

VOLUME 2

MARCH 2000

ISSUE 11

NEW AGE GAMING

S O U T H A F R I C A

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PLANE SCAPE
TORMENT
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ON THEIR LATEST TITLE

DEVELOPER'S BLUEPRINT
HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR OWN GAME

AWESOME REVIEWS
TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION
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ED's Note

What we do

The game reviewing business is a fun hobby-turned-job for the lucky few of us, and it is a relatively new concept in the big scale of things. Being new, many publications, both print media and electronic, didn't have a template to work from so many years ago. A few brave souls hacked out a couple of obvious scoring categories like graphics, sound and playability, wrote an in-depth review and sent it out into the world. This supply (the reviews and screenshots) and demand (gamers wondering which games suck and which are worth their money) dynamic started something we now call gaming magazines and gaming Internet sites. The bare truth of the matter is that nobody really knows what the best way to review a game is and I'll be the first to admit that our scoring system isn't perfect but it's more refined than almost any other. The problem is that no game suits every category and you can't change the categories for each and every review, so what do you do? Well the good news is that we're working on a new rating system, with the help of a few intelligent readers we will be introducing what we feel is the most accurate way to review a video game. It's a different way of doing things and we'll be breaking out of the mould set for us by those first pioneering game reviewers.

The other thing with game reviews is that they're opinion based and opinions are mostly defended the best by who can shout the loudest or in our case, being print media, who has the final, dare I say 'official' say on the matter. In light of this, we're humbly aware that we are just another opinion out there in a world with instant access to a hundred opinions you can find by using just one phrase and an Internet search engine. One important difference between magazines and the Internet is that more thought and consideration goes into writing a review for a printed publication than an Internet site purely because we expect you to pay for our opinions and we, in turn, have to pay for the content. Any fool can knock together a gaming site and if you've been around long enough many of today's famous and respected Internet gaming sites were started by a bunch of passionate gamers just like you and me, they grew to fame in a different way but essentially we're all the same at the roots. The worst possible situation is when someone reads one of our reviews and formulates an opinion after just reading the review bar, or in some cases only the final score. Then there are the people who read every word three times. The message here is this, read the review, then look at the score and then if you disagree let us know, it's a free country as they say and your opinion is just as valid as the next person's 'different' opinion. As a gaming magazine we'll never be able to satisfy everyone. We'd just like to think that because we've been playing games since games were invented that we're a little more able to formulate a more considered opinion based on experience and the fact that we have to sell our opinions and not rely purely on shouting the loudest in a room full of 'experts'.

Michael James, Editor

The training wheels are coming off

Developer's Blueprint is sailing her maiden voyage this issue, and I believe it's a first in gaming magazine history... No other game developer has ever taken on such a major commitment and again I'd like to thank Travis Bulford and his team for their efforts. All we now need is some serious commitment from you 'future developers' to your games, unlike many other publications and books we'll actually be showing you step by step how to do this game making thing and remember there'll be a monster prize and a little fame up for grabs at the end of it all.

Insert input here

As you'll find out when you read the last page of this issue, we're looking for a few new freelance writers and this is the warm-up paragraph, I'm using this space here to thank everyone who has ever sent in any material to New Age Gaming, be it a review, a letter, screenshots, a picture or just general slating of something we've printed or in a few cases something we haven't. Keep it coming, we read absolutely everything we receive because we're always curious if nothing else and would you believe it, many of the small and large improvements/changes in the magazine have come directly from your suggestions or criticism. This is your magazine in one sense and this is because we aren't that stupid to think we know what everyone wants, so we rely on you to tell us. Okay, enough Kleenex tugging stuff... In closing - send us those reviews, articles, pictures and ideas and even if you don't own a talented bone in your body or don't have any original ideas always remember, reader submissions are always good for a laugh if nothing else [you can't say that, Big Ed].

NEW AGE GAMING SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN GAMING MAGAZINE AN UNREAL DESIGN FX INITIATIVE

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UNREAL DESIGN FX
COLOUR CURVE

PRINTER
PAARL PRINTING
(011) 804-6201

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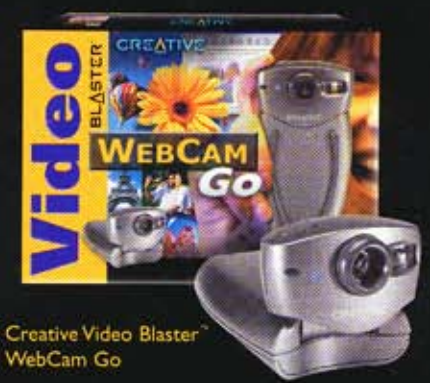
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HARDWARE

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This month's Hardware Hype features some rather interesting, if somewhat different items. Check out the low down on headphones, a large track ball, light guns for the PC and a multi-system controller that is much more than it seems.



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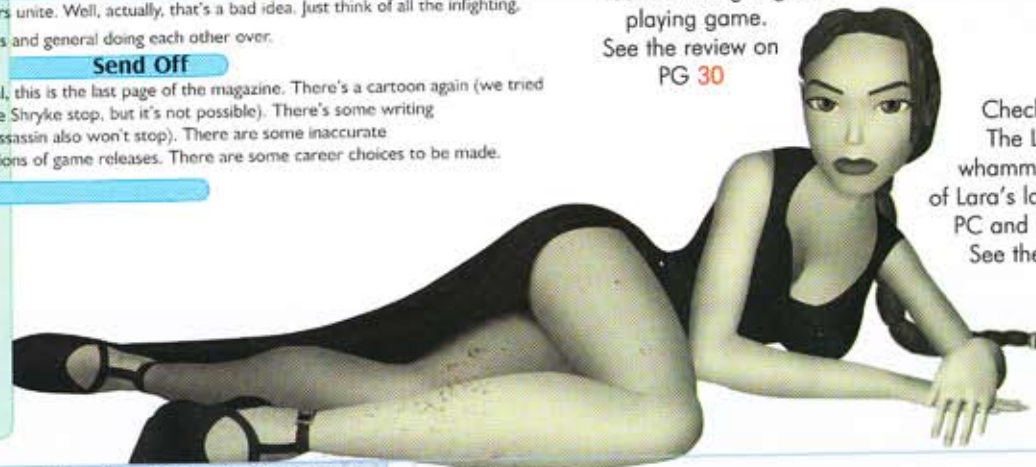
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<Golf Simulator>



The return of Black Isle is marked with the release of Planescape: Torment, a vast and intriguing role playing game. See the review on PG 30



Check out our Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation double whammy! We bring you reviews of Lara's latest exploits on both PC and PlayStation this month! See the reviews on PG 46 PC and PG 62 PSX.

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Cover CD



Exclusive NAG interview of the new Bitmap Brothers' PlayStation offering PG 26



There's more racing action than you can shake a joystick at in Gran Turismo 2, PG 56

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We're well into the new Millennium and things are going well, apparently. The web still grows from strength to strength on a daily basis, with vast amounts of information being added to its already massive collection of news and knowledge on an hourly basis. Keeping up is impossible, but we do our best. So, in that spirit, we bring you yet



another look at what's happening on the World Wide Web...

Here is a plus for all you Duke Nukem fans. When you next visit the 3D Realms web site, why not take the virtual tour and see where all the magic happens. This is a fun, if rather gimmicky reason to visit the site - taking the virtual tour will display the 3D Realms offices to you in stunning 360-degree detail. You can also take the opportunity to learn about the entire crew, and find out what their future plans are. Of course, this is pretty boring unless you're something of a 3D Realms fan. But



it is fairly unique, so it certainly is worth a look. Surf over to www.3drealms.com and click on the virtual tour link.

A new site has become available for all the Need for Speed fans out there. The EA Need for Speed Motor City page is basically a community page, filled with lots of information and fun. This page is really intended for die-hard fans who will appreciate the various featured vehicle profiles and "news" that the site presents. It holds little value to the non-fan, but is a well-constructed site nonetheless, and would be an interesting visit for those who appreciate a graphically sound web site. Unfortunately the address for the site doesn't have a funky, memorable name so use this address:
<http://207.207.66.178/>

The following site will be of great interest to those who play any of



Here at New Age Gaming we love to see local developers getting the ball rolling with new products. After all, there is a huge amount of untapped potential out there, right here in South Africa, which we would love to see realised.

One such development company is Mooncow, affiliated to Twilyt Productions (www.twilyt.com) - the people that brought you The Tainted last year. The crew over at Mooncow are currently working on a project entitled Alien Overlords, which looks very promising if the web site is anything to go by.

Although the site is small, it does contain everything you would need to know about this rather strange looking, fun space shooter.

Of course, for a site to get awarded the web site of the month award, it needs to be more than informative, attractive and easy to navigate. It needs a little bit extra to qualify.

The little bit extra at www.alienoverlords.com comes in the form of a really fun and addictive online game, called Alien Overlords Lunar Lunacy. It is a very simple arcade style game, but it will certainly allow for hours of challenging fun as you attempt to land five pods safely on the surface of a volcanic moon, all the while avoiding lava pits and random asteroids, before you run out of fuel.

The game is simple to play, with a keyboard driven interface and easy controls. So check it out. Surf over the www.alienoverlords.com and follow the 'Things' link. From there, click on the appropriate links to start the game.

This little online taste of Alien Overlords is not a development marvel, but it does show the graphic capability of Mooncow, and will enable you to have a little more fun than just reading about the product.



White Wolf's World of Darkness RPG's. As we all know, Vampire: The Masquerade is making it's PC debut shortly, an event which has generated much excitement in both computer gaming and role playing circles. However, were you aware of the fact that Werewolf: The Apocalypse is also destined for the desktop? Developers Dreamforge have entered the hallowed halls of White Wolf and have collaborated closely on this new project, entitled Werewolf: Heart of Gaia. The site itself is a typical development site, with lots of news, information, screenshots and the like. It is a beautiful

site to look at, and fully captures the feel of Werewolf: The Apocalypse with graphics and text that read and look like the real thing. Pay it a visit at www.assegames.com/100-GAMES/werewolf/.

There are a vast number of people who are new to the wonderful world of the Internet, and often need help. These unfortunate folks may never realise the potential of the web, and the huge amount of interesting, fun and educational information held in its hallowed ethereal vaults. For those folk that are new to the 'net, and wish to maximise the potential that they can draw from it, there is Newbie-U: the New User



University. Dealing with every aspect of the web from Internet to IRC to newsgroups and FTP, the Newbie-U is a handy place to go and have a look at. All the 'courses' offered by Newbie-U can be completed online, and promise to convert newbies into knowbies! Visit it at www.newbie-u.com.

The buzz around the long awaited PlayStation 2 is growing as we expect its release in South Africa later this year. Those markets that already have access to this product are buzzing with news about its brilliance. A great place to begin preparing yourself for the imminent arrival of the new face of television game consoles is www.psx2.com, a site specialising in the PlayStation 2 and its games. Resplendent with news, pre-releases, reviews

and product previews, this site holds a wealth of information for both PlayStation enthusiasts and those looking at the possibility investing in one of these new second-generation consoles.



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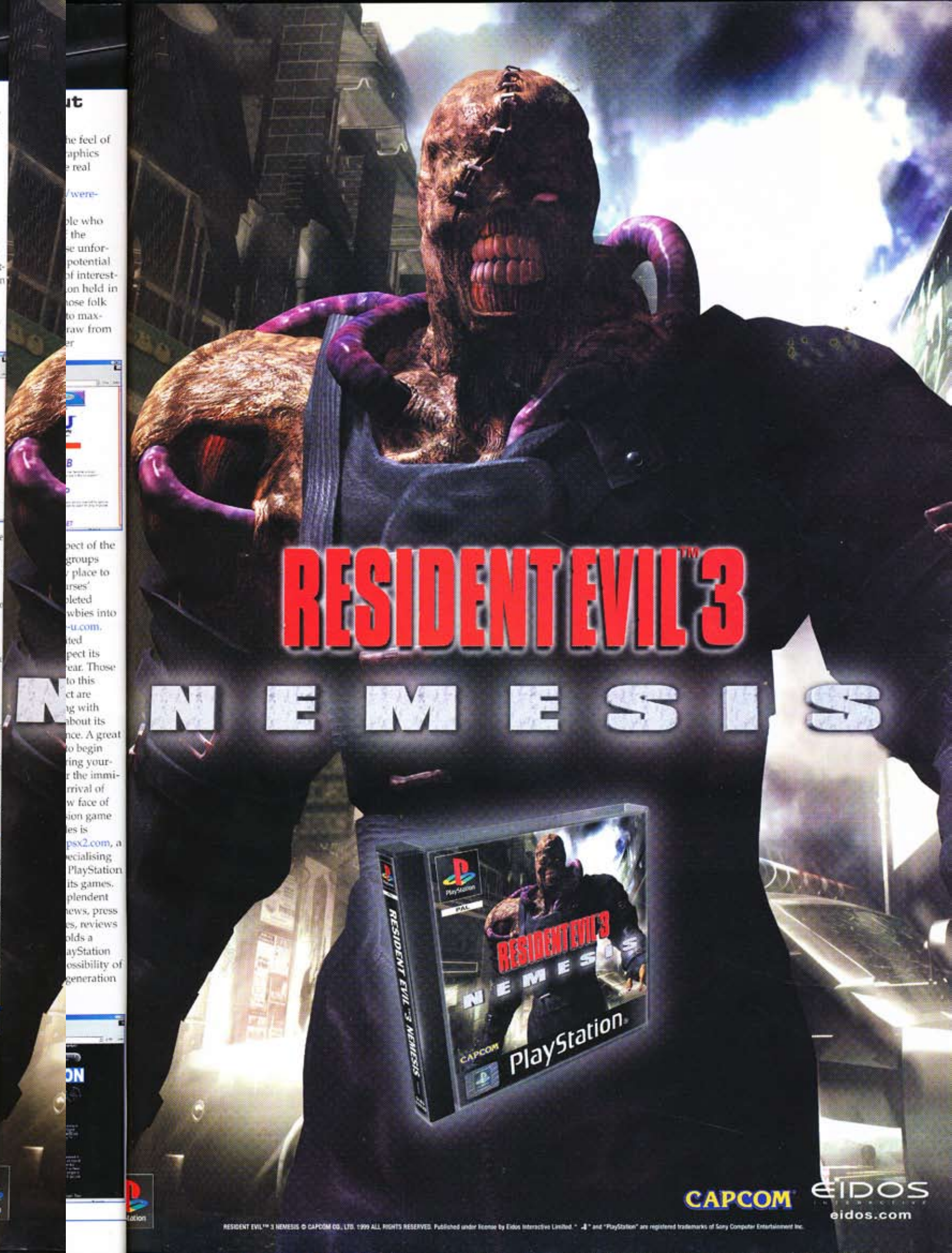
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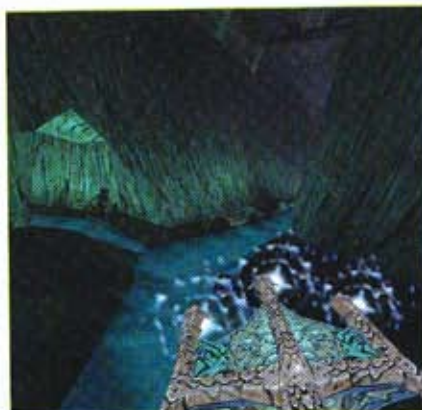
989 Studios has announced the highly anticipated sequel to last year's big action adventure, Syphon Filter. The game will now ship on two CD's, with over twenty new missions for you to blast and sneak your way through. Players will get to explore new environments from ice caverns to the usual list of high-tech military installations. One of the more exciting features promised for the final game is an all-new multiplayer mode where two players can choose from the wide selection of in-game characters and fight it out to the death. What made the first game so popular was its wide selection of weapons and this time around you can expect to see over 25 different kinds of weapons and gadgets. Your arsenal will consist of things like grenades, tear gas, crossbows, night vision rifles, pistols, knives and automatic shotguns. In addition to all these changes players will now be able to save at selected checkpoints located through each mission. The range of



moves has also been improved upon and besides the standard, kneel, walk, roll and crouch 989 Studios has included a new strafe move. Other refinements include better artificial intelligence, music and sound and an improved game engine. We'll be looking forward to this first game in the second generation of Special Forces action adventuring.

Daikatana Deathmatch Maps

Luke Whiteside, Daikatana level guru leaked a few scant details about the maps featured for the final game after numerous negative postings on a forum. There will be 10 deathmatch maps, 2 for each era, including the original maps from the demo version. Besides those there will be 4 capture the flag maps (1 per time period), one death tag map and 1 blade



match map where the Daikatana will be the only weapon. These have definitely been confirmed for the retail version when it arrives in 2009 (just kidding).

The Best of Last Year

If you were wondering which games made it big last year, then wonder no more. PC Data has released its retail gaming hits list for 1999. Please note that these figures are based on international sales.



- 1 Roller Coaster Tycoon - Hasbro Interactive
- 2 SimCity 3000 - Electronic Arts
- 3 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire - Disney
- 4 Age Of Empires II: Age Of Kings - Microsoft
- 5 Starcraft - Havas Interactive
- 6 Half-Life - Havas Interactive
- 7 C&C 2: Tiberian Sun - Electronic Arts
- 8 Microsoft Flight Simulator - Microsoft
- 9 Frogger - Hasbro Interactive
- 10 Baldur's Gate - Interplay
- 11 Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2 - Activision
- 12 Wheel Of Fortune - Hasbro Interactive
- 13 Rainbow Six Gold Edition - Red Storm
- 14 Starcraft Expansion: Brood Wars - Havas
- 15 Need For Speed 3 - Electronic Arts
- 16 Monopoly Game - Hasbro Interactive
- 17 Deer Hunter III - GT Interactive
- 18 Star Wars Episode I - LucasArts
- 19 Combat Flight Simulator - Microsoft
- 20 Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear - Red Storm

Resident Evil: Gun Survivor

Capcom have been working hard on a new gun game using the spooky Resident Evil environment as a background. Fans of the game will be pleased to know that the game will look, feel and taste very similar to the current



series, with all the usual trimmings and ample doses of blood and gore. The imaginatively named, Resident Evil: Gun Survivor promises to put you right there amongst flesh eating zombies, ravenous dogs and other deformed creatures of the night. The Umbrella Corporation is again up to no good and besides having to worry about slimy things that go bump in the night, you'll also have to deal with members of a SWAT team that have been sent in to eliminate you. The game will allow players to navigate freely using the gun and when the time comes for a little lead peeping you just aim and pull the trigger. Capcom have indicated that they'll also be throwing in a handful of puzzles here and there to keep die-hard fans happy. There are very few Light Gun games in circulation and the use of a huge video game franchise like Resident Evil, and the commitment of a major development studio like Capcom, might just be the very thing needed to swing around this limited market. If this game proves to be a smash hit, we'll be seeing more like it soon.

Following in the footsteps of the greats, The Sims (a human simulation game, if you didn't already know) from Electronic Arts and Maxis will also feature customisable 'skins'. In an effort to garner more interest in their upcoming title, Electronic Arts and Maxis are offering special Ultima Ascension skins to those who pre-order the game from select web sites. Maxis has added Ascension characters like The Avatar, Raven and Kane, other characters include The Sims creator, Will Wright, an EA Sports cheerleader, a Maxis worker and even Sid Meier. The developers are very excited about the potential of this open-ended 'feature' and in much the same way as Quake, expect to see thousands of custom-made skins appear on the Internet soon after the game is released. Already, during the process of developing the game a number of creative users have designed their own skins, wallpaper and floor patterns to be used in the final version. Now, Face-Lift, which is an application that will allow players to create new faces and heads



for use in the final game, has been added to the creative tools for The Sims. Even though the title has not yet hit retail stores the tool is available for download (8.90MB) at the official web site for The Sims. Go get it at www.thesims.com and start making faces, but not while your mom is looking!

Bigger than the movies... almost

Exceptionally good sales for the big three consoles over the December/January holiday period have helped the video game industry achieve the R43.2 billion point in hardware and software sales for 1999, inching closer to the film industry's R44.4 billion annual box office take. This is very interesting news in light of the fact that it doesn't include the PC gaming sales figures. PlayStation lead the pack with a phenomenal R9 billion in holiday sales alone, a figure greatly helped by the sale of around 3 million PlayStation consoles increasing Sony's market share to 53% of the video game console market. There are currently 25 million PlayStation consoles in North America (this represents one quarter of all the homes in America), and around 70 million worldwide.

PlayStation also sold more games than any other company, with over 15 million titles sold in December - and to think they've only just begun.

The Sims add a little Ascension

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Rogue Spear: Urban Operations

Red Storm announced recently that it would be releasing the Rogue Spear add-on, Urban Operations, early this year. Set in the urban environment, Team Rainbow will face its most dangerous missions to date, where every stray bullet endangers innocent lives (collateral



damage to be kept to a minimum boys). Due to the public nature of these missions, the secrecy of the Rainbow organization will also be in danger as the team fights against the most lethal terrorists in the world. Urban Operations will feature five new levels, each with four game types. In addition, the expansion will feature five classic levels from the original Rainbow Six (which were redone for Rogue Spear), new weapons, and five new multiplayer maps. The terrorists will also have new skills. Urban Operations will add new locales, weapons, and game modes. This time around, the eminent Rainbow counter terrorist organization must extinguish threats around urban centres of the world, including the slums of Istanbul, the watery canals of Venice, and the tenement housing complexes of Mexico City. In total, there will be five new single-player scenarios, plus a number of multiplayer sites, such as a prison, a chemical compound, bunkers, construction sites, train tracks, and a graveyard. As a bonus, Urban Operations will also offer five classic maps from the game that started it all, Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six; these include such favourites as Amazon, Skyscraper, and Hacienda. The game is looking almost good enough to eat, watch for a full preview soon.

Electronic Arts - 2000 and Beyond

Electronic Arts has licensed the Quake 3 Arena engine from id Software and plans to use the technology to develop several PC games, including a James Bond title based on the film, The World is Not Enough. The other highly anticipated game to receive the Q3A treatment will be American McGee's Alice, an alternate



and frightening rendition of the classic, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Both titles are due for release this year with more to be announced later in 2000 (E3). The licensing of id's technology means that development teams can focus on the creative side of things, leaving the 3D-engine dog work to the experts.

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NEW AGE GAMING PRICE COMPARISON

Game Title	Incredible Connection	CNA Interactive	Toys R Us	Reggies
Knockout Kings (PSX)	R 149.99	None	R 369.99	R 369.99
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation (PSX)	R 469.99	R 459.00	R 489.99	R 489.99
WarPath: Jurassic Park (PSX)	None	R 359.00	R 399.99	R 399.99
Tomorrow Never Dies (PSX)	R 349.99	R 359.00	None	R 489.99
Slave Zero (PC)	None	R 329.95	NA	NA
Jane's USAF (PC)	R 299.99	None	NA	NA
Unreal Tournament (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation (PC)	R 329.99	R 329.00	NA	NA

RELEASE LISTS

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!"

PC RELEASE LIST

FEBRUARY*

- 01 - Felony Pursuit - THQ
- 01 - Giants - INTERPLAY
- 01 - Lego Land - LEGO MEDIA
- 01 - The Sims - MAXIS
- 15 - Boarder Zone - INFOGRAMES
- 15 - Die Hard Trilogy 2 - FOX
- 15 - Messiah - SHINY
- 15 - Nox - EA
- 15 - Unreal Gold - EA
- 17 - Daikatana - EIDOS
- 17 - Risk II - HASBRO
- 17 - Iron Plague - GT INTERACTIVE
- 22 - Formula 1 99 - ACTIVISION
- 29 - Superbike 2000 - EA

MARCH*

- 01 - Croc 2 - FOX
- 01 - Imperium Galactica II - GT INTERACTIVE
- 01 - Official Formula 1 Racing 99 - EIDOS
- 01 - Silent Hunter II - MINDSCAPE
- 02 - Majesty - HASBRO
- 07 - Anachronox - EIDOS
- 07 - Tiberian Sun: Firestorm - EA
- 07 - Dawn of War - SOUTHPEAK
- 09 - Allegiance - MICROSOFT
- 14 - Metal Fatigue - PSYGNOSIS
- 14 - Soldier of Fortune - ACTIVISION
- 14 - Star Trek Armada - ACTIVISION
- 15 - Splinter - EA
- 16 - Reach for the Stars - MINDSCAPE
- 16 - Thief II - EIDOS INTERACTIVE
- 17 - Warlords Battlecry - MINDSCAPE
- 20 - B17 Flying Fortress - HASBRO
- 20 - Gunship! - HASBRO
- 20 - Star Wars Force Commander - LUCASARTS
- 20 - Wild Metal - TALONSOFT
- 21 - NASCAR 2000 - EA
- 21 - Shogun Total War - EA
- 21 - Tachyon: The Fringe - NOVALOGIC
- 21 - Wall Street Tycoon - I Entertainment
- 23 - Baseball 2001 - MICROSOFT
- 24 - F1 2000 - EA
- 24 - Triple Play 2001 - EA
- 28 - Deus Ex - EIDOS
- 28 - Evolve - VIRGIN INTERACTIVE
- 28 - Vampire: The Masquerade - ACTIVISION

*INTERNATIONAL RELEASE DATES

PSX RELEASE LIST

FEBRUARY*

- 01 - NASCAR Rumble - EA
- 08 - Team Buddies - ACTIVISION
- 10 - Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling 2 - THQ
- 11 - Samurai Showdown Warrior Rage - SNK
- 15 - All Star Tennis 99 - UBI SOFT
- 15 - Colin McRae Rally - SCEA
- 15 - Fighter Destiny II - SCEA
- 15 - Jackie Chan Stunt Master - MIDWAY
- 15 - LEGO Rock Raiders - LEGO MEDIA
- 15 - NHL Blades of Steel 2000 - KONAMI
- 15 - Rayman 2 - UBI SOFT
- 15 - Saga Frontier 2 - EA
- 15 - Test Drive Rally - INFOGRAMES
- 17 - Deception III - TECMO
- 17 - ECW: Hardcore Revolution - ACCLAIM
- 22 - Army Men Sarge's Heroes - 3DO
- 22 - Crusaders of Might & Magic - 3DO
- 22 - Superbike 2000 - EA
- 24 - Fear Effect - EIDOS
- 25 - Renegade Racer - INTERPLAY
- 28 - Urban Chaos - EIDOS
- 29 - Eagle One - INFOGRAMES
- 29 - Roadsters - TITUS
- 29 - Street Skater 2 - EA

MARCH*

- 01 - Big Mountain 2000 - SCEA
- 01 - Colony Wars Red Sun - ACTIVISION
- 01 - Hot Shots Golf 2 - SCEA
- 01 - International Rally - KONAMI
- 01 - Rollcage Stage II - ACTIVISION
- 01 - Syphon Filter 2 - SCEA
- 01 - Test Drive Cycles - INFOGRAMES
- 01 - WWF Smackdown - THQ
- 07 - Hydro Thunder - MIDWAY
- 07 - Sim Theme Park - EA
- 07 - World League Soccer 2000 - SCEA
- 14 - Triple Play 2001 - EA
- 15 - Galerians - CRAVE
- 21 - Caesars Palace 2000 - INTERPLAY
- 21 - Gauntlet Legends - MIDWAY
- 21 - Major League Soccer - KONAMI
- 24 - Disney World Racing - EIDOS
- 27 - F1 2000 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 28 - Nightmare Creatures 2 - EIDOS
- 28 - Test Drive Le Mans - INFOGRAMES

*INTERNATIONAL RELEASE DATES

In Passing...

PlayStation 2 Titles Coming Soon

Ardent Tekken fans awaiting the imminent release of Tekken Tag Tournament for the PlayStation 2 will be disappointed to hear that the expected overseas release date has been moved back to mid April. However, Ridge Racer V for PS2 should still make the overseas March launch date.

Tiberian Sun Expansion

Sporting an unusually long name, Command & Conquer Tiberian Sun: Firestorm Expansion is set to take the market by storm. The expansion should arrive early 2000 and will be distributed by Electronic Arts Africa. Westwood has created 18 all-new missions and a big selection of new units, including, among others, the Juggernaut, a three-gun walking arsenal in answer to the artillery of NOD. As we get more news you'll hear it.

Circle of Light

Halo is an exciting new futuristic third-person science fiction action game that sees the player as a military recon unit of the human race's new planetary empire. Combat takes place on the land, in the sea and air as the player single-handedly takes on the entire might of a hostile alien species. Using guerrilla warfare tactics the player must use weapons and vehicles of three different cultures to ensure victory at any cost. Halo is looking to ship later in the year and as things stand right now will be making its way onto the PlayStation 2.

Singapore Bans Half-Life

The Singapore Board of Censorships and the Ministry of Arts have apparently banned the sale of Valve Software's Half-Life and all of its associated third-party modifications in the Southeast Asian island nation. Government officials have already raided a number of shops, ordering retailers to pull all copies of the title, claiming that the game contains too much violence despite the built-in parental lockouts.

Windows 2000 service pack... already

It comes as no big shock that Microsoft is already working on a service pack (updates and bug-fixes that's what they call a patch for an operating system, a service pack) for their yet unreleased Windows 2000. This service pack, codenamed 'asteroid', will be available for free download from the Microsoft web site in June.

Eidos and Disney

Eidos Interactive and Disney Interactive have joined forces to develop three video games for the console and hand-held business based on Disney content. The titles will be created at Eidos' internal studio, Crystal Dynamics. The first offering, Walt Disney World Racing, will debut early 2000 for PlayStation. In July 2000, Eidos will probably be releasing a second title for these systems in conjunction with the Disney movie sequel, 102 Dalmatians. A third game to be determined at a later date will also be released.

LucasArts

some scant game, Jedi ent a series



between TI host of evil Trade Federation will be able to commanders including expansion Kenobi. The expansion will be distributed through ten levels and a few bosses to ultimately face the dreaded Darth Maul. As players hone their abilities, a points-based system and set of power-ups will renew health and recharge Force powers. These power-ups will also allow characters to obtain items for use in combat, including shields and restraining bolts. Each of the five Jedi has different proficiencies in combat and while Obi-Wan has agility and speed on his side, Qui-Gon has greater experience and stronger Force powers. The levels in Jedi Power Battles are based around specific Star Wars: Episode One environments, some of the levels have platforms and obstacles that must be negotiated in various encounters. There will also be extensive support for a two-player game where players must cooperate as a team and use each other's unique abilities to overcome the forces of evil.

third-person the player race's place on player single-

mately face of a hostile ers hone the tactics and set of p hicles of recharge Force at any also allow of the year combat, incle making Each of the 1 in combat at speed on his ence and str Jedi Power B and the Star Wars: Epped the the levels had all of its must be negi in the There will all ment player game ver of a team and copies of overcome th gains too arental

Who's the Sexiest of them all

Lara Croft is character of soft is competition updates later this year patch for their service available ft web site



Entertainment's 3D action game F.A.K.K.2, a third person action game based in the Heavy Metal universe. The game uses the Quake 3 Arena engine and features a fully animated and digitised version of the real-life model Julie Strain. Players will need to defend Julie's planet from powerful aliens intent on plundering her world's fountain of youth.

Jedi Power Battles

LucasArts has released a few screenshots and some scant details about their new PlayStation game, Jedi Power Battles. The game will present a series of one and two person clashes



between The Force wielding Jedi Knights and a host of evil mercenaries and assassins from the Trade Federation and the dark Jedi. Players will be able to choose between five Jedi characters including Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi. The object of the game will be passing through ten levels and a few bosses to ultimately face the dreaded Darth Maul. As players hone their abilities, a points-based system and set of power-ups will renew health and recharge Force powers. These power-ups will also allow characters to obtain items for use in combat, including shields and restraining bolts. Each of the five Jedi has different proficiencies in combat and while Obi-Wan has agility and speed on his side, Qui-Gon has greater experience and stronger Force powers. The levels in Jedi Power Battles are based around specific Star Wars: Episode One environments, some of the levels have platforms and obstacles that must be negotiated in various encounters. There will also be extensive support for a two-player game where players must cooperate as a team and use each other's unique abilities to overcome the forces of evil.



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Who's the Sexiest of them all

Lara Croft is considered the sexiest virtual character of all time but she's facing some stiff competition when Julie Strain hits the scene later this year. Julie is the female lead in Ritual



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Planet of the Babes

Now this is a sure fire winner, for a number of reasons... all of them bad. 3D Realms, creators of the popular third-person PlayStation shooter, Duke Nukem: Time to Kill has released a



few screenshots of their upcoming sequel, Planet of the Babes. This new game puts the muscle-bound hero in the future and in charge of repopulating the Earth, with the only remaining species - overly endowed women, sounds like a marketers dream come true. Duke won't have it so easy however and must face a race of intelligent apes and mutated boars. The game is a pure action title but will occasionally involve pressing a few switches and finding the odd key, but the emphasis is on pasting the evil ones and 'liberating' the girls. Improvements to the existing engine include enhanced lighting effects, a higher resolution and a few other small, but essential, refinements. We'll bring you all the news on this new and exciting Duke experience as soon as it reaches our quivering controllers.

In more news from Electronic Arts

It looks like PlayStation 2 owners are in for some difficult choices when the unit is finally put on sale later this year. Electronic Arts has been developing for Sony's new console for almost a year now and will have around 5 new titles available for the North American launch. The company has in total around 15-18 titles in development, many of which are planned for release during the course of 2000. EA has indicated unwavering enthusiasm for the PlayStation 2 and based on disappointing sales, which they blame on the small install base, support for Sega's console will probably fall away and Nintendo 64 releases will be reduced to as little as four new titles during 2000. This projected plan is easy to understand as Sony is estimating an install base of around 10 million PlayStation 2 units by the end of 2000 and a big install base equals big software sales. Taking into account their huge successes within the sports genre, gamers can expect to see EA leaning towards this arena with their current crop of PSX 2 titles. It looks like it's all guns firing at EA for the PlayStation 2, and interestingly in spite of all this activity there is still no news of a 2000 release for the Nintendo Dolphin or Microsoft's rumoured X-Box. Current PlayStation owners need not worry about the future of their software as EA is planning on focusing even more resources into the development of new original PlayStation titles, an obvious move considering the PSX 2 can run original PlayStation games. It always takes a big software developer to make or break a console platform, and by this token it seems that Sony definitely has all the support they need from one of the biggest software developers/publishers out there.

JOYSTICKS AND GAME CONTROLLERS



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just cHARTs

It seems that Age of Empires 2 is firmly entrenched in the charts, and appears to be hanging on to the top spot in a very fickle market. However, the new entry of Quake 3 is well anticipated by those in the know, and this game will most certainly stand a great chance of dislodging Microsoft's strategy/management title.

We see fewer new titles this month, but can see the big name titles like Tomb Raider 4 crawl upwards while others, like Pharaoh, begin a slide that might see them off the charts shortly. Another big new entry to watch is the relatively low entry of Quake 3's competitor, Unreal Tournament. The tussle between

these games may prove to be very interesting indeed!

On the PlayStation front, we see that FIFA 2000 has taken its spot at the top, as was to be expected with a title in EA's popular soccer sim range. Disney's Tarzan is climbing the ranks, and Lara Croft in Tomb Raider 4 enters at a high third position. EA's Need for Speed: Road Challenge's welcome return last month is holding fast in tenth spot.



Local PC Charts			
Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	Age of Empires 2 - Microsoft - Crew/SDD	1	2
2.	Quake 3 - id/Activision - MMW/SDD	New	New
3.	Tomb Raider 4 - Eidos / Eidos - Crew	5	1
4.	Flight Sim 2000 Standard - Microsoft - Crew	4	1
5.	Pharaoh - Sierra / Havas - Crew	2	1
6.	Need for Speed 2 Classic - EA - EA Africa	New	New
7.	Unreal Tournament - Epic / GT Int. - MMW/SDD	New	New
8.	SWAT 3 - Sierra / Havas - Crew	7	1
9.	FIFA 2000 - EA Sports - EA Africa	6	1
10.	Rally Championships - Actualize / EA - EA Africa	New	New

Local PlayStation Charts			
Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	Fifa 2000 - EA Sports - EA Africa	2	1
2.	Tarzan - Disney - Ster Kinekor Int.	5	1
3.	Tomb Raider 4 - Eidos - Ster Kinekor Int.	New	New
4.	Formula 1 99 - Psygnosis - Ster Kinekor Int.	3	1
5.	Tomorrow Never Dies - EA - EA Africa	6	1
6.	Spyro 2 - Ster Kinekor Int.	New	New
7.	Barbie Race and Ride - Ster Kinekor Int.	New	New
8.	Mission: Impossible - Ster Kinekor Int.	New	New
9.	Croc 2 - EA Africa	8	3
10.	Need for Speed Road Challenge - EA Africa	10	1

International PC Charts		
Position	Name	Developer - Local Dist.
1.	Age of Empires 2	Microsoft - Crew
2.	Unreal Tournament	Epic/GT Int. - MMW
3.	Heroes of Might and Magic 3	New Worlds / 3DO
4.	Alpha Centauri/Alien Crossfire	Firaxis/EA - EA Africa
5.	Planescape: Torment	Black Isle / Interplay - MMW
6.	Jagged Alliance 2	Talonssoft - Gametronix
7.	Baldur's Gato	Black Isle / Interplay - MMW
8.	Quake 3: Arena	id/Activision - MMW
9.	Half-Life/Opposing Force	Valve/Sierra - Crew/SDD
10.	Homeworld	Relic/Sierra - Crew/SDD

International PSX Charts		
Position	Name	Developer - Local Dist.
1.	Grandia	Sony - Ster Kinekor Int.
2.	Gran Turismo 2	Polyphony - Ster Kinekor Int.
3.	Dance Dance Revolution	Konami - Ster Kinekor Int.
4.	Dino Crisis	Capcom - Ster Kinekor Int.
5.	Final Fantasy Anthology	Square - Ster Kinekor Int.
6.	Parasite Eve 2	Square - Ster Kinekor Int.
7.	Final Fantasy VIII	Square - Ster Kinekor Int.
8.	Tomb Raider 4	Eidos - Ster Kinekor Int.
9.	Syphon Filter	989 Studios - Ster Kinekor Int.
10.	Metal Gear Solid	Konami - Ster Kinekor Int.

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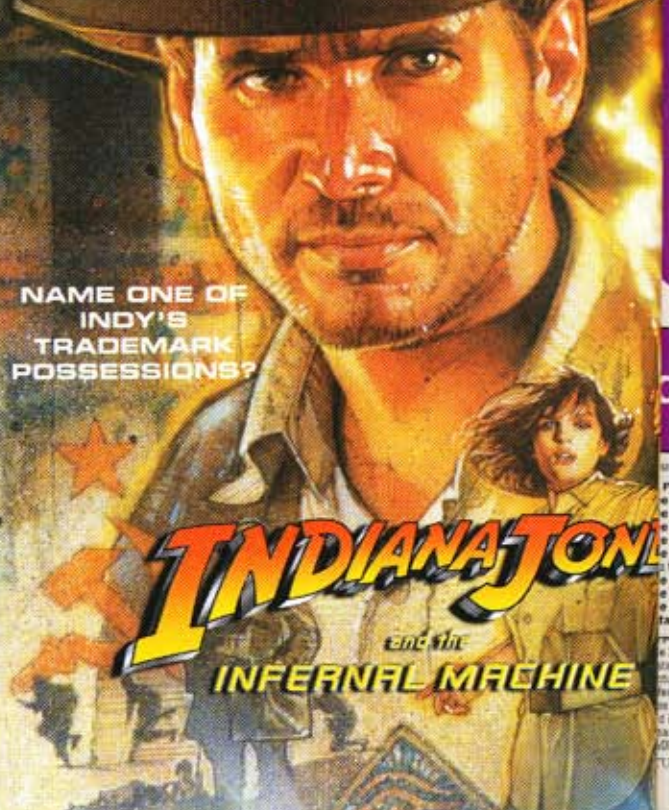


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of Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine are up for grabs this month.



NAME ONE OF INDY'S TRADEMARK POSSESSIONS?

GAME WARS

I get quite distressed when I hear people arguing about what the best platform for gaming is. These arguments generally go something along the lines of two people getting to blows over the fact that the computer and the PlayStation appeal to different tastes. I tire of hearing people mouth off about the merits of their favourite gaming platform and discrediting the other, spouting long strings of statistics, facts and figures that they more than likely don't understand and then getting really uptight about the fact that the other guy doesn't agree with them. All this while a few thousand miles to the North people are starving and fighting wars. It leads me to wonder, by way of my usual twisted conclusions and fuzzy logic, if these people can actually call themselves gamers.

Let's get analytical. What, exactly, is a gamer? What is the quintessential quality, the rare and bright star in the soul, that allows a person to claim this title? Quite simply, to be a gamer, one must play, and enjoy games. It is a relatively simple concept, easy enough for even the most fudge-brained ox to understand. Let me explain it again, just so we can be quite sure on this point: gamers play games. Gamer would probably be defined in a dictionary as a person who plays games, if those idiots in Oxford woke up and realised that English is a dynamic language, and they should update their damn dictionary from time to time. Got it? Good.

So, then, where should the line be drawn? What is considered enough, in terms of games played, to earn this title of utmost respect? Let's say, for example, that John Doe plays on his PC for three hours a day, seven days a week. Is he a gamer? Most, I am sure, would say, hell yes, he is a gamer. But what about the fact that he never touches a PlayStation, because he thinks they are the spawn of Satan? Could he be considered a gamer, even though his gaming is restricted to one platform? I say no! He could be called a PC gamer, certainly, because he spends all of his gaming time at his computer. But to be a true gamer, you have to experience the entirety of gaming - you have to partake in gaming as a whole. It's a kind of Zen thing, really...

The argument can be taken even further. Okay, so let's say our good pal John Doe gets hold of a PlayStation, and starts spending some time on that every second day. Right. There we

RamJet tries to explain the futility of PC versus PSX arguments this month, but instead just gets himself rather confused and induces a raging headache, again!

Any comments or replies (or general slating) can be sent to: rampage@nag.co.za

go. So now he's a gamer, right? Wrong! He could be called an electronic entertainment gamer, sure, but hey, what about all the other types of games out there? Yes, unfortunately it is true: life

If we follow the above line of thought, we need to redefine the term 'gamer'. A true gamer would have to be a person who plays everything, has no time for anything else, no money after buying all those games and is in serious need of getting a little sunlight, before the neighbours sneak in one day and drive an ash stake through his heart. This, of course, is completely unreasonable. No person could ever be a true gamer if that's the case, so the argument really blows itself out of the water.

This is where I get to say my two cents worth, which, considering the current exchange rate, probably isn't worth spit. But I'm going to say it anyway. I believe that a gamer is a person who is willing to experience any game. They don't have to like every game, or play games twenty-four hours a day. But they should be open to experience new types of gaming, to at least give them a try, and to respect the tastes and likes of other gamers. Just because you don't like a certain type of game doesn't mean that someone who does is an ingrate who just crawled out from under a particularly nasty rock. It means that you have different tastes. And let's be honest people. What does it matter? If you like playing on your PlayStation and your best bud likes his PC, so what? It's not a reason to start a feud.

that may spill over into other areas of your lives and last for the next twenty-two generations. They're only games, after all. Yes, we enjoy them, often almost 'live' for them, but there is a world outside of gaming, and getting all hot under the collar because of our hobbies is, well, kind of petty. Live and let live, folks.

It's not a matter of which is a better platform. The real mystery lies in why people feel the need to argue about it. I suppose it's one of the 'human nature' things that turn us into such nasty creatures.

does not begin and end with computers and consoles, and there is a great big wide world out there, no matter how much you try to deny it.

What about Role Playing Games, Tabletop war games, or even card and board games? They are games, aren't they? Would one not have to play these as well, to be considered a gamer? By way of this particular argument, yes, you would. Wait a minute, I am getting a headache... Let's trim this down.



PR

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BACKCHAT

Thank you to everyone who wrote in this month. Unfortunately we cannot reply to all of the letters we receive, 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 (Ed's Choice) 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. Any arguing will be ignored!

Well done to Neale "Unspecified" who wins our letter of the month - keep the questions coming. Until next month...

Backchat
PO Box 2749
Alberton
1449

letters@nag.co.za

I think the simple game demo has done more for the gaming industry than any other single thing since the first demo appeared on cassette tape years ago. One of the better returns on investment a development team makes when they release a demo is the stream of suggestions, bug reports and general opinions from the gaming community. Sometimes this information is used to perfect a game before release and therefore save time and aggravation by being as perfect as possible before reaching the general public from a retail store shelf. A good example of this was the release of the Quake III Arena demo test and the upcoming Diablo II beta test (keep an eye out for this in a future issue). So long live the humble demo and may they provide you with many more 'free' and happy hours.
Ed

Honour Among Enemies

What pleasure can someone possibly get from winning a game when he has to cheat to do it? Isn't it a hollow victory? Does it really improve your self-esteem? I'm afraid I just don't get it. Take last night for instance. I'm playing a

Brood War ladder game on Battle.net. The guy I'm playing against has three yellow bars on his latency indicator, which is pretty impressive, as I usually have to be satisfied with five red bars, being from South Africa and all. The game progresses very nicely until about five minutes into the game and suddenly a 'waiting for player' message pops up for 30 seconds. Okay, I thought, I'm used to this. What I wasn't used to was that it happened consistently every 5 minutes or so for about 30 seconds. It doesn't even happen that often

when you actually play through a bad connection, which this definitely wasn't. I don't mind losing when my opponent plays well or I play badly. I consider myself a good sportsman, none of those 'my mouse was dirty' excuses for me. I do not like playing, never mind losing to, someone who uses some dirty trick to get the upper hand. Like the idiot who said: 'No rush, okay?' and then promptly rushed me 3 minutes later or the other rat, who, after letting me do all the work in beating up the computer, took the allying off and rushed me with his, by then, sizable force. What's the point? We already had a win together! Is there no discipline or honor amongst gamers? If we want people to take us seriously, then we must take gaming seriously. Learn how to lose (and win) graciously. Be real men, never mind good sportsmen. (I am chauvinistically referring to the male gender, because I've never actually played against a woman, but I'm sure they're all real ladies and don't need to be reprimanded.) Do you think Gary Kasparov is going to risk his reputation just to win at

chess? Will Pete Sampras cheat just so that he can become the world number one in tennis? Of course not! So why should we demean our pastime by cheating?

Justus Ortlepp
E-mail

This is why games such as Quake Arena and Unreal Tournament work well, other than camping there is no real way to cheat. The problem with Brood War is that you need to rely on the integrity of someone you've never met and is probably younger than you by a number of years. It's starting to look like there is simply not enough honour out there to go around. The thing we need the most is a little sportsmanship and learning to lose gracefully because if we aren't cheating then we're making excuses. Perhaps it's got something to do with the decline of social skills due to excessive time spent behind a monitor?
Ed

The return of the Classifieds

Your magazine is great and I wouldn't trade it for anything... (Well, maybe for Lara Croft in a nice bikini...) [I'd trade my own mother for Lara Croft in a bikini (sorry mom), Ed].

The reason I am writing is because of a new section you tried to start in your magazine about a year ago but unfortunately there wasn't enough interest in it at the time. Yes, I'm referring to your classifieds! I realise there wasn't much support for it in the past but now am sure gamers would love to sell some of their old games to purchase new ones and besides what happens to all those games you guys get for reviewing? Won't you sell those? You might be able to raise the whole NAG teams salaries for a year. I have at least 8 games I want to get rid of. Could you guys maybe give the classifieds another chance otherwise I will have to resort to the shameful habit of begging or buying illegal copies.

Henry Chapman
E-mail

Yes, the magazine was fresh and new at that time and didn't have enough readers to support a thriving classifieds section. This isn't the first e-mail I've received about this so if you think starting a classifieds section is a good idea then send an e-mail to the usual address and let me know your opinions, also include a list of possible things you'd like to flog to the other readers so I can bid for what I want first. Who knows, maybe someone might even have a long lost original copy of Speedball 2 for the Commodore Amiga.
Ed

Henry Chapman speaks... again

As a new PlayStation fan, I find my dismay, that I seem to have been affected with the now officially recognised PlayStation Thumb.

This depressing condition causes cramps and painful muscle spasms in the thumb, which usually occur at vital stages of a game. Motor racing games are the main culprits, which tend to trigger these symptoms. According to doctors, PlayStation Thumb is a form of repetitive strain injury (RSI) and is common among people who work with computers or 'repetitively use their hands'. Does anyone else suffer from this, and if so, what is the solution? If a cure is not found soon, I foresee my gaming career being cut short before it has even started! Please Ed, I see you as the master of the gaming world and thus I accept that you have the answer to my question...

Henry Chapman
E-mail

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and Repetitive Strain/Stress Injury is another little medical problem you'll face if you own a PC or PlayStation. Although the first condition is more closely related to extended use of a mouse and keyboard, there is also the

Patch me up

When I decide to buy a certain game I always do the sensible thing and try to find a review of it on the Internet or in your magazine. If the game scores 80% or above I normally buy it, if it scores less than that, I don't. I recently read a review of Ultima IX on the net. The reviewer said that the game had all the makings of a classic. It had a great story and great graphics, but due to a lot of bugs and slowdowns it didn't score that high. It seems to me that if these bugs didn't exist, the game would have scored much higher. If I didn't know anything about the Ultima series and how great these games are I never would have considered buying Ultima IX. Now for my question - if a game achieves a score of 70% because it has a lot of bugs and slowdowns, is it possible for the same game to score 80% or maybe even 90% if it was reviewed after installing a patch that fixes these problems? If this is the case then a lot of games that scored 70% could actually have scored 80% or higher if it were reviewed after installing a patch. I don't know if it's possible, but can't you update your reviews (you could only give the new score) if a patch comes out that dramatically improves the game's performance, so that we can know that it's okay to buy the game if you intend to update it with a patch.

Neale
E-mail

Like a marriage, patching things up seems to be the wrong use of words, as patching something generally refers to a temporary fix and when a game is patched it's 'fixed' until the next patch... What all this might mean, I don't know, what I do know (and you'll find two examples of this phenomenon in this issue) is that more often than not patches don't make that much of a difference to a game. An exception to this, for example, would be the patch for Sin. That was a 35 MEG download at the time, so would the general rule here be, the bigger the patch the bigger the improvement? This then equates to lengthy downloads and so on. This aside, in answer to your question - no, adjusting scores based on patches isn't what it's all about. If developers can't get it right the first time then why should they be accommodated at a later stage? Not everyone has access to the Internet and then if they do they don't always have the resources to continually download patches for faulty products. To further highlight this check out the Slave Zero review, it was reviewed without a multiplayer element, and before the magazine went to print a patch was released, adding a multiplayer option to the main menu and for all intents and purposes this was all it did, add an option. The patched game now offers 12 multiplayer maps and you can go head to head with four friends in a multiplayer scenario. Now this should have made some impact on the continuity score, but it doesn't because the multiplayer option is a weak tacky affair that reeks of a rushed job. To further fuel the fire the newly patched game will not recognise your old saved games! This brings me to a gripe I've been meaning to air for some time. Patches, something you either have to love or hate. Love because they update and improve your game (if only marginally) and hate because they often destroy any progress made in a game because version 1.1 isn't compatible with a save game from version 1.0. Now in light of my lengthy ranting let me know how you feel about patches and their place in a world of rushed deadlines and sloppy programming.
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Ed

danger of epilepsy, loss of sleep and even in some rare cases obsessive and compulsive disorders where people spend too much time with their computers and not enough time anywhere else. You're all at risk unless you observe the warning labels that come with the game. The PlayStation Thumb could lead to serious problems, eventually... they can't really say what the long term effects might be seeing that the PlayStation has only been around for 5 odd years... so either take a break between playing sessions or run the risk of developing a possible flaccid impotency of the thumb in ten years time.
Ed

Tomb Raider rejects player

Last Friday I bought a copy of Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation as I've already played the other three games. My problem is that at the end of level 4 or 5 just into the movie segment it shuts down completely. I have a... [Long system specification list, Ed] so I knew it couldn't be my machine. I took the game back to Incredible

Patch me up

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Ed

BACKCHAT

Connection and swapped it for another one, this one worked but with no diary set-up or scrapbook as you people claimed in Issue 8, November. Now at the end of level 12, again at the video segment the game just shuts off. I'm disgusted and upset at Eidos for having supplied reject copies of the game to South Africa. I'm asking for some advice on what to do to obtain a working copy of the game in South Africa and one that includes the missing features mentioned above.

Ivano
E-mail

Okay, calm down there. Firstly I've not heard any similar complaints about the game shutting down during video sequences, so I'm guessing it has something to do with your machine. Secondly there is no such thing as reject copies circulating in South Africa, the game you have at home is the same one on sale around most of the world. Thirdly the preview of Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation was exactly that, a preview. Around twenty percent of what developers promise during game development never makes it into the final version. The information used in the preview came straight from Eidos so they goofed, not us. The best possible solution for you is to make sure you've updated all your drivers and DirectX and then try again, if that doesn't work then try the game on a friend's machine.
Ed

Deadlines

Lately a lot of people I know have complained about the release dates of games. Apparently they're sick of this 'when its done' rubbish! Well I don't mind waiting for a game but I can understand them feeling this way and I too sometimes succumb to the urge of wanting to play some great game, right now and not when its done! Why I say this is if you look around the world in which we live you'll see that everything revolves around deadlines. Take NAG for example - imagine for a minute that you people had no deadlines, would we be lucky to see 4 issues in a year? [It would be more like 1, trust me, Ed] So why don't developers follow deadlines? Delaying a game can have a bad effect, like Tiberian Sun, it should've come out at least a year ago or earlier, the same applies for Daikatana. In addition, every time a developer comes out with something cool it's back to the drawing board. It's a vicious circle. On the other hand if you want something you've got to be prepared to wait for it. Look at the companies who have adapted the 'when its done' method - id, 3D Realms, Epic and Blizzard to mention just a few. You have to agree that their track record isn't too shabby. Also when the

game does arrive people don't seem to mind that it was late in getting there. So with this taken into consideration I'd be prepared to wait the extra few months for a Quake 3, Duke Forever and so on. So all you gamers out there who think life isn't worth living just because Diablo 2 or some other game didn't make it over the Festive season, get over it and go out and buy the good games that did come during Christmas.

Justin Reabow
Durban

You've said it so well, I'm at a loss for words. I agree that there should be no rushing a game like Diablo 2, but then I can't help thinking that a two-year delay on some games is a little excessive.
Ed

Power to the readers

I have a few suggestions to make. Many have asked already, but still we don't know who the NAG family is. How about that long promised and ultimately elusive photo for the readers, only if to check-up on Shryke's comic representation of the scruffy bunch? One thing I have noticed about NAG is that it focuses 'mainly' on making itself as good as it can be and keeping its readers as satisfied as possible. Now I'm not complaining here, the constant growth and refinement of the magazine is very rewarding for the readers I'm sure, but how about encouraging some interactivity from the readers as well. Demand some homemade game levels or bitmaps/3D rendered pictures to showcase on the demo CD as a reward. Why not add some reader opinions on certain hardware reviews. I am very sure there are creative readers out there that can add to NAG and others that have their own opinions about certain hardware that could enhance the reviews and make it much more complete.

Quinton Jacobs
E-mail

You've got some nice ideas there, so here is the demand, send in those homemade levels, renders and other bits and pieces and if we get enough we'll force Leonard to make a little space on his CD. As for the photos on the team, I really don't think so... it's much safer to present the NAG crew in cartoon format, but if you beg enough we might move a little closer to saying, 'cheese'. Phew, got us out of that one, say thanks to your Editor everyone!
Ed

Please send any questions and opinion related mail to:
letters@nag.co.za

Hi and welcome to the first issue of the Developer's Blueprint. This series is about computer games, or more specifically about developing computer games. The Developer's Blueprint is intended for anyone that has ever wondered how to go about developing a computer game. In the five years I have been developing games here in South Africa I can't count the number of talented artists, programmers and designers I have met that were interested in games development. If you follow each article, each month you should be able to develop a computer game by the end of the series. Although that is the primary goal of the Blueprint, people who are just interested in what goes on behind the scenes in game development will still find value in following these articles.

During the next few months I will take you step by step through the game development process. Just

Designing Your Team

by Travis Bulford
In Part 1 of Developer's Blueprint Travis talks about gathering friends and planning games.

more people on the team the harder the team will be to organise. We will be developing a small game with you and our team for this exercise consists of three people - Me (naturally), Adrian and Dominik, one of Celestial's artists.

Gathering That Team

Some of you will have precise people in mind for your team. Others will find you have a particular skill missing. Use the mailing list (see end of article) and any other sources you can find other people interested in working with you on the game. Do not think that you have to have expensive professional training to get into game development, just remember the best game developers in the world are self-taught.

Getting Your Team Organised

So you have your four skills assembled. This team needs to be organised. First identify each person's responsibility within the team. Now you need a regular meeting place and time. Preferably somewhere that is large enough for the whole team and their computers. We call our game design sessions GADS and I will continue to refer to them as GADS for this series. Learn that paper is your friend - write down everything as you go through your GADS. Also keep these papers. You may think you can remember everything, but believe me in six months time you will not remember the specifics.

Designing Your Game

I remember working on easily over 100 games as I grew up. Of those pre-Celestial games, I finished 3. That's a 3% hit ratio, not high enough by any standard, one objective of the design phase is to make sure you have a game you will finish.

oping a cool scrolling engine and try to fit the game into it. Our primary goal was to develop Toxic Bunny and we decided to build it in a platform-scrolling engine. If we started by trying to develop a scrolling engine, that's all we would have done. (You would never believe what other engines we considered for Toxic Bunny before we settled on scrolling-platform.)



Things on a larger scale

2. Try to remember that everyone on your team should be able to add his or her 5c worth to the game. These people all like computer games and as such are the best qualified to comment on the games content.

Tip:

Do not bring games/videos to your GADS - you will not work if you can play games instead. Make other time for that.

Remember that if other people don't like your idea then let the idea go. If you fight to keep your idea when others don't like it they will do the same to you later.

3. Be realistic about what you are trying to do. The idea is to find something difficult enough to challenge you, but still within your reach. Take small steps, everyone has to learn sometime.

Silver Rain (Our game we are developing for the Blueprint) Now let's explain some of the history behind the product. Silver Rain is a game Adrian and I designed and wanted to do in 1988. The logo is actually a scan of the original logo designed then. Since I have always wanted to do an arcade shooter, it made perfect sense to dig up this project. You should design most of your product before you start developing it. For example you need a story, bad guys, good guys and stuff to exchange between them. A few tips for the design phase:

1. Remember to get everyone's opinions. Everyone should feel like the game is their own.
2. If you put something into the game ask yourself:
 - 2.1 Is the player aware of this thing? No point adding money to a game if the player can't see how much there is.
 - 2.2 Does this new thing affect the choices the player can make? If a feature makes no difference to the way you have to play then most probably its not adding anything to the game.

to fit the game into it. Our primary goal was to develop Toxic Bunny and we decided to build it in a platform-scrolling engine. If we started by trying to develop a scrolling engine, that's all we would have done. (You would never believe what other engines we considered for Toxic Bunny before we settled on scrolling-platform.)



Things on a larger scale

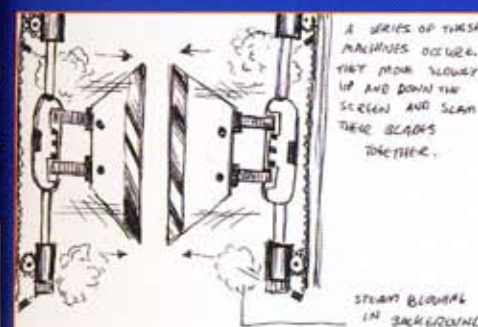
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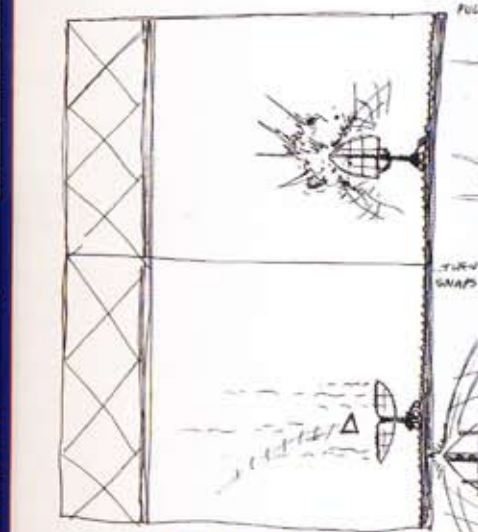
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1. Remember to get everyone's opinions. Everyone should feel like the game is their own.
2. If you put something into the game ask yourself:
 - 2.1 Is the player aware of this thing? No point adding money to a game if the player can't see how much there is.
 - 2.2 Does this new thing affect the choices the player can make? If a feature makes no difference to the way you have to play then most probably its not adding anything to the game.



A SERIES OF THESE PAINTINGS OCCURRED FROM SLOWLY UP AND DOWN THE SCREEN AND SCAM THESE SCENES TOGETHER.

STEAM BEHIND IN BACKGROUND



THIS MACHINE MOVES UP & DOWN THE SCROLLS AND USE SELECTED-PALETTE TO FULL SHIP

TWO SIMPLY SNAP SHUT.

2.3 Is this feature unique in its function? A bigger gun may not add as much to a game as a similarly powered gun with different behaviour.

3. Are there enough short term and long-term goals? You need to keep your players attention with a combination of both. No short-term goal may make players grow despondent. No long-term goal may make your players bored. Too many goals may make your player confused. Also remember, sometimes players can

then consider removing it. We normally wait to hear at least two complaints about something before we act on it.

7. Do not be scared to drop entire blocks of your design. Even when you have started your game it may become apparent that a particular part of your game needs to be changed. Go ahead change it. It's your creation after all.

8. Remember to motivate your player. Some players will be completely uninspired if you do not motivate them. When you play a game you want to feel like you make a difference in the world. Different players will be motivated by different things so find out what motivates each player in your team and use that as a basis for your motivational design.

Silver Rain - Some Design Information

(A summary of the actual design) Silver Rain is an arcade shooter. In 2068 A.D. our hero, a spy, infiltrates a top-secret base. An evil corporation has built a flying war factory. This factory is capable of creating millions of automated war ships. The war factory is about to embark on its destructive path. Our hero steals a prototype self-modifying ship and begins his trip, flying through to the heart of the factory to where he can destroy it. We decided we wanted power-ups, different ways to finish levels. We wanted the player to have the resource to make his ship more power-

The design phase is often the most fun as imaginations ignite and bad ideas get shot down in flames. Here are a few examples of specific problems the pilot in the game will need to negotiate, but always remember to make the game fun to play and not frustratingly difficult...

be given the opportunity to make their own goals. (This happens very often in

role-playing games). Balancing your game will take a great deal of time and patience. Rely on your experience playing games to guide you in this area.

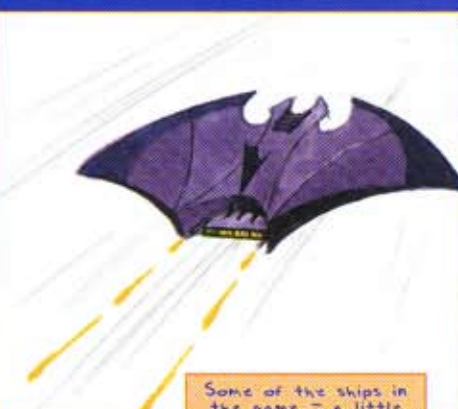
4. Players want to be rewarded for getting through hard pieces of the game.

5. Remember your game is defined as much by what you put in it as by how much you leave out. Some things do not belong in your game, so avoid the temptation of putting everything in.

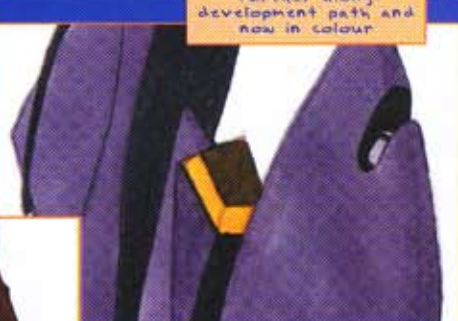
6. If everyone thinks something about your game sucks, then most probably they are right. Try to find out why they think that, and fix it. If you cannot fix it

ful and have to choose what power to use. In addition we wanted his ability to modify the ship, to be improved if he plays better.

Once you have decided what will be in your game and what will not, you can then start thinking about what game engine to build. We decided to build a 2D-scrolling engine with 3D pre-rendered ships and hand drawn tile graphics. When you manage to shoot every ship in a wave you get a star. Each time you get a star your purchase slider moves one item down. You can purchase speed, shields, blasts and upgrades. When you select your upgrade you



Some of the ships in the game - a little further along development path and now in colour

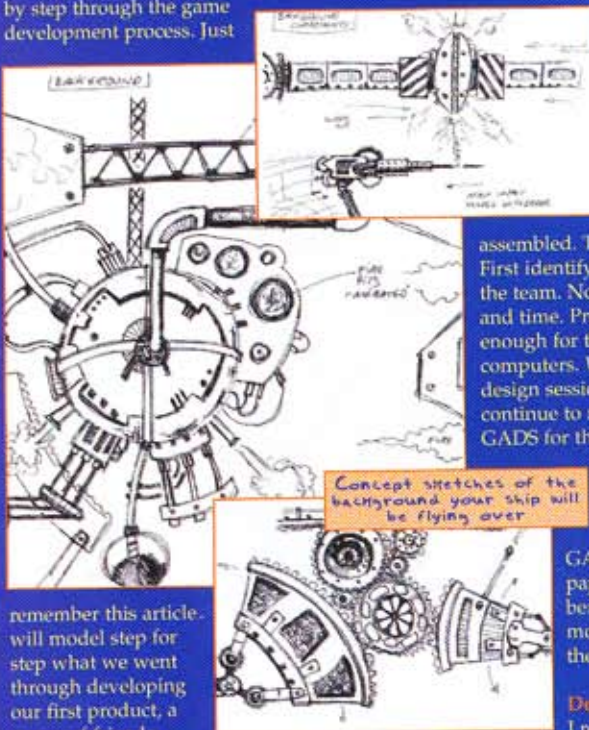


start at the top of the list again. This way your choices have a drastic effect on your game play. If you make your ship too fast then you may have trouble flying it. Each time you upgrade your ship it gets bigger and this makes it harder to dodge.

We suggest you look at building a similar game especially if you expect difficulty with the technical issues of the development. Next month we will be providing you with all the tools you need to develop your game. We will also be talking about building all the additional game tools you will need. In the mean time get a team together and do your design.

Help:

Remember to use the mailing list to present questions as we proceed. Mailing list: blue-dev@spider.web.za To subscribe to the list just send E-mail to blue-dev-subscribe@spider.web.za and you'll automatically be added.

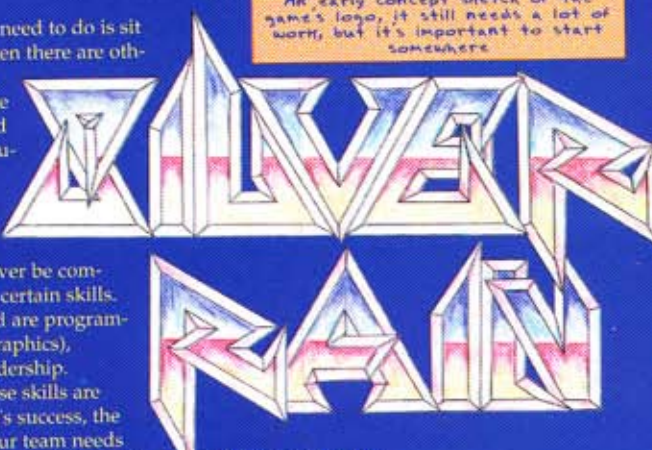


Concept sketches of the background your ship will be flying over

remember this article. will model step for step what we went through developing our first product, a group of friends working from home with a common goal (fun via game development!). It's how we started and there's no reason why you can't do the same. So with all that in place let me stop my jabbering and get on with the blueprint.

Team

Most people think that all you need to do is sit down and write your game, then there are others who realise that designing your game should be the first step. The very first and most important step is actually assembling your team. This step will influence what your game is and whether or not your game will ever be complete. Your team needs certain skills. The skills you will need are programming, art (sound and graphics), design/writing and leadership. Although all four of these skills are imperative to your team's success, the most important thing your team needs is passion. People on the team need to be hard working and enthusiastic. Team size is not important, just remember the



An early concept sketch of the game's logo, it still needs a lot of work, but it's important to start somewhere

Here are a few tips:

1. Work out what game you want to make. We finished Toxic Bunny because writing Toxic Bunny was important. We did not start by devel-

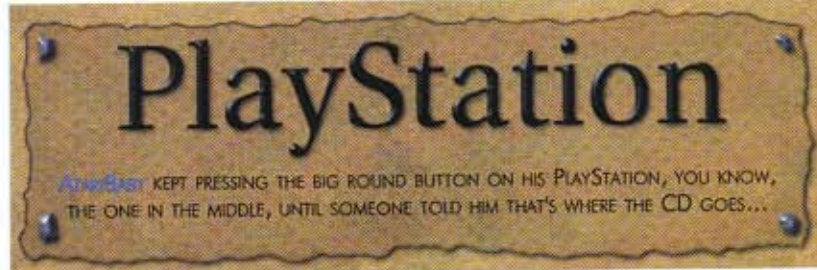


The PlayStation story would make a great film. It has all the ingredients that a good director would look for. It's a story of vendetta and betrayal that spans many years. It's the story of a well known electronics giant that decided to try its hand at console game design... So lets all gather and I'll start at the beginning!

In the beginning
Through out its years of existence, Sony has always given us great inventions. Although not many people know that Sony was originally called TTEC (Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering Corporation) and was started by Akio Morita and Masaru Ibuka, both were engineers working on heat seeking technology for the Japanese government during World War 2. With the decimation of Hiroshima by the atom bomb, the war between Japan and the US ended and that meant that Morita and Ibuka could try their hands at less destructive innovations. Sony mainly built transistor radios aimed at the American market. As years went by Sony went from strength to strength building TV's, video recorders and perhaps the most famous invention, the Walkman. Around this time as part of Sony's TV broadcast business, they developed an image manipulation system called System G. Meanwhile on the other side of the Atlantic a new kind of revolution was unfolding... video games. Pong had arrived and was making money quicker than Sony could produce walkmans. Ken Kutaragi, one of the System G team developers showed interest in the 'new' technology but Sony refused to act, and two other Japanese companies, Taito and Namco came to monopolise the market in Japan. Namco were busy building Disney licensed rocking horse rides and managed to get their hands on the Japanese side of Atari Corp and in one fowl swoop, became part of the videogames market. After selling Atari's games, they started designing their own. The first being a basic shooting game called Shoot Away. It was a minor game in the gaming circles, then Taito released Space Invaders, and the world went video game mad.

After missing out on this entire videogames boom, Sony teamed up with Panasonic, Toshiba, and Yamaha and hurriedly created the MSX home computer to try and grab a piece of the action. It was a dismal failure, arriving just as home computer went the same way as bell-bottomed trousers. Soon afterwards, Nintendo produced the first in the Donkey Kong series and as result of that the NES was put on sale. It was a machine that was supposed to pick up the pieces where the Atari VCS left it. Soon the NES was a popular commodity in millions of homes around the world. To try and keep up the popularity, Nintendo pulled in the help of Namco. Their task was to create home console versions of all the arcade favourites like Xevious, Rally X and of course Pac Man. The deal was highly lucrative for both parties until 1989, when their original 5-year contract expired. During this time Nintendo's position had strengthened greatly and it had many external developers that were held under far stricter contracts. A contract that Namco's boss was not expected to sign. Namco's boss Masaya Nakamura was outraged and immediately filed a lawsuit against Nintendo claiming monopolistic practices but in the end was forced to relent. Though their cut of the profits would be much smaller, Namco needed the money to keep afloat. Nakamura reluctantly signed the deal, and slowly and surely started plotting his revenge.

Soon after, Nintendo launched their 16-bit machine, the Super NES. The machine was meant to do battle with Sega's Mega Drive and



had won the battle on its home soil in Japan, but as for the rest of the world, Sega held the biggest slice of the cake. When Sega announced the arrival of the new MEGA CD offering far greater data storage capabilities with cheaper manufacturing costs, Nintendo realised that they had some catching up to do. Nintendo needed CD technology quickly, and so they turned to Sony, who as you know by now, created the format with Phillips.

Remember Ken Kutaragi and the System G team? Well they had spent the rest of the 80's enviously eyeing out the rest of the gaming worlds technology while working on their own. Nintendo was so impressed with their work, that a deal was struck in early 1990 - Nintendo would get the CD technology for their NES and Sony would get into the gaming industry, with the backing of the worlds biggest games company - both parties were delighted! But why should Sony stop at making Nintendo's CD unit? Why not take the process one step further and make their own machine that could play both SNES and the new Sony CD games. Work began and the project was christened - PlayStation!

Nintendo was so delighted with their new hardware, allowing Sony to make a single game that would have been released on the SNES under the Sony logo. The game was called 'Fotessa' and it was said to be absolutely awesome for its time. So... the future was looking rosy, but then disaster struck - Nintendo backed out of the deal. It is thought that they were not comfortable with the reduced profits from the CD format or that they feared Sony would monopolise the new CD's by producing movies and enhanced audio discs, (does that smell like DVD to me!) a market that Nintendo would have no part in. To say that Sony was ticked-off was an understatement! Of course they could still continue and sell their games with their developed unit, but without the backing of Nintendo and the NES plug-in it, was pretty much pointless.

But Sony's appetite had been whetted by this

dalliance with Nintendo. While working on the NES thing one problem was the NES compatibility with the coding that was done by Sony. Sony decided not to waste the millions that were already spent on the research and development, and to soldier on with their PlayStation project regardless. After all, they could now make a machine that had no retro ties with anyone. Ken Kutaragi relished the challenge and set about creating PlayStation X or PSX as the all new super console.

All went quiet on the Sony frontier for the next couple of years. The only idea of what Sony was up to was the incredibly shrewd buying of Psygnosis, the highly regarded software developers. One or two rumours leaked about Sony having some sort of project under R&D, but nothing was definite, until January 1994 when the news finally broke. A subsidiary, Sony Computer Entertainment Europe would produce a multimedia machine for launch in mid '95. The gaming world soon realised that if Sony threw their corporate weight behind the project, they could own the entire gaming industry in one foul swoop! Nintendo and Sega weren't so much quaking in their boots as cackling in their pants! A month later, and tech specs appeared, forcing Sega, who had recently announced their Saturn console, to add another 32-bit SH Risk processor in an attempt to avoid it being outdated on release. Alongside the release of the PSX specs, came the announcement of the first PSX game, Warlock (never to see the light of day) and a major deal with Namco. At last Masaya Nakamura had his revenge. Nintendo was now the sworn enemy of both Namco and Sony. Soon rumours of a near perfect version of the then brand-new Namco arcade hit Ridge Racer, was doing the rounds. month later (March '94) and Sony showed the machine for the first time, although at this stage in a PC casing, four times the size of the finished product. The frantic journalists were treated to a demo of the now famous T-Rex dinosaur head that appeared on the Demo discs that came with the early PlayStations. The press were amazed. In May, development kits were delivered to such famous game companies as Konami and Capcom. June saw official release dates being announced, November for Japan and a disappointing September '96 for the UK and the US. Within the first year Sony sold over 2 million units worldwide, and as we all know currently is the biggest selling games machine (apart from the Atari VCS) in the world ever. As we await the arrival of the new PSX 2, we can just wonder what marvel Sony has created and if they can improve on their amazing invention that has captured the attention of gamers worldwide.

Well then, that's the entire story. And believe you me, this is one that no one in the country has heard before. Next month we might delve into the history behind data storage... yep I'll take you back to the days when the biggest HD was 10 MB and cost more than today's basic PC's. I also had lots of requests to reveal the history behind the Mario Bros Saga and the story of Apple Macintosh... well I'm working on both! Until such time... happy gaming!

betrayal that I'll start at Atari Baby

Card Games FOR WINDOWS™



Card Games for Windows
Are you growing weary of being a little fish in a big corporate pond? Well, the games available on this title will turn you into a veritable card shark as you guzzle your way through hours (lunch hours, of course - yeah, right) of card playing. In. With over one hundred games, including Rummy Drop, Tai Pei, Teens, Pai Gow poker and Canasta, at your disposal, you will be able to spend that huge upcoming bonus on a trip on a New Orleans riverboat!

BrainBusting Games FOR WINDOWS™



BrainBusting Games for Windows
Does the idea of working on a complicated, multi-million Rand deal at could make or break your company's future bore you to tears? Then is CD is exactly what you need for little mental stimulation. With more on the square of ten games at your finger tips, this title is guaranteed to let those under-utilised grey cells fizzling. Some of the games featured in this disk include Rats (which very dedicated Windows gamers would remember and love), Worm World, The Cube, Pentablox and ngstones. After all the mental stimulation you receive from these, don't be alarmed if your IQ rises sharply!

Let's face it. There are times when a quick game of something simple yet fun is just what the doctor ordered. To this end, Windows based games are about the best source of a 'gaming-fix' to be found. You know those times - when the work has just got too much, and you need something relaxing to reset the old brain a bit, while keeping the option of alt-tabbing back to a work program should the boss decide to make his rounds. Family Fun has made the whole spectrum of Windows games all that much easier - and wider - by producing a range of Windows based games for the discerning office gamer. These titles, crammed full of evaluation versions of some really great Windows games, are an absolute steal at the paltry price of R99.00 each, and will keep the old office PC ticking over with fun and excitement.

Card Games FOR WINDOWS™



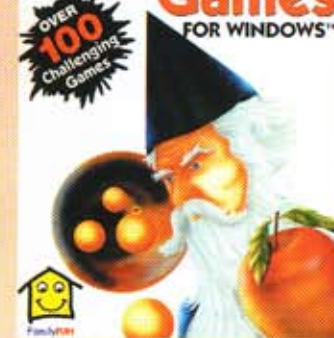
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Adventure Games FOR WINDOWS™



Adventure Games for Windows
Fancy yourself the Indiana Jones of the boardroom? Then this is the title you need to get a hold of! Featuring over 100 adventure Windows based games, this is exactly what you need to escape the tedium of another spreadsheet, replacing figures with maps and marketing strategies with treasure finding tactics. Titles include Commander Keen, Metal Knights, Golden Wombat, Imperial Conquest and Dark Continent. So break away from the cubicle and enter the world of high adventure.

Word Games FOR WINDOWS™



Word Games for Windows
Have you always dreamed of a career in journalism (you sad soul you)? Then you better be up on your vocabulary - at least this is what we are told. This collection of five Windows based words games is an excellent place to get started! Letter Rack, What's Up, Foreword, Word Blitz and Countdown Cracker can all be found in the foil halls of this CD, and will certainly prove useful, if only in coming up with long, fancy sounding words when trying to explain to your boss why you were playing games instead of completing month end figures.

Casino Games FOR WINDOWS™



Casino Games for Windows
Would you rather be winning money than making it for someone else? Are you going through Sun City Withdrawal? Rest assured, your pain has been considered, and the good therapeutically minded people at Family Fun have put together a Windows Game compilation just for you. Over one hundred titles grace this CD, including Blackjack, Casino Craps, 5 Card Draw, 777 Slots and 3D Roulette. Okay, so the money you win isn't real, but everyone is allowed even just a little fantasy, right?

Arcade Games FOR WINDOWS™



Arcade Games for Windows
Remember those carefree days when the school bag got set-aside for an afternoon of Pac-Man and Asteroids at the local coin-op arcade? Thought those days were over? Well, fear not, for the drudgery of wage slavery is about to be set aside by this title, which features in excess of 100 arcade titles for the busy Windows based worker who wants more out of a coffee break than plastic Java and stale doughnuts. Titles include Asteroid, Ms Chomp, Duck Hunt, Breakfree and F18. Best of all, you don't have to walk around with a pocket full of coins to play these arcade classics!

Board & Dice Games FOR WINDOWS™



Board and Dice games for Windows
Redefine the boardroom with these titles for Windows. More than one hundred family favourites are included on this CD, with titles like Chess Mate, Backgammon, Chinese Checkers, Hexmine and Search and Destroy to distract you from that all important deadline that is encroaching. Go ahead, give in to temptation, set your work aside and experience the next best thing to a night spent with the family around the game board.



Only R99.00 Each

These titles are available at the following retail stores:



For more information contact T.C.M. Warehouse on Telephone: 011 312-1067 Fax: 011 312-0143 or email sales@tcmwarehouse.com

There you have it. Excellent entertainment for both home and the office, at an average of less than one Rand per game - certainly an excellent deal. Please note that any late employers dialling the TCM Warehouse offices will be ignored.

The question of when you should introduce your child to the wonderful world of computers has now been conclusively answered and would you believe that a mere nine months old is the perfect time, provided you have the right tools that is. In answer to this question, JumpStart Baby has come up with an innovative device called the Baby Ball that allows very young children to interact with the computer. Included with baby's new toy is some unique software that brings everything together into one package.

We have quickly moved into an age where computer literacy is a prerequisite in most jobs and there is no better time to educate children than right now, no matter what the age. Often most parents don't have any idea of where to begin this formative tuition.

The JumpStart series has always been one of the leaders in interactive education and now they've set their sights even younger with JumpStart Baby. On the most basic level, JumpStart Baby is nothing more than an elaborate interactive storybook where child and parent can spend up to 30 minutes a day exploring the exciting possibilities that computers represent. The interface is bright and colourful and instructions are communicated well with overly cheerful voice acting and singing. The whole package simply oozes baby.

The Baby Ball

In a nutshell the Baby Ball is a giant indestructible single-click mouse button. The device connects to your serial port and has an on-off switch. The Baby Ball is made from strong plastic with hardly any moving parts. Installation is a snap, and all you need to do is connect the device to your machine, install the software and restart your machine. The 'mouse button' on top is easy to press and feels a little rubbery, after pressing the button and releasing, it returns to its original position without any sticking or resistance. The only question, and this would be very specific to the child, is that presumably the baby will press the button and then carry on pressing it against the rubbery resistance, this type of pressing will not produce any activity or action and in order for the Baby Ball to produce a click it must be completely released and then pressed again. Other than that the Baby Ball is well constructed and works exactly like it should, an innovative device that will improve with future revisions.



EVERYTHING IS VERY BRIGHT AND CHEERY



SING ALONG WITH THESE CRAZY CHARACTERS



LEARN ALL ABOUT FARM ANIMALS

and nothing looks overly complicated or confusing. There are a number of different activities on offer that range from simple object and colour sorting to the identification of farm animals. There are no challenges or tasks to complete but rather every press of a button or key results in something happening on the screen. There are eight main activities - each focusing on different benefits, here is a brief rundown:

Colour Train

Introduces children to the cause and effect relationship of computer-player interaction and by sorting common objects by colour, this game builds colour discrimination, naming and matching, and vocabulary skills.

Let's Make Music

Develops a child's auditory discrimination and perception skills as well as building cognitive ability for understanding melody, rhythm, volume, pitch and aids language development and verbal memory.

Connect the Stars

Builds attention span and visual tracking skills while helping the child perceive shapes and part-whole relationships.

Puzzle Time

Helps children make sense of their perceptual world, understanding part-whole relationships, and associate objects, actions, and spoken words that build language skills.

Where's Teddy?

Introduces relational word concepts such as up, in, and behind, which helps children locate an object's position in space and assists them in language development.

JumpStart Baby

Picture Fun

This activity builds attention, colour discrimination, and the ability to perceive forms and figure-ground relationships while teaching basic counting skills and number concepts.

Dress Teddy

Builds vocabulary of body parts, clothes, and environmental conditions.

Down on the Farm

Develops auditory attention and discrimination skills.

Kids' Net

Do you want to make word searches or puzzles for school, or need some rainy day entertainment for the kids? Have a look at Discovery Channel's Puzzlemaker and customise word searches, mazes, crosswords and other maths puzzles to your hearts content. Ideally situated at <http://puzzlemaker.discovery.com> this site has it all, if puzzles are your thing. Besides a long list of different types of computer puzzle generators you'll also find a useful maze generator that asks you a number of questions such as shape, size, and complexity and then magically creates your own unique maze. One of the links on the site is the incredible Mazed things, that will take you to a page where you can find a number of unique hand drawn mazes, all resembling things like elephants, faces and Zodiac signs. The site is well presented and easy to understand and before you know it you'll be churning out those puzzles by the minute.



Category: Education | Ages: 9-24 Months | Internet: <http://www.knowledgeadventure.com> | System Requirements: 486 DX2 66 MHz - Windows 95/98 - 16 MB RAM or more - 15 MB HDD - 1 MB Video Card | Developer: Knowledge Adventure | Publisher: Havas Interactive | Distributor: Crew (011) 203-9100 | RRP: TBA

Disney movies are always packed to the brim with action, adventure and daring escapes, so naturally they make excellent candidates for video games, or so you'd think...

Disney's Classic Video Games is a simple arcade game compilation that includes three basic arcade games based on the movies, The Jungle Book, The Lion King and Aladdin. All three titles run in a small window that can be scaled or sized manually or by using the pre-determined settings. Each game is controlled using



MUFASA BASHING THOSE BLINKY HYENAS

either a keyboard, joystick or game-pad and other than a few other miscellaneous options that's about it.

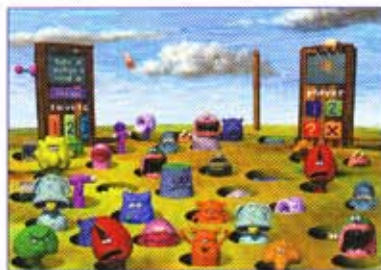
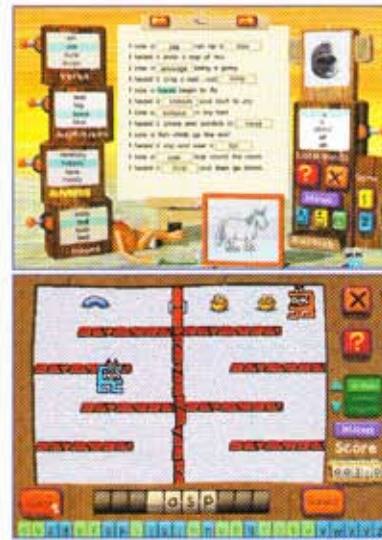
Each of the three games are strictly platform affairs, and they all follow the same time honoured pattern of negotiating levels and killing enemies, while collecting items for points. The

Category: Games | Ages: All Ages | Internet: <http://www.disneyinteractive.com> | System Requirements: 486 DX2 66 MHz - Windows 95/98 - 8 MB RAM - 20 MB HDD - 256 Colour Video Card | Developer: Virgin Interactive Entertainment | Publisher: Infogrames | Distributor: Crew (011) 203-9100 | RRP: R 269.00

The attention span of the average child is somewhere around 4-5 seconds, so if you're trying to teach them anything, then fun and games is the best way to do it. The Fun School series appeals to the funny bone and keeps kids riveted to the spot with some of the wackiest characters ever.

Using five different activities (many of which are subdivided into two different types of games and then again divided into three different levels of difficulty), this title covers all the bases for a wide-ranging audience aged between six and nine years old. The interface and games are all well animated, designed and clearly presented in a window that takes up about one third of the screen. After a brief introductory movie, kids can then enter their name and select an activity by catch-clicking one of five revolving planets (each planet represents a different activity). The first game on the list is built around improving literacy skills and by clicking on the different letters of the alphabet children must try and guess the hidden word. For each correct guess their playing piece will move forward through a maze and gobble up a tasty treat, for every

incorrect guess the computer controlled character progresses on his side of the maze. The next game is a traditional 'pairs' game and here players must match the corresponding alien heads as they pop up and then disappear into a number of holes in the ground. Next up is a word game where kids must choose a word and fill in the blanks, once they've constructed a sentence the computer voice will read it out to them or alternatively blank spaces must be filled in using words from the wide selection on offer. On the mathematical side, Space Shuttle requires the player to choose the correct sequence of numbers or shapes, as the level of



THE CRAZY ALIENS

Fun School 7

Ages 6-9

difficulty increases so will the complexity of the sequences. The last game is a 3D maze game where you must navigate a simple 3D maze using a 2D map and collect the coloured pieces of a pipe in order to save the poor goldfish, who is running out of water as every second goes past. Through all the different activities and games kids will build on their own abilities, practice concepts already learnt at school and learn to be a little more creative in their puzzle solving skills. Even though the Fun

School series is developed and region specific to the United Kingdom it is perfectly suited to enhancing mathematics and literacy skills everywhere. For the price, this title is a sound purchase and should provide many hours of interactive entertainment, education and the all-important fun.

Category: Educational | Ages: 6-9 | Internet: <http://www.europress.co.uk> | System Requirements: Pentium 166 MHz - Windows 95/98 - 16 MB RAM - 20 MB HDD - 2 MB Video Card | Developer: Europress | Publisher: Europress | Distributor: TCM Warehouse (011) 312-1067 | RRP: R 199.00

Charts

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | JumpStart Pre-School | Havas/Crew/SDD |
| 2. | JumpStart First Grade | Havas/Crew/SDD |
| 3. | Disney's Tarzan Action | Disney/Crew/SDD |
| 4. | JumpStart Second Grade | Havas/Crew/SDD |
| 5. | Microsoft Magic School Bus | Havas/Crew/SDD |



NAG Exclusive Interview

We asserted ourselves and demanded some answers, eventually after four days of begging and pleading the legendary Bitmap Brothers gave us the cat and the beans on their latest title, Speedball 2100. This exclusive NAG interview is brought to you courtesy of Empire Interactive. In 1988 the Bitmap Brothers released a futuristic sports game that would go on to garner a huge fan base and enthral gamers the world over, the game was Speedball. Then in 1990 they released a sequel to the first that went on to conquer the mightiest of legends at the time, games such as Elite and Ultima V were knocked from their posts as Speedball 2 entered the playing field and stomped all over the competition. It's been a long time coming and if you've never heard the name Speedball, prepare for an education of a lifetime as one of the best games of the nineties arrives on the PlayStation. Welcome to Speedball 2100 and if you don't already own a PlayStation, well... shame then. We committed a grave error in forwarding these questions to the Bitmap Brothers... in the time they took to answer them, the game's deadline slipped a couple of hours. Sorry, but we just had to!

First off, where have you been? I can barely remember the last title you did. Where have the Bitmap Brothers been for the last decade or so?

Last decade or so, let me think... Xenon ('88), Speedball ('88), Xenon 2 ('89), Cadaver ('90), Speedball 2 ('90), Cadaver: The Payoff ('91), Gods ('91), Magic Pockets ('91), Chaos Engine ('93), Z ('96) and Chaos Engine 2 ('96). Then of course there are the new games we are working on for release later this year, Z2 and Speedball 2100.

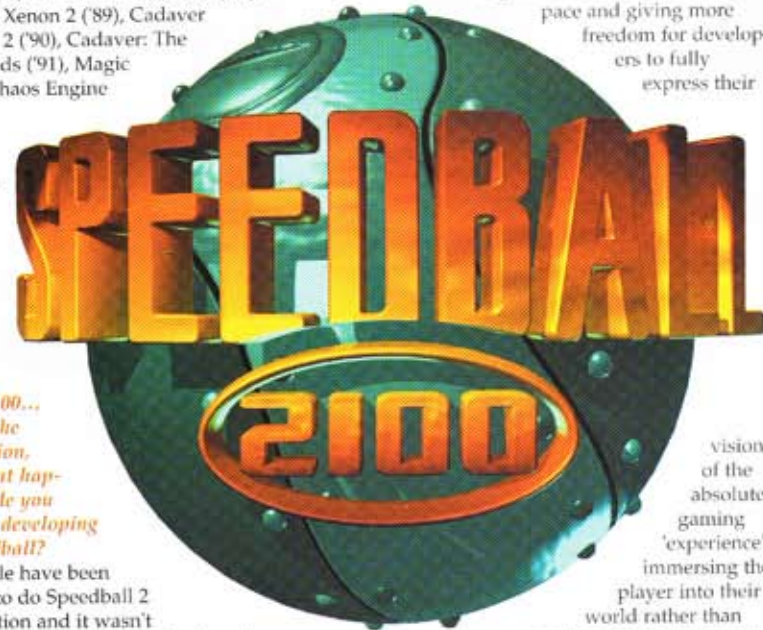
Speedball 2100...
In relation to the previous question, why now? What happened that made you decide to start developing the third Speedball?

For years people have been badgering me to do Speedball 2 for the PlayStation and it wasn't something I was convinced of at the time. I think it was a case of wanting to make a really good job of it and needing the right team. At the time we were concentrating on making PC games. So in about December '98, after having a meeting and exchanging ideas with Pete Tattersall and Chris White - who had previous PlayStation experience - I decided they were the right people to do the job. Now we've extended the team - adding Nick, Byron and Dean - so now we have 5 people working on the project.

What do you predict for the future of gaming?

I think we are approaching a very exciting time in the computer games industry. Gaming is part of today's culture and will continue to grow in the future with the release of the next generation

consoles. Thankfully the days when gaming was socially ridiculed have long gone and now more and more people are enjoying the experience of escapism through gaming. Technology is moving forward at an incredible pace and giving more freedom for developers to fully express their



Production values are approaching 'Hollywood' standards as games become more like interactive films.

Will there be a PC version of Speedball 2100?

At this time, we are only developing the game for PlayStation. Many people, including a great number of computer games journalists, from all over the world have been bombarding us with emails and phone calls begging us to produce other versions. A PC version seems to be at the top of most peoples' wish list although we have no firm plans to produce any other versions but watch this space!!!

Will there be a PlayStation 2 version?

The Bitmap Brothers would love to support PlayStation 2, we won't have games ready for its launch and I think it would be a mistake for us to finish something for the launch... we hope to have something coming out

in the second generation of games... could be Speedball...

When the first Speedball was released it went up against competition like Elite on the Commodore 64 and Ultima V and won (with reference to magazine ratings at the time - Commodore User). What will make this new game that special?

Well, we certainly feel that as with the original will be the gameplay that will make it so special and stand out from other games.

Are you going to stick to the formula of Speedball 2? With reference to the upgrading of your team, the power-ups, the frantic pace and the rules of the game.

To change the composition would be a grave mistake, which is why Speedball 2100 will remain very faithful to Speedball 2. The mix of the in-game action and the strategic aspect of management side created a unique balance of game play, which we have absolutely no intention of changing.

Describe the game to someone who doesn't play much sport...

Speedball 2100 is a fast-paced futuristic Sports game. Two teams of nine players face each other on an oblong pitch with goals at each end, for ninety-second periods, with the objective of slamming a metal ball into your opponent's goal. Employ tactics (particularly violence), collect power ups and credits to beat your opponents. Activate special features (bounce domes and

Genre: Futuristic Sports [PSX]

Developer: The Bitmap Brothers

Publisher: Empire Interactive

Supplier: MMW / SDD
Tel: (011) 652-8222
Expected Release Date: April 2000

Internet:
<http://www.empire.co.uk>

teleports) to gain advantages over your adversaries. The management section allows you to buy and sell players, train them to be even more powerful/aggressive and to personalise your team (change the player's names and team logo). Save your team onto a memory card and take it to your friends to play against their best team.

Will some of the old teams be re-instated? Brutal Deluxe... Etc...

Most definitely! We now have extended the league system so all of the original teams are there along with some new blood.

Are we going to see the return of the ice-cream man and the stretcher-bearers?

They were in from day 1 as they seem to be one of the aspects that people remember when they

talk about Speedball 2... it wouldn't be the same without them.

What is your policy/thoughts on computer game violence and how will this affect Speedball 2100? Is it going to be a hard and dirty game?

Well it will contain violence although there is no blood, almost 'perceived' violence as opposed to graphical depictions of the injuries suffered by the players. Just like a Tom & Jerry cartoon if you like.

If someone told you they were planning on imitating the game in real life and wanted to someday take it to the Olympics, what would you tell them?

Make sure that there's a hospital very close to the Olympic village!

Tell us about the computer play dumb so to speak or will we be seeing something truly revolutionary?

We are using the original AI code as a basis although we are modifying certain areas that will be beneficial to gameplay. I wouldn't go as far as saying our AI is revolutionary but it does the job it's intended to do and it does it very well indeed.

As far as the game engine goes what new technologies have been employed to make this the ultimate game?

I think one of the most important aspects of Speedball 2100 is the transition from the 2D system to a 3D environment and I think this will enhance the gameplay and will bring it in line with the modern standards of 3D games.

What does your development team look like for the game, sound and graphics, coding - and how involved (if any) are any of the old team that put the first two games together?

We have a brand new team working on Speedball 2100 in our relatively new Bitmap Brothers (North) studio based in Harrogate. Pete Tattersall (formerly of Hookstone - Zoop) is Studio Manager with Chris White (programmer - previously worked for Pete at Hookstone on Sentinel and Assault for Candle Light Studios), Byron Nilsson (programmer - previously owned his own development company 'Arc'), Nick Dent (artist - Football World Manager and Lion King) and finally Dean Atkin (artist - GTA and Pinball Construction Kit). I myself am very much involved with the team and work closely with Pete on the project as I'm very attached to Speedball.

Genre: Futuristic Sports [PSX]

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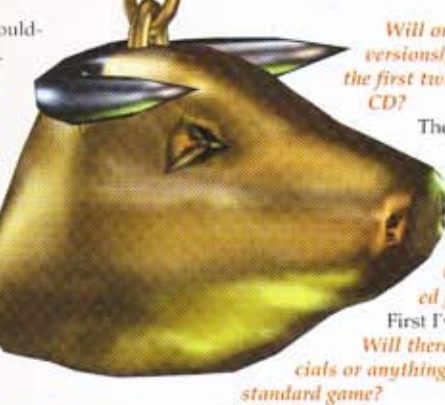
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Where did you get the original idea for Speedball?

Strangely enough we were asked to do a game based on 'real' tennis and while we were looking into it, we came up with the concept Speedball.



Will original versions/ports/conversions of the first two games appear on the CD?

There are no plans to incorporate the previous versions on the CD.

Is there any truth to the rumour that Crash Bandicoot tested for one of the teams?

First I've heard of it.

Will there be any secrets, specials or anything extra besides the standard game?

If there are I'm not going to tell you... not just yet anyway!

Can fans of the old versions configure the game to look and play similar to Speedball 2?

The camera viewpoint for Speedball 2100 is exactly the same as the original because it worked so well. To re-create this was fairly difficult as we are now working in a 3D environment

although we've done it and it works a treat.

What's on the horizon? Xenon 2100?

Who can tell? As with Speedball, Xenon is another game that a vast amount of people would love to see on today's consoles. You never know, it may happen in the future...

What has been the hardest challenge so far in the development of Speedball 2100?

The hardest challenge has been getting the game playing at the right speed whilst improving the original graphics in line with the quality of current PlayStation games.



THESE VERY EARLY SCREENS DON'T EVEN FEATURE PLAYERS YET!

Do you still have fun making games? What do you find to be the biggest change in the way you make games from the first Speedball to this new one? Size of company, money, time?

I still get the same excitement and enjoyment from making games today as I did when we first set up the company. Sure things have changed over the years with bigger teams/budgets, greater commercial pressure from publishers (certainly when it comes to delivering the

Do you think your old fans will view this new game more critically than most?

I think they will as it's been a long time coming and I'm sure that they won't be disappointed. We're not in the business of putting out bad games, especially when it's one that's so cherished and has played a massive part in the company's history.

In the past you managed to deliver more game than was thought possible at the time, such as limited processing power, number of sprites on the screen etc. Does this Bitmap Brothers 'magic' still exist, are we going to be blown away?

Well I hope so. If there's one aspect that we excel in it is to squeeze as much out of the machine as possible. There are times when we simply cannot get the results that we want although fortunately for us it rarely ever happens.

Is there a story attached to the game, or do you just play it like any other sports title?

We set the scene, i.e. Speedball is the most popular sport played in the future, played with bone-crunching brutality, from there we just want players to enjoy the fast paced action of a sports game - too much of a story would interrupt the flow of the game.

At the time of the first Speedball, did you ever imagine games to come this far in terms of graphics, size, sounds etc?

If I did I would be writing books like Nostradamus.

What game of all time surprised you the most and why?

Well that's a hard one because almost each month a great game comes out. One game I would have loved to have been involved with is Grand Turismo as it's one hell of a driving game.

If you had the opportunity to promote the game with a single sentence what would it be?

If you've never heard of Speedball or The Bitmap Brothers, find out what you've been missing - you won't be disappointed.



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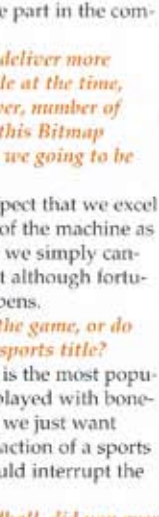


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Son of the Return of the Revenge of...

It seems that there are a bunch of sequels out there these days. And no, I'm not talking about movies. Just think about it. Gran Turismo 2. Quake 3 - three, for pity sake, it's a sequel's sequel - Gabriel Knight 3, Ultima Ascension (that's number 9, folks... it's worse than Rocky). No matter where you go, sequels seem to be the answer to keeping the coinage rolling in. Why come up with a great new idea when you can piggyback something off of a great old one? Seriously, there are a lot of new sequel games out there lately. The difference, of course, between game sequels and movie sequels is the fact that game sequels tend to be better than the originals, unlike movies, where follow-on movies tend to suck. Of course, we have the steady march of technology to thank for this phenomenon, rather than having to blame scriptwriters who have fallen into something of a trap. This is just one of the myriad of joys that comes from playing computer and console games. So often it happens that sequels excel above their predecessors, merely for this fact. So, to those developers who are producing new products for long standing titles, we say well done, and keep them coming!

We would like to welcome the newest members of our page layout crew to the NAG family. Following shortly on the heels of the new review bar format, we would like to present our two new award symbols. The Merit symbol will appear on all games with a total score of 85% - 89%, while the Excellence Award will be displayed with games that achieve in excess of 90% as their final score. On a similar note, just a quick reminder about our two new scoring criteria, the first is originality, which directly relates to how much imagination and new thought has gone into the title in question. There are many great games out there that are simply just a new slant on an old idea, and this score will be the great leveller. The second new score category is judgement, and it relates to the reviewer's own personal opinion of the title, for those games that may not be the best, but are still great fun.



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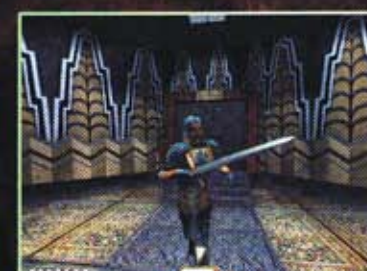
On the streets and rooftops of a darkened city, where magic and technology mingle and the forces of a corrupt sheriff lurk just beyond every shadow, it takes someone with a soft touch and even softer step to stay ahead of the law, and steal enough to survive. For an honest thief like Garrett, the choices are clear - profit...or perish.

CREW

"Should steal its predecessor's title of Best PC Sneaker" - PC Gamer

THIEF II

THE METAL AGE



Evaluation System

90 - 100

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 show if you're tired of one kind of game and would like to broaden your horizons.

80 - 89

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 and here is where you'll find them.

70 - 79

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.

60 - 69

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 love these titles.

50 - 59

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.

40 - 49

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 the sell in Rands what they scored.

0 - 39

Any game scoring in this dreaded range is 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. I got 20% for doing something right after all.

CREATIVE ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PC PREMIUM SYSTEMS



Intel Pentium III 500 MHz Processor
Intel 440BX AGP-Chipset Motherboard
128 MB SDRAM Memory (PC-100)
13 GB Ultra DMA Harddisk
1.44 MB Floppy Drive
Microsoft Windows 98 Pre-Installed
Sound Blaster Live!
PC-DVD 6X MPEG2 Kit with Dxr2 Technology
3D Blaster Riva TNT 2 Ultra 32 MB
Cambridge SoundWorks FPS 2000 Speakers
Modem Blaster Flash56 PCI Modem
BlasterPC Black Case with INFRA Remote & FM Tuner
17" High Resolution Monitor
104 Key Keyboard
PS/2 Mouse

Awards Ceremony



TWO GUYS WALKING IN PLANETES:
TORMENT, THE BIG WINNER THIS
MONTH. PAGE 38



CAR PARKING



TWO MEN FIGHTING



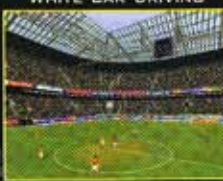
BIG GUN SHOOTING



SMALL 747 FLYING



WHITE CAR DRIVING



SOCCER BEING PLAYED

Rally Championship Page 34

The dust, the grit, the roaring engines...

Unreal Tournament Page 38

Do you have what it takes to be champion?

Urban Chaos Page 44

Gang busting at the turn of the millennium.

Jones USAF Page 50

Take to the skies! Kill or be killed!

Gran Turismo 2 Page 56

All the cars, all the tracks, all the action...

This is Football Page 66

Great tackling, passing, shooting, scoring fun!

Welcome to Sigil, Cutter. Now ye're thinkin', what's this Sigil place. Well, if you want the dark about this place, ye'll be wise to listen to bloods who know what they're sayin', and not be goin' to any bub rattlin' his brain-box. But there are a few things that ye'll be well to know right off, Cutter. Sigil is a city of doors, and ye'll do well to heed these words carefully. These doors are everywhere. Every door, every window, every gap and nook and cranny can take ye to other places, terrible places that you may never have imagined, even in yer darkest dreams. Some of these doors go to the seven heavens, other can take you to any level of the 999 hells, or anywhere in between. But ye only have to concern yerself with the Planes if ye are unfortunate enough to get goin' there. What ye should worry over now, Cutter, is this place, this centre of the multiverse. It is an exciting place, to be sure, and a cutter who keeps his wits about him will even end up making himself some jink, if he works hard enough. I ye're wantin' the dark of it, as I am sure a blood like yerself would, ye would be best to pay some careful attention. This is a very, very dangerous place...

Most people you speak to - those that play computer games, of course - have played Baldur's Gate. And, of those, there are very few that can claim they didn't enjoy this epic. Now, Baldur's Gate creators Black Isle have developed, and Interplay released, Planescape: Torment, a new adventure game using Baldur's Gate's infinity engine. It is a return to the similar isometric role-playing format used in Fallout and Baldur's Gate, and will promise to have fans raving.

Translating the Classics

As most people know, Baldur's Gate was based on TSR's fantasy role-playing game, Advanced Dungeons and Dragons, and made use of the Forgotten Realms setting. Planescape: Torment is also based on AD&D, but instead of making use of the more traditional (or rather, accepted) fantasy concepts brought forth in the Forgotten Realms world, Planescape: Torment visits the realms of Planescape. This setting was created by the writers at TSR as an alternative to the more accepted fantasy feel of FG and Greyhawk, enabling players to enter a world that is more surreal, more gritty and more mature than their other fantasy settings. It has proved very popular with people playing the AD&D RPG. The question is, however, how well does it translate to a PC game?

The answer, quite simply, is beautifully. The feel that Sigil generates in the RPG is wonderfully translated into the more visual format of a computer game. The developers managed to capture the grip and grime of the setting masterfully, just as they did the sparkling fantasy feel of Baldur's Gate. It seems that the chaps at Black



THROUGH A PORTAL TO WHO KNOWS WHERE

PLANE SCAPE TORMENT



Isle are very clued up on the whole AD&D thing, because they just keep doing it so well. What they have achieved with

Planescape: Torment is a wonderful collage of imagery that embodies Sigil to

Sigil itself. One might wonder at this decision on the part of the developers, considering the large potential for variation that Sigil represents. But, Sigil is an exciting and entertaining place, with its own distinctive culture and customs, people and language. It is large enough to hold several hundred stories without any

reliance on plane hopping, and the developers' decision to set the largest part of Planescape: Torment's tale within this city is sound. Sigil has a vast array of entertaining and interesting tidbits, facts and mysteries to offer the player, even within the scope of this single tale. Its vast area is divided into several areas, each ruled by a single Faction - a group of individuals with like-mind-



OBVIOUSLY THIS BACKGROUND DESIGNER IS LONELY... ALTHOUGH WHO'S COMPLAINING?



The fifteen factions of Sigil rule the various parts of the city, or carry out specific duties within the city. They constantly argue amongst themselves while vying for power...

few things that you can do to any place, to any place, to any place. If you are a Shryke

der at this the develop- ing place, to any place, to any place. If you are a Shryke

The Nameless One A strange and enigmatic immortal, this man is in search of his forgotten past.

Annah A tiefling by race, Annah is brash, crude, and also a highly accomplished thief.

ed beliefs. These Factions (including the Dustmen, Sensorium, Mercy Killers and others) are responsible for their various wards and rule them as they see fit. Sigil as a whole is "ruled" by the Lady of Pain, a mysterious figure sometimes seen floating over its streets. Little is known about her, but her blade-crowned figure and ruthless sense of justice is feared by all inhabitants of the city. The various wards allow for a great variation of setting in the game. The streets of the Lower Ward are littered with thugs and prostitutes, while in better areas noblemen, mages and priests rub shoulders with visitors

from other planes. Exploring Sigil can be a challenge, as the Lady constantly changes the layout of the city through her workforce of Dhabus, strange floating construction workers who communicate through glowing symbols created in the air. However, once you get a feel for the place, it is a thrilling city to play a game in; dangerous, puzzling and huge.



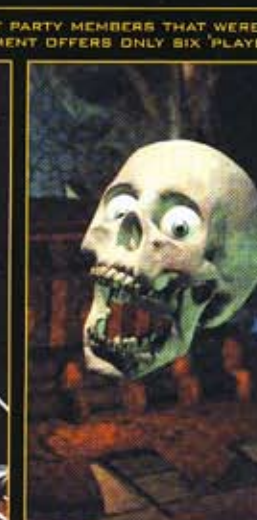
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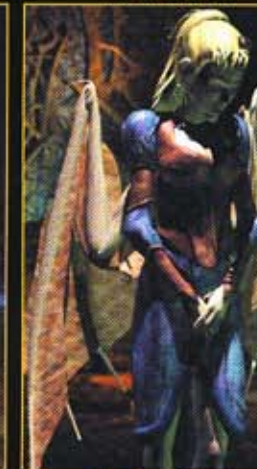
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Morte A floating skull with a fast mouth and an eye for the ladies - a valuable fighter too.



Falls From Grace A fallen Succubus, this ex-demon adds beauty and grace - amongst other very useful 'priest' skills.

What tangled webs... The story behind Planescape: Torment is a complex and twisted one. It concerns the mysterious Nameless One, an enigmatic man who has lost his memory. He is your main character - unlike Baldur's Gate, which gave you a huge variety of main characters to choose from, you are restricted to playing only the Nameless One as your chief character - and at the beginning of the game you literally know nothing about your character other than the fact that you have just woken up in a mortuary. You then embark on a massive adventure of truly epic proportions as you quest to discover the identity of the mysterious, corpse-like Nameless One.

As the tale unfolds, you have



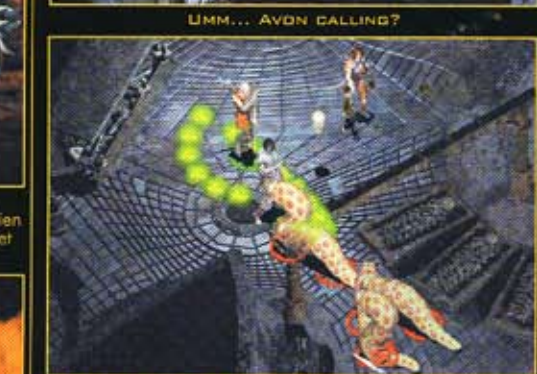
Dakkan He is a member of an almost alien race - this mystic is a great asset to the party.



Ignus Cursed by a spell to burn forever, Ignus is a powerful mage, adding his magical powers to the party.

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IF THESE ARE THE SLUGS, IMAGINE THE PARKTOWN PRAWNS

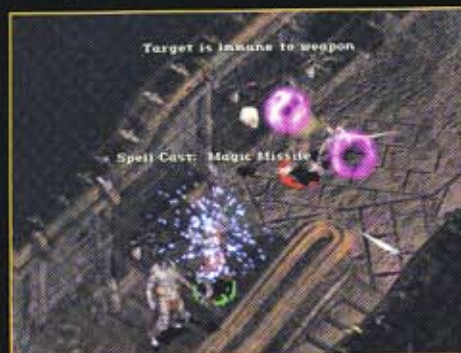
to make your way around vast areas of Sigil, from the lower class areas of the Lower Ward to the swanky rich areas on the city. Some journeys to other planes are even included in this journey of discovery, as the Nameless One completes numerous small tasks and missions while still maintaining interest in the main plot.

Accompanying the Nameless One are five other adventurers that join forces with him at various times within the game. They all do so for their own reasons, and the trustworthiness of these travelling companions is never quite confirmed. As a whole, the story of the Nameless One is surprising, exciting and entertaining - guaranteed to keep players happy for a very long time.

Another Baldur's Gate? The best comparison for Planescape: Torment is Baldur's Gate, as they have similar roots and origins. There are many similarities between the two games, but also many differences. The chaps from Black Isle have refined things a little more in Planescape: Torment. Items, spells, weapons and special abilities are now menu driven, through a pop-up, accessible by right clicking on the screen. This takes a little getting into, especially when you are used to the convenient, ever present items of Baldur's Gate. However, the result of this new method is an uncluttered and neater screen.

Graphically, there is an improvement over Baldur's Gate here. The characters are larger on screen, and the backgrounds are more complex and detailed than before. There are fewer choices of characters in Planescape: Torment than in Baldur's Gate. Players are restricted to using the Nameless One only as a character - although you can vary his statistics as you see fit. Also, you do not choose his class or alignment during character generation; these aspects of the character are taken care of during the game, according to the decisions the player makes, and the actions taken.

The story, too, is more linear than the one presented in Baldur's Gate. The player is afforded less choices and opportunities to explore than before, but this aspect serves the story well. There are still a myriad of sub-plots and mini-



LOOK AT THE PRETTY LIGHTS

handy command. The game is mostly mouse driven, although there are a few useful keyboard shortcuts that will benefit the player in the long run.

One strange element within the game is the fact that the Nameless One cannot die. This makes for quite a change from the "save every ten minutes" tactic that did well with Baldur's Gate.

Although other party members can be put in the "dead book" during the game, the Nameless One always wakes up after dying. He keeps all his equipment, and party members who are still alive are nearby whenever this happens.



Not only does this rather unusual element affect game play, but it is also important to the story. Often, dying can be an epiphany for the Nameless One, leading to many revelations about his past, his identity, and exactly why it is that he cannot be killed. A final very noticeable difference is the fact that Planescape: Torment is far less forgiving than Baldur's Gate. It is a more difficult game to get through - not a bad thing, really, seeing as how BG seemed ridiculously easy at times. One aspect of Baldur's Gate that does not make an appearance in Planescape: Torment is the multiplayer aspect of the earlier game. However, the nature of Planescape: Torment's story does not really make for great multiplayer gaming, and is therefore not too sorely missed.

What's it like really

Planescape: Torment is similar enough to Baldur's Gate to be recognisable and attractive to BG fans, but different enough to be a new game with new surprises and challenges. All in all it is a wonderful game. Pleasing to the eye and ear, simple to control, challenging and entertaining, this game is a very worthwhile endeavour to undertake, especially for those who enjoy computer based role playing or adventure games. If you liked Baldur's Gate, you will certainly enjoy this game. It is long and enthralling, and is guaranteed to supply many hours of great enjoyment to all who play it. It can get a little frustrating at times, but the excellently constructed story and exciting action will guard against boredom. If you liked Baldur's Gate, you will love Planescape: Torment. If you never played Baldur's Gate, buy them both.

There are a huge number of creatures and people to be met in this game. Here are a few examples of those to be met in the earlier levels of the game (we have to leave some surprises for you):



And yes, they are far nastier than they look!



GENRE Role Playing		DEVELOPER Black Isle		PUBLISHER Interplay		SUPPLIER MMW / SDD (011) 652-8222	
COMPARATIVES Baldur's Gate Fallout Silver		PRO'S Engrossing Story Simple Interface Takes Too Long		CON'S No Multiplayer Limited Character Choices		MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS Pentium 200MHz MMx 32 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 4 MB Video Card 650 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.0)	
RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS Pentium II 266MHz 64 MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 8 MB AGP Video 800 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0a)		GRAPHICS 89		STORY 95		CONTROL 92	
SOUND 88		ORIGINALITY 89		PLAYABILITY 94		JUDGEMENT 96	
92							

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missions spanning five
continents, plus innovative multiplayer modes.

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missions spanning five
continents, plus innovative multiplayer modes.

sometimes negotiation requires more than a handshake



exec scan procedure.....
security level COV9.....
.....clearance granted.

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missions spanning five
continents, plus innovative multiplayer modes.

PC CD ROM

Shryke

Party real-to-life
missions spanning five
continents, plus innovative multiplayer modes.



3-D accelerated Quake II™ engine, upgraded with GHOU rendering system for unprecedented detail and faster gameplay.



Story-driven plotline with ultra-realistic weapons, enemies & environments.

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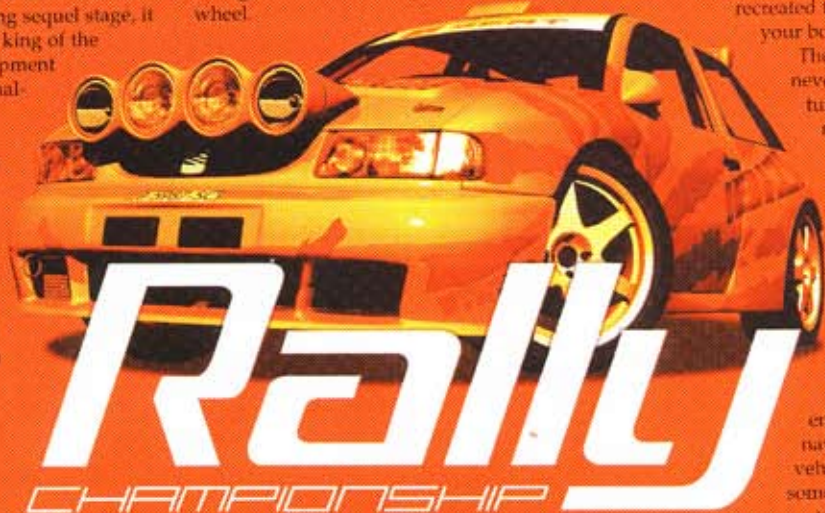
South African Distributors: Multimedia Warehouse a division of SDD - www.mmw.co.za JHB (011) 652-8400 Bloem (051) 447-3193 CT (021) 550-8300 DBN (031) 263-0121 PE (041) 363-0540 Soldier of Fortune © 1999 Activision, Inc. Developed by Raven Software Corporation. Published and distributed by Activision, Inc. Activision is a registered trademark of Activision, Inc. Soldier of Fortune is a registered trademark of Omega Group, Ltd. This product contains software technology licensed from Id Software, Inc. ("Id Technology"). Id Technology © 1997 Id Software, Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and trade names are properties of their respective owners.

It was with clear intentions that I began playing Rally Championship, that being that it would have to impress me to no end before I relinquished Colin McRae Rally's domination of this genre. After all it was the same game that had seen me through many a bad day and the birth of my first child, how could any game top that? Finally it can officially be stated that though the Codemasters classic is an outstanding piece of software and nearing sequel stage, it has finally been usurped as the king of the rally games by a superb development that is surprisingly fresh and challenging.

Rally Championship has a thoroughbred upbringing - it is the older brother of four classic titles from the Europress stable, the most popular title being Network Q RAC Rally Championship, which collectively have sold over 1 million copies over the years. But this does not necessarily make for a winner out of the starting blocks but with this kind of history behind its developers, who would bet against it.

Let's begin at the specs requirements, which will hold a few gamers over the barrel. As usual the minimum requirements sound all fine and dandy but in essence the recommended requirements are what really bring RC to life. A powerhouse P2 and a similarly effective graphic accelerator will be the tools required to astound

even our most ardent of Quake 3 players. Perhaps one of the most refreshing findings is that you don't need to have a steering wheel to compete at the highest level, perhaps not to have one would be the correct statement. The keyboard control is one of the best encountered and was my choice throughout the review, pleasing those gamers who are not fortunate enough to own a steering wheel.



The thrill of the chase, the test of the stage, the heart of the power and the relief of the finish sum up the intense feelings associated with top class Rallying. Trying to recreate all these emotions and more into a PC game is almost impossible because it demands a tight balance between playability and reality. To be able to come close to achieving these goals is a feat on its own and that is exactly what Rally Championship has accomplished, believability.

settings and with an above average AI you are usually under tremendous pressure towards the closing stages. The only form of performance improvements comes from your choice of manual, semi-auto and full-auto gearing, manual being the fastest and full-auto the slowest. But this is only the tip of the iceberg for RC as you enter what is some of the most challenging rallying terrain in the world, all of it painstakingly recreated to test every sensitive nerve in your body.

The 36 stages available are a never-ending trail of twists and turns combined with some of the most wonderful scenery available on a racing game.

Obstacles are strategically placed to upend any hint of domination, these being differing forms and ranges from hay bails, rocks and slippery surfaces to ditch hairpin bends, water hazards, strategically positioned gates and much more.

If the stage is not difficult enough, you have to somehow navigate your powerhouse rally car around without damaging the car some of the more important features of its drive train. What makes RC stand out is the sheer number of issues that can arise at any given time due to a damaged car. Winning the stage is a piece of cake, but more so is it to complete the rally in one piece, and that is meant with this sincerity. Most of the time a good win under the belt is a result of a battered car that

pressures you to allocate your precious stop and repair time to the more important damages. These range from your cockpit demo and thing, engine, suspension and brakes to tyres, steering, gear, box, body, lighting, electric differential to name a few. As with Colin McRae Rally then, never is enough time and something has to be left out and this destructibility really ends up nipping you in the

A good example comes from the Pinelands. Your car is International Rally where I was lying second only to come to a

after Caroline Lopez (yes a woman and quite a driver I must add). After quite a difficult stage not budging the car was looking a little worse for wear but I could juggle a few minutes to repair it enough to complete the stage, or so I thought. Because I had neglected the body repairs that were quite dilapidated at the time, I had quite a shock ahead of me. I had managed somehow to keep my nose ahead until two blocks from the end and then it happened, I lost my right front wheel. This must have been the most depressed I have ever felt in a game considering the sheer length of the stages in RC (some as long as 30 minutes to complete). This taught me a big lesson, the developers have undertaken to not only recreate the fun and excitement of real rallying but also the torment and disappointment that comes with it - excellent. If you want to try and push the limit of the repair time you can, but it will cost you in added time to your next stage pushing you further back down the field, as wasn't hard enough to maintain with the leaders.

Dissecting racing games is what is required to get to the heart of the game and this normal physics engine that backs up the eye candy

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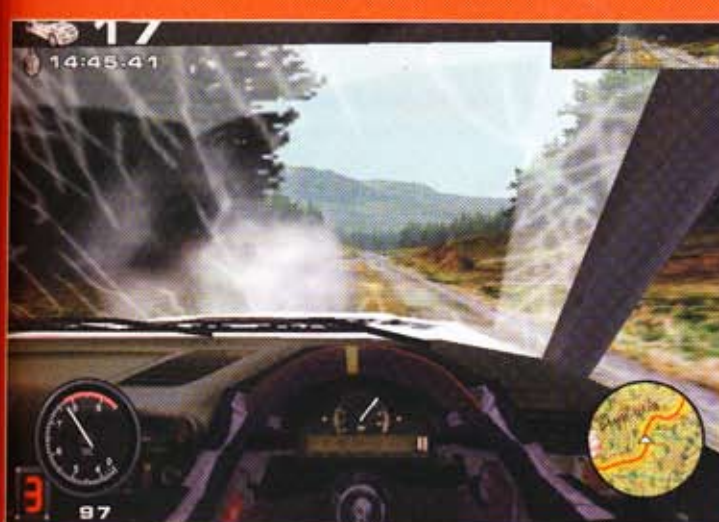
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IN-VEHICLE VIEWS ARE BOTH REALISTIC AND DIFFICULT AT THE SAME TIME

How did Magnetic Fields recreate the 36 stages available in RC?

"First we scan in an accurate map of the stage and build the basic route in Lightwave. We add width to the surrounds of the road and implement the gradients to the road sections and topography. We have visited each of the 36 rally stages and taken photos of them, we have also driven through the stages with a video camera mounted on the dashboard of the car. This leaves us with actual footage of each stage - amazing reference for the artists, and the only way to really make this a true simulation of the rally. Next we take the photographs and scan them in. Magnetic Field's talented art team then decide which parts of these textures should be cut up and used as textures. This is a vital step in making the game look so realistic, we cannot have unlimited textures so careful selection of these is key. There are textures for road surfaces, fields, trees, bushes, rivers, houses, animals, etc. We also decided to design each stage so that it runs in a set weather condition. In the past we have allowed conditions for stages to be variable, but this means you have to compromise the graphic quality to cater for this. The main reason we did it this way was our intention to make every stage look amazing."

If one thing is to stand out



REPAIR SERVICE AREAS WITH TIME LIMITATIONS

about RC it's the atmosphere created by the graphics and its depiction of differing conditions. All the terrains are realistically represented as the cars react to their differing conditions. Everything from grass, gravel and mud to tarmac and snow will cause the car to drift and hold in the manner it should. Weather conditions also affect the set-up of your vehicle, which in turn affects the control and traction you have over the stage. A full breakdown of the stages are given before hand to help make the correct decisions but a few curve balls are normally thrown in to hamper the direct approach. Rain, snow and dry conditions are juggled about as well as different racing times including the odd night and foggy stage to make matters slightly more difficult. The sound effects and

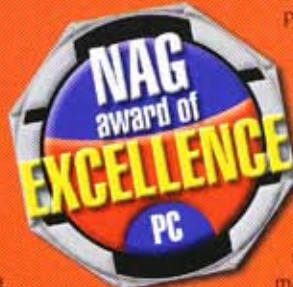
music keep up the same high standards of the development with different engine noises and sound effects for the choice of terrains. There is also your trusty co-driver who is your only lifeline between success and total failure. Derek Ringer or Claire Mole, both real-life rally co-drivers call the shots and surprisingly accurately as well. Each bend has a distance to it and a sharpness rating to warn you of impending danger, unfortunately there is the odd flat out area that will yield a hairpin bend at thirty metres - who said rallying wasn't fun?

Something must be said about RC's impressive replay feature that is totally usable to make your own little replay clips with a multitude of different camera angles, speeds and detail. Then there is the information in the menu about every car available in RC, broken down into past history, features and performance. This is an insightful look into the ergonomics of rally cars and what makes them tick.

Rally Championship is leaps and bounds ahead in the rally genre and almost tops my all time favourite list with its excellent speed representation and superb control physics. This game is as good-looking as Michelle Pfeiffer on a nudist beach and that's while driving in the rain. It caters for the enthusiast and the beginner while maintaining its difficulty extremely well. The large selection of choices and strategies will enthrall even the most ardent of strategy gamers while not overpowering the gamer with too much jargon. The emphasis in RC is fun, addictive gameplay that will no doubt keep you occupied for many months in your quest to be the Rally Champion - not to be missed.



From the offset RC astounds, its intro is captivating, readying you for what is to come. The interface is a little poor but its main objective is to be simple to navigate and easy to manipulate, this it does without question. The range of resolutions and performance settings is impressive and will help most gamers calibrate the game for different machine specs.



The title has four modes of play including simulation, these being Mobil 1 BRC simulation, arcade, single rally and time trial. This selection caters for the entire range of players whether you are a seasoned driver or a smash-a-car derby winner, you will soon be challenged by the art of high speed cornering on different surfaces.

RC has 23 of the top rally cars of which the A6 and A7 class are immediately available and the A8 (2 litre turbo 4x4) obtainable after winning either the 6 rally Mobil championship in your class or the arcade mode. This is easier said than done as there are no difficulty



EXCELLENT PROPORTIONAL GRAPHICS DEPICT ACCURATE TERRAINS



GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS
Rally Racing	Magnetic Fields	Actualize	EA Africa (011) 803-1212	Pentium II 266 MHz 64 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 8 MB AGP 3D Card 20 MB HD Windows 95/98 DirectX 5.0 DirectSound Com	Pentium III 500 MHz 128 MB Ram 32 X CD Rom 16MB AGP 3D Card 650 MB HD Windows 95/98 DirectX 6.1 DirectSound Com
COMPARATIVES			PRO'S	CONS	
Colin McRae Rally Network Q RAC Rally Championship			Graphically Superb Ultimate Control Strategically Perfect	Hard Immovable Objects Vehicle Under Weighted	
http://www.rallychampionship.co.uk			RRP R 299.00		
GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY		
95	NA	95	86		
SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT		
87	89	92	93		
PC CD ROM Storm Environmental Audio Ready NEW AGE GAMING MULTIPLAYER? YES 91					

37

Unreal Tournament has finally shipped in South Africa. Much to our dismay the title shipped rather late, but it was well worth the wait. I think finally it is safe to say that id Software has some real competition in Epic Games and both these companies have developed 3D engines against which the rest of the market will be compared. Unreal Tournament can stand on its own two feet as it enters an emerging market of FPS games catering for the demanding multiplayer enthusiast. - Soul Assassin

In 2291 the Liandri Mining Corporation legalised no holds barred fighting to curb violence among their deep space miners. By publicly displaying these matches and generating income, Liandri soon realised that it was their most profitable venture. People hungered after the bloody matches as fighters fought to the death. It is now 2341, 50 years after the inception of the deathmatch and Liandri has started a professional league where the best of the best can fight for glory in the Grand Tournament. You have been chosen. Your strength and brutality are legendary; the only question remaining is do you have what it takes to become the ultimate champion?

I must say that the story is a little more creative than Quake 3 Arena in concept, although they don't quite explain the premises of re-spawning. Another advantage over Quake 3 is the fact that you can access the bot characters bio sheets within the game and don't have to fiddle around reading your manu-

friendly and easy to use and you don't have to fiddle around with a cryptic advanced settings window, although the advanced settings have been retained for those hardcore gamers that need to tweak Unreal Tournament to its utmost. Another nice feature in the interface is the ability to use skins with different graphics and colour settings to really personalize it. I think most of the mod developers will appreciate this



UNREAL TOURNAMENT



THE GAME HAS SOME GREAT OUTDOOR AREAS

al. The story might not be as in depth as any game focusing on a story driven single player, but for a game that almost exclusively focuses on multiplayer the story is quite impressive.

The first thing gamers will notice is the extremely well designed and elegant user interface from which you can configure almost every option imaginable in Unreal Tournament. Unlike the original Unreal, the new interface is user



small added feature.

As with Quake 3 Arena, Unreal Tournament doesn't really cater for the single player market and a lot more time has been spent to produce an enhanced multi-

player experience. The single player element is available, but functions as an area where dedicated players can enhance their skills as they go up against computer opponents (bots). Single player is little more than a ladder system in which you can play bots in the various different game modes offered and contains no story driven aspects. Even taking this into consideration single player is nonetheless exciting and fun to play as you strive to advance to the next level of competition and try to achieve a trophy for finishing each mode.

One of the more interesting aspects that Epic included with the single player element is the team based modes of play where you can communicate and give orders to bots on your side. Not only does this force you to play as a team but it also introduces newcomers to the different strategic roles that team members must take to successfully complete their objectives. Once you have gathered all the trophies you are ready to take on the real thing - live complex human opponents, pitting your skill against theirs, either over the Internet or on a LAN.

Multiplayer is the name of the game and the heart of Unreal Tournament. Unfortunately I was disappointed with the standard deathmatch and CTF modes. It should have been slightly faster and it doesn't quite get you involved enough. It is missing the adrenaline rush of the fast paced gameplay that Quake 3 Arena offers. It is hard to pinpoint the exact missing pieces and I think a lot of gamers will disagree with me, but there is just something missing. What Epic did pull off exceptionally well is the added value found in the unique new game modes.

Besides the usual Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch and CTF they have introduced two newcomers namely Assault and Domination.



'FLY ME TO THE MOON...' - AN ORBITAL SNIPER SATELLITE

They are highly addictive and unusually fun to play and for a change something different.

The first new mode, Domination, entails two teams fighting for control over special glyphs scattered throughout the level. To take control of one you simply need to touch it. Once touched the glyph becomes the colour of your team and is marked as being controlled by your team. Every 5 seconds 1 point is awarded to your team for every glyph that they control, and the winning team is the one to reach a pre-determined amount of points (usually 100). While fragging

Interesting Fact

I don't think many gamers realise that id Software is the holding company of New Line Gaming derived its name from the original Unreal. Weird but true nonetheless. I am glad to see that Unreal Tournament lives up to the name and that Unreal 2 has a definite possibility to take the FPS crown away from id Software. So how do we change our name to Unreal 2 Design FX? In total there are 50 maps available in Unreal

well worth the wait. I think finally it is safe to say that id Software has some real competition in Epic Games and both these companies have developed 3D engines against which the rest of the market will be compared. Unreal Tournament can stand on its own two feet as it enters an emerging market of FPS games catering for the demanding multiplayer enthusiast. - Soul Assassin

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Weapons

Impact Hammer

Primary Fire: Fires a blast of air
Secondary Fire: Rapid impact, good for deflecting incoming shots



Enforcer

Primary Fire: Normal firing rate
Secondary Fire: Increased firing rate with less accuracy



Shock Rifle

Primary Fire: Instant hit energy beam
Secondary Fire: Fires an energy ball which explodes on impact



Ripper

Primary Fire: Ricocheting blades, good for decapitations
Secondary Fire: Exploding blades



Rocket Launcher

Primary Fire: Fires rocket propelled grenades which explode on impact
Secondary Fire: Fires normal grenades which explode after a few seconds



Flak Cannon

Primary Fire: Fires chunks of hot jagged shrapnel
Secondary Fire: Shoots a shrapnel grenade which explodes on impact



Weapons

BioRifle

Primary Fire: Shoots out clumps of deadly toxic sludge
Secondary Fire: Hold in to fire a larger clump of toxic sludge



Sniper Rifle

Primary Fire: Normal fire
Secondary Fire: Zoom in on target with scope



Minigun

Primary Fire: Normal firing rate
Secondary Fire: Increased firing rate with less accuracy



Pulse Blaster

Primary Fire: Rapid fire plasma bursts
Secondary Fire: Steady stream of plasma almost like a lightning gun



Chainsaw

Primary Fire: Forward thrust and gouge motion
Secondary Fire: Side-to-side sweep. A great move for decapitation!



Redeemer

Primary Fire: Launch miniature nuclear warhead
Secondary Fire: Launch and guide miniature nuclear warhead



opposing team member's butts is highly entertaining, you do not get any bonuses for frags and the game is more a strategic arrangement of team members to control as many glyphs as possible for as long as possible, while trying to deter the opposing team from taking control of any glyphs.

The second new mode, Assault, is probably my favourite mode of play and entails two teams who are each given a set of goals to reach within an allotted time limit. The defensive team have to stop the assaulting team from achieving their objectives which usually includes blowing up computer terminals, escaping from a castle, or penetrating a base. If the assault team achieves their goals the map roles of the teams are reversed and the defender becomes the attackers and vice versa. The new assault team now has to achieve the same goals but in less time than the first team, if they fail they lose.

It all sounds a little confusing but is actually very easy once you have played a game and understand the concept. Epic Games have included tutorials for each of the different game modes should you be new to Deathmatch and CTF or are simply trying to learn the new game modes offered. The tutorials consist of a female voice explaining the concepts while you try and do as instructed. Not that I think most gamers need any instruction on Deathmatch, it is still however a handy tool for introducing newcomers to the world we have loved and known for so long.

In total there are 50 maps available in Unreal

Tournament covering the different modes of gameplay. Most of them are the usual corridor based maps, while some introduce unique concepts such as spaceships flying amongst the stars, moving trains, or small asteroid levels. Unfortunately I couldn't help but notice how bland the actual level design is. The architecture is uninspiring and the colours used are insipid making the levels seem out of place considering that the game takes place in the future. To put it plainly the levels lack smaller architectural detail. Most of the levels are bare bone walls with lights and elevators and nothing to attract the eye. This is probably my biggest disappointment with Unreal Tournament and I had hoped that the levels would live up to the quality that I have seen in Quake 3 Arena.

Funnily enough there has been a lot of debate about the AI differences between Quake 3 Arena and Unreal Tournament and which offer the more realistic bot. Both AI's cheat, Unreal Tournament just does it with more grace and occasionally you do find a bot who knows exactly where you are when it shouldn't. In UT the bots act a little more like human opponents and don't blatantly hit with



LOVELY GRAPHICS, COOL WEAPONS - IT ROCKS!

every shot and it makes the single player games almost feel like a LAN game with human opponents. Even in team based games you forget that you are playing with bots as they run around and do what human opponents usually would. The only real complaint I have is that even on the highest difficulty setting the bots are easy to kill, especially after getting accustomed to the bots in Quake 3 Arena. Maybe it has something to do with the devastating weapons that are available and their high damage potential.

In all there are 12 weapons for you to implement carnage and inflict damage against your opponents. Some of the weapons are new while others are just rehashed weapons from the original Unreal. The arsenal is well balanced, although I did find most people sticking to the Rocket Launcher and Sniper Rifle, which are arguably the most devastating weapons within the game besides the elusive Redeemer. The rocket launcher offers a homing function that will track your target while the Sniper Rifle can impose instant kills if you get a headshot in. The most interesting new weapon is called the



The Guardian has finally found his way into Britannia, accompanied by his lapdog Lord Blackthorn, and they are set to corrupt the eight virtues that have sustained Britannia for so long. They summon eight pillars of evil into the world to corrupt the eight sacred virtues - truth becomes lies, valour becomes cowardice, honour becomes dishonour and so the list continues as Britannia moves into its darkest hour.

Once again Lord British summons the outlander known as the Avatar, the champion of the virtues, to bring salvation to the Kingdom of Britannia. He has to cleanse the shrines and rid the world of Britannia of the Guardian for once and for all. Only this time none of his companions will



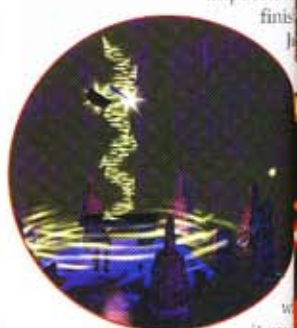
After being in development for 5 years, Origin finally released Ultima Ascension. Not only did it forsake the traditional isometric view of all its predecessors using a 3rd person 3D engine, it is also the game that sadly will end the Ultima series. Just how well did Origin pull off the grand finale of the Avatar and Lord British?

Soul Assassin

run around in full-blown plate armour and cast spells while wielding a two-handed Lightning Sword? It sounds like fun, but can become boring very quickly.

Besides the eight major quests of restoring the shrines of virtue, Ultima Ascension offers a good variety of smaller interesting quests to go on and even has 2 treasure maps if you want to go treasure hunting. Having said that, I would like to mention that finishing certain quests before taking on other quests, and not finishing certain quests before getting to specific locations in the game can make Ultima Ascension a nightmare to play and ultimately impossible to finish. What do I mean by

'impossible to finish'?



impossible to finish. There are so many bugs related to quest triggers that you could end up not being able to finish the game. This is inexcusable and no game should ever ship with bugs of this magnitude.

While the monsters are varied in Ultima Ascension, ranging from rats to beholders and demons to zombies, I couldn't help but feel that the fighting became an irritation rather than a game play element. The monsters weren't well balanced and after you cleanse the third pillar you can basically kill almost any one of them without breaking a sweat. In my opinion the monsters should have been a lot harder to kill especially considering the dangerous magic spell that can be collected throughout the game. I hardly ever had to resort to mystical means to beat even the bosses and they usually also only took 10-15 seconds to vanquish. The only real challenge was to figure out the hoards of puzzles found in the dungeons.

One aspect I have to congratulate the designers on is the world of Ascension. The world is huge in scope, thoroughly detailed and even remembers the location of anything that you might drop in the world. The scenery and spell effects are

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ICE DRAGON - DETAILED ENEMIES AND NICE SNOW



WHY IS THERE ALWAYS LAVA, IN EVERY SINGLE GAME?

nificantly done and one can't help but be in awe as you run through the Kingdom of Britannia. Once again it is unfortunate that the performance of the 3D engine is so sluggish that even this can be messed up. Even on a Pentium II 450 MHz with 128 MB of RAM and a Creative Labs GeForce card, Ultima Ascension ran very slowly. I even installed the full installation of 975 MB to see if I could remedy the problem, but to no avail. If you come in range of any city, the game starts to slow down and at times looks like a slide show; the frame rates dropping so low. Yet another negative for what is to be the final in the Ultima series of games.

The musical score and sound effects of Ultima Ascension have its plus points

drive access, disappearing items, leaks in the world map, monsters attacking through closed doors and so on. By the time I finished Ultima Ascension I had created over 200 saved games so I could continue when the game crashed, which was at least once every hour. My saved game directory was 800 MB big, almost as big as the installation of the game itself, only to be rewarded with a disappointing 30 second movie for playing over



I WONDER WHERE THE LION AND THE SCARECROW ARE?



100 hours of gameplay. This truly has to say something to Origin about their quality control. I have never been tormented so much by scoring a game as I have with Ultima Ascension. It could have been one of the all time classic games to have ever been released and yet it suffers from numerous bugs and flaws. The game should never have been released as it was to the public and how it passed Q&A is beyond me. Even with the latest v1.07 patch the game still contains too many bugs to be played satisfactorily. That is without mentioning the poor performance of the game, even on high-end systems that

exceed Origin's recommended specifications. If you are a fan of the Ultima series I would say, 'Buy it at your own risk and be aware of the problems', for the casual gamer I recommend that you wait until the game has been fixed and re-mastered. It pains me to say this but

with all the issues surrounding Ultima Ascension I can come to no other conclusion. Ultima Ascension is definitely one of the games that had the most potential in 1999 and it saddens me to say that it is the most disappointing game of last year. I had expected better from Origin.

stand by his side. They have all been corrupted by the pillars and the Avatar has to set out alone across the vast Kingdom as he tries to correct the damage that has been done. You play as the Avatar and this responsibility falls unto you as you set out, unbeknownst to you, on your final quest.

Quite an interesting story with many slight twists and turns as you play. Definitely one of the better stories to be conceived in recent gaming history. The story isn't quite as good as the story for Ultima VII: The Black Gate, but it is unique and offers a few surprises that Ultima fans will not be expecting and I can hear the fans ranting and raving about a few of them as more finish the game.

As we have come to expect you can play any class from a mage to paladin in Ultima Ascension, but unfortunately this doesn't determine the way in which you play the game. Only what items you start your quest with. Any character can learn all the spells, use all the weapons and armour and basically be a supped-up superhero. More attention should have been given to the classes as far as abilities are concerned and restrictions should have been placed on the classes. This would have greatly added to the re-playability of Ultima Ascension. Since when can you



'SINCE WHEN CAN YOU RUN AROUND IN FULL-BLOWN PLATE ARMOUR AND CAST SPELLS WHILE WIELDING A TWO-HANDED LIGHTNING SWORD?'

Major Game Stopper

Unfortunately Ultima Ascension has a couple of scenarios which, when encountered can make the game impossible to finish. I cannot cover all of them and I would like to let gamers know how to get by the Shamino bug (even with patch v1.07) that everyone encounters. Close to the end of the game you have to free Shamino from the spiritual realm and he is supposed to tell you where the Isle of the Avatar is. Unfortunately all the patches have messed it up and he doesn't. One way to get around this is to uninstall the game before you free Shamino, reinstall the game without patching it, free Shamino, get the location, save your game and then patch the game again. Another is to just use the fly cheat and fly to the Isle of the Avatar in which case you don't have to uninstall. Hopefully this issue will be addressed in the next patch - it is a pity that such an excellent game can have so many bugs.

Role Playing

While Ultima Ascension is probably one of the best games I have played as far as story, scope and detail is concerned. It is also the most bug ridden game that I have come across in all my years of playing games.

CREATIVE ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM

BLASTER PC

GENRE Role Playing	DEVELOPER Origin	PUBLISHER Electronic Arts	SUPPLIER Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS Pentium II 266 MHz 64 MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 8 MB 3D Accelerator 600 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS Pentium II 400 MHz 128 MB Ram 8+ X CD Rom 16 MB 3D Accelerator 1 GB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0a)	PC CD ROM
COMPARATIVES Ultima Series Kings Quest VIII	PROS Huge Scope Lots of Quests Good Story	CONS Poor Performance Numerous Bugs Poor Character Classes	RRP R 299.00	Soul Assassin		
GRAPHICS 60	STORY 84	CONTROL 69	CONTINUITY 40	NEW AGE GAMING		
SOUND 62	ORIGINALITY 85	PLAYABILITY 42	JUDGEMENT 30	MULTIPLAYER? No		
				59		

This game, a product of Mucky Foot distributed through Eidos, has probably got one of the ugliest boxes I have ever seen. The artwork is pretty bland and uninspiring, and allows one to easily fall into the trap of judging a book by its cover. I admit, that's exactly what I did, and it was with quite a lot of mumbling and groaning that I installed Urban Chaos onto my machine.

There is a wonderful thing that comes with judging a product purely on appearances. It happens rarely, but it does happen - the surprise accompanied by the fact that the product is actually a great piece of software, despite the lame artwork that accompanies it. Urban Chaos is such a product, a true wolf in sheep's clothing; playing it is like discovering a rare antique in a junk shop. It does raise the question of how well the game will perform in terms of sales, with its poor presentation, and makes one wonder where the guys



URBAN CHAOS



gang called the Wild Cats. At first, the random acts of violence and terrorism that this gang perpetrates seem to be just that - random. However, the tale unfolds into a complex plot of power, corruption and betrayal as D'Arci and Roper discover that all is not what it seems in Union City.

For a quick comparison, Urban Chaos can be said to be a version of Tomb Raider with a bad attitude. It is a 3D adventure game in the spirit of Tomb Raider, with lots of climbing, jumping, running and exploring. But while the challenge of the obstacles is often the focus of Lara Croft's world, Stern and Roper live in a violent place where being able to take down a punk is an enormously important skill. These two are street-smart, tough and foul mouthed, and are both capable of fighting with a variety of weapons ranging from bare hands to automatic assault rifles.

As the game progresses and the plot thickens, the threat of violence increases with the appearance of more and more Wild Cat thugs on the streets. Quick reactions and quicker thinking are the elements that will carry you through this violent adventure. Choices like "shall I take this punk hand to hand, or show him the errors of bringing a bat to a shotgun fight?" can make a vast difference to the play strategy that needs to be used while playing. At times, every bullet

With the dawning of the new millennium, there was much speculation as to whether we would actually make it as a species, and as a planet. Apocalyptic predictions by the dozen, ranging from blazing meteors, to nuclear war, to alien invasion, to angelic hosts trumpeting to welcome the arrival of judgement day abounded, and it seemed that, although most didn't buy into this form of hysteria, there was a little seed of doubt within everyone's mind. Urban Chaos is a game that explores this hysteria, from the angle of complete anarchy ruling the streets at the turn of the century. - Shryke

counts, while at others the exterminate while to get extermination of bad guys at the quickest, the quickest possible rate is paramount. It all comes down to reading the situation quickly and correctly.

Roper and Stern are great characters to control. She (Stern) is a true wise-ass, a roughened up, fast talking computer, but this is a version of Whoopie Goldberg (although a much better looking, with excellent ability to beat down a man to death with her hands as easily as she can take him down. A few claps around his wrists. Roper is a mysterious veteran of many wars, a do-gooder who realises that peace is often only attained through superior force. Together they make a formidable crime fighting team.

Union City, the setting for the game, is a large and exciting place. The freedom granted the player in exploring the city is tremendous. Despite your missions (which are seldom timed) you can traipse around the city, jumping from rooftop to rooftop, looking for character improvements and equipment as you go. Add to this the fact that it really is a "living" city, with traffic, pedestrians, random events, rain puddles and litter, and it becomes an exciting place to be, even if it only exists on your computer monitor.

Controlling the game is simple. It provides the player with a keyboard driven control system and interface, using direction keys and other keys as the primary controls. With these you can make Stern (or Roper, depending on the mission you are on) run, jump, leopard crawl, pick up, sneak, slide down ropes and, of course, open a variety of cans of "whup-ass" all over the opposition. While shooting things does have the greatest effect, it takes care of things most quickly, both Stern and Roper have an impressive array of hand-to-hand techniques and combat moves (including a particularly nasty groin kick, accompanied by a shuddering "crunch" sound), which are a lot of fun to use. The movements of the characters takes

the while to get used to, despite the simplicity of the controls, and to this end the developers have included a few training missions, which include an obstacle course, combat training and driving lesson - yes, you get to climb into cars and career around the city too, in this game.

Urban Chaos falls into the category of eye candy. This game is very pretty to look at, in terms of graphic excellence. The whole city has a very dark and dingy feel to it, but this is brought across in a wonderfully masterful manner, with excellent lighting and shadows, realistic, vibrant colours and good animation. A few added extras, like rippled reflections and kickable garbage and soft drink cans, as well as ever present, fluttering litter, add to the realistic feel that has been captured in what is an almost cartoon-like game. I found myself stopping to look at the marvellous graphic quality more than once, in the way that an explorer pauses to examine a newly explored vista before him.

Sound in games is usually something of an afterthought, and is often lacking. However, there is no such lack in Urban Chaos. Part of the realism generated in the game comes from the effective and correct use of sound effects. Clattering cans, thundering explosions, cracking gunfire are all part of this collage of sound that pleases the player's ear just as the pretty picture pleases the eye. Of course, there is some bad language in the game, to bring across the "street-attitude" that these



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characters possess. Nothing that would make young ears burn, but it is there, and parents should be aware of it.

The story behind the game is complex and engrossing. As the tale unfolds, you become aware of the fact that there is far more going on than meets the eye, and the scope of the "evil" pervading Union City is vast. The player is swept along in this tale, with little influence over it save for the final outcome. However, the interactive nature of the setting does allow the player to feel "involved" in a deeper sense than just allowing the story to progress around him or her.

This is a very, very solid title. All 3D adventure fans will definitely love it, while others will also more than likely enjoy it's fast paced action and challenging missions. Nothing is straight forward in this game - if there is a dif-



FIREPOWER MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

difficult way to do something, then rest assured that this is how it has to be done. However, careful play and forethought will allow the player to progress through the game with relative ease. It isn't an easy game, not at all, but offers an enjoyable and beatable challenge to savvy players. Personally, I really enjoyed this game. The bug bit beautifully, and I found myself exploring the streets of Union City and busting punks long into the wee hours of the morning whenever I played, sometimes swearing in frustration or cackling in triumph. Give it a shot. See if you can reverse Armageddon!

CREATIVE ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM

BLASTER PC

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS
3D Action	Mucky Foot	Eidos	Crew (011) 203-9100	Pentium II 233 MHz 32 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 4 MB Video Card 150 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.0)	Pentium II 300 MHz 64 MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 4 MB D3D Video Card 400 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0a)
	COMPARATIVES	PRO'S	CONS		
	Tomb Raider Soul Reaver Indiana Jones	Excellent Graphics Wonderful Control Fully Interactive	Overly Complicated Missions Repetitive Gameplay		
	http://www.eidos.com		RRP R 329.00		
GRAPHICS	90	STORY	76	CONTROL	88
SOUND	92	ORIGINALITY	82	PLAYABILITY	87
				CONTINUITY	83
				JUDGEMENT	88
					86

PC CD ROM

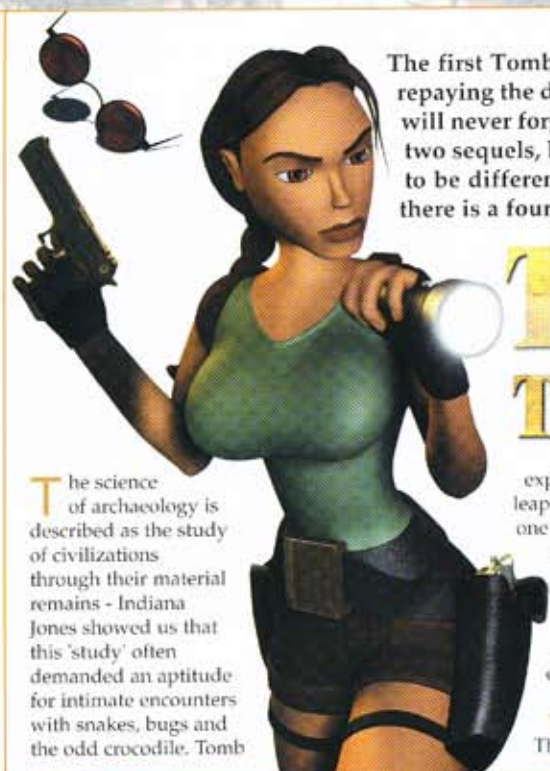
Shryke

Environmental Audio Ready

NEW AGE GAMING

MULTIPLAYER?

86



The first Tomb Raider experience defied all the rules, borrowing valuable gaming time and repaying the debt with more than anyone could have imagined, as it led us on a journey we will never forget. A large chunk of gaming nostalgia - it was a game like no other. Then came two sequels, both desperately trying to re-established the connection, both failing by trying to be different when all people really wanted was more of the same, but only better. Now there is a fourth, Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation.

TOMB RAIDER THE LAST REVELATION

The science of archaeology is described as the study of civilizations through their material remains - Indiana Jones showed us that this 'study' often demanded an aptitude for intimate encounters with snakes, bugs and the odd crocodile. Tomb

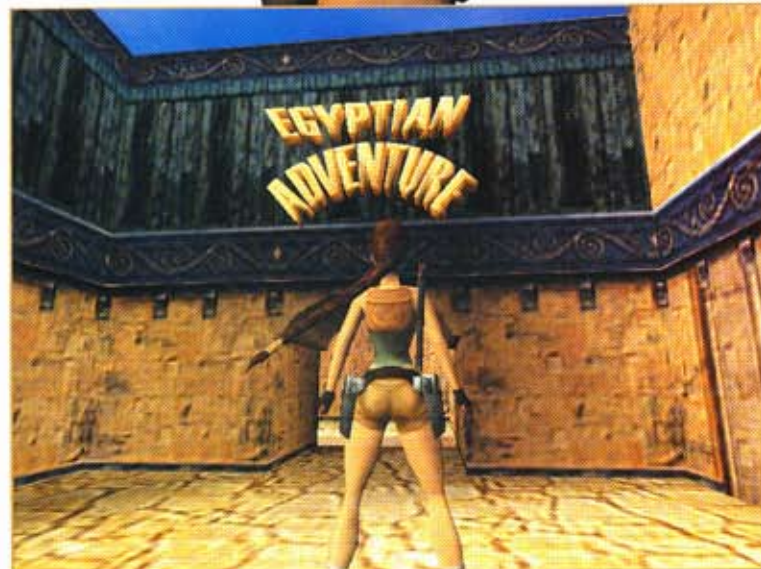
exploring the unknown, to climb, crawl and leap where no one has gone before, that is the one single quality that makes Tomb Raider special. Core moved away from this successful formula with their second and third games and only now, through a mediocre fourth sequel, are they slowly starting to return to what makes the Tomb Raider experience so unique and irresistible.

There's a fly in my Cambodia

The game begins in Cambodia, the stunning Croft 'training' mansion is gone and Lara is now a young girl under the tutelage of professor Werner Von Croy, a respected archaeologist. Welcome to the all-new and compulsory training level, veterans might sneer at the thought of having to prove themselves for the fourth time in a row, however, although very basic, this level plays two important roles. One is to familiarise the player with the essential controls and moves available in the game including negotiating ropes and poles and shimmying around corners. The other role is to set the scene for the game's story. In the past players used to learn how to control Lara by going through the paces at her house and elaborate training facility. The house came complete with a doddering butler, an elaborate indoor and outdoor gymnasium and, perhaps the best part of all was the fact that the mansion held within its walls and out in the garden a number of secret areas that could be uncovered by only the most persistent and dexterous players. The Cambodia level in The Last Revelation is a little disappointing as a training level and ends almost as soon as it has begun, leaving you feeling a little cheated. What it does do well is give a little insight into the life of the young Lara, her mentor and sets up the game without a flaw. One nice touch was a scene where Lara finds her legendary backpack, a conspicuous absentee during the first few minutes of the game. This Cambodia level did originally promise more information about Lara, her past, her reason for pursuing archaeology to the

exclusion of all else and more, but other than the backpack scene little of these 'revelations' can be said to light in the final product.

From there, years later, we see Lara crossing vast desert thanks to one of the many superb high-quality video segments. This is where the real meat and bones of the tale begins, to summarise without spoiling things, Lara unwittingly unleashes the evil Egyptian god Set while searching for lost treasure. Set has the ability to let loose a plague of misery and darkness upon the human race at the turn of the millennium if he is not returned to his grave in time. Now Lara, with a little help and advice from a colleague sets out to undo what she has done and literally save the world. Her old mentor, Werner von Croy also returns and becomes inextricably intertwined with Lara's destiny, it really is engaging stuff, right to the climactic finale. The



THIS SCREENSHOT BURNS THE GAME UP PERFECTLY...

Raider showed us that we could also participate in this world of exploration, and experience that hair-raising adventure right in front of our computers, without any of the risk and all of the rewards.

This fourth game is the best and the worst of the Tomb Raider series. Part of the appeal of this series is the solitary exploration of ancient tombs and the idea that your feet are the first to walk here in a thousand years. The magical sense of

disappearing into walls and 'solid' stone blocks. For seasoned players this comes as no surprise as Core haven't managed to iron out this problem since the first game. The camera that keeps Lara in the third perspective has also been left alone and still, on more than twenty occasions throughout the game, positions itself in such a way that guess work jumping and climbing is the only way forward. Considering the sheer number of possible locations for the camera this can be easily forgiven while exploring rooms and outside areas but cannot be overlooked when it comes to climbing walls and crawling on all fours, here the camera is erratic and always seems to be in the worst possible position. The poor camera is a legacy dating back to the first game that, by now, should have been rectified.



This is one of the more interesting puzzles in the game. The idea is to move your 3 pawns to the last square on the big 'board' before the computer / malevolent presence does. Running Lara's hand over the four rotating panels activates the 'dice' rolling. Each white side denotes a single move on the playing field - if all four are white it means you've rolled a six. Jumping or walking onto the correspondingly coloured floor panel selects which pawn to move. The symbols on some of the squares represent the chance to roll again - if you land on an opponent's piece that piece is transported back to the start. Winning the game opens up a quick and easy route to the end of the level, while losing the game opens up a much tougher path.

only complaint that could be levelled at the videos and game-engine cut scenes is the stilted discourse between the game characters. Lara and her virtual actors seem a little distracted at times, as if reading everything on cue cards that they've never seen before. In retrospect the game's story is solid and imaginative but only really serves to put Lara into the next harrowing situation or to give the player a better sense of purpose.

Still the same old...

The Last Revelation is with out a doubt definitely still Tomb Raider in the sense that very little has changed in the graphics department and you'd be hard pressed to find any significant changes from the third sequel to this one. Among the apparent changes are a few more resolutions to choose from, some new lighting features, a 32-bit colour palette and a little more detail here, there and everywhere. The engine that runs the game is really starting to show its age and you only need to put it next to any recent powerhouse first person 3D engine to make it blush red with embarrassment. The game is still plagued by clipping problems, which range from minor glitches to full-blown irregularities where Lara sometimes completely



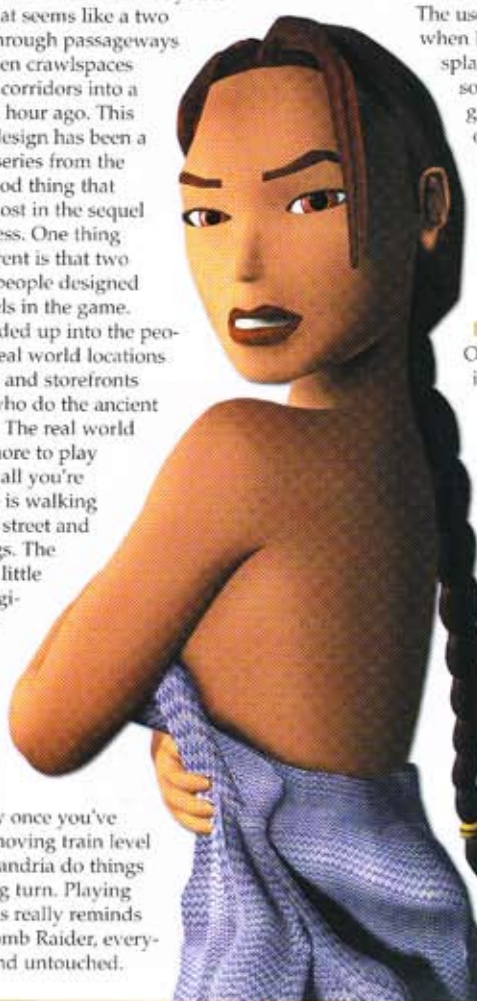
The Games We Play...

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What really separates and improves this fourth game is the level design - in a word, breathtaking. Often the map designers will combine up to four different levels all joining a central hub level that is again divided up into four smaller arenas. More often than not you'll emerge from what seems like a two kilometre hike through passageways and rooms, hidden crawlspaces and underwater corridors into a room you left an hour ago. This masterful level design has been a hallmark of the series from the first and it's a good thing that this hasn't been lost in the sequel production process. One thing that seems apparent is that two different sets of people designed the different levels in the game. They can be divided up into the people who do the real world locations like city rooftops and storefronts and the people who do the ancient tombs and cities. The real world locations are a chore to play through because all you're really doing here is walking down a deserted street and entering buildings. The game starts with little intrigue and imagination, the maps look the same and there isn't anything really new to see or do.

Perseverance is what pays off in this case and only once you've played past the moving train level and entered Alexandria do things take an interesting turn. Playing the first few levels really reminds one of the first Tomb Raider, everything looks old and untouched.



However, once the Alexandria hub is completed you enter yet another dull section of play, another real world location. It is only well into the game, when you reach the Sphinx do things really start getting interesting. Overall the game is divided up into highs and lows, but the highs are definitely worth the effort of plodding through the lows. One other interesting choice the developers made was to force players to backtrack through the same levels over and over again, particularly in one section where up to six visits between the same two levels is necessary to finally complete that hub. This backtracking is a cheap trick to increase the playing time and will always be remembered as a pointless waste of time.

The use of sound is excellent and when Lara lands in water a believable splash is heard right on cue, all the sound effects are functionally good but nothing really stands out like the nostalgic music. It is a good thing that Core left the distinctive music alone, and nothing brings a smile to your face when hearing the first few bars of the Tomb Raider soundtrack.

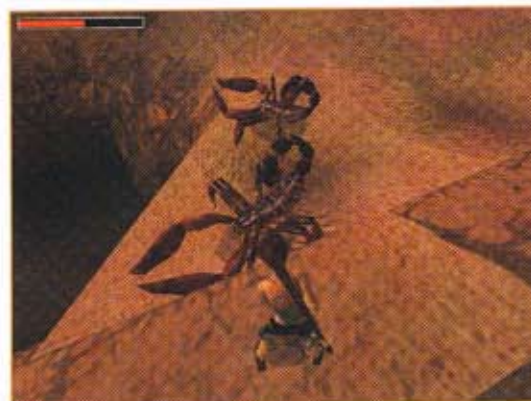
Enigmas within riddles

One area the developers promised to focus on in this instalment was the balancing of adventuring and shooting, leaning away from straight action and more into exploration and puzzle solving. In this area they have made true on all their promises and have delivered a perfectly balanced game. The learning curve is also perfectly set and while seasoned tomb raiders will quickly fly through the early levels newcomers will find a good pace set by the game with the level of difficulty increasing at a moderate pace. The puzzle elements, much like the levels can be sorted into memorable and forgettable. Some of the puzzles are more athletic challenges while many



SOME OF THESE NEW ENEMIES ARE UGLY, SMART AND VERY LETHAL.

choose to confound even the experts, others on the other hand are downright stupid and require pinpoint positioning of the main character to open doors and use the right item in the right place. Many of the athletic 'puzzles' require a mastery of the new rope swing and pole climbing abilities. These new abilities are well



Creepy things

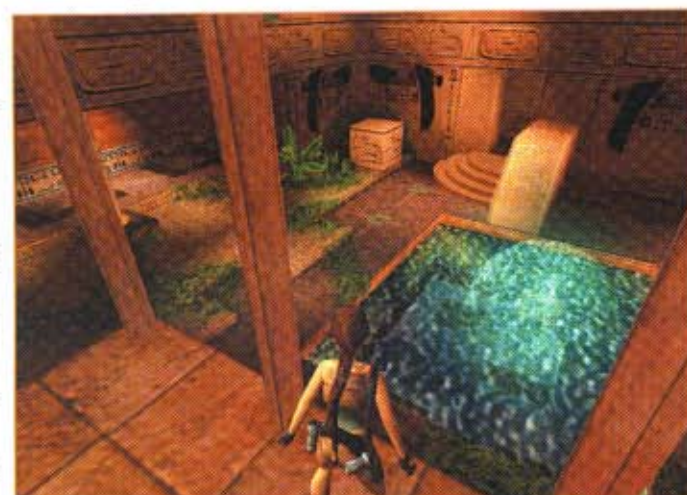
In this game the focus is kept away from fighting enemies and rather on exploration, what this means is that there aren't hundreds of things to shoot all the time. What can be said of the enemies is that they are well placed and suit each location. You'll face scorpions (normal sized and giant), humans with swords and automatic weapons, mummies and other pyramid horrors and even annoying locusts that swarm around you. Most of the enemies are well animated but lack any real intelligence and it's still possible to leap onto a stone block to get away from them, making killing them easy and removing any challenge they're supposed to represent. The locusts are a ridiculous enemy - one

and automatic weapons, mummies and other pyramid horrors and even annoying locusts that swarm around you. Most of the enemies are well animated but lack any real intelligence and it's still possible to leap onto a stone block to get away from them, making killing them easy and removing any challenge they're supposed to represent. The locusts are a ridiculous enemy - one

The developers have taken all the new abilities and extra options and used them well within the game.

The list of individual weapons isn't as large as the last Tomb Raider game, but The Last Revelation makes up for it by including a few different types of ammunition for each weapon, consisting of 'normal' shotgun shells and then wide-spread shells, poison, normal and explosive cross-bow bolts. Some of these weapons can also be fitted with a laser sight giving players the opportunity to kill enemies out of range.

The standard pistols, however will be used the most, as it is easy to outsmart enemies and then shoot them at your leisure. One other interesting addition to the inventory is the crowbar, which Lara uses to open doors or pry jewels out of walls. The weapons are introduced into the game slowly and you'll be



PURE ADVENTURE FROM START TO FINISH

which you have no real defence against, and all you can do is wait until they go away. The Scarab beetles (from the movie The Mummy) are a brilliant addition to the game and represent the



only real challenge from the computer. They swarm out of holes and will follow you onto a surface - the only way they can be defeated is running away, although sometimes you are given a burning stick to temporarily ward them off. Overall no enemy stands out as either very exciting or dangerous and to save ammunition you can kill everything, with a few exceptions, with your pistols. There are 'bosses' in the game and they do pack quite a punch if you get in their way, one such boss is a tin equestrian that needs around half your ammunition supply to defeat. This is an annoying way of providing a challenge and Core should really know better than to add this lowlight to a game that will be critically viewed by almost everyone who plays it.

What's it like, really?

It is the best game in the series technically, nothing has or ever will beat the first game and Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation is really what the second sequel should have been. One common problem through each level is that it's too easy, they could easily have removed exactly half of the ammunition and health in the game and there still would have been plenty to go around. For fans, a definite recommendation bearing in mind all the little problems, for first time adventurers you'll be pleasantly surprised by the depth and character this series has and will easily ignore many of the problems, simply because this is the first time you'll see them and not for the fourth. For the rest of it we can only hope the Core doesn't try and knock together a fifth game just before Christmas 2001. The Tomb Raider series, if it is to continue into the future needs a major engine overhaul and some fresh creative input, if it is to be the last then you can call Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation a dignified conclusion to a video game legend.

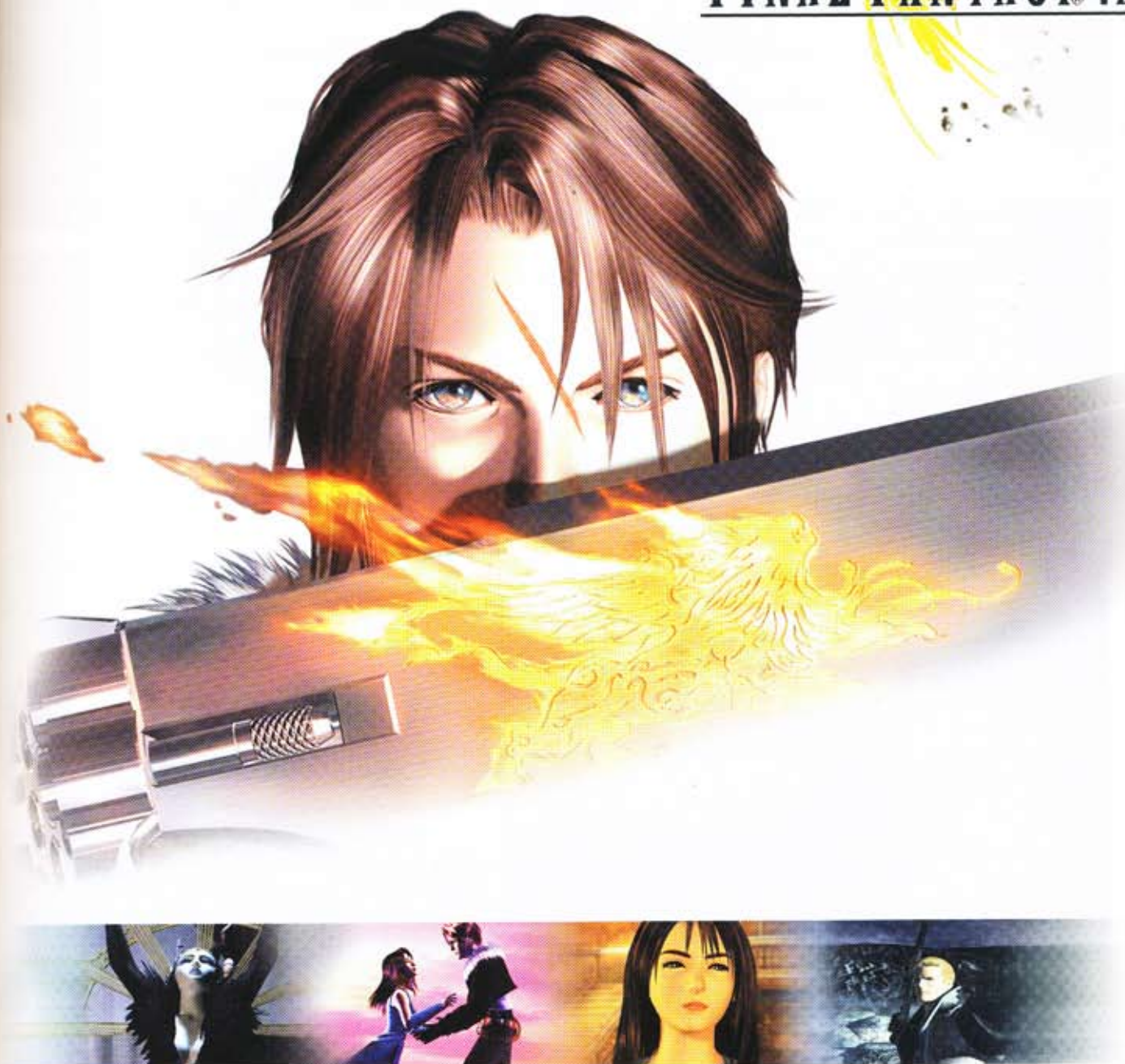
CREATIVE ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM



GENRE 3D Action Adventure	DEVELOPER Core Design	PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive	SUPPLIER Crew (011) 203-9100
COMPARATIVES Tomb Raider Indiana Jones Urban Chaos	PRO'S Awe Inspiring Levels Sense of Adventure Epic Scale	CONS Ancient Engine Stupid Camera Too Easy	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS Pentium III 233 MHz 16 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 4 MB 3D Accelerator 20 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)
RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS Pentium III 266 MHz 32 MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 8 MB AGP 3D Video 20 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0a)			
GRAPHICS 83			
STORY 86			
CONTROL 81			
CONTINUITY 79			
NEW AGE GAMING			
MULTIPLAYER			
SOUND 79	ORIGINALITY 63	PLAYABILITY 87	JUDGEMENT 80
80			

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The United States Airforce is undoubtedly the most powerful airforce in the world and they aren't afraid to demonstrate the fact at almost any opportunity. In this survey simulation Jane's USAF attempts to allow you to fly some of the United States Air Forces most famous past, present and future aircraft.

So what exactly is a survey-simulation I hear you ask? Well a survey simulation is one where the game tries to simulate a number of jets, unlike single craft simulations such as Falcon 4 or Jane's F15, which only focus on and simulate one in great detail. Although in theory it may sound like a bargain in reality such survey games usually fail to simulate the various aircraft with absolute realism and they are usually aimed at the casual flight-simmer, a type of breed better known as, the weekend warrior.

Jane's began their survey-simulations with hits such as USNF and Advanced Tactical

USAF

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Fighters - Israeli Air Force then followed USAF. The same Pixel design team that created Israeli Air Force now brings you the next instalment, USAF.

As a survey-simulation, USAF brings you a multiple aircraft experience and you are able to pilot the famous F-4 Phantom II, the venerable F-105 Thunderchief (also known as, 'Thud'), the deadly F-15 Eagle, the awesome F-15E Strike Eagle ('The Mudhen'), the robust A-10 Thunderbolt II ('The Warthog'), the versatile F-16 Fighting Falcon ('The Viper'), the stealthy F-117 Nighthawk and the superior F-22 Raptor. You can even pilot the Mig 29 Fulcrum (which is pretty weird considering the USAF part in the title). As you can see they offer you

Of course you will experience realistic characteristics such as high angle drag and speed bleed but stalls are virtually impossible and the ability of the planes to roll is of this world and extremely unrealistic. The avionics are also a step from older survey-simulations and include various air-to-air and air-to-ground modes but they do not offer the multitude of modes found in real thing...or in hardcore games that matter. The AI is not too bad and the enemy will kill if he gets the chance, however, your wingmen are stupid at times and have a penchant for lawn-darting i.e. hitting the ground real hard!



This game is geared towards fun and this it delivers in spades. There is your usual instant action and quick missions that you can create with a couple of mouse clicks. For the more 'serious' pilot there are four campaigns. There are in addition historical campaigns in which you'll get the chance to fly the F4 Phantom and the F105 over Nam and the F15, F15E, F117, F16 and a personal favourite ground-ponder, the A-10 Warthog, in Iraq. You can also fly future cam-

The graphics have been improved since Israeli Air Force and flying over or through the Grand Canyon has to be seen to be believed. The screenshots do not do this title any justice. However when you fly low the sense of speed is non-existent and the terrain is not as good as from high up. The terrain uses satellite imagery and is very accurate. The object graphics are superb and definitely the best out there at this stage. If only Jane's had such an excellent F15E Strike Eagle in their F15 simulation. The explosion graphics are awesome as well as the dawn and dusk setting- flying any of the craft at sun-down can best be described as an awe-inspiring experience.

The sound is good although I thought it to be very quiet in the cockpit, I realise this is realistic but I do like to hear the roar of the afterburner when I light it up!

The game is geared for multiplayer and can support up to 16 players on IPX, LAN and TCP/IP and there is always the

option of playing online with Jane's Combat.Net. The multiplayer is a real hoot and provides for hours of turn and burn against real opponents, beware however, that there are some excellent aces flying the virtual skies and don't be surprised if you find yourself under a parachute while you watch your flaming bird spiral downwards a few minutes into the game.

USAF also includes some other excellent features such as a powerful and easy to use mission editor and mission builder utility. The Net is already brimming with thousands of user-created missions available for download and this therefore has the potential to extend the shelf life of the game. Another useful and perhaps gimmicky feature is the Microsoft Speech Recognition program that allows you to speak commands directly to the game.

The game is geared for multiplayer and can support up to 16 players on IPX, LAN and TCP/IP and there is always the



and hardcore alike. It is without any hesitation that I urge you to rush out and buy it - your money will be well spent.



THE MIGHTY THUD OVER VIETNAM, THE UTTERLY AWESOME F-15E STRIKE EAGLE AND THE SUPERIOR F-22 RAPTOR - ALL LETHALLY LOADED AND READY TO INFLICT AS MUCH COLLATERAL DAMAGE AS IS HUMANLY POSSIBLE AND STILL BE ABLE TO DENY INVOLVEMENT



the best from the Vietnam era all the way through to the Gulf War and the Kosovo conflict and well into the near future. However none of these aircraft are modelled with the absolute realism in flight models and avionics, as you would find in hardcore titles such as Falcon 4 or Flanker 2. Although all the cockpits are slightly different to reflect the different planes they are all essentially the same with regards to functionality. They are however a major step up from the cockpits found in other games such as ATF and USNF. Even the flight model is different for every plane but nowhere near realistic.

paings over Nellis Airforce base and in Germany you can add the futuristic super-plane, the F22 Raptor.

There is one thing I must warn you about the missions, personally I still can't decide if it's a good thing or a bad thing. When on a mission in order to succeed you have to ensure all the different flights complete their respective mission objectives and in order to do this you will be able to switch to all the different planes. At first this sounds cool until you realise that it's up to you to finish all the flight's goals... it gets scary and extremely difficult jumping from plane to plane!

Flight S...

A fine survey simulator for all the weekend warriors out there, the game isn't as realistic as other more 'hardcore' simulations but should appeal to anyone who enjoys the high-speed thrill of flying military aircraft. Above all, Jane's USAF is the definitive multiplayer ace of the skies and comes highly recommended.

GENRE Flight Simulator		DEVELOPER Jane's Combat Simulations		PUBLISHER Electronic Arts		SUPPLIER Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212		MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS Pentium II 266 MHz 32 MB Ram 6 X CD Rom 4 MB 3D Card 550 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)		RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS Pentium III 350 MHz 64 MB Ram 24 X CD Rom 16 MB 3D Accelerator 1.2 GB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0a)		PC CD ROM
COMPARATIVES Israeli Air Force Advanced Tactical Fighters		PRO'S Superb Graphics Excellent Multiplayer Nice Package		CONS Weak Flight Models Artificial Intelligence		RRP R 299.00		NEW AGE GAMING		MULTIPLAYER? Yes		
GRAPHICS 92		STORY NA		CONTROL 88		CONTINUITY 95		JUDGEMENT 90		89		Reaper Environmental Audio Ready
SOUND 85		ORIGINALITY 85		PLAYABILITY 90		JUDGEMENT 90		89				

Through years of mindless killing in first-person shooters, it was a company called Zombie that finally broke the tactical barrier and offered Spec Ops: US Army Rangers. Since then, titles such as Rainbow Six and Delta Force followed in their footsteps to overshadow Spec Ops. With Spec Ops II, Zombie aimed to take on the recent competition...

Zombie focused their second generation in the Spec Ops series on the US Army Green Berets, and although this allows for a greater variety of mission types and the use of some breathtaking military hardware, Spec Ops II is still flawed by the unfortunate defects of the previous title. The graphics engine has been greatly enhanced to offer lifelike indoor and outdoor environments, and this is the only department where Spec Ops II is on par with the

SPEC OPS II

sight doesn't follow the movement of the mouse at times, and detracts from gameplay in every sense.

To try and make up for the awful controls, Zombie provided training missions where the player can come to terms with the environment and different weapons and tactics. The training grounds include a firing range, obstacle course and kill houses. After some intense Green Beret training, it's time to advance to the campaign missions, which takes place in Germany, Antarctica, Korea, Pakistan and Thailand. Each location sports four to five missions each, where mission types include patrols, strike, raids, hostage rescue, ambushes and exfiltrations. The missions are very



TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT...

competition. Its major downfall lies in the fact that it was designed to be a third person shooter, and the first-person view was clearly added as an afterthought. Controlling one's firearm is extremely difficult, and once the player finally manages to train his/her sights on the bad guy it is most often too late. The crosshair or laser



difficult to complete with the obscure controls, but the idea behind the missions are very nicely done, and the player will have to get used to playing the same mission many times over again.

The Green Berets seem to have a lot of money for toys at their disposal when looking at the arsenal. Weapons range from the standard M16 and M203, M249 SAW, AK 47, M82 Barret Light 30, MP5's, all the way to the highly specialised OICW which consists of an M4 5.56mm and 20mm burst cannon in one sleek Bullpup design.

Spec Ops II has a kind of unfinished feel to it, and it will take some serious patches to get the game up to par with titles such as Rogue Spear, SWAT 3 and Delta Force 2.

Spec Ops III: Navy Seals is already in the works, and one can only hope that they've learnt their lesson by now. Spec Ops II was a great idea with some highly innovative features that were executed quite badly, and will mainly appeal to fans of the original.

1st Person Action

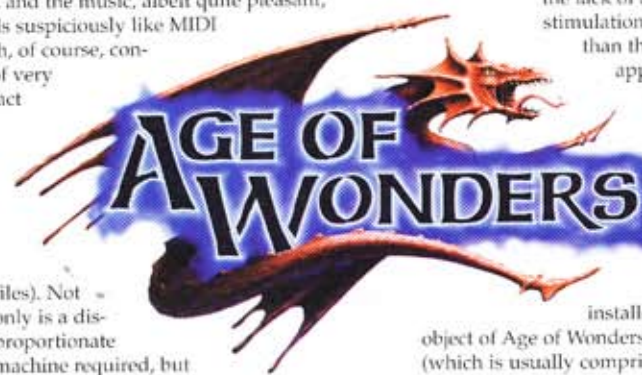
Pro's: Innovative Missions

Con's: Incomplete Tricky Control

Developer: Zombie
Local Dist: MMW / SDD
Tel: (011) 652-8222
Price: R 299.00

I never cease to amaze me that developers are forever capable of releasing games that are so slackly coded that they are a disgrace. Take Age of Wonders, for instance - for a game that plays like a cross between Lords of Magic and Warlords, the stated system requirements (Pentium II, lots of RAM) are simply ludicrous, not to mention hard disk robbery, at an installa-

tion size of 300 MB! How do they justify all this? After all, the graphics are nothing spectacular, there are no cut-scenes or audio clips to take up space, and the music, albeit quite pleasant, sounds suspiciously like MIDI (which, of course, consists of very compact



files). Not only is a disproportionate machine required, but this game is also quite unstable, at least in DirectX full-screen modes, and plays most reliably in a window, which yields substantially poorer performance.

Those of you who have played Lords of Magic or Warlords II or III will find that Age of Wonders does not really present anything new, but rather offers a rehash of these golden oldies. However, it does so inelegantly, as mentioned above. You can only choose from two sides (as opposed to Lords of Magic's eight), and can customise your magical sphere preferences (chosen from the four elements and 'life' and 'death' magics). Innovation has been introduced in the form of a comprehensive list of abilities which may be purchased for a character by expending skill points. These points accumulate every time a character gains an experience level. As mentioned above, the graphics are not fantastic, and tend to be rather cramped and

unclear. The sound is decidedly mediocre, and the music, while not bad, is not exactly inspirational. The campaigns are rather engaging, but the lack of any video or audio stimulation makes them far drier than they could have been. The appealing world map is about the most exciting feature of the game.

Age of Wonders plays quite sluggishly even in turn-based strategy title, and I don't see it staying installed for very long. The object of Age of Wonders is to conquer the world (which is usually comprised of an above-ground and a subterranean level) by taking over cities, building new facilities, wresting control of cities, mines, farms and power nodes from your opponents and defeating enemy armies.

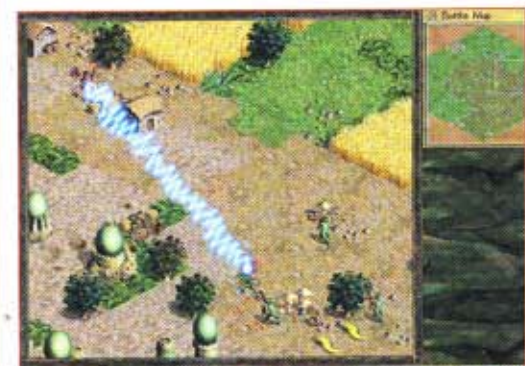
The secondary objective in this game is not to fall asleep.

Turn-Based Strategy

Pro's: Campaigns Points System

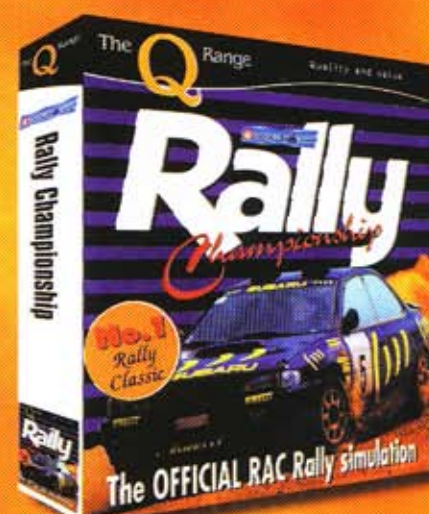
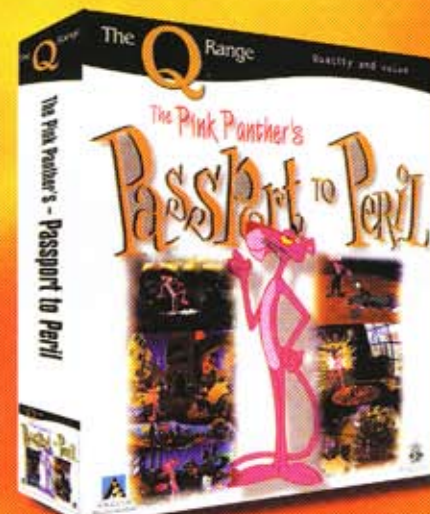
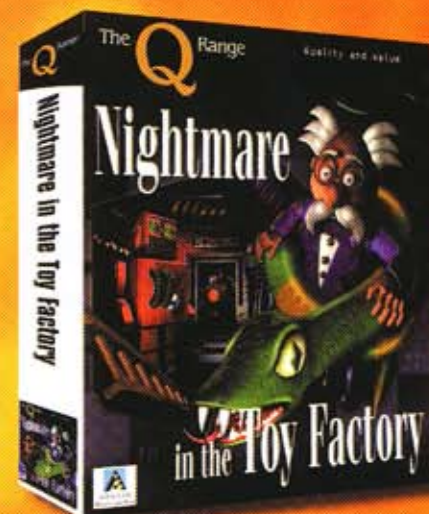
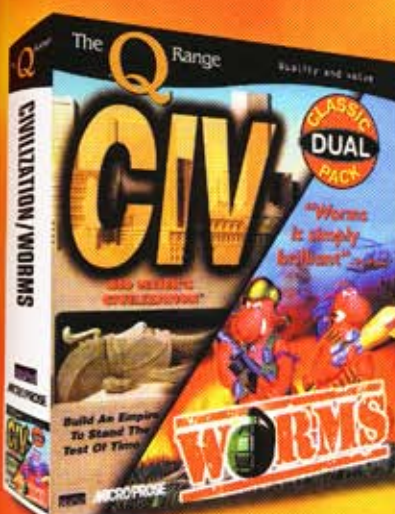
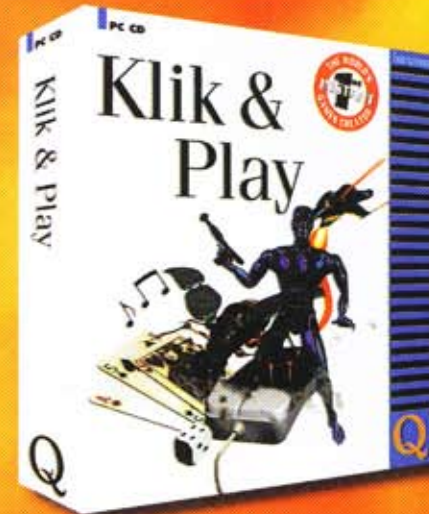
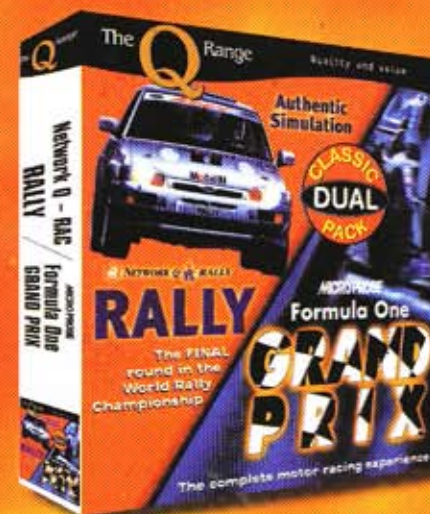
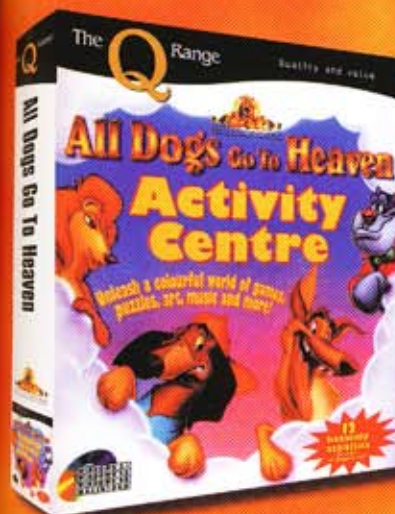
Con's: Dull Sluggish System Requirements

Developer: Epic Games
Local Dist: MMW / SDD
Tel: (011) 652-8222
Price: R 299.00



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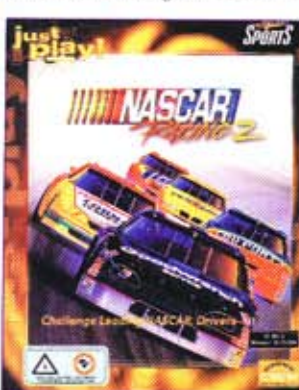
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Bargain Buys

A new range of bargain buy games has recently become available, and it's really something. Featuring a range of Sierra games and distributed locally by Crew, these bargain buys feature some of the most popular names to have hit the shelves in recent years. At R99.00, these titles will certainly take the market by storm, and will provide the cash-strapped gamer with hours of fun. You can get them from Crew on (011) 203-9100.

Nascar Racing 2

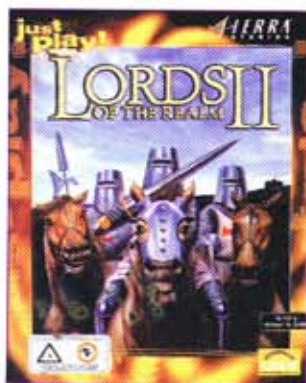
The second instalment of Papyrus' well-loved Nascar series, Nascar Racing 2 features some of the best racing action ever on the PC. With excellent graphics, completely customisable cars (including engines, parts and paint jobs) thrilling sound and addictive game play, Nascar Racing 2 is a definite winner for all racing enthusiasts. Take part in the full



season, or challenge your friends in up to eight player multiplayer races on any of the sixteen most famous speedways around the world. Vie for supremacy against the most famous names of America's best-loved motor sport at speeds clocking in at around 200 miles per hour. Feel the excitement, the pressure and the power of your vehicle as it thunders around the track, making use of careful tactics and speed to cross the finish line first. Back in the garage you can fine-tune your car for peak performance, allowing you to get the best out of your American muscle car. This is one of the best racing experiences you will ever be able to get on your PC.

Lords of the Realm II

Enter the world of Medieval England as you do battle for the throne of a country torn apart. Lords of the Realm II features all the aspects of running a country as you prepare your army to take the throne. Plant crops, build weapons, collect taxes

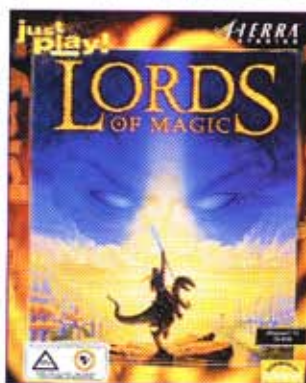


and trade with foreign merchants in an effort to rise to sufficient power to wrest the throne from your opponents. In Lords of the Realm II you can vary the amount of management detail you wish to become involved in as you take on up to four computer opponents in numerous realms subject to virtually endless variables, allowing for months of play. Strategy is of utmost importance here - one mistake, and you will pass into history as a forgotten usurper. Take on four friends with the included network and modem support - show them just who the right one is to rule the realm!

Lords of Magic

The evil sorcerer Balthor threatens the peace of Uruk, and it is up to you to take the situation into your own hands and bring stability back to the land. Wielding the forces of magic, you explore, discover

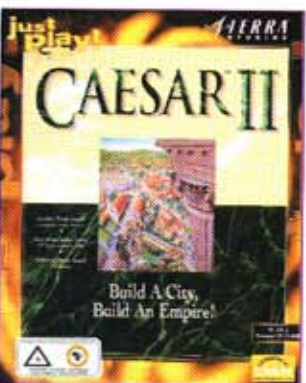
and manage resources while developing political relationships and advancing your status and fame through your actions. Choose from one of three character types - wizard, warrior or thief - to take on your path of rediscovering the lost arts of magic as you battle to save the lands from a terrible evil. In this vast epic, you can choose any of 24 characters to represent yourself in your epic quest. Take on Balthor on your own, or join up to four players via LAN or Internet - or even take the part of Balthor and take your friends on head to head. This game, a spin off of the popular Lords of the Realm series, features stunning graphics and wonderful gameplay, and will keep any gamer entertained for a long time!



Caesar II

Can you build a better Rome? Take on this mammoth task in Caesar II, described as one of the best city management-cum-strategy games of all time. It's not as easy as it sounds, though. Keep in mind that you have millions of people to look after, barbarian invaders to stave off, a city to manage and an empire to build. This is no walk in the park or afternoon session with some building blocks and a few nifty ideas. You will have to be shrewd in your

city building, smart enough to know what the people want without giving away too much. Caesar II features stunning graphics, extensive city building with dozens of features, extended options for added and deeper gameplay and an online tutorial and history of the Roman Empire. Can you become the next ruler of the Roman Empire? Only time and effort will tell, so you had better get those whips cracking!

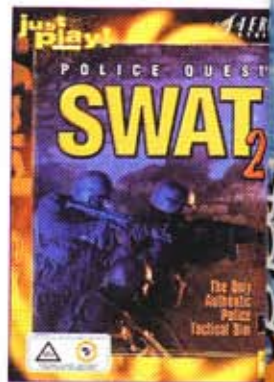


SWAT 2

Time is of the essence as you lead a crack SWAT team in to rescue hostages from the clutches of international terrorists. Can you get in, handle the situation and get out again with no civilian casualties? Do you have the guts that it takes to put your life on the line for peace, justice and freedom? Perhaps, though, you like the other side of the coin. Could you, as the leader of a ruthless terrorist group, fail the attempts of law enforcement officials

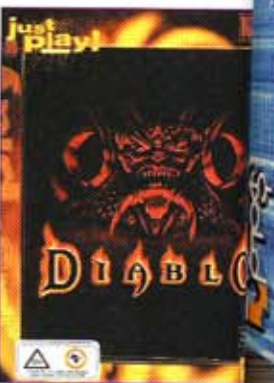


and force the system to its knees? Do you have determination and conviction of your actions to become a renowned international terrorist? SWAT 2, a spin off of the Police Quest series, enables you to attempt both. This is an exciting tactical simulation that will test your skills to the limit. A myriad of missions, equipment and tactics are available as you take on up to four friends in a multiplayer environment, or go one on one with a very smart, very sneaky AI. SWAT 2 is a true test of your tactical knowledge.



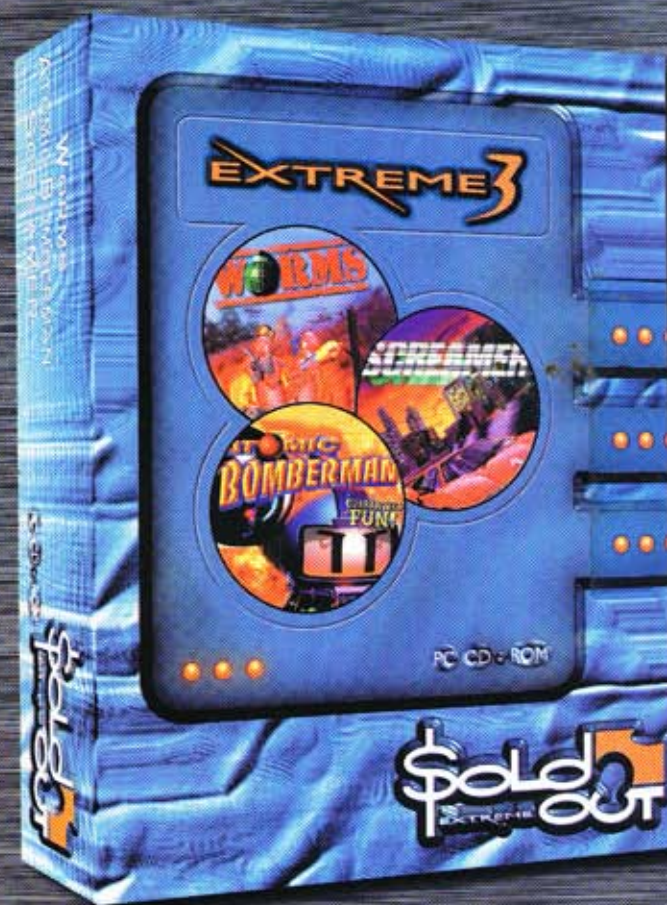
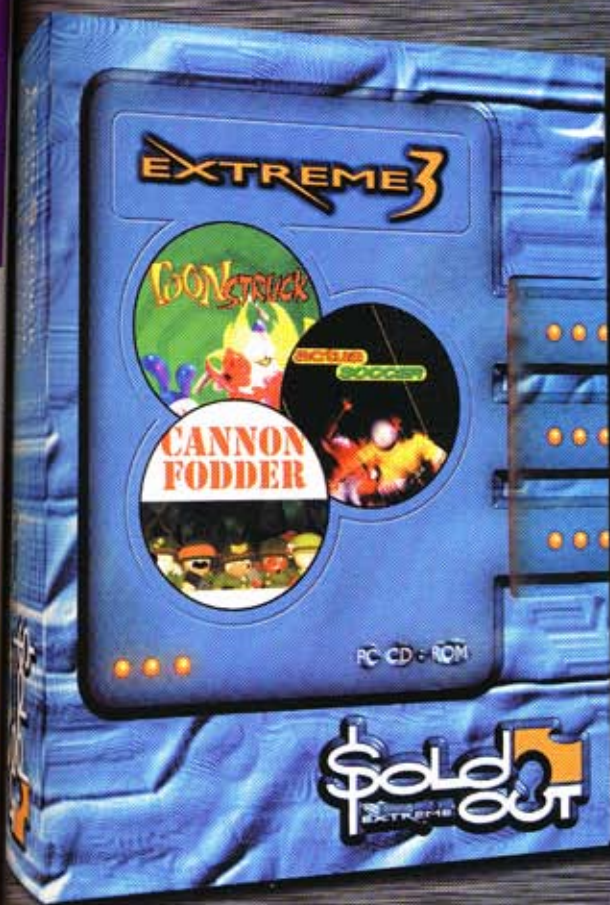
Diablo

Have you got what it takes to face the terror that lurks below the old cathedral? The living dead, rifting demons and creatures that should not sit between you and your ultimate goal, the destruction of the dreaded Diablo. Enter this fantasy world warrior, rogue or wizard and do battle against minions of darkness that threaten life as you know it. Enter the twisting, monster ridden, treasure dungeons and begin your quest to free the world. Diablo, a horrific demon summoned up in a terrifying ritual. Sword, bow and spell are your only companions as you delve deep into the dark depths of terror... Diablo was one of the best-loved games ever grace computer screens in recent years. It features a good story, action packed game play and excellent character advancement, allowing you to take your character all the way from a mere peasant to a hero of, well, heroic proportions. Every time you enter the world of Diablo, the specialised engine creates a new dungeon for you to explore and plunder, either on your own, with up to four friends via LAN, or on Blizzards free online Battle.net gaming service. Fantasy will never be the same again.

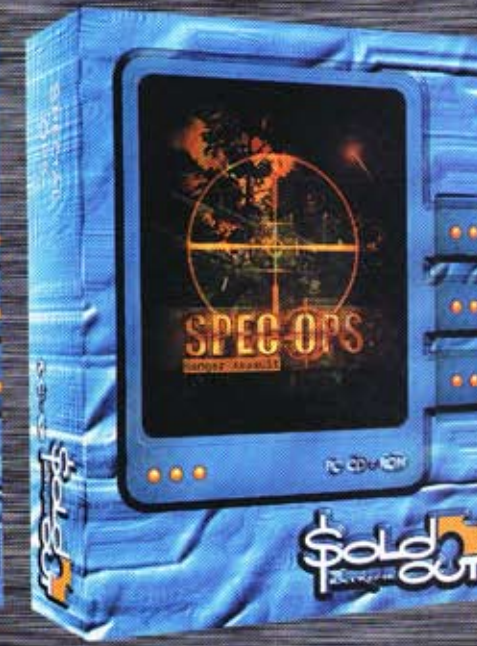
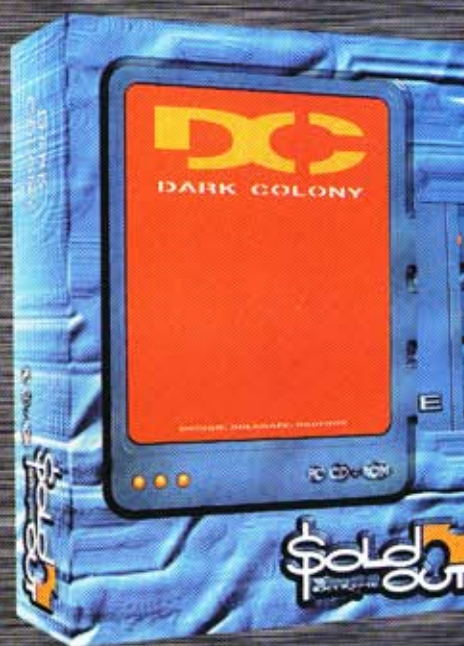
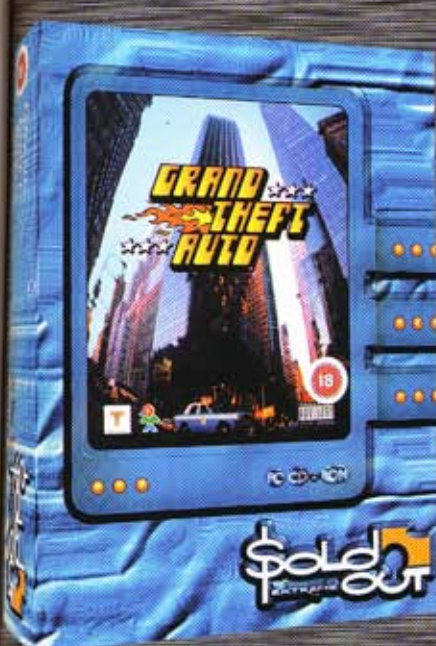


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error that dead, ter not stand destruction world as a against the you know sure filled the world of n a terrify only com- depths of games to ars. It fea- play and g you to are sapling ry time ised



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If ever there is pressure on a title to impress it has to be enormous on the shoulders of the developers of Gran Turismo 2. Not only is the game competing against the cream of the racing genre crop, but more so against the success and accolades that its predecessor received since its release. Competing at this level is not an easy task especially under the watchful eye of the sometimes over critical gaming press - that would be the category I fall under. This however doesn't bode well for certain sequels because of the high expectations but with that in mind it also can be overwhelmingly favourable to the title because it has already been elevated to the realms of nobility. GT2 is certainly under the hammer, if not only for its stature, but also for its final mark it will leave on the heritage of the outgoing PlayStation console.

Where do we start? Lets be a little different this time and begin at the beginning - the intro. To call this prelude to the game a theatrical masterpiece would leave a bad taste in the mouth of some of our well-known movie critics, but then I had a rather sour taste after a recommendation to watch the rather distasteful 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre'. Perhaps it's better to adjudicate the overwhelming sense of pleasure derived from the intro by

putting it in the same light as the highly acclaimed intro's from Resident Evil 3, Final Fantasy VIII and Tekken 3. The mixture of high speed action and flawless graphically animated sequences combined with the superb soundtrack 'My Favourite Game', track 8 from The Cardigans top selling album 'Gran Turismo', sets the perfect prelude to what is to come.

GT2 can easily be described as more (plenty more) of the same intense gameplay from the original. It is so big that the game has been divided up onto two discs, one of which contains the Arcade and the other the Gran Turismo version.



Kazunori Yamauchi
Executive Vice-President - Polyphony Digital Inc. and guru around the success of the GT franchise.

"We are deeply grateful to everyone who made GT happen: first of all to the car manufacturers who were so receptive to our original vision and helped us so unstintingly, then to everyone in the media and on the shop floor who told the users about the game, and last, but not least, to the users who actually played Gran Turismo."



GRAN TURISMO 2™
THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR



Official Laguna Seca Raceway License
Laguna is the only officially licensed track in GT2, the remainder are a selection from the original GT and some testing fantasy tracks developed by Polyphony Digital.

tion for ghost racing and bettering your record times of all the circuits. This brings us to the new addition of Dirt Racing mode that actually means the rally section. You now have the option of testing your abilities on the dirt with some of the worlds most powerful rally cars. Is this just an attempt to grasp at the growing rally sim market? Actually, yes. GT2 does what it does best by bringing you top quality physics and heart pounding gameplay but falls terribly short in its attempt to overshadow the latest crop of rally sims. However, it does enough to elevate GT2's overall options even further away from its impending competition, making the task of competing with it even more difficult than before.

The crème de la crème

Gran Turismo, the original, cannot be described as simply a racing game, but rather the art of perfection in a racing simulation. After many torturous hours tweaking, configuring and controlling my amply full garage, I still to this day spend many a day shifting gears and ploughing plots around the many tracks available in Gran Turismo. Whether this shows my admiration for exceptional programming or my adolescent state of mind, I am not quite sure. What I am sure about is the intense feeling of anticipation when the final version of Gran Turismo 2 happened to somehow land on my desk, I think it had something to do with the anonymous death threat that was found on the Ed's desk a week before.

Storm

of GT2 is as before the scale of the Gran Turismo mode. It comes with 34 different car manufacturers, each with their own selection of vehicles for you to purchase racking up to an overwhelming 594 cars in all. You can then take each of them for a spin on 28 different rac-

ing circuits including the now licensed Laguna Circuit, which will test all your racing nerve. Yes GT2 is now bigger than ever and this includes completing 60 license tests to gain all of the accolades and entrances into the races. Each license has more tests but are not that difficult to achieve for the seasoned veteran and if you are battling then the inclusion of a Demonstration replay will certainly help you understand the process of tackling the test. Obtaining one of the three accolades is surprisingly easy but pushing the levels up to the gold platform will test the most ardent of GT racers to the maximum.

GT mode welcomes back the similar interface, which includes the favourite Car Wash but includes a new Wheel Shop for kitting out your car with some designer rims. Even though the interface is similar, the development team listened to the consumers and added short cut options for gaining quick entry into all the menu options.



Gran Turismo 2 (Continued)



Where to next?

We have hardly acclimatised ourselves with Gran Turismo 2 as the screenshots from the currently under development Gran Turismo 2000 for the PlayStation 2 start to filter through the press. If the software on the PlayStation can win hands down five years after the console was released, we can expect nothing less than perfection from the team when they have the power of the PlayStation 2 behind them. As the release date of the PlayStation 2 closes in so does our anticipation of the software that will release with it - bring on Gran Turismo 2000.

594 car models from 34 car manufacturers from all around the world - that's what gamers will be able to drive in GT2!!

Europe (19)	Japan (8)	USA (6)
Alfa Romeo	Honda	Chevrolet
Aston Martin	Toyota	Vector
Audi	Subaru	Dodge
BMW	Mitsubishi	Ford
Citroen	Mazda	Shelby
Fiat	Nissan	Plymouth
Jaguar	Suzuki	
Lancia	Daihatsu	
Lister		
Lotus		
Mercedes-Benz		
Peugeot		
Renault		
Mini and MG		
RUF		
TVR		
Vauxhall/Opel		
Venturi		
Volkswagen		



DAY AND NIGHT RACES COMPOUNDED BY FAST EXCITING ACTION



eliminating those long menu click throughs that irritated to no end. The manufacturers have been broken up into city dealerships that span four outlying areas, each depicting from which part of the globe they come from. It only takes a few minutes to realise that GT2 is a definite improvement on its predecessor and this is just by perusing the menus.

Essentially GT2 takes the thorough enjoyment of its big brother and adds to it in subtle and effective ways. A keen eye will pick up slight graphical improvements and improved handling physics from its predecessor. The ability to utilise your old license saves from the original on GT2 will sit well with the veterans who worked long and hard to achieve them. The

inclusion of a damage model has also been a welcome addition and was one of my gripes in the original review. But once again there is no damage to the look of the cars but rather to the handling of your seemingly battered vehicle. This was due to manufacturer pressure and the lack of space on the discs - excuse duly noted. But how effective is

the handling damage? Well it's a little too effective in some instances, with some of the slightest mistakes relegating your vehicle to the ICU ward. The normal problems that arise are differing pulls to either side affecting cornering and handling. However the damage option can be configured in the main menu and it has been totally left out of the Gran Turismo mode, basically leaving it as only an Arcade mode option. In essence I thought that at least an option to include it in GT mode would have made the game that one step more difficult for those Schumacher wannabes out there. I did however enjoy the test that tyre wear offers to the gameplay. As the race goes on so the tyres wear down affecting the cornering and grip of your muscled machines. This makes you think before tapping on the power continually, making for more tactical races.

Something new is also the inclusion of Drag racing to the GT mode and that includes some of

the fastest drag cars in the world, which can also be used for other types of races, though this is not wise for the more difficult tracks. The Championships are now plentiful with varying degrees of engine performances gaining you entry into them. But that's not all, now there are also different race classes ranging from the luxury models only and golden oldies to sports cars and rallies. Each car is organised into its drive and engine positions (e.g. Engine mounted in the front and drive shaft in the rear then its classified as a FR) making vehicle selection more in-depth than before. The inclusion of Endurance races was a wonderful surprise changing from intense full out driving to the more planned and tactical technique. If you think you can handle two hours or more of constant concentration then GT2 will push your limits.

Adding to the intense gameplay is the excellent sound effects and recorded engine noises from each of the 594 cars. Its amazing how distinctive a vehicle sounds to its competitors further enhancing the uniqueness of GT2. The pop of the backfire and the creak of the turbo's make you step back to take in the excellence of its achievement. As the cars realistically screech around corners and the smoke billows from beneath the tyres you get an unerring sense of reality. All soundtracks are from world renowned artists such as Fatboy Slim, Propellorheads and the Stereophonics to mention a few, accurately simulate the thrill of the game with their self sustaining brand of heavy handed music.

The actual depiction of how GT2 has improved comes in the way the developers have combined the nuances of difficulty into differing forms of success. First time players can easily enter the high spec world of racing by using common sense and their knowledge of engines. If you are not a 'grease monkey' by profession it means very little as every tuned part comes with a detailed description of its purpose. But to get the ultimate performance out of your vehicle there must definitely be an understanding of the components of a vehicle. For the seasoned veteran there is once again more on offer to tweak and tinkle with and an easy interface for the

Rally Fever!

The addition of rally driving or the so called dirt track race is a welcome surprise within the already packed ranks of Gran Turismo 2 discs. This solidifies the total dedication to the art of racing on both road and dirt from the developers at Polyphony Digital.

Whether they attempted the move as an afterthought or had planned it from the beginning is not quite clear. The physics and temperament of the dirt races are in many ways similar to the train of thought from the original with a few tweaks needed to the driving technique to overcome the difference in surfaces and to a certain extent the subtle flaws in the control.

Somehow the rally section gets left behind in the deluge of information of the road cars. Somewhere along the line you will need to hop into one of these monster dirt grinders in your quest to complete GT2.

Nevertheless there is ample to smile about with the worlds top rally cars on offer showing off their wares

on some of the tougher tracks available in GT2. You can even try and convert one of your favourite gorged vehicles into an off road star, this being if GT2 will allow you, as not all cars can be converted.

Final consensus on the inclusion of the rally section boils down to content and not really the perfection of the addition. GT2000 I'm sure will pick up the pieces and place them in a much more defined order, while GT2 is enough to satisfy the curiosity of the driving fans.



CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON
CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	CONTROLLER SUPPORT	OPTIONAL EXTRAS
Racing	Polyphony Digital	SCEE	Ster Kinekor Interactive (011) 445-7900	Vibration Function Compatible	1-2 Player(s)
The defacto racing simulation has finally been challenged by its own kind. Gran Turismo 2 offers more of everything and more. Its unique style of realistic physics and wealth of configurations impress strongly in its reign as the definitive racing simulation - on all platforms.	COMPARATIVES	PRO'S	CONS	Analog Controller Compatible	Memory Card 3 - 15 Block(s)
	Gran Turismo	More of Everything	GT Mode Easier		
	Need for Speed	Superb Sound Effects	Sloppy Damage Model		
	Colin McRae Rally	Fun Addictive Gameplay	Over Rewarding Bug		
http://www.eidos.com			RRP R 459.00		
GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY	NEW AGE GAMING	
90	NA	95	86	MULTIPLAYER? Yes	
SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT	86	
95	80	79	75		

more often than not downgrades. Unfortunately there is always something that spoils the broth, this time it comes by way of winning races and earning your fortunes. Quite simply, it's a little too easy for the average GT fan. Not so much in the AI of the game but in the overpowering performance of certain vehicles. Money is also easier to come by once you gain the advantage over the competing cars. To my surprise, after completing the four wheel drive campaign, I was awarded a Ford GT40 69' with a value of over 250,000 credits.

Whether this is a bug or one of the biggest QA slips of modern time I'm not quite sure. Either way it somehow takes the wind out of the sails of this highly anticipated sequel taking the hard earned credit problem out of the equation. After much deliberation I finally figured out where the problem lies - the performance of vehicles won are too high. In most instances the vehicles are extremely competitive and with minimal upgrading can be used to win their sections and more hands down on a continual basis. In GT you were proud to own a high spec vehicle, in GT2 I feel it will become commonplace. There is also a rather uncanny omission of second hand vehicles for all other manufacturers except the Japanese. This is understandable but is totally against the grain of what GT2 is trying to achieve with its mass of manufacturer support. There is also a clear lack of different racing conditions besides night and day races. The inclusion of rain or snow would have thrown the cat amongst the pigeons and made for some interesting competitions. GT2 will also bring back memories to its faithful followers with many of the tracks and licence tests exactly the same as in the original, making you wonder whether this is a sequel or an add-on.

GT2 does live up to the expectations of its predecessor, even after I said it would be hard to beat. However the small improvements are only surpassed by the sheer weight of the games content. What we have in GT2 is the most comprehensive racing simulation on the market on any platform to date but most seasoned GT players will be left wondering if this is an add-on or worth a full pop as a full product. If the chips had to fall it would certainly make a serious debate of which I would have to take the side of the slightly aggrieved, but even then I would eagerly hand over my hard earned Rand's in search of just one more corner hugging race.

(Continued)

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REVIEWS UNDER FIRE

It's an action adventure starring James Bond, it's got all the gadgets, loads of guns and a great sound track so you'd expect a great game... except it's not. Here follows a cliché ridden review of a sadly wasted opportunity, it seems James Bond can't figure out what to do with a PlayStation - the ultimate Bond gadget.

As always the movie to game transition is fraught with mishaps, we've seen it in the past too many times to be counted and here again it reappears casting a dark shadow over a potentially good game. Tomorrow Never Dies is a fair stab at the action adventure genre but you can't help thinking that the developers have typically sacrificed quality over big movie license.

The name is Station, Play Station. In classic Bond style the game begins in much the same way as the movie, with the first two missions being played before the elaborate aquatic nymph opening sequence is shown. Right from the start the game boasts scenes from the actual movie and follows the plot of the movie to the letter only using creative license to make the game more playable in some areas. This technique works well and before you know it you're completely wrapped up in the PlayStation world of James Bond. The story,



FLIGHT 303 TO LONDON BOARDING... DING!

basically, follows agent 007 on his latest mission to prevent the global domination plans of media mogul Elliot Carver. The movie plot relayed from within the game is thin and it seems as though the developers have taken it for granted that you've seen the movie as most missions consist of do this or that with no real good reason as to why. This flaws the flow of the game a little and you'll quickly realise this is just another game with a great story told poorly. However, that's not what we came to the cinema for, now

is it? The game itself is a third person action adventure with a little first person sniping thrown in for good measure. In addition to run-



ning around and killing bad guys you'll also partake in a little skiing and driving, effectively giving you three types of game. The problem is that these other two aspects of the game are poorly conceived while the main game - the straight action shooter, is average at best. Perhaps it would have been better to stick with one good game style instead of three average ones.

Live and let live

Tomorrow Never Dies resembles Metal Gear Solid, but you could only really call it a passing resemblance. Initial impressions are good as the presentation is flawless, everything looks, sounds and even smells like a James Bond movie but it's once you start playing that you'll immediately realise all is not well in Her Majesty's Secret Service.

The graphics are average and overall the levels lack imagination, variation and detail. This includes much of the character animation, while Agent 007 looks good with his wide array of moves the guards and other enemies are much less athletic. Much of the game consists of running around various locations from the movie and shooting guards, occasionally you run into a 'boss' character and with the exception of the helicopter these bosses look very much like the guards with different clothing, each requiring 100 hits to kill. The skiing sub-levels are fun and while you're speeding down the slopes you can poke enemies with your ski poles, however the skiing sections are overly easy and present no real challenge. There is also a single driving sub-level where you must destroy a convoy in the Swiss Alps, again this



gadgets there are a handful of 'traditional' weapons up for grabs including two types of sniper rifle and even a rocket launcher, again nothing innovative and seeing that the guards all use and drop assault rifles and ammunition you'll quickly learn that this is the most practical weapon to use most of the time. Again, all the right ingredients are there, they just don't make a tasty meal, something serious is missing here and it's not salt.

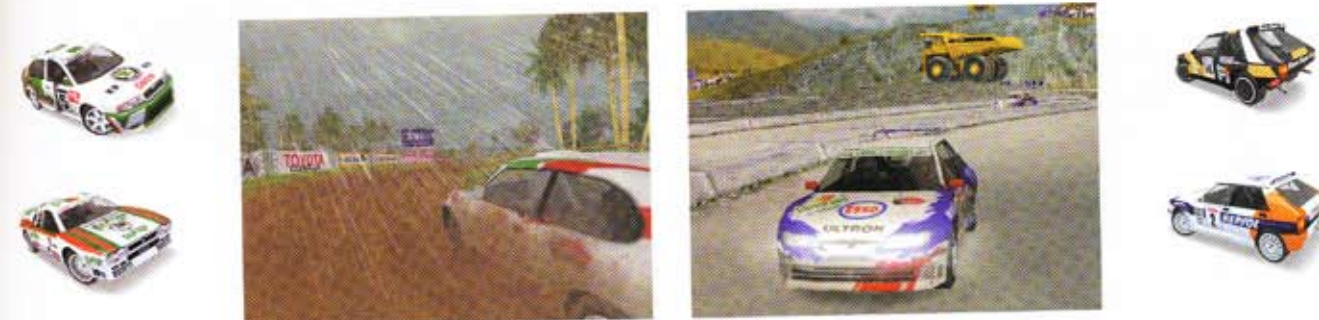
Tomorrow won't live

The game will initially stir interest with its classic Bond style but ultimately won't leave you shaken and wanting to play again and again. Overall a disappointing effort, lacking in almost every way, especially the length - ten missions in two days just doesn't equal long term fun or value for money.

expect a can't figure out what to do with a PlayStation - the ultimate Bond gadget.

Both the driving and skiing parts can be considered bonus games within the main game and look and play their part perfectly in recreating the Bond experience. Naturally as you'd expect from any good James Bond movie you'll receive a handful of useful gadgets you can use while saving the world. Of these you'll get to use a laser designator, exploding cuff links and the ubiquitous fingerprint scanner, these devices are a novel touch and should get anyone excited at the prospect of using Bond's special electronic arsenal. The gadgets are interesting to stretch the word but overall only have a single purpose during a mission - you don't get them all from the beginning so you never have to figure out what to use when. Instead you're issued with one every now and then and when the appropriate time comes you get to use it, this smacks of poor implementation and lack of imagination. It seems someone told the developers they had to include the gadgets but they had no idea what to do with them. Besides the

of the game is thin and it seems as though the developers have taken it for granted that you've seen the movie as most missions consist of do this or that with no real good reason as to why. This flaws the flow of the game a little and you'll quickly realise this is just another game with a great story told poorly. However, that's not what we came to the cinema for, now



Officially sanctioned by the world's international motorsport governing body, the F.I.A., the Michelin Race of Champions is an established part of the top level rallying calendar. Based on the principle of knockout rounds - with preliminary heats, quarter-finals, semi-finals and final-, the contest pits the drivers 'one against one' round a spectacular 2.6 km gravel/tarmac figure-of-eight parallel circuit.

GENRE Action Adventure	DEVELOPER Black Ops Entertainment	PUBLISHER Electronic Arts	SUPPLIER Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212	CONTROLLER SUPPORT Vibration Function Compatible Analog Controller Compatible	OPTIONAL EXTRAS 1 PowerUI Memory Card 1 BlockUI	 RedTide
The game tries to be a jack-of-all-trades by combining three different styles but the result is a very short and uninspired movie license game. All three modes of play lack any originality and if you take the game as a whole or even in parts, it just doesn't cut the cloth.	COMPARATIVES Metal Gear Solid Syphon Filter	PRO'S James Bond Atmosphere Three Game Modes Sound	CON'S Far Too Short Poor Implementation Old Concepts	RRP R 395.00 http://www.tndgame.com		
	GRAPHICS 61	STORY 56	CONTROL 77	CONTINUITY 53	NEW AGE GAMING MULTIPLAYER? No	
	SOUND 83	ORIGINALITY 51	PLAYABILITY 67	JUDGEMENT 50		
62						

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Tomb Raiders 1 through 3 have been welcomed with open arms by the gaming community in the hopes that each will perhaps offer something new... will it be fourth time lucky for Eidos?

Lara's back in the latest instalment of what many believe is the best adventure game series ever. But it has to be said that serving up the same game four times in a row is pushing it, especially with no major improvements. Gamers will have to start realising that a few new levels and moves do not necessarily equal a new game. With TR4 we have been promised a return to the series' roots, in that more emphasis is placed on the exploration side of the game as was the case in the original Tomb Raider, and less of "blast everything". While it's nice to see something with a bit of a change where skills are more important than button mashing, TR4 remains nothing more than more of the same all over again.

Once again, TR4 has a training mode but this time it is compulsory to complete before starting the actual game and the Lara you control in the

TOMB RAIDER THE LAST REVELATION

The same only different
The gameplay and control is incredibly similar to the prequels (is it any surprise?) with a few improvements here and there. One notable improvement is the interface and menu system, more easily

navigated and intuitive than before. Another nice "ability" is that certain items in the inventory can be combined, such as fitting a laser sight to a gun and so on. This increases the depth of the puzzle element of TR4 and does make it slightly more involved and enjoyable. Now you can zoom in on your target and really shoot them right between the eyes, or anywhere else for that matter. Also new is the targeting system, Lara can now target enemies automatically or manually. The only real difference is a button press before Lara locks on if in Manual mode, whereas in Automatic she will lock on to the nearest target automatically. The usual complement of Olympic calibre feats is intact, with Ms Croft able to vault, climb, duck, crawl, monkey swing and so on. The mandatory 'find the key, press the switch' puzzles are present, as are Lara's 'trademark' flares. Also available to Lara is a nifty little crowbar for those situations demanding that little bit of extra leverage. Unfortunately, bugs that plagued the previous incarnations of Tomb Raider are still unsolved such as the inability to aim jumps correctly and the rather slow rotation of Lara. The camera can also be a nuisance as in most adventure games, we'll have to hope one developer

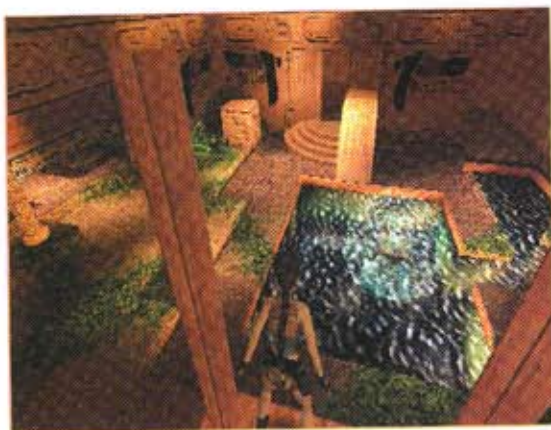
comes up with a solution to that incessant problem sooner or later.

Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation is undoubtedly the best looking of the series, but the PlayStation capabilities are no longer as amazing as they seemed to be two years ago and pale in comparison to the sort of technology currently on offer. Although the game does boast the most advanced graphics of the series, there are still no major improvements over the graphics seen in the previous two instalments of the series and don't look as amazing as they could when compared to some of the other games currently available. The graphics do look less rough and more rounded than in previous editions, as do the excellent backgrounds and scenery. Unfortunately the graphics do at times look grainy and once again are plagued by clipping glitches. Footsteps, gunshots and numerous grunts from foes all sound realistic and serve to immerse you in the environment and complement the action superbly.



With a cherry on top

If you haven't played a Tomb Raider game you may find some interest in this one, but if you've played the prequels you'll think you're watching reruns. If you're a die-hard fan you may enjoy it, but there is nothing that saves TR4 from being the same game as Tomb Raiders 1 through 3 just with a different hat on. Gamers are going to have to start complaining about being given the same thing numerous times in a row and the developers and publishers are going to have to realise that there is actually some work to be done when putting out a sequel, especially if it's a sequel to a vastly successful game. Eidos have really milked the series and after 4 outings it's becoming rather monotonous. If they make a fifth, let's hope for something revolutionary.



ALWAYS A HUGE ADVENTURE!

training mode is a slightly younger version of today's Lara. Tomb Raider: Last Revelation aims to incorporate the story line more than any of its predecessors did, and that is one aspect in which it succeeded. Even though it isn't an absolute epic, it does lend some purpose to the explo-

GENRE 3D Action Adventure	DEVELOPER Core Design	PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive	SUPPLIER Star Kinector Interactive (011) 445-7900	CONTROLLER SUPPORT Vibration Function Compatible Analog Controls Compatible	OPTIONAL EXTRAS 1 Player(s) Memory Card 2 Block(s)
COMPARATIVES Tomb Raider Series	PRO'S Better Than the Previous One...	CONS ... But Only Marginally More of the Same	URL http://www.eidos.com	RRP R 459.00	PLAYSTATION Madman
GRAPHICS 83	STORY 75	CONTROL 75	CONTINUITY 70	NEW AGE GAMING MULTIPLAYER? No	OVERALL 75
SOUND 85	ORIGINALITY 55	PLAYABILITY 80	JUDGEMENT 75		

Slightly prettier graphics and a few new moves. Minor improvements to the story and that sums up the difference between TR4 and the rest of the series. A good game in its own right but it's been done before.

Buzz Lightyear is Back!

As space hero Buzz Lightyear, you've got your hands full. Your best buddy, Woody, has been kidnapped by a greedy toy collector and it's going to be an all-out race against time to save him. It's all up to you... Buzz Lightyear to the rescue!



Spin, spring, somersault and bounce through 15 colourful, action-packed levels.



Enjoy fast and fun 3-D gameplay with your favourite characters from the movie!



Unlock special toy accessories to complete your missions, like cool rocket jet boots.



Imagine that your toys came to life at night when you weren't around? This is an exciting prospect if you're six years old, but a terrifying one if you're anything over twelve (think 'Chucky' here). This, besides plenty of fun and adventure, is the general premise behind the Toy Story series. In this second movie-to-game adaptation, Toy Story 2, you take charge of Buzz Lightyear as he dashes, leaps and falls with style on a perilous mission to save his friend Woody. Get ready to save the universe, Space Ranger!

Disney Interactive has walked a long road from their first feeble attempts at games to what they're currently letting loose on the market. This evolution is a good one and it almost seems that with each subsequent release they do a better job than the last. This might also have a lot to do with the very capable development company behind the game, Traveller's Tales. Toy Story 2: Buzz Lightyear to the Rescue, is a rare example of a successful transition from movie to game.

TOY STORY 2

Kidnapped

Like all game editions of movies the story is already there, the locations are set and all the characters are in place. This makes the game developers job a little simpler but can also lead to disaster if the Hollywood license is given all the attention and not the game. Thankfully in this case it seems to be a fine balance of both, as the game loosely follows the plot of the movie while occasionally dipping into different locations to set the background for the frantic and sometimes frustrating PlayStation action to follow.

In a daring rescue attempt Woody is kidnapped by Al, an obsessive toy collector, and taken away from Andy's House. Buzz and the usual gang of toys from Andy's bedroom team

up on a rescue mission that will take them into the hazardous streets of the neighbourhood, Al's Toy Barn and eventually right into Al's penthouse suite. Along the way they'll face danger and a number of narrow escapes including a mad dash across a busy road under a set of red road cones. To further complicate matters Woody is reluctant to return home, as he believes he is now getting too old to still be a child's toy.

It is into this setting that the adventure begins, staged across 12 levels Buzz Lightyear, controlled by the player, must find Woody and convince him that his place is back home with Andy. Each new level of the game is introduced with a video sequence



from the movie and for every boss level successfully completed an additional bonus movie is shown.

Disney, as if emphasising their proficiency in animated features have included an option in the game to

view all the movies once the playing bits are finished, as a kind of extra reward for playing past a certain point. The sheer amount of video in the game is impressive, although the quality is a little less than crystal clear, being slightly blurred - an unavoidable quality versus quantity trade off. The movie segments link up well with each new level, giving time and place, so an overall flow is achieved from story through to game.

The game itself is your standard 3D platform action romp, that doesn't really offer anything new. It's your basic collect all the coins and avoid the bad guys while negotiating a series of obstacles, this pattern is then punctuated at regular intervals by boss levels of increasing difficulty. It's all very basic on the surface but if you look a little deeper and play a few levels you'll quickly realise that there is much more to this game than its deceptively plain appearance. Besides the coin collecting, each level has five Pizza Planet tokens for you to 'earn'. You'll earn these tokens by participating in a

number of varied sub-games within each level. The most basic of these is a challenge issued each level by Hamm, the piggybank. If you collect fifty of the coins scattered across the level and bring them to him he'll award you with a Pizza Planet Token. This is the easiest challenge to accept and complete, as the coins are relatively easy to find. The next type of sub-game challenge usually involves you collecting five of something, as you explore each level you'll often find other characters standing around, if you talk to them they will ask you to find something, typically, five aliens or five horseshoes. Collect all five and return to the character and you'll earn another token - this task is a little tougher than the first. The third type of token opportunity is a race or a timed challenge, in the first two levels you'll need to race the RC car to earn a token and later this type of game involves finding something before the timer reaches zero. The fourth token for most levels is either well hidden or requires some serious gymnastics to reach. Finally, most levels have a small boss you need to defeat to earn the final token for the level, these bosses range from a giant floating robot to an evil looking kite, most of these bosses are easy to kill when you learn the trick to killing them. One nice aspect about Toy Story 2 is the fact that you can progress onto the next level without collecting all five tokens from that level. This opens up the game immediately and allows players to finish whatever section they feel like at anytime. The only level that requires a set number of tokens is the last level of the game. This technique also allows players at any level to play

through the game, leaving the tough tasks until last when they become more familiar with the controls and game nuances. However, that's not all, some of the tokens can only be reached on earlier levels once certain tasks have been completed in later levels and this is all linked together through Mr. Potato Head. Occasionally you'll run into Mr. Potato Head and he'll ask you to find his missing arm, leg or eye, once you bring this careless fool his appendage he'll give you access to a special ability such as rocket boots, a grappling hook, special shield and so on. These special abilities take the form of sealed toy boxes on some levels and once Mr. Potato Head gives you access to the ability these boxes will open and an icon will appear, moving over the icon activates the ability. These abilities are linked to collecting tokens and completing challenges, so for example on level two you must win a race, but your opponent is too fast and the rocket boots power-up is securely locked away in a box, so you're forced to move on without that token. Now on

level ten Mr. Potato Head unlocks the rocket boots power-up, so after completing level ten you can return to level two and win the race by using this new power-up. This is another way of increasing play time as repeat level jumping is necessary to completely finish each level. What all this boils down to is a well-designed and challenging game that offers a number of different styles of play,

which in turn keeps players interested for longer.

For the old, but not the uni-RedTide

Of all the aspects of this class, which you're humans and each of the robots, the enemy short, e- been so regard of enen- Keep system ferent colours done in through can alw-

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Toy Story 2: Buzz Lightyear to the Rescue (Continued)

which in turn keeps players interested for longer.

For the colony

Of all the platform games currently in circulation, Toy Story 2 has some of the loveliest graphics for a game of this class. One of the more interesting aspects of the graphics and levels is the fact that everything is so big, which is hardly surprising seeing that you're just a toy in the big world of humans. The levels are big, colourful, and more importantly very different to each other. The enemies populating each level are somewhat limited to robots, cars and the odd plane, given the scope of the game the number of enemies around does come up a little short, even more variation would have been something, but level after level regardless of location, the same kind of enemies keep appearing.

Keeping Buzz on the move is easy, the control system is very simplistic, and you have two different types of attack. Firing the laser (or coloured light bulb, if you ask Woody), can be done manually while you figure out the aim through some guesswork and a little luck or you can always go first person mode and take careful

aim with the automatic target selection button (R1), all you need to do then is press and forget. The automatic aiming system does have a drawback and that is while you're aiming you can't move Buzz out of harms way, a tough trade off. There is little to fault the control system, graphics or level design, everything has been so well integrated that the game is a pleasure to play.

The music in Toy Story 2 is cute and functional, with a slight bubblegum flavour.

Some of the assorted tracks are long enough to avoid sound repetition when looped while others are very short and tend to grate a little on the nerves. Each level has its own separate track and the tempo of the music is suitably raised when facing any of the boss levels. The numerous voice samples played within the game come straight out of the movie, but once you've heard the same phrase ten times they become a little less 'exciting'. This is especially apparent for the central character, Buzz Lightyear, his repertoire of catch phrases is limited to a handful and by the time you've reached the fifth level you've heard them all far too many times. The other game characters that aid you in



THE SPINNING-TOP ATTACK - DON'T EVER TRY THIS AT HOME!



your quest do play a minor vocal role, but again this is limited to calling you over and for the rest text will have to do. It would have been great to hear each character explain the necessary tasks with voice instead of text. This use of text only ups the recommended age of players, as many younger gamers, in some instances, can hear instructions better than they can read them. Music and voice aside the rest of the audio is well done - the laser, your main weapon, does sound a little wimpy most of the time until it gets temporarily upgraded but the resulting explosions are meaty and well engineered. For the rest, all the sound acts on cue and provides a solid audio platform for the graphics to survive in.

To infinity and beyond...

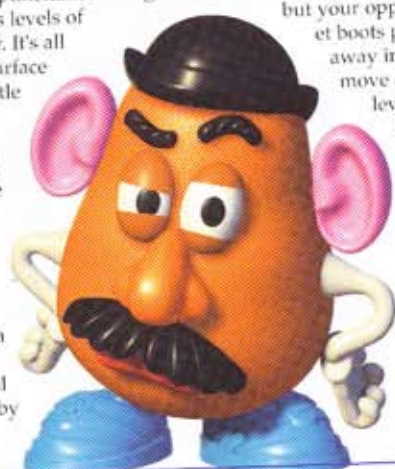
The gripe list is unusually short for a change with only a few headaches here and there. In spite of all the wonderful graphics and innovative level design the game has an annoying camera. The camera can be set either as active or passive. The active option leaves the camera in control as it desperately tries to get behind Buzz while the passive mode allows you to control the viewfinder. The problem is that no matter which option you select the camera is sluggish and takes a while to move into the correct position. It is annoying and detracts from the game. Toy Story 2 is what you could call frustratingly easy, frustrating because mistimed jumps and swings can often result in a lengthy retracing of steps to return to the same position. This problem is then added to by the lightning fast camera that sometimes takes so long to swing around you lose patience with it and make a jump on blind faith alone, which often results in more backtracking. The game is also very easy but considering it is aimed at a young market this can be forgiven. Toy Story 2 isn't the most original platform game to arrive in the last year but it does do everything well and if you consider where the title is aimed at, it hits the mark and does the Toy Story franchise justice.



GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	CONTROLLER SUPPORT	OPTIONAL EXTRAS
Action Platform	Traveller's Tales	Disney Interactive	Crew (011) 203-9100	Vibration Function Compatible Analog Controller Compatible	1 Playset Memory Card 1 Block(s)
	COMPARATIVES	PRO'S	CONS		
	Spyro 2 Crash Bandicoot 3 Rugrats	Toy Story 2 License Varied Level Design	Poor Camera Frustrating Too Easy		
	http://www.activision.com		RSP R 399.00		
	GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY	
	81	85	80	82	
	SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT	
	79	69	88	75	
					80



CRISP GRAPHICS FROM ANDY'S ROOM TO THE END



REVIEWS UNDER FIRE

The biggest sport in the world has been simulated since the beginning of entertainment software. Trying to recreate the atmosphere is something that very few developers have accomplished over the years, but as time goes by we are being overwhelmed by the intense detail and improved realism of these football sims. Sony's internal development team has generously offered the gaming public an all round package with depth and realistic gameplay - This is Football.

Never tell Sony they cannot compete in the competitive football sim market. With the muscle and knowledge they picked up over the years of watching other developers make the PSX a great console they are able to maintain their high standard of development. But taking on the arduous tasks of competing in the football sim market against the likes of EA Sports FIFA and Konami's ISS Pro will take something more than just knowledge and muscle, but it all helps for the greater cause.

This is Football shows from the offset its determination to offer the gaming public a refined and polished product. The intro details the pro-match hype of a continental footballer that reads himself for the big match. The intro holds its own as being unique and intriguing compared to the normal rendered intros of its competitors.

Most football sims hold a tremendous amount of information, TIF does quite the same with a barrage of players and teams all catered for in almost every type of competitive football competition in the world. Teams and players from all four corners of the globe are accurately rendered for appearance and characteristics. There are a few little slips but when dealing with the sheer numbers this is bound to happen every now and then. The worlds favourite stadia are painstakingly recreated with rotating boards and waving flags, there is even the FNB Stadium as an option for those African challenges.

One of the very few downfalls of TIF is the average graphics when compared with the current titles in the market. It's not that it's not effective in its representation, it's just a little less detailed making for a rather uninspiring battlefield. It's clear that Sony's objective was to cut out all the unneeded details and to work harder on recreating the intricacies of the physics and dynamics of football.

This is where TIF shines through with its superb motion capture animations showing off some of the best dynamics in football sim. The ball physics and player animations compliment each other effectively enough to

THIS IS FOOTBALL



SMOOTH ANIMATIONS ON AVERAGE GRAPHICS



take the lead in this department. Players shimmy and weave through tackles as defenders try to poke a foot in. The representation of momentum is also extremely well done as players take speed into tackles, normally ending up with a foul. The use of subtle nudges with the crash detection model is effective

for winning the ball and this shows true with two players both jumping for a header, normally ending with the stronger nudge winning the ball. The goalkeepers are superb to watch as they dive around protecting their perimeter with every inch of their body.

Sudden jerks and turns are not commonplace in TIF as everything is smooth and controlled. The action does come across a little slow because of this but in all honesty it does reflect the true speed of football

as we play it. Some gamers will feel that the action does not come hard and fast enough for an arcade style game, but I would categorise it more in the simulation than the arcade mould.

The control mechanism is simple and effective by the standards with minimal button pressing required for special moves. All the favourite moves are available with my personal favourite, the dummy move, as effective as always. Heading and passing are well co-ordinated as players respond quickly to a ball moving in their general

direction. Unfortunately the shooting mechanism is a little on the unimaginative side with a bar representing the pace of the shot being a little ineffective. Any shot taken at full tilt will most definitely go sailing miles over the bar, making for some unimpressive goals. Most shots must come from half power or side foot shots to have any chance of going in.

The AI in TIF is of a very high standard

as players show impressive intuition. Goalkeepers are difficult to beat from long range but are more vulnerable one on one. AI players run into positions and set up key movements for passes into space. The AI players also tackle effectively without cheating or getting away with rough play, as referees like to insert their dominance on the playing field. The selection of difficulty levels is well balanced with the world-class level being a real test for all seasoned football gamers.

We have all had the dilemma of a poor commentary feature in football sims, well I have finally found one that does not fall into this category. The commentary is well timed and constantly correct in its objective of intensifying the gameplay. The lack of humour is a blessing in disguise because it focuses on the action of the game and not who can be the best stand-up comic. Other features such as being able to make strategic, substitution and formation changes in-game are impressive, as well as the ability to constantly check your performance through a management stats option that updates after every game played. Players throw their hands in the air at bad offside

decisions and an injured player will limp around until substituted showing the subtle touches the development team have added for gameplay depth.

This is Football has impressed me with its cut to the chase approach. The tempo of the game may not work for the arcade freaks but in all fairness it's the way the game is played. I don't think it quite takes the football sim crown but it's a damn fine effort from Sony nonetheless. A great alternative if you are looking for a football sim with a no frills all gameplay approach.

DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	CONTROLLER SUPPORT	OPTIONAL EXTRAS
SCEE	SCEE	Ster Kinekor Interactive (011) 445-7900	Vibration Function Compatible	1-8 Player(s)
COMPARATIVES	PRO'S	CON'S	Analog Controller Compatible	Memory Card 2 Block(s)
FIFA 2000	Excellent Animations	Average Graphics	Multi-Tap Compatible	
ISS 98	Impressive AI	Flawed Shooting Mechanism		
http://www.playstation-football.com/ RRP R 429.00				

GENRE	GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY	NEW AGE GAMING
Football Simulation	76	75	82	90	
The slow pace of the game might not appeal to everybody's gaming tastes but it reflects the true speed of football as it's played. Bland graphics are made up of superb animations and physics and impressive selection of teams and competitions. A highly competitive product for the discerning football fan.	89	85	90	85	85
	SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT	MULTIPLAYER?

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sm is a little better than the other titles to have

are not as good as the other titles to have

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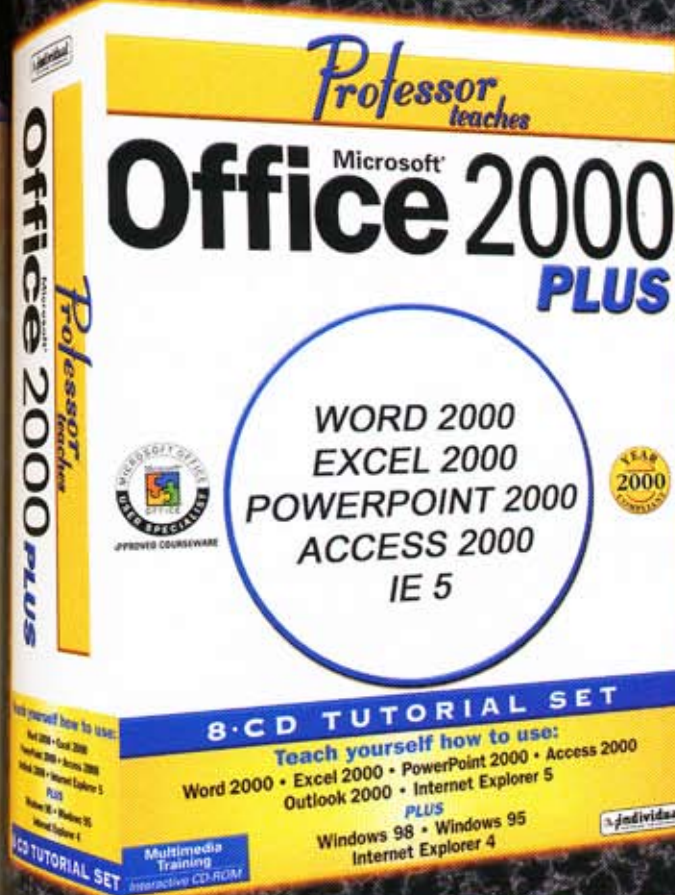
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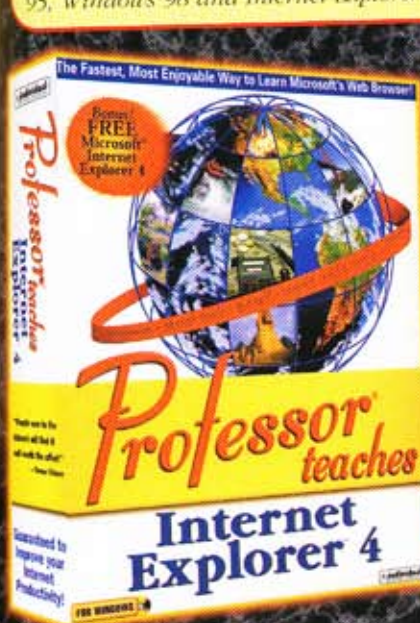
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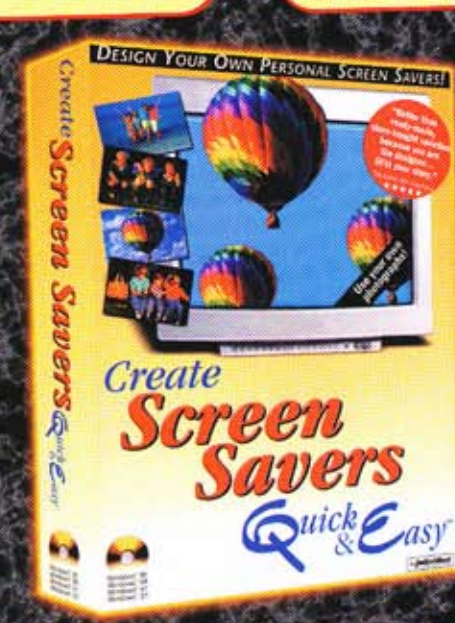
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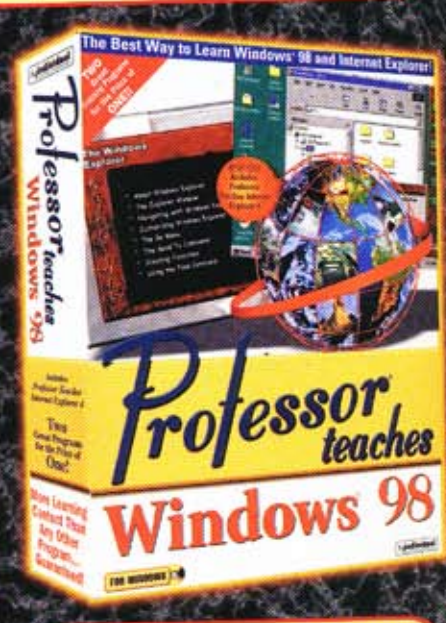
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REVIEWS UNDER FIRE

Similar to racing games, fighting games are running out of good ideas. They've always had the same formula and to pique some interest developers often throw in magical powers or outlandish combatants to try and keep the genre interesting. With the publishing power of Electronic Arts, the talents of Black Ops Entertainment and Dream Works Interactive we now have, would you believe, a dinosaur fighting game.

This title was inevitable - it has everything going for it including the Jurassic Park license and the nastiest collection of prehistoric monsters ever seen in a software title. Conceptually the game is everything we've been waiting for since seeing Steven Spielberg's Jurassic Park - the chance to do battle with dinosaurs.

Darwin and fossils
Man against dinosaur is no real contest and as is usually the case the first bite invariably ends the fight. Dinosaur: 1 Human: 0. So now we've arrived at dinosaur against dinosaur and for those of you who grew up on violence you'll be happy to know that man is still part of the equation. The game is set against the backdrop of the movie, Jurassic Park, and from Steven Spielberg's Hollywood blockbuster the developers have extracted a few film locations and some of the dinosaurs, including the big Tyrannosaurus-Rex and a modified, larger version of the Raptor. The presentation right from the start is impressive with colourful visuals, plenty of options and scary sounds effects



CHARGE TO 10 000 VOLTS NURSE... CLEAR...

assaulting you from every direction. Besides the usual set of options indicative to fighting games, Warpath has a few unique options, such as the 'museum' option, to add to the overall game.

The museum is a showcase for all the available dinosaur opponents in the game. Inside the museum you will discover how big these creatures were, which prehistoric period they came from and in typical virtual style, you can change the colour of their skin and hear their names correctly pronounced. The other options include a fabulous 'practice' mode where you can learn all the special moves without the hassle of time limits and twelve metre long lizards trying to slice you into smaller dinosaur pieces. From there you can engage a friend or friends in the 'versus' and 'team' modes or take on the computer in the 'arcade' mode. Two other modes, 'choice' and 'survival' are available in the game but they are locked until you successfully complete the 'arcade' mode through once. The last mode on the list is the standard 'options' where you can change a number of settings including length of match and how many rounds to play.

Tiny brains
The first frown the game scores has to do with lengthy loading times, it's annoying and a true indication that any game is taking too long is the fact that you're always aware of how much time you've just spent staring at the '...loading' screen. This gripe aside, once the game begins you'll soon forget having to wait as an impressive graphical wonderland unfolds before your eyes. The dinosaurs are well animated and look stunning - they're huge on the screen and all behave realistically when moving, blocking and taking lunges at their opponents. The actual fighting arenas, compared to the combatants, are poorly conceived, lack any imagination and have a fair number of graphical glitches among them. The arenas however are not important as the main action focuses on the dinosaurs battling in the centre. The camera does a good job of travelling around the action, keeping both fighters on the screen at all times as it pulls back and zooms in unison with the positions of the fight-

ers. The only disappointing graphical aspect of the carnage on the screen is the dull hue of red chosen to represent the blood and guts sequences making things look a little unrealistic when tooth, claw and flesh clash. One nice little touch is the inclusion of 'edibles' (an option that can be turned on or off). These 'edibles' are random dinosaur snacks that consist of, among other things, people, smaller lizards and even dogs. Snatching and eating one of these 'edibles' instantly reduces some of the damage sustained so far, so they have their uses. The sound effects accompanying the action are more than capable of transporting you into the arena and keeping you there until final blood is drawn. The use of sound effects and a handful of small graphical nuances from the movie further serve to



immerse you into the game. In short, it's everything you could want in a dinosaur fighting game - except for a few problems that drag it down.

Sap that strength
In spite of all the good here the bad has been left in charge. Despite looking good enough to eat the dinosaurs featured in the game have no character, and all invariably start looking the same after about ten rounds. The controls are sluggish and when trying to perform some of the more elaborate combinations the whole effort always degrades into a wild button smashing frenzy. If any successful combination moves are accomplished out of this button mash they are more by luck than anything else. Therefore, the actual fighting part of the game is flawed simply because of a poor control system and this unfortunately drags the whole thing under a prehistoric mud pit.

GENRE Fighting Game	DEVELOPER DreamWorks Interactive	PUBLISHER Electronic Arts	SUPPLIER Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212	CONTROLLER SUPPORT Vibration Function Compatible	OPTIONAL EXTRAS 1-2 Player(s) Memory Card 1 (Block(s))	PlayStation
COMPARATIVES Primal Rage	PRO'S Nice Idea Great Graphics Sound Effects	CONS Load Times Sluggish Control Confusing Fighting	http://www.ea.co.za			
GRAPHICS 90	STORY NA	CONTROL 47	CONTINUITY 59	NEW AGE GATING		
SOUND 87	ORIGINALITY 75	PLAYABILITY 53	JUDGEMENT 50	66		

It's a novel idea that has been well put together but due to an incredibly slow and unresponsive control system, has been ruined. The inclusion of the museum and comprehensive practise mode does help the score a little - but not by much.

RedTide

ADVENTURE

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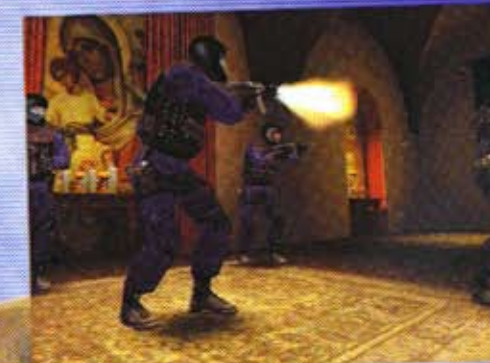
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REVIEWS UNDER FIRE

Cashing in on the Tiger hype is undoubtedly priority number one for the Electronic Arts suits, but it doesn't take expensive licenses to make a good golf game. Tiger seems not only to be taking the crown on the course but on the PSX as well. CyberTiger is an excellent change from the astute protocol of the golfing etiquette. **Storm**

With the current Tiger hype going around it's fully understandable how Electronic Arts would want to cash in on his expensive licence. But this leaves a certain dilemma with the quality of product that needs to be of the same high standards as Tiger's golfing abilities. CyberTiger certainly gives a good account of itself, especially since it's aimed at the younger market but will definitely appeal to the golfing enthusiasts as well.

CyberTiger starts you off as Little Tiger in search of fame and fortune in the amateur ranks. You have the option of creating your own golfers if Tiger is not your thing. As little Tiger you are handicapped by your distances but are allowed the pleasure of teeing up off the closer tees. Once you progress and perform in the little league tournaments you are then elevated to Teen Tiger level. Once again depending on your finishes you can then reach the ultimate Pro Tour and play as the powerful CyberTiger. Besides the Career Mode there is also a Single Mode where you can play against a friend.

CyberTiger is most definitely a arcade representation of the game of golf, this is more defined by the

ability to win Power-Ups by way of special balls. There are nine balls to be won in all and each has a certain ability to help you around the course. The 'spin ball' allows you to get spin in the rough and sand, 'Ghost Ball' has a tendency to go through objects such as trees,

'Mulligan Ball' offers you an extra shot if needed, 'Gum Ball' will stick to whatever surface it touches first with no roll, 'Eye Ball' will always travel where you aimed, 'Power Ball' will propel the ball further than ever before, 'Super Ball' will bounce its way down the fairway giving you added yardage and the 'Mystery Ball' will randomly pick one of the above. You can either win these balls by practicing on the range before each round or by achieving milestones in the game such as an eagle or hole-in-one. These

power balls are an excellent addition to the gameplay of the normally pristine protocols of golf.

If you are a stickler for these protocols then CyberTiger is still a wonderful representation of the game. The physics model is intensely correct for an arcade title and will teach the younger gamers a thing or two about golf as well as keep the dads occupied for hours. The trademark Tiger punch

is included and each shot is given his mark of approval - or not. The golfer animations are excellent and show true form for those looking for a tip or two.

If there is a downfall it's the lack of depth in the Career Mode with only a limited number of tournaments played on the four licensed courses of TPC Sawgrass, TPC Summerlin, TPC The Canyons and the Badlands Golf Course. There is also an uncanny ability to sink even the longest of putts but this is only once you have mastered the putting ability on the practice range. The Courses are actually quite difficult, as they have been changed to be zany and fun but the ability to have after touch on the fairways will allow you to keep the ball in play more often than not.

CyberTiger is fun, but a little on the easy side for the average player. It offers extremely quick play with an average of 30 minutes for 18 holes. It also features monster drives, hidden golfers and hidden tricks that can be picked up along the way.

CyberTiger uses the fun and addiction of striking a little ball into an open area with the physics of a simulation. If you are a fan of golf and have kids as well then CyberTiger will entertain for many hours and comes highly recommended.

Golf Simulation

Pro's: Fun Gameplay
Correct Physics
Tiger Trademarks
Con's: AI Weak
Pro Tour too Small
Developer: Electronic Arts
Local Dist: EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212
Price: R 399.00

80

Once again Gremlin attempts to make a mark on the PSX as a reputable golf game developer, this time under the watchful eye of Infogrames. The anticipation of something fresh and exciting was cruelly shortened by the most blatant lack of programming and graphical skills yet seen in the history of the genre. **Storm**

Having played most of the original Actua Golf series with their glaring lack of physics and terrible attempts at a graphics engine, I had given the development team the opportunity to redeem itself. This was a fruitless endeavour with the most difficult task trying to find something positive to say about PGAETG.

PGAETG is actually one of only a handful of golf games available for the PSX and also one of the few to offer a handicapping system in its gameplay. If you are not hacking away in a quick round or non-tournament event then you are attempting to gain presence within the European Tour. The European PGA is obviously better at organising a golf tour than helping in the development of a golf simulation. The game features 8 of the top European golf courses, which includes Druid's Glen from Ireland and Hanbury Manor in England. Unfortunately the graphics represent-

PGA European Tour Golf

ing the course is outdated and unappealing to the needs of a golf sim. The player models are exactly the same for all players and it seems as if they are dressed by an 18th century evangelist. The animations are slow and full of texture splits with the only saving grace being the grooved swing animation and the moving trees as the most realistic graphical feature in the game.

The crux of any golf game is the physics engine or rather the lack of it in this instance.

PGAETG follows on the unimaginative engine from its Actua Golf range and similarly unimpressive physics model (no visible changes to the outdated Actua Golf series). The golf ball once struck, once again, has a total disregard for gravity, hovering in the air for more than is normally physically possible. The ball reacts differ-

ently to the differing surfaces, but that is as close as it comes to impressing. Fairways are like glass and slopes cause almost 90-degree bounces in the opposite direction.

They say you drive for show and putt for dough, if that was the case then you would be a very wealthy tour player by now. PGAETG is quite simply the easiest putting technique of any golf sim I have had the pleasure of playing. The golf commentary is once again from the 'sprightly' team of Peter Alliss and Alex Hay that constantly repeat themselves and even slaughter the old good shot.

All these glaring problems relegate PGA European Tour Golf to an all time low of worst golf simulation ever. With the older title of Everybody's Golf and the newly released CyberTiger you will be better off marking your ball and rechecking for a better line.

Golf Simulation

Pro's: European License
Con's: Awful Physics
Gaping Graphics
Gravitational Problems
Developer: Infogrames
Local Dist: Ster Kinekor Ltd
Tel: (011) 445-7900
Price: R 399.00

25



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When one looks at the future of gaming and the Internet, a lot of communication between humans and machines will be done through voice communication. Plantronics is a company that realises this fact and recently brought out their new PC multimedia headsets.

Plantronics Multimedia Headsets

Although each of the three new headsets provides the same basic functions, each caters for a different market in the multimedia environment. The bottom range solution comes in the form of the SR1 Monaural Speech Recognition Headset. This one comes with only one speaker and a high quality noise-reducing microphone that will mostly and only be practical to use with online communication or voice recording. It is sleek, thin, and although the company praises its durability, keep this one away from small children!

The medium range headset is the LSI Lightweight Stereo version. It offers more in that the sound quality is exceptionally good, and features a noise reduction microphone

boom with a great degree of movement for the perfect placement. This model comes with a sleek volume adjust control and a microphone on/off selector. It works well for gaming, and looks very sleek for those "Space Cadet" types amongst us.

The full enchilada comes in the HSI Gaming/Multimedia Stereo headset. This animal sports 40mm speakers for dynamic bass response, and rotating noise reduction microphone boom that can be tilted down for the best placement, or swivelled upwards into the frame if one needs to move it out of the way. It also features the volume control unit and mic on/off switch. The unit is encased in thick plastic, and offers the best sound in the series. To adjust the headset to fit one's head takes some effort as the slides are fitted with springs that will try to pull the earphone speakers back, but after some use they learn and stick with the adjustments. This headset is a great choice for serious gamers that appreciate great sound and a high quality microphone.

The entire Plantronics headset range comes with



gold plated plugs and 3m cables, and a collar clip that will keep the cable out of the way. The pricing comes in a tad hefty as the SR1 sells for R 299, the LSI for R 499, and R 699 for the top of the range HSI. A good microphone headset is always a good gaming investment, and the Plantronics series offer a great combination of good sound and noise-free voice recording, if one can afford it.

Distributor: Plantronics
Tel: (021) 851-1978
Pros: LSI and HSI Great for Gaming
Sleek Design
Comfortable and Functional
Cons: Thin Plastic Construction
Very Pricey
RRP: R 299.00 - R 699.00
Internet: <http://www.plantronics.com>

Zykon Joyrider Pro



JOYRIDER FLIGHT CONFIGURATION

one combination controller that allows for seven various game play modes. All of this in a compact unit.

The Joyrider Pro's beauty lies in its flexibility. Comprised of a wheel, pedals, throttle and joystick, the Joyrider offers several variations for the gamer. Remove the top of the wheel and release a pin at the top of the unit, and your steering wheel becomes a cockpit controller, complete with throttle control and rudders - the wheel even features a "forward/backward" motion necessary to move your simulated aircraft up and down. Replace the pin, and swivel the outer edges of the wheel downwards, and you have a handle bar style controller for use with motorcycle and similar simulators. The five-button joystick can function as a flight controller too, or can be used to vary viewpoints - either through use of the hat switch, or by using the joystick as a whole.

The unit performs very favourably when put through its paces, with

responsive handling and a great feel. The entire unit is sturdily constructed from black plastic. Which is a good thing, really, because with all the changes that can be made to the unit and the moving parts that make it up, it is potentially a weak unit. After all, it goes through a lot of wear and tear. However, after our patented NAG "let's see if we can break this thing" stress test, we found it to be as strong as it is versatile. The grip-able area of the wheel is coated in non-slip rubber,



JOYRIDER HANDLEBAR CONFIGURATION



and has a button at each thumb position. Four more buttons are available for use of the main body of the unit (apart from those on the joystick) and various dials allow you to fine trim the unit's settings, and select one of the seven available game modes.

The true joy of the Zykon Joyrider is the price that this unit comes in at. For a paltry R599.00 you get everything you need, except for a joy pad. This is value for money in action!

Distributor: Proton Technology
Tel: (011) 486-0748 / 9
Pros: Versatile
Sturdy Construction
Price
Cons: Possible Wear and Tear Damage
RRP: R 599.00
Internet: <http://www.prototech.co.za>

Logitech have been leaders in gaming peripherals for many years and have walked away with a few Editors' Choice awards over NAG's existence. Though the trackball is not a traditional gaming device we decided we would give the peripheral a chance at proving its worth and our findings were quite promising.

Logitech Trackball Marble+

The Logitech Trackball Marble+ is part of Logitech's pointer device range targeted at the corporate and design markets. The patented 'marble technology' used on the device is most certainly one of the smoothest trackball mechanisms we have ever come in contact with. The technology offers precise control and minimal maintenance (cleaning), which is always a blessing in disguise for gamers. The design is exceptional for all hand sizes with the marble ball positioned exactly in the correct ergonomic position for the thumb. The classic 2-button and mouse wheel is almost identical to the Logitech Mouseman and it even shares its Logitech 8.20 Mouseman software.

The real question is whether the device is practical for gaming? With all the Trackball devices there is almost no movement of the hand or wrist, only the thumb controls the directional movement. Unfortunately we found the sensitivity of the Trackball to be a little on the over-

sensitive side, causing configurations more than a few problems. Sensitivity settings are totally off the traditional mouse settings, but after a bit of tinkering, a happy medium can be found. Other settings differ very little, if none at all. After a few intense games the scores started improving and the technique started to understand the thumbs precise movements. The thumb however does become quite tired and at times goes into spasms, but to be fair this happens with the mouse and wrist movements as well at times.

Overall the Trackman Marble+ is not a bad option for an alternative to the mouse and keyboard and does make a lot more sense than Microsoft's new Dual Strike controller (though the similarities are quite far apart). The lack of precise control does affect things such as 'railing' in Quake but we can see that a little practice will overcome this naggy problem to an extent. However at the price we would recommend the classic selection rather than the Trackman. For all purpose usage the Trackman Marble+ is a comfortable medium that gives similar performance to the mouse, but it can be seen why the Trackball is not a favourite amongst general users, its not a mouse.

Distributor: Crew
Tel: (011) 233-1111

Pros: Comfortable
Similar to Mouse Design
Marble Technology
Cons: Thumb Movement
Sensitive
Bad for Railing

RRP: R499.00
Internet: <http://www.logitech.com>



Act Labs GS Gun System

As part of their excellent range of controllers, Act-Labs has produced the GS Gun System. This PC based light gun system features two guns, a hand held controller and a "holster" style base, all of which connects to the PC via the video/monitor port. This system also comes with its own software, and a number of drivers and patches are available on the Internet for improved performance.

Made with silver and black plastic, the futuristic looking gun system is very pleasing to the eye. The units are sturdily constructed, and although a little light in the hand, appear able to stand up to all the rigors that gamers would put them through. Each gun has two buttons - one trigger, and one mounted on the side of the unit - while the hand held controller has two buttons and a directional mini-joystick. These three units connect to a base that holds each snugly.

On the whole, the Act-Labs GS gun system is a great idea, well made and fun to use. It works wonderfully, featuring an accuracy range of three pixels. Once properly calibrated, the GS is accurate and fast firing. Of course, accuracy can also depend on the honesty of the person using the system at the time; remember, sitting with the gun right up against your monitor just doesn't count. The six-foot cable lengths used on these units allows the player to get a comfortable distance away from the monitor,

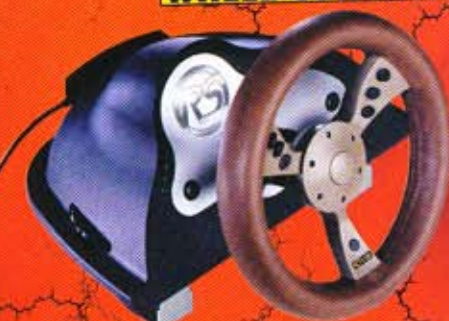
although those using smaller monitors are obviously at a disadvantage here. For those with larger screens, the GS supports a resolution of up to 1280 x 1024, and it's added 3D support allows for a more realistic gaming feel as you take a bead on the bad guys.

Included in the package is Remington's Top Shot, a "shooting range simulator" (for lack of a better term) that allows you to test and play with your GS to your heart's content. Unfortunately, at this time, there is a limited amount of software that supports the GS, or light guns in general, for that matter. Patches do exist on the Act-Labs website for a large number of games, but software does not generally come out with this type of support at this time. However, this will certainly change shortly, and products like the Act-Labs GS Gun System will be at the forefront of PC light gun technology.

Distributor: Act - Labs
Tel: (041) 992-3350

Pros: Accurate
Fun
Cons: Expensive
Limited Software Support

RRP: R 826.00
Internet: <http://www.iasoscc.com>



- Immersion i-Force technology
- Compact racing wheel with 280-degree turning radius
- Solid pedal base prevents tipping and sloping
- Program custom force-feedback effects using our software
- Unique Future-Proof RS Engine Technology

RS Shifter

PC Shifting System

HARDWARE
RACING
CONTROL

- HI/LO Mode - full legacy support for older games
- Mounts on either side of your wheel for Left/Right hand support
- Ultra realistic feel with "true" gear resistance
- Default die cast metal 8-gear shift pattern consisting of 7 forward and reverse
- Sleek metallic and black shifter knob
- Full Gear mode - access any gear at any time

ACT-LABS GS

Gun System

EXTREME
ACCURACY



- Contoured rubber gun handle
- Innovative system includes 2 guns and a handheld controller unit
- 3D accelerator support
- Uses ACT LABS gun technology

ACT-LABS

EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST A TOY

All products above available direct to the public.
IASOS cc
is the sole distributor of Act-Labs in South Africa
For further information contact Lindy
(041) 992-3350 or 082 701 8805 - lndud@iafrica.com

MULTIPLAYER MAYHEM

Over the years we have seen a steady pattern appear as to what gamers want to play online. The mass-market appeal of hardcore action has driven the online market towards an unknown destination. Who could actually predict the future of this entertainment Mecca that is growing beyond the expectations of some of the world's most renowned gaming guru's? Who plots the course?

Though the think tanks of the development houses and scientists of the IT companies drive the innovation and technology, it still breaks down to one glaring factor - consumer needs. Where would they be without our demanding needs driving their sales and fattening their pockets? As time progresses we evolve into more mature and educated consumers that then breeds a diversity in our needs. This is where it is going to become difficult for the developers because they cannot rely solely on the mass-market appeal anymore. There is always going to be that stigma around action and strategy games but development is starting to shift towards the enrolling of these characteristics with other innovations.

This is where online gaming is going to come into its own. It is able to break free from conformity and offer the consumer what they really need - diversity. Games are a release, a portal through which one steps for a brief moment, breaking free from the moulds of everyday life. Letting yourself go is not easy with the stress of everyday life, whether you are a student, breadwinner or beggar there is no simple way to release from reality. This is where online gaming shines because it creates the portals we need to let ourselves go to role-play with other humans with the same objectives.

Have you ever read a good book and tried to explain it to a friend, no

BREAKING THE MOULD

matter how hard and how graphic you get, he will never understand the same feelings and emotions you went through, he would have to read the book himself to experience it. But what if you could both read the book at the same time and experience the same emotions as the story takes its twists and turns? As the new breed of multiplayer and online games enter our market over the next few years, the entailing of good storytelling and character involvement between personalities will render books to the top shelves. Your heritage would then be to write your own scripts, be the master of your own destiny and to break free from conformity to be someone unknown to even your closest relatives.

We drive the market as consumers and the crying out for more has become a worldwide trend as the borders are broken down by the free access of information. Though South Africa is a small and rather quiet territory, beneath the shell of adolescents and immaturity, we are a thriving and dedicated group who are ready to erupt and let our voices be known.

In-between the shortcuts to all our Quake and Starcraft servers there is that small unattractive icon that has been staring you down, willing you to double-click it. This is the icon you need to click to break the mould and experience true multiplayer the way it is meant to be. Whether the icon on your desktop has a destination or not, even-

tually it will be activated by your growing need to gain a higher sense of fulfilment. Many gamers the world over have taken the plunge, starting the cycle that is now producing the likes of Everquest from Sony, Allegiance from Microsoft and

has some of the worlds largest development houses under full steam to bring us new worlds to release ourselves into. The mould is being broken everyday by development houses because consumers are hacking away at the very foundations of its success. We have been given a taste of change and the thirst for more is exorcising.

We need to be given leave from the constant similarities of one minded multiplaying, we need more worlds to explore our fantasies, and we need free Internet to explore our worlds (Telkom release us!). We aren't quite sure whether these or any other needs will be met but one thing is for sure that the more there is, the more chance it might happen... breaking the mould that we have built around ourselves.



APOLOGIES

www.playgames.co.za

Last month I mentioned the launch of the new online gaming service from Magenta. I also incorrectly mentioned that they were a pay-for-play service, which is most certainly incorrect. The good news is that they are a FREE service to the community - check them out!

allegiance

Developer: Microsoft
Host: The MSN Gaming Zone
(www.zone.com)
Cost: Free (beta testing)
Download: 56 MB



space untapped recourses. This is where you come in as you take the side of one of the factions in the glorified role of destroying the enemy. Allegiance is not something that has been attempted with failure in mind, this can be seen by the graphical detail and the work done on creating seamless interactions between team members. Taking a leaf out of the Wing Commander book, Allegiance looks and feels extremely similar, but beneath its exterior is a highly involved

plot that adds strategy and planning to this intensely enjoyable multiplayer game. The use of effective teamplay ensures the survival of your faction as everybody is given a task that he is responsible for. Whether it is scouting the outlying areas for enemy ships or controlling the mining of minerals required for your factions growing economy, there is constant responsibility on each and every member to play their part. This makes for some of the most addictive gameplay yet seen in an online game. The game is currently undergoing beta testing and is free to all who have the software and a temporary account with the MSZ Zone. The pings from South Africa are not wonderful as usual, but are acceptable as the game has fair latency control. The capture the flag section is currently under development and will probably be out with the full release. The Zone currently has a Free Online Play section and Zone Allegiance Club that is the hub of the team-play area. Latch onto a group and do what South Africans do best - dominate.

WIZARD

ONE-OFF OFFER!

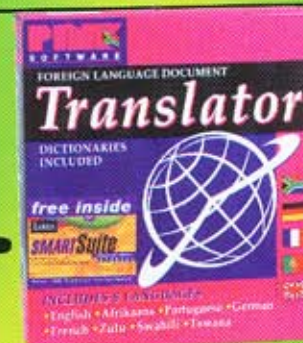
SAVE R1200

CREATACARD GOLD 3

- Easy to use workspace
- Photoworkshop
- Photo organizer
- Multimedia cards
- Photo CD & TWAIN support



LOTUS SMARTSUITE V9



PINK SOFTWARE TRANSLATOR

ALL 3 FOR ONLY

R189

SAVE HUNDREDS OF RANDS ON EVERY SOFTWARE PACKAGE IN-STORE

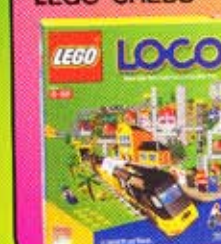
MORE RIDICULOUS SPECIALS IN-STORE!



LEGO CHESS

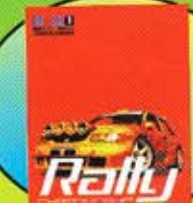


LEGO CREATOR



LEGO LOCO

EACH R269



RALLY CHAMP
• Combine realistic simulation with hard-core gameplay to give the player the most intense driving experience

R269



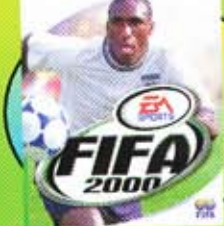
AGES OF MIST
• Experience a beautiful new world of culture, fantasy, secrets and turmoil

R269



CHESSMASTER 7000
• Challenging for beginners and experts alike

R269



FIFA 2000
• More than 40 classic teams • Instant response to player commands

R269

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The Demo Scene

New Age Gaming has some exciting offerings for the aspiring developer this year, not the least of which is the series by Travis of Celestial on putting your first game together. Rather than duplicate what he's doing in this the demo scene section, and write a game as well, I thought it would be a great opportunity to do a demo-oriented project from start to finish. I first thought of an actual demo but they tend to be personal and written because the author has some ideas and the means to implement them. A game was the other choice, but you are already going to get a series on games.

So the answer I came up with was a Linux tracker. Specifically what I'll be putting together is an Impulse Tracker clone for Linux. There are a number of reasons for this choice. It's demo-related for a start: chances are if you've watched a demo, then you've heard tracked music. It's non-trivial: writing a good music editor and sample editor will take a lot of doing to get right and that will present me with lots of opportunities to talk about how I went about the task, as well as providing you, the reader, with ways of contributing through ideas or even some code. It's also a project which touches on a wide variety of programming issues, which I hope will be useful to learn from. Not that I personally know them all now. That's the point - I don't, but as I go along I'll pick up what I need to know to solve the next problem and the one after that, until I've learned enough to finish the program.

Last but not least, I think there's a real need for the program. A couple of trackers exist for Linux - most notably the very good SoundTracker (www.soundtracker.org), but all the ones that work have FastTracker interfaces. I have nothing against FastTracker. It's a superb program but I'm pretty clueless about the keys and the layout. ScreamTracker is what I am used to and I'm now getting tired of jumping to DOS every time I want to do some composing.

Before you roll your eyes and say 'why Linux only?', I'm hoping if we do it right, the tracker will be portable to the Win32 environment. This will mean making some design choices early on that will affect the rest of the project and how we do things. Besides, Linux is the development environment of choice. It's stable, full-featured and has a wide variety of industrial-strength free tools for us to develop the package. Thanks to

the Cygnus Windows compiler, once the Linux version of the tracker is working, we can change a compile switch and get a Windows version for free.

Design - The First Phase

Probably the stupidest thing to do right now is to open up my favourite text editor and start writing code. That might work for small utilities but it will lead to grief early on in a project of this size and scope. Before we even design how it's going to work, we need to ask some questions. Here's a list of them and the possible answers:

Do we want 100% Impulse Tracker functionality and compatibility? Ideally yes.

Do we want portability between OS's? Yes for reasons discussed above. I just mentioned Linux and Windows, but there's no reason not to have portability across other Unices as well.

Should it be a GUI application, a console application or perhaps a GUI

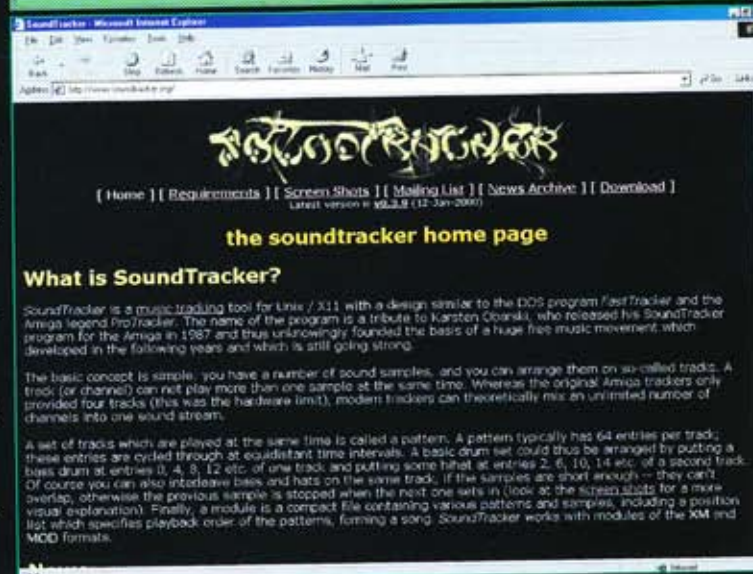
Demo 2000 A Linux Tracker From Scratch...

BY PAUL FURBER

INTERNET: [HTTP://WWW.SURF.TO/DEMOS](http://www.surf.to/demos)

E-MAIL: [SADemo@EGROUPS.COM](mailto:sademo@egroups.com)

E-MAIL: [M@VERICK.CO.ZA](mailto:m@verick.co.za)



What is SoundTracker?

SoundTracker is a music tracking tool for Linux / X11 with a design similar to the DOS program FastTracker and the Amiga legend ProTracker. The name of the program is a tribute to Karsten Obarski, who released his SoundTracker program for the Amiga in 1987 and thus unknowingly founded the basis of a huge free music movement which developed in the following years and which is still going strong.

The basic concept is simple: you have a number of sound samples, and you can arrange them on so-called tracks. A track (or channel) can not play more than one sample at the same time. Whereas the original Amiga trackers only provided four tracks (this was the hardware limit), modern trackers can theoretically mix an unlimited number of channels into one sound stream.

A set of tracks which are played at the same time is called a pattern. A pattern typically has 64 entries per track; these entries are cycled through at consistent time intervals. A basic drum set could thus be arranged by putting a basic drum at entries 0, 4, 8, 12 etc. of one track and putting some hi-hat at entries 2, 6, 10, 14 etc. of a second track. Of course you can also interleave bass and hats on the same track, if the samples are short enough - they can't overlap, otherwise the previous sample is stopped when the next one sets in (look at the screenshot for a more visual explanation). Finally, a module is a compact file containing various patterns and samples, including a position which specifies playback order of the patterns, forming a song. SoundTracker works with modules of the XM and MOD formats.

app that just looks like a console? Probably two of the above should be supported. This is a tricky one since supporting a GUI toolkit means using their built-in timing routines - and they sometimes have too much latency for a fast real-time sound application (which is what a tracker is after all).

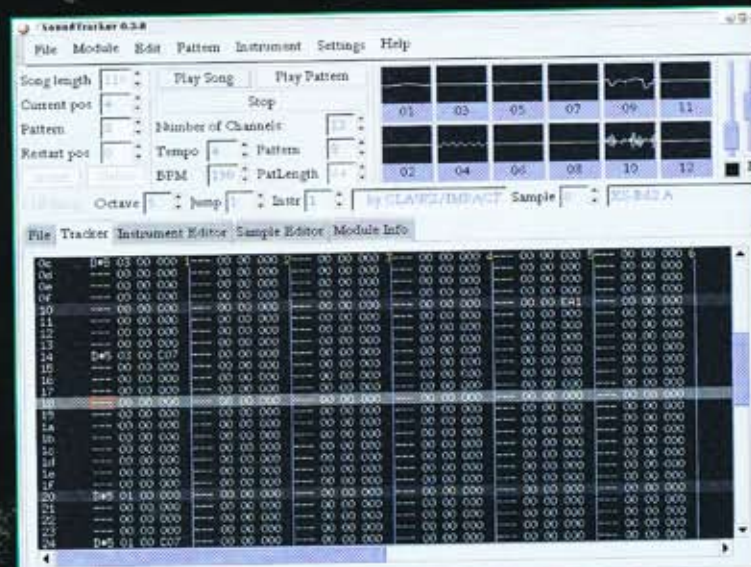
Can we use existing libraries?

Of course yes. If someone else has done the hard work for a particular problem we need solving and (this is important) that person has released the code under an Open Source style license, then we should feel free not to have to reinvent the wheel. Besides, the tracker itself will have more than enough original code.

Okay, so which libraries then?

That depends on a number of things like choice of language, object-oriented vs. procedural considerations and toolkits available. Perhaps the most important way of going about things at this early stage is to make a real effort to modularise every major component so that new ones can be plugged in if needed and existing ones can be rewritten without breaking the rest of the application.

As you can see, lots of choices need to be made. Some of them will be wrong but I won't know that until I try them. 'Analysis paralysis' is an easy trap to fall into here. It means exhaustively trying everything on paper or in your head before starting. We don't need to do that - just have a clear idea of what it is that needs to be achieved and some high-level design goals. With that in mind, tune in next month for the real first instalment, plus a breakdown of what code I will have working by then. I will post the URL of a Website where you can download the source plus instructions on how to get it working. If you have suggestions or comments (always most welcome), mail me at m@verick.co.za.



Dear Dad,

I hereby solemnly swear that I, _____, will never ever 'borrow' the car and try doing handbrake turns on Main Street ever again.*

Yours Sincerely

*Above offer subject to the receipt by the abovementioned of the new PlayStation game, GRAN TURISMO 2



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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.

Cool Boarders 4

Shortcut Through Colorado

This is an easy way to get through Colorado. When you get to the part with patches of deeper snow, around the third or fourth patch, there



should be a place with a lot of trees. Weave through those trees, to a railroad track. Grind on that track and after a while you should be in first place (unless there is somebody in front of you). This won't automatically allow you to win, but it will help break the time record.

Slope Style Secret in Vermont

On the right side of the course, between the ramp with two rocks in front of it and the ramp with the green pole, there are a group of trees - you can grind on the fallen tree to reach a secret tunnel.

Play as Fast Eddie

You have to beat rookie on Trick Master to get him as a playable character.

Unlock Extra Mountain

When you go to the tournament name enter in 'NEWHILL'.

Unlock all Mountains, Characters and Boards

Select One Player mode and enter, 'ICHEAT' as your name, if you entered it correctly you'll hear the phrase 'Hey, no cheating'.

Unlock all Special Events

Select One Player mode and enter, 'IMSPICIAL' as your name, if you entered it correctly you'll hear the phrase 'Hey, no cheating'.

Medal Of Honour

Activate all Cheats the Hard Way. Beat each level with all 3-star ratings and get all the medals. This will unlock all the cheats.

Captain Dye Mode

With this code your health will stay the same from one mission to the next, for example if you end the first mission with 83% health you'll begin the next mission with 83% health. To use this code enter,

'CAPTAINDYE' at the password screen.

Rapid Fire

Enter, 'ICOSIDODEC' at the password screen. This code allows your firing rate to be increased four folds.

Reflecting Shots

Enter, 'GOBLUE' as a password.

Wire Frame Mode

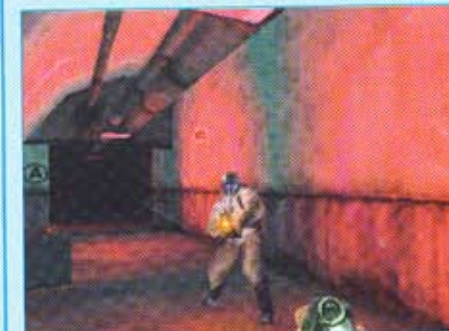
Type in, 'TRACERON', if done right, the Enigma machine will flash green.

Defeat the Freeze Attack

While playing against the Dream shades in the hidden virtual reality dungeon, they will try to freeze you so other people can kill you. To have the effects wear off, all you have to do is bring up the item screen or push Circle and wait for the effects to wear off.

Enable Noah in Multiplayer

Enter, 'BEACHBALL' as a password to unlock Noah in the multiplayer mode. If you entered the code cor-



rectly, the Enigma machine will flash green.

Enable Otto in Multiplayer

Enter, 'HERRZOMBIE' as a password to unlock Otto in the multiplayer mode. If you entered the code correctly, the Enigma machine will flash green.

Enable Dinosaur in Multiplayer

Enter, 'SSPIELBERG' at the password screen to unlock a dinosaur in the multiplayer mode, if you entered the code correctly, the Enigma machine will flash green.



PlayStation Cheats

Enable Werner von Braun in Multiplayer

Enter, 'ROCKETMAN' as a password to unlock Werner von Braun in the multiplayer mode.

Enable William Shakespeare in Multiplayer

To enable William Shakespeare in the multiplayer mode, type, 'PAYBACK' at the password screen.

Enable Winston Churchill in Multiplayer

To play as Winston Churchill in the multiplayer mode, enter, 'FINESTHOUR' at the password screen, the Enigma machine will flash green if you entered the code correctly.

Enable Wolfgang in Multiplayer

Enter, 'HOODUP' as a password to unlock Wolfgang in the multiplayer mode. If you entered the code correctly, the Enigma machine will flash green.

American Movie Mode

Everyone speaks English (American Movie Mode)... the easy way to enable American Movie Mode is to enter the password, 'SPRECHEN'. Everyone speaks English (American Movie Mode)... the hard way. After you complete the second mission with a 3-star rating for each level, you will be rewarded with a secret code entitled 'American Movie Mode'. In addition, if you beat the mission with at least one 2-star rating and three 3-star ratings, you will receive the second medal.

The Making of Each Level

Use these passwords to unlock the history and making features of all the levels under the 'Gallery' option. If you entered the code correctly, the Enigma machine will flash green.

Level	Code
Level 1	Invasion
Level 2	biggreta
Level 3	dasboot
Level 4	stuka
Level 5	Komet
Level 6/7	twosixtwo
Level 8	Victory Day



Infinite Ammo

For infinite ammunition enter the code, 'BADCOPSHOW' at the password screen. Note these codes will only work after you complete a mission and then replay it.

Kill Yourself

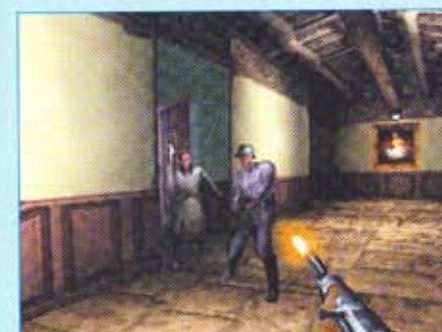
Press R1, R2, L2, R1, R1, R1, R2, L2, L1, L1 then press Square quickly, your character should blow up and say, 'What did you do that for?'

Multiplayer Power-Ups

To get the first medal and a cheat option, beat the first three levels with a three-star rating or enter, 'DENNISMODE' at the password screen.

To get a power-up in the multiplayer game, kill your opponent and pick-up the box right next to the dead body. If you did not turn on the cheat, this should now be a player ammunition box, however, if the cheat is on you will get one of the following:

BLK (Blink) - Every time the victim tries to reload, the victim will transport to one of the two to three pre-set locations on the map.
DMX (4x Damage) - The victim's firepower will increase four fold.
REV (Reverse Controls) - The victim's controls will be reversed. Left will be right, and up will be down.
FRZ (Frozen) - The victim cannot move forward, backward, or sideways. The victim can only look up



and down and left or right.

SLW (Slow) - The victim's movement will slow down by almost four times and when the victim crouches, he'll only be able to move a few inches.
DMD (Half damage) - The victim's damage will decrease by two folds.
RFL (Reflecting shot) - The victim's bullet will reflect off walls, grounds, and ceilings.
SWP (Swap ammunition) - The victim's opponent's ammunition will be given to the victim. However, the opponent will still keep the same amount of ammunition and only the victim's ammunition will increase.
AIR (Air hanging) - When the victim jumps, the victim will stay in the air for a while longer than normal. This is good for making long jumps from roof to roof. The power-up affects either you or your opponent and lasts for around one minute.

Passwords

Use these passwords to complete the desired mission.

Mission	Password
Mission 1	RETTUNG
Mission 2	ZERSTOERN
Mission 3	BOOTSINKT
Mission 4	SENFEGAS
Mission 5	SCHWERES
Mission 6	SICHERUNG
Mission 7	EINSICKERN
Mission 8	GESAMTHEIT

Gran Turismo 2

Unlock Super License

First earn the A, B, International A, B, and C Licenses, the Super License will now be available.

Unlock Event Synthesizer Race

After earning the Super License, you will be able to unlock the Event Synthesizer Race.

Eight Tracks

Go to Arcade Mode and enter the 'Bonus Items' option. You should see the letters A, B, and C above each of the levels given. As you do the following, they will be covered with a blue, yellow, or red dot. To fill in the four big question marks, go back to the main Arcade Mode screen. Then, go to 'Single Race', choose any difficulty level, and place first in each of the four original levels with an A-class car, a B-class car, and a C-class car. After you have done this, go back to the 'Bonus Items' menu and the four big question marks should be filled in with these levels, Autumn Ring, Deep Forest, SS R5, and Grand Valley Speedway, totalling eight tracks.

To Get the GT Hi-fi Mode

Finish the GT world cup then the GT hi-fi mode will appear under the special event option.

Hints

In arcade mode, winning first place, on any of the original four tracks, in all three classes of vehicles (a, b, c) will open a new track (for a total of four). If you come in first on all eight tracks, in all classes of vehicles, on the easy difficulty setting, four new car manufacturers will be available for you to choose from (Toyota, Subaru, Dodge, including a concept car, and TVR). If you win first on



all eight tracks, in all classes of vehicles, on the normal difficulty setting, a movie and the game credits will be available.

Easy Money and Cars

First, you must have at least 300,000 now and an I-A license. Buy a Mitsubishi 3000GT MR-Twin Turbo and tune it to the max. Go to Special Events and enter the number one Tuned Turbo Car World Cup. All the races here pay 50,000, but are hard. Pick the one with the Test Course. The cars here are unforgiving so make sure you tune your car to go to at least 210 MPH. Race 3 consecutive times and you will win the second ultimate car, the HKS R33 Drag, which sells for 250,000.



The Ultimate Driving Machines

After you have established at least 4 million, buy the Suzuki Escudo Pikes Peak Version, which sells for 2,000,000. This car is very powerful and quite easy to handle at high speeds. If you drive well enough, you can race any race and defeat all your opponents. This car will whip the competition in the GT World Cup so have fun.

Getting Money

Win the 4WD Challenge at Laguna Seca to receive a 618 HP custom car. Take that car to the Tuned-Turbo Challenge and enter the Test-Track race. You will win \$50,000 and a car worth \$30,000 for each 3-lap race that is won. The secret to winning on the Test-Track is in the corners. Stay smooth and off the walls and grass to pass the faster cars. Do not let them block your car, and drive defensively once in the lead. Get a brand new Nissan Skyline GT-R Vspec (R34.J) 1999 and tune it to the max. Then, get an International A license. Go to Special Events, go to Line Up 4, choose Tuned Turbo Car No.1 Race at the Test Course. Finish in first place to get \$50,000 and a Skyline that is worth \$30,000. Repeat this until you win a 250,000 Mine's HKS 180 SX (racing modified). Repeat again until you win a 13,750 Mine's Lancer V (racing modified). Note: You do not have to use a Nissan Skyline, just a powerful and fast car.

Please send any cheat requests to asassasin9ag.co.za.

The year is off to a running start and South Africa has finally got its hands on Unreal Tournament and Planescape Torment, which should have been available in December already. Is it just me or doesn't the rest of the world care about us gamers in South Africa, since we get everything late? It's no wonder so many gamers actually decide to buy online. It's fast, simple and you get the latest products.

The whole NAG team has returned from a brief but enjoyable holiday, although I think most of us will take at least another month before we move into full gear - the holiday mode of thinking takes a while to purge itself from your system. We are currently looking at new premises and hopefully are moving into larger office space by April. Just remember that we might not be reachable for a couple of days if we do move and have to wait for Telkom to move our lines. Judging from past experience this might take anywhere from a week to 6 months.

But until then we will probably be playing some Amiga games since our Ed has decided to rummage through his old junk and found his Amiga 500, which has found a new home in our office. I must admit that the Amiga was the King of gaming back in the good old days of gaming. I think we should start collecting some Commodores, ZX Spectrums and Atari machines as well and build up a nice collection of gaming history. It is funny to look back at the old machines and realise just how far gaming

has come. Nowadays PC's are more accessible, we have more game developers and even have a couple of dedicated trade shows for industry. Speaking of which - we're already making plans to get some staff over to E3 this year, which will take place in May and we are considering a daily live web update as well. I just thank the powers that be, that it won't be my finger tips getting typed off. It looks like our Editors will be making the pilgrimage again as they collect artwork, betas, souvenirs, and of course hobnob with all the big shots like John Carmack and co. The PlayStation 2 will also be there and most probably launched in the States round about then as well. (Rumour has it that the next generation console will launch in South Africa round about August, so keep your fingers crossed.)

On an ending note it is my sad duty to inform gamers that Diablo 2 has been delayed to what seems like the middle of the year. Tears were cried, keyboards broken, but finally we got over it and now must sit and wait a couple of extra months for what might be the best game of 2000. Thankfully Nox will arrive soon as well as some other good titles, but they just aren't Diablo 2. For our monthly 'who wants to appear in New Age Gaming' list I must now hand you over to our Editor's prediction list. By the way please keep sending in letters, we always love hearing that at least someone is actually reading our magazine.

Just for once we'd like to see these predictions come true. We're all holding thumbs...



INDIANA JONES
and
"INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA"

Could Indiana Jones be the tight fitting pair of pants that finally unzips Lara Croft's delicate hold on the third person tomb raiding adventure genre? This game is what we technically refer to as highly anticipated and promises to be something special. Be sure to read the cliché ridden review next issue as we crack the whip, uncover the mysteries of eternal youth, and sail on the ark of adventure and discovery.



MEDAL OF HONOR

Climb into the head and sit behind the eyes of a Special Forces soldier in the Second World War, on a vital mission. You'll find no plasma field photon accelerators or depleted uranium slug firing rocket propelled nuclear cannons in this game, instead grab a few 'traditional' weapons (like a bazooka or Tommy gun) and paste those stiff collared Nazis. Will this game earn a medal of honour [very original, Ed]? Find out next issue.



THE SIMS

If you've ever suspected that there are a race of tiny people living inside your computer to make it go, then Electronic Arts are about to prove you right. Dubbed as the people simulation game, The Sims is due for release any minute now and promises to drive millions of people into social isolation as they try and make their virtual lives better than their real ones.

We need more freelance writers, so we're using this space here to sneak in a quick free ad. Below you'll find a list of what we need and then even further below the all important freelance writer specifications, here goes...

We need a features writer. This doesn't mean writing reviews but rather insightful and unique articles on the gaming industry. You'll need to be able to work to tight deadlines and do thorough research on your topic.

We need a sports game and racing game reviewer, preferably someone who owns both a PC & PlayStation and has definite plans to buy a PlayStation 2. This is the 'writing reviews' job, a demanding task that requires plenty of gaming experience and a fresh perspective on things.

We need a hardware reviewer/hardware feature writer - this means you will need to have plenty of experience in this field... in other words know your hardware.

What you'll need to do

Put together a 600-800 word review of a current game/article and E-mail it to us at ed@nag.co.za, unfortunately postal applications will be incinerated, as you need to be connected to the internet. The review should follow the general style of the maga-

WANTED!

zine and must be in English. Include a little information about yourself so we can decide if we could learn to like you or not. So send in only via E-mail and put 'I can't spell' as the subject, if you don't use this subject header your mail might appear in the next backchat section by accident.

Freelance writer specifications

You must live in the Gauteng area.

A valid drivers license and your own transport is essential.

You must have reliable access to the Internet and a permanent valid E-mail address.

Being able to play both PC & PlayStation is a bonus.

You must have a computer with fairly decent specs.

This isn't a competition so there are no rules except one, multiple entries will be deleted along with the original.

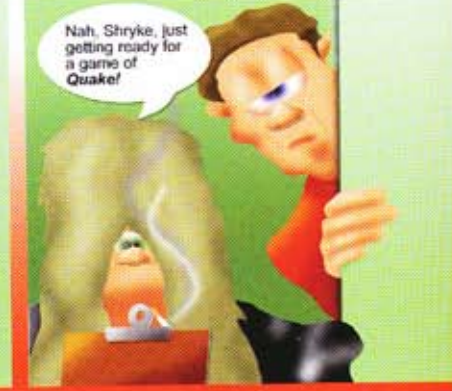
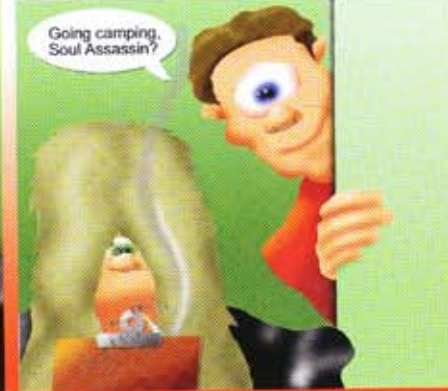
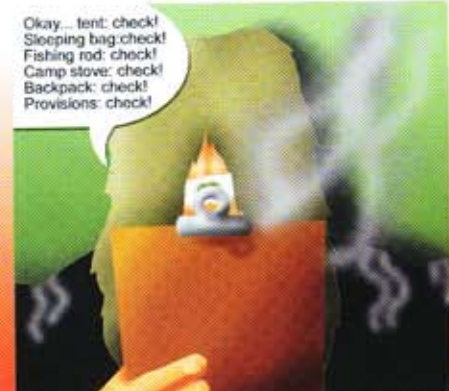
The editor's decision is final.

Closing date will be the first day in April... that's April fools day so you won't forget.

If you've already sent in samples or articles or whatever then do so again, we'll round everything up and see who really wants to be famous.

a NAGging suspicion...

True tales of foul play and aggression from the NAG office, written and illustrated by Shryke



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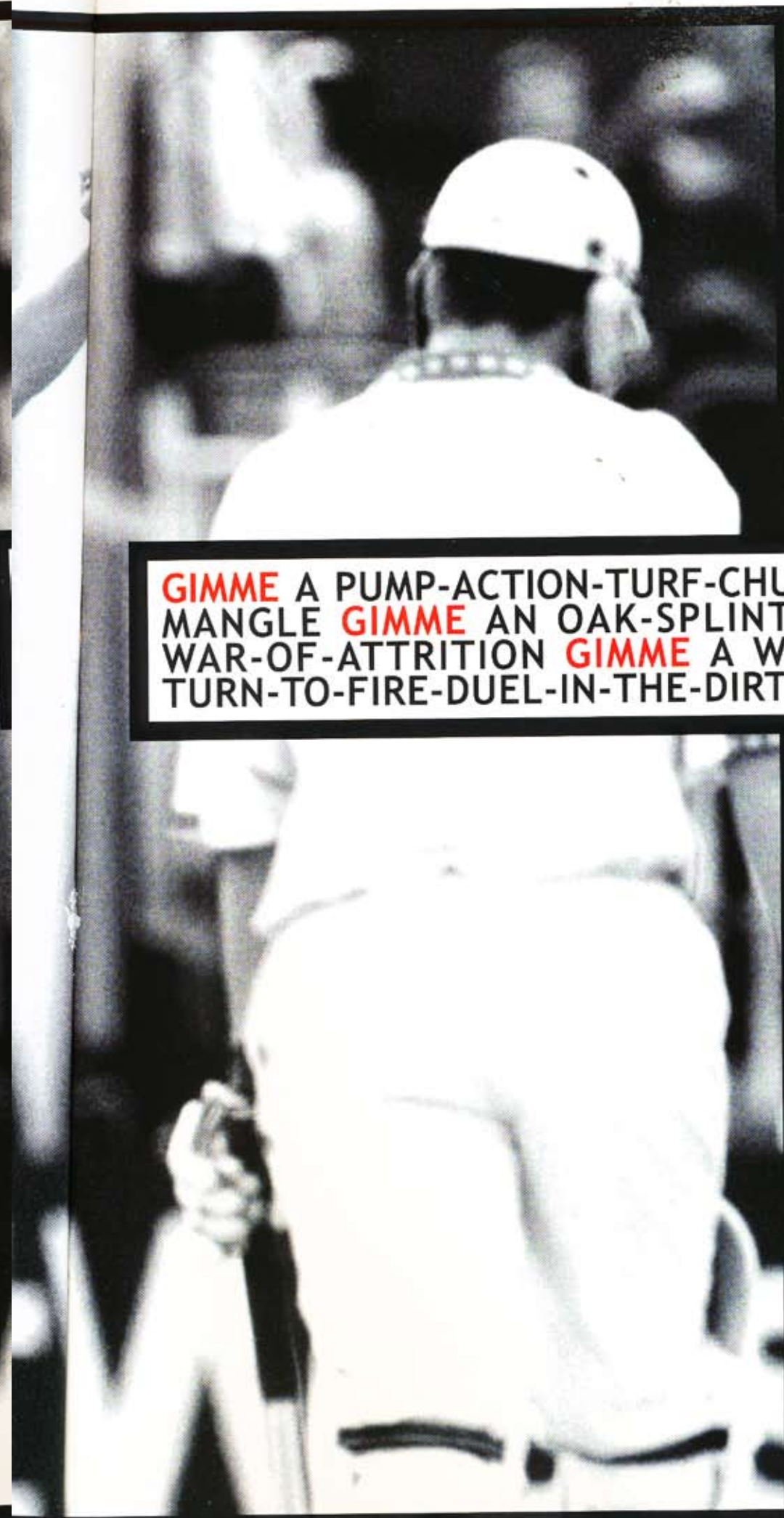
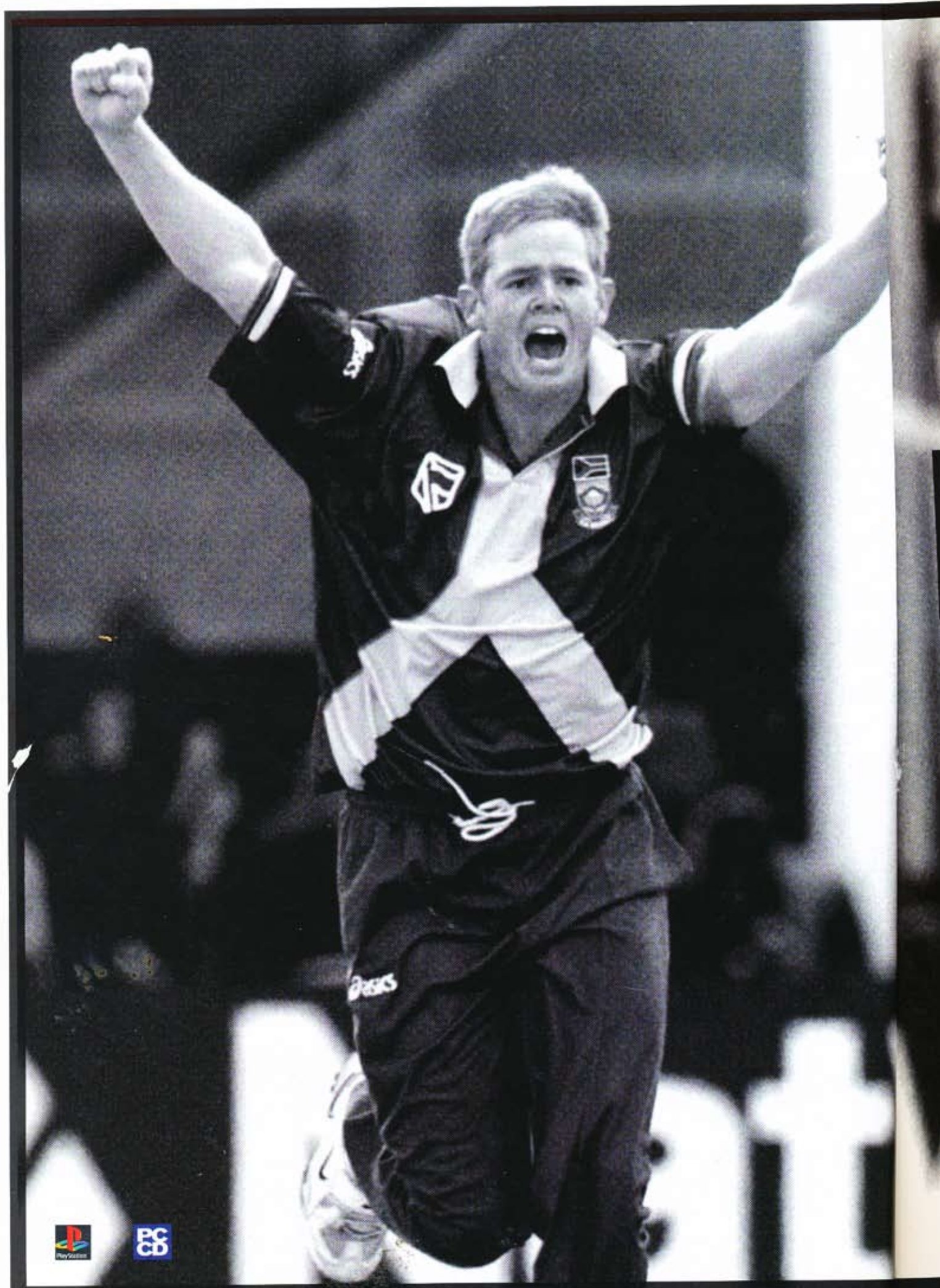
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