SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADING GAMING, COMPUTER & TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE

NAG

Vol. 16
Issue
FIVE

PC / PLAYSTATION / XBOX / NINTENDO

E3 SUPPLEMENT

32 pages cover all the new games for the next year and beyond



FIFA 14

NEXT GENERATION TRICK SHOT

8 E3 PREVIEWS INCLUDING

Titanfall
Command & Conquer
The Evil Within
Mad Max
Murdered: Soul Suspect
Watch Dogs

E3 supplement brought to you by UBISOFT BLGAMES

PRE-ORDER FROM GAMES AND GET A

FREE POSTER

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST



17 SEPTEMBER

fpb 18LV

PS3 PlayStation 3 PlayStation Network

#GTAV

XBOX 360 XBOX LIVE

©2008 - 2013 Rockstar Games, Inc. Rockstar Games, Grand Theft Auto, the GTA Five, and the Rockstar Games marks and logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software. "PS", "PlayStation", "PS3", "PS3" and "●" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. 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. All other marks and trademarks are properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.



SERIOUS GAMER?



Tritton Playstation 3 Kunai White Stereo Headset (84721)

R649.95
SAVE R50



Tritton AX180 Gaming Headset (84724)

R799.95
SAVE R50



Cyborg R.A.T.5 Gaming Mouse (84717)

R649.95
SAVE R50



Cyborg M.M.O.7 Gaming Mouse (84718)

R1149.95
SAVE R50



Cyborg V7 Gaming Keyboard (84719)

R1099.95
SAVE R100



Tritton XBOX360 Warhead 7.1 Wireless Headset (84726)

R2999.95
SAVE R500

No matter what type of gamer

CASUAL GAMER?

The SIMS 3 Assorted PC Games





The Sims 3 (69933)
Showtime (80811)
Seasons (83504)
EP3: Late Night (74835)
Supernatural (82479)
Pets (78844)
University (84595)
Island Paradise Episode 10 (85213)

R249.95 each



Monte Vista (84047)
70's, 80's & 90's Stuff Pack (84334)
Katy Perry (81793)

R199.95 each

MEGA & SELECTED STORES ONLY.

THIS OFFER IS VALID FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

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

you are, we've got you covered!

Inc DTP 4861

NAG

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

Assistant editor
Geoff "GeometriX" Burrows

Staff writer
Dane "Barkskin " Remendes

Contributing editor
Lauren "Guardi3n " Das Neves

Technical writer
Neo "ShockG" Sibeko

International correspondent
Miktar "Miktar" Dracon

Contributors
Rodain "Nandrew" Joubert
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius
Miklós "Mikit0707 " Szecsei
Pippa "UnexpectedGirl" Tshabalala
Tarryn "Azimuth " Van Der Byl
Adam "Madman" Liebman
Wesley "Cataclysm" Fick

Art director
Chris "SAVAGE" Savides

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

Sales executives
Cheryl "Cleona" Harris / cheryl@nag.co.za
+27 72 322 9875

Martin Green
083 445 0371
martin@greenmoonmedia.co.za

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
www.zinio.com/nag
www.facebook.com/NAGMagazine
www.twitter.com/nagcoza

Printing
Impress Web Printers
031 263 2755

Distribution
On the Dot
Stuart Dickerson / 011 401 5932

Copyright 2013 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.

Contents

Regulars

8 Ed's Note
10 Inbox
14 Bytes
53 home_coded
64 Everything Else

Opinion

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

Previews

34 Watch_Dogs
36 Titanfall
37 The Evil Within
38 Mad Max
39 Command & Conquer
40 Murdered: Soul Suspect
42 Puppeteer / The Elder Scrolls Online

Reviews

52 Reviews: Introduction
52 Mini review: State of Decay
54 The Last of Us
56 Remember Me
57 Soul Sacrifice
58 Deadpool
59 Animal Crossing: New Leaf
60 Fuse
61 Le Tour de France 2013 – 100th Edition
62 Game & Wario / Mars: War Logs

Hardware

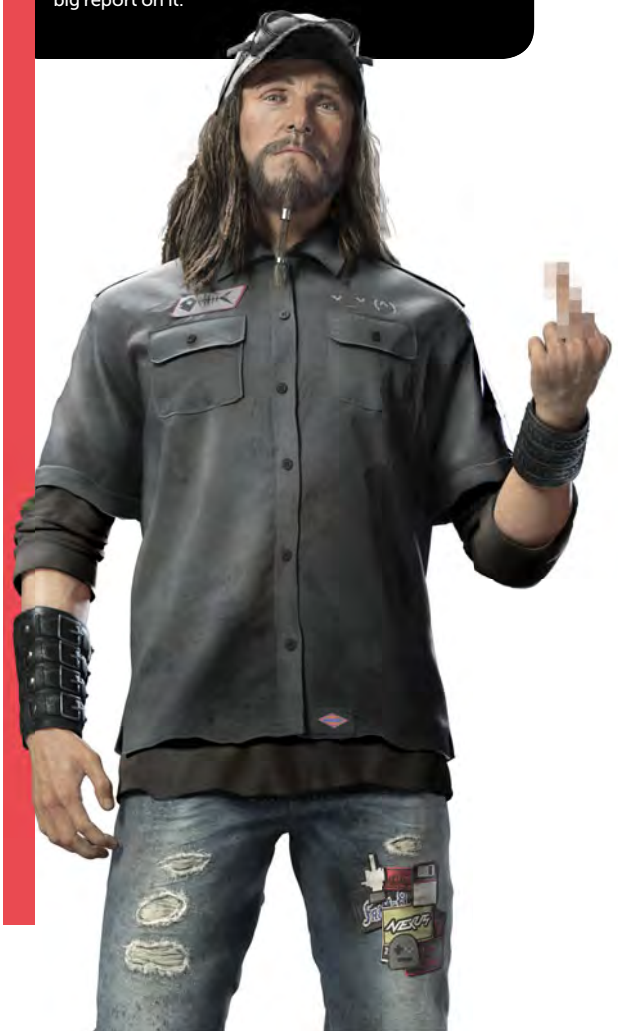
66 Tech News
68 Dream Machine
70 Lazy Gamer's Guide: Plantronics GameCom Commander
72 Versus: NVIDIA SHIELD vs. Razer Edge
74 GIGABYTE GV-N770OC-2GD
76 MSI MPower MAX
78 GIGABYTE G1.Sniper V
79 Turtle Beach Ear Force XPSEVEN / Roccat Arvo
80 ASRock Z87 Professional
82 Philips Ultra Wide 29" / Monster MVP Carbon
83 Corsair Vengeance K95 Gaming Keyboard / Evetech Haswell gaming PC

Features

28 INTO THE PIXEL 2013
Essence of the art
Every year at E3, striking works of art from around the video game world are selected to be displayed in all their glory at the Into the Pixel exhibit. This year's E3 saw the tenth anniversary of the renowned exhibition, and it did not disappoint. We've collected all the featured artworks within the pages of this magazine for you to marvel at.

44 FIFA 14
Soccer! Football! UNICORN JUGGLING! All of these things are deemed incredibly important by the Council of Elders, and so we embarked on a quest to discover more. Sadly, our team of unicorn analysts did not return. But we gleaned much knowledge on the next-gen future of the absurdly popular *FIFA* series of football sims.

84 COMPUTEX 2013
If you're a fan of super-cool gadgets, peripherals and any other form of hardware, then chances are that you've heard of Computex and all the technological wizardry it so proudly puts on parade. As Neo explains, it's like E3 for hardware. We were right there, in amongst the madness, and we're ready to give a great big report on it.



GET MO'FO' LESS

PS3 & Xbox360 Games for only R229.99 each or 2 for R399.99

Many more titles available at this price in store



PS3 - Just Cause 2



PS3 - Ghost Recon 2 Advanced Warfighter



PS3 - Deus Ex Human Revolution



PS3 - Driver San Francisco



PS3 - Ghost Recon Future Soldier



PS3 - Call Of Duty 4 Modern Warfare



PS3 - Prototype



PS3 - X-Men Destiny



PS3 - TinTin The Secret Of The Unicorn

All these PS3 titles are also available on Xbox360



Xbox - Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood



Xbox - Call Of Duty Modern Warfare 2



Xbox - Dirt Showdown



Xbox - Far Cry 2



Xbox - Just Dance 3



Xbox - Rainbow Six Vegas 2



Xbox - Star Wars The Force Unleashed



Xbox - Star Wars The Force Unleashed II



Xbox - Transformers Fall Of Cybertron

Most of these Xbox360 titles are also available on PS3

MONSTER

GET INSIDE THE GAME



Monster, makers of the world's finest headphones, and Electronic Arts, a global leader in digital interactive entertainment, join forces to create the ultimate gaming headphone. The MVP Carbon's proprietary High Definition Surround Sound delivers the pulse-pounding bass and extreme detail that fully plunge you into the game, just the way the games' sound engineers intended.

- Pillow-soft earcups for hours of gaming
- Reversible mic boom
- Super-comfortable headband
- Professional quality microphone
- Musiclink dual ports for sharing audio
- High definition surround sound mixamp

Not all items are available in all stores - please call your local store to enquire.

Look & Listen

Availability and prices subject to change at the discretion of the supplier. While stocks last.



Everyone else

This month some new people are getting into gaming. It's weird that in a single deadline cycle I've been exposed to three different instances where non-gamers have dipped a toe in the gaming pond. Perhaps it's E3 clouding the issue; when there's so much gaming goodness in one hit you tend to see gaming everywhere. I'll list the three examples quick. This was going to be longer but I wrote the DVD and NAG LAN bits first and now I'm only left with this much space. Boo. Here they are: 1) A woman that knows nothing about games paging through *NAG*. I'll be honest, this was only because of the food feature in there, but it's a start, it's something – I told her we're doing shoes next month. 2) A dad that read something about *Minecraft* in *Time* magazine and started to play games with his son (check the letters page). 3) A girlfriend who wrote to me asking what "action shooter person game" she could buy for her boyfriend that they could play together and that he would like. I suggested *Borderlands 2*. I'm waiting for the result. All these people that are not gamers all getting into gaming just makes me happy in my heart. Here's some easy homework. Don't worry, I'll never check that you did it because don't really care and I want to be like the cool substitution teacher that everyone loves. This month go out there and introduce someone to gaming that isn't a gamer. I'd like to hear your stories – good and bad. Send mail to letters@nag.co.za and make me proud.

DVD

Over the last few months, good game demos have become scarce in the wild. Game companies are no longer happy to just release a demo on the Internet and let everyone download it and play it and have fun and move on. These days it must be linked to a sale, with DLC and special offers and so on. Steam is software that everyone should have on their computers by now. You can't play *Call of Duty: Black Ops 2* or *Team Fortress 2* or anything really without Steam (except EA games). Additionally everyone in gaming therefore needs some kind of Internet (capped or uncapped) to play anything. So with all this in mind we've decided to embrace the reality and package Steam demos for you to enjoy. Make sure you read the instructions. Please do give us feedback about this. I don't know any better way to do this.

NAG LAN

Some points about the NAG LAN @ rAge this year: tickets will only go on sale 31 August 2013 at 09h00 and not the first week in August. We're also not going to be using Computicket this year because they've let us down two years in a row and didn't seem very sorry the last time they screwed up. The new ticketing solution is www.itickets.co.za, the downside is that they don't have a physical presence – so unfortunately there are no stores you can walk into so ticket sales are only online. For those of you who can't buy stuff online for whatever reason we are truly sorry. They do have a phone-in option but it will still mean having to give them your credit card info telephonically. We're also limiting the amount of tickets you can buy to two per person. Sadly, circumstances have forced this option as there are many low life opportunists who buy stacks of tickets and then sell them at a higher price to desperate people. Bottom line: never buy scalped tickets from anyone ever because you just mess it up for everyone else in the long run. That's about it. More information can be found on our website and Facebook page.

This issue was a long tough haul to put together, so if you're looking for us we'll be in a heap on the floor crying for our mommies.

Summer is coming, look sharp. NAG

- RedTide
Editor



GIGABYTE™



A New Standard in Durability

ULTRA DURABLE 5 PLUS

GIGABYTE 8 Series
Ultra Durable™
Motherboards

SUPPORTS intel inside CORE
intel inside CHIPSET Z87







rectron

NATIONAL SALES CALL CENTRE: 0860 582 835

INBox

letters@nag.co.za

*Disclaimer: Most of the letters sent to this fine publication are printed more or less verbatim (that means "we don't edit or fix them" for you slow kids at the back), so ignore any spelling or grammatical errors. It's not us... it's you.

Letter of the Month August 2013

From: Johan
Subject: Minecraft
Minecraft, this beast that has kind of taken over the gaming industry, surprised me today. I was sitting at my PC playing BioShock Infinite when my dad came in, and asked me if I still had that game where you build stuff with the blocks (Minecraft). I told him yes, I do. Quitting BioShock and quickly opening Minecraft I showed him my current project (building a bat signal which doubles as a bat cave) he asked if I can start a new game. I said sure, and to my surprise my "ou toppie" got in behind my computer and started playing Minecraft.

My dad has never played a game and in shock watching him discover the controls and hitting trees, I asked why he wanted to play all of a sudden. He told me to go to his desk and read this months' Time magazine. In it there is article about Minecraft which inspired my dad to find out more about this game with limitless possibilities. I took my NAG to him and let him read the "Only you" paragraph in the Ed's note, he said that "F@ck right it's addictive". My dad is now playing Injustice with me. I never thought something like this would happen. Minecraft has made my dad a gamer. I am proud. His birthday is coming up and I've got more than a decade of gaming to help him catch up with. Keep up being awesome people of NAG.

This is an awesome story and for that you get free games to enjoy with your dad. I was always very lucky as both my parents supported my newfound interest/hobby. They bought me my very first home computer – a Commodore 64 – and then later helped me get a bank loan for my Amiga 500 at the tender age of 15. Remember, R4,500 back in those days was a fortune and my minimum wage job at the local video store just barely covered it. My dad helped me type in two pages of some collect the fruit with a snake game (which included double checking everything thanks to a few typos) he also enjoyed playing Boulder Dash *with me. I was lucky because I didn't have to beg and plead, my folks were just cool with it all and that was 30 years ago, when computers and gaming were still mysterious and scary for everyone else. So to all the parents out there, take an interest in what your kids are doing and give it a go, who knows, you might even have some fun along the way. Ed.*

From: Dylan
Subject: Lights, Camera, Master Chief
Despite the fact that I'm not an Xbox gamer, I still hold a lot of interest in the Halo series. Now one can only imagine my excitement when I stumbled onto the movie Halo 4: Forward Unto Dawn. To my surprise the movie was a live action film which I had rarely seen before, in fact the only other live action film, based on a video game that came to mind was DOOM *[Hitman, Tomb Raider, Resident Evil, Silent Hill, Max Payne, etc. Ed]*. At first I was sceptical about the possibility of the movie actually being enjoyable, yet as the minutes passed by I found myself growing more and more interested in the outcome. The part that I found most enjoyable was that the movie didn't seem to follow any particular storyline to that of the games. It appeared to be a separate storyline that was merely based on the general fundamentals of the game as well as featuring a few of the characters. So generally when MC appears and tells a bunch of cadets to "call me Master Chief", I squealed like a little girl and bounced up and down in my seat with excitement. All-in-all I thoroughly enjoyed the film, despite its fairly average length, and this got me thinking... why aren't there more live-action movies based on video games? For larger production companies, money is clearly no object, so why have none of them attempted to dive into the wonderful array of games to make a few movies. Now obviously it would be pointless to make a movie exactly like the game, which includes storylines, etc., but instead use many of the game's world's, characters, weaponry, etc. to make a new storyline that gamers can relate to and that the general public will enjoy. I don't know about you but, I wouldn't mind watching a movie based on Mass Effect or Skyrim, would you? P.S. great work on the magazine guys!

The Tomb Raider *series is probably the most successful game to movie conversion ever. In total the two movies in the franchise have collected just over $430 million at the box office worldwide. On the other side of the pond we have movie director Uwe Boll who is a huge fan of game to movie conversions but his films are mostly known for their terrible box office results that no amount of enthusiasm can rescue. It's true that games offer a wealth of original content that would make excellent movies but the track record of these cross media adventures isn't amazing. Ed.*

From: Enslin
Subject: Game Food
This weekend I felt all "piraty", and I thought it a great idea to try out the Side Order: Grog as defined in your July 2013 issue on page 31. Well... umm, what I can say..., is that I would give myself 10/10 for the looks of the thing (it should be noted that I followed your instruction 100%), as for the taste though... I must give it only 3/10. See attached photo! It tasted like stale lemon after you fall face first in the sand in a post-apocalyptic wasteland... the nutmeg seems to

megarom interactive



LETTER OF THE MONTH
The 'Letter of the Month' prize is sponsored by the good folks at Megarom. The winner receives two games for coming up with the most inspired bit of wisdom of cleverness. Note: You can't change the games or the platform they come on.

HARD TECHNICAL STUFF
LAND MAIL: P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158
BETTER MAIL: letters@nag.co.za
IMPORTANT: Include your details when mailing us or you'll never get your prize if you win.



grind your teeth like sand, and the cinnamon, rum and lemonade did not quite complement one another... That being said, it was a blast to make, and for what it was worth, I made all kinds of "Aaaargh", and "Uuurgh" noises until late night, so in effect... it was a success! Keep up the great work guys, love your magazine lots! This weekend I am trying the Iguana-on-a-Stick!

Geoff, the master chef behind the grog, had a lot to say about your taste buds, he then moved onto criticising other areas of your life that have nothing to do with making grog. Sorry, it's just how these prima donna chefs are. Bottom line from him – did you use the right kind of rum? Use dark rum – there's even one with a pirate on it. Geoff has made it a few times for himself and apparently enjoyed it. Our tips for iguana-on-a-stick are as follows: use the right kind of iguana; Fijian iguanas are best in season and are culled by the government for population control purposes each November. Use the right kind of stick, it needs to be flexible (green) enough not to burn easily and strong enough to hold the iguana. Four foot long iguanas require a stick 1cm in diameter. If you're brave enough to snag an iguana around six foot then you're looking at 2.5-3cm diameter stick. Wrap in banana leaves and roast while turning over a coal bed fire for at least 3 hours. Enjoy with sticky rice and coconut water. Ed.

From: Douw
Subject: NAG potions

I was reading July's edition of NAG, reading some interesting opinions here, notes there... and then I came across "game food". Much to my surprise it wasn't about a game. Several Pages about what you could have to replenish your inner-gamer health so that you could go on and kick ass. I immediately made sure that I was reading the right magazine though. Just a warning – make sure you washed or cleaned your hands before even thinking on touching the game controller! I've seen controllers ruined by the oily-and-filthy hands from fattening & crumby foods. I've seen the control graveyard, and it isn't pretty.

My two pet hates when it comes to controllers: 1) The sound of them hitting the floor because some idiot friend with giant clumsy stupid hands can't coordinate the act of putting down a controller and picking up a drink at the same time. 2) Dirt on the controller. Wash your hands you animals before you touch my stuff or get out and never return. I also have a three and a four: batteries that never last and that grey power that forms around the sticks when they grind against the controller housing. Ed.

From: Phillip
Subject: Gaming Relationships

I want to add to that letter of the month in July, I just finished reading it and I completely agree. Finding a girlfriend is easy, but finding a great girlfriend is about as hard as stapling water to a tree. Luckily I found the perfect girl who plays games and listens to metal, but even she has problems. *[I assume you're saying this to illustrate a point. Ed]* Just like any game, a girl will have bugs, but it is highly unlikely that anyone will create a patch for those bugs. But I've been thinking about that question "are games better than girls?" Probably, probably not- I think they are equally great, both have things that the other doesn't. With games you know exactly what to expect, but with girls it's a huge surprise! So that's pretty exciting. Games come with manuals, but with girls you have to figure out the controls, and I mean what gamer doesn't love a challenge, I mean even Call of Duty is way too easy on veteran. Are games better than girls? No, but they do get

ON THE **FORUMS**

The NAG forums; it's a classy place... if you look at it under the right kind of lighting conditions **www.nag.co.za/forums**

Q: Now that the dust has settled on E3, what were your favourite announcements and/or what were your worst?

"Mirror's Edge 2! Best news ever! Published by EA! SHIT!"
Squirly

"Best: The PS4's price tag. Dragon Age: Inquisition. Final Fantasy XV stole the show for me. Worst: Nothing really since Microsoft reversed the new Xbox's... uh... requirements."
Unknown Source

"My favourite announcement was Sony saying that none of their games would have DRM, causing the entire hall to give them a standing ovation"
Acinixys

"Seeing that mysterious figure in a beat-up hood and cloak walking through the desert, and then suddenly *BOOM* Master Chief! Got the biggest hype out of that one!"
Changsta 187

Tyrone "Folset" Swart, "Sorry if you are not the person to ask about this, but is there a limit to how many times I can enter the art contest? For example, I entered and won last month. Would I have to wait a month or something till I could enter again?" *[Then I said no, there's no limit. Ed]* **Then he said, "Well in that case! Here is my next art submission."** *[And here we all are. Ed]*

This is the best bit of fan created artwork we received at *NAG* this month. 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. Just don't go and stick the *NAG* logo on a picture and send it in because that is dumb and dumb people don't win things.



PRIMA INTERACTIVE

This months Fan Art winner recieves a Chrome Silver Controller for Xbox 360 valued at R549. Sponsored by Prima Interactive.



pretty damn close! Oh yes, me and my girlfriend have been together for 7 months, so I'd like to give her a shout out. I love you Rensché Prinsloo! Keep on with the great magazine guys; love the GTA 5 cover art. PS could you put this in the letters section? I'd really like to give my girl a surprise when she reads through her issue of your great magazine. PPS please edit out anything below the PS.

Hey, this isn't a request line buddy – I'll put your letter in but I'm not going to be following your instructions on how to do it. As for your letter, it all depends on the girl at the end of the day. They are very hard to understand most of the time and that's not me talking, but other girls. Just remember, ladies, once we figure out how to make robot girlfriends we won't need you anymore and then who's going to kill that spider? And don't say "robot boyfriends" because we'll make sure those robots are old and rubbish, see? Ed.

From: Brent
Subject: NAG CD

I'm 12 years old and I personally love the CD *[DVD, but I get what you mean. Ed]*, it's awesome. I think it's a great addition to NAG. I buy the magazine every month and one of the main reasons I buy NAG is because of the CD *[DVD. Ed]*. Although I enjoy the CD *[Giving up. Ed]*, I have to admit that the games (demos and full games) are quite weird, I do enjoy some of the games though. Please put better games on the CD. The wallpapers are just awesome. Now what I do is I create a folder named "Wallpapers". Every month I save the wallpapers from your CD into my "Wallpapers" folder. I then set the desktop of my computer to change the wallpaper every day according to the "Wallpapers" folder. There are many games out there that I just wonder, "What's the big deal about THAT game. Then, "Magically", your CD has the trailer to that exact game! Why do I have to go online to see the trailer of a game if the CD has about 100 game trailers! The "Cool Videos" are awesome. I loved the "Faces of Gaming" video. Some videos are just plain RANDOM! I don't really pay attention to the other stuff. I'm sure there are many "Gamers" out there that could also relate to this letter.

I hear you. We've been avoiding going this route because I was concerned about who had and didn't have Internet connectivity. Bottom line is that everyone should have some kind of Internet so we're going to assume that from now on. Each month we're going to put a few Steam based demos on the DVD. We might need to reduce a few of the trailers for this but I think being able to try out some of the new cool games will be worth it. If you guys disagree or have a better suggestion please let me know. We're kicking it off in this issue – let us know. Ed.

From: Arno
Subject: Broaden thy horizon my son

I was talking to a couple of my school mates the other day about the games we play. I found out, that although my fellow classmates knew about gaming news, they didn't play a huge variety of games. The one only plays RPG games and the other only RTS games. This got me thinking. Why do we stick to only one or two genres? I myself often play more FPS games but still play other games such as God of War, The Last of Us, Uncharted, Skyrim, Indie games and a game I've been meaning to pick up, Brutal Legend. I do realize we play what we're familiar with and enjoy, but I asked the other guys why they don't play other types of games and they said they stick with what they're used to. Explore the world of gaming, enjoy yourself and broaden your horizon!

THE SHORTS

Extracts of n00b from NAG letters

"They even did it in Big Bang Theory, the comedy starring people like us, they get everything right, until it comes down to the gaming..."
- John

"Will I need to purchase the Xbox One to play new games, or will it be possible to play them on my current Xbox?"
- John *[a different John. Ed]*

"I must sound pretty annoying right now, but I just wanted to apologize if I pestered you with my previous emails. Thanks for being really nice about everything though."
- Callum

"It's not fair to me or the other gamers who can't afford the top edition or how do you see it?"
- Edward

This is a righteous message from our fatherly gaming guru Arno. Condescending tone aside he is correct in what he says. However, considering games are so expensive these days it's hard to jump genres on a whim. It's much safer to spend your hard earned cash on "more of the same" and something you know you'll enjoy without any real risk. The way out of this sad rinse and repeat cycle is to start playing indie games. The quality and scope of these lower budget experiences are getting better by the month. Ed.

ON TWITTER

Quack like a duck @nagcoza

:)
@nagcoza your Magazine Always has a different Smell than other magazines, That my friend is The smell of Awesomeness B-)

lexamantis
Only @nagcoza will tell you clear and on the cover to be a better gangbanger!!!

Troy Lawrence
Was told by my mother today to take a break from gaming and read a book. So I read @nagcoza. There. You happy.

Brad De Milita
@nagcoza why is there cooking kak in the July issue, its N.A.G not N.A.C.

Thusabantu
@Tr15oy @nagcoza give this man a bells...if he's 18+ otherwise some cool aid

THINK YOU CAN CODE?

ENTER THE ENTELECT

R100K CHALLENGE

TODAY



VISIT

challenge.entelect.co.za

TO ENTER

entelect

everything is possible

In assosiation with

NAG



The great E3 adventure – Part 2

This column was supposed to be a condensed recap of my thoughts on E3. It won't be. Instead I want to talk about a particular part of E3 – namely my favourite *part*. Incidentally, I was given the Ed's Note duty for the E3 supplement that came with this very edition of *NAG* Magazine. So if you want what *would* have been in this column, then you can find my gushy ramblings in there.

This was a particularly exciting E3 for many reasons: new consoles, Sony dropping DRM bombs, Microsoft looking silly in front of its consumers, giant metal robots blowing each other up in *Titanfall*, EA announcing *Mirror's Edge 2* and *Star Wars: Battlefront* – the list can go on.

All of that was eclipsed by one (actually two: I snuck back in for a second go) 10 minute game of *EVE-VR*. That suffix in the title probably gave away where I'm going with this. Yes, the Oculus Rift. Thanks to my roguish charms and dapper good looks, I managed to get one of these things strapped to my face. The Oculus Rift's presence at E3 was very hush-hush so I count my lucky stars that I managed to hear about their company being there, and for me being able to convince them to let me in even though I very definitely was not on any pre-arranged bookings list that they had.

Six Oculus Rift devkits were all linked up to play this proof of concept game developed by CCP; you'll know them as the guys behind the wildly successful MMO *EVE Online*. The game, *EVE-VR*, was a very simple spaceship dog-fighting game played between two teams of three ships. You could pew-pew some lasers using the controller's left trigger, and launch volleys of homing missiles by holding the right trigger, waiting for a lock and then releasing. As I said: it was a basic game but it was designed to show off what CCP can do with the Oculus.

The moment I had one of the devkits strapped to my face and I'd slipped on some noise-cancelling headphones, all of the hubbub and distractions in the room around me simply vanished. Looking down towards my lap showed me my pilot's lap; he was sitting in the same position I was and that caused a strange connection to this faceless avatar, so much so that I got instant goose bumps. For all intents and purposes I was *in* that star ship; I was *in* that game and it completely blew my mind.

Like most, I play games for entertainment but first prize for me has always been if the game can immerse me in another life or world. That's part of the reason why I love games like *Skyrim* and *Half-Life*, because their worlds are so believable I can't help but fall headfirst into them. However, any modicum of immersion I might have felt up until I strapped on that Oculus Rift, was nothing more than preparation: a mere amuse-bouche. I've been playing games for about twenty-eight years now, but I have never had a gaming experience quite like this.

People keep asking me which console I'm choosing first: the PlayStation 4 or the Xbox One. I know I'll eventually own both of them, but for me they're no longer a priority. You want next gen gaming? You're looking in the wrong place. Next-gen is on a PC that has an Oculus Rift connected to it.

- Miklós Szecsei -

Microsoft slashes DRM, announces launch regions

Spoiler: we're not one of them



Despite Microsoft's firm defence of the DRM that they opted to pile onto their upcoming Xbox One, it seems that the company has finally given in to reason (or possibly a lack of pre-orders) and made significant changes to the way it will control what people do with the games that they buy.

Perhaps the biggest change, certainly in our market, is the removal of the 24-hourly check-in that the XBO was originally set for. Now there will be a one-time online connection and update when you first plug in your console, and it'll leave you alone forever. Owners will also be able to freely trade their games among friends and resell them to anyone as many times as desired. Finally, all region-locking on games has been removed. That last point is particularly important, because we have some bad news for you now that you're all excited.

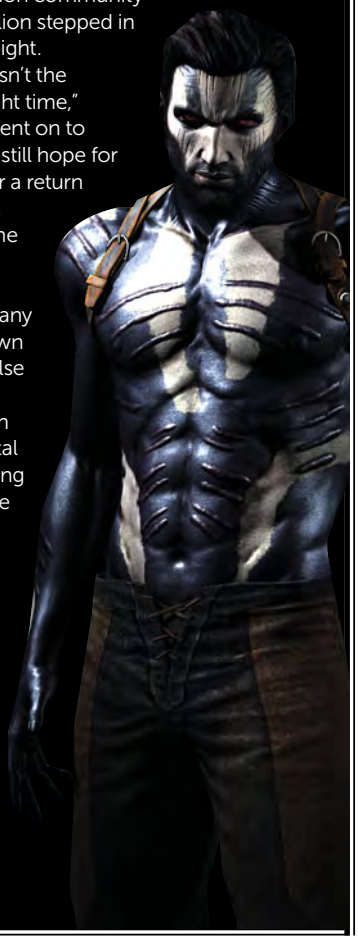
Xbox One will not launch in South Africa this year. As a part of its commitment to online services and cloud-based things that have almost nothing to do with gaming, Microsoft has elected to limit its launch pool to a selection of 21 countries including Australia, UK, United States, Russia, Brazil and Mexico. South Africa is supposedly on the list for a mid- to late-2014 release. If you're antsy, then you could always ship in a unit from an international retailer, but don't be surprised if it refuses to operate following its mandatory initial call home to mom. If only there were ways to spoof an IP address...

Oh, and there are a few more caveats surrounding the relaxation of Microsoft's DRM: gamers will lose access to the lauded disc-free operation (things go back to the regular method of "no disc, no play") and the family sharing system has been tossed out the window.

All this back-and-forth nonsense has consumed Microsoft in the last month, and you'd think now would be a great time for things to settle down to allow them to get on with Gamescom preparations. But that's not happening: instead, the company's head of Xbox, Don Mattrick, has left Microsoft to jump into the role of CEO of casual games developers Zynga. Mattrick scored a cool $5 million just for taking the job, on top of the $3 million he's expected to earn during the year, including bonuses. Smooth move, Mattrick.

A return to Nosgoth is coming

If you've been holding your breath for a new *Legacy of Kain* title, here's a bit of good and bad news: an in-development game by the name of *Legacy of Kain: Dead Sun* has been cancelled. Following a whole lot of rumour-mongering over at the NeoGAF forums, Square London community manager George Kelion stepped in to set the record straight.



"*Dead Sun* just wasn't the right game, at the right time," said Kelion, but he went on to confirm that there is still hope for those of us pining for a return to this universe. That return will come in the form of Nosgoth – a multiplayer-focused game that the company will detail further down the line. Not much else is known about this game, but it has been confirmed that Crystal Dynamics isn't working on it. As for the future of single-player *Kain* experiences, Kelion has at least left us a glimmer of hope...

"While we're not working on a single-player *Legacy of Kain* game right now, that doesn't mean it's not something we'd look at making in the future."

Senior producer on Gears of War leaves to work on Mass Effect 4

The high profile departures continue at Epic Games: Chris Wynn has left the company to take up a new position with Electronic Arts. Wynn was the lead producer on *Gears of War 3* as well as the senior producer on the more recent *Gears of War: Judgment*. He's taken on the role of senior development director at BioWare, where he will work alongside Casey Hudson on the next *Mass Effect* game.

Another *Gears of War* senior member Rod Fergusson left Epic this time last year, as did Cliff Bleszinski and Epic president Mike Capps. At this rate, the developer's kitchen staff will soon need to take up development positions on the next *Gears of War* game. We can see it now: *Gears of War: Unsung Heroes* – in which the COG canteen staff have to maintain regular meals for Delta Squad while trying to source fresh ingredients in an increasingly hostile world.

"We have been able to step back and say that we are not taking any technological means to impact trade-in and we are confident that if we build great content, then the consumer will not want to trade in our games."

-Reggie Fils-Aime, Nintendo of America president

msi
Supports intel CORE
intel CHIPSET Z77
TAKE CONTROL
Z87-GD65 GAMING
GAMING MOTHERBOARDS
GAMING G SERIES
JUST GAME!
Killer E2200 GAME NETWORKING
KILL YOUR LAG
TOP QUALITY & STABILITY
OVERCLOCK IN 1 SECOND
Sound BLASTER CINEMA
REALISTIC SURROUND SOUND
game.msi.com
© 2013 Micro-Star Int'l Co.Ltd. MSI is a trademark of Micro-Star Int'l Co.Ltd. All rights reserved. Intel, the Intel logo, Centrino, Centrino Inside, Intel Core and Core Inside are trademarks of Intel Corporation in the U.S. and other countries. For more information about the Intel processor feature rating, please refer to www.intel.com/go/rating.
COREX
Corex IT Distribution Dynamics (PTY) LTD
Johannesburg Tel: +27 11 700 7188 Fax: +27 11 700 7140
Cape Town Tel: +27 21 528 8000 Fax: +27 21 528 8055
Durban Tel: +27 31 537 4912 Fax: +27 31 537 4988
Like "Corex Alliance" on Facebook Follow "Corex Alliance" on Twitter Subscribe to "Corex Alliance" on YouTube For more information visit www.corex.co.za

The Game Stalker



Is it a girl thing?

I'm sure some of you will disagree with me on this topic. I don't mind, but it's a forewarning.

I was recently lucky enough to make the gamer pilgrimage to E3 for the first time, and I won't deny that I was floored at the scope and scale of what is largely hailed as one of the biggest gaming trade shows in the world.

But while I'm aware that women are not always visibly and overtly represented in the gaming arena (I'm not going to go into stats), we're at least peripherally aware that there is an ever increasing population of female gamers. Yes I knew as a woman that I was going to be in the minority at this event, nevertheless I was still surprised at just how true this was.

I jokingly made a comment on Twitter about the fact that for once I didn't have to cue outside the bathroom, and while we can't deny that it's amusing, it saddened me to think that even after so many years and so many stats that argue that the gaming industry is now no longer the domain of predominantly white males, the reality is that this doesn't seem to apply to the journalists. I remember looking around the media room, and even though people from all over the world were coming together for the love of video games, I saw perhaps a handful of other women in the room with me.

I'm not the only person who noticed this either and I can't help but wonder if this questioning of the status quo is a current trend, as in recent weeks I've increasingly been sent or have come across articles on the Internet pointing out not specifically the lack of female representation in the gaming world, but rather the cyber hate and attacks that many female gamers are forced to endure if they dare to point out that the system has flaws.

It has nothing to do with hierarchy either. You can be at the top of the journalistic food chain, or right at the bottom, but you are immediately judged on your gender. Respected and insightful female journalists such as Leigh Alexander are also on the receiving end of gender specific derision, not just from gamers but from developers and just after E3 2013, journalist Tina Amini published an article on Kotaku about the "creepy-rapey side of E3". In it she detailed multiple accounts by a variety of women on the harassment they endured over the three day conference ranging from groping to inappropriate comments.

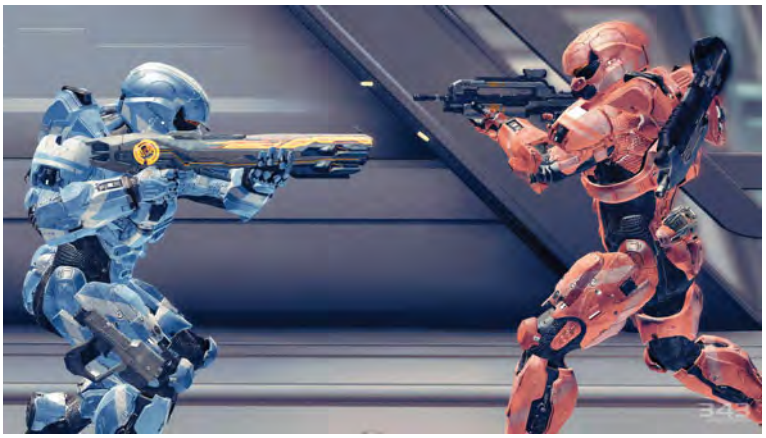
You may or may not be aware of the Feminist Frequency series and the fact that the author was the target of a particularly aggressive online hate campaign including a game where you could beat her up. Her case is extreme and I still heard someone comment the other day that she was being overly whiny. Because of course being threatened with rape and death by stabbing is completely acceptable.

The "fake geek girl" meme. The journalist who placed his business card in between the breasts of a PR rep. The fact that we have to mention this at all is indicative that something needs to change.

If you're a white male, you need to realise that I'm not trying to make you feel bad. I don't want you to stop gaming or interacting with female gamers. This is merely an attempt to point out that gaming is a wonderful thing, but it is not owned by any one group. It should be inclusive of all regardless of race or gender.

- Pippa Tshabalala -

Xbox One's reputation system fights fire with fire



If you've ever played a multiplayer game online (on any platform, across any multiplayer gaming service), you've no doubt been subjected to the type of rampant abuse that leads to gamers having to put up a great big "WARNING!" sign when asked what it's like playing games against other humans (or sub-humans, as it were). Take Xbox LIVE, for example, where within five minutes of starting a *Halo* match you're likely to want to phone your mom to ask her if all these extensive promiscuity allegations against her are true. With Xbox One, Microsoft hopes to curb such notorious behaviour in a very special way.

The gist of it is that players who tend to grief, harass or otherwise abuse fellow players online will be lumped into a separate matchmaking pool made specifically for players who grief, harass or otherwise abuse fellow players online. In other words, if you act like an A-hole, you'll find yourself limited to playing games against similarly horrible gamers whenever you attempt to join multiplayer servers.

"If we see consistently that people, for instance, don't like playing with you, that you're consistently blocked, that you're the subject of enforcement actions because you're sending naked pictures of yourself to people that don't want naked pictures of you... Blatant things like that have the ability to quickly reduce your reputation score," Microsoft senior product manager Mike Lavin told OXM.

This isn't the first time pairing trolls with trolls has been used to curb online asshole-ery. *Max Payne 3*, for example, introduced the excellent Cheater Pool to ensure that cheaters were lumped with cheaters to hilarious effect. This is the first time it'll dominate the entire online service of a console, however.

"Every MMO that follows the [*World of Warcraft*] formula is a trivial exercise, dominated by rote and convention, trading off the joy of the journey for a series of meaningless tasks. And when we race to the end, we expect some kind of miracle end-game that will keep us playing. It never does."

– Red 5 Studios (developer of upcoming MMO shooter Firefall*) CEO Mark Kern believes that too many MMOs have removed any real gameplay challenge in order to appeal to more casual gamers.*

Let's try this again



The ill-fated Warhammer 40K MMORPG is a long-gone and bitter memory for most, but that hasn't deterred Games Workshop from pursuing new ways to get the licence back into the online space. The company recently announced a partnership with *Wet* and *Naughty Bear* developers Behaviour Interactive to deliver *Warhammer 40,000: Eternal Crusade*. The game will play out much like *PlanetSide*, with players of various factions vying for control over territories and fortresses during (real-time) months-long campaigns.

Eternal Crusade, which is set for release in 2015 on PC and next-gen consoles, is planned to be launched on a free-to-play model, with froobs relegated to a single class: the Ork Boy. These runts need to team up to take down even a single Space Marine, but the thinking from the developers is that, since there will always be large numbers of free players, it's a good fit for the Ork horde mentality. Those who are willing to cough up a bit of dosh will gain access to the remaining races and classes from Space Marines, Eldar, Chaos Space Marines and the rest of the Orks. There will also be a fifth, non-playable faction in the form of the Tyranid, who will be present to provide a bit of PVE reprieve and general trouble-making in this otherwise entirely PVP-based online game.

Duke Nukem Forever and ever and ever

Just when you thought Gearbox couldn't get any further into trouble, 3D Realms has thrown down a law suit that claims Gearbox owes them over $2 million in unpaid royalties from sales of *Duke Nukem Forever*.

The suit stems from what is being labelled an "agreement among friends" between Gearbox's chief Randy Pitchford and 3D Realms big-wigs George Broussard and Scott Miller, in which it was stipulated that, as part of the sale of *DNF* from 3DR, Gearbox would foot the bill for a $2.9 million debt that 3DR held with a 3rd party. Now, 3D Realms' lawyers are alleging that Gearbox claims the royalties owed were taken out of the debt repayment, and that the net result is zero dollars. In addition, 3D Realms claims that their auditors were blocked from investigating the precise amount of money they were owed from *Duke Nukem*'s sales.

For now, Gearbox have refuted the claims, essentially calling 3D Realms a bunch of crazy people who have already milked the contract for every drop of value. In a statement, they went as far to say that 3DR "chose to blame its failures on Gearbox" and called this suit "hostile". Ouch... them's fightin' words.

PlayStation Vita action RPG Warrior's Lair is dead

During E3 2011, Sony showed off *Warrior's Lair* for the PlayStation Vita. Back then the game was called *Ruin*, but an action RPG by any other name would drop loot as readily. The game missed E3 2012 and was similarly AWOL this year. The only conclusion to draw was that things weren't looking too good for whichever developer was left working on the title. It was originally being developed by Idol Minds, but later rumours suggested that Sony San Diego was finishing up development.

Not that the developer is of relevance any longer: the game has been cancelled. Sony has confirmed the game's demise in a statement issued to website IGN. "Sony Computer Entertainment can confirm that *Warrior's Lair* for PS Vita is no longer in development," the statement read. "We apologize to those who pre-ordered the title and ask that they contact their retailer directly to cancel their pre-sale."

A new hope

Star Wars: Battlefront is not dead! If you can't tell from that, this is exciting news: EA confirmed that DICE Sweden (not the new LA-based branch) has dedicated a portion of its team to the development of a reboot of the *Battlefront* series. There's not much more info at this stage, but the fact that the creators of *Battlefield* are taking on a game inspired *by Battlefield* is enough to demand a change of pants from anyone of the gamer or sci-fi nerd persuasion.





Self-inflicted boredom

On the weekend before electro-inking these words, I attempted a bit of 48-hour game jamming for a challenge called Molyjam Deux. The premise involved picking a quote from Peter Molyneux's Twitter account and building a game around it. The 'Neux, known for saying some rather grand and whimsical things from time to time, was going to inspire game creators in a far more direct way than usual.

> "These spikes of non-creativity are a bane on any developer's existence – sometimes, a weak idea or series of weak ideas strikes us from nowhere and seeps into our work."

Unfortunately, I spent the weekend hitting duds. Over the course of those two days, I got moderately invested in quite a few prototypes that felt flat and didn't have much else to show for it. I just didn't have any great ideas. I wasn't clicking with the 'Neux!

These spikes of non-creativity are a bane on any developer's existence – sometimes, a weak idea or series of weak ideas strikes us from nowhere and seeps into our work. And although there's a lot of advocacy for "just doing it" in a jam environment, I sometimes know that I can save myself a lot of trouble by dropping something immediately if I can't see a honeymoon phase looming.

If I go into a game project thinking that I can eventually make it exciting... I probably won't. This has happened time and again: if the work didn't *start* with great feelings, it didn't magically *become* great. My idea of the game's potential fun doesn't need to be well-defined or thought out at the beginning – what matters is whether or not it's there at all. The point is to be emotionally engaged with the project before pushing a single pixel onto the screen.

Trying to find fun in a space you don't feel enthused about is a bit of a crush-coal, make-diamonds approach to a creative problem, at least when doing it so insistently. Diving into the deep end is a great exercise to do from time to time – and really extends one as a developer – but this doesn't mean you're going to find something worth diving for every time. If you're not finding fun in a particular area, stop, ask yourself why and move on to the next creative space if necessary.

You are your first critic and the tone of your entire project is going to be set by how you feel when you start it. If you feel uninspired, that lack of inspiration goes into your work – and it's hard to think of something coming from nothing in that environment, isn't it? When we're excited, we analyse more details and put extra work into places that we already know need attention without even stopping to think about it. That's the honeymoon, and it ensures that a game starts off on the right foot.

Any project is hard to commit to after a long time – getting tired of the same code and the same situations after months or even years of work is natural and long-term developers just have to understand and manage that. But when the germ of inspiration isn't there to start with? Well, there are too many cool ideas and creative avenues out there to waste any more time than necessary making things that you don't find fun.

- Rodain Joubert -

Double Fine and the quest for even more money



Given that Double Fine was the studio that kickstarted the Kickstarter revolution with their massively successful ($3.3 million worth of success, to be precise) crowdfunding effort for the 2D point-and-click adventure that is now known as *Broken Age*, it seems strangely fitting that they're among the first examples of what happens when Kickstarter isn't quite enough. In a backers-only update, industry legend Tim Schafer revealed that they're running behind schedule, and that they're going to need even more cash to complete *Broken Age*.

"Even though we received much more money from our Kickstarter than we, or anybody anticipated," explains Schafer, "that didn't stop me from getting excited and designing a game so big that it would need even more money."

To fix this dilemma, Double Fine is turning to Steam Early Access to keep the game's development rolling. The plan is to release a polished version of first half of the game on Steam in January 2014, sales of which will hopefully generate enough income to sustain the game's development.

Schafer explains that, after calculating the eventual outcome of all this were they to continue on their current budget without this Early Access push, the first act of the game wouldn't be ready until July of 2014, which meant the full game wouldn't be ready for launch until 2015, and their funds couldn't accommodate that. At that rate, he says, they'd have to cut 75% of the game just to get it out before they ran out of dough.

They considered Kickstarter again, but Schafer says it "seemed wrong", and that even using funds made from their other titles wouldn't cover all the costs. Steam Early Access was their solution, with those profits from other titles used to help offset the cost. Folks who backed the original Kickstarter will get access to a beta version of the game before the Early Access release, and will also get the Early Access copy of *Broken Age* when it launches. When the full game *finally* launches, they'll still obviously get that as well. We've done some calculations using global mortality rates and science to determine that approximately nine backers of Double Fine's Kickstarter have died since backing the project early last year. Morbid.

The dead rise again



If you're into zombie slaying and own an Xbox 360, there's every chance that you enjoy a bit of *Dead Rising*. After the series severed the apron strings in its second outing, it's now preparing to return back under the watchful eye of mother Microsoft, who's stepping in as the publisher for the third game.

There's quite a bit that's different about *Dead Rising 3*, with not only a new protagonist (in the form of mechanic Nick Ramos), but a much larger open world and a somewhat edgier, less tongue-in-cheek approach. Much of the gameplay from the first two titles will return, including the ability to build and customise weapons, but an increased focus on free-roaming means vehicles play a greater role, and the player won't be bogged down by the need to find maintenance rooms and toilets to customise weapons and save their progress.

As an Xbox One exclusive, the game will make use of the mandatory Kinect camera, supposedly using audio from your gaming environment to trigger zombie reactions in the game – make too much noise while playing and the undead will hear you. There's also talk of SmartGlass integration, making this truly a Microsoft mascot of the next generation when it launches in November this year.

Hollenshead says farewell to id Software



After 17 years at the house of *Doom*, *Wolfenstein* and most recently *Rage* (the game, not our super-lovely expo), id Software's Todd Hollenshead has decided it's time to move on. He originally joined the esteemed development studio in 1996, first serving as CEO and then as the company's president following the ZeniMax acquisition in 2009.

"After many years with the studio, Todd Hollenshead decided to leave id Software to pursue other personal interests," Bethesda's Pete Hines said. "While Todd was not part of the development teams, he was an integral part of id Software's success as the business head of the studio and we wish him the very best in his future endeavors."

The news is slightly disconcerting, given that id Software has apparently been facing some trouble following *Rage*'s divisive reception. Long-awaited *Doom 4* apparently underwent a complete overhaul, and a sequel to *Rage* was allegedly cancelled to divert all attention to the fourth *Doom*'s development. Regardless, we wish Mr Hollenshead the best of luck.

Konami's New Coke

With all the changes on the map for *Metal Gear Solid V*, Konami decided that now would be a great time to ditch Snake's voice actor David Hayter in favour of someone closer to the character's age. In comes 46 year-old Kiefer Sutherland (just two years older than Hayter) of *24* and *Dark City* fame. Sutherland is claimed to be a perfect match for Snake "in terms of age and performance", said series creator Hideo Kojima, and has been in the recording booth for months already, where his voice and facial performances have been captured for use in the game.

So where does that leave the abandoned Hayter? A little bitter, by the sounds of things. When probed for a response, the actor tweeted "Great actor, good man. The game will probably still be excellent... Like New Coke!"

Take some time to read about the soft drink maker's marketing disaster in 1985 and it'll make sense to you.

Hell has a date with Xbox 360 and PS3

Back when *Diablo III* was confirmed for the PS3 and PS4, everyone assumed that it would make its way over to the Xbox 360, and now Blizzard has confirmed that the assumption was indeed correct. They also finally committed to a release date (a big deal for Blizzard): September the 3rd for current-gen consoles. Both versions will feature a pre-order bonus of the Infernal Helm in-game item, which imbues its wearer with bonus XP gains. As it stands, Blizzard hasn't confirmed that the game will come to Xbox One at all, and, while there's currently no word on release dates for the PS4, we think it's be safe to assume it'll follow shortly after the release of the console.

GAME DESIGN
STUDY WHAT YOU LOVE



THE WITS SCHOOL OF ARTS AND THE SCHOOL OF ELECTRICAL & INFORMATION ENGINEERING

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT HANLI GEYSER:
T +27 (11) 717-4687
E HANLI.GEYSER@WITS.AC.ZA

WWW.WITS.AC.ZA/WSOA
WWW.EIE.WITS.AC.ZA

THE WITS SCHOOL OF ARTS DIGITAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG



E3 hangover

So now that we've all had some time to unwind from the crazy carnival and supreme dog-and-pony show that is the Electronic Entertainment Expo, how do we feel about stuff? From my point of view, not much changed actually. Well, that's not entirely true: Microsoft did do a complete 180 on their DRM policies regarding the Xbox One, but only after E3 was over. Sony managed to seem the most competent by just... doing nothing at all. Nintendo's still Nintendo'ing as only Nintendo does, which suits me fine because I like what Ninten... do.

I don't need to mention the PC Master Race, because honestly, nobody cares? It's like that joke: How do you know someone has a powerful PC? Don't worry, they'll tell you. Ha ha, I keed. I recently got a second GTX 560 so I could SLI, and I've not regretted it. It doesn't really improve frame rates per say, but it smooths things out to such a degree that it makes you wish this is how PC gaming worked as a standard. But, it doesn't, since PC gaming is about as unstandardized as it gets. And not everyone wants to be elbow-deep in thermal paste and overpriced components, so we're back to consoles.

This has been a damn long console generation. And I hope the people who've "picked their sides" as it were, really, *really* like them, because they're likely to be stuck with them for a long, long time. I don't think the eight-or-so year generation was an oddity. It's unlikely that Microsoft or Sony are going to be wanting to replace the PS4 or Xbox One any time in the next eight, perhaps ten years.

E3 didn't change my mind on the Xbox One. It's clear the system is designed with a specific goal in mind, and that just doesn't align with what I want from a gaming system. I won't hold it against the Xbox One, I don't need to sell my Xbox 360 after all. And it makes the future a little bit cheaper, not having to buy games for an entire platform. Not the exclusives, anyway.

I'm not overly happy that Sony has decided to go the Xbox LIVE Gold route with PlayStation Plus, making a subscription a requirement to play games online. So thanks for that, Microsoft (because really, it's their doing). Microsoft raised a generation of console gamers thinking that online multiplayer is a value-added service, when it's not. Especially not when most multiplayer games, even on Xbox LIVE, are peer-to-peer. But whatever, the die has been cast.

Looking over my review schedule for the remainder of the year, it's predominantly Nintendo stuff (with a few Vita titles). More's the pity that Nintendo is so... I don't want to say "mismanaged" in South Africa, but as things are it is clear things could be better regarding the Nintendo brand. I don't like having to fight for the right to review Nintendo games in the magazine, just because "nobody has Nintendo products in South Africa", according to people with veto power.

Since Xbox One won't be launching in South Africa this year (only the end of next year, *perhaps*), it looks like the PlayStation 4 will get the lion's share of attention in the coming months. So keep that in mind: we're not being biased, that's just how things played out. If you feel something isn't getting the coverage it deserves, come and shout at us on the website.

- Miktar Dracon -

The three top publishers' patience is running thin for the Wii U



Nintendo's Wii U is still not looking so great despite this year's very strong showing of first-party games at E3. The problem is that most of those games are still a little way away, and the Wii U is in desperate need of games. More specifically, it's in need of that one game that will sell systems.

Before the console launched late last year, it was believed that Ubisoft's *ZombiU* was that game. Unfortunately for Ubisoft and Nintendo, despite relatively solid review scores and public reception, *ZombiU* was a failure. Recently, Ubisoft CEO Yves Guillemot stated that ZombiU wasn't even remotely profitable for the French publisher. As a result, you can officially count out any potential sequels, which runs contrary to rumours that were swirling a few months ago that stated one was in the works. That's not all: the fate of *ZombiU* had a knock-on effect for another Wii U title: *Rayman Legends*. The relative failure of *ZombiU* was responsible for Ubisoft switching *Rayman Legends* from Wii U exclusive to multiplatform offering. As for Ubisoft's current stance on the Wii U, Guillemot had this to say: "We hope [the Wii U] will take off. At the moment, we've said 'let's do through Christmas and see where we are from there.'"

Activision's CEO Eric Hirshberg is similarly disenamoured with Nintendo's flailing console: "We came to the table with a robust slate, but we have no announcements now," he said during this year's E3.

Electronic Arts isn't shy about things at all when it comes to the Wii U. EA Sports COO Peter Moore has described the Wii U as a "disappointment when you look at sell-through". For Moore, the biggest problem is the Wii U's lack of focus on online capabilities: "[Online] is so integral to what we do. They're so small it's hardly worth running the servers. It seems like a box that's out of sync with the future of EA – which is one that gives a real social feel to our games. The Wii U feels like an offline experience right now."

"We didn't want those creators to wind up in a position where even after making a fantastic game, they didn't sell well enough. We decided that we had to come out on enough machines that players can try it out on any one that they have."

-Yves Guillemot, CEO of Ubisoft, on Rayman Legends *going multi-platform*

Please leave a blood-stained message: Hotline Miami 2 announced

We absolutely adore the blistering pace and neon-lit violence of *Hotline Miami*, so we're impossibly excited that we'll now officially see a sequel in our future. Calling itself *Hotline Miami 2: Wrong Number*, the approach developer Dennaton Games is taking with it is one that'll be brutally familiar to fans, while adding a generous dose of More Everything to the original game's formula. There'll be more of an emphasis on narrative, more playable characters (including at least one female character), more enemies and more of the same disturbingly awesome soundtrack.

It's being billed as a darker, more emotional trip taken through the eyes of multiple characters as they violently rage through the '90s. "We tried to give different storylines to the characters, tried to work with different emotions – not just being crazy or like a psychopath," said Denis Wedin, one half of Dennaton Games. "We tried to give them other backstories."

While there are no plans for multiplayer support initially (the main priority at the moment is the campaign and its story), Wedin has said that they may add something further down the line.

Feed me, seymore



While the announcement from EA that *Plants vs. Zombies 2* is in the pipeline is certainly a big deal, we're much more excited about a lesser-known gem by the name of *Plants vs. Zombies: Garden Warfare*. This obvious spoof on *Call of Duty* and *Battlefield* sees players taking on the roles of the Plants and the Zombies in a mix of competitive and cooperative modes from a third-person perspective.

Popcap returns as the developers, but in spirit only – most of the team on this project has been liberated from various other EA projects to ensure this Frostbite 3-powered game looks and plays every bit like a true shooter, although the original *PvZ* bunch are on call to ensure this title retains the charm and humour the series is known for.

No release date has been pegged at this stage, but the game will be available on current and next-gen consoles as well as PC when it eventually arrives.

ArenaNet: Guild Wars 2 expansion "not something we're focused on"

The first *Guild Wars* game managed to accumulate six million sales during its lifetime. The coupled financial success was thanks to expansion packs and paid add-ons. The whole thing worked rather well for publisher NCSoft, which is why you're currently able to play *Guild Wars 2*.

While it would make sense for NCSoft to play it safe and follow the same business model for *Guild Wars 2*, they're not planning on doing so. As such, don't expect any expansion packs or paid-for add-on content. Instead, developer ArenaNet has this concept called "Living World" which will bring new content to *Guild Wars 2*.

The game's lead designer Mike Zadorojny has said that the development team isn't even looking at expansion packs. Instead, this Living World concept will allow them to "do what expansions would have done but do it on a more regular basis."

Basically, four teams at ArenaNet each get four months to develop one month's worth of content for the game. That content is then added to the game once it's done, and you don't pay anything for it. An early example was the Flame & Frost update from the beginning of this year, but new Living World content will be getting more in depth as time goes on. That makes sense considering the whole staff contingent of ArenaNet is working on Living World content.

So what's going to sustain the game in the long run? The already established microtransactions; "it is absolutely enough," Zadorojny confirmed.



1. LIQUID IMAGE EGO WIFI EQUIPPED HD1080P EXTREME SPORTS CAMERA

2. LIFEPRROF COVER FOR IPHONE 5

TECHNOLOGY & GADGETS

SOUTH AFRICA'S ONLY ONE-STOP ONLINE SHOP FOR THE MODERN MAN!

We offer the following:

- Unique range of products
- Secure online shopping
- Next day courier delivery
- Collections also welcome
- Card & bank payments

Shop at www.Mantality.biz

mantality.biz

Games • Shave • Stuff • Sex • Gadgets • Style

~ Distributors ~

Apex Interactive	011 796 5040
ASUS SA	011 783 5450
BT Games	0861 4 GAMES
Compuseed	011 781 8880/2/3
Comstar	011 314 5812
Core Gaming	011 535 9000
Corex	011 700 7188
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
Musica	0860 687 422
Phoenix Software	011 803 5437
Prima Interactive	011 799 7800
Rectron	011 203 1000
Samsung	0860 726 7864
Silverscreen Trading	011 794 9749
Sonic Informed	011 3145800
Ster Kinekor Entertainment	011 445 7700
TVR Computers	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 / Disney
E-MAIL support@xtrememes.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

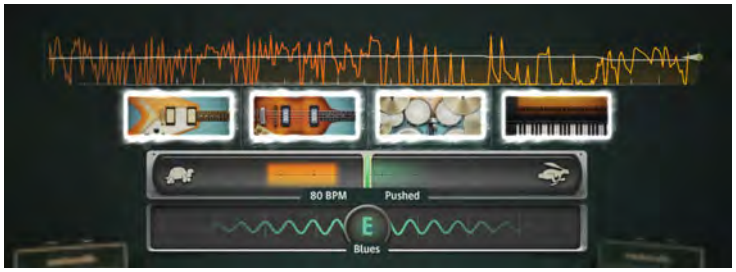
Imagination ignition



Following their short-lived but well-conceived Kodu, Microsoft is back in the user-generated content game with the upcoming *Project Spark*. Coming in somewhere in the middle of the gameplay-focused content creation of *LittleBigPlanet* and the drag-and-drop simplicity of game creation tools like Game Maker and Construct, *Spark* will let players create their own fantasy RPG worlds, fill them with content and set up the content and parameters with which players interact, then share their creations with the world.

But it goes a step further than quest building you find in RPGs (or at least, used to); *Spark* allows users to reprogram each object or NPC in the game with a new "brain" – essentially a preconfigured set of AI instructions. A simple rock on the ground can become a pet that follows the player, and enemies will advance on the player's position (or avoid hostilities altogether) depending entirely on their programming. You'll also be able to build your own brains and share them with other users online. Although there's no word yet on how advanced the system gets, MS showed off a few examples of advanced programming results, including an on-screen keyboard, a timed mini-game, and a game of blackjack.

Keep on rocking



Rocksmith launched to a mixture of impressed and disappointed looks, both from the general public and here at Castle NAG, but instead of shrinking away into the darkness, Ubisoft has been tinkering away at a new version which they promise will be far more than a collection of updates. They've dubbed this updated version *Rocksmith 2014 Edition*.

Everything will be tweaked and smoothed over, from less time spent staring at loading screens to a renewed focus on teaching technique instead of just chords and notes. There's also what appears to be a very impressive tool called Session Mode in which players can jam freestyle along with up to four AI players on different instruments. The idea is that you won't need to rely on backing tracks and drum machines to work on your improvisation; the AI players will adapt to you as you play – changing tempo, pitch and volume depending on what they "hear" from you. It all sounds very exciting, and we can't wait to check it out when it launches in October this year.

Cube World servers suffer DoS attacks at launch

If you've been keeping half an eye on *Cube World*, then you probably know that the action RPG – with a determined nod in *Minecraft*'s direction – has become available in alpha form. Not only does the game share a blocky aesthetic with Notch and Mojang's procedurally generated mining and building extravaganza, but it's following a similar release pattern. For a reduced fee people can grab the alpha build, which will give them access to the beta and eventual final release. Those joining the party in either the beta release or final build will need to pay more.

Having the game on sale is all well and good, assuming people can actually get to the website to make a purchase. Mere hours after the alpha became available, the game's website went down. At first it was believed that the developer (Picroma) had underestimated demand for the game, but as their systems improved the problem continued. Less than a week later it was realised that the game was experiencing continual Denial of Service attacks from an unknown source.

"Initially we assumed the fault was on our side, like our download/updating system could be broken," the game's developer Wollay Funck explained, "So we closed the sale and improved our system. But it turned out that all these problems were the result of DoS attacks. It seems that someone is trying to systematically damage us and our business. The attacks usually occur during evening/night as soon as we open our store or user registrations. The attackers obviously want to prevent us from selling our game."


TOM CRUISE
MORGAN FREEMAN
OBLIVION
ON BLU-RAY™ & DVD
16•07•13
/@OblivionMovie
/oblivion
© 2013 Universal Studios. All Rights Reserved.
Not all items are available in all stores - please call your local store to enquire.
Look & Listen
* Release dates, availability and prices subject to change at the discretion of the supplier. While stocks last.

Fresh from the grave



One of the most surprising announcements to come from Microsoft's camp at E3 was the reveal of *Killer Instinct* – a reboot of the '90s fighting games from Rare and Midway Games. We're not sure if it was the game's ingenious blend of combat mechanisms or the fact that it featured a dinosaur character (just kidding, it was definitely the latter), but *Killer Instinct* has always been one of those classics forever etched in our memories.

Then Microsoft swooped in to take advantage of our nostalgia, together with one of the game's original creators – Ken Lobb (who's been off the scene for 13 years) – and Double Helix Games, which includes a number of developers formally of Shiny Entertainment. The new *Killer Instinct* will be an Xbox One exclusive and will only be available for download. It'll also be free to play and heavily supported by micro-transactions. Players will get one character for free upon download and will have to cough up some serious dosh if they want to unlock the entire roster; or simply purchase a season pass and get access to everything as it's released.

There's no doubt that this form of monetisation is often fraught with imbalances and potential to anger gamers, but who knows, this might just be a winner if care is given to balance and ongoing updates.

Look & Listen

Pre-orders **www.lookandlisten.co.za**

PC

Total War: Rome II	September
Need for Speed: Rivals	November
Pro Evolution Soccer 2014	TBA 2013

360

FIFA 14	September 27th
Batman: Arkham Origins	October 25th
Battlefield 4	November 1st

PS3

Grand Theft Auto V	September 17th
Beyond: Two Souls	October 11th
Call of Duty: Ghosts	November 5th

Source SDK adds Oculus Rift support

Valve has been very vocal in its support for the virtual reality shenanigans enabled by the much-anticipated Oculus Rift headset. They've now added support for it to their Source SDK as part of the new Source SDK 2013 release, effectively enabling modders to muck about with virtual reality in their games and mods. Videos have demoed it in use in extremely popular mods like *Black Mesa*. Other important additions include the long-awaited addition of Mac OS X and Linux support for mods.

"I'm part of the problem. I did the same games for 15 years. I did games about a character that jumps around with a sword. So it's my fault, but we're all getting a bit older, and it's time to try something else ... In the way you interact with the game world, it's much easier to destroy than create. When you get into more subtle subject matter, which is about human interactions, it's tough."

–Assassin's Creed *creator Patrice Desilets, explaining to GamesIndustry.biz that games need to be less about killing people, and more about meaningful interaction*

PS4 brings back classic Sony, says executive

Speaking with the Guardian, Sony Computer Entertainment president Andrew House said that he believes the fourth console in the PlayStation family is a return to Sony's "original roots". House says that, when the original PS and the PS2 were launched, the focus was squarely on the developers and the consumers – and he reckons that sentiment has been rekindled with PS4.

"I see our approach on PS4 as really taking Sony Computer Entertainment back to our original roots," said House. "When we first launched with the PS1 and certainly the PS2, the goal was to give the consumer more choice, and lots of flexibility at a time when the delivery mechanism of games, on cartridges, placed a lot of restrictions on the industry. And also, by shifting to disks, to give developers – and particularly smaller ones – the chance to take risks and build a business. I think you're seeing exactly those kinds of principles applied to PS4."

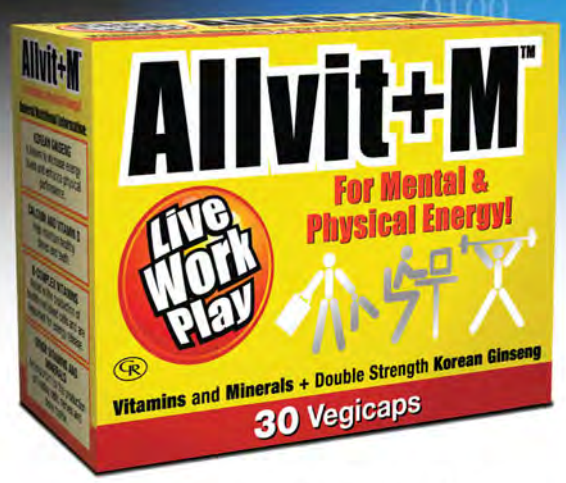


House went on to say that developers are already commenting that the PS4 makes it significantly easier to develop games than its predecessor, and that the steps Sony has taken to nurture smaller developers has caused many developers to emerge from the mobile space, which House thinks is a "tremendously positive trend for console gaming".

Allvit+M™

For Mental & Physical Energy!

Essential vitamins and minerals + Double Strength Korean Ginseng



Available in Packs of 30 or 60 Swallow Vegicaps.

Dosage

Take one vegicap daily with breakfast.

Supercharge your day with a MPE² Boost!

MENTAL & PHYSICAL ENERGY

Double Strength Korean Ginseng -

- Provides a *Mental* and *Physical* Boost!
- Improves circulation and has *immune boosting properties.*

Essential Vitamins and Minerals -

- Required by your body in order for you to *live, work and play at your peak.*

Georen PHARMACEUTICALS (Pty) Ltd

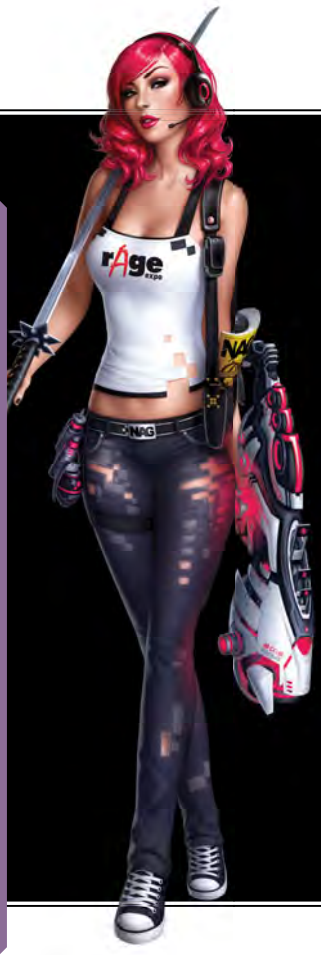
Visit www.georen.co.za for more Quality Products

Available at Dis-Chem PHARMACIES Pharmacists who care and other Leading Pharmacies.

Win R1000!

Take part in our questionnaire at www.georen.co.za and you could be our Cash Winner!

T&C's apply and are available at www.georen.co.za. There is only one prize of R1000 plus an Allvit+M hamper, the competition will be drawn on the 28th of November 2013. The judges' decision is final. The winner will be contacted via details supplied on the entry form.



Foxy Roxy

Some call her the ultimate gamer grill. Then we smack them and tell them that Roxy isn't food (this is what eating too much of mom's meatloaf will do to you), she's the official rAge/*NAG* mascot. She was lovingly created in 2012 by South African illustrator Warren Louw for the 10th anniversary of rAge. Seeing that we (much like the gaming industry) like to squeeze the blood out of every IP we create, we've got her working it hard in *NAG* each month. Her job is to hide somewhere in the magazine for you to find. Go, do it now!

Send your sighting to ed@nag.co.za with the subject line "August Roxy", and of course your contact details, and you could win a prize.

JULY WINNER



No Winner, we win!, page 82

THIS MONTH'S LOOT THAT NOBODY WON

PS Vita 7 in 1 Starter Kit, valued at R299.95. Sponsored by dreamGEAR and Musica.

dreamGEAR

MUSICA
A WORLD AWAITS



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 ***Le Tour de France 2013*** for 360 from Apex Interactive. Send your captions to **ed@nag.co.za** with the subject line "**August caption**".



NAG's lame attempt at humour
"Duncan lights a fart while pumping gas."



Last months winner
"This threesome is about to get freaky"
- Douw Kotzé

BT GAMES®
0861 - 4 - GAMES
49 STORES NATIONWIDE
WWW.BTGAMES.CO.ZA



Pre-order your copy & receive a GTA V poster! *PLUS* get access to fly the Atomic Blimp!



grand theft auto V FIVE
17 SEPTEMBER

Insomniac returns to form

With the *Resistance* series now fully out of the hands of Insomniac Games and *Fuse* done and dusted, the developer is looking forward to getting back to its humorous roots with *Sunset Overdrive* – an upcoming Xbox One exclusive.

Insomniac is creating a massive open world for *Sunset Overdrive* in which a mutating virus has appeared seemingly overnight, turning any survivors into murderous beasts. But don't expect your usual zombie fare with this one: the game will feature bright visuals with a big helping of humour to keep things up-beat. There's not much known about the gameplay at this time, but the trailer showed off a highly agile and mobile character who mixed parkour with near super-human abilities to move through the open environment while dishing out several types of death and damage to the mutant hordes.

What's particularly interesting about this new title is Insomniac's take on regular updates. The studio has arranged a special deal with Microsoft (the game's publisher) to allow them to push new game content to its online players without having to go through the regular hoop-jumping and certification channels, which means lots of small, iterative updates and new content, much of which will come from player feedback and discussions. They've also confirmed that they intend for the game to be fully playable without an Internet connection, although you'll miss out on a lot of the additional content.



Jordan Thomas exits 2K Games in pursuit of indie dreams

This bit of news may seem a bit arbitrary, specifically because we imagine that not many people would know the name Jordan Thomas – but news of his departure from 2K Games to join the independent scene (working with an as-yet unnamed partner) has generated a fair bit of buzz around the gaming industry. Thomas, who served as creative director at 2K Marin (creators of the divisive sequel to the original *BioShock*), is perhaps best known for the role he played in designing what many consider to be one of the greatest levels ever built in a video game – The Cradle in *Thief: Deadly Shadows*.

Jordan's decision to leave 2K came after helping Irrational Games finish work on *BioShock Infinite*, taking on creative responsibilities towards the end of its development. "It cemented for me that while *BioShock* spoke to me, it'll never be for me what it is for Ken [Levine]," Thomas told GamesIndustry.biz. "I've expanded that legacy here and there, but I could never have created it from scratch. I need to build something that is, to me, what *BioShock* is to Ken. No matter how long it takes, I have to start now."

He's already got a game in mind, taking certain ideals from *Thief* and *BioShock* and employing them with "a radically different focus".

RELEASE LIST

Dates subject to change without notice

August week 1

Magic: The Gathering 2014 Core Set	Collectible card game

August week 2

Disney's Planes	3DS / DS / PC / Wii / Wii U
Tales of Xillia	PS3

August week 3

Disney Infinity	360 / 3DS / PC / PS3 Wii / Wii U
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	360 / PC / PS3
Splinter Cell: Blacklist	360 / PC / PS3
The Wonderful 101	Wii U
Saints Row IV	360 / PC / PS3
Lost Planet 3	360 / PC / PS3
Mortal Kombat: Komplete Edition	PC
Madden NFL 25	360 / PS3
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	PC / PS3
One Piece: Pirate Warriors 2	PS3
Rayman Legends	360 / PC / PS3 / Vita Wii U

August unconfirmed

Payday 2	360 / PC / PS3

"If people are in your friends list, we're not touching that, we're just making it easier for you to come together. It's really the anonymous side of things where we're making these investments. Ultimately if there's a few percent of our population that are causing the rest of the population to have a miserable time, we should be able to identify those folks."

– Xbox senior product manager Mike Lavin, speaking with OXM about the lauded new reputation system for Xbox One

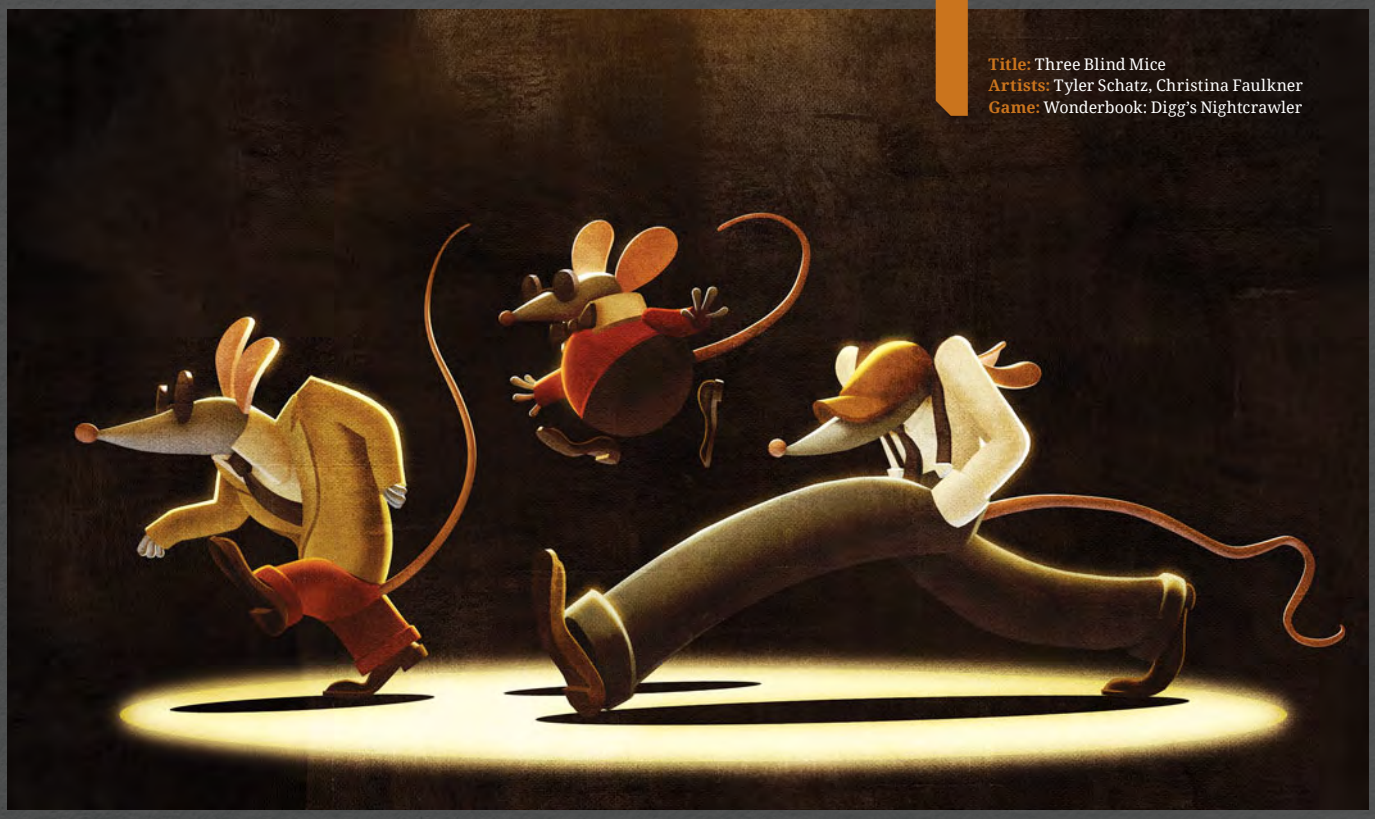


ESSENCE OF **THE ART**

Into the Pixel 2013

Each year at E3 a collection of fine art is proudly put on display for everyone to enjoy. You won't find anything like da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* or Monet's *Haystacks* series here, but rather pieces like *Three Blind Mice* and *Super Summer Vacation Force*. This year's Into the Pixel exhibit featured a collection of sixteen pieces from artists working in the video game industry right now. This is the tenth anniversary of the exhibit and is presented by The Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences and the Entertainment Software Association. In this space it's less about day one sales, hype and review scores and more about imagination, mood and creativity across all styles of games. But this is not about the words; enjoy the art of the video game.





Title: Three Blind Mice
Artists: Tyler Schatz, Christina Faulkner
Game: Wonderbook: Digg's Nightcrawler



Title: Castle Siege
Artists: Michel Ancel, Jean Christophe Alessandri, Lu Yang, Christophe Messier, Jean Brice Dugait, Simon Quemener, Sebastien du Jeu, Christophe Villez, Anthony Le Du, Jean-Baptiste Rollin, Benjamin Mouret, David Garcia
Game: Rayman Legends



Title: Back from the Wild
Artist: Jaime Jones
Game: Destiny





Title: Cloudbank
Artist: Jen Zee
Game: Transistor



Title: Broken Age
Artist: Nathan "Bagel" Stapley
Game: Broken Age



Title: Remembering
Artist: John Sweeney
Game: The Last of Us



Title: Schemes Collage
Artist: Reece Millidge
Game: Icycle: On Thin Ice



Title: Dark Ages
Artist: Brian Thompson
Game: FETCH



Title: Crossroads
Artist: Daniel Dociu
Game: Unannounced



Title: Freljord
Artist: James Paick
Game: League of Legends



Title: The Naval Duel
Artist: Martin Deschambault
Game: Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag

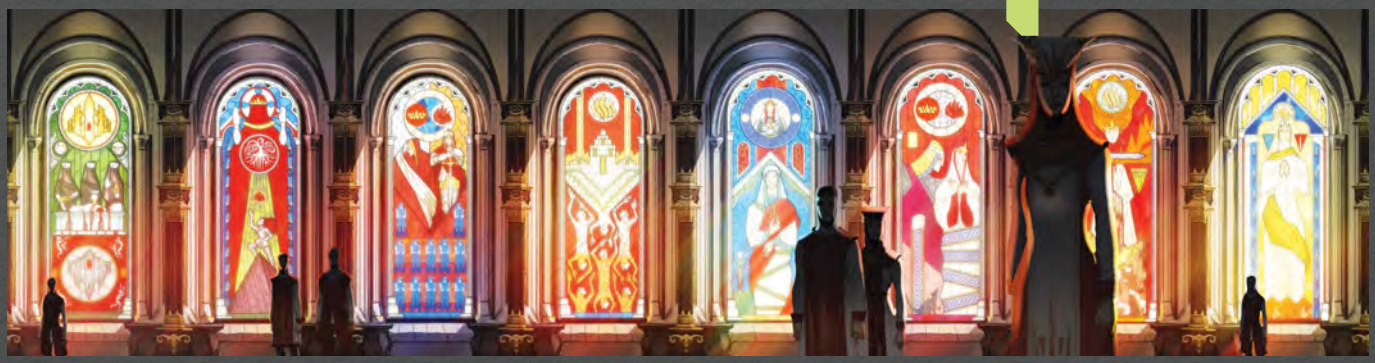


Title: Junkyard
Artist: Raymond Swanland
Game: Command and Conquer



Title: Super Summer Vacation Force
Artists: Mike Nguyen, Vic Nguyen
Game: Super Time Force





Title: The Chant
Artists: Nick Thornborrow, Matt Rhodes
Game: Dragon Age



Title: The Buried City
Artist: Dorje Bellbrook
Game: Destiny



Title: Last Stand
Artists: Jeff Chamberlain, Anthony Eftekhari, Ray Chih, Yong Hyun Kim, Kirti Pillai, Laurent Pierlot Takuya Suzuki, Fausto DeMartini, Vitaly Bulgarov, Chris Yang, Mike Kelleher, Sada Namaki, Shawn Liang, Jim Jiang, Seth Thompson, Bill LaBarge, Hsuan (Steven) Chen
Game: StarCraft II: Heart of the Swarm

HANDS ON TESTED

RELEASE DATE / 22 November 2013
PLATFORM / 360 / PC / PS3 / PS4 / Wii U / XBO
GENRE / Action-adventure
DEVELOPER / Ubisoft Montreal
WEBSITE / www.watchdogs.ubi.com
PUBLISHER / Ubisoft

Watch_Dogs

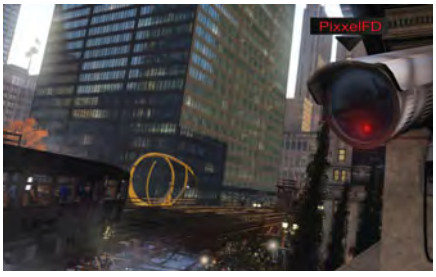
Ubisoft's ambitious open world IP could lead the next-gen charge

At E3 we got to sit down to a private gameplay demonstration with two Ubisoft Montreal developers. In addition to that, we had a nice chat with creative director Jonathan Morin.

Our demo was played on a PlayStation 4 and it looked every bit as convincing as it did in the initial reveal video from E3 2012. The game runs on a new engine called Disrupt. "Everything talks to each other emergently," Morin told us, "so it's not scripted at all." That doesn't mean every time you play a mission things will be different. It's a lot like *GTA* in mission structure, but the free-roaming bits in between are where the magic can be found. Sadly we only saw snippets of that, but the mission we did get to witness held further glimpses of this promise of emergent, unscripted gameplay.

The mission involved protagonist Aiden Pearce rescuing a partner called T-Bone who was about to be captured by enemies. Through monitoring enemy movement via CCTV cameras, Aiden was able to guide T-Bone to him so the two could escape in a hijacked enemy vehicle. While hijacking the vehicle the demonstrator opted to shoot the occupant; the gunshot startled civilians who notified the police, and a high-speed chase ensued. At this point the second developer hopped onto an iPad to lend a hand. He could disrupt helicopters, change traffic lights and take over billboards to broadcast text messages to the player on the console (to illustrate this, using the iPad app he hacked an in-game billboard to make it display my name). The cops eventually got the better of Aiden, but the iPad wielding developer initiated a citywide blackout. The sudden darkness allowed the first developer to evade the cops, right after he activated a slow-motion skill and shot all three of them in the kneecaps.

> "...using the iPad app he hacked an in-game billboard to make it display my name."







Numerous references to *Assassin's Creed* lore can be found in *Far Cry 3*, prompting debates as to the likelihood of a shared game universe. While creative director Jonathan Morin insisted that the *Watch_Dogs* universe exists on its own, he wasn't about to rule out the possibility of any similar Easter eggs.



The game will be identical across console generations with no content having been cut from the current-gen versions. Next-gen consoles, however, will have more NPCs on screen and improved visuals.





Interview with Jonathan Morin – Creative Director for *Watch_Dogs*



NAG: Can you tell us more about the seemingly scripted sequences that we've seen during demonstrations and trailers? We saw Aiden approach an enemy and pull off a seemingly canned execution move. Another example was in the 2012 E3 reveal when Aiden pulls a civilian out of a car in the middle of a gunfight.
JM: "Scripted" is probably the wrong term for the manoeuvre. The player can do all sorts of takedowns depending on where they come from and what they're doing. We have a bunch of different animations and depending on the context and the distance, [Aiden] will do something different. We really wanted to be careful to make the player feel in control of what he wants to do, so you can be lethal and non-lethal depending on your style of things.

NAG: So they're all contextual? Including the civilian being pulled out of the car?
JM: We call those "Rescue Events". So when you cause mayhem in the city, if you end up in a situation where civilians are in danger, it generates those events systematically. If you intervene, then when the media looks at the situation and reports on it, they might notice those elements and that gives you extra reputation.

NAG: Like a notoriety system?
JM: Yes, kind of like a reputation system based on how the media represents [Aiden].

NAG: Tell us about the slow-down effect that was seen in the live demo. Can you pull that move any time?
JM: Yes, that slow-down effect is called Focus. It was created to make sure that the player can always do multiple things at once. Aiden Pearce is a street-smart guy and we want to sell that idea that he's a smart man and not just a badass with a gun. To do that we needed to give some mechanics to the player so that they feel that way. When you're thrust into situations like where you're driving at 200 miles per hour and you have six guys on your ass, we ended up creating this thing where you can concentrate, like an adrenalin rush, so you press a button [to] Focus on [the action] and now suddenly you're all in very slow motion so you can point at the traffic light, cause a bridge to open, do a take-down with the blockers on a couple of cars, and then come back to normal. So those kinds of elements, for the player to be able to tackle those in the split of a second moment, we needed that tool to be there. It's still a resource-based tool, so the player cannot use it all of the time.

NAG: How does the resource regenerate?
JM: It'll regenerate over time, but there are ways to accelerate its regeneration.

NAG: Can you talk more about the skill unlocks? Is there an RPG-like system in place?
JM: Yes, there's a definite RPG layer to it and the entire skill tree is based on that. You can use your phone to access everything, but you need to have the different hacking tools for that. That's when you'll use points to choose which skills you want to have first, which ones you want to upgrade – so there's an entire tech tree to progress through.

NAG: Could you explain a little more about the online aspects of the game? Is the system going to work through Uplay accounts?
JM: We're using a matchmaking system. It's presented to you like any other side activity; that way you won't get spam or any weird pop-ups. It's player-centric, which means that if you were on a console and you were in deep shit and you wanted to ask for help, you are the one asking for it and then people could accept that to help you out. And when the help is done, it fades away afterwards. **NAG**
- Mikit0707

RELEASE DATE / Q2 2014
PLATFORM / PC / XBO / 360
GENRE / FPS
DEVELOPER / Respawn Entertainment
WEBSITE / www.titanfall.com
PUBLISHER / Electronic Arts

Titanfall

Get ready for campaign multiplayer

It's apt to start this *Titanfall* information dump with the backstory, largely because the game is a multiplayer only experience. Gasp. The action rolls out in the far-flung future on distant planets that have been colonised by humans. The enemy in this imagined universe is the Interstellar Manufacturing Corporation (IMC), bent on acquiring natural resources from these colonies no matter the cost. Of course no motley crew of colonist scum worth their salt are going to take this capitalist plundering lying down with their legs in the air. This means all-out war and fighting and death; also known as fun, excitement and entertainment (for gamers).

It's the Wild West frontier of space and all you've got to take it to the bad guys is a 24 foot tall metal hulk. The message: bring it on corporate lackeys and remember to lube up real good because us colonists stopped giving a toot about foreplay a long time ago.

"Smackt-talk aside, *Titanfall* is something new dressed as something old."

Smack-talk aside, *Titanfall* is something new dressed as something old. It's a shooter (what else were you expecting) that features giant mech exoskeletons that can be called down (from ships above), climbed into and controlled by the payer. Polished shiny military styled ones for the corporation and cobbled together scavenged ones for the colonists. The act of summoning your Titan is where the game gets its name – a Titan that falls from the sky. But that's only half the story. Besides fast and fluid mech action players (or rather Titan pilots) are equally competent outside their Titans, being able to double jump and get around the maps quick and fast. The development team are working on carefully balancing the game so that it doesn't devolve into a queuing system for the tanks. From a game objective point of view, being out of your Titan is as important as being inside it, to help with the balancing there is a delay between ordering your Titan and receiving it.

The act of entering your Titan is something special and depending on your approach a number of different entry procedures and animations are available. For example, if a player just so happens to slide between the legs of his Titan the automatic pilot AI will reach down, grab the player and place him in the cockpit – all in one fluid motion. In some cases players will be able to use the Titan's finger as a handrail while leaping from a building into the cockpit. It's important to mention here that these Titans are not lumbering hulks but rather fast and agile extensions of the pilot. The idea that piloting a Titan is almost indistinguishable from playing on foot is a key part of the play dynamic. Even the controls carry through; Titans have dodge jets for strafing for example. You only need to watch the stunning gameplay video to see this dynamic in action. But that's not all; when you exit your Titan you can tell it to follow and protect you or even guard a specific area. **NAG**

- RedTide





CAMPAIGN MULTIPLAYER

To clarify, it's a multiplayer only game so the story is conveyed in small pre-match chunks, short introduction movies, the actual levels (posters and visual cues) and of course stuff said by the odd NPC. It's not clear how this will translate after your twentieth straight game over the weekend but we've been told there is a plan. It's seven on seven human players in the different game modes but each map will also be filled with AI grunts that salute and make you feel like the all-important Titan pilot that you are. On the enemy side these grunts are primarily sponges for your bullets and decoration for the walls. We're still a good many months away on *Titanfall* and everyone is waiting and watching to see if the *Call of Duty* magic has made the leap to Respawn.







Some quick notes. The Xbox 360 development of *Titanfall* is being handled by a different (hand-picked) team, a PS4 version has not been ruled out, the game uses a heavily modified version of the Source engine, there are about 80 people developing the game and lastly, "traditional" eSports modes will be supported.

RELEASE DATE / 2014
PLATFORM / 360 / PC / PS3 / PS4 / XBO
GENRE / Survival horror
DEVELOPER / Tango Gameworks
WEBSITE / theevilwithin.com
PUBLISHER / Bethesda Softworks

The Evil Within

Can survival horror survive survival horror?

Playing a character that disintegrates into emotional wreckage at the first sign of the Bogeyman isn't appealing, even for fans of the survival horror genre. Shinji Mikami, father and creator of the *Resident Evil* series, doesn't much care for such characters either. "When I watch a horror movie and see a character that just runs away, and loses their minds, I think 'just die already!'"

Survival horror as a genre has it rough. Casual gamers are drawn to games designed to make them feel as empowered as possible, letting them dominate. By contrast, survival horror is based on putting players in a position of weakness that can't be overcome by simply finding a bigger gun, in order to create a sense of vulnerability.

Sebastian Castellanos, the lead character in *The Evil Within,* has a strong personality that can deal with the strange things going on around him. Mikami didn't want a character that suffers psychological damage easily, but also didn't want them to be super human. So while Sebastian keeps a cool head in the face of fear, he's no Leon Kennedy. He's easily killed, and knows it. Sebastian and two other detectives are called in to investigate a mass murder at an insane asylum. They arrive after the police, who should be there but are nowhere to be seen. After a brief look around, Sebastian is knocked unconscious after witnessing something strange. Waking up bound and in a different location, he bears witness to a graphic human disembowelling. The team at Tango have gone out of their way to model human innards and gore, something the id Tech 5 engine seems oddly suited at rendering. Sebastian must now escape, survive and find out what exactly is going on. In this quest he can use limited resources to craft traps. A mine with some nails acts as a good doorstop, halting the progress of zombie-looking humanoids. When danger is near, Sebastian's animations change. He becomes more alert, and goes down into a crouching pose, ready to dodge faster should the need arise. He might experience strange "distortions" in an area, with enemies, doors, walls and objects shifting into nightmarish shapes (perhaps a call back to the original *Resident Evil 4* prototype dubbed "the Fog Version" which had *Eternal Darkness*-style insanity effects).

> **"So while Sebastian keeps a cool head in the face of fear, he's no Leon Kennedy. He's easily killed, and knows it."**

There's barely a HUD and no music, and word labels for objects fade in when you get close then fade out again. You can throw objects to distract monsters and will have access to guns, knives and axes but no heavy weapons like machine guns. There's even a giant man with his head locked in a safe, who lumbers around carrying a huge saw, in an obvious nod to *Silent Hill.*

"I want players to be more scared than they've ever been," laughs Mikami. "But not so scared that they'll stop playing!" **NAG**

- Miktar











There have been 23 *Resident Evil* games since its debut on PlayStation in 1996.

RELEASE DATE / 2014
PLATFORM / 360 / PC / PS3 / PS4 / XBO
GENRE / Action adventure
DEVELOPER / Avalanche Studios
WEBSITE / www.madmaxgame.com
PUBLISHER / Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment

Mad Max

We don't need another studded codpiece

Mad Max is one of the reasons why E3 is a great event. Click... boom, out of nowhere we now have a *Mad Max* game pencilled in for 2014. Where did this come from and why now, what is it about, who is doing it – these were all questions that needed to be answered. We cornered a frightened developer and made him squeak.

Mad Max is a single-player only open world hardcore vehicular combat third person action game. Or a "JLTM" (just like the movie) game for short. The game world is a massive 32km² which is incidentally the same size as one of the developer's previous titles, *Just Cause 2*. It's set in the dusty Outback and although it might look like a desert and haze like a desert it's much more than that, and once you get playing you'll discover it's far from barren – event density is high and the action is fierce.

> "In this adventure you are assisted by Chumbucket; described as an idiot savant mechanic."

You play antihero Max Rockatansky (Mad Max to his mates) some time and place in the existing *Mad Max* universe. Best guess is somewhere before the second movie because your dog, Dog, is still alive and well. But none of this is important because the game features an all new original story that, besides Max, isn't connected to any of the film's original characters. Sorry to disappoint those weirdoes hoping for a little more Tina Turner chainmail action. You will of course get to experience everything that made the movies great from feathery shoulder pads and excessive brutality to heaps of vehicular mayhem and liberal shotgun loving. The overall point of playing is to scavenge the wasteland, take on missions and survive the bad guys while you collect parts and build the ultimate survival vehicle, the Magnum Opus. Fans of the movie will be sad that Max's Interceptor has been is taken from him, boo – but yay, you can build your very own badass ride as the game progresses. In this adventure you are assisted by Chumbucket; described as an idiot savant mechanic. He is focused on maintaining and creating the ultimate vehicle while you go around killing and scrounging for new oil filters. The idea is that your final build of the Magnum Opus will be representative of your journey through the game and your unique playing style. At E3 we saw a short sliver of alpha game action which included snappy physics-based vehicle action, dusty roads and gritty environments. The realistic car physics and ragdoll bad guy combination will make for interesting videos as players around the world discover new and devastating ways to take bandits apart. In the short demo Max got out of his car and did a little sniping which was followed up by really violent close quarters combat featuring the shotgun. The whole thing felt a little like id Software's *Rage* in terms of look and feel. NAG

- RedTide

REAL WORLD

George Miller (director of the movies) has been consulted on art direction, feel and setting for the game. He is also currently working on a fourth *Mad Max* movie, *Mad Max: Fury Road*. The movie is due out in 2014 and stars Tom Hardy as Max Rockatansky, the lovely Charlize Theron and Nicholas Hoult. Before we go, there was a bit of an initial moan when fans of the franchise found out that the game wasn't going to feature any Australian accents. Thankfully, after an Internet tantrum, the developers changed their stance and have now confirmed that the game will feature an Australian accented Mad Max. Good on ya, mate! Let's hope it doesn't get banned in Australia when it releases in 2014.







We've already had a *Mad Max* video game – release in 1990 for the NES by Mindscape. Loosely based on the second movie, players had to collect gasoline, shoot bad guys or die trying.



Command & Conquer

Welcome back, commander; let's hope your ADSL doesn't bomb



RELEASE DATE / Q3/Q4 2013
PLATFORM / PC
GENRE / Real-time strategy
DEVELOPER / Victory Games
WEBSITE / www.commandandconquer.com
PUBLISHER / Electronic Arts

This was supposed to be a fully-fledged sequel to 2003's *Command & Conquer: Generals*. When it shifted to a free-to-play online game, I was no longer excited. After having played the game at E3 and been given the chance to chat to development director Tim Warden, I'm upbeat about what developer Victory Games and EA have up their sleeves.

There are three factions in the game: the European Union, the Asia Pacific Alliance and the familiar terrorist group from the first *Generals* game, the Global Liberation Army. "The first thing you'll notice," Warden told us, "is in the old game [the GLA] were very Middle Eastern looking and that offended some people. The Global Liberation Army now is completely international so hopefully we can offend everybody equally."

I opted to play as the GLA Toxin General. Consequently I had access to abilities that: called in explosive gas trucks via a deployable GLA tunnel network; placed instant explosives on garrisoned buildings; unleashed a GPS scrambler (confusing enemy troops causing them to stop attacking your units and drive around in circles instead); and dropped nuclear weaponry. New abilities opened up as my tech tree evolved. The tech tree development is closer to the one found in *Red Alert 3* than in the previous *Generals*. Structures have multiple upgrade options, with each option moving your tech tree in a different direction. The result is a more varied tech level advancement.

> "...sort of like *Gears of War* Horde mode meets RTS"

I played a co-op mission and throughout it my partner and I were attacked by waves of increasingly higher teched enemies that were preceded by count-down timers; sort of like *Gears of War* Horde mode meets RTS. Additionally we were given new objectives to eliminate garrisoned buildings in a nearby town. Co-op missions will have shifting objectives in order to keep things fresh. It works rather well, but if you'd rather play a more traditional AI skirmish by yourself, that option makes a return.

Each faction has five generals to choose, and each general has his or her unique general abilities and special unit modifications. There's talk of new generals and units being added to the game after launch.







Resource collectors are now combat-ready, and they're surprisingly powerful. I managed to ward off two squads of rocket troops and a tank with around ten GLA workers. Combat-ready collectors were added in order to ward off early rush tactics.



The game definitely *feels* like a *Generals* title. You're still collecting resources, building a base and expanding your tech tree to build more powerful units. However, there's a greater sense of speed. I felt rushed by count-down timers and fleeting objectives. They've obviously done this because the game is now an online experience, so fast matches are the order of the day. RTS players who prefer to turtle during the opening phases of a game will likely feel a bit harassed by this forced sense of urgency; I know I did.

Command & Conquer is still coming at some point this year. Warden was unable to provide a more concrete release date, but he did confirm that the title is still free-to-play. There's still no mention of monetisation. What Warden was adamant about was that the game is more like a "live service" than an ordinary PC game. With that in mind, Victory Games will be harvesting stats and player usages after every game so that they can make tweaks and adjustments to the overall experience. **NAG**

- Mikit0707

RELEASE DATE / Early 2014
PLATFORM / 360 / PC / PS3
GENRE / Action-adventure / Puzzle
DEVELOPER / Airtight Games
WEBSITE / murdered.com
PUBLISHER / Square Enix

Murdered: Soul Suspect

The hardest murder to solve is your own

The premise for *Murdered*, according to creative director Yosuke Shiokawa, is "what if in *Die Hard* John McClane died but continued to fight as a ghost?" To that end, *Murdered* begins with gritty bent-cigarette anti-hero detective Ronan O'Connor being thrown out a window by a mysterious assailant. Dead from the fall, he stands next to his body, quite unhappy at being a ghost. The assailant comes down and shoots the detective in the chest. Each shot mirrored on his now incorporeal form, a pattern of orange beams breaking out where his real body is shot.

To escape the limbo world of "Dusk" Ronan must uncover the truth behind his killer and set in motion events to bring him to justice. As a ghost, Ronan can't interact with the physical world, but a few supernatural powers let him impact things in meaningful ways. As you explore Salem's wooden houses, gothic churches and a mental asylum, Ronan's deadness comes in handy. He can walk through walls, so exploration is surprisingly straightforward. He can also possess humans so as to see through their eyes, or hear through their ears. Early in the game, after the police show up to examine his body, a nearby forensics officer is reading something important but you can't make out what it is. By possessing the cop, you get to see the list he's looking at, which provides you with "clues". By possessing another cop, you can overhear their whispered conversation you wouldn't hear otherwise. Finding clues unlocks triggers in the environment, or waypoints marking important things you need to examine.

> "In a way, *Murdered* is a new take on the classic adventure game genre, just a bit more ghost-hands-on."

Side-quests might present themselves, like helping a dead woman uncover where her body is hidden so she can pass to the next world. To do so, you possess her murderers and influence their thoughts so you can get clues. You might uncover "memory residues" that let you replay scenes from a person's memory, which in turn provide more clues. In a way, *Murdered* is a new take on the classic adventure game genre, just a bit more ghost-hands-on. Ronan can perform some basic poltergeist-like actions, such as turning on a stove to make people move or to distract them. When you have enough clues, you piece them together by placing them in order in the "deduction" interface. If you're right, the investigation moves forward.

There's danger in the Dusk however. Deranged spirits, people who didn't pass on, kill you with a touch. By sneaking up behind them, you can jump into them to rip apart their essence. Being able to walk through walls makes flanking the spirits easy, but timing is everything. It's still early for *Murdered: Soul Suspects*, it's clear the visuals and overall quality need work, but conceptually there's something interesting here. NAG

- Miktar

The core team at Airtight Games was responsible for *Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge*.









Airtight Games doesn't have much to their name, the only notable games being *Dark Void* and *Quantum Conundrum*.



Valid from Thursday 25 July to Saturday 31 August 2013.

makro

XBOX 360

Suit up with this 320GB Halo 4 bundle



plus

plus



plus



plus



320GB Halo 4 Bundle
Includes: 4GB console, Hard Drive: 320GB, wireless controller, play and charge kit, Halo 4 game, Lego Star Wars 3 download token (requires internet)
Specifications: HDMI, Wi-fi connectivity, full HD graphics and media centre (256162)

WAS 3599
2999
per bundle (256162)

Take aim with these great games



BUY 3 FOR
499
or
BUY 1 FOR
199 each

Assorted Titles
(239777; 126905; 191483; 150283; 109284; 149802; 194835; 171630)

All prices in South African Rand

Get your own Makro card today! Simply apply on-line @ www.makro.co.za, call 0860 300 999, sms "insert" to 31144 or visit your nearest Makro store.

Everything you could ever want. And more. For less.

Unless we state a specific limitation, Makro will attempt to have sufficient advertised stock available to meet consumers' anticipated demands. If we still run out of stock, we will attempt to obtain the stock or we will offer you a reasonable alternative. Makro takes utmost care to ensure that all advertisements are correct. If a mistake occurs or incomplete information is printed, we will display a notice in-store with all the correct details. Prices exclude accessories used for display purposes and include14% VAT. Makro Account Disclaimer *Includes Interest @ 21% p.a, excludes service fees & compulsory insurance. ** Includes Interest @ 21% p.a, service fees & compulsory insurance. All prices are indicative and actual repayments may vary based on account activity. NCRCP 38/FSP 38911.

RELEASE DATE / 11 September 2013
PLATFORM / PS3
GENRE / Platformer
DEVELOPER / SCE Japan Studio
WEBSITE / www.worldwidestudios.net/japan
PUBLISHER / Sony Computer Entertainment

HANDS ON TESTED

Puppeteer

A simple platformer, but that's not why you'll want this

The last time *NAG* had a look at this game was at its reveal during Gamescom 2012. That was an hour-long presentation with game director Gavin Moore. At this year's E3, however, we were able to get our grubby mitts on the game to play through the opening stages.

It appears as if *Puppeteer* is a very basic platforming game. You run, jump, collect yellow moon shards and try to find alternate heads for protagonist Kutaro to wear until he finds his own head (which was chewed off by the evil Moon Bear King). Each head acts as a key in certain parts of levels, but finding those areas is a little tricky. If you manage to, you'll be rewarded with moon shards provided you complete a hidden mini game.

Despite the fairly basic gameplay mechanics, *Puppeteer* is a captivating experience; that's thanks to the level design and puppet show aesthetic. Because the whole game plays out on a stage, you're only ever traversing a single screen at a time, but watching the stage props collapse and shift around you to create the next portion of the level is mesmerizing. In a way, *Puppeteer* is a lot like *LittleBigPlanet*: basic gameplay mechanics, but you'll want to keep playing to see the next unique piece of art direction and clever level design. **NAG**

- Mikit0707





Puppeteer is rather like a Pixar film: on the surface it looks like it's been made for kids, but there's a ton of pun-filled humour and darker themes that are clearly aimed at adults; or at least adults who are still kids at heart, which is about 99% of us here at *NAG*.

RELEASE DATE / Q2 2014
PLATFORM / PC / PS4 / XBO
GENRE / Massively multiplayer online role-playing game
DEVELOPER / ZeniMax Online Studios
WEBSITE / www.elderscrollsonline.com
PUBLISHER / Bethesda Softworks

HANDS ON TESTED

The Elder Scrolls Online

Just another MMO?

I may not be the best *NAG* writer to be previewing an MMORPG, but when it comes to *Elder Scrolls* games, I know my stuff. Publisher Bethesda Softworks and newly formed ZeniMax Online Studios have made a big deal about how *The Elder Scrolls Online* "feels like" an Elder Scrolls game. Consequently, when given the chance to play it at E3, I dived in head first despite my genre reservations.

I had an hour with the game; not enough to truly experience an MMO, but I wanted to answer one question: does this "feel like" an *Elder Scrolls*? The answer is no. The only time I remotely felt like I was playing an *Elder Scrolls* was when I fought a Mud Crab, and even then I only recognised it because it was labelled "Mud Crab". Aside from text based references, this didn't feel like an *Elder Scrolls* at all. This feels like any other MMO I've played. If you want comparison to a single-player game, then it felt like *Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning*.

MMORPG fans will find things to be excited about. *The Elder Scrolls Online* is launching at a bad time however, when MMORPG fatigue is a very real thing. Its one saving grace might be that it's heading to next-gen consoles where MMORPGs are rare, but I'm concerned Bethesda Softworks might have an uphill battle with this one. **NAG**

- Mikit0707





Our hands-on had four predefined classes available, ranging from mages to Dragon Swords. The name alone made us pick the Dragon Sword class, which combines close combat weaponry with a lot of fire enchantments and fire-based attack spells. We played as a Breton; all of the familiar *Elder Scrolls* races are there for you to play as.

NAG LAN @ rAge expo

4–6 October 2013

Tickets will cost **R400 per person** for the whole weekend (includes free access to the expo)

Tickets go on sale at **09h00** on **Saturday 31 August 2013**, and are available to purchase online only at **www.itickets.co.za**

www.rageexpo.co.za

COREX hp intel NAG


MESSI
10
unicef



SOCCER SUPERSTAR

RELEASE DATE / September 2013
PLATFORMS / 360 / 3DS / PC / PS2 / PS3 / PS4 / PSP / PSV / Wii / XBO
GENRE / Sports simulation
DEVELOPER / EA Sports
WEBSITE / www.easports.com/fifa
PUBLISHER / Electronic Arts

It's almost like clockwork... you can set your calendar by the yearly releases of *FIFA* games from EA Sports. And it really is no surprise, not when you consider that this particular series of games has managed to captivate gamers and football fans the world over for several decades.

But this year will be a little different for fans. *FIFA 14* won't just be the next iteration of their best-loved sports game – it is a title inspired by the added opportunities granted developers by the awesome power of next-generation consoles. More CPU cycles, more memory... more everything, really... means that a large number of new ideas are being brought into the series for this year.

With elements like Pro Instincts, which gives the player that split second of "prediction" that will change the way they react to situations, *FIFA 14* looks exciting enough. But what about adding in Elite Technique, which effectively uses player input and a whole bunch of in-game factors to select the perfect animation for any given moment, be it a ground-pass or a desperate header attempt after a cross? Or, even more importantly, Precision Movement, which takes every step a player makes on the pitch into account, changing the way they react to momentum and speed drastically? Not to mention, of course, drastic increases in graphics, physics and a host of other elements...

It all adds up to making *FIFA 14* look like the most exciting football game we've seen in years, because it will be more realistic than ever.

It's not just all about the next generation, though; *FIFA 14* will be released across all platforms, meaning that Xbox 360 and PS3 fans will still have a new game – complete with some game changing elements – to try out when it releases later this year.

But don't take our word for it... we caught up with Aaron McHardy to discuss what *FIFA 14* will bring to the table, for new consoles as well as the current generation.

Who is Aaron McHardy? Well, he played football up front for Jamaica, earning Under-21 and Olympic caps. Of Jamaican descent, he grew up in Vancouver and attended Oregon State University on a football scholarship. He is also the lead gameplay producer for the *FIFA* franchise, making him the only member of the FIFA team to have played international football. He is also an ardent Arsenal supporter, but we won't hold that against him...

Aaron McHardy,
Senior gameplay producer, FIFA 14

NAG: What kind of impact are the upcoming 8th generation consoles having on the development of *FIFA 14*?
AM: Obviously it's an exciting time for us with new consoles coming out. Any time you get new hardware with more power or more memory it gives us new ideas and gets the brain turning about the game. If you look at some of the big features we put in the game this year, we wouldn't be able to do those with the current generation of consoles. For example, the animations we're adding; we just couldn't have that level of variety on the current generation of consoles. The new Pro Instincts feature uses the higher processing power to make more educated decisions, so that the players have this sense of athletic awareness. These kinds of things just aren't possible on the old generation consoles due to the limitations that they have.

NAG: Would it be correct in saying that, because *FIFA 14* is being released across the board, we're going to see a big difference in experience between the current generation consoles and the next generation?
AM: Yeah, I think we are going to see a significantly different experience. On the gameplay side we're utilising the new power and capacity of the new consoles. But right across the game there are sweeping changes: the way it looks, the way it feels, the enchantment of the sport and things we are able to do all around the stadium, and not just in gameplay, are really a leap forward. When you bring the sum of all those parts together, like better crowds and better effects in rendering, modelling the outside of the stadium... they all add to a significantly better experience.

NAG: Would you therefore say that this is the biggest step forward for the franchise in almost a decade?
AM: It's hard to quantify that but I think we're getting there, for sure. This is the most advanced FIFA game that I have ever been a part of and, if you look at the product now, it definitely is a huge leap forward compared to what we've been making thus far. A lot of that is because of the power of the new consoles.

NAG: With the new technology and new engine ideas, like EA Sports Ignite, how much of the game is being rebuilt?
AM: That's an interesting question – there are large portions of the game that are just being rebuilt and restructured, but the tricky thing for us is trying to find where

> "... with Pro Instincts, that player who is trying to defend has a full understanding of the motion of his opponent's arm and where it's going to be in the future."



that balance is. We had a lot of good stuff in *FIFA* already that we don't just want to throw away. So finding areas where we have solid code and solid areas that we can bring across, like a lot of elements of our gameplay and foundations of our systems need to be preserved. Things like our kicking error system, our first touch control, we've tried to preserve. But obviously with the new generation and more power and the ability to do really cool things, we need to think about how we can restructure things and change the way the game plays. There are a couple of big features that we're putting in this year that are completely new and only really possible on the new consoles.

Pro Instincts I mentioned already: this is the ability for us to use technology we had in our player impact engine in a way that we never could before. Being able to understand how a player is going to react to a situation in the future, albeit just a fraction of a second gives us immense power in what we can do in interaction and what the players have in terms of understanding what's about to happen. Historically anticipation has been a very difficult thing to achieve in *FIFA*; now the players can see what's coming at them and maybe process an opponent running right at them, see if they're going to collide with them and get out of the way with some level of precision... we weren't able to do that on the old generation consoles. We had to build these systems from scratch in this year's game, to take advantage of that power. So with Pro Instincts we have things like players jumping out of the way of tackles, stepping over legs, actually grabbing and holding onto another player's arm and hooking them when they are jostling. These weren't possible with the way our systems used to work, or rather they weren't possible to do in the way that we're doing them now. We could have had cheaper solutions, but they wouldn't have felt quite right. But the new technologies of the consoles and things like ignite are opening new doors for us to do really cool things like behaviours into the future.







NAG: What kind of impact do you think Pro Instincts will have on the player's experience?
AM: It's all about awareness for players – not so much on a team level. That's why we called it Instincts, because that is the crux of what we're trying to achieve. In the previous iterations, everything was pretty reactive; you collide with somebody, we figure out how that collision should look and then you fall over. There were some elements of trying to prepare and trying to avoid sticky situations, but a lot of that was founded off of, for want of a better term, guesses – heuristics – in the game world. With the next generation and the Pro Instincts feature, players instinctively know what's about to happen to them in the next second or half-a-second. It's not entirely as if they can see the future, but they have a good understanding if they're about to collide with somebody. Or if they're trying to defend against someone, they understand what they can or cannot do at a level that we weren't able to achieve on the other consoles. So imagine trying to dispossess an opponent while you're running down the side-line... we had the push-pull feature in *FIFA 12* and *13*, but basically it was just grabbing in the general area and if you connected, we allowed you to have a successful pull. But now, with the Pro Instincts, that player who is trying to defend has a full understanding of the motion of his opponent's arm and where it's going to be in the future. So he can actually reach out and grab that limb and engage in a much more meaningful battle for the ball. And that's just one example of how we're using the Pro Instincts technology. We're using this technology throughout the game to improve our protect-the-ball feature, so that players really have an understanding of the interaction with another player that is immediately in front of them. Another example – when players fall, they understand how their body is going to collide with the ground, and act accordingly. They have an understanding of what is about to happen in the next second or so of their reality. We feel that it's an ability that all professional athletes of that level have and we've brought that into the game for *FIFA 14*.

NAG: Will Pro Instincts only affect the player that's on the ball, or will we see other instances of it in the background, for the rest of the team?
AM: That's precisely the kind of thing that Pro Instincts is meant to fix. So off the ball they won't be running into each other. They'll step around each other or jump out of the way, or even play an animation to turn their shoulders to get out of the way. And that's the crux of the feature – to get players out of sticky situations. Think of a player like Messi – absolutely phenomenal at dribbling the ball at speed towards a player, touching the ball past them and finding a way to get through. You look at videos of Messi and you sometimes wonder "how the heck did he get out of that scenario?" That's what Pro Instinct is about; finding ways to avoid tackles or jump



over a leg or avoid messy scenarios, like a professional athlete.

NAG: Is the Pro Instinct system going to take a broad approach, or will there be recognisable reactions for well-known players?
AM: For this year, our main purpose is to give everyone on the pitch that innate ability of what is happening in the immediate future. So we're not going to be doing a whole lot of work on personalities, in so far as Messi uses Pro Instinct differently to another player. That's specifically Pro Instinct; we always work on personality in our game and we always have different elements to use to highlight the stars. But Pro Instincts isn't one of them for this year.

NAG: Something we may see in the future?
AM: Absolutely. We're always looking for ways to bring the stars out, bring the teams out so that they play differently. Here's a little insider scoop on the feature that we're not really talking about much, but with our custom tactics this year – to give an example of how we do this every year – we're adding a new slider for the amount of time that a player chooses to be on the ball. So at one end of the spectrum your team will dribble and be looking to taking players on exclusively. But if you move the slider all the way to the other end you get teams like Barcelona, who play one touch football. It allows us to get the individualism into the game at a team level. On top of that we've added a trait this year in the form of a technical dribbler. That's for those guys that aren't necessarily fantastic on the ball, but are known to take people on while they have the ball, and hold on to the ball a little longer. We work on personality across the game each year, and we have lots of features this year geared towards making the stars stand out, so that you can really feel how they play differently. Pro Instinct isn't the vehicle for that this year, but we're always looking for new ways to get personality into that.

NAG: Can you give us a bit of an insight into Elite Technique?
AM: Elite Technique is a feature that really is about the next generation of consoles. The new consoles are very exciting with the cycles and processing power they give us, but also the memory. We have reached our limit on memory for the old consoles, and we have to find ways to optimise and really do special things to cram more animations into the game. Elite Technique is really the child of understanding that we no longer have that limitation. With the memory in the new consoles we are free to add so many more animations to the game. And that's what Elite Technique is.

What we're trying to do is look at all the techniques that footballers use on the pitch and take a cross section of the game, and add so much more variety. Even simple things like ground passes – there is five times more variety in the passes that you can use in *FIFA 14* for the new consoles, compared to the version we're putting out for Xbox 360 and PS3. When you think of headers, we have a whole new feature designed around new header types when you shoot at goal. When



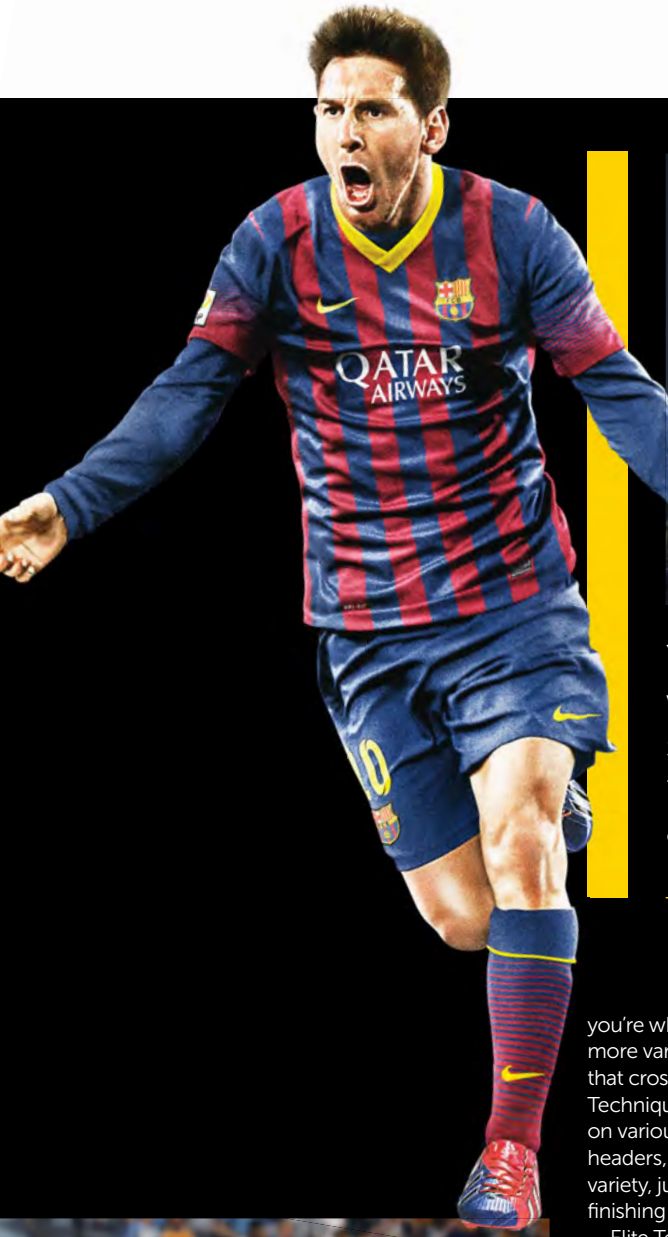














You look at videos of Messi and you sometimes wonder "how the heck did he get out of that scenario?" That's what Pro Instinct is about; finding ways to avoid tackles or jump over a leg or avoid messy scenarios, like a professional athlete.



you're whipping across, we have so much more variety in the way that you can finish that cross with a header, as a result of Elite Technique and the memory. Depending on various factors you might get glancing headers, falling headers... a whole lot more variety, just in the one simple scenario of finishing a shot with a header.

Elite Technique is about brining those actions in the real world into the game, because now the reins are off, and the opportunity for us to add a whole lot of variety to the game is immense.

NAG: Will there be individual personalities built into Elite Technique?

AM: That's not been the focus of Elite Technique, but you will see personality in Elite Technique. A number of things we have put in are new behaviours, not just animations. The player you have will determine how well you are able to execute these new manoeuvres.

NAG: Can you elaborate a little on Precision Movement?

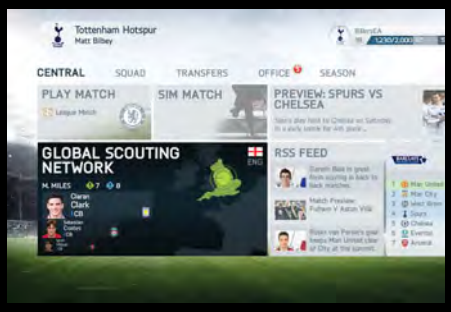
AM: Precision Movement is probably the biggest change we're making to the game this year. It's a foundation for the game. It is the biggest impact that people will feel when they pick up the controller this year. It's us ripping out the foundation of our game and replacing it with a new technology called step-based locomotion. That's a huge feature, and was founded in trying to make the player feel more grounded, more explosive, and more integrated into the environment. Less foot sliding, pops and spins and things that take you out of the game.

You see and understand every single foot plant, and understand the player's movement and momentum. That technology shift is enough that, as soon as you pick up the game, it's going to feel completely different. But Precision Movement is more than that; it's about looking at the rate at which players can accelerate and decelerate, the movement that they carry in the game, and trying to get it to be a lot more physically realistic. When you pick up the controller you're going to feel that the pace of the game is completely different from what it was in *FIFA 13*. You're going to feel a controlled build-up. You won't feel the urge to sprint that much. Precision Movement is about trying to get more realism into the game so that, if you do slam the sprint button down, there are repercussions. If you want to change direction it will take longer, because the momentum will carry through.

When you talk about foundation features that apply to all the players, that's exactly what Precision Movement is. It's the base level of running in *FIFA*. Everything has changed, and that's really exciting for us.

NAG: So this is going to be a *FIFA* like we've never seen before?

AM: Absolutely. I think the first time you pick up the controller it might even be a bit jarring, because you're so used to the game playing out in a specific way... it's going to take you half a game to come to terms with and get used to the control in *FIFA 14*. But when you do, and you get through a couple of games and start to feel how it plays differently, I think the rewards are plentiful. I think everyone will



"... the first time you pick up the controller it might even be a bit jarring, because you're so used to the game playing out in a specific way... it's going to take you half a game to come to terms..."







appreciate the new balance and the new pace that we're bringing this year.

NAG: Aside from new opportunities created by the new hardware, what are the challenges in bringing out a game like *FIFA*, which has a yearly iteration? Where do you draw your inspiration from, year upon year?

AM: The main point of inspiration comes from watching the game of football and seeing what we can bring from the world of football into our game. There are also two other major sources of inspiration: One is the minds of our team, who are a group of football-passionate people from all around the world. Not just the producers and designers, but all of the engineers and animators... everybody really loves this game and studies this game, and has ideas about how to make it better year after year.

And of course there's listening to our fans and understanding what they want, what they're excited about seeing in *FIFA*.

When you put those things together, the big challenge is figuring out how we can do it in such a short amount of time. If you look at this year's game on Xbox 360 and PS3, it's phenomenal what we've achieved. I've talked a whole bunch about all of our innovations for the next-generation titles, but when you think about putting features like protect-the-ball into the current generation games, as well as things like new ball trajectories, and much more... I think it's remarkable how much change we've got in those products as well in a one year cycle. The challenge is not in how to come up with these features; it's in how we can execute them at the highest standard in one year, and still keep those quality bars up. I think we've done a fantastic job this year and our fans are going to be happy when they play the game.

NAG: What is your personal favourite aspect of *FIFA 14*?

AM: Wow, that's a tough one. There's so much change going on in this year. It's hard to pick out one specific thing. I'm going to cheat and give you two. One that is shared across both generations of consoles is protect the ball. We've created a new feeling of battle for the ball possessor. It's something I have envisioned for around the last six years for the game. We've been slowly iterating on shielding as a feature, but we've taken a massive leap forward and exploded what the expectations for protecting the ball are in *FIFA 14*. I am excited about that feature coming together... giving the player the tools to buy time.

I'm also excited about all our new sprint-dribble animations and sprint-turn animations. We've taken another leap forward in the visual quality of those animations, due to the way that we're building them – especially on the next generation of consoles. The visual quality of what you get in the game feels a lot more realistic and a lot more athletic. Plus, having the preservation of momentum totally changes what the game feels like when you're dribbling around, and I'm quite excited about that too.

NAG: So it's not just an awesome game for the next generation, but a massive step for current generation consoles as well?

AM: Absolutely. NAG

- Shryke

"The question isn't who's going to let me; it's who's going to stop me."

- Ayn Rand



Don't let anything stop you from getting the service that you deserve.

Switch to Imaginet

Uncapped ADSL from R149/month

ADSL | HOSTING | DOMAINS | 3G

OUT OF THIS WORLD CUSTOMER SERVICE

imaginet

great prices, better service

www.imaginet.co.za

help desk

086 111 1101

info@imaginet.co.za

7 days a week

Reviews Intro

They could have materialised anywhere in the universe. But here they are on this planet ruining everyone's life. Meet the NAG reviewers.

Now that E3 has come and gone and all the cards are on the table, what announcement or announcements were you secretly hoping for but never materialised?



RedTide

That everyone suddenly decided that digital and online and DLC wasn't a good plan anymore and abandoned the whole silly idea forever. Leading the charge EA announced *Dungeon Keeper 3* would be out in December with a nice fat printed game manual.



Miktar

Was hoping Nintendo would reveal something, anything, related to either *Metroid* or *Star Fox*. Why you do this, Nintendo? Stop playing games with my heart.



Azimuth

A new *Unreal Tournament*. It's not even a secret anymore, because I cried into my pillow all night and my boyfriend had to go sleep on the couch.



MikitO707

Like any good member of the Church of the Children of the Atom, I was praying for a *Fallout 4* reveal. Instead, Bethesda gave me more *Elder Scrolls Online*. This was my face --> :|



GeometriX

A Kinect-less Xbox One and local release date. OH SNAP!



Barkskin

Any news on *Beyond Good & Evil 2* would've made me supremely happy. Disappointment tastes oddly similar to a very average burrito, if you also filled it with shards of broken glass.

Mini reviews

Kinda like regular reviews, only bite-sized and with less of those pesky words.

STATE OF DECAY

It's the zombie apocalypse. Hold on, let me finish – it's the zombie apocalypse, but it's not the same zombie apocalypse you've mowed through with a chainsaw about a zillion times already in the last five years or so; it's the zombie apocalypse where there aren't any chainsaws and if you get killed, you're dead and you can't reload the game so chainsaws would probably be a bad idea anyway. I mean, zombies and close quarters engagement is just reckless exhibitionism, and everybody back at the safehouse is relying on you to bring home some penicillin for Bobby Ray because he's been looking a bit pale. And a bit hungry. And a bit... bitey.

In *State of Decay*, the point isn't to rush around shooting zeds. In fact, shooting zeds makes a lot of noise so let's add that after "using chainsaws" on the list of Things Not To Do In A Zombie Apocalypse Because It's Pretty Stupid When You Think About It. Instead, you're supposed to be getting through this whole catastrophe by stockpiling resources, building and maintaining base defences, locating and rescuing additional survivors, and very occasionally (and very discreetly) "taking care of" people like Bobby Ray.







For everybody who loved *DayZ* up until the part when they realised it's not actually a proper game and there's nothing to do. **NAG**

85

"How is 'a host of new online features' considered a selling point for *Final Fantasy VII*? Come on Steam, get it together."

- Geoff



Ramjet
I was hoping that Nintendo would pull a rabbit out of a hat. A mushroom shaped rabbit, right out of Mario's red cap...



SAVAGE
That *Star Wars 1313* would be finished and released.



ShockG
Neo wasn't available for comment.

REVIEW **SCORES** GUIDELINE

1-39 This game is broken. Even if you get it to run, playing it is a painful experience that you wouldn't wish upon your worst enemy.

40-49 It barely functions, but there's little real game here. Maybe you'd play it for a bit if you got it for free, but it's not something you'd recommend to friends.

50-59 Acceptable, but nothing special. It's generic or uninspired, but playable, and might be worth spending some time hunting for achievements.

60-69 Now we're getting somewhere. This game has something interesting about it, and fans of the genre or series should enjoy it, but something significant holds back this game from greatness.

70-79 This game is very good. Anyone who enjoys this type of game will have a great time and could finish it without too much aggravation. It shows care and polish, but falls short in a number of areas.

80-89 An excellent game; one that you'd happily play through multiple times and recommend to friends. It adds interesting, if imperfect, advancements to the genre or series.

90-100 As close to perfection as possible. This game is highly innovative; it has incredible visuals; it plays like a dream and you can't get enough of it. You have to look for faults just to avoid giving it a perfect score.

home_coded

Exposure for South African indie developers...

Chris Bischoff

WWW.STASISGAME.COM







Anyone who's followed the local game development scene for the last few years has heard of *Stasis*: a dark sci-fi adventure game developed by one man: Chris Bischoff.

Stasis is one of those games that stuns anyone who sees it, and has, over its nearly three years of development, gained a loyal following both locally and abroad, with much of that interest stemming from the game's incredible visuals. Very often in the case of indie games, and especially those developed by just one person, visuals are characterised by what has become enduringly known as "developer graphics", but in this case, Chris is the co-owner of Burn – one of South Africa's top 3D architectural visualisation studios. The result is a game that looks like it's been put together by a team of experienced developers and artists rather than a lone soldier, and Chris has even taken on the task of composing all his own music. In Chris' words, "Having that level of intimate control over a project has been both a blessing and a curse!"

At present, *Stasis* is about 70% complete, and it's here where Chris has come to a cross-roads: Does he continue this labour of love on his own, in a vacuum, as he calls it, or does he reach out to the community for crowd funding and pull in a few professional musicians, voice-over artists and others to help him add that final level of polish? Whichever way he goes, he's aiming to get the game out of the door by early 2014, but the release date is still officially "when it's done".

If you have an established local game development company or project and would like to be featured in NAG*, send an email to* geoff@nag.co.za.

Please note: we accidentally wrote the incorrect website address for Fuzzy Logic in the June issue. The correct address is **www.fuzzy-logic.co.za**. Sorry guys!



PLATFORMS
PS3
REVIEWED ON
PS3
GENRE
Survival horror / action-adventure
AGE RESTRICTION
18
MULTIPLAYER
Local
None
Online
8 players
DEVELOPER
Naughty Dog
WEBSITE
www.thelastofus.com
PUBLISHER
Sony Computer Entertainment Europe
DISTRIBUTOR
Ster Kinekor Entertainment

Reviewed

The Last of Us

What a ride

Naughty Dog has a habit of making blockbuster hits. From their humble roots through to the success of *Crash Bandicoot* and ultimately *Uncharted*, everything that this studio touches seems to turn to gold. Knowing that, it's almost impossible to go into *The Last of Us* without a double-edged bias – not just an expectation that this will be a great game, but a sense of trepidation that says "there's not a chance that a studio renowned for their platformers can put together a decent survival horror." As it turns out, they can. And then some.

The Last of Us tells the story of a smuggler named Joel who, 20 years after a fungal infection turned most of humanity into an army of zombie-like lunatics, is charged to take a girl named Ellie across the wastelands of the United States. The setting is familiar and the task simple, but during the 15 or so hours you'll spend with the duo there are so many levels of depth in both storytelling and gameplay to experience that (almost) any idea that this is a "safe" game is made laughably untrue.

Let's take a look at that "almost" first. Joel and Ellie's epic journey is one fraught with danger. Around any corner there could be a pack of infected or a survivor looking to rob/murder/rape anything with a conscience. This journey warrants an excessive use of force to deal with those who'd get in their way, and Joel is completely at ease with taking another life – infected or otherwise. While *The Last of Us* feels like a survival horror at its heart, with perfectly-timed fluctuations in pace and danger, the game's many combat scenarios are a bit of a let-down compared to everything else on offer. This is mostly true in the case of medium difficulty (which will still push you to keep your head down and pick off enemies without resorting to the use of guns wherever possible), but much of the combat with humans takes place in wide, open areas filled with a mix of convenient waist- and head-high cover for you to hide behind, and the linear nature of some of the scenes practically forces you to play in a way that devolves into highly action-oriented gunplay. Thankfully, this is seldom true of the sequences in which you fight infected, which are usually incredibly tense encounters that force you to take a stealthy approach or suffer the consequences (in the form of death).

Now, this is only a criticism depending on what you want out of *The Last of Us*, and even though the game is practically all action towards the end, the panic and tension you'll feel for the large majority of the story more than makes up for this little transgression. And, to be fair, in the context of that story this

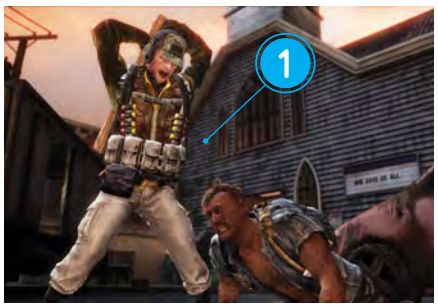


There's a multiplayer mode in *The Last of Us* that I didn't play. I'm officially boycotting multiplayer components in single-player games, but I took some time to read about it and it sounds fine, if a little limited. What a surprise.

One of the most powerful parts of player immersion in *The Last of Us* is its soundtrack. It's beautiful and moving, and a pleasure to listen to even outside of the game.



Melee combat is on offer but it's mostly a matter of getting your timing right on approach or succeeding in a quick-time event. It's always violent, and it feels incredibly satisfying when you bring down a tough opponent.





There's a flamethrower in the game. Don't ask us why; I used it once when I unlocked it but didn't touch it from there. It felt a bit like cheating.

change of pace makes complete sense, but saying any more would be spoiling it.

So onto the good stuff: the other 94% of *The Last of Us*. I'll start by saying that I simply can't remember the last time a game made me feel this connected to its characters. This is part of a very conscious effort by Naughty Dog to build a world and cast that makes sense; it's more about establishing a believable framework and fitting in gameplay elements than starting from the gameplay elements and working inwards, as is so often the case. What this means is you, as the player, can take a back seat: let yourself become the characters and make this journey as though your life depended on it, and you'll find that everything you do and every nook you explore makes sense. It's wonderful to be able to experience this level of immersion, which is only broken by the surprising chime of a PlayStation Trophy that pops up just once, as the closing credits roll.

This connectivity resonates throughout every gameplay mechanism, many of which are implemented with such care to keep the player immersed that it'll be some time before you notice you're reacting to them. Perhaps my favourite example of this is the system that lets the player know it's okay to put your weapons away, chill out and just experience the beauty of the world: when













"This journey warrants an excessive use of force to deal with those who'd get in their way, and Joel is completely at ease with taking another life - infected or otherwise"

Ellie starts talking or whistling (it scared the pants off me the first time it happened), you know you're safe. But when Joel's stance and animations shift to become tense and quick, or Ellie gasps in surprise – it's time to take cover and assess the situation. And every now and then, just to keep you on edge, you'll simply be dumped into a hostile situation without expecting it.

It's these changes in pace that make the experience such a breathtaking one (sometimes literally); you're constantly swinging between delicately designed modes, from tense to relaxed to jubilant to triumphant to panicked to terrified. This rollercoaster ride fits perfectly with the auxiliary activities you'll do between the combat and stealth sequences, such as scavenging for supplies, crafting survival items like shivs and first aid kits, climbing through ruined buildings, upgrading your weapons at workbenches, and even improving Joel's stats with supplements that you find hidden throughout the world. The mix of gameplay elements on offer here might surprise or even concern those of you looking for a pure horror survival experience, but the result of this fine blend is a unique flavour that is made strong *because* of this blend; aside from the sometimes weak gunplay there is very little that I'd want changed in this balance of gameplay. **NAG - GeometriX**

94

***The Last of Us* is an almost perfectly conducted assembly of finely-tuned components, all working together to form one of the most enriching, immersive gaming experiences I've had in ages. Play it.**

PLUS

Incredible character depth / Great blend of gameplay mechanisms / Tense and terrifying infected combat

MINUS

Somewhat unimaginative human combat



PLATFORMS
360 / PC / PS3
REVIEWED ON
PS3
GENRE
Action-adventure / Beat-'em-up
AGE RESTRICTION
16
MULTIPLAYER
Local
None
Online
None
DEVELOPER
Dontnod Entertainment
WEBSITE
www.remembermegame.com
PUBLISHER
Capcom
DISTRIBUTOR
Ster Kinekor Entertainment

Reviewed

Remember Me

Quite forgettable*

In the future that is Neo-Paris, 2084, the side of the bread line on which you live means the difference between a shiny utopian lifestyle and grime-ridden squalor. This faithful cyberpunk world plays host to *Remember Me*'s intriguing narrative, one in which memories are sold, bought and abused like drugs, or shared between partners as a true measure of love and trust.

Taken at face value, *Remember Me* plays out like a mix of *Uncharted* and *Prince of Persia* with a focus on combo-driven combat. Taking on the role of memory hunter Nilin, players will clamber about on the many ledges, catwalks and window sills of Neo-Paris from the darkest depths to the tallest skyscrapers in the attempt to get to the bottom of a conspiracy.

It's a solid enough premise wrapped up in a highly polished package, but spend a few minutes peering beyond the façade and you'll find that everything about *Remember Me* feels too safe, too measured, to convey the sense that the developers went into this with the intention to create a fun and meaningful experience. For your first few hours, there's plenty to suck you into this world: the exploration is unchallenging but certainly compelling, and the combat feels like it's really going somewhere with its customisable combos and variety of enemy types. But then it stalls; difficulty scaling resorts to the beat-'em-up staple of simply throwing more enemies at the player, and the combat system loses its lustre when you realise all you're doing is spamming a handful of tired combos to build Focus and unleash your next Fury attack.

The combat is simply too linear in *Remember Me*: despite the visuals telling you otherwise, there's no mechanical sense of weaving through your opponents, delivering well-timed counters, stun attacks, blocks or throws. You just bash, bash, bash and try to stay alive long enough, tapping the right button when a visual cue pops up, and continue until you can activate a Fury ability. Do that until everyone is dead. Then you move on, climb some things (with more visual cues), and repeat until it's all over. For a game that forces you to spend so much time in fisticuffs, *Remember Me* makes no attempt to ensure that combat is fulfilling; it's simply a chore that hinges on perfect timing rather than strategic thinking and smart use of combos. And once you've nailed that perfect timing and committed it to muscle memory, everything about it becomes quite meaningless. **NAG**
- GeometriX





DON'T MESS WITH MY HEAD

As a memory hunter, Nilin has the ability to remix certain peoples' memories at points in the game. This enters the player into a puzzle-like mini-game in which you need to make small changes to their memories, causing them to have a different understanding of the present. These sequences are weird and oddly unsettling, but ultimately they're linear affairs and don't do much to save this game from obscurity.



62

If games were rated on concept alone, *Remember Me* would excel. It's filled with great ideas and presented in a stylish manner, but peel away its shiny exterior and you'll find a hollow void. Undeniably solid but soulless and boring, *Remember Me* simply doesn't blip on the radar.

PLUS

Great setting and narrative concepts / Memory remixes are a fun diversion

MINUS

Combat gets stale and repetitive / Level traversal is unchallenging / Camera needs babysitting

*I'm not even sorry

PLATFORMS
PSV
REVIEWED ON
PSV
GENRE
Role-playing game
AGE RESTRICTION
16
MULTIPLAYER
Local
2 players
Online
2 players
DEVELOPER
Japan Studio
WEBSITE
www.playstation.com
PUBLISHER
SCEE
DISTRIBUTOR
Ster Kinekor Entertainment

Reviewed

Soul Sacrifice

A little big adventure

Soul Sacrifice adds a great dimension to the PS Vita in that it brings a deep, engaging RPG to the platform. While any new games for the flagging handheld are more than welcome, this one will certainly appeal to fans of long, grinding heavy games with tons of decision making and customisation.

The player assumes the role of a prisoner who uses a magical book (named Librom) to defeat his captors. By reliving historic events detailed in the book (which also contains the game's extensive lore) the player slowly gains magical power. For a Vita game – at least according to the preconceived ideas we have concerning handheld games – *Soul Sacrifice* is long, deep and complex. But it manages to keep the "bite-sized" nature that makes handheld games easy to play anywhere, at any time.

Things do get a little repetitive in the game, as enemies and environments get recycled, but the addictive nature of the game and decisions that the player needs to make in approaching combat keeps things fairly fresh.

In short, it's a surprising title, and one that is well worth trying out – particularly if your Vita has been gathering dust. Good graphics and a decent story round off the package, as well as a sensible control scheme that doesn't go crazy with all the options Vita has on offer. **NAG**

- Shryke

Reading a self-improvement book has never been so effective...







79

A new Vita game is always a good thing, and *Soul Sacrifice* manages to offer players a deep and engaging role-playing experience.

PLUS
Engaging dynamics / Deep game play

MINUS
Some repetition / No verticality



PLATFORMS
360 / PS3
REVIEWED ON
360
GENRE
Third-person action
AGE RESTRICTION
18
MULTIPLAYER
Local
None
Online
None
DEVELOPER
High Moon Studios
WEBSITE
www.deadpoolgame.com
PUBLISHER
Activision
DISTRIBUTOR
Megarom

Reviewed

Deadpool

Is this what awesome looks like?

When Weapon X gave Deadpool an accelerated healing factor, the process drove him incurably insane. And so one of the Marvel and X-Men universe's most interesting, entertaining and craziest characters was born. Deadpool, a favourite anti-hero for many comic fans, is fully aware of the fact that he is a comic book character. By extension, in the game, he is equally aware that he is making an appearance in a video game. In fact, it's all his idea; he cons developers High Moon into making a game for him.

That's the premise behind the title, and Deadpool fans will probably get a kick out of running around, beating up bad guys and listening to Deadpool's copious one-liners and conversations with the voices in his head, delivered with great enthusiasm by voice actor Nolan North. In truth, it is the character of Deadpool that makes the game anything more than a mediocre third-person action title, and he may be a little more abrasive than non-fans like. Most of the jokes are aimed below the belt, and the game is crammed with X-Men babes for Deadpool to gush over.

The action is a mix of melee and gun-play, with numerous weapons available to the player. These can be upgraded by earning upgrade credits, as can a number of Deadpool's abilities. The game dynamic comes down to using various light and heavy attacks in combination with firearms, but you'll probably get through *Deadpool* with a lot of button-mashing, too... it's not a particularly tough game.

The levels are also really straight-forward, with very little opportunity for exploration given to the player. When you can go off of the beaten track, there aren't any collectables to be found, either. Every now and then High Moon have played a prank by putting Deadpool in an 8-bit level or a side-scroller, but these are few and far between.

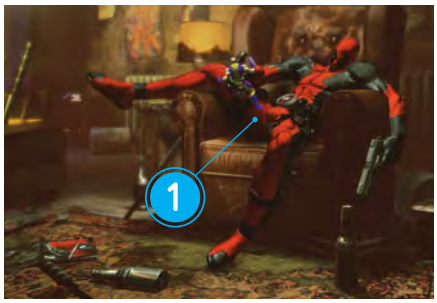
The game is good looking enough but, once again, this may not be enough to elevate it to a higher level. In fact, the crazy antics and one-liners are what make this game enjoyable, and they may only appeal to fans of the comic book character.

That said, those who know the character really shouldn't expect more than a game that is full of violence (which gets rather repetitive after a short while) and self-aggrandising comments... that's pretty much what *Deadpool* is all about as a character, and in that way, the fit is pretty much perfect.

If you're after a few hours of mindless fun, and you like Deadpool, this game is tailor made for you. If not, it may prove disappointing. Either way, you'll likely only play through it once. NAG

- Shryke

1 Tights always lead to package jokes...











70

If you're a Deadpool fan and want a few hours of mindless fun, this is a good option. If not, it turns into a mediocre action game...

PLUS
Deadpool is awesome / Great homage to the character

MINUS
Pedantic 3rd person action game / Limited replay value

PLATFORMS
3DS
REVIEWED ON
3DS
GENRE
Social simulator
AGE RESTRICTION
3
MULTIPLAYER
Local
None
Online
4 players
DEVELOPER
Nintendo EAD Group No. 2
WEBSITE
animal-crossing.com/newleaf/
PUBLISHER
Nintendo
DISTRIBUTOR
Core Group

Reviewed

Animal Crossing: New Leaf

Adorable debt simulator

In 1986, Katsuya Eguchi had to move to a new city to pursue work at Nintendo. In Japan, signing up with a company tends to be a lifelong commitment, not to be taken lightly. Eguchi had to leave his friends and family behind, which made him lonely. He wondered if there was a way to recreate the feeling of being able to spend time with them, doing things together. That's when he came up with *Animal Crossing*.

Animal Crossing is two things: an insidious way to introduce people to the "life simulation" genre, people who might not have even knows the genre existed in the first place; and a digital balm for the homesick. It seems to do a good job on both counts.

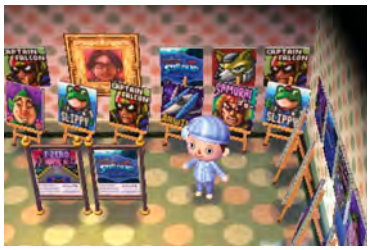
New Leaf follows the series formula of living in a small town full of animal people, with a few noteworthy additions, like being able to set town ordinances that modify how things behave somewhat. You can make villagers get up earlier (so stores open sooner), or get them to help water flowers. Beyond that, you still pay off debts (expansions to your house are costly), do some odd chores for money, but mostly just... be.

Animal Crossing plays out in real time, tied to the real-world clock. It's meant to be visited slowly, over several years. A place to call home, when you need to. **NAG**

- Miktar







89

***Animal Crossing* is less of a game, and more of an application. Think of it like a living calendar you can visit in person. Each day holds something different, and special holidays have special events. You carve out your own little space inside the game world to exist in.**

PLUS
Content that spans the entire year / Lots to uncover / Local and online multiplayer

MINUS
It's more like a hobby than a game / That's not really a bad thing though

Whatever your taste, we got you covered...

Website: www.nag.co.za

Dragon fruit

Twitter: @nagcoza

Durian

Facebook: NAGMagazine

Kiwano

Mobile: m.nag.co.za

Pomegranate

Steam: NAG Online

Star fruit

Buddha's Hand

Digital: www.zinio.com/NAG

PLATFORMS
360 / PS3
REVIEWED ON
360
GENRE
Third-person shooter
AGE RESTRICTION
18
MULTIPLAYER
Local
2 players
Online
4 players
DEVELOPER
Insomniac Games
WEBSITE
insomniacgames.com/games/fuse
PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts
DISTRIBUTOR
EA South Africa

Reviewed

Fuse

Design by numbers



Back in 2010, Insomniac Games announced *Overstrike* – the developer's first title to live beyond the bounds of PlayStation exclusivity. After disappearing from view for a while, *Overstrike* was eventually renamed *Fuse*, and the uniquely cartoonish art style on display at the game's initial announcement was given a serious makeover to adopt a more serious, generic look. And now that *Fuse* is finally out in the wild, it seems a generic approach was taken with more than just the game's visual stylings.

The game's hook is in its cooperative focus. To this end, there are four playable characters from which to choose, and these four are then dispatched to various locations across the globe to throw a wrench in the works of a malevolent military organisation called Raven. Raven's after a substance called Fuse, which has a variety of stupendously powerful applications for dispensing concentrated violence. Luckily, you and your crew manage to get your hands on some deadly Fuse weaponry of your own to even the odds.





What this all equates to is really just another third-person cover shooter, with very little by way of innovation save for some interesting weaponry. Played solo, the game hands control of your three squad mates over to the AI, and you're given the opportunity to switch between characters at will. The AI is fairly adept at murdering foes and reviving you if you've absorbed one too many bullets. Enemy variety is far from bountiful, with the game slowly churning out new enemy types you'll have seen countless times before in other games. Most of them aren't particularly gratifying to vanquish and precious few of them pose any real challenge, although there are some creative boss battles that are quite enjoyable.

Your super-powered Fuse weaponry is the game's coolest feature, with each character brandishing their own unique variant. Naya carries the Warp Rifle, for example, which causes miniature black holes to form when enemies are killed with it. Peppering multiple enemies with the Warp Rifle and then killing one of them can set off a chain reaction of these black holes, doing massive damage to multiple enemies. Dalton is equipped with the Mag Shield, which can absorb enemy fire and then reverse its polarity to send enemy projectiles back to their source. Given that Insomniac's *Resistance* series is renowned for outrageous, awesome weaponry, it's no surprise that the same can be said for the Fuse weapons here.

The game is at its sharpest when played cooperatively, with players working together to find new ways to combine their characters' Fuse weapons to earn bonus points towards upgrading stuff like the number of grenades you're able to carry, or even unlocking entirely new secondary skills, like Naya's cloaking ability. Even played cooperatively, however, things get tedious quickly because there's really nothing special here. It's by no means a bad game, mind you. I'd call it solid. But I'd also call it uninspired and safe. **NAG - Barkskin**

70

The good intentions are clear, but *Fuse*'s execution is, sadly, very drab and unexciting. From the aesthetic to the cover-driven third-person combat, it's dragged down by the "me too!" mentality. It's reliably more fun when played with friends, and the Fuse weapons are wonderfully extravagant – but it's not enough to make *Fuse* stand out.

PLUS
Fuse weaponry is fun, interesting / Co-op = good times

MINUS
Cookie-cutter solo play is disappointingly dull

PLATFORMS
360 / PC / PS3
REVIEWED ON
360
GENRE
Sports
AGE RESTRICTION
3
MULTIPLAYER
Local
2 players
Online
None
DEVELOPER
Cyanide Studios
WEBSITE
www.tourdefrance-thegame.com
PUBLISHER
Focus Home Entertainment
DISTRIBUTOR
Apex Interactive

Reviewed

Le Tour de France 2013 – 100th Edition

The definition of niche

We're used to certain sports titles being aimed at niche markets, but *Le Tour De France 2013* takes the cake. Locally it doesn't bear the *Pro Cycling Manager* name anymore, but that's the pedigree that the game stems from. However, this time around, there really isn't much management to be done. Instead, the player gets to experience the most famous cycling event in the world up close and personal, which may or may not be a good thing – depending on how you feel about cycling. Enthusiasts may well leap at the chance to plan the strategy of the long and gruelling event, but it takes a special kind of constitution to get through a title like this. It's not fast, or action packed, no matter how excited the in-game voices get. It's pedantic and precise, although a lot of the managerial precision of previous years is absent in this edition.

Graphically bland, the title doesn't excite on any level other than that which would excite cyclists – the strategy of the race. It can get pretty complex, but it isn't exactly fast paced, so all but the most ardent cycling fans will get bored long before each stage's halfway mark. This one is definitely only for those that love cycling and that's pretty limited. **NAG**
- Shryke



1 Yes, you control the pedalling rate...





60

This one is strictly for cycling enthusiasts... anyone else will find it far too slow-paced and underwhelming.

PLUS
Great for enthusiasts / Fairly detailed

MINUS
Little management / So boring it'll make your eyes bleed

Genius
Live with Ideas

Enjoy your life
Let Music Change Your World





SP-HF365B SP-HF805B SP-HF1255B SW-HF2.1 1700

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
www.geniusnet.com

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

Find us on Facebook Genius

PLATFORMS
Wii U
REVIEWED ON
Wii U
GENRE
Mini-game collection
AGE RESTRICTION
7
MULTIPLAYER
Local
5 players
Online
None
DEVELOPER
Nintendo SPD / Intelligent Systems
WEBSITE
gameandwario.nintendo.com
PUBLISHER
Nintendo
DISTRIBUTOR
Core Group

Reviewed

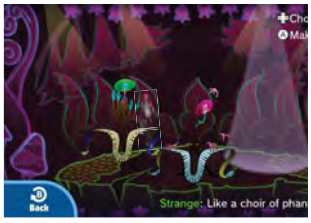
Game & Wario

A game with a game in which you play a game

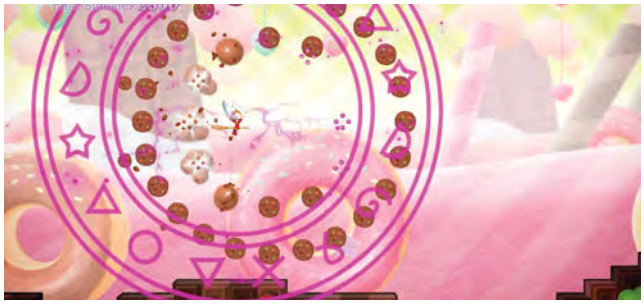
Game & Wario is something that will underwhelm a lot of people, especially those looking for a single complete game experience. Essentially, this is the official demonstration software for the Wii U GamePad, with a surprisingly decent collection of games built around it. While most of its content has a lot of longevity if given more than a passing glance, like all *Wario*-related mini/micro game collections it's something you really have to be in the mood for.

There are several single-player and multi-player games, all involving the Wii U tablet in some way. Even when playing the single-player games, things are designed to be enjoyable by a group. Nowhere is this more evident than in "Gamer", a game in which you play a kid trying to play a portable gaming system in bed without getting caught by his mom. So, as the player looks at the tablet, playing a bunch of classic *Wario* micro-games, the TV shows his room. His mom will try to sneak in, appear, or generally reveal herself in strange ways [*Umm?! Ed*]. If the player doesn't duck under the covers in time (or fails at the micro-games), it is game over. It's remarkably tense, novel, and great with a crowd. *Game & Wario* does what it sets out to do well, but should have been a free game with the system. NAG

- Miktar







70 **Even though each mini-game in *Game & Wario* is in itself a polished and deep experience, and the entire package is wrapped together nicely with a lot of trimmings like collectables and digital "toys", it's hard to recommend this at full price. Wait for it to go on sale, or ask for it as a gift.**

PLUS
Great presentation / Lots of content / Inventive gameplay using tablet

MINUS
Limited appeal

PLATFORMS
PC
REVIEWED ON
PC
GENRE
Role-playing game
AGE RESTRICTION
16
MULTIPLAYER
Local
None
Online
None
DEVELOPER
Spiders
WEBSITE
www.mars-thegame.com
PUBLISHER
Focus Home Interactive
DISTRIBUTOR
Apex Interactive

Reviewed

Mars: War Logs

A real battle...

The saddest thing about *Mars: War Logs* is that the developers simply didn't seem to have the budget to pull this off. There are a lot of great ideas in this sci-fi role-player, but none of them ever get to be shown off. It's like a B-grade film that you simply know would have been better if the people working on it were paid more.

Based on war-torn Mars, the game sees the player take on the role of Roy (great name, huh?). He is a prisoner of war with a dark past. Roy's adventures take him all across Mars, eventually, but the middle section of the game devolves into pointless bits of fetch-and-carry, punctuated with lore sections that don't do too much to enhance the setting.

Mars: War Logs could have been a great game, and possesses a decent combat system (even if it has a heavy emphasis on dodging). But the developers simply didn't go the extra mile – in fact, there are numerous shortcuts evident in the game's overall lack of polish. It's a sad thing, really, because great sci-fi role playing games seem to be becoming scarcer by the year. The gap that exists simply won't be filled by games like this, even if forgiving players may enjoy it. NAG

- Shryke

1 There is only so much you can do with a colour palette that only includes earth tones.







50 ***Mars: War Logs* wants to be a better game than it actually is, but weak design elements and a lack of polish lay it low.**

PLUS
Decent combat system / Some weapon customisation

MINUS
Needs a lot of polish / Some weak plot aspects

NAG

South Africa's leading gaming, computer and technology magazine

www.nag.co.za
NAGMagazine
@nagcoza
zinio.com/nag







Option 1	tick	Option 2	tick	Option 3	tick	Option 4	tick
12 month subscription with cover DVD at R450		6 month subscription with cover DVD at R230		12 month subscription without cover DVD at R330		6 month subscription without cover DVD at R170	

SEND MY COPY OF NAG TO:

Full name: _____

Postal address: _____

E-mail: _____ Tel: _____

PAYMENT METHOD (PLEASE CIRCLE): Bank deposit / Cheque / Credit card / Postal order

Visa/Mastercard number: _____

Expiry date: _____ CVV number: _____

Signature: _____

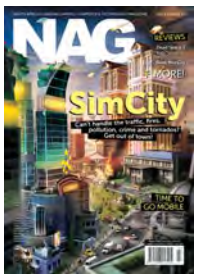
- Order by fax: (011) 704-4120
- Order by e-mail: subs@nag.co.za
- Order by post: NAG, P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158

Bank account details for direct deposits: NAG, Nedbank Fourways,
Account number: 1684170850, **Branch code:** 168405

Once you have paid the money into our account, fax a copy of the subscription form plus the bank deposit slip to [011] 704-4120. No deposit slip = no subscription. Please make cheques and postal orders out to NAG and then post the completed form to NAG Subscription Department, P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

***Please note: No refunds will be issued for this subscription offer.**







EVERYTHING ELSE

Well, almost everything.

Bits and bobs that can all be filed under gaming lifestyle

DC COMICS BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE: THE JOKER ARTFX STATUE

It comes with three AAA batteries so it's already 91.876% more exciting than any of the other statues we've seen in the magazine so far. The downside here is how these batteries are put to use. We were personally hoping for glowing eyes, ethereal lights or even some suitable creepy noises but instead we got an annoying, obviously fake overly-loud camera sound and (advertised spotlight activation). It works by using a motion sensor to sense the presence of a human; once this happens the camera sound goes off and the spotlight comes on (it didn't come on for us because Savage plugged it in the wrong way around). Besides that it does pretty much what all the other statues do. Anyway, in spite of some minor disappointment it's well made and looks the part on any collector's shelf (provided you don't walk past it too often). The spotlight, dynamite and box, camera and nasty looking cherub all are packaged individually in the box and snap into the base. Standing over 30cm it's an impressive salute to an iconic graphic novel.

Supplier: Cosmic Comics
RRP: R1,899



WIN

THIS KILLING JOKE STATUE*!

Simply visit the NAG website and look for the competition entry. We don't know where it'll be because time and space work differently in a magazine, but you'll find it when you get there. Don't panic. Good luck!

*** Note:** the one you're trying to win has been assembled and disassembled by Savage, written about by Michael and generally touched and fingered by everyone in the NAG office – except Jacqui because she left early. We also can't get the light working but we didn't break it.

Everything on these pages this month was supplied by Cosmic Comics; their website isn't fully functional so please visit their Facebook page here: **www.facebook.com/pages/Cosmic-Comics-South-Africa**

POP! TELEVISION: MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE 19: SKELETOR VINYL FIGURE

POP! TELEVISION: MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE 17: HE-MAN VINYL FIGURE

In case you're wondering, these guys don't do anything special: the heads don't bobble, there are no interchangeable underpants or any extra weapons – nothing. You'd think a vinyl figure of He-Man would at least have a different hairdo in the box. But no, they just exist in all their 9.5cm glory, staring at you while you pretend to work. For something like this, R199 is a little on the expensive side, but there's no sense to be talked into crazy He-Man fans. Tarryn probably has the whole set with She-Ra on back order.

Supplier: Cosmic Comics
RRP: R199 (each)



MARVEL BISHOUJO STATUE: KITTY PRYDE

This pretty little thing was designed by Shunya Yamashita – a well-known Japanese illustrator and game designer, famous for his beautiful female characters. This was all off the back of the box, would you believe? Standing at around 22cm, Kitty sure looks the part in her black spandex yellow trimmed body suite. Of course no X-Person would be caught dead without her hot yellow boots and sassy red belt. This statue also includes Kitty's pet dragon, Lockheed, who can be posed on her arm for maximum effect.

Supplier: Cosmic Comics
RRP: R899





BLOODSHOT

It might be a pile of stereotypical anti-hero comic cheese, but *Bloodshot* carries itself like it's something special. Plenty of energy has been put into telling a story that is intriguing, and the artwork backs it up with its mature style and great sense of movement. Ultra-violence and a dark sense of revenge run thick through this book; anyone with a love of *Punisher* will be right at home here.

Supplier: Cosmic Comics
RRP: R139

HARBINGER

Angsty youthful superhero stories are old news, but if done well then they're potentially interesting. *Harbinger* sort of is, but it's difficult to overlook this tired concept when there's so little on offer here that tries to be anything more. The artwork tends towards the muddy and grungy more often than not, leading to a few generic-looking panels that could be from any comic you've read in the last ten years.

Supplier: Cosmic Comics
RRP: R139

ARCHER & ARMSTRONG

For a book written to be a humorous adventure, *Archer & Armstrong* isn't all that funny. Maybe we've been spoiled by frankly better writing, or maybe it's the silly The One Percent stuff that just smacks of immaturity, but something about this book didn't quite click. The artwork is fine, if a little unoriginal, but it's the over explanative writing that really puts us off: there's very little effort made to establish any sense of mystery or organic storytelling through dialogue.

Supplier: Cosmic Comics
RRP: R139

TECHNEWS

KNOW YOUR TECHNOLOGY

OCULUS RIFT
The Oculus Rift is a next-generation virtual reality headset designed for immersive gaming. It is described by its developer, Oculus VR, as an upcoming high field of view (FOV), low-latency, consumer-priced virtual reality (VR) head-mounted display (HMD).

FOV
Field of View in relation to video games refers to the extent of the observable game world that is seen on the display at any given moment. The FOV is usually given as an angle for either horizontal or vertical FOV. The FOV in a video game may change dependent on the aspect ratio of the display resolution. This is determined by the image scaling method used by the video game. FOV normally increases with a wider aspect ratio of the monitor resolution.

VR
Virtual Reality is a computer-simulated environment that can simulate physical presence in places in the real world or imagined worlds. Most current virtual reality environments are primarily visual experiences, displayed either on a computer screen or through special stereoscopic displays, but some simulations include additional sensory information, such as sound through speakers or headphones.

HMD
A head-mounted display is a display device, worn on the head or as part of a helmet, that has a small display optic in front of one (monocular HMD) or each eye (binocular HMD).



ANTEC PORTABLE BLUETOOTH SPEAKER SP1
Now available in four new funky colours (pink, red, orange and blue), the SP1 portable Bluetooth speakers are great for music, watching movies and playing games.
R899 | www.corex.co.za



OCZ VERTEX 450 256GB SSD
The Vertex 450 is a little faster than the Vertex 4 (the 450 actually replaces the Vertex 4 series) while being a little slower than the Vector drive. With sequential write speeds as high as 511MB/s, this drive is actually hitting the limit of the SATA 6Gbps interface. Very low IO latency and a high IOPS rate is the order of the day here.
R3,499 | www.ocztechnology.com



DID YOU KNOW?

Microsoft recently announced that the latest version of its multimedia API, DirectX 11.2, will require Windows 8.1 on the PC and will come built into its next-generation Xbox One game console.
Some of the features that DirectX 11.2 introduces are:

- HLSL shader linking
- Inbox HLSL compiler
- GPU overlay support
- DirectX tiled resources
- Direct3D low-latency presentation API
- DXGI Trim API and map default buffer
- Frame buffer scaling
- Multithreading with SurfaceImageSource
- Interactive Microsoft DirectX composition of XAML visual elements
- Direct2D batching with SurfaceImageSource

#7.1

BY THE NUMBERS

Razer Surround, a state-of-the-art audio engine that provides 7.1 virtual surround sound with any stereo headphones, is now available for free up to December 2013. It has been released as a complementary software add-on which has been integrated within their Razer Synapse 2.0 application. Features include bass boost, sound normalisation, voice clarity, voice level, custom and pre-set equaliser settings, and pre-configured calibrations for all Razer Audio products. In addition the software will also work with any stereo headset.
www.razerzone.com/surround

Mosh Pit



RAZER TAIPAN

This ambidextrous gaming mouse sports an all-new 8,200dpi 4G dual sensor system. Additional features include a matte finish, rubberized thumb grip and nine programmable buttons.
R799 | www.corex.co.za



SONY XPERIA V

If getting thrown in the pool or dropping your phone in the bog is a daily concern of yours, then Sony's range of waterproof phones should be just what you need. This Xperia V comes in at the mid- to high-end and features a dual-core CPU, 4.3" display and LTE support. It also boasts an IP X5/7 waterproof rating – the highest yet on a Sony phone.
R4,999 | www.sonymobile.com

COOKOO CONNECTED WATCH SMARTPHONE BLUETOOTH 4.0

Using the Cookoo Connected App, you can sync your phone to this watch and it will alert you every time there is a notification on your smartphone. Your watch will either beep, vibrate or simply display a visual icon whenever you get a new email, receive a call or missed call, when your phone battery is low, when a calendar reminder pops up or even when you have a Facebook message.
R1,699 | www.mantality.co.za

"It makes sense that game developers would focus on AMD hardware with AMD hardware being the backbone of the next console generation. At this time, though, our relationship with EA is exclusively focused on *Battlefield 4* and its hardware optimizations for AMD CPUs, GPUs and APUs." ***AMD***

AMD and EA have apparently entered into an agreement whereby AMD have exclusive rights to optimisation for games based on EA's Frostbite 3 engine.

"DICE has a partnership with AMD specifically for *Battlefield 4* on PC to showcase and optimize the game for AMD hardware. This does not exclude DICE from working with other partners to ensure players have a great experience across a wide set of PCs for all their titles." ***EA Spokesperson***

DREAMMACHINE

This month's Dream Machine changes platforms for the first time in more than two years. The reason behind this change is simply because the Z87 platform offers better gaming performance than the Sandy Bridge-E system we have had up to this point. The high memory speeds and the supreme quality of the motherboards contribute to make it a compelling, if not the best PC gaming platform around. GIGABYTE's G1.Sniper 5 comfortably takes the position as an unparalleled gaming motherboard. As an added bonus, we've discovered an overwhelmingly fancy (and expensive) headset that's earned itself a spot in the Dream Machine.



PSU
Cooler Master Silent Pro M2 1500Watt PSU
R3,300 / www.coolermaster.com



GRAPHICS
Gigabyte GV-NTITAN-6GD SLI
R14,899 each / www.gigabyte.com



OS DRIVE
OCZ Vector 256GB SSD
R3,000 / www.ocz.com



STORAGE DRIVE
Seagate Barracuda 3TB
R1,799 / www.seagate.com



CHASSIS
Corsair Obsidian 900D
R4,299 / www.corsair.com



DISPLAY
ASUS VG248QE
R5,200 / za.asus.com



KEYBOARD
GIGABYTE Aivia Osmium Mechanical Gaming Keyboard
R1,299 / www.rectron.co.za



COOLER
NZXT Kraken X60
R1,950 / www.nzxt.com



MOUSE
Razer Ouroboros
R1,399 / www.corex.co.za



SOUND
Creative Sound Blaster ZxR
R2,799 / www.corex.co.za



HEADPHONES
Plantronics GameCom Commander
R4,569 / www.gamersgear.co.za



MOUSE MAT
Razer Ironclad
R599 / www.corex.co.za



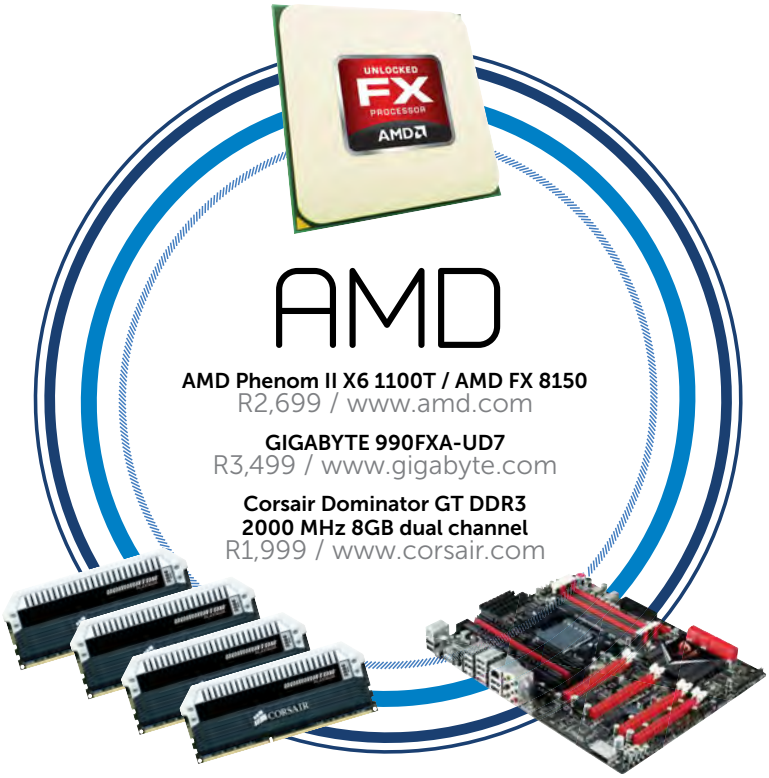
Intel

Intel Core i7 3960X
R11,999 / www.intel.com

GIGABYTE G1.Sniper V
R6,199 / Rectron

8GB quad channel DDR3 2,400 MHz memory
R3,999 / www.gskill.com

Intel Dream Machine:
R82,208



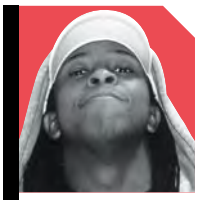
AMD

AMD Phenom II X6 1100T / AMD FX 8150
R2,699 / www.amd.com

GIGABYTE 990FXA-UD7
R3,499 / www.gigabyte.com

Corsair Dominator GT DDR3 2000 MHz 8GB dual channel
R1,999 / www.corsair.com

AMD Dream Machine:
R68,208



HARDWIRED
Microsoft love

The Xbox One thrashing has been rife on the Internet. Just about every place you look, there are jokes, memes and everything you can think of thrown at the console. I'm not here to disagree with any of it; in fact for the first time I think the public is right to have these feelings towards the Xbox One. There's just nothing compelling about the console, and everything that has been announced about it is rather annoying.

It makes me wonder just how out of touch the authorities at Microsoft are with their customers. This isn't isolated to the Xbox One but with Windows as well. There's clearly a need for a more traditional interface and desktop to come back, hence the inclusion of the Start button in Windows 8.1. However, even that Start button isn't what was called for by the consumers. Microsoft is obviously aware of the negative sentiment that surrounds Windows 8 (you need only look at sales), but for some reason is unwilling to go back to the drawing board and put back what was asked for while bringing all the new features of Windows 8 and more. It's as if Microsoft is trying to pacify the end user into accepting what it is they think should be the desktop experience.

This lack of empathy with customers is very apparent because it's precisely what has led to the weakness of all their platforms of late. From being a market leader and a company that steered technology, Microsoft is now a company of numbers only. Sure enough they still command the biggest computing and possibly largest entertainment platform on the planet, but it is far from the most compelling of late (much like Nokia used to be and we all know how that turned out).

To execute so poorly at every turn looks like a failure at the top rather than a fault with the technologies themselves. It is something that is perhaps happening with Apple as well, where its resurgence and rapid climb to the top was only because of a single man's leadership and visionary ways. Whether you're a fan or not of the often claimed tyrannical ways that Steve Jobs and Bill Gates led their respective firms, you have to admit that their ways produced results. Maybe it is a product of being some of the founding people of Silicon Valley, but their ability to predict and steer the future is something missing today.

With the backlash that Microsoft has been suffering over the Xbox One, their insistence at forging forward in the very same manner is puzzling. It could be because of the hundreds of millions of dollars that have gone into the deals surrounding it, or just being foolhardy. Whatever it is, it's a peculiar way to navigate this entertainment landscape. If the reception of the Xbox One is this poor months before availability, there's no possible way for it to be better once the actual console is here.

Part of what sells items is hype before the actual product launch, and pre-orders are a great way to gauge this. Comparing the latest pre-orders of the Xbox One against those of the PS4 on Amazon is almost laughable. There's no way Microsoft isn't aware of this, yet they are insistent on their position, and in some ways even aggressive about it. Who knows what the future holds for both consoles. Microsoft could pull a rabbit out of their hat with it all come launch date, but as it stands this one is dead in the water and no amount of screaming "TV" and "services" is going to change that. Either way, my money is already allocated to the competition. NAG

- Neo Sibeko

Dream Machine

The Lazy Gamer's Guide

Plantronics GameCom Commander

Website www.gamersgear.co.za **RRP** R4,569

TECHNICAL
FREQUENCY RESPONSE
20Hz – 18kHz
MICROPHONE FREQUENCY RESPONSE
100Hz – 10kHz
NOISE REDUCTION
up to 18dB
DRIVER UNITS
40mm
CABLE LENGTH
2 metres with coil cord

Listen. Can you hear that? Probably not, because you're not wearing a set of Plantronics GameCom Commander headphones. We know that's neither here nor there, but we needed an entry point for this Lazy Gamer's Guide, and that was it. Now, it's fair to say that most people who want a pair of gaming headphones wouldn't want total rubbish, but wouldn't want something that costs more than your average small yacht either.

Then there are those at the far end of the spectrum who love yachts, and don't give a damn about the price of things and stuff, and love it when people remark on their super-expensive, super-exclusive limited-edition doohickies. The GameCom Commander is partly made for those people. But it's also made for those who want the absolute best audio experience a gaming headset can provide, and are willing to pay whatever it takes to get it. **NAG**

You'll find in-line volume and mute controls as you'd expect, and the cord is also coiled.

The Commander comes with a handy, rugged travel case for easy transportation – and to keep your mega-pricy new headset safe from harm. It's also lined with pouches in which to store the Commander's various cables.



Getting the Commander up and running is quick and easy, with no driver installation needed. Simply plug the QuickDisconnect adapter with the dual 3.5mm jacks (one each for the microphone and headset) into the bundled USB sound card, then plug that into a USB port. To then use the headset with your smartphone/tablet, switch to the other adapter/cable on the fly.

SUMMARY

PROS
- Superb sound quality
- Comfortable

CONS
- All of the rands
- PC only

ALTERNATIVES
- Creative Sound Blaster Recon3D Omega

There's a removable (thanks to the power of Velcro) identity patch that can be strapped to the headband, and you can go so far as to customise it with a replacement identity patch that you've had custom made.

The noise-cancelling microphone is robust enough that you know it won't accidentally snap off, and the high-quality build of the set overall is remarkable. It doesn't weigh much either.



The 40mm drivers deliver incredibly vibrant, crystal-clear sound that's perfect for games and movies. For music, you may be able to find headphones that have been tuned and balanced more towards the musical side – but we honestly found them to be more than adequate for music.

On the left ear cup you'll find a laser-etched, limited edition serial number to really hammer home the Commander's exclusivity.

The USB sound card powers the 7.1 Dolby stereo surround sound, which can be switched on and off using a toggle on its side. When enabled, the effect it has is easily noticeable.

NVIDIA SHIELD

PRICE

NVIDIA cut down the price of the SHIELD from $350 to $299 which puts it in line with the PS Vita. This is most certainly a smart move by NVIDIA as it makes it instantly more available to a wider audience. This is perhaps one of the biggest advantages over the Razer Edge as it's one third of the price at the very least.

HARDWARE

The NVIDIA SHIELD is based on NVIDIA's own Tegra 4 hardware. It has a 1.9GHz Cortex-A15 based quad core CPU powered by a GeForce-derived 72 CUDA core GPU. It's all wrapped up with 2GB of DDR memory and 16GB of built-in storage. Naturally the operating system of choice is Android 4.2.1. Wi-Fi is a pivotal part of this system and so is the graphics card you decide to use with it. It is also worth keeping in mind that the SHIELD is only compatible with NVIDIA hardware, so if you're an AMD GPU owner, half the functionality of the SHIELD will be lost to you.

GAMES

The SHIELD's biggest selling point is that it not only plays Android games, but all PC games as well. The streaming technology allows you to stream games from your PC directly onto the handheld. Obviously this means your PC gaming is limited to the range of your home Wi-Fi connection, but other than that every PC game is a go. In addition to that, the Tegra optimized Android games will look great amongst the other Android games.

AVAILABILITY

Sadly NVIDIA only sells the SHIELD in the USA and Canada. While it is still possible to use forwarding addresses and the like, it's significantly more difficult to get hold of this unit outside of those regions. Then there's also the matter of the warranty which would be problematic should your unit become faulty in the future. Hopefully international distribution for the SHIELD comes in due time.

NVIDIA SHIELD VS Razer Edge



The SHIELD's biggest selling point is that it not only plays Android games, but all PC games as well.



NVIDIA SHIELD

This month in Versus we are looking at portable gaming devices. Not traditional ones but ones that are essentially PC game friendly. We introduce you to NVIDIA's $299 handheld, the NVIDIA SHIELD, and Razer's $999 Edge gaming tablet. We may be questioning the point of such dedicated devices currently, but not everyone wants to play Android games exclusively on portable platforms. If gadgets and gaming is your thing, perhaps between these two there's an ideal product for you. Whichever one you decide upon, it's sure to keep you entertained for hours or days on end. So here is a brief comparison between the two units.

RAZER EDGE

PRICE

At $999 this tablet isn't cheap at all making it the most expensive tablet money can buy, so this one is solely for those with deep pockets.

HARDWARE

The Razer is technically a PC and as such has very familiar hardware in the form of an Intel Core i5 CPU at 1.5GHz, 4GB of DDR3 memory, a GeForce GT 640M and Intel HD graphics for the desktop. It's all put together with Windows 8. As a portable computer, you are able to connect a mouse and keyboard to the Edge more easily than you would the SHIELD. Should you wish for a controller-like interface you are able to buy a separate gamepad controller or a docking station which actually turns it into an Ultrabook.

GAMES

The Razer can pretty much play all PC games available today, within reason. That is because it's an x86 platform with a regular graphics card. The GT 640M is particularly weak, so some adjustments have to be made in terms of visual quality, but for the most part the visuals should be better than the SHIELD when it's playing native Android games.

AVAILABILITY

The Edge can be bought anywhere in the world where there is a Razer retailer or distributor. Obviously there may be some import costs depending on where you are, but it is largely a product available across the globe.

1 One of the best, if not the best GPU cooler in the business. GIGABYTE's latest WindForce heat sinks are leading the pack when it comes to cooling.



Hardware Award

BENCHMARKS

BASELINE: EVGA GTX TITAN

3DMARK - Fire-Strike	7399 9,116
CATZILLA - Tiger	10330 13,483
	(DX11 ultra detail) 4xAA: 53.84
HITMAN - Absolution	(DX11 ultra detail) 4xAA: 68.97 fps

GIGABYTE GV-N770OC-2GD

Supplier Rectron **Website** www.gigabyte.com **RRP** R6,399

Last month we looked at our first GTX 770 and found it thoroughly impressive in all respects. Even though it was still based on the GK104 core, a few changes and refinements allowed the new SKU from NVIDIA to match and, in other cases, beat out the mighty HD 7970 GHz Edition cards, something that had been impossible for the GTX 680.

This month we have another GTX 770, this time from GIGABYTE. While we would not be excited about yet another GPU based on a core we've seen more than a dozen times, this card does warrant a closer look if only because it is the highest factory clocked GTX 770 we have ever tested. Moreover, at the time of writing this, was the fastest GTX 770 out the box that one could buy from any vendor. That says a lot about GIGABYTE's quality control, or at least the confidence the firm has in their PCB and cooler quality.

Memory clocks, much like on other GTX 770 cards, is the standard 7GHz, pushing out just over 224GB/s of memory bandwidth. We are now suspecting that this may have something to do with NVIDIA guidelines for partners, as we've yet to see any GTX 770 being sold with higher clock speeds on the memory. Either way, the core speed is what we are interested in and this is where the GIGABYTE card shines. With a base clock of 1,137MHz, its base clock is a good 52MHz higher than NVIDIA's reference boost clock. So even at its slowest, the GIGABYTE GTX 770 is faster than all reference cards at their best. Because of the vastly superior cooler however, the GV-770OC is always operating at the boost frequency of 1,189MHz, which makes it a full 104MHz faster than the reference boost clock.

This may not seem like a lot, but remember the GPU core we are dealing with here is the same one that was on the GTX 680. The much higher GPU clock speed and the high memory frequency combined give this card a nice advantage over anything else at this price.

Where overclocking is concerned you can get even more from this card and, because of the way GPU Boost 2.0 works, you can ideally run 1.225GHz on the core all day with no voltage or fan speed adjustments. As for the memory, we found that a safe maximum was 7.6GHz instead of the 8GHz we were able to achieve on the previous GTX 770. Slightly disappointing yes, but the GPU core speeds are more important than memory bandwidth here. At the overclocked speeds, the GTX 770 is even faster, but sadly not quite enough to pose any threat to the GTX 780 in any capacity.

That is just too powerful for any card to challenge currently. The only downside is the pricing of this card as you can pay anywhere up to R6,599 for it, which is pretty steep considering that it's supposed to be a $400 graphics card. You can blame the weak rand for that and general pricing of the card locally. Therefore, shop around before you commit to purchasing. If you do find the right price though, you'll not be disappointed in the least because there's nothing else short of the GTX 780 and TITAN that will be faster.

We aren't sure if there will ever be such a card, but if GIGABYTE has managed to produce such a compelling version of the GTX 770, the Super Overclock edition should be even better. Until then, this is arguably the fastest GTX 770 money can buy and you'd do well to consider it. NAG

- Neo Sibeko

9

Likely the fastest GTX 770 we are ever going to see out the box. The performance is brilliant to say the least.

PLUS

Very nice factory OC / Fantastic cooler / Performance

MINUS

Memory OC isn't as good as on other cards

Antec®

All Power. No Limits.

HCP-1300 Platinum



NVIDIA SLI READY

Antec Quality AQ7 7 Year Warranty

80 PLUS® PLATINUM

OC Link™



max max max
• 2600W • 217A +12V • 20x PCI-E •

Allows 2 HCP Platinums to work in tandem to power the most demanding systems

Stealth Wires



DARKENED wires = **INVISIBLE**

16-pin Socket



MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY

16-pin | 2 x 8-pin | 14-pin | 12-pin | 10-pin

COREX

Corex IT (PTY) LTD

Johannesburg
Tel: +27 11 700 7188
Fax: +27 11 700 7140

Cape Town
Tel: +27 21 528 8000
Fax: +27 21 528 8055

Durban
Tel: +27 31 537 4912
Fax: +27 31 537 4988

Like "Corex Alliance" on Facebook. **Follow** "Corex Alliance" on Twitter. **Subscribe** to "Corex Alliance" on YouTube. For more information visit **www.corex.co.za**



SPECS

CHIPSET
Intel Z87
MEMORY
4x240-Pin DDR3
CPU SUPPORT
LGA 1150
SLOTS
4xPCI-E 16X,
3xPCI-E 1X

Hardware Award

MSI MPower MAX

Supplier Corex **Website** www.msi.com **RRP** R2,999

MSI's motherboards have always been the vendor's Achilles Heel. They have been steadily improving however with each new chipset, but it's been a slow and arduous road. Oddly enough the turnaround for MSI happened with the GAMING series of boards.

This may have been coincidence, but it was with these gaming boards that we were introduced to one of the best BIOS interface (Click BIOS 4) and options screens we'd ever seen. Much like the Z87 GAMING we reviewed last issue, the MPower MAX is built around the same BIOS, only with the more appropriate yellow, overclocking colours.

Other than the different colours, the BIOS options are near identical. You'd think then, it'd be pointless to buy the MPower over the GAMING motherboard. Fortunately you'd be wrong, because this is a purist motherboard and is designed primarily for overclocking and gaming as a distant second. The differences are slight, but they are enough to warrant wanting the MPower over the GAMING board.

In our testing we found that the MPower overclocked memory better than the GAMING board. Instead of being greeted by the 55 POST LED errors, we were able to POST or at the very least see "b2" or any of the other b postcodes which pointed to IMC issues. Therefore, from there we could increase cache line/IO voltage or deal with secondary or tertiary timings on the memory. The small changes like these make us believe that the MPower is tuned for overclocking in a way that the GAMING board isn't.

For LN2 overclocking there's no question about which board you should be using. The ability to adjust Bclk on the fly will come in handy for sure. Be it you're validating memory frequencies or lowering the CPU clock speed so you can get through those very tough CPU tests, these buttons are irreplaceable.

What we would have wanted to see though, and perhaps these are on the Z87 XPower, are PCIe dipswitches which allow you to turn off PCIe lanes. Some kind of LN2 mode which would set the CPU multiplier to 16X or 12X by default so you don't get the post issues associated with high multipliers would be appreciated as well. These are but a few things missing on this board. Other than that it remains a solid offering from MSI and easily the best MSI board we have tested thus far.

As we found with the GAMING board, overclocking on the MPower MAX is simple. It's just so straightforward and obvious it makes for one incredibly easy board to test memory and CPUs with. There are no weird BIOS quirks to get in the way. As a result binning CPUs or memory with this board is simple. You simply pick your desired values, save them to a profile and exit the BIOS. Getting up to speed is something that can be done in seconds rather than minutes, regardless of the memory or CPU you are using.

BENCHMARKS

BASELINE: ASUS RAMPAGE IV GENE

3DMark Vantage CPU	34,700 46,760
Cinebench 11.5	10.11 13.43
AIDA 64 copy	30,250MB/s 20,396MB/s
3DMark03	118,701 127,025

It is because of this that we have to commend MSI, for producing a board that is somewhat in line with their fantastic Lightning graphics cards. No longer are end users forced to pick other motherboards to pair with their graphics cards, because the MSI boards are not cutting it. Those days are long gone and as it stands MSI are right up there with the best of them in the business. The MSI MPower Max is superb. NAG

- Neo Sibeko

9

MSI has finally produced a board that is possibly as good as their graphics cards. Incredible!

PLUS

Amazing BIOS interface / Performance / Easy overclocking

MINUS

Memory OC is not as good as other boards currently

CORSAIR®

Designed for Enthusiasts.
Engineered for Performance.

Obsidian Series 350D

MICRO ATX PC CASE



The Micro ATX case for high-performance system builds.

The Obsidian Series 350D Micro ATX PC case is designed for building compact high-performance systems with Micro ATX and Mini ITX motherboards. The compact size is ideal if your space is limited, but there's plenty of room inside for liquid CPU cooling, dual hard drives, dual SSDs, and dual full-length graphics cards.

Like all Obsidian cases, the 350D is designed for fast and neat builds, with tool-free access and drive installation. Smart features like a native 2.5" SSD cage make the most of its small size, and the cooling-focused interior has five fan mounting points, with room for two 240mm radiators.

Learn lots more at corsair.com/350D

/corsair | @CorsairMemory

CHECK OUT THESE OTHER CORSAIR PRODUCTS DESIGNED TO MAKE YOUR PC THE BEST PC



MEMORY



POWER SUPPLIES



GAMING KEYBOARDS



SOLID-STATE DRIVES



MICE



HEADSETS

rectron

NATIONAL SALES CALL CENTRE: 0860 582 835



Dream Machine

SPECS

CHIPSET
Intel Z87
MEMORY
4x 240-Pin DDR3
CPU SUPPORT
LGA 1150
SLOTS
4x PCI-E 16X,
3x PCI-E 1X

GIGABYTE G1.Sniper V

Supplier Rectron **Website** www.gigabyte.com **RRP** R6,199

GIGABYTE, as the number two mainboard vendor in the world, had a rather tough time with Z77 if we are truly honest. The boards were solid, but with increased competition from the likes of ASRock and MSI, their default position of being the director challenger to ASUS and their ROG products was compromised to say the least.

Each of their boards, while just as inspired as the previous generation, lacked that something extra to set it apart from the rest. While every other competitor innovated in some way, GIGABYTE seemed stuck in an older time and, in some ways, struggled to adjust to the new UEFI interface while stringing all their features into a complete package.

Fortunately GIGABYTE has done the work with Z87 and so much so, that the Sniper 5 has made such a compelling case for itself that it's managed to change our Dream Machine platform. That's right; by the end of this review, you should understand why the Sniper 5 is the most exciting gaming motherboard on the market ever. For the rest of the Z87's lifetime, we can't see a better gaming product. There are going to be better overclocking motherboards, but we are beyond confident that it'll take something extraordinary to best the Sniper 5 for gaming. In the limited space we have here, we'll run through some of the features on this board and perhaps, much like we are, you'll be as impressed.

The Sniper 5 supports quad CrossFire, quad SLI- all through the familiar PLX switching chip. That is four cards at 8X PCI Express speeds using PCIe 3.0 specification (equivalent to 16X PCIe 2.0 in theory). Nine fan headers each controllable with software, ten SATA ports of which six are 6Gbps, all of which support RAID 0,1 and 10 modes (RAID 5 on GSATA ports as well). You'll find no mSATA idiocy here, as this is purely for power users.

Dual Gigabit Ethernet via the Qualcomm Atheros Killer E2201 NIC and Intel I217-V controller (supports packet priority, etc.). Keep in mind though that teaming isn't supported, but we've hardly ever found a meaningful usage scenario for this so it shouldn't be a problem. In addition to your networking options, GIGABYTE has included one of the best wireless connectivity modules in the business which supports dual band (2.4/5GHz spectrum) Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n. Not only that, this module supports Bluetooth 4.0, 3.0+HS and 2.1+EDR. Therefore, you can actually use wireless headsets with this board provided you have the right software.

On to what is arguably the single crowning feature, we find the Creative Sound Core 3D solution. This isn't a software workaround layered on top of a passable ALC codec, no this is the real deal processor. Complementing the Creative chip is a separate and isolated circuit which features Nichicon audio capacitors and a BurrBrown High performance OPA2134 operation amplifier. This amp is well suited to gaming audio with impressive bass and a detailed mid-range, but for those who prefer a livelier, low distortion sound can go with the LM4562 from TI as well, which is also included in the package. Ultimately it will be up to you how you want to configure your audio on this board. GIGABYTE has pioneered a first on any consumer motherboard and executed exceptionally well. With such a thorough audio solution an add-in card isn't necessary. This won't beat the current Dream Machine audio card we have from Creative, there's no way it can, but it's vastly superior to any other on-board solution on the market and measurably better than some low to mid-range discreet cards. As it stands there's far too much going for this board than against it for us to justify giving it anything but our highest accolades. The G1 Sniper 5 is the one to buy for your gaming needs. NAG

- Neo Sibeko

BENCHMARKS

BASELINE: ASUS RAMPAGE IV GENE

3DMark Vantage CPU	34,541	46,760
Cinebench 11.5	10.14	13.43
AIDA 64 copy	30,250MB/s	20,396MB/s
3DMark03	107,807	127,025

9

The G1.Sniper 5 is by far the most impressive gaming board we've ever seen.

PLUS
Looks spectacular / GIGABYTE's best BIOS interface to date / Massive amounts of features

MINUS
Price / Slight performance penalty because of switching chip

Turtle Beach Ear Force XPSEVEN

Supplier Apex Interactive
Website www.apexinteractive.co.za
RRP R3,499.95

Turtle Beach is still a relatively new brand in our local market, but they've been making waves with their high-end, gaming-focused offerings. This headset is right up there with the highest end of headsets, and offers loud, clear tones throughout the range. You'll be blown away by the depth of audio that comes through these cans; sounds that you had never heard before creep through unmuddied in-game music, and while the set functions as well as you'd need at its default settings, you've got a selection of toggles and dials to adjust the surround sound output to suit your unique listening profile.

As this is the most costly headset from Turtle Beach, you'd expect a high level of comfort, and that's exactly what you'll get. I found the side pressure to be a little overbearing at first, but when combined with the soft-touch fake leather and memory foam cups, as well as the soft-touch headband, it's not long before you forget they're even on your head. This snug fit has the added bonus of ensuring that almost all exterior noise is blocked out, which we can assume is why Major League Gaming (MLG) was happy to throw its support behind this headset.

In terms of performance, you'll struggle to find anything more capable on the console, but in the PC market this set still has plenty of competition. It's here where I have my only concern: despite shipping with what must be a record-breaking seven cables and two control boxes, the XPSEVEN can only connect to your PC via 3.5mm input. With so many cables in the box I'd think it wouldn't be a stretch to include the 9-pin PC cable that comes with the ZSEVEN, but instead Turtle Beach has opted to package them as two nearly identical offerings. **NAG**

- Geoff Burrows

SPECS
DRIVERS
1x 50mm per cup
CONNECTIVITY
Digital optical, 3.5mm
SUPPORTED DEVICES
PS3, Xbox 360, mobile, PC



9

This is a high-end console headset with a high-end budget, but you'll get what you pay for.

PLUS
Excellent audio performance / Very comfortable / Great noise isolation

MINUS
9-pin PC cable not included

Roccat Arvo

Supplier TVR Computers
Website www.tvr.co.za
RRP R799

Roccat's Arvo is designed to offer all the functionality of a typical gaming keyboard, but without taking up a huge chunk of your desk. And thanks to some clever design, they've managed to pull it off without sacrificing on comfort or functionality.

That's not to say that the Arvo is flawless, mind you. While the keyboard's managed to maximise the use of space in its layout, it does mean that you'll have to get used to a new way of doing things. The arrow keys, for example, are now placed underneath the numpad, and furthermore the numpad now doubles as providing the functions of various other keys like Insert and Delete.

Thankfully, to the top-right of the keyboard you'll find a mode-switching button which lets you quickly switch between regular numpad use and Gaming Mode, the latter of which activates the arrow keys and more. Naturally this'll take some getting used to, and can obviously lead to constant brain overlap if, say, you use different keyboards at home and at work.

Still, it's very impressive that Roccat's managed to squeeze a full gaming keyboard into such a compact space. I also especially like that three of its five programmable macro keys are conveniently placed just below the spacebar, within easy reach of your thumb, while the remaining two are quickly accessible near the arrow keys. To be honest, I don't generally use macro keys while gaming, but the placement of these is usefully logical.

Beyond that, the keyboard is a pleasure to use once you've become acclimatised to its nuances and key layout. It's a comfortable typing experience, and compact enough that it should be mighty appealing to anyone with limited desktop space. **NAG**

- Dane Remendes



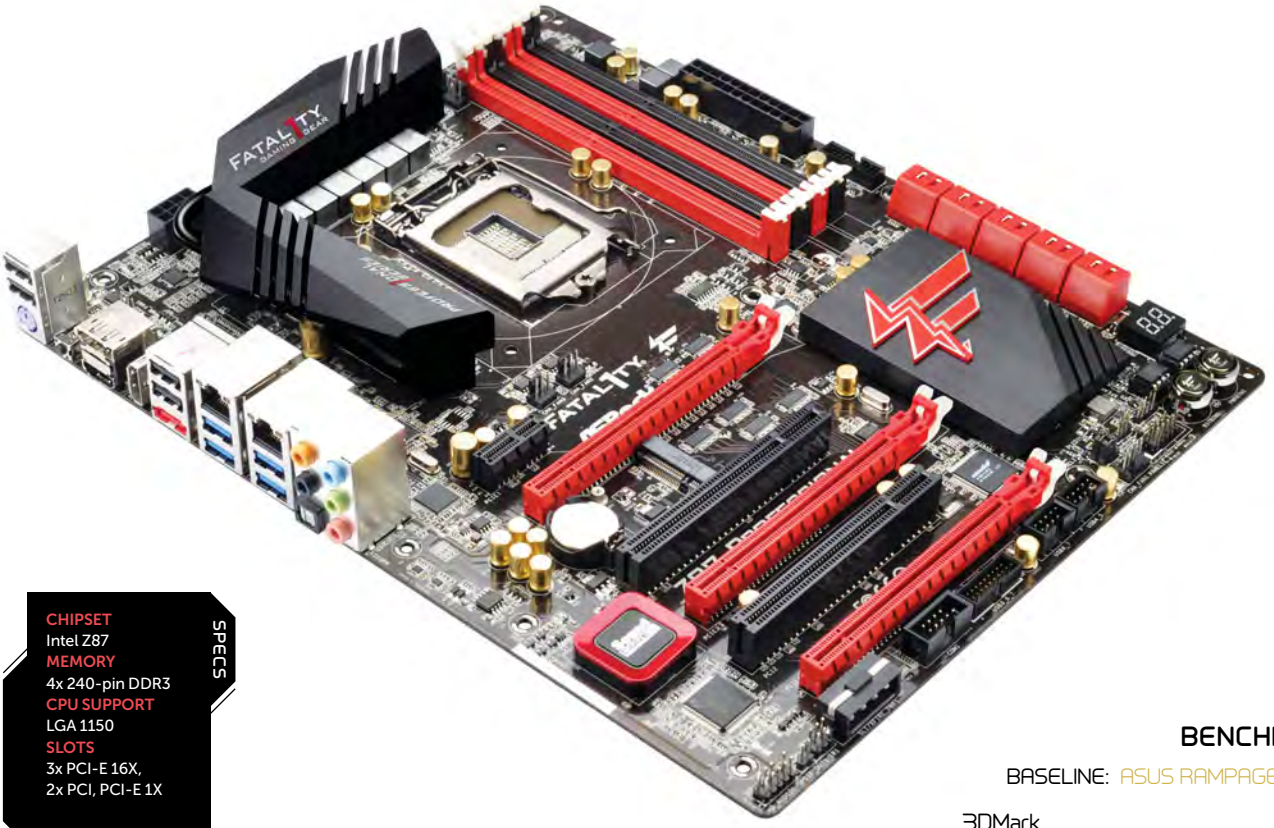
SPECS
MACRO KEYS
5
BACKLIGHTING
Only specific keys
WINDOWS KEY LOCK
yes
DIMENSIONS
39cm x 14cm

8

The cramped layout takes some getting used to, but this is a great keyboard once you're accustomed to it.

PLUS
Compact without compromising functionality

MINUS
Its design requires some familiarising



SPECS

CHIPSET
Intel Z87
MEMORY
4x 240-pin DDR3
CPU SUPPORT
LGA 1150
SLOTS
3x PCI-E 16X,
2x PCI, PCI-E 1X

ASRock Z87 Professional

Supplier Compitum **Website** www.asrock.com **RRP** TBA

During the last generation with the Z77, ASRock came out of left field and essentially surprised everyone with the OC-Formula. The OC-Formula was not only one of the most sought after overclocking motherboards in the overclocking community, but it was just as equally desired amongst gamers.

Helmed by the once number one overclocker in the world, Nick "Pimp-hand" Shih, the work that the engineers at ASrock did was spectacular and far beyond what anyone could have ever envisioned. The Z77 OC-Formula was the only board to give the ASUS Maximus V Extreme a run for its money, matching it in just about everything overclocking related.

This time from ASrock, we have their gaming orientated Z87 Professional. This is a Fatal1ty board, so it has the appropriate red and black colour scheme. This scheme is carried from the heat sinks right through to the BIOS. It's all beautifully put together in a manner that other vendors could learn from. The screens are simple to navigate and there are no fancy sub menus to confuse you, it's straightforward and a pleasure to use.

However, because of the OC Formula we found that we had very high expectations for this board. Even though it's from ASRock's gaming line, there's no reason for it not to be just as efficient as the overclocking boards. Sadly this was not the case. While overclocking wasn't an issue, memory was another story.

This is where the Professional board became unhinged. With the shipping BIOS, the memory performance as tested under AIDA 64 was very low, with copy speeds around the 23GB/s mark instead of the 30GB/s we expected. We have seen this issue before with another board and it is definitely BIOS related. Sadly, we were not in possession of any BIOS that fixed this at the time this review was carried out. Subsequently this performance anomaly made sure the benchmarks didn't fare as well as they should have. Setting up 2,800MHz with the memory we had as well proved a little more difficult than it should have been. Sometimes we would be stuck with "55" while other times we could POST and boot into windows normally. All these issues are BIOS related and should be sorted by the time you read this, but that was our experience during testing.

Keep in mind though that this isn't representative of all ASRock Z87 boards. Just recently the Z87 Formula, under the hands of Nick Shih and John Lam of HKEPC, broke the memory OC world record with speeds in excess of 4,200MHz. So once again, this is an isolated issue, the more overclocking focused boards should not have any of these problems at all.

As far as being a gaming board, we found the Professional to be a competent offering with the Creative Labs Sound Core 3D hardware. There's no denying that this is one of, if not *the* best audio solutions on the market. Its implementation isn't as grand as on the G1.Sniper 5, but then again no board can match that. Considering as well that the Z87 Professional is likely less than half the retail price, we are more than willing to overlook this.

There's no dedicated network interface chip on board, but as we've always believed these are not useful, because we've yet to be convinced that shaving a few milliseconds off your lag will significantly improve your scores while gaming online, so it's not missed in the least. Overall, this is a good board, just not as good as it should have been. **NAG**

- Neo Sibeko

BENCHMARKS

BASELINE: ASUS RAMPAGE IV GENE

3DMark Vantage CPU	33,608	46,760
Cinebench 11.5	10.09	13.43
AIDA 64 copy	23799MB/s	20,396MB/s
3DMark03	111,667	127,025

7

The Z87 Professional is a slightly above average Z87 board from ASRock.

PLUS
Nice BIOS layout / Should be relatively cheap / 10 SATA ports

MINUS
Low memory performance with shipping BIOS / Only three user profiles

CUTTING EDGE REVIEWS

M.NAG.CO.ZA

WHY GO TO M.NAG.CO.ZA? IT'S ONLY SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADING MOBILE SITE ON GAMING AND TECHNOLOGY...THAT'S WHY!

WHILE YOU'RE THERE, CHECK OUT THE HOTTEST PREVIEWS, CUTTING-EDGE REVIEWS, THE LATEST FEATURES AND SO MUCH AWESOMENESS YOU WON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THE SPILL-OVER.

THE SITE'S CONTEMPORARY CONTENT COVERS GAMING, COMPUTERS, GAMING CONSOLES, COMPUTER PERIPHERALS, GADGETS, COMPUTER HARDWARE AND ANYTHING ELSE THAT RELATES TO HAVING INTERACTIVE FUN IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

M.NAG.CO.ZA

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

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).

Philips Ultra Wide 29”

Supplier Philips
Website www.philips.co.za
RRP R7,000

Hardware Award

Look at the size of this thing! Every now and then we get a product for review that brings the office to a standstill. People who have no general interest in technology gather around our desks to gawk and marvel at the object in question. That object, right now, is the Philips Ultra Wide 29”. Don’t think that the name is just marketing fluff, this thing *is* ultra wide. You can watch a film shot in full widescreen without a hint of a black bar on the top or bottom, and games played on this beast of a screen can reach all the way up to 2560x1080 if you’ve got the video card to handle it.

This is also a monitor that’s clearly been designed for those users who enjoy proper desktop ergonomics. Despite its bulk, the sturdy rear support allows you to effortlessly reposition the Ultra Wide’s height, vertical and horizontal angle. And on that note, the useful viewing angles are impressive, too. While colours tend towards darkening at extreme angles, anyone sitting in front of the screen will experience excellent colour reproduction – an essential feature given the width of this screen.

Our technical tests proved that as well as being a large monitor, the Ultra Wide is a solid performer. While there are a few SmartImage colour presets on offer, we found its best left off, which produced vibrant colours that showed no preference to any side of the spectrum while ensuring a solid contrast ratio across the board.

Perhaps the oddest feature that the Ultra Wide boasts is the ability to hook up two PCs to the screen and use it as though it were two 1280x1080 displays. It’s perhaps unlikely that this feature will see much use, but when you’ve got this much real estate to play with, it’s a harmless addition. NAG

- Geoff Burrows

SPECS

DIAGONAL DISPLAY SIZE
29”
MAXIMUM SUPPORTED RESOLUTION
Single 2560x1080 or double 1280x1020
INPUTS
1x DVI, 2x HDMI, 1x DisplayPort, 1x 3.5mm audio, 1x USB 3.0
OUTPUTS
1x DisplayPort, 4x USB 3.0, 1x 3.5mm audio



9

A massive monitor with the performance to match. It’s not practical for most people, but if you’ve got the space or the inclination, this is a great screen for gamers, designers and movie watchers.

PLUS
Excellent colour reproduction / Customisable ergonomics / Impressive viewing angles

MINUS
Probably too large for many users

Monster MVP Carbon

Supplier Monster
Website www.monsterheadphones.co.za
RRP R2,999.99

The MVP Carbon is the result of Monster’s collaboration with EA Sports to create their very first gaming headset. You may know Monster as the company that produces those ridiculously overpriced “Beats by Dr. Dre” things. They share a similar aesthetic to the Beats range, but carry EA Sports branding on each cup. And while they’re a decent first entry into the crowded gaming headset market, they’re not perfect.

The MVP Carbon boasts clever design in a number of respects – the foldable cups make for easy transportation, for example, and it ships with a ControlTalk Universal cable that allows it to be used with smartphones and tablets. It’s compatible with PC, 360, PS3 and Wii and ships with all the cables and adapters you’ll need to get it working on those platforms, which is great. In use, however, the set’s on-ear design is uncomfortable – at least to me. It feels as though the cups press too tightly against the ears, which means it doesn’t take long before discomfort starts to set in.

Sound quality, meanwhile, ranges from decent to excellent. Surround sound is handled by an in-line headphone amplifier dubbed the Gamebox. For gaming, the MVP Carbon offers remarkable sonic clarity, producing crisp sound across the spectrum with good volume. Movie audio is similarly impressively handled. For music, however, the MVP Carbon falters in quality. The mid and high frequencies sometimes fuse together when the audio gets busy, becoming a bit muddied and distorted.

Despite this, the set delivers good audio performance overall. Sadly, their design is uncomfortable enough to be a deal-breaker to me. At the price they’re charging for it, I really think you’d be better off with one of the other incredible sets of headphones that exist within a similar price bracket. NAG

- Dane Remendes

SPECS

FREQUENCY RESPONSE
20Hz – 20kHz (tested)
DRIVER UNITS
30mm



7

While their performance is good, I found the MVP Carbon headset to be very uncomfortable.

PLUS
Can be used on multiple platforms / Great noise isolation

MINUS
Gets uncomfortable / Expensive

Corsair Vengeance K95 Gaming Keyboard

Supplier Rectron
Website www.corsair.com
RRP R1,899

When we originally looked at the K95, it was one of the best mechanical gaming keyboards around. It was heavy, solid, had tons of features but was not an attractive piece of kit. Plainly put, it was rather unsightly, which was a pity given that it did just about everything else very well.

Fortunately Corsair has updated it with the K95 and it's better than its predecessor in virtually all respects. Gone are the metal bits and instead we find tough high quality plastics. Not only does it make for a lighter keyboard, it actually looks better. Especially with all the lights enabled. It's a simple design but one that remains appealing.

Features wise, there's just about everything that the old keyboard had and more. There isn't enough space to go into all of them here but suffice to say the macro keys are handled just as well as before and you'll have more programmable keys than you know what to do with. If the 18 keys are not enough you can save profiles onto the keyboard memory and recall them using the M keys.

The light configuration options on the K95 have been improved as well. You can customize them using the keyboard only as to which keys you want to light up. You're not bound to having WASD only, but any configuration you want. A great feature for sure as not everyone uses WASD.

As far as mechanical keys are concerned, this is always going to come down to preference: if you're opposed to the harder actuation key press of the Cherry MX Red, you may perhaps consider another keyboard. We are impressed with just about every feature of the K95. It could still be improved upon, but as the successor of the K90, it does a brilliant job. **NAG**

- Neo Sibeko

SPECS

DIMENSIONS 502 x 166mm
WEIGHT 1.34kg



8 **The CORSAIR K95 is a wonderful update to an already good keyboard. The price may be steep but it is one of the best gaming keyboards around.**

PLUS
Fantastic quality plastics / Looks good / Light configuration options

MINUS
No Audio pass-through / Only one USB 2.0 port / Price

Evetech Haswell gaming PC

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

Looking at the i5 CPU listed in the specs box, you might think for a minute that this is a mid-range PC. I suppose when compared to the highest end of Intel's line-up, it technically is, but Evetech's decision to pair the highest-spec i5 from Intel's new Haswell range with the extremely powerful NVIDIA GTX 780 means you really do get the best of both worlds.

As well as a great combination of hardware, you also get a well-paved upgrade path for the years to come. With added power from Haswell comes a move to a new socket, and coming in at the beginning of this generation of Core CPUs means you can easily jump to an i7 later down the line. The important thing is that you've got a great GPU and motherboard. It's funny how things have changed; just a few years ago any gamer would want the best CPU to start, and upgrade the GPU down the line, but with the price of Haswell being as low as it is, going in with a high-end GPU means you've got a great starting point for a future of affordable upgrades.

In terms of performance right now, we found this Haswell build to be impressive. Our benchmarks showed it performs well in 3D Mark Fire Storm, pulling in an overall score of 7,944, and our Sniper Elite demo cruised through at an average frame rate of 42.2 with all visual settings put to their limits. Add to this solid performance the fact that you've got stellar cooling and a very stable power supply (aided by the 20-phase power on this board), all packaged in the gigantic Phantom 820 (seriously, this thing is a monster), and you're set. **NAG**

- Geoff Burrows



SPECS

CPU
Intel Core i5-4670K OC to 4.8GHz
MOTHERBOARD
MSI Z87 MPOWER
RAM
Corsair Vengeance 16GB DDR3 2400MHz
GPU
Inno 3D GTX 780
STORAGE
OCZ Vertex 4 120GB
OPTICAL DRIVE
LG Super multi
PSU
Corsair GS800
COOLING
Corsair Hydro H10
CHASSIS
NZXT Phantom 800

9 **An all-round excellent prebuilt gaming PC that any level of gamer would be proud to own.**

PLUS
Great performance / Excellent upgrade path / Stable components

MINUS
Case might be too big for some

COMPUTEX 2013 POWERED BY

FRONTOSA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



COMP

Computex is to computer hardware what E3 is to games. One could argue that CES is equally as important, but that would not be true. No other show has this many product releases and, because of its timing, gives us a more realistic glimpse as to what will come for the remainder of the year. This year in particular was special because Intel announced their 4th Generation Core architecture at Computex. So, as you can imagine, virtually everything we are concerned with was somehow related to the 4th Generation Core platform.

Much like last year, we took the time to cover some of the events and product announcements at Computex in Taiwan so we could bring you the news, buzz and interesting insights into future technologies. There wasn't much in the way of revolutionary technology this year, but there were plenty of improvements on products we've seen before, which is always a good thing. Power saving has come to the fore once again as mobile platforms show no signs of slowing down. Intel is finally making some serious inroads into this space and as such we were able to catch a glimpse of a few tablets and phones that made use of Intel technologies.

Even though this is a weeklong event, there is plenty to see and it's just not possible to get to every corner of the two exhibition venues. However we got to as many places as possible and between the crowds, the cheering, the technology and booth babes, we managed to cover a lot of the show, and what follows is just a little bit of what Computex 2013 had on offer.


UTEX
2013



AMD

AMD was there with a large stand but it wasn't really clear what it was they were showing off. It was certainly not anything new because the official 6000 series APUs were nowhere to be found and their graphics card lineup hasn't changed in almost a year. What was being promoted, albeit in a very quiet manner, was the company's design wins in the upcoming gaming consoles, a significant victory of course for AMD over Intel and NVIDIA.

Here's hoping that AMD has more for us including the 8000 series GPUs, and the new Steamroller based CPUs.





ANTEC

Antec's A.M.P line of products weren't impressive in the beginning but what we saw at the stand and in the VIP Room was incredible. Some products didn't even have names yet, but the quality was there alright. This is going to be a brand to watch out for in the future. If it's marketed right, it could end up as a more recognizable brand than Antec itself. There were many vendors showing off headphones and audio peripherals, but the A.M.P range did it with style and the quality was surprisingly good, in fact very good. Look for the ISO review in an upcoming issue of *NAG* amongst many other Antec products. In particular, keep a close eye on their Bluetooth headphones, portable speakers and charging units. Even the stand that Antec constructed was impressive, certainly one of the better presentations of the entire show.





FRONTOSA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

ASROCK

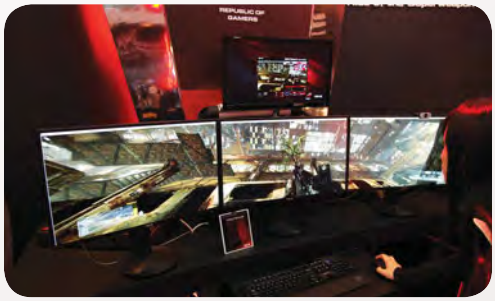
ASRock's stand was a standard affair, except for the overclocking exhibition on the latest OC-Formula board which produced some great results, including memory speeds well over the 4,000MHz mark. At the heart of the overclocking were Nick "Pimp-Hand" Shih, supremely talented overclocker Splave, and the forever-controversial John Lam from HKEPC. The LN2 flowed fast and every so often there'd be an announcement of some achievement of sorts.

All of ASRock's latest Z87 boards were there on show including the demo showing the conformal coating used on the OC-Formula which allowed the system to operate with water constantly poured over it. This is a first for the industry and one that all overclockers are sure to appreciate.









ASUS

Does anybody market better than ASUS in this industry? The answer is no. The speech that CEO Jerry Shen gave at their ROG press conference was very good. The ROG brand is powerful, from peripherals to components, everything ROG speaks to the company DNA. Even the lamentable gold motherboards from the normal range of products weren't enough to deter from the comprehensive and incredible line up of ROG products that were on show.

Of course nothing would be complete without the premier Z87 motherboard in the Maximus VI Extreme. The sheer capabilities of this motherboard left us flabbergasted. Before official announcement it was causing any waves in the overclocking scene and it was good to see it in its full glory at the show. Just one of the many impressive products from the ASUS stands. From their tablets and hybrid systems to the TUF series of products, it all came together in a way very few if any other vendor managed to pull off. If you never understood why ASUS was number one, being there and taking in all of their presentations and products at the show would make it clear to you. We aren't sure how well their gaming peripherals will do just yet, but you can be sure that they will be right up there battling it out with the best of them.



BIT-FENIX

Here's a niche case manufacturer that we have always had a soft spot for. It's not in the vast product range where Bit-Fenix stands out, it's in the quality and versatility of the few products they have where their charm is. When it comes to micro and mini ITX cases, very few do a better job than Bit-Fenix. The Prodigy became the standard for powerful mini-ITX builds and we saw even more variations of this case at the show. As with other vendors, some products didn't have commercial names, but they were still noteworthy nonetheless.

One particular case stood out from the rest and it could easily be the most aesthetically appealing mini-ITX case ever built. When this hits the market it's definitely going to cause competitors to re-evaluate their current offerings. We are more than moved by it and will certainly bring you a full review as and when the case is made available commercially.

Another worthy mention from Bit-Fenix is their FLO range of headphones. We can't say much right now as they were not the final products which will hit the shelves, but what we did see and listen to was remarkable. This market is definitely going to be contested fiercely. We will have to see how Bit-Fenix fairs.



CORSAIR

Corsair had a grand overclocking exhibition this year, the first of its kind as the competitors were strictly by invite, a day before Computex officially started. The line-up included every vendor's in-house overclocker with the likes of Elmor representing MSI, Andre Yang for ASUS and HiCookie for GIGABYTE, amongst many other high profile overclockers. The event itself was a free-style competition with a total purse of $20,000 up for grabs broken down into smaller cash prizes per benchmark.

Andre Yang of ASUS along with TL, also an employee of the company, walked away victorious securing nine out of the available eleven benchmarks. The memory frequency record was taken by GIGABYTE's Hicookie and Dinos22 on the brilliant Z87X-OC board, while the remaining benchmarks went to 8-pack and Zzolio. The most interesting thing about this event however, is that it served to highlight just how dominant the ASUS Maximus VI Extreme motherboard is. It stole the show as it won 10 out of the 11 benchmarks.

Other than the show, Corsairs's suite at the Grand Hyatt showed off more entries to their gaming peripherals including the new K95 which we review this issue. With a new drive to pander to enthusiasts' needs, Corsair is off to a good start. We will have to see though if they can offset G.Skill as the memory of choice for competitive overclockers, only time will tell.

FRONTOSA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

COOLER MASTER



A particular vendor that proved to be very busy throughout the show duration was Cooler Master. Located at the Nangang Exhibition Hall, Cooler Master was very busy from day one starting with their partner night at the Xinyi Night Market right through to their VIP showroom. There seemed to be something to see related to Cooler Master every day.

On the showroom as expected, were various new products from cases to gaming devices. It was all there. We didn't manage to capture everything as there was literally a road shows worth of products on display, but we did manage to get a look at the new CM690 II, the much talked about Eisberg series of liquid coolers, and the mini ITX Elite 130 case. Despite its form factor, this case can handle dual GPU cards such as the HD7990, full sized PSUs and a host of other regular-sized components. One could easily build a powerful gaming desktop into this case around the mini-ITX platform. Old favourites were there as well such as the Seidon series right next to the highly sought after Nepton 280 CPU cooler.

As always with Cooler Master, no show is complete without a demo of their PSUs. The new V series with their 3D circuit design was on a test bed all day showing off the incredible efficiency at load levels as low as 5%, something that other vendors rarely test because to get an efficiency rating, tests are only done at 20% loads and higher. That Cooler Master continues to pour money into their PSUs other than in just making them bigger is notable to say the least. Not only were these possibly the most efficient PSUs at the show, but they were whisper quiet as well courtesy of some clever fan design familiar to those who have ever used Bequiet fans.

CM Storm had plenty of gaming peripherals available on display as well. The new aluminium series of keyboards are strictly designed for professional gamers, featuring just about everything you could imagine on a high-end gaming keyboard. From keyboards to headsets it was all there in its full glory. With so many products on show you can look forward to all the new Cooler Master products we saw at the show in the upcoming issues. We are in particular intrigued by the new all-in-one liquid coolers, as we've heard nothing but high praises from those who have already tested them.













EVGA

EVGA didn't have a booth this year, but like many were present at the Grand Hyatt in a suite. Within their suite the company showed off a full line of Z87 and their upcoming X79 Dark motherboard (reviewed next issue). The highlight of their presentation was their new line of ACX coolers for their graphics cards. These new coolers not only look better than their predecessors, but they perform significantly better as well. These are to be the new coolers featured on their well-respected "Classified" graphics cards as well.

EVGA also showed off its very first ITX chassis for their stinger motherboard. Very few people would associate the American vendor with chassis design but their first attempt was simple but elegant. Inside, the mini-ITX Z87 stinger motherboard was mounted showing just how much room the chassis had, enough to fit in a full-length graphics card and some high performance cooling for the CPU. The new line of G2 power supplies completed the presentation with units starting from 500W all the way to 1.3KW for the overclockers.

Next month we'll be looking at the EVGA GTX 770 Classified which, at the time of writing, was still in design. Even though it was not on show in their suite, we could tell that EVGA was very excited about it and the yet unannounced 780 Classified as well.

GIGABYTE

GIGABYTE as usual was the only motherboard vendor in a completely different area of the city to the rest. Their stand was big, grand even and not only that they had VIP rooms at the Grand Hyatt as well. The number of products on show warranted such a space and to show how important they were to the show, there was an NVIDIA booth babe with NVIDIA's SHIELD portable console at the GIGABYTE stand all the time.

Much like the others, Z87 was the highlight product. For GIGABYTE however their most impressive component had to have been the G1 line of motherboards. You can read our review elsewhere in this issue. At the time we were introduced to this new generation of their gaming boards it was obvious that GIGABYTE had brought something special with them. Swappable op-amps are an industry first on a motherboard, and to see a vendor take gaming that seriously should be encouraging for all PC gamers.

As for their VGA and peripherals, it was a good showing as you would expect. The new Windforce coolers on their custom offerings of the GTX 780, GTX 770 and now GTX 760 were there. Another first from GIGABYTE was the company offering their GTX TITAN buyers a second Windforce cooler for them to install. As NVIDIA bars its partners from doing anything to the GTX TITAN, this is a smart way for GIGABYTE to get the upper hand on the competition which is confined to selling reference cards. If you've not seen them by the time you read this you should very soon. GIGABYTE's Fly headsets were on display as their first foray into audio products. These may not cause heads to turn like the many other cans we saw at the show, but their punchy bass, street friendly and robust design should provide them with an advantage over many competitors.

As usual we'll be looking at all the GIGABYTE products in more detail in upcoming issues of the magazine.

COOLER MASTER®

QUALITY BUILD for ENTHUSIASTS

N600	Case
V8GTS	Air Cooler
Eisberg 240L	Liquid Cooler
V1000	Power Supply





Elite 130 | GXII | Seidon 240M | Hyper 212X

www.coolermaster.com

Sonic Informed
Computer Component Importer & Distributor

Cape Town
Tel: 021 551 8218 Fax: 021 551 8244
Johannesburg
Tel: 011 314 5800 Fax: 011 252 5974

FRONTOSA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

JHB
Tel: 011 466 0038 Fax: 011 466 0033
Cape Town
Tel: 021 551 4411 Fax: 021 552 6172
Durban
Tel: 031 001 1480

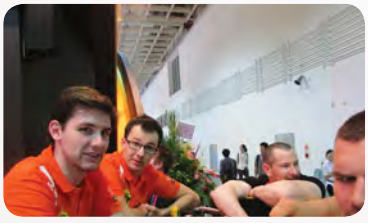
G.SKILL

G.Skill, as usual, had their overclocking exhibition featuring the world's top competitors. The G.Skill stand as grand as it always is, was the unofficial meeting place for all the people in the overclocking community. This year had an unprecedented number of overclockers showing up, upwards of 25 including but not limited to, K|NGP|N, TiN, LeegHoofd, Massman, 8-Pack, Fred Yama, Andre Yang, Hiwa, Young Pro, Dinos22, HiCookie, Dea8eaur, Duck-San, OC-Windforce, Littleboy, Elmor Nick Shih, Splave, Mad22, John Lam and many others. Not all were active on the booth but they all at one time or another came around to check out the overclocking. G.Skill does this grand service for the community indirectly, as many of these members rarely get to meet in person other than at such trade shows. World records aside, this was possibly the most interesting spectacle throughout the entire show. The crowds that gathered at the booth were always invigorating to those who were overclocking. If any vendor has secured a place in all enthusiasts' and overclockers' hearts it would have to be G.Skill, a great showing indeed.

With some new high performance 2,800, 2,933 and even 3,000MHz kits on show, G.Skill seems ready to secure itself as the enthusiast's memory of choice for the new platform much like they did with Z77. It didn't hurt the vendor either that several records were broken throughout the duration of the show using G.Skill memory.













INTEL

Intel wasn't showing anything in particular this year even though it could be argued that the buzz around Computex this year was exclusively because of their technology. The 4th Generation Core processors, along with their newer mobile platforms, were at the Intel stand, where design wins for tablets, Ultrabooks and even smartphones were being demoed to media and public.

Gaming has obviously increased in importance for Intel and as such their 5000 series HD Graphics processors for mobile platforms were running through various games at respectable settings. With the recent improvements in architecture and drivers, Intel is proving to be a serious challenger to AMD and their APUs.

Other than that it was business as usual for Intel, surprisingly there was not overclocking or anyone showing off the new XTU software, but suffice to say it was present at other vendor's stands. This important program is soon to pick up popularity amongst casual and competitive overclockers alike, so it may be worth looking out for if you're an enthusiast.

MSI

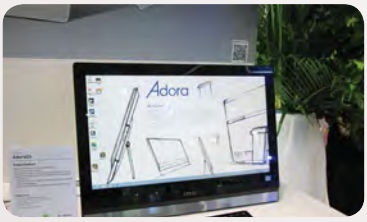
MSI was probably the single most active vendor during the entire show. From gaming competitions, overclocking shows and all kinds of presentations, MSI did it all. With a slew of new products, MSI was big at this year's Computex. Their gaming line has grown to encompass All-In-One PCs, notebooks, motherboards, graphics cards and gaming peripherals as well. To promote this expansion of their gaming range MSI held a gaming evening with teams competing for various prizes using a slew of these new products.

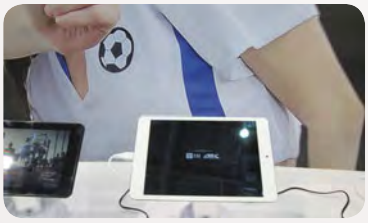
We managed to get a sneak peak at several upcoming tablets from MSI, not unexpected but definitely a worthwhile move for MSI considering that they do make some of the best gaming notebooks money can buy.

Of particular interest to us were the new Xpower and Mpower motherboards along with the GTX 770 Lightning. As far as we can tell this is tied for the fastest GTX 770 on the market with another vendor's premium graphics card. At the time of writing there had been no notable records set with the card, but we're confident it's only a matter of time until MSI proves once again why they are considered to have the best graphics cards on the market. We shall be bringing you this review amongst the many other MSI products at the show in future issues of the magazine.









FRONTOSA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY







SILVERSTONE

This was a vendor we hadn't seen or heard from in a while. At this year's show however there was a vast product range including updates to their staple Raven chassis series and Zeus PSUs. As with other such vendors, PSUs were a big deal and SilverStone showed off a vast range of units all with exceptionally high efficiency ratings.

Not to be outdone by the competition, SilveStone was also showing off their Intelligent PSUs that offer incredible amounts of detail about operating conditions and the like. Moreover the software allows end users to adjust fan speeds, power distribution and the amount of power to allocate to the 12V rail. Impressive stuff and certainly one of the unique features in all the PSUs we saw on the floor.

Not only were there new PSUs but CPU coolers as well in the Tundra series. We weren't told much about these other than that they were a custom design and shared very little if anything with competing products. We will have to see just how good these are later, for now though we have to admit that they look great and should prove to be a hit with case modders.







IN CLOSING

As stated in the beginning, we couldn't get to every single vendor there was at the show. The products varied from passable to fantastic. Market leaders came in big and splashed their wares everywhere possible. Nanoxia, the German chassis company, was back with even larger cases but ones that are truly built for the power user and enthusiasts. Built with impeccable attention to detail and aluminium, Nanoxia, next to Lian-Li, could claim to have had the largest cases on show, and in some ways the most advanced.

AVEXIR was there with a bigger stand this year, showing their new lightning-like LEDs for their memory kits. AXEVIR made a big splash last year, but this year the competition is tougher, so we will have to see what they can do with the new Z87 platform. Suffice to say they easily had the best-looking DRAM kits at the show.

As mentioned earlier, graphics cards were almost entirely dominated by NVIDIA's GTX 780, TITAN and GTX 770 parts. AMD had nothing new to show; hence their partners were nowhere to be found. Your Sapphires and Club 3Ds as a result hardly being on the lips of any of the multitudes of enthusiast, media and overclockers who graced the show.

NVIDIA on the other hand was at the Grand-Hyatt showing off the NVIDIA SHIELD behind closed doors. As a product that's for the US and Canada primarily, there wasn't much excitement about it especially seeing that the show was in the East. We didn't get to spend much time with the unit, but it did garner some interest from crowds whenever it made a public showing.

There were many things taking place at Computex simultaneously, from case-modding competitions to competitive gaming. The events were virtually all the time and every day. Overall the mood for this year was a little more excited than last year even though the number of visitors was lower. As a quality over quantity show however, it is better than last year. We've no doubt that next year should be even better with Broadwell and Haswell-E and Windows 8.1. Until next year then, we'd like to thank all those who made this coverage possible. **NAG**

FRONTOSA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Tough on security, soft on the wallet.



Accomplish more with the right business tools.



Protect your business for less with the HP ProBook 4340s. Business security doesn't have to break your budget. That's why the new **HP ProBook 4340s** is jam-packed with security features. Peace of mind has never been so affordable.

- **Intel® Core™ i5 processor**
- **Windows® 7 Profexxional**
- **320GB 7200 rpm SMART SATA II HDD**

FRONTOSA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

©2013 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. All rights reserved.
Intel, the Intel Logo, Intel Inside, Intel Core, and Core Inside are trademarks of the Intel Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries.

GG 

Hate out of ten

I blame the school system for all sorts of crimes against humanity, including hogging up time better spent playing in the sandpit with LEGO and the reckless propagation of that frequently false "you and I" rule[1], but perhaps none quite so wicked as the reduction of subtle, complex concepts like how much you've learned in a subject to a series of necessarily approximate numbers on a report card. And I'm not just saying that because I scored a miserable 17% in my grade nine maths exam and had to drop the subject altogether, although it's actually a good example because I'd copied enough trinomial homework from my friend to know how trinomials worked but the exam didn't even have trinomials in it. That number on my report card was not an adequate representation of how much I'd learned in maths, and should have been at *least* another π or cosine or so higher[2].

Quite in spite of the system's obvious failure to demonstrate anything really meaningful, however, we persist in this same reduction of subtle, complex concepts to numbers in other contexts as well – like game reviews, for example. As a person who is paid to write thoughtfully about games, there's something profoundly tragic about the reality that a significant percentage of readers is going to skip the words entirely and only look at the score I've given a game. As though that's the only important thing I have to say about it, and never mind those inconsequential details like, oh you know, the game itself.

And if that's not already bad enough (and it is), recent trends and paradigm shifts in score theory[3] have apparently discarded anything and everything scored eight or less out of ten to the trash heaps of ignominious posterity, with nines and tens reserved exclusively – simultaneously, paradoxically – for those games worth playing because the score is RIGHT, or still not worth playing because the score is WRONG.

That's not just in readers' perceptions of a game, mind you, but also perceptions of the writer – if I should dare to give a higher or lower score than a reader expects, it's because I have some vaguely defined cognitive deficiency, or some vaguely defined agenda, or some vaguely defined conflation of subjectivity, objectivity, and/or quantum relativity with no real relevance to anything I actually wrote. Usually because that part wasn't read, and if it was then only as a vindicating retrospective of the reader's pre-existing prejudice, and all because of a stupid number that can't mean anything much anyway.

So to Arno who wrote such a nice letter in the July issue of *NAG*, I think I can speak with confidence on behalf of pretty much everybody who writes about games seriously when I say that I wish scores could be eliminated from reviews. When I rule the world (or the gaming press), my first policy change will be to permanently remove all review scores or replace them with something similarly besides the point, like photos of cats. At least photos of cats would add something of *real* value. NAG

- Tarryn van der Byl

1 Only when it's the subject of the verb, boys and girls, otherwise it's "you and me" and you can tell Miss Cullis I said so.

2 Okay, maybe maths wasn't the best example because I can't even pretend to know what I'm talking about here anymore.

3 You'll have to supply your own flashing neon "SNEERING SARCASM" billboard to go with that.

"As a person who is paid to write thoughtfully about games, there's something profoundly tragic about the reality that a significant percentage of readers is going to skip the words entirely and only look at the score I've given a game."

Extra Life

By Scott Johnson – ©2013 All rights reserved – ***Myextralife.com***



LOST PLANET 3

PRE-ORDER NOW





AVAILABLE 30.08.2013

SURVIVAL IS NOT ENOUGH



fpb 13V

YouTube /LostPlanetOfficial

/LostPlanet

@LostPlanet

SPARK

SK STERKINEKOR ENTERTAINMENT

THE WAY IT'S MEANT TO BE PLAYED NVIDIA

PC DVD ROM

PS3 PlayStation 3

PlayStation Network

XBOX 360

XBOX LIVE

CAPCOM

©CAPCOM CO., LTD. 2013 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. "PS", PlayStation", "PS3" and "●" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "PS3" is a trademark of the same company. 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. NVIDIA, the NVIDIA logo, and The Way It's Meant To Be Played are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation. All rights reserved.

msi

MSI recommends Windows 8.

intel inside CORE i7

GAMING G SERIES

UNLEASH THE GAMING POWER

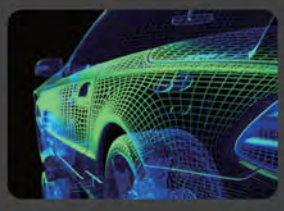
GE40 Dragon Eyes



The slimmest, most lightweight 14" gaming notebook ever!



Super RAID with Dual SSD's in RAID0 provides speeds over 800MB/s!!



Power your games with the new nVidia GeForce GTX760M. Gear Up. Game On.



Crystal clear sound fidelity with Audio Boost technology!



Expand your vision with Matrix Display Technology for an extreme gaming experience!

COREX

Corex IT (PTY) LTD

Johannesburg	Cape Town	Durban
Tel: +27 11 700 7188	Tel: +27 21 528 8000	Tel: +27 31 537 4912
Fax: +27 11 700 7140	Fax: +27 21 528 8055	Fax: +27 31 537 4988

Like "Corex Alliance" on Facebook. **Follow** "Corex Alliance" on Twitter. **Subscribe** to "Corex Alliance" on YouTube. For more information visit **www.corex.co.za**