SA'S LEADING GAMING, COMPUTER & TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE / PC / PLAYSTATION / XBOX / NINTENDO / Vol 14 Issue 7

NAG

Previews

StarCraft II:
Heart of the Swarm
The Secret World
Gotham City Impostors
+ MORE!

Above and beyond

The Call of Duty Experience

BORDERLANDS 2™

Bringing sexy skags back

You have been chosen by the Seventh slag of Potatoes to experience this issue of NAG without a cover DVD. Do not panic. Just try and enjoy the moment. Reward: 4000 XP.



OCTOBER 2011 SOUTH AFRICA R42.00

9 771028 053002 10



F1 2011

Formula 1™

GO COMPETE



F1 2011: COMING SEPTEMBER 23RD 2011

PG

Games for Windows LIVE

XBOX 360

XBOX LIVE

PS3

codemasters

© 2011 The Codemasters Software Company Limited ("Codemasters"). All rights reserved. "Codemasters"® and the Codemasters logo are registered trade marks owned by Codemasters. An official product of the FIA FORMULA ONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP.
The F1 FORMULA 1 logo, F1 logozights reserved.
All other copyrights or trademarks are the property of their respective owners and are being used under license. Developed by Codemasters. Published by Codemasters. Microsoft, Windows, the Windows Vista Start button, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies, and 'Games for Windows' and the Windows Vista Start button logo are used under license from Microsoft. "PlayStation", "PS3" and "PS3" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

PICK ME! PICK ME!



Dark Souls
Available on
PS3, XBOX360 - R599.95 each



Spider-Man Edge Of Time
Available on
PS3, XBOX360 - R499.95 each
Wii, 3DS - R399.95 each
DS - R299.95



PES 2012
Available on
PS3, XBOX360 - R499.95 each
PS2, PSP, Wii - R249.95 each
PC - R299.95



WWE 12
Available on
PS3, XBOX360 R599.95 each
Wii R399.95



The Sims3 Pets
Available on
PS3, XBOX360 - R599.95 each
3DS - R399.95 each
PC - R249.95



Battlefield 3
Available on
PS3, XBOX360 - R599.95 each
PC - R399.95



8 November*

Call Of Duty Modern Warfare 3

Available on

PS3, XBOX360 - R699.95
Wii, PC - R499.95
DS - R299.95



Uncharted 3 Drakes Deception Explorer's Edition

Available on

PS3 - R1299.95



11 November*

The Elder Scrolls V Skyrim

Available on

PS3, XBOX360 - R599.95
PC - R399.95



15 November*

Assassin's Creed Revelations

Available on

PS3, XBOX360 - R599.95
PC - R399.95

First 10 Pre-Orders will receive a 6 Pack of Bobbleheads.

Every pre-order thereafter, will receive a single bobblehead





18 November*

Need for Speed The Run

Available on

PS3, XBOX360 - R599.95
Nintendo Wii, 3DS - R399.95
PC - R349.95

18 November*



Saints Row The Third

Available on

PS3, XBOX360 - R599.95
PC - R399.95

EXCLUSIVE TO **GAMINGINC MEMBERS** ON PRE-ORDER!

FREE DELIVERY & 10% OFF your purchase

Sign-up at www.gaminginc.co.za

Terms & conditions apply

www.incredible.co.za

PROMOTION VALID OCTOBER 2011

*RELEASE AND AVAILABILITY DATES MAY CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE FROM SUPPLIER.

Incredible Call Centre 0860 011 700

Prices include 14% VAT. All standard terms and conditions of Incredible Connection & suppliers herein apply. We reserve the right to limit quantities on all promotional items per customer. Prices correct at time of going to press.

All names, logos, images, characters, slogans, likenesses, trademarks, copyrights and other intellectual property featured are the exclusive property of their respective owners and are used under licence from these owners.

Incredible CONNECTION

WHERE TECHNOLOGY & HUMANITY MEET

Inc DTP 3588

PALIT®

GeForce® GTX 590 3GB (3072MB GDDR5)

PALIT 3D GRAPHICS ENGINE



*Memory Amount: 3072MB
*Memory Interface: 768 bit
*Dram Type: GDDR5
*GPU Core Clock: 607MHz
*Memory Clock 1707MHz (Effective 3414MHz)
*Shader Clock: 1512MHz
*CUDA Cores: 1024
*Memory Bandwidth: (GB/Sec)327.7
*NVIDIA SLI-Ready: 2Way

Compatible with Windows 7 | nVIDIA SLI READY | PCI EXPRESS 2.0 | PhysX by NVIDIA | nVIDIA GeForce CUDA | GeForce 3D VISION READY | Direct x11 | HDCP

GeForce® GTX 580 3GB (3072MB GDDR5)



*Memory Amount: 3072MB
*Memory Interface: 384 bit
*Dram Type: GDDR5
*GPU Core Clock: 783MHz
*Memory Clock 2010MHz (Effective 4020MHz)
*Shader Clock: 1566MHz
*CUDA Cores: 512
*Memory Bandwidth: (GB/Sec)192.96
*NVIDIA SLI-Ready: 3Way

GeForce® GTX 460 Sonic 2GB (2048MB GDDR5)



*Memory Amount: 2048MB
*Memory Interface: 256bit
*Dram Type: GDDR5
*GPU Core Clock: 700MHz
*Memory Clock 1800MHz (Effective 3600MHz)
*Shader Clock: 1400MHz
*CUDA Cores: 336
*Memory Bandwidth: (GB/Sec)115.2
*NVIDIA SLI-Ready: 2Way

TVR
TECHNOLOGY • VISION • RELIABILITY

Johannesburg
Tel : (011) 807-1390
Fax : (011) 807-1589
Unit 11, 8 Trinity Close
Cambridge Commercial Park
Paulshof, Sandton

Pretoria
Tel : (012) 665-4923

Nelspruit
Tel : (013) 755-1234

Cape Town
Tel : (021) 555-0891

Durban
Tel : (031) 263-0371

Port Elizabeth
Tel : (041) 365-2390

Bloemfontein
Tel : (051) 406-0945

Huntkey

Power Your Dream

FIND THESE PRODUCTS @ rAge expo

1200w



*1200W Power Supply.
*Complies With Intel ATX12V V2.3 & EPS12V V2.92.
*The Smart Fan of the Segmented Voltage Regulator
*A Quiet Environment.
*Cable Management Design.
*Supports SLI & Crossfire Multi-GPU VGA Cards.

80 PLUS BRONZE

80 PLUS SILVER

HUNTKEY CASE



H102

*Micro ATX / ATX
*USB x 2 / Audio
*Front board with baking varnish for piano
*Rugged edges
*Intel CAG1.1 complied

H001

*Micro ATX / ATX
*USB2.0 x 4 / HD Audio / IEEE1394
*Transparent acrylic sideboards
*Front board with baking varnish for piano
*DIY-inspired 80mm colored fan

90W Energy Star

Universal Power Supply



* 5V USB Power Port
* Input : 100-240V AC
* Output : 19V DC
* (+- 5%), 0-4.74A

HUNTKEY 900W

Power Supply



*900W Power Supply.
*Complies With Intel ATX12V V2.3 & EPS12V V2.92.
*The Smart Fan of the Segmented Voltage Regulator
*A Quiet Environment.
*Cable Management Design.

TVR

TECHNOLOGY • VISION • RELIABILITY

Huntkey Hong Kong Development Co., Ltd.
Huntkey Industrial Park, Banxue Road,
Bantian, Shenzhen, 518129, China
Tel: +86-755-86906666 Fax: +86-755-89606699
Email: markets@huntkey.com
www.huntkeydiy.com

Huntkey®
Power Your Dream

NAG

Editor
Michael "RedTide" James
ed@nag.co.za

Technical Writer
Neo "ShockG" Sibeko

Skag pups
Geoff "GeometriX" Burrows
Dane "Barkskin " Remendes

Contributing Editor
Lauren "Guardi3n " Das Neves

International Correspondent
Miktar "Miktar" Dracon

Contributors
Rodain "Nandrew" Joubert
Walt "Ramjet" Pretorius
Miklós "Mikit0707 " Szecsei
Pippa "UnexpectedGirl" Tshabalala
Tarryn "Azimuth " Van Der Byl

Art Director
Chris "SAVAGE" Savides

Photography
Chris "SAVAGE" Savides
Dreamstime.com
Fotolia.com

Sales Executive
Cheryl "Cleona" Bassett
cheryl@nag.co.za
+27 72 322 9875

Marketing and Promotions Manager
Jacqui "Jax" Jacobs
jacqui@nag.co.za
+27 82 778 8439

Office Assistant
Paul Ndebele

Contact Details
P .O. Box 237
Olivedale
2158
South Africa
Tel +27 11 704 2679
Fax +27 11 704 4120

Subscription Department
subs@nag.co.za

Internet
www.nag.co.za

Printing
Impress Web Printers
031 263 2755

Distribution
Jmd Distribution

Copyright 2011 NAG.
All Rights Reserved. No Article Or Picture In This Magazine May Be Reproduced, Copied Or Transmitted In Any Form Whatsoever Without The Express Written Consent Of The Publisher. Opinions Expressed In The Magazine Are Not Necessarily Those Of The Publisher Or The Editors. All Trademarks And Registered Trademarks Are The Sole Property Of Their Respective Owners.

Don't Pirate NAG!

recycle
this magazine when you're finished with it.



Regulars

10 Ed's Note
12 Inbox
14 Bytes

Opinion

14 I, Gamer
16 The Game Stalker
18 The Indie Investigator
20 Miktar's Meanderings
85 Hardwired
98 Game Over

Features

28 **The top 8 NPCs in games**
Being a gamer means we spend most of our time bashing enemies, but we've also made some delightful digital friends on our travels. Every person we've ever met in real life pales in comparison to this awesome bunch of virtual companions.

34 **Above and Beyond: The Call of Duty Experience**
What happens when *Call of Duty* transitions into the real world? Innocent people get noob-tubed. Which isn't nearly as fun in real life. We investigate!

54 **Borderlands 2**
"Hey! Hey check me out! I'm dancin'... I'm dancin'!" We check out the gunzerkers and grenade rain of our second trip to Pandora.

86 **4-way SSD shootout**
SSDs! They're, like, so hot right now. Let's find the best of them together!

88 **Versus: Alienware M17x R3 vs. MSI GT780**
Can Alienware's new M17x gaming notebook hold off the brutal onslaught of MSI's GT780? Read on to find out.



Previews

38 StarCraft II: Heart of the Swarm
42 The Secret World
46 Might & Magic Heroes VI
48 Gotham City Impostors
49 Darksiders II
50 Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning
51 The Darkness II
52 Warhammer Online: Wrath of Heroes / WildStar

Reviews

64 Reviews: Introduction
65 Short Reviews: The Tiny Bang Story / Dead Block
66 Deus Ex: Human Revolution
70 Resistance 3
72 No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise
74 F.E.A.R. 3
76 Driver: San Francisco
77 UFC Personal Trainer
78 Rugby World Cup 2011



Hardware

80 Tech News
82 Lazy Gamer's Guide: BlackBerry PlayBook
84 Dream Machine
90 HTC EVO 3D
92 EVGA Z68 FTW / Corsair H100 Extreme Performance Liquid CPU Cooler
93 Evetech Core i7 Gaming PC
94 Popcorn Hour A-210 HD Media Player
95 GIGABYTE A75-UD4H
96 Sapphire Pure Platinum A75

NAG DVD

Brought to you by
MUSICA
A WORLD AWAITS

Demos
Frozen Synapse / Millennium 4 - Beyond Sunset / Owlboy
Pro Evolution Soccer 2012 / The Count of Monte Cristo
Tropico 4

Extras
Cheatbook Database + updates
[Free Games]: A Flipping Good Time
[Free Music]: Harmony of a Hunter / Gamecca Volume 3
Issue 27 September 2011 / Rage Expo 2011
The Overclocker Issue 16

Musica
A word from our good sponsors

130 Videos
126 Game Trailers / 2 Pop Fiction
2 ScrewAttack Video Game Vault

PIMP YOUR PRE-ORDER

Get pimped up discounts at rAge expo

COMPUTERS | GAMING | TECHNOLOGY

30 September - 2 October
The Coca-Cola dome
kalahari.com, stand 11



PS3 Now R559.00
Also available on DS, WII, PC & Xbox 360
Coming 8 Nov 2011



PC Now R324.95
*Includes Back to Karkand Expansion Pack & SPECACT Kit
Also available on PS3 & Xbox 360
Coming 28 Oct 2011



Batman Arkham City
PS3 Now R499.95
*Lenticular Edition. Also available on PC & Xbox 360. Coming 21 Oct 2011



Saints Row The Third
PS3 Now R469.95
*Includes Genki Pack and Exclusive Bobble Head. Also available on DS, WII, PC & Xbox 360. Coming 18 Nov 2011



Elder Scrolls 5 Skyrim
Xbox 360 Now R499.95
*Includes World Map. Also available on DS, WII, PC & Xbox 360. Coming 11 Nov 2011

Free delivery | Order now on your mobile

Prices, artwork and release dates subject to change. Terms and Conditions apply.

To get the Tag Reader visit
http://gettag.mobi on your mobile phone browser or enter the link below
www.kalahari.com/rage

kalahari.com®



Augmented edition

Last month I was pontificating about the merits and demerits of adding *NAG*, the magazine, to the digital domain. I received a lot of feedback from many readers and opinion was clearly divided between embracing the future and sticking to tradition – almost right down the middle in fact. I think the safe bet (doing both), is probably the way to go end of the day. Hang tight – something will happen soon. But that's not what this is about. This is about another conflict I stumble across all the time – digital distribution versus boxed copies.

Every other day someone sends me a PSN code or a XBLA code to unlock a shiny new game. This is standard for Xbox LIVE! and PlayStation Network stuff because that's the only way I've ever 'bought' games from these services – points or codes. The other week I was sent a Steam code for the sublime *Dead Island*. Box copies did arrive at some point but were quickly snapped up for review in *NAG* and NAG Online before I even sniffed the fresh plastic. I felt cheated with just the code... you see, I come from an age when games used to come on cassette tapes in those plastic fold-open containers, the instructions printed on a glossy folded up sheet of paper and stuffed inside. Then came disks and CDs and now DVDs and Blu-ray and ultimately digital downloads. All through the ages the packaging got better, the manuals got thicker and the toys got more elaborate (night vision goggles anyone). But enough about my dubious past and back to feeling cheated. So there I was, Steam code entered and game files copied off the server (Geoff had already installed the game). After playing for a few hours I honestly didn't care anymore about the manuals or box or whatever – it didn't really matter. Then, the other day, I opened the augmented edition of *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* – this was a proper boxed copy in shrink-wrapped plastic. It has two disks and a special pocket for the DLC codes. It smelt really good and the paper felt smooth, embossed and just right. The same thing happened when I cracked open my extended edition of *Lord of the Rings*. It's a special vibe... A lot of things are going on when you open a new game box – excitement, sights and touch, smell and the weight of it all (including the manual). All of this versus entering a Steam code and then mowing the lawn, rebuilding the braai and so on while it downloads. Is this really the future everyone is looking for when it comes to buying games? Thankfully there will always be special versions and collector's editions to keep these fussy few of us happy. Of course there is the whole 'save the trees' argument again but that's easy to counter with sustainable sources of paper. I really don't know what to think because sometimes I'll just buy a game on Steam and other times I'll ask around about the collector's edition.

That's about all I've got for you this month, crazy season starts right now so you better strap on and hold in.

RedTide
[Editor]

MORE MINECRAFT

The 1.8 update arrived yesterday so by the time you read this 1.8.1 will probably be around to fix all the bugs 1.8 introduced. To be honest (besides the stunning world generation tweaks), I'm disappointed and was expecting much more after all this time. Maybe Notch is too busy jet-setting and planning conventions these days. Regardless, the update introduced a 'creative' mode, so you future architects and designers can get your move on. This is what we got the other day in the mailbox, "It may have taken me all weekend but it was worth it. I only used the finest pixelated bricks to construct this behemoth (that's 4,758 blocks in case you're wondering)." – Theo McPherson. Think you can do better? Prove it.



COVER STORY

I was walkin' down the street, when out the corner of my eye
I saw a pretty little thing approachin' me
She said I've never seen a man
Who looks so all alone, could you use a little company?

If you pay the right price your evenin' will be nice
Or you can go and send me on my way
I said you're such a sweet young thing, why you do this to yourself?
She looked at me and this is what she said

Oh, there ain't no rest for the wicked
Money don't grow on trees
I got bills to pay, I got mouths to feed
There ain't nothin' in this world for free
I know I can't slow down, I can't hold back
Though you know I wish I could
Oh no, there ain't no rest for the wicked
Until we close our eyes for good.





GIGABYTE™

GIGABYTE recommends Windows® 7.

GIGABYTE notebook **P2532**

Blazing Performance Unleashed

Featuring 2nd Generation Intel® Core™ i7 Processor

Intel® Core™ **i7** Quad Core Processor

NVIDIA® GeForce® **2GB** GT550M

Windows 7



15.6" notebook

P2532

Experience the thrill of exhilarating multimedia with blazing fast performance on the GIGABYTE P2532. Featuring a stunning 15.6" screen with full HD, a powerful and cutting-edge Intel® Core™ i7 processor, exceptional graphics performance, and unprecedented sound optimization with THX TruStudio Pro™ technology, the P2532 is designed to provide extraordinary multimedia enjoyment.



7200rpm high capacity HDD
USB 3.0 for high-speed data transfer



Full HD for superior viewing quality
LED backlight display



Unique and stylish double heatsink design with cooling effect up to ninety-watts.

rectron

For more information visit **www.rectron.co.za** or call **0860 582 835** / For Support call our National Technical Support Line: **0861 788 789**

Johannesburg
Tel: +27 11 203 1000
Fax: +27 11 203 1940

Cape Town
Tel: +27 21 555 8200
Fax: +27 21 555 7136

Durban
Tel: +27 31 582 0200
Fax: +27 31 582 0280

Port Elizabeth
Tel: +27 41 398 7082
Fax: +27 41 398 7140

Bloemfontein
Tel: +27 51 430 0000
Fax: +27 51 430 1144

*Disclaimer: All letters sent to NAG are printed more or less verbatim (that's as we get them for you kids at the back), so ignore any spelling or grammatical errors.)

megarom interactive

Letter of the Month October 2011

From: Marius
Subject: Mystery of the Easter egg
Hmm, those chocolate covered marshmallows, oops wait, the other kind of Easter egg. Many of my fellow gamers may not even know what I'm talking about – as very few games still support this lost art of hidden gems. They started in the early '80 and are becoming a rare breed indeed. These little gems use to give us a whole range of new secret stuff. Some were egotistical, like the Carmack must die piece in *DOOM*. Some were in reference to other games and some were very funny, like *Diablo*'s hidden cow level.

This was one of the things in the good old days that made me want to replay games to find all the fun extras. Nowadays I think games are taking themselves too serious. Who wouldn't like a small silly reference to the *Matrix* in *Deus Ex*, or a reference to *Tomb Raider* in *Uncharted*? Please developers don't overdo the funny like *Duke* did, just make us smile once in a while.

Spot on. We were talking about this the other week in the office – actually when Wolfenstein arrived all those months ago too. Dane and I were saying how we both walked into the fireplaces in the one level and checked for secret buttons, levers and switches – you know, to open the hidden rooms. This kind of playing style (obsessively checking fireplaces and under bridges and in dustbins/toilets) is only exhibited by people who come from an Easter-egg background. For me Tomb Raider is the one that I'll remember forever. I often used to spend ages jumping, dying, climbing and eventually lucking my way to some far off spot high up in the middle of a tomb. When I got there, I was greeted by a hidden cache of weapons or health. It made me smile every time and to this day I always check my gaming environments carefully for Easter eggs. Ed.



The 'Letter of the Moment' prize is sponsored by Megarom. The winner receives two games for coming up with the most inspired bit of wisdom or cleverness.

IMPORTANT STUFF! PAY ATTENTION!
Land Mail: P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158
Cyber mail: letters@nag.co.za
Important: Include your details when mailing us, otherwise how will you ever get your prize if you win...

From: Jan-Hendrik
Subject: Difficulty issue
I read a letter in the September issue that was talking about difficulty in games. I understand what he is saying. To be honest I'm one of those guys that would just finish the game on easy and be done with it. Unfortunately thanks to the achievement system these days, they make achievements for finishing on the highest difficulty. The sad news is I have to actually do it, so I end up playing the same game over again, just on another difficulty, just to get the achievement. I'm not really one of those guys that care about the challenge, I just want a great story from the game and I'm happy. Gears of War only has the one story, so play it once and you're done, but playing something like Mass Effect or Dragon Age is totally different. I could easily play the game 10 times because every time is not the same; you make different choices and are bad or good. Totally different, that is what I want. Maybe by forcing players to play the games on higher difficulties will also make them stop complaining about "the single-player campaign being too short". I bet most of the guys play on easy and then want to complain that it's too easy. Easy is meant for people who are not used to those types of games. I enjoy a bit of a challenge, but I don't play the game for the challenge, I play it for the story. That is what the single-player type of guy wants from his game really.

I think each person takes out of a game what they put into it. If you pick easy and race through all your games because you don't pay for them or have rich parents or whatever then you're not going to have a fun experience with gaming. If you take it slow and play it on a tougher level of challenge then the game will be more fun and take longer – this usually happens when you only get 1-2 games a month. This is just like cheating in games. If you cheat to get ahead the challenging/fun/annoying game experience you're having will die for you. Ed.

From: Justin
Subject: Length
I am a reader of your magazine and while many people spend their first paragraph of their letter praising NAG and its brilliance, or they start their ranting criticism and don't stop till they reach the end. I do not send this letter to praise you or to criticise your magazine without real purpose. But I do have a question to ask, which leads to criticism which does actually have a point, therefore it is creative criticism [thanks for setting the scene for everyone, Ed]:

I am a writer (I am not inquiring about a job), and I have written two novels. I am currently working on my third novel; if you were to take a guess at how old I am I believe that you would be incorrect... for I have yet to turn seventeen that shall come in September.

As a young novelist I obviously write very often (duh), I do enjoy your magazine very much but I am shocked by how few pages come each month. I do not know how large your staff compliment is but it is definitely larger than my staff compliment, which consists of me alone.

In my first month of writing my third novel (April, started on the 1st of April), I wrote 150 pages. That was on my own, I wrote more pages than your entire staff wrote in the month of April!

Obviously I do not know all that goes into writing a journalistic magazine but still! I wrote more pages than several people, who were all paid to do it too by the way, in a month. There are also other factors of course, such as your paper. But personally I would prefer lower quality paper with a higher level of content than pretty, shiny paper in a magazine that is unfortunately single-sheet toilet paper thin.

Creative criticism can always better everything, please heed what I have said and think about it. Don't go and respond with a little joke to try and hide something from the readers.

People always ask me this first, so let me just answer now: No, I have not yet published my books, they are still in the test-reader phase and additional revision and editing phase, but I write further and further every day. You guys should do the same.

I'm torn between telling you that we write about 35000 words a month for NAG all of which have to appear in print, be edited, corrected, researched and double checked and so on. We do all this in two weeks while we still have other jobs to do like run the company, website stuff, freelancers, deal with advertisers and so on (oh, we also put rAge on each year). I'm happy you're proud of your unpublished work which you have hours and hours of time to do all day long. The other half of me wants to tell you well done. Writing a novel is very hard and you should be proud of your achievements regardless. You should also keep on writing and make sure you never stop trying to get your work out there. So to be honest, I don't really know what to tell you because I don't know what point you're trying to make. Ed.

Shorts [extracts of LOL n00b from NAG reader letters]

"I did bad because I was reading NAG all the time instead of studying!"
– Ricardo

"So here is me saying: "Unleash hell!" as I rev up my lancer."
– Siemeon

"Did you know that meme means tits in Turkish?"
– Devilliers

"I think its nature's way of preventing the "geek gene" from spreading - keeping us away from all the girls so that we can't reproduce and further weaken our already flimsy gene pool."
– Kyle

From: Tanya
Subject: Mind Boggle
I'm reading through the August edition (page 20 specifically) and came across an interesting article. You are talking about the 6% of the population being colour blind and the addition of colour blind feature in the new Modern Warfare, I might add that I believe that 100% of the population should be playing the awesomeness that is Modern Warfare. Not trying to be a smartass or anything but something to think about:

The ratio of colour blind women to colour blind men is great. Face it; men suffer more from colour blindness than the amazing fairer sex! That 6% you talk about is women and men combined (keep it in mind). So looking at the true amount of people that actually play modern warfare (and games alike) and then looking at the percentage of which are women, keeping in mind men are more likely to be colour blind, what is the true percentage of game players that are colour blind. Looking at that percentage, instead of just the 6%, makes the need for an integration of colour blind accessibility even more. So I hope all the new games start bringing the feature out.

A high percentage of people who write in to magazines have no idea what they're trying to say but just click on send anyway because they think they've got far enough into the letter for it to seem like a good idea at the time and even make sense. See what I'm saying – just keep it in mind. Ed.

From: Niël
Subject: A simple hat tip
Hello good people of NAG. The reason I write this letter is merely to show my gratitude to anyone who has ever helped a fellow gamer. Whether it was helping them with their hardware at a LAN or posting the solution to a glitch of a game online, it doesn't matter. Without people like you, gaming would be a massive headache. And with that I hereby dedicate this letter to all of the hardware geniuses, the software masters and anybody else who knows something useful.

Thank you for point that out. The gaming community can be a wonderful place filled decent helpful people. Ed.

NAG Fan artwork

This is the cream of the crop that we received at NAG this issue. If you insert, use or create a piece of gaming artwork incorporating the NAG logo you might also end up here for your three lines of fame. Remember, don't just stick the logo on a picture – use the logo in a picture or you win squat.



Francoin Visser, "I put together a submission - NAG logo up in lights - Neon tubes. It's a basic 3D spline sketch extrusions with some material tricks to get the right look and feel. Let me know what you think!"

From: Shawn
Subject: One tiny question
Dearest most humble NAG Editor. For many, many years I have faithfully bought the NAG, and have marvelled at the sheer quality of your magazine. Your brilliance is awe inspiring and had led many into the gaming void. But as I sit and read the new NAG today and turn the first few pages, WTF is a Levi's ad doing in the magazine without any reference to games or PC's?

I understand that perhaps under your busy, stressful schedule that this may have slipped in unnoticed and for that I forgive you – a concerned gamer.

LOL... Adverts like that are targeted at the majority of people reading NAG... Loosely – youth culture. If this isn't clear let me try it like this: we have a lot of people reading NAG who wear clothes and jeans and Levi's would like you to buy their brand of clothing instead of any others and based on their advertising support in NAG I agree with them 100%. ;) Just remember that companies like Levi's believe in you otherwise they wouldn't be spending money with NAG. All they ask of you is to remember them and support them when you have the choice... or not – it's always up to you. Ed.

From: Carl
Subject: Cover art
Great magazine – I'm going to keep is sweet and short could you please put some of your cover art on your DVD or give me a link where I can download it.

Usually, we're not allowed to put the cover artwork anywhere except on the cover of this magazine. We have to sign non-disclosure agreements and artwork restriction documents before we can even get the goods. Sorry. Ed.

From: Terence
Subject: Will the real Pippa Tshabalala please stand up?
I have been a gamer for almost as long as I can remember, and a NAG reader for most of those years, I was just going through some of my NAG disks and found a December 1999 CD *[Snip, I've edited this one a bit to save space, Ed]* This mail isn't about NAG and what pleasure you have given me over the years, but about Pippa Tshabalala. In all the years I have read your magazine I have always thought about sending you a mail, but the thought of Ed replying to me, made me rather keep my 2 cents in a jar. After reading Pippa's byte in your August magazine I reached for the jar, and with a bright smile and somewhat crazy look in my eye... said "I knew you would come in handy one day". This was not the first time Pippa had me clawing towards the jar, but today I have my 2 cents *[snip, Ed]*. NAG stands for New Age Gaming , and I purchase it monthly for reasons mentioned above, the last thing I want to read is something to do with some ego boosting (as gathered from her article) ladies Twitter account. I have no grudge against Pippa, as I have no reason to have. I don't know her as a person and don't really care, but for someone in your position you should be ashamed for even thinking rubbish like that belongs in the NEW AGE GAMING magazine. You have been very blessed in getting where you are, and I am positive you have worked very hard at getting there, but to think that something like Tweeting Twits is acceptable has made me doubt the reason why you should be writing for this magazine. The article that is supposed to be gaming related, has turned out to be a, and how was your day Pippa? Scribble. This belongs in a blog or even in a diary, but not sharing a page with gaming related articles. What I am getting at.... is, you are in a wonderful position, to be writing about something you love, and i am not talking about Pippa, but gaming, and have many people read it. Most people don't have the skill or the talent to be a writer for the NAG, but you most certainly do, otherwise NAG would never have asked for your input. It's not easy keeping everyone happy, but if you think that your article was appropriate for this magazine, I can only feel sorry for you, this magazine and its readers. Hope you prove me wrong in the next article, or I'll send another letter asking for your spot.

Thanks for the mail and long-time support... 1999 – I remember those issues vaguely. I do have all of them and occasionally open those old dusty boxes for a laugh. Regarding Pippa, she is a columnist for NAG and a gaming industry personality. I don't tell the writers what to write in their columns – never have and never will (especially not Tarryn – that's far too dangerous). It's an opinion column that is all. For me (like Rodain – the writer of the developer column), I love reading what's on the mind of people in the industry – normal people actually doing the job of being in the gaming industry. It shows me they're all human and have human issues and human flaws and so on... the one exception here is me of course, because I'm perfect. ;) Ed.

"A high percentage of people who write in to magazines have no idea what they're trying to say but just click on send anyway..."

On the Forums

If the drugs aren't working anymore, come speak to an unqualified unprofessional! Most gamers are welcome: www.nag.co.za/forums

Question: What is your favourite type of in-game environment, and why?

echo: Desert, because of the blue skies. And living in sunny SA, it's more relatable.

nukehead: Post-apocalyptic wastelands as I find that the imagination of the design team usually has free reign. Note that I classify Rapture as post-apocalyptic in this case.

absolado: A heavily fortified asylum for the criminally insane!

Acinixys: STALKER will always be my go to game for great outdoor environments.

Spindleshanks: Underwater. Why? Have you not seen Guild Wars 2?!

spjt07: Jungle. I love the shady areas, the in game atmosphere noise and the suspense that something might just jump out from some bush and bite your head off.

Changsta 187: Urban. Lots of cover and interactions within the environment. Oh and graffiti too :D

Shadow_Con: I like a prison environment because I find trying escape while avoiding guards and acting all stealthy really fun.

Sinner-PWA: I like Jungle environment. It seems very exotic, & the lush scenery always appeals. Plus I can dress like Tarzan & feel like I'm getting into the character... *cough*, No, I don't dress up really.

hideinlight: Unreal inspired open environments with beautiful and lively skies. Moving clouds, flying objects, flickering stars, huge moons and planets with ancient mysterious architecture surrounded by water, DM-Phera for UT3 is a good example of this.

Shaderow: The ones with body parts, bullets, grenades and all kinds of **** flying everywhere.

Cpt.Monde: Jungles. Great for stealth and jungle warfare really brings out the badass in you.

Jodez: Secret underground bases are fun, you never know what you might find down there

Hein: A well designed game will have everything and underwater levels are the levels I hate the most. Stalker had some memorable places and the creepy Ferris wheel made it so nostalgic. If I have to mention a favourite it'll be an ancient ruin type setting with a clear blue sky in lush jungle.

Ro$hi: Space, because being in space in a game is probably the closest I'll ever get to actually being in space...
ShawniF: Jungle because it's colourful with awesome lighting and it's tons better to look at than dull post-apocalyptic shades of grey.

The Wolf: Since BioShock: Infinite, I can't think of a better and more perfect environment. You're welcome to disagree, but you'd be wrong! :P

.:Enigma:.: Jungle, it can give even the dullest game a more vibrant environment.

Toxxyc: The "Crysis 2" environment (it's in a class of its own) simply because it makes you feel both mighty and inferior at the same time.

Deaththekidd: Jungle, Sometimes you find special mushrooms. LOOK!! a rainbow Pony.

Gamescom 2011 – you will be unprepared



How do you cram a trip to Gamescom into 570 words? Like this: meet GeometriX at airport; two flights, one train ride and twenty-three hours later, arrive in Cologne, Germany. Check into hotel. Open door to room; find elderly German couple making out on the couch; share an awkward two seconds of silence. Return to reception; obtain new keycard for new room. Shower off hours of travel stench; depart hotel to find dinner.

Eventually locate authentic-looking bräuhaus; step inside to sample local food and drink. Get taken by surprise as all beers served in minute, 200ml glasses. Order half a metre of sausage and sauerkraut for dinner. Eventually figure out how to get waitress to *stop* bringing beers. Return to hotel; sleep for thirteen hours.

Day one: head into city to register for Sony pre-event press conference. Catch the underground and a tram to other side of city to attend EA's pre-event press conference. Get greeted by Imperial Stormtroopers, Jedi Knights and sundry Imperial officers. Feel mild excitement for *Star Wars: The Old Republic* before remembering it's an MMO and dying a little inside. Furiously scribble notes as EA barrels through their titles for Gamescom; get caught up in Ken Rolston's enthusiasm for *Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning*; secretly wish he was my own crazy uncle.

> **"... greeted by Imperial Stormtroopers, Jedi Knights and sundry Imperial officers."**

Return to previous side of city to attend Sony's press conference. Chuckle at mile long queue and thank god for pre-registration. Find seats inside; furiously type notes this time. Get schmoosed by Sony corporate who plies journalists with free alcohol and food; get hands-on time with the PSV; make mental note that owning one is imperative; realise that might have been the alcohol thinking; realise it wasn't and reaffirm decision to want a PSV.

Day two: train ride into Gamescom. Marvel at sheer size and amount of *Uncharted 3* advertising. Make way to EA's business stand; spend the day in presentations for the publisher's games. Sneak out of EA for a *Far Cry 3* presentation with Ubisoft; head to a Blizzard press conference and get over excited by impending release of *Heart of the Swarm*. Head back to hotel; write articles for NAG Online until 2AM.

Day three: spend the morning with Warner Bros. meeting developers from Rocksteady Studios and Grasshopper Manufacture; see *Arkham City* and *Lollipop Chainsaw* in action. Sprint off to a hotel for an interview with *Forza 4* creative director Dan Greenwalt. Knock on door; get greeted by lead designer from *Dust 514* instead. Confess that there'd been a PR mix up; spend the next hour with the CCP Games dev team checking out *Dust 514* instead. Sprint back to convention centre for hands-on time with *Modern Warfare 3*. Spend the rest of the night writing more articles for NAG Online.

Day four: interview creative director for *Heart of the Swarm*. Move to Bethesda stand; spend an hour playing *Rage* with id's Tim Willits. Sprint to previous business hall to play *Darkness II* and see *Borderlands 2*. Run into Valve's Gabe Newell; geek out slightly.

Day five: fight way through sixty-two thousand show attendees; dodge Link, *Pokémon* and assorted anime cosplayers. Thank god that we had two days at Gamescom without the public. Play an amazing 64-player round of Conquest in *Battlefield 3*.

Day six: Twenty seven hours of travel later, land in South Africa. Attempt to cram the entire event into a 570 word column; realise it's an exercise in futility.

Miklós Szecsei



New Counter-Strike confirmed

...and you'll be able to shoot at PS3 players

Valve has finally lain to rest the rumours, speculation and worries surrounding what is one of the most anticipated sequels we've seen since *StarCraft II – Counter-Strike: Global Offensive* has been confirmed. The game will see a release next year and is being developed by Hidden Path Entertainment – the team that has been working with Valve to maintain *Counter-Strike: Source* for the last couple of years. We can gather now that the co-development process was an extensive grooming operation for the studio, although we imagine that the thickened skin they no-doubt developed from months of player "feedback" was half the goal.

CS: GO will be the *Counter-Strike* you were probably hoping for: pure *CS*, but new. No frills will be added. Valve insists that *GO* will stick to its roots and serve to improve the existing systems rather than re-invent anything. There won't be any sort of *COD*-inspired unlocks or experience points; players will earn and buy their weapons and upgrades just like they always did – in the playing field. There also won't be any auto-aim or other assists for those without a keyboard and mouse, which brings us to our next, most interesting point: cross-platform play. There's no doubt that a multi-platform release is the way to go, but this is a big surprise: PC, Mac and PS3 players will be able to play in the same games. Whether the PS3 players use a regular controller, Move controller (yup) or USB keyboard and mouse, if their match history and statistics show that they're as good as the PC and Mac players in a game, they'll be able to join in.

Matchmaking is important for Valve, because they realise the huge rift that skill discrepancy creates in games that pro players like to adopt. We're still suffering the emotional scarring left after extensive flaming when we last tried to play *DotA*. It's important for Valve and Hidden Path to build a matchmaking system that works. That means, in the words of Valve's Chet Faliszek, "If you're playing against PS3 players, that just means that they're as good as you."

The game will include a number of new maps, but will also bring a few remakes of classic maps like de_dust. There will also be new game modes but we're not yet sure what the details are.

Expect a public beta sometime this year, and a release in early 2012 on PC, Mac, PS3 and Xbox 360, although Xbox players won't be able to join in the cross-platform fray due to restrictions by Microsoft.

Keep carrying the torch

The highly-anticipated *Torchlight II* finally has a price. Players can expect to pay $20 (R150) for the title when it's made available some time in 2011, currently only on PC. In addition, Runic Games has confirmed the fourth and final playable class for the game – the spell-casting Embermage, who will join the Berserker, Outlander and Engineer.

For those not in the know, *Torchlight II* is the sequel to Runic Games' indie hack-n-slash dungeon crawler that managed to sell over one million copies. The game will have support for single player, or online and LAN-based co-operative play. The first *Torchlight* was hardly as well-known as its sequel but carried the same price. If our estimates are correct, expect *Torchlight II* to perform much better than its predecessor.



Let's do the time warp again



After just 18 years, Germans are finally allowed to buy a copy of *DOOM* that doesn't come from the top shelf of a back room in an apartment upstairs from a petrol station in a dodgy neighbourhood. That's right, the German Federal Department for Media Harmful to Young Persons (the Bundesprüfstelle) has lifted the ban of sale of this 1993 title, officially granting it a 16+ age restriction.

After some prodding from Bethesda Softworks, which now handles the distribution of id Software titles, the Bundesprüfstelle caved on their ancient ban because they feel that *DOOM* is "now only of artistic and scientific interest and will not appeal to youngsters," and will never be played by kids younger than 16. If anything, this is likely to drive them to do just that, but it does bring up an interesting point: just because it's dated, is *DOOM* any less immersive for a modern audience – especially one that might only play it for the first time? Is that immersion any less "dangerous" now that it was back when the game was banned? *[Just shows how flimsy this argument is. Ed.]*

Shoot her!

// *ORION: Prelude* already boasts both of the things that have been proven to make any game automatically better: dinosaurs and jetpacks. The multiplayer shooter was missing just one thing, in that the dinosaurs previously weren't playable. Except now that's changed, so we can all go back to thinking this might be the greatest game the world has ever seen. Dinosaurs will be player controlled in a *Left 4 Dead*-style multiplayer mode called Dino Attack. Each class of dinosaur will have a certain role to play with its distinct abilities - similar to how the different Special Infected operate in *Left 4 Dead*.

Some PlanetSide 2 details for you

Sony Online Entertainment president, John Smedley, recently loosed a few details regarding their much-anticipated MMO, *PlanetSide 2*. After a huge amount of initial confusion due to badly translated info retrieved from a Chinese gaming website, Mr Smedley swooped in and saved the day by clarifying what he'd originally said for those of us who can't read anything but English.



First up, as has been stated before, the game will be free to play. Just what kind of free-to-play model will be employed by the game hasn't yet been decided, but Smedley mentioned that he likes the way *League of Legends* does things. He also said that he thinks Blizzard's controversial plan for *Diablo III*'s auction house is a good idea and will help with gold farmers - but nothing similar will be implemented in *PlanetSide 2* (for now, at least). Smedley also revealed that they're aiming to open up a beta for the game late this year, or early next year. One interesting final tidbit that Smedley left us with is that he believes that *Star Wars: The Old Republic* will be the last large-scale MMO to employ a monthly subscription-based model.



Under the bridge



"Trip, trap, trip, trap," went the youngest Billy Goat Gruff over the bridge.

"Who's that tripping over my bridge?" roared the Thing That Shall Not Be Named.

"It is only little old me," said the Billy goat.

"Now I'm coming to gobble you up," said the creature.

Have you identified this creature yet? Well done! You guessed it – it's a troll. Because I'm being all academic and stuff, I'll start from the beginning. Wikipedia (incidentally a bad academic source, but it serves our purpose here) describes an Internet troll as "an Internet term for a person who, through wilful action, attempts to disrupt a community or garner attention and controversy through provocative messages."

In traditional Scandinavian folklore a troll has very specific characteristics. For example, they are larger than humans, particularly ugly, strong, slow-moving and dim-witted. They also supposedly turn to stone when they come in contact with sunlight.

> **"Gaming forums in particular have become a swampy breeding ground for such creatures"**

Hmmm, yeah I can see the similarities.

So I began to wonder – what is the real attraction of being a troll? Well apart from the super-strength. I can relate to that.

It was with this in mind that I set off upon my quest. To investigate the bridge lurker that is the troll.

Unsurprisingly, just Googling "How to deal with Internet trolls" returned a wealth of results. After all, haven't trolls been around since the dawn of the Interwebz? What was unexpected however was the fact that not only are there online tactics for dealing with these creatures, but there are also categories. Categories! Teamtechnology.co.uk for example details the different types of trolls as Playtime Trolls, Tactical Trolls, Strategic Trolls and Domination Trolls. I wasn't aware that there were so many species, but I suppose that makes sense. After all, surely not all troll tactics describe a single entity?

There is even academic research about the troll. Judith Donath in her paper "Identity and Deception in the Virtual Community" (1998) discusses this concept with specific reference to the Internet troll. She argues that "Trolling is a game about identity deception, albeit one that is played without the consent of most of the players." (14)

And for the most part this is true. Trolls revel in anonymity. Even if they are recognised members of said community, they feel more confident knowing that they can hide behind their pseudonym. The flaw in this plan often lies in the fact that so many of us (gamers) are largely unimaginative when it comes to gaming pseudonyms. By this I mean that we use the same gamertag/handle on every gaming forum that we frequent, and the result is that if someone had real beef with a gaming troll, it really would be all too easy for us to track them down. A simple Google will suffice.

Unfortunately I can't reveal the result of my findings, as that would need a whole feature. And pictures. (Ed?) *[I'm guessing you'll do it for free? Ed]* I'm sure some trolls will argue that what I've written is not relevant. "What does this drivel have to do with gaming?" they ask. Well, since you mentioned it... Gaming forums in particular have become a swampy breeding ground for such creatures. They lurk in the dark corners of our forums, waiting for the moment when the littlest Billy Goat Gruff comes trip trapping across their bridge. And then they pounce! "Inflammatory/racist/sexist comment about this topic!" they roar.

They are the fanboys. The sexists. The racists. The ones that think they're better than you. They can design your magazine better. Produce your TV show better.

The trolls.

Pippa Tshabalala

Isn't that just super?

Uber Entertainment's *DotA*-like *Monday Night Combat* was damn good fun, and performed relatively well on the XBLA and Steam markets, but didn't manage to hold gamers' attention for much longer than a few months after its release. After spending a lot of time listening to player feedback and staying close to the drawing board, Uber is preparing to offer a sequel to the game that will fix all the little things that bothered people, and a whole lot more.

Super Monday Night Combat will boast a visual overhaul courtesy of a new engine, and will be free to play. The game will do away with instant kills – as Uber recognised the imbalance that these caused – and will no longer allow players to destroy turrets – this will have to be done by the opposing team's mobs. The developers have promised more maps – and larger ones at that – across a variety of environment types.

The game will release with three classes: The Veteran is similar to the Tank class, and is designed to soak up damage while dishing it out in close-quarters combat; the Gunslinger is a variant of the Sniper, with a wild West theme; and the Combat Girl – a support class who can summon robotic kittens (battle kittens?) and build turrets. Since Uber is in business to make money, don't expect the entire game to be free – you'll have to cough up some cash if you want access to the additional classes and customisable skins that will be released frequently. However, you'll be able to get a taste of those classes with a free trial; once that's up, you'll be able to decide whether or not they're worth your money.



A typical example of a field engineer.

Super MNC will be PC-exclusive for now; obviously the freemium pricing model requires a bit of political tinkering to get approved by Microsoft. No release date has been confirmed yet, but the game should be in beta by time you read this, with a release scheduled for shortly after.

Call of Duty: Domain Warfare finally comes to an end

Remember that whole spiel back in July when **modernwarfare3.com** showed up out of nowhere and cheekily redirected to *Battlefield 3*'s official site? Disappointingly, this obnoxious debacle was not the handiwork of *Battlefield* publisher/Activision's sworn enemy, Electronic Arts, but rather was the result of a *Battlefield* fan's attempt at baiting *Call of Duty* fans into unleashing an ALL CAPS RAGE!!!

A legal fiasco followed as Activision scrambled to reclaim the domain, stating that the owner had no rights to the domain and that it was being used in less-than-pleasant ways. At the time of writing, it's been two months since this all started and a verdict has been reached: Activision has been awarded the rights to the domain. Although there's still that little matter of **modernwarfare4.com**...

An imaginary Activision representative had this to say about putting this whole shebang to rest: "We're thrilled to have gotten our sh1t back. We've also gone ahead and registered domains for *Modern Warfare 5* through *20* - because you know we're not going to be done milking that cash monkey anytime soon, so we may as well get in there early to prevent this ever happening again."



Pre-purchase NAG right now and get a RedTide's Nipple Hat for Team Fortress 2!



Right, so that headline is total rubbish, but it's got you reading this, so it's a success. It also relates to Philip Reisberger's lofty critique of the approach taken by big publishers looking to break into the free-to-play arena. Reisberger, CGO of Bigpoint Games, told *EDGE* that he believes players should be offered the chance to pay for an advantage in F2P games. Bigpoint Games, in case you're wondering, is responsible for publishing/developing a number of browser-based, free-to-play titles. Notably, they're responsible for the development of titles like *Battlestar Galactica Online* and something called *The Pimps* (LOL), but they've also published such titles as *Puzzle Pirates*.

Reisberger says that Bigpoint understands the business model better because they've never shipped a retail game before. He also states that the big publishers are wrong to offer premium items that don't give players an advantage. "It wouldn't ruin the game," said Reisberger. "If selling an advantage ruins the game, you haven't done the balancing right... It's a delicate balance, though, and that's why I love my game designers. All of them have understood how to do this. If you have a sophisticated approach to free-to-play games, in the end you can monetize everything."

They're not impressed with the efforts of publishers like EA and Ubisoft, but Reisberger specifically sniped at Valve, who recently took their ever-popular *Team Fortress 2* into the free-to-play world. "There are millions, hundreds of millions of people willing to invest even though they aren't obliged to. The crucial part of the design is not having to invest, but wanting to. Most people in the Bigpoint universe don't ever pay. But if they want to pay, don't just offer hats – offer them something that will help them."

Quantic Dream loses millions to second-hand market

// Paris based game developer Quantic Dream has given us titles like *Fahrenheit* (also known as *Indigo Prophecy*) and *Heavy Rain*. Co-founder Guillaume de Fondaumiere claims that his company lost between €5 and €10 million to second-hand sales of their excellent PlayStation 3 exclusive, *Heavy Rain*.

Speaking to GamesIndustry.biz, de Fondaumiere blamed the recent recession for the rise of second-hand game sales. He then went on to say that the second-hand market is the "number one problem right now in the industry."

"I can take just one example of *Heavy Rain* - we basically sold to date approximately two million units, we know from the trophy system that probably more than three million people bought this game and played it. On my small level it's a million people playing my game without giving me one cent. And my calculation is, as Quantic Dream, I lost between €5 and €10 million worth of royalties because of second hand gaming."

This, de Fondaumiere believes, is a problem that all developers and publishers have to fix together. He admitted that he thought that games were too expensive and that this was part of the reason why the second-hand market existed in the first place. In admitting this, de Fondaumiere adds his name to a growing list of game developers who have voiced their concerns about the price of games; Bethesda's Todd Howard (director for *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*) recently said similar.



Ethics versus effect



Once upon a time, I played this lightweight RPG game on Facebook. I can't remember what it was called, but you got to control a little bunny who went out and fought spiders and bees and stuff. Combat was brain-shrinkingly simple: you had to click the "Attack" button over and over again until either you or your opponent died. Then you'd return from the battle with some money, go to the in-game shop, buy a better weapon for your bunny and get right back to fighting the same spiders and bees, except these ones had more health and damage and it would take you several more clicks to finish the fight.

Man, that was a horrifically boring game. And I vaguely recall playing it for three solid hours.

If we're really, truly honest with ourselves, we can all probably admit to playing these timewasters at some point or another. Take *Farmville*, for instance. It's a blatantly uninspired chore of a game that doesn't have any real depth or intrigue, but it also happens to be one of the most popular apps on Facebook. People keep finding reasons to return to it even though careful observation will reveal that, yes, it really *is* a waist-high river of crap flowing through Hurrdurr Valley.

> **"When you're a game designer and you know about these sort of tricks, it's very tempting to use them. "**

It's a weird thing, actually. But it's a frighteningly well-known and deliberate effect that some game designers actively strive towards: no matter how inferior the core gaming experience may be, there's lots of things which you can add to any title that will poke at our psychology in just the right manner. *Farmville* does this in two ways: first by punishing players when they leave for too long (crops withering and whatnot), and secondly by using the "social" aspect of the game to enforce peer pressure: you promised to help Wendy with her crops every Wednesday, so you'd be a complete jerk if you ditched that arrangement for something stupid like *working*.

After all, the only effort needed from you is some simple button pressing. And hey, if you're willing to fork out just a *tiny* bit of cash, that whole routine will become even easier!

When you're a game designer and you know about these sort of tricks, it's very tempting to use them. Most of them can be characterised as nasty little psychology hacks which require little effort from the developer but translate into quick and easy rewards (usually increased playtime, an important measure for subscription-based games like *WoW*). The *Desktop Dungeons* alpha, for example, greatly extended its lifespan by offering tiny incremental rewards for completing different combinations of gameplay: win X dungeon with Y class. Now win that same dungeon with seventeen OTHER classes. Et cetera et cetera.

I'm not saying that a game employing these tricks can't be fun, but it has a lot more integrity – and is far more worth the time invested – when the hacks aren't used. This is an important factor to consider from the perspective of the designer ("am I creating a worthwhile experience, or one that only *seems* worthwhile?") and is a great way to start making sharper, more engaging situations for your players. Or, you know, just not deliberately wasting their time for your own gain. It probably translates into a karma thing somehow.

Rodain Joubert

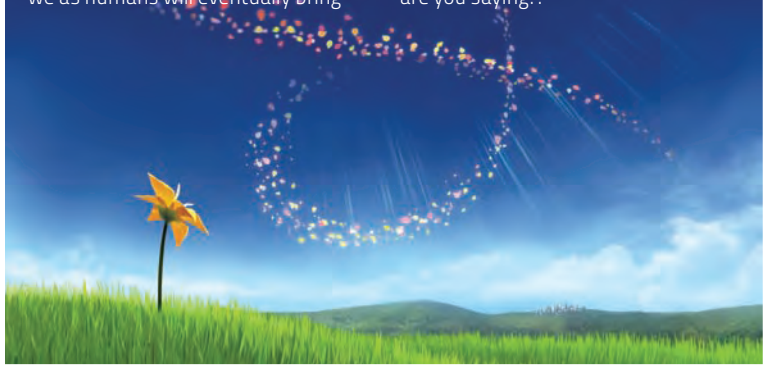
FOX News hates flowers!

FOX News is back in the news again, accusing videogames of destroying the world, murdering puppies on an hourly basis and regularly setting fire to old folks. This time, their irresponsibly unprofessional (but wonderfully hilarious) argument is somehow more bonkers than ever. They've accused certain games of promoting a "liberal agenda" with their environmentally conscious themes. Wait... Wait, what?

Speaking to FOX News was online radio presenter (and probably alcohol hobbyist, as well as full-time nutjob) T.J. McCormack, who accused certain games of being tools of the "green police" and believes that they're using scare tactics and guilt to promote a political agenda. Three games in particular sprung to mind – *SimCity Societies*, *Flower* and *Fate of the World*. Seriously. *Societies* challenged players to build environmentally friendly, sustainable cities. *Fate of the World* sees us trying to save the world from the inevitable doom that we as humans will eventually bring upon ourselves if we're not careful. And *Flower* has, well... it's got flowers. Is FOX News actually so bored of whining about videogames being the cause for every violent crime ever committed that they've now turned to bashing games that attempt to promote a little environmental awareness?

Just in case it wasn't perfectly clear how delightfully insane everyone involved in this ridiculous display of "quality journalism" is, here are a couple of utterly mad (regardless of context) quotes from McCormack to hammer it home: "These guys have kids with sweaty palms, and freaking out that they're not going to kill a bunch of virtual polar bears ... virtual polar bears!" Later, he went on, not allowing a little thing like, you know, making sense get in his way: "... It's also boring. It's also boring! These are not games, there's a game that teaches kids how to do a tad sale! Recyclables!"

LOL. Good lord man - what the hell are you saying?!





The final frontier is finally free

Cryptic Studios' *Star Trek Online* has suffered from poor performance since its launch early last year. Despite a number of improvements made to the gameplay and underlying architecture, bringing back players who felt burned by its original offering has proven too difficult to overcome without resorting to the inevitable shift to free-to-play. Hey, it worked for *Age of Conan*.

STO's freebie version will run in tandem with the regular paid-for version, and will give players access to a large portion of the game – the entire storyline as well as all classes, skills and spaceships – but will limit F2P players' access to certain non-essential components.

While F2P players will not have a reduced character level cap, they will be limited to two characters per account, and those characters will have a reduced inventory size and credit storage limit. Free players will have limited access to Create a Fleet (guild creation) and won't be able to access any part of the user-generated content in Foundry Creator, nor can they build their own missions. Additionally, players will see restrictions in in-game chat, forums, mail and customer service, and will be subjected to advertisements in the In-Game Vivox Voice Chat system.

Despite the restrictions, this is one of the more relaxed F2P offerings out there, and should be just the ticket to get new and returning players into the game to see how far things have come in the last year.



Elite in every sense of the word

Call of Duty: Elite – Activision's upcoming social networking and matchmaking system for *Call of Duty Black Ops* and *Modern Warfare 3* – is going to cost you money if you want the "Pro" version – almost as much money as an Xbox LIVE Gold account. At £34.99 (R400, excluding local markup) for a 12-month subscription, it's clear that the publisher isn't out to make any friends, but what exactly do you get for your hard-earned (or begged) cash?

The features list is impressive, but it's the 20 items of DLC to be released over a period of nine months that strikes us as the most interesting. Of course, that's *20 items of DLC*, which, outside of the Elite context, is bordering on absurd. We sincerely hope that the developers will be able to keep the game balanced with that amount of content potentially dividing the community. The "nine months" also raises an eyebrow; this is a year-long subscription; what is going to happen to the game after nine months?

Other features in Elite Pro include: prized events and operations; access to official leagues; advanced clan features like operations, clan level gains, and exclusive title cards and emblems; access to pro video guides for each map and weapon, as well as general professional tactics; access to Elite TV – episodic video entertainment made by "top talent"; and more.



Moore's Law proves itself again

Did you know that *Max Payne 3*'s release is in less than six months time? Do you even know why that's a big deal? Shame on you if you don't, but thankfully there's no reason to panic if you're scratching your head in amazement that some fat, balding alcoholic is getting people excited: Rockstar Games will release a port of the first title for mobile phones.

Yes, it's a funny world where a ten year-old AAA title gets a port to mobile, but here's the stranger thing: it's going to sport higher-resolution textures and overall improved visuals, as well as other unconfirmed new features. It'll supposedly even support wired external controllers, but we're not entirely sure how that's going to work. No platforms have been confirmed, but expect the usual iOS and Android love – possibly even Windows Phone 7.

// **MWEB have confirmed that they will be providing local ranked servers for *Battlefield 3*.** All game modes will be supported, including the 64-player Conquest mode, and will be run on brand new, state-of-the-art hardware to ensure the best possible gaming performance. MWEB will also be hosting a number of beta servers for those who will be able to get their hands on the beta before the game launches.

// With *Sonic 4* performing decently, SEGA has decided that now is a great time to **re-release *Sonic CD* on PC, XBLA and PSN,** as well as iOS, Android and Windows Phone 7. The port will feature widescreen support and achievements, and is due out some time in Q4 this year.

// The Wii U's release is fast approaching, and Square Enix have announced that they will release ***Dragon Quest X* for both the original Wii and Wii U.** The HD version will boast improved visuals, and players on either platform will be able to play with each other in this online RPG.

// Since the release of *Split/Second*, developer Black Rock has had a tough time keeping afloat following disputes with publisher/owner Disney Interactive. Now, sadly, **the company has been forced to close its doors.** At the time, they were working on a F2P *DotA*-style game provisionally titled *Champions Alliance*. Two studios, Roundcube Entertainment and Shortround Games, have been founded by many of former employees at Black Rock.



You no speak Americano



Unrelated people sit huddled on the floor around a wallsocket. Such scenes are common in airports across America. For many Americans, flying domestically is a regular commute. Forward-thinking airports now have dedicated areas for sitting by power outlets. There is a teenage girl in the group; I notice she is on *Second Life*. She is chatting away furiously; I don't recognize the area she's in. Her avatar is quaintly average, a slider-driven recreation of her real body. *Second Life*'s character creator is more than sufficient for Real Body. If you're looking for something exotic and custom, then real money is involved. I have a Derp brand anthropomorphic bovine avatar myself. He's cute. A little pedestrian, but it suits my needs and it was cheap. The Derp avatar crafters do exemplary work. I respect master artisans. Custom-built avatars to one's exacting specifications cost upwards of $450. There are a lot of other things

> **"I once had to explain to a driver that videogames don't magically appear. "**

I'd rather spend that kind of money on.

Further in, the terminal is full of the Regulars. Looking around me: several people checking things on smartphones. Even more typing away furiously at Business Stuff on their iPads. Some kids have PSPs (regular and Go), some have DSs (phat but mostly Lite and XL). A few 3DS show up, more popular now with the reduced price. Practically everyone has a netbook, or a laptop. Most of these people will occasionally look around to see if an outlet has opened up.

This particular airport I'm in is not one of the forward-thinking ones. A small cheer erupts near one outlet, a person fished a multi-plug out of his backpack. One girl looks particularly relieved to finally be charging her cell phone. My own cell phone died one layover back already. I did not have time to find power.

Earlier in the week, the elderly driver taking me to the airport is surprised. The idea that an 8-year old *Marvel vs. Capcom 3* player could be sponsored amuses him. Up until he started asking me about competitive gaming, he had no idea it even existed. It came up in conversation when he enquired as to what I do for a living. Sometimes, I'm tempted to lie. It's easier than trying to explain videogames to people. The driver is in his late 60s. He has never left America. I've met people here who have never even left their own home town. The driver is utterly bemused that videogames are a billion-dollar industry. He always thought they were just a tiny distraction for kids, the man explains. It's a sentiment I've heard many times before.

I once had to explain to a driver that videogames don't magically appear. That they are productions, like movies, that involve thousands of individuals. Voice actors, writers, artists, directors, producers, shareholders, advertising agents... "I always thought a guy pressed a button, and out popped a game," he said. The viewpoint isn't as ignorant as it sounds, just one of a generational divide. Many, who missed the Digital Revolution, know only the Industrial Age: prefab presses, where liquid metal goes in one end and a steel rod comes out the other. An age where material A becomes Part A after a button press. I'm oversimplifying, of course. But that's the refuge of those who don't lack details.

Miktar Dracon

Team Meat, Zen Studios punch each other up over XBLA treatment

Team Meat, they of *Super Meat Boy* fame, have been pretty vocal in the past about their dissatisfaction with developing for Microsoft's Game Feast promotion back in 2010 and their general dislike for the way Microsoft treats XBLA developers. They recently raised the issue once again on the IndieGames Podcast, stating that *Super Meat Boy* didn't get the promotion it was verbally promised, which was supposed to include a review by Major Nelson and an exclusive launch week, neither of which actually happened.

After this, Zen Studios (developer of *Pinball FX2* - which was released during the same Game Feast promotion) unexpectedly leapt into the fray to defend The Big M, revealing that they'd had a much more pleasant experience in their dealings with the folks at Xbox HQ. They released a public email, arguing that *Super Meat Boy* received "the MOST promo out of thd [sic] deal as they were the poster child for the whole campaign." They also cite the Microsoft "brain trust" as the reason for *Pinball FX2*'s continued success.

What really sent Team Meat into a frenzy was the conclusion of the email: "So why all the backlash? What are they not telling you? Is this a desperate attempt at marketing, PR...SALES? How come no one has mentioned that these guys have made millions - is it to protect their 'we are indie and poor' image?"

Oh no they didn't! Team Meat then vulgarly responded with this on Twitter: "so, what the [f%@k] is your problem? you obviously have no [f$!king] clue what we went through to talk [sh1t] like that publicly." After a bit of nasty bashing back and forth, the two developers settled their differences and Team Meat even jokingly requested an *SMB* skin for *Pinball FX2*. Still, it made for a fascinating little battle, one party utterly dissatisfied by their treatment at the hands of Microsoft, while the other claims nothing but sunshine and daisies. It's not the first time this argument has been had, and it certainly won't be the last.



The missing link in human (r)evolution

You'll read all about it somewhere further on in this issue, but here's the short of it: we loved *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*. But, being a story-driven, linear affair, squeezing in meaningful extra content would prove tricky had the developers not already made some room for it. It didn't seem like such a big deal, but during the game, player character Adam Jenson is off the grid for three days. He's unable to account for his disappearance but we were so wrapped up in the main story that we didn't think much of it. As it turns out, Jenson didn't just vanish during that time, he experienced the happenings in the game's first DLC – *Missing Link*.

The mini story arc kicks off with Jenson smuggling himself aboard a freighter destined for a mysterious location, but when he awakens, he finds himself held captive by Belltower (a tough-as-nails security firm) agents.



Shortly after, those agents disable Jenson's augmentations, forcing him to rely on his basic human abilities and befriend unlikely allies in his attempt to escape.

At the time of writing, no release date or price has been confirmed, but we wouldn't be surprised to see *Missing Link* available within the next month, or even by time you read this.



Creative lead bored of Halo 4

Halo 4 is one of the most anticipated upcoming Xbox 360 exclusives, but despite the enthusiasm for the series held by millions of gamers around the world, one rather important chap just can't seem to get it up for the game anymore. The project's creative director, Ryan Payton, has resigned from developer 343 Industries, citing his lack of excitement and inability to dedicate himself to what he calls a "crazy endeavour".

"After a few years, there came a point where I wasn't creatively excited about the project anymore," Payton told Kotaku in a recent interview.

"The *Halo* I wanted to build was fundamentally different and I don't think I had built enough credibility to see such a crazy endeavour through."

After witnessing friend and developer Jake Kazdal at work on indie RTS *Skulls of the Shogun*, Payton realised that he was wasting his time being stuck on a project that didn't speak to his values and which he no longer cared for.

Now free from his corporate shackles, Payton has formed a studio by the name of Camouflaj, which already has two titles underway. Little is known about these projects, but Payton's goal is to have one billion people playing them at once. Even Facebook falls short of that number of active users, but we can't think what other platform could potentially allow for that many players at once.

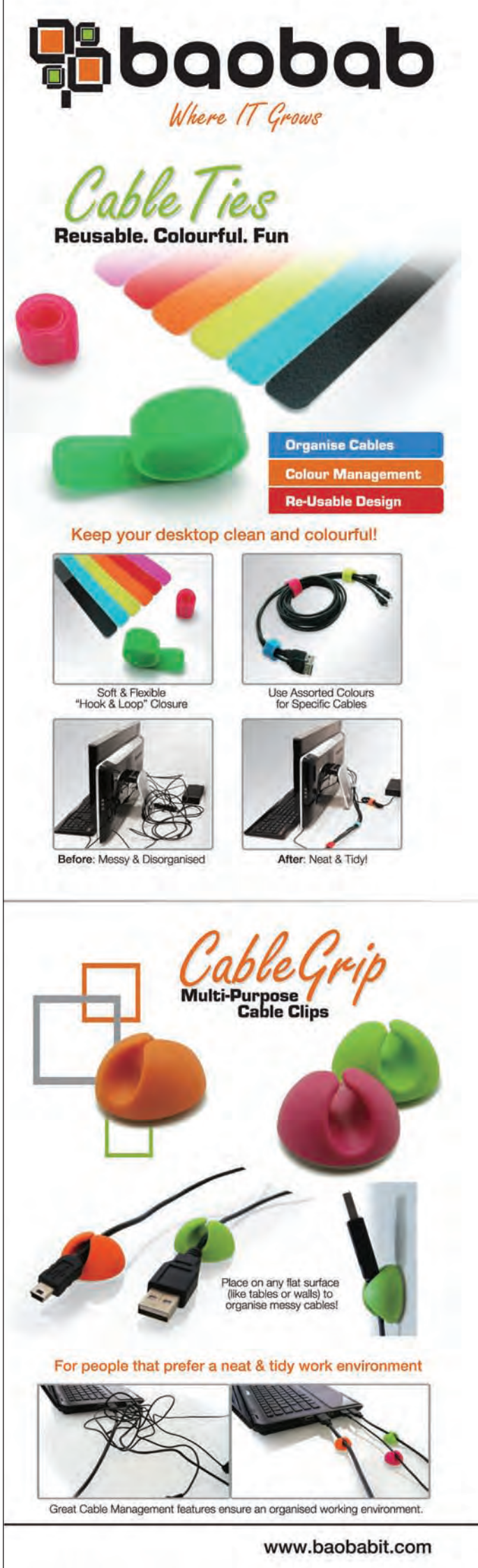
Project Tens of Millions of Dollars

// It seems EA's Online Pass system (also known as Project Ten Dollar) has been good to the publisher. For those with a puzzled look on their face, Online Passes are essentially a way for publishers to ensure that they make money off of used game sales (which they normally don't) by shipping their games with one-time access codes to their respective multiplayer components. Anyone who buys the game secondhand has to pay a fee to access the online side of things. It's been a highly controversial system since its inception – but apparently it's quite effective.

"The revenues we derive from that haven't been dramatic," said EA CFO Eric Brown to Gamasutra. "I'd say they're in the $10-$15 million range since we initiated the program." Seems like a pretty dramatic number to us. It's been so successful for EA that a number of other publishers (Sony, THQ and Ubisoft among them) have been using Online Passes of their own for a while now.

"In a lot of ways **I see the PC as potentially a re-emerging sort of platform.** I think that the PC has always offered ways to approach games that you can't necessarily approach on console, even if it's just because of UI restraints."

-Tom Chilton, lead programmer on *World of Warcraft*



Distributors

Apex Interactive	[011] 796-5040
ASUS SA	[011] 783-5450
BT Games	0861 4 GAMES
Comstar	[011] 314-5812
Core Gaming	[087] 940-3000
Corex	[011] 655-8800
EA South Africa	[011] 516-8300
Evetech Solutions	[012] 326-6547
ESET	0860 313 872
Frontosa	[011] 466-0038
Incredible Connection	0860 011 700
Intel Corporation	[011] 806-4530
Look & Listen	[011] 467-3717
Megarom	[011] 361-4800
Microsoft	0860 225 567
Nu Metro Interactive	(011) 340 9300
Phoenix Software	[011] 803-5437
Prima Interactive	[011] 799-7800
Rectron	[011] 203-1000
Samsung	0860 726 7864
Sonic Informed	[011] 314-5800
Ster Kinekor Entertainment	[011] 445-7700
TVR	[011] 807-1390

If your company isn't listed here, phone *NAG* on [011] 704-2679.



Support Lines

Got a legal boxed game and need some technical help? Before you call please do the following. Update your system software, drivers and have a look online for a game patch. Just these simple tasks eliminate 93% of all problems – it's a made up statistic but probably close enough.

Publishers: Activision / Blizzard 2K Games / Rockstar / Ubisoft Codemasters / NC-Soft / Namco-Bandai
E-mail: support@xtremems.co.za
Number: 0861 987 363

Publishers: Microsoft Xbox
Number: 0800 991 550

Publisher: Electronic Arts
e-mail: zasupport@ea.com
Telephone: 0860 EAHELP/324357

Syndicate reboot leaked ahead of magazine reveal



It's been rumoured for months and finally revealed: EA and Starbreeze Studios (*Chronicles of Riddick* and *The Darkness*) have been hard at work on a reboot to the 1993 cult action-shooter *Syndicate*. A mere week before the game was supposed to be debuted in Swedish videogame magazine Gamesreactor, the first few screenshots and game information was leaked via EA's Origin before being hastily removed by the publisher. It was all too late however, as online gaming forum NeoGAF grabbed the information and assets before EA could expunge it from the internet.

As previously hinted at, the *Syndicate* reboot will be an FPS and from the sounds of things will be very similar to another recently revived cyberpunk series, *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*. In the world of *Syndicate* there are no governments or politicians controlling countries. Instead, the first world is controlled by massive corporations known as Syndicates and each Syndicate controls various territories all over the globe. In the world of *Syndicate*, "business is war".

You'll take on the role of a syndicate agent called Miles Kilo and you'll get loads of cybernetic enhancements to make your job easier. These enhancements are dubbed "Chips" in the game and they will allow you to do things like slow down time and see through walls. If you think this is all too similar to *Deus Ex* then you'd be right; however do bear in mind that the *Syndicate* franchise came into existence a full seven years before *Deus Ex*.

Not much else was revealed in the leak other than the game will feature co-op support for up to four players, which is very reminiscent of the original, isometric *Syndicate* in which you controlled a team of four syndicate agents. To add to the nostalgia, the four-player co-op will have its own set of nine missions all of which will be based on missions from the original *Syndicate* from 1993. And yes, the Persuadatron will be back.

"I hope that *Ultima* does survive forever, yet I also, of course, have my own very particular ideas for what *Ultima* can and should become over time. Who knows? **You never know what's going to happen in the future...** the door is always open if they were ever interested."

-Richard Garriott, creator of *Ultima Online*

Head in the clouds

// Cloud gaming! We don't really care about it, but THQ CEO Brian Farrell sure does. The publisher frequently offers deals via the cloud-based gaming service OnLive. At the Cloud Gaming USA conference, Farrell said that he foresees a move to all-digital game distribution that "will result in a lower cost for the hardware manufacturer, which will result in a lower cost to consumers and therefore a lower entry point, thus driving more mass market adoption." He doesn't just mean on the PC, but on consoles as well - although he didn't necessarily specify cloud gaming or OnLive.

There's also the matter of downloadable content, with Farrell revealing that *Saints Row: The Third* is going to have a whole bunch of it. The plan is to follow the game's release with 40 weeks of DLC. "We totally change how we keep consumers engaged for a very long time," said Farrell. "We intend to create an online digital ecosystem that keeps them interested for a year or more." It's not dissimilar to what THQ attempted (but failed) with *MX vs. ATV Alive* (which was released at a lower-than-usual price of $39.99), except *Saints Row: The Third* won't have purposefully reduced content and will not be released at a lower price point. Farrell went on to reveal why they think *MX vs. ATV Alive* didn't do as well as they'd planned: "What we found was unlike free to play, $39.99 just wasn't low enough to drive a big enough install base to push the level of DLC we had initially hoped for."

msi™

MSI recommends Windows® 7.

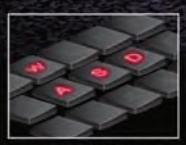
GAMING G SERIES

BORN msi TO GAME

BE THE KING OF THE WORLD



GT780



Gaming Keyboard with Backlit



Max 32GB RAM Upgrade

- The Latest 2nd Generation Intel® Core™ i7 Processor
- Genuine Windows® 7 Ultimate
- NVIDIA® GeForce GTX 560M graphics card (with GDDR5 1.5GB VRAM)
- Exclusive DDR3 SO-DIMM x 4 slot Design (Max. support 32GB RAM)
- THX TruStudio Pro Provides Excellent Surround Sound
- USB 3.0

Keyboard by steelseries

The best gamer's keyboard from SteelSeries with best key layout, multi 10 key response and better force feedback.

Sound by DYNAUDIO

30% more sound detail and sound stage enhance for best sound experience with "Sound by Dynaudio" technology.

Your PC, simplified.

Windows 7

www.msi.com

The Windows® 7 taskbar is still the same familiar place for switching between windows. But now it's easier to see, more flexible, and more powerful.

Plus-sized Bats

Batman: Arkham City is getting a New Game Plus mode. What that means is once you're done with the story on normal or higher difficulty, you can start a new game with all your swanky Bat gadgets and upgraded abilities that you unlocked in your first playthrough intact. That's not all there is to it either, according to Rocksteady Studios European community manager Sarah Wellock.

In New Game Plus mode, enemies no longer display a counter indicator above their heads - which makes the combat much more interesting and challenging. New Game Plus is also set on a single difficulty level, with tougher enemies and bosses early on to ensure that all your powerful upgrades don't make the experience a cakewalk.



EA's Origin hits 4 million users

Publisher Electronic Arts launched its Steam rival a few months ago and has already attracted about 4 million registered accounts according to the company's chief financial officer, Eric Brown. Many PC gamers are lamenting the fact that there's another digital distribution program on the scene that's vying for their system resources, but they're just going to have to suck it up if they hope to play games like *Battlefield 3* and *Star Wars: The Old Republic*.

With the increase in user accounts comes an increase in available games via the distribution channel. Brown confirmed that third-party titles will be making their way to Origin in the near future, which moves the fledgling service out of the realms of a simple online presence to that of a serious competitor to Valve's offerings. All that's needed now is for the South African pricing to be sorted out; all too often it costs you less to buy a physical, retail version of the game than it does to download a digital copy off Origin.

Interestingly, there are no PC games out as yet that require Origin to be installed, which means that those 4 million accounts are people who have voluntarily signed up for EA's online shopfront.

Look & Listen



Pre-orders / www.lookandlisten.co.za

PC

Batman: Arkham City	October
Saints Row: The Third	November 18th
The Lord of the Rings: War in the North	December 1st

Xbox 360

Pro Evolution Soccer 2012	October 16th
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	November 8th
Need for Speed: The Run	November 18th

PS3

Battlefield 3	October 28th
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	October 28th
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	November 15th

Wii

The Adventures of Tintin: The Game	October 21st
NCIS	October 28th
Happy Feet Two	November

3DS

The Sims 3: Pets	October 21st
Sonic Generations	November
Generator Rex	November 11th

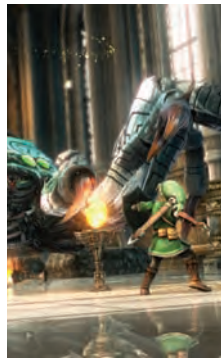
DS

Spider-Man: Edge of Time	October 14th
Zoobles Bundle	November 4th
Bakugan: Rise of the Resistance	November 14th

Kinect

Raving Rabbids: Alive & Kicking	November 4th
The Black Eyed Peas Experience	November 11th
Your Shape: Fitness Evolved 2	November 11th

Wii U in "development hell"?



// According to sources over at hardware leakers 01.net, Nintendo's upcoming Wii U is struggling with teething problems. They go so far as to say that it's in "development hell," with people accusing Nintendo of rushing the console's production to get it out there as quick as possible.

Specifically, the rush has allegedly led to "inadequate" streaming and wireless functionality, with reports that Nintendo is utilising a cheap chipset as well. The wireless controller, which caused a massive stir in the community when it was first revealed, apparently doesn't even work, leading most developers to use the wired version - but those occasionally don't work either. "Many developers are feeling lost, their progress impeded by a distinct lack of visibility, their working hours by the quasi-paced daily software updates," say these anonymous sources.

This isn't the first time Nintendo's been accused of taking shortcuts to release earlier. If these rumours prove true, it's a real shame - because the console holds so much promise.



Great Destinations

UNDER R1000

PRE-ORDER THESE GAMES IN STORE NOW



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIPS

WRC 2 INCLUDES:

- Return trip to South Africa
- Stay several days
- A wide range of cars to choose from
- Several challenges
- Free African Safari DLC

PRE-ORDER PRICE

R224.99 PC

RELEASE DATE: 21 OCTOBER

SAVE R25

WRC 2 is available on PC, Xbox 360, Playstation 3



DRAGON INFESTED LANDS

SKYRIM INCLUDES:

- Return trip to South Africa
- Stay several days
- Full tour of the land of Skyrim
- Dragons, monsters and demons
- Fantastic medieval weapons

PRE-ORDER PRICE

R349.99 PC

RELEASE DATE: 11 NOVEMBER

SAVE R50

Skyrim is available on PC, Xbox 360, Playstation 3



WRESTLEMANIA

WWE 12 INCLUDES:

- Return trip to South Africa
- Stay several days
- 77 opponents to beat
- The best seats in the house
- Multiple finishing moves to learn

PRE-ORDER PRICE

R349.99 WII

RELEASE DATE: 21 OCTOBER

SAVE R50

WWE is available on WII, Xbox 360, Playstation 3



STEELPORT CITY

SAINTS ROW 3 INCLUDES:

- Return trip to South Africa
- Stay several days
- Full tour of Steelport City
- Rich gang culture
- Incredible weapons selection

PRE-ORDER PRICE

R349.99 PC

RELEASE DATE: 18 NOVEMBER

SAVE R50

Saints Row 3 is available on PC, Xbox 360, Playstation 3



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

PES 2012 INCLUDES:

- Return trip to South Africa
- Stay several days
- Best seats at all the stadiums
- Coaching a team of your choice
- A chance to play all UEFA teams

PRE-ORDER PRICE

R224.99 WII PS2 PSP

RELEASE DATE: 16 OCTOBER

SAVE R25

PES 2012 is available on WII, PC, Xbox 360, PS3, PS2, PSP



A GALAXY FAR FAR AWAY

RATCHET & CLANK ALL 4 ONE INCLUDES:

- Return trip to South Africa
- Stay several days
- Full tour of the galaxy
- An incredible adventure through space
- Loads of cool weapons

PRE-ORDER PRICE

R524.99 PS3

RELEASE DATE: 19 OCTOBER

SAVE R75

Rachet & Clank: All 4 one is available on Playstation 3



THE BEST GAMES GUARANTEED.

Look & Listen

For the Fans

These pre-order prices are only available in-store

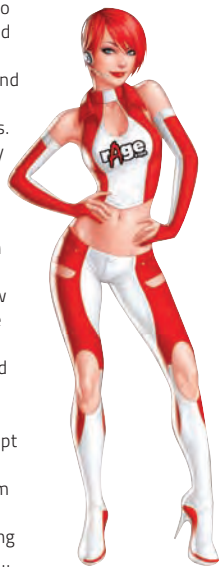
*Pre-order terms and conditions apply. These can be viewed in store or online at www.lookandlisten.co.za/terms/. While stocks last. Availability and prices subject to change at the discretion of the supplier. Not all items are available in all stores - please call your local store to enquire on availability.

What's that noise?!

Thanks to the redesign we were rushed for time to come up with a new story for the badger. So, instead, we'll just tell you the truth. We're sick of him; we stole him from a stupid flash video like years ago and kept modifying him with more and more ridiculous ideas and stories. We've effectively washed away everything that was good and wholesome with our plagiarised garbage and now it's time to move on. Whoa! That felt good. Instead we're going to whore out a marketing concept and make you find Scarlett from rAge. See if you can find her hiding in the magazine...

Clue: It's in NAG magazine somewhere.

Send your sighting to **ed@nag.co.za** with the subject line **'October Scarlett'** and don't get it wrong or deleted it will be.



September Winner



Damian van Dyk, Page 40

Win!

An Xbox 6 in 1 Starter Kit valued at R499. Sponsored by Bowline and Dream Gear.



Caption of the Month

Every month we'll choose a screenshot from a random game and write a bad caption for it. Your job is to come up with a better one. The winner will get a copy of *PES 2012* for PS3 from Ster-Kinekor Entertainment. Send your captions to ed@nag.co.za with the subject line 'October Caption'.





NAG'S LAME ATTEMPT AT HUMOUR / "Stop, Hammer time!"



LAST MONTHS WINNER / Tower was hoping to get the spare.

- Matt Frese

Blizzard will release six titles over the next three years

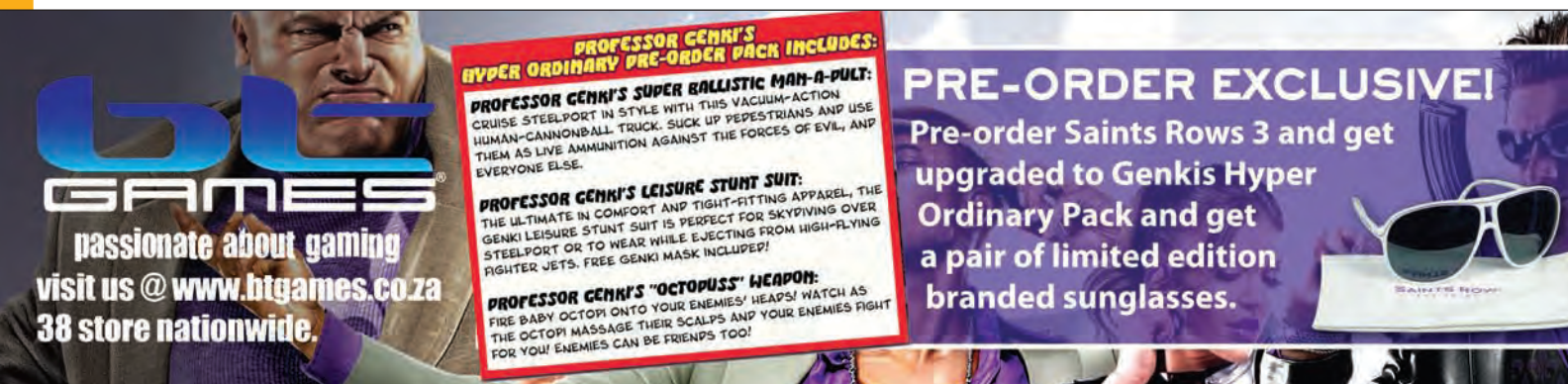
// At the recent Citi 2011 Technology Conference, COO of Activision Blizzard Thomas Tippl said that we can expect six "proven property" titles over the next three years. Of those six, five titles were confirmed by the COO: two expansions for *World of Warcraft*, the last two chapters of *StarCraft II* and *Diablo III*.

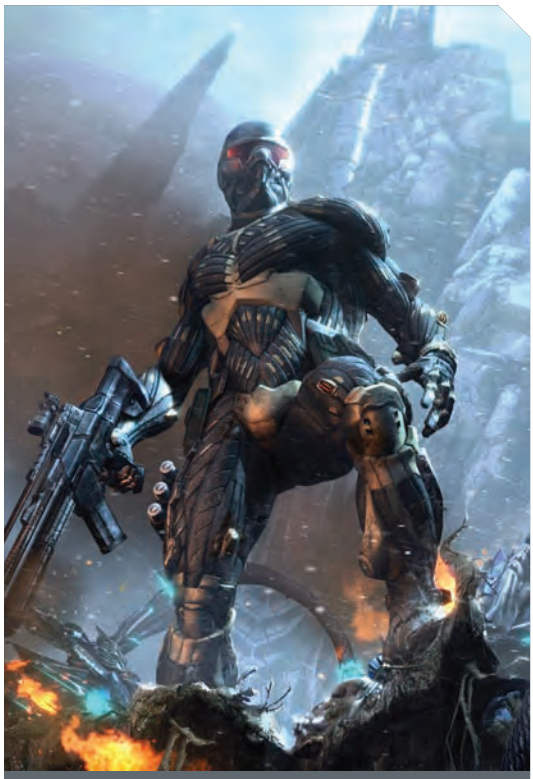
What exactly the sixth title might be is open for discussion. Some have suggested that it could be the oft mentioned new Blizzard MMO, which still goes by its codename *Titan*. Of course, Tippl did refer to the six titles as "proven property" and *Titan* is by no means an established Blizzard IP. With this in mind it seems likely that the sixth title will be an expansion to the still unreleased *Diablo III*.

Whatever the sixth title is, we can at least take solace in the knowledge that come 2014, all the waiting for these highly anticipated Blizzard games will be over. What will we have to look forward to once that happens?

"I'm not really an MMO guy. I respect them, I look at them, but I don't play them. **It feels more real to me when I'm the hero and it's crafted for that.** A community aspect to it, I recognise a lot of people would want that in a game like this, but it changes the flavour for me."

-Todd Howard, director on The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim





Crysis is heading to your console

Nearly four years ago Crytek and Electronic Arts unleashed *Crysis*; the PC Master Race gave a collective screech in horror as practically no rig was able to run it at max detail. At the time, only super-rich drug dealers who had the disposable income to build computers capable of running the Large Hadron Collider were able to run the game properly. This despite the fact that the LHC didn't even exist back then, which means that those super-computers also had to have Time-Travel chips. Yeah, expensive doesn't even begin to describe it.

Fortunately today's PCs can run *Crysis* quite happily, but if you haven't upgraded your PC in a while and you have either an Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3, then you're in luck. Crytek CEO Cevat Yerli has announced that the original game will be heading to consoles this October.

Naturally the game has been scaled down somewhat so that it runs properly on the consoles. Despite this, Crytek is referring to the console release as a "remastered" version as it will feature new particle effects, new lighting and streamlined Nanosuit controls. It still looks very impressive – as good as *Crysis 2* looks on consoles actually.

The game might be available by the time you read this; it's a download-only title for the time being so better up your cap limit. You can pick up the original *Crysis* via the PlayStation Network for $19.99 or Xbox Live Arcade for 1600 MS Points.

Release List

BT GAMES

Dates subject to change without notice

October: Week 1

Dark Souls	360 / PS3
MotionSports Adrenaline	360 / PS3
PowerUp Heroes	360
Rage	PC / 360 / PS3
The Penguins of Madagascar	360 / PS3 / Wii uDraw / DS

October: Week 2

Just Dance 3	360 / PS3 / Wii
Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure	PC / 360 / PS3 / Wii / 3DS
Spider-Man: Edge of Time	360 / PS3 / Wii / 3DS / DS
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	360 / PS3
Forza Motorsport 4	360
Xbox 360 Wireless Racing Wheel	360
Sesame Street: Once Upon a Monster	360

October:Week 3

The Adventures of Tintin: The Game	PC / 360 / PS3 / Wii / 3DS
Batman: Arkham City	PC / 360 / PS3
WWE '12	360 / PS3 / Wii
Dead Rising 2: Off the Record	PC / 360 / PS3
Monster High: Ghoul Spirit	Wii / DS
WRC 2	PC / 360 / PS3
Pro Evolution Soccer 2012	PC / 360 / PS3 Wii / PS2 / PSP
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	PS3
Airline Tycoon 2	PC
Dance Central 2	360
Medieval Moves: Deadmund's Quest	PS3
Move Cricket	PS3

October: Week 4

Generator Rex	360 / PS3 / Wii / 3DS / DS
James Noir's Hollywood Crimes	3DS
Imagine: Babyz	3DS
Imagine: Fashion Designer	3DS
Imagine: Horse Rider	3DS
Zhu Zhu Pets Princess - SAS	DS
Monopoly Collection	Wii
Hasbro Family Game Night 4: The Game Show	360 / PS3 / Wii

Ubisoft removes dodgy From Dust DRM

// Eric Chahi's *From Dust* enjoyed a highly successful release on XBLA. Yay! On PC, however, the game was met with a massive outcry from those who purchased the game via Steam. Damn! Complaints of shamefully shoddy porting, obnoxious glitches and Ubisoft's notoriously intrusive DRM service ruining the entire experience resonated across the Internet. It was such a nightmare that Ubisoft actually offered refunds to those who weren't happy with it.

Now, Ubisoft has taken another step towards making up for this mess: by removing their crappy DRM that requires constant authentication with Ubisoft's servers at all times while playing - a remarkably asinine requirement given that Steam functions perfectly well as DRM on its own. They've released a patch that allows you to play the game offline and now stores your saved games locally as opposed to storing them in a vault somewhere beneath Ubisoft headquarters. Unfortunately, the patch doesn't fix any of the PC version's other issues - which include a fixed frame rate, restrictive resolution choices and numerous bugs.



Top 8 NPCs in games

Being the hero who saves the day is great fun, but it's the NPCs (non-player characters) in a game that breathe life into game worlds that would otherwise be dead. Here is a list of the eight NPCs that stood out for us above all others.

8 Tychus Findlay – StarCraft II

Tychus plays the role of "a criminal with a heart (of money)" – he's there to balance out Jim Raynor's ego in *StarCraft II* and help players remember that there's not always a wholesome way to go about the business of saving humanity. He also throws a jukebox at Raynor, which anyone can agree makes for a better projectile weapon than any other entertainment device these days.



7 Cortana – Halo series

Before *Halo*, there was Cortana. Bungie used her as a part of their marketing campaign for the first game before its release, and gamers fell oddly in love with her. It's odd because she's not real, even in the game world context, despite some rather disturbing cosplay attempts made to be just like her.



6 Harold – Fallout series

When the player first meets Harold in *Fallout*, he's a relatively young ghoul* who seems to have a small plant (named Bob) growing out of his head. Being the relaxed kind of guy that Harold is, he's none-too bothered by Bob, but eventually becomes overrun by the plant and turns into a tree. Now he's practically a dryad.

*Technically Harold is not a ghoul, but a failed experiment of the FEV virus. Not quite super-mutant, not quite ghoul, in Tim Cain's words, "Harold is special."




DEAD ISLAND
A PARADISE TO DIE FOR
AVAILABLE NOW!
DEADISLAND.COM
available on
PS3
XBOX 360
PC DVD ROM
Distributed Exclusively by Apex Interactive Tel: (011) 796 5040
www.apexint.co.za Email: sales@apexint.co.za
All rights and trademarks and logos are copyright of their respective owners.
www.apexactive.co.za
DEEP SILVER
© Copyright 2011 and Published by Deep Silver, a division of Koch Media GmbH, Gewerbegebiet 1, 6604 Höfen, Austria. Developed 2011, Techland Sp. z o.o., Poland. © Copyright 2011, Chrome Engine, Techland Sp. z o.o. All rights reserved.

5 Alyx Vance – Half-Life 2

Gordon Freeman's close friend and ally, Alyx will help you get around the game world with her hacking skills. She's also just a really swell person, and manages to keep the game's mood light when she's around.



4 Catalina – GTA: San Andreas

Nothing says "crazy chick" like Catalina. We like to think that Carl Johnson should be able to handle even the wildest of women, but Catalina manages to almost break him down to a snivelling child within five minutes of meeting the poor guy.





3 Minsc – Baldur's Gate series

"Go for the eyes, Boo! Go for the eyes!" Thinking about it now, we can't even remember what Minsc brought to the *Baldur's Gate* table other than humour. He's a ranger, but that didn't stop us from handing him a sword and shield and sending him to the frontlines, just so that we could hear his hilarious war cries every time he was sent to his doom.

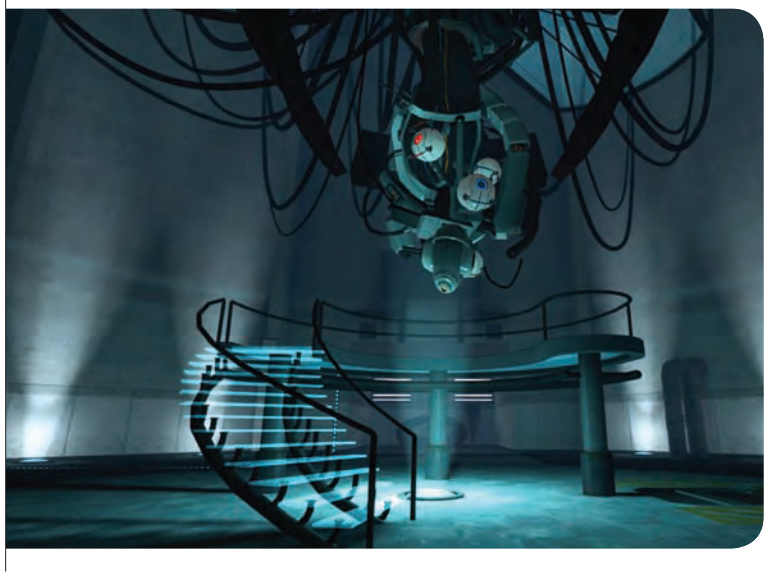
2 Murray – Monkey Island series

Introduced in *The Curse of Monkey Island*, Murray became an instant fan favourite for his blunt humour and habit of turning up in the all the wrong places. At one point in Curse, Murray falls to the floor and cracks his skull because, in his words, "I'm a skull."



1 GLaDOS – Portal series

Gaming's ultimate bad-girl, GLaDOS does whatever the hell she wants and can get away with it. She's pretty amusing in *Portal*, but practically hilarious in *Portal 2*. We love you GLaDOS, even though you're so damn evil.



Super-size your gaming!



TELEFUNKEN 40" HD READY LCD (TLCD-40FHDA)

WAS 4999.95

NOW 4499.95

*Please bring your TV license & ID

+



XBOX 360 4GB CONSOLE + KINECT + 3 GAMES
+ 3GB MUSICAWORLD INTERNET DATA BUNDLE PM
FOR 12 MONTHS ONLY*

4799.95

*Terms and Conditions apply

=

40" TV + KINECT BUNDLE

WAS 9799.95

NOW 7499.95

SAVE 2300



TELEFUNKEN 32" HD READY LCD (TLCD-32HD)

WAS 2999.95

NOW 2499.95

*Please bring your TV license & ID

+



XBOX 360 4GB CONSOLE + KINECT + 3 GAMES
+ 3GB MUSICAWORLD INTERNET DATA BUNDLE PM
FOR 12 MONTHS ONLY*

4799.95

*Terms and Conditions apply

=

32" TV + KINECT BUNDLE

WAS 7799.95

NOW 5499.95

SAVE 2300

Wanna WIN this? Find us on facebook/ musicasouthafrica to see how.

TVs available at the following stores only: • Sandton • Gateway • Rosebank • Cavendish Square • V&A Waterfront • Canal Walk.
Valid from 8 September - 26 October 2011. Limited stock available.

LIKE US ON *musicasouthafrica*

NEED HELP? CONTACT OUR FRIENDLY CALL CENTRE ON 0860 MUSICA (687 422)
ASK FOR TERMS & CONDITIONS FOR PRE-ORDER IN-STORE'S.
MONDAYS - FRIDAYS 08:00 - 17:30, SATURDAYS 08:00 - 13:00

ALL PRICES ARE INCLUSIVE OF TAX AND CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS. ERRORS AND OMISSIONS EXCLUDED. OFFER VALID UNTIL 26 OCTOBER 2011 OR WHILE STOCKS LAST. AVAILABLE AT SELECTED STORES. NO CLUBCARD POINTS EARNED ON GIFT CARD PURCHASES.

MUSICA
A WORLD AWAITS

DARK SOULS™





- PRE-ORDER NOW -



PRE-ORDER THE LIMITED EDITION FOR A STANDARD PRICE. THE LIMITED EDITION FEATURES:

- ORIGINAL GAME: DARK SOULS.
- MAKING-OF DVD: ALL THE CINEMATIC MATERIALS RELATED TO THE GAME - TRAILERS, DEV DIARIES, GAMEPLAY FOOTAGE, INTERVIEWS AND MAKING-OF EXCLUSIVE VIDEO.
- ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK CD: AUDIO-CD WITH IN-GAME MUSIC.
- ARTWORK: ALL THE ARTWORK AND PRELIMINARY DESIGNS FEATURED IN AN EXCLUSIVE ARTBOOK.
- GAME GUIDE: DARK SOULS DIGITAL GAME GUIDE FOR BOTH NOVICE AND EXPERIENCED ROLE-PLAYING FANS. THE GAME GUIDE IS AVAILABLE AS A DIGITAL DOWNLOAD FOR MAC & PC.

- OCTOBER 7TH 2011 -

WWW.PREPARETODIE.COM

fpb 16V

PS3 PlayStation 3 · PlayStation Network · XBOX 360 · XBOX LIVE · megarom interactive

FROM SOFTWARE

BANDAI NAMCO Games · BANDAI

Dark Souls™ & ©2011 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. ©2011 FromSoftware, Inc.
"PS", "PlayStation", "PS3", "PS3", and "" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft.


-PREPARE TO DIE-

ABOVE AND BEYOND

The Call of Duty Experience

It took two plane trips. One seven hour bus-ride through the Arizona desert with a broken air-conditioner and a dwindling supply of RadAway. Gruelling two-hour long lines to buy a burger. Thousands of the most rabid hardcore *Call of Duty* fans from all across the globe. Kanye West. We survived The Call of Duty Experience. Medals were awarded, backs were pat, legends made.











Call of Duty XP

The first ever *Call of Duty* fan event took place September 2-3 in Los Angeles. An estimated 8000+ hardcore "CodFish" (our slang for all the beautiful *CoD* fans) showed up for the festivities.

Filling up two entire aircraft hangers, there were live events, special concerts, a high-stakes tournament, sumo wrestling and the chance to be the first to play *Modern Warfare 3*'s new multiplayer modes. Tickets cost a smooth $150 each (about R1100), but included a free copy of the Hardened Edition of *Modern Warfare 3* (to be delivered to each attendant's mailbox upon launch).

The Dropkick Murphys performed opening night. The one million dollar single-elimination tournament ran both days, with thirty-two four-man teams competing for the prize. The less hardcore could partake in break-neck single-elimination team-deathmatch rounds lasting 10 minutes, team up for the new Spec Ops Survival mode or try their hand at King of the Hill. Each event had its own little cloth badges awarded for participation, with special gold-trim Prestige badges for reaching certain milestones (like wave 18 in Spec Ops). The new zombie map for *Black Ops*, Moon, was playable as well.

The live events included a Jeep thrill-ride with plenty of bumps, steep-rock climbs and one bit where we had to leap out of the Jeep and retrieve a briefcase while under (fake) enemy fire. There was a team paintball arena set in a life-sized recreation of the Scrapyard level from *Modern Warfare 2*, and a recreation of the Pit training sequence. Prizes were awarded for the top speed-runs through the Pit. Juggernaut Sumo, the most humorous of the events, had us wear a big sumo suit and try to body slam our opponent.

Food (like the Burger Town Classic or Chicken Burger) could be purchased at a replica Burger Town building, provided you wanted to wait hours in line, in the sun. Mercifully, the events inside the aircraft hangers were air-conditioned by what we imagined to be a captured hurricane. An Armoury section held weapons and combat gear, *Call of Duty* research and concept art, and a few guys in ghillie suits waiting in dark bushy corners to try and scare you.

Events ended with the first public performance by Kanye West since the release of his last album. We're going to be honest, we didn't go to that.

You can read a more detailed account of our trip to Call of Duty XP via NAG Online: http://bit.ly/r88u7L

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3

Release Date: **November 8, 2011** Platforms: **360 / DS / PC / PS3 / Wii** Genre: **First-person Shooter**
Developer: **Infinity Ward / Sledgehammer Games / Raven Software** Website: **callofduty.com/mw3** Publisher: **Activision**

During the opening presentation for Call of Duty XP, a lot of new information about *Modern Warfare 3*'s multiplayer was revealed. We're going to assume that if you're reading this, you're a CodFish and know what we're talking about. The dive to prone or "dolphin dive" and currency system from *Black Ops* will not be in *MW3*. Guns level up independently through use, giving you access to attachments. Spec Ops works on every multiplayer map, and has new ammo/utility restock points to spend money earned.

POINTSTREAKS

Killstreaks are out, Pointstreaks are in. You no longer gain streaks from just kills, so being a team player and capturing points / kill assists / etc. can now net you streak rewards as well.

Pointstreaks have also been divided into strike packages, giving you even more customisation.

Assault: Gives you access to straight damage dealing effects, from air strikes to attack helicopters.

Support: Let's you help the whole team out, starts at UAVs and ends with a 5 care package drop from a chopper with guns. Support also will not lose their pointstreak upon death.

Specialist: For the lone wolf, you get to add up to three extra perks as you increase your streak, ending with having every perk active at once, but you lose your pointstreak if you die.

PERKS

A few new perks have been introduced, along with some old favourites. The new perks are:

Recon: Explosive damage marks enemies on the HUD.

Blink Eye: Undetectable by Air Support / Sentries.

Assassin: Undetectable by UAV / Portable Radar / Thermal / Heartbeat.

Quickdraw: Aim faster down the sights.

Stalker: Move faster while aiming.

Marksman: Identify targets at longer range.

Most of these are slight variations on perks that we've already seen in the series, like being undetectable, but hopefully they're balanced out so there are no 'godlike' combinations.

NEW MULTIPLAYER MODES

New multiplayer modes are being added to private matches, letting you play something more interesting that just TDM with your friends.

Infection: The infected kills enemies to recruit them for the infected team.

Drop Zone: Hold the Drop Zone for Team Points and Care Packages.

Team Juggernaut: With the support of a juggernaut, kill players on the opposing team. The first team to reach the score limit wins.

Juggernaut: Kill the Juggernaut to become the new Juggernaut.

Gun Game: Be the first to dominate with every gun.

One in the Chamber: Gain ammunition by eliminating enemies. Be the last to survive.

There are two new competitive multiplayer modes as well: Kill Confirmed, and Team Defender.

Kill Confirmed: You only get points for a kill if you or a teammate picks up the dropped dog tags of killed enemies. Hopefully this will create situations where a dead teammate becomes a lure to ambush enemies. You can pick up the dog tags of your killed teammates to deny the other team the points.

Team Defender: Like Capture The Flag, but with no designated return zone. You gain points the longer you can hold on to the flag, so decide to hole up and defend, or keep running and try to dodge enemy fire.



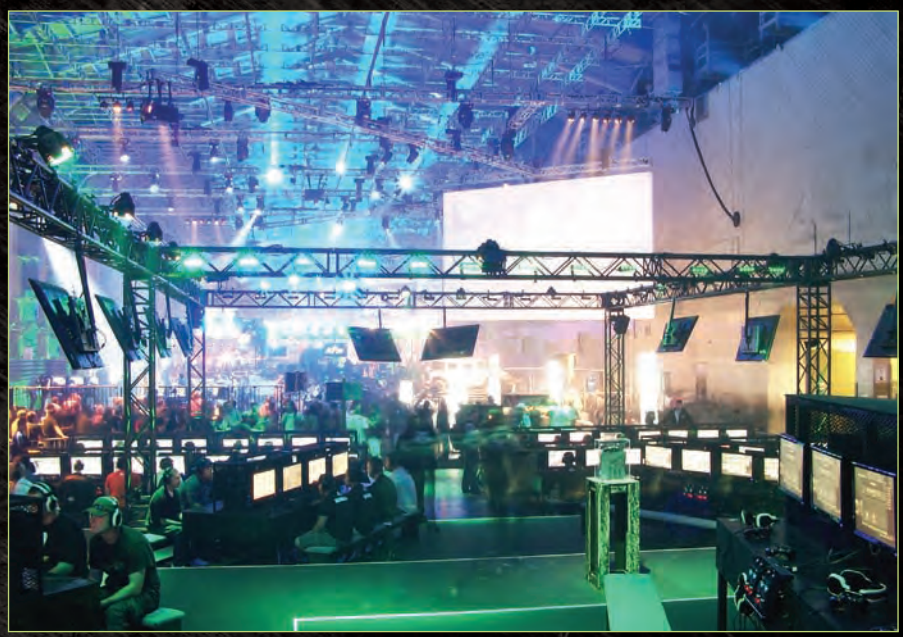




DEDICATED SERVERS?

At Gamescom 2011, Activision confirmed that *Modern Warfare 3* on PC will have dedicated server support, addressing what many South African CodFish saw as a huge flaw in *Modern Warfare 2* and all but removing it from the competitive scene until *Black Ops* allowed dedicated servers again.





Call of Duty: Elite

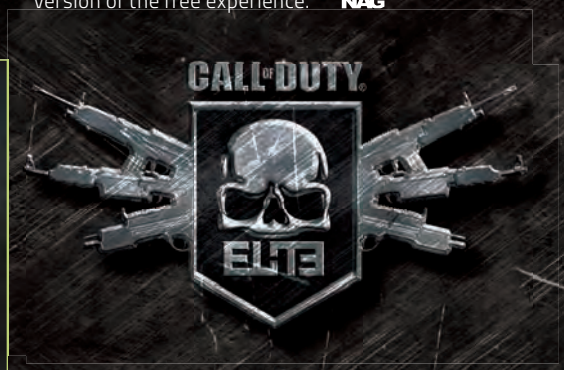
Elite is intended to be a comprehensive online service that affords users a way to organise games with similarly-ranked players, view advanced game statistics and enter official tournaments for a chance to win prizes both real and digital.

It's also a convenient way to customise in-game details like player load outs and clan identifications so that you can hop right into the action when you fire up the game itself, giving users a quick and convenient way to lose productivity at work without even playing anything.

Naturally, *Elite* comes in two flavours: a free edition which offers most of the aforementioned stat tracking, news feeds and social network integration with usual suspect Facebook.

There's also a neat little feature where you can upload and share HD video clips of in-game performances. Most of the prize-eligible tournament stuff, however, hides behind the $49.99-a-year Premium shield, which promises free monthly DLC, special clan opportunities and a generally expanded version of the free experience. NAG

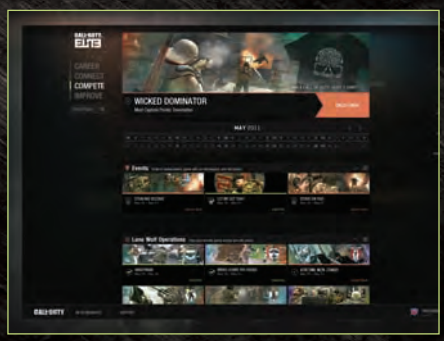






VITAL STATISTICS

This will be the 8th game in the *Call of Duty* franchise, the 5th produced by Infinity Ward. *Modern Warfare 3* marks the first Infinity Ward developed *CoD* without the studio co-founders Jason West and Vince Zampella, who left Activision in mid-2010 after a still-on-going legal dispute involving the words "royalties", "bonuses" and other complex terms. Nearly half of Infinity Ward's original team left with them.



COLOUR BLIND?

Can't see colour, colour-impaired, or monochromatically inclined? Sledgehammer Games has announced that *MW3* will be the first in the series with built-in support for colour-blind gamers. They've not elaborated on how; perhaps the game comes with a colour-sniffing seeing-colour dog. It'll probably just be symbols above people's heads indicating teams. Or racial profiling stigma, letting players know which axis of evil they're currently shooting at.







"IT LOOKS INSANE!"
360Mag - UK

Watch the trailer

MAKE METAL BLEED

ACE COMBAT™ ASSAULT HORIZON

Game Content Includes:



Folded Box
Limited Edition



Standard
Game



Notebook signed by
the Development Team



Video Game
Soundtrack



Exclusive Aircraft
F4-E Phantom II

Find out more on: www.acecombat.com

OUT ON OCTOBER 14TH

PS3 PlayStation3 PlayStationNetwork XBOX 360 XBOX LIVE megarom interactive namco

fpb 16V

ACE COMBAT™ ASSAULT HORIZON & ©2011 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. © GeoEye / JAPAN SPACE IMAGING CORPORATION © DigitalGlobe, Inc., All Rights Reserved. All trademarks and copyrights associated with the manufacturers, aircraft, models, trade names, brands and visual images depicted in this game are the property of their respective owners, and used by permissions. KINECT, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. "PlayStation", "PS3", and are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved.



Dawww! Look at those little Banelings. Don't you just want to hug them so hard they burst?



StarCraft II: Heart of the Swarm

Hell hath no fury like a woman spawned

[details]

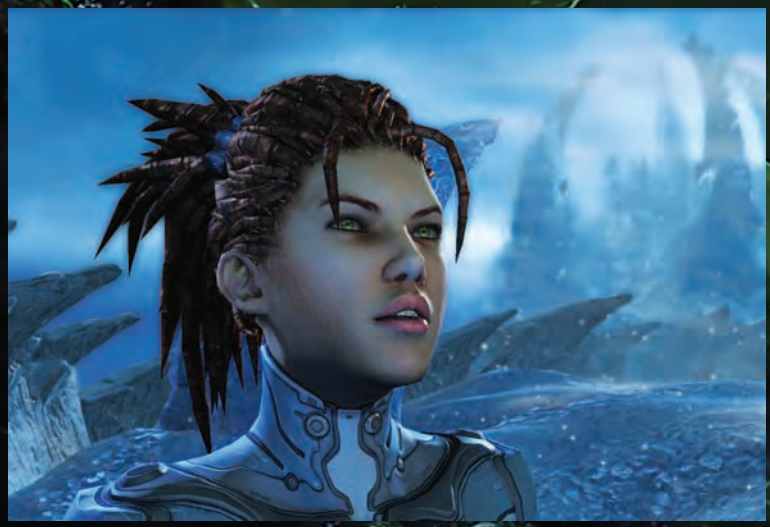
Release Date:
2012
Platforms:
PC
Genre:
RTS
Developer:
Blizzard Entertainment
Website:
eu.battle.net/sc2/
Publisher:
Blizzard Entertainment

[trivia]

// Blizzard wasn't eager to talk too much about the gameplay between actual missions, but what they did say is that Kerrigan will be on board a zerg Leviathan much like Raynor was on board the *Hyperion*.

Kerrigan is pissed, but who can blame her? [*Spoiler alert, Ed*] At the end of Wings of Liberty, Raynor manages to save her just before Tychus puts a bullet in her head. In the second chapter of Blizzard's *StarCraft II* saga, subtitled *Heart of the Swarm*, Kerrigan becomes the narrative focal point. She's out for revenge against Arcturus Mengsk, the leader of the terran group known as The Sons of Korhal. For those in need of a *StarCraft* lore refresher, it was Mengsk who betrayed Kerrigan on Tarsonis. After luring the zerg to the planet, Mengsk left Kerrigan to the swarm, which ultimately led to her capture and transformation into the Queen of Blades. In *Heart of the Swarm*, you take the role of Kerrigan (much like you took the role of Jim Raynor in *Wings of Liberty*) as she begins to reunite the shattered remnants of the zerg and go after the man whose actions led to her transformation. At the start of the campaign, Kerrigan's goal is to piece together her own zerg swarm by attacking other zerg queens to capture their broods. Once sufficient unit types and mutations have been captured, the narrative switches to revenge as Kerrigan turns her focus to killing Mengsk.

For *Heart of the Swarm*, Blizzard is focusing on three key aspects: epic mission design; compelling choices between missions; and an engaging narrative through the developer's delectable cinematics. Each mission will have a specific "hook" to it: a unique aspect designed to avoid monotony in objectives. Two missions were playable at Gamescom. In one mission you had to race a rival queen to collect a hundred zerg eggs; whoever managed to collect the eggs first was rewarded with a massive army to use to crush the loser. Another mission had you fighting protoss forces on a frozen moon that had blizzards whipping across the terrain at different intervals. Kerrigan's roaches were immune to the cold thanks to their assimilation of DNA from a local species. This meant that timing your attacks was everything; choosing to attack the protoss during a blizzard meant that they were at their weakest because of the cold, while your zerg forces shrugged off the freezing winds.



Kerrigan will be a playable character in all twenty of the campaign missions. She'll be your army's focal point and Blizzard wants to give players a sense of power when using Kerrigan on the battlefield.

"For Heart of the Swarm, Blizzard is focusing on three key aspects: epic mission design; compelling choices between missions; and an engaging narrative through the developer's delectable cinematics."





[trivia]

// The zerg Lurker appears in the Galaxy Map Editor in *StarCraft II*, but Senior Game Designer Jonny Ebbert hinted at the unit's return in *Heart of the Swarm*.







In the later missions of *Wings of Liberty*, Kerrigan was a force to be reckoned with, and that same force will be at your disposal throughout *Heart of the Swarm*. A number of powers or "Battle Focuses" will be made available to you throughout the campaign and you'll gain more as you progress through the missions. There will be numerous Focuses to collect, and each Focus will have five sub-abilities for you to unlock. One such Focus is called Spec Ops, which taps into Kerrigan's Ghost training, giving her the ability to launch nuclear devastation at her enemies. Another is the Corruption Focus, which allows her to call on her zerg heritage to weaken her enemies and debilitate them. You'll be able to pick one Battle Focus to use per mission so you'll never be locked into a specific play style from mission to mission. Different Focuses will prove invaluable for certain missions.

Blizzard's plan to offer you more compelling choices between missions means that you'll be able to customise your army even more so than you could in *Wings of Liberty*, as





In addition to becoming The Queen of Blades, Kerrigan became the first interstellar Rastafarian. True story.

each of your units will have powerful upgrades for you to choose between. For example: you might upgrade your zerglings so that they can move and attack faster; or you might select a zergling upgrade that allows you to train them in three seconds as opposed to twenty. These upgrades will remain from mission to mission and it looks as if some of the in-mission evolutions have become permanent upgrades purchased between missions instead. At a later point in the campaign you'll be able to permanently mutate your units into one of two sub-species. For example: you could choose to mutate your zerglings into either Raptor zerglings or Swarmlings. The former mutation allows zerglings to leap over obstacles and opponents in order to reach their target; the latter mutation means that each zergling egg will hatch three zergling units. Despite still being limited to 200 supply, Blizzard hopes that these mutations will give players a sense of being able to overrun opponents through sheer numbers. If you pick the correct unit upgrades and mutations, you'll be able to spawn hundreds of zerglings in next to no time. These mutations will only be available during the single-player campaign and won't be carried over to multiplayer for obvious balance concerns. Similarly, there will be units unique to the single-player portion of *Heart of the Swarm*.

Insofar as multiplayer over Battle.net is concerned, *Heart of the Swarm* will have its own ladder. Players who have not purchased the second chapter will not be able to play with those who have because of the addition of new multiplayer units in *Heart of the Swarm*. You will, however, still be able to chat and communicate with friends over Battle.net irrespective of which chapter of *StarCraft II* they are currently playing.

There's still no concrete release date, but Blizzard said that we can bank on a beta in the near future. **NAG**

Mikit0707

"Kerrigan will be a playable character in all twenty of the campaign missions"







"Who's been a good little ultralisk?"

Get a FREE copy of Battlefield 3

when you sign up for a 1 Mbps MWEB uncapped ADSL product for only R299 p/m*



Simply call 08600 32000
& quote "BF3 promotion"
when you sign up

Normal price R399,
can be yours for free

MWEB
CONNECT & YOU CAN

Official Provider of Public
EA Ranked Servers for Battlefield 3

*Excludes all line rentals.

Valid until 9 December 2011. Battle field 3 Game will be delivered to customers after the 28 October 2011 release date. You must quote BF3 Promotion when you call to sign up. New ADSL home customers only and cannot be taken up with another MWEB ADSL promotion. Only available via MWEB Call centre. Offer is only available for the PC version of Battlefield 3. See mweb.co.za for terms and conditions that always apply. E&OE

© 2011 Electronic Arts Inc. Battlefield 3, Frostbite and the DICE logo are trademarks of EA Digital Illusions CE AB. EA and the EA logo are trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. THE DEPICTION OF ANY WEAPON OR VEHICLE IN THIS GAME DOES NOT INDICATE AFFILIATION, SPONSORSHIP OR ENDORSEMENT BY ANY WEAPON OR VEHICLE MANUFACTURER.





"But because you don't have lips, you can't do this with a straw. Mmm! Strawberry! My favourite."





The Secret World

Cthulhu! Bogeymen! Societies! Zombies!

[details]

Release Date:
Q2 2012
Platforms:
360 / PC
Genre:
MMORPG
Developer:
Funcom
Website:
www.thesecretworld.com
Publisher:
Electronic Arts

[trivia]

// Funcom has recently announced that *The Secret World* will adopt a traditional subscription model for an MMO. Additionally the game will feature microtransactions and a shopfront where players can buy visual alterations for their character.

Funcom has a history in developing online games. The team has worked on MMORPG titles like *Anarchy Online* and the more recent *Age of Conan: Hyborian Adventures*. Their next online offering, *The Secret World*, is a departure from the staple of fantasy and sci-fi MMORPGs. *The Secret World* is set on Earth, but a decidedly different one in which all manner of urban legends, conspiracy theories and horror stories are true. In this world there are three rival factions battling each other for ultimate control. Their war is a secret one, fought in the shadows and imbued with subterfuge and deliberate manipulation. As a player it is up to you to choose a side, rise through its secret societal ranks and ultimately play a part in its domination of the globe.

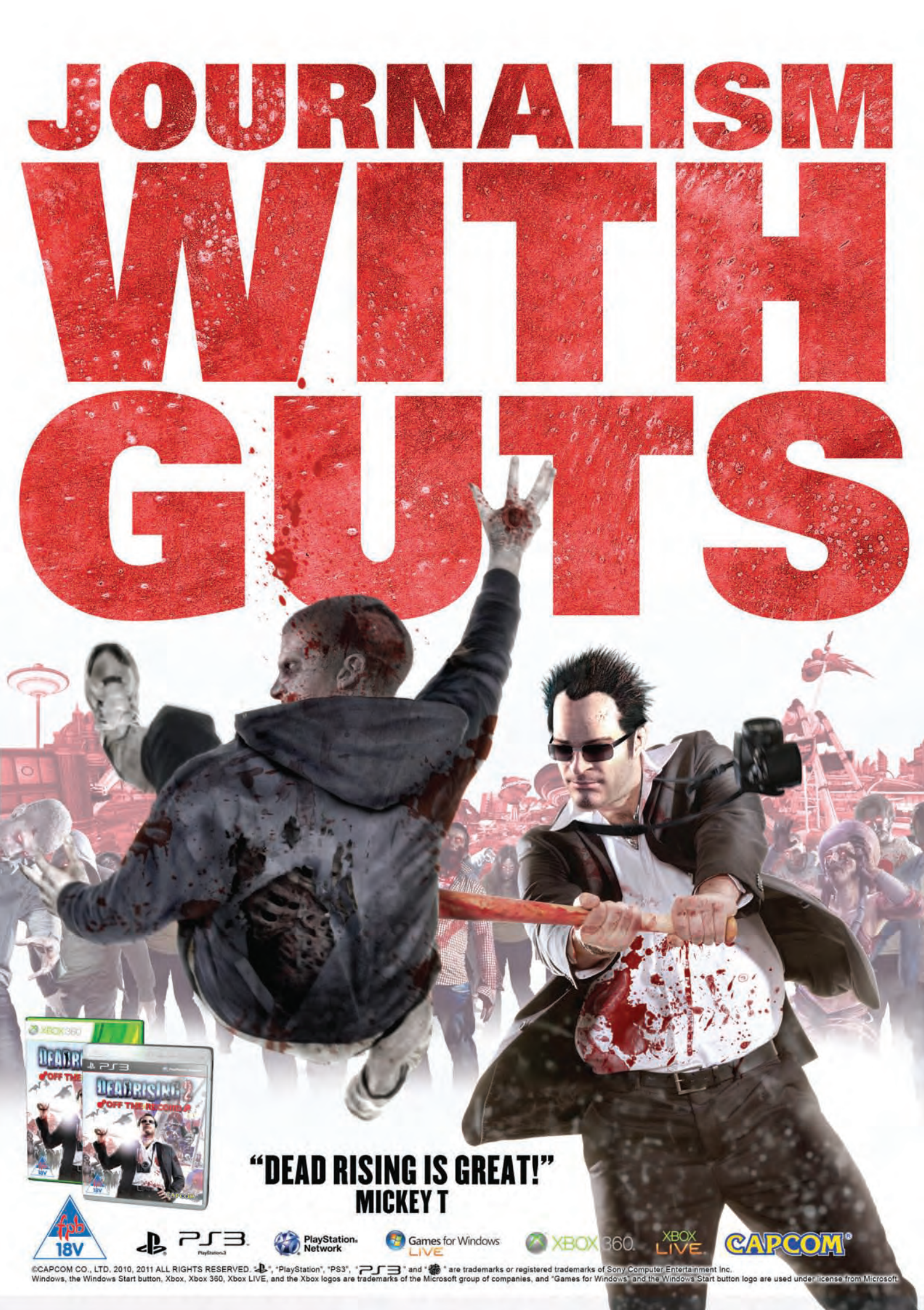
There are three secret societies to choose from, each hailing from different parts of the world and each adopting very different approaches to their displays of power. The London based Templars are steeped in tradition and believe in dominion through military power and strategy. The New York based Illuminati prefer ostentatious wealth, glamour and control through corporate ideals and structure. And finally, the Korean based Dragon maintains its power through mystery and manipulation. The Dragons focus their attention on what they call "the unknowing catalyst of change"; they believe that in order to prosper from an event, one need only be there to influence proceedings in minute ways.

Character classes and skill levels are out in *The Secret World*. Instead, you'll grow your character by unlocking skills out of a selection of over 500. You'll be free to develop your own class to take into both PVP and PVE areas. There are still ranking missions for each society, but instead of being rewarded with XP to use to unlock further levels and skills, you'll be rewarded with secret knowledge reserved for members of your society. So, the higher your level of secret knowledge climbs, the greater your access to weapons and upgrades. Visual customisation is an important part of *The Secret World* and will be integral in identifying the roles and factions of other players during PVP battles. Certain weapons and armour sets will lend themselves to specific styles of play, so despite there being no classes or levels, you'll be able to distinguish your opponents' roles by what they've equipped.

During a Gamescom presentation, we witnessed a low-level Illuminati agent on a ranking mission in an underground parking lot in New York. The agent was tasked with locating another Illuminati representative but in order to reach the representative, the agent had to traverse the numerous levels of the parking lot, all of which were in darkness and infested with enemies. Lights and shadows played a huge part in the mission as the Illuminati player had to stick to the lit up areas and drop flares in sections that had no power. Some of the monsters were attracted to the light, and others chose to attack in the darkness. This level of dynamic environmental interaction is not often seen in a MMORPG, but it is clear that the environment is going to be more

"There are three secret societies to choose from, each hailing from different parts of the world and each adopting very different approaches to their displays of power."

JOURNALISM WITH GUTS



fpb 18V
PS3 PlayStation3
PlayStation Network
Games for Windows LIVE
XBOX 360
XBOX LIVE
CAPCOM

©CAPCOM CO., LTD. 2010, 2011 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. "PlayStation", "PS3", "PS3" and "" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.
Windows, the Windows Start button, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies, and "Games for Windows" and the Windows Start button logo are used under license from Microsoft.











Combat in *The Secret World* will use a combination of guns and swords, so get ready to stab, shoot and then ask questions.



[trivia]

// The legendary lost city of Shambhala is a Buddhist belief that has come to represent an ideal land for the people of that faith. It also makes an appearance in Naughty Dog's *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves*.

than just a setting for you to slaughter waves of enemies in.

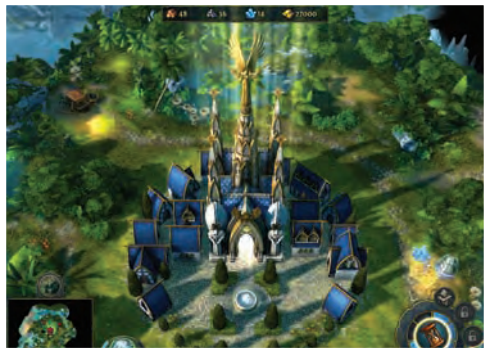
The societal ranking missions have been created to be triangular in nature. This means that no matter which society you choose, they will all play a part in a particular mission. For example: as an Illuminati agent, the player in the demonstration we watched arrived to find the parking lot in darkness. Had he chosen to play as a member of The Dragon, his mission objective would have been to knock out the power to the building, thus making life harder for the opposing Illuminati agent. This constant power struggle and sabotaging by each faction will form a basis for a number of the ranking missions.

PVP arenas in *The Secret World* work somewhat differently to the ranking missions found in the PVE areas. There are two types of persistent PVP environments: places of power and Warzones. Places of power are different locations found all over the planet that each hold something of significance for the factions. These places are legendary sites like Stonehenge and the ancient city of Shambhala. They will be available for you to capture and hold for your society and the more of these sites your society holds, the greater the benefits for all members of that society. Warzones are similar, but much larger. In Warzones you'll partake in PVP battles with over a hundred players. Each Warzone has four temples to control before the entire zone is controlled. Capturing a temple is a lengthy process and involves capturing power sources in order to breach a main defensive perimeter. Once inside, whichever society currently controls that temple will have access to an Automaton guardian that will need to be defeated by the attacking society before they can take control. Again, the more Warzones a society controls, the greater the benefit for the society as a whole. This PVP setup will also benefit from there being three societies in *The Secret World*; if one society becomes too powerful and takes control of the majority of the places of power and Warzones, then the other two societies can band together to attack the stronger society. This, the developers hope, will ensure a constant power struggle between all three societies. **NAG Mikit0707**


BATMAN
ARKHAM CITY
PS3
XBOX 360
Games for Windows LIVE
DVD
BATMANARKHAMCITY.COM
16
rocksteady
NuMetro













Might & Magic Heroes VI

Thrilling heroics, one turn at a time

[details]

Release Date:
Q4 2011
Platforms:
PC
Genre:
Turn-based strategy
Developer:
Black Hole Entertainment
Website:
mightandmagic.uk.ubi.com/heroes6
Publisher:
Ubisoft

[trivia]

// Someone wiser than us once said that rearranging the words in your game's title automatically screams "reboot." True story.

// Might always comes before Magic in the pecking order. It's why nerdy dudes usually don't get the girl at the end.

There's a good chance that many of you have never played a *Heroes of Might & Magic* title before, probably because the words gears, war, field or fare don't appear in big, punchy lettering on the box. It's a series with a ton of history, having first appeared back in 1995 as an offshoot of the *Might & Magic* RPG franchise. It's seen good times and bad, and after the mixed reaction towards *Heroes of Might & Magic V* (a fine attempt at revitalising the franchise after Ubisoft acquired the rights to the franchise from now-defunct 3DO); it seems another reboot is in order. With new developer Black Hole Entertainment (a studio comprised of a number of self-professed fans of the series) pulling all the strings, the hopes and dreams of at least a thousand German people rest on this game being great – especially with such competition as the brilliant *King's Bounty* series fighting for control of the turn-based strategy limelight.

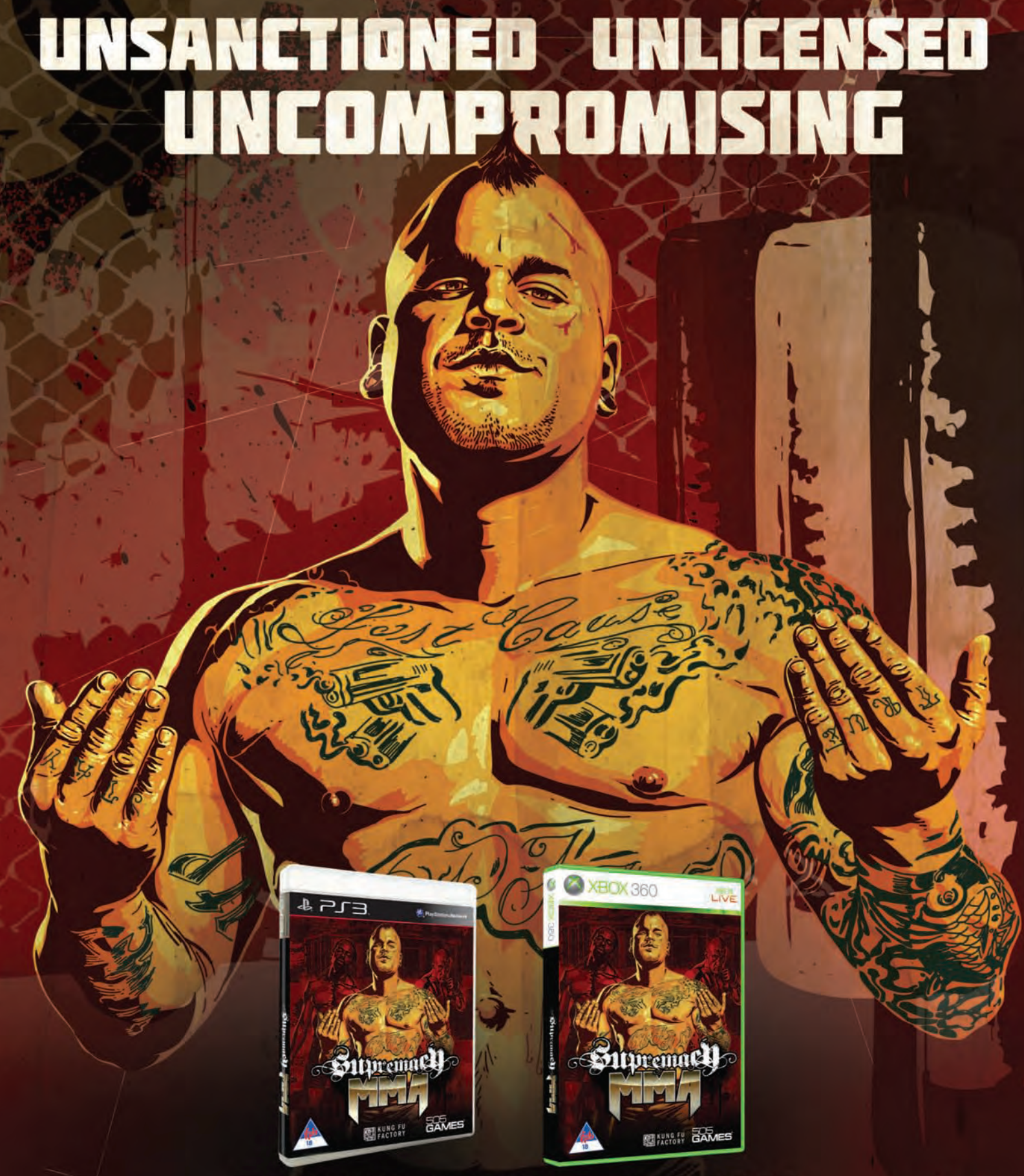
Here's an explanation of how the game works: you choose from one of five different factions, which determines what heroes, units and abilities you'll have access to. You're dumped in fantasy environments along with a bunch of human-/AI-controlled enemies, each with their own heroes, units and abilities that they can use to zap you in the face when you're not paying attention. You roam a map littered with perils and loot, but there's only a certain amount of movement you can do each turn/in-game day. As you gather resources

"You're dumped in fantasy environments along with a bunch of human-/AI-controlled enemies, each with their own heroes, units and abilities that they can use to zap you in the face when you're not paying attention."

(there are only four of them now, down from the previous seven) and gold, new buildings can be built in your starting town, granting access to more units and more options for stuff like resource trading. Come into contact with an enemy (whether they're a mob of NPCs guarding treasure/resource locations, or an opposing hero) and the view zooms into a tactical perspective, with your army on one end and the enemy horde on the other. Units then take turns moving, shooting and clobbering until either side's troops are obliterated. Spells and special hero abilities can periodically be used to swing the odds in your favour, but when the enemy army has a hero at the reins, they can do the same. Laying siege to enemy towns works a bit differently, forcing you to deal with towers and walls in addition to enemy troops. Capturing an enemy town now gives the option to convert it to your town type, rather than forcing you to integrate troops from different factions into your army, which reduces morale.

That's the general idea behind the series. Heroes gain XP as you direct them around the map to do hero-type stuff, eventually levelling up and granting access to new abilities and stat boosts that affect your army. This is one area that's been noticeably altered for this sixth, alternately titled entry in the series. Hero abilities are obtained via a surprisingly rich, RPG-like skill tree, while the Magic Guild is no longer used to learn new spells. There are tons of stats to worry about and abilities to upgrade here, so many that it's actually quite daunting to begin with. The abundance of options will suit many play styles and there's also a new reputation system to keep track of. Series staples like hotseat multiplayer will obviously feature, as will a campaign for each of the five factions. I imagine that some of the changes might annoy some long-time fans, but I quite like the alterations. Overall it looks like this'll be an impressive and highly polished turn-based offering. **NAG Barkskin**

UNSANCTIONED UNLICENSED UNCOMPROMISING



AVAILABLE NOW!

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SUPREMACYMMAUK

PS3 PlayStation Network XBOX 360 KUNG FU FACTORY 505 GAMES

2010 Supremacy MMA is a trademark of MMA Holding Group, LLC used under license by 505 Games S.r.l and its subsidiaries. All rights reserved.505 Games and the 505 Games logo are trademarks of 505 Games (U.S.) or its affiliates in the U.S. and other countries. KINECT, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. "PS", "PlayStation", "PS3", "PS3" and "PS" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other marks and trademarks are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

Distributed Exclusively by Apex Interactive Tel: (011) 796 5040

www.apexint.co.za Email: sales@apexint.co.za All rights and trademarks and logos are copyright of their respective owners.

www.apexactive.co.za





> **"...Fumigation, a tug-of-war domination game mode that required us to capture and hold as many of the three 'Gas Blasters' as possible on a map styled around the alleyway in which Bruce Wayne's parents were murdered..."**



Well aren't you a pretty, er... lady?







Gotham City Impostors

Be the Bats you want to see in the world

[details]

Release Date:
Q1 2012
Platforms:
360 / PC / PS3
Genre:
First-person shooter
Developer:
Monolith Productions
Website:
www.gothamcityimposters.com
Publisher:
Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment

[trivia]

// One of the most enticing aspects of this game is the price, which is set at a mere $15/1200MSP for the entire game. We're expecting some paid-for additional content to make an appearance later, however.

// "Prizes" will occasionally fall from the sky. These are randomly awarded supply crates that provide temporary bonuses to individuals or the entire team. They can also be booby-trapped.

Here we have the team that developed *F.E.A.R.* and its sequel, *Condemned* and its sequel, *No One Lives Forever* and its sequel, and *Blood* (and its sequel, in case you didn't spot the pattern). Then we throw these guys at the *Batman* licence and give them the freedom to do whatever they want. Then they come up with this: a team-based, objective-focused, experience points-rewarding, unlockable content-providing first-person shooter in which players take on the roles of Batman or Joker wannabes because their lives are too dull in the great city of superheroes and villains. Interested yet?

If *Gotham City Impostors* sounds weird, or a bit crazy, that's because it is, and for a game that barely blipped on our radar before Gamescom 2011, this turned out to be one of the most pleasant surprises of the show.

Choosing either the Bats or the Jokers, players will attempt to beat the other team in a variety of game types. We had a chance to play Fumigation, a tug-of-war domination mode that required us to capture and hold as many of the three "Gas Blasters" as possible on a map styled around the alleyway in which Bruce Wayne's parents were murdered on that fateful night. Players can build their character from a variety of body types (three were confirmed: the overweight Mighty, the petite Nimble and the all-rounder Tough), equip them with a primary and secondary weapon, support gadget and movement gadget, throw on any number of unlockable costume accessories like heroic capes or evil make-up, and get down to the business of killing each other.

While we'd be happy enough running around Gotham City firing home-made weapons at people, it's the gadgets that really bring the game to life and even manage to set it apart from its most similar soon-to-be competitor – *Team Fortress 2*. Support gadgets include grenades, sticky bombs, boomerangs (with target lock-on) and bear traps, but it's the movement gadgets that really shine. Gliders let you stay up in the air and swoop down on unsuspecting (or just unfortunately slow) opponents; roller-skates allow you to move a little quicker on ground and make use of the skate ramps scattered around each level; the classic Batman-inspired grappling gun will allow you to get to places nobody would think to look (you dirty camper); and our favourite, the smoke bomb, which allows you to move about in almost complete invisibility in search of that opportunistic melee attack.

The best part about all of the customisation in this game is that it's completely open. Players can combine any body type with any weapons and gadgets of their choice. Think of a great big Mighty in barely-fitting, crudely sewn Batman gear swooping down on your enemies and then healing all of his teammates. Oh the fun times ahead. NAG

GeometriX

Darksiders II

The only certainty in life is Death

[details]

Release Date:
Q2 2012
Platforms:
360 / PC / PS3 / Wii U
Genre:
Action adventure
Developer:
Vigil Games
Website:
www.darksiders.com
Publisher:
THQ

[trivia]

// Because the entire game is set in the Abyss Underworld, it has allowed the artists at Vigil to go nuts with level design. During the preview we saw the Lord of Bones' floating castle being pulled through the sky by two giant serpent creatures that constantly snapped at each other. Awesome!

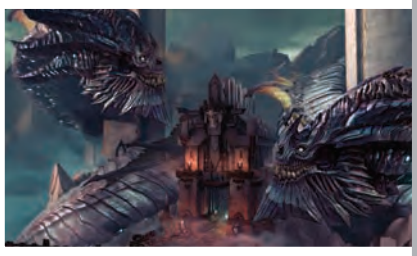
War, what is he good for in all honesty? All he managed to do was get himself framed for triggering the Apocalypse, and now his brother, Death, has to cut his Bahamas holiday short in order to clear his sibling's name. He probably wasn't on holiday in the Bahamas but I like to think he'd be able to take a break from harvesting souls every now and then.

Darksiders II takes place at the same time as the events of the first *Darksiders*. You play as Death, a decidedly less honourable horseman than War. While War dealt with situations with an air of nobility, Death is more roguish and isn't afraid to make shady deals with other characters in order to get what he wants.

The sequel will maintain that mix of exploration and combat, and you'll once again get a steady trickle of abilities and equipment that will unlock previously inaccessible areas. New to the game mechanic are loot drops, gold pickups, weapon and armour stats and a vendor system for selling unwanted items and purchasing new ones. The game takes place in the Abyss Underworld and not on Earth, so no more clubbing hellspawns to death with parking metres. Combat will be faster due to Death's preference for speed and agility over brute strength and high defence. **NAG**

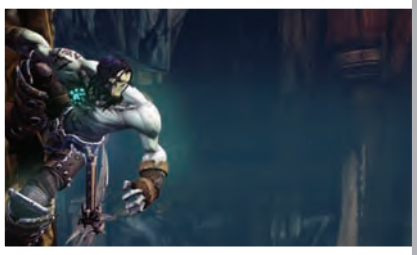
Mikit0707























Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning

A button-mashing, RPG junky's wet dream

hands on tested / hands on tested / hands on tested

[details]

Release Date:
Q1 2012
Platforms:
360 / PC / PS3
Genre:
Role-playing game
Developer:
38 Studios [PC]
Big Huge Games [Console]
Website:
www.ea.com/reckoning
Publisher:
Electronic Arts

[trivia]

// Key to character types in *Amalur* is a mechanic known as Destinies. There are roughly forty to choose from and you can combine any of them to create a class of character that works for you.

// Want to learn more about this game? Dig out your June 2011 edition of *NAG* for a two page spread by GeometriX.

This is not your usual role-playing game. *Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning* has everything you'd expect from an RPG; it has character customisation, side quests, dialogue trees, crafting, an open world, a beefy storyline, lore, loot drops and stats. I know! It's totally an RPG! It also, however, has something that many RPGs don't: a rocking combat system that feels as if it's been ripped straight out of your favourite third-person action game.

Prior to going hands-on with the game at this year's Gamescom, *Amalur* lead designer Ken Rolston appeared on stage during EA's press conference. He gushed about his game but kept returning to the combat, insisting that it was intuitive, accessible and above all, addictive. He could not have described it better if he'd tried.

The hands-on demo at Gamescom featured a warrior class in an underground dungeon. He was already a fairly high level character and had both physical and magic attacks at his disposal. He was also very agile and had little difficulty dodging incoming attacks with a well-timed press of the B button. Physical attacks were mapped to the A and X buttons with each assigned to two different swords: a fire sword mapped to the A button, and a lightning sword mapped to the X button. Combos were as easy as pressing the two buttons in varying combinations, but you could further alter your attack string by varying the timing of your button presses. Holding either A or X would charge an attack, which would be unleashed the moment you let go; the longer you held down either button, the more powerful the charged attack. On top of all of this were finishing moves known as Fate Shift moves. An onscreen button prompt would indicate when you could perform one of these, and the result was always spectacularly gruesome and satisfying.



Crotch-belt armour of +10 to slutting.

"The lasting impression of the combat after hands-on time was just how accessible and satisfying it was."

If physical attacks weren't enough, the warrior had four spells mapped to the A, B, X and Y buttons, which you accessed by holding down one of the triggers. The other trigger brought up his shield in case dodge rolling was out of the question.

The lasting impression of the combat after hands-on time was just how accessible and satisfying it was. It's not unlike the combat in *Fable*, but it is infinitely more varied and far superior in execution. Honestly, this alone is enough to keep you devouring this game. The fact that the combat is the caramel centre to a devilishly delicious cake that is smothered in rich fantasy lore and sprinkled with loot drops, RPG stats and character progression, makes *Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning* all the more delicious. I can't wait for it to clog my arteries. NAG

Mikit0707

The Darkness II

Why dual-wield when you can quad-wield instead?

hands on tested / hands on tested / hands on tested

[details]

Release Date:
Q1 2012
Platforms:
360 / PC / PS3
Genre:
FPS
Developer:
Digital Extremes
Website:
www.embracethedarkness.com
Publisher:
2K Games

[trivia]

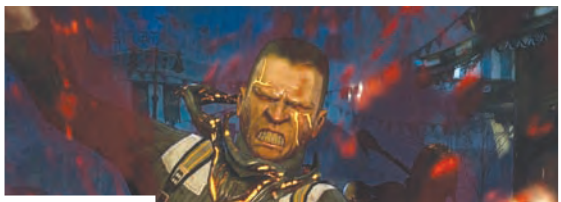
// *The Darkness* started life as a comic book published by Top Cow Productions back in 1996. The first appearance of The Darkness was in *Witchblade* comic #10.

It's been two years since the events of the first game and thanks to his powers from The Darkness, Jackie is the Don of the Franchetti mob. After a failed attempt on his life, Jackie is forced to unleash his powers once again so that he can find those responsible.

Visually, the game's undergone a massive change in direction, with the game artists developing a "Graphic Noir" style. It has a cel-shaded, *Borderlands* look to it but despite the necessity of Jackie keeping to the shadows, there's a surprising amount of colour to be found.

The violence has been cranked up to a mom-horrifying level and that's largely thanks to the new combat mechanic of Quad-Wielding. While it takes some getting used to, it's wildly satisfying once you get it right. Jackie's two demon arms are permanently visible (providing you're in darkness) allowing you to whip attack with one while picking up items (such as car doors for cover or metal poles for projectiles) with the other. Additionally you can dual-wield weapons, essentially giving you four means to slaughter your enemies. If that's still not enough, you can perform execution moves like the Spinal Tap, in which the one demon arm holds up an enemy while the other arm rips the poor bastard's spine and skull out. Good times indeed! NAG

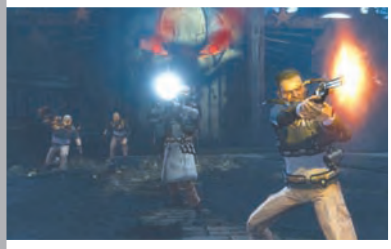
Mikit0707













087 808 2585
012 998 5668

titan-ice computers

By enthusiasts, for enthusiasts!

RAZER

COOLER MASTER

steelseries

CORSAIR

EVGA

MadCatz

OCZ Technology

CYBORG

Shop online @ www.titan-ice.co.za
Retail store: 640 Borzoi St, Garsfontein, PTA

Warhammer Online: Wrath of Heroes

Break me off a piece of that

hands on tested / hands on tested / hands on tested

[details]

Release Date:
Q4 2011
Platforms:
PC
Genre:
MMO action
Developer:
BioWare Mythic
Website:
wrathofheroes.warhammeronline.com
Publisher:
Electronic Arts

[trivia]

// The game will support a freemium pricing model. That means you can play the entire game for free, but if you want that shiny pair of shoes or glowing bastard sword, you'll have to pay up.

The PvP component of any MMO is always a big attraction for players, and there are some who'd rather spend all of their time battling other players instead of saving princesses or slaying trolls. For this reason, a small, flexible team within BioWare Mythic decided to create *Wrath of Heroes* – a stripped-down, RPG-free version of *Warhammer Online: Age of Reckoning* – that only has a PvP component.

Players will be able to get into the action almost instantly. Once you've found a game server, jump in and then select your player character from the selection of pre-built characters (there are currently seven) and you're ready to go. The code that we played only included a single game mode – a 6v6v6 conquest-style game in which players of each team vied for ownership of four control points in the map – three outer points and a central one. The central point could only be held if one of the other points was under a team's control, so, as you can imagine, the back-and-forth nature of this game type ensured that the combat was fast and exciting.

The pre-built characters will offer players the usual selection of damage-dealing, tanking and supporting character types, and most will be based on existing player classes from *AoR*. A great feature about this type of flexible development is the developers can concentrate on building balanced, fun classes without the need to fluff them up with starting quests and stories.







Wrath of Heroes is nearing completion (it should be in closed beta by time you read this), and what we've played so far offered a good balance of fast-paced combat and tactical gameplay. This no-frills style of game shares equal influence by action games and MMORPGs alike, and it shows. Oh, and it'll be free-to-play, which is sure to generate a bit of interest on its own. **NAG**

GeometriX

WildStar

Had to go and touch it

[details]

Release Date:
TBA
Platforms:
PC
Genre:
MMORPG
Developer:
Carbine Studios
Website:
www.wildstar-online.com
Publisher:
NCsoft

[trivia]

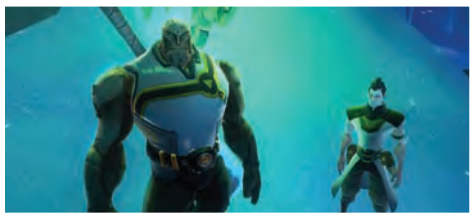
// The currently confirmed player classes are Warrior (no questions there), Spellslinger (a gun-toting mage) and Esper (control and damage-dealing psychic).

In the untamed lands of the MMORPG, it seems like every new game of the genre is set to take the industry by storm, shake it to its core, flip it on its head and other turns of marketing speak. In truth, MMORPG players tend to dedicate themselves to whichever single game takes their fancy more than the others, so, it's important for developers of these games to either give the existing pool of gamers something truly new to play, or lure in the non MMO crowd. Carbine Studios is trying to do a little bit of both.

WildStar takes place on a frontier-like world called Nexus, where players will attempt to find out what happened to the planet's previous occupants, the Eldan. Some people are a little worried about what exactly happened to the Eldan, considering they were touted as the most advanced race in the universe, but many are happy to simply get on with their lives robbing the world of its natural resources and killing the remaining wildlife.

In *WildStar*, players will have an extra layer of character customisation: Player Paths. In addition to race, character class, crafting professions and everything else you expect, Paths will determine how the game's extensive layering system throws additional content at you during your adventures. Currently, there are four Paths: Exploration, for those who like to seek out new and interesting places in the world; Conquering, for those who prefer combat above anything else; Collecting, for the achievement hunters out there; and Building, for those who like to create places of harmony and safety for the other players in the game. The layering system will then give players extra locations to discover, monsters to kill, challenges to complete, resources to acquire, positions to defend, or other tasks. We're told that this system, when combined with a party of varied players, allows for even the most mundane fetch quest to become dynamic and interesting. **NAG**









GeometriX

First National Bank – a division of FirstRand Bank Limited. An Authorised Financial Services and Credit Provider (NCRCP20).

THATSITCOMMUNICATIONS/MAG/004E



R300 Free Internet from FNB Connect

Sign up for FNB Connect and enjoy unshaped **FREE YouTube, FREE Facebook** and **FREE Twitter**, between 7 and 11pm every evening.

You can also open an FNB cheque account and qualify for rewards of up to 2GB of FREE, lightning fast, unshaped ADSL data every month.

No contracts, no tie-ins, just cheap data from R12.38 per gig.

To sign up and learn about more free sites you can surf go to **www.fnbconnect.co.za.**
Terms and conditions apply.

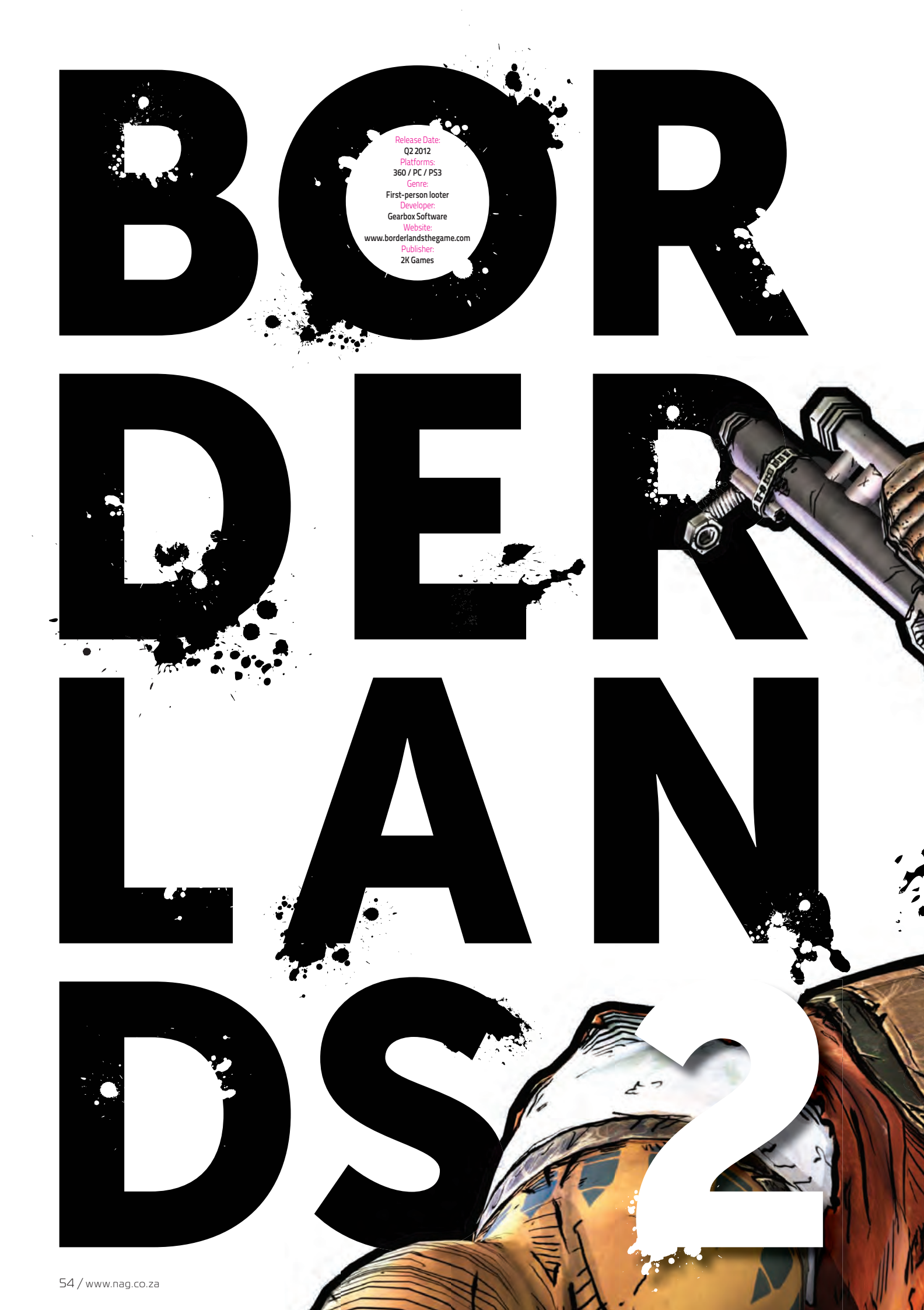
YouTube Broadcast Yourself™ facebook. twitter

FNB
First National Bank

how can we help you?

BORDERLANDS 2

Release Date:
Q2 2012
Platforms:
360 / PC / PS3
Genre:
First-person looter
Developer:
Gearbox Software
Website:
www.borderlandsthegame.com
Publisher:
2K Games



Bringing sexy skags back

We left the Gearbox Software offices feeling confident. *Borderlands 2* is set to fix every problem players had with the first game. It will improve upon the elements that needed improving, and add enough new stuff to make it feel like a genuine sequel.
Earlier that day...

Back to Pandora! Not that blue kitty infested *three-dee* planet. *Our* Pandora has bandits, robots, skags and various dubious characters all trying to make a quick buck. This Pandora had a Vault that contained untold riches and exotic alien technology. When our intrepid Vault Hunters finally cracked open the Vault, they [REDACTED FOR PEOPLE WHO'VE NOT FINISHED *BORDERLANDS*], releasing the Atlas Corporation's grip on the planet.

We're in a meeting room at Gearbox Software in Plano, Texas, USA. The developer takes up the top few floors of the building above a bank. Creative director Paul Hellquist explains their thinking behind developing the sequel to arguably one of the biggest surprise hits in the last decade. There were five key areas they wanted to improve and expand, namely story, enemies, environments, classes and of course, guns.

"With *Borderlands 2*, we love what we're on to with the shooter/looter," says CEO and Gearbox co-founder Randy Pitchford. He used to be a professional magician in Hollywood. "But *Borderlands* is such a 'version 1.0'. It was great fun, but there are so many things that need to be polished and tuned and iterated. The huge motivator to *Borderlands 2* is 'doing it all solid, beautiful and elegantly."



NO REST FOR THE WICKED

Borderlands 2 takes place five years after the first game. The new antagonist, Handsome Jack, gained fame and fortune by taking credit for what the Vault Hunters did. He used his riches to buy the Hyperion Corporation, built a giant base on the moon, and is delusional about "cleaning up" Pandora. You start the game in a to-the-death arena Jack set up, its fights televised to the rest of the galaxy. By fighting your way through some of Pandora's nastiest beasts, you work your way up the ranks towards an eventual grand prize payday. But Jack has other ideas, betrays you and dumps you for dead in icy tundra on Pandora.

The elusive and illusive Guardian Angel (who goaded you into finding the Vault in the first game) contacts you once more, requesting your help to kill Jack. She intones it won't be easy, and you'll need help. You must find the original Vault Hunters who have scattered across Pandora and are living their own lives now. "One of the things we're hoping for is players will enjoy learning who the Vault Hunters were and are now," says Hellquist. To facilitate this new narrative-driven experience, the mission system has been completely revamped. Objectives can change dynamically mid-mission. Hellquist laughs, insisting that they've learned their lesson and "will have less text boxes to read."

To make sure the story doesn't get in your way, now when you talk to an NPC you can just walk away and the rest of the dialogue will come in over your radio headset. If you're running errands and a co-op partner hands in a quest, everyone in the party gets the dialogue over their radios. Additionally, NPC characters now move about more, interact with the environment, and comment on things the player does. They act more like people, and less like quest-dispensers. Portly gun-peddler Marcus, for example, plays darts with throwing knives while doing his monologue.

"All players will appreciate that stuff," says Hellquist, "but the players who weren't grabbed as much by the loot aspect of the game will have all this meat of context and interesting gameplay to go with these stories that all the missions are telling. We're not just telling this plot-line, we also want all of the side-missions to be telling these little side-stories about life on Pandora."

MONEY DON'T GROW ON TREES

When the Vault was opened in *Borderlands*, an alien element called Eridium started to appear all over Pandora. It's named after the long-dead Eridian aliens who once inhabited the planet, and now forms a major part of the currency system in *Borderlands 2*, tying into the narrative and world-building more closely.

Important upgrades and items, like backpack size increases, cost Eridium now. When picked up on the battlefield, Eridium also acts as a temporary buff, increasing damage, resistance to

"The huge motivator to *Borderlands 2* is doing it all solid, beautiful and elegantly."

Randy Pitchford, CEO, Gearbox Software.











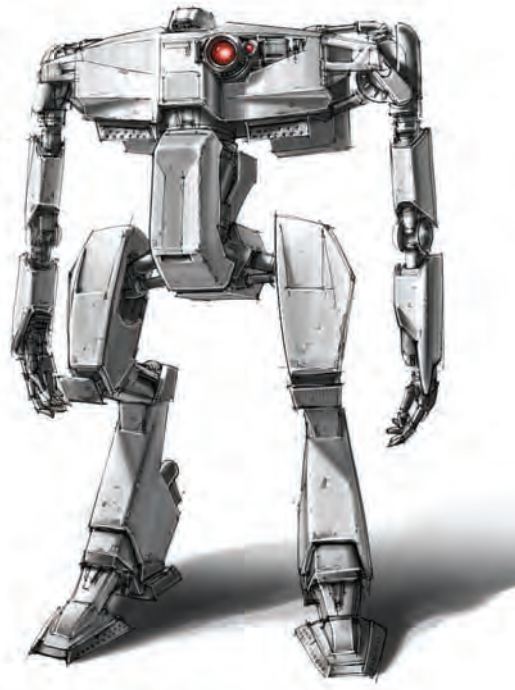
MICHAEL "PANTS ON FIRE" PACHTER

"Pachter? Man, I hate that guy," remarks one of the developers on *Borderlands 2*. His reaction is understandable, since Michael Pachter, a high-profile gaming research analyst for Wedbush Securities, shot down the first *Borderlands* before it was even released. Investors and such listen to Pachter (don't ask us why), so his opinion mattered.

"Sent to die. I think *Borderlands* is the definition of a game that should have had its own window and not be up against all this stuff," explained Pac-Man in an interview. "It's absolutely the same audience. I don't think it's as much an RPG as they would like us to believe. If it's an RPG, *Dragon Age* is going to kick its butt; and if it's a shooter, *Call of Duty* or something else is going to kick its butt."

Over 4.5 million units sold worldwide (and counting), would like to have a word with Mr Pachter.





TOP LEFT & LEFT: A showcase of the Bandit SMG and Tedior weapons available in *Borderlands 2*.

BOTTOM: A Battlebot design.

WHAT DO YOU GET THE MAN WHO HAS EVERYTHING? THE MOON.

Handsome Jack, after buying the Hyperion Corporation, built a base on Pandora's always-visible moon. It looks ridiculous in its absurd grandness, yet deadly acting as a deployment station for Hyperion's robots. The H-shaped moon base literally shoots robots on to Pandora, allowing for rapid deployment anywhere.

"It's definitely not an accident that Hyperion is up there blocking the view and plotting," comments art director Jeramy Cooke. "We wanted to have a bad guy that could sort of piss off the player. I really believe you can't just tell the player to be mad at the bad guy; he has to kind of crap on stuff, be a dick, get in there and mess things up. Since that moon is always there hanging in the sky in the first game, we kind of wanted him to be such a douche. So, he put his company logo on the frikken moon."

certain elemental damage types, and so forth.

The Hyperion Corporation makes most of its profit by mining the crap out of Pandora for Eridium, refining it into "Amp!". Used in guns, grenades and shields, Amp! (as we understand it) is used to increase certain types of damage you do, or apply elemental weaknesses to enemies. Throw a Lightning Damage Amp! grenade on an enemy, and now your Lightning-damage guns do major hurt.

The production and refinement of Amp! produces a by-product, which in true corporate fashion is re-branded as "SLAG", sold as energy drinks and healing packs.

MORE GUNS THAN THE POPULATION OF NORWAY

While the first game had a statistically huge number of guns, the visual variety was lacking. Gearbox has scrapped the entire gun generation system for the sequel and built a new one from scratch with a new paradigm. Much more emphasis is placed on the differences between the nine gun manufacturers, with clear physical and visual differences between them. Now when a weapon drops, you'll be able to instantly tell which manufacturer it's from based on its silhouette.

"We have a really talented concept artist, Kevin Duc, and he's sort of just owned that sphere of designing the new manufacturer styles for all the guns," says art director Jeramy Cooke. "He's just blown it out of the water, everyone that sees the guns are amazed by how cool they look. For me that's really fun. I love designing the brands, it brings so much flavour. They're not just shapes with stats anymore."

For example, Vladof guns are all about fire rate, so they all have a heavy mini-gun barrel for housing ample bullets. Torque weapons are explosive-round, shown via large gun barrels for the mini-rockets they fire. Dahl weaponry emphasizes burst-fire, sporting recoil-reduction grips. Jacobs guns have that old-time feel, with wooden stocks and semi-auto firing. Tediore may be the most amusing of the bunch, where reloading involves throwing away the gun itself like a grenade.

PRETTY PANDORA PARTS

Hellquist admits the first game was a monotonous dusty brown. Since Pandora is an entire planet, with arctic and temperate zones, there was much more they wanted to show. Landscapes and locations will be much more varied, ranging from jungle to tundra, highlands to dust-bowls. While they still want to maintain a "wasteland" feel, it now won't always be desert. "Just don't expect *Far Cry*," he laughs. "Everything on Pandora is violent and wants to kill you, even the plant life."

To improve the sense of scale when exploring, the connectedness of areas is now much more visual. Landmarks you see in the distance from one zone will be visible from an opposite zone. When you're at the landmark itself, you'll see the landmarks from neighbouring zones. So while areas are still broken up into sizable chunks, they now flow together better.

BUILDING BETTER BADASS BADASSES

"The first game felt like the same four bandits and skags over and over," Hellquist admits. *Borderlands 2* has double the enemy types compared to the first game, with much more variety. Every time you enter an area, the spawn locations for enemies are different. Path-finding and A.I. communication have been improved greatly. You might be fighting a group of skag pups when suddenly a Fire Skag appears, its roar can turn



WHAT ABOUT CL4P-TP?

Absent from what we were shown was *Borderland*'s immutable little iconic mascot. When pressed on this, Gearbox's creative director Paul Hellquist divulged some details about the little robot's involvement in *Borderlands 2*.

"Yes! I can confirm he's a part of this game; we've got some fun surprises in store for the player. We've taken to heart that all the DLC adventures are a part of *Borderlands 2*, so we're not pretending that General Knox and Claptrap's Revolution didn't happen, and what happened to Claptrap after that. As for where he's headed, he's the last of the Claptraps, since the previous Vault Hunters helped Hyperion wipe out the Claptraps. He's an antique as far as Hyperion is concerned, and his attitude has shifted. In the first game he was this happy go lucky dancing little guy, by the time revolution has happened he's got a fire in him. And now he's in a place where he hates Hyperion as much as the players do because of what happened. But he's still got that light-hearted part of him too. You're going to have some fun adventures with him, as he tries to get back at Hyperion. He's such an interesting character though. We get daily mail saying 'Claptrap's awesome, I love this guy, he's great, I want more Claptrap' and then the very next email is like 'f*** that robot, I never want to see that thing ever again!'"









all nearby pups into fire pups, changing what weapons you must use. Robot enemies can call down flying engineer robots that heal them. Bandits call "plays", which causes all nearby Bandits to do one particular thing. An example Hellquist gives is when a bandit leader shouts "everyone throw grenades!"

It will *rain* grenades. Shoot the damn leader before he does that.

An additional tactical layer is the new wounded state animations for enemies. When you've damaged one to within an inch of their life, they start limping, crawling or generally looking half-dead (but still angry at you). This makes them very easy to spot in a crowd, so you may want to leave one like that for an easy Second Wind comeback kill if you end up going down. This element adds a surprising amount of decision-making during combat, which Hellquist hopes will help with avoiding it feeling like a "chore" compared to the first game.

THE NEW BATCH

"We knew we were successful with the classes in *Borderlands*, because nobody could agree which one was best," laughs Hellquist. Gearbox wanted more skills for the sequel, more "game changer" super skills that, once you hit them mid or high tier, change your entire play-style. There will still be three skill trees per class, but the studio is keeping tight-lipped over what players can expect.

The only new class they were ready to talk about is Salvador the Gunzerker: a squat, dwarf tank of a man, sporting a kitsch beard, groovy sideburns and ammo-belts everywhere. Inspired by Brick from the first game, Salvador also uses a rage system but instead of going Mr Super Punchy, he gets to use any two guns akimbo when enraged. Including rocket-launchers. Try this with four players simultaneously in co-op.

"It always sucked that we took away your range attack when going rage with Brick, but now you can go double rocket launchers," says Pitchford. "You can still go up and melee them to putty, but now you have that memory of what was fun about the Berserker but improved about it."

Akimbo also allows Salvador to combine elemental effects if he uses two complimentary weapons. An example would be using a gun that covers enemies in an Amp! de-buff making them weak versus fire, in tandem with a fire-based machine-gun, for insane amounts of damage. Certain weapons will also have flavour text on their descriptions, indicating if they will work well with other weapons for hidden special effects.

"We needed to make sure he wasn't Brick-lite," adds concept designer Scott Kester. "How do we make a big guy that isn't just another big guy? Make him a little guy that weighs as much as the big guy! (laughs). It's hard, trying to make these classes that appeal to individual tastes, instead of just creating a game where every character is 'soldier guy' with a different mask on. We wanted more of a 'man, I love Gimli from *Lord of the Rings*, I like dwarves, and this guy is a dwarf!'"

LIVE DEMONSTRATION

Even though the game isn't anywhere near complete, we were treated to a live demonstration showing off early levels and some later content. Firing up "today's build, so it might be buggy," the user interface is instantly recognizable. New touches (is that a mini-map?) adorn the slick edges of the interface, past which we're looking at snowy icy tundra.

The new interface is super-swish, mimics a 3D effect by being inside the game space (akin to how *Dead Space* does it), and when the panels are open they show your character on the right in glorious detail. Aside from the slicker look, the interface has better vertical design for split-screen and "the PC version will have native mouse support for drag and drop, clicking," promises designer Jason Reiss as he controls the action using an Xbox 360 controller.

RESCUE A FRIEND

"Rescue a friend" is the only quest on the mission list. The cel-shaded graphic novel look is back, obviously, looking crisper than the first game. This area is the "Glacial Tundra", as indicated by some splash text that appears which also gives some experience for discovering the area. We're walked into the "Marrowfields", an area littered with frozen bones. One of the new enemies appears. The "Bullymong" is a huge, four-armed bluish gorilla, who picks up a nearby car wreck, lobbing it at us. It's super effective. One quick restart later...

Being an early build, some things are missing textures and the frame rate stutters. We pick up a Tediore gun, which is "all about fast reloading by being disposable." Running out of ammo shooting the Bullymong (who strafes and leaps around), the gun gets thrown like a grenade. It actually explodes, and a new fully-loaded gun "digitally regenerates" into your hand from the hand-held Tediore digistruct. The same in-game tech used for spawning vehicles.

We come across a gun under the new S&S Munitions label. The bandits of Pandora now manufacture their own guns, and they look totally hobo. The sight is a nut welded atop a bolt, and since they're all about ammo capacity they have huge bullet-drums hanging under them like truck nuts.

CARS AND MIDGETS

We're shown one of the new vehicles of *Borderlands 2*, an off-road technical "or party wagon, as we call it," according to Reiss. It's a big *Mad Max* styled rambler, seats four (which Gearbox hopes to be the standard for all the vehicles). Driving it around shows off their improved handling and independent wheel suspension. We drive up to the base of a giant dam, the "Bloodshot Slums," now out of the snow. Bandits come out to play, the new enemy animations shown off as the attackers dive out of the way of bullets, roll around, duck behind cover and gesticulate wildly. The animation improvements come thanks to the new state-of-the-art motion capture studio Gearbox recently built. "We can now do smoother, subtler animations," says animation producer Trey Davenport. "Enemies can have responsive and lifelike reactions to being shot."

From behind large steel doors, a Nomad Torturer appears. This behemoth of a man carries a huge riot shield. With a midget strapped to it. According to Reiss, "the Torturer hates Midgets, so he has one as a meat shield cover for his riot shield to make a point." The midget complains and shouts, struggling against the chains. If you shoot the chains, the midget pops off and distracts the Torturer so you can get at his unshielded back. Otherwise, expect a difficult fight.

"Comedy is definitely one of the spices in the soup of *Borderlands*," says Hellquist. "We have every intention to continue that quirky humour and style. So not just dialogue, but also the enemies and situations. We're always trying to find the right balance. If we went too far with that stuff it could quickly become a game that has a camp feel, and we don't want a campy vibe. We want the threats to be real, we want the

"It will *rain* grenades. Shoot the damn leader before he does that."



SPLIT-SCREEN / COOPERATIVE IMPROVEMENTS

Aside from the interface being better suited for split-screen play (no more panning around), marketing director Steve Gibson confirmed at Gamescom 2011 that people playing split-screen will be able to play online with two other players. With one caveat. "The only situation you cannot do is split-screen plus split-screen because you need a host," Gibson said. "And a split-screen guy uses a lot of CPU, so he cannot be the host."

Gearbox has also stated that characters will now have back-and-forth dialogue during co-op (like *Left 4 Dead*), and they'll fix some of the nagging problems the original had, like certain missions being locked out for players depending on their level or progress in the story.





"Comedy is definitely one of the spices in the soup of *Borderlands*..."

situations to have impact on this universe you're living in, but we also want light-hearted fun with all these zany characters."

The team skips ahead a few levels, as we're pressed for time. Having gone through the dam, we're now on top of it and can see the Bloodshot Slums down below. Bloodshot Gang graffiti splashed randomly across the metal shantytown indicate we're now in serious business land.

ROLAND RESCUE

Busting out from behind some doors, Roland appears. He's been captured by Hyperion from the Bandits (who had captured him first, apparently), and being carted away inside an energy cage atop a "W4R-D3N" robot. Handsome Jack's mechanical henchmen are the continued evolution of Hyperion's Claptrap project. "GUN Loader" robots (using tech from Gearbox's *Aliens* game) have agile navigation, leaping atop storage crates and finding quick routes through the metal jungle. If Hyperion gets away with Roland, the mission will pick up again elsewhere thanks to the new dynamic branching mission structure.

EXP Loaders (exploders, get it?) try to get close to us. Shoot out their legs, and they crawl Terminator style towards you before blowing up. Indicated by an audible pop, Hyperion launches more robots on to the field from their moon base. Their descent is marked by a graceful arc, which terminates in a robot crash-landing right in front of you.

The robots go after the bandits too, causing a three-way running battle as you try to catch up to Roland and the W4R-D3N robot trying to get away with the Vault Hunter. Giant "WAR Loader" bots drop in, which in turn request support Surveyors which fly around and heal the Hyperion forces. The Surveyors zip between structures nimbly, regenerating the arm we just blasted off the WAR Loader.

We reach Roland, and the W4R-D3N stops. It's a constructor robot, deftly assembling an entire platoon of support bots right in front of us. We're dropped back to the main menu, where we see the entire cast we're not supposed to, and they make us promise not to tell.

END BITS

The team loads up another level quickly just to show off the variety in the locations. We fly over emerald fields inspired by the Scottish highlands, the rolling green hills tipped with peaks of rock. They fly us up to the high-tech dam, through a dried-up riverbed and into Overlook, a small neutral town atop an outcropping. It all looks fantastic and incredibly lush, compared to the first game.

Bringing us back to where we started... **NAG**

Miktar

OWN IT
ON BLU RAY AND DVD

X-MEN
FIRST CLASS

THE STORY BEGINS



X-Men: First Class
Blu-ray
R199.99



X-Men: First Class
DVD
R99.99



X-Men: The Ultimate Collection
All Five Films
DVD Box (5 DVD) R299.99
Blu-ray Box (5 Disc) R599.99

Available mid October 2011

NEXT entertainment

© 20XX Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment LLC. All Rights Reserved.
TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX, FOX and associated logos are trademarks of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation and its related entities.

Look & Listen is NAG's preferred DVD and Blu-ray Retailer

DVD • CD • GAMES • DIGITAL • ACCESSORIES

Look & Listen
For the Fans

Shop online at www.lookandlisten.co.za or visit our stores nationwide. Contact us on 011 467 3717.

While stocks last. Errors and omissions excepted. Availability and prices subject to change at the discretion of the supplier.
Not all items are available in all stores - please call your local store to enquire on availability.



MARVEL, SPIDER-MAN, X-MEN and all related characters: TM & © 2011 Marvel Entertainment, LLC. and its sub and trade names are the properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.


X-MEN™
DESTINY
megarom interactive
www.facebook.com/HeroHQ
ACTIVISION
www.activision.com
sidiaries. Licensed by Marvel Characters B.V. www.marvel.com. Game © 2011 Activision Publishing, Inc. All other trademarks

The reviewers

Question: If you could design the ultimate hand-held weapon what would it be? *Star Wars* glow sticks are not allowed.

RedTide



The RobDinolaseye beamer – A gun that shoots a tiny egg out of which hatches a giant robot dinosaur that shoots lasers from its eyes.

Miktar



Got trypophobia? How about a gun that shoots small pellets that burrow into flesh then inflate to the size of soccer balls before popping.

Azimuth



The Eye Poppertron 3000 - the ultimate innovation in instant conflict resolution.

Mikit0707



A ray gun that when fired at anything, removes the empty spaces between atomic nuclei and their electrons. Sugar cube sized planets anyone?

GeometriX



The LOL Cat Launcher: fires photographs of cats doing silly things to keep your enemy too amused to fight back. Fits all standard 30mm bayonet sockets for increased lethality.

Barkskin



The Moraliser: Each time you pull the trigger, you automatically win a game of *StarCraft*, thereby making you feel better about your worth as a human.

Ramjet



Thinks he doesn't need to reply to my mail anymore. Next month I might introduce you to a new writer for NAG. - Ed.

SAVAGE



The GTFO cannon. Non-lethal teleportation gun that gets rid of stupid, annoying people, to a destination of your choice.

ShockG



A gun that kills people.

Anatomy of a review

A quick guide to the NAG reviews section

/1/ Totally interesting stuff: Developer, publisher, platform, random junk and more. The number of players listed under multiplayer is the maximum number you can have in a game at one time. Local means "couch", not LAN.

/2/ Obligatory words (i.e. a review): This is the stuff you probably won't read before ogling the shiny pictures, glancing at the score and then flipping the page. We don't blame you – word-reading is hard.

/3/ Screenshots: These are the pretty pictures you'll probably stare at before peeking at the score, ignoring the wonderful review and then flipping the page. You should probably ask your mom to make your sandwiches too. Just to be on the safe side. You might cut yourself.

/4/ Captions: Funny. Informative. Touching. The captions are usually none of these things. Except maybe touching, when we put some innuendo in there.



/5/ Game name: The most reading you'll do will likely happen in this bit right here.

/6/ Award: Comes in three delicious flavours. See below for maximum info.

/7/ Those things with extra info: These things have extra info.

THE AWARDS

Editor's Choice: If a game gets this award, you know it's more than just good. It means it pulled the editor away from *Call of Duty* for long enough to actually play another game – and we can't think of anything more remarkable than that.



Must Play: It means exactly what it says: you must play this game. Beg your parents for cash, dole out sexual favours, etc. – fight past the pain and do whatever it takes to get your sweaty paws on it. You'll thank us for it later.



Pony: You know how everyone wants a pony? Yeah, that's not the case here and we're not just being mean. We're trying to protect you from the horror of being punched in the nether regions by thoroughly rubbish games.



THE SCORE BOX

/1/ Plus: These are the great things that make us happy.

/2/ Minus: These are the rubbish things that make us sad.

/3/ Bottom line: The waffle stops here. Hundreds of words distilled into a tiny bit of text that can either damn a game to the depths or shower it with praise.

/4/ The Score: It's a number out of 100. It lets you make an informed decision as to whether or not you should spend money on this game. This isn't rocket science, people.

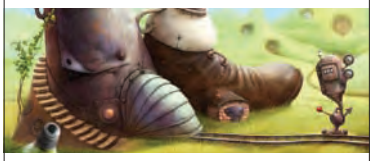
1 / **PLUS** / Very detailed / Enthralling setting / Amazing graphics
2 / **MINUS** / Not enough detail / Boring setting / Rubbish graphics
3 **BOTTOM LINE GOES HERE; KEEP IT UNDER 15 WORDS, 15 WOULD BE IDEAL. THANKS.**
4 69

QUICK HITS

The Tiny Bang Story

Here's the deal: there's this giant, football-looking thing orbiting a world known as Tiny Planet. When an asteroid slams into that massive football in the sky, it goes boom and shatters nearby Tiny Planet into a whole bunch of jigsaw puzzle pieces, conveniently dividing *The Tiny Bang Story* into five chapters to play through. To find the missing pieces and rebuild the planet, you set off on a bit of point-and-click puzzle solving in a number of different locations.

The game is filled with puzzles, but most of them offer very little by way of explanation (there's a hint system though). Some of them are utterly obtuse, but many of them are quite clever and fun to solve. For example: one puzzle requires you to build a train out of parts hidden onscreen, while another requires that you pop upward-floating balloons holding jars that contain pieces of a picture. The painstaking scanning of your screen that some puzzles require might put many off the game, but it's fun, intelligent and has an adorable hand-drawn art style for people who enjoy this sort of thing.



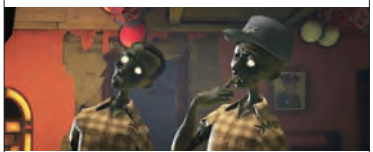
// It's not for everyone, but this is a fun little puzzler.

Dead Block

The success that horde defence games have enjoyed recently is undeniable, and now *Dead Block* is here to give us its own take on the Nazi Zombies game mode from *Call of Duty* (sans Nazis). It'll do so with a healthy dose of humour, *Team Fortress 2*-style visuals and plenty of fun and small, but collectively meaningful, ideas.

Going into each of the game's missions, you'll be greeted with an ultra-cheesy '60s-inspired video of the area and the characters at your disposal, which will be any combination of Jack the construction worker, Mike the Boy Scout, and Foxy the security guard. Each mission takes place inside a safe house such as a high school or mansion, and you're tasked to hold off the endless incoming zombies until you've completed each mission's final goal.

The game's mix of silly humour with well thought-out gameplay mechanics works well, and each mission has either new traps to discover or character skills to unlock. The major issue with the game is its repetitiveness; each mission follows the same structure so the only reprieve from boredom is the new abilities.



// Good fun for a few days, but the repetition might bother you once the honeymoon period is up.

WEB SCORES

How do we measure up? We scour the Net to find out what the rest of the world thinks.

NAG / Metacritic average / Game Rankings average

Resistance 3



88
83
85

Deus Ex: Human Revolution



87
89
90

F.E.A.R. 3



80
75
75

Rugby World Cup 2011



79
50
51

No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise



76
73
71

Driver: San Francisco



68
80
80

enhance your
CONSOLE GAMING

Race to Victory with MadCatz



Licenced Wireless Racing Wheel for XBOX 360
Powerful wireless connectivity | non slip pedals
Full rubber grip points | Interchangable Gear shift
Intergrated headset port for XBOX Live



CYBORG EVO 5
the RumblePad
reversable D-pad | Left analog stick
Compatible with XBOX 360 | Ergonomic controls
Advanced programming provided by ST software

CYBORG F.L.Y.9



Rule the skies with the all-new F.L.Y.9 wireless flight stick
Adjustment tools for altering complete maneuverable controls unique base design

comet COMPUTING
sales@cometcomputing.co.za |
www.cometcomputing.co.za
office : +27 (0) 11 824 3368 |
fax : +27 (0) 11 824 3339

MADCATZ

Look & Listen
For the Fans

Deus Ex: Human Revolution

Revolutionary house

If you ask any oldschool PC gamer what their top ten favourite games are, there's a good chance that the first *Deus Ex* will be on that list. The game managed to charm action and role-playing gamers alike due to its near perfect combination of stodgy role-playing mechanics and modern-day first-person shooting. It was also the bearer of a disappointing sequel, *Deus Ex: Invisible War*, which means that *Human Revolution* not only has to make up for the transgressions of its predecessor, but somehow continue from where the first game left off.

Human Revolution plays out with a simple but well-told story. You're Adam Jenson, security chief for Sarif Industries in the year 2027 (before the events of *Deus Ex*). Sarif is a global leader in the next generation of cybernetic augmentations, and the world's population is divided between those who see augs as the next evolution of humanity, and those who oppose the unnatural advantages that they bring. Lo-and-behold, Jenson finds himself dragged into a conspiracy of epic proportions, and he'll have to travel all over the world to uncover the whirlwind of mysteries, save the girl, and save the day.

editor's choice / editor's choice / editor's choice

[details]

Platforms:
360 / PC / PS3
Genre:
Action role-playing game
Age restriction:
18+
DRM:
Internet connection required [Steam]
Multiplayer:
Local: None
Online: None
Developer:
Eidos Montreal
Website:
www.deusex.com
Publisher:
Square Enix
Distributor:
Megarom









This is an action game with a healthy dose of role-playing elements that will allow you to choose what kind of Jenson you'd like to play. Almost all missions in the game can be handled with force, stealth, diplomacy or, more often the case, a mixture of all three. True to its RPG roots, *Human Revolution* sees Jenson gain experience points for almost everything he does, from killing enemies to hacking terminals. As you gain XP, you'll earn Praxis Points (these can also be purchased as kits for large sums of money or occasionally found) that can be spent on unlocking and improving dormant augmentations within Jenson's body. While the augmentations cover a variety of skills, and many of them focused on non-combat and stealth abilities, one can't shake the feeling that there are too few of them – especially those that improve Jenson's diplomatic skills. With that said, if you play the game using a mix of all types of engagements, you'll find that the selection is sufficient.

Your progress through the game's main storyline and chapters is entirely linear, moving from one key story mission to the next, but you'll be able to freely explore a limited area of two of the game's cities: Detroit and Shanghai. The cities present players with a decent sense of freedom, with plenty of conversations to overhear and locations to discover depending on what types of augmentations you've unlocked (like increased strength to lift heavy objects, or leg upgrades that allow you to jump to previously unreachable heights). While every area in the game is practically littered with detail, the world's NPCs' behaviour is so unbelievably rigid that these quest hub areas feel lifeless despite their atmosphere. This is where the game's sandbox tendencies come in handy, however, as there are so many places to explore, and during missions there are always multiple ways to move about the environment, so, like true sandbox games, the game world is only as fulfilling as you choose to make it. If you breeze through the missions without paying the heed to the rich detail, then you'll likely find the game to be incredibly shallow. Take your time, stop to read the collectable eBooks, explore every location you possibly can (and again when you return with new augmentations), and play this game at a slower pace than any first-person shooter, and you'll find that *Human Revolution* is incredibly rewarding and thought-provoking.

/1/ Boss battles! They suck. As combat-only events, they have no place in this game and they represent both instances that I stopped playing from frustration. Pro tip: bring grenades.

/2/ The game's soundtrack is truly marvellous. If you can afford it, buy the Augmented Edition which includes a making of DVD and the entire soundtrack in MP3 format.

/3/ Because we're all bored of hearing people mispronounce the word "deus": here's the official pronunciation guide: deɪ.əs ˈɛks / DAY-əs EKS. That's "day-us". Not "dues", not "deuce", and certainly not "juice". [*We were going with 'do sex' for a while in the office, Ed*]

© 2011 Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. Screen images are simulated.

SAMSUNG



INCREDIBLE DEPTH FOR THE ULTIMATE GAMING EXPERIENCE.

Experience real-life depth with the new Samsung 3D LED monitor.



Real 120Hz · Brighter* 3D images · 2D to 3D image conversion · **www.samsung.com**

* Brightness comparison based upon monitors with same brightness in 2D. †3D glasses are required and are included with purchase.

CNETT South Africa

Look & Listen
For the Fans







Along with the gameplay choices presented to the player, there are many instances where you're required to make a moral decision, and often those decisions will have practical implications. The most common is the choice of killing, knocking out or completely avoiding your enemies, which is obviously dependant on your choice of augmentations and weapons. Unfortunately, aside from the immediate effects (like a dead body that's just caused the alarm to sound), big decisions seldom have really impactful consequences. Sure, there's a guy who you help out who later gives you a moderately large sum of money, or the other guy who you can choose to screw over for your own personal gain who later tries to kill you, but there is only a single consequence in the game that made me genuinely regret a decision I had made earlier. The game's progress is incredibly forgiving. This is good in the sense that you don't always feel like killing yourself for your decisions, but without sufficient impact, those decisions don't hold very much weight. Similarly, and this is due to the fantastic level design, you can't ever corner yourself due to augmentation choice – there's always a way through a level that feels designed for your style of play. Of course, the small selection of augmentations comes into this, and by about two-thirds of the way in, I was choosing augmentations purely for the sake of spending Praxis Points.

There should be no doubt in anybody's mind – *Human Revolution* is a flawed game, but there were only two occasions in my twenty hour play-though I can recall wanting to stop playing because of those flaws. And then, I only stopped for long enough to clear my head so I could jump back in and move past those points. There is so much fun to be had here that it'd be a shame for anyone to give up playing or avoid it completely based on its collectively insignificant issues. **NAG**

GeometriX

/ **PLUS** / Incredibly immersive / Range of supported play-styles
/ **MINUS** / Boss battles / Lots of little things

IT'S GOT A FEW PROBLEMS, BUT NOTHING SHOULD STOP YOU FROM PLAYING THIS GAME.

87

CHANGE

the rules of networking with the power of convergence.

HP Converged Infrastructure connects what's next with HP Networking Solutions. Enterprise networks have become overly complex, cost-intensive, and vulnerable to attack. Now HP delivers solutions that virtualize network connectivity, reducing complexity by up to 85%.* And the HP TippingPoint Secure Virtualization Framework provides a unified security model across virtual and physical environments. The result is seamless protection with a staggering ROI of up to 247% in six months.* So put the new rules of networking to work for you.

New Rule #5: Virtualized data center networks reduce complexity by up to 85%*

New Rule #6: Secured data centers deliver up to 247% ROI over a six-month period*

Get [Insert Offer].

Visit hp.com/networking/change to view all the new rules of networking.



*For more details, visit hp.com/networking/change

Copyright © 2011 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The only warranties for HP products and services are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. HP shall not be liable for technical or editorial errors or omissions contained herein.

Look & Listen
For the Fans

Resistance 3

Holding back the darkness

You can almost taste Insomniac's ambition in *Resistance 3*. It's supposedly the last *Resistance* game that'll have the Insomniac Games logo plastered all over its intro, so going out with a bang was clearly on their minds. As such, the game is a statement of intent, hoping to solidify Insomniac's status as a developer of first-class shooters before they move onto their next title, *Overstrike*. I'd say they've succeeded.

Resistance 3's single-player storyline begins devoid of all hope, with the human race having been almost completely wiped out by the Chimeran invasion of Earth. If the human race could be represented as a single human body, then the Chimera have chewed, mauled and shot it to pieces over the years, leaving only one of this weird metaphorical body's forearms somewhat intact and animated. Probably because it's started to smell a bit dodge and even Chimerans have standards when it comes to chowing down on putrid grub. At the end of this forearm is an abnormally large, clenched fist that's embodied by one man: Joseph Capelli, who replaces Nathan Hale as the player character after the events of the previous game.

Joe's eking out a fairly miserable existence with his wife, their young son and a small group of other survivors who've set up shop in Haven, Oklahoma. These people have given up the fight in favour of simply surviving as long as possible. That all changes when series regular Doctor Malikov shows up with a plan that might save the human race and Joe begrudgingly takes the job, mostly thanks to his wife. Well, that, and he'd like his son to be able to lead a normal, carefree life someday. Throughout the ten-hour (give or take) campaign, it's clear that it's a decision Joe can't help but regret. It lends the otherwise fairly standard storyline of heroics 'n' guns a very human component that makes it nicely engrossing. And so, clutching his son's mitten in hand, Joe sets off on a journey to New York City while the rest of us enjoy some meaty FPS action along the way.

Meaty this certainly is, with a wide array of returning and all-new weaponry that packs a fantastic punch. Staples like the Bullseye and the Auger are joined by inventive new guns – like the Mutator, which fires a rude blob of goo that infects enemies with a concentrated strain of the Chimera virus (or something), covering them in boils that eventually overcome them. The weapons look and sound fantastic, and they now slowly

must play / must play / must play / must play

[details]

Platforms:
PS3
Genre:
First-person shooter
Age restriction:
18+
DRM:
None
Multiplayer:
Local: 2 players
Online: 16 players
Developer:
Insomniac Games
Website:
us.playstation.com/games-and-media/games/resistance-3-ps3.html
Publisher:
Sony Computer Entertainment
Distributor:
Ster Kinekor

















/1/ Chimera are divided into Feral and Military categories. The two of them don't get along very well.

/2/ All weapons in the game have a secondary fire function. The Auger, for example, deploys a shield in front of you that can only be penetrated by Auger fire.

/3/ Occasionally you're joined by AI-controlled companions who provide a little assistance. Not that it's going to help against that Goliath...





improve with use. Each weapon has three upgrade levels, each upgrade providing bonuses like improved damage, or it might even evolve the way you use the weapon entirely. Thankfully, Insomniac chose to rid us of that crappy restriction of carrying only two weapons at a time (effectively raising a rebellious middle finger to most modern shooters) and the weapon wheel also makes a valiant return because of this.

The enemies you'll be shooting are equally diverse, with certain weapons best used against certain enemies. There's nothing outrageously large to shoot at, but there's enough variety here to ensure that you're never bored with battling the same enemy over and over. They're smart, too. Well – they're mostly smart. I saw the AI do some pretty ridiculous things during my playthrough, but these isolated incidents were more funny than detractive. Fights with these enemies are made excellently intense thanks to the return of a limited-health system, rather than a regenerative one. It's refreshing to play an FPS in this day and age where you can't simply duck behind a piece of cover and magically have your health restored. It makes confrontations on low health nail-bitingly tough as you're forced to play more carefully because you picked up the last health pack just before getting hit in the face with a Wildfire rocket. This, coupled with your Magical Videogame Pants that let you carry all the game's satisfying weaponry at once, gives everything a classic FPS feel. It's a modern shooter with old-school sensibilities – which may piss some people off, but I love the challenge it provides.

Environments are quite detailed and fun to fight in, and care has been taken to put in alternate routes and flanking spots to make everything feel more open. Technologically, it's not a powerhouse like, say, Sony's other PS3-exclusive FPS, *Killzone*, but it still looks and sounds great. There's also the option to play the game cooperatively either locally or online – but the player count has been dropped from 8 in the previous game to 2 in this. The drop in player count makes sense, considering the game's more intimate, desperation-themed storyline. It's a campaign filled with many memorable moments (including a particularly fun mission on a train) and the story/pacing holds up all the way through, undergoing some remarkable twists and turns before reaching its conclusion. Like the iconic Bullseye, it fires off in unexpected, wild directions – but every shot hits its mark, making *Resistance 3*'s a narrative well worth enjoying.

Once you're done with that there's the frantically fun competitive multiplayer side of things. Apparently every single game with a multiplayer component now needs to mimic *Call of Duty*-style weapon/perk/ability/random crap unlocks, and despite the story's love for the old school, *Resistance 3*'s multiplayer takes a more contemporary approach. As with the cooperative play, the player count has been dropped. *Resistance 2*'s 60-player madness has been dropped down to 16 (8v8) here. It ticks all the right boxes: including customisable player classes and a multitude of game modes. The weapons make the transition to multiplayer brilliantly, and you'll find the multiplayer is deep enough to keep you occupied for a good deal of time after you've completed the campaign.

Resistance 3 has a lot to offer. In truth, it's actually a fairly standard FPS – but one that's brimming with quality design and intense gameplay. Play it. Good times come guaranteed. NAG

Barkskin

/ PLUS / Chunky, satisfying weaponry / Compelling story / Fun, rewarding multiplayer
/ MINUS / Nothing worth mentioning

***RESISTANCE 3* IS ONE OF THE FINEST SHOOTERS YOU'LL EVER PLAY.**

88

Look & Listen
For the Fans

No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise

A bloody new coat of paint





What happens when one of the most outrageous, most mature (but completely immature) games ever developed is awkwardly released as a platform exclusive for Nintendo's famously (or notoriously, depending on how you look at it) kid-friendly Wii? Well, the short of it is that your sales bomb harder than a penis joke in church. It's happened many times (*MadWorld* and *House of the Dead: Overkill*, anyone?) on Nintendo's console when unlucky developers attempt to sell bloody, ultraviolent games to your motion-controlled grandma. So, how do you fix it? In this case, you give the game slight visual upgrades, add in a few bonus features and rerelease the game on the consoles with bigger balls. That's just how *No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise* rolls.

Here's what you need to know: you're Travis Touchdown. After winning a lightsab... sorry, Beam Katana in an online auction, Travis becomes embroiled in the glitzy world of assassinations and indiscriminate murdering. Turns out there's an organisation that ranks the world's top assassins, and Travis is at the bottom of the top-ten list. Other than the possibility of future sex, there's no real reason for Travis to climb to the top – but I guarantee you'll have a whale of a time getting there. Well... mostly. This is the second time I've played *No More Heroes*, and apart from a few small changes/additions, this is pretty much the same game – flaws and all.

Gameplay is fairly standard beat-'em-up fare – you've got slash and stun attacks, each with a high and low variant. There's more to it than that, but space is limited. On PS3, it's best played with PlayStation Move, because there's something inherently satisfying about slashing maniacally in the real world and watching digital characters spray ludicrous amounts of blood as a result of your handiwork. Still, even without Move, the action is great. Travis can upgrade his stats (like health), buy new Beam Katanas, and do a bunch of other stuff by exploring the fictional town of Santa Destroy in between ranked battles (which are diversely themed levels that see you killing tons of henchmen before facing your target) against assassins. I'd forgotten how annoying the filler part of the game is, driving around Santa Destroy to procure enough in-game cash to enter the next ranked battle, which is where the game's real strengths lie. You earn cash by doing odd jobs around town – mowing lawns, collecting coconuts, signalling ships and other such stuff – or by doing assassination side missions, which involve things like killing X number of enemies using only wrestling moves. They've added a few more of these mini-games, but it doesn't stop them from being a pain in the ass. Conversely, the boss battles are awesome (and there are five bonus bosses from *NMH 2* here as well), with each boss requiring a different approach and each of the paths to get to them filled with imaginative obstacles and tons of enemies to slash at.

This HD upgrade makes the game more pleasing to the eye with its prettier textures and improved lighting (even though the art style was always eye catching), but it's still plagued by the same technical botches as the Wii version: crazy frame rate drops and other issues that we put up with due to the Wii's limitations, but are now all the more noticeable on Sony's machine. Other than that, there are small additions that make the whole package even more appealing, but to be perfectly honest, anyone who's played the original doesn't need to play this upgrade. Nevertheless, it's one of the most unique, most excellently irreverent games out there, one that's well worth playing if you missed it on the Wii. NAG

Barkskin

[details]

Platforms:
PS3
Genre:
Action adventure
Age restriction:
18+
DRM:
Disc-based
Multiplayer:
Local: None
Online: None
Developer:
Grasshopper Manufacture [original] / AQ Interactive
Website:
www.konami.com/nomoreheroes
Publisher:
Konami
Distributor:
Ster Kinekor Entertainment

/1/ Your Beam Katana has limited juice. When the battery drains, you recharge it by furiously tugging the Move controller up and down. Preferably near the region of your crotch, because that's what Suda would want.

/2/ Boss battles are preceded by and concluded with ridiculous cinematics. Seriously - the boss battles alone are worth playing this game for. If you really like mowing lawns, there's always that as well.





/ **PLUS** / Fantastic boss battles / Awesomely cheeky / Good, fun combat / Imaginative
/ **MINUS** / Side missions kill brain cells / Technical wobbles

IF YOU PLAYED THE WII VERSION, THERE'S NO REASON TO PLAY IT AGAIN – BUT IT'S STILL AWESOME.

76

ASUS®

Inspiring Innovation • Persistent Perfection

ASUS recommends Windows® 7 Professional.

REPUBLIC OF GAMERS



STRIKE IN SILENCE

ROG G74 Series

We can improve it, we have the technology. Better. Stronger. Faster.
Designed with portable power in mind, the G74Sx is the future of gaming notebooks from ROG. It comes loaded with a superfast 2nd generation Intel® Core™ i7 Processor,Genuine Windows®7 Professional and discrete NVIDIA® GTX 560M GPU for the best gaming and multimedia experience available in a gaming notebook.

intel inside CORE i7 Visibly Smart NEW

GET IN TOUCH WITH US!

www.asus.co.za +27 11 783 5450 asus_za@asus.com

facebook.com/asusza twitter.com/asus_za

Intel, the Intel Logo, Intel Inside, Intel Core, and Core Inside are trademarks of Intel Corporation in the U.S. and other countries.

Look & Listen
For the Fans

F.E.A.R. 3

Not so scary

The *F.E.A.R.* series is still with us, with the recent release of the third instalment in the franchise bringing more of the expected action for fans. What it didn't bring, mind you, is a lot of what the game is named after. *F.E.A.R. 3* simply isn't scary. You might get a fright or two, or you may get a little tense, but the bone chilling dread that the very first title evoked just isn't there.

Maybe it's because we've become used to the *F.E.A.R.* formula. Maybe we've become desensitised in general, but the odd appearance of Alma and the nasty monsters you will get to face simply don't brown the undies.

What the game does provide, in the absence of bladder-stimulating scariness, is a good, solid shooter experience. It's not the most ground-breaking of shooters, but *F.E.A.R. 3* delivers good action, and lots of it. With limitations on the number of weapons that can be carried, as well as an enemy AI that will do its best to try and take the player out, this cover-based shooter can get quite tense at times. The cover system works beautifully, with the player able to effectively use and move behind cover, while enemies will do their best to flush him out.

[details]

Platforms:
360 / PC / PS3
Genre:
First-person shooter
Age restriction:
18+
DRM:
Disc-based
Multiplayer:
Local: 2 players
Online: 4 players
Developer:
Day 1 Studios
Website:
fear3.co.uk
Publisher:
Warner Bros. Interactive
Distributor:
Nu Metro Interactive



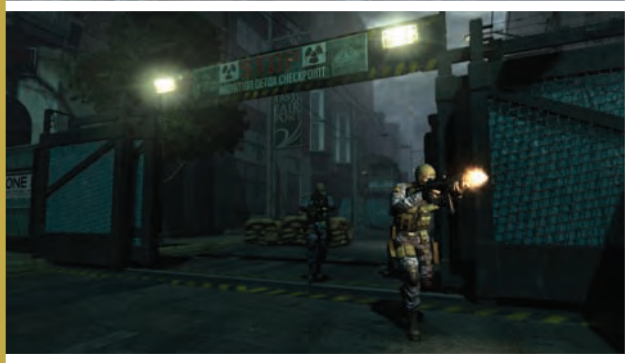












Instead of using a standard experience system, *F.E.A.R. 3* features a number of in-game achievements that earn the player advancement. Shoot X number of guys in the head, and you get a reward of points. Kill a certain number of guys with a particular gun, more points. These points add up and, once the player has reached a predetermined number, a new level is awarded, along with new abilities. It's a great system, and one that will have you going back to check what you need to do all the time. Unlocked levels are perpetual, too – they carry over between playthroughs and different modes.

The first playthrough is done with Pointman, the hero of the very first *F.E.A.R.* game. Once you complete a level, you unlock it for use with Paxton Fettel, his psychic, powerful and dead brother. Fettel doesn't use guns, and is a bit of a let-down in single player modes. In co-op play, though, the combination of Fettel's powers and Pointman's prowess with firearms makes for a deadly and entertaining combination.

Aside from the average length single-player campaign, which can also be played co-operatively, there are a number of multiplayer modes. Some of these are really awesome, and give *F.E.A.R. 3* the edge over the competition, at least in terms of fresh approaches.

On the whole, *F.E.A.R. 3* is a satisfying and entertaining action shooter. It probably won't win any awards, but fans will likely enjoy it. NAG

Ramjet

/ **PLUS** / Good cover system / Intense action / Great multiplayer
/ **MINUS** / Not scary / Fettel is uncool

A DECENT SHOOTER, ALTHOUGH NOT REVOLUTIONARY... AND NOT SCARY AT ALL.

80

SA's new Superphone!



HTC Sensation

A Dual Core Processor for a new multimedia high

Connect wirelessly with DLNA streaming to any enabled device.

Unlocked Bootloader puts you in control of your software*

Experience HD with a qHD wide-screen for crystal-clear viewing.

HTC Sense gives you a personalised, tailor-made user experience.

- Android 2.3.4
- 1.2 GHz Dual Core Processor
- 8MP Autofocus camera + LED Flash
- 4.3" qHD display
- Front Facing Camera
- Full HD video (1080p @ 30 frames per second)

facebook.com/htcsouthafrica

* To unlock your HTC Sensation bootloader it must be running software version 1.45.401.2 which is available via a FOTA update. Other devices will be added in the future, so please check HTCDev.com often for updates, as well as a detailed explanation of the unlock process.

htc
quietly brilliant

Look Listen
For the Fans

Driver: San Francisco

Holy shift!

If you've ever wondered what it would be like to control an entire city and cause the population to behave in a suicidal manner while you cruise around at 200MPH, then this might be just what you need while you wait for the men in white overalls to take you away.

As with most *Driver* games, you'll take on the role of detective John "get the hell out my way I don't care if this is a sidewalk" Tanner. Roughly following the events at the end of *Driv3r*, Tanner and his arch nemesis Jericho have a vehicular face-off; Tanner loses and finds himself comatose on a hospital bed. As a result, the vast majority of *Driver: San Francisco* takes place inside Tanner's head, in which he evidentially stores a satellite-mapped version of the city of hills and hippies. This lends itself to some kooky happenings, but instead of allowing the eccentric setting and surrounding story to gently wash over the player, the developers opted to hold the player's hand through every little nuance and explain, repeatedly, at great detail, what is going on.

In his mind, Tanner can use an ability called Shift, which he improves as the game's 6-7 hour campaign progresses. Shifting allows the player to control almost any vehicle in the game world, and use those vehicles to aid their current objective. Many of the game's missions have you chasing someone or racing against other cars, so having the ability to suddenly drive oncoming traffic head-on at your prey or opponents is quite useful. It's also quite cruel, and, despite this being "all in his head, so it's fine," one can't help but feel a little disturbed by Tanner's nonchalance about the wanton murder of people in a city he's supposedly trying to save. With that said, Shifting is fun, fast and exciting, and makes for a hell of a replacement for boring PIT manoeuvres.

Progress through the campaign is made by selecting the next available core mission that is only unlocked when you've completed the requisite number of city missions. The latter can at best be described as pointless but cute attempts to extend the game's obviously simple storyline. One's frustration is compounded by the linearity of the storyline that feels oddly stifling in a game with such a large environment. If you're in the mood, you can spend hours completing optional dares and activities that are mildly entertaining, but don't add much value to the core game. The game's currency, Willpower, is earned in these events and can be spent to upgrade abilities or buy new cars. Because, you know, you can't just jump into any vehicle in the city and claim it as your own. NAG

GeometriX

[details]

Platforms:
360 / PC / PS3
Genre:
Arcade racing
Age restriction:
12+
DRM:
Internet connection required [UPlay]
Multiplayer:
Local: 2 players
Online: 6 players
Developer:
Ubisoft Reflections
Website:
driver-thegame.ubi.com
Publisher:
Ubisoft
Distributor:
Megarom Interactive







/1/ The multiplayer component is one of the game's greatest strengths and combines Shifting with classic racing in nine different game modes.

/2/ Montages and non-interactive cutscenes make up a large chunk of some of the more interesting happenings in the game. It's just a pity that you can't do anything but watch them.







/ PLUS / Shifting works a treat / Multiplayer is fun / 120+ licensed vehicles
/ MINUS / Stifling storyline / Repetitive main/side missions / Feels rushed / Too much fluff

A FUN IDEA MIXED UP IN OVERALL WEAK EXECUTION.

68

Look & Listen
For the Fans

UFC Personal Trainer

Serious fitness

[details]

Platforms:
360 / PS3 / Wii
Genre:
Fitness
Age restriction:
3+
DRM:
None
Multiplayer:
Local: 2 players
Online: None
Developer:
Heavy Iron Studios
Website:
www.ufcpersonaltrainer.com
Publisher:
THQ
Distributor:
Ster Kinekor Entertainment

When it comes to fitness games, the market is booming. Okay, they're not really games, but you use them on gaming consoles, so that categorisation will have to do for now.

Combining this success with the increasingly popular MMA disciplines is a stroke of genius on the part of THQ, who enlisted the help of some of the top UFC coaches to put together a training program that will work you like crazy.

UFC Personal Trainer will not teach you how to beat the crap out of someone, but it will get you fit. The short, intense workouts are available in numerous flavours, like cardio and strength training. The user can set up a 30 or 60 day workout period, too, during which progress will be tracked.

Speaking of tracking, the Kinect system does a great job here, and the game gets pretty unforgiving on half-hearted movements on the part of the user. If you're going to get fit using this, you're going to work hard and properly!

The graphics are good, with clear visual and audio instruction on performing the exercises the program presents. The trainers will motivate the user with audio prompts, too, but these often get repetitive.

If you want to get fit using one of your consoles, this is a good option. But it's not for everyone. NAG

Ramjet







/ **PLUS** / Good workout / Well presented
/ **MINUS** / Repetitive voice prompts / Can't cheat with Kinect!

IF YOU WANT A GOOD FITNESS PROGRAM, HERE IS YOUR SOLUTION. BUT IT'S NOT FOR EVERYONE.

75



Look & Listen
For the Fans

Rugby World Cup 2011

Rucking good

When you think about rugby players, images of muscle-bound dudes ready to rip your arms off are easily conjured. However, now scrawny gamers who couldn't tear the wings off of a fly can also get in on the rucking, scrumming and running... without the danger of getting their frail, soft bodies crushed by really big guys [*stereotyping is still alive and well I see, Ed*].

That's because HB Studios, the developers who have also worked on numerous EA Sport titles, have released a game to celebrate the 2011 Rugby World Cup. Although EA opted out of distributing the game, it still has full IRB backing and features most of the world's teams as fully licensed content.

We haven't seen a really decent rugby game... well, ever, but *Rugby World Cup 2011* takes the work that was done before and improves on it. The end result is a rugby simulation that flows, full of the organised chaos that a bunch of men chasing after an oddly shaped ball brings with it. The controls are sensible; they offer simple inputs for those who aren't too familiar with gaming, right through to more complex actions for those who know their controller, know rugby, and want to look impressive.

The camera also helps, allowing a view from behind the team, or one from the side. The behind view is great for single player matches, but the side-on view is where most multiplayer games will take place. And we see a lot of multiplayer happening here; it's the kind of game that even spectators will cheer for, crammed with fun and excitement.

And it doesn't look too bad, either. The graphics appear a little dated, and during play the players pretty much look the same, except for hair colour. Occasionally, a recognisable player will be spotted during one of the game's TV-replay style cut scenes, but player likenesses aren't really well captured.

Playing the game is lots of fun, but single-player matches may demonstrate what could be considered an elastic AI from time to time. For the most part, the player's team will do really well, until they suddenly become inexplicably slow and stupid for a few moments. And the opposing AI may occasionally display flashes of brilliance, even if it is the weakest team of the lot.

With that said, this certainly is the best rugby game we have seen to date. And its ease of play will have every rugby fan able to play, even if they have never touched a game before. It is an excellent entry-point into gaming. Yet more experienced gamers will also get a kick out of it, particularly if they are rugby fans. The fluid nature of play, which never really gets overly bogged down, is great. NAG

Ramjet

[details]

Platforms:
360 / PS3
Genre:
Sports
Age restriction:
3+
DRM:
None
Multiplayer:
Local: 4 players
Online: 4 players
Developer:
HB Studios Multimedia
Website:
www.rwc2011game.com
Publisher:
505 Games
Distributor:
Apex Interactive















/1/ Now, playing with funny-shapped balls is something everyone can do – not just doctors!

/ **PLUS** / Easy to play / Licensed teams / Great multiplayer
/ **MINUS** / Slightly dated graphics / Some inconsistencies

IT'S THE BEST RUGBY GAME WE HAVE SEEN SO FAR, PARTICULARLY IN MULTIPLAYER.

79

Thermaltake
COOLall YOUR LIFE

Chaser MK-I

e-SPORTS CHASSIS
PURSUIT WITHOUT FEAR



INTERNAL
USB 3.0
SUPERSPEED

With the e-SPORTS spirit , Thermaltake Chaser MK-I has built a perfect cooling system into this brand new series of chassis. Water-cooling ready design allows users to integrate 240mm liquid cooling system. ColorShift LED fans, highly advanced ventilation, USB 3.0 SuperSpeed ports can be directly connected to the motherboard. Chaser MK-I gaming chassis is ready for any galactic combat.

www.thermaltake.com

©2010 Thermaltake Technology Co., Ltd. All Rig

COREX

T: +27 11 700 7188
F: +27 11 700 7140
2 Brands Hatch Close
Kyalami Business Park
Kyalami

T: +27 31 582 0200
F: +27 31 582 0280
Umhlanga Ridge Town Centre
Umhlanga
Durban, 4051

T: +27 21 555 8200
F: +27 21 555 7136
442 Koeberg Road
Milnerton
Cape Town

DID YOU KNOW?

The recent winner of the world's top 500 supercomputers is the Jaguar Cray XT5. It takes up 4,400 square feet (409 square meters), which is larger than an NBA basketball court.

/ **Performance:** 1.759 petaflops (theoretical maximum: 2.33 petaflops)
/ **Processors:** 37,376 six-core AMD Opteron 2.6 GHz
/ **Processor cores:** 224,256
/ **Total RAM:** 300 terabytes
/ **Total disc space:** 10 petabytes
/ **System type:** Cray XT5
/ **Operating system:** Cray custom version of SUSE Linux

The computing power of the Jaguar is used by scientists to run simulations of climate changes and effects, supernovas, and a number of other compute-intensive applications.



Speedlink Kudos Gaming Mouse
A sexy looking mouse with a 5,000dpi sensor, 9 programmable buttons and six 6g weights, means you're sorted for gaming.
R599 | www.dawnofgaming.co.za



Roccat ISKU Illuminated Gaming Keyboard
The IKSU's claim to fame is the inclusion of Roccats new Talk technology, allowing the keyboard to communicate with the mouse. Using the Easy Shift[+] key you can execute functions of both peripherals.
R899 | www.sonicinformed.com

N-Control Avenger

The Avenger is an external adapter that houses the PlayStation 3 controller by tightly gripping the controller's exterior surface, providing an immersive gaming experience through an intuitive user-interface. "It enhances the gamer's manual dexterity and situational awareness by improving accuracy and reaction time," says David Kotkin, lead designer of The N-Control Avenger.

The Avenger allows for rapid, fluid movements between individual buttons and analogue sticks, and comes equipped with a stabilizer tripod, high-precision tension straps, hair-triggers, and sensitivity adjusters, which can be fine-tuned like a precision weapon. The Avenger will only be available in a limited edition of 5,000 units worldwide.



By the Numb3rs

8.429GHz

On 31 August 2011 Team AMD FX set a Guinness World Record for the "Highest Frequency of a Computer Processor". They overclocked the AMD FX to 8.429GHz, beating the previous record of 8.308GHz.



Thermaltake Level 10 GT Snow Edition
Sporting the same specs as the original Level 10 GT, the new Snow Editions' glossy white paint job is sure to turn heads.
R3,999 | www.corex.co.za

AOC e1649fwu
A 16 inch USB-powered monitor that doesn't need an external power adapter. It's just too cool.
R949 | www.platinummicro.co.za

Know Your Technology

/ SSAO /
Screen Space Ambient Occlusion is a technique for efficiently approximating ambient occlusion in real time. This technique was developed by Crytek and used in their *Crysis* game of 2007. This technique is implemented using a pixel shader where the algorithm samples depth vales around the immediate pixel and computes the depth difference between these two points. The result is of a high quality but doesn't have the performance penalty of normal ambient occlusion.

/ TONE-MAPPING /
This technique where computer graphics and real-time rendering is concerned is used to map one set of colours to another in order to approximate the appearance of HDR lightning on our screens which have a very limited dynamic range. This is what allows current games to use HDR lighting without losing scene data, through overexposure for example.

/ GLOBAL ILLUMINATION /
This is a broad term for a group of algorithms that add more realistic lighting to static or dynamic scenes. These algorithms take into account not only light directly from the light source but subsequent cases in which light rays from the same source are reflected by other surfaces in the scene. Ambient occlusion, photon mapping, IBL, radiosity and ray tracing are examples of global illumination.

/ PARALLAX MAPPING /
An enhanced version of normal or bump mapping techniques. This technique much like the others works at a texture level to give of the appearance of depth, without any significant penalty in performance. Parallax mapping works by displacing texture coordinates at a point of the rendered primitive using the view angle relative to the surface normal. This is combined with the height map at that point to achieve the effect. At steeper view angles texture coordinates are displaced more, giving the illusion of depth.

BlackBerry PlayBook

[info]

RRP:
16GB R5,699;
32GB R6,499;
64GB R7,499

Website:
www.blackberry.co.za

[technical]

- **7" 1024×600 WSVGA capacitive LCD touch screen**
- **130mm x 194mm x 10mm; 425g**
- **1 GHz dual-core processor**
- **BlackBerry Tablet OS with support for symmetric multiprocessing**
- **MP3, AAC and WMA audio playback**
- **Support for high resolution video playback (H.264, MPEG4, WMV)**
- **1080p HDMI output**
- **Dual 1080p HD cameras for video conferencing and video capture (3MP front and 5MP rear)**
- **1 GB RAM memory**
- **GPS, orientation sensor (accelerometer), 6-axis motion sensor (gyroscope), digital compass (magnetometer)**
- **Stereo speakers and stereo microphones**
- **Wi-Fi (802.11 a/b/g/n) connectivity**
- **Bluetooth 2.1+EDR support**

[summary]

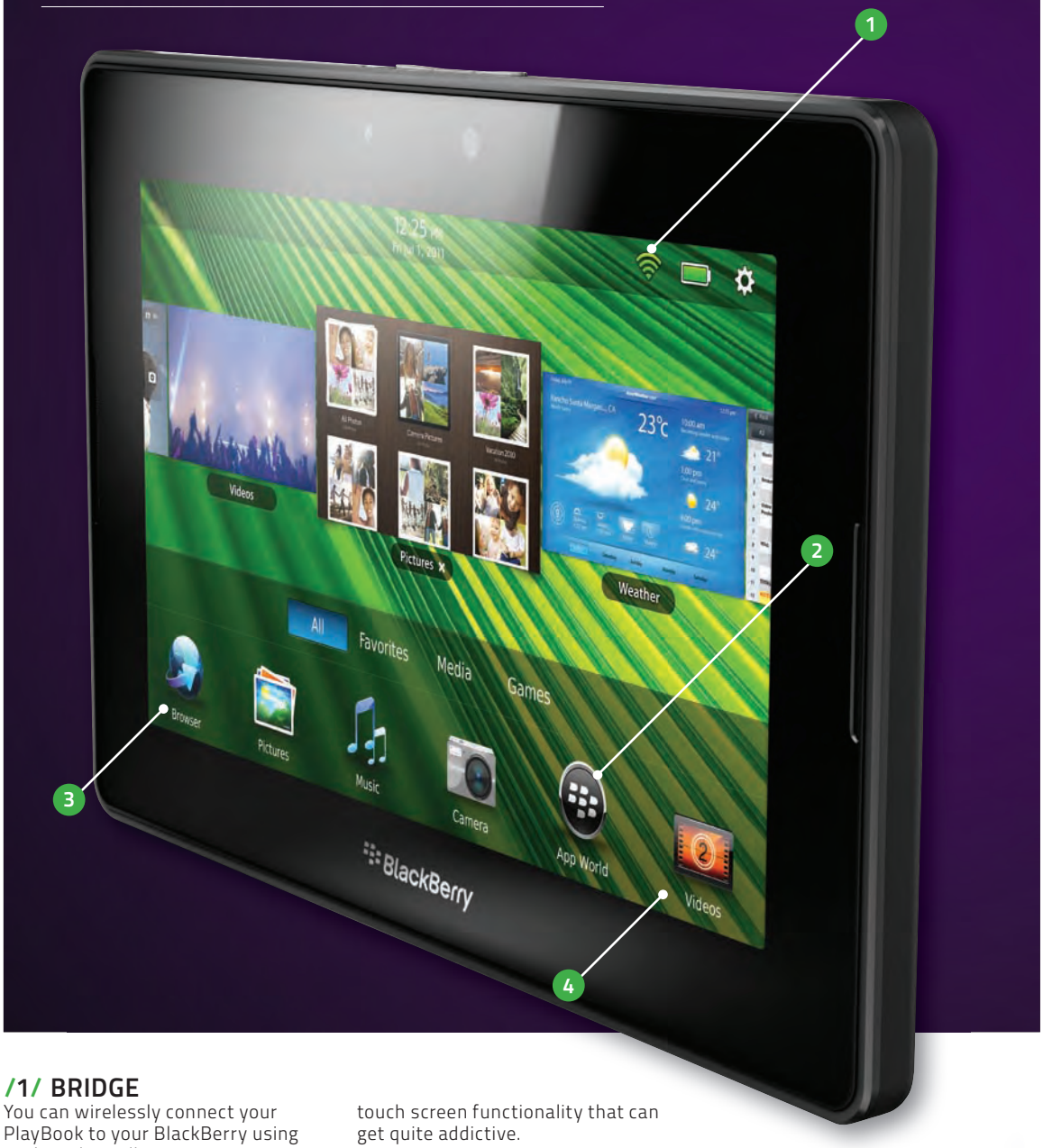
/ Pros:
Supports HD; Easy to use touch and swipe; Ultrathin and portable

/ Cons:
Wi-Fi only option could be limiting; Touch screen gets very dirty

/ Alternatives:
Apple iPad; Samsung Galaxy



If you're a BlackBerry owner, have cash to burn and are looking for a cool 'accessory' in the form of a tablet, then the PlayBook might be what you're after. We think the product name, PlayBook, is quite apt in describing just what you can do with this little 7" gadget. It's versatile in that it can be used for business on the go as an extension to your BlackBerry phone, or simply as a portable media device for gadget junkies.



/1/ BRIDGE

You can wirelessly connect your PlayBook to your BlackBerry using Bridge. This will give you access to your phones email, calendar, BBM, documents, contact list, music, and photos. Basically everything that your phone has stored on it in terms of data, can be accessed on the PlayBook.

/2/ PLAY

Link your PlayBook to your App World and you can download from a huge list of games available. There are some neat little games using the touch screen functionality that can get quite addictive.

/3/ SURF

Open up web pages, view videos on YouTube, update your Facebook status, the PlayBook does it all.

/4/ WATCH

Copy videos, movies or TV series to your PlayBook and you have all your media available anytime, anywhere. You can make use of the built-in speakers or plug your own headphones in. NAG



900Mbps Rock Star

Wireless Networking



450Mbps Concurrent Dual Band Wireless N Router

TEW-692GR

450 2.4GHz Band + **450** 5GHz Band

TRENDnet launched the first 450Mbps wireless router and now the first 450Mbps Dual Band router that support 450Mbps on both bands at the same time.

All Gigabit Ports

The combination of the highest performance wireless and wired networking technology creates a seamless wireless HD home experience.

70% GREENnet Energy Savings

TRENDnet's proprietary GREENnet technology greatly reduces energy consumption of wired and wireless networking by up to 70%!

TRENDnet®

FIRST DISTRIBUTION™
www.firstdistribution.co.za

Phoenix Distribution PTY Ltd
Trading as Phoenix Software
www.phoenixsoftware.co.za

Pinnacle AFRICA
www.pinnacleafrica.co.za



Display
Samsung P2770HD
www.samsung.co.za

Motherboard
GIGABYTE GA-X58A-UD9
www.gigabyte.com



Storage drive
Seagate Barracuda XT 2TB
www.seagate.com



OS drive
OCZ Vertex 3 240GB SSD
www.ocz.com



dream machine

Dream Machine

Processor	**R8,999**
Motherboard	**R6,275**
Graphics	**R5,499**
PSU	**R2,399**
Memory	**R1,899**
OS Drive	**R5,699**
Storage drive	**R1,499**
CPU Cooler	**R1,099**
Case	**R1,799**
Display	**R4,999**
Keyboard	**R1,499**
Mouse	**R899**
Mousemat	**R319**
Sound	**R2,799**
Speakers 5.1	**R3,699**

TOTAL: R49,381

Processor
Intel Core i7 980X
www.intel.com



PSU
Antec High Current Pro 1200 Watt PSU
www.antec.com



CPU cooler
Corsair H100 Extreme Performance Liquid CPU Cooler
www.corsair.com

NEW





Mouse
Roccat Kone[+]
www.roccat.org



Keyboard
Logitech G19
www.logitech.com



Graphics
MSI GTX580 Lightning
www.msi.com

Mousemat
Roccat Alumic
www.roccat.org



Sound
ASUS Xonar Xense
R2,799 / za.asus.com





Case
Coolermaster HAF X 942
www.sonicinformed.co.za



Memory
Corsair Dominator GT 2000C8
www.corsair.com



Speakers 5.1
Logitech Z-5500 Digital
www.logitech.com



CAREFUL - NUMBERS CAN BE MISLEADING!



Just for the purposes of this column, let's all pretend numbers mean something. Data is not information. Not all information is relevant and as such, it is quite possible to have information extrapolated from data, which still doesn't tell you anything you can make a purchasing decision on. Stay with me here for a while because this is important, especially where hardware is concerned.

I'm intrigued by the purchasing decisions that people make of late. It seems we've been trained to make these based on synthetic results and aesthetics which are probably the two least important factors when buying hardware. As a dedicated overclocker, numbers are everything to me, but I'm also very aware of how different overclockers are from the people who actually keep these manufacturers in business, which are the gamers and casual users. So 3DMark numbers on boxes, records and such, while impressive, are actually meaningless data at best.

> **"So in the end, manufacturers are communicating military class components, double the amount of copper on their traces, and fans with 100 year life spans"**

In fact there's no correlation between 3DMark records and game performance at all. So to advertise a product to gamers using such numbers is a futile exercise. The overclockers who would appreciate these numbers don't trust them either because these "records" are usually achieved with cherry-picked hardware which tends to skew results and are not representative of retail products.

The fastest GTX 580 on the market, for instance, is the GIGABYTE GTX 580 Super Overclock, and naturally because it has the highest factory overclock out of all the cards. However the best overclocking GTX 580 is the Lightning card, which has by far the highest average overclock, (using liquid nitrogen) followed by the ASUS GTX 580 DirectCU II. So as a gamer, which one should you purchase, you may ask. Well, the GIGABYTE card is probably the worst looking out of the three; it is also the lowest overclocking one in extreme conditions, but it is the fastest out the box and will play your games at a higher frame rate than all the others.

However, all the advertising and marketing material from these companies make no mention of this at all. So in the end, manufacturers are communicating military class components, double the amount of copper on their traces, and fans with 100 year life spans and such. All the things are only beneficial to the manufacturer but meaningless to the end user as nobody buys hardware with the expectation of it lasting 100 years. This applies to other hardware components as well. SSDs for example are getting faster by the quarter. Right now if you want the fastest SSD you need only match a SandForce controller with some high-speed NAND flash and you have yourself the best SSD that money can buy. As a result, most high-performance drives on the market are comprised of exactly the same components and perform identically. Yet every single marketing or advertising campaign highlights the very high read and write sequential speeds which happen to be identical across all vendors.

There has to be a better way to communicate a vendor's advantage over another, while informing the public as well. It's crazy that so much is spent on packaging and appearance, but at no point is anything on the box communicating anything useful to a potential customer. Anyway, I doubt if this kind of marketing will change anytime soon, but at least as end users we can learn what to look for when making our purchasing decisions by educating ourselves and putting less emphasis on synthetic results. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko

4-Way SSD shootout

(It sounds dirty... but it really isn't.)



Corsair ForceGT 120GB

Supplier: Evetech
Manufacturer: Corsair
Website: www.evetech.co.za
ERP: R2,499

Score: 9/10 [Value]



Patriot Wildfire 120GB

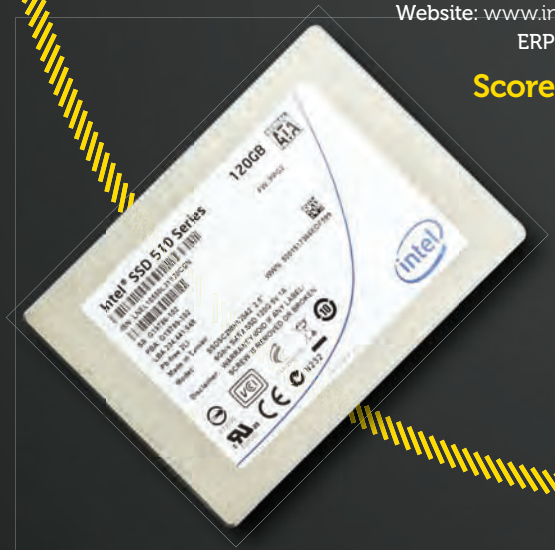
Supplier: Patriot
Manufacturer: Patriot
Website: www.patriot.co.za
ERP: R3,799

Score: 8/10 [Performance]

Intel 510 120GB SSD

Supplier: Intel
Manufacturer: Intel
Website: www.intel.com
ERP: R2,899

Score: 7/10



OCZ Vertex 3 240GB

Supplier: OCZ
Manufacturer: OCZ
Website: www.ocztechnology.com
ERP: (R2, 799 for 120GB model)

Score: 8/10



Benchmarks

	Average read	Average write	IO Meter IOPS	4K read (QD32)	PCMark Vantage HDD	Average IO Response	Max IO response time
Corsair ForceGT 120GB	/ 469.1/	/ 163.1 /	/ 13993.4 /	/ 95.41 /	/ 47307 /	/ 0.5715 /	/ 40.871 /
Intel 510 SSD 120GB	/ 454.9 /	/ 198.2 /	/ 13521.37 /	/ 87.57 /	/ 40621 /	/ 0.5914 /	/ 467.421 /
Patriot WildeFire 120GB	/ 498 /	/ 260 /	/ 16711.79 /	/ 152.9 /	/ 60346 /	/ 0.4785 /	/ 54.3345 /
OCZ Vertex 3 120GB	/ 504.1 /	/ 303 /	/ 18128.85 /	/ 179.4 /	/ 50462 /	/ 0.4411 /	/ 44.379 /

SSD drives are no longer new to anyone, and they have improved quite substantially since their introduction. A name that stands out in all SSD related topics is SandForce. SandForce controllers for SSDs are the leading performance chips. Yes Marvel, JMicron and Intel have vastly improved their flash controllers but they are not matching SandForce as yet.

The current SSDs all seem to be powered by the SF-2281 chip, and with good reason. This chip promises read and write sequential speeds exceeding 500MB/s which are well over the limit of the SATA 3Gbps standard. Before you go out looking for an SSD that delivers that kind of performance though, it is worth keeping in mind that these numbers are theoretical controller limits. In addition these numbers are capacity dependent. This is simply because the more NAND chips there are in an SSD, the more apparent the RAID-like functionality. After all, what leads to SSD's being so fast isn't anything magical but the ability to do parallel transactions.

With that said, lately there's been some concern with the smaller node NAND flash, in particular the shift to 25 and 34nm NAND chips. The number one concern being the significantly reduced write cycles which have gone down to around 300 write cycles per chip, much lower than the 1000 cycles or more of the older 50nm and higher NAND Flash. Manufacturers claim that this will not affect the end users much. There's some credibility to that claim, however what they don't tell you is that the write levelling techniques used to combat this reduced write cycle overhead rob you of capacity. It's a few GBs of space, but given the premium on capacity SSDs have, it's nothing to snivel at. You'll note as well that all the drives here, apart from the OCZ drive, are sold as 120GB drives but only offer 110GB of useable data.

Binary conversions aside, it means you effectively lose 10GB of storage on an already small drive. Paired with relatively expensive controllers and you're looking at improved performance, but not necessarily increased value over the older SSDs. An issue for most people, but if you're a power user the sacrifice is worth it. Most people who have used an SSD will tell you that they can never go back to a mechanical-magnetic drive, so this shootout is mainly geared at those people who want performance above all else.

Before, we get into the numbers, it is worth mentioning that an SSD is probably the largest performance differentiator within systems these days. Simply put, mass storage is the slowest component of the entire computing experience barring the user. Almost everybody's Windows Performance Index score is held back by the storage component. Migrating primary storage to an SSD usually allows people to gain ratings of 7 and above and in our context, gaming is truly pleasurable on a powerful machine once you install an SSD.

So with all this, we gathered four high speed SSDs and pit them against each other. Three of the drives could be said to be similar, although the Intel drive features a very different component list.

Strange as it may seem, the Intel drive doesn't use an Intel controller, but a Marvel BKK2 chip that is paired with 256MB of Hynix DDR2 RAM. The SF controller drives don't use a caching mechanism, and therefore do not have any dedicated RAM. With the Marvel controller, Intel has used their own 34nm NAND chips; peculiar given that they sell 25nm NAND to other vendors for use in their SSDs. Regardless, Intel offers a longer warranty on their drives than most IHVs so the choice of NAND could have something to do with it.

The other drives as stated earlier were similar, the exception being the Patriot Wildfire drive which uses the more expensive Toshiba 25nm NAND. If you have glanced at the performance figures already you will have figured out that this was the fastest drive of them all, or at least of the 120GB drives. The OCZ Vertex 3 is a stellar SSD but won because, as stated earlier, it uses more NAND chips for a higher capacity and therefore achieves better performance than the 120GB drives.

Surprising was the Corsair ForceGT drive. We thought this would be extremely fast but it wasn't. Next to the Patriot drive it just couldn't keep up, but in its defence, it was much faster than the Intel 510 and cheaper. So value wise there's nothing better here in this shootout. The numbers are also skewed because of the Toshiba NAND memory which makes the Wildfire the fastest 120GB drive. Against other similar drives with Intel NAND, we're confident the Corsair ForceGT would hold its own, if not lead the pack.

In closing, we feel that if one had to make a compromise between price and performance and look at these drives on value alone, the Corsair ForceGT would be the winner as it's the cheapest drive here but it's not the slowest. For those not too concerned with the pricing, we'd definitely have to give the nod to the Patriot Wildfire SSD. The OCZ drive is out of contention and only really used for reference sake as it still remains the fastest SATA SSD we've ever tested, but at over R5,000 for the 240GB model, it doesn't really fit in. So there you have it, four of the best drives out there. Whichever one you decide upon, you'll get incredible performance out of it. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko

Versus

Alienware M17x R3 vs. MSI GT780

Epic gaming notebook Battle of epicness!

Gaming notebooks (or desktop replacements, or whatever the hell you want to call them) are becoming more and more alluring by the second. They'll never replace our superior desktop machines – but they're impressive beasts nonetheless, often packed with cool features to sweeten the deal. We've just gotten two new, godlike notebooks in for review. One of them will walk away with the coveted Dream Machine award. The other will leave here shamed.

Alienware M17x R3

Price: R32,999
Supplier: Dell
Website: www.dell.com

PLUS
Looks great / Cool features

MINUS
Poor GPU performance / Insane price

5/10



Alienware's previous M17x had occupied a slot in our Dream Machine for quite a while. That was a fantastic machine, offering performance that still holds up surprisingly well against the newer hardware found in MSI's GT780. It's a bit odd then that the new M17x that Alienware has sent us can't even match the brute force of its predecessor, let alone outdo it.

The M17x R3 honours Alienware's tradition of providing an impressive level of quality. Its refined, minimalistic (but unmistakably badass) looks and sturdy build quality make this a laptop to be admired from a distance. Open it up and you'll find a keyboard that is comfortable and pleasant to use. To be honest, I prefer the SteelSeries keyboard design touted by Alienwares's competitor, but I can't imagine anybody not liking the M17x R3's keyboard. It's backlit, with the option to change LED configurations and colours to customise the look of it all. Even the touchpad can be customised to suit your tastes.

The CPU is a slight upgrade to that of the MSI GT780, sporting a 2.2GHz Intel Core i7-2720QM rather than the GT780's 2GHz Core i7-2630QM. It's also packed with more RAM, sporting 16GB dual-channel, 1600 MHz DDR3 memory – double that of MSI's offering. These two upgrades provide better performance in certain areas, but not in the area where it matters most – gaming. This is because Alienware has lumped its otherwise impressive piece of hardware with an NVIDIA GeForce GTX 460M – an outdated, underpowered GPU that just can't keep up with the GTX 560M that powers the competition.

We'll allow the numbers to explain: For synthetic tests, we put the M17x through the same paces as the GT780. Unigine Heaven with no AA and 4xAF at 1920x1080 achieved a score of 647 in DirectX 10 mode. Bear in mind that this is a higher native resolution than that of the GT780. Turn on DirectX 11 with tessellation enabled and that score drops to 434.

SPECS

CPU:
Intel Core i7-2720QM (6M cache, 2.2GHz, 3.3GHz Turbo Mode)
GPU:
NVIDIA GeForce GTX 460M (1.5GB GDDR5)
RAM:
16GB DDR3
Display:
3D-capable 17.3" WideFHD (1920x1080) 120Hz WLED
HDD:
1.5TB 7200RPM (2 x 750GB, RAID0)
Audio:
Internal 5.1 surround sound
OS:
Windows 7 Professional 64-bit

3DMark Vantage dished out 8369 3DMarks with the performance profile selected – but that score is slightly inflated by the superior CPU that this notebook features. Real-world tests don't fare any better – especially with 3D enabled, which is supposed to be a major selling point for this notebook. The *Resident Evil 5* benchmark running with 4xAA in DirectX 10 at 1920x1080 scored an average FPS of 54.8 with 3D disabled. Turn it on though, and that frame rate drops to 18.6 – which is a horrible average at which to endure 3D effects, barely playable at all.

Even with added bonuses like two 750GB drives set up in RAID0 configuration (exactly like what the GT780 offers), the price is ludicrous. Unfortunately in this versus comparison, the M17x is bested by the GT780 – which costs more than R10,000 less. To be fair, it's got the potential to be a great notebook – but replacing that GPU would drive the price up even higher than it already is.

We've always liked MSI's range of gaming notebooks. Some more so than others, but for the most part they're high-quality machines that any gamer on the go would do well to consider if they're looking to hand over some cash for a drool-worthy desktop alternative. The GT780 is no different, and it's easily the best gaming notebook MSI has ever created: not just because its performance is brilliant as far as desktop replacements go, but because it boasts superior design in every other aspect as well.

First things first: this notebook is aesthetically gorgeous, with MSI having altered their previous designs to incorporate a more sophisticated, polished look. The smooth contours, sturdy build and brushed aluminium casing give the entire device a grown-up look and feel.

Pop the hood and you'll find an excellent LED-backlit keyboard designed by SteelSeries. The keyboard layout is fantastic, making for comfortable use and providing satisfying keystrokes. The LED backlighting allows you to change the backlighting mode by selecting from a range of different styles and modifying the LED colours to suit your tastes. It's all a bit superfluous really, but it helps set the GT780 apart from the pack.

Where the GT780 really shines is with its raw performance straight out of the box. The unit we received is powered by an Intel Core i7-2630QM, an NVIDIA GTX 560M and 8GB of DDR3 RAM. Real-world tests with the *Resident Evil 5* benchmark (4X AA at the GT780's native res of 1600x900 in DirectX 10 mode) produced an average frame rate of 82, which is excellent. For synthetic tests we used Unigine Heaven (with and without DX11/tessellation enabled) and 3DMark Vantage. We ran Heaven in DirectX 11 (tessellation enabled) with no AA and 4X AF at 1600x900 and the GT780 managed a good score of 613. At the same settings in DirectX 10 mode, the result was 1005. 3DMark Vantage at 1280x1024 with the performance preset selected spat out 9443 3DMarks. They're all impressive scores as far as gaming notebooks go, and the GT780 shouldn't have any trouble running all but the most demanding of games with all settings maxed out.

One of the biggest problems we've had with MSI's notebooks in the past has been their displays, which were never quite bright enough – even with the brightness maxed out. That problem seems to have died with the GT780, its 17.3-inch LED display producing vibrant, crisp images. There are a ton of cool extra features touted by the machine, like the fact that the two 750GB hard drives housed within come preconfigured in RAID0 configuration. There's also a Blu-ray combo drive tucked away in there – although we can't figure out why the button (which doesn't always respond on first touch) to eject the tray is on the touch-sensitive bar above the keyboard. The Dynaudio speaker setup is as appreciated as ever, spitting out surprisingly good mobile audio.

The GT780 is an outstanding gaming notebook, worthy of Dream Machine status. It's well designed, it's powerful and it's packed with awesome. **NAG**

Dane Remendes

SPECS

CPU:
Intel Core i7-2630QM (6M cache, 2GHz)
GPU:
NVIDIA GeForce GTX 560M (1.5GB GDDR5)
RAM:
8GB DDR3 (expandable up to 16GB)
Display:
17.3" HD+ (1600x900)
HDD:
1.5TB 7200RPM (2 x 750GB, RAID0)
Audio:
2.1 speakers, sound by Dynaudio, THX TruStudio Pro, 7.1-channel output
OS:
Windows 7 Ultimate 64-bit

MSI GT780

Price: R21,599
Supplier: MSI
Website: www.msi.com

PLUS
Excellent performance / Good audio / Great design

MINUS
Nothing, really

10/10

hardware award / hardware award / hardware award



Conclusion: It may bear the coveted Alienware name and possess superior hardware in certain respects, but the M17x R3 just can't compete with the real-world performance offered by MSI's GT780. The fact that Alienware's machine costs over 10,000 bucks more is the final nail in its coffin – all because of that GPU.

HTC EVO 3D

Supplier: **HTC** / Website: **www.htc.com** / RRP: **R5,500**



Just about everywhere you look, there's some mention of 3D, be it from TVs, computers, cinemas, notebooks, or consoles; virtually anything that has a visual component to it seems to be turning 3D. There's no getting away from it and it's evident that this is the future of all things visual.

On the mobile front, the HTC EVO 3D is the first stereoscopic mobile phone on the market. From initial impressions, the 3D effect was actually better than we could have imagined. This could be because we couldn't wrap our collective heads around how a glasses-free stereoscopic image would work, but lo and behold, the EVO 3D proved that this was possible.

How convincing the effect is though, is another story on its own. Before we get into that, however, it's worth mentioning that this is actually a powerful phone. It's not an EVO 4G by any means, but it still packs a punch specs-wise. With a dual-core Snapdragon 1.2GHZ SOC paired with an Adreno 220 GPU, it is right up there with the best. This configuration is backed by 1GB of RAM and on top of the Gingerbread operating system; HTC has layered their Sense 3.0 UI. It is worth mentioning that, the way Android is currently, there's really no need for additional UI layers, because vanilla Android is actually very good.

> "Even without the 3D, the HTC EVO 3D works well, is packed with features and can just about go head-to-head with any other high-end smart phone on the market."



The phone itself is by far one of the meatiest phones we have reviewed. It is thick, built sturdily and robust, some may feel it's a little on the heavy side though. Alas, it is a phone that houses two cameras at the rear and uses a qHD 4.3" display, so you should expect a weighty phone. Covered in an anodized material, we wouldn't say it's a particularly attractive phone, but it does manage to come off as a high quality device. The volume rocker and power button are the only parts of the phone that feel slightly "cheap" – very odd considering that the camera button and the 2D/3D switch are really solid.

The screen itself is pretty good, however it's not a match for the other high-end phones out there that use Super AMOLED and comparable display technologies. However, you'd be hard pressed to say anything bad about the capacitive touchscreen.

Getting back to the 3D, as stated earlier it's impressive initially, but it becomes apparent quite quickly that you can't really use these features for much more than party tricks and a quick 3-minute game once in a while. The biggest problem is that in 3D mode the resolution is lower than it is in 2D mode, and the image seems dimmer as well. This is true for the 3D photos as well which are not 5MP each for each eye, but 2MP at 1920x1080 each. The videos are taken at an even a lower resolution in 3D at 640x720. Overall the 3D is more gimmicky than it is useable. However, we do have to take into consideration that it is still early days for glasses-free stereoscopic viewing. In the HTC EVO 3D's defence, the Nintendo 3DS apparently doesn't fare much better.

Overall, even without the 3D, the HTC EVO 3D works well, is packed with features, and can just about go head-to-head with any other high-end smart phone on the market. The selling point may be the 3D, but we think the phone has other qualities which make it a worthwhile purchase. We'd not buy the phone for the 3D capabilities, but having them doesn't hurt either. NAG

Neo Sibeko

[specs]

CPU:
Qualcomm Snapdragon dual-core 1.2GHz
GPU:
Adreno 220
Memory:
4GB built in, up to 32GB SD card
Display:
3D LCD capacitive touchscreen (540x960)
OS:
Android OS v2.3
Size:
126.65x65x12.1mm

/ PLUS / First phone to use 3D technology / Great specs
/ MINUS / The 3D may be uncomfortable / Immature 3D technology

THIS IS A GREAT EFFORT BY HTC. THEY'VE PUT TOGETHER A COMPETENT, IF NOT GREAT, PHONE.

7 OUT OF 10

msi™

CHIPSET AMD

AMD A75 CHIPSET FM1 SOCKET

Dual Graphics Ready

MILITARY CLASS II

SFC 30% Higher Power

Hi-c CAP Tantalum Core

Solid CAP 10 years lifetime

msi MILITARY CLASS II HIGH STABILITY COMPONENTS

CERTIFIED MILITARY STANDARD MIL-STD-810G

TOP QUALITY & STABILITY

MSI AMD Llano-series mainboards



RECOMMENDATION AMD

U3/S6 Click BIOS Concept

Control Center

*The performance may vary by different system configurations
*Tested with AMD A8-3850 + MSI A75MA-G55



www.msi.com

COREX

T: +27 11 700 7188
F: +27 11 700 7140
2 Brands Hatch Close
Kyalami Business Park
Kyalami

T: +27 31 582 0200
F: +27 31 582 0280
Umhlanga Ridge Town Centre
Umhlanga
Durban, 4051

T: +27 21 555 8200
F: +27 21 555 7136
442 Koeberg Road
Milnerton
Cape Town

EVGA Z68 FTW

Supplier: **EVGA** / Website: **www.evga.com** / RRP: **TBA**



EVGA is probably best known for the Classified range of motherboards. Not surprising considering that in the early days of the X58 platform, there just wasn't any other motherboard that was remotely close to what the Classified boards could achieve where overclocking was concerned. Under the guidance of Peter Tan (who is now working in a similar capacity at ASUS) EVGA shot to the top and earned itself a reputation with overclockers all over.

With the P67 boards however, EVGA didn't get it right, but fortunately the Z68 chipset has allowed the company to try and impress the enthusiasts and power users again on the 1155 platform. To that end, the FTW board is the highest-end Z68 board that EVGA produces. This motherboard is geared for overclockers first and everybody else second. This is not to suggest that this wouldn't make for a fantastic motherboard in a high-end gaming machine though, the opposite is true actually.

It has 4-way SLI and Crossfire support, USB 3.0 and SATA 6Gbps support. Missing are digital audio outputs but again, as stated earlier this is primarily for the enthusiast who probably has a discreet audio card. What we do miss is the ability to use AVX-enabled applications, such as media, encoders on this board. This is simply because you can't enable the CPU IGP on this board, and as such these features will be lost to you, which is sad considering one of the major selling points of the Z68 platform is the ability to use your IGP and your discreet graphics controller at the same time. Oversight on EVGA's part indeed, but forgivable given the target market. Everything else is as you would expect in such a high end board.

The FTW has a detailed but easy to navigate BIOS, clear CMOS, power and reset switches. Post LED and PCI-Express slot jumpers for those wanting to test multi GPU configurations on the fly.

This isn't a perfect board, but it's one that is easy to like and appreciate. Definitely worth the purchase if you're in the market. NAG

Neo Sibeko

Benchmarks

Super Pi 8M	/ 1min43.60 / / 2min 5.175 /
CineBench 11.5	/ 7.11 / / 9.34 /
3DMark Vantage CPU	/ 25,074 / / 33,737 /

Baseline: ASUS RAMPAGE III GENE

hardware award / hardware award / hardware award / hardware award /

[specs]

Chipset:
Intel Z68 LGA 1155
Memory:
4x240-pin DDR3
CPU support:
Intel Core i5/i7 LGA 1155 CPU
Slots:
6xPCI-E 16X, PCI-E 1X

/ PLUS / 4-Way SLI / Overclocking tuned BIOS
/ MINUS / No DVI/HDMI or VGA output

THIS MOTHERBOARD IS TUNED BY OVERCLOCKERS FOR OVERCLOCKERS. PERFORMANCE IS GREAT AND STABILITY IS SECOND TO NONE.

8 OUT OF 10

Corsair H100 Extreme Performance Liquid CPU Cooler

Supplier: **Evetech** / Website: **www.corsair.com** / RRP: **R1,099**



Corsair has been producing closed loop water cooling solutions for a while. The H50 was impressive for its time but there were air coolers that had similar performance and the very high-end ones were beating the H50. As such, with every version, Corsair has been improving the design and performance of these hydro coolers. The latest one is the H100 which, needless to say, is the best out of the entire line-up.

It's not only building on the developments of the previous versions, but it also, for the first time, features a dual radiator (240mm) system which houses two fans. Obviously this means this cooler can handle much higher loads, but more than that, Corsair has made some advances in the water block which help move heat away from the CPU heat spreader better than before (not counting the H80 which uses the same block).

Corsair also included a button on the top of the water block which has three modes which allows you to pick between quiet, performance and balanced modes. Naturally these regulate fan speed, however we found that if you plug the fan headers into the motherboard and have the board control it based on thermal loads, you can get away with very good performance at very low to moderate fan noise – something that was hard to get right with just the three modes.

Overall this is a well-constructed cooler, and one that is very simple to install. In fact, it is simpler to install than our previous best, the Noctua DH14, which is easy to setup. This Corsair H100 is not only better at keeping the CPU cool, but for those who would like to go a little more extreme with their cooling, allows for easy water chilling which will sit very well for overclockers with those temperamental 2600K CPUs.

Where performance is concerned, idle temperatures were not any better than with the DH14, but the load temperatures were much better with a 5GHz 2600K at 1.45V loading at 61°C. Add 2011 X79 platform support and you have without question the best cooler we have tested here at NAG. NAG

Neo Sibeko

dream machine / dream machine / dream machine /

[specs]

Size:
275x122x27 (mm radiator)
Compatibility:
2011/1366/775 1156/1155/AM2/AM3

/ PLUS / Very simple to setup / Incredible performance
/ MINUS / Can be very loud

THE BEST WATER COOLER CORSAIR HAS EVER PRODUCED AND THE BEST WE HAVE TESTED TO DATE.

9 OUT OF 10

Evetech Core i7 gaming PC

Supplier: **Evetech** / Website: **www.evetech.co.za** / RRP: **R24,999**

It's good to know that we live in a world where it's a simple matter of throwing large amounts of money at someone and in return you'll receive a PC that outperforms almost anything. With us impressed with Evetech's mid-range offering two months ago, we were eager to get stuck into their range-topping offering to see just how much extra performance one would get for the premium.

There's a lot to be said for a PC that comes built into Corsair's demure 600T. If you're looking for elegance, you won't be disappointed, and Evetech's technicians have shown plenty of care in the assembly of this machine with colour-matched braided cabling used for the few occasions where the cables peak out from the chassis' impressive management system. A nice touch that was so subtle we didn't notice it at first is the inclusion of LED cabling along the inside perimeter of the side window, which provides a gentle white glow inside the case. Classy.

Of course, the performance is the most important part of a gaming PC, and we were pleased to find that this machine could handle every game we threw at it, cranked all the way up and at a resolution of 1920x1080, without ever dipping below 40 frames per second. Typically, its average frame rates were much higher, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a game from this generation that will see a skipped frame. With the powerhouse that is the GTX 590 running the show, we imagine even the next generation of games will struggle to punish this rig too far either.

The only downside to this machine is the water-cooling system's noisy radiator fans, even while the machine is idle. If you absolutely must have liquid cooling, then this Corsair will provide great thermal dissipation, but we'd easily recommend Evetech's air-cooling option, the Noctua NH-D14, over this (or really any) water system.

NAG
Geoff Burrows

hardware award / hardware award / hardware award

[specs]

CPU:
Intel Core i7-2600K 3.4GHz
Motherboard:
ASUS Maximus IV Extreme-Z
Display card:
Gainward GeForce GTX 590 Premium Edition (or Radeon HD 6990)
RAM:
16GB Corsair Dominator 1600MHz DDR3
Power supply:
Antec High Current Pro 1200W
CPU cooling:
Corsair H100 water cooling
Primary storage:
120GB Corsair Force GT SSD
Secondary storage:
1TB Western Digital Caviar Black
Chassis:
Corsair Graphite 600T
Optical drive:
LG 10x Blu-ray reader/writer
Warranty:
24 months



*Banana not included.



Benchmarks

Unigine Heaven Extreme / 2,170 /

S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Call of Pripyat average / 123.9 FPS /

AVP average / 105.6 FPS /

3DMark 11 Extreme / 3,164 /

/ PLUS / All-round performance / Great chassis / Blu-ray player
/ MINUS / Noisy water-cooling system

PHENOMENAL PERFORMANCE FOR THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD IT.

9
OUT OF 10



Antec 25
A Quarter Century of Quality and Innovation

LanBoy Air
Most Modular, Most Customizable
Open-Air Chassis



product design award 2011



High Current Pro
1200W | 1000W | 850W | 750W

Dark Fleet Series
DF-85 | DF-35 | DF-90 | DF-10

KÜHLER H2O Series
H2O 920 | H2O 620

ESQUIRE Be the change
Midrand (012) 657-8500
Nelspruit (013) 755-4900
Cape Town (021) 555-0001
Durban (031) 579-7200
Port Elisabeth (041) 391-8500
www.esquire.co.za

FRONTOSA
Johannesburg (011) 466-0038
Cape Town (021) 551-4411
www.frontosa.co.za

ANTEC.COM

Copyright © 2011 Antec, Inc. All rights reserved. Antec and Antec logo are registered trademarks in the United States and other countries. Other names and brands mentioned herein be claimed as the property of other companies. Specifications are subject to change without prior notice. Actual products and accessories may differ from illustrations. Omissions and printing errors expected. Content of delivery might differ in different countries or areas.

Syabas Popcorn Hour A-210 HD Media Player

Supplier: **Popcorn Hour** / Website: **www.popcornhour.co.za** / RRP: **R1,999**

With an increase in both Internet access and available bandwidth, it's no wonder that media players are gaining popularity, and even many TVs and Blu-ray players come with USB playback and online streaming functionality built in. It's gotten to the stage where a dedicated media player needs to offer a lot to make its purchase worthwhile.

Syabas' Popcorn Hour A-210 is their top-of-the-range offering, and will be able to play pretty much any video format you throw at it, at any resolution, without a hitch. That's the most important function of such a device, but when there are mobile phones with the same functionality, one expects a little more. And what better way to offer extra features than with downloadable apps?

The App Market currently lists 62 applications from various video and streaming suppliers and social networking services. Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and Photobucket are the most obvious inclusions, but there are also plenty of obscure suppliers that provide a range of content from tech-talk podcasts to classic Westerns. Unfortunately, with a range of software comes a range of standards, and while most of the apps tend to look and function in a similar way, there's no guarantee that all of the A-210's native functions will make it across. The most notable omission in most apps was the device's zoom function. As with all market-driven operating systems, you have to take the bad with the good, and eventually you'll settle on a few apps that provide what you need.

The Popcorn Hour A-210 has a large feature set on its own, such as manual audio syncing and a built-in torrent client, and will provide you with just-about every function you could imagine needing on such a device. Unfortunately, it's let down by a clunky interface that sadly seems to be the norm on media players. NAG

Geoff Burrows

[specs]

Supported services: **Bonjour, UPnP SSDP, UPnP AV, Windows Media Connect, Windows Media Player NSS, Samba, NFS.**
Supported video containers: **MPEG, AVI, WMV, MOV, MP4, ASF, MKV, RMP4.**
Supported video codecs: **XVID, MPEG 1/2/4, WMV9.**
Supported audio formats: **AAC, M4A, MP3, WAV, WMA, FLAC, OGG.**
Inputs: **2x USB 2.0, optional internal 2.5"/3.5" HDD, Gigabit LAN, optional Wi-Fi (via USB).**
Outputs: HDMI 1.3a, **component, s-video, composite, S/PDIF optical, coaxial digital audio.**
Hardware specs: **667MHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 256MB NAND Flash.**



/ PLUS / Good performance / Supports many file types / App variety
/ MINUS / Clunky interface / App standards

GOOD PERFORMANCE AND TONS OF EXPANDABILITY IN BOTH HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE, BUT SOMEWHAT LET DOWN BY ITS PRIMITIVE INTERFACE.

7 OUT OF 10

GIGABYTE A75-UD4H

Supplier: **GIGABYTE** / Website: **Rectron** / RRP: **R1,649**

AMD APUs have really become game changers. As we saw in the last issue, the graphics performance is much better than what Intel can offer you for a significantly higher price in the Sandy Bridge CPUs. Indeed the CPU performance on AMD's parts is particularly weak, but given that in this day and age we interact visually with our computers more than anything else, graphics performance is as important as CPU performance and some even say much more so.

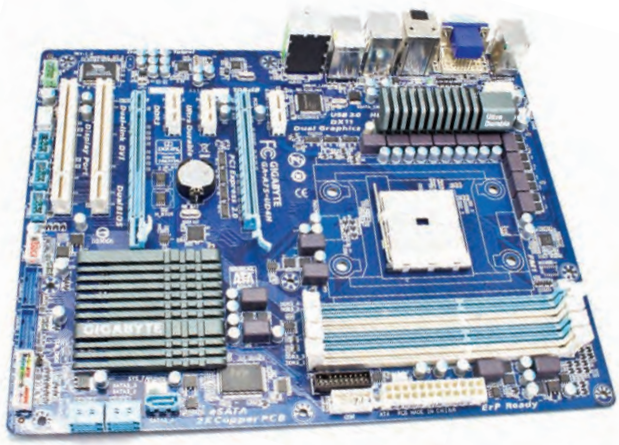
Anyway, as you would expect, manufacturers are jumping at the opportunity to produce FM1 motherboards for these APUs. After all, it's the only new AMD product right now and it's easy enough to sell because of the on-board performance of the IGP. Having said that, GIGABYTE's UD4H board is their premium A75 board and it is quite impressive given its target market. It has plenty of USB 3.0 connectivity, Dual Link DVI, HDMI and Display Port support, so all digital display options are covered. It's a little thin on the SATA ports, but for the vast majority of people five ports should be enough.

There really isn't much else to the board though, and overclocking wise, it is okay. The CPU that we tested with was a notoriously bad 3650 which not only offers lower performance than the A3850 we used previously, but also has a lower-clocked GPU with fewer stream processors.

You are able to increase the IGP GPU clock speed in the BIOS but we found that you're better off just getting the A3850 APU instead which offers great performance and has some headroom for overclocking to further increase this advantage. As it is, don't put too much faith in the benchmark numbers as they are not representative of the best this motherboard can offer.

Overall there's not really much to complain about with the UD4H; it does exactly what it claims. It's packed with features and is probably as good an A75 board as you are likely to see on the market. NAG

Neo Sibeko



Benchmarks

CineBench 11.5 / 3.16 / / 9.34 /

3DMark Vantage CPU / 8,560 / / 33,737 /

Baseline: ASUS RAMPAGE III GENE

[specs]

Chipset: **AMD A75**
Memory: **4x240-pin DDR3**
CPU support: **AMD A Series CPUs**
Slots: **2xPCI-E 16X, 3xPCI-E 1X, 2xPCI**

/ PLUS / Good performance
/ MINUS / Nothing

THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST A75 BOARDS MONEY CAN BUY.

8 OUT OF 10

CONNECT
Video Communication
Genius ®
Live with Ideas





FaceCam 1005 HD Webcam
FaceCam 1020 HD Webcam
WideCam 1050 Wide Angle Webcam

HS-300U Rear-band Headset
HS-400A Head-band Headset
HS-500X Head-band Headset

Find us on Facebook Genius www.geniusnet.com

Taiwan Excellence Silver Award
Taiwan Top 20 Global Brand
IF Product Design Award
Red dot Design Award
Good Design

KYE SYSTEMS CORP.
Tel: +886-2-2995-6645
Fax: +886-2-2995-4751
E-mail: sim@geniusnet.com.tw

AXIZ WORK GROUP
+27 11 2377000
www.axiz.com

TVR Computers CC
+27 11 8071390
www.tvr.co.za

SPEEDLINK
DARKSKY
★ Blue illumination option ★ Flat keys ★ Illumination can be disabled ★ Long-lasting LED illumination ★ 7 special buttons ★ Cable length 1.7m ★ Plug AND play ★ Perfect Gaming keyboard
KUDOS
★ 5000dpi laser sensor (adjustable in over50 steps) ★ 1000Hz polling rate (USB 2.0) and 150ips tracking speed ★ 16-bit data channel for changes on-the-fly ★ Stores over 2,900 macro steps ★ 9 programmable buttons + dpi switch + profile switch button ★ Weight system ★ Wide 4D scroll-wheel ★ distinct notch positions
IMPEDUSA
★ TRUE 5.1 Headset ★ 8 driver units for realistic surround Sound ★ breathtaking Quality soundality with Earth-shaking Bass and crystal-clear trebles ★ flexible noise - cancelling microphone outstanding voice transmission quality ★ in-line remote for volume And sound level adjustment ★ maximum comfortthanks to the flexible headband and comfortable padding ★ lightweight just 340g ★ foldable earcups and high quality carry case ★ generous 3.8m cable for lots of freedom of movement
www.dawnofgaming.co.za
NOW AVAILABLE AT THESE STORES
DAWN OF GAMING DISTRIBUTORS OF
SPEEDLINK
TELL 011 316 6418
CELL: 082 900 4091
INFO@DAWNOFGAMING.CO.ZA
COMPUTER HOUSE
Shop No.1 Shoprite Mall, Cnr Willem Botha & Springbok, Wierda Park, Centurion
012 654 8006
VISION TECHNOLOGIES (SA)
012 751 2037
HANS STRYDOM DR, PRETORIA
inter computers
KEMPTON Tell: 011 391 4763
BPC Pro Shop
MORELETA PARK
TEL: 012 997 7008 / 23 / 24
FAX: 012 997 7178
CELL: 082 578 2017
EMAIL: CHRIS@PCPROSHOP.CO.ZA
GARETH@PCPROSHOP.CO.ZA

Sapphire Pure Platinum A75

Supplier: **Sapphire** / Website: **www.sapphiretech.com** / RRP: **TBA**

Sapphire seems to be tuning their products exclusively to power users lately. It's becoming increasingly hard to find a board of theirs that doesn't have what we'd like to call the staple feature set of all overclocking motherboards. That is a switchable BIOS, clear CMOS, power,reset buttons and Post LED. All these on a motherboard make setting up, overclocking and tuning much easier than you'd expect.

Sapphire's board extends this to the BIOS as well. It's a simple BIOS but one that has all the features you'd expect to have in their high-end boards for the more performance-tuned platforms. This is actually great because it means you can easily extract more performance from your chosen CPU and this was the case with A3650 CPU we used. This CPU doesn't overclock well at all, but tuning the HT base clock to 120MHz was a simple affair and while we couldn't select the 933MHz multiplier, the 800MHz ratio worked perfectly. It's the small things like these which make this board a pleasure to work with. The memory ratio issue we suspect is BIOS related but it's nothing that can't be fixed with an update.

With HDMI, DVI and DisplayPort connectivity, a built-in Bluetooth controller and a USB 3.0 bracket in the box, Sapphire hasn't skimped on anything. It's really hard to fault this board on anything really as it also performs well enough. For some reason at the default speeds it could not match the GIGABYTE A75-UD4H but once again we believe this to be an isolated BIOS tuning more than anything else. Having said that, this difference was evident in the memory performance tests, where it was several hundred megabytes off the mark.

Still, if you're an overclocker looking to play with the FM1 CPUs this is the board to have. There isn't another board on the market that is this finely tuned for overclockers and we are thoroughly impressed with Sapphire's efforts. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko



hardware award / hardware award / hardware award /

[specs]

Chipset:
AMD A75
Memory:
4x240-pin DDR3
CPU support:
AMD A Series CPUs
Slots:
PCI-E 16X, 2xPCI-E 1X, 2xPCI, 1xPCI-E 4X

Benchmarks

CineBench 11.5 / 3.08 / / 9.34 /

3DMark Vantage CPU / 8,470 / / 33,737 /

Baseline: ASUS RAMPAGE III GENE

/ PLUS / Overclocking orientated / Post LED / Bluetooth
/ MINUS / Can't operate RAM at 933MHZ

NO OTHER A75 IS BUILT WITH SUCH ENTHUSIAST ORIENTATED FEATURES. THIS ONE IS DEFINITELY WORTH THE PURCHASE.

9 OUT OF 10

TOP RATED GAMES

VISIT NAG ON YOUR PHONE AND DOWNLOAD ANY OF THE PREMIUM GAMES FEATURED ON THIS PAGE. WHILE YOU'RE THERE, CHECK OUT THE HOTTEST NEW PREVIEWS, HANDS-ON REVIEWS, THE LATEST FEATURES AND A WHOLE LOT MORE PURE AWESOMENESS.

R40



R30



R40



R10



EXPERIENCE THE GAMING THRILL 24-7. GO TO m.nag.co.za OR SMS MOBI NAG TO 33978

SMS COSTS R1.50.



THE ULTIMATE MOBILE DESTINATION FOR HARDCORE GAMING ENTHUSIASTS.

m.nag.co.za

thumbtribe

Samsung Apps

Visit the Best of the Mobile Web directory on thumbtribe.mobi and browse top categories, including entertainment, news, sport, technology, travel, motoring and more. Point your browser to thumbtribe.mobi or SMS MOBI thumbtribe to 33978 (R1,50).

1. Tekken Mobile™ ©2009 NBGI. 2. Game code and certain audio and/or visual materials © 2010 Electronic Arts Inc. EA and the EA logo are trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by Electronic Arts Inc. under license from Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. MORTAL KOMBAT, ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT 3, the dragon logo, and all related characters and elements are trademarks of and © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. WB GAMES LOGO, WB SHIELD: ™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. (s10) All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. 3. SQUARE ENIX CO.,LTD All Rights Reserved. 4. Space Invaders ©TAITO CORP. 1978,2008 All Rights Reserved. EA and the EA logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the US and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

DO NOT WANT



"What do women want?" It's one of those critically existential questions that sells heaps of tabloid-class magazines, straight-to-paperback books, and one-way trips off the planet every single day, but without ever actually resolving itself[1].

Some self-appointed arbiter of what-women-want recently declared it had the definitive answer, or at least an infallible truth thereof by way of what it doesn't much like about what men want, because epistomological enquiry is really just a random, meaningless accumulation of syllables.

"It took 30 years to really perfect the three things that males seem to really love, which are shooting, and driving, and sports," said Silicon Sisters Interactive[2] co-founder, Kristen Forbes, with all the inimitable confidence of a woman who'd presume to speak on behalf of the entire other sex. "And those are absolutely kick-ass games now, and you really have to sit back and go, 'What is the equivalent for girls?' And please God, don't let it take us 30 years to get to as high a quality level as that."

If you're thinking she might just be onto something, the company's first oestrogen-powered enterprise[3] is the iOS title School 26, a game targeted for 12-16 year old girls, featuring gameplay based on and around empathy, peer pressure, and high school life. So no, she's not onto anything at all, she's just subscribing to dreary stereotypes and exceedingly questionable social conditioning.

So perhaps the real question then is, "What don't women want?" Ooh, I'll start! Games based on and around empathy, peer pressure, and high school life. I mean, unless it has rocket launchers, obviously, which also rather conveniently[4] solves empathy, peer pressure, and high school life in one high-calibre payload. As it were. I mean, rockets even look a bit like tampons, so there's tremendous potential for demographic marketing and a Kotex sponsorship right there, nevermind a terrific metaphor about the otherwise impenetrable[5] feminine cipher.

"It took 30 years to really perfect the three things that males seem to really love, which are shooting, and driving, and sports..."

The fact is, different people like different things. It really is as simple as that, and genital presets don't make much very much difference either way. Developers should stop asking "What does men and women want?" and start asking "What would a bunch of people want?" instead. NAG

Tarryn van der Byl

[1] Maybe that's the point. Those magazines, books, and one-way trips off the planet won't just sell themselves. This is why we should hurry up and discover monsters or something.
[2] Cringe.
[3] Its continuing mission, to explore desperately contrived new genres. To seek out new gender paradigms and new vapid clichés. To boldly go where no man has gone before. Or woman. Or where anybody whatsoever would want to go at all, for that matter.
[4] And permanently. Rocket launchers are like that.
[5] It's not a pun, because this is technically a family magazine.

Extra Life

By Scott Johnson - ©2011 All rights Reserved - Myextralife.com





fpb 18V

PS3 PlayStation 3 · Games for Windows · XBOX 360 · XBOX LIVE · THQ · SK STERKINEKOR ENTERTAINMENT

© 2011 THQ Inc. All Rights Reserved. THQ, Saints Row, Saints Row The Third and their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. Windows, the Windows Start button, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies, and "Games for Windows" and the Windows Start button logo are used under license from Microsoft. "PlayStation", "PS3" and "PS" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "PS3" is a trademark of the same company. All Rights Reserved. Trademarks are property of their respective owners. Wii is a trademark of Nintendo.

Available at these stores:

BT GAMES passionate about gaming · kalahari.com · Look & Listen DVD • CD • GAMES — MP3 • ACCESSORIES · Toys R Us · cna · MUSICA A WORLD AWAITS · DION WIRED · Incredible CONNECTION www.incredible.co.za · Pick n Pay HYPER · TOP CD · Reggies

GIGABYTE™

G1.SNIPER 2

Z68 Gaming Motherboard

Leader in Motherboard Innovation



rectron

For more information visit **www.rectron.co.za** or call **0860 582 835** / For Support call our National Technical Support Line: **0861 788 789**

Johannesburg
Tel: +27 11 203 1000
Fax: +27 11 203 1940

Cape Town
Tel: +27 21 555 8200
Fax: +27 21 555 7136

Durban
Tel: +27 31 582 0200
Fax: +27 31 582 0280

Port Elizabeth
Tel: +27 41 398 7082
Fax: +27 41 398 7140

Bloemfontein
Tel: +27 51 430 0000
Fax: +27 51 430 1144