FREE!

P3Zine

Issue 20 | November 2008

Free Magazine For PlayStation 3 Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...

EXCLUSIVE #2

REVIEWED!
Little Big Planet
Read it here first...

EXCLUSIVE #1

CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR

Hands-on preview & exclusive new screens inside...

EXCLUSIVE #3



PLUS!

MOTORSTORM PACIFIC RIFT
Exclusive desktop wallpaper inside...

REVIEWED!



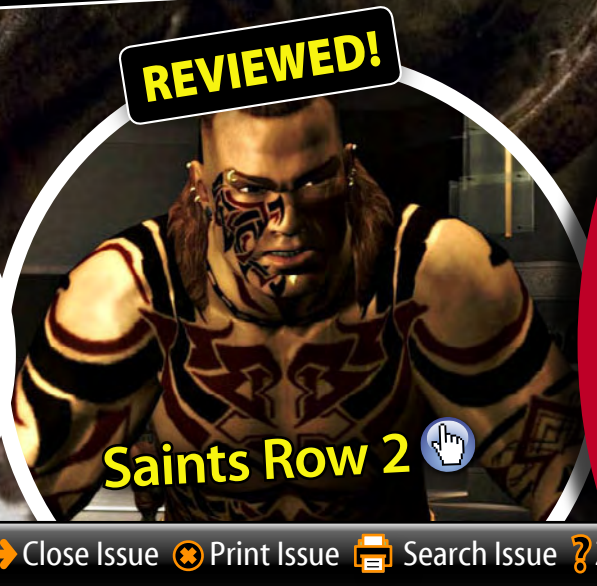
FIFA 09 vs PES 2009

PREVIEWED!



Guitar Hero World Tour

REVIEWED!



Saints Row 2



FRACTURE

Read the definitive review!

Welcome to P3Zine



Welcome to an action-packed issue of P3Zine - this month we kick off with an exclusive hands-on preview, complete with never-before-seen new screens, of the hotly anticipated Call of Duty: World at War. Can it best the stunning Modern Warfare we lapped up this time last year? In short, very possibly.

We also have the first review of the weird and the wonderful LittlepBigPlanet. Find out what all the fuss is about and then turn the page to get the final word on this year's PES vs FIFA debate. Always an annual event in the gaming calendar, this year's contest has gone to extra time, but there's a clear winner with no shoot out required...

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
p3zine@gamerzines.com

MAGAZINE FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of the magazine

MEET THE TEAM

There's nowt they don't know about PlayStation



Richard Melville
Loving every minute of LittleBigPlanet



Steve Hill
PES vs FIFA. FIFA vs PES. The old chestnut is back...



Chris Schilling
Coming face to face with Fracture

DON'T MISS!

This month's highlights...

The latest & greatest titles on PS3



Call of Duty: World at War
Exclusive preview and new screens inside...



LittleBigPlanet
Definitive review



Saints Row 2
Reviewed and rated



FIFA 09 vs PES 2009
Who's the daddy?

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away

Motorstorm	Damnation
Spider-Man	Call of Duty:
Street Fighter IV	World at War
Bionic Commando	Guitar Hero 4
Voltage	LittleBigPlanet
Bomberman Ultra	Fracture
Batman:	Saints Row 2
Arkham Asylum	FIFA 09
Valkyria Chronicles	PES 2009

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If you are reading this, then you didn't choose "Play" when Adobe Reader asked you about multimedia when you opened the magazine.

Without the multimedia playing, the magazine will look correct, but you will be missing out on all of the extra content built into each issue, like videos, animated screenshots, annotations, quizzes, competitions and more.

We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Evolution
Heritage: World Rally Championship series, Motorstorm
Link: www.motorstorm.com
ETA: 14th November

Motorstorm: Pacific Rift

EXCLUSIVE ARTWORK

Now with a totally tropical taste



Monster trucks can rumble over everything in their path - just be careful not to roll them!

"Tracks are bigger, better and more varied"

What's the story?

The original Motorstorm was one of PS3's biggest successes at launch, even if time hasn't really been kind to it. After the initial buzz of those graphics had died down, we felt like we'd been left with half a game. DLC filled the hole, but it's fair to say that quite a few were mildly disappointed. Fortunately, Evolution Studios has evidently listened to criticism, and while it's no revolution, Pacific Rift is a very definite step up for the franchise.

Why should we be excited?

Tracks are split up into four elemental themes – Fire, Water, Earth and Air – and they're generally bigger, better and more varied, offering several alternate paths to the finish line, each with their own advantages and problems. Pools of water cool your boost meter quicker, while terrain deformation is no longer as important as it previously was – meaning you can focus more on finding the quickest route rather than worry whether the ruts you're leaving behind are going to wreck your next lap. Oh, and there are also now monster trucks to drive, while bikes and quads get a couple of new moves – the duck and the bunny hop.

When do we get more?

It's out on November 14th, and we'll bring you our verdict next month.

Anything else to declare?

The game will feature four-player split-screen multiplayer racing, so you don't need to play online to go head-to-head with your mates, which has got to be a good thing.

EXCLUSIVE DESKTOP BACKGROUND



During this jungle stage you're at risk of getting distracted by one of the most gorgeous skies we've ever seen in a game.

"THE MOST EXCITING SHOOTER OF 2008"
- 360 MAGAZINE -

"WE KNEW FAR CRY 2 WAS GOING TO BE FUN, BUT WE DIDN'T REALISE JUST HOW MUCH FUN"
- OFFICIAL 360 MAGAZINE -

"A BRAVE NEW WORLD .. A TECHNICAL MIRACLE"
- XBOX WORLD 360 -

"MORE THAN ENOUGH TO PLEASE ANY PS3 GAMER REGARDLESS OF YOUR TASTE IN GAMING"
- PLAY MAGAZINE -

"BY GOD, IT'S INCREDIBLE"
- PC GAMER -

"THE HOTTEST FPS OF 2008"
- TOTAL PC GAMING -

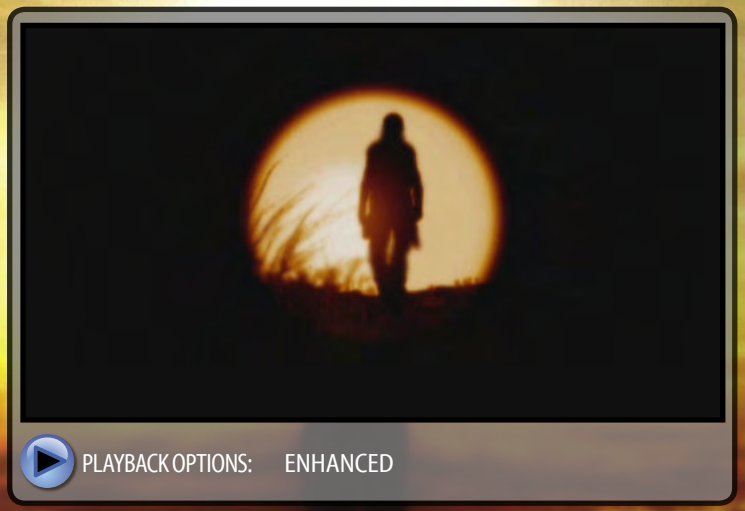
"THE GAME OF THE YEAR"
- PC ZONE -

"AWASH WITH CLEVER IDEAS AND SMART TOUCHES"
- TOTALVIDEOGAMES.COM -

"IT'S AN INSTA-BUY"
- VIDEOGAMING247.COM -

"A BEAUTIFUL, AMBITIOUS SHOOTER"
- C&VG -

"FAR CRY 2 WILL BE A SMASH"
- PLAYSTATION WORLD -



OCTOBER 24TH

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Spider-Man: Web of Shadows

FIRST LOOK

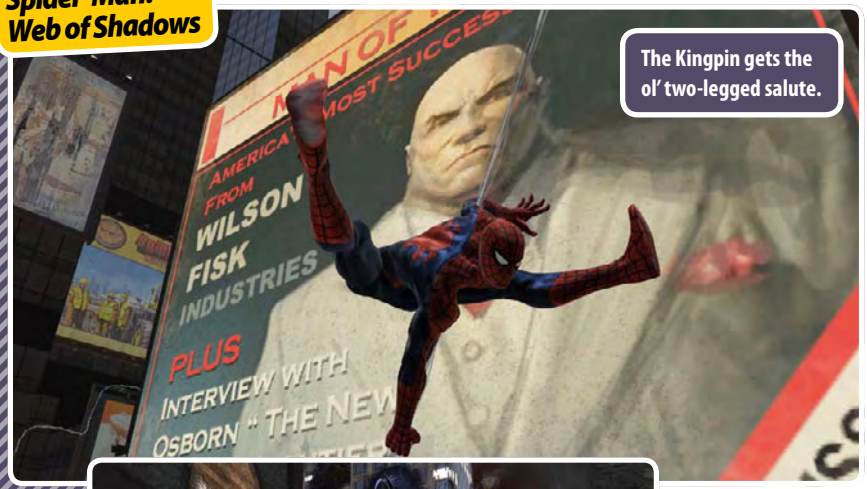
It's enough to get your spidey-sense tingling…

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Treyarch
Heritage: Ultimate Spider-Man, Spider-Man 3
Link: www.seizecontrol.com
ETA: February 2009

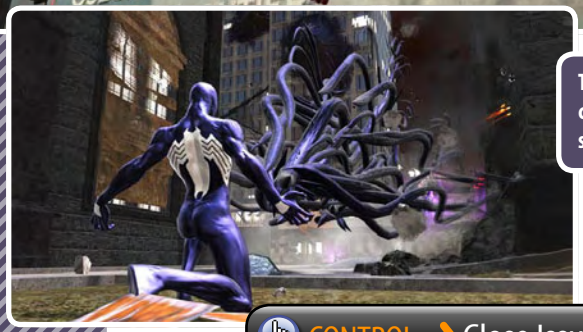


Wolverine and Spider-Man in yet another team-up shocker.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Spider-Man: Web of Shadows



The Kingpin gets the ol' two-legged salute.



The alien Symbiote costume in all its stunning glory.

"The developers have gone back to Spidey's roots, modelling the game after the comic book"



What's the story?

Everybody's favourite friendly neighbourhood wall-crawler is back in this latest game from Activision. Spider-Man: Web of Shadows pits our hero against the might of Venom, who is threatening to take over New York City with his army of symbiotes. The developers have wisely decided to ignore the painful car crash that was Spider-Man 3, and instead have gone back to Spidey's true roots, modelling the game after the comic book incarnation of our hero.

Why should we be excited?

How you play the game is up to you, as the huge spiralling 3D cityscape is fully explorable and you can decide whether to help or hinder the people you encounter. At any time you can swap between the traditional red and blue or the infamous black costume, each with its own separate powers. There is also an RPG element to proceedings, as you can spend experience points gained after each mission powering up abilities as you see fit. Featuring a host of comic book stalwarts, including the Kingpin, Wolverine, Black Cat, Vulture, Luke Cage and Moon Knight, this makes excellent use of the license available.

When do we get more?

The game is due out at the end of October, so we'll be bringing you the full review next month.

Anything else to declare?

So far it all looks good, but will this be a Marvel tie-in worth buying? Watch this space, true believers!



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Street Fighter IV

The World Warrior is back

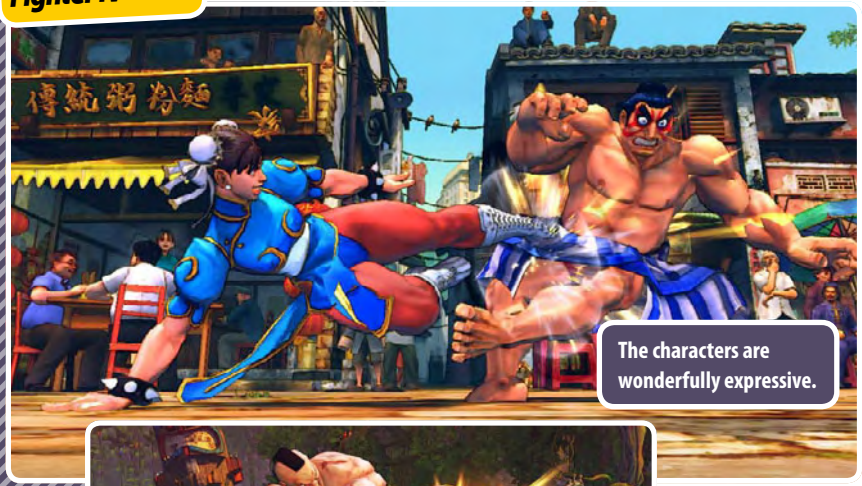
FIRST LOOK

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Heritage: Street Fighter series, Resident Evil series
Link: www.streetfighter.com
ETA: February 2009

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Street Fighter IV



The game has a uniquely stylised feel which looks astounding in motion.



The characters are wonderfully expressive.



Virtually all the old favourites return, but you'll have a few new moves to learn in some cases.

"Despite its 3D visuals it's still very much a 2D fighter – but the best-looking one ever seen"



What's the story?

Merely the triumphant return of arguably the greatest – and certainly the most famous – beat-'em-up series of all time. And, having seen it in action, you should be every excited.

Why should we be excited?

It's already out in arcades across Japan and the US, though us UK gamers will have to wait a little longer to get our hands on the game. Fortunately, the home console versions will be arriving in February. Despite its 3D visuals, it's still very much a 2D fighter – but the best-looking one ever seen. It's not just a case of the game looking nicer – the improved visuals affect the gameplay. Beat-'em-ups are all about anticipation and reaction, and it's far easier to gauge your opponent's moves and respond accordingly thanks to the clarity of the animation.

There's an incredible flow to battles, and the game retains its essential complexities while being far more forgiving in terms of reading command inputs – making the tougher moves easier to pull off. The new focus moves – essentially charged attacks – add a further layer of strategy, offering a way out of tricky situations but leaving players vulnerable if executed at the wrong time.

When do we get more?

Unless the dwindling UK arcade scene gets an unexpected shot in the arm by the arrival of an SFIV cabinet between now and February, we'll just have to hope for a demo before release.

Anything else to declare?

Ryu and Ken's master, Gouken, was recently revealed as a computer-controlled challenger.



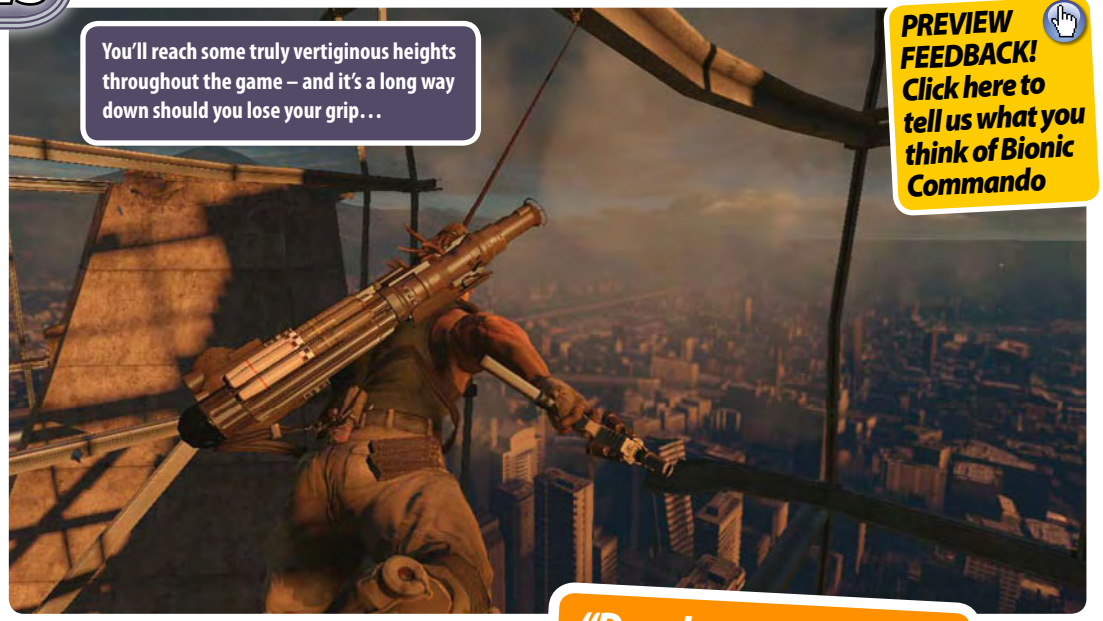
CONTROL Close Issue Print Page Search Issue Zoom In Zoom Out Toggle Full Screen Previous Page Next Page

Bionic Commando

Not Rearmed, but completely rebuilt

FIRST LOOK

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: GRIN
Heritage: Bionic Commando Rearmed, GRAW (PC)
Link: www.bionic commando.com/en
ETA: 9th January

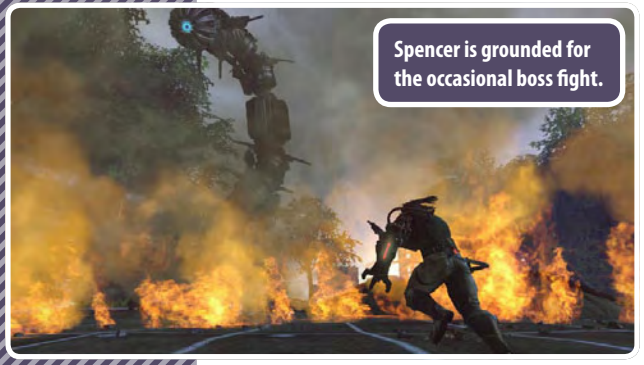


You'll reach some truly vertiginous heights throughout the game – and it's a long way down should you lose your grip…

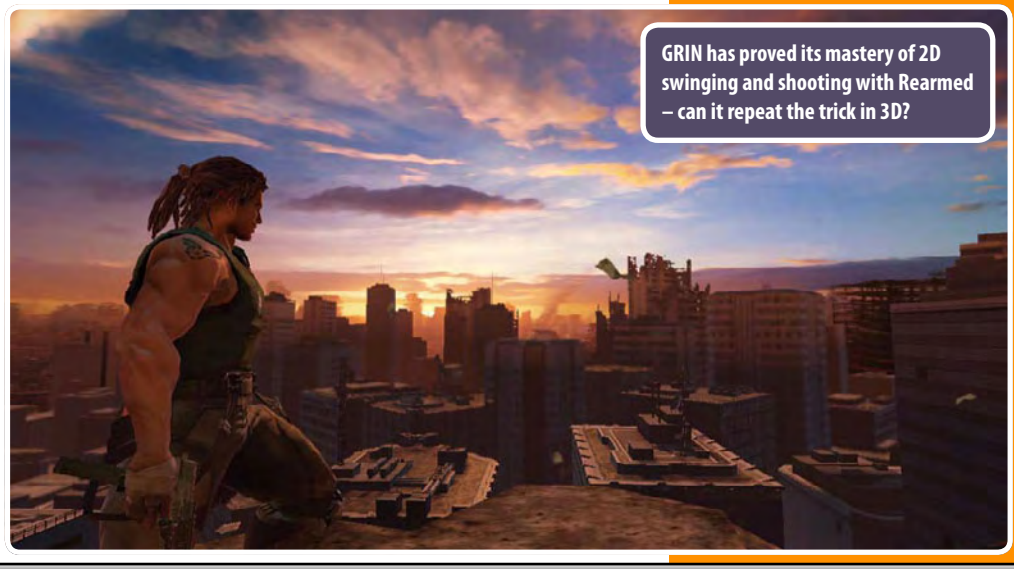
PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Bionic Commando

"Developer GRIN has a tough act to follow, with its 2D stablemate dazzling most critics"





Spencer is grounded for the occasional boss fight.



GRIN has proved its mastery of 2D swinging and shooting with Rearmed – can it repeat the trick in 3D?

What's the story?

This isn't to be confused with the excellent 2D re-imagining currently making grown men cry with its fearsome difficulty on PSN, but instead a fully 3D look at what it means to have a grappling hook for an arm. As the first 'true' sequel to the 20-year-old NES game, you're once again playing as Nathan Spencer, except this time you find yourself in a world of trouble – imprisoned for crimes you haven't perpetrated, and just about to be sentenced to death when a handy terrorist bomb just so happens to go off…

What do we know?

With Ascension City in ruins, you're sent on a covert mission to tackle this unknown terrorist force. While you'll still have to do plenty of grappling, the extra dimension allows you to pull off more advanced techniques, such as wall-walking. It's quite a unique sensation to explore an environment with such verticality – we're used to traversing relatively flat horizontal surfaces, so to progress upwards feels rather fresh, even if the mechanics are based on a 20-year-old game.

Developer GRIN has its own tough act to follow, with its 2D stablemate dazzling most critics, but early evidence suggests Capcom has another hit on its hands.

When do we get more?

It's out on January 9th. Fingers crossed we'll see and hear a little more before then. Watch this space.

Anything else to declare?

The game features a multiplayer mode, which again should be something a little different from your average online fragfest. Evidently you can fly solo and also play in groups, while your statistics will be tracked in significant detail.

Saints Row 2



PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED

FREE YOUR INNER SINNER







18

PLAYSTATION 3

XBOX 360 LIVE

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INCOMING

Another magnificent seven…



Voltage

Publisher: Lexicon Entertainment | **ETA:** Winter

While most future racers take you to galaxies far, far away, developer IBA group has decided to focus on our own Milky Way, taking its zero-grav circuits and dumping them around the likes of Saturn, Jupiter and Venus. With feature-packed tracks cramming in huge jumps, teleports and bags of power-ups, this could be a decent rival to Sony's WipEout.

Vampire Rain: Altered Species

Publisher: Ignition | **ETA:** 31st October

It's not long before this improved version of the divisive 360 stealth-'em-up is with us. The original was a strange, horror-themed take on Splinter Cell, and found pockets of fans while alienating many who found its exacting mechanics too tough to cope with. Hopefully the PS3 version will be a little easier.





Bomberman Ultra

Publisher: Hudson | **ETA:** Winter

Hudson's ever-popular mascot finally arrives on PS3 in downloadable form, as this winter you'll find Bomberman Ultra on PSN. It promises to be one of the best versions yet seen, with four-player local and eight-player online multiplayer, and 14 arenas to choose from.

Eat Lead: The Return of Matt Hazard

Publisher: D3Publisher | **ETA:** Q1 2009

A third-person shooter with a difference, Eat Lead tells the story of fictional Eighties videogame 'star' Matt Hazard, charting his return to gaming after a long absence. It's set to lampoon all manner of videogame clichés, and with a trailer parodying celebrity TV shows, it looks like the humour will certainly hit the mark.





Batman: Arkham Asylum

Publisher: Eidos | **ETA:** 2009

With the Dark Knight dominating the box office, it's no surprise to see the Caped Crusader return in digital form, this time in a game which takes place inside the titular prison, seeing Batman battle against foes both old and new. The shots we've seen so far look impressive – here's hoping the gameplay can match them.

Valkyria Chronicles

Publisher: Sega | **ETA:** 31st October

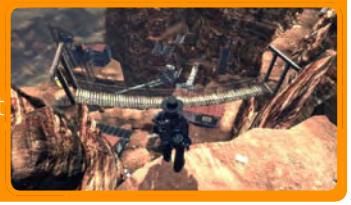
Just as we were putting the finishing touches to this issue, Sega brought forward the release date of this gorgeous RPG to the end of October. We should hopefully bring you our opinion of this hand-drawn epic next month – this is certainly one to settle down with on those long winter nights.



Damnation

Publisher: Codemasters | **ETA:** Winter

Another game deserving more attention, is this steampunk-themed shooter. Aside from its unique look, its massive stages cover almost as much vertical ground as horizontal, making for an entirely different third-person blaster. Drop-in, drop-out co-operative online play is also included.



IN THE PIPELINE

NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JAN/FEB	MARCH/APRIL
NARUTO	PRINCE OF PERSIA	LORD OF THE RINGS: CONQUEST	ALPHA PROTOCOL
SACRED 2	X-BLADES	FEAR 2: PROJECT ORIGIN	ROCK REVOLUTION

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- Also compatible with Guitar Hero® games for the Xbox 360®

WIRED MICROPHONE:

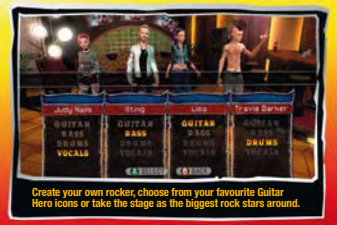
- Sing along using the mic and infuse your own style into the music

ROCK OUT ON THE GUITAR CONTROLLER OR ADD A DRUM KIT CONTROLLER AND A MIC FOR THE BAND EXPERIENCE

WIRELESS DRUM KIT:

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- Quiet surfaces so you can hear the music
- Pressure-sensitive pads allow creation of a wide range of sounds
- Authentic arrangement of the pads to mimic an actual drum set with raised cymbals



Create your own rocker, choose from your favourite Guitar Hero icons or take the stage as the biggest rock stars around.



Compose, record, edit, and share your own music online. Download and play community-created content for free! **



Rock out solo, with another guitarist or with a band. Kick it up with 4 vs. 4 Battle of the Bands play. **



PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED

COMING AUTUMN 2008

*Additional faceplates sold separately **Some features may be limited in the Wii™ and PlayStation®2 Guitar Hero World Tour games

PlayStation.2 PLAYSTATION 3 XBOX 360 LIVE Wii Vicarious Visions redoctane

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EXCLUSIVE HANDS ON PREVIEW

Call of Duty: World at War

Hands on with Call of Duty's return to the front...

EXCLUSIVE SCREENSAVER

Soldiers are understandably nervous before a big battle. That you suspect Call of Duty: Word At War (i.e. CoD5)'s developer, Treyarch, are a little nervous is kind of appropriate. In terms of the Call of Duty games, accepted wisdom always had it that Infinity War made the good ones and Treyarch the lesser ones. After the all-conquering sales Juggernaut of Call of Duty 4, the pressure must be overwhelming. And even worse for them, after the trip to the relatively fresh modern age, it's a return to the bomb-torn soil of World War 2. It would appear that they've got a lot to prove.

But there's a trio of strong cards they're promising to play. Two are very simple, and the third is a little more nebulous. The latter is the setting – they're concentrating on

> Call of Duty continued

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Treyarch
Heritage: Call of Duty 3
Link: www.callofduty.com
ETA: November

the Pacific and Russian fronts, and saying that they lead to a WW2 which is a little less familiar.

The two main stories place you in the boots of a Russian soldier on the vengeful road to Berlin, and a marine island-hopping against the Japanese – whose distinct tactics and psychology are implemented in the game. Which is all very well, but it's the sort of thing you can't call from just a description. The other two cards are direct. Firstly, this is the first game which Treyarch has had a full two-year development cycle on – which by implication means it's first time we're going to get a chance to see what they can really do. Secondly, this is Call of Duty complete with Co-op. And frankly, >

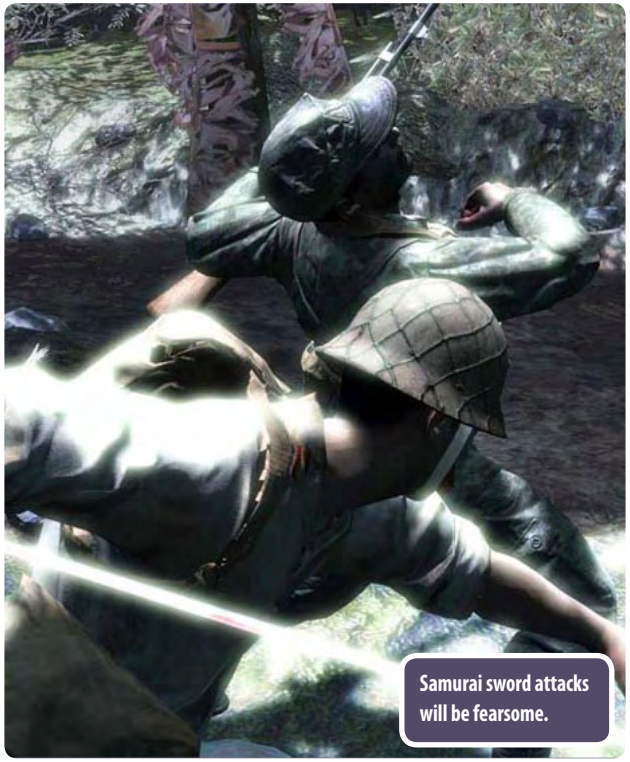
"This is the first game which Treyarch has had a full two-year development cycle on"



PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Call of Duty: World at War



The Soviet levels are grim and explosive in equal measures.



Samurai sword attacks will be fearsome.

> Call of Duty continued

that card may be enough to justify the endeavour all by itself.

Only playing the game really gives us a chance to decide that of course. Which makes it lucky that that's exactly what we had a chance to do, playing through two whole levels solo, before re-playing them in co-op. Hard Landing is the Pacific mission, progressing through swamps into an enormous battle to take an airfield. Eviction is the Russian one, showing the push into Berlin. Both share a similar sense of crescendo, starting small and intimate and growing – the Berlin one's following of tanks down a tattered Berlin street is a genuinely brutal moment. And it gets more so – you're ordered to execute Nazis who surrender, capturing exactly how bad those final months of the Western Theatre were. Over in Hard Landing, we see more ambushes and desperate charges – the former leading to unexpected rushes from the undergrowth. It's also

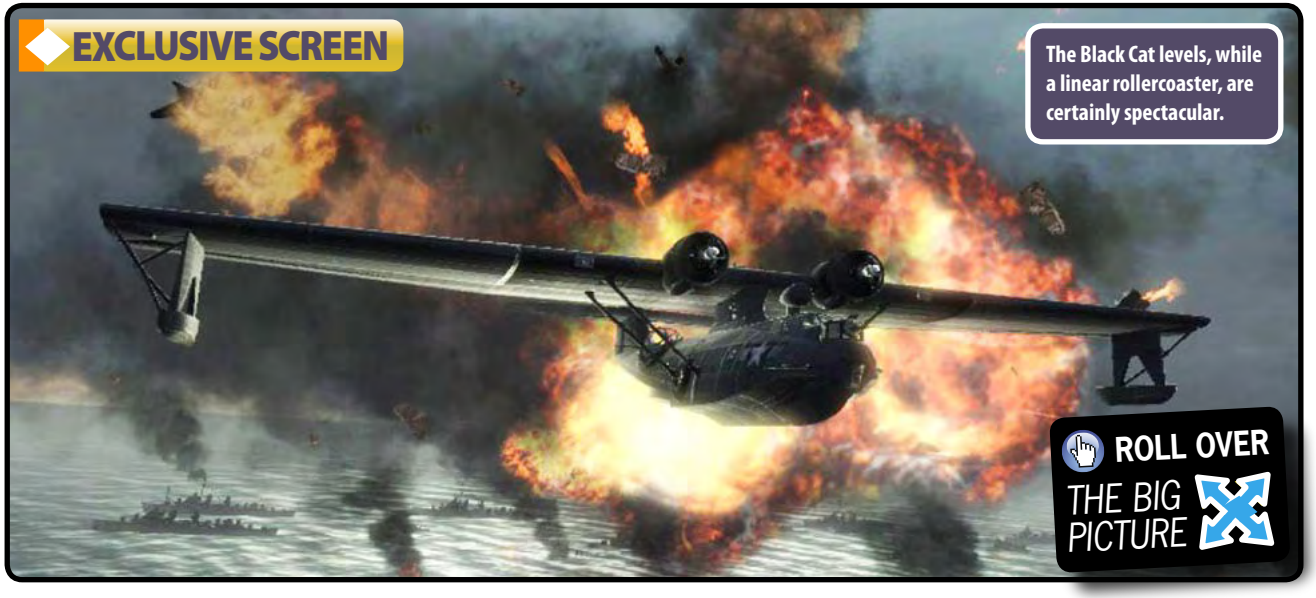


The flamethrower makes its horrific debut.



Beaten and then slaughtered. Don't get captured!

"Following tanks down a tattered Berlin street is a genuinely brutal moment"



EXCLUSIVE SCREEN

The Black Cat levels, while a linear rollercoaster, are certainly spectacular.

ROLL OVER THE BIG PICTURE

CALL OF THE WILD

Three things in Call of Duty: World at War that were so good we had to share them



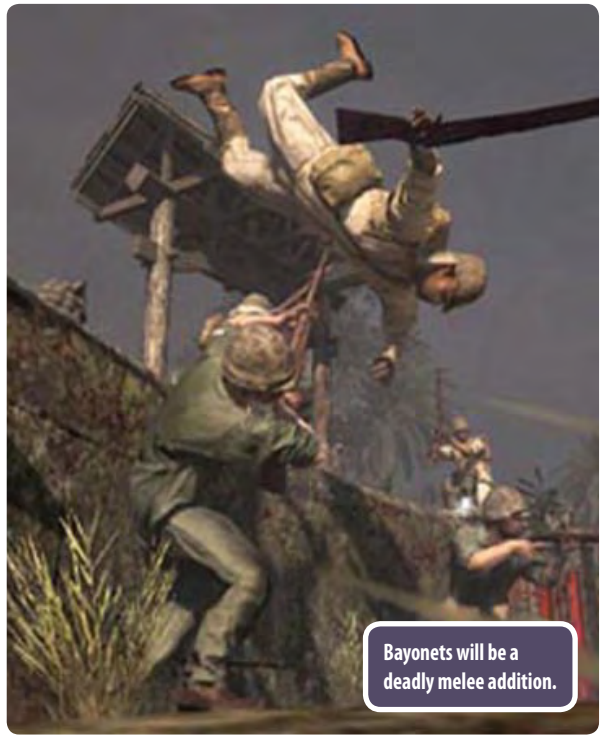
Turning Japanese | **Friendly fire** | **Black cat crossing**

Turning Japanese

Well, turning Japanese into bits of meat. The tactics are just different in the Pacific theatre. In Co-op, working your way paranoidly around a level, looking for places where they should be hiding is all part of the fun. As is taking them down when you have the drop on them.

CALL OF DUTY WORLD AT WAR





> Call of Duty continued

here that you get a chance to play with the new spreading fire – get hold of a flame-thrower and you can set bushes alight, burning out anyone who's hiding. The Soviets also have access to man's red fire, in the form of a secondary-grenade of the Molotov cocktail variety. Just remember to drink responsibly – as in, don't drink it. Lob it at the opposition.

Co-op is four players online, or two players split-screen. In the latter, we lose a little of the draw distance, but it's still perfectly playable. The interaction also changes the game – it perhaps makes it a little less cinematic, as part of the Call of Duty game was always the world being a scene around you, and now it's a scene where there's an actor being equally errant. However, it also gains in other ways. For example, there's alternate game modes – if you throw atmosphere out the window, you can play in a Club-esque competitive mode, where you gain increasingly amounts of points for killing >



> Call of Duty continued

opposition in chains, with even more for head shots. Racing to get the big points, immediately changes the dynamic amusingly.

Also, with someone else there you start to notice how the level design has altered a little – while far from an open world, there's definitely more alternative routes, including bits where you can split up and clear separate sections out. The only problem with this is with the game's difficulty. Normally when you get shot your friend can rescue you – assuming he doesn't get shot to pieces in the process. If you're miles apart in the level, that immediately goes out the window. But bar that, the system works well – the incapacitated being able to still fire their pistol while they wait for help being suitably dramatic.

"The incapacitated are still able to fire their pistol while they wait for help"

But while great fun, this is a familiar array of what we expect from the introduction of Co-op to a well-established game. Well executed, well engineered and… well, that's all. Is that enough? It probably will be. This seems a much better game than Call of Duty 3, and has every chance of being a worthy successor to Call of Duty 4. Will it allow Treyarch to step out of Infinity's Ward shadow? You have to hope so.

Roll over screen for annotations





Pour it on and hope no-one snipes your gas tank from a tree.



Enhanced lighting makes night scenes come alive.

P3Zine Call of Duty World at War

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE 90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS 90%

Back to the front lines, but bring your friends this time

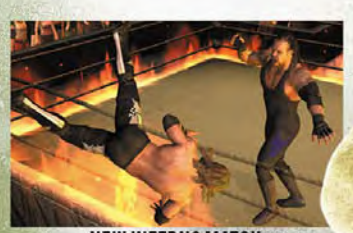
TAG TEAMS EXPLODE ONTO WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2009...
IT'S JUST YOU AND YOUR PARTNER, BACK-TO-BACK
AND READY TO FACE THE ONSLAUGHT.



HIGH IMPACT DOUBLE TEAM MOVES



NEW CREATE A FINISHER



NEW INFERNO MATCH



ROAD TO WRESTLEMANIA CO-OP



PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED

SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2009

ALONE, YOU'RE GREAT.
TOGETHER YOU'RE UNSTOPPABLE

15

PSP. XBOX 360 LIVE PlayStation.2 PLAYSTATION 3 NINTENDO DS. Wii

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POWERED BY gamespy.

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FIRST LOOK

Guitar Hero World Tour

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Neversoft
Heritage: Tony Hawk series, Guitar Hero: Aerosmith
Link: www.guitarhero.com
ETA: 7th November

On the road with the band sim to beat

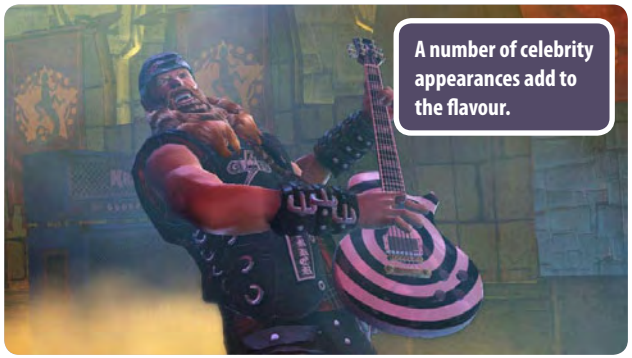


Up until recently, Guitar Hero has ruled the music genre roost with a cocky, Jagger-esque swagger, swatting away pretenders with its unmatched rhythm-action genius. Then, all of a sudden, the series took a misstep – original developer Harmonix moved on to bigger and better things with Rock Band, and the series was forced to regroup, recruiting an unlikely replacement in the form of Tony Hawk developer Neversoft, who didn't quite manage to recapture the magic of the original. With Harmonix now firmly on top, it was going to take a Herculean effort for Guitar Hero to top the charts once more, but with a full band's worth of instruments in tow and a series of improvements to the setup, it's looking likely that the number one position is up for grabs once more.

It's the drumkit that's likely to sway public opinion in Guitar Hero's favour. While Harmonix arguably remains the master of the note charts – creating musical patterns that feel just about perfect to play, there's no doubt which set of instruments are superior. While Rock Band's kit clatters noisily as you thwack its four plastic pads, there's an almost blissful near-silence from Guitar Hero's three circular rubber drums and two raised cymbal pads. The simple elevation of those two makes it instantly feel more like real drumming, without over-complicating matters – Konami's seven-input Rock Revolution seems to have spoilt the broth somewhat, but five and a pedal feels perfect. Even if you've never played the drums before, it seems oddly more natural to be tapping away above and below, rather than four pads side by side.

"The guitar feels remarkably solid and doesn't feel nearly as lightweight as previous efforts"

As for the guitar, well that's a similar success story. It's remarkably solid and doesn't feel nearly as lightweight as previous guitar peripherals. With a classic sunburst finish, it's much nicer to look at than its rivals, while a few additions make it the most satisfying to play as well as to hold. The five classic fret buttons are joined by a touch-sensitive lower portion of





> Guitar Hero World Tour continued

the neck, utilised for those frenzied guitar solos, while Star Power is just a button-press away if you're not extrovert enough to tilt your axe skywards when you want to wow the crowd. The strum bar is still a little too loud for our personal tastes, admittedly, but never has a plastic instrument felt closer to the real thing.

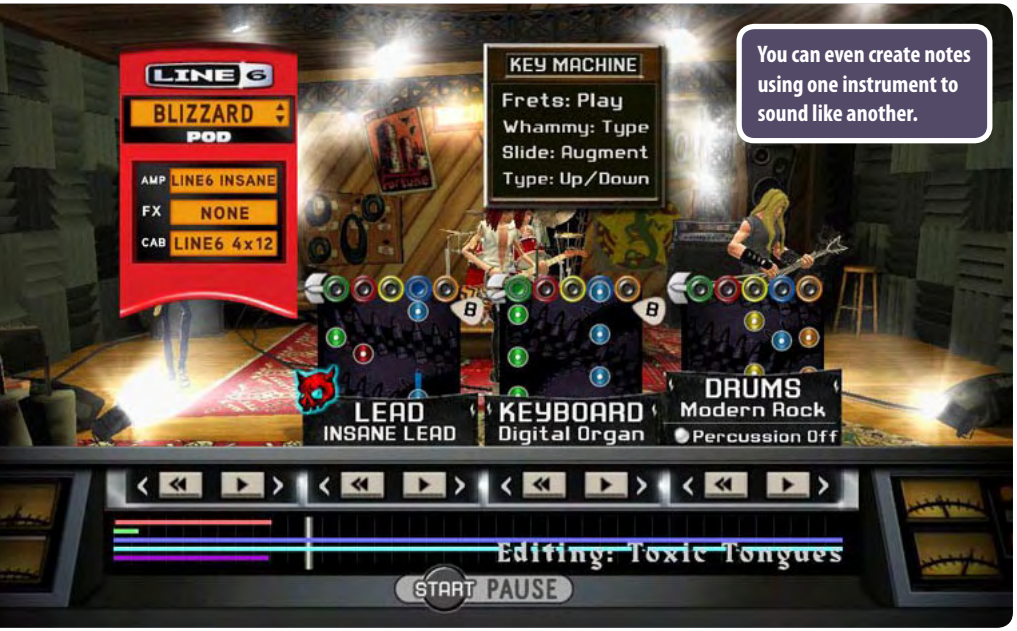
And those pesky note charts? From early evidence, the 'ghost notes' of Legends of Rock are a thing of the past. That's not to say that Guitar Hero has lost its hardcore edge, just that you'll rarely (if ever) be playing notes that just aren't there any more. And if you're the kind of player who's always fancied a bash at Guitar Hero but has never been quite good enough to join a virtual band, then the beginner difficulty offers an easy way in, where skill is far less important than just plain having fun.

Fun is certainly something you'll be having plenty of – particularly if you've got a full band involved. With the promise that pre-orders of the game will get a free additional guitar peripheral, you can start a four-player session out of the box, and that's easily the most enjoyable way to play the game. While most will be fighting over the instruments, the microphone is another string to the game's bow – vocalists familiar with Rock Band's approach will feel >

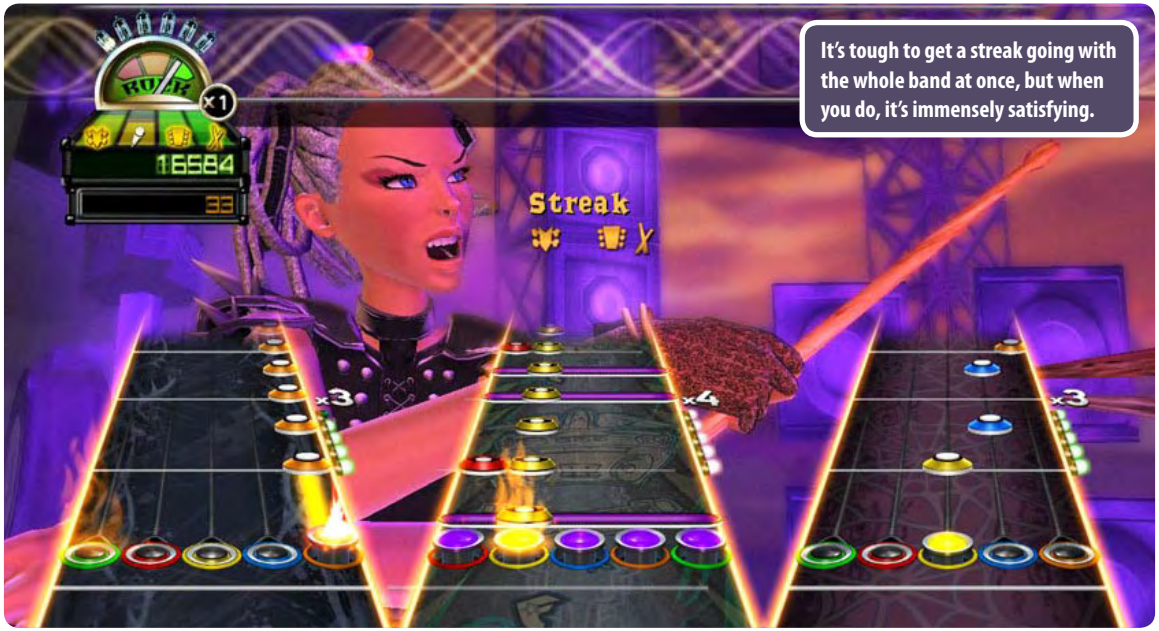
"From early evidence, the 'ghost notes' of Legends of Rock are a thing of the past"



Songs will be categorised on the GHTunes store so you can find the type of track you're looking for quite easily.



You can even create notes using one instrument to sound like another.



It's tough to get a streak going with the whole band at once, but when you do, it's immensely satisfying.

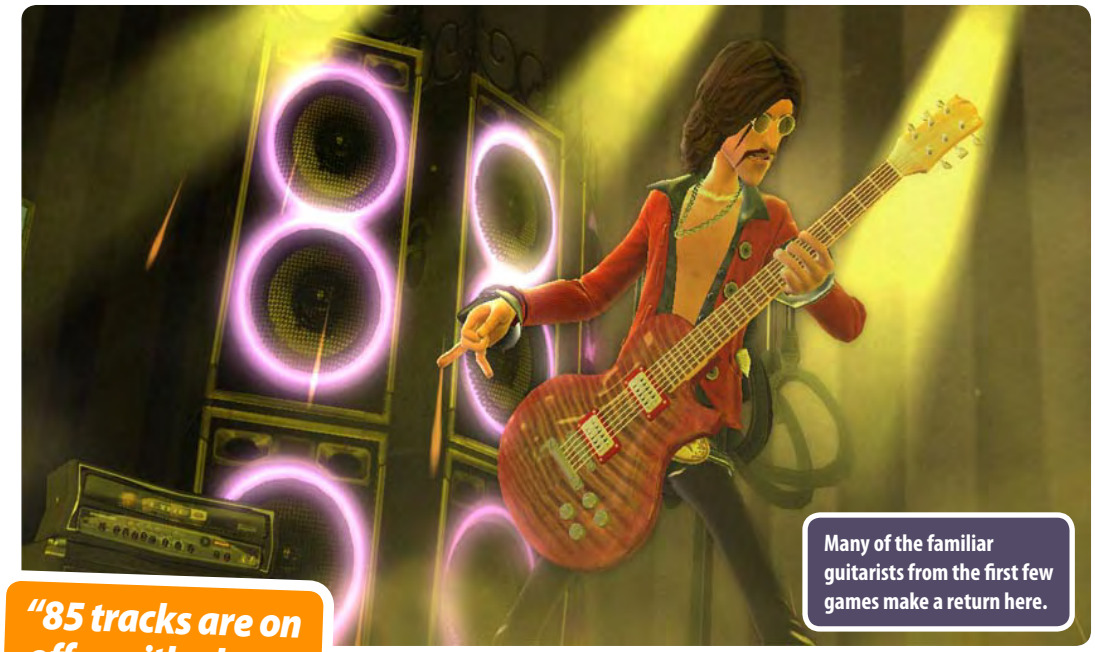
> Guitar Hero World Tour continued

immediately at home, as Guitar Hero's take on singing is essentially identical. A minor tweak to bass playing adds realism and a little extra challenge – you can play open notes by just hitting the strum bar and leaving the note buttons untouched. Which takes some getting used to for the first couple of goes.

85 tracks are on offer, with plenty more to come via downloadable content, and there will be a few secret songs that dedicated players can unlock. And, as if that wasn't enough, further tunes will be available from the GHTunes service – an online store which allows players to download tracks created by other users for no charge whatsoever.

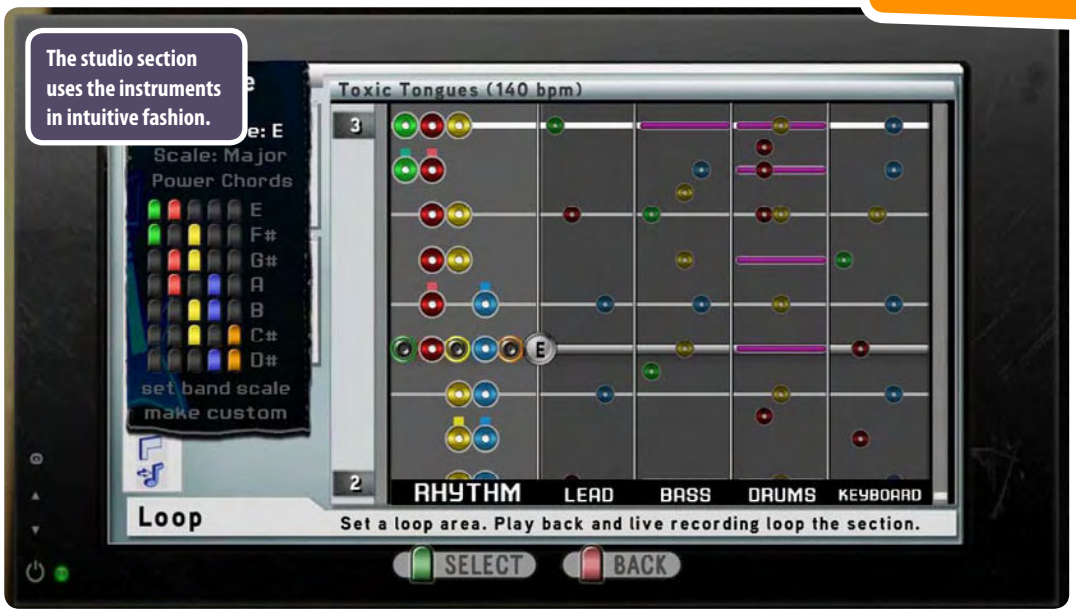
Budding composers will only be able to upload five of their own efforts initially, but will get the opportunity to produce more should their songs be rated highly enough by the online community.

The intuitiveness of the studio itself is Neversoft's final masterstroke. Rarely have we seen a game series so significantly reinvented. Granted, Guitar Hero needed a change, but it's hard to conceive such a huge improvement in a relatively short space of time. One thing's for sure, Harmonix is going to struggle to top this. In the battle of the bands, there can only be one winner. And we know who our money's going to be on this year.



Many of the familiar guitarists from the first few games make a return here.

"85 tracks are on offer with plenty more to come via download"



The studio section uses the instruments in intuitive fashion.



Those concerned about the addition of the Beginner difficulty shouldn't worry that Guitar Hero has lost its edge. It's still plenty hard when it wants to be.

P3Zine

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE 95%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS 90%

A rockin' good time will be had by all



FRACTURE™



RESHAPE THE BATTLEFIELD.
RESHAPE THE BATTLE.









OCTOBER 10TH 2008

www.FractureGame.co.uk

12

PLAYSTATION 3

XBOX 360 LIVE

DAY 1 STUDIOS™

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SEABASS ON TOAST

We grill the producer of PES 2009



Shingo 'Seabass' Takatsuka

After last year's debacle, Shingo 'Seabass' Takatsuka explains how PES is back on track…

PES 2008 was widely criticised, so how have you addressed these issues for PES 2009. And what else can we expect?
Looking at last season's PES 2008, we understand that there were quite a few flaws that were picked up. So mainly, when we began to create PES 2009, we started working from there – mainly the online aspect. We tried to increase the quality of the online game in PES 2009. Also, as we were criticised last year for the slowdown of the game and the not so fluid movement, we decided to change that. Now those were the top priorities to work on because of the previous title. As for new content, there is the Become a Legend mode, as well as an enhancement of the AI and control system.

Can you tell us more about the Become a Legend mode?
We had this a couple of years ago in the Japanese version (J-League) that comes out every year. A few years ago we put in a mode that has now become the basis of Become a Legend mode in PES 2009. What you do is you start out by creating your own self – you can use a camera to capture your face and you can edit it. It doesn't have to be you, but you can create this one character, and you are only able to control it >


Italy take on Holland. Actual gameplay view may differ.



Champions League squads will be updated online.

> Interview continued

in this Become a Legend mode. If you select a striker, you start as a striker, and if you select a midfielder you start as a midfielder. Then you have a choice… you could go to several different teams to build up your career or you can stay in one team if you have just one team that you like. But the purpose is to recreate yourself in a football player's life. There are no specific goals, but one achievement would be to become the most valuable player in Europe. Also in Become a Legend is the Legends mode, where you take that character online with up to four players co-operatively.

That sounds quite similar to the FIFA Be a Pro mode. Is that a coincidence? And what does your game do differently?
We knew from the beginning when we implemented this that everyone was going to say that. Be a Pro was first in FIFA's game last season, but we had the mode in J-League maybe two years before they introduced that, so it is kind of our fault and we're a bit upset that we couldn't introduce this prior to EA. It's not a coincidence but we probably had the idea of the mode first. There is basically a fundamental difference. With EA you select one player to live his career, however our purpose is to recreate yourself as a professional player, so that's fundamentally different.

Have you had a chance to look at FIFA, and do you see any influences from your game?
Yes, I have seen FIFA. You might not believe it, but when we see FIFA we always consider ourselves to be underdogs. Of course. we have our strong points that we believe in, which is gameplay, so we see FIFA in that way and see how they've brushed up their gameplay. And because they're getting better and better it's sometimes a threat, and also gives us the will to make our game better. Of course, we do acknowledge the good points that FIFA always brings out, which is graphics or licenses or whatever, so we don't sit back, but we strive to create a better game.



More action from the Champions League. Snap him!



Liverpool and Manchester United finally appear correctly.



"You might not believe it, but when we see FIFA we always consider ourselves to be underdogs"

PES 2009 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Heritage: PES
Link: http://pesunites.com
ETA: 17th October





THE OFFICIAL VIDEOGAME

SBK08

SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



PC DVD · XBOX 360 · PlayStation 2 · PSP · PLAYSTATION 3

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"POWERED BY ADRENALINE!"









LittleBigPlanet

Welcome to a brave new world where the hero is an eco-friendly sack…

There's been a lot of talk from Sony about LittleBigPlanet. There's the belief that the unique 'build a game within a game' formula will appeal to socially networked modern gamers, new gamers and also give a certain Italian plumber a kick up the backside.

In reality, LittleBigPlanet is a mix of Mario, Parappa and, um, Facebook. And that isn't a bad thing at all. And, given that UK developers Media Molecule are a new pack of game developers previously involved with Black & White, Fable and Ratchet & Clank, it's not surprising.

>



Publisher: Sony
Developer: Media Molecule
Heritage: None!
Link: www.littlebigplanet.com/en_GB/
ETA: 24th October

> LittleBigPlanet continued

Let us explain. LittleBigPlanet isn't like many platform games you've played before, and we're not just talking about the spooky cast who are composed purely out of materials more commonly found in an episode of Blue Peter. You are sack boy, a cute little sack with a face, but to dismiss LittleBigPlanet as a game for pre-school babies would be missing the point. It's true that at first glance, LittleBigPlanet does resemble what the Tellytubbies would have looked like if it was based around puppets rather than men in costumes, but scratch the surface and you'll discover a thinking man's platformer. You can make your sack boy smile, grin, gurn, hula hoop and slap stickers on the feet of giant queens made of cardboard. Okay, so LittleBigPlanet is completely mad but you won't have had this kind of control over a character since, well, Abe's Oddyssey, which appeared years ago on PSone. Pretty much every button does something – the D-pad controls your face, the Sixaxis motion sensor your hips >

"The cast are composed purely out of materials more commonly found in an episode of Blue Peter"



Say hello to the new guys. Mario and Luigi, be afraid!

BADLY DRAWN BOY
Dressing to impress



Getting the sack | **Dress to impress** | **Spooky fireman**

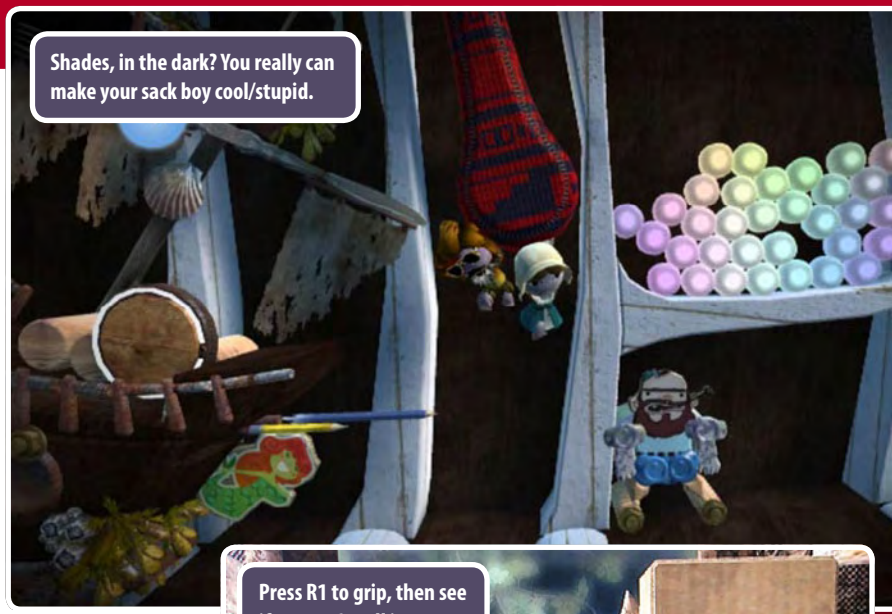
Getting the sack

Here's your basic sack boy, the one you start out with. Notice he's naked (sort of) so you'll need to press Square which brings up your 'pocket' and pick out some clothes to hide your fabric shame.



The barrels are checkpoints, which decrease as you progress.


In the Creation mode, you can set backgrounds as well as objects.


Shades, in the dark? You really can make your sack boy cool/stupid.

> LittleBigPlanet continued

and the sticks manage your basic movements. You'll instantly want to make a manic face, shove your cloth pelvis to the front of the screen and wave your arms up and down like a cottonweave Usher.

The idea is that you explore LittleBigPlanet from your house or 'pod' which is a box in space with a PlayStation controller inside. You can progress through the story mode, create your own levels, network with friends online or simply redecorate your pod. Or costume. Did we mention that the makers of the game pop up as >

"The idea is that you explore the game from your house or 'pod' which is a box in space"


Press R1 to grip, then see if you can't pull it over...

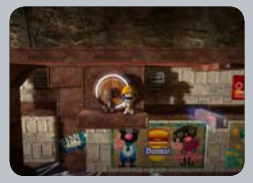
FREEZE FRAME

Five brief snapshots of a LittleBigPlanet


LEVEL CREATOR
The level creator allows planting of trees, mushrooms and plants.



ONLINE
Go online and show your sack boy alter-ego to the world in Facebook.


IN AND OUT
You can move forward and back into the screen, and this happens seemlessly.


WOODEN HORSES
Devices such as pulleys and wooden horses give the game a toybox feel.


FRIENDS
Invite your friends online and they can then sample your levels.



If you need to buy a PS3 as well, then this pack might be just what you're looking for.



The screen pans out (and in) depending on the events occurring…



You can create very retro game designs if you wish.

> LittleBigPlanet continued

polaroid pictures during the intro level and the 'Gallery' music from Tony Hart's 80's TV show plays in the background? We didn't, because there's frankly too much weirdness to get your head around in a single sitting. Persevere though, and you'll rejoice in the playful world full of toys, gadgets and strange characters – you'll smile when you least expect it. If you're so inclined, you can use a PlayStation Eye to wedge your mug into the game, too. We recommend doing it, if only to confuse relatives, partners and visitors to your house. In many ways, fans of Yoshi's Island on the DS will see similarities within the cartoon backdrops but there's so >

"Persevere and you'll rejoice in the playful world full of toys, gadgets and strange characters"

Roll over screen for annotations





Every piece of art is brilliantly memorable – even the turbans.




The colours are enough to make you puke.


The obligatory 'haunted' level – a rare glimpse at something approaching familiar.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



> LittleBigPlanet continued

much going on at any one time, you know that it takes a PS3 to power the layers and layers of detail and slick animation in LittleBigPlanet.

The initial puzzles you encounter are familiar jumping challenges but that's just a dry run for what follows, including block pulling, pushing and stacking alongside dressing a man with a moustache to make a beaver open a draw bridge. We told you it was strange – and it is. It's so odd that it makes Mighty Boosh look like an episode of Heartbeat.

It's likely that the main story mode will keep you fascinated for a couple of weeks before you get your head around the fabric universe and start doing a bit of platform DIY. So, there's depth, style and something genuinely original here. It's a brave game because, let's be honest, Lara Croft is lurking around the corner, ready for her PS3 close-up, and in the blue corner is sack boy, ready to show you his special space house, range of wigs and those impressive pelvic thrusts. Give sack boy a chance, however, and you might find his world a bit more exciting.

Richard Melville



"It's likely that the main story mode will keep you fascinated for a couple of weeks"



P3Zine Verdict

A bonkers but ultimately brilliant platformer

+ Unlike anything you've played
+ Clever controls
- Maybe too weird for some?

92%



Publisher: LucasArts
Developer: Day 1 Studios
Heritage: F.E.A.R. (PS3), MechAssault series
Link: www.lucasarts.com/games/fracture
OUT NOW

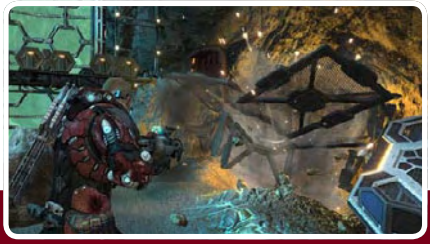
Fracture

Brilliant idea, shame about the execution



In many ways, Fracture reminds us of Assassin's Creed, in that it's a concept that hasn't quite been fleshed out in the way it should have been. Ubisoft's game had plenty of polish, while its parkour element – and particularly the way every single building could be interacted with, whether climbed, hopped on to or jumped off – felt remarkably freeing. But it never reached greatness because it didn't use its strengths to the fullest, including a host of dull mission-based objectives and some poor fight mechanics. It felt like a game which would either benefit from a sequel, or be bested by another title taking its best bits and improving upon its weaknesses.

And that's Fracture all over. It's a game whose terrain deformation feels very different – occasionally inspiringly so. But it's constantly bumping up against limitations



"There's a terrific game here screaming to get out"

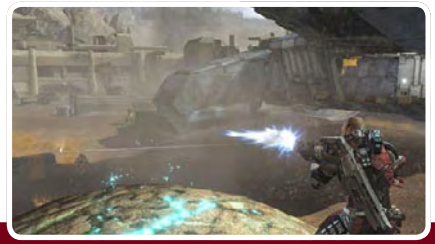
elsewhere – whether it be the none-more-generic space-marine archetypes, the hopelessly weak plotting or the samey levels. There's a terrific game here screaming to be let out, but focus testing and developer inexperience have collectively blunted its creative edge.

Promising story

The game's story shows a little promise, though that's soon to be revealed as little more than basic motivation for the events that follow. The idea is that the US has been split in two by a series of natural disasters caused by human ignorance of the changes in global climate and general neglect of the environment.

You play as Jet Brody, a soldier on the side of the Atlantic Alliance – the eastern side of the US, which has allied with Europe and favours technological enhancement over the genetic modification and stem cell research the Pacificans are fond of. Taking umbrage to the law passed by the president that outlaws such genetic tinkering, General Sheridan – whose ill daughters require this treatment to survive – throws the nation into war by attacking the Alliance, and it's up to you to try to prevent Sheridan from doing any more damage.

All of which sounds like a step up from your average war story, but the game completely fails to explore this potentially interesting plot thread. Instead, you're sent on a series >



DISH THE DIRT

The ground is your oyster with an Entrencher in hand…



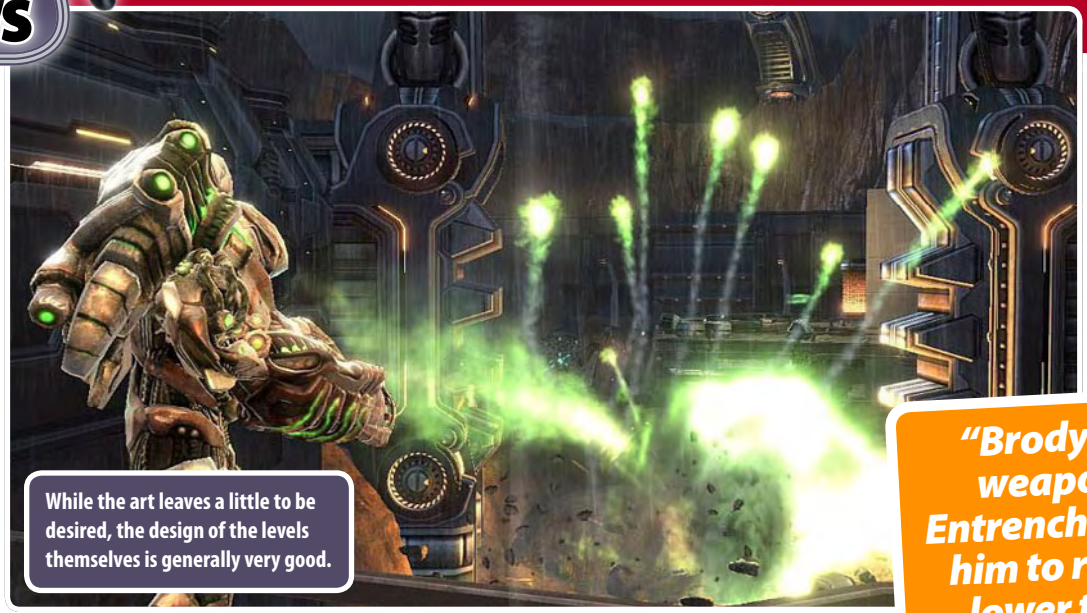
Can you dig it? | **Up 'n' under** | **Move any mountain**

Can you dig it?

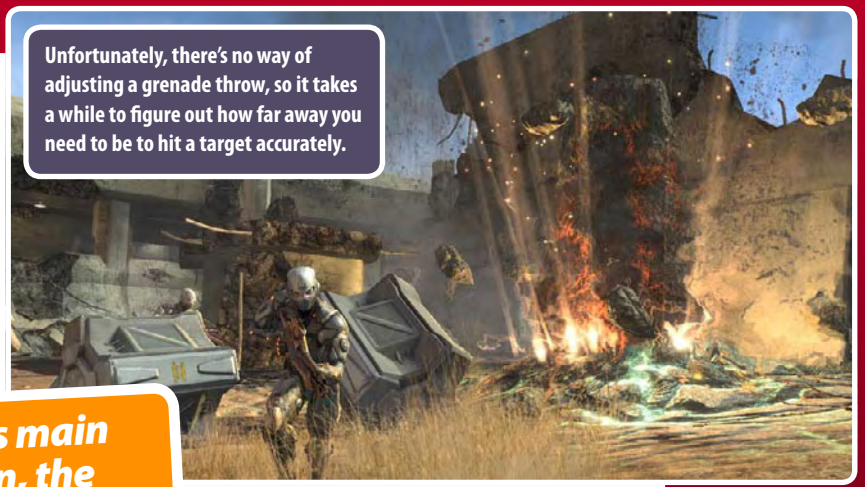
The Pacificans are clearly unable to understand why a laser-spitting death robot would be a far better way of guarding the entrance to their base than a bit of soil. You'll often have to burrow under pipes or uncover tunnels to progress into enemy strongholds.



Particle effects are decent, and the whole game generally runs very smoothly, too.



While the art leaves a little to be desired, the design of the levels themselves is generally very good.



Unfortunately, there's no way of adjusting a grenade throw, so it takes a while to figure out how far away you need to be to hit a target accurately.

"Brody's main weapon, the Entrencher, allows him to raise and lower terrain"

> Fracture continued

of missions which either involve you shooting all the genetically-enhanced Pacifican troops in sight or else destroying some kind of emplacement to put a stop to the General's plans. Fracture very rarely strays from this template, and if you couple the repetitive objectives with the curious way the game moves onto each area with barely a few seconds of dialogue and a quick-save to split stages up, it's like you're playing one single enormous level.

Brody himself is as generic a character as you're likely to find. Initially starting out with a completely different name and look, he's been fed through some kind of blandness-enhancing machine that's sucked any kind of character out of him. He's a shaven-headed, scarred, monosyllabic space marine who will likely be completely forgotten the second you play another third-person shooter.

Which is a great shame, because Fracture's central idea – for the most part – works brilliantly. While Brody's weapon set is otherwise fairly unremarkable, his main weapon, the Entrencher, allows him to raise and lower terrain – an ability which is used both to solve environmental puzzles and to drastically affect combat situations. It's a little disappointing that you're not given a tad more freedom with the former – there's usually one prescribed solution which you have to rigidly stick to – yet the latter involves >

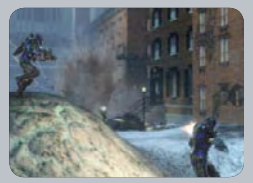


FREEZE FRAME

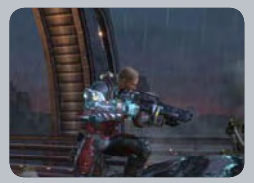
Guiding you through Fracture, one earth-moving step at a time



10 MINUTES
The game's lengthy tutorial. The controls do need a bit of learning, but not this much.



45 MINUTES
Much more like it! Blasting enemies skyward with a crater-creator of a shot.



3 HOURS
Plodding in the campaign, which is starting to feel just like one giant area.



7 HOURS
Nearing the end of the solo mode in DC, and having fun with the Rhino.



9 HOURS
Multiplayer's fun, and there's a weapon test mode to have a go at, too.

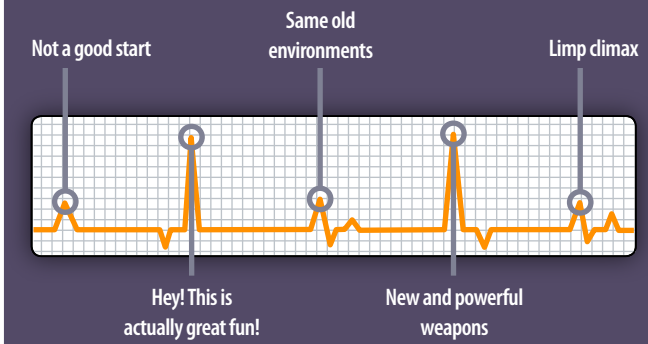


You're able to carry two weapons at a time as well as the Entrencher.



There's an abundance of canisters and containers – not all of which are explosive, but which can be sent flying with a well-placed shot.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



> Fracture continued

plenty of glorious experimentation. It's here where the game is at its best – you'll sometimes be outnumbered in battle and taking heavy damage, then just as you're about to run out of health, you'll create a quick hill to hide behind, and lob a vortex grenade over the mound to suck in multiple foes. Or you could point your weapon at the feet of a group of onrushing foes and send them tumbling as the ground rises up beneath them. Though your enemies aren't hugely intelligent, there are plenty of them, and combined with their unerring accuracy at times, skirmishes can get particularly frenzied and chaotic. A battlefield can be flatter than Holland before a shot is fired, and end up looking like the Alps when you've finished. It adds a degree of unpredictability to a game that lacks surprises elsewhere, which means that the brisk eight-hour single-player – despite its samey puzzles and locales – doesn't often drag.

Developer Day 1 Studios certainly deserves credit for offering us a glimpse of an interesting future for real-time terrain alteration, though it's disappointing that it didn't quite have the imagination to allow the Entrencher to shape the gameplay as well as it does the environment.

Chris Schilling

"A battlefield can be flatter than Holland before a shot is fired, and end up looking like the Alps"



Fracture's music works well – not surprisingly for a LucasArts title, it doesn't sound all that dissimilar from certain Star Wars themes.



P3Zine Verdict

Stuck in the mud

- \+ Ground-shaping works well
- \+ Technically fine
- \- Mired in genre convention

74%



Saints Row 2

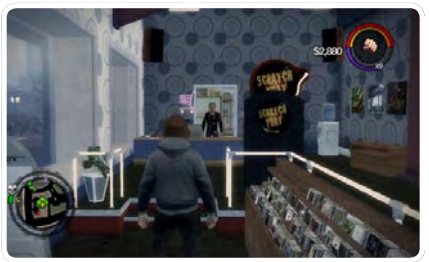
Stilwater runs cheap

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Volition
Heritage: Saints Row, The Punisher
Link: www.saintsrow.com
ETA: 17th October

When Grand Theft Auto IV roared onto consoles earlier this year, many people wondered where on Earth that left Saints Row 2. The original had pretty unashamedly ripped off GTA's template, but brought with it a series of technical and mechanical improvements that made it hugely enjoyable to play, even if its story and setting didn't quite live up to those found in Rockstar's most popular series. Then GTA raised its game in every possible way – creating a city with unrivalled atmosphere, opting for a story several shades darker than the norm, and tightening up the controls (specifically for gunplay, where Saints Row had almost certainly bested its inspiration) to such a degree that it seemed to leave Volition nowhere to go.

Student bashing

And then you load up Saints Row 2, and within hours you're haring around on a quad bike in a flame resistant suit, sending university students sprawling as you literally blaze a trail around their campus. Or you might be spraying sewage throughout a neighbourhood to reduce prices in the area at the behest of a dodgy estate agent. How about streaking? We took our obese female avatar out into a crowd of people, who either ran away from our terrifying flab or tried to spray mace in our faces. And if you'd rather concentrate on the story, then maybe you'll find yourself >



HOMIE SWEET HOMIE

Oh when the Saints go bouncin' in



Winning streak | **Police release me** | **The drugs don't work**

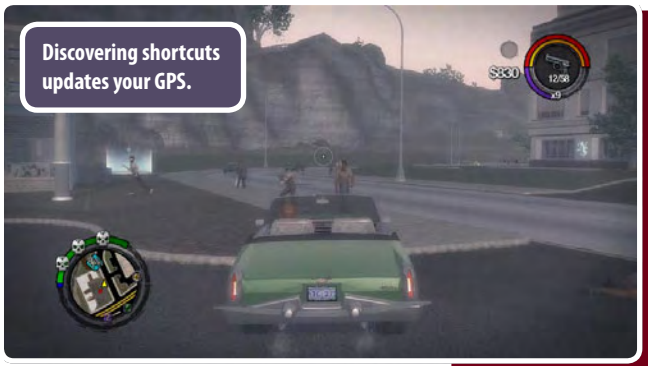
Winning streak

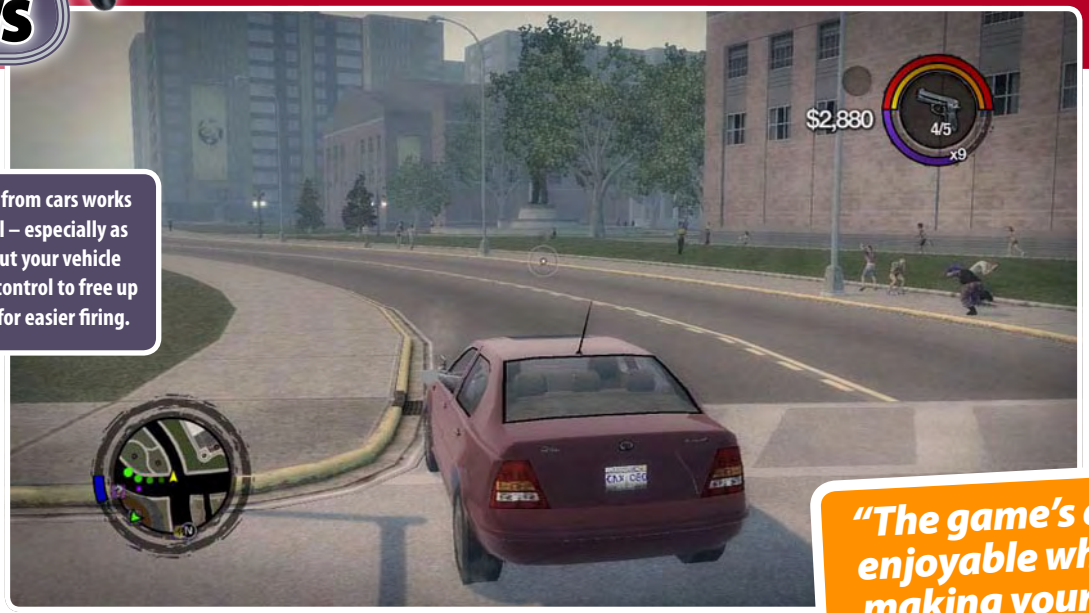
Some of the funniest little asides are discovered purely by accident, or reckless experimentation. If you visit a store to buy new clothes, you're given the option to view your current wardrobe to mix and match – and there's also an option there to remove your outfit entirely.

Roll over screen for annotations

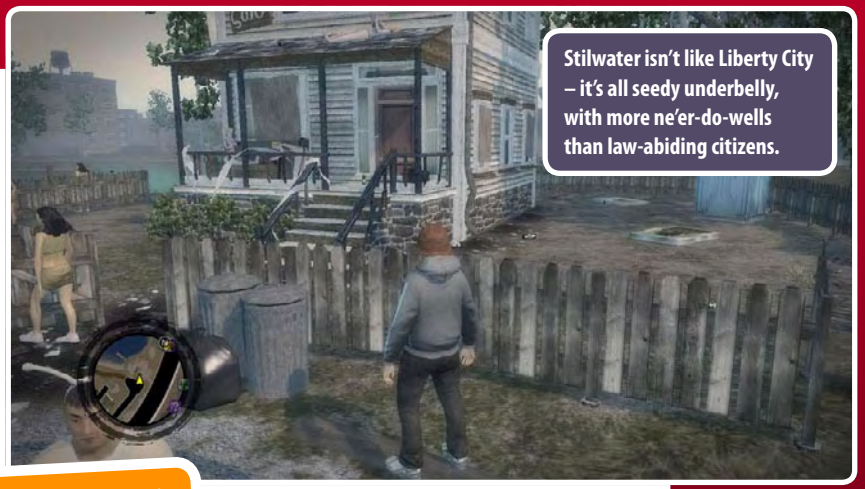








Shooting from cars works fairly well – especially as you can put your vehicle in cruise control to free up a button for easier firing.



Stilwater isn't like Liberty City – it's all seedy underbelly, with more ne'er-do-wells than law-abiding citizens.

"The game's at its most enjoyable when you're making your own fun"

> Saints Row 2 continued

protecting a car as it races to the hospital… with a rocket launcher.

By now you've got a fair idea of exactly which direction Volition has taken the franchise in, and given the prevalence of sandbox games these days, it's remarkable how fresh this ludicrously over-the-top approach feels. Probably its closest rival is Mercenaries 2 – a similarly daft and thoroughly unrealistic take on free-roaming, but here you're creating havoc with other humans rather than buildings.

As with Mercs 2, the game's perhaps at its most enjoyable when you're creating your own fun – ripping up parking meters and hurling them at passing cars, forcing them to swerve wildly, as they take out several pedestrians shortly before smashing into a nearby tree. But there are many more forms of organised chaos – take a look at your map and you'll see a wealth of activities you can try, almost all of which involve creating mayhem. You might fly around in a helicopter taking out enemy gangs or vehicles, visit a Fight Club for bare-knuckle brawling, engage in crowd control by becoming a celebrity bodyguard and taking care of any particularly aggressive or obsessive fans – by, for example, throwing them into a group of police who'll taser them into submission, or chucking >

FREEZE FRAME

There's plenty to do to fill up your time in Saints Row 2



5 MINUTES
You've just woken from a coma and need to get back in the game.



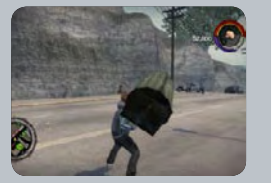
30 MINUTES
Making your mark by spraying the Saints tag over your rivals' graffiti.



3 HOURS
Stealing cars and wrecking bars – oh, and visiting the odd strip club for research'.

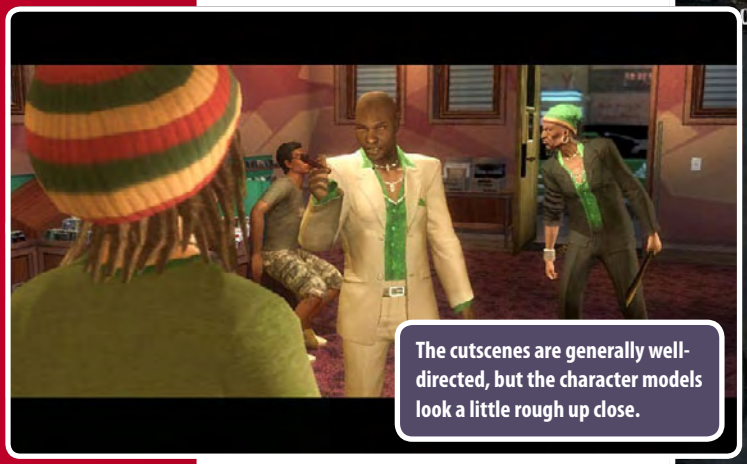


7 HOURS
Tackling rival gangs on their own turf with homies in tow.



30 HOURS
You might have finished the story by now. Us? We're still throwing people off bridges.

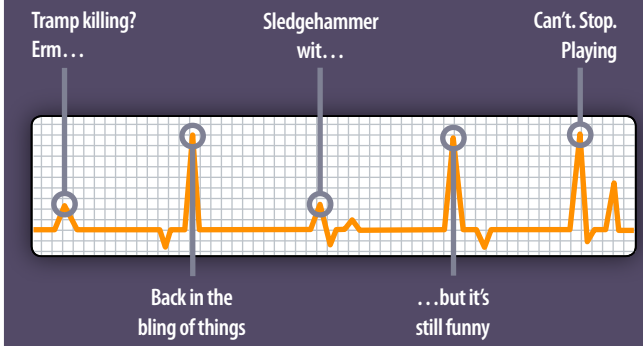



The cutscenes are generally well-directed, but the character models look a little rough up close.



There's a very neat joke near the start involving a bike which we won't spoil.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



> Saints Row 2 continued

them at a mechanical digger, whose scoop will send them flying through the air. There are more 'traditional' side-quests, like races and assassin missions, but you'll often get more entertainment from the more outlandish ideas – and the bonuses for completing the increasingly difficult levels of these are often superior. Fancy using shock paddles as a weapon? Then hijack an ambulance and visit crash sites to perform CPR on any victims. Aside from adding vehicles to your garage and weapons to your cash, these missions will usually increase your style and respect points – essential for unlocking further missions.

It's telling that we're not too far from the end of the review, and the story hasn't had a mention yet. That's not necessarily because it's bad, but because the many distractions are such that most players will only follow the plot-based missions when they have to. At one early stage of our playthrough, we'd only completed eight percent of the game but had been playing for nearly six hours, which tells its own story. In truth, the most interesting aspects of the cutscenes are hearing familiar celeb voices swearing like troopers, or to make them inadvertently hilarious by decking your avatar out in the most outrageous get-up possible. We had to laugh when we made our female character talk with a male Cockney accent – as every story sequence features your protagonist in his or her current guise, there's even more opportunity for mischief here.

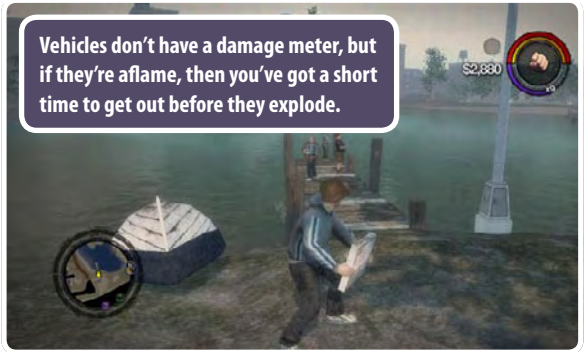
In truth, the fact that the story occasionally takes a turn for the serious doesn't always sit well with the cartoon violence – and some may be uneasy with its casual killing and occasional brutality. When the rest of the game is far too silly to take seriously, it makes certain events seem unnecessarily nasty.

Occasional glitches

Aside from that, and the occasional glitches and technical shortcomings we've come to expect from ambitious open world games like this, there's not an awful lot to criticise about Saints Row 2. The controls work as they should do – despite the lack of a lock-on, shooting works just fine, while vehicle handling is suitably arcadey. While the sledgehammer parodies and cheap laughs miss as often as they hit, you'll still be laughing longer and harder with this than many of this winter's offerings.

Chris Schilling

> *"We had to laugh when we made our female character talk with a male Cockney accent"*


Vehicles don't have a damage meter, but if they're aflame, then you've got a short time to get out before they explode.

P3Zine Verdict

Its thrills may be cheap, but you won't care. A riot

\+ Hysterically funny in places
\+ Loads of things to do
\- Seriousness jars with the lighter tone

84%

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Level after 90 minutes, who will emerge victorious after extra time?



Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Heritage: The FIFA series
Link: www.fifa09.ea.com
OUT NOW

FIFA 09

Given the mass hysteria that has greeted this year's FIFA, we can't help thinking that there must have been a subliminal message transmitted during the four-minute advert featuring Wayne Rooney. Or perhaps it's the fact that after years of enduring style over content, there is actually something to shout about here.

Last year's game was a step in the right direction, and 09 follows it up with a distinctly physical brand of football. With two well-matched teams, time on the ball is at a premium, and it's largely harem-scarem stuff, offering split seconds with which to find a pass before the opposition are all over you like a soup sandwich. And while you wouldn't begrudge a well-timed tackle,



most of the time it's more niggly, involving shoulder-to-shoulder grappling and even a hint of shirt-pulling thrown in, too.

If you can find a player with a decent turn of pace, dribbling can be effective, with a well-timed burst of speed enabling you to wrong-foot defenders. There's also a lot of emphasis on through-balls, with players

NEW STUFF
It's in the game…

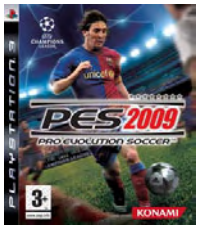


Live season | **World Cup** | **Be a Pro**

Live season
The Adidas Live Season dynamically updates player form in the game to mirror their real world performance. So if Rooney snags a hat trick on Match Of The Day, it might be worth sticking him in your team.

Pro Evolution Soccer 2009





Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Heritage: The PES series
Link: pesunites.com
ETA: 17th October

P3Zine GOLD

One of the more astonishing revelations of last year was the admission by producer 'Seabass' that he was surprised at the slowdown in the PS3 version of PES 2008. Arguably not as surprised as those who paid good money for it, only to find that the online element was also knackered.

It's fair to say that the transition of PES from PS2 classic to next-gen



contender was far from seamless, but Seabass and his team have gone back to basics to deliver what the series has always been best known for: smooth, flowing football, goalmouth scrambles and head-in-the-hand thrills and spills.

On those criteria alone, it's a triumph, distilling the excitement and euphoria of a football match into 10 dizzying minutes of action. Responsive controls allied with supreme ball control ensure that you're always in charge, and that any mistakes are football-based rather that the fault of the interface. That said, there is



You'll definitely recognise the bigger stars.

FIFA 09 continued

making forward runs, replete with an arm in the air. And while this can lead to a lot of crossing opportunities, unfortunately they are rarely effective, with the ball either headed away or deflected out for a corner.

While animations are generally smooth, players are sometimes caught facing the wrong way, particularly when being selected or unselected, which can be problematic. High scoring games are fairly rare, and goals are often scrappy affairs, seemingly scored at random with little sporting narrative in terms of possession or pressure. It might look pretty, but it's about winning ugly.

"The game really comes into its own with the vast suite of online features"

As ever, production values are sky high, with a peerless commentary from Martin Tyler and Andy Gray, and enough official licenses to fill a stadium. Where the game really comes into its own is with the vast suite of online features, including the much-vaunted 10 v 10 online mode, something of a technical achievement. However, as with the rest of the Be a Pro mode, it remains something of an acquired taste – more intermittent entertainment than interactive.

Steve Hill

P3Zine Verdict
A world of sport
+ Copious online options
+ Authentic
– Dodgy AI
85%

VITAL STATISTICS
FIFA 09 vs PES 2009

FIFA 09		PES 2009
7	GRAPHICS	8
7	GAMEPLAY	9
9	SOUND	7
6	CONTROL	9
9	REALISM	7
9	ONLINE	7
9	TEAMS	6

LICENSE TO THRILL
It's official!



We are the Champions | Scousers | Mancs

We are the Champions

PES now has the Champions League license. On the plus side, it means EA won't be releasing a bespoke Champions League title. On the down side, Konami still don't have the rights to the Premier League.

PES 2009 continued

a new control system, with manual passing assigned to the right stick, offering direction and power. It takes some getting used to, and in fact can be ignored, but does actually come in handy for pulling off a cheeky back heel in the midst of a crowd scene. Elsewhere, sprinting can be speeded up by tapping the shoulder button.

Licensing has always been PES's weakness, and while the North London Reds and Merseyside Blues are still in place, fans of North West giants who play in red are catered for with the inclusion of both Liverpool and Manchester United. However, the big news is the inclusion of the Champions League license, replete with onscreen shenanigans and warbling music. The tournament can be played in full, too – with online squad updates promised.

"The big news is the inclusion of the Champions League license"

Those in for the longer haul can delve into the Master League, and come up smiling some time next year. And for fans of playing on your own, Become a Legend enables you to scan your face on to the body of a 17-year-old player and embark on a professional career, and even take your player online. A better game this year.

Steve Hill

P3Zine Verdict
Back to its best, and still the footie game to beat
+ Liquid football
+ Champions League
– Fictional Premier League
90%

PlayStation Network

Download 'em today!

WipEout HD

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Studio Liverpool
Price: £11.99

It almost goes without saying that WipEout HD looks astonishing. Indeed, we'd go so far as to say it's one of the top three best-looking games on the entire system, despite coming in at a piffling cost of 12 pounds minus one penny for the download. It runs at a full 1080p, and at 60 frames per second. And it's so tricky, you'll spend the entire first track afraid to blink. You'll be so dazzled your eyes will literally hurt from staring.

It's a while until the novelty wears off, but eventually you're 'merely' left with a rather familiar future racer that just happens to be one of the most perfectly presented, immaculate-looking and sounding games you've ever played. Certainly if you've played the PSP games, almost everything here will feel a little old, albeit with a lick of paint that makes up for the lack of new content. Weirdly, the eight-player online mode seems to lack something – it's perfectly implemented, but oddly dull compared with the thrill of the solo game. Perhaps WipEout is one of those rare games that's best played alone? Either way, it's curious to note.

At this price point, WipEout HD represents a bargain, and we just hope it's well served by DLC, which will give it greater longevity. As it stands, it's an incredible high that wears off just a little too soon.



P3Zine Verdict
Prepare for scorched retinas
+ Astounding to look at
− Steep learning curve
85%

Mega Man 9

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Price: £6.99

Capcom has tried to convince the world that it's a good idea to release a NES game for the same cost as the gorgeous remake of Bionic Commando. They almost pulled it off with us, too.



Mega Man is a lovingly crafted tribute to games of yesteryear, but times have changed, and it's hard to see many players willing to put up with the masochistic difficulty level here. And while the old-school graphics are charming, we can't help but feel it might have appealed to more people with a look more fitting for these HD-enhanced times.

P3Zine Verdict
An acquired taste
+ Charmingly old-school
− Ridiculously hard
65%

Geon

Publisher: Pinnacle Software
Developer: Strawdog Studios
Price: £4.99

Geon is a sort of sports game where you control a cube traversing grids to collect pellets and deposit them in your opponent's goal when full.

Despite a raft of improvements over the Live Arcade version of the game, Geon still feels a little pointless, and almost every game results in a 5-4 win, depending on who was marginally quicker, and whether your attacks connected or not. It's got an appealing neon look, and it's a fun time-killer if you've got someone to play with, but solo players need not apply. Cheap, but only a bit cheerful.



P3Zine Verdict
Fun but shallow
+ Likeable arcade fun
− In truth, fairly dull
60%

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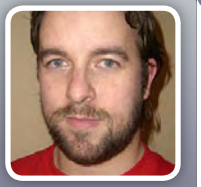
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Turning Japanese

What PS3 had to offer at the Tokyo Game Show



Chris Schilling
Chris is the proud owner of all three 'next-gen' consoles. Every issue Chris will chart the progress of PS3 and commenting on Sony's latest and greatest initiatives.

Though the queues outside its booth at the show itself suggested otherwise, Sony's showing at this year's Tokyo Game Show was a little disappointing for some – certainly for people like myself who'd hoped for new information on some brand new titles from Sony as a publisher. Despite rumours continually resurfacing that we'd see the first proper unveiling of the latest title from Fumito Ueda and Team ICO, that failed to materialise, as did Sony's other top-secret mystery game which has been discussed in hushed tones among journalistic circles for quite some time now. By comparison, Microsoft had plenty to talk about, with John Schappert's keynote announcing a new Halo game among other, more Japanese-friendly exclusives.



Noby Noby Boy might not be the best looking game ever, but if it's as inventive as its creator's last work, it could be a gem.

Yet that's not to say that Sony had nothing to show – it's just that of the 14 previously unannounced titles, the vast majority we already knew of, as Western-focused titles that merely hadn't been talked about in the East yet. So it was up to the third-parties to really pick up the slack, and quite a few had some interesting PS3-related wares to show off.

Top billing

Top billing went to Level-5 (Dragon Quest VIII, Professor Layton) and its good-looking RPG White Knight Chronicles. Given that Japanese games haven't quite matched up to Western ones yet in terms of graphical quality, this was remarkably pretty. The hook of WKC is that its lead characters can transform into gigantic Knight characters, standing at over seven feet tall. Given that they'll have to battle against even larger creatures – one behemoth is so big it carries an entire town on its back! – it's a useful ability to have. Besides single-player shenanigans, Level-5 promises a sizeable online mode for up to four players that's already drawing comparisons with the superb Phantasy Star Online. As yet there are no details of a Western release, but as it's been discussed in detail on the official US PlayStation blog, I think we can safely put it down for a PAL release next year.

> **"We're hopeful that Takahashi has another wildly inventive ideas on his hands"**

Square-Enix was also there, showing off a mightily impressive trailer for Final Fantasy Versus XIII – not to be confused with the official FFXIII – and the former remains a PlayStation exclusive.

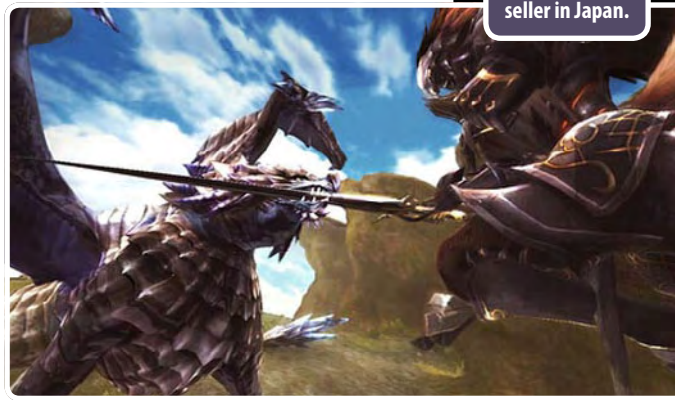
As, indeed, does Keita Takahashi's Noby Noby Boy, a typically Japanese curio whose brief appearance featured some incredibly bouncy music. It was soon established, however, that the clip shown was from the game's title sequence. Whether this can be the PS3's Katamari remains to be seen, but I'm hopeful that Takahashi has another wildly inventive idea on his hands.

Elsewhere, Tecmo's Quantum Theory looked very decent – rather like an Eastern-flavoured Gears of War, with bizarre guns and strange, angular creatures. Once again, it seemed as if Japanese programmers were beginning to make the most of the PS3's capabilities, as this was one seriously attractive game. Meanwhile, Tekken 6: Bloodline Rebellion was confirmed for a PS3 release, while LittleBigPlanet made a few waves with the appearance of Solid Snake and Sephiroth Sackboys.

If it was a slightly disappointing showing from Sony, it's only down to the rising anticipation for what it's holding back. But when it's ready to unveil its really big guns, then Microsoft and Nintendo could well be blown away. Watch this space.



Quantum Theory proves Japanese developers are starting to get more from the PS3.



White Knight Chronicles will be a system-seller in Japan.

In P3Zine Issue 21



Tomb Raider Underworld

Exclusive review!

PLUS!

Guitar Hero World Tour
Mirror's Edge
Call of Duty: World at War
SmackDown vs. RAW 2009
Fallout 3
Alone in the Dark
Resistance 2

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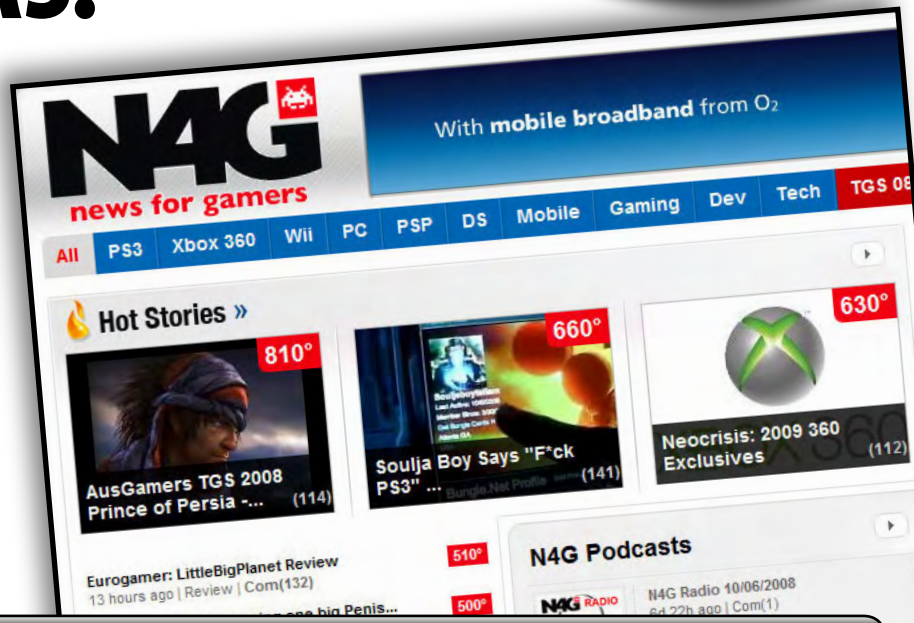
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