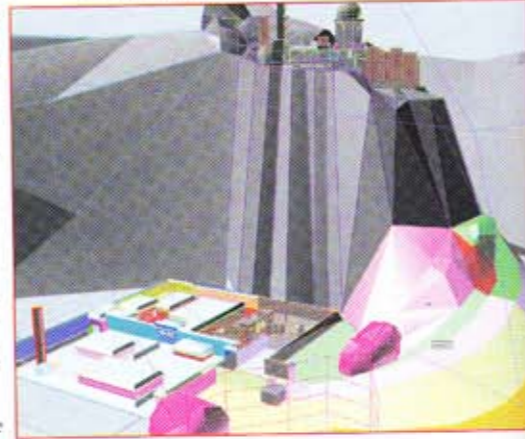
In effect the whole look of the game has been polished and that is quite impressive if you consider the first offering was awesome. More dialogue,

GENRE: ACTION STRATEGY
DEVELOPER: TAKE 2 / RED STORM
PUBLISHER: TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE
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INTERNET: WWW.REDSTORM.COM

more action, more attention to detail. One bone of contention from the first game was the snipers were not that effective, but in this new offer that has been rectified and now they are fully functional!

THE CREW
In Rogue Squadron you can also select any of your team members during single player to complete a task for you if needed, also you can switch operatives while playing too. Another in-game feature that is similar but more advanced when compared to the Eagle Watch Full Watch mode, is called Overwatch mode where you can view through several tactical windows, what your teams status is and their position in the mission. There is also going to be a mission editor to allow changing everything except the basic geometry and textures of the maps. There are new all team controls that can halt the team with simple commands, and allow easier planning phase control over the team.

NEW!
Effects include weather such as snow and rain that will add to the total atmosphere of the game; also there are new weapon damage



effects. Such as scorch marks from frag grenades, environmental damage from grenades and gunfire, including vehicle damage from the two also! More on this exciting game soon.

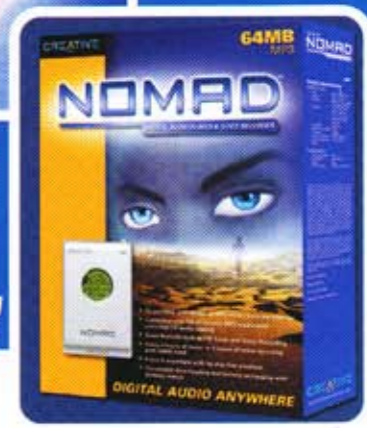
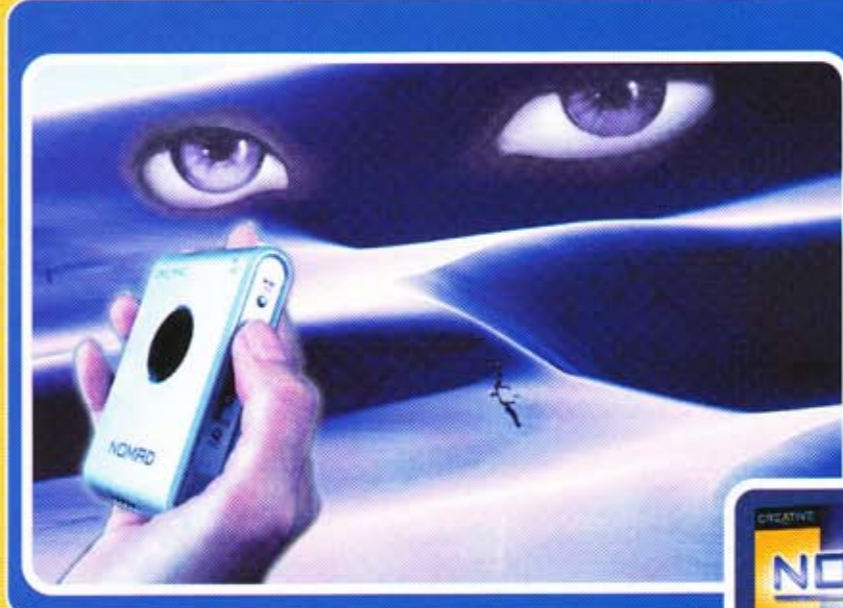
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Any game scoring in this dreaded range isn't even worthy of bargain bin status. Avoid completely. Go lower down the scale and these games just keep getting worse, although titles scoring in the single digits might be good for a laugh. It got 20% for doing something right after all.

49% - 40%

Very poor games fall into this range. Terrible they may be but a few redeeming qualities rescue them from dropping into the next bracket. Sometimes worth a look if they sell in Rands what they scored.

59% - 50%

Middle of the road. Games scoring here are average games, not too good and not too bad. Games like these usually end up in your Christmas stocking from well meaning but clueless grandparents.

69% - 60%

Good solid games usually score around this mark. Combinations of serious flaws or lacking features prevent these games from scoring anything better. Fanatical gamers or fans of the genre will probably

79% - 70%

love these titles.

Tricky territory here, there is usually no good reason for not buying a game that scores in this range. Good games here suffer from a tired formula or lack of innovation. Technically flawless but just not very inspired.

89% - 80%

Any game reaching this status deserves your attention. Good in every way but just lacks that little extra that separates it from classic status. No game is ever perfect but some come very close

100% - 90%

and here is where you'll find them.

The ultimate achievement for a game is to get over the magic 90%. It represents an automatic purchase if you enjoy the type of game on offer. Also a good place to shop if you're tired of one

Ratings - Yay or Nay?

Recent announcements have inferred that South Africa is going to get its own version of the ESRB, or Entertainment Software Rating Board. What is the ESRB? Take a look at your computer game boxes - a small black and white indicator somewhere on the box rates it as being suitable for all, adults only, or some similar classification. This is a rating awarded by the ESRB, according to prescribed standards which define certain elements in games.

The establishment of a similar organisation in South Africa will have a definite impact on the local computer game industry, with both positive and negative effects projected. On the good side, control over computer games is one of the ways that the "anti-computer game violence" lobby may be satisfied - provided, of course, that effective control measures are put in place to enhance the decisions made by the proposed organisation.


Another big plus that such an organisation established locally represents is for the South African entertainment software industry itself. The organisation will be able to, through the use of coded stickers and other forms of identification, affixed to product boxes, instantly identify pirated software, and clamp down on offenders. Heavy fines and possible prison sentences, according to South African copyright laws, will undoubtedly be the order of the day. The consequential effect on the industry as a whole should be a decrease in the price of software, resulting in higher turnovers for distributors and a growth in the local industry as a whole.

So far, not too much bad news for the average legitimate gamer. Theoretically, cheaper, legal software rated in a simple yet effective fashion will be available from every retailer countrywide. The perceived problem comes in with the actual process of analysing and rating of software. Firstly, what kind of standards will be imposed on games? Can we expect a fair and accurate analysis as is proper in our fledgling free society, or will we see the return of a draconian "censorship board," cutting and banning games with gay abandon? With the current debate about software content, this is a distinct possibility that needs to be faced. The wrong kind of structure could seriously harm the computer industry, rather than enhance it.

The next question is one of timing. How long will this organisation take to review and rate new software? Certainly, while these measures are needed, an organisation that will delay the release of new software significantly will once again harm the industry on a local level. Information sources like the Internet make it obvious when games become available overseas, and waiting too long to see them available locally will get South African gamers up in arms before long.

The last matter of concern lies in who exactly will be responsible for the rating of games? Will the organisation be completely independent, or affiliated to official structures? How much say will developers and distributors have? And what kind of experience will those working for the organisation have? NAG hopes to bring you a full report on these new developments shortly. For now, we can only speculate on what might end up being a very powerful double-edged sword within the local entertainment software industry. - NAG

EXPENDABLE



We had no trouble giving Expendable our editor's choice this month. It's adrenaline pumping, trigger-pulling, non-stop action from the word go. It has to be the best arcade action available for the PC

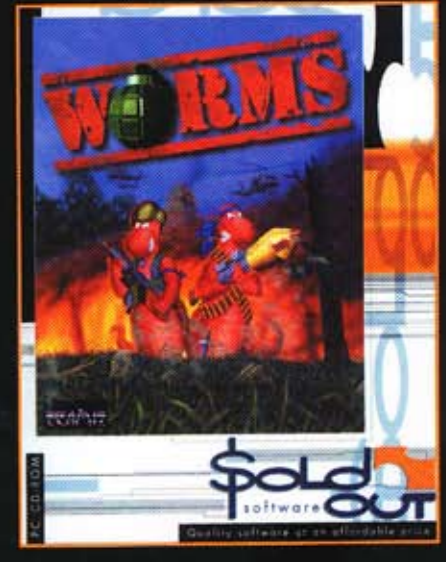
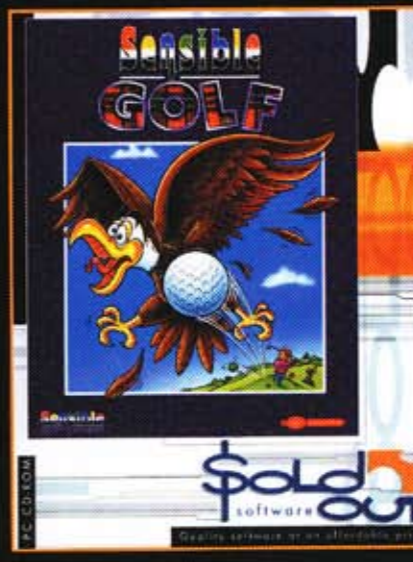
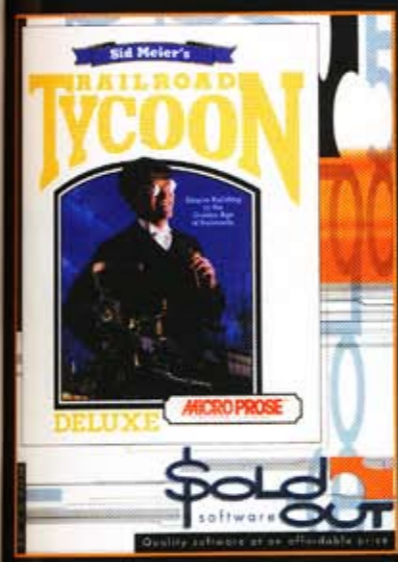
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NEW AGE GAMING EDITOR'S CHOICE

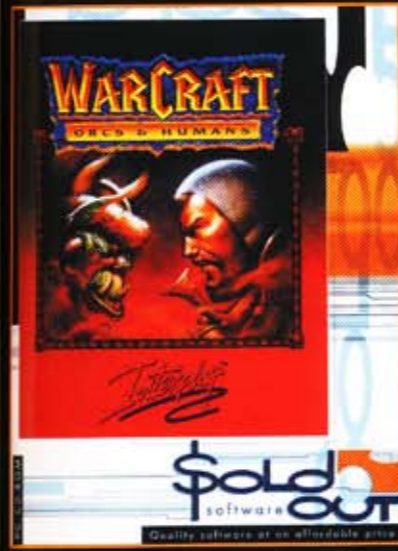
The Awards Ceremony

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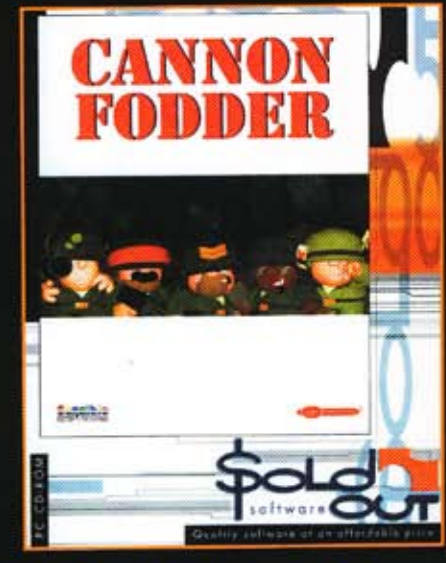
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These days any new release that enters the gaming market starts off drowning in a sea of similarity and some would even say dull mediocrity. Hundreds of first person shooters and real time strategy titles line the shelves begging for your attention with promises of something new and different, something bigger and better. They're all the same though and that's not necessarily a bad thing. You see with each release the ante is upped and what this means at the end of the day is that you, the consumer, can choose from the very best modern technology has to offer. So the question is, what do you get if you throw away the game-making manual everyone seems to be using these days and try do something a little different? Hands up anyone who remembers Incoming, that rare gem in the forgotten genre of arcade action. There have been a number of arcade action titles released in the past few months but none of them are so single minded in their pursuit of pure arcade action at the expense of all else as is Expendable. Similar to Incoming, Expendable is the latest action feast by pulse fingering developers Rage. Incoming had two areas of excellence - pushing graphic accelerators to their uppermost limits and providing a non-stop shooting frenzy that required a few hours rest period to come down

EXPENDABLE

Hopeless naked hostages, a galaxy in bitter turmoil and legions of mindless killing machines sent to set things right - one question, where do I sign up? Rage brings us another masterpiece of gratuitous graphical splendour and mind-numbing mouse-gripping adrenaline-pumping action. Just when you thought it was safe to expose yourself to some more gore and violence Expendable takes things way over the top and well into the next dimension. Aren't you glad you can turn it all off and hide under your blanket?

from the high. This latest offering is no different, so get ready for Expendable - you won't believe your eyes.

The future sucks

The year is 2463 and mankind (not the politically correct humankind, this is a different future where women exist only to serve), in typical mankind fashion spreads his wings and heads deep into the black starry void, colonising as he goes. The furthest colonies are only inhabited by the few and the brave, and are quickly becoming industrial powerhouses. All is well and mankind quickly concludes that he is alone in the vast reaches of space. Now from the depths of space come the Charva, a nasty alien race who discover that man's breathing gas, oxygen, is good and instead of asking nicely how to make it themselves, they destroy everyone and take it by force, overrunning the colonies and murdering the colonists. The Charva are currently moving from colony to colony along a path of destruction towards Earth. Now you must guide a squad of units into battle, at the front line of the infestation, close to Earth. Your puppets are Expendable units, grown from genetically pure seeds, the very cream of the gene crop. These units have no family or minds of their own to speak of - they exist only to hunt and kill and they're mankind's last hope. This is the scenario - you must control these units, and purify every colony you find until you ultimately reach the alien home world where your greatest battle

awaits. It's mundane reading at best but who cares, we've got alien butt to kick, bring it on.

Now what?

You begin the game with a simple stock issue Pulse Cannon, an infinite supply of ammunition, a finite supply of health and a limited amount of time to complete the

level. This time limit represents the amount of time you have left until your mother ship commences planetary bombardment to clear up any stragglers you might have left behind you, as if. This Armageddon weapon is unfortunately fatal to you as well, so you better hustle through those levels there's no time to

take in the scenery and admire the view on this mission. Additional time can be collected from stopwatches on the ground. Older gamers will remember the classic arcade game, Commando, Expendable is exactly like that game, only better in every conceivable way. The screen scrolls in all directions and for the most part you're left playing from a slightly lowered top down perspective with the enemies approaching from the top of the screen. This works very well and complements the frantic



IT'S LIKE THIS FROM BEGINNING TO END, SHOOT, GRAB HEALTH, DIE, SHOOT...

nature of the game - a first person view just wouldn't work here. Occasionally the camera will pull away and change the angle, sometimes for cinematic effect and sometimes to accommodate the huge level end bosses. This 'dramatic' style keeps things interesting and offers that little extra intrigue. All the levels are



INTO THE DARK PIT, SWEARING AND SHOOTING AS USUAL



well conceived from both a graphical and design point of view and even though your path through the nightmare seems a little linear it never forces the issue giving you plenty of freedom to explore your environment, if you have the time that is. Each map has tons of small touches and great attention has been paid to every small detail. The different levels all have an ominous futuristic alien feel to them, and be it building carcasses or large outdoor areas, everything feels big and looks lovely. Other than taking out aliens you will eventually get to a few bonus levels where you have a tight time limit to collect as much extra booty as possible and make your way to the exit or die and loose everything, again a welcome extra. There simply aren't enough descriptive terms allowed in any one sentence to accurately describe the



splendid graphics in the game, eye candy is a good but overused word - they rock, coloured lighting, bump mapping and extraordinary

explosions do nothing but add to the experience. Rage is synonymous with cutting edge graphical special effects and Expendable only adds another feather to their already overloaded cap. The game really has to be seen to be believed and the best part about it is that they haven't neglected the play value in the process. In the

sound department things have also received the Rage work-over,



ONE SMALL GUY AGAINST THE BEST GRAPHICS ON THE PLANET!

meaty sounds add to the graphical wonderland in ways you can only imagine, run on the beach and you'll hear squishy crunching effects, lob a grenade and it'll clank and bang until igniting in a fiery inferno. Support for almost any type of 3D-surround sound system is catered for and things even sound juicy with a simple pair of headphones.

And that's not all!

As you blast, kick and run through each level copious amounts of special weapons and collectable items literally fall from the sky. What this means is good news, your simple Pulse Cannon doesn't pack enough punch to deal with the numerous enemies around so the

idea is to collect these extra weapons and use them against anything that moves. Each map is also home to crates, canisters and boxes - shooting these also reveals more weapons and items. In essence you're never left wanting when it comes to raw firepower. Each of the special weapons has its own special effects, sounds and quirks - it's good to know which weapons are effective against which enemies. The various armaments are divided into four different categories. Energy weapons include the Spread Pulse Cannon and the Portable Particle Accelerator. Projectile weapons start at the simple Shotgun and move on to the deadly Vulcan Cannon and end with the Phantasm, a nasty piece of work with adapted alien technology. There are also Missile weapons available that range from Multiple Warhead Rockets to Laser-Guided Missiles. The last category hold everything else such as the Flame Thrower, a few reclaimed alien weapons and simple but effective mines. Some of these weapons can be powered up and others can be manually guided. There is a catch though and only three different kinds of weapon can be carried at one time, so choose wisely. You'll also be able to carry grenades in addition to the three main guns and by holding down the fire button you can increase the distance they'll travel. Other collectibles include a shield, extra life, laser sight and numerous point bonuses.

Critical

It's terribly hard to try and point a finger at grey areas in the title - it's almost a perfect game in every respect. You could say it's a touch limited and offers no real depth but then that's what it's supposed to do so no luck there. It is a little on the short side, now add the fact that you have no real time to explore the level with that cursed time limit, things seem a little rushed - but then that only adds to the tension. There are no multiplayer options in the game as far as head to head combat goes but what you can have is two players fighting it out on the same screen at the same time. The only area to really fault is the high system requirements, it does take a monster machine to run this game with all the bells and whistles but that's just looking for something to moan about. If you're into serious mindless action Expendable should be first on your list.

REDTIDE

GENRE
Arcade Action

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 200	Pentium II 266
32 MB Ram	64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	12 X CD Rom
3Dfx Voodoo I	8MB 3D AGP
300 MB HD	300 + MB HD
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)



Developer: Rage Software
Publisher: Rage Software
Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000
RRP: R 299.00

<http://www.rage.co.uk>

Multiplayer	Competitives	Pro's	Con's
Yes	Incoming Commando	Graphics Addition Play Value	High Requirements 3D Card Only

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
95	91	88	83	87	93

90

Amidst the hype and attention given to the release of Star Wars: The Phantom Menace (the movie), gamers are flocking to get their hands on the PC versions of the resultant titles. Undoubtedly there is much to live up to, and with my fellow colleague reviewing the adventure, it was an arduous task that awaited me when Racer landed on my desk. Unsurprisingly, a solid and enjoyable game reared its head and managed to uphold, to a certain extent, the virtues of the 'Force'. **Storm**

An eagerness like never before came over me as I was about to open the first copy of Star Wars: Episode I Racer. Being an avid fan of not only the series but of the LucasArts team of game developers, I must confess a certain amount of bias at first. Before I had even installed it I had premonitions of greatness for the gaming title that held the name of Star Wars on the box. But as normality set in it became clear that what was before me was just another release trying to cash in on the biggest hype-making machine in history.

As usual with LucasArts, the installation was smooth and automated, but the obvious print on the box annoyed me, '3D Card Required'. I don't have the problem of not being without such a device, but I do know of many fellow South Africans that are still on the lookout for a 3D card. I don't know if this title will have you rushing out to get one either, but if you are without one, I can assure you that this trend is gaining momentum.

At first glance, Racer shows signs of brilliance and then suddenly appears to be a little on the amateurish side. The starting interface is subtle but not altogether clear and concise. An example of this is the standard use of the mouse for selecting menus and then, all of a sudden, you are confused by only a keyboard response. Why, you ask, would I mention something as drab as a slight glitch like this? Well, it happens often enough in different ways in this kind of release, highlighting a slight chink in the armour of the Star Wars machine.

I FEEL THE NEED FOR SPEED

But if it's entertainment you want, then nobody does it better than LucasArts. Racer is glorious to behold and at full pace is a totally immersive experience. Once you have initiated a Racer and chosen the pod, you are on one of the best

STAR WARS EPISODE I RACER

rollercoaster rides on PC. Being able to ride as Anikin Skywalker in his favourite pod could be considered an honour, but trust me there are bigger fish to fry. With over 21 different pods and 25 unique courses, you will be drawn into one of the quickest racing



experiences yet seen on PC.

While you get revved up on stats and features we need to bring everything into perspective. The graphics in Racer are a little on the average side if you take the time to slow down and look at them. But in truth you never really slow down at all unless you are careening off a cliff. But in essence the little attention to detail is what is lacking here, the polygon counts are frightfully small and some special effects such as the engine fire are simulated with little effectiveness. But once you reach top speed in your jacked up pod, there is a clear understanding as to why the frame rates flash by at an alarming speed.

I'LL BEY 5000 THUDITS ON STORM

The main aim of the game is to work your way through the ranks of three different leagues, aptly named Amateur, Semi-Pro and Galactic (advanced). Starting off in Racer is discerningly easy at first, with most of the Amateur racers not offering any competition at all. Everything in Tournament mode revolves around money (Truguts is the actual currency) and how good you are at winning it. As I said you will have little trouble at first, but the game gets somewhat more interesting once you realise that upgrading your pod is the order of the day. Keeping

yourself up to spec and in-touch is reflected on how well you upgrade your pod. The options of new and used parts are a welcome sight considering you don't earn much at first. You will spend many hours with the local trader in Mos Espa on Tatooine sifting through the parts that

are supposed to give you the edge. If the money is right you can improve the likes of your braking, turning, acceleration, speed, and other areas just by adding a part to the pod. The interface controlling the shop and its contents is another one of those mindless romps by the developers with its side scrolling bars that give little indication of its supposed improvement.

Once sufficient progression has been made to the Semi-Pro arenas, it is a welcome sight to get a little more competition. Certain of the courses are well designed with a few black sheep stepping in. As you progress, an obvious observation is made that most of the tracks are the same, just changed a little to add a new dimension to it. This does however work quite effectively and allows the players to learn and adjust to the conditions accordingly. New pods



THE EXCELLENT GRAPHICS, HIGH SPEED ACTION AND UNIQUE FEEL OF THE GAME MAKE IT A CLEAR WINNER



become available after winning races and most of them have their own added advantage that can be used effectively on different courses. The likes of Bou's Roors enviable hot-pod which has the capability of reaching speeds of 1000+Mph and Sebulba's speciality is the flame jet that shoots out from the sides of his pod.

I'M NO JEDI KNIGHT

The winning feature of Racer has to be the intense way it displays speed perception. Never before can I say that I have felt as if I was being propelled around a course at great speed. Now after configuring my force-feedback joystick I can finally say that my search is over for the

ultimate feeling of speed and realism on the PC. This is a benchmark I have been looking for for many years and LucasArts are the Developers that have created the standard. This, you think, would make the game a little difficult to control? No! The controller and especially the force-feedback support are excellent. Re-configuring



the joystick to suite personal preferences is all part and parcel of the strategy to overcome the deceptive corners and obstacles that happen to suddenly be planted in your way. But there is another reason, that of course being, the top grade physics model that portrays you being pulled along, chariot style, by two jet propelled engines. Special manoeuvres such as going sideways through cracks and engine positioning for jumps, become part of the tactical arsenal that is needed to win the more challenging races. There is also the cleverly implemented turbo-boost, which can only be used if the engines are positioned



YOUR ARCH RIVAL SEBULBA



correctly, and then only for a prescribed amount of time, otherwise a fire will break out from the heat. Utilising this feature is only useful if you are on an open stretch, otherwise handling through the corners at turbo speed will no doubt bring the inevitability of a crash. Another interesting addition is the ability to repair damages without stopping. This however does slow you down, allowing your competitors to either catch-up or move off further into the distance. If you happen to make it through to the advanced section (galactic) of the tournament (not to difficult to do) you will notice a sudden wake up in the AI of the computer-controlled competitors. This is a little disconcerting, with a gradual improvement being the better option for optimal playability. Nevertheless you will find it extremely difficult to progress at this level, but with just cause. Finishing a game off quickly is annoying, especially when the AI is the blameful party. If you do happen to make it through, then you truly know the courses and you have the reflexes of a 'Jedi Knight', something I no doubt lack.

IT'S STAR WARS
I had a truly entertaining experience while playing Racer and enjoyed being able to take part in a film sequence of sorts. The multiplayer option is both fun and exciting, but neglects to add the option of computer-controlled players and Internet play. Doing that for a PC release is shameful, LucasArts need to give greater attention to the ability of the PC and not neglect us because of the restrictions of the consoles. I have been both impressed and disappointed with Racer, especially in the tracks department, but overall I am happy that Racer surpasses the speed barrier and has set a benchmark for other games to follow. Though not the most inspiring of productions, it entertains you sufficiently to fall into the value for money category. Then, and only then, can you finally add the name Star Wars to the scenario and the realisation occurs that Racer is a guaranteed sale to any Star Wars fan.

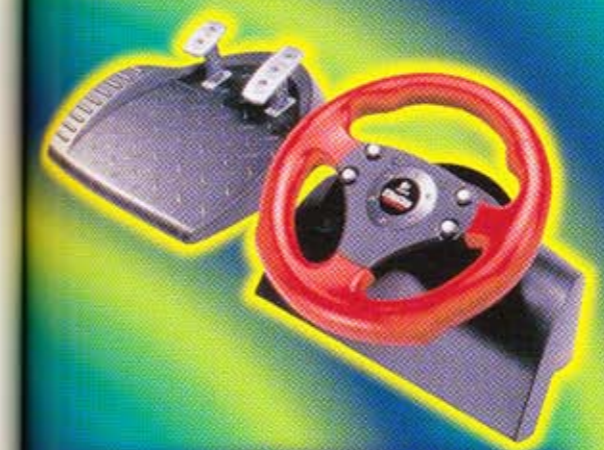


STORM

A wonderful reflection of how speed should be shown on the PC, though certain track and interface problems lower the overall perception of the title. Cunning and strategy is a welcome addition to the racing techniques, as well as the tactics of upgrading and expandability. This is an entertaining racing game that happens to bare the name of Star Wars

Developer: LucasArts	Publisher: Activision	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	RRP: R 299.00
http://www.starwars.com			
Multiplayer: Yes	Comparitives: Wipeout 2097 PSX Powerslide	Pro's: Excellent Speed Perception Dynamic Control Good Track Design	Con's: Bad Track Design Small Interface Irritations Sudden AI Changes
Graphics: 86	Sound: 89	Control: 87	Story: NA
Continuity: 72	Playability: 83	83	

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For a first-person shooter to succeed nowadays, game developers must produce a game that will really grab the attention of the gamer, and in such a way that they'll keep coming back for more. Illusion Softworks have done just that with *Hidden & Dangerous*. **Memnoch**

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

The game plays out in the early 1940's during WW2, where your team consists of elite Allied soldiers. At the beginning of each campaign, the player has the option to hand pick eight out of forty fine men, each with their own attributes. Characters' abilities vary in the fields of shooting accuracy, strength, endurance etc, that gives each one it's own personality. Should one of your

increasing your firing accuracy, and producing a smaller target for Jerry to shoot at. Third-person mode is more effective for covering ground fast, and for scanning around corners. One can choose to switch on the crosshair for this mode, but more than once I was peaking around a

corner when a German soldier spotted me, coming around the corner. My crosshair was all over the place, and he got such a fright as well (they call that luck), and it took three badly placed rifle shots at point-blank to bring this guy down. After the first mission I realised this was gonna be a tough one...



DID ANYONE BRING MY STEALTH SNOWBOARD?

soldiers get killed during a mission, the soldier stays dead throughout the game, but the worst part is that you will also now have one less character to finish the current campaign with. For each mission one can pick four characters, so choose them wisely.

Hidden & Dangerous marries the genres of first person, third person and action-strategy into one neat package, and it works quite well. This leaves the player to adapt his/her personal playing style, so there is more than one way to skin a cat in this game, adding to the re-playability in so many ways. The first-person view is the most effective way to play, but be warned. Control of your character can take some getting used to, as your weapon will bob up and down while running, making accuracy almost non-existent. Rather go prone or lie down flat when shooting, thus

detail. From this panel, orders can be given to your squad, and it can range from simple movement commands, to a co-ordinated strike from different directions. One can even use the command sliders to set the timing of each of the operations, tell your squad mates to change weapons or use objects. This form

SNEAKING AROUND
Where *Rainbow Six* offered control of squad mates via a mission planning screen before the mission started, *Hidden & Dangerous* sports an in-game mission planner, which can be accessed at any time. The map is presented as a 3D terrain, much like the real terrain in the game, only with less

of mission planning is a great asset in this type of game, as the situation can change rapidly, making initial plans obsolete in most cases. The idea of *Hidden & Dangerous* derives a lot from *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines*, as each one of your characters will have different abilities, and each one can be switched to at any time. The artificial intelligence will take over as soon as the player switches over to the next soldier. I must admit that the AI is much better than anything we've seen before, and although there are a few rough edges, the overall way it is done must be commended. The enemy will hunt you down when you are spotted, and will go prone when shot at. While sneaking up to them, try not to make too much noise, as "Achtung! Engländer!" will alert the enemy to your presence, making life difficult or very short. German Soldiers will fire relentlessly, changing magazines, and will move closer till they kill their target. Some shoot extremely well, while others will have difficulty hitting their target, which means that no two Germans have the same attributes either. Nonetheless, the enemy AI is deadly even at the easier levels, and it really takes careful planning not to lose a squad member during a mission.

GUNS
Another great feature of *Hidden & Dangerous* is the hardware. You get a lot of weapons to play around with, from pistols, rifles, sniper rifles, sub-machine guns, machine guns, grenades, mines, bazookas, knives, binoculars, and even a flare gun. The strength of a character dictates how much it can actually carry, and it makes sense to give a soldier with 100% shooting accuracy a sniper rifle. As



THESE GUYS SEEM A BIT CONFUSED



"HEY DAD CAN I BORROW THE ARMOURD VEHICLE TONIGHT?"

previously mentioned, weapons can be fired in the third-person view, although better results will be achieved in first person. The weapons are fully 3D, and can be aimed through the sights of the weapon, giving a real authentic feel to them. One can also use a crosshair, but the weapon will not be displayed. The sniper rifle features a zoomable scope, which makes for easy picking of targets. Should you run out of ammo, scavenge weapons off dead soldier's bodies! At the end of a campaign, I usually have more

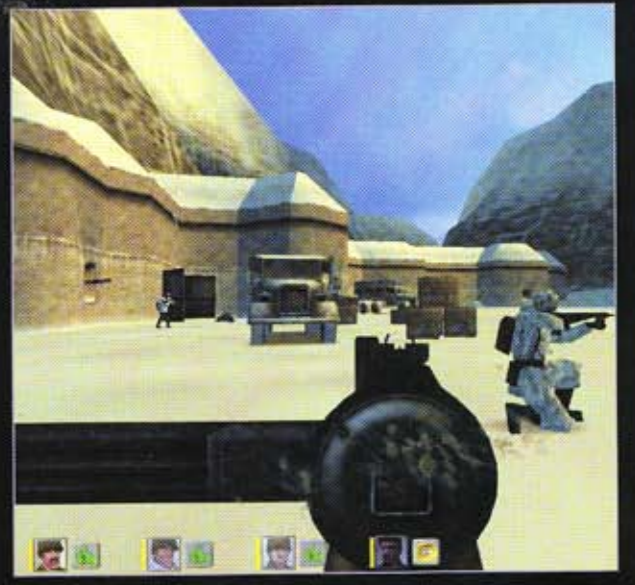


ONE OF YOUR MISSIONS INVOLVES TAKING OUT A SUBMARINE

German hardware than the stuff I started off with. The best part is that the environment is totally interactive. Need to cover distance fast? Climb into a vehicle with your entire squad, and drive there! This applies to boats and tanks as well, making for very interesting situations.

LAST BEST
Saving the best for last, the graphics in *Hidden & Dangerous* are to die for. The campaigns will take you through some

breathtaking scenery in Europe. Forests, mountains and night-time are all done very realistically with the *Insanity* engine, adding even more to immersion. Some levels incorporate fog and rain with that wet look, others will be at night, where the lighting looks like the real thing. Then there will be levels with huge open areas, and at 1024x768 32-bit colouring, the detail is breathtaking. Explosions are the prettiest I've seen in



THIS GAME HAS SOME OF THE BEST GRAPHICS SEEN YET



a game, with flames shooting into the air, leaving the object burning for quite some time. I was totally overwhelmed by the authentic and realistic feel of *Hidden & Dangerous*, and although some of the missions are very difficult and can take a few hours to complete, it kept me coming back for more. Featuring co-operative multiplayer, this title is sure to become a favourite amongst gamers of all genres.

MEMNOCH

GENRE
Action Strategy

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium III 233	Pentium III 266
32 MB Ram	64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	8+ X CD Rom
2 MB SVGA Video	Direct3D AGP
60 MB HD	500+ MB HD
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Illusion Softworks	Publisher: Illusion Softworks	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	RRP: R 299.00
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<http://www.illusionsoftworks.com>

Multiplayer	Comparitives	Pro's	Con's
Yes	Rainbow Six Delta Force Commandos: BEL	Different View Modes Great Graphics Interactive Environment	Very Difficult Limited Saving Missions Too Long

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
94	90	78	85	92	83

87

Cue dramatic John Williams orchestral opus, lights, camera and action... 'There has been a great disturbance in the force, it felt like a hundred thousand gamers all cried out at once and then were silent.' Cut. Largely due to the movie's status, there have been few eagerly anticipated titles in the history of computer gaming as *The Phantom Menace*. It's a wonderful opportunity that has been sadly wasted.



person shooter. Assumptions aside and Star Wars mania aside, *The Phantom Menace*, from a technological and play value point of view has very little to offer the rabid hordes of fans who will no doubt ignore the writing on the wall and make a foolish purchasing decision. About eighty percent of the people reading this review probably already own the game and are now reading this to justify the purchase to themselves. If you're one of

a couple of metres ahead so you can never really see very far ahead, but your enemies can, resulting in situations where laser beams are being fired at you from robots or mercenaries you can never see. This effectively eliminates any sneaking around and surprising your enemy or taking pot shots at them from a safe distance. Your Jedi character also has a strange new 'ability' to half disappear into walls and doors, and on one occasion in the desert city of Mos Espa an alien creature started sinking into the ground, going deeper and deeper with each conversation segment. This is a typical game engine flaw generally referred to as clipping problems, where the game engine cannot force a

When the first preliminary previews and discussions emerged on *The Phantom Menace*, a thin vein of doubt and suspicion always underlined the articles, the writers of which didn't want to commit themselves to anything even though they were all huge Star Wars fans themselves. Everyone seemed to be adopting a wait-and-see attitude. Now, considering the brilliance of the very underrated *Jedi Knight* you would assume that this new game would either be better or at the very least, of the same quality, even though it's supposed to be an

STAR WARS EPISODE I THE PHANTOM MENACE

solid object to behave like a solid object. Examples of this range from being able to see right through walls to entire areas of the level coming apart at its polygon seams, it's a common phenomenon and plagues games in different levels of severity. The Phantom



adventure game and not a first

these people, stop now, it's mostly bad news and yes, you should have read the review first, but then you don't really care because it's the new Star Wars!

IT'S NO PICNIC

Try to imagine the first *Tomb Raider* game without an intelligent camera that could be manually positioned, without weapons that aim automatically, without the gymnastic flair the character animation had and finally without the great sense of adventure the game instilled and you've got *The Phantom Menace*. The game is a third person action adventure (not the adventure game everyone thought it would be), your view of this action and adventure takes place slightly back and high above the main character's head, resulting in an almost top down perspective which makes seeing what's coming at you difficult. This view is dynamic in that the camera will swing around a bit - keeping your character 'centre stage' at all times. This sounds good on paper but on more than a few occasions an overhead bridge or an architectural feature obstructs your view altogether making it impossible to determine where you should swing your Lightsaber. The result, a desperate blind stabbing of the mouse or controller buttons combined with the erratic rotating of your character, unfitting behaviour for a respectable Jedi Knight. The chosen camera angle also reduces your view to



KILL ALL THE NASTY ROBBOTS WITH THE BIG GUN

Menace has a few instances of this annoyance, nothing too serious but worth mentioning nevertheless. The game engine is relatively fast moving but antiquated, and if you don't own a 3D accelerator then you can't play - the game only supports accelerated computers. After all the game engine mud slinging, you're left with an addictive and engrossing experience that keeps you coming back for more, rating a game



YIP, IT'S A GREEN LIGHT BUSTROFF!

It re ly le ly ty :- a ce I t e S I t E c r n y F v e u r D d m a s to bu ex gr fin lit sw ga an are var cha see we at t tha



THERE'S PLENTY OF ACTION IN THIS GAME

like this is a difficult task and will really depend on preference instead of hard cold fact. So, it sounds bad but strangely enough doesn't play all that bad. Somehow the graphics engine, primitive as it may be, works fairly well for a game that manages to pull you into its world before you know it. This all sounds terribly negative for this highly anticipated title and it is, sort of, but there are a few redeeming points that just manage to rescue it from a forced early retirement. In a nutshell, you ultimately must decide if you can live with the problems just because it's Star Wars, and it seems many people have done just that. It's a pity that this kind of blind logic has already resulted in the game topping charts around the world.

SLOWLY YOUR FATE WILL UNRAVEL

The story follows the movie and occasionally focuses on one highlight in the plot to add more spice to the proceedings. There are thirteen levels in total and range from jungle combat in the swamps of Naboo to urban combat in the galactic capital of Coruscant. The game kicks off on the Trade Federation Battle Ship, where you must use your cunning and Jedi training to navigate a labyrinth of battle ship innards while you dispatch the odd few hundred killer droids. From there it's down to the surface of Naboo where you must rescue the young queen, explore swamps, rescue Jar Jar Binks from his underwater prison and get the queen to her royal starship... escaping to Tatooine. On Tatooine you'll fight Tusken Raiders and see the dusty city of Mos Espa where eventually you bet

you're wondering, there are no difficulty settings, and this equals zero replay value. Sigh. As you progress through the different levels you'll take control of four different characters, firstly the two Jedi, Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon, Captain Panaka and then eventually the young Queen, Amidala. Each character behaves the same and can do mostly the same things, the major differences between them are purely cosmetic, although only a Jedi can wield a Lightsaber, perform a roll and a double forward flip. One other nice but limited touch is that the two Jedi characters can use the force push, pressing an additional key causes an arc of repellent energy to move away from whichever direction you're facing, forcing enemies backwards and sometimes disabling them permanently.

Whatever happened to all the other force powers? This 'ability' can also be used to push buttons



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY (BUT DON'T TELL DARTH MAUL)

money on the Boonta Eve Podrace and end up in a skirmish with Darth Maul. From there it's off to Coruscant, galactic capital where you'll fight bums and riffraff far below the city's glossy exterior, then it's back to Naboo where your greatest challenge and destiny awaits you. The final confrontation level with Darth Maul is literally a pushover not worthy of all the blood, sweat and tears it took to get there, ending the game with a weak ten second 'well done' parade and the credits. Peppered throughout the levels are a few boss encounters, which add even more variety to the game and all provide a tough challenge. Overall, it's impressive stuff but seeing that you can finish the game in just over a week of casual play it comes up miserably short at the end. It's almost with surprising dismay that you realise after a few gaming sessions that the whole experience is almost over, and in case

or clear an escape route. Each character has access to a few different weapons over and above the standard Blaster, for example the queen carries a Droid Stunner and her protector Captain Panaka uses the devastating R-65 Heavy Blaster. Ultimately this skin jumping style of play is clearly an afterthought and doesn't add much to the mix other than variety, it would have been nice to see more integration and perhaps more dependency on other characters actions. That



LAND US BACK, YOU DROID!

said, during some of the levels you'll play two different missions with different characters at the same time, with the action beginning with one character as it ends with the other, this adds some interest as it is fairly unique. The structure of some missions requires you to escort a character through a level, now this always makes things trickier and more fun. The problem here is that the person under your wing so to speak has no concept of danger and will often



NO MATTER HOW FAR INTO THE FUTURE YOU WANDER, PEOPLE WILL STILL WANT TO KILL EACH OTHER AND THIS IS WHAT THEY'LL BE USING.

blindly run straight into a solid wall of laser fire to get to a predetermined pre-programmed position. This fearless attitude often ends tragically forcing you to restart the level from a previous save. The only real control you have in this situation is to tell your escort to 'wait here' or 'follow me now'. Besides blasting robots, protecting the mindless and leaping from ledge to ledge you must also speak to a number of different alien characters. This interaction involves finding out information, laying bets and general 'adventure' type stuff. Sometimes this becomes a little tedious and the running from character to character to elicit the correct response is very linear and more often than not your progress requires no real thought or head scratching, another wasted opportunity. The only aspect in the game that does demand some mental agility are the areas where you must push or pull boxes or flip switches to proceed.

Again these diversions offer no real challenge and all come down to elaborate time wasting as you pull a box from one side of the level to the other. Scattered here and there are a number of side quests where you'll be asked to help out with non-essential tasks, these quests, if completed, usually result in you being given health or weapons. In a more fair and positive light and in spite of all these problems, the game is very addictive,



THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD LIGHTSABER DUEL.



and shoot you right through a solid stone wall, the fools. This isn't to say the game offers no challenge, some might even say it's quite difficult especially when the solution to a puzzle isn't very apparent, you can spend ages looking for an elusive switch. The ability to save whenever you like does also reduce the time

and offers plenty of gaming intrigue, its downfalls are quickly forgotten as the flowing story grips you and drags you under the game's peaks and troughs of action and adventure.

MORE ON THIS LATER

Controlling the character is simple enough using the keyboard or joystick but you are required to keep the shift key firmly depressed to continue running, walking takes too much time and has no practical application in the game, it's not like you can sneak past enemy lines or anything. Other than that the control keys can be changed and if you've played Tomb Raider you'll feel right at home with a similar keyboard configuration. The artificial intelligence is adequate but enemy characters can sometimes end up stuck behind doorways and corners, they know you're there and will try

you'll be playing, but this is a double edged sword for developers. PC gamers want to be able to save anytime they want even if it's bad for them. The levels are well designed and hide a number of secret areas where you can stock up on ammunition or health. For every miss there's a hit, but after balancing the review journal and adding up all the pluses and minuses The Phantom Menace just doesn't offer enough to warrant any awards or even a special mention. Feelings on this game are definitely mixed, for Star Wars fans the problems will seem meaningless and easily ignored but after playing and completing the game you'll definitely feel a little cheated, it reeks of a rushed deadline and a quick cash-in. If you look at The Phantom Menace in a universe where Star Wars doesn't exist, taking it purely as any another game it would rate as very average which is a real pity.



REDTIDE
GENRE
 Action Adventure

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 200	Pentium II 266+
32 MB Ram	64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	8+ X CD Rom
3D Acceleration	8 MB 3D AGP
340 MB HD	340+ MB HD
Windows 95/98	Windows 95/98
(DirectX 6.1)	(DirectX 6.1)

Developer: Big Ape Productions	Publisher: LucasArts	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (01) 315-1000	RRP: R 299.00
http://www.starwars.com			

Multiplayer	Comparitives	Pro's	Con's
No	Tomb Raider III	Engrossing Addictive It's Star Wars	Far Too Short Old Graphics Engine No Replay Value
Graphics	Sound	Control	Story
70	86	82	90
Continuity	Playability	79	
57	88		

The Phantom Menace isn't a terrible game - it has many excellent qualities but somehow when all these parts are put together it comes up a little short. It will be remembered for what it could have been and not what it is.

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2048X 2048 Large Texture Support

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CREATIVE
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Earlier this year, when the US forces attacked IRAQ in Operation Desert Fox, CNN used an early version of a Jane's Combat Simulations title to demonstrate the movement of the US naval forces during this conflict, stunning thousands of viewers worldwide with the accuracy and realism of the simulation. Jane's Fleet Command is finally on the shelves, and ready for the public to experience the thrill of naval warfare first hand.

Memnoch

Some of us remember the days of submarine simulations, and the best naval title we know must arguably be Harpoon. Jane's finally broke the silence after quite a while of zero activity on the naval simulation scene with Fleet Command, and together with that they bring a degree of realism that is accessible to all kinds of gamers. Using a simple point and click interface, much like an action-strategy type game, Fleet Command produces a real-time strategy naval simulation.

One must ask, why hasn't anybody done this before? The main reason is that simulating a naval environment can get quite boring very quickly, as ships tend to travel at snail like speed compared to say flight or land warfare. What makes it even more difficult, is that the sea comprises a much larger area, almost 72% of the earth's surface. So what makes Fleet Command exciting then? Jane's managed to capture the essence of the modern naval environment, such

Jane's FLEET COMMAND

To get up to speed quickly, four tutorial missions are available, each giving the player training in how to utilise the basics from air-operations, to fleet defense. The player will be guided via voice instructions, where the interface and the views will be explained. Fleet Command features four basic views, comprising of the tactical view, map view, the 3D view and the info view. This is done using four windows, one large with three smaller ones beneath it. The tactical view and 3D

views can be swapped, and the 3D mode offers a full-screen option as well. What effectively happens here, is that the game will be played in real-time strategy mode via the tactical view, and the selected object will be displayed in the 3D window. The 3D window deserves a mention here. Objects are modeled with great accuracy, propellers turning, aircraft taxiing on carrier decks, missiles streaking away from ships



as carrier operations, surface-to-surface missile combat, submarine warfare, and even land strikes all into one neat package. To make it more exciting, all the hardware found in this game exists in the real world, and realistic naval doctrine is followed throughout. The first downside of this title comes in the form of a pesky 45 page manual, which describes only basic game elements such as the options, single missions, campaigns, multiplayer and the mission builder. Feeling a bit amazed at the lack of information, I found the Jane's Reference section to satisfy most of my craving for information. Each object found in the game is described here, from ships, subs, planes, choppers, to all the weapons these units utilise, and this huge euphoria of information covers fleets from nearly all the countries in the world. By selecting an object, a few pages will become available, firstly describing the unit, showing a photo of it, and then the object in 3D as it will be found in the game. To be honest, there are zillions of books written about naval warfare tactics, and to put all these in a manual would've been an impossible feat - an acceptable trade-off I guess.

with puffs and trails of smoke, and the greatest reward of all, weapon impact on a target. The interface works quite well in that regard, by clicking on a weapon before impact it will show the 3D window taking a stationary viewpoint, and the objects will connect in splendour, with debris flying, flames spewing and visual damage showing, creating instant gratification. The single missions feature about 34 scenarios, which can be played in any order of preference, with a star rating system indicating the difficulty of the mission. I found this to be the real training grounds of Fleet Command, where one

has the time to figure out all the nitty gritty things not described in the manual. It took me a while to get the hang of all the sensors of the ships and planes, and things got easier once I figured out that nearly all sensors are switched off by default, to prevent the player from alerting the enemy too early in a mission.

This explained why I lost a lot of planes during the identification of targets, as the enemy always managed to squeeze off their

missiles first. A hint I can give here is to get an E-2C Hawkeye into the air first thing, should one be available. The Hawkeye is the Navy's early air warning system, and will detect enemy planes and more important, hostile cruise missiles at long ranges.

Defense of your fleet can be daunting at times, and it isn't a strange site to see 12 enemy cruise missiles inbound in a defensive situation. This is really where the point-and-click skills come in handy. Although the ships and Hawkeye will pick up these incoming weapons of mass destruction, they won't engage automatically. So one needs to select your ship, and then right click on the incoming missile. Radio chatter becomes overwhelming at this stage, as ships call out their targets, and trails of the defense SAMS (surface-to-air missiles) swoosh through the air. Should one cruise missile break through the defensive barrier, the last line of defense should kick in. It exists in the Phalanx multi-barrel cannon system on most US ships, and will pump hundreds of 20mm rounds into the air, trying to negotiate the incoming threat. Phew! That was close, as debris from the now ex-threat comes flying over your ship, too close for comfort. Carrier operations are modeled to a great degree



NO MATTER HOW BIG YOU ARE, ALL IT EVER TAKES IS ONE MISSILE



A NARROW MISS!

of accuracy, and truly extend the striking capability of a modern fleet. Planes can be sent to identify unknown contacts, and can fire weapons at targets as well. Keep in mind that enemy fleets also have a very effective defensive capability, so cunning strategies will need to be devised to strike your targets with success. To effectively destroy another fleet, the player will need to use a combination of air and sea assets with active jamming gear decreases your enemy's ability to engage your missiles.

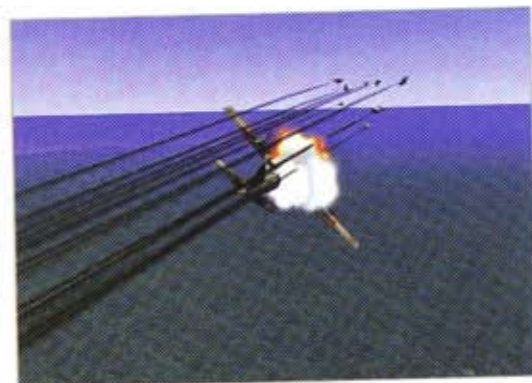
The campaign mode is where everything comes together. Campaign mode features scenarios where the US will assist in conflicts between China and Sri-Lanka, through a US and Russian force on force conflict. What makes the campaign different from other simulations, is that the missions within the campaign take place in real time, and mission orders are received on the go. In essence, the campaign in one huge mission, with all kinds of directives that will be issued as the situation develops. It gives a dynamic feel to the campaigns, and although the missions are scripted, no one mission will be played out the same should it be replayed again. Jane's has managed to keep events quite random, and ships and units will appear at different locations and times. One will usually start off in control of a number of ships, including Aegis missile cruisers, Ticonderoga battle ships, aircraft carriers, submarines, and maybe even ships of other allied countries.



THE ILL FATED WARSHIP - TITANIC II

Fleet Command also features a very comprehensive mission builder, where any kind of scenario can be created to the finest detail. The player can decide which side to fight on, and some great multiplayer missions can be created to play against your friends. A real nice touch that will surely add to the replayability of this title. Multiplayer exists in LAN and Internet play, adding the human

Platforms will have all the relevant weapons in their arsenal as used in real life, including missiles such as the Harpoon, Exocet, and even TLAM cruise missiles that were used in all the latest conflicts in Iraq and Kosovo to destroy strategic land-based targets. The only gripe I have with the weapon loadouts is that the aircrafts come with pre-configured loads that cannot be changed, and seeing that the F-14 Tomcat doesn't carry the AIM-54 Phoenix in the default configuration they are definitely frowned upon. On a few occasions I ordered the Alert-5 Tomcats to scramble for an intercept mission, when I heard the "Cold Cat!" call over the comms. I immediately selected the doomed Tomcat, only to see it splashing into the water. Now a Cold Cat is every navy aviator's nightmare. It means that there has been some kind of malfunction during take off, with either a dead engine or broken catapult the culprit, which almost always results in the plane crashing into the ocean. I couldn't believe they actually simulated that, a brilliant piece of work Jane's!



element on both sides of a simulated battle never hurt anyone! The graphics are visually stunning, and adds to the atmosphere of this brilliant title. One can choose between a great variety of resolutions, and the more horsepower you have, the higher you can go. The 3D view needs a lot of horsepower to perform at it's best, but it really pays off with amazing visuals. The graphics can be scaled to suit one's machine, and features such as animated and transparent water that can be turned off to increase the framerate. Fleet Command uses Direct3D for 3D acceleration, so most of the current screen cards will support it just fine. Sound adds a lot to immersion in a simulation, and here it shines as well. All the time a mission is going on, voices will be heard over the comms, from pilots acknowledging commands, ships shouting out frag orders, to the screams of crewmembers when a hostile missile does hit its mark. Nothing drives fear into the hearts of men/woman like the sound of a cruise missile skimming the surface of the ocean!

Although I have experienced some bugs in the game, the overall impression was great, and I found Fleet Command to be a lot of fun. On a few occasions ships would not turn towards the new direction I assigned to them, and once a Tomcat refused to attack an enemy ship with it's Harpoon missile, and I made sure that was inside launch parameters. These are little things that can be fixed in a patch, and didn't distract from the overall gaming experience. Jane's Fleet Command is a brilliant strategy simulation, and should appeal to all naval and real-time-strategy enthusiasts that enjoy a realistic modern combat environment.

MEMNOCH

GENRE
Naval Strategy

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 200 MMX	Pentium II 300
32 MB Ram	64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	12 X CD Rom
3D Accelerator	8MB 3D AGP
260 MB HD	260+ MB HD
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

Developer: Jane's Combat Simulations	Publisher: Electronic Arts	Supplier: Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212	RRP: R 299.00
http://www.janes.ea.com			
Multiplayer Yes	Competitives Harpoon	Pro's Easy to Learn Accurate Modelling Variety of Missions	Con's Poor Manual Suspect AI at Times

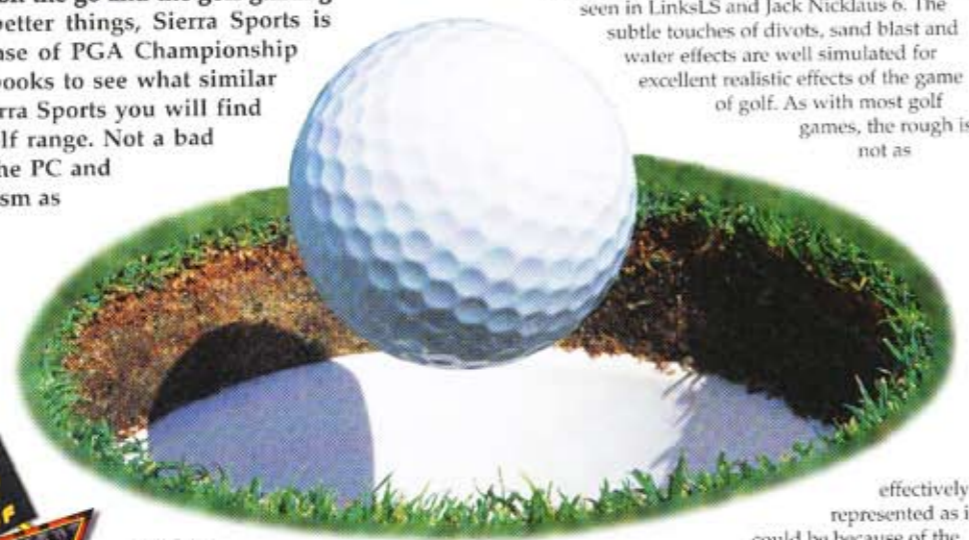
Graphics 89	Sound 95	Control 74	Story NA	Continuity 92	Playability 90
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88

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

With the US Open Championships on the go and the golf gaming world starting to get an itch for better things, Sierra Sports is getting in on the act with the release of PGA Championship Golf. Going back into the history books to see what similar products have been released by Sierra Sports you will find the infamous Front Page Sports Golf range. Not a bad attempt at recreating the sport on the PC and the first to offer the mouse mechanism as a swing option. - Storm

This time around Sierra Sports have adopted a similar plan of attack, only now they have managed to get the official licence for the first major of the year, the PGA Championship. It must be said that PGACC has a striking resemblance to Jack Nicklaus 6 and uses the same technique of motion captured golfers and computer created imagery to simulate the environment. Actually the animation of the 20000+ polygon golfer in PGACC is the best seen in a golf game and will teach the budding golfer a few things about stance and positioning in the swing. The golfer has an



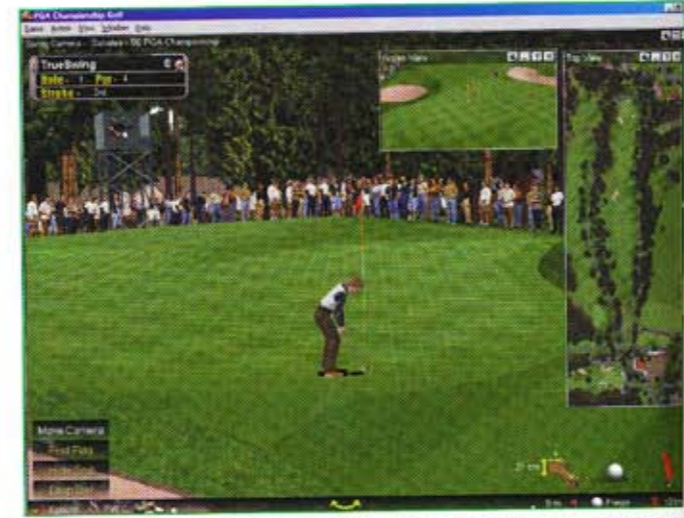
angles for total configurability similar to the one seen in LinksLS and Jack Nicklaus 6. The subtle touches of divots, sand blast and water effects are well simulated for excellent realistic effects of the game of golf. As with most golf games, the rough is not as

amusing array of reaction animations that brings the game to life on your screen. As for the other attributes of the graphics which include higher resolutions and special effects pertaining to golf, Sierra can be proud of a wonderful attempt at making the game as visually appealing and realistic as possible. Special additions have been added in such as a multiple camera that can be chosen from an impressive list of choices, as well as a totally custom choice of camera

effectively represented as it could be because of the limitation of the graphical engine, but the ball reacts to the rough with surprising realism. Running commentary is supplied by PGA Tour Radio's Grant Boone and The Golf Channel's Mark Lye and with amusing results. Comments are made with accuracy and are relevant to the situation. Most games seem to make a mockery out of cyber commentary, but PGACC does a good job of showing the way it should be done. If it's a selection of great courses you are looking for then PGACC is a title to get because it houses some of the best courses in the world as



AWESOME VISUAL APPEAL MAKES PGA A GREAT LOOKING GAME



FLOATING CAMERA'S (ALA LINKS) ARE VALUABLE FOR SHOT SELECTION

its default selection. The infamous Sahalee Country Club, which hosted the 1998 PGA Championship, is recreated with precise measurements and is a great challenge for any cyber golfer. There is a surprising inclusion of The Royal Birkdale, which is famous for holding the British Open eight times and has hosted every other major event in Britain as well as two Ryder Cup events. Other courses included are the rugged Pasatiempo of California, Black Diamond Ranch of Florida, Pete Dye Golf Club of West Virginia, The Prince Course of Hawaii and last but not least, the Coeur d'Alene Resort Course of Northern Idaho. All these courses have a strong history and offer something more than just a hack around when playing on any level. PGACC has 12 modes of play, which include the likes of Skins, Stableford (for handicapping), betterball, scramble, medal and matchplay. These are just a few of the actual modes with some interesting additions coming from modes such as betterball Bloodsome which makes teamplay a lot more fun to play. The handicapping system adopted by PGACC is one of the best seen in cyber golf and is a great leveller for playing against players without the same ability and vice versa. Being able to enter a tournament is only an option if you have an official PGACC handicap, which gives an incentive to play as often and as well as you possibly can. One of the best features is the option to customise your golfers appearance to your own personal liking. Everything from hair colour to clothing preference can be configured giving you more of a personal liking to the golfer you intend playing with against online players. My opinion is that the FMV of LinksLS golfers is on its way out because of the fact you have little control over looks and no configurability over preferences except club selection. Multiple players can be created for different levels if the game and all are recorded with in-depth databases of stats pertaining to past performances and scoring. The stats are not revolutionary but are on par with LinksLS and Jack Nicklaus 6. Playing PGACC is an education to the game of golf, true ball physics and realistic shot making make PGACC one of the most addictive golf

games on the market. The control mechanisms are well balanced and difficult at the same time. The usual 3-click mechanism is available but with a different interface that can be confusing at first but gets very simple to manipulate in the end. The real talent of the cyber golfer is testing with PGACC's unique mouse swing mechanism called the 'Trueswing'. This simulates the movement of the mouse with that of the swing.



EXCELLENT CHARACTER ANIMATIONS LUMINATE THE GAMEPLAY

Yes, it has been done before, but not effectively and without cheating ability. PGACC 'Trueswing' uses the horizontal or vertical movement of the hand to simulate the swing path and with surprising realism. Attempting to draw the ball with the mouse is a simple out-to-in movement of the mouse, but it's a lot tougher than explained above. It takes many hours of practice and control (and the odd hand cramp) to master the mechanism, but it must be said that it does add more elements of skill to the game of cyber golf. Finally another developer has realised the need for course designing software and Sierra Sports have come to the party. The Course Designer available with PGACC is



simple and effective to use but does not offer as wide a range of options as the one available with Jack Nicklaus 6. However it's the ease of use that makes this one more attractive especially to first time cyber course designers. The addition of the designer software makes PGACC

one of the best value for money packages around because you can download custom courses from the Sierra website that fellow designers have attempted to create and have fun making up collections of courses for future play. Most games are not without fault and PGACC is no exception, the tournament mode for single player is almost not complete. After playing a custom tournament against a field of AI golfers and winning, you get no recognition for the win.

It rather unceremoniously dumps you back into the main menu without even a cheer. Rather an anti-climax to four blood sweating rounds of tournament golf. Somehow I feel that it was not supposed to be this way and could be because of the highly talked about SGA (Sierra Sports Golf Association) that controls online tournaments throughout the year. The much hyped features of online handicaps, career stats, tournament prizes, ladder rankings and SGA certified Custom Courses all came tumbling down in my opinion because the server only becomes active in September (according to a few online player on the servers at the time). This gives us some time to practice but does not give me any thrill from winning a tournament, no matter whether it is online or not. You are however able to play against online players and get the hang of the speeds, which were

respectable considering the averages of online golf games. The adoption of a technique developed by Sierra called 'ReadyPlay' lets you play a round of golf independent of your playing partners, allowing for quicker and more enjoyable rounds of cyber golf. Besides the disappointment of not being able to play online tourneys yet and the lack of recognition for winning the custom tourneys against the computer, PGACC is one of the best cyber golfing games around. Though the competition is tough, there where only two contenders, now PGACC has entered as a definite challenger for the title. Sadly it does not take top honours, but it performs admirably enough to make the competition look behind them closely. This title comes highly recommended for the seasoned veteran looking for serious online play (for free) and for the average golfer who enjoys a round of cyber golf during his lunch break.



STORM

GENRE
GOLF SIMULATION

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 133	Pentium II 266
32 MB Ram	64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	8 X CD Rom
640 x 480 VGA	1024 x 768 SVGA
80 MB HD	110 MB HD
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

RRP: R 299.00

http://www.sierra.com

Multiplayer	Comparitives	Pro's	Con's
Yes	Jack Nicklaus 6 Links LS 99	Handicapping Mouse Swing Course Designer	Easy Use of 3 Click No Winners Cheque

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
90	82	83	NA	92	87

87

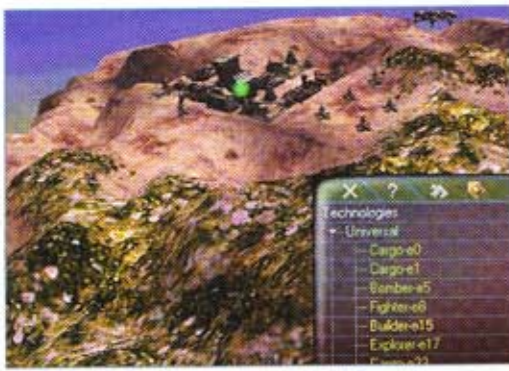
A valiant attempt at taking the crown of best golf game. Excellent graphics and enjoyable gameplay make up this true golf simulation. A Course Designer finishes this title off as a real value for money option for the budding cyber golfer.

Online gaming is becoming more popular every day and more and more companies are taking the plunge and developing their own online persistent worlds. Most of these worlds tend to the fantasy RPG area of gaming. So far very few companies have even

considered any other direction. Up steps Cryo Interactive and Vibes to create an online Sci-Fi universe with 900 million planets and more strategy and economics than actual role playing. This game is Mankind. - *Soul Assassin*

MANKIND

I can't say that I have been too overwhelmingly pleased with any of Cryo Interactive's last few projects but I must admit that Mankind did peak my interest at first. The basis of the game is a huge galaxy with 900 million planets and two opposing empires fighting for control of planets, resources,



FIGHT IN SPACE OR ON THE LAND

fame and followers. You automatically get assigned to one of these empires and must join all of its followers to try and conquer the other. If this isn't to your taste - the most ambitious and hardest undertaking in the game is to create your own empire that can then fight with the two existing ones for control. This is actually a LOT harder than it sounds, since a great portion of players will have to band together and work seamlessly to achieve the goal, and you know how players can argue about who's in control and who has to do what. Players are required to build bases, amass large battle fleets and manage an economy to fund all their activities throughout Mankind. Unlike most other online games, the game doesn't stop just because you decide to leave. While you are not connected the game evolves and things carry on as normal and you might even get attacked while disconnected. An interesting concept, the only problem is the lack of orders you can issue to your units, ships and buildings to follow while you are disconnected.

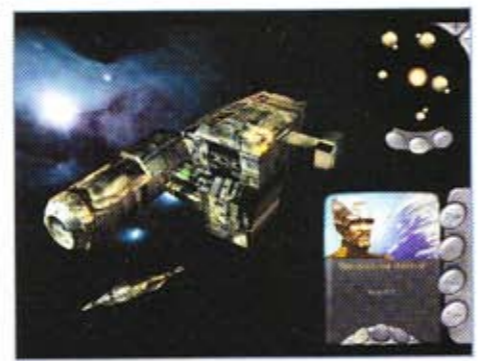
Mankind is unique in the way that it will be distributed and marketed, essentially falling back to the old tried and tested shareware method. Once the game is finished gamers will be allowed to download the game which should be an estimated 30MB and can take it for a trial run. If they decide that they enjoy the premise of Mankind they can then subscribe, get an access key and enjoy one full years worth of gaming on the Mankind servers. In addition the game will also be shipped as a boxed product in selected countries and anyone that purchases one of these will get the full games as well as a one-year subscription to Mankind. I think most people will opt for the Shareware version first, due to the fact that you can actually test the game and then purchase it.

This is good news if you don't own the game yet - yes it is commercially available as a boxed product in



a few countries by now. The reason is that Mankind is an unfinished game and has major elements still missing. Some essential features making playing the game quite

pointless. I quote the following from the actual Mankind manual - "Missions are accessible in the interface of a spaceport or an imperial city. When you, the player, enter into the universe of Mankind, you will be offered several types of missions, presented in order



of difficulty, which will help you to learn the game." I searched high and low to find the phantom missions only to find out they haven't actually been implemented yet and are slated for release in an upcoming patch. Imaging paying for a game that states in the manual there are missions only to find out that there aren't any yet. This brings me to another point - the manual. The manual that comes with the game is so inadequate that I have to ask myself if it was worth spending the five minutes necessary to read it. I found myself twiddling my thumbs most of the time, due

to the fact that I just didn't know what exactly to do in-game, and the manual only describes basic tasks such as moving around in the world and giving 3 line descriptions of buildings. Another problem is actually finding somebody to play with, I mean that is what you're paying for. It is not like you can disconnect and play it in single player mode. In the time that I spent building bases, ships and generally messing about with anything I could do I saw one other person online. Funnily enough he was just as confused as I was. Ridiculous!

For now I suggest staying as far away as possible from the boxed product, you are just going to be wasting your money for which you can purchase a more enjoyable experience. The only halfway decent thing about Mankind would be the accelerated graphics, which look spectacular. Wait till the shareware version comes out, have a look at Mankind and if you like what you see purchase it. In essence the game is still in its beta stages and has a lot of work still to be done on it.

Sadly I have to say that Cryo's first steps into the online persistent gaming world is a disappointment. Mankind, which is a spaced based strategy, resource management game falls short in many areas. The product is still unfinished and some essential features are still missing.

SOUL ASSASSIN			
GENRE Strategy			
Min Requirements		Recommended	
Pentium 166	32 MB Ram	Pentium 200	64 MB Ram
8 X CD Rom	2 MB SVGA Video	8+ X CD Rom	Direct3D Card
70 MB HD	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	70 MB HD	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)
Developer: Vibes	Publisher: Cryo Interactive	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	RRP: R 299.00
http://www.mankind.net			
Multiplayer: Yes	Competitives: VGA Planets	Pro's: Huge On-Line World Good Graphics	Con's: Too Few People On-line Inadequate Manual Unfinished Product
Graphics: 84	Sound: NA	Control: 60	Story: 63
Continuity: 42	Playability: 42	59	

The late sixties were, without a doubt, an interesting time to be alive - at least, this is what I am told. What with the dawning of a whole new type of society and the birth of an entire new culture, they certainly were interesting times. Music was changing, and the world was changing with it; attitudes began to vary, lifestyles altered, and girls started wearing skirts that ended way above their knees. These were times of experimentation, of exploration and of change. But, despite all the new elements that entered into life in this time, certain things stayed the same. Crime was rampant, and street gangs prevailed in the London underworld. Which, by way of the scenic route, brings us more or less to the point.

When the controversial Grand Theft Auto first hit the scene some years ago, the outcry surrounding the game was something of a storm in a tea cup. Then again, games of this type generally get the more conservative elements within society up in arms - it's par for the course, really, when the game in question "promotes" crime, violence and vehicular



Futuristic sporting events always seem to have some kind of violent edge to them, at least according to the science fiction writers out there. This, of course, does not say much for our society. What with violent games like rugby and American football, and other unsavoury elements like football hooliganism and the cancellation of cool TV programmes in favour of sport coverage, it's a wonder that society hasn't crumbled into complete and irreversible anarchy! One wonders whether turning sports into violent pursuits indicates the decline of an already bloodthirsty establishment... but enough waxing philosophical. On with the review.

Every game developer wants to get some kind of edge, an element of newness in his products. That's how accidents like Savage Arena happen. Granted, it is a great idea - two teams of muscle bound psychopaths get together on a secret sporting arena and throw a steel ball around while running interference with chainsaws and explosives. But that's about all it is. This is an unfortunate symptom of hybridised sports games. They all too often fall completely flat once they get past the drawing board. Let's face it - you have enough to keep you busy in the average sports game. There is no time to worry about whirring chainsaws and arbitrarily flung sticks of dynamite. All that these elements do is complicate game play more than is warranted. And Savage Arena does not feature the easiest game play to start with. The computer doesn't give any quarter in this game. If you're going to play it, make sure you

mayhem. However, you just can't keep some folks down, and we now have the dubious pleasure of experiencing the first Grand Theft Auto Mission Pack: London 1969. Purchasing this product is something of a deal, seeing as how the powers that be have deemed it necessary to include a revamped version of the original game with it - just in case you missed it the first time around. Little has changed from the original incarnation of GTA, except for the addition of a 3D-supported game play mode. This will make fans happy, of course, seeing as how they no longer have to play the game in the old 256 colour, "which blob is my character" mode. But enough about the old. Let's take a look at the mission pack. Hmm, okay. Except for the setting, which takes full advantage of cheesy accents, bad music and bell bottoms nothing much has changed. To call Grand Theft Auto a driving simulator is pushing things just a smidgin too far; any game in which the cars handle like they're being steered with a shifting spanner just don't make the grade in those terms. Rather, this game falls into the nether realm of the action game, that strange limbo of games used by people like me when they can't beat a game into a little category box. What the game is, in the simplest terms, is a violent, crime

game has one good point - for some reason that logic cannot determine, it is highly addictive. It seems that the simplistic game play and brutality of the missions must appeal to the criminal inside - GTA is fun, if feeble. Oh, and before you rush out and buy it for your five year old brother, it does carry a well deserved 18 age restriction. NAG

know what you're doing before you even start, unless you enjoy an almost endless string of humiliating 15 000 to 0 defeats. It gets so bad that the game actually becomes quite unpleasant to play. And, of course, the gleeful way in which the game displays multiple replay views of you getting the tar beaten out of you doesn't make the situation any better. On the upside, the game is not too bad, graphically speaking. It ain't the prettiest thing I've ever seen on the computer screen, but it beats many of the dogs out there. The characters are a little blocky on screen, and their movements are slightly stilted, but the scenery isn't shabby, and the various intro and option screens are wonderfully handled. And, of course, it has great sound effects - wonderfully bass driven booms and bangs that rattle the windows and shake the floor. On the whole, though, these two elements



Mission Pack #1: London 1969

infested version of electronic bumper cars that gets the player careening around London, stealing cars, blowing up football teams, setting up drug deals and causing general mayhem, while endeavouring to avoid the police. The graphics aren't great, the sounds get on your nerves and game play is frustrating. However, aside of reminding one of downtown Johannesburg, the



Pro's: New 3D Mode All New Look Highly Addictive Game	
Con's: Very Difficult to Control Annoying Sound Effects Grand Theft Auto	
Comp: R 249.00 (RRP) Red Storm Entertainment www.redstorm.com Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	
49	



don't really make up for horrible game play - what good is looking pretty if you keep getting trounced by an unrelenting AI, after all? This one is for sports fans only, and then only the ones who find this kind of thing either appealing or challenging, rather than down right annoying. Maybe it's just me, but a game that doesn't hook the player (even if it is a hustle) from the word go belongs anywhere but in my CD ROM drive. This is really a game that needs a test play before you buy it. Let the buyer beware! NAG

Pro's: Impressive Sound Fairly Good Graphics	
Con's: Unforgiving AI Annoying Game Play Difficult to Control	
Comp: Speedball R 249.00 (RRP) Red Storm Entertainment www.redstorm.com Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	
45	

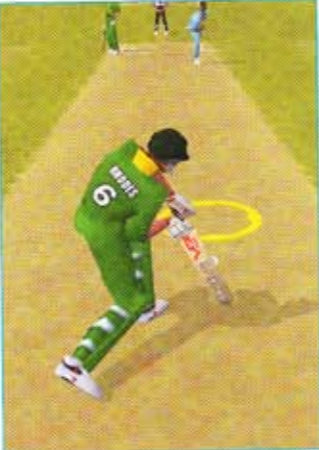
With the Cricket World Cup now but a painful memory, it's little surprise that Electronic Arts timed its release to coincide with the event. EA usually have the knack of signing the official licenses with supreme precision and timing. But after watching South Africa fail on two occasions to dominate the Aussies and eventually crumble under the pressure of the semi-final, the bitter taste in my mouth has been sweetened by the ability to recreate the exact match and actually make a meal out of them.

The release of WCC99 has to be my favourite 'wanted' list title and if you ask whether it stood up to my expectations then I would have to say 'yes' and 'no'. The first and most beholdng feature of the game is the scintillating graphics engine that was developed from scratch and initiated into the cricketing genre with much respect. Player animations are motioned captures from the multi-talented Adam Hollioake and the 500+ moves show exactly what the PC is capable of producing. The bowler actions and key power stroke of the batsman are wonderful to behold, especially in slow motion replays. Each of the true cricketing venues of the host England has been painstakingly reproduced to simulate the event to its maximum. Venues such as Lords and the never to be forgotten Trent Bridge with its flat pitch and swinging cloud cover are identical to the actual venue. The control mechanism in WCC99 has to get a special mention because of its innovative and easy to use approach to controlling the bowler and batsman. More so the bowling because it incorporates elements of the game that other games have battled to simulate. The way in which you can swing, seam, pace and change the flight of the ball takes the skill factor to the next level. A swing meter similar to that of a golf game is used which relies on a fair amount of timing to deliver the ball exactly as wanted. This in turn makes the batting a little more difficult than normal but it also has one of the best control mechanisms seen in the game. A number of different options of control can be configured and surprisingly the mouse option is one of the best to use. A cone shaped pointer controls the direction and a simple mechanism of timing and a click will dispatch the ball,

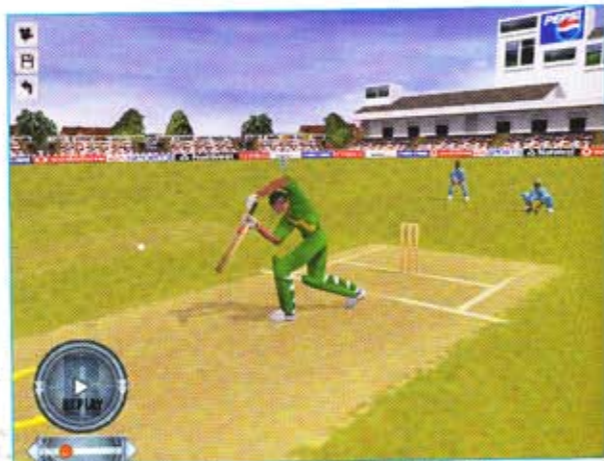
hopefully, in the direction indicated. Both mechanisms of bowling and batting combined make for some interesting and challenging gameplay that is normally lacking from cricket titles. Something that must be mentioned is the ability of the batsman to move around the crease and even double step and slog the bowler. The temperament of a cricket title normally revolves around the way in which you can control your fielding positions and WCC99 is the most expandable around. More often than not you will end up making major changes to the default positions because EA have not checked archives of standard fielding positions and you normally get Jonty Rhodes playing at third man or



likes of Richie Benaud and David Gower commenting with their usual witty temperament. Realistic pitch worts and venue conditions are gloriously commented on and add true TV style atmosphere to the game. EA have managed to bring the excitement of the commentary to the game of cricket, but not without the odd bug or two that normally creeps into the fray. Nevertheless, the crowds and the commentators do however add character to the game by creating atmosphere with responses to every delivery. The game offers Practice Nets to practice your bowling and batting to your hearts content, as well as a selection of One-Day games including the World Cup and a Super Sixes Tournament. It



well as a selection of One-Day games including the World Cup and a Super Sixes Tournament. It



LANGE KLUSENER BENDING THE SIXES



"IF HE CATCHES THIS, THEY'LL WIN THE GAME"

ICC Cricket World Cup England 99

G Kirsten	b Nash	1 (6)
D Cullinan	run out (Vettori)	1 (8)
H Gibbs	c Vettori b Nash	5 (4)
J Kallis	c Fleming b Cairns	0 (2)
H Cronje	c Vettori b Nash	0 (3)
J Rhodes	c Parore b Nash	0 (2)
S Pollock	c&b Cairns	0 (1)
L Klusener	not out	1 (10)
M Boucher	bw Doull	1 (4)
P Symcox	bw Vettori	5 (8)
A Donald	b Doull	0 (4)
Extras		1
Over: 6.5		15 / 10

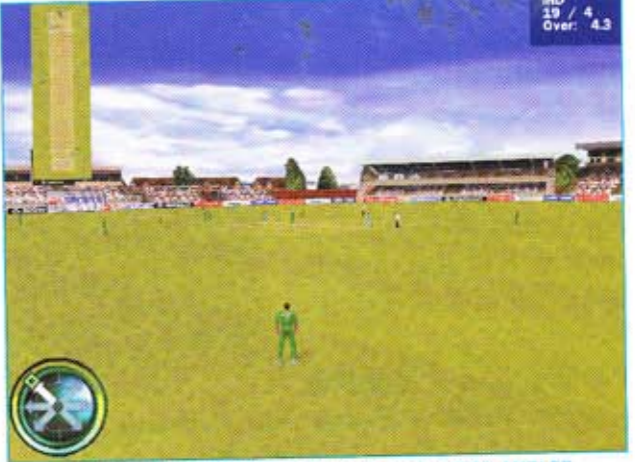
THE COMMENTATORS WERE LOST FOR WORDS, THE SOUTH AFRICAN SIDE PUT ON THE WORST BATTING PERFORMANCE EVER...

would have been nice to have added value thrown in by adding a Test series but that is most probably in the works for release as a full product. My personal opinion is that it should have been included but with the timing issue so prominent at hand it was obviously out of the question, but will be on my look outs list when the 2000 series arrives. Unfortunately there are some major issues that are the direct result of rushing the title for the World Cup event. Firstly the computer controlled AI is a little erratic and amusing at the same time. Sometimes after the ball has been lobbed to the bowler you are able to steal a quick single and therefore make up a few more runs at its discretion. The obvious omission of the left handed batsman is one of those rushed oversights due to timing constraints and is said to be rectified with the first patch. But nevertheless its irritating to receive review code that has these disconcerting omissions. Another irritation are the squads

available for selection that still have a few older and unavailable players in the line-up, but this is a minor problem for South Africa as the squad at least has all the current players and more. Certain batting bugs occur at the most inopportune of times, with the ball consistently being hit to the same fielder. The normal natural high standards of EA have been tested with the ball physics after hitting the bat showing signs of gravitational problems. Certain boundary shots seem to keep the ball in the air at almost horizontal ease, defying the laws of gravity. All these issues are bugs that must be sorted out to create the all-round package that was expected in the first place. WCC99 would have certainly been the cricket title to take all sporting honours but was pushed to favour the release. Though many debates can go on about that, I feel that WCC99 gives you sufficient attention to overlook the problems and enjoy the game. The patch will however be a major part of finishing off the product the way it should have been released. EA have made good with their promises to be leaders in



I CAUGHT A FISH THIS BIG ONCE



THERE ARE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF CAMERA ANGLES

their field with WCC99 but with the strong competition of Codemasters' Brian Lara Cricket on their heels, more work needs to be done to widen the gap. The overall impression is a good one and an enjoyable one especially with the hype of the World Cup event fuelling the need to play cricket at every waking moment on the PC. This is but a stepping stone to what can actually be achieved and WCC99 shows the potential. Finally cricket is being highlighted as a game that deserves recognition on the PC. As much as I have enjoyed WCC99 I have only been given a taste of what can be achieved and hope that WCC2000 is the FIFA 99 of the cricket genre.

Developer: Creative Assembly | **Publisher:** EA Sports | **Supplier:** Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212 | **RRP:** R 199.00

<http://www.ea.co.za>

Multiplayer: Yes	Comparatives: Brian Lara Cricket EA Cricket 97	Pro's: Excellent Graphics Smooth Animations Ease of Control	Con's: AI Bugs Commentary Bugs Bad Ball Physics
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Min Requirements: Pentium II 233 32 MB Ram 2 X CD Rom 1 MB SVGA Video 130 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Recommended: Pentium II 233 32+ MB Ram 4+ X CD Rom 4 MB 3D Accelerator 130+ MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)
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Graphics: 92	Sound: 72	Control: 85	Story: NA	Continuity: 75	Playability: 69
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79

Earth - We follow the precepts of our father. Use no magic when steel and muscle suffice, or disaster and chaos will follow. We keep the law. Our armies enforce it.

HONOR, VENGEANCE, HOPE, TERROR.

Four Kingdoms, four creeds.

Four immortal siblings have fought for 1500 years to rule the land of Darien. But one of the rivals

discovers an ancient artifact, and it shatters the balance of power overnight. Massive armies collide.

Supernatural forces level entire cities. Chaos destroys the land and the stability of the universe is shaken forever.



Features

- Four unique sides with different build hierarchies
- Hardware support for improved graphics and special effects
- Rich, in-depth story and character development
- Physical changes in veteran units
- Lay siege to castles and cities
- Non-Player humans, wandering monsters and life forms
- Pre-built multiplayer bases and/or units
- Multiplayer missions & varied victory conditions
- Switchable radar/main map view
- Custom keyboard mapping
- Multiplayer capabilities over LAN, TCP/IP, modem and Internet

Wind - Time has forgotten us and we have forgotten time. Our city is the forest. Our road is the wind. Those who visit our shores uninvited will perish.

Fire,

We seek the unknown. We find knowledge and power hidden from ordinary minds. Through skill and study, we will attain the impossible and the world will tremble.

Four powerful siblings.

A vanished monarch.

One massive realm.

The epic quest to control it all begins this June.

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Water

We travel the way. We have seen sights our siblings can only imagine. Faraway lands share their secrets with us. We explore. We discover. We build our wealth.

The sequel to KKND involves three nations warring for world domination and neither side will give up till either its enemies and/or the world has been destroyed. The same plot has been used in countless other games and sci-fi movies alike, but no one seems to realise it's getting old, as are numerous other aspects of Krossfire... **Madman**

Well once again, as in most other Real Time Strategy games, you're out for world domination, whether by hook, crook or excessive



violence. From the start, Krossfire underimpresses. I've always been quite sceptical about the functionality of RTS games on the PlayStation mainly due to the fact that an RTS game isn't particularly suited to a game pad. Unfortunately I was right. The control is extremely dodgy, immediately detracting from the gameplay. I found it difficult to select individual units and issuing commands was just as painful, it's laborious and difficult and even after playing a few rounds I never felt comfortable and in control. The game does have Dual Shock support though I found that to be more of a gimmick, Dual Shock is better suited to fighting and racing games or when put to good use in a game like Metal Gear Solid. Scrolling around isn't particularly hard but singling out an individual unit is too time consuming, resulting in frustration and sometimes ruining a good strategic ploy just because you can't move tank A to position B. The graphics are of a decent quality... from a Master System point of view, but the units are small, badly detailed and fuzzy making it hard to distinguish between them. The



REAL TIME STRATEGY ON THE PLAYSTATION IS A RARE EXPERIENCE

graphics are virtually identical to those of its predecessor on the computer, giving you an idea of how dated they look. Another area in which KKND fails is

sound. Awful tunes are complemented by awful effects that combine to make an awful experience... Igor, bring me my earmuffs!

BUT HOW DOES IT PLAY?

You have two modes to play, either the normal campaign mode or Kaos mode (i.e. skirmish mode). In the campaign mode you choose one of the 3 factions - the Series 9 are the new ones, you'll recall KKND only had 2 nations; the Survivors who hid in bunkers during the first war, shielded from the nuclear explosion; and the Evolved (formerly known as the Mutes) who stayed upon the Earth's surface and somehow survived the explosion and their brains weren't fried, just lightly sautéed in natural juices. They believe the Earth is rightfully theirs and their primary units are weird, mutated beasts and other natural nasties as opposed to the Survivors' mechanical menaces. The Series 9 robots are the agricultural robots that went slightly insane as a result of the explosion and they are now striving for world domination using their armoured tractors and ploughs. The problem with the campaign missions is that first of all you don't get to build in the first missions which makes them quite boring and once you lose your first batch of units that's it. The first missions usually consist of moving one or a group of units to someplace else on the map with

enemies patrolling all the roads etc. You basically have to figure out the correct path and avoid fighting as much as you can so as to preserve the lifespan of your units since no replacements are available. It also isn't all that submersive; you don't really feel like you're doing very much. You can't really plan any strategy; you just move your units around the map and watch them die. The missions are quite difficult, even the early ones making the



learning curve steep and frustrating. There is seemingly no purpose to doing the same mission over and over again till you find the exact right path to guide your single unit along since it is too weak to fend for itself. Kaos mode is good for a group but that is when KKND's faults really start to show. In Kaos mode you find out that the differences between the different nations is just cosmetic, most units are virtually identical underneath. The best multiplayer strategy is to just sit back and guard your base letting everyone else kill each other. Whilst it may be cowardly you're almost guaranteed to win.

COMMANDED AND CONQUERED

The game does feature one nice touch and that's the ability to go up against the computer with a friend via a split screen multiple player option, which turned out to be fun and this feature manages to rescue the title somewhat. The game has a few good points but dissappoints overall. You're better off getting Warzone 2100 or even the original Command & Conquer. A failed attempt is the best way to describe KKND 2... maybe



someone will eventually decide to grace our TV screens with a decent RTS game as it seems the PlayStation is seriously lacking in this genre.



MADMAN

GENRE
Real Time Strategy

Controller Support: Vibration Function Compatible

Optional Extras: Memory Card 1 Block, 1-2 Player

Developer: Melbourne House
Publisher: Infogrames
Supplier: Star Kinekor Interactive (011) 445-7900
RRP: R 329.00

<http://www.melbournehouse.com>

Multplayer	Comparitives	Pro's	Con's
Yes	Command & Conquer Warzone 2100	Addictive Multiplayer Three Races Last in the Series	Poor Story Lacking Game Play Useless Control

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
61	51	53	69	68	59

60

The two player mode is fun on the same machine against the computer. But ultimately a failed attempt. The PlayStation is still in need of a decent RTS title... maybe someone will answer our cries with the new batch arriving this year.

The mysterious killers of ancient Japan, the shadowy members of the Ninja Clans, have been the subject of many books, movies and games. Their incredible ability to hide in shadows and stealthily enter and leave heavily guarded establishments made them the stuff of wonder amongst their peers - a fascination that continues to this very day. Hours of research have gone into their ways, their methods and their beliefs, and a great amount of material concerning the subject is available today. - **Shryke**

TENCHU

STEALTH ASSASSINS



Why is it, then, that so many computer games based on Ninjas are so lame? Most seem to be platform type arcade shooters, in which the characters run through a myriad of locations and kill everything that moves. Not very ninja-like, really. Which brings us to Tenchu. Unlike its forerunners, Tenchu is an impressive collection of challenging, third person perspective Ninja missions in the service of Lord Goda, a feudal Japanese warlord. Within the game, you are given the choice of two characters (Rik Maru or Ayame), both of whom have particular strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, prior to each mission, you get to visit the little weapon storeroom and stock up



MAY I SLICE YOUR FLESH WITH MY SWORD

on throwing knives, caltrops, smoke bombs and other useful implements. Each mission sends the character into unknown territory, and success relies on stealth, guile and fighting skill - with the least emphasis on the final one. As a matter of fact, the fewer enemies you bump into along the way, the better your chances of getting through each mission are. But what's Tenchu like to play? Honestly, it's pretty middle of the road, neither the best nor worst game around. Graphically, Tenchu tends towards the lower end of the scale. It's not a particularly pretty game, with characters that are slightly blocky and stilted movements. It takes some getting used to, running around with these strange brick men at your disposal, but once you get past the initial disappointment, the graphics don't disturb too much. The sound of the game is also fairly nondescript, with a mildly annoying ever-present background ditty throughout every mission. One aspect of the sound and sound effects that redeems Tenchu is the game's use of authentic Japanese accents - no westernised, fake "ah-sos" and the like. Controlling your chosen Ninja is fairly simple - the game avoids complex button combinations and tends towards ease of play rather than complicated movements.



Combination movements are possible, of course, but these are not vital to game play. Unfortunately, combat can take some getting used to. The whole system is simple in-principle, with a basic rocker and button combination to attack and block. The problem comes in with facing. Your character does not automatically face enemies, and turning is quite slow. It is therefore fairly important to stay back and keep opponents in front of you as much as possible. Which brings us to the question of violence in the game. The cover of Tenchu bears a stern 18 age restriction, although playing the game does not always indicate why. Yes, it is bloody and quite brutal, but TV is pretty much the same these days, so what's the big thing with the age restriction? One can only interpret this as referring to the fact that your character is an assassin - the game has, in short, what can only be described as questionable motives. Without launching into any kind of argument condoning or condemning in-game violence, suffice to say that players should consider this factor before starting a game of Tenchu.

On the whole, Tenchu is a solid game, if somewhat dated in its execution (excuse the pun). Yes, the graphics aren't wonderful, and the sounds aren't something you'd hear in a George Lucas movie, but the freshness of approach and the accuracy of the background utilised by Tenchu make it something of a winner. Add to that a good story filled with intrigue, betrayal and the pursuit of honour, and you have a game that is well worth the effort. All in all, a fun game that takes the Ninja genre to a new and deserved level.



SHRYKE

GENRE
Fighting Game

Controller Support: Vibration Function Compatible

Optional Extras: Memory Card 1 Block, 1 Player

Although not the prettiest game to look at or listen to, Tenchu is a fine example of the Ninja game genre, relying on stealth and guile rather than on how many times you can hit your fire button. A violent, engrossing tale set in Feudal Japan, Tenchu is well worth the time.

Developer: Activision
Publisher: Activision
Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000
RRP: R 429.00

<http://www.activision.com>

Multplayer	Comparitives	Pro's	Con's
No	Bushido Blade	Decent Story Challenging Missions Good Variety	Poor Graphics Average Sound Dated

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
61	63	80	85	85	70

74

The whole thing with racing games, see, is the fact that there are just so damn many of them. And, as is the case with all kinds of saturation, the addition of more racing games to the pool merely serves to dilute the mix even further - effectively removing the impact that these games have on their players. Of course, there are exceptions to the rule. These are few and far between, true, but they do occur. These are the few shining examples of racing games that bend the rules, explore new avenues, and generally push the limit just a little bit. Tank Racer is such a game.

Shryke

So what makes Tank Racer different? Well, there are a number of points to consider. Firstly, rather than driving around in stunning, state-of-the-art speed machines, you're crammed into a clunky tank.

TANK RACER

Admittedly, these tanks are faster than your average armoured destruction craft, but it would be pretty bland racing tanks around a track at 30 kph. The very fact that you are sitting in a tank adds the next point of interest to the game. By default, driving around in a vehicle with a 30 pound cannon strapped to it gives you the ability to blow the living daylight out of everything around you, and Tank Racer takes full advantage of this. Finally, chuck some wacky, bumpy, windy tracks into the mix, and you are left with a game of vehicular mayhem that ranks up there with the best of them.

Tank Racer sends the player whirling around various precarious tracks in either one or two player mode. The aim, obviously, is to win the race. To this end, the player is granted full control over his weapon turret, which can be turned to the left or right through a full 360-degree arc - and, of course, fired at opponents. Unfortunately, shooting an opponent does not blow him to kingdom come. It does, however, slow him down, adding to the fun of the game. Various weapon power ups are available on the tracks, including mines, homing missiles, turbo boosts and alien abduction markers (don't ask

New Age Gaming Exclusive Give away

Reserve judgement on Tank Racer until you receive your free demo copy.

Multimedia Warehouse has kindly sponsored 50 demo copies of Tank Racer for the Playstation. We will be giving away the demos to the first 50 Playstation owners that write in, so get moving. Address your letters to: Free Stuff, P.O.Box 2749, Alberton, 1449 : E-mail: letters@nag.co.za

which enhance the mayhem of the game.

Tank Racer is a fairly good-looking game, with terrain that is bright, cheery, and destructible! You can drive through walls and over parked cars in your quest for victory, should you prefer

selected at the start of the race. However, once you have it right, the game is maniacally funny and a great deal of fun. Using the controller is simple, once you have the various control functions down - it seems that the designers wanted to concentrate on fun and not

on technical difficulty when it comes to Tank Racer, which is absolutely fine by me. The fact that the game is not complicated in the control department allows the player to immerse himself in game-play without worrying about what his hands are doing. Tank Racer is fast and furious fun, as well as being highly addictive. Some of the normal laws of physics seem to have been suspended for the benefit of the game, adding to the fun, almost cartoon element of the whole situation. It is a racing game with a difference - a definite breath of fresh air in a somewhat stale genre. Serious car simulator enthusiasts may find Tank Racer mildly annoying, particularly if they take life too seriously. However, the average game player will more than likely be captured by Tank Racer's offbeat charm and wide appeal.



to deviate from the track. Minimal deviation is possible, making tactics like ambushes and the like possible, if you like wasting time waiting for opponents rather than careening around the track. The game is packed full of bangs, booms and roaring engines; enough to whip the insanity up to fever pitch. Controlling the tank takes a little getting used to, and the tank's performance depends heavily on the model that you



SHOOT WHOEVER'S IN FRONT OF YOU!

SHRYKE

GENRE
Tank Racing

Controller Support
Vibration Function Compatible
Analog Controller Compatible

Optional Extras
Memory Card 1 Block
1-2 Player

Developer: Glass Ghost
Publisher: Grolier Interactive
Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000
RRP: R 429.00
<http://tankracer.grolier.co.uk>

Multiplayer Yes
Comparitives Running Wild
Pro's Easy to Control Great Addictive Fun Good Multiplayer
Con's Very Average Too Easy

Graphics 67
Sound 61
Control 72
Story NA
Continuity 63
Playability 71

67

Tank Racer is a crazy, careening race through destructible landscapes. Your tank is armed with a turreted cannon, perfect for blasting opponents as you barrel through village streets and across sleepy pastures. This mayhem filled racing game will get you hooked!

What can be said about Bruce Willis that hasn't already been said? The ultimate nice guy action hero, "Bruno" has a following of millions of fans who flock to his movies around the world. And he has done it all. Action, drama, comedy... you name it, Bruce has been in it. Now he appears as the "star" of Apocalypse, a game from Activision.

Shryke

So how did they do it? Mr Willis was motion captured and digitally scanned before being turned into Trey Kincaid, the anti-hero of this gloomy game. Then, just for good measure, Activision had Bruce record a whole bunch of phrases and comments, which are flung around

nano-physicist of note. A convicted criminal, the game kicks off with an excellent cut scene of Kincaid being sentenced to death, and attempting a breakout. Thereafter, the game hurls the player into a world of violence as Kincaid blasts his way out of prison, through sewer systems, rampages down city streets and surreal war factories. There is no thought here and no remorse - in Apocalypse you kill everything that moves.

And there is a hell of a lot of moving stuff, seeing as how Kincaid is an escaped convict.

Everybody wants him dead, and most people try to get him that way. This creates a strange irony within the game - he has to destroy those who he is supposed to save, in order to save them. Okay, down to the nitty gritty. Apocalypse is, quite simply, a third person blaster game. Literally. Blast everything in sight, and you should get through it okay. The story line is pretty linear, without much variation in the way the levels are to

be completed - every now and then an alternate path will be opened to the player, but these are rare, and always lead to the same place.

Graphically, Apocalypse is one of the best I've seen. The game is beautifully put together, with stunning backdrops for the well-modelled characters to run around on. The motion of the characters, too, is well handled, and people familiar with Bruce Willis will recognise more than just his voice when controlling Kincaid. Even his motions and actions are perfectly mimicked by this game. Even the camera angles are used in a very effective fashion. The camera is far from being static during game play; it



BRUCE WILLIS DOING WHAT HE DOES BEST...

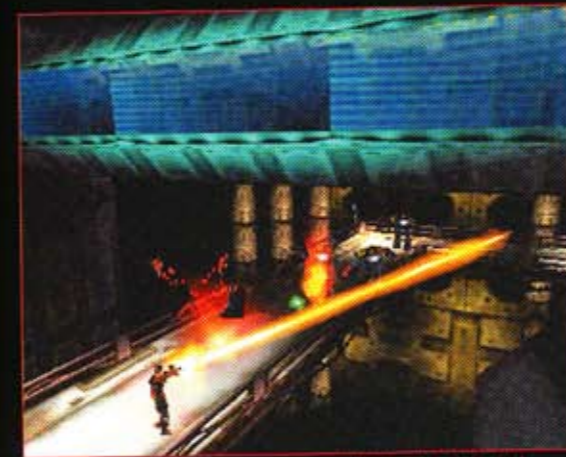
swoops, zooms out, zooms in and changes angles quite often. This takes a bit of getting used to, but when you're in the groove with the moving view, it enhances the game tenfold. Controlling Kincaid couldn't be simpler. Obviously movement is controlled by the rocker switch, while the four main control buttons do nothing more than fire in different directions. The "front" buttons on the controller handles other functions, such as jumping, crouching, changing weapons and firing the all powerful, screen-clearing smart bomb. On to the sound effects and music. Quite simply, they're great. Bruce's constant comments are quite amusing,

and the ambient effects are stunningly handled. The game is well supplied with health bonuses and weapon changes, including Rip Lasers, guided missiles, particle beams, flame throwers and grenades, to name but a few. The game works on a check point system - each time you die, you respawn at the last checkpoint you passed. You may only save at the

end of each level, which can get a bit annoying, but shouldn't cause too many problems for the average player. All in all Apocalypse is a violent, non-stop blast-o-rama of fun. Definitely worth while having.

APOCALYPSE

during the course of the game with gay abandon. What this creates is a feeling of actually directing Bruno in a sci-fi action film of note. Apocalypse is a tale of the end of the world, as brought about by a rather disturbed scientist who "creates" the four horsemen of the Apocalypse in a quasi-religious, semi-scientific ritual. Naturally, he is the nice kind of guy who wants to bring about the end of the world and, just as naturally, only one man can stop him. Enter Trey Kincaid, his former student and



THEY'VE GOT REALLY BIG GUNS IN THE FUTURE!

SHRYKE

GENRE
Arcade Action

Controller Support
Analog Controller Compatible
Vibration Function Compatible

Optional Extras
Memory Card 1 Block
1 Player

Developer: Activision
Publisher: Activision
Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000
RRP: R 429.00
<http://www.activision.com>

Multiplayer No
Comparitives Small Soldiers Commando
Pro's Easy to Play Brilliant Graphics Excellent Sound
Con's Slightly Mindless

Graphics 84
Sound 87
Control 85
Story 78
Continuity 85
Playability 86

84

A violent spree through the far future, you control Bruce Willis as he undertakes saving the world. Blast your way through prisons, sewers and war factories in this action packed 3rd person winner! But beware, very little thought is needed to get through it.

Just how far you can take a concept is often explored and exploited by game developing companies to the upper limits of endurance. Judging from the look of things, rainbow coloured bubbles seem to be quite a hit in some circles. Isn't it amazing what some people call entertainment?

SEVEN COLOURFUL BUBBLES
The idea behind the game is so effectively simplistic that it defies an easy explanation, the overall concept has changed very little since the first game was released around six years ago. Fans of the previous instalments will feel instantly at home but newcomers will need a few practice sessions to get used to how things work in this world overrun by bubbles. The basic idea is to shoot differently coloured bubbles up into layers of other bubbles. If a bubble makes contact with two or more similarly coloured bubbles, they all go pop clearing space. You must clear all the bubbles within a specific time limit or it's game over - simple. To make things tougher and all the more frantic the bubble mass above you keeps lowering at specific time intervals until it reaches the bottom, ending your game. Besides the standard coloured bubbles there are a few other types of bubbles that add a new dimension to the game. One of them is the Star Bubble that acts like a colour chain reaction, eliminating all the bubbles on the screen of a certain colour, the Rainbow Bubble changes into the colour of the eliminated bubble touching it. Finally, adding a new twist is the Anti-Gravity Bubble that always floats upward, taking any attached bubbles with it. A number of different game options are available starting with the basic Arcade option where you must clear rounds to continue, the Story Puzzle option requires round clearing and card collecting. The Puzzle option introduces a new slant on the action where you must add or remove bubbles from a pulley system, it's always in your best interests to maintain a balance so both weighted sides stay as far away from the bottom

as possible. Besides those nasty pulleys the Puzzle game also has more standard levels where you need to figure out the best



turned off for purists). If you manage to eliminate bubbles above other bubbles these orphaned bubbles will drop off the screen because they

BUST-A-MOVE 4

bubble clearing route before the timer hits zero, some are easy and others deviously simple. All this can also be played against another human player and this

is where the title comes into it's own - you see as you clear bubbles they are added to your opponents side making for some heated games with people screaming at rainbow coloured bubbles.

EDITING A CHAIN REACTION
Being a sequel almost everything has received some work, the graphics look fresher and more detailed with plenty of animation and some special effects. The sound effects while different tend to grate a little, but this is offset by the pleasant musical score so a balance is reached. One thing you will find is that certain sound effects aren't welcome mainly due to the fact that they spell some or other impending disaster. That's the short and tall of it, as far as cosmetics go the real changes have been made to the way the game plays. The



have nothing to hold onto. Usually these bubbles drop away never to be seen again, but in Bust-A-Move 4 they come back with deadly force, eliminating other similarly coloured bubbles above them. This chain reaction can often clear an entire screen in a few seconds and can swing a losing game around instantly. This option only works in two-player mode. Another addition to the game is a new editing option. In the game editor you can set up different screens and even create your own set of rounds that can be transported via memory card from machine to machine. The edit mode is in its infancy and doesn't offer any real powerful controls and you're limited to just placing bubbles and setting up elaborate single levels. There isn't any support for

and even create your own set of rounds that can be transported via memory card from machine to machine. The edit mode is in its infancy and doesn't offer any real powerful controls and you're limited to just placing bubbles and setting up elaborate single levels. There isn't any support for

pulleys or special time limits but then these will surely end up in Bust-A-Move 5 some day.

SO YOU'RE LEFT WITH WHAT EXACTLY?
It's a great game in every respect, a nice change of pace for those who tire of slaughtering zombies, collecting gems or racing cars. The puzzle market is about as diverse as you can get. Bust-A-Move 4 is exactly what you'd expect from a title like this except for the addition of the edit mode it offers nothing really special. The game has a loyal following, which will ensure its continued success, its fun, frustrating and has more than enough levels to keep you busy for weeks. The two-player mode adds plenty of life, if it's nothing else it's good clean fun.



HEY, WAIT A MINUTE, DOESN'T THAT LOOK LIKE...

game plays. The biggest change has to be the new chain reaction (this option can be

biggest change has to be the new chain reaction (this option can be



REDTIDE

GENRE
Puzzle Game

Controller Support
Vibration Function Compatible

Optional Extras
Memory Card 1 Block
1-2 Player

Developer: Taito
Publisher: Acclaim
Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000
RRP: R 329.00

<http://www.acclaim.com>

Multiplayer: Yes
Comparitives: Tetris, Bubble Bobble
Pro's: Addictive, Puzzle Concept, Fun, Two Player
Con's: Limited Single Play, Poor Editor

Graphics: 81
Sound: 79
Control: 83
Story: 63
Continuity: 88
Playability: 89

81

Bust-A-Move 4 is good fun for the whole family, if this prospect gives you gooseflesh then it probably isn't going to be your kind of game. The title is aimed at the younger market but don't be surprised if you end up wasting hours on it.

PlayStation™ PLATINUM



WIPEOUT 2097

The ultra fast world of Wipeout awaits you. Grab your control, strap on your helmet, and take to the high-speed tracks in your high tech hovercraft, racing against opponents both ruthless and skillful. The adrenaline pumping action of Wipeout takes you to the fastest speedways around the world, where you will compete with the best hovercraft pilots in the business, for the ultimate prize. So, whether your choice of vehicle is the Feisar, AG, Auricom or Qirex, or whether you prefer the challenge of Vector, Venom or Rapier class tracks, the super speed of Wipeout 2097 is made just for you.



INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD

Do you have what it takes to beat the best of the world's athletes at their own game? Are you strong enough, hard enough, tough enough to take on the best of the best, striving for new world records? Or do you belong in the stands? Take part in 100 meter sprints, hurdles, long jump, high jump, pole vault, discus, hammer throw, javelin and freestyle swimming events as you strive to better your opponents in this exciting and challenging sports game. Only the strongest have a place on the winner's podium. Do you have what it takes to claim your place amongst the world's super track and field stars?



PANDEMONIUM

Enter the 3D-fantasy world of Pandemonium with Nikki the trapeze artist and Fargus the jester. Partake in a crazy platform adventure through these magical lands, collecting coins and magical weapons, including fireballs, shrink rays and freeze rays. Run through a shape-changing gate, and you could even find yourself in the guise of a rhino or dragon! Sweeping camera angles and precarious levels add together to make the world of Pandemonium a magical, living realm full of challenge, adventure and fun. Experience this exciting Platinum range title on your PlayStation console, and leave the dreary real world behind.



PORSCHE CHALLENGE

Not everyone can handle a fast sports car around some of the most challenging tracks in the world. Whirl around these tests of skill and nerve in your simulated Porsche Boxster, Porsche's latest motoring triumph. Speed around one of twenty-four beautifully rendered tracks with the driver of your choice, using either an automatic or manual tiptronic transmission. Real time lighting sources and excellent shading bring these speedways to life as you pit your machine against those of your competitors in the ultimate street race event of the decade. So what are you waiting for? Leap behind the wheel and burn some serious rubber!

If you're on a tight budget and want to add to your PlayStation collection then these Platinum titles are the perfect choice. All of them are classic games at a reduced price, that achieved Classic Status when originally released.
RRP R199.00

CRASH BANDICOOT 2: CORTEX STRIKES BACK



The evil mastermind Cortex is back, and this time he ain't kidding! Our hero, Crash Bandicoot, returns in this hilarious, high-speed adventure to try and thwart the plans of the horrific villain and save the world. Guide Crash as he ice skates, avoids flesh eating plants, dodges razor backed turtles and performs death defying leaps. With an improved free roaming 3D world, jam packed with a host of colourful characters, Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back, takes the platform game genre to another level, with sweeping camera angles and stunning graphics to boot! The endless fun of this game is so addictive, you'll never want to stop playing it - your friends will think that you have died!



COOL BOARDERS 2

Radical half pipe action, downhill races and excellent jumping action. These are the elements of Cool Boarders 2, where you can feel the thrill of riding a real snowboard. Dodge and weave on the downhills, perform gravity defying stunts in the half pipe or hurtle from the tremendous ski jumps. Customise the look of your snowboarder, and choose the board that suits you best. All this is within the scope of a truly cool game. Carve the fresh powder with a board built for speed or wow the crowd on your half-pipe trick board. Perform tail grabs and daring 360s, no matter where you are. But beware - the cliffs and slopes of these white hills are not for the weak of will!



MULTIPLAYER MAYHEM

The question of computer game violence and its effect on those that play the games has become something of a hot spot all over the world – even national leaders like US President Bill Clinton are now expressing concern over the current situation. In fact, the debate has got to a point where occurrences like the massacre at a high school in Littleton, Connecticut, situated in the North Eastern United States, during which two school children killed several of their peers before committing suicide, have been blamed on computer game violence.

For many years, violent entertainment, including films and television, have been blamed for events of this nature. The real question lies in whether such accusations are based on fact, or whether so called “mother grundies” are on just another witch-hunt, trying to blame the problems of modern society on the most obvious sources.

Let's face it – we live in a seriously messed up world. Crime, particularly violent crime, pervades society so thoroughly that every moment of every day seems affected by it – particularly in countries like South Africa. Just how much of this can be blamed on violent entertainment? Is it fair to state that brutality in movies, on TV and on the computer monitor are responsible for most, or even a part, of these dreadful happenings? Or should we start looking at our society as a whole more thoroughly, more critically, and try to find the root of these evils somewhere other than what appears on screens and monitors around the world? Should an entire, enormous industry be changed for the few occurrences of violence that it may be

BINARY BLOODSHED



responsible for – the statistics speak for themselves, after all. There, to quote Hamlet, is the rub. The current situation has given rise to two distinct schools of thought. Those that state that “killing pixels rather than people” is somehow therapeutic – an outlet for stored up anger – and those that argue by saying violence is far too pervasive and present in what we define as entertainment and recreation.

The question that NAG wants to ask is quite simply: where is this all going to lead, and what kind of impact is this heated debate going to have on the computer game industry? Certainly, should it somehow be proved that violent entertainment has no effect on those who make use of it, the industry will simply chug along as always, as though nothing ever happened.



On the other hand, though, we have to face the possibility that certain rules and regulations may be imposed on computer games and developers in the future. This could have very far-reaching and unfortunate consequences for the average, non-gun-toting gamer. Imagine no more first person shooters, no more real-time strategy and no more combat simulations. The computer game world will become doomed to endless streams of puzzles and tame simulators – not the best of situations for anyone involved. This type of restriction will

kill the computer game industry as effectively as a bullet to the head, if you'll excuse the analogy. The solution? That's another big question. Perhaps stricter controls should be placed on the retail side of games. Retailers and

responsible adults, whether gamers or persons buying games for others, will need to begin exercising caution and discretion when acquiring new software. Maybe developers should institute some kind of “parental control” on games not suitable for younger or impressionable gamers. What the entire situation boils down to is a sticky mess of “maybes” and “what ifs”. The only certainty is that the debate is long from over, and judging by current developments, could swing either way. Suffice to say that we hope it doesn't send the industry spiralling down into spiritless submission.

COMPUTER GAMING LEAGUE: THE EVOLUTION

Fond memories of the early days of serial connections come streaming back to me. The first in the line of true competitive games came tumbling down the developer channels after the world became infatuated with competitive play. Games such as Doom, Command & Conquer and Warcraft were the forefathers of this growing art. Now as time has progressed and technology has taken giant leaps forward, we are in the state of yearning for what could be potentially bigger than the Super 12.

As today's developments enter the market we are being inundated with new techniques and structures on what could be a better competitive gaming experience. As developers vie for the crown of top multiplayer game, we keep fuelling their money-making schemes with our deep obsessions of champion status. Now with the first releases of multiplayer only games already on our shelves we await the crown prince of multiplayer only games, Quake 3. This assumption can only be made because of the world-wide support of its predecessors Doom, Doom2, Quake and Quake 2 and the cult like status that the originators id



www.glsa.co.za



NIR BROODZIAN (LEFT), GENERAL MANAGER OF CREATIVE LABS AFRICA, AND ANDREW OH (RIGHT), SENIOR CHANNEL MARKETING EXECUTIVE OF CREATIVE LABS SINGAPORE. CREATIVE LABS ARE THE MAJOR SPONSORSHIP BACKBONE OF WORFAIRE '1999.

Software have received over the years. With a heritage such as this who would back another horse? But, in such a volatile industry anything is possible as opinion's change on a dime.

We are to be proud of South Africa's involvement in creating need for more multiplayer games. The true stats show that less than >1% of SA households have a PC in their homes. This if compared against the USA market, which has figures of more than 46% of PC in their homes, shows that we have tremendous scope for improvement. However, with the few and far between multiplayer competitions we have seen splattered across the country, we have had such wonderful response. The invention of the LAN party (multiplayer party) may not have originated in South Africa, but we are firmly set at the front of the cue. With dozens, if not hundreds of smaller and bigger events

being held every week, we are on the verge of creating our own socially active gaming league. Since the beginning of time, hobbies have become more than that by adding the competitive edge to the system, why should ours be any different? If you could earn a fair living doing what you normally do in your spare time, what could be better?

The obvious obstacles of a gaming league revolve around money, sponsorship and resources. Many people will ask why? We can do this in the community on our own. The truth is, our hobby is one of the most expensive to govern and the logistics are tedious to control. Manpower is something that can be easily overcome but convincing the industry and companies there in, that we are sitting on the edge of one of the biggest competitive platforms since the Olympic Games is an arduous task. As you can tell, we are along way off from that, but with an industry that was an infant ten years ago, and is now bigger than Hollywood, anything is possible.

The first steps as an infant are being taken in South Africa already with the advent of WORFAIRE and the Gamers League of South Africa (GLSA, the website is <http://www.glsa.co.za>) as well as the South Africa Computer Gamers Network (SACGN, the website being <http://www.sacgn.co.za>). These small steps are giant leaps in our time, remember this column in a few years time when South Africa holds its first PGL event. Who knows what could be next, The Matrix?

JAZZ JACKRABBIT 2

the secret files



JAZZ JACKRABBIT 2
included
FREE
+ WIN
PRIZES

NEW!!
3RD PLAYABLE
CHARACTER
LORI



Jazz Jackrabbit 2 'the secret files' and the Jazz logo © and © 1997 Epic MegaGames Inc. All rights reserved. Published under exclusive license from Epic MegaGames Inc. by Project Two Interactive BV, A PMR Group Company.

GAMETRONIX

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New Chips on the Block

NAG investigates the Next Generation 3D Acceleration Chipsets and comes up with some surprising results.

THINGS ARE HEATING UP AS THE MAKERS OF TODAY'S 3D-ACCELERATION CHIPS RELEASE THEIR NEXT GENERATION CHIPSETS TO MANUFACTURERS. IF THERE IS ONE THING ABOUT GAMERS THAT I HAVE LEARN'T IN ALL MY YEARS OF PLAYING GAMES, IT IS THAT THEY GET VERY ATTACHED TO BRANDED PRODUCTS AND ARE ALMOST 'RELIGIOUS' ABOUT THEM. THE MAIN PLAYERS IN THE MARKET ARE 3DFX WITH THEIR VOODOO 3 CHIPSET, NVIDIA WITH THEIR NEW TNT 2 CHIPSET AS WELL AS S3 WITH THE SAVAGE 4 CHIPSET, ALTHOUGH S3 CAN BE CONSIDERED THE SMALL CANNON AMONG THEM. EACH OF THESE COMPANY'S CHIPSETS HAVE THEIR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, BUT TAKEN AS A WHOLE THE NEW GENERATION IS TURNING OUT TO BE EXCEPTIONAL. THE EMPHASIS IS CURRENTLY MOVING AWAY FROM FRAMES PER SECOND TO IMAGE QUALITY, LETS FACE IT WHAT IS THE REAL DIFFERENCE IN A GAME AFTER YOU REACH 60 FPS? NOT MUCH! CURRENTLY THE CARDS ARE SEARED TO GIVE YOU IMPROVED IMAGE QUALITY WHILE MAINTAINING AT 60+ FPS AT 800x600, WHICH HAS BECOME THE STANDARD RESOLUTION FOR MOST GAMES. ALTHOUGH THE EMPHASIS IS MOVING AWAY FROM FPS, IT IS STILL ONE OF THE MAIN DETERMINING FACTORS WHEN DECIDING TO PURCHASE A CARD. BELOW WE HAVE A LOOK AT THE ACTUAL CHIPSETS AND WHAT THEY OFFER. I MUST STATE THAT THESE CHIPSETS ARE TAKING GRAPHICS TO NEW HEIGHTS. ONE IS BETTER IN ONE AREA THAN THE OTHER AND VICE VERSA, BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY EACH MAKES SIGNIFICANT ADVANCES IN THE AREA OF 3D ACCELERATION.

Think the company that has generated the most controversy with their new chipset would have to be 3Dfx. Since the merger between 3Dfx and STB they have dropped all outsourcing of 3Dfx chipsets and the cards are now produced, marketed and sold internally under the 3Dfx brand and manufactured by STB, so don't hold your breath for a Creative Voodoo3 or Diamond Monster 3, it just won't happen.

This has really ticked off a lot of 3Dfx supporters and a few have even moved onto other chipsets so that they can stay with their preferred card manufacturer, but that is all water under the bridge and I wish them success with their new Voodoo3 range. Both the Voodoo3 2000 and Voodoo3 3000 (hereinafter V3/2K and V3/3K) ship in an AGP configuration, unfortunately only the V3/2K ship in a PCI configuration. This is good news for people still using motherboards without an AGP slot and gives them an acceptable upgrade path.

The Voodoo3 is turning out to be a worthy competitor in the graphics market and the cards emulate the previous 3Dfx Banshee being a 2D/3D-display solution. On the 2D side the Voodoo3 3000 ships with a 300MHz RAMDAC and the Voodoo3 2000 with a 350MHz RAMDAC offering a maximum resolution of 2046 x 1536 at 75Hz.

Currently being hailed by a lot of people as the new King of Hill in the 3D world, nVidia has proven that they can make fast graphics chipsets and still maintain the image quality without any 'washout' look to games that were evident on the Voodoo2 cards. What made their cards even more attractive is the TNT's ability to do 2D graphics as well as 3D acceleration and use AGP 2x. The new TNT2 follows on the footsteps of its predecessor and continues to support a 2D/3D solution and even has support for AGP 4x. The TNT 2 has lived up to expectations and boasts some of the highest

This is all fine and dandy but 2D has become less of an issue since all these chipsets support high quality 2D modes at decent refresh rates. The biggest difference between cards in their new generation is the difference in speed. The Voodoo3 2000 has a clock speed of 143MHz while the 3000 has a clock speed of 166MHz. We benchmarked all the products at their default speeds and didn't overclock them due to the uncertain nature of overclocking. The new Voodoo3 chipset

support the Glide API, Direct3D and OpenGL. Unfortunately the Voodoo3 can't accelerate in a window yet, but an upcoming OpenGL ICD should alleviate this. A big concern regarding the Voodoo3 is its inability to render at 32-bit and still only outputs 16-bit. This is a definite drawback when compared to the other cards on the market. The image quality on the TNT2 and Savage 4 is simply clearer. Another drawback is that even though the Voodoo3 ships AGP models the card still doesn't make use of AGP texturing and rather

frame rates out there, of course they are still outsourcing the chips to card manufacturers so you can get a TNT2 based card from your favourite manufacturer, such as Creative Labs and Diamond Multimedia. The TNT2

relies on 3Dfx's proprietary Direct Memory Execution, which accelerates on-board memory transfers. With the 2.9GB transfer rate on the board that this achieves, I can't but help wonder why they only put 16MB on the board instead of 32MB? It would have made more sense to put 32MB on the card using this technology. The upcoming Voodoo3 3500 will ship with 32MB, but this card is yet to be released. Even with these drawbacks the Voodoo3 is

performing exceptionally well and under Quake II it gave us the highest FPS/sec of all the chipsets. This brings up a sticky point though. The Voodoo3, like the Voodoo2 has a texture limit of 256 x 256 and Quake II falls within these limits. In comparison the TNT2 and Savage 4 both support 2048x2048 textures. Most new games will go beyond the 256 x 256 texture limit, such as Quake III, and will perform better on the TNT2. The Voodoo3 will have to resize these textures, which takes time and also means a loss in image quality. Be that as it may the Voodoo3 is a good performer, and the cards are available at a reasonable price and with the added features of hardware assisted DVD playback using Microsoft's DirectShow, a major contender in the 2D graphics and 3D accelerator market.

only sport a 300MHz RAMDAC and is has a slightly lower refresh rate of 60Hz when compared to the Voodoo3 3000's refresh rate at 2048x1536. This isn't that a big problem since most people don't have monitors that can

3Dfx Voodoo3



nVidia TNT 2

NEXT GENERATION 3D CARD ROUND-UP

support such high resolutions anyway, so if you are not a graphics artist this shouldn't be major factor.

Unlike the Voodoo3 cards, due to the varying manufacturers, the cards are shipping in a range of different clock speeds. Right from the Ultras which is 180MHz + and the normal TNT2s which sit around the 145MHz + mark. This makes comparison a little tricky due to the differences in speed, you can always overclock the cards but it might void your warranty. Therefore we decided to stick to the cards default speed for benchmarking purposes since most people stay away from overclocking. The advantages of the TNT2 are obvious. The

card can render at 32 bit and maintain a good frame rate besides supporting large textures with a texture limit of 2048x2048. These give the TNT2 an advantage in image quality over the Voodoo3 but is still not as good as S3's S3TC texture compression, it does however have a faster frame rate. As its predecessor the TNT2 supports the OpenGL and Direct3D APIs for acceleration, but unfortunately its main drawback of the TNT2 is still the inability to run legacy games that only provide acceleration for 3Dfx's Glide API. As with the Voodoo3 the TNT2 also supports hardware assisted DVD playback and also has the ability to output to a TV. Currently there are 16MB and 32MB cards

shipping with the TNT2 chipset but as of yet only the 32MB version have been available in SA. This might explain the more expensive nature of the TNT2 cards in SA, generally being more expensive than the Voodoo3. The TNT2 is the best all round card of the bunch giving lesser FPS than the Voodoo3 but better image quality. On the other hand it gives more FPS than the Savage 4 but has lesser image quality. The TNT2 is well balanced in both areas and will make the necessity of upgrading last a little longer. This would be my choice of 3D accelerator should I need to make a purchasing decision based on the balance of FPS and image quality.

The longest running card and chip manufacturer of the bunch, yet it took them a while to develop a graphics card that can compete with the likes of nVidia and 3Dfx. The previous Savage didn't do too well for S3 and they hope to impress everyone with the new Savage 4. Their latest addition to the 3D market might not boast the highest FPS, but it certainly has the best image quality in the games we tested. The Quake 3 test version looks absolutely marvellous, the image is crisp clear and the colours bright and vivid, and even Quake II looks spectacular after a texture update to the game. Same as with the TNT2 and Voodoo3 the Savage 4 is a 2D/3D-display solution and ships with a 300MHz RAMDAC, which has even a lower maximum of 1920x1200 at 60Hz when compared to the other cards. Once again this shouldn't be a major factor due to the reason stated above.

The Savage 4 cards ship in an AGP or PCI version with full support for AGP 2x and supports the OpenGL and Direct3D APIs,

giving it the same problem as the TNT2 - it can't run Glide based legacy games. Luckily the newer games support all the APIs, or at least Direct3D. The Savage 4 is another chipset capable of rendering at 32-bit giving it a slight

inception even though games only now appear to be taking advantage of it. The main advantage in favour of the Savage 4 is its incredible image quality made possible by S3TC from S3 and supported by DirectX 6. This gives gamers the chance to view almost photo-realistic scenes.

S3 Savage 4

advantage over the Voodoo3 although the Voodoo3 kills it in sheer performance. It seems that S3 was more interested in image quality than performance, and this is where the truth lies. The amazing image quality is achieved using S3TC, which is S3's patented compression technology for textures used in games. This is a double-sided sword. You can get amazing image quality, the only problem is that the game has to support the texture format. Another factor is that S3TC has been supported by DirectX 6 since its

Well at least as close as you are going to get to it for now. Unfortunately the card takes a big knock on the FPS side and comes in at below 30 FPS in higher resolutions. S3TC is what makes the Savage 4 a consideration due to the immense difference in picture quality when looking at other 3D cards. If quality is more important than FPS I would wholeheartedly recommend a Savage 4 card, but unfortunately its FPS is the lowest of the batch. The frame rates aren't that bad when compared to the old Voodoo 1, but with today's power gamers it is running on the shallow end. What does make the card a little more attractive though is its reasonable price.

NEXT GENERATION 3D CARD ROUND-UP

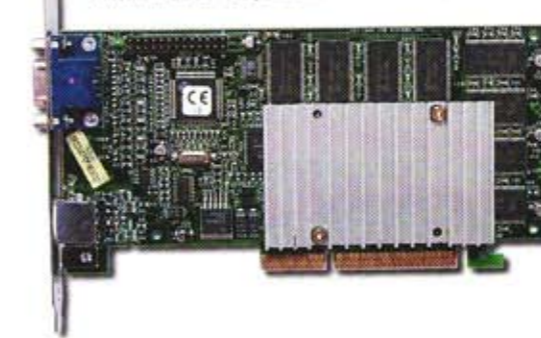
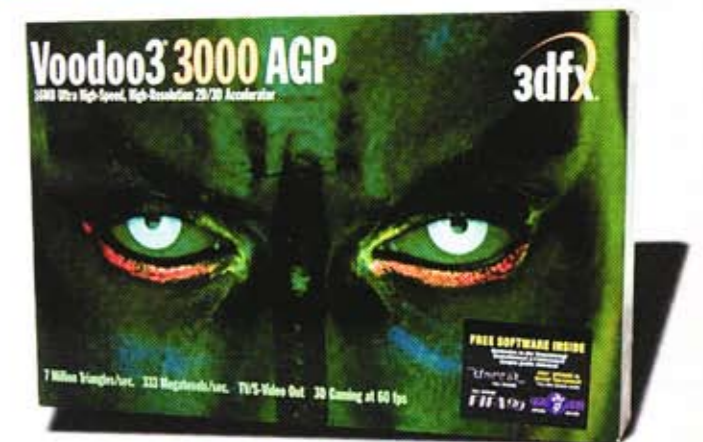
This card walks away with our Editor's choice for a few very good reasons. Firstly, it offers very fast frame rates for today's games and comes with a full version of Unreal, FIFA 99 and a Descent 3 level sampler. Full games are always a bonus when buying a card, especially if you don't already have them. Most of all, the card retails at

R1599.00 making it exceptionally good value for money especially since the card has a TV output connector as well,



just in case you want to watch a DVD or play games on your TV. As with the 2000 the 3000 is a plug & play installation requiring very little fiddling around, plug in the card, it auto detects and you install the driver. You also have to install the MiniGL drivers that are provided to install certain games.

Once again I have to warn you about the texture limitations on the Voodoo3 - any 3D scene with 16MB+ textures brings the card to a crawl, so while it might be the best buy now you will probably have to upgrade again if 3Dfx doesn't find a work around for this problem. The card comes with a 10-year limited warranty and is distributed by Memtek.



Pro's: Excellent Frame Rates
Full Game Extra's
Competitive Price
10-Year Warranty
Con's: Texture Limitations
No AGP Texturing
No 32-bit Rendering
R 1599.00 (RRP)
Memtek Component Distribution
(011) 789-3718
www.3dfx.com



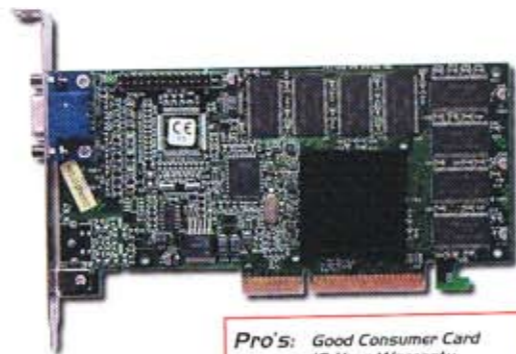
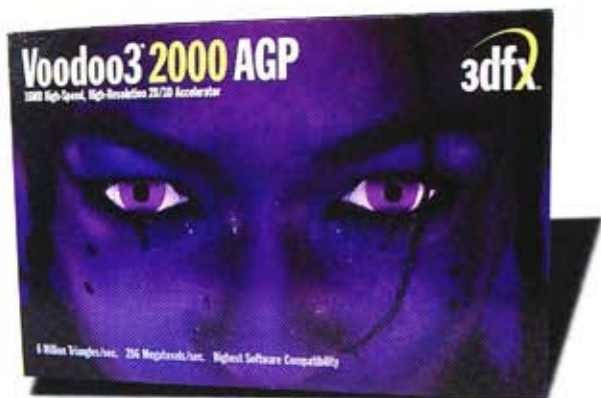
The Voodoo3 2000 is the bottom of the range Voodoo3 based card and retails at R1150.00 making it affordable for the majority of gamers. Nothing fancy besides the look of the book here and it only ships with a sampler CD from Eidos Interactive,

driver disk and manual.

The card's installation is straightforward plug & play. After installation it auto detects and requests the driver disk. After installation of the drivers you are ready to go. For the card to work with some games you do have to install the MiniGL drivers on the disk, but this is a minor inconvenience and takes less than a minute.

The only problem that I can foresee is the texture limitation. As soon as you reach a scene using 16MB or more textures the Voodoo3 just slows down to a crawl. The card comes with a 10-year limited warranty and is distributed by Memtek.

The box contains the card, a driver disk, colorific colour matching software, 3D Deep a gamma utility for games, a TV output cable and a manual. Funnily enough the card is supposed to be very overclocking tolerant yet the shipping drivers don't offer support for overclocking the card. Creative did say that this feature would be available in the next driver release. One aspect that Creative does have going for them is a TV output and the



Pro's: Good Consumer Card
10-Year Warranty
Competitive Price
Con's: No Extra's
No AGP Texturing
No 32-bit Rendering
R 1150.00 (RRP)
Memtek Component Distribution
(011) 789-3718
www.3dfx.com

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Another great card from Creative Labs even though at R2499.00 it is the most expensive of the bunch. Taking into consideration that you would most probably keep this card longer than a Voodoo3 due to its excellent large texture support. It absolutely kills the Voodoo3 cards when dealing with 3D scenes that use more than

to buy this card. Hopefully in the future the price might drop and make it better value for money.

A bit of a disappointment is that the card doesn't ship with any games as with most of the past 3D accelerators that they have done.

The box contains the card, a driver disk, colorific

colour matching software, 3D Deep a gamma utility for games, a TV output cable and a manual. Funnily enough the card is supposed to be very overclocking tolerant yet the shipping drivers don't offer support for overclocking the card. Creative did say that this feature would be available in the next driver release. One aspect that Creative does have going for them is a TV output and the

upcoming Unified drivers that will be released soon for their TNT and TNT2 based cards. The unified drivers will allow these cards to run legacy Glide games with little degradation in performance. They can currently be downloaded from

16MB or even 32MB of textures, which is where the gaming industry is heading. At the end of the day the extra R900.00 you would pay for the TNT2 Ultra over the Voodoo3 3000 puts it out of reach of most gamers and only hardcore gamers will opt

This card represents the middle of the range graphics accelerator. It is slightly faster than the Voodoo3 2000 but slower than the 3000 and 3D Blaster TNT2 Ultra. It is also the only card that is an OEM version, meaning you get the card, a driver disk and a small manual in a plastic bag. Considering that you only pay R1150.00 for the V770 it is understandable. Note that this price is only available directly from CyberDyne should you be interested in buying one.

The installation of this card is not as straight forward as the rest and requires the setting of a jumper to select AGP 2x or AGP 4x. It is very important that you know which to set it to, otherwise games might

Diamond Viper V770 OEM



<http://www.creativelabs.com/unified>. Just make sure you have your serial number handy when you visit. As with most of Creative 3D accelerator cards the TNT2 Ultra comes with a 3-year Warranty and you can always count on support from Creative for their local products.

Pro's: Excellent Frame Rates
32 MB Memory
AGP 2x & 4x
2048x2048 Textures
Con's: No Extra Games
Most Expensive Card

R 2599.00 (RRP)
Multimedia Warehouse
(011) 315-1000
www.creativelabs.com

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lockup on you. We have had some readers calling about the Viper V770 not working and according to CyberDyne Systems it is an incorrect setting of this jumper. Other than the jumper the installation is pretty much a plug & play installation. The Viper V770 comes with a 3 year warranty and CyberDyne Systems have proven themselves to have an excellent support team should any problems arrive. At the price the V770 is a card to seriously consider if you want a TNT2 based card. We have also just learned that the Ultra version has arrived, unfortunately it wasn't in time for this 3D-card roundup.

Pro's: Affordable
Favourable Performance
32-bit Rendering
Con's: No Extra's
No Box
Jumper Settings

R 1150.00 (RRP)
Cyberdyne Systems
(011) 327-0237
www.cyberdyne.co.za

83

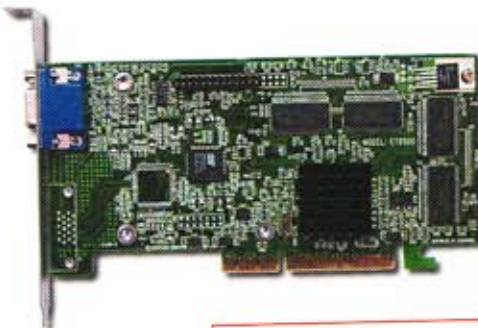


The Savage 4 comes in last due to the slower FPS in higher resolutions. The one factor that still makes it a viable option is its price and excellent image quality. At R1399.00 the card is still affordable and has

the best image quality of all the cards we looked at, largely due to S3's patented S3TC technology.

The cards ship with a driver disk, Colorific and 3D Deep colour software and a manual. Nothing fancy just the necessities. As with the rest of the cards the installation is straightforward and no problems were encountered.

As with all of Creative Labs' products the Savage 4 ships with a 3-year limited warranty and you can count on Creative's technical support during this period.



Pro's: Excellent Image Quality
Respectable Price
Con's: Slowest Performance
No Extra's

R 1399.00 (RRP)
Multimedia Warehouse
(011) 315-1000
www.creativelabs.com

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THE FINAL SAY!

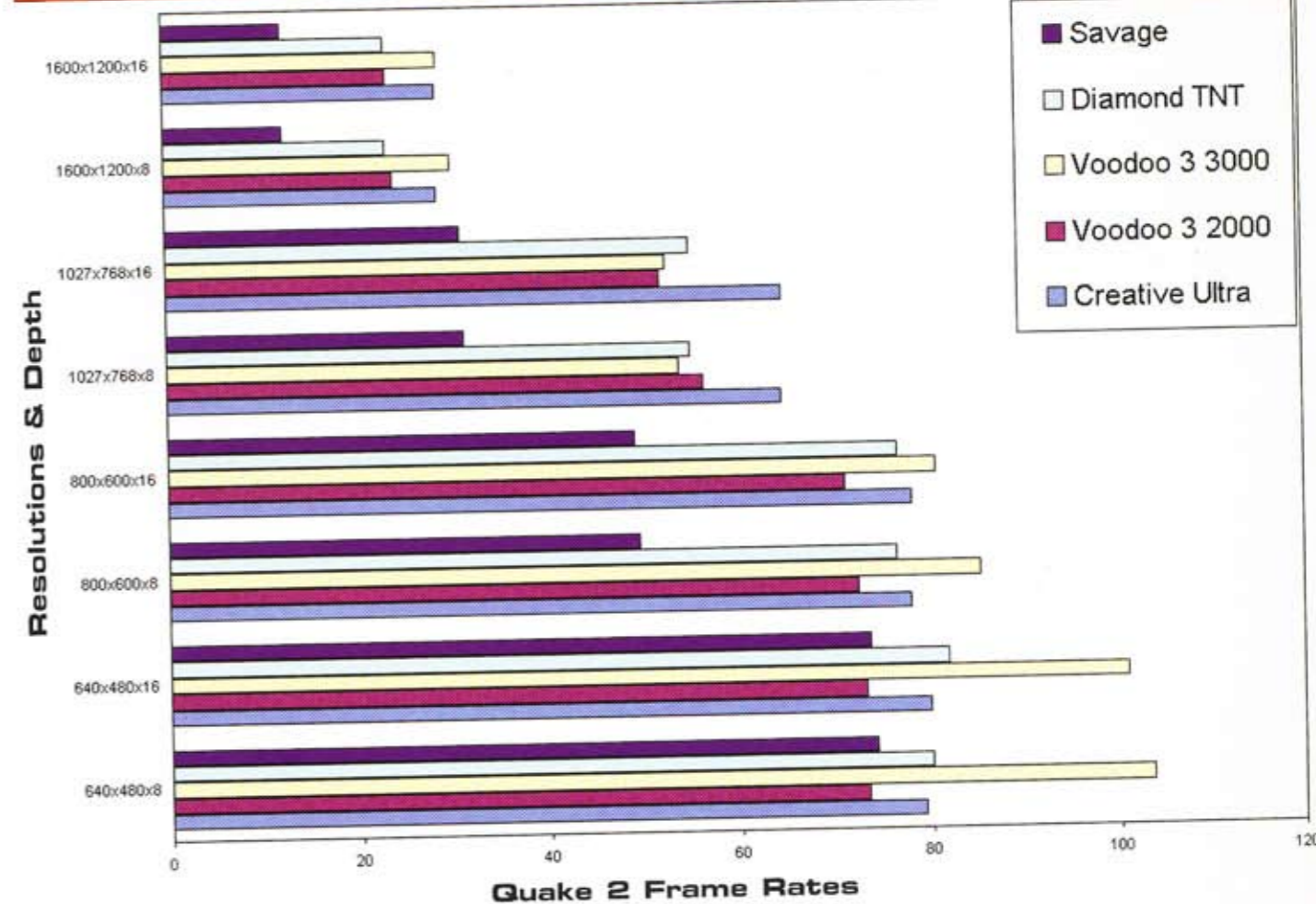
As you can see, currently the top card on the market is the Voodoo3 3000 giving excellent value for money and the only card that ships with games. I must admit that I was quite surprised that the card performed so well in our tests, I

just hope that 3dfx will address the AGP texturing and 32-bit rendering when they bring out their next generation card.

I hope this article will help you decide on which card is the one for you, be it a Voodoo3 or TNT2 based card.

See how the cards performed on the Quake 2 TimeDemo Test

Tested on: PII 450, AGP, 128Mb RAM, Seagate Scsi HD.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

THIS SECTION IS FOR PLAYSTATION EXCLUSIVELY. PC GAMERS PLEASE SEE THE COVER CD WHERE WE PLACE ANY NEW CHEATS FOR PC GAMES. THE ARCHIVE ON THE CD IS ONGOING AND CONTAINS ALL PC CHEATS TO DATE. IN THE FUTURE WE MAY CONSIDER PLACING A PLAYSTATION CHEAT ARCHIVE ON THE CD.

TIGER WOODS '99

200% Terrain Elevation Increase

Select the "Edit Name" option on the "Player Select" menu and enter PUMFZ as a name.

400% Terrain Elevation Increase

Select the "Edit Name" option on the "Player Select" menu and enter MAXIMUMZ as a name.

Change Voices

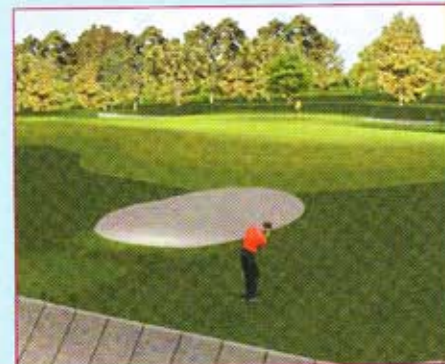
While playing a game, hold Up or Down, then press X, Square, Triangle, Circle, L1, L2, R1, or R2 to increase or decrease the pitch of the comments made.

Exploding Range Carts

When you start the game, proceed to the Practice Facility screen and select "Driving". Once you see the range cart, try and hit it three times to watch in burn in all of its glory.

Flat Terrain

Select the "Edit Name" option on the "Player Select" menu and enter OLD_SCHOOL as a name.



South Park Video

There's a five-minute South Park Christmas episode on this PSX CD. Place it in your computer and look for a file called zzdummy.dat - open it in "movie player". The South Park you'll see is called "The Spirit of Christmas", which was originally intended to be a greeting card for the FOX company employees.

Be warned: All of the swears are uncensored, and technically it's illegal to do this unless you own a copy of the original animated short.

Taunts

When your opponent is about to shoot, you can taunt him by pressing any button. The button you press determines the taunts:

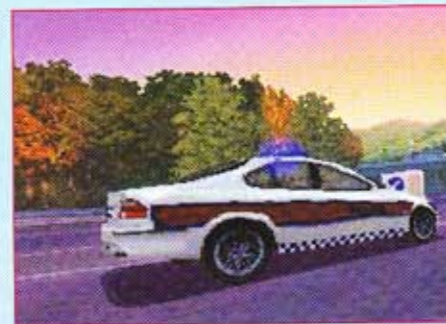
- L1: Crowd Cheers
- L2: Tiger laughs
- R1: Tiger says, "That was lucky"

R2: Tiger clears his throat.
Triangle: Tiger yells out, "fore!"
Square: Tiger says, "nice shot!"
Circle: Tiger says, "no way!"
X: Tiger says, "no pressure"

Need For Speed: High Stakes

Dashboard View

Select any mode, any track, and any car. Press START on the race icon (at the car selection screen) then immediately hold UP+TRIANGLE+X before the loading screen appears. Hold this until the race begins.



Drunk Mode

Pick a car and start a race. Immediately press Up + L2 + R1 and hold through the loading screen. The screen will now be blurred as if you were drunk.

Easier Tickets

Enter Pursuit Mode and choose a cop car. When the game starts, hold L1 and press UP to turn off your sirens. The person running will slow down. When you've caught up to him, press L1 + UP to turn your sirens back on, then pull him over.

Easy Money

After buying your first car go to two-player mode and select High Stakes. It will ask you if you want to save, select Yes. After accessing memory slot 1 it will ask for memory card 2. Take the card out of slot 1 and place it in 2. The game will think it's a different memory card and will duplicate your car. Now all you have to do is beat yourself and sell the car you won.

Extra Music Tracks

First, go to the audio options from the main menu. Then go to the CD player and select it. Go all the way to the bottom, and there are two music tracks that are turned off. Just turn them on, and you can listen to them while your driving.

Headlights and Turn Signals

While racing, hold L1 and press LEFT or RIGHT for the blinker. Hold

PLAYSTATION CHEATS

L1 and press UP for the headlights. Hold L1 and press DOWN to turn on your hazard lights.

Heavy Car

Before the loading screen appears to load your next race, press START to load the game and immediately after, press and hold LEFT + SQUARE + CIRCLE. Continue to hold the buttons until the loading screen disappears. You will now be able to knock over other cars easily when bumping into them.

Phantom Car

To get the phantom car, enter your name as FLASH. Note that you cannot save if you use this code.

Police Helicopter

To pilot a police helicopter in test drive mode, enter your name as WHIRLY, and then enter test drive. Note that you cannot save the game if you use this code.

Super Cop Cars

To get the Super Cop Cars, You must arrest 10 speeders within the given time limit.

Titan Car

When entering a username, enter "Hotrod" and you'll get a beast of a car to play with. This cheat disables game saving.

Bust-A-Move 4



Another World in Arcade Mode

At the original title screen, press Triangle, Left, Right, Left, Triangle. A small character will appear on the bottom left side of the screen. Then, go into Puzzle Mode and choose Arcade to access a new set of puzzles.

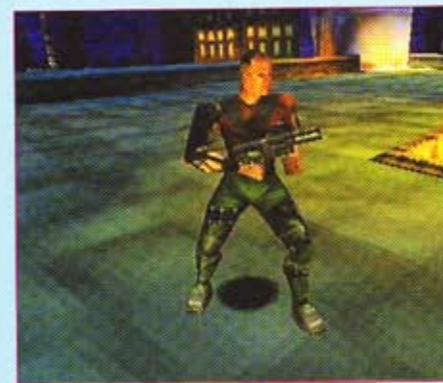
Bonus Characters

To gain access to five new characters. Beat Story mode in Player versus Computer mode and you'll get Madam Luna and Dreg. After that, play Win Contest mode until you fight a new character. Beat them, and they are yours!

Apocalypse

All Weapons

Pause the game then hold L1 and press Square, Circle, Up, Down, X, Square.



Checkpoint Select

Pause the game. Hold L1 and press Square, Circle, X, Release L1 and a new option will appear. That option will allow you to warp to any checkpoint in the stage.

Debug Mode and Statistics Report

To check the last checkpoints name you cleared Pause and hold L1. Then press Down, Down, Triangle. A little bow will appear in the lower left-hand corner.

Full Health

Pause the game and hold L1 while pressing Square, X, Triangle, O.

Infinite Lives

Pause the game then hold L1 and press Triangle, Circle, X, Square.

Invincibility

Pause the game then hold L1 and press Down, Up, Left, Left, Triangle, Up, Right, Down.

Level Select

Pause the game then hold L1 and press Triangle, Up, X, Down.

Tenchu: Stealth Assassins

Alternate Ayame Costume

At the item select screen press Left, Left, Down, Down, Square, Square, Triangle, and Circle. Then, the armour icon will automatically be selected. Now begin game and play as Ayame and select her third costume.

Choose from All Items and Specials

At the item selection screen HOLD R1, then press LEFT, LEFT, DOWN, DOWN, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE.

Debug Mode

Press START and hold L1 + R2, then press Up, Triangle, Down, X, Left, Square, Right, Circle. Release L1 + R2 while still paused and press L1,

R1, L2, and R2. The screen should then shudder. Now when the game is going, press R2 + L2 to access the debug mode. This lets you get weapons that only your enemies can normally use. This also lets you check your rank in the middle of the stage. Have fun with all of the options, but if you add too many enemies to the level, the game will glitch.

Healing

To restore your health, pause the game and press Left, Left, Down, Down, Square, Square, Triangle, Square. You will know that you entered the code correctly when you hear a ninja say "Nuh".

Increase Number Of Items

At the item select screen hold L2 then press LEFT, LEFT, DOWN, DOWN, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X.

Increased Carrying Capacity

At the item selection screen HOLD L1, then press LEFT, LEFT, DOWN, DOWN, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE.

Invincibility

Press start while playing. While in menu, press and hold, SELECT+Circle. Then press start.

Japanese Dialogue on some stages

This cheat only works on stages 3, 6, 9, 10. During the movies the characters will speak in Japanese instead of English. At the Stage Select screen, HOLD L1 then press Left, Left, Down, Down, Square, Square, Triangle, and then Circle. You will here a confirmation that the code worked. Then begin one of the stages above.



Level Layout Select

Here is a code that allows you to select the layout A, B, or C of the level you are going to play. To activate this code, enter the following sequence at the level select screen: While holding R1, press left, left, down, down, square, square, triangle, X.

Level Select

Select a character, then hold R2 and press LEFT, LEFT, DOWN, DOWN, SQUARE, SQUARE, Triangle, Square at the next screen.

WCW Nitro

All Wrestlers

At the main menu press R1 four times, L1 four times, R2 four times, L2 four times, then press select. Alternatively, press R1 + L1, R2 + L2, R2 + L2. Select. A noise will confirm the code.



Big Hands

At the Mode Select screen press L2 seven times, then press L1 17 times.

Big Head, Hands and Feet

Go to the Options screen and press R2 seven times, then press R1. Select.

Big Heads

At the Mode Select screen press R1 seven times, then press R2, Select.

Bonus Rings

At the Options menu, press R1, R2, R1, R2, L1, L2, L1, L2. Select.

Computer Assistance

Press the SELECT button at any time during the match and another wrestler will come out and help you beat up on your opponent.

Easy Win

Choose the disco ring and throw your opponent outside of the ring. When they stand up, press L2 to make them do the YMCA dance. Keep doing this until the timer runs out.

Ring Skip

In the Options Menu press R1, R2, R1, R2, Select. From now on, each time you press the Select button the ring will advance by one.

Voodoo Mode

At the Wrestler Select screen press L1 seven times, L2>Select you should hear a Wacky sound. During the match as the wrestler takes damage his head will get bigger and bigger.

YMCA

While playing in the Disco ring, hit L2. It's fun to stay at the YMCA.

Please send any cheat requests to assassin@nag.co.za.

THIS MONTH WE WRAP UP THE DIFFERENT RACES WITH AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT ALL THINGS ZERG, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE BROOD WAR EXPANSION SET. WE'LL REVEAL WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO SUCCEED WITH THE ZERG SWARMS. R.A.V.E.N.

STAR CRAFT

EXPANSION SET

BROOD WAR

ZERG BASICS

The most fundamental concept to remember when playing Zerg is that your best friend is large numbers of units. The Zerg force depends on swarming its opponents with a varied



mix of units. This can, of course, be dangerous when playing against Protoss, due to their Psionic Storm (which is a Zerg commander's greatest enemy).

Zerg have the ability to spread the fastest across a map, mainly due to the fact that the Hatcheries/Lairs/Hives serve not only as resource gathering centres, but also as production facilities for all units, as opposed to Terran and Protoss, who require Barracks, Factories, Gateways, Starports and so on. This means that a Zerg expansion is easier to defend than a Terran or Protoss one.

Use Overlords to scout the map early on, but accept that they will be at risk in the process, so try always to have surplus control. The outcome of a battle is often decided by reconnaissance - the player with the better picture of the lay of the land normally has a better understanding of tactical implications, and is better able to exploit these.

Learn to use Defilers. These underused and underrated units can be a huge help against Terran and Protoss opponents, and even against other Zerg players. Remember that Protoss cannot heal or repair

damage in any way, so the effects of Plague are permanent, while against Terran it offers the chance of destroying buildings. Also, try shrouding your Hydralisks with Dark Swarm, and see how much longer they end up living.



Zerg
Episode VI

LAND MAPS

On a land map one should always assume that the opponent is going to try to rush (you've seen this sentence before, haven't you?). Zerg are the rushing force in Starcraft, and so it never hurts to have a small horde of Zerglings ready early in the game, even if you don't plan on rushing your opponent. Build Sunken Colonies liberally around your base, and ensure that they have overlapping fields



of fire, so that they protect each other. These defensive structures work miracles against ground troops, especially Zealots and



LURKERS TEAR UP INCOMING ZEALOTS

Dark Templar. The odd Spore Colony is useful to supplement your Overlords' detection abilities.

In the early and middle game, your attacks should consist of at least Zerglings and Hydralisks. With this approach, the cheap (and expendable) Zerglings charge in and engage (and distract) enemy forces, while the Hydralisks take up position and pound the enemy from a little way off. This reflects the general truism that, more often than not, hordes of only one unit type can be defeated with relative ease.

In the later game, include a few Ultralisks in your attack, but don't overdo it. Also, first ensure that your Ultras have at

least the movement upgrade, and preferably the Chitinous Plating armour upgrade. These should lead the charge, absorbing the worst of your opponents' defensive firepower, while the rest of the swarm does the real damage.

Place Lurkers at choke points your opponent will need to cross. These units devastate armies of ground troops. Defend these with Hydralisks to keep air units at bay. But more on Lurkers later. In a similar



DEVOURERS WORKING WITH MUTALISKS AGAINST CORSAIRS ARE SERIOUSLY UNFUNNY

vein, research burrowing ability, and send a Zergling to each resource location you can find and burrow it there. This will provide an early warning system, and allow you to hit the expansion before it's adequately protected.

AIR MAPS

Zerg have the ability to dominate the skies if they set out to do so early on, and are willing to expend some resources in the process. An early batch of Scourges can leave an unwary opponent stranded on his original island and unable to get off it while you secure additional resources. Use this technique to deny enemy transports access to your



base, or regress from their own!

Once again, variety of units is essential. Some Mutalisks are a must at all times, as not only are they general-purpose units that can hit both air and ground targets, but they may be morphed at any stage into either Guardians or Devourers. Scourges are always good to have, and shine in "patrol" mode.



DISGUSTING, ORGANIC AND LETHAL - THE ZERG REPRESENT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE

favour with their Ensnare ability, both against ground and air units. Remember that, should your units be set upon by cloaked Wraiths, Ensnare will reveal them. You should also use Queens liberally on land maps.



UPGRADES

As always, ability upgrades should be a higher priority, in general, than attack or carapace upgrades. Zerglings speed upgrade is a must early on - the quicker the Zerglings get to their enemies, the shorter the period that they are exposed to ranged enemy fire. The upgrades available at the Hydralisk Den are also vital, and will make your Hydralisks (which are Zerg's main ground units) far more effective.

Other important upgrades include the Lurker morphing ability, the researches at the Ultralisk Cavern and all spell-like powers for Queens and Defilers.

NEW UNITS

Lurker:

This is an exceptionally deadly addition to the Zerg swarm. Place these defensively near your minerals, and watch enemies who try to disrupt your supply train pop by the dozen. Also incredibly effective at holding choke points. Just ensure that any detectors that venture near your



Guardians are one of the crowning glories of Zerg air forces. These monsters can level bases in minutes, but they require air backup, which is where Devourers, Mutas and Scourges come in.

Always, but always, have a few Queens available. These are invaluable "covert operations" units able to scout quickly and assassinate enemy ground troops (Spawn Broodling is awesome against Protoss High Templar, for instance). They will, furthermore, also stack the odds in your



Lurkers are dealt with quickly, and they will live long and prosper. Because they inflict splash damage, Lurkers dispose of entire squads of Zerglings, Marines and Firebats in seconds and Zealots and Dragoons take only marginally longer to demolish.

Devourer:

This is Zerg's answer to Valkyries and Corsairs, as well as all other nasty flying enemy units! They are most effective in combination with Mutalisks, as the acid spores the Devourer afflicts its victims with increases damage taken by them, and Mutalisk shots rebound twice, thus hitting three times in total, each time inflicting additional damage. Acid spores also increase enemy units' cool down time, thus slowing down their fire rate.

FINAL NOTES

With Zerg, the key is to use not only large numbers, but also a wide variety of units. Bewilder your opponent with mixed troop types. Always attack, and don't

allow your opponent any respite. Hit him repeatedly with an assortment of units, and try varying your mix from one wave to the next. This way,

should he think he has the answer to your attack judging by your previous wave, your next one will find him floundering with inappropriate counterunits. As always, seek to surprise your opponent and keep him on his toes. Spread quickly and overrun the entire map.

NEXT MONTH WE'LL BE LOOKING AT SOME MORE ADVANCED TACTICS IN THIS STRATEGY GUIDE SERIES.



Send Off

It's been one year since we had our last E3 section and now this year we are bringing you a special insert, the E3 Tribune, our version of a news sheet you can keep handy to refer to when deciding on buying upcoming games for the next year. Michael and Warren disappeared into their offices for what seemed like an eternity to make that 16-page news brief, an eventually gave them less time to make up the magazine, so more late nights.

I have to make mention of the Cricket though since Warren went overseas to go watch the finals after winning a ticket at an Electronic Arts Golf day. He left the Wednesday and South Africa lost to Australia on the Thursday, leaving him to watch a final between Pakistan and Australia, which was to say the least, disappointing. Hopefully we will make the final next time if we adopt a slight bit more savvy at the crease and communicate a little. I can tell you that Warren was not too pleased with him after arriving back in South Africa.

Now we all await the Rugby World Cup, and the Springboks better defend their title otherwise it'll be a bleak year for sport in South Africa. As far as gaming went, the last month has been very quiet and very few new releases came our way. This seems to be the trend since we experienced the same strange phenomena last year right after the E3 show. This is probably due to all the overlooked bugs that they discover

during the show and try to fix before shipping. There is nothing like the general public to show a developer where the bugs are in a game. Most of the highly anticipated titles have been postponed such as Tiberian Sun, Diablo 2, Darkstone and a couple of others. Even Quake III: Arena has been moved to later in the year, it's enough to make you want to call up the developers and demand that these games are released. Damn. I want to play these titles now!

I think this Christmas is going to be flooded with new gaming titles, making it harder to choose between all the wheat and chaff roaming the shelves. On the up side you might get a game from Father Christmas, who, as we understand also reads NAG, ensuring that you don't find any turkeys under the tree.

As everyone might have noticed, the games that we stated would be reviewed in this issue in last month's Send Off didn't quite make it. It seems that some of the distributors don't know when their own games are coming since I compiled the list just before we started printing. All of them should have been here according to them, but as of yet none have arrived and some will only ship in a couple of months. My apologies if this confused a lot of people, but we are at the mercy of the developers and distributors of these games for release information.

[Yes, Soul Assassin - good excuse, you better hope someone buys it!]

Here They Are, But You Never Heard It From Me...



KINGDOMS

This game is scheduled to arrive just before we wrap up the next issue, we left some space for it and we'll make sure that if it arrives on time we'll give it the full treatment. The developers, Cavedog are expecting to do well with this one but we'll have to see how it does up against the rest of the RTS brigade.



DUNGEON KEEPER 2

Things are looking good for this one for now, we've already seen plenty of evidence at EA Africa's offices that this game will be arriving in time for next issue (we stole a Horny doll). Dungeon Keeper is a highly anticipated release and we're all drawing straws when it arrives to see who gets to review it but we've heard the Ed is a big fan...



ALIENS PREDATOR

I am actually starting to wonder if this game will ever ship, the estimated release dates keep getting postponed every time I ask. If it does arrive this time, you can bet that NAG will be playing AvP for a while. We might even settle the argument about which is the best character to portray in our weekly death match - the Alien, the Predator or the Marine.



OUTCAST

We also gave this game an in-depth look a while ago and from what we saw it's going to be something special. It uses a relatively new 3D game engine that uses 3D pixels instead of polygons. We were initially a little sceptical about this technology but the game proved to us that a solid story and engrossing game play is all you need for a winner.



NEED FOR SPEED HIGH STAKES

This review is basically guaranteed - we've already farmed it out to someone and told them they've got three whole weeks to review it. Last time we checked everything was going well except for two sticky PlayStation buttons. First impressions are good and the game is looking really stunning.



DRIVER

Driver tells the tale of and undercover cop called Tanner, who must stamp out a powerful crime ring or drug lords and other evil henchmen. Players must sell their services to the highest bidder and will experience high-speed driving action in New York, Miami, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Coming soon.

Well that's unfortunately that for this issue of NAG. We always try and bring South African gamers only the best and promise to keep getting better. Remember to keep sending in those e-mails and letters, feedback is the breakfast of champions, till the next one.

KEEP FRAGGIN, KICKIN BUTT, STRATEGIZING, SPORTSIZING AND PLAYING GAMES - SOUL ASSASSIN

VRALLY 2

CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION 2



ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

eden



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PlayStation Powerline: 0800 111 013



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